

SOLOMON IBN VERGA'S
SHEVET YEHUDAH:
DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS, CRITIQUE

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and Ordination

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PREFACE

It may seem perhaps ironic that a thesis on a book, which depicts the fury of Christian hatred toward the Jews, should be dedicated first to Christian individuals. The fact is, that without them I would not have lived to produce it. For it was Jan Misiewicz, who, despite the threat of severe punishment to himself at the hands of the Nazis and Ukrainian policemen, offered me food for my survival in the forests of Podolia and steered me to Michal Ogorek and his mother, who courageously sheltered me on their premises under the very noses of the German soldiers. Their courage, integrity, humanity and perseverance against many odds, helped to keep alive eleven Jews during the last two tragic years of the holocaust under Hitler. I was one of those eleven. Hence, it is to them that I owe a debt of gratitude for my life and remember them with love for their acts of bravery and unbounded compassion, shown in the midst of an environment hostile to anyone with a drop of Jewish blood in his veins. Unfortunately such Christians were rare. Most of them fell prey to the venom of Nazi propaganda against the Jews. The Hitler period was an excellent opportunity for Christianity to redeem itself vis-à-vis the Jew. But only a few brave souls made such an attempt on behalf of their faith. Hence, the deeds of the Misiewiczzes and the Ogoreks in no way conflict with the overall portrayal of Judeo-Christian relationships as found in Shevet Yehudah.

I cannot ever forget the family of John Van Der Hout.

John and Sylvia Van Der Haut opened for me the doors to the home of Noel and Betty Zeldin in Toronto, Canada, whose hearts and interest in me paved the way to HUC-JIR in New York. There I was able to pick up the shattered pieces of my soul, mend it to a point of self-fulfillment, and dedicate it for the rest of my life to the service of my people. Hearts like those of the Van Der Hauts and the Zeldins are also rare. I hope that my achievements will be a living monument to their generosity of heart, which knew no bounds even to a stranger like myself.

Last, but certainly not least, my wife Peppi and my children Zev and Shari deserve a prominent spot in this preface. Like loyal soldiers they held the fort of our homestead during the long periods of my absence from it. Their constant encouragement, their patience and their superhuman endurance during the years of my study for the Rabbinate, have allowed me to bring this project to its completion. To them I owe my love and unending gratitude, for they have allowed me to bring to fruition dreams and aspirations in adult years, which in my younger days were so mercilessly stifled by Hitler's madness.

TO THESE PEOPLE WHO HAVE TOUCHED AND SHAPED MY LIFE WITH THEIR UNBOUNDED INTEREST, UNDERSTANDING AND COMPASSION AND WHO HAVE MADE SUCH AN INDELIBLE MARK ON IT, THIS PROJECT IS DEDICATED.

Leon M. Kahane

New York,
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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

This thesis cannot be complete without acknowledging my indebtedness to my teacher, Dr. Martin A. Cohen and my former secretary Mrs. Jack Belfer.

I am indebted to Dr. M. Cohen for reading the manuscript and for guiding me each step of the way in the tedious process of compiling the material for this project.

His criticism and advice have made my work a real challenge. In the end it is for me a source of gratifying achievement.

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INTRODUCTION

The closing years of the fifteenth century heaped tragedy, persecution and expulsion upon the once-glorious Jewry of Spain. Despite loyalty to their kings and kingdoms, despite the high intellectual status they had achieved during the Golden Age, despite the high places they reached in royal circles or the financial community of their native land, the Spanish Jews began to feel the ground slipping from under their feet as the last decade of the fifteenth century ended.

Jews of Spain were once honored by kings, princes and the scholarly community. They had free access to high officials of both Church and State. Whenever a Jew was imprisoned for any misdemeanor, his co-religionists, imbued by a passion for solidarity, approached the nobles or other officials and succeeded in freeing the detained man. The image projected to the world by the Jews of Spain was one of enviable success. Envied it was indeed, especially by the masses of the lowly populace. The dregs of the non-jewish community had been often used by anyone who could promise them some material improvement of their lot in this world, or by others who ably promised them salvation from the damning purgatory in the world beyond.

In Spain it was the clergy who incited the populace against the Jews. Fanning that hatred before their faithful in daily preachments, these devoted Princes of the Church were able to convince the masses that rising cost of living was the result of Jewish machinations; that they were slowly being "disarmed" of all defenses the

Christian faith had mustered for them; that they were gradually being subordinated to the Jews despite the high positions Christian Spaniards held in their native land. These insinuations beamed at the populace with high intensity and frequency produced immediate results. The masses began to hate the Jews and evermore insistently demanded that the Jews be punished. They began to seek vengeance with pick and shovel in their hands for the glory of God and of Royal Spain.

Thus, both frightened and motivated to an emotional pitch, the lowly Spaniard was being stripped of his humanity, and like a hungry wolf was let loose en masse upon the Jewish community, encouraged to rob, to loot and to kill. And there was no one to stop him, for no one dared to interfere with actions by which God was to be glorified and Spain protected from all evil influence. Not even the converted Jew could escape this tragic fate; he, too, felt the heat of this passionate hatred against his brethren; he was also mistrusted and mishandled, even though by the act of conversion to Christianity he was able to achieve status and privileged positions. In fact he was even relieved from paying royal taxes which all Jews had to return to the King's treasury. The cries "we would rather go to hell, than live with you in paradise" now heard across the land, marked the end of Jewish life in Spain.

Attacked, impoverished and humiliated, the Jews asked of their scholars and Rabbis to explain this tragedy to them. Why were they charged with ritual murder or the desecration of the host, when they knew that such accusations were utterly false? Or, why should such a tragic lot befall them when they had proven themselves loyal to their Spanish motherland. The numerous texts they had at their disposal

made references to their persecutions only tangentially. They did not provide them with the answers they sought. All they could glean from those pages was the "residue of Mosaic law across the centuries." Their character was more talmudic than historic: they were extremely scholarly and technical. They failed to engage the mind of a believing Jewish reader. So the Jewish believer was left with his questions unanswered. Loyal to his faith, he went on suffering but he continued voicing his perennial pleas for an explanation of his tragic fate. Thus it was, that a new genre of historical chronicles appeared among the Jews. Their authors described in great detail the persecutions of the Jews across their vast kingdom. These chronicles were being written with a historic flavor, with an underlying philosophy of Jewish existence and tragic experience. It was precisely this type of book for which the Jewish reader of the fifteenth and sixteenth century yearned. Solomon Ibn Verga's "Shevet Yehudah" was such a book. It appeared to fill the need of the day. Many scholars who had subjected this work to scholarly scrutiny and analysis agree with Isidore Loeb that of all the Hebraic chronicles devoted to Jewish history of the Middle Ages, "Shevet Yehudah" is the most original one and the most vivid one of all.

There were other books as well. But they were polemic or apologetic in nature. Such literature was cultivated among the medieval Jews. Yet it did not quench the curiosity of Israel's descendants as to why their fate would so often run aground upon the bedrock of tragedy and destruction. The "Shevet Yehudah" attempts to provide answers to some of these questions. That is why its appearance around 1550 marks a new era in Jewish culture. For with its appearance, the Jewish reader had at his disposal the very first Jewish book

which attempted to treat the Jewish tribulations from a deeply-rooted Jewish point of view. Its author examined the economic and social factors at the time of the Spanish Inquisition and expulsion. As Cantera puts it: "It was within the circle of Christian culture the first work about the Jewish problem written in Hebrew by a Jew."

The appearance of Shevet Yehudah, however, was not a chance occurrence. The author of the book, Rabbi Solomon Ibn Verga did not create his magnum opus in a vacuum. For at the beginning of the sixteenth century great Italian historians introduced a new genre of historiography. They forsook the medieval theological position by which the earlier historians were bound, and they began writing history based upon empirical evidence rather than upon accepted tenets of historical tradition. Itzhak Baer is certain that Ibn Verga fell under the influence of these historians by coming in contact with them, either personally or through their writings. Their impact is clearly evident in Shevet Yehudah. The book lists numerous personalities drawn from the author's circle. It describes numerous occurrences across the centuries of Jewish existence; its tone is lively and the language is rich, it keeps the reader identified with the tragic events it portrays and the arguments it presents. The frequent quotations from Shevet Yehudah in other historiographical works speak eloquently for the profound esteem which this book has earned for itself by many researchers, and for the great interest with which it was read from the first moment it had seen the light of day.

PART A

GENERAL NOTES ON THE AUTHOR AND THE BOOK

CHAPTER I

SKETCHES OF THE IBN VERGAS#1: The name Verga and the noun "Shevet" in the title.

It was probably not just mere coincidence that the word "Shevet" was employed by the author as part of the title of his book. The Spanish noun "Verga" and the Hebrew "Shevet" are synonyms. They both mean "rod". Hence it is quite probable that the author was punning with his name when he included in the titles of two of his works the word "Shevet".

The name Ben Verga was common among the Jews in Andalusia. But Wiener claims that it is more proper to write Virga rather than Verga, even though there is no evident support for this view.

There were other famous Ben Vergas in Jewish history and it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish the degree of their relationship.

TABLE ITHE BEN VERGAS

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Rabbi Joseph Aben Verga | - lived in Valona. |
| 2. Rabbi Meir Aben Verga | - pupil of Rabbi Joseph Fasi, murdered in Italy by robbers. |
| 3. Rabbi Samuel Aben Verga | - a contemporary of Rabbi Moses Ben Joseph Trani. He is not to be confused with a relative of our Rabbi Solomon Aben Verga, the Don Samuel Hanasi, who was involved in averting the decree against the Jews of Toledo. |
| 4. Jacob Aben Hacar Verga | - lived in Haag in 1693. |
| 5. Rabbi Judah Ben Verga | - considered by many scholars to have been the father of Rabbi Solomon. Ibn Verga, the author of Shevet Yehudah. |

- 6. Rabbi Solomon Ibn Verga - the author of our book.
- 7. Rabbi Joseph Ibn Verga - of Adrianapolis, son of Rabbi Solomon Ibn Verga.
- 8. Judah Ibn Verga - lived in the sixteenth century and corresponded with Joseph Karo. The "Information about some persecutions and violence which overcame the Jewish people" is attributed to him. It is similar to the preface of Shevet Yehudah.

#2: JUDAH AND JOSEPH ABEN VERGA

(a) Judah Aben Verga:

Throughout his Shevet Yehudah, Solomon Ibn Verga never refers to Judah as his father, nor does Judah ever acknowledge that Solomon was his son. At best it can be accepted that Judah was a relative of Solomon. However, many scholars do refer to Judah as Solomon's father, as is evident from Wiener's comments on the subject. Martin Cohen maintains that since it is impossible to establish with certainty what the relationship of Solomon Ibn Verga was to the supposed author of Shevet Yehudah, it is probable that Solomon utilized the name Judah for his title, because the latter was more renowned in the contemporary world and would thus have lent a greater authority to his composition.

Some Hebrew title-pages employ the word "Zkeyno" in reference to Judah. This strengthens the position of those who argue for a father-son relationship between Judah and Solomon. But Wiener points out that the use of "Zkeyno" is not found in all editions of Shevet Yehudah, and it does not appear in the short foreword to the text, written by Solomon himself, therefore, the father-son relationship of the two Vergas cannot be decidedly proven.

To complicate matters even further, there are those who suggest that Judah Ibn Verga was Solomon's grandfather, not his father.

From what was generally collected about Judah, it appears that he was a Spanish historian of the second half of the fifteenth century, a cabbalist and perhaps even a mathematician and astronomer. He is mentioned in section 38 of Shevet Yehudah as having been held in high esteem by the governor of Andalusia and the Duke of Medina Sidonia to whom Judah appealed for help whenever Jews were being maligned or falsely accused of crimes, e.g.: as in the case of the Jews in Xerez de la Frontera.

Judah apparently attempted to maintain communication between the Jews and the Marranos. When the Inquisition was introduced into Spain, Judah was being forced to betray the Marranos he knew, but he escaped to Lisbon where he may have lived for a few more years until ultimately the Inquisition caught up with him and he met his death under torture. Judah wrote a history of the persecution of the Jews based upon Prophiat Duran's book, and Judah's own chronicle in turn became the basis of Shevet Yehudah. He is also credited with the Piruch a Faragani, a commentary on Al Faragani's work in the elements of astronomy. A whole series of scientific books are claimed to have been completed in 1458, but that date does not coincide with the events described in Shevet Yehudah #62.

(b) Joseph Ibn Verga:

Joseph was also a historian and maintained his father's tradition as a historian. He was a Rabbi in Turkey and lived in Adrianapolis at the beginning of the sixteenth century. All sources support the view that he was Solomon's son and that he emigrated from Spain

to Turkey as a Marrano. He is said to have completed his father's work by adding a record of some of the events of his own time. He was steeped in Jewish disciplines and was the author of "Sh'eyrit Yoseph", published in Adrianapolis in 1554. The book deals with Talmudic methodology. Apparently he knew Latin, as well. Some scholars attribute the Sh'eyrit Yoseph to another Joseph Ibn Verga of Avlona. Loeb claims that he intervened on behalf of the Jews in Xerez de la Frontera. But Loeb simply misread the text, in which Judah was clearly said to have been associated with this particular event.

#3: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SOLOMON IBN VERGA

Little is known about the life of Solomon Ibn Verga. Salomo Ben Schefet refers to Solomon Ibn Verga as having lived at the end of the fifteenth century, at the time of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal. He observed these expulsions and experienced them as well. His name is not mentioned anywhere else but in his own book. Scholars suggest that he probably hailed from Seville, and had spent most of his adult life in Castile. This suggestion is based on Shevet Yehudah because basically the book reflects Castilian conditions. I. Baer suggests further that he was an active participant in the theological discussions between the Jews and the Christians, which were quite frequent at the time. By 1478 Rabbi Abraham Zacuto made the first reference to Solomon Ibn Verga, and called him "a praiseworthy Chacham". In 1481 he became the official representative of the Jewish communities of Castile and Aragon, and since then was commissioned to collect monies from these Jewish communities in order to redeem Jewish prisoners from Malaga,

Malaga was recaptured from the Moors in 1487 by the Catholic sovereigns Don Fernando and Dona Isabel. To have been selected for this task, Solomon Ibn Verga must have been a well-known personality and a highly esteemed man by Jews and non-Jews. It is not known how old Verga was at the time, but by 1487, having been involved in such a serious undertaking, he must have been a mature individual, well-known in Jewish and non-Jewish governmental circles. Verga claims that he witnessed the observance of Easter in the Spanish Court. Baer, however, refers to the observance of Easter as the "Passover sacrifice in the Royal Court". In November 1491, a few months prior to the issuance of the expulsion order and on the eve of the capture of Granada, Solomon Ben Verga is said to have appeared in the Royal Court in Cordova in order to intervene on behalf of the Jews of Granada. He is also believed to have intervened on behalf of an arrested Jew in the city of Guadalajara in "New Castila". In 1492 Solomon Ibn Verga had to emigrate to Portugal where he settled in the suburbs of Lisbon together with other Jewish emigrés. Cantera claims that "there is no doubt that he accepted baptism", and converted to Christianity. Zimberg supplies 1497 as the date of Verga's forced conversion and believes that it took place upon the issuance of a very severe anti-Jewish decree.

In 1506 Verga presumably left Lisbon to avoid the terrible pogrom against the Marranos, although Verga himself says that he witnessed it personally. Cantera firmly believes that Verga was within the Lisbon city limits during the pogrom. His own portrayal of the incidents should not be regarded as having been written some days later, after he may have returned to Lisbon (when the pogrom

stopped). In 1507 the borders of Portugal were opened and the Marranos were allowed to emigrate. Baer is certain that Solomon Ibn Verga was kept fully informed about the fate of the Marranos up to 1507. It is not known when Verga left Portugal. It is possible he may have joined one of the group of Marrano emigrants, and reached Italy, where, according to Baer he finished writing the Shevet Yehudah. Cantera, however, brings in evidence that he fled to Turkey first and settled probably in Adrianapolis and there composed his book. But Baer insists that he settled in Naples and there he expanded and completed his text. There is no doubt, claims Cantera, that the nucleus of the book was composed after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, and Ibn Verga dedicated it to the memory of the Castilian Jews and the tribulations they had undergone. As to Verga's movements in Italy Baer believes that he spent some time in Rome. There he saw Church services in the streets, and as he witnessed them, he must have gone back in his mind to the ancient services in the old Temple. Thus was he able to embellish his own account of the service in the Jerusalem Temple on Yom Kippur. Baer speculates that Verga remained in Rome possibly till after the death of Pope Alexander VI in 1503 and after the gates of Portugal were opened. If this were so, then the date of Verga's departure from Portugal must have taken place prior to the general emigration of Marranos from that country. If Verga left earlier, then we encounter another problem, e.g.: who helped him to cross the sealed borders? Such information is not available and the suggestion runs counter to the generally accepted date for Verga's departure from Portugal in 1507.

TABLE II

The Most Important Data in the life of Solomon Ibn Verga:

1. Date of birth? Place of birth? Castile or Seville?
2. 1478 mentioned by, and already known to, Rabbi Abraham Zacuto as a praiseworthy Chacham.
3. 1481 became the official representative of the Jewish community in Castile and Aragon.
4. 1487 collected monies to redeem Jewish prisoners in Malaga.
5. 1491 appeared in the Royal Court in Cordova to intervene on behalf of the Jews in Granada and an arrested Jew in Guadalajara in New Castila.
6. 1492 emigrated to Portugal, settled in a Lisbon suburb.
7. 1497 presumed to have been converted to Christianity.
8. 1506 witnessed a terrible pogrom against the Marranos. Is presumed to have left Lisbon in order to avoid the pogrom (?).
9. 1507 left Portugal for either Turkey or Italy (?), lived in Adrianapolis (?), Rome (?), Naples (?).
10. ? writes Shevet Yehudah.
11. ? died in Italy.
12. 1550 first appearance of Shevet Yehudah.

#4: IBN VERGA'S EDUCATION

It is impossible to establish the extent of Verga's educational background. From the scanty bits of information at our disposal it is possible to surmise that he was ordained as a Rabbi. It is evident from the Shevet Yehudah that he knew the Talmudic material, that he was familiar with the works of Jewish commentators and also had an insight into classical literature of Rome. Baer claims that he knew philosophy and was at home with Jewish literature and folklore. Some scholars claim that he must have known Latin well, in

view of the fact that he borrowed many of his narratives from Latin sources, although it is really impossible to establish if he had indeed read Latin authors in their original. Baer himself is not quite sure. Yet, the fact that he was a frequent participant in theological debates must support the view that he was informed in Church literature and therefore, Latin as well. It appears further from Rabbi Abraham Zacuto's Hachibut Hagadol that Solomon Ben Verga was also dabbling in astronomy. Cantera speaks of him as a distinguished historian and a medical doctor in Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Despite all this lustre, Baer feels that Verga did not match the status of Isaac Abrabanel, his contemporary, nor can he equal the philosophers and philologists like Rabbi Azariah de Rossi. Nevertheless the influence of Abrabanel on Ibn Verga "while not as pervasive as on Usque, was not inconsiderable". Verga showed that he was acquainted with several of Isaac Abrabanel's works and he spoke highly of him.

#5: VERGA: THE MAN AND THE JEW

Solomon Ibn Verga must have been a keen observer of life, and a loyal subject of the Crown. Despite the persecutions and the tragic incidents he had seen around him, despite the fact that eventually Spain had become to him a "terrible stepmother", nevertheless, in his writings he exhibited a warm longing for his native Spain. From his remark about himself in Shevet Yehudah we may surmise that he was a humble man.

As a Jew he loved his suffering people with passion. He compared them to a burning torch which sheds light for others, but in

the process is consuming itself. He admired their courage, their loyalty to the covenant and their willingness to face persecution and even death, for the sake of sanctifying God's name. He was highly respected by his co-religionists and was selected to be their official representative.

At the same time, however, Verga did not hide the deficiencies he saw in his kinfolk. He complained that some of them were money-hungry and in the process of acquiring wealth, they forgot their God and their faith. He was probably shocked by their lack of religiosity, because he himself was deeply committed to a theological position. Baer refers to him as the "pious author". Jewish solidarity must have been foremost in his mind. We see him use his influence and his good offices whenever a Jew was imprisoned, be it near or far away.

#6: VERGA AS AUTHOR

Although Verga humbly refers to himself as only "Shlomo, the copyist", he was nonetheless more than a mere compiler of historical chronicles. As an author he was the first to include in his historical accounts contemporary material with an underlying religio-philosophical base. He may have copied some of his material from other sources, but when he compiled it, he did so in such a way that his readers would find in it some clues as to the reasons for their inhuman tribulations. As an author he speaks with shock about the catastrophe which he witnessed. Wiener calls Solomon Ibn Verga the "Hauptverfasser" of the Shevet Yehudah, that is its chief author. From this statement it may be inferred that some scholars believe that there were other authors besides Solomon Ibn Verga. Baer, however, disputes this theory and puts forward cogent

arguments for his "single author" theory of the book. He bases his argument on the fact that there is a unifying thread going through all numbered pieces and therefore, there was only one author, and he was Solomon Ibn Verga. Baer argues that it is possible to distinguish Solomon's material from that of Judah and herein lies the suspicion that Solomon purposely used the name of the famous Cabbalist in order to earn respectability for his own work. In any case, Baer insists that Judah could not have been one of the authors of the book; nor should we press too strongly the case for his son Joseph. For there is enough inner evidence that Solomon Ibn Verga was the single author of the book. Baer points up the uniqueness of the author's style and asks: "Who could have so successfully imitated the skillful use of irony and legend of Solomon Ibn Verga?." No one, but Solomon himself! On the basis of Solomon's own statement we learn that he had also written another book entitled "Shevet Ebrato" in which he described the service in the Temple by the High Priest on Yom Kippur Day and during Passover. The book however, is no longer extant. As to when Verga authored the Shevet Yehudah, Loeb held that the compilation of it was begun in Spain and therefore, the copying from common sources was, in fact taking place. Martin Cohen maintains that "the Shevet Yehudah was redacted in its present form before Usque's work".

#7: VERGA THE HISTORIAN

(i) His strengths:

Scholars agree that Solomon Ibn Verga was a gifted man. He possessed an extraordinary skill of observing and assessing the economic and social conditions of his time. As Baer puts it:

"He reflects an understanding of unusual measure". He also credits Verga with finding "more historical items than any other learned historian of his time", despite the fact that his historical background may not have been as deep as one would expect from a man like Verga. Furthermore, Verga was the first historian who, among his contemporaries began to deal with events happening before his very eyes, from a new viewpoint. And out of this new spirit emerged an empiric-causalistic inquiry. There was a definite historical approach and a new criterion in his writing, even though he used trustworthy historical material, as well as numerous legends, popular tales, imaginary profiles, personalities, conversations, etc. It was an empirical approach to history and because of it Verga superceded other historians. Baer is not sure whence this approach came to Verga. He wondered whether he studies it with modern political scientists, or whether he acquired it from his contact with the new Italian historical writings. It is impossible to establish it with any degree of certainty.

What were the characteristic features of this new approach? Verga was most likely dissatisfied with a mere re-hashing of old facts; with listing for his co-religionists all the old sins of Israel on account of which they experienced the trials and tribulations. The sins of Israel are considered by him as only one of the many factors which brought the suffering upon the Jews. He recognized that there were other historical factors which interacted with one another and ultimately brought about these tragic events. Verga examines various relationships between Jews and Christians on various social levels, dissects them and points up that those in the upper crust of the Christian society were fabourably dis-

posed toward the Jews. Hatred emanated only from the clergy and was beamed at the lower layers of the social strata. They succeeded to win the support of the masses because of the prevailing economic discontent on that level. Verga also examines the exile from a sociological point of view and looks at Jewish history scientifically. Evidence of these approaches could be found in various parts of the book, but especially in the long discussion between King Alfonso and the learned Thomas. That discussion reflects the author's attempts to examine the political reasons for the destruction of the Jewish state in the days of the first and second Temples. Among the many factors, Verga mentions religion as a negative political factor in the persecution of the Jews.

(ii) His Techniques:

In his writing Verga employed the following techniques:

(a) Grouping and Interpreting:

Loeb claims: "His merit is his skill in grouping and interpreting older motifs".

(b) Use of Well-known Spanish Names:

Verga makes extensive use of popular Spanish names such as Pedro de Guzman, Enrique Mendoza, Juan de la Vera. Through the use of these names as well as those he freely invented himself, Verga gave his narratives a trustworthy historical ring and enhanced the authenticity of his accounts.

(c) Use of Common Well-known Spanish Expressions:

For similar reasons Verga employs these expressions and puts them into the mouths of Popes, Kings, Monks, etc.

(d) Use of Quotations:

Verga uses them to give a sound authenticity to his accounts, but Baer does not accept them as such. He says that no matter how solemn Verga's assurances are about the trustworthiness of the material he cites, it nevertheless belongs to the realm of poetry. Even when Verga makes the following statements the material is sheer fantasy: e.g.

"There are many versions of this, but I took it from French..."
 or, "There is an oral tradition about it, but I found it written in"
 or, "I could not copy the ending because it was illegible..."

(e) Use of Imagination and Fantasy:

Baer points out that Verga gives very frequently free rein to his imagination and fantasy. A given account he had before him often served him only as an exordium for his own inventions and personal considerations.

(f) Use of Foreign Expressions and Names:

Verga uses foreign names and expressions in order to give his material a foreign touch, e.g.: Passover he calls "Pascua de cen-cenos". He used these expressions with such great skill that he was able to mislead many a scholar to believe in the Christian origin of his chronicles. The use of foreign names also re-enforced the process of camouflaging the origin of the narratives. Baer is certain that Verga used the names of well-known personalities of his day, e.g.: the use of the name Versoris is probably the name of John Versoris 1458, a Rector in Paris.

(g) Use of Invented Facts for his Readers' Sake:

Quite often our author invented facts and circumstances in order to make the somber and even boring narratives more vivid and interesting to the reader.

(h) Use of Interpolation:

Verga weaves his material very skillfully. He interpolates less important material among other important facts and thus gives all his data an equal measure of validity, e.g.: in the story of the shepherds and others. Scholars also speculate that some of the interpolations were used to perpetuate certain names, people, or events, e.g.: the use of the name Don Vidal Benveniste. Baer maintains that the name was doubtlessly interpolated. Why did Verga use his name? Vidal ben Benveniste de la Caballeria in 1492 negotiated with the King of Portugal about the permission for entry into Portugal of Spanish exiles. Hence, Baer speculates that it is possible that Verga may have wanted to build a literary monument for him, therefore he eternalized him in his book.

(i) Use of Motifs:

Often one finds on the text ordinary common motifs which must have been well-known to the people at the time. But they are used very skillfully by the author: he reshaped them first enough to serve his own purposes.

(j) Use of the "Ancient Touch":

To give more authenticity to his work, Verga frequently employs the device of flashbacks to older times.

(k) Use of Suppression of Facts:

Occasionally some facts about Kings or other important personalities have been suppressed. The clearest case of suppression of facts by Verga is evident in the portrayal of King Manuel of Portugal who was not well-disposed to the Jews as a righteous king.

(l) Use of Personal Glimpses:

Often glimpses from Verga's personal life have been inter-

woven with other material. They also give his material more credibility.

(m) Use of Non-Hebraic Sources:

Those too have been successfully reshaped and subordinated to the author's overall aims.

(n) Use of Exaggeration:

Occasionally Verga would expand a story to a point of grotesqueness and thus would evoke laughter from the reader; he uses legends for the same purpose. In his use of irony Baer hails him as inimitable.

(iii) His Weaknesses:

As inimitable as his techniques were, Verga was not free from weaknesses as a craftsman in historiography. These weaknesses can be categorized under definite headings:

(a) Telescoping of Events:

By the use of this device, Verga created big gaps and confusions in his historical accounts. He telescoped events to the point that those which were commonly occurring during the Spanish Inquisition he ascribed to Provence or Portugal. Yet Cantera feels that even though Verga leaps over many periods in Jewish history with giant steps, it is nonetheless noteworthy that he is more capable of comprehending historical distances than any other Jewish chronicler in his time.

(b) An Evident Naiveté:

Baer claims that in order to cover up the insignificant sources of his accounts and in order to put forth their seemingly trustworthy historicity, the interpolation of personal glimpses has been

naive and deceiving. It was also naive for Verga to have used Popes and Kings as defenders of the Jewish honor, when they were known to have been vicious Jew-haters, or to have used these people as experts of the Talmudic law.

(c) Free Inventions and Fiction:

The invention of facts, names, places, etc., done so frequently by Verga undermines his status as a historian. Although some scholars considered this as Verga's forte, Loeb ascribes them to other sources.

(d) Simple Inaccuracies:

Frequently Verga makes of Popes and Kings staunch defenders of Jews, when they were known to have been the very opposite. This device gives the passages a polemical character. These inaccuracies may not have been intentional. They may have stemmed from Verga's meagre background in Jewish history. Baer, for instance, feels that Verga's acquaintance with the period of the Second Temple was not too extensive. He claims that Verga learned the facts from Yosippon. Other periods he seems to have learned from Rabbi Nathan Hababli and from the Seyfer Hakkabalah by Rabad.

(e) Substantive Impossibilities:

Fanciful accounts are easily detectable by the presence of these "substantive impossibilities", e.g.: the presence of a Muslim official at a French Royal Court. This simply could not have occurred before Francois I; similarly, the presence of a Portugese King in a Castilian setting could not have occurred at the time.

(f) Primitive Composition:

Verga is also accused by Fritz Baer of poorly composing and struct-

uring his dialogues. In them scholars see an indiscriminate interweaving of legal material, polemical pieces and ironical strips. The numbered selections in the book, according to Baer, do not hang together, but in Verga's defence he says, that the author may have wanted to examine one and the same problem from various points of view, and the legal material is used to soften the impact of the chilling experiences, which resulted in the wake of Divine intervention.

(g) Questionable Suppression of Facts:

Verga calls King Manuel of Portugal a "Melech Chassid" and makes him appear helpful to the Jewish cause. Other contemporaries however, considered him to have been an evil Jew-hater, who in 1497 ordered Jewish children taken away from their parents and forcibly baptised and converted to Christianity. Baer questions Verga's motive and reasons for such suppression of facts. Verga knew of the Marrano experiences up to 1507. Asks Baer: "Did he want to make it sound legendary, or were these facts detrimental to his own integrity? Or, was it his intention to silence Manuel's misdeeds in order to give him a good name, because in his later years he was helpful to the Marranos? There is no adequate answer to these questions. But the evident manipulation of facts by Verga casts some degree of suspicion on his objectivity and his trustworthiness as an unbiased historian,

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS SHEVET YEHUDAH?(a) A Collection of Historical Narratives and Debates:

The book Shevet Yehudah first appeared in print in approximately 1550 in one of the Hebrew publishing houses of the Ottoman Empire. The book is basically a collection of historical narratives and theological disputations between Jews and Christians in Spain.

The book opens with historic reminiscences about a period of the destruction of the Second Temple. Like in a kaleidoscope, one scene follows another. They depict the trials, the sorrows and the tragedies of the Jewish people in various periods of their history. The historical survey of the Jewish saga is intermixed with accounts of theological discussions or general debates between Jews and their Kings, or between the representatives of the Catholic clergy and Jewish deputies. The topics which have been debated relate to the economic or social position of the Jews in the country and include various criticisms of the Jews made by their Christian counterparts. The historical narratives include the period of bitter expulsions of Jews from various European countries, especially the expulsion from Spain in 1492. There are, in toto, sixty-four accounts of various persecutions. The book ends with a description of the Jerusalem Temple and the ritual in it performed during Passover and Yom Kippur holidays. Zunz had recognized the importance of that treatise since it supplied a considerable number of names of localities and a description of numerous customs.

(b) A Collection of Reminiscences:

The concluding passages of the book contain an account written by an old man, who as an old Jew was looking back upon the fate of his people. They are his reminiscences of former glory; they are also dreams and yearnings written with a tragic pathos and are meant to make a tremendous impact on the reader. Whether they are mere fairytales or trustworthy statements of the author's innermost beliefs, they were of interest to the general readership of the time, regardless of whether they may have been unbelievers, skeptics, or those who loved literature for its own sake, or also those who looked for a rationale of their suffering.

(c) A Mirror of Prevailing Conditions:

The book reflects very clearly the mode of living in Verga's days, as well as the mood and the spirit of his period. It further reflects many Jewish customs in different countries, the folklore and popular traditions, as well as the outlook of the Jews exiled to various parts of Europe. The author, for instance, describes the expulsion from France. In very moving terms he portrays the frustrations of the exiled Jews and their ultimate decision to return to France. Despite the persecutions experienced within its borders these Jews considered France to be their homeland, and decided to return home, come what may! Although the book reflects generally Spanish circumstances, and specifically the conditions in fifteenth century Castile, it occasionally gives us a glimpse of Portugal and even Italy. Since Naples was a point of assembly of Spanish and Portuguese exiles, and since Verga himself lived in Italy, his accounts of the social conditions in Italy may be considered trustworthy. He

also reflects the theological and philosophical problems which the Jews had faced there, and also the various social issues with which they were confronted at the time. It was in Italy where Verga read the letter of Rabbi Meshullam of Rome written to the Jewish communities of the Vatican State and the Kingdom of Naples. The letter is considered to be authentic and it must have given Verga a good insight into the problems faced by the Jews who lived under the dominion of the Pope.

(d) A Collection of Actual Experiences:

Among the many narratives about the ages past, there are also pieces which depict actual experiences of the author as well as various reports about the experiences of his contemporaries which were related to the author personally. In its present form, however, the Shevet Yehudah also contains additional material written by Solomon Verga's son Joseph. It has thus been redacted and further enlarged by him, as all scholars who had examined the text agree.

(e) A Handbook of Polemical Defenses:

Where the author is not preoccupied with contemporary matters and issues of the day, faced by the Jewish community, he gives polemical defenses to his co-religionists. For instance, he uses Talmudic attitudes, statements, assessments, evaluations of individuals or groups to explain the prevailing conditions. Thus he explains to his readers that a Christian is at bottom a lover of cattle and could never change his inner nature.

(f) An Expression of a Jewish Viewpoint:

Baer is quite emphatic in this regard. He maintains that all

chronicles in the book view things from a Jewish perspective. While the French sources, for instance, would supply accounts of events on the French side of the border, and the Spanish chroniclers would be highly selective in their choice of recorded material, the Jewish chronicler speaks of Jewish fate in all countries of that region. He depicts the measures which Jews themselves undertook to save themselves and makes known the extent of the relief which Jews were ready to offer their persecuted brethren. He further portrays the inner resources of Jewish men, women, and even children which they did marshal in the face of agony and persecution.

(g) A Literary Gem:

Scholars agree that from a purely literary point of view, the book is an important addition to the literature of the period. "Generally", says Baer, "The book is a pearl in the needed historical literature of the Jews". It helped Jewish scholars to evaluate the impact of the Spanish catastrophe on the thinking of men like Verga and to assess better the entire period reflected in the text. Scholars agree that the book stands above the Chronicles of Abraham Zacuto, above that of Usque, and even above the Yosippon. It mirrors the author's sensitivities to Jewish life, his erudition, his worldliness, his style and techniques as a skilled craftsman. No wonder that the book was immediately well received by the scholarly community, the experts, the intellectuals and the general populace. In it all of them found consolations, encouragements, and the author's assurances that God, despite the tragedy, was still standing by his people and in the end would not forsake them.

Today the book still holds a special interest of historians because the textual puzzle regarding the origin of its sources and their authorship has not been solved.

CHAPTER III

THE PURPOSE OF "SHEVET YEHUDAH"

Solomon Ibn Verga had defined the purpose of Spanish historiography as being an attempt to record as accurately as possible the record of the past, the successes of the royal forbears, and all the events and happenings which could serve as a word of "counsel" for the future.

But the Jews had another purpose in mind when they recounted the events of the past and recorded them for posterity. As Cantera observed, the Jews had no nobles and no kings to satisfy. They had no desire to promote historiographical activity for their sake, as was the case with the Spaniards. Other motives were operative among Jewish historiographers of Verga's time. These were especially set in motion by Verga himself. For what purpose? To justify the faith of the children of Israel in the living God. And it is this motive which is basic in Shevet Yehudah. Hence, the first purpose of the book was to (a) give a redefinition of the destiny of the Jewish diaspora.

The author of the Shevet Yehudah had not merely intended to entertain his readers with his accounts of the events in the past and contemporaneous Jewish history. From the moment one reads them, one can readily see that these narratives are too gruesome for entertainment. The author must have had something else in mind: it was to give a definite philosophy and a rationale for Jewish suffering in general, and the Spanish catastrophe in particular. And it is this attempt which explains what the underlying purpose of Shevet

Yehudah was. Baer agrees that Solomon Verga did not intend to give a mere account of the tragic happenings throughout the centuries of Jewish existence. What Verga must have wanted was to present his own point of view, to give his own interpretation of the meaning of all these happenings. And that he did by analyzing the realities which confronted the Jewish people, the economic, social and religious factors which ultimately generated a jealousy and hatred toward the Jew and culminated in the expulsion from their native land. Thus the second purpose of the book seems to have been (b) to give the stricken and crushed Jewish community an appraisal of the societal conditions responsible for the active Jew-hatred, which ended in their tragedy of expulsion from Spain. Verga used his book to educate his readership. He taught them a new truth: religious factors alone were not the prime reasons for the plight of the Jew. He made his contemporaries look beyond the causes which the "old faith" listed for them, i.e. disloyalty to God. Verga himself went beyond it. He observed life with a keen, analytic eye. He observed his fellow Jews, their way of life, their manner of dress, their pursuit after the satisfaction of material needs, etc. Then, he analyzed the most common Christian accusations hurled at the Jews, drew conclusions from his observations and presented them to his Jewish readers in the hope that they would heed and learn a lesson. Thus Shevet Yehudah served a further purpose (c) to teach the tenets of faith, basic principles of life and various maxims which govern it. To do this Verga even invented a whole array of fictitious circumstances which exemplified these tenets, principles or maxims. For instance, he taught his readers the maxim that "Gold is the master of the

world", or, he reemphasized the truth that "confessions obtained under torture were worthless", or he assured them that "the Guardian of Israel neither sleeps nor slumbers" or, he simply offered them a palliative by reassuring them that "the Jews were indeed a very intelligent people". Thus Verga's book served yet a further purpose that of (d) bolstering the confidence of the Jews in their God and in themselves. Verga brings in incidents where God has not forsaken his people nor ever allowed their total destruction. He bolstered their confidence in God's ultimate intervention, help, and restoration to their former glory. Baer sees in each story a reaffirmation of Israel's greatness and a restatement of Israel's willingness and continuous readiness to make the ultimate sacrifice in order to bring about the redemption of Israel, divinely preordained. This position reflects Verga's deep commitment to the faith of his fathers and his deeply religious outlook on the events of the time. In this respect Verga is the "legitimate heir of the old historical rationale of the tragic experiences". That old rationale expressed itself in the following hope:

"That they know it and turn, asking forgiveness of the merciful God, so that he may pardon their sins, because of which they have suffered and God may thus say "enough" to their suffering."

But over and above this position from which tragic events have been heretofore explained, there also appears in the book a rational view of the causes and factors operative in Jewish history. Verga must have hoped to bolster the self-respect of his co-religionists who must have been despondent, crushed and perhaps even ashamed of being Jewish. In fact, Cantera saw Verga as a "tormented Jew bemoaning the incessant discussion about the character of his people,"

and one who wanted to do something about it. Thus, seeing very little of the past grandeur left in the Jews, seeing them tired, immersed in painful toil, at a point of being extinguished, Verga reassured them that Jews were similar to their Christian neighbours, that they had nothing to be ashamed of, because they were, in fact "giving off light to others like a burning torch" and therefore, ought to be proud of themselves. Verga further gives his people the assurance that old eras renew themselves in history, not only the painful ones, but the glorious ones, as well. Hence, even though Abraham's fiery oven is now renewed in the pyre of the auto-da-fé, nevertheless, Jews like a tree will in the end be rejuvenated and will blossom forth as a living people. This rich imagery must have made a tremendous impact anyone who read what Verga had to say.

But even that did not satisfy the author. He went beyond all these reasons for writing his magnificent chronicle. Baer claims that the essence of Shevet Yehudah is dedicated to the memory of the Spanish Jewry. Thus the book served yet another purpose. It was conceived as (e) a memorial to the destroyed Spanish Jewry and a history of the Jews in the Middle Ages in general. Written, as Baer calculates it, some thirty years after the Spanish expulsion it gave these catastrophic events a poetic touch and heightened the drama of those days of trial and wandering. Furthermore, Cantera feels that Verga wanted to leave a literary monument to his contemporary Joseph Ben Yachya. Hence, he dedicated a particular narrative to him as well. Being at heart a committed and dedicated Jew, Ibn Verga had something else in mind, too. He witnessed the hostility toward the Jews expressed in acts of violence; he heard the numerous accusations hurled

at the Jews; he noticed the helplessness of his brethren in the face of these occurrences. Hence, he must have wanted to give his crushed co-religionists a tool with which to defend themselves. The book as written and compiled offers (f) a polemical tool to the Jewish exiles. The many digressions in the book are the author's personal polemical retorts to Christian accusations. These retorts are the writer's own assessments of the situation which confronted the Spanish exiles, and are his own answers to the polemics with which they were confronted at every turn. When a Spanish king inquires into the reasons for the Jewish fall, the answer given to him is really Verga's own reply. The Jews suffered not merely due to Divine punishment for disloyalty, but also due to historical factors, the politics and the regional power play in the ancient world. Jews must not, therefore, be condemned outright. Cantera is certain that Verga's desire was to submit to his contemporaries and fellow exiles a whole series of such retorts, so that they may serve them as reference material for religious disputations which were so frequent at that time.

The book was also written as (g) a defence of the Jews against the numerous accusations by Christians. This can be seen from such reasoning by the author as this one: There is no doubt that economic circumstances did force the Jews to take interest, but they did it against their will. Besides, every people has its share of evil-doers, but these are hidden among those who are victorious in the skirmish. In a defeated people, however, the smallest stain, even the size of a mustard grain seems to be as great as the disc of the sun.

Furthermore, many of the Jewish "confessions" about the evil nature of their character or faith were to be discounted, for they were obtained under torture, whereas confessions which deny transgressions are to be accepted as trustworthy. Such lines of defense can only be forthcoming from a dedicated and concerned Jew. And concerned Verga was indeed. That is why time and again he points out to his Jewish readers the Christian view of the Jews, their objections and accusations against them. The book, then was intended to serve as (h) a conditioner to self-awareness. Verga complains that the Jews have themselves contributed to Christian hatred of them, regardless of the venomous preachments of the Roman Catholic clergy. Thus they have themselves supplied basic reasons for Jewish hatred, which could be categorized as follows:

TABLE III

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. Jews were overly | - haughty |
| 2. Jews were overly | - vain |
| 3. Jews were overly | - pushy, had no scruples |
| 4. Jews were overly | - showy |
| 5. Jews were overly | - conspicuous |
| 6. Jews were overly | - wealthy, they had in their coffers all Spanish fortunes. |
| 7. Jews were overly | - separated from the rest of the society because of their peculiar customs, their eating and drinking habits. They did not drink wine touched by a Christian, they stood aloof from others, they did not intermarry. |
| 8. Jews were overly | - timid and weak, could not stand pain. |
| 9. Jews were overly | - sensitive |

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 10. Jews were cowards | - were not suited for combat duty |
| 11. The Jewish religion | - was an incurable disease |
| 12. Jews | - murdered Jesus |
| 13. Jews were subtle | - cunning in their reasoning |
| 14. Jews were liars | - took advantage of the Christians |
| 15. Jews were | - too competitive |

Verga thus tells his people that their wealth and station have brought upon them the ire of their Christian neighbours. He recollects that when they were poor and were not conspicuous in their manner about themselves, there was no hatred toward them. No false accusations were ever made against them. For example, blood libels did not exist, etc. He reminds them that the Christians view the Jews' glitter and wealth as a hoarded treasure at the expense of the Christians. All their wealth is said to have been accumulated through loans, high interest rates and thus, the Jews were being accused of commanding under their control three-fourths of Spanish real estate in the country. Such suspicions could not have produced good results.

In view of all this the Jews deserved to have been punished, and merited the fate that befell them. The punishment, therefore, constituted merely a repayment for their sins against God and man. For that they were doomed to suffer persecution. Shevet Yehudah thus became (i) a manual with answers and a rationale of Jewish sufferings. That the author is embittered by the disproportionate amount of suffering, there is no doubt. Nor is there doubt that Verga considered his people to have been indeed chosen by God to

constitute a bridge between the heaven and the earth. But why, then, such perennial tragedy and eternal punishment by the nations of the civilized world? Verga must have recalled the verse from Proverbs: "For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth", as well as the verse from Amos: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities".

But these answers apparently did not satisfy Verga. He, therefore examined their sociological and psychological foundations. For Zimberg there is no question that the "living nerve of the whole of Shevet Yehudah" was the problem of the answer to Jewish suffering and he was convinced that this was precisely the issue which made Verga write the book.

TABLE IV

1. The Jews incurred the wrath of Heaven for their disloyalty.
2. The Jews came under the direct supervision of Heaven, and having flouted its commandments, they deserved a stiff punishment.
3. Internal strife and discord precipitated their ruin.
4. Failure to fulfill their debt to God prolongs exile.
5. Repayment for their sins against their fellowman.
6. It was God's temporary abandonment of Israel.
7. It was punishment for their blind pursuit after material profits.
8. Their demoralization.
9. Their total lack of scruples.
10. They were punished for the sins of their fathers.
11. They were punished for lack of internal solidarity.

12. They were punished for their haughtiness and irksomness.
13. They deservedly incurred hatred of the Christian dominant society.

Thus we notice that Verga does not attempt to conceal the faults of the Jews. He even exaggerates them. Why? Because he wanted his readers to raise the question of suffering and ask themselves why all this tragedy had befallen the Jewish people. The author must have hoped that by doing this the readers would be motivated to search for answers, and having found them they would be inspired to greater commitment to their people, and a stauncher fidelity to the faith of their fathers. Thus they would make an intelligent judgment on the entire period of the Spanish expulsion, and would reaffirm with the author, after they had identified with his point of view, their loyalty to Israel and Judaism. That is why Baer sees the book as a national document of a religious declaration of faith.

Summing up, we see that the main purpose of writing the Shevet Yehudah was neither to examine the world from a biological or other scientific point of view as some scholars would have it; nor was any philosophical speculation its main purpose as others have ascribed to it; nor did the author intend to produce a mere compilation of a series of folksy legends; nor did he intend to invent tales for the sake of satisfaction of his poetic urges. The writing of Shevet Yehudah was prompted by the author's sincere desire to investigate and analyze the social position of the Castilian Jews, the reasons for their expulsion and the catastrophe which crushed them. No wonder that the book enjoyed a wide acceptance

from the very outset. The book had in fact become prescribed reading for every day of the week, except Saturdays:

"It was the duty of every Jew to be well versed in this book, that he be grateful to God who at all times watches over us. While at the same time he will learn many beautiful things...and how to handle the disputations with the Christians, or how to answer those who would seek to convert the Jews..."

This is how Shevet Yehudah became known, not only to scholars but to lay men and women, as well. It has thus fulfilled its purpose quite adequately.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAIN IDEAS AND MOTIFS IN THE BOOK(i) Main Ideas:

The Shevet Yehudah provides for the reader a survey of the ancient Jewish history. It traces major tragic events from early antiquity until the destruction of Judaea. Furthermore, each narrative is in effect a portrayal of the persecutions of the Jewish people. It shows how the position of the Jews worsens in the fifteenth century, and in connection with this worsening, the book raises many contemporary issues facing the Spanish Jewish Community. Even though it may appear from the text that many lively discussions were taking place between the Jews and the Christians in Spain, yet the author shows quite clearly that most of these discussions were indeed staged by the kings or the Spanish nobles, only to serve their own ends rather than Jewish interests. The book very adequately depicts the extent of Jewish tragedy across the centuries, but especially after the expulsion from Spain. It gives us an overview of the various decrees regarding forced conversions of Jews; it relates the heroic deeds of the loyal believers who stood the test of faith by submission to suffering and torture; it speaks of the miraculous rescue of many communities.

Despite all these tragic experiences described, the author did not resort to the use of any eschatological or apocalyptic material. There is no mention of it in the book. However, polemical statements abound. The author retorts such accusations as ritual murder, or that Judaism is an incurable malady, or the Christian

objections to Jewish stubbornness, hatred of fellow Christians, or disloyalty as citizens. Loeb claims that the inclusion of a whole variety of popular tales and other apocryphal documents, makes the book one of the most precious documents of its time. Without the Shevet Yehudah these folktales or documents would not have been known to posterity.

(ii) Key Motifs:

Folk motifs are usually taken from a written tradition. Cantera echoes Baer in his claim that Verga came in contact with these non-Jewish folk motifs through Jewish intermediaries. There are motifs in the Shevet Yehudah which seem to have been taken from Nicholas de Lyra and other non-Jewish sources. On the whole, all the motifs could be catalogued under the following headings:

TABLE V

Key Motifs in Shevet Yehudah

1. Why do the nations hate the Jews?
2. The Jewish origin -- a legend.
3. The meaning of Jewish tragedy.
4. Stereotype accusations against the Jews.
5. Stories about the false messiahs.
6. Disputations with the Christians in order to show how disfavorable the Jewish position is.
7. Reminiscences of former glory.
8. Defence of Jewish Character.
9. Nature of Jewish law, an attempt to show that Christians are generally better off than the Jews.
10. Persecution of the Jews -- the methods.
11. The nature of Jewish guilt.

12. Papal politics.
13. The True Faith -- selection of precious stones.
14. "Savlanut Datit" - religious tolerance.
15. Religious relativism.
16. Roots of Christian jealousy.

These motifs are used interchangeably and are very skillfully interwoven, thus producing a very authentic effect of historical trustworthiness.

Zimberg noticed how some of these motifs have been used by poets in each generation with only slight variations in small detail. For instance: In the motif regarding the choice of the true faith, when King Don Pedro, Sr. asks of the Jewish scholar Ephraim ben Sancho to make his choice of faith known within three days, the story revolves around precious stones. The same motif was used in Lessing's drama "Nathan the Wise", except in his reply to Saladin, Nathan used three rings rather than three precious stones. Baer maintains that this motif of the three great faiths compared to the three precious stones, or rings, etc. could be found in a collection of novellae entitled "Decamerone", written by a Florentine author Giovanni Boccaccio, as well as in a thirteenth century anthology of novels which predated the one of Boccaccio, entitled "Le Cento novelle antiche". Baer is convinced that this motif of "the precious stones" served as a base for Verga in his narrative in the *Shevet Yehudah*.

Baer further maintains that the motif of the religious tolerance stems from the influence of the Italian historiographers upon Verga. The motif was an indication of a rebellion against the accep-

ted theological views. The long accepted traditional views of the historians, philosophers, and writers in the Middle Ages was put into question and the medieval eschatological views were challenged in the Renaissance period in Italy. This was a period of the "enlightened view", and Verga shows evidences of having been influenced by these new ideas. The same motif was also used by Lessing, but its roots go back to Italy, as was the case with our author, as well.

This spirit of religious tolerance could be detected in every theological disputation, although Verga had allowed the motif of religious relativism to temper the effects of the other. This religious relativism may also have been rooted in the "new look" at history which came from Renaissance Italy. It contained in it even an ingredient of what Baer calls "Sapkanut Apikorsit", an atheistic doubt. For twice in Shevet Yehudah the kernel of it is evident when a statement like "religion can only exist in one's imagination" appears. This is as if to say that religion is a product of human imagination and because it is such, religious relativism must be allowed to play its part. For what is considered sacred by one people is profane and irrational to another; what is essential to some is only a myth to others.

All these motifs further illustrate the ambivalence in Christian attitudes toward the Jews. In the end, however, it becomes obvious that Jew-hatred is like a twisted cord, made up of a variety of strands, some positive, some negative. Jews were hated not only for their defects in physique or character, but for their assets as well. The following table shows it quite clearly.

TABLE VIPositive Reasons For Christian Jew-Hatred

1. Jews were innately intelligent.
2. Jewish solidarity was admirable.
3. Rabbis were too learned.
4. Jews were charitable and compassionate.
5. Jews were loyal to their religion.
6. Jews were clinging to their religion in too obstinate a manner.

Thus, no matter what the Jews would do, or no matter what they would be like, venom and hatred would be poured out against them. Their presence in the country seems to have served well the purposes of the politicians of the day. If they were admired for their intelligence, then they were accused for having too much of it; as a result they were treacherous to have around, and should not have been trusted. The exile which imposed upon the Jews all restrictions and limitations in the world, and which had originated in Christian quarters, was used against the Jews by accusing them of degeneration which was dangerous for the Christians to have around. If the Jews were coveted for being rich, they were also accused of being poor; if they were too admired for their compassion and charity, they were accused for their evil motives behind these traits; if they were empathized with for their enslavements and humiliations, they were prejudiced as having merited these punishments for the evil traits in the physical and emotional make up. All these ambivalent feelings were concretized in specific accusations against the Jews, each of which had the elements of these suspicions and

claims.

TABLE VII

Specific Accusations Against The Jews

1. Ritual murder and blood libels.
2. Desecrations of the Host.
3. Poisoning of wells.
4. Jews brought pestilence into the world.
5. Jews were enemies of the Christians. They learned to kill only in order to do away with the Christians.
6. The Shofar was blown to announce the downfall of Christian Empires.
7. Jews possessed magic powers and used them against the Christians, e.g.: to bring down rainfall over their own fields and not those of the Christians.

These acts supposedly committed by the Jews were said to have supplanted the Christians into a position of inferiority, submission to the Jew, and utter dependence upon him. Jews, however, were said to have the means of avoiding the effects of their own evil deeds. For instance, Jews were said to have possessed special medicines which prevented them from contracting epidemic diseases, or had access to witchcraft which they manipulated for their own benefit, and at the same time the detriment of the Christian communities. Hence, Jews had to be done away with. No amount of persuasion could neutralize the effects of all these accusations. They were too deeply rooted in popular motifs and folkloristic traditions. Nor could Jewish scholarship be of help, either. To prove the absurdity of these accusations on the basis that Jewish character was molded by Jewish laws which forbade the Jew to indulge

in all these outrages, was futile. The masses knew nothing of scholarship and the clerics had their own vested interests to protect. Hence, they condemned Jewish attempts at good will as a ruse and a diabolic scheme which had to be mistrusted. Jewish fate was thus sealed and the inevitable tragedy took its toll.

CHAPTER V

LITERARY TECHNIQUES AND GENRE

The discerning reader of Shevet Yehudah can readily recognize that from a literary point of view Verga had created a "daring masterpiece". It can be seen in every chapter, every narrative, or every detail. Recognizing Verga's craftsmanship and poetic skill, Zimberg maintains that had he lived in another period of history, e.g. in the days of Al Charizi, he would have very skillfully written joyous parodies, biting satires or sharply pointed epigrams. Having lived, however, at the time of tragedy, laughter disappeared from his narratives, and he became the historian of woe, a chronicler of Jewish trial and catastrophe. There are, therefore, no lively songs or happy stories in Shevet Yehudah. And yet, despite this painful role for which his fate had picked him, Verga did not entirely smother the element of humor, poetic exaggeration which at least occasionally dispels the mournful look on his reader's face. This log of woe and mourning is very artistically interwoven with poetic elements and glimpses of reality.

We have already mentioned in previous chapters that Verga had been influenced by the Italian genre -- the novella. These novellae upset the old-established literary tradition and injected into the historical writings of the period rational views, analytic approaches, excursus beyond accepted theological positions, newly found motifs such as that of religious tolerance. All this seems to have originated in the courts of the enlightened circles of the Borgias, at the end of the thirteenth century, and as Baer so strongly

maintains, these had greatly influenced Solomon Ibn Verga. This influence can be felt in Verga's narratives. And not only Verga followed the footsteps of the novella writers, but also other medieval preachers, Jewish and Christian, took their clues from them. These gave their narratives and their sermons a more intense literary tone rather than a purely religious one. Such collections could be found far beyond the borders of Italy: they circulated in Germany, e.g. Seyfer Hachassidim, and in Spain.

The following table shows the typical literary techniques Verga had used either in order to heighten the reader's interest, or to intensify his involvement with the contents of the book, or still further, to get the reader to identify with the author's point of view.

TABLE VIII

1. Use of allegories.
2. Use of allegorical interpretations of Biblical verse.
3. Use of popular stories by the characters in the book, both Christian and Jewish.
4. Use of satire, exaggeration and even sarcasm.
5. Use of irony.
6. Putting blasphemous statements in the mouths of Christians to deny Christian teachings.
7. Use of Pathos.
8. Use of legends gives the narratives an epic tone.
9. Use of a mood, especially that of quietude.
10. Use of peculiarities in his style.
11. Use of archaization of material.

12. Appropriate setting of the stage for more somber passages to come.
13. Use of miracles.
14. Dramatic use of sudden resolution of plot.
15. Use of popular motifs which may have even originated in Arab tales, or medieval French sources, etc.
16. Use of blunt statements as well as many hidden symbolisms.
17. Use of definitive statements to heighten the authenticity of the account.

It is this great multiplicity of skillfully interwoven literary techniques which gives the book its richness and flavor. And further, it shows us the excellence of Verga's craftsmanship; it gives us an indication of his deep commitment as a Jew. When Verga puts into the mouth of a Christian a statement like: "I am convinced that the fact that the Jews killed Jesus is false" we know that Verga means it and uses it to defend his calumniated brethren. When Verga uses such phrases as "I heard it from a messenger...", or "from a respectable (M'kubal) source...", or "from a pious and learned man", he is insistent that the reader believes what he has to tell him.

Verga becomes very forceful by the use of this device, and cannot be easily ignored. The drama of the tragic events in Spain is heightened by a mood of quietude which Verga so skillfully sets up. The heartrending incidents are described in a quiet epic tone. Zimberg feels that it is precisely this quietude in Verga which reflects the anxiety among Jews at that time, their fear of death, their neurotic anxiety stemming from any concocted rumor about them, for any trumped up charge, no matter how silly, was sufficient to

send an entire community to the auto-da-fés. All these literary techniques, intermingled and interwoven give uniqueness to Verga's style and make that style strictly his own. The style is lucid, and attractive. It shows the author's good taste in weaving this great variety of factual strands, and it is this uniquely Vergian style which gives cohesion to all the narratives in the book. This asset of Solomon Verga caused Baer to produce his "single author" theory about the Shevet Yehudah.

Finally, Loeb is pleased with the "sudden resolution" technique, by means of which missing evidence is found, criminals are caught, witnesses show up at the right moment, etc. Because of it the somber mood of the accounts is interrupted by what Loeb calls "un procédé de théâtre", which in fact may be a welcome respite for the reader from the gruesome accounts of cruel persecutions of his people.

No wonder Shevet Yehudah was indeed considered a literary gem and a pearl in the much impoverished historic literature of the period.

CHAPTER VI

EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS OF SHEVET YEHUDAH(a) Editions:

Wiener lists eleven editions of Shevet Yehudah, and claims that the great number of editions alone testifies to the fact that the book must have enjoyed a wide acceptance among the Jews. As already mentioned, it was recommended reading by responsible Jewish authorities. A detailed list of editions in Wiener range from 1550 -- 1924. The first edition is in the British Museum in London. It is believed to have appeared in Turkey, during the reign of Sultan Suleiman in 1550. Since then the book had been published in Prague, Amsterdam, Grodno, Zolkiew, Warsaw, Lemberg, Hannover, Konigsberg and Wilna.

TABLE IXVarious Editions Of Shevet Yehudah As Recorded By M. Wiener

1. Editio princeps, in Museum of London, published in Turkey, approximately 1550.
2. Italian edition, in Sabionetta, in second half of the sixteenth century.
3. Prague edition, published by Gerson ben Joseph Berael Cohen, 1608.
4. Amsterdam edition, published by Emanuel Benveniste, in 1655.
5. Amsterdam edition, published by Solomo ben Joseph Cohen Props, 1709.
6. Furth edition, published by Abraham Bing, in 1724.
7. Grodno edition, published, not indicated, in 1774.
8. Zolkiew edition, published, not indicated, in 1804.
9. Warsaw edition, published by Zewi Jacob Bomberg et Comp, in 1841.
10. Lemberg edition, published, not indicated in 1846.

11. Hannover edition, published by Carl Rümpler, in 1855.

(b) Translations:

There were also numerous translations of the book. The book was translated into Yiddish, Spanish, and Latin. No English translation has yet been made and the last German translation appeared in 1855. Numerous passages from the book were quoted in a host of other publications. The last Yiddish translation with selected additions was published in Vilna in 1900, under the title "Shevet Yehudah Hashalem". The last Spanish translation was completed by Cantera in 1927 in Spain.

TABLE X

(a) Yiddish - German Translations

1. Cracow translation in 1591 by Isaac ben Aron.
2. Amsterdam translation in 1648 by Yehudah Leb ben Mordechai and Samuel ben Moscheh ha Lewi.
3. Sulzbach translation in 1700 by Coppel Lewi and Jacob Hirsch.
4. Amsterdam translation in 1700, sponsored by Solomo ben Joseph Cohen Props, done by Rabbi Eljakim.

(b) Spanish Translation

1. Amsterdam edition in 1640 by Meier de Leon, Vara de Juda.

(c) Latin Translation

1. By Monk Honorius, contemporary of Joseph Ibn Verga.
2. By Georg Genz in Amsterdam, 1651, 1654 and 1680.

(c) The purpose of the translations.

There must have been doubters in the worthwhiliness of the German translation of the Shevet Yehudah, since Wiener finds it

necessary to rebuke those who questioned its usefulness, Wiener argues that the book reports credible historical data and brings to light many interesting accounts of incidents during this tragic period of Jewish History. Since the book was a product of its time, it is worthy of scholarship.

It seems to us that Verga's exaggerations about the various traits of his co-religionists, must have raised these questions about the worthwhiliness of the German translation. They were perhaps worried that a German translation would make the book accessible to German non-Jews and would intensify their hatred for the Jews rather than placate it, especially when they would read about the suspect Jewish laws and practices, or Verga's attack on their demoralized status, their pursuit of wealth, etc. Wiener hoped that Verga's objective stand would be recognized by any honorable reader and would not be twisted or misused to evil ends. That is why Wiener hoped that his translation would serve a beneficial purpose, that it would play the role of Shevet Yehudah itself, by depicting the sufferings of the Jews on account of many false charges. "No one in his right mind", says Wiener, "will argue with the author for having berated these false accusations against the Jews and the blood baths which resulted from them". Therefore, Wiener hoped that his own translation would be widely accepted and read, and would fulfill a twofold purpose: (i) to intensify Jewish loyalty and commitment to their faith, and (ii) prevent religious hatred from arising again. These were noble motives for undertaking the tedious task of translating a somewhat difficult text.

(d) Wiener's Approach:

Wiener claims to have made every effort to convey the true meaning of words, idioms, etc. He admits that it was not easy to do so, that in certain cases, due to the idiosyncracies of the German language it was difficult to convey true meanings. He must have had before him a few variants of the text, because he indicates that he has departed from his own textual variant only "where the trustworthiness of another variant in another edition became evident." Wiener also listed at the end of his introduction what appeared to him to be printer's errors, and where he felt compelled to emend the text to make sense out of it. He also included personal annotations where the Renaissance Hebrew obscured the meaning of the text. Wiener also claims to have attempted to transliterate in a trustworthy manner, names of persons and localities. He himself had followed the Amsterdam edition of the text, published in 1569, and had consulted the Adrianople edition, as well as the Viennese Kaiser Museum edition, which unfortunately lacks the ending. Yet, despite these assurances by the translator, which are no doubt genuine, his translation is in number of places defective. These weaknesses were not difficult to spot. Loeb has noticed them in his studies and made some corrections of the Wiener text. The Wiener edition was used in preparation of this thesis.

PART B

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE TEXT

AN ANALYSIS

CHAPTER VII

THE TITLE, THE METHOD OF COMPILATION, AND COMPOSITION(a) The Title:

In Chapter I, mention has already been made regarding the relationship between the name Verga and the word "Shevet". Here, we want to consider the name "Judah" in the title of the book. Scholars are not in full agreement as to whom the name "Yehudah" refers. Isaac Baer, for instance, maintains that Rabbi Solomon Ibn Verga used the name of the great learned scholar among his relatives, Don Yehudah ben Verga of Seville. He bases his claim on the fact that Ibn Verga, himself attributed the major part of the book to his learned relative.

Wiener, however, is undecided as to whether the author entitled his book "Shevet Yehudah" in reference to the State of Judah, or in reference to Rabbi Judah Aben Verga, whose historical chronicles had served as a base for this text. This seems to be, however, the generally accepted view. The Jewish Encyclopedia states it as a fact. In his Hebrew introduction, Wiener emphatically refuses to accept Wolf's contention made, in agreement with a Yiddish-German translation, that the name "Yehudah" refers to the Messiah; the author does not speak of any Messiah. Wolf claimed: "Boni ominus causa ut Deus restituat regnum Judae per Messiam ben David, qui ex tribu Juda sit eriturus." There is yet another possibility which is quite cogent. If not the Messiah, then the author may have had in mind some future period of glory restored to his downtrodden people. For, the phrase "Shevet MiYehudah" appears in a biblical

verse which expresses a promise that "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet..." Although this verse refers to Judah, one of Jacob's sons, nevertheless, it is possible that Verga identified with it all Jews, and thus very poetically, having borrowed the key thought of the verse, reassured them that in due time they would be reinstated to their former glory and status.

The uncertainty as to what or whom the author had in mind when he entitled his book "Shevet Yehudah" is evident in the various types of mistakes made by the translators and scholars. So, for instance, the Jewish Encyclopedia points out that Gentius definitely had erred when in his Latin translation he made two peculiar mistakes on the title page: (a) the word Shevet he spelled with a "Tav" instead of a "Tet", and then (b) he translated it as "tribe" instead of "rod". Wiener supports this view and insists that the word "Shevet" is synonymous with the Spanish "Virga Judae" and not "tribus Judae".

Wiener is also inclined to believe that the author may have made the reference to his own last name, when he used the expression Shevet Yehudah as his title.

The use of "Shevet" even produced a mistake of identity of the author. The "Shevet" in the title, must have misled at least one scholar to believe that the author was not a Solomon Ibn Verga, but a Solomon ben Schefet (Shevet?). This is the only reference to someone other than a Verga as a probable author of the book.

It is interesting that Wiener, prior to his introduction to

the Hebrew text included a Latin title page in which he did not attempt to translate the title to the Latin "Virga Judae", as he had suggested that Gentius should have done, but reproduced it in a transliterated form. It is impossible to establish why he failed to translate the title into Latin. He may have been afraid to incur any criticisms for such a translation, or he himself may not have been very certain whether Virga Judae was a correct translation. We suspect, however, that he may not have been certain as to what the author had in mind when he used Shevet Yehudah as the title. Probably doubting that Virga Judae was rendered correctly, he preferred to leave it safely in a transliterated form.

In his Latin title page, Wiener included not only a synopsis of the entire book, but he also spelled out the full scope of his own work in relation with it.

TABLE XI

Wiener's Latin Title Page

Liber

Schevet Yehuda

Auctore

R. Solomone Aben Verga

Continens calamitates et exilia, quibus Judaei a variis gentibus vexati sunt, narrationes de aliquot Pseudo-Mesiis Corumque poenis, de controversiis inter Juaeos et Christianos agitatis, de modo in creando Principe suo olim ab Hebraeis observato, de structura sacrae aedis Hierosolymitanae una cum ratione sacrorum a Pontifice maximo in Festo Expiationis celebratorum aliaque quae legantur digna, denuo edidit, textum secundum omnes editiones constituit, varias lectiones

adjecit, introductione notis, indicibus, mutisque
additamentis auxit

Dr. M. Wiener

(b) Ibn Verga's Method Of Compilation And Composition:

Since Baer had suggested that the actual writing of the book was not coterminous with the expulsion from Spain, but it was rather written in retrospect, it would be of interest to us also to trace the author's method of compilation of his great chronicle.

From its external appearance the book is a collection of brief narratives. But an internal analysis of details and their character reveals much more in the material than meets the eye; it reveals the author's method of composition and compilation. Some of these narratives the author simply copied from other sources without acknowledging it. These he either had at his disposal, or they may have been brought to his attention by his contemporaries. Other narratives are a mixture of such plagiarized material, but expanded by the author's own occasional comments and remarks, which he had incorporated into the text. Some material is strictly the product of Verga's own creative imagination, which, as Baer puts it, "only a discerning eye could single out."

Still other narratives contain statements ascribed to great Jewish scholars, or poets, e.g.: Yehudah Halevi, the Rambam, Rabbi Isaac Abrabanel, and others. Baer maintains that these have brought into the main body of the text a definite purpose. Their effect was to heighten the "sense of paradox". "As if," says Baer,

the author had "a deliberate intention to wreck the building of philosophical enlightenment, upon which rested the Spanish Jews before the expulsion".

Some borrowed material was turned into a parody of well-known sources, while other strands of his subject matter solemnly pay due tribute to learned men of the period. Certain narratives are translations of foreign tales, and these were so skillfully done, that Baer had to admit his high regard for the artistry in Verga's method of compilation. Baer singles out, for instance, the speech of a Jewish representative from Jerusalem made before the Romans. This speech although found in other Jewish sources as a translation from a Latin source, can be really traced to a Spanish book, famous in its day, written in 1518 - 1524 and printed in 1529. That book was "Libro llamado 'Relox de Principes', or, 'Libro Aureo del Emperador Marco Aurelio' " and was to have been authored by Bishop Antonio de Guevara, of approximately 1480 - 1545, the chronicler of King Carlos V. But even though Baer mistrusts Guevara's objectivity and sincerity, he is willing to see in this speech copied by Verga, an indication of at least one of his methods of compiling his chronicles. Translations from Latin were also used by Verga's son Joseph. He enlarged the book by adding his own material, which he either translated, borrowed or composed.

The concluding "Tchinah", the supplication, is considered to be such a personal composition, although chronologically Joseph's material is said to reflect the condition of the Jews in Turkey. Wiener further suspects, that the unnumbered selections of the book

are later accretions, which were not included in the first edition to which Joseph makes reference.

Hence, the Shevet Yehudah is also suspected of having been slightly redacted by some later compiler.

CHAPTER VIII

AN OVERVIEW OF VERGA'S SOURCES

As had been shown in the preceding chapters, scholars are in agreement that not all of the material contained in Shevet Yehudah is authentic, or strictly Ibn Verga's. Verga drew his statements from other sources. Some of these sources have been identified with certainty, others were attributed to undetermined authors. In the introduction to his own work, the author acknowledges that a certain amount of his information regarding the persecutions and expulsions of Jews he found in the writings of Judah ben Verga. Judah, on the other hand took his information from Prophiat Duran's work, "Hashmadot". Graetz supports this view. Other information he found in historical chronicles, written both by Jews and non-Jews. As Cantera points out, Verga may have used some sources which are in part Latin. In fact, Verga himself admits this fact about some of his narratives. Graetz, however, accepts Verga's statements as trustworthy, whereas Baer ascribes them to another source (from which Verga borrowed his information), i.e. Yosippon, due to the fact that the Hebrew is "too exquisite to have been taken in translation of a foreign source." Although Baer's argument may be convincing, it is difficult to find proof for each one of his examples, simply because some versions of Yosippon have not been preserved, as for instance, the part in which the names of the four Roman procurators appear. Cantera suggests that Latin sources may have come to Verga through Italian and

Sicilian Jews. Other sources used by Verga were Christian in origin. Loeb believes that the story of the letters from Tirus, the royal correspondence with Versores, the dialogue of the Jerusalemite with the Romans, are of Christian origin. These were first recorded in Latin.

Then, as Loeb suggests, Christians must have translated these accounts from Latin into Hebrew, and only in the Hebraic form did these reach Verga. The fables, however, Loeb believed to have been drawn from Jewish folklore and are therefore Jewish in origin. Then, many of the sources claimed to have been consulted by Verga, are pure invention. Cantera maintains that, even though invented, they have a unifying theme: they illustrate the fate of the Jewish diaspora. Certain narratives in Shevet Yehudah are of unknown origin. They seem historically trustworthy, but their exact source cannot be readily identified. Some narratives can be traced to Germanic sources. These may have reached Verga through the German Jewish emigrés in Italy. It is also possible that Verga may have had before him a detailed model of the Temple in Jerusalem, constructed on the basis of Jewish sources. For instance, the first lines of Verga's description of the Temple in Jerusalem, are strongly reminiscent of the passages in the Talmud and the Midrash, and resemble the description of the Herodian Temple supplied by Yosippon, which as we have mentioned above, was another major source of reference. Thus, Abrabanel's material, although in shorter form and interpolated by strands of other origin, found its way to Shevet Yehudah. Cantera even believes that Verga had an abstract of Abrabanel's work constantly before him. From it

Verga was able to quote foreign chronicles, names of Spanish localities such as Lucena, Toletolá, Escalona, etc., various legends, especially the one about the establishment of the first Jewish community in Spain. Cantera is certain, that the latter has been taken from Abrabanel's commentary to the "Sefer Mlachim." Furthermore, since Abrabanel obtained his material from Spanish chronicles, Verga was able to have access to these contemporaneous Christian chronicles, through Abrabanel's works or books in his library. Ibn Verga mentions him twice in his book, thus confirming his own acquaintanceship and contact, with this great Jewish scholar of the period.

Over and above all the heretofore listed sources, scholars maintain that there exists a "common core" in Verga's Shevet Yehudah, Usque's "Consolations" and other contemporary historical chronicles. The scholarly arguments about this "common source" are based on their examination of commonly quoted dates, names of localities, various decrees promulgated against the Jews, etc. Opinions differ among scholars as to what that common source was. Isaac Baer identifies it as a "small Hebrew chronicle" which described the expulsions and persecutions of the Jews at the end of the Middle Ages. This chronicle was apparently distributed in different versions, and was known to Isaac Abrabanel, Samuel Usque, and others. The essence of the chronicle had been used by Prophiat Duran, the author of Ephodi, at the end of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Martin Cohen finds this common unidentified source in Chapters 1 - 24 of Dialogue III of Usque's book. He found that

Usque referred to it sometimes as L.I.E.B. and sometimes as Li. Eb. But Cohen points up that it was precisely this source which seems to have been utilized by the author of Shevet Yehudah, even though it is difficult to identify the actual work in which it was included and who was its author.

TABLE XII

Key Sources Of Shevet Yehudah

1. Writings of Judah ben Verga.
2. The Yosippon.
3. Sources of unknown origin.
4. Germanic sources.
5. Jewish Folklore.
6. Abrabanel's writings.
7. An unidentified source: L.I.E.B., or Li. Eb.
8. Christian sources.
9. Personal Experiences.
10. Free pieces.

CHAPTER IX

ANALYSIS OF THE KEY SOURCES OF SHEVET YEHUDAH(a) The "Common Source":

Scholars have so far failed to identify with certainty the "Common Source" from which the prominent medieval chroniclers have taken their historical material. Different texts and personalities have been suggested as the L.I.E.B., but not all scholars accept any one theory unanimously. Hence, the identity of the common source still remains subject of scholarly debate and dispute. Here we shall try to outline the key positions taken by Jewish historians and scholars with regard to the identity of the "common source", the L.I.E.B. or Li. Eb.

(i) Graetz's Position:

In 1875 Graetz proposed that L.I.E.B. meant "Libro Ebraico", and that expression was only a technical reference to Prophiat Duran's book the "Zichron Hashmadot". Unfortunately, only several quotations have been preserved from this text; the bulk of Duran's work is lost to us. The preserved quotations can be easily identified in Abrabanel's text "Y'shuot Mshicho", and they are all parallel to the material in Usque and Verga. Thus, on the basis of these findings, Graetz maintained that L.I.E.B., the common source was Duran's book.

(ii) I. Loeb's Position:

In 1888 Isidore Loeb deciphered the L.I.E.B. to mean: "Liber Iehuda Ebn Verga", and having been struck by the many similarities in Usque and Verga maintained that "It seems impossible for one of

the two writers not to have copied the other". Thus, according to Loeb, the basic text was that of Solomon Verga, and not as Graetz had proposed that of Propiat Duran.

(iii) Fritz Baer's Position:

Thirty-five years later, the identity of the common source was not yet settled. Baer, investigating Verga's sources, observed the same parallelisms in Usque and Verga just as his predecessors did. But Baer went a step further. He noted that in these parallel passages there were different degrees of relationship to the "common core" material: in some accounts Usque was more trustworthy, in others Verga's reports were historically less questionable. Therefore Baer disagrees with Loeb that Shevet Yehudah was the basic text used by others as their reference text. He insists that another source provided the common core, and argues against Duran's work, because it was burdened with many loopholes.

(iv) Cantera's Position:

Cantera supports Baer in his arguments. He further claims that the abbreviation L.I.E.B. in Usque on the basis of which Graetz wanted to deduce that Propiat Duran was the common author, is "for our purposes useless." Cantera suggests that the items about the persecutions of 1290 in Naples, the expulsion of Jews from France, and especially the analysis of the narratives about the years 1391 - 1412 show the probability that Usque and Verga did not use the same edition of a common source. Cantera puts forward a further view that Usque may not have been able to utilize the common source in Hebrew. He may have used it in a Portugese translation or any other Romance language.

But Cantera does not solve the problem.

A bold attempt to identify the common source was found in

(v) Martin Cohen's Position:

In his critical notes to Samuel Usque's "Conçolacam", Cohen identifies L.I.E.B. with Isaac Abrabanel's historical chronicle, the "Ymot Olam." He bases his proposition on the fact that Isaac Abrabanel played a crucial role in preserving Ephodi's chronicle, and he, being convinced that his theory is "the most plausible one," goes on to insist that "all evidence presently available points to his identification." He argues as follows: "It is beyond doubt that the L.I.E.B. was a Hebrew book, for all chronicles of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance periods were written only in Hebrew; the only exception was Usque's "Conçolacam" written in Portuguese. The material contained in the L.I.E.B. points to an "Iberian Origin", and "its failure to mention Portugal limits it to Spain."

Thus it was composed "by someone close to the soil of Spain." Although Cohen is unable to ascertain the terminus ad quem of this source, he speculates that 1455 was the terminus a quo, and that not Judah but Isaac Abrabanel was the author of the L.I.E.B. What has inspired the formulation of these basic hypotheses concerning the identity of the common source was a close scrutiny of the following parallel passages in Usque and Verga.

TABLE XIII

Parallel Sections And Common Sources

In

Usque and Verga

<u>USQUE</u>	<u>VERGA</u>	<u>NOTE</u> <u>REFERENCE</u>
III - 4	30	11
8	31	10
11	19	11
12	18, 20	12
13	20	12
16	6	10
17	14, 39	11
18	43	10
19	26	10
20	21, 24, 25	11
21	27, 46, 48, 49	13
24	5	11

The study of these passages reveal not only parallel narratives, but also common errors, which scholars have used in support of their view that both Usque and Verga used a common source, rather than plagiarized one another. These errors stem from a common source, which both had copied.

Thus we are left with strong arguments in favor of a "common core" underlying these historical narratives, a hypothesis which most scholars support. However, the identity of that core is still very much disputed, and its puzzle remains unsolved. It is this unsolved puzzle which, as Cohen put it, "has intrigued many scholars" and today "whets a historian's desire to decipher the letters L.I.E.B. or Li. Eb., which Usque may have "wished to

disclose only to a part of his audience." The debate continues.

(b) The Yosippon Source:

Fritz Baer is firm in his view that Verga had read the works of his "learned Leidensgenossen, his comrade in misery." From him he borrowed a variety of motifs. For instance, the survey of events in ancient times is reminiscent of Yosippon, or the observations about the kings Latino and Janus, the worship of Sabbatai and Lucifer, are also derived from the Yosippon. Also common in the two texts are such motifs as names of nations, the descriptions of the Samaritan Temple, chase and killing of elephants in battle, etc. Baer argues that the very first chapter in Verga, was taken from Yossipon (it deals with ancient Jewish history!) even though the author maintains that he took the material from an Aragon chronicle. Many of Yosippon passages have been interwoven with other legendary accounts, but it is certain that the underlying strands of these accounts have been taken from Yosippon. The speech of Josephus to the surrounded Jews, or the names of the Roman procurators are Yossipon in origin. However, the problem with Baer's proposition is, that not in all instances can the Yosippon parallels be found. Much of the Yosippon has not been preserved.

TABLE XIV

Yosippon Strands In Shevet Yehudah

##	1
	2

7

8 -- Yosippon in origin though obtained through
Abrabanel

9 -- As above

10 -- As above

12

32

50

64

56 -- Page in Shevet Yehudah

126 -- Page in Shevet Yehudah

(c) The Abrabanel Material:

It is evident from the studies of I. Baer that he trusted Abrabanel more than Verga, even though he knew that the former depended very heavily on the Spanish Chronicles. However, Verga having integrated the Abrabanel material into his own, shortened the borrowed accounts, and as he did in other cases, gave them a "foreign touch" by interpolating them with accounts drawn from other sources. Baer insists that only from Abrabanel could Verga have taken over foreign chronicles, and his insights into the purposes of Spanish Historiography, which he claimed to have been: "to take counsel for the future from the past."

TABLE XVMotifs Taken Over From Abrabanel

1. The accounts of the ten catastrophes.

2. The ending of Verga's #22.
3. Citations attributed to foreign chronicles.
4. Verga's insights into the purposes of Spanish Historiography in #3, and #11.

(d) Worked-Over Strands From Christian Sources:

One such most obvious strand is the account of the "Disputation of Tortosa." Cantera says that at the base of this disputation is the "letter by Bonastruc Desmaestro of Gerona, who was invited to the dispute." However, that basic strand has been freely "done over" by the author of Shevet Yehudah. This can be evident from the comparison of the Verga text with that in "Jeshurun" by Kobak. In the latter, the Vatican documents and other parallel Latin accounts have been reproduced and examined by Baer. While investigating them, Baer noticed characteristic weaknesses in the Verga account of the disputation and this led him to propose that Verga made his account too subjective to be historically trustworthy. There are deviations in it, e.g.: different dates, duration and length of the disputation differs, and other even more serious deviations. Hence, Baer's conclusion was that Verga invented this account, but based it upon the disputation between Pablo Christiani and Nachmanides. Graetz, on the other hand, had accepted the Vergian account of the disputation as trustworthy. Loeb claimed that "the two accounts are to be considered as two free versions of the same basic text, the Jeshurun version being superior to that of Shevet Yehudah." Loeb also accepted the basic trustworthiness of the Vergian account, despite the fact that it was intermingled with

legendary material. Baer, however, rebuts Loeb by accusing him that : "Loeb says this, because he did not trouble himself to confront the Jeshurun and the Verga texts together." To complicate matters even further, Cantera proposes that even though Baer did confront the Jeshurun text with that in Verga's Shevet Yehudah, he used as basis of comparison the Codex Vaticanus, which in his view "had been retouched by the same author as Shevet Yehudah." Baer was therefore misled in his conclusion.

From the above scholarly debates it is evident how difficult it is to pinpoint with accuracy all the original sources of Shevet Yehudah. The best we can do is to follow the accepted consensus of opinion among leading scholars, whenever it exists. Where such a consensus does not exist, the trustworthiness of sources must be questioned and left questionable until more evidence will some day be available.

(e) Personal Experiences:

Baer maintains that the accounts about the fate of the Spanish exiles came from Verga himself. He accepts this without an iota of doubt. The reason why Baer is so sure that these accounts are trustworthy, is that Verga himself had experienced the expulsion from Spain and had recorded these experiences personally.

But we are still not satisfied with this line of argument, because even though Verga had been a victim of persecution, and even though he may have attempted to record the facts accurately, nevertheless we cannot rule out entirely the subjective element in these accounts, especially when we know how skillful Verga was

in interweaving fact with legend. Baer approached these strands, with too hasty judgments about their historical trustworthiness.

TABLE XVI

Source Material From Verga's Personal Experiences

##	38
	61
	62

(f) Sources Of Unknown Origin:

Generally speaking, with regard to these accounts scholars argue about the same issues: trustworthiness of these accounts, their possible and probable origins, and the intensity of the subjective bias in them. Some accounts simply leave scholars puzzled, without being able to supply any answers.

TABLE XVII

Source Material Of Unknown Origin

Section	3
	4 Of Arabic Origin?
	9
	10
	34 Of German Origin?
	35
	36
	49 Of German Origin?

It is interesting to note that the origins of these narratives are being ascribed to a wide variety of sources. They

range from Arabic literary motifs to German historic traditions. Thus Verga's section #4 Baer ascribes to someone who knew Arabic literature, and sections #34 and #49 are flashbacks to German conditions, possibly in the mid-fourteenth century.

(g) Free Pieces:

The analysis of these sources follows the same pattern as that of the other source categories. Here Baer argues that all these "free pieces" bear a common character. They all have definite themes, which point to the use of a common source. In some of these pieces not merely historical or quasi-historical facts are given, but also legal material is reproduced, which again is subject of scholarly disputes as to its origins.

TABLE XVIII

Free Pieces And Their Themes

Section	# 3, 4, 9	- Disputations regarding the pros and cons of forcible conversions.
Section	# 13	- Portrait of a medieval character: a Monk.
Section	# 17, 28, 29	- Verga shows how the theological disputations were staged: new witnesses were being constantly brought in, as they were needed, in order to make the accusations of Jewish enemies look as trustworthy.
Section	# 26	- A Jewish defense against the typical accusation levelled against them, that they had poisoned the wells.
Section	# 41	- The general theme of the story: "An unfortunate statement of

- Section # 41
- Jewish Deputies made to even a well-meaning Pope, could do more harm for the Jews, than the venomous statements of apostate Jews levelled against their former co-religionists.
- Section # 33
- The purpose of the "False-Messiah's stories is to portray a type, who brings his people in danger.
- Section # 15
- A glimpse at an unusual type of persecution of Jews. Baer claims that it is reminiscent of a persecution in Prague in 1389.
- Section # 14, 20, 44
- Are also suspected of being free pieces.

CHAPTER X

SCHOLARLY HYPOTHESES ABOUT THE AUTHOR, TEXT, AND SOURCES

Cantera in the introduction to his Spanish translation of Shevet Yehudah summarized some of the hypotheses which scholars have put forward regarding the various aspects of the Verga text. He felt, for instance, that it was impossible to study Shevet Yehudah critically, without consulting first the works of Kayserling, Graetz, Loeb and F. Baer. But even a cursory glance at these, reveals to the reader the great *pêle-mêle* which exists in them. Everyone of these scholars has his own theory and disputes everyone else's hypothesis. Rarely do they agree on any one issue. This great confusion leaves many questions about the authorship about the book, its sources or its historical value, unanswered. Where Graetz appears not to have worked out any one consistent point of view, Kayserling shows himself to have been an absolute defender of Verga. Loeb generally maintained that, although the author presented actual historical events, nevertheless he managed to introduce a great many characters and motifs which were purely legendary, and were a product of his imagination. None of these, however, really succeeded in establishing what in the book belonged to the realm of reality and what to fiction. It was Fritz Baer, according to Cantera, who made a major contribution in this respect. He attempted to make clear the methods of the author, his intentions, and purposes in producing the book. Thus, Fritz Baer was able to conclude that Shevet Yehudah was in effect created by one and only

author, and that author could not have been anyone else but Solomon Ibn Verga. Loeb, on the other hand regarded Verga's chronicle, as a compendium of narratives whose authorship could not be decidedly established, since they were related in those days by popular tradition. He concluded that ultimately the book was the work of three distinct compilers. Martin Cohen pointed out recently that a hypothesis similar to that of Baer was first put forward by Umberto Cassuto in 1912, after he had examined the parallelisms in *Usque* and Verga. But Baer undertook his study with a determined aim in mind: he wanted "to reconstruct the personality of the author and to restore it back to its people." Thus, in his approach, Baer was critical of practically everyone of his predecessors. He criticized Graetz for allowing Verga's definite point of view to by-pass him, when he made his judgment about the historical value of the book. Baer further criticized Graetz for "making out too much, out of the material in Verga, when he readily had accepted many of his accounts as historical facts." Loeb, on the other hand, is criticized by Baer for not having undertaken a thorough study and analysis of the sources of *Shevet Yehudah*. Baer asks of Loeb after all said and done: '...but where is the dividing line between truth and poetry?', and this is what Loeb failed to do.

Baer also feels that both Graetz and Loeb allowed themselves to be misled by Verga's statement that he owes his story to a Spanish royal chronicle, which he had translated into Hebrew.

The great confusion in scholarly approaches to the textual problems of Shevet Yehudah, is clearly evident from the polarities of the scholarly positions. Thus, for instance, where Graetz sees in Verga's reports, about the proscriptions of the manner of dress for Jewish women, and indication of the worsening conditions for Jews, and a reflection of the extraordinary measures being taken against the Jewish community, Baer sees nothing extraordinary in them. He maintains that these were only typical ordinances, which were repeatedly promulgated, and were well known to the Spanish Jew of the fifteenth century. Or, vice versa. Where Baer, Kayserling and Loeb maintain that the hostile statements made by Jews and related by Verga were not likely to have been directed at the Christian masses, but must have been the product of Verga's own fantasy and imagination, Graetz disagrees and defends the absolute trustworthiness of Verga's reports.

It can now be easily seen why so many textual puzzles still exist, and why Shevet Yehudah deserves to be the object of renewed scholarly interest, analysis and study.

CHAPTER XI

HISTORICITY OF THE BOOK: THE BIG QUESTION?

The historical value of the data contained in Shevet Yehudah has been seriously questioned by various historians, especially by Loeb. Loeb claimed that even though Ibn Verga was in many instances original, he nevertheless allowed too much fiction to dominate his narratives. Many scholars agree that the religious controversies between Christians and Jews were of special interest to Ibn Verga, but even these contain a definite bias and many details in them are definitely fictitious. The only exception seems to be the Tortosa Disputation.

Loeb insisted that trustworthy historical pieces form only a small part of the book, and he listed the historical pieces as follows:

TABLE XIX

Trustworthy Historical Pieces According To Loeb

(a)	# 4	
	# 5	These were copied from a Spanish Royal chronicle.
	# 6	
(b)	# 10	
	# 11	This is the most compact group of narratives in the book.
	# 18 - 28	
(c)	# 30	
	# 35	(?)

- (c) # 37
- # 40
- # 43
- # 47 - 49
- (d) Articles about the final expulsion from Spain and Portugal.
- (e) Extract from Semtob Sonsola.

Graetz questioned the historicity of only two accounts, the rest of the book was for him historically trustworthy. Loeb, however, rebuts Graetz by pointing out that he had posited too much faith in the historicity of Verga's accounts. Graetz should have been much more cautious before he accepted these documents so freely. Medieval Jewish chroniclers are known for their bias and their subjective approach to their task of compiling and transcribing historical material. The result of this type of historiography was evident in many fictitious pieces integrated into their works. Hence, Graetz should have been careful in his appraisal of Verga's material.

How cautious some scholars have been in accepting the material as historical fact, can be seen from Fritz Baer's approach to Verga's reports about the fate of Jewish refugees from Spain. Scholars had generally believed Verga, because it was highly probable that he witnessed these events himself. The consensus among scholars is that he belonged to Spanish Jews who after the 1492 expulsion from Spain, ultimately found refuge in Portugal. Yet, Fritz Baer was not ready to accept all these accounts without some degree of caution. Many of them came to Verga by

word of mouth, thus in many instances what Verga recorded was hearsay. Hence, Baer goes on record as believing Verga only where he clearly admits that his material was obtained from other witnesses. Loeb is very critical of Verga's 'blood libel' reports.

TABLE XX

Section	#7
	#8
	#12
	#16
	#17
	#29
	#62

He believes that these passages are nothing but popular fables, because as he puts it: "the blood libel trials in Spain recorded in authentic documents are very rare." In effect, Loeb claims to know of only three such trials: one in 1435 in Sepulveda, a second possible one in 1468 or 1471, and a third one in Saint Enfant de la Guardia of 1490. Furthermore, Alfonso de Spina, writing his *Fortalitium Fidei* in 1460 had already mentioned two similar incidents of such trials. "Hence," says Loeb, "this should be enough to prove that these 'Blood Libel' stories had circulated among the masses prior to Verga's *Shevet Yehudah* , and this is how they have probably made their way into Verga's text." And being mostly popular tales they are not to be accepted as fact.

Loeb insists that Verga's narrative No. 12 is pure invention for the sake of entertaining his readers. He shows it on the basis of historical impossibility. The event is said to have occurred in Ocaña in Castile, during the reign of King Manoel. But this king could not have been any one else but the Portuguese King Manoel, who ascended the throne of Portugal in 1495. Spain never had a King Manoel nor Manuel. "Hence," argues Loeb, it must have been the Portuguese Manoel, son of Alfonso," and it is quite improbable that an event which was to have occurred in Spain should be dated according to the reign of a Portuguese king. This Verga did most likely because he began writing his story not in Spain, but after he had reached Portugal, and the Jews, having been expelled from Spain in 1492 could not have been present in Ocaña in 1495. The story, therefore, is obviously Verga's fabrication.

The personages mentioned in Verga's eighth narrative are most likely those of the fifteenth century, and consequently, lived in a period in which King Alfonso of Castile was nonexistent. Hence, this account too is not historically trustworthy. Similar considerations can be brought forth in regard to narrative seven, as well. And yet, despite these attempts to destroy the truthfulness of the accounts, Loeb submits that in both these narratives reference is made to 'doublons' 'K'fulot, which he claims to have been the true monetary unit in circulation at that time. If so, then there is a grain of truth in Verga's reporting. Should we then destroy the entire report when some inconsistencies are intermingled with some trustworthy accounts?

This confusion points only to the need for a cautious acceptance of one scholarly hypothesis as against another, and to the need of further research and study of Verga before sweeping condemnations à la Loeb are to be made by any students of Verga.

In connection with narrative No. 17, Loeb proceeds to show that, what he calls 'plus amusantes invraisemblances' destroy the veracity of Verga's stories. How is it possible for a King of France, for instance, not to know the laws of his country? The conversation taking place in this narrative is reminiscent of the dialogue between King Dagobert and Saint Eloi, but the laws mentioned in that conversation are pure invention. Thus, Verga's account is not too trustworthy, once again.

"What is even more improbable," argues Loeb, "is the apparent ignorance of a Pope of the material in biblical scriptures." "Pope Marco Florentin does not even show the slightest inkling as to what the content of the book of Esther is. L'ignorance...est phenomenale et touche à la bouffonnerie." It is highly improbable for a Pope to have been so ignorant of scripture contents, therefore, the trustworthiness of Verga's account must be put in question.

Also the presence of a musulman ambassador in a French royal court is highly improbable before the sixteenth century. Even if he were to arrive in France to plead the cause of the Jews of Paris, who had been falsely accused of criminal activities, he could not have arrived there till shortly after the capture of Constantinople in 1453, and that would have been too late for the good of the Jews of Paris, since they had been ex-

pelled from France in 1394. At that time, in which the event is supposed to have taken place according to Verga, there were no Jews in Paris any longer. Hence, this piece too is but a tale, and it betrays its 'popular origin' as well as its 'naïveté de l'anachronisme.' Loeb, speculates that the story about the confrontation of a Turk with the French, was a product of Spanish refugees who settled in Constantinople after the expulsion of 1492.

As for the trustworthiness of the narrative No. 16, Loeb destroys it, saying that the opening phrase "once there arrived in Spain..." points to a purely popular tale which lies at the base of the account, and the rest of the material in it does nothing to correct that impression.

Cantera questions the historicity of narrative No. 12 in which Verga depicts the Portuguese King Emanuel as 'the merciful King' and the defender of Jewish interests. Emanuel, however, was known to his contemporaries as a vicious Jew-hater. Therefore, Cantera questions the motives of our author in depicting Emanuel in such a gracious manner. Cantera asks: "Did the author seek to expunge or to smudge the impression of the true event and ascribe it to legend?" Or, did Verga attempt to correct Emanuel's image because in the last years of his reign he became very much interested in the fate of the 'anusim'? With casting of such suspicions Cantera also raises doubts in the reader's mind as to whether he should believe the author's story or read his material with a 'grain of salt'!

There is no question that the study of Verga has not been

exhausted. To the contrary, all this confusion about the historical trustworthiness of the book should encourage further research and study of this valuable chronicle of one of the most crushing Jewish tragedies prior to that of the Hitler period.

CHAPTER XII

PERSONALITIES IN SHEVET YEHUDAH:Their Role And Context

Loeb had suggested that the personages appearing in Shevet Yehudah, even though folkloric, belong to the "circle of the author's personal experience." However, he disagreed with Graetz's attempts to identify either philo-semitic kings and Popes, or the self-hating apostates, or the Jew-hating noblemen, bigots, etc. Loeb felt such an identification was difficult. He was even unable to identify such Christian scholars as Thomas and Versores, and maintained that they were fictitious characters. He seems to have been the only one who attempted to investigate the overall role of these people in Vergian narratives. Thus, he concluded that the kings emerge from these accounts as men generally enlightened, but somewhat sceptical. They show themselves benevolent toward the Jews, they attempted to protect them against the fanaticism and the jealousy of the populace, and even admit the prevailing ignorance and foolhardiness among their subjects. The king generally admires the wisdom of the Jews, excuses their stubborn adherence to their faith, and attempts to understand it, he misleads their adversaries, and ascribes the lies and false accusations against the Jews to popular foolishness, whipped up hatred, jealousy and a priori ill-will.

In the cited block libel cases, the king invariably sides with the Jews and attempts to confound their accusers. He does

it even to a point of harboring personal fears of becoming suspect in his own quarters. In general, Loeb concludes that Kings of Spain and France, the majority of their nobles and the enlightened upper classes in the society do not show any animosity against the Jewish subjects only the lower eschelons of society are filled with hatred against the Jews. The Popes display an equally magnanimous attitude toward the Jews and protect them even against the inimical attitudes of clergy and others. Even Benedict XIII in the Tortosa Disputation, who held a decidedly adverse position against the Jewish participants, seems to mellow in his attitude. Pope Marco Florentin is definitely pro-Jewish.

The Christian scholars, seen around the royal court and whom the king consults repeatedly, also show themselves almost always as the great defenders of the Jews and advocates of rights for them, etc. All women portrayed are generally ill-disposed toward the Jews. The Jewish apostates are usually in the enemy camp, e.g. Geronimo de Santa Fe. The only exception is Martin de Lucena, a baptized Jew who remains friendly toward his former co-religionists. The bishops and monks remain generally hostile. Loeb found it very amusing to watch the behaviour of Kings and Popes portrayed in the reports. He was amazed at the lack of etiquette in the royal courts. There seemed to have reigned a 'familiarité'!, which was surprising: no official stiffness, no put-on airs, no reserve prevailed. Anyone could enter the royal chambers "as one would enter a flour mill", and the king behaved like an operetta actor: he was flippant and

facile with words. The Pope is depicted in a similar fashion; he resembled a lay bourgeois. Whether events took place in the royal court or in papal chambers, the prevailing atmosphere resembled that of "a bourgeois home in Paris." As if the visitor pulled the cord of the bell outside and a maid would answer the door from within. Loeb seemed delighted by this portrayal and concluded "Le trait n'est il pas délicieux?"

I. Baer, however, suspected that Verga in his portrayals of Christian personages harbored a definite sense of contempt for them: an air of disrespect for them prevailed in every account where they are mentioned, and an attempt to disgrace them lurks from every statement.

TABLE XXI

Key Personalities In Shevet Yehudah

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Don Abraham Benvenisti | - Very close to royal circles. |
| 2. Don Joseph, his son | - Also very close to royal circles. |
| 3. Don Vidal Benvenisti | - Mentioned in connection with the Tortosa Disputation, attempted to obtain permission for entry into Portugal for Spanish exiles. |
| 4. Ephraim ben Sancho | - |
| 5. Don Emanuel Brodo | - Lived after the expulsion in the Kingdom of Torgura (?). |
| 6. Ben Dina ? | - A scholar ? |
| 7. Don Joseph Ibn Yachyah | - |
| 8. Rabbi Isaac Abrabanel | - |

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 9. Maestro Martin di Lusina | - The Comforter of the Jews. |
| 10. Bachiller de la Torre | - His philosophical work is quoted. |
| 11. Rabbi Judah Ben Verga | - Saved Jews in the city of Xerez de la Frontera. Also involved in warning the Marranos of Seville of the dangers of the Inquisition. |

TABLE XXII

Key Non-Jewish Personalities

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Pedro di Guzman | - Supposedly killed by Jews. |
| 2. His wife Beatriz | - |
| 3. Enrique di Guzman | - Duke of Medina Sidonia, during the reign of Henry IV in 1474. |
| 4. The Mendosa Family | - Aristocrats of Castile. |
| 5. Kings: Don Alfonso,
Pedro, Manuel | - All of Portugal.
- |
| 6. Scholars: Thomas,
Nicholas,
Versores | -
-
- |
| 7. John de la Vera | - |

PART C

CRITIQUE OF THE TEXT,
THE AUTHOR,
AND SCHOLARLY POSITIONS

CHAPTER XIII

CRITIQUE OF THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR

From our study of Shevet Yehudah and the literature around it, it appears that there is a consensus of opinion regarding the weaknesses in the text. Scholars are unanimous in their complaint that the book lacks a definite logical and chronological order. There is no connection between narratives, there is no follow-up of accounts rendered. A systematic overall unity is missing.

Fritz Baer argued against such a severe criticism, but he too admitted that some accounts were poorly structured and lacked the clarity which would render the events as they did in effect happen. Cantera attempted to defend the author. He ascribed these deficiencies to the author's heightened emotional pitch, due to persecution and personally-experienced expulsion, and blames the "psychological processes within the author" to have brought these about. Other scholars explain the lack of order in the book as due to the fact that it was compiled by three authors and not one; hence, the lack of connection and unity in the material. Still others claim that the author had no intention to entertain anyone, this was not his main task, therefore one ought not to expect utmost precision from him. Where needed, there is clarity, and the style is attractive.

Criticism of Verga is also heard from the translators of the book. Cantera, for instance, aims at him a grave charge of having deceived his readers by interweaving incidents of perso-

nal nature into accounts of a historical nature, in order to give these narratives all the trustworthiness they needed. In his section eleven, Verga depicts customs and traditions which according to him were common in Provence only, where in effect they were just as common in Portugal and in Spain. Or, he limits events which took place over a number of years to the year 1490 because this year was considered as a year of Redemption in Gabbalistic literature, thereby giving the events the slant he needed for his purposes.

To that end, Verga is also accused of purposeful dislocation of pieces of information which should have been placed together. This helped him to create disorder in his accounts and thus evade conclusions he owed his readers. Verga's apparent concern with the trustworthiness of his statements made him even further deceive his readers by claiming support from a variety of source materials, Jewish and non-Jewish, where, in effect the material was a product of his own making.

Verga's subjectivity has also been criticized. His commitment to Judaism and his love of his people made him digress from the main thought of the narratives in order to rebut a current polemic or refute a charge levelled at the Jewish community. Thus in his section seven he inserts his own assessment of the contemporary problems which the Jewish communities faced.

Furthermore, Verga seems to have been selective in his choice of material. In his sections 48 and 49 only those communities are mentioned which were close to Andalusian territory, yet the reader may have conjured up in his mind the idea

that a similar situation prevailed throughout the Spanish mainland. Cantera defends Verga by saying that he was not to be entirely blamed for it. Yet, it was definitely Verga's subjectivity which exaggerated or distorted anti-Jewish laws, perhaps in order to whip up the sentiments of his co-religionists and to drive home not only his viewpoint, but also his feelings. In section 49 laws regarding the "macha roja" are not in exact accord with the statutory articles which promulgated this practice. According to F. Baer, Verga made them appear in too sweeping a fashion, whereas in the statute of Valladolid, where they had originally appeared they are mentioned only accidentally.

F. Baer in his study of Shevet Yehudah has shown a number of times how Verga functioned. The Usque III:12 material is reflected in Verga's three sections 21, 24, 25. Hence Verga splintered the account, moved the events into France in this case, mixed them with discussions between kings and nobles and declared that he had received this information from a Germanic source, which could not be found for the purposes of verification. This is Verga in action! He used this method in other accounts, as well.

Is there any wonder that there were bound to arise among scholars defenders and accusers of this Vergian technique. It seems that those who want to defend the discrepancies in Verga's reports blame it conveniently on the "manuscript variants", which in many cases cannot be located in order to substantiate these claims. The word 'suspicion' often comes up in scholarly textual analyses. Scholars suspect the author of providing many

inaccurate records of the events. Whether Verga allowed those discrepancies to find their way into his text deliberately or not, the fact remains that Shevet Yehudah is full of such questionable information. Even De Rossi in his time had claimed that Verga's accounts were inaccurate and were based on statements, many of which had no foundation in truth. No wonder that the historical trustworthiness of the book is regarded as questionable by scholars of high standing.

CHAPTER XIV

CRITIQUE OF SCHOLARLY POSITIONS(a) Reciprocal Criticism By Scholars:

Across the many pages of scholarly articles written in connection with Shevet Yehudah, one can readily find criticisms, attacks, denials and support levelled not only against the author, but also made by one scholar against another. Thus, Loeb would say of Graetz, that much of what he believed to have been trustworthy in Verga was nothing but legend. Fritz Baer and others consistently refuted both Loeb and Graetz. Graetz's hypotheses of trustworthiness were refuted by simple study of chronology. Cantera objected to Baer's position in a number of cases, as for instance, in the case of Usque III:16 and Verga section 6, where Baer posited a Hebrew chronicle at their base. Cantera disagreed and maintained that the material shows syntactical construction peculiar to Latin and other Romance languages, hence, there must have been a non-Hebraic source at the base of the accounts written by these two Jewish authors. Cohen disagreed and maintained that Cantera's argument simply indicated that the Hebraic story depended heavily on Christian writings and nothing else.

Nor is Fritz Baer infallible, even though his "Untersuchungen" may seem to be the definitive work done so far on Verga. He may have been extensively quoted by some as the expert on Verga's book, yet he was also proven in error by others. His

internal method is regarded as limited and therefore his conclusions are not always to be taken as being correct.

And thus it goes on and on with some doubt always present either about some aspect of the book, or the author's motives, or the historicity of his work.

(b) Personal Comments:

It is amazing how revealing the scholarly analyses are about their authors themselves.

Fritz Baer seems to have been very sure of his views. He very often lapses into cynical aggressiveness. It is evident, for instance, in his analysis of Verga's section 64. Such aggressiveness alone is suspect. It conveys to the reader the idea that from Baer's perspective everyone is and was in error; only he had all the answers and only he knew the truth. Fritz Baer seems to have trusted Yosippon and Abrabanel more than he trusted Verga. And when he claimed that Verga had definitely taken the material from them, the question that comes to mind is "Whence such a guarantee?" Why not exercise some caution? Why such sweeping statements? Perchance the method used by Baer brought him to wrong conclusions; perchance his yardstick of evaluation and analysis was wrong. But Fritz Baer persisted to argue with great confidence and conveyed the definite impression that he firmly believed himself to be right in his conclusions and others to be wrong. He did not notice, however, that at times he even contradicted himself. At one point he argued that some of Verga's narratives were badly composed, in another he reversed himself claiming the very opposite, i.e:

that the narratives were not so badly composed, that some accounts were even so clear that they managed to escape Loeb's critical look. As one reads Baer one quickly discovers that where he needs proof for his views, he readily quotes Loeb to support his point of view. But if Loeb disagrees with him, he crushes him in a unilateral argument.

Looking back on Fritz Baer's analysis it seems to us that he brought to it a definite personal bias. His 'single author theory' was motivated by his ardent desire to "reconstruct the personality of the author and to restore it back to his people."

With this motivation he approached his research, and therefore failed to be as objective as he should have been. As a result, it is quite probable that this bias may account for Baer's strong views, his exaggerated ideas and emphatic points of view. Baer displayed this approach to prove decidedly his pre-conceived ideas about the author. This is, as we see it, Baer's major flaw.

Cantera has shown very little originality in his work. He based the introduction to his Spanish translation entirely upon Baer's "Untersuchungen." He quotes him copiously, and where he does not refer to him, the reader who had Fritz Baer's analysis in hand, knows that Cantera rehashes the "master's" point of view. Cantera is further guilty of sloppiness of thought and poor organization of his material. He mixes thoughts and ideas, without separating them into appropriate paragraphs and necessary subdivisions. Although he summarized all positions taken by the scholarly researchers regarding Ibn Verga, he showed himself

definitely taken by Baer's point of view and accepted it with only a few feeble attempts at criticism. He brought practically nothing new into this field of study. Only occasionally did Cantera raise some new question which has been missed by others. One such question was in regard to the problem of "the common source." Cantera doubted whether Usque knew enough Hebrew to have used a Hebrew original as his basic text of reference. Hence, rather than to use a Hebrew text Usque may have used a variant of the original source in translation in some Romance language. Verga, on the other hand, knew apparently more Hebrew than did Usque, therefore, he had access to the original Hebrew sources. If so, Shevet Yehudah may have been closer to the original source and should be considered more trustworthy than the "Conçolaçam." This question seems to have escaped Cohen's attention, because he did not raise the possibility anywhere in the critical notes to his translation of Usque's work.

Loeb showed himself a scholar of note. He was original in his thinking, methodical in his examination of the text from perspectives not raised by other scholars. His style was accessible to the newcomer and an air of respect for his predecessors was evident in every line of his work. Unlike Fritz Baer he seemed to have been a humble man and a scholar whose ego was not inflated by personal bias. In the course of study of Loeb's material, this writer has gained a great deal of respect for Loeb and his views.

CHAPTER XV

AT THE END OF THE PROJECT

Preparation of this project was a most worthwhile experience. It opened up so many vistas on the problems of historiography in general, and Jewish history in particular. It sensitized me to the need of further historical research in the period depicted by Shevet Yehudah. In the course of compilation of the material for this thesis, I have become enamored with Solomon Ibn Verga. His humanity, his deep Jewishness and loyalty to his people, his craftsmanship, his mode of thinking, his concern for uplifting his depressed brethren, made me crave for more study about this unusual man and skilled historian.

As I reach the end of the project and look back on the months of research, I am amazed at the amount of material I have compiled. I remember my first impression of the text. It looked small, it seemed insignificant, and I expected primitive, medieval tales within its pages. How mistaken I was! In Shevet Yehudah, I found a wealth of problems, issues and questions which are still relevant to the fate of our people today. The skill and the craftsmanship of Verga astounded me practically at each turn of the way. I identified with Verga's attempt to take a pragmatic approach to Jewish destiny. He tried to educate his contemporaries that religious factors alone were not shaping the Jewish future.

Verga seems to have realized that Jewish life, the security of the Jew and his fate among the Christians were subject to

economic, political factors and power struggles in the region in which they lived. Verga did not offer his readers some distant eschatological promises of a glorious period of ultimate security, on condition that they would be passively pious and obedient to the dictates of their faith. But he pointed up the ambivalence in Christian attitudes to the Jew and distinguished the attitudes of the upper and lower strata in society. He seemed to sensitize his readers to an awareness of these varied feelings. He seemed to have conditioned them to self-awareness, and what may have even been in the back of his mind was a realization, that if we were to watch our image and develop the ability to rebut charges against us, we may then be able to temper somewhat the sting of our tragic fate.

This project further revealed to me the extent of Jewish tragedy during the Spanish expulsion. The woe and the frustration, the mental anguish and anxiety of men, women and children who were being maligned by the Christians, was brought forth in every page of this book. Their tragedy was even further heightened by their helplessness and paralyzing fear of their Christian neighbours. From the perspective of the twentieth century, events in the fifteenth, no matter how tragic, seem to be reduced in size and intensity. Involvement with a book like Shevet Yehudah stir's one's Jewish pride and makes one identify with the author and his protagonists. No wonder I felt that Verga's pragmatic approach was most welcome. In the religious context of his day, it may have even required courage to put his ideas in print, although one realizes that Verga camouflaged

some of his personal feelings by the great variety of techniques he employed.

I realize now that what I have done is a mere beginning. There is so much yet to be done with Shevet Yehudah. The internal textual problems continue to exist. They are complex, due to many causes. They need to be examined again in the light of new techniques developed since the days of Fritz Baer and others. There are many deficiencies in the heretofore translated texts. I discovered in Wiener, for instance, that he had a definite purpose in translation. It, too, needs to be studied and analyzed. The English reader has not yet had access to Verga's book simply because no English translation has yet been made. That, too, remains to be done, not merely in order to add just another text to the literature of the period, but also to point up so many relevant problems and issues regarding Jewish fate in all ages, including our own.

I was amazed at the number of textual problems which arose out of the subjectivity with which the scholars approached their task. Scholarly debates were in fact raging a generation ago. I was appalled by the lack of precision, the hasty judgments, the personal slant which colored the scholars' approach and pronouncements. All this, and much more which cannot be even listed in this thesis, requires further analysis, study and research, in order to bring this depicted painful era in Jewish history clearer before us. Some new light may yet be shed on the trials of our people in the days of Spanish Inquisition, and perchance a lesson or two can be learned from those painful experiences and

applied to our time, no less turbulent and no less anxiety-ridden than those years of five centuries ago.

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5. ibid.
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7. Shevet Yehudah, op. cit., J 64.
8. Shlomo Ibn Verga, Shevet Yehudah, ed. Isaac Baer, Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 5707, pg.82.
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10. Cantera, op. cit., pg. 1.
11. ibid.
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13. Cantera, op. cit., pg. 41.
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PART A

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4. *ibid.*, pp. VIII.

5. *ibid.*: in Wiener's Introduction it appears as Valona, but in the Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isidore Singer, VI, pp. 550 - 551 it appears as Avlona.

6. Solomon Ibn Verga, *op. cit.*, & 50.

7. Wiener, *op. cit.*, pp. V - VI.

8. The Jewish Encyclopedia, *loc. cit.*, as well as in Francisco Cantera Burgos, Introduction to Chevet Jehuda (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria Lopez-Guevara, 1927, pp. 3.

9. Wiener, *op. cit.*, pp. V.

10. *ibid.*, pp. V - VI.

11. Martin A. Cohen, Critical notes to "Samuel Usque's "Consolations for the tribulations of Israel," JPS 1965, pp. 283.

12. Wiener *op. cit.*, pp. V.

13. *ibid.*

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15. *ibid.*

16. Cantera, *op. cit.*, pp. 2, ff.

17. Solomon Ibn Verga, *op. cit.*, & 38.

18. *ibid.*, 562.

19. *ibid.*, as well as in Cantera, *loc. cit.*, pg., 2, ff.

20. H. Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, Leipzig: Oscar Leiner, VIII, pp. 1.

21. The Jewish Encyclopedia, *loc. cit.*, pg. 550.

21a. I. Baer in his Hebrew Introduction *op. cit.*, pg. 8, says that "there is also evidence (?he fails to give his references), that in 1488 - 1491 there lived a man by the same name, Rabbi Judah Abn Verga, who was one of the last Jewish tax collectors in Castile. He lived in Ocoña, the native city of Rabbi Isaac de Leon". Isaac Baer speculates that it is possible that this Judah

was the astronomer of Seville. He was saved from the Inquisition in 1483, the year of the Andalusian expulsion, or possibly even prior to this date and settled in northern Castile from where he fled to Portugal in 1492. There he died a martyr's death.

22. Cantera, op. cit., pp. 3.

23. ibid.

24. Isidore Loeb, "Le folk lore juif dans la chronique du Schebet Jehuda, "Revue des Etudes Juives, (Paris) XXIV, ppg.8.

25. The Jewish Encyclopedia, loc. cit., pp. 551.

26. Loeb, loc. cit., as well as in Solomon Ibn Verga op. cit., & 38.

27. Wiener introduction, op. cit., pp. VI.

28. Isaac Baer, Introduction, op. cit., pp. 5.

29. Wiener introduction, loc., cit., same, Zunz in his "Asher Benjamin of Tudela," II: 268, as does De Rossi.

30. Fritz Baer, Introduction, op. cit., pp. 6. Baer claims that recently a Spanish document was found which bears out this contention. He does not state, however, how recently, nor does he give any other details.

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33. Fritz Baer, loc. cit.,

33a. ibid, pp. 8, 33b, ibid., pp. 6.

34. Cantera, loc. cit.

35. ibid.

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36a. Cantera, op. cit., pp. 30.

37. Fritz Baer, op. cit., pp. 72.

38. ibid, pp. 77.

39. Cantera, op. cit., pp. 8, also in The Jewish Encyclopedia, loc. cit.

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41. Isaac Baer, Introduction, *op. cit.*, pp. 11.
42. *ibid.*
43. Zimberg, *of. cit.*, pp. 90.
44. *ibid.*
45. Isaac Baer, Introduction, *op. cit.*, pp. 6.
46. Loeb, *op. cit.*, pg. 1, also in Isaac Baer, *ibid.*, pp. 7.
47. I. Baer, *ibid.*
48. Fritz Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 77.
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50. Cf. *ibid* and Isaac Baer, Introduction, *op. cit.*, pp. 15.
51. Isaac Baer, Introduction, *op. cit.*, pp. 8.
52. Cantera, *ibid*, pg. 16.
53. Cantera, *ibid*, pg. 16.
54. Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 285.
55. Solomon Ibn Verga, *op. cit.*, & 51.
56. Isaac Baer, Introduction, *op. cit.*, pp. 6.
- 56a. Isaac Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 141.
57. Zimberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 93.
58. Isaac Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 117, also in Zimberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 98.
59. Wiener, Introduction, *loc. cit.*, also in Solomon Ibn Verga, *op. cit.*, & 62.
60. Zimberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 98.
61. Fritz Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 80.
62. Cf notes Supra no. 17 and 33a.
63. Solomon Ibn Verga, *op. cit.*, & 31.

64. Wiener, Introduction, op. cit., pp. XXIV.
65. Fritz Baer, loc. cit.
66. Wiener, Introduction, op. cit., pp. V.
67. ibid, Wiener refers to Ibn Verga as Aben Verga.
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69. ibid.
70. Cantera, op. cit., pp. 9.
71. Wiener, Introduction, op. cit., pp. VII.
72. Cohen, op. cit., pp. 282.
73. Fritz Baer, op. cit., pp. 77.
74. ibid.
75. Isaac Baer, Introduction, op. cit., pp. 12.
76. ibid.
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78. Isaac Baer, Introduction, op. cit., pp. 16.
79. Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 7.
80. Isaac Baer, Introduction, op. cit., pp. 13.
81. Loeb, op. cit., pp. 4 also in Cantera, op. cit., pp. 34.
82. Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 48.
83. Isaac Baer, op. cit., pp. 123 and 69.
84. Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 28.
85. ibid, & 18, Don Benveniste, Don Soliman C. Jaisch,
& 10, King Don Pedro, Sr.
86. ibid., & 17 and & 64.
87. Fritz Baer, op. cit., pp. 62.
88. ibid., pp. 61.
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91. Fritz Baer, op. cit., pp. 53, also in Cantera, op. cit., pp. 33.

92. Fritz Baer, *ibid*, pp. 44.

93. Cantera, op. cit., pp. 36.

93a. Fritz Baer, *loc. cit*.

94. Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 17 - the story about the three rings. Also in Cantera, op. cit., pp. 34.

95. Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 8.

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96a. Fritz Baer, op. cit., pp. 73.

97. *ibid.*, pp. 66, also in Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 32.

98. Fritz Baer, op. cit., pp. 68.

99. *ibid.*, pp. 73.

99a. Cantera, op. cit., pp. 36.

100. *ibid*.

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103. Isaac Baer, Introduction, *loc. cit*.

104. Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 12.

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6. The Jewish Encyclopedia, loc. cit.

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9. Isaac Baer, *loc. cit.*
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46. Isaac Baer, op. cit., pp. 5.
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9. "Das Buch Sehevet Jehudah," translated by M. Wiener, Hannover; Carl Ruempler, 1856, pp. 82, also in Zimberg, *op. cit.* pp. 92.

10. M. Wiener, loc. cit., also in Zimberg, loc. cit.
11. Fritz Baer, Untersuchungen über Quellen und Komposition des Schebet Jehuda, Berlin: C.A. Schwetckhe & Sohn, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923, pp. 69.
12. ibid, pp. 77.
13. ibid.
14. Isidore Loeb, "Le folk lore juif dans la chronique du Sehebet Jehuda," *Revue des Etudes juives*, (Paris), XXIV, pp. 8, also in Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 3, 4, 41, 60, 14, 6, 38.
15. Loeb, op. cit. pp. 27.
16. ibid, pp. 26.
17. Isaac Baer, op. cit., pp. 10.
- 17a. Zimberg, op. cit., pp. 92.
18. Solomon Ibn Verga, *Shevet Yehuda*, ed. Isaac Baer, pp. 126.
19. Zimberg, loc. cit.
20. Fritz Baer, op. cit., pp. 69.
21. "The Jewish Encyclopedia," ed. Isidore Singer 1916, VI, pp. 550 - 551.
22. Fritz Baer, op. cit. pp. 77.
23. Loeb, loc. cit.

G. NOTES TO CHAPTER VI:

1. "Das Buch Schevet Jehudah," Translated by M. Wiener, Hannover: Carl Ruempler, 1856, pp. VIII - XIV, XVIII.
2. Rabbi Jacob Emden in his "Mur UK'Tziyah," ed. Altona 1761, pp. 18a, also Supra, note 50 to ch. 3.
3. Francisco Cantera Burgos, Introduction to Chevet Jehuda (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria Lopez-Guevara, 1927, pp. 42.
4. The Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isidore Singer, 1916, VI, pp. 550 - 551, also in Wiener, op. cit., pp. XV - XXIII.
5. Wiener, op. cit., pp. XXV.

6. *ibid.*, pp. XXIII.
7. *ibid.*, pp. XXIV.
8. The Jewish Encyclopedia, *loc. cit.*, also in Isidore Loeb, *Revue des Etudes Juives* (Paris), XVII, pp. 87.

PART B

H. NOTES TO CHAPTER VII:

1. *Supra*, note 1, to ch. 1.
2. Isaac Baer, Introduction to Shevet Yehuda, ed. Isaac Baer, Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 5707, (1948), pp. 7.
3. "Das Buch Sehevet Jehuda," translated by M. Wiener, Hannover,: Carl Ruempler, 1856, pp. VIII.
4. The Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isidore Singer, 1916, VI, pp. 550 - 551.
5. Wiener, *loc. cit.*
6. Wiener, *op. cit.*, pp. VI - VII.
7. Gen. 49: 10a.
8. Reference to Gen. 49:10a appears in "The Jewish Encyclopedia" *loc. cit.*, although this possibility is not clearly spelled out.
9. *ibid.*
10. Wiener, *op. cit.*, pp. XXIV.
11. *ibid.*, also *Supra*, ch. 1.
12. "The Jewish Encyclopedia" *loc. cit.*, also in Schmit, Judische Merkwirdigkeiten I: 131.
13. *Supra*, note 17, ch. 3., also in Francisco Cantera Burgos, Introduction to Chevet Jehuda (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria Lopez-Guevara, 1927, pp. 8.
- 13a. Fritz Baer, "Untersuchungen uber Quellen und Komposition des Shebet Jehuda," Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke & Sohn, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923, pp. 1 and 47.
- 13b. Cantera, *op. cit.* pp. 30 also in Solomon Ibn Verga, any edition & 38, 62, 52, 59, 60.

14. Isaac Baer, op. cit., pp. 13.
15. ibid.
16. ibid., pp. 15.
17. ibid., pp. 9.
18. ibid., pp. 11, reference made here to Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 12.
19. Isaac Baer, loc. cit.
20. ibid.
21. ibid.
22. The Jewish Encyclopedia, loc. cit.
23. Cantera, op. cit., pp. 10.
24. ibid.

I. NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII:

1. "The Jewish Encyclopedia," ed. Isidore Singer, 1916, VI, pp. 550 - 551, also in H. Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, Leipzig: Oscar Leiner & VIII, pp. 1.
- 1a. Israel Zimberg, The history of Jewish Literature, IV, Vilno: Tomor Publ. Co., 1933, pp. 93.
2. Solomon Ibn Verga, Shevet Yehuda, any edition, & & 12,32.
3. Graetz, op. cit., IX, pp. 309.
4. Francisco Cantera Burgos, Introduction to Chevet Jehuda (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria Lopez-Guevara, 1927, pp. 25.
5. ibid.
6. ibid.
7. Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 12.
8. Isidore Loeb, "Le folk lore juif dans la chronique du Schebet Jehuda," Revue des Etudes juives, (Paris), XXIV, pp. 4.
9. Cantera, op. cit., pp. 34.
10. ibid., pp. 28 also in Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit. & & 3, 4, 10, 9, 49, 34, 35, 36.

11. Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 49.
12. Cantera, op. cit., pp. 28.
13. ibid., pp. 25.
14. e.g. the first chapter of Shevet Yehudah, etc., also in Frtiz Baer, Untersuchungen uber die Quellen und Komposition des Schevet Jehuda, Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke & Sohn, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923, pp. 77.
15. Cantera, loc. cit.
16. ibid.
- 16a. ibid.
17. Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 50, 7,.
18. Cantera op. cit., pp. 17, also in Solomon Ibn Verga, op. cit., & 48, 49.
19. Isaac Baer, Introduction to Shevet Yehudah, ed. Isaac Baer, Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 5707 (1948), pp. 12.
20. Martin A. Cohen, critical notes to "Samuel Usque: Consolations for the tribulations of Israel," Jewish Publication Society, 1965, pp. 277.

J. NOTES TO CHAPTER IX:

1. Martin A. Cohen, critical notes to "Samuel Usque: Consolations for the tribulations of Israel," Jewish Publication Society, 1965, pp. 282. Also in H. Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, Leipzig; Oscar Leiner, VIII, pp. 393 ff.
2. Cohen, loc. cit.
3. ibid., pp. 283.
- 3a. Francisco Cantera Burgos, Introduction to Chevet Jehuda, (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria Lopez-Guevara, 1927, pp. 19.
- 3b. ibid.
- 3c. ibid.
4. ibid, pp. 285.
- 4a. Graetz, op. cit., pp. 180 ff.

5. *ibid.*, pp. 284.
6. *ibid.*
7. *ibid.*
8. Mentioned in Shevet Yehudah, section 50.
9. Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 286.
10. Listed in Cantera, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, and in Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 331, note no. 124.
11. Listed in Cohen, *op. cit.*, but not in Cantera, *op. cit.*,
12. Cohen, *op. cit.*, combines Shevet Yehudah, in sections 18 and 20, and claims them to be parallel to Usque's, *op. cit.*, section 12. Cantera, *op. cit.*, however, makes Shevet Yehudah's section 12, parallel to Usque's section 12, and Shevet Yehudah's section 20 to Usque's section 13.
13. Cohen, *op. cit.*, makes sections 27, 46, 48, 49 of Shevet Yehudah's parallel to Usque's section 21, whereas Cantera, *op. cit.*, lists only section 27 of Shevet Yehudah, and omits the others.
14. Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 284.
15. *ibid.*, pp. 282.
16. *ibid.*, pp. 277.
17. Fritz Baer, Untersuchungen uber die Quellen und Komposition des Schebet Jehuda, Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke & Sohn, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923, pp. 56.
18. *ibid.*, also in Shevet Yehudah, section 7.
19. Yosippon, folio 6b.
20. Fritz Baer, *loc. cit.*
21. *ibid.*, pp. 51.
22. *ibid.*, pp. 58.
23. *ibid.*
24. Shevet Yehudah, sections 3 and 11.
25. *ibid.*, section 40.
26. Cantera, *op. cit.*, pp. 20.

27. *ibid.*, also in Fritz Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 38.
28. "Jerusalem," Kobak, Bd. 6, Bamberg, 1868, pp. 45 ff.
Publ. Halberstamm.
29. Fritz Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 38.
30. *ibid.*, also in Graetz, *op. cit.*, VIII, pp. 114 ff,
406 ff.
31. Isidore Loeb, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, (Paris) XXI,
pp. 150, 152 note 2.
32. Fritz Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 39.
33. Cantera, *op. cit.*, pp. 20.
34. Fritz Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 71.
35. *ibid.*, pp. 47.
36. *ibid.*, pp. 67.
37. Shevet Yehuda section 16, attributed to a pious com-
ment to Psalm 121:4. Loeb in *op. cit.* XVII, pp. 48 shows that
a similar legend circulated in Istanbul in 1633.
38. Fritz Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 61.

K. NOTES TO CHAPTER X:

1. Francisco Cantera Burgos, Introduction to Chevet Jeh-
uda (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria Lopez-Guevara, 1927.
pp. 12.
2. *ibid.*
3. *ibid.*, and in Isidore Loeb, "Le folk lore juif dans
la chronique du Schebet Jehuda," *Revue des Etudes juives*,
(Paris), XXIV, 1 ff.
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*
6. Martin A. Cohen, critical notes to "Samuel Usque:
Consolations for the tribulations of Israel," Jewish Publica-
tion Society, 1965, pp. 332. Cassuto had examined Usque's
section 11 and section 19 in Schevet Yehudah. His hypothesis
was made public in "Un ignoto capitolo di Storia Ebraica" in
Judaica Festschrift für H. Cohen, Berlin 1912, pp. 399 ff.

7. Fritz Baer, "Untersuchungen uber die Quellen und Komposition des Schebet Jehuda," Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke & Sohn, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923, pp. 2.

8. *ibid.*, pp. 1.

9. *ibid.*, pp. 62.

10. *ibid.*, pp. 1.

11. *ibid.*, pp. 3, and in Shevet Yehudah, section 6.

12. *ibid.*, pp. 61, also in H. Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, Leipzig: Oscar Liener, VIII, pp. 420.

13. Shevet Yehudah, section 60.

14. Fritz Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 71.

I. NOTES TO CHAPTER XI:

1. "The Jewish Encyclopedia," ed. Isidore Singer, 1916, VI, pp. 550 - 551, also in Isidore Loeb, "Le folk lore juif dans la chronique du Schebet Jehuda," *Revue des Etudes juives*, (Paris), XXIV: 1 ff.

2. "Jewish Encyclopedia," *ibid.*, also in Loeb, *ibid.*, pp. 4.

3. Schevet Yehudah section 40.

4. Loeb, *op. cit.*, XXIV, pp. 2.

5. Shevet Yehudah, ed. Isaac Baer, Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 5707 (1948) pp. 112 - 115.

6. Shevet Yehudah, sections 8 and 41, also in Loeb, *op. cit.*, pp. 1.

7. Loeb, *ibid.*

8. Fritz Baer, Untersuchungen uber die Quellen und Komposition des Schebet Jehuda, Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke & Sohn, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923, pp. 70.

9. *ibid.*

10. Loeb, *op. cit.*, XXIV, pp. 24.

11. *ibid.*, pp. 27.

12. *ibid.*

13. *ibid.*, pp. 26.
- 13a. *ibid.*, pp. 27.
14. *ibid.*
15. *ibid.*
16. Shevet Yehudah, section 17.
17. Loeb, *loc. cit.*
18. *ibid.*
19. Francisco Cantera Burgos, Introduction to Chevet Jehuda (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria Lopez-Guevara, 1927, pp. 30; also *Supra*, ch. 1, note 96.
20. Cantera, *loc. cit.*

M. NOTES TO CHAPTER XII:

1. Isidore Loeb, "Le folk lore juif dans la chronique du Schebet Jehuda," *Revue des Etudes juives*, (Paris), XXIV, pp. 1, also in Francisco Cantera Burgos, Introduction to Chevet Jehuda (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria Lopez-Guevara, 1927, pp. 39, also in Shevet Yehudah, section 7, also in Fritz Baer, "Untersuchungen uber Quellen und Komposition des Schebet Jehuda," Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke & Sohn, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923, pp. 82.
2. Loeb, *op. cit.*, pp. 4.
3. Shevet Yehudah, section 7, also in Loeb, *op. cit.*, pp. 5 ff.
4. Shevet Yehudah, section 8.
5. *ibid.*, section 7.
6. *ibid.*, section 13.
7. *ibid.*, sections 13, 44, 63.
8. *ibid.*, sections 7, 8, 44, 24.
9. Loeb, *loc. cit.*
10. Shevet Yehudah, sections 7, 3.
11. Loeb, *loc. cit.*, only exception in Shevet Yehudah, section 14.

12. Shevet Yehudah, section 40.
13. *ibid.*, section 41.
14. e.g. Thomas in Shevet Yehudah, section 7, or Versores, section 64, or Roberto, section 9.
15. Shevet Yehudah, sections 14, 20, 41, 44.
16. *ibid.*, section 44.
17. *ibid.*, sections 14, 41, 44.
18. Loeb, *op. cit.* XXIV, pp. 7.
19. *ibid.*
- 19a. Isaac Baer, Hebrew Introduction to Shevet Yehudah, Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 5707 (1948), pp. 9 - 10.
20. *ibid.*
21. Shevet Yehudah, section 40.
22. Isaac Baer, *loc. cit.*
23. Shevet Yehudah, sections 38, 3, also in Baer's edition of Shevet Yehuda, *op. cit.*, pp. 127.
24. Isaac Baer, *op. cit.*, claims that Spaniards are mentioned by Verga with a definite bias on his part, i.e. in contempt, with disrespect and with a definite attempt to disgrace them.
25. Shevet Yehudah, section 29.
26. Isaac Baer, *loc. cit.*, claims that the family Guzman was one of the aristocratic and most respected families in Spain. It is, therefore, highly unlikely that Beatriz held such a lowly job as Verga mentions.
27. So identified without any shadow of a doubt, by Isaac Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 8.
28. This family produced writers, poets, etc. To this family belonged Pedro Gonzalez di Mendosa, the great Cardinal of Ospana, who had greatly influenced Spanish policies, both foreign and internal. He held this high office during the reign of Roman Catholic kings, before and after the expulsion.

PART CN. NOTES TO CHAPTER XIII:

1. "The Jewish Encyclopedia," ed. Isidore Singer, 1916, VI, pp. 550 - 551.

2. Israel Zimberg, The History of Jewish Literature, IV, Vilno: Tomor Publ. Co., 1933, pp. 90.

3. Francisco Cantera Burgos, Introduction to Chevet Jehuda (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria: Lopez-Guevara, 1927, pp. 34.

4. *ibid.*, pp. 30.

5. The Jewish Encyclopedia, *loc.cit.*

6. Cantera, *loc. cit.*

7. The Jewish Encyclopedia, *loc. cit.*

8. Cantera, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, also in Shevet Yehudah, section 11.

9. Cantera, *ibid.*, pp. 13, also in Shevet Yehudah, sections 21, 24, 25.

10. *ibid*, pp. 36.

11. *ibid*, pp. 11.

12. *ibid*, pp. 18.

13. Fritz Baer, Untersuchungen uber die Quellen und Komposition des Schebet Jehuda, Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke & Sohn, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923, pp. 19.

14. Cantera, *op. cit.*, pp. 16.

15. Fritz Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 36.

16. Cantera, *op. cit.*, pp. 12.

17. "Das Buch Schevet Jehuda," translated by M. Wiener, Hannover: Carl Ruempler, 1856, pp. VI.

18. Fritz Baer, *op. cit.*, pp. 15.

Q. NOTES TO CHAPTER XIV:

1. Isidore Loeb, "Le folk lore juif dans la chronique du Schebet Jehuda," *Revue des Etudes juives*, (Paris), XXIV, pp. 1.

1a. Martin A. Cohen, Critical notes to "Samuel Usque: Consolations for the Tribulations of Israel," Jewish Publication Society, 1965, pp. 284.

2. Francisco Cantera Burgos, Introduction to Chevet Jehuda (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria Lopez-Guevara, 1927. pp. 11.

3. Cohen, loc. cit.

4. *ibid*, pp. 332.

5. Israel Zimberg, *The History of Jewish Literature*, IV, Vilno: Tomor Publ. Co., 1933, pp. 91.

6. Cohen, loc. cit.,

7. Fritz Baer, Untersuchungen uber Quellen und Komposition des Schebet Jehuda, Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke & Sohn, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923, pp. 56.

8. *ibid.*, pp. 58.

9. *ibid.*, pp. 64.

10. *ibid.*, pp. 63.

11. *Supra*, notes to ch. 10, note 7.

12. Cantera, *op. cit.*, pp. 13.

13. *Supra*, notes to ch. 9, note 3c.

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6. SAMUEL USQUE. Consolations for the Tribulations of Israel, Translated from Portuguese into English by MARTIN A. COHEN, Jewish Publication Society, 1965.

(c) Studies Of The Text:

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8. FRITZ BAER, Untersuchungen ueber Quellen und Komposition des Schebet Jehuda, Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke & Sohn, Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923.
9. FRANCISCO CANTERA BURGOS. Introduction to Chevet Jehuda (La Vara de Juda), Granada: Libreria Lopez-Guevara, 1927.
10. ISIDORE LOEB. "Le Folk Lore Juif dans la Chronique du Schebet Jehuda," Revue des Etudes Juives, (Paris), XXIV, pp. 1 - 25.

11. M. WIENER, German Introduction to "Das Buch Schevet Jehuda", Hannover: Carl Ruempler, 1856.

(d) Related Studies:

12. ISRAEL ZIMBERG. The History Of Jewish Literature, IV, Vilno: Tomor Publ. Co., 1933, pp. 90 - 98.
13. H. GRAETZ. Geschichte der Juden, Leipzig: Oscar Leiner, vol.I, pp. 419.
14. -----, vol.VII, pp. 255, 258ff., 286ff.
15. -----, vol. VIII, pp. 108, 114ff., 127 note 1, 128, 180ff., 327, 339, 393ff., 397, 406ff., 408ff., 417ff., 419 - 20, 466ff.
16. -----, vol. IX, pp. 211ff., 309.
17. S. DUBNOW. Die Geschichte des Juedischen Volkes in Europa, Berlin: Juedischer Verlag, 1927, IV, pp. 398.

(e) Articles:

18. "Judah Ibn Verga," The Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Isidore Singer, New York and London: Fink & Wagnals Co., VI, pp. 550 - 551.
19. "Joseph Ibn Verga," *ibid.*
20. "Solomon Ibn Verga," *ibid.*
21. A. MARX. HUCA III, 1926, pp. 357.
22. KAYSERLING, JQR. VIII, pp. 639.
23. -----, *ibid.*, XI, pp. 656 - 657.
24. -----, *ibid.*, XX, pp. 251, 266.

APPENDIX

Baer's Analysis In The Following Order:

- I. Shevet Yehudah and Usque:
 1. The reports about the pastoral persecutions in 1320.
 2. David Alroy and persecutions during the Maimonidian period. The murder of Jos. Halevi in Granada.
 3. The expulsions from England and France. The persecutions in Naples in 1290.
 4. Persecutions in 1321, "The Black Death."
 5. Vinzenz Ferrer and the catastrophe in 1391 and 1412.
 6. The Common Source of Usque and Ibn Verga.
- II. The Disputation of Tortosa.
- III. The reports from unknown sources.
- IV. Yosippon and Abrabanel in Shevet Yehudah.
- V. Freely found pieces in Shevet Yehudah and the author of the book.
- VI. The contemporary in Shevet Yehudah.
- VII. The author and the importance of the book.