

Bishop *Kollonitsch, viewed his monopolistic position with misgivings, pointing out that not only was he Austria's sole military purveyor but that a disproportionate part of the state income was being earmarked solely for him as payment for his services. All attempts to dispose of his services failed, however, for few others were in possession of sufficient capital to assume his place and none was prepared to extend credit to the state with its chronically empty treasury. The state's debts to Oppenheimer grew from 52,600 florins in 1685 to 700,000 in 1692, and to 3,000,000 in 1694, at which point it remained stable for a few years until it increased during the War of the Spanish Succession.

Bishop Kollonitsch, appointed head of the treasury in 1692, frustrated by his unsuccessful attempts to dispense with Oppenheimer's services, tried to undermine Oppenheimer by falsely accusing him of attempting to murder Samson Wertheimer. As a consequence Oppenheimer was forced to buy his freedom and establish his innocence with the sum of 500,000 florins. In 1700 when his sumptuous home was stormed and plundered by a mob, order was reluctantly restored by the authorities and the two instigators hanged. It has been suggested that the cause of the attack was Oppenheimer's intervention in suppressing an anti-Jewish book of *Eisenmenger.

When Oppenheimer died the state refused to honor its debts to his heir Emanuel and had his firm declared bankrupt. His death brought deep financial crisis to the state; it experienced great difficulty in securing the credit necessary to meet its needs. Emanuel appealed to European rulers to whom the state owed money and who intervened on his behalf. After deliberate procrastination the state refused Emanuel's demand for 6 million florins and instead demanded 4 million florins from him. This amount was based on a sum which (with compound interest), according to the state, Oppenheimer had allegedly obtained by fraud at the beginning of his career. Emanuel died in 1721 and the Oppenheimer estate was auctioned in 1763.

Although Oppenheimer was not himself learned, he was a benefactor on a scale hitherto unknown, building many synagogues and yeshivot and supporting their scholars. He also paid ransom for the return of Jews captured during the Turkish wars and supported as well R. Judah he-Hasid's voyage to Erez Israel in 1700. Known as "Judenkaiser" by his contemporaries, he was a man whose complex personality, a mixture of pride and reserve, defied historical analysis. Twenty years after his death it was estimated that more than 100 persons held residence in Vienna by virtue of their being included in Oppenheimer's privileges.

Bibliography: M. Grunwald, *Samuel Oppenheimer und sein Kreis* (1913); idem, *Vienna* (1936), index; S. Stern, *Court Jew* (1950), index; H. Schnee, *Die Hoffinanz und der moderne Staat*, 3 (1955), 239-45; MHJ, 2 (1937); 5 (1960); 9 (1966); 10 (1967), indexes.

[H.W.]

OPPER, FREDERICK BURR (1857-1937), U.S. political cartoonist; an originator of the comic strip. Oppert left Madison, Ohio, for New York, where he worked for 18 years on the weekly *Puck*. He joined Hearst's *New York Journal* in 1899, and his work was then syndicated through the *International News*. Oppert depicted suburban types which became familiar to almost every American household. He also became Hearst's leading political caricaturist, lampooning the eccentricities of public figures, particularly during election campaigns.

A volume of his political drawings, *Willie and his Papa*, was published in 1901. His cartoons on England, *John Bull*, appeared in 1903. Other collections were *Alphabet of Joyous Trusts* (1902), *Our Antediluvian Ancestors* (1903), two volumes

of his character *Happy Hooligan* (1902-07) and *Maud and the Matchless* (1907). Oppert also illustrated the work of some of his contemporary humorists, including Mark Twain, Peter Finley Dunne, Bill Nye, and George V. Hobart.

Bibliography: DAB, 23 (1958), 504f. (incl. bibl.).

[E.J.]

OPPERT, GUSTAV SALOMON (1836-1908), German orientalist and Indologist. Born in Hamburg, younger brother of the archaeologist Jules *Oppert and of Ernst Jacob Oppert, the traveler, Oppert studied the lore of India, its languages, literature, and history and was appointed assistant librarian at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and at Queen Victoria's Library in Windsor. In 1872 he was appointed professor of Sanskrit at the Presidency College in Madras, India where from 1878 to 1882 he also served as editor of the *Madras Journal of Literature and Science*. After traveling through India, the Far East, and the U.S. he accepted a teaching post at Berlin University in Dravidian languages.

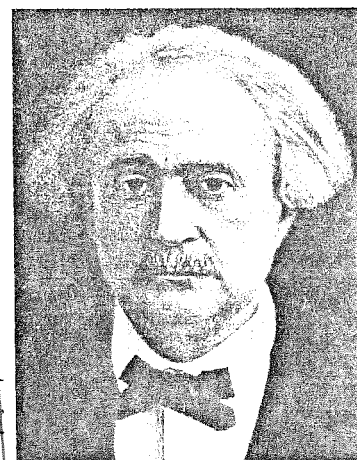
He also produced a number of works in folklore, general philology, ancient Hindu culture, epigraphical studies of South Indian inscriptions: travel accounts, and editions of various classics of Sanskrit culture in the areas of philosophy, poetry and philology.

Like his brother Jules, Gustav Oppert devoted himself to various Jewish causes. He was a trustee of the Hochschule fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums and bequeathed his estate to this organization.

Bibliography: JC (March 20, 1908), obituary; Winger, Biog.

[E.F.]

OPPERT, JULES JULIUS (1825-1905), French philologist, orientalist, and archaeologist. Born in Hamburg, he studied law but changed to Oriental languages. He migrated to France where he continued his research on Old Persian and Assyrian and became a recognized authority in his field. In 1851 he was invited to join a sponsored expedition to explore Mesopotamia. The results of this expedition contained Oppert's definite identification of the site of ancient Babylon, and appeared in a two-volume report, *Expédition Scientifique en Mesopotamie* (1859-63), which received a prize for the most significant discovery of the year. In 1869 Oppert joined the Collège de France, first as



Jules Julius Oppert, Assyriologist. Jerusalem, J.N.U.L., Schwadron Collection.

instructor in Assyriology, and then in 1874 as professor of Assyrian philology and archaeology.

His studies in various branches of Oriental learning included Indo-Iranian, Sumerian, Elamitic, and Assyriology, in which he became a founder and preeminent authority. He discovered and deciphered numerous historical, astronomical and religious inscriptions, juridical documents, contract tablets, and collected material for his history of the Chaldean and Assyrian civilizations.