

Adolph Lewisohn, Copper Magnate in the Gilded Age, by author Henning Albrecht, Hamburg (Hamburg Univ. Press) 2019, 151 pages. Translation from German. Numerous illustrations. Also available online:
<https://blogs.sub.uni-hamburg.de/hup/products-page/publikationen/172/>

The series of biographies about the patrons, who in 1906-07 helped the Hamburg Scientific Foundation (HSF) to be successfully established thanks to their donations, have been expanded to include this first-class presentation about Adolph Lewisohn. And he deserves that too. He gave 100,000 gold marks which prompted the author to nominate him as the third largest original donor to the Hamburg Scientific Foundation (after Alfred Beit and Moritz Warburg and his sons).

Lewisohn descended from an Orthodox Jewish family in Hamburg, where his father - also a merchant - paid the closest attention to the strict observation of the religious rules. Adolph was not particularly enthusiastic about orthodox Judaism. Later in New York, which became the centre of his life until his death, he tended towards reformed Judaism. In New York, Lewisohn first worked for his older brother, Leonhard's company, which traded in pig bristles, horsehair, and similar items, like the family firm in Hamburg. Adolph soon realised that copper was a commodity that had a much brighter future, mainly in the rapidly growing electrical industry. So, he devoted himself first to the trade, then to the demand and finally to the processing of this material. It was about founding companies, buying mines, and arranging mergers, the copper war and finally the failed attempt at creating a monopoly with other bold speculators, from which Lewisohn got out lightly through clever hedging.

The author Henning Albrecht describes the life of the extraordinarily successful businessman Adolph Lewisohn (1849-1938), who emigrated to New York in 1867, but not only writing about it chronologically, but also by following a few chapters with the facets that make this man such an outstanding personality: reviewing Lewisohn's private, social and political activities, his commitment to prison reform in America, the art collector and the philanthropist. The author had access to the autobiography of his protagonist, which was over 200-pages long and was written in excellent English but not based on a diary, from which the original is often quoted, including Lewisohn's guiding principles of successful business conduct which are of enduring interest. At the same time, the author has intensively researched the environment in which Lewisohn was active

socially, politically and as a businessman in America, and placed his life convincingly in these contexts.

Lewisohn was known to several American presidents and through his work, to numerous personalities of the moneyed American society. In this way, the "unlimited possibilities" of the time when Lewisohn was active in America become evident: industrialisation - railroad construction - enormous population growth - monopolies - the frontier border shifting to the west and similar developments. The description of the "Gilded Age" mentioned in the subtitle is exciting and interesting. For his research the author has used the extensive literature from this period and certainly found everything that is available in the Hamburg State Archives about the Lewisohn family and from certain American sources.

The German version written by Claus Gossler is printed in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 100 (2014), p. 187-188.