Salo Baron

THE PAST AND FUTURE OF JEWISH STUDIES IN AMERICA

Edited by Rebecca Kobrin

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Chapter Four

AN ECONOMIC HISTORIAN READS SALO W. BARON

FRANCESCA TRIVELLATO

During the winter of 1926, shortly after he had been hired at the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City, Salo W. Baron taught a class on the economic history of the Jews in the Middle Ages, among a few other courses he offered that term.[1] Half a century later, twelve years after his retirement from Columbia University in 1963, he contributed several sections to a slim textbook titled *Economic History of the Jews*, which to this day stands virtually alone in the genre.[2] These two moments bracket Baron's consistent, if muddled, engagement with a subject that has long been framed by hoary stereotypes about Jewish economic prowess and that, for historical and historiographical reasons, most economic historians have relegated to the margins.

Baron's writings on the economic history of Jews oscillate between, on the one hand, an emphasis on the effects of oppression and the glorification of Jews' mercantile skills (during premodern times) as well as their excellence at capitalistic entrepreneurship (after the Industrial Revolution) on the other. Overall, Baron's work represents an internalist approach to the study of the economic history of the Jewish people that shies away from carrying out systematic comparisons, both across Jewish groups and with other groups living in the same time and region, even as it commends the value of such comparisons.[3]

For an economic historian like me, with a keen interest in the roles of Jews and Christian images of Jews in the development of commercial society in premodern Europe, reading Baron today produces a sense of dissonance. This dissonance stems from the fact that, generationally, Baron belonged to a cohort of scholars who revolutionized the economic history of premodern Europe and succeeded in moving it to the center of the academic discipline. They were so successful that historians of the Renaissance or the French Revolution had to grapple with economic arguments in their fields as a matter of course to an extent that they do not today. Steeped as he was in a different scholarly tradition, Baron, however, remained insulated from these currents. As a result, his examination of Jews' economic roles was not always the most up to date.

Interestingly, among the figures who shepherded the renewal of economic history in Europe during the interwar period, several were Jewish—almost all more secular than Baron, though also, if only because of the tragic events of the mid-twentieth century, committed to bringing Jewish topics to the mainstream of the profession. Born in 1895, Baron led a particularly long life, passing away in 1989 at the age of ninety-four. But he was only nine years younger than Marc Bloch (1886–1944), the cofounder of the French journal *Annales* with Lucien Febvre; seventeen years younger than Gino Luzzatto (1878–1964), a notable Italian Jewish socialist, antifascist, and towering figure in economic and medieval history; and four years older than Michael Postan (1899–1981), who was born in Bessarabia and fled to the United Kingdom after the October Revolution, where he became professor of economic history at the University of Cambridge and where, alongside his wife, the older and more established scholar Eileen Power, he devoted his energy to editing *The Economic History Review* and the volumes on the Middle Ages of *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*.

Although these authors and their colleagues wrestled with Werner Sombart's major work, *Der moderne Kapitalismus* (Modern Capitalism), of which no full translation in English exists to this day, they dismissed his 1911 *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (The Jews and Economic Life)—an account of Sephardi Jews' domination of the sixteenth-century European commercial expansion that stressed their ostensible financial dexterity—the evidentiary and analytical standards of which did not meet those of the profession.[4] By contrast, Baron continued to take *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* seriously. As I show, these different points of departure

account for the dissonance between the treatment of the economic history of Jews, especially in the premodern period, at the hands of Baron and his contemporaries outside of the field of Jewish history beginning in the 1920s.

ECONOMIC THEMES IN THE WORK OF SALO W. BARON

As many have observed, Baron was still a very young man when, in 1928, he wrote his most widely read and consequential piece, "Ghetto and Emancipation." In the ghetto, he claimed, "the Jews might live in comparative peace, interrupted less by pogroms than were peasants by wars, engaged in finance and trade at least as profitable as most urban occupations, free to worship, and subject to the Inquisition only in extreme situations."[5]

As part of his deeply revisionist view of the medieval and early modern periods, he also celebrated the economic conditions in the ghetto: "Despite all the restrictions placed on his activities, it is no exaggeration to say that the average Jewish income much surpassed the average Christian income in pre-Revolutionary times." As proof of this uncorroborated statement, Baron asked rhetorically, "is it not remarkable that the most typical ghetto in the world, the Frankfort *Judengasse*, produced in the pre-Emancipation period the greatest banking house of history?"[6] Even his justly admiring biographer Robert Liberles calls this passage "flippant."[7]

Baron's indictment of interwar capitalism in the same essay struck a more realistic chord than his idealized view of the pre-emancipation ghetto. He described the capitalism of his own days as "medievalism on a higher plane." "Liberal *laissez faire*"—he continued—"is being more and more supplanted by a system of great trusts, protectionism, Fascism, Sovietism. Growing dissatisfaction with democracy and parliamentarianism has brought about a movement back to a modified medievalism." From Baron's perspective, there were a few positive signs amid these frightening trends. "That Reform and Zionism have both begun, though timidly and slowly, to reconsider the Jewish Middle Ages is encouraging. . . . With other national minorities the Jews claimed and are claiming, not without success, the equilibrium between their full rights as citizens and the special minority rights they think necessary to protect their living national organism from destruction and absorption by the majority, a process that has often proved to be harmful both for the absorber and the absorbed."[8]

Baron regarded unfettered capitalism and liberalism as sworn enemies of organized Jewish life—a theme to which he would return with vengeance in a later piece.

This early essay foreshadows a twin tendency in all of Baron's subsequent approaches to the topic: an optimistic view of Jews' economic positions in the premodern period and a politicized treatment of twentieth-century political economies and ideologies.

Whereas both the first (1937) and expanded (1952–80) editions of *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* are sprinkled with sections on Jews' economic activities, only in the second volume of the first edition is the theme discussed in a sustained fashion.[9] There, Baron describes Jews' rapid alienation from agriculture with the rise of feudalism in Europe. Stressing persecution and vexing taxation as factors leading Jews into the monied economy, he also consistently singles out the economic sphere as one in which the most affluent among Jews, whether as tax collectors or merchants, carved out a space for themselves within the oppressive Christian societies in which they lived. Tackling head-on Sombart's theory of Jews' pivotal role in the development of modern capitalism, he refutes Sombart's notion that the most advanced financial instruments had antecedents in rabbinic law and, more generally, that "the Jews were the fathers of modern capitalism" during the medieval commercial revolution.[10] He nevertheless makes an exception for "the Spanish-Portuguese refugees, Jewish and Marranos"—that is, the protagonists of Sombart's *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*—who "throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries settled in all western lands." However, for Baron, "the most spectacular rise of the Jews under capitalism came in the first half of the nineteenth century," when "under the leadership of the Rothschild family of Frankfurt, London, Paris, Vienna, and, temporarily, Naples, the Jewish bankers and industrial entrepreneurs secured a position unrivaled in Jewish history."[11]

Moreover, when he moves from socioeconomic analysis to philosophical considerations of Jews' involvement in the economy, Baron finds common cause with Sombart. He agrees that Jews' "peculiar ethnic and religious experiences . . . gave them further advantages. Their whole history had molded mind and outlook, conscious and unconscious attitudes, in a manner suitable to modern capitalism." Their historical detachment from agriculture and identification with the bourgeois spirit of urban life had produced "the artificiality of all Jewish existence, the consequent prevalence

of speculative thinking, as against peasant concreteness."[12] Baron is therefore ready to conclude that "capitalism, in essence 'artificial,' based upon an exchange of abstract values, represented the most abstract and irrational of values, viz., money, found the Jews ready to carry its implications to the logical extreme."[13]

It is perplexing that in the mid-1930s, as conspiracy theories regarding Jews' alleged rootless cosmopolitanism and dominance of international finance were growing ever more menacing, Baron did not perceive the potential problem that designating Jews as the epitomes of abstraction could engender. In a seminal text of 1946, Jean-Paul Sartre would argue that in the anti-Semitic trope about Jews' love for money, "money often assumes the abstract form of shares of stock, checks, bank deposits."[14] For traditional anti-Semites, Sartre added, these are not legitimate forms of property, in the way in which objects, land, and other tangible possessions are, and contribute to the subversion of social order.

In 1942, in the middle of World War II, Baron published two very different pieces addressing the economic status of Jews in medieval Europe and in the contemporary United States, respectively. In "The Jewish Factor in Medieval Civilization," he aimed to persuade European medievalists to be more receptive of all aspects of Jewish history, including its economic ones. He relied on a then recent volume by Walter Fischel on Jews in Medieval Islam to insist that during the High Middle Ages, Jews arriving in Europe from the Middle East introduced new methods of trade and possibly new types of commercial paper instruments, playing "a role far in excess of their numbers."[15] Mindful that "much material, particularly outside of Germany, still awaits thoroughgoing investigation," Baron nonetheless reaffirmed that "in the local trade of the growing centers north of the Alps and Pyrenees the Jews *must have* performed certain *pioneering* services" in the distribution of both luxury and cheap goods.[16] As we will see, by 1942, leading economic historians of the European Middle Ages had in fact already put most of these claims behind them. Unfamiliar with that literature, Baron listed Jewish advancements in various economic areas, hiding behind the requisite cautionary call for the need to conduct additional research not only on Jewish moneylending but also on Jews' involvement in the slave/captive trade.

In the second of his 1942 pieces, Baron compared the advantages of socialist and capitalist systems for the Jewish people, but the outcome of his inquiry was predetermined. He asked, "Are not the Jews bound to lose

out with every weakening of the capitalist system of production, even if such weakening be not necessarily combined with the disappearance of civil liberties, civic equality and, generally, of political democracy?"[17] The question was little more than rhetorical. Having described Sombart's *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* as a "brilliant, though undisciplined, treatise," he recalled that authors such as Hermann Wätjen and Herbert Bloom had "reduced [it] to its proper proportions"—as if empirical correction was all Sombart's misguided framework of analysis required.[18] His homage to Sombart was even more unnecessary since Baron was unequivocal in noting, correctly, that there was no "conclusive evidence for the oft-asserted great influence of post-biblical Judaism on the emergence of the 'capitalist spirit' and the modern commercial techniques."[19] In fact, as he conceded, Baron's real concern was with "the influence of modern capitalism on the Jew and his destiny,"[20] or the opposite of Sombart's question about Jews' influence on modern capitalism, and the piece soon turned into a lament for the consequences of materialism and individualism for Jewish life. Baron never doubted the superiority of capitalism over socialism for the Jews as individuals, but he conceived assimilation and secularism as threats to Jews as a collective. Needless to say, these were not the issues that anguished economic historians outside of the field of Jewish history, no matter how directly touched they were by (or sensitive to) the dramatic events that were unfolding before their eyes.

In 1945, asked to contribute to a volume in honor of the leading Talmudist and giant figure in American conservative Judaism Louis Ginzberg, Baron wrote about the nineteenth-century German rabbi Levi Herzfeld (1810–84), who, together with Ludwig Philippson (1811–89), had been among the early advocates of reform within Judaism and the author of a history of Jewish trade in antiquity. Baron called Herzfeld "the founder of the new discipline of Jewish economic history."[21] The subject and the tenor of this tribute encapsulate what I described as Baron's muddled engagement with economic history. The Columbia professor appreciates Herzfeld's view that the best response to the rising anti-Semitism that followed the economic crisis of 1873 in Germany was "a solid factual history of Jewish commerce," which could show that "it was not 'native predisposition' but historic circumstances which induced the Jewish people to engage in commerce."[22] In this respect, published in 1879, Herzfeld's study was a prescient antidote to Sombart's 1911 distorted and essentialized portrait of Jews' superior economic skills.

Baron also hailed Herzfeld for "his keen sensitivity . . . for the interrelations between Jewish and general history," which he judged to be far greater than that of all his contemporaries, Heinrich Graetz's included.[23] He was right, but this insight, no more than his praise of Herzfeld's critique of Jews' innate economic prowess, formed little more than a cameo. However laudatory, Baron's remarks did not inspire him to follow in the German rabbi's footsteps.

As late as 1961–62, in an account of modern Jewish history that he prepared for the trial of Adolf Eichmann by the Israeli court in Jerusalem, Baron called Sombart "the leading German student of the rise of modern capitalism" in the twentieth century. While acknowledging Sombart's proclivity for hyperbole and his double-edged admiration for Jews, he proceeded by citing or summarizing several of his dubious claims.[24] Baron alluded to what he called the Jewish "domination" (in quotation marks) of the liberal professions in the 1930s and emphasized the anti-Semitic backlash that it provoked.[25] He also stressed, on multiple occasions, the Jewish presence among both the upper echelons of international finance and industry and the anticapitalist socialist and trade unionist leaders, hardly concealing his lack of sympathy for the latter. Based on intuition rather than data, Baron estimated that during the interwar period, the occupational profile of the Jews and the rest of the population converged for the first time, "not so much because the Jews have changed as because the Western world has become increasingly 'Jewish' in its economic structure."[26] Yuri Slezkine's 2004 *The Jewish Century* tacitly built on this intuition.[27]

If we now turn to the two premier economic journals published in Britain and France during the time when Baron's career was taking off, the dissonance to which I alluded at the onset of this chapter—between his conception of economic history and the development of the field among historians of premodern Europe, and especially between his views of Sombart and theirs—will become clear.

THE ECONOMIC HISTORY REVIEW

The first issue of the British journal *The Economic History Review* appeared in January 1927; the two editors-in-chief were Ephraim Lipson (1888–1960), born in Sheffield to a lower-middle-class Jewish family and a specialist of the economic history of modern England, and Richard Henry Tawney

(1880–1962), the great socialist scholar of the nexus between religion and capitalism, who questioned both Weber and Sombart. A keyword search for "Jews" and "Jewish" in the journal's digital archives for the years 1927–50 yields forty-eight entries between stand-alone articles, book reviews, and short notices. Not a huge number, but—and this is my point—a series of influential contributions that come from outside the inner circle of Jewish history and could have prodded Baron to discard Sombart's perspective and consider more grounded views of Jews' roles in European economic history.

In the opening issue of the new journal, Tawney himself included a review of the French historian Henri Sée, whose *Les Origines du capitalisme moderne* he called "a masterpiece of lucidity and compression."[28] Like most scholars of his generation, Sée engaged with Sombart's major work, *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, disputing its depiction of the Middle Ages as a precapitalist epoch; he also downplayed significantly the role for Jewish merchants and financiers. The journal's second issue featured a survey of "Recent Work in German Economic History (1900–1927)," which credited two groundbreaking studies by Jewish economic historians—Georg Caro's "comprehensive book" and Moses Hoffmann's volume on Jewish financial occupations—with demonstrating that "there is a great deal of opposition to Sombart, who assigned to the Jews a place of exceptional importance in the development of capitalism."[29] Baron cited both of these German Jewish authors, Caro and Hoffmann, in passing; the attention devoted to them by the *EHR* is an indication of the respect that they commanded even outside of the field of Jewish history and, more generally, of the possibility of convergence between Jewish and economic historians.

Opening his 1933 bibliographical essay on "medieval capitalism," Postan clarified that although any serious discussion of the subject of capitalism remained indebted to Karl Marx, "it is Werner Sombart, rather than Marx, who must be regarded as the originator and sponsor of the ideas that have been agitating the students of medieval capitalism for the last thirty years."[30] Postan illustrated how, for Sombart, the Middle Ages constituted "the non-capitalist or 'pre-capitalist' epoch *par excellence*" and discussed those scholars who challenged this theory, notably Henri Pirenne, the aforementioned Sée, Lujo Brentano, Georg von Below, N. S. B. Grass, Heinrich Sieveking, as well as (in the English context) Frank Hyneman Knight and Sylvia Thrupp, not to mention a number of more specialized authors.[31] Postan concluded, appropriately, that "the combined

effect of these studies has been to destroy the ancient view of the paucity of productive credit in the Middle Ages, and to reveal the organic part which credit played in medieval trade. This revelation has removed medieval economy further still from Sombart's pre-capitalist style, but it has not solved the further problem as to whether medieval credit itself possessed anything resembling the 'capitalist structure of finance.'"[32]

The next point that Postan tackled most concerned Baron. He noted that "the problem of Jewish finance and its contribution to the rise of capitalism, made fashionable again by Sombart's study on the subject, produced a whole avalanche of literature, mostly polemical." Postan estimated that "the full and authoritative story of Jewish finance in the Middle Ages still remains to be written," again singling out the works of Caro and Hoffman as the most reliable to date and aligning himself with the critics of Sombart who contested "his view of the Jews as caretakers and purveyors of the capitalist spirits in the non-capitalist Middle Ages."[33] A year later, in 1934, Harvard economic historian Abbott Payson Usher put it simply: "some have believed that the Jews played an active and important part in the maintenance of banking throughout the early Christian period, but recent studies indicate that the development of banking among the Jews began at a relatively late date."[34]

For our purposes, these interventions are reminders that while Baron was at work on the second volume of the first edition of *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, the most reputable economic historians of Europe had settled their scores with Sombart, especially with regard to Jews' economic roles in the Middle Ages, and did not consider his views in *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* as worth the attention that Baron was lending them.[35]

THE FRENCH *ANNALES*

In 1926, Bloch and Febvre founded the *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, better known simply as *Annales*, which marked a watershed moment in European and world history writing. Abandoning the traditional emphasis on politics and diplomacy, they launched "a periodical of economic and social history" that sought to overcome academic specializations.[36]

In the early issues of *Annales*, the question of Jews' economic roles in the Middle Ages is largely treated by omission, in the sense that space is devoted to the advocates of the commercial revolution of the Middle Ages

who put Italian and Flemish merchant bankers on a pedestal, including Pirenne and Armando Sapori.[37] In 1929, distinguished Marxist historian Henri Hauser discussed the role of "pre-capitalist banking" with regard to its Florentine, Genoese, Sienese, and "Lombard" protagonists in the Middle Ages, the Fugger and Welser in the sixteenth century, and the Amsterdam *Wisselbank*, the Bank of England, and the Huguenots in the seventeenth century, with no mention of Jews.[38]

Other contributions, however, took Sombart to task explicitly for its exaggerated views of Jews' determining role in jump-starting Europe's transition to a capitalist economy. Historian André-É. Sayous passed away without having published a monograph but having refuted Sombart's thesis concerning Jews' place in the development of Western capitalism on the basis of extensive archival research in Genoa, Marseille, and Barcelona. A prolific author of articles and book chapters, Sayous was also a close collaborator of *Annales*. In 1932, Febvre praised his "critique of Sombart," whom he described as possessing the dubious talent of bringing his readers along ("*un entraîneur d'hommes*").[39] In 1937, the journal featured a piece by the still young but already authoritative medievalist Roberto Lopez, whose title alone, "Aux origines du capitalisme génois," left little doubt about its content.[40]

By the mid-1930s, in short, like *The Economic History Review*, *Annales* had also sided with those specialists in the economic history of the European Middle Ages who had put to rest Sombart's view of the Jews as the only capitalist vanguards in a feudal society. The articles it published on the development of early European capitalism were substantial, had a profound impact on current and later scholarship, and could have informed Baron on some of the subjects of his magnum opus. The general import of the French historiographical debate on the origins of modern capitalism would appear even more robust if we included monographs as well—not only the 1926 landmark study by Sée but also Hauser's companion book from a Marxist perspective.[41]

Moreover, *Annales* could not be faulted for ignoring Jewish topics altogether. In 1930, the journal reviewed the French translation of a study of the land problem in Mandatory Palestine by Abraham Granovsky, which had first been published in Hebrew and German. The reviewer was renowned sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who would die in Buchenwald in 1945. Born into a Christian family, Halbwachs grew closer to Judaism after his marriage to Yvonne Basch, daughter of Victor (a noted Dreyfusard, Zionist, and president of the *Ligue des droits de l'homme*) and herself a prominent figure in the feminist and pacifist movements. In 1927, he traveled to Egypt, Palestine, and Lebanon to gather material for a study of sociology of religions, which appeared in 1941, after the promulgation of the Vichy anti-Jewish legislation, as *La Topographie légendaire des Evangelies en Terre sainte*.[42] This research surely led to his being tapped to write the 1930 review, in which Halbwachs offered a balanced summary of the conflict between the Zionist supporters of land collectivization and private property, but in the end, he expressed skepticism toward the meager achievements that the Jewish National Fund, headed by Granovsky, who advocated collectivization, had accomplished in its first twenty-six years of existence.[43]

In 1939, under the rubric "Jewish problems," *Annales* reviewed three different but important volumes: Léon Berman's history of Jews in France from its origins to the present (here the reviewer put the accent on emancipation and the Crémieux decree of 1870); a work published by the World Jewish Congress on Jews' then current economic condition (with praise for the statistical data assembled by YIVO concerning the Polish case); and a demographic and onomastic study of the Jews of North Africa compiled by the chief rabbi of Algeria, Maurice Eisenbeth, which drew on both community and public statistics and thus offered a more accurate picture and higher population figures than those appearing in French censuses.[44] In the aftermath of the war, *Annales* reviewed a French translation of a Yiddish manual of Jewish history written by Simon Dubnov for elementary schoolchildren, a novel study of Jews in France under Napoleon, and an important volume published by the Centre of Contemporary Jewish Documentation, which detailed the anti-Semitic propaganda mobilized by the French state under the Vichy regime (1940–44).[45]

CONCLUSION

The responsibility that fell on Baron's shoulders with his appointment as the first holder of a Jewish history chair in a secular institution of higher education in the United States was enormous. Hailing from Galicia, he achieved more than any Jewish academic in North America before him. His voracious and ever-expanding erudition, however, never strayed too

far from the blueprint of his early training; even once he entered the temple of the secular university in New York City, his interest in the historiographical battles that were being waged outside of Jewish studies was rather subdued. Or at least this was the case for his attitude toward economic history and the debates that unfolded in the pages of journals such as *The Economic History Review* and *Annales*.

In 1939, then still in his mid-forties, Baron remarked, "so far neither the Marxist nor the other economic interpreters of Jewish history have succeeded in producing a general synthetic work on the entirety of Jewish experience." Although he admitted that the contributions of some economic historians of the Jewish past were "undoubtedly of great value," he found them to be "fragmentary explanations of certain phases of Jewish history."[46] Oddly, for all his dislike of the dominance of ideas over practices in the tradition of Jewish history writing—the "theocratic view of history"[47] that he spent his life rebuffing—he never considered seriously the possibility that a more in-depth examination of economic life and institutions could add to his project.

The easiest explanation for this lack of interest lies in his early education and personal penchants, but it extends to a broader ambiguity that encompasses his work. In principle Baron stated that "the historical explanations of the Jewish past must not fundamentally deviate from the general patterns of history which we accept for mankind at large or for any other particular national group." But he also maintained that a "*socio-religious* approach" was most suited to the study of Jewish history because, compared with economics, community, and other social factors, religion was "the most conspicuous place at least in the consciousness of the Jews throughout the three and a half millennia of their existence."[48]

These are difficult premises from which to pursue a comparative economic history. These considerations also lend some valence to Jacob Neusner's criticism of Baron for assuming that "a single group, with a continuous, linear history, formed also a cogent and distinct economic entity, with its own, continuous, linear, economic history." In Neusner's view, it is not possible to describe "the Jews' history as one cogent history, their economics as an economy, and their 'philosophy' or even theology as a single system everywhere sustaining a single 'Judaism,'" and only once these assumptions are dispensed with, can "the analytical work . . . begin."[49]

With greater sympathy and sensitivity, Liberles pinpoints the unresolved tension at the heart of Baron's work and personality and thus helps us to understand some of the paths not taken by this eminent scholar, including in his approach to Jewish economic history. He reiterates Baron's "conviction that Jewish history was no more unique than the history of any other social group and that it must be described and exploited using the same norms as used elsewhere in the historical profession."[50] But Liberles also notes that Baron's belief in the transhistorical interrelation between Jews and Judaism led him to assert "the legitimacy of the religious factor in history" and to join "forces with Max Weber and in a sense with Werner Sombart as well."[51] Upon assuming the Miller Chair in Jewish History, Literature, and Institutions at Columbia University, Baron apparently wished that it be located in either the religion or Semitic languages department, whereas the university president insisted it be housed in the Department of History. Baron's desire for autonomy may have accounted for his preference as much as, if not more than, a disciplinary rift. In any case, the university ultimately prevailed and Baron embraced the opportunity to be part of the Department of History.[52]

That was in 1930. Ninety years later, the same history department is home to the Salo Wittmayer Baron Professorship, and Jewish history is more and more represented across the historical profession, at least in North America. Still, the study of the economic life of past Jewish societies remains for the most part confined to a separate subfield, which does not place a great premium on comparison and maintains a certain fixation with Sombart, at least in certain academic quarters.[53] My hope is that the remarks in this chapter will soon begin to sound like ancient history, as those interested in exploring the manifold facets of Jews' interactions with the economic sphere are finding it increasingly natural to be in dialogue with a broader range of scholarly approaches than Baron did.

NOTES

1. Robert Liberles, *Salo Wittmayer Baron: Architect of Jewish History* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 33.
2. Salo W. Baron, Arcadius Kahn, et al., *Economic History of the Jews*, ed. Nachum Gross (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975). The same year another brief synthesis appeared: Marcus Arkin, *Aspects of Jewish Economic History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975). The pioneering work by Russian-born University

of Chicago economist Arcadius Kahn on Eastern European Jewish immigrants to the United States was collected posthumously as Kahn, *Essays in Jewish Social and Economic History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). Only a decade ago were the writings of Nobel laureate Simon Kuznets on Jewish economic history first assembled in two volumes: *Jewish Economies: Development and Migration in America and Beyond*, ed. Stephanie Lo and E. Glen Weyl (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2011–12).

3. A partial exception is the paper that Baron read to the Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association in December 1936, published as Salo W. Baron, "The Jewish Question in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Modern History* 10, no. 1 (1938): 51–65. It contains a survey of economic and demographic data about the Jewish population in Europe and Russia, including some comparisons with analogous trends among local Christian inhabitants, and is framed for a nonspecialized audience.
4. Werner Sombart, *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1902); Sombart, *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, 3 vols., 2nd ed. (Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1916–28). A partial English translation appeared as Sombart, *Economic Life in the Modern Age*, ed. Nico Stehr and Reiner Grundmann (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2001). See also Werner Sombart, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1911); Sombart, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*, trans. M. Epstein (London: T. F. Unwin, 1913). Luzzatto did more than others to bring Jewish and general economic history into dialogue with each other. In spite of his reservations about the book's overall thesis, he translated an abridged edition of *Der modern Kapitalismus* into Italian: Sombart, *Il capitalismo moderno: Esposizione storico-sistematica della vita economica di tutta l'Europa dai suoi inizi fino all'età contemporanea*, trans. Gino Luzzatto (Florence, 1925); Luzzatto, *"L'origine e gli albori del capitalismo: A proposito della seconda edizione del 'Capitalismo moderno' di* Werner Sombart," *Nuova rivista storica* 6 (1922): 39–66, reprinted in Luzzatto, *Dai servi della gleba agli albori del capitalismo: Saggi di storia economica* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1966), 485–527. A few years prior, however, Luzzatto had already made plain his criticisms of Sombart's *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*: Gino Luzzatto, "Rassegna: Pubblicazioni di storia economica-sociale," *Nuova rivista storica* 3 (1919): 632–46.
5. Salo Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation: Shall We Revise the Traditional View?" *Menorah Journal* 14, no. 6 (1928): 515–26, at 523–24.
6. Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," 523.
7. Liberles, *Salo Wittmayer Baron*, 45.
8. Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," 526.
9. Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937); Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd ed., 17 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957–80).
10. Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews* (1937), 2:177.
11. Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews* (1937), 2:183.
12. Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews* (1937), 2:176.
13. Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews* (1937), 2:177.
14. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York: Schocken, 1995, originally published 1946), 126.

15. Salo W. Baron, "The Jewish Factor in Medieval Civilization," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 12 (1942): 1–48, at 18 and 18n29, citing Walter J. Fischel, *Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Mediaeval Islam* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1937) as well as Baron, "The Economic Views of Maimonides," in *Essays on Maimonides: An Octocentennial*, ed. Salo Wittmayer Baron (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 127–264.
16. Baron, "The Jewish Factor in Medieval Civilization," 19 (emphasis added) and 19n30.
17. Salo W. Baron, "Modern Capitalism and Jewish Fate," *Menorah Journal* 30, no. 2 (1942): 116–38, reprinted in *History and Jewish Historians: Essays and Addresses by Salo W. Baron*, ed. Arthur Hertzberg and Leon A. Feldman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1964), 43–64, at 47.
18. Baron, "Modern Capitalism and Jewish Fate," 47. Here Baron lifts his phrasing concerning Sombart's treatment of Jews and capitalism verbatim from his preface to Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (1937), 1:v. The references are to Hermann Wätjen, *Das Judentum und die Anfänge der modernen Kolonisation: Kritische Bemerkungen zu Werner Sombarts "Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben"* (Berlin: W. Kohlammer, 1914); Wätjen, *Das holländische Kolonialreich in Brasilien: Ein Kapitel aus der Kolonialgeschichte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1921); and Herbert I. Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Williamsport, PA: Bayard, 1937). Two years later, Baron mentioned Wilhelm Roscher, Max Weber, and Lujo Brentano among Sombart's "disciples as well as opponents" and singled out Levi Herzfeld for his efforts to collect statistics about Jews' economic activities: Baron, "Emphases in Jewish History," *Jewish Social Studies* 1, no. 1 (1939): 15–38, at 23.
19. Baron, "Modern Capitalism and Jewish Fate," 48.
20. Baron, "Modern Capitalism and Jewish Fate," 48.
21. Salo Baron, "Levi Herzfeld: The First Jewish Economic Historian," in *Louis Ginzberg: Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday; English Section* (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1945), 74–104, reprinted in Baron, *History and Jewish Historians*, 322–43, at 325. Rabbi Levi Herzfeld, *Handelsgeschichte der Juden des Alterthums* (Braunschweig, Germany: J. H. Meyer, 1879).
22. Baron, "Levi Herzfeld," 327, 334.
23. Baron, "Levi Herzfeld," 334.
24. Salo W. Baron, "European Jewry Before and After Hitler," *American Jewish Year Book* 62 (1962): 3–53, at 9.
25. Baron, "European Jewry Before and After Hitler," 10.
26. Baron, "European Jewry Before and After Hitler," 12.
27. Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), includes several ambivalent references to Sombart. Detailed studies of Jewish occupational structures tell a more complicated story. For example, on interwar Hungary, see Mária M. Kovács, "Interwar Antisemitism in the Professions: The Case of the Engineers," in *Jews in the Hungarian Economy 1760–1945: Studies Dedicated to Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger on his Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Michael K. Silber (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992), 237–44.
28. R. H. Tawney's review of Henri Sée, *Les Origines du capitalisme moderne (Esquisse historique)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1926), in *The Economic History Review*

(hereafter *EHR*) 1, no. 1 (1927): 156–59, at 157. See also Henri Sée, *Modern Capitalism: Its Origin and Evolution*, trans. Homer B. Vanderblue and Georges F. Doriot (New York: Adelphi, 1928).

29. Georg Brodnitz, "Recent Work in German Economic History (1900–1927)," *EHR* 1, no. 2 (1927): 322–54, at 335. Also see Georg Caro, *Sozial- und wirtschaftsgeschichte der Juden im Mittelalter und der Neuzeit*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Gustav Fock, 1908–20); Moses Hoffmann, *Der Geldhandel der deutschen Juden während des Mittelalters bis zum Jahre 1350* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1910).
30. Michael Postan, "Studies in Bibliography: I. Medieval Capitalism," *EHR* 4, no. 2 (1933): 212–27, at 212.
31. Postan, "Studies in Bibliography," 212.
32. Postan, "Studies in Bibliography," 216.
33. Postan, "Studies in Bibliography," 216.
34. Abbott Payson Usher, "The Origins of Banking: The Primitive Bank of Deposit, 1200–1600," *EHR* 4, no. 4 (1934): 399–428, at 402.
35. This is not to say that economic historians dispensed with other aspects of Sombart's work. After the publication of a critical review of *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, Sombart was offered ample space for a reply by the *EHR* editors. See Werner Sombart, "Theory and Economic History," *EHR* 2, no. 1 (1929): 1–19.
36. [Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre], "À nos lecteurs," *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* (hereafter *AHES*) 1, no. 1 (1929): 1–2. Having changed its name to *Annales d'histoire sociale* from 1939 to 1941 in order to escape censorship, the publication was registered as *Mélanges d'histoire sociale* in 1943–44, but reverted to its original title in 1945. Note that Bloch opposed these name changes before being killed by the Nazis and Febvre behaved very insensitively toward his Jewish colleague; see Philippe Burrin, *France Under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: New Press, 1996), 317–23. The epistolary exchanges between Febvre and Bloch on this matter do not appear among the letters between the two that Febvre published in a volume devoted to the memory of the deceased cofounder in 1945: "Marc Bloch: Témoignages sur la période 1939–1940; Extraits d'une correspondence intime," *Annales d'histoire sociale* 8, no. 1 (1945): 15–32. In 1946, the journal, now directed by Fernand Braudel, acquired the name by which it is best known, *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, which it kept until 1994, when it became *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*. The way in which the journal is digitized for the period before 1939 does not allow for keyword searches, so I based the survey discussed in the body of the text on my reading of the tables of contents.
37. For example, Henri Pirenne, "L'instruction des marchands au moyen âge," *AHES* 1, no. 1 (1929): 12–28. The book review section also devoted numerous pages to the urban history of the Middle Ages, with the assessment of studies by Pirenne, Sapori, Pierre Lavedan, and others.
38. Henri Hauser, "Réflexions sur l'histoire des banques à l'époque moderne (de la fin du XVe à la fin du XVIIIe siècle)," *AHES* 1, no. 3 (1929): 335–51. In a short review of a journal article by J. G. van Dillen on the *Wisselbank* of Amsterdam (founded in 1609), Febvre praised the author for his sobriety and statistical data, as well as his comparisons with the public banks of Venice, Genoa, Lyon, and Antwerp. Lucien Febvre, "*La banque d'Amsterdam*," *AHES* 1, no. 3 (1929): 444–45. Van Dillen would go on to write extensively about Jews' contributions to Amsterdam's stock market, curbing excessive estimates of their supposed predominance. For example, see van Dillen, "De economische positie en betekenis der Joden in de Republiek en in de Nederlandse koloniale wereld," in *Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland*, ed. Hendrik Brugmans and A. Frank (Amsterdam: van Holkema and Warendorf, 1940), 561–616.

39. Lucien Febvre, "Une critique utile: Les origines du capitalisme moderne à Gênes et W. Sombart," *AHES* 4, no. 15 (1932): 318–19. The review referred to Sayous, "*Der moderne Kapitalismus* de W. Sombart et Gênes aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles," *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale* 18, no. 4 (1930): 427–44; and "Les Juifs," *Revue économique internationale* 24, no. 3 (1932): 491–535. See also Sayous, "Dans l'Italie à l'intérieur des terres: Sienne de 1221 à 1229," *AHES* 3, no. 10 (1931): 189–206. A full bibliography can be found in André-E. Sayous, *Structure et évolution du capitalisme européen, XVIe–XVIIe siècles*, ed. Mark Steele (London: Variorum Reprints, 1989), xiii–xxiv.
40. Roberto Lopez, "*Aux origines du capitalisme génois*," *AHES* 9, n. 47 (1937): 429–54, which includes Sayous among its references (453). A year later, in 1938, Lopez fled Italy upon the proclamation of the so-called Racial Laws.
41. Sée, *Les Origines du capitalisme moderne*; and Henri Hauser, *Les Débuts du capitalisme* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1927).
42. Annette Becker, *Maurice Halbwachs: Un intellectuel entre guerre mondiales 1914–1945* (Paris: Angès Viénot, 2003), 271–90.
43. Maurice Halbwachs, "Proprieté individuelle ou proprieté collective: Le problème palestinien," *AHES* 2, no. 6 (1930): 270–71; and review of Abraham Granovsky, *Les problèms de la terre en Palestine* (Paris: Rieder, 1928). Born in the Russian Empire in 1924, Granovsky (later Granot in Hebrew) immigrated to Jerusalem in 1922 and became one of the signatories of the Israeli declaration of independence in 1948 and a member of the Knesset.
44. Léon Berman, *Histoire des Juifs de France des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Lipschutz [1937]); *La Situation économique des Juifs dans le monde* (Paris: Congrès juif mondial, Département économique, 1938); Maurice Eisenbeth, *Les Juifs de l'Afrique du Nord: Démographie & onomastique* (Alger: Imprimerie du lycée, 1936). Paul Leuilliot reviewed the first two and René Lespès the latter in *Annales d'histoire sociale* 1, no. 1 (1939): 108–11.
45. Simon Dubnov, *Précis d'histoire juive, des origines à 1934*, trans. Isaac Pougatch (Paris: Pyoum, 1946); Robert Anchel, *Napoléon et les Juifs* (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1928); Jacques Polonski, *La Presse, la propagande et l'opinion publique sous l'occupation* (Paris: Éditions du Centre de documentation juive contemporaine, 1946). Paul Leuilliot reviewed the first two titles and Maurice Baumont gave an account of the latter: "Judaisme," *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 2, no. 4 (1947): 497–99.
46. Baron, "Emphases in Jewish History," 23. He also lamented the paucity of studies of Jewish economic thought. I have excised this topic from my chapter for reasons of space.
47. Baron, "Emphases in Jewish History," 26.
48. Baron, "Emphases in Jewish History," 27–28, 35 (emphasis in the original).

49. Jacob Neusner, "Jews in Economies and the Economics of Judaism: The Case of Salo W. Baron," appendix to his *Why Does Judaism Have an Economics? The Inaugural Saul Reinfeld Lecture in Judaic Studies at Connecticut College, April 13, 1988* (New London, CT: Connecticut College, 1988), 21–28, at 26 and 28.
50. Liberles, *Salo Wittmayer Baron*, 124.
51. Liberles, *Salo Wittmayer Baron*, 142.
52. Liberles, *Salo Wittmayer Baron*, 88–93.
53. A book like Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein, *The Chosen Few: How Education Shaped Jewish History, 70–1492* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), for example, won the 2012 National Jewish Book Award. It not only takes Sombart as one of its legitimate sources, but it also lends itself to the kind of criticism that Neusner leveled against Baron (see note 49).