PREFACE

For centuries Amsterdam has been a well known cultural centre to which the Jewish community has contributed a highly distinctive and noteworthy element.

In a violent and barbarous manner the unscrupulous Nazis in World War II destroyed this Jewish element. Very little escaped their desecrating hands.

It is, therefore, of even greater importance to preserve and make an inventory of the surviving relics.

There are two centres in Amsterdam where the written and printed works of the Jewish community have been preserved: the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana (University Library) and Ets Haim/Livraria Montezinos of the Sephardic Community.

In the case of printed works, even in cases of extreme rarity, the possibility exists that a second copy might be discovered, but in the case of manuscripts we enter the field of the unique specimen.

This rarity makes it necessary that this field should be opened up by a catalogue.

The catalogue which we here present has the special advantage that material on the same subject is brought together from both the collections mentioned above. This treatment has the important effect of accentuating again the complementary nature of the two collections.

In conclusion I wish to mention the names of those who have, with devotion and industry, had the greatest share in bringing it into being, Mrs. R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, M.A., Mrs. R. Plesser-Ginsburg, at present in Israel, and L. Fuks, Ph.D., who co-ordinated and supervised the whole.

Prof. Dr. S. van der Woude
Director of the University Library of Amsterdam.