

The Formation of a Modern Rabbi

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Edited by

David C. Jacobson
Saul M. Olyan
Rachel Rojanski
Michael L. Satlow
Adam Teller

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THE FORMATION OF A MODERN RABBI

by

Samuel Joseph Kessler

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
THE VIENNESE SCHOLAR AND
PREACHER ADOLF JELLINEK

by
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Providence, Rhode Island

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For M.L.

Song of Songs 8:5

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One hundred tongues speak one language: namely, the Science of Judaism is bound up with faith. Wherefore the latter lives actively in the hearts of the Jews, literature finds support and encouragement, and thus we can infer the warmth of faith among the Jews based on the favorable or unfavorable conditions [they] afford to science.

—Adolf Jellinek,
“Eine Wanderung durch jüdische Bibliotheken” (1853)

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Acknowledgments

As Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Hanina said: Whoever reports a saying in the name of he who said it brings redemption to the world. As it is stated: 'And Esther reported to the king in the name of Mordecai.'

(b. Megillah 15b)

One acquires many debts in the writing of a book: to friends, mentors, institutions, funders, and a myriad of seen and unseen librarians and archival staff.

To begin, this book would not exist at all if it weren't for a research fellowship from the Simon Dubnow Institute in Leipzig in summer 2013, for which I was encouraged to apply by the ever gracious and knowledgeable Yaakov Ariel. It was in Leipzig that I discovered the world of Adolf Jellinek and began to get a sense that bringing together the rise of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the changing rabbinate, and Jewish urbanization might make for an interesting project. A subsequent meeting with the eminent Rabbi Dr. Ismar Schorsch pointed me firmly in Jellinek's direction. And as the project continued to take shape, I was encouraged by both Randall Styers, whose profusion of recommendations landed me the various grants I required, and Malachi Hacohen, who firmly believed that a book on Jellinek had something new to offer historical scholarship. Above all, however, I am indebted to my teacher, Jonathan Hess, z"l, whose graciousness, generosity, kindness, and intelligence embodied the noblest ideals of the professoriate. He is greatly missed.

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Note on Place-Names and Translations

I refer to historical locations using their German name (e.g., Pressburg instead of Bratislava), although upon first use I include any alternate or contemporary terms as well (e.g., Breslau [Polish: Wrocław]). If Anglophone readers are most familiar with a particular name (e.g., Vienna instead of Wien) I use what is familiar. For other places, I use a period- or linguistically appropriate name and spelling (e.g., Leopoldstadt instead of Leopold City).

In the nineteenth century, Christian and family names often contained slight differences depending on location, language, and typography. For Jellinek, a vast majority of modern scholarship spells his first name “Adolf.” He himself, however, was not consistent. In Leipzig, his printed and manuscript works often spell his given name “Adolph.” Jellinek’s Hebrew name was Aaron, which he inherited from his maternal grandfather. (In German, Aaron is rendered “Aron.”) In the body of the text I use the modern spelling, Adolf, while in quotations and bibliographical citations I retain whichever form appears in the original.

Unless otherwise noted, German, French, and Hebrew translations are my own.