

SHELOMO DOV GOITEIN

1900-1985

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY



SHELOMO DOV GOITEIN: IN MEMORIAM

The man we honor here, whose quiet and unassuming manner almost left his passage through this institution unobserved, typifies the purpose and function of the Institute for Advanced Study—that of enabling the scholar to pursue his work in the most supportive ambience possible. His gentle nature and vast scholarship, his courtesy and erudition will be addressed in the printed talks which this booklet contains. I only wish to add a brief word to record the extraordinary grace of life and learning Shelomo Dov Goitein brought to our community and to express, on behalf of so many here whose lives he touched, the pride and pleasure we felt in his presence and our gratitude for the kindness and friendship he so warmly and generously bestowed.

Princeton
New Jersey, 1985

HARRY WOOLF
Director
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MEMORIAL COMMENTS

March 13, 1985

Since I happen to be serving as Executive Officer of the School of Historical Studies this year, it has fallen to my lot to welcome you here this afternoon as we honor the memory of Shelomo Goitein, a member of the School from 1971 through 1975 and then a long term visitor until his death on February 6, 1985. I feel especially privileged by this happenstance because Professor Goitein was, in a way, the first introduction I had to life as it can be and should be at the Institute. When I came to the Institute in 1973, I was working on certain works of art that involved some rather recondite texts in Hebrew, a language of which I am quite ignorant. I went to Professor Goitein for help and was rewarded not only, of course, by ample and stimulating responses to my questions, but also by being cast under the spell of this magical man. Whenever I saw him afterward the conversations were always as rich and rewarding as they were just plain fun. I have never met anyone who wore the heavy mantles of both learning and wisdom with such gentility and grace.

Our eulogists are Professors Avrom Udovitch of Princeton University, Franz Rosenthal of Yale University, and Yosef Yerushalmi of Columbia University. They will speak in that order, without further introduction.

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Shelomo Goitein, were he with us this afternoon would have, on the whole, approved these proceedings. For while he knew how to relax and enjoy life, one of the things he enjoyed most was not wasting time. Anybody who was ever invited to the Goitein home for dinner can testify that the conversation was not allowed simply to meander, to wander aimlessly. Goitein always had an agenda. It is not exactly that one had to sing for one's supper. Rather, he assumed that like himself people were very busy and that they were very busy following serious and interesting pursuits. Why waste time then, when we can learn from each other by going around the table with every person giving an account of himself and his work?

A month after his death, on the traditional *sheloshim*—the thirtieth day—we are gathered to hear an accounting of Shelomo Dov Goitein's works. I am sure that Goitein would have thought that if we insist on spending the late afternoon of an early spring day talking about him, it should be his work that we talk about. It should be his colleague and friend Franz Rosenthal discussing his contributions to Islamic studies and his admired young colleague Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi evaluating his place in Jewish historical studies. This, at least, is no waste of time. He may have had some qualms, however, about talking of Goitein, the man, his life and times. These are, nevertheless, indispensable in understanding and appreciating Goitein's accomplishments, and he himself has left us several accounts of these aspects of his life. I hope, therefore, he will forgive us if we waste a few moments talking about Goitein.

Shelomo Dov Goitein was born on April 4, 1900, in Burgkunststadt, a tiny village in Bavaria. He was the youngest of three sons born to Freda and Eduard Goitein. His father was a district Rabbi and the leader of the small local Jewish community. On both his mother's and his father's side, he was a descendant of a long and distinguished line of traditional Jewish religious scholars. All of us know that Shelomo Goitein was certainly not a boastful

man. On the contrary, modesty and discretion were his hallmark. The one expression of personal family pride that I ever heard him utter was concerning the treatise of his grandfather's grandfather, Benedict Baruch Goitein, who lived in the late eighteenth century, the author of the work called *Kesef Nivhar*, a compendium of Talmudic law arranged according to religious and legal concepts. Not infrequently he would remove this book from the shelf, extol its virtues, and announce that compared to the work of his ancestor, nothing that he himself wrote or would ever write was very significant.

It was in this small, almost rural community in Bavaria, which eighty years later elected him as an honorary citizen, that Goitein received his early education. I share with you a little known anecdotal detail of Goitein's biography. Apparently the local Catholic church was short of suitable candidates for its choir. Goitein, who was proud of the fact that as a child he had a very pleasing soprano voice, was pressed into service and served for some time as an altar boy in the Catholic church of Burgkunstadt. He was proud of this experience. He said it improved his Latin; but it also, he said, gave him an insight into the communication between man and God. Possibly this childhood experience influenced the choice many years later of his doctoral dissertation on prayer in the Koran.

From Burgkunstadt, he went at age 14 to Frankfurt where he spent the next nine years interrupted only by a three-month stint in 1918 as an artillery lieutenant in the German army. In an autobiographical memoir of his life as a scholar he writes, "the really formative period of my life were the years 1914 to 1923 which I spent in Frankfurt and partly also in Berlin. It gave me inspiration, knowledge and friendship. It was a time of great enthusiasm. This was especially true for the post-war period which started for many of us while we still were in uniform. We were not a lost generation—quite the opposite. We were full of good hope and confidence. This was going to be the last war. We would see to it. The old rotten monarchies of Russia, Austria, and Germany had gone. The right of self-determination for the small nations was assured. Social justice was gaining victories. The Jewish youth, in

particular, was confronted by the tremendous task: the building of the old-new national home in Palestine. Although only a few of my acquaintances took the task literally as I and my closest friends did and were resolved to emigrate from Germany to Palestine immediately after the completion of our studies, the ideal affected everyone. It either was embraced enthusiastically or rejected with equal fervor. Frankfurt in those days vibrated with spirituality. Martin Buber came over almost every weekend. Franz Rosenzweig was very near to us."

He goes on to describe other influences on his life at that time and his involvement in Jewish youth organizations which combined ideals of national redemption with those of personal perfection through communion with nature, with music and art.

Concerning his studies at that time, he writes, "my five years at the University, 1918-23, were years of mad activity. Fortunately, I had received excellent training in the two upper grades of the classical *gymnasium* which corresponded approximately to college here. If I know how to interpret a text philologically, I learned this first there. The German university of those days was notorious for its lack of educational guidance. I attended twenty-four to thirty classes a week because I was resolved to go to Palestine and wished to have as broad an education as possible. In addition, every morning at 6:30 I had an hour of Talmud with the greatest Talmudist in Frankfurt, who happened to be a banker. I drew a portrait of this man in the second volume of *A Mediterranean Society*, pages 546-547. You may read it there. Another Talmud lesson was taken in the late afternoon, four times a week, with a professional teacher, and again on Saturdays with a third teacher. Our professors at the University were sources of information. In some cases, also models of methodology. I had the good luck to have as my main mentor, Joseph Horowitz, who had been professor at the Anglo-Mohammadan College at Aligarh, India, and was equally fluent in Arabic and Persian and was an expert on the contemporary East. He was a very reserved man, but when set talking he was an inexhaustible source of knowledge about the East, past and present, and a paragon of philological exactitude. His guidance for my Ph.D. thesis, I believe, did not take more than

ten minutes. Its topic was Prayer in the Koran. He said, 'collect everything the Koran says about prayer, and try through critical examination to arrange it chronologically.' This, of course, I did. But my real concern was the prayers themselves, their religious purport, and, above all, their literary forms."

After completing his dissertation in 1923, he set out for Palestine. He arrived there in September of 1923 and began his career in the Middle East as a teacher in a high school in Haifa. He was an educator and frequently said and wrote that this was essentially how he saw himself and his role. Aside from his four years at Haifa, he was later again involved in secondary education between 1938 and 1948 as (and this was one of his favorite phrases to describe himself) "His Majesty's senior education officer in Palestine," a position which he held for those ten years.

Shelomo Goitein was a member of the original founding faculty of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He inaugurated the instruction in Islamic history and Islamic studies at that University. He founded the School of Oriental and African Studies and he founded the Israel Oriental Society. It was he who trained, educated and raised up several generations of eminent scholars in the Middle East, Israel and elsewhere.

In 1957, he accepted a position at the University of Pennsylvania in order to work on the Geniza. Because of his involvement in public life in Israel, he felt that he could not do justice to this project if he stayed in Jerusalem. There is one event (little known in Goitein's biography) that I would like to recount in this connection. Before he came to Pennsylvania, Fernand Braudel, the other great Mediterraneanist of the twentieth century, heard about his work and invited him to Paris on an open-ended research appointment to pursue his research and writing there without any teaching responsibilities. The only condition posed was that the Geniza research be published in the French language. For considerations of language and efficiency and effectiveness, Goitein renounced the certain charms of Paris for the less certain charms of Philadelphia. All those who were close to Shelomo and Theresa know that leaving Jerusalem was, on a personal level, a very serious sacrifice for the Goitein family. It was a step taken only

because he felt that he had a mission with respect to the Geniza project, a mission that would best be served in the relative calm of an American university campus. The efflorescence of his scholarship during the subsequent three decades amply justified his decision.

Upon his retirement from the University of Pennsylvania in 1971, he came to Princeton as a long-term visitor in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study. When he retired, Goitein looked forward to a very modest retirement income. The first volume of *A Mediterranean Society* had just appeared and he had plans for at least two more volumes (it actually ended up to be four more). He also projected a three-volume study of the medieval India trade and he simply had insufficient means at his disposal to realize his ambitious projects. In 1970 he looked forward to a life of vagabondism. He had invitations from Brown and from several other American universities and he intended to support his work by moving every year from place to place, carrying his Geniza laboratory with him. It is to the eternal credit of the Institute for Advanced Study, to his colleagues Felix Gilbert and Kenneth Setton in the School of Historical Studies, and to the Director Carl Kaysen who, at that time, made an arrangement for Goitein's temporary association with the Institute. The fund-raising each year necessary to maintain this association with the Institute was often quite an adventure, but it was an adventure which we managed to survive every year due to the devoted efforts of Carl Kaysen, Harry Woolf and other friends. This annual ordeal continued until 1983 when Goitein's achievement was recognized through the award of a MacArthur lifetime fellowship. Of his and Theresa's life in Princeton, Goitein frequently paraphrased the Biblical expression, saying, "This lengthened the days of our life."

As of November, 1984, Shelomo Goitein's bibliography numbered 599 items: books, articles and reviews. When everything that is now in press is finally published, it will number well over 600. Of these items, about twenty percent were completed during Goitein's thirteen and a half years in Princeton, including, during this period, seven books: volumes II, III and IV of *A Mediterranean*

Society, volume V which is now in press and volume VI which is virtually completed, both of which will appear posthumously; his volume of documents, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, as well as three volumes in Hebrew. My colleagues following me at this podium will discuss his work which falls into three major categories: Jewish studies, Islamic studies and Judaeo-Arabic studies.

Shelomo Goitein described himself as a sociographer. For all of you here, this is probably a new term, and I believe that it was he who invented it for himself. Original man that he was, he had to have an original category for himself and it was that of a sociographer. By that he meant that he was a describer, a writer about old societies based on their texts. He realized the importance of documents and he knew how to read them in depth. He had an unmatched gift for recreating a whole society in all its vividness, exposing its many levels and penetrating to the soul and mentality of the people about whom he wrote. From this standpoint, the five volumes of Goitein's *Mediterranean Society* are a unique contribution to our vision of pre-modern Jewish and pre-modern Near Eastern societies, and stand as a model for the study of both. I had told Goitein that when his *Mediterranean Society* would be completed, I intended to write a review entitled "The Two Mediterraneans" in which I hoped to compare his work with that of Braudel. Braudel's Mediterranean is vast. It stretches from the gates of Hercules to the gates of Peking. It is full of plains, plateaus and peninsulas, of climates and seasons, and it moves with the majestic, leisurely rhythm of the long *durée*. Goitein was more modest and his Mediterranean is much more modest. It is the Mediterranean coast between Tunisia and Egypt, with a little extension in either direction. It is only part of the Mediterranean but its shores are teeming with people, their quarrels, their wedding contracts, their dowries, their house furnishings, their table ware, and also their mentality, their religion and their most intimate feelings. His universe was not on a measure of the sea. Goitein's, like Braudel's, is a total history, but a total history based on the measure of man.

Goitein, when talking about himself, often used the third person instead of the first person. We can recall such statements as, "Mr.

Goitein is always busy and therefore he always has time," an assertion which was both characteristic and true. He was very lucid about himself. In summarizing his life's trajectory, he wrote:

I started out an essentially medieval being, that is, one for whom there exists only one real issue of mind, overriding all others, religion. I have remained, I believe, a *homo religiosus*, but I have become a thoroughly modern man with all that is implied in this change. Finally, there was a constant discrepancy between a particularly happy personal life and a heartbreak or wrath at the sight of so much misery and degradation experienced during this century. Often I asked myself, how was I able to live with all this? How often did I cry out with Job, 'is my strength the strength of stone, or my flesh made of bronze?' and how often did I feel like the Book of Deuteronomy when it said, 'you will be driven mad by the sight that your eyes shall see?' As one who has brought up to regard his life as a service to the community, I felt that question of Job, that curse of Deuteronomy, stronger than any satisfaction that I ever derived from personal happiness.

Personal happiness was tied to his family life. He dedicated the third volume of *A Mediterranean Society* to the memory of his father who died when he was 14 years old, "to the loving memory of my father, Dr. Eduard D. Goitein, 1864-1914," and he quotes Proverbs, "The ways of wisdom are kindness and all its paths are peace." He dedicated volume two to his mother, "to the loving memory of my mother, Freda Goitein, nee Braunschweiger, 1870-1920," and he quotes from the Talmud, "When Rav Joseph [who was blind] heard the steps of his mother, he said to his students, 'let me stand up, I perceive the presence of God.'" Volume I of *A Mediterranean Society* is dedicated very simply: "to Theresa, 'Mine and yours is hers.'" All who had the privilege of entering their home were enriched by the tenderness and beauty, the profound and almost total sense of sharing, complicity and friendship of these two remarkable human beings.

I cannot conclude these remarks without pointing to some of Goitein's personal qualities which many of us admired and rejoiced

in. He was always ready and eager to learn new things. For the first sixty years of his life, he was a philologist. At the age of sixty, the documents and material he was studying propelled him into new areas and he transformed himself into an economic historian. By that I don't mean only that he read works on economic history so that he could quote them in his footnotes, rather he began to think like an economic historian and to interpret his material accordingly. In his seventies, when he was working on documents connected with the family, he acquired the skills of a social historian. He read a great deal in sociology and anthropology, and applied what he learned to the merchants and craftsmen of the Geniza world—and to their wives as well. The result is one of the finest examples of social history of the Islamic Middle East. In his eighties Goitein became a historian of what the French call “mentalité.” The results of this new turning in his thought are embodied in the fifth volume of *A Mediterranean Society*, now in press. This is a pioneering effort, representing the first attempt by a historian to probe the mentality of a traditional Near Eastern society.

In the fall of 1984 he was a regular participant in a joint evening seminar between the Institute and the University. He had no hesitation about offering for discussion some chapters from his work in progress. He accepted criticism and comments from colleagues his junior in both years and learning and he went home immediately to make revisions accordingly. One had the feeling with Goitein that the past was never finished. He looked upon himself as an unfinished product. He had an almost mystic compulsion to keep working on himself. Next to his radio, not very long ago, I noticed a list of musical works. “When I have time,” he told me, “after I finish the India book, I'm going to buy all these records and listen to them.” If Goitein at age 84 was still improving himself, then anyone who went to see him felt that things were not hopeless. That is why one always went away from Goitein feeling good, and feeling that he carried one upward.

“I hope,” wrote Shelomo Goitein in April 1970, “to return to the dreams of my youth—my role as an educator. Numerous publications of mine tried on the one hand to interpret the classical sources

of Judaism and the spirit of our times as far as I understood it, and on the other hand to further the understanding of the world of Arabic Islam and its relationship to the Jewish people. The Geniza publication should contribute to both ends. Ecclesiastes has said: 'in the morning sow your seed and in the evening do not let rest your hands.' Even in the evening of our lives we should not stop sowing. One day the seed might bring forth fruit."

He was a giant who walked in our midst.

Franz Rosenthal
Sterling Professor Emeritus of Near Eastern Languages
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A loss as great as that caused by the unexpected death of Shelomo Dov Goitein always jogs the memory. Since he came to this country, I consider myself fortunate to have enjoyed a good deal of personal contact, but during the past month, my thoughts went back farther: to the International Congress of Orientalists in Rome in 1935 where I first met him and, as I remember clearly, had lunch together with him in the company of some other scholars from the Hebrew University. The paper he presented at the Congress dealt with the impending publication of his edition of part V of al-Balâdhurî's *Kitâb al-Ansâb* and was a general survey of early Muslim historiography. About the same time, I am not sure whether it was a little earlier or later, I had an opportunity to consult his doctoral dissertation on prayer in the Qur'ân in the Oriental Reading Room of the Prussian State Library in Berlin which had a copy of it. I took no notes and do not really remember what I read. In fact, I seem to have a dim recollection that I found it difficult to get through, since the kind of copying procedure then available was terribly hard to read, almost illegible. Thus my first acquaintance with Shelomo Goitein as a student of the Qur'ân and as the editor of an old Islamic historical text pictured him to me as an Arabist, and I have considered him an Arabist ever since. When I learned about his many accomplishments as a Hebrew and Biblical scholar and, not the least, as a man of action, it at first surprised me that one man could do so many things so well and keep growing and expanding his interests. It did not shake my view of him as the complete Arabist and Islamicist but rather confirmed it.

His academic mentor was the Arabist Joseph Horowitz in Frankfurt. As Goitein described him, Horowitz had three main interests: The Qur'ân, early Arabic historiography, and old Arabic poetry. Horowitz produced an amazing number of outstanding students during his rather brief tenure at Frankfurt, and his influence upon all of them was strong. It is easy to see that he

passed on his concerns to Goitein. Those three fields are indeed the best foundation anyone working in Islamic studies could have. In the case of Goitein, his early introduction to them bore truly extraordinary fruit. If ancient poetry was not a field in which he published, he confessed in later years that he always had "a weakness for ancient Islamic poetry" and, of course, al-Balâdhurî's *Ansâb*, in his words, "represents one of the richest collections of ancient Arabic poetry." The edition, indeed, required a solid knowledge of that poetry.

The project of editing the large work of al-Balâdhurî on the basis of the Istanbul manuscript, the only one then known, appealed to the young Hebrew University as something suitable for its newly created School of Oriental Studies. It was a massive undertaking that was to prove to the world the importance of the School as a scholarly center of Arabic studies. Projects of this sort are easy to inaugurate but hard to execute. It was fortunate that the University had in Goitein the one man who at the time could be entrusted with the task. He not only produced his part of the edition on schedule, but he also set the standards for the entire enterprise. They were new standards of accuracy. In particular, they established the principle of the necessity of sifting through a vast body of parallel texts for comparison and comment. The later editors, Max Schlössinger and M. J. Kister, adhered to them faithfully.

The entire work has not yet been edited. Beginning in 1959, some Arabic scholars started anew on its edition, since 1979 under the aegis of the *Bibliotheca Islamica* in Wiesbaden and Beirut. Meanwhile, two more manuscripts had been discovered in Morocco. The editor of Vol. IV was Iḥsân 'Abbâs, an outstanding scholar well known here in Princeton. In his epilogue to the volume, he briefly refers to the "Jerusalem edition" in these words: "The text contained in this volume was published between the years 1936 and 1971 on the basis of only the Istanbul manuscript by three very thorough scholars (*muḥaqqiqîn mudaqqiqîn*). The accuracy of their work constitutes a good example of dedicated effort, and I confess that I have profited much from their critical attitude and their way of using the sources consulted by them,

while attempting wherever I could to go beyond it as much as possible." This is high praise indeed coming from someone as accomplished an editor of texts as Ihsân 'Abbâs and who felt compelled to choose his words carefully. The footnotes to his edition contain no further express references to the Jerusalem edition, and it seems to me from cursory comparison that there was in fact little occasion for changes and improvements. If the great project had to be abandoned by the Hebrew University, the role played in it by Goitein will never be forgotten.

Another, even larger project, the Concordance of Classical Arabic poetry, an indispensable tool for scholars, is being continued in Jerusalem. It originated at the same time as the Balâdhurî project and is a reminder of the seminal work on Oriental studies done in Jerusalem when Goitein taught there. It also is a further indication of his concern with Arabic poetry.

It proved even more significant that Goitein received his academic training in the field of Qur'ânic studies. The Islamicist has a nearly inexhaustible choice of subjects to deal with, many of them as yet imperfectly explored. Yet anyone who thinks that he can do whatever he does without a thorough knowledge of the Qur'ân, is sadly mistaken and likely to have a limited and fatally stunted perception of what Islam was, is, and will be. Knowledge of the Qur'ân includes the life story of the Prophet, as Goitein put it: "Developed Islam differed from its original as a grown up man from a child. However, just as childhood predestines the future adult, so did Muhammad's creation shape later Islam in all its essentials." From the Qur'ânic foundation, the student of Islam can go anywhere and make firmly grounded contributions—that is, in theory. In practice, of course, it requires the genius with which Goitein was so abundantly blessed, the willingness to work constantly and methodically, the ability to look around nearly everywhere in the world in order to find related or contrasting features that illuminate the particular nature of Islam, and, last but not least, the courage to tackle the big problems and to venture into if not entirely unexplored, then hotly contested territory. All that characterizes his work on Islamic subjects, and not only this side of his work but all of it.

Let me call your attention to at least a few of his Islamic contributions that are of unusual interest. Concerned as he always was with the Qur'ân, he never forgot his dissertation. As he once mentioned to me and also expressed in print, he hoped to find the time to return to "Das Gebet im Qoran." To my knowledge, more urgent and ultimately more important activities did not permit it. That he always thought of it, is also indicated by the brief article on the subject published for the first time in his collected *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, by the way, a revealing title. As always, he raises fundamental, original questions, such as, for instance, why there is no extensive liturgy in Islam, and proposes new solutions, such as how it came about that the number of daily prayers in Islam was set at five. In the same vein, he attempted to solve the problem of the origin of the month-long fast during Ramaḍân. It does not have a simple explanation and has puzzled scholars for a long time. Goitein's subtle argumentation centers around Muḥammad's attitude toward Moses as the bearer of an earlier revelation and the Jewish tradition of Moses's second stay of forty days on Mount Sinai ending with the day of atonement. Another of the old problems which has found a new solution through Goitein is that of why the Muslims settled on Friday, *yawm al-jum'ah* "Day of Gathering," as their special day of the week. He does away with the often proposed simplistic notions that the Muslims had no choice because Saturday and Sunday were preempted by the Jews and the Christians and that Friday was chosen as a sort of protest against them. He points to a variant reading in the Qur'ân which replaces *yawm al-jum'ah* of the accepted text with "the day of the great 'arîbah," using the word for Friday current among Jews and Christians and thus suggesting a connection with their customs. His wide experience as an educator made him aware of the need for a clear pedagogic approach even when addressing scholars. So he often summarized his findings in a number of precisely formulated and numbered points. Let me quote the decisive first two (out of nine) points made in connection with *yawm al-jum'ah*: 1. The expression *yawm al-jum'ah* is pre-Islamic and designated the market-day, just as its Hebrew (and Aramaic) equivalent *yôm hak-kenîsa*. And 2. The

market day was held in the oasis of Medina on Friday, the day "when the Jews bought their provisions for the Sabbath." Naturally, such a summary gives no indication of the richness of the argumentation and the many keen observations made on the basis of a detailed knowledge of Arabic and Jewish sources.

In the background there always was his conception of Islamic history as a whole. It can be seen in all his publications. He always watched out for what could be learned about the past from present-day conditions with which he was thoroughly familiar. But he was not hesitant to state bluntly what many scholars feel but do not like to admit, that "medieval Islamic civilization is a thing of the past." It cannot be repeated and when attempts are made to revive it, they just remain on the surface. They cannot penetrate the innermost being of what had existed before and reproduce it. Enough remnants of the past, however, had remained earlier in our century, in particular in then remote areas like the Yemen. Someone with wide Orientalist learning like Goitein was able to notice and use the light they shed on the medieval past.

The entire sweep of Muslim history could, in Goitein's view, be divided into four major periods of different lengths. He felt that the great break with the old Arab tradition did not come, as commonly assumed, with the end of Umayyad rule but a century later when the process of the Muslim assimilation of Hellenistic thought and scholarship was largely completed. Then there came four centuries of maturity and independent creativity rarely matched in the history of civilization. Thereafter, to the beginning of the nineteenth century, was a period of dormancy often accompanied by outright decadence in many sections of society and intellectual life. Thus, 850, 1250, and 1800 roughly mark the turning points in Muslim history. The "watershed" around 850 is a new and noteworthy idea. The assumption of a continuous and protracted period of decay frequently encounters strenuous opposition. It can be argued that decadence lies in the eye of the beholder and that what to some observers may seem to be inertness can be interpreted as the consolidation of a cultural position. However, there is enough truth to it to let his periodization stand as a whole and as a valuable corrective to other views on

the long-range periods of Muslim history. It is another indication of the universality of his view of the past.

I would like to mention only one more of his specifically Islamic contributions which has always been a particular favorite of mine. It seems to concern a minor item. In reality, in his hands, it turns out to be something of wide significance that pervades not only all Muslim life throughout Muslim history but connects that history with the ancient Near East as well as humanity throughout the world from the earliest stages known to us to the present. I mean the article, published first in the Jubilee Volume of the Indo-Muslim periodical *Islamic Culture* under the title of "The origin and historical significance of the present-day Arabic proverb." It was again published in an enlarged form in the collected *Studies* where it is entitled "The present-day Arabic proverb as a testimony to the social history of the Middle East." The titles themselves show the progress in his thought and the widening of his perspective that enabled him to draw significant conclusions from seemingly unpromising material. The Arabs were and are fond of proverbial expressions, the meaning of which often escapes the uninitiated. They are quoted throughout the literature beginning with pre-Islamic poetry, and many collections of proverbs were compiled. Goitein now shows that these proverbs were constantly changing, although a common stock of them can be traced. They reveal the differentness of old Beduin Arab modes of thinking and living and, on the other hand, the continuity that existed in urbanized Islam with pre-Islamic Near Eastern civilizations. In short, the article contributes to the understanding of Islam in its historical development, and it puts Islam in a universal and fundamental human setting. It should be remembered that Goitein's *Jemenica*, I believe his first published major scholarly book, was a collection of proverbs of the Jews of the Yemen. The brief introduction of *Jemenica* already alludes to those ideas which grew and were nurtured in his mind. Incidentally, the Yemenite proverbs provide much information on a little known niche of the Arabic language. With his later publications on Yemenite dialectology, they make him a major contributor to Arabic linguistics.

The example of the "proverbs" shows clearly what has been implicit in almost his entire work as an Arabist: in some way or other, it always drew its inspiration from his concern with Judaism and immensely profited from it. In those years, when the Geniza documents, known before but really discovered by him, occupied most of his time, the specific Jewish themes, of course, became dominant but Islam was always and everywhere present. It was he who discovered what others had failed to see. The Geniza was not just a Jewish preserve but represented an integral component of the Muslim world. Its profusion of original documents fills a gap and substitutes for lacking contemporary Muslim information of this sort. It provides precise linguistic information, for example, on objects of daily life for which the Arabic dictionaries fail us. Above all, it tells us about economic activities, big and small, which were those of medieval Islam in general and could only be dimly perceived on the basis of data available before. And it clarifies a variety of social conditions in the Jewish community which can be assumed without a doubt to have also been those of the comparable strata of Muslim society. "*A Mediterranean Society* is "the" Mediterranean society. The value of Goitein's Geniza work for Islam is being increasingly acknowledged by Islamicists of every hue and specialization. Their appreciation of its importance will continue to grow. It is particularly remarkable how smoothly Islamic and Jewish themes in his work run together without a seam. As the Geniza teaches us much about its Muslim environment, Jewish concepts noticeable in Islam help us to understand its formation and development. Muslim dominance set the tone; the Jewish minority provided variations. Enabling us to see and feel the resulting harmony is his unique creation. Nobody else anticipated or equals him in this respect.

It is tempting to compare him with Ignace Goldziher, who was born exactly half a century earlier and who is acknowledged to be the father of modern Islamology. There is a difference. Knowledge about Islam was too limited in Goldziher's time, and Jewish learning was too strong and traditional and above all Europe-centered to allow an unqualified comparison between Goitein's work and that of Goldziher. In the course of the twentieth century,

the situation in these respects changed thoroughly. Thus, the time had come for someone to take up where Goldziher had left off. The history of the Jews in their natural Near East environment could now be integrated into the history of their Muslim living space.

In Goitein's work, the resulting gain of knowledge and understanding has been so great for both as to signal a new departure. He has succeeded in giving Jewish-Arabic studies new directions and in making them an indispensable component of Arab Muslim studies, to the mutual benefit of both. In the process, he has become the creator of a true sociology of Muslim civilization that is based not on preconceived theories from outside, but on the authentic facts he has discovered. His work will stand as Goldziher's work has done, and on a comparable level of importance.

It is a great privilege to have known Shelomo Dov Goitein for all his wonderful scholarly and personal qualities. What he has done for Islamic studies will always be remembered.

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi

*Saló Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture and Society
Columbia University*

Although I was not a colleague of Professor Goitein and never formally his student, I learned from everything he wrote. Indeed, I have a fairly extensive collection of "Goiteinica" at home, for he regularly sent me offprints of his work. In what is essentially an exercise in group memory of a very great and wonderful man, I trust that you will understand if I begin with a few personal recollections.

The first work by Shelomo Dov Goitein that I ever read was a little book that had been published by Schocken in New York in 1947. It was entitled *In the Land of Sheba*. Many years later I was fortunate enough to acquire a complete set of the entire original *Schocken Bücherei*. This was an extraordinary series of ninety-two small volumes in uniform format, published in Nazi Germany by German Jews and for German Jews in the short span between 1933 and 1939, part of the saga of German-Jewish spiritual resistance to Nazism. The original of *In the Land of Sheba* was in that series, entitled: *Von den Juden Jemens*. It had been written in Jerusalem in 1934 and published in Berlin in the dark year of 1937. When I reread the introduction, this time in German, I suddenly understood that the book was more than a little anthology on the Jews of Yemen; it had also been a thinly coded message to the Jews of Germany in that terrible time. Goitein wrote of the Yemenite Jews that theirs was "eine wahre leidensgeschichte"—a true history of suffering. Yet at the same time, he continued pointedly, they were able through their faith and learning to retain their human dignity (*auch unter den erniedrigsten äusseren Bedingungen die Menschenwürde da voll gewahrt bleibt, wo das Licht des Glaubens und des Wissens um die eigene Bestimmung im Inneren leuchtet*).

My second memory is also fairly early. I did not attend the Congress of Orientalists to which Professor Rosenthal referred (I was only three years old at the time). But in 1954 I was in my second year at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York which, as many of you are aware, is itself an important repository

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of Geniza materials, and where the annual meeting of the American Academy for Jewish Research takes place. As a student I sat, as usual, in the rear of the auditorium, and I was fortunate to be present at what I think was a rather historic occasion, both in terms of Professor Goitein's own work and in terms of modern Jewish scholarship. It was the meeting of the Academy at which he presented a paper entitled "What Would Jewish and General History Benefit by a Systematic Publication of the Documentary Geniza Papers?"

These were, so to speak, my first encounters with what I shall call, provisionally, the "Yemenite Goitein" and the "Geniza Goitein." But there were other Goiteins as well.

Years passed, I was teaching at Harvard, and Professor Goitein came to visit. No matter what our research purposes, when we come to a library do we not check the catalogue (somewhat surreptitiously) to see whether it contains our own books and monographs? Goitein went to Widener Library and we went with him, and we said (gratuitously)—"If you're looking for one of your articles in the more exotic periodicals you should really look, not under your name, but under the periodical listing." He said that he was looking for something else, something of his called *Pulcellina*. Now *Pulcellina* was a play that Goitein wrote in Hebrew and published in Tel Aviv in 1927, and I think that for him this was the litmus test as to whether the Widener Library was truly a great library. Do they have a copy of *Pulcellina* at Harvard or do they not? (The answer is, they do.) This was a play that had nothing to do with either Yemenites or the Mediterranean. Its plot revolves around an historical incident, a rather famous one in Jewish history—the blood libel of Blois, in France, in 1171. I will not tell the whole story. Suffice it to say that there was a ritual murder accusation and the forty or so Jews of Blois were pressured to accept baptism or die. Most chose martyrdom. Among them was a young Jewess named Pulcellina with whom the ruler, Count Thibault, had fallen in love, yet she too chose a martyr's death.

There are certain commonplaces that arise in conversations about Shelomo Dov Goitein. One hears repeatedly that while his work on the Yemenite Jews alone would have given him a secure

place in the annals of Jewish scholarship (and that, of course, is true) it was the Cairo Geniza that gave him his special claim to world renown. One hears, comfortingly (for it seems to imply hope for the rest of us), that Goitein was a "late-bloomer." After all, his love affair with the Geniza did not begin until 1948. He went to Budapest on a mission that had nothing to do with the Geniza, at a time when it was thought that the Kaufmann collection had been lost during the war, but he found the Geniza documents intact in both the Kaufmann and Goldziher collections. Before that, in Goitein's own phrase—and I have often wondered whether he meant it as a pun—he "studiously avoided" Geniza studies. But while I suppose that such a periodization has some validity, let us beware of radically bifurcating Goitein's creative life, for it was a life in which the major concerns continued and overlapped. Although today we have divided him into several aspects, even when we have said what we have come to say, they will still not add up to the total Goitein.

The Yemenites. He was so passionately interested in the Yemenites. This interest continued after he became involved in Geniza research, and even in the Geniza he found documents about Yemenite Jewry. He was fascinated by them, I believe, not only because they were "available" in the sense that an anthropologist may enter a certain area of field work because it is accessible. Goitein studied the Yemenite Jews not only because they were present in some number in Jerusalem in the 1920s and '30s, nor even because they were transplanted *en masse* to Israel in 1949 and with that their organic way of life in Yemen had come to an end and had to be documented before it was too late, but because in Goitein's eyes they were—the phrase is his—"the most Jewish and the most Arab of all Jews." It was, I submit, this interplay that fascinated him above all. And that already adumbrates the later Geniza studies which were not yet on the horizon at the time.

Though he was probably unaware of it when he began, the study of Yemenite Jewry must also have been an invaluable anticipatory experience for him combining, as it did, historiography, ethnology, linguistics. He wrote at one juncture that in listening to his Yemenite informants he learned quite early to ask as few delib-

erate questions as possible, to give them a chance to speak spontaneously, for only then would he receive unexpected information and nuances. Is this not essentially the way in which Goitein "listened" to his Geniza informants of the tenth to the thirteenth centuries?

I dare say that even *Pulcellina* has its place. *Pulcellina* represents many things. It is Goitein's homage to his own Ashkenazic heritage. It reflects his literary bent. Though not a work of scholarship, it is deeply rooted in Jewish history. It also represents his interest in the theatre as education. Here I should pause for a moment to supplement what Professor Udovitch has told you in some detail, and that is the extent to which Goitein was existentially involved in the problems and aspirations of twentieth-century Jewish life. I know it was largely fortuitous, yet somehow to me it has always been symbolic, that in 1923 two young German Jews took the same boat from Trieste with the same destination and purpose in mind. They were Gershom Scholem and Shelomo Dov Goitein. (Should you wish to stretch the symbolism even farther, it happens that the boat did not go directly from Trieste to Palestine; it went to Egypt.) At the time Goitein had not yet committed himself to Islamic and Jewish scholarship. A commitment of a different kind brought him from Germany to Palestine, and here too a comparison of the two men is not without interest. Scholem in 1923 did not think he would ever teach at a university because the field of Jewish mysticism did not exist as an academic discipline, and so he thought he would be a high school mathematics teacher. Goitein at first disapproved of the very notion of a Hebrew University because it would draw Jews away from what they should be doing in Palestine—transforming themselves through agriculture and labor—fulfilling the Zionist dream. But even after he had reconciled himself to scholarship there continued to pour forth newspaper articles on current issues, essays on the great modern Hebrew writer Agnon, books and monographs on the Bible which we cannot discuss today, but which form an integral part of the totality that was Goitein. And of special importance—monographs and books on education, not only Jewish education but also Arab education in Israel. Years later he would

publish a Hebrew book devoted entirely to Jewish education based on Geniza records.

The future biographer will have to reckon with all these strands and somehow tie them together. But Professor Udovitch has invited me to speak specifically about Goitein's contribution to Jewish historiography, and when he first called me I balked at the prospect. To paraphrase the prophet Amos, I am neither a Geniza specialist nor a son of a Geniza specialist. The only time I ever touched the Geniza directly was during a very brief flirtation that concerned some leaves from what is apparently the earliest printed illustrated Passover Haggadah. In this connection I think it fitting to mention that those leaves were first discovered by Professor Alexander Scheiber, himself an important Geniza scholar and the last representative of the grand tradition of Jewish scholarship in Hungary, who passed away in Budapest only several weeks ago.

My difficulties in attempting to evoke the contribution of Shelomo Dov Goitein to Jewish historiography are compounded by the very nature of his work. On the one hand, the achievement is so manifest. It is simply "there," in *Jemenica*, in the magisterial volumes of *A Mediterranean Society*, in a bibliography whose scope has already been indicated by Professor Udovitch. It is there also because Goitein was so consistently articulate and reflective about the nature of his own scholarly venture. At the same time, even the most detailed analysis of his Geniza studies may not convey the magnitude of the contribution. We need a larger framework, and for that we must very briefly consider the development of modern Jewish scholarship since its inception in the early nineteenth century.

If one needs a date for the beginning, it was 1819, when a small group of young German Jews organized what they called a Verein für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, a "Society for the Scientific Study of Judaism." Scientific study, in the spirit of the age, meant critical historical study. As you all know, Heinrich Heine was a member of the Verein though he, along with others, abandoned the project and accepted baptism, "the passport to European civilization." Yet in 1822, three years after the founding of the Verein, there was published the first modern periodical devoted to the

historical study of Judaism, the *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*. Only one volume appeared, but the lead article by Immanuel Wolf entitled "On the Concept of a Science of Judaism" ("Ueber den Begriff einer Wissenschaft des Judenthums") turned out to be a manifesto for much of nineteenth-century Jewish scholarship, especially in Central Europe. Here are the key passages:

If we are to talk of a science of Judaism, then it is self-evident that the word 'Judaism' is here being taken in its comprehensive sense—as the essence of all the circumstances, characteristics, and achievements of the Jews in relation to religion, philosophy, history, law, literature in general, civil life and all the affairs of man—and *not in that more limited sense in which it only means the religion of the Jews. . . .*

It treats the object of study in and for itself, *for its own sake*, and not for any special purpose of definite intention. It begins without any preconceived opinion and is not concerned with the final result. . . .

But should the question be asked: what advantage will accrue to science as a whole from a scientific treatment of Judaism on these lines? It will be obvious once again that such a question cannot emanate from anyone who has grasped the true spirit of science. How could it be that an object which in any way at all had its place within the field of scientific research could be examined and discussed without shedding some light on other objects of science and thus indirectly over the whole field of the sciences? *In the realm of the sciences nothing stands on its own—nothing is isolated.* On the contrary, all the sciences are subject to mutual influence, are bound to each other by an inner harmony.

The challenge, on this level, seemed clear enough. In the very same issue of the *Zeitschrift*, Leopold Zunz, the only member of the original group to remain true to its goal, and one of the great architects of *Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, published a monograph on Spanish place-names in Hebrew texts. However, the manifesto notwithstanding, the course of Jewish scholarship in the nineteenth century took different turns, for reasons that are evident in

retrospect. The state of the sources and of bibliography, the struggle for Jewish civic and political emancipation, the lack of a university setting, all had their effects. Moreover, although Wolf had emphasized that there should be no prior conception of Judaism, he himself and those that followed believed that there is an "Idea" of Judaism to be found at the end, an essence which clothes itself in various historical forms but which "Wissenschaft" will eventually distill.

Jewish historical research in the nineteenth century betrayed other characteristics. It was Zunz himself who used the phrase "Kultur und Leidensgeschichte," a view of Jewish history as essentially a history of culture and of suffering. The approach to texts was sophisticated and critical, but "Kultur und Leidensgeschichte" was, in a way, a modern metamorphosis of the two primary genres of Jewish historiography in the Middle Ages, which had focused almost exclusively on books and martyrs.

There were exceptions. Some attempts were made at what might be called "social history" but these efforts were neither consistent nor especially penetrating. There was even a solitary and abortive beginning toward economic history by Levi Herzfeld. Most of you will not recognize his name, for his contemporaries ignored him and posterity has done little to remember him.

Yet for all its deficiencies, the achievements of nineteenth-century Wissenschaft are manifest as well, and it is not my purpose merely to judge that enterprise with the smugness of hindsight. After all even Jewish-Arabic studies have their rather formidable beginnings in nineteenth-century Wissenschaft des Judentums. We ought to remember in speaking of Goitein that it was Abraham Geiger who, already in 1833, wrote his doctoral dissertation on *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen*. It was Moritz Steinschneider who produced *Die Arabische Literatur der Juden*, not to mention his many other contributions to the field. Scholars of medieval Jewish philosophy knew that they could not understand their subject unless they turned also to Arabic philosophy, while scholars of Hebrew poetry in Muslim Spain realized that they must have a thorough knowledge of Arabic poetry. Nevertheless the fundamental biases remained: history of ideas, history of per-

secutions, history of Jewish luminaries, history of great events, with little integration even of these subjects into general historical processes or conceptual frameworks.

Much of twentieth-century Jewish scholarship can be seen as a series of complex and felicitous reactions against these very trends, and I do not think that Goitein himself would have wanted anyone to regard his work as something totally apart. Even so, he belongs in the very select company of those who have changed the very way we look at Jewish history today.

Shelomo Dov Goitein was neither the discoverer of the Cairo Geniza, nor the first to publish Geniza texts and documents. On the contrary, with his customary generosity of spirit, he repeatedly went out of his way to give credit to his predecessors, and these constitute no minor galaxy: David Kaufmann in Budapest, Solomon Schechter in Cambridge and then in New York, Alexander Harkavy in St. Petersburg, Jacob Mann in Cincinnati, Simha Assaf in Jerusalem, to name but a few. What, then, did he achieve?

The interest of Geniza research before Goitein was largely in its literary texts. The Geniza had first aroused attention and excitement because one could recover from it such literary treasures as the Hebrew original of the Book of Ben-Sira (Ecclesiasticus). True, some had come to appreciate the non-literary texts as well, but most of the documents edited and published had been in Hebrew. With Goitein there emerged not only a comprehensive plan of research into the documentary aspects of the Geniza, but a new and particular emphasis on the documents written in Arabic, albeit in Hebrew script. Before Goitein, scholars were willing to read fragments of texts; given the nature of the Geniza this was inevitable. Goitein was prepared to read fragments of fragments of illegible (or seemingly illegible) scraps. Prior to him scholars were interested, so to speak, in the "interesting" parts of the Geniza. Goitein himself has told us how in a library catalogue which contained some Geniza items, one was annotated: "not important—it is only a business document." It was Goitein who came to look at the whole, however dispersed that whole was in collections from Leningrad to Philadelphia, and out of business documents and other seemingly humble materials he conjured up—a world.

At one time, perhaps around the turn of the century, a phrase was current in France that may have reflected the activity of some of the graduates of the Ecole des Chartes. One spoke, somewhat whimsically, of "la fureur de l'inédit"—the furious rush to publish any interesting document one found in the archives. Now at a relatively early stage in his Geniza research Goitein discovered one hundred and thirty-eight Jewish documents on the India trade where less than a dozen had been known before, but he was not seduced into thinking that his task was done. He understood immediately that in order to grasp the full nature of the India trade he must try to fathom the entire society that produced it. This total approach and his incredible patience yielded the most unexpected results. Some were discoveries for which nineteenth-century Wissenschaft would have adored him—new information about the great Hebrew poet Judah Halevi, about Obadiah the Norman proselyte, about Moses Maimonides and his distinguished son Abraham, new data concerning Almohade persecutions, messianic movements, Palestinian academies.

But far more than that. It was Shelomo Dov Goitein who restored to us more than three centuries of Jewish history in all their living *texture*. It was he who brought about what I trust will be a final restoration of balance and perspective to our generally "occidental" view of medieval Jewish history. It was Goitein who has delivered a major blow to what my own great master, Salo Baron, has consistently combatted as the "lachrymose conception of Jewish history" (the phrase is Baron's), which views Jewish history solely as a vale of tears, a tale of pogroms and death. And finally it is Goitein, I believe, who has made the most decisive breach in the artificial walls between Jewish and general history. The integration is proclaimed in the easy flow from title to subtitle in his magnum opus: *A Mediterranean Society*, and then—*The Jewish communities of the Arab world as portrayed in the documents of the Cairo Geniza*.

One is stunned at the scope and purity of the achievement. Despite the profound personal involvement in the realities of twentieth-century Jewish life which we have underscored, despite the tragic relationship that has developed between Jews and Arabs in this century, Goitein's work was marked by remarkable objec-

tivity, by genuine openness and catholicity. Despite what could have ended in the hands of others as a facile reductionism, Goitein was able to maintain the delicate balance between what we may call the horizontal and the vertical, between outside influence and immanent internal development. "A Mediterranean Society," yes, but with its own Jewish specificity, its own historical integrity. And always an awesome capacity to see the whole. Goitein was more aware than most that "God dwells in the details," but he also knew that the details are not gods.

The legacy? First the Geniza itself, which even now is not exhausted; Goitein was the first and last to caution us on this point. Ongoing research by his students and others in ever-widening circles—in Jerusalem, a massive Geniza poetry project; at Cambridge University the cataloguing of the Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) texts. Shaul Shaked of the Hebrew University has long been working on the Judaeo-Persian texts; Marc Cohen of Princeton has recently published a splendid book on Jewish self-government in Egypt based on Geniza materials.

Second, the example and the challenge to see other periods and communities with the same comprehensive vision. Professor Udovitch has mentioned Braudel and the Mediterranean. Within Jewish history the Sephardic Diaspora, from the sixteenth century (to which Braudel devotes some pages) to the late eighteenth century, awaits a "Goiteinesque" treatment. Much work has been accomplished, but thus far there seems to be no striving toward a larger synthesis. Yet here too there is a great geographical and cultural continuum that demands to be grasped as a unity. Even in terms of economic history we can contemplate a network that was virtually global in scope. By the mid-seventeenth century Sephardic Jews were living in a diaspora that extended from London through most of continental Europe, North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, and whose ties of kinship and commerce linked them to brothers, cousins and uncles who were living at least nominally as Christians in the Iberian Peninsula, in Goa in India, in the Caribbean, and in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the New World.

Third—and here perhaps you will say I am converting Goitein's

creative life into a cautionary tale—the potential for a new symbiotic relationship between Jewish and general historiography. Through the centuries the West has sporadically “discovered” post-Biblical Jews and Judaism. In the twelfth century the Victorines discovered the importance of the work of Jewish biblical commentators, some of whom were their own contemporaries. In thirteenth-century Spain Dominican and Franciscan friars discovered and studied rabbinic literature, at least for purposes of anti-Jewish polemic and debate. During the Renaissance, Europe discovered the Kabbalah, albeit as an esoteric Jewish tradition that allegedly supported Christian beliefs. The Reformation found that it was possible and even necessary to have recourse to the “Hebraic truth.” A very large and important book has yet to be written on Christian Hebraism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when, throughout Europe, there were Christian scholars who possessed a surprisingly thorough knowledge of rabbinic Hebrew and classical and medieval Jewish sources. Why there was a sharp decline toward the end of the eighteenth century and in the nineteenth century cannot concern us here. Whatever the reasons, all those periodic awakenings to the fact that neither the Jews nor Judaism ceased with the “Old Testament,” that there is something valuable to be gained from the study of post-Biblical Hebrew literature—all that is past. Certainly we can harbor no nostalgia for the theological bias and polemical motivation that all too often tainted even the most erudite efforts.

What I think Shelomo Dov Goitein opened for the future is something of an entirely different order. I do not know if another Geniza will ever be found. In order to compress what I want to say, I will use another model. I have in my office two folio volumes published in 1960 in, of all places, Sofia, Bulgaria. Each volume has a Bulgarian title page (which I cannot read) and another which proclaims in resonant Latin: *Fontes Hebraici ad Res Oeconomias Socialesque Terrarum Balcanicarum Pertinentes*—Hebrew sources for the economic and social history of the Balkan lands. I am told that at the time there were two Jews left at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences whose Hebrew was sufficient to enable them to read rabbinic sources. They decided to take the legal responsa of rabbis

who lived in the Ottoman Balkan territories from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and to extract from them the many texts that shed light, not only on inner Jewish affairs, but on the economic and social history of the Balkans generally. There was no Hebrew press in Sofia at the time, and these volumes are now something of a bibliographical curiosity. Each document consists of a photograph of the original Hebrew text from a printed edition of responsa, a Bulgarian translation, and a French précis. For the Jewish historian these texts are no novelty; we have known them all along. The corpus itself is now merely a poignant relic of something that was begun and never brought to completion. But it is also a symbol that transcends its particular subject matter. It points to the vast reservoirs of information and insight that await the general historian who will turn, with the proper equipment and preparation, to Jewish sources. I can think of no Jewish scholar who has opened these vistas more convincingly and dramatically than Shelomo Dov Goitein.

I will end by reading you a short part of a letter written originally in Aramaic in what may be called by now one of "Goitein's centuries." It is a letter of condolence sent around 1030 from Spain by Shemuel Ha-Nagid (Samuel Ibn Nagrela), the great Jewish scholar, poet, and Vizir of Granada, to Rabbi Hananel son of Rabbi Hushiel, head of the Academy of Kairouan in North Africa. Rabbi Hushiel had just passed away. The letter begins:

To our friend Rabbi Hananel from Samuel, humblest of scholars, peace and consolation. It is known to my master that although his sorrow is as great as the sea because his father was called to the assembly of the heavenly hosts, it is not from him alone that the life has been taken away and the torch extinguished, *for all men become kin when a sage has passed away.*

Many scholars are admired, only some are loved as Shelomo Dov Goitein was loved, and of such as he, I believe, was it written: *Talmidey hakhamim marbin shalom ba-'olam*—scholars increase peace in the world. That statement appears in the Talmud at the end of the tractate *Berakhot* and therefore it is also fitting to say *Yehi zikhro 'alenu li-berakhah*—may his memory be, for all of us, a blessing.

