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TRACING THE HEBREW BOOK COLLECTION OF THE VENICE GHETTO

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INTRODUCTION

In cataloguing the early Hebrew book collection of the Jewish Community of Venice, located at the “Renato Maestro” Library and Archive, I have come across to all the “footprints” (evidences of provenance) found on the copies: *ex libris*, signatures, inscriptions, stamps, and censor’s notes that I have included in the catalogue of the collection *I libri del Ghetto: Catalogo dei libri ebraici della Comunità Ebraica di Venezia (secc. XVI-XX)*¹ which I have recently published.

Through this work, I became so involved in the argument as to wish to examine in depth the history of the Jewish Community Library and to identify at least some of the owners, censors, teachers and readers that had had these books in their hands at a certain time during this long history. At this point I decided to choose it as topic for my PhD thesis.

In order to better esteem and appreciate this book collection I thought it would be useful to describe the context in which Hebrew printing began and its subsequent development and evolution. Therefore, the first two chapters of this dissertation include a brief history of Hebrew printing.

Since the first Hebrew books appeared in Italy, as it is on the Italian soil that this craft reached its formal perfection, the first chapter is entirely dedicated to Italy.

Rather than reporting a chronological series of events – which already existed – we decided to organize the information according to the places of publication, thus providing a brief history of Hebrew printing in each town in which it took place.

The second chapter traces the history of Hebrew printing in Northern Europe and in the Mediterranean area. This time the different paragraphs are dedicated either to

¹ (Padova: Il Prato, 2016). [From now on: *I libri del Ghetto*].

single cities with their surroundings, or to broader areas, that may even include more than one nation. Smaller paragraphs are dedicated to the major cities or towns. In some states, indeed, book printing was concentrated around a major city, like in Basle, Amsterdam, Vienna or Prague, while it was almost totally absent elsewhere., In other states, like Germany or Poland, printers were scattered in small towns, where patrons could finance their activity, and they were often moving and resettling with their equipment and their families.

Besides the historical events - the opening and closing of printing presses and the wandering of many printers from one country to another – it is interesting to have a glance at the circulation of books, literary works and ideas, that was often controlled by local governments.

The third chapter deals with the preservation of the Jewish archives and book collections that are kept in the public institutions. It briefly describes the situation of different Jewish libraries and archives in Italy, that were particularly affected by the events that took place during the fascist regime.

Other paragraphs concentrate on the “Renato Maestro” Library and Archive, which is the main object of this research, tracing the history of its collection prior and after its foundation.

The reconstruction of this history was made possible by the existence of different archival and documentary sources that were collected in different archives. The main core of archival witnesses is to be found, of course, at the “Renato Maestro” Library and Archive itself. However, the puzzle could not be complete without the pieces that were found at the Central Archive for the History of Jewish People (CAHJP, Jerusalem), at the National Library of Israel where Isaia Sonne’s archive is kept, and at the UCEI Bibliographic Center in Rome.

Other sources containing useful, but often partial, information, are brief articles, reports, letters, oral witnesses and, of course, *footprints*.

Analyzing these sources, it becomes clear that some of the books which were once part of the collections, that flew into the modern library, have disappeared. Not surprisingly, they were some of the most rare and precious volumes.

The archival sources include an 18th century book-list, a 19th (?) century inventory, a book-list of the Spanish Synagogue (19th-20th century), and a 19th century cards catalogue.

The documentary witnesses include: 1. The private correspondence of a few scholars that visited the library in the past and wrote about it and about the volumes that they consulted; 2. Official correspondence of the library staff; 3. Occasional reports on this collection made by scholars that were specifically appointed by some central Institutions (like that commissioned by the Unione delle Comunità Israelitiche Italiane and compiled by Isaia Sonne in the 1930s).

Analyzing all the early book lists, we have identified the missing editions attaching a list of the missing volumes at the end of each source description.

Some of the missing books dated back to the 16th century were part of the local heritage up to the 20th century, they, then, disappeared. Widespread rumors say that they were probably sold during the hard time that followed World War II but, of course, there is no evidence of that.

A track brought to a dead end: Vittorio Fano's archive² (the President of the Jewish Community of Venice) includes a circular letter dated July 16th, 1953 sent from the UCII with the request of sending unused prayer books to the Italian Jewish Community of Jerusalem. There was no evidence of this request in the "Renato Maestro" archive.

While in Jerusalem, on January 21st, 2016, I visited the Italian Temple (located at Rehov Hillel, 27) looking for evidences of possible donations from Venice. It was surprising to find out that the library was no longer there, only a few books were on

² CAHJP, folder n. 20.

exhibit at the Museum. The greatest part of the library was composed by the private collection of Attilio Milano that, in 2015, was donated by his heirs to Ca' Foscari University of Venice.³ When this big collection left Jerusalem, the volumes that remained at the Italian Temple were collected and stored in a few boxes, out of reach. The Museum Chief Curator, Dr. Andreina Contessa, was so kind to show me an Excel document containing the former inventory where the provenances of many volumes was indicated. This list contained two volumes donated by the Jewish Community of Venice, and a few modern books of private donors from Venice. None of the missing books listed in the third chapter was included.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to footprints, that are the main interest of this research. It is based on the list of provenances that was published in the above mentioned catalogue (הספרים של הגטו). *I libri del Ghetto ...*). The footprints are gathered according to their nature: censors' signatures, institutions stamps, owners signatures and/or stamps, booksellers and bookbinders (stamps and stickers), viewers' notes. All these data enable us to follow the copies journey across the time and the space, and to learn something on the destiny of private libraries after the death of their owners.

Referring to the FRBR⁴ vocabulary, I would say that the first two chapters concern the *manifestation* and the *persons* and/or *corporate bodies* who realized it, while the third and fourth chapters are dedicated to the *items* and to their *owners*. Paragraph 3.4, in addition, is dedicated to the *subjects* (FRBR Group 3), therefore it includes indirect information concerning the works. However, since we do not deal with any *work* directly, we will not discuss any possible *expression* either.

³ Milano's archive was entrusted to the "Renato Maestro" Library and Archive on the same period.

⁴ See: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Study Group on the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records: Final Report* (Munich: K.G. Saur Verlag, 1998 [2009]), 13-17.

At the end of this historical and bibliographical survey, remains only a variegated and composite heritage, that seems only a pale shadow of what it could have been. The different provenances, indeed, testify the former existence of broader and richer collections that were dispersed, and only a few copies remained or arrived, sometimes, by chance.

This Venetian Jewish collection symbolically represents the witness of the glorious past of this town, that was the cradle of the Hebrew printed book, and at the same time of its irrevocable decline.

Transcription

Names and titles have been transliterated using the scientific transcription (see below), but family names are written in the form that is most commonly used and known. For instance, Ashkenazi, Levi and Shneor will be used instead of Aškenazi, Lewi and Šne'or.

א' (not transcribed at the beginning and at the end of the words);

ב b	בּ b	ע' e'
ג g	ג' g	פּ f or p
ד d	דּ k or kh	צ צ
ה h	הּ l	ק q
ו w	מּ m	ר r
ז z	נּ n	ש' š or ś
ח ḥ	ס s	ת t

For toponyms the English form has been preferred with the exception of Livorno (the English *Leghorn* today is rarely used by scholars). The historical name of the mentioned cities, being in use in the period concerned by this work, has been preferred to their present-day name. Istanbul always appears as Constantinople, in

all the other cases, when the historical name has been used, the present-day name has been constantly reported in brackets. This is the case for Breslau (Wrocław), Danzig (Gdańsk), Lyck (Ełk), Posen (Poznań), and Stettin (Szczecin).

Abbreviations

BHB: Bibliography of the Hebrew Book

p./pp.: page/s

s. m.: shelf mark

Vol./vols.: volume/s

Periodicals

RMI: Rassegna Mensile di Israel.

1. Hebrew Printing in Italy (15th-18th centuries)

The “Renatro Maestro” Library keeps a treasure of early Hebrew printed books belonging to the Jewish Community of Venice, and representing a unique testimony of its history and of the single stories of many Venetian Jews, who entrusted their memories to the endpapers of these volumes. Whether they arrive from schools and synagogues libraries or from private owners’ houses, these books often include information and data concerning their owners or their occasional readers. A productive curiosity brought us to research both on the history of those who produced these books and on that of its different owners and viewers.

The composition of this collection will be analyzed in paragraphs 3.3 (dedicated to the cities of publication) and 3.4 (describing the content of the books), while the marginalia will be studied in the fourth chapter. The first and second chapter, as already stated, are dedicated to the history of Hebrew printing in Italy (Ch. 1) and in Europe and in the Mediterranean area (Ch. 2) during the 16th-19th centuries.⁵

Other scholars have already proposed more detailed studies on this subject, concentrating on specific places, and there would be no need to rewrite an existing work. The aim of these two chapters is to provide general information and bibliographic references linked to the historical background of the books included in the “Renato Maestro” collection.

The survey proposed will expose a broader history than that really represented by the volumes in the Library. This intentional choice was made in order to describe the context in which the different bookmen operated, and how it determined the success or the failure of printed books, and of their printers.

⁵ A complete list of Hebrew printers was compiled by Joseph Jacobs and M. Franco: “Typography”, in *JE*, vol. 12, 308-322.

1.1 Geršom Soncino and the pioneers

Hebrew printing in Italy started at the end of the fifteenth century with a few isolated attempts and with the wandering printer Geršom ben Mošeh of Soncino.

The first dated book printed in Italy was the Rashi's commentary on the Torah (without the biblical text), published in Reggio Calabria in 1475 by Avraham ben Gaṛton. It was the only Hebrew book ever printed there, as the press closed just after its publication probably due to an argument between Avraham ben Gaṛton and his associate, whose name is not mentioned. Habermann found some hints of this dispute in the colophon.⁶

The same year, in **Piove di Sacco**, Mešullam Cuzi (Quzi), an Ashkenazi copyist, started printing the first volume of Ya'aqov ben Ašer's *Arba'ah Turim* ("The Four Pillars") which was completed by his sons on the 3rd of July 1475.⁷ The other volumes were never printed as Cuzi's sons did not continue the work.

Habermann has identified one more book issued by this press with no indication of the publisher nor the place and date of publication. It was a *Seder Selihot* according to the Ashkenazi rite.⁸

Those Hebrew books were probably not the first ones to be printed, as there is a group of eleven Incunabula that had been printed on the previous decade. They bear no place of publication and no date, but Rabbi David Simonsen first and then Moses Marx have proven that they were most likely printed in **Rome** between 1469 and 1472, and accordingly they are known as the "Roman Incunabula".

⁶ A. M. Habermann, *The History of the Hebrew Book: From Marks to Letters, From Scroll to Book* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1968), [Hebrew. From now on: *Hebrew Book*].

⁷ Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy, Being Chapters in the History of the Hebrew printing press*, (London: The Holland press, 1963), 22. [From now on: *Hebrew Books*].

⁸ H. B. Friedberg, *Toledot ha-defus ha-ivri be-medivot İtalyah, Espanyah-Portugalyah [!] ...* (History of Hebrew Typography in Italy, Spain-Portugal and the Turkey. Tel Aviv: Bar-Juda, 1956), 23. [Hebrew. From now on: *Italy*].

The printers, 'Ovadyah (ben Mošeh?), Manasseh and Benyamin could have learned the art of printing by the two German Jewish printers Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz in Subbiaco.⁹

The first durable Hebrew press was opened by the German family of the Soncino's. The first book was published in **Soncino** in 1483 by Yehošua' Šelomoh ben Yišra'el Natan Soncino (also: Joshua Solomon), it was the tractate *Berakhot* of the Babylonian Talmud. "Not only was it Soncino's first *sefer*, it was likely the first printing of any tractate of the Talmud, with the possible exception of some Spanish editions".¹⁰ He printed other tractates, as well as different Bibles or single biblical books and prayer books. Yehošua' Šelomoh Soncino was the first of the five generations of wandering printers in the same family.

Other minor presses were active in Italy in the incunabula period (in Bologna, Ferrara, Pesaro¹¹), the best known one was that of Yosef ben Ya'aqov Gunzenhauser (Ashkenazi) in **Naples** (active in 1487-1490). An anecdote links him with the Soncino family: the first book printed by Gunzenhauser, in 1487, was "the Hagiographa, a continuation of the Soncino edition of the Prophets, in the same size, with the same arrangement of the text, and with very similar type, thereby, denying the Soncinos the opportunity of completing their "holy work" on the Bible".¹²

⁹ Herrmann M.Z. Meyer - Angel Sáenz-Badillos, "Incunabula - Italy", in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second Edition, vol. 9 (Jerusalem, etc.: Thomson-Gale and Keter, 2007), 760 [From now on: *EJ*].

¹⁰ Aaronson, A., *People of the Book: Five Hundred Years of the Hebrew Book from the Beginning of Printing Until the Twentieth Century*, Feldheim Publishers, Nanuet (NY), 2014, 23-24. [From now on: *People of the Book*]. On the Soncino family see also: Abraham Meir Habermann, "Soncino", in *EJ*, vol. 19, 10.

¹¹ Aaronson states that they were eleven (*Ibidem*, 26), while Herrman M. Z. Meyer and Angel Sáenz-Badillos list twelve printers ("Incunabula", in *EJ*, vol. 9, 760-761).

¹² Moses Marx, *Gershom Soncino's Wander-Years in Italy, 1498-1527: Exemplar Judaicae Vitae* (Cincinnati: Society of Jewish Bibliophiles, 1969), 9, [First published in 1936 with the title: *Gershom (Hieronymus) Soncino's wander-years in Italy*. Reprinted from Hebrew Union College annual, volume XI. From now on: *Soncino*]. See also: Friedberg, *Italy*, 40-50; Joshua Bloch, "Hebrew Printing in Naples", *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 46. 6 (1942): 489-514, reprinted in *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography*, edited by Charles Berlin, 111-138 (New York: New York Public Library, 1976); and Sergio della Pergola, Ariel

Yehošua` Šelomoh Soncino moved to Naples in 1490, and published there the first complete edition of the *Mišnah* in 1492. On that very year his press closed down, as well as Gunzenhauser's. The fact that the two rivals simultaneously ceased their activity, in a city where Hebrew printing was rather successful (almost twenty works were printed in the last decade of the 15th century), is indeed surprising. Marx affirmed that it could have been due to the Church restrictive legislation against Jewish presses, that compelled many of them to close all across the Italian peninsula. Heller, in accordance with Bloch, described a different situation, stating that the three printers of Naples, Soncino, Gunzenhauser and Yišhaq ben Yehudah ibn Katorzo of Catalayud (Spain), were probably cooperating, and used the same press, that of Gunzenhauser. Their rivalry, in his opinion, was only fictive.¹³

Between 1497 and 1502 Geršom Soncino suspended his printing activity and travelled. Aaronson wants him wandering in Northern Europe seeking for manuscripts¹⁴, Marx proves that he was in **Venice**, at least for a while: "There seems to us to be no doubt that while there, aside from his efforts to rid himself of the remains of his stock of publications, his chief purpose was to gain permission to do the printing for that city...".¹⁵ He never succeeded in his task because of the opposition of Aldo Manuzio who had also planned to print with Hebrew types and did not want rivals to compete with him on his territory. There are not many witnesses available, but Manuzio and Soncino certainly met and tried to reach an agreement to cooperate but probably ended in an argument that forced Soncino to leave the city. Soncino had, in fact, compiled an Introduction on Hebrew grammar

Toaff, "Naples", in *EJ*, vol. 14, 776-777.

¹³ See: Marx, *Soncino*, 9-10; Marvin J. Heller, *Further Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 14-24; and Joshua Bloch, "Hebrew Printing in Naples", in *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography*, edited by Charles Berlin (New York: New York Public Library, 1976), 111-138.

[Reprinted from the Bulletin of the New York Public Library, 46. 6 (1942): 489-514].

¹⁴ Aaronson, A., *People of the Book*, 25.

¹⁵ Marx, M., *Soncino*, 17.

that Manuzio published several times anonymously (see paragraph 1.2 “Venice”). Later Soncino used critical terms about Manuzio.

“Manuzio era probabilmente alla ricerca di chi potesse aiutarlo nelle edizioni ebraiche ma desiderava più un dipendente che un socio. Soncino, d’altro canto, non era persona da sottomettersi agevolmente a condizioni economiche sfavorevoli o a un ruolo di sudditanza culturale”.¹⁶

Finally Manuzio printed only a few leaves using Hebrew types, as if to test the market, but did not go any further.

A few years later, Daniel Bomberg became involved in this new activity and obtained the exclusive privilege to start a Hebrew press in Venice.¹⁷ The political climate by then had changed, and the influence of humanism brought by a more open attitude towards Hebrew literature. Under the pontificate of Leo X de’ Medici it became easier to open Hebrew presses, and it is to him that Bomberg dedicated his first edition of the Bible with Hebrew commentaries.

Besides Bomberg’s intellectual reasons, the local government was more willing to accept his requests as he “was a Christian, a gentleman and an acceptable person, and no doubt he had also very influential advocates. At all events one could trust him explicitly not to print anything against the Christian faith, as it was known that he understood Hebrew. Since he was a very rich man, and had already made great

¹⁶ Giulio Busi, “Gershom Soncino a Venezia. Cronaca di una disillusione”, in *L’attività editoriale di Gershom Soncino 1502-1527*. Atti del Convegno (Soncino, 17 Settembre 1995), edited by Giuliano Tamani (Soncino: Edizioni del Soncino, 1997), 19. Translation: “Manuzio was probably looking for someone who could help him with the Hebrew edition but he wanted an employee rather than an associate. Soncino, in turn, was not a person who easily accepted unfavourable economic conditions nor to be culturally submitted”.

¹⁷ Habermann, A. M. *Ha-Madpiss Daniel Bomberg u-Reshimat Sifre Beth Defusso* [sic!]: *The Printer Daniel Bomberg and the List of Books Published by His Press* (Zefat: Museum of Printing Art, 1978), 11 [Hebrew. From now on: *Daniel Bomberg*]. On the different kinds of privileges see: Horatio Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press 1469-1800: An Historical Survey Based Upon Documents For The Most Part Hitherto Unpublished* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s sons; London: John C. Nimmo, 1891), 51-57 [From now on: *Venetian Press*].

investments in the city, it would, no doubt, attract still more trade to the place...".¹⁸

In 1502 Cesare Borgia, Duke of Romagna, granted Geršom Soncino a permit to open a press in **Fano** where he begun printing books in Latin. On the following year he printed a Hebrew book: *Me'ah berakhot* according to the Roman Rite. A number of other books followed, namely prayer books and *Halakhic* works including some Talmudic treatises. In 1507, seeking for a wider market, he moved to Pesaro where he remained until 1527, but in the meantime he kept publishing a few titles in Fano up to 1516.¹⁹

In Fano he could count on the cooperation of the punch-cutter Francesco Griffio (Francesco da Bologna, c. 1540-c. 1518) who had cut several type settings for Aldo Manuzio (at least six Roman types, a cursive type, four Greek ones and a set of Hebrew types). He left Venice after twelve years probably because of a dispute with Aldo who had obtained a monopoly on the types that he had cut without giving him any advantage.

Until the end of his life Soncino moved to different towns in Italy, Greece and in the Ottoman Empire depending on the alternate support of local patrons and on business opportunities. In fact, at that time, there was a whole generation of "wandering" printers who moved from one little town to the other, often upon official invitation and economic advantages. They printed anything that the local government needed - bulls, edicts, statutes, etc., - and then, when the trades begun to slow down, moved elsewhere.²⁰

Soncino's departure from Italy has often been justified with the impossibility to

¹⁸ Marx, M., *Soncino*, 21.

¹⁹ Heller, M. J., *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book: an Abridged Thesaurus* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), I, xvi, [From now on: *The Sixteenth Century*].

²⁰ See: Marx, M., *Soncino*, 3-7.

compete with the emerging of Daniel Bomberg. However, some scholars suggest a different view, arguing that such economic reasons cannot be proven. Indeed - they state - Bomberg, as a non-Jew, needed to hire more employees than Soncino, who could proofread and correct his printed texts by himself and had less estates to maintain.²¹ According to this point of view the true reason would be a conflict with the censorship.

Whatever the reason could have been, Bomberg remained for a while the only printer of Hebrew Books in Italy as we will see in the next paragraph.

None of Soncino's editions can be found today in the "Renato Maestro" Hebrew collection, but an incunabulum was once kept in this Library, and disappeared afterwards 1937 (see par. 3.5.d).

²¹ See: Habermann, *Daniel Bomberg*, xvi; and Marx, *Soncino*, 68-69.

1.2 Venice

The Venice Ghetto was founded in 1516, formalizing and authorizing the Jewish presence in the town, and creating an enclosed residential area for them. Similar arrangements existed already and were destined to members of different nations, mainly foreign merchants who, during their temporary stay in Venice, had to live in buildings appointed especially for them, and were not authorized to leave at night. Jewish merchants and money-lenders could be found in Venice since the 14th century, although with discontinuity, but their permanent settlement was forbidden.²² In spite of that, the first Hebrew characters appeared in printed books before the foundation of the Ghetto, in Christian printers' editions (see below).

Hebrew printing in Italy did not start in Venice - as we have already stated - but it is there that it reached formal perfection.

Sixteenth century Venice was one of the most important cultural centers in Europe and the place where the greatest printers started their activity.

Grendler, who made a research on the actual size of the Venetian printing press, wrote: "On the basis of the number of Venetian editions and the size of their press runs, church and state faced the mountainous task of regulating an industry that printed an estimated 15-20 million books in the cinquecento".²³

Amram states that "The printers of Venice, among the first in time, were undoubtedly the first in excellence".²⁴ He also suggests that this phenomenon was

²² On the Jewish presence in Venice see: Benjamin Ravid, "Venice" , in *EJ*, vol. 20, 499-504 (499); Cecil Roth, *History of the Jews in Venice* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975). [Italian translation by Dante Lattes: *Gli ebrei in Venezia*. (Roma: Paolo Cremonese, 1933). From now on: *Gli Ebrei in Venezia*]; Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid, *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001).

²³ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press: 1540-1605* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 12, [From now on: *Roman Inquisition*].

²⁴ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, p. 147.

due to the unique fondness for decoration and to the care for esthetic details that characterize this town. Merchants and artists from Europe and from the Mediterranean were attracted to Venice, that was a crossing point and gave many people the opportunity to improve their trades.

This was especially true for *Marranos* escaping from Spain and Portugal who found in Venice a secure port. The local Government was not interested in the past history of the new immigrants but demanded them to declare their ethnic and religious group and to remain faithful to it.²⁵ No ambiguity could be tolerated: the new Christians that returned to Judaism were accepted as long as they respected the regulations of the Ghetto and did not try to mix with Christians or to behave and dress like them.

The presence of Spanish and Portuguese Jews, who were rich and literate men, is testified by their books, that were published in Venice through the 16th century. The first Jewish prayer-books appeared in Venice and in Ferrara (1552-1555), and they were issued in European vernacular languages. "For some three decades, Venice was to be virtually the only source of Jewish books in Spanish and Portuguese and in this way it became the guiding force behind the re-education and re-Judaization of the *Marranos* throughout Italy, France, Germany and the Low Countries".²⁶

Aldo Manuzio (c. 1450-1515) was the first to use Hebrew types, in the *Introductio per brevis ad Hebraicam linguam*, compiled by Geršom Soncino (whose name is not mentioned), that was added to the Latin and Greek grammars published in 1501.

²⁵ On the *Marrano* Jews in Venice see, among the other works: Brian Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice 1550-1670* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1997), 201-312 ; Federica Ruspio, *La nazione portoghese: ebrei ponentini e nuovi cristiani a Venezia* (Torino: S. Zamorani, 2007); and the works published by Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini.

²⁶ Jonathan I. Israel, "The Jews of Venice and their Links with Holland and with Dutch Jewry (1600-1710)", in *Gli Ebrei e Venezia: secoli XIV-XVIII: Atti del convegno internazionale organizzato dall'Istituto di storia della società e dello stato veneziano della Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia, Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore: 5-10 giugno 1983*, edited by Gaetano Cozzi (Milano: Edizioni Comunità, 1987), 96.

Aldo, who was the best known printer of Latin and Greek classics and grammars, started his activity in Venice in 1494. He was born in Bassiano (Sermoneta), studied in Rome, and then moved to Ferrara, Carpi and finally to Venice in 1489-90. Although he promised to print Hebrew books, Aldo never kept his word, probably because he thought that the expense would be greater than the income or because of the rupture with Soncino who moved to Fano. In July 1501 Aldo announced the publication of a Polyglot Bible in three versions, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, but he only printed a sample page of the Genesis in three columns and then abandoned the project.²⁷

This choice left a gap that was soon filled by another printer, known as his counterpart for the Hebrew books. At the beginning of the Sixteenth century, in fact, a new immigration wave brought to Venice a Christian printer, **Daniel Bomberg** of Antwerp. Born about the year 1480 in a wealthy and well educated family of merchants, he moved there seeking for a more central location to improve their trades and ended up being the most famous gentile printer of Hebrew books. The idea of the press seems to be his partner's Felice da Prato, a new Christian who had become an Augustinian friar and worked for Peter Liechtenstein printing a Latin translation of the Psalms in Venice in 1515. He convinced Bomberg to sponsor this edition, that contained marginal notes in Hebrew characters, and insisted with him on the possibility of opening a Hebrew press.²⁸

Bomberg took on the challenge and made all kinds of efforts to run the new enterprise in the best possible way. He had several sets of Hebrew types and secured them with a privilege before issuing the first book. He printed the major work of the Jewish literary tradition, and he is remembered in particular for having published the

²⁷ Mario Infelise, "Manuzio, Aldo, il Vecchio", in *Dizionario Biografico Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 69 (Roma: Treccani, 2007), online at [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/manuzio-aldo-il-vecchio_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/manuzio-aldo-il-vecchio_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

²⁸ Joshua Bloch, "Venetian Printers of Hebrew Books", in *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography*, edited by Charles Berlin (New York: New York Public Library, 1976), 68, [From now on: *Venetian Printers*].

first entire edition of the Babylonian and the Palestinian Talmud.

To provide the best possible edition of his works he sent one of his workers to a mission in Europe and the Mediterranean area seeking for different manuscripts of the texts that he intended to publish and finance their purchase and their collation. In addition, he also took care of the esthetic of his books, in terms of paper quality, types and woodcut decorations. He reached such a great printing quality that his types were still in use two centuries after the end of his activity. The use of Bomberg's types was proudly advertised on the title pages even when they were already worn.²⁹

The date in which Bomberg began printing on his own is debated, even if lately scholars seem to agree on the year 1515³⁰. In this year Bomberg made an official request for a patent for his Hebrew types and for a copyright for the books in which he invested a great sum. It is likely that Bomberg started his activity before applying for the patent but we have no proof that a book was published before 1516.

²⁹ Habermann, *Daniel Bomberg*, 21.

³⁰ In *The Chain of Tradition* (שלשלת הקבלה) Gedalyah ibn Yahya writes: "In the year 5271 [1511] Daniel Bomberg started to print the *Gemarah* and the other holy books" (*Sefer Šalšelet ha-Qabbalah*. Venice: Zuan Di Gara, 1587, 116b [Hebrew]). Since this text was broadly quoted, we find the same date in several later essays. Apparently, a copy of the Hebrew Bible without comments printed by Bomberg and bringing the date of 1511 misled some scholars in the Seventies. Avraham Rosenthal has then demonstrated that this title page was printed towards the end of the XVI century based on the emblem of the French king Henry IV that appears on the frame ("מתי התחיל דניאל בומבירגי) אברהם רוזנטאל, (גנוזות ספרים: מאמרים ביבליוגרפיים, הוצאת בית הספרים הלאומי והאוניברסיטאי, ירושלים, תשל"ו, עמ' 15 קפו-קצא (להדפיס", סיני, עח (כסלו.טבת תשל"ז), עמ' קפו-קצא). In fact, the frontispiece of this copy - now at the National Library of Israel - is not the original one but was replaced in France between 1589 and 1610 with a Latin title page: "Biblia Hebraea. Venetiis, Per Dan. Bombergum, anno sal. 1511" (See: BHB). Israel Mehlmann argued that the printer who changed the frontispiece modified the decoration according to the new fashion but had no reason to change the date on the original Hebrew title page (ישראל מהלמן, (גנוזות ספרים: מאמרים ביבליוגרפיים, הוצאת בית הספרים הלאומי והאוניברסיטאי, ירושלים, תשל"ו, עמ' 15 קפו-קצא). However, according to the copy at the Schocken Library, this title page has no date while the colophon dates the end of the work to the year 5278 (1517). The dispute is also quoted in Habermann, *Daniel Bomberg*, 14 and Bloch, *Venetian Printers*, 68.

Another testimony, brought by Yosef ha-Kohen in his *Chronicles of the Kings of France and the Kings of the House of Ottoman the Turk*, dates Bomberg's press to 1513.

In order to grant a high quality of the books that he published, Bomberg was aware of the necessity of hiring literate Jews to compose and correct texts. It is interesting to remark that all the Jewish craftsmen, typesetters and correctors, who worked in the first Venetian print shops were not members of the local Jewish Community but came from abroad. At that time, Jews were not allowed to print, as it was permitted only to patrician families. Some of them worked for Christians under their names, but their position was always at risk. To prevent problems, Bomberg wished to obtain a special privilege for his Jewish workers from the College of the Savii. Namely he demanded for them the exemption from wearing the distinctive yellow cap to go out of the Ghetto (that was founded in 1516) arguing that they would suffer from harassment at any time they would try to reach the press. It was quite hard for him to obtain this permit and finally he was granted one that was valid only for four months and susceptible to revocation.

Felice da Prato obtained also a copyright from the Pope but Bomberg feared that the local government would not accept it as it was valid only beneath the borders of the State of the Church.

Nothing of what he published before 1517 seems to have survived. The oldest printed book coming out of his print shop that we still have is the *in folio* Rabbinical Bible of 1517-1518.

Felice da Prato edited the commentaries and the *massoretic* notes and wrote a dedication to Pope Leo X. This edition, however, was harshly criticized by Elijah Levita who arrived to Venice soon afterwards. Moreover, since Felice da Prato was a Jew who had converted to Christianity and dedicated this edition to the Pope, the book was rejected by the Jews. Therefore, they counted the Rabbinical Bibles starting from the following edition, edited by Ya`aqov ben H̄ayyim ibn Adoniyah of Tunis (who later converted as well).³¹

³¹ Giuliano Tamani, "Edizioni ebraiche veneziane dei secoli XVI-XVIII", in *Le civiltà del Libro e la stampa*

At that time the Senate decided to abolish all the privileges that had been granted to printers arguing that they had originated an economical loss. Indeed many printers had left the city and moved elsewhere with their enterprises because their activity was too limited. A new law was approved: only texts that had never been published before could be protected by copyright, provided that the 2/3 of the Senate approved it.

Bomberg lost his former privileges and asked for a new copyright for his next ambitious project: the printing of the Talmud. He obtained it in 1518, supported by Pope Leo X, son of Lorenzo de' Medici.

The text was edited by Rabbi Hiyya Me'ir ben Dawid (who was also Judge at the Jewish Court) who collated all the manuscripts that Bomberg collected and the Soncino's published treatises. He also edited some other works published by Bomberg and left him after the publication of the Talmud.

This giant enterprise involved Bomberg's press from 1519 to 1523 preventing him from printing any other book. He was then obliged to deny all the requests for Hebrew books that Christian literates submitted to him at that time.

This is clearly stated in the introduction of an edition of the *Psalms, Proverbs, Canticles* and *Ecclesiastes*, published in 1522 and dedicated to Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522) who asked for it to be printed the year before.³² In 1523-1524 Bomberg also printed for the first time the four volumes of the Palestinian Talmud, fixing both editions on a layout that lasted through the centuries.

a Venezia: testi sacri ebraici, cristiani, islamici dal Quattrocento al Settecento, edited by Simonetta Pelusi (Padova: Il Poligrafo, 2000), 30.

³² On Reuchlin's role in the defense of Hebrew books from the Roman Inquisition see: David H. Price, "Who or what saved the Jewish books?: Johannes Reuchlin's role in the Jewish book pogrom of 1509-1510", *Daphnis*, 39 (2010): 479-517; and *Idem*, "'Whether to Confiscate, Burn and Destroy All Jewish Books': Johannes Reuchlin and the Jewish Book Controversy", in *Censorship Moments: Reading Texts in the History of Censorship and Freedom of Expression*, edited by Geoff Kemp. (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 47-54.

“Bomberg’s strongest editor and corrector after the departure of Hiyah Meir was Jacob b. Hayyim ibn Adonijah of Tunis, a victim of persecution in northern Africa, who found his way into Italy and eventually like Felice da Prato found rest in the bosom of the Church”.³³

Together with Ya‘aqov ben Hayyim ibn Adoniyyah, who was an experienced philologist, other editors worked for Bomberg: first of all Cornelio Adel Kind³⁴, then Avraham de Balmes, Hayyim ben Mošeh Alton and Dawid Pizzighettone.

De Balmes was a physician who worked for the clergy and was privileged by Pope Innocent VIII. He translated scientific works from Hebrew, taught at the University of Padua and wrote a Hebrew grammar under request of Daniel Bomberg, but died before its publication in 1523.³⁵

Cornelio Adel Kind, who also printed a few books on his own, became a close friend of Bomberg and his most important associate. Adel Kind, whose name was Yiśra‘el, chose the name Cornelio after Bomberg’s father when he converted to the Christian faith and gave his master’s name to his first son, Daniel. Other members of the Adel Kind family, like Daniel himself, were also employed at the press but Cornelio was to play a preeminent role until the end.

³³ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, p. 172.

³⁴ Sometimes also “Adelkind”, but we have kept the Hebrew form of the name. See: Raphael Posner - Israel Ta-Shema (editors), *The Hebrew Book: An Historical Survey* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975), 159, [From now on: *Historical Survey*].

³⁵ On Avraham De Balmes see: Saverio Campanini, “Peculium Abrae: La grammatica ebraico-latina di Avraham de Balmes”, in *Annali di Ca’ Foscari*, 36. 3 (1997): 5-49; Joseph Elijah Heller, “Balmes, Abraham ben Meir de’”, in *EJ*, vol. 3, 94-95; Giovanni Licata, “Abraham de Balmes: Grammatico ebreo, filosofo, traduttore di Averroè”, in *Coexistence and Cooperation in the Middle Ages: IV European Congress of Medieval Studies F.I.D.E.M. (Fédération Internationale des Instituts d’Études Médiévales): 23-27 June 2009*, edited by Alessandro Musco and Giuliana Musotto (Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali, 2014), 785-80; Francesco Pierro, “Abramo di Meir de Balmes (1460-1523), medico, filosofo e grammatico ebreo della Scuola Napoletana (con un documento inedito)”, in *Atti del XIX Congresso nazionale di storia della medicina: L’Aquila 26-29 settembre 1963* (Roma: Arti grafiche E. Cossidente, 1987), 338-341; Giuliano Tamani, “Le traduzioni ebraico-latine di Abraham de Balmes”, in *Biblische und judaistische Studien: Festschrift für Paolo Sacchi*, edited by Paolo Sacchi and Angelo Vivian (Frankfurt a. M.; New York: P. Lang, 1990), 613-635. See also: Silvia di Donato, “Il Kitab al-Kašf ‘an Manahiğ al-adilla fi ‘aqa‘id al-milla di Averroè nella traduzione ebraico-latina di Abraham De Balmes”, *Annali di Ca’ Foscari* 41. 3 (2002): 5-36; Brian Ogren, “Sefirotic Depiction, Divine Noesis, and Aristotelian Kabbalah: Abraham ben Meir de Balmes and Italian Renaissance”, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 104. 4 (2014): 573-599.

In 1525, after the second edition of the Rabbinical Bible was issued, Bomberg's privilege to print expired and he asked for a renewal. He obtained it only at his third attempt, rising his offer to the sum of five hundred ducats. This episode demonstrates that the Republic tolerated the Hebrew press only on behalf of its economic advantages.

Between 1526 and 1531 a second edition of the Talmud was printed under the supervision of Cornelio Adel Kind and Elia Levita who had fled from Rome – where he lived in the house of Cardinal Egidio of Viterbo – after the sack of the city.

Levita started working for Bomberg as an editor and as an author, especially of Hebrew dictionaries and grammars. He also wrote some comments in which, every time he expressed a totally new idea, he marked it with a little hand with a finger pointing to that paragraph. This device, deriving from a habit already existing in manuscripts, was broadly used from then on. He loved working for the press and approved the way his patron managed it. When the French Ambassador offered him the chair of Hebrew at the University of Paris he refused it preferring his work at the press. Only when Bomberg stopped printing for a long period from 1539 to 1544, Levita moved to Isny where Paulus Fagius had invited him to work at his press. When Bomberg started printing again he moved back to Venice and never left again. The reasons for this pause are not known but it may have been due to the necessity to sell the printed stock in order to finance new works.

The choice of the books at Bomberg's press was made evaluating different factors. He wanted his audience to be as large as possible, and accordingly he usually avoided publishing books that could not interest the Christian and the Jewish public at once. This becomes clear when we look at those works that were published concurrently in two or more different editions. Sometimes, for example, a Latin translation was added for the Christian market and the date on the front page or on the colophon

followed either the Christian or the Jewish calculation.

Even the choice not to publish certain titles was made in order to keep a good relationship with all the customers. With regards to that, Bruce Nielsen - who calls Bomberg "a bookman of two worlds" - tries to demonstrate that the lacking of kabbalistic works in his catalogue is in fact intentional. He proves that - in spite of the fact that he owned a lot of kabbalistic manuscripts and had influent Christian friends who were interested in them - he preferred lending the manuscripts rather than publishing the books. "Could Daniel van Bombergen have performed another marketing success with kabalistic titles? Perhaps among the Christians, but in doing so he ran the risk of alienating some of his Jewish customers who might have been offended that he had attempted to reveal these texts. [... And] he knew there was extremely limited demand among the Jews for printed kabalistic texts".³⁶

Until 1543 Bomberg had no rival in Venice, then, in 1544, two other minor presses opened, one owned by brothers Dei Farri and one by Francesco Brucioli and, on the following year, also Marco Antonio Giustiniani opened a new competitive Hebrew press.

The **Dei Farri** brothers were well known printers of Latin and Italian works and published all their Hebrew books in one year (1544) hiring Cornelio Adel Kind who - at the same time - kept working for Bomberg.³⁷ "In addition to Adelkind, Dei Farri had the cooperation of Judah ben Isaac Halevi of Frankfurt and Yechiel ben Yekuthiel Hakoen Rapa, scholars, type founders, and press builders".³⁸ Their books dealt mainly with ethics (*Sefer Še`are ha-tešuvah* by Yonah Gerondi, *Alfa Beta de ben*

³⁶ Nielsen, Bruce, "Daniel van Bombergen, a Bookman of Two Worlds", in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, edited by J. R. Hacker and A. Shear (Philadelphia: Penn University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 75.

³⁷ Nello Pavoncello, *Le tipografie ebraiche minori a Venezia* (Roma: Tip. Veneziana, 1990), 27, [From now on: *Tipografie minori*].

³⁸ Bloch, *Venetian Printers*, 74.

Sira, *Menorat ha-ma'or* by Yiṣḥaq Abohav, *Sefer ha-yašar*) and philosophy (*Sefer ha-Iqqarim* by Yosef Albo) but they also published a few legal and biblical commentaries and a couple of historical books like the *Yosippon*, reprinted from the Constantinople edition published by Dawid and Šemu'el ibn Naḥmiyyas in 1510 (a copy of this book is kept at the "Renato Maestro" Library³⁹).

Francesco Brucioli, from Florence, published only one Hebrew book in 1544: *Sefer Ruah Hen* by Yehudah ben Ša'ul Ibn Tibbon. Francesco managed his press in Campo SS. Filippo e Giacomo together with his two brothers Antonio and Alessandro. In 1548 Antonio was condemned for having authored and printed heretical work (that were burnt), and the press was forced to close.⁴⁰

In spite of the new competitors, Amram stated that "Neither the laws of Venice nor the competition of Giustiniani affected the activity of the Bomberg press, and the number and character of the books produced would indicate that the press was quite prosperous. [...] The Bomberg press was strengthened by the accession of Johanan Treves and of Me'ir Parenzo, the latter destined to occupy a place in the House of Bragadini similar to that of Cornelio Adel Kind in the House of Bomberg".⁴¹

His reputation as a printer was so high that people came from distant lands in order to ask him to print their liturgical books. Even the last year of activity was a fruitful one in which he published several books.

After Bomberg's death in 1549 (or 1550⁴²) his son David, who started working with him in 1527, inherited the press.⁴³ Cioni writes about the closure of the press stating

³⁹ Camarda, *I libri del Ghetto*, n. 899, s. m. C.M.12.

⁴⁰ R. N. Lear, "Brucioli Antonio", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 14 (1972).

⁴¹ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 205.

⁴² Amram dates Bomberg's death in 1549 or 1550 while Bloch (*Venetian Printers*, 14) and Alfredo Cioni ("Bomberg, Daniel" in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 11, 1969) state that it happened in 1553.

⁴³ Bloch, *Venetian Printers*, 77.

that it started already in 1546 when Bomberg decided to go back to Antwerp not to see the decline of his life-long enterprise.⁴⁴

His types were acquired mainly by Giovanni Di Gara who published many fine Hebrew books and then passed to Cristoforo Zanetti. Part of the typesetting remained to the heirs and were later acquired by Christophe Plantin.

The quality of the books printed by Bomberg was so high that it is said to be still unsurpassed: "As a pioneer in Hebrew printing in Venice he established so high a standard that no one has surpassed his work, even with the aid of modern mechanical improvements, and it is a question whether any Hebrew printing has yet equalled [!] the quality and taste shown in the productions of the Bomberg press."⁴⁵

This fact has probably contributed to increase the interest towards his character and his life. A lot has been written about him, and scholars have defined him at once as an illuminated philosopher with a great interest in Jewish culture, as a merchant aiming at making business, and even as a missionary who tried to convert Jews⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Alfredo Cioni, "Bomberg, Daniel" in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Volume 11, 1969 ([http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/daniel-bomberg_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/daniel-bomberg_(Dizionario_Biografico)/)).

⁴⁵ Bloch, *Venetian Printers*, 78-79.

⁴⁶ For further studies see: M. Benayahu, *Haskamah we-rešut bi-defuse Wenešī'ah: ha-sefer ha-ivri me-et hava'ato la-defus we-ad še'ato la-or* (Jerusalem: Makhon Ben Zvi, 1971). [Hebrew]; Habermann, *Daniel Bomberg*; I. Mehlman, "Daniel Bomberg, the Printer of Venice", *Areshet*, III (Jerusalem, 1963) [Hebrew]; B. Nielsen, "Daniel van Bombergen, a Bookman of Two Worlds", in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, edited by J. R. Hacker and A. Shear (Philadelphia: PENN University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 56-75, [From now on: *Early Modern Italy*].

In the “Renato Maestro” Hebrew books collection nine editions only were published by Daniel Bomberg, with the cooperation of Cornelio Adel Kind. Among them a volume including three treatises of the second edition of the *Babylonian Talmud* and a single treatise of the third edition (nn. 841-842, copy C.G.17). This is the surviving part of a complete Talmud with many double volumes that has mysteriously disappeared (see paragraphs 3.3-3.5).

The other Bomberg editions are: Yiṣḥaq ben Ya‘aqov Alfasi’s *Sefer Rav Alfās*, corrected by Ḥiyyah Me’ir ben Dawid (n. 17, 3 vol.: 1521-22, voll. 1-2 are missing, the third volume was expurgated by Luigi da Bologna), Ya‘aqov ben Ašer’s *Arba`ah Turim* (n. 889: 1522, censored by Luigi da Bologna), Maimonides’ *Yad ha-ḥazaqah* (n. 688: 1524), vol. 2 of *Rabbinic Bible II* (n. 123: 1524-25), vol. 3 of *Rabbinic Bible III* (n. 124: 1546-48), *Midraš ha-Mekhilta* (n. 700: 1545), and *Rabbenu Baḥiyya* by Baḥiyya ben Ašer (1546, n. 50).

1.2.1 The presses of Giustinian and Bragadin⁴⁷

Marco Antonio Giustinian came from a wealthy patrician family and started his activity as a printer with great ambitions in 1545, commissioning several Hebrew types to Guillaume Le Bé. His printer’s mark was a representation of the Temple of Jerusalem with the motto “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of hosts” (Haggai 2, 9). He hired the best printers and proofreaders, some of them also worked for Bomberg like the well known Cornelio Adel Kind, and invested in the quality and refinement of his editions that were indeed of great value. However, he had an impulsive nature that caused him to enter in competition with the other local printers and at the end led him to close his print shop.

⁴⁷ Sometimes written in the Italian form Giustiniani and Bragadini. Here we have chosen the Venetian form of their names.

Giustinian was the first rival to the old Bomberg and he became a well known printer but his press did not overshadow that of his predecessor.

“Nevertheless, the high quality of many of Giustiniani’s books, particularly his edition of the Talmud (1546-51), was sufficient to secure his reputation as a printer. That edition is particularly noteworthy for the inclusion of indices, prepared by R. Joshua Boaz, reprinted with all editions of the Talmud to the present...”.⁴⁸

This Babylonian Talmud was accurately edited by Yehudah ben Yiṣḥaq ha-Levi Aškenazi of Frankfurt and Yeḥi’el ben Yequti’el ha-Kohen. Only a few copies of this edition have survived as it was published only a couple of years before the Talmud was banned and burned all over Italy.

Among Giustinian’s publications there are different editions of the Pentateuch with commentaries (and also with Latin translations), single books of the Bible, homiletic works, responsa and works on the Jewish law like the *Halakhot Gedolot*, *’En Ya’aqov* by Ya’aqov ibn Ḥabib and, of course, the famous *Yad ha-Ḥazaqah* (*Mišneh Torah*) by Mošeh ben Maymon that caused his ruin.

In 1550 **Alvise Bragadin** (c.1500-1575), a younger and more dangerous rival, entered the scene and later gained the supremacy. In the first four years of his activity he printed only about fifteen titles, among them the *Hilkhot Rav Alfasi* of Yiṣḥaq ben Ya’aqov Alfasi (published in 1552 and based on the Bomberg edition of 1521), the *responsa* of Rabbi Yehudah ben Eli’ezer ha-Levi Minz (1553) and Maimonide’s *Moreh Nevukhim* (*The Guide of the Perplexed*, 1551).

An important role in these events was played by Cornelio Adel Kind who worked for both of them. He served Giustinian as a master printer for a short time at the beginning of his activity (1549-52), confirming the leading role that he had at the Dei Farri’s press. Soon he left Giustinian to dedicate all his attention to Bomberg until his death. Then, he returned to Giustinian and worked for him until 1552 with his son

⁴⁸ Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xix.

Daniel.

The rivalry between Giustinian and Baragadin was the source of a great disaster that changed the sort of all the Hebrew presses in Italy and the ways of learning of Italian Jewry: the burning of the Talmud.

The dispute begun in 1550 when both printers published an edition of Maimonides' *Mišneh Torah*.

It all started with Giustinian's refusal (for unknown reasons) to publish that book with the glosses of Rabbi Me'ir ben Yišḥaq Katzenellenbogen of Padua (*Maharam*, 1473-1565). Rabbi Katzenellenbogen then turned to Alvise Bragadin who accepted the task and published it, printing a Hebrew book for the first time. A few months later, Giustinian decided to print the same book with part of the Rabbi's notes (*Haśagot*) concentrated at the end of the second volume (without his permit, of course). The author, who had invested a great sum in this publication, was consequently facing a consistent loss of money. He decided to appeal to his friend Rabbi Moses Isserles - who was the leading authority among Ashkenazim in Europe - seeking to protect his investment. Giustinian's edition was then banned and whoever bought it would have incurred in *herem* (excommunication). Foreseeing his ruin, Giustinian decided to turn to Pope Julius III and a trial took place in which the two parts were represented by converts from Judaism. They went so far in accusing one another of blasphemy that the final decision of the court was the burning of the Talmud and of many other *halakhic* works.⁴⁹

Indeed, this trial - whose object was not intended to be the Talmud - took place in a moment in which the suspicion against Hebrew publications was growing stronger. When Giustinian finished printing his edition of the Talmud, in 1551, Cardinal Girolamo Verallo had already tried to stop it, sharing the common opinion of its

⁴⁹ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 262-267; Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xx; Bloch, *Venetian Printers*, 81-82. See also: Paul F. Grendler, "La distruzione di libri ebraici a Venezia nel 1568", in *Venezia ebraica: Atti delle prime giornate di studio sull'ebraismo veneziano: Venezia 1976-1980*, edited by Umberto Fortis (Roma: Carucci, 1982), 99-127.

being full of blasphemies. The *Executors against blasphemy* were charged to appoint a team of Hebrew experts to examine it. The Roman trial only accelerated the ongoing process.⁵⁰

The Talmud was burnt in the major Italian cities with unusual solicitude: a big fire was lit in Rome in Campo de' Fiori on September 9th 1553, less than a month after the issue of the *Bull (bolla)* on the August 12th 1553. Venice quickly followed the example burning Hebrew books in Piazza San Marco on the 21st of October of the same year. Other fires were lit in Ancona, Bologna, Ferrara, Urbino, Ravenna, Mantova and Cremona.⁵¹

This was the end of Giustinian's press that closed in 1552. All the attempts to stop or limit the books destruction or to sell them abroad failed, as did the request for a refund that Giustinian submitted to the Pope. The consequences of the bull went so far as to cause harassment and local violence against the Jews as well as indiscriminate destruction of Hebrew books disregarding their subject. A new bull was issued on May 29th 1554 (*Cum sicut nuper*) to limit the damages: it confirmed the urgency to eliminate all blasphemous text but condemned unjustified violence and permitted those books that did not include blasphemies.

Alvise Bragadin continued to print until 1554 with the help of Me'ir ben Ya'aqov **Parenzo** (d.1575) and then paused until 1563. During this period other cities filled the gap and took upon them the printing of Hebrew books: they were Cremona, Ferrara, Mantua, Sabbioneta and Riva del Garda (sometimes also: Riva di Trento).

⁵⁰ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 254-270, Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, 91-92.

⁵¹ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 266-268; Bloch, *Venetian Printers*, 82.

Six editions of this collection were issued by Marco Antonio Giustiniani, while those of Alise Bragadin I are only two. Of the famous *Mišneh Torah* printed in 1550-51 surprisingly survived Giustinian's edition only (n. 689). Several copies of the second Bragadin edition, in turn, are available (n. 690: 1574-1575). The other book issued by Bragadin's press is vol. 1 of *Sefer Rav Alfasi* by Yišḥaq ben Ya'aqov Alfasi printed by Me'ir bar Ya'aqov Parenzo (n. 18: 1552).

The remaining volumes published by Giustinian are: *'En Ya'aqov* by Ya'aqov ben Šelomoh Ibn Ḥabib (n. 356: 1546-47), *Midraš Rabbot* (n. 706: edited by Cornelio Adel Kind, 1545), *Mišnah* (n. 713: 1546-1547), *Kol bo* (n. 381: 1547), *Orah ḥayyim* by Ya'aqov ben Ašer (n. 887: 1550).

1.2.2 After 1563: the resumption of the Hebrew press

When printing in Venice was resumed in 1563, the first book was published in Padua (that was under Venetian rule) by Lorenzo Pasquato: it was Me'ir Ibn Gabbay's *Derekh Emunah* edited by Samuel (Šemu'el ben Yišḥaq) Bohem.

Shortly afterwards different printers started their activity almost at the same time and the competition among them brought Venice again to the top of the book trade centers. In 1565 Alvise **Bragadin** published the *editio princeps* of the *Šulḥan 'Arukh* in four volumes, completed six years before by Rabbi Yosef Karo. It appeared one "year after the publication of the *Index of Trent* (1564), which significantly reduced the number of prohibited books and also introduced a system of permanent surveillance based on the principle of expurgation (...). The *Shulḥan 'arukh* was therefore one of the first Hebrew books to be revised before publication".⁵²

Bragadin and Me'ir ben Ya'aqov **Parenzo** published books together and apart with different printer marks: Parenzo's printer mark was a seven-branch *menorah* while Bragadin chose three crowns. Ya'aqov Parenzo, his father, came from the town of

⁵² Raz-Krakotzkin, "Persecution and the Art of Printing", in *Jewish Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of David B. Ruderman*, edited by Richard I. Cohen, etc. (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press; Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014), 104 [From now on: *Persecution*].

Parenzo in Dalmatia (present-day Croatia) but probably had German origins⁵³. Me'ir worked for Daniel Bomberg together with Cornelio Adel Kind in 1545, then he was employed as a typesetter and corrector at Carlo Querini's press while, at the same time, he worked on his own. In fact, despite the prohibition of owning a press, Me'ir Parenzo also printed about ten titles on his own between 1545 and 1552, his name being especially linked to his edition of the *Mišnah* with the commentary of 'Ovadyah from Bertinoro (1548-49)⁵⁴ that served as a model for the following editions.⁵⁵

The experience that he acquired working for the best presses of the time made him a skilled artisan with artistic competences. He commissioned typefaces to the famous French punch-cutter Guillaume le Bé (c. 1524-1598) and later to Ya'aqov of Mantua, aiming to the best printing quality of his products. At that time he was working at the Giustinian's press but he remained there only for a short period as he probably started competing with his patron. Amram writes that "The books published by Meir Parenzo are many of them quite as handsome as those published by Adelkind and show no sign of the approaching decline of the Venetian press".⁵⁶ In 1550 Me'ir turned to Bragadin and from then on worked mainly with Alvise I. Members of the two families continued cooperating along the time.

Alvise published the last book in 1575 - the year of his death - and it was a new

⁵³ S.n., "Parenzo", in *EJ*, vol. 15, 241.

⁵⁴ Fortis, *Editoria in ebraico a Venezia* (Venezia: Arsenale, 1991), 39 [From now on: *Editoria*].

⁵⁵ Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin writes: "The Mishnah, together with a Hebrew translation of Maimonides' commentary, was first printed in 1492 in Naples, followed by a probably limited edition in 1515 in Pesaro. An important stage in the shaping of the standard version and form of the Mishnah took place in Venice in the 1540s, when two editions were printed. The first, based on the text of the Naples edition, but with many corrections of errors of the earlier printing, was published by Giustiniani (1546-47), during the preparation for the later publication of the Babylonian Talmud. A year later (1548-49) the Mishnah was published by Meir Parenzo in the Venetian printing press of Antonio Querini, which included for the first time the commentary of R. Obadiah of Bertinoro. This would become standard in most later editions. Hence, this Venetian edition should be seen as the model of all future editions of the Mishnah." (*Persecution*, 101).

⁵⁶ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, p. 368.

edition of the *Mišneh Torah*. His son Giovanni inherited the press that was active up to the beginning of the 18th century.

The last successful printer of the 16th century in Venice was **Giovanni (Zuan) Di Gara** who printed more than 270 books, most of them in Hebrew characters, between 1546 and 1611 (he died in 1609 so the last book of his printing press was published after his death).⁵⁷

Giovanni was born in Riva del Garda, he moved to Venice with his family when he was very young and he worked for Daniel Bomberg for many years. When Bomberg's enterprise closed, Di Gara bought some of his Hebrew fonts and presented himself as the heir of this already legendary printer.⁵⁸ In his first editions he also used to write on the frontispiece that the work was made either "in the house of Bomberg" or "with Bomberg's types".

Afterwards, he used the press of Cristoforo Zanetti before opening one of his own.

Di Gara and Bragadin, the two big printers of that time, cooperated from time to time and shared professional employees like Ašer Parenzo, Me'ir's brother. Sometimes on top of the three crowns of Bragadin's printer mark was added a small crown representing Di Gara with a quotation from *Avot* 4: 17: "There are three crowns [...] and the crown of a good name is superior to them all".⁵⁹

Ašer Parenzo worked for both as an editor for a long time, indirectly testifying the existence of a good relationship between them. This tie is also clearly stated in a few title pages in which we read "on behalf of Giovanni Bragadin, at Giovanni Di Gara's".

⁵⁷ Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxii.

⁵⁸ Ioly Zorattini, *Giovanni di Gara*. Online at: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-di-gara_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-di-gara_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

⁵⁹ Heller (*The Sixteenth Century*, xxi-xxii) states that the fourth crown represents Ašer Parenzo, Amram (*Hebrew Books*, p. 352) and Bloch (*Venetian Printers*, 71 and 84) as well as Giulio Busi ("Di Gara, Giovanni", in *EJ*, vol. 5, 659-660) affirm that it was Di Gara's crown.

Among the workers of this new press there were also some well-known Rabbis that could grant a high quality for the books that were published there. Among them were Šemu'el ben Elḥanan Ya'aqov Archivolti, who also authored some works, Leon Modena, the famous Rabbi and scholar, Yiṣḥaq ben Mordekhay Geršon who cooperated with different printers, and Yiśra'el ben Dani'el Zifroni (from 1588) and his son (Mošeh) Elišama' who later joined him. Yiṣḥaq Geršon had a pioneer role in the history of Hebrew printing as he was the one to introduce indexes and table of contents in the works that he revised and insisted on their importance.

The books issued by Di Gara covered many different subjects and enriched the cultural scene in fact, as Amram states "all of the known branches of learning were enriched by some specimen of his press"⁶⁰. Between 1565 and 1608 eight editions of the complete Jewish Bible issued his press. Single books of the Bible were also published separately, as well as different editions of the Pentateuch with various commentaries, especially Rashi's.

He also published legal treatises like *Ṭur Even ha-'Ezer* (1565), *Ṭur Yoreh De'ah* (1574), *Ṭur Oraḥ Ḥayyim* (1579), *Ṭur Hošen Mišpat* (1595), *Menorat ha-Ma'or* (1595), *Sefer ha-Ḥinnuk* (1601), *Šulḥan 'Aruk* (1587, 1593-1594, 1597-1598, 1602), rabbinical *responsa* (Mošeh Alsheikh, Levi ben Ya'aqov ibn Ḥabib, Mošeh Galante, Šemu'el ben Yosef Kohen and Yiṣḥaq ben Yehudah Abrabanel), classical Jewish works like *Keter Malkut* (1570), a philosophical treatise by Šelomoh Ibn Gabirol, or the *Kuzari* (1594), an apologetic work by Rabbi Yehudah ha-Levi. Di Gara had also a pioneer role for illustrated books, in fact he is famous for having printed the first *Haggadah* in 1599 (six editions were issued until 1609) with woodcut illustrations that were to become typical of the local tradition.⁶¹

The press closed in 1610 while Avraham Ḥaver Ṭov and Elišama' Zifroni were

⁶⁰ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, p. 360.

⁶¹ Fortis, *Editoria*, 47.

printing their last book, R. Yiṣḥaq Ibn Sahulah's *Mašal ha-qadmoni*, but the first four pages only were printed.⁶²

At that time the Inquisitions made a strong pressure on the printing of books and Hebrew presses were particularly controlled. In 1571 a new bull forbid all Jews to work at a print shop and to print books. It was then necessary to hire Christian typesetters but this made the printing process more complicated and expensive as they made a lot of mistakes that needed to be found and corrected. Jews were employed as correctors and curators when it was permitted and they tried to preserve the quality of the texts but, as Christian continued the work on *Shabbats* without their supervision, their task was often compromised.

Between 1565 and 1567 **Giorgio (de') Cavalli**, a Venetian patrician of Veronese origin, printed about twenty Hebrew books with the mark of an elephant carrying a tower with the Latin motto "tarde sed tuto" (*slowly but surely*).⁶³ He was assisted by Vittorio Eliano, Avraham Ayllon and Samuel Boehm and printed mainly legal codes and commentaries.

At the same time, on the years 1564-1567⁶⁴, a few Hebrew books were printed by **Giovanni Grifio** (or Grifo/Griffo/Griffi who also printed many other Latin and Italian books) identified by the famous printer's mark of a griffin holding a stone to which a winged globe is attached. Amram suggests that this symbol could prove his family ties with the Gryphos family of Lyons that used a similar mark.⁶⁵

Samuel Bohem also worked at this press together with Mešullam Kauffman, Šelomoh

⁶² Habermann, *Peraqim be-toledot ha-madpisim ha-ivriyyim we-inyane sefarim* (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1978), 228, [Hebrew. From now on: *Peraqim*].

⁶³ Pavoncello, *Tipografie minori*; 22-25, Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 349; Bloch, *Venetian Printers*, 83-84.

⁶⁴ Pavoncello also mentions a single book that was published by Griffo in 1560: the second volume of a *Siddur* for *Ro'š ha-Šanah* and *Yom Kippur* corrected by Vittorio Eliano (*ibidem*, 30-31).

⁶⁵ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 350.

Luzzatto and Šemu'el Archivolti. According to his motto "wisdom without good luck accomplishes nothing", he soon understood that his press was not big enough to compete with those of Di Gara and Bragadini.⁶⁶

Cristoforo **Zanetti** (1520-1582) inherited the press of his father Bartolomeo and printed books in different languages but he is remembered for his Greek and Hebrew publications. He printed at least eight Hebrew books in association with Zuan (Giovanni) Di Gara in the years 1564-1566 and then continued the enterprise on his own⁶⁷. He had types cut for him by Guillaume le Bé, the same type founder that produced typefaces for Carlo Querini, Marco Antonio Giustinian, Me'ir Parenzo and others.

Other members of the Zanetti family were on the printing business but their family ties are not always clear⁶⁸. "In 1593- 96 Matteo Zanetti associated with Comino Presigno [also: Presegni, Ed.] published few books and Matteo's heirs continued the press under the superintendence of Daniel Zanetti who at the same time was printing in his own house in the Calle de Dogan. Finally in 1606 Zanetto or Zuan Zanetti [Giovanni, Ed.] took charge and printed in Hebrew until 1608 after which no Hebrew books appear at this press."⁶⁹

Other contemporary printers of Hebrew books were:

- Carlo Querini (also: Quirino) who published the *Mišnayot* with the commentary of Rabbi 'Ovadyah ben Abraham Yare of Bartenura in 1548-1549 in association with

⁶⁶ See: Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 349-350.

⁶⁷ Pavoncello (*Tipografie minori*, 45-46) writes that Cristoforo, Daniele, Zuan [Zanetto] and Matteo were brothers, Amram (p. 343) mentions the last three generically as Cristoforo's "heirs", in EDIT16 no family tie among them is mentioned (http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/web_iccu/ihome.htm).

⁶⁸ See also: Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 342-344.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 343.

Meir Parenzo.⁷⁰

- Alessandro Gardane (also: Gardano) who printed Latin and Italian books in Venice (1577-1581) and Rome (1583-1591) and published only two Hebrew books (both in Venice): an edition of the *Šulḥan `arukh* in 1577-1578, and a prayer book (*Siddur*) according to the occidental Ashkenazi rite in 1578 (*Seder Tefillot mi-kol ha-šanah ka-minhag ha-Aškenazim*).
- Comino Presigno (or Presegni) who published a few books together with Matteo Zanetti in 1593-1596.

The 16th-century Venetian editions in the Library (besides those already mentioned) include:

- five were published by Giovanni **Bragadin**, the son of Alvise I, but they were often printed by Ašer Parenzo at Giovanni Di Gara's print shop (n. 7: *Peruš ha-Torah*, 1579; n.172, *Tanakh*, 1590-91; n. 467: *Ashkenazi Maḥazor*, 1599-1600; n. 598: *Seliḥot*, 1600; n. 826: *Miqra'e Qodeš* by Yosef ben Binyamin Samegah. There is also a *Tanakh* printed by Baragdin in 1607, n. 95);
- five were issued by Giorgio (Zorzi) de **Cavalli** (n. 382: *Kol bo*, 1567; n. 466: *Ashkenazi Maḥazor*, 1567; n. 707: *Sefer Rabbot*, 1566; n. 745: *Pirqe Avot*, 1566-67; n. 886: *Even ha-`ezer* by Ya'aqov ben Ašer, 1565);
- *Sefer Yosippon* printed by Giovanni **de Farri** and his brother in 1544 (n. 899);
- Nine editions issued by Giovanni **Di Gara** alone: n. 9: *Divre Šalom* by Yišḥaq ben Šemu'el Adarbi, 1586; n. 122: *Rabbinic Bible IV*, 1568; n. 275: *Manot ha-Levi*, 1585; n. 276: *Hazon la-Mo`ed*, 1586; n. 287: *Šulḥan `Arukh* by Yosef Caro, 1593-94; n. 826: *Miqra'e Qodeš* by Yosef ben Binyamin Samegah, 1586; n. 866: Mošeh ben Yosef Trani's *Bet Elohim*, 1576; n. 885: *Even ha-`ezer* by Ya'aqov ben Ašer, 1565; n. 886: *Yoreh de`ah* by Ya'aqov ben Ašer, 1574. There are also six Di Gara edition dating to the 17th-century: n. 25 (1603), n. 26: (1603), n. 27 (1601), n. 29 (1600-01), n. 340 (1600-01), n. 835 (1611);
- Two editions of Giovanni **Grifio** (n. 888: Ya'aqov ben Ašer's *Oraḥ ḥayyim*, 1566; n. 891: *Idem, Hošen ha-mišpat*, 1567);
- 'Ovadyah from Bartenura's *Peruš ha-Mišnayot* published by Carlo **Querini** in 1548-49 (n. 69);
- four editions of Daniel **Zanetti** (n. 14: *Ho'il Mošeh* by Mošeh Alfalas, 1597, n. 15: *Idem, Wa-yaqehel Mošeh*, 1597, n. 28: *Torat Mošeh* by Mošeh Alšek, 1600, n. 744: *Midraš Šemu'el*, 1600).

⁷⁰ Pavoncello, *Tipografie minori*, 40, writes that Querini (there: Quirino) only published volumes 4 to 6 of the *Mišnayot* but he actually published all the 6 volumes (digital copies at: www.hebrewbooks.org). The first one is marked with Parenzo's printer mark and Querini is mentioned in the colophon, but the next volumes have all Querini's printer mark.

1.2.3 The 17th Century: the sunset of Venice

The 17th century marked the beginning of the inexorable decline of the Venetian printing press. Other cities took its place in the book trade, in Italy Livorno became the most important centre of the time, while abroad Amsterdam and London were rising.

However, at the beginning of the century Venice kept her leading role for a while as it was known for the very good quality of its products which made it worth to go through the local censorship procedure. Heller observes that Jews from all the Mediterranean area had their books printed in Venice, despite all the risks of sending their manuscripts overseas without direct control, because they perceived Italian presses as superior.⁷¹

At that time Jews were not allowed to own a printing press nor to work as compositors, therefore the whole business was in Christians' hands and Jews could only be employed as proof readers and correctors. This cooperation, although forced, had some benefits as it granted an initial investment as well as the availability of materials and manufacturers: "the Jewish associate was not only able to publish Hebrew books, but he also gained access to the typographical material of his Christian partner. The wood-cut frames on the title pages of Hebrew books - the expense of preparing such frames was often not justifiable by the smaller Hebrew book market - were first employed with Latin works and then made available to the Jewish associate".⁷²

As we have already mentioned, Di Gara's press issued Hebrew books as late as 1611 and then closed. Its rival press, the **Bragadins'**, benefited from the lacking of a

⁷¹ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century Hebrew Book: an Abridged Thesaurus* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), xv [From now on: *The Seventeenth*].

⁷² Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xv.

significant competitor on the market. The Bragadins ran it as a family enterprise so that one generation succeeded the other in the management. The last generations though seem to have been less interested in the business than their ancestors and only profited from the income.

Alvise I was succeeded by his son Giovanni who worked from 1579 to 1614. He could count on the professional support of Ašer Parenzo. Pietro was the first son who succeeded Giovanni in 1614, his brothers Lorenzo (1615-30, 1639-50) and Alvise II (1624-30, 1639-50) later associated with him. From 1631 to 1638 the press was idle. In 1639 Giovanni's grandsons joined the press: "Vicenzio [!] I., 1639-49; Nicolaus, 1639-50; Giacomo, 1639-50; Girolamo, 1639-67; Vicenzio [!] II., 1697-98, and his brother Aloisio III., who worked alone as late as 1710".⁷³

Starting from 1614 the press was actually directed by other printers rather than by the owners. The printers' names appear either on the frontispiece or on the colophon of the books: they were Giovanni Calleoni (also Cajon, Cajun)⁷⁴, Giacomo Sarzino, Antonio Calleoni, Cristoforo Ambrosini, Giovanni Doriguzzi and Domenico Bona.⁷⁵ The books printed in this period include mainly rabbinical responsa, commentaries on the law and many prayer books for the different communities.

Finally, in the eighteenth century the press was known as "Stamparia Bragadina" and the single owners were no longer mentioned. Minor printers could use this press, using its name as a sort of label.⁷⁶

In 1630 Giovanni Vendramin founded a new press that kept his name for 10 years until his death, followed by Andrea Vendramim. The name of the press then

⁷³ S. n., "Bragadini", in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2007, 4, 117.

⁷⁴ Some scholars distinguish Giovanni Calleoni and Giovanni Cajon/Cajun as two different persons, but they were probably variations of the name. For instance, Amram (*Hebrew Books*, 374-175), Heller (*The Seventeenth Century*, xvi) and Pavoncello (*Tipografie minori*, 10-22) distinguish the two printers while Bramati etc. (*La biblioteca della Comunità ebraica di Verona: il fondo ebraico*), Busi (*Libri ebraici a Mantova*), Benayahu (*Asufot*, 2001, pp. 93-94) and Tamani (*Libri ebraici nella Biblioteca Universitaria di Padova*) report the different forms as variations of the same name.

⁷⁵ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 373-375.

⁷⁶ Fortis, *Editoria*, 53.

changed into “Commissaria Vendramina” and “Stamparia Vendramina”. Some master printers of this press in the 17th century became famous: they were Giovanni Calleoni (who also worked for the Bragadins), Me’ir ben Mošeh Ḥayyim da Zara, Giovanni Martinelli, Francesco Vieceri, Giovanni Imberti, Antonio Rizzini and Domenico Vedelago⁷⁷.

Those printers often appear in the title pages as the actual responsible for the edition, while the “Stamparia Vendramina” is mentioned on the margins as a mere location rather than a publisher.

By the middle of the century the decline of the Venetian presses became evident, the types used were of poor quality and the contents were trivial.⁷⁸

Actually, the decline had already affected the Greek and Latin edition printed in Venice while the Hebrew presses kept higher standards. Amram and Bloch say that this is probably due to the fact that employees engaged in Hebrew printing perceived it as “holy work” and not just as a source of gain.⁷⁹

Around 1766 the two presses partially fused together and published books either together as “Stamperia Bragadina e Vendramina” or apart, until the latter disappeared sometime after 1777. The quality of the books printed in this last period was quite poor. “When David b. Rafael Hayim Bueno printed a prayer book in 1706 at the Bragadini press, he proudly speaks of its beautiful type; in fact the type is really beautiful. So at a later date Benjamin ben Aaron Polacco prints a manual for the night service of Hoshanah Rabbah and Shabuot with the poorest types”.⁸⁰

Originality was no longer characterizing the Venetian press that ended up issuing only liturgical volumes with rare exceptions. Umberto Fortis suggested that the cause

⁷⁷ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 376. On p. 397 Amram lists Me’ir da Zara among the printers who worked at the “Bragadini press” but in fact he only worked at the “Vendramina”.

⁷⁸ Bloch, *Venetian Printers*, 86.

⁷⁹ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 342, and Bloch, *Venetian Printers*, 85.

⁸⁰ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 395.

of this cultural decline was to be identified in the changed atmosphere of the *Ghetto*. Venice was losing its leading role in the Jewish world and it ceased being the cradle of charismatic Rabbis and illuminated scholars. Venetian Jews were less educated than their ancestors, as demonstrated by the amount of ritual and biblical books that, starting from the beginning of the 18th century, were provided with a translation in a vernacular language.⁸¹

Among the printers who ran Hebrew presses in Venice emerged the two families of Foa/Fua and Polacco. Aharon Polacco, of Polish origin, worked for the Bragadins and his sons Menahem and Benyamin followed his footsteps. Benyamin was a very active printer, his name appearing in the colophon of many Venetian edition. From 1724 to 1727 he also worked in Mantua at the press owned by the d'Italia family.

The *Foas* came from Sabbioneta (near Mantua) and managed Hebrew presses both in Pisa and in Venice. In the 1730s Yišḥaq and Šemu'el Foa printed separately different educational books for their respective sons, both named Gad. The two Gad became printers, continuing the tradition. Gad ben Yišḥaq, who worked for the Stamperia Bragadina as well as for the Vendramina, printed books for his son in 1760-1762 and ended up opening a press of his own in 1792-1809.

The Foa family, in turn, had already a press in Venice at least since 1766, and in some books the publishers identified themselves just with their family name "Bene Fo'ah". Gad ben Šemu'el also worked at both presses and then printed a few books on his own (*Seder Tiqqun lel Šavu'ot*, Venice, 1767; *Seder Qeri'at Šema`*, Venice, 1770 and 1777; *Šare Šiv'ot Yišra'el*, Venice, 1775, *Ḥamiššah Ḥumše Torah we-Ḥameš Megillot we-Haftarot*, Venice, 1777). Around 1779 he moved to Pisa and opened there the "Stamperia Fua" or "Foa", often appearing with the Italian name "Ventura di Samuel Fua". Sometimes

⁸¹ Fortis, *Editoria*, 53.

he also printed books at the David Cesena press.⁸²

Looking at the content of the books printed in Venice in the period of its most intense activity (1520-1609), the predominance of Talmudic literature is evident. As Robert Bonfil has put it, “Talmudism affected the entire cultural discourse of the Jews, peremptorily privileging works dealing with Talmudic themes and written in the Hebrew-Aramaic idiom typical of Talmudic literature, particularly Talmudic commentaries, rabbinical response, and related matters”.⁸³

In the 17th and 18th century pietistic and religious literature prevailed, as a consequence of the diffusion of the lurianic *qabbalah* and of the outstanding role of devotional confraternities, like the *Šomerim la-Boqer* society of Venice. Rituals, special prayers, the study of texts and the practice of devotion became more frequent and were given a redemptive meaning.⁸⁴ Many special prayer books were printed, such as specific *sidre tefillah* for the different societies, *ašmorot la-boqer* (for the predawn prayers), *Seliḥot* (penitential hymns), and different types of *Ta`aniyyot* and *Tiqqunim*. The last three kinds of prayer books are particularly abundant in the “Renato Maestro” collection.

⁸² Amram (*Hebrew Books*, 397) wrote that Gad ben Šemu‘el opened his press in Pisa in 1785, and Posner and Ta-Shema (*Historical Survey*, 154) affirmed that he moved there in 1796, but we found editions attesting his presence there at least from 1779.

⁸³ R. Bonfil, “A Cultural Profile”, in *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, edited by Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 172.

⁸⁴ See: Michela Andreatta, “The Printing of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Italy: Prayer Books Printed for the Shomrim la-Boker Confraternities”, in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, edited by Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shearl (Philadelphia: PENN University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 156-170.

The Venetian editions in this collection are the most numerous (226, the copies are many more). A deep analysis of these books has been proposed by Giuliano Tamani in the preface to the catalogue *I libri del Ghetto* (*Op. cit.*, 11-19), while information on the Venetian editions in the Library (according to the date of publication) can be found at paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4.

A complete list of the Venetian editions is included in the Catalogue indexes (*ibidem*, 638-639).

1.3 Mantua

Mantua had an important role in the incunabular period, being among the first cities in which Hebrew books were printed. **Avraham ben Šelomoh Conat**, a copyist of Hebrew books of Ashkenazi origin, founded the first Hebrew press there, printing books with the help of his wife **Estellina**. Between 1476 and 1480 they published six books: the letters (*Iggerot*) of Rabbi Yedayah ben Avraham Bedersi, the first printed edition of the *Yosippon*, Ya'aqov ben Ašer's *Oraḥ Ḥayyim* ("Path of Life"), the commentary on the *Torah* of Rabbi Levi ben Geršon, the *Luḥot* (astronomical table) of Mordekhay ben Avraham Finzi, the traveler's tales of Eldad ben Mahali the Danite and *Nofet Šofim* by Rabbi Yehudah ben Yehi'el called Messer Leon (d. 1498), that was "the first Hebrew book published in the lifetime of its author. [... His wife Estellina] printed a book on her own account, no less important a work than the "Investigation of the World" by Jedaiah Bedersi"⁸⁵ with the cooperation of Ya'aqov Levi of Provence of Tarascon.

⁸⁵ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 31-32.

Habermann informs us that Conat's cursive Hebrew types were cut in the shape of his handwriting while the square types that he used for the *incipites* were similar to those of Mešullam Cuzi (Piove di Sacco).⁸⁶

In the 16th century only a few books were printed in Mantua by **Šemu'el ben Me'ir Latif** between 1513 and 1515.

The next Hebrew books were printed in 1556 at the press of **Venturino Ruffinelli**, a Christian printer who was already printing Latin and Italian books in Mantua (1544-1559) and in Venice (1530-1547). He was followed by his son **Giacomo**, who was active from 1547 to 1591 in Mantua, Rome and Perugia, and by his grandson **Tommaso**, who printed books in Mantua from 1593 to 1595.⁸⁷

One of the printers at Tommaso's press was (Mošeh) Elišama' Zifroni, the son of Yiśra'el ben Daniel Zifroni original of Guastalla (Padua) who worked in Sabbioneta and Basel before settling in Venice and working at Di Gara's press. Elišama' was mentioned for the first time in *Hilkhot 'olam* by Yešu'ah Levi (Mantua, 1593). He remained in Mantua until 1597 and then joined his father in Venice at Di Gara's press where he stayed up to its closure in 1610.⁸⁸ His name appeared for the last time on *Šilte ha-gibborim* by R. Avraham Portaleone (Ša'ar-Aryeh), printed in Mantua in 1612 with Di Gara's types. Elišama' died the following year.⁸⁹

In the same period, **Ya'aqov ben Naftali ha-Kohen of Gazzuolo** (d. c. 1570) moved from Sabbioneta to Mantua and there, for the first time in 1555, he used the hands of the priesthood as his printer mark (Yaari n. 23-24). In 1556 he started a partnership

⁸⁶ Habermann, *Hebrew Book*, 82; and s. n., "Conat, Abraham" in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 27 (1982), online at: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/abraham-conat_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/abraham-conat_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

⁸⁷ Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxiv. See also "Ruffinelli, Venturino", "Ruffinelli, Tommaso" and "Ruffinelli, Giacomo" at the CERL Thesaurus (online at: <https://thesaurus.cerl.org>).

⁸⁸ "Zifroni, Israel ben Daniel", in *EJ*, 21, 529; Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 333.

⁸⁹ Habermann, *Peraqim*, 227-229.

with **Me'ir ben Efrayim of Padua** (d. 1583).⁹⁰ Their publications are marked with the typical Mantua portal with two Solomonic columns that decorate the title pages. Some well known kabbalistic works issued from their press, like the *Zohar* (1558-1560)⁹¹, *Tiqqune ha-Zohar* (1557) and *Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut* (1558) of Pereš ben Yišhaq Gerondi, annotated by 'Immanu'el ben Yequiti'el Benevento who also edited the *Zohar* edition (d. c. 1560).⁹² They also printed moral treatises (Baḥya ibn Paquda's *Ḥovot ha-levavot* in 1559), Maimonide's *Mišneh Torah* (printed in 1565 in association with Yišhaq ben Yosef Sullam at Ruffinelli's press⁹³), a commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Yišhaq ben Yosef Caro (*Toledot Yišhaq*, 1558) and literary works like the *Sefer Livyat Hen* (1557) on Hebrew grammar and poetry by Immanuel ben Jekuthiel Benevento. Amram writes that Me'ir ben Efrayim in 1572 obtained a license from Giovanni Battista di Milano, Inquisitor of Mantua, to reprint the *Mišneh Torah* but could not complete the printing of its volumes because of a plague epidemic followed by his imprisonment.⁹⁴ Upon his death he was succeeded by his nephew **Efrayim ben Dawid of Padua** who printed at the Ruffinelli's press.

Other minor printers were **Yosef ben Ya'aqov Šaliṭ (Shalit) Ashkenazi of Padua** (active 1550-1563), who previously worked in Sabbioneta with Ya'aqov ben Naftali ha-Kohen and then moved Mantua, and **Francesco Filoponi** followed by his sons

⁹⁰ S. n., "Meir ben Ephraim of Padua", in *EJ*, 13, 783.

⁹¹ This edition of the *Zohar* is commonly known as the *editio princeps* but Jan Doktór and Magdalena Bendowska ("Sefer Ha-Zohar: The Battle For Editio Princeps", *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, 2012, 2 (242), 141-161) have demonstrated that this book had already been published in Cremona by Vincenzo Conti in 1558. The Cremona edition was authorized by the Inquisition but lacked the Rabbinical *Haskamah*, therefore it was rejected by Jews and labeled as a "Christian" edition. Nevertheless, it was the basis of the Lublin (1623) and Sulzbach (1684) editions, but the editors of the following editions preferred to perpetrate the Mantua text and commentaries on the *Zohar*, presenting it as the *editio princeps*. The BHB description of the Cremona *Zohar* (n. 129407) although bearing the date 1559-1560 confirms that it was printed at the same time as the Mantua edition.

⁹² Benevento also went to the Ottoman Empire looking for manuscripts of the *Zohar* to compile the printed edition. Umberto (Moses David) Cassuto - Moti Benmelekh, "Immanuel ben Jekuthiel Benevento", in *EJ*, 3, 341.

⁹³ BHB, n. 179075.

⁹⁴ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 330-331.

Filoterpse (d.1575) and **Clidano** (d.1589). Yosef Shalit printed several books not always mentioning the name of the actual owners of the press. Some books were printed at Venturino Ruffinelli's and at least two books (*Bediqot* and *Šehitot* by Ya'aqov ben Yehudah Weil) were printed at Filoponi brother's press in 1563.

When Hebrew presses were forced to close in Ferrara (1558) and Sabbioneta (1560), Mantua benefited from the lack of competition. However, the situation changed when printing in Venice was resumed causing the decline of Mantua.

In the years 1563-1590 the Hebrew presses of Ruffinelli, Filoponi and Me'ir ben Efrayim of Padua remained active but issued a small amount of publications (some books were issued with no indication of their publishers). The only important book of that period is 'Azaryah De Rossi's *Me'or 'enayim* (1573-74).

In 1612 a new press was established by Eli'ezer d'Italia who printed liturgical volumes as well as larger works. Elišama' Zifroni came back from Venice upon his request and worked at his press for some time.⁹⁵ "In 1622 the Perugia family took over this press which remained active for another 50 years".⁹⁶

Other minor contemporary printers were Abraham ben Dawid Portaleone and Yehudah Šemu'el di Perugia.

In the 18th century Hebrew books were printed in Mantua in two presses: one owned by Refa'el Ḥayyim d'Italia, founded in 1724 and then managed by his heir Eli'ezer Šelomoh d'Italia, and the other by Yišhaq Yare ben Dawid and Ya'aqov Ḥaver-Tov (1718-1723).⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xviii.

⁹⁶ Gershon Zilberberg, "Printing, Hebrew", in *EJ*, 16, 532.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, 536.

Twenty-eight editions published in Mantua are part of this Hebrew book collection: six date back to the 16th century, one was issued in the 17th century, twenty appeared in the 18th century, while only one dates back to the 19th century (an Italian *Siddur* published by the Tipografia Benvenuti in 1866, n. 435).

The earliest edition is an Italian *Maḥazor* printed in 1556 by Ya`aqov ben Naftali ha-Kohen from Gazzuolo at Venturino Ruffinelli's press for Me'ir ben Efrayim from Padua (n. 523). Ya`aqov ha-Kohen, in addition, completed the *Mišnayot* (voll. 3-6) that Tobia Foa had started printing in Sabbioneta but only the volumes 1-3 are included in this collection (n. 714, only the third volume was printed in Mantua at Francesco Filopono's press. D. Hierosolimitano expurgated this copy).

An interesting case is that of the two editions of Yiṣḥaq Aboab's *Menorat ha-Ma'or*: the first was issued by Filoterpe and Clidano Filopono in 1563, while the second, printed by Giacomo Ruffinelli in 1589-1590, is an imitation of the Filopono edition, and bears the false date of 1563 in the colophon (n. 1, and n. 2). The two copies are incomplete and mixed together in a single copy; only the leaves 100-115 belong to the Ruffinelli edition. Four different censors signed on the first leaves.

The two remaining 16th-century editions were published by Me'ir ben Efrayim from Padua and Ya`aqov ben Naftali ha-Kohen from Gazzuolo (*Tiqqune ha-Zohar*, 1557, censored by Luigi da Bologna, n. 862, and *Sefer ha-Zohar*, 1558-1560, n. 901).

The only 17th-century edition was published by Yehošua' from Perugia and his son Yehudah Šemu'el (*Pirqe širah*, 1661, n. 793).

Seven 18th-century Mantua publishers are mentioned in this collection: Yiṣḥaq ben Dawid Yare and Ya`aqov Haver Tov (n. 272: 1720, n. 290: 1721-1723, n. 522: 1718-1719), Eli'ezer Šelomoh d'Italia (nn. 143, 153, 154, 633, 651, 677, 686, 732, 770: 1777-1787), Refa'el Ḥayyim d'Italia (nn. 54, 432, 564, 702, 791, 827: 1724-1744) sometimes appearing in association with Yehošua' ben Mikha'el from Sezze (n. 79: 1742-1744, n. 135: 1742), and Mošeh ben Yonah from Hamburg and Ya`aqov ben Naftali from Frankfurt a. M. (n. 432: 1726).

1.4 Sabbioneta

“In 1551, the same year that Abraham ibn Usque began to print in Ferrara, Duke Vespasian Gonzaga permitted R. **Joseph ben Jacob Shalit Ashkenazi of Padua**, and **Jacob ben Naphtali ha-Kohen**, both of whom had worked previously in Mantua, to establish a Hebrew print-shop at the home of R. **Tobias ben Eliezer Foa**. Although

the Sabbioneta press is commonly associated with Foa, Joseph Shalit appears to have been the motivating force behind the press and, with other partners, the provider of necessary financial support. Tobias Foa is credited with providing only the physical quarters, Gonzaga's patronage, and limited financial assistance. Associated with the press were also Cornelius Adelkind, Vincenzo Conti, and R. Joshua Boaz Baruch".⁹⁸ Adel Kind was invited in 1553 by Tobias Foa to supervise the printing of the Talmud that he had planned to publish but a few tractates had barely appeared that the ban was imposed on the book.

During the first three years of their activity, the printers identified themselves as "partners" but, from 1554, the press became associated with Foa's name as the principal owner. In the same year Cornelio Adel Kind left the press, after printing about twelve titles, and went back to Venice (some have argued that it was due to his conversion⁹⁹) and Rabbi Tobias' sons Eli'ezer and Mordekhay took his place.

In Sabbioneta appeared, for the first time, the family emblem with two lions on the two sides of a palm tree with the Shield of David on top that served as a printer mark (Yaari, 20-21).

The two former associates of Foa's press, Yosef Shalit and Ya'aqov ben Naftali, continued printing in Mantua.¹⁰⁰

The press closed in 1559 while an edition of the *Mišnah* was being printed and the last four *Sedarim* ("orders") were printed in Mantua. Amram suggested the cause of the closure of the press could be some "anti-Christian statements that were found in some of their publications".¹⁰¹

Foa's types passed to the hands of Yosef ben Ya'aqov of Mantua and of Vincenzo

⁹⁸ Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxvi.

⁹⁹ See Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxvii.

¹⁰⁰ Gershon Zilberberg, "Printing, Hebrew", in *EJ*, 16, 532.

¹⁰¹ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 292-293.

Conti, and years later they were acquired by Di Gara and then by the Stamperia Bragadina in Venice.¹⁰²

Vincenzo Conti was invited to Sabbioneta from Cremona by the Duke Vespasiano Gonzaga and he resumed the Foa's press in 1567.¹⁰³ In Cremona Conti printed over forty books in eleven years (1556-1567), while in Sabbioneta he only published a few books in 1567 with the help of Yiśra'el Zifroni.

In the "Renato Maestro" collection only two editions arrived from Sabbioneta, they were both printed by **Tobia Foa**: *Hilkhot Rav Alfasi* by Yiṣḥaq ben Ya'aqov Alfasi in three volumes issued in 1554-1555 (n. 19, the second volume is missing, while there are two copies of the first and third volumes), and volumes 1-3 of the *Mišnah* that Foa published in 1559-1563 (n. 714, bound in a single volume, censored by D. Hierosolimitano).

1.5 Cremona

In the middle of the 16th Century Cremona played an important role in preserving Talmudic studies at a time when the Talmud was burned and disappeared from many Italian regions.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, 294-295.

¹⁰³ Roberto Ricciardi, "Conti, Vincenzo", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 28 (1983), online at: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/vincenzo-conti_res-2fca3f07-87eb-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/vincenzo-conti_res-2fca3f07-87eb-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) writes that Conti took Adel Kind's place at Foa's press upon his departure and that he took over this press already in 1557, invited by the Duke, and worked there until 1567. Amram (*Hebrew Books*, 294), Heller (*The Sixteenth*, xxvii) and Benayahu (*Hebrew Printing at Cremona: Its History and Bibliography* (Jerusalem: Machon Ben Zvi and Mossad Harav Kook, 1971), 21-22. [Hebrew. From now on: *Cremona*]) write that Conti, who was in Cremona, printed some books in Sabbioneta only in 1567.

¹⁰⁴ On the Jewish presence in Cremona see: Attilio Milano and Federica Francesconi, "Cremona", in *EJ*, vol. 5, 283-284; Franco Bontempi, *Storia delle comunità ebraiche a Cremona e nella sua provincia* ([S.l.]: Società per la storia del popolo ebraico, printed 2002); Giovanni B. Magnoli, *Gli Ebrei a Cremona: storia di una comunità fra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Firenze: Giuntina, 2002); Carlo Bonetti, *Gli ebrei a Cremona (1278-1630): note ed appunti* (Cremona: Tip. Centrale, 1917) [reprinted in 1985, in Cremona by the Archivio di Stato]; Domenico Bergamaschi, *Ebrei a Cremona: frammenti inediti di storia patria* (Monza:

“A great rabbinical academy which served as a sort of asylum for the persecuted Talmud was established in Cremona, in Northern Italy, a town belonging to Milan. Here the Talmud was now studied and many Hebrew books were printed. This work was carried on with the full protection of the governor of Milan and under the leadership of Rabbi Yosef Ottolenghi, one of the German emigrants who settled in Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries”.¹⁰⁵

This tolerance, however, didn't last for a long time and the Talmud was burnt even in Cremona in 1559.

The first Hebrew press in Cremona was that of **Vincenzo Conti** who printed about forty Hebrew books between 1556 and 1567, and died in Piacenza in 1570. Conti had Veronese origins and probably had contacts with the Venetian printers of Hebrew books. He moved to Cremona in 1554 with his sons Anteo and Francesco upon invitation of the local Bishop Gerolamo Vida.¹⁰⁶ Ricciardi suggested that another reason for his relocation in the Duchy of Milan could be identified in the 1553 bull that worsened the situation of Hebrew printer-shops in Venice and its temporary decline.¹⁰⁷

Between 1557 and 1567, as we have already mentioned, he was in Sabbioneta and then he moved to Piacenza where he published only Latin and Italian books.

Conti is remembered for his edition of the Zohar printed in 1558-1559 at the same time as the Mantua edition (see note n. 91). At his press worked Samuel Boehm, Zanvil Pescarol and Vittorio Eliano as editors. In 1567 he published some books in

Artigianelli, 1906).

¹⁰⁵ Joshua Bloch, “Hebrew Printing in Riva di Trento”, in *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography: Studies by Joshua Bloch and others, reprinted from the Publications of the New York Public Library on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library*, edited by Charles Berlin (New York: New York Public Library, 1976), 97. [From now on: *Riva di Trento*].

¹⁰⁶ Gershon Zilberberg, “Printing, Hebrew”, in *EJ*, 16, 532; Roberto Ricciardi, “Conti, Vincenzo”, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 28 (1983). Online at: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/vincenzo-conti_res-2fca3f07-87eb-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/vincenzo-conti_res-2fca3f07-87eb-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_(Dizionario_Biografico)/).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*.

Sabbioneta at Yiśra'el Zifroni's press.

“Until 1559 Conti used almost exclusively "Rashi" (cursive) type, as in his first edition of *Ziyyoni* by Menahem b. Meir, of which the Inquisition destroyed 1,000 copies. From then onward he used square type, as in the *Zohar* and in the second edition of *Ziyyoni*. In Cremona Conti finished the *Ashkenazi Maḥzor* that had been started in Sabbioneta [sic!] in 1557 ...”.¹⁰⁸

The last Hebrew book printed in Cremona was Eli'ezer Ashkenazi's *Yosef Leqah*, published in 1576 by Solomon Bueno at Cristoforo Draconi's press. It was the only Hebrew book issued by his press.

Two editions in the Library were published in Cremona by Vincenzo Conti: the commentary *Qiṣṣur Mordekhay we-simanaw* by Yehošua' Bo'az Barukh printed in 1557 (n. 52), and Ya'aqov ben Ašer's *Arba'ah Ṭurim* published in 1558 (n. 890). The two works are bound together in a single volume (s. m. C.M2.27, copy censored by G. D. Vistorini, L. Franguellum and H. Ferr[ariens]is).

1.6 Riva del Garda (Riva di Trento)

Riva del Garda takes its name from its being located on the northern end of the Lake of Garda.

Between the 14th and the 16th century different rulers alternated in the town government: the Veronese Scaligeri, the Visconti, the Venetian Republic and finally the Episcopal principality of Trent (1521).

Thanks to its position in the crossroads between the North and the lands of Veneto and Lombardy, it was an important commercial center.

¹⁰⁸ Attilio Milano - Federica Francesconi (2nd ed.), “Cremona”, in *EJ*, 5, 283-284.

A Jewish community settled there, taking advantage of this situation, and its members were mainly engaged in the money-lending activity.

Riva del Garda was also a suitable location for a printing enterprise because the Lake was surrounded by different paper factories (like that of Baldeser Bozzoni) and it was easy to send books from there to other market places.

In 1539, when Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzo (1512-1578) was elected Prince Bishop of Trento, the local Jewish community benefitted from his tolerance and his appreciation of the Jewish literature.

The Cardinal authorized the opening of a Hebrew press and he also acted as its protector.¹⁰⁹ It was located at **Antonio Broën's** house (or Broini) and it was managed by Ya'aqov ben Dawid **Marcaria**.

Marcaria was a physician, he graduated at the University of Padua in 1553 and, on the following year, he was listed among the physicians operating in Riva del Garda.¹¹⁰

Between 1557 and 1563 he published about forty Hebrew books, mainly in 8° or in 4°, taking advantage from the closure of the Venetian presses. Rabbi **Yosef Ottolenghi** (d. 1576), on duty in Cremona, helped him working as editor at the press up to 1561 and financing some of its publications. Tamani formulated the hypothesis that Ottolenghi was responsible for the choice of legal and ritual works while Marcaria selected the philosophical, ethical and astronomical works.¹¹¹

The other workers are not known with the only exception of Yosef ben Ya'aqov

¹⁰⁹ Gershon Zilberberg, "Printing, Hebrew", in *EJ*, 16, p. 532.

¹¹⁰ *Libro massariale* of Riva for the year 1564, Riva del Garda, Arch. stor. comunale, *Libro massariale 1564*, c. 4r, quoted in Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, "Marcaria, Jacob", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 69 (2007), online at: http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/jacob-marcaria_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ [From now on: *Marcaria, Jacob*].

¹¹¹ Giuliano Tamani, *La tipografia di Jacob Marcaria (1557-1563)* (Trento: Provincia autonoma di Trento; Riva del Garda: Biblioteca civica, 1991), 164. See also: Adam Shear, "The Paratexts of Jacob Marcaria: Addressing the (Imagined) Reader in Mid-Sixteenth-Century Italy", in *Early Modern Workshop: Jewish History Resources*, volume 6: *Reading across Cultures: The Jewish Book and Its Readers in the Early Modern Period* (Cambridge, MA: The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies at Harvard University, 2009).

Shalit Ashkenazi from Padua. It is possible that other cooperators came from other centers of Hebrew presses like Venice, Cremona, Mantua, or Sabbioneta but their names are not recorded.

Marcaria was chosen as the official publisher for the Council of Trent (his press was the only one in the area), therefore he also published Latin works in the years 1562-63.

One year earlier, in 1561, Cristoforo's nephew, Ludovico Madruzzo, was appointed cardinal and this fact immediately affected the work of the press. Ludovico, who was not as tolerant as his uncle, opposed the publication of Hebrew books that from then on was suspended. Some unfinished works that were being printed were sent elsewhere to be completed.

The Hebrew books published by this press were not trivial but rather destined to learned Jews: they included eight philosophical volumes, five of which were Islamic philosophical texts translated into Hebrew, nine biblical texts and commentaries, and sixteen legal and liturgical works. The major part of these books was provided with an introduction compiled by Marcaria himself, who also acted as editor and proved to be a man of deep culture with a special interest in philosophy.

In 1558 he published some collections of Ashkenazi and Sephardic responsa - like the *Sefer Rav Mordekhay* by the German Rabbi Mordekhay ben Hillel Ashkenazi (c. 1250-1298) and the *Sefer Bar Šešet* by the Spanish Rabbi Yišhaq ben Šešet Perfet (also: Barfat, 1326-1408) - as well as several legal volumes.

In spite of the prohibition of printing the Talmud, one of its tractates was printed in 1561: *Masseket derek ereš u-firqe ben `Azzay*, a brief text on good manners.

Two Talmudic compendiums also bypassed the prohibition and were printed in 1558-61: *Sefer Rav Alfasi* by Yišhaq Alfasi and two editions of *Sefer Arba`ah turim* by Ya'aqov ben Asher (1280-1340).

In 1559 two editions of the *Mišnah* were issued: one with the commentaries of Maimonides and 'Ovadyah ben Avraham Yare from Bertinoro, the other without commentaries, in pocket-size, edited by R. Ottolenghi.

The press of Riva del Garda also published mystical works and single volumes on other subjects (a Passover *Haggadah*, a grammar, a literary text, etc.). According to G. Tamani, Marcaria's greatest contribution to Jewish culture was the printing of the edition princeps of *Sefer Milhamot ha-Šem* by Levi ben Geršom.¹¹²

At the end of the Council of Trent the press closed and printing in Riva del Garda was resumed only in 1864 when the printing press of Frassinò Bertacco was transferred there from Chioggia.¹¹³

The last book printed in Riva del Garda was *Meir Iyyov*, a commentary on the book of Job written by Me'ir ben Yišḥaq Arama in 1506 and already published in Salonika in 1517. Only the leaves 1-64 were actually printed there, then the edition was completed and published in Venice at Giorgio Cavalli's press in 1567.

Bloch writes: "It appears that when Hebrew printing ceased in Riva di Trento, Joseph ben Jacob Shalit Ashkenazi, who was proof reader in Marcaria's Hebrew press, was instrumental in carrying to Venice the sheets of the unfinished Hebrew publications".¹¹⁴

We have no information concerning Marcaria's death, besides the fact that he probably passed away in Venice sometime after 1573.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Maria Luisa Crosina, *La comunità ebraica di Riva del Garda sec. XV-XVIII*; Giuliano Tamani, *La tipografia di Jacob Marcaria (1557-1563)*, Trento: Provincia autonoma di Trento; Riva del Garda: Biblioteca civica, 1991, 163.

¹¹³ Giuseppe Fumagalli, *Lexicon typographicum Italiae: Dictionnaire géographique d'Italie pour servir à l'histoire de l'imprimerie dans ce pays*, Firenze: Leo Samuel Olschki, 1905, 330.

¹¹⁴ See: Bloch, *Riva di Trento*, 101.

¹¹⁵ See: Bloch, *Ibidem*, 89-110; and Ioly Zorattini, *Marcaria, Jacob*. Online at: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/jacob-marcaria_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/jacob-marcaria_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

One book only, in this collection, was printed in Riva del Garda: *Sefer Rav Alfas*, by Yiṣḥaq ben Ya'aqov Alfasi, edited by Rabbi Yosef Ottolenghi and published at Antonio Broën's print shop in 1557-58 (n. 20, many leaves are missing).

1.7 Bologna

The first press founded in Bologna was that of Baldassarre Azzoguidi in 1471 upon invitation of Giovanni II Bentivoglio who ruled the city from 1463 to 1506. The first Hebrew book was published six years later, in 1477, by "Meister" Yosef, Neria Ḥayyim Mordekhay and Ḥizqiyyah Montero. It was an edition of the Psalms with the commentary of Rabbi Dawid Kimhi. The book was issued in 300 copies and it was the first biblical book to be printed and the first attempt to print a vocalized text.¹¹⁶

From 1482 to 1488 Avraham ben Ḥayyim dei Tintori (the Dyer) from Pesaro - who had previously printed some books in Ferrara - managed a press in Bologna at the house of Avraham Caravita.¹¹⁷

It was only in 1536 that a new press was established in Bologna by the company of the silkweavers namely Menaḥem ben Avraham of Modena, Yehi'el ben Šelomoh of Ravenna, Aryeh ben Šelomoh Ḥayyim of Monselice and Refa'el Talmi from Forlì. "[...] between 1537 and 1541 they published nine books, with the assistance of Isaac Immanuel de Lattes of Rome [...]. The nine books published by them are of varying

¹¹⁶ See the colophon of the cited book (c. 153b); Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 48; and BHB, n. 308017. Amram (p. 48) reads "of Ventura" instead of "Montero" as do the authors of the other catalogues that he quotes in the note. The Library of Congress Hebrew Incunabula short-title catalogue has "Montero" (n. 4, p. 5) which is closer to the Hebrew name on the colophon (מונטרו).

¹¹⁷ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 230. See also: Ariel Toaff, "Bologna ebraica negli studi recenti", in *La cultura ebraica a Bologna tra medioevo e rinascimento: Atti del convegno internazionale: Bologna, 9 aprile 2000*, edited by Mauro Perani (Firenze: La Giuntina, 2002), 13-28; Giulio Busi, "La tipografia ebraica a Bologna", *Ibidem*, 71-82; Guido Dall'Olio, "Libri ebraici e Inquisizione a Bologna (1553-1574)", *Ibidem*, 83-102 [From now on: *Inquisizione a Bologna*]; Mauro Perani, "Confisca, censura e roghi di libri ebraici a Bologna nella seconda metà del Cinquecento", *Ibidem*, 103-116.

degrees of importance, a volume of legal decisions, some rabbinical works, portions of the Bible and books of devotion".¹¹⁸ They were also the first to publish a prayer book with the Italian translation in Hebrew characters.

A 16th- century Italian *Maḥazor* is the only Bolognese edition in this collection. It was printed by Refa'el ben 'Immanu'el Talmi from Forlì on behalf of the company of the silkweavers in 1540 (n. 520). The first volume is missing, while there are two copies of the second volume: one was censored by G. D. Vistorini in 1609 (s. m. C.M2.15), the other is characterized by the presence of many footprints by the Volterra Ancona family from Finale di Modena (Finale Emilia. S. m. C.M2.15.B).

1.8 Ferrara

Hebrew printing in Ferrara alternated periods of activity to long years of total inactivity. The first book printed there, in 1477, was Levi ben Geršon's commentary on Job. It was published by **Avraham ben Ḥayyim dei Tintori** (the Dyer) from Pesaro, and a month later it was followed by the *Ṭur Yore De'ah*, the second of the four volumes of Ya'aqov ben Ašer's *Arba'ah Ṭurim* that Abraham Conat had started printing in Mantua.¹¹⁹ After 1477 there is a five-year gap before Avraham ben Ḥayyim appeared again in Bologna where he founded a new press in association with **Yosef ben Avraham Caravita**.

The Hebrew presses in Ferrara remained idle until 1551 when **Šemu'el ibn Askara Sarfati of Pesaro** (Samuel Gallus), professor of Hebrew at the University of Ferrara, opened a new one and published six to eight books in 1552. On the following year

¹¹⁸ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 232-233. There Amram also makes some hypothesis concerning the terms of the partnership of the silkweavers' company.

¹¹⁹ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 41-42; and VVAA, "Hebrew Printing in Ferrara", in *EJ*, vol. 6, 763.

Sarfati worked as an editor while the new owner of the press became **Avraham ben Šelomoh Usque** (who was probably one of the founders of the press from the beginning). He was a new Christian who escaped from Portugal - where he was named Duarte Pinel and had a Latin print shop - and returned to Judaism in Italy.¹²⁰ His name is linked to the “Ferrara Bible”, a Judaeo-Spanish (Ladino) literal translation of the Bible¹²¹ in Latin alphabet that Usque edited and printed in 1553 in association with another *Marrano* who had fled from Spain, **Yom Ṭov Athias** (*alias* Jeronimo de Vargas). The copies of the Bible are not all identical, but there are some major variants that led scholars to distinguish two different editions: one for the Jewish market and one for Christians’. The printers’ names and the dedication on the title page change accordingly. The “Christian” edition is dedicated to Ercole II d’Este, Duke of Ferrara, and it is “Estampada en Ferrara con yndustria y deligencia de Duarte Pinel a costa y despesa de Jeronimo de Vargas, en primero de março 1553”.¹²² In the “Jewish” volumes, dedicated to Doña Gracia Mendesia Nasi¹²³, the publishers appear with their Jewish names: “Estampada en Ferrara con yndustria y delegencia de Abraham Usque portugues a costa y despesa de Yom Tob Atias hijo de Levi Atias

¹²⁰ Aron Di Leone Leoni also found evidence of Usque’s presence in Antwerp where he was seeking for a permit to remain after the 1549 expulsion but did not succeed; see: *The Hebrew Portuguese nations in Antwerp and London at the time of Charles V and Henry VIII: news documents and interpretations* (Jersey city: Ktav, 2005).

¹²¹ The claim for the “literal” character of the translation made by Usque is expressed in the title: “Biblia en lengua Española traduzida palabra por palabra dela verdad Hebrayca por muy excelentes letrados vista y examinada por el officio dela Inquisicion”.

¹²² Yerushalmi questioned the authenticity of the Christian names of the two *Marrano* publishers, as they were usually kept secret not to jeopardize their relatives’ security abroad nor their own. See: “A Jewish Classic in the Portuguese Language”, in Samuel Usque, *Consolação às Tribulações de Israel*, vol. 1 (Lisboa: Ed. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1989), 86-87 [from now on: *A Jewish Classic*]. Renata Segre suggested that Pinel may be identified in Didacus de Pinheyro from Trancoso in Portugal (“La tipografia ebraica a Ferrara e la stampa della «Biblia» (1551-1559)”, *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 35 (1992): 318. [From now on: *Ferrara*]). See also: Chiara Faiolo, *Libro, diaspora e ri-costruzioni identitarie: Per una storia della tipografia sefardita portoghese nell’Italia del Cinquecento*, PhD thesis in Iberian Studies (Bologna: Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna, 2010), 127. [From now on: *Tipografia sefardita*].

¹²³ Doña Gracia Nasi (1510-1569) is also known with her Christian name Beatrice de Luna or Beatrice Mendes. She was married to Francisco Mendes and she was a very influent and wealthy woman who rescued many Jews from persecution and was persecuted herself, but rescued herself moving to different places. She died in Constantinople in 1569.

español, en 14. de Adar de 5313 [1553]".¹²⁴

However, in the last years, some doubts have emerged concerning the authenticity of the publishers' Latin names on one side, and the real intent of publishing two editions on the other side. In fact, the textual variants that could mark the translation either as "Christian" or as "Jewish" do not correspond in all the copies to the respective frontispiece.¹²⁵

On the following years Usque published about twenty-five titles on his own concentrating on philosophical, *halakhic* and theological works and on Judaeo-Spanish liturgy. However, no Spanish or Portuguese title appeared after 1555. The press of Avraham Usque continued to publish Hebrew books until 1558, despite the confiscation and burning of the Talmud (and of other Hebrew books) that took place in different Italian cities, including Ferrara, after the Roman trial with the Venetian presses of Giustinian and Bragadin. Ferrara was a relatively independent town and, indeed, Duke Ercole I d'Este and his heirs had a welcoming attitude towards Jews seeking refuge, especially if they could bring along economical advantages.¹²⁶ It was in Ferrara that delegates from different Jewish communities (Rome, Padua, Venice, Mantua, Reggio Emilia and Modena) decided to meet in 1554 to discuss the situations of Jews in Italy. During this congress it was decided that - in order to protect the communities against the irresponsibility of some of their members - any work needed to be revised and approved by an appointed internal committee before its publication. From then on *Haskamot* started to appear on every book that issued the press, but this pre-censorship could not grant the approval of the Inquisition which was enforcing its control on the press.

¹²⁴ See also Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 283; Leo Wiener, "The Ferrara Bible", *Modern Language Notes*, 10. 2 (1895): 41-43; and Richard Gottheil - Meyer Kayserling, "Abraham Usque", in *EJ*, 20, 433.

¹²⁵ See: Stanley Rypins, *The Ferrara Bible at Press* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1955. Reprinted from *The Library*, 5. X. 4 (1955): 244-269); Faiolo, *Tipografia sefardita*, 141-149; Yerushalmi, "A Jewish classic...", p. 89; Segre, *Ferrara*, 322.

¹²⁶ VVAA, "Ferrara", in *EJ*, vol.6, 763.

The closing of the press in 1558 could be due to the punishment in which the author, Ya'aqov Fano, and the printer incurred after publishing the first edition of *Šilte ha-gibborim* that contained a praise of the new Christians who were burned in Ancona in 1556 under the accuse of Judaizing.¹²⁷

By the end of the Seventeenth century two Jewish printers from Mantua, Y. Nissim and Avraham Ḥayyim da Fano, were working at Girolamo Filoni's press in Ferrara. There, in 1693, they printed only one Hebrew book, a *Siddur mi-Berakhah* (weekday prayer book) with a Portuguese translation. Sometime later, however, Filoni was obliged to dissolve the society and to melt down his Hebrew types.

Heller writes that only two other books are known to have been printed in Ferrara in that century: Ḥay ben Šerira Ga'on's *Pitron ḥalomot* (1600) and *Alef Bet* (Filoni's press, circa 1693), a book for children.¹²⁸

The last evidence regarding the existence of Hebrew presses in Ferrara dates from 1767, when the local Jewish Community appointed some pupils of the Jewish school to learn the craft from the printer Salvador Serri in order to preserve it.¹²⁹

1.9 Livorno

Until the middle of the 16th century Livorno was a small village of little interest. In 1548 Cosimo I de' Medici made a first attempt to increase its population in order to enlarge the city exploiting its potential as a port. He invited foreign merchants to

¹²⁷ The real author could be Šelomoh Hazan from Ancona, as it has been proved by Yerushalmi (*A Jewish Classic*, 99). Quoted also by Chiara Faiolo in *Tipografia sefardita*, 130). On the Hebrew press in Ferrara see also: Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 278-283; and VVAA, "Hebrew Printing in Ferrara", in *EJ*, vol. 6, 763-764.

¹²⁸ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xx; BHB, n. 143418 (*Alef Bet*).

¹²⁹ VVAA, "Ferrara. Hebrew Printing in Ferrara", in *EJ*, vol. 6, 763-764.

settle it granting them the protection of their goods against their creditors:

“a qualunque individuo di qualsiasi luogo, condizione, grado o qualità, che si fosse recato, o si volesse recare ad abitare familiarmente in Livorno, a Pisa o nei loro territorii con piena pienissima sicurtà per ogni debito pubblico e privato, proveniente da condannazione pecuniaria, nelle quali fosse per qualunque cagione incorso il nuovo abitatore, da non potere per conseguenza essere molestato nella persona o nei beni da esso acquistati in Livorno e nel suo capitanato”.¹³⁰

A second, more successful, invitation was made in 1590 by Ferdinando I, who offered better advantages. The charter was then expanded and officially issued in 1593, becoming known as the “Costituzione Livornina”. Even though it was addressed “To all of you, merchants of whatever nation, Levantines, Westerners, Spaniards, Portuguese, Greeks, Germans, Italians, Jews, Turks, Moors, Armenians, Persians and others [...]”¹³¹, this law actually aimed at attracting Spanish and Portuguese Jews and new Christians, as it becomes clear throughout the document. They were offered protection from the Inquisition and granted financial advantages, as well as the freedom to profess or to return to Judaism, to own Hebrew books¹³², to build a Synagogue in each town, to have their own schools and tribunals. The documents shows a good knowledge of the Jewish law and provides the legal support for the

¹³⁰ *Notificazione* implemented by Cosimo I de’ Medici in 1548, quoted by Emanuele Repetti in *Dizionario geografico, fisico, storico della Toscana contenente la descrizione di tutti i luoghi del granducato, ducato di Lucca, Garfagnana e Lunigiana*, Vol. 2 (Firenze: presso l’autore e editore coi tipi di A. Tofani, 1835), 736. Translation: “to any one, coming from any place, in any condition, social level, or quality, who came or intends to come and live (...) in Livorno, in Pisa, or in the thereby territories, with full assurance from all public and private debts, deriving from pecuniary condemnation which the new inhabitant incurred for any reason. Therefore he cannot be molested either in his person or in his goods acquired in Livorno and in its territory.”

¹³¹ Ferdinando I de’ Medici, *Costituzione Livornina*, digitized manuscript dated 1593 (courtesy of the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text & Image, University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia), available at: <http://www.liberliber.it/online/autori/autori-m/ferdinando-i-de-medici/costituzione-livornina/>. Original text: “A tutti uoi mercanti di qualsiuoglia nazione, leuantini, e' ponentini spagnioli, portoghesei, Greci, todeschi, & Italiani, hebrei, turchi, e' Mori, Armenij, Persiani, & altri saluto”.

¹³² *Ibidem*, “Concediamo licentia, e' faculta' di poter tener libri di ogni sorte stampati, & a penna, in hebraico, & in altra lingua, purché siano reuisti dal Inquisitore, o' altri sopra a' cio' diputati”.

necessary services. This was the starting point of the Jewish community of Livorno that was to become one of the most influential in Europe.

On the 19th of March 1606 Livorno was proclaimed a “city”. The Jewish community at that time was a very small one, counting less than 200 people, but it was growing quickly. By the end of the 17th century about 2400 Jews were living in this port city.¹³³

The first Hebrew press appeared in the middle of the 17th century when **Avraham ben Šemu’el Ḥayyim Ḥaver-Ṭov**, who had previously worked in Venice at the *Stamparia Bragadina*, started a partnership with **Yedidyah ben Yišḥaq Gabbay** who acquired Bragadin’s types and ornamental woodcuts. “They used as printer’s mark the three crowns - borrowed from Bragadini - with the addition of the coat of arms of the Medicis”.¹³⁴ In 1645 Gabbay obtained a fifteen-year privilege on all Hebrew and “Jewish” books by Ferdinando II de’ Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany (1610-1670), who thought that that business could be a fruitful one. In fact, elsewhere in Italy Jews were not allowed to own a print shop thus leaving the Hebrew book production in Christians’ hands. A Jewish self-production press could have had a broader market selling its products also in North Africa and in the Ottoman Empire, thanks to the commercial relationships of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews that settled in Livorno with those communities. Gabbay’s press could open only five years later, due to Church hostility and internal conflicts with the *massari*¹³⁵, it was active from 1649 to 1657 (while the privilege would have expired in 1660) with the name “La stampa del Kaf Nahat” after the commentary of Yedidyah’s father Yišḥaq ben Šelomoh Gabbay on the *Mišnayot*.¹³⁶

Yedidyah’s son Abraham inherited part of the press equipment and moved to Smyrne to open a print shop there.

¹³³ Attilio Milano - Alessandro Guetta, “Leghorn (Livorno)”, *EJ*, vol. 12, 608.

¹³⁴ Gershon Zilberberg, “Printing, Hebrew”, *EJ*, vol. 16, 536.

¹³⁵ The *Massari* were a group of eligible representatives who dealt with the administration and legal questions of the Jewish community.

¹³⁶ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xviii.

Hebrew printing in Livorno paused for a long time after the closure of Gabbay's press. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the only Hebrew books that appeared in Tuscany were printed in Florence by **Francesco Moücke** (1700-1758). His press, financed by Giovan Agostino Ricci and Gabbay Villareale, issued in Hebrew only liturgical work especially intended for the Livornese Jewish community. Moücke obtained an exclusive privilege from Carlo Ginori, "Ministro delle Riformazioni", not linked to the works or to the language but to the types in which he had invested a great sum. His last Hebrew book was published in 1736; and a few years later Hebrew printing in Livorno resumed.¹³⁷

About eighty years had passed without a single Hebrew press in Livorno when **Clemente Ricci**, who was in the paper sale and distribution business, decided to take the challenge entering into partnership with another merchant, **Avraham ben Refa'el Meldola** (whose brother David was a printer in Amsterdam). Their cooperation ended two years later, in 1742, with a dispute due to financial losses and Meldola continued working on his own with his brother Moses Hezekiah (1725-91) in the editing and composing role. Sonnino points out that all the other workers at Meldola's press were of foreign origin (Hamburg, Zhovkva, Fürth).¹³⁸

Yiṣḥaq ben Mošeh de Pas (also: Paz) also played an important role in that period, being the principal editor and compositor at Ricci's press. After the break of the partnership, de Pas started working in Florence at the press of Battista Stecchi, editing three Hebrew books.

Meldola and de Pas were printing Hebrew books at the same time, one in Livorno and the other in Florence and they soon entered in competition and appealed to the court both claiming the exclusiveness of their privileges. In 1749 the *Consiglio della*

¹³⁷ Francesca Bregoli, "Hebrew Printing in Eighteenth-Century Livorno: From Government Control to a Free Market", in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, ed. by Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shear, (Philadelphia: PENN, 2001), 171-194. [From now on: *Hebrew Printing*].

¹³⁸ Guido Sonnino, *Storia della tipografia ebraica in Livorno* (Torino, 1912), 28. [From now on: *Livorno*].

Pratica Segreta decided in favor of de Pas and Meldola was forced to close his printing shop. De Pas continued printing in Florence until 1760 with his exclusive monopoly on the business and cooperating also with different Christian printers in Livorno.¹³⁹

The possibility of granting monopolies over texts and types was officially abolished in 1767 by the Grand Duke Peter Leopold of Habsburg-Lorraine. Notwithstanding, Bregoli has demonstrated that Livorno did not surpass Venice in the Hebrew book production until the 1780s and that the books published in Tuscany were mainly legal and liturgical volumes.¹⁴⁰

Simultaneously another long lasting press started its activity: it was that of **Eli'ezer Sa'adun** (often also: Sahadun) who, between 1780 and 1790, entered into partnership with **Abraham Yiṣṣḥaq Castello**. Castello was a famous Rabbi, remembered as a charismatic Spanish preacher and as a Hebrew poet. Many important works were published at this press during the ten years of its activity. Sonnino provides a list of their employees: Dawid Ḥay ben Ya'aqov Refa'el Millul (*proto*¹⁴¹), Barukh ben Šemu'el Colonna (editor), Ḥananyah ben Mordekhay Del Moro (editor), Yiṣṣḥaq ben Mošeh Palagi (editor), Yiśra'el *Massahod Haber* (editor) and Ya'aqov ben Yiśra'el Fernandes (worker).

In 1790, upon Castello's death, Eli'ezer Sa'adun continued working at the press until 1808 with little competition. Dawid Ḥay Millul continued working for him together with his brother Mošeh.¹⁴²

Other printers who published Hebrew books were Mošeh ben Yosef Athias (also: Attias), Carlo Giorgi, Giovanni Vincenzo Falorni (from 1776) and Ya'aqov Nunes

¹³⁹ For the dispute between Meldola and de Pas see: Francesca Bregoli, *Hebrew Printing*, 180-183.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 184.

¹⁴¹ The "proto" provided the copies of the sheets that served as a model for the compositors that compiled the pages.

¹⁴² Sonnino, *Livorno*, 37-39; 47-50.

Vais who were later associated with Raphael Meldola.¹⁴³ Some Christian printers occasionally issued a few Hebrew books, this was the case for Gian Paolo Fantechi and Antonio Santini.

Mošeh Athias was active in the years 1762-67, and held the printing monopoly after Yişhaq de Pas. According to Sonnino, his books are not of a good quality in comparison to his contemporary printers. His main cooperators were Mošeh ben Yonah Ashkenazi (his father was also a printer in Constantinople), Ya‘aqov Refa‘el Millul and his son Mošeh Ḥay.

Carlo Giorgi worked at the press of Antonio Santini as an associate from 1759 to 1770 and then continued publishing Hebrew books on his own until 1781. His books were of good quality but their production was very expensive as Giorgi - who did not know Hebrew - necessitated of many Jewish cooperators. Some well-known printers worked at his press: Yişhaq ben Mošeh de Pas, Ya‘aqov Nunes Vais, Mošeh Meldola (Avraham’s brother) and Mošeh Ḥay ben Ya‘aqov Refa‘el Millul.

In 1789-1797 **Ya‘aqov Nunes Vais** and **Refa‘el ben Mošeh Ḥizqiyahu Meldola** managed one of the most successful Livornese Hebrew presses. Ya‘aqov Nunes Vais (d. 1815) first worked at Giorgi’s and at Falorni’s presses. Refa‘el Meldola (1754-1828) was appointed Rabbi in Livorno in 1803 and then, from 1805 on, served as Rabbi for the Spanish and Portuguese Community in London.¹⁴⁴

Livorno then became the only center for Hebrew printing in Italy, and it also supplied liturgical volumes to the Oriental communities, but the quality of the books was inferior to that of the Venetian editions. “Its productions” - Amram writes - “nearly all liturgical and Kabbalistic, had neither beauty nor intrinsic value and were

¹⁴³ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 402.

¹⁴⁴ Sonnino, *Livorno*, 30-37; 44-45.

intended to satisfy the simple taste of people living for the time far beyond the cultural influence of the best in their own literature".¹⁴⁵

Different members of the **Sa'adun** family continued publishing Hebrew books for twenty years after Eli'ezer passed away. They were Dani'el (1806-09) and his brother Šemu'el (1819-20) associated with (Šemu'el?) Molko (1820-24)¹⁴⁶, Naḥman (1823-28), Yehudah Yosef Ḥayyim and Eli'ezer Refa'el (1826-28).

Between 1809 and 1818 the Sa'adun press was idle, and another printer took upon him the printing of Hebrew books: Ya'aqov Arovas (or Arobas). His press, in fact, reached its peak of production exactly in those years. For a certain time Arovas cooperated with Yedidyah and 'Immanu'el Ḥay Piazza (the Library owns a copy of *Hillula Rabba* dated 1819).

Another printer of the nineteenth century was **Ya'aqov Tubbiana** (active in the years 1821-38) helped and then followed by his son **Mošeh Yešua'** who continued issuing books until 1852. The press was then acquired by Rabbi **Yiśra'el (Israel) Costa** and his associates and kept this name also after the son of Avraham Barukh Piperno bought it.¹⁴⁷ Israel Costa appears on the front pages of his publication with an associate (usually "Israel Costa & Co." either in Italian or in Hebrew) in the years 1860s-1870s, while on the following decade he stands out as a single publisher.

In the years 1843-56 the sons of Yehudah Šemu'el Ashkenazi, Ya'aqov and his unnamed brother, published also some books independently and then moved to Smyrna.

The last Livornese presses on the list are three long lasting ones, their names being strictly tied to the history of this town: Ottolenghi, Belforte and Benamozeg.

¹⁴⁵ Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 398.

¹⁴⁶ The printers always appear on the title pages only with their family names as "Sahadun, Molco & C." (either in Italian or in Hebrew).

¹⁴⁷ Sonnino, *Livorno*, 54-55.

Eli'ezer ben Menaḥem Ottolenghi also opened a successful Hebrew press in 1821 and he was active until 1853, then his heirs continued the task.

A name strictly associated to the Livornese press is, no doubt, that of the **Belforte** family. It made its first appearance on a prayer book published by Eli'ezer Sa'adun in 1806 (*Sefer Selihot le-ašmurat ha-boqer*). On the title page Yosef ben Šelomoh Belforte - aged twenty-eight - figures as one of the promoters of the publication of this volume. Yosef taught the printing craft to his son **Šelomoh** who started printing Hebrew books in 1820-21.

In 1834 Šelomoh founded a Hebrew press together with Mošeh Yiśra'el **Palagi** and they were particularly active in the 1840s. In 1869 Šelomoh's son Giuseppe became responsible for the press that kept the former name "*Šelomoh Belforte we-ḥavero*" and renewed the partnership with the Palagi brothers. The next manager of the press was Giulio Belforte who improved the technical equipment of the press expanding its activity to the graphic arts and opened the first Belforte book shop. This change was absorbed by the new name of the factory: "*Stabilimento di Arti Grafiche Salomone Belforte & Co*" as well as by the title page of its Hebrew books "*Šelomoh Belforte we-ḥavero: madpissim u-mokhre sefarim*".¹⁴⁸

This typography kept growing and started publishing books in other languages, and it still exists under its founder's name. It printed liturgical books according to different rites, for the Italian communities as well as for very distant places like Baghdad, Istanbul and all the North African countries.¹⁴⁹

Two other print shops enriched the Livornese panorama of Hebrew books in the nineteenth century: the Benamozeg and the Gentilomo presses. **Eliyyahu ben**

¹⁴⁸ A. Kiron, *La casa editrice Belforte e l'arte della stampa in ladino* (Livorno: Salomone Belforte & Co., 2005), 12-13.

¹⁴⁹ During World War II Jews were prohibited to own factories with more than one hundred employees and to print books. The Belforte family was forced to flee Livorno and the press temporarily passed in the hands of some Christian friends and changed its name to "*Società Editrice Tirrena*" (see: *ibidem*, 16-19).

Avraham Benamozeg (also: Ben Amozeg, 1823-1900) was an Italian Rabbi and kabbalist, born in Livorno in a family of Moroccan Jews. "He served as a preacher at the synagogue of Livorno, as a professor of theology in the rabbinical school of the city, and as a member of the local rabbinical court. He also founded a printing house for Jewish religious books".¹⁵⁰

Šimšon Gentilomo was a student at the rabbinical seminary of Padua who moved to Livorno before graduating and opened a press that was active in the 1830s. He published some translations of biblical and liturgical texts.

The Livorno editions in the "Renato Maestro" collection are a hundred and seventy-five dating, for the major part back to the 19th century (115 editions, see: *I libri del Ghetto*, 634-635), when Hebrew printing in Venice had declined.

The most recurring printer name is that of Salomone **Belforte** (21 editions), at times in association with Moisé and Israel **Palagi** (5 editions). Eli'ezer Menahem **Ottolenghi** (also: Lazzaro Emanuele) follows him with nineteen editions, plus one published together with Natan Molkho and his brother (n. 241); Israel **Costa's** editions are thirteen (seven were published in association with others), while Eliyyahu **Ben Amozeg** and associates appear ten times.

Eli'ezer **Sa'adun's** editions are eleven, while only a few volumes testify the production of the other members of his family: Dani'el and Šemu'el (2), Naḥman (also: Consolo, 5), Šemu'el (4), Yehudah Yosef Ḥayyim and Eli'ezer Refa'el (2).

Nathan Molko appears five times (three in association with Sa'adun), Ya'aqov **Arovas & Co.** are mentioned in four editions, just like Ya'aqov ben Yehudah Šemu'el **Aškenazi** and his brother, Ya'aqov **Tubiana**, and his son Mošeh Yešu'ah Tubiana. The collection accidentally includes four editions of each of these printers.

Only a single edition remained of the following 19th-century printers: Mordekhay Finzi, Salmoni Gentilomo e Clava, Sanson (Šimšon) Gentilomo, Pietro Meucci, 'Immanu'el Ḥay Piazza, and Yedidyah and 'Immanu'el Ḥay Piazza with Ya'aqov Arovas.

The most recurring publishing houses in the 18th-century volumes are those of Avraham Yišḥaq **Castello** and Eli'ezer **Sa'adun** (13, besides the already mentioned 11 editions published by Sa'adun alone), Giovanni Vincenzo **Falorni** (10), and Ya'aqov **Nunes Vais** and Refa'el **Meldola** (4).

The only 17th-century in the collection were published by Yedidyah ben Yišḥaq **Gabbai** (*Mišnayot*, 1653-1656, n. 718, *Yalquṭ Šim'oni*, 1649-1657, n. 895).

¹⁵⁰ Alessandro Guetta, "Benamozeg, Elijah ben Abraham", in *EJ*, vol. 3, 317.

1.10 Rome

Rome is the place where the first Hebrew books in history were printed, the first one being a commentary on the Torah by Rabbi Mošeh ben Naḥman Gerondi (Nahmanides). As we have already said, these *Roman Incunabula* are not provided with printing details besides the names of their printers: 'Ovadyah, Menaššeh and Binyamin of Rome. Scholars have dated them between 1469-72.

Roman Hebrew presses were not stationary nor long-lasting ones, but they occasionally issued a few Hebrew books and then disappeared or published books in other languages.

The next Hebrew book printed in Rome after the Incunabular period was a prayer book for Pesach holidays, published by Giacomo Mazzocchi in 1508. Then, no book appeared until 1518. In that year, a new press was established in the house of Giovanni Giacomo Fagiot da Montecchio with the permission of the Pope. There, Yišḥaq, Yom Ṭov, and Ya'aqov sons of Avigdor ha-Levi Ashkenazi of Padua printed three Hebrew books of their relative Eliyyahu ben Ašer ha-Levi Ashkenazi (Eliyyahu Baḥur): *Sefer ha-Harkavah*, *Sefer ha-Baḥur* and *Sefer ha-Diqduq*. Then, Ya'aqov only printed a single prayer book according to the Ashkenazi rite in Turin (1526).

The publication of Hebrew books paused again and resumed at the official press of the Papal court: that of Maestro Antonio Blado (active in 1516-1567). He first published a single book containing a Hebrew text, which was an edition of the Song of Songs with Latin translation issued in 1524, after that, he printed only Latin and Italian works until 1545. In 1545-47 he published five Hebrew books with the cooperation of Yišḥaq ben 'Immanu'el de Lattes and Benyamin ben Yosef d'Arignano as editors and Šemu'el ibn Askara Sarfati of Pesaro (who later moved to Ferrara) and

Šelomoh ben Yišhaq of Lisbon as chief printers.¹⁵¹ Amram states that this famous press stopped printing in Hebrew because “the Inquisition and its censors could not tolerate a Hebrew press under the very shadow of St. Peter’s”.¹⁵²

In the same year another Hebrew press failed to be opened in Rome by the son of the Pope, Pier Luigi Farnese. In fact, after applying for the privilege, Farnese was appointed Duke of Parma and Piacenza and concentrated in politics but was killed two years later.¹⁵³

After the Blado episode, it became harder to publish Hebrew books in Rome and it was only in 1578 that the next one appeared. Again, it was a Christian printer who published it with the help of the well-known apostate Vittorio Eliano and they only printed biblical texts.

¹⁵¹ Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxiii.

¹⁵² Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 251.

¹⁵³ See: Amram, *Hebrew Books*, 248; and Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxiii.

2. Hebrew Presses in Europe and in the Mediterranean Area (15th-18th centuries)

The Hebrew book collection in the “Renato Maestro” Library includes a significant number of foreign editions, and it represents an interesting testimony of the international book circulation. The history of Hebrew printing is reflected on the shelves of this library, whose volumes were collected according to the cultural needs of the local Jews, and to the possibility of acquiring and importing printed Hebrew works.

As already done in the first chapter, we will propose a survey on the history of Hebrew printing in northern and eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean area.

While in Italy Hebrew presses were managed by Christians, according to the laws of the single cities that often prevented Jews from owning an enterprise and from printing books, elsewhere in Europe, this was not the case. At the beginning, Hebrew books were printed for scholars, theologians and Christian Hebraists in general and the presses were associated with the universities. The readership was a specific one and the texts printed were mainly Bibles with commentaries and grammars with Latin translations.

Such was the situation in Paris, in Germany, in Belgium and in the Netherlands but not in the Ottoman Empire where the printing presses were founded by Jewish refugees.

It was later in the 16th century when Jews started publishing books for their own use in northern Europe.

Hebrew presses had a very short life in Spain and Portugal because of the expulsion of all Jews from the two countries. In 1492 they were expelled from Spain and in 1496-97 from Portugal.

Jewish presses in Spain appeared in 1475-76, while the first Portuguese Jewish printer was Šemu'el Gacon who published a *Pentateuch* in Faro in 1487. His print shop closed in 1492 or 1493. Other presses were active in Lisbon and Leiria like that of Eli'ezer Toledano (Lisbon) and Šemu'el d'Ortas and sons (Lieira).

They both arrived from Spain, Toledano used to live in Toledo and later in Hajar - where he acquired all his equipment - and founded a press in Lisbon active up to 1492, while the origin of the d'Ortas family - active in the years 1492-96 - is not known.

2.1 Basel and Antwerp

2.1.1 Basel

Hebrew printing in the North Europe started in Basel, in a gradual way. Some woodcut Hebrew words were introduced in Latin works but no complete Hebrew incunabula appeared. It was not until 1530 that **Heinrich Petri** (1508-1579) and his son Sebastian Heinrich Petri (1546-1627) printed the first Hebrew books containing also a Latin text. The press was called *Officina Henricpetrina* and it mainly published Latin works.¹⁵⁴

The next Swiss press to publish Hebrew books was that of the **Froben** family whose founder was **Johannes** (1460-1527). He started working with Johann Petri and Johann Amerbach printing his first book in 1491 (a Latin Bible). His first Hebrew book appeared in 1516 (*Hebraicum Psalterium*). Heller writes that "Johannes Froben

¹⁵⁴ On the history of Hebrew printing in Basel see also: Joseph and Bernhard Prijs, *Die Basler hebraïschen Drucke, 1492-1866: Im Auftrag der Offentlichen Bibliothek der Universitaet Basel* (Olten: Urs Graf-Verlag, 1964 [1965]); and Joseph Prijs, *Die Basler hebraïschen Drucke, 1516-1828: im Auftrag der oeffentlichen Bibliothek der Universitaet Basel* (Basel: Sepher-Verlag, 1952).

published as many as 250 titles, among them Hebrew/Latin books of the Bible and grammatical works, primarily works by Muenster but also by R. Abraham ibn Ezra and Elijah Levita (Baḥur)".¹⁵⁵ Johannes was followed by Hieronymus who, later on, was associated with Nicholas Episcopius, his brother-in-law. In 1564 the press passed to Hieronymus' sons, Ambrosius and Aurelius who continued printing Latin works and Hebrew texts with Latin translation directed to Christian theologians.

In 1577 Ambrosius met Rabbi Simeon Guenzburg at the book fair in Frankfurt am Main and they discussed a project of printing Hebrew books for Jewish customers. In particular, Guenzburg proposal concerned an expurgated edition of the Talmud. Froben accepted and secured himself a permit from the city council in order to hire a literate Jew who could supervise the work; as Jews were not allowed to live in Basel. Once he obtained the permit, Ambrosius travelled to Venice, according to Guenzburg's advice, looking for skilled craftsmen. At Di Gara's press he met **Yiśra'el ben Dani'el Zifroni** and asked him to work at his press. He was a skilled editor and compositor, who had a good experience thanks to the years spent working with Vincenzo Conti in Cremona and Sabbioneta and - as already mentioned - he later moved to Venice. In Basel Zifroni worked on the Talmud edition (1578-1581) as well as on other publications that were issued during his stay, he also cooperated at least for one edition with Thomas Guarin, another printer who issued Hebrew books.¹⁵⁶

Jacobs and Franco stated that "Froben's success, like that of Bomberg, induced other Christian printers to join in competition, as Guarin (whom Sifroni also worked for), Beber, and especially Conrad Waldkirch, who from 1598 on published a Great Tefillah, an 'Aruk, an Alfasi in octavo, and "Synagogue Music and Songs" by Elijah b.

¹⁵⁵ Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxxi.

¹⁵⁶ On the printing of the Talmud see also: Fausto Parente. "La Chiesa e il "Talmud": l'atteggiamento della Chiesa e del mondo cristiano nei confronti del "Talmud" e degli altri scritti rabbinici con particolare riguardo all'Italia tra XV e XVI secolo", in *Storia d'Italia*, vol. 11, *Gli ebrei in Italia*, edited by Corrado Vivanti (Torino: Einaudi, 1996), 521-643; Heinrich Pallmann, "Ambrosius Froben von Basel als Drucker des Talmud", *Archiv für Geschichte des Deutschen Buchhandels*, 7 (1882): 44-61.

Moses Loans, who was for a time Waldkirch's corrector for the press."¹⁵⁷

Around 1581 Froben left Basel and travelled to Italy where he was trying to obtain a permit to sell his second Talmud edition. He converted to Catholicism hoping that this could help him to convince Pope Gregory III in 1582 proposing the expurgated edition censored by Marco Marini.¹⁵⁸ The censorship was proven not to be enough extensive, Marini was punished and Froben was denied his request.

The copies of Froben's Talmud were sent to their financier, Simon zum Gembs, who still had to pay part of the expenses. Zum Gembs was very disappointed by the shipment he received: the quality was poor, the censors had greatly damaged the texts and the sheets of different volumes were mixed up together. He summoned Froben for damages in Frankfurt am Main but he never faced the trial.¹⁵⁹

This was the end of Froben's Hebrew press. In 1585 the enterprise passed to his son Hieronymus and to his son-in-law Yoḥanan Me'ir who printed only books in vernacular. The same year Zifroni came back to Italy.

Konrad Waldkirch bought Froben's typographic equipment - including Hans Holbein's woodcut illustrations and frames that had been employed in Latin books - and took his place as a major publisher of Hebrew books in Basel from 1581 to 1612. Hans Jakob and Vecelina Hene worked for him as compositors, Yiṣḥaq Eckerdorf was the proofreader and Johannes Buxtorf the Elder - who was professor of Hebrew in Basel - censored the texts. Hans Jakob left the press in 1609 and relocated in Hanau where he opened his own press.

Burnett writes that Waldkirch did not face the usual financial difficulties linked to the publication of Hebrew books, because he always secured himself with a

¹⁵⁷ Joseph Jacobs, M. Franco, "Typography", in *JE*, vol. 12, 300. [From now on: *Typography*]. Online at: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14553-typography#anchor11>.

¹⁵⁸ Whether Froben actually converted to Catholicism or not has not been demonstrated, some scholars argue that, while in Rome, he simply introduced himself as a Catholic.

¹⁵⁹ Stephen G. Burnett, "German Jewish Printing in the Reformation Era (1530-1633)", in *Jews, Judaism, and the Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, edited by Dean Phillip Bell and Stephen G. Burnett (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2006), 512-513. [From now on: *German Jewish Printing*]

preliminary contract. The promoter would pay for the printing costs and receive the entire production.¹⁶⁰

Other print shops published few Hebrew books elsewhere in Switzerland but they were isolated cases.

In the 17th century Hebrew books were still produced mainly for Christian Hebraists and Jewish presses were still unusual, as Jews were not allowed to reside in Basel until the 19th century. Temporary permits were issued but it was hard to start a business like a print shop when it was subjected to the renewal of a permit. The Froben and Waldkirch presses were notable exceptions.

When the Waldkirch press closed, Hebrew and Jewish books were printed for seven years (1612-1619) by Ludwig Köning and Johannes Buxtorf father and son (both with the same name), two well known Christian Hebraists who also authored several important titles. Among them it is worth to mention the *Biblia Sacra Hebraica et Chaldaica*, edited by Buxtorf (father) with R. Abraham Braunschweig (1618-19) and based on the Rabbinic Bible published by Daniel Bomberg in Venice in 1546-48, with the commentaries that appeared on the previous Bomberg edition of 1524-25.¹⁶¹

Other presses, X active in Basel, X issued Hebrew or Hebrew-Latin works. There were dictionaries and grammars, books from the Bible with the translated text, philosophical works and other works written by Christian Hebraists.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 514.

¹⁶¹ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xxxix. A database of the printers that operated in Basel, with biographical information and printer-marks, is provided by the local University library. Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Index Typographorum Editorumque Basiliensium, online at: <http://www.ub.unibas.ch/itb/recherche/offizinen-alphabetisch/>.

In the “Renato Maestro” Library there are two 16th-century books printed by **Ambrosius Froben** (*Sefer Hasidim* (1580), n. 326¹; and three Talmudic treatises (1578-1580), n. 843), a *Bible* printed by **Ludwig König** in 1618-19 (n. 94) and Johannes Buxtorf’s *Tiberias*, printed by his son **Johann König** (1626-1676) in 1665 (n. 280). **Konrad Waldkirch** is represented by a single copy (*Sefer Rav Alfas*, 1602, n. 22), like “Gio. Tournesein” [sic!], probably **Johann Jakob Thurneysen IV** (1754-1803) whose name appears in a prayer book with the Italian translation published in 1802 (n. 22).

2.1.2 Antwerp

Antwerp was also a very important centre for the book market. Christophe Plantin (c. 1520-1589) moved there from Paris in 1549 and became the biggest publisher of his time, issuing more than 2000 books, among them about thirty were Hebrew texts. Heller affirms that a significant amount of these texts was distributed in Morocco.

“Most impressive is his Royal Polyglot, the *Biblia Sacra hebraice, chaldaice, graece et latine*...(1569-72), printed in eight volumes for Phillip II of Spain”.¹⁶²

2.2 Leiden and Amsterdam

In the Netherlands the first Hebrew letters appeared on Johannes Cellarius’ *Opuscula quattuor* printed by Dirk van Borne in Deventer in 1517: it was a wood engraving of the Hebrew alphabet.

Hebrew types were first used in Louvain in 1528 by Dirk Maertinsz van Aelst, but the actual continuous Hebrew printing in the area started in 1538, when Christopher

¹⁶² Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxxiii.

Plantin arrived to Leiden.¹⁶³

At the beginning of the 16th century, Amsterdam was far from having the leading role it acquired in the following century. Hebrew types in this area were used for the first time in Louvain in 1528.

Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld remark that “the first Hebrew text printed in Amsterdam appeared at a time when [... it] was already a centre of the international printing and book trade”.¹⁶⁴

2.2.1 Leiden

As already mentioned, the Hebrew book production in the Netherlands became continuous in 1583, when **Christope Plantin** moved from Antwerp to Leiden to replace the former printer of the local University. He brought with him eight different Hebrew typesets even if Hebrew books, although of a good quality, constituted only a small part of his business. From an inventory compiled by his son-in-law Raphlengius we learn that some of Plantin’s Hebrew types were part of Daniel Bomberg’s.¹⁶⁵

In 1585 Plantin’s press passed to **Franciscus Raphlengius** (d. 1597) who managed Plantin’s print shop in Antwerp with Johannes Moretus. His role at the university was confirmed and the character of the books published by him reflects his role as an academic printer: he issued grammars, dictionaries and books from the Bible.

¹⁶³ Heller, *Ibidem*, xxxiii-xxxiv.

¹⁶⁴ Fuks, Leo - Fuks-Mansfeld, Renate Gertrud (Rena), *Hebrew typography in the Northern Netherlands, 1585-1815: Historical Evaluation, and Descriptive Bibliography*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 17. [From now on: *Netherlands I*].

¹⁶⁵ Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands I*, 12.

In 1587, after serving as extraordinary professor, Raphlengius was appointed ordinary professor of Hebrew at Leiden University.

Raphlengius, who had converted to Protestantism with his two elder sons (his wife Margaretha and the two younger sons remained Catholics), was glad to leave Antwerp, that had been recently conquered by the Duke of Parma Alessandro Farnese (1545-1592). For the same reason Plantin, who was Catholic, was seeking to go back to Antwerp leaving Leiden that had a Protestant majority.

The adherence to the Protestant faith is also evident in the exegetical works that he published, authored by Johannes Drusius, the former professor of Hebrew, and in the Calvin's Catechism issued in 1591.

At Franciscus Raphlengius' death, the teaching post was transferred to his son Christopher, the only member of the family who was interested in the field, but he died shortly afterwards, in 1600.

Franciscus, the younger son, hesitated to close the press and finally resolved to continue printing until 1619, when he ceased publishing and sold part of his Hebrew types to Thomas **Erpenius**, Professor of Arabic at Leiden.

From 1619 until his death he loaned them to **Johannes Le Maire** who published Erpenius' works. Then, in 1624 the widow of Erpenius decided to sell the Hebrew types thus preventing Le Maire from using them. To keep printing in Hebrew he had to provide himself with new types but he did it only in 1647. Le Maire's printing activity was rather long (1603-1657) but he issued Hebrew books in a discontinuous way.

Yiṣḥaq **Elzevir** came into possession of Plantin's types. In 1625, the Elzevir press was inherited by Bonaventura and Abraham Elzevir who printed Hebrew books up to 1652 when they passed away. Their press was chosen as the local university press in order to keep the oriental printing equipment, that once belonged to Prof. Erpenius,

for the service of the academic institution where he had been working.

The Elzevir family did not continue the tradition of Hebrew printing, with the exception of a few small volumes that were issued in 1656-1660 by Johannes Zacharias Baron using their types.¹⁶⁶

The Plantin's types were used by different printers during the 17th and 18th century, but it is not clear if they were given on loan or if they changed owner many times. In 1713 Pieter Van der Aa acquired them and three years later he was appointed printer of the local university.

Their final owner, however, was Johann Enschedé of Harlem who bought them in 1770.

Other presses issued Hebrew books in Leiden, but they were usually either isolated issues among a wide production of works in other languages or books published by wandering printers that spent a short time in Leiden. This was the case, for instance, of Leib Soesman who learned the printing craft in Amsterdam from 1557 to 1770 and then kept the local style when he moved to Leiden and to The Hague.

In other towns - excluding Amsterdam - only a few Hebrew books were printed. Some printers, however, were more deeply involved in the business: in Franeker the University and governmental printer **Aegidius Radaeus** from Antwerp (active 1586-1615) printed at least twenty-seven books with Hebrew types and **Fredricus Heynsius**, who took his place at the University, issued nine books containing Hebrew texts. "The books were for the most part written by the Professors of Hebrew at Fraenker University and produced by the official printers at the University.

None of the books were written or ordered by Jews and they were all destined for scholarly use."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands I*, 13.

¹⁶⁷ Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands I*, 66.

2.2.2 Amsterdam

In the 17th century, when Venice gradually started to decline, Amsterdam, together with Livorno, were getting ready to take its place. Hebrew presses, scarcely present in Amsterdam, started to be more and more widespread and printers arrived from different countries escaping restrictive laws and invasive censorship.

Their success laid mainly in their competitive prices. The books printed in Amsterdam were less expensive because - as once it was the case for Venice - the numerous local mills and foundries provided abundant paper and type, and the existing trade routes granted a broad distribution of the copies.

“The printing business in Amsterdam was accelerated by the presence of Protestant propagandists. The industry suffered a decrease at the hands of Spanish censorship and persecution. Later Holland shook off the yoke of Spain, printing once more flourished”.¹⁶⁸

After the declaration of independence in 1581 the Netherlands were free from the Spanish censorship and Inquisition, nevertheless the Portuguese community of Amsterdam imposed itself a previous control on all the books published by its members. The heads of the Jewish community were appointed to check the texts and give their official consent to the publication. This was made to prevent legal problems with non-Jewish tribunals that could jeopardize the safety of the whole community.

¹⁶⁸ Herbert I. Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews of Amsterdam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Williamsport: Bayard, 1937), 45, [From now on: *Economic Activities*].

Heller and Bloom stated that the number of books published in the Netherlands in that century, exceeded that of all other European countries.¹⁶⁹ Unlike other European places and other cities in the Netherlands, where the presses were linked to the local universities and provided the books requested by local scholars, namely Christian Hebraists, in Amsterdam the Hebrew presses were independent, managed by Jews and intended for the Jewish market.

Nevertheless, a great input to the Hebrew book business is to be found in the Christian Reformation that brought about a new interest for the biblical sources and for the original texts of the Bible. "Calvinist supremacy in Amsterdam [- Bloom affirms -] made it possible for Hebrew book publishing to gain such great importance".¹⁷⁰ Moreover, this enterprise was financed mainly by non-Jewish investors, among them paper merchants and booksellers.

The book trade became a major part of the economy of the city, with a great number of people involved in the production process. Amsterdam types, as it had once happened with Bomberg's types, were considered the best on the market and were proudly praised on the title pages of books printed elsewhere. The local Jewish community was constantly growing and especially literate Jews, Rabbis and scholars went to Amsterdam either to publish their own works or to buy local imprints and they often remained for a long time.

The two first Hebrew presses in the 17th century in Amsterdam were those of Menaššeh (Manasseh) Ben Israel and Dani'el de Fonseca, both issuing the first book in 1627.

¹⁶⁹ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xxii; Herbert I. Bloom, *Economic Activities*, 45; M. Bendowska and J. Doktor, *The Amsterdam of Polish Jews. Old Hebrew printed Works from the Collections of the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw* (Warsaw: The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, 2016), 45. [From now on: *Polish Jews*].

¹⁷⁰ 1937, p. 60.

Scholars disagree as to which of the two presses published the very first book in Amsterdam. The discussion arose from the colophon of the book *Ševile emunah* in which de Fonseca claimed that it was the first Hebrew book in the city, but his counterpart's publication was likely already extant.¹⁷¹

De Fonseca (b. c. 1580) was a New Christian who fled Portugal because the Inquisition suspected him of Crypto-Judaism. He probably arrived in Amsterdam in 1616, as in that year his name appears in the list of the members of the Sephardic congregation *Neveh Shalom*.

His press had a short life and issued only two books: *Ševile emunah* by Me'ir ben Yišḥaq Aldabi and *'Ene Avraham* by Avraham de Fonseca. We do not have any further information concerning the origin of his types, the names of his cooperators or the reasons that led him to close the press and to leave Amsterdam, as he probably did since his name disappeared from all the archival sources from then on.¹⁷²

Menaššeh (Manasseh) Ben Israel (1604-1657), like de Fonseca, was also born in Portugal in a family of *conversos* that escaped from Lisbon in 1603 or 1604 because of the Inquisition. Ten years later they arrived to Amsterdam where they all returned to Judaism, changing their family name from Nunes Rodrigues Soeiro to "Ben Israel", since they did not remember the former name of their ancestors.

Manasseh studied in the local Sephardic school becoming a Rabbi and a teacher. He got interested in the book production in 1626, when he was looking for a new source of income, and had noticed that the local Jewish Community had to import all its books from Venice or from Poland. All the Hebrew books occasionally printed in Amsterdam were, in fact, intended for Christians.

¹⁷¹ See: The Seventeenth..., p. xxiii; and Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands I*, 137-139.

¹⁷² M. Bendowska and J. Doktór, *Polish Jews*, 58; Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands I*, 135-140.

His first imprint was dedicated to Efrayim Bueno and Avraham Sarfati, probably the friends who helped him raising funds to start the enterprise. Later his brother-in-law Yonah Abarbanel may have financed some publications.¹⁷³

In 1629 the printing of Yosef Šelomoh Delmedigo's books *Sefer Elim* and *Ma'ayyan ganim* about the Karaite scholar Zerah ben Nathan of Troki (Lithuania) caused him some problems with the leaders of his Jewish Community. A committee was appointed to check and expurgate the texts from possible heretical statements and some passages were eventually omitted. This event caused a rupture, that lasted until 1636, with Yišhaq Aboab, who had assisted him as a corrector,.

Several Amsterdam printers learned the printing craft at his shop, among them Yeudah Leib ben Mordekhay Gimpel of Posen, Reu'ven ben Elyakim of Mainz and Dawid de Castro Tartas.

In 1639, when the three different congregations of Sephardim fused together in a unitary Talmud Torah, Ben Israel lost his influence and received a reduced salary becoming the fourth Rabbi. As a consequence he tried to implement his book production and he got associated with his brother-in-law Yonah Abarbanel and with his brother Efrayim Soeiro printing Jewish books in different languages. Besides his own works, Manasseh Ben Israel issued editions of the Bible and liturgical volumes. He was the first Amsterdam printer who exported his printed books to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.¹⁷⁴

In 1641 the situation changed, Yišhaq Aboab was appointed Rabbi in Brazil and left a vacancy that was replaced by Manasseh who gained the status of Rabbi and

¹⁷³ Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands I*, 100-103; Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xxiii-xxv.

¹⁷⁴ M. Bendowska and J. Doktór, *Polish Jews*, 58.

teacher.¹⁷⁵ Two years later he realized he did not have enough time to work at the press, therefore he transferred its management to **Eliyyahu Aboab** of Hamburg and kept cooperating as editor and author. "During the time Aboab ran the printing house a completely new kind of type was introduced, which had never been used before in the Netherlands, the so-called *waybertaytsh* type, a cursive type especially used for the printing of Yiddish books and texts".¹⁷⁶

Eliyyahu Aboab printed eight works keeping his role until 1645, When Manasseh's son Yosef took his position (1646-1648).

In 1646 two Christian merchants commissioned an octavo edition of the *Miṣnah*. The book, containing a glossary edited by Manasseh and the punctuation added by R. Ya'aqov Yehudah Leon Templo, was printed in 4000 copies. Yosef's contribution as a manager was a short one as he died in 1650 during a business trip to Lublin. At his death another son, Šemu'el ben Yiśra'el Soeiro, inherited the press. Seven years later Šemu'el died in England while he was engaged in obtaining the readmission of Jews in the land. Manasseh died the following year thus putting an end to the "Ben Israel" press.

Sometime around 1639, another important Hebrew press opened in Amsterdam, that of **'Immanu'el Benveniste** (1608-1664). Little is known about his family apart its belonging to Iberian origin, probably a *conversos* family. Benveniste is said to be from Venice, although this wasn't probably true, but he arrived in Amsterdam through Italy and kept the Italian form of his name.

He certainly spent some time in Venice, where he probably acquired his Hebrew types and learned the craft. Bloch has always affirmed that he bought the types formerly used by Ya'aqov Marcaria in Riva del Garda but it hasn't been proved

¹⁷⁵ Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands I*, 107-108.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, 109.

yet.¹⁷⁷

Benveniste's printer mark was very famous: a rampant lion on the right and a turret on the left, all surmounted by a star. It was usually printed inside a shield inserted in an architectural frame but it also appeared on other pages, it became so popular that other printers imitated it in different places of northern Europe.

Benveniste hired some of the unemployed workers of the Ben Israel press and soon overshadowed it. Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld state that the success of Benveniste's press was greater than that of Ben Israel's as he made, of the printing press, his only business, and founded it when he was already a skilled craftsman who had acquired a good experience at the Venetian presses.¹⁷⁸

Benveniste had a great export trade, proven by the big number of copies that he issued. Many of his books were commissioned by private investors to be sold in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.¹⁷⁹

He started his activity publishing Spanish works for the Sephardic congregation, later he issued some of the principal books of the Jewish textual tradition like the Babylonian Talmud, the *Šulḥan `arukh*, *Hilkhot Rav Alfás*, *Midraš Rabba*, *Šene luḥot ha-berit* and many liturgical volumes and prayer books according to different rites. He printed different editions of the Bible, as well as the Yiddish biblical paraphrase for women *Še'ena u-re'ena* compiled by Ya'aqov ben Yišḥaq Ashkenazi (1550-1625) in 1616. Finally, in 1644-48 he published his famous unexpurgated edition of the Talmud, subscribed by two well known workers: Yehudah Leib ben Mordekhay Gimpel of Posen and Uri Phoebus ben Aaron Witmund ha-Levi (see below).

Among Benveniste's press' workers there were some well known craftsmen who later published books on their own. **Yehudah Leib ben Mordekhay Gimpel of**

¹⁷⁷ Bloch, *Riva di Trento*, 109.

¹⁷⁸ Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands I*, 153. For a complete list of Benveniste's workers see: *ibidem*, 150.

¹⁷⁹ M. Bendowska and J. Doktór, *Polish Jews*, 60.

Posen, for instance, had previously served Manasseh Ben Israel (1632-1640) and was probably the main assistant of the Benveniste press and a skilled compositor.

The interest in the book production was rooted in the previous generations of the family. In 1599-1611 his father and grandfather had financed some editions of Conrad Waldkirch in Basel, where his father Mordekhay Gimpel had corrected the sixth edition of the *Biblia Rabbinica* in 1618. It is not known if he arrived in Amsterdam long before he entered the Ben Israel print shop.¹⁸⁰ His first son, named after his father who was probably dead, learned the printing craft when he was very young.

In 1648 Yehudah Leib started a partnership with **Šemu'el ben Mošeh ha-Levi** - with whom he got acquainted in 1646 at Benveniste's press - and together they printed about twenty works in Hebrew and in Yiddish. Very little is known about Šemu'el ha-Levi apart his Dutch name, Marcus Levy.

Together they were the first Ashkenazi Hebrew printers in Amsterdam. During that period they probably kept a good relationship with Beniveniste whose printer-mark appears on the title page of *ʿAšarah ma'amarot* by Menahem ʿAzaryah da Fano in 1649. When the partners interrupted their society in 1651, Yehudah Leib resumed his place as a compositor at Benveniste's press together with his son Mordekhay. In 1658 he worked briefly for the new press of Uri Phoebus with his son and, from 1661 to 1664 he cooperated with Yosef Athias.

Šemu'el ben Mošeh ha-Levi in 1651 found a new partner: **Re'uven ben Elyakim of Mainz** who in turn had also worked at the Ben Israel press and later with Eliyahu Aboab. Re'uven of Mainz passed to Benveniste's press until 1656, he was later hired by Uri Phoebus ha-Levi.

Benveniste decided to close his print shop in 1659 but continued working in the book trade. Although the reasons of this choice are not known, Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld

¹⁸⁰ Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands I*, 185.

have formulated the hypothesis that it could be due to the difficult competition with Uri Phoebus ha-Levi and Yosef Athias's printing houses.¹⁸¹

Uri Phoebus ben Aharon Witmund ha-Levi (also: Philips Levi, or Philip Arentsz, 1627-1715), as we have said, opened a print shop in 1658 thus leaving the Benveniste press where he was working. He probably had had previous printing experiences as an apprentice and, in 1655, he also cooperated with Šemu'el ben Mošeh ha-Levi. In Amsterdam he was a very active printer, issuing about one hundred titles in thirty years, some addressed to the non-Jewish market. He was assisted by Yeudah Leib of Posen and his son Mordekhay Gimpel, Re'uven of Mainz, and Mošeh ben Aharon of Worms.

In 1664 Uri Phoebus became a member of the Guild of Booksellers, Bookprinters and Bookbinders of Amsterdam, with his Dutch name Philips Levi.

During his life he changed congregation several times passing from the German to the Polish one, went back to the German and then finally turned to the Sephardic congregation.

In 1672 when the local Government fell and William III of Orange took the power, he went bankrupt like many of his contemporary. The following year, however, he was able to resume his activity.

Among its publications we find the first complete Yiddish translation of the whole Bible - without the Hebrew text and commentaries - made by Yequti'el ben Yišhaq Blitz in 1676, which caused him a lot of trouble.¹⁸² The book was completed and distributed only in 1679. Almost in the same period Yosef (Joseph) Athias issued a similar translation of the Bible edited by Yosef (Joseph) Witzzenhausen. The two

¹⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 152.

¹⁸² For a complete account on the printing of the Yiddish Bible see: Fuks, Leo, Fuks-Mansfeld, Renate Gertrud (Rena), *Hebrew typography in the Northern Netherlands, 1585-1815: Historical Evaluation, and Descriptive Bibliography*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 237-241. [From now on: *Netherlands II*].

printers, ruined by this wrong investment, entered a fruitless dispute.¹⁸³

At the end Uri Phoebus was obliged to cede his print shop to his financiers Justus Baeck (a wealthy merchant) and William Blaeu (publisher, printer and member of the city council) and to work as an employee at his own printing house.

In 1691 he moved to Poland and settled in Zolkiew seeking a broader market and lower competition.¹⁸⁴ Hebrew printing became his family tradition, and his heirs transmitted the craft from one generation to the other until the twentieth century.

Uri Phoebus' main concurrent in Amsterdam was **Yosef ben Avraham Athias** (c. 1635-1700). He was born in Spain in a Marrano family and his father, Jorge Mendez de Castro, was burned by the Inquisition in Cordoba in 1665 when he was already in Amsterdam. He founded his press in 1658, the same year as Uri Phoebus, and on March 31, 1661, he was the first Jewish printer to be accepted in the Amsterdam Bookprinters' Guild.

Being the local market a competitive one, Athias tried to specialize in works that other printers were not publishing and he also printed many books for the non-Jewish market. Between 1659-61 he published the first Hebrew Bible with Arabic numerals in four volumes with the assistance of Prof. Johannes Leusden (1624-1699). Therefore he could reach the scholarly circles for which his publications were intended.

He also published Catholic books for the Portuguese market as well as many editions of the English and Spanish Bible. His Bibles were issued, many times, in hundreds of copies thanks to the stereotype process that he introduced for the first time: he fixed the composed pages in iron frames and stored them so to be ready for printing at any

¹⁸³ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xxviii.

¹⁸⁴ Other scholars stated that Uri Phoebus moved to Poland in 1689 (Heller, II, p. xxviii) but Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld affirm that in 1691 there is evidence of his presence in Amsterdam where he was liquidating his printing press (*Netherlands II*, 241).

time.¹⁸⁵

His English Bibles were sold in enormous quantity in England and Scotland and this is why the second Anglo-Dutch war in 1665-1667 caused him great harm: his book cargo was seized and only part of it reached its purchasers after the war.

In 1666-67 Athias published a new Hebrew Bible, *Biblia Hebraica Accuratissima*, the first one to include both the Jewish and the Christian approvals on the same edition.¹⁸⁶

“In 1667 the States General took cognizance of his excellent work by presenting him with a gold chain and medal as a token of the country’s esteem. Three years later, it granted him a fifteen year monopoly on the printing and sale of English Bibles. In 1673 the monopoly was renewed”.¹⁸⁷

Athias’ financial situation, in spite of the success of his editions, was always critical. He was not capable of paying his debts to his main financier, Christoffel van Gangelt who, in turn, went bankrupt in 1672. Joseph Deutz, his stepdaughter’s husband, helped van Gangelt taking upon himself Athias’ credits but the latter could only give him his books as a pledge.

Athias was forced to find a partner to continue printing and he got associated with his main competitor’s widow in the trade of English Bible, Jan Jacobsz Schippers. Later, Anna Maria, Jan Fredericx Stam’s daughter, joined the partnership up to 1674. Therefore, at that time the associates secured themselves the monopoly on English Bibles.

In 1679-87 Athias published an Yiddish edition of the Bible, thus entering in open conflict with Uri Phoebus who published a similar edition (see above). Moreover, in

¹⁸⁵ Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands II*, 286-291.

¹⁸⁶ Theodor Dunkelgrün, “Like a Blind Man Judging Colors: Joseph Athias and Johannes Leusden Defend Their 1667 Hebrew Bible”, in *Mapping Jewish Amsterdam: The Early Modern Perspective*, edited by Shlomo Berger, Emile Schrijver and Irene Zwiep (Leuven and Paris: Peeters, 2012), 80.

¹⁸⁷ Bloom, *Economic Activities*, 49-50.

1681, he bought a letter casting plant from the Elzevier family and this purchase resulted in a quarrel with the letter-casters guild and in a strike of his workers. The origin of this conflict is to be found in the great success of the trade of his Bibles that caused the envy of its competitors. The opposition of the guild against Athias was probably the major reason for renewed financial difficulties that led him to bankruptcy and forced him to close for a couple of years. The press reopened with the intervention of Mošeh Machado that acted as a Maecenas.¹⁸⁸

From 1685 the Hebrew section of the press was managed by Yosef's son 'Immanu'el (also: Manuel, c. 1664-1714), while he was engaged in the other publications and in the type foundry, but his name continued to appear on the frontispieces.

In 1695 another bankruptcy forced them to hide themselves from the creditors for six months. By 1697 they could start printing again, although the press, managed by their associates, was active even during their hiding.

In 1700, before his father's death, 'Immanu'el took over the whole press but it was not a successful business anymore, he was unable to pay his debts. The widow Schippers had died and her daughter, after an unsatisfying attempt to share the enterprise, resolved to chase him from her property. He printed his last book in 1709, failed to fulfill the next working opportunities, and died in poverty in 1714.

Avraham Athias, whose relation with the former owner is not clearly stated, inherited the print shop but his activity was limited to the years 1728-1741. The typesets were later acquired by Šemu'el Proops, an Ashkenazi Jew that we will meet later.

Another famous contemporary printer was **Dawid de Castro Tartas** (c. 1625-c. 1700) who opened his print shop in 1662 and published about seventy books, stopping in

¹⁸⁸ This episode is reported by Bloom, *Economic Activities*, 50-51. Heller, instead, writes that Athias made a great expense purchasing a type-foundry that was not as profitable as he was expecting it to be (*The Seventeenth Century*, xxix-xxx).

1698. He issued works in different languages mostly in Hebrew and Spanish. Like many of his contemporaries in Amsterdam, he was part of a family of new-Christians that returned to Judaism in Europe. One of his brothers, Yiṣḥaq, was burned by the Inquisition in Lisbon.

Dawid acquired a good experience working as a compositor at the Ben Israel press and then continued printing books independently helped by his brother Ya'aqov. Their little press was successful and kept growing so much that Dawid finally hired other workers.

“Tartas’ output was varied and, in some cases notable. He printed prayer books, discourses, a Mishnah, and numerous other titles, primarily small works. Among those titles are several books by R. Solomon de Oliveyra (d. 1708)...”.¹⁸⁹

Both Tartas and Oliveyra adhered to the movement of the false Messiah Šabbetai Ševi and this press issued the greater number of works for the Sabbatianism than any other. This movement, in fact, was particularly successful among Amsterdam Jewry and many printers became involved. The false Messiah was mentioned in the titles pages of some volumes, like two prayer book issued by Yosef Athias. When Šabbetai Ševi converted to Islam shocking his followers and putting an end to this heresy, some presses that had been involved in the movement paused their activity for a while. This was the case of Dawid de Castro Tartas who, in 1667, remained idle, but then regained his position and continued publishing books until 1697. From 1678 his son-in-law, Šemu’el ben Yiṣḥaq Texeira Tartas, worked at the press with different roles.

His Hebrew types were partially sold to Caspar Steen in 1692. In 1697 when he decided to retire and leave, he sold the rest of the types with all his equipment and privileges to Mošeh Mendes Coitinho.

Bloom motivates the retirement with a harsh dispute among de Castro Tartas and two other presses: that of Caspar Steen and Mošeh Polacco and that of Ašer Anshel

¹⁸⁹ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xxx.

and Iśśakar Baer. In 1694 de Castro Tartas acquired a monopoly to print a prayer book (*Tefillot kol ha-šanah, Yom Kippur we-Ta`aniyyot*) but discovered that, in spite of his privilege, the above-mentioned printers were printing the same book. Since Ašer Anshel had also been granted a fifteen-year monopoly from the States General, Tartas lost the suit.¹⁹⁰ Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld gave few details but stated that Tartas' privilege was not specific enough to prevent other printers from printing the same kind of books.¹⁹¹

Caspar Steen, acquiring de Castro Tartas' types in 1692, became the only non-Jew owning a Hebrew press in Amsterdam. He was a bookbinder and had a bookshop when he decided to engage in the whole printing process, and he published Hebrew books only. This characteristic differentiated him from the other Christian printers that were interested in the business and published Hebrew books as well as works in other languages. The composing work was usually done by Polish Jews that immigrated to Amsterdam. Steen's press was active until his death, in 1703. His son refused to continue the work.

Mošeh Mendes Coitinho, the second customer of de Castro Tartas' typographical material and printing privileges, opened his print shop in 1698. He was part of a *conversos* family like the major part of his colleagues and rivals but he didn't have any previous experience in the printing craft. At the beginning he was assisted by Šemu'el Texeira Tartas, his father-in-law, who worked as a proofreader at de Castro Tartas' press,. Later Texeira Tartas moved to Livorno (1701) and then went back to Amsterdam where he printed only a couple of books in 1722-23.

Coitinho's press was active until 1711 and issued books in Hebrew (about 35) as well as in other languages.

¹⁹⁰ Bloom, *Economic Activities*, 52-53.

¹⁹¹ Fuks - Fuks-Mansfeld, *Netherlands II*, 342-343.

Another significant Hebrew print shop in the 17th century in Amsterdam alternated its owners several times. It was established in 1688 by **Mošeh Kosman ben Eliyyahu Gomperz** who owned a type-foundry. The following year he was dissatisfied with the work and decided to cede the press to **Mošeh ben Avraham Avinu** (also: Moses Polak). The latter was probably of Czech origin and converted to Judaism after his wife Friede Israels, and he printed mainly Ashkenazi prayer books and small works. He had worked for Uri Phoebus and Dawid de Castro Tartas and may have cooperated also with Caspar Steen. Mošeh was probably not as skilled in accounting as he was in composing, because he went bankrupt more than once: first in 1690 and again in 1694. In both cases the press returned to his founder, Mošeh Kosman, and was entrusted to **Ašer Anshel ben Eli'ezer Hazzen** and **Yiššakar Baer ben Avraham Eli'ezer** of Minden. Mošeh ben Avraham Avinu moved to Germany where he continued his printing activity and was at the end condemned for his debts.¹⁹²

Ašer Anshel was a ritual slaughterer (*šohet*) and he often appeared as such on the books that he published. In Dutch documents he is mentioned as Andies Ele'azar Soget, while his partner **Yiššakar Baer** appears as Barent Leenderts or Linaer.¹⁹³ Anshel was also employed at Uri Phoesbus' press, just like his partner, who later worked for Dawid de Castro Tartas and Yosef Athias.

They were assisted by Anshel's son Benjamin Wolf who worked as a compositor. In 1693 - as we have already said - they were forced to return the leased equipment to Mošeh ben Avraham Avinu but their idleness lasted only one year. Mošeh' second failure reestablished their former role.

Yiššakar Baer retired in 1703 while Ašer Anshel continued to print for ten more years, until 1713. His son Benjamin Wolf had already left the press in 1709.

¹⁹² Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xxxii-xxxiii, and Heller, *Printing the Talmud: A History of the Individual Treatises Printed from 1700 to 1750* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 59-74.

¹⁹³ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xxxiii. Bloom uses the Dutch names (*Economic Activities*, 52-53).

During the 18th century Hebrew printing in Amsterdam started slowly to decline. The three main printers of the previous century, Uri Phoebus ha-Levi, Yosef Athias and Dawid de Castro Tartas, were not replaced by other printers of equal importance.

However, Amsterdam was still the main center for the publication of Hebrew titles but the former splendor was fading. A big part of the production was destined to be sold abroad, mainly in Poland and Russia where print shops were not competitive.¹⁹⁴

Around 1680 **Yiṣḥaq Cordova** opened a press and published Spanish and Hebrew books. In 1710-14 he printed some books in Hamburg but then he returned to Amsterdam and kept working there until he resolved to sell his press to Hartogh Alexander **van Embden**. Van Embden was a book-dealer whose print shop operated for generations under his heir's management.

Last but not least, the famous **Proops** family also has its roots in the 17th century. Yosef Proops arrived to Amsterdam from Posen, opened a Hebrew press and became a member of bookseller's guild in 1677. His son Šemu'el, as already stated, bought the Hebrew types of the Athias' press, and concentrated on the printing business trying to make it as much profitable as possible. "[...] their main concern was with the sale and auction of books. Joseph, Jacob and Abraham were members of the firm from 1734-1780. In 1799 Solomon ben Abraham Proops headed the concern. The last of the family, David ben Jacob Proops, died in 1849. His widow sold the business to Levinson of Amsterdam".¹⁹⁵

A major printer of the 18th century, in spite of the decline of the printing industry, was Mošeh ben Šim'on Frankfurt, a religious judge and writer in Amsterdam. He

¹⁹⁴ Zeev Gries, *The Book in the Jewish World 1700-1900* (Oxford ; Portland, Or.: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010), 34. [From now on: *Book in the Jewish World*].

¹⁹⁵ Bloom, *Economic Activities*, 55.

published a large-folio edition of the *Miqra'ot gedolot* (Rabbinic Bible) in 1724, selling subscriptions prior to its publication.¹⁹⁶

Other printers have also issued a limited number of Hebrew works or books containing Hebrew texts with translations, but this will not be part of our investigation.

“There were 318 Jewish printers in Amsterdam from the time of Menasse ben Israel until 1732. In 1743 nine Jewish booksellers and one Jewish printer were listed as having to pay taxes, their annual income amounting to 800 guilders or more.”¹⁹⁷

There are several factors that contributed to the decline of the printing industry in Amsterdam. For more than a century its name was associated with this great cultural business and it was admired for its good quality and finesse. Printers from all over Europe looked at Amsterdam as a model and tried to imitate its style. However, a time arrived in which this production became less profitable and the lack of an economic return made it less attractive to businessmen.

Too many copies of the same books invaded the market in spite of the numerous monopolies that had been granted in order to prevent this situation. Since many reprints of the same books were available the prices lowered. Moreover, the presence of peddlers that were selling their books at lower prices than the other booksellers damaged the latter as well as all the printers and the press workers.

¹⁹⁶ See: Gries, *Book in the Jewish World*, 23.

¹⁹⁷ Bloom, *Economic Activities*, 59.

Guilds requirements for its members became less strict and less experienced workers became involved in the book production reducing its quality. Notwithstanding all these factors, since the cost-of-living in Amsterdam was higher than elsewhere its prices remained quite high and smaller towns became more competitive.

The Amsterdam editions in the “Renato Maestro” collection are forty-seven (but the copies are a lot more) dating, for the major part, to the 18th century. Many printers appear in the list (see: *I libri del Ghetto*, 632), among them there are three members of the **Athias** family: Yosef (n. 604: *Ta`aniyyot*, 1689), his son `Immanu`el (a Bible commissioned by **Dawid Nunes Torres** (n. 101: 1699-1705), an edition of the *Šulħan `arukh* (n. 289: 1697-1699), and *Qiššur Šene luħot ha-berit* (n. 345, 1707) by Yeša`yahu Horowitz) and Avraham ben Refa`el Hizqiyahu Athias (n. 551: 1728; n. 561: 1740; n. 613: 1728; n. 673: 1737; including four liturgical volumes and an ethical work).

The most recurrent surname is that of the **Proops** family: Šelomoh ben Yosef Kohen appears eight times in volumes dating 1722-1734 (nn. 5, 132, 353, 605, 723, 756, 817, 902), his sons Avraham, Ya`aqov and Yosef appear either together or apart in eleven editions (140, 206, 228, 231, 294, 355, 731, 824, 846, 850, 870: 1727-1784), while only one book was printed by Dawid ben Ya`aqov (n. 45: 1824).

`Immanu`el Benveniste, in spite of his great production, is only represented in this library by two editions (n. 100: 1653, n. 845: 1644-1648), just like **Uri Phoebus ben Aharon ha-Levi** (n. 130: 1685, n. 858: 1669-1670) and the less famous Yehudah ben Mordekhai and Šemu`el bar Mošeh ha-Levi (n. 37: 1648, n. 305: 1648).

Only single copies remained of the editions published by **Dawid ben Avraham de Castro Tartas** (n. 720: 1685-1687) and **Caspar Steen** (n. 131, 1698).

The remaining Amsterdam editions arrived from the print shops of other well known printers: Yišħaq ben Ya`aqov de Cordova and Mošeh ben Yišħaq Gomes Mesquita (n. 792: 1708), Yosef Dayyan (n. 333: 1726), Mošeh Frankfurt (n. 162: 1727), Yišħaq ben Šelomoh Refa`el Yehudah Leon Templo (n. 632: 1727), Yoħanan Levi Rofe and his son Binyamin (n. 167, 1817), Mošeh ben Avraham Mendes Coitinho (n. 404: 1705, n. 460: 1700), Šemu`el Rodriguez Mendez, Mošeh Šarfati da Girona e Dawid Gomes da Silva (n. 199: 1726), Hirsch Levi Rofe and Mošeh Kasman (n. 293: 1749), Naftali Hertz ben Alexander Süsskind Levi from Emden (n. 558: 1726, n. 829: 1727).

The last significant edition in the collection is a five-volume Pentateuch with *Haftarot* published in 1767-1769 by Gerard Yohan Janson at Yišra`el Mondovi`s press (n. 203, the second volumes is missing).

These few volumes are not representative of the local production nor, probably, of the actual size of the book import from this city.

2.3 German towns

In Germany, like elsewhere, the printing presses were mainly linked to Universities and issued books for the academics. Hebrew books were part of it, therefore those presses published a small number of books containing from a few woodcut words to a complete Hebrew text, usually accompanied by a Latin translation. One of these printers was Johann Potkin, active in Cologne in 1515-1571.

Together with single Hebrew books, Jewish works in vernacular language or in Latin were also printed in different towns. They were Frankfurt am Main (that was yet to become a relevant centre for Hebrew printing), Hamburg, Mainz and Tiengen (Waldshut-Tiengen) where, in 1560, Eli'ezer and Yosef ben Naftali **Hertz Treves** printed six Hebrew books before being forced to close. They had previously worked in Zurich and, when they moved to Tiengen, they tried to print the Talmud but the Swiss Confederation (that governed the County of Sulz) disagreed and ordered the closing of the press.

The following attempt to publish the Talmud in Basel failed as well, and it was printed only after two decades by Ambrosius Froben.

Thomas Anshelm (c. 1465 - c. 1523) was another printer who published Hebrew books as well as books of Jewish interest in different cities (Strasbourg, Pforzheim, Tübingen and Hagenau). He became an affirmed printer thanks to his friendship with the Christian Hebraist Johann Reuchlin and to the publication of his works.¹⁹⁸

At the beginning of the 16th century the printing craft was not properly regulated and the rules regarding the censorship of books were fixed at the Diets of Nuremberg

¹⁹⁸ Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxxv-xxxvi.

between 1524 and 1530. City magistrates were appointed to be responsible for the books published in their territory.

Then, in 1570, the Diet of Speyer “required that all presses be located in imperial cities, university towns, or residence cities to ensure that all books were properly censored”.¹⁹⁹

In the 17th century Hebrew books were printed in many different German towns, and they were issued mainly at presses managed by Christian Hebraists because it was hard to obtain printing licenses from the feudal lords. There were, for instance, Elias Hutter in Nuremburg, Georg Kelner in Wittenberg, Rudolph Martin in Giessen, Melchioris Lottheri in Leipzig, Wolfgang Endter, Johannis André and Wolfgang Endter junior in Altdorf. Here, different Jewish anti-Christian works were edited and published by Christian theologians to promote awareness and to enable Christians to refuse Jewish theories.

The printing presses that were located in small German towns reflected the stylistic influence either from Amsterdam or from Prague. The local printers, usually, learned the craft in one of these two major printing centers and then moved to start their own enterprise in a new marketplace. Sulzbach, Wilhermsdorf and Fürth, for instance, reflected the Prague style, while the printers of Dyhernfurth, Dassau and Halle were under the influence of Amsterdam. Sometimes this influence was even proudly affirmed in the frontispieces of the books, where “with Amsterdam letters” was printed with bigger types.

¹⁹⁹ Burnett, *German Jewish Printing*, 509. For further information see: S. G. Burnett, “The Regulation of Hebrew Printing in Germany, 1555-1630: Confessional Politics and the Limits of Jewish Toleration,” in *Infinite Boundaries: Order, Disorder, and the Reorder of Early Modern German Culture*, edited by Max Reinhart (Kirkville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, c1998), 329-348; and *Idem*, “Hebrew Censorship in Hanau: A Mirror of Jewish-Christian Coexistence in Seventeenth-Century Germany”, in *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After*, edited by Raymond B. Waddinton and Arthur H. Williamson (New York: Garland, 1994), 199-222.

In the 18th and 19th century German presses had a significant role in Europe, even though Vienna was placed in a preeminent position. Many small towns started having at least one Hebrew press or a Jewish printer of Hebrew books associated to a Christian printer.

On the following paragraphs we will deal with the major print shops that operated in the main locations, but some Hebrew texts were also published elsewhere, either by wandering printers, Christian printers or short-lived presses. This was the case for Koenigsberg, Johannisberg, Halberstadt, Leipzig, Karlsruhe and for the Polish towns of Stettin (Szczecin), Danzig (Gdańsk), Breslau (Wrocław), Lyck (Ełk) and Posen (Poznań).²⁰⁰

Among the German towns listed in the last paragraph, only Leipzig appears as a place of publication in the “Renato Maestro” collection (for the Polish towns see par. 2.6.1). Three publishing houses located in **Leipzig** are mentioned in the Catalogue list (*I libri del Ghetto*, 634), as publishers of a few volumes, all dating to the 19th century.

One of them is Carl B. Lord’s Riesschen Buchdruckerei, where the society *Ḥevrat šoḥere Torat Yiśra’el* (חברת שוחרי תורת ישראל) is mentioned as principal publisher (two editions, n. 99 and n. 211, both issued in 1862). The other printers on the list are Moritz Schäfer (n. 712: 1887), and Carolus Tauchnitius (Karl Christoph Traugott Tauchnitz, 1761-1836. Three editions dated 1838-1860, nn. 110, 113, 120).

2.3.1 Augsburg

An important city for Hebrew and Jewish printing in Germany was Augsburg. In the 15th century Hebrew letters were printed through woodcuts only.

In the 16th century different translations of Jewish books were published together with Hebrew grammars, but it was only when **Ḥayyim ben Dawid Shahor (Schwarz)** moved there from Oels (Silesia) - after leaving Prague - that printing in Hebrew seriously began. He was active in Augsburg from c. 1531 to 1540, probably

²⁰⁰ Gershon Zilberberg, “Printing, Hebrew”, *EJ*, vol. 16, p. 537.

using the press of the Christian printer August Wind. Habermann states that his son Ya`aqov and his son-in-law Yosef ben Yakar worked with him for the whole wandering period, even though their names are mentioned only from 1540 (appearing for the first time in the edition of the *Arba`ah Turim*).²⁰¹

Burnett states that “While in Augsburg Schwarz worked in the print shop of Silvan Otmar, and lived in the home of Bonifacius Wolfhart, a Protestant pastor who also served as the censor of Hebrew books for Augsburg”.²⁰²

Like Geršom Soncino in Italy, he was a pioneer in Hebrew printing in northern Europe, and like him he wandered from country to country with his press, but he didn’t print as many books as Soncino.²⁰³

In 1541-42, due to the worsening of the situation of the printers in Augsburg that prevented Shahor and his associates to continue printing, he addressed the apostate Paulus Aemilius, who was a man of influence, asking him to travel to Italy. The purpose of this mission probably was to sell his books and to test the waters for new working opportunities on the Italian soil. Heller reports of his plan to print the Talmud in Ferrara with Yiṣḥaq of Gunzberg and Paulus Aemilius himself, but the project could not be realized.

The relationship between Aemilius and Shahor deteriorated, the former started to print book on his own anonymously (as an apostate his name could harm the sale of his books) while the latter left the town. On the last years of his life Shahor moved three times with his family, first to Ichenhausen (Bavaria, 1543-44), then to Heddernheim (1545-46) and finally to Lublin. However, before they could obtain a permit to open a new press in Lublin, Ḥayyim died.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Habermann, *Peraqim*, 105. On printing in Augsburg see also: Helmut Gier and Johannes Janota, *Augsburger Buchdruck und Verlagswesen von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1997); Mosheh Rosenfeld, *Der jüdische Buchdruck in Augsburg in der ersten Hälfte des XVI Jahrhunderts* (London: Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1985).

²⁰² Burnett, *German Jewish Printing*, 506.

²⁰³ Habermann, *Peraqim*, 103.

²⁰⁴ Charles Wengrov, “Shaḥor (Czerny, Schwartz)”, in *EJ*, vol. 18, 366; Posner-Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 97; Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxxv-xxxvi.

2.3.2 Isny

Between 1540 and 1542 about twenty titles were printed in Isny (southern Germany) by **Paulus Fagius** (1504-1549), a pastor, one of Reuchlin's students and himself a Christian Hebraist. He taught Hebrew at the Universities of Strasbourg and Cambridge and translated Hebrew works into Latin, especially some works authored by Elia Levita. We have already met Levita at Bomberg's press in Venice, where he worked as a proofreader. Seeking for a publisher for his Hebrew dictionaries and finding in Fagius an interested publisher, Levita took advantage of the temporary closure of Bomberg's press and spent some years in Isny. There, he directed Fagius' press, publishing his own dictionaries and editing other works. He also acquired the Hebrew fonts used by Ḥayyim Shahor in Augsburg and used them in Isny. His nephews Eliyyahu and Yosef moved there with him, and other workers may have joined them.²⁰⁵

Later, Fagius moved to Konstanz and then to Strasbourg but Levita didn't follow him to the last destination but preferred to come back to his family in Venice and died there in 1549.

2.3.3 Hanau

In 1592 Jews were expelled from Hanau and they were not allowed to settle there again before 1603, when ten Jewish families received a special permit to live there.

When the first Hebrew press was founded in 1609 the local Jewish community was very recent but it grew quickly. The press was founded by Yehudah ben R. Mošeh Šim'on ha-Levi Guenzberg, called Seligman Ulma who worked as a proofreader, and

²⁰⁵ Habermann, *Peraqim*, 152.

a Christian manager was appointed to secure the press' status before buying all the necessary equipment in Basel. Therefore, Hans Jacob Henne (also: Hena, Hene, d. 1613) came from Basel to head it and took care of all the necessary purchases.

The financiers were three Frankfurt Jews: Yiṣḥaq zum Krebs, Avraham zum gulden Schaff, and Šemu'el zum weissen Rosen, who obtained a permit from Count Philipp Ludwig II of Hanau-Münzenburg (1576-1612).²⁰⁶ The works issued at this press, were Jews and Christians and were employed with complementary roles, they mainly contained liturgical, rabbinical and kabalistic texts, approved by the local Hebrew censor Walter Keuchen, who was also rector of the gymnasium (in 1612-1622).

In 1618-19 the press was temporarily idle probably because two of its leading printers were busy in Basel, working on the Rabbinic Bible at Ludwig Köning' press. Concerning the following period of activity, when printing resumed, few archival documents have survived and printed books are not always a reliable source.

Some of the books printed in Hanau, in reality, bear the name of other locations or do not mention it at all, therefore the attribution is made with a degree of uncertainty. However, it is possible that printing in Hanau continued until 1630.²⁰⁷

After the closure of this press, the next printer of Hebrew books in Hanau was the Christian Hebraist Heinrich Jacob Bashuysen (1679 – c. 1750), active in the years 1709-1714. Then the press passed to J.J. Beausang and was active until 1797.²⁰⁸

Only one book in the Library collection was printed in Hanau: it is an Ashkenazi <i>Mahazor</i> printed in 1625 (n. 501, the printer is not mentioned).

²⁰⁶ Burnett, *German Jewish Printing*, 514.

²⁰⁷ For further details see: *Ibidem*, 516-517.

²⁰⁸ Chasia Turtel, "Hanau", in *EJ*, vol. 8, 317.

2.3.4 Hamburg

The first Jews arrived in Hamburg at the end of the 16th century, around 1577, from the Netherlands. They were *Marranos* who had been expelled from Spain and Portugal and they were still concealing their Jewish faith. When it was discovered, however, the issue arrived to the city council who had to deliberate on their possible expulsion.

Since the members of the community included “financiers (some of whom took part in the founding of the Bank of Hamburg in 1619), shipbuilders, importers (especially of sugar , coffee, and tobacco from the Spanish and Portuguese colonies), weavers, and goldsmiths”²⁰⁹ the Council decided not to renounce to the economical benefits brought about by them.

A toleration agreement was issued by the Senate in 1612, as it was the case for the members of other religious faiths, preventing them from living in the Inner-city.²¹⁰

Before the establishment of a Jewish community in Hamburg, Hebrew books were printed by Christians from the 16th century, they were mainly editions of the Psalms or the *Megillot*.

One of the local printers was **Jacob Rebenlini** who published Hebrew-Latin works from 1629 to 1647. Then his Hebrew types were acquired by **Thomas Rose**, a bookseller who printed Hebrew books from 1686 to 1709. During the last year he was joined by his son Johann who, from 1711, started printing books independently. Rose used a typographical frame with an emblem similar to that of ‘Immanu’el Benveniste.

²⁰⁹ Zvi Avneri - Stefan Rohrbacher, “Hamburg”, in *EJ*, vol. 8, 295-296.

²¹⁰ For further details see: Joachim Whaley, *Religious Toleration and Social Change in Hamburg 1529-1819*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 73-75 [First ed. 1985].

From 1600, German Jews settled in **Wandsbek** and in **Altona**²¹¹ (1611), and in 1627 some of them also moved to Hamburg.

In 1649 these Ashkenazi Jews were expelled from the city, and concentrated in Wandsbek and Altona, but some of them, especially those originating from Poland and Ukraine, preferred moving to Amsterdam. The ban, however, didn't last for a long time and, in a few years, the Ashkenazi population increased again. In 1671 a united rabbinate that included the three towns was founded, giving birth to the AHW Congregation having its main centre in Altona.

The Sephardic Community was better accepted because of its higher social status. In 1611 it already had built three Synagogues that fused together in a united congregation (*Beth Israel*) in 1652.

Since Jews continued speaking Spanish and Portuguese for a long time (about two centuries) after their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula, they published about fifteen books in these languages in Hamburg between 1618 and 1756.

“Nearly 400 Hebrew books were printed in Hamburg in the 17th –19th centuries. In the 19th century, the Jewish printers issued mainly prayer books, the Pentateuch, mystic lore, and popular literature.”²¹²

During the first half of the 18th century, in the Hamburg district of **Wandsbek** two printers, father and son, were involved in Hebrew typography: Yiśra'el ben Avraham and Avraham ben Yiśra'el.

²¹¹ Now they are both part of Hamburg.

²¹² Zvi Avneri - Stefan Rohrbacher, “Hamburg”, in *EJ*, vol. 8, 295-296.

Three editions in the Library collection were published in Hamburg: Abrabanel's commentary on the *Former Prophets* (n. 8: 1686), and Šim'on Ginzburg's *Naftali ševa' rašon* (n. 318: 1708), both printed by Thomas Rose, and Ibn Paquda's *Hovot ha-levavot* published by George Kramer in 1922 (n. 941).

A single Wandsbek edition, produced by Avraham ben Yiśra'el, belongs to the collection: it contains the Talmudic treatise *Šabbat*, printed alone in 1742 (n. 851).

2.3.5 Sulzbach

Sulzbach was a very important centre for Hebrew printing for more than two hundred years: Jewish presses were active there from 1669 to 1851.²¹³ At the beginning of the 17th century, however, Jews were admitted only temporarily for business purposes.

At that time, before the arrival of Jewish printers, Abraham Lichtenthaler, a Lutheran printer, published some books on Jewish subjects.

Then, in 1666, the Duke Christian-Augustus permitted the establishment of a Jewish community and authorized the opening of a Hebrew printing press. The permit was granted to several printers: to **Yiṣḥaq ben Yehudah Katz of Prague** (Yiṣḥaq Yudeles) of the Gersonides' family (the descendants of Geršom ben Šelomoh ha-Kohen Katz), to **Mošeh ben Uri Shraga Bloch** and to the **Fränkel-Arnstein** family.

Yiṣḥaq ben Yehudah Katz (Yiṣḥaq Yudeles), who worked as a compositor in Prague at the press of Jacob Bak, moved to Sulzbach together with Bak in 1669, but their press was soon compelled to close. On the following year they separated themselves; Bak went back to Prague while Yudeles remained for one year and then left for Wilhermsdorf.

²¹³ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xliv.

Mošeh ben Uri Shraga Bloch (Phoebus Bloch) started printing in 1684 and issued an edition of the *Zohar*, partially financed by the Duke who had a great interest in *qabbalah*.²¹⁴

Bloch decided to publish a new edition of the Babylonian Talmud but died before he could accomplish this task. His son, who inherited the press, tried to fulfill his father's dream but succeeded in publishing only single tractates. Then, since another press was printing the Talmud on Frankfurt am Oder, they interrupted the publication, not to worsen their difficult financial situation. Actually, in 1696 the *Blochs* had to ask another member of the family, Aharon Fränkel, to join the press and to invest on its work. The Fränkel-Arnstein family then continued to manage it until the nineteenth century.²¹⁵

As one would expect, the books printed in Suzbach, included in this Hebrew collection, were published mainly by members of the **Fränkel** and **Arnstein** families, with the only exception of a *Sefer Hasidim* issued by Mošeh ben Uri Šraga **Bloch** in 1685 (n. 327). The Arnstein family is represented here by Ze`eqel ben Aharon, once in association with his son (n. 479: 1837, n. 507: 1795, n. 509: 1794).

The editions of the Fränkel family are more numerous: eight of them were published by Mešullam Zalman ben Aharon in 1748-1770 [?] (nn. 660, 675, 709, 727, 729, 833, 847, 854), one was published by him together with his sons (n. 291: 1764). Two books of the collection were issued by his sons Aharon and Naftali (n. 730: 1765-1766, n. 848: 1766-1770), and three were published by Aharon alone (n. 39: 1776, n. 471: 1780, n. 508: 1770). Finally, two editions bear the name of another Aharon Fränkel, the son of Uri Lippmann (n. 469: 1699, n. 470: 1709).

²¹⁴ For further details see: Boaz Huss. "The Text and Context of the 1684 Sulzbach Edition of the *Zohar*", in *Tradition, Heterodoxy and Religious Culture*, edited by Chanita Goodblatt and Howard T. Kreisel, 117-138 (Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2006).

²¹⁵ On Hebrew printing in Sulzbach see also: Jacob Rothschild, "Sulzbach", in *EJ*, vol. 19, 306-307.

2.3.6 Fürth

Unlike other German towns, Jews were allowed to live in Fürth already in the middle of the 16th century. The local community counted about two hundred people but its population increased in 1670, when Jews were expelled from Vienna.

The first printers of Hebrew books started their activity almost simultaneously in 1691: one was Yosef ben Šelomoh Zalman Shneur and the other was **Ševi Hirsch ben Yosef ha-Levi**. The latter published less than ten titles at his house, ceasing in 1699.

The other, **Yosef ben Šelomoh Zalman Shneur**, had previously worked in Wilhermsdorf at the press of Yišhaq Yudels and left after his death in 1690. His father, who was a *parnas* in Fürth, convinced him to move there and open a print shop. He obtained a permit from Christian Albert (1686-1692), Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach, but was not allowed to print tractates of the Talmud because this privilege had been granted to Mordekhay Model (Marx).

“Schneur began printing in 1691 with the assistance of Moses Menahem Nahum Katz of Cracow, an experienced printer; Reichal bat Isaac Yuedels and her brother Simhah, children of the late Isaac Yuedels as compositors; and Raphael ben Mordecai Gumpel Altschule of Prague (1691-1692), Samuel Zanvil ben Jacob Popetsch of Cracow (1692-1695), and Hayyim Zelig ben Nathaniel Shatz of Fuerth as editors”.²¹⁶

One year later, in 1692, Shneur died and the press passed to his brother Avraham and to Yišhaq **Bing**, his brother-in-law, who kept it until 1698. It remained closed until Yosef's son, Šemu'el Bonfed, decided to reopen it in 1722 in partnership with Avraham ben Yišhaq Bing. They published Hebrew works for about eight years ceasing in 1730.

In 1739 **Hirsch ben Ḥayyim of Fürth** (1683-1772) who had a print shop in

²¹⁶ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xlvi.

Wilhermsdorf, transferred it to Fürth, thus returning to his home town.

Other printers active in the 1760s were Yiṣḥaq ben Yehudah Leib **Buchbinder**, Henokh ben Leib Buchbinder, Śimḥah Levi, Yosef Petshau and Mendel Baer. In that decade, Fürth was a major center for Hebrew printing.

The following century Yiṣḥaq ben Dawid **Zürndorffer's** press managed the major part of the local printing business. The following years it became the most famous press in Fürth and its name changed to Zürndorffer & Sommer reflecting the new partnership.

The Fürth editions in the Library are seventeen. Two were printed by (Şevi) **Hirsch ben Ḥayyim** (n. 322: 1740 [?], n. 726: 1741) and four by his son **Ḥayyim** (n. 282: 1761, n. 373: 1738, n. 831: 1757, n. 852: 1753). Three books were printed by members of the **Buchbinder** family: Henokh ben Leib (n. 347: 1762-1764), and **Yiṣḥaq (Eisak) ben Yehudah Leib** (n. 284: 1766, n. 303: 1761).

The *Zürndorffers* appear four times: Dawid Yiṣḥaq is mentioned in a *Mahazor* that he published in 1836-1839 (n. 503), while the other three volumes were issued by Yiṣḥaq ben Dawid (n. 166: 1801-1804, n. 597: 1810 [?], n. 834: 1785, containing two prayer books and a *Bible*).

The other printers from Fürth whose volumes can be found in the Library collection are: Yosef ben (Şelomoh) Zalman **Shneur** (n. 344: 1696, n. 384, 1697), Yosef **Petshau** and Mendel **Baer** (n. 6: 1763), Yiṣḥaq ben Leib (n. 506: 1791), Śimḥah Levi and Juda **Sommer** (n. 350: 1861-1862).

2.3.7 Wilhermsdorf

The history of Hebrew printing in Wilhermsdorf starts with another member of the Gersonides' family of Prague: Yiṣḥaq ben Yehudah Leib ha-Kohen Katz (**Isaac Yuedels**). Isaac Yuedels obtained a permit from Count Wolfgang Julius of Hohenlohe-Neuenstein to open the first local print shop. Actually, it was the Count who offered him the possibility to relocate in Wilhermsdorf from Sulzbach because

he owned a paper mill and was looking for new customers. Yuedels was hosted at the castle with his printing material and was offered a money loan to start the business. In exchange he promised not to print works against the Christian faith and to buy anything he needed only from the Count. Yuedels moved there with the whole family, whose members were all involved in the printing work, even his two daughters worked as compositors. The press was active from 1670 to 1690 the year of Isaac's death. He was greatly in debt with the Count when he died, but the Count decided to cancel his debts and to sell the remaining Hebrew books during the next years in order to cover the expenses.

The next Hebrew press was opened twelve years later by **Yira'el ben Me'ir of Prague** who sold it shortly afterwards to **Hirsch ben Ḥayyim of Fürth**.²¹⁷

The "Renato Maestro" collection includes ten different Wilhermsdorf editions, all issued by two printers: **Yiṣḥaq ben Yehudah Leib Jüdel's Geršoni** (n. 468: 1673, n.472: 1673, n. 719: 1681-1684) and (Sevi) **Hirsch ben Ḥayyim from Fürth** (n. 226: 1717, n. 302: 1738, n. 375: 1716, n. 695: 1725, n. 722: 1723-1725, n. 724: 1733, n. 836: 1729).

2.3.8 Dessau

In Dessau the conditions in which the first Hebrew presses were founded were slightly different than in other German towns. The first printer was a court Jew at the duchy of Anhalt-Dessau, Mošeh Benyamin (Moses Benjamin) **Wulff** (d. 1729).²¹⁸ He served Prince John George II and then his son Leopold I and his mother and later his wife, who had a regent role when the prince was absent. Wulff obtained a permit to

²¹⁷ Jacobs, Franco, *Typography*, 304.

²¹⁸ See: Marvin J. Heller, "Moses Benjamin Wulff: Court Jew", *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*, 33. 2 (2000): 61-71. Online at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41443485>. [From now on: *Wulff*].

open a press in 1695 and published the first books in the following year. Although he was authorized to print both Latin and Hebrew works he was only interested in the latter and never issued Latin books. All the workers and the equipment arrived from Amsterdam. He printed many prayer books according to the Ashkenazi and to the Polish rite and some kabalistic works. The last book issued by his press was *Yalqut Šim`oni* (1704), he was then forced to close his print shop and sell his types because of economic and legal problems (he was imprisoned several times).

The failure in printing the Talmud had a great impact on him and on his career. In 1696 Wulff stipulated an agreement with Johann Christoph **Beckman** and Michael **Gottschalk** who had obtained a royal privilege to print the Talmud. Wulff took the challenge and started printing it, but he soon realized that the expense was greater than his expectation and his workers were not up to the task. Because of this failure his financial problems increased, as he was obliged to pay damages to his partners.

Other Hebrew printers operating in Dessau in that period were Mošeh ben Šimḥah **Bonem** (active from 1696 to 1704), and Ḥayyim Altschul ben Mordekhay (Gumpel) of Prague (1696-99, he later moved to Dyhernfurth and then to Asterdam).

Some books were printed in Dessau by wandering printers who spent from a few months to one year in the town before leaving for their next destination.

<p>The only Dessau edition in this collection includes two works authored by Ya`aqov ben Yosef Reischer and published in 1696 by Mošeh ben Šimḥah Bonem (nn. 812, 813).</p>
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2.3.9 Dyhernfurth (now Brzeg Dolny, Poland)

In the middle of the 17th century Dyhernfurth was a new small town and no Jews were living there. The Jewish community grew when Šabbetai ben Yosef Mešorer **Bass** (1641-1718) decided to open a Hebrew press and relocated there with his family and his workers with their families. Together they constituted the first Jewish nucleus of Dyhernfurth.

Bass was a well educated man who also authored some works like *Šifte ḥakhamim*, his famous commentary on Rashi's commentary on the *Torah*, first published in Amsterdam in 1680.

His Christian neighbors accused him of publishing works containing blasphemies, therefore he went through a few processes. He was found innocent but these legal problems interfered with his work. His animated private life and a fire that destroyed the press in 1708 jeopardized his activity but he succeeded in rescuing it and in keeping it productive. His son Yosef, and later his granddaughter Ester, continued the work until 1762.

Heller writes that "The number of books published by Bass in Dyhernfurth is not clear, [...] among the books attributed to Dyhernfurth there are several tractates more likely printed in Zolkiew. The confusion, to a large extent, likely arises from the printers in both locations acquiring their typographical material from Amsterdam, possibly from the same sources."²¹⁹

Four other printers were active in Dyhernfurth in the 18th century, namely Šemu'el ben Avraham Katz, Avraham Levin, Šelomoh (Solomon) Koenigsberg, and Yehi'el Mikhl May. At the beginning of the 19th century they were replaced by H. Warschauer & Co., and D. Sklower who moved to Breslau (Wrocław, Poland) in 1834. "The Dyhernfurth productions, which included a complete Talmud and

²¹⁹ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, xlix.

Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, were very popular at the time, but business declined due to outside competition."²²⁰

Three Dyhernfurth editions are part of the Library collection: Yosef Caro's *Sefer Maginne Eres*, published by **Ester bat Yosef Bass** in 1754 (n. 283), and two editions of the Pentateuch with the *Megillot* and the *Haftarot* respectively issued by **Yeḥi'el Mikhl May** in 1785 (n. 142), and by his sons Mikha'el Šim'on, Aharon, Yosef and his widow Raḥel (Re'ekel) in 1805 (n. 145).

2.3.10 Frankfurt am Main

The Jewish presence in Frankfurt am Main dates back to the Middle Ages.²²¹ The city was famous for its book fair that attracted bookmen from different towns; many Jewish printers and booksellers participated every year starting from 1535. Their condition, however, was not safer than elsewhere and they often had to hide their Jewish identity, using the names of Christian printers.²²²

Hebrew printed texts appeared for the first time at the beginning of the 16th century in woodcut. The actual printing of Hebrew books started in Frankfurt towards the end of the 17th century, but the number of local issues is uncertain. Frankfurt am Main, , sometimes appeared as the place of publication in books that were actually printed elsewhere, as it happened for other towns as well.

The first Hebrew editions were published by an experienced Christian printer, Balthasar Christian Wüst, who printed books in different languages. He started his

²²⁰ [S. n.], "Dyhernfurth", in *EJ*, vol. 6, 77-78.

²²¹ On the Jewish presence in Frankfurt, see: Isidor Krakauer, *Geschichte der Juden in Frankfurt a. M. (1150-1824)*, 2 vol., Frankfurt a. M.: In Kommission bei Kauffmann, 1925-1927.

²²² Jean Baumgarten, "The Printing of Yiddish Books in Frankfurt-on-the-Main (17th and 18th Centuries)", *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem*, 20 (2009): 1-2. [From now on: *Yiddish Books*]. Online at: <https://bcfrj.revues.org/6225>.

printing activity as early as 1656 but his first Hebrew book appeared in 1675, it was *Šehitot u-vediqot* by Jacob Weil. He continued his activity until c. 1693 while his son Johann (1677-1707) had already started working independently in 1690.

Jews were not allowed to own a printing press but could be employed as workers and sometimes they printed under someone else's name. Some Jewish printers were associated with the Wüst press but they didn't put their names on their publications. Among them were Yišhaq and Seligman Reis, Yosef Trier Cohen, Lesser Schick, Šelomoh Hanau, Zalman and Avraham ben Kalman Katz.²²³

In the 18th century, local Hebrew presses continued to be owned by Christians. Besides the Wüst press, the other Christian printers were Blasius Ilsner (b. 1682), the Andreas, Nikolas Weinmann, Anton Heinscheit and Johann Kölner (or Kollner, active in 1708-28). Kölner, in particular, printed two noteworthy editions: the *Arba`ah Turim* (1712-16) with the comment *Bayit hadaš* by Yo'el ben Šemu'el Sirkis (the *Bach*) and an edition of the Talmud (1720-23) edited by Aryeh Leib ben Yosef Šemu'el of Krakow.²²⁴

In the 19th century Jewish printers emerged as well. "Among them were J. H. Golda (1881-1920), E. Slobotzki (from 1855 9, and the bookseller J. Kauffman, who took over the Roedelheim press of M. Lehrberger in 1899."²²⁵

Near Frankfurt two small centers were especially active in the field of Hebrew printing: Offenbach and Rödelheim. The latter, in particular, became famous thanks to the *Orientalische und Occidentalische Buchdruckerei* founded by Wolf Heidenheim

²²³ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, li. For further details on Hebrew printing in Frankfurt see: Baumgarten, *Yiddish Books* (details on Wust at p. 17, n. 20).

²²⁴ Posner-Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 107; Jacobs, Franco, *Typography*, 304.

²²⁵ Mordechai Breuer, "Frankfurt on the Main", in *EJ*, vol. 7, 211.

and Baruch Bashwitz.²²⁶

Six editions represent the Frankfurt book production in this Venetian collection. The earliest volumes are those published by **Johann Kölner** (n. 53: 1712, n. 359: 1723, n. 892: 1712-1716). *Sefer `en Yiśra'el* printed by Šelomoh Zalman ben Dawid **Aptrod** and Mošeh ben Yonah **Gamburg** in 1723 (n. 359) follows them in chronological order. The remaining books were published by Heinrich **Bayerhofer** (n. 596: 1763) and J. **Kauffmann** (n. 573: 1882).

Not far from Frankfurt, other printers were publishing Hebrew books in **Offenbach**, and two copies of their production arrived into the Venetian collection. The earliest one is Yišhaq ben Avraham Aboab's *Menorat ha-ma'or* in the edition printed by Bonaventura de Lannoy in 1721 (n. 4), while the next one is *Qiššur Šene luhot ha-berit* by Yeša'yahu Horowitz printed in 1724 at Yiśra'el ben Mošeh's print shop (n. 346).

Thirteen books in this collection were printed in **Rödelheim**, for the major part at the print shop of J. Lehrberger & Comp. in 1840-92 (nn. 392, 393, 410, 486, 487, 488, 499, 617). Two editions bear the name of S[amuel?] Lehrberger (n. 394: "S. Lehrberger & Comp., 1898, and 411: 1893). One edition does not mention its publisher, while the remaining two works were published by Wolf Heidenheim and Barukh Baschwitz (n. 511: 1800-1805, n. 512: 1800-1805).

2.3.11 Frankfurt am Oder

The Jewish community of Frankfurt am Oder settled permanently in 1671, after being expelled twice, in 1510 and in 1573. Like in other locations, the first printing press founded in Frankfurt, in 1502, was associated with the local university. The first Hebrew book that appeared was probably a Bible printed in 1551, but it was an isolated case. The first printers that constantly issued Hebrew books, in effect, were the Christians Joachim and Friedreich **Hartmann** who started their activity in 1595-96 at the press of Johann **Eichhorn**. They mainly printed Bibles and a few minor works. They were followed, in 1673, by Johann Christopher **Beckmann**, a professor of Greek

²²⁶ Joseph Jacobs and Schulim Ochser, "Rödelheim", in *JE*, vol. 10, 439. Online at: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12791-rodellheim>. See also: Levinger, *Heidenheim*.

and history at the local university. Heller explains that “The impetus for a Hebrew press was the need for a new source of Hebrew books by the Jews of Eastern Europe after the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) and the Chmielnicki massacre of *tah-ve-tat* (1648-1649) which caused the sources of such works in Eastern Europe to close.”²²⁷

Beckmann obtained the printing license for Hebrew books in 1675 and was authorized to employ Jewish workers. He subsequently hired Aharon ben Yiśra’el Katz from Prague and his workers and they printed many titles on different subjects, from legal treatises to kabalistic works.

In 1693 Beckman realized that he could no longer deal with his academic career and with the printing press and decided, at once, to cede the management to **Michael Gottschalk** who was a bookbinder and owned a bookshop. Gottschalk was enthusiastic in his role and in 1697-99 decided to undertake the printing of the Talmud. Beckmann obtained a permit from the Elector of Brandenburg Friedrich III with the intercession of Dr. Ernest Jablonski, a Christian Hebraist who later had a main role in Hebrew printing.²²⁸

Gottschalk’s twelve-volume Talmud is known by the name of its financier, Yiśśakar ha-Levi Bermann of Halberstadt (also known as Behrend Lehmann, 1661-1730). As we have already mentioned in the paragraph on Hebrew printing in Dessau, Gottschalk and Beckmann addressed Moses Benjamin Wulff, seeking for a sponsor.²²⁹ After failing to fulfill the task, Wulff paid the damages and promised not to print any Talmudic treatise again. Therefore, the Talmud was printed in Frankfurt and many copies were donated to poor Jewish communities thanks to the financier’s contribution.²³⁰

A second Talmud edition was published in 1715-22 in both Frankfurt am Oder and Berlin.

²²⁷ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, lii.

²²⁸ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, li-lii.

²²⁹ For further information: Heller, *Wulff*.

²³⁰ Max Freudenthal, “Zum Jubiläum des ersten Talmuddrucks in Deutschland”, *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, 42 (1898): 80–89.

The workers and the typographical equipment of this press had different provenances, therefore its style did not have a single source of influence. The compositors came from Venice and from Prague while the materials, such as types and decorations, were purchased in Amsterdam.

In 1739 Johann David **Grillo** (1684 - 1766) succeeded to Michael Gottschalk, he purchased the press and, upon his death, he was replaced by his wife and daughter and later by Christian Friedrich **Elsner** (1797). The print shop continued working under Elsner's management until 1813, when Hirsch Baschwitz acquired it. Then, in 1826, it was sold to Trebitsch & Son in Berlin.²³¹

A very important press that enriched the Frankfurt area in the 19th century was that of **Wolf ben Samson Heidenheim** (Benjamin Ze'ev, 1757-1832)²³². He published his first book in Offenbach in 1791: Avraham Ibn Ezra's *Moznayim*, a grammatical work. Later he moved to Rödelheim to which his name is associated. The press was opened around 1800 and Heidenheim began his most famous publication, a nine volume *Mahazor* with a German translation in Hebrew characters, that was reprinted several times. He issued a big number of volumes, mainly Bibles, prayer books and liturgical volumes. "Heidenheim devoted great care to typographical setup as well as to the restoration of the correct text of the prayers. With this objective, he drew on manuscripts and occasionally on old printed texts".²³³

The press then passed to **Mošeh Lehrberger** who later moved to Frankfurt am Main.

The only book printed in Frankfurt am Oder in the Library collection is Ya'aqov ben Šelomoh Ibn Ḥabib's *Kotnot or*, published by Michael Gottschalk in 1729 (n. 354).

²³¹ Chasia Turtel, "Frankfurt on the Oder", in *EJ*, vol. 7, 212.

²³² See also: Israel Meir Levinger, "Die deutschen Gebetsbücher und Chumaschim: 150. Jahrzeitstag von Wolf Heidenheim", *Udim*, 11-12 (1981-82): 69-82 [From now on: *Heidenheim*]; and Sefton D. Temkin "Heidenheim, Wolf", in *EJ*, vol. 8, 763.

²³³ Sefton D. Temkin, "Heidenheim, Wolf", in *EJ*, vol. 8, 763.

2.3.12 Berlin

In Berlin Hebrew printing started later than in the other German towns.

Daniel Ernst **Jablonski** founded a Hebrew press there, and chose Yehudah Leib (Judah Loeb) **Neumark** as its manager. Neumak's son Nathan had his own print shop that operated from 1719 to 1727. Aharon ben Mošeh Rofe a member, of the same family, owned also a press from 1733 to the 1760s. In 1734-39, soon after the press was founded, he undertook the printing of the Talmud with the cooperation of Grillo from Frankfurt am Oder, using Jablonski's types.

Aharon was succeeded by his grandson Mošeh and by his great-grandson Mordekhay **Landsberg**.²³⁴

From 1708 to 1717 another printer was active in Berlin: Baruch **Buchbinder** of Wilna who published Ya'aqov Ibn Ḥabib's *'En Ya'aqov* (1709).

In 1715-22, as we have illustrated on the former paragraph, the second edition of Gottschalk's *Talmud* was partially printed in Berlin (and in Frankfurt am Oder).

Then, in 1760, the **Orientalische Buchdruckerei** was founded.

At the same time other publisher issued Hebrew works, among them George Friedrich **Starcke** who was active in 1777-1803 (a copy of one of his editions is kept at the "Renato Maestro" library, see below).²³⁵

In the second half of the 19th century, several printers of Hebrew books were active especially in Berlin. Among them were **Julius Sittenfeld**, **Şevi Hirsch ben Yişḥaq Itzkowski**, and Louis Gerschel (from 1858) with other financiers.²³⁶

²³⁴ Posner-Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 109.

²³⁵ "Starcke, Georg Friedrich", in *CERL Thesaurus*.

Online at: <https://thesaurus.cerl.org/record/cni00030139>.

²³⁶ Bast, Rainer A., *Die Philosophische Bibliothek: Geschichte und Bibliographie einer Philosophischen Textreihe seit 1868*, Hamburg: Meiner, 1991.

In 1885 the **Mekize Nirdamim** society, whose task was the publication of classical Hebrew books and manuscripts, was established in Berlin under the supervision of Abraham Berliner (Berlin). It had been founded for the first time in Lyck (Ełk) in 1864 where it was directed by Eli'ezer Lipman Silbermann.

This collection includes nineteen books arriving from the Berlin presses. The earliest edition is an Ashkenazi prayer book issued by Daniel Ernst **Jablonski** in 1699-1700 (n. 415). The following edition, in chronological order, is Avraham ben Dawid from Posquières' *Ba'al ha-Nefeš* printed by Aryeh ben Aba **Singer** in 1762 (n. 35, the publishing house is not mentioned. Singer added a colophon identifying himself as "Šoḥet and inspector of the Community of Berlin"). The third edition is a *Pentateuch* with Mendelssohn's German translation in Hebrew characters, published by George Friedrich **Starcke** in 1783 (n. 208).

The next book contains a biography of Moses Mendelssohn and was published in 1789 by an "association for the youth education" (Hēvrat Hinnukh Ne'arim, n. 304).

Besides two other 19th-century editions in which the publisher is not mentioned, the remaining volumes date back to the 20th century. The most recurrent name is that of Ševi Hirsch ben Yišḥaq **Itzkowski** (nine editions: nn. 324, 328, 705, 711, 753, 799, 800, 801, 878), in two cases it is associated with the **M'kize Nirdamim** society (nn. 800, 801), directed in Berlin by Dr. Abraham Berliner. M'kize Nirdamim, in turn, appears as the only publisher in three other books (nn.349, 385, 802).

The other printers, represented by single items in this collection, are Julius **Sittenfeld** (n. 803: 1863-1869), Louis **Gerschel** (n. 492: 1871-1872, n. 493: 1873-1874), and Julius **Benzian** (n. 773: 1878-1893).

2.4 Prague

Prague was a preeminent center in Jewish history, having a large Jewish population, bigger than many other European cities. In the 16th century it was the second place in Europe - after Italy, of course - where Hebrew presses were founded, and it was just behind Venice in the book production.

The first Hebrew press in Prague was that of Yeša'yahu ben Ašer ha-Levi Horowitz

and Yequti'el ben Yiṣḥaq Dan (*alias* Zalman Bumslau), who made the financial investment, while the working team was composed by Me'ir ben Dawid Michtam, Šelomoh ben Šemu'el ha-Levi, Mordekhay ben Eli'ezer and Šemaryah ben Dawid. The composition of the team changed across the years.

The society was active between 1512 and 1518, later Me'ir ben Dawid Michtam only remained in Prague associating with Geršom ben Šelomoh ha-Kohen (in German: Katz; d. 1544), Me'ir ben Ya'aqov ha-Levi **Epstein** and **Ḥayyim ben Dawid Shahor (Schwarz)**. They published books together or separately and in 1526 they printed the famous *Pesaḥ Haggadah*, whose woodcuts have been attributed to Ḥayyim Shahor.

Habermann disagrees on this point, affirming that the letter *Šin* that appears in two of the illustrations does not refer to Shahor, who may have left the city earlier on that year.²³⁷

In 1527 **Geršom ha-Kohen** (Katz) obtained a privilege (monopoly) from king Ferdinand of Bohemia, and his successors, known as the Gersonides, and he continued printing in Prague for over a century.

Geršom's monopoly caused the other printers to leave, especially Ḥayyim ben Dawid Shahor who moved to Oels and started a partnership with Dawid ben Yehonatan. There, the two associates printed only a Pentateuch in 1530. When a storm destroyed their press, Shahor moved to Augsburg where he probably worked at August Wind's press.

The exclusive privilege obtained by Geršom, was granted also to his sons, and they employed Me'ir Michtam in ordet to learn the printing craft from him.

Geršom's sons Šelomoh and Mordekhay cooperated with their father printing many liturgical and biblical volumes, and were later joined by their brothers Mošeh and Yehudah. In 1544 Geršom died and in the following year his son Mošeh was able to obtain a new privilege from the Emperor Ferdinand I.

²³⁷ Charles Wengrov, "Shaḥor (Czerny, Schwartz)", *JE*, vol. 18, 366, vs. Habermann, *Peraqim*, 104.

Mordekhay ben Geršom Katz was the first one to use a pressmark similar to that of Marco Antonio Giustinian, with a representation of the Jerusalem Temple. It was later used again by Ḥayyim ben Ya`aqov ha-Kohen (1604-1612) and by Abraham Heide Lemberger with little variants.

During the years 1550-1566 the press remained idle because of political problems and persecutions against the Jews, and in that period Mošeh died. Mordekhay resumed printing with his sons but their activity was interrupted again in 1571-77, then his sons and their heirs continued managing the press up to the end of the 18th century.

Only in 1605, after more than seventy years of monopoly of the Kohen family, another press could open in Prague: it was that of **Ya`aqov ben Geršom Bak** who moved there from Venice where he owned a Hebrew press together with his father. After his death, in 1618, he was succeeded by his sons Yosef and Yehudah who signed as "Bene Ya`aqov Bak" (the Ya`aqov Bak's sons). Yosef left the press in 1660, while Yehudah continued printing until 1669, when he was compelled to close following a libel action.

Yehudah died in 1671 and two years later his sons obtained the permit to resume printing under the name "Bene Yehudah Bak" that was used up to 1696. Then the press changed its name several times, according to the members of the family that were managing it, and kept working up to the 19th century with brief pauses. These interruptions were usually due to political reasons and legal problems and once, in 1680, Heller wrote that they were temporarily relocated in Wekelsdorf (German name for Teplice nad Metují, Czech Republic) to complete the printing of a *Maḥazor* that is the only Hebrew book ever published there.

About one hundred and eighty years after the foundation of the Bak press, the heirs of the two print shops associated fused together in a new press: Bak and Katz (1784-

89). After that period the press passed to other owners.²³⁸

Other Hebrew printing presses were active in Prague, like the **Schedel** press and the **Heide-Lemberger** press. The first one opened in 1602 and was managed by three brothers: Avraham, 'Ezri'el and Yehudah Leib, sons of Mošeh Schedel in partnership with Ḥayyim ben Ya'aqov ha-Kohen. They printed many Hebrew and Yiddish works for the use of the local Jewish community, providing legal texts, biblical commentaries, liturgical books, and new and old titles. Their activity lasted less than ten years.

The second press was that of Avraham ben Šim'on (Simeon) Heide (d. 1639), better known as Abraham **Lemberger**, who started printing in 1611. He issued biblical commentaries as well as legal and ethical works, ceasing in 1621 because of the Thirty Years' War. His sons succeeded in printing only one book in 1641: *Kol Yehudah* by Yehudah Leib ben Yosef Rofe.

In the 18th century the only Hebrew press in Prague was that of Ya'aqov Bak. The Prague style started to disappear, as did the German square types, and the books started looking similar to those printed in Amsterdam.

In 1746 Hebrew and Yiddish translations of the *Gospels* were published at the archbishop's press, together with other translations, for missionary purposes.²³⁹

Seven publishers appear in the list of the early editions of Prague (see: *I libri del Ghetto*, 636). They are:

Mošeh ben Yosef Bešal'el Katz (n. 716: 1614-1617), Elsinwenger Buchdruckerey (n. 798: 1792), Me'ir Fleckeles (n. 473: 1800), Leiden Gebrudern Stiassny (n. 178, 1801), Moses Israel Landau (n. 121: 1833-1837, n. 399: 1841, n. 409: 1841, n. 482: 1851, n. 483: 1854, n. 696: 1840), Gottlieb Haase Söhne (n. 406: 1844, n. 421: 1851) and S. Freund's Witwe & Comp. (n. 484: 1864).

²³⁸ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, lv-lvi; Posner, Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 150-151.

²³⁹ Zilberberg, "Printing, Hebrew", in *EJ*, vol. 16, 536.

2.5 Vienna

The Jewish presence in Vienna dates back to the 12th century, but it was not continuous as Jews went through different persecutions and abandoned the city several times.

In 1624 Emperor Ferdinand II founded the first Ghetto confining there all the Jews and imposing them a strict regulation. It was not until in 1635 that a new law was promulgated, enabling to move and conduct business with more freedom.

In 1669-70 Emperor Leopold I (1640-1705), instigated by his wife and by the local Bishop Leopold Karl von Kollonitsch (1631-1707), decided to expel the Jews, to expropriate their properties and to transform the Great Synagogue into a church.

Later, in 1683, the Jews were readmitted in Vienna but, far from having full citizenship rights, they were only “tolerated”.

During the 18th century, the new Viennese community could count on the institutional support of some Jews court, namely Samuel Oppenheimer, Samson Wertheimer and Baron Diego Aguilar. The restrictive legislation in force, however, prevented the community from growing.

By the end of the century Jews started an assimilation process into the gentile cultural life that was encouraged by the *Haskalah* movement, usually defined as the “Jewish Enlightenment”. A number of Jews were elevated to the nobility.²⁴⁰

The history of Hebrew printing in Vienna began in 1793 when the first Hebrew press was founded by the court printer **Joseph Lorenz Edler von Kurzböck** (also: Kurzbeck) who hired **Anton** (Edlen von) **Schmid** (1765-1855).²⁴¹ When Kurzböck

²⁴⁰ For an account on the Jewish presence in Vienna see: VVAA, “Vienna”, in *EJ*, vol. 20, 518-523. There, however, the readmission of Jews in Vienna is dated ten years later, in 1693.

²⁴¹ Some woodcut Hebrew sentences appeared in Vienna also during the 16th century, but the actual

died, in 1792, Schmid took over the press acquiring his typographical equipment, that included part of Bomberg's and Proop's types. He could count on the assistance of Yosef Della Torre and of his son Adalbert who worked for him as proofreaders.

Emperor Francis II (1768-1835) granted him a privilege on Hebrew books on the condition that he would donate a copy of each book that he published to Imperial library. Thanks to the big amount of volumes donated to the Emperor's library he received a title of nobility that was added to his name, and a golden medal for his merits.

In 1800 the government prohibited the import of Hebrew books thus giving Schmid a great advantage.

Schmid printed many classical texts, Bibles and prayer books for all the rites as well as books in Arabic, Persian and Syriac.

In 1839 Schmid's press passed to his son Franz, who also inherited the noble title, but ten years later he sold it to Adalbert della Torre.²⁴²

Another Hebrew press that operated in the same period was that of **Joseph Hraschanky** (1752-1806) who used the German types from Frankfurt am Main. He learnt the printing craft in Brno at the press of Franz Joseph Neumann and family. His career in Vienna began at the court press of Thomas von Trattners (1719-1798) and Josef Lorenz von Kurzböck (1736-1792). In 1791-97 he published a complete Babylonian Talmud. The print shop later passed to his son Georg.

During the 19th century the community grew and flourished and its cultural life was enriched. Many educational institutions were founded as well as many different prayer houses.

In 1838 Schmid opened a branch of his print shop in Pressburg (Bratislava), and by

Hebrew printing started only two centuries later.

²⁴² Joseph Jacobs - S. Mannheimer, "Schmid, Anton von", in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, 55. Online at: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13286-schmid-anton-von>.

1860 another Viennese printer, **Joseph Schlesinger**, followed the example and opened his second press there.

By the end of the century, Schlesinger became the major printer of liturgical volumes with different translations.

Other renowned printers were active in Vienna at the time in which it became the major centre for Hebrew printing. The most important print shop owners worth to be remembered are Joseph M. Belf, Adalbert Della Torre, Joseph Hochwart, Adolf Holzhausen, Georg Holzinger, U. Klopff and Alex Eurich, the Knöpflmacher family, Franz Edlen von Schmid and J. J. Busch, Anton Strauss and the Winter brothers.

The Viennese editions in this book collection are numerous (168), all but three dating to the 19th century. The three exceptions are a *Pentateuch* with commentaries (n. 176: 1794), a complete *Bible* (n. 204: 1794), and Ibn Paquda's *Hovot ha-levavot*, all issued by Joseph **Hraschanky** (n. 362: 1797), who also appears in a prayer book dated 1804 (n. 418). His son Georg, in turn, appears four times in the collection (n. 285: 1808, n. 342: 1808, n. 481: 1811, n. 666: 1811), while two editions bear the general label "Hraschankyschen Schriften" (n. 56: 1804, n. 771: 1805).

Different members of the **Knöpflmacher** family of printers also appear in the list (*I libri del Ghetto*, 639): Moritz (Mordekhay, 1828-1910. N. 319: 1894) and his son Adolf (1856-1930. Nn. 485: 1867, 496: 1868), Jakob and sons' print shop where Anton Edlen von Schmid worked for several years (many occurrences), and Franz [?] (n.148: 1858, n. 422: 1855, n. 500: 1856, n. 612: 1856), who was later joined by his sons (n. 252: 1860).

Other recurrent publishers in the collection are: Georg **Holzinger** (8 occurrences), Josef **Schlesinger** (24), Anton **Schmid** (52), Franz Edlen von Schmid: (3), also in association with J. J. **Busch** (11). Schlesinger owned another print shop in Budapest, and in some editions both cities are mentioned as places of publication (Wien-Budapest, nn. 838, 839, 840). The Pressburg (Bratislava) branch of the print shops of Franz and Anton Schmid, in turn, is mentioned in three editions (n. 278: 1846, n. 413: 1835, n. 570: 1852).

Less frequent Viennese publishers, whose volumes are kept in this collection, are: J. M. Belf (1), Adalbert Della Torre (4), Joseph Hochwart (1), Adolf Holzhausen (3), Kaiserlich-königlichen Schulbücher-Verlage (1), U. Klopff and Alex. Eurich (1), Chayim David Lippe (1), Löwy's Buchhandlung (1), R. Picker (1), A. Reichart and associates (2), Anton Strauss (2), Taubstummen Instituts Druckerey; k. k. (1), filiale der Brüder Winter (4).

Dawid Löwy (Levi) and Avraham ben Dawid Alkalay appear as publishers in "Wien-Pressburg" (Vienna-Bratislava) at the end of the 19th century (n. 71: 1880-89, n. 368: 1881).

2.6 Poland, Russia and Ukraine

2.6.1 Small centers

While Hebrew printing in Poland started in the 16th century, in Russia and Ukraine it arrived two centuries later , although with discontinuity, and it started having a leading role in the 19th century only.

“In Russia proper the first Hebrew book is said to have been printed in 1760 in Oleksinets (Y.L. Heller’s *Berit Melah*), where there was printing until 1776”.²⁴³

The first Hebrew press in Ukraine was that of Benyamin ben Avigdor in Zbarazh, but it was destroyed in 1812. Then, in 1813-14 a new press was founded in Ternopil by Ya’aqov Auerbach and Naḥman Pineles. Pineles was involved in the *Haskalah* movement and this could be the cause of the separation of the two associates. Auerback is no longer mentioned on the books printed from 1814 onwards, while Pineles started cooperating with Yosef (Joseph) Perl (1773-1839), an educator and writer, and an exponent of the *Haskalah too*. Since the book production linked to the *Haskalah* movement did not have a broad market, they also printed biblical and *Halakic* works but, in spite of any effort, the press closed in 1817.²⁴⁴

In **Slavuta** (Ukraine) the well-known Shapira press was founded only in 1792 but issued three Talmud editions in 1800-1820. The press was then transferred to Zhytomyr.

Another important Ukrainian town in Jewish history is **Lvov** (in Geman: Lemberg) whose printers were specialized in Hasidic works, pietistic literature and qabbalah

²⁴³ Posner - Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 113.

²⁴⁴ Habermann, *Peraqim*, 321-323.

and exported their production to towns in Galicia and in Russia.²⁴⁵

Vilnius (also: Vilna, Lithuania) became an important printing center during the 19th century with the Romm's press.

During the 17th century, several persecutions against the Jews took place in Ukraine causing many people to leave the country. Moreover, the wars between Poland and Sweden (1600-1629 and 1655-1660) generated a new wave of Jewish immigrants to the Netherlands. Bendowska and Doktór have noticed that in 1628 all the presses active in Krakow, Lublin and Prague closed. However, it could be a coincidence as no evidence has been found of a coordinated action against Jewish presses.²⁴⁶

Many printers who were forced to stop their activity moved to Amsterdam, and by 1660 the number of Polish Jews in Amsterdam was so high that they could found their own congregation separated from the Germans.²⁴⁷

In 1666, the diffusion of the messianic *Sabbatean* movement provoked a great confusion that affected the Hebrew presses too.

“Jewish presses were subjected to increasingly stricter controls to make printing heretical works in the open or in secret impossible. More and more works were being struck with excommunication. [...] Finally the Vaad decided to solve the problem in a radical way by issuing a total ban on printing and publishing Jewish books in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a ban that remained valid throughout the 1680s.”²⁴⁸

Hebrew printing resumed with the intervention of John III Sobieski (also: Jan; 1629-1696), King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, invited Uri Phoebus ben Aharon ha-Levi to move from Amsterdam to his territory. In 1691 Uri Phoebus accepted and relocated in **Zolkiew**, but about fourteen years later he went back to Amsterdam.

²⁴⁵ Gries, *Book in the Jewish World*, 113-116.

²⁴⁶ *Polish Jews*, 27.

²⁴⁷ In 1673 the two groups were reunited.

²⁴⁸ Bendowska - Doktór, *Polish Jews*, 30.

In spite of the protectionist efforts of the Polish Rabbis, represented by the *Va`ad Arba` Arašot* (Council of the Four Lands), that tried to limit the import of books supporting local printers, Amsterdam remained the main provider of books in the 18th century.

In 1764 a major change took place: the *Va`ad Arba` Arašot* was dissolved and all its decrees were abolished. The regulation and the censorship on the printing of books in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ceased to exist and new Jewish presses started appearing. This situation made the printing of Hasidic works possible even after this movement was excommunicated in 1772.²⁴⁹

In the 18th and 19th century, small presses opened in the towns of Stettin (Szczecin), Danzig (Gdańsk), Breslau (Wrocław), **Lyck** (Ełk) and **Posen** (Poznań).²⁵⁰ In Warsaw the first Hebrew book appeared as late as 1796.

Ukrainian editions in the “Renato Maestro” collection (for Zolkiew see par. 2.6.4):

Drohobycz: A. Zupnik (n. 739: 1893-1903).

Lemberg (Lvov): B. M. Balaban (n. 169: 1857, n. 875: 1836), Löbl Balaban (n. 156: 1839), Pessel Balaban (n. 514: 1887), Chaje Taube Mattfes (n. 168: 1840), Hayyah Tavah, the wife of Aharon Madpis (n. 477: 1836), Jsaac Pilitz (n. 789: 1876), Chajim Rohatyn (n. 386: 1899), U. W. Salat and Nik, J. M. (n. 600: 1880, n. 789: 1876), A. N. Süss (n. 313: 1876), Yehudit, the wife of Ševi Hirsch (n. 33: 1792).

Munkács (Mukačeve): Kohn & Klein (n. 68: 1899).

Slavuta: Mošeh da Slavuta Šapira (n. 741: 1815, n. 849: 1816-1822).

Žytomyr: Hanina Lipa Shapira, Arie Leib and Yehošu’a Heschel (brothers. N. 505: 1848).

Polish editions (for Krakow and Lublin see par. 2.6.2 and 2.6.3):

Jarosław: Eisig Gräber (n. 70: 1888, n. 388: 1896), Elias Marder (n. 374: 1896).

Krotoszyn: B. L. Manasch (n. 582: 1840).

Lyck (Ełk): M’kize Nirdamim (Eliezer Lipman Silbermann¹. Nn. 385: 1750-1888, 390: 1871, 825: 1866-1868, 882: 1868), Rudolph Siebert (n. 701: 1864-).

Przemysł: Zupnik & Knoller (n. 321: 1883), Zupnik, Knoller & Hammerschmidt (Nn. 679: 1888, 857: 1886, 929: 1884).

Czech editions:

Prostitz (Prostějov): Yišhaq ben Aharon Prostitz (n. 357: 1603).

²⁴⁹ Bendowska - Doktór, *Polish Jews*, 32.

²⁵⁰ Zilberberg, “Printing, Hebrew”, *EJ*, vol. 16, 537.

2.6.2 Krakow

The history of the Polish Hebrew printing press is linked to that of Prague, as the first printers active in Krakow in 1530 probably learned the craft in Prague at the press of Geršon ha-Kohen. They were three brothers: Ašer, Elyakim and Šemu'el, Ḥayyim **Halicz's** sons. Their birthplace is unknown, as it is the name of their financier, and even their presence in Prague is discussed.

Their publications differ from those published in other countries, instead of printing rabbinical works they focused on popular books linked to the Ashkenazi tradition. Their books were small and inexpensive and, until their conversion, they were all in Yiddish. "The Halicz brothers were the first ever to publish works in Yiddish, the common language of Ashkenazic Jews, thus breaking through an important barrier as the printing of Jewish works was reserved up to then to those in *leshon ha-kodesh*, the holy Hebrew tongue".²⁵¹

Since their enterprise was not successful, they separated and printed books independently. Ašer was the first one to leave then, in 1536, Šemu'el moved to Oels to work with his brother-in-law Eli'ezer ben Šemu'el, but their press was destroyed and Šemu'el went back to Krakow.

In 1537 all the brothers converted to Christianity, probably for economic reasons, and the local Jewish community refused to buy their books and to pay its debts.

Bendowska and Doktór suggested that the boycott of the Halicz press was not a consequence of their apostasy but rather the opposite, the brothers may have converted to Christianity seeking support from the Church in order to save their press that was boycotted by the Jews for reasons that we do not know.²⁵²

²⁵¹ Bendowska - Doktór, *Polish Jews*, 20.

²⁵² *Ibidem*.

At the end the brothers obtained the monopoly and a tribunal granted them the refund of their debts. However, the Jews kept boycotting the Halicz press, they burned the books that they were compelled to buy and imported them from other places, mainly Venice and Prague.²⁵³

On December 31st, 1539 a royal decree forced the Jews of Posen and Krakow to buy all their Hebrew and Jewish text. The two Jewish communities asked the Lvov (Lemberg) community to be involved in the compelled purchase in order to share the expense. They paid the books in three payments, according to the decree, and then they got rid of the whole stock. Some scholars have stated that they destroyed it, while Friedberg and Bendowska-Doktór argued that the *parnassim* sold the books, recovering the money with the interest. The boycott, indeed, was not against the books but concerned their publishers.²⁵⁴

The press finally closed and the brothers took different paths, printing books on their own aiming at different markets. After the press closure, sources disagree on the information concerning their lives: Bendowska and Doktór - who hesitated to find the right correspondence between the Jewish and the Christian names of the brothers - stated that Johannes published Christian books under his new name, Paul issued Yiddish and German works, while Andreas remained in Krakow as a Christian merchant and died there in 1560.

Since Paul issued an Yiddish edition of the *New Testament* (Krakow, 1540-41), many scholars have argued that he became a Christian missionary, but he may have actually returned to Judaism, as it has been suggested by Majer Balaban.²⁵⁵

Posner-Ta-Shema and Heller state that Šemu'el - baptized as Andreas (?) - returned to Judaism and moved to Breslau and then to Constantinople, around 1550. He

²⁵³ Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxxix; Charles Wengrov, "Halicz", in *EJ*, vol. 8, 274; Habermann, *Peraqim*, 131-136.

²⁵⁴ C. Wengrov, "Halicz", in *EJ*, vol. 8, 274; Posner-Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 155; Bendowska - Doktór, *Polish Jews*, 22; Ch. B. Friedberg, *History of Hebrew Typography in Poland from the Beginning of the Year 1534 and its Development up to our days ...* (Tel Aviv: Baruch Freidberg, 1950), 3. [From now on: *Poland*].

²⁵⁵ Bendowska - Doktór, *Polish Jews*, 23.

opened a Hebrew press there and was succeeded by his son Ḥayyim.²⁵⁶

No other Hebrew press operated in Krakow until 1569, when **Yiṣḥaq ben Aharon of Prostitz** obtained a permit to open it in association with Samuel Böhm (also: Boehm, d. 1588).

Prostitz had previously spent many years in Italy, learning the craft at the Venetian workshops of Giorgio Cavalli and Giovanni Grifo. When the latter closed his press in 1568, Prostitz bought all his equipment including woodcut frames and decorations and brought it to Poland. King Sigismund II August (1548-72) granted him and his heirs a fifty year monopoly “including the right to print the Talmud and other Hebrew books”.²⁵⁷

Prostitz’s activity was reduced for a certain time due to accusations made by the clergy that suspected the content of his books and sought to prevent the publication of the Talmud. The examination lasted longer than it was expected to, but finally Prostitz was found to be innocent. His press flourished especially in the 1570s, but then went through a hard time due to political agitation and epidemics. In 1592 the whole family left Krakow to escape the plague and moved to Nowy Dwor where they published Mošeh Cordovero’s *Pardes Rimmonim*. When they could return to Krakow, in 1602, Yiṣḥaq decided not to return and moved to his native town of Prostejov. He brought with him part of his printing equipment and a couple of workers and kept printing until his death in 1612. His sons Aharon, Mošeh Yehošua’, Simḥah and Mordekhay managed the Prague press and started printing the long yearned for Talmud edition (1602-1605) that brings Yiṣḥaq’s name. While printing the Talmud, the Prostitz could not engage in printing other significant works and issued only some small books. When the Talmud was completed, however, they also published bigger works like the *Arba`ah Turim* by Ya`aqov ben Ašer (1614-15), Yosef Caro’s *Šulḥan `arukh* (1618-19) and a second edition of the Talmud itself.

²⁵⁶ Posner-Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 155; Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxxix; Bendowska - Doktor, *Polish Jews*, 23.

²⁵⁷ Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xxxix.

In 1618 the Thirty Years' War brought about a deep financial crisis. Aharon Prostitz became incapable of paying his numerous debts and was taken to court. When he finally succeeded in fulfilling his debts he was obliged to close the press until 1624 because of a plague epidemic.

More than two hundred Hebrew and Yiddish books were published at Prostitz's press during its long activity.

In 1627 a short-lived press published one title: it was *Šomerim la-Boqer*, printed by the brothers Yiśra'el Zalman and Ḥayyim ben Me'ir Gan.

Then, in 1630, **Menaḥem Naḥum Meisels** entered the scene with his elegant Hebrew types especially cut in Venice. He acquired the typographic equipment of the Prostitz family, secured himself with a privilege of King Sigismund III Vasa and started printing with Yehudah ha-Kohen from Prague who managed the press.

His printing style reflected that of Prague more than the Italian one. The press issued all the texts that were necessary to the local Jewry, namely biblical texts and commentaries, liturgical and legal books and Yiddish works. Several important works in big format were issued from this press, until economic difficulties, *tah-ve-tat* massacres and epidemics made it difficult to continue the printing work. On his last years of activity Meisels printed only small works and calendars, and died in 1662.²⁵⁸

The press passed to Yehudah Leib Meisels, his son-in-law, who printed small works facing the same difficulties and finally determined to close in 1670.

At this point there is a long period of idleness of the Hebrew presses in Krakow, as the next print shop was opened in 1804 by Naftali Hertz ha-Kohen Shapiro whose sons continued his work until 1822. Later, at least two other printers were active in Krakow: Karl Budweiser (1863-74), who later moved to Lvov, and Joseph Fischer (1878-1914).

²⁵⁸ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, lix.

Two Krakau publishers appear in the present-day collection: Yiṣḥaq ben Aharon **Prostitz** (three editions, n. 21: *Sefer Rav Alfas*, 1597-1598, n. 708: *Sefer Rabbot*, 1587-1588, n. 844: *Babylonian Talmud*, 1602-1605) and Josef **Fischer** (five editions dated 1882-1897: nn. 171, 295, 296, 678, 929).

2.6.3 Lublin

The second centre for Hebrew printing in Poland was Lublin where Ḥayyim **Shahor**'s son Yiṣḥaq founded a press with his brother-in-law **Yosef ben Yakar** in 1550. Actually the Shahor family had arrived in Lublin three years earlier, when Ḥayyim was still alive, but they obtained the permit to print only in 1550. In the meantime Yosef ben Yakar had gone to Venice, worked at Giustinian's press, and came back to Lublin. Shortly afterwards the two founders died and were succeeded by their family members and other associates.

In c. 1557 **Kalonymus ben Mordekhay Jaffe** (d. 1603), who was a former associate of the press, and Yosef ben Yakar's son-in-law Eli'ezer ben Yiṣḥaq Ashkenazi renewed the press equipment.

"Kalonymus was a second cousin of Mordecai Jaffe, author of the *Levushim*, and married Hannah, the granddaughter of Ḥayyim Schwartz [=Shahor], a well-known wandering printer. In 1559 she and her cousin Ḥayyim b. Yiṣḥaq Schwarz obtained a printing privilege from Sigismund II, king of Poland. Kalonymus published two maḥzor editions, one in the German rite (1563), the other in the Polish (1568), and a Talmud edition (1559–77)".²⁵⁹

When Eli'ezer ben Yiṣḥaq moved to Constantinople with his son in 1574, Jaffe bought part of his types and decorations and became the only manager until his death. In

²⁵⁹ S.n., "Jaffe", in *EJ*, vol. 11, 64.

1592 his family and he temporarily relocated in Bistrowitz due to a cholera epidemic, and later returned to Lublin.

His sons Yosef, Ševi Hirsch and Ḥayyim assisted him at the press that in 1604 passed to Ševi Hirsch.

This press issued many different titles, and it is particularly remembered for its fine Talmud edition published in 1611-1639 in large folio. In 1648 the press resumed its activity but political problems and persecution caused it to close again. However, it did not remain idle for a long time, and a new member of the family took charge of it in 1665: Šelomoh Zalman Jaffe, Kalonymus' nephew, who married his daughter Sarah and in turn worked as a corrector.²⁶⁰

The following important Hebrew press in Lublin appeared only long after the closure of the Jaffe press. It was already 1870 when Ya'aqov ben Šelomoh Hirschenhorn and Mošeh Schneidemesse opened a new print shop.

2.6.4 Zolkiew

Zolkiew (Zhovkva, now in Ukraine) entered the history of Polish Hebrew printing thanks to **Uri Phoebus ben Aaron Witmund ha-Levi** who left Amsterdam and relocated there in 1691 seeking for a less competitive market. For that reason the local printing style reflects that of the Netherlands'.

In 1690 Uri Phoebus had obtained a permit from the king of Poland John III Sobieski and his press was the biggest Hebrew press active in Poland at the end of the 17th century and through the first half of the 18th century.²⁶¹

Then, in 1705 Uri Phoebus went back to Amsterdam where he authored some small

²⁶⁰ Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xli-xliii; Posner, Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 156.

²⁶¹ Heller, *The Seventeenth Century*, lxi; Bendowska - Doktór, *Polish Jews*, 31.

works, never resuming his printing activity, and died in 1715.²⁶²

The Zolkiew press was for a short time managed by his son Ḥayyim Dawid and then it passed to his grandsons Aharon and Geršon. The heirs continued the family business well into the 20th century.

The period of most intensive printing activity was that comprised between 1790 and 1809. The peculiarity of the local book production was the abundance of kabalistic works.

In the 18th century Zolkiew had several small presses but they were forced to transfer to Lvov (German: Lemberg) in 1782.

However, in 1791, a new press was established there under the name “Meyerhofer”.

Three major printers were active in Lvov: Mann-Rosanes (also: Grossmann), Meir ha-Levi Letteris and Madfes.

Only two editions of this collection were published in Zolkiew: *Sefer Ḥemdat Yamim* (3 vol.) printed by Geršon ben Ḥayyim Dawid, Dawid ben Menaḥem Man and Ḥayyim Dawid ben Aharon: in 1753-1756 (n. 338), and Yišḥaq ben Eliyyahu Šeni’s *Me’ah še`arim*, printed by Yehudah ben Me’ir Hoffer and Mordekhay Rabin Stein in 1797 (n. 832).

2.6.5 Vilnius

The Hebrew book production in Vilnius (also: Vilna, Lithuania) is linked to the Romm family. The press was founded in 1799 by **Barukh ben Yosef**, who had another print shop in Grodno since 1789.

When he died, in 1803, his son Menaḥem Mannes inherited the press and in 1836

²⁶² Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld write that Uri Phiebus died in Amsterdam in 1715 (*Netherlands II*, 242) while Friedberg states that he died in Zolkiew in 1705 (*Poland*, 64), Heller reports the two versions (*The Seventeenth Century*, lxi).

published the Babylonian Talmud. The Shapira family of Slavuta reacted to this publication as it was concurrent to their Talmud edition and the turmoil among the Rabbis was so loud that the Russian government decided to close all the Jewish press with two exceptions, one of which was the Romm press.

In 1841, the year of Menahem Mannes' death, a fire destroyed the press but it was soon rebuilt under the management of Yosef Reuben and his son Dawid and lasted up to 1862. Then Dawid's widow Devorah and her two brothers-in-law took their place.

"The firm prospered from 1867 to 1888 under the leadership of its literary director, the Hebrew writer Samuel Shraga Feiginsohn. [...] Most of the firm's income came from the publication of religious works in editions of tens of thousands of copies."²⁶³

After Devorah's death the press was sold and its owner changed twice during the 20th century, until it closed in 1940.

The most famous book published by this firm was the Talmud edition printed in the 1880s that contained new commentaries, especially the one authored by the Vilna Gaon. A preceding edition had been published by Dawid in 1859 but it was not as successful as the following one, as the Shapira family had also published a concurrent edition in Slavuta in 1858.

Zeev Gries highlighted the peculiar character of Vilnius as a "home to an impressive array of both traditional scholars and maskilim and had supposedly been the center of opposition to Hasidism in earlier generations". Accordingly, its presses published works of traditional scholarship and *Haskalah* ideology, in opposition to Lvov (Lemberg), that was the main Hasidic center in the 19th century.²⁶⁴

²⁶³ Yehuda Slutsky - Shmuel Spector (2nd ed.), "Romm", in *EJ*, vol. 17, 418; and Posner and Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 160 (almost identical).

²⁶⁴ Gries, *Book in the Jewish World*, 114-116.

2.7 The Ottoman Empire

“Next to Italy in importance were Constantinople (1493) and Salonika (1513) where Hebrew printing was introduced by exiles from Spain and Portugal; the Soncinos began their activity in Salonika in 1527/28 and in Constantinople in 1530. Iberian refugees also brought printing to North Africa. Hebrew books were printed in Fez with Lisbon type, 1516–22”.²⁶⁵

Nevertheless, authors preferred to send their manuscripts to Italy to be printed there, as Italian presses were perceived as the best extant ones. Therefore, for the major part, Ottoman presses printed liturgical and legal volumes and traditional Jewish works, while first imprints of new works were entrusted to the Italian print shops. However, since the prayer books printed in Salonika and Constantinople were almost suitable for Sephardic and Romanian Jews only, those according to the Ashkenazi and Italian rites had to be imported from Italy.

The Talmud was never printed in its entirety, but only single volumes were published in the area, even after its ban in Italy. Zipora Baruchson highlighted the diffusion of the Talmud in the Ottoman Empire in its Ashkenazi form (as it was printed in Italy), with the *Tosafot* and the commentaries of Rashi, Ašer ben Yehi’el and Mordekhay ben Hillel. The Sephardic form, with its differences and without the *Tosafot*, that was common in Spain before the expulsion of Jews disappeared.²⁶⁶

Minor presses also existed in North Africa and in Palestine, usually founded by refugees from the Iberian peninsula, but they only printed few books. This was the

²⁶⁵ Zilberberg, “Printing, Hebrew”, in *EJ*, vol. 16, 531.

²⁶⁶ Zipora Baruchson, “On the Trade in Hebrew Books Between Italy and the Ottoman Empire during the XVIth Century”, in *East and Maghreb: Researches in the History of the Jews in the Orient and North Africa*, edited by A. Toaff (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1986), 62 (Hebrew). [From now on: *Trade in Hebrew Books*].

case in Fez (where the first press was that of Šemu'el ben Yišhaq Nedivot), in Cairo (where Geršom ben Eliezer Soncino - grandson of the famous Geršom - was active in the 1550s), in Safed and in Damascus.

These presses cannot be considered the fruit of local industry and investment: they were founded by foreigners, their main workers were immigrants from Spain, Italy or Poland, where they had learned the craft, and the necessary raw materials had to be imported from abroad. They often had financial difficulties and were forced to find a patron who invested in the press. Big works were especially hard to be sold because of their high cost, therefore some printers tried to solve the problem selling them in separate booklets.²⁶⁷

2.7.1 Safed

During the 16th century in Safed and in other Middle Eastern towns, literate people used to have their books printed in Constantinople, in Salonika and, above all, in Venice.

Looking for a place to improve his business, Eli'ezer ben Yišhaq Ashkenazi and his son Yišhaq of Prague left Lublin with their printing equipment and, after spending three years in Constantinople (1573-76), they opened a print shop in Safed. Habermann states that Eli'ezer ben Yišhaq intended to settle in Safed from the very beginning, because of its symbolic value in the Land of Israel. There, his son and he got associated with Avraham ben Yišhaq Ashkenazi - whom they had met in Constantinople - during the years 1577-1580. Their shared business was quite unsuccessful because the local market was not broad enough and the transportation was poor. Therefore, the associates needed to separate and to travel abroad trying to

²⁶⁷ Baruchson, *Trade in Hebrew Books*, 56 (Hebrew).

sell their books. Avraham left for Yemen while Eli'ezer went back to Constantinople where he restored his cooperation with his former partner Dawid ben Eliyyahu Kashti (1586). In 1587 Eli'ezer moved to Safed again and printed three more books of local authors before passing away. His types remained unused for about eighteen years in the house of Avraham ben Yiṣḥaq Ashkenazi, then his sons Yiṣḥaq and Ya'aqov sold them to Avraham ben Mattityahu Bath-Sheba, alias Basevi. Basevi, who was in Damascus, used the types to print part of Josiah Pinto's sermons collected in the volume *Kesef nivḥar* (1605), but they were extremely worn. This unsuccessful printing was interrupted before all the volumes were issued.²⁶⁸

No other press opened in Safed until 1831, when Yiśra'el Bak (1797-1874) from Berdychiv (Ukraine) moved there with his printing equipment. His press was destroyed twice: first in 1834, during the revolt against Muhammad Ali, and again in 1838 by the Druze uprising. Realizing that it was not the best place for his enterprise, in 1840, he transferred it to Jerusalem where he enjoyed lacking of competition that lasted for 22 years. He continued printing until his death in 1875, then the press passed to his son Nisan who sold it in 1883.

Safed, however, attracted a new printer, Dov Be'er Kara from Skala (Poland), who moved there opening his print shop in 1863. However he ceded soon because Safed could not compete with Jerusalem.

Other attempts to open print shops there were made in the 20th century with the foundation of the *Ha-Galil* press (1913), that later became the "Friedman" press, and the *Ha-Matmid* press (1959).²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Habermann, *Peraqim*, 311-316; Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, xlix; *The Seventeenth Century*, lviii; Posner - Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 103-104.

²⁶⁹ Habermann, *Peraqim*, 311-316; Posner - Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 151.

2.7.2 Salonika

Salonika was a very peculiar place in the Ottoman Empire as the majority of its inhabitants were Jewish.

The first Hebrew press was established there in 1512-13 by **Don Yehudah Gedaliah** (d. 1526) from Lisbon who learned the craft by Eli'ezer Toledano. He was assisted by his son Mošeh and by his daughter.

In 1521 **Mošeh Soncino** arrived to Salonika from Italy and he is known to have printed four Hebrew books there. Five years later, **Geršom Soncino** moved to Salonika with his son Eli'ezer and immediately started his printing activity there. In 1529 they both moved to Constantinople and only Eli'ezer came back to Salonika for a short while in 1543 and published a book there again.

In 1546 another press was founded in Salonika by the **Jabez** brothers, Šelomoh and Yosef ben Yišhaq. Around 1553 an outburst of plague forced them to leave and they temporarily settled in Adrianople where a few books were issued from their press.

Šelomoh then moved to Constantinople, while Yosef went back to Salonika. At the beginning of the 1570s, a second epidemic convinced Yosef and his son to sell their print shop and join Šelomoh in Constantinople.

The Salonika press was acquired by **Dawid ben Avraham Azubib** who operated until 1588 in adverse conditions.

The last print shop of the 16th century was founded in 1592 by Italian immigrants of Veronese origin: **Šabbetay Mattityahu Basevi** (Bath-Sheba, d. 1601), his sons Avraham Yosef and Avraham and his wife Fioretta. The press operated until 1605, and was financed by R. Mošeh ben Šemu'el de Medina whose father was a renowned Rabbi.

In 1610 the closed print shop was acquired by **Šelomoh and Mošeh Šim'on** and opened its doors again while members of the Medina family continued supporting it.

The press was active for ten to fifteen years and closed when a great fire in the neighborhood destroyed it.

The following press appeared long afterwards and issued about twenty titles in five years, from 1651 to 1656. The new printer was a convert to Judaism, **Avraham ha-Ger**, who published an unknown number of Talmudic treatises that had become rare to find and hard to import.

In 1675, the wandering printer **Avraham ben Yedidyah Gabbai** left Smyrna for the second time and relocated to Salonika. The new press had a long life although its owners often changed.

In the 18th century the books printed in Smyrna were mainly rabbinical writings such as responsa, novellas and homilies. The two main presses located in town were that of Avraham ben Dawid and his colleague YomṬov Canpillas and that of Avraham ben Yedidyah Gabbai from Livorno (from 1657).

In 1729 Canpillas started working independently and later, from 1732, he got associated with other partners.

Books printed in Salonika can easily be identified by their unique style, as types, woodcuts and paper are different from elsewhere.

Other printers of Hebrew books in Salonika were Mošeh ben Šemu'el Falcon, Betsal'el Levi, Ḥayyim Avraham ben Šabbetay Neḥamah and Sa'adi ha-Levi, Mordekhay Naḥman and Refa'el Yehudah Kalay. In the 1790s Mordekhay Naḥman associated with Dawid Yiśra'eliiyah.

Six editions in the Library were published in Salonika, but five printers only appear in the Catalogue list, as in one edition the publisher is not mentioned.

All the books date back to the 18th century, the earliest being the *Sefer Zehore hammah* printed by Mošeh ben Šemu'el **Falcon** in 1738 (n. 906). The next book printed in Salonika is the second volume of Rapaport's *Batte Kehunnah* printed in 1754 by **Bešal'el Levi** (n. 806, the first volume was printed in Smyrna by Yonah Aškenazi and Dawid Ḥazan).

The remaining three editions are Dawid Pardo's *Sefer la-Menaseah le-Dawid* printed by Refa'el Yehudah **Qala'y** and Mordekhay **Naḥman** in 1765 (n. 779), *Kokhva de-šavit* by Eliyyahu printed in the 1799 edition of Ḥayyim Avraham ben Šabbetay **Neḥamah** and Sa'adi ha-**Levi** (n. 868), and Yosef Naḥamoli's *Ašedot ha-pisgah*, published by Mordekhay **Naḥman** and Dawid **Yiśra'eliyyah** in 1790 (n. 769).

2.7.3 Constantinople

The Hebrew press in Constantinople was the first press ever in the area. It was managed by two refugees from the Iberian Peninsula: **Dawid and Šemu'el ibn Naḥmias**. The first book published at their press was Yosef Caro's *Šulḥan 'arukh* in 1493. They printed mainly *Halakhic* works and a lot of *Midrašim*.

Other printers came from different places and settled in Constantinople, printing Hebrew works.

In 1529 Geršom Soncino moved there with his son Eli'ezer who issued more than thirty titles.

Around 1548 Šemu'el, one of the **Halicz** brothers from Krakow arrived to the city and returned to Judaism. He also resumed printing, founding a Hebrew press that continued working under the management of his son Ḥayyim upon his death (c. 1561-62).²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ Posner - Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 155. On Hebrew printing in Constantinople see also: Joseph R. Hacker, "Hebrew Printing in Istanbul, 1493- 1530", in *The Alphabet of Ben Sira: Facsimile of the*

In the meantime, in 1559, **Šelomoh ben Yišḥaq Jabez** arrived from Salonika (see above) and was later joined by his brother Yosef. Following the burning of the Talmud in Italy (1553) the Jabez brothers decided to print a new edition of it, a work that kept the press busy for ten years, from 1583 to 1593.

In 1575 a new print shop appeared in Constantinople, that of **Eli'ezer ben Yišḥaq Ashkenazi** and his son Yišḥaq. They arrived from Lublin and they printed three books with the occasional cooperation of Dawid ben Elijah Kashti. Then, the *Ashkenazis* moved to Safed, coming back to Constantinople for a short while and then definitively settling in Palestine.

Another press was established in Belvedere, in the Bosphorus, at the residence of Donna Reyna, Doña Gracia Mendesia Nasi's daughter who moved to Constantinople with her mother in 1553 marrying Don Yosef Nasi (d. 1579). Reyna, who had no descendants, decided to invest her fortune to promote Jewish learning and, in 1593, she entrusted a printing press to Yosef ben Yišḥaq Askaloni. The press was later transferred to the village of Kuruçeşme for unknown reasons and operated there in the years 1597-1599.²⁷¹

The closure of this press was followed by a forty-year period of idleness, interrupted in 1639 by **Šelomoh ben Dawid Franco**, a *converso* who was escaping from the Iberian peninsula. He was already an aged man when he arrived to Constantinople

Constantinople 1519 Edition, edited by Joseph Hacker and Abraham Meir Haberman (Verona: Valmadonna Trust Library, 1997), 15-37.

²⁷¹ Gotthard Deutsch - Meyer Kayserling, "Nasi, Reyna", *JE*, vol. 9, 174 (online at: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11334-nasi-reyna>). The press is mentioned by Heller, *The Sixteenth Century*, ilviii and *The Seventeenth Century*, lxii. On the history of Gracia Nasi see: Howard Tzvi Adelman, "Jewish Women and Family Life, Inside and Outside the Ghetto", in *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, edited by Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 143-146. Paul Frédéric Jean Grunebaum-Ballin, *Joseph Nasi, duc de Naxos* (Paris; La Haye: Mouton, 1968); Cecil Roth, *The House of Nasi: Dona Gracia* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, c1948), [Reprinted in 1977 with the title *Doña Gracia of the house of Nasî*]; Alice Fernand-Halphen, *Une grande dame juive de la Renaissance: Gracia Mendesia-Nasi* (S.l.: s.n., 1929).

and he died soon afterwards but the press continued operating. His son Avraham and his son-in-law Ya`aqov Gabbai succeeded him two years later, in 1641, but from 1648 Abraham Franco appears as the only publisher. He continued his activity until c. 1683 with some intervals, employing refugees from the Chmielniki massacres of 1648.²⁷²

At the same time, from 1660 to 1670, also **Avraham ben Yedidyah Gabbai**, who had printed some books in Smyrna, transferred his press to Constantinople but ended up moving back again. He used Bragadin's typographical equipment and some of his decorations, as well as his printer marks, that are clearly recognizable.

In 1710 Yonah ben Ya`aqov Ashkenazi (also: Yonah ben Ya`aqov of Zalozce, d. 1745) founded a new press in Constantinople where the influence of Amsterdam was recognizable. He engraved his own types and decorative frames and associated with Naphtali ben `Azri`el of Vilna for the first two years. He travelled several times for working purposes and he was forced to leave the town twice but he continued printing in Ortaköy, which was not far. In 1741 a fire destroyed the press that could re-open two years later with the help of the local Rabbi Avraham Rosanes.²⁷³

"During the 35 years of his activity in Constantinople and Smyrna, Ashkenazi printed 125 books. [...] Ashkenazi made Constantinople the center of Hebrew printing in the Orient".²⁷⁴ The press continued to operate with Jonah's sons Reuben, Nissim and Mošeh and later with his grandsons, up to 1778.

²⁷² Zilberberger, "Printing, Hebrew", in *EJ*, vol. 16, 536.

²⁷³ Zilberberger, "Printing, Hebrew", in *EJ*, vol. 16, 536; Posner - Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 149-150.

²⁷⁴ Posner, Ta-Shema, *Historical Survey*, 150.

The Constantinople editions in the Library are not at all representative of the commercial ties this city had with Venice, a tie that was especially strong among the Jewish communities in the two centers.

Nine editions only have survived the vicissitudes of this peculiar collection, and only two of them date back to the 16th century. They were both printed by Šelomoh ben Yišhaq **Jabez** around 1567: *Ner Mišwah* by Mošeh ben Ḥayyim Pisanti (n. 795) and *Yeša` Eloqim*, a commentary on the *Hoša`anot* (n. 588).

Six of the remaining editions were issued in the 18th century by **Re`uven** and **Nissim** the sons of Yonah **Ashkenazi** (n. 697: 1730), by Nissim's son, **Šemu`el** (n. 697: 1730) and by **Yonah ben Ya`aqov Ashkenazi** (n. 312: 1728, n. 697: 1730, n. 869: 1736, n. 903: 1736). The only 19th-century edition from Constantinople contains an ethical work, *Sefer miqra'e godeš* by Efrayim ben Avraham Ḥayot, printed by **Arab `Oglu** in 1829 (n. 331).

2.7.4 Smyrna

In Smyrna the first Hebrew press was founded by **Avraham ben Yedidyah Gabbai**. He was Yedidyah ben Yišhaq Gabbai's son, the founder of the *Kaf Naḥat* press in Livorno. The Smyrna press was active during two intervals: 1657-1660 and 1671-1675.

No other Hebrew press opened in Smyrna until 1728 when **Yonah ben Ya`aqov Ashkenazi** started a partnership with **Rabbi Dawid ben Ḥayyim Hazzan**. In 1739, however, Hazzan left for Palestine and the press was closed. His son Yehudah, however, opened a new press in 1756 that operated up to 1767, then the typographical equipment was sold to Yehošua` Cohen-Tannoudji from Tunis.

At the same time, in 1756, two other presses were founded by **Ya`aqov ben Šemu`el Valensi** and by **Osta (?) from Argos** who could count on the help of Rabbi

Berakhyah Kohen.²⁷⁵

During the 19th century several Jewish printers were operating in Smyrna: **Šemu'el Hakim**, and Ḥayyim Avraham ha-Levi who worked as a proofreader (1844-51); **Ya'aqov ben Yehudah Šemu'el Ashkenazi** and his brother who moved there from Livorno in 1858; Ben Zion Benjamin ben Yehošua' Mošeh **Roditti** (1857-73); Yišḥaq Šemu'el ben Yehudah **de Segura** with other associates, and later he was joined by his brother Aharon Yehošua' (active up to 1874).

In 1880, Ḥayyim Avraham de Segura opened another print shop and the following year two partners, Avraham **Pontremoli** and Ya'aqov **Poli**, founded another press publishing mainly Talmudic works.²⁷⁶

Three editions of the partners Yonah ben Ya'aqov **Ashkenazi** and Dawid **Ḥazan** are still part of the Hebrew collection, one of them is Aharon ben Mošeh Alfandari's *Yad Aharon* (n. 16, 1735-1766) that was completed by Ya'aqov **Valensi** (voll. 2-3). The other volumes contain the *Sefer Hemdat ha-Yamim* (n. 337: 1731-1732), and the responsa of Rabbi Yišḥaq ben Yehudah Leib ha-Kohen Rapaport (*Batte Kehunnah*, n. 806: 1736).

²⁷⁵ H. B. Friedberg, *History of Hebrew Typography in Italy, Spain-Portugal and the Turkey* (Tel Aviv: Bar-Juda, 1956), 149 [Hebrew, אוסטטא מארגוט].

²⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

2.8 On the International Book Circulation

International book trade among printers and book sellers existed from the very beginning of printing history. When books became available in large quantities, the local marketplaces became too small to sell the whole production and potential customers had to be reached up to faraway places.

There is proof of the import of books even by the hands of well known printers like Daniel Bomberg (in Venice) whose production was not small nor trivial. Nevertheless, he decided to import few copies of works that could interest some of his customers (but not enough to justify a new edition at his press). A catalogue of Bomberg's bookshop acquired by Conrad Gesner in Venice in 1543, and analyzed by Z. Baruchson, includes seventy-five titles, among them thirty-nine were imported, and twenty-seven of them were printed in Constantinople.²⁷⁷

The book production in Eastern and Western Europe gradually increased from the 16th to the 20th century, and it was far more extensive than the local needs of the towns where the presses were located. Printers, in fact, aimed at the international market and had an eye on the demand of other countries where Hebrew presses were small or totally absent.

The Frankfurt Book Fair (that still exists) was an international meeting place for printers and book sellers from all over the continent. Up to the end of the 17th century it was the main marketplace to sort books to different countries and to buy stocks of volumes from foreign booksellers. Afterwards, it was temporarily surpassed by the Leipzig Book Fair, that dominated the international scene until World War II.

²⁷⁷ Conrad Gesner, *Pandectarum sive partitionum universalium Conradi Gesneri Tigurini, medici & philosophiae professoris, libri XXI* (Tiguri: excudebat Christophorus Froschouerus, 1548), 41b-42b; Baruchson, *Trade in Hebrew Books*, 65 (Hebrew).

Besides these international events, itinerant merchants were the principal book suppliers for the different Jewish Communities, especially during the 18th century.

In the second half of the 19th century, when the *Haskalah* movement had generated a widespread interest in secular culture, Jews started investing in bookshops.²⁷⁸

The main scope of this movement was a complete integration of Jews in the secular society, eliminating cultural and linguistic hurdles.

A major work conceived in this atmosphere is the German translation of the *Pentateuch* made by Moses Mendelssohn and accompanied by his commentary (*Sefer Netivot ha-šalom*, Berlin: George Friedrich Starcke, 1783).

German Jews, like their Eastern European brethren, were not confident with non-Jewish languages. Therefore, they were cut out of non-Jewish literature and knowledge, but certainly heard about it from merchants and travelers. Zeev Gries, who extensively wrote on this topic on his volume *The Book in the Jewish World 1700-1900*, stressed the importance of Hebrew and Yiddish translations of secular literature that became available in the 18th century only.

This was not the case for Italian Jews who, in the 16th century, knew Italian dialects better than Hebrew.

“The Jews of eastern Europe had until then had little or nothing to do with the humanities, with literary and historical scholarship, with the natural sciences, mathematics, engineering, chemistry, or technology. This even applied to medicine, a field in which Jews led for generations but from which they were virtually absent by the turn of the seventeenth century.”²⁷⁹

Concerning Jewish literature, Gries remarks a renewed interest in Talmudic studies proven by the numerous editions of the *Mišnayot* (65).²⁸⁰

Religious works, including liturgy, were often provided with an Yiddish translation

²⁷⁸ Gries, *Book in the Jewish World*, 22.

²⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, 28-29.

²⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, 39.

(while it rarely happened on the previous centuries). This factor contributed to enlarge the reading public and to diffuse the knowledge of the meaning of rituals and customs even outside the cultural élite.

As we have already mentioned, in the 18th century Amsterdam was the main center for Jewish printing, and a great part of its production was directed to eastern Europe. The eastern presses closed one after the other because they were unable to stand the competition of Amsterdam and Prague where printing was less expensive.

Simultaneously, the availability of many printed books brought about the increase of private and public collections. Libraries appeared in all the *Batte ha-midraš* as early as the 17th century, thus making all the main *Halakic* works available to poor students, and facilitating social mobility.

Moreover, these libraries started acquiring works that fell outside the standard religious studies, dealing with ethics, philosophy and *qabbalah*. The spreading of their knowledge generated a cultural elevation of the eastern Jewish Communities, bringing about social changes.

Evidences of this widespread book circulation can be found in the historical book collections of private and public libraries whose volumes show a variety of printing locations, even if some of them appear only in a few copies.

3. The Hebrew Book Collection of the “Renato Maestro” Library

3.1 Jewish Cultural Heritage in Italy

The Italian Jewish cultural heritage is rich and variegated but it has been properly preserved and valued only in the last three decades.

Until World War II it was not conceived as a unitary heritage concerning all Italian Jews, as every Jewish Community perceived itself independent from the others. Each one had its own history, its key-figures, its traditions (even the Italian rite changes from one city to the other), and was proud of its uniqueness and jealous of its cultural treasures.

The UCII (Unione Comunità Israelitiche Italiane²⁸¹) was aware of this widespread reluctance to cooperate and to share one’s patrimony with another, as it emerges from the stylistic devices used in the circular letters sent from Rome all over Italy.

Venice - faithful to its historical suspicion against any attempt to interfere with its inner affairs - was especially reticent and general in the answers submitted to the UCII.

In the postwar period, when the surviving communities were facing enormous problems to rescue their lives and properties and were trying to reconstruct themselves, the cultural heritage was not a priority and it was neglected for a certain time. Then, in the 1950s, the necessity of a national rescuing operation arose and a few attempts were made to conduct a census of all the existing book collections and archives in order to avoid losses and damages.

²⁸¹ This name was used from 1930 (Legge Falco) to 1989 when it was officially changed by the law n. 101, Art 19.1: “L’Unione delle Comunità Israelitiche Italiane conserva la personalità giuridica di cui è attualmente dotata e assume la denominazione di Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane”.

At the same time, some Israeli institutions, especially the Ben Zvi Institute, were making pressure on the UCII to obtain the custody of the archives of the Italian Jewish Community. The UCII with its members, as well as the different Jewish Communities, were all against the transfer of their heritage to Israel and they appealed to the Civil law in order to secure it under Italian guardianship.

Many letters testify the difficulty in treating this issue debating with Israeli scholars and politicians.

In order to preserve the documentary heritage and to protect it from foreign attempts to obtain its custody, and from local risks of dispersion, the UCII promoted a general survey and tried to propose centralized solutions.

On the 11th of December 1953 the UCII sent a letter to all the Italian Jewish Communities asking for a report on the consistence of their documentary heritage and on its conditions. It contained also an official request to preserve it in the best possible way and not to jeopardize its entirety.

“Il Consiglio della Unione nella sua seduta del 30/11/1953, presa in esame la situazione del patrimonio artistico, bibliografico e culturale delle Comunità e Sezioni, ha dovuto dolersi di come tale patrimonio vada facilmente in deperimento, quando anche non vada disperso per opera diretta dei responsabili e depositari.

[...] Vi trasmettiamo formale diffida ad astenervi da ogni atto che possa comunque pregiudicare la consistenza del patrimonio rituale, culturale ed artistico di pertinenza di ciascuna Comunità o Sezione e vi invitiamo a provvedere affinché tale patrimonio venga opportunamente censito e conservato.

È stata nominata in seno al Consiglio dell'Unione una apposita Commissione che curerà il rilevamento del patrimonio anzidetto prendendo contatto a tale scopo con i depositari di esso”.²⁸²

²⁸² Circolare UCII n. 32 of December 11, 1953, Archivio Storico dell'UCEI, fondo “Attività dell'UCII dal 1948”, box n. 97, file n. 35-6 “Situazione patrimoniale archivi”. Translation: “The Union Council, during its session of 11/30/1953, examined the situation of the artistic, bibliographic and cultural heritage of the Communities and Sections and regretted its spread deterioration, or even its dispersion

The answer from the Jewish Community of Venice is dated December 17th 1953:

“A pregiata Vs. Circolare n. 32. Abbiamo preso nota di quanto ci dite: A Venezia esiste una biblioteca i cui libri sono stati schedati e catalogati, gli oggetti artistici sono stati pure quasi completamente catalogati”.²⁸³

On the following year, on July 8, 1954, a letter was sent to all the Italian Jewish Communities demanding information on their artistic and cultural heritage in order to keep it properly. It becomes clear that some communities had never answered to the previous request.

A general questionnaire, prepared by Elio Toaff, who was the Chief Rabbi of Rome, was attached to this circular letter. Each Community was asked to provide information on its territory and the nearby villages concerning: 1. Buildings and cemeteries, 2. Furniture (portals, *teivot*, *aronot*), 3. *Sefarim* and ritual objects, 4. Public and private libraries, their holdings and the existence of inventories and/or catalogues, 5. The existence of public and private archives and their consistency and organization.²⁸⁴

Yiṣḥaq Ben-Zvi (1884-1963) who was the President of the State of Israel and the founder of the Ben-Zvi Research Institute was willing to transfer the Italian archives to Jerusalem and made many efforts to obtain them. On October 20th 1955, Ben-Zvi in a letter to Giorgio Zevi, President of the UCII, wrote:

“שמחנו לשמוע מפיו [של אטיליו מילאנו] שהחלטתם לאסוף את החומר הארכיוני המפוזר על פני קהילות רבות ולשומרם בקהילות המרכזיות.

directly caused by its own responsible and depository persons.

[...] We impart to you formal injunction to abstain from any action that could somehow jeopardize the consistency of the ritual, cultural and artistic heritage pertaining to each Community or branch. We also exhort you to take measures in order to conduct a census and preserve this patrimony.

A specific Commission has been appointed among the Council of the Union to take care of the survey of the above-mentioned heritage, contacting its depository on this purpose”.

²⁸³ Archivio Storico dell’UCEI, fondo “Attività dell’UCII dal 1948”, box n. 97, file n. 35-6 “Situazione patrimoniale archivi”. Translation: “[...] We took note of what you say: in Venice there is a library whose books have been registered and catalogued, and the artistic objects have been catalogued almost completely as well”.

²⁸⁴ Archivio Storico dell’UCEI, fondo “Attività dell’UCII dal 1948”, box n. 97, file n. 35-6 “Situazione patrimoniale archivi”.

[...] אך דאגתנו היא על כך שמא תכנית זאת תצא לפועל באיחור זמן, כאשר כבר חלק ניכר מהחומר הארכיוני שהיה שמור בקהילות קטנות נעלם או אבד. מדי פעם בפעם מגיעות אלינו ידיעות שאוספים שלמים שמוצאם מן הארכיונים האיטלקיים מוצעים למכירה בארצות הברית, באנגליה ובשווייץ [...]. אין הדברים אמורים רק על השנים הראשונות שלאחר מלחמת העולם הראשונה אלא גם על הזמן שלאחר כך, עד היום".²⁸⁵

He continued writing about the project of the Institute - which was by then part of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem - to create a specific department for the study of Italian Jewry. He described the new location at the University Campus as well as the cultural initiatives that were going to be promoted. Ben-Zvi tried to convince Zevi that his plans were not intended to be an alternative to the Italian projects but rather to integrate them.

Eventually, on the last paragraph, he makes the request:

"בקשתי מכם איה שתפקידו בידינו את המסמחים שעדיין נמצאים בקהילות שנתחסלו או שהן עומדות להתחסל [...]. אנו בטוחים שבמדינת ישראל תגיע גאולתם של מסמחים אלה. וכשם שהרבה מטובי בניה של יהדות איטליה עלו ארצה ישראל בעשרות השנים האחרונות, כך צריכה להיות יהדות איטליה גאה שגם נכסי תרבותה עולים עמה לירושלים".²⁸⁶

One month later the UCII Council made a clear decision: the archival material, properly preserved and organized, must be kept exclusively in Italy. Copies can be

²⁸⁵ Archivio Storico dell'UCEI, fondo "Attività dell'UCII dal 1948", box n. 97, file 35-4 "Biblioteche e archivi". Translation: "We were glad to hear from [Attilio Milano] that you have decided to gather all the archival material that is scattered among many communities and to keep it in the central communities. [...] but we are worried that of this project may be realized too late, when a consistent part of the archival material that was kept in the small communities disappeared or went lost.

From time to time we receive information about entire collections, originating from Italian archives, that are offered on sale in the United States, in England and in Switzerland [...]. These things do not concern only the first years that followed the first World War but also the following period, until today".

²⁸⁶ Archivio Storico dell'UCEI, fondo "Attività dell'UCII dal 1948", box n. 97, file 35-4 "Biblioteche e archivi". Translation: "My request is that you entrust to us the documents that are still in the communities that disappeared or that are about to disappear [...]. We are sure that in the State of Israel those documents will be saved. And as many of the best children of Italian Jewry made *Aliyah* to *Eretz Israel* on the last decades, so Italian Jewry must be proud that also the assets of its culture rise with them to Jerusalem".

made available to the Israeli academic institutes.²⁸⁷

The status of the archives was finally decided, the next step to be done was the gathering in Rome of all the small archives that could not be preserved in their original location.

The same process concerned the libraries of the Italian Jewish communities that, for the major part, were neglected and not available to the reading public.

In c. 1937, in a personal note, Isaiah Sonne (who was the director of the Rabbinical College of Rhodes in the years 1936-38) had already complained the situation of the Jewish collections and suggested to gather them in a central location like the UCII in Rome.

”רכוש ביבליוגרפי עצום מפוזר על פני קהילות ישראל שבאיטליה, ביניהן כאלה שהולכות וחרבות לחלוטין, ואין מי שידאג לריכוזן ולגאולתן מסכנת הכליה, ביחוד בימי הגזירות הרעות שנתחוללו עכשיו על היהדות האיטלקית. [...] כלום ניתן, שאוצרות אלה ילכו לאיבוד ויעברו מן העולם, מבלי שנעשה נסיון להציל מה שאפשר להציל [...] [...] באתי לידי הכרה, שאין תקנה אחרת להצלת הרכוש היקר הזה אלא בריכוזו ובסידורו בארכיון גדול, שימצא במקום מרכזי ובטוח כל צרכו. לשם כך עיבדתי תכנית מפורטת, והגשתי לפני ”איחוד הקהילות העבריות באיטליה” שברומא (Unione delle Comunità

²⁸⁸.”(Israelitiche Italiano [i.e. Italiane])

Later on, Sonne made some considerations concerning the uncertain political situation in Italy and the dangers which the local Jewish heritage were exposed to. He expressed his intention to make a further visit to the Italian Jewish Communities

²⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, document attached to Ben-Zvi's letter.

²⁸⁸ ”על הספרות שבקהילות היהודים באיטליה”, The National Library of Israel - Archive Department, Archive of Isaiah Sonne, **ARC. 4* 796**, box n. AC-5098. Translation: “An enormous bibliographic possession is scattered among the Israelite Communities in Italy. Among them some are going to be completely dismantled and there is no-one who will take care of its gathering and saving from the danger of extinction, especially on the days of the evil decrees that are being imposed to Italian Jewry. [...] It is possible that those treasures will be lost and cease to exist, without any attempt being made to rescue what can be rescued [...].

[...] I became aware that there is no other remedy to rescue this precious possession other than concentrating and organizing it in a big archive, located in a central and secure place in any case. For this purpose I prepared a detailed program and I presented it to the Union of the Hebrew [sic!] Communities of Italy that is in Rome (Unione delle Comunità Israelitiche Italiane)”.

in order to convince their leaders to send their collections abroad, to safer countries, especially to the United States.

Israeli institutions, however, were not satisfied with the negative answer that they received and were determined to conduct a battle against the obstinacy of the Italians to put in danger the integrity of an heritage that they were not capable to preserve.

On September 14, 1956, in the circular letter n. 36, Renzo Levi (vice president of the UCII) informed the Presidents of the Italian Jewish Communities that a team of Israeli experts was going to visit the communities to reorganize their archives. The appointed members were Naomi Hillel, Daniel Carpi, D. J. Coen, Chone Szmeruk and Shlomo Simonsohn. They planned to form two groups: Carpi and Szmeruk were going to visit Modena, Ferrara, Verona, Padua, Venice, Trieste and, if necessary, Gorizia, while Simonsohn and Hillel were going to Livorno, Genoa, Alessandria, Casale, Asti, Ivrea and Vercelli. Dr. Coen was going to arrive too late to join them.²⁸⁹

The addressed Presidents were asked to cooperate making all the documents available to the experts and, at the same time, monitoring their work.

An ill-concealed suspicion appears in the last paragraph:

“Teniamo a ricordare che le Comunità non sono autorizzate a vendere o offrire in dono materiale archivistico o bibliografico senza preventiva autorizzazione di questa Unione che deve seguire precise istruzioni emanate in merito, dall’Ufficio Centrale degli Archivi di Stato come da nostra circolare del 26 agosto 1956, n. 34”.²⁹⁰

Even though the aim of the circular letter was to inform the Communities of the imminence of the Israeli experts’ visit as a matter of fact, without asking their opinion, Venetian Jews were not willing to make their way so easy.

²⁸⁹ Archivio Storico dell’UCEI, fondo “Attività dell’UCII dal 1948”, box n. 97, file 35-4 “Biblioteche e archivi”, *Verbale riunione dell’11 settembre 1956*.

²⁹⁰ *Ibidem*. Translation: “We wish to remind you that the Communities are not allowed to sell nor to donate archival or bibliographical material without the previous authorization of this Union, that has to conform itself to precise instructions issued on this subject by the Central Bureau of the State Archives, as illustrated in our newsletter dated August 26, 1956, n.34”.

President Vittorio Fano submitted a quite cold answer:

“Siamo in possesso della preg. V. circolare n. 36, il cui contenuto sottoporremo all’attenzione del Consiglio di Amministrazione di questa Comunità nella Sua prossima riunione, riservandoci di riferirVi quindi al riguardo”.²⁹¹

We have no further information concerning the visit of Daniel Carpi and his team in Venice. I couldn’t find any evidence in his private archive nor in the archives of the Venetian Jewish Community and in that of the UCEI (the new name of the UCII).

In 1959-60 a new correspondence between the UCII and the leaders of the Jewish Communities testifies that the centralizing project was far from being completed. The letter constituted, in fact, a further attempt to make a census of all the existing documentation and to convince, at least, the smaller communities to cede their historical archives and ancient books. It shows the attempt to centralize the management of all the archives or, at least, their organization.

Its author, Augusto Segre, from the UCII Department of Education and Culture, was trying to figure out which means were necessary to rescue the Italian Jewish cultural heritage.

He wished to have a clear planning of the needed interventions in order to present it to the annual Claims Conference of Geneva where it was possible to ask for funding.

The questions that he submitted to the presidents of the Jewish Communities were the following:

1. Vi è presso la Vostra Comunità una persona esperta in grado di prendersi cura in modo adeguato dell’archivio?

²⁹¹ *Ibidem*, Letter from V. Fano to the UCII, Venice, Sep. 17, 1956, prot. N. 624/CUC. Translation: “We are in possession of your newsletter n. 36, whose content will be submitted to the attention of the Administrative Council of this Community during its next session. We reserve the right to report to you on this subject”.

2. Avete motive di ritenere che, se non viene tenuto con la massima cura, il materiale storico è destinato, in un tempo più o meno breve, ad andare distrutto completamente o in parte?
3. In caso negativo, per quali motivi?
4. In caso affermativo, quali provvedimenti intendete prendere?
5. Sareste disposti ad inviare naturalmente a titolo di prestito, il Vostro archivio all'Archivio Storico di Gerusalemme, dove verrebbe trattato con tutte quelle cure che la scienza mette a disposizione?
6. In caso negative, sareste disposti ad inviarlo all'Unione delle Comunità, che provvederebbe così ad organizzare un archivio centrale per tutte le comunità italiane?²⁹²

The style of these questions shows that the Union had no direct control over the single collections. It was trying to convince each Community that it was better to yield their documentary material to a central institution that could organize it and make it available to the public, rather than neglecting it, keeping it in unsuitable spaces with no one taking care of it.

The Historical Archive of Jerusalem was proposed as the first possible hosting institution for this material, but the person who wrote the questions was aware of the general mistrust towards Israeli institutions. Nobody doubted that they would keep the material in the best possible way but, at the same time, nobody believed that the

²⁹² "Questionario relativo agli archivi esistenti presso le comunità", it was attached to a circular letter dated Oct. 22, 1959, Archivio Storico dell'UCEI, fondo "Attività dell'UCII dal 1948", box n. 97, file 35-11 "Biblioteche" 1959-1960. Translation:

1. Is there in your Community an expert who can take care of the archive properly?
2. Do you have any reason to think that the historical material, if it is not kept with great care, may be destined to partial or total destruction sooner or later?
3. If not, for what reasons?
4. If yes, which measures do you intend to take?
5. Would you be willing to send your archive - obviously as a loan - to the Historical Archive of Jerusalem, where it would be treated with all the available scientific care?
6. If not, would you be willing to send it to the Union of the Communities, that would engage in organizing a central archive for all the Italian Communities?

documents would be really given back to their Italian owners after their reorganization. This is stated clearly in the private correspondence among Italian scholars and representatives of cultural institutions.²⁹³

Therefore, a second option was proposed: the Italian archives could be gathered in Rome at the UCII Library and Archive. Indeed, this solution was preferred by several communities that finally sent their heritage to Rome.

This was not the case for Venice, always too jealous of its treasures and independence to yield even a small part of it or to let others interfere with its inner affairs.

The major part of the Communities, however, made the same choice and kept their collections. For this reason the UCII made a further appeal on the following year:

“[...] Ci rendiamo perfettamente conto come ogni Comunità sia gelosa di tutto ciò che in vario modo ricorda la storia del proprio nucleo ebraico, ma dobbiamo tuttavia ancora una volta ricordare che questo desiderio deve essere accompagnato anche dalla effettiva possibilità e volontà di dare a questo materiale una sistemazione che lo preservi dai gravi pericoli cui può andare incontro (umidità, topi, etc.) o che lo metta in condizione da essere facilmente consultato dagli studiosi”.²⁹⁴

The letter continued renewing the offer to deposit libraries and archives to the UCII center in Rome.

This writing has a pedagogical tone, it sounds like an attempt to make the readers

²⁹³ See, for instance, the letters kept at the Archive of the Centro Bibliografico dell'UCEI, fondo “Attività dell'UCII dal 1948”, box n. 97, file 35-4 “Biblioteche e archivi”, namely: a letter from Giorgio Zevi to Attilio Milano dated 24/01/1956 (n. 398-350), formal letter of the Council of the UCII to Israeli President Yish'haq Ben-Zvi dated 16/01/1956 (n. 263-350), private letter from Giorgio Zevi to Dante Lattes dated 25/11/1955 (n. 4483-350); fondo “Attività dell'UCII dal 1948”, box n. 97, file 35-6 “Situazione patrimoniale archive”, letter from Benvenuto Terracini to Sergio Piperno dated 2/6/1959 (n. 2584-350), copy of s letter sent from Colombo to B. Terracini forwarded by him to S. Piperno on 15/3/1959 (n. 1318-350), letter from B. Terracini to S. Piperno dated 4/3/1959 (n. 1318-350), etc.

²⁹⁴ *Circ. N. 38*, Rome, May 30, 1960, Prot. N. 2764/350, *Ibidem*. Translation: “We are perfectly aware that each Community is jealous of anything that, in many ways, reminds the history of its Jewish nucleus, but nevertheless we have to remind you that this wish must be accompanied to the actual possibility and willingness to organize this material in order to protect it from the serious dangers that it may encounter (humidity, mice, etc.) and to make it easily available to scholars”.

reasonable and capable to make the right choice (which, in the aim of this letter, is to entrust their material to the UCII).

However, only the Communities of Pitigliano and Senigallia accepted the advice. At the central archive of the UCEI were entrusted the historical archive of the Università Israelitica di Senigallia and that of the Università Israelitica di Pitigliano which included the historical fund of the Pio Istituto Consiglio.²⁹⁵

The historical archives of the other Jewish Communities are still kept in their place of origin with the exception of those that have been destroyed by the fascists (Torino, Alessandria, Ferrara, etc.²⁹⁶) or donated to public institutions.²⁹⁷

The Jewish community in Mantua made a unique choice in order to save its bibliographic heritage from damage or dispersion, entrusting it to the municipal library *Biblioteca Teresiana* as early as 1931. The early book collection had gone through different vicissitudes, some volumes were destroyed in a fire in 1861, others were damaged by the water used to extinguish the fire. Probably for lack of surveillance, other books disappeared from the new location (in via Gilberto Govi 11-15, where the Community has now its headquarters). It was decided, therefore, to keep liturgical volumes and educational books only and to alienate early books and manuscripts, a choice that actually kept them safe during World War II.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ On this institution see: Roberto G. Salvadori, *La comunità ebraica di Pitigliano dal XVI al XX secolo* (Firenze: Giuntina, 1991), 88-99.

²⁹⁶ See: Michele Sarfatti, "Contro i libri e i documenti delle Comunità israelitiche italiane, 1938-1945", *RMI* 69. 2 (2003): 369-385.

²⁹⁷ On the library of the Jewish Community of Padua see: *Libri ebraici dei secoli XVI-XIX nella Biblioteca universitaria di Padova*, edited by Giuliano Tamani (Padova: Programma, 2005), 11-20. On Modena see: Davide Ruggerini, *Un protagonista del commercio librario nell'Italia del Lumi: Moïse Beniamino Foà (1730-1821)*, Phd Thesis in Literary, Philological and Historical Culture (Bologna: Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna, 2012-13), 227-238; Raffaella Manelli, "Il recupero in rete della Biblioteca della Comunità ebraica di Modena e Reggio", *Quaderni Estensi*, 1 (2009): 49-55.

²⁹⁸ See the Biblioteca Teresiana website at: <http://www.bibliotecateresiana.it/content/category/6/45/92/>. The catalogues of the Hebrew collection were edited by Giulio Busi: *Biblioteca Comunale di Mantova, Libri ebraici a Mantova*, 4 vols. (Fiesole: Cadmo, 1996-2003).

3.2 The “Renato Maestro” Library and Archive

The Library and Archive of the Jewish Community of Venice was founded in 1981 thanks to a donation made by Dr. Renato Maestro’s sisters to perpetuate their brother’s memory.

Renato Abramo Vita Maestro (1911-1974) was the fifth son of a Levantine merchant, Giacomo Maestro, who moved from Ancona to Venice sometime after his wedding that took place in 1891. Renato was educated at the Collegio Ravà, and later graduated at the “Marco Foscarini” high school in Venice. He also obtained a Master’s Degree in Economics in 1935 at Ca’ Foscari University. He openly opposed the Fascist regime joining an antifascist group, for that reason he was arrested and confined in L’Aquila (1941-43). Then he joined the Allies and cooperated with them in Bari and in Rome and, when the war was over, he returned to Venice joining his family. He resumed working as an accountant, cultivating, at the same time, a deep interest in Jewish history and culture. He was also an active member of the Council of the Jewish Community and was especially committed to relocating the different Jewish institutions into the Ghetto (like the kindergarten and the Community headquarters), giving it a central role again.

Renato Maestro died in 1974 leaving a bequest for the foundation of a Jewish cultural center, that was used to reorganize the library and the archive of the Jewish Community.²⁹⁹

This donation is already attested in 1976 in an article that appeared in the local periodical “Notizie della Comunità Israelitica di Venezia” (Settembre 1976-Tishri 5737, p. 1) entitled “Il centro di studi ebraici e la donazione Maestro” (*The Jewish*

²⁹⁹ Sigrid Sohn, “La circolazione della cultura ebraica nella comunità di Venezia: la Biblioteca-Archivio “Renato Maestro”, in *E li insegnerai ai tuoi figli: educazione ebraica in Italia dalle leggi razziali ad oggi*, edited by Anna Maria Piussi (Firenze: Giuntina, 1997), 192 [From now on: *Renato Maestro*]; see also Renato Maestro’s biography in the Library and Archive website at: <http://renatomaestro.org/it/renato-abramo-vita-maestro/>.

Cultural Center and the Maestro donation).

La Biblioteca in corso di allestimento e di sistemazione nei locali del "Centro", per le cure del Prof. Umberto Fortis e Signora è stata spesso meta di giovani ricercatori.

Marcella e Margherita le sorelle del compianto e mai dimenticato dott. Renato Maestro hanno desiderato onorarne la memoria con una donazione alla Comunità: con precisa destinazione per oggi e per il futuro alla nostra Biblioteca; per un totale riordino e aggiornamento e regolare funzionamento. La Biblioteca sarà lo strumento per realizzare il progetto comunitario di un vero e proprio "Centro di Studi Ebraici" a Venezia. La donazione è importante e ci auguriamo che serva di esempio ad altri possibili donatori che ci metterebbero così anche in condizione di trasferire il Centro Studi-Biblioteca in locali più adatti ed accoglienti.³⁰⁰

The library holdings include about 12000 volumes, 35 periodicals, a small manuscript collection, 147 ancient books in Latin alphabet, and a collection of ancient books in Hebrew alphabet. The latter group is composed by 2373 volumes in Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino.

This collection grew thanks to the contribution of different members of the local Jewish community, especially some of the Rabbis that were active in Venice. The Hebrew books were usually part of bigger collections that have been donated to different libraries according to their subject.

The main part is composed by the library of the local Talmud Torah and by the collections of the different Synagogues (*Schole*), that up to the 19th century were scattered in different places.

In the 1820s these libraries were gathered and stored by the *Fraterna Generale di Culto*

³⁰⁰ Translation: "The library, that Prof. Umberto Fortis and his wife are preparing and organizing in the spaces of the "Center", has often been visited by young researchers.

Marcella and Margherita, the sisters of the lamented and never forgotten Dr. Renato Maestro, wished to celebrated his memory through a donation to the Community. It is specifically destined to our library, now as in the future, for a global reorganization and update and for its regular activity. The library will serve as a vehicle to realize the community project for a real "Centre for Jewish Studies" in Venice. The donation is consistent and we hope that it will be an example to other possible donors that would allow us to transfer the Library-Research Center to more suitable and comfortable spaces".

e Beneficenza. Except for a few oral memories and old inventories, there is little evidence concerning the early book collection in this period, while it was impossible to find any earlier information about it.

It is known that before World War II, the “Convegno di Studi Ebraici”, located in Venice in Calle del Rimedio (Castello), was provided with a library.³⁰¹ The registry of loans that was compiled between 1929 and 1956 (with a long interruption due to the war) shows a prevalence of contemporary fiction books. Then, “starting from 1934 the interest for Zionistic topics grows and the library regulars start asking more and more frequently for volumes on science, history and Jewish culture”³⁰². The ancient books, however, do not appear in those registries.

From 1930 to 1989 the Italian government imposed to the Jewish Community the name “Comunità Israelitica di Venezia” as it appears on the stamps on the books, especially those in Latin alphabet.

During the 20th century, the great care reserved to these books in the past, as the main source of Jewish learning and as a precious heritage of the community that passed from one generation to the other, was neglected.

The terrible events that took place on the first half of the century, had a great impact on the following period. After World War II the Jewish communities had to face bigger and more urgent problems than the preservation of their cultural heritage.³⁰³

In the years 1941-46 the library remained close and probably in that period many of the rare and most valuable volumes of the collection disappeared. We cannot exclude that some of the missing volumes were secretly sold in order to raise money for the necessities of the bankrupted community.

In 1947, shortly after his assignment as chief Rabbi of Venice, R. Elio Toaff remarked

³⁰¹ For further information concerning this association see: Simon Levis Sullam, *Una comunità immaginata: gli Ebrei a Venezia (1900-1938)* (Milano: Unicopli, 2001), 138-153. [From now on: *Una comunità immaginata*].

³⁰² Sigrid Sohn, *Renato Maestro*, 190.

³⁰³ For the situation of Italian libraries and archives during World War II see: Andrea Capaccioni, etc. (ed.), *Le biblioteche e gli archivi durante la seconda guerra mondiale: il caso italiano* (Bologna: Pendragon, 2007).

the lacking of some registries and addressed Venetian Jews in these terms:

“Poiché alcuni dei libri in cui erano scritte le date degli anniversari di morte dei nostri cari sono andati perduti durante il periodo delle persecuzioni, faccio vivo appello a coloro che desiderano esser tenuti al corrente di tali anniversari di voler indicare a questo Ufficio Rabbinico i nomi e le date di decesso delle persone che vogliono commemorare con funzioni annuali di suffragio”.³⁰⁴

During the persecutions, indeed, the archival registries were either hidden in time or seized by the government. Some registries could not be found anymore.

Emblematic is the case of Giuseppe Jona, the president of the Jewish Community of Venice from 1940 to 1943, who destroyed all the documents in his possession and committed suicide not to deliver to the fascists the lists of the members of the community who were still in Venice.

Some documents, however, disappeared even earlier, namely the registries of the “German Nation”. R. Adolfo Ottolenghi, in the commemorative volume for the 400th year anniversary of the *Scuola Canton*, wrote about the missing items:

“[...] i libri delle deliberazioni, i libri inventari, i ricevutari delle scuole tedesche. [...] A Scuola Grande, p. es., fino a una cinquantina d’anni fa, esistevano due interessanti libri manoscritti in ebraico, uno del 1611, l’altro del 1649. [...] Ritrovare questi libri di Scuola Grande o altri di Scuola Canton e delle varie sinagoghe esistenti o distrutte, sarebbe ritrovare una preziosissima fonte per la storia delle famiglie e di alcune delle più antiche istituzioni della nostra Comunità”.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ Letter of E. Toaff, dated Jan. 30, 1947, Archive of Vittorio Fano, File P 21, **CAHJP**, Jerusalem (paragraph 2, “Anniversari”). Translation: “Since some of the books that contained the dates of death anniversaries of our beloved ones went lost during the persecution periods, I appeal to those wishing to be informed about these anniversaries to indicate to this Rabbinical Office the names and dates of death of the persons that they wish to remember with annual intercession rites”.

³⁰⁵ Adolfo Ottolenghi, *Per il IV centenario della Scuola Canton: notizie storiche sui templi veneziani di rito tedesco e su alcuni templi privati con cenni della vita ebraica nei secoli XVI-XIX: Commemorazione tenuta nella Scuola Canton la sera del 6 Dicembre 1931 - 26 Chislev 5692* (Venezia: Tipografia del Gazzettino Illustrato, 1932), 12. [From now on: *Centenario Scuola Canton*]. Translation: “[...] the deliberation books, the

Even if these proofs concern the archive, the situation of the library was not much different.

After the war the books were transferred several times: first, in 1949, they were brought to the new headquarters of the Jewish Community in Campo SS. Filippo e Giacomo, Ponte Storto 4756, and then, from 1959 to 1967 to Calle del Dose 5877.³⁰⁶ When the library was located there, Prof. Cesare Vivante voluntarily took care of its management and of its transfer to the *Ghetto Vecchio* in 1967.

Prof. Umberto Fortis who was engaged in this operation, remembers that he found all the copies abandoned and mixed up in Calle del Dose. With the cooperation of a transport company, the books were relocated at the ground floor of the present-day “Community Center” (Cannaregio) where Prof. Fortis tried to organize them in wooden shelves with the help of an old inventory.

A short article that appeared in September 1975 in “Notizie della Comunità Israelitica di Venezia” bear witness of the reorganization of the library:

“Da qualche tempo è in corso, a cura del Prof. Umberto Fortis, nei nuovi locali del Centro Sociale, il riordinamento e l’aggiornamento della Biblioteca della nostra Comunità. Vi è la speranza di poterla aprire e farla funzionare, in un prossimo futuro, almeno con un servizio di prestiti, nell’ambito di un Centro Studi particolarmente orientato verso la storia, la cultura e le tradizioni degli Ebrei Veneziani”.³⁰⁷

The article continues with an appeal to the Venetian Jews to contribute to the new

inventories, the receipt records of the German Synagogues. [...] In the Scuola Grande, for instance, up to some fifty years ago, there were two interesting manuscript books in Hebrew, one dated 1611, the other 1649. [...] Finding these books of the Scuola Grande or others of the Scuola Canton and of the various existing or destroyed synagogues would signify finding a priceless source for the history of the families and of some of the oldest institutions of our Community”.

³⁰⁶ Sohn, *Renato Maestro*, 192.

³⁰⁷ S. n., “Biblioteca”, *Notizie della Comunità Israelitica di Venezia* (Settembre 1975-Tishri 5736): 4-5. Translation: “Recently Prof. Umberto Fortis has been organizing and updating the library of our Community in the new rooms of the Social Center. Hopefully we will be able to open it in the next future and to make available at least a loan service in the context of a Research Center particularly oriented towards the history, the culture and the traditions of Venetian Jews”.

library with financial or documentary donations. Hebrew books or volumes on the history of Italian Jews were particularly wanted.

The last transfer took place in 1989, when the library was officially founded and was granted a new location in the *Ghetto Nuovo* in the same building that hosts the *Scuola Canton* (Cannaregio 2899).³⁰⁸

Finally, in 2006, the building was restored and the volumes were replaced in the new library that is located on the ground floor. The library and the archive were eventually organized and stored in a proper location provided with a reading room for public consultation.

3.3 The Hebrew Book Collection: Cities of Publication

The Hebrew book collection at the “Renato Maestro” Library, probably like many others *Judaica* collections, reflects the history of Hebrew printing that has been exposed in the first two chapters.

Concerning the 16th-century editions, for instance, since Venice was the main center for the Hebrew book production, one expects to find a majority of Venetian editions, and this is the case. However, this collection is not really representative of the grandeur of that epoch, as very little remained here of this huge production. Among sixty-two 16th century editions in the library (the copies are more numerous), forty-six are Venetian, six were printed in Mantua (1556-1590), two in Sabbioneta (1554-1563), two in Cremona (1557-1558), two in Krakow (1587-1598), two in Basel (1578-1580), one in Bologna (1540) and one in Riva del Garda (1557-58).

The predominance of Italian towns is evident, and the few books that were not

³⁰⁸ A map of the different places where the library was located is attached at the end of this chapter (Appendix 3).

printed in Venice were issued during the break of printing that took place in the city after the burning of the Talmud (1553).

In the 17th century, as we have already mentioned, Venice kept its leading role, even though it was entering a period of recession and many presses (not only the ones that printed Hebrew books) had closed down. The outburst of plague in 1630 stopped the whole book production for several years, and not even a single Venetian printer attended the Frankfurt Book Fair in that period.

However, among the seventy-five editions in the library collection, thirty-eight were printed in Venice and eleven in emerging Amsterdam. The other Italian centers are represented by single editions: one from Verona (1650), one printed in Mantua (1661), and two editions from Livorno (1649-57 and 1653-56).

Northern European towns were making their way into the book market. Amsterdam had a leading role, but printers started scattering into different countries issuing a small amount of volumes. The list includes Basel (3 editions in the library), Berlin (3), Dessau (2), Krakow (1), Hamburg (1), Fürth (2), Hanau (1), London (1), Prostějov (1), Sulzbach (2), Wilhermsdorf (3), Frankfurt am Main (2).

These small centers, especially the German ones like Fürth and Sulzbach, became more influential in the following century, when Amsterdam and Prague dominated the market.

The commercial ties between Venice and Amsterdam were particularly strong in the 17th century. Venice served as an intermediary between the northern countries and North Africa, while the import-export of all kinds of books among Venice and the other northern European cities took place through Amsterdam.³⁰⁹

The Amsterdam book production, indeed, was far too big if compared to the local

³⁰⁹ Bloom, *Economic Activities*, 97; and Marino Zorzi, "La produzione e la circolazione del libro", in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 7, *La Venezia Barocca* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1997), 495-496.

Jewish Communities, and in fact it was directed for the major part to other marketplaces. "The Amsterdam Hebrew press was famed throughout Europe, and as a consequence, export trade was perhaps the chief asset of the industry."³¹⁰

It is not surprising to find many Amsterdam editions in the Venetian collection, on the contrary one would expect to find more of them. The *Marrano* merchants that constituted the Spanish and Portuguese communities of Venice, indeed, had strong trade contacts with their brethren in Amsterdam, London, Hamburg, Vienna, Krakow and Rouen.³¹¹

The import of goods - and of books - was even more necessary during the 18th century when the local industry reduced its production.

Giuliano Tamani has defined this period as the "secolo bronzeo" (*bronze age*) of Hebrew printing, "because this period marks a further decline, and then the end of Hebrew printing in Venice, which was no longer master but only "dealer" of the book production. The Bragadin and Vendramin presses, that probably also functioned as a cover to Jewish printers, published about six hundred and thirteen editions, including a hundred sheets with occasional poems."³¹²

Nevertheless, at a time when Venice was declining as a Hebrew printing center, the books from that period kept in the "Renato Maestro" collection are mainly Venetian.³¹³ In this case the book collection does not reflect the trends of the global market but it is probably influenced by the protectionist policies of the local government.

These volumes contain for the major part biblical and liturgical texts and *Halakic* works, while the remaining minority is not much original either as it contains

³¹⁰ Bloom, *Economic Activitie*, 59.

³¹¹ *Ibidem*, 97.

³¹² Giuliano Tamani, "Di alcuni stampatori in ebraico a Venezia nei secoli XVI-XVII-XVIII", in Chiara Camarda (ed.), *I libri del Ghetto*, 16.

³¹³ The situation for the non Hebrew presses was different, the Italian and Latin book quality was good and Venice was regaining its former position in the international book trade.

sermons, response and ethical works. Twenty editions deal with *qabbalah*, but the main kabalistic works, like the *Zohar*, are printed in Livorno, Amsterdam, in the Ottoman Empire (Constantinople and Smyrna) and in small northern towns like Brno, Zhovkva, Offenbach, Fürth and Wilhermsdorf. In Venice only kabalistic prayer books appeared (*Tiqqunim* and *Sefer Ša`are Šiyyon*) and *Maftəhot ha-Zohar* (indexes for the *Zohar*).

The Community, indeed, was going through a phase of cultural decline and it was no longer vital as it had been in the 16th century, when it attracted Jewish literati from abroad.

Lelio Dalla Torre, the well known 19th-century scholar and historian, wrote “Il secolo decimottavo fu per gli ebrei della penisola, per quanto riguarda la cultura universale, e lo studio della lingua patria, una età di stagnazione se non anzi di retrocedimento”.³¹⁴

Religious books and grammars were now sufficient to satisfy the needs of Jewish students, who were not trained in secular sciences (with the exception of the offspring of wealthy families).

Therefore, Venetian Jews did not invest in importing high-cultural works (at a time in which they were facing a financial crisis) but used the books that were produced locally, and the ones that could be imported from other Italian cities (that were probably easier to obtain because they had to be provided with an imprimatur) namely Mantua, Livorno and Pisa.

Books imported from abroad went through customs where the officers had to check whether they had the same title or content of the books printed in Venice, and to make sure that they contained nothing against the local legal system or against morality. In the first case the control involved also the book sellers who were directly interested in the matter, while in the second case the control was looser.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ “La cultura presso gli ebrei in Italia nel secolo decimottavo”, *Il Corriere Israelitico* 9 (1866).

³¹⁵ Marino Zorzi, “La stampa, la circolazione del libro” in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. 8, *L’ultima fase della*

However, it was hard to check all the books that arrived through different channels and many volumes were sneaked into the borders. Up to 1712, for instance, the books that arrived to the Fontego dei Tedeschi (German living quarters) were not checked. Moreover, the packages addressed to private citizens or the small packages sent to librarians did not go through the customs. Whoever wanted to obtain a prohibited book just had to order single copies.³¹⁶

In order to give a clearer idea of the composition of the collection, the following table includes a list of the publishing places and of the relative numbers of 18th-century Hebrew editions in the “Renato Maestro” Library and Archive.

Amsterdam	36	Kiel	1	Smyrna	4
Berlin	5	Livorno	32	Sulzbach	17
Berlin-Frankfurt a. O.	2	Lviv	1	Venice	139
Brno	4	Lyck	1	Wandsbek	1
Constantinople	4	Mantua	21	Vienna	3
Dyhernfurth	2	Offenbach	2	Wilhermsdorf	7
Frankfurt am Oder	5	Pisa	7	Zhovkva	2
Fürth	13	Prague	2		
Hamburg	1	Salonika	6		

The 19th century collection in the Library reflects again the geographical distribution of the main printing centers. In this period the local production is very limited, only the press of the Foa family (also active in Tuscany) is still active in Venice, while a few other Hebrew volumes are issued by other presses. Therefore, the local Jewish community had to import its books from other printing centers, mainly Livorno and Vienna.

The Venetian 19th-century editions in the “Renato Maestro” Library and Archive are

Serenissima (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1998), 830-831.

³¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 833.

only fourteen, while the Livorno editions are one hundred and fifteen, and the Viennese editions are one hundred and forty-one. The difference is astonishing.

In this century Livorno has the role that Venice had in the 16th century, producing the greatest part of the Italian Hebrew books, although their quality was much lower than that of Venice both in terms of content and material. Other cities also had a share in the Hebrew book market, namely Padua (7 volumes in the library), Verona (10 volumes) and Trieste (12 volumes) where several printers were active at the same time. In particular, Joseph Fischer, who also had a print shop in Krakow, published different volumes with Italian or Latin translation mentioning the two places of publication together: Trieste-Krakow (4 volumes).

Other printing centers represented by a significant number of volumes in this collection are London (34), Berlin (15), Lvov (12) and Rödelheim (12). On the whole, the 18th-century Hebrew editions in the library are 473.

3.4 The Hebrew Book Collection: Content

In the previous paragraph we have looked at the ancient Hebrew book collection of the Jewish Community of Venice from a “geographical” point of view, concentrating on the places of publication of the volumes. Now we want to pay attention to its composition and to the works that it contains.

The collection includes 2373 volumes, containing works in different languages, some of them are in Latin alphabet, while the greatest part is in Hebrew.³¹⁷ The Hebrew

³¹⁷ When I started organizing and cataloguing this collection, in November 2013, the books were scattered in different places and had gone through different acquisition processes. Among them, two hundred and nine were catalogued in the library OPAC with special shelf marks, different from all the others. These books - mainly in Latin alphabet or provided with a translation in a European language - were identified by a numerical series preceded by the letter “A” (“Antichi”). Only a few of them were entirely in Hebrew, but they were distinguished by the addition of an “E” to the shelf mark (AE:

books, in turn, were part of different collections that were gathered together gradually.

As we have already hinted, the composition of this collection reflects on one side the printing history presented in the first chapter and, on the other side, the changing cultural atmosphere of the Venetian Ghetto through the centuries.

The **16th-century** editions are fifty-nine, and they include mainly rabbinical literature (thirty volumes), and biblical and *Midrašic* texts (fourteen volumes).

The Talmud survives in a few tractates of the second edition published by Daniel Bomberg (*Bekhorot*, *Keritot* and the small tractates *Me'ilah*, *Qinnim*, *Middot*, *Tamid*), one tractate of the third edition (*Zevaḥim*), and three volumes of the Froben edition published in Basle in 1578-80 (*Berakhot*, *Mišnayot mi-Seder Zera'im*, *Yoma*).

The most common Talmudic work in this collection is Ya'aqov ben Ašer's *Arba'ah Ṭurim*, represented by eight editions: Bomberg 1522, Giustinian-Adel Kind 1550, Conti 1558, Di Gara 1565, Cavalli 1565, Grifo 1566 and 1567.

It is followed by the *Sefer Rav Alfasi* of Yišḥaq ben Ya'aqov Alfasi, of which there are five editions: Bomberg 1521-22 (which is the oldest book in the whole collection), Bragadin-Parenzo 1552, Tobia Foa 1554-55, Marcaria-Ottolenghi-Broen 1557-58, I. Prostitz 1597-98).

Due to the prohibition of printing the Talmud, in fact, its study was conducted with the help of these compendia. Maimonides' *Mišneh Torah* also constituted an important legal work and the library has several copies of its editions. Bomberg's edition of 1524 is not complete, as there are only two copies of the first volume while the second is missing, but the banned edition of Giustinian (see paragraph 1.2.1, *The presses of Giustinian and Bragadin*) is represented by three copies of the first volume

"Antichi Ebraici").

This small collection includes four manuscripts that bear the same shelf marks (those with the letter "A"), but are distinguished by the letters "ms" added at the bottom of the labels.

This collection has been kept apart, and its organization has not been modified, but the Hebrew books that it included have been replaced and integrated into the recently reorganized Hebrew section.

and two of the second volume. Surprisingly there is not a single copy of Bragadin's almost contemporary edition that was supported by Rabbi Katznellenbogen. However, there are several copies of the four volumes of his edition of 1574-75.

Only a partial edition of Yosef Caro's *Šulḥan `arukh* has survived: it was published by Giovanni Di Gara in 1593-94, and the Library only has a copy of the third and fourth volumes (*Even ha-`ezer, ḥošēn mišpat*).

Among the ten 16th century Biblical works there are the II, III and IV *Rabbinic Bibles* (Bomberg 1524-25 and 1546-48 and Di Gara 1568), but they are not complete. The Di Gara edition survives in six copies but the first volume (*Torah*) is missing, the second Bomberg edition only has the second volume (*Nevi'im Ri'šonim*), while the third edition is represented by the third volume alone (*Nevi'im Aḥaronim*).

The liturgical volumes are only five: two *Maḥazorim* according to the Ashkenazi rite (Bragadin-Di Gara 1599-1600 and Cavalli 1567, two *Maḥazorim* according to the Italian rite (Bologna, Talmi, 1540 and Mantua, Me'ir ben Efrayim da Padova, V. Ruffinelli, Ya`aqov ha-Kohen da Gazzuolo, 1556) and a commentary on the *Hoša`anot* (Constantinople, S. Jabez, 1567).

The collection is completed by two kabbalistic works, four ethical volumes, two collections of sermons, a dictionary and an historical volume.

Looking at the places of publication and at the publishers, the predominance of Venice stands out immediately with 43 editions. The other printing centers are: Basel (2), Bologna (1), Constantinople (2), Krakow (2), Cremona (2), Mantua (6 editions, one of whom started in Sabbioneta and completed in Mantua) and Riva del Garda (1).

This 16th-century collection used to be much bigger and precious than it is today but some volumes disappeared during the 20th century.

The 17th-century printed books are seventy-six, among them twenty-five books belong to rabbinical literature, twenty-three contain biblical texts and commentaries and fourteen are liturgical volumes. The other subjects are represented by few

volumes: there are four sermons collections, three kabalistic texts, two volumes on ethics, one on philosophy and one on Jewish traditions.

There are only two editions of the Talmud, both of foreign origin of course, as in Italy it was forbidden to print it during all the century. The first one is the Krakow edition issued by Yišhaq ben Aharon Prostitz in 1602-05 (the library owns ten tractates: *Šeqalim*, *Ro's ha-Šanah*, *Sukkah*, *Ta'anit*, *Megillah*, *Ḥagigah*, *Ketubbot*, *Nedarim*, *Nazir*, *Soṭah*), the other one was published by 'Immanu'el Benveniste in Amsterdam in 1644-48 (the library owns seven volumes: *Šeqalim*, *Yoma*, *Sukkah*, *Ta'anit*, *Megillah*, *Bava Qamma*, *Bava Batra*).

There are six editions of the *Mišnah*, printed by Zanetto Zanetti (Venice 1606); Mošeh ben Yosef Bešal'el Katz (Prague 1614-17); Pietro, Alvise, Lorenzo Bragadini at Giovanni Calleoni's (Venice 1625); Yedidyah ben Yišhaq Gabbai (Livorno 1653-56); Yišhaq ben Yehudah Geršoni (Wilhermsdorf 1681-84); Dawid de Castro Tartas (Amsterdam 1685-87).

The collections of the 18th and 19th century constitute the major part of the heritage of this Library.

The **18th-century** editions are more than four hundred, a third of whom is composed by liturgical volumes. Besides the liturgy, there are eighty-five books on rabbinical literature (among whom twenty editions of the *Mišnah*, eight belonging to the Talmud, ten legal works by Joseph Caro and nine by Maimonides and eight collections of *responsa*) and sixty-eight books on biblical subjects (Bibles and commentaries).

Sermons and ethical themes are treated respectively in thirteen and fifteen volumes.

The books of this century include the biggest number of kabalistic works comparing to the other centuries (twenty editions).

The **19th-century** book collection includes about four hundred and fifty volumes. This century is characterized by the abundance of biblical and liturgical works: one

hundred and thirty-two editions of biblical texts and commentaries and one apocryphal of the Ecclesiastes, and one hundred and seventy-five liturgical volumes. The rabbinical literature is represented by some fifty editions, including mainly treatises of the *Mišnah* or the Talmud.

The subjects of the works published in this period are more varied than before. The number of works of philosophy and ethics increased, and the same happened to catechisms, sermons and didactical works that were marginal topics. New subjects also appeared, like poetry, literature, history and apology.

Concerning this book collection, Amos Luzzatto wrote that its beautiful ancient volumes were not just ornamental, but they were actually used for every-day religious study:

“Che questi libri non fossero soltanto comparse ornamentali nella Biblioteca di un collezionista ma un prezioso strumento di studio e di lavoro è dimostrato, fra l’altro, dall’accuratezza con la quale proprio il testo dei *Turim* comprende numerose pagine ricopiate a mano, per sostituire le pagine a stampa mancanti, forse perché logorate dall’uso”.³¹⁸

Here Luzzatto is talking about a copy of the first part of the *Arba`ah Turim* (*Four Pillars*) by Ya`aqov ben Ašer, published in Venice by Marco Antonio Giustinian and Cornelio Adel Kind in 1550. In this copy (s. m. C.G.14), in fact, several pages have been replaced by handwritten copies, but it is not a single case. In this collection nineteen books are provided with substitute handwritten pages: ten editions belong to the 16th century, only one to the 17th century, six of them date to the 18th century, and there are even two 19th century volumes that went through the same process.

³¹⁸ Amos Luzzatto, “Libri, Ebrei e riti nei secoli”, in *Armeni, Ebrei, Greci stampatori a Venezia* (Venezia: Provincia di Venezia, Assessorato alla cultura, 1989), 54. Translation: “That these books were not just ornaments in the Library of a collector but a worthwhile study instrument is demonstrated, among the other things, by the accuracy of the numerous hand-written pages included in the text of the *Turim* which replaces the missing printed pages, that were probably deteriorated for the extensive use”.

The “restored” copies include ten liturgical volumes, five legal works, two biblical texts, one historical composition (*Sefer Yosippon*, Venice, De Farri, 1544), and the ethical *Sefer Menorat ha-Ma’or* by Yiṣḥaq ben Avraham Aboab (Mantua, F. and C. Filopono, 1563).

Some of these volumes were later restored by professional restorers that definitely integrated the manuscript leaves into the volumes.

3.5 Ancient Catalogues and Other Sources

In 2013-2015 the Rothschild foundation financed the inventory and cataloguing of the whole Hebrew printed book collection that is now available for scholars.³¹⁹

While compiling the catalogue, I consulted all the previous inventories and partial catalogues that are kept in the archive. They constitute an important witness on the history of this library and contain useful information on its composition.

The available sources are seven (a typewritten catalogue, five manuscript registries, and a report), all but one kept in the “Renato Maestro” Archive, and they will be individually analyzed in the following paragraphs in chronological order.

We will provide a general description of each source and of the books that are listed in it. At the end of each paragraph, we will add a list of the volumes, included in these sources, that are now missing from the Library collection (except for the third source - the *Inventory of the Spanish Synagogue* - for which we provide only a list of the extant volumes. See paragraph c).

This work will be based on the data published in the catalogue *הספרים של הגטו. I libri*

³¹⁹ All the books are included in the library OPAC (on the website: <http://renatomaestro.org/it/#>). For the Hebrew books a printed catalogue is available: *I libri del Ghetto (Op. Cit.)*.

del Ghetto: Catalogo dei libri ebraici della Comunità Ebraica di Venezia (secc. XVI-XX), edited by myself (Padova, Il Prato, 2016. From now on “the Catalogue”).

The first and fifth sources are fully transcribed in an appendix at the end of this chapter.

a. Notebook 70

The first source is a manuscript notebook that includes a list of about 130 titles with the indication of the date and place of publication. The list does not include serial numbers that could be of help to identify the copies but it indicates the place and date of publication with few exceptions.

On its first page, the notebook is marked with number 70, which makes reference to an archival register number (the next source, for instance, is marked with number 71). It is followed by the signatures of R. Moisè Coen Porto and of Sabato Ancona³²⁰, probably drafted between 1876 and 1918, when the Rabbi was on duty in Venice.

The list itself looks older and in fact, the most recent publication included dates back to 1844 (Ḥayyim Yiṣḥaq Mussafia, *Ḥayyim we-ḥesed*, Livorno, Eli'ezer Menaḥem Ottolenghi). Actually, 19th-century editions are quite rare in this catalogue.

At a certain moment after its compilation, someone added some side notes with a pencil, marking the volumes that were still extant in the collection. He added the word “Esiste” (*existing*), sometimes replaced by “idem” or “id.” to these volumes, and it has been kept in italics in the transcription that is fully attached at the end of this chapter (**Appendix 1**).

In this list the bibliographic description has been integrated with the lacking

³²⁰ Sabato di Aronne Ancona was the dean of the Jewish religious school (*Scuola di Religiosa Istruzione*) at the end of the 19th century. He was also one of the three delegates of the *Scuola Coanim* until it closed down in 1893 (see: Edoardo Gesuà sive Salvadori, *Gesuà e dintorni: Documenti ed immagini di una famiglia e della realtà ebraica veneziana tra Ottocento e Novecento*, vol. I (Venezia: Biblioteca Archivio “Renato Maestro”, 2013. Printed but not published, in two volumes kept at the “Renato Maestro” Library, copies CONS.159-160), 148, 161, 180. From now on: Salvadori, *Gesuà e dintorni*).

information (when it was possible) and the corresponding number in my Catalogue has been indicated in brackets (unless the volumes are missing).

Unsurprisingly some of the missing volumes are common to those already quoted in the previous sources as they all describe the same collection in different periods.

b. Notebook 71

The second inventory - presently kept in the same box in the archive - is entitled "N. 71 Catalogo Libri della Bibl[i]oteca Ebraica del Talmud Torà" and contains 737 titles. The handwriting is uniform and the ink as well.

It was not compiled before 1861, as *Sefer Terumat ha-qodeš*, that was published in Livorno in that year by Eliyyahu Ben Amozeg and associates, appears quite early on the list, at n. 227.

Since the books published in the 1860s are no more than three it may be that this was in fact the period of compilation. Accordingly, the last book on the list, which may have been added just after its acquisition, is also the most recent one, dating to 1862 (n. 99 of the Catalogue).

The rectangular labels on the spines and endpapers of the books that correspond to this catalogue are often partially covered by the octagonal ones linked to the *Card Catalogue* (par. *d*). This fact helps us determining the period of compilation of the *Card Catalogue*, that is not dated.

The *Notebook 71* is structured into three columns: the first for the serial numbers that are reported with a label on the volumes, the second for the title and the third for the publication detail which, unfortunately, are not always provided, and there is a gradual negligence on the data entry.

In the first pages, dates and places of publication are often indicated, while towards the end of the list it rarely happens. Moreover, in several cases the date reported in the catalogue is not exact.

Quite often in the catalogue only the book titles are indicated, nonetheless, many volumes have been identified thanks to the BHB database³²¹. However, when several editions of the same work were published between the 16th and the 19th centuries, and the copy went lost, it was impossible to determine which edition was actually present in the collection. In these cases, the titles have been inserted on the following list of missing volumes with the indication that further details are not available.

Finally, when the titles corresponded to famous works that were issued many times and of which several different editions are kept in the “Renato Maestro” Library, it was impossible to guess whether the catalogue included an edition that later disappeared. Therefore, some missing volumes that contained works such as the *Bible*, *ʿEn Yaʿaqov*, *Sefer Rav Alfaz*, or the *Arbaʿah Turim*, may not be included in the list.

Missing volumes:

- N.2. *Heleq šeni me-Hilkhot Rav Alfaz* (Sabbioneta: Tobia Foa, 1554). [Not 1564 as written in the old catalogue. The first and third volumes are still extant. See n. 19 of the Catalogue].
- N.5. *Ha-Rambam (Mišneh Torah*. Venice: Bragadin, 1550). [Complete].
- N. 12. *Šeʿelot u-tešuvot Zerah Yaʿaqov* [no details].
- NN. 13-20 and 25-32. *Miqra Gedolah (Rabbinic Bible*. Venice). [The date of publication is not indicated for any volumes. However, four complete editions (volumes 1-4) of Venetian Rabbinic Bibles are listed (with the Basle edition in the middle, at numbers 21-24 of the list). Since the existent editions are five, we do not know exactly which editions this catalogue is listing. Indeed, all of them were included in the library collection (even if we do not know whether they were all complete of the four volumes), and today only the first Bomberg edition (1517-18) has completely

³²¹ Available at: <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/infochannels/Catalogs/bibliographic-databases/Pages/the-hebrew-book.aspx>.

disappeared. Of the second Bomberg edition (1524-25) only the second volume survived (n. 123 of the Catalogue), while his third edition (1546-48) is represented by volume three alone (*Ibidem*, n. 124).

The fourth Rabbinic Bible was printed by Giovanni Di Gara in 1568 (*Ibidem*, n. 122); of this edition only the *Pentateuch* (vol. 1) is missing. The fifth edition is due to Pietro and Lorenzo Bragadin at Giovanni Calleoni's press (1617-19), and this is the only complete edition of which many copies are still available].

- N. 36. Eliyyahu ben Avraham Mizrahi, *Eliyyah Mizrahi* (Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1545).
- N. 37. Eliyyahu ben Avraham Mizrahi, *Eliyyah Mizrahi* (Constantinople: Yonah ben Ya'aqov Ashkenazi, 1726).
- N. 42. Mordekhay ben Avraham Jaffe, *Levuš ha-buš we-argaman* (Krakow: Yišhaq ben Aharon Prostitz, 1599). [Not 1550].
- N. 43. Šim'on (Simeon) ben Šemaḥ Duran, *Tašbaš* (Amsterdam: Naftali Hirsch ha-Levi, 1738-39).
- N. 44. Tovyah ben Avraham ha-Levi, *Hen tov* (Venice: Zuan Di Gara, 1605).
- N. 45. Dawid ben Pinḥas Nieto, *Matteh Dan we-Kuzari* (*Kuzari šeni*. London: Thomas Iliffe, 1714).
- N. 49. Avraham ben Mošeh de Boton, *Lehem Mišneh* (Venice: Daniel Zanetti, 1604-06). [Not 1609].
- NN. 51-65. *Talmud Bavli* (Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1520-1548). [Editions I-III, several tractates, all missing. The only extant tractates are *Bekhorot*, *Keritot*, *Me'illah we-Qinnim we-Middot we-Tamid*, 1528 (second edition) and *Zevaḥim*, 1548 (third edition). None of them is listed in this old catalogue].
- NN. 100-103, Yosef Caro, *Šulḥan 'arukh* (Venice, 1667). [This edition is not included in the BHB database, the librarian may have miscalculated the date].
- N. 104. *Ohev ger* [No details].
- N. 109. *Massekhet Yebamot* (Krakow: Yišhaq ben Aharon Prostitz, 1604).
- N. 111. *Massekhet Yebamot* (Fürth: Hayyim ben Ševi Hirsch, 1753).
- N. 112. *Bava Batra* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Kölner, 1720). [Not 1719].
- N. 113. *Pesaḥim* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Kölner, 1721). [Not 1719].
- N. 117. *Ḥanukkat ha-bayit* (Venice: Bragadin, 1696. Author: Mošeh ben Geršon Hefez-Gentili or Venice: Gad ben Šemu'el Foa at Stamparia Bragadina, 1759. Author: Menahem ben Yišhaq Noveira).
- N. 121. Yosef ben 'Immanu'el Ergas, *Šomer emunim* (Amsterdam: [s.n.], 1736).
- N. 125. Avraham ben Šabbetay ha-Kohen, *Kehunnat Avraham* (Venice: Bragadin, 1719).
- N. 126. Avraham ben Yišhaq Zahalon, *Yad harušim* (Venice: Zuan Di Gara, 1595).
- N. 128. Yišhaq ben Mošeh Arama, *'Aqedat Yišhaq* (Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1547).
- N. 129. Yišhaq ben Mošeh Arama, *'Aqedat Yišhaq* (Venice: Zuan Di Gara, 1573).

- N. 136. Yišhaq ben Yehudah Abrabanel, *Peruš `al Mišneh Torat El* (Sabbioneta: Tobia Foa, 1551).
- N. 193. *Bene Dawid* [no details].
- N. 226. Leon Modena, *Galut Yehudah* (Padova: Joseph Foa, 1640).
- N. 229. Raphael Dawid ben Hizqiyahu Meldola, *Huppah ḥatanim* (Livorno: Ya`aqov Nunes Vais and Raphael Meldola, 1797 [?]).
- N. 243. Mošeh Cordovero, *Or ne'erav* [no details].
- N. 245. *Razi'el ha-gadol* (*Sifra de' Adam qadma'ah*. Amsterdam: Moses Mendes Coitinho, 1701 [?]).
- N. 255. *Ḥamiššah Ḥumše Torah* (Mantua: Efrayim ben Dawid of Padua at Giacomo Ruffinelli's, 1589-1590). [The copy was incomplete].
- N. 269. *Imre binah* [no details. the modern catalogue has only the 1883 edition published in Livorno by Israel Costa, n. 298].
- N. 271. *Haggadah šel Pesah* (Amsterdam: Ašer Enšel ben Eli'ezer Ḥazan and Yiššakar Be'er ben Avraham Eli'ezer, 1695).
- N. 278. Ḥananiyah ben Menaḥem Cazes, *Qin'at soferim* (Livorno: Ricci and Meldola, 1740).
- N. 285. Yehudah ben Šemu'el ha-Lewi, *Ha-Kuzari* (Venice: Zuan Di Gara, 1594).
- N. 287. [?] מעשה טעץ
- N. 288. Pereš ben Yišhaq Gerondi, *Ma'arekhet ha-elohut* (Ferrara: Avraham Ibn Usque, 1557).
- N. 289. Yišhaq ben Yehudah Abrabanel, *Mifalot Elohim* (Venice: Zuan Di Gara, 1592).
- N. 295. Yišhaq ben Avraham Troki, *Hizzuq emunah* [Amsterdam: s.n., 1705?].
- N. 298. *Mizmor le-todah* [no details].
- N. 354. Šemu'el ben Elḥanan Ya`aqov Archivolti, *'Arugat ha-bošem* [Venice: Zuan Di Gara, 1602 or Amsterdam: Šelomoh Proops, 1730].
- Ibn Sahulah, Yišhaq ben Šelomoh, *Mašal ha-qadmoni* (Venice: Elišama' Zifroni and Avraham Ḥaver Ṭov at Zuan Di Gara's, 1610). [See par. 3.5.e, n. 12].
- N. 368. Avraham ben Yišhaq Shalom, *Neweh Šalom* (Venice: Zuan Di Gara, 1574).
- N. 370. Leon Modena, *Galut Yehudah*, [Venice: Giacomo Sarzina, 1612?].
- N. 373. Yosef Caro, *Šulḥan ha-panim* [no details].
- N. 376. Ya`aqov ben Ašer, *Peruš ha-Torah* [no details].
- N. 377. Zekaryah Porto, *Asaf ha-mazkir* [Venice: Domenico Vedelago at Bragadin's press, 1675?].
- N. 380. Yedayah ben Avraham Bedersi, *Eš ha-da'at* [Venice: Vendramin, 1704?].
- N. 384. Pereš ben Yišhaq Gerondi, *Ma'arekhet ha-elohut* (Ferrara: Avraham Ibn `Usque, 1557). [Not 1558. The same as n. 288].
- NN. 395-396. Manasseh ben Yosef Ben-Israel, *Nešamat ḥayyim* (Amsterdam: Samuel Abrabanel Soeiro, 1651/52).

- N. 400. *Naḥalat Ševi* [Venice: Gerolimo [sic!] Bragadin, 1660 or Gerolimo Bragadin per Lorenzo Prodotto, 1661?].
- N. 405. Dawid Ḥayyim ben Yeuhdah Mošeh Corinaldi, *Bet Dawid* (Amsterdam: Yosef Dayyan, 1738-39).
- N. 408. *ʿEmeq Binyamin* [no details. It maybe Benyamin ben Refaʿel Diaz-Brandon's *Orot ha-mišwot*, whose additional title is *ʿEmeq Binyamin*, published by Johann Janson in Amsterdam in 1753].
- N. 409. *Maʿamar ha-šekhel* (Cremona: Vincenzo Conti, 1556).
- N. 410. *Seder Zemanim* [by Gabriel Hiyya. Venice: Stamperia Bragadina, 1675?].
- N. 411. Yosef Caro, *Tofteh ʿarukh* [no details].
- N. 415. Nissim ben Yehošuaʿ Sibilio (?), *Maʿašeh nissim*, [Salonika: Refaʿel Yeuhdah Kalay and Mordekhay Naḥman, 1757?].
- NN. 416-420. *Tanakh*, Genova [no further details].
- N. 513. *Sefer Rabbot*, Amsterdam [no further details].
- N. 524. Šemuʿel ben Yaʿaqov Hagiz, *Devar Šemuʿel* [Venice: Zuan Di Gara, 1596?].
- N. 525. *Zerah Yaʿaqov* [no details].
- N. 532. *Parašat derakhim* [no details].
- N. 539. *Torat ha-bayit* [no details].
- N. 547. Refaʿel ben Eliyyahu ha-Lewi, *Qol ben Lewi* (Constantinople: Yonah ben Yaʿaqov Ashkenazi, 1727).
- N. 553. *Divre Yosef* [no details].
- N. 569. *Massekhet Yoma*, Sulzbach [no details].
- N. 570. *Massekhet Yoma*, Venice [no details].
- N. 571. *Massekhet Yebamot*, Venice [no details].
- N. 572. *Massekhet Šabbat*, Sulzbach [no details].
- N. 575. *Massekhet Makkot*, Basel [no details].
- N. 619. *Talmud Massekhet ʿAvodah zarah* (Cracovia, 1604).

Numbers 8-11 are manuscripts.³²²

³²² Transcription:

8. פתלי וכן נפתלי, manoscritto, Pisa, 1404.

9. Manoscritto in pergamena, scritto a Padova nel 1403 e contenente פרק חלק וההקדמה מפי' משנת האבות והאבות עם פי' מרבינו משה בן מימון וחובת [צ"ל חובות] הלבבות, וביקור לר' יהודה בר' דניאל בתחלת פרקי החבור, וס' מבחר הפנינים והילכות [!] חסידות מועתיקים וכו'.

10. תר"ג מצות in pergamena, senza data.

11. in pergamena, completo, di gran pregio, scritto a Pieve di Sacco presso Padova l'anno 1402.

c. Inventory of the Spanish Synagogue

The third source is a handwritten list of books owned by the Spanish Synagogue of Venice, “Tempio Spagnuolo Venezia. Elenco libri di Orazione regalati da Confratelli od acquistati dal Consiglio d’Amministrazione”. It includes about sixty titles with no further publication details. The description is very short and does not include any publication details, and the titles are listed according to the date of acquisition. Each page is divided into five columns indicating the progressive number (1-60), the title, the date of acquisition (all are comprised between 1896 and 1926), the number of volumes and the name of the donor.

The listed volumes are either books of the Bible or liturgical volumes in use at the Spanish Synagogue in the period indicated by the dates of acquisition. They date for the major part from the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

Since the list also includes several Italian books that are not part of the Hebrew book collection that is the object of this research, it was impossible to add a list of missing copies. Therefore, we decided to provide a list of the volumes that are still part of the Hebrew collection.

The identified copies are:

Title	Publication details	Provenance And date of acquisition	Spanish Synagogue number	Modern Catalogue number	Shelf mark
La Legge di Dio ossia il Pentateuco	Vienna, A. Strauss, 1821	Graziano Ravà, 1896	1 (5 vol.)	194 (2 vol.)	M.044.G.II M.044.G.IV
Orazioni quotidiane	Livorno, I. Costa e socio, 1879	Graziano Ravà, 1896	4	448	P.129.A
Il Pentateuco con trad[uzion]e	Vienna, A. Strauss, 1821	Sorelle Norza ³²³ Cattelani, 1897	14-17 (5, 1, 1, 1 vol.)	194 (1 vol.)	M.044.II.2

³²³ In the copies the name appears with a different spelling: “Norsa”.

Il Pentateuco	Amsterdam, [Janson, Mondovi], 1767-1769	Giuseppe Curiel fu Vito, 1906	36 (5 vol.)	203 (1 vol.)	M.022.I M.022.V
Orazioni feste penitenziali	Venice, Vendramina, 1693	Tempio Spagnuolo, Venice, 1899	29-32 ³²⁴	552 and 607	P.056

d. Card Catalogue

Going back on the time-line, the second source is a handwritten card catalogue stored in two wooden boxes. This catalogue is not dated but the oral tradition situates it in the 1870s which, in theory, could be the time in which its compilation started. In fact, the previous catalogue - actually an inventory - ceased to be updated in 1862 (*see source n. 3*).

However, since it also contains 20th-century publications, this would mean that the card catalogue was in use for about fifty years.

The 20th-century editions are only thirty-three, less than the ones dating from the 16th and 17th century and the most recent publication is dated 1925. Since the handwriting in the cards describing the recent editions is the same as that of the ancient ones, I would rather date the catalogue compilation closer to the final date of 1925. Given that the librarian who authored the cards was in charge in or after 1925 he may have started working some years earlier, but it is unlikely that it was before the end of the 19th century. This means that this catalogue could correspond to the period in which the library was located in Calle del Rimedio.

Then someone integrated some cards, probably replacing the ones that went lost and adding some other books that were acquired. Indeed, even though the major part of

³²⁴ Number 29-32 of the list of the Spanish Synagogue include different liturgical books that are all listed according to the generic subject "Orazioni feste penitenziali" (prayers for penitential holydays).

the cards are compiled with a uniform handwriting, some of them were later integrated by different persons.

The catalogue contains an almost equal number of editions of the 18th and 19th centuries (221 and 211 respectively), that constitute the major part of the collection. The cards however are many more, because the copies are not listed together, but each one is described on a separate card.

The provided description is quite detailed and in some cases it goes so far as to indicate the missing pages of the copies.

The presence of two different shelf mark series on the cards proves that, at a certain time, the book collection was replaced and organized differently. The older numbers, written with a blue crayon, were replaced by a numerical series that combines Roman and Arabic numbers, with the indication of the corresponding bookcase and shelf added with a specific stamp. Octagonal labels on the back and inside the volumes report the new serial numbers, hiding the previous ones.

Since some descriptive cards do not bear the blue numbers, it is possible that some of the volumes were acquired after the change of the shelf marks.

Nine cards, on the contrary, are lacking the new shelf marks, which means that those volumes for some reasons were probably no longer part of the collection.

Concentrating on the rare volumes, the catalogue includes an incunabulum containing Ya`aqov ben Ašer's *Tur Oraḥ ḥayyim*, printed at Soncino by Šelomoh ben Mošeh Soncino around 1490, that has disappeared.

The 16th century editions are forty-six, nine of whom are missing, namely:³²⁵

³²⁵ The other 16th century editions that are still part of the collection are included in the catalogue *I libri del Ghetto* (*Op. cit.*). Here are the corresponding catalogue numbers: 1, 7, 9, 14, 17, 18, 19, 69, 122, 123, 172, 275, 276, 287, 326, 466, 467, 523, 588, 689, 690, 706, 708, 713, 714, 745, 795, 797, 843, 844, 862, 866, 885, 887, 888, 889, 890, 901.

1. *Nevi'im Ri'šonim* (Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1518). [s. m. I-1/3].
2. *Maḥazor mi-kol ha-šanah ... ke-minhag ha-Aškenazim* (Sabbioneta-Cremona: Tobia Foa-Vincenzo Conti, 1556-1560). [s. m. XVIII-A. In the catalogue the date is miscalculated. It is indicated that the book was kept "in cassaforte", in the strongbox].
3. Avraham ben Ya'aqov Saba, *Be'ur `al ha-Torah* (also: *Šeror ha-mor*. Venice: Marco Antonio Giustinian, 1545).
4. *Seliḥot* (Venice: Cornelius Adel Kind, 1548). [s. m. XVIII-18].
5. Ya'aqov ben Ašer, *Arba`ah Turim* (Riva di Trento (Riva del Garda): Antonio Bröen, 1560-61). [s. m. VIII-5].
6. Ya'aqov ben Ašer, *Bet Yosef*, vol. 4 (*Hošen Mišpaṭ*. Venice: Giovanni Di Gara, 1565). [s. m. VIII-8/4].
7. Moses Maimonides, *Mada`, Ahavah Zemanim* (Mantua: Me'ir ben Efraym of Padua and Yišḥaq ben Yosef Sullam at Ruffinelli's, 1566). [s. m. VI-2/1].
8. Yosef Caro, *Šulḥan `arukh* (Venice: Alvise Bragadin, 1576). [s. m. VIII-7/2 a-b].
9. *Talmud Bavli* (Krakow: Yišḥaq ben Aharon Prostitz, 1578-80). [Blue s. m. only: 30/3 b].

The 17th century editions described in the card-catalogue are fifty-seven. Among them, the missing books are:³²⁶

1. Yišḥaq ben Šlomoh Ibn Sahulah, *Mašal ha-qadmoni* (Venice: Giovanni Di Gara, 1610). [s. m. XIX-10. Only four pages were printed].
2. *Maḥazor* according to the Roman rite (Venice: Pietro, Alvise and Lorenzo Bragadin, at Giovanni Calleoni's, 1626). [s. m. XVIII-20 and XVIII-5].
3. *Mišnayot* (Amsterdam: Manasseh Ben Israel, 1631-[1633]). [s. m. III-20/1-6].
4. *Maḥazor* according to the Roman rite (Venice: Stamparia Vendramina, 1656). [s. m. XVIII-4 and XVIII-6].
5. *Tefillot la-Mo`adim we-Yamim Nora'im* (Venice: commissioned by Geronimo Bragadin, printed by Antonio Calleoni, 1656). [N. 562 of the catalogue. One copy is missing, its s. m. was XVIII-21].
6. *Yefeh To'ar*, vol. 2 (Venice: Antonio Rizzini at the Commissaria Vendramina, 1657). [s. m. XI-16].
7. Yosef Caro, *Šulḥan `arukh* (Amsterdam: Yosef Athias, 1664). [s. m. VIII-13/1].
8. *Orḥot šaddiqim* (Frankfurt am Main: [s.n.], 1689). [s. m. XV-43. It is indicated that the book was kept "in cassaforte", in the strongbox].

³²⁶ The other 17th century editions that are still part of the collection are included in the catalogue *I libri del Ghetto*. Here are the corresponding catalogue numbers: 3, 8, 12, 25, 27, 28, 30, 94, 95, 96, 100, 130, 223, 269, 271, 289, 307, 327, 332, 340, 344, 351, 358, 384, 469, 472, 562, 683, 700, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 744, 762, 763, 772, 790, 793, 794, 828, 830, 844, 845, 858, 894, 895.

9. Šemu'el Phoebus ben Yosef Yuzpa ha-Kohen, *Leqet Šemu'el* (Venice: Stamperia Vendramina, 1694-95). [s. m. IX-53].
10. *Mišnayot* (Venice: Alvise Bragadin, 1695). [s. m. III-8. This edition is not documented, maybe the librarian miscalculated the date, that should be 1704-05, n. 721 of the Catalogue].

e. Isaiah Sonne's Report

Another important evidence concerning the history of this collection is a report commissioned by the UCII and compiled by Isaiah Sonne in 1937.

Sonne was given the task to visit the libraries and the archives of different Jewish Communities in the Center and in the North of Italy and to make an account on all the most precious manuscripts and printed books that were part of those collections. One of his reports concerns the library of the Jewish Community of Venice (a copy can be found in the archive of Isaiah Sonne at the National Library of Israel, box AC-5097).

His introduction cuts off any expectation:

“Per evitare un’amara delusione nell’esaminare il patrimonio bibliografico della Comunità Israelitica di Venezia, bisogna dimenticare che Venezia tenne per oltre un secolo (1520-1640) il primo posto nell’arte tipografica ebraica, e che fino alla metà del secolo XVII costituiva il centro del commercio librario ebraico. Perché di fronte a tale ricchezza questo patrimonio perde ogni considerazione ed ogni valore”.³²⁷

Yet, when he visited the library he found many rare and precious volumes that disappeared only later. The collection today is far more deceiving if examined

³²⁷ Isaiah Sonne, *Relazione sulla Biblioteca della Comunità Israelitica di Venezia*, Archive of the NLI (box AC-5097). Translation: “In order to avoid a sad disillusion in examining the bibliographic heritage of the Israelite Community of Venice, it is necessary to forget that for more than a century (1520-1640) Venice had the first place in the craft of Hebrew typography, and that up to the end of the 17th century it represented the trade center for the Hebrew book. In fact, facing all this abundance, this heritage loses any regard and value”.

expecting to find a considerable number of local 16th century editions.

Sonne listed some of the treasures that he found at the library - in spite of his disappointment - providing us with some evidences of the volumes that disappeared. The first on the list is an incunabulum now missing: a book containing the first two volumes (with missing parts) of Ya`aqov ben Ašer's *Arba`ah Turim* printed in Soncino by Šlomoh ben Mošeh Soncino around 1490.

Then follows a list of three "Ancient Oriental Publications", all printed in Constantinople, of which only the third is still extant. They are: *Ha-ḥibbur ha-gadol me-ha-hilkhot ha-nahugot* by Yišḥaq ben Ya`aqov Alfasi printed by Dawid and Šemu`el Ibn Naḥmias in 1509, *Midraš Rabba* published by Šemu`el Ibn Naḥmias in 1512, and *Ner Mišwah* and *Yeša` Eloqim* printed by Šelomoh ben Yišḥaq Jabez in 1566.

On the following 4 ½ pages, Sonne described the Italian rare books starting with the Babylonian Talmud issued in Venice by Daniel Bomberg in three editions.

Sonne's description of the treatises is quite detailed and it allows us to understand the quantity of the book loss: the Talmud was complete with forty treatises, nine of them were available in double copies. He stated that it contained more volumes of the second Bomberg edition (they were twenty-nine) than the Bodleian Library in Oxford, whose collection was reputed the biggest one. Moreover, the books were all in very good conditions, some of them were "even magnificent, which makes this copy even more precious".

This Talmud, which is iconic of Bomberg's printing press, has almost totally disappeared: today there is only one volume containing a few treatises of the second edition (*Bekhorot*, *Keritot*, and *Me`illah*, *Qinnim*, *Tamid*, *Middot*) and one of the third edition (*Zevaḥim*). Sonne himself testified the disappearance of these volumes, as he wrote in a note dated June 13th, 1954.³²⁸

The list continues with thirty-three rare and less rare editions, of which fifteen are still part of the collection.

³²⁸ UCEI - Archivio Storico, box 97, file 35-2: "Biblioteche ed archivi 1950-1953", orange note.

Here is a list of the missing volumes from Sonne's report:

1. *Nevi'im Aḥaronim* (Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1517). [First Rabbinical Bible, third volume].
2. Ya'aqov ben Ašer, *Hošen mišpat* (*Sefer Arba'ah Turim*, vol.4. Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1522). [Sonne lists only this volume, which is missing, but today the library collection includes the first two volumes of the same edition. These volumes bear the label of the 19th century card catalogue and the signatures of Yequti'el ben Avraham Motta and Abram di Consiglio Motta].
3. The second volume of Maimonides' *Mišneh Torah* (*Mayimoni : le-khol ha-Yad ha-ḥazaqah ...* Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1524). [The first volume is extant in two copies].
4. Maimonides' *Mišneh Torah* (Venice: Alvise Bragadin, 1550). [Sonne saw two copies none of which is extant today, while Giustinian's edition has been preserved].
5. Yosef ben Yehošua' ha-Kohen, *Divre ha-yamim le-malke Šarfai u-malke bet Oṭṭoma'n ha-Togar* (Sabbioneta: Tobia Foa, 1553).
6. *Maḥazor mi-kol ha-šanah* (Sabbioneta-Cremona: Foa-Conti, 1557-1560).
7. Pereš ben Yišḥaq Girondi, *Ma'arekhet ha-elohut* (Ferrara: Abraham Usque, 1557). [Not 1559. This copy, that disappeared, had marginal notes of the publisher Yišḥaq ben 'Immanu'el de Lattes, and a signature of the owner Mordekhay Dato].
8. Ya'aqov ben Ašer, *Arba'ah Turim* (Riva di Trento: Madruzzo-Marcaria at Antonio Broën's, 1561). [Sonne wrote that the copy had marginal notes and a frontispiece with the typical portal of Mantua, which was different from the portal of other copies].
9. Maimonides, Moses, *Madda', Ahavah, Zemanim* (Mantova: Me'ir ben Efrayim of Padua and Yišḥaq ben Yosef Sullam at Ruffinelli's, 1565).
10. Caro, Yosef ben Efrayim, *Šulḥan 'arukh* (Venice: Giorgio Cavalli, 1566).
11. ha-Kohen, Ša'ul ben Mošeh, *Še'elot* (Venice: Zuan Di Gara, 1574). [Correspondence between the author and Yišḥaq ben Yehudah Abrabanel].
12. Ibn Sahulah, Yišḥaq ben Šelomoh, *Mašal ha-qadmoni* (Venice: Elišama' Zifroni and Avraham Haver Tov at Zuan Di Gara's, 1610). [Only the first four leaves belonged to this edition (probably the rest of the book was not printed) while the next pages on this missing copy belonged to the previous edition, published by Me'ir Parenzo around 1547].

Not rare missing volumes:

13. *Bible* (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin with Bomberg's types, 1566).
14. Luria, Šelomoh ben Yehi'el, *Hoḥkmat Šelomoh* (Krakow: Yišḥaq Prostitz, 1582). [Not 1581. Glosses and corrections on twenty-one Talmudic treatises].

15. Yaffeh, Mordekhay ben Avraham, *Levuš `ir šušan* (Krakow: Yišḥaq ben Aharon Prostitz, 1598).
16. `Ésrím *we-arba`* (*Rabbinic Bible*. Basel: Konrad Waldkirch, 1617-18). [Sonne maybe made a mistake in taking note of this edition details. Probably the Rabbinic Bible that he saw in Venice was the one printed by Ludwig König in Basle in 1618-19, which is still in the library (n.94)].
17. (?) *Maḥazor* according to the Ashkenazi rite (Sulzbach, 1669). [The date is probably mistaken, this edition doesn't seem to exist, while there is a *Maḥazor* printed in Sulzbach by Aharon ben Uri Lippmann Fränkel in 1699].
18. Nieto, Dawid ben Pinḥas, *Kuzari ḥeleq šeni*, with Spanish translation (London: Thomas Iliffe, 1714).

f. *Green Registry*

The sixth source is a modern green registry including a list of Hebrew titles with a series of inventory numbers that does not take into account the other inventories. Its numbers duplicate the extant ones thus compromising the univocal correspondence that must be respected between the single copies and the inventory numbers. Moreover, these duplicated numbers are not written directly on the book nor on labels stuck on them, but they are written on little notes, similar to bookmarks, inserted in the books. As a consequence, some of them have been lost.

The author of this list, identified by chance, remembered that he compiled it in the 1980s, before doing his *Aliyyah*, when he was tidying up the library as a young volunteer. At that time the books were stored at the Community Center, where today the Youth Club is located.

The inventory includes 1732 entries (different copies of the same edition are listed separately), mainly dating to the 18th-20th centuries. These volumes, of course, are part of the present-day collection but it is not easy to determine whether some volumes are missing. Indeed, several errors that occurred in the calculation of the dates of publication make its consultation quite difficult.

The volumes are listed according to their subject. The first 120 editions described are

Maḥazorim (festive prayer books), then festive and ferial liturgical volumes are mixed with a few Biblical texts (nn. 121-199). Then, different kind of works follow, many of them are of didactical interest and include grammars and dictionaries (339-437), than liturgy and Bibles predominate again. From n. 896 *Halakic* codes appear, while all the other works are listed in numbers 1100-1428. Finally, from n. 1429 a new series of biblical texts continues until the end, intermingled with other liturgical volumes that start from n. 1552.

At first the 16th and 17th century editions were checked. The major part of these volumes has been recorded with a wrong publication date. The Bibliography of the Hebrew Book served as a database to check the existence of the editions listed in this inventory. Not considering the little miscalculations of a few years, a list of “missing volumes” dating back to these two centuries was made. Upon fifteen editions, twelve do not exist (the date has been miscalculated), and two volumes are actually missing: *Ma'aneh lašon*, Frankfurt am Oder, Michael Gottschalk, 1698 (n. 127); and *Arba'ah Turim*, Riva di Trento, 1561 (n. 1074, also in source 4, n. 5).

This catalogue represents a sort of picture of what this collection included in the 1980s. As such, it reveals that the rare books appearing in the previous lists of missing copies, had already disappeared when this catalogue was compiled.

g. Typewritten Catalogue

The last and most recent source is a typewritten catalogue, compiled in 1990, including 814 editions that correspond to 1211 copies. This book-list was quickly drafted in a few days during the visit of an Israeli librarian, who divided the volumes according to their subject, as for an open shelves library. It was in use until 2015, when the OPAC was fully integrated and then, in July 2016, the new catalogue was

published.

The old description was very short and the shelf marks were noted with a pencil on the frontispieces (where it is still possible to see them) and written on masking tape cuts stuck on the back of the volumes.

This catalogue was not helpful in compiling the new one, as the titles were often replaced by the subjects, volumes and copies were not always mentioned and many different books brought the same shelf mark without it being explained anywhere.

Moreover, many of the books that were described in this catalogue were not included in the library inventory. Indeed, only those books that had been inserted in the OPAC in a previous moment (about a hundred copies) were also provided with an inventory number.

Other problems were: errors in calculating the date of publication, a lacunose description, and the weird “attachment” of some books of Psalms to totally different publications that bore the same shelf marks.

Moreover, the catalogue was not complete. Besides the books that it included, some one thousand volumes were scattered in the library shelves, some others were selected to be brought to the *Genizah*, twenty-five were discarded as “doubles” (but it was not true for all of them), and twenty-two were on exhibit at the Jewish Museum adjacent to the library.

After a thorough reflection, when the organization of the collection has been defined, it became clear that it was impossible to keep the old shelf marks or to rely on this catalogue. The description was to be remade again with different criteria. Therefore, this catalogue has been discarded.

Moreover, since it described part of the collection that was in the library in 1990, it cannot be helpful to trace the older composition of the library because, at the time, the missing rare volumes were already disappeared.

Appendix 1

*Relazione sulla Biblioteca della Comunità Israelitica di Venezia*³²⁹

Per evitare un'amara delusione nell'esaminare il patrimonio bibliografico della Comunità Israelitica di Venezia, bisogna dimenticare che Venezia tenne per oltre un secolo (1520-1640) il primo posto nell'arte tipografica ebraica, e che fino alla metà del secolo XVII costituiva il centro del commercio librario ebraico. Perché di fronte a tale ricchezza questo patrimonio perde ogni considerazione ed ogni valore.

Il patrimonio bibliografico attualmente in possesso della Comunità Israelitica di Venezia consiste di due fondi: 1) la Biblioteca del "Talmud Torah", composta di oltre mille volumi, in generale ben conservati e recentemente catalogati dal Dott. Riccardo Pacifici, attualmente rabbino Capo di Genova; 2) la biblioteca del defunto rabbino Cohen-Porto, acquistata dalla Comunità [irc]a 15 anni fa; conta [irc]a mille volumi catalogati dal sig. Marco Alter. A differenza del primo fondo lo stato di conservazione di quest'ultimo lascia molto a desiderare. Durante la mia visita a Venezia non ho avuto occasione di esaminare più attentamente la Biblioteca Cohen-Porto; l'esame sommario non mi ha offerto nessuna sorpresa, nessuna scoperta. Della Biblioteca del Talmud Torah cercherò di mettere in rilievo tutto ciò che può offrire un certo interesse bibliografico.³³⁰

MANOSCRITTI

Dei ricchi tesori di rari codici ebraici accumulatisi a Venezia nei sec. XVI e XVII, che andarono ad arricchire tante raccolte [sic!] estere - ancora nel sec. XVIII i rabbini di Venezia, Aboab e Merari, fornirono al bibliofilo tedesco Unger stampe e mss. ebraici - solo sei codici sono rimasti in possesso della Comunità Israelitica nella seconda metà del '800. Di essi diede una descrizione dettagliata Mosè Lattes nell'Antologia Israelitica di Padova del 1879: "Notizie e documenti di letteratura e storia ebraica" (v. pg. 22: "Di un manoscritto del "Zerah Jacob" di Zerahja Gotha e degli altri codici ebraici della Libreria delle Scuole Israelitiche in Venezia"), e noi ci limiteremo di

³²⁹ The National Library of Israel - Archive Department, Archive of Isaia Sonne, ARC. 4* 796, box AC-5098. Published with permission of the Copyright and Permissions Coordinator of the National Library of Israel.

³³⁰ The punctuation of the original document was incoherent, therefore it has been corrected.

riportare qui un riassunto di questa descrizione, dato che durante la mia visita a Venezia i codici non furono messi a mia disposizione per un tempo indispensabile per compilare una descrizione.

Attualmente manca del tutto l'ultimo codice (N. 6) dell'elenco di Lattes, del primo (N. 1), composto di due volumi secondo la descrizione Lattes, si conserva soltanto un volume. Lo smarrimento di questi due codici è dovuto al fatto che, non essendo membranacei come gli altri, non sono stati rinchiusi nella cassaforte ma lasciati negli armadi della Biblioteca, dove si trova tuttora un volume del primo codice. Eppure l'ultimo codice cartaceo smarrito supera di gran lungo per valore intrinseco i codici membranacei, dei quali esistono numerose copie nelle varie Biblioteche italiane, mentre quel codice cartaceo costituisce un prezioso cimelio ed importantissimo documento storico, del quale si conoscono solo due altre tutt'e due scomplete e a quanto pare presentava la copia più perfetta per ogni riguardo. Sarebbe perciò un'opera meritevole di fare indagini per rintracciarlo. Va accennato che lo stesso Lattes pubblicò alcuni estratti (Liquitim) da questo codice e, al dire dell'Ecc.mo Rabb. Ottolenghi, doveva andar smarrito proprio mentre si trovava in casa di Lattes.

Ecco il riassunto della descrizione di Lattes:

Cod. I - GOTHA JAACOB/ ZERAH JAACOB/ Glosse al codice rituale e legale di R. Jacob ben Asher (Turim), consistente nel riportare riassunti di varie raccolte di consulti. Vi sono inseriti consulti interi di Gotha e dei suoi contemporanei. Consistente di 3 volumi, dei quali la Biblioteca possiede i primi due di pgg. (cc !) 117 e di cc. 363, manca invece il terzo di pgg (cc. !) 75. Ms. cartaceo, su carta orientale, scrittura rabbinica orientale. Come abbiamo accennato, attualmente, si trova un solo volume che dovrà essere identificato col secondo vol. di cc 363 (?), e porta la segnatura 12 nel nuovo catalogo del dr. Pacifici. Intorno all'autore si v. l'articolo di Lattes; aggiungo solo che in un manoscritto del noto cabalista Jacob Zemah, scritto a Gerusalemme nel 1646, ora in possesso della Biblioteca della Comunità Israelitica di Trieste, questi riporta una risposta di Zerahja Gotha ad una sua domanda fattagli.

Cod. II - Cod. membranaceo, scrittura quadrata italiana della fine del sec. XIV (1398). PENTATEUCO/ colla Massora di Ben-Asher, scritto da Daniel ben ha-Rofè Samuel ben Daniel ha-Dajan, a Pisa nel 1398. 8°. Ornato, numerosi bei fregi.

Cod. III - Membranaceo, scrittura quadrata tedesca del principio del sec. XV (1402). MAIMONIDE MOSE/ MISHNEH TORAH/ il codice rituale e legale in 14 libri.

Grosso volume in 2° (oltre 500cc), scritto da Mosè ben Samuel ha-Levi per il suo nipote Mordechai ben Isaac a Piove di Sacco nel 1402. Nel libro VII c'è la figura della "Menorah".

Cod. IV - membranaceo, scrittura rabbinica italiana del sec. XV.

AHARON ha-Levi/ SEPHER ha-HINUC/ l'esposizione dei precetti positivi e negativi in ordine del Pentateuco con motivazioni etiche.

Cod. V – membranaceo, in 4°, finito nel 4 Adar 5163 (1403), scritto da Hiya ben Jehuda da Candia per suo Maestro Abraham ha-Rofè ben Jehuda ha-Rofè, a Padova.

Miscellanea di vari opuscoli etico-filosofici, oltre alcuni scritti ascetici:

- a) MAIMONIDE MOSE/ PERUSH al MASSECHETH ABOTH/ Commento al Trattato misnico "dei Padri", preceduto dagli "Otto Capitoli" d'introduzione, tradotto dall'arabo da Samuel ibn Tibbun.
- b) MAIMONIDE MOSE/ PERUSH.../ Commento al cap. X del trattato misnico di Sanhedin – traduzione di Ibn Tibbun -, dove vengono formulati ed esposti i 13 articoli di fede – i dogmi dell'Ebraismo -.
- c) BAHJA ibn PAQUDA/ HOBOTH ha-LeBABOTH/ I doveri del cuore, cioè i doveri morali, solo un compendio (ha-Qazer).
- d) RONANO JUDA/ PORATH JOSEPH/ Commento ai [sic!] primi quattro capitoli della sezione "Jessode ha-Torah" del Nishneh Torah di Maimonide.
- e) GABIROL SALONO/ MIBHAR ha-PeNININ/ Scelta di perle, cioè sentenze etico-filosofiche in gran parte raccolte dai peripatetici arabi.
- f) Seguono vari saggi sulla penitenza (Teshubah) attinti dal libro "Roqeah" di Elazar ben Jehuda da Vormazia.

Cod. VI

Cod. VI- cartaceo (mancano indicazioni ulteriori).

CAPSALI ELIA/SEDER ELIAHU/ Contiene la cronaca degli Ottomani, come pure una descrizione delle scuole talmudiche nel Veneziano al principio del sec. XVI.

Come abbiamo accennato sopra questo codice importantissimo non si trova attualmente nella Biblioteca (sarà il cod. Gaster?).

A queste 6 risp. 5 manoscritti descritti da Lattes, vanno aggiunti due registri della scuola italiana scritti in ebraico, che si conservano fra i libri della Biblioteca e non nell'Archivio.

Cod. VII – cartaceo, in 4°, varie scritture italiane e levantine del sec. XVI e XVII.

Registro di ricevute, scritte e firmate da vari predicatori ufficienti, maestri della scuola italiana a Venezia a cominciare dalla seconda metà del '500 fino alla metà del '600. Fra le personalità note vanno segnalati: Abraham ben David Provenzal che funse da predicatore prima del 1585, e Leon da Modena le cui firme e scritture si trovano fino al 1647. Inoltre vi si trovano ricevute (o copie di tali ricevute) rilasciate da messi palestinesi del '500, che raccoglievano danaro per due Scuole (Qehiloth) italiane a Saffed (V. appendice).

Cod. VIII – cartaceo, in folio, scrittura corsiva italiana del '600.

Registro degli statuti della Scuola italiana a Venezia (Regolazione) e dei verbali delle sedute del consiglio di casa. Gli statuti di questo registro sono stati pubblicati dal dr. Pacifici sulla Rassegna dell'Israel, il quale ne diede anche una descrizione esauriente.

INCUNABOLO / Un solo incunabolo mutilo in principio e in fine, si è salvato dalla razzia fatta dai librai esteri agli incunaboli ebraici in Italia:

JACOB ben ASHER / ARBAAH TURIM / Codice rituale e legale in quattro parti, SONCINO, presso Salomo ben Mosè Soncino, s. a. (verso 1490). Folio. Il nostro esemplare contiene soltanto un frammento delle due prime parti (Orah Hajim e Joreh Deah); com. in metà del cp. 34 della prima parte e si arresta in mezzo al cp. 320 della seconda parte (segnatura: 9/1).

STAMPE ORIENTALI ANTICHE / In misura moto [sic!] scarsa sono rappresentate le antiche stampe orientali, cioè di Costantinopoli e di Salonicco, e ciò fa tanto più meraviglia in quanto che lo smercio dei libri stampati in queste due città si effettuava in gran parte a Venezia. Nel catalogo librario di Bomberg mandato al suo cliente in Germania, ristampato da Freiman, le stampe di Costantinopoli occupano quasi il primo posto. La maggior parte di esse furono ristampate dalle tipografie ebraiche di Venezia (de' Farri, Giutiniano [sic!] e lo stesso Bomberg).

Solo tre stampe orientali degne di nota ho trovato nella Biblioteca:

1509.

ALFASSI / col commento di R. Nissim / ed. pr., folio.

Costantinopoli 1509. Solo un frammento si è conservato, e cioè: in trattati "Jebamoth" e ["]Ketuboth" [sic!].

1512.

MIDRASH RABBAH / Raccolta di Midrashim sul Pentateuco, attribuito a R. Oshaja

Rabba / Costantinopoli 1512. Folio. Ed.pr. Mutilo in fine ; si arresta alla sezione "Haazinu". Bell'esempl.

1566.

PEZANTE MOSE / NER MIZVAH / Commento sopra le "Azharoth" (esposizione dei precetti in versi) di Salomo ibn Gabirol. Costantinopoli, presso Salomo ben Yişhaq Jaabez, 1566. 4°, pgg. 63, cc. 2.

JESHA ELOHIM / Commento sopra gli inni sinagogali per "Sukkoth" chiamati "Hoshanoth". Costantinopoli, Jaabez, 1566. 4°. Pgg. 65, 3.

Contiene in fine una poesia di Samuel AF-NAIM (dei Calomiti).

RARE STAMPE ITALIANE

Delle stampe italiane e più precisamente di quelle locali veneziane, la più preziosa è senza dubbio un TALUD BABILONESE completo - di 40 trattati - dell'edizione di BOMBERG. Per comprendere il valore si [i.e. di] questa stampa bisogna aver presente quanto segue: negli anni 1520-1548 uscirono dai famosi torchi di Daniel Bomberg tre edizioni del Talmud Babil. E cioè: la prima nel 1520-1522; la seconda 1526-1531 (1539!); la terza 1548. Mentre è accertato che nella prima ed. fu stampato il Talmud intero, resta tuttora incerto se si possa affermare altrettanto per la seconda e terza edizione, perché finora non si è potuto trovare un Talmud completo di queste due edizioni [sic!]. Ora è vero che anche il nostro esemplare non è tutto della seconda edizione, ma, come vedremo, contiene un numero tanto ragguardevole della seconda edizione, da superare in certo senso perfino il numero della Bodleiana di Oxford, la [sic!] considerato generalmente come il più alto.

Il complesso dei trattati talmudici delle edd. Bomberghiane nella nostra raccolta ammonta a 49, dei quali 9 dopponi. Nove trattati sono della prima ed. (1520-1521); 29 trattati sono della seconda ed. (1526-1539); 11 della terza ed (1548).

Facciamo ora seguire i singoli trattati nell'ordine tradizionale, e per fornire uno sguardo generale sull'entità dei trattati Bomberghiani nelle varie Biblioteche delle Com. Israel. Ita. accenneremo [sic!] presso ognuno di essi, dove e in quale ed. esso si trova oltre Venezia.

1 ed. III

BERACHOTH / ed. III, 1548. Segue: MISHNAH - ordine I (Zeraim) col commento del Rash (R. Shimshon da Sens). Il frontesp. Porta la data 1522, ma il testo è della seconda ed.

(A Firenze si trovano due copie dell'ed. I = 1520)

2. ed. I:

SHABBATH / ed. I, 1520. Possessore: Jehuda ibn Sages, che da cui [sic!] fu acquistato

[sic!] nel 1565. Altro poss.: Shemarja Af-Naim (Calominiti) di Candia; altro poss.: Josef Jeshurun.

2 a. ed. II.

Altra copia / ed. II, 1529/1530.

(A Trieste / ed. I.)

3. ed. II.

ERUBIN / ed. II, 1528, cc129 [sic!].

4. ed. I.

PESSAHIM / ed. I, 1520, cc. 140 (ultima bianca)

(Un'altra copia della stessa ed. a Roma)

4 a. ed. II (?)

Altra copia / ed. II (così sul frontesp. !), 1548

(manca a Oxford)

5. ed. II

YOMA / ed[.] II, 1531, cc. 97. Due copie (anche a Roma)

5 a ed. III/ Lo stesso / ed. III, 1548

6. ed. II.

ROSH ha-SHANA / ed. II, 1529, cc. 42 (anche a Roma)

7. ed. II.

SUKKA / ed. II, 1526. Cc 68. (Anche a Firenze; a Roma ed. I, 1521.).

8/ ed. I.

HAGIGA / ed. I, 1521 (anche a Firenze)

8 a ed.III

Lo stesso / ed. III, 1548 (manca a Oxford)

9 / ed II.

BEZAH / ed II, 1529/1530, cc 52. (anche a Roma)

10. ed. I.

MEGHILLAH / ed. I, 1521. (anche a Firenze)

10 a ed III

Lo stesso / ed III, 1548. (manca a Oxford)

11. ed. I.

SHEQALIM / ed. I, 1521 - Tishrì 282 -, cc. 14 (anche a Roma e a Firenze).

11 / ed. II.

Lo stesso / ed. II, 1527. (anche a Roma e a Firenze).

12 / ed. I.

TAANITH / ed. I, 1521. Cc 37. (anche a Firenze, dove si trova anche l'ed. II, 1529)

12 a ed III

Lo stesso / ed. III, 1548 (Manca a Oxford)

13 / ed. II

MOED QATAN / ed. II, 1526. Due copie.

14 / ed. III

YEBAMOTH / ed. III, 1548 (anche a Roma; a Firenze si trova la prima ed. 1522).

15 / ed. II

KETUBOTH / ed. II, 1527. (manca a Oxford)

16 / ed. II

GHITTIN / ed II, 1526, cc. 116 (anche a Roma)

- Manca a Oxford -

17 / ed. II

QIDDUSHIN / ed. II, 1526 (? Il frontesp. È della prima ed.). -Trovati anche a Roma. A Firenze vi è una copia dell'ed I, 1520. (ed. II manca a Oxford).

18 / ed. III

NEDARIM / ed III, 1548, cc 122 (=Roma).

19 / ed. III

NAZIR / ed III, 1548, cc 61. (=Roma).

20 / ed. I

SOTA / ed. I, 1520, cc 54. (= Firenze = Roma)

21 / ed II (?)

BABBA QAMA [sic!] / ed II (1531) o III (1548)

- A Firenze una copia dell'ed I (1521)

21. ed. II.

BABBA MEZIA / ed II, 1531 (manca a Oxford)

22. ed. II.

BABBA BATRA / ed. II, s. a. - 1531 - (manca a Oxford).

A Firenze e a Roma copie della prima ed.

23. ed. I.

SANHEDRIN / ed I, 1520, cc 130. (altre due copie a Firenze e a Roma)

24. ed. II.

SHEBUOTH / ed II, s. a. - 1528 (?) -, cc 62. (altre due copie a Firenze e Roma)

25 / ed. II.

MAKKOTH / ed II, 1529 (Kislev 290), cc. 28 (altre due copie della stessa ed. a Firenze e Roma; a Trieste si trova una copia della prima ed, 1520)

26 / ed I.

ABODA ZARA / ed I, 1520, cc 98. (altra copia a Roma).
 27 / ed. II,
 HORAJOTH / ed. II, 1527, cc. 18 (altra copia a Roma).
 28 / ed. III.
 EDUJOTH / ed. III, 1548, cc 10 (ed. II, 1530 si trova a Roma; ed. I, 1521, si trova a Trieste)
 29 / ed. II.
 ABOTH / col commento di Maimonide, ed. II, (1539!), (altro esemplare a Roma).
 30 / ed III.
 ZEBAHIM / ed III, 1548, cc 121, (altro esempl. a Roma; dove si trova pure un esempl. dell'ed. I, 1522; a Firenze si trova l'ed. II, 1529).
 31 / ed. III
 MENAHOTH / ed III, 1548, cc 112 (A Firenze l'ed. I, 1522; l'ed. I, 1522; l'ed. II, 1529 si trova a Roma e a Trieste)
 32 / ed II,
 BECHOROTH / ed II, 1528, cc 71. Due copie; un'altra copia a Roma; ed. I, 1522, si trova a Firenze.
 33/ ed II.
 HOLIN / ed II, 1528, cc. 178 (ed. I, 1521, a Firenze).
 34 / ed II, 15
 ARCHIN / ed II 1528, cc 36 (altra copia a Roma; ed. I, 1522 si trova a Firenze)
 35 / ed. II.
 TEMURAH / ed. II, 1526 (1528?), cc 34 (ed. I, 1522, a Firenze)
 36 / ed. II.
 KERITOTH / ed II, 1528, cc. 28 (ed. I, 1522, a Firenze)
 37-41 / Ed. III.
 MEILA / QINIM / TAMID / MIDDOTH / TRATTATI BREVI / ed. III, 1547 (sul frontespizio c'è l'anno 1528; cf. Rabinowich, Maamar al ha-Talmud, pg. 49, n. 66) - un altro esemplare a Roma -.
 42 / . ed. II.
 NIDDAH / ed. II, 1530, cc 100 (altro esemplare a Roma).
 43 / ed. III (?)
 MISHNAJOTH / I primi tre ordini: 1) - Zeraim con doppio commento: Maimonide e R. Shimshon das Sens; 2) -EDUJAOTH [sic!] con doppio commento: Maimonide e R. Abraham ben Dawid (RABaD);
 Il resto solo il comm. Di Maimonide, Venezia, Bomberg, 1546/7

44. ed. II (?)

Lo stesso / col commento di Maimonide, Venezia, Bomberg

Ed. II (?), 1549.

Tutti i volumi di questa magna opera della stamperia bomberghiana sono in perfetto stato di conservazione, alcuni anzi addirittura splendidi, il che rende ancora più prezioso questo esemplare.

Altre stampe ebraiche italiane di certo interesse:

1517.

NEBIIM AHARONIM / Terza parte della Bibbia Rabbinica, ed. I,

Venezia, Bomberg Daniel, 1517. Folio.

1522.

JACOB ben ASHER / HOSHEN MISHPAT / Quarto volume del codice rituale e legale - Arbaa Turim -, Venezia, Bomberg, 1522. 4° grande.

1524.

MAIMONIDE MOSE / MISHNEH TORAH / Codice rituale e legale con varie glosse e commenti, Venezia, Bomberg, 1524. 2 vll. In folio.

Bellissimo esemplare.

1550.

LO STESSO / MISHNEH TORAH / come il numero precedente, con glosse aggiunte da R. Meir Katzenelbogen [sic!] da Padova e dal suo figlio Samuel Jehuda, editori, Venezia, nella stamperia di Bragadin Aluisi [sic!], 1550. 2 vll. In folio. Bell'esemplare.

1550/51

LO STESSO / senza le glosse di Katzenelbogen [sic!], Venezia, presso Giustiniano [sic!], 1550/1551. 2 vll. In folio grande. Esemplare spl.

1550/51

Un altro esemplare della stessa edizione. Possessore: Assaël Rafael RIETI, con annotazioni di famiglia (nascite e circoncisioni) dell'anno 1586. Fra l'altro viene menzionato Abigdor CIVIDAL, come padrino, e Jehiel Jehoshua da RIETI, fratello Hananja Eljaqim RIETI. Splendido esemplare, legatura orig.

1554/55

ALFASSI / Compendio del Talmud Babilonese, con vari commenti e glosse, oltre il "MORDECHAI" e la "TOSSIFTA". Sabbioneta, presso Tobija Foà, 1554/55. 3 vll. In folio. Bellissimo esemplare con note mss. del '500.

1554

KOHEN JOSEF / DIBRE ha-JAMIM... / Cronaca dei re di Francia e dei sultani di

Turchia, s.l.e.a. (Sabbioneta 1554). 8°. Solo un frammento - com. colla segnatura 3/2, e si arresta a c. 287.

1557/1560

MAHAZOR / Ciclo di preghiere peri [sic!] giorni festivi secondo il rito tedesco, con un breve commento e l'indicazione dei "dinim". Sabbioneta - Cremona, Foà - Conti, 1557-1560. Cc 287. Bell'esempl.

1558 /

TIQQUNE ha-ZOHAR / Supplemento allo Zohar sulla Genesi, con vari "Pessaqim" riguardanti la pubblicazione di opere cabalistiche. Mantova, Jacob ben Naftali da Gazzolo [sic!], 1558/1560.

1558/1560

ZOHAR / Commento cabalistico al Pentateuco, attribuito a R. Simon ben Johai. Mantova, Jacob ben Naftali da Gazzolo [sic!], 1558/1560. 3 vll. In 4°. Ed. pr. Bell'esemplare, con note mss.

1558.

JACOB ben ASHER / ARBAA TURIM / Codice rituale e legale in 4 parti con glosse marginali di R. Abraham da Praga, Cremona, Vincenzo Conti, 1558. Folio.

1558.

(de) BENEDETTI (Mi-Baruch) BOAZ / QIZZUR MORDECHAI / Riassunto dei Dinim che si trovano nel "Mordechai" (aggiunto all'Alfassi di Sabbioneta), Cremona, Vincenzo Conti, 1558. Folio.

1559.

R. PEREZ / MAARECHETH ELOHUTH /Esposizione del sistema teologico-cabalistico, con due commenti: 1) anonimo; l'altro: MINHAT JEHUDA / di JEHUDA HAJAT, oltre varie glosse marginali dell'editore ISAC LATTES e di un certo "HASSON". Ferrara, presso Abraham Usque, 1559. 4°. Possessore: MARDECHAI [sic!] DATO colla firma autografa. Bell'esemplare.

1561.

JACOB ben ASHER / ARBAA TURIM / Codice rituale e legale in 4 parti, con glosse marginali. Riva di Trento, Madruzzo-Marcaria, 1561. Folio. La porta del frontespizio in questo esemplare è diversa da quella che si trova negli esemplari comunemente conosciuti, propria alla stampa ebraica di Riva di Trento, la porta del nostro esemplare invece è quella adoperata a Mantova. Una curiosità bibliografica.

1565.

MAIMONIDE MOSE / MADA / AHBAH / ZEMANIM / I primi tre libri del codice di Maimonide, con glosse marginali di Josef Sullam, Mantova, presso Meir ben Efraim,

1565 (Hesvan 326). 4°.

1566.

CARO JOSEF / SHULHAN ARUCH / Codice rituale e legale in 4 parti, Venezia, presso Giorgio Cavalli, 1566. In folio.

1574.

ABRAVANEL ISACCO / SHEELOTH / Scambio di lettere intorno a vari problemi filosofici fra Saul ha-Kohen da Candia e Abravanel negli anni 1505-1507. Vi sono aggiunte anche le "H[A]SSAGOTH" obiezioni di Josef Ghicatiglia contro la traduzione ebraica del Noreh [i.e. Moreh] Nebuchim, fatta da Samuel ibn Tibbun [sic!] (cc. 19-31)

Venezia, presso di Gara, 1574. 4°.

1574/1575

MAIMONIDE MOSE / MISHNEH TORAH / Codice rituale e legale, in 4 vll. Col commento di Josef CARO / KESSEPH MISHNEH / Venezia, presso Bragadin, 1574/75. 4. VII. In folio. I volumi II e IV su carata [i.e. carta] cerulea poco comuni.

1610.

SAHULA ISAC / MASHAL ha-QADMONI / Raccolta di favole in prosa rimata, con incisioni in legno, Venezia, presso i soci Elisha Zifroni e Abraham Haber-Tob, nella Stamperia di Zoan di Gara, (marca tipografica: tre corone), 1610. 4°. Solo le prime 4 carte sono di quest'edizione tutto il resto invece è dell'edizione precedente, cioè: Ven., presso Meir Parenz, s.a. (1547). Suppongo che l'edizione nostra è stata sospesa dopo le prime 4 carte, e che non fu continuata, perché la stamperia di Gara ha cessato di lavorare alla fine del 1609. Le 4 carte stampate certo non incoraggiavano la continuazione; è quanto di peggio è mai uscito dalla stamperia di de Gara.

Le cc 2-3 contengono la prefazione dell'autore, in principio in caratteri Rashi e si passa poi ad adoperare caratteri quadrati. L'opera comincia a c 4a, ed è stampato in due colonne, in caratteri quadrati, ornate di figure in legno. Queste figure non sono riproduzioni dell'ed. del 1547, ma in gran parte riproduzioni delle figure adoperate dallo stesso Haber-Tob nel "Zemah Zadiq" di Leon Modena, stampato presso Zanetti 1600. Questo frammento costituisce una rarità bibliografica.

Accenneremo infine ad alcune stampe non italiane poco frequenti nelle Biblioteche delle Comunità Israelitiche Ital.:

1566.

BIBBIA / Anversa, presso Plantino, coi caratteri di Bomberg acquistati da Plantin, 1566, 4° grande. Bellissimo esemplare in legatura originale - pelle su legno - di questa edizione apprezzatissima.

1851.

LORIA SALOMO / HOCHMATH SHELOMO / Glosse e correzioni su 21 trattati talmudici, Cracovia, presso Isacco Prostiz, 1581. 4°. Bell' esemplare in legatura originale di cuoio con impressioni a secco.

1578.

BERACHOTH / Il primo trattato talmudico dell'edizione purgata per opera del censore Marino [i. e. Marini], Basilea, presso Frobenio, per opera di Israel Zifroni da Guastalla, 1578. Fo.

1587.

MIDRASH RABBOTH / Raccolta di Midrashim sul Pentateuco, col commento "MATeTNOTH [i.e. Mattenot] KeHUNAH" di Issachar ben Naftali, Cracovia, presso Isac Prostiz, 1595. Fo. Ed. pr. Del Com.

1595. [i.e. 1597-1598]

ALFASSI / Compendio talmudico di R. Isac da Fez, con vari commenti e glosse, aggiunte le glosse di M. Dawid Tiktin, Cracovia, presso Isac Prostiz, 1595. Fo.

1598.

JAFFE MORDECHAI / LEBUSH ha-BUZZ... e "LEBUSH IS SHUSHAN / Ampliamento del codice rituale e legale di Josef Caro.

Questi due "Lebushim" corrispondono alle due ultime parti del "Shulhan Aruch", cioè al "Eben ha-Ezer" e "Hoshen Mishpat". Cracovia, presso Isac Prostiz, per opera di Naftali Shalit, 1597/98. Fo. Cc 166, 256. Bell'esempl.

1606.

HABIB JAACOB / BETH JISRAEL / Raccolta delle "Agadoth" del Talmud con commento compilato. Prosnitz, presso Isacco Prostiz, 1603. Folio. Solo il vol. II.

1617/1618

BIBBIA RABBINICA / Basilea, presso Waldkirch, 1617/18.

Fo. 4 vll. Bellissimo esemplare.

1665.

MAHAZOR / Ciclo di preghiere per i giorni festivi, secondo il rito locale di Francoforte, Francoforte sul Meno, 1665. 4°. Bellissimo esemplare.

1669. [1699?]

MAHAZOR / Ciclo di preghiere per i giorni festivi, secondo il rito tedesco, commento, Sulzbach 1669. Fo. 2 volumi. Leg. Originale in cuoio con impressioni a secco.

1714.

NIETO DAVID / KUZZARI II / ovvero MATEH DAN / Apologia della Legge orale

contro i neosaducei, in forma di dialogo, con traduzione spagnola accanto, Londra, 1714. 4°. Bellissimo esemplare in legatura orig. di pelle.

1730.

KOLLY JAACOB / MEAM LOEZ / Compilazione dai Midrashim e dai commenti omiletici popolari sulla Genesi in giudeo-spagnolo in caratteri ebraici (ladino), Costantinopoli, presso Jona Ashkenasi [sic!], 1730. Fo. Bell'Esemplare.

1736.

ZOHAR / Midrash cabalistico sul Pentateuco, attribuito a R. Simon ben Johai, secondo l'edizione di Mantova del 1558/60, con glosse Luriane, Costantinopoli, presso Jona Ashkenasi [sic!], 1736. 4°. 3 volumi. Bell'esemplare, con largo margine; legatura di velluto rosso guasta.

Alcuni cenni sulla provenienza dei codici manoscritti

Dei sei codici descritti da Lattes due sono di origine cretese, più precisamente di ebrei cretesi venuti a Padova a scopo di studi, l'uno al principio del '400, l'altro un secolo dopo: 1) l'amanuense del codice V, come abbiamo visto, è un certo Hija ben Jehuda da Candia, che scrisse una miscellanea di saggi morali per suo maestro, il medico ABRAHAM ben JEHUDA a Padova nel 1403. [...]

Rodi (Egeo) / Gennaio 1937. I. Sonne

Appendix 2

Catalogo dei libri ebraici esistenti nella libreria di proprietà del Talmud Torà³³¹

- 3 volumi ף"הcompleti. Sabbioneta, anno 1554. *Esist.* (2 copie dei voll. 1 e 3. N. 19)
- 1 volume incompleto מחזור tedesco, Venezia. *Id.* (n. 466 o 467)
- 1 volume completo הרמבם Venezia 1550. *Id.* (Bragadin's *Mišneh Torah?* **Missing**)
- 2 volumi completi הרמבם Venezia 1551. *Id.* (n. 689)
- 1 vol. משניות סדר זרעים, עדיות ומועד קטן ופרקי אבות עם פ, רמב"ם Venezia 1547. *Id.* (n. 713)
- 1 vol. incompleto משנה תורה להרמב"ם *Esiste* (n. 688)
- 1 vol. in pergamena sui תרת"ג מצות senza data, in buon stato [sic!]. *Esiste* (ms)
- 1 vol. in pergamena משנה תורה הרמב"ם completo, di gran pregio, scritto a Piove di Sacco presso Padova l'anno 1402. *Esiste* (ms)
- 1 vol. manoscritto in carta semplice senza anno né luogo שו"ת זרח יעקב *Esiste* (ms)
- 1 vol. נביאים ראשונים 1מרקא גדולה Venezia 1568. *Id.* (n. 122)
- “ 1 vol. נביאים אחרונים וכתובים Venezia 1618. *Esiste* (n. 96)
- “ 1 vol. כתובים Venezia 1549. *Esiste* (**Missing**. Vol. 3 at n. 124)
- “ 1 vol. נביאים אחרונים Venezia 1618. *Esiste* (n. 96)
- “ 1 vol. כתובים Venezia 1618. *Esiste* (n. 96)
- “ 1 vol. כתובים Venezia 1568. *Esiste* (n. 122)
- “ 1 vol. נביאים אחרונים Venezia 1568. *Esiste* (n. 122)
- “ 1 vol. נביאים ראשונים Venezia 1617. *Esiste* (n. 96)
- 3 vol. יוסף incompleti, Venezia 1574. (א"ה Venezia 1565). *Esiste* (n. 893 and n. 886)
- 1 vol. הרא"ש Venezia 1566. (not identified)
- 3 vol. שלחן ערוך incompleti, Mantova. *Esiste* (n. 290)
- 3 vol. “ “ “ Amsterdam. “ (n. 289. Only vol. 1)
- 1 vol. התורה אברבנאל על Venezia 1579. *Id.* (n. 7)
- 1 vol. אברבנאל נביאים ראשונים Amburgo 1687. *Id.* (n. 8)
- 1 vol. זולצבאך, מדרש רבות *Esiste*. (n. 709)
- 1 vol. מדרש רבות Amsterdam. *Esiste*. (**Missing**)
- 1 vol. מדרש שמואל Venezia 1545. (n. 706)
- 1 vol. שתי ידות. *Id.* (n. 333)
- 1 vol. מזרחי פירוש רש"י Venezia 1545. *Esiste* (**Missing**. Also in source 3 n. 36)

incompleti

³³¹ “Renato Maestro” Library and Archive, handwritten document, box 15.

- 1 vol. *idem* Costantina. *Esiste* (**Missing**). Also in source 3 n. 37)
- טהרות עם פי' רמב"ם Venezia 1523. טהרות עם פ', רבינו שמשון משנזא 1 vol. תלמוד בבלי Venezia 1549. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. בבא בתרא Venezia. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. יבמות Venezia 1543. גיטין Venezia 1526. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. חולין Venezia 1526. ערכין Venezia 1528. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. [?] פסחים Venezia 1548. עירובין Venezia 1528. *Id.* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. זרעים Venezia 1522. *Id.* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. ברכות Venezia 1548. כתובות Venezia 1527. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. ראש השנה Venezia 1531. יומא Venezia 1548. סוכה Venezia 1526. חגגה Venezia 1548. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. שבת Venezia 1530. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. "מכות" 1530. סנהדרין Venezia 1520. שבועות Venezia. (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. נדה " 1530. "מנחות" 1548. הרא"ש גל הלי קטנות Venezia 1530. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. "ביצה" 1530. "מגילה" 1548. שקלים Venezia 1522. תענית Venezia 1548. מועד קטן Venezia 1539. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. בבא קמא Venezia. מציעא Venezia 1539. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. כריתות Venezia 1528. מעילה וקינים ומדות ותמיד Venezia 1528. (n. 841)
- " 1 vol. בכורות Venezia 1528. זבחים Venezia 1548. *Id.* (nn. 841-842)
- " 1 vol. "נדרים" 1548. "נזיר" 1548. סוטה Venezia 1520. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. ע"ז Venezia. הוריות Venezia 1527. עדויות Venezia 1548. פרקי אבות Venezia 1539. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- 1 vol. תלמוד בבלי *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. ראש השנה תענית יומא סוכה מגילה *Id.* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. חולין כריתות תמורות מעילה קינים תמיד מדות ערכין *Idem* (n. 847)
- " 1 vol. בבא בתרא, ע"ז *Idem* (**Missing**)
- " 1 vol. נדה כלים אהלות נגעים פרה טהרות מקוואות מכשירין זבים טבול יום ידים *Esiste* (n. 847)
- " 1 vol. פסחים ביצה חגיגה מועד קטן *Id.* (n. 847)
- " 1 vol. גיטין נדרים נזיר סוטה *Id.* (n. 847)
- " 1 vol. בבא קמא בבא מציעה *Id.* (n. 847)
- " 1 vol. שבת ועירובין *Esiste* (n. 847)
- " 1 vol. זבחים מנחות בכורות *Idem* (n. 847)

Trattati separati incompleti תלמוד בבלי

- " 3 vol. ברכות Amsterdam. *Esiste* (n. 850?)

- “ 1 vol. יומא סוכה שקלים תענית מגילה Amsterdam. (n. 845)
- “ 1 vol. ברכות *Idem* (**Missing?**)
- “ 1 vol. בבא בתרא Francfort [sic!]. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- 1 vol. עקדת יצחק Venezia 1547. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- 1 vol. detto “ 1573. *Idem* (**Missing**)
- 3 vol. החזקה להרמ"ב incompleto Venezia 1576. Quarta parte. *Id.* (n. 690)
- 2 vol. “ “ “ 1574. Seconda parte. *Id.* (n. 690)
- 2 vol. “ “ “ 1574. Terza parte. *Id.* (n. 690)
- 2 vol. ספר הילקוט Livorno 1550. Completo. *Id.* [i.e. 1650] (n. 895)
- 1 vol. “ “ 1555. Seconda parte, incompleto. (n. 895)
- 1 vol. חן טוב Venezia 1605. *Esiste* (**Missing**. Also in source 3 n. 44)
- 1 vol. בתי כהונה, Smirne. *Esiste* (n. 806)
- 1 vol. לחם משנה Abram di Boton, Venezia 1609 [i.e. 1604-06] *Esiste* (**Missing**. Also in source 3 n. 49)
- 1 vol. מחנה ראובן Livorno. *Id.* (n. 815)
- 1 vol. תורת יוסף (n. 695)
- 1 vol. ש"ת שמש צדקה Venezia. (n. 766)
- 1 vol. מטה דן וכוזרי Pinchas Nieto, Londra 1714. *Esiste* (**Missing**. Also in source 3 n. 45)
- 2 vol. מעשה רקח Venezia. Prima parte, incompleto. *Esiste* (n. 822)
- 1 vol. יד אליהו [צ"ל ידי אליהו] Costantina. *Id.* (n. 312)
- 1 vol. קול בן לוי Costantina. *Id.* (**Missing**. Also in source 3 n. 547)
- 1 vol. למנצח לדוד Dawid Pardo Salonicchi [sic!]. *Esiste* (n. 779)
- 1 vol. ש"ת זרע יעקב Livorno. *Idem.* (n. 60)
- 1 vol. שני לוחות הברית Amsterdam. *Idem* (n. 345)
- 1 vol. ש"ת הרמב"ם Venezia. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- 1 vol. מלאכת מחשבת Venezia 1710. “ (n. 315)
- 1 vol. יד אהרן Smirne. *Idem.* (n. 16)
- 1 vol. באר שבע Issahar [sic!] Beer, Francfort [sic!] 1709. *Idem* (**Missing**)
- 1 vol. מגיני שלמה Venezia 1741. (n. 896)
- 1 vol. ש"ת חיים וחסד Livorno [1844]. *Esiste* (n. 768)
- 1 vol. סעודת מצוה Venezia. *Id.* (n. 859)
- 1 vol. עיני אברהם Amsterdam. “ (n. 824)
- 1 volume פני יצחק Mantova. *Esiste* (n. 54)
- 1 vol. ראשית חכמה Venezia. “ (No details. **Missing**)
- 1 vol. מאמר יין המשומר (n. 828)
- 1 vol. ש"ת [צ"ל שאלות] שאול [בן משה] כהן Venezia 1574. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- 1 vol. מאור עינים Mantova. Azaria De Rossi. *Id.* (n. 791)
- 1 vol. שם שמואל Francfort [sic!]. “ (n. 830)
- 1 vol. כבוד חכמים Venezia 1700. *Esiste* (n. 796)
- 1 vol. חמדת ימים Smirne. “ (n. 337)
- 2 vol. שושנים לדוד Dawid Pardo, Venezia. *Idem* (n. 782)
- 1 vol. חלק בני יהודה Venezia 1692. *Idem* (n. 271)

- 1 vol. דרכי הגמרא לחם סתרים Venezia [Di Gara] 1608 [by Joseph ben Solomon Tzayach]. Mantova [Tommaso Ruffinelli, 1593]. Mantova הליכות עולם [idem]. *Idem* (**Missing**)
- 1 vol. שלשה שריגים. *Esiste* (n. 898)
- 1 vol. קורא הדורות Dawid Aschenazi [sic!], Venezia. *Esiste* (n. 299)
- 1 vol. Tesoro de preceptos ecc. in Spagnuolo, per Ishac Atias [sic!], Venezia 1627. *Esiste* (**Missing**)
- 2 vol. השתערות מלך הנגב עם מלך הצפון Amsterdam. *Esiste* (n. 673)
- 1 vol. קריאה נאמנה Venezia. *Esiste* (**Missing?** The edition in the modern catalogue, n. 856, dates to 1868 which seems too late)
- 1 vol. "פ' ישעיה" Venezia 1657. כלי פז (n. 223)
- 1 vol. דרך אמת Id. (**Missing**. No details)
- 3 vol. incompleti משניות - ס' קדשים - Id. (not identified)
- 4 vol. " " Vienna. *Id.* (not identified)
- 1 vol. " " Amsterdam. *Id.* (not identified)
- 1 vol. חומש עם תרגום ורש"י *id.* (not identified)
- 1 vol. זהר על התורה Livorno. *Id.* (n. 905)
- 1 vol. בינה לעתים Venezia 1653 [i.e. 1648]. *Esiste* (n. 307)
- 1 vol. דעת קדושים Livorno [1809]. " (n. 805)
- 1 vol. ספר אשיה [יאשיה?] Livorno. *Id.* (**Missing**)
- 1 vol. יקהל שלמה Livorno 1786. *Id.* (n. 279)
- 1 vol. יד אבישלום Livorno [1829]. " (n. 58)
- 1 vol. פרשת דרכים Costantina [1728?] " (**Missing**)
- 1 vol. שו"ת Pisa [by Avraham Koriat, printed by Samuel Molkho in 1812]. " (n. 383)
- 1 vol. עץ שטול Venezia " (n. 12)
- 1 vol. לית חן ואור יקרות Venezia. *Id.* (n. 32)
- 1 vol. עללת הבציר Livorno 1779. " (n. 897)
- 1 vol. וזאת ליהודה incompleto. *Esiste* (n. 39?)
- 1 vol. לקט שמואל Venezia 1694. *Esiste* (**Missing**. Also in source 2 n. 9)
- 1 vol. תשב"צ Amsterdam [1738-39]. *Esiste* (**Missing**. Also in source 3 n. 43)
- 1 vol. manoscritto in pergamena scritto a Padova nel 1403 [...]. *Esiste*

Appendix 3



4. Footprints

Early books may bear evidences that go beyond the publishing details in their frontispieces. Typesetters and correctors can be mentioned in the introduction or in the colophon, public inspectors and Church censors may appear in the first pages, as well as Rabbinical *Haskamot*.

These are the first early evidences of the circulation of a work before its publication and of the different intervention that may have modified it. When books leave the print shop, the single copies go through different hands and their story is testified by the evidences found on their pages.

Bookdealers used to put their stamps or labels on the endpages (especially during the 19th century), censors deleted words, passages, or entire pages, and signed on the last page (or, sometimes, on the first page) of the books, and owners often added a note certifying their possession.

There are also other kinds of footprints, such as family histories, memorandums, students lists, notes, and bookbinders' labels.

The following paragraphs are dedicated to the evidences found in the early Hebrew books of the "Renato Maestro" library (reference numbers for the catalogue *I libri del Ghetto*³³² will always be indicated).

The first paragraph is dedicated to the censors' notes, with a short introduction about the censorship of Hebrew in Venice. The second and third paragraphs investigate the provenances, concentrating on institutions and on single persons whose footprints appear in the volumes.

Finally, some information will be given on booksellers, bookbinders and viewers, enabling us to determine the location of the concerned copy at a specific time.

³³² *Op. Cit.*

4.1 Censors

4.1.1 Inquisition and Censorship in Venice

The control over the printing press in Venice was regulated quite late compared to its foundation, censorship was not established until the Counter-Reformation period. At the beginning of the 16th century the government took action against heretic books, but its intervention was not systematic.

Up to 1527, "When an author or publisher sought a *privilegio*, the Council of Ten in a few cases asked someone to read the work to make sure that it was free from religious, moral, or political error".³³³ The process was later regularized and an imprimatur was always required in order to apply for a *privilegio*. For the major part, however, printers did not go through this process, as it was not mandatory and it was valid only in the town where it was released.

The first indexes were officially published in the 1540s, when the Protestants' threat became evident as many outstanding figures converted to the new religion. Their works were soon published and distributed in Venice and Switzerland, at this point (and) Italian governments felt the urgent need of an intervention.

The legislation was introduced in Venice in 1543, when the *Executors against blasphemy* were given the power to punish printers who published prohibited books. In 1547 fines were extended to people who imported those books. That same year *Tre Savii all'eresia* were appointed to help the canonical court.³³⁴

The Council of Ten and the *Executors against blasphemy* could act as censors, and punish editors and printers, but their action was very limited and by no means

³³³ Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, 74.

³³⁴ See: Paul F. Grendler, "The Tre Savi Sopra Eresia 1547-1605: A Prosopographical Study", *Studi Veneziani* 3 (1979): 283-340; Andrea Del Col, "L'inquisizione romana e il potere politico nella Repubblica di Venezia (1540-1560)", *Critica storica* 28 (1991): 189-250; *Idem*, "Organizzazione, composizione e giurisdizione dei tribunali dell'Inquisizione romana nella Repubblica di Venezia (1500-1550)", *Critica storica* 25 (1988): 244-294.

systematic.

A first decree was published on July 18th 1548 demanding all book-owners to submit the volumes that might contain statements against the Catholic faith to the *Tre Savii* within eight days to avoid prosecution.³³⁵ A few days later, Tommaso Giunti officially required more clarifying details, especially concerning the works of non Christian authors that had freely circulated until the Protestant reform. The Holy Office admitted the need of a more specific decree and avoided severe punishments until the publication of the first Venetian index of prohibited books, on January 16th 1549. "Compiled exactly as the Council of Ten ordered, the catalogue was printed by Vincenzo Valgrisi with an exhaustive privilege of May 7, 1549. It banned the opera omnia of 47 authors, the vast majority of whom were northern Protestants [...]. The catalogue also listed about 100 individual titles, many of them anonymous".³³⁶

In 1548 the Archbishop Giovanni Della Casa was sent to Venice as a Papal nuncio and was expected to organize the censorship of Jewish texts. He apparently failed to do so because of the lack of Christian experts who could deal with this task. His activity, on the contrary, was very effective in expurgating Latin texts and in contrasting the Lutheran local community.³³⁷

In 1550, as already mentioned (see par. 1.2.1) the conflict between two Christian printers, Giustinian and Bragadin, brought to the burning of the Talmud and of many other *Halakhic* works. Hebrew printing was suspended up to 1554, when the *Executors against blasphemy* decided that expurgated Hebrew books (except the Talmud and its commentaries) could be published again.

In order to avoid further incidents, in 1554 the Venetian Rabbis formalized a self-censorship process: Hebrew works could be printed if they were granted an *Haskamah*, the official approval of three Rabbis and of the chiefs of the local Jewish

³³⁵ Brown, *Venetian Press*, 212.

³³⁶ Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, 86.

³³⁷ On the history of the indexes of prohibited books will not be exposed in the present dissertation. See: Grendler, *Roman Inquisition*, 85-127, 254-285.

Community.³³⁸

On March, 19, 1562, the *Riformatori dello Studio di Padova* fixed a new procedure for prepublication censorship, requiring all works to be read by three members of the Holy Office to detect offences against the Christian faith. The texts were to be checked also by a public reader and by a ducal secretary in order to control its political content and its respect of the government policy. Upon submission of three *testamurs* the *Riformatori* could release a certificate for the Council of Ten, who could grant the imprimatur.³³⁹

In case publishers wished to obtain a *privilege* too, they had to appeal to the Senate. The prepublication process changed several times, in order to improve its efficacy. In 1566, for instance, the Council of Ten decided requested from the *Executors against blasphemy* to register imprimaturs and privileges. From 1569, in order to prevent printers from modifying the texts after obtaining the imprimatur, a copy of all printed books had to be deposited at the *Riformatori's* office.

From 1566-68 onwards, the control became stricter and the cooperation between the different institution grew stronger, and bookshops started to be checked, because prohibited works could be imported or secretly printed in Venice.

When the Venetian printing industry was starting declining, in the 16th century, the government adopted defensive measures trying to oppose foreign (especially Roman) competition.³⁴⁰ Conflict between the Holy Office and the Venetian government influenced the censorship process, caused a lack of coordination among the powers, and facilitated the circulation of prohibited books. "Possibly more heretical prohibited books entered Venice between 1592 and 1605 than at any time since the 1560s."³⁴¹

³³⁸ See: Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, "Giovanni di Gara", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 56 (2001). Online at: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-di-gara_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-di-gara_(Dizionario-Biografico)/). [From now on: *Giovanni di Gara*].

³³⁹ Grndler, *Roman Inquisition*, 151-152.

³⁴⁰ See: Gredler, *Roman Inquisition*, 225-233, 237-252.

³⁴¹ Gredler, *Roman Inquisition*, 254.

During the 17th century the *Riformatori* were the principal responsible for prepublication censorship. Single Christian censors continued expurgating books even though the Pope had formally forbidden it (see below). In order to stop the circulation of prohibited or unexpurgated books, inspections and confiscations took frequently place during the 18th century. When this happened, Jews petitioned to have their volumes back, demonstrating that the presumed blasphemies in their works were due to misreading and misunderstanding. In some cases the books returned to their owners.³⁴²

4.1.2 Censors in the “Renato Maestro” Collection

Many books in the “Renato Maestro” collection (from now on: the Library) bear the traces of the censor’s intervention, here we deal with those found in the Hebrew volumes (we did not consult the non-Hebrew early books).

Since the history of censors and censorship is well known and has been the object of several accurate studies, we will not add a new chronicle to the extant ones.³⁴³ On the

³⁴² Popper, *Censorship*, 117-119.

³⁴³ See: Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text: The Catholic Church and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). [From now on: *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*].

- “The Censor as a Mediator: Printing, Censorship and the Shaping of Hebrew Literature”, in *The Roman Inquisition, the Index and the Jews: Contexts, Sources and Perspectives*, edited by Stephan Wendehorst (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2004), 35-57. [From now on: *The Censor as a Mediator*].
- “From Safed to Venice: The Šulḥan `Arukh and the Censor”, in *Tradition, Heterodoxy and Religious Culture: Judaism and Christianity in the Early Modern Period*, edited by Chanita Goodblatt and Howard Kreisel (Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2006), 91-115. [From now on: *Šulḥan `Arukh*].

Antonio Rotondò, *La censura ecclesiastica e la cultura* (Torino: Einaudi, 1973).

Federica Francesconi, “This passage can also be read differently: How Jews and Christians censored Hebrew texts in early modern Modena”, *Jewish History*, 26 (2012): 139-160. [From now on: *Modena*].

Horatio Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press 1469-1800: An Historical Survey Based Upon Documents For*

contrary, referring to the existing publications, we want to highlight the censors' footprints contained in the Library that may confirm what is already known or provide further data on their activity and - in particular - on their interactions with Venetian Jews.

The list of the censors, available on page 660 of the Catalogue (*I libri del Ghetto*), includes twenty-seven names. The signatures, in two of the volumes, were not readable, therefore one or two censors might be missing from the list (n. 22 - copy P.088.B, and n. 122 - copy C.G2.03.II).

The censors are usually well known people and much information about them is available, therefore, from their biographies we learn something about the provenance of the volumes that are part of this collection. Five of them expurgated the books before their publication (preventive censorship), therefore their names are not relevant for the purpose of this research.

The list of the censors is annexed at the end of this paragraph with the indication of the number of volumes in which their signature appears. Some of them have also indicated the date of expurgation next to their signature: these dates are put in brackets on the list.

Simply looking at the numbers, one immediately remarks that the most active censors in the area must have been Domenico Hierosolimitano, Giovanni Domenico Carretto and Luigi da Bologna, followed by Camillo Jaghel, Giovanni Domenico

The Most Part Hitherto Unpublished, John C. Nimmo (London, 1891), 60-82.

Paolo Ulvioni, *Stampa e censura a Venezia nel Seicento* ([S.l.: s.n.], 1975).

Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press: 1540-1605* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977). [From now on: *Roman Inquisition*].

- "The Destruction of Hebrew Books in Venice, 1568", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 45 (1978): 103-130.

Richard Gottheil, etc., "Censorship of Hebrew Books", in *JE*, vol. 3, 642-652. Online at: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4170-censorship-of-hebrew-books>.

William Popper, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books* (New York: Ketav, 1969. First published in 1899). [From now on: *Censorship*].

See also the works published by Mario Infelise, Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, and Michele Jacoviello.

Vistorini, Girolamo da Durazzano and Renato da Modena.

The first attested censor of Hebrew books was **Jacob Geraldino** (or Giralдино), who operated in the whole territory of the Church as an apostolic commissioner starting in 1555 circa. As a consequence, he was active in several places (Rome, Bologna and Mantua) and was supposed to supervise an extensive territory and a large quantity of books. In 1556 the duke of Modena Ercole II d'Este appointed him ducal commissioner.

“His orders were to examine all manuscripts and all books already printed or to be printed, and, as he might deem proper in each case, to correct and expurgate from them anything contrary to the Catholic faith of the Church of Rome, or contrary to good principles and morals.”³⁴⁴

Of course he was helped by other censors, especially by the convert Jew **Andrea De Monte** (or del Monte, d. 1587), alias Yosef Zarfati Alfasi. De Monte was a Moroccan Jew who moved to Rome where he probably attended the French Synagogue (for that reason he was called “Şarfati” = French). His conversion to the Catholic faith took place around 1552. He became a teacher for the catechumens, and a preacher for the Jews from 1576 to 1582. The growing hostility towards him by the Jewish community stopped his preaching activity. His main office, however, was the censorship of Hebrew books, and he continued this task in Rome and in Spoleto, being very zealous. He was also commissioned some commentaries on the Bible in order to explain the Jewish meaning of some peculiar terms, and a few polemic works against Judaism.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ Popper, *Censorship*, 40.

³⁴⁵ Fausto Parente, “De Monte, Andrea”, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. 38 (1990). Online at: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-de-monte_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/andrea-de-monte_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).

Both Geraldino and del Monte were later accused of favoring the Jews, not expurgating properly the blasphemies contained in their books. Indeed, this was not completely false, as the censors often acted as mediators between the Christian and Jewish world trying to defend the interests of both sides.

About ten years ago, the former identity of Jacob Geraldino was discovered, and he was identified as Rabbi Yosef Yehudah of Arles (or Arli), the Chief Rabbi of Macerata who converted in 1553.³⁴⁶ On this late discovery Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin wrote: "The fact that this was not known until recently is a clear example of the uncertainty with respect to conversion and casts new light on the activities of the censor..."³⁴⁷ and he went on reporting a correspondence that proves that the real scope of Geraldino's work as a censor was to approve the use of Hebrew books making them acceptable through little expurgation.

The only book censored by Geraldino in the Library collection is a copy of the second volume of Maimonides' *Mišneh Torah* printed by Giustinian in 1550-51 (C.G2.08, n. 689, expurgated by him in 1555).

After Geraldino quit his activity, another censor was dealing with the expurgation of Hebrew books but in a different way: he cooperated with Conti's press in Cremona (1557-1567) and with Di Gara in Venice (from 1567), censoring works before they were printed. It was **Vittorio Eliano** (Yosef), Rabbi Elia Levita's grandson (Baḥur) who converted to Catholicism followed by his brother Eliyahu-Giovan Battista. His name appears in the colophons attesting his preventive censorship with the standard formula "Revisto & corretto per mi Vittorio Eliano, iusta la copia della correctione de libri, come è nel officio delli Claris. Esecutori contra la Biastema".³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ See: Dall'Olio, *Inquisizione a Bologna*, 91.

³⁴⁷ Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 87.

³⁴⁸ Translation: "Inspected and corrected by myself, Vittorio Eliano, being due the transcription of the books revision, as in the office of the Executor against blasphemy".

This assertion, in the Library, is visible on volume C.G.18 (n. 891) containing Ya'aqov ben Ašer's *Hošen ha-mišpaṭ* (Venice: Giovanni Grifo, 1567).

When Eliano was sent to Cremona, local Jews brought him their books to be approved, previously marking the passages to be expurgated in order to accelerate the process.³⁴⁹

It is very rare to find in 16th century books the signature of a single censor, as the expurgation of early censors was usually considered lacking and unsuitable by later inspectors who commissioned a new revision.

Gregory XIV, elected Pope on December 5th 1590, shared the widespread clerical mistrust against the expurgation of Hebrew books, that was never perfectly done. In order to grant a better work, it was entrusted to the Jews themselves who had to expurgate their own books and were exposed to severe punishments in case they were found not properly censored.³⁵⁰ From the Registries of the Roman Inquisition:

“Die 13 Aprilis 1591. Scriptum inquisitori Taurini, illum reprehendendo, quod inchoasset expurgare libros Hebraeorum; nam hoc modo dicerentur approbati a sancta inquisitione, e nondimeno non possono mai tanto purgarsi, che non restino pieni e rispersi d’heresie e bestemie. Et ideo Sanctissimus numquam permisit, huiusmodi expurgationem a Christianis fieri, sed Hebraei a se ipsis illos expurgent, et si deinde errores invenientur aut blasphemiae, severe puniantur iuxta constitutiones apostolicas.”³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 92.

³⁵⁰ Popper, *Censorship*, 73.

³⁵¹ Cod. Barb.lat.24 (tomo 3, fol. 362) quoted by Moritz Stern in *Urkundliche Beiträge über die Stellung der Päpste zu den Juden mit Benutzung des päpstlichen Geheimarchivs zu Rom* (Kiel: H. Fiencke, 1893), 170, n. 5. Translation: “April 13, 1591. Contesting what had been written by the Torino Inquisitor, that he had started expurgating the Jews’ books so that they could be said approved by the Holy Inquisition, nevertheless they cannot be expurgated enough not to remain full and widespread of heresy and blasphemies. Therefore, His Holiness never permitted the expurgation to be performed by Christians, but that it has to be done by Jews themselves, if, however, errors or blasphemies will be found, they will be severely punished according to the Apostolic Constitutions”.

Christian inquisitors and revisers, however, didn't always respect this new disposal because the book expurgation, financed by Jews, was a remunerative activity. Indeed, the decree was restated and reinforced several times in the following years.³⁵² Whatever the reason was, some censors continued to operate even in the 1590s, when Christians were forbidden to engage in the censorship of Hebrew books. Whether they did so because as apostate Jews they were exonerated from the prohibition or because the decree was not valid in certain cities it has not been definitively established.³⁵³

Domenico Hierosolimitano (also: Gerosolimitano, 1553-1621) was born in Jerusalem as Šemu'el Vivas, in a family of Spanish origin. He had studied in a yeshiva in Safed, becoming a Rabbi and, at the same time, a renowned physician. Later, he moved to Cairo and then to Constantinople, where he was welcomed at the court of Sultan Murad III. In 1590s he left for Venice and there, on August 6th 1593, he converted to Christianity taking the name of Domenico after Saint Dominic de Guzmàn who was celebrated on that day.

He worked as a censor until his death, sometimes also in team with others, and took care of the new censors' training. He was active in several cities: Mantua, Monferrato, Milan, Venice and Rome, here, he also taught Hebrew at the Collegio dei Neofiti.³⁵⁴

Hierosolimitano is the author of the famous *Sefer ha-ziquq*, a guide for censors on the expurgation of Hebrew works (*Index Expurgatorius*) written in 1596 and constantly updated up to 1626. In its introduction he exposed the principles of censorship, and provided a list of about 480 works (including different editions of the same work)

³⁵² *Ibidem*, 171-175.

³⁵³ See also: Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 91-94.

³⁵⁴ Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor as a Mediator*, 41-42; *Idem*, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 88-89. See also: Gila Prebor, "From Jerusalem to Venice: The Life of Domenico Yerushalmi, his writings and his work as a Censor", *Pe'amim* (2007): 111-112, 215-242 (Hebrew); *Idem*, "Domenico Yerushalmi: his life, writings and work as a Censor", *Materia Judaica*, XV-XVI (2010-2011): 467-481; Lucia Rostagno, "Note su Domenico Gerosolimitano: A proposito del recente saggio di M. Austin PARTE I", *Rivista degli studi orientali*, 76 (2002): 231-262; *Idem*, "Note su Domenico Gerosolimitano: PARTE II", *Rivista degli studi orientali*, 77 (2003): 231-275.

giving detailed instructions concerning their expurgation.³⁵⁵

In spite of this, his work, like that of the other censors, was nor systematic nor consistent: Raz-Krakotzkin has demonstrated that “Gerosolimitano did not always follow the instructions he himself formulated, and, in many cases, he did not erase passages marked in *Sefer Hazikkuk* from works whose censorship he oversaw.”³⁵⁶

He was active again in 1612, and his last attested signature is dated 1619.³⁵⁷ He died in Rome in 1622.

In the Library collection his name appears in fourteen books, his most recent footprint is dated 1601.³⁵⁸

On August 27th 1595, in spite of the papal prohibition, the Bishop of Mantua appointed a commission for the expurgation of Hebrew books, electing three censors for the task: Alessandro Scipione, Laurentius Franguellus and Domenico Hierosolimitano. The latter probably headed the commission as his signature is often added to that of the others.³⁵⁹

Alessandro Scipione had already worked in Mantua, where he was appointed corrector in June 1589 and, after having been working there for one year, he probably left and then returned later.³⁶⁰

In the Hebrew collection the jointed signatures of Alessandro Scipione and Domenico Hierosolimitano - all of them dated 1597 - appear in the copies: C.G2.06 (n.19, *Hilkhot Rav Alfaz*, Sabbioneta: Tobia Foa, 1554-55, vol. 3), C.G2.03.IV.C (n. 122,

³⁵⁵ Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 85, 120-174. The text was published by Gila Prebor: ““Sepher Ha-Ziquq” by Domenico Yerushalmi”, *Italia*, 18 (2008): 7-302 (Hebrew: ספר הזיקוק של (דומיניקו ירושלמי (1555-1621): השפעתו על הדפוס העברי See also: Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor as a Mediator*, 45-50; Idem, *Šulhan `Arukh*, 103-108; and Shifra Baruchson-Arbib - Gila Prebor, “Sefer Ha-Ziquq: (An Index of forbidden Hebrew books): The Book’s use and its influence on Hebrew Printing”, *La Bibliofilia*, CIX. 1 (2007): 3-31.

³⁵⁶ Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 88-89.

³⁵⁷ Popper, *Censorship*, 101.

³⁵⁸ See: *I libri del Ghetto*, 660.

³⁵⁹ Popper, *Censorship*, 77.

³⁶⁰ Popper, *Censorship*, 68.

Rabbinic Bible IV, Venice: Giovanni Di Gara, 1568, vol. 4), C.G2.04.I.A (N. 689, *Mišneh Torah*, Venice: Marco Antonio Giustinian, 1550-51, vol. 1).

The work of the Mantua commission, that was supposed to be completed within two months, lasted for several years, up to 1597, because of the big amount of books brought by Jewish owners who were trying to avoid fines and punishments.

Laurentius Franguellus, started his activity in the 1570s and was particularly active in the year 1575. Before joining the Mantua commission, he had previously worked in Ferrara. His tasks were probably of local nature, commissioned by local authorities.³⁶¹

Popper has remarked that Franguellus probably left the commission in 1596, when his name ceased to appear, and was replaced by fra Luigi da Bologna sometime before October 1597.³⁶²

In the Library this is attested by the copy with the shelf mark C.M2.07 (n. 690, *Mišneh Torah*, Venice: Alvise Bragadin and Me'ir Parenzo, 1574-75, vol. 3) in which both signatures (of. D. Hierosolimitano and L. da Bologna) are dated 1597. This very copy was later revised again by Fra Renato da Modena in 1626 and by Fra Girolamo da Durazzano in 1640.

Franguellus' name appears in the Library collection only five times, always bearing the year 1575, before the period of activity of the Mantua commission.

The concerned copies are: C.G.22 (n. 18, *Sefer Rav Alfás*, Venice: Me'ir Parenzo and Alvise Bragadin, 1552), C.M2.27 (n. 52, *Qiššur Mordekhay we-simanaw*, Cremona: Vincenzo Conti, 1557), C.G2.03.II and C.G2.III.A (n. 122, *Rabbinic Bible IV*, Venice: Giovanni Di Gara, 1568), C.G2.01 (n. 123, *Rabbinic Bible II*, Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1524-25).

³⁶¹ Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 87.

³⁶² Popper, *Censorship*, 77-78.

“Different copies of the same work corrected, one by Geraldino, one by Franguellus, and one by Irosolimitano [sic!], or different copies corrected by any one of them at different times and places, show altogether different expurgations from one copy of the same work treated in turn by all of them.”³⁶³

Towards the end of the century the revisers started mentioning the names of the inquisitors who had appointed them for the task. Sometimes only the inquisitor’s signature appeared.

For instance, **fra Hippolitus Ferrarensis** of Cremona (Franciscan Order of Friars Minor) sometimes mentioned the local inquisitor. He worked in Ferrara at the Holy Office between the 16th and 17th centuries, and in 1584 he also authored a booklet on the censorship of Hebrew books that was later integrated by Camillo Jaghel.³⁶⁴

In 1602 the prohibition for Christians to censor Hebrew books was reinforced. The expurgation made by them was considered invalid, and a special note was sent from Rome to the Jews of Ancona informing them of the inconsistency of the work done by Luigi da Bologna. Carpi and other communities were later informed of this new disposition.³⁶⁵ “How slight was the regard at times paid to these papal orders is evidenced by the signature of Joseph Parius [?] dated 1604 at this very town of Carpi.”³⁶⁶

In the Library the copy C.G.22 (n. 18, already mentioned) bears the signature of Yosef Parius dating 1603, even closer to the decree’s date.³⁶⁷

Luigi da Bologna was a convert from Judaism who joined the Dominican Order and was involved in the censorship of Hebrew books in Mantua (1596-97), Cremona,

³⁶³ Popper, *Censorship*, 62.

³⁶⁴ Federica Francesconi, *Modena*, 147.

³⁶⁵ Popper, *Censorship*, 99.

³⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁶⁷ On the same copy the formula used by Parius is copied again with the date of 1613, but it was probably added later by someone who just copied it.

Casale Monferrato, Ancona, Modena and Reggio Emilia (1602).³⁶⁸

In spite of the criticism against his work at the Mantua commission, he resumed his activity as a censor in 1606.

His name appears on thirteen books in the Library.

In 1607 a new active censor joined the team: Giovanni Domenico Carretto, who expurgated twenty books of the Library collection.

In 1608-09 Pietro Ferdinando was active in Mantua (he does not appear in the “Renato Maestro” collection) and Giovanni Domenico Vistorini expurgated once more many volumes that had been censored by Fra Hippolitus of Ferrara (C.M2.27, n. 52; C.G2.01, n. 123; C.M2.20, n. 700), Laurentius Franguellus (C.M2.27, n. 52; C.G2.01, n. 123) and Domenico Hierosolimitano (C.M2.36, n. 523).

Giovanni Domenico Carretto was active as censor in Venice starting 1607 then, in 1618, he moved to Mantua where he was appointed censor for one year by the general inquisitor.³⁶⁹

In the library twenty copies bear his name in a period that goes from 1608 to 1618, the year he left for Mantua.

From 1613 another well known censor was fulfilling the task under the direction of the inquisitor Michelangelo Leri: **Camillo Jaghel da Correggio** (1554–ca. 1624).

Camillo converted to Christianity together with his son Ciro around the year 1600, leaving his wife and his other sons who did not join them in the new faith. He “was a physician, an ardent reader of classical Latin and Greek literature, medieval Jewish commentaries, and Italian poetry and literature. He was also one of the most celebrated censors of Hebrew books in Italy. [...] His intellectual and social status

³⁶⁸ Popper, *Censorship*, 145; Mauro Perani, “Il manoscritto ebraico come fonte per la storia sociale degli ebrei”, *Materia Giudaica*, 11. 1-2 (2004): 94. [From now on: *Il manoscritto ebraico*].

³⁶⁹ Richard Gottheil, etc., “Censorship of Hebrew Books” (*Op. cit.*), 649.

played a role both in his conversion and in his “second life”.³⁷⁰

His first task was to check the work done by Luigi da Bologna and to correct its deficiencies but – as already remarked by Popper³⁷¹ - he barely made any intervention in the books that he revised.

In the first decade of the 17th century Camillo and Ciro operated in Modena, Reggio Emilia and Lugo.³⁷² His name occasionally appears connected to the year 1617, and then again to the period 1619-21 in Ancona.

“Despite his indefatigable activity as a corrector and censor of Hebrew books, he ended up before the tribunal of the Inquisition twice, in 1614 and 1620, asked to present his own list of books.”³⁷³

In the 1620s three censors handled the books in the “Renato Maestro” Library: Isaia da Roma, Petrus de Trevio and Renato da Modena. Vincentius Mattelica, who was also active in these years, does not appear in any copy. The single occurrence of Giovanni Domenico Carretto’s signature dated 1628 (C.G2.05, n. 713) is probably a misreading for 1618.³⁷⁴

According to Popper (pp.143-145), in 1623 Isaia da Roma was active in Mantua, while Petrus de Trevio operated in Rome.

Renato da Modena (d. 1628 in Reggio Emilia), was also a convert from Judaism, he was a Capuchin friar and an active censor.³⁷⁵ He was designated to make the third general revision of Hebrew books in Mantua in 1626. His revision, however, was not the final one, as later other censors were appointed to check the same books again.

³⁷⁰ Federica Francesconi, *Modena*, 145-146.

³⁷¹ Popper, *Censorship*, 101-102.

³⁷² Mauro Perani, *Il manoscritto ebraico*, 93-94.

³⁷³ Federica Francesconi, “Dangerous Readings in Early Modern Modena: Negotiating Jewish Culture in an Italian Key”, in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, edited by J. R. Hacker and A. Shear (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 147.

³⁷⁴ Popper (*Censorship*, 142) informs us that Carretto usually wrote the number 1 in a way that looked like a number 2, therefore several scholars have misread his annotations.

³⁷⁵ Girolamo Tiraboschi, *Biblioteca Modenese: o notizie della vota e delle opere degli scrittori natii degli Stati del Serenissimo Signor Duca di Modena*, vol. 3 (Modena: Società Tipografica, 1733), 222-223.

The signature of Girolamo da Durazzano (not Durallano)³⁷⁶ was added after the major part of da Modena's signatures in 1640-41, as it is confirmed by the copies: C.M2.19, n. 9; C.G2.22, 18; C.G.06, n. 21; C.G.11, n.467; C.G2.08, n. 689; C.M2.07, n.690.

The first one, C.M2.19 (n. 9, *Divre Šalom*, Venice, Giovanni Di Gara, 1586), bears the signatures of four different censors: [1] *Fra' Luigi da Bologna vide, marzo 1599*; [2] *Camillo Jaghel 1613*; [3] *Visto per me fra' Renati da Mod[en]a 1626*; [4] *Fra' Gir[olam]o da Durazzano 1641*.

Another book that has passed through (seven) hands is the halakhic code *Sefer Rav Alfas*, printed in Venice by Me'ir Parenzo and Alvise Bragadin in 1552 which we have already mentioned a couple of times (C.G.22, n. 18). All the main censors handled this book and left their footprints: [1] *Revisus x me Laurentium Franguellum 1575*; [2] *Revisto et corretto per mi fra Luigi da Bologna del ordine de san Domenico 1599*; [3] *Fra' Jos. Parius Offici Carpi Vic. s ... 1603*; [4] *Idem fra' Jo.s Parius ... officii Carpi Vic. s ... 1613*; [5] *Camillo Jaghel 1613*; [6] *Visto x mi fr. Renato da Mod[en]a 1626*; [7] *Fra' Gir. da Durazzano 1640*.

The coexistence of different signatures testifies that a censor's approbation was by no means considered an official permission granted by the Church. As we have already hinted, the books were often not expurgated properly, and in some cases the censors even signed the last page without censoring any passage. Therefore, the inquisitors often commissioned new controls and appointed new censors to revise the same texts again and again. Even the books that went through preventive censorship before their publication and had been granted an imprimatur were later expurgated by more meticulous revisers.

While at the end of the 16th century Jews willingly brought their books to the censors to have them expurgated, and consequently authorized, when it became clear that this process did not constitute a guarantee and that every few years the books had to

³⁷⁶ Perani, *Il manoscritto ebraico*, 94.

be expurgated again, they grew skeptical and annoyed by the frequent requests of the inquisitors.

When the order of a new expurgation arrived in Mantua, “deputies were appointed (Dec. 13, 1624) to do all in their power to keep the order from being extended to include this State.”³⁷⁷ The Jews of Modena tried to avoid a new expurgation too, but they did not succeed.

The last censor who operated in the 17th century was **Antonio Francisco Enriquez**, whose name is linked to the town of Urbino. His signatures on the Library books are dated 1685-1688. One is on *Sefer Berit menuḥah*, printed in Amsterdam in 1648 by Yehudah ben Mordekhay and Šemu’el bar Mošeh ha-Lewi (M.234, n. 37, expurgated in 1688); the others are on different volumes of a *Mišnah* printed in Leghorn in 1653-56 by Yedidyah ben Yišḥaq Gabbai (P.204.I/III/IV.A/VI, n. 718). These signatures are all dated 1685 and the censor always mentions that he was appointed by the Archbishop of Urbino. No other censors preceded or followed him in the expurgation of these copies.

A leading figure in the 18th century was **Giovanni Antonio Costanzi**, censor and Scriptor Hebraicus at the Vatican Library from 1765 until his death, in 1786.

He may have been the last Jewish convert who engaged in censorship. Costanzi was born in Constantinople, became a Rabbi and served in different Jewish communities in Bosnia and Dalmatia. He converted to Catholicism in 1731, was baptized in Würzburg, and later moved to Rome.³⁷⁸

Costanzi compiled a great number of the descriptions included in the first volume of the catalogue of 453 Hebrew manuscripts of the Vatican Library edited by Giuseppe Simonio Assemani in 1756. Costanzi also authored three indexes of Hebrew books

³⁷⁷ Popper, *Censorship*, 103.

³⁷⁸ Ariel Toaff, “Giovanni Antonio Costanzi, ultimo censore di libri ebraici a Roma (1745-1756 Ca.)”, *RMI*, 67. 1/2 (2001): 203-214. Online at: <http://jstor.org/stable/41263553.giovanni>.

classifying them as: permitted, permitted after expurgation, and forbidden. "He went further than any other previous censor in his condemnation, and forbade works which contained merely the names of angels other than such mentioned in the Bible."³⁷⁹

In the "Renato Maestro" collection Costanzi's name appears only once, on the second volume of a *Mahazor* according to the Italian rite printed at the Stamparia Vendramina in 1742 (M.003.II, n. 528).

Censors in the "Renato Maestro" Hebrew Book Collection

Alessandro Scipione: 5 (1597-1609, nn. 1, 19, 122, 357, 689)

Andrea Alberti: 1 (n. 22)

Andrea de Monte: 1 (n. 706)

Antonio Veruda (?): 1 (1761, n. 323)

Antonio Francisco Enriquez: 5 (1685-1688, nn. 37, 718)

Camillo Jaghel: 9 (1613-1629, nn. 9, 18, 19, 21, 96, 689, 690)

Caesar Belliosus: 1 (n. 689)

Domenico Hierosolimitano: 14 (1578-1601, nn. 19, 122, 287, 326, 356, 523, 688, 689, 690, 713, 714, 744)

Ferrante (?) Marini: 1 (n. 340)

Gio. Antonio Costanzi: 1 (n. 528)

Giovanni Domenico Carretto: 20 (1608-1618, nn. 1, 2, 26, 122, 287, 326, 340, 356, 357, 688, 689, 713, 744, 745, 763, 835, 885, 888, 891, 893)

Giovanni Domenico Vistorini: 6 (1609, nn. 15, 52, 123, 520, 523, 700)

Gio[vanni da] Montef[alcone] (Inq.r di Mod.): 2 (n. 689)

Girolamo da Durazzano: 9 (1640-1641, nn. 9, 18, 21, 467, 689, 690, 716)

Hippolitus Ferr[ariensis]: 5 (1601, nn. 55, 122, 123, 700)

Ioannes Carolus Kohlmann (preventive censorship): 1 (n. 879)

Isaia da Roma: 3 (1623, nn. 1, 2, 763)

Jac[obu]s Geraldini: 1 (1555, n. 689)

Jos. Parius (Carpì): 1 (1603-1613, n. 18)

³⁷⁹ Popper, *Censorship*, 121.

Karl Fischer (preventive censorship): 4 (nn. 178, 348, 409, 798)
Laurentius Franguellus: 5 (1575, nn. 18, 52, 122, 123)
Luigi da Bologna: 13 (1597-1601, nn. 1, 2, 9, 17, 689, 690, 862, 885, 888, 889, 891, 893)
Marco Marini da Brescia (preventive censorship): 1 (n. 843)
M. Krauss (preventive censorship): 1 (n. 931)
Petrus de Trevio : 1 (1628, n. 12)
Renato da Modena: 8 (1626, nn. 9, 18, 19, 21, 467, 689, 690)
Vittorio Eliano (preventive censorship): 1 (n. 891)

4.2 Owners - *Institutions*

The list of the provenances of the Hebrew books in the collection includes the names of many institutions, however only a few of them donated more than a couple of books to the Library.

Most of the institutions are Venetian, out of forty-eight only thirteen are foreigners. Actually, two books only were donated by the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, the others arrived from within the Jewish Community, namely from its administrative offices, its schools, its synagogues and from local Jewish associations.

4.2.1 *Community administration*

In this paragraph we will introduce the institutions linked to the Jewish Community of Venice that owned one or more books that are now part of the Hebrew collection.

The aim of this chapter is not only to introduce all the existing institutions but to cast light on those included in the list of the provenances of the books.

In particular, the institutions that appear in the index at the end of the Catalogue are:

Amministrazione Templi Israelitici Riuniti: 1 copy
Comunità Askenazita (Venice): 1 copy
Comunità di Venezia (*Qahal Qadoš*) rito sefardita: 1 copy
Comunità Israelitica di Venezia (stamp): 72 copies
Fraterna Generale Israelitica: 1 copy
Riuniti Sovvegni Spagnoli e Tedeschi in Venezia (stamp): 1 copy

The Jewish Community of Venice was identified by different names through the centuries: in ancient times, from the 16th to the 18th centuries, it was called “Università degli ebrei” and it gathered the representatives of the different Jewish *Nations*.

From the beginning of the 19th century to the eve of World War II (1806-1930) its official name was “Fraterna generale di culto e beneficenza degli Israeliti” of Venice.

This institution had a representative and administrative role and it included only the heads of the families and single Jews living in Venice who could afford to pay a monthly fee. It was responsible for the school management and for charity.³⁸⁰

In the years 1930-1989 the Community was imposed the name “Comunità Israelitica di Venezia” (with a law of the fascist government), and finally the law nr. 101 of March 8th 1989 uniformed the official name of the religious communities defining the Jewish ones as “Comunità Ebraiche”.³⁸¹

At the beginning of the 20th century many Jewish families were living outside the Ghetto area, where poor families were concentrated. The Ghetto was commonly called “zo” (down) while the rest of the city was called “so” (up) meaning that the area was more culturally elevated. The inhabitants were, accordingly, distinguished in “ebrei del so” and “ebrei del zo”, upper-class and lower-class Jews.

³⁸⁰ Levis Sullam, *Una comunità immaginata*, 71-72.

³⁸¹ S. Sohn, *Renato Maestro*, 193. On the history of the Jewish Community of Venice in the 19th-20th centuries and its institutions see: G. Luzzatto Voghera, “Gli ebrei”, in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. I, *L'Ottocento e il Novecento*, edited by M. Isnenghi and S. J. Woolf, (Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2002), 619-648 [From now on: *Gli ebrei*]; Levis Sullam, *Una comunità immaginata*.

The Ghetto remained the cultural and religious center of the Jewish life, where all the Jews gathered for Shabbats and other rituals, and where there were all facilities for the Jewish everyday life (the *mikweh*, kosher food, etc.).

There was a kindergarten, a Jewish school, associations of mutual assistance and a rest home for the elderly.

The associations of mutual assistance were called “*sovvegni*” and up to 1944 there were two parallel associations: one for the so-called Spanish Nation and the other for the German Nation. They both provided medical and financial assistance and took care of the funeral services for their members.

In 1944 the two “*sovvegni*” fused together constituting the *Sovvegni riuniti spagnolo e tedesco di Venezia*. Its role sometimes coincided with that of another association, the *Fraterna di misericordia e pietà* that, just like the *Sovvegni Riuniti*, was subordinated to the supervision of the *Fraterna Generale* (later: *Comunità Israelitica*).³⁸²

4.2.2 Synagogues

The five Venetian Synagogues are traditionally called “*Schole*” or “*Scuole*” (schools), they are: *Scuola Grande Tedesca* (1528-29), *Scuola Canton* (1531-32), *Scuola Italiana* (1575), *Scuola Levantina* (16th-17th centuries), and *Scuola Spagnola* (or *Scuola Ponentina*, 16th-17th centuries) which is the biggest of all.

The *Scuola Canton* was also called “*Schola dei Fano*” for the outstanding role of different member of this Venetian family in this Synagogue.³⁸³

Until the beginning of the 20th century they were distinguished by the practice of the

³⁸² G. Luzzatto Voghera, *Gli ebrei*, 629.

³⁸³ Levis Sullam, *Una Comunità Immaginata*, 204.

three different rites, Ashkenazi, Sephardic and Italian. Each Synagogue was administrated by a Committee (*Capitolo*) of brethren who were independent from the Fraterna Generale. The brethren, who paid an annual association fee, were granted a fixed seat in the Synagogue and could be called to public reading, to take the scrolls from the Holy Ark, etc.. The Chief Rabbi and the vice Rabbi officiated in the Scuola Spagnola, the main Synagogue.³⁸⁴

Today the Venetian community gathers only in one Synagogue for its rites and prayers: in the Scuola Spagnola during the warm season and in the Scuola Levantina during the cold season. This habit has begun as early as the middle of 1930s, when the attendance to public prayers started decreasing and members of the outstanding, wealthy Jewish families came to the Ghetto to attend the main celebrations only.³⁸⁵

For a certain time, from middle 19th to middle 20th century, the Synagogues were called “Temples” according to the custom of that age. Therefore, books arriving from a Synagogue may bear different forms of its name. For instance, in three copies, the Scuola Italiana is mentioned as “Tempio Israelitico Italiano”; the Spanish Synagogue, in turn, changed its name three times: Scola Spagnola, Tempio Spagnuolo di Venezia and Tempio Spagnolo di Venezia. The Scuola Grande Tedesca is sometimes called just “Scuola Grande”.

No books bear the name of the three disappeared synagogues, Scuola Luzzatto, Scuola Coanim and Scuola Meshullamim, founded by private families of Ashkenazi origin.³⁸⁶

Scuola Spagnola: 2 copies
Tempio Spagnuolo di Venezia: 5 copies
Tempio Spagnolo di Venezia: 3 copies

Scuola Canton: 5 copies

³⁸⁴ Levis Sullam, *Una Comunità Immaginata*, 121-122.

³⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, 123.

³⁸⁶ For further information on the synagogues see: Ottolenghi, *Centenario Scuola Canton*, 7-22; Salvadori, *Gesù e dintorni*, 161-195; Roth, *Gli ebrei in Venezia*, 160-164.

Scuola Grande: 3 copies
Tempio Tedesco (Venezia): 1 copy

Scuola Italiana (*ex libris*): 8 copies
Tempio Israelitico Italiano: 3 copies

Scuola Levantina: 1 copy
Tempio Levantino: 2 copies
Presidenza del Tempio Israelitico Levantino (Venezia): 2 copies

Scuola Nuova (stamp): 1 copy
Templi Israelitici Riuniti - Venezia (stamp): 2 copies
Templi Riuniti: 1 copy

4.2.3 Schools

Several Jewish schools are mentioned in the books proving their provenance from the collections of smaller libraries. Here is a list of the schools footprints, followed by a description.

Biblioteca delle Scuole Israelitiche di Venezia: 3 copies
Scuola Elementare Israelitica di Venezia (stamp): 3 copies
Scuola Israelitica (non identificata): 1 copy
Scuola Israelitica di Religiosa Istruzione (stamp): 38 copies
Scuole Israelitiche di Religiosa e Morale Istruzione: 1 copy
Talmud Torah di Padova: 2 copies
Talmud Torah di Venezia (stamp): 21 copies (one has “direzione del Talmud Torah di Venezia”)

The Talmud Torah of Venice and the Religious School (Scuola Israelitica di Religiosa Istruzione) are the ones that appear more frequently.

Even though the stamps or the handwritten notes of the Talmud Torah appear on twenty-one copies, the books arriving from this library are many more. In fact,

looking at the sources that we have analyzed on the third chapter it emerges that the very core of the “Renato Maestro” Hebrew collection comes from the library of the Talmud Torah.

Unfortunately, besides these old inventories we have no direct record on the organization of this religious school and of its students.

Secular as well as religious studies were usually reserved to the offspring of wealthy families and held at home hiring private teachers, usually men of high culture. The educational curriculum included not only Hebrew language and literature but also Italian and sometimes Latin, philosophy, music and dance. Even these subjects were taught by Rabbis (for instance, there are proofs of dance classes held by Leon Modena).

During the 19th century many private families organized classes for their children. As reported by Gadi Luzzatto Vogherain; in Venice, in 1829 there were twenty-four private schools.³⁸⁷

Besides private education, every *Nation* had its own schools that accepted all Jewish students, males and females. The Ghetto people were usually more educated than their non-Jewish neighbors, because instruction was considered a main pillar in Jewish upbringing.

The Jewish public schools were not exclusively religious as they also included secular subjects, especially Italian language and literature.

It was not rare for grown-ups to continue their studies, and usually members of the different *Nations* gathered in the Synagogues around well educated Rabbis who gave lectures on the main Jewish texts, explaining them to the audience. Private lessons

³⁸⁷ *Cenni sulla presenza ebraica a Venezia durante la dominazione austriaca* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1999), 200; Levis Sullam, *Una Comunità Immaginata*, 103.

were held in the houses of wealthy Jews as well, who hosted them for the benefit of many students.³⁸⁸

The primary education was guaranteed to almost everyone (at the Talmud Torah or with private teachers), while the secondary level– called *hesger* – was reserved to the most talented students who had a greater interest in pursuing their studies. It included both religious and secular subjects, with a predominance of the former.

At the beginning of the 19th century the Venetian Jewish schools were called “Scuole Israelitiche d’Istruzione”. Their organization was reported by Maddalena del Bianco:

“L’insegnamento era diviso tra una «cattedra inferiore», una «cattedra media» ed una «cattedra superiore», i maestri erano all’epoca rispettivamente Felice Prignati, Moisè Padovani ed Emmanuel Roches. [...] Lo studio di Grammatica, Letteratura ed Aritmetica venne a periodi sospeso per «deficienza di mezzi»; fuori dall’Istituto vi era pure un’altra scuola dove una maestra istruiva per tutto il giorno i «teneri fanciulli» sinché fossero in grado di leggere le orazioni in ebraico e di «volgarizzarle».”³⁸⁹

In 1821, the old school called Talmud Torah was replaced by a new one, called *Midraš re’šit da’at* for students aged 4 to 12 it intended replacing the secular public schools.

In 1822 another school was founded for the poor families’ girls who would later go to the service of wealthy Jewish families.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ Roth, *Gli ebrei in Venezia*, 177-179.

³⁸⁹ Maddalena del Bianco, “Aspetti della modernità: L’impegno del rabbinato italiano dell’Ottocento nell’istruzione e nell’educazione”, *Materia Giudaica*, XV-XVI (2010-2011), 134, n. 27. Translation: “Teaching was divided in «elementary classes», «middle classes» and «high school classes». The teachers at that time were respectively Felice Prignati, Moisè Padovani and Emmanuel Roches. [...] The study of Grammar, Literature and Arithmetic was at times suspended for «lacking of means». Besides the institute there was also another school, where a teacher taught all day long to «tender pupils» until they were able to read and translate Hebrew prayers”.

³⁹⁰ Luzzatto Voghera, *Gli ebrei*, 645.

The “Renato Maestro” Archive includes the archives of these schools and enables us to trace their development identifying the different names that they had across the time.

In 1818-30 schools were called - as we have anticipated - *Scuole Israelitiche d'Istruzione*. Later, the definition became more specific, and the “education” proposed was defined as “religious and moral” (*Scuole Israelitiche di Religiosa e Morale Istruzione*).

In the Library this full name appears only on a single copy in handwritten form (n. 536, **P.073.I-II.B**), while thirty-eight copies – including that one – are marked with the stamp of the *Scuole Israelitiche di Religiosa Istruzione*. This specific name never appears in the archive papers. Probably both names referred to the same institution, but the short form was preferred for the official stamp.

In 1950 a well-known private school for boys was founded by Mosè Ravà: it was the Collegio Ravà, where some of the most illustrious members of the local Jewish Community were educated. It included a primary school and a middle school and was provided with dorms. It was even considered among the most successful institutions in Italy and was attended by Jews and non-Jews alike.³⁹¹

At the beginning of the 20th century, the number of Jewish schools was significantly reduced. There were: a kindergarten for boys called “Giardino d’infanzia” (1876-1919) or “Giardinetto” (1921-24), and a separate school for girls, “Scuola fanciulle” (1821-1920) that lasted up to the 3rd grade. The masculine primary school appears as *Scuola Religioso-Morale Maschile* in the years 1873-1934, then in 1938 the Italian Racial

³⁹¹ Levis Sullam, *Una Comunità immaginata*, 105; Antonio Mikelli and Pietro Veronese (editors), *Atti dell’ottavo Congresso pedagogico italiano e della quarta Esposizione didattica: Venezia settembre 1872* (Venezia: Tip. Antonelli, printed 1873), 573: the Collegio Ravà is mentioned in the 6th position of the Italian schools that won a symbolic “silver medal”.

An institution for Jewish girls had been founded and directed by Sara Salom Jona (1829-1926), but it closed in 1898. These two schools, however, are not mentioned in any of the books in the “Renato Maestro” Library. See: Levis Sullam, *Una Comunità immaginata*, 105 n. 12.

Laws were promulgated provoking enormous social changes that affected the school system.³⁹²

In the pre-war period, the Chief Rabbi Adolfo Ottolenghi often lamented the small number of enrolled pupils and the fact that those who attended the classes were even less. We have proofs of his yearly reports on the Jewish school, that provide much information on the *Talmud Torah*.³⁹³

The *Talmud Torah* was intended as a school of religious education held in the afternoon and attended by students of the 1st-3rd grade, who were, at the same time, enrolled in public schools. They mainly belonged to the low and middle class, while the kids of upper class families attended the classes organized by the ADEI on Tuesday afternoon and the Rabbi's lessons on Sundays.³⁹⁴

In 1938-39, due to the expulsion of all the Jewish students from public schools, the Jewish Communities urged to organize private schools for their children. In Venice, as in other cities, the classes were soon formed and Jewish teachers who had been suddenly fired by the government were hired to continue the school programs in the new Jewish classes.

Therefore, starting from 1938 the primary school located in Cannaregio 1189, that constituted a "separate branch" of the public school "San Girolamo Emiliani", was enlarged. It was followed, in 1939, by a totally new middle school, located in the offices at Ponte Storto 4756 (SS. Filippo e Giacomo).

³⁹² See: Eurigio Tonetti, *Inventario dell'Archivio della Comunità israelitica di Venezia* (Venezia: Comune di Venezia: Comunità israelitica di Venezia: Regione Veneto Soprintendenza Archivistica per il Veneto, 1983). A detailed account on the Jewish schools of Venice has been provided by S. Levis Sullam in *Una comunità immaginata*, 103-121.

³⁹³ Adolfo Ottolenghi, *La scuola ebraica di Venezia attraverso la voce del suo Rabbino (1912-1944)*, edited by Elisabetta Ottolenghi (Venezia: Filippi, 2012).

³⁹⁴ Simon Levis Sullam, "Gli ebrei a Venezia nella prima metà del Novecento", in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. III, *L'Ottocento e il Novecento*, edited by Mario Isnenghi and Stuart J. Woolf (Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2002), 1670. [From now on: *Gli ebrei a Venezia*].

Thanks to the contribution of publishing houses, teachers and other donors, this school was equipped with a library with 370 volumes.³⁹⁵ This library doesn't seem to have any connection with the present Hebrew collection, as it must have included didactical books for the secular studies program.

According to the archival documentation, both schools were closed sometime between the years 1943-51. The fascists arrested more than a hundred Venetian Jews, including children, on the night of December 5th, 1943.

Rabbi Adolfo Ottolenghi, in a letter to Amelia Fano dated February 2nd, 1944, described what remained of the school: it was attended by twenty-one children, all sons of mixed marriages. The only teacher was Miss Rina, the classes were held at the Rest House where kosher food was served to the pupils. This new arrangement lasted only a few months as by October 1944 all the Jews that could be found in Venice, including those recovered in the Rest House and in different hospitals (Rabbi Ottolenghi was among them) were deported.

When the war was over and the survivors and the hidden Jews could return to their houses, the primary school could open again: it was June 1st, 1945 (it existed until 1962). The kindergarten opened a few days later, while the middle school at the Ponte Storto never resumed its activity.³⁹⁶

4.2.4 Associations

Several Venetian associations left a footprint on the pages of the books at the "Renato Maestro" Library and Archive. However, while their stamps appear frequently in

³⁹⁵ Callegari, Carla, *Identità, cultura e formazione nella Scuola ebraica di Venezia e di Padova negli anni delle leggi razziali* (Padova: CLEUP, 2002), 220. [From now on: *Scuola ebraica*].

³⁹⁶ Laura Voghera Luzzatto - Maria Teresa Segà (ed.), *Ritorno a scuola: l'educazione dei bambini e dei ragazzi ebrei a Venezia tra leggi razziali e dopoguerra* (Portogruaro: Nuova dimensione, 2012), 17-19. On the Jewish schools of Venice see also: Salvadori, *Gesù e dintorni*, 134-160.

the modern book collection, it is not so common in the old ones which we are interested in.

ADEI (Venezia): 1 copy

ADEI Wizo di Mestre: 1 copy

Biqqur ḥolim (stamp): 1 copy

Cuore e Concordia, Circolo: 1 copy

Cuore e Concordia, gruppo giovanile ebraico di Venezia: 1 copy

Šemeš šedaqah (Burial brotherhood): 1 copy

Società del Casino Buoni Amici: 4 copies

One of the most renowned and active associations in the Jewish cultural life is the Italian Jewish Women Association (Associazione Donne Ebreo d'Italia – ADEI) founded in Milan in 1927. The Venetian branch was founded on the following year by Amelia Fano (1875-1964) and, according to the idea of the national movement, its activity was both local and international.

It organized cultural and educational activities for women and children and helped the poor Jewish families of Venice while, at the same time, it had a philanthropic character expressed in its support to the Jewish Communities of Palestine and Libya.

The ADEI was responsible, at the same time, for the local kindergarten and for the primary school. Its activity was interrupted during the war in the years 1943-45 and was resumed immediately afterwards providing assistance to the refugees.

The ADEI is still active in Venice, and from 1950s it is linked to its international counterpart, the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO). In Venice, this tie between the two organizations remained hidden for a long time not to attract the attention of the Italian government in order to facilitate the participation of the members who did not join the Zionist ideal.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁷ VVAA, *L'ADEI dalla nascita ai giorni nostri* (Milano: Associazione donne ebreo d'Italia, 1971), 22-23.

In the Hebrew collection of the “Renato Maestro” Library there is only a single book bearing the ADEI stamp (a prayer book published in Leghorn in 1932, n. 969), while another one bears the stamp of the section located in Mestre (a *Pentateuch* issued in Vienna in 1872, n. 196).

The association **Cuore e Concordia** of Venice was founded in 1891 when former small associations fused together. Its scope was to assist the poor Jewish families in case of illness or hospitalization and to organize for them the *Seder* of Pesach and the Purim celebrations. The first president of the association was cav. Mario Ancona for thirty years (1907-1937) later was presided by Abramo Cesana (Bino, 1872-1937), an antique dealer.³⁹⁸

At a certain point this association assumed the character of representative of the lower class, in contrast with the *Fraterna Israelitica* to which only wealthy Jews belonged. In 1934 a new section was created to gather young members who organized various activities and attended the Rabbi’s lessons.³⁹⁹

The association dissolved in 1945 when it was replaced by a different circle that inherited its name but not its functions, dealing with cultural activities and leisure.

In the library just one book bears the direct footprint of this circle, it is a Sephardic prayer book published in 1933. The second footprint is “indirect”: it is the membership card of Rav Raffaele Grassini found inside an 18th century copy of a *Šulḥan `arukh* edition (n. 294, Amsterdam, 1777).

A peculiar case is that of a copy of the Bible (Venice, Foa-Bragadin, 1766) provided with the *ex libris* of the *Šemeš šedaqah* burial brotherhood.

The four copies bearing the *ex libris* of the association “Società del Casino Buoni Amici” represent an interesting case. All of them are copies of the same edition of a prayer book and they arrived from the same library (*Tiqqun lel Šavu`ot we-lel Hoša`ana*

³⁹⁸ Levis Sullam, *Una Comunità Immaginata*, 136.

³⁹⁹ Levis Sullam, *Gli ebrei a Venezia*, 1672.

Rabbah, Wien, Schmid, 1831).

It seems that in Venice there was no place bearing this name, while all the researches ended in a Masonic circle located in Brescia. The only place in Venice named “casino” and linked to the ideas of Jacobinism was the “Casino al Canaletto”, held by Giovanni Andrea Spada.⁴⁰⁰

We couldn't find any documentary evidence concerning the two associations *Biqqur ḥolim* and *Šemeš šedaqah*. The first one was devoted to the assistance of the sick and the two stamps found are dated 1904 and 1909 (*Mišnayot seder Zera'im*, Vienna, Holzinger, 1820, n. 737), the second one was a burial brotherhood active in the 18th century (*Arba'ah we-ešrim*, voll. 1-2, Venice, Foa at the Stamparie Bragadina e Vendramina, 1766, n. 81).

4.2.5 Non-Venetian Institutions

Among the non-Venetian organization that appear on the books of the “Renato Maestro” Library there are a few Italian institutions like the Collegio Rabbिनico Italiano (Italian Rabbinical Seminary), the Jewish Communities of Rome and Abbazia (Opatija) and several International associations that were active in Italy.

Since the copies concerned are not numerous we can investigate on the single provenances.

Aliyyat ha-no'ar (עליית הנוער): 1 copy (n. 1014)

Alliance Israélite Universelle: 5 copies (nn. 739, 929)

Collegio Rabbिनico Italiano (stamp): 1 copy (n. 686)

⁴⁰⁰ Ivana Pederzani, *I Dandolo: dall'Italia dei lumi al Risorgimento* (Milano: Angeli, 2014), 60; Nadia Maria Filippini, *Donne sulla scena pubblica: società e politica in Veneto tra Sette e Ottocento* (Milano: Angeli, 2006), 85.

Comité zur Errichtung - einer Israel. Cultusgemeinde - in Abbazia: 1 copy (n. 986)
 Comunità Israelitica di Abbazia: 1 copy (n. 1001)
 Congregazione Municipale della Regia Città di Pavia: 1 copy (n. 292)
 Dipartimento Affari Giovanili dell'Organizzazione Sionista (ההסתדרות הציונית המחלקה (לעיני הנוער): 1 copy (n. 1040)
 Fondo Nazionale Ebraico (postal stamp): 1 copy (n. 1041)
 Israelitische Gemeinde Mannheim (stamp): 1 copy (n. 947)
 Joint Distribution Committee: 1 copy (donation, n. 505)
 U.J.E.C.O. (The United Jewish Educational and Cultural Organization - Europe): 1 copy (n. 1043)
 Università Israelitica di Roma (stamp): 1 copy (n. 1046)
 Univer. Stud. Judaic. Lilburn: 1 copy (n. 892)

The copy arriving from the Italian Rabbinical Seminary contains Maimonides' code *Madda', Ahavah, Zemanim* (Mantua, Eli'ezer Šelomoh d'Italia, 1779, n. 686). It has another owner's footprint: Avraham Ze'ev ben Ref'el Yišhaq Porliṭš (Hebrew) alias Abramo Porlitz (Split). The stamp of the Collegio Rabbinico Italiano is on the frontispiece of the book. It seems unlikely that the Collegio Rabbinico had donated this book to the Venetian library, first, because it is rare for a Jewish library to get rid of an early volume, second, because the Library already owned several copies of that book, and third, there is no document attesting the donation (but, of course, it could have been lost).

There were many international associations providing assistance in Italy to Jewish survivors and refugees after World War II.

The first Jewish humanitarian association was the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC, also called "Joint"), founded in 1914 to assist Jews in need, mainly in Eastern Europe and in Palestine. It had a crucial role after the Holocaust, when all its resources were destined to the survivors.

The stamp of the *Joint* was found on a *Maḥazor* for *Rosh ha-Shanah* and *Yom Kippur* according to the Polish rite (Żytomyr, Shapira, 1848, n. 505).

Different associations sometimes cooperated at the same tasks, and many of them took care of the children and youngsters education. They financed the foundation of schools and dorms, paid the rental of the buildings and the salaries to the teachers, and provided the necessary equipment. Books were part of the material that the associations were sending to the schools promptly founded after the war and needed everything. They usually sent educational books imported from abroad, some of them were printed by the associations themselves or with their contribution.

The Department of Education and Culture in the Diaspora of the World Zionist Organization (WZO), for instance, published many educational books, as it was its main purpose. In the Library there are a few editions of Hebrew grammars for children published by this Department (nn. 1047, 1048, 1051).

Hebrew grammars for adults were also published in big numbers and were reprinted several times. In the Library, for instance, there are two copies of a grammar entitled *Yesodot*: one was published by the *Massadah* press in Tel Aviv in 1945 and donated to the Library by the Youth Affairs Department of the WZO (n. 1040), the other was issued by the *Joint* two years later and arrived to Venice through the Jewish National Fund (JNF, Fondo Nazionale Ebraico, n. 1041).

The JNF, in turn, published other books, like the children tales written by Miryam Singer and published by request of the WZO Department of Education (*Kaf ha-sayyadim we-šelah*, Tel Aviv, Omonut, c. 1937, n. 1055).

These facts prove, once again, that different organizations had a common interest in printing and distributing this educational material.

This kind of books were usually authored and published in Palestine-Israel and sent to the different Jewish Communities all over the world to promote *Aliyyah*.

In this context, *Aliyyat ha-no`ar* was founded in Berlin in 1933 as an association whose aim was to rescue Jewish children from the Nazis, and it kept working after the fall

of the Nazi regime. It organized their immigration and their settlement in Palestine in *kibbutzim* and villages.

In the Library, its stamp was found on two copies of the same book of food blessings (*Birkat ha-mazon*, Florence, Israel, 1938, n. 1014) with Italian translation, according to the Ashkenazi rite.

The leftists were against the Zionist-inspired movements that promoted immigration to *Ereš Yiśra'el*, as they believed in a Jewish involvement in the fight against all fascist movements in Europe and their alliance to the progressive parties.

Someone tried to mediate and to smooth the differences between the two parts: an expression of this attempt is represented by the United Jewish Educational and Cultural Organization of Europe (U.J.E.C.O.). It was conceived in Paris in 1946 during a Conference on "Spiritual Reconstruction" and was officially founded on the following year in London with the main purpose of securing the future to European Judaism and its development.

"Soon afterwards, the organization introduced a wide-ranging series of educational materials that attempted to synthesize religious, Zionist, and "progressive" approaches to Jewish culture. [...] Despite the flurry of activity and its broad perspective, UJECO was hindered from the start by the not-so-hidden agenda of its founders. Strongly influenced by the views of the American Jewish Committee, a vocal opponent of Zionism and a long-standing rival of the JDC, UJECO sought to counter what it regarded as the "emigrationist" agenda of both the Jewish Agency and the Joint."⁴⁰¹

Therefore, it is not surprising if the UJECO obtained only a little financial aid and administrative support and was always facing management difficulties.

"The project collapsed later in 1948, after managing to distribute a few thousand

⁴⁰¹ Dalia Ofer, etc., *Holocaust Survivors: Resettlement, Memories, Identities* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 99.

textbooks and wall maps of Palestine to local schools.”⁴⁰²

The copy that somehow arrived to the “Renato Maestro” Library “with the best wishes of U.J.E.C.O.” is a reading book for children printed in Tel Aviv around 1945 (*Miqra’ot hadaššot*, by Levin Kipnis and Salomon Zalman Ariel, n. 1043).

Another humanitarian association was the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, founded in Paris in 1860 to promote human rights and to defend Jews from foreign attacks. Its foundation was solicited after two main scandals took place: the Damascus affaire (1840) and the Mortara case (1858). Later it became an institution that promoted education, welfare and culture.⁴⁰³

Its stamps appear on five volumes of a pocket edition of the *Mišnah* translated into Italian by Vittorio Castiglioni (Trieste-Krakow, Fischer, 1893-1903, n. 739).

Other footprints are linked to public institutions like Jewish Communities or even the Congregazione Municipale della Regia Città di Pavia (Municipal Congregation of Pavia; in this case the footprint is on a note inserted in the book, n. 292 – P.261).

The stamp of the Jewish Community of Rome (Università Israelitica di Roma) is on a Hebrew grammar for children printed in Rome in 1918 (*Ša`ar ha-limmud* by Vittorio Castiglioni, n. 1046). It is hard to explain how this book arrived to the Library, whether it was donated or forgotten in Venice by a wandering reader.

Two books contain the footprints of the Jewish Community of Abbazia (today Opatija in Croatia). The local Jewish Community was not ancient, it was founded at the end the 19th century when the town was developing as a holiday location. The Community was officially recognized in 1922 but already in 1940 the Fascists occupied the town, expropriating the Jewish properties.

⁴⁰² *Ibidem*, 100.

⁴⁰³ On its history see: André Kaspi (etc.), *Histoire de l’Alliance Israélite Universelle de 1860 à nos jours* (Paris: Colin, 2010); André Chouraqui, *Cent ans d’histoire: l’Alliance Israélite Universelle et la renaissance juive contemporaine (1860-1960)* (Paris, 1965); Narcisse Leven, *Cinquante ans d’histoire: L’Alliance Israélite Universelle (1860-1910)* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1911).

When the war was over, Fiume and its surroundings (including Abbazia) were occupied by Tito and annexed to Yugoslavia and the Jews couldn't return to their homes.

Federico Falk (1919-2016), who traced back the history of the Jews in Fiume and Abbazia (including the history of his own family), found out that those Jews who tried to go back to Fiume to get their goods disappeared.⁴⁰⁴

The book bearing the stamps of the Jewish Community of Abbazia is a *Maḥazor* for *Yom Kippur* with German translation (Vienna, Schlesinger, 1913, n. 1001) that may have been left behind by one of the Jews who was temporarily evacuated and brought to Veneto in 1941.

The other book has an interesting stamp: "Comité zur Errichtung einer Israel[itische] Cultusgemeinde in Abbazia", Committee for the establishment of a Jewish Community in Abbazia. Even though I could find no proof concerning this Committee, it is possible that it was an association founded by members of the former Jewish Community of Abbazia who tried to return there and recreate their community.

This book is also an Ashkenazi *Maḥazor* with German translation (Vienna, Schlesinger, 1909, n. 986).

A third footprint is linked to the little town of Abbazia: "Lamm Salomone / Deposito Mobili / Abbazia". It is another prayer book *Sefer Qerovot hu Maḥazor* (Lviv, Balaban, 1887, n. 514) marked with the stamp of a furniture depot (in Italian).

Falk provided information on the Lamm family: Salomone was born in Stary Sambor in 1865 and he was married to Rosa Penner, who died in 1938. They had two

⁴⁰⁴ *Le comunità israelitiche di Fiume e Abbazia tra le due guerre mondiali: gli ebrei residenti nella provincia del Carnaro negli anni 1915-1945*, website edited by Federico Falk: <http://www.bh.org.il/jewish-spotlight/fiume/> http://www.bh.org.il/jewish-spotlight/fiume/?page_id=234. [From now on: *Fiume e Abbazia*]. See also: *Le comunità israelitiche di Fiume e Abbazia tra le due guerre: gli ebrei residenti nella provincia del Carnaro negli anni 1915-1945*, edited by Federico Falk (Rome, 2012).

daughters: Ida and Lea, the latter was deported to Auschwitz together with her father in 1944. Salomon was killed upon his arrival, while no further information is available concerning Lea.⁴⁰⁵

4.3 Owners – *Persons*

4.3.1 *Venetian Rabbis*

The contribution of the Rabbis on duty in Venice across the time is quite limited. Five copies are marked with the official stamp of the Chief Rabbi of Venice but the stamps are not associated with the Rabbi's name.

The first Rabbi whose footprint was found in the Hebrew collection is **Abramo Lattes**, who was in the office in Venice from 1839 to 1875. He was born in Savignano sul Rubicone (Emilia Romagna) and studied at the Rabbinical College in Padua where he graduated in 1834. Five years later he succeeded to his grandfather as the Chief Rabbi of Venice. He was on duty when Daniele Manin led for a short time the Republic of San Marco (March 22nd, 1848 - August, 22nd, 1849) and supported it sponsoring occasions in the Jewish community for raising funds.⁴⁰⁶

His name appears on two copies in one of them his students mentioned him as his teacher. These books were not donated by the Rabbi nor were in his possession. On the copy M2.112 (n. 5) someone wrote down a list of Lattes' students for the year 1861, and many people added their signatures on the volume, while the other volume, the copy M2.24.A (n. 358), was part of a school library and different students left their footprints on it.

⁴⁰⁵ Falk, *Fiume e Abbazia*: <http://www.bh.org.il/jewish-spotlight/fiume/>.

⁴⁰⁶ Adolfo Ottolenghi, "Abraham Lattes nei suoi rapporti colla Repubblica di Daniele Manin", *RMI*, Seconda Serie, 5, no. 1 (1930): 25-35.

The surname *Lattes* appears twice only, but we cannot determine if it refers to Rabbi Abramo.

His Vice Rabbi, **Leone Luzzatto** (Venice 1848 - Florence 1918) left his footprints in the Hebrew collection too. He was a teacher, and cooperated with the magazine *Il Vessillo Israelitico*.

Luzzatto's business card was found on a copy of the *Agiographs* published in Venice in 1618 by Pietro and Lorenzo Bragadin at Giovanni Calleoni's (n. 96, s.m. G.28.E4).

The books that unequivocally belonged to him are: a copy of Pinḥas Eliyyahu ben Me'ir Hurwitz's *Sefer ha-Berit* (Brno: Joseph Karl Neumann, 1797, n. 348, s.m. M2.193), *Seder ha-tiqqun le-lel Hoša'ana Rabba* (Venice: Gad ben Yiṣḥaq Foa: Nella Stamparia Bragadina, 1741, n. 627, s.m. M.403. Luzzatto's name appears also in the copy with s.m. M.411 together with other names), Yehi'el Melli's *Tappuḥe zahav* (Mantova: Refa'el Ḥayyim d'Italia, 1740, n. 702, s.m. P.230.B. Former owners: Grosin Vita Levi, *** Saraval) and *Hod Yosef* by Yosef ben Mošeh Arvatz (Jérusalem: [s.n.], 1910, n. 908, s.m. M.255.B. The book was donated by the author to Rav Luzzatto that is mentioned here with his Hebrew name "Yehudah").

Moisè Coen Porto (1834-1918) was the last of Samuel David Luzzatto's disciples at the Rabbinical College of Padua where he obtained the *Semikhah* in 1855. He assisted Rabbi Lattes since 1860 and then succeeded him as Chief Rabbi in Venice from 1876 until his death.

His name appears in four Hebrew books in the Library. Once he is mentioned as the addressee of the volume (copy MISC.LVII.24 , n. 701), twice it is Eugenio Calimani who identifies himself as a pupil of Rabbi Coen Porto in 1897 (copy C.M.08, n. 69; copy M.076.8, n. 726). In one copy there are several students lists, and the Rabbi's name appears twice, testifying that he certainly used that copy for his classes, but it doesn't necessary mean that it was his own copy (s. m. M2.20.I-II, n. 736).

In one case only, a note of Rabbi Raḥamim della Rosa informs us that he himself donated the book to Rabbi Coen Porto, thus revealing the actual provenance from his library (copy BOX.2.A.31, n. 674).

The “Coen Porto” surname was found on the back of a volume, but since the first name was not legible, it is not clear whether it refers to Rabbi Mosè or to a member of his family (copy M2.39, n. 882).

Rabbi **Adolfo Ottolenghi** was born in Livorno in 1885, but his family hailed from Piemonte. He graduated at the local Rabbinical College and he also attended the University of Pisa obtaining a degree in Law in 1911. The following year he started working as secretary of the *Fraterna Generale di culto e beneficenza* in Venice and, in 1919 he was appointed Chief Rabbi there. During his mandate he took care of the education of the children as well as that of the adults, and of the spiritual growth of his community, and published several articles and historical researches.

He also engaged in the management of the schools, the synagogues, the Rest House and the Jewish cemetery, trying to improve their efficiency. He kept this role until his death that occurred in Auschwitz in August 1944. Ottolenghi, aged and blind, even if he was aware of the danger, decided not to flee Venice after the Nazi occupation and remained at the Rest House in the Ghetto.⁴⁰⁷

The books belonging to him passed to his wife who survived the Shoah. Only some books were donated to the “Renato Maestro” Library, among them the Hebrew volumes bearing his name are seven: *Mesillat ha-limmud* (Vienna, Schmid - Busch, 1848, copy M.334.B, n. M.334.B), *Ḥamiššah Ḥumše Torah* (Vienna, Schmid, 1794, voll. 1, 3, 4, 5, copies P.019-I-V, n. 177), *Tefillat bene Šiyyon* (Vienna- Budapest, Schlesinger, [193-], copy M.293.1, n. 980), *Šiḥon* (Vilnius, Meronah, 1921, copy M2.188, n. 1037).

⁴⁰⁷ On Rabbi Adolfo Ottolenghi see: Umberto Fortis (ed.), *Adolfo Ottolenghi* (Venezia: Fondazione Querini Stampalia, 2003); Ottolenghi, Elisabetta (ed.), *La scuola ebraica di Venezia attraverso la voce del suo Rabbino (1912-1944)* (Venezia: Filippi editore, 2012); Levis Sullam, *Una comunità immaginata*, 72, 242-244; Callegari, *Scuola ebraica*, 221, n. 101.

However, seven other books belonged to members of his family, namely Emilio, Samuele David and Ya`aqov Mošeh Adolf.

Rabbi Elio Toaff, who was sent to Venice in the post-war period (1946–1951), didn't leave any book in the Library, nor did the Rabbis that followed him. The only recent Rabbi who unconsciously left a footprint is Raffaele Grassini (on duty until 1992) who left his membership card of the *Circolo Cuore e Concordia* inside a copy of the *Šulḥan `arukh* that belonged to the religious school (Amsterdam, Proops, 1777, copy M. 263, n. 294).

4.3.2 Don Roberto Diana

Some early Hebrew books were donated to the “Renato Maestro” Library by a Catholic priest, Don Roberto Diana (1927-1996). The books – five volumes – include a magnificent Polyglot Bible (London: Roycroft, 1653-1657, copies A.G.14.I-VI, n. 127) with the *ex libris* of Antonia Suardi Ponti and a New Testament in Hebrew (London: Macintosh, 1817, copy M.416, n. 277) that curiously bears the footprint of Cesare Vivante.

In the “Renato Maestro” archive we could find the document attesting the donation of the Polyglot Bible that took place on March 28th, 1996. From it we learn that the volumes were first acquired at the Galliera antique bookshop in Bologna on September 24th, 1991. They were then donated to the Library by Marinella Diana, the priest's sister, upon his testamentary disposition.

4.3.3 *Members of the Venetian Community*

Single members of the Jewish Community of Venice contributed to the Hebrew collection of this public library. In several cases, however, a single person donated part of his family library including books belonging once to other relatives. In these cases the copies bear the footprints of different members of a family, proving the passages from one generation to the other.

In the following paragraphs we will describe the single book donors first and the family collections that were donated to the Library afterwards. In most cases we do not know whether the books that can be linked to a certain family were donated all at the same time or they arrived at different times, in different ways.

However, this is not really relevant to our task, that is to trace back the provenances. Therefore, we decided to gather the provenances according to the family trees, providing information on the persons mentioned or that directly signed the books and on their family ties with one another.

One of the most recurrent footprints is that of **Giuseppe Bassi** di Girolamo, called "il maestro" ("the teacher", also: Yosef ben Šelomoh, 1864-1916), that was found on ten copies (six signatures and four stamps). Bassi was a teacher of Judaica at the Collegio Ravà⁴⁰⁸ in Venice from 1888, and cooperated with the monthly magazines on Jewish history and literature *Il Vessillo Israelitico* and *Il Corriere Israelitico*. He was also the vice Rabbi and *hazan* of the Levantine Synagogue and he also presided the "Fraterna Vespertina" (devotional association). We are further informed of his being a good-natured and helpful person.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁸ It was a private school that also included a student dormitory, founded in 1850 and directed by Moisè Ravà.

⁴⁰⁹ Salvadori, *Gesù e dintorni*, 24, 24n; Levis Sullam, *Una comunità immaginata*, 38, n. 32.

Other recurrent names are those of Giuseppe Aboaff and Ilia Clerle.

Giuseppe Aboaff sometimes signed as *Bepi*, called “il bello”.⁴¹⁰

Clerle, in turn, often signed as *Ilia Tondo Clerle* (Levi) and his name appear in eight copies in the years 1860-1882.

Giuseppe Franco, who was the *hazan* at the Scuola Canton, appears on a *Mahazor* of Ashkenazi rite (n. 515) that belonged to this Synagogue.⁴¹¹

4.3.4 Angelo Raffaele Sullam

Part of the “Renato Maestro” collection arrived from the private library of **Angelo Sullam** (15/05/1881-09/10/1971). Born and raised in Venice where he attended the Collegio Ravà, he graduated in law in Padua. In 1903 he founded the Venetian Zionist group, and five years later he organized the fourth Italian Zionist Congress in Venice. In the same period he started managing the family agricultural business (paddy fields)⁴¹² and became involved in politics working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a mediator among the Italian government and the Zionist representatives in Jerusalem.

From 1919 to 1929 he presided the *Fraterna Generale di Culto e Beneficienza degli Israeliti* (that is an old name for the Jewish Community) in Venice. From 1921 to 1964 he was elected President of the *Comitato italiano di assistenza agli emigranti ebrei*, founded to assist Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe passing through Italy on their way to their final destination (usually South America).

In the years of the persecution he sought refuge in Bari. After the war he dealt

⁴¹⁰ Salvadori informs us that his wife, Augusta Pighin, converted to Judaism in 1897 in order to “join the mothers of Israel” (*Gesua e dintorni*, 285).

⁴¹¹ Ottolenghi, *Centenario Scuola Canton*, 13.

⁴¹² See: Antonio Lazzarini, *Fra terra e acqua: l'azienda risicola di una famiglia veneziana nel delta del Po*, 2 vol. (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1990-95).

mainly with the management of the agricultural firm while teaching Economics and Reclamation acts at the University of Padua.⁴¹³

At the end of the 1970s his heirs divided his books according to their subject and distributed them to different libraries. The volumes and documents on law, politics and economy were donated to the Consiglio Regionale del Veneto, the historical books are now at the CDEC in Milan, the religious and Hebrew books, and the works of Jewish interest were donated to the Jewish Community of Venice. This last group of volumes seems to be the smallest one, and the Hebrew books, in particular, are only thirty-three. Among them twenty-eight are liturgical volumes (including several copies of the same works), four contain biblical texts and only one is a work on ethics (*Šimḥah la-iš* by Šimḥah Fano, Trieste, Marenigh, 1852, n. 306, BOX.2.A.3).⁴¹⁴

Angelo Sullam was married to **Enrichetta Artom** from Asti (called Henriette, 1892-1975). They had four kids: Costanza, Renzo, Vittorio and Giovanna (Giovannina Reinisch Sullam). The last two sons were born in Asti at their grandparents' house, where the Sullam family sought refuge during World War I.⁴¹⁵

4.3.5 Families

Artom

In the “Renato Maestro” Library and Archive the Artom surname appears several times, associated with the names of different members of this family whose origin is

⁴¹³ Giovanna Tedeschi and Pierluigi Ciprian (editors), *Fondo Angelo Sullam* (Venezia: Biblioteca del Consiglio Regionale del Veneto, 2011), 12, n. 3.

⁴¹⁴ The complete list of the Hebrew books that belonged to Angelo Sullam can be found in the catalogue *I libri del Ghetto*, p. 675.

⁴¹⁵ Interview to Giovanna Sullam about her family memories, http://www.memoro.org/it/La-mia-famiglia_2591.html (last visited on 28/11/2016).

in the town of Asti in Piemonte. Enrichetta (also: Henriette), Angelo's wife, seems to be the only one who moved to Venice, therefore, the books with footprints of her family probably belonged to her library.

When analyzing the family tree of the *Artoms* it was not easy to identify the actual owners of the volumes, as the same names return many times across the generations. However, following the generations backwards, starting from Enrichetta, it comes out that the footprints follow a direct line on her family tree. This fact may confirm that all the "Artom books" arrived to the Library through her and her husband.⁴¹⁶

Enrichetta, Angelo Sullam's wife, was Vittorio Emanuele Artom (1857-1948) and Gemma Regina Pugliese's daughter (1874-1896). Gemma died after giving birth to her third son, Eugenio (1896-1975). Her three children, Camillo, Eugenio and Enrichetta were raised by their grandmother Enrichetta Ottolenghi, the widow of Israele Artom (1824-1891).

Israele was the third son of Raffaele Beniamino Artom (1795-1859) and Benedetta Segre from Vercelli (1795-1872), and he had five brothers: Salvatore, Yosef Ḥayyim, Dolce, Alessandro (1827-90, single) and Isacco Jonathan (1829-1900, single), the well known assistant of Cavour.

Raffaele Beniamino, in turn, was Israele (also: Israelin or Lillin, 1758-1844) and Bella Segre's fourth son (1771-1823) and Avraham Refa'el Artom's grandson (b. 1749) who had a stepbrother called Mošeh Ḥayyim (1720-after 1795). The latter was the son of the first marriage of Israele Artom (1696-before 1767) with Giusta Speranza Sacerdote, while Avraham Refa'el was born by his second marriage with Ricca Sacerdote.

Another interesting footprint that links the Artom and the Sullam collections with each other is the stamp of the bookshop of the Foa brothers in Acqui (in Piemonte,

⁴¹⁶ The family tree and the information concerning the Artom family were found on: Elena Rossi Artom, *Gli Artom. Storia di una famiglia della Comunità ebraica di Asti attraverso le sue generazioni (XVI-XX secolo)* (Torino: Silvio Zamorani, 1997).

not far from Asti). This stamp is associated once with Angelo Sullam's *ex libris* (n. 164, copy M.304.IV.C), once with Israel Artom's signature (n. 164, copy M.304.III.C), and once with both (n. 412, copy M.204).

In one case there is no signature associated to the Foa stamp (n. 164, copy M.304.II.B) but, since other volumes of the same edition bear the same stamp together with the Artom or the Sullam footprint, it is likely that it has the same provenance.

Here is the list of the books that belonged to the Artom family according to their record number in the Catalogue:

Alessandro: *Šemot*, ante-1836 (vol. 2, n. 106).

Avraham Finzi ben Avraham Refa'el Artom: *Massekhet Berakhot* (Amsterdam: S. Proops' sons, 1746, n. 850 [!]).

Avraham Refa'el + Eli'ezer ben Mošeh Ḥayyim + Ya'aqov Carmi (?): *Qorban Aharon* (Venice: G. Di Gara, 1609-11, n. 835)

Avraham Refa'el: *Kol bo* (Venice: Marco Antonio Giustinian, 1547, n. 381).

- *Nevi'im Ri'šonim* (Livorno: Castello-Sahadun, 1780-82, , vol. 1, n. 217).

Emilio: *Seder Tefillat Yešarim* (Vienna: J. M. Belf, 1876, n. 408).⁴¹⁷

Enrichetta: *Šefer Tiaqqune Šabbat* (Leghorn: E. M. Ottolenghi, 1836, n. 620).

Israel: *Even ha-`ezer* (Venice: G. de' Cavalli, 1565, n. 886).

- *Ḥamiššah Ḥumše Torah* (Vienna: Schmid-Busch, 1840, vol. 3, n. 164 + Foa's bookshop in Acqui).

- *Maḥazor le-Ro's ha-Šanah we-Yom ha-Kippurim* (Vienna: J. Schlesinger, 1880, n. 498).

- *Melakhim, Yirmiyahu* ante-1836 (voll. 9, 11, n. 106).

- *Seder `Iyyun Tefillah* (Prague: M. I. Landau, 1841, n. 399).

- *Tefillah Zakkah* (Vienna: A. Schmid, 1816, n. 412) + Angelo Sullam's *ex-libris* + stampo f the Foa bookshop in Acqui.

- *Yehošua - Šoftim* ante-1836 (voll. 6-7, n. 106)

Israel + Vittorio: *Seder tefillat kol peh* (Prague: M. I. Landau, 5601, 1841, n. 409)

Mošeh Ḥayyim: *Maginne ereš* by Yosef Caro (Fürth: Isaac ben Yehuda Leib Buchbinder, 1766, n. 284) + *Giuseppe Salvadori Ottolenghi from Acqui* (signature).

⁴¹⁷ Emilio Artom has not been identified because this name may reasonably refer to different persons.

Calimani

Venetian Jews had various origins, as it is demonstrated by the existence of five Synagogues linked to the different *Nations*. The Calimani family was of German origin, the name derived from *Kalman* was the usual German transposition for the Greek name Kalonymos.⁴¹⁸

The most famous member of this family is Rabbi Śimḥah ben Avraham Calimani (1699-1784) who attended the Scuola Canton. He also authored a famous Hebrew grammar in Italian (printed in 1751) as well as many other literary works.⁴¹⁹ Unfortunately he didn't leave any footprints in the Hebrew collection of the "Renato Maestro" library.

The names appearing on the books are linked, for the major part, to the offspring of Marco Calimani, namely to his sons Leone, Giacomo and Girolamo.

Leone was married to Rosa (called Emilia) De Leon, and they had at least three children, Ida and Susanna who were deported to Auschwitz in 1944 and didn't come back, and Eugenio (1877-1933). Eugenio was known as the "Maestro" and was also the *ḥazan* of the Spanish Synagogue. He and his wife Estella Cesana had three sons: Emilio, Emilia and Angelo (1915-2012).

Giacomo, Leone's brother, married Enrichetta Polacco, and they had three children too: Moisè (1870-1944, Bruno and Ada's father), Giuseppe (b. 1884), and Rita Lea (1892-1944) who was married to Ettore Segre.

Felice Calimani, Annetta Fuà's husband and Davide and Allegra's father belonged to another branch of the family.

⁴¹⁸ Samuele Schaerf, *I cognomi degli ebrei d'Italia: con un'appendice su le famiglie nobili ebree d'Italia* (Firenze: Israel, 1925), 57. See also: Roth, *Gli ebrei in Venezia*, 192.

⁴¹⁹ Ottolenghi, *Centenario Scuola Canton*, 16.

Here is the list of the footprints of this family:

Angelo: *ʿOlat tamid* (Livorno: S. Belforte e socio, 1924, n. 965, copy P.134, *Salvadori Bianca*).

Bruno: *Compendium orationum = Seder Haggadah šel Pesah* (Verona: Typographia Libantea, 1828, n. 579, copy BOX.2.A.34, *Polacco A., Talmud Torah*; copy M.065.C, *Bruno Calimani*, 8 Aprile 1913).

Calimani: *Mišnayot* (Vienna: A. Schmid, 1815, n. 736, copy M2.20.I-II, list of names dated 1859: *Sacerdoti, Jona, Polacco, Fano, Luzzatto, Calimani...*, etc.).

David + Yaʿaqov: *Mišnayot* (Amsterdam: D. Tartas, 1685-1687, voll. 1-2, n. 720, copy M.079.2.III-IV, both appear on a 19th century list of names; copy M.079.2.V-VI.A, list of the pupils on the 23rd of November 1865: "*Calimani Giacomo di Marco classe Va Reale, [...] Calimani Davide di Felice classe Va Ginnasio,*" etc.).

Davide: *ʿEn Yiśraʿel* (Venice: Bragadin 1625, n. 358, copy M2.24.A, "*W Calimani Davide*", etc.)

- *Maddaʿ, Ahavah, Zemanim* (Livorno: Ottolenghi, 1848, n. 687, copy M2.31.C, "*Calimani Davide è un buon giovane*").

Emile + Yosef: *Tehillim* (Livorno: S. Belforte e socio, 1896, n. 264, copy P.027.B, *Emile (?) Calimani*, probably Emilio; *Yosef Calimani*, both appear on a 19th century list of names).

Emilio: *ʿOlat tamid* (Livorno: S. Belforte e socio, 1910, n. 963, copy P.139, etc.).

Eugenio: *Mišnayot* (Fürth: Ševi Hirsch ben Ḥayyim, 1741, n. 726, copy M.076.8, "*Calimani Eugenio 1897 studiò col Rabbino M. M.é Coen Porto*").

- *Peruš ha-Mišnayot* by Ovadyah of Bartenura (Venice: Parenzo – Querini, 1548-49, n. 69, copy C.M.08, "*Calimani Eugenio studiò in questo libro col Rabbino Moisè Coen Porto nell'anno 1897*").

Girolamo fu Marco + Joseph: *Šaʿar bat rabbim: Maḥazor ḥeleq riʿšon* (Venice: Bragadin-De' Paoli, 1711-15, n. 515, copy G.2.4, *Girolamo Calimani fu Marco*, etc.; copy G.24.D, "*Calimani Joseph Venezia 23 Agosto 1898*").

Giuseppe di Giacomo: *Ḥamiššah Ḥumše Torah* (Mantova : E. S. d'Italia, 1785, n. 153, copy M.025.I-II, "*Livres de pries pour l'enfant juif de Venise mai le pedron [sic!] il est le monsieur Calimani Joseph fils de Jacques et de Henriette Polacco né dans Venise le Mars dell'année 1884*", "*Otobre 23 1898*", etc.).

- *Maḥazor*, Ashkenazi rite (Vienna: A. Schmid, 1823, n. 480, copy M.092.I.A, *Giuseppe Calimani di Giacomo; Abram d'Italia 1° Agosto 1837*).

Leone: *Ḥamiššah Ḥumše Torah* (Vienna: A. Schmid, 1820, n. 179, copy P.017.E.III-V, the name appears in the list of the members of a *Minian*).

- *Sefer Tehillim = Liber Psalmorum* (London: 1862, n. 225, copy P.053, *Adriana e Paola Camerino*, July 1897; *Davide Usigli*).

Moisè Momolo di Fiandra: *ʿOlat tamid* (Livorno: I. Costa e socio, 1879, n. 448, copy P.129.A; "*Tempio Spagnuolo Venezia, Dono Graziano Ravà 1896*").

Moisè: *Maḥazor kol ha-šanah* (Venice: Y. H. Aškenazi - Stamparia Bragadina, 1756, n. 478,

M.004.II.A, “*lì 18 Luglio 1841 / Anzolo Paciarotto / Vita Bianchi / Moisè Calimani...*”, etc.).

- *Sefer Torat Eloqim = Moysis Pentateuchus* (London: Macintosh, 1835, n. 209, copy M.140.B, “*Venezia lì 25 70 *81 / Bassan...*” etc.).
- *Torah, Nevi'im u-Ketuvim* (Leipzig: Tauchnit, 1859-1860, n. 113, copy M.139.IV,).

Polacco

The information concerning the Polacco family was too lacking to trace its family tree, therefore it was impossible to determine whether the persons who left their footprints in the books are interrelated or not.

It is quite hard to identify **Abramo** Polacco, for instance, as many different persons had this name. In a few cases the marginalia contain biographical details that were helpful to make the right attribution. **Giacomo di Leone** (Ya`aqov ben Yehudah, 1883-1944) for example, identified himself as “Leopoldo’s brother”, specifying that his brother was blind, and died on August 5th, 1870. In this case it was easy to guess that Giacomo (whose notes appear on five copies) was Alba Polacco’s husband, who was killed in the Holocaust together with his children, Regina (1910-after 1944) and Mosè (1921-44). Giacomo and Leopoldo had at least two other brothers: **Moisè** (1875-1943) and **Abramo** (1870-1943) who could be the ones appearing on the marginalia list.⁴²⁰

The brothers Adele (d. 1916) and Anselmo (1853-1873), Giuseppe Polacco’s sons, are mentioned in two separate memorandums, where their death date is reported, but they were not the books owners (n. 470 and n. 515). According to the data deduced from the footprints, they may have had another brother called **Girolamo** (n. 235, copy M2.207). The latter was not the only one with this name, as in 1948, prior to his possible birth-date, another Girolamo Polacco wrote an annotation on copy G2.3 (n. 515). None of the copies in which these footprints were found (Bibles and prayer books) belonged to the Polacco family, but rather to public collections (sometimes

⁴²⁰ Camarda, *I libri del Ghetto*, 672.

Sinagogues footprints appear too), and many different persons are mentioned in their endpages and page margins.

The family ties among the *Polaccos* are not as useful to this research as those of other families because they do not constitute an evidence of provenance.

There are some exceptions: a few volumes were actually donated by two members of the Polacco family, one of them is Pellegrino Polacco who signed five copies belonging to him, that were donated to the Library by Ambra Dina in 1991.

The other donor was probably the most famous of them all: Rabbi **Bruno Pellegrino Polacco** (in Hebrew: Geršon ben Avraham Polacco. Cesenatico 1917 - Livorno 1967). Belonging to a Venetian family, Bruno Polacco graduated in 1939 at the Rabbinical College in Rome and, the same year, he authored a comedy in Judeo-Venetian dialect entitled "Quarant'anni fa" (*Forty Years Ago*). It was played by the amateur actors associated to the "Cuore e Concordia" club and it stressed the social and economic differences among the Jews of Venice.

Bruno Polacco served as *Hazan* and vice-Rabbi in Venice and, in 1953 he was appointed Rabbi in Ferrara, where he remained for ten years. In 1963, he was sent to Livorno, here, he spent the last years of his life.

List of the footprints of the Polacco family:

A.: *Compendium orationum = Seder Haggadah šel Pesah* (Veronae: Typ. Libantea, 1828, n. 579). Copy BOX.2.A.34: Polacco A. + Calimani Bruno.

Abramo: *Torah* (Lipsiae: Caroli Tauchnitii, 1859, n. 113). Copy M.151: Polacco Abramo + Dalla Torre Costante (1866), *Coen Sacerdoti* ***.

Adele di Giuseppe + Giacomo + Girolamo: *Maḥazor ḥeleq ri'šon [-šeni]* (Sulzbach: Aharon ben Uri Lippmann Fränkel, 1709, n. 470). Copy G.09.B: *Adele Polacco di Giuseppe* (d. 1916) + Gabri'el and Aharon Padovani, etc. Copy M2.162: *Giacomo Polacco, Girolamo Polacco* (viewers).

Alberto: *Maimonides, Moses. Madda', Ahavah, Zemanim* (Venice: Stamparia Bragadina, 1740, n. 685). Copy M2.53: *Polacco Alberto* (Padova) + *Errera Eugenio di Giovanni, Giacomo Errera, Foà Gedeone*.

Bepi: *Seder Haggadah šel Pesah* (Venice: Stamperia Bragadina, 1792, n. 578). Copy P.180: + *Cantoni Giacomo fu Giuseppe* (d. 1996).

Bruno + Girolamo: Maimonides, Moses. *Madda', Ahavah, Zemanim* (Livorno: Eli'ezer Menahem Ottolenghi, 1848, n. 687). Copy M2.31.C: *Polacco* (* 7/6/88) + *Calimani Davide*. Copy M2.31.E: *Polacco Bruno* (7-1-1828) M2.31.O: *Polacco Girolamo + Pontecorvo S.*

Bruno (see also: Geršon ben Avraham): *Bet Tefillah* (Livorno: Šelomoh Belforte and associate, 1871, n. 427). Copy M.282.D: *Bruno Polacco + Leone Morpurgo*.

Bruno: Kohen, Hananyah Elhanan Hay ben Yišhaq. *Hanokh la-na'ar* (Livorno: Eli'ezer Menahem Ottolenghi, 1842, n. 378). Copy P.146.A: *Bruno Polacco + Leone Curiel* (1862).

- *Torah Nevi'im u-Ketuvim* (London: Bible Society, 1866, n. 115). Copy M.061: *Polacco Bruno*. Copy P.214: *Bruno Polacco* (1936), and many other footprints.
- *Torah Nevi'im u-Ketuvim* (London: Bible Society, 1888?, n. 118). Copy M.091: donated by *Refa'el Horowitz* (?) to *Bruno Polacco + Lisa Virgilio* (1875).

Geršon ben Avraham (see also: Bruno): *Maḥazor le-Yamim Nora'im* (Venice: Nella Stamparia Bragadina, 1792, n. 533). Copy P.209: *Geršon ben Avraham Polacco* (Bruno Polacco).

- *Seder Qeri'e mo'ed* (Wien: Anton Schmid, 1822, n. 647). Copy M.281.C: *Geršon ben Avraham Polacco* (1939).
- *Šulḥan 'arukh mi-tur Oraḥ ḥayyim* (Sulzbach: Mešullam Zalman ben Aharon and his sons Aharon and Naftali, 1764, n. 291). Copy P.263: *Geršon Polacco*.

Giacomo + Leopoldo + Anselmo: *Ša'ar bat rabbim: Maḥazor* (Venezia: Nella Stamparia Bragadina: Appresso Giovanni de' Paoli: [by] Yosef and Ya'aqov Hay ha-Kohanim, 1711-1715, n. 515). Copy G.41: Memorandum of the death of *Leopoldo Polacco* (on August 5th 1870) compiled by his brother *Giacomo*. Memorandum of the death of *Polacco Anselmo di Giuseppe* (aged 20, on February 9th 1873). Copy G.21.G: "Polacco Giacomo fu Leone e del fu Fortunata Hirschel 1864". Copy G.35: "Giacomo Polacco fu Leone anno 1847".

Giacomo + Girolamo fu Leone: *Hamiššah Humše Torah* (Mantova: Refa'el Hayyim d'Italia: by Yehošua' ben Mikha'el Sezze, 1742, n. 135). Copy M2.207: "*Giacomo e Girolamo Polacco fu Leone 1852*", and many other footprints.

Giacomo fu Leone: *Heleq šeni Maḥazor* (Venezia: Giorgio de' Cavalli, 1567, n. 466). Copy C.M2.16.II: *Polacco Giacomo fu Leone* (Ya'aqov ben Yehudah, 1847) + *Eli'ezer Levi, Elia Crerle* (1882).

- *Maḥazor heleq ri'šon [-šeni]* (Venezia: Giovanni Bragadin: by Giovanni Di Gara, 1599-1600, n. 467). Copy C.M2.11: *Polacco Giacomo fu Leone* (Ya'aqov ben Yehudah, 1839) + *Scuola Canton*.

Girolamo: *Ša'ar bat rabbim* (*Op. Cit.*, n. 515). Copy G2.3: signature dated 1848.

Moisè + Bruno: *Miqra Qodeš* [Bibbia] (Vol. 2., Leipzig: šohere Torat Yišra'el: Riesschen Buchdruckerei, 1862, n. 99). Copy M.059.C: *Polacco Moisè + Cesana G., Dina Giulio*. Copy M.059.D: *Bruno Polacco + Bepi Susan, Sacerdoti Abramo, Giuseppe Bassi, Cesare Bassi* (1892).

***: *Sefer 'Olat tamid* (Livorno: Šelomoh Belforte e socio, 1925, n. 966). Copy M.199.B: *** *Polacco + Biblioteca delle Scuole Israelitiche di Venezia, Iarach Dante*.

Orefice Marco: *Hamiššah Humše Torah* (Venezia: Giovanni Bragadin: by Ašer Parenzo: at Giovanni Di Gara's, 1590-1591, n. 172). Copy C.P.03: *Polacco Orefice Marco + Tivoli Abram*.

Pellegrino fu Giuseppe: *Idem*. Edition in 4 vols. Copy REL.562: “*Polacco Pellegrino fu Giuseppe*”, a gift of Ambra Dina (1991, n. 539).

- *Maḥazor le-Yamim Nora'im* = *Orazioni per il Capo d'Anno* (Livorno: Salomone Belforte & C., 1892, n. 538). Copy REL.561: “*Polacco Pellegrino fu Giuseppe*”, a gift of Ambra Dina (1991).
- *Maḥazor Mo'ade ha-Šem* = *Orazioni per la solennità di Pessah* (Livorno: Salomone Belforte & C. , 652, 1892, n. 550). Copies REL.558, REL.559, REL.560: “*Polacco Pellegrino fu Giuseppe*”, a gift of Ambra Dina (1991).

Salvadori

The Salvadori family hailed from Corfù, where it was known as *Gesuà* which is closer to the Hebrew form of the name. When they arrived to Italy their name was translated but the original form was kept as well, therefore the full name is “*Gesuà sive Salvadori*” as it was recently demonstrated by a member of this family, Edoardo. He traced back the history of his ancestors starting from Mandolin *Gesuà sive Salvadori* and Stametta Massa, who lived at the beginning of the 18th century. This paragraph is based to a great extent on his researches.⁴²¹

A peculiarity of this family, that emerges at a first glance at the family tree, is the variety of names, which is quite unusual but really helpful. Indeed, it was easier than with other families to match the footprints with their *owners*.

Mandolin and Stametta had two sons, Salamon (b. 1774), who only had three daughters, and Elia (1773-1857). Salamon spent little time in Venice, but remained mainly in Corfù, therefore he didn't change his name, and was always registered as “*Salamon Gesuà*”. Elia, on the contrary, settled in Venice where he married Viola

⁴²¹ Edoardo *Gesuà sive Salvadori* collected his researches in two unpublished volumes containing his family history as well as the reproduction of original documents and gravestones. Copies of his works are kept at the “Renato Maestro” Library, they are entitled *Genealogia di una famiglia ebraica levantina: I Gesuà da Corfù a Venezia nel XIX secolo* (printed in 2010, copy CONS.141) and *Gesuà e Dintorni: documenti ed immagini di una famiglia e della realtà ebraica veneziana tra Ottocento e Novecento* (*Op. Cit.*).

Veneziano and added to his family name the Venetian name “Salvadori” that already existed. They had two daughters, Ester and Anna Laura, and two sons, Girolamo Momolo Raffael (1818-1896) and Abramo Vita (1816-1878).

The latter married Rosa Marcaria (1820-1905) having thirteen children, three of them died very young. The ones that continued the family branch are Giacomo Mandolino (1848-1914), Samuele (1852-1932), Benedetto (1854-1936) and Abramo Enrico (1858-1934).

Giacomo Mandolino had five male sons, but none of them appears in the footprints of the Hebrew book collection.

Samuele, who was married to Allegra Levi Morenos, had ten children, the ones that are relevant for this research are Rosina (1879-1959), Angelo (1884-1958) and the younger son (Girolamo) Attilio (1892-1942). Angelo and his wife Bice Cesana had five daughters and two sons. One of the daughters, Bruna, could be the person whose signature on a *Pentateuch* was read with uncertainty as “Bruno” (the footprint, indeed, is marked with a question mark. The book was printed in Vienna in 1860, n. 195, copy M2.64.A).

Another doubtful attribution concerns the note of the teacher who donated a prayer book to Olga Brunner Levi (1885-1961) on the 16th of December [18]94 signing as “R. Salvadori”. It could be either Rosina (1879-1959) the daughter of Samuele, or Rosa, Benedetto’s daughter who died of tuberculosis in 1916.

Attilio, in turn, clearly appears on a Maimonides’ code *Madda`, Ahavah, Zemanim* (Livorno, Ottolenghi, 1848, n. 687, copy M2.31.Z).⁴²²

Going back to the previous generation we follow the line of Benedetto who was the *Shammash* of the Levantine Synagogue, and was married to Allegra Polacco (1858-1922). The footprints of this branch (that includes Edoardo, the author of the research on the family) are the most frequent ones.

⁴²² The only other “Attilio” in the family, was one of Benedetto’s sons who died when he was a baby.

Benedetto had seven sons, two of whom – Rosa and Attilio - have already been mentioned. The others are Marco (1880-1949), Odoardo (1884-1945), Fortunata (1883-1949), Mandolino Giacomo and Ida who died when they were still babies.

Marco was married to Angela Rosa Ponte (who was not Jewish), and they had five children, among them were Giuseppe (1905-1976), Bianca (1911-1982) and Mario Benedetto who married a non-Jewish woman and converted to Catholicism with his sons. They were all raised in the ideals of the fascist party in a family of non observant Jews.

Odoardo (1884-1945) had four children with his wife Estella Silva: Umberto, Benedetto (called Giorgio, the father of Edoardo), Emma and Emilia (1903-1983).

Abramo Enrico, the remaining brother of the fourth generation, had five daughters and only one son, Mandolino (called Giuseppe, 1891-1972) who, in turn, had two sons: Rosina (b. 1931) and Sergio (1927-1993) who only had two daughters, thus extinguishing the family branch. Abramo Enrico and his offspring renounced to the first part of their family name "*Gesuà sive*", and they were registered only as "Salvadori".

Footprints of the Salvadori family:

Attilio: *Madda` , Ahavah, Zemanim* (Livorno: Ottolenghi, 1848, n. 687, copy M2.31.Z, Heller Nino).

Benedetto: *Tiqqun Šovavim* (Mantova: E. S. d'Italia, 1782, n. 651, copy P.161.A.).

Bianca: *`Olat tamid* (Livorno: S. Belforte e socio, 1924, n. 965, copy P.134, Calimani Angelo).

Bruna (?): *Ḥamiššah Ḥumše Torah* (Vienna : Knöpflmacher, 1860, n. 195, copy M2.64.A).

Elia: *Mišnayot* (Vienna: Schmid, 1815, n. 736, copy M2.20.I-II, etc.).

Elia: *Nevi'im Ri'šonim (Rabbinic Bible IV*, Venezia: G. Di Gara, 1568, n. 122, copy C.G2.03.II, [...] 23 Novembre 1876, etc.).

Emilia: *Ḥamiššah Ḥumše Torah* (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1884, n. 214, copy M.016, Cava Carlo).

Giuseppe: *`Olat tamid* (Livorno: S. Belforte e socio, 1910, n. 963, copy P.139, Todeschini Emma (Classe III, insegnante Bici Cassuto, Emilio Calimani).

Mandolin: *Miqra Qodeš* (vol. 3, Vienna: Schmid, 1834, n. 219, copy M.066.B.IV, "Lì 25 Sevat e

[sic!] m[orto nostro] padre Man[dolin] Salvadori che corrisponde li 28 Gennaio 1878", "Il giorno 7 Sevat e [sic!] morto il nostro fratello Elia Salvadori ...", "Regalato al giovane Aboaf Angelo 1938", Salvadori Mandolin).

R: *Seder ha-`avodah* (Vienna: Schlesinger, 1893, n. 510, copy P.234, "Alla sua cara Olga la maestra affez.ma R. Salvadori, 16.12.94" [Olga Brunner], "lascito di Ugo Levi 1971").

Sergio + Marco: *Miqra Qodeš* (Leipzig: 1862, n. 99, copy M.059.B, *Libreria di C. A. Levi - Prem. Stab. Emporio Venezia*; copy M.059.H, Salvadori Marco).

The footprints of Elia and Mandolin Salvadori could not be attributed with certainty, as they do not match the personal data that are known about them.

There are two Elias in the family: Elia the son of Mandolin (1773-1857) and David Elia (1845-1874), the son of Abramo Vita, who was known simply as Elia. However, since both had already passed away in 1876, the footprint on the copy C.G2.03.II (n. 122) can hardly be attributed to either one of them (unless the rest of the handwritten note could be deciphered revealing a different perspective).

The information found on copy M.066.B.IV (n. 219) also is quite problematic: the annotation concerning the death of Mandolino does not correspond to any of the three persons bearing this name. The date of the death of the first Mandolino, who lived in the 18th century, is not known, but since his two sons were born in 1773 and 1774 it is impossible that he died in 1878. The second person with the same name arrived at the third generation, it was Giacomo Mandolino (1848-1914) and the third was his nephew Mandolino called Giuseppe (1891-1972).⁴²³

Considering the date of publication (1834), the association of the sentences "our brother Elia" and "our father Mandolino", and the presence of a separate signature of "Mandolino Salvadori" (probably Mandolino III would rather sign as "Giuseppe"), I would rather identify the provenance of this volume in the family of Abramo Vita.

Elia probably is David Elia who, indeed, had many brothers that could say "our brother" (while his grandfather Elia only had one brother who lived in Corfù), and

⁴²³ There was another "Mandolino", the son of Benedetto and Allegra Polacco, but he lived too shortly (1879-1880).

Mandolino should be his brother Giacomo Mandolino, but the mystery on the annotation date remains.

Sullam

The Sullam family, that was linked to the Artom family by the marriage of Henrietta with Angelo Sullam, has been living in Venice for a very long time.

As we have already mentioned, their main business was the management of their paddy fields located near the Po Delta, from which derived the major part of their income.⁴²⁴

At the end of the 18th century the Sullams were among the wealthy Jewish families in Venice mentioned by Saul Levi Mortera in his *Anagrafi degli abitanti del Ghetto* (1797). Lazzarini reports that they were not as rich as the Curiel, Angeli, Luzzatto, Malta and Motta that, in turn, could not compete with the richest families of the Ghetto: Vivante, Treves and Bonfili.⁴²⁵

Starting from 1797, when Jews were allowed to own properties for the first time, Benedetto (1742-1820) started buying apartments in Venice and later lands in the countryside. Then, it was his younger son Giuseppe (Iseppo, 1786-1858) who conceived and realized the idea of the paddy fields in the 1830s.

Benedetto was married to Diamante Namias (1752-1836) and they had eight sons, one of them was Moisè (1769-1826) who married Regina Hanau. Regina and Moisè had six children, the one that is relevant for our footprints is Costante (1813-1898), the grandfather of Angelo Raffaele Sullam (1881-1971). Costante di Moisè (whose footprints are dated 1844-1851) was a member of the *Fraterna Generale* and a

⁴²⁴ Antonio Lazzarini, "Possidenti e bonificatori ebrei: la famiglia Sullam", in *Storia di Venezia*, vol. III, *L'Ottocento e il Novecento*, edited by Mario Isnenghi and Stuart Woolf (Roma: Editore Istituto Dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2002), 603-617.

⁴²⁵ *Ibidem*, 606.

councilor. In 1871-1887 he also was co-director of the *Pio Stabilimento Hanau* together with Giuseppe Musatti, Girolamo Errera and Alberto Treves dei Bonfili.⁴²⁶

Costante's wife was Costanza Pisa, and they had four children: Giuseppe, Regina, Benedetto and Luigi. Benedetto (1847-1918) married Giovannina Enrichetta Levi having five sons: Guido Costante (1873-1849, architect), Regina Costanza, Emma, Angelina and Angelo Raffaele.

Not all the *Sullams* that appear in the Venice collection are from Venice: Mošeh Ḥayyim Sullam (also: Moisè Vita), in fact, identifies himself as being from Mantua. He was one of the three representatives of the *Università Ebraica di Mantova* (Jewish Community of Mantua) at least in 1775, when he was involved in a dispute between the *Monti di pietà* and the Jewish money lending desks.⁴²⁷

Footprints from the Sullam family:⁴²⁸

Abramo: *Ša'ar bat rabbim: Maḥazor ḥeleq ri'šon* (Venezia: Bragadin-De' Paoli, 1711-15, n. 515, copy G2.1.G, d. 17/11/1721).

Artom: *Seder ha-tiqqun le-lel Hoša'ana Rabba* (Venezia: Stamparia Vendramina, 1739, n. 626, copy P.145.B, *Mošeh Barukh, Avraham Hay ****).

- *Yesode ha-dat* by Yehudah Leib ben Binyamin Ze'ev Ben-Ze'ev (Vienna: A. Schmid, 1823, n. 62, copy M.321).

Costante + Angelo: *Seder ha-Haggadah le-lel Šimmurim* (Vienna: Schmid-Busch, 1840, n. 569, copy BOX.1.C.8, *Costante Sullam ... 1851, Angelo Sullam*).

Costante fu Moisè + Angelo: *Maḥazor Mo'ade Ha-Šem = Orazioni per la solennità di Succot* (Livorno: Belforte-Palagi, 1843, n. 527, copies P.127.1.C, P.127.2.B, and P.127.3.B, *Costante Sullam fu Moisè 1844, Angelo Sullam*).

G. Reinisch + Angelo: *Maḥazor Mo'ade ha-Šem = Orazioni per la solennità di Pessah* (Livorno: Belforte e C., 1859, n. 549, copy M.167.I).

Guido di Benedetto: *ʿOlat tamid* (Livorno: S. Belforte e socio, 1881, n. 449, copy M.084).

⁴²⁶ Salvadori, *Gesù e dintorni*, 12-13. The "Pio Stabilimento Hanau" was a charity foundation managed by the Chief Rabbi together with other four members of the Fraterna Generale. Its main purpose was to assist poor Jews financing their education and their working activities, and supporting them in case of illness or injury. It was founded upon the testamentary disposition of Elia Hanau (d. 1856) and thanks to his bequest.

⁴²⁷ Paolo Elia, "Alcune polemiche sui banchi feneratizi ebraici del mantovano tra il 1775 e il 1776", *RMI*, Terza Serie, 43, no. 9 (1977): 492. Online at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41284481>.

⁴²⁸ The list does not include the footprints of Angelo Sullam unless they were accompanied by the footprint of another member of the Sullam family.

Mario: *Selihot le-Ašmoret ha-boqer* (Venezia: Stamparia Bragadina, 1735, n. 602, copy P.140.A).
Mošeh Ḥayyim + David Vita: *Nevi'im Ri'šonim* (Venezia: Bomberg, 1525, n. 123). Copy C.G2.01: *Mošeh Ḥayyim Sullam da Mantova 1781, Geršon Sforini, David Sforini da Mantova, M. I. Sforinj, Felice Rubino, David Vita Sullam.*

Vivante

The history of this famous Venetian family, one of the pillars of the local Jewish Community, has been traced back by one of its members, Cesare Vivante. He made a research to discover whether the oral memories concerning the origins of the family were indeed correct, and he found out that they were only partially true. Since the whole story can be found in his work *La memoria dei padri: cronaca, storia e preistoria di una famiglia ebraica tra Corfù e Venezia* (Firenze: Giuntina, 2009) we will concentrate here on the persons that left their footprints on the Library Hebrew collection.

This time the list is longer, including fifteen names (they are not to be confused with the *Vivanti* from Ancona that also left their footprints on the collection).

The family has its origins in the island of Corfù, where Leon di Menaḥem Vivante (c. 1700 - c. 1780) started a trade and insurance business with Venetian merchants. His sons and him went back and forth several times to take care of the family interests, and one by one they finally moved all to Venice.

Leon, the forefather, was married to Rachele Rietti and they had a few daughters (whose names are not known) and four sons, who had a leading role in the family history: Menaḥem (Mandolin), Eli'ezer (Lazzaro), Maimon and Jacob Vita. They soon built a fortune and bought many properties, but a series of misfortunes caused the collapse of their patrimony.

Menaḥem (1720-1778) married twice, the first time in Corfù with a young woman called Perla who died soon afterwards, and the second time in Venice with Rachele Luzzatto. They had seven children, among them were Leon and Aharon (Aron) - the only two males - and Ester who married her youngest uncle, Jacob Vita. Leon and

Aron were responsible for the branch of the family enterprise that was located in Trieste and they were totally ruined by the 1830s. Aron never married, while Leon got married twice and had four daughters, one of whom did not survive her birth.

Lazzaro (c. 1730-1801?) had two sons, Menaḥem (Mandolin, c. 1759-1825) and Sabbato (Šabbetay, 1773-1849) who were the only members of the Vivante family that were not affected by the financial crisis. They were also active members of the Jewish Community although in different ways: Menaḥem was a circumciser while Sabbato was a member of the Council of the *Fraterna Generale*. Menaḥem had but two surviving daughters (upon four) and arranged for them convenient marriages with two sons of the Baron Treves dei Bonfili, while the two branches of Sabbato's offspring that continued developing, that of Lazzaro and that of Caliman, are now located respectively in Alessandria (Egypt) and in Buenos Aires.

Maimon (1735-1774), the third of Leon's sons whose wife was Bella Rossi Mulli (called Bilà), had seven children: Rachele⁴²⁹, Sara, Leon Vita, Giuseppe Emanuele (Giuseppe Giacomo Albrizzi after his conversion to Catholicism in 1792), Raffaele, Jacob and Maimon (Momolo, who was probably born after his father's death). Among them the ones that continued the generation were Leon Vita (c. 1764-1832) who married Sara Coen from Corfù, and his brother Jacob (c. 1772-1839) who was married to Sara Angeli.

Jacob Vita (c. 1740-1817) conducted the trade business of the family for many years after the death of his elder brother Menaḥem, but his sons inherited it when it was already in decline. He had five daughters and six sons, but three sons and one of the daughters, Rachel, died very soon. The three remaining sons, Leon Mosè, Aron Isach and Maimon, as well as their sister Lea, continued the family branch.

Lea (Elena, 1778-1849), indeed, after the death of her husband Gabriel Malta, had an illegitimate son, Angelo (Israel, 1815-?) who later married Isabella Luzzatto having

⁴²⁹ On the history of Rachele see: Cesare Vivante, *La memoria dei padri: cronaca, storia e preistoria di una famiglia ebraica tra Corfù e Venezia* (Firenze: Giuntina, 2009), 50-71.

four children: Bianca Clementina, Fortunato (Mazaltov), Moshè Refael and Giuseppe (Josef, 1855-1929). Giuseppe⁴³⁰ married Natalia Schmitz (the sister of Italo Svevo) and had four children: Angelo Fortunato (1882-1944) who was killed in Auschwitz with his sister Allegra Carmen (1885-1945), Bianca and Jole who died before the deportation.

Going back to Lea's brothers, **Leon** (Mosè Raffael, 1774-1823), the elder⁴³¹, was married to Zerle Trieste (they divorced in 1812) and they had two daughters, Ester and Laura.

Aron (1782-1867) and Stella Luzzatto were the parents of Jacob Vita II (1808-1892) - who married Giuditta Salom and had nine children -, Abram (1808-1881) and Maimon (Leon Momolo, 1810-1875) - who remained single.

Maimon (Girolamo, 1794-1849, the brother of Leon and Aron) married Anna Luzzatto and had two sons, Jacob Vita III (Giacomo, 1828-1889) who didn't have any sons and Leone Menashé (called Cesare, 1831-1905), the forefather of the present-day Vivante descendants. Cesare (Menashé Leone) was married to Sara (called Sarina, d. 1928) one of the daughters of his first cousin Jacob Vita II and they had six children, three women who didn't get married, Anna, Ada (Ida) and Alba, and three men, Girolamo (1871-1934), Giacomo (Jacob Vita IV, 1877-1969) and Costante (1878-1944).

Girolamo married Gianna Cavaglieri, the daughter of Bice Pesaro and Ercole Cavaglieri from Ferrara (whose signature was found on a *Siddur* published in Rödelheim in 1879, n. 392, copy M.109), and had two sons: Bice Sara (1917-1975), who was a teacher, and Cesare (1920-2014) who retraced the family history.

Costante did not have children, while Giacomo was the father of Mirella (1925-2008, Israel) and Salvatore (1921-1944, Auschwitz).

⁴³⁰ He is the only one in the family bearing this name, which enables us to attribute to him the footprint found on copy M.035.B.II.

⁴³¹ The first daughter, Rachel (1773-1774), didn't survive her first year.

Cesare Vivante in his work *La memoria dei padri...* (op. cit.)⁴³², annexed the lists of the books owned by different members of the Vivante family, that were compiled by notaries upon their request. These lists, edited by Piergabriele Mancuso, show a main interest in secular works in non Jewish languages. However, there are also separate lists for the Hebrew books that were part of the libraries of Lazzaro (1791), Jacob Vita (March 12, 1792), and Leon Vita and his brothers.

We tried to compare the footprint list below with these lists but it was impossible to determine with certainty whether they have common elements. In fact, these documents, that were drafted by the notaries in the 18th century, do not indicate any detail concerning the editions of the works included.

We know that Lazzaro and his son Menaḥem were circumcisers, and that this branch of the family seems to be the most interest in religion. Indeed, the list of Hebrew books (all religious) owned by Lazzaro is much longer than the lists of his relatives'. Moreover, the two books that arrived to the Library with Lazzaro's signature (Eliezer) are both Talmudic commentaries. Of course, this fact is not relevant to determine his reading habits, as probably only the Hebrew books that were part of the family collection were donated to one of the libraries of the Jewish Community. Two volumes arrived from his sons' library, one bearing the signature of both, the other signed by Menaḥem alone (see below).

Since the Hebrew books were only a part of their collection, in order to find out how many volumes of their library are actually kept at the "Renato Maestro" Library, it would also be necessary to look for the footprints of the non-Hebrew early collection of the Library.

Books arriving from the Vivante family.⁴³³

⁴³² The lists of Hebrew books are on pp. 203-213.

⁴³³ Often the former owners of the books can be easily identified – as it is the case for Ada, Cesare,

Cesare Vivante: *Berit ĥadašah* (London: Macintosh, 1817, n. 277, copy M.416, “dalla Biblioteca di d. Roberto Diana, Venezia 1996”⁴³⁴).

Eleazar Vivante: *Bet ha-beĥirah* (Livorno: E. Sa`adun, 1795, n. 698, copy M2.98).

- *Sefer Išše ha-Šem* (Livorno: E. Sa`adun, 1795, n. 764, copy M2.103).

Ezechia + I. + Giacomo: *Maĥazor Sefaradim le-Yamim Nora'im* (Amsterdam: A. Athias, 1728, n. 551, copy M.342.1).

Giacomello (Jacob) + Israel S. Giuseppe: *Ĥoq le-Yiśra'el* (Livorno: S. Sa`adun, 1818, n. 874).

Vol. 1: *Be-re'šit*, copy M.035.B.I: *Giacomello Vivante, Israel S. Giuseppe Vivante, Bappi, G. Pase*.

Vol. 4: *Ba-midbar*, copy M.035.B.IV: *Jakob Vivante, Giuseppe Vivante*.

Giacomo: *Mišnayot* (Amsterdam: D. Tartas, 1685-1687, voll. 1-2, n. 720, copy M.077.I-II.B: *Giacomo Vivante, Michele Calabi 1834, Moisè Padovani*).

Giuseppe: *Ĥoq le-Yiśra'el* (Op. Cit., n. 874).

Vol. 1: *Be-re'šit*, copy M.035.B.I: *Giacomello Vivante, Israel S. Giuseppe Vivante, Bappi, G. Pase*.

Vol. 2: *Šmot*, copy M.035.B.II: *Giuseppe Vivante, Curiel*.

Vol. 4: *Ba-midbar*, copy M.035.B.IV: *Jakob Vivante, Giuseppe Vivante*.

Vol. 5: *Devarim*, copy M.035.B.V: *Giuseppe Vivante*).

Jacob: see: Giacomello.

Jacob Vita: *Ša`are Šiyyon* (Venezia: G. b. Y. Foa-Stamparia Bragadina, 1753, n. 333, copy MINI.19).

- *Arba`ah we-`esrim* (Pisa: Molko-Sa`adun - Foa, 1803, n. 86, copy M2.204).

- *Seliĥot le-ašmoret ha-boqer* (Venezia: Stamparia Bragadina, 1735, n. 603, copy P.140.G.).

Menaĥem and Šabbetai: *Še'elot u-Tešuvot by Avraham Refa'el ben Yehudah Koriat* (Pisa: S. Molko, 1812, n. 383, copy M2.83.B, brothers).

Mirella: *`Olat tamid* (Livorno: S. Belforte e socio, 1932, n. 969, copy P.132.B, ADEI of Venice, “Premio a Mirella Vivante 1932-33”).

Sabbato: *Mišnayot* (Sulzbach: M. Z. b. A. Fränkel, 1751-1752, n. 727, copy M.075.1)

Šabbetai: *Qorban ĥagigah* (Venezia: A. Bragadin, 1704, n. 311, copy M2.30, donated by *Me'ir ben Ašer* to *Šabbetai Vivante*).

Salvatore: *`Olat tamid* (Livorno: S. Belforte e socio, 1926, n. 967, copy P.138, “A Salvatore Vivante la Maestra Clementina Heller. Venezia 9 Maggio 1930”, Angelo Sullam).

Sedur di Ada: *Bet Tefillah yiqqare* (Livorno: Belforte e socio, 1871, n. 427, copy M.282.E, “*Sedur di Ada Vivante che ebbe in regalo da suo padre e da suo Nonno e da tutta la famiglia*”).

Vivante: *Maĥazor kol ha-šanah* (Ashkenazi rite, Venezia, Y. H. Aškenazi - Stamparia Bragadina, 1756, n. 478, copy M.415, “*Zerle Trieste di Padova, sposa Vivante di Venezia*”).

Yosef Ĥayyim: *Massekhet Šabbat* (Berlin – Frankfurt a. O., Gottschalk, 1716, n. 742, copy M2.135, A. Maestro, *Hebrà di Mettivè Lachet, Galial Pinto Zeando* [?]).

Eleazar (Lazzaro), Menaĥem, Sabbato (Šabbetai), Salvatore and Mirella – but in some cases it is very hard to attribute the footprints to one of the many persons bearing the same name (especially Jacob Vita – Giacomo).

⁴³⁴ For information on Roberto Diana see par. 4.3.2.

4.4 Booksellers and bookbinders

A further indication of provenance can be found in the stamps and labels of Bookbinders and booksellers who left their footprints in the volumes.

In this paragraph we have listed the most interesting footprints of booksellers and bookbinders (all the others can be found in the Catalogue), thus excluding the bookshops that were directly linked to the printers and/or publishers or located in the same area where the books were printed.

A lot more could be said about bookbinding, their value and their meaning, but here we only focused on provenances and locations.

Asher A. & Co., Booksellers, London: 1 copy. The firm was founded by Adolph Asher (1800-1853) born in Cammin (Berlin) and was originally a merchant.

“Coming into possession of a large collection of books, he returned to Berlin and established his bookselling business at Mohrenstraße 53 on 1 January 1830. He took advantage of his trading connections in London, where he opened a second shop in Covent Garden by 1835, and St Petersburg, where he opened a third shop. He sold new and used books, became the principal supplier of the British Museum and close friend of its great librarian Anthony Panizzi (1797-1879)”⁴³⁵

Asher sold the firm one year before his death, but the different purchasers continued working under the name A. Asher & Co, that is still in use.

The copy bearing this footprint is a collection of sermons printed in Berlin.

N. 803: Yişhaq ben Yişhaq Rabinovich. *Nidvot pi*. Berlin: Julius Sittenfeld, 1863-1869. Copy M2.181.

⁴³⁵ A. Asher & Co. B.V., online at: <https://www.asherbooks.com/about.html>.

Bader, David (épületfa és deszka kereskedő - Nagy-Szöllös): Bader was a Hungarian bookseller. His stamp was found on five copies containing different books belonging to two editions of an Ashkenazi *Maḥazor* with Hungarian translation, printed by Joseph Schlesinger.

N. 1004: *Mákszór imádságos*. Budapest-Becs [=Wien]: Schlesinger Jos., [1899 or 1901]. Copies M.376.V, M.376.VII, M.376.VIII.

N. 1005: *Mákszór imádságos*. Budapest: Schlesinger Jos., 1902. Copies M.376.I, M.184.

Foà brothers (stamp of a bookshop in Acqui): 4 copies (3 of the same work).

N. 164: *Tiqqun soferim: we-hu Ḥamiššah Ḥumše Torah*. Wien: Druck und Verlag des Franz Edler von Schmid und J. J. Busch, 1840. Copies M.304.II.B, M.304.III.C (it bears Israel Artom' signature), M.304.IV.C (it contains the *ex libris* of Angelo Sullam and the stamp of the "Comunità Israelitica" of Venice. See paragraphs 4.2.1, and 4.3.4).

N. 412: *Tefillah Zakkah*. Wien: Anton Schmid, 1816. Copy M.204 (here we find the *ex libris* of Angelo Sullam, the signature of Israel Artom from Asti, and the stamp of the "Comunità Israelitica" of Venice).

Gallico, Raffaello ("Tutto per il culto ebraico, via Ribet 5, Torino"): 1 copy.

N. 976: *Seder tefillot li-yeme ha-ḥol: la-Sefaradim = Preghiere per i giorni feriali: rito spagnolo*. Livorno: S. Belforte & C., 1936. Copy P.228, bearing the stamp of the Chief Rabbi of Venice.

Goetschel, Simon (also: Götschel, Basel. Stamp): 1 copy.

N. 581: *Seder ha-Haggadah šel Pesah ... = La Haggada : ou Cérémonies des deux premières soirées de Paque...*, Paris: Librairie du culte israélite de L. Blum, 1884 (Paris : imprimerie Jouaust et Sigaux). Copy P.059 (a gift from Hirsch Sinigaglia).

Lamm, Louis (bookshop, Berlin, Neue Friedrichstrasse 61-63): 1 copy.

Louis Lamm (Wittelshofen, 1871 – Auschwitz, 1943) moved to Berlin in 1900, and opened a bookshop and a publishing house that became well-known in Jewish circles. In 1933, following Hitler's election as Chancellor, he moved to Amsterdam transferring there his Judaica bookshop. In 1941, the *Joodsche Weekblad* published a brief article celebrating his 70th birthday. He published Jewish works from the Middle Ages to his present time, and he also authored some researches on German Jewry.

In 1943 he was deported to Auschwitz together with his daughter Ruth and they were both killed there.⁴³⁶

Lamm's business card was found inside a copy of an 18th-century Pentateuch printed in Venice. Curiously, the book was found in Venice, where it was printed, with the card of a German bookshop. Unfortunately there is no further indication of provenance that could enable us to make some conjectures on its history.

N. 137: *Hamiššah Ĥumše ha-Torah we-Ĥameš Megillot*. Venezia: su commissione dei signori Foa: Nella Stamparia Bragadina, 1755. Copy P.012.

Marhiv H. (Jerusalem, stamp): 1 copy.

N. 760: Leon Modena, *Tsemah Tsaddiq ex: A righteous offspring*, New York: Press of A. H. Rosenberg, 1899. Copy M.257).

Max Joseph (Frankfurt, stamps and stickers): 10 copies.

N. 285: Yosef Caro. *Sefer Maginne eres: Šulħan `arukh Oraħ ĥayyim*. Wien: Georg Hraschanky, 1808. Copy G.14.

N. 849: [Talmud Babilonese]. In Slavuta: Mošeh Šapira da Slavuta, 1816-1822.

Vol. 3: *Massekhet Šabbat*. Copy G.37.2.

Voll. 6, 9, 11-14: *Massekhet Šeqalim* [-*Bešah, Ta`anit, Megillah, Mo`ed qaṭan, Ĥagigah*]. Copy G.37.6.

Voll. 17-19: *Massekhet Nedarim, Nazir, Soṭah*]. Copy G.37.9 (with a note of Jacob Tugendreich from Berlin).

Vol. 23: *Massekhet Bava Meši`a*. Copy G.37.12 (it also bears the signatures of M. Davidsohn and Jacob Ilzig Tugendreich).

Vol. 24: *Massekhet Bava Batra*. Copy G.37.13.

Vol. 25: *Massekhet Sanhedrin*. Copy G.37.14.

Voll. 27, 29: *Massekhet Ševu`ot* [-*`Avodah Zarah*]. Copy G.37.15 (plus the signatures of Davidsohn Cohn and Jacob Tugendreich).

Voll. 26, 28, 30, 34-38: *Massekhet Makkot* [-*`Eduyyot, Pirqe Avot, Horayot, Bekhorot, Arakhin, Temurah, Keritot, Me`illah, Kinnim, Tamid, Middot*]. Copy G.37.16 (it also bears the signature of Jacob Tugendreich).

Vol. 33: *Massekhet Ĥullin*. Copy G.37.18.

⁴³⁶ *Het Joodsche Weekblad*. (5 December 1941): 7. A page is dedicate to Lamm at *Joods Monument* website, a memorial of Jewish Holocaust victims from the Netherlands (<https://www.joodsmonument.nl/>). At: <https://www.joodsmonument.nl/en/page/214832/louis-lamm>. Further information can be found at JoodsAmsterdam website: <http://www.joodsamsterdam.nl/louis-lamm/> [Dutch].

Watkins Binder (Bookbinder, Cravel Lave Southwark): 11 copies.

N. 105: *Torah Nevi'im u-Ketuvim*. London: Bible Society at the Operative Institution, 1836. (London: Macintosh Printer). Copy M.060.

N. 115: *Torah Nevi'im u-Ketuvim*. London: Bible Society at the Operative Institution, 1866. Copies M.061, P.224.

N. 212: *Ḥamiššah Ḥumše Torah*. London: Bible Society at the Operative Institution, 1864. Copies M.070.A, M.070.C.

N. 251: *Sefer Tehillim = Liber Psalmorum: ad editionem Hooghtianam*. Londini: [s.n.], 1859. (London: Printed by W. Clowes and Sons). Copies P.032.A, P.032.B.

N. 253: *Sefer Tehillim*. London: Bible Society at the Operative Institution, 1861. Copy MINI.43.A.

N. 255: *Sefer Tehillim = Liber Psalmorum: ad editionem Hooghtianam*. Londini: [s.n.], 1862. (London: Printed by W. Clowes and Sons). Copy P.053.

N. 256: *Sefer Tehillim*. London: Bible Society at the Operative Institution, 1865. Copy MINI.45.

N. 257: *Sefer Tehillim = Liber Psalmorum: ad editionem Hooghtianam*. Londini: [s.n.], 1870. Copy P.034.

Conclusions

The aim of this work was to trace back the history of the “Renato Maestro” early Hebrew book collection, identifying the smaller collections absorbed by this library and follow the journey of single copies through the marginalia found on their papers. The composition of the collection was determined analyzing old inventories and catalogues, as well as the written testimony of scholars who visited the library, and of the persons in charge of its management (par. 3.2-3.5). Going through these lists of titles, several missing volumes have been identified, the most remarkable was a complete Bomberg’s Talmud (several treatises were available in more than one copy) of which a single volume remained.

Any attempt to discover the circumstances in which these books disappeared, and to find out their present location, was unsuccessful.

Regarding the study of provenances, , due to the lack of information and evidences, and to the necessity of fixing boundaries to this research that risked to be endless, the long list of owners, booksellers and viewers has been only partially studied.

Specific studies would be needed to dig deeper in the footprints left behind by persons who could not be easily identified.

The family trees that constitute the basis for the argument introduced in the fourth chapter, were not always available nor easy to trace. Many owners have been identified thanks to their family ties, that were helpful to recognize the common provenance of some volumes. For this reason owners and viewers (usually owners’ relatives mentioned in the endpapers) have been gathered according to their family name, virtually rebuilding small collections that arrived from the same family libraries.

Sometimes it was not possible to find out the relationship among the persons who left their footprints, even though they had the same surname. In a similar way, as

information concerning small bookshops were very hard to find, not all the booksellers and bookbinders were identified.

In spite of numerous efforts and inquiries, at the end, I had to surrender to the temporary impossibility to identify all the footprints appearing in the collection.

However I am proud to have initiated this work of investigation on the provenances of the early book collection, wishing that it can be continued by future studies.

Archival sources

“Renato Maestro” Library and Archive:

- *Catalogo dei libri della Biblioteca ebraica del Talmud Torà*, end of the 19th century, handwritten, box 15.
- *Elenco dei libri d'orazione posseduti e dei pezzi musicali che si eseguono al Tempio*, handwritten, 1910, box 29A.
- *Ancient index of the archive*, beginning of the 20th century, handwritten, box 29A.
- *Sequestro beni della Comunità: verbale ed inventario*, 1944, handwritten, box 51.
- *Biblioteca: registro prestiti 1929-1956*, box 199A.
- *Museo Israelitico “Vittorio Fano”: inventario degli oggetti esposti*, 1960, box 199 C.
- *Mostra del libro ebraico: Corrispondenza e fatture*, 1960, box 199C.
- Personal archive of Attilio Milano.

Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti:

- Fondo Luigi Luzzatti, correspondence with Mosè Soave (sezione 1, serie 1, lettera S).

Private family archive of Carlo Fano:

- “I Fano della Sinagoga Canton di Venezia detta Schola dei Fano discendenti di Beniamino Rabbino di Fiorenzuola ca. 1730-1800 e loro congiunti e collaterali veneziani e non: Albero genealogico redatto da Renzo Fano a completamento e aggiornamento della iniziale ricerca di Nella Fano”. [Handwritten].

The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People Jerusalem (CAHJP):

- *Carpi family archive*, P 57, file n. 9 (historical researches on different cities, including Venice).
- *Morpurgo family archive*, P 96, file n. 8 (book list)
- *Vittorio Fano's archive*, P 21
 - file n. 15 (letter from Rabbi Elio Toaff to Venetian Jews, Jan 30th, 1947)

- file n. 20 (letters concerning the transferring of some *Sefarim* to Jerusalem in 1952)
- File n. 21 (UCII circular letters dated Jul 16th, 1953, and Dec 11th, 1953)

The National Library of Israel - Archive Department:

- *Personal archive of Isaiah Sonne* (ARC. 4* 796)

Box AC-5098:

1. Letter on the situation of Jewish libraries in Italy (in Hebrew: "על הספרות היהודים באיטליה שבקהילות").
2. Report on the visit to the library of the Jewish Community of Venice.

Box AC-5096:

Correspondence with the Italian Rabbinical College and with the UCII, about his visits to Italian libraries and the publication of his reports.

Box AC-5099:

1. Sonne's annotations concerning the manuscripts and the printed books that he saw in the Venetian library.
2. Book lists.

Box AC-5097:

- Letter from UCII vice president Guido Zevi to Isaiah Sonne (Nov 29th, 1937) lamenting gaps in the reports submitted by him.

On shelf:

Isaiah Sonne. *Relazione sui tesori bibliografici delle Comunità israelitiche d'Italia*. [Rhodes, 1934-1937], typewritten document (s. m. R 14265).

UCEI - Archivio Storico (Rome)

Box 97:

File 35-2: "Biblioteche ed archivi 1950-1953"

- Letter to Raffaele Cantoni (May 28th, 1953) on president Ben Zvi request to receive the Italian Jewish archives.
- Letter from the UCII president to Vittorio Fano (Dec 10th, 1950) advising to entrust the reorganization of the Venice library to Mr. Nicola Erdely.

- Letters from Vittorio Fano to Dante Lattes, and to Raffaele Cantoni, on the same topic.
- Sonne's note (Jun 13th, 1954) indicating that Bomberg's Talmud disappeared from the Venetian library.

File 35-4: "biblioteche e archivi"

- UCII circular letter n. 36 (Sep 14th, 1956), introducing the members of the Commission appointed to make a survey of the principal Jewish libraries in Italy: Naomi Hillel, D. Carpi, D.J. Coen, Ch. Zmeruk e S. Simonsohn.
- Answer from Venice (Sep 17th, 1956)
- Memorandum of the meeting that took place with the members of the Commission on Sep 11th, 1956.
- Correspondence between the UCII and the Ben Zwi Institute that requested to receive and keep all the Italian Jewish archival material.
- Letters of Giorgio Voghera, Dante Lattes and Attilio Milano on the same subject (Italian and Hebrew).
- Piperno's letter on the Venetian Jewish archive (1956).
- Correspondence concerning the reorganization of the Venetian Jewish Community archive (1956).

File 35-5: "Commissione patrimonio artistico"

- Correspondence dated 1959 about the possibility of temporarily entrusting two boxes from the Padua archive to Daniel Carpi to be described in Israel.

File n. 35-6: "Situazione patrimoniale archivi".

- UCII Circular letter n. 14, Jul 8th, 1954.
- UCII Circular letter n. 32, Dec 11th, 1953.
- Three answering letters from the Jewish Community of Venice

File 35-11: "*Attività dell'UCII dal 1948*"

- UCII Circular letter n. 38.
- Sample letter to be attached to the questionnaire concerning libraries and archives.

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<http://www.rabbinoottolenghi.it/index.htm>