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NOTES AND DISCUSSION.

Jewish Lulab and Portal Coins.—The recent Anglo-Jewish Exhibition has yielded good fruit. It has given the impulse to various publications of great interest for Jewish History, Literature, and Archæology. One of these publications contains a valuable contribution to the study of Jewish Numismatics, written in German by Prof. Graetz, *Bedeutung der jüdischen Münzen mit dem Feststrauss und dem Portale*; and rendered into English by Mr. H. Montagu, F.L.A. (On the Jewish "Lulab" and "Portal" Coins.)

It is a strange phenomenon that among the many antiquities unearthed in Palestine, and especially in Jerusalem, no Jewish coin is to be found of the period anterior to the Babylonian exile. We have no direct evidence that coins existed at that period, and the terms *shekel*, *beha*, *gerah*, *agurah*, *hesitah*, etc., indicate, perhaps, weights rather than current coins; even the phrase "current with the merchant" (Gen. xxiii. 16) may have reference to the correctness of the *shekel* as a weight, and not to the currency of money. The proper Hebrew word for coin, *matbea*, so frequently met with in Postbiblical literature, does not occur even once in the Bible, neither does the word *taba* in the sense of "impressing," "stamping," although the noun, *tabbaath*, "ring," may derive its origin from the same root. We should, however, go too far if we were to infer from the absence of direct evidence that coins did not exist at that period. Selling and buying was as necessary in olden times as in later periods, and the ancient Israelites probably employed some kind of money in their business transactions.

The impression on Jewish coins was much restricted by the prohibition: "Thou shalt not make unto thee an image or any likeness of that which is in heaven above or which is in the earth beneath, or which is in the waters underneath the earth" (Ex. xx. 20). Whatever may have been the interpretation that this law practically received, it seems certain from the specimens of coins still extant that the impression of figures of living beings was strictly avoided, as these were frequently the object of divine veneration among the surrounding idolatrous nations. Plants, fruits, vessels, parts of buildings, are found represented on Jewish coins. The Hebrew inscriptions were made in ancient Hebrew characters. Although the coins extant belong to the time of the Second Temple and the Second Exile, a period in which the square characters introduced by Ezra were in use among the Jews, the ancient characters were retained for the inscriptions on coins. Why this was done we cannot say for certain. It may be that the intention of Ezra, when transcribing the Law in Babylonian characters, and leaving the ancient characters for ordinary purposes, was *lehabhdil ben kodesh lechol*, "to distinguish between that which is holy and that which is common." It is, however, possible that even at the time of the Maccabees the ancient characters were better known in the country, especially to the Israelites in the North, who had not been carried away into exile.

In some cases the inscriptions inform us of the value of the coin, that it is a *shekel Israel*, or half a shekel, or a quarter, but in many cases no value is mentioned, the value being probably known by the size of the coin. The date is indicated in many of them, but not according to a fixed era. The first, second, or fourth year of the Liberation of Israel,

or Jerusalem, the name of the ruler is likewise mentioned ; but as there were several chiefs of the same name a little confusion and doubt as to the date of the particular coin is inevitable. Thus, the name Simon on certain coins is interpreted by some as referring to Simon I., the son of Gamaliel, the Prince (*Nasi*) ; others refer it to Simon II. ; again others to Simon bar Gioras, the leader of the Zealots, before the destruction of the Temple, or to Bar-Kochba, whose first name is said to have been Simon. The same is the case with the name Elazar, found on some coins. The name may refer to one of the chiefs of the Zealots in the first Jewish war against the Romans, or to a Rabbi Elazar bar Modai, who lived during the second Jewish war against the Romans, in the reign of Hadrian.

There is also a group of coins called "the Lulab coins," which have become a subject of controversy, and are examined in the above-named pamphlet of Prof. Graetz. On the one side of these coins a vessel containing three plants is represented, with a fruit on the left side of the basket. The fruit and these three plants have been identified as those named in Lev. xxiii. 40: the fruit of the goodly tree, branches of palm trees, boughs of a thick-leaved tree, and willows of the brook, generally called the *arba minim* (the four kinds) or *ethrog* (citron), lulab (branches of the palm-tree), hadassim (myrtles), and *arababak* (willows). This interpretation is now generally adopted. On the other side of these pieces the type is that of a portal or colonnade ; four columns with an architrave, and other ornamentations above. It looks like a portal, and it has been believed to be the entrance to the Temple (though the Temple had no ornamentation of columns at the entrance), or the representation of the Mausoleum, which Simon Maccabeus caused to be erected in memory of the Asmonean family in Modim, or of the Ark of the Covenant. Prof. Graetz rejects all these views. His own interpretation of the type is certainly ingenious and most plausible. The plants on the one side remind us of the Feast of Tabernacles ; is it not likely that the other side might also represent some characteristic of the same feast, namely, the Sukkah (tabernacle) ? Equally ingenious and plausible is the learned Professor's explanation of the semicircle and lines in the midst of the portal. He identifies them with the ornaments of the Sukkah as described in the Talmud, consisting of ears of corn, dates, nuts, and other kinds of fruit. The types on both sides complement each other in representing the characteristics of the Festival of Tabernacles. These forms may have been chosen for two reasons ; either the coins were struck after a victory gained just before this Festival, or an allegorical representation of God's protection (Sukkah, Lev. xxiii. 43), and Israel's rejoicings (Lulab, *ib.* 40). Prof. Graetz thinks that the impression on these coins was to commemorate a victory gained by the Jews during the first war with the Romans, on the 17th Ellul. (See Megilloth Taanith.) In consequence of this victory the Jews were enabled to go up to Jerusalem in large numbers for the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. It would, however, seem very strange that coins struck for the purpose of commemorating this event, in which the visit to the Temple and the worship therein was of the greatest importance, should contain no reference to the Temple. This omission would rather lead us to assume that these coins were struck after the destruction of the Temple, during the war of Bar-cochba. Prof. Graetz attempts to prove that this was impossible, in a way more ingenious than probable. According to the Mishnah (Sukkah, iii. 8) the rich in Jerusalem bound their lulab (*i.e.*, together with the myrtle and willow branches) with *gimonioth* of gold. These *gimonioth*, he argues, are the very basketshaped orna-

ments in which the plants are placed on the coins. The argument is not convincing. For even if this interpretation of the term *gimonioth* were correct, there is no reason why the rich of Jerusalem should not have continued their practice, after the destruction of the Temple, outside Jerusalem. But it is not at all likely that *gimonioth* denotes, "baskets," as the term "binding" (*ogedin*) does not well apply to baskets. Besides, it would have been very awkward to carry lulabim about in baskets. The rich of Jerusalem more probably ornamented their plants with gold thread or binding. The baskets on the coins are probably the receptacles of the *lulab* when not wanted, and were in use everywhere and at all times. The question, therefore, as to the date of these coins is, in spite of the highly interesting pamphlet of the Jewish Historian not yet decided. Perhaps it is better to leave it an open question, as it may be the cause of further essays, as interesting and learned as the present one, from the pen of Prof. Graetz.

M. FRIEDLANDER.

Isaac Jeshurun-Alvares, of London (died in Vienna 1735). In the old cemetery of the Jewish Congregation of Vienna very many lie buried who were lowered into their graves for the second time when Ludwig August Frankl busied himself with publishing the epitaphs of the graveyard in his *Inscripfen*. Thanks, however, to the intelligent piety of the Viennese authorities, the Archives of the Congregation have preserved the MS. in which S. G. Stern entered the account of the inscriptions which he deciphered. To my no little surprise, I there discovered for the first time the cemetery of those epitaphs that Frankl had overlooked. For in the hasty endeavour to arrange chronologically for the press the epitaphs which Stern had deciphered without regard to sequence, many were omitted; it was as when a wanton hand, commissioned with the duty of emptying a vessel full of precious liquid, carelessly jerks out the contents, reckless how much is spilt in the process. In this hitherto unknown cemetery, which I painfully enough was able to restore by means of comparison, I also found the name of the man who deserves a record among the members of the London Sephardic Congregation of the first quarter of the last century.

The epitaph, numbered by Stern 91, and provided with the super-
scription :

מצבת ר' יעקב אלבארים ישרון מעיר לונדון משפחה מיוחסת בישראל

runs as follows :—

פט

הספרדי יעקב בן הר"ר יצחק ישרון אלבארים מלונדין
 סו פדים ומקוננים שאו קינה, על יעקב אשר יצא ממדינת בריטניא, לנור
 ולהשתקע בוויינא, והאלהי' אנה להביאו לקברו מוכנה, להשיב העפר אל הארץ
 תחתונה, ונשמחו לאשר נתנה, פקודתו שמרה רוחו בתוך נדנה, להשלימה
 בקרובה לקונה, להנות מזיו השכינה, ולעמוד בתחייתו תוך עדת מי מנה, נפטר
 בשבת קדש ונקבר ביום א' ט"ח אייר ת"צ"ה לפ"ק

ת"צ"ב"ה

Here lies

the Sephardi Jacob ben Isaac Jeshurun-Alvares,¹ of London.

Ye mourners and wailers, raise an elegy for Jacob, who went forth from

¹ Concerning the martyr Simon Alvares in Coimbra, see Kayserling's *History of the Jews in Portugal*, pp. 239 seq.; for the martyr Isabel Nunes Alvares, see *Sephardim*, p. 203.