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"A COMPARATIVE AND CRITICAL STUDY OF SOME SIXTEENTH
CENTURY JEWISH HISTORIANS."

By

Larry J. Halpern

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

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Referee, Professor Ellis Rivkin

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DIGEST

Since the Diaspora, Jews had looked away from the writing of history and exerted their energies in aggada and halacha. The sixteenth century saw the reawakening of Jewish history after this long hiatus. This century was one which saw a world in change. The West, offering Christians new challenges in trade and an upheaval within their religion, was closing its doors to the Jews. The Golden Age in Spain ended with a thud as the Christians centralized their control and introduced the Inquisition. Portugal and Italy offered but temporary safety and soon joined Spain in expelling the Jews.

It was in this world of change that the writing of history blossomed with renewed vigor; to the Church it offered a tool for polemics by establishing the heresy of the Reformation, to the Reformers it offered a means by which to establish their legitimacy through a citation of the past. The Jew, ever influenced by his surroundings, turned anew to the writing of his history. For the Jew history offered hope. A look at the Jewish history showed that, even in this hours of despair, things were better than ever. In response to their world three men, Joseph ha-Kohen, Samuel Usque and Solomon Ibn Verga, looked to the Jewish past to find a Jewish future, and unite the New Christians with the long-term Jews.

Samuel Usque saw past disasters as the fulfillment of God's threatened punishment and offered the hope that the divine rewards would soon be meted out. Ibn Verga saw the hope for Jewish survival in an understanding of the natural events which had caused the earlier disasters. Joseph ha-Kohen, although the last of these three, has returned to the

pietism of the past, a faith that someday God will save the Jews. This is shown in his simple, sympathetic chronicle.

The cause for the more imminent hope of Usque and Ibn Verga may have been found in the splintering of the Church or the rising Ottoman Empire, with its offers of religious freedom. By ha-Kohen's day the troubles in Italy, the land of his residence, may have overwhelmed such considerations of outside hope.

This is the scope of this study, its result - an increased awareness of history being but the reflection of its author.

Chapter One

The appearance during the sixteenth century of Solomon Ibn Verga's Shebet Yehuda, Samuel Usque's Consolation for the Tribulation of Israel and Joseph ha-Kohen's Emek ha-Bakha marked the rebirth of the Jewish concern with the writing of history. It is important to note that the Jews, who had showed the world an advanced talent for the writing of history, (as evidenced by the production of the Bible),¹ had not produced any historical works which they chose to retain, since the destruction of the Jewish State and the naissance of the Diaspora. Rather, the attention of the people had been turned to the collections of laws, aggadah and commentaries. The significance of this change, ringing in a period in which Jews neither wrote nor maintained written history other than the Bible, may best be appreciated when one recognizes with Josephus' the high place assigned to history and historians in early Jewish literary annals. "Hebrew and historical works," he wrote with pride, "were part of sacred Scriptures. Prophets and priests were assigned the role of historians."

"Little did Josephus realize that with his passing, the art of the Jewish historian ... would vanish from among his people for many centuries to come."²

The only work of history, written and preserved during this great hiatus, was the Josippon. This book, accepted throughout the Middle Ages as the work of Josephus, is a history fused with pietism. This work, with its discussion of the fall of Jerusalem in somber tones and yet interspersed with "flashes of hope and faith in the ultimate redemption, blended readily with the mood of medieval Jewry."³ The Jewry of the early Middle Ages,

which was set upon from all sides, found this book in keeping with the illusion of the past, present and future which they sought to preserve. (Could these Jews have felt that the Josippon had said it all?)

The above discussion is not to preclude the possibility that private chronicles were written during the Middle Ages. However, these works which are known to us, were written for purposes other than that of an analysis of history and are thus excluded from the category of books of history written in the Middle Ages.

Our question, in the face of the sixteenth century's rebirth of history, must then be - why did the Jews turn once again to an analysis of history? The period of the late fifteen and early sixteenth century was one of great change, one of great awakening in the West. In Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella had brought the country under Christian control, Columbus had been sent to explore new sea routes for the profitable trade with India; the Inquisition had been introduced - putting new power into the hands of Church and State, and new fear of its arbitrary power in the hearts of all. Portugal had seen its day of freedom for religious groups and had introduced the Inquisition along Spanish lines. The doors of that which had once been the world of the Jews, were shut. The Golden Age of Christian Spain, with all its hopes, were shattered. In Germany the very walls of Christendom were atremble with the words of Martin Luther. The Reformation, which challenged the very foundation of the Church, stirred many to moments of joy, others to days of fear. "To Usque this Reformation was divine retribution visited upon the Church for using violence in forcing religious beliefs upon those who would not freely accept them." The

Reformation also turned many writers to the use of history as the vehicle for their polemics. The reformers sought to justify their changes by finding historical precedents and the Church fought back. It was natural that the Jews, as a part of these societies, should also resort to this device. However, with the closing of the doors in Spain and Italy, the lands of the Ottoman's opened for the Jews whose economic skills were highly valued. But as the doors of the West closed for the Jews, they began to open anew for those of the Christian world. Trade-encouraged exploration had begun, unity within the state was occurring. Turkey was extending the sway of its control and had become a threat. The world was in change - everyone seeking new ways to meet the new realities.

With these divergent forces at work upon the world, it is not difficult to understand the reawakening of Jewish interest in history. One suggestion is that the secular pursuits of new solutions was reflected in the Jewish concern with creating new modes of expression, and thus they returned to the use of history. A second suggestion is that this renewed interest in history was the result of the exile from Spain and the end of the Golden Age. Graetz has stated: "The voyages toward the end of the fifteenth century had stirred men's minds, so that the desire for more knowledge about the world and its inhabitants was as keen among the Jews as among other intelligent people."

"Joseph ha-Kohen, who had also lived in Italy, found that men's minds were agitated not only by the discovery of new parts of the world, but also by the great conflicts which went on about them between Christianity and Mohammedanism. The Turks were extending their sway over southeastern

Europe, and no Christian power seemed able to stop them." ⁶ This reference to Joseph ha-Kohen is not to his Emek ha-Bakha, here under study, but his work The Annals of the Kings of France and of the House of Othman. They had withstood their calamities well, until the expulsion from Spain. They no longer could resist the urge, they had to know - Was this all that life could ever be for them? Was it worth it all? To the strict rationalist Graetz, this

"destruction of the great Jewish communities in Spain and Portugal marked the end of an important period in Jewish life. There was a need to analyze why this calamity had befallen the Jewish people and, if possible, to strengthen and console them."⁷

It is to be expected that a major change in the life of an individual will require of him a major reworking of his understanding of life and his reactions to it. So it is understandable that a people whose individual members were so shaken, would undergo a reappraisal.

הספר "טהי ירושה" שפוקדש ברובו לעצמיות ספרה
שלפני פאירוש, נכתב כשלושים שנים לאחר מכן. רק אז
החליט פירוש כיצדן לאר הישתי ספרותי פירושתי
פחשונים שזוכנו מאונסות ח"ו הנהו

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"The vicissitudes in the life of the nations as well as the changes in the life of the Jewish people, especially since their cruel expulsion from Spain and Portugal, and the heartless persecution of the Marranos, at length brought some clear-seeing Jews to the conviction that history is not ruled by chance, but that a higher hand guides it, bringing to pass destined events by bloodshed and tears. Since the time of the Crusades, no century had been richer in changeful, almost dramatic events than the sixteenth century, when not only fresh continents were discovered, but when a new spirit began to prevail among mankind, striving after new creations, but always kept down by the leaden weight of existing systems. This wealth of occurrences taught a few thoughtful Jews, mostly of Sephardic origin,

to trace the work of Providence in the apparently whimsical and irregular course of universal and Jewish history. They considered history a comfort to that portion of mankind which had been overthrown over-ridden and downtrodden by the tumultuous course of events."⁹

The fact that the writing of history by the Jews died with the expulsion from Jerusalem and was revived by the expulsion from Spain is too good a point to miss. It is as though the second shock destroyed the amnesiac reaction and just that quickly did the writing of history blossom full-bloom. In keeping with such a thought is that these writers, as the prophets, see history as a means to instruction and improvement as had the prophets of the Bible.

Along with the use of history for improvement, is its use to rekindle the pride of a downtrodden people. The Jews can take pride in their endurance of past disaster. So too might the Marranos, so long removed from the Jewish people, be retrained by these histories. The support given to Samuel Usque by Donna Gracia Nasi may suggest her desire that by the creation of history in which they New Christian is depicted as a constantly true Jew, this group, to which she belonged, would be accepted within the peoplehood of Israel. Dr. Martin Cohen has suggested:

"Though a patron of art; her interests transcended art for art's sake. In literature, as in other realms of life, she supported activities that would return the New Christians to Judaism and to a useful and productive life."¹⁰

The result she sought - that both Jews and New Christians look to the same history and thus become one people.

The plea of the Emek ha-Bakha may be yet one more view of the reason that the writing of history was undertaken. The calamity of the expulsion

had brought the Jews to the breaking point. Now God must see the history of his people and know that the test has gone on long enough. It is God's turn to aid His defeated people.

אנא כ' כל זמן האמן השנה כי רבים הן שומרים ע
 פאסם פאמשי האדם אהוהא שאכונק ואם שקינו הברית
 וזרם ארבים אה זבח פ' עשכרנו חושב, כי עמיק פ' ורצנו כל
 פיוס נאשכנו כצאן טהור לזרע עשכרנו אה פ'
 11 ישענו וריהם כי הן ואמנו עומס שמך

Yet it was for Samuel Usque to say, through his view of history, what all anxiously hoped would be true - that all of God's biblical curses and punishments to be borne by the Jews, had now been satisfied and now was the time when the people Israel could enjoy God's unrestricted beneficence.

"Indeed, if we wished to examine things closely and not allow ourselves to be overcome by emotion, there is no affliction, however great, whose might is now buffeting us, that past generations have not seen and suffered greater ... I have therefore proposed to relate the tribulations and hardships which have befallen our people and the causes which led to each disaster... Each tribulation is followed by the prophecy which seems to have been fulfilled in it. In this way, we can see that just as those who prophesied our misfortunes proved to be right, so (we must believe) will our good fortune come to pass, since both emanated from the same Source."¹²

So it is, from the words of the authors themselves, or from their translators, we learn why they wrote their history. That the genius for writing history, at least among the Jews, was reborn in the sixteenth century, is clearly established. Why no earlier disaster brought its rebirth is only conjecture - perhaps none was of the magnitude of the expulsion from Spain. Why, or if, this disaster alone would have been sufficient to arouse the spark is impossible to determine for it did not occur in a vacuum. However, between the spirit of exploration, advancement and competition that

existed in the world at large and the spirit of gloom and despair within the Jewish community, the combustion did occur. While for Isaac Abravanel this combustion led him to preach the imminent coming of the Messiah, for others Messianic Cabala was the answer for it "idealized the suffering of the exiled people as the travail of the Messianic era and the imminent redemption of mankind."¹³ Yet still others were sparked by this combustion to explore the Jewish past. All were anxious to keep alive the flame of Jewish existence, to each was available the knowledge of the past and a variety of forms for its expression.

So it was that in Italy, the land of the Renaissance, initially safe from the onslaught of the Inquisition, the muse of history found its awakening.

"It inspired three votaries simultaneously: Ibn Verga the rationalist who analyzed the Jewish problem from an historical social viewpoint; Joseph ha-Kohen, the annalist who interpreted Jewish history as a divinely inspired martyrology; and Samuel Usque, the imaginative poet, author of the Consolacam, to whom Jewish history was a divine drama of retribution which held forth the promise of glorious fulfillment."¹⁴

Footnotes - Chapter One

1. For a further discussion of this subject see - Dr. Abraham A. Neuman, "The Shebet Yehuda and Sixteenth Century Historiography," Landmarks and Goals, (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 82-104.
2. Neuman, "Josippon: History and Pietism," Landmarks and Goals, p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 26.
4. Neuman, Goals, p. 84.
5. Neuman, "Samuel Usque: Marrano Historian of the Sixteenth Century," Goals, p. 125.
6. Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews, (Philadelphia, 1956), Vol. IV, p. 455.
7. Ibid.
8. Isaac Baer, "Introduction," trans. Shebet Yehuda, (Jerusalem, 1946), p. 11.
9. Graetz, History, Vol. IV., p. 554.
10. Dr. Martin Cohen, "Introduction," trans. Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel, (Philadelphia, 1965), p. 15.
11. Joseph ha-Kohen, Emek ha-Bakha, (Wien, 1852), p. 85.
12. Cohen, trans. of Consolacum, p. 39.
13. Neuman, p. 87.
14. Ibid., p. 115.

Yet, in spite of this lack of firsthand evidence, there is some, and a plentiful supply of re-creations have been attempted by others and into this arena this writer now enters.

In seeking to learn of the early life of Joseph ha-Kohen one will begin with the evidence revealed in his own work. On page ninety-three we find the very origins of his existence....

וילגרת אמי יוסף הן ידועות מן הכתובים אשר לזרעו מספר

Joseph ha-Kohen was of one of the many families who had their roots in Spain and had been forced to leave Spain and next lived

המדינת פרווהנץ האוויניאן אשר על נהר רון

(the Rhine area of France - the Avignon area of the Provence.)

ויוצאני אלהי משם ואני הן חמש שנים, ונשם הלהי' לילינוהר
פשוטהב ער פיוס כלפ³

Thus the place in which this book was authored, as well as the place wherein Joseph had spent the bulk of his life is clearly established as the area close to Genoa in Italy, a part of the community of Jews who had been exiled from Spain and lived in Italy, away from the initial hungry grasp of the Inquisition. But Joseph does not leave us with this scant parcel of data, he goes on:

זכי מקל שנתים ימים ואקל את האומה הן ה מהל' ר
אברהם ככרן ז"ל יאשר, ונשם הנות אשר הלהי' לילינוהר בער
פדיא... מבר אשר וילגרת הן... ואקרא שמו ידוע⁴

An idea of the time in which Joseph lived is given directly;

וארצ אמי יוסף ככרן עשהת הלינוהר פשוטהב השנת רפ"ה
ואחש אלפיס (1538)⁵

(The need to repeat the place where he dwelt is necessitated due to the often disjointed collection of accounts which compose this work.)

Joseph dates himself directly and also gives us clues by the material he presents as firsthand. Here his account is of a meeting with David Reubeni who came to Italy from the East in 1524.

וְכִי הַדְּמָה כִּי הָרְאוּ כִּי יִלְבֶּנֶת הָיָה וְכִי הָיָה כְּדָרְסֵן
כִּי כָּאֵל שֶׁל מַחֲנֵי וְאֵל אֶל מַחֲנֵי הַדְּמָה אֵלָּה שְׂרָא חֲכָם לְדָוִד

which is attributed to

6

אֵלָּה שֶׁל מַחֲנֵי כָּאֵל כְּמִנֵּי הַסִּי דְּהַרִי פִי מִיִּסְרִי.

However, Joseph's life in Italy was not to remain free from strife, as he reports

וְיִסְרֵי אֵינֶנּוּ הַיּוֹם כִּמְנֵי לְחַדְוֶשׁ אֲבֵרִי... וְנִצָּא מִלִּינְוֵה
הַיּוֹם כִּשְׁלִישֵׁי לְחַדְוֶשׁ יִזְנִי אֶל מַחֲנֵי הַוֹּלְטָגִיּוֹ (Valtaggio) וְאֵלֵּי יִסְרֵי לְחַדְוֶשׁ
עַל שֶׁן שֶׁמֶן וְעִשְׂרִים וְשִׁלֵּשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחֲמִשֶּׁשׁ אֲלֻפִּיִּם

For more specific details of the life of Joseph one can consult both his Annals and the secondary material as exemplified in the account by Heinrich Graetz.⁸ From that which has been assembled one can say that Joseph ha-kohen was born in Avignon about 1496 and died in 1575. His major occupation was that of a physician. That his work as a physician brought him in contact with some of the aristocracy is shown by his connections with the doge. While of Spanish stock, Joseph never entered Spain. Born in France, he spent the bulk of his life in Italy in the town of Genoa. The expulsion in 1550 saw Joseph move on to Valtaggio. The fact that Joseph lived his life in Italy is most important for this was the land from which the expansion of the Ottoman Empire could be most closely seen. Italy was the country which saw itself directly engaged

in the battle with the Ottoman Empire, a battle for trade superiority- a battle, the consequences of which would shape the course of modern history. So too was Italy the last safe-haven in the West for the Jews of Spain and during his lifetime Joseph saw this haven destroyed. This was the Italy which shaped Joseph ha-Kohen, the author of the Annals of the Kings of France and of the House of Othman. That traces of such thinking could be found in the Emek ha-Bakha is not surprising. The people before whom Joseph presented his work were in the process of becoming one people. Those New Christians who had left Portugal with the Jews had by now determined if they would remain Christians or would join the Jews. As the Church's reaction to the Reformation crept into the Papal States the Jews were again in jeopardy, and the New Christians had to stand and be counted.

Of a line of Jews who had seen and suffered the pain of the expulsion from Spain, from France and ultimately had personally been a part of the expulsion from Genoa; of a family of Kohanim with their pride in their biblical lineage, it is not surprising that his work should be written to strengthen the Jews and instruct the Marranos through a recounting of what Israel had successfully endured in the past. This book is the work of a man of compassion, a man with a view of history with a tenderness and perspective given by the years of his life. This book is a return to a naive pietism in response to immediate travails. This book which, according to Dr. M. Letteris, was first completed in 1563 and was revised by the author until its final form in 1575, follows both the Shebet Yehuda and Consolation and is a retreat from their positions. The freedom of Ibn Verga was impossible and he returned to a tried and true pietism.

It should be noted that Dr. Letteris points out that, to the work, as completed by Joseph ha-Kohen, there was penned an addition by the proof reader (ד'אנא). This addition covers the period from 1575 - 1605. Within the text of ha-Kohen as it is presented by Dr. Letteris are many additions which crept into the manuscripts from which he worked. It was the composite text created by Dr. Letteris which served as the source for the study of Joseph ha-Kohen's Emek ha-Bakha.

To proceed in alphabetical order one need next turn to Samuel Usque author of the Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel. Of this man little is known. His true Christian name is even lost. His last name as given here is late and suggests a tie to the city of Huesca - prominent in the history of the Jews of Aragon. This name, as Dr. Cohen suggests in his introduction to his translation of the Consolacam

"appeared only after he had fled the Inquisition, and may have been a pseudonym, adopted to protect dear ones left behind in Portugal." (p. 12)

In analyzing the material of the third Dialogue one becomes aware that the last eleven chapters of history are filled with Usque's personal experiences. However, the date and place of his birth can be but guessed. Dr. Cohen states that

"Samuel was born around the time of the forced baptism (Portugal 1497), perhaps shortly thereafter." (p. 12)

Portuguese, Usque calls his mother tongue, the New Christians, his countrymen and thus would Dr. Cohen's suggestion be in order.

As for the intermediate years of his life, one is again forced to conjecture. His work is filled with references to some of the classics and a knowledge of Bible, Talmud and Midrash are also his. For his classical

knowledge no detailed explanation is necessary as this could be his as a member of the New Christian society. However, with the forced conversions of 1497, the law prohibited the reading of any Hebrew books other than medical books. It is possible, and in keeping with the suggestion of many scholars of the Marrano period, that the Jews did engage in clandestine study of their Hebrew books. That such a program, limited to clandestine study time, could produce the breadth of knowledge displayed by Usque is most doubtful. This can only be accounted for by Dr. Cohen's suggestion that Usque was university trained, perhaps with the intention that he enter the priesthood. This suggestion says Dr. Cohen

"is conjecture, but it would help explain Usque's wide knowledge, his religious sensitivity and the feelings of guilt for which the Consolacam appears to be at least in part, a compensation."⁹

Such a conjecture may be refuted by Usque's own words that

"many have become Christians in body, yet no stain ever touched their souls and they always bore the seal of their ancient law."¹⁰

It is true that Usque was raised as a Marrano and shows great pity for those who were lulled into a false sense of security as Ycabo says;

"But in my ignorance, while hidden in the garb of a Christian, I thought that I could thus save my life, although it was just the reverse."¹¹

From Usque's description in Chapter Thirty of Dialogue Three one might assume that he was among the group of Marranos who left Portugal with the arrival of the Inquisition in 1531. Ycabo then traces a route, perhaps Usque's own, that was travelled by these exiles. The places mentioned include England, France, Germany and finally Italy. Whatever the case Usque's journey landed him in Ferrara about 1551. Dr. Cohen

suggests intermediate stops in Naples (and the beginning of a friendship with Samuel Abravanel) then on to Salonika, then a major center of Judaism which welcomed the roaming exiles.

"as if she were Jerusalem, that old and ever pious mother of our."¹²

Dr. Cohen, however, cites some questionable sources which place Usque in Safed and as a preacher of the doctrine of the imminent return of the Ten Lost Tribes,¹³ but these may refer to another Usque.

Once settled in Ferrara, Usque became friendly with Donna Gracia Nasi, to whom one edition of his book was dedicated.¹⁴ A second important friendship, that with Samuel Abravanel and his wife, is reflected in Usque's use of the book by Isaac Abravanel, Samuel's father, as a major source. Within Usque's work itself are praises for the good works of Samuel Abravanel.¹⁵

Also of interest, is the fact that in Ferrara there lived at the same time as Samuel Usque, the printer Abraham Usque who published the Ferrara Bible, the Consolacam and liturgical works - and Solomon Usque, who was both poet and playwright of some note. The relationship, if any,¹⁶ between these three has been worked in all manners from brothers, to parent (Abe) to children,¹⁷ to those who see a relationship but do not specify just what it is.¹⁸ (Here it is sometimes suggested that Samuel Usque aided Abraham in the preparation of the Bible - a suggestion made on the basis of Samuel's familiarity with biblical quotations.)

To trace the final years of Samuel Usque is most difficult. The thirty-sixth chapter of the third dialogue, dated 1553, speaks of the desecration of the synagogues of Pesaro. The question that arises is

whether this is a firsthand report? The book, Consolacam, was published in 1553 in Ferrara and it is likely that Usque would have been there at this time in spite of the general banishment of the Jews in 1551. What became of Samuel Usque is a matter of conjecture and this Dr. Cohen does provide:

"Indeed it might be satisfying to imagine Usque spending the sunset years of his life in the congenial atmosphere of Galilee or perhaps the City of David, or even dying under the hoofs of a hostile horseman, as legend tells of Jehuda Halevi, another sweet singer of Zion. Usque's burial place, like the site of his birth, is unknown. He has no monument except the work which helped to bring life of the spirit to many a dejected New Christian of his own and of a later generation."¹⁹

While still faced by the absence of any but the slightest firsthand evidence of the life of the author of the Shebet Yehuda, one is faced with the problem of determining just who wrote this work. The book, when first released in approximately 1550, bore the author's name as

עם דוסטור אדמוה של הנו ליוסף²⁰ with the additional note וירכא בן שלמה

The title page of the text reads;

אמר שלמה וירכא בן
הסוף ספר אשר חבר אדוניי רחמכם פסדוה דון יעקב
וירכא בן מנחם כהן קצת שמות ואליכיו
אשר עברו על ישראל האלה נכריה ודעוקי אמן²¹
...

Thus, at least three Ibn Vergas are involved in the preparation of this work and are given credit for the writing of parts of this work. Who these men were and their relationship is an area of great uncertainty.

The first of the Ibn Vergas was Judah Ibn Verga. Of this gentleman there is mention not only in the title paragraph, which showed him to be

the author of a work which, at least at its end, included some of the destructions and decrees that had come upon the Jews of the Diaspora, which form the basis for the Shebet Yehuda. In section thirty-eight (38) of the Shebet Yehuda there is an incident which speaks of Rabbi Judah Ibn Verga of Seville. This individual was an important figure for, in the time of crisis for the Jewish community, he is selected to go before the Duke and plead the case of the Jews. While initially the Duke does not desire to admit Judah, Judah finally gains admission (a sign of his connections) and, through a bit of legerdemain, the Duke is shown the innocence of the Jews. This Judah Ibn Verga is again mentioned in Section Sixty-Two (62) where his premier position among the Jews of Seville makes him a desirable catch for the Inquisition, especially as he was one who tried to keep the ties between the Marranos and the Jews. He, however, escaped to Lisbon where he was tortured and died -

יג'ר אג'ר' פ'ו'ב'פ'ו ל' מ'ס'ב

But is he the Judah Ibn Verga of the title page? Did he write of the destructions which form the basis for the Shebet Yehuda? Answers to these questions still remain to be found, but conjure is to be found in abundance. Max Seligsohn in his discussion of the Ibn Vergas states that

"Ibn Verga wrote a history of the persecutions of the Jews, largely taken from Profiat Duran's 'Zikron ha Shemadot' ... his work, in turn, was but the basis of the Shebet Yehuda."²²

However this opinion is not accepted by the editor of the text used by this writer, Isaac Baer, who suggests in his introduction (page 8) that this Judah was the man for whom the book was named and the author of much of the work, but not the man of Seville. Both of these writers would agree that this Judah Ibn Verga was a relative of Solomon Ibn Verga, but not his

father. Heinrich Graetz takes the position, without citing any supporting evidence, that Solomon "added several narratives to his father's notes."²³

This writer would agree with those who state that the lack of any situations in which Solomon calls Judah his father, indicates that this is not a father-son relationship.

Of Solomon Ibn Verga there is again but scant evidence in the Shebet Yehuda. There are several incidents which are introduced with the phrase *וזהו דבר* indicating the hand of Solomon Ibn Verga. In Section Sixty-Four, Solomon tells of the time that he was sent by the Spanish communities to collect money for the prisoners of Malaga, while Section Sixty is a second-hand eye-witness report of the massacre which took place there. This is but a secondhand report as Solomon was outside the city when the massacre took place. It was Solomon Ibn Verga who, according to Graetz,

"had witnessed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal and who for a time pretended to be a Christian, and then emigrated to Turkey as a Marrano."²⁴

Solomon is also credited with a knowledge of Latin, which is evidenced by his use of sources. The occupation pursued by Solomon was that of a physician. Max Seligsohn suggests that it was Solomon's good fortune to escape to Turkey where he wrote the Shebet Yehuda. Of interest is Mr. Seligsohn's analysis of the title - Shebet Yehuda - which, he states, is an allusion to Judah Ibn Verga. ("Shebet" in Hebrew being the equivalent of the Spanish "Verga"), refers to Genesis XLIX:10.²⁵ At the end of paragraph Sixty-Four Solomon Ibn Verga states;

*והנאם דעבודי וקרבן פסח וענינו כזה פנה בין מלא
ברוך דעריס נפלאים הספר "שבת יהודה" שלם, ופלא
ענינו הספר "שבת עמנו"*

Concerning this book of persecution narratives and some rabbinical treatises is now lost.

Joseph Ibn Verga is, without question, the son of this Solomon Ibn Verga and testimony of this fact is to be seen in the title page as cited above and more clearly in Joseph's own words

אמר יוסף - כעין העניות אשר כתב אבני דכ' שנים י' זלצ'ר
26 באב ת' פ

The lineage established, one gains from the Shebet Yehuda a picture of the man Joseph Ibn Verga. It is he who completed the work of his father and, as the work was published in Turkey and his father had set up residence in Adrianople, it may be assumed that this was his dwelling place. It should also be noted that Joseph ~~maxen~~ Ibn Verga makes use of the writings of Don Isaac Abravanel. Max Seligsohn has reported, ²⁷ not on evidence from the Shebet Yehuda, that Joseph Ibn Verga was a pupil of Joseph Fasi and belonged to the college of rabbis in Adrianople. That such a position was attained by Joseph is entirely possible, for he shows within the Shebet Yehuda an ability to handle his materials, including the sources written in Latin which he calls the "Christian language." Max Seligsohn also attributes the She'erit Yosef (Adrianople, 1554) to this Joseph Ibn Verga. However this book, which contains a methodology of the Talmud, has been attributed by Wolf to another Joseph Ibn Verga, who lived in Avlona.

To dissect the Shebet Yehuda, that each of the Ibn Vergas might be properly recognized for his share in the creation of the work, is a job which this author has attempted in general above, and beyond this feels there is little chance of total success, or any real reward. A broad breakdown is possible - to Judah Ibn Verga must be attributed the basic

material or core upon which the work was based. It was his idea to record the destruction which had come upon the Jews, from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem down to his own day. To Solomon Ibn Verga can be attributed the genius of the book - the inventive dialogues by which a world of causality, other than divine, is probed and brought to the fore. That this genius was not Joseph's is a conjecture based upon the lack of the dialogic form in those passages which bear his name, and strengthened by his final appeal (pp. 163-164) in which Joseph addressed God and, with reference to the travails of the Jews views them as divine punishment, asks God's help in this time with the ancient refrain of the prophets;

יְהוָה נָא כֹחֶךָ כְּאִשֶּׁר דָּבָרְתָּ כִּי עָמַךְ הִשְׁתַּחֲוִי וְלֹא הִשְׁתַּחֲוִי
 אֱלֹהִים וְסִינַי שִׁיבָנוּ, אֵל רַחוּם וְרַחוּם! אֵיכָכָה גּוֹלֵי לְפָנֶיךָ
 עוֹד וְכֹאֵל הִרְעָה אִשֶּׁר מִצָּא אֶת עָמְךָ וְאֵיכָכָה גּוֹלֵי וְכֹאֵל
 אֶבְרָם מוֹדֵדוֹךָ הֵן עֲבָדֶיךָ, אֵל יְהוָה לְפָנֶיךָ צְרוּרֵינוּ, וְכִשְׁמִירָנוּ
 מִמֶּנּוּ קִבֵּשְׁנוּ עַם כֵּל פְּשָׁעוֹת לְכַבֵּדוֹ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, מִכָּר קָל
 לְבוֹשׁ חֹסֶדְךָ וְכֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ
 גְּלוּלָהּ פָּנֶיךָ וְעֵמֶךָ יוֹסֵף

בכח"ר שלמה נירלנד.

This man is oblivious to his father's intent, his is the work of adding bare incidents of his own time (as those of page 144) and those immediately preceding, of setting down the chronicles of others. The genius was his father's.

Chapter Two - Footnotes

1. Page 144, line 21.
2. In his translation of Usque's Consolacem, (Philadelphia, 1965), p. 93.
3. (Wien, 1852), p. 48.
4. Ibid., p. 94.
5. Ibid., p. 102.
6. Ibid., p. 97.
7. Ibid., p. 109.
8. Volume IV. There is more material in a variety of German sources.
9. p. 13.
10. p. 204.
11. Samuel Usque, Consolation, trans. Martin Cohen, (Philadelphia, 1965, p. 207.
12. Ibid., p. 212.
13. Ibid., p. 14.
14. Dr. Abraham Neuman, Goals, p. 111.
15. See Dialogue III, especially pp. 209f.
16. Meyer Kayserling, "Samuel Usque," Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 12, p. 387.
17. A. Pesaro, Memorie Storiche, (Ferrara, 1878).
18. A. Neuman, Goals, p. 110.
19. M. Cohen, "Introduction," Consolation, p. 17.
20. Solomon Ibn Verga, Shebet Yehuda, Edit. I. Baer, (Jerusalem, 1947), p. 7.
21. Ibid., p. 18.
22. Max Seligsohn, "Judah Ibn Verga," Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, p. 550.
23. Vol. IV, p. 556.
24. Ibid.
25. Max Seligsohn "Solomon Ibn Verga," JE, Vol. 6, p. 550.
26. p. 144, l. 21.
27. Max Seligsohn "Joseph Ibn Verga," JE, Vol. 6, p. 550.

Chapter Three

The time for the reawakening of the muse of the writing of history among the Jews was the early sixteenth century, a time of political, religious and social excitement and innovation. The Jews were on the run, seeking to remain at least one step ahead of the ever-hungry Inquisition. To Portugal, thence to England, France, Italy and Turkey they fled, and among those who fled was heard the ever-present cry - Why do we suffer? How long must this be our fate? Why should we go on? Is there any value in all of this suffering? It was to these cries that the muse for the writing of Jewish history was reborn. Each, who felt the muse within, and heard the cries without, reacted in his own way, with his own answer. To analyze these reactions will be the purpose of this chapter.

A. Sources

The first question that must be asked of any historian is "What are your sources?" So must we answer this question of these men. After so long a drought in the writing of Jewish history, where did these men turn for their materials? An analysis of Joseph ha-Kohen's Emek ha-Bakha reveals, that for him, a prime source is material which he has gleaned from chronicles kept by the Kings of Germany, as well as the material of Rabbi Elazar;¹

אמר יוסף בכרך את פרסאמו כאלה אשר ב"ו
 בימי פלפי חלק צבאם בעסקי מקוונתם כאלהם
 אשר כהו מ'מ'סן בכרך, ומספר דברי בי'מ'סן מ'מ'סן
 אשכנז²

Another source of material is that reported as;

אפרים בן יעקב כתב כל אשר בימים רבים ואמר
(p. 42) ארלי' ערעלן אל דבר'ו

so too he writes,

כל אשר כתיב כאפרים בר יעקב הספדו אשר
(p. 48)...הער פכיל עמאר.

similar sources would include the writings of Kalonymus b. Kalonymus, the
"Igeret Ba'ale Hayyim" and Iben Bahen.³

A second area for obtaining information was the availability of books, by non-Jews, on a variety of subjects. These books, with only a passing concern for the fate of the Jews, include such works as the Safer Ashkenaz, a book with the chronicles of Germany, and a book on Cosmographia written by Sebastianus Munsterus. (This work pays little regard to the Jews and the data given is but incidental to its major theme.)⁴

A source of importance for Joseph ha-Kohen is evidenced on pages 63 and 64 where he states;

ע"ק ארזא הספר פ' כוראוליא

which the editor states is a reference to the book by Samuel Usque, which was written in Portuguese. It is quite probable that ha-Kohen, dwelling in Italy, would have in his possession a copy of the Consolacam in translation.⁵

So too does ha-Kohen cite a source listed as 'ארזא א' כתב
ר' צ'ין - this source, as those cited above, and several other works cited by ha-Kohen, are given in the heading for a given paragraph for which they were used. The material on the period from 1562 until 1572 is all credited to 'ארזא א'.

The contribution of ha-Kohen has been his collecting of the historical material, and the frame into which he has placed these documents. (This frame will be the subject of a more intensive examination at a later point in this chapter.) Ha-Kohen has used his firsthand observation, history known to everyone by oral communication and the Josippon. Such an assortment of sources allowed ha-Kohen a wide choice for his study and their availability shows that he has used his prerogative as an historian and included only selected materials.

The historical sources of the Consolacum are of extreme importance when one notes, with Dr. Martin Cohen, p. 269, that

"As an original historian, Usque contributed but little - a mere thirteen chapters in the historical section of Dialogue III. The rest of his lengthy message was built on the data, the concepts, and often the very words of others. Usque promises his reader in his Prologue: 'I have culled them indeed not without some toil and trouble, from various highly accredited authors, as can be seen in the margins, and from the most recent works which contain the eye-witness accounts of our elder contemporaries.'"

Yet Dr. Cohen has gone beyond Usque's citations and corrected others. In analyzing his footnotes to Usque's text one becomes aware that the material in Dialogue I is culled from Usque's thorough knowledge of the Bible. Much of the material is taken from the Josippon, which is the basic source for Dialogue II, and Josephus - perhaps in some corrupt version. So too has Usque used a variety of classical sources, (though Dr. Cohen discounts the historical value of such material), rabbinic material and, in the last Dialogue (III) one finds mention of Alfonso de Spina's Fortalitum Fidei - an anti-Jewish polemic, as well as contemporary material. Usque also cites the L.I.E.B. After an analysis of available theories,

Dr. Cohen discounts the suggestions of Loeb that this was the Shebet Yehuda, and suggests instead the Yemot Olam of Isaac Abravanel - his argument is most convincing. Most important for the shaping of the Consolacam, though not a commonly quoted source, unless the above suggestion is accepted, is Don Isaac Abravanel. Abravanel desired a theologically oriented history and this Usque has achieved. He set his trust in the

"truth of prophetic prediction and on the Deuteronomic view of sin and punishment and this is the thinking which produced the Consolacam."⁷

Surely, with this great an influence upon the Consolacam, one must give careful thought to Dr. Cohen's suggestion that the L.I.E.B. stands for L(eon) I(Ehuda) EB(reo) - the name of Don Isaac's oldest son, and that the work in question is the now lost Yemot Olam.⁸

To obtain an idea of the primary sources used by the Ibn Vergas is to tackle a monumental task, for with each generation came new sources, new directions, new ideas. The one close tie that can be made is between the basic destructions, as given by Judah Ibn Verga, and the "Zikron ha-Shemadot" by Profiat Duran, as suggested by Max Seligsohn.⁹ Beyond this basic source one is left to the reports of the authors and a knowledge of available materials. The danger of attributing sources may be seen in an analysis of the "Third Destruction," an incident given us in a letter of R. Shirira Gaon. However, Ibn Verga's account is not drawn from that source according to *whic. 2* and has been doctored by him.

If one accepts Dr. Cohen's suggestion, in his discussion of the identity of the work called the L.I.E.B., then he will find that Ibn Verga has relied upon the Sefer Ha-Kabbalah, by Ibn Daud, and upon the L.I.E.B would be a reflection of his friendship with the Abravanel family in the

same way that Usque was so influenced. That Verga knew of Don Isaac Abravanel, and his work, is shown by Verga's mention of the Abravanel family and his use in Chapter Fifty-One of a direct quote from Abravanel.

אמר יוסף: שם ארז קאסי'א יצ'נו כג'ו הש' פ'צ'ו פ'ח'פ'ל ב'ח'מ'פ' ד'ן י'צ'ק א'ב'ר'ה'א'נ'י פ'ר'ה'ל' ס'פ'ר ה'ת'כ'ס ו'א'ח'ר' ל'כ'ו'ר' כ'פ' ו'ב'ל'ש'ו'ן כ'צ'ל ו'פ'מ'ו'ר' א'ר' (p. 120)...: ו'כ'ר' ל'ש'ו'ן

Other sources used by the Ibn Verga's include the "Chronicles of the Kings of the Purple"¹⁰ (the Roman emperors) and the "Chronicles of the Spanish Kings,"¹¹ Judah Almoni,¹² the Josippon,¹³ a familiarity with the Midrash and the Kuzari,¹⁴ the "Igeret Taimon" of Maimonides¹⁵ (and much of the philosophy presented is quite similar to that found in Maimonides' Moreh Nebukim)¹⁶ and others. A most important source for Ibn Verga is his own vivid imagination, which colors even his historically accurate accounts of his own day (which, perhaps for his own safety he often projects upon an earlier day)¹⁷ and creates in toto some of the accounts.

With each of the three historians presented herein, one must be aware of the difficulty in ascertaining the sources used. While an author may cite rabbinic material, his knowledge of this material may be but from secondary sources. While the material given in an historical account may parallel an account in Josephus, the actual source might be the Josippon, or a document now lost. While Usque and Ibn Verga may report the same incident, it is difficult to ascertain if one has used the material of the other, or if both had access to the same source. This writer has found that even those sources noted by the historians, are incorrect. How easily then, might readers of the texts be misled as to the true sources (in contra-

distinction to the sources cited by the text.

Upon the evidence of the above analysis, one must attribute to these historians a knowledge of a wide-range of materials and, as would be expected of educated people who are forced to travel, an ability to handle several languages. It is most likely that Joseph ha-Kohen had a copy of Samuel Usque's Consolacam, but did not have Verga's work. To discover a connection between Usque and Verga one would have to agree with Loeb that Usque's L.I.E.B. is actually the Shebet Yehuda. However, this author is inclined to agree with the more recent scholarship of Dr. Cohen, that both men had a common source available to them - which is to be discovered by a close reading of their parallel passages. Yet most of their material is drawn from independent sources.

Each of these historians has created his own image of history, to such an extent, that even those sources shared, become different as they are used by the historian. This difference is accentuated by the writer's style, emphasis and setting as applied to each incident. These men and their works give fine evidence that it is the historian who, by emphasis and method of presentation, molds history to his view. It is thus necessary to bear in mind the historian's personal history as one analyzes his work, that one might discover through a close reading of his work(s) his view, - his distortion.

B. Historical Content

The Emek ha-Bakha is written, according to its author, to include all of the disasters from the time of the great destruction, the destruction of Jerusalem;

לפיכך כי בראשית אשר עברו עלינו מיום יפוצר
 מלך אדמון עד דיוס כלל מפורכות כש ופך נמתי אל ימי
 למחברת המבור קלן יכיל אל אשר מצא ימי הקולות הסופרים
 אשר בראשית לפני המשון עברי ¹⁵ והספיק ¹⁸

and so it is that the first incident reported is of the Roman period.

ויפי רבן יומן בן זכאי עליהם לראש... ופי בימין פכסין
 פכסין ופכסין פכסין אל לשמון בן שמעון ואר לשמון
 בן אלישע ככרן פכסין (p. 2)

But the author moves with great rapidity, once having presented selected disasters from the early Roman period. It should be noted that there is an idea of a chronology of events and ha-Kohen usually reports the incidents in their proper sequential order. Also to be noted is ha-Kohen's method of citing one date and then to discuss a series of disasters which may, or may not, be related. This is to be seen on pages 24 and 25,

Paragraph 1;

אמר יוסף ככרן אל בראשית אשר פיו בימי
 פכסין מלך זכור...

Paragraph 2;

וילכו כנצמדין פפולזין פאלר אל ארץ המצור

this is included as

ככור הספר דברי בימין אשר כובדו למחבר
 זכור ומלך בית אילומאן

Paragraph 3;

ויפי בטנ (פפסין) וילכו כנצמדין אל יבולזין

(the march of the French to retake Jerusalem?), but paragraph 4;

ויפי בימי פקיסר אנריקו

Sequence is present, but a firm relationship between paragraphs is lacking.

The sweep of the countries which come into view, the amount of material related and the precision of the dating, all become greater as the centuries pass and the time under discussion becomes closer to that in which Joseph ha-Kohen lived. An explanation of this is easily projected - the research would be easier, the sources more readily available and most important the motivation would be greater. The proximity of the events to ha-Kohen's audience made the lessons seem real, the lessons that ha-Kohen sought to teach his fellow Jews.

While ha-Kohen does use quotes by the people within the incident which he is reporting, fictional quotes, according to what must have been said, this method is not explored. The insights which Ibn Verga is able to give his readers through his use of dialogues are lacking entirely from ha-Kohen's presentations.

ו'אמרו ננקום נקמה משיחיו מלך כדורם, (כח' צ"ס)
מלכי ואל יזכר שם יטבאל ע"ה - צ"ח אל' הלו' ע"ס אל' צ"ס
19
הצ"ס י"ב' כח' צ"ס

And to this evil reaction, expressed by the masses who led the charge, the reaction of the Jews was one of piety and faith in the Lord.

ו'אם ע"ה... ו'טבאל... ע"ה צ"ס
20
י'אצ"ו צ"ס ו'א' פ' ה' צ"ס

This is the final answer of the Jews to every disaster. (This is the answer if one reads ha-Kohen and accepts his presentation.)

Common sayings showing the pattern of thought within this work are

"ו'אל פ"ר מ'צ"ס מושיע היום אל' פ' "מה" בי' מ'צ"ס פ' צ"ס"

This book is a collection of the disasters which befall the Jewish people

forces, which demanded the attention of ha-Kohen. The threat of the East and the Church's reaction to the Reformation forced the author's concern from Spain to the Papal States where the new danger lay for the Jews (until the final bull of expulsion in 1569 by Pope Pius V). This bull, the travails which preceded it and the more distant past all form the world viewed by Joseph ha-Kohen and given, in this work, as his original contribution to history.

The content of Usque's Consolacam is of a form different from the chronicle-like style of both ha-Kohen and Ibn Verga. Usque places his material into a three part dialogue, which gives the incidents a form and continuity. The characters within this dialogue are Numeo (the symbol of Nahum, the comforter) and Zicareo (Zechariah the remembrancer) who console the saddened Ycabo, who speaks as both the personification of the people Israel and as Jacob, the progenitor. It is Ycabo who tells of the misfortunes of his people, a task which is divided into three periods - 1) that of the Bible, 2) the Second Commonwealth, 3) the medieval period and the contemporary scene. As with ha-Kohen, this book speaks not of the great moments in Jewish history, but focuses upon the disasters - a situation which is natural with the idea of the book. The disasters, presented as examples of the horrible past which is over, make the present seem more bearable, a respite after the horrors, a pause before the coming breaking of the dawn.

The material of the first dialogue is given, at the opening, in the form of a parable which Ycabo then explains, however, this device of parables to introduce the history, is not used in the rest of this Dialogue, nor in other Dialogues. A most important feature of this work is the tie which

Usque finds between each of the disasters and the prophecies of the Bible. For Usque, each disaster was but the fulfillment of a prophecy caused by disregarding God's law. Evidence of this attitude is reflected in his handling of the forced conversions in Portugal in 1497. Having described the events through Ycabo, as the personification of the people Israel, he concludes;

"Who can escape Your anger, O Lord, when it is moved with so much cause as my iniquities provided? For even here it has overtaken me, in these farthest parts of the earth, fulfilling these cruel judgements which You pronounced against me through the lips of Your prophets:

'The Lord will scatter you among all peoples from one end of the earth even to the other; there you shall serve other gods, whom you have not known, you nor your fathers, and you will serve your enemy and languish. (Deut. 28:64-65)..."²⁴

Having repeatedly followed this pattern Usque spends a large part of the Third Dialogue, forty-eight pages, with the blessings which shall henceforth come unto Israel, its people and its land. This is the point to which all of the historical material leads, regardless, or better, perhaps because of the inaccuracies in the accounts, that Israel had endured the curses and was now to receive the blessings.

The scope of the material presented is almost unbelievable, for Usque sketches the travails of his people from Abraham and Noah (p. 51), with ever greater detail and clarity, to his own time - the sixteenth century. It is only natural that, in assembling a history which covered so much time, the details given would not be too numerous. The format of this work however, allows that material presented to be given in a lucid manner, that every detail stands out clearly against the background. Usque's genius is shown in the history of the Third Dialogue where his ability to

focus upon the material of more recent times, to report it accurately, to be aware of the importance of an event is to his credit. The structure by which Usque has presented this material and the style of his writing are the key signs of his genius and not his ability as a recorder of data.

The historical events recorded in the Shebet Yehuda begin with the destruction of Jerusalem by Caesar Augustus. In this account a concern for the cause of the hatred of the Jews is established, a concern which is found to determine the material included and the method used to present the history. This first account gains importance from the existence in Ibn Verga's time of a parallel situation in which a Jew, Abraham Senior, aided and abetted the courtship and marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella.²⁵ This situation also brought problems for the Jews. The concern, of Verga for the cause of the problems of the Jews, is often apparent in his discussions of real incidents. But the genius of his concern becomes manifest in the events which are expanded or totally invented by him. The purpose of this inventiveness is to place in the past incidents which, when closely examined, will yield insights into the problem which faced Ibn Verga and his fellow exiles - their constant suffering and their desire to know "why?"

To accomplish his analysis of the reason for the plight of the Jews, Ibn Verga has used history. An analysis of the contents of his work reveal an author who is not concerned with the presentation of "all" the disasters, nor does he require that each incident be in its proper place in the time order. In truth, one has the feeling that for Verga, the history is a necessary framework upon which he has chosen to hang his analysis of the Jewish travails. The bulk of space, and of his genius, is given over to pure fiction and fictionalized accounts in which Ibn Verga, through his

use of the dialogue, manages to explore the causes for the repeated suffering of the Jews. The dialogue form allows him the freedom to analyze the problem from the point of view of the non-Jew and to force upon those who he has speak for the Jews, a more scientific defense of the Jews. This method puts an end to the purely emotional approach.

An example of this method may be seen in the Seventh Disaster, which Ibn Verga entitles;

ענין וכו' פיר בין המלך האדני והאדני המלך
(p. 26) מספר דם אומאש כלבס פמחואדא

This debate is found in no other source and is considered to be the creation of Ibn Verga's imagination. Yet, unlike Graetz and others, ²⁶ who would relegate the Shebet Yehuda to a position of relative insignificance, ²⁷ this writer has found Ibn Verga to be a genius. His work is one of importance. The importance of his work is not in the history it presents, but in the view of causation to which it calls all of its readers, and in its attempt to see in the machinations of the world, more than the mere actions of an omnipotent God. This is shown as this seventh section progresses, the King states: (p. 26, L. 12)

אפ' כ"י ש'אד' מ' ע'ש'ה' ע'ש'ה' כ' פ'ט' ע'ס' ר'ה' פ'ו'ד'ע'י'
ס'ג' נ'פ'י'ג' פ'י'פ'ו'ד'ע'י' מ'י' ק'ד'ס', ו'מ'א' א'מ'ח'ר' כ' מ'פ' ע'י' ה'ע'נ'ו'י'
פ'י'פ'ו'ד'ע'י'! ... ו'פ'י'ש' ע'ס' א'מ'צ'א' נ'פ'י'ג' ע'ס' ה'ד'ר'ק' א'מ'ע' ו'מ'א'
ה'ד'ר'ק' ע'נ'ש'...

From this point on the King proceeds to show how the downfall of the Jews follows no logic that would adhere in the natural order, nor any reason or manner of divine punishment.

Thomas, the spokesman for the Jews, then attempts to show that the

common charges against the Jews are fallacious, using both history and the midrash for his proof texts. Thomas shows that the downfall of the Jews is of the natural order.

This use of the dialogic form is found repeatedly in the Shebet Yehuda and marks those passages which to Ibn Verga were most important, for the other passages are brief accounts, usually copied, or translated directly into this work. (Such a case is seen in Section Twenty-One, page 69.) Along with the use of dialogue and fiction, one finds in Ibn Verga's accounts, a use of the ideas and happenings of his own day. This material becomes the basis for his fictional accounts of the past. This is the case with Section Thirty-Eight where the incidents related may actually have occurred within Ibn Verga's lifetime.

An over-all look at the Dialogues included by Ibn Verga gives one a good idea of the world as he saw it, or, as he felt it must be seen.

1. He rationalizes the decrees of the Kings against the Jews, by his presentation of the Kings as benevolent, wise men, who have a strong sense of justice, but are subject to the pressures of the masses.²⁸
2. The Popes are pictures as favoring the Jews. (In his time the Popes were still open to influence, though by 1550 troubles already beset the Jews from the Papacy.)²⁹
3. It is the priests who stir up the gullible and incite them against the Jews.³⁰

Summary: Those of the educated, aristocratic class are favorably inclined toward the Jews, while the masses, aroused by jealousy are ever ready to attack the Jews.

It is interesting to note that all of the histories begin with exactly that period in which the muse of the writing of Jewish history was silenced. It would seem, that in addition to all else that they would hope

to achieve, these historians sought to pick up the accounting of Jewish history from the moment of its death.

The historical content of these three works covers a great span of time and, but for the Emek ha-Bakha, these sources are not reliable. The incidents presented overlap in some areas as all of the authors have focused upon the disasters which have come upon the Jews. (The incidents which all three authors presented are found to be either direct quotes from another source, or from one another - little is to be gained by a comparative analysis.) The prime lesson which one learns from a comparison of the contents of these three works is that it is the historian who makes history by his selection of the events which he will include, as well as those he will leave out and by his selection of the setting into which he will place the events.

C. Style

The styles exhibited by each of these writers are widely disparate, though may be found to overlap in certain areas. Joseph ha-Kohen has presented his book, in what might be termed the classical style. His writing is vivid and has a flavor of the biblical style.³¹ The writing of Joseph ha-Kohen is one which vividly portrays the sorrows of the Jews and which shows the author's sympathy with their pain. As a result of such feelings the writings of Joseph ha-Kohen often reflect great bitterness. Such feelings are shown in the repetition of tragedy and the extent of the descriptions;

וְיָדָהּ הַכֹּהֵן הוּא וְיִקְוֶהוּ כִּכְלָה עֲמֵר עַד עַד וְקִדְוֶה
אֲשֶׁר הוּא (worms) וְיִנְיֹסוּ רֵגִים אֵלָיו בְּפִלְסוּן, כִּי יִכְלָה
בֶּן אֲדָמָה עַד, וְיִכְלָה אֵלָיו פִּלְסוּן וְיִכְלָה פִּלְסוּן עַד אֲדָמָה,

לא חטאו על אש ואשך ויכנסו רבתיסן ויפילו רמאליס ובהילס
 שלטו את ידס... ואת ספרי כתרס לאסר פפילו ויקרעס ויכנסס
 ברעלסרס... ויפרכס קדסו את קדוס שרס נסר פשוט, בחור
 חור מחסס מאנו עטוב מאחר פ'; וישלסו רביס את ערסס
 ואס את אליו ואס את כסרו ואת אש חיקו ואת בניו ואת
 בנותיו, ונשס כחמניות שחל יספסן בכל ימס וכל נפס, ואמרו
 שחל ישלסו בפשפסן נפסס את חיק אמורס (p. 15)

This reaches the point that ha-Kohen includes a listing of those who were killed and

ושס את רמס אחר ויכנסו כססרס פכסס, ופס סוס
 שס אחר ויחור, ואת אחר פססו רבס ופסס ורכס על
 פסס ויכנס פכססו האסן ובאסרס ופסס, כס כפסס
 ביס ובין רמס ויכנס ופכסס ויפססו רמס ויכנסו ס
 אסן שס וס פכסס חסנרס לס כרססו את יס וארסס
 פסססו סר פססס, עססן יאסנו כס חור וס יס...

While the style of Joseph ha-Kohen is most pleasant and shows the author to be adept at the use of biblical quotations and the Hebrew language, the true stylistic genius among these three historians must be Samuel Usque. While this writer's acquaintance with this work has been only in the translation by Dr. Cohen, he feels that the genius of Usque shines through. His is the genius not only of the written word, but of the selection of his framework of the history as a pastoral dialogue.

"This choice of the pastoral genre, the dialogue form and the discipline of history for his polemic was not made fortuitously by Samuel Usque. Pastoral poetry and prose were the delight of the cultured classes of the Renaissance, to which most of Usque's audience belonged. This was particularly true in Italy, where Usque wrote, and Usque was sensitive to the importance of using a fashionable form for his message. The dialogue form ...in addition ...was a traditional device in Christian polemical works against the Jews." (p. 10)

(This may also explain, at least in part, the use of the dialogic form in the Shebet Yehuda.) The very names of the characters within the Dialogue proper ring with a poetic sound. Even Usque's selection of the Portuguese language for the transmission of his work, is an example of his poetic style. So too this use of Portuguese was an attempt by Usque to write for his fellow Portuguese New Christians, for Portuguese would not have been selected as a means of bringing this book to the non-Jewish world, Spanish would better achieve this goal. It would however, be the language of communication with his fellow Jews in this period when Hebrew was a prohibited subject. Yet, it was to be the fate of this book to fall into disuse due to this very choice of the Portuguese language. Usque's ideas are good, his sentiments in keeping with the spirit of his people, his lyrical prose

"stands out today as a monumental contribution to Portuguese literature."³²

Usque explains his choice;

"Before learning of my intention, some gentlemen felt that it would have been better for me to have written in the Castilian tongue, but I believe that I have done the right thing. My primary intention was to speak to the Portuguese (New Christians), to describe the record of our Diaspora, and by many sometimes circuitous means, to seek some relief from the hardships we have been enduring. It would therefore have been inappropriate for me to shun my mother tongue and to seek a borrowed language in which to speak to my countrymen. And though at one time there were many among us from the Diaspora of Castile - my own forebears came from there - it seems more proper for me to consider the majority of our people today."³³

The language of Usque has been lost upon this writer, but Usque's imagery, even in translation, or perhaps because of Dr. Cohen's brilliant translation, is especially vivid. Such may be exemplified by the portrait of Dona Gracia

This method, employed by Ibn Verga, of building incidents upon a truth which he expands, can be found exemplified in both Section Thirteen and Section Twenty. Section Twenty is most interesting for Ibn Verga talks of an expulsion from France, which in fact was from England where the conversion of a Dominican is verified as occurring in London in 1275, which was fifteen year prior to the exile. To this, Ibn Verga has added the discussion between a King, (who is pro-Jewish), and his princes, (who are against the Jews) and expands the facts, even changing the time of warning before the final expulsion - the stated three-month span was not found in England's expulsion, but in his own Spain.³⁶

D. The Aim or Idea of History

In analyzing the works of these three historians, one becomes aware that the mere collection of facts and figures was not enough for these men. Each of these men sought to make a contribution to his people's well-being. This contribution was an attempt to answer the people's ever-present question - Why had the Jews suffered? Why do they suffer? To achieve a solution to these questions these men use history. For them the dates and places of the events they record need not be correct, for it is to the spirit of the Jews as reflected in their history that these men look. They seek to find the essence of the survival of the people and to present this essence to the people of their day as a cure for their ills. Each man has seen this essence in a different light and has viewed the history of his people through haze of this light. For these men history was a tool chosen, in addition to all other reasons, as it was becoming the battleground of religious polemics.

Joseph ha-Kohen's Emek ha-Bakha may, in this discussion, be used as a control text. His work is most like the early chronicle in form. However, even this work was not unaffected by the times in which it was created. While showing the greatest regard for historical accuracy of any of these men, ha-Kohen still uses history. Within his portrayal of the disasters which befell the Jews, and, exemplified by the very fact that this is just a recitation of these disasters, Joseph ha-Kohen reveals his purpose - to show the Jews of his day God's hand in the working of history and His justice, as those who do evil will ultimately suffer while those who do his will, prosper. This is a cry for the Jews to have hope, hope in God, and a trust that their right actions would see them restored in spite of the renewed antagonism of the Church. Examples of this spirit saturate this work and are characterized by the statements;

(p. 9) וַיִּבֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵלָּהּ הָיָה כִּפְיָא, שְׁמוֹ קִוְיָהָא כּוֹס חַיִּים פ'

It is not man, but God, who set Israel's path with thorns, and the Jewish reaction indicates their awareness of this reality, for in the fact of this reality, we read their typical reaction;

וַיִּמָּחַד לְהַבְהִיר וַיִּפְּחֵם לְחַיִּים - וַיִּשְׁאֵל עֲנִיָּפִים פ' שְׁמִינִי - וַיִּלְלֵנוּ
(p. 14) צוֹמָה וַיִּצְעֲקוּ אֵל פ' הִצֵּר עֲפֵס,

and occasionally God hearkens;

וַיִּשְׁמָע פ' אֵת נִקְרָא, וַיִּלְכֹּד אֶת הָרִית וַיִּבֶן אֲנִיָּם כְּרוֹב
חֲסִידִין - אֵל כֵּן, אֲמַרְתִּי: אֲדַכֵּךְ פ' בְּאֵנְפִי פ' יְשׁוּבָה אֲפִק
וַיִּנְחֲמֵנִי יְמֵי שְׁלוֹם שְׁאֵר הָאֵלִים: כִּי הָיָה רָחֵמִי פ' יֵשׁוּבָה אֲפִק
שְׂרִיבָה וַפְּרִיָּה. הִרֹק פּוֹדֵד וַחֲצִי אֲמִין, אֲמִין (p. 29)

and when the enemies of the Jews die, it is said;

כֵּן יֵאָבְדוּ כֵּל אוֹיְבֶיךָ פ' (p. 104)

It can then be seen that for Joseph ha-Kohen, history is the account of man's action and, as such, is a reflection of God's administration of His world according to His justice. For, while he does give some insight into the particular cause of a particular disaster as;

וְאֵלֶּה הָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן
מִיְּמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

(p. 65), and also (p. 78)

וְיָדָעְתָּ שֶׁכָּל הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֱלֹהִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

the real cause of everything is God - He alone metes out reward and punishment.

Thus, ha-Kohen holds out to his people a hope for a greater future given them for their perseverance in adhering to His way and this hope is what the Emek ha-Bakha seeks to keep alive. If we have suffered so much ...our time is not far off - this is the spirit of ha-Kohen, as, facing renewed danger, he writes;

אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ כִּי כָּתוּב וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
(p. 87) וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

While written before the Emek ha-Bakha and a source for that work, the Consolacum by Samuel Usque may be viewed as going beyond ha-Kohen in its use of history. It should be realised that Usque's book was written but a short time after Alfonso de Spina's Fortalitium Fidei was published in Spain. This work,

"written at the time the New Christians were first charged with heresy, and containing among other things, a refutation of Jewish objections to Christianity and an anthology of the most preposterous and vicious libels concocted about the Jews throughout the Middle Ages."³⁷

and the books and preachers for whom it supplied ammunition

"went unanswered because no New Christian dared defend Judaism without exposing himself drove the Portuguese Marranos to the brink of despair."³⁸

The Consolacam may then best be viewed as an apologia for the Jewish people, an attempt to provide the ammunition which would refute these hate-mongers, while capitalizing on the forms then in fashion for such works. As such, Usque was not concerned with the accuracy of detail. He exaggerated and accepted facts with fiction, so long as they furthered his thesis.

Underneath Usque's view of the history of the Jews is the spirit of the prophets which he shares with ha-Kohen and Abravanel, that it is God who controls all of the events of history. "These misfortunes came upon me from a much higher quarter," said Ycabo, the personification of Israel. Yet, Usque had gone one step beyond ha-Kohen in that, (perhaps because he saw in the Reformation the dissolution of the Church and the rise of new freedom, or was it the hope offered by the rising Ottoman Empire), he states that the promised punishments of the Bible have all been fulfilled and that the promises of reward are about to be meted out to Israel. Every disaster described is concluded with the words of the prophecy it fulfills. Within Usque's account of history one discerns the idea that these accounts, though in the past, closely parallel the reality of the moment. How close is the case of Eleazar's martyrdom (pp. 119-120),

after severe torture when he would not convert, to the martyrdom experienced by many New Christians at the hand of the Inquisition. While the death of Hannah and her seven sons by fire (pp. 120-122) is similar to the death of many who were burned by the Inquisition. In concluding his account of Hannah, Ycabo states;

"Brother, I have narrated these three misfortunes to you in such detail because they are so exemplary and of such great importance that they grieved me to the extreme." (p. 122)

Indeed "exemplary" they are, examples of the proper attitude one must have in the face of the Inquisition which tortured and killed with fire.

Finally the Jews, having endured all of the travails, are to be lauded, not discouraged, for God has chosen them and never forsaken them. The constant punishment is not a sign of His abandoning the Jews, but of their abandoning Him and His punishment of them, to set them anew upon the right path.

"Certainly with only these proofs you can regard yourselves as the happiest of all creatures, for you will find that He has not employed any of these means with any other people that was or is yet to be punished."³⁹

This is Usque's view of the history of the Jews and all of his efforts are directed that he might hear the Jews of his day join with Ycabo in saying;

"I will wait for the Lord. I will trust in the God of my salvation...Rejoice not against me, you, my enemy Bozrah because I have fallen, for I will arise with the Lord's favor, and though I sit in darkness, He will give me light there, for He is my light. I will bear His indignation with patience, for I have erred against Him, until He renders a favorable decision in my case and judges my cause, and brings me forth to the light from the darkness where I am at present and then I shall behold His righteousness. I shall also see my enemy Bozrah covered with dishonor and shame,

she who now asks me mockingly: Where is your God? Why
 does He not save you from your perils and from my hands?
But I trust in the Lord of hosts, that my eyes shall
see her trodden down as the mire in the streets. (Micah
 7:7-10)⁴⁰

The Shebet Yehuda, by Solomon Ibn Verga, reflects the same times and ideas as those for which Usque wrote. However, Ibn Verga has moved in a direction different from that of Usque. As ha-Kohen, Ibn Verga has written his work in Hebrew, that his work be a part of the historic past of his people. His use of history may stem from its use by the polemicists of his day, although in reading this work one feels a freedom unlike that of any of the other works, indicating that this is not a response to the polemics. Ibn Verga seeks to speak to the Jews of Turkey, a people enjoying great freedoms as they were induced to serve this growing empire. He does not require the same caution that Usque displays for the Christian Church is without influence here. He writes in Hebrew as it is the language of his people. It is the tool which will unite the Jews of the Empire into one trading block. Ibn Verga has been encouraged by the freedom of the Empire to analyze the travails of the Jews more scientifically, needing neither to apologize for his people, not to his people. Thus it is seen that the Shebet Yehuda;

"did not expose the wounds of his people to arouse sympathy, or even to plead for divine compassion. He collated these stories as a scientist collects data for analytical study and cumulative evidence, by means of which it might be possible to reach rational conclusions or at least to attain a clearer insight into the nature of the social problem."⁴¹

Ibn Verga hung together the stories which he found and added to them from his imagination. His book is filled with his additions, but none of these changes would effect an analysis which sought the causes for the continued

suffering of the Jews. Into this setting of historical evidence, Ibn Verga carefully and brilliantly set his analysis of the materials and the problem. In the imaginary dialogues Ibn Verga, speaking first as the adversary of the Jews, then as its advocate, is able to carefully analyze the causes of the Jewish suffering. It can be seen in Ibn Verga's account of history that the incidents, while sometimes expanded, are not presented with great sobbing or an abundance of sympathy. Rather, these are straight accounts for what had happened to the people.

Ibn Verga's view of history is that it is a tool, through whose use he might remove the need for future suffering by the Jews, by discovering the causes that they might be corrected. Ibn Verga views the world as man's, in which a cause and effect relationship is present, with both cause and effect being man made. This is his contribution to Jewish history. This is what separates him from Usque and ha-Kohen. Of pure historical importance is Ibn Verga's concern with genealogies, with which this book is filled. Such a list is included in the second section, a genealogy for Ben Sira.

The Seventh Section, dealt with in part in an earlier discussion, is a final example of Ibn Verga's creative dialogues which serve to analyze the disasters which befell the Jews. In this dialogue, Ibn Verga handles biblical and other materials - to answer traditionalists, anti-Jewish charges as to Jewish trickery etc., an attack on the traditional view that Jews suffered their disasters as divine punishment. He also probes that which he would consider the main reason for Jewish suffering - the jealousy of the masses of the pride and wealth of the Jewish people. All other reasons are refuted and Ibn Verga suggests a solution:

דמיא טומאט: עצה שוכניז האכותק, שכל פנאיות
 שגאו איפודים מכל פרבית שיחלכו לעצמם, וכל כפי
 ראות שופר' פארש. וסוד שנים ערפי הא' יעלש מושי, וסוד
 שיגאו חמא אדום גטיכיו שלג יפ' ודיטן (p. 32, L.5-7)

Ibn Verga also refutes many charges brought against the Jews and gives historic evidence to support each presentation. He presents here justification for the Christians to practice their faith in a manner different from the Jews. So too does he cite examples of provocations which in the natural order brought disaster upon the Jews.

All of the above analysis would not be possible without the dialogic form, for this form has given Ibn Verga the ability to say; "I did not say this, Thomas, (or the king,) did." By claiming to be reporting history, and this alone, Ibn Verga gained the freedom to publish his inquiry, with all of its ramifications, without bringing upon himself the animosity of Jew or non-Jew.

42

To say, as has the historian Heinrich Graetz, that this work is without value as a history due to Ibn Verga's inclusion of fiction with his fact, is to fail to recognize the great step forward that he had made. Ibn Verga removed Jewish history from the area of apologia, or accounts of the manifestations of the Divine in the world, and brought this history to grips with the real world. In this world both cause and effect were man made, even for the Jews. His inclusion of fiction does not spoil his historic material, but heightens its importance by bringing to the bare facts the light of understanding. The secret of seeing the value of this work is the ability to separate the fact from the fiction. As the genius of ha-Kohen was manifest in his chronicle-like, biblical style, Usque's

genius was manifest in his artistic use of the Portuguese language and Ibn Verga's was revealed in his recognition and presentation of the fact that cause as well as effect is a reality of this world. His answer to the suffering of the Jew and their desire to know, "Why?" was to look for the cause in this world, that the Jews might begin to act in a way that would prevent its reoccurrence.

Footnotes - Chapter Three

1. Perhaps this is the R. Elazar ben Judah who was the author of the Ha-Rokeach.
2. (Wien, 1851), p. 24.
3. (Wien, 1851), as cited by Letteris in his notes for page 48.
4. Ibid., p. 56.
5. M. Letteris, "Introduction," Emek ha-Bakha, p. X.
6. Including Plutarch (Dial. II-f41a), Lucan (Dial. II-f40b), Ovid (Dial. II-f41a) and Augustus, City of God (Dial. I, pp. 84ff.)
7. Appendix B, p. 275.
8. For a more thorough examination of all of Usque's sources, from which this writer's statement is but a gleaning, see Appendix B, pp. 269-287.
9. Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. VI, p. 550.
10. "First Destruction," pp. 19-20.
11. "The Sixth Destruction," pp. 22-25.
12. Ibid.
13. "The Seventh," pp. 26-46.
14. Ibid.
15. "Thirty-One," pp. 74-77.
16. "Thirty-Five," p. 91.
17. as is seen in incident "Thirty-Eight," pp. 92-94.
18. p. 1.
19. p. 14.
20. Ibid.
21. p. 44.
22. p. 79.
23. as on page 92.

24. Dial. III, p. 204.
25. A. Neuman, Goals, p. 101.
26. Max Seligsohn, Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. VI, p. 551.
27. Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews, Vol. IV, p. 557.
28. This is seen especially in sections "Twenty-Four" and "Twenty-Five," p. 70.
29. see section "Forty-One," pp. 107-115.
30. see section "Forty-Four," pp. 117-118.
31. see especially p. 93.
32. Dr. M. Cohen, "Introduction," Consolation, p. 11.
33. "Prologue," Consolation, p. 40.
34. Dialogue III, p. 230.
35. Goals, p. 90.
36. This material is presented in the notes by Azriel Shohet editor of the Shebet Yehuda (Jerusalem, 1947), pp. 185-186.
37. see Dr. M. Cohen's "Introduction" to the Consolation, p. 9.
38. Ibid.
39. Dialogue II, p. 159.
40. Dialogue III, p. 261 - the italics are Dr. Cohen's.
41. A. Neuman, Goals, p. 89.
42. History of the Jews, Vol. IV, p. 557.

Chapter Four

Each of these sixteenth century historians has responded to the tempestuous society in which he lived. His world was a world come alive, a world which held out hope for the Jews in Turkey, while offering naught but despair in some parts of the world. To the world in general and to their unique world, these men responded through the now popular historic mode, a mode rekindled by the Protestant Reformation. Each of these men, in their works discussed herein, gives ample evidence of their ability to uncover the records of the past, be they in Hebrew, Latin or any of several other languages. Yet both Usque and Verga are found to fictionalize their accounts in part, or in toto, and all three men have recounted, not a full history of the Jews, but only an accumulation of the disasters which had fallen upon the Jews. Both ha-Kohen and Usque are found to reflect their own sympathy with the people and to use their finest literary skills to depict the suffering of this usually faithful people. Thus, these men, for all of their skill at finding and translating their sources, would not fit within our modern notion of the science of history. This conception would hold that the historian must present his material in a cohesive form, tracing growth, cause and effect and only using the facts as the material presents them. (Or at least with relatively subtle bias.) Of these three men only Ibn Verga could approximate this ideal and his work lacks the accuracy, chronological sequence, unity and a clear-cut differentiation between fact and fiction.

In dealing with this period and its historians, Dr. Abraham Neuman has said:

"With the exception of the latter work (Rossi's Me'or 'Enayim) and, in a different sense, the Shebet Yehuda, the histories enumerated above do not rate as historical classics; but they signalize at least an awareness on the authors' part of the value of historic knowledge, an appreciation of its importance in the life of a people, and an earnest attempt to apply the lessons of history to the problems of their time..."¹

and indeed, this point is important in evaluating these works. A second, and equally important insight offered by Dr. Neuman comes in a series of three questions which he has asked concerning Ibn Verga, but applicable as a tool to analyze the work of each of these men.

- "1. What was the author's principle of selectivity? Within the known range of his historic material why were so many irrelevant and insignificant selections included and others far more important omitted?
2. What was the thread of continuity followed by this admittedly skillful writer inasmuch as he did not pursue chronological sequence in these narratives?
3. Furthermore, if his aim was primarily to write a purely historical work, it is difficult to see why an historian so gifted and critical as he often shows himself to be should also include material totally unworthy of his critical insight."²

These questions may provide the means to gain a fuller understanding of all three historians, for they present to the reader their implied answers that these men have gone beyond pure history, as an assemblage of "facts," and have written books in which the facts are used to solve the problem of the Jews, according to the unique view of the author.

Joseph ha-Kohen who, of these three men, sticks most closely to the facts, seeks to assure his people that God is controlling the destinies

of men and if they will remain with the faith of their fathers, they will survive, and life's meaning will be apparent. All of this approach had, by ha-Kohen's day, again become necessary, for troubles had once again set upon the Jews of the West. The brief respite in Italy was at an end. This theme is the answer ha-Kohen would give to each of the above questions. Nothing is included in his work which is not part of this theme. His sympathy for the Jews, and the exaggerated attention paid martyrdom, devotion to Judaism and prayer to God, are ha-Kohen's additions by which he seeks to create the desired spirit. With all of this, his book would most likely be a source to be trusted, for it is the closest to the pure fact, the pure chronicle.

Samuel Usque, living in Renaissance Italy, a country and time in which there was much antagonism toward Judaism, and a number of New Christians who had, perhaps against their will, been forced to be identified with the Jews, responded with his Consolacam. This book used the pastoral, dialogic form then popular for the anti-Jewish polemics. This work, written in a beautiful Portuguese style, sought to speak to these New Christians in their own language and style that it might be accepted by them, and thus arm them against those who would attack their Judaism. Thus were these people united with the same "history" which was that of the Jew. This book, Usque's apologia for Judaism, was in every way the equal of the polemics it sought to refute. Usque furnished ammunition by offering hope to these people, a hope encouraged by the Reformation's destruction of the solidarity of the Church as well as the opening of the East under the rising Ottoman Empire. He demonstrated, by his reconstruction of the past, the fact that God had, through Jewish suffering, demonstrated

His control of the world. As God had delivered punishment to the sinner, so would he reward the just and this day of reward was about to dawn for the Jews. This spirit of consolation is furthered by Numeo and Zicareo's consoling of Ycabo, so that the spirit of the dialogue, every conversation and the conclusion, lead one to hope, convinced of God's justice being manifest in the world. This goal would, for Usque, be the answer to Dr. Neuman's questions. This work, showing Usque to be a capable historian, well aware of his sources, covers the greatest breadth of time and is an historical work which can stand on its literary merit.

The Shebet Yehuda written by the Ibn Verga and given its genius of scientific cause analysis by Solomon Ibn Verga, came to full bloom in the new freedom of the Ottoman Empire. Written without a need to apologize to others or to console the empire's happy Jewish population and in the spirit of development which came to the world with the Renaissance, Ibn Verga sought to objectively analyze the earlier plight of the Jews to prevent a reoccurrence of these tragedies. To allow himself the freedom of expression in print, Ibn Verga used the dialogue-debate form, that he might, with equal enthusiasm present both sides of the irritations which he felt had given rise to the various persecutions of the Jews. Both as corroborating evidence and as a vehicle to carry his analysis, Ibn Verga gathered episodes of Jewish history and scattered them throughout the work. Thus would Ibn Verga explain the book's lack of selectivity, its lack of chronological sequence and the inclusion of material which is free of his "critical insights."

For each of these historians his theme, his response to his time and the needs of his people, have caused him to view history in the manner

he choose. For each, this view was different. Ibn Verga alone discovered objectivity and this, only when his objectivity was hidden from his reader. Each work contains material taken from a variety of sources and allows today's reader the opportunity to compare sources, some of which are no longer available, and to become aware of some sources for which today's historians should search that they might expand their knowledge of the past. To read any of these works, expecting to find a "modern" history, is impossible. These works lack continuity, flow (though this is provided by Usque's narrator, Ycabo) and the straight, pure facts that we moderns seek under our title "scientific history." It might be seriously questioned if any historian has been unbiased in his report, for the very abundance of available sources forces selectivity and exclusion of some material. To make this choice the historian will be forced to show his bias as to what is important. This reality is at work in the sixteenth century as it is today. To be understood, to know why objectivity was hidden, facts altered, requires an understanding of the times in which this muse of history was reawakened. To read these authors with an awareness of their *zeitsenleben* as has been attempted herein, is to learn from them not only of their past, but of their present.

Footnotes - Chapter Four

1. A. Neuman, Goals, p. 87.
2. Ibid., p. 83.

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