Introduction

I am unpacking my library. Yes, I am. … I must ask you to join me in the disorder of crates that have been wrenched open, the air saturated with wood dust, the floor covered with torn paper, to join me among piles of volumes that are seeing daylight again after two years of darkness, so that you may be ready to share with me a bit of the mood – certainly not an elegiac mood but, rather, one of anticipation …

Walter Benjamin (1931)*

A library is not supposed to move. It defines the place where a book can be found, so it should not itself change places. And if it does – what will become of the books? For some time they will be inaccessible. They will be tucked away in boxes that are securely closed. The order that once was imposed on them is disrupted. Even though it will be restored in a new place, it will never be quite the same. The shelves are arranged in a different manner. The boxes will be opened and several books will be missing – an entire box may have disappeared, while books that were long considered lost suddenly reappear among the piles of displaced volumes. A number of books will be set aside for repair. The books will be rearranged. The new place creates new proximities and new distances. Books that previously were consigned to an obscure corner are now sitting proudly in the middle of the shelf, right in front of the curious reader’s eyes. Books that may have looked obsolete return to the shelves solidly bound and in new covers, attracting the attention of the wandering mind. The library has moved. The catalogue remains valid. Yet many changes have taken place.

What has a library to do with tradition? This question has occupied a prominent place in recent research on the transformations of Jewish culture in the early modern period. In Ashkenaz, tradition as a canon and as a method of defining and transmitting the canon was radically refashioned with the advent of the printing press and the dissemination of a Sephardi canon of learning and scholarship, including philosophical and exegetical writings and the Shulhan 'arukh. Elchanan Reiner has characterized the changes that took place in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as the result not of a struggle with a New Science, but with a ‘New Library’.1 We may


add, however, that this ‘New Library’ was not a universal library: it was not con-
ceived as a comprehensive collection providing insight into the history and present
state of human knowledge (from a Jewish point of view or from other perspectives).2
Rather, it constituted an alternative canon with new and contested criteria for defin-
ning the fields of knowledge that it would make accessible.3 What we can observe
then at the beginning of the eighteenth century may be characterized as a further
shift: tradition moved from the ‘New Library’ of the Jewish early modern world to
the universal library of the Jewish enlightenment.

The year 1742 is mentioned several times in the present volume, because it has
assumed an almost emblematic character, encapsulating the new intellectual possi-
bilities that presented themselves as the result of the complex and fruitful encounter
between medieval knowledge4 and early Jewish enlightened discourse. Maimonides’
halakhic code, the Mishneh torah, had been reprinted in Jessnitz between 1739 and
1742 at the initiative of David Fraenkel, who served as rabbi of the Jewish commu-
nity in nearby Dessau and was revered by his young student Moses Mendelssohn.
When the new edition of the Mishneh torah was complete, another work was added
to this already impressive achievement: in 1742, Maimonides’ contested philosop-
hal treatise Guide of the Perplexed was reprinted for the first time in almost two hun-
dred years. At about the same time, Mendelssohn set out to study the Guide; it has
often been assumed that it was the Jessnitz edition that allowed him to become ac-
quainted with Maimonides’ philosophical thought. However, annotations in his hand
can be found in a copy of the Sabbioneta edition of 1553 – a fact that, far from de-
tracting from the importance of this particular moment in Ashkenazi cultural history,
adds to its complex texture5 and allows us to study a number of features that seem to
be characteristic of the encounter between medieval knowledge and enlightened dis-
course in the eighteenth century.

the ‘canon’ and actual – private or semi-public – book collections deserve further attention. See, for ex-
ample, Zeev Gries’ discussion of the large and varied book collections of individual scholars as well as
battel midrash, which provide interesting insights in the limitations as well as the flexibility of ‘canon’,
in Ha-sefer ke-sokhen tarbut ba-shanim t"s-t"rs (1700–1900) (Tel Aviv, 2002), pp. 65–77.
2 On the emergence of the idea of the ‘universal library’ that transcended confessional boundaries, see
Roger Chartier, The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth
and Eighteenth Centuries, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford, 1992), pp. 61–88; Jonathan Israel, Radical
4 For the purposes of this volume, we suggest a rather broad definition of ‘knowledge’ as ‘any and
every set of ideas and acts accepted by one or another social group or society of people – ideas and acts
pertaining to what they accept as real for them and for others’, see E. Doyle McCarthy, Knowledge as
Culture: The New Sociology of Knowledge (London and New York, 1996), p. 23. This definition em-
phasizes the social embeddedness and historical fluidity of knowledge and allows us to refer to various
‘sets of ideas and acts’ without imposing hierarchical claims as to their validity.
5 This copy can be examined today in the British Library (C. 49. e. 13.). See Moses Mendelssohn,
Gesammelte Schriften: Jubiläumsausgabe, ed. Alexander Altmann et al., 14: 271 (Hebrew text) and
20.1: LXXXIV–LXXXV.
While Ashkenazi scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were concerned with the selection of books that would constitute a new canon, an authoritative source of religious knowledge, the intellectuals of the eighteenth century had something different on their minds. They did not select books; rather, they wished to bring books together in a different place. They no longer defined tradition as a canon, but as the Jewish section of a universal library. Thus they were reluctant to discuss matters of exclusion and instead focused on strategies of inclusion, juxtaposition, and critical discernment. They printed Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah* along with his *Guide of the Perplexed* and advocated the study of the Bible as well as the study of philosophy and history. They cited Judah Halevi alongside Christian Wolf and the Talmud alongside Kant. As a glimpse at Mendelssohn’s copy of the *Guide* reveals, the fact that the early Jewish Enlightenment made a number of medieval works available in new editions does not imply that all of these works had previously been inaccessible. However, they were certainly deemed to be less accessible than was desirable. The rabbis, scholars, and printers of the early Jewish Enlightenment attempted to define the outlines of a new cultural space in which more books would become available to a larger number of readers, in which new proximities and new possibilities for study and comparison would emerge, in which readings would be unpredictable, and in which tradition and critique would meet, producing innovative ‘uses of tradition’. For the authors of the early Jewish Enlightenment, the transition to modernity was inextricably linked to this effort to establish tradition in a new place, to move a library, to unpack its volumes in a different environment, to open them in changed contexts, to cope with dust, loss, and disorder and to restore the books to visibility in a ‘mood’ of ‘anticipation’. The promise associated with this moment found perfect expression in the words of the printer of the Jessnitz edition of the *Guide*, Israel bar Abraham, in his preface: ‘*u-vkhen eś ha-da‘at ha-zot eś hayyim hi la-ma‘ahaziqim bah*’.7

This volume begins by juxtaposing two contributions that reflect two widely diverging interpretations of this transition to modernity. Together, the essays by Shmuel Feiner and David Ruderman invite us to a midrashic reading of the present volume, forcing us to make sense of the tensions that arise from the presence of tradition in modernity and encouraging us to read the remaining essays with a new and less static understanding of the role of both tradition and critique in shaping the intellectual worlds of modern Judaism.

Elaborating upon Isaiah Berlin’s characterization of the eighteenth century as a highly complex and confused – rather than rational and harmonious – epoch, Shmuel Feiner draws our attention to the particular dynamic and turbulence of the ‘Jewish eighteenth century’. In this troubled era, when science was counterbalanced by mysticism and Haskalah by Hasidism, the rise of a Jewish enlightened discourse represented a

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6 The term ‘alternative library’ that Shmuel Feiner suggested in his description of the ‘bookshelf of the early maskilim’ points to significant changes in the evaluation of languages, genres and books in the eighteenth century, but detracts from the underlying decisive shift in the understanding of the concept of the ‘library’ itself, which we would like to emphasize here. Cf. Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, trans. Chaya Naor (Philadelphia, 2004), p. 44.

sent only one revolution among many. Feiner documents this rise in terms of a linear development, from a growing interest in medieval Sephardi philosophy among Ashkenazi scholars, via new and revolutionary approaches to intellectual and social issues, to the maskilic rejection of rabbinic genres and authority. Medieval Sephardi books formed part of a library where individuals developed readings of Jewish religion, culture, and society that transcended the interpretative frameworks provided by the rabbinic élite. Feiner’s narrative gives prominence to struggle, rupture, and concomitant pain; the maskilim are revealed to be the instigators of a Jewish Kulturkampf that has lasted down to the present time.

Whereas Shmuel Feiner draws our attention to the Jews’ potential for revolution, David Ruderman emphasizes the revolutionary potential of the Jewish tradition. He argues that earlier Jewish scholars, notably in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy, forged a modernity in which tradition and innovation (epitomized in Kabbalah and science) were essentially compatible. If on the surface Ruderman’s picture appears to be more positive and tranquil than Feiner’s, it certainly is no less dynamic. Here, however, the dynamic is not presented as a result of the clash between traditional and revolutionary forces, but as an intrinsic part of tradition per se. When re-shaping itself, Ruderman seems to imply, tradition has no need for crisis and critique. It can rely on its own originality, especially when seasoned by occasional stimuli from the outside, non-Jewish world.

The tension between these two conceptions of tradition vis-à-vis modernity is illuminating, because it helps us perceive a diversity that usually remains hidden behind a too-rigid terminology. Thus we learn that innovation and the shaping of a new intellectual sphere may depend as much on the embracing of tradition as on its rejection; that, in fact, tradition is not a single uniform structure, but a constellation of traditions from which Jewish authors could choose, if only to challenge and subvert what they had found. Moreover, it seems to have made a difference in which section of the new library old books were unpacked: the selection of books that received particular attention and the ways in which these were introduced, cited, and contextualized vary according to the area of knowledge that was at stake. Feiner is concerned mainly with religious and philosophical thought, while Ruderman addresses primarily the sciences and natural philosophy. Finally, in both accounts Sepharad appears in two different guises. Whereas Feiner identifies the contemporary Sephardi ‘port-culture’ as the chief model of the Ashkenazi cultural critique and medieval Sephardi science and philosophy as its principal source, Ruderman reduces the medieval Sephardi scholars to distant cultural icons who had once succeeded in performing an intellectual balancing act but whose work was now found wanting in the face of contemporary scientific endeavour. Throughout this volume, we shall witness Sepharad assuming these alternative and indeed conflicting roles. Unpacking the works of medieval Sepharad could mean a proud presentation of a splendid history of Jewish involvement with philosophy and the sciences, documenting a development that led from Sepharad to the eighteenth century and implying that contemporary achievements had their roots in Jewish tradition. It could also mean reflecting, with no less pride, on innovation as a step beyond the limitations of even the greatest authors of the past.
The three case studies that follow take us to the entrance doors of the library. What were the tangible and intangible processes of transmission that made it possible for medieval Sephardi books to enter the library of the Jewish Enlightenment? Israel of Zamość, the protagonist of the first of these three studies, is a special case in the history of the encounter between Sepharad and Ashkenaz; and, given the fact that he was among the early mentors of Mendelssohn and other maskilim in Berlin, a highly significant case as well. As argued by Gad Freudenthal, for Israel of Zamość Sephardi culture was not at all remote, given the physical presence, in Zamość’s earlier history, of a Sephardi community and its legacy – an unusually rich Sephardi library. Freudenthal places Israel within the intellectual context of neo-Maimonidean scholarship and a ‘largely invisible scientific sub-culture’ in Jewish Poland. However, Israel’s approach to the halakhic text and his subversive interpretations transcend the innovative, scientific readings of the Talmud that he could find elsewhere. He presents scientific knowledge as a source of authority that is superior to the halakhic text.

Adam Shear traces the transmission and representation of one particularly prominent Sephardi text, Judah Halevi’s Kuzari, in Ashkenaz of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Shear’s narrative shows that until well into the eighteenth century Ashkenazi scholars used the book mainly as a repository of useful information on various subjects, whereas early maskilim like Wetzlar were interested in its overall thesis about the relationship between revelation and philosophy. The maskilic commentaries of Zamość and Satanow, which combine the two earlier approaches, represent a true transformation of Halevi’s Kuzari into a work to be taught to others. Shear argues that it was the combination of many heterogeneous factors that led to the eventual transformation of this Sephardi text into a maskilic vehicle for discussing new scientific theories. Its ‘availability’ rested on the image of the work and on the categories in which it was interpreted as well as on the physical transmission of the book.

Steven Harvey explores the presence of medieval Sephardi texts from a slightly different angle, emphasizing the role of the Hebrew printing press and the importance of new editions, given the paucity of printed editions of philosophical works in the period following Spinoza’s challenge. Examining the introductions to the writings of Israel of Zamość, Naphtali Hirsch Goslar, Judah Loeb Margolioth, and Pinchas Elias Hurwitz, Harvey suggests that these introductions be viewed as harbingers of a renewed interest in the writings of medieval Jewish philosophy that was to be followed by a wider interest in these works themselves. The introductions are the more instructive in that they display very different, even conflicting reports about the familiarity with the sciences among eighteenth-century Jews as well as widely divergent attitudes toward the medieval rationalists. The reception of the Sephardi heritage was anything but uniform, with enthusiasm, criticism, and scepticism all manifested in various degrees.

These detailed studies of the transmission of medieval Sephardi texts allow us to trace moments of innovation in the often neglected liminal spaces where new approaches and concepts are about to emerge but are still articulated in an ambiguous or contradictory manner, because they still rely, in part, on previous models of thought and speech. It is not always an easy task to identify ‘what is new’ even in the work of
those scholars who are most frequently cited as symbols of innovation and renewal. Raphael Jospe portrays Mendelssohn, often perceived as the very embodiment of German Haskalah, as a ‘medieval modernist’. This appellation reflects Mendelssohn’s indebtedness to medieval Jewish philosophers along with his attempt to reinterpret and transform their theories and apply them within contemporary political contexts. While Mendelssohn’s approach to political thought and to the separation of church and state reveals the elasticity of tradition and may serve as an example of innovative exegesis, the philosopher takes a conservative stance on core questions of biblical criticism, to the extent of ignoring the more audacious views of one of his medieval sources, Abraham Ibn Ezra. Albert van der Heide confirms the portrait of Mendelssohn as a medievalist in his case study of Mendelssohn’s commentary on Exodus 19, comparing this chapter of the Be’ur with Dubno’s commentary on Genesis 22. Rabbinic exegesis and medieval commentators, whether mentioned by name or not, take pride of place in both chapters. The medieval flavour of the Be’ur is further accentuated by the fact that Mendelssohn follows the medieval model of the topically arranged commentary instead of embracing the more discursive approach widely adopted by contemporary Christian scholars. The combination of fairly conservative readings of Sephardi texts with interpretations that led to radical innovation clearly illustrates that the new library allowed for a variety of interpretative practices: some could actually be considered a part of the medieval Sephardi heritage; others, like Mendelssohn’s reading strategies in Jerusalem, clearly transcended it.

Thomas Kollatz further elaborates on the often very circumspect ways in which readers moved about in the new library. Aron Gumpertz, scholar, physician, and friend of Moses Mendelssohn’s, published a revised edition of Loeske’s compendium on pharmaceutics and a supercommentary on Abraham Ibn Ezra’s commentary on the Five Megillot. In both works Gumpertz adopts a historicizing strategy, emphasizing the inherent progress of science since the days of medieval authorities like Galen and Ibn Ezra. Thus, instead of openly confronting and repudiating the views of the older scholars, he takes these as a point of departure for his explanations of contemporary achievements in the sciences, based on experiment, exploration, and new discoveries. Gumpertz decides to use revision and commentary as a writing space in which tradition and critique are not contradictory forces. The older works become accessible to the extent that they can be integrated into a dynamic history of the sciences and inspire the writing of supplements that reflect the best of contemporary knowledge.

In Resianne Fontaine’s contribution on Pinchas Hurwitz’s encyclopaedia Sefer ha-Berit we encounter a quite different evaluation of the Sephardi heritage. Unlike Gumpertz, Hurwitz challenges the very idea of progress. He does not hesitate to declare that medieval science has become obsolete in the light of modern scientific discoveries. However, the new concepts, too, are likely to be replaced by other notions sooner or later. Therefore, true knowledge is provided solely by rabbinic and kabbalistic sources. Incidentally, these sources happen to contain many views that are in accordance with modern theories. Thus Hurwitz presents a rather original approach to the new library. He takes books from many different crates and looks for a place for them on the shelves, while at the same time establishing criteria to contain and
control the many facets of change. In this effort, he relies on works that the authors of the Jewish Enlightenment rarely touched – medieval and early modern kabbalistic texts. Hurwitz’s work, written towards the end of the eighteenth century, clearly reflects the turbulence of a new age and the impact of the revolution wreaked on contemporary Jewry by new discoveries and experiments. Being dynamic as well as conservative, Sefer ha-Berit can be viewed as supporting both Feiner’s and Ruderman’s perceptions of the eighteenth century. While this may sound contradictory, the picture that arises from Sefer ha-Berit is that of a self-confident author who is able to formulate a meaningful answer to the challenge of his day.

We have already noted that Maimonides’ Guide occupied a particularly prominent place in the early Jewish Enlightenment. Reading his work in the context of the new library could lead to surprising and highly consequential revisions of Maimonidean as well as contemporary philosophical contentions. Warren Zev Harvey examines Moses Mendelssohn’s rejection and Salomon Maimon’s subversion of Maimonides’ classification of moral rules as ‘generally accepted opinions’. Whereas Mendelssohn builds his argument against Maimonides on Halevi, Maimon turns to Kant. Harvey captures the intensity and fluidity of readings in the new library when he outlines the dense texture within which Mendelssohn formulated his thoughts on the epistemological foundations of moral rules: ‘with the help of Judah Halevi, [Mendelssohn] platonized Nahmanides’ Augustinian version of Maimonides’ Aristotelian interpretation of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil’. A particularly creative reader, Maimon inscribes in Maimonides’ text notions that contradict Maimonides but are in line with Kant. Carlos Fraenkel, stressing the intellectual union between Sepharad and Ashkenaz, demonstrates that Maimon’s interest in Kantian philosophy culminates in his attempt to reformulate Maimonides’ concept of the divine intellect in terms of Spinoza’s doctrine of Deus sive Natura in order to complete the Copernican revolution in Kant’s theory of knowledge. For Mendelssohn and Maimon, the philosophical works of Sepharad – including the writings of Maimonides, Halevi, and Spinoza – remain cornerstones of contemporary philosophical reflection. Their relevance does not depend on modern supplements and appendices, as is the case in the sciences. Quite the contrary: the elucidation of key issues in modern thought depends, according to Mendelssohn and Maimon, on a creative re-reading of the medieval and early modern Sephardi masters.

While philosophy and the sciences constituted fields of study that were considered to be essential for the enlightened mind, other fields that were not prominent in the Christian world but had always attracted great attention in the Jewish world remained relevant as well. Many of the most important exponents of the Jewish Enlightenment were interested in the liturgy – they edited, translated, and wrote commentaries on the prayer book. But while they admired some liturgical poetry, such as Judah Halevi’s Siyyon ha-lo tish’ali, which had become part of the liturgy for Tish’ah be-Av, they were reluctant to restore another genre – rhymed Ashkenazi piyyut – to the shelves of the new library. Before the ‘literary rediscovery’ of liturgical poetry by the maskilim in Berlin, other strategies of accommodation prevailed. Shlomo Berger presents two early modern Yiddish translations of Solomon Ibn Gabirol’s Keter malkhat, a poem that had become part of the Sephardi liturgy for Yom Kippur, and
traces the ways in which this philosophically inspired poem was transformed into an expression of popular ethics. Thus, a Hebrew poem from Sepharad could be accommodated in an Ashkenazi library via translation into Yiddish and transposition into a different genre. But when Zeev Wolf Buchner, an author of the Jewish Enlightenment, became interested in the medieval poem, he chose to rewrite it in Hebrew, restoring its philosophical character and adding a distinctively Jewish national perspective. In contrast, the Ashkenazi piyyu†im tended to resist accommodation. Wout van Bekkum turns to the early proponents of the Science of Judaism and demonstrates that whereas the Sephardi poems could be described in the aesthetic terms of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Ashkenazi piyyu†im could be analysed only in historical terms. Both the aesthetic and the historical re-evaluation of liturgical poetry point to the intricate relationship between religious reform and secularizing scholarship. As emerges from Emile Schrijver’s contribution, an opposite strategy of accommodation was followed by Saul of Berlin, who sought to promulgate new ideas through an ‘original’ medieval genre. Invoking the authority of the fourteenth-century Talmudic scholar Asher ben YeÌûel, his pseudo-epigraphic responsa-collection Besamim rosh (Berlin 1793) exploited the accommodative potential of the traditional she’elot u-teshuvot genre, thus introducing Ashkenaz on the Sephardi bookshelf.

In this volume ‘Sepharad’ denotes not only medieval texts that were rearranged into a modern library, but also a contemporary context that shaped the interest in the medieval books: Wetzlar points to the Sephardi community of Amsterdam as a model for Ashkenaz; Wessely wishes to be buried in the Sephardi cemetery of Altona; and Gumpertz, in his medical writings, mentions Mendez d’Acosta and Jacob de Castro Sarmento, both fellows of the Royal Society in London. Andrea Schatz and Irene Zwiep explore the relation between medieval and contemporary Sepharad, the impact of the latter on Jewish enlightened discourse, and the ways in which the image of Sepharad in the eighteenth century facilitated and informed the construction of ‘bridges’ between medieval and contemporary practices of Jewish reading and writing. Schatz addresses the various manifestations of ‘Sepharad’ in maskilic writings on the Hebrew language: medieval Sepharad, Christian Spain and the contemporary Sephardi communities in Europe and the Ottoman Empire were evoked not as isolated historical models, but as distinct configurations in a series of historical recurrences that reflected and supported each other and formed the multilayered basis for the maskilic project of creating a bilingual, diasporic Jewish modernity. Zwiep presents the intellectual strategies and attitudes that played a role in the formation of a series of new Hebrew canons in the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic. She points to the parallels and, in a number of instances, even productive dynamic between the contemporary spheres of Sepharad and Ashkenaz and examines their different roles as catalyst, instigator, and appreciative audience. The creative interaction between Sepharad and Ashkenaz in Amsterdam stands out as yet another example of the local specificity of the processes of transition that we can observe in European Jewish communities between 1700 and 1800.8 The Jewish Enlightenment

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8 See, for example, the contributions to the volume Ha-haskalah li-gevanehah: 'iyunim ḥadashim be-toldot ha-haskalah u-ve-sifrutah, ed. Shmuel Feiner and Israel Bartal (Jerusalem, 2005).
in Berlin and Königsberg has to be analyzed within a diasporic network in which many paths could lead to modernity; and although most of them intersected at one point or another, not all of them may have formed part of the Jewish Enlightenment.

One of the most ambitious projects of the Jewish Enlightenment in Berlin was the establishment of a Hebrew printing press under the auspices of the Jüdische Freischule. A significant fraction of the books that bear its imprint are new editions of medieval and early modern works, among them Saadia’s *Emunot ve-de’ot* (1789), Alguadez’ translation of the Nicomachean Ethics as *Sefer ha-Middot* (1790), Maimonides’ *Moreh nevukhim* (1791–1795), and Judah Halevi’s *Kuzari* (1795). Works that had already become available include Bahya’s *Hovot ha-levavot* (Jessnitz 1744), Maimonides’ *Millot ha-higgayon* (Berlin 1765), Benjamin Mussaphia’s *Zekher rav* (Berlin 1765/66), Abraham Ibn Ezra’s *Sefer Ṣahot* (Berlin 1769), and Isaac Israeli’s *Yesod Ṭolam* (Berlin 1777). In addition we also find a significant number of newly edited works from Italy, such as Elijah Levita’s *Sefer ha-Baḥur* (1767), Moshe Hayyim Luzzato’s *La-yesharim tehillaḥ* (1780), and Azariah de’ Rossi’s *Me’or ’enayim* (1793/94). These and many other volumes indicate that the maskilim – in collaboration with wealthy owners of rare manuscripts, rabbinic scholars who provided approbations, and a community of subscribers – wished to establish a new library in a quite literal sense. The contributions to the present volume, however, make it clear that these efforts were merely the culmination of many different and contradictory trends and that they assume meaning within a much broader historical context. They can be traced back to Israel’s Zamość, Goslar’s Halberstadt, Gumpertz’ Berlin, and David Franco Mendes’ Amsterdam. They emerge from a complex history of re-reading medieval and early modern scientific and philosophical concepts. They articulate the desire to ground tradition in modernity and modernity in tradition. The effects of the changes that took place in the age of transition between 1700 and 1800 far surpassed this particular moment when the library that had moved was taking tangible shape. The proponents of the Science of Judaism articulated the fascination with both medieval Sephard and the world of libraries in new political and cultural contexts. Like the proponents of Jewish enlightened discourse in the eighteenth century, they heeded the advice of Judah Ibn Tibbon, who admonished his son, the translator of Maimonides’ *Moreh nevukhim*: ‘Make thy books thy companions, let thy cases and shelves be their pleasure-grounds and gardens. Bask in their paradise, gather their fruit, pluck their roses, take their spices and their myrrh.’

Andrea Schatz, Irene E. Zwiep and Resianne Fontaine

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