

# LEIPZIG [LEIPSIC]

## Jewish Encyclopedia [1906]

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Talmud Torah started 1901 by Carlebach [p.

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A city of Saxony. The first mention of its Jewish community occurs in the middle of the thirteenth century in the "Or Zarua" of Isaac ben Moses of Vienna (p. 215b), who speaks of a synagogue and of a tax on the community. The oldest non-Jewish record of the existence of Jews in Leipsic dates a century later. On Oct. 28, 1352, Margrave Frederick, "the Stern," of Meissen gave the synagogue ("scolam Judæorum") in Leipsic as a fief to his marshal ("Urkundenbuch von Leipzig," iii., No. 44). The Jews' Street ("Iudenburc"), into which a special gate ("valva") opened, is first mentioned in the "Leipziger Stadtbuch" in 1359.

### In the Middle Ages.

In Feb., 1349, Margrave Frederick, "the Earnest," ordered the burning of the Jews in his territories; and although there is no documentary evidence of the event, the Jews of Leipsic were without doubt exterminated, their houses and lands being confiscated by the margrave. His successor, the above-mentioned Frederick, "the Stern," although not less harshly inclined toward the Jews than his predecessor, allowed some of them in 1364 to settle in Leipsic on payment of a large sum for protection. It is doubtful, however, whether a Jewish community was again organized there. In 1430, by

command of the elector Frederick, the Jews were expelled from Saxony, after having been robbed of their property. By a special patent of freedom and protection the rich Jewish money-lender Abraham of Leipsic, together with his family, was exempted from this order in return for the payment of a large sum of money; he was also granted extensive privileges. In recognition of the faithful services which he had rendered the Duke of Saxony he was allowed among other things to have a synagogue ("Judenschule"). Finally, however, even he and all his household fell victims to envy and hatred. As the result of a suit brought against him he was punished in 1439 by the annulment of the greater part of the bonds which he held, by a money fine of 12,000 gulden, and by perpetual banishment from the country ("Urkundenbuch von Leipzig," iii. 103 *et. seq.*).

At the Fairs.

From that time forward for nearly 300 years no Jews settled permanently in Leipsic. Only after the middle of the fifteenth century numerous Jews appeared at fair-times, but the first statistics concerning their attendance at the fairs date from 1675. From that year to 1748 there were at the fairs on an average 750 Jews; 1770-79, 1,652 Jews as against 8,597 Christians; 1786-1839, 3,185 Jews to 13,005 Christians (R. Markgraf, "Der Einfluss der Juden auf die Leipziger Messen"; three lectures in the "Leipziger Tageblatt," March 27, 28, 29, 1896). The Jews took a large share in the trade as regards both purchase and sales and the variety of the purchases made for good legal tender. At the same time they were exposed to endless annoyances, exacting regulations, and burdensome restrictions. At the New-Year's fair in 1645 an order of the city council of Leipsic was published forbidding Jews to have open shops and booths facing the street, and permitting them to sell only in private rooms. This order resulted in an agitation on the part of the Jews which lasted nearly a century. The shopkeepers and merchants, and with them the city council, repeatedly sided against the Jews; but the elector twice decided in their favor (Oct. 6, 1687, and March 1, 1689). In 1704 the Jews were assigned quarters on the Brühl during the fair. In 1722, in

addition to the quarrel in regard to open shops, a dispute arose in regard to peddling. The council, at the instance of the merchants and shopkeepers, wished to forbid this kind of trade also, but the elector at first permitted it. On Sept. 3, 1731, August, "the Strong," issued an order forbidding Jews to sell in shops open to the street or to peddle from house to house. This order, however, does not appear to have been strictly carried out.

#### Privileged Jews of the Eighteenth Century.

In 1713 Gerd Levi of Hamburg, on his appointment as purveyor to the mint, had received permission from the elector Frederick August to reside permanently in Leipsic, he being the first Jew to be so privileged. This privilege was extended to his son Levi Gerd. In 1754 another privileged Jew, Baruch Aaron Levi of Dessau, was allowed to settle in Leipsic (Freudenthal, "Aus der Heimat Mendelssohns," pp. 122, 130). During the Seven Years' war several Jewish traders successfully attempted to settle permanently in Leipsic. Although the city council, the estates, the mercantile class, and especially the goldsmiths' gild, opposed the settlement of Jews, and strove to have all non-privileged Jews excluded, and although the council refused all petitions from Jews praying to be allowed to settle in the city, nevertheless from the end of the Seven Years' war on, some Jews remained settled in Leipsic beyond the limits of fair-time, probably by permission of the elector in return for services rendered or to be rendered. Thus, on Aug. 15, 1766, there were thirteen such settlers; on Sept. 9, twelve; and on Oct. 30, eleven. After 1788 Jewish visitors to the fair continued to settle permanently in Leipsic, and the council tried in vain to secure from the elector an order for their banishment. They lived in the inner city and in the suburbs and had their places of business wherever they pleased. But as late as 1835 the Jews living in Leipsic, sixty-six in number, were still precluded from engaging in any incorporated trade and could engage only in petty commerce.

Decisions of the two chambers of the Saxon Diet first brought about a change in favor of the Leipsic Jews. A law of May 18, 1837, permitted

them to form themselves into a religious community, and as such to have a common house of prayer. A second law, of Aug. 16, 1838, defined the civil position of the Jews. Civil rights were granted to those who were already residents, with the exception, however, of all municipal and political rights. Jews who were not yet residents had to obtain permission from the ministry of the interior before settling. The first foreign Jew to obtain the privilege of citizenship (Jan. 7, 1839) was the engraver Solomon Veith of Dresden.

#### Prayer-Rooms at the Fair.

The Jews present in Leipsic at the fair had their rooms for prayer ("Judenschulen"), varying in number according to the attendance. Generally each one was erected by the members of a certain community and named after the place from which the majority of them came. Thus in 1717, besides the Berlin "Judenschule," there were those of Dessau, Halberstadt, Hamburg, and Prague. In the nineteenth century those of Breslau, Brody, Jassy, and Tiktin (Tikotzin) were added for the visitors at the fair. Sometimes, however, as at the New-Year's fair on Jan. 7, 1704, the Jews were prevented from holding divine service, "absolutely and with all seriousness, either in secret or openly in the city or its suburbs."

#### Community Organized.

The position of "rabbi for the fair" until the beginning of the nineteenth century was usually filled by the rabbi or dayyan of the neighboring community of Dessau. Until 1815, also, the bodies of Jews who died in Leipsic were taken to Dessau for burial (only exceptionally to Halle). In that year the first Jewish cemetery was laid out in Leipsic. During the Michaelmas fair in 1837 Zacharias Frankel, "as chief rabbi of the Jewish communities in Dresden and Leipsic," issued a printed appeal to all Israelites in Germany to assist in building a synagogue in Leipsic. The appeal proved ineffective. Ten years passed before the Jewish community of Leipsic was organized, on the basis of a statute which was approved by the government and which was revised in 1884. On Sept. 8, 1847, Adolf [Jellinek](#) was installed as preacher and

religious teacher. Preaching in German was introduced in Leipsic at a comparatively early date; first in the so-called Dessau synagogue, then in the German Jewish temple Bet Ya'aqob. As early as 1818 Joseph Wolf, preacher in Dessau, preached in Leipsic during fair-time; L. Zunz preached there in 1820; I. N. Mannheimer in 1821; Immanuel Wolf in 1822; and I. L. Auerbach was preacher until 1845. Preaching in German was introduced into Leipsic by the members of the Namburg congregation in 1820; and it was due to the popularity of the German sermons delivered by famous preachers to the throngs which gathered in Leipsic from various parts that the practise was introduced also into Berlin, Königsberg, Vienna, Magdeburg, Dresden, and many other communities (Kayserling, "Bibliothek Jüdischer Kanzelredner," i. 4 *et seq.*). Jellinek preached at first (1845) in the Berlin private synagogue for visitors to the fair in Leipsic. In 1849 this synagogue passed into the hands of the community. On Sept. 10, 1855, a new synagogue was dedicated; and in 1864 a new cemetery was opened.

Jellinek, who was called to Vienna at the close of 1857, was succeeded by Abraham Meyer Goldschmidt (1858-89; from 1887 assisted by Abraham Eckstein). Since 1888 Nathan Porges has been officiating as rabbi and preacher in Leipsic. Simon Hurwitz (died at an advanced age on March 6, 1900), author of commentaries on the "Tanya" (Warsaw, 1879) and (in Hebrew) on the Maḥzor Vitry (Berlin, 1884-93), from about the year 1875 had charge of matters pertaining to the ritual slaughter of animals. From May 29 to July 2, 1869, the sessions of the first Jewish synod and of the first German Jewish "Gemeindetag" were held in Leipsic. The "Gemeindetag" developed into the "Gemeindebund" in 1877, which, finding its existence threatened by an order of the Saxon ministry of the interior, of Dec. 16, 1881, changed its seat from Leipsic to Berlin. In 1901 the Talmud Torah, with Dr. Ephraim Carlsbach as director, was founded; and in the following year another private Orthodox society, the Addi Jeschurun, was established with Dr. A. N. Nabel at its head.

The community of Leipsic, of which, according to civil law, every Jew living in the prefecture of Leipsic is a member, and which is in a state

of continual growth, numbered at the last census (1900) 6,314 souls, a little more than half of the total number of Jews in the kingdom of Saxony (12,419). The capital of all the benevolent institutions within the Jewish community amounts to about 1,000,000 marks, of which 700,000 marks is controlled by the directorial board of the community.

—Typography:

The first book printed with Hebrew type at Leipsic was a Latin work, the "Elementale Hebraicum," of Novenianus, a pupil of Pellicanus and lecturer in Hebrew; it appeared in 1520. The first Hebrew work printed there, however, was an edition of the Psalms published by Melchior Lotther in 1533, and prepared for the press by Anthonius Margarita, who had come to the city two years before as lecturer in Hebrew.

There has never been a Jewish printing-press in Leipsic, but in the last quarter of the seventeenth century several Hebrew books were published there through the efforts of F. A. Christiani, a convert. The edition of the commentary of Abravanel on the later prophets which appeared in 1685 is especially noticeable for its beautiful print. The numerous Hebrew works published in Leipsic since the middle of the nineteenth century have all been printed by non-Jewish firms.