

I wish to extend heartfelt thanks to some of the many people who have assisted me in the making of this book. David Patterson opened up for me the treasure-house that is Haskalah literature and his encyclopedic knowledge of nineteenth-century Hebrew literature provided me with many of the insights that have gone into the completion of this work. Not only that, but he gave me open access to his extraordinarily rich and detailed filing-cabinets, whose cards provide an extensive thematic guide with meticulous bibliographic references to this literature.

While at Oxford, at the earliest stages of my studies of Modern Jewish history, I had the extraordinary good fortune of my path's crossing with Steven Zipperstein. It was in my discussions and tutorials with Steve that the present project was conceived as a D. Phil. thesis; it was he who actually first suggested the topic to me as one worthy of exploration. He has watched over this work—and its author—over the years diligently, with tact, loyalty and affection. I shall never forget his tireless support, intellectual engagement, the kindness: without Steven Zipperstein, this book would never have been realized.

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The unique atmosphere of the YIVO Institute, where I worked as an assistant-archivist for some years, enriched my understanding of this culture immeasurably. I was privileged to be there at a time when

ica. We discussed, of course, Jewish autobiography; and the intellectual excitement of that encounter left me with a spring in my step. Some years later, through the mediation of Sam Norich, who was Executive Director of the YIVO Institute—to whom I also express my gratitude for all the goodness he showed me—we taught a course together on Jewish autobiography to an exceptional group of students. The dialogic encounter of each of our weekly sessions provided me with fresh insights into the topic. Ruth Wisse, whom I also met through YIVO, and was later privileged to work with as a colleague, believed in this work and encouraged me all along.

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This book is dedicated to my daughter, Davina—already a voracious reader at the age of eleven. I hope that this book will only deepen her understanding of the rich culture to which she is heir.

Needless to say, all of the flaws and errors in this book are solely attributable to the author.

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