

ALEXANDER MARX

Average Cost of a Book Acquired for the JTS Library—\$32.95

Estimated Value of the Entire JTS Collection—\$50,000,000+

Having had Alexander Marx as Librarian for 50 Years—Priceless!

A Talk Delivered by David Wachtel on Tuesday, June 22, 2004 at the Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries

Description: Alexander Marx was the Librarian of the Jewish Theological Seminary for half of the twentieth century. During his 50-year tenure, the library evolved from being an insignificant appendage of a fledgling academic institution to being the greatest collection of Hebraica and Judaica in the United States. As the driving force behind the Library's unparalleled expansion and development, Alexander Marx transformed not only a single institution but also the face of Jewish bibliography itself.

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מאמרי הקטן על הספרן אלכסנדר מרקס ז"ל, מוקדש בכבוד רב וברב תודות לאחד מיוורשיו הרוחניים של מרקס,
למורי וידידי, פרופסור מנחם שמלצר שליט"א, מתלמידיו הקטן, הצמא לינוק ממעינותיו,
דוד וכטל, הפועל במלאכת הקודש.
פה, נו יורק ע'וא'בי'
עש"ק - י' לחדש רחמים,
שנת ו'יתר דברי מנחם לפ"ק

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In seeking to create an attention grabbing title for this essay, I chose to use the phrasing and cadence made famous by a series of recent commercials for a popular credit card. It occurred to me that I could just as easily have used a turn of phrase from Jewish tradition by invoking the axiom recited during the morning blessings of the daily liturgy. I could have said regarding the value of having had Alexander Marx as Librarian for half a century: אלו דברים שאין להם שיעור, these are the things that have no measure, for in truth there is no way to quantify the true impact of Professor Marx's tenure as Librarian at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Having thus declared that his contributions to the Seminary and to the Library were in fact immeasurable, it is nevertheless my pleasant duty today to try to convey to you some glimpse of what those contributions were.¹

Of course we could look at the facts and figures, numbers and reports that would demonstrate to any objective observer the astronomic growth in the Library's holdings during the years Professor Marx was at its head. I will in fact refer to those facts and figures, those numbers and reports, but only in terms of background, for while the construction of buildings and the acquisition of books are not inconsiderable events in the making of a great library, they are after all quantifiable. Immeasurable and uncountable however, are the intangibles that Professor Marx brought to his fifty years at JTS. Among these intangibles were his encyclopedic knowledge of Hebrew books, his legendary abilities in identifying ancient hands, his passion for collecting and above all, his love for the Jewish people and especially for their books.

¹ This paper was originally given as a talk at the convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries held in New York on Tuesday, June 22, 2004. While efforts have been made to modify the style of this paper from that of an oral presentation to that of a written document, there are certain stylistic elements of the original lecture which nevertheless remain. I would like to thank my colleagues, Prof. Evelyn Cohen, David Sclar and Ari Kinsberg for giving generously of their time in reviewing the text. Needless to say, responsibility for any typographical errors or inaccuracies that may appear in this text are solely my own.

From 1903 to 1953, the steady hand of Alexander Marx guided the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. His presence at its helm over a span of half a century provided a fount of bibliographic acumen that was made available to students, faculty and visitors from the four corners of the earth, permanently transforming the Seminary Library into one of the most important repositories of Judaica and Hebraica in the world. Under his leadership the Library outgrew its cramped quarters several times and its holdings swelled from a meager three manuscripts to over 8,000 and from 5,000 printed works to over 165,000 books. It went from having only two fifteenth-century volumes to becoming the largest single collection of Hebrew incunabula in the world.

Every rabbi ordained at JTS, every student who has ever attended one of its schools, every scholar who has ever visited its collection and every faculty member who has ever taught within its walls owes a portion of his or her accumulated wisdom to the work of Alexander Marx. His legendary knowledge of Jewish and Hebrew books was recognized around the world. His own writings remain to this day important contributions in the field of Jewish history as well as Jewish bibliography. His correspondence with scholars and luminaries of the Jewish world reveals a wealth of details on how the Library collections were acquired. Perhaps most tellingly, the countless testimonials and expressions of appreciation for a scholar of the first rank are beyond compare.

When I was first approached to present this paper, I thought I would need to synthesize from among these many accolades, and distill my own words of tribute to Professor Marx, but I must admit that this was in fact too daunting a task. I found that others had already sung the praises of Alexander Marx (as Abraham Lincoln once said) "far above our poor power to add or detract." Therefore I chose to read to you from the words of Professor Gerson Cohen, one of

Marx's students and his immediate successor as Librarian. Cohen, who would eventually become Chancellor of the Seminary wrote:

The name of Alexander Marx will always have the same importance for the Seminary Library that Solomon Schechter and Louis Ginzberg have had for the character of the Seminary as a whole... Marx proved to be the ideal helmsman for the Library. A disciple of Moritz Steinschneider and of Abraham Berliner, he combined vast knowledge with a passionate love for the Jewish Book, or to be more accurate, for any document or object which would shed light on the Jews. To his passion for Judaica, Marx brought also a compulsive drive for exactitude and an eye for detail...

Underlying everything else was a gentleness of soul that inspired all who came in contact with him and infected them with the love of Judaism, of the Jewish Book and of exactitude. Marx gained the admiration and affection not only of his colleagues at the Seminary and the world over, of his students and of the lay benefactors of the Seminary, but of the wider world of Bibliography and librarianship as well. It can be said categorically that as librarian and bibliographer, he did more than any other person to gain recognition of and respect for the subject of Jewish bibliography in American bibliographical and library circles.²

Likewise, it was the renowned bibliophile A.S.W. Rosenbach who wrote that while "Europe had its Steinschneider, America now had its Marx."³ Furthermore, it was our own esteemed chairperson today, Dr. Menahem Schmelzer, who wrote that Alexander Marx was "singularly equipped and inclined to be the driving force behind the growth of the Library. Without Marx's conception of what *jüdische Wissenschaft* entailed and what a library that was supposed to serve it should contain, the Seminary Library would not have become what it did."⁴ And finally, it was Solomon Goldman, the prominent American Conservative rabbi, who said of him:

What others looked upon as toil and dreary vistas of boredom was to him the pleasure of his life. Research was nourishment; paleography, bibliography, typography, history were the call of kin; the rustling of a manuscript was sweet music; the colophon

² Gerson D. Cohen, "Foreword" in Alexander Marx, *Bibliographical Studies and Notes on the Rare Books and Manuscripts in The Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, ed. Menahem H. Schmelzer (N.Y.: Ktav / JTS, 1977), pp. ix-x.

³ A.S.W. Rosenbach in Alexander Marx, *Studies in Jewish History and Booklore* (N.Y.: JTS, 1944), p. ix.

⁴ Menahem Schmelzer, "Building a Great Judaica Library- At What Price?" in Jack Wertheimer, ed. *Tradition Renewed: A History of The Jewish Theological Seminary* (New York: JTS, 1997), pp. 687-8.

of an incunabulum was superb beauty; the collecting of books was thrilling adventure; . . . From the time his sainted father taught him his first *Aleph* up to the present . . . the story of his life has been that of the romance of a craft.⁵

There are many similar passages that I could refer to, from any number of scholars, students, colleagues, bibliophiles, librarians, book dealers and the like. In light of the brief time I have been allotted today, however, I will resist the temptation to further cite from the abundant encomia accorded to Alexander Marx both in his lifetime and after his death. For those who would wish to directly engage Marx's scholarship and erudition, I encourage you to select liberally from the over three hundred works listed in the bibliography of Marx's writings compiled by Boaz Cohen.⁶ For those who would wish to know more about the man himself, you should read the introduction to the Marx Jubilee Volume by Solomon Goldman⁷ or peruse the necrology entry by Abraham Halkin printed in the *American Jewish Yearbook* of 1955.⁸ For our purposes today, however, a brief biographical sketch will suffice.

Alexander Marx was born in 1878 in Elberfeld, Germany and grew up in Koenigsberg (East Prussia). After completing his courses at the Gymnasium there, he studied at the University of Berlin and the *Rabbiner-Seminar für das orthodoxe Judentum*, also in Berlin before returning to the Albertina University in Koenigsberg to defend his doctoral thesis. His studies were interrupted by a year in a Prussian artillery regiment where he excelled in horsemanship. While he had a number of mentors, none would prove to be more influential on the young Alexander Marx than the man he called "my sainted teacher," Moritz Steinschneider. Marx's relationship

⁵ Solomon Goldman, "The Man of the Book," ed. Saul Lieberman, *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume* (New York:JTS, 1950), English section, p. 1.

⁶ Boaz Cohen, "Bibliography of the Writings of Prof. Alexander Marx," *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, pp. 35-59.

⁷ Goldman, pp. 1-34.

⁸ Abraham Halkin, "Alexander Marx" in *American Jewish Yearbook*, vol. 56, (1955), pp. 580-88.

with Steinschneider, both personal and scholarly, would remain an important influence throughout his life.

In 1903, at the tender age of twenty-six, Marx accepted the invitation of Solomon Schechter, the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, to teach history and become librarian of the newly-reconstituted Seminary. Marx had met Schechter in Cambridge in 1898 while working on his doctoral dissertation on the *Seder Olam*. Both Schechter and his wife Mathilde were favorably impressed with the young man from Berlin. Later in his life Marx would often maintain that it was Mrs. Schechter who proposed his name for the post at the Seminary after Professor Solomon Schechter had exhausted all other candidates who came to mind. Along with Schechter himself, it was Alexander Marx and a handful of others at the Seminary who served as the means of transmission for *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the academic study of Judaism, from its birthplace in Europe to American shores.

For the sum of \$2500 per year, Marx was to teach courses in Jewish history as well as devote at least five hours a day to the establishment and maintaining of the Library. It soon became clear that this latter duty had been entrusted to the right man. As Schechter reported to the Seminary Board of Directors in early 1904, "Dr Marx, besides his lectures, has given much more time to the Library than I had reason to hope he would be able to."⁹

In 1905, Marx married Hannah Hoffmann, the daughter of Rabbi David. Z. Hoffmann, rector of the Berlin *Rabbiner Seminar*. Also in that year he was a delegate to the Seventh Zionist Congress in Basle. The years following Marx's arrival in New York were filled with the tasks that would consume him for the next half century. His scholarship and the growth and development of the JTS Library—these were the stuff of Marx's life.

⁹ "Minutes of the Board of Directors of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America," vol. 1, p. 59. These minutes are housed in the Rare Book Room of the J.T.S. Library.

His scholarly talents were made evident in his meticulous attention to detail. Not only could he see the details, he was a master at describing them in such a way as to make them come alive for others. By resorting to his encyclopedic knowledge of other works, he was able to draw the lines of connectivity that are the lifeblood of scholarship in general and bibliography in particular. He produced annual reports of the Library's new acquisitions that were eagerly anticipated by scholars and bibliophiles alike, and while his zeal extended to all books, the field of Hebrew incunabula was a particular obsession for Marx. When writing about these Hebrew books printed in the fifteenth century, there is a particular intensity in Marx's writing that does nothing to disguise the passion he so obviously felt about them.

In the area of book identification, Alexander Marx's skills were legendary. It has been said of him that he could look at a single page of a manuscript and determine its age with uncanny accuracy. Moreover, he was purported to be able, simply by perusing the fragmentary text of a single unbound printed leaf, to identify not only the text in question, but also the edition from which it had come. Recently, I met a great nephew of Marx who insisted that as a child he had been told by his older siblings, that his Uncle Alex could indeed tell the age of any book he held in his hand, whether he looked at it or not. He confessed that for some years he thought that his Uncle Alex was a magician and not a librarian.¹⁰

As anyone in the rare book trade will tell you, as a rule rare Hebrew books are in far worse condition than their non-Hebrew counterparts. The extensive utilization of Hebrew and Jewish books has often served to their detriment. Jewish and Hebrew books are not so much read as they are devoured, and those that have survived the ravages of time and the vicissitudes of Jewish history tend to stay in active circulation even when they suffer the abuses that would relegate other works to the trash heap. As a result, many older Hebrew books and manuscripts

¹⁰ Personal conversation with Gabriel Goldschmidt, January, 2003.

are often missing pages or entire sections; likewise the constituent volumes of multipart works are often separated. Most will remain this way permanently, but a lucky few volumes will pass through the hands of a bibliographer or librarian with the ability and knowledge that will allow them to be reunited with their fellows. Alexander Marx was just such a person; his ability to recognize the component parts of works thus separated was astonishing and gave rise to a series of serendipitous discoveries across his storied career. Here again are the words of Solomon Goldman:

In 1908, he [Marx] purchased from a Palestinian dealer, a defective copy of Bahya ben Asher's *Kad Ha-Kemah* and in 1928, he identifies at a glance eight pages offered to him by the same dealer as belonging to that copy. In 1903, the Seminary came into possession of the second half of R. Zerahya Halevi's critical notes on Alfasi. In 1923 Dr. Marx recognizes instantly, in a mass of new manuscripts acquired by the Library, the first half of that volume.¹¹

Marx himself clearly attained great satisfaction in such reunifications of disparate elements of the same book or manuscript and often told of these events in his writings:

A Yemenite dealer once brought to the Library a large paper bag with innumerable fragments of manuscripts. The Librarian immediately picked out a leaf containing a colophon of the second part of Maimonides code, dated 1592. Eight years earlier, the Librarian had acquired the bulky folio volume which lacked this last leaf.¹²

Marx, shunning the limelight, typically referred to himself in the third person simply as the Librarian. Again, Alexander Marx in his own words:

One of the earliest and most beautiful Hebrew incunabula - R, Levi ben Gerson's Commentary on the Pentateuch, Mantua, 1476 - which we received in 1903, lacked 22 leaves at the beginning and one leaf at the end. Twenty years later the beginning was supplied from a copy in the Adler collection. In 1924, on a casual visit to a downtown bookstore, the Librarian noticed inside of a manuscript a folded leaf in poor condition; he acquired it for \$300. It was the last missing leaf of that incunabulum.

There is in the Halberstamm collection an edition of the Book of Esther with a commentary, Constantinople, 1518, of which only four copies were known.

¹¹ Goldman, pp. 23-4.

¹² Alexander Marx, "The Library" in ed. Cyrus Adler, *The Jewish Theological Seminary of America: Semi-Centennial Volume* (New York: JTS, 1939), pp. 110-11.

Unfortunately this copy lacked six leaves. Years later, a ten-cent purchase in a bookstore completed the volume.¹³

The Seminary Library is rife with these and other examples of seemingly miraculous discoveries that Marx was able to make based on his extraordinary memory and immense knowledge. But perhaps the greatest example of Marx's amazing memory and vast bibliographic erudition occurred near the end of his long tenure as Librarian at the Seminary.

The year was 1950 and Marx, who had already served the Seminary for forty-seven years, had handed over the title of Librarian and some of the day-to-day responsibilities of running the Library to Gerson Cohen while retaining the position of Director of Libraries. In early May of that year, Marx received a letter from Hugo Streisand, a German book dealer, who offered for sale “an exceptionally fine and voluminous manuscript on vellum with many extraordinary features.”¹⁴ The rest of the story is best told by referring to the contemporary record. The correspondence that spells out the events that followed is fascinating but in the interests of time, I will summarize. The following are excerpts from a series of entries from the Seminary’s internal “Report on the Library” for 1950 and 1951:

Early in May [*sic*], 1950 Hugo Streisand of Berlin wrote to the Library asking if it would be interested in buying an illustrated manuscript. He enclosed photographs of a few pages and quoted a price that seemed comparatively reasonable. (\$5,000.) Dr. Alexander Marx consulted with some Seminary friends and cabled the bookdealer to send the volume on approval.

A week later, the book arrived by air mail. As soon as the package was opened, it was obvious that the Library had in its possession one of the finest objects of Jewish art in the world. Even to the casual observer, its beauty was overwhelming. Compiled and illustrated in Italy in the latter part of the 15th century, the volume consists of a compendium of Jewish knowledge up to that time – books of philosophy, astronomy and mathematics, moralistic fables similar to those of Assop [*sic*], a Prayer book with Haggadah, books of the Bible with commentary; all in all, more than 40 different works, closely written on more than 800 pages of unbelievably [*sic*] unusually fine vellum in beautiful script. The 222 exquisite miniatures and countless illuminations are among the

¹³ Ibid. p.113.

¹⁴ The letter is dated April 24, 1950. It is in an uncatalogued folder labeled "Rothschild Manuscript," in the Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary, Alexander Marx Archives, ARC 80.

finest in a Hebrew manuscript anywhere, and their magnificent colors and tracings in pure gold testify to the wealth of its original owner.¹⁵

In a letter to Alan M. Stroock, chairman of the Seminary's board of directors, Marx gave voice to his own excitement at being in possession of this unique manuscript.

I must say that the mere handling of this magnificent volume was a most exciting experience for me. I, for one have never seen anything more beautiful in Hebrew manuscripts, and the late Grand Rabbin of France, Professor Israel Levi, in his description of this manuscript in *Revue Etudes Juives*, 1930, states that this is without a doubt one of the most beautiful Hebrew manuscripts known to exist.¹⁶

Marx's use of such superlatives gives us a clear indication of just how special this work was. But Marx's mention of the article by Professor Levi draws attention away from the fact that Marx had realized even before writing to Stroock that he had seen this manuscript before. In his own distinctive handwriting written on the original letter from Hugo Streisand, Marx made notes that are amazing even when we read them today, more than a half century later. He wrote "see on this MS, Muller-Schlosser, Haggadah von Sarajevo, 199-207, plates 36-38,"¹⁷ along with two other scrawled references that would in fact identify the manuscript. We should remember, this was in 1950; there were no computers, no databases, no internet; there were none of the tools available to the modern researcher and yet Marx was able to recollect an article written fifty-two years earlier!

When Dr. Marx saw the manuscript, he recalled that he had seen reproductions of a few pages of the Haggadah in a work of 1898, described as coming from manuscript 24 of Baron Edmond de Rothschild and an account of the whole manuscript in a French periodical of 1930. He communicated with the family of the late Baron and discovered that the Rothschild collection had been looted by the Nazis during World War II, and part of it taken to Germany. Dr. Marx informed the Berlin bookdealer, who wrote back that

¹⁵ *Report on the Library – July 1, 1950 – April 1, 1951* (April 24, 1951), p. 5. A typescript summary of all the entries from various editions of the "Report on the Library" that pertained to this matter is in the uncatalogued folder labeled "Rothschild Manuscript," in the Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary, Alexander Marx Archives, ARC 80.

¹⁶ June 9, 1950, uncatalogued folder, "Rothschild Manuscript," *Alexander Marx Archives*, ARC 80.

¹⁷ April 24, 1950, uncatalogued folder, "Rothschild Manuscript," *Alexander Marx Archives*, ARC 80. The work referenced by Marx was printed in Vienna, 1898.

the person who had originally commissioned him to sell the book had disappeared when told of [the] developments.

The events convinced Dr. Marx that the volume must have been stolen. Baron James de Rothschild, son of the late Baron, acting with the help of the Seminary, had the case brought to court, and the evidence of theft was confirmed. The decision of the court ordered the manuscript returned to the Baron and the Seminary still awaits further developments.¹⁸

The further development that Marx had in mind of course was to ask Baron de Rothschild if he would consent to leaving the manuscript in the care of the Seminary as a gift, a loan, or if need be, a purchase. To this end Marx had communicated with the Baron directly in a letter dated April 19, 1951:

Dear Baron de Rothschild,

... Now that we have been informed of the favorable decision of the Court, I must confess to somewhat mixed feelings. On the one hand, I am very happy to have been instrumental in identifying the manuscript as your property ... On the other hand I, as well as my colleagues and associates here have become so attached to the volume that after giving it eleven months of temporary asylum we find it difficult to part with.

I have been hoping against hope that this exquisite item might some day be added to the great literary treasures of the Seminary Library. It would be most fitting that this relic of Jewish learning and art that found its way to America under such unusual circumstances should find a permanent home in a land that gave welcome to many Jews from Europe in their most troubled times

... I venture to take this opportunity to ask you whether you would be inclined to leave it with the Jewish Theological Seminary Library as a permanent loan.¹⁹

Even while arranging to return the manuscript to Rothschild, Marx offered the Baron the cash amount the Seminary would have expended in purchasing it. In a final attempt to prevent the manuscript from leaving the Seminary Library, Marx concluded his letter:

... Or should you consider parting with it, we would be ready to pay the original price asked by the dealer (\$5,000.) Even in that case we would forever consider it as the gift of Baron James de Rothschild.²⁰

In the end, the Baron thanked Marx and the Library for recovering the manuscript and asked that it be returned to him as soon as a suitable courier could be found. The triumph that

¹⁸ *Report on the Library – July 1, 1950 – April 1, 1951* (April 24, 1951), p. 5.

¹⁹ April 19, 1951, "Edmond de Rothschild," *Alexander Marx Archives*, ARC 80.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

would have served as a capstone to Marx's illustrious career was not to be. Eventually, it was Alexander Marx himself, on his way to Israel for the first time in the spring of 1952, who served as courier to ferry the manuscript across the Atlantic and return it to its rightful owner. In 1957 the manuscript was donated by the Rothschild family to the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem, forerunner of the Israel Museum, where it remains on display to this day. Known as the *Rothschild Miscellany* in honor of Baron James de Rothschild, the manuscript offered to Alexander Marx for \$5,000 in 1950 is today, quite literally, priceless.²¹ When the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* recorded the arrival of the miscellany in Jerusalem, a full-page article by Bezalel Narkiss neglected to mention the role played by Marx and the Seminary in the manuscript's recovery. It was only through the insistent efforts of Gerson Cohen and with the aid of Shmuel Yosef Agnon, Alexander Marx's brother-in-law, that *Ha'aretz* eventually printed Cohen's letter detailing the role played by Marx in the whole affair.²²

If this were the end of the story we could easily say *dayyeinu*. But in truth, there is one more chapter to our tale. In 1966, more than a dozen years after the death of Alexander Marx, the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary suffered a disastrous fire, a conflagration that claimed over 70,000 victims from among its vast holdings. The Seminary made impassioned pleas around the world for help in recovering from this terrible blow.

And here, as Paul Harvey says, is "the rest of the story." Among those who heard of the Seminary Library's plight and were moved by it was none other than Baron Edmond de Rothschild, the French cousin of James de Rothschild of whom we have been speaking. As part

²¹ Although the *Rothschild Miscellany* represents a cultural treasure of the Jewish people and resides in the Israel Museum and cannot be sold, a conservative estimate of its value would be in the neighborhood of \$10,000,000. For those on a slightly more restricted budget, a mere \$7,950 will buy an exquisite facsimile edition produced by Linda and Michael Falter of Facsimile Editions, Ltd.

²² Bezalel Narkiss, "Rothschild Manuscript no. 24 in 'Bezalel'," *Ha'aretz*, April 15 1957, p. 6; Gerson Cohen, Letter to the Editors, October 2, 1957, p. 2; cf. correspondence between Cohen, Agnon and G. Schocken (editor of *Ha'aretz*) in "Rothschild Manuscript," uncatalogued folder, *Alexander Marx Archives*, ARC 80.

of the overwhelming international response to the destruction that had been wrought by the fire in the Seminary Library, Baron de Rothschild resolved to give to the Library another magnificent fifteenth-century Italian manuscript that had been in the collection of the Rothschild family. On December 6, 1966, Baron de Rothschild personally presented this manuscript, now known as the *Rothschild Mahzor*, to the Seminary Library. In his presentation, the Baron paid homage to the late Alexander Marx and acknowledged his role in the return of the miscellany all those years before.²³

In the book of Ecclesiastes (11:1) we read, שלח לחמך על פני המים כי ברב הימים תמצאנו. *Kohelet* enjoins us to cast our bread upon the waters, for in the fullness of days we shall find it. What better proof-text than this can we ask for to illustrate the story of these two Rothschild manuscripts? When Alexander Marx returned the *Rothschild Miscellany* in 1952, he was casting his bread upon the waters and in 1966, when JTS was enriched by the acquisition of the *Rothschild Mahzor*, it was in the fullness of days certainly being recompensed.

I began this talk by quoting from a Mishnaic dictum which speaks of דברים שאין להם שעור, דברים שאין להם שיעור, things that have no measure. The same paragraph in the daily liturgy also embraces another paradigm, that of דברים שאדם אוכל פרותיהם בעולם הזה והקרן קימת לו לעולם הבא, or "those things whose benefits one may enjoy while still in this world and yet still be rewarded for in the world to come." Of all the meritorious acts mentioned in this Mishnaic passage, we are told that it is the study of Torah that reigns supreme above all others.

I would suggest that Alexander Marx was in fact the embodiment of that paradigm. Throughout his life, as he toiled in the vineyard of Torah that was the Seminary Library for half a century, both he and the Seminary enjoyed the fruits of his labors. And while, in the world to

²³Gerson D. Cohen, "Foreward," *The Rothschild Mahzor*, (New York: JTS, 1983), p. 7; cf. "Rothschild Mahzor," Library Files, Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

come, Alexander Marx is doubtlessly reaping the rewards of that long illustrious career, it is we, who as the heirs to his legacy in this world, continue to benefit from his knowledge and scholarship to this day.