BRITISH ROMANTICISM AND THE JEWS
British Romanticism and the Jews

History, Culture, Literature

Edited by Sheila A. Spector
Contents

Acknowledgments vii
Contributors ix
Introduction 1
Sheila A. Spector

Part I Cultural Contexts 17

   Alan H. Singer

2. Abraham Goldsmid: Money Magician in the Popular Press 37
   Mark L. Schoenfield

3. Halakhic Romanticism: Wordsworth, the Rabbis, and Torah 61
   Lloyd Davies

4. “What Are Those Golden Builders Doing?”: Mendelssohn, Blake, and the (Un)Building of Jerusalem 79
   Leslie Tannenbaum

Part II British Romantics and the Haskalah 91

5. “For Luz is a Good Joke”: Thomas Lovell Beddoes and Jewish Eschatology 93
   Christopher Moylan

6. Scott’s Hebraic Historicism 105
   Esther Schor
7. Maria Edgeworth's *Harrington*: The Price of Sympathetic Representation
   *Neville Hoad*

8. Imagining “the jew”: Dickens’ Romantic Heritage
   *Efraim Sicher*

**Part III  Jewish Writers and British Romanticism**

   *Michael Scrivener*

10. Not for “Antiquaries,” but for “Philosophers”: Isaac D’Israeli’s Talmudic Critique and His Talmudical Way with Literature
    *Stuart Peterfreund*

11. Hyman Hurwitz’s *Hebrew Tales* (1826): Redeeming the Talmudic Garden
    *Judith W. Page*

12. Grace Aguilar: Rewriting Scott Rewriting History
    *Elizabeth Fay*

13. *Alroy* as Disraeli’s “Ideal Ambition”
    *Sheila A. Spector*

14. Harold's Complaint, or Assimilation in Full Bloom
    *David Kaufmann*

*Glossary*  265
*Works Cited*  269
*Index*  287
At the 1999 meeting of the American Conference on Romanticism, I found myself wandering around like the Ancient Mariner stopping one in three to ask: “Where are the Jews?” Having spent the better part of the previous two decades exploring the relationship between Blake and Kabbalism, I had come up for air and was astonished to find that in a major conference on Romanticism, attended by a group of international scholars whose interdisciplinary focus transcended virtually all boundaries of time and space, there was absolutely no presentation devoted to the Jews, not even by the Israeli scholars who were there. Yet, as my own research amply demonstrated, there were, indeed, strong historical, cultural, and literary connections between British Romanticism and the Jews, ranging from the legal problems of English Jews, to Christian interests in Judaica and Anglo-Jewish literature, through the post-Holocaust Jewish American critics who opened up the field of Romanticism for the rest of us.

My first thought was to organize a special session on British Romanticism and the Jews for the next ACR Conference, but the deadline had already passed, so I did the next best thing. I advertised for a special session at the next MLA convention. Considering NASSR-L, the list-serv for the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism, as the most efficient means of contacting the largest group of Romanticists, I sent out a call for papers, and as an afterthought, indicated that if there was enough interest, I would be happy to compile an anthology of original essays on any aspect of the intersection between British Romanticism and the Jews. As the rich variety of this volume testifies, there was, indeed, a great deal of interest in the topic, just no appropriate mode of publication. So it is with great pride that I have edited what I hope will be but the first of many different forms of scholarship that help illuminate the wealth of as-yet unexplored material dealing with the interaction between Romanticism and Judaica.

Since January 2000, when I first announced my interest in compiling this volume, I have made many new friends who have been extremely
generous with their time and knowledge, in order to bring this project to fruition. Lilach Lachman, of Tel-Aviv University, whom I met at that first ACR Conference, has provided invaluable advice and guidance from the beginning; and Jeanne Moskal of the University of North Carolina, although not contributing an essay herself, became an e-mail pal, passing on to me any information she thought might be useful, and providing good advice when I had problems. Similarly, I wish to extend a special thanks for the moral and intellectual support provided by Clifford Marks of the University of Wyoming, whose ill health prevented his being a more active partner in the project. Judith W. Page, of the University of Florida, and Esther Schor, of Princeton University, both of whom did write essays for this volume, have served as de facto co-editors, generously helping me with all of the problems that befall a first-time editor, from basic information about the content of papers to advice about the best way to get this kind of anthology published. I also wish to thank all of the other contributors to the project, whose personal attention has helped make this volume more than simply another collection of essays. Marilyn Gaull, of Temple and New York Universities—who considered this book her Christmas present—has been an enthusiastic and informed advocate, generating Palgrave’s interest in the concept of the project and providing her own editorial skill for its execution. Without Marilyn’s unstinting assistance, this anthology would not have made nearly the contribution that it does. Finally, I would like to thank Kristi Long, Senior Editor at Palgrave, Roee Raz, her Editorial Assistant, and Donna Cherry, Palgrave’s Production Manager, for turning this project into a reality. Its strengths are due to all those who believed in the project; its weaknesses, unfortunately, are my own.
LLOYD DAVIES received his Ph.D. in Literature from Duke University’s Graduate Program in Literature. He is an associate professor of English Literature at Western Kentucky University with research interests in Romanticism, literary theory, and Jewish studies. He recently concluded a dialogue with several other literary critics, published in the journal *Christianity and Literature*, on the possibilities of traditional Judaic textual studies as a theoretical model for contemporary literary criticism. He is currently working on a book-length project, inspired by the work of Harold Fisch, entitled *Romantic Hebraism: The Covenantal Turn in English Romanticism*.

ELIZABETH FAY, Associate Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, specializes in Romanticism and Gender Studies. In addition to two books—*Becoming Wordsworthian, A Performative Aesthetics* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), and *A Feminist Introduction to Romanticism* (Blackwell, 1998)—she has a book forthcoming on British Medievalism (Palgrave), and she has written “Romanticism and Feminism,” for *The Blackwell Companion to Romanticism*, edited by Duncan Wu (Blackwell, 1998); co-edited with Alan Richardson “British Romanticism: Global Crossings,” a special issue of the *European Romantic Review* (Spring 1997); and is the editor of a special issue on Grace Aguilar, in *Romantic Circles* (Spring 1999).

NEVILLE HOAD received a B.A. and M.A. from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa; and the Ph.D. from Columbia University, New York. He was a William Rainey Harper postdoctoral fellow in the Humanities Division at the University of Chicago, and is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Texas at Austin. He has published articles in *Postcolonial Studies, GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, Development Update, Jewish Affairs, and Repercussions*; and he has
written reviews for *Current Anthropology, Windy City Times*, and the *Voice Literary Supplement*.

**DAVID KAUFMANN**, Chair of the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department at George Mason University, has written extensively about contemporary theory. In addition to a full-length study, *The Business of Common Life: Novels and Classical Economics between Revolution and Reform* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), he has published numerous essays in *New German Critique, The Burlington Magazine, Modern Judaism, Modern Philology, Yale Journal of Criticism, ELH*, and *PMLA*, among others.


**JUDITH W. PAGE** is Professor of English at the University of Florida and is also an affiliate faculty of the Center for Jewish Studies. She is the author, most recently, of *Imperfect Sympathies: Jews and Judaism in British Romantic Literature and Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

**STUART PETERFREUND**, Professor of English at Northeastern University in Boston, directs the graduate program there, having formerly served as chair of the department from 1991 to 1999. His most recent books are *William Blake in a Newtonian World: Argument as Art and Science* (1998), and *Shelley among Others: The Play of the Intertext and the Idea of Language* (2002). Long interested in the role played in British culture by religious issues and religious controversy, Peterfreund is currently at work on a book dealing with British natural history writing from Bacon to Darwin. A chapter dealing with Bacon recently appeared in the journal *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, and another on Gilbert White is forthcoming in a collection by several hands.

ESTHER SCHOR, Associate Professor and former Acting Director of Jewish Studies at Princeton University, is the author of Bearing the Dead: The British Culture of Mourning from the Enlightenment to Victoria (Princeton University Press, 1994). In addition, she is the co-editor of The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein (Oxford University Press, 1993), and Women’s Voices: Visions and Perspectives (Random House, 1990). Currently, she is editing the Cambridge Companion to Mary Shelley (in progress).

MICHAEL SCRIVENER, Professor of English at Wayne State University, converted to Judaism as an adult, and is the author of three books: Radical Shelley (Princeton University Press, 1982); Poetry and Reform (Wayne State University Press, 1992); and Seditious Allegories: John Thelwall and Jacobin Writing (Penn State University Press, 2001). He is at present working on Jewish representations in Romantic literature.

EFRAIM SICHER is Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva, where he teaches the nineteenth-century British novel, as well as contemporary drama and fiction. His publications cover a wide range of topics from Charles Dickens and George Eliot to modern dystopia and post-war memory. His several books include Beyond Marginality: Anglo-Jewish Literature After the Holocaust (SUNY Press, 1985), and a collection of essays on the literary aftermath of the Holocaust, Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory after Auschwitz (University of Illinois Press, 1998). His recent study of representation in Dickens’ novels, Rereading the City/Rereading Dickens: Representation, the Novel and Urban Realism, is forthcoming from AMS Press, New York.

ALAN H. SINGER, who received his Ph.D. in Modern British History at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1999, is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor of the History of the Western Civilization at Marquette University in Milwaukee. He has taught courses on British, Jewish, and European history at Stephens College and the University of
Missouri, and is in the process of completing a monograph, *Aliens and Citizens: Jewish and Protestant Naturalization in the Making of the Modern British Nation, 1689–1753*.

**Sheila A. Spector** is an independent scholar who has devoted her career to exploring the intersection between the British and Jewish cultures, primarily in the Romantic Period. She has published *Jewish Mysticism: An Annotated Bibliography on the Kabbalah in English* (Garland, 1984), and her two-volume study of Blake as a Kabbalist—“Glorious incomprehensible”: The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Language, and “Wonders Divine”: The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Myth—was published by Bucknell University Press in 2001.

**Leslie Tannenbaum**, Associate Professor of English at The Ohio State University, is author of *Biblical Tradition in William Blake’s Early Prophecies: The Great Code of Art* and of articles on Blake, Mary Shelley, and Byron.