II. THE FATHER OF HEBREW BIBLIOGRAPHY
In 1897, Moritz Steinschneider published in Leipzig his *Vorlesungen über die Kunde hebräischer Handschriften* (Lectures on the Discipline of Hebrew Manuscripts).\(^1\) Admittedly the least influential of his works, the *Vorlesungen* are nonetheless fundamental for our understanding of Steinschneider’s oeuvre and of his comprehensive approach to Hebrew manuscripts, their history and description.\(^2\) It is in this perspective, rather than as a historian of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* or a biographer of Steinschneider’s, that I have turned to the study of the *Vorlesungen*. This paper describes my appreciation of Steinschneider’s methodological and theoretical premises in his study of Hebrew manuscripts.

The *Vorlesungen* are the published lectures that Steinschneider delivered at the Veitel-Heine-Ephraim’sche Lehranstalt from 1859 until his death. The date of the beginning of his lectureship at the Veitel-Heine-Ephraim’sche Lehranstalt is crucial in Steinschneider’s life: at the age of 43 he finally succeeded in obtaining his first permanent, regular appointment, and he was to teach there for the next 48 years. The *Vorlesungen*, written after years of lecturing at the Institute, are the fruit of decades of cataloguing and research on Hebrew manuscripts.\(^3\) By 1897, Steinschneider had already published his main catalogues of Hebrew manuscripts and printed books as well as the epoch-making *Die Hebraischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher*,


\(^2\) Through the Hebrew translation by Israel Hadad, edited with notes by A. M. Haberman (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1965), the *Vorlesungen* also played a role in the development of the modern discipline of Hebrew palaeography and codicology, as practised in Paris and Jerusalem.

\(^3\) M. Steinschneider, *CB* (1852–60); *Cat. Leiden* (1858); *Cat. Munich* (1st ed. 1875, 2nd ed. 1895); *Cat. Hamburg* (1878) and finally *Cat. Berlin* (1st vol. 1878, 2nd vol. 1897, the same year as the *Vorlesungen*). The monumental *HÜ* was published in Berlin, in 1893.