

ANDERS HAMMARLUND

A Prayer for Modernity

Politics and Culture in the World of Abraham Baer (1834–1894)



Anders Hammarlund: *A Prayer for Modernity*

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Anders Hammarlund

February 2013

I

Retrospectives

The Front Page of the Nation

An Introductory Excursion

I am back on *Stora Nygatan*, “Big New Street”, a street still resounding with nineteenth-century modernity, even if it has become something of a backstreet in the twenty-first-century city. Four years ago I stood here, contemplating the site and its sights, asking questions, learning the facts, trying to grasp the historical relationships, formulating hypotheses. Little by little (and quite unexpectedly), my tentative excursion into the cultural history of Gothenburg developed into a research project; an ambitious exploration of the conflicts, confusions, and cultural constructions of nineteenth-century Europe. During this scholarly journey, many unexpected findings and surprising connections were made. Returning now to my point of departure, it comes to mind that the main outcome of all my research toil and hardship actually is a kind of self-knowledge. The study of the Jewish reform movement and its interaction with the emerging Swedish national culture – a project that originally was styled as an investigation into the “integration process” of an immigrant minority – turned out to be an exploration of the roots of my own Swedish middle-class culture and its intellectual outlook and traditions.

Stora Nygatan is an open street, lined with buildings on just one side. At regular intervals, the street twists at sharp angles; it is laid out on the edge of the seventeenth-century fortifications – huge, stone-clad ramparts encircling the city like the thorns of the skin of a chestnut. A wide moat, connected to the city’s canal system, encircles the entire urban structure.

The ramparts were demolished early in the nineteenth century, but it took well into the 1850s before the inner peripheral zone – previously reserved for military purposes – was taken over by urban expansion. It was here that something quite extraordinary and unprecedented happened. For the first time in the history of the Christian Kingdom of Sweden, a non-Christian religious identity was allowed to be publicly displayed in an urban landscape. The establishment of the Synagogue of Gothenburg, consecrated in 1855, marks an important shift in the development



Stora Nygatan, Göteborg, 1870s. (© Göteborg City Museum) GhmB_11964

of Swedish society. The symbolic relevance of the building seems to have been realized from the outset. Soon after its erection, it became a frequent artistic motif. On my first visit to the synagogue, I brought a copy of one of these pictures in my briefcase, and I remember that I took a close look at it, comparing it with the actual building. The name of the artist is unknown. It is just a small, medallion-shaped drawing, integrated into the elaborate design of the front page of a book published in Gothenburg in 1877, *Baal t'fillah oder Der practische Vorbeter*, a handbook of Jewish liturgy.

In 2005, on the 150 year-anniversary of the consecration of the Gothenburg synagogue, the Jewish congregation published an anthology on Jewish life and traditions of the city. Here a contribution by historian Ingrid Lomfors caught my attention. It presented Abraham Baer (1834–1894), the most internationally renowned of the cantors of the Gothenburg synagogue. The basis of his fame is the above-mentioned liturgical collection. In fact, it was exactly this book that inspired my urban excursion and became the focus of my research project. Frankly speaking, I was surprised and even somewhat ashamed by my ignorance. As a cultural

historian and ethnomusicologist, I had been dealing with European Jewish history for many years, but in spite of that, I had never heard of this important document. I started to look for literature on Baer and his work in Swedish databases and library catalogues, but strangely enough, it turned out that this internationally famous *tour de force* of a sort of early ethnomusicology, emanating from Stora Nygatan in Gothenburg, had been totally overlooked by Swedish scholars. One may ponder over the reasons for this neglect; actually, it was one of the first things I asked when I opened the book, stunned by its dimensions and by its quality of presentation. Cantor Abraham Baer's *Baal t'fillah oder der practische Vorbeter* is one of the most remarkable books published in 19th century Sweden. As a documentation of an oral music tradition it is unequaled in its epoch.¹

If almost nothing has been written on Baer in Sweden, a look at the vast literature on Jewish music history gives a vivid picture of his international importance. Many of the modern handbooks on Jewish liturgical music could not have been written without recourse to his documentation. During the entire twentieth century, the *Baal t'fillah* has been used as a compendium for cantor's courses at important Jewish institutions, especially in the United States. The most recent musicological publications on Jewish traditional liturgy take Baer's work as their explicit model. In fact, it is hard to come up with another Swedish musical publication of the nineteenth century that has had a comparable international impact. After all, it deals with the *gestaltung* of world religion.

However, this international attention focused almost exclusively on Baer's work; only the most basic facts about his life seemed to be known. He arrived in Gothenburg in 1857, presumably from East Prussia, and was working as the local synagogue's cantor until his death in 1894. In addition to his daily duties in the synagogue, he devoted many years to the collecting of traditional liturgical melodies. Nothing seemed to be known about his family, his cultural background and his scholarly and religious orientation. In a way he was blocked out or concealed by his own book. I was mystified by this lack of information, but this only spurred my researcher's zeal.

Luckily, I found a copy of the *Baal t'fillah* in the collections at *Statens musikverk*, my Stockholm institute. Browsing the volume, trying to grasp its form, content and

כַּעַל תְּפִלָּה



BAAL T'FILLAH
oder
„Der practische Vorbeter“

Vollständige Sammlung der
Recitative der Israeliten nach
und portugiesischen (sephardischen)
betreffenden rituellen Vorschriften



gottesdienstlichen Gesänge und
polnischen, deutschen (aschknasischen)
Weisen nebst allen den Gottesdienst
und Gebräuchen (דברים ומנהגים)

von
ABRAHAM BAER,
Cantor und Gesanglehrer der israelitischen Gemeinde zu Gothenburg.

Eigenthum des Herausgebers.

Pr. 50 Mark.

„Baal t'fillah oder Der practische Vorbeter“ (1877), front page.

message, I gradually realized that this publication was much more than a songbook. In fact, it opened vistas into an important and continuously relevant but maybe not satisfactorily analyzed phase of Swedish cultural and social history.

Vistas: to be able really to understand and explain the broader context I needed a somewhat more distant and elevated vantage point. So, I crossed the moat of Gothenburg and climbed a winding path leading to the top of a rock situated about 500 meters south of the old ramparts.

The rock is crowned by a massive fort, which in its turn is crowned by a sculpted, gold-plated crown. This impressive octagonal structure, built from huge granite blocks, bears the name *Kronan*, “The Crown.” And really, in Gothenburg everything starts with the Crown, the royal state administration. In 1619, King Gustavus Adolphus decides that a fortified city shall be erected at the southern brink of the river Göta älv, near its mouth into the North Sea. The district around the estuary has been one of the most hotly disputed areas in northern Europe ever since the emergence of the Scandinavian kingdoms. During early seventeenth century, only a narrow strip of land along the river is Swedish. Bohuslän, the coastal province in the north, belongs to Norway, and the province of Halland along the coastline, in a southward direction, is a Danish possession. Denmark dominated the Northern European scene because of its total control of the straits connecting the Baltic Sea with the North Sea. Breaking out of this Danish stranglehold was a pressing issue for the regents in Stockholm in order to be able to trade directly with important North Sea ports, including Hamburg, Bremen, and Amsterdam.

When founding Gothenburg, Gustavus Adolphus realized that, in this ambition, it was useless to rely on Sweden’s domestic urban-planning tradition, which were very weak. Therefore, the king and his counsel decided to employ international expertise, and this competence was to be found mainly in the Netherlands. The new city of Gothenburg was laid out according to principles most amply demonstrated in Amsterdam; principles that also had been applied in several overseas colonial urban projects. The plan included a rectangular grid of streets, combined with a grid of canals that functioned both as a harbor, and as an internal transportation system, with bridges crossing the canals at regular intervals. This urban configuration was enclosed by the robust, semi-circular fortification system. Three external

strongholds greatly enhanced the military strength of the city: the Crown in the south – where I was standing –, *Lejonet* (The Lion), which I could discern through the mist on another hilltop in the northeastern suburbs, and the fortress of Nya Älvsborg on an island at the mouth of the river.

If the layout of the new city relied mainly on Dutch competence, many of the settlers had a German background. So right from the beginning, the city had a cosmopolitan, mercantile character. However, it was also a royal fortress. With the ramparts fully extended at the end of the seventeenth century, it was the largest fortification of the Swedish heartland. This meant that there was a continuous presence of the royal authority, but mainly in the form of the military administration. So even if Gothenburg quite soon became the second largest city of Sweden, it differed greatly, both socially and architecturally, from the capital Stockholm, the center of which was dominated by the Royal Palace and the palaces of the court nobility. In Gothenburg there were no noble palaces; no royal palace was ever built there. The largest secular building was the military storehouse. This was a city of burghers, tradesmen, artisans, officers, soldiers and sailors.

During the eighteenth century, the military importance of Gothenburg decreased as the formerly Danish provinces at the southern tip of the Scandinavian Peninsula came under Swedish administration. A new era of private entrepreneurship dawned, epitomized by the Swedish East India Company, whose monumental storehouse at the Great Harbor Canal is an architectonic landmark. However, the state-centered ideology of mercantilism that dominated activity during the 1700s, led to a certain stagnation, which was overcome only during the subsequent century.

From the position that I have taken up at the Crown fortress, I can clearly see that the original layout of the central part of the city is more or less untouched, but the huge military installations that girdled the city have been transformed into a green belt. Close to Stora Nygatan, the Trädgårdsföreningen (the spacious Park of the Gardening Society), along with a broad, tree-lined boulevard mark the previous position of the outer ramparts. The decision to tear down the city fortifications marked the beginning of Gothenburg's "grand siècle", when its citizens regarded their city as the motor of the liberalization and modernization of Swedish society.

This book explores that fascinating era, the period during which Gothenburg

earned the popular epithet “the front side of Sweden.” My sources are multifarious, and my methods interdisciplinary and intentionally unorthodox. This attitude is, I think, at the core of ethnomusicology, a discipline linking the study of aesthetic expression with the analysis of society. The study of culture, of human systems of symbols and meaning, is not an exact science. It is rather a hermeneutic activity, which may result in suggestions of plausible interpretations, but which should refrain from reductionism. Cooking down and smoothing out the multiplex human experience into simple principles, this is not the cultural researcher’s task. Rather one has a responsibility to demonstrate the immense complexity of human interaction and creativity. Using thick description one must *add* something, not subtract value from the phenomena being studied. The humble realization of the limits of our understanding is more honest and realistic than the presentation of pretentious universal theories.

Strolling through Gothenburg, a few research questions and hypotheses formed in my mind. How can one explain the fact that an epoch-making work about Jewish liturgy was created in Gothenburg, a place located in the absolute periphery of European Jewish culture, with no historic tradition of Jewish worship and learning, and with a Jewish population of only around 400 persons? It would not have been surprising at all if it had appeared in Berlin, Kraków, Budapest or Vienna. But why did it materialize in Gothenburg, of all places? It was my hypothesis that the specific political and cultural climate of the city on the Swedish west coast – which traditionally is depicted as markedly liberal and tolerant – was an important factor. But in order to test this presumption, I had to study and analyze these conditions in detail. This of course entailed a considerable amount of biographic and historical research in order to clarify the relationships between the personalities directly or indirectly involved in the production process of Abraham Baer’s book. However, this contextual approach also entailed an analytical reading of the text itself, of Baer’s *Baal t’fillah*. What kind of work is it actually? How does it relate to other documentations of Jewish liturgy – and to nineteenth-century music documentation and historicism generally? How should it be understood against the background of general European nineteenth-century culture?

Have I been able to find answers to my basic research question? Have my hypoth-

eses been confirmed? The answer is yes and no. It lies within the nature of this kind of research process that the gradual increase of data leads to new combinations and continuously reformulated hypotheses. The picture grows more and more complex and more ambiguous the deeper you dig. It remains true that the conditions in Gothenburg certainly were important for the creation of Abraham Baer's magnum opus. However, the nature of the relationship between text and context appeared to be much more subtle, complex, and full of contradictions than expected. The book that I ultimately wrote emerged as a set of semi-independent essays on different aspects of nineteenth-century Jewish history, as well as Gothenburg's role in that history and on the interaction between Jewish and Swedish culture in the era of national liberalism. Baer offered me the key to the Synagogue on Stora Nygatan, and upon entering I realized that it was in fact larger inside than outside. I found an immensely interesting group of people sitting on the nineteenth-century benches – discussing, writing, reading, singing. There were many voices, many opinions. I decided to remain there for a while, listening to their discussions, and soon my perspective widened from the local to the European cultural arena.

History and Humanity

Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Reform

Frankfurt am Main is a crossroads of Europe, both historically and culturally. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the city was marked by its strange anachronisms. Different, and very contrasting, eras seemed to be living side by side. The middle ages were not only outwardly present in the facades around Römerberg square and in the partial fortifications still standing; in some aspects of religious and social life they lasted until 1806. But parallel to this anachronism, the city was an early center of the German Enlightenment as well as for its antithesis, romanticism. Jewish life in Frankfurt was restricted to the *Judengasse*, the ghetto along the city wall, and it was strictly regulated by the harsh *Frankfurter Stättigkeit* or *Judenordnung*, which had been formulated by the Christian authorities in 1616. It was only Bonaparte's occupation of Germany that made a change in the Jewish situation possible. The French administration transferred the city authority to Karl von Dalberg, the enlightened *Kurfürst* of Mainz, who immediately gave the Jews the right to settle in other parts of the city. Almost eight hundred years of religiously motivated discrimination seemed to fade away in the aftermath of the French revolution.

Abraham Geiger, who would come to play a decisive role in the development of liberal Judaism, was born in 1810 in a very traditional Jewish milieu in Frankfurt.² His father, Michal Lazarus Geiger (1757–1823) was a *Vorsänger* (cantor) and a *dayan* (judge at the Jewish rabbinic court) and a theologically learned and *weltabgewandter* (“unworldly”) Jew. The German family name (“Fiddler”) suggests a traditional background of musical professionalism in the family. The boy started his study with Torah reading at the age of three. At four, he entered the Mishnah; the art of Hebrew calligraphy he learned at six, and in the same year his father started to introduce him to the Talmud. After that, he had to spend two rather unproductive years in a traditional Jewish children's school, a *heder*, where he is reported to have been mobbed by his schoolmates because of his too prominent learning. At the age



Abraham Geiger (1810–1874)

of eight, he started formal Talmud study with his father. Michal Lazarus was a feeble and sickly person who died when Abraham, his youngest son, was only thirteen. Therefore, the elder brother, Salomon (1792–1878), who was eighteen years older and would later become a well-known orthodox scholar, was partly responsible for Abraham's Jewish education.

Roots of Urbanism

Napoleon Bonaparte's short-lived project to forcibly unite Europe under the banner of a French empire was a misguided effort to centralize an entity that already existed, however not as a state or a united polity, but as a cultural and economic network. Since the high Middle Ages an urban archipelago had spread over the continent, from northern Spain to the gulf of Finland, from Scotland to Transylvania; an archipelago of towns and cities, connected by roads, sea-routes, kinship ties, literacy and legal codes. This process started in the Carolingian era. Charlemagne and his advisers wanted to overcome the cultural and economic isolation and backwardness of western Christianity in relation to the eastern Mediterranean area, where the Islamic Caliphate had emerged as a cultural and economic super-power. In this effort to revive long-distance trade and to reconnect with the Mediterranean world, there was an urgent need for language skills and intercultural competence. It was only natural that the Franks connected to and made use of networks that already existed in the area, particularly the Jewish Diaspora. With its strong nucleus in Mesopotamia, where Talmudic scholarship had reached its apex shortly before the rise of Islam, and with important branches in Italy and Spain, Jewish culture functioned as a bridge between a prospering Middle East and an emerging western, Christian civilization. It is significant that Charlemagne entrusted Jewish negotiators and interpreters with important tasks in the diplomatic mission that he sent to the Caliph Harun al Rashid in Baghdad after having been crowned Roman emperor. So in fact, Jewish scribes worded much of the intermediary diplomatic correspondence in Hebrew or Arabic along the routes between Islamic centers and Western Europe during this era.

This urgent need for urban skills and expertise was a draw for Jewish re-settlement in the areas that were to become the German medieval empire. In the Roman

cities along the Rhine, there had been Jewish communities, but these presumably vanished with the dissolution of Roman urban life. In the new German “Roman” empire proclaimed by Otto I, in 962, urbanism had to be re-started. In the network of imperial cities that was created, the Jewish component was conspicuous. Development of the Jewish communities simply was a means to broader urbanization. The promotion of urban German settlements in East and Central Europe and Scandinavia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is a more recent parallel to this kind of development policy, which of course was based on a mutually beneficial collaboration with groups that acted, in a way, as urbanization contractors.³

It is significant that European urban culture, right from its beginnings, has been characterized by the co-existence of two religious traditions and identities, two branches of the monotheistic tree; Judaism and Christianity. Until the end of the eleventh century this coexistence was relatively unproblematic, and in the Germanic-speaking lands it led to the development and flourishing of the specific Jewish culture that was to be called *Ashkenazic* (German), with its specific form of medieval German language, which later developed into Yiddish. This relatively tolerant situation however vanished during the era of the crusades, when the Jewish communities became hostages at the mercy of various Christian potentates, who, in a mafia-like fashion, might offer them “protection” but also would tax them uninhibitedly and arbitrarily – or surrender them to the mob. Late medieval, gentile policies concerning Jewish Europeans appear to have been calculated on a slide rule of horror. The field of economic and societal activity allowed to Jews was gradually restricted because of the emergence and expansion of the guild system, which excluded non-Christians, and by the Jews’ loss of the right to own land. The deteriorating situation in Western Europe triggered the eastward emigration that was to make the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth the center of Ashkenazic Jewry.

The out-definition and stigmatization of the Jewish population was linked to the growing centralization and dogmatization of the Roman church. To the church, Judaism’s rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, and of Christian dogmas like the Trinity concept, made the sheer presence of Jews in Christian society an anomaly. The Jews simply were lost souls and enemies of the Church, and their abominable social predicament was seen as God’s appropriate punishment, a punishment that must be

upheld in order to demonstrate or illustrate the proper lot of unbelievers. The Jews were accepted only as involuntary actors in a Christian dramaturgy. This massive and centralized theological effort resulted in an anti-Jewish folklore, a widespread and ghastly altercasting that became a deeply rooted tradition even in parts of Europe where there was no Jewish population at all.

In a way, one can argue that it was Judaism's non-hierarchic tradition and the flexible network character of Jewish diasporic society that made its survival in an increasingly hostile Christian Europe possible. After the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE there was no single or absolute center of Jewish authority, and even if the Mesopotamian Talmud became a generally accepted conceptual framework for Jewish learning and jurisprudence, interpretation and re-interpretation of sources and texts became the core of the tradition, not dogmas and hierarchy. Each congregation (*kehilah*) was an independent, self-governing unit, actually an association of laymen, which appointed certain specialists, like rabbis and cantors. Judaism can be described as a *hermeneutic community*, a network of readers, writers and speakers, who are held together by the shared possession of canonized but not petrified texts. Likewise, the classical Jewish diasporic society was a non-hierarchic network of communities, families and individuals.

In early imperial Germany, it was the cities along the Rhine – Mainz, Worms, Speyer, and Cologne, which became the major centers of Jewish culture. Here the Jews actually belonged to the original core of the urban population. Frankfurt rose to European significance only somewhat later, during the Hohenstaufen dynasty, and its Jewish quarters soon were affected by the marginalization strategies characteristic of the late medieval period. In 1462 the city council forced the eleven existing Jewish families to move from their traditional settlement in the neighborhood of the cathedral to an area just outside the city wall, close to their cemetery. The measure was motivated by the Jew's "disturbance" of the Christian Sunday's rest and by their alleged profanation of Christian processions. The *Judenstadt* or *Judengasse* prospered from Frankfurt's rise to an important economic and cultural center, but the narrow strip of land along the curved wall soon became an overcrowded ghetto with high, narrow, and protruding half-timbered houses leaning against each other. During a period of social unrest at the beginning of the seventeenth century, part of

the Frankfurt petty bourgeoisie revolted against the city council and the patricians, and in wake of this conflict the ghetto was plundered by a mob, and its population driven out of the city. Two years later the Jews were allowed to return with the consent of the emperor, but now the harsh *Judenordnung* was imposed that would restrict Jewish life for two hundred years to come.⁴

The emperor's decision to allow the return of the Frankfurt Jews was not motivated by any humanistic or philanthropic feelings. To the German emperors, the Jews simply were an asset, a community of unbelievers that just because of their position as powerless outsiders could be treated completely arbitrarily. The relationship, dictated from above, can be summarized in the following way: "We offer you reasonably secure conditions in the *Judengasse*, but as service in return you must give us access to your networks in order to facilitate our economic transactions, and if our business fails, you will bear the responsibility and take the blame." Seventeenth-century Europe still had no corporate banking system in the modern sense. The credits necessary for war efforts and infrastructural modernizations of the emerging territorial states had to be procured from private financiers who depended on their personal goodwill and contacts. In fact, most financiers were non-Jewish, but Jewish bankers were regarded as especially useful just because of their predicament of total dependence on the mercy of those in political power. They actually had to pay for their right to exist. In a peculiar way, they were also seen as representatives of their whole ethno-religious community. "The Jews" had to deliver ... This bordered of course on sheer blackmail and extortion. When the Habsburg emperor, Charles VI, was in need of ample funds for financing the Spanish war of succession in the early years of the eighteenth century, he demanded a credit of 100,000 thalers from the Jews of Frankfurt. When the community was not capable of bringing forth this vast sum of money, the imperial clerks closed the synagogue and the ritual premises, but in the end they had to realize that the Frankfurt community in fact was totally broke.

For the Jewish population, the establishment of enclosed Jewish quarters (the phenomenon that during the eighteenth century became known as "ghettos", originally referring to a district of Venice that was set off for Jewish settlement) was not a totally negative thing, with the experience of mob riots and plundering in

fresh memory. The *Judengasse* in Frankfurt was walled off from the rest of the city, its gates were closed at night, and there were guards that saw to the security of the inhabitants. On the other hand, the Jews' access to the Christian city was severely restricted, both physically and symbolically. The wearing of a Jewish mark on the clothing was prescribed until 1728, and the Church authorities saw to it that the contact between Christians and Jews was minimized. The exclusion of Jews from most trades organized within the guild system resulted in a peculiar and polarized social structure in the ghetto. A gulf opened between an increasingly impoverished mass of ordinary Jews trying to make a living in the trades that were required internally, within the Jewish community, and the thin stratum of wealthy Jewish financiers. Middle class culture was not a prominent feature of the *Judengasse*. It is estimated that in 1750, before the onset of the emancipation process, there were about 60,000 Jews in the German states – all of them living under these extremely circumscribed conditions.⁵

In all this misery, there was one thing that definitely was not jeopardized or put into question – Jewish identity. From both sides of the theologically defined borderline that divided Europe into a Christian majority and a Jewish minority, the efforts to uphold the distinction were scrupulous. It had certainly become very difficult to *be* a Jew, but it was not difficult to know *who* was a Jew. Pre-modern European states differed greatly in their political and economic organization, but with their more or less feudal systems of estates, guilds and corporations, they were all strictly regulated, collectivistic societies, where the hierarchical distinctions between different social groups and collectives were upheld with the outmost precision and scrupulousness. An intellectual movement that became increasingly influential and powerful during the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment, however challenged these often painful but conceptually clear-cut discriminatory divisions and regulations.

Vibrations of a New Era

In 1910, historian Ludwig Geiger published a biographic anthology about his father, a book that provides many interesting details and insights into the complicated process of reform, renewal and reassessment that characterizes Jewish nineteenth-century history (*Abraham Geiger, Leben und Lebenswerk*). Until his twelfth year, Abraham

Geiger's contact with non-theological or secular literature was restricted to tales in the Yiddish language. German literature, which flourished in Frankfurt, was completely unknown to young Abraham. Of course, the parents recognized quite early the unusual intellectual gifts of the boy and decided to supplement his Jewish learning with a modest dose of modern, gentile education. Beginning in 1804, there was a secular Jewish *Elementarschule* in Frankfurt. But it was out of question for the parents to place Abraham in such a reformist or even secularist environment, where the religious service was read in the German language – and on Sundays! So instead, the boy had private teachers in Latin, Greek, and German writing. On his thirteenth birthday, he proudly gave a discourse on ethical issues in High German, to the family circle. It is somewhat characteristic of the spirit of those years that the German oration had to be preceded by a *derashah*, a traditional Jewish sermon, and that the pious listeners covered their faces out of shamefulness during the German performance.

The episode illustrates the deep cleavage in the Jewish community between traditionalists and Enlightenment-oriented modernists. In an autobiographical text, Geiger gives a vivid sketch of the conditions of the first decades of the century.

In my home city, there was a strangely harsh antagonism between those who were moved by the vibrations of the new era and wanted to absorb its ideas, and the others, who clung to out-dated opinions and institutions. This rift was so wide, that the community in reality was split in two. Both fractions followed their own agenda, without bothering about the others, even if the ties of the congregation [*Gemeinde*] still tightly knit them to each other. There were such cleavages in most big congregations. The urge to revive the community as a whole had faded away, partly as a result of pressure from above; however, the conservatives did not have the power or courage to fight back, even if they did not give up a single inch. Generally, the traditional habits were not sufficiently disturbed to trigger a fight.

...Laissez-faire was the slogan of the period. On the traditionalist side, participation in the historic movement was seen as impossible, even horrifying. Nothing can be done with old-fashioned orthodoxy, it was maintained,

it must and will perish. To tackle it would not only trigger a struggle (which, feeling their power they were not afraid of), it would also bring unseemly matters into circulation and would therefore be damaging. The adolescent was not stimulated to reach an inner decision; he was tuned to the opinions of his different environments. It was only by his own introspection and *Selbstvertiefung* that he could overcome the crude one-sidedness that prevailed in both camps.⁶

In this way, Geiger depicts the environment in which he received his first religious influences. From his diary, it can be concluded that it was not easy for him to overcome the one-sidedness.⁷ It took some painful efforts until the flame of the Enlightenment, *die Flamme der Aufklärung*, had consumed all the husks. As a typical proselyte of the Enlightenment, he becomes a critic of the Talmud. Until now, traditional Jewish learning had been his single frame of reference, but the reading of Becker's *Handbuch der Weltgeschichte*, a German historical standard work, shattered this self-contained world-view. The comparison of Roman and Greek culture with Judaism inspired some doubts about the universal validity of the Talmud, and these relativistic thoughts were confirmed by discussions in his circle of friends. Among these can be mentioned Ignaz Ellissen, who became a well-reputed lawyer in Frankfurt, and Ludwig Braunfels, a relative of Geiger's who, after visiting the Jewish *Elementarschule* and *Gymnasium*, studied philology and philosophy in Heidelberg and became a publicist and translator. An important personal example for Geiger was his close friend M. A. Stern, who had a similar conservative family background but broke away from theology and decided to study modern mathematics.

Among those who inspired Geiger in Frankfurt, Ludwig Geiger also mentions a person of an older generation, the printer and scholar Wolf Heidenheim (1757–1832). At his office in Rödelheim, Heidenheim printed exquisite prayer-book and Torah editions. With his combination of learning, artistic printer's skill and entrepreneurship, he opened Geiger's eyes for *die Dinge der Welt*, the practicalities of life.

In April 1829, at the age of nineteen, Geiger registered at the University of Heidelberg. Now, for the first time, he visited a public, gentile institution of learning.

He had no school exams, but was accepted on the basis of his private teacher's references. The transition from private Jewish to public academic studies did not take place without struggle. His brother Salomon detested the university, which he regarded as a secular and Christian institution. He and the rest of the family had foreseen a rabbinic career for Abraham and expected him to enter a *yeshiva*. But he managed to get his own way. How this actually became possible is not fully clear, but Ludwig Geiger supposes that some of the enlightened patrons of Jewish Frankfurt may have supported the talented young man, both morally and financially.

In Heidelberg he studied *Orientalia* (i.e. Arabic, Hebrew and other Semitic languages) and Greek, but parallel to these academic activities he continued his Talmudic studies, and he started a Mishnah commentary, which however remained unfinished. Apparently dissatisfied with the level of oriental studies at Heidelberg, he switched to Bonn University in October, and here he found an inspiring intellectual and social environment. It was in Bonn that Geiger decided *für die Juden zu wirken*, to devote himself to the cause of the Jews. And it became clear to him that he should do this as a theologian, a plan that put classical, humanistic scholarship in the foreground, especially philological work. This calling was inspired no less by the circle of fellow Jewish students he met in Bonn, people like Samson Raphael Hirsch, who later became the founder of the neo-orthodox movement in Germany, the Arabic scholar L. Ullman, who among other things translated the Quran into German, and Salomon Frensdorff, who became the principal at a teacher's seminary in Hannover. Among the university professors, it was especially the excellent Arabic scholar Georg Freytag who made a lasting impression.

Geiger concluded his studies in Bonn in 1832, writing a dissertation for a *Preisfrage* competition organized by Freytag. Its subject was *What Did Mohammad Borrow from Judaism?* Geiger's contribution was rewarded with the first prize; in the following year, it was published in a printed edition.⁸ It was those years in Bonn that gave Geiger's life the direction it would follow for the rest of his days. His religious skepticism vanished, and the optimistic outlook was strengthened, not the least by his contact with the family of the merchant Seligman Oppenheim. In 1840 one of Oppenheim's daughters, Emilie, would become his wife.⁹

In Bonn, Geiger took no formal exam, but shortly after concluding his studies he

obtained a rabbi's diploma from the Rabbi Moses Salomon Gosen in Marburg. As a Jew in early nineteenth century Germany he would hardly have had the opportunity to obtain a university position, so a career as a rabbi was quite natural for a person with his inclinations and erudition. After all, it was his aim to fuse gentile academic learning with Jewish intellectual tradition, so his choice of the rabbi's role was part of the program. Moreover, a few years later, in 1834, he documented his university qualifications by obtaining a doctorate at Marburg University. However, upon leaving Bonn, he then had to find a job.

First, he applied for a position at Hanau, a town near Frankfurt. Here he was rejected for being *zu wenig fromm*, "not pious enough," but this was actually a relief to him since the old-fashioned atmosphere of the congregation was not very attractive. However, he also had applied for a position in Wiesbaden, and there his trial sermon was a success, at least among the intellectuals of the congregation. In October 1832, Geiger signed a contract and moved into the rabbi's quarters in the little capital of the duchy of Nassau. Initially he seems to have been rather satisfied with the circumstances in Wiesbaden, but quite soon he realized that there was a wide gulf between the Jews in the city of Wiesbaden and those of the outlying small, village synagogues, which were part of the *Gemeinde* organization introduced by the duchy administration. According to Geiger, a wholly united and integrated congregation would be favorable for all Jews of the duchy, a reform that would require that he be given the title and authority of a *Landesrabbiner*. When Geiger formally applied for this, some members of the small congregations opposed his policy and wrote to the *Landesregierung*, the local state administration, declaring their general dissatisfaction with the rabbi. The maintained that Geiger did not have the necessary theological knowledge, his rabbinical diploma was questionable, and that within his writings he was advocating the "eradication of traditional Judaism." He did not even properly observe the Sabbath, they concluded.

These petty and incorrect allegations apparently mirror the prejudiced reactions of some of the conservative village Jews concerning Geiger's very modest synagogue regulations, which he introduced in 1836. It is obvious that already in 1835, he had felt the urge to look for alternatives to the Wiesbaden position. Hearing from a Hannover colleague that the Jews of Gothenburg were looking for a rabbi, he sent

a letter to the board of the congregation, presenting himself and his scholarly and rabbinic qualifications.¹⁰ However, nothing materialized from this effort; after all, Geiger was only 25 and not yet an important figure in the world of Jewish learning. Nevertheless, in this way a connection was established that facilitated the influx of Geiger's ideas into the intellectual climate of Gothenburg.

The Landesregierung in Nassau was somewhat confused by the infighting of the congregation and decided to reject Geiger's *Landesrabbiner* application. In the summer of 1838, he decided to give up the seemingly hopeless struggle and gave his notice. In July, he left Wiesbaden for Frankfurt, but after just a few days in his home city, he was invited to give a trial sermon in Breslau, where the Jewish community was looking for a *Gemeindeführer*, a reformist preacher for the synagogue. Geiger had not seen the advertisement, but some of the progressive members of the congregation invited him. He packed his belongings and traveled to Breslau, the capital of Silesia. On July 21st he gave his sermon, which made a deep impression on the audience. Only four days later he was elected *Rabbinatsassessor* and assistant rabbi. However, he now became entangled in a new and even tougher fight with a conservative coterie, which – under the leadership of the reactionary Rabbi Salomon A. Tiktin – strove by all methods to have the decision of the board annulled. The conflict, which played out both on religious and political levels, lasted until the end of 1839. Waiting for things to settle, Geiger had to stay for more than a year in Berlin under financially quite severe circumstances and it was only in January 1840 that he finally could take up his position in Breslau. Here he had reached a reasonably solid platform for his scholarly and reformatory activities, even if the conflict with the bothersome conservative faction continued into the 1850s.

Confusion and Anomie

I have written rather extensively on the conflicts surrounding Geiger's early appointments because they illustrate the confusion and difficulties of an early nineteenth-century Jewish society in transition. In his wonderful little book about the history of the German Jews, Ismar Elbogen writes a telling paragraph on the contradictions and antagonisms of the era:

Did these far-reaching changes harmonize with traditional Judaism? It was here, in the spiritual realm that the real problems appeared, because here there were not only a few practical consequences of the legislation of the government that were at stake, but the very preservation of the substance of Jewishness. Since the destruction of the Temple, Judaism had not experienced such a revolution. The ghetto was narrow and secluded, but it also was the locus of a communal feeling of solidarity and a coherent *Weltanschauung*. Its walls offered a shielding, a protection against alien influences. Now the barriers were lifted; the shielded ghetto inhabitant suddenly was exposed to all kinds of influences from the outside world. The more he became integrated into this foreign world, the more he was assailed by foreign patterns of thought. The obligations of a citizen, the changes in the world picture, the demands of economy and society – these were all new and difficult problems. The traditional believer was not bothered, of course, he felt secure in his inherited religion. But through his children he experienced that every step outside the familiar environs deeply shattered their Jewish faith.

During the centuries of seclusion, Jewish faith was not something that could be learned. It was simply a matter of course; it was not studied, but experienced, and it was expressed in the thousands of obligations of everyday life. Loyalty of the fulfillment of duty, the readiness for martyrdom, had its footing in a solid belief in God, and in the steadfast messianic confidence. This sanctuary of the Jewish soul was inaccessible to the outsider. The Christian, political argumentation dinned into the heads of the Jews that Judaism was no religion, that it was only a collection of empty ceremonies aiming at the upholding of national separateness. And, many of them willingly accepted this, since to them the whole Jewish tradition appeared to be just an obstacle in their lives and careers. They seemed to have been inebriated by the drive to be fully compensated for what the world owed them. To them, as to all their contemporaries, happiness was the happiness of the individual; their desire for the modern was stronger than their longing for the eternal. Who could have given them guidance? The old rabbis lived in another world, spoke a foreign language, and to the young generation

they had the air of *Kauscherwächter*, Kosher inspectors, (as one of the elders of the Berlin congregation explained his function to a government inquiry), that is, as overseers of ritual regulations, not as teachers of the congregation! What shining examples could have been found among such people! Think of a scholar like Akiba Eger, the celebrated rabbi of Märkisch Friedland and later of Posen. He lived like a saint, and through his humanity and untiring helpfulness, he gained the admiration even of his opponents. However, like all the rabbis of the era, he was encapsulated in the past, without the slightest understanding of contemporary conditions. How could they be leaders, when they answered the questions of today with the precepts of yesterday? The present did not consider the eternity of the past. The new generation however was lacking energy, warmth and sincerity; it did not have the profundity that was necessary for a proper understanding of the true substance and worth of Judaism. Dazzled by novelty, it overlooked the brilliance of its own heritage. Also, there were no responsible institutions ... which could take care of the educational effort. The old congregations were destroyed; their successors had not yet been founded, and those who concerned themselves with the continuation of the religious traditions existed in only loose formations.¹¹

Elbogen illustrates the loss of identity and even anomie that seemed to be the outcome of the emancipation process that had started in the wake of the Enlightenment and the French revolution. Considerable segments of the Jewish population were losing contact with Jewish traditions and social networks, only to find that being a secularized and/or converted Jew in the eyes of many a Teutonic-minded national activist was an even larger stigma than traditional Jewishness. The reorganization of the German Jewish community as a whole, and the formulation of a Jewish identity that would be compatible with modern civil society – the *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* advocated by the national liberals of 1848 – that was to be the task of the Jewish reform. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the regimes of the various German states had “kidnapped” the traditional Jewish *kehilah* organization and transformed it into a means for political, religious and economic supervision of their Jewish subjects. The appointment of *Landesrabbiner* (officially recognized

heads of Jewish communities in principalities, provinces or districts) was in the hands of the Christian governments, which regarded the Jewish communities primarily as taxation objects. The administrators' primary interest was the smooth and unproblematic functioning of this "rational" system, and they often were skeptical of what they understood as the "sectarianism" of the Jewish reformers, and consequently felt more comfortable with the compliant traditionalists.

Installed in Breslau, Geiger displayed an untiring activity, both in the scholarly and the organizational fields. During the 1840s, he took part in three *Rabbinerversammlungen*, rabbis' conferences (Braunschweig 1844, Frankfurt 1845, Breslau 1846), which represented a new type of interaction between Jewish leaders and communities. The 1846 conference was organized by Geiger himself, who now had acquired a certain fame as one of the most eloquent advocates of moderate reform. When in the same year the *Kommerzienrat* Jonas Fränckel donated funds for the creation of a Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau, Geiger was seen by many as the natural candidate for the director's post. However, when the institution opened in 1853, the job was given to Zacharias Frankel, who represented a competing, but somewhat more conservative viewpoint. It was not until 1872 that Geiger would be able to channel his scholarly and pedagogical ideas into a Jewish teaching institution, the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*.¹² After the death of his beloved wife in 1860, Geiger broke off his twenty-three years in Breslau, assuming the rabbinate of the *Hauptsynagoge* in his home city of Frankfurt. However, in 1869 the board of the expansive Berlin congregation decided to appoint a second progressive rabbi alongside the already functioning Joseph Aub and turned to Geiger, who now was the undisputed front figure of the liberal movement. Geiger accepted the appointment to Berlin under one proviso; that an institute for genuine Jewish *Wissenschaft* should be created and that he was to be engaged in the planning of its curriculum.

One of the central features of this Berlin *Hochschule* was its organization as a non-confessional scholarly institute. It was not just a seminary with the task of producing rabbis, cantors and teachers. In a way, it simply continued the multifarious activities that Geiger had engaged in since his Bonn years; the production of knowledge, insights and perspectives on Judaism and Jewish culture in past and present. Through his books, innumerable scientific and polemic articles, transla-

tions and – not least – through his sermons and public lectures, he already had become an institution of his own.

A Sozialphilosophie of Liberation

The new generation of academically educated rabbis, which was represented at the above-mentioned rabbis' conferences, was deeply inspired by the scholarly works of Leopold Zunz (1794–1886), who is regarded as the founder of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Books like his *Etwas über die Jüdische rabbinische Literatur* ("On Jewish Rabbinic Literature") and *Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* ("The Liturgical Performances of the Jews") inspired an enthusiasm for the rich and multifaceted Jewish literary tradition, and for a modern historic perspective. The prominent modern Jewish theologians in Germany who now stepped forward leaned heavily on this fundamental scholarship.¹³ Samson Raphael Hirsch and Abraham Geiger had been student colleagues in Bonn, and both of them having experienced the misery of the age, made it their mission to combat it. They had a common point of departure and a similar objective, but their methods and ultimate goals diverged greatly.

Hirsch became the founder of neo-orthodoxy; in his view, traditional ritual observance was not necessarily incompatible with the engagement in modern society. His answer to the challenge of emancipation was an urge to be more Jewish than ever, to accept and revive the whole historical baggage as a living presence in the modern world. Geiger also was a historicist, but in a totally different way. To him, Judaism had a universalistic core of ideas that could be separated from the historically accrued forms of religious practice. He strove to bring forward the tradition of the prophets. Their spiritual and ethical teachings should be placed in the foreground, whereas the ritualistic and aesthetic side of religion – seen as a cultural heritage – should be recreated and adapted to contemporary requirements. This program was not confined to superficial details; he asked for a fundamental remake of the Jewish habitus and world-view. The Reform, he said, means "a new Gestalt, a rejuvenated life, a spiritually permeated form. The serious and heavy as well as the light, the totality as well as the singular – all must have purpose and meaning, must raise the spirit and warm the hearts, so that it may influence the whole life."¹⁴

In all his reformist enthusiasm, Geiger was no revolutionary; his reform was based on historical research, on his *historisch-kritische* method; a rationalism that did not refute revelation, but saw it as its mission to interpret it in the light of modern science and contemporary social conditions. The Torah, the Talmud, all the rich Jewish theological and philosophic literature, must be studied as historical sources, as documents that can be scrutinized and analyzed according to scholarly and scientific standards. In the twenty-first century, this might sound trivial and hardly challenging, but we have to remember that during the early nineteenth century, academic research on religion still was a branch of Christian theology, an aid of exegesis. The comparative, historical and anthropological study of religions was made possible only by the gradual secularization of the universities in the course of the century. That is why persons such as Hirsch and Geiger, as well as many other Jewish scholars of the era, started as philologists and “orientalists” (the actual content of “Oriental” studies could vary between different universities, but it was a primarily linguistic discipline), specializing in Semitic languages. In this environment, they could study the classical Jewish languages like Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic from a Gentile, “outside” perspective. From their Jewish background and education, they brought a traditional Hebrew competence, a firm overview of the biblical and Talmudic corpus of texts, and the scholastic Jewish tradition of textual interpretation. It was from this fruitful fusion that liberal Judaism emerged, and it soon became a cultural movement of general significance, with important reverberations far outside the Jewish context, in that its congregations and synagogues was the backdrop and nursery for many important European scientists and intellectuals.

Geiger’s viewpoint, that the rejuvenation and modernization of Judaism and Jewish community life should be based on the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, on the judgment and engagement of this new type of Jewish scholar, gave his liberal Judaism a certain intellectual and elitist flavor. Some critics maintained that it put high expectations on the ordinary Jews without asking for their opinions. The reform ideas of Zacharias Frankel, who became the director of the Breslau seminary, was in many ways similar to Geiger’s, but Frankel stressed a “grassroots” perspective. The ordinary congregation member, who simply wanted to live his Judaism in modern

society, should also be considered a kind of specialist, and his opinion and needs must, then, be considered. Frankel thought that historical research was fine, but it did not offer all the recipes needed for the future. In the United States, Frankel's ideas became the point of departure for the movement later known as Conservative Judaism, whereas Geiger's ideas became the basis for those congregations that label themselves liberal.

But then it should also be remembered that Geiger, during his whole career, was working as a rabbi, as the spiritual leader of Jewish communities. He certainly was a scholar, but he was also deeply involved in the day-to-day administration and in the life of his congregational members. It is no coincidence that figures like Ezra and Hillel seem to have been among his favorites in the Jewish intellectual history; prophets, scholars, and tribunes of the people in troubled times, who gained their authority not from their inherited social status, but from their high intellectual and moral standing.

In order to establish Jewish studies as a scholarly discipline on a professional level it was necessary to create modern public forums, independent of the traditional Jewish educational institutions. Here, the new Jewish periodicals were of utmost importance. Geiger contributed to several of them. In 1835, he personally founded the *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für Jüdische Theologie* (published until 1847–48), which brought him in closer contact with Zunz and other important scholars. Geiger's intense work with the epoch-making *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel* (1857) led him to begin the publication of another magazine, the *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben*, which came out in eleven volumes from 1862 to 1874.

Geiger also engaged in Jewish *Volksbildung*, the effort to raise the level of Jewish education and consciousness of the larger Jewish community. Here the publication of a series of public lectures given in Frankfurt am Main 1863–65 and in Berlin 1870–71 (*Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte*) played an important role, and the book was reprinted several times.¹⁵ These eloquent lectures contributed considerably to the spreading of Geiger's ideas in wider circles and to the establishment of liberal Judaism as a clearly distinguishable current.

The use of the term “liberal” in the designation of Geiger's movement as “liberal Judaism” is worth some consideration. I use the term here in its general

sense – broad-minded, free, and liberty-minded – and it is not automatically transferable into the political realm. It denotes the historicist, evolutionary standpoint of the Jewish reformers, as opposed to an “orthodox” and “fundamentalist” belief in eternally fixed notions, formulations, and regulations. This means that liberal Judaism also opposed the *radical* Reform movement (with its main focus in the Berlin *Reformgemeinde*), which advocated a total break with the traditional forms of worship and community life.

Performing Judaism: Liturgical Revisions

To the liberal reformers, the Hebrew legacy of devotional expression was a link to the venerable faith of the ancestors and an important uniting element of the Jewish Diaspora. Therefore, they also opposed the almost total abandonment of the sacred language in synagogue worship that was implemented by the *Reformgemeinde*. The most important prayer texts and the Torah should be read in Hebrew, but these pillars of the liturgy ought to be put in a vernacular framework.

It is obvious that there are some similarities here with the Christian, Protestant reformation that took place 300 years earlier. Ordinary member of the congregation should be enabled to take a personal, religious standpoint, and this required an access to, and understanding of, the sacred texts. In the Jewish as in the Christian context, this motivated the translation of the Bible, with Moses Mendelssohn's German Torah version as an important Jewish example. The protestant vernacularization of religious communication aimed at the clerical monopoly of exegesis and worship of the Roman church. In a similar fashion, the Jewish liturgical reform challenged the authority of rabbis and cantors, but here the parallel halts: post-temple Judaism already was a lay religion, with no sacerdotal, cultic prerogatives. The prayer leader was just a member of the *minyan*, taking the role of a *shali'ah tzibbur*, the spokesperson of the congregation.

Siddur means “order” or “sequence.” The term also denotes the collection of prayer texts and liturgical instructions that are used in the daily worship in the synagogues, the prayer book. (*Mahzor* is the equivalent term for collection of holiday service texts.) The elements of the *siddurim* evolved over a period of more than 2000 years, but it was only during the middle ages that they were collected

and reasonably standardized. In the course of the centuries, the basic benedictions, supplications and hymns were supplemented by a multitude of artful religious poems, *piyyutim*, which enriched the aesthetic aspects of cantorial expression. However, they also considerably lengthened the duration of the service and made the performative task of the prayer leader increasingly difficult and demanding. The *siddur* tradition that the early nineteenth-century Jewish reformers had to deal with was a complex and sometimes confusing amalgamation of ossified ritual formulae, sonorous song lines and religiously high-pitched praises and laments. A considerable portion of these texts referred to specific historical circumstances in their countries of origin. They therefore were hard to understand for the laymen, and not only for linguistic reasons. Geiger advocated a revision of the *siddur* on historical grounds. Such portions that had lost their original relevance and could be perceived as alien or even contradictory to the current needs and ideals of the congregation should be omitted. New prayers, which were composed in the vernacular but conformed to the ethos of Jewish worship, could be included. The Jewish tradition of religious service was seen as standing in a kind of dialectical relationship to the changeable, surrounding world. The upholding of the vitality of the Jewish identity therefore required a continuous interplay with, and adjustment to, the contemporary environment. This stance can be summarized by the phrase *continuity through change*.

Since there was no centralized authority within the Jewish reform movement, every congregation, every synagogue, had to deal with this problem individually. Under Geiger's guidance, his Breslau congregation in 1854 adopted a new prayer book (*Israelitisches Gebetbuch*¹⁶), carrying out his *Grundzüge und Plan zu einem Neuen Gebetbuche*, formulated in 1849.¹⁷ The Breslau *Gebetbuch* was scrutinized by many *Cultuscommissions* in the German-speaking congregations around Europe and partly used as a model for other reformed *siddurs*.

The Religion of Humanity

The prayer book revisions reflected a new interpretation of the relationship between *ethnos* and *ethos*, between the political and the religious aspects of the Jewish tradition. In Geiger's idealistic and evolutionistic narrative, history is purpose-driven – it

has a meaning and a direction. The purpose of Judaism is its universalistic mission; it had its heroic origins in the era of patriarchs and prophets, and the task of upholding the monotheistic message was imposed upon the Jewish people. Ancient Israel's statehood put this undertaking on a national, particularistic basis that made it possible to institutionalize its expressions, rituals, and scriptural traditions, but it was only the experience of the Diaspora that created the specific insights required for Judaism's sublimation of its ethical teaching and intellectual tradition. Out of the long, dark era of medieval intolerance came (according to Geiger) a Jewish religion, liberated by the triumph of reason over mysticism and ritualism.

During the long era of persecutions and powerlessness, it was natural that the Jewish people clung to their memory of a statehood linked to a national territory in *Eretz Israel*. The phrase that traditionally ends the Seder ritual, "Next year in Jerusalem", expresses this mechanism of self-defense and stubborn resistance in a hostile environment. But with the advent of modern civilization and the dismantling of the reactionary structures of ignorance and intolerance, Geiger argues that Jerusalem must be understood in a symbolic way. The triumph of reason and rationalism marks a messianic shift in history; *logos* ("reason", once described as the son of God by the Judeo-Hellenic philosophers of ancient Alexandria) walks on the earth and redemption is near at hand. Jerusalem is here and now, in Breslau, Frankfurt, Berlin, Paris, and perhaps even in Gothenburg. The particularistic, national aspect of Judaism therefore has lost its relevance.

In his *Das Judenthum und Seine Geschichte* Geiger tellingly concludes an introduction to a section on the period 1200–1800 in the following way:

Mankind still has great tasks, and likewise Judaism has the objective of rejuvenating and liberating itself, thereby participating in the universal rejuvenation and liberation process. Contemplating its historical path, Judaism realizes its inexhaustible strength and becomes conscious of itself and its mission: it wants to spur the feeling of pride in its obligation, and wants its vitality to prevail. It is encouraged to take an active role in the spiritual struggle that it still must endure, for the sake of itself and for the whole. The Jewish community increasingly engages in its own situation, both in the past and the present.

Consoled, we now will wander through the six centuries that make up the preparation for our present conditions. This journey will certainly take us through some spiritual deserts, but it also contains a warrant for entrance into the Promised Land, a confidence in the fulfillment of the great message that Judaism brought into the world, the preaching of a spiritually liberated and united humanity.¹⁸

And in another section of the same book:

The city of Jerusalem is a venerable memory of the past; it is the cradle of religion. However, it is not the hope of the future, and it is not the place from which a new life will emerge. On entering a new commission after a long and eventful career, a well-informed diplomat once said: My head is so full of old traditions that I will not be able to engage in the new currents. The giants of antiquity, the cities that once served high purposes but gradually sank into insignificance, speak a similar language. Hellenism no longer subsists on its original soil. Athens never again will be the center of universal knowledge. Rome still is shining with the monuments of its imperial era; its churches and basilicas still claim to be recognized as the center of medieval Christianity. This is the reason why it never will become the sound capital of a new state. This is also the case with Jerusalem. Let us honor its past; but we should not nourish the hope that it would provide for our future. We do not want to live in a city on the mercy of divine election; we want to contribute to a city where human activity unfolds under God's protection. We do not want to live among the ruins of an ancient era, even if it is venerable enough. No, we want to lay the foundations for a robust future. Honor Jerusalem and its memory, as one does for every deceased great personality, but let us not disturb its rest.¹⁹

The Jewish people, as an ethnic community, as a nation in the eighteenth-century sense, was urged to voluntarily step down from its protective barricades of the supervision of identity and cultural distinctiveness. In the name of progress, it should transpose itself from a political body, from a transpiring and noisy physical

collective into an association of well-shaven and unobtrusive individual citizens, from a tribe into an association, from a *Gemeinschaft* into a *Gesellschaft*. By giving up its corporeality, it was supposed to deliver its spirituality to humanity.

This might seem odd and inexcusably naive, or even incomprehensible in the light of twentieth-century Jewish history. But we have to remind ourselves that Geiger, and his generation of Jewish reformists, were formed intellectually by an unshaken belief in progress, founded on the ineffaceable experience of enlightenment and liberation. Any reversion back into the folds of imperial serfs and *Schützjuden* was inconceivable, and everything seemed to confirm this confidence in the gradual perfection of society. Geiger had not seen the rise of modern racism and anti-Semitism, and his early death in 1874 spared him this experience. That a movement like National Socialism ever would be able to attract the educated German masses would have been totally inconceivable.

I would like to quote another paragraph from *Das Judenthum und Seine Geschichte* that clearly reverberates of Geiger's messianic universalism:

Vivified by the spirit of liberation, permeated by a science that both widens and deepens the perspective, contemporary Judaism will become increasingly conscious of its mission and will strive for its realization. This is a task that corresponds to all serious, contemporary aspirations, but it also has deep roots in its Judaism's own fundamental disposition, *that it will be the religion of humanity [Menschheit]. Only a religion that is reconciled with the freedom of thought has its justification, as well as its guarantee of persistence.* Every religion that opposes the rights of the spirit will be crushed under the wheels of time. And furthermore: there is no future for a religion that confines itself to a narrow circle, that contracts into a cell and differentiates itself from the rest of mankind, as if this would be a soulless or foreign body, and confines itself to its own little concerns. *Only a religion that sees it as its mission to offer its bounties to the whole of humanity and therefore presents itself in a universally accessible form can be confident of its future.* Judaism must remind itself, that it has been called to strive for the aim – even if this cannot be achieved by us alone – *that God is recognized as the one and only, and that his name is one.*²⁰

Here Geiger simply and tellingly concludes the paragraph with an allusion to the *Shema Yisrael*, the Torah's fundamental formula of Jewish monotheism.

A German-Jewish Kulturnation?

The relinquishment of Judaism's national aspirations must be seen in the context of the upsurge of national movements that characterized Europe's nineteenth century. In the *Vormärz* period, the era between the Vienna congress of 1815 and the March revolutions of 1848, nationalism was primarily a progressive and even revolutionary political factor. Nationalists were opposing the traditions of feudal privilege, absolutist government and religious intolerance; *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, the slogan of the 1789 revolution, was the motto of many a central European nationalist. The civic integration of the national community was bound to replace the rigid and unjust segmentation of society brought about by *l'ancien regime*.

Judaism and the Jews of Europe had to find their place in the emerging new pattern of identities. To the liberal Jewish reformers in Germany, the striving for a unified, constitutional and secular German state seemed inseparable from the democratic and egalitarian agenda. German *Bildung* and *Kultur* represented the achievement of humanism. It was only natural for Geiger and his sympathizers to offer the bounties of Judaism to this project of national liberation. In fact, Jewish liberals and democratic socialists were among the most ardent partisans of German unity.²¹ This was the case, since it had been the petty principalities of the feudally fragmented Reich that had marginalized and fettered the Jews. Certainly, there were some coarse Teutonic voices among the student's *Burschenschaften* choirs, but with the rule of law, *Bildung* and progress they certainly would be harmonized with Beethoven's and Schiller's *Götterfunken*, the godly spark of joyful liberty.

German political modernization was largely a Protestant affair. One would think that the open-mindedness of liberal Judaism would make it an ideal partner of rationalist, enlightened Lutheranism. However, the relationship between liberal Judaism and Protestant theology became a complicated one. The Lutheran Church had not given up its aim to proselytize among the Jews. According to the widespread idea of the "supersessionist" theology, Protestantism was the proper heir of the Hebrew, Mosaic tradition, and it was a matter of eschatological dimensions to

make the Jews realize this. An enlightened and liberal church would be attractive for modern Jews, it was thought, since it would give them the opportunity to free themselves from the “straitjacket” of halakhic rules and regulations, without being forced to leave the Mosaic tradition behind. Considerable effort was given to missionary activity among the Jewish population. Now the advocates of liberal Judaism proclaimed that the Halakhah must be interpreted as a sort of cultural heritage, that in a modern society it could not be binding in all its details. Suddenly it was perfectly viable to *remain* a Jew and enjoy all the fruits of modernization. Liberal Judaism, with its strong *Bildung* emphasis and universalistic appeal, even could appear as a dangerous cultural contender of liberal Protestantism. The internationally renowned Lutheran theologian Franz Delitzsch, who was an expert on Judaism and founded the *Institutum Judaicum* in Leipzig in 1886, was upset by Geiger’s realistic views on the historic Jesus (“Jesus was a Pharisee who walked in the footsteps of Hillel”) and regarded him and liberal Judaism as a major threat to Christianity, playing into the hands of secularization.²² Delitzsch’s attitude was somewhat ambiguous. He took a stand against the rise of vulgar anti-Semitism during the 1880s, but he also re-formulated and polished the old sinister idea that the Jewish people are collectively guilty of having killed Jesus!

This is not the place for a detailed account of the labyrinth of nineteenth-century German Protestant dealings with Judaism. This somber chapter in European religious history has been analyzed in a recent, excellent study by the Swedish scholar, Anders Gerdmar (2009). The more virulent phase of modern, Lutheran anti-Jewish propaganda came after Geiger’s era, when the anti-Semitic tendency of the *Kulturprotestantismus* was used as a means for political mass-mobilization, above all by the *Christlich-Soziale Arbeiterpartei*, founded in 1878 by the notorious Berlin preacher Adolf Stoecker (1835–1909). Stoecker and his sympathizers cherished the idea of a “Germanic Christianity” that was supposed to be essentially different from “Semitic Mosaism.”

Metropolitan Prayer

“The large building of the Neue Synagoge was filled to a capacity normally seen only on the High Holidays. The speaker talked for one and a half hour, with warmth



Neue Synagoge, Berlin. Oil painting by Emile de Cauwer, 1865.

and much eloquence. The impression was very favorable.” With these formulations, the reporter of the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* characterizes an event that took place on January 22, 1870 in the Neue Synagoge in Berlin – the installation sermon of rabbi Abraham Geiger.²³ “Crowded” here would have meant more than 3,000 people. This amazing building represents something totally different from the humble prayer-houses of traditional Judaism in Germany. It is a venue for a metropolitan mass audience; certainly a house of worship, but also a masterpiece of art and architecture. All the surprising innovations and experiences of nineteenth-century technology and aesthetics here have been combined into a joyful fusion of past and present. In the heart of Prussia the tale of *al-Andalus* is chanted, a story about a pluralist past in the most occidental part of the Orient, medieval Muslim-ruled Spain – Jewish culture as a bridge between east and west in a tolerant multi-faith environment. Scholars like Geiger saw Sephardic culture as a golden age of Judaism, with personalities like the philosopher Maimonides and the poet Jehudah ha-Levi representing the peak of intellectual and artistic achievement.

The architect Eduard Knoblauch did not just copy the palaces, mosques and synagogues of Andalucía. He created a very special synthesis of stylistic elements that only partly were taken from the storehouse of architectural history. This is not eclecticism; it is rather a kind of futurism. Entirely new combinations, rich with textures, ornaments and colors never before experienced on the banks of the Spree, a fantasy bordering on the fantastic. An aesthetic accomplishment based on a peculiar and sensitive equilibrium between the traditions of German *Handwerk* and the innovative solutions of modern engineering; a showing-off of the new possibilities and perspectives offered by the command of history and technology. It blended imagination and invention, precision and practicality, solemnity and spirituality, beauty and bounty in the here and now.

One enters from Oranienburger Strasse through three horseshoe arches; seeing the exquisitely decorated polychrome brick facade glittering in filigree style, one comes to the vestibule’s rotunda. A flight of stairs leads to the men’s vestibule and the impressive *Vorsynagoge* hall. It is only now, after passing through rather narrow spaces that you reach the synagogue proper, and its immense volume feels like a warm, welcoming, and glimmering ocean.

From the street, one sees the building crowned by a dome that has no function in the synagogue proper. It is conceived as an exclamation mark; it is there to announce the presence of the Temple in the townscape. It is also here that the building's most prominent technical feature is demonstrated, the novel iron dome construction by Johann Wilhelm Schwedler. What outwardly looks like an oriental dream, like an echo of Samarkand and Baghdad, is in fact the product of sober German engineering, coupling rationalism and fantasy, modernity and medievalism.

It was a contemporaneity of several epochs, in fact, but in a totally different way than in early nineteenth-century Frankfurt. The narrow *Judengasse* had vanished and its gates had opened into the broad-minded splendor and wide-open future of Berlin's Neue Synagogue.

Sonderweg or Highway?

Thoughts About Jewish History and Identity – and Some Theoretical Considerations

During the 19th century, Jewish history was molded into a genre, in which the Jewish destiny tended to become a story of a *Sonderweg* through European time and space – a path that only occasionally seems to coincide with major routes and highways. It is the dangerous wandering of the minority through the wild and hostile forest of majority society; it is persecution and expulsion, and it is uniqueness and stubborn traditionalism against all odds. Even Jewish writers tend to depict the Jews as outsiders and Jewishness as something deviating from a general pattern. Jewry and Judaism is particular, it is a culture with its own logic and with a specific paradigm.

Sometimes it may be practical, for methodical and literary reasons, to create these kinds of demarcations, but on closer reflection, the dominance of this perspective is rather surprising. After all, there is hardly any other ethnic group in Europe with a comparable cultural continuity and presence. Since the days of the Roman Empire, the People of the Book have belonged to the inhabitants of the European house, and they must even be counted among its original builders. It is my conviction that Jewish history cannot be properly understood without an assessment of the continuous *interaction* and *interplay* between the Jewish people and the other inhabitants of this European house.

In depictions of Jewish cultural history, the discourse of singularity is expressed, for example, in the use of anthropological and sociological terms such as assimilation and acculturation. An original state of total separateness and unambiguity is conjured up, which is then followed by an emancipation and assimilation process that successively makes the Jews more “similar” to the majority population. Jewish culture, which until then had been essentially different, became acculturated to the prevailing patterns of the majority. Before, the Jews lived as if under a glass cover, usually called “the ghetto”; later, the invisible wall cracked and disintegrated.

The acculturation-assimilation interpretation of modern Jewish history assumes the existence of a static, monolithic European majority culture and society to

which the minority adjusts, in order to achieve emancipation and integration. But socio-cultural adjustment and emancipation are not features characteristic only of the nineteenth-century Jewish predicament. These terms can, in fact, be used to describe the general European pattern of societal change during this era. Modernity and modernization are of course evasive and complex concepts, but there seems to be a general consensus that a “New Europe” was taking shape via a process beginning with Descartes, Hobbes and Spinoza in the seventeenth century, and culminating in the latter part of the nineteenth century with the consolidation of centralized, constitutional “national states,” based on urbanism, capitalism and industrial production. Secularization is regarded as a central aspect of this passage to modernity. “Old Europe” was based on religious world-views providing total interpretations of, and frameworks for, the human existence. Political institutions were religiously legitimized and there was no fully separated secular sphere of society. The institutions, rituals, and regulations of the politico-religious communities framed the life of the individual. The concepts of creation, redemption, and a heavenly afterlife were guidelines for earthly life. God, Satan, and the angels were factors of real significance.

This pattern was challenged by the emergence of rationalistic science during the seventeenth century and by its ideological sequel, the Enlightenment, which presented an alternative worldview. Another factor was the evolution of the public or civic sphere of society, which was connected to the break-up of the system of estates and guilds. A new European “republic” took shape, creating a subversive network of scholars and men and women of letters – *la république des lettres*; the intellectual avant-garde that paved the way for the subsequent evolution of political liberalism.

Old Europe had been based on distinction and discrimination. Society was understood as consisting of separate communities; estates, guilds, trades, faiths, religious orders, clans. The identity of the individual was determined by his or her ascribed placement within the system. The ability to break out of the system was not foreseen. In Old Europe, social positions seldom were the results of individual achievements. In principle, the individual could flourish only by sticking to his or her ascribed role.

The growth of an independent bourgeois civil society in the urban centers of Europe during the eighteenth century entailed a dismantling of the old system. It was through this challenge to traditional religious and political elites that modern Europeanness emerged; the idea of a society based on the voluntary interaction of equal citizens – emancipated individuals who were supposed to contribute to society and the public cause, and to the *res publica*, through their personal achievements.

This process affected all European religious and ethnic communities. In fact, modernization can be described as a gigantic European acculturation and assimilation effort, the aim of which was inclusion or integration into the new secular social space that took shape with the weakening of feudal and clerical structures. The accelerating processes of migration and urbanization connected to industrialization entailed the acculturation of hitherto rural segments of the population, which were often ethnically, linguistically or religiously distinct. In this situation, it became an important point of concern for all Europeans to find ways of preserving certain central aspects of their traditional identities, and to find methods of bringing these identities along into modern times.

This secularization process affected Jewish Europe at an early date. Long before the formation of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment movement of mid-eighteenth century, secularizing and anti-tradition tendencies had been clearly observable in the Jewish population hubs of Old Europe. Historian, Shmuel Feiner, has collected ample evidence of the erosion of rabbinical authority and the emergence of secular Jewish contexts in the Jewish centers of Western and Central Europe already around 1700.²⁴ Even if open criticism of autocratic rabbinical supervision was seldom documented in print, it is clear that, through their choice of lifestyle, considerable segments of the Jewish population demonstrated a growing alienation towards the traditional demands of orthodoxy. Feiner argues that the Haskalah should be interpreted as a reaction against these anti-tradition tendencies, which were perceived by some intellectuals as a threat to Jewish cultural identity and social coherence. Haskalah, then, was actually a *revival* movement, which strove to strengthen Judaism by reformulating its fundamentals in order to demonstrate its compatibility with modern science and rationalism.

However, this reformulation and revision process was not specific to Judaism.

It characterized the general European philosophical and religious climate of the period. The Christian churches were all trying to cope with the challenge of deism, libertinism and a general skepticism toward religion. Those in power handled the problem by coercive means, through censorship, excommunication and deportation, but they also responded theoretically and creatively to the challenge. Rationalistic Lutheran theology was one of the products of this process. The scope of these revisions and reforms was limited by the seamless fusion between the clergy and the political elites in many European states, but the period also saw the growth of sectarianism. Groups such as Pietists, Methodists, Baptists etc., broke away from the state-supported churches. Some of these could be regarded as orthodox and fundamentalist, others as revisionist.

We see this pattern in Judaism as well. Even if there, of course, was no Jewish “state church,” there were strong links between the rabbinical establishment and state authorities in many countries. In Germany, Christian supervision had, in a way, turned the rabbis into state officials. They were supposed to maintain status quo, i.e., keep Judaism on its traditional rabbinical track. Sectarians and heretics were not welcome, neither by the rabbis, nor by the bishops and cardinals. In Eastern Europe, Hasidism opposed rigid rabbinical intellectualism and elitism. In Western and Central Europe, the Haskalah condemned popular religious emotionalism and superstition.

The history of European Jewry and Judaism can be understood as a process of interaction and transformation. It is a path that winds right through the European heartland. This path very often coincides with Europe’s main routes and is consistently present at the important crossroads. Nevertheless Jewish European history is specific, it has its own identity – but how might we understand this specificity? In Old Europe, where the mobility of the individual was restricted both ideologically and geographically, social categorization and classification might seem fairly unambiguous. However, in the landscape of nineteenth-century Europe, the picture becomes much more complex and nuanced. Therefore, in order to be able to fruitfully delineate, analyze, and interpret the actions and works of my protagonists, my premise will be the *cultural multidimensionality* of man.

Dimensions of Identity

Cultural identity is never one-dimensional. As a social animal, every human being has “multiple personae” and is inscribed into a cluster of several parallel narratives. In the preceding chapter, we have seen how deeply involved the leading personalities of the liberal Jewish movement were in German cultural and political life. However, they were not only eloquent representatives of German national *Kultur*, they also were involved in the broader cosmopolitan *Lebenswelt* of urbanized Europe, as a kind of citizenry of an exterritorial structure called civilization. And, we can view Jewish Gothenburg as a flourishing seedling from the German cultural greenhouse. German was still spoken in many Jewish families in 1850’s Gothenburg. It is significant that the introduction of the Swedish language in synagogue services caused a formal protest from a group of congregation members, who declared that they would really miss the beautiful German sermons of Rabbi Heinemann. In support of their claim, the Germanophile-Jews pointed out that in *Kristine kyrka*, the Lutheran German church of the city, the mass still was given in the German language, and this was not seen as a challenge to the Swedish loyalty of the churchgoers. So why could the German service not continue in the synagogue as well?²⁵

The Gothenburg Jews also were deeply involved in *Swedish* social and economic structures, and some of these entrepreneurs and intellectuals were influential agents in the emerging Swedish national culture. All of them were, of course, shareholders in the old Jewish Diaspora as well.

Can a person really claim simultaneously to have Jewish, German, Swedish, and European identities? Of course one can and it is a much more realistic claim than the conventional single-mindedness of ethno-national one-dimensionality. Perhaps a person does not practice or enact these different belongings in the same arenas, but depending on one’s own experienced self-identification and on the preconceptions and interpretations of the social environment, one’s behavior and utterances receive divergent interpretations by several parallel “audiences.” The idea of a single, one-dimensional collective identity – a national, religious, or ethnic identity – is in fact absurd; it is an abstraction that causes much political and social confusion.

Cultural identity is a practice; it is something you *do*, and not something you simply are, or have. Externally formulated categories of the type that occur in legal

codes, population statistics and passports have the look of objectivity, but we have to remember that the coherence and continuity of the individual self is not a physically demonstrable or static characteristic. You do not carry around your identity like an id-chip in your ear. It must continuously be displayed and manifested through action – bodily as well as mentally. You have to feel and think, and thought and emotion are processes that take time.

Collective identities and belongings are, of course, even more difficult to grasp. Linguistically, we often handle this problem with the help of metonyms. We conceptualize the collective as a “person” (e.g. the nation; Sweden, Jewry) that “thinks” and “acts.” This creates the misleading impression that this abstract super-personality is a homogeneous and monolithic entity. The individuals who belong to collectives like Swedes, Germans or Jews (note the possessive character of the verb “belong”!) become ethnically “standardized,” and are seen as *either* Swedes, or Germans or Jews. This non-inclusive and static way of thinking, however, does not meet the mobile complexity of real life.

The understanding of cultural identity as a process is indeed supported and inspired by much of the most recent culture theory. In ethnomusicology, the perspective of cultural anthropologist Fredrik Barth has played a major role for the theoretical development of the study of music and ethnicity. I certainly follow in Barth’s and his proselytes’ footsteps, but for my discourse on identity I have found my main inspiration among the founders of classical German *Kulturwissenschaft* of the nineteenth century. And it is a fascinating fact that here we actually arrive in the environment of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. For those Jewish intellectuals who were actively involved in the turbulent political and cultural transformation of Germany, the questions of identity were almost unavoidable. Their own personal experiences as Jews also tended to make them more sensitive to the complexities of the field. As culture theorist and philosopher, Klaus Christian Köhnke, has pointed out, the actual initiator of what came to be known as the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin, Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903), also can be regarded as the founder of modern cultural philosophy and cultural theory.²⁶

Along with Abraham Geiger, Lazarus belonged to the loose circle of liberal reformists who strove to create a new basis for Jewish life in the emerging unified

German state. In the 1850s he started to formulate a new approach to cultural research that he labeled *Völkerpsychologie*. For the modern reader, this term might sound laden with somewhat unpleasant Teutonic overtones, but with his use of the word “*Volk*” Lazarus wanted to stress his interest in the phenomena of *collective* culture; entities such as nations, religious and ethnic groups etc. *Social psychology* is the modern equivalent of his *Völkerpsychologie*. During Lazarus’ time, the arts and humanities were dominated by historicism. Trace the origin and follow the development – that was the obsession of this predominantly diachronic and narrative perspective. It is high time, Lazarus argued, that we make the *currently existing society* our object of study, not just the individual and historical phenomena. Culture is not only the product of artistic or intellectual work. Our daily lives in society are in fact, structured and made possible by cultural codes and tacit agreements. Psychology – as a branch of philosophy – analyzes the mechanisms of the individual psyche. But what happens when thousands and millions of individual minds are coordinated and create a kind of societal body? Social collectives have a specific kind of existence, but what kind of existence? What is a nation, and where, and how, can it exist?

Lazarus’ efforts were partly a reaction against the essentialist and romantic (or even mystic) *Deutschtümlerei* (“Germanomania”) that was an increasingly irritating aspect of German nationalism. Emerging biologist and racist ideas mingled with historicist and deterministic interpretations of *Volksgeist* (“national spirit”) and *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (“community of fate”) in a politically ominous way. In 1862, Lazarus protested against this diffuse and demagogical discourse with a fascinating essay, titled *Über das Verhältnis des einzelnen zur Gesamtheit* (“On the relationship of the singular to the totality”):

Spiritual affinity and difference are independent of genealogical relations of consanguinity. The concept of *Volk* is based on the interaction between the spiritual and historical conditions on the one hand, and on culture’s intervention within nature on the other. What primarily constitutes a *Volk* are not certain objective characteristics, such as descent, language etc., but rather the subjective opinion of the individual members of the *Volk*, who

together *consider* themselves as the *Volk*. The concept of *Volk* is dependent on the subjective opinion of the members of the *Volk* themselves, on their ideas of their similarities and affinities. If we are dealing with plants and animals, then the natural scientist can classify and systematize them on the basis of objective, distinctive features. With people, however, we ask *them* about their collective, *Volk* identity.

... Therefore, the only possible definition of *Volk* seems to be: a group of people, who consider themselves as a *Volk*, who consider themselves to belong to a specific group.

... The subjective character that we ascribe to the concept of *Volk* should not surprise us. The *Volk* is a purely mental conception; it has no bodily existence, even if it is not independent of material conditions. A *Volk* is a mental creation of those individuals who belong to it. They are not just a *Volk*; they are continuously creating the *Volk*.²⁷

It is clear that Lazarus' thinking comes very close to, and actually heralds, concepts like "imagined communities" and "ethnic boundary maintenance" that has played a major role in the study of ethnicity and nationalism since the 1980s. Humans live in a *natura altera*, a "second nature" that they have created themselves with the help of their symbolic tools. Every individual subjectively relates himself, and adjusts to, this *objective Geist*, this thick web of traditions and cultural patterns. What makes Lazarus' theorizing especially fruitful in the context of my research is his clear-sighted view on aesthetics. In the above-mentioned essay, he writes:

In addition to the objective conditions of politics, the *force des choses* (or, as it is often formulated nowadays, the logic of facts), ethical concepts such as justice, fairness, as well as cultural progress, are usually seen as important driving forces of history – above and beyond interests and passions. However, to my knowledge, the importance of aesthetic motivations in history has not been recognized. There has been a lot of talk about the influence of political and historical events on the flourishing or decline of the arts, but not much have been said about the influence that aesthetics have exercised on other

aspects of culture, specifically on political life. This causal relationship has not been considered with the same naturalness as the other way round.

We are not referring here to the *artistic* sphere proper, to the creation and reception of *works of art*. On the contrary, we think that purely aesthetic *motivations* can be found in domains and actions that are not at all part of the artistic field and seem to be totally untouched by aspects of aesthetic beauty.

... In the *Gestaltung* of private life, as well as of social life generally, and in the political events of war and piece, aesthetic ideas will come to be discerned as powerful principles.²⁸

In the company of Moritz Lazarus it becomes possible to find a way into a more open, flexible and less reductionist perspective on cultural identity. If Jewish (or Swedish, or German) identity is seen as something that is continuously *practiced* and *performed*, the societal *arenas* for this practice come into focus, rather than the neatly delineated and de-contextualized histories of ethnic collectives in the bodily sense. Perhaps the term *forum* is an even better metaphor than “arena.” After all, people do not usually perform theatrical roles in public spaces; they rather strive to be themselves, through a pattern of actions, reactions and transactions.

Here, cultural identity is not seen as emanating from the mere ascription or affiliation to a group of people, but rather as the outcome of the interplay between the expectations and imaginations of the acting individual and the interpretative reactions of the multiple “audiences” which together represent the *objective Geist* of the socio-cultural environment. In all reasonably complex societies, people’s acts and utterances are performed and interpreted in several differing social contexts, from the physically close circle of the family, to the abstract, imagined communities of ethnic, national and religious belonging.

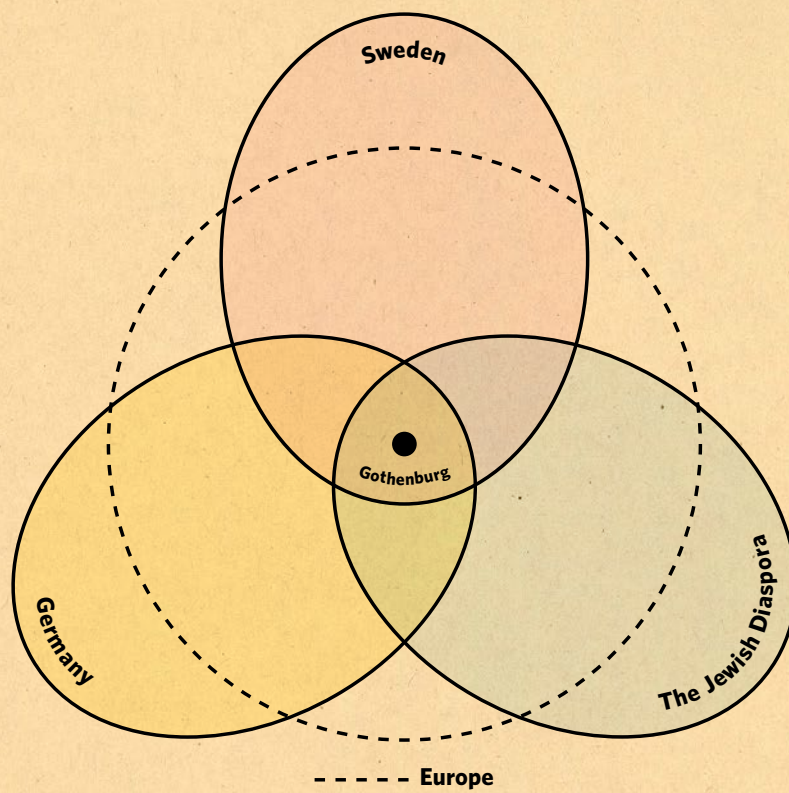
Moritz Lazarus’ ideas were developed and brought into twentieth-century sociology by his student Georg Simmel (1858–1918), who in an outburst of creative writing around 1900 scrutinized the fundamental concepts of social theory. Simmel uses the German word *Kreise* (“circles”) to denote the complexity of overlapping social contexts in which the cultural identity of the individual takes shape, and which in their totality – that is, on the collective level – contains the objective Geist or *culture*

of society. Consequently, this approach accounts both for the collectivistic and individualistic aspects. On the one hand, the individual may find a social context that facilitates the satisfaction of his inclinations and ambitions and offers him an established and suitable social forum, as well as gaining the advantages of belonging or membership. On the other hand, the specifics of individuality are provided by the combination of *Kreise*, which are unique in each case. Simmel concludes in his characteristic, witty style: *So kann man sagen: aus Individuen entsteht die Gesellschaft, aus Gesellschaften entsteht das Individuum* (“And so you can say: society emerges from individuals, and the individual emerges from societies.”).²⁹

In the analysis of the cultural predicament of nineteenth-century Jewish Gothenburg – and specifically of Abraham Baer – we of course must select a few relevant fields out of many that are also theoretically conceivable. During my Gothenburg “fieldwork,” I have chosen to delineate five cultural forums: *Sweden, Germany, Europe, the Jewish Diaspora*, and *Gothenburg*.

Sweden represents the national level of the emerging nation-state; *Germany* is the cultural-linguistic community of German-speaking Europe; *Europe* is the cosmopolitan network of urban culture, and the *Jewish Diaspora* is the archipelago of scattered Jewish communities all over the world. At the intersection of these four forums is *Gothenburg*, the local civic environment in which Abraham Baer and his contemporaries lived and acted.

These social modalities can be visualized as partly overlapping fields. However, I do this somewhat reluctantly, since the graphic representation risks rendering this abstract, and purely analytic idea, as a far too geometric and definitive form. Here, we are not dealing with territories or populations. The fields of the graph represent provinces of meaning, or discourses, that is to say, conceptual, not physical entities. In these interrelated but, in fact, extraterritorial cultural forums, I imagine our protagonists as they act, react, and interact – simultaneously or alternately expressing and enacting their Gothenburgness, Swedishness, Germanness, Jewishness and Europeanness. Studying these actors from this over-reaching perspective, I endeavor to make sense of their performance, or in other words, aim to arrive at a plausible interpretation.



Cultural forums in the Lebenswelt of Abraham Baer

II

Transformations

A New World

The Jews of Gothenburg

The story of the Gothenburg Jews is a very short one compared to the long and dramatic tale of the Ashkenazi Jews. When the historian, Carl Vilhelm Jacobowsky, was asked to write a history of the Gothenburg Mosaic congregation on the centenary of the synagogue in 1955, he had difficulty in determining the actual starting point.³⁰ When Jews began to settle in the region of Gothenburg, there was no organized community, and the term “Mosaic” had not even been introduced. After some deliberation, he decided to use the year 1780 as the founding date of the community. During the 1770s, there had been a small influx of Jewish individuals to the Swedish realm. This was in fact an almost revolutionary event. Ever since the Protestants’ victory in the confessional conflict of the reformation era, religious intolerance had been a fundamental political principle of the Swedish state. At the 1593 synod in Uppsala it was decided that Lutheranism, according to the Augsburg confession, was the one and only faith to be tolerated in the kingdom of the Swedish Vasa dynasty. All other forms of religion, Christian or non-Christian, were judged as heretic or pagan and were totally outlawed.

Consequently, Sweden was a terra incognita for the European Jews, a distant and unattractive periphery. There are reports that Jewish merchants occasionally appeared in Gothenburg, but these seem to have been storm-driven migrant birds, who perhaps, had not heard about the strict regulations maintained in this dangerous Nordic theocracy. If their Jewishness was detected, they were asked immediately to leave the kingdom, which they willingly did.

“Under Vigilant Supervision” – The Origins of Gothenburg’s Jewish Community

However, in 1775, the enlightened despot Gustav III decided that Jews could now be accepted as immigrants, and that they would be allowed to settle in the realm as “*skyddsjudar*” or protected Jews (cf. the German term *Schützjuden*), *nota bene*, with some very strict conditions.³¹ This might look like a tolerant reform, as a step



Panorama from the tower of Kristine church. Late 1880s. (© Göteborg City Museum) GhmE_443

in the direction of religious freedom, but the actual conditions were negotiated in a complicated political process during the following decade. The Jews were not involved in these discussions; this was a purely Swedish affair between a traditionally anti-Jewish faction consisting of clergy and bourgeoisie, and a group of rationalistic, Enlightenment-influenced aristocrats who were impressed by the policies of Gustav's uncle, the Prussian king, Frederick II. The basic motivation behind the lifting of the ban on Jewish immigration was that Sweden might prosper from the acceptance of a few skilled professionals. The well-being of the Jews was not on the agenda. They were supposed to be grateful for this act of enlightened mercy.

This 1775 decision resulted from the arrival in Sweden of the engraver, Aaron Isaac, (coming from Bützow in Mecklenburg-Schwerin), who as a suppliant, applied for the right to remain in the country. Isaac had an influential patron, count Carl Sparre, which considerably facilitated his case. He received the right to establish a *minyan* in Stockholm, which became the embryo of the Stockholm Jewish community.

The existence of a group of Jews in the Swedish kingdom was a difficult challenge for the clerical and juridical officials. How could a programmatically mono-religious,

and strictly Lutheran state handle the sudden emergence of a Jewish minority? How was it possible to find a slot in the system that would allow for the acceptance of a non-Christian faith in the realm? In fact, the Jewish faith was not fully accepted until the establishment of the law on religious freedom in 1951! For the “orthodox” Lutheran clergy, Judaism was simply an aberration, not a religion. The Jews’ “stubbornness” in their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah was a stumbling block. Therefore, the Jews could be accepted only as a nation, not as a religious community. The “Jewish Nation” therefore was treated as an enclave, with a “guest” status. Like foreign diplomats, they enjoyed special treatment by the Swedish authorities; but in the case of the Jews, this special treatment was no privilege, but rather a serious obstacle.

In 1782, the government formulated its set of regulations concerning Jewish settlement in Sweden, *Kongl.Maj:ts och Riksens Commerce-Collegii Reglemente, För them av Judeska Nationen, som wilja hit i Riket inflytta och sig här nedsätta* (“The Regulation of His Royal Majesty and of the Board of Trade of the Realm Concerning those Members of the Jewish Nation, Who Want to Immigrate and Settle in the Kingdom”), usually called *Judereglementet*, (“The Jewish Regulations”). The formulations of this document present an interesting mixture of religious and economic considerations, a blend of prejudice and pragmatism that mirrors the political discussions preceding its proclamation. The Diet (*Riksdag*) had accepted a specific form of circumscribed religious freedom, necessary for the Jewish settlement, a few years earlier. Its wording is characteristic: “Jews may not be allowed to have their synagogue in other places than Stockholm, and at most, in two or three other major cities, where the police are able to keep them under more vigilant supervision.”³² Since these regulations deeply affected Jewish life in Sweden during its 56 years of existence, a short account of its content will be given here.

Every Jewish person arriving in Sweden was supposed to report to *Konungens Befallningshavande*, the local provincial government. If the Jew did not have a passport and a testimonial of good conduct, he would be rejected. If his papers were accepted, he would be sent off to one of the three allowable cities (Stockholm, Gothenburg, Norrköping) according to his choice. Within six week’s time after his arrival in the city, he had to decide whether to stay there or not. If he chose to

stay, he had to verify that his ready monetary assets amounted to 2,000 *Riksdaler specie*, which was a considerable amount of money, almost a fortune. He then could receive a letter of protection that gave him the right to stay in the city and to make his living there.

The Jews were allowed to engage in wholesale as well as retail trade, but house-to-house peddling was outlawed. Outside the commercial domain, they were only allowed to work in professions that were not subject to guild regulations, such as artistic painting, engraving, diamond and glass cutting, instrument making, or embroidery and other artistic needlework. In contrast, they could, however, own factories and ships. Farming was out of the question since the Jews were only supposed to be city dwellers. In trades that belonged to the guild system, Jews were allowed to work under Christian masters, but they could not become masters themselves. Furthermore, Jews were not allowed to work as foodstuffs dealers, pharmacists or wine traders; they were supposed to work as butchers, bakers, and wine dealers, only to satisfy their own needs and those of their co-religionists. In those regulations concerning dealings with foodstuffs and medicines, clerical notions of Jewish impurity and even unreliability, mixed with petty-bourgeois trade protectionism in an interesting way.

Jews were not allowed to take part in fairs in other cities, and peddling in the countryside was strictly forbidden. It was even prescribed that Jews must settle in certain restricted areas in the cities, but these paragraphs were never strictly upheld, and those Jewish neighborhoods that evolved resulted from the Jews' spontaneous community feeling rather than from rulings of the Swedish authorities. It appears that the freedom of movement of the Jews was already sufficiently restricted.

The *Judereglementet* also states that the Jews of the three cities were required to establish their own cemeteries. However, a Gothenburg Jewish graveyard did not come into existence until 1793. According to Jacobowsky, the small number of Jews and the relative vicinity of Copenhagen account for this. However, since 1780, a handful of Jewish individuals had been living in the city. Some of these pioneers had relatives living in neighboring Marstrand, which actually functioned as a bridge for the Jewish immigrants. In 1775, Gustav III declared Marstrand – a small fishing town in the shadow of the mighty Karlsten fortress – to be a *porto franco*, a port of

free trade, that was open to members of all faiths and nations. In April 1779, a Moses Salomon of Röbel in Mecklenburg arrived, and a few months later Elias Magnus, who became the founder of a prominent Gothenburg Jewish family. In 1782, the Marstrand Jews received permission to rent a vaulted room in the fortress to use as a synagogue. Within the Marstrand Jewish community in 1789, were counted sixty members, including Ruben Henriques and Elias Delbanco, likewise founders of Gothenburg dynasties.

The *porto franco* status of Marstrand was abolished in 1794 and most of the Jews moved to Gothenburg, where membership of the Jewish congregation rose from twenty in 1792, to 102 in 1807. Since religious meetings in private houses were outlawed by the Protestant state church, it is probable that some form of synagogue existed since the 1780s, but the exact location of this house of prayer is not known. In 1802, the congregation purchased a house on the street of Drottninggatan with the intention of using it as a synagogue. However, later in the same year, this building was destroyed by fire. It would take another six years before the Gothenburg Jews could inaugurate their first synagogue, in a building at Kyrkogatan 44 that was renovated and furnished according to the requirements of Jewish ritual. The economic accounts of the synagogue project are the oldest documents preserved in the archive of Gothenburg's Jewish congregation.

The synagogue was inaugurated on August 5, 1808, and the celebration of this solemn event was published in a printed Swedish language edition. However, the façade of the building in no way identified its religious function; such an open demonstration of a non-Christian identity would not have been accepted by the dominant Lutheran society. The interior decorations have not been preserved, but according to the building plans and the artisans' bills, the disposition of the prayer house seems completely to have followed the traditional pattern. There was a centrally located table, the *bimah* or *shulhan* on which the Torah was placed to be read, and of course, the *aron kodesh* niche with the Torah scrolls on the eastern wall, as well as a cantor's reading pulpit.

The inauguration of the synagogue on Kyrkogatan marks the conclusion of the "pioneer" era of the Gothenburg Jewish community. In spite of a temporary ban on Jewish immigration, instigated in 1806 by the bigoted king Gustav IV Adolf, the size

of the community more than doubled during the first decades of the nineteenth century, and in 1815 it numbered 215 members.

It is an important fact that the Jewish immigration to Sweden can largely be described as a long-lasting German-Swedish affair, in the sense that the migrants almost exclusively came from the German lands, with Copenhagen as a station en route for the families, in some cases. The first settlers originated from Posen, Mecklenburg, Hannover, Hamburg, Silesia and Copenhagen. There exists a small Sephardic component, symbolized, for example, by the families Henriques and Delbanco, but these immigrants also came from Germany and Denmark, where their ancestors had been living for generations in Ashkenazic Jewish environments. Yiddish and German were the colloquial languages of the immigrants, and much of their internal correspondence was written in the cursive Hebrew script.

During the first decades of the nineteenth century, Jewish immigrants played important roles as pioneering industrial entrepreneurs in Gothenburg, mainly in the textile branch and in sugar and lamp oil production. Others founded prosperous trading houses, but due to the restrictions of the *Judereglementet*, Jews still were excluded from state service and from many other professions. Alongside a socio-economic elite, consisting of a dozen of wealthy families, there was a middle-class stratum of small-scale shopkeepers and artisans, but the emergence of a Jewish proletariat was precluded by the strict immigration laws. Of course, the community also contained people of small means, as well as those with social problems. This fact was of great concern for the congregation since Jews were excluded from the charitable institutions of the Christian majority society, and they had to organize their own relief institutions to care for the poor and the elderly.³³

Jews and Lutheran Absolutism

Except for the religious aspect, there was no great cultural rift between the Jewish immigrants and the emerging educated Swedish middle class. The languages involved in the socio-cultural interaction – German, Yiddish, and Swedish – were closely related historically and morphologically, and the immigrants had no big difficulty in acquiring the Swedish idiom. At this time, German was still the dominating foreign language in Sweden; every educated Swede knew some German,

and many artisans had worked in continental German-speaking areas during their apprentice travels. The second-generation Jews had a perfect command of the Swedish language and had no difficulty in identifying with Swedish traditions and cultural codes. The more a Swedish Jewishness took shape, the more absurd and humiliating the discriminatory regulations of the *Judereglementet* appeared. Yet, even after its abolishment in 1838, serious obstacles remained for Swedish Jews. In 1841 a group of Jewish intellectuals in Stockholm and Gothenburg formed an association called *Judiska intresset* ("The Jewish Cause") with the aim of furthering the emancipation, through petitions to the government, discussions with politicians, and confrontation of anti-Jewish prejudice. In order to clarify the background of their efforts and motivations, I will now describe the ideology of their opponent, the theocratic fusion of politics and religion of the Swedish Lutheran state.

When Lutheranism, after a long period of confusion and conflict, had become the officially declared dogma of the kingdom, it soon was perceived as a state ideology. The church was completely fused with the state, the clergy became officials who read out the royal decrees from the church pulpits and exercised effective political and ideological control and supervision. Early modern Sweden was no national state in the twentieth-century sense, but a multi-ethnic, dynastic realm with a theocratic underpinning of its political *raison d'être*. The existence of several different languages within the kingdom – which, during the sixteenth century, expanded into something of a Baltic empire – was not seen as a major problem. The government actually encouraged the development of Finnish and Estonian written languages through the translation of official decrees and, of course, of the Lutheran Bible and the works of Martin Luther. German was widely used in the administration, in parallel with Swedish and Latin. However, this ethno-linguistic pluralism was paired with a totally intolerant religious policy. Secession and conversion to confessions or religions other than Lutheranism could lead to capital punishment or deportation. Therefore, in fact, being "Swedish" in the old Swedish kingdom simply meant being a Lutheran subject of the king. Political identity mainly was a matter of religion, not of ethnicity.

The fusion of religion and politics is nowhere more eloquently expressed than in the architecture of the royal palace in Stockholm, which was rebuilt after a devastat-

ing fire in 1697. In the old castle, the royal chapel had been clearly discernible in the complex cluster of wings, gates, towers and courtyards. In the new baroque palace designed by the royal architect Nicodemus Tessin, the palace church was integrated into the southern wing, where it was symmetrically juxtaposed to *Rikssalen*, the official state hall where important political ceremonies took place. These two official rooms, one for religious rituals, the other for political representations, were joined by a centrally located, magnificent vestibule, the façade of which symbolized royal power, specifically the heroic deeds of Charles XII (r. 1697–1718). However, nothing in the façade of the south wing signaled the existence of the church inside. “The church shall be in the state, not the state in the church,” that was a central tenet of the German rationalist and natural law theorist Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694), who was appointed royal historiographer by king Charles XI and deeply influenced the political thinking of Swedish baroque absolutism. In Tessin’s palace, which symbolizes the political structure of the realm, the church is in the state – even physically.

The primary role of the king is that of a protector of the faith. He is not a servant of the church; he is its master. The king wields this power not in the name of a nation or a people, but in the name of God and reason.

Now, why did this system and state of things have important repercussions for Jews and Judaism? It was because anti-Judaism was included in the state’s fundamental ideology. This is due to the odious idiosyncrasies of Martin Luther that were incorporated into the world-view of Swedish orthodox Lutheranism. But wasn’t the reformation, an event that seriously impaired the oppressive power of the Roman Catholic Church, a positive thing for the Jews? The Protestant reformers based their work largely on a return to the monotheistic sources of Christianity, the scripture of Mosaic revelation, the Old Testament. Luther and the other reformers translated the biblical texts into vernacular language and scrutinized their content. Reading, preaching, and understanding became cornerstones of religious education. The verbal message was emphasized, at the cost of the aesthetic *Gestaltung* of the mass. However, it was soon realized that the translation of the biblical texts required a study of the original Hebrew versions, and it became unavoidable for the translators and exegetes to turn to Jewish scholars for advice. During the middle

ages, knowledge of Hebrew among European Christians was nonexistent; Christian clergy had only second-hand access to the sources of their religion, via the Latin Vulgata translation and the Greek Septuaginta.

However, the Jewish scholars could often point to loci in the official Christian translations that obviously contained grave errors and misunderstandings. The expertise of the rabbis seriously challenged the authority of the traditional Christian interpretation, and the Christian reformers reacted in a protective manner. The supersessionist theology of the Protestants was another obstacle for a rapprochement between Jews and Christians. The Hebrew Old Testament was interpreted as a *Christian* scripture, anticipating God's promise of salvation. The development of post-Christian, Talmudic Judaism was totally unknown to Christian theologians, who regarded Judaism as suspended by the appearance of Jesus.

However, the Jews involuntarily were given a crucial role in the Christian eschatological scheme: the return of the Messiah would contain the conversion of Israel, and the fact that there were already individual Jews who accepted the Christian baptism was seen as a sign of the approaching return of the Savior and the fulfillment of God's plan. In 1537 Luther obviously was convinced that this was going to happen in the near future. At the outset of his reformatory career, he approached the Jews in a positive and conciliatory way, defending them against the intolerance of the Roman church. Obviously he thought that Protestants' swing toward the Old Testament and their rejection of papal authority would make the Jews his eager proselytes, which then in turn would hasten the second coming of Christ.

The Jews were not enthusiastic. They were urged to abandon their religious and social traditions in order to join a movement, the future of which was totally unpredictable. Rome and the Emperor would strike back against the Protestants, that was a certainty. And in that case, the revenge on the Jews would be horrendous. Any responsible rabbi, therefore, must avoid association with the protagonists of the confessional drama that was being played out in Christian Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Luther's reaction to this reluctant attitude of the People of the Book was choleric. His attitude – if you are not with me, you are against me – recalls the policy of Mohammad. In a similar way, he tried to make the Jews of Yahtrib join his nascent

movement, apparently thinking that his drawing on Jewish traditions automatically would make them his followers. The Jews however were skeptical towards the radical preacher from Mecca, who then declared war on them and expelled them from Yahtrib (today's Medina) in the first political act of Islam.

Like Mohammad, Luther turned 180 degrees. Programmatic anti-Judaism became a prominent feature of Luther's late career, when his teachings had become a political program in a growing number of German principalities. Luther apparently saw Judaism as a competing religious force in the chaotic transitional situation of mid-sixteenth century Central Europe. The protestant focus on the Old Testament and the idea of general priesthood led small groups of radical Protestants (sabbatarians) to convert to Judaism. Luther's opinions about the Jews are clearly expounded in his *Sendschreiben wider die Sabbathler* (1538) and in three pamphlets printed in 1542–43 (*Von den Jüden und ihren Lügen*; *Vom Schem Hamphoras* and *Von den letzten Worten Davids*). With these anti-Jewish works, Luther strove to found a school for Old Testament exegesis, and this task would be fulfilled through a sharp confrontation with Judaism. His hatred of the Jews culminated in nothing less than a program of annihilation of Judaism in Germany. The church historian Wilhelm Maurer tellingly summarized Luther's suggestions regarding the treatment of the Jews in the following way:³⁴ 1. The houses of the Jews shall be torn down, and they shall then be housed in huts that the Gypsies shall make for them.³⁵ 2. The letters of safe conduct shall be annulled, a measure that totally would have destroyed Jewish trade. 3. A ban on "usury" (money-lending, which erroneously was supposed to be a Jewish monopoly) shall be proclaimed. 4. Jewish persons capable of work shall be forced into slave labor. 5. The burning down of synagogues and Jewish schools. (It is apparent that 400 years later, the policies of the Nazis closely followed these steps of confiscation, intimidation, humiliation, *Berufsverbot*, forced labor and cultural genocide, only that Hitler added one even more radical paragraph at the end of the process.)

That these views on Jews and Judaism were shared by the Swedish political and cultural elite is demonstrated by chancellor Axel Oxenstierna's reaction to a suggestion that Sephardic Jews be invited to settle in the newly founded city of Gothenburg. Oxenstierna (1583–1654), undoubtedly the most influential of Swedish

seventeenth-century politicians, is reported to have said that, “he would like it very much if this place, which God and nature seem to have formed for the benefit of Sweden, could grow and develop. But, he would dislike it equally if the region became successful through the work of the malignant persecutors of the name of Christ. In that case, it would be better that the place remains a little, disdainful crofter’s hut for all time, than it become known as a rich and flourishing place of trade”.³⁶

However, it was not until 1686 that the ban on Jewish (and other non-Christian) immigration was formalized in a church law statute. A few years earlier, in 1681, two Jewish immigrant families had been officially baptized in Saint Gertrud’s church in Stockholm, in a triumphant ceremony in the presence of the king and the queen. The event was published in an illustrated booklet composed by the church’s vicar Christopher Bezelius, in which most of Luther’s ideas are repeated.³⁷ According to vicar Bezelius, the Jewish people are led astray by their rabbis, whom he describes as “noxious spiders.”

The church’s official standpoint was of course propagated from the pulpits all around the country, and the conceptual Jew became very present even in the remotest villages – even if they had never been visited by any real Jewish people. Even among the “heretic” Pietists who gained some influence during the eighteenth century, and generally had a somewhat more lenient attitude towards the Jews, the missionary aspect was very prominent. Missionary activity among Jews continued to be supported by the Lutheran State Church (for example, through the organization *Svenska Israelmissionen*) until the 1960s.³⁸

Toward Emancipation

The institutional forms of the small Gothenburg congregation followed traditional *kehilah* patterns, with a president (*parnas*) and a board of elders. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, the only employed functionary was the *hazan*, who was responsible for all ritual functions, and who seems to have acted as the congregation’s religious teacher as well. However, the need for a more systematic education, both Jewish and secular, was felt early on, since Jews did not have access to the Swedish school system. In 1826 the congregation started its own boy’s school, called Göthildaskolan in honor of Göthilda Magnus, who, in 1812, had donated a

considerable sum of money to be used for charitable purposes. An 1838 donation rendered possible the establishment of a girl's school as well. The consolidation of the Jewish community and its growing self-esteem is also expressed in the decision to employ a rabbi. The recruitment process started in 1832, but it was not until five years later, in 1837, that the first rabbi, Dr. Carl Heinemann, was installed in Gothenburg. The correspondence connected to the recruitment gives interesting insights to the networks of the early Jewish reform movement. Some note-worthy personalities show up among the numerous candidates: Salomon Frensdorff, Wilhelm Jacob Auerbach, and the close friend of these two, Abraham Geiger. Some of the candidates apparently were reluctant to move to distant Gothenburg, where there was no Jewish tradition, and no professional colleagues with whom to discuss and consult. A Marcus Eller of Hannover was offered the post in 1834, but he was then given a position in his home city and preferred to withdraw his application. Instead he recommended Abraham Moses Tendlau of Wiesbaden, who sent his papers to Gothenburg, but ultimately decided to withdraw as well. All the details of the recruitment process are not documented, but it appears that it was Eller, who in this situation suggested Geiger. Geiger was then strongly recommended by Copenhagen's Rabbi Abraham Alexander Wolff, to whom the Gothenburg Jews had turned for advice. The exact reason for the ultimate choice of Dr. Heinemann – who since 1831 had been *Oberlehrer* at the Jewish school in Stettin – is not known. However, he also seems to have been reform-minded, but apparently in a somewhat less demonstrative and presumptuous way than Geiger.

On June 30, 1838 the government annulled the *Judereglementet* of 1782, thereby taking an important step toward Jewish emancipation. The decision was politically controversial. There was a strong anti-Jewish coverage among petty-bourgeois circles and in the clerically minded conservative press, which actually led to mob riots in Stockholm, where some wealthy Jews had their windows smashed.

The government's decree "concerning the obligations and rights of persons of the "Mosaic faith" gave Jews the right of free settlement and largely put them on par with Christian citizens. But as we have seen, there were also conditions attached to these new rights. As long as the government regarded the Jews as a "guest" nation with which it had made a kind of "treaty," it did not meddle much in their internal

affairs. The Jews were inserted in a slot in the rigid system of estates and guilds, and for each such slot, specific rules applied. The way of organizing community life continued along traditional lines. With the abolishment of the 1782 regulations, the Jews were transformed into a religious minority, and their congregations were treated as *religiösa församlingar*, parishes. They were now supposed to abide to the formalities applicable to this type of associations. The old system with a *parnas* and a group of elders was abolished. Instead, the *mosaiska församlingar* had to appoint their board of *föreståndare* (principals) and a president. They also were obliged to keep minutes from their meetings. There was a language condition as well: the accounts had to be kept in the Swedish language.

In a way, the physical and juridical restraints concerning place of settlement and profession were substituted by cultural restraints, which required the Jews to adjust to general norms. The authorities of the majority society strove to mold or “translate” Jewish organizational structures in such a way that they would be manageable in the general administrative and fiscal system. Partly this was also the objective of the Jewish emancipation activists of the *Judiska intresset* association. The new cultural restraints, or rather expectations of cultural uniformity, also profoundly influenced the development of Jewish ritual and liturgical performance.

“With a Temple Character”

It is a great hall; a flat ceiling with recessed panels decorated in arabesque style in blue and gold. It feels like the warm night sky of a dry Mediterranean landscape with constellations of stars glimmering high above. This “heaven” is supported by slender columns, which are horizontally articulated into three stories, supporting galleries on both sides of an aisle. The columns are slender shafts, like trees in a cool northern, misty forest, where the fluttering leaves create a shifting pattern of green and brownish colors. There are no abstract, geometric arabesques lower down; closer to the earth the decoration becomes more organic and naturalistic, with an unmistakable touch of the Nordic zoomorphic ornamentation in the style of the Viking age. Combining the Alhambra with a wooden stave church, it is a meeting-place for *saga* and *bracha* – sagas and blessing. But, it is a theatrical venue as well, with a parquet floor, galleries, a stage and also, a curtain (even if this is located at the back of the stage).

Under a magnificently decorated arch at the other end of the hall, a huge musical instrument is enthroned as a counterpart to the “stage” at the opposite end. In-between, down on the floor, verbal communication is intended to meet and interact with the organ music – acting as both message and medium. This is a hall for rituals, but not for rites of mysticism. Only above the Torah niche, do the windows have colored glass. From the other windows flows a bright, illuminating daylight.

The interior is colorful, almost festive, like a fragile wooden chest, or sounding board, inserted into a protective coating of stone. If the interior is warm and optimistically confident, the exterior is more matter-of-fact and not without a certain defensive preparedness, perhaps there is a kind of pragmatic vigilance. It has the air of a Byzantine basilica with solid walls and imperative triads of arches; an assembly hall for judges, sages and scribes, historically and stylistically located somewhere between the Constantinople of Constantine and the Aachen of Charlemagne. However, it is also firmly connected to the Gothenburg environment through the chosen building material, the typical local yellow bricks, which are only sparsely inserted with bands of gray stone. Undoubtedly the most modern building of contemporary Gothenburg, the synagogue, inaugurated in 1855, epitomizes the thoughts, dreams, feelings and hopes of its era. It is only natural that its façade was used in many emblems and ex-libris of the day. It is in itself emblematic.

The merchant and banker Michael S. Warburg, an ardent supporter of the liberal reform in Germany, had suggested the creation of this new and larger synagogue in 1841, and the collecting of funds for the purpose began.³⁹ In 1843 a centrally located building site was bought on Kyrkogatan street, but it soon was realized that it was too narrow for the projected building.⁴⁰ Instead, a lot on the fortification zone that had newly been opened for exploitation was purchased, and it was here, on Stora Nygatan that the synagogue was erected. The work started in 1852, and three years later the building was solemnly inaugurated. Two architects were involved in the project. First, the congregation engaged Victor von Gegerfeldt, the city architect of Gothenburg, who presented his drawings in 1847. Gegerfeldt, who had studied in Germany, apparently found his models among early German Reform synagogues, like the building of *Neue Israelitische Tempelverein* in Hamburg. However, Gegerfeldt's drawings presented a very modest building and did not win the acclaim of



Gothenburg Synagogue, 1901. Photo: Aron Jonasons ateljé. (© Göteborg City Museum) GhmPK_769



Gothenburg Synagogue, facade at Stora Nygatan, 1902. (© Göteborg City Museum) GhmPK_770

the board of the congregation, who in 1849 turned to the German-born contractor and architect August Krüger, who recently had designed private houses for two of the board members. Krüger then was sent to Germany to study the most recent synagogue architecture there. The symbolical linking of Orient and Occident had become a main theme in the synagogue architecture of reformed and liberal congregations on the continent, and Krüger successfully adopted this trend. His drawings were sent in to *Överintendentsämbetet*, the national Swedish authority for architectural supervision, which expressed some criticism regarding the free eclecticism of the suggested building. Krüger then revised his design, making the facade stylistically more uniform. The demonstratively “oriental” elements in the exterior were tuned down, in favor of a more generalized “Byzantine” or “early Christian” style. The result must have been deemed a good one to comply with the opinion put forward at a meeting with the building committee in 1845, that the synagogue “should have a Temple character. They [the committee members]...do not strive to invoke something stately or magnificent that would attract attention ... but the temple should differ from the profane.”⁴¹

In the disposition of the interior, the new synagogue, in several ways, breaks with the traditional pattern. The clear longitudinal direction of the inner space, the placement of a preacher’s pulpit in front of the Torah niche, and the frontal arrangement of the *bimah* platform (which in traditional synagogues is located in the center of the building) – this all speaks the language of the Jewish reform. The Torah reading is of course still the focus of the ritual, but the sanctuary has been adapted for a service that has become more a staging than a meeting, with the cantor and the rabbi performing in front of the congregation/audience, whereas in traditional synagogues all male members of the *minyan* were participants on an equal footing.

With the opening of the new synagogue on October 12, 1855, the Jewish community of Gothenburg gave their presence in city and society a hitherto unknown visibility. Since 1851, a *Cultuscommission* had been formed with the intention to create a modern *Bön, Synagog- och Ceremonialordning* (statutes of prayer and ceremonies, and synagogue regulations) that would frame the religious, social and aesthetic activities of the congregation, and it reported its results in good time

before the synagogue's consecration. All together, a new platform for Jewish life in Gothenburg had been created – a considerable achievement for an association numbering just 382 people (174 males, 208 females).⁴²

With the location of the synagogue on Stora Nygatan, a Jewish quarter also started to take shape, as several members of the congregation built their residences on adjoining blocks. Krüger designed a grouping of two symmetrically matching houses framing the synagogue, one of which was built for the businessman August Abrahamson, who later would play an important role as a cultural entrepreneur and patron.

In what half a century earlier had been a terra incognita, these 382 people had created a new world, contributing to a promising opening of culture and society. Not the promised land of the fathers, of course, but maybe the promised land of modernity?

The Importance of *Bildning*

S. A. Hedlund and National Liberalism

Early in 1852 publicist Sven Adolf Hedlund, age thirty-one, decided to leave Stockholm. After seemingly complicated negotiations, he had reached an agreement with the board of *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning* (“The Gothenburg Trade and Shipping Journal”), usually called only *Handelstidningen* or *GHT*), and he took up a position as one of the editors of the newspaper. It is likely that Hedlund did not realize the full significance of this step when he wrote a letter to the publisher and owner Magnus Prytz and offered his skills. *Handelstidningen*, which had been founded by Prytz in 1832, had a turbulent history during its previous years, with an ownership conflict and an embezzlement scandal as embarrassing details. The ambitious and self-confident Hedlund was looking for a platform for his political and cultural ideas, but there was no guarantee for success in Gothenburg. However, *Handelstidningen* was to become Hedlund’s haven for almost half a century. After six years in Gothenburg, Hedlund had taken over the journal, which he soon transformed into one of the first modern dailies in Sweden, a trend-setting mouthpiece for liberal convictions during an important transition period in Swedish history.

However, S. A. Hedlund was much more than a successful editor and publisher. He actually made Gothenburg his civic platform. When Hedlund arrived in Gothenburg, it had just around 30,000 inhabitants and hardly earned the epithet “city.” However, during the following five decades the population increased by 500%, and in 1900 there were 130,000 Gothenburg inhabitants.⁴³ Gothenburg was in fact one of the fastest growing cities in Scandinavia; only Oslo had a higher expansion rate. The traditional trading port was transformed into an industrial center, and as a social entrepreneur and politician, Hedlund was involved (often as the initiator) in the creation of most of the new cultural and social institutions that sprang up during this era of expansion and liberal reforms in Gothenburg. In fact, he embodies *Göteborgsandan*, the “Gothenburg spirit,” and when discussing his accomplishments with many a local patriot, I was met with some suspicion

when I pointed out the fact that he was originally from Stockholm. S. A. Hedlund, one of the dominating figures of Swedish national liberalism during the formative years of modern Swedish society, *chose* Gothenburg; in a way, he *emigrated* from Stockholm to Gothenburg in order to realize and implement his societal and political convictions.

There is not much in Hedlund's family background that seems to portend his subsequent career. His father was a farmer, the leaseholder of a royal estate in Eldgarn, an island in Lake Mälaren, about forty kilometers west of Stockholm. However, the family represented a very specific segment of Swedish rural society, a stratum of commoners that was of a more educated middle class than they were peasants. The father, Carl Adolph, was reasonably prosperous; the family kept a private tutor and it was decided that Sven Adolf, who early on showed his intellectual capacity, continued on to a higher education. In these circles, a clerical career in the Lutheran State Church, or a position as civil servant were the conventional options for those sons who didn't aspire to take over their fathers' farms. But Sven Adolf belonged to a generation that saw new perspectives opening up, even if it would take several decades until the transformation of Swedish society really gained momentum.

The setting in Eldgarn, in the midst of the idyllic inland archipelago of Lake Mälaren, in many ways represented traditional Swedish, agrarian society. The country was almost untouched by the industrial revolution, its economy, to a large extent, being based on subsistence farming. The nobility still dominated the political organs, and the political representation was based on *ständerna*, the system of four estates – *adel* (nobility), *präster* (clergy), *borgare* (burghers) and *bönder* (landowning peasants) – which together formed *riksdagen*, the diet. One of the few advantages of early nineteenth-century Swedish society in an international, comparative perspective was the educational level; beginning in the seventeenth century, the Lutheran State Church had seen to it that literacy was almost universal. However, the infrastructure of the comparatively sparsely populated, geographically extensive country was underdeveloped, a fact that hampered the modern economical development of the rich natural resources. Postal service was slow; traveling could be hazardous and very time-consuming. Roads were primitive, the rural inns a nuisance. Sea transport was preferred if possible; in winter the frozen lake

systems provided somewhat easier transportation in many regions. The journey from Stockholm to Gothenburg took several days, and after the trip the traveler would need a few days rest to overcome the physical hardships. Even the travel from Eldgarn to Stockholm was no simple suburban journey. There were very few bridges between the islands of Lake Mälaren's archipelago. Sailing, rowing, and towing were preferred methods of transportation.

In a place like Eldgarn, there would have been a great contrast between the agriculturally very busy summer months, and the long winter season. The Hedlunds and their farmhands and crofters would work day and night; barns, pantries and storehouses had to be filled up to the roof with hay, fodder and foodstuffs to provide for the long unproductive period – and to produce some surplus that could be sold at the marketplaces in Stockholm. In winter most outdoor work would be devoted to the woods of the estate and to the tending of equipment and buildings. “Industrialism still hadn't wiped out domestic industry and diligence,” wrote S. A. Hedlund's nephew Henrik in his 1929 biography of his father's brother, characterizing the atmosphere at Eldgarn.⁴⁴ But winter was also the season for parties and entertainment. The proprietors and leaseholders of *herrgårdar* (small noble estates) and larger farms – who actually were a kind of “gentry” – organized social coteries and invited each other to balls and Christmas parties. This very much was good old Sweden, as portrayed by Selma Lagerlöf in her classic novels and tales.

In late summer 1836, young Sven Adolf, at fifteen years of age, traveled to Stockholm in the company of his mother in order to undergo the examination for entry into high school. He already had a considerable classical education at this time, but the approaching examination had caused some nervousness. Having studied only with private tutors at Eldgarn, Sven had not been able to compare his capacity with schoolmates of the same age. However, he was accepted, and so he remained in Stockholm, quartered with a family in the St. Clara district. In his diary, he tells about his homesickness that first evening in his student's room, when he saw the last glimpse of the Mälaren barge that carried his mother back to Eldgarn.⁴⁵

After three years at the high school, Hedlund registered at Uppsala University, where he remained until 1844. His academic activities were interspersed with work as a private tutor for noble families, a common way of financing university studies.

This also provided an opportunity to create social networks that could be useful in the future. The scope of Hedlund's studies at Uppsala reveals the wide range of his intellectual interests. His studies were a mix of conventionalism and individualism, of practicality and intellectual speculation, which was likely typical. He qualified in economics as well as theology, and he polished his Latin writing. Gradually his interests in philosophy and history gained the upper hand, and he devoted much time to comparative linguistics, which at this time was quite a new discipline in Sweden. The systematic understanding of the historic relationships between the Indo-European languages and the formulation of the "laws" of phonetic language development opened new fascinating perspectives on cultural history. On the one hand, this fostered a Herderian attitude of cultural relativism everywhere in Europe that facilitated a break with the traditional Eurocentric paradigm. On the other hand, it became one of the ideological sources for the pan-movements, based on ideas of an almost metaphysical affinity and solidarity between language communities and families. Hedlund's dissertation for the degree of *filosofie kandidat* in 1844 was a translation of the Sanskrit tale of *Sunda and Upasunda* from the *Mahabahrata*.

The dominating figure in the humanities at Uppsala University during this period was the historian and poet Erik Gustaf Geijer (1783–1847). He was strongly influenced by contemporary German philosophical thinking on history and cultural identity in the aftermath of Herder, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. In 1811, Geijer became one of the founders of *Götiska förbundet* ("The Gothic society"), a cultural and political association of Swedish intellectuals aiming at "the revival of the spirit of freedom and virtues of the ancient Goths" – in early Swedish historiography, the Goths were seen as the heroic ancestors of the Götar, one of the medieval "nations" or tribes of southern Scandinavia. The formation of *Götiska förbundet* was one of the responses to the great political trauma of early nineteenth-century Sweden, the catastrophe of the war with Russia in 1809. The old Swedish kingdom was split in two, its eastern parts being annexed by the Russian Empire as the "Grand Duchy of Finland." In Stockholm this political disaster triggered a *coup d'état* and the king was forced to abdicate. A new constitution was promulgated that restricted royal power and opened the way for the subsequent liberal development of nineteenth-century Swedish society.

The events of 1809 caused a revision of the ambitions of the Swedish elite's traditional foreign policy. During the Thirty Years' War, the Swedish Lutheran state acted as the protector of Protestantism in Germany and the Baltic area. From 1630 to 1815 the northern German duchy of Pomerania remained under Swedish administration. Sweden was continuously present on the European continent; in fact it was only partly a Scandinavian state. The 1809 war led to the abandonment of the policy of European involvement in favor of an isolationist attitude. After handing over Pomerania to Prussia in 1815, Sweden was reduced to its present, Scandinavian borders. A process of modern nation building started. The poet and bishop Esaias Tegnér, who was one of the founders of *Götiska förbundet*, formulated the new agenda of Swedish intellectuals and politicians as being: *att inom Sveriges gränser erövra Finland åter*, "to regain Finland within the borders of Sweden," that is, to make the country prosper and develop in its new framework through cultural revival and hard work.

Politically, this attitude could have conservative as well as reformist implications. There was a widespread belief that the traditional institutions of Swedish society simply had to be confirmed and strengthened, and return to the basic values and virtues that had once given the Swedish state an important European position! "Heroic" kings of the past, such as Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII, were honored and idealized. On the other hand, the assessment of the 1809 events also led to the realization among growing segments of the political and cultural elite, that reforms were needed if the country was to keep pace with the accelerating transformations of the rest of Europe. The old monarchy had failed, and it ought to be replaced by something more vital, efficient, and viable. This was the start of Swedish nationalism, but also of political liberalism. The inner conflict of the post-1809 movement became clearly visible in the career of Geijer, who in 1838 publicly announced his secession from the conservative camp and started to advocate for far-reaching reforms. He now became the target of harsh attacks from his old political fellow travelers, but for the young generation in Uppsala he became an inspiring model.

We do not know if S. A. Hedlund attended Geijer's lectures, but it's clear that they met on other occasions. According to his biographers, Hedlund discussed his career options with Geijer. Deeply embedded in his philological and historical

enthusiasms, young Hedlund voiced his strong leanings towards academic archaeology. However, Professor Geijer's reaction was: "Our age needs practical men; that is what you ought to do."⁴⁶

A Practical Man

And he did. Hedlund was a practical man, and it was not Uppsala, but the European events of 1848 that definitely made him the *homo politicus* he would remain for the rest of his days. It all started in Paris. In February the demonstrations against the French monarchy escalated into street fights. After a few days the regime was toppled, and the second republic was proclaimed. A provisory government was installed, consisting of liberals and socialists. These events mobilized political activists all over Europe. In Stockholm *Reformvännernas sällskap*, the Reform Association was formed by a group of liberal-minded members of Parliament (*Riksdag*). They were deeply dissatisfied with the government's tricky delaying tactics concerning the question of the system of political representation, meaning the adaptation of the traditional Riksdag to the requirements of an emerging bourgeois, civil society. The Reform Association held frequent meetings, striving to reach an agreement on the new method of representation. At the sixth of these meetings, on March 16, S. A. Hedlund made his debut as a political orator. But Hedlund did not focus on the technical problems of parliamentarianism; he did not discuss voting methods and party organization. His speech was devoted to *Arbetarfrågan*, the working class question, the new socio-political problem that had become impossible to ignore, even in a backward country like Sweden where the modern working class still was in its diapers.

Hedlund points out that the new and really important aspect of the Paris events was the fact that an association of physical workers had been formed – a social organization that now demanded its political rights. And this is precisely the large issue of our age, Hedlund stresses, to provide the working class with civil rights. The traditional socio-political entities of Swedish society once had emerged from associations, he continues. When these voluntary associations were given power – as organizations such as guilds and estates – they soon had petrified into defenders of egoistic interests. They had forgotten their original purpose, to serve

the public. This must not happen again. The educated classes now have to accept their responsibility. It is their task to educate and enlighten the workers, to support them in their struggle to reach a level of ethics that would make them capable of exercising the power that their large number entitled them to.

A few days later, the reformists gathered at a restaurant at Brunkeberg Square in central Stockholm. Hedlund had written a speech, which he intended to conclude with a toast for freedom. Freedom; what is freedom, he asked. Until now, humankind only has asked for the negative aspect of freedom, freedom *from*; that is the liberation from bonds and oppression. That was easy to understand, since the external pressures had been overwhelming.

But freedom also has a positive aspect, freedom *to*, which each individual personally must develop. This freedom is not to be confused with a permission to do everything you like; that would be slavery under personal desires and whims. No, freedom is to allow the will of the individual to agree with the will of God, the law of the mind. One hears the echo of Hegel, but also of Herder.

Freedom as the law of the individual is confronted, of necessity, by the law of the general. These two principles have continuously been in conflict with each other, but this have been caused by the fact that neither of them had been what they ought to be. But when freedom has had its proper ingredients, and in spite of that has struggled with necessity, the latter always have been forced to yield. So it must be forever. The right of the individual to develop according to his inner law is unconditional; therefore necessity must make room in order not to be an obstacle to progress. Hedlund argued that with God's help, a harmony between individual and society would be obtainable,

Raising his glass for a toast at the end of his speech, Hedlund wanted to make clear that no external law of society should be allowed to obstruct the development of the law of any individual, and that necessity, in the end, should merge with freedom.⁴⁷

There are of course some undigested *Lesefrüchte* and naïve expectations in these speeches, but they are worth quoting here because they contain much of the core of Hedlund's thinking on social and political matters, ideas that he – with numerous realistic modifications – strove to implement during his coming years as a publicist

and politician. However, he never was allowed to propose his toast for freedom. In the street outside a crowd had gathered, and soon the demonstrations degenerated into a scuffle. A mob threw stones at the military and smashed the windows of the house of August von Hartmansdorff, the leader of the conservative faction. Barricades were built, the guardsmen were ordered to shoot; about thirty persons were killed.

In Stockholm the revolutionary unrest stopped after this early outburst. Hedlund tried to calm the spirits in the worker's education association of which he was a member. But he understood that something of historic dimensions was taking place in Europe. Since 1847 he had been writing book and theatre reviews for the daily *Dagligt Allehanda*, and in April 1848 he was asked to travel to Paris as its correspondent to report about the consequences of the February revolution. The three months in Paris became the great formative experience of his youth. Looking back at the Paris sojourn in one of his late articles from the 1890s he writes: "I admit that my letters were 'green' [naïve], but they were honest and they are a testimony to the sympathy I felt for the workers, a feeling that several times was revealed by the blots on the paper on which the letters were written, late in the evening."⁴⁸

Hedlund followed the complicated political course of events in the French capital, moving around in the city, sometimes under dangerous circumstances, especially during the grim street fighting that followed the workers uprising in June. In his reports, he voices a deep sympathy for the workers' cause, but he sharply criticizes the demagoguery of some of the radical revolutionaries. Reflecting over his experiences he came to the conclusion that independent workers' associations would be a necessary platform for the working class in its legitimate struggle for political rights and social and economic security. The old guild system and the patriarchal authority, which had characterized the traditional, pre-industrial society, had guaranteed a certain social security and regulated the connection between worker and employer. With these structures withering under the impact of industrialism and capitalism, new patterns of communication had to be established, and new connections between employer and worker created. In short, a regulated labor market had to be created, with employment agencies serving as brokers for the working force. Realizing the job-finding problems of many young

workers and artisans, in 1849 Hedlund personally started an employment office in his flat in Stockholm!

Hedlund's *arbetar-associationer*, "workers' associations," were they not a kind of trade union or syndicate? Yes, in a way, but according to Hedlund they actually had a higher purpose; they would be instruments used in a peaceful socio-economic transformation of society. Being organized as cooperative enterprises, where the workers had their share, both of the work and of the return, the associations ideally would be able to take over a considerable share of the production.

Back from Paris, Hedlund devoted himself more eagerly than ever to the reform cause. In the self-critical atmosphere created by the Stockholm riots, the initiative of the reform movement shifted away from the capital. A national reform meeting was held in 1850 in Örebro, an early industrial center that had become an important focus for the liberals. As editor of the local paper *Örebro Tidning* 1849–51, Hedlund had a prominent role in this historically important gathering of the reform forces. He still had not given up his ambition to reach a position in the Stockholm press, and in 1851 he managed to form an agreement with the leading liberal organ, *Aftonbladet*. But once there, he soon realized that he was in many ways regarded as too radical and free-spoken. Lars Johan Hierta, the founder of *Aftonbladet*, clearly realized Hedlund's talent, but he – somewhat ironically and a bit paternalistically condescending – called him *den unge fyren*, "the young zealot." No, Gothenburg was the right place for Sven Adolf Hedlund.

Missionaries of Bildning

In the Gothenburg Museum of Art, in a prominent position in a hall dedicated to Swedish nineteenth-century art, there is a painting that can give us an idea of the panorama that met Hedlund as he approached Gothenburg after the long journey from Stockholm in 1852. In the foreground we see two overloaded carriages on a dusty dirt road. After a passage through the narrow, forested valleys leading down from inland Västergötland, the carriages have just reached a point where the landscape opens towards the broad Göta älv estuary. In the background on the left, there is a glimpse of white facades and church spires. In the west, the dark clouds suddenly open up letting the sunshine illuminate the city of Gothenburg guarded



Geskel Saloman: "Emigrants on the road to Gothenburg". Oil painting, 1860s. Photo: Hossein Sehatlou
(© The Gothenburg Museum of Art)

by the massive forts The Lion and The Crown.

However, the painting, a large oil canvas by artist Geskel Saloman, is not just a picture of a decorative landscape. It must be interpreted as an ideological statement. Unlike most academic works of art of the period, its motif is not historic. Instead it formulates the big issue of the Swedish political debate of the period: reform, modernization, and consolidation. With his "Emigrants on the road to Gothenburg" the artist tries to give the impression of a snapshot from the roadside of Partille, a village that later was to become a suburb of Gothenburg. During his wanderings in the surroundings of the city, he actually met with people like these, chatting with them and asking them about their origins and destinations. Every detail in the painting – the clothing, the wagons, the blanket covering the load, the tiny cottage at the roadside on the right, the mile-stone in the foreground – are based on thorough research. Authenticity clearly is the ambition. Of course the picture is a studio composition by the artist, but the characters are based on real people, peasants who Saloman – not without difficulty – persuaded to pose for him during his summer expeditions along the west coast.⁴⁹

It is interesting that Saloman paints the two women in the picture looking back over their shoulders, toward the country that they now are leaving while the men and the boys have all their attention focused in the opposite direction, seemingly unaware of the fact that they just are passing the last mile-stone of the old country.

This is a representation of a social, economic and political problem: the living conditions in the kingdom of Sweden are so hopeless that an increasing segment of the population does not see any other solution than emigration. What should be done? The artist wants the audience at the 1868 exhibition of the Royal Academy of Art in Stockholm, where the canvas had its first exhibition, to discuss this question publicly. The painting is a summons to political action.

In this work of art, Saloman, in fact, summarizes the strivings and discussions of the two decades that had passed since the remarkable year of 1848. Some of the obstacles for progress had been removed by the political reform of 1866–67, which transformed the old Diet into a two-chamber parliament, but still much remained to be done. Meanwhile, emigration only accelerated.

A bright sunlight illuminates the western horizon, attracting the attention of the optimistic male emigrants. To them, Gothenburg is just a point of departure, a necessary station on the way to freedom and a better future. But Geskel Saloman's rays of sunlight also illuminate the city of Gothenburg, which is not only an emigration port for the many travelers on the roads of Sweden and on the northern seas, but the final destination. In 1852, S. A. Hedlund is also an *immigrant* to Gothenburg, as is the Jewish artist Geskel Saloman, who had arrived from Copenhagen two years earlier.

My research on nineteenth-century Gothenburg, to a large extent, deals with immigrants; individuals who were attracted to Gothenburg, who chose to settle at this specific location, and who saw it as a window of opportunity. And the contributions of S. A. Hedlund and Geskel Saloman added greatly to Gothenburg's attractiveness. They were partners in an ideological undertaking called *bildning*, a word for which there is no real equivalent in the English language. Since *bildning* is a central concept in the cultural milieu of nineteenth-century Gothenburg, I must deal with it at length here, and I will turn back to the subject several times in my effort to portray the spiritual climate that was the background for Abraham Baer's work.

Bildning is "education" in a sense, but education with a fostering aspect and an

ethical direction. The literary meaning of the word is “formation” or “creation.” *Bildning* can be said to be a process by which individuals, through a conscious effort, develop and raise their personal characters to a higher level of culture and human perfection.⁵⁰

Of course, Hedlund was not the originator of the *bildning* idea. However, he is one of its earliest and most eloquent propagators, and he formulated its central concepts in an article written already at the outset of his career. It is worth delving for a while in this document, which in fact was Hedlund’s debut in the press. It was printed in *Posttidningen* (“The Post Journal”) July 24th 1845.

“A highly *bildad* gentleman,” “a lady with a unusually high level of *bildning*,” those are expressions that we hear daily in urban and well-mannered circles, and when we ask about the precise content of the merit of these people, then we usually get an account of his or her charming manners and pleasant style of conversation; with one word, gentility; thus, this is *bildning* among a class of people.⁵¹

Hedlund then continues with an ironic description of the total lack of interest in political and social matters that is obvious in these well-mannered and fashionable circles, where it is impossible to take up a discussion about problems such as poverty and failing social institutions. Such a discussion will inevitably result in yawns and pitying remarks or just total indifference. Hedlund continues:

“Well, but true *bildning* is not to be equated with the capability of superficial conversation about the latest novels or theatre performances; it consists in a diversified and deep knowledge,” you might say. That is true, but the question is, if this is enough. The erudite who after a short conversation has made you totally convinced of your own ignorance, and displays a cynical misanthropy and pedantry – is he really a man of *bildning*?

... There must be something else that is needed, and that is exactly what our age overlooks: the moral foundation, that is, the ennoblement and *bildning* of the *heart*, not merely of the *intellect*.⁵²

Hedlund concludes his article with the following call for cultural and ethical commitment:

A nation where this false *bildning* prevails, where it is the polished surface that is desired and not the inner ennoblement of character; where a demarcation line between educated and uneducated is drawn in such a way that human dignity is not appreciated; where the feeling for Truth and Right doesn't animate the minds of the citizens: such a nation is weak and paralyzed, however great its physical strength is.⁵³

According to Hedlund, *bildning* cannot be measured quantitatively, and it is not only a question of courtesy and politeness either. *Bildning* is an inner quality of a holistic character, and it is not just the sum of an aggregate of disparate data. As the outcome of an effort toward the realization of the individual's highest human capacity, it also has an altruistic ring. A person who is *bildad* is liberated and is therefore capable of taking social responsibility in an emancipated society. On the level of the collective, the process of *bildning* even has a certain similarity to the process of psychoanalysis. By looking back into history, listening to the stories and dreams about the origins of the nation, collecting and analyzing the cultural heritage, a better understanding of the present condition could be reached. Among the liberals, the term *folkbildning* was used. On the one hand, this word means "*bildning* for the people." On the other hand it is also possible to translate it as "creation of a nation" or "nation-building."

It can be argued that the ethical and intellectual foundations that Hedlund sketches in his essay is a state of mind, or a faith in humanity, that might provide a secular substitution for traditional religion, as a sort of a *social* covenant or code of civilization that could function as a check on the liberated individualism of modernity.

"*The Common Good ...*"

"We will faithfully defend the *rights of the individual* without forgetting the *common good ...*" In a lengthy editorial published on December 6, 1852, Hedlund presents his program or policy for *Handelstidningen* and offers subscriptions to the paper

for the following year. We recognize many ideas from the 1845 article on *bildning*, but here these cultural and ethical principles broaden into the political realm. It is largely a liberal social program with a focus on social justice, rule of law, education, enlightenment and economic and technological progress. It is clearly stated that from now on, Hedlund is responsible for the important editorial material. And so it was to remain for a long time.

Typographically, the paper that Hedlund took over in 1852 was a rather primitive publication. The normal daily edition consisted of one folded printed sheet, resulting in a total compass of four tightly printed pages, each divided into four long columns of text. Illustrations were very sparse, and those that appeared normally were small, simple woodcuts. Over the coming ten to fifteen years *Handelstidningen* was transformed from something that looked almost like a seventeenth-century print, into a modern European daily, with a richly diversified typography and a clearly structured editorial content. Hedlund invested in modern presses and started his own printing house. The format of the paper also expanded considerably, as did the circulation.

Handelstidningen soon became the dominating daily of Gothenburg. In the new political landscape that took shape after the parliamentary reform of 1866–1867, its position was clearly social-liberal.⁵⁴ Facing the realities of emerging modernity, the liberal movement had split on the question of how to respond to the positive aspect of freedom, the freedom *to*, as Hedlund had expressed it in his 1848 speech. Hedlund's socially radical liberalism, with its moralistic focus on social justice, was confronted by a so-called moderate faction, characterized by laissez-fair economic liberalism of the Manchester brand. In the Gothenburg press, the daily *Göteborgs-Posten* had been the mouthpiece of the moderate movement since 1858, and this paper was, for years, the only serious contender to *Handelstidningen*. The relative success of *Göteborgs-Posten* partly was based on its somewhat more popular journalistic style. Toward the end of the century, *Göteborgs-Posten* became more conservative. Beginning in the 1880s, the two liberal papers were challenged by the emergence of a populist tabloid press. However, the full ideological consequences of this development were not obvious until after 1900.

In 1854 Hedlund married Stina Rudenschöld, and the couple created a solid

bourgeois home that became an important social and cultural meeting-place in Gothenburg. Stina was a congenial partner for Hedlund's private life-project and cultural endeavor, but with this liaison he also allied himself with an important educational reformer. Stina's father, Count Torsten Rudenschöld (1798–1859), was a well-known philanthropist and spokesman for the establishment of a compulsory school system. This system would guarantee a common cultural and ethical set of basic values for the nation, irrespective of social background. It would be a school system in which intellectual and physical work would alternate and interact with one another in a process of molding a student's character. These ideas strongly influenced Hedlund's thinking on educational matters and fused with his *bildning* concept.

Sven and Stina's home at Östra Hamngatan and the editorial office of *Handelstidningen* were, in a way, communicating vessels in a specific socio-cultural setting which had a lasting influence on the development of Gothenburg's cultural profile. In 1861, Hedlund's social circle was given a semi-organized form as *Diskuterande sällskapet*, The Discussion Club. This consisted of a dozen gentlemen, representing journalism, and the learned, legal and artistic professions. The kernels of the grouping were the young Jewish intellectual Carl Simon Warburg (the son of the economist Samuel Warburg and the nephew of the synagogue reformer Michael S. Warburg) and the writer and cultural historian, Viktor Rydberg, a close personal friend of Hedlund's. Around them we find the publicist and politician Carl Herslow; the pedagogue, educational reformer and politician C. J. Meijerberg; the museum curator A. W. Malm; the lawyer Aron Philipson; Moritz Wolff, the rabbi of the Gothenburg congregation; the Jewish teacher and preacher Meyer Ruben Henriques, and the artist Geskel Saloman. It is interesting to note the strong Jewish representation in the group; as we see, several of these persons actually held important offices in the Jewish congregation.

Saloman related in a letter, many years later, his recollections from the group's gatherings:

Our little club was ambulatory. ... I think that the host of the night was supposed to announce the subject of the discussions one week in advance, if I recall this correctly.

... The subject could be anything, communism, Darwin's theories, the justification of the ugly in art, etc. Often the discussion continued after dinner, but sometimes it ended before the meal, and in such cases the guests remained for less serious chats, sometimes with the hostess, sometimes in the manner of old bachelors. On such occasions, it was a real treat to listen to one of Viktor Rydberg's performances. He could imitate the lecture of a vicar in such a way that you got the feeling that you actually saw the congregation sitting there in the church weeping and devoutly listening to a heart-rending deliverance of the sermon.⁵⁵

"Our little club was really agreeable, as long as we kept it in its original form" another member of the circle, Carl Herslow, reports. "We debated an issue, often a fairly venturesome one, had a simple evening meal, and then we just talked wildly and unchained."⁵⁶

"Talking wildly and unchained"; the unrestrained discussions seem to have been the basic idea for *Diskuterande sällskapet*. This was a form of socio-cultural interaction that was not supposed to become too strictly organized; its function was to provide the background inspiration for the acts of "practical men" in Geijer's sense of the phrase. However, after some time, rumors of the lively discussions spread throughout the city; more and more people wanted to take part in the gatherings, and eventually the sessions were made public and moved to the assembly hall of Börshuset, the Stock Exchange Building, which was the usual place for public gatherings and events. But this also attracted some crackpots who were really too unchained; the discussions became unwieldy and the whole thing died out. The original circle of friends, however, continued their social intercourse. And much of the inspiration was channeled into political activity. Hedlund engaged himself in local politics, especially after the 1863 reform of the system of local government. He was elected to the new governing board of the city, the *stadsfullmäktige*, and unleashed an untiring pursuit of social and cultural questions, striving to implement his ideas of *bildning* and social progress. In 1866 he was also elected *riksdagsman*, member of the newly reformed Swedish parliament.

The significance of the intertwining of Hedlund's social activities among different

clubs and associations, with his political work, becomes obvious if we study the development of *Göteborgs konstförening*, the Gothenburg Art Association. The society was created on his initiative (and with substantial support from his friend Geskel Saloman) only two years after his arrival in the city. By cleverly, but discreetly playing off the wealthiest merchant families against each other he managed to collect a substantial founding capital. The art collection of the association became the kernel of the Gothenburg Museum of Art. In 1865 the museum organized an art school with Saloman as prefect that later evolved into an academic institution of national importance, the Valand School of Fine Arts.

Hedlund also was the initiator of *Göteborgs museum*, the still existing Göteborg City Museum, which opened in 1861 with the aim of functioning as a “*centrum i samhällsbygget*,” a hub in the wheel of the process of societal modernization. In the disposition of its collections and exhibitions, as well as in the organization of its governing board, the museum clearly expresses Hedlund’s bildning concept, with its fusion of cultural and political aims.⁵⁷

In an article published on May 1864, Hedlund proposed the creation of a higher educational institution of a new type, a kind of open academy of Gothenburg, based on his *bildning* idea. Hedlund’s new *högskola* was supposed to be an outspoken center of intellectual excellence. The professors would be recruited on the basis of their individual achievements, and there would not be any preconceived set of traditional disciplines. There would not be any degrees either – the aim of this institution was the free and personal intellectual and moral refinement of the students, not vocational training. Hedlund had many occasions to air these ideas in *Göteborgs bildningscirkel*, a *bildning* society in which he engaged shortly after his arrival and settlement in the city, and of course in many articles in *Handelstidningen*. A humble start was made during the 1870s with the city council’s decision to establish *Göteborgs Undervisningsfond* (an educational fund), and the organization of a series of public lectures began. But, it was not until 1891 that Gothenburg University opened its gates. However, Hedlund’s anti-utilitarian and idealistic educational concept met strong political opposition, and he had to accept that the university was organized along conventional lines, with exams and degrees.

Social and Political Questions

Hedlund's engagement in cultural policy issues in no way hampered his activities in social politics. In 1864, in the city council, he suggested the creation of a "committee on pauperism." The incipient process of urbanization and industrialization had led to a more or less spontaneous emergence of suburban slums and shantytowns, and to a substantial increase of street begging. The existence of a proletariat of a new kind became visible on the streets, and the social liberals were worried. The impressive city planning efforts of the 1850s and 1860s had been almost totally dedicated to the city center and the representative blocks around the new boulevards. If Gothenburg wanted to become "a model of an orderly, free and prosperous society," something had to be done with the dark spot that was visible on the otherwise "bright and promising picture."⁵⁸ The moderate liberals and the conservatives were hardly enthusiastic about this. They maintained that this was a question for the city's traditional poor relief board and private charity initiatives, and they regarded poverty as the consequence of moral deficiencies; a good and ambitious worker always would find employment. Hedlund and his supporters wanted to investigate the real root of poverty – unemployment – which they interpreted as a *structural* problem. They also pointed out the growing social segregation, as the city center had been converted into something of a reservation for the well to do.

The 1865 report from the poverty committee highlighted housing shortages and alcoholism as pressing issues for the city authorities. It called for public action; the city ought to take the responsibility for the large-scale construction of workmen's dwellings. However, the suggestions by the committee were largely disavowed. It was left to private initiative to solve the housing problem. In this situation, Hedlund supported the establishment of cooperative workers' building associations.

In Sweden, the Crimean war of 1853–56 provoked considerable concern for the state of the country's national defense, which at this time still was based on *indelningsverket*, a system created in the seventeenth century. This organization mirrored the traditional estate system in that the higher ranks were recruited almost exclusively from noble families, whereas the regular soldiers mainly were of peasant descent. Hedlund and the liberals maintained that within a modern national state, the defense must be a national concern, and they were, therefore, supporters of

the idea of a national conscript army. On top of this structural deficiency, the technical and personnel resources of the army were deemed insufficient. Some nationally minded activists actually considered the British-Russian conflict, which was partly played out in the Baltic area, to be an opportunity to regain Finland, if only the Swedish army had enough guts. Fortunately it did not, and the situation demonstrated the weakness and relative powerlessness of the country from the international perspective. This situation became even more obvious with the war in 1864 between Denmark and Prussia, where the Danes had to cede considerable territories to the emerging German superpower. There was a substantial popular support for the idea of a Swedish intervention on the side of the “Scandinavian brethren,” but in fact, the country would have been incapable of active warfare.

In this situation, there were private initiatives, starting in 1858, to set up a volunteer corps that would be able to supplement the state army in case of emergency. The movement, which became known as *Skarpskytterörelsen*, “The Rifle Volunteer Movement,” spread quickly over the country. In 1867 there were 304 associations with a total of more than 40,000 members. One of the first formally organized *Skarpskytte* associations was founded in Gothenburg in 1860, on the initiative of S. A. Hedlund, who also took active part in their exercises. He also used *Handelstidningen* to promote his ideas on the military question, and he also published a pamphlet titled “A Defense System of Sweden, Organized on the Basis of General Conscription”.

However, the significance of the *Skarpskytte* movement was more political and cultural than military. In the liberal campaigning on the question of political representation, the existence of an armed paramilitary corps actually became something of an asset. Hedlund is reported privately to have uttered, ironically: “If these guys in Stockholm are not willing to make sacrifices, we have 40,000 men in arms ...”

But, no *Skarpskytte* revolution broke out. After the reforms of 1866–67, the movement lost much of its momentum, and it was incorporated into the official military system. And strange as it may sound, Hedlund’s activities on this issue perhaps had more to do with his ideas of a civil society, a modern polity consisting of free citizens of the nation, not of *undersåtar*, subjects of the king. The nation must be founded on solidarity and personal and shared responsibility, but this had to be paired with tolerance and respect in the most sensitive of all cultural spheres – faith, belief, religion.



S. A. Hedlund and Viktor Rydberg ca 1890. (© Göteborg City Museum) GhmB_13459

The Faith of the Ancestors

Viktor Rydberg and the Identities of Cultural History

Well, if you have the courage and inclination to fight your way through like the Americans – and not fear trying a new profession if it becomes necessary, for example, going into a merchant trade or something like that as soon as you arrive here – then it's good. If you want to climb, you must take one step after another. You don't reach the top directly if you have high ambitions. Man hasn't got wings, he must climb ... But I don't want to lure you to come here. Your choice of career is yours and only yours, I don't know your inclinations – I mean, what kind of job you would like, but I think it's healthier, both for mind and body to choose something physical and mechanical instead of becoming an underpaid law clerk, digging in miserable trials.⁵⁹

Mina Rydberg wrote these words in a letter to her brother Viktor on October 23, 1854. Mina and her sister Hedda had recently immigrated to the United States, and now Viktor was seriously reflecting on following the emigration trail. But in the end, Rydberg's emigration became only domestic; he didn't embark from Gothenburg, where he had arrived in 1852 after studies at Lund University; he settled there, and the city became his New World.

Rydberg, who during the subsequent decades, was to become one of the most influential Swedish writers, was born in 1828 in the town of Jönköping, where his father was a caretaker and warder at the old castle jail. The family lived in very modest circumstances, and when the mother passed away during a cholera outbreak in 1834, the home broke up and the children were taken care of by other families.

Rydberg's career as a writer and journalist started in Jönköping in the late 1840s, but it was his affiliation with *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* that gave him a literary platform on a national level. The liberal Jönköping publicist Johan Sandvall, who had bought the paper in 1848, recruited him to *Handelstidningen*. However,

when in 1850, a conflict ensued between Sandvall and the previous owner, Rydberg had to give up his position. The complicated affair ended with Sandvall's escape to the United States after having been accused of fraudulent proceedings. It was only after S. A. Hedlund took over the paper in 1853 that Rydberg's important *Handelstidningen* period started. It was in fact Hedlund who, in 1855, discovered Rydberg's broad literary and scholarly talent, and he became his mentor and collaborator for many years to follow. A deep personal friendship developed between the two men, and their journalistic, literary and political activities actually were intertwined to the degree that they were seen as a "team." Rydberg lived for quite a long period in Hedlund's house on Östra Hamngatan, where he almost was regarded as a member of the family.

One of the best accounts of the Gothenburg intellectual milieu of the age is given by the literary historian Karl Warburg (1852–1918) in his extensive biography of Rydberg, published only a few years after Rydberg's death in 1895. Professor Warburg, (the son of Michael S. Warburg, one of the pillars of the Jewish community of the city and the initiator of the synagogue project), is regarded as one of the founders of modern Swedish literary history. His scholarly orientation was very much determined by his early and close contact with Rydberg and Hedlund, and beginning in 1877, he wrote literary reviews and essays for *Handelstidningen*.

On October 12, 1855, Rydberg and Hedlund along with several of their friends and colleagues took part in an event of historical importance – the inauguration of Gothenburg's new synagogue. The following day, a lengthy and detailed report of the occasion was printed in *Handelstidningen*. The author of the article is not indicated, but it has been suggested that it is one of Rydberg's earliest contributions to the paper under Hedlund's aegis.⁶⁰ This is possible, but in the light of Rydberg's output of the 1850s, it seems more likely to have been written by Hedlund. I quote it here at length, since it gives a vivid introduction to what was to become the main theme of Rydberg's literary work for more than a decade (and of Hedlund's political strivings) – the issue of religion and politics.

Yesterday in the afternoon an extraordinary solemnity took place here in our city, namely the consecration of the new synagogue of the Mosaic congregation. This new church building [sic], which is located on Östra Larmgatan,

with one facade facing the park of Trädgårdsföreningen, is designed by the architect Krüger in a mixture of Byzantine and Moorish styles. It distinguishes itself not only by its beautiful façade, but also by its neat and tasteful interior. The roof and the walls are decorated with arabesques, the galleries painted in oak color, and the pillars and ornamentation surrounding the tabernacle are executed in stuccowork. At the opposite end of the building there is an organ gallery with a new instrument, built by the distinguished organ builders Marcussen. Precious chandeliers hang from the roof. This all gives not only an impression of solemnity; it also has an air of cheerful comfort. A Hebrew inscription above the portal reads "Blessed be he, who comes in the name of the Lord"; over the tabernacle "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One," above the back gallery "Praise God in his Sanctuary"; and over the organ gallery "All souls praise the Lord."

A great number of celebrities and people of authority had been invited to the consecration, and tickets had been distributed to private citizens, many who also turned up.

...The solemnity opened with a procession of the elders of the congregation, who brought the Torah scrolls, that is, the parchment scrolls on which the Pentateuch is written, to its sacred repository (the tabernacle). This whole ceremony was accompanied by organ and choir music, and numerous prayers were read. When the Torah scrolls had been inserted and the sacred space had been closed, a cantata was performed, consisting of alternating solo, aria, recitative, choir and solo quartet, after which a hymn was sung that was concluded with a fugato Hallelujah. This was followed by a sermon given by the rabbi of the congregation, Dr. Heinemann, by another hymn and at last by the consecration prayer, also performed by Dr. Heinemann.

...This extraordinary ceremony did not fail to make a deep and wonderful impression on the participants, both members and non-members of the Mosaic congregation. The former must find it elevating and encouraging seeing their new devotional room now being inaugurated, bringing edification and confirmation for them and their descendants, The latter could not, without reverence, contemplate this millennial tradition, which,

although in somewhat changed forms, faithfully preserves the holy service and sacred memories of old Israel. It also was an encouraging testimony of a more elevated and prejudice-free spirit to find members of different creeds assembled in harmony, each of them expressing a deep feeling of respect for each other's convictions.

The music for the consecration ceremony was composed by our clever musician and director Mr. Czapek, who has been accepted as organist at the Mosaic congregation, which thereby has demonstrated a totally different character of religious tolerance than can be found at the Gothenburg consistory, where it was unthinkable to have Mr. Czapek, a Catholic, as music teacher for school children.

Today a service has been given in the new church, according to the new ritual with a shortened Torah-reading and some prayers and psalms in the Swedish language. The schoolmaster Henriques, who has been appointed second preacher of the congregation, read the sermon.

We congratulate the Mosaic congregation, not only for its new, eminently beautiful church, but also for the new order of its divine service, in which a successful solution for the problem of how to combine the contemporary devotional requirements of the members of the congregation, with the traditional claims of maintenance of all that which constitutes the identity of ancient Mosaic religion.

We also congratulate the Mosaic congregation for having so many generous members who made it possible to erect a building like the new synagogue; members, who by such acts will contribute to an increase of the esteem both for themselves and for their co-religionists. This will eradicate all remnants of the medieval prejudices that still may prevail, assisted by commercial envy, against the believers of the faith from the womb of which our own religion sprang.

The positive and respectful tone of the article indicates that this is more than just a report from a public event. It should be seen in the context of Hedlund's and Rydberg's *Kulturkampf* of the 1850s and 1860s, the campaign against the dogmatism

and religious monopoly of the Lutheran State Church. The two works that gave Rydberg national fame, the novel *Den siste athenaren* ("The Last of the Athenians", 1859) and the polemical theological treatise *Bibelns lära om Kristus* ("The Biblical Teachings about Christ", 1862), both deal extensively with the problems of faith, power, and freedom. In Rydberg's struggle with these sensitive and difficult matters, his stance towards Judaism came to play an important role. His attitude seems to have been considerably modified in those years, and I think this is due to his contact with the liberal Judaism of the Gothenburg community. In Hedlund's circle and in *Diskuterande sällskapet* he had direct access with several people who had considerable insights into the contemporary strivings of Jewish reformers and researchers on the continent: Rabbi Moritz Wolff, Carl Simon Warburg, Geskel Saloman, and Meyer Ruben Henriques.

Viktor Rydberg and the "Honorable and Thinking Mosaites"

In order to clarify this theoretical and ideological process, I take an excursion into Rydberg's just mentioned works. The plot of "The Last of the Athenians" (which originally was published as a serial in *Handelstidningen* in the spring of 1859) is set in late antiquity. Christianity, which for centuries has been a subversive, clandestine faith of the oppressed, is now being established as an official state religion. The church thereby takes over the hierarchic organizational patterns of Byzantium and becomes an instrument for ruthless careerists, like the novel's bad guy, the bishop Petros, who, using all means at hand, strives to gain control of the heritage of the noble-minded and wealthy heathen philanthropist and Platonist Krysanteus (who is "the last of the Athenians"). In the process, the message of Christianity is distorted and corrupted. Rydberg sees original Christianity as much closer to the Platonism of late antiquity than to the intolerant clerical doctrine that became politically victorious in the twilight of the classical Mediterranean world. The hero, Krysanteus, embodies the serene sophistication of an enlightened Greek philosophy that, in its natural process of maturity, tended towards a deistic, monotheistic stance in which Christ with deep sympathy could be interpreted as a neo-platonic. The messianic tradition of Judaism that came to its Christian fulfillment in Jesus had been modified by the influx of Hellenistic ideas in places like Alexandria. Through

the confrontation and dialogue with Greek thought, the particularism of Judaism was “overcome” and transformed into the universalism of Christianity.

The struggle between personal faith and politically loaded orthodoxy takes place on several levels in the novel. There is, for example, the rich Jewish merchant and slave-trader Baruch, who supports the idea of the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple and represents the stubborn national particularism and seclusion of the Jewish community. His daughter, Rakel, falls in love with an epicurean Greek, but this liaison is of course unacceptable to her father and the rabbis. In the end, a fanatical rabbi kills Rakel’s lover with a poisoned dagger. A narrow-minded and dogmatic temple Judaism strives to preclude the rapprochement of Hellenism and Judaism.

However, “The Last of the Athenians” is only superficially a historic novel; it is of course a contribution to the contemporary Swedish debate on religious tolerance. Powerful, state-ordained, dogmatic priests or rabbis are found on the one side; freethinking, emancipated men and women on the other side. Many of Rydberg’s readers saw in fact S. A. Hedlund behind the figure of Krysanteus; Hedlund the champion of the liberal press, the advocate of freedom of conscience and the rights of man, struggling for secularised *bildning* against state-supported intolerant neo-Lutherans, creationists and fundamentalists.

For the modern reader it seems strange and even disgusting that a book that is part of a discourse about religious tolerance may contain such Judeophobic stereotypes as the above mentioned. But Rydberg seems to use these traditional Christian stereotypes in order to highlight the general problem of orthodoxy versus reformism. The Jew Baruch symbolizes the traditional patriarchal Jewish establishment, which cannot accept change and clings to old rituals and commandments.

Rydberg’s thinking here is based on a grand dichotomy, which is clearly stated in the preface (dedicated to Hedlund), which Rydberg added when the serial was published as a book. The basic dualism in the development of civilization is *orient* versus *occident*. According to this orientalist vision, the oriental spirit has deep and venerable roots in the early history of mankind. However, it represents something static, inflexible, hierarchic and collectivistic. It is tradition for tradition’s sake. Despotism is its political expression. Its historical antithesis is the occident, western civilization and mentality as introduced by the Greeks. The stiff oriental orthodoxy

of Old Testament Judaism needed the fertilization of liberal western, that is to say, Greek philosophy in order to produce the teachings of Christ. And here, in this dialectic process, lies the “meaning” of religious history. The occident might be the land of the setting sun, but it is the real *Morgenland*, the land of the future, and it will prevail. However, Rydberg sarcastically proclaims, even if the oriental spirit has its roots in the east, it is not limited to Asia; “oriental minds are born not only beside the Ganges, they can also be found on the shores of the Seine and Lake Mälaren,” in Paris and Stockholm. The orient – occident dichotomy is used sweepingly as a metaphor for oppositions such as darkness and light, evening and morning, despotism and liberty, oppression and freedom, reaction and progress.⁶¹

The “Jews” which Rydberg conjures up are of course symbolic creatures; they are the conceptual Jews of 1800 years of Christian altercasting. If, with his novel, he had wanted to evoke an instant antipathy towards the “oriental” principle in history, he hardly could have chosen a more effective means. These symbolic Jews were already present in the minds of his readers, as part of both the Lutheran ideology and its world picture that had been propagated for generations. It was an integrated aspect of the Swedish symbolic universe, and, it had in fact, been reinforced by the previous non-existence of a Jewish population within the realm. The symbolic Jew could live his own imaginary but powerful life in Sweden, being evoked in political debates and religious exegesis, without ever being challenged by any real, living Jews. During the twentieth century, Jönköping, the birthplace of Rydberg, ironically was given the epithet “the Jerusalem of Småland,” referring to the town’s numerous evangelical sects and prayer houses. However, during Rydberg’s early years, this was definitely a Jerusalem without Jews – except for the powerfully symbolic ones.

Göteborg was different. In Hedlund’s circle, Rydberg was acquainted with living Jewish people, and he had ample occasion to discuss questions of Jewish history and theology with Moritz Wolff and Ruben Meyer Henriques. As a scholar, Wolff had dealt extensively with the important Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (24 BC–40 AD), who is regarded as a valuable link between pre-Christian Judaism and Hellenism, and here he would have provided Rydberg with interesting material. Rydberg would also have had the opportunity to borrow books from Wolff and to order literature from the continent on the rabbi’s recommendation. We

have no documentation about the exact content of these discussions. *Diskuterande sällskapet* was, per definition, an informal association, and no minutes were written down. But concerning Rydberg's own books, we are quite well informed. After the author's death, his private library was donated to Nordiska museet in Stockholm, where it still is kept. A look into the catalogue and some of the books gives an impression of the author's possible reading of Jewish scholarly literature during the 1850s and -60s. He owns a copy of J. M. Jost's important work *Geschichte der Judentum und seiner Sekten*, which was published in Leipzig in 1858 in the series *Schriften herausgegeben vom Institut zur förderung der israelitischen Literatur*.⁶² Another book in the same series is Julius Fürst's *Geschichte des Karäerthums bis 900 der gewöhnlichen Zeitrechnung* (Leipzig, 1862). Rydberg also owned a set of the *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Juden* from the years 1860–69, a periodical published by the above-mentioned Leipzig Institute. We also find Wolff's important German translation of Maimonides from 1863, a collection of Jewish sermons in the Swedish language, as well as a collection of psalms composed for the synagogue service in Gothenburg, both by M. R. Henriques.

Several of Moritz Wolff's later works are also to be found in the library, a fact that illustrates the continuous, friendly contact between the rabbi and Rydberg right up to the death of the latter in 1895. Their contact also is documented by several letters in the Rydberg collection at *Kungliga biblioteket* (the National Library of Sweden) in Stockholm.⁶³

In Rydberg's next major work, *Bibelns lära om Kristus* ("The Biblical Teachings about Christ"), his new insights into Jewish history and religion become more manifest. The immediate stimulus for the work was an ecclesiastical controversy around a freethinking *lektor* Ljungberg, a member of the Gothenburg diocese consistory. Ljungberg was accused of having denied the divinity of Christ in his writings and was therefore threatened with exclusion. The case brought about a considerable debate in the press, in which Rydberg first took part with several articles, and then with his theological examination into the sources of the Christian faith. His aim was to demonstrate that the authoritarian state church had built its dogmas partly on dubious and distorted traditions, and that the Christian Bible actually contained some fake medieval additions that ought to be discarded. It was especially the au-

thenticity of the dogma of the Trinity that Rydberg challenged. Of course the treatise was written from a Christian viewpoint, and the conventional Lutheran idea that Christianity represents a “higher” and more mature form of religion than Judaism was not seriously put in question. But Rydberg wanted to demonstrate that the idea of the Messiah and the background for the teachings and actions of Jesus must be understood in its Jewish, historical context. In his view, Christianity springs partly from opposition to the established Temple Judaism, but Judaism also represents a venerable tradition of monotheism without which Christianity would not have been possible. In many ways, Rydberg seems to identify with the Judeo-Hellenes of classical Alexandria. Metaphorically, his discussions with Wolff, Hedlund, Warburg and Henriques take place in a modern Alexandria called Gothenburg, a city characterized by its vivid interfaith connections and liberal intellectual climate. Philo could have been invited to one of the gatherings where Rydberg entertained his friends with his satiric mimicry of vicars and preachers. However, it is a city that is surrounded, or even besieged, by intolerant fundamentalists dressed in black.⁶⁴

In *Bibelns lära om Kristus* the Judeophobic and anti-Judaistic stereotypes have disappeared. This might partly be a result of the work’s more scholarly character compared to the somewhat public-pandering serial novel *Den siste Athenaren*, but it seems likely that Rydberg, through his Jewish reading and through his discussions with Wolff, C. S. Warburg, M. R. Henriques, et al., had begun to see through the deeply ingrained Christian clichés about Jews and Judaism. He knew the symbolic Jew very well – he had portrayed him with expertise in his novel. However, some actual Jews had now entered his world, and his discourse on things Jewish became considerably more realistic and nuanced. As we read Rydberg we see him presenting the presence of enlightened Jews, just like once in Alexandria, Jews who not only read the Torah but also, are well versed in modern philosophy. Their struggle for reform and modernization deserves the support from the progressive circles, as part of the general process of liberalization and emancipation. The Judaism that he met in Gothenburg seemed to have nothing of the stiff legalism, conservatism, or even fanaticism that he had conjured up in his novel; it rather stood out as the most tolerant religious milieu in the city.

Rydberg’s thinking on religion, as expressed in *Bibelns lära om Kristus*, basically

stems from the tradition of Christian enlightenment exegesis, a tradition which tried to do a quite remarkable trick – namely, to rationalize the irrational, to interpret the revelation and the sacrum in intellectual terms, rather than in emotionally laden metaphors and ritual performance. This is also an evolutionist paradigm, in which the rationalist break from “superstition” and supernaturalism was seen as the opening of a new era of cultural and societal perfection. Enlightened Christianity, in a way, appeared as the final product of a long teleological process. However, in this thinking, the Old Testament tended to be seen in contrast to the New Testament, instead as a harbinger of the gospel, as it had been used in traditional pre-enlightenment exegesis. The Old Testament now represented a “primitive stage” of collectivist tribal religion, which was prevailed over by Pauline Christianity. In an essay about the Jehovah-cult of the Hebrews, Rydberg claims that the faithful Jewish monotheist would be stunned and surprised by the fact that such an ugly teaching ever could have carried in its womb the seeds of such a noble form of religion. He would look at that ancestor with the same feelings that civilized and refined men experienced when receiving the human family tree of Darwin.⁶⁵

“The Faith of the Forefathers”

Strangely enough, the old Hebrews of the era of the patriarchs could also be seen as cultural heroes, as fierce and stubborn messengers of early monotheism, whose primeval purity nevertheless soon was compromised by weakly Canaanite customs. The pristine world of Moses and Aron and the desert migration of the Hebrew tribes could be seen as a universal symbol for the journey of mankind from the slavery under nature to the freedom of culture. This actually became the theme for one of Rydberg’s most famous poems, the text for the festive cantata performed in connection with the 400-year anniversary of Uppsala University in 1877.

This idea goes back to Johann Gottfried Herder, whose contradictory thoughts about the Hebrews and the Jews play an ominous role in the development of early German nationalism. To Herder, the old Hebrews actually represented the model nation – a community created and defined by its language, its religious idea, and by the promised territory it carved out for itself. In his *Vom Geist der hebräischen Poesie* (1782) he enthuses over Hebrew poetry, praises its profundity and originality,

and even sets the Hebrew above the Greek and the Roman. Judaism, as it later developed, he describes as “degenerated” religion. Herder even argues that Judaism after Moses is a “decrepit corpse,” and that its influence on Christian religion should be uprooted to make room for a more German Christianity, just as other nations ought to develop their specific forms of Christianity.⁶⁶

Here we see how Old Testament exegesis actually plays an important role in the establishment of the *nationalist* mind-set. This becomes very obvious in the work of Viktor Rydberg after 1870. After a personal crisis during the 1860s, he turned to the study of the “faith of the forefathers,” that is, the Scandinavian, pre-Christian forefathers, which he presented in 1887 in a popular book titled *Fädernas gudasaga* (“The Sacred Saga of the Ancestors”).

In 1879, the Norwegian scholar, Sophus Bugge, gave a lecture in which he demonstrated that there are considerable Greco-Roman, as well as Christian, influences in Norse mythology. Similar ideas were presented by another Norwegian researcher, A. C. Bang, who pointed out similarities between the *Voluspá* (one of the core poems of the Icelandic Edda) and the Greek Sibylline oracles. These suggestions, which today look quite uncontroversial, caused a scholarly feud in which Rydberg became one of the most conspicuous protagonists. Bugge’s and Bang’s observations seemed to relativize and challenge the originality and “purity” of Norse and Scandinavian culture and mythology. To Rydberg, the Edda and the Icelandic saga literature represented a central aspect of his “Nordic” identity. Apparently, he was alarmed, nearly overwhelmed, by his own feelings of loss of identity and this triggered an immense effort to explain and clarify the “faith of the ancestors.” Rydberg devoted almost a decade to a penetrating but very speculative study of the old manuscripts and of their different scholarly interpretations. This seems to have been connected to his engagement with religious tolerance. Everybody must have the right to access correct knowledge of the faith of their fathers, and he regarded *asatron*, Norse mythology, as this original Scandinavian faith. In “The Sacred Saga of the Ancestors”, he interprets the obscure and unsystematic traditions of the Edda as a “historical” narrative, based on a concept of origin, exodus and arrival to the Promised Land. In a way, he seems to have been striving to create a Kalevala for the Swedes, or a Pentateuch for the Scandinavians – an almost holy scripture, telling about the origin

and wanderings of the forefathers and their confrontation with the godly powers.

In scholarly circles, his mythological research was received with skepticism, and he became involved in a harsh polemic with academic historians of religion.

He published the result of his toil in the two-volume work *Studier i germanisk mytologi* ("Studies in Germanic Mythology"), 1886–1889. "The Sacred Saga of the Ancestors" is a popularized version, dedicated to Swedish youth, and written in a very peculiar, archaizing language.

To many of his friends, this enormous effort to create meaning and structure out of an incoherent corpus of obscure medieval tales and poems was puzzling and even disturbing. He appeared to be obsessed by his speculations. Rydberg's Jewish friend and biographer, Karl Warburg, politely discusses the motivations for his Germanic odyssey, but it is obvious that he regards the author's period of Norse mythological study as an artistic and intellectual *cul-de-sac*.

Tactics of Tolerance

Now we return to the redaction of *Handelstidningen*, where much energy during the 1850s and 1870s was devoted to the issue of religious tolerance.

Almost immediately after his take-over of *Handelstidningen* in the autumn of 1852, S. A. Hedlund wrote a programmatic article on the religious question, in which he accuses many liberal-minded intellectuals of a blameworthy indifference. He suggests that they claim that all the necessary freedoms already exist; those restrictions that one finds are required by the need to stop the actions of Jesuits and revivalists. But Hedlund maintained that the question of religious freedom was one of the central problems of contemporary Swedish society. The fusion between church and state is a contradiction for true Protestantism, which requires the individual to take a personal stand in matters of faith. This suppression and authoritarian tutelage also fosters a subversive spirit, which produces sectarianism. The Christians would reach a higher level of religious unity if it were looked for in the moral realm, and not in a dogmatic system. America is referred to as a model; there Christianity is more widespread and vigorous than anywhere, and this is due to universal religious tolerance and the separation of state and church.

In this first article the situation of the non-Christians is not touched upon, but

during the following year, the question of Jewish emancipation is taken up at least fifteen times in the paper. However, it is not a systematic campaign; the issue is commented on now and then in many different types of editorial material, and the situation of the Jews in other countries, such as Prussia and the Ottoman Empire, is also discussed. For Hedlund, the fundamental idea is the respect for everyone's right to cultivate the faith of his ancestors. The religious feelings which are inculcated since childhood are central and indispensable components of personal identity, and the hampering of their cultivation is harmful to a citizen's identification with their social environment, and therefore to society at large. The Jewish emancipation became a touchstone for this principle of tolerance. The full integration of the Jewish congregations into a religiously pluralistic civil society was the political objective of Hedlund's circle. However, it is important to point out that it was the principle of tolerance that ruled. It was the right of the Jews to be *different* that was at stake, and the recognition of this right did not automatically imply an embracement of Judaism as such. So in a way, the otherness of the Jews gave the tolerant liberals an opportunity to demonstrate their open-mindedness. This is illustrated by an episode at a synod in Falköping in 1865, where Hedlund and Rydberg took part in a public discussion. Hedlund started with an attack of the clergy's authoritarian tutelage of the laymen. There ought to be a much bigger place for lay influence in clerical matters, he maintained, quoting St Paul's opinion that "everybody in his place should be a Christian priest." The next item on the agenda was "the conversion of the Jews." Here Hedlund remarked that in his discussions with several "honorable and thinking mosaites" he had learned, that if Christianity wants to see any progress in this mission, it must think of its own reformation. Conversion to Christianity may be socially advantageous, but there is a fear that such a step would result in the loss of the belief in *one* God.

"With these words Hedlund and Rydberg left the conference, and an excited murmuring broke out in the audience, resembling a storm."⁶⁷

In 1866, Hedlund was elected a Member of Parliament in the new, two-chamber Parliament (*Riksdag*) in Stockholm. The question of religious tolerance he could now discuss, not only as a publicist, but in a formal political forum as well. The political situation during these years was somewhat unclear since the formation

of political parties was only in its inception. A modern political landscape was gradually taking shape, with a conservative right dominated by the land-owning gentry and clerics, and a radical liberal left. In between these, a moderately liberal, rural faction of peasants and landowners, *Landtmannapartiet* was formed (it would take more than twenty years until the social democratic labor movement was established in Sweden). Though critical of some of the more shortsighted interests of the rural politicians, Hedlund sided with *Landtmannapartiet*, even if the down-to-earth pragmatists among the party's leadership expressed some irritation over his idealist outspokenness.⁶⁸

However, in the subsequent elections of 1869, Hedlund declined re-election, instead convincing his friend Rydberg to run.⁶⁹ Rydberg was, quite unexpectedly, nominated by the Gothenburg financier and industrialist David Otto Francke. Almost reluctantly, he took his seat in the *Riksdag* in Stockholm, apparently having difficulties identifying with any of the emerging party-like formations. However, his maiden speech in the parliament on February 16, 1870, was a successful feat of rhetoric and was much commented on in the press. It dealt with the still unsolved question of religious tolerance in the state administration, that is, the emancipation of the non-Lutheran citizens. Even if the repression of Christian sectarians and the absolute religious monopoly of the state church had been abolished through the reforms of the 1850s, non-Lutherans were still excluded from working in the service of the state. Rydberg's speech contributed considerably to the *Riksdag*'s subsequent decision on emancipation.

III

Transcriptions

Abraham Baer, *der practische Vorbeter*

On February 29, 1876, the readers of *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* could find the following advertisement on page three.

The editors with pleasure make room for the subsequent remarkable subscription announcement:

Israelite Church Songs
(The Practical Vorbeter)

by

A. Baer

Cantor at the Mosaic congregation in Gothenburg

These sacred songs which, during different epochs and under shifting conditions, have deeply influenced the religious life of the Israelite congregations, and which have also aroused the interest of non-Jews, were created over several centuries. According to the erudite opinion of Dr. Philippon, several of these songs can be traced back to the singing in the Temple and, generally, to oriental melodies.. Their origins and development are consequently wrapped in obscurity. Since these songs are based on an oral tradition, the scholarly efforts to clarify their history have not been very successful. It has been demonstrated that some of them are derived from Spanish and Portuguese folk melodies.

The time has come to collect these ancient songs in a work that might be of interest both in an ecclesiastical context as well as for the historians of music.

For many years, I have been busy collecting and noting down the songs of the different rituals. For those prayers, the melodies of which are forgotten, I have composed music in the spirit of the texts.

...

The work that I now want to make public and bring into the hands of the Israelite congregations, consists of around 125 printed sheets, which means that it has been considerably expanded in relation to my original announcement that included only 70 sheets. The number of old melodies is about 1500, to which are added around 20 of my own compositions.

This expansion, as well as other circumstances, like the increased printing costs, necessitates a rise of the subscription prize to thirty (30) kronor Swedish currency.

...

While, I now respectfully offer a new subscription for this work, I beg that it might be benevolently received and that its imperfections be mildly judged.

The printing of the work will start as soon as a sufficient number of subscribers have been received.

The work will be published in four volumes (each 7:50 kronor), which I will distribute to the subscribers in the order of their appearance.

Gothenburg in February 1876

A. Baer

S. A. Hedlund, who was very much involved in this very unique book project likely formulated the proud introduction to the generously spaced subscription offer. One would think that Abraham Baer could have offered his manuscript to a publishing house. However, considering its pioneering character it certainly would have been difficult to have it accepted by a publisher. Printing would be a costly undertaking; and there was a question of who was actually going to buy such a book – hardly the musically interested layman. This was a very demanding publication, which required insights into Jewish religious and liturgical traditions. Jewish cantors, of course, were the primary target group, but how many Jewish cantors were there in Sweden? Baer had to be his own publisher, and he needed support. Hedlund recruited subscribers among his friends and colleagues, and he offered to print a public subscription advertisement in his newspaper; this of course also was a

political demonstration of his firm principle of religious tolerance. The spreading of Jewish cultural traditions certainly did not earn him sympathizers among Lutheran fundamentalists.

The subscription advertisement marked the conclusion of a complicated and difficult creative process that had begun almost fifteen years earlier in connection with a generation shift in the staff of the Gothenburg synagogue in 1862. It was then that Baer realized the severe fragmentation of the musical traditions of Judaism and the growing confusion concerning the theological and aesthetic standards of worship and liturgy. These problems would not have been quite so obvious to him when he first climbed up the steps to the *bimah* and stood before the *amud* of the Gothenburg synagogue on September 6, 1857, giving his public trial service in front of the whole congregation. The week before, he had performed at an audition with the board of the synagogue, and their response had been enthusiastic.

His high tenor voice, his coloratura, his improvisations and interpretative skill won him immediate acclaim; the accurateness of his musical ear was proved by his ability freely to modulate from any theme in a randomly chosen tonality.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, the public performance must have been a nerve-wracking moment for the twenty-two-year-old Abraham Baer. The Gothenburg congregation represented a Swedish-speaking new world, and Baer did not know much about Sweden and the conditions of Judaism in the country. What were the musical and religious preferences of these people? For a cantor, the relationship with the ordinary members of his congregation is of utmost importance. They must be able to perceive him as their spokesperson and representative in front of God. How would they react? His future was at stake. The mere travel from his native Polish Prussia to Gothenburg was a costly undertaking, and he had no guarantee for success. When he projected his bright and bold melisma into the resonant space of the new synagogue, he had to demonstrate his full technical competence, but he also was supposed to move the audience, to appeal to their Jewish feelings, and not only to their formal judgment. But what was it that these people in Gothenburg wanted?

At last the morning of the important day broke. With a trembling heart, he started his performance, the synagogue was overcrowded; soon he regained his confidence, the congregation was very satisfied, and three days later he was offered a contract for an immediate appointment.⁷¹

A Town in Netzeland

What brought Abraham Baer from Poland, the center of Ashkenazic Jewish culture, to Sweden, its absolute periphery? The story starts in Netzeland, a tiny and forgotten strip of land, for a long time almost a no man's land, one of the many disputed historical territories in Central Europe. To understand how this life story came about, we have to "reconstruct" Netzeland, since its traditional culture has been wiped out by the atrocities of twentieth-century European politics. Of course, the Netze River still winds through the partly wooded, agrarian landscape of present-day northwestern Poland, contributing to the Warthe and the Oder, some 200 kilometers westwards.

For many centuries, the strip of land along the river was part of the kingdom of Poland, forming its border zone towards germanized Pomerania. When the Polish state was wiped off of the political map in a series of "partitions" during the latter half of the eighteenth century, it was annexed, in 1772, by what may be regarded as one of Poland's successor states, the rising Prussian conglomerate. Protestant Berlin now became the political and cultural center, supplanting the traditional links to Catholic Warsaw and Kraków, which had been annexed by Russia and Austria respectively. However, the German presence in these areas was no novelty. Ethnic German settlements had existed since the Middle Ages, but this should not be interpreted as an expression of a concerted German imperialism, rather as a result of the function of the structural peculiarities of the old Polish kingdom. Ethnic pluralism, coexistence and interdependence belonged to a general central European pattern.

With its eastward expansion, Protestant Prussia also – somewhat reluctantly – acquired a substantial Jewish population. In the original core provinces of Brandenburg-Prussia, the conditions of Jewish life had been severely restricted. The Jewish congregations were tiny, scattered, and humbled. In Berlin, Jews had



Wilhelmstrasse, Filehne. Ca 1900

been allowed to settle, beginning in 1671. In Poland, on the other hand, a full-scale Jewish society had developed during the late Middle Ages. The Prussian authorities, in their traditional systematic way, started to deal with the substantial Jewish presence by counting and registering the Jews, and examining their social, cultural and economic conditions. With the Haskalah, Prussian rationalism gained ardent supporters among intellectual Jews, who saw that the Enlightenment promised a road toward emancipation and citizenship.

Abraham Baer was born on December 26, 1834, in the small Netzeland town of Filehne (Wieleń), which was a *Kreisstadt* in the Bromberg (Bydgoszcz) *Regierungsbezirk*, which in its turn belonged to the Grand Duchy of Posen (Poznań). In the new German empire, the region was reorganized as *Provinz Posen*.⁷² Today's Filehne is a cultural ghost town, but not because of material destruction. Many of the old houses still stand along the Wilhelmstrasse, even if this main street has been renamed several times.

However, the traditional culture of the place has vanished, as have those who maintained its values and social structures. Very few of the present inhabitants have

family roots in the region reaching back before 1945. The exodus from the mousetrap of Central European politics started during in the turbulent years 1918–19, when new states and borderlines were forged in the European *Zwischenraum* between the Baltic and the Balkans. The subsequent three decades saw the total collapse of civilization in the area. You need a good deal of imagination to conceptualize nineteenth-century Filehne. Memories of the *Städtchen* on the Netze have been scattered around the globe, embedded in family histories of Americans, Australians and Israelis. This is mostly an oral history; little of it has been put down on paper, even less has been published.

However, an unpretentious article evokes this bygone world and lifestyle. Arno Herzberg (1908–2002) had made an important contribution to the Jewish resistance during the 1930s, then being the head of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in Berlin. During the 1990s, as an old man, he collected his souvenirs and memories of his childhood in Filehne.

A small river called the Netze divided the town. It was small enough for the big boys in our gang to be able to throw a stone over to the opposite bank. I could only make it halfway, but could hit the small steamers and freighters floating down the calm waters. It was my way of resenting their going into the wide world north of the river. To the north, German peasantry and a large private estate dominated the countryside. To the south, Polish peasants lived in small villages. In between was the town, a meeting-place for north and south. Every week the peasants drove their horse-drawn carts to market to sell their products. When the day was done, they spent their money in the shops that lined the main street, Wilhelmstrasse. These shops, mostly owned by Jews, sold fabric, shoes, hardware, clothing, and the basic necessities of life.⁷³

During the nineteenth century the town had between 3,000 and 5,000 inhabitants – mostly they were German-speaking Lutherans. Around 1900, the Jewish population numbered about 800. Jews had been living in the town since 1655, and according to Herzberg there was a flourishing traditional Jewish culture, which, in

spite of its rather strict adherence to halakhic requirements, was wide-open to the liberal influences coming from Breslau and Berlin.

It was almost a standard expression. Berlin Jews, sizing up a fellow Jew, said with a tinge of pride and with recognition of achievement and a sense of self-assurance: “*Er kam über den Schlesischen Bahnhof*” (“He arrived at the Silesian station.”). They had in mind the main railway station for trains coming from the East.

“From the East” included a good part of the province of Posen, which was a kind of reservoir for Jews in the big city. They could replenish their numbers with people who were bent on success and yet did not forget where they came from. The vibrant Jewish cultural life in this part of Germany can be traced back to the nineteenth century. In 1838, a set of prayer books for the Holidays (*machzorim*) was printed in the province and had subscribers in no less than forty-five cities and towns. At the beginning of the twentieth century, in the years leading up to the First World War, Jewish life regained new heights in the small towns of Posen, until history turned this life to ashes and wiped out all traces of Jewish existence.⁷⁴

One of the cornerstones of the multifaceted Jewish life and culture of early twentieth-century Filehne, was Frau Abraham’s restaurant, where Berlin newspapers were read, and secular and political issues were discussed. The other gathering place was the synagogue, built in 1787:

There was a *minyan* every morning and evening and we did not need to hunt for the tenth man. The way to the temple led through a narrow pathway next to our house. The worshipers came, the men in their high hats, the women in their Sabbath best. The pathway opened onto a wide street and there stood the temple, in red brick with high glass windows. There was the beautiful interior with its high ceiling, and the well-polished wooden seats. There was the garden, full of lilac bushes. Children could play hide-and-seek under them. Close by was the *bes hamidrash* [study house and public library], a small building with one large room.⁷⁵

Herzberg depicts early twentieth-century Filehne, but he also recalls the previous generations of his family, and here the peculiar synthesis of tradition and modernity that seems to have been characteristic for Filehne is demonstrated. The dominating figure is the grandfather, Abraham Herzberg, who prospered as an efficient *Königliche Spediteur*, a freight forwarding agent appointed by the King of Prussia, but who was also an observant Jew.

When my grandfather built our house, he saw to it that the flat roof was fenced in as required by the Jewish Law. He built the house with a permanent sukkah. It was a unique arrangement. The roof over one of the upstairs rooms could be opened by pulling on a strong cord attached to a weight. The ceiling of this room was thatched with a layer of straw. We could see the light through it and, at night, the stars. When it rained, we just lowered the roof. When it was too cold, a little stove gave the desired heat. We decorated the room with strings of chestnuts, flowers and lavish greenery.

It seems likely that Abraham Herzberg's business started to flourish when Filehne became connected to the quickly expanding Prussian railway network, and this would have happened some time after 1850. Grandfather Herzberg may actually have been a schoolmate of Abraham Baer's at the *bes hamidrash* around 1840, but when the house with the permanent sukkah was built, Baer had left Filehne for good.

Fortunately, Herzberg's somewhat naïve and nostalgic article is not the only existing biographical account of life in Filehne. Herzberg mentions that there was a memorial plaque on one of the houses in the Wilhelmstrasse that reminded the passers-by that this was in fact the birthplace of Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903), the philosopher whose ideas on *Völkerpsychologie* and *Kulturwissenschaft* I have discussed earlier in this book. It was in fact Herzberg's mentioning of the little monument that caused me to discover this fascinating and inspiring thinker. Lazarus apparently stood out as Filehne's most important contribution to the German-Jewish intellectual landscape. He is worthy of a lengthy biographical digression here; partly because his life and work illustrates the general cultural setting that was the *Lebenswelt* of Abraham Baer during his childhood and adolescence. But it is also

important because Lazarus' career gives us several important clues to the emergence and development of the Jewish reform. Furthermore, it is simply a fascinating history that ought to be told.

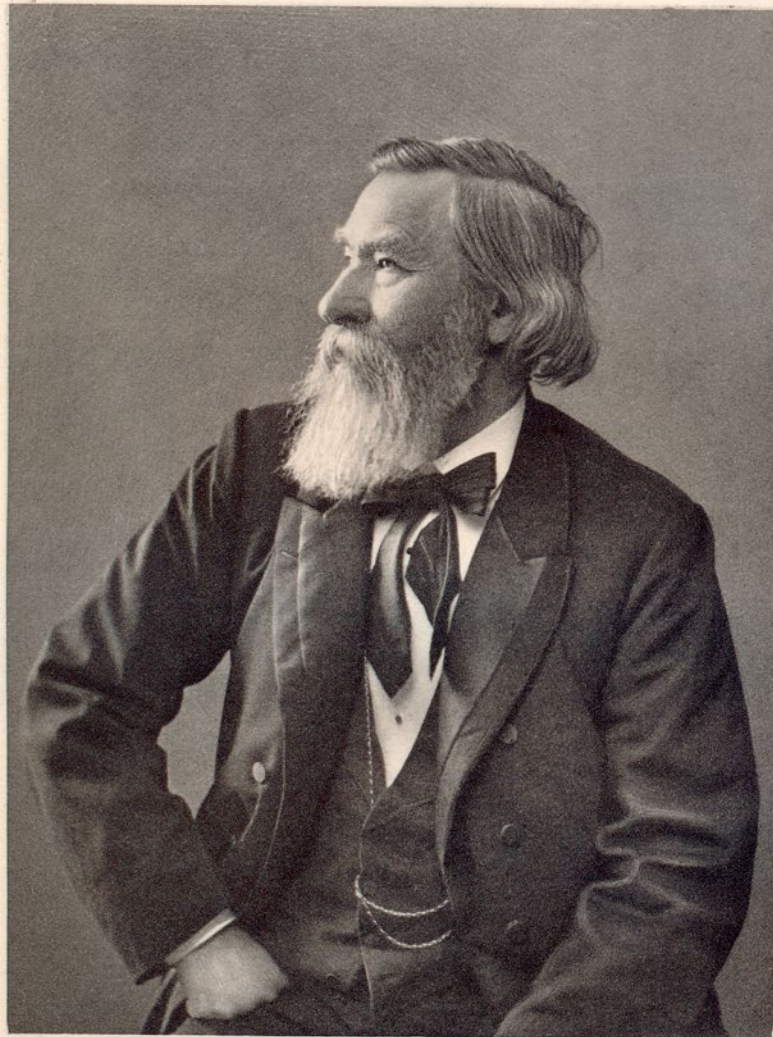
Talmud, Bildung, and Kulturwissenschaft – An Excursus on Moritz Lazarus

During the 1880s, Lazarus wrote down his memories of his early years in Filehne. His wife, Nahida, published the text in 1913. It is a charming and clear-sighted little book that gives a vivid picture of life and traditions in this microcosm of Central European culture.

It is 1830, and Lazarus invites us to his family home in Filehne. *Die Haushaltung war ausserordentlich charakteristisch*, he writes, “the household was extremely characteristic,” in that it had retained its old patriarchal structure. It consisted of several families and generations. Two elderly women, Lazarus' grandmother and her sister, named Esterchen and Gitelchen, were the real sovereigns and owners of the house, and of the property of the rather extensive family business. The elder sister was the actual manager; the younger was in charge of the bookkeeping and correspondence.

Both sisters had several children, two of which (Lazarus' father and uncle) were living with their families in separate apartments in the house. However, all meals were eaten communally in the *Wohnstube* of the grandmother. The adults, that is to say, the grandmothers, their sons and daughters-in-law, and their guests (there usually were guests), were seated at one table, the children at another. Only during the Passover meals did they all sit together at long tables.

The adult males of the extended family, Lazarus' father and uncle, devoted themselves to theological studies and were only occasionally asked to take part in business matters. They were Talmudic scholars on an advanced level. “Even before I could read and write,” Lazarus remembers, “I was listening to scholarly study in the Hebrew language every weekday morning from six to eight.”⁷⁶ The father and his brother were pursuing their Talmud study together with an old gentleman, Rabbi Selig. The rabbi – who lived in the Lazarus house as well – was very fond of young Moshe (Moritz Lazarus' Jewish name) and often woke the boy up and brought him to the study room in the cold winter mornings. Wrapped in the rabbi's fur coat he



W. Höffert Berlin phot.

Heliogr. Georg Büxenstein & Co.

Lazarus

Verlag von Georg Reimer, Berlin.

Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903)

listened attentively to the (at first) incomprehensible lectures. As soon as he learned to read, his Hebrew studies started at the private *heder* of a neighbor.

In 1833, the Prussian government organized compulsory elementary schools for the Jews of the Posen province. Here Lazarus, above all, learned the official High German language. In the family, as generally was the case in Jewish Filehne, Yiddish seems to have been the preferred language, supplemented by Hebrew for prayer and intellectual/religious discourse. Many of the Jews must have known the Polish language as well, which was the vernacular of a third of the local population. Alongside the secular elementary school, young Moshe also enjoyed the traditional Jewish tuition of one of his uncles.

After Moshe's *bar mitzvah*, his father, who was a renowned Talmudist and jurist, gave him daily instruction. This study took a lot of hard brainwork, but also gave moments of joy and conviviality. The Jewish intellectual environment in the town was vibrant. There were seven Jewish charitable associations; all of them had a scholar as their chairman, who gave lectures every Saturday afternoon. There were itinerant preachers as well. The whole setting was permeated with traditional Jewish scholarship. At the study house, Lazarus made friends with several *bocherim*, poor Talmud students living from the charity of the local Jewish community. Once a month they went around in the village, collecting alms and food support from the Jewish families. They also used to have some meals in wealthier Jewish homes. Lazarus remembers from his younger teenager years:

My real occupation was the following: every morning, with the exception of Fridays and Saturdays, between five and seven o'clock (six to eight during winter), there was study of the later rabbinic scriptures and the codices and their analyses together with my father and uncle. Then, until noon, study of the Talmud, which used to be cursory once a week, otherwise it was strict. The study demanded all these hours in order to be successful. It had to be carried out with the utmost precision. Every aspect of the Talmudic text had to be pursued through all the centuries right down to the most recent commentators. The strict study consisted of Talmudic jurisprudence. The preparation for this started during the first years of study, under the guidance

of an older Talmud student, either in the afternoon or in the evening. On Thursday evenings, we rehearsed the week's assignment, the teacher then being absent; a custom at all higher Talmud schools.

These Thursday nights could be quite joyous events. During the breaks, we had frugal meals, or occasionally a delicacy, seasoned with amusing and witty conversations, so that the old walls of the *bes hamidrash* were echoing with laughter ...⁷⁷

One of Lazarus' most interesting observations from those years concerns the traditional style of study in the *bes hamidrash*, which he characterizes as an oral method of scriptural study. It was all about texts, but no notes were taken; very little was written, but sizable parts of the texts were learned by rote, and in the discussion whole segments would be recalled, quoted and scrutinized. However, some of the *bocherim* were so poor that they could not afford to buy any books and therefore copied whole tracts by hand.

In spite of the incursion of the Prussian school system, Jewish Filehne of the 1830s and 1840s still had the air of a self-contained and institutionally complete Jewish community. However, even if the Jewish world of learning and religious observance was a foreign province for the Christians, there was of course much socio-economic and political interaction between the three ethnic and religious groups of Filehne.

Lazarus' father Aron, was a *dayan* at the rabbinical court, but he also had acquired an impressive expertise in German/Prussian law (here he was an autodidact; being Jewish, he had no access to German law schools). This double competence allowed him to act as a sort of interface between the Jews and the gentiles of the local community. Aron Lazarus was also very much involved in different charity activities in the village, and this idealistic initiative was not limited to the Jewish population. The Jewish education of Filehne was also a cultural asset for the whole community, especially when it gradually became more intertwined with German *Bildung*. After entering the German Jewish School, young Moshe quickly acquired a perfect command of High German, to the extent that villagers started to consult him as a scribe and private teacher. It is worth remembering that in the German Christian *Elementarschule* that was established in the 1830s, the ethnic German

children also learned High German; their vernacular Low German dialect might have been almost as distant from High German *Schuldeutsch* as Yiddish.

According to Lazarus, there was a trusting relationship between the Jews and the other religious groups of Filehne. He particularly stresses the cordial relations found sometimes between pious Polish Catholics and learned Jews. It is likely that this had to do partly with the common subordinate position of these two groups in relationship to the Lutheran Prussian state. Lazarus recalls that his father was on visiting terms with several Polish Catholic clergymen; they used to have long talks about the political and social problems resulting from the secularist strivings of the Prussian administration, the policy that later, under Bismarck, was labeled *Kulturkampf*, the “cultural struggle” directed against the political traditions of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany. For the Poles of *Provinz Posen*, this was just another side of the Germanization policy by the Berlin government.

Lazarus noticed, that while the Catholic priests had more contact with the Jewish scholars, the Jewish schoolteachers were more in touch with their Protestant colleagues. He also saw that the Protestant vicar and the Catholic teacher of the village kept a marked distance from each other. This spurred the curiosity of the Jewish boy, who however did not dare to talk with anyone of them. He continues:

The fact that these three, equally-sized religious communities that co-existed in the village, were of different descents and spoke different languages, aroused my lonely thoughtfulness, which then almost daily was stimulated by very obvious phenomena and occurrences. All in all, this might actually be the original inspiration for my *Völkerpsychologie*, and the continuing observations of the different conducts within the three population groups, in nearly all aspects of life, contained the personal origin of a comparative psychology.⁷⁸

So, looking back at his childhood in *Provinz Posen*, Lazarus concludes that it was the specific social and cultural patterns of Filehne that gave him his scholarly direction. Without Filehne, there would have been no *Völkerpsychologie*. It was not only the sensitivity toward the ethnic, religious, and social matters that was sharpened;

the atmosphere was permeated by the quest for knowledge and understanding emanating from the Jewish tradition.

All this effort, all these treasures, had no other purpose than the inner, spiritual enrichment of the character; this quest was the inheritance of all those who concerned themselves with the Torah for its own sake, and with such a self-sacrificing devotion.⁷⁹

At age sixteen, Lazarus was a full-fledged Jewish scholar in the traditional sense. Parallel to that specific expertise, he also had consumed considerable portions of classical German literature, partly by borrowing books from village watchmaker (who was also the caretaker of the Jewish school), who had bought a *Bibliothek von Klassikern* during his study years in Berlin.

At this time, he was offered the teacher's job in two Jewish towns in the district. However, Lazarus felt that by accepting such a position, he would have to relinquish his ambitions. What were these ambitions? He wanted to become a German *Student*, to gain the qualifications for academic work. Old *Dayan* Lazarus did not object to his son's plans, but he did not have the economic means to help realize them. However, a halfway solution was found by sending Moshe to Posen, where a merchant – *Kolonialwaren en gros* – accepted him as an apprentice and family member, with the provision that he would be able to devote all his free time to his further education. He also was supposed to pursue Talmudic studies together with his master.

As soon as the office had closed for the day, we studied the Talmud, biblical exegesis, Jewish religious history and so on, both before and after supper. I was grateful to feel the joy of moving along familiar ways of thinking.⁸⁰

But it in his free time – and during the nights – he was actually trying to move along the *unfamiliar* ways of thinking: classical gentile philosophy, the German *Dichter und Denker*, and modern historical research. Up to this time, he had primarily been strolling around through the forum of traditional Jewish learning. Now, he began to

unfold the European intellectual road map in its German edition. It was a euphoric experience, but too big a challenge for the sixteen-year-old lad, who overworked himself, had a breakdown, and was sent back to his mother in Filehne for seven weeks of convalescence. The family doctor strongly admonished him to give up his *Doppelleben*, his double existence. Either a business career or continued studies.

At eighteen, he left the Lazarus house in Filehne for the second time, and now his itinerary definitely was drawn up with the help of the modern European road map. After learning the basics of Greek and Latin from his brother Leiser, who was studying at the Gymnasium in Sondershausen, the twenty-year old was enrolled at the Gymnasium in Braunschweig in 1844. He did not want to remain an autodidact, he wanted to master the classical languages, and he wanted to have full access to the European cultural arena. In two years time he completed the whole curriculum, and in 1846 he registered as a student of philosophy at Berlin University.⁸¹

In 1850 he made his “debut” into the German cultural and political forum with a pamphlet, titled *Über die sittliche Berechtigung Preussens in Deutschland, ein Beitrag zu einer philosophischen Begründung des Völkerrechts* (“On Prussia’s Ethical Precedence in Germany, a Contribution to the Philosophical Foundation of International Law”). Here, his experiences and conclusions of the failed revolution of 1848 were integrated into a pledge for the creation of a united, liberal Germany under the leadership of the rationalist Prussian state. The pamphlet gained him national fame and paved the way for the establishment of his *Völkerpsychologie*, in which he collaborated with the linguist, Heymann Steinthal. Together they founded the *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*, which came out in twenty editions between 1860 and 1890. In 1860 he accepted a chair as professor of psychology at the University of Bern in Switzerland. The *Kriegsakademie*, the Royal Military Academy in Berlin, appointed him teacher of philosophy in 1867. This might seem strange and quite a bit surprising, but we have to realize that the tradition of the Enlightenment was still strong among the higher ranks of the Prussian army. At the *Kriegsakademie*, the officers were not only studying military science; they also were supposed to “attain a liberal *Bildung*, a broad overview of history and literature and a critical sense supported by a philosophical worldview.”⁸² Seventeen years after his first wary steps into the forum of German national *Kultur*

he stood firmly in the center of the square, as one of the leading contributors to a new, progressive cultural ideal. In fact, he gave courses on modern, liberal German culture to the supporters of the new German national state.

The maintenance and revival of Jewish heritage was, in fact, an aspect of this liberal German program. This is demonstrated by the founding in 1872 of the famous *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Lazarus counted among the initiators of this important institution; a non-confessional, secular institute devoted to the scientific study of Judaism and Jewish culture. Abraham Geiger wrote the curriculum and taught at the *Hochschule*, until his death in 1874.

Apprentice Travels in the Borderland

The sources on Baer's childhood and youth are surprisingly meager. Lazarus' memories partly fill this gap and make it possible to reconstruct a plausible picture of the cantor's childhood in Filehne. The principal source is an article published in the periodical *Der jüdische Cantor* on Baer's 25-year anniversary in Gothenburg and reprinted in the introduction to the 1883 edition of the *Baal t'fillah*.⁸³ Baer's father is reported to have been a renowned Talmudist. There was an older brother, who became a cantor as well, and young Abraham's own musical talents were detected early. But, his father wanted him to become a rabbi and began preparing him for that career. At seven, the boy is reported to have been introduced to the *Gemara*. His early education was not confined to traditional Jewish subjects. Like Lazarus, he would have attended the German-language *Volksschule* of the village.

However, after the early death of his father in the 1840s he managed to convince his mother that his musical talent made him better suited for the cantor's job than for the rabbi's. At the age of eleven he had performed the *Kabbalat Shabbat* in the Filehne synagogue; two years later he lead the *maariv* prayer at *Shavuot*.

With a great enthusiasm he now made song his main object of study. With mixed feelings he began to wander around, looking up clever *chazanim*. He became an *m'shorer*! What that means, only he knows who really has tasted the life of the *m'shorer*, like our hero. During his wanderings he met great cantors, such as: Jisroelke, Skuder, Weintraub, Lichtenstein, Isaak Heymann etc.⁸⁴

A *m'shorer* was a cantor's apprentice, assisting during service with part-singing, alternating solos – more or less being the cantor's factotum, he was also supposed to take part in the practical arrangements around the worship. This was the traditional way of learning the cantor's trade. There were no formal institutions with training, there was no codified musical repertory, there were no course books or compendia. The aspiring cantor had to acquire his professionalism through practical experience, in direct personal contact with the bearers of tradition. Musically, this was a purely oral enclave in the heart of a massively scriptural Jewish culture!

Now we can imagine the teenaged Abraham Baer crisscrossing the multilingual and multi-confessional Polish-Prussian borderlands between Berlin and East Prussia. Polish villages with Catholic churches and sombre Calvaries; German Protestant villages; noble estates with impressive baroque palaces, owned by largely absent Polish *schlachta* families and managed by German *Gutsverwalter*s and Jewish dairy-men; ethnically mixed towns with a growing German and germanized middle class, sometimes with a Jewish quarter, provincial centers with Prussian army barracks and huge neo-renaissance town halls and *Gymnasien*. And endless, muddy dirt roads, with stone cobbles only through the villages.

A *m'shorer* was – almost per definition – poor and humble. Walking would be a frequent means of transportation, and now and then, a ride with a farmer or a wagoner. On rare occasions he would spend a little on a third-class railway ticket; the Prussians had started to construct this novel communications system quite recently, and the network was very thin. However, when he visited Berlin to hear the famous cantor Abraham Jakob Lichtenstein⁸⁵, the train fittingly would have brought him to the legendary *Schlesischer Bahnhof*.

In his early teens he still had no experience with written music, but during his *m'shorer* travels he seems to have started to learn how to read and write music, basically as an autodidact. He is also reported to have taken up violin playing.

In 1850 he was appointed as a private Hebrew teacher of the Flatauer family, residents of the village of Sittnow (Sitno), near the town of Vandsburg (Więcbork), which is situated about 100 kilometers north-east of Filehne in what was then the province of Western Prussia. During the two years he spent in this friendly environment, he found plenty of opportunity to develop his musical skills. However,

he felt a need to perfect his cantorial competence, and in 1852 he approached cantor, Isaac Heymann, in Gnesen (Gniezno), who accepted him as a family member and assistant. Heymann had spent some time as cantor in Filehne and it is likely that the two had met there. However, Heymann was no aged and venerable *hazan*; he was of the same generation as Baer and it must have been his academic musical competence that made him a role model for Baer. According to the article in *Der jüdische Cantor*, it was Heymann who introduced Baer to Solomon Sulzer's epoch-making liturgy collection *Schir Zion*.

In 1856, Heymann was appointed first cantor in Grote Synagoge in Amsterdam and moved to the Dutch metropolis. Baer found a more humble cantor's position at a place called Pakosch (Pakość), thirty kilometers south of Bromberg, but apparently the conditions there were not ideal, so he soon shifted to Schwetz (Świecie), a town near the Weichsel (Wisła) river. Baer's older brother held a cantor's position in the neighboring town of Culm (Chełmno), and it seems likely that he assisted with the transfer to Schwetz. In Culm, Baer made the acquaintance of the young, reform-minded scholar and rabbi Moritz Wolff, (who was a friend of his brother's), and from then on their lives and careers became intertwined.

Moritz Wolff was the son of a rabbi in Meseritz, a town situated between Posen und Frankfurt an der Oder. He had been working in Culm since 1849. In 1855 he was asked to succeed his newly deceased father in Meseritz, but instead he applied for the position in Gothenburg, which for a person with his reform inclinations apparently seemed more attractive than the traditionalist and conservative congregation of his hometown. In September 1856 the board of the Gothenburg congregation voted for Wolff, who took office the following year. Wolff suggested Baer for the cantor's job, and as we have seen, the congregation was satisfied with this advice.

How can we summarize the experience and competence of the young *hazan* who arrived in Gothenburg in August 1857? During his early years in Filehne, he had acquired a firm competence in the Hebrew language and in the basics of liturgical singing. He had a perfect command of High German, he certainly understood Yiddish, and it is likely that he also was able to speak some Polish. During the *m'shorer* years, he had been able to pick up and compare the different liturgical styles prevalent in the Eastern German and Polish areas. It is likely that he was



Moritz Wolff (1824–1904) (© Göteborg City Museum)

acquainted with the ideas of the Jewish reform when still in Filehne. We have no exact information concerning his travels; it is possible that he visited other parts of Central Europe as well. With Heymann in Gnesen, he was able to perfect his music theory training, and in Pakosch and Schwetz, he acquired some experience in the role as a professional *Vorbeter*. He must have learned the *shohet's* (kosher butcher) trade as well, since in Gothenburg this task was included in his contract with the community.

The Role of the Vorbeter

When dealing with Jewish institutions and traditions of worship, it is problematic that much of the general, scholarly vocabulary concerning liturgy and ritual stems from a Christian frame of reference. When describing the different activities and functions of the synagogue, we often conform to a method of “translation,” where Christian counterparts, or parallels to Jewish usages are used in an explanatory fashion. This is difficult to avoid, perhaps, and it is not improper in any way, but it causes many misconceptions. This is actually the case with the cantor’s institution. To put it clearly: the most important thing to understand with the cantor’s role is the fact that he is not a musician at all. Every similarity with a Christian cantor or church musician is only accidental!

Even the parallel of church – synagogue is questionable. The word “synagogue” is a Greek translation of the Hebrew *beit keneset*, which simply means “house of meeting,” or “assembly house.” This institution emerged as a complement to the Jerusalem temple of antiquity with its sacerdotal *korban* (sacrificial) cult. In the synagogues the Jewish people gathered to study, to read the Torah and to pray. In contrast to the temple, the synagogue became a *lay* institution, and in traditional, post-temple Judaism there is no clergy, in the proper sense. In theory, any male member of the congregation may lead the prayers and may be asked to read from the Torah.

However, due to the shortage of prayer book copies in the medieval synagogue, and as a consequence of the growing complexity of the prayer corpus, leading the prayers became harder to master for the average congregation member. And so, a more formalized prayer leader’s role emerged during the Middle Ages. The Hebrew term for this was *shali’ah tzibbur*, “the person sent forward by the congregation,”

“the spokesman of the congregation” or *baal t’fillah*, “master of the prayers.” The Yiddish term is *Vorbeter*. This was originally an honorary task, not a profession. Often, the only salaried functionary of a synagogue was the *hazan*, the beadle or caretaker. Gradually this role tended to be fused with the tasks of the *Vorbeter*. In small and poorer congregations, the *hazan* was a synagogue factotum, and the person in charge was often supposed to fulfill other ritual functions as well, like that of *shehitah*, kosher slaughter, and *berit milah*, circumcision.

In larger, mainly urban congregations, where the aesthetic expectations and ambitions of the audience were higher, the musical aspects of the *hazan’s* profession tended to be emphasized. In such milieus, talented and self-confident *Vorbeters* could carve out a position as musical and liturgical specialists.⁸⁶

In considering the synagogue service, there is another problem in the translation or parallelism with the concept of “liturgy.” The term is widely used in modern Judaism, but strictly speaking, there is no liturgy in the proper sense of the word (“altar service”), simply because there is no altar in a synagogue. The Jewish religious service consists of a sequence of prayer texts and hymns, framing the central act, the reading from the Torah. There is no sacramental element of mystical communion like the Christian Eucharist, and in the loss of a “performing” clergy, there has been little stimulus for the theatrical aspects of religion that have developed, for example, in the Christian mass.

This means that *verbal* performance is at the heart of the synagogue tradition. During more than two millennia of intense interaction with the spoken word, there has been a steady urge to make it more outspoken and elaborated, to interpret its meaning in its aesthetic form, to convey it in such a way that it reaches the emotional as well as the intellectual depths of the service participants. And of course, the medium of music has been given an important role – *prosody* in the proper sense of the word; the aspect of song in the language; the speech melody and its rhythmical patterns.

A system of simple signs, the *ta’amei hamikrah*, was added early on to texts of the Torah manuscripts. This was done in order to suggest the most effective and impressive way of enhancing the declamation by musical means, to make it a *cantillation*. These signs in no way indicate the exact melodic course of events; they

rather suggest how the structure of the text should be clarified and embellished by distinct melodic gestures. In Ashkenazic Judaism this developed into a tradition of melodic formulas, and these *neginot* or *tropen* tended to influence the musical language used in the *Vorbeter's* prayer performance.

Originally, prayer was regarded as belonging to the *oral* tradition of Judaism, as opposed to the scriptural tradition of the Torah. The ideal prayer should “come from the heart” and be a spontaneous outpouring of the religious feelings of the individual. Consequently, in Jewish prayer performance, musical improvisation and extemporization often have been held in high esteem.

That is why these aspects of the *chasonus* (that was the term used to denote the *Vorbeter's* art in nineteenth-century Germany) had to be learned by oral instruction, by listening, imitation and re-creation. Before the nineteenth century, prayer modes and melodies never were put down on paper.⁸⁷ The aspiring *m'shorer* was supposed to acquire more of an attitude and an aptitude than a repertoire. As a “spokesman” for the congregation, he was supposed to be sensitive to the mood of his audience, in order to convey its feelings in his vocal performance. In many ways, this attitude is similar to the roles of expressive specialists in many pre-modern European musical cultures in which the performer took on the mood and personality of his artistic patron (one could think of the flamenco singers of Andalucía, the Gypsy court musicians of the Polish and Hungarian aristocracy, and the court lutenists of the renaissance – and, of course the Jewish *klezmerim*). This roll could only be played by being as individualistic as possible, by creating an unmistakable personal voice.

If the musical competences of the traditional *Vorbeter* had an intentionally informal and oral character, his formal theological and scriptural erudition had to be considerable. He had to master the Hebrew language and was supposed to have a firm overview of the vast *siddur* and *mahzor* texts, as well of the Jewish calendar and the halakhic requirements of synagogue worship. In fact, the traditional *Vorbeter* must be regarded as the main functionary of Judaism as a practiced religion. What about the rabbis? These were of course the spiritual leaders and representatives of the Jewish communities and enjoyed a high status, but primarily they were scholars and experts of Halakhah and theology.

A Commission in Gothenburg

On October 20, 1851, five gentlemen convened in the old synagogue on Kyrkogatan in Gothenburg: Rabbi Heinemann, the teacher Hirsch Salomon Gans, the businessman and reform activist Michael S. Warburg, the teacher and preacher Meyer Ruben Henriques, and Mr. Gottfried Jacobsson, the secretary of the congregation. During the summer, they were appointed members of *Cultuscommissionen*, a committee that had been entrusted with the revision of the prayer book and the synagogue ritual. It is apparent that the reform was linked to the ongoing synagogue-building project. A “modern prayer for a modern building” was the objective of the committee. Right from the beginning, the negotiations were complicated. There was no common idea of the scope and exact content of the reform. Warburg and Henriques seem to have represented a rather radical reformist stance, whereas the rabbi and the old teacher Hirsch Gans had a more conservative attitude. Secretary Jacobsson seems to have been more of a neutral official.

However, the installation of the *Culturscommission* was not the actual start of the reform efforts in Gothenburg. The discussion had been lively ever since the 1830s when the congregation had been reorganized and Dr. Heinemann had been appointed rabbi. In Stockholm, new ritual regulations had been introduced in 1840, and in Gothenburg modest revisions had been decided upon in 1844. But now the reform process was slowed down by a conflict over the leadership of the reform activities. A committee on the statutes of the congregation and the synagogue had been appointed in 1838. Dr. Heinemann was of the opinion that the formulation of a revised ritual must be entrusted to the rabbi, who had the necessary professional competence in the field. The lay members of the committee then should examine his suggestions.

But, the initiative for reform in Gothenburg came from a group of laymen who were members of the emancipation activist group *Judiska intresset*, and Heinemann apparently felt that their activities tended to erode his authority as the spiritual leader of the congregation. The collision of personal, political, and professional interests and ambitions impeded the reform endeavor, and it was only after the completion of the new synagogue and the appointment of a new rabbi, Moritz Wolff, that a new ritual and prayer book could be created.

The reform process in Gothenburg was of course dependent on the development in the German-speaking regions of the European continent. Hamburg, Berlin and Breslau had become important centers of the Jewish reform, and much of the discussion in the Gothenburg *Cultuscommission* was inspired by the revised *siddurim* and *Synagogenordnungen* published by different German congregations. This is not the place for a detailed review of the revisions of synagogue service brought about by reformed Judaism, but there are some important issues that must be highlighted. The changes advocated by the reformists affected most aspects of synagogue culture: the verbal content of the service, its aesthetic form, the disposition and decoration of the building, and even the extra-ritual behavior of the congregation members in the synagogue premises.

The universalistic reinterpretation of Judaism as a religion advocated by, among others, Abraham Geiger, made the allusions to Jewish statehood and particularism problematic. Prayers dealing with the gathering together of the Jews in *Eretz Israel* and the reinstatement of the sacrificial cult in the Jerusalem Temple, which had been part of the service since the Talmudic era, were omitted or reformulated in many *siddurs*. The rationalistic tendency of the reform also led to a playing down of the mystic influences from the Kabbalah. The historical interpretation of Judaism made it possible to rewrite and adjust the traditional texts according to the needs and ideals of modern Europeans. The ethical core of the tradition could be sifted out with the help of historical scholarship, whereas the anachronistic husks could be relegated to the museum of religious history, or even thrown on the rubbish heap of history.

The language of the service was also the object of much discussion. The most ardent of the reformers argued that the service always must be given in the local vernacular, and found precedence for this in the use of Aramaic in Talmudic times. Only a minority of the ordinary congregation members in Germany were in a sufficient command of Hebrew to understand the deeper meaning of the prayers and Torah texts. In order to be intelligible, these therefore, should be translated and revised. Only in some of the most central prayers, should the Hebrew formulae be retained.

The question of language is, of course, closely related to the aesthetic form of

the synagogue service, and it is here that the musical component became a central issue – right from the beginning. When the educator Israel Jacobsohn introduced organ music in his small school synagogue at Seesen in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel in 1810, he, in fact, broke a taboo. Not that the musical medium per se was regarded as alien to the Jewish ritual; the *chasonus* vocal tradition had been an integral and indispensable ingredient of synagogue culture since the Middle Ages. However, authorities like the twelfth century philosopher Maimonides had strongly condemned the playing of instrumental music on ethical grounds.⁸⁸ The aspect of instrument playing as a physical work improper for the Sabbath also impeded its entry into Jewish worship.

European synagogue architecture has a long tradition, but except for some parts of Eastern Europe, the Jewish Diaspora never strove to develop a specific architectural style. The synagogue basically was a house of assembly, and even if there are some traditional requirements that must be met concerning its layout, it always had been designed according to the local tastes and building traditions. The Christian authorities usually forbade any exterior ornamentation, and consequently the synagogue facades were simple and unassuming. The emancipation process impelled the Jewish congregations to “come out” with their cultural identity; they were supposed to be visible in the townscape in the same way as the different Christian denominations and congregations. Something specific was expected. We have already seen the result of these ambitions and expectations in the Gothenburg synagogue inaugurated in 1855, and of course, in the Neue Synagogue in Berlin.

This new spirit was expressed in the revised prayer books found in the new synagogues, and in the organ music. However, the reformers wanted to change the whole attitude of the service participants. Service attendance should not be felt only as an obligation, as a burdensome participation in an only partially intelligible and therefore empty ritual. It was supposed to be an uplifting and edifying experience, especially on the Sabbath and at the High Holidays, and therefore, it had to be clearly set apart from everyday life. Traditional synagogues had a certain informality and spontaneity; there was a coming and going during the service, some people started prayer at home and showed up only for the central section

of the service, small children were brought to the synagogue and had difficulty of sitting still and keeping quiet during the time-consuming scriptural readings and prayers. The cantor's performance often would be interrupted by uncoordinated, spontaneous responses from emotionally aroused participants. There was much *kavvanah*, religious fervor, but there was also much chatting about secular things; after all, the *schul* was a meeting place, an important social venue in traditional Jewish society. The traditional synagogue and its service did not *represent* Judaism; it simply *was* Judaism in practice. Many of the new, reformed synagogues were called *temple* or *Gotteshaus*, which indicated a shift in function. These artistically designed sanctuaries represented the idea of modern, progressive religion. To the non-Jewish environment they signaled the high cultural ambitions of the People of the Book, and for the Jews it meant a boost of their confidence in progress and emancipation. Jews now were citizens, and citizenship required decorum, a universally accepted civilized code of behavior.

The synagogue's regulations strove to formulate this code of conduct. Proper civic clothing was prescribed. Walking around and chatting during service was outlawed, and small children were not allowed any more. In many ways, these regulations remind one of the sets of (mostly unwritten) rules for audience conduct at concerts or theatre performances that was part of nineteenth century bourgeois culture. You had to know how to dress and where and when it was proper to applaud, or chat with your neighbor. If the new, liberal Jewish congregations wanted to edify their members, they had to educate them as well.

But let us return to the *Cultuscommission* of 1851. The question of the language of the service immediately came into the foreground. In the congregation there were reformists who wanted to restrict the use of Hebrew to the short *Shema* formula, the Jewish "declaration of faith," and similar opinions were expressed in the committee. Heinemann objected to such radical changes on the ground that the Hebrew language is the link that "connects all coreligionists of all times and all countries during service." Jewish unity also motivated his objections to far-reaching changes in ritual and prayer book content. It is important, he maintained, that any Israelite could find a service in which he would be able to participate in any synagogue. If the radical suggestions that came up in the committee were to be

accepted, Heinemann declared, “our children would not be able to participate in the service if in the future they came to a foreign place.”

He spoke these objections at a meeting with the board of the congregation in 1854, where the final suggestions of the *Cultuscommission* were discussed. In fact, they contain much of the skepticism that he had expressed during the three years that the committee had been in charge. At first glance, Heinemann’s stance gives the impression of a reactionary inflexibility, but a closer look at the process of the Gothenburg reform reveals that this was not at all a fight between an orthodox fundamentalist and a group of devoted reformers. The conflict has been interpreted in that way, but in reality, Heinemann was firmly located in the modern reformist camp. However, he seems to have been more orientated towards the school of Zacharias Frankel, the founder of what later became known as conservative Judaism, which is in fact a moderate branch of the broader reform movement. At the board meeting in 1854, Heinemann actually quotes Frankel to support his view that the messianic expectations preached by the prophets ought to be retained in the new prayer book. The lay preacher Meyer Ruben Henriques, on the other hand, seems to have been a follower of Abraham Geiger. When Heinemann suggested that the report of the committee should be submitted for scrutiny to a respected theologian, Henriques brought Geiger’s name into the discussion as the only possible choice. However, in the end it was not Geiger, but the *Oberlandrabbiner* Bodenheimer in Krefeld, Germany, who was consulted. Bodenheimer expressed some sharp criticism concerning the very liberal Swedish translation of parts of the central benedictions. In many ways, his views actually tallied with Heinemann’s.

After some minor corrections, the report of the *Cultuscommission* was accepted at a board meeting October 9–10, 1854. Responding to this decision Heinemann in January 1855 declared in a letter to the board that he intended to leave his position two years later. On top of the demanding task of editing and publishing the new Gothenburg prayer book, the congregation now also had to tackle the complicated undertaking of recruiting a new rabbi. When the board started to plan the inauguration of the new synagogue in October 1855, the Gothenburg Jews certainly were in possession of a beautiful and impressive sanctuary. However, concerning the actual religious practice that was going to evolve inside its walls, confusion

prevailed. Much had to be created ad hoc. There was a reform decision, but still no reformed prayer book. There was an organ, but there was no organist and no Jewish organ music. There was a choir, but no choir repertoire. There was a cantor, but he was a *Natursänger* and not familiar with the new musical requirements linked to the reform.

Enter Abraham Baer.

Exploring a New World

When he descended from the *amud* after auditioning his first service in September 1857, Baer must have felt, from the reaction of the audience, that as far as his vocal ability was concerned, he now had a firm position in Gothenburg. Three days later, he had signed the contract, but it is important to point out that he was appointed *second* cantor, and that the *shohet's* task belonged to his duties. An elderly person, A. S. Fürst, who was born in 1798 and had been working as cantor since 1822, occupied the position as first cantor. Nothing is known about his musical competence, but he does not seem to have been in touch with the latest developments in continental synagogue music. His ability to fulfill the cantorial requirements also seems to have been seriously hampered by his infirmity.⁸⁹ When Jonas Josephsson, who had been working as a kind of synagogue factotum ("*schammes*, *shohet* and all sorts of things") since 1829, retired in 1856, the congregation employed a G. Frank from Röbel as second cantor. However, Frank left Gothenburg after just one year, and this created the opportunity for Moritz Wolff to suggest Abraham Baer for the position. One might wonder why Frank gave up his position. It seems likely that the unclear situation brought about by the on-going reform of the liturgy, and the conflict between the board and the rabbi made the role of the cantor difficult. He also seems to have objected to the revision of some of the central prayers.⁹⁰ And what exactly was it that the congregation demanded from its *Vorbeter* from a musical point of view? That must have been hard to tell, since the new prayer book still had not been published. And in the preliminary versions, nothing in detail was said about the liturgical music, other than that choral singing was required.

After the definitive exit of Heinemann in January 1857, a new *Cultuscommission* was appointed on the initiative of Ruben Meyer Henriques, with an even stronger

reformist composition. Its main task was to edit and publish the new prayer book, the first volume of which came out in 1858. It is mainly modeled on Abraham Geiger's 1854 prayer book for Breslau, with parallel texts in Hebrew and Swedish.⁹¹ I will return later to its form and content, but for now, let us follow young Abraham Baer's efforts to integrate himself into the peculiar cultural setting of Jewish and Swedish Gothenburg. In the above-mentioned article in *Der jüdische Cantor* there is a rather detailed account of this introductory period of Baer's Swedish career.

Learning the Swedish language was of course an important task during the first years in Gothenburg, especially since the new cantor and shohet was expected to assist in the congregation's religious education. Moses Anschel Nissen could have been helpful with this. Nissen was a music enthusiast and deeply involved in the city's expanding civic musical life; in spite of not having any *Vorbeter* education, he had been given an important role in the synagogue's modern musical activities. He was the choir leader and music teacher of the synagogue, and Baer was supposed to take part in the choir rehearsals. The purely cantorial portions apparently still were reserved for old Cantor Fürst. Nissen seems to have decided on the repertoire that was being performed during the service. Baer simply was supposed to perform the pieces decided by this amateur choir leader. Not an especially rewarding task, perhaps.

In the article for *Der jüdische Cantor*, those first three or four years in Gothenburg are depicted in a rather positive way. However, the adjustment and acculturation process cannot have been without its surprises and disappointments. What kind of power and status relationships prevailed in the local congregation and in the Swedish Jewish community at large? Rabbi Wolff must of course have supported Baer's efforts, but he was a newcomer as well and initially did not have much to relate about the local peculiarities. It was, perhaps, a tough process of social trial and error. We do not know very much about this.

Strong Emotions in the Synagogue

Fortunately, one document sheds some light on the cantor's social situation and personal circumstances in those years. Louise Magnus (1842–1921) was a well-known personality in late-nineteenth century Gothenburg, the hostess of a culturally important salon and the central figure in much of the informal, social life

of Gothenburg Jewry. She was the daughter of the industrialist Levy Fürstenberg; her brother Pontus was to become Sweden's most famous private art patron of the nineteenth century (his art collection was later donated to Göteborgs konstmuseum, the city's municipal art museum). Looking for references to Abraham Baer in the catalogue of the vast manuscript collections of Gothenburg University Library, I found a letter from Baer to a very young Louise Fürstenberg. It is worded in a stylistically elaborated German, and it is very carefully written, even if some spelling mistakes reveal a certain nervousness of its author:

Verehrtes Fräulein!

When you first see these lines, you, as yet, have no idea that here a young man exposes his whole heart, and puts his whole life into your hands, a young man who hitherto must have appeared to be totally indifferent to you. Alas, Miss, this cold facade of indifference only concealed a flame of sincere love.

Many times, I was intending to verbally open my heart to you, but one single glance at your lovely and candid face, even if this seldom was granted me, disheartened me from a confession. In order not to be totally devoured by uncertainty and worry, I was compelled to find clarification by letter. It was on May 18, 1859, as you were twining wreaths for your Confirmation in our House of God. I was there too, but I was deeply absorbed by a melancholy of homesickness. Do you remember how you approached me and whispered a few friendly words to me? Alas, since that day I have been unable, even for one minute, to eradicate the memory of your charming and enchanting appearance from my emotions. Your kind words sounded like a serene harmony of delightful melodies, which brought me to the realm of infinity and immortal bliss.

Baer continues by telling Louise that the mere act of confessing his feelings in script has given him some relief, but he pleads for a quick answer, and urges her to absolutely not show the letter to anybody: he does not want to be exposed to pitying remarks in case his feelings did not be resonate in her heart.

Assuredly I am unworthy of you; therefore I alone want to bear the pain of disappointment. However, my beloved Fräulein, I will and must love you unto death.

To conclude the letter, he adds a poetic tribute to his beloved, in which the first letters of each line together form her name. He then assures her that she can trust the messenger completely and that she may send anything with him; total discretion has been agreed upon. The envelope has no stamp; the letter apparently has been handed over personally by the *postillon d'amour*.

Love in the synagogue. What was Louise's answer? We do not know; Baer's correspondence is not preserved, but I think we may assume that she did answer. The two were going to meet many times in the synagogue for decades to come, and some form of clarification of the relationship must have been pronounced. However, total discretion seems to have prevailed. It is not improbable that the feelings were reciprocal, but a liaison between the daughter of one of the pillars of the community and the newly installed *shohet* and second *Vorbeter* would have been socially unacceptable. It is somewhat astonishing that Baer does not realize this unavoidable obstacle; after two years in Gothenburg he ought to have deciphered some of the social codes of the community. With all probability, he really was in love, and did not write this letter out of simple social ambitions. If Louise had not been discreet, his communication could have resulted in serious problems. The fact that she kept the letter to the end of her life seems to indicate that there was some emotional engagement on her side as well. If she had just been embarrassed by the letter, she would have burned it to assure that it did not get into the wrong hands. But she kept it carefully.

The letter is undated, but it seems probably that the "event" took place during the summer or autumn of 1859, or early in 1860. After being rejected by Louise he must have soon decided to search for a more realistic mate. A cantor is supposed to be a respectable and steady family person, and it is probable that Moritz Wolff assisted his *protégé* in finding a wife with the right social background. In the summer of 1860, Baer makes a visit to Culm, and here his engagement with Johanna Wolff, the daughter of a cantor Wolff (perhaps a relative of Moritz Wolff) is announced on the twelfth of August.

Baer then went back to Gothenburg; after fourteen months of engagement, the couple was married in Culm in October 1861. Baer's personal circumstances were settled, but quite abruptly his professional situation became somewhat strained. Old cantor Fürst passed away at the end of the year, and a few months thereafter the choir-leader Mr. Nissen died as well. Now, one might expect that the congregation would have asked Baer to succeed Fürst as first cantor. This, according to *Der jüdische Cantor*, they had promised him when he was employed four years earlier. Maybe they regarded him as too young to have the necessary experience. But it seems likely that they looked for someone with a "modern" music competence; maybe they wanted someone who was more of a composer/organist and not so much a traditional *hazan*. Baer now had to engage in the search for a new first cantor, and apparently it was not easy to find somebody who both had the right qualifications and was willing to settle in Gothenburg. Several applicants arrived. Baer had to arrange the auditions, which was a complicated undertaking, since first he had to brief the applicants on the new Gothenburg prayer book so that they would be able to perform according to the local ritual. Several candidates were rejected, two were accepted, but both of them seem to have held out just for short periods. When L. Löwenstein of Lüneburg, who had been cantor since April 1865, decided to quit in December 1866 (according to Jacobowsky thereby satisfying the wishes of a large part of the congregation), Baer at last got his full recognition with his promotion to first cantor, which occurred in April 1867. In order to render possible a regular service activity he had taken the initiative in giving the newly appointed young *shohet* Simon Landsberg a *Vorbeter's* education.

During the previous year, he actually had felt compelled to ask for a salary raise in order to be able to provide for himself and his family "according to our position." His daughter Dina had been born in 1862. These years must have been quite hard for Baer, personally and professionally. The account in the article in *Der jüdische Cantor*, which he reprinted in the second edition of his *Baal t'fillah*, is telling:

A choir had to be created from scratch, and this choir had to be provided with songbooks and organ parts. Like the synagogue, the liturgy was new: the synagogue songs, which were partly taken from the *Schir Zion* [Salomon

Sulzer's liturgy collection, published in 1839 and 1865], partly composed and adapted by music director Czapek in the Swedish language, only gradually were introduced. There were no written solo pieces since the old cantor had been a *Natursänger*. Therefore, it is understandable that everything was in a fermenting and chaotic state. The choir leader [Mr. Nissen] tried hard to find a way out of this dilemma. Especially during the High Holidays there were great difficulties. The organist was sitting at his instrument waiting for the mysterious sheet that the choir leader would give him. It was only through Mr. Czapek's dexterity that disturbances could be avoided. However, at the death of the choir leader, Mr. Czapek declared right out, that he would not be able to play without a part. Now the board turned to Mr. Baer, who already had saved the situation many times, and he immediately had to devote himself completely to this very difficult task, since the High Holidays were approaching. The composition of all the liturgical solos of the services, in modern as well as traditional styles, their arrangement, supplementation and revision, and their combination into an ordered whole; that is a really demanding work when the parts have to be put on the music stand even before the ink has dried. However, loyalty and dedication prevail! The effort was not without consequences, however: during the High Holidays his professional spirit held Mr. Baer upright, but then he suffered a breakdown and was ill for several weeks.⁹²

The choir that Baer now had to rehearse and conduct originally consisted of twelve boys from the Jewish school, but this arrangement precluded the continuity of musical competence, since after finishing school, the boys would usually quit the choir. Instead, Baer organized a mixed choir, consisting of adult members of the congregation. The attendance at the rehearsals was quite good, but it proved to be very difficult to convince these singers to perform on a regularly basis all the year around. Therefore, Baer recruited twenty boys and twenty girls from the so-called Polish school, an institution that had been created for the benefit of the children of Eastern European Jewish immigrants who had started to arrive after 1850.

A Bohemian at the Organ

The music director, Czapek, who is mentioned in the above quotation, deserves a full-scale presentation. He played an important role in Gothenburg's musical life and in the emerging *bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit* of the city for more than fifty years. Joseph Wolfgang Czapek was born in Prague in 1825.⁹³ In many ways, he seems to have been a rather typical representative of the phenomenon called *das böhmische Musikantentum* in Vienna of the classical period. The extensive baroque patronage of the aristocracy of Bohemia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries resulted in a remarkably high standard of musical professionalism in the province. Under the less favorable economic and cultural conditions resulting from the political reforms of the Habsburg administration since the 1770s, unemployed musicians from Bohemia began to emigrate all over Europe, effectively spreading the musical ideals of Viennese classicism.

Czapek was the son of the schoolteacher and musician Wenzel Czapek, whose father had been a workman in the village Vyšehořovice. Wenzel married a Maria Kindl, apparently a woman of ethnic German background. Such inter-ethnic, Czech-German liaisons were in fact frequent in traditional Bohemian society. The question whether Joseph Czapek was Czech or German therefore is irrelevant – he was in many ways a typical Bohemian of the age, expressing himself in the *lingua franca* of Central Europe, High German.

After graduating from the Prague conservatory in 1843, he began his international career as a violinist and *Kapellmeister* in Berlin. In 1847, he made a concert tour to Scandinavia with an orchestra called the *Steyermärkische Gesellschaft*. The ensemble presented several concerts in Gothenburg throughout the summer season. During the stay, Czapek managed to establish valuable contacts in the city, and when the rest of the orchestra left for Hamburg to continue their tour in America, he decided to remain in Gothenburg, where he was given a position at *Kungl. Göta artilleriregementes musikkår* (the military band of the Royal Gothenburg Artillery Regiment, which was an important local music institution at that time). The next year he was appointed *musikdirektör* (band leader). The position became a platform for a multifaceted musical activity during the coming decades, as pedagogue, conductor, organist, and concert manager – and of course as a violinist and composer. He is considered to be



Joseph Czapek (1825–1915). Oil painting by Geskel Saloman, 1850. (© Statens musikverk)

the founder of professional concert life in Gothenburg, and his ambitious symphony concerts during the 1850s were something hitherto unheard of in the city.

In 1856 he married Bertha Haglund, the daughter of the hotel manager L. P. Haglund, who created Grand Hotell Haglund at Hotellplatsen, which was the classic hotel and meeting-place in Gothenburg until the mid-twentieth century. It is evident that Czapek managed to position himself in the focal point of the city's public life.

In 1855, he was appointed organist in the new synagogue, retaining that position until 1909. The music for the inauguration of the building was his work. However, Czapek was a Roman Catholic, not a Jew, which may come as a surprise. Since there was no customary practice using organ music in traditional synagogues, there were hardly any Jewish musicians who were able to claim the position of professional organist. Furthermore, it may still have been the opinion among the more traditionally-minded segments of many liberal congregations, that organ playing during the Sabbath was to be regarded an improper physical work. The Christian musician therefore enters as a kind of *shabbes-goy*, a person employed for tasks not allowed for Jews during Shabbat. This became a widespread phenomenon in reformed synagogues all over Europe. In the field of religious music, Czapek in fact, acted as a multifunctional and versatile expressive specialist. The English, Anglican congregation of Gothenburg employed him as an organist as well, from 1857 to 1900.

In 1856 Czapek had the opportunity to collaborate with a famous Czech colleague, pianist and composer Bedřich Smetana who came to Gothenburg to work as a piano pedagogue. Interspersed with vacations in Bohemia, Smetana's sojourn in the city lasted until early in 1861. In comparison with Smetana, Czapek appears as a less innovative composer. Stylistically he was conservative, clinging to the ideals of Viennese classicism and early romanticism. His attitude toward composing was clearly pragmatic, in that he almost exclusively wrote works that he would be able to perform with the musicians available. Smetana criticized this stance in a review of Czapek's *Messe Solennelle*, which had its premiere in 1858.⁹⁴ He advises his colleague not to base his instrumentation on the technically limited local conditions; instead, he should let his musical imagination govern his writing.

Among his works can be mentioned two symphonies and several masses and

cantatas. His *printed* output consists almost exclusively of marches, dance pieces, and works in the lighter genres. In Gothenburg, he was among other things, also seen as a representative of Central European ballroom culture.

In his pragmatism, he apparently was more of a Bohemian musical artisan of the eighteenth century than a romantic composer. Musicologist, Lennart Hedwall, has described the “perfect craftsmanship” and “striking musicianship” in Czapek’s works.⁹⁵ He created music for the opportunity, and even if he, along with his managerial activities, created opportunities for music-making as well, he did not compose for eternity or for the drawer. He was a media man of his age and city, of the burgeoning bourgeois culture of an emerging civil society.

In the archive of the Gothenburg Jewish congregation there are eight works by Czapek, created for use in the synagogue. Seven of these are cantatas or hymns and were written for specific occasions, such as the king’s birthday or death, or the rabbi’s twenty-five-year anniversary. These works are arranged for organ, choir, and occasionally for solo voice. The most ambitious of them, the cantata for the inauguration of the synagogue, also feature a brass quartet and timpani, and there is an additional set of parts for flute, clarinets, trumpets, French horns, and strings, expanding the ensemble to almost symphonic dimensions. In these works, there seems to be no allusions whatsoever to traditional *chasonus*. This is mainstream, Central European classicism, a musical language that would fit any public festivity in nineteenth-century Gothenburg. Maybe the fact that the inauguration cantata simply was reused in 1905 (his revised copy is dated October 6, 1904) is a significant testimony of Czapek’s rather conservative musical stance.

Czapek’s response to the liturgical requirements of the new synagogue can be studied in an 1855 manuscript called *Psalmer för den offentliga gudstjensten* (“Psalms for the Public Service”). This is a collection of melodies for the biblical psalms; all of them composed as four-part chorales in a very austere homophonic style, looking like exercises in the craft of strict academic four-part writing. Czapek’s work with these psalm melodies must be viewed within the context of the reformist strivings of the first *Cultuscommission*, and melodies from the collection seem to have been sung during the inauguration service of the synagogue. These rather austere creations continued to be used for many decades. There is a revised version from 1860, and

on the synagogue's fiftieth anniversary in 1905, Czapek produced a new version.

However, the most interesting of the manuscripts, from the liturgical point of view, are the volumes labeled *Musik till sångerna vid gudstjensten i Gothenburgs Synagoga komponerad och arrangerad af Professor S. Sulzer, Director Jos. Czapek och Cantor A. Baer* ("Music for the songs of the service in the Gothenburg Synagogue composed and arranged by Professor S. Sulzer, Director Jos. Czapek och Cantor A. Baer"), which are the result of Czapek's interaction with Baer. There seem to have been three different versions; from 1872, 1878, and 1898. Here the service is regarded and notated as a coherent musical sequence, with organ preludes, psalms, prayer melodies and choral responses. Prayer texts in (Hebrew and Swedish) are included, and in the 1878 version, pages and slips of paper cut out from the *siddur* are pasted here and there in the manuscript. *Musik till sångerna vid gudstjensten* is largely based on Viennese cantor Salomon Sulzer's liturgical publications, a fact that is also stated on the title page. Here a clear distinction is made between the modern, composed, or arranged multipart pieces, and the *Vorbeter's* more traditional solo portions; for the latter, only the Hebrew text is given.⁹⁶

The continuous changes in the new liturgy that was taking shape around 1860 required a lot of arrangement and revision work (and a lot of music copying) from Baer. However, because of their focus on the modern, multi-part choir repertoire, the new handwritten liturgy books were of no use in the cantorial instruction of *shohet* Landsberg that Baer undertook. Similar problems occurred when he was dealing with the different applicants for the first cantor's position. In Germany, the oral cantorial tradition was in a state of dissolution, and many aspiring cantors had no *m'shorer* experience. They might be perfect at reading musical notation and keyboard playing, but they had great difficulties in finding inspiring musical models for the specific prayers that still were supposed to be performed as cantor's solos. The situation was aggravated by the fact that in many German synagogues, the traditional Torah cantillation – which functioned as a kind of musical storehouse for cantorial extemporizing – had been abolished! Baer realized, that in order for the cantor's art and trade to continue under such circumstances, it had to be transcribed and transferred from an oral to a written culture. This is the starting point for his work with what was to become his *Baal t'fillah*.

After the futile attempts to externally recruit a sufficiently competent first cantor, the board of the congregation at last seemed to have realized that they were in possession of exactly this competence in the person of Abraham Baer, and with his promotion in 1867, the situation stabilized.

Der practische Beschneider

Surprisingly few personal belongings of Abraham Baer have been preserved in the Archive of the Jewish Congregation of Gothenburg. From the perspective of cultural history, the most interesting object is a small notebook, sized about 13×18 cm, and bound in a hard black cover, decorated with gilded ornaments.

Directly on the inside of the cover, the following title is written: *Die Beschneidung der Juden, von der practisch-operativen und ritualen Seite zusammengestellt von Abraham Baer. Im Monate April 1873* ("The Circumcision of the Jews From the Practical and Ritual Point of View, compiled by Abraham Baer in the month of April 1873"). What follows is a treatise on the art of circumcision, from the medical as well as the ritual point of view. After this handwritten article, a register follows, containing the names of 198 boys, circumcised between 1873 and 1893. This is the *mohel* book of Abraham Baer.

Was he really a *mohel* as well, on top of his duties as cantor, *shohet* and teacher? I was a little bit surprised when I opened the book, because his contract with the congregation says nothing about this function. However, in the biographic article in *Der jüdische Cantor*, there is some information to be found concerning this aspect of Baer's career. For twenty years, the Jewish physician Dr. Gans had performed the circumcisions in Gothenburg. However, in 1872, Gans decided to relinquish his *mohel* office, and in doing so he recommended Baer as the most suitable successor. Therefore, early in 1873, the board of the congregation sent the cantor on a study trip to Berlin. There, he was received by a circle of people who were centered around the newly created *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Abraham Geiger and Joseph Aub (at this date both were rabbis in the Neue Synagoge at Oranienburger Strasse), old cantor Lichtenstein and especially Ludwig Philippson, the publisher of the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, all are reported to have assisted Baer in the theological and ritual aspects. The medical part was taught by the Berlin *mohel* Hamburger.⁹⁷

On January 17, 1873, Baer performed his first circumcision on a Berlin boy named Simon Michael; this was the concluding examination of the *mohel's* course. The act took place in the *Hoffsche Synagoge* in the presence of Hamburger, *Obercantor* Lichtenstein and “*die Herren Dr. Samst und Caro.*” In the last week of February, Baer was back in Gothenburg, where he was immediately called upon to circumcise four boys who had been born during his absence. The passage in the biographic article concludes, “In the name of his *mohel* office he has with great success introduced young *Weltburger* into the covenant of Abraham.”

The *mohel's* duties could appear to have been no great burden for Baer. According to the register, there was an average of ten operations per year during the following twenty years. Baer was, of course, paid extra for the *mohel* commissions, which must have been a welcome addition to his rather modest income. But not all circumcisions took place in Gothenburg. There were very few competent circumcisers in Sweden, so Baer tended to be summoned on short notice from remote places like Karlstad, Vänersborg, Norrköping, and Karlskrona, and he sometimes traveled very long distances in the middle of the winter.

So, even if the *mohel* position was closely related to his cantorial duties in the synagogue, it must have taken away some valuable working hours from the musicologist and editor Baer.

Life and Death of a Cantor

Until 1889, when he moved to an apartment at Drottninggatan 58, Baer lived with his small family in a flat attached to his cantor's position, located in the same block as the synagogue, at Östra Larmgatan 12.⁹⁸ His economic circumstances were quite modest. According to the minutes of the congregation, as quoted by Jacobowsky, the rabbi had a yearly salary of around 5,000 Riksdaler during the 1850s, whereas Baer received only 1850 Riksdaler when appointed first cantor in 1867.⁹⁹ Therefore, we may assume that there might have been some economic motivation for his work with the *Baal t'fillah*; every opportunity to strengthen the financial muscles of the family was welcome. But there were other tasks for the cantor as well.

Around 1870, the increasing migration of Jews from the Russian empire was being felt in Gothenburg. Beginning in 1844, foreign citizens were allowed to reside

in Sweden without the consent of the government. The liberal reforms of the age facilitated social and geographic mobility, and there was an increasing influx of poor Jewish apprentices and peddlers, which is documented in the charity cashbook of the Jewish congregation. As non-Christians, Jews were supposed to organize their own social aid and charity institutions, and the congregation frequently assisted migrant Jewish families. Many of these became transmigrants, but eventually a small Eastern European Jewish community evolved in the city. In 1872 it was estimated to consist of around 250 individuals.¹⁰⁰ These working-class families settled mainly in the districts of Haga and Annedal, outside the old city center, where the Jewish bourgeoisie traditionally had their residences. Until 1883, all Jews who settled in Gothenburg were admitted into the local congregation, but in that year, new statutes made Swedish citizenship a requirement for membership. The revision had both economic and cultural reasons. There was a cultural gulf between the established Swedish- and German-speaking Jewish families and the “Polish” immigrants, who spoke Yiddish and/or Slavic dialects. The liberal reformists of the synagogue feared that the immigrants, who often were traditional Jews, would change the composition and cultural profile of the congregation. The reformists supposed this would negatively affect their position in Swedish society. This has sometimes been judged as a narrow-minded lack of ethnic solidarity, but considering the fundamentally divergent life-style and outlook on religion and politics between the groups, it is hardly surprising. The alienation was often mutual. The newcomers felt estranged by the reformed ritual of the synagogue, and organized their own *minyans*. In a few overcrowded wooden, tenement houses in Haga, along the streets Skolgatan and Haga Nygata, a sort of miniature version of New York City’s Lower East Side evolved, with families subsisting as textile workers, tailors, shoemakers, and peddlers.¹⁰¹

In order to integrate the traditional Jews of the suburbs, a school was organized for the “Polish” children. Abraham Baer was teaching Jewish subjects, and music at the school. Jacobowsky quotes his mother’s sister, Lina Hirsch (b. 1858):

The children attended morning school with cantor Baer, first on the street of Trädgårdsgatan. A room was rented there from two orthodox old sisters



Abraham Baer, ca 1890. After Jacobowsky 1955

named Baruch, who often entered the classroom to ask Baer for ritual advice (for example, if this or that was kosher), then on Klädpressaregatan, and finally on Skolgatan. We were taught religion, German and Hebrew. Twice a week, Dr. Wolff lectured on religion. We respected him immensely.¹⁰²

In the afternoon, at four o'clock, the children were supervised by the Swedish *magister* Törngren and his fiancée. Then the subjects were history, Swedish language, mathematics, geography, handwriting, singing, and needlework. The children also learned Hebrew songs in Swedish translations, which then were performed at the annual examination, to the delight of the numerous dignitaries of the congregation who usually took part in the celebration.

Obviously, the morning school was liberal-Jewish, whereas the afternoon curriculum was basically equivalent to Swedish elementary school. In this way, the children were introduced to two cultural forums that hitherto would have been inaccessible to them, Sweden and Germany.¹⁰³

With his village background from *Provinz Posen*, Baer may have been an asset for the congregation in this pedagogic field. It is significant that he taught High German and Hebrew, not Yiddish, even if his familiarity with the *mammeloschen* must have facilitated his communication with the children and their parents. The teaching of "Hebrew" songs is of course interesting, even if we know nothing about the repertoire. However, it was from this school that Baer recruited the boys for his synagogue choir, and so he gave them a place in the "temple" of the reformists. Baer's *mohel* book also proves his close contact with the Jewish neighborhood of Haga, which stood for a considerable part of the Jewish birthrate of Gothenburg.¹⁰⁴

There is a series of documents in the congregation's archive that allows us to glimpse some of Baer's professional activities and of his relationship with the board, but there is astonishingly little material of a more personal character.¹⁰⁵ It is obvious, however, that already in his thirties, Baer had some health problems. In May 1872 he asked for a summer vacation from June 17 to August 28. Supporting the application there is an attached medical testimonial from Doctor S. H. Gans, confirming Baer's need for a prolonged stay in the countryside. However, the nature of the ailment is not indicated. During the vacation, Simon Landsberg acted as his substitute in the

synagogue.¹⁰⁶ The preferred summer address seems to have been a cottage close to the coastal resort Särö, located in the southern outskirts of Gothenburg.¹⁰⁷

The most detailed account of the Baer's domestic conditions is to be found in the estate inventory drawn up after his death in 1894.¹⁰⁸ The picture that emerges is that of a markedly modest middle class home at Drottninggatan 58. There are the conventional sets of electroplate table silver, supplemented by a few more valuable silver items, there are the usual kitchen utensils and bed linens, but there are no gems, and nothing extravagant. The family had one domestic servant, supposedly a maid. Even if the flat seems to have been rather well furnished, there are no treasures on the list. The most valuable object is a piano, estimated at 100 Kronor. However, a collection of "books and music" has the highest value (250 Kronor) of all the listed items. Unfortunately, no specific information is given, and there is no clue as to what happened with this material after Baer's death.

The piano was of course an important tool for the cantor in his professional musical role, but it was also a necessity for the education of his daughter Dina. Her musical training seems to have begun early, and she became an accomplished keyboard player. Her theoretical efforts are documented in a musical notebook containing exercises (scales in different keys, strict four-part homophonic writing, and so on). It is likely that Czapek was her teacher in both theory and keyboard playing. At least since 1878, when she was sixteen, she regularly was his stand in on the synagogue's organ.¹⁰⁹ She must have been the first female organist in a Swedish synagogue, still a rare phenomenon.

Abraham Baer's tombstone at the old Jewish cemetery in Gothenburg is demonstratively simple, almost austere. Is this just a consequence of the family's restricted financial means? We do not know. One may think that the community would have sponsored a somewhat more monumental memorial stone for its famous cantor, had they really fully recognized his achievement. The cemetery abounds with richly decorated tombstones of rabbis, writers, and businessmen. Of course, it is also possible that the tomb was designed according to Baer's own wishes. The obituary published in the *Österreichisch-Ungarische Cantoren-Zeitung* emphasizes his humble and unobtrusive personality. I conclude this chapter with a quotation from an article about the funeral that was published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*.¹¹⁰

Gothenburg, 9 March. Today the funeral of Cantor Baer, who passed away on 6 March after a prolonged suffering, took place. The deceased had worked for thirty-six blessed years for his Gothenburg congregation. Conscientiousness and dedication are qualities that will remain his posthumous reputation. However, Mr. Baer did not work just for his congregation. Out of love for his profession, and inspired by the realization that young cantors often are perplexed by the confusing complexity of Jewish liturgical song and all the other cantorial concerns, he undertook the large task of collecting old, Polish Jewish traditions, as well as modern melodies. The fruits of his protracted effort he then published in his work *Der practische Vorbeter*. Therefore, his name will not be forgotten. Those who knew Baer personally, as well as those who know only his work, understand what the deceased symbolized for his congregation and for Judaism. Only recently, during a period of respite from his suffering, Cantor Baer announced in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* the publication of the third edition of his work. However, his ailment soon returned and sent him back to his sickbed, from which he was never again able to rise. Today, numerous members of the congregation rallied round the bier of the departed, honoring his dear memory. The ladies' choir of the synagogue and around forty boys and girls from the school, sang his funeral hymn to harmonium accompaniment. The Rabbi Dr. Wolff performed the funeral ceremony at the grave of the man he had been working with for more than half a generation. Honor to his memory!

Notations of Judaism

Baal t'fillah – *An Ethnomusicological Analysis*

To explore Baer's *Baal t'fillah* is like entering a building; the actual building that is depicted on the front page, but also the building of 2,500 years of Jewish ritual practice. This symbolical house of prayer is a vast collection of poems and prose passages, arranged and rearranged many times, adjusted to shifting religious, historical and political needs, crystallized as a mesmerizing sequence of Hebrew letters. But Baer, in his *Baal t'fillah*, adds something new to this purely verbal structure. The musical pillars and vaults, the resounding and shimmering ceiling, the lofty melodic balconies, the reverberant glimmering windows, the cantillation of the Torah scrolls – the audible is made visible. The acoustic, phonetic aspect of the prayer tradition is highlighted through musical notation.

Let us start by examining the front page (see page 6), which in itself is a successful artistic creation. The top of the page presents the Hebrew title in bold but undecorated letters. This is supplemented by a transliteration in elaborated Latin script. Together, these two versions of the title (the Hebrew is of course read from right to left, the Latin from left to right) leads the eye of the reader in a counter-clockwise circular movement, starting with the *beit* letter in the upper right corner and ending in the H letter of the word *t'fillah*. Thus, the title frames the oval-shaped picture of the Gothenburg synagogue. It is important, I think, that the drawing presents the synagogue in its urban surrounding, hinting at its integration in the public space of the city.

The Hebrew title and the picture of the synagogue's exterior take up approximately the upper third of the page. The lower section presents the German book title in German letters, a detailed description of the content of the publication, and the name of the author/editor. The typography is somewhat restrained, without shadings. In the upper part of the page, the shading of the letters emphasizes the sacredness of the ritual tradition. Like in the drawing of the exterior, the light is coming from above, creating an experience of three-dimensionality. In the lower section of the page, however, the whole impression is more matter-of-fact. Here the actual work place of

the *hazan* – the *amud* – is presented in the drawing of the synagogue's interior. This depiction of Judaism's inner space supplements the drawing of the exterior above. Actually, what is depicted below is exactly what exists behind the street façade of the synagogue – the *bimah*, the *amud* and the *aron kodesh*.

So, all in all the title page demonstrates how the Jewish religious culture of the Diaspora (the Hebrew title) interacts with the Swedish environment and European urban culture (the drawing of the exterior and the Latin letters), and how these are intertwined with German culture (the German title and the German language) and with its rationalistic *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. The design with Abraham Baer's name at the bottom of the page, with its curved typography, in a way catches and unites all these different cultures, as he in fact was an actor in all these forums. Under his name it states that he is the cantor of the Jewish congregation of Gothenburg as well, and therefore also a protagonist on the Swedish forum.

The creator of this complex and rather successful design is unknown, but it seems likely that the person belonged to the staff of the Breitkopf & Härtel printing house. However, Baer must have brought the two synagogue drawings when he traveled to Leipzig with his manuscript, which means that he had some premeditated idea for the design.

After the title page, a *Widmung*, a dedication, follows. First the members of the board of Gothenburg's Jewish congregation are listed; the businessmen, entrepreneurs and cultural patrons Eduard Magnus (1800–1879) and Isaac Philip Valentin (1812–1898), and the lawyer and politician Aron Philipson (1826–1881). These men were not only the pillars of the Jewish congregation; they played important roles in the general economic and cultural life of Gothenburg. They all belonged to the social circle around the fourth person mentioned in the dedication, S. A. Hedlund. And in fact this non-Jewish gentleman had played a crucial role in the realization of Baer's book project, but not only by accepting the advertisement for subscriptions in *Handelstidningen* of 1876. Hedlund actually contributed to the covering of the printing costs. The biographic article in *Der jüdische Cantor* tells us about this:

... However, enthusiasts and subscribers often are not the same thing, and the work may never have been printed (the cost amounted to 6,000 Marks), if

DEN
VORSTEHERN DER ISRAELITISCHEN GEMEINDE ZU GOTHENBURG

HERRN ED. MAGNUS,
RITTER DES NORDSTERN- UND ST. OLAFS-ORDENS,

HERRN J. P. VALENTIN,

HERRN RECHTSANWALT A. PHILIPSSON,
REICHSTAGSABGEORDNETEN

UND
DEM REDACTEUR DER GOTHENBURGER HANDELSZEITUNG

HERRN DR. S. A. HEDLUND

IN GRÖSSTER EHRENBETUNG

GEWIDMET

VOM

HERAUSGEBER.

providence had not helped the author in the shape of Dr. S. Hedlund. This noble person – editor of *Handelstidningen* and member of the first chamber of the *Riksdag* – had taken 14 days leave from the *Riksdag*, and had hurried back home in order to settle some important business of his. As soon as he saw Baer's manuscript, he became very interested in the project and personally recruited subscribers and wrote articles about the work. In short, he made everything possible in order to further the publication.¹¹¹

The book is reviewed in *Handelstidningen* on April 17, 1878. It is presented as a collection of two thousand melodies – as a kind of songbook. The review of *Göteborgs-Posten* on February 16, 1880, has a similar approach and characterizes Baer's publication as a *storartadt musikverk*, "a magnificent musical work." However, as we deduce from the text of the title page, this book is much more than a voluminous assemblage of melodies; it is also a handbook of Jewish liturgy, and as such it is related to earlier publications in the liturgical genre, the *siddurim* and *mahzorim*, the traditional Jewish prayer books. Song in the synagogue always carries a text, and the traditional prayer books are collections of texts: prayers, benedictions, supplications, religious poems, and biblical and Talmudic quotations. So what is the structural principle of Abraham Baer's publication? Does he arrange and classify its content according to musical principles, or is there some other organizing principle?

Approaching this question we may take a look at the table of contents, which is found after the preface. What first strikes us is the fact that the content is presented almost exclusively in Hebrew script. Only a few of the main headlines are rendered in German as well. It becomes clear that Baer addresses a Jewish audience that already has a basic command of the liturgical language, a fact that limits the universal musicological approach of the German language preface.

Now, what kinds of titles are presented in the table of contents? They are, in fact, the titles of the prayer texts, which, in the most cases, are simply the first words of the first line. It is obvious that Baer has structured his *Baal t'fillah* mainly according to the prayer book tradition. The pieces are presented in the order of the *siddur* and *mahzor*, because this is a practical handbook, a *practische Vorbeter*, which is intended for use at the *amud*. The *Vorbeter* should be able to read the music

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2	אדון עולם, תכל	—	38	יוצר משרתים (2)	—	74 a	אח-אמנו	—
3	ברכות השחר (ברוך)	—	39	את-שם (2)	—	74 b	שמע קולנו	20
4	אשר קדשנו	—	40	קבלם (2)	10	75	רצה	—
5	רוצא כל-בשר	—	41	והאופנים (2)	—	76	תעלה ונבא (לרא ולחה מ)	—
6	והמקרב-נא	—	42	אור תדש (2)	—	77	תתקנה	21
7	אשר בחר-בנו	2	43	ברוך (2)	—	78	שאתה	—
8	הקדש	—	44	נהב-אנו (2)	11	79	על נפשים (למנוחה ולפזורים)	—
9	אלהי	—	45	שמע ישראל (2)	—	80	בימי פתחיה (למנוחה)	22
10	אשר נסח	—	46	למשן ירבו	—	81	בימי מרדכי (לפזורים)	—
11	שלא עשני	—	47 a	הי אלהים (2)	12	82	על בלם	23
12	רחמינו	—	47 b	אמת (2)	—	83	יכתוב (בעשית)	—
13	ידי רצון, בין שדיא	—	48 a	תהלות (2)	13	84	וכל נפשים	—
14	רבוין	—	48 b	מי-כמחה (2)	—	85	ברכת פהנים	—
15	אכל	3	49	שירה תדשה (3)	—	86	שים שלום (לשחרית ולמוסק)	24
16	לפך	—	50	הי תמלך (3)	—	87	שלום רב (למנוחה)	—
17	שמע ישראל	—	51	צור ישראל (3)	14	88	בסער (בעשית)	—
18	אתה הוא	—	52	ברוך (למנוחה עשרה)	—	89	המברך	—
19	אתה הוא	—	53	אלהינו	—	90	המברך (קודם תלל ויהושענות)	25
20	פ-אמן	—	54	זכרנו (בעשית)	15	91	אבינו מלכנו (לעשית ולחצ)	—
21	תקנה	—	55	מלך	—	92	והוא רחום	—
22 a	יבא-שיר תדשים (לרא)	—	56	אתה גבור	—	93	הי אלהי ישראל	—
22 b	מזמור שיר	—	57	מכלכל	—	94	יבא-זאת	—
23	ברוך שאתה	4	58	מי כמותך (בעשית)	—	95	אנא	—
24	דוד	—	59 a	ונאמן	—	96	נהגילנו	—
25	נאני בחדשך (2)	—	59 b	קדשה	—	97	שומר ישראל (2)	—
26	מזמור לחודנה (2)	5	—	קדוש, למשקם, וקדבר, ימלך	—	98	נאמנו	26
27	תני קבד	—	60 a	לדור נדור	16	99	קדמי	27
28	רוחניות (לברית מילה)	—	60 b	האל המדוש	—	100 a	האי קדוש	—
29	ברוך הי לעולם (2)	6	61	אתה ימן	—	100 b	אל ארץ אפים	—
30	וקרות (לברית מילה)	—	62	השמיני	—	101	תני בנסח האלי	28
31	יחשע הי	—	63	סלח לנו	—	102	מלך	—
32	נרא ישראל	—	64	ראה	—	103	תתקנה (לחול)	—
33	ישתבח (2)	7	65	עננו (בתענית ציבור)	17	104 a	והשיר (לשבת ויום טוב)	—
34	מחיש	8	66	רפאנו	—	104 b	ברכו (ברכת תהורה)	29
35	ברכו (2)	—	67	ברך	—		תנינות	
36	ברוך (2)	—	68	תקע	—	105	פשוטה	30
			69	תשירה	18	106	השורה	—
			70	ולפזורים	—	107	לראש השנה וליום פזיר	—
			71	על-המזמרים	—	108	אשר	—
			72	ולירושלים	—			

*) Die in Parenthese stehenden Zahlen bedeuten die Anzahl der (verschiedenen) Melodien, die in dem Werke vorkommen.

according to the sequence of the ritual, without having to turn the pages back and forth too much, even if it is impossible to strictly uphold this standard due to the frequent repetition of certain parts of the prayer texts.

The book is divided into four parts: *Wochentags-Gesänge* (“Weekdays Songs”), *Sabbath-Gesänge* (“Sabbath Songs”), *Gesänge für die drei Feste* (“Songs for the Three Festivals”), and *Gesänge für das Neujahr und Versöhnungs-Fest* (“Songs for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur”). In each of the four parts, the material is structured according to the requirements of the daily service. According to traditional Judaism, there are three daily prayer hours, the *shaharit* (morning), the *minha* (afternoon), and *maariv* (evening) services. The *shaharit* can be regarded as the default full-scale service, containing all the essential components of the Jewish liturgy, whereas the *minha* and *maariv* services are shorter and more condensed. In order to facilitate our understanding of Baer’s handling of his material we must be acquainted with the basic structure and content of the weekday’s *shaharit*.

There are many local variations of the *siddur*, but basically, the sequence of the traditional morning service can be divided into six sections. First, the *berakhot hashahar*, the morning benedictions are presented. These are followed by a set of songs of praise, the *pesukei d’zimra*, consisting to a large part of hymns from the Bible’s Book of Psalms. The next section consists of blessings and biblical quotations, grouped around the venerable *Shema Yisrael* clause (sometimes called the Jewish confession of faith), the oldest of the prayers of the ritual. The fourth section is the *Shemoneh Esreh* or *Amidah*, nineteen prayers that are regarded as the “summit” of the service. This is followed by a set of penitential prayers called the *Tahanun*, and the *Siom hat’fillah*, the conclusion of the service. On Mondays and Thursdays, the solemn cantillation of a portion of the Torah is inserted after the *Tahanun*, and in the Saturday, Sabbath services, the Torah is read as well.

The daily cycle of prayer hours interacts with the weekly Sabbath cycle and with the festivals of the Jewish calendar, creating a complex pattern of weekdays, Sabbath and festival liturgies. It was this growing complexity of synagogue worship that, during the Middle Ages, lead to the emergence of the printed and fairly standardized *siddurim* and *mahzorim*. And it is this pattern of liturgically sequenced text collections that Baer follows when he edits his *Baal t’fillah*. In fact, his book can be

regarded as a *siddur* and *mahzor* to which one aspect has been added that is not contained in the traditional prayer books – the presentation of the musical medium.

What kind of *siddur* was it that Baer used as a pattern for his book? We have seen how the Gothenburg congregation managed to publish its own prayer book in 1858, after many years of discussion and conflict in the *Cultuscommission*. Considering Baer's involvement in the process of creating music for the new liturgy, one would expect that his book would present the musical program of the Gothenburg reform, and that its prayer texts would be those of its new prayer book. But this is not the case. Baer's *Baal t'fillah* is essentially a traditional *siddur/mahzor*. It does not contain any of the abridged or reformulated prayers of the liberal reformists; it proudly presents the old and venerable formulations.

Within the music that Baer presents, there are certain reformist features, but these are actually found in very few of the 1,488 items of his book, and then often just in the form of a suggested organ accompaniment to a seemingly traditional prayer melody. The main reason for this somewhat surprising conservatism is, I think, the main target audience of the publication – Ashkenazic cantors and cantorial students around Europe and America. With this broad, and theologically heterogeneous group in mind, he cannot take a stand for any specific version of the liturgical reform. Baer presents what he sees as exemplary versions of the prayer melodies. The local cantor can use what he finds musically appropriate, according to the specific circumstances of his congregation; he may perform revised versions of the texts that are not contained in *Der practische Vorbeter*, but he would still be able to use the musical toolbox presented by Baer.

How, then, are these musical vehicles presented in the book? Baer makes visible and explicit something that had only been implicit in the traditional prayer books – the modulation of the *Vorbeter's* voice, the pattern of musical intervals used in the performance of the Jewish liturgy. Of course, Baer was not the first cantor who applied the musical shorthand of staff notation to Jewish liturgical song. In his preface, he expresses his gratitude to his models Sulzer, Naumbourg, Deutsch, and Lewandowski, but it is also clear that he was deeply aware of the complications associated with this written notation. This is apparent in, among other ways, his simultaneous use of two different alphabets: Hebrew for the prayer titles, and Latin

for the texts of the musical notation. The staff notation of course almost forces him to use the Latin script, simply because it runs from the left to the right. Printed in Hebrew letters, the text would have to be broken up in syllables, with each individual syllable being read from the right to the left in a text flow running from the left to the right – such combinations actually do occur in some handwritten cantorial manuscripts, but they generally have been regarded as impractical.¹¹²

A Musical Form for Prayer: Nusah

This clash between a traditional means of graphic representation of *language* (symbols for sound qualities: letters) and an untraditional means of representing *musical courses of events* (symbols for pitch and meter: staff notation) actually represents a conceptual split in the performance tradition of the synagogue. The extra-verbal, expressive features of the *Vorbeter's* art had not been conceptually separated from the verbal flow. Here we approach a unique phenomenon of Jewish worship, a concept that almost seems to evade any clear and unambiguous definition but nevertheless is regarded as absolutely central to this tradition – *nusah*. Even the cantor and musicologist Sholom Kalib, who with his *The Music Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue*, created the most comprehensive presentation and analysis of Ashkenazic liturgical music, had to admit, “the full scope of the term *nusah* resists definition.”¹¹³

The lexical meaning of the Hebrew word, *nusah*, is “form or version of a text,” for example in a legal document. In the liturgical context the term has come to denote the *musical* form and version as well – a way of “doing” the text musically. Some Jewish prayer texts have their specific melodies, and in such cases, the term *nusah* refers to just one melody. But it may also denote a set of melodic formulae that may be combined freely within a type of prayer texts, that is, a “melodic style.” It may also refer to the personal way of doing the whole liturgy by a certain cantor, as well as the whole musico-liturgical tradition (*Nusah Ashkenaz*, *Nusah Sefarad*). Kalib makes an important and fruitful distinction between quantitative and qualitative aspects of the *nusah*. The quantitative aspects are those that can be presented in musical notation. These include what he calls *scale-basis* and basic melodic and rhythmic motifs. The scale-basis is the set of pitches and

musical intervals available in the *nusah*, the phenomenon we typically refer to as the “scale.” However, for the oral *chasonus* tradition, the concept of scale was a foreign abstraction. The *m’shorer* didn’t start his training by learning specific scales used in the synagogue; he acquired a set of melodic gestalts, held together by a common but implicit scale-basis. The qualitative aspects are such factors as mood, atmosphere, and emotionally engendered shadings in the voice quality, nuances of volume, shifting patterns of stress – in short, what in a classical music context would be regarded as interpretation. Even extra-musical factors of the performance, like the gestures and facial expression of the *Vorbeter* could melt into this general characterization.

So, in a way, *nusah* could be understood as a term for the format of the musical medium of Jewish liturgical performance.

Aims and Purposes

Before going into a detailed analysis of the musical content of the *Baal t’fillah*, (henceforth called *BT*) it is worth reflecting a while on the purpose of the book. What is it that Baer strives to accomplish? For it is quite clear that his project has several, parallel aims, and that these sometimes risk coming into conflict with each other. I think that we can discern at least four different motivations behind the work:

1. Practicality – the “Jewish cantor’s manual” dimension.
2. *Wissenschaft* – the scholarly analysis. Here the target group for the publication consists of scholars, music historians, historians of religion, etc. – Jewish and non-Jewish.
3. Heritage – the “corpus of Jewish liturgical music” dimension. Here the audience could be described as the general, educated Jewish public.
4. Representation – the presentation of Jewish tradition to the non-Jewish world.

Then there is, of course, a normative aspect as well, which can be linked to all the abovementioned aims: Baer wants to contribute to the maintenance of a high aesthetic standard of synagogue worship. His presentation of the liturgy is supposed to be exemplary.

The practicality is demonstrated by the strict adherence to the textual sequence of the *siddur*, and by the detailed comments and recommendations on ritual that supplement the notations. In a purely musicological edition of liturgical music, other principles of order would have been more accurate, such as basic scale, ambitus, and meter.

The *Wissenschaft* dimension is clearly expressed in the prefaces to both editions. This clearly applies to the academic form of these introductory texts, filled with many footnotes, but partly also to their content. Baer refers to earlier research in the field of Jewish liturgical music, which he criticizes for its narrow-minded historicism. In their effort to trace the historical origin of synagogue music, the scholars have focused on biblical poetry and *ta'amim* (musical accent signs). He remarks, somewhat ironically, that some interesting findings have been made, but generally, little light has been thrown on this obscure field.

As an alternative to this philological approach, he advocates a study of the living, oral tradition – “the vivid songs, which are performed daily in all synagogues.” This is nothing less than an ethnomusicological appeal. *Chasonus* music is here and now. Its true identity is not found in ancient signs and symbols, but in living practice.

The different aims and motivations behind Baer's project also illustrate the social multi-dimensionality of his work. While the practicality is an aspect that only concerns Jewish cantors, the *Wissenschaft* perspective entails a presence within the forum of German academic culture. The ambition to present the *chasonus* as a Jewish cultural heritage is relevant for the ethnic identity of the wider Jewish community, not only for the pious or orthodox segment of the population. The broadly representative function of the work mirrors Baer's roles and positions in non-Jewish contexts, local, national, and global. When the book is printed and sent out to the subscribers, it is simultaneously received and interpreted in all the different cultural forums.

Methods of Presentation

This focus on oral phenomena, of course, entails problems of methodology. In a paragraph in the preface to the first edition of the *BT*, Baer discusses the problems that occur when rendering these freely floating melodies on paper. The formulation

is a good example of Baer's characteristic German style, so I cannot refrain from quoting it first in the original language:

Die Piecen ohne Tempo-Ueberschrift sind rezitativisch vorzutragen, wie überhaupt die meisten unserer traditionellen Gesänge mehr das Gepräge des Rezitativs haben, und zwar deshalb, weil die meisten Gebetstücke unserer Liturgie jeder Stropheneintheilung und des eigentlichen rythmischen Taktes entbehren. (Aus diesem Umstande sind die Schwierigkeiten leicht zu ermessen, die man bei Bearbeitung solcher Gesänge zu überwinden hat.)

“The pieces without an indication of tempo should be performed like recitatives. Since most of the prayer texts of our liturgy have no stanza form and lack musical measures, most of our traditional songs have a recitative character (These circumstances give an idea of the difficulties that must be overcome when arranging such songs.)”

So, how does Baer tackle these problems? A look at the very first page of the *BT* gives us an impression of his method. As an introduction to the weekday *shahar-rit* service, he presents a Sephardic Portuguese melody to “At dawn I seek you” (*Schachar awakkesh'cho*; *Shahar Avakeshkha* in the English transliteration), a *piyyut* or liturgical poem by the medieval Spanish-Jewish poet and philosopher, Salomon ibn Gabirol (1021–1058).

At dawn I seek You, my rock and my fortress
my morning and evening prayers I lay before You
Before Your greatness I stand in fright
for Your eyes can see into the thoughts of my heart

What is this that the heart and tongue can
bring about, and what is the strength of my spirit within me?
Behold the singing of man will be pleasant to You, therefore
I thank You while the soul of God is within me

שחרית לחול

1

Morgen-Gesänge.

Nº 1.
Portugiesische Melodie.
Moderato. (♩ = 84.)

שחר אבקשך

Scha - char a wakkesch' cho zu - ri u - mis - gab - bi e e roch l' fo -
ne - cho schach - ri w' gam ar - bi schach - ri w' gam ar - bi

Ebenso die an - dern Strophen.

אדון עולם יגדל

Nº 2.
Jig - dal o - lom a scher mo - lach b' te - rem kol j'zir***) niw - ro l' -
Jig - dal e lo him chaj w' jis - ch - tab - bach nim - zo w' en es el m' zi - u - so e -
es na a soh w' - chef - zo kol a saj me - lech sch' mo nik - ro.
chod w' en jo - chid k' ji - chu - do ne - lom w' gam en sof l' ach - du - so.

Ein Jigdal bei einer טילה בריית siehe Nº 257.

ברכות השחר

ברוך

Nº 3.
Solo. Chor. Solo.
Bo - ruch at - loh a do - noj bo - ruch hu u - wo - ruch sch' mo e lo - he - nu me - lech ho o - lom

אשר קדשנו

Nº 4.
a scher kid d' scho - nu b' mizwosow w' ziw - wo - nu (al n' ti las jo - do - jum.)
(la a sok b' diw're so - roh.) o - men.

Nº 3; dann leise, worauf Nº 5 folgt.

רופא כל-בשר

Nº 5.
A Solo. Chor. B Solo. Chor.
Boruch attoh a donoij boruch hu uworuch sch' me ro - fe chol bosor umaf' li la a sos o - men.

Nº 3 u. 4 mit dem 2. Texte, doch oh. ne „Omen“

והערבנא

Nº 6.
Solo.
W' ha a rew no a do - noj e lo - he - nu es diw' re so - ro - s' cho b' fi - nu u - w' fi am m' cho bes jis - ro -
el w'nibjeh a na ch' nuw' ze e zo - e - nu w' ze e zo - e am m' cho bes jis - ro - el kul - lo - nu jo d' e sch' -
me - cho w' lom' de so - ro se - cho (lischmoh) ham m' lammed to - roh l' am - mo jis - ro - el o - men.

*) In manchen deutschen Gemeinden betet der Cantor bis כחשבות auf seinem Platze. Er legt טלית טלית erst vor שאתר an.

**) In manchen deutschen Gemeinden wird an „Chanuckoh“ das „a don Olom nach der Melodie: טענו צור“ gesungen.

***)) Andere Lesart: J'zur.

****) In den meisten deutschen Gemeinden folgen gleich nach „Umafil la a sos“ Nº 9 - 19, dann Nº 3 (mit dem 2. Texte) - 18.

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This strophic text is provided with a metric melody that Baer presents in 4/4-meter and supplements with a bass part. A *moderato* tempo and a metronome figure are indicated. For the following sections of the service, no tempos are suggested, which according to Baer's explanation in the preface indicates that they should be performed in the free recitative style. However, there is a standard time signature for all these recitatives, and the melodic flow is divided up into measures of regular 4/4-meter. How is this contradiction to be interpreted? On the one hand, it could be seen as a consequence of Baer's over-ambitious adjustment to the academic style of musical notation, where notating without bar lines was an oddity (even if it would have been possible to follow the pattern of traditional opera recitative notation). On the other hand, it may also be an expression of his aim to communicate the sense of musical pulse that is present even in a non-metric performance. The bar lines also simply may have been intended as orientation aid for the performer. However, the result is that, to the *uninitiated* reader the time signatures and bar lines give a somewhat misleading picture of the nature of the Jewish prayer style. This of course diminishes the documentary value of the notations, since a certain familiarity with the traditional performance style is needed for a reasonably faithful interpretation.

In passing, it should be remarked that Baer's choice of this specific melody for the Ibn Gabirol *piyyut* as the opening item of the whole book is interesting per se. The *BT* mainly presents the liturgical tradition of *minhag* Ashkenaz, the Jewish culture of Central and Eastern Europe, to which Baer himself belonged. However, as a vignette to his collection he includes a poem and a melody that belong to the Sephardic tradition. This has very little to do with practical aspects. It must rather be interpreted as an expression of the historicist ideology of liberal Judaism, as a sort of manifesto. To the liberal reformists and scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the Sephardic culture of medieval Spain was the golden age of the Jewish Diaspora. Many reformists, such as Abraham Geiger and Moritz Wolff, devoted years of work translating and commenting on the philosophy, theology, and poetry of al-Andalus. The modern type of synagogue design, which evolved during the nineteenth century, often took Andalusian architecture as its model. In a modest way, this is demonstrated in the interior of the Gothenburg synagogue, but the best example of this apotheosis of *Sepharad* is of course the Neue Synagoge in Berlin

(1866); a building that demonstrates the programmatic fusion of tradition and modernity, of Orient and Occident, of revelation and rationalism.

Baer personally witnessed this splendor during his 1873 visit to Berlin; perhaps he even listened to Geiger's sermons in the huge prayer hall. The *Schachar a'wak-kesch'cho* melody at the entrance of his liturgical handbook is a counterpart to the "Moorish" archway of the Neue Synagoge. It signals Baer's attachment and devotion to the general cultural heritage of Judaism, and it places a token of this heritage at the book's most representative location.

Besides the aspect of meter and tempo in the ordinary prayer melodies, there is another problem of notation that Baer had to cope with – musical pitch. Traditionally, there was no standard, absolute pitch in the *chasonus* repertoire. Each *hazan* chose a pitch level that was suitable for his personal vocal resources. In a cantor's *nusah*, there were fairly consistent patterns of pitch relationships between the Weekdays, Sabbath and High Holidays liturgies, as well as between different segments of the respective liturgies, but there was no universal point of reference.

In his *BT*, Baer concurs with the standard pitch system of nineteenth-century art music. It is clear that he aims at creating clear and easily readable notations. The bulk of the weekdays shaharit service he renders in A Major (or its parallel key F# minor), which locates the greater part of the melodic content inside the musical staff. This is also quite a comfortable pitch level for male voices. However, the use of the conventional key signature does not imply that these melodies actually have an A Major quality. Many of them use just three or four pitches that look like a selection from the seven notes of the major/minor scales, but could in fact be characterized as pentatonic. Traditional *chasonus* simply cannot be inserted into nineteenth-century major/minor tonality. Baer has to find a way to render the modal phenomena of the *chasonus* with the help of a system of notation that had been created for a very different system of musical expression. He is confronted with the same dilemma as all folk music collectors and early ethnomusicologists who attempted to make the oral visible, and readable.

One of the unique features of the *BT* is its undogmatic and pluralist approach towards the musical differences between different *nusahs*. For many of the prayer texts, Baer presents at least two versions or variants. His treatment of this aspect

seems directly to mirror his early experiences as a *m'shorer* in *Provinz Posen* around 1850. Polish and German Jewish communities existed side by side. There were differences in ritual and music, as well as in the colloquial language of the community members. Some of the German communities were historically related to the Jewish traditions of the old German Reich; others who had their roots in the *Serenissima Respublica Poloniae* had been strongly influenced by Haskalah and German liberal reform. Dialects of Yiddish could still be heard among the older generations, but High German rapidly supplanted the traditional Jewish form of the language. The Polish communities tended to be more traditional and less Haskalah-oriented. Here Yiddish was the dominant colloquial language, even if Polish was certainly also spoken by many community members.

These cultural and linguistic differences have their musical counterpart as well. Baer makes a distinction between Polish and German musical styles, and he labels the melodies *Polnische Weise* (P.W.) and *Deutsche Weise* (D.W.) respectively. However, this distinction is not put into practice throughout the whole work, which seems to imply that there was also a large, shared repertoire. For the introductory *berakhot hashahar* of the weekday's *shaharit* no alternative melodies are rendered; it is only in the *Pesukei d'zimra* and *Shema* sections that the German-Polish split vision starts to be realized. Baer explains the Polish/German split in his preface to the first edition, where he explains his motivations for the distinction between old and new styles:

All new melodies are indicated with N.W. (Neue Weise); those that are products of singular old Vorbeters (Chasanim) and only have a local significance with A.W. (Alte Weise). Such melodies that are different in the two rituals (the Polish and the German) are designated with P.W. (polnische Weise) or M.P. (Minhag Polen), D.W. (deutsche Weise) or M.A. (Minhag Aschk'nas), and the Portuguese ones with Port. W. (portugiesische Weise) or Minhag Sephard. In contrast to this, no such designations are given to those [melodies] that are ancient and distinguish themselves through their typical character and their wide distribution.¹¹⁴

These distinctions and characterizations apparently caused some discussion. In his preface to the second edition of the *BT*, Baer explains:

I did not find it necessary to indicate with my name those pieces that I myself composed in the old style and which consequently do not belong under the heading “traditional *Chasonus*,” which some dear friends have asked me to do. Anybody who has some knowledge about our sacred music would be aware that we do not have fixed melodies to all our prayers, and that the longest prayers are entrusted to the free outpourings from the Chasan’s heart. And it is also exactly here that the Chasan can display his talent and sentiment, his erudition in the field of Jewish song; in short, gives voice to his full individuality. In spite of the incongruence between different Chasanim, all these recitatives (like Malchios, Sichronos, Shofros etc.) have an old Jewish character. However, they are and will be individual creations. Every clever *Vorbeter* cultivates his own “Steiger” (style and way of singing) and strives to disseminate it through his pupils.¹¹⁵

Baer seems to refer to those items in his book that can be considered as his personal renderings of traditional *Vorbeter* creations. However, he also declares in this preface that *all* the Polish pieces and part of the German repertoire that is designated with A.W. and N.W. are his own compositions!

This might look a bit confusing, and apparently it is the term “composition” that causes the confusion. Baer with his formulation “free outpourings from the Chasan’s heart” (*freien Ergiessungen des Vorbeterherzens*) amply demonstrates that he is fully aware of the improvisatory attitude typical of the *nusah* sphere, but he has no access to concepts like “improvisation” or “extemporizing” that would have been natural for modern, twentieth-century ethnomusicology. The concept of composition (as defined in nineteenth-century art music) is in fact incompatible with *nusah* thinking.

This leads us to the question of how representative Baer’s work is. One might get the impression (not least from the rubrics on the title page) that this is a complete collection of Jewish liturgical music. But, in the preface, Baer in fact makes it quite

clear that this is not his main aim. Primarily, this is a collection for practical use, based on the experiences of a *Vorbeter* educated in the Polish-German borderland. One may think that it would be an easy thing to compare Baer's rendition of the tradition with the modern, scholarly presentations of *chasonus* music, such as Idelsohn, Werner, and Kalib, in order to arrive at a conclusion regarding his representativity, or fidelity, to the heritage of synagogue music. However, in doing so, we would be arguing in a circle, since these later publications, to a certain extent, are based on Baer's collection, being the first really comprehensive edition of *chasonus*.

Certainly, Baer was a scholar and something of an ethnomusicologist, but he was also himself a bearer of tradition. Therefore, his book of liturgy must be seen as the result of a process of introspection. In a way, he was his own informant, and this in no way diminishes the quality of his work. In this culture of "free outpourings," there simply was no standardized canon. The essence of this tradition was its individualism and variability, and its willingness to adopt and assimilate every musical vehicle that fit into the *Vorbeter's* expressive toolbox. It is possible, and even likely, that Baer had a collection of musical notes and manuscripts that he used during his work with the *BT* (even if it's rather surprising that nothing of this seems to have survived). However, in his musical mind he had a treasure of patterns and combinations that could be mobilized through improvisatory acts, and some of these he put down in his *Baal t'fillah*, as truly synthetic, ideal realizations, and representations of *chasonus*. Memorizing, not writing down, was at the heart of the tradition. One recalls the *bocherim* in Filehne learning the Talmudic lessons by heart with the help of *Lerntropen*, the specific melodies used as vehicles of theoretical study. They represent a very characteristic oral method of Jewish text study.

We should also bear in mind that much of the core of the *Vorbeter's* art could not be taken down in conventional musical notation. Baer renders pitch patterns and hints at metrical and agogical aspects – that is what he could do with the notational system that stood at his disposal. But for the *nusah*, aspects like voice quality, dynamics, microtonal inflections, general charisma, and subtle references to textual or contextual dimensions were as important as the sequence of defined pitches and intervals.

Chasonus – a Method of Differentiation

In order to grasp Baer's version and vision of the *chasonus* we have to compare the different sections of the *BT*. Is there an overall structural principle organizing the whole corpus of liturgical melodies? There certainly is, but its fundament is not musical. As has already been pointed out, it is the sequence of the *siddur* and *mahzor* texts and the ritual cycle of Sabbaths and holidays that govern the presentation of the music in the *BT*. Analyzing the *BT* by reading and singing it through (a deeper understanding of musical notations can only be acquired through the hermeneutical act of musical realization and interpretation), I reach the conclusion that the basic aim of the musical rendering of Jewish liturgy – as visualized by Baer – is the production of *differentiation*. On the microstructural level of the single prayer text, it serves disjunctive and conjunctive functions and helps to emphasize important phrases and formulations. On the broader, macrostructural level, it highlights the *distinctions* between different sections of the single service, between the different daily services, between the weekdays and the Sabbath, and between the shifting phases of the Jewish ritual calendar. How this is accomplished according to Baer, we can learn from a juxtaposition of the *shaharit* services for weekdays and for the Sabbath.

In the weekday's *shaharit* (*BT* No. 1–154) the whole service up to the Torah section is dominated by a fairly simple melodic structure that Baer notates as A Major. The recitation gravitates around the notes E and F#, with many repetitions of these notes. For most of these prayers Baer presents just one single version of the music. In contrast, for the Sabbath service pieces he often provides alternatives – for some of these texts there are four different versions of the music. This apparently mirrors the generally higher creative effort that the *Vorbeters* were supposed to invest in the Sabbath performance.¹¹⁶ It is not always fully clear if Baer considers any of the Sabbath versions as a first choice, but if we look at the sequence of melodies labeled “1.w.” throughout the service, these stand out as more profiled and complex than their weekdays counterparts. These items use a somewhat higher pitch level than the weekdays versions, and this for most singers would result in a more expressive vocal quality.

Of the four melodies presented in *BT* 432 (p.109) for the *Yigdal* (“Great is the Living God and Praised”) 1.w. and 3.w. are closely related variants, the 2.w. can

שחרית Morgen-Gesänge.

109

Nº 432.
Allegretto.
Solo.

יגדל אלהים

1.W. Jig - dal e lo - him chaj w' jisch - tab bach nim - zo w' en es el m' zi - u - so e -

2.W. Andante.

3.W. Allegretto.

4.W. Allegretto.

chod w' en jo - chid k' ji - chu - do ne e lom w' gam en sof l' ach - du - so.

Ebenso die andern Strophen.

Nº 433.
Schluss.

מתים יחיה

1.W. Me - sim j' chaj - jeh el b' row chas - do bo - ruch a de ad schem t' hil - lo - so.

2.W.

3.W.

4.W.

Das עולם ארון wird entweder wie יגדל gesungen oder wie folgt.

Nº 434.
Solo.

אדון עולם

don o - lom a scher mo - lach b' te - rem kol j' zir niw' ro l' es na a soh w' chef - zo kol a saj me lech sch' mo nik - ro.

Ebenso die andern Strophen.

Nº 435.
Schluss.

ועם - רוחי

W' im ru - chi g' wij - jo - si a do - noj li w' lo i - ro

be considered as a related, minor-like version, whereas 4.w. has a totally different melodic shape and is presented in a D Major tonality.

For the *Adon olam* ("Lord of the Universe") further down on the same page it is stated in a commentary that it can be sung to the same melody as the *Yigdal*, apparently if any of its first three alternatives has been performed. The D Major melody printed as No. 434–35 is supposed to be used if the D Major *Yigdal* has been sung. This principle is maintained in the benedictions following afterward, so basically two distinct tracks can be followed throughout the first three sections of the Sabbath service – one of them notated by Baer as F Major, the other as D Major.

It might seem odd that there are such large differences between the musical renderings of the same texts. However, the important thing here is *the consistency of the musical form*, the *nusah*, not the historical continuity of a codified musical repertoire. The cantor must stick to his musical pathway, must maintain his characteristic style throughout the performance. There was a reciprocal relationship between a *Vorbeter* and his congregation. When accepting a position at a synagogue, the *Vorbeter* was supposed to adjust to the local traditions of liturgical style, but he was also supposed gradually to bring something of his own, to mold a personal *nusah* on the basis of tradition. A talented and charismatic *hazan* would be able to make a deep imprint on the local liturgy. Nevertheless, throughout all these changes and additions, the overall structure of the service had to be distinguishable and recognizable.

In Baer's Weekday *shaharit* there is a clear shift in the *Siom hat'fillah*, the section that comes after the Torah reading portion, where the concluding part of the service takes up much of the modal character of the Torah reading, instead of continuing in the E–F# centered mode of the previous sections. In a similar way, there is a distinct musical switch at the start of the *Amidah* section of the Sabbath liturgy (*BT* 539, p. 128), where a modality rendered by Baer as F Major/D minor is supplanted by melodic structures centered on A and E (notated as E Major, A Major, or A minor). This signals the inception of the *birkat sheba* section of the service (the Shabbat version of the *Amidah*). Here, a specific melodic device that until now has been only sparsely used is given much attention, namely the interval sequence *minor second – augmented second – minor second*, in this notation framed by the notes E–F–G#–A, with E as the tonic/finalis. Clearly, this tetrachord pattern – with the

Nº 536.
Andantino. Solo.

צור ישראל

N.W. Zur jis-ro-el ku-moh b'es-ras jis-ro-el u-f' deh chin.u-me.cho j' hu -
doh w' jis-ro-el go-a le-ne a do-noj z' wo-os sch' mo k' dosch jis-ro-el.

בגלל אבות (ליוצר)

Nº 537.

Big-lal o-wos to-schi-a bo-nim w' so-wi g' ul-loh li-w' ne w' ne-hem.

Nº 538.

Solo.

Chor.

ברוך

Solo.

Chor.

N.W. Bo-ruch at-toh a do-noj bo-ruch hu u-woruch sch' mo go-al jis-ro-el o-men.

Stille Andacht.

Nº 539.

Moderato.

ברוך (ברכת שבע)

Solo.

Chor.

Bo-ruch at-toh a do-noj bo-ruch hu u-woruch sch' mo.

Nº 540.

Moderato. Solo.

אלהינו

E lo-he-nu we-lo-he a wo-se-nu e lo-he aw-ro-hom e lo-he jiz -
chok we-lo-he ja a kow ho-el hag-go-dol hag-gib.bor w' han-no-ro-el el -
jon go-mel cha so-dim to-wim w' ko-neh hakkol w' so-cher chas-de o
wos u-me-wi go-el li-w' ne w' ne-hem l' ma-an sch' mo b' a-ha woh.

Nº 541.

Andante.

Chor, dann Solo.

(י זכרנו) (בעשית)

N.W. Soch' renu l'chajjim melech cho fez bachajjim w'chos' wenu b' se.fer hachaj-jim l' maan-cho e lohim chaj-jim.

*) Siehe die Anmerkung zu Nº 54.

augmented second as the characteristic interval – is used to give greater emphasis to this central part of the liturgy. It also seems to be linked to a higher expressive intensity than the preceding, more major/minor-like portions of the *nusah*. The musician Baer prescribes “*Dolce e molto religioso*” for the interpretation of the magnificent *Mim’komocha passage*, which follows the congregational singing of Ezekiel 3:12 (*BT* 553, p. 130).

Reveal yourself from Your place, O our King, and reign over us,
for we are waiting for You. When will you reign in Zion?
May it be soon in our days, and may You dwell there for ever
and all time. May you be exalted and sanctified in the midst of
Jerusalem, Your city, from generation to generation for evermore.
May our eyes see Your kingdom, as said in the songs of Your
splendor, written by David your righteous anointed one.

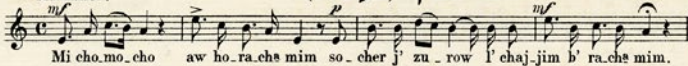
It is also clear that Baer classifies pieces using the E–F–G#–A formula as traditional, such as; *Weisen, welche uralte sind, [und] sich durch ihren typischen Charakter, wie durch die grosse Verbreitung, die sie gefunden, auszeichnen ...* (“melodies, which are ancient and distinguish themselves by their typical character as well as by their wide distribution”). In contrast to this traditional pattern, his numerous N.W. melodies in this section (which are his own compositions) have a definite major/minor identity.

It seems clear that it is the preservation of the type of distinctions that I have outlined above that is the central idea. Of course, this can be done in many different ways, with a widely shifting musical material. It is a case of maintaining the borders: the repertoire used in this process may vary greatly; both in space and time, but the distinctions are upheld. The consistent core of the liturgy is its set of codified texts; the cantorial *nusah* is a medium with a variable format.

We have seen that there is a clearly distinguishable difference between the Week-days services and the Sabbath services regarding tonality, pitch level, ambitus and musical elaboration. However, the aesthetic effort culminates in the fourth section of the *BT*, the *Gesänge für das Neujahr und Versöhnungs-Fest* (“Songs for the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement”), comprising items 957 through 1,488. Here

N^o550.
Andante.

מי-כמוך (בעשית)

N.W.  *Mi cho.mo_cho aw ho.ra.chs mim so - cher j' zu - row l' chaj-jim b' ra.chs mim.* *wird wie עזר עזר
folgt N^o545 (ליצי 546)
mit dem 2. Texte.*

N^o551.

נקדש

N.W.  *N' kad.desch es schim'cho bo - o - lom k'schem schemmak dischim o - so bish' me morom kokko -*

N^o552.

אז בקול

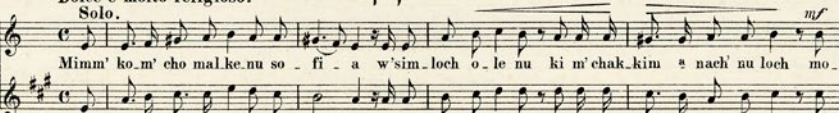
suw al jad n' wi.e.cho w' ko - ro seh el seh'w'o.mar. *קדוש siehe
N^o516
(transponiren).* *Solo.
Os b' kol raasch godol ad -*

dir w'chosok masch mi - im kol mi - s' nas - im l' ummas s' rofim l' ummo - som bo - ruch jo me - ru *בית כבוד
siehe N^o519
(transponiren).*

N^o553.

Dolce e molto religioso.

מוקמך

N.W.  *Mimm' ko.m' cho mal.ke.nu so - fi - a w'sim - loch o - le nu ki m'chak.kim a nach' nu loch mo -*

saj tim loch b' zij - jon b' ko.row b' jo - me - nu l' o - lom wo.ed tisch - kon tis.gad.dal w'sis.kad -

dasch b'soch j' ruscho - lajim i - r'cho l' dor wodor ul' nezach n' zo - chim w'e - ne.nu sire - - no mal -

chu.s' cho kaddo - wor ho.o.mur b'schi.re us - se.cho al j' de do wid m'schi.ach zid ke - cho.

N^o554.

Allegretto.

ימלך

N.W.  *Jim - loch a do - noj l' o - lom a lo - hajich zij - jon l' dor wo - dor ha la lu - - joh.*

we may assume to find Baer's *chasonus* in its most elaborate form, and in order to reach an understanding of his aesthetic approach and the underlying compositional principles, I therefore will make a closer analysis of a couple of pieces from this part of the book.

Musicological analysis often tends to be more mystifying than clarifying, in that it tries to explain in indirect, technical (and sometimes quantitative) terms, something that has to be experienced and perceived in its totality in order to be fully understood. To avoid the trap of reductionism, I therefore will apply a narrative, metaphorical method that tries to convey the structural connections and interrelationships, both within the musical form itself, and between the text and the music. I am trying to grasp the musical architecture; the tonal structure that Baer is representing and evoking with his notations. A more conventional, musicological analysis is sketched out in the footnotes.

Let us take a look at Baer's rendering of the *Elohenu welohe awosenu m'chal*, one of the prayers comprised in the *shaharit* morning service of the second day of Yom Kippur (*BT* 1431b, p. 327). The prayer text deals with the institution of the Day of Atonement, tells about its importance and explains its significance. As with many prayers, it actually has the form of a dialogue with God; through the mouth of the *baal t'fillah*, the Lord is reminded of his promise to forgive those sins that are *beshegaga*, unintentional transgressions resulting from ignorance and human imperfection.¹¹⁷ Purified by the truthful account of these imperfections and in a state of serious repentance, the members of the congregation stand before the Lord. And between them and God stands the *Vorbeter* as the *shali'ah tzibbur*, the spokesman of the community:

*M'chal*¹¹⁸

1. Our God and God of our ancestors, forgive our sins [on this Sabbath day and] on this Day of Atonement.
2. Blot out and remove our sins and transgressions as Isaiah promised in Your name: "I blot out your transgressions, for My own sake; and your sins I shall not recall."

N^o 1431^b.
Solo. A

א'ו'א מחל

① E lo - he - nu we lo - he a wo - se - nu m' chal la a wo - no - se - nu b' jom (*) haschschabbos haschsch u - w' jom) hak.kip.pu - rim has - seh m' cheh w' has wer p' scho - e - nu (w' chat.to - se - nu) min

ne.ged e ne.cho ② ko.o.mur o - no - chi o - no - chi hu mocheh f' scho.e.cho l' ma a ni w' chat.to - se.cho lo es - kor ③ w' ne e mar mo.chi.si cho.ow p' scho - e - cho w' che.o - non chat.to.se -

cho schuwoh e.laj ki g' al - ti.cho w' ne e mar ki wajjom has - seh j' chapp er a le -

27 chem l' ta - her es - chem mikkol chat.to.se.chem lif - ne a do - noj tit - ho - ru. ⑤ E lo - he - nu we lo -

33 he a wo - se - nu r' zeh wim.nu.cho - se - nu) kad.d' schenu b' miz - wo - se - cho w' sen chel - ke - nu b' so - ro -

36 se.cho sab - b'e - nu mit - tu - we.cho w' samm' chenu bi.schu.o - se.cho (*) w' han - chi - le - nu a do - noj e lo -

41 he.nu b' a ha woh u.w'ro - zon schabbas kod - sche.cho w' jo - nu.chu woh jis - ro - el m' kadd' sche sch' me - cho)

46 ⑦ w' ta - - - her lib - be - nu l' ow - d' cho be e mes ki at - toh sol.chon l' jis - ro -

50 el umochlon l' schiw - te j' schurun b' chol dor wo.dor u - mib.bal.o - de.cho en lo - nu me - lech

55 mochel w' so - le - ach (el.lo ot - toh) ⑧ bo - ruch at - toh a do - noj bo - ruch hu u.woruch sch' mo

61 Solo. me.lech mo.chel w' so - le - ach la a wo - no - se - nu w' la a wo - nos am - mo bes - jis - ro -

64 el u - ma a wir asch - mo - se - nu b' chol scho.noh w' scho - noh me.lech al kol ho - o -

67 rez m' kad - desch (*) haschschab.bos w' jis - ro - el w' jom hak.kip.pu - rim o - men.

Chor.

Chor.

Hierauf folgt N^o 1124, 1125, 1126, 1249, 1250, 1128 bis incl. 1131^a (siehe Anmerkung zu N^o 1131), 1131^b bis incl. N^o 1154; dann wird die Haphtarah gelesen (am Sabbath wird auch יקום שביעין u. יקום שביעין eingeschaltet), das Gebet für den Fürsten vorgetragen, וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁכַּח וְהָיָה כְּשֶׁיִּשְׁכַּח ver. richtet, worauf אשׁוּרִי (N^o 603), תהלת יי (604) N^o 1160 u. 1161 folgt.

^a) Am Sabbath.

3. You promised further: "I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud, your sins like a mist. Return to Me for I have redeemed you."
4. And in the Torah it is written: "For on this day shall you receive atonement to cleanse you; from all your sins shall you be cleansed before the Lord."
5. Our God and God of our ancestors [may our Sabbath rest be acceptable to You;] may Your *Mitzvot* lead us to holiness; and may we be among those who devote themselves to your Torah. May we find contentment in Your blessings, and joy in Your sustaining power.
6. [Help us to enjoy, in love and fervor, the heritage of Your holy Sabbath. May Your people of Israel, who hallow your name, find rest on this day.]
7. Purify our hearts to serve You in truth. For you forgive the people of Israel and pardon the tribes of Jeshurun in every generation; and we acknowledge only You as the Sovereign who grants us pardon and forgiveness.
8. Praised are You, O Lord, who forgives and pardons our sins and the sins of the house of Israel. Year after Year, You absolve us of our guilt, Sovereign over all the earth, who hallows [the Sabbath] Israel, and this Day of Atonement.

In the musical *Gestaltung* that Baer presents, I imagine his *Vorbeter's* pulpit decorated and expanded into a surprisingly complex and multidimensional construction. It has several levels; exactly how many is hard to tell before the performance has started. However, it seems clear that each level in its turn consists of several smaller steps and protruding platforms. It is a multi-colored amalgam of architectonic elements and ornaments. At the base, there are two heavy structures, reminiscent of the Yachin and Boaz pillars of the Jerusalem temple, but we might also catch a glimpse of flamboyant, medieval stone vaults and even timber constructions reminiscent of folk architecture from the Carpathians.

Baer enters this prayer from the substructures in the center of the voluminous and expansive musical structure that almost reaches the level of the balcony of the Gothenburg synagogue. He says the first clause of the *M'chal*, ("Our God and God of our ancestors") with a powerful musical hint of the *hechal*, the Torah cabinet. He then takes three ascending musical steps, uttering the central supplication of the Yom Kippur ("forgive us our sins"). In the fourth clause of the text, where the

Torah is quoted, he expressively addresses the congregation, and approaching the next clause, in which the introductory invocation is repeated, he almost surprisingly leaps to the next level of the structure; now his voice takes on a new, echoing quality, amplified by numerous niches in the façade.

Reaching the prayer's seventh clause, he seems to have made the two pillars of the base expand and rise above the whole structure, suddenly lifting him towards the synagogue's ceiling to a narrow ledge where he is balancing freely during two long melismatic phrases, containing the words "Purify our hearts to serve You in truth." There is no protective balustrade. Baer is performing his thrilling balancing act without a safety net, depending only in his musical powers and in his trust in the faith of his ancestors.

Descending on a flight of steps that has stealthily risen next to the pillars, he then returns to the second level of the building, and symbolically turning again towards the Torah cabinet, he utters the final clause, praising the Lord. With the concluding *amen*, the *amud* has regained its original, physical shape, a simple lectern with a pulpit and a lamp.

We find that the musical form Baer has given the *M'chal* prayer can be described as an **A-B'-C-B'** structure. The two main sections, **A** and **B**, are distinguished by their contrasting tonal identity. After the **B'** section, the expressive culmination of the **C** section is inserted; then material from the **B¹** section is reused and supplemented by a few profiling tonal alterations.¹¹⁹

Another example of Baer's rendering of the High Holidays repertoire is the *Attoh hiwdalto* (BT 1485), which belongs to the *Ne'ilah*, the concluding part of the Yom Kippur service.

*Attoh hiwdalto*¹²⁰

1. You distinguished humanity at Creation; and You bestowed upon humanity the privilege of standing in Your presence.
2. Who can say to You: "What are You doing?" And even if we should be righteous, what can we give you?
3. In love, You have given us, O Lord our God, [this Sabbath day and] this Day

N^o 1484.

י' אתה נותן יד לפושעים

p dolente
 At - toh no-sen jod l' fo-sch' im wi-min'cho p'schu - toh l' kab-bel scho-wim wat-t -
 lamm' de-nu a do-noj e lo-he-nu l' his-wad - dos l' fo-ne - cho al kol a wo-no -
 se-nu l' ma-an nech - dal me-o schek jo-de - nu u-s' kab-b' le-nu bi-s' schu -
 woh sch' le-moh l' fo - ne-cho k' isch - schim u - ch' ni-cho - chim l' ma-an d'wo -
 re - cho a scher o - mor - to. En kez l' isch - sche cho-wo - se-nu w' en mis -
 por l' ni-cho-che asch-mo - se-nu w' at - toh jo-de-a sche-a-cha-ri - se-nu rim-moh w' so -
 le - oh l' fi - choch hir-be-so s' li-cho-se - nu moh o - nu meh chaj-je - nu
 meh chas-de - nu mah zid - ke-nu mah jisch - e - nu mah ko-che-nu ma g'wu-ro-se-nu
 mah no-mar l' fo-ne-cho a do - noj e lo-he-nu we-lo-he a wo - se-nu ha
 lo kol haggib-bo-rim k' a-jin l' fo - ne-cho w' ansche hasch-schem k' lo ho-ju wa-cha-cho -
 mim kiw-li maddo u - n' wo - nim kiw-li has - kel ki row ma a se - hem to - hu wi -
 me chajjem hewel l' fo - ne-cho u-mo-sar ho-o-dom min habb' he-moh o - jin ki hakkol ho-wei.

N^o 1485. A'

י' אתה הברלת

mp
 ① At - toh hiw-dal-to e nosch m' rosch wat-tak-ki-re-chu la a mod l' fo-ne-cho ② ki
 4 *mf* *rall.* *a tempo*
 mi jo-mar l' cho mah tif - al w' im jiz - dak mah jit - ten loch ③ Wat - tit - ten

*) N. M. A. auch n. d. Mel. d. N^o 792.

7 lo_nu a do_noj e lo_he_nu b' a ha woh (*) es jom haschschabbos has_sch w'es jom(zom)hakkippu -

10 rim has_sch kez u_m' chi - loh u_s' li - choh al kol a_wo_no - se_nu l' ma_an nech -

15 dal me_o_schek jo_de_nu w' no_schuw e le_cho la a sos chukke r' zo n' - - cho b' le - wow scho -

20 lem w' at - toh b' ra_chs me_cho ho_rab_bim ra - chem o - le_nu ki lo sach.poz b' haschschosas o -

25 lom schen_ne e mar dir_schu a do - noj b' him.mo.z'u k' ro - u_hu bih_jo_so ko - row. W'

30 ne e mar ja a sow ro_scho dar - ko w' isch o_wen machsch' wo_sow w' jo - schow el a do -

35 noj wi_rach me_hu w' el e lo - he_nu ki jar_beh lis.lo - ach w' at - toh e lo_ha s' li_chos chan -

40 nun w' rachum e_rech ap_pa_jim w' raw che_sed (we e mes) u_mar - beh l' he - tiw w' ro -

44 zeh at_toh bi_s' schu - was r' scho_im w' en at_toh cho_fez b' mi_so - som schen_ne e

48 mar e mor a le - hem chaj o - ni n' um a do_noj e lo_him im ech_poz b' mos ho_ro -

52 scho ki im b' schuw roscho middar - ko w' cho - - joh schu - - wu schu - wu middarkechem ho_ro -

57 im w' lom_moh so_mu - su bes jis_ro - - el w' ne - e mar he_cho - fez ech_poz mos ro -

61 scho n' um a do_noj e lo - him ha lo b' schu - wo midd'ro.chow w' cho - - joh. W' ne - e -

65 mar ki lo ech - poz b' mos ham - mes n' um a do - noj e lo_him w' ho - schiwu wi_ch' ju.

Folgt N°1431b, 1124 bis incl. 1126; N°1249, 1250 (wird in m. Gem. nicht gebetet), 1128 bis incl. 1135. In m. Gem. auch Duchan (s. 1251 u. 1252 (I.W.), welches sofort n. N°1131a stattfindet u. N°1253 bis incl. 1255. - Dann N°1136 (n. M. A. auch 1137, welches n. M. P. aber nach N°1488 gesetzt wird (vor Beginn dieses Wapp wird die Lade geschlossen)). -

) Am Sabbath.

of Atonement, so that there be an end to our sins through pardon and forgiveness, that we refrain from doing evil, and return to You to observe Your laws wholeheartedly.

4. In Your abundant mercy, have compassion upon us. For You do not desire the destruction of the world; as Your prophet Isaiah declared:
5. “Seek the Lord while the Lord may be found. Call upon the Lord while the Lord is near. Let the wicked person abandon the ways of wickedness, and let the evil person abandon evil designs. Let them return to the Lord who will have mercy upon them; let them return to our God, who is ever ready to forgive.
6. O God of forgiveness, You are gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in mercy and goodness. You desire the repentance of the wicked, not their death, the prophet Ezekiel declared:
7. “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that they abandon their ways and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways, for why should you die, O house of Israel?”

In his *Attoh hiwdalto* structure, Baer uses just two levels of expression, but he starts at the higher level, at a musical platform that is oblique and tilting, so that he actively has to counteract the forces of gravity while alternately turning his body and face towards God and the congregation. This is an austere and numinous place, with no decorations, apt for a declaration on the nature of the relationship between God and mankind, which is the content of the first clause of the text.

The charged tetrachord with the augmented second as its vibrating center carries the first two clauses of text. In the third clause, the *Vorbeter* gradually turns towards his congregation, and the musical stress is alleviated. A ramp is unfurled, and quoting the prophet Isaiah, the *Vorbeter* descends to the floor level, facing the congregation, only to return to the apex of the *amud* at the line “let them return to our God, who is ever ready to forgive” at the end of the fifth textual clause. This upper level is now even more dramatic than at the beginning. On the words “turn, turn” in the last textual clause, the whole structure is shaken as if by an earthquake.¹²¹

In the weekdays section of the *BT*, there is a presentation of a central feature of Jewish liturgy, the Torah cantillation. Here the account becomes more abstract,

since the aim is to explain the use of the *ta'amim*, the musical signs added to the letters of the biblical texts. The *ta'amim* are an ekphonic notation system, which means that the signs do not represent pitches, but short melodic motives to be sung on a single unit of text. Baer presents this as a chart, spread over six pages, in which three or four versions of the musical interpretation of the *ta'amim* are rendered for each of six types of cantillated texts – the Pentateuch, the Haphtara (Prophets), Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur texts, the book of Esther, the texts for *Tisha b'av* and *Toch'chah*. On the top of the chart, the signs and their proper placement (above or under the letters of the Hebrew texts) are indicated. Underneath there is a transliteration in Latin script and a German translation of the names of the symbols. Thus, the notations represent various traditional ways of realizing the musical signs. The chart presents only the musical vocabulary or toolbox of cantillation, not its practical application to text. However, a set of suggested realizations of specific textual passages follows, and in an appendix to the third section of the book there is a short specific section on Sephardic cantillation.

Ethics, Aesthetics and Musical Emancipation

We now have an impression of the structure and content of Baer's representation of the *chasonus*. This musical "sanctuary" of his is surprisingly traditional. Baer maintains the vaults of the *siddurim* and *mahzorim*, and the exuberant decorations and expressionist, melismatic outpourings of the heart are combined in flexible and variable patterns. I have already touched on the relatively infrequent musical modernizations, such as instrumental accompaniment (organ) or choral arrangements. A look at the actual figures is telling. Of the 1,488 musical items in the *BT*, only 21 are supplied with organ parts, and there are only 51 choral settings. Many of these choral settings are not full-scale arrangements, but only short cadenzas or responsorial formulas. This sum of 72 "modern" items amounts only to 4.8 % of the total number of pieces in the book. Then there are of course a considerable number of *Neue Weise* items, which, without being harmonized or arranged often show a propensity for a conventional nineteenth-century type of major tonality.

Actually, the stylistic diversity of the *BT* is one of the most conspicuous features of the collection. There are several reasons, one of which undoubtedly is the

נגינות

Die Intonation der Accente auch Tonzeichen.*)

Gestalt und Namen der Accente.
Die deutsche Uebersetzung n. m. Autoren.

Nº 105.

Uebliche Intonirung
der Parschijoth
oder pentateuchi-
schen Perikopen.

(ששונה)



Nº 106.

Intonirung der
Hapthoroth oder
prophetischen
Perikopen.

(הפטירה)



Nº 107.

Intonirung der
Parschioth am
Neujahrs und
Versöhnungstagen.

(ראש השנה)



Nº 108.

Intonirung des
Buches Ester
am Purim.

(אסתר)



Nº 109.

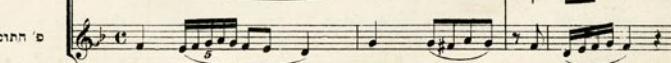
Intonirung der Klage-
lieder Jeremias am
Tage der Zerstörung
Jerusalems.

(איכה)



Nº 110.

Intonirung der Toch'choh. (סחוקה)



*) Die Intonation der Accente nach sephardischem Ritus siehe im Nachtrag Nº 938 etc.

שחרית

31

טנינה Munach liegend	רביעי r'wi - a Viereck	טנינה Munach vor: ∞, 9, 9-μ	טנינה Mu_nach vor: טהפך <	טנינה Munach vor: טרכא תביו: ()	טנינה Mahpach, paschto, so . kef ko .ton Umkehrung, Dehnung, kleine Erhebung כשוטר כשוטר כשוטר חסור	טנינה Sokef godol grosse Erhebung

conflict between the traditional *hazan* Baer and the reform-minded liberal Jew, Baer. Unlike many other reformists, he understood the specific qualities of the traditional musical form of the liturgy. Also, the title *Baal t'fillah* is in itself telling. Reform-minded, professional *hazanim* tended to use the modern occupational title cantor, whereas the term *Baal t'fillah* (“Master of Prayer”) was likely to be associated with rural, lay prayer leaders. The conflict we see in Baer’s work mirrors a process of change affecting not only the Jewish Diaspora, but also European eighteenth- and nineteenth-century culture as a whole. The comprehensive term for this process is *emancipation*.

Emancipation is a concept that is often used in connection with socio-economic and political changes that took place in nineteenth-century Europe, in the aftermath of the French revolution. The Latin root of the word, *emancipio*, originally meant “to release a son from the authority of the father.” The emancipated person acquires personal independence. Metaphorically, the term seems to have been used in Sweden at least since the 1820s.¹²² It was understood as an overarching concept, covering the dismantling of feudalism, absolutism and religious dogmatism that characterized a Europe that – under the leadership of more or less enlightened and liberal reformers – broke away from *l’ancien regime*.

Usually the term, emancipation, is used when one speaks about the liberation of social groups. Populations that, since time immemorial, had been subjected to specific rules that cut them off from participation in political and social institutions, groups that had been systematically and collectively incapacitated, were released from their bonds. This emancipation was a prerequisite for the new civic and public spirit that we associate with modernity. In this sense we talk about the emancipation of religious minorities (like the Jews), but there is of course also the emancipation of women and social and linguistic groups.

However, emancipation did not only affect social collectives. We can talk about a general process of emancipation, where conceptual hierarchies and deadlocked interactions were loosened or dissolved. After having been released from external, ideological aims, many fields of human activity, creativity, and productivity then entered into the public sphere. This applies not least to aesthetic media. Art, literature, theatre, dance, and music were in fact emancipated; they were justified on

their own terms. Aesthetic professionals emerged from their secure, but secluded, feudal positions; they ceased to be servants, and tried to be agents in the cultural marketplace. The modern role of the musician took shape – and the modern idea that music has its intrinsic value.

The role of music in traditional Jewish liturgy can be described as pre-emancipated. It had a central function as a medium, but it was not an aim in itself. It could not be separated from the sacred word, and its performers were not labeled as musicians. It was only cultivated in a Jewish context; the performers did not have access to gentile musical institutions and therefore acquired their extra-Jewish musical impulses from other sectors of the non-Jewish majority society.

On the other hand, the musical ideals of the Jewish reform movement can be linked to the general process of emancipation. The mere fact that *music* in the synagogue (instead of *nusah* and *chasonus*) began to be talked about, and that the musical component of the liturgy was differentiated from the ritual and verbal aspects, tells us that the process of emancipation was in motion. The musical medium that reformers wanted to introduce into the liturgy was fundamentally different from traditional means of expression. It consisted of the musical hard- and software that was codified by the academic music institutions of the nineteenth-century, and cultivated in bourgeois musical life, after having been crystallized in the court culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Characteristic traits of this medium include staff notation, multipart harmonizations, tempered tuning, major/minor tonality and – on the hardware side – the standardized musical instruments of the symphonic orchestra.

However, the most important aspect of this emancipated musical sphere was, perhaps, the growing predominance of two interrelated concepts, the *opus* or musical work, and the *composition*. Musical works were *written*; they were the result of an act of composition that was supposed to be fixed on paper. The opus then could be performed and repeated over and over, and in many different interpretations. The identity of the musical work was linked to its written representation.

It is obvious that this definition of music must come into conflict with the concept of *nusah*. Early Jewish reformers saw it as their task to phase out the flexible and text-oriented form of the liturgy in favor of a more clearly discernible musical

structure. This often has been described as a process of aestheticization. The musical-theatrical aspects of synagogue service were enhanced, and this transformation was supported by the axial orientation of the reformed synagogues, where the cantors at the *amud* faced the “audience” (or congregation) instead of the *Aron kodesh*, the Torah cabinet, as in traditional prayer houses. Written compositions, marking the primacy of musical form over textual structure, were inserted into the liturgy. However, this musicalization also implied a *restriction* of available means of expression. Traditional, “expressionist” aesthetics was supplanted by an aesthetics of symbolism; emotionalism yielded to rationalism, but it was a rationalism that in fact idealized aesthetic beauty on an abstract level. Here, the ideals of the Jewish reform coincided with parallel aesthetics of the *Bildung/bildning* movement. It wanted to weed out the “irregular” expressions of individual emotions and idiosyncrasies. Its aim was an edifying devotional decorum, not a religious, emotional experience of catharsis. Consequently, most reformers had a negative attitude toward the improvisatory attitude that characterized the creative work of traditional *Vorbeters*, the ideal of whom was expressive power, not abstract beauty. Their musical palette contained a rich array of melodic and vocal colors and ornaments (scale runs and roulades, sequences, shadings of timbre, dynamic shifts, et cetera). On the contrary, the application of *bildning* aesthetics tended to result in something of an expressive grayscale phenomenon. Its distancing from all things eruptive, surprising, and unpredictable would vouch for its seriousness.

If we suppose we can set ritual actors on a scale, where the two extremes are symbolized by the ecstatic shaman on the one hand and the uncommitted clerical officer on the other, then the traditional *Vorbeter* definitely would be placed closer to the shaman.

Consequently, this implies that traditional Jewish liturgy possessed a highly developed and convincing aesthetic, but it was an aesthetic that many of the reformers – consciously or unconsciously – had distanced themselves from and did not understand or accept. The process of musical emancipation in the synagogue was rather a kind of de-aestheticization of the liturgy. The accepted span of spontaneous expressions of feelings and sentiments was reduced. It is also possible to play with the thought that the aesthetic focus was transferred into the architectonic realm,

into the design of the synagogues. The interplay between the synagogue visitor and the building itself became more important than before. Entering the building and experiencing its beauty became a more important aspect of religious identity. The musical ornaments that had floated in acoustical space now were brought down and attached to the walls and vaults, like a frozen music.

Where in this process do we find Abraham Baer? If we see the *BT* as his manifesto and bequest, it seems obvious that he did not want the traditional *Vorbeter's* ornaments to transubstantiate into cold architectonic splendor. In the *nusah* something very specifically Jewish was contained, something that was strongly associated to the faith of the Fathers and therefore, had a universal value. However, musical art should also have a place alongside the *nusah* in the sanctuary of nascent Judaism.

Reading Baer's preface to the two editions of the *BT*, one realizes that he saw the book as the first step of a larger undertaking. There would be a supplement with variants of the "old Jewish" songs and recitatives, and with melodies that were missing in the first publication. In a footnote, Baer also mentions that he is working on a "dissertation" on "the development of the synagogue, on the emergence of the *Vorbeter's* function, on the traditional songs, the ritual regulations and customs, as well as on the customary prayers and their authors."¹²³ This would have become the scholarly, *kulturwissenschaftliche* part of the project: a comprehensive, historic depiction and analysis of Jewish ritual and liturgy. Considering Baer's working conditions in Gothenburg, this was an undertaking of gigantic proportions. Its objective was similar to that of Ismar Elbogen's epoch-making standard work *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (1913). However, Elbogen does not discuss the musical aspects at all.

This holistic perspective presents a kind of totality of Jewish religious expression, placing the old alongside the new, the original together with the arrangements, the emancipated near the traditional. It is akin to the scientific and scholarly ideals of the circle around the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums*; Judaism as a historical symphony, with the continuity of change as the main theme.

However, out of this grandiose scheme, only the second edition of the *BT* materialized. Thus, we should regard the book as a prelude to a really "magnificent

work,” a total notation of Judaism. However, Baer – who died at age fifty-nine – did not have the strength to finish this mega project. Conceivably, he did not receive enough support from his social environment either.

Judgement and Nachruhm – On the Reception of Baer’s Baal t’fillah

I have already quoted some of the reviews of the *BT* that were published in Swedish journals. In these short articles, the professional qualities of the work were not dealt with, probably because the reviewers did not have the necessary competence for such scrutiny. Instead, the cultural heritage aspect of the book was emphasized. The international reception, however, was much more diversified. Baer himself, however, gives an overview in the extended introduction to the 1883 edition, where he quotes a considerable number of reviews published in German and French journals. This is, of course, part of his advertisement for the publication, but a check with some of the original sources warrants Baer’s sincere and honest use of the texts.

As the *kehilot*, the traditional Jewish ethno-religious communities were transformed into religious congregations – largely along the lines of the expectations and demands of majority society – both the title and the professional role of the *Vorbeter* were changed. The *Vorbeter* gradually became as an official who, first and foremost, was a singer in the synagogue. In the larger, liberal congregations it became possible to emphasize the musical aspect of the commission. This coincided with the entry of the musical notation and of emancipated art music into the synagogue. A cantor was supposed to be able to read and write music, and to have some knowledge of music theory. Many cantors acquired more or less academic, musical training as a complement to their Jewish studies.

After 1850, Jewish cantors began to create modern social networks in the form of associations and periodicals. The *Österreichisch-Ungarische Cantoren-Zeitung, Central-Organ für die Interessen der Cantoren und Cultusbeamten* (ÖUCZ) was founded in 1881 by Josef Bauer, who was of Hungarian origin but worked as the cantor in the *Türkisch-Israelitisches Tempel*, a Sephardic synagogue in Vienna. In Bromberg – a city in Baer’s home province of Posen in Prussia – A. Blaustein published *Der jüdische Cantor* in 1879.

These periodicals presented articles about Jewish culture and history, and of

course about Jewish liturgy and music. However, professional issues like employment terms and work conditions of the cantors were also dealt with. There were advertisements and reviews as well, and job announcements. Sometimes the journals published new works in the liturgical genre.

What did these cantorial periodicals write about Baer's magnum opus? In *Der jüdische Cantor* 1879, no. 22, Baer's *BT* is very positively reviewed. The work is judged to be superior to all earlier publications of the genre. This applies not only to the richness of its content, but to the technical realization as well. Since reviewers in several periodicals already have very positively judged the book, further appraisal actually is unnecessary, the writer continues, and he then quotes a letter to Baer from Salomon Sulzer, the famous Viennese cantor. During the following three years the *BT* is commented on in *Der jüdische Cantor* on five different occasions, a fact that Baer carefully notes in the preface to the second edition of his book.

In the *ÖUCZ*, which was founded only in 1881, there is no review of the first edition, but Baer's work is mentioned in 1882 in two articles about the *chasonus* tradition, the first, written by the *Musikdirector* David Rubin of Prague, the second by *Obercantor* Emil Fränkel in Strakonice in Bohemia. In numbers 12 and 13 of the same year, there are advertisements for the *BT*. In the third edition of 1883 a subscription advertisement for the *second edition* of the *BT* is published.

Consequently, Baer's work seems to have been well known among his European, liberal Jewish cantor colleagues. However, the reviews and references to the *BT* that were printed in the general Jewish press can have been even more important for the fame of the book and for its impact in the Diaspora. Early on Baer anchored his project in the center of the liberal Jewish movement. As early as 1869 the first subscription offer was published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* (*AZJ* 1869:21). In 1876 Baer announced that the work would be printed soon; the subscribers apparently had been wondering about the long production period. The *AZJ* was the leading liberal Jewish periodical in Germany. It had been founded in 1837 by the Magdeburg rabbi and scholar Ludwig Philippson (1811–1889). In principle, the *AZJ* was a weekly, but to a certain extent it had the character of a daily, containing political news, ideological articles, essays on cultural history and Judaism, reports from important European Jewish centers, letters to the editor, and

advertisements. From 1909 to 1919, Ludwig Geiger, the son of Abraham Geiger, edited the *AZJ*; during that period the paper took a markedly anti-Zionist stance. The *AZJ* is historically important not only because of its long life (1837–1922), but also because of its unusually high circulation (up to 10,000 copies). The *AZJ* reviews Baer's *BT* in its *literarischer Wochenbericht* of no. 14. 1878 (April 4). The reviewer (supposedly Dr. Philippson) stresses the dimensions of the work and its practical usefulness. However, not being a musician himself, he “delegates the judgment of its musical merits to the professionals.”

Baer's Austrian reputation already has been demonstrated by the references to his book in the *ÖUCZ*, but it also is expressed by a review in *Der israelitische Lehrerbote* (1879:5), which was a German-language, Bohemian periodical.

These above-mentioned reviews and references were published in liberal Jewish periodicals, and that is, of course, hardly surprising. However, the general relevance within the Diaspora of Baer's work is illustrated by the fact that he is reviewed in publications belonging to the traditional, “orthodox” camp as well. *Der Israelit* (1878:34) pays attention to the *BT* by quoting the positive critiques by the famous cantors Moritz Deutsch and Salomon Sulzer. It seems likely that Baer circulated copies of these letters as part of the marketing of his book. In the likewise orthodox *Der israelitische Bote* there is a detailed review, specifying the disposition of the publication. As a merit of Baer's work, compared with Sulzer's revered *Schir Zion*, its usefulness for small congregations without trained choirs is stressed. In spite of this greater accessibility, it is stated, “Baer's songs all have a profound musical worth and are impregnated by a noble style and a genuine Jewish spirit. Not even the smallest congregation should be without Baer's *Baal T'fillah*.”¹²⁴ Baer may have been inspired by these positive reactions from the orthodox camp, to advertise the second edition of his *BT* in the weekly newsletter, *Jeschurun*, the mouthpiece of Samson Raphael Hirsch's neo-orthodox movement.¹²⁵

The growing Hebrew press also recognized Baer's achievement. In *Ha-Maggid* (“The Itinerant Preacher”), the vanguard of this literary movement in the Lithuanian Jewish milieu, there is a review (1878:28). *Ha-Maggid* was published by Rabbi Eliezer Lipman Silberman (1819–1882) in Lyck, East Prussia.

There were reviews in the French Jewish press as well. The musicologist Ernest

David (1844–1886), an authority on the history of Jewish music, was enthusiastic in *L'Univers Israélite* (1881:1).¹²⁶ David exclaimed outright that this book is a *Vademecum*, an indispensable companion for every *hazan*. He also emphasizes that the *BT* is not necessarily a repetition of Naumbourg's and Sulzer's works; on the contrary, it should be regarded as a completion of these publications.

What about the non-Jewish Swedish press? I have already mentioned that *Handelstidningen* in Gothenburg, S. A. Hedlund's paper, printed the first review (on April 17, 1878), as could be expected. The text is rather short and stresses the cultural heritage perspective and evaluation of Baer's publication, which is interesting not only to "the mosaic congregation, but to all educated musicians and friends of music, since two-thousand-year-old melodies, from different countries and epochs, have been collected."¹²⁷ Then, both Philipppson's and Deutsch's reviews are quoted. Likewise a positive review was published in *Göteborgs-Posten*, February 2, 1880. According to a footnote to the introduction of the second edition of the *BT*, similar opinions were stated in the Stockholm liberal daily, *Aftonbladet* (1880, no. 12), and "in other Swedish newspapers."¹²⁸

Up until 1882, there were at least twenty-three reviews of the book or references to its content in the European press. In the following year, Baer published subscription advertisements for the second, slightly revised edition in the *ÖUCZ* (1883:3) and *AZJ* (1883:40). He also received international support for the planned continuation of his publication activity. "Who has not heard of Baer's *Baal t'fillah*, this indispensable encyclopedia for cantors," a certain Siegfried Graf exclaimed in a letter to the editor of the *AZJ* (1885:21), where he suggests that all congregations should purchase the promised continuation of the Gothenburg cantor's work.

This comprehensive overview of the press' reactions quite distinctly demonstrates how Baer's work resounded and was received simultaneously in several parallel forums, from the local cultural setting of Gothenburg (whose journals were important on the national Swedish level as well), to the Jewish Diaspora, as well as on a general European level. One of the most interesting and penetrating reviews was written by the non-Jewish, German composer and conductor Ferdinand Hiller (1811–1885), and published in the weekly *Der Gegenwart* (1880:52), one of the most important cultural magazines of its era in Berlin. Whereas other non-Jewish reviewers mainly

deal with the heritage aspect and *BT*'s value as an historical documentation, Hiller displays a deeper understanding of the ethos of the *chasonus*. He praises the deeply moving character of many of the melodies:

They seem to be melodies that have been torn directly out of the heart, and it is hard to understand how such effusions could be transmitted through the centuries without ever being written down. And then their originality! Our contemporary musical way of thinking is completely dominated by our modern concept of harmony, so that we are almost incapable of imagining a melody devoid of harmonic foundations. However, here we find songs that cannot be forced into our system because of their accidental flattened and augmented intervals. In spite of this, they do not lack a kind of tonal grounding, or whatever one would call it. In his preface, the editor complains of the fact that the limited space did not allow the inclusion of organ accompaniment. This complaint is the only thing for which he can be blamed, and it was his good genius, not the costs of an expansion of the publication, which saved him from that. In only very rare cases can our harmonic system be applied to the songs, from which they do not emanate. An interesting collection of Armenian Church songs has been totally ruined by such harmonic additions ... Only the monophonic performance is appropriate for such songs; they can be sung by one single voice, or collectively – but the vocal interaction can only be done in unison.

It is an expensive work, this *Vorbeter*, but it is precious – I warmly recommend it to all researchers and composers, to all schools and libraries. In spite of all the amassed cultural and artistic treasures that are accessible to us, it is refreshing to get out of these “green vaults” and hear notes that speak to us like voices of nature. Such a *Volksstimme* [voice of the people] is a *Gottesstimme* [voice of God] as well.¹²⁹

What is interesting, is Hiller's somewhat relativistic perspective, which was unusual in the art music, academic context of the nineteenth century. He has a vague notion of the fundamental difference between music and *nusah*, and he understands

that there are aesthetic qualities of a different kind outside the scope of academic, musical notation – a view only rarely voiced in his musical environment. However, to many liberal Jewish cantors, this was a truism.

Apparently, Baer's book was something of a success. The number of copies originally printed is not known, but must have been rather limited and calculated to meet the needs of the subscribers. However, soon Baer must have realized that there was a growing demand for the publication, and started to plan for a second edition. Like the first edition, the print would be delivered to the subscribers as a series of separate booklets, or parts. However, Baer also arranged with the publisher and bookseller, J. Kauffmann in Frankfurt am Main, to assist with the distribution in Germany, presumably of the bound publication.¹³⁰

This second edition, which seems to have been released in the autumn of 1883, was provided with a lengthy introduction (which I have already quoted several times), containing quotes from the reviews of the first edition. There are no far-reaching changes in the second edition. The revisions and additions mostly concern the ritual instructions given in the footnotes.

The Afterlife of Der practische Vorbeter

In the ninth edition of the *Österreichisch-Ungarische Cantoren-Zeitung* of 1894, which was published in Vienna on March 21, the obituary of Abraham Baer dominates the front page. Even if there are some errors in the obituary concerning the deceased cantor's biography, it is clear that Baer had acquired European fame through his *Der practische Vorbeter*. This is also demonstrated by a beautifully decorated congratulatory address on Baer's twenty-five-year anniversary as cantor in Gothenburg, published in the same paper on September 7, 1882.¹³¹ Baer proudly included a reprint of the address in the introduction to the second edition of the *BT*, and there he also reproduced personal congratulatory letters from thirty-two individuals from all around the European Jewish Diaspora, most of them cantors of renown. Browsing the annual volumes of the *ÖUCZ*, it becomes clear that only the absolute elite of European cantors were given comparable, full-page congratulatory addresses in the periodical.

Another telling testimony of Baer's fame is the *Galerie berühmter und bekannter*

Cantoren & Componisten, a wall chart printed in Germany in 1891.¹³² (See page 289) The picture presents the pantheon of *chasonus* in a somewhat hierarchical fashion. In the central space, the most formidable heroes of modern cantorial music are depicted, within a sort of sanctuary framed by sketches of biblical musical instruments. Here we find Baer in good company with Salomon Sulzer, Moritz Deutsch, Louis Lewandowski, and the Viennese cantor, Josef Goldstein. Not a bad ranking!

In ÖUCZ 1894:23 (September 28) there is an advertisement, announcing that the *Baal t'fillah* has passed into the ownership of the firm of J. Kaufmann after the departure of its author. Kaufmann released a third edition of the work at the end of September the same year. Consequently, the *BT* had seen three full editions before the end of the nineteenth century. They were followed by much copying and several facsimile reprints in the United States during the twentieth century. In 1953, the *BT* was ranked as number 1 in the *Out of Print Classics Series of Synagogue Music*, issued by Sacred Music Press, the Hebrew Union School of Sacred Music, and American Conference of Certified Cantors. There was a steady demand, since Baer's book continued to be used as a compendium for cantor's curricula at several American-Jewish institutions, for example, at the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York.¹³³ It is significant that even in 1987, Hazan Charles Davidson recommended Baer's *BT* as the "greatest and most complete collection of European *nusachot*" in an article in the *Journal of Synagogue Music* in which he presents a model for a basic curriculum for the teaching of cantorial students.¹³⁴

As we have seen, Baer's *Der practischer Vorbeter* soon became a standard work and was widely used by cantors all over Europe and North America. However, being the most ambitious and comprehensive collection of traditional *chasonus*, it soon attracted the attention of musicologists and historians of Jewish music as well. It is fair to say that after the publication of the *BT*, no serious discussion about the historical and musical profile of the Jewish liturgy – and about the nature of Jewish music at large – could be carried out without reference to Baer's book. Was there really much to discuss? After all, Baer had presented a seemingly complete picture of the *chasonus*. Certainly he had, but his main aim with *Der practische Vorbeter* was exactly its practicality, its usefulness in the synagogue, not in the academic seminar or in the political forum. Therefore, he only hinted at the historical and

musicological perspectives made possible by the collection, referring to his coming publications for a more detailed discussion. The question of Jewish musical identity was linked to the continuing political discussion about the historical and contemporary role of the Jewish people and their culture in Europe. Consequently, the standpoints of the protagonists were very much influenced by their differing religious and political orientations. Orthodoxy, reformism, liberalism, Zionism, and socialism represented conflicting views on Jewish identity.

In German musicology, Baer's work was used as source material by the composer and scholar Jakob Schönberg (1900–1962), in his 1925 dissertation *Die traditionellen Gesänge des Israelitischen Gottesdienstes in Deutschland* ("Traditional Songs of the Jewish Liturgical Service in Germany").¹³⁵ With his background in a cantor's family, Schönberg had an intimate knowledge of synagogue music and was qualified to evaluate Baer's collection. He appreciated Baer's correct and comprehensive rendering of the musical material and regarded the work as a representative corpus. His main interest was musical structure, and the aim of the dissertation is the analytical presentation of the traditional music in the Jewish liturgy. He polemized against the widespread opinion that the *chasonus* is based on a consistent modal system analogous to the so-called church modes, an idea that had been put forward by *Oberkantor* Josef Singer in Vienna, who also presented the traditional pitch system of the *chasonus* as neat diatonic scales. Schönberg argues that the melodies of the synagogue liturgy do not constitute a homogenous, distinct musical style (*Stilform*); they rather make up a kaleidoscopic amalgamation of stylistic elements (*Stilbildungen*).¹³⁶ A considerable portion of the repertoire is clearly structured according to major/minor tonality principles, and can be analyzed along these lines, but there are also certain archaic traits that require other analytic tools. Here he advocates for breaking away from analytical models based on classical European nineteenth-century music theory and takes up a more relativistic, ethnomusicological position, probably influenced by the pioneering Jewish ethnomusicologist, Abraham Zwi Idelsohn (1882–1938).

Schönberg takes Baer's presentation of the *neginot*, the cantillation of biblical texts, as the point of departure for a discussion on the *ta'amim* system of musical symbols and their realization in cantorial practice. He then proceeds to analyze the

Gebetskantillationen, the prayer service proper. Here, his main achievement is the demonstration of the differentiating *Leitmotiv* technique used in the *Gestaltung* of the prayer texts – a phenomenon that I have touched on in my introductory analysis. In an appendix Schönberg presents an overview of the main themes connected to the weekdays, Sabbath, the pilgrimage festivals and the High Holidays. He also argues that many melodic motifs found in the prayer melodies must be interpreted as reminiscences or quotations from the *neginot*, so in fact, scriptural cantillation functions as a source or stock of melodic material for the prayer. Musical history was not Schönberg's main topic, but in the *neginot* he recognizes a pentatonic strain, which he interprets as the result of non-Jewish, European influences during the early medieval period.

Here he was influenced by Idelsohn, the dominating figure of Jewish musicology and ethnomusicology during the first half of the twentieth century. If Schönberg focuses mainly on the musical medium in itself, striving impartially to describe and analyze Baer's corpus of liturgical melodies, Idelsohn represent a different perspective. He is in fact writing the history of the Jewish people through its music. In the introduction to the second chapter of his *Jewish Music in its Historical Development*, he writes:

Jewish music is the song of Judaism through the lips of the Jew. It is the tonal expression of Jewish life and development over a period of more than two thousand years. To place that song in its ancient and original setting, we must seek the beginning of the people itself. In so doing, we see that just as the Jew, being of Semitic stock, is part of the Oriental world, so Jewish music – coming to life in the Near East – is, generally speaking, of one piece with the music of the Orient. It takes its trend of development through the Semitic race, and retains its SEMITIC-ORIENTAL CHARACTERISTICS in spite of non-Semitic – Altaic and European – influence. Jewish song achieves its unique qualities through the sentiments and the life of the Jewish people. Its DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS are the result of the spiritual life and struggle of that people.¹³⁷ [Capitalization by Idelsohn!]

In this Herderian search for the essence and cultural continuity of Judaism and Jewish identity, Idelsohn reveals his roots in Central and Eastern European traditions of nationalistic thinking. He is one of these innumerable collectors, researchers and editors who explore the villages of remote provinces in search of the original, traditional and specific. Idelsohn made a lasting scientific contribution through his substantial recording activity starting in Jerusalem in 1909. He regarded the documentation of Jewish groups from Asia and North Africa, generally, as a key to the sources of Jewish music.

Idelsohn (who was not only a scholar but a *hazan* as well) had a clearly positive opinion on Baer's *BT* as a handbook for practical use in the synagogue, and there is a lengthy and respectful comment on it in his book on Jewish music.¹³⁸ Yet, with his essentialist orientation, he was dissatisfied with Baer's reluctance to clearly distinguish between "real tradition" and "innovation," and he therefore considers the *BT* of "minor value" for historical investigation. Strangely enough, he does not seem to have grasped Baer's view on "innovation" (*freie Ergiessungen des Vorbeterherzens*, "free outpourings from the *Vorbeter's* heart") as the real core of tradition.

In 1971, Jakob Schönberg's dissertation on the *BT* was reprinted on the initiative of the musicologist and composer, Eric Werner (1901–1988). This re-publication must be seen in connection with Werner's preparations for his main work on Ashkenazic liturgical music (*A Voice still Heard, the Sacred Songs of the Ashkenazic Jews*), which appeared in 1976, commissioned by the Leo Baeck institute. Like Schönberg, Werner largely relies on Baer in his presentation of the forms of liturgical musical expression and of their historical development. Werner grew up in Vienna and was firmly rooted in the tradition of Central European musicology, with its early openness for ethnological and anthropological perspectives in the spirit of Guido Adler. Idelsohn's fieldwork publications certainly influenced his views on Jewish music history, but if Idelsohn stressed the *longue durée* of Jewish history and its cultural continuity and coherence, Werner emphasized the specificity of Ashkenazic culture and its markedly European identity. He devotes a special chapter to the part of the liturgical repertoire that Idelsohn called the *Missinai* tunes. In contrast to the spontaneous *Ergiessungen des Vorbeterherzens* that are such an important aspect of the *chasonus*, these are fixed prayer melodies, musical compositions connected to

specific texts. According to Werner, Baer's clear rendering of these characteristic melodies turns out to be one of the greatest merits of his work. Basing his argumentation largely on Baer's notations, Werner demonstrates that these melodies, which traditionally have been regarded as stemming from Jewish antiquity (*missinai* means "from Sinai"), must have been created in Germany during the high Middle Ages (twelfth to fifteenth centuries). Consequently, they stand out as tokens of cultural interaction and Jewish participation in European culture, rather than an "oriental" cultural heritage.

Concerning the relationship between the *neginot* and the prayer modes, Werner is more reluctant and skeptical than Schönberg. However, in the last work I will discuss in this short overview of Baer-based research on Jewish music, Sholom Kalib's gigantic *The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue* (published in six books 2002–2005), the close connection between the formulae of scriptural cantillation and the prayer repertoire becomes something of a *Leitmotiv*.

Kalib writes in the preface to the second volume of his work, "At the time I began to contemplate the present work in 1970, I envisioned a thorough documentation of the Eastern European tradition, modeled on the monumental volume, *Baal Tefillah*, by Abraham Baer." Kalib is an American *hazan* and music scholar, born in 1929 to immigrant parents from western Ukraine. Belonging to a family of cantors, he became "imbued with Jewish tradition, observance, and *yiras shomayim* ("fear of heaven")." Active as a professional cantor since 1949, he combined his natural grounding in the traditional culture of the synagogue with a career in musicology. Kalib's direct reference to Abraham Baer as his immediate source of inspiration is revealing. As a matter of fact, the direct, motivating experience behind his documentation effort was very similar to Baer's. When starting a cantor's assignment at a synagogue in Detroit in 1970, he became painfully aware of his congregation's ignorance of *nusah* and the traditional forms of worship. "The knowledgeable *kôhôn*, which had constituted a fundamental pillar upon which our traditional liturgical music had flourished for centuries – had vanished into history." Something had to be done to rescue this treasure of musical and religious expression. Like Baer's undertaking, Kalib's had a twofold objective; the revival and reintroduction of classical *chasonus* into the modern synagogue, the *practical* aspect so to speak,

and the scholarly analysis of the musical means of expression and their historical development. Whereas Baer was only able to fully carry through the first objective, Kalib has managed to realize the whole concept, even if his publication in the end became more of a scholarly, analytical work than a *practische Vorbeter*.

In spite of their totally different conclusions on the nature of synagogue chant, there is an interesting similarity between Kalib and Josef Singer, the Viennese cantor who tried to force the *chasonus* into a system of “church modes,” namely the systematic effort, the structuralist urge to reduce all the disparate phenomena of the tradition to underlying, basic principles. As we have seen, Jakob Schönberg was skeptical of this attitude, instead accepting the idea of the collage or “kaleidoscopic amalgamation.” Kalib hears something more than a collage:

After having made a listing of the motives existent in twenty renditions – by thoroughly authentic practitioners of Eastern European synagogal musical tradition – of the weekly *Birchos Hashachar* (the fourteen blessings which open the morning public service), it became apparent that, on the one hand, the component motives seemed innumerable. On the other hand, a basic sameness was apparent in all the renditions. Where, then, did that sameness lie?¹³⁹

Kalib found a way to look for this underlying sameness in the analytic method of Heinrich Schenker, to which he had been introduced by his musicology mentor Oswald Jonas, who was, in fact, a disciple of Schenker's. Reducing the component motifs to their skeletal structure he arrived at a set of motifs that were identical, or very close to the *neginot*, the cantillation and study motifs symbolized by the *ta'amim* chart. These *tropen* formulae, as they also have been called in Ashkenazic tradition, therefore constitute that “sameness” and should be regarded as the basic structural principle of the *chasonus*. However, in Kalib's reasoning, this sameness also represents an essence of Jewishness and a token of cultural continuity. He polemizes against the Israeli musicologist Amnon Shiloa, who rejected Idelsohn's theory of a common Middle Eastern source for all Jewish cantillation traditions. Basically, Kalib's project not only deals with the revival and raising of the standard

of liturgical music, it also has a strong flavor of cultural heritage management. Advocating his inclusion of some Middle Eastern examples in his material, he writes.

Above and beyond these characteristics of Middle Eastern musical style, in general, as well as the structure and nature of cantillation and prayer modes, a few melodic fragments close to identical to prominent ones within the musical tradition of the Askenazic synagogue are cited below. Together with their Middle Eastern modes of performance, one perceives an unmistakable kinship, which adds a living musical linking of motifs – in addition to those of philosophy, texts, place and format of Jewish prayer – with their historical source in ancient Israel.¹⁴⁰

Apart from these findings and interpretations (and perceptions), there are many other interesting features in Kalib's magisterial work. His empirical basis partly consists of a compilation of notations taken from earlier publications of liturgical music, among them of course Baer's *BT*, as well as unpublished manuscripts, and transcriptions of taped renditions of cantors. This is not the place for a detailed account of Kalib's presentation of the music of the synagogue. Suffice it to say that to the musicologically oriented layman (Jewish or non-Jewish) it offers a navigable route to the otherwise rather inaccessible universe of the *chasonus*.

IV

Interactions

Words and Pictures on the Front Page

Mauritz Rubenson, Aron Jonason, and the Urbanity of Gothenburg

Crossings, intersections and junctions are the nodes of change. Transportation and communication systems bring us to meeting places, places of interaction. Collisions are likely to occur. Others crossing their route sometimes obstruct travelers on the move. This is inevitable, but in the turmoil, a fruitful interchange may also take place. (See map on page 290)

In a city, there is always a preference for certain crucial crossroads, venues of decisive cultural interaction. Physical and social accessibility are important – they matter. It must be easy and comfortable to get to the place, and the premises must be both inviting and enclosing. The movement and activity of the street outside must be perceivable behind the windows.

I am standing at the junction between Östra Larmgatan and Drottninggatan, just one block away from the synagogue. The two streets meet at an oblique angle; Östra Larmgatan, which runs parallel to the curved fortifications, confronts the rectangularity of the street grid. Today, this junction is not an inspiring environment from an urban point of view; it is uneventful and quite motionless. The busy public space it once was has been transformed into a back street, which is hardly inviting for conversation and exchange. The few passers by hurry by, occupied by trivial pursuits and unaware of the past.

History has been crossed out – deleted. *Tabula rasa* was the aim and ideal of the city planners of the 1960s, and often they prevailed. Attempting to visualize and conceptualize the past, I must rely on pictures from books about old Gothenburg. Although the twentieth-century architects have tried to preserve the scale of the traditional townscape, even creating street arcades here, the new buildings are aesthetically very reduced, and their facades make an almost muted and impersonal impression.

In nineteenth-century Gothenburg, this crossroads had a central position, both geographically and culturally. Bloms Salonger, which was the city's most important public venue during the 1850s and 1860s, was situated here. The various salons were

used for concerts, balls, political meetings, fêtes and celebrations. The establishment was part of Bloms Hotel, which had its front side on Hotellplatsen (the Hotel Square), where it competed with Gothenburg's oldest hotel, Göta Källare, for the travelers who arrived at the nearby Central railroad station. Later in the century, the city's public space was supplemented with several new venues, like the Stock Exchange at Gustaf Adolfs Square. However, the blocks at Hotellplatsen kept their status well into the early twentieth century, which can be seen in the fact that a branch of the electric tramline crossed the crowded square, connecting it directly to Drottningtorget and the Central station.

In the 1870s, the hotel entrepreneur Lars Peter Haglund (the owner of the neighboring hotel Göta Källare) bought Bloms Hotell and merged it with his new Grand Hotell Haglund, which became the stateliest establishment of the city. The building was modernized and enlarged several times, and around 1900 it stood in its full splendor with an opulently decorated stucco façade. The café along Östra Larmgatan had a continental atmosphere with Thonet café chairs, marble tables and newspapers; in the winter garden behind the hotel vestibule, the guests would listen to the daily musical entertainment, sitting under palm and fig trees.

Creating conditions for interaction, supporting the infrastructure and logistics that make exchange of opinions possible – that is an important form of social entrepreneurship. The members of the self-aware profession that called themselves *cafetiers* regarded their trade as an art form. This profession had its golden age before World War I. Some of their ambitions survived the war, but after the Second World War, only theater scenery, decorations and tourist attractions remained. Social entrepreneurship was replaced by plain business.

I am not interested in *Kaffeehaus* nostalgia. It is simply a fact that for anybody who tries to fully understand the famous and almost mythologized modernity that exploded during the nineteenth century, the café is one of the best viewpoints. It is not just by coincidence that the term *cafetier* is of French origin. Eighteenth-century Paris created the model, but this was not primarily due to the refinement of French cuisine. Namely, the *cafetier's* supply of meals and cakes was not the most characteristic aspect his trade; coffee was not even the main thing! As a new, fashionable drink, coffee became a battering ram against the bastions of guilds, fraternities and



Östra Larmgatan street, 1901. On the right, the stately storehouse of August Abrahamson & Co. In the background, the crossing with Drottninggatan street. Photo: Aron Jonason (© Göteborg City Museum) GhmPK_947



Grand Hotell Haglund at Hotellplatsen square. Photo: Axel Sjöberg (© Göteborg City Museum). GhmD_54681

regulations of state mercantilism. As a new commodity, it demanded new social modalities and locales, independent of traditional inns, pubs, bakeries, and the like. The café is not a descendant of the inn or the baker's shop; its aesthetics and social forms have their roots in the aristocratic salon. The little cup of coffee was actually a kind of entrance ticket, proving that you had paid for your right to sit at the tables. Quick circulation of customers was not desirable. On the contrary, guests were encouraged to remain at their tables for hours. They would come early to the café to have their breakfast; later they would have conferences with their colleagues, have lunch, and then the workday would be concluded with a dinner at a late hour. *Habitués* were taken care of; well-known personalities were an asset in the marketing of the establishment. This type of venue and public service became a fundamental condition for the existence of the cadres of intellectual professionals that emerged during the nineteenth century. Offering everything that a writer would need, from pencils and paper to national encyclopedias, the best cafés provided, on a commercial basis, a kind of intellectual and artistic service that the public sector of society could not match.

The geographical spread of the modern café institution, to a certain degree, was linked to the expansion of the railway system; the café as a part of the new communications structure. Swiss café family dynasties played an important role in this process; in Sweden this novel type of establishment, initially called *schweizerier*, not only offered coffee, but had the right to serve spirits as well.

In an 1854 letter to the editor of *Handelstidningen* a surprisingly sophisticated and urbane visitor from Växjö, in the province of Småland, complained about Gothenburg's lack of "proper cafés," a social and cultural deficiency that ought to be rectified as soon as possible. "How is it possible that Gothenburg can manage without a nice and well-situated café, where visitors could enjoy refreshments and read local and foreign papers?"¹⁴¹ The writer has several complaints about the low service level at the city's existing establishments. He also complains about Gothenburg's general lack of attractions, and sternly concludes:

Now and then, a magician [*trollkarl*] comes to town, and the lucky visitor may enjoy his performance. But this is just by coincidence, and as I have

said, what would really be expected is a beautiful café with good food, good service – and newspapers.

Good Service and Newspapers – The Bills and Cashbooks of Mauritz Rubenson

The Jewish immigrant Rudolf Rubenson (1806–1857) did much to remedy this underdevelopment. From the continent, he brought a new type of social competence. He successfully ran the café in Bloms Salonger, and for some time the café at Trädgårdsföreningen (the Gardening Society) as well, the park just outside the city moat.¹⁴² His café became the meeting place of a distinguished group of literati.

Of the nine children of Rudolf Rubenson and his wife Coelina (Selina) Goldschmidt, the second son, Mauritz, was chosen as his father's successor to head the family firm. After his Jewish confirmation, which was celebrated on May 24, 1852, in the old synagogue on Kyrkogatan,¹⁴³ he was introduced to all the mysteries of the café trade, the culinary as well as the social. As a true *cafetier*, you were supposed to start at the bottom – on the café floor. The role included not only the management of the office, the planning, bookkeeping, the personnel recruitment, all the economic and logistic aspects, but the social dimensions of the business were also an important part of the training. Already in his teens, Mauritz was an experienced waiter, in addition to his confectionery skills. In the waiter's role, he was particularly successful. Here the task was not just to receive the customers' orders, deliver these and take the payment. A formal and unengaged conversation, restricted only to questions as to whether the customer was satisfied with the coffee or the pastries, would have been regarded almost as an offence against the *cafetier's* decorum. The waiter was supposed to start the workday by reading the morning papers, in order to be able to discuss the news with his customers and to act as a newsagent himself. It is characteristic that young Rubenson is reported to have won the sympathy of Mathias Blom, the proprietor of the establishment, by organizing the establishment's newspaper collection.¹⁴⁴

Mauritz Rubenson took this role very seriously, to the degree that he often transcended the line between waiter and writer, and actually made the two roles coincide and interact in a productive manner. He used his pencil not only to write the café bills, but wrote down literary sketches and notated interesting discussions



Mauritz Rubenson. Photo: Aron Jonason (© Göteborg City Museum) GhmB_13474

at the tables of the habitués as well. From being a "stage worker" at the theatre of public life, providing a functional venue and social setting, he became an actor on the stage himself. But this propelled him socially and professionally from the service sector into the arena of journalism. Some writers seem to ridicule Rubenson's career shift. They imply that a serious writer does not start out as a waiter. However, his career was perfectly logical and consistent. When his father, Rudolf, died in 1857, Mauritz took over the business, but he soon franchised the café and concentrated on his literary activity. In 1864 he was hired by Hedlund at *Handelstidningen*. At that time, he had achieved some success as a dramatist, with two historical plays that had been staged at the city theatre. These plays gave Rubenson's interpretation of Swedish history from the early modern period as being a project of enlightened, rationalist state-building. The first play dealt with the victory of the Enlightenment over religious prejudice, and atavisms during the persecutions of people thought to be witches in Sweden, at the end of the seventeenth century. King Charles XI is depicted as the clear-sighted opponent of this primitive superstition. In the other play, the "enlightened despot" Gustav III is the main figure, successfully fending off Danish conspiracies and plans for a military invasion during a visit to Gothenburg in 1789.

Mauritz Rubenson is regarded as one of the first modern journalists of the Swedish press. Hedlund made him the "flying reporter" of *Handelstidningen*. The vivid eyewitness report from important political, social, and cultural events became his signature. His reports from railway inaugurations, exhibitions, and royal celebrations all around the country are legion, but his real interest lay in the genre of social journalism. He made a series of research journeys, both within Sweden and abroad, sometimes under very difficult circumstances. An example of these journeys is his expedition on foot, through Marks *härad*, a poor district of region of Västergötland, which he undertook in the 1860s. His main interest was the conditions of the workers of the widespread home textile industry in the district. Many of his articles were collected and published as books. In his *Skildringar från Amerika och England* (1868), he reported on his journey to the Anglo-Saxon world. In the following year, he published his impressions from travels in the opposite direction, with visits to Stockholm and Saint Petersburg in *Vid Mälaren och Nevan*

(“At Lake Mälaren and the Neva”). His geographic perspective here is revealing; Gothenburg is the center of the world, and Stockholm, more or less, belongs to a Baltic or eastern European sphere! When traveling eastward, why not combine these two eastern cities in the project? The progressive builder of a modern civil society has to look in all directions for innovations, valuable traditions, and general competence. America is of course the land of the future, but Rubenson also sees the flaws of the American system and clearly understands the difficulties and challenges that awaited the Swedish emigrants who settled in the New World. On the other hand, he is able to appreciate the cultural and scientific institutions of imperial Russia, and he strongly advocates a rapprochement between Sweden and its traditional enemy.

Firmly anchored in contemporary Swedish society, with personal contacts in all social strata and classes, Rubenson nevertheless was a kind of futurist. His efforts and professional activities all seem to aim toward a goal of the gradual perfection and betterment of technology and humanity in a coming era. He has an almost messianic belief in the ultimate and liberating fusion of social and technological achievements. He is in fact a worthy contemporary of Jules Verne. In a staged studio photo of the editorial staff of *Handelstidningen*, the flying reporter, Rubenson, is seen with his essential tool, the notebook, in his hand. He is seen as person continuously listening, noting, and reporting. However, these attributes of a professional newspaperman only hint at the tools of his journalistic craftsmanship. What really mattered was his social competence, the urbane and communicative personality that had been molded at the café.

Rubenson's café at the crossroads of Östra Larmgatan and Drottninggatan became the meeting place of a circle of liberal-minded literati and publicists. This circle overlapped, to a great extent, with the social and professional circle of S. A. Hedlund. For future posterity, author Viktor Rydberg is the most famous member, but at the café, you could also see Carl Johan Lindskog, Hedlund's partner in the *Handelstidningen* company, and the creator of the financial and organizational basis for the paper's leading position in the liberal press. Music critic for *Handelstidningen*, Israel Sandström was present as well. The writer and publisher, Jonas Philipson, also belonged to the circle; he had earned a certain reputation for the radical, satirical



Editorial staff of Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning, 1890s. Sitting in the center, S. A. Hedlund. Standing behind him, as fifth person from the left, Karl Warburg. Sitting on the right, Mauritz Rubenson. (© Göteborgs stadsmuseum) GM_14227

paper *Tomtebissen*, which he co-edited with Rydberg in 1857. Journalist, Axel Krook, who translated Abraham Geiger's book about the history of Judaism (*Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte*) into Swedish, and to whom Abraham Baer presented a signed copy of his *BT*, often appeared at the café.

The improvised intellectual interactions and collaborations that took place during the 1850s at the café tables (the protagonists certainly would have written many of their articles and essays here) under the discrete supervision of Mauritz Rubenson and his father, developed during the next decade into the society called *Vargklyftan*, a less serious group but definitely one with more social impact. Here the focus was more on theatrical entertainments, song performances and practical jokes. If the coterie at the café had an informal character, with no regular membership and procedures, *Vargklyftan* was given the strict structure of a gentlemen's association, with statutes and proceedings. However, its implicit function was the social integration of the membership, not serious political discussion or professional collaboration.

A Magician Comes to Town – The Switchboard of Aron Jonason

In November 1864, the establishment of a new photographic studio was announced in the Gothenburg press. The location of the studio is significant; it was located at 58 Drottninggatan, “next to Bloms Hotell” and Rubenson’s café. It also happens to be the building where Abraham Baer was to live in twenty-five years later! The advertisements are signed A. & P. Jonason. The letter A stands for Aron and P for Pauline. However, they are not a couple; Pauline is Aron’s sister. Aron Jonason, 26, had recently arrived back in Gothenburg after a three-month’s study trip to Copenhagen and Germany, during which he learned a truly modern skill, the photographer’s trade. The establishment of the firm signals Jonason’s ambitions to carve out a reasonably secure and profitable professional niche after some years of free-lance literary activity.

Aron Jonason was born in Gothenburg in 1838. His father, the watchmaker and businessman Liebman (Ludwig) Moses Jonason (1805–1869), the son of one of the first Jewish immigrants to Gothenburg, seems to have dwelled in a firm, traditional Jewish *Lebenswelt*. His letters to his son were written in Swedish, but the introductory and concluding phrases (such as *Mein lieber Aron, deiner dich liebender Vater*) apparently were perceived of as being specifically Jewish, even if Liebman uses the German *Schriftweise*, not the Yiddish orthography. The most emotionally laden expressions were written in the *mammeloschen*, the mother tongue. Aron received his basic education at the Jewish school, took part in the congregation’s religion course during 1853 and had his Jewish confirmation on June 12 that year.¹⁴⁵ His studies then more or less went in the direction of the family tradition of mechanics. He enrolled at Chalmers’ school of engineering (the future technical university of Gothenburg) and acquired a good basic education in the natural sciences. However, his artistic urge is powerful, and in the new craft (or was it an art form?) of photography he sees the possibility to combine the different sides of his talent. But it was Jonason’s literary talent that eventually gave him his platform as a cultural worker in the public sphere of Gothenburg.

In 1859, the publisher David Felix Bonnier founded a new paper, *Göteborgs-Posten*, challenging Hedlund’s *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*. Like *Handelstidningen*, *Göteborgs-Posten* had a liberal profile, but in political matters



Aron Jonason (© Göteborg City Museum) GMA_8894_1

it took a more market-oriented, laissez-faire policy stance than the social-liberal competitor. Compared to *Handelstidningen*, it had somewhat less editorial weight, but nevertheless, there were several distinguished writers in the staff, among them Abraham Baer's friend Axel Krook. Bonnier also recruited Jonason, who was to remain a member of the staff until 1896, and it was mainly in *Göteborgs-Posten* that Jonason developed his very personal style of writing. At first, he was something of a local editor, reporting and commenting on social, cultural, and political events in Gothenburg. But from the mid-1860s, his weekly chronicles became the focus of his journalistic activity. With these columns he created a novel literary form, and soon this form became more important than the content. Rather than using language as a medium for reporting from the world, he used his impressions from the world to report from the language itself, making the *witz*, the sound pun or witticism (*vits* in modern Swedish orthography) his main vehicle of expression! This makes his writings virtually untranslatable. He balanced daringly on the edge of language, using the witticism as a *förminskningsglas*, a "reduction glass," and thereby strove to handle the unwieldy and the uncomfortable, often dissolving it into laughter. This was often achieved by understanding something figurative or metaphorical in a literal way. In this discourse, metaphors, homonyms and near-homonyms are used as surprising and hazardous leaps or pitfalls in the language, liberating the mind and leading the thoughts in new and unexpected directions. In the cover text to their fascinating book about Jonason's life and work, Jonas Magnusson and Cecilia Grönberg present a neat definition of the *witz*:

We understand the *witz* as an intellectual and cognitive vehicle and as a "contextual switch" or "gearshift." The *witz* makes it possible to operatively link one context to another. It is a mode of thought, which – while comparing and combining – keeps the elements separated; which simultaneously homogenizes and emphasizes the heterogeneous. But the *witz* also is discovery and innovation. Walter Benjamin calls it a "lightening of thought." The *witz* destabilizes and dynamizes, it reveals the limitless plasticity of language. It contaminates and infiltrates, but it is also an amalgamating artifact. It is acid and magnetic pole, dismantling and reassembling, actuality and

potentiality. The *witz* is always double, a Janus figure, a door that is both closed and open.¹⁴⁶

His columns in *Göteborgs-Posten*, as well as his many contributions to other publications – including his own books and pamphlets – were widely read and commented on by the reading public of Gothenburg. Consequently, Jonason contributed considerably to the creation and maintenance of a specific Gothenburg style of parlance and discourse in which the *witz* has a central position. *Göteborgsvitsen*, ‘the Gothenburg pun’, is a living tradition in Sweden, and Jonason is regarded as one of its creators and most witty representatives.

Another socially very important genre in which Jonason made an important contribution is the *revy*. The Swedish *revy* (from the French word *revue*) is a theatrical entertainment form, usually consisting of a sequence of tableaux, monologues, dialogues, songs, dance performances, and the like, often commenting satirically on current political or social events. In its classical form, the *revy* was performed at or around New Year, summarizing the outgoing year and speculating on the prospect for the coming year.

Jonason thus furnished the Gothenburg public with topics of conversation, as well as with linguistic candy. His *witz* echoed in the salons and cafés. He was often invited to entertain at private parties and festivities, not least among the Jewish families of the city. With the establishment of his photo studio he entered a parallel social function, providing a sort of mirror to the bourgeois population. During the first years, it seems largely to have been his sister Pauline who was in charge of the studio at Drottninggatan, while Jonason devoted much of his time to his literary endeavors. However, in 1867 Pauline married, and Jonason leased the studio to other operators until 1870, when he liquidated the firm.

If Pauline left the photographic profession in 1867 because of her marriage (as would be expected from an nineteenth-century woman), it was Aron’s marriage plans that, in 1879, caused him to return to professional photography, his literary work being somewhat economically unstable. Jonason first opened a studio at Södra Hamngatan 29, where he was active until 1887. Meanwhile, in the house of optician, Julius Lange, at Södra Hamngatan 43, a new studio was built according to Jonason’s specifications.

The year 1887 also marks another important event in Jonason's photographic career; he is appointed *hoffotograf*, court photographer, to the king of Sweden. While visiting Berlin the previous year, Jonason learned about the use of colloid photo paper, an innovation that provided copies with much better resolution and tone quality. In the summer of 1887, King Oscar II visited the popular summer resort of Marstrand. When passing Gothenburg, the king wanted to have his ship's crew photographed. Jonason was sent for, and took a couple of photographs. During processing, the pictures were found to be rather under-exposed. However, using the new paper quality (which apparently was a novelty in Sweden) Jonason managed to overcome this obstacle. The copies, presented to the king the next day, were highly appreciated by Oscar, who immediately asked his chamberlain to issue a court photographer's power of attorney to Jonason. The royal summer visits to Marstrand, and the photographic documentation of these visits, became a tradition, and Jonason developed a personal friendship with the king. This, of course, gave him and his establishment some sort of national fame.

Jonason's studio remained at Södra Hamngatan 43, but in 1909 it was moved to Östra Hamngatan 39, where parts of the upper floor were reconstructed and furnished according to the American "single-slant" system. Each of the successive venues that Jonason used seems to represent a step in the rapid development of photography. He was continuously in touch with the state of the art developments. In the newspaper *Göteborgs Aftonblad* of October 30, 1909, there was a report from the opening of the studio at Östra Hamngatan; the detailed description of the gathering and its participants makes it very clear that this is an important event to the Gothenburg public.

In hundreds of thousands of photographs, Jonason and his assistants at the studio portray Gothenburg and its inhabitants. There was of course much routine in the daily production of calling cards, wedding photos, group photographs of confirmations, and various other events. But Jonason demonstrated his talent early on as a very psychologically and artistically conscious portrait photographer. His portrait of Mauritz Rubenson is a telling example.

Before his cameras, the provincial town at the Göta älv developed into a modern industrial city. Jonason was, in fact, asked by the city administration to document



Kungälvavägen street. Photo: Aron Jonason. (© Göteborg City Museum) GhmE_112

the expansive modernization process, and these pictures of streets, buildings, work places, and factories give us a fascinating perspective of the rapid process of change. Jonason's assistants probably took most of these pictures. Considering the long exposure times they often went out early in the morning in order to take their photos before the streets were filled with moving pedestrians. The picture of Kungälvavägen has a surrealistic, almost eerie atmosphere, with the rows of newly erected neo-renaissance palaces in contrast with the dog in the foreground and the horse-drawn streetcars in the background.

Diasporic Competences

I have chosen to portray these two personalities and their careers because I think they very eloquently represent the spirit of the second-generation Jews of Gothenburg. Born in the 1830s, they also belong to the same generation as Abraham Baer. It is likely that they attended the festive inauguration of the synagogue in 1855. They enthusiastically take advantage of the gradually widening career opportunities made available during the emancipation and liberalization process

that started with the abolishment of the Jewish regulations in 1838. They reach culturally important positions in Swedish society and cultural life rather early in their careers, and for the outsider, it may look as if they had totally abandoned the Jewish community and its traditions. In encyclopedia articles and scholarly works, their Jewish identity is in fact seldom mentioned. Even in Jonas Magnusson's and Cecilia Grönberg's excellent and penetrating presentation of Aron Jonason, the Jewish aspect is somewhat played down, even if it is briefly mentioned as a sort of background factor of some hypothetic relevance for the formation of Jonason's cultural outlook. I would argue that their Jewish upbringing and socialization were highly important, positive and formative experiences for these two individuals. Jonason's parents must be described as traditional Jews, his father in fact having a strong religious attachment. In the Jonason collection at the Göteborg City Museum there is a handwritten document that testifies to this, a compendium of instructions for prayer that Liebmann Moses apparently had prepared for his son.¹⁴⁷ Directions for the use of the *talit* (prayer shawl) and for the proper attachment of the *tefillin* (phylacteries) are given in the Swedish language. The prayer texts are rendered in Hebrew script. Jonason had his confirmation in 1853, that is, four years before the appointment of Baer as cantor – but a later contact with the *Vorbeter* is documented. On June 1, 1860, he bought some books from Baer, according to his cashbook for 1858–62.¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately these books are not specified; maybe it was the new *siddur* of the Gothenburg congregation, which had been published in 1858. The cashbook also documents his quarterly payments of the congregation subscription.

But the cashbook also documents Jonason's social activity in other forums than the Jewish congregation and community. Among other things is evident that he frequents Rubenson's café, where he pays for *dryckjom* (drinks) in November 1860. Rubenson and Jonason make it their calling to act as mediators and culture brokers in the growing complexity of available cultural forums. In my tentative visualization of the *Lebenswelt* of the Jewish population in Gothenburg, we find them at a point in public life that gives maximal access to a multiplicity of cultural forums. Figuratively speaking, they spend their lives at a café situated at the *Hauptplatz* (main square) of an emerging metropolis, the rise of which was considerably furthered as they put their multifaceted European diasporic

experience at the disposal of the provincial but modernizing Swedish society. They connect people; introduce them to one another, and to hitherto unknown cultural forums, linking them, mirroring them, expanding their language and communicative skills.

To Rubenson, the social aspect is central, as is the evolutionary potential of everything. All voices must be heard. The realization of all good, productive and positive ideas must be encouraged and facilitated. Being anchored within Judaism is natural and self-evident, as is the maintenance of the Jewish family network, in Sweden and abroad. During his trip to the United States, Rubenson visited relatives on both his maternal and paternal side. Most of his brother and sisters married Jewish partners.

But in 1873, Rubenson married a non-Jewish woman, Albertina Carlsson from Borås. Nevertheless, it seems to have been important for him that his sons (who from a halakhic point of view were regarded as non-Jewish) should somehow be given a Jewish identity, and maintain some sort of connection to the Jewish community. In a letter to Moritz Wolff in May 1886, he asked if the rabbi is willing to officiate in a name-giving ceremony for his newborn son Albert. The question was discussed in *Cultuscommissionen*, which decided that the rabbi was free to participate in the ceremony. It is significant that Rubenson did not seem to have considered a conversion. He paid regularly for a permanent seat in the synagogue.¹⁴⁹

Rubenson's whole career seems to be devoted to the task of bringing people together, in order to further the development of their respective abilities and competences. He worked at finding synonyms, shared meanings for different symbols.

Aron Jonason, on the other hand (who married outside the Jewish community as well), strove intensely to bring different semantic fields together under shared linguistic symbols, in order to bring out the surprising multiplicity and ambiguity of the human condition. In his *witz-bombs*, he explored the homonym as a meeting-place for different meanings. The use of word puns as well as sound puns opens up linguistic expressions in unexpected directions. The comic effect is based on the sudden, surprising and disarming insight into the language's willfulness and indomitable independence. The *witz-bomb* explodes rigid definitions and creates eruptive craters in the language. It exercises an anarchistic terror and effectively

destroys all stilted and bombastic communication. As Abraham Geiger points out in a surprising passage in the second volume of his *Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte*, the pun or witticism has its justification when “it zeros in on the low-down, and reveals it in its complete ridiculousness, pours a corrosive lye over it and roots subversively in its intestines, dismembering them with a certain sensation of pleasure.”

We inevitably exist under the dominion and conditions of language, but we do not realize this in ordinary communication. In a similar way, we are conditioned by the lustful and uncontrollable urges and instincts of procreation, even if we cling to the idea of our own free will. This is the background for our sexual embarrassment and shame, because here, the rational control of the ego is defeated by the libido of the species, and we are shocked when we see the nudity of life revealed. The *witz* brings out our helplessness, and this also explains the high frequency of sexual puns and word play – they open up a doubly ludicrous embarrassment.

People such as Rubenson and Jonason, in the second and third generation of Swedish Jews or Jewish Swedes, were raised in a culture of linguistic multiplicity and ambiguity. Within their families, at least three spoken idioms existed – Yiddish, Swedish, and German. These could be considered as distinct languages, but in fact, are closely related to one another as branches of the Germanic language family tree. On top of this, these three languages had quite recently found (or were actually still seeking) their standardized and codified forms as full-fledged literary, national languages. One could also argue that the complexity was even higher, since most of the early Jewish immigrants to Sweden had their family roots and relations in the parts of Germany where Low German was the vernacular, not literary High German! This conditioned the linguistic sensitivity for a person like Aron Jonason. There were always unsuspected ambiguities, hidden meanings and implications, and a lot of comic mistakes made. This seems to have been the background of a specific form of party amusement, *mauscheln*, which is reported to have been a popular ingredient of the social life of the Jewish community of Gothenburg during the 1860s. At birthday parties and weddings, Swedish-language sketches, tableaux and monologues, larded with Yiddish or Yiddish-like expressions, were performed. This apparently has its historic background in the

badchen (jester, merryman) performances that had been part of the Jewish wedding and *Hanukkah* and *Purim* tradition for centuries. Here of course, the social dimensions of linguistic competence and identity were at play as well – especially since the 1870s, when Yiddish speakers from Eastern Europe started to arrive at the Swedish scene.

The Ethos of Modernity and the Ethics of Craftsmanship

Otto Salomon and the Spirit of Sloyd

Lake Sävelången is one of the steps in a staircase of lakes that glitter in the valleys connecting inland Västergötland with the Göta älv estuary at the strait of Skagerrak. It is late May and the gently undulating landscape is clad in a lush green fabric of beech, oak, ash, linden, birch, and hazel. Here and there, bright strips of meadowland run downhill toward the lakeshore. A traditional pastoral landscape has been created by thousands of years of *ängsbruk*, meadow cultivation. This was the predominant form of agriculture in the northern region until the nineteenth century. Landscape architects, inspired by the English romantic gardening style, took over when peasants' sickles and rakes became the object of ethnologic collecting.

Romantic gardens need monuments, and in the park of the Nääs estate there actually is one, but this monument is no romantic stage backdrop or set piece. It is serious and it is for real. There is a little hill on a peninsula that reaches out into the lake; on the hilltop is an urn-like stone sculpture, filled with flowers. In front of it, there is a rectangular, stone-framed surface. Climbing the hilltop, I notice a row of stone slabs sunk in the lawn, but this structure becomes visible only as I step on the stones. At first, I take it for a slightly curving footpath, but soon I realize that it encircles the entire hilltop. In fact, it has the shape of a perfect ellipse, enclosing the monument. It is a kind of demarcation line, separating the secular from the sacred, but it in no way hampers the access to the monument. It is a *symbolic* demarcation that can be transgressed, that makes it possible to be both insider and outsider. This artwork interacts with nature. The roots of the beech trees that have been planted on both sides of the line have been allowed to push some of the slabs slightly aside, thereby demonstrating the irresistible power of continuing biological life.

The ellipse encircles a private burial ground, the smallest Jewish cemetery in Sweden. Only two people are buried here, August Abrahamson and Otto Salomon.



"A symbolic demarcation that can be transgressed". The stone slab ellipse at Nääs. (Photo by the author).



Sepulchral monument of August Abrahamson and Otto Salomon, Nääs (Photo by the author.)

There is no boasting with titles and accomplishments here, just the names of the two people are written on the monument. But on a pedestal, there is an inscription in Swedish: *Den gode är en makt även i graven*. (“The righteous is a power even in his grave”). Abrahamson and Salomon are treated as equals, and we understand that the ellipse – a geometric shape whose identity is determined by its two perfectly equal foci – is not randomly chosen.

The Nääs park is carefully modeled on a traditional pastoral landscape, in sensitive ecological balance. Not very much has been added. Instead, the natural and agricultural aspects are a given and have been enhanced and brought out clearly. This is a *Gestaltung* of a Nordic Arcadia, and the numerous buildings that are set in the spacious park interact with the landscape and the vegetation.

August Abrahamson – Entrepreneurship and Patronage

In 1868 the businessman and cultural patron August Abrahamson (1817–1898), bought the Nääs estate, which is located in Floda parish, around thirty kilometers northeast of Gothenburg.¹⁵⁰ At that time, the residence was a typical Swedish eigh-

teenth-century manor house with a whitewashed main building and two wings on an open courtyard. Abrahamson immediately started a thorough renovation of the buildings. It was also on his commission that the surroundings were transformed into a landscape garden. He had married the opera singer Euphrosyne Leman in 1859, who came from a wealthy Stockholm family. At forty-two years of age, he realized that he was economically independent and decided to retire from his successful wholesale business in the textile trade. Buying Nääs, he transferred the textile firm to his younger brother, Leopold, and devoted himself to family life in his Gothenburg city residence near the synagogue on Stora Nygatan, as well as engaging himself in cultural patronage. The renovation of Nääs was intended as a grandiose present to his beloved wife. However, Euphrosyne tragically passed away early in 1869, and August had to move in as a widower. One of the rooms at Nääs was draped in black and furnished as a memorial to Euphrosyne.

But the new Nääs was not a sad place at all. August did not live in the past, his aims were in the future; he was, until the end of his days, taking part in the innovative process of modernization. Nääs became a showpiece of modernity, demonstrating progress and novelty, paired with knowledgeable historicism. The furnishings of the different rooms display the typical nineteenth-century *faiblesse* for eclecticism, but the re-use of historic styles is coupled with a totally untraditional interest in technical innovations. The novel products of industrial manufacture, materials such as pressed glass and electroplate silver, are highly valued and carefully displayed. It is a sign of progress that a silver fork or spoon can be quickly manufactured in thousands of identical copies and thereby be affordable and accessible not only to privileged aristocrats but to ordinary bourgeois citizens of an emancipated *res publica*.

August Abrahamson retired from his firm, but he was continuously active in the role of the philanthropic patron, net-worker and socio-cultural entrepreneur. His office at Nääs is telling, and even moving. It was a rather narrow space; not very representative, just a workplace. In it were his desk, his writing utensils, and his books. Here he maintained his international connections, keeping up with of his correspondence, reading the letters, and writing the answers. On the wall is a framed diploma, documenting his membership on the program committee of the



August Abrahamson (© Göteborg City Museum)

1889 Paris international exhibition. The Eiffel tower had one of its supports and supporters at Nääs.

Abrahamson's life story begins in Karlskrona, the naval base on the south coast of Sweden. His father Aron (the son of the distinguished Berlin engraver and medalist Abram Abramson), had settled in Karlskrona in the 1780s, where he worked – with very limited success – as contractor to the Royal Navy. The family was poor, and August early on assisted his sickly father with the consignments from different naval stations in southern Sweden. At fourteen years of age, he was sent to Gothenburg to work as a shop assistant in the firm of Louis Benecke. However, in 1839 he started his own business in "*korta varor*," a Swedish trade term comprising cloth, yarn, underwear and accessories. His success is linked to the booming textile industry of early nineteenth-century Western Europe. Applying modern methods of business and distribution, he introduced comfortable ready-made underwear to the Swedish public, thereby making the northern winters somewhat more bearable – in fact a very significant contribution to the process of civilization. During the 1840s and 1850s he established an extensive international network, and he often traveled to Britain, France, Germany, and Austria. He moved with cultural ease within the European forum, as well as the Jewish Diaspora, where he also had many of his commercial partners. Through his marriage with Euphrosyne Leman, he acquired a considerable cultural capital and respectability in the Swedish context, in addition to his already documented commercial success. His acquired social and cultural position is most eloquently exhibited at Nääs, but his city residence, particularly the office and warehouse building that his firm erected on Östra Larmgatan in 1876, also demonstrates the self-confidence of his modern entrepreneurship; Renaissance architecture with a Venetian flavor, perhaps the most universally European style that could be mobilized.

Abrahamson's philanthropic patronage was manifested on the national as well on the local level. In 1869 he made a generous donation to the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, and a few years later he founded a *slöjd* ("craft") school for boys at Nääs. This school was intended for local children who had finished *folkskolan*, the obligatory ground school.

Accepting a Calling – Otto Salomon

Björkenäås is something of an architectonic antithesis to the classical eclecticism of the renovated main building at Nääs. It is a villa situated on the mainland opposite the Nääs peninsula. Whereas the *corps-de-logis* at Nääs exemplifies the tradition of the Swedish *herresäte*, the aristocratic residence, this building of 1878 demonstrates the novel wood building techniques recently made possible by the mechanized sawmill industry. According to an 1884 newspaper article it was in fact built according to drawings originally made for a summerhouse erected for the Russian tsar at Livadia in the Crimean. Its style has a certain flavor of the Balkans and the Black Sea area, with its flat, protruding roof, brown and yellow painted facades, and its geometrical decorations. In fact, it would have fit in as a *yalı*, an Ottoman summer residence on the shores of the Bosphorus. It strongly deviates from the Swiss-inspired, heavily decorated wooden chalet style that had become popular in Sweden at the time, which soon was given the fitting epithet *snickarglädje*, “carpenter’s delight.” At Björkenäås there is not much carpenter’s delight, but there certainly is a good amount of woodwork. The interiors are very well lit and painted in bright colors; big windows invite the daylight. The focus is on practicality, not on representation. If Abrahamson’s palace at Nääs demonstrates the retrospective ambitions of historicism, Björkenäås is something of a futuristic fantasy.

In Abraham Baer’s *mohel* book, Björkenäås is mentioned twice. On March 30, 1881, a boy named Aron Alexander was circumcised at Björkenäås. Two years later, on February 23, 1883, Baer returned to the house to circumcise the second son of Otto Salomon and Ellen Wahren. The house had been built for the pair a few years earlier. Otto Salomon was the nephew of August Abrahamson, the son of his sister Henriette. After the death of Abrahamson’s wife in 1869 he had been given an important role at Nääs, and remained there for the rest of his life. This was not his original career option. In 1868 he had started a curriculum at the technical university in Stockholm. His fellow students were surprised and even confounded at his decision to quit university after just one year of study. As an engineer he would have good career prospects, taking part in the booming industrial revolution of Sweden. But now, he suddenly accepted a seemingly humble position at a remote rural location.

The childless widower, Abrahamson, apparently felt a need to have a young assistant at his side in the management of the estate. During the first years at Nääs, Salomon worked as the bookkeeper and manager of the estate. He also took a university course in agriculture, but quite soon, his creativity was channeled into a different realm. When Abrahamson founded his craft school in 1872, Salomon was appointed principal, and from then on, he concentrated on the pedagogical aspects of his work at Nääs.

The craft school for local children was, in many ways, a traditional philanthropic institution, with a somewhat paternalistic character. However, under Salomon's leadership, the development of the *pedagogical methods* and the *education of craft teachers* soon came into the foreground. During 1875–82, a training college for *slöjdlärare*, craft teachers, was established at Nääs. During the following three decades, Salomon developed the institution into the leading school of its kind in Sweden. He also developed and redefined the concept of *slöjd*.

Slöjd is an old Swedish word denoting forms of traditional handicraft that did not belong to the sphere of professional craftsmen such as blacksmiths, shoemakers, and carpenters. *Slöjd* was work done at home, a kind of leisure time occupation, with both aesthetic and intellectual aspects. Often the products had no direct practical aims; rather they would embellish the cottage or be given as presents. Sometimes, the mere problem solving of the creative process would be more important than the product itself. *Att slöjda*, “crafting,” was a way to demonstrate your ingenuity and wit and to develop your skill and manual dexterity. *Slöjd* could be performed on many different materials, including textiles, metal and leather, but mainly it was woodwork that was considered to be the core activity.

The Ethics of Handicraft

Discussion on the merits of handicraft can be found in many European countries during the nineteenth century. The topic must be interpreted against the background of the growing awareness of the effects of industrialization on the cultural heritage of traditional society. Peasants became much more involved and incorporated in the expanding capitalist economy and tended to become buyers rather than makers. Museums were created with the aim of collecting the neglected

products of long winter evenings' work with needle or knife. These categorized and exhibited artifacts not only represented the national heritage, they also symbolized ethical and social values, virtues associated with innocent, traditional rural life. It was thought that these values ought to be brought into the emerging modern society. They were seen as precious expressions of a more authentic form of humanity that had been managed by ordinary people, in contrast to the artificial artisan products belonging to aristocratic and urban environments.

Urbanization and proletarianization threatened the values of this cherished folk culture. Therefore, intellectuals felt an obligation to further the continuation of the traditions in an age of accelerating mass production. It was suggested that it must be possible to combine technological and economic progress with the maintenance of the eternal values of traditional culture. This could not be done at random. *Slöjd* was an oral and manual tradition, but the old forms of transmission from one generation to the next had been challenged, and the continuation of tradition required that it be recorded and systematized. That was the track that Solomon switched to after their first attempts with local schoolboys at Nääs.

From the start, he was deeply influenced by the theories of the Finnish-Swedish theologian and teacher, Uno Cygneus (1810–1888), whom he visited in Finland in 1877. Cygneus, in his turn was a follower of the Swiss pedagogic reformer Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), the enlightened advocate of a reformed school system that advocated general knowledge, not vocational training. The fostering of good citizens and fellowmen was the overarching principle of his philosophy. This should be done through the harmonious development of the natural ability and talent of the individual pupil. Pestalozzi and Cygneus emphasized the importance of physical training and manual work. Handicraft was included in their curricula, but there was no systematic methodology.

Salomon gradually came to the conclusion that the general pedagogical efficiency and meaningfulness of craft activities could only be enhanced if their methods were systematized. During the 1880s and 1890s he developed what he called “pedagogical *slöjd*.” The movements and actions of the different tools were analyzed, and a series of gradually more complex objects, which the students were to make, was standardized. Through his publications, lectures and extensive international contacts, Salomon's

ideas were disseminated worldwide as “Swedish sloyd.” According to Hans Thorbjörnsson, Salomon’s pedagogical thoughts can be summarized in three paragraphs:¹⁵¹

1. Contemporary schools were too focused on theoretical subjects. Learning by rote and repetition were methods that did not develop the independent and creative thinking of the pupils. Children do not only have a desire for knowledge, they need activity as well. If physical work like handicraft is included in the curriculum, both of these needs can be satisfied. A person without handwork skills is not a fully educated individual. Learning is doing; knowledge is not passively received, but actively acquired.
2. Each human individual has inborn, slumbering abilities or potentialities. Education must develop these abilities, methodically and harmonically. It is not only the intellectual strength that must be cultivated; the moral and physical strength should also be harmoniously developed. The acquisition of volition precedes the development of memory, and moral and religious emotions are more important than physical power. The pedagogue must try to find the adequate balance between these forces, for each individual. Fostering is more important than teaching. This fostering raises and improves man, makes him as godlike as possible. The curriculum must be personalized and contain moments of individual activity.
3. There is a difference between material and formal education. The former consists of knowledge and skills about a subject, whereas the latter is the development of mental and physical strengths that are acquired during the process of material education. True education (and here the Swedish word *bildning* is used) has nothing to do with the quantity of knowledge. An educated, *bildad* person is able to see overarching connections and patterns, and he is also capable of developing his own personality in such a way that a real self-knowledge is acquired. Thereby, he is prepared to work for all mankind.

Thorbjörnsson concludes his summary of Salomon’s pedagogical credo with the sentence “His aim is the development of volition, moral and interests” (*Det han vill uppnå är snarast utveckling av vilja, moral och intressen*). It is not difficult to see

the close parallels to the *bildning* concept outlined by S. A. Hedlund in the 1840s. Basically, Salomon's method and the educational achievements at Nääs should be understood as a realization or implementation of the *bildning* ideas that were crystallized during the century.

In his writings, Salomon discussed the teacher-pupil relationship (which at Nääs was originally an adult-child interplay), and this pedagogical interaction continued to be one of the focal points of his theoretical work. But around 1880, Nääs was transformed from a philanthropic craft school for local children, into an institution for adults. A vocational training college for *slöjd* teachers was established between 1875–82. According to Thorbjörnsson, this seems to have been the first institution of its kind in the world. But a basic tenet of Salomon's ideology was the inclusion of *slöjd* in the curricula of the elementary school system, and after discussions with Uno Cygneus he decided to concentrate on further education of *folkskollärare*, elementary school teachers. These teachers already had pedagogical experience and were more apt to understand Salomon's fostering perspective than the *slöjd* teachers, who perhaps, tended to be more aesthetically inclined.

The courses for *folkskollärare* offered at Nääs lasted around six weeks. About four courses a year were given. The summer courses soon became very popular, which was partly due to the generous possibility of open-air activities at Nääs during the warm season. The *slöjd* lectures and exercises were supplemented by a growing output of social and intellectual activities. In fact, Salomon emphasized the theoretical aspects. It was not possible for the ordinary participant to become an accomplished *slöjdare* in only six weeks. However, the method was illustrated, and each participant produced a model series that could be demonstrated to the pupils. Gradually, Salomon developed a regular lecture series that was included in the courses. The lectures dealt not only with *slöjd* topics; a wide spectrum of themes was taken up. Nääs, in fact, became a sort of *bildningsinstitut* or folk college. During the 1890s, music, folk dancing and dance games were introduced, and a specific Nääs song and dance repertoire was compiled. What was mainly cultivated was the "academic" form of folk dancing that had evolved in Swedish student societies during the nineteenth century. Going from being part of the social, informal aspect of the "Nääs spirit," song and dance game instruction was given its own slot in the

course catalogue, and in 1895, a *lekledare* (game instructor) course was added. The dance game activities were, of course, related to the physical training activities (gymnastics, ball games, and the like) that were also encouraged at Nääs.

The aim of this “folk culture” activity was not the collecting and presentation of “authentic” folklore. The booklets and songbooks are clearly products of Nääs; they are expressions of modernity, informed by tradition. The Nääs experience actually had a considerable influence on the modern perception and presentation of Swedish folklore. The celebration of Midsummer’s Eve at Nääs became paradigmatic and set a pattern for the contemporary staging of this reinterpreted peasant festival, a pattern that was promoted all around the country by the course participants. The mind set behind this folk-revival symbolism is strongly influenced by Herder’s ideas on *Humanität*. Salomon’s basic tenets on tradition and identity would, today, be interpreted as a form of multi-culturalism. Cultural identity is indispensable for every society or polity; no man is an island, and the feeling of belonging is a positive force that is essential to humanity. Humanity is universal, but it is also multifaceted and diverse. Identity implies alterity, otherness. Feelings for *mankind* are certainly positive, but their object is a remote and cool generalization, while the feelings for the nation, for the close and specific cultural traditions and symbols, have more warmth and intensity. However, “belonging” has to be paired with tolerance; plurality, not hierarchy, must prevail. All nations are equal and have equal rights, and the respect for this equality is a central ideological feature. The Nääs students were encouraged to bring their homeland’s songs and dances, and at the inauguration of the courses, the national anthems of all the participants were performed. Even if the Nääs *slöjd* courses were designed for Swedish elementary school teachers, the ideology was of course, universalistic. By way of Salomon’s extensive personal international connections, Nääs soon gained a worldwide reputation, and an increasing number of foreigners applied for the courses. There were participants from most European countries, as well as from North America. However, soon Latin America, Japan, Egypt, Ethiopia, South Africa and even “East India” were represented. From statistics compiled in 1903, for the one hundred courses that so far had been organized, it can be deduced that twenty-six percent of the participants were foreigners (1,037 of a total of 3,909).

Judaism and Universalism at Nääs

Bildning and cultural identity were, as we have seen, central components of the Nääs ideology. However, there is another factor that should not be overlooked, religion. A sort of ecumenical, universalistic spirit seems to have prevailed during Salomon's directorship. Religion was seen as a positive value, and in his speeches given at the celebrations that concluded the courses, Salomon included a benediction that most participants interpreted as a Christian prayer. Some participants may not even have known about Salomon's Jewishness. This vaguely defined atmosphere of "religious secularism" has led most commentators to underrate the importance and relevance of Salomon's and Abrahamson's Jewish identity. Their religious stance is interpreted as some kind of lukewarm deism, an open-minded belief in the existence of something more elevated than the material and worldly, more of a personal feeling than a system of ideas and beliefs. However, as we have noticed, Salomon never in any way broke away from his Jewish family traditions. There was a great deal of exogamy in the Gothenburg Jewish community, and even in the old Jewish families, many of the traditional *mitzvot* were questioned or abolished. Some people started to regard circumcision as an atavistic practice that did not belong to modern society. Against this background, one would expect that Salomon had reduced the Jewish aspects of his private life to a minimum, but that was not the case. His wife was Jewish, Abraham Baer was summoned to circumcise his sons, and there is ample evidence of a kosher kitchen at Björkenääs.¹⁵²

In fact, I would argue that the Jewish component of the Nääs achievement has been systematically neglected or overlooked during the twentieth century. Already in 1899, the Swedish state accepted Abrahamson's donation of Nääs, and after Salomon's death in 1907, the connection to the Abrahamson and Salomon families became a historic one. During Salomon's lifetime it certainly had occurred that the Jewish factor at Nääs had been questioned or negatively judged, but that was mainly based on traditional, Lutheran anti-Judaism. "Shall we really let our youngsters go to Nääs," rural vicars are reported to have said. "After all, Salomon is a Jew." There were also comments in the conservative press claiming that Nääs was a hotbed for religious and political propaganda. With the rise of modern, populist anti-Semitism, the Jewish cultural presence in general became a heated and inflamed topic.

Pointing at Jews and ferreting out “Jewish influences” became a cherished genre of vulgar anti-Semites, and as a consequence, many liberal and progressive writers refrained from discussing the subject in fear of being misunderstood. A culture of circumlocution and paraphrasing evolved. Salomon (like other culturally or politically important Jewish personalities) tended to be portrayed not as a Jew, but as a person with a “Jewish background,” born “in a Jewish family,” and so on. One sometimes even gets the impression that the writers actually are saying “Well he was a Jew, but he was OK, because he was no real (practicing) Jew,” or “Well he was Jewish, but that is totally insignificant in this context.”

Of course, Salomon’s Jewish identity is not insignificant at all. His life and work, in an almost exemplary way, illustrates the ideas and ideals of liberal Judaism. It also demonstrates the European, or even worldwide significance of this reform movement as a vanguard of modernization and universal emancipation. The benediction that Salomon used to include in his speeches was the central passages of the *birkat kohanim*, the Jewish priestly benediction that had been transmitted to Christian tradition and therefore sounded familiar to most of his non-Jewish listeners.

We do not know much about Salomon’s Jewish reading. His extensive publications deal almost exclusively with educational matters and *slöjd* methodology, and from these writings it can be inferred that he was very well read in the international literature on these topics. However, there was no specific Jewish ideology of arts and craft, even if the fostering effects of manual work and handicraft were discussed also at Jewish reform schools. The Jewish aspect of Salomon’s work should be looked for in his motivations, and in their ethical foundations, rather than in the details of methodology and aesthetics.

These ethical values he could in fact have picked up more or less unconsciously during childhood; they were part and parcel of the *Lebenswelt* of Jewish Gothenburg. As a boy, Salomon saw the new synagogue take shape on Stora Nygatan, and his family had fixed seats in the sanctuary. In 1882, Salomon’s sister, Sophie Elkan (1853–1921), wrote the text for a little cantata composed by Czapek on Moritz Wolff’s twenty-five-year anniversary as rabbi in Gothenburg.¹⁵³ Sophie was an important person in the Nääs circle. She was an acknowledged writer, the author of historical novels, essays, and short stories. Nobel Prize winner Selma Lagerlöf was her close

friend, and Sophie regularly spent several summer weeks in her company at Nääs.¹⁵⁴

During 1865–66, Salomon took part in the religious education at the synagogue,¹⁵⁵ presumably under the tutelage of Rabbi Wolff, but it is highly probable that cantor Baer assisted in the course as well. The “confirmation” was a modernized version of the traditional *bar mitzvah* education. It is significant that the participants were around fifteen years old when they took part in the course, in contrast to the traditional *bar mitzvah*, which normally is done at age thirteen. This means of course that the intellectual maturity of the students in Gothenburg was considerably higher. I stress this, because it was here that Salomon was exposed to all the central ideas of the Jewish reform. This was also the epoch of the new Gothenburg *siddur* that had been introduced in 1858, the modern prayer book modeled on Geiger’s Breslau *siddur*. The confirmation students must have used exactly that book.

Geiger’s spirit certainly was a factor also for August Abrahamson’s Jewish identity, even if the businessman hardly could be expected to have studied his philological treatises and Talmudic excavations. However, in Abrahamson’s library at Nääs, a copy of Geiger’s collected works in five volumes, published in Berlin in 1875, was placed on a demonstratively visible bookshelf.¹⁵⁶

You may ask why Salomon did not explicitly comment on the Jewish contribution to the Nääs spirit. The answer already has been given: in the ideological climate dominated by the Lutheran State Church of Sweden, any direct reference to Jewish ideas and traditions would have created great difficulties for Salomon’s project. Religion and Jewishness had to be private concerns. Otherwise he would immediately have been attacked by certain elements of the conservative clergy, as well as by anti-Semites. Therefore, the attitudes and ideals of liberal Judaism could only be allowed to trickle out in the green grass of Nääs and blend with the general positive social climate of the institution.

The success of Nääs was due, to a large extent, to Salomons’s extensive international connections and social talent. His career demonstrates the importance of his access to multiple cultural forums, and how this multidimensionality and cultural mobility became an asset for Swedish society. We have seen how Abraham Baer, through the publication of his *Baal t’fillah*, was communicating simultaneously in several overlapping forums, even if he was very stationary and seldom left Gothen-

burg or Sweden. Salomon on the other hand, was geographically very mobile. His *Lebenswelt* can be analyzed on the same lines as Baer's, but we may infer that he was more active in the Swedish and urban European forums than the cantor, who in his turn, definitely felt more at home in the Jewish Diaspora and in Germany.

Bildning, Svenskmannaskap and Internationalism

As we have seen, Nääs, as it took shape under Salomon's leadership, evolved into a *bildning* institution of both national and international relevance. However, its national importance was not only the result of the repute that the high pedagogical standard of the *slöjd* courses created. Nääs also played an active role for Swedish nationalism as an ideology. The high ethical values that permeated Salomon's ideology were linked to the traditions of pre-modern peasant culture. *Svenskmannaskap* is a word frequently used by Salomon. It was part of the message communicated at Nääs. The term is difficult to translate, but I will try to break it down into its components: *Svensk* is "Swedish," *man* is "male person," and the suffix *-skap* is historically related to the English "-ship" but would have its modern equivalent in the suffix "-ness." Then *svenskmannaskap* would mean something like "the quality of being a Swede," or simply "Swedishness." However, *svenskhhet* is the normal word for Swedishness, and *svenskmannaskap* has a more solemn or even overblown or artificial ring. For nineteenth-century Swedes, it would have evoked a feeling of reverence for the old virtues of the nation, such as honesty, reliability, and truthfulness. Simultaneously – since it apparently is a romantic neologism – it would have been associated to the radical atmosphere of national liberalism. For Salomon, it apparently summarized the Nääs spirit.

There is a photograph that expresses the Nääs spirit better than most narratives and course descriptions. It is a picture taken by the English Nääs enthusiast, Richard Harvey, of Leicester in 1906. Close to the *slöjd* school building there is *Föreläsningsskullen*, the "lecture hill." Here Otto Salomon used to give his lectures when the weather was good. We see Salomon leaning against a chair. In front of him there is a table with a water bottle and an urn containing small slips of paper with the names of all the participants. As the picture is shot, Salomon is not talking, but listening. One of the female participants is reading her account of the previous



At "lecture hill", 1906. On the left, at chair, Otto Salomon. Photo: Richard Harvey. (© August Abrahamsons stiftelse, Nääs).

day's lecture. After the lecture, the name of the next reporter is drawn from the urn. The possibility that you would have to give an account stimulated the receptivity of the listeners.

As we can see, most of the participants (especially the women) are wearing national costumes. In this way, they express the idea of human diversity and manifoldness, and simultaneously they represent their differing cultural backgrounds and belongings. If nations are imagined communities, as Benedict Anderson (and in fact Moritz Lazarus) suggests, then what we see here is, in a way, the transformation of the imagined community into a physical one. Here, these individuals – who just a few weeks ago were complete strangers to one another – appear as a coherent group, coordinated in time and space in their experience of natural beauty, intellectual concentration, and idealism. It can be pointed out that a considerable number of marital relations were established at the summer courses. A network of family relations spread over the country and contributed to the *folkbildning* in the literal sense of the word.

Otto Salomon actually took the role advised by Abraham Geiger. The Jewish

intellectual, who, loyal to the faith of his ancestors, re-interprets tradition on the basis of historical research, re-formulates the national Jewish political identity into a religious/ethical one, and with an almost messianic enthusiasm throws himself into the construction of a modern European nation – a voluntary association of *bildade*/educated, liberated individuals.

Like Abraham Baer, Otto Salomon was not interested in the mere preservation of cultural artifacts and traditions. Baer's collection of liturgical music is a set of suggestions for practical use, but it is only in performance that the aesthetic form can fulfill its ethical end. When Salomon's *slöjd* student successfully completed the task of carving a well-shaped butter-spade with only the help of a simple knife, then he could throw away both the butter-spade and the knife. The real outcome of his concentrated effort was buried in his mind, in the individual configuration of his unique personality.¹⁵⁷

In the preface to the second edition of *Der practische Vorbeter* Abraham Baer mentioned that some people had asked him why he had not indicated which of the melodies are traditional and which are his own compositions. Such a clear-cut dividing line is not relevant in the *chasonus* tradition, Baer explained, and he concluded:

Anybody who has some knowledge about our sacred music would be aware that we do not have fixed melodies to all our prayers, and that the longest prayers are entrusted to the free outpourings from the *hazan's* heart. And it is also exactly here, that the *hazan* can display his talent and sentiment, his erudition in the field of Jewish song; in short, give voice to his full individuality.¹⁵⁸

To give voice to one's full individuality – this could have been a motto of the *bildning* association of Gothenburg in which S. A. Hedlund played a prominent role. It could have been the motto for Abraham Geiger's work as well. On the collective level it is also fully compatible with the credo of internationalism that was so prominent at Nääs. The optimistic atmosphere of mutual understanding that was promoted by Salomon culminated during his last years, but the outbreak of World War I in the summer of 1914, signaled the darkening realities of twentieth-century history.

Many of the foreign participants had to discontinue the course and return home. It was shocking news and there were tearful farewells. After the war, the international aspect of the Nääs project never fully recovered. This was partly due to the lack of a leadership that could be comparable to Salomon's. His international outlook, his linguistic skills, his social network, and his devotion were unique. After his death in 1907, it was impossible to find a fully competent successor. The lectures in German were canceled, and British colleagues were asked to take over the lectures in the English language. The classical period of Nääs had been embodied in Otto Salomon.

It Is Serious and It Is For Real

I am back on the hilltop at Nääs, at the mausoleum inside the elliptic row of stone slabs.¹⁵⁹ When I first read the inscription "*Den gode är en makt även i graven*" ("The righteous is a power even in his grave"), I found it vaguely biblical, but I did not recognize the wording. Salomon had used this formulation in an article about Pestalozzi, published in 1905. The article concludes with a relation of an 1899 visit by Salomon, his wife, and one of their sons, to Pestalozzi's tomb in Birr in Switzerland. After a very poetic depiction of their walking tour through the beautiful but misty landscape, with the fog lifting just as they approached the churchyard, Salomon describes the monument and quotes its inscription. He then concludes his article thus:¹⁶⁰

I laid my wreath on the tomb, and in exchange, I took a stone. This stone lies permanently on my writing-table, mounted into a paperweight. Everytime I am tempted to think uncharitable thoughts or acts toward my neighbor, I hurry to have a look at the stone, which thus has often prevented me from such sins.

"The righteous is a power even in his grave."

Two months after my visit to Nääs I happened to be reading Maimonides' magnum opus *The Guide for the Perplexed*, and suddenly this idea popped up in chapter Forty-two. Here Maimonides is discussing the etymology of the Hebrew words *chai* and *mavet*, life and death, and the metaphorical use of this dichotomy to signify

conceptual oppositions like *good and evil*, *wisdom and ignorance*. Maimonides concludes the chapter: “In consequence of the frequent use of this figure in our language our Sages said, ‘The righteous even in death are called living.’”

According to M. Friedländer, the translator of the edition I am reading,¹⁶¹ Maimonides is quoting the very first tract of the Babylonian Talmud, the *Barachot*, Folio 18 A. I feel myself suddenly transported to a hilltop somewhere in Mesopotamia more than 1,500 years ago. The somewhat obscure passage tells about two rabbis who are walking through a Jewish cemetery, discussing the nature of the presence of the dead among the living. Suddenly one of them notices that the *tzitzit* (tassels) of the other’s *tallit* (prayer shawl) are touching the ground, which is considered improper. He calls the colleague’s attention to this, but is dismissed, the other rabbi maintaining that the objection is irrelevant since the dead cannot perceive this earthly transgression. But does not the soul have eternal life? Are not the dead present among us, are they not at least active through our memories of them? A never-ending Talmudic discussion starts ...

V

Reactions

The Limits of Openmindedness

Fin-de-siècle Gothenburg

Adolf Magnus has been pondering for a week, but now at last he grabs his pen and writes a very angry letter. Certainly, his handwriting is beautifully disciplined as usual, and his language polite, but it is very clear that he is upset, agitated and deeply disappointed. He has been pondering over the following “warning” issued in an article in *Handelstidningen* from February 25, 1898.

...To the co-religionists of Dreyfus – the Jews – this case implies a warning, not to overestimate themselves and not to misuse the power they have won with the money they have earned, partly through wise calculation and thrift, but also in less honest ways, which we have witnessed several times in the Panama process. Even if they are not frequent, it is such traits that have evoked the anti-Semitism, which is now vociferously expressed in Paris and in some other French cities. A few years ago, this epidemic was unknown in France, but it seems to have been imported from Germany, and from Austria, in the capital of which it occupies the mayor’s post....

The incentive for the article is the recent judicial decision in Paris against Emile Zola, who in his famous open letter (“J’accuse”) to the president of France, published in *L’Aurore*, had accused the military establishment of criminal manipulations in the Dreyfus case. In 1894, captain Alfred Dreyfus, who was working at the information office of the French general staff, had been arrested and later convicted for having handed over secret military documents to the German military attaché in Paris. As later was demonstrated, Dreyfus was completely innocent, but his Jewishness almost automatically made him a suitable suspect. It dragged on until 1906 before Dreyfus was rehabilitated. The Dreyfus affair uncovered deeply corrupt practices in the general staff, but it also polarized French society through the use of anti-Semitism as a political vehicle for populist and nationalist agitation and demagoguery.

The *Handelstidningen* article tries to assess the actions of the different parties involved in the complicated political affair that had evolved in the French capital. According to the writer, it is not only “the Jews” that deserve to be warned. Overestimating his fame as an author, Zola had been carried away by his enthusiasm and dedication, which then had backfired on him. The French generals are admonished not to underrate the power of journalists, and the governing circles of France are warned not to try to suppress the openness of the judiciary system.

Apparently, the well-meant message by the author of the article is to urge the protagonists of the affair to reflect on their behavior and attitudes. However, it is the strange operation of accusing “the Jews” for the rise of anti-Semitism, and the demonstration of traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes (cunning, wealthy and powerful Jews) that evokes Magnus’ opposition, and causes him to write a letter to his old friend S. A. Hedlund. At this time Hedlund, seventy-seven, had retired from his post as editor-in-chief of the paper, so Magnus’ letter is a private one:

The prejudice against Jews is so deeply ingrained, even among people who believe themselves to be fairly tolerant, that as soon the word “Jew” is mentioned, their thinking becomes blurred. The article that caused me to write this letter is a proof of this.

I know that you are actually tolerant, but you know that “the exceptions confirm the rule,” and if that was not the case, I would not write you these lines.

If you were still responsible for *Handelstidningen*, I would not write, and instead confine myself to mourn the fact that one of the few exceptions from the said rule was just a vision.

Now I write, even if I do not know whether my letter is of any use; probably, the present editor-in-chief of *Handelstidningen* is a latent anti-Semite. If that were not the case, this article, as well as the incessant reports in the same vein from *Handelstidningen’s* correspondents in Vienna and Paris, would not have been published in the paper.¹⁶²

Hedlund’s reply to Magnus’ letter has not been preserved, but it is clear that his

response was immediate. The next day, March 7, Magnus writes back:

Brother Hedlund!

With distress I received your card with the announcement that you had written that article. If I had known that, I would not have written.

Thank you for the friendly invitation to discuss the matter personally. However, I decline, since matters of this revolting nature are not suitable for a discussion, especially not between old men who still has young blood in their veins.

If you, like me, since nearly 62 years had experienced that people regard it as their right to criticize and admonish you of no other reason than your birth, you would better have understood my declination.

To me, the proper meaning of the article is still obscure. The only possible way to understand it is as a paraphrase of the old saying “boys always and everywhere deserve beating; if they have not done anything this time, they have done it before, or will do it in the future.”¹⁶³

If you put “Jews” in place of “boys,” one gets an explanation of your article.

In his answer to this letter, Hedlund, obviously somewhat irritated, had written that he was perfectly able to discuss the problem in a relaxed manner, whereupon Magnus comments by return of post:¹⁶⁴

Brother Hedlund!

Another misunderstanding.

I decline a conversation because I do not trust my *own* ability to preserve the self-control that befits a *bildad* person when discussing this matter.

If you now make the conclusion that I “overestimate” myself, you would change your mind when I tell you that I highly appreciate the quality of self-control, but I doubt my *own* ability to exercise it, when this question is touched upon.

I tried to explain the reason for that in my previous [letter], but I realize your inability fully to grasp it.

You did not suffer from an “affliction” for 62 years – thank your creator for that – but do not judge a case for which you lack the qualifications for a fair judgment.

Yours sincerely
Ad. Magnus

It was a deep crack in an old friendship. Adolf Magnus (1836–1914), was the nephew of the industrialist and cultural patron Eduard Magnus who had been the *parnas* (chairman) of the Jewish congregation during the construction of the synagogue and one of Hedlund’s close partners in the circle of Gothenburg’s *Bildungsbürger*.¹⁶⁵ His reaction to Hedlund’s dubious and disappointing commentary on the Dreyfus affair reveals the strong tensions that existed under the tolerant and progressive surface of Gothenburg’s civic life. The rapid societal change that had taken place since the 1850s, had led to the emergence of new political forces and ideologies. Science and technology certainly were in a state of progress, but what kind of political future awaited the generations of the approaching new century? Had the *bildning* efforts really resulted in an ethically more advanced society? The latest developments seemed to point in other directions. In Vienna and Paris, the offer of liberal Judaism seemed to be rejected with a cynical and scornful laugh.

The general optimism of classical national liberalism seemed to be shattered, both by the establishment of socialist and Marxist movements, and by the emerging phenomena of a new populist, political mass culture. For Jewish intellectuals, the Dreyfus affair became an eye-opener. What was the real meaning of the cherished idea of tolerance? It is almost too symbolic that it is S. A. Hedlund who wrote the ominous “warning” to the Jews. Looking back at the campaign for religious freedom and tolerance of the 1850s and 1860s, it is obvious that there was a certain paternalistic strain. The exercise of tolerance, which became a central aspect of the liberal credo, required a suitable object. The liberal-minded reformists could of course embrace Catholics and Lutheran nonconformists, but in nineteenth-century Sweden, Jews were the only non-Christian group of any significance. It could be comprehended as a truly magnanimous gesture to declare sympathy for the Jewish

cause. But such a gesture did not automatically presuppose a genuine interest in or even sympathy for Jewish culture. In fact, it was very much compatible with the traditional Christian ideas of “the Jew.” “Look at me!” the tolerant liberal could shout, “I even socialize with Jews!” From Viktor Rydberg’s writing, we know that the openness towards things Jewish could be strictly qualified: there were bad Jews and good Jews, and the good Jews were asked to give up much of their “oriental” Jewishness. But they also were required to retain something of their quality of the “significant other,” upon which the normality of Christian identity – and the splendid generosity of liberal tolerance – could be projected. Released from the dramaturgy of traditional Christian eschatology, they became inscribed into a new narrative of programmatically inclusive progressivism.

In Hedlund’s case, there certainly was a genuine philological interest in the cultural heritage of Judaism, but it is significant that exactly this person, who counted many Jews among his close personal friends and was one of the leading ideologues of the *bildning* movement, could fall back into the deeply ingrained stereotypes of traditional Christian altercasting.¹⁶⁶ So what had the *bildning* movement, besides the creation of numerous cultural and pedagogical institutions, actually accomplished? Had the individual citizen been raised to a higher ethical level?

There certainly was a liberal and open-minded Gothenburg, but it had to coexist with a not so liberal Gothenburg, in fact the conditions sometimes were more like a battlefield than a peaceful and pluralistic civic forum. As the commander of the aggressive vanguard of a very one-dimensional type of Swedishness, we find a not so *bildad* person who nevertheless possessed much respect in wide circles. Pehr Emanuel Lithander (1835–1913) had finished his education in rural Västergötland at age fifteen and started a mercantile career in Gothenburg in the textile trade. Politically, he came out early as a protectionist with a nationalistic image. In 1883 he was one of the founders of *Sveriges allmänna handelsförening*, a mercantile association whose motto was *Sverige åt svenskarna*, “Sweden for the Swedes.” Mr. Lithander was elected *riksdagsman* (member of parliament) in 1886 and contributed greatly to the enforcement of a stricter legislation concerning peddling in the countryside. However, the principal targets of Lithander’s efforts were, in fact, the Jews, and Jews in general, not only the small number of Jewish

peddlers whom he continuously depicted as a dangerous threat to everything Swedish. He eloquently communicated his views in pamphlets like *Den semitiska faran. En europeisk ödesfråga* ("The Semitic Danger. A Fateful European Issue") (1912). The aesthetics of national symbols was another of his preoccupations. Personally he regarded his campaign for the erection of the new neo-baroque, overblown Riksdagshuset (Parliament building) in Stockholm as his proudest achievement.

Lithander also was a member of the *kyrkofullmäktige* (parish council) of Gothenburg, the local representative body of the Lutheran State Church. It is obvious that his political and religious leanings were very similar to the petty bourgeois anti-Semitism of the *Christlich-Soziale Arbeiterpartei* of Adolf Stöcker. Even in this respect, Gothenburg was a suburb of Berlin, located in the cultural overlapping between Sweden and Germany. But that was not the way Lithander saw it. The one-dimensionality of man was his credo, as usual among populist activists. Identities have to be absolutely unambiguous, unchanging, and mutually exclusive. "A Jew never can become a Swede."

Based on Lithander's decades of anti-Jewish propaganda, an even more venomous, lethal and clearly racist anti-Semitism emerged in Sweden after World War I.¹⁶⁷ This, of course, belongs to an era after my period of investigation, but I cannot refrain from mentioning it here because of its strong repercussions for the Jewish families of Gothenburg. In 1923 a political association called *Svenska Antisemitiska Föreningen* ("Swedish Anti-Semitic Union") was founded in Gothenburg. Its sole aim was the cultivation of hatred of Jews. It was clearly inspired by the early Hitler movement in Germany and a forerunner to the small Nazi organizations that popped up in Sweden during the 1930s. *Svenska Antisemitiska Föreningen* instigated smear, and boycott campaigns against Jewish cultural personalities and "Jewish" companies and shop-owners. It distributed humiliating and intimidating publications, like the notorious *Pro memoria för Göteborg* (1926), which contained address lists of Jews in Gothenburg, as suitable targets for ethnic cleansing. One of the victims of these concerted persecution efforts was Axel Salomon, the son of Otto Salomon, who had inherited the family's glass, china, and household store at 35 Östra Hamngatan. According to Axel's son, the business was so heavily damaged by the boycott that the firm had to close.¹⁶⁸ Axel Salomon and his family decided to leave Gothenburg for

good – a depressing finale to the era of the “Gothenburg spirit.” Salomon’s store had provided generations of Gothenburg inhabitants with the necessary appurtenances of respectable bourgeois family life – china sets and crystal glasses; vases and ash-trays; coffee pots and tea tables. It had contributed considerably to the self-image of Gothenburg’s middle class. In contrast to most Gothenburg citizens, the Salomons had placed themselves at the multidimensional junction of available, overlapping cultural forums, thereby providing access to modernity. By way of reward, there was not even a simple token of gratitude.

An Academic Intermezzo

Early in December 1883, Abraham Baer and his daughter Dina were in Stockholm on a musical mission. Baer had been quite busy during the past weeks. The last days of November, he had been summoned to a circumcision in Karlskrona in southern Sweden. It seemed likely that he would continue directly from there to Stockholm, since the travel via Gothenburg would have required a complicated crisscrossing through the country. On December 12 he wrote a letter to Isaac Philip Valentin, asking for permission to remain in the capital for a few more days, in order to settle an important matter, namely, the examination of Dina at the conservatory of the Royal Academy of Music for the degree of *organistexamen*, organist’s degree.

This required some negotiations with the board of the conservatory. In the recently approved statutes for the examination, “close knowledge of the ritual of the Swedish religious service” had been explicitly stated as one of the obligatory requirements. Naturally, Dina Baer could not be expected to have the necessary qualifications in the field of Lutheran liturgy, and it would be very embarrassing for a Jewess having to answer questions about Christian ritual in the presence of other examinees. Therefore, Baer tried to get an exemption for his daughter from this requirement.

The director of the conservatory, the composer, music critic, and violinist Albert Rubenson (1826–1901), was Jewish, and Baer perhaps expected some understanding from him. However, statutes are statutes, and as Baer writes in his letter to Valentin, “when these rules were formulated, many details had been considered, just not Jews.” The mere fact that he was Jewish of course made it even more difficult for

Rubenson to make any concessions or exceptions in this case. Instead, he advised Baer to have his daughter examined by the teachers of the advanced “artists” section of the conservatory. This certainly would require more instrumental brilliance, but on the other hand, the examination would be purely musical. Baer reports in the letter that, with great difficulty, he managed to persuade “Miss [Hilda] Tegerström and Music Director Heinze” to handle the examination.¹⁶⁹ Since both teachers were very busy with the examinations at the time, he and Dina had to remain in Stockholm until the following week.

However, Dina Baer does not appear in the examination registers and records of the conservatory.¹⁷⁰ If she failed the exam, or if she and her father decided not to pursue their aim, in face of the considerable higher artistic and technical requirements of an instrumentalist’s diploma, I do not know. Here the sources remain silent.

Perhaps the most interesting question concerning this little affair is the possible motivation behind Baer’s effort. To him, the prestigious conservatory of the Royal Academy of Music might have appeared as an institution with purely aesthetic purposes. Dina’s acquisition of an organist’s diploma might have functioned as a official recognition of Baer’s, and his family’s, cultural achievement in Sweden. In the sanctuary of *nusah*, Baer certainly was high ranked, but naturally he wanted to be accepted in the hall of fame of *music* as well. In the preceding year, Baer had celebrated his 25th anniversary as cantor in Gothenburg. In the little biography originally printed in *Der jüdische Cantor*, and reprinted as part of the preface to the second (1883) edition of the *Baal t’fillah*, there is actually a paragraph reporting on Dina’s prospects and of the plan to have her examined at the Stockholm conservatory.

However, until his discussions with director Rubenson, Baer may not fully have realized that in the education of church musicians, the conservatory primarily was a service arm of the Lutheran State Church, not of musical art. The ritual requirements were as important as the musical.

There may have been a more pragmatic motivation as well, for the quest for academic confirmation. Baer might have seen it as a prospect for Dina to succeed Czapek at the organ of the Gothenburg synagogue. She might also be a candidate for the organist’s post in the Stockholm synagogue. Without an organist’s degree, she was regarded as an amateur, or even a dilettante, and would hardly have been able

to compete with other eventual candidates. As has been mentioned earlier, we know that Dina on several occasions served as Czapek's stand in, but in the cashbook of the congregation, there is no trace of any payment for her organ playing, whereas Czapek's reward is amply documented.

Dina then married the businessman, Oscar Simon Valentin (b. 1852), and settled in Stockholm. The couple remained childless. Dina's subsequent musical activity seems to have been restricted to the private sphere. She was widowed in 1921, and remained in Stockholm, where she lived in a two-room apartment at Vikingagatan 41, under fairly modest circumstances. In the estate inventory drawn up after her death in 1941, there are just a few items that seem to be linked to her father's cantorial work.¹⁷¹ She possessed a copy of the second (1883) edition of the *Baal t'fillah*, which according to her will, went to the Jewish congregation in Stockholm. However, since the congregation already possessed the book, this copy seems to have been sold at a book auction together with a couple of prayer books also coming from Dina's property. The book ended up in the collections of the Music Museum in Stockholm.¹⁷² In this copy the *BT*, there are a few handwritten notes, which imply that Dina had actually used it at the organ.¹⁷³

The Re-assessment of Religion

Among the *bildning* ideologues, there was a firm belief in the correlation between aesthetic quality and ethical content, between beauty and virtue. The cultivation of aesthetic sensitivity was supposed to lead to a deeper understanding of the human predicament, and to an open-minded attitude towards cultural diversity. The whole thinking of the field was permeated by a certain odor of sacredness that leads us to a discussion of the process of secularization. Earlier, I discussed the concept of emancipation, and of course, emancipation and secularization are closely linked phenomena. Secularization, the emergence of a non-religious sector of society that was a consequence of the Enlightenment and its political rationalism, was a prerequisite for the liberalization of European societies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the impact of capitalism and industrialization on the social fabric of society, there was a growing feeling of anomie, an experience of dissolution of ethical values. If the politically-based faith monopoly of the Christian

religion, with its irrefutable dogmas, regulations, and ethical teachings, had to be challenged by the unavoidable and necessary tide of liberalization, what would then be the ethical fundament of society? That was the question, which occupied the minds of many liberal intellectuals. If we advocate the introduction of religious freedom and pluralism, what will then unite the millions of emancipated individuals into a humanly acceptable social interaction? In many ways, the *bildning* movement can be seen as a response to this challenge. It almost takes the shape of a secularist religion, if that expression may be used. It creates its temples in museums, theaters, and concert halls, venues of collective acts and rituals, where the cultivation (or cult) of aesthetic media and of the ritual/artistic performance in itself replaces the worship of a metaphysical entity. But in many of these temples, God tends to be supplanted by another abstract (and perhaps metaphysical) entity, the Nation.

Here, the metaphysical questions of faith and belief gradually are expelled from the collective, political sphere of society and relegated to the status of an individually achieved worldview, or *Lebensanschauung* – a private matter that belonged to the sphere of the family *Gemeinschaft*, but had retreated from the social world of the *Gesellschaft*. This is the secularist definition of religion that becomes dominant in the twentieth-century western world, especially in the traditionally Lutheran countries of northwestern Europe. However, we must understand that this presupposes a very far-reaching revision of the general, traditional thinking on existential matters. The idea of religion that evolves in this sense appears to be a completely modern phenomenon. It is the product of a process of rationalization of the irrational. God is reason, *logos*.

The historical revision of religion affects all religious communities and confessions of the western world. Therefore, the Jewish reform has to be studied in this wider context. It is part of a general process, and its agents and protagonists are not isolated inside their synagogues and institutes; they are citizens and *Bildungsbürger* of a multidimensional cultural forum. Their Judaism is very much a nineteenth-century phenomenon. So is the discussion on the aesthetics of synagogue worship in which Abraham Baer became involved, the clash of opinions that was an incentive for the compilation of his work. The Jewish reform movement put a strong emphasis on the intellectual aspects of Judaism. It is no coincidence that many of

the reformers dealt extensively with Maimonides, the systematizer and analyst of Sephardic medieval culture. They strove to arrive at a seamless fusion of German Enlightenment thinking, and Judaism; this is demonstrated most eloquently by the neo-Kantian philosopher, Hermann Cohen (1842–1918), in his *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* (“Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism”), 1918. For Cohen, the closeness of his thinking to Protestant rationalistic theology was almost self-evident, even if he never abandoned his sense for the uniqueness of Jewish ethical monotheism.

In Cohen’s case, there is an interesting biographic connection between the ethics and the aesthetics of Jewish worship. He was married to the daughter of Louis Lewandowski, the legendary cantor/composer of Neue Synagoge in Berlin, and had a deep passion for music. Like many of his generation of Jewish intellectuals, he eagerly followed the introduction of *music* into the synagogue ritual of the reformed communities, embracing the *Bildung/bildning* equation of beauty and virtue. *Nusah* inevitably had to be replaced, or at least supplemented by *art*.

This rationalization of worship closely parallels the development in many Christian communities, not the least the Lutheran churches. Like in the synagogue, the aesthetic form of the religious service became an area of heated discussion and conflict. In Sweden, there is an ongoing struggle over the *Koralbok*, the officially canonized collection of hymns for use in the state church, which dragged on during the whole nineteenth century. The *Koralbok*, compiled by the German-born composer and organist Johann Christian Friedrich Haeffner (1759–1833) and published in 1820–21, contained a set of standardized melodies in strict four-part homophonic arrangements.¹⁷⁴ Traditional hymn singing in the church, especially in rural contexts, had been largely heterophonic, with characteristic embellishments and regional and individual stylistic variations, which left a space for personal expression of religious feeling. Musicologist, Anders Dillmar, who, in his 2001 dissertation analyzes Haeffner’s church music reform, discusses the fact that this individualistic form of basically preliterate religious music making (or as it was called in eighteenth-century England, “old way of singing”), appears to be a general European phenomenon, and he clearly sees the *nusah* as a parallel.¹⁷⁵

The new, stricter hymn versions tended to put a straitjacket on congregational

singing, where an orally transmitted, traditional form was supposed to surrender to a disciplined and impersonal performance style with organ accompaniment. In many cases, the introduction of the *Koralbok* coincided with the introduction of organs. Until the end of the eighteenth century, there were no organs in most small parish churches in the countryside. This powerful musical instrument became a vehicle for the coordination and discipline of the congregation. This suppression of the individual and emotional must of course be seen against the background of the rationalistic redefinition of the religious sphere. Considering his strong interest in traditional folk singing, and his important contribution to early Swedish folksong research, Haeffner's stance is somewhat surprising. However, he was deeply influenced by Herder's brand of what might be called "romantic rationalism," which advocated a clear aesthetical distinction between the profane sphere and the elevated sacredness of religious devotion. He saw music's role in the church as, above all, *elevating*, demonstrating universal, abstract principles. The strict four-part writing was in itself an expression of an eternally valid principle of harmony, and its performance in the church demonstrated the original mission of music, the praise of God. He regarded the uncoordinated display of individual musical expression of religious feeling as improper and even vulgar. To Haeffner, Palestrina's polyphonic vocal crispness represented the summit of religious music.¹⁷⁶

The new *Koralbok* and Haeffner's ideas soon caused opposition among certain members of the clergy, who recognized that the reduction of aesthetic and sensuous stimuli in the worship was detrimental to the engagement of the churchgoers, and thereby seriously contributed to the emergence of dissenters' movements. A characteristic of many of these Evangelical sects, which were formed all over the country during the nineteenth century, was their strongly emotional emphasis. These charismatic preachers and their followers not only protested against the political oppression of the state church; in a way, they wanted to break out of the squarely outlined and impersonal form of its worship, which could be perceived as some sort of rationalistic correction institution.

The aspects of rationalistic discipline, and coordination are evident in the revisions of traditional synagogue service that was part of the program of the Jewish reform movement. Actually, I think it would be fruitful to see the changes

in religious worship and performance that take place in the churches and synagogues of nineteenth-century Sweden, not only as parallel tracks, but also as deeply interrelated aspects of a religious re-definition process emanating from the German Lutheran milieu. The *Psalmer för den offentliga Gudstjensten* ("Psalms For the Public Service") that (the Catholic!) Joseph Czapek provided for the Gothenburg synagogue are closely similar to Haeffner's arrangements. Looking back at Abraham Baer's reactions to the confusing musical situation in the synagogue during the 1850s and 1860s, he appears rather as a defender of the *nusah*. The *Baal t'fillah* is mainly a documentation of the Jewish version of the old, preliterate religious song style – the vanishing music of European folk religiosity. And despite his plans for a publication of a modern liturgy, this only remained a manuscript. One may ask the question whether his grandiose compilation effort was not actually a *protest* against the leveling forces of the liberal reform. The fact that he apparently did not receive sufficient financial backing from the congregation for his publication, but had to rely partly on Hedlund's enthusiasm, is telling. Certainly, for nearly thirty-seven years, reform-minded Gothenburg was the arena of his religious, musical, and scholarly achievements. But did he really feel at home on this liberal, national front-page? Did he win adequate sympathy and understanding for his efforts in the synagogue? Maybe he felt more relaxed and comfortable with the Yiddish-speaking children and their parents in Haga, where it was fully acceptable just to be *a mensch* and *a jid*, and where the top hat of the *Bildungsbürger* was replaced by a worker's cap, or a *yarmulke*. It was where *nusah* prevailed, undisturbed by *bildning* aesthetics.

At the Roots of Ethnomusicology

In 1885, Karl Valentin from Gothenburg successfully defends his dissertation *Studien über die schwedischen Volksmelodien* ("Studies of Swedish Folk Melodies") at the university of Leipzig. The work was published by Breitkopf & Härtel. Valentin's dissertation is considered as the first truly scholarly, academic investigation into Swedish folk music. It must, in fact, be regarded as the pioneering work of Swedish ethnomusicology – even if the term "ethnomusicology" did not come into use until the second half of the twentieth century. The dissertation is marked by an almost positivistic matter-of-factness. Valentin is not interested in music as a car-

rier of some metaphysical *Volksgeist*, or spirit of the folk; he does not emphasize the extra-musical, mainly national, symbolic values that were the focus of most contemporary Swedish transcribers and collectors of folk music and folk songs. He is interested in the musical medium in and of itself, as a form of communication.

Karl Valentin (1853–1918) was the son of Isaac Philip Valentin. As a composer, conductor, and educator, he became an important figure in Swedish musical life around 1900. From 1901 until his death, he was the secretary of the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, one of the most important and prestigious positions in Swedish musical life. As one of the initiators in 1910 of an association for musicology (reconstituted in 1915 as *Svenska samfundet för musikforskning*, or Swedish Musicological Society), Valentin belongs to the founders of Swedish academic musicology.¹⁷⁷

Karl Valentin had his Jewish confirmation in the Gothenburg synagogue on May 16, 1869. This was during the time when Abraham Baer was working as the cantor, teacher, *mohel*, and *shohet* of the congregation.¹⁷⁸ As has been written earlier, Isaac Philip Valentin, as a member of the board, had close contact with Baer and actually he was his employer. We may presume that the senior Valentin, a well-known enthusiast, patron, and organizer in Gothenburg's musical life, had a clear view of Baer's musical competence. It might be that his judgment was conclusive for Baer's advancement to the title of first cantor in 1867.

It seems plausible that Karl Valentin's background in this Jewish milieu contributed to his early "ethnomusicological" orientation. Already as a child, he must have been familiar with Baer's cantorial productions, and he must have seen the *Baal t'fillah*. In fact, Baer's understanding of the nature of oral tradition and his awareness of the mobility and "ethnic faithlessness" of musical forms and structures may well have influenced the young musician and scholar. Karl Valentin had a permanent seat in the synagogue until 1897, when he moved to Stockholm.¹⁷⁹ In Stockholm, he composed at least one work for the synagogue, a cantata on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of the local *hevra kadisha* (burial society).¹⁸⁰

Jewish cantors of the reform movement actually must be counted as important contributors to the emergence of "comparative musicology" and *musik-ethnologie*. Aron Friedmann, who was *Oberkantor* at the Neue Synagogue in Berlin, published

a collection of biographical texts under the title *Lebensbilder berühmter Kantoren* (“Biographies of Famous Cantors”, 1918–21). Here he presents a new category of musical professionals that had been developing in Europe since the 1830s, namely the Jewish cantor. Reading these sixty-five *Lebensbilder*, it is clear that these Jewish functionaries possess a very specific, novel, and historically very interesting mix of competences. On the one hand, they were representatives of an oral tradition in which extemporization and improvisation were the most highly valued forms of expression – in contrast to contemporary tendencies in academic art music, where only written music was deemed worthy of study. On the other hand, as a consequence of the liturgical reform, the cantors were musically literate and able to transcribe this oral heritage. They were therefore competent to bring the *nusah* into the realm of notated music. Playing with Max Weber’s terminology, one could almost say that they were *idealtypische* ethnomusicologists.

On top of this, many of them lived and worked in multi-ethnic environments, where they continuously met ethnically distinctive musical cultures. As a mobile professional group with a European field of activity, they were mediators of musical styles and innovations throughout the Ashkenazic Diaspora, from London to Odessa, from Stockholm to Trieste – and somewhat later in the New World as well. Many cantors were active in multiple cultural forums, and they took often part in the local art music life where they resided. In this context, a new creative role is taking shape – the Jewish cantor/composer. These academically educated *Komponisten* created written art music liturgies for the Jewish religious festivals, often with instrumental accompaniment and choral parts. As have been demonstrated, cantors also organized modern professional networks by means of journals and associations.

To summarize: multiple competences, receptive attitudes, and networking. It is clear that the liberal Jewish *objective Geist* acted like a fertilizer for the budding discipline of the study of music and culture – and music *in* culture. Through Lazarus and his student Simmel, the analytical spirit of Jewish textual analysis and interpretation (as cultivated, for example, in early nineteenth-century’s Filehne) is combined with the tradition of the social sciences that takes the aesthetic perspective as a given. Simmel embarked on ethnomusicological fieldwork as early

as 1879, when he published a questionnaire on the phenomenon of yodel in the periodical *Jahrbuch des schweizer Alpenclub*. The questionnaire consists of fifteen questions covering the sociology and emotional context of the yodel, its gender aspects, acoustic conditions, relation to language, et cetera. It was part of the data collected for his dissertation, *Psychologische und ethnographische Studien über die Anfänge der Musik* (“Psychological and Ethnographic Studies on the Origin of Music”). Simmel intended to obtain his doctor’s degree with this work, but because he had entered a totally unexplored academic area, the professors became uneasy, and the dissertation was rejected. Instead, he presented a thesis on Immanuel Kant’s idea of the essence of matter. The ethnomusicological study was published in a slightly revised form the following year in Lazarus-Steinthal’s *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*.

Lazarus and Steinthal, and later Simmel, became known early on outside the German-speaking region. Their thinking influenced, among others, the French sociologist Celestin Bouglé (1870–1940), who had studied in Berlin, and William Isaac Thomas (1863–1947) of the Chicago School in the United States. But it was the founder of American cultural anthropology, Franz Boas (1858–1942), who was most clearly influenced by *Völkerpsychologie*. In his article “The History of Anthropology,” published in *Science* in 1904, Boas refers to “folk psychology” as the most important source of inspiration for linguistic-anthropological study, a form of research that comprised myth, religion, and aesthetics, in addition to language. Among Boas’ students, we find well-known scholars such as Alfred Kroeber, Edward Sapir, and Ruth Benedict.¹⁸¹

A Prayer for Modernity: The Jewish Reform Revisited

With the historic background and cultural perspectives given in this book, it is obvious that the Jewish reform must be analyzed, not only as an internal Jewish phenomenon, but it should also be interpreted as an important aspect of the European modernization process and the German national awakening and unification efforts. The Jewish reform offered an integrative ideology, expressed mainly in the German language. Its leading personalities acted not only in the Jewish arena of synagogues, congregations, associations and periodicals, they were

also protagonists in the general German forum as well: in the emerging political parties and cultural institutions. With the aim of contributing to the creation of a new imagined national community – the German *Kulturnation* – Liberal Judaism in fact, decided to relinquish its traditional ethnicity, which was founded on the relationship between a people and a territory. Instead, they chose to take part in the formation of a modern *Gesellschaft*.

We have seen that nineteenth-century Jewish culture in Sweden was a kind of suburb of Berlin. Figuratively, Stora Nygatan in Gothenburg was a cross street with Berlin's Oranienburger Strasse. The ideas that were discussed by men like Geiger, Philippon, Lazarus, Steinthal, and Frankel were adapted to Swedish circumstances and rephrased in the Swedish language. Hence, they became an important factor for the modernization of Swedish society.

It was supposed that the switch to a secularized identity within the Jewish reform could be implemented without leaving the essence of religion behind. But one might wonder whether what we have seen here was in fact the formulation of a “new” religion or *Sozialphilosophie*, a Judaism that stepped out of its history in order to study itself from the outside, but which worked and lived in the future. Ethnic, down-to-earth Judaism, as practiced by the masses of traditional Jews in Eastern Europe, was alien to Geiger. It was an anachronism, a medieval remnant, permeated by mysticism and ritualism, which only deserved to be rescued by the Jewish-German Enlightenment.

In retrospect, it is easy to criticize liberal Judaism for having been politically naïve in its firm belief in *Humanität* and the perfectibility of man. During the post-Holocaust era, the liberal reformers have been accused (by Socialists, Zionists as well as by the Orthodox Jews) of having rendered the Jewish people helpless in the face of emerging, modern anti-Semitism. It is maintained that the optimistic dismantling of ethnic solidarity, coherence, and distinctiveness lured the Jews into a feeling of illusory security and stripped them of their defense mechanisms, which would have been necessary in an emerging populist, mass society. The total destruction of the German Jewish community during the Holocaust seems to corroborate this negative interpretation. Sometimes, even a *causal* relationship between integration and anti-Semitism seems to be (more or less consciously) implied. According to this

line of thinking, the paranoiac ideas of “invasion” and conspiracy were less likely to emerge in majority society as long as the Jews remained an ethnically distinct and secluded community.

This kind of emotional response is understandable. In the light of the inconceivable atrocities organized by German administrators and institutions, the close connection and interdependence between German and Jewish cultures became difficult to psychologically handle. Many Holocaust survivors and exiled German Jews emphatically expressed their total dissociation from everything German, but often they did it in the beloved German language. There is some explanatory value in looking at the Nazi disaster as an internal conflict, as a kind of German civil war; a populist mass movement turned against the nation’s cultural elite and avant-garde.

However, twentieth-century history was not predestined; historical courses of events never are. The coming to power of National Socialism was not “programmed” by nineteenth-century events. When assessing 150 years of a close and reciprocal German-Jewish interaction that took place largely under the auspices of the Jewish reform, it must be remembered that it created an immense creative potential that contributed decisively to the rise of European modernity. European culture – and national identities – would have been very different (and certainly poorer) without this bold, re-interpretative effort. And the *legacy* of this cultural creativity and multi-dimensionality was not destroyed; it is an integrated and indispensable weft in the fabric of Western culture. Not least, the multifaceted and flowering Jewish life and culture in the United States is based on its heritage.

*Integrated or Integrators? A Reassessment of
Jewish Gothenburg and Swedish Gothenburg.*

At the outset of my study of Abraham Baer and his era, when formulating my questions and hypothesizes, I titled my project *Gestaltung, identity and integration*. These concepts have, of course, been present during the whole research process; however, they have gradually acquired a different meaning and emphasis. The simplistic and conventional model of the immigrant group that arrives on the Swedish scene, and after a few generations, integrates successfully into the majority society as an established ethnic minority, thanks to the tolerant attitude of the local

receiving society, has been challenged in several ways. As has been shown in the preceding chapters, the societal and cultural change that we have been focusing on cannot be understood as a unilateral process of assimilation. What seems to take place is rather a multilateral development of adjustment and revision. The four hundred Gothenburg Jews of the mid-nineteenth century appear more like *agents* of integration. But here I am not referring to their own integration into something static and unchangeably “Swedish,” but rather to their role as promoters of the integration of Sweden into the modern, industrialized world. With their background in the Jewish reform movement, artists, intellectuals, and cultural patrons including Geskel Saloman, Isaac Philip Valentin, Karl Valentin, Moritz Wolff, Sophie Elkan, Otto Salomon, Pontus Fürstenberg, Karl Warburg, Aron Jonason, Mauritz Rubenson, and Abraham Baer contributed decisively to the emergence of the modern Swedish cultural outlook. In their multi-dimensional *Lebenswelt* of *fin-de-siècle* Gothenburg, identities were continuously negotiated in a process of transformations, transcriptions, interactions, and reactions.

There certainly were several thousand Swedish migrants (in fact, we can see them as a kind of *transmigrants*) passing through Gothenburg on their route to the New World on the other side of the Atlantic. But there was also a very significant number of, what might be called, domestic immigrants to Gothenburg; Swedish citizens who settled in the city. For many of these people, coming from small villages and hamlets in the Swedish countryside, the expansive, cosmopolitan city on the west coast was a truly new and foreign world. In this massive process of urbanization (in 1900, there were 100,000 more Gothenburg inhabitants than in 1850), there was an ample need for urban competence and entrepreneurship. The rapid influx of rural populations to Gothenburg, and the social problems this caused, causes me to think of the phenomena associated with contemporary third-world urbanization. Spontaneous shantytown suburbs and slums emerge on the peripheries. It was these kinds of appalling conditions that caused S. A. Hedlund to suggest the creation of the committee on pauperism in 1864. Some of these new working-class suburbs originally had the character of seasonal settlements, which only gradually gained a more stable status. An interesting example is the so-called Albostaden on the southern periphery of Gothenburg, which was established by carpenters from Ale

häräd, a rural district northeast of Gothenburg. Although many of these craftsmen, who were working on building construction during the warm season, eventually chose to settle permanently in the suburb, they continued their social and economic ties with their rural native district. To fashion these newly arrived villagers into true city-dwellers required the creation of civic, cultural, and mercantile venues, institutions and organizations. It was in this realm that the continental traditions of the Jewish entrepreneurs became an important factor. If we regard the metropolitan status of mid-twentieth-century Gothenburg as the goal of the urbanization process, then the Jewish *Bildungsbürger* of the city definitely appear as one of the most integrated segments of the population – already at the outset of the process. They mainly represented the European cultural forum.

There was also an internal urbanization or socialization process within the Jewish community, in which Abraham Baer became directly involved through his role as a functionary of the Jewish congregation. I am referring to the efforts to integrate the Jewish immigrants arriving from the Russian empire, and here, we also touch upon the class aspects of the Jewish reform movement. The families who settled in Haga represented a Jewish working-class culture that hitherto had not been represented in Sweden, due to the immigration filters of the Swedish administration. The motivations of the *Bildungsbürger*, in their efforts to educate these Yiddish-speakers, certainly included a mixture of idealism and pragmatism. These attitudes parallel the *folkbildning* efforts of the Swedish liberals, who saw the raising of the cultural and ethical level of the emerging working class as a pressing issue. For many of the Jewish *Bildungsbürger*, the traditional Jews also constituted an embarrassment. It was assumed that they would trigger anti-Jewish reactions among the majority population. But Baer does not seem to have acted only as an agent of the *bildning* ideology. He became a sort of mediator between the two cultural and socio-economic strata of the Jewish community. On the one hand, he taught High German, the language of Jewish secularism and Enlightenment, in the school in Haga, thereby giving the working-class children access to the world of Moses Mendelssohn, Abraham Geiger and Louis Lewandowski. On the other hand, he brought the “Polish” choirboys to the synagogue, demonstrating their ability to contribute to an aesthetically valuable liturgical music. The two social worlds that

he united can be symbolized by the media forms of *nusah* and *music*. He knew the values and virtues of *nusah*, but he also could identify with the world of music. This “interposition” is precisely the central message of his *Baal t’fillah*. We must understand and appreciate our tradition, a culture with unique and specific values, but we must also accept and embrace modernity and its novel ways of expressing both Jewish and universal human values. *Treu und frei*, as Moritz Lazarus put it – faithful to the ideals of the ancestors, but liberated from the bonds of legalistic fundamentalism and unquestioning belief in authority. A prayer for modernity.

Notes

1. There are of course numerous examples of Herder-inspired folk song collecting and editing from the early nineteenth century, but these collections are mostly the works of enthusiastic amateurs. No attempt at a published comprehensive and systematic corpus of Swedish folk music was made until the early twentieth century, and none of these publications have had an international relevance comparable to Baer's.

2. Geiger, L. 1910, p. 5ff.

3. In the European Jewish Diaspora, the Hebrew people – originally mostly peasants and shepherds – became a predominantly urban population, a development paralleled in many subsequent processes of ethnic migration, not less during the twentieth century, when rural populations from southern Europe were propelled into the metropolises of western Europe, where they often specialized in certain commercial and service trades. Of course, it was not the Jews who initiated the medieval urbanization process, but it soon attracted Jewish immigrants, and the establishment of Jewish communities then in its turn contributed to the acceleration of the process.

4. The history of the Frankfurt ghetto is nicely summarized by Bedoire 2003.

5. Lässig 2004, p. 43.

6. Geiger, L. 1910, p. 277f.

7. Geiger, L. 1910, p. 278.

8. This little work on Mohammad and Judaism was reprinted several times and became a cornerstone of Geiger's international reputation, even if some of its hypotheses and conclusions were challenged by later research.

9. The couple had been engaged since 1833, but the marriage had to be postponed, partly because of Geiger's weak financial situation, but mainly because of the still existing quota on Jewish marriages in Frankfurt, where only two Jewish *Familianten* were allowed to marry yearly.

10. The letter, signed March 8, 1835, is published in *Abraham Geigers Nachgelassene Schriften* v, pp. 84–87.

11. Elbogen 1935, pp. 219–221.

12. Under the leadership of Moritz Lazarus, Salomon Neumann, and Moritz Veit an association was founded in Berlin in the early 1860s, with the aim of furthering the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Its activity was somewhat hampered by the Prussian-Austrian war of 1866, but a generous donation of the *Stadtrat* Meyer brought the plans for an institute nearer its realization. On December 26, 1869, the founding of the *Hochschule* was decided on. Geiger was asked to formulate its *Lehrplan* (curriculum). The start of the institute was delayed by the French-Prussian war of 1870–71, but in May 1872 the inauguration took place. Geiger accepted a position teaching "History of Judaism and its Literature." See also Rahmlow 1995 and Völker 1990.

13. Geiger approached Zunz in a letter from April 22, 1831, and declaring that Zunz was his greatest role model (Geiger, L. 1910, p. 17).

14. Quoted from Elbogen 1935, p. 247.
15. The lectures were published in two separate volumes (Breslau 1864 and 1871).
16. The full title is *Israelitisches Gebetbuch für den öffentlichen Gottesdienst im ganzen Jahre, mit Einschluss der Sabbate und sämtlicher Feier- und Festtage, Geordnet und mit einer neuen deutschen Bearbeitung versehen*.
17. Geiger 1875–78, vol. 1, pp. 203–229.
18. My translation of the German text, quoted after Geiger, A. 1910, p. 389.
19. Geiger, A. 1910, p. 498f.
20. Geiger, A. 1910, p. 362. Italics are Geiger's.
21. At the outbreak of the war between Prussia and France in 1870, Geiger enthusiastically demonstrated his sympathy for the German cause, Ludwig Geiger reports (1910, p. 211). He saw the dethronement of Napoleon III as a necessary defense against a severe violation by the French. Germany represented progress, a haven for a flourishing Jewish culture, whereas the Paris emperor was a corrupt swindler.
22. Gerdmar 2009, p. 226.
23. *AZJ* February 23, 1870.
24. Feiner 2010.
25. Jacobowsky 1955, p. 82.
26. Köhnke in the preface to his edition of Lazarus 2003.
27. Lazarus 2003, p. 88f.
28. Lazarus 2003, p. 100f.
29. Simmel 1992 (1908), p. 485.
30. My account of the history of Gothenburg's Jewish community is based on Jacobowsky's book, if not otherwise stated.
31. For the early history of the Swedish Jews, I mainly rely on historian Hugo Valentin's standard work (1924, 2004).
32. *At Judar ej må tillåtas hafwa sin Synagoga på flere ställen i Riket, än Stockholm samt högst två eller tre andre större städer, hwarest de under en bättre Police kunna vara under en waksammare tillsyn*. (Quoted after Jacobowsky 1955, p. 11).
33. The development of the Jewish community of Gothenburg and its socio-economic conditions during the first half of the nineteenth century have recently been studied by economic historians Anna Brismark and Pia Lundqvist (2011). They emphasize the pioneering role of Jewish merchants in the establishment of modern patterns of distribution of articles of consumption.
34. In Lindeskog 1976, p. 62.
35. The somewhat surprising role given to the Gypsies here is explained by the ethnic hierarchies of sixteenth-century Central Europe. The utter humiliation of the Jews was part of Luther's agenda; consequently their dwellings would be fabricated by the only group that could be considered inferior to them.

36. The statement was recapitulated by chancellor M. G. De la Gardie in the royal council on November 19, 1667. Here, it is quoted from Valentin 2004, p. 21.

37. Bezelius 1681.

38. Since surprisingly few of Luther's works were translated into Swedish prior to the nineteenth century (mainly his Catechism and a collection of sermons), it could be argued that the impact of his ideas about Jews and Judaism was rather limited. However, we have to bear in mind that one of the reasons for the limited translation activity was the fact that a great part of the clergy as well as the educated laity were in command of the German language (or were ethnic Germans) and consequently did not need translations. Furthermore, Swedish theologians and church officials very often studied at German Protestant universities, some of which regarded the Swedish state as their protector. This means that all aspects of Luther's teaching were continuously accessible to the cadres of the state church. When larger selections of Luther's writings began to be published in Swedish in the early nineteenth century, the anti-Jewish ideas were not cut out. In P. A. Söndén's *Doct. Martin Lutheri skrifter i ett efter tidens behov lämpadt urval* (1828), Luther's condemnation of Jewish Old Testament exegesis (in his biblical explanations), which he describes as "lies" inspired by Satan, is reproduced without comment (part 2, p. 143 f.), and the odious anti-Jewish passages of the *Tischreden* also are deemed worthy of reproduction in the Swedish language (part 3, p. 172–174). And this at a time when Jews had been living in the country for half a century!

39. M. S. Warburg was the son of Simon Elias Warburg (1760–1828) from Hamburg, who settled in Gothenburg in 1790. Michael Simon was engaged as an international commissioner by many of the Jewish merchants and industrialists in Gothenburg. See Brismark & Lundqvist 2011 and 2012.

40. The synagogue project has been successfully analyzed by Bedoire 2003 and 2005.

41. Quoted after Jacobowsky 1955, p. 43. The meeting took place May 20, 1845.

42. Jacobowsky 1955, p. 71.

43. Historian, Jan Christensen, in his monograph on charity and cultural patronage in nineteenth-century Gothenburg (Christensen 2009) presents an interesting statistical overview of the city's development, from which I here quote some relevant facts. The census figures for our period reads as follows:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of inhabitants</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Increase %</i>
1850	26,084		
1860	37,043	10,959	42
1870	56,288	19,245	52
1880	76,401	20,113	35,8
1890	104,657	28,256	37
1900	130,619	25,962	24.9

In 1855, the emerging new middle class, a category, which in Swedish was referred to as *ståndspersoner*, made up 16 % of the population and had a considerably stronger position than in Stockholm, where the corresponding figure was 12 %. Together with the traditional burgher estate (*borgarståndet*) they represented 40 % of the population of the city. The transition from a trading port city to an industrial center is expressed in the figures for factories and industrial workers:

Year	Factories	Workers
1850	127	3,553
1860	126	4,987
1870	113	5,956
1880	114	8,139
1890	163	11,931
1900	312	20,412

For more statistical details on Gothenburg's demographic, economic, and social development, see Fritz 1996.

44. "Industrien hade då ännu inte gjort kol på husfliten." Hedlund, Henrik 1929, p. 10.

45. Hedlund, H. 1929, p. 20.

46. Hedlund, H. 1929, p. 59.

47. Hedlund's 1848 speeches here are summarized according to Gellerman 1998, p. 18 f.

48. Hedlund, H. 1929, p. 97.

49. Raphael 1965, p. 125f.

50. The word *bildning* has been used in this sense since early nineteenth century. This is certainly a result of influences from the German *Bildung* concept, which was crystallized, not least, in Herder's writings, and later was influential in the creation of the modernized Prussian educational system, epitomized in Wilhelm von Humboldt's program for the new Berlin University and in the German *Gymnasium*. Among the earliest users of the Swedish term can be mentioned E. G. Geijer (1810) and the poet and cleric Esaias Tegnér (1812). Volume 4, SAOB (*The Swedish Academy Dictionary*).

51. Quoted from Hedlund, H. 1929, p. 65.

52. Hedlund, H. 1929, p. 66 f.

53. Hedlund, H. 1929, p. 68.

54. Christiansen 2009, pp. 104–111.

55. Quoted from Raphael 1965, p. 124.

56. Raphael 1965, p. 124.

57. On the museum project and its ideological background, see Bäckström 2011. In his interesting article, Bäckström especially stresses Hedlund's idea that the museum should function as a venue for communication and interaction between different associations and political levels of society.

58. Hedlund, in a motion to the City Council. Quoted from Christiansen 2009, p. 156.
59. Quoted after Warburg 1900, vol.1, p. 168.
60. Jacobowsky 1955, p. 69.
61. Of course, the orientalist dichotomy was no invention of Rydberg's. It is a common theme in German philosophic and historical discourse of the romantic era, and can also be found in Hegel's writings. In his interesting study of the roots of theological anti-semitism in Germany, Anders Gerdmar (2009) gives many examples of this way of thinking in sweeping polarities among theologians and historians of religion, a pattern in which Jews and Judaism almost always are grouped together with what is negative. Most amply this is demonstrated in the case of Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860) of the Tübingen School of Theology. So it is not surprising that we find Baur's *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmengeschichte* (1858) and his *Vorlesungen über die christliche Dogmengeschichte* (1865–67) in Rydberg's library at the Nordic Museum in Stockholm.
62. The institute was founded in 1855 by the Magdeburg rabbi, Ludwig Philippson. It existed for eighteen years, reached a membership of about 3,000 subscribers, and produced about eighty works of Jewish history, science, poetry, fiction, and biography.
63. KB, Rydberg collection.
64. In Gothenburg and in the surrounding districts on the west coast of Sweden, Lutheranism was marked by the influence from Schartauanism, a severe revivalist movement inside the state church, founded by Henric Schartau (1757–1825), which emphasized priestly authority and traditional forms and regulations. According to Schartauian preaching, personal salvation can be reached only through *nådens ordning*, "the order of grace," a process of acceptance of sinfulness, calling experience, and conversion. Schartau originally was inspired by Herrnhutism, but later opposed its emotional religiosity.
65. The essay *Jehovatjänsten hos hebreerna* was published in 1864 in the first issue of the monthly *Svensk månadsskrift för fri forskning och allmän bildning*, which was founded by Rydberg's close personal friend, Carl Simon Warburg. Rabbi Wolff polemicized against Rydberg's conclusions in a later issue of the monthly, stressing the continuity in the development of the Jewish faith.
66. Gerdmar 2009, p. 57.
67. The episode is described in Hedlund, H. 1929–30, vol. 1, p. 396.
68. Gellerman 1998, pp. 101–105, 123–130.
69. Warburg 1900, pp. 95–104.
70. BT 1883, p. XXII.
71. BT 1883, p. XXII.
72. The subsequent fate of the locale is of some interest. According to the Versailles treaty after World War I, the border was created along the Netze river, between Germany and the resurrected Polish state, and the town was split into a German and a Polish part. With the Nazi invasion in 1939, the town was integrated into the *Netzekreis* of the *Grenzmark Posen-*

Westpreussen. The synagogue was destroyed and the few remaining Jews deported. (The ark cabinet of the synagogue, an exquisite eighteenth-century work, was dismantled and hidden during the war. It was afterwards sent to the United States and now stands in the Scheuer Chapel at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.) In January 1945 most of the German population left Filehne, escaping the approaching Soviet army, and in the autumn of the same year, the remaining Germans were systematically expelled.

73. Herzberg, A. 1997, p. 328.

74. Herzberg, A., 1997, p. 327.

75. Herzberg, A., 1997, p. 332.

76. Lazarus 1913, p. 10.

77. Lazarus 1913, p. 41f.

78. Lazarus 1913, p. 32

79. Lazarus 1913, p. 49.

80. Lazarus 1913, p. 52.

81. Lazarus claims that his basic Jewish intellectual training facilitated his quick advancement at the *Gymnasium*. His well-trained capacity for text memorizing and early oratory experiences became valuable assets in his academic work.

82. Lazarus 1906, p. 521. Here, Lazarus describes the curriculum advocated by General Eduard von Peucker (1791–1876).

83. There is also an article about Baer in Friedmann's *Lebensbilder berühmter Cantoren*, but this seems to be based on the text published in *Der jüdische Cantor* and in the *BT*.

84. *BT* 1883, p. XXII.

85. Abraham Jakob Lichtenstein (1806–1880) was born in Preussisch-Friedland and started his cantorial training at 9, as a “sopranist” *mshorer* with the *hazan* Chaim Leib Conrad in Königsberg, where he also learned violin playing. After Glogau, Posen, and Frankfurt an der Oder (where he learned the *shehitah*), he came to Stettin, where he acquired a cantor's position. Here, he became acquainted with the composer, Carl Loewe, and took active part in the secular musical life of the city. In 1845 he was recruited by the Jewish congregation in Berlin, where he worked as second cantor together with Louis Lewandowsky (Friedmann 1918, pp. 69–86).

86. For details on the role of the *hazan* and the history of the *hazan* institution, see Werner 1976, Rubin 2006, Elbogen 1993 (1913), Idelsohn 1932, Slobin 1989.

87. There are some older staff notation transcriptions of synagogal song, but these were not made for practical use and contain only fragments of the liturgy. With few exceptions, traditional *hazanim* were not musically literate.

88. Maimonides' views on music are closely reminiscent of contemporary Islamic, restrictive ideas in the field. As has been demonstrated by Sarah Stroumsa (2009), he was intellectually and theologically formed by the intense Jewish-Islamic/Arab cultural interplay in his native Spain.

89. Jacobowsky 1955, p. 82.

90. Jacobowsky 1955, p. 83.

91. See Petuchowski 1968.
92. *BT* 1883, p. XXIII.
93. Czapek's biography according to Carlsson 1996, and the article by musicologist, Tobias Norlind, in *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*, vol. IX (1931).
94. The review was published in *Handelstidningen* on December 16, 1858 (Carlsson 1996, p. 206).
95. Quoted from Carlsson 1996, p. 206.
96. The Czapek manuscripts of synagogal music in the congregation's archive are the following: *Invignings-Cantate för synagogan i Göteborg den 12te Oct. 1855*. (Partition F XXVII:33, "Instrumental Parts" F XXVII:32. "Copy for 50th Anniversary" 1905 F XXVII:34) ; *Psalmer för den offentliga gudstjensten 1855/1905* F XXVII:35; *Psalmer till den offentliga gudstjensten 1860* F XXVII:37 (revised version of F XXVII:35); *Choral till klagodagen öfver Oskar I 14/8 1859* F XXVII:36; *Jubel-Cantate den 4de november 1864* F XXVII:38; *Musik till sångerna vid gudstjensten ... 1872* F XXVII:39 (with Baer and Sulzer); *Kantat vid klagodagen över kung Karl xv den 20 Oktober 1872* F XXVI:7; *Musik till sångerna vid gudstjensten ... 1878* F XXVII:40 (with Baer and Sulzer); *Tjugofemårsdagen af Dr. Wolffs verksamhet inom Göteborgs Mosaiska Församling den 4 April 1882* F XXVI:7 (Printed; Text by Sophie Elkan); *Jubileumssång 1897* F XXVI:7; *Musik till Sångerna vid gudstjensten ...: Sånger för sabbath-helg och vardagar 1898* F XXVII:41 (with Baer and Sulzer); *Kantat vid klagodagen efter kung Oscar II 1907* F XXVI:7.
97. *BT* 1883, p. XXIV
98. *Göteborgs adress- och industrikalender 1850–1899*. Baer's taxation document of 1885 (JFA G59:19) states that he lived in the courtyard house of the synagogue block (*VII:e roten, hus 29*).
99. Jacobowsky 1955, p 83f.
100. Jacobowsky 1955, p. 86.
101. In a very interesting and well-researched article, historian Per Nyström (1980) provides fascinating information about the Jewish neighborhood of Haga 1870–1900.
102. Jacobowsky 1955, p. 87.
103. According to a paragraph in the biographic article from *Der jüdische Cantor*, reprinted in the second edition of the *BT*, Baer also was active as a private teacher, supposedly to supplement his income. However, nothing is known about the nature of this assignment.
104. E.g., February 23, 1873, Baer performed his third circumcision on Moritz, the son of the merchant Israel Sapozinsky, who according to Nyström 1980, lived with his large, extended family in a crowded flat at the corner of Skolgatan 11 and Haga Nygata 16. Baer returned on September 15, 1874, to circumcise the newborn son Samuel.
105. When summoned as a *mohel* to locations away from Gothenburg, Baer had to apply for a few days leave from the board. Most of these applications letters are to be found in the JFAG (F12:j). In the account books (G84) there are numerous references to practical chores connected to the cantor's job. Baer bought materials for building of the sukkah, collected the synagogue's seat fees, hired workmen for snow shoveling in the synagogue's courtyard, et cetera.
106. JFAG F:12f.

107. In a vacation application from May 29, 1877, the address, Bukärr 3 is given (JFAG F:12f).
 108. Estate inventory (*bouppteckning*) 23 May 1894, LG.
 109. In a letter on June 17, 1878, Czapek asked the board for a permit for Dina to act as his locum tenens (JFAG F:12f).
 110. *AZJ* 1894:11, p. 4.
 111. Quoted after the reprint in the preface to *BT* 1883, p. xxiii.
 112. I have written about these problems in an article about the manuscripts of Jona Schain (1877–1955) (Hammarlund 2009). Schain emigrated from Russia to Sweden in 1905 and was active as a *shohet* and *hazan* in the town of Kristianstad in southern Sweden.
 113. Kalib 2002, vol. 1:1, p. 91. Concerning *nusah* definitions, see also Slobin 1989, Chapter 11, and Werner 1976, p. 293.
 114. *BT* 1877, p. IX.
 115. *BT* 1883, p. XI.
 116. The lesser degree of ritual involvement on weekdays is indicated by Baer in a footnote where it is stated that in many German congregations the *Vorbeter* does not enter the podium until the *Jistabach* verses of praise (*BT* no. 33, p. 7).
 117. For an interesting discussion of the *shegaga* concept, see Cohen, H. 2008 (1919), p. 253.
 118. English translation after *The New Mahzor/Mahzor Hadash for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur* 2004, ed. R. Sidney Greenburg and R. Jonathan D. Levine, p. 654 f.
 119. The **A** section of the *M'chal*, which in its turn consists of six musical phrases, covers measures 1–31 in Baer's notation on p. 327 of the *BT*. The introductory invocation phrase has an E minor character. The plea that follows modulates into A minor, which is confirmed by the use of the G# in the end of measure five. However, this episode leads back to E minor by way of its G Major parallel tonality. Then there is some G Major-like ascending sequences and some descending A minor sequences, followed by a musical semicolon in the form of a cadence on the note B and a concluding, descending augmented second motif (measures 30–31) on the last word of the fourth clause of the Hebrew text ("in the Torah").
- Here, at the inception of the text clause five (measure 32), the piece switches abruptly and dramatically into G minor (a tonality markedly distant from the E minor/G Major of section **A**), and the **B'** section begins. In measures 35–36, the descending sequences used in measures 12–14 are echoed in transposed form, which creates a musical correspondence between the second text clause with its plea of the removal of the sins, and the fifth clause with its reference to the "mitzvot that lead us to holiness."
- The **B'** section (which is made up of five musical phrases) closes on a Bb note, which is also the tonic of the following, exuberant **C** section (measures 46–48). The most important difference between the **B'** and the **B''** sections is the use of the augmented second motive C#–Bb in the latter, marking the absolution of guilt expressed in the second period of text clause eight. In the **B''** section (measures 48–71) one also should notice the elegant inclusion of a benediction formula (with a congregational response in measures 59–61), which functions as an introduction to the

concluding text clause.

120. English translation after *The New Mahzor/Mahzor Hadash for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur* 2004, ed. R. Sidney Greenburg and R. Jonathan D. Levine, p. 796f.

121. The musical structure of the piece can be described as **A'-B-A''**. The **A'** section, which covers text clauses one through three (measures 1–14, notated by Baer as C minor), uses the augmented second tetrachord G–Ab–B–C. The **B** section, in which the basic scale is modified towards a G minor character, starts in the last lines of the third text clause (measure 14), but the transition has been prepared in the **A'** section by a G minor episode in measures 7–8. Similar modulations as in the **A'**, take place in the **A''** section (measures 38–70), which returns to the characteristic scale base of the **A'** section, as the text tells about the return to the merciful God (measures 38–39). Compared with **A'**, **A''** stands out as musically more dramatic.

122. SAOB (*The Swedish Academy Dictionary*).

123. BT 1877, footnote on p. VIII.

124. *In keiner auch noch so kleinen Gemeinde sollte Baer's "Baal T'fillah" fehlen*. Quoted after the reproduction in the preface to BT 1883.

125. *Jeschurun* 1883:35, p. 604.

126. Reproduced in the preface to BT 1883, p. XVI.

127. Perhaps it was S. A. Hedlund who wrote this review. He also promoted Baer's work internationally. Apparently he sent a number of copies of the BT to his friend Fredrik Elias Magnus (1832–1899), who had settled as a businessman in London. In a letter to Hedlund on April 4, 1878, (GUB, S. A. Hedlunds papper), Magnus praises the beautiful design of the book, but he admits his inability to judge the quality of the work. However, he promises to give a copy as a present to Rabbi Marks of the reformed synagogue in London to have his professional judgment. The result of the action is not known. (I am indebted to Christoph Leiska for this reference.).

128. BT 1883, footnote on p. XVII.

129. Quoted after the reproduction in BT 1883, p. xv.

130. According to the advertisement in *Jeschurun* 1883:35, the second edition of the BT could be ordered *vom Verfasser selbst* (from the author himself) or from Kauffmann.

131. In the same edition of the *ÖUCZ*, there is an advertisement for the BT as well.

132. The print was edited by Israel Wiesen in Osterode am Harz, who was an author of Jewish religious schoolbooks and prayer books.

133. American-born cantors Maynard Gerber, Stockholm and Leon Perlman, Gothenburg both have told me that they became acquainted with the BT during their studies in the United States.

134. Davidson 1987, p. 27, footnote 13. It is also significant that Davidson had been one of the editors of the *Journal for Synagogue Music*.

135. Jakob Schönberg was born in Fürth, Bavaria. He was one of numerous German Jewish musicians whose careers were destroyed by the Nazi regime. His father, David Schönberg, was the *hazan* at the Claus-Synagoge in Fürth. Jakob Schönberg attended the Israelitische Realschule in Fürth from 1906 to 1916, and the Oberealschule in Nürnberg from 1916 to 1919. He then

received further education at both the Technical High School in Darmstadt and the University of Berlin. He received his doctorate from the University of Erlangen in 1925. Spandel Verlag, of Nürnberg, published his dissertation the following year. Schönberg earned his living during Germany's Weimar Republic (1919–1933) as a pianist, music critic, conductor, and composer. He wrote articles for the *Nürnberger Zeitung* and served as a musical consultant for Bavarian Radio in Munich. Bavarian Radio performed some of his orchestral compositions. He also worked in the film industry as a music conductor and illustrator. His film music was published by Schott's Söhne (Mainz) and Hawkes and Son (London). Schönberg emigrated to England in August 1939 and settled in the United States in January 1948.

136. Schönberg 1926, p. 41.
137. Idelsohn 1938 (1967), p. 24. Capitals in the text according to Idelsohn.
138. Idelsohn 1938 (1967), p. 339f.
139. Kalib 2002–05, vol. 1, part 1, p. xiii.
140. Kalib 2002–05, vol. 1, part 1, p. 10.
141. *GHT* August 5, 1854.
142. In addition to this, Rubenson had two more cafés in the city, in the, then, suburbs of Lorensberg and Majorna. See Fredberg 1977, vol. 2, p. 710.
143. JFAG, D2a1 (Register of Gothenburg Jewish Congregation 1824–1878.)
144. Fredberg 1977, p. xx.
145. JFAG D2a1 (Register of Gothenburg Jewish Congregation 1824–1878.)
146. Magnusson, J. & Grönberg, C. 2009, back cover.
147. Archive of Göteborg City Museum G.M 8687 and 8688.
148. GUB, handskriftssamlingen, Hovfotografen Aron Jonasons papper.
149. *Bänkrumslängder* (seat registers) 1855–1873 and 1870–1901 (JFAG G40:1, 2).
150. The most comprehensive account of the history of Nääs and the Abrahamson-Salomon family is by Thorbjörnsson 1990. If other sources are not mentioned, my account is based on Thorbjörnsson.
151. Thorbjörnsson 1990, p. 56f.
152. Thorbjörnsson 1990, p. 44.
153. *Vid tjugofemårsdagen af Doktor Moritz Wolffs verksamhet vid Göteborgs Mosaiska Församling den 4 april 1882*. (Printed sheet.) JFAG F26.
154. Lagerlöf described impressions from Nääs in her novels, like *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa* (“The Wonderful Adventures of Nils”), internationally, her most famous work.
155. JFAG D2a1. Register of Gothenburg Jewish Congregation 1824–1878. Salomon's confirmation took place on May 20, 1866.
156. According to the museum staff at Nääs, the rooms of the main building were left in exactly the same state they were in at Abrahamson's death in 1898.
157. After Salomon's death, the ethical aspect of his methodology came into conflict with new aesthetic ideals. To many of the craft ideologues of the new century, the product, not the process,

was the main thing. *Slöjd* tended to become an artistic domain. The fundamental difference between these two contrasting perspectives manifested themselves when the famous furniture designer, Carl Malmsten, was invited to teach at Nääs during the 1920s. Malmsten, the aesthete, did not understand Salomon's ideology of ethical fostering through *slöjd*. To him, the whole point of *slöjd* was the sensuous act of creating beautiful shapes in wood. The pedagogical method should emanate from the aesthetic worth that the object had for the student, not from the aspect of exercise. The abstract ethics of the act of *bildning* were not compatible with Malmsten's thinking. This led to a serious conflict with the older generation of Nääs teachers, who had been impregnated with Salomon's ideas.

158. BT 1883, p. xi.

159. According to Thorbjörnsson (1990, p. 37), the mausoleum was designed by the British artist Clara Montalba (1840–1929), the niece of August Abrahamson. Clara was the daughter of August's brother Salomon, who had made a remarkable and astonishing international career. Born in 1810, he signed on board a British ship in Karlskrona and left the family as a teenager. He settled in London and married the daughter of the wealthy and renowned art and antiques dealer Montalba and took over his business. Under the name Anthony Rubens Montalba, he acquired some fame as a genre painter. He had four daughters, all of whom were artistically active. Clara was the most successful of them. Her father had bought a palace in Venice, where she, for many years, was the central figure of an international cultural circle. The Montalba sisters often visited Nääs during the summers.

160. Salomon, O. & Kastman, C. 1904, p. 54.

161. Maimonides 2004, p. 105f.

162. GUB, Sven Adolf Hedlunds papper. Adolf Magnus to S. A. Hedlund on March 6, 1898.

163. "Pojkar skola ha smörj, hvar och när de råkas, ty ha de ej gjort något ont denna gång, så ha de nog gjort det förut, eller göra det senare." GUB, Sven Adolf Hedlunds papper. Adolf Magnus to S. A. Hedlund March 7, 1898.

164. GUB, Sven Adolf Hedlunds papper. Adolf Magnus to S. A. Hedlund March 8, 1898.

165. Adolf Magnus was the founder of the leather trade firm A. Magnus & Co.

166. Beginning in 1886, Hedlund suffered a series of strokes, which gradually restricted his professional activity. It is difficult to avoid the thought that not only his physical ability, but his intellectual judgment as well, eventually were somewhat affected by his medical condition.

167. Concerning Lithander, I refrain from using the term anti-Semitism, which in fact is just a neologism that nineteenth-century Judeophobes came up with in order to dress up their religiously founded hatred of Jews in a secularized suit, declaring it a *Weltanschauung* or "scientifically" based ideology. Lithander's parallel engagement in clerical and mercantile politics links him to the traditional anti-Judaism of eighteenth-century Sweden that resulted in the so-called *Judereglemente* of 1782.

168. Salomon, Otto III: *Min judiska släkt i Sverige 1775–1985*. Unpublished lecture manuscript. AASN.

169. The pianist, Hilda Thegerström (1838–1907) had studied with Marmontel in Paris and Liszt in Weimar, where she made her first official appearance in 1859. She taught at the Stockholm conservatory, 1872–1903. Wilhelm Heintze (1849–1895) was regarded as the leading Swedish organist during the second-half of the nineteenth century. In 1881–1889 he held the organist’s post at St Jacob’s Church in Stockholm.

170. KMA A1a 32, 33; KMA F9.

171. SSA, Bou 1941 II 2160.

172. According to a receipt in MTMS (the Archive of the Music and Theatre Museum, Stockholm, Ämbetsarkivet, vol. G3A:9), the book was purchased at Stockholms Stads Bokauktionskammare (Stockholm City’s Book Auction Department) on June 11, 1941.

173. On the front paper, Abraham Baer has written a personal dedication: “*Meinen inniggeliebten Kindern Dina und Oscar, zur freundlichen Erinnerung von ihrem Papa.*”

174. Haeffner’s *Koralbok* was used in the Lutheran state church until 1937.

175. Dillmar 2001, pp. 33–36; 66f; 504f. See also Göransson 1997.

176. In an 1810 essay in the periodical *Phosphoros*, Haeffner develops his views on church singing, ridiculing the overly ornate musical practices in Stockholm’s churches. His description of the situation reminds me very much of the negative judgments on traditional *nusah* expressed by some ardent supporters of the Jewish liturgical reform.

177. The most comprehensive account of Karl Valentin’s life and career is from Öhrström 2009.

178. Register of Gothenburg Jewish Congregation 1824–1878. (Judiska församlingens församlingsböcker JFA D11/A1)

179. Bänkrumslängd (seat register) 1870–1901 (JFAG G40:2).

180. *Kantat vid Mosaiska Församlingens i Stockholm begravningsällskap 110-årsfest*. This is Valentin’s Op. 39. (*Catalogue of Musical Items of the Jewish Congregation in Stockholm*, compiled by Cantor Leo Rosenblüth 1933. JFAS, Riksarkivet).

181. Klautke 2010, p. 10f

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