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FOREWORD

To our readers, to our students shalom, peaceful wellbeing!

This volume of studies in history has no planned, central theme. Exactly because of this fact, it bears a first-hand testimony about us, the authors, both as individuals and as members of the wider community.

As individuals, each one of us, from those already established, to the first-appearing young scholars — pupils and disciples — has contributed a choice sample of his personal, special field of historical research.

These individual pieces of research unite, as if naturally, to constitute the solid background upon which the — again — individual imprint of our communal-spiritual self, our Department, appears.

Permit me to fulfil my duty to 'You,' reader, and to 'Us,' fellow members-authors, and enumerate in the following condensed sentences the emerging special characteristics, as they are in my private judgement; these elements — present both in our research- and teaching-motivations — are:

a) Time-continuity: from the earliest history — to modern times;

b) Space-continuity: central areas of the western civilisation — the Near East — Europe — the Americas (our teaching curriculum exceeds these limits);

c) These two arch-elements are the prime cause of the manifestation of interrelations between the relevant multisided and multicentered research-activities displayed before You — and Us.

So, we study: the history of the social-economic, political, cultural, and national destinies of our Mother-area, the Near East, in its international, especially 'imperial' context; the 'Empire' itself: its pattern of world-strategy; the world-confronting histories of small nations: the Armenians, the Druze and the Jews. The wide-spaced confrontations of the last — from the U.S.A. to the Middle East — are, naturally the most studied and the most variegated and even reach down to the core: from the earlier anti-judaic determinative traits of european Christianity and its modern degenerate avatars of catastrophic impact — to redeeming self-determination.

In conclusion: I regard this emerging picture as a marvel; it harmonises — as if by inborn ease — with our special outlook as a tradition — cherishing israeli University, dedicated to contribute harmoniously and to

the best of its ability to the present and future of our country, our area and to Humanity as a whole.

*At the same time it serves as proof for the existence of a healthy basis for the further development of our Department. Consequently, by accepting outside and inside criticism and guidance—our students included—we have a firm hope to progress towards the fulfillment of our purpose: to understand and to make understandable to all the admonishing words of *Magistra Vitae*.*

* * *

Warm words of thanks:

in advance, to our readers who are invited to communicate their reaction; to the Members of the Editorial Board, especially professor A. Sharf, the present Chairman of our Department;

to professor D. Sperber, Chairman of the Book-publishing Committee and Mrs. Miryam Drori, Editorial Executive, Bar-Ilan University Press;

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to Mr. Y. Hason and the Staff of Ahva press, for their manysided creative cooperation.

*Lastly and primarily, the most deeply felt thanks are directed to: Founder *facile princeps*, tireless guide of our Department, professor Avrom Saltman.*

אשרי האיש אשר לא הלך בעצת רשעים
ובדרך חטאים לא עמד ובמושב לצים לא ישב :
כי אם בתורת ה' חפצו ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה :
(תהילים א, א—ב)

ב"ה

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THE EDITOR