Anyone doing research that requires the consultation of Hebrew manuscripts, especially in the fields of philosophy and science, will sooner or later come across references to the works of Moritz Steinschneider. They may be references to the many bibliographies he composed; among them bibliographies of translations of medieval works into Hebrew, of mathematical treatises by Jews, of books written in Judeo-Arabic, of Yiddish literature, and we have still not exhausted the list. They may be references to his monumental catalogue of the printed books in the Bodleian Library, a work that extends to spaces beyond the Bodleian’s bookshelves as it includes many printed works that are found only in depositories elsewhere or are no longer extant. And, of course, they may refer to one of the many catalogues of Hebrew manuscripts that Steinschneider compiled. No other author compiled as many catalogues of Hebrew manuscript collections in institutional libraries as Steinschneider did; these include the collections of the Leiden (1858), Munich (1875, 1895), Hamburg (1878), and Berlin (1878–1897) libraries. Steinschneider also made plans to catalogue the manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, having already examined many of them during his summer sojourns in the library while preparing his catalogue of the printed books there, but as he was ill when the decision to print the catalogue was made, Adolph Neubauer, his rival and nemesis, was assigned the task. True, while the number of catalogues he compiled, four, is greater than the number of catalogues his nearest competitor, Neubauer, prepared, three, the actual number of manuscripts described in all these catalogues is only around 1050. This figure is less than the number of manuscripts in each of the

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1 *Cat. Leiden.*
3 *Cat. Hamburg.*
catalogues of the Bodleian,\(^5\) Parma,\(^6\) Paris\(^7\) and London\(^8\) libraries, but it would be misleading to appraise each catalogue solely on the basis of the number of manuscripts described without paying attention to the accuracy of the descriptions and their evident erudition. One method to appraise catalogues might be to rate them on a scale, placing those that need the most revision at the top. In this rating, catalogues prepared in the 18th and 19th centuries for the collections in Florence, Vatican, Parma, Turin and Paris—to name a few—would be near the top of the scale, whereas Steinschneider’s catalogues would be close to the bottom. In fact, new catalogues or revisions and corrections of the Oxford, Parma, Vatican and Paris collections have been published recently or are in various stages of compilation. The only justification for preparing revised editions of Steinschneider’s catalogues would be to translate them into English or Hebrew so that modern scholars and laypeople who do not read Latin or German would be able to consult them, and to update the bibliography and add some identifications of texts, mainly kabbalah and rabbinics, on the basis of recent scholarship or comparison with manuscripts and sources not available to Steinschneider.

Furthermore, the number of manuscripts actually described by Steinschneider is higher, if we take into account the manuscripts he described for booksellers or private collectors. These include 146 manuscripts from the M. S. Ghirondi collection offered for sale by Samuel Schönblum (Lemberg) and presented in great detail in a hectographed publication of Steinschneider’s autograph entries;\(^9\) 85 manuscripts offered for sale by Julius Benzian (who also published *Hebräische Bibliographie*, edited by Steinschneider); about 50 manuscripts offered for sale by Fischl Hirsch and discussed in volumes of *Hebräische Bibliographie*; 36 manuscripts offered for sale by A. Asher & Co., described partly in a

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