Moses Schwarzfeld: Between Jewish Studies and Literary Comparatism

Maria Mădălina Irimia
Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca,
"Wilhelm Filderman" Center for the Study of Jewish History in Romania
Corresponding author email: maria.irimia@ubbcluj.ro

Moses Schwarzfeld: Between Jewish Studies and Literary Comparatism

Abstract: Jewish scholar Moses Schwarzfeld explored how folklore influenced Jewish identity in the nineteenth century, especially in a context where Jewish participation in this field was viewed as an unauthorized trespass into a cultural space to be solely Romanian. According to Schwarzfeld, folklore played a central role in shaping Jewish identity. Based on the principles of "Wissenschaft des Judentums," Schwarzfeld established a new type of interdisciplinary research examining antisemitic stereotypes and commonly held cultural beliefs in Romanian folk literature. By doing so, he converged with the universalist vision of the Transylvanian comparatist Hugo Meltzl, whose intention was to promote marginal literatures. But different from Meltzl, besides the scientific content Schwarzfeld's work had a clear political component: especially his early research was used as a tool in the Jewish emancipation struggle. These two components—activism and research—were a defining feature of his work.

Keywords: Jewish intelligentsia, Romanian Folk-Literature, Anti-semitism, Wissenschaft des Judentums, Literary Comparatism, Jewish emancipation.

Citation suggestion: Irimia, Maria Mădălina. "Moses Schwarzfeld Between Jewish Studies and Literary Comparatism." *Transilvania*, no. 4 (2025): 76-90.
https://doi.org/10.51391/trva.2025.4.07.

> "Every nation, like every individual, possesses a sense of superiority over others, believing itself to be perfect, more intelligent, and more righteous than anyone else. Through the lens of these innate prejudices, it judges and evaluates those it encounters in a flawed manner. Each person—and every nation—perceives in others, with a scrutinizing eye, more defects than qualities, and even the best traits, the greatest virtues, are subjected to a critical judgment that is seldom favourable and rarely flattering to outsiders."[1]

This formulation belongs to the Jewish-Romanian scholar Moses Schwarzfeld, glossing how he perceived relationships between the world's nations at the end of the nineteenth century. In this schema, certain nations assert their greatness and uniqueness, often at the expense of excluding other ethnic groups and cultures. Analyzing the representation of "the other," Schwarzfeld explores these "innate" prejudices. Schwarzfeld's text was published in 1891 under the title *Evreii* în *literatura română populară* [Jews in Romanian Folk Literature]. It was the first study of folk "ethno-psychology" and among the earliest attempts to apply the comparative method in the field of Jewish Studies.[2] Examining Romanian stereotypes about Jewish people and drawing comparisons with other minorities—Greeks, Armenians, and Roma—Schwarzfeld outlined an "imagined portrait" of this minority within a historical context characterized by discrimination and marginalization, both legislatively and socially. Anticipating Andrei Oișteanu's distinction between "the real Jew" and "the imaginary Jew," Schwarzfeld framed his imagological analysis

1. "Fiecare popor *în mare*, ca îndeobște omul *în mic*, își acordă sieși superioritate asupra altor popoare, se crede perfect, mai inteligent, mai drept ca oricare altul și, prin prisma acestor prejudecăți înnăscute, judecă și apreciază în mod defect pe cei ce vin în contact cu dânsul. Tot omul—și tot poporul—vede la alții, cu ochiu-i scrutător, mai mult defectele, și chiar însușirile cele mai bune, virtuțile cele mai mari, capătă o sențință critică foarte puțin favorabilă și prea puțin măgulitoare pentru străin". Moses Schwarzfeld, "Evreii în literatura populară română. Studiu de psichologie populară," in *Anuar pentru israeliți cu un supliment calendaristic pe anul 5652 (1891–1892)* (Bucharest: Tipo-litografia "Eduard Wiegand," București, 1891), 98.

2. Simona Fărcășan, Între *două lumi. Intelectuali evrei de expresie română* în *secolul al XIX-le* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 2004), 258.

around the contrast conceptualized in 1890 by the French rabbi Isidore Loeb: "the Jew of history" vs. "the Jew of legend."[3] In doing so, he initiated a new type of interdisciplinary research and interpretation, inherently comparative.[4]

Schwarzfeld aligned himself with the methodologies of his time, including comparative philology, Theodor Benfey's migration theory, the European folkloric studies initiated by the Grimm brothers, Edward Burnett Tylor's evolutionist theories, and the literary comparativism advocated by Hugo Meltzl. This article places him alongside Meltzl, one of the most influential comparatists of his time. Meltzl taught at the University of Cluj/Kolozsvár/Klausenburg and founded the first journal dedicated to comparative literature, *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, published from 1877 to 1888. He echoed a sentiment similar to Schwarzfeld's regarding excessive nationalism, which he addressed in his analysis of comparative literature: "By now, every nation considers itself, for one good reason or another, superior to all other nations, and this hypothesis, worked out into a complete theory of *suffisance* is even the basis of much of modern pedagogy, which today practically everywhere strives to be 'national'. This unhealthy 'national principle' therefore constitutes the fundamental premise of the entire spiritual life of modern Europe."[5]

Meltzl's comparative framework did not comprehensively include the Jewish literary production of Transylvania. Seen through the lens of his theoretical texts, however, Jewish literature and folklore would have appeared marginal, a "small literature" attached to a diasporic community with a distinct history and culture.[6] Schwarzfeld and Meltzl both emphasized the importance of oral literary traditions, but they held differing conceptions of these traditions: Meltzl adopted a stadial approach to oral literature, while Schwarzfeld advocated for a comparative study of Jewish folklore within the broader context of Romania and Eastern Europe.[7] Schwarzfeld launched *Anuarul pentru israeliți* [Yearbook for Israelites] in December 1877, the same year *Acta Comparationis* was published. This publication's focus on Jewish literature and history in Romania marked a significant debut. It was published for nineteen years. Amid a renewed interest in folk traditions, Jewish scholars turned their attention to the study of both Romanian and Jewish folklore.[8] Among them were Moses Schwarzfeld, Moses Gaster, Lazăr Șăineanu, Ion Aurel Candrea, and Salomon Segall. Within this group, Schwarzfeld distinguished himself as the initiator of a comparative approach, working to identify the defining features of local Jewish folk creations in relation to those of other regions.[9] Romania's first modern constitution, adopted in 1866, did not grant Jews naturalization. Article 7 institutionalized

3. See Andrei Oișteanu, *Imaginea evreului în cultura română. Studiu de imagologie în context est-central european*, (București: Humanitas, 2004). See also Isidore Loeb, *Le Juif de l'histoire et le Juif de la légende* (Paris: Léopold Cerf, 1890).

4. Schwarzfeld's approach aligned with the rise of ethno-psychology, folklore studies, and imagology during the 1880s and 1890s, when researchers explored stereotypes and oral traditions from an interdisciplinary perspective. Beginning in the 1880s, one of psychology's most influential figures, Wilhelm Wundt, applied ethnographic methods to study "folk psychology" (*Völkerpsychologie*), influencing scholars focused on oral traditions and national identity. In his anthropological study, *The Golden Bough: A Study of Magic and Religion* (1890), James Frazer utilized comparative mythology to investigate trends in ritual and belief systems.

5. "Inzwischen hält sich jede Nation aus diesem oder jenem triftigen Grunde jeder anderen gegenüber für superior u. diese zu einer vollständigen Theorie der Suffisance ausgebildete Hypothese bildet sogar die Hauptgrundlage der modernen Pädagogik, welche heutzutage so ziemlich überall in erster Linie 'national' zu sein sich bestrebt. Dieses ungesunde 'Nationalitätsprinzip' bildet demnach die Hauptprämisse des gesammten geistigen Lebens der modernen europäischen Völker." Hugo Meltzl, "Vorläufige Aufgaben der Vergleichenden Litteratur. II. Das Prinzip des Polyglottismus," *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 15 (1877): 312; Hugo Meltzl, "Present Tasks of Comparative Literature," translated by Hans-Joachim Schulz and Philip H. Rhein, in *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*, ed. David Damrosch, Natalie Melas, and Mbongsieni Buthelezi (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 45.

6. Although not using the term *world literature*, a century before, Moses Mendelssohn, the reformer of the German Jewry, advocated for Jewish literature and its integration into "universal literature." Mendelssohn (1729–1786) is regarded as the leader of Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment. His principal work is *Jerusalem and Other Jewish Writings*, published in 1783. While Mendelssohn did not explicitly advocate for a "global Jewish literature," his ideas integrated Jewish literary and intellectual traditions into European and, ultimately, global contexts. By viewing Judaism from a global perspective, supporting secular education, and actively promoting Hebrew literature during the Jewish Enlightenment, Mendelssohn broadened the discussion of Jewish literature into a larger intellectual and literary dialogue. See Isaac Eisenstein-Barzilay, "The Ideology of the Berlin Haskalah," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, no. 25 (1956): 1–37.

7. In discussing Meltzl's stadial perspective, which categorizes oral literature as an earlier stage in literary development, Angus Nicholls emphasizes that "as part of his justification for his choice of ten languages, Meltzl distinguishes between 'Kunstliteratur'—presumably, literary works that are consciously formulated as works of art by individual authors and which possess a world-literary profile—and 'Volksliteratur': works that originally circulated as oral literature and are seen to have ethnological rather than strictly artistic value." See Angus Nicholls, "The 'Goethean' Discourses on Weltliteratur and the Origins of Comparative Literature: The Cases of Hugo Meltzl and Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett," *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 54, no. 2 (2018): 180.

8. At that moment, comparative research in Romanian folklore studies had a more extended history, which could be traced back to Dimitrie Cantemir, who analysed ethno-folkloric elements in *Descriptio Moldaviae* (1716); Cantemir ruled Moldavia from March to April 1693 and again from 1710 to 1711. This kind of research entered a new phase at the end of the nineteenth century, with the emergence of two prominent scholars who pioneered this direction in Romanian culture and established academic schools: Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu and Alexandru Odobescu. See Alexandru Dobre, "Folclor comparat româno-evreu," in Sal. Segall, *Din folclorul poporului evreu. Credințe, datini și superstiții*, ed. Alexandru Dobre (București: Minerva, 2000), XXXIII–XXXV.

9. Dobre, "Folclor comparat," XXVIII.

a discourse of national identity infused with antisemitic elements.[10] Schwarzfeld's project aimed to outline the profile of the *Judeophobe* in Romanian culture. His analysis centers on the Romanian perspective: "The study will highlight the Jew with the qualities and defects perceived by the Romanian while also revealing the power of observation, prejudices, and weaknesses of the Romanian people. [...] It will present the Jew as he is seen, believed, and understood by the Romanian, not as he truly was or is."[11] In a different context, American anthropologist Alan Dundes offers a similar account, arguing that the characteristics attributed to Jews in antisemitic folklore reveal much more about Christians than about Jews: "If folklore is autobiographical ethnography, then anti-Semitic folklore reveals a great deal about Christians and nearly nothing about Jews."[12]

This article frames Schwarzfeld's approach to folklore in conjunction with the theory of comparative literature developed by Meltzl. The study of Jewish folklore (*Volkskunde*)—including customs, ceremonies, and folk literature—was recognized as an essential component of the cultural discourse promoted by scholars of Wissenschaft des Judentums in their efforts to recover and preserve Jewish cultural heritage.[13] This initiative coincided with the broader European Romantic interest in folk traditions, influenced by Johann Gottfried Herder's concept of *Volksgeist* (*spirit of the people*), a framework from which Jewish scholars would later distance themselves as German nationalism gained prominence. The so-called Science of Judaism emerged in nineteenth-century Berlin as a movement led by Jewish intellectuals who sought to connect Jewish values with contemporary society. They founded the cultural society *Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft des Judentums,* where Jewish and non-Jewish scholars collaborated to develop modern Jewish historiography.[14] Schwarzfeld's comparative folkloristic studies and his approach to Jewish literature were part of the Wissenschaft des Judentums movement, sharing critical tenets with methods closely aligned with Meltzl's comparative framework. His work offers a critique of nationalist exclusivism and advocates for a transnational, multilingual, and interdisciplinary methodology for Jewish oral traditions.

Historical Context

Amid the intellectual effervescence of the late nineteenth century, the cultural triad of modern Romanian Judaism—Schwarzfeld, Gaster, and Șăineanu—emerged, with *Anuarul pentru israeliți* as its central publication. This trio represents the second-generation of Jewish intellectuals established after Romania's 1878 independence. Their goal was to educate the Jewish population and promote cultural legitimacy within Romanian society. To counter the perceived backwardness associated with Yiddish, these Jewish intellectuals viewed the Romanian language as a crucial element of integration into Romanian society. Having benefited from the Romanian public education system, they championed the transition to Romanian as part of their broader self-emancipatory program. Their efforts were successful: by the late nineteenth century, Romanian had become the mother tongue of most Jews in the country. Yiddish retained a cultural function—not only among Romanian Jews but throughout Eastern Europe.

Gaster and Șăineanu engaged in theoretical debates regarding the origins and dissemination of European folklore, applying the comparative method in their scholarly analyses.[15] Both maintained close ties to the Romanian literary scene. While studying abroad, Gaster was invited by B.P. Hasdeu to publish in *Columna lui Traian*, and upon returning to Romania, he authored the influential *Romanian Popular Literature*, building on Hasdeu's theories. In 1881, he secured a position at the University of Bucharest, teaching a comparative mythology course.[16] On the other hand, in 1880, the young Șăineanu sought mentorship and enrolled in the Faculty of Letters, where Hasdeu became his professor. Recognizing Șăineanu's talent, Hasdeu invited him to collaborate on *Columna lui Traian*. Later, he wrote a glowing preface to Șăineanu's thesis, Încercare *asupra semasiologiei române* [An Essay on the

10. Silvia Marton, "Designing Citizenship. The *'Jewish* Question' in the Debates of the Romanian Parliament (1866–1869)," *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History. Journal of Fondazione CDEC*, no. 3 (2012): 35–55; see also Carol Iancu, *Evreii din România (1866–1919). De la excludere la emancipare*, trad. C. Litman, second edition, revised and extended with a chronological bibliography of the "Jewish Question" (1861–1919) (București: Hasefer, 2006).

11. Schwarzfeld, *Evreii* în *literatura populară*, 99–100.

12. Alan Dundes, *From Game to War and Other Psychoanalytic Essays* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 114.

13. Wissenschaft des Judentums movement was founded by young Jewish intellectuals who tried to apply Enlightenment ideals to Jewish studies. Key figures here were Leopold Zunz, Eduard Gans, and Isaak Markus Jost. On the basis of an unfinished Nahman Krochmal text, *Moreh Nevuchei Hazman* [Guide for the Perplexed of the Time], the movement tried to bring Jewish history, culture, and religion into academic discourse while at the same time dispelling ignorance. Despite high hopes in the early years, many members became assimilated, while others converted to Christianity. Conflicts between modernity and Jewish identity were reflected in this movement's transformation.

14. Michael A. Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany*. *1749–1824* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1967), 162.

15. See Moses Gaster, "The Modern Origin of Fairy-Tales," *The Folk-Lore Journal* 5, no. 4 (1887): 339–351; Moses Gaster, *Rumanian Bird and Beast Stories* (London: The Folklore Society, 1915). See also, Lazăr Șăineanu, *Basmele române în comparațiune cu legendele antice clasice, și în legătură cu basmele popoarelor învecinate și ale tuturor popoarelor romantice. Studiu comparativ* (Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Göbl, 1895).

16. Moses Gaster, *Studii de folclor comparat*, edition and preface by Petre Florea (Bucharest: Saeculum I.O., 2003), 7–8.

Semasiology of the Romanian Language], when the Romanian Academy Printing House published it in 1887.[17] Twice denied citizenship, Șăineanu later immigrated to France.

Of this intellectual triad, Schwarzfeld followed a different path. Unlike Gaster and Șăineanu, he did not benefit from formal academic education or university resources. His intellectual formation was shaped by the Wissenschaft des Judentums movement, which promoted the scholarly study of Judaism with an emphasis on history and culture. He kept up with developments in Jewish studies through correspondence with his exiled brother Elias, who lived in Paris and contributed to the historical journal *Revue des Études Juives*.[18] Nevertheless, like Gaster and Șăineanu, Schwarzfeld was indirectly influenced by Hasdeu. His impact on Schwarzfeld was evident in his positivist approach, the critical analysis of documentary sources in historical research while using folklore as a complementary resource.[19] Schwarzfeld argued that oral traditions could complete the picture of an era: "Traditional material is important for supplementing facts and establishing historical truth."[20] In this light, folklore or popular literature "becomes valuable for clarifying numerous historical issues and social and cultural considerations."[21]

Schwarzfeld's Methods

Schwarzfeld's comparative method was anchored in a comprehensive analysis of folk literature, which he viewed as a reflection of collective psychology and a means to address social stereotypes. In the early 1870s, while living in Iași, Schwarzfeld was drawn to the Junimea movement and the prestige of its publication, *Convorbiri literare*. Along with his brothers, Wilhelm and Elias, he frequently attended Junimea conferences, where he met Titu Maiorescu and Mihai Eminescu.[22] After being rejected by the Junimist circle (*Convorbiri literare* repeatedly turned down the poems he submitted for publication), Schwarzfeld, together with several Jewish colleagues and his brother Wilhelm, decided to establish a cultural society, Speranțele junilor israeliți români [The Hopes of the Young Romanian Israelites]. The purpose of this society was to publish studies on Jewish history and folklore. For three years, he collected proverbs and sayings in Yiddish—a passion he continued even after settling in Bucharest in 1876—since one of the society's main goals, alongside establishing a library and a journal, was to collect folkloric and historical materials related to Jews in Romania. Schwarzfeld edited *Speranța*, a modest four-page publication that appeared only for a few issues. More than just a journal, *Speranța* was an expression of his cultural ideals.[23] This endeavor expanded following his move to Bucharest, where he initially enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine. He subsequently transferred to the Faculty of Letters, although he never completed his studies there.

Schwarzfeld's encounter in Bacău with Avram Iacob Löbel led to a valuable publishing partnership, resulting in the release of the first issue of *Calendar pentru israeliți* in December 1877, later renamed *Anuar pentru israeliți*. The journal saw unexpected success and was warmly received by both the Jewish community and young Jewish intellectuals. Among them was Lazăr Schein, who later became known as Șăineanu, a student at the time.[24] *Anuarul pentru israeliți* was the first Romanian publication influenced by the Wissenschaft des Judentums movement, aiming to redefine Jewish identity by highlighting Jewish cultural heritage and acknowledging its contributions to Romanian society. The publication played an educational role within the Jewish community, specifically targeting disengaged Jewish individuals and those still attached to the traditions of the older generation.[25] Schwarzfeld published studies on folklore and popular literature alongside his early works on Jewish history. These include *Literatura poporană israelită* [Israeli Folk Literature], *Anecdote populare române cu privire la* evrei [Romanian Folk Anecdotes Concerning Jews], *Basmul cu pantoful la evrei și alte popoare* [The Slipper's Tale Among Jews and Other Peoples], *Credința în omoruri*

17. George Voicu, *Radiografia unei expatrieri: cazul Lazăr Șăineanu* (București: Institutul Național pentru Studierea Holocaustului din România "Elie Wiesel," 2008).

18. Elias Schwarzfeld was one of the 11 intellectuals expelled in 1885, including Moses Gaster.

19. I.C. Chițimia, "B.P. Hasdeu şi problemele folclorului," in *Folclorişti şi folcloristica românească* (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1968), 32–72.

20. "[...] materialul tradițional își are importanța sa la completarea faptelor și la stabilirea adevărului istoric." Moses Schwarzfeld, "Către cititori," *Analele Societății Istorice "Iuliu Barasch,"* no. 2 (1888): 186.

21. "devine un material foarte prețios pentru deslușirea multor chestiuni istorice și a multor considerații sociale și culturale."; Moses Schwarzfeld, "Raportul domnului prim-secretar," *Analele Societății Istorice "Iuliu Barasch,"* no. 1 (1887): 11.

22. *Junimea* was a literary and cultural society founded in Iași that united some of the most influential Moldavian intellectuals, including Titu Maiorescu, Petre P. Carp, Vasile Pogor, Iacob Negruzzi, and Teodor Rosetti. After 1876, when a branch was established in Bucharest, its reach expanded nationwide. Some prominent figures of Romanian culture were part of the society, including the national poet Mihai Eminescu. Most members had studied in Germany (except Rosetti, who studied in Austria) and were shaped by the post-revolutionary intellectual climate of Central Europe. Their shared goal was to revitalize the stagnant intellectual life of Iași and transform it into a modern cultural-scientific center. Ideologically, the *Junimists* represented a modern form of conservatism, grounded in evolutionary principles and advocating for Romania's gradual development following Western European models.

23. Maria Mădălina Irimia, "Schiță pentru biografia unui intelectual uitat: Moses Schwarzfeld," *Revista de istorie a evreilor din România* 19, no. 3 (2018): 65.

24. Moses Schwarzfeld, "Șirul amintirilor," *Egalitatea* XXXV, no. 6 (1924): 18.

25. Măriuca Stanciu, "Medieval Documents on the Jews in the Romanian Principalities as Reflected in the Jewish Press," *Studia Hebraica*, no. 6 (2006): 136–137.

rituale făptuite de Biserica creștină cu urme în literatura populară română [The Belief in Ritual Murders Committed by the Christian Church and Its Reflections in Romanian Folk Literature], *Evreii în literatura lor populară sau cum evreii se judecă înșăși – studiu etnico-psihologic* [Jews in Their Folk Literature, or How They Judge Themselves – An Ethno-Psychological Study], *Evreii în literatura populară română* [Jews in Romanian Folk Literature], *Evreii în literatura populară universală* [Jews in Universal Folk Literature], and *Literatura populară israelită ca element etnico-psihologic* [Israeli Folk Literature as an Ethno-Psychological Factor]. These studies receive little recognition today, just like Schwarzfeld's pioneering research on Yiddish-language Jewish folklore, which remains similarly overlooked.

His research demonstrated that Jews in Romania were the creators of a Yiddish folk production "distinct in spirit, substance, and form from that of any other people."[26] In his first study on folk literature, *Literatura poporană israelită*, Schwarzfeld emphasized its originality and the importance of studying and preserving this body of work, without which, he thought, the spirit and character of the Jewish people cannot be understood.[27] Schwarzfeld's methodology relied primarily on the empirical collection of Jewish proverbs and anecdotes from oral tradition and their complete transcription. Subsequently, he applied comparative analysis to highlight the unique characteristics of Jewish folk literature in contrast to that of other nations: Romanians, Russians, and Poles. He showed how some Jewish proverbs appeared in different languages, suggesting that through translation and cultural transfer, they entered the Romanian folk environment, such as: "Ich mit dir adarabe, un du mit mir kider wider," which in Romanian corresponds to "Tu umbli cu el cu mila, iar el după tine cu pila."[28] In this regard, Schwarzfeld made a notable comparative contribution by publishing a comparative table in the appendix of *Evreii în literatura populară română* that includes over four hundred proverbs and sayings about Jews collected from Central and Eastern Europe.[29]

Along with publishing historical and folklore studies in *Anuarul pentru israeliți*, Schwarzfeld carried out extensive work through the Iuliu Barasch Historical Society, which he founded in Bucharest in 1886. This was the first scholarly society dedicated to Romanian Jews, with the goal of "collecting material on the history of Jews in Romania and Jewish-Romanian folk psychology."[30] It institutionalized research on the history of Romanian Jews based on historical and documentary sources. The society's research program outlined specific guidelines for the study of folk literature, focusing primarily on stories, legends, and songs, and placing less emphasis on proverbs and sayings. Over a decade, Schwarzfeld collected more than 7,000 proverbs, riddles, songs, stories, and anecdotes.[31] The Iuliu Barasch Historical Society conducted five years of intensive research and gathered historical and folkloric documents.[32] The society's objectives culminated in the publication of three volumes of the *Analele Societății Istorice "Iuliu Barasch"* [Annals of the Iuliu Barasch Historical Society] between 1887 and 1889. The historical material compiled over these three years of publication reflects the collective efforts of a group of researchers who sought, through the study of history and folklore, to affirm Jewish identity and support the legitimacy of Jewish claims to civil and political emancipation.[33]

Schwarzfeld's studies, published as reports from the historical society, represent the first syntheses of Romanian-Jewish history. These studies employ an interdisciplinary analysis and method for source exploration, featuring subchapters dedicated to the Jewish language, traditions, and culture.[34] Schwarzfeld regarded folklore

26. "Prin cercetările sale, el a făcut dovada că *și* evreii din România au dat o literatură populară originală, că există o producție populară idiș, care se deosebește prin spirit, fond *și* formă, de cea a unui alt popor." Savin Solomon, "O colecție de proverbe idiș culese de Moses Schwarzfeld," *Revista cultului mozaic* 10, no. 113 (1965): 2.

27. "Prin cunoaşterea literaturii poporane evree—produsul minții şi inimii sale—se vor putea trage trăsăturile sale cu multă siguranță, mai cu seamă de către un Evreu ce s'au interesat a cunoaşte mai de aproape nația sa..." ("Through the knowledge of Jewish folk literature — the product of its mind and heart — one can draw its traits with greater certainty, especially by a Jew who is interested in understanding his own nation more deeply..."). Moses Schwarzfeld, "Literatura poporană israelită," *Calendar pentru israeliți pe anul 5638 (1877–1878)*, no. 1 (1877): 4.

28. Schwarzfeld, "Literatura poporană," 3.

29. See Moses Schwarzfeld, "Anexă – Evreul in literatura populară universală, tablou comparative," in *Evreii* în *literatura populară*, 154–172.

30. Statut Societatea Istorică "Iuliu Barasch," in Arhiva Centrului pentru Studiul Istoriei Evreilor (ACSIER) Fond I, Dosar 411, f. 2.

31. Moses Schwarzfeld, „Raportul domnului prim-secretar," *Analele Societății Istorice "Iuliu Barasch*," anul I (1887): 11.

32. The active members of the society included Benjamin, Moses, Elias, and Wilhelm Schwarzfeld, who were joined by M. Braunstein-Mibaschan, Moses Gaster, Hillel Kahane, M. Beck, Lazăr Șăineanu, Adolphe Stern, Aizic Taubes, and others, bringing their total to 50. The titular members numbered 200 and were referred to as the "supporters" of the society because they contributed financially but did not have voting rights. Among them were J. B. Brociner, Adolf Last, and Max Gaster. Honorary members were selected from distinguished scholars and prominent Jewish figures abroad, including Isidore Loeb, A. Berliner, Ioseph Halevy, M. Kayserling, M. Steinschneider, and A. Harkavy.

33. Hary Kuller, "Presa ca document al vremii," *Buletinul Centrului, Muzeului și Arhivei istorice a evreilor din România*, no. 1 (1997): 118.

34. In *Excursiuni critice asupra evreilor din România*, part of *Analele Societății Istorice "Iuliu Barasch"* (Bucharest: Tipo-litografia "Eduard Wiegand," 1888), Moses Schwarzfeld includes a chapter titled "Datini, credințe *și* obiceiuri" [Customs, Beliefs, and Traditions], in which he observes that in countries where they enjoyed greater freedom, Jews assimilated more foreign influences into their customs and beliefs. In this regard, he cites their belief in incantations as an example, noting that it was contrary to Jewish religious and moral life. Additionally, Jews adopted from Romanians the simplicity of manners and patriarchal way of life, as well as their characteristic hospitality.

as a reflection of a people's evolution, examining aspects of Jewish daily life and interpreting their mindset and worldview. Unfortunately, despite its promising beginnings, the project was discontinued due to unfavourable conditions from inadequate research funding and a challenging political climate that was unsupportive of developing a Romanian-Jewish historiographical school. From 1890 onward, Schwarzfeld shifted his focus to journalism and advocacy for Jewish rights in Romania's longest-running Jewish publication, *Egalitatea*. Moreover, in 1887–1888, Schwarzfeld collected and published ballads, folk songs, and popular legends from Wallachia in the most prestigious socialist journal, *Contemporanul*, under the title "Poezii populare din Muntenia" [Folk Poems from Wallachia].

Schwarzfeld foregrounded his comparative method: "Ultimately, folk literature must conform to the principles of folklore as defined by a science whose mission is to compare the products of universal folk literatures—across all languages and eras—in order to establish their interconnections and mutual influences, their origins and affiliations: *the ways in which ideas, perspectives, and customs are exchanged between nations*."[35] He would revisit this theory throughout his life, as demonstrated in his regular column, "Impressions," in *Egalitatea*: "In reality, apart from temperaments, there are no fundamental differences between individuals or between nations—*only variations in certain traditions and customs*. [...] Nevertheless, the differences among people and nations are not as essential as many believe. National character is simply a way of expressing ourselves. What truly exists are national formations linked by a chain of traditions, coexisting and continuously struggling."[36] After years devoted to the study of folklore, Schwarzfeld concluded in 1914 that the most striking features of various cultures are not their differences but rather their profound similarities:

> "Nothing reflects the spiritual essence of humanity better than folk literature—an emanation of the sentiments and thoughts of the masses. Folklore reveals how much people resemble one another and how little their conceptions, emotions, beliefs, and customs truly vary, not just in superstitions but in all folk creations, whether stories, legends, ballads, songs, proverbs, or even simple jokes. [...] By studying folklore, a patriot can broaden his perspective, allowing him to realize that ethnic differences are not so significant or deep as to create chasms between people or incite divisions and hatreds that burn and destroy; rather, because people are fundamentally the same across all times and cultures, and because they form a shared intellectual and spiritual whole, reconciliation is always possible in the interest of harmonious coexistence."[37]

Beyond its documentary and literary significance, he also emphasized its educational and ethical role. In Schwarzfeld's view, folklore served as a tool for spiritual and social development and, in line with his political thought, a weapon in the fight for Jewish emancipation and against antisemitism: "Since the heart and soul of nations are the same, they form one great family, artificially fragmented. From this perspective, folklore is valuable as a science, as it reveals part of the treasure of a people's heart and knowledge. Still, it is also invaluable from a moral and practical standpoint—a perspective that should never be neglected."[38] Just as Eminescu noted in the preface to E. Baican's collection of anecdotes that "there are no people who have come into contact with Romanians without being mocked by them,"[39] Schwarzfeld made a similar observation:

> "The Romanian calls foreigners "foreign scum," "*filthy* scum," and there is no nation he considers righteous, good, or honest. Thus, the German is "devilish," the Frenchman receives the same flattering label, the Jew is "tărtan," the Greek is a "mangy goat," the Serb is "stupid," the Bulgarian is "with leeks," and the list would never end if we were to enumerate all

35. "În sfârșit, literatura populară trebuie să corespundă tuturor cerințelor folclorice, adică științei, care are drept misiune de a compara între ele produsele literaturilor populare universale, din toate limbile și epocile, și de a stabili legăturile și influențele reciproce, obârșia și filiațiunile ce există între ele: *modul în care se urmează schimbul de idei, de vederi, de obiceiuri între națiuni*." Moses Schwarzfeld, *Poeziile populare Colecția Vasile Alecsandri sau Cum trebuie culese și publicate cântecele populare* (Iași: Tipografia Dimitrie Gheorghe, 1889), 2.

36. "De fapt, în afară de temperamente, nu există diferențe esențiale între oameni și oameni, și între popoare și popoare, *doar deosebiri între anumite tradiții și obiceiuri.* [...] E totuși neîndoios că între oameni și popoare nu sunt așa deosebiri esențiale cum își închipuie mulți. Caracterul național e un fel de a ne exprima. Formațiuni legate printr-un lanț de tradiții într-o conviețuire și luptă continua." Moses Schwarzfeld, "Asemănarea între noroade," *Egalitatea* 44, no. 43–44 (1933): 86.

37. "Nimic ca literaturile populare – o emanație a sentimentelor și cugetului maselor, – nu reflectă mai bine fondul sufletesc al omenirii. Folclorul ne arată cât de mult seamănă și cât de puțin variază concepțiile, sentimentele, credințele și obiceiurile popoarelor, nu numai în superstiții, ci în toate produsele populare, fie ele povești, legende, balade, cântece, proverbe, și până la urmă simple glume. [...] Cu studiul folclorului, orizontul patriotului s-ar lărgi, și l-ar face să înțeleagă că deosebirile etnice nu sunt așa mari, profunde, spre a săpa prăpăstii între oameni, spre a provoca rupturi și uri care dogoară și omoară; din contra, cum oamenii sunt oameni în toate timpurile și sub toate orizonturile, și cum ei formează un tot comun, sufletesc și intelectual, o apropiere e totdeauna posibilă în interesul unei conviețuiri armonice." Moses Schwarzfeld, "Fondul sufletesc," *Egalitatea* 25, no. 20 (1914): 151.

38. Moses Schwarzfeld, "Basmul cu papucul la evrei, la români și la alte popoare. Studiu folkloristic," in *Anuar pentru israeliți cu un supliment calendaristic pe anul 5653 (1893–1895)* (București : Tipografia Edward Wiegand, 1893), 142.

39. "nu e popor să nu fi intrat în contact cu românul fără ca acesta să-și bată joc de el." Mihai Eminescu, "Prefața," in E. Baican, *Literatura populară sau Palavre și anecdote*, broșura I (București: Tipografia Academiei Române, 1882), 5.

the epithets and insults Romanians direct at foreigners, as well as those other nations direct at foreigners themselves."[40]

In 1891, Schwarzfeld published an extensive study titled *Evreii în literatura română populară*, in which he analyzed proverbs, anecdotes, and sayings from Romanian literature to understand how Jews were perceived in the collective folk mentality. Through this investigation, Schwarzfeld identified the emergence of an antisemitic image. His study aimed to trace the origin, historical evolution, geographical distribution, circulation, and variations of texts that portrayed Jews in this light. Divided into four chapters, along with a methodological introduction and conclusions, the work established a new approach to folklore as a scientific discipline. Schwarzfeld introduced a methodological perspective that criticized earlier practices, which focused exclusively on the empirical collection and interpretation of texts. In his view, the people who shape collective identity span all social and demographic classes: "Peasants and townsman, the poor and the rich, merchants and civil servants, parvenus and noblemen—all together constitute the people; therefore, we must be interested in how each of them, without distinction, forms opinions and judgments."[41] The material for this research was drawn from various Romanian folk collections and original works, as well as from oral tradition gathered over more than a decade of meticulous fieldwork. In a previous study, Schwarzfeld argued that proverbs and sayings represent the most significant part of folk literature from an ethno-psychological perspective, stating that "they can be considered the final expression, the most condensed form under which a story, a legend, a tale, a fable, or a belief is presented."[42] He also observed that "silence is often an answer," suggesting that the absence of certain expressions and motifs in folk literature is just as revealing as their presence.[43]

Through a detailed analysis of proverbs, anecdotes, and folk songs, Schwarzfeld exposes the symbolic representation of the Jew in Romanian folk literature, rooted in the dichotomy between the "Jew of History" and the "Jew of Legend." The latter is a mythological figure, a product of popular imagination, embodying the darkest stereotypes and prejudices: the sorcerer, the corrupt moneylender, the coward, and so forth. Schwarzfeld argued that science, through the careful study of sources, must work to eliminate these deeply embedded stereotypes in the collective consciousness.[44]

Between the Science of Judaism and the Comparative Method

Like other figures of Wissenschaft des Judentums, Schwarzfeld distanced himself from the Romantic perspective on Jewish culture and history. His critical and aesthetic views align with a certain universalism. I argue that Schwarzfeld's comparatism lies at the intersection of Wissenschaft des Judentums and the vision of the Transylvanian comparatist Meltzl. The period during which scholars of Wissenschaft des Judentums established themselves coincided with the rise of the scientific study of folklore by German Romantics. William John Thoms introduced the term "folklore" in 1846, although efforts to collect and publish folk stories date back to the early nineteenth century. In the second half of the eighteenth century, Johann Gottfried von Herder compiled folk songs from various nations—German, British, Spanish, Italian, etc. He arguably created an anthology of world literature, *On the Influence of Poetry on Popular Customs*.[45] Later, the German brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm pioneered modern folklore studies. Their work in folk literature research inspired the philologists of the Wissenschaft des Judentums movement.[46]

In turn, the German cultural and academic environment played a crucial role in shaping Romanian Jewish intellectuals engaged in historical and philological research. Gaster, a close collaborator and friend of Schwarzfeld, studied at the Rabbinical Seminary in Breslau in 1876, where he cultivated broad philological interests alongside biblical and Talmudic exegesis. He also drew extensively from the works of the scholar Max Müller and the orientalist Theodor Benfey, who introduced the migration theory of literary motifs that Gaster embraced.[47] For Gaster, the comparatist perspective offered an unexpected opportunity to highlight ancient Hebrew literature, aligning with his multidisciplinary academic training and becoming a consistent focus of his work in folklore studies.[48] In 1898, a young rabbi from Hamburg, Max

40. "Românul numește pe străini lifte străine, lifte *spurcate*, și nu-i popor pe care să-l găsească drept, bun și cinstit. Așa, neamțul e al dracului, franțuzul se bucură de același calificativ măgulitor, evreul e tărtan, grecul e capră râioasă, sârbul e bleod (prost), bulgarul cu praz și ar fi să nu mai sfârșim, dacă am voi să înșirăm toate epitetele și apostrofările românilor contra străinilor, și ale altor popoare față de alți străini"; Moses Schwarzfeld, "Literatura populară israelită ca element etnico-psihologic," in *Anuar pentru israeliți cu un supliment calendaristic pe anul 5650 (1889–1890)* (Bucharest: Tipo-litografia "Eduard Wiegand," 1889), 51.

41. Schwarzfeld, *Evreii în literatura populară*, 100.

42. Schwarzfeld, "Literatura populară israelită," 47.

43. Schwarzfeld, *Evreii* în *literatura populară*, 101.

44. Schwarzfeld, *Evreii* în *literatura populară*, 153.

45. Shunquing Cao, *The Variation Theory of Comparative Literature* (Berlin: Springer, 2013), 3.

46. Dani Schrire, "Poetic Emancipation: *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the Study of Folk-Narratives," *Fabula* 64, no. 3–4 (2023): 216.

47. Măriuca Stanciu, "Moses Gaster pe urmele Sfântului Graal," in *Orizonturi evreiești – Orizonturi europene*, ed. Liviu Rotman (București: Centrul pentru Studiul Istoriei Evreilor din România, 2000), 68.

48. Stanciu, "Moses Gaster," 69.

Grunwald (1871–1953), founded the *Society for Jewish Folklore* in response to a call for the collection of folklore materials along with a questionnaire. The society published *Mitteilungen zur jüdischen Volkskunde* (1898–1929), a journal that regularly featured articles on Jewish folk culture, customs, and traditions of Eastern European Jews, as well as those of German, Yemeni, and Caucasian Jews.[49] Grunwald's endeavor reflected the neo-Romantic trends of the early nineteenth century, setting itself apart from the rationalist program of the Wissenschaft des Judentums movement. However, amid the rise of racial discourse in Germany, Grunwald not only positioned himself as an opponent of the German ethnographer Richard Andree but also as an ideological rival of the author of *Volkskunde der Juden*. Foreseeing the emerging racial discourse, Andree's book, published in 1881 in Leipzig and Bielefeld, portrayed Jews as an inherently distinct group.[50] Andree's work mirrored a broader tendency of the time. Shortly before, the German journalist Wilhelm Marr had coined the term *antisemitism*, which quickly spread and replaced older terminology in articulating a concept of hatred toward everything associated with the Semitic race.[51] Schwarzfeld had already applied this analytical model, challenging cultural stereotypes about Jews. However, whereas Grunwald positioned himself as an ethnographer of Jewish identity, Schwarzfeld distinguished himself as a comparatist, seeking common themes and motifs in a vast and heterogeneous corpus of texts. In doing so, he transcended the boundaries of ethnic identity and national literature—an approach that undeniably brought him closer to Meltzl.[52]

Convergences with Meltzl's Comparatism

Folklore research thrived in Hungary during the second half of the nineteenth century. Jewish scholars made significant contributions to this research through their studies of Finno-Ugric, Turkic, and Balkan folklore. At the same time, Hungarian orientalists such as Ignaz Goldziher and Bernát Heller emerged as key figures in comparative studies. The establishment of the Rabbinical Seminary in Budapest in 1877 aligned with this trend.[53] Unlike Romanian historiography, Hungarian historiography acknowledges the contributions of Jewish folklorists in Hungary, although their Jewish origins are mentioned only sporadically. As Vilmos Voight points out, documenting Jewish contributions to Hungarian folklore studies is challenging. The emergence of Jewish folklore studies in Hungary is linked to Friedrich Salomo Krauss, a graduate of classical philology in Vienna and a folklore collector in Bosnia. In 1895, while in Vienna, he met Henrik Wlislocki, a folklorist from Transylvania and one of Meltzl's collaborators. Krauss maintained connections with folklorists who were then involved in two significant projects: the *Kronprinzenwerk*, initiated by Crown Prince Rudolf of Habsburg, and *Acta Comparationis*, founded by Meltzl and Samuel Brassai.[54]

In 1872, at just twentysix years old, Meltzl became the youngest professor at the university in the multicultural city of Cluj/Kolozsvár/Klausenburg, where he held the Chair of German Language and Literature. Alongside Brassai, he founded the first journal dedicated to literary studies and history *Acta Comparationis*, which drew inspiration from Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur*, first articulated in 1827.[55] Meltzl outlined his program in three seminal articles, published in issues 9 and 15 of the journal's inaugural year (1877) and in issue 24 (1878). These essays set forth the objectives of the new journal, designed as a publication with a global perspective, as indicated by its title page, which featured the journal's name in ten different languages. From a cultural-political standpoint, the journal sought to counteract the rising tide of chauvinistic nationalism, as seen in the works of German philologists like Jacob Grimm.[56] It emphasized primarily European literature and lesser-known literatures from non-European regions, aspiring toward Goethe's ideal of unifying and interconnecting these literatures into a cohesive whole.

In his programmatic essays, Meltzl advances the principle of polyglottism, which he considered essential to genuine comparative literature and complementary to the principle of translation. While the latter facilitated the indirect circulation of literary values, polyglottism, in his view, constituted "the direct commerce itself." He maintained that authentic comparative analysis required reading works in their original languages to avoid the distortions introduced by translation.

---

49. Michael Brenner, *Prophets of the Past: Interpreters of the Jewish History*, translated by Steven Rendall (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 160.

50. Aya Elyada, "Early Modern Yiddish and the Jewish Volkskunde, 1880–1938," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 107, no. 2 (2017): 185–186.

51. Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 82.

52. A direct comparative influence on Schwarzfeld was the Viennese rabbi Adolf Jellinek, who incorporated Schwarzfeld's collected material into his 1886 work, *Der jüdische Stamm in nichtjüdischen Sprichwörtern*. In turn, Schwarzfeld drew upon Jellinek's folklore collection to extract proverbs about Jews from world literature, noting that it "abounds in proverbs from all languages and literatures." Schwarzfeld also referenced Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Wander's *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon*, though he regarded it as incomplete. See Schwarzfeld, "Anexă – Evreul," 140.

53. Vilmos Voight, "Suspension Bridge of Confidence: Folklore Studies in Jewish-Hungarian Scholarship," in *Modern Jewish Scholarship in Hungary: "The Science of Judaism" between East and West*, ed. Tamás Turán and Carsten Wilke (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017), 108.

54. Voight, "Suspension Bridge," 112–113.

55. Meltzl, "Present Tasks," 41.

56. David Damrosch, "Hugo Meltzl and the Principle of Polyglottism," in *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, second edition, ed. Theo D'haen, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir (London: Routledge, 2023), 12.

Thus, he envisioned his journal as a kind of polyglot parliament where writers and scholars from around the world could come together.[57] In his third and final programmatic article, *Der Dekaglottismus*, Meltzl elaborated on the principle of polyglottism by introducing the concept of decaglottism. Following his decaglot criterion, Meltzl's selection of ten working languages for his journal was a statement of linguistic diversity and the equality of all languages: German, French, English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish, Icelandic, and Hungarian.[58] He believed that the inclusion of these languages contributed to literatures within the world literature realm. Meltzl argued that the exclusive use of these ten languages rested on the principle that no language should be deemed superior, thereby challenging the narrow scope of comparative literature, which had traditionally focused primarily on a handful of Western European languages. Meltzl mentioned other European literatures and languages, such as Russian, acknowledging its geopolitical significance, but excluding it from his polyglot program due to its strong political associations which he deemed "completely irrelevant in relation to purely literary and comparative-literary-historical matters."[59] Instead, he included minor literatures within his framework of decaglottism, asserting that "all literatures are equally important, regardless of whether they belong to European or non-European, civilized or 'savage' peoples."[60] He also referenced the literatures of small, oppressed European groups, including the Roma, Jews, Armenians, and Transylvanian Saxons, which he believed could find "refuge" within comparatism. Though seemingly minor, these literatures, in Meltzl's view, contained ethnological and literary-historical treasures that had been neglected by conventional literary history for pseudo-methodological reasons. He argued that comparative literature should assign equal importance to folk poetry worldwide and to world literature. In conclusion, Meltzl maintained that languages not yet integrated into the broader European literary tradition—specifically those that had not adopted the European alphabet, such as Russian and Turkish—could not participate in universal literary exchanges.[61]

Romanian, like the other minority languages of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was omitted from Meltzl's list. Romanian, along with other Eastern European literatures, was viewed primarily as an instrument of folk literature (*Volksliederlitt*). Meltzl, however, demonstrated his interest in Romanian folklore by reproducing excerpts of Romanian folk poetry, old Romanian ballads from southwestern Transylvania, and a collection of Romanian folk songs from the Ciblu Mountains.[62] In June 1878, *Acta Comparationis* published *Cântecul Gintei Latine* by Vasile Alecsandri in both the original and German translations. That same year, Schwarzfeld included a Hebrew translation of Alecsandri's poem in *Anuarul pentru israeliți*, translated by Rabbi Aizic Taubes. The two translations bear witness to a widespread interest, on the part of both Schwarzfeld and Meltzl, in specifically translating to and from the Romanian language.

The significance of translation is central to Schwarzfeld's broader body of work. He embraced Meltzl's principle of polyglottism, investigating the sources of Jewish literary texts in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Romanian. He applied this principle through a comparative analysis of Jewish proverbs and sayings in relation to those from Romanian, German, Polish, Russian, and other cultures, highlighting intercultural exchanges among these communities. Over its nineteen years of publication, his *Anuar* showcased fiction, poetry, reviews, biographies, and translations of classical writers.[63]

57.Meltzl, "Present Tasks," 47.

58. Hugo Meltzl, "Vorläufige Aufgaben der Vergleichenden Litteratur. III. Der Dekaglottismus," *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 24 (1878): 494; Angus Nicholls, "Three Translations from the *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*: "Preliminary Tasks of Comparative Literature, Part III: Decaglotism;' 'Laws of Comparative Literary Research;' and 'Goethe's World Literature'," *Comparative Literature* 76, no. 3 (2024): 285–293. Also discussed in David Damrosch, Natalie Melas, and Mbongiseni Buthelezi, eds., *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 41–49.

59. "Zugegeben, daß dem Russischen unter den slawischen Sprachen eine sehr bedeutende politische Rolle zufällt: aber das ist für die rein literarischen und vergleichend-litterarhistorischen Fragen völlig irrelevant." Meltzl, "Vorläufige Aufgaben der Vergleichenden Litteratur. III. Der Dekaglottismus," 496.

60. "Jede Literatur ist gleichwürdig, gleichviel, ob sie einer europäischen oder aussereuropäischen, einer sogenannten civilisierten oder wilden Nation angehört." Meltzl, "Vorläufige Aufgaben der Vergleichenden Litteratur. III. Der Dekaglottismus," 496.

61. Meltzl, "Present Tasks," 47.

62. See "Zwei alt-rumänische Romanzen" by Oskar Mailand, *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 5–6 (1881): 59–61; "Erdélyi Román népdalok a Czibles hegy tövéből" by Gerecze Peter, *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 1-2 (1881): 28–30; "Volkslieder der Transsilvanischen Rumänen," by H. von Wlislocki, *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 5 (1877): 86–87. (Published in multiple parts; only Part VI appears in this issue).

63. Aizic Taubes (1835–1920) served as the rabbi of Bârlad and Tutova County for 32 years before relocating to Bucharest. He translated *Cântul Gintei Latine* [The Song of the Latin Nation] in honour of the Romanian poet winning first prize in a poetry competition held in southern France as part of a "Latin Festival." Alecsandri's reaction upon learning of the translation of his work is captured in correspondence with Taubes: "Domnule Rabin! Primind traducerea *Cântului Gintei Latine*, făcută de dumneavoastră în limba ebraică, am regretat mult de a nu cunoaște această veche și bogată limbă, și de a nu fi în stare să apreciez meritul operei dumneavoastră. [...] Dacă israeliții din țară ar păși pe urmele d-voastră, luminându-și sufletul, credeți, domnul meu, că lesne ar înceta de a fi – după denumirea ce le dați – copiii vitregi ai României; România fiind cea mai ospitalieră și mai tolerantă din întreaga lume". [Rabbi, sir! Upon receiving your translation of *Cântul Gintei Latine* into Hebrew, I deeply regretted not knowing this ancient and rich language, as I am unable to fully appreciate the value of your work. [...] If the Israelites of this country were to follow your example and enlighten their souls, believe me, sir, they would soon cease to be—according to the term you use—the stepchildren of Romania; for Romania is the most hospitable and tolerant country in the world."] See "Traduceri din V. Alecsandri în limba ebraică, " in *Anuar pentru israeliți cu un supliment calendaristic pe anul 5639 (1878–1879)* (Bucharest: Tipografia „Hajoetz", 1878), 112–113.

The Schwarzfeld family itself serves as a compelling example of Jewish intellectual multiculturalism during the second half of the nineteenth century, emerging under the auspices of the *Haskalah*. The father of the Schwarzfeld brothers, the erudite *maskil* Benjamin Schwarzfeld, who received a modern education in German, translated the works of Friedrich von Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing into Hebrew. Later, as a journalist, he corresponded with some of Europe's leading Hebraist scholars on literary and scientific subjects. Moses' brother, Elias, carried forward this intellectual legacy, beginning his journalism career with translations published in *Curierul de Iași*. Throughout the run of his newspaper *Fraternitatea*, Elias Schwarzfeld published translations of studies and historical sketches by key nineteenth-century Jewish authors, such as Leopold Kompert, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, Emil Franzos, and Isidore Loeb, as well as by non-Jewish figures like Ernest Renan, a philosopher and expert in Semitic history, culture, and civilization. *Egalitatea*, the newspaper edited by Schwarzfeld, featured a permanent feuilleton section with translated and original novels, short stories, and sketches.

Schwarzfeld possessed a Yiddish version of *Basmul cu minciunile* (The Tale of Lies), which he published in his *Anuar* alongside a Romanian translation, preceded by an introduction expressing his multicultural vision of folklore: "This tale is as widespread among nations as any other folk creation. Variants can be found with slight differences in their combinations. There are generally two or three distinct types. The unique expressions and local colour are the original elements in each literature, just as with all other forms of folk genres."[64] Schwarzfeld observed that while each version of a folktale may exhibit linguistic or stylistic peculiarities, the core themes and structures tend to remain constant. Additionally, in his comparative study *Basmul cu papucul* [The Slipper's Tale], he challenged Theodor Benfey's diffusionist theory — which argued for Indian origins of European narrative folklore — by proposing instead collective model of collective cultural legacy in which stories circulate and influence one another. He also acknowledged that some folktales could emerge independently across different cultures, shaped by universal human experiences throughout history.[65] Through this observation—that folktales belong to a shared heritage—Schwarzfeld aligned with the principles of literary comparatism promoted by Meltzl.

Another significant point of convergence between the two scholars' visions emerges in Meltzl's article "Der transscendentale Idealismus in der Volkspoesie, besonders der Siebenbürger Magyaren" [Transcendental Idealism in Folk Poetry, Particularly Among Transylvanian Hungarians]. In the context of the realism-versus-idealism debate, Meltzl critiques the realism of the German philosopher Johann Friedrich Herbart, especially his stance toward idealism and poetry, emphasizing the importance of integrating folklore into the study of history. He argues that the rigid perspective of realists on literature and poetry neglects the comparative aspects of folk creations, collective mentalities, and the perception of "the other" in the cultural landscape of Central and Eastern Europe.[66] Applying this insight to Schwarzfeld's folkloristic work, one can observe how he fluctuates between idealism and realism in analyzing stereotypes about Jews in Romanian folk literature. Through the comparative method, Schwarzfeld examines these representations in their historical context, transcending literary clichés with a nuanced and well-documented portrayal of Jews in Romanian popular culture.

Meltzl often discussed translation challenges, emphasizing that ongoing information exchange — through the indirect method — could lead to a thorough understanding of world literature. In 1879, *Acta Comparationis* published a special issue dedicated to Lessing's play *Nathan the Wise*. Meltzl contributed an article analyzing the play's origins and dissemination, examining its cultural impact beyond Germany and exploring the variations in translation and stage adaptations. According to an article by Auber Forestier, which appeared in the same issue, *Nathan the Wise* was one of the most frequently performed plays at the German Theater in Philadelphia.[67] In their analysis of the play's origins, Meltzl and Forestier emphasized its Jewish themes and highlighted their role in shaping the identity of the character Nathan. Forestier connected Nathan with Moses Mendelssohn, the Haskalah's initiator and Lessing's close friend. Through this symbolic association, Forestier argued that Lessing's message not only advocated for religious equality and interfaith harmony but also actively aimed to challenge anti-Semitic stereotypes. Meltzl, in turn, emphasized the universality of Lessing's vision by quoting a passage imbued with Enlightenment humanism, which he regarded as "flourishing" in the mature work of the author:

"We should always keep this principle close to our hearts, for it is barbaric to discriminate among nations; all were

64. "Acest basm e tot aşa de răspândit între popoare ca orice alt produs popular. Variantele se pot regăsi cu mici diferenţe în combinaţii. Sunt peste tot două sau trei tipuri diferite. Expresiile proprii şi coloritul local e în acest gen partea originală în fiecare literatură, ca şi în toate celelalte genuri populare." Moses Schwarzfeld, "Basmul cu minciunile. Schiţă comparativă din domeniul folkloric," in *Anuar pentru israeliţi cu un supliment calendaristic pe anul 5656 (1895–1896)* (Bucharest: Tipo-litografia "Eduard Wiegand,"1896), 186.

65. Schwarzfeld, "Basmul cu papucul," 139–140.

66. Hugo Meltzl, "Der transscendentale Idealismus in der Volkspoesie, besonders der Siebenbürger Magyaren," *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 10 (1881): 154–156.

67. Auber Forestier, "Nathan the Wise in America," *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 9–10 (1879): 138–140.

> created by God and endowed with reason. The most fitting duty of Christians is to love their neighbors; according to Christ, a neighbor is anyone in need of our help. We all require assistance from others; thus, we are all neighbors to one another. Therefore, we do not wish to condemn the Jews, even though they condemned Christ, for God Himself has said: "Judge not, that you be not judged!" We do not wish to condemn the Muslims either, as there are righteous individuals among them as well. Ultimately, no one is a barbarian unless they lack humanity."[68]

Although written in the spirit of Enlightenment humanism and promoting tolerance among religious communities, the quoted passage from Meltzl still bears the imprint of the theological prejudice—the notion that the Jews condemned Christ. In doing so, Meltzl, whose intention is to underline both the cultural constraints and the inclusive aspirations of nineteenth-century liberal ideals, inadvertently perpetuates one of the oldest "foundational myths" of modern anti-Semitism. His example demonstrates how inherited prejudices can persist even within the rhetoric of universalism.

Interestingly, Romanian Jewish literature also features a character reminiscent of Nathan, created by the Jewish author Ronetti Roman (Aron Blumenfeld), who was also closely associated with Schwarzfeld and the intellectual circle of *Anuar pentru israeliți*. However, in contrast to Lessing's idealist perspective, Roman approached Jewish identity in the Christian world from a realist perspective, adapting it to the social and political context experienced by Romanian Jews, in which antisemitism played a predominant role. Manasse represents the older generation of Jews, who adhere to the traditions and values of Judaism, maintaining a distance from Christians. For him, the Christians' benevolent attitude inspires reluctance, as he believes it conceals ulterior motives: "He was too friendly to me, and when a Christian is too friendly with a Jew... I have lived long enough to know what that means."[69] Schwarzfeld devoted numerous articles in his newspaper *Egalitatea* to this play, particularly addressing debates around the Jewishness of Manasse, such as in "Cum trebuie *înțeles* Manasse" [How Should Manasse Be Understood?]. He claimed that the play had been misinterpreted, as it was assumed that "it aimed to show Jewish youth the path they should follow and that Manasse's death symbolized the death of steadfast and consistent Judaism – the Judaism determined to preserve itself." Then he argued, "The play *Manasse* is a living organism and, as such, is susceptible to various interpretations. Ronetti Roman did not intend to depict the entire Jewish community in Manasse—which would not have been possible—but rather, in line with modern tendencies in artistic representation, sought to trace in his descendants the transformation of an objective type into a milder form in response to new conditions."[70] Schwarzfeld repeatedly rejected the notion that *Manasse* was a thesis-driven play or a didactic allegory. Instead, he insisted that "the author merely sought to portray an aspect of Jewish life—through stark and dramatic contrasts, a natural approach for a talent of his calibre."[71]

Beyond the debates regarding cultural influences and the translations of Lessing's play, Meltzl also referenced a German-Jewish *Volksbuch* (folk book) listed in the bibliography of *Acta Comparationis*, published in Budapest under the supervision of N. Porges. The editor promoted this book as a work of entertainment and featured Nathan on the cover, adorned with a laurel wreath. Meltzl pointed out that Jewish popular literature referred to such works as *maseh* or *maseh-bichl*, meaning "storybooks" in Yiddish. He also cited a book by Medlinger Sam, published in 1860 under the title *Lessings Verdienste um das Judentum* [Lessing's Merits to Judaism], emphasizing Lessing's role in challenging negative portrayals of Jews in German literature.[72] I argue that Schwarzfeld's exposure of anti-Semitism in Romanian folk literature offers a compelling counterpoint to Meltzl's concerns about the representation of Jews in European literary traditions. Although Meltzl did not devote equal attention to Yiddish and Hebrew literature in his journal, his comparative approach suggests a desire to connect German literature with Jewish-German literary production.

One can reasonably assume that Meltzl would have appreciated Schwarzfeld's contributions to comparatism. However, since Schwarzfeld used folklore studies to support the struggle for the emancipation of Romanian Jews,

---

68. "Hanc sententiam semper volumus in animo tenere, nam barbarum est, discrimen facere inter populos, qui omnes a Deo creati et ratione praediti sunt. Maxime decet Christianos proximum suum diligere, et proximus est auctore Christo qui auxilio nostro eget. Egemus autem omnes auxilio aliorum hominum, ergo omnes sumus proximi. Itaque nolumus damnare Judaeos, quam-quam Christum damnaverunt, nam Deus ipse dixit: ne iudicate, ne damnate! Nolumus damnare Mahomedanos, etiam inter Mahomedanos probi homines sunt. Denique nemo est barbarous qui non inhumanus et crudelis est." Hugo Meltzl, "Fabulae de Nathan Origo," *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 9–10 (1879): 137–138.

69. Ronetti Roman, *Manasse. Dramă în patru acte* (București: Editura Librăriei H. Steinberg, București, 1900), 80. See also Iulia-Maria Deaconu (Ticărău), "*Manasse* – Imaginea evreității între tradiție și modernitate. Trei generații evreiești," *Meridian critic*, no. 38 (2022): 65–75.

70. "că tinde a arăta tinerimii evree calea ce ar avea de urmat, și că moartea lui Manasse ar simboliza moartea iudaismului ferm și consecvent, a iudaismului hotărât a se conserva. Piesa *Manasse e un organism viu*, și ca atare susceptibilă de orice tâlc. Ronetti Roman a voit de a înfățișa în *Manasse*, nu obștea poporului evreu—ceea ce nici nu ar fi fost cu putință, ci—conform cu tendințele moderne în redarea vieții în artă—a tins de a urmări în descendență *transformările unui tip real, în forme reale*, odată ce e pus în condiții noi." Moses Schwarzfeld, "Cum trebuie înțeles Manasse," *Egalitatea* XXVI, no. 10 (1915): 76.

71. "n-a urmărit prin el nici o tendință, ci a voit numai să redea o față a vieții evreiești—în contraste puternice și dramatice, lucru firesc pentru un atare talent." Moses Schwarzfeld, "Amintiri despre Ronetti Roman," *Egalitatea* XIX, no. 7 (1908): 50.

72. See "Deutch-jüdiche litteratur," *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 9–10 (1879): 154–155.

Meltzl may have rejected this approach as incompatible with his ideal of academic neutrality. This may also help explain Meltzl's ambivalence toward Jewish literature, which received relatively little attention in *Acta Comparationis* and, more broadly, in the field of world literature, despite the multilingual and transnational character of Jewish literary culture at the end of the nineteenth century. Levy Vital and Allison Schachter point out that secular Jewish literature evolved from Mendelssohn's cultural circles in Germany into a network of cultural circles in Eastern Europe. While its early goals focused on integrating Jews into European society and modernizing Jewish life, by the late nineteenth century, these aims had shifted toward a revival of Hebrew language and literature.[73] Therefore, given Meltzl's strong opposition to militant literary nationalism, as shown in his programmatic essays, one can comprehend his limited interest in modern Hebrew literature, revitalized by the *Haskalah* and politicized by the Zionist movement at the end of the nineteenth century. The journalistic and literary works of Perez Smoleskyn, a prominent *maskil* advocating for late nineteenth-century pro-Zionism, possessed a strong Jewish nationalist character and encouraged the return to the ancestral land of Palestine.[74] For him, the famous verse by Gordon, "Be a man in the world and a Jew at home," which became the motto for an entire generation of *maskilim*, was unacceptable.[75] In his view, *Haskalah* represented the evolution of a *sui generis* individual. Therefore, through his journal *Ha-Shaar*, founded in Vienna in 1869, he sought to challenge both Orthodox Jews and progressive *maskilim* alike.[76] In the "Petite revue polyglotte" section of the same issue, a debate unfolded regarding the origins of the parable in *Nathan*, titled *The So-Called Jewish Origin of the Parable of the Ring*. While some Jewish scholars—such as M. Wiener in the *Weuheimer Jahrbuch für Israeliten* (1857)—asserted a Jewish origin, others—such as A. Wünsche from Dresden—dismissed this hypothesis, contending that it had Oriental, possibly Indian roots, in line with Benfey's migration theory of literary motifs. Schwarzfeld clearly engaged with the debates generated by these same theories.

References to Jewish history and literature in *Acta Comparationis* are therefore not extensive, as Meltzl focused more on the literature of the Roma, Armenians, and Transylvanian Saxons of Transylvania and the region. In his teaching, he analyzed Roma poetry with students like Anton Hermann and Heinrich von Wlislocki, both of whom later presented themselves as experts in Romani culture. Nevertheless, even if he did not fully adhere to his principle of giving equal attention to all literatures—especially those that were minor and marginal—, Meltzl did recognize the literary value of Jewish cultural production, as evidenced by his brief references to them in *Acta Comparationis*.

Conclusions

Modernity confronted the Jewish people with a series of profound dilemmas: tradition versus *Haskalah*, autonomy versus integration, assimilation or conversion, the struggle for emancipation versus emigration and Zionism, communal solidarity versus socialism. Few Jews adopted firm, decisive positions, while most navigated the complexities of multiple identities. Bilingualism, movement across different cultural and social environments, a lasting attachment to traditional Jewish values, and varying degrees of openness to modernity shaped Jewish life in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Jewish intellectuals, aware of their role as either self-declared or socially assigned leaders, felt a profound responsibility as spiritual guides and cultural strategists. They generally responded with caution. In Romania, the majority advocated for the integration of Jews into Romanian society, setting an example by specializing in fields related to Romanian culture (folklore, linguistics, and history) or by producing literature in the Romanian language that addressed the pressing debates of the time. Faced with such provocative and complex conditions, Jewish intellectuals like Schwarzfeld were pivotal in shaping the cultural, historical, and political discourse surrounding Jewish identity in Romania. Along with his collaborators, Schwarzfeld did not merely document the Jewish past; by broadening their investigations to include ethnography and folklore, they integrated Jewish culture into the broader historical fabric of Romania, reclaiming their people's legacy within the nation's cultural narrative.

Schwarzfeld's application of the comparative approach in his research on Jewish folklore served not only as an academic exercise but also as a deliberate political strategy in the struggle for the emancipation and recognition of Jewish rights in Romania. Ironically, although he was a pioneer of comparative folklore studies in Romania, his Jewish identity positioned

73. Levy Vital, Allison Schachter, "Jewish Literature/ World Literature: Between the Local and the Transnational," *PMLA* 130, no. 1 (2015): 93–94.

74. Perez Smolenskin (Smolesky) (1842–1885) was a Jewish writer and journalist of Russian origin. He founded and edited the Hebrew-language magazine *Hashachar* [The Dawn] in Vienna. The magazine became a literary platform for the Haskalah movement and Jewish nationalism. Smolenskin was a proto-Zionist and showed interest in Laurence Oliphant's plans for the colonization of Palestine. He authored novels such as *Șimhot-Hanef*, *Hatoé b'darhei ha-chaim* (in four volumes), *Kevurat Hamor*, *Hairușa*, and others.

75. Yehudah Leib Gordon, also known as Leon Gordon (1831–1895), was one of the most significant Hebrew-language poets of the nineteenth century and a leading figure in the Haskalah movement in Russia. In 1866, he published the poem *Awake, My People!* in the Hebrew-language magazine *HaKarmel*, which was regarded at the time as a call for modernization for both Jews and Russians. See Paul Mendes-Flohr, Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 384.

76. Jacob S. Raisin, *The Haskalah Movement in Russia* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1913), 261.

him outside the national intellectual framework he sought to engage with—a fate shared by many Jewish scholars of his generation. His ostracism is evident in Romanian intellectual and academic circles, notably in the hostility of B.P. Hasdeu, who labeled Schwarzfeld as "the most dangerous Jew in Wallachia," and through his exclusion from the pages of the journal *Șezătoarea*, where editor Arthur Gorovei had initially welcomed his folklore research.[77] This highlights the resistance of the Romanian intellectual elite toward the Jewish presence in the Romanian cultural landscape.

By analyzing Romanian folk traditions and revealing the ways Jews were portrayed within them, Schwazfeld sought to deconstruct entrenched antisemitic representations within the Romanian collective consciousness. The comparative method—juxtaposing Jewish folklore with Romanian and broader European traditions—enabled Schwazfeld to challenge the nationalist rhetoric aimed at excluding Jewish contributions from Romania's cultural heritage. Schwarzfeld's method effectively fused two intellectual affiliations. First, he pioneered the Wissenschaft des Judentums movement in Romania, striving to embed Jewish studies within the framework of European historiography. Second, his engagement with Meltzl's comparativism went beyond academic alignment; it was an intellectual strategy to combat nationalist historiography by advocating for a transnational, multilingual approach to literature. Oișteanu later adopted Schwarzfeld's innovative methodology, acknowledging that Schwarzfeld was the first to examine the Real v. Imaginary Jew in Romanian folklore and, through his work, anticipated the methods of modern imagology. Although Meltzl and Schwarzfeld never collaborated directly, they shared a similar desire to transcend literary nationalism.

Acknowledgement: This work was funded by the EU's NextGenerationEU instrument through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan of Romania—Pillar III-C9-18, through the project *A Global History of Romanian Comparatism: A Case Study in Inter-Imperial Comparative Literature (1877–1944)*, PNRR-III-C9–2023-I8-CF 22/27.07.2023, contract no. 760276/26.03.2024.

Bibliography

"Deutch-jüdiche litteratur." *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 9–10 (1879): 154–155.

"Traduceri din V. Alecsandri în limba ebraică" [Translations from V. Alecsandri into Hebrew]. In *Anuar pentru israeliți cu un supliment calendaristic pe anul 5639 (1878–1879)*, 112–113. Bucharest: Tipografia „Hajoetz", 1878.

Avi, Israel Bar (D. Wertenstein). *Pagini de istorie evreiască. Familia Schwarzfeld: Beniamin (1820–1897), tatăl, Elias (1855–1915), Wilhelm (1856–1894), Moses (1857–1943), fiii* [Pages of Jewish History: Schwarzfeld Family: Beniamin (1820–1897), the father, Elias (1855–1915), Wilhelm (1856–1894), Moses (1857–1943), the sons]. Jerusalem: Cenaclul Literar "Menora," 1968.

Brenner, Michael. *Prophets of the Past: Interpreters of the Jewish History*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Cao, Shunquing. *The Variation Theory of Comparative Literature*. Berlin: Springer, 2013.

Chițimia, I.C. "B.P. Hasdeu şi problemele folclorului" [B.P. Hasdeu and the Problems of Folklore]. In *Folcloriști și folcloristica românească* [Folklorists and the Romanian Folklore], 32–72. Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1968.

Damrosch, David. "Hugo Meltzl and the Principle of Polyglottism." In *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, second edition, edited by Theo D'haen, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir, 12–20. London: Routledge, 2023.

Datcu, Iordan. *Dicționarul etnologilor români* [Dictionary of Romanian Ethnologists], vol. II. Bucharest: Saeculum I.O., 1998.

Deaconu (Ticărău), Iulia-Maria. "*Manasse* – Imaginea evreității între tradiție și modernitate. Trei generații evreiești" [*Manasse* – The Image of Jewishness between Tradition and Modernity. Three Jewish Generations]. *Meridian critic*, no. 38 (2022): 65–75.

Dobre, Alexandru. "Folclor comparat româno-evreu" [Romanian Jewish Comparative Folklore]. In Sal. Segall, *Din folclorul poporului evreu. Credințe, datini și superstiții* [From the Folklore of the Jewish People. Beliefs, Customs, and Superstitions], edited by Alexandru Dobre, XXV–CXXIII. Bucharest: Minerva, 2000.

Dobre, Alexandru. "Permanența istorică a poporului român – o constantă a preocupărilor folcloristicii *și* etnografiei naționale" [The Historical Continuity of the Romanian People – A Lasting Topic in National Folklore and Ethnography]. *Revista de etnografie* și *folclor* 32, no. 4 (1987): 315–322.

Dundes, Alan. *From Game to War and Other Psychoanalytic Essays*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997.

Eisenstein-Barzilay, Isaac. "The Ideology of the Berlin Haskalah." *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish*

77. In a memorialist article published in his column *Impressions* in Egalitatea, 1922, Moses Schwarzfeld offers a subtle yet firm critique of B. P. Hasdeu, whom he considers a brilliant and imposing intellect but one still impacted by the biases of his era. The two engaged in an intellectual and epistemological dispute rather than a direct polemic. Schwarzfeld accused Hasdeu of consistently omitting the role of Jews in the Romanian national narrative and of not eschewing the caricature of the" fanatical Jew," arguing that this type of symbolic exclusion was a structural issue in the 19th-century nationalist rhetoric, fostering an ethnically limited Romanian identity that was unable to accept Jewish otherness as equally vital and authentic. Moses Schwarzfeld, "Reminescențe. Hasdeu," *Egalitatea* 29, no. 20 (1922): 157–159.

Research, no. 25 (1956): 1–37.
Elyada, Aya. "Early Modern Yiddish and the Jewish Volkskunde, 1880–1938." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 107, no. 2 (2017): 182–208.
Eminescu, Mihai, "Prefața" [Preface]. In E. Baican, *Literatura populară sau Palavre și anecdote* [Folk Literature or Palavers and Sketches], broshure I, 5–7. Bucharest: Tipografia Academiei Române, 1882.
Fărcășan, Simona. *Între două lumi. Intelectuali evrei de expresie română în secolul al XIX-lea* [Between Two Worlds. Jewish Intellectuals of Romanian Expression in Nineteenth Century]. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, 2004.
Forestier, Auber. "Nathan the Wise in America." *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 9–10 (1879): 138–140.
Gaster, Moses. "The Modern Origin of Fairy-Tales." *The Folk-Lore Journal* 5, no. 4 (1887): 339–351.
Gaster, Moses. *Rumanian Bird and Beast Stories*. London: The Folklore Society, 1915.
Gaster, Moses. *Studii de folclor comparat* [Studies on Comparative Folklore]. Edition, preface, and notes by Petre Florea. Bucharest: Saeculum I.O., 2003.
Gerecze, Péter. "Erdélyi Román népdalok a Czibles hegy tövéből." *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 1–2 (1881): 28–30.
Iancu, Carol. *Evreii din România (1866–1919). De la excludere la emancipare* [Jews from Romania (1866–1919). From Exclusion to Emancipation]. Translation by C. Litman, second, revised edition. Bucharest: Hasefer, 2006.
Irimia, Maria Mădălina. "Schiță pentru biografia unui intelectual uitat: Moses Schwarzfeld" [Short Biography of a Forgotten Intellectual: Moses Schwarzfeld]. *Revista de istorie a evreilor din România* 19, no. 3 (2018): 56–81.
Kuller, Hary. "Presa ca document al vremii" [The Press as a Historical Document]. *Buletinul Centrului, Muzeului și Arhivei istorice a evreilor din România*, no. 1 (1997): 117–161.
Mailand, Oskar. "Zwei alt-rumänische Romanzen." *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 5–6 (1881): 59–61.
Marton, Silvia. "Designing Citizenship. The '*Jewish* Question' in the Debates of the Romanian Parliament (1866–1869)." *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History. Journal of Fondazione CDEC*, no. 3 (2012): 35–55.
Meltzl, Hugo. "Der transscendentale Idealismus in der Volkspoesie, besonders der Siebenbürger Magyaren." *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 10 (1881): 154–156.
Meltzl, Hugo. "Fabulae de Nathan Origo." *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 9–10 (1879): 137–138.
Meltzl, Hugo. "Present Tasks of Comparative Literature." Translated by Hans-Joachim Schulz and Philip H. Rhein. In *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*, edited by David Damrosch, Natalie Melas, and Mbongsieni Buthelezi, 44–47. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009.
Meltzl, Hugo. "Vorläufige Aufgaben der Vergleichenden Litteratur. II. Das Prinzip des Polyglottismus." *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 15 (1877): 307–315.
Meltzl, Hugo. "Vorläufige Aufgaben der Vergleichenden Litteratur. III. Der Decaglotismus." *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 24 (1878): 494–501.
Mendes-Flohr, Paul, and Jehuda Reinharz, eds. *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
Meyer, Michael A. *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany. 1749–1824*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1967.
Nicholls, Angus. "The 'Goethean' Discourses on Weltliteratur and the Origins of Comparative Literature: The Cases of Hugo Meltzl and Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett." *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 54, no. 2 (2018): 167–194.
Nicholls, Angus. "Three Translations from the *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*: 'Preliminary Tasks of Comparative Literature, Part III: Decaglotism'; 'Laws of Comparative Literary Research'; and 'Goethe's World Literature'." *Comparative Literature* 76, no. 3 (2024): 285–293.
Oișteanu, Andrei. *Imaginea evreului în cultura română. Studiu de imagologie în context est-central european* [The Image of the Jew in Romanian Culture. Imagological Studies in East-Central European Context], second, revised edition. Bucharest: Humanitas, 2004.
Raisin, Jacob S. *The Haskalah Movement in Russia*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1913.
Roman, Ronetti. *Manasse. Dramă în patru acte*. Bucharest: Editura Librăriei H. Steinberg, 1900.
Șăineanu, Lazăr. *Basmele române* în *comparațiune cu legendele antice clasice,* și în *legătură cu basmele popoarelor* învecinate și *ale tuturor popoarelor romantice. Studiu comparativ* [The Romanian Fairy Tales in Comparison with the Ancient Legends and in Connection with the Fairy Tales of the Neighboring Nations and of all the Romanic People. A Comparative Study]. Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Göbl, 1895.
Schrire, Dani. "Poetic Emancipation: *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the Study of Folk-Narratives." *Fabula* 64,

no. 3–4 (2023): 213–242.
Schwarzfeld, Moses "Basmul cu minciunile. Schiță comparativă din domeniul folkloric" [The Tale of Lies. Comparative Sketch in the Field of Folklore]. In *Anuar pentru israeliți cu un supliment calendaristic pe anul 5656 (1895–1896)*, 185–192. Bucharest: Tipo-litografia "Eduard Wiegand," 1896.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Amintiri despre Ronetti Roman" [Memories of Ronetti Roman]. *Egalitatea* 19, no. 7 (1908): 50-51.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Asemănarea între noroade" [Similarity between Peoples]. *Egalitatea* 44, no. 43–44 (1933): 86.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Basmul cu papucul la evrei, la români și la alte popoare. Studiu folkloristic" [The Slipper's Tale Among Jews and Other Peoples]. In *Anuar pentru israeliți cu un supliment calendaristic pe anul 5653 (1893–1895)*, 139–165. Bucharest: Tipografia Edward Wiegand, 1893.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Cum trebuie înțeles *Manasse*" [How *Manasse* Should Be Read]. *Egalitatea* 26, no. 10 (1915): 76.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Evreii în literatura populară română. Studiu de psichologie populară." [The Jews in Romanian Folk Literature: A Study of Folk Psychology]. In *Anuar pentru israeliți cu un supliment calendaristic pe anul 5652 (1891–1892)*, 97–172. Bucharest: Tipo-litografia "Eduard Wiegand," 1891.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Excursiuni critice asupra istoriei evreilor din România de la început până la mijlocul acestui veac." [Critical Notes on the History of the Jews in Romania from the Beginning to the Middle of This Century]. In *Analele Societății Istorice "Iuliu Barasch*," 17–118. Bucharest: Tipo-litografia "Eduard Wiegand," 1888.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Fondul sufletesc" [The Soul Foundation]. *Egalitatea* XXV, no. 20 (1914): 151.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Literatura poporană israelită" [Israeli Folk Literature]. *Calendar pentru israeliți pe anul 5638 (1877–1878)*, no. 1 (1877): 1–10.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Literatura populară israelită ca element etnico-psihologic" [Israeli Folk Literature as an Ethno-Psychological Factor]. In *Anuar pentru israeliți cu un supliment calendaristic pe anul 5650 (1889–1890)*, 41–52. Bucharest: Tipo-litografia "Eduard Wiegand," 1889.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Reminescențe. Hasdeu." *Egalitatea* 29, no. 20 (1922): 157–159.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. "Șirul amintirilor" [The String of Memories]. *Egalitatea* 35, no. 6 (1924): 18–19.
Schwarzfeld, Moses. *Poeziile populare Colecția Vasile Alecsandri sau Cum trebuie culese și publicate cântecele populare* [The Popular Poems from the Vasile Alecsandri Collection or How Folk Songs Should Be Collected and Published]. Iași: Tipografia Dimitrie Gheorghe, 1889.
Solomon, Savin. "O colecție de proverbe idiș culese de Moses Schwarzfeld" [A Collection of Yiddish Proverbs Collected by Moses Schwarzfeld]. *Revista cultului mozaic* 10, no. 113 (1965): 2.
Stanciu, Măriuca. "Medieval Documents on the Jews in the Romanian Principalities as Reflected in the Jewish Press." *Studia Hebraica*, no. 6 (2006): 135–147.
Stanciu, Măriuca. "Moses Gaster pe urmele Sfântului Graal" [Moses Gaster in Pursuit the Holy Grail]. In *Orizonturi evreiești – Orizonturi europene* [Jewish Horizons – European Horizons], edited by Liviu Rotman, 68–77. Bucharest: Centrul pentru Studiul Istoriei Evreilor din România, 2000.
Vital, Levy, and Allison Schachter. "Jewish Literature/ World Literature: Between the Local and the Transnational." *PMLA* 130, no. 1 (2015): 92–109.
Voicu, George. *Radiografia unei expatrieri: cazul Lazăr* Șăineanu [Scrutinizing an Exile: The Case of Lazăr Șăineanu]. Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studierea Holocaustului din România "Elie Wiesel," 2008.
Voight, Vilmos. "Suspension Bridge of Confidence: Folklore Studies in Jewish-Hungarian Scholarship." In *Modern Jewish Scholarship in Hungary: "The Science of Judaism" between East and West*, edited by Tamás Turán and Carsten Wilke, 108–116. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017.
Volkov, Shulamit. *Germans, Jews and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
Wlislocki, H. von. "Volkslieder der Transsilvanischen Rumänen." *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*, no. 5 (1877): 86–87. (Part VI of a serialized series).