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**Jewish Printing Culture  
between Brno, Prague and Vienna  
in the Era of Modernization, 1750–1850**



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# Table of Content

- 4** Introduction  
Louise Hecht
  
- 11** The Lack of Sabbatian Literature: On the Censorship of Jewish Books  
and the True Nature of Sabbatianism in Moravia and Bohemia  
Miroslav Dyrčik
  
- 30** Christian Printers as Agents of Jewish Modernization?  
Hebrew Printing Houses in Prague, Brno and Vienna, 1780–1850  
Louise Hecht
  
- 62** Eighteenth Century Yiddish Prints from Brünn/Brno as Documents  
of a Language Shift in Moravia  
Thomas Soxberger
  
- 90** Pressing Matters: Jewish vs. Christian Printing in Eighteenth Century  
Prague  
Dagmar Hudečková
  
- 110** Wolf Pascheles: The Family Treasure Box of Jewish Knowledge  
Kerstin Mayerhofer and Magdaléna Farnesi
  
- 136** Table of Images

# Introduction

Louise Hecht

## Jewish Printing Culture between Brno, Prague and Vienna in the Era of Modernization, 1750–1850

The history of Jewish print and booklore has recently turned into a trendy research topic. Whereas the topic was practically non-existent two decades ago, at the last World Congress of Jewish Studies, the “Olympics” of Jewish scholarship, held in Jerusalem in August 2013, various panels were dedicated to this burgeoning field. Although the Jewish people are usually dubbed “the people of the book,” in traditional Jewish society authority is primarily based on oral transmission in the teacher-student dialog.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the innovation and modernization process connected to print and subsequent changes in reading culture had for a long time been underrated.<sup>2</sup> Just as in Christian society, the establishment of printing houses and the dissemination of books instigated far-reaching changes in all areas of Jewish intellectual life and finally led to the democratization of Jewish culture.<sup>3</sup> In central Europe, the rise of publications in the Jewish vernacular, i.e. Yiddish, that addressed women and lesser educated strata of Jewish society since the late sixteenth century, clearly testifies to this trend.<sup>4</sup> The first centers of Hebrew printing<sup>5</sup> were located in Italy; after a short intermezzo on the Iberian Peninsula during the fifteenth century, in the sixteenth century Hebrew printing houses spread to the Ottoman Empire in the east and to Prague, Basle, Augsburg and several Polish cities (especially Krakow and Lublin) in the north; during the seventeenth century also liberal

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1 Elchanan Reiner, ‘The Ashkenazi Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript versus Printed Book’, *Polin* 10 (1997), pp. 85–98 (pp. 88, 91–3).

2 Zeev Gries, *The Book in the Jewish World, 1700–1900* (Oxford et al.: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007), pp. 1–2.

3 Elchanan Reiner, ‘The Ashkenazi Elite’ (s. note 1), pp. 87, 93.

4 Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), pp. 3–8.

5 “Hebrew printing” does not refer to prints in Hebrew language alone, but includes the whole output of printing shops in Hebrew letters; i.e. also books in Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish and German in Hebrew letters.

cities like Amsterdam became important hubs, while the Polish centers lost some of their power due to turmoil and pogroms.<sup>6</sup>

Hebrew and Yiddish printing were thus wide-spread and well-established by the eighteenth century. Yet, due to the Enlightenment's quest for learning and education, communication and information changed in quality and quantity from the second half of the eighteenth century onward. They became essential factors for upward social mobility among central European Jewry. Consequently, book production dramatically increased in Jewish just as in gentile society. Different literary genres emerged, such as textbooks, readers, journals, books for children and novels. New segments of society, especially children and lower social classes, were recruited as reading audiences and new reading habits (extensive rather than intensive reading) finally produced the so-called *Lesewut* (reading mania) around 1800.

Parallel to the process of secularization central European Jewry underwent a language-shift from western Yiddish to high-German, with German printed in Hebrew letters (also called *Judendeutsch* or *Weiberdeutsch*<sup>7</sup>) as an intermediary stage, from the second half of the eighteenth century onward. Although the language-shift was instigated by the aversion of Jewish enlighteners against the *Jargon* – as they called the Yiddish language, Joseph II's Edicts of Toleration hastened the disappearance of Yiddish by decreeing that Jewish business records and legal documents had to be written in German.<sup>8</sup> Yiddish books were thus increasingly replaced by reading material in German. This trend manifested itself even in religious literature: from the 1810s onwards prayer-books for women written in German (first printed in Hebrew letters, but after 1830 almost exclusively in Latin letters) became a new and burgeoning genre that quickly replaced the traditional Yiddish *Tkhines* in central Europe.<sup>9</sup> Although the genre gained momentum in the German lands, the first women's prayer-book in high-German (printed in Hebrew letters) was composed by the Bohemian Maskil Peter Beer<sup>10</sup> and published in Prague by Karl Wilhelm Enders,<sup>11</sup> in 1815.

6 Shlomo Berger, 'The Oppenheim Collection and Early Modern Yiddish Books', in *The Bodleian Library Record* 25 (2012), pp. 37–51 (p. 38–9).

7 For different definitions of the terms, cf. the articles by Thomas Soxberger and Kerstin Mayerhofer/Magdalena Farnesi in this volume.

8 On the Edicts of Toleration and its impact, cf. my article in this volume.

9 On *Tkhines* cf. Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs* (see note 4), pp. 3–35.

10 Peter Beer, *Gebetbuch für gebildete Frauenzimmer mosaischer Religion: Zum Gebrauch bei der öffentlichen als auch häuslichen Gottesverehrung* (Prague: K. W. Ender, 1815), cf. image 1; on Beer's prayer-book, cf. Louise Hecht, *Ein jüdischer Aufklärer in Böhmen: Der Pädagoge und Reformer Peter Beer, 1758–1838* (Köln: Böhlau, 2008), pp. 324–337.

11 On Enders' publishing house, cf. Alena Köllner, *Buchwesen in Prag von Václav Matěj Kramerius bis Jan Otto* (Vienna: Edition Praesens, 2000), p. 63.

In the introduction to his prayer-book Beer claimed that he had composed the prayers primarily for the benefit of his wife and daughter; only a government decree that preliminarily prohibited *Tkhines* encouraged him to make his collection public.<sup>12</sup> Besides attesting to the language-shift of Bohemian Jewry, Beer's prayer-book thus neatly exemplifies how government measures and maskilic ideas could coincide in the attempt of modernizing central European Jewry. The concerted efforts between the state and the Maskilim first and foremost entailed the reformation of the Jewish educational system; both parties aimed at the inclusion and even the prevalence of secular subjects in the Jewish curriculum. The laws for compulsory education and the establishment of the German-Jewish school system during the reign of Joseph II enhanced the maskilic project and decisively transformed Jewish society in the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>13</sup>

While both, the enlightened absolutist state and the Maskilim aimed at modernizing Habsburg's Jews, state measures did not always suit maskilic efforts. Joseph II's relaxed censorship regulations from 1781 encouraged public discussions through a flood of pamphlets and brochures; this contributed to the formation of a vital public discourse and simultaneously to a boom in the printing business. The window of opportunity that opened up for clever Christian printers, was hampered for the Hebrew book market though. Joseph II's Edicts of Toleration sought the acculturation of Jews by reducing the use of Hebrew and Hebrew letters and, finally, by abolishing them in every sphere but religious practice. Hence, the Emperor opposed the establishment of new Hebrew printing presses. Concurrently – seemingly for purely economic reasons – all existing Hebrew printing presses in the Bohemian lands passed into Christian hands during the reign of Joseph II.<sup>14</sup> It was not before 1824/6 that Moses Israel Landau, the grandson of Prague's former chief rabbi Yehezkel Landau, could (re)establish a Jewish printing house in Prague.<sup>15</sup>

The Maskilim, on the other hand, tried to launch Hebrew as a (secular) learned language<sup>16</sup> and were thus interested in expanding the Hebrew book market. Since the Josephinian state did not interfere with Jewish religion,

12 Beer, *Gebetbuch* (see note 10), introduction, footnote.

13 On the reformation of Jewish education, cf. Hecht, *Ein jüdischer Aufklärer in Böhmen* (see note 10), chap. 3.

14 Cf. the article by Dagmar Hudečková in this volume.

15 Iveta Cermanová, 'The Fall and Rise of Hebrew Book Printing in Bohemia', in *Hebrew Printing in Bohemia and Moravia*, edited by Olga Sixtová (Prague: Academia, 2012), p. 215–237 (p. 231–7).

16 On the role of Hebrew for the Haskalah movement, cf. Louise Hecht, 'The Haskalah in Bohemia and Moravia – a gendered perspective', in *The Enlightenment in Bohemia: Religion, morality and multiculturalism*, ed. by Ivo Cerman, Rita Krueger, Susan Reynolds (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2011), p. 253–272 (p. 260–1).

enlightened Bible commentaries provided an effective opportunity to reach their goal. Hence, Maskilim in the Habsburg Monarchy not merely promoted Moses Mendelssohn's project of a German Pentateuch translation with an enlightened commentary, they continued it. One of the first projects undertaken by the Viennese Hebrew publisher Anton Schmid was a reprint of Mendelssohn's Pentateuch translation *Netivot ha-Shalom* in several editions.<sup>17</sup> Simultaneously, Schmid commissioned translations of the Prophets and the Scriptures to local Maskilim. The commented translations of *Joshua* and *Judges* by Me'ir Obernik<sup>18</sup> appeared in 1792 and started the serial *Mincha Chadasha*.<sup>19</sup> After Obernik's death in 1805, Samuel Detmold and others continued the project.<sup>20</sup> From the 1810s onward, a new edition with the title *Kitvei Qodesh* (Holy Scriptures) was launched.<sup>21</sup> In Prague, the Maskil and printer Moses Israel Landau relaunched the series with "corrected translations" and slightly different commentaries under the title *Sifrei Qodesh* (Holy Books) in the 1830s.<sup>22</sup> While Mendelssohn and the first issues of *Mincha Chadasha* still printed the German translation in Hebrew letters, which were still more familiar to Jewish readers, subsequent editions used the Latin alphabet for the German text; this adaptation testifies to the rapid acculturation of Habsburg's Jewry.

The project, to which the current issue of *Judaica Olomucensia* is dedicated, aims at embedding the output of major central European printing houses into the overall paradigms of the Enlightenment, modernization and acculturation of Habsburg Jewry during the historically sensitive century before full legal emancipation in 1867. Hence it can be viewed as extending, complementing and continuing the project 'Hebrew printing of Bohemia and Moravia' by the Jewish Museum Prague (at [hebrewprinting.com](http://hebrewprinting.com)). While the Prague project primarily focused on the early history of Hebrew printing in the Bohemian lands (mostly on the sixteenth and seventeenth century), our project researches the shift from the pre-modern to the modern era. It, therefore, includes an analysis of texts in the vernacular and puts a special emphasis on the language shift from western Yiddish to High German (in Hebrew and

17 Cf. image 3, of the second edition.

18 Due to different transliteration options, in some sources he is called "Abernik", "Obornik" or a combination of the three.

19 Peter Beer, 'Über Literatur der Israeliten in den kaiserl. österreichischen Staaten im letzten Decenio des 18. Jahrhunderts', in *Sulamith* 2, 1–2 (1808–9), p. 342–357, 421–6, 42–61 (p. 352–3); cf. also image 10.

20 On the biographies of these Maskilim who also worked as correctors in Schmid's printing house, cf. Andreas Klöner, 'Forschungsbericht: Hebräischer Buchdruck in Wien. Der Talmud aus dem Strudelhof: Die jüdischen Korrektoren des hebräischen Buchdruckers Anton Schmid', in *Biblos* 55, 2 (2006), p. 115–127.

21 Cf. images 4–9.

22 Cf. images 13–16.

Latin letters) as an indication of Jewish acculturation in the Western provinces of the Monarchy. Scrutinizing the literary output in different parts of the Habsburg Monarchy allows to discuss the fiercely debated question about the specific historical moment of this language shift.

Additionally, we extended the geographic scope beyond the limits of the Bohemian lands and incorporated Vienna into the sample. By investigating the history and output of the Hebrew/Jewish printing houses in Vienna, Prague and Brno we sought for maximum diversity. Prague boasted a large and established Jewish community with a venerated tradition in Jewish printing that de- and re-generated between 1750 and 1850. Brno, as a royal town, had a *privilegium de non tolerandis iudeis* since 1454; the Hebrew printing press established in 1754 by the Christian Franz Joseph Neumann mainly produced for the local Moravian market. Vienna, on the other hand, neither had a formal Jewish community for the period under consideration (although individual Jews were tolerated for payment of high taxes) nor a tradition in Hebrew printing. Nevertheless, Vienna's printing houses that were established by Christians after 1786 soon became known for their high quality prints beyond the borders of the city and even the Habsburg Monarchy.

In this context, the following questions were pursued: did Maskilim succeed in essentially influencing the book market with their agenda? Did printers and editors seek to educate the reading audience by promoting modernization and Enlightenment values or were they merely driven by economic interests? And finally: did the relationship between Jewish authors and Christian printers resemble the (mostly strained) relationship in the Christian book market?

After tracing the general socio-political changes in the Jewish and Christian society of the Habsburg Monarchy and assessing the impact of laws and state institutions on printing and printing houses, Louise Hecht maps the Hebrew printing houses in the three cities (with a special emphasis on Vienna). As these presses were owned by Christians during most of the period, she further considers the question, whether Christian printers tried to promote the modernization of Jewish society by publishing maskilic literature.

Thomas Soxberger's article focuses on Moravia and carefully analyzes the Yiddish language output of the printing house of Franz Josef Neumann (and his successors) in Brno from 1754 through 1802/3. He aims at tracing the above-mentioned language-shift of Moravian Jewry. Since most catalogues and compendia do not distinguish between Yiddish and German printed in Hebrew letters, they are not aware of the growing number of German prints that Soxberger discerns toward the end of the period.

Dagmar Hudečková as well as Kerstin Mayerhofer and Magdaléna Farnesi outline the history of Prague's Jewish printing shops at different time periods.



Hudečková carefully scrutinizes the intriguing phenomenon of how the venerated tradition of Hebrew printing in Jewish hands came to a temporary end in the late eighteenth century. Moreover, she ponders, whether Christian printers that took over the Jewish businesses helped to erase the differences between Jewish and Christian printing. Mayerhofer and Farnesi, on the other hand, examine the business strategies of the highly successful Jewish printer Wolf Pascheles in the middle of the nineteenth century. Pascheles, who shaped the conception of Jewish and even Christian understanding about “Jewish folk tales” through his widely-acclaimed *Sippurim*, in fact ventured to shape “modern Jews” through his output in different genres.

The project is wrapped up by Miroslav Dyrčik’s article that investigates the puzzling lack of Sabbatian literature in the Bohemian lands, despite the clear evidence of Sabbatian activities for more than 150 years. While most analyses so far have attributed the phenomenon to censorship, Dyrčik points to halakhic congruencies between Sabbatians and traditional Jewry that could be accounted for the lack of specific books.

The initial spark for the project arose through the holdings of our library. The Kurt-and-Ursula-Schubert Center of Jewish Studies holds a large collection of printed material that has been endowed by several generous donators, namely Nina and Beno Melchet, Dr. Stanton Carter, Kurt and Ursula Schubert and Chayim Frank. The library presently numbers over 7,000 books, periodicals and archival material dated since the second half of the eighteenth century. Parts of this collection are valuable first prints from well-known printing houses in Prague, Brno and Vienna, e.g. the first Talmud edition printed in Vienna by the Moravian printer Josef Hraschanky in 1791 or the Hebrew prospectus to Moses Mendelssohn’s Bible translation into German (printed in Hebrew characters) by the Viennese printer Anton Schmid from 1795. An important aspect of this project consisted in presenting this precious material – that primarily belongs to the Chayim Frank collection – in its proper light and inspiring further research on the subject, by scholars and students alike.

The project was made possible through a generous grant by Palacky University, Olomouc (project no. IGA\_FF\_2014\_078) that funded the research and made the cataloguing as well as the digitization of the relevant material possible.

Furthermore, my thanks go to Dr. Daniel Soukup for his circumspect supervision of the library project and his generous help in scholarly as well as technical matters.

Last but not least, I wish to thank Mr. Matej Grochal for scrupulous copy-editing and his support in administrative matters.

# Images



**Image 1:** Title page of Peter Beer's prayer-book for women, German with Hebrew letters, printed in Prague by E.W. Enders, 1815; private collection Hecht

# The Lack of Sabbatian Literature: On the Censorship of Jewish Books and the True Nature of Sabbatianism in Moravia and Bohemia\*

Miroslav Dyrčik

Moravia and Bohemia are areas in which Sabbatianism was deeply rooted. Although there has been known Sabbatian activity over 150 years, there is only one Sabbatian and one anti-Sabbatian treatise ever printed in these lands. The article refutes the prevailing sentiment that there was rabbinical censorship of the printing of Sabbatian literature regardless of time and place and demonstrates that this statement can be taken into account only after 1754. Instead of that, the article exemplifies that state book censorship and the near conformity of Sabbatians and non-Sabbatians in contemporary Halakha and ritual customs are the causes of the nonexistence of printed Sabbatian literature in Bohemia and Moravia.

Since its invention, printing has been used for a wide range of purposes in early modern Europe by Christians and Jews alike. With the outbreak of the Reformation, printing became a means of propaganda for the majority of Christian denominations. Denominational propaganda was not restricted to theological treatises, disputes, and apologies; but included a very large scale of printed literature: political, “national” fiction, philosophical, ethical, liturgical, homiletic and educational, among others. Regarding the Sabbatians<sup>1</sup> and their opponents, a similar usage of printing can be traced to the Jewish milieu as well.

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1 Derived from Sabbatianism, a Jewish messianic movement wide-spread in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century. The movement was titled after its figurehead, the self-proclaimed messiah Shabtay Tzvi. The movement was regarded as heretical by some contemporaries, and its followers gave rise to many controversies.

The Emden-Eybeschütz controversy is perhaps the most obvious evidence for using printing as an instrument of propaganda in the struggle between Sabbatians and their opponents.<sup>2</sup> The 1713 Hayyun controversy in Amsterdam and its reverberation in printing had rather a “political” than a religious tinge.<sup>3</sup> The treatises of famous rabbis “pursuing the heresy” are another excellent example of propagandistic literature.<sup>4</sup> The same tension between Sabbatians and anti-Sabbatians can also be found in homiletic literature.<sup>5</sup> Generally less confronting, however still propagandistic, were the famous Sabbatian treatises on “theology”, cosmogony and cosmology.<sup>6</sup>

A significant level of uncertainty nevertheless predominates in liturgical, ethical (hebr. *musar*) and conductive (hebr. *hanhagot*) literature. Even though some prayer books could easily be identified as Sabbatian,<sup>7</sup> there remains a large amount of printed liturgical books of ambiguous origin. The indistinctiveness of these books stems from the fact that the vast majority of them originated in (Lurianic) Kabbalah. This system of beliefs and practise was equally the good graces of non-Sabbatians, Sabbatians, as well as their opponents. Therefore, a liturgical book missing a distinctively Sabbatian nature could not be tacitly considered non-Sabbatian or even anti-Sabbatian, or visa-versa.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the prayer book by Jacob Emden is the only book that could be undoubtedly regarded as non-Sabbatian.<sup>9</sup> The same haziness obscures the *musar* and the *hanhagot* literature.<sup>10</sup>

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- 2 Footnotes 2–7 and 9–10 contain incomplete lists of the printed books on the subject. Jacob Emden, *Sefat Emet ve-Lashon Zehorit* (Altona, 1752); Jacob Emden, *Edut be-Ya'aqov* (Altona, 1756); Jacob Emden, *Shevirat Luchot ha-On* (Altona: Ya'abetz, 1756); Jacob Emden, *Petach Eynayim* (Altona, 1757); Yehonatan Eybeschütz, *Luchot Edut* (Altona: Aharon Katz, 1755).
- 3 *Qeshet Amrey Emet* (Amsterdam, 1713); Moses Hagiz, *Shaber Posheim* (London, 1714); Moses Hagiz, *Igeret ha-Qenaot* (Amsterdam, 1714); Moses Hagiz, *Leqet ha-Qemach* (Wandsbeck, 1726); Nehemiah Hayyun, *Modea Raba* (Amsterdam, 1714); Nehemiah Hayyun, *Shalhevet Adonay* (Amsterdam, 1714); Nehemiah Hayyun, *ha-Tzad Tzvi* (Amsterdam, 1714).
- 4 Moses Hagiz, *Sefat Emet* (Amsterdam: Shlomo Katz Propes, 1707); Jacob Sasportas, *Ohel Ya'aqov* (Amsterdam: Hertz Levi Rofe', 1737); Jacob Sasportas, *Qitzur Titzat Novel Tzvi* (Altona: Jacob Emden, 1756); Jacob Emden, *Sefer Torat ha-Qena'ot* (Altona: Jacob Emden, 1752); Jacob Emden, *Sefer Shimush* (Altona: Jacob Emden, 1758); Jacob Emden, *Sefer Hitavqut* (Altona: Jacob Emden, 1762).
- 5 Nehemiah Hayyun, *Divrey Nehemyah* (Berlin: Baruch Buchbinder, 1713); Elazar Fleckeles, *Ahavat David* (Prague, 1800).
- 6 Nehemiah Hayyun, *Raza di-Yihuda* (Venice: Bragadin, 1711); Nehemiah Hayyun, *Oz le-Elohim* (Berlin: Baruch Buchbinder, 1713).
- 7 Natan of Gaza, *Tiqunim Shonim* (Amsterdam: Yosef Atiesh; David di Gastro Tartas etc.; Frankfurt am Main, Prague etc., 1666);
- 8 This indistinctiveness deserves further research, beyond the scope of this article.
- 9 Jacob Emden, *Sidur Teffilah* (Altona: Jacob Emden, 1745–1748);
- 10 Hayim Lipschitz, *Derech Chayim* (Sulzbach: Aharon ben Uri Lipman Mavin, 1702); Jacob Sagal of Zlatowa, *Sefer Shem Ya'aqov* (Frankfurt (Oder): Michael Gotshlaq, 1716); *Chemdat Yamim* (Izmir: Yonah Ashkenazi ve-David Chazan, 1731–1732).

It is said that Moravia and Bohemia are lands in which Sabbatianism was deeply rooted.<sup>11</sup> This statement can be traced up to the present academic discourse, throughout twentieth century historiography, *Wissenschaft des Judentum*, and the Haskalah movement, back to the time of Sabbatian activity.<sup>12</sup> Contrary to this statement and the large production of books<sup>13</sup> between the year 1665 and the 1820s,<sup>14</sup> there has been just one Sabbatian and one anti-Sabbatian book ever printed in Bohemia or Moravia.<sup>15</sup> The former is a prayer book *Tiqun Qri'ah le-Kol Yom*, published for the first and the last time in Prague, in 1666.<sup>16</sup> The latter is a collection of anti-Sabbatian sermons *Ahavat David*, by Elazar Fleckeles (Prague, 1800).<sup>17</sup>

There is a gap of almost 150 years between the two printings. This striking finding could lead to two interesting, however premature, conclusions. The first being that there were no Sabbatians in Moravia and Bohemia

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- 11 These two lands are examined in unison for several reasons. They were both under the Lands of the Bohemian crown, ruled by the Austrian branch of the Habsburg dynasty at that time. Despite the fact that each land had its own Jewish administration, their Jewish populations were very closely related; many seventeenth and eighteenth century Moravian land rabbis served later as chief rabbis of Prague or Bohemia (or both simultaneously) and vice-versa. However, their affinity is documented foremost in printing; most of the prayer books printed in the second half of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century in Prague were also intended for Moravian communities; for example, see the colophons "according to customs of Bohemia, Moravia..." in *Slihot im Perush* (Prague: Bney Yehudah Baq, 1680); *Machzor mi-Kol ha-Shanah ke-Sidrah* (Prague: Yosef ben Yehuda Baq, 1684); *Tefilot Yom Kipur Qatan* (Prague: Nichdey Mosheh Katz, 1692); *Tefilot mi-Kol ha-Shanah* (Prague: Nichdey Mosheh Katz, 1704); *Tefilot mi-Kol ha-Shanah* (Prague: Nichdey Yehuda Baq, 1713); *Tefilot mi-Kol ha-Shanah* (Prague: Nichdey Yehuda Baq, 1731).
- 12 J. Emden claims that the Sabbatians surpassed their opponents in Bohemia and Moravia. See Emden, *Sefer Torat ha-Qena'ot* (see note 4), fol. 60v; G. Scholem asserts that "Moravia was one of the strongholds of Sabbatianism...". See Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 564; and lastly, M. Miller concludes that Sabbatianism is the reason for the absence of Hasidism in Moravia. See Michael Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 55–59.
- 13 Primarily in Prague. The Prague printing industry was established in 1512, and during the second half of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century two printing houses produced around 220 prints. Printing in Brno/Brünn started in 1752, and the only printing house produced 84 prints until the end of the eighteenth century. See Yeshayahu Vinograd, *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book, Part I* (Jerusalem: The Institute for Computerized Bibliography, 1995), p. 27 and 35.
- 14 That is the period of documented Sabbatian activity in Moravia or Bohemia. See Gershom Scholem, 'Redemption Through Sin', in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism: and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* by Gershom Scholem (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), pp. 78–141. (p. 80).
- 15 There is no full-scale list of printing from Prague or Brno. However, at present, in the most elaborated incomplete lists, there are no Sabbatian publications. See Yeshayahu Vinograd, *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book, Part II* (Jerusalem: The Institute for Computerized Bibliography, 1994), pp. 109–111 and 531–594; *Bibliography of the Hebrew Book 1470–1960* (National Library of Israel) at <[http://aleph.nli.org.il/F?func=find-b-O&local\\_base=mbi01](http://aleph.nli.org.il/F?func=find-b-O&local_base=mbi01)>.
- 16 Nathan of Gaza, *Tiqun Qri'ah le-Kol Yom* (Prague, 1666). According to G. Scholem, this collection of various tiqunim was arranged by Nathan of Gaza. Scholem (see note 12), p. 524.
- 17 Elazar Fleckeles, *Ahavat David* (see note 5). It is the 4<sup>th</sup> and the last part of *Olat Chodesh* (Prague, 1775–1800).

approximately between 1666 and the 1780s.<sup>18</sup> The second being that the printing efforts of these Sabbatians were suppressed by rabbis from amongst their opponents. Nevertheless, state censorship<sup>19</sup> on the one hand and the nature of Sabbatian religious movement on the other are the best explanations for the lack of printing endeavours amongst Bohemian and Moravian Sabbatians, as it will be explained. The statement that there were no Sabbatians in Bohemia and Moravia since the year 1666 is untenable. There are several controversies over Sabbatian activity in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century in Moravia and Bohemia, documented in rabbinic literature.<sup>20</sup> Some Sabbatians living in the Bohemian lands or just wandering through are known by name.<sup>21</sup> There are two families known for their Sabbatian/Frankist background in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the Jewish inhabitants of the Moravian town Prostějov/Prossnitz were called *Schebsen*, an epithet derived from the name Shabtay. Undoubtedly, these two lands were populated by Sabbatians. However, the demand of this population for specific Sabbatian literature remains disputable and it shall be discussed later in the article. Contrary to the prevailing opinion that there was rabbinical censorship of the printing of Sabbatian literature, there is no support for such general statements in contemporary sources until the Emden-Eybeschütz controversy.<sup>23</sup> The sentiment is just a wish, reflecting the post-Sabbatian negative approach to the phenomenon across the Jewish population; serving to refine, above all, the rabbinical stratum projected on to the era even long before the controversy. In fact a much more complicated situation has to be assumed prior to the controversy regarding the existence of printed Sabbatian literature. Mainly, two aspects have to be taken into account concerning the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century Jewish printing.

<sup>18</sup> The sermons included in *Ahavat David* were mostly given in the 1780s.

<sup>19</sup> During the period under discussion, state censorship in Bohemia was conducted by the Catholic Church.

<sup>20</sup> Elazar Fleckeles, *Ahavat David* (see note 5); Elazar Fleckeles, *Teshuvah me-Ahavah*, part 1 (Prague, 1809); Mordekhai Benet, *Parashat Mordekhai* (Israel, 1970); Emden, *Sefer Torat ha-Qena'ot* (see note 4); Emden, *Sefer Shimush* (see note 4); Emden, *Sefer Hitavqut* (see note 4); Prager Joseph, *Gachale Esh* (Bodleian Library, Cat. Neub. #2189).

<sup>21</sup> For example: Issachar Beer Perlhefter, Mordecai Mokiach Eisenstadt, Judah Hasid, Leibele Prossnitz, Yehonatan Eybeschütz.

<sup>22</sup> The most famous are members of the Dobrushka family, during the second half of the eighteenth century in Moravia, and members of the Wehle family, at the turn of the nineteenth century in Prague. The obscure membership of the Dobrushka family either to Sabbatianism or to Frankism, or to an amalgamation of the two, needs further research.

<sup>23</sup> Let the topic of the dispute a side. At this point, all engaged rabbis, whatever their inclination to Sabbatianism was, accepted (some unconsciously, tacitly) that Sabbatianism must be publicly denounced. For more information, see below.

The inner Jewish printing censorship was based on approbations (Hebr. *haskamot*). An author needed just three *haskamot* of any recognized rabbi regardless of their personal convictions, of their present office, or of their political, economic, and social stratum in order to print. Obtaining *haskamot* from rabbis living in three different places and publishing a treatise in a fourth place was not an exception.

Sabbatianism was not an unchanging monolith, and the perception of Sabbatianism had been changing through time as well. The re-appearance of Shabtay Tzvi after forty years in hiding (in 1706) was taken as a reasonable possibility of the upcoming eschatological events amongst all strata of the Jewish population, evoking no stronger or more elaborate opposition. Since expectations were unfulfilled, the sympathy for Sabbatianism rapidly vanished and conversely the opposition, primarily from rabbis, slowly increased. One of the first symptoms indicating the changing climate is the Hayyun controversy in Amsterdam. Nehemiah Hiyya Hayyun was expelled from many communities, Sephardic and Ashkenazi alike, before his arrival in Prague in 1713. Gaining a *haskamah* for his *Divrey Nehemiah*<sup>24</sup> from David ben Abraham Oppenheim, the chief rabbi of Prague and Bohemia, he left for Berlin abusing Oppenheim's *haskamah* for printing a different, Sabbatian treatise *Oz le-Elohim*.<sup>25</sup> He then moved to Amsterdam where the sale of the treatise gave rise to controversy. Though the controversy was political rather than religious in nature, nobody dared to defend the true nature (Sabbatian) of Hayyun's treatise. Both sides tacitly agreed that selling Sabbatian literature (at least in Amsterdam) was "improper".<sup>26</sup>

Yet the 1725 excommunications of Sabbatians were the very first comprehensive attempt to modify the Jewish printing process. These excommunications were issued in the seven most important Jewish communities of the time, and shared more or less the same phrasing generally condemning Sabbatianism.<sup>27</sup> The 1725 excommunications indicate the strengthening of opposition to the Sabbatians and the effort to cooperate on cross-communal level. On the other hand, the vague phrasing that revealed no names other than that

<sup>24</sup> Hayyun (see note 5);

<sup>25</sup> Hayyun, *Oz le-Elohim* (see note 6);

<sup>26</sup> Chacham Tzvi and Moses Hagiz recognized the true Sabbatian nature of the treatise, and aspired to put Hayyun under the ban. Nonetheless, their effort transgressed the privileges of the Amsterdam Portuguese community, the Hayyun's patronage in Amsterdam, and ironically Chacham Tzvi and Moses Hagiz were those expelled from Amsterdam.

<sup>27</sup> However, it is written in such a vague way that no Sabbatian would have hesitated to sign it. See Pawel Maciejko, 'Coitus Interruptus in And I Came this Day unto the Fountain', in *And I Came This Day unto the Fountain* ed. by Pawel Maciejko (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2014), pp. i–lii, (p. xii).

of a wandering book dealer, Moses Kamenker,<sup>28</sup> shows the enduringly weak position of the anti-Sabbatians.<sup>29</sup> Only the Emden-Eybeschütz controversy demonstrates the dominance of anti-Sabbatian propaganda. A prominent rabbi (Jacob Emden) accused another prominent rabbi (Yehonatan Eybeschütz) of being a “sectarian heretic”. None of Eybeschütz’s supporters in the controversy defended Eybeschütz’s fall to Sabbatianism, only asserting his innocence and lack of involvement in the heresy.

Since that controversy, Sabbatianism was not generally favoured, and it was definitely something which one should hide from the public.<sup>30</sup> Still, a much more complicated situation dependent mainly on local conditions, should be assumed prior to the controversy. Hayyun’s itinerant life story is significant for the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century; as a Sabbatian he had been barred from entering or had been expelled from many Sephardic communities to find patronage in many Ashkenazi (or Italian) communities. Contrarily, the excommunication of Chacham Tzvi and Moses Hagiz, as the result of the Hayyun’s controversy, exposed the impotence of a contemporary anti-Sabbatian who lacked adequate political, economic, and social strength. The persecution of anti-Sabbatian rabbis could be taken into account as an explanation of the non-existing printed Sabbatian literature in Bohemia and Moravia, but not earlier than the year 1754.<sup>31</sup> There are several studies on the chief rabbis of Prague in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century, but none touching upon their attitude towards Sabbatians.<sup>32</sup> Even though some thesis

28 Moses Meir Kamenker was an itinerant peddler of books and manuscripts, arrested in Mannheim in 1725, bearing Sabbatian letters and other writings. For more information, see Maciejko (see note 27), p. i–vi.

29 The authors of the excommunications did not dare to accuse a rabbi of any level. Moreover, the Prague excommunication was a tricky one, as P. Maciejko revealed. See below.

30 And there is not known printed literature including Sabbatian propaganda after the beginning of the controversy, but *Chemdat Yamim* (the reason being that the true Sabbatian nature of the *musar* book was in question for a long time). Therefore, this article will deal with printing in Prague only. Printing in Brno started only after the beginning of the controversy.

31 Following the appointment of Yechezkel ben Yehuda Landau as a Chief Rabbi of Prague. For more, see below.

32 The following studies deal only with chief rabbis: Albert Emil Brachvogel, *Simon Spira und sein Sohn* (Berlin: Otto Janke, 1896); Ludwig Lazarus, ‘Neue Beiträge zur Geschichte der Familie Fränkel-Spira’, in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, No. 3, 1912, pp. 334–358; Tobias Jakobovits, ‘Die Erlebnisse des Oberrabbiners Simon Spira-Wedeles in Prag (1640–1679)’, in *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Juden in der Čechoslovakischen Republik* (further just *Jahrbuch*), vol. 4, 1932, pp. 253–296; Tobias Jakobovits, ‘Das Prager und Böhmisches Landesrabbinat Ende des siebzehnten und Anfang des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts’, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. 5, 1933, pp. 79–136; Tobias Jakobovits, ‘Die Erlebnisse des R. Berl. Jeiteles als Primator der Prager Judenschaft’, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. 7, 1935, pp. 421–436; S. H. Lieben, ‘Oppenheimiana’, in *Jahrbuch*, vol. 7, 1935, pp. 437–485; S. H. Lieben, ‘David Oppenheim’, in *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 19, 1928, pp. 1–38; C. Duschinsky, ‘Rabbi David Oppenheimer. Glimpses of His Life and Activity. Derived from His Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library’, in *The Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series*, vol. 20, No. 3, 1930, pp. 217–247. The articles of Alexandr Putik are set in a wider sociological context and touching upon Prague non-



could be proposed out of these studies<sup>33</sup> an anti-Sabbatian attitude of these rabbis cannot be presupposed.<sup>34</sup> If there was a tenacious anti-Sabbatian rabbi in late seventeenth century Prague, he would have lacked adequate political, economic, and social strength.<sup>35</sup> A. Putik estimates that around 1700 there were between 100–105 rabbis in Prague.<sup>36</sup> According to his categorization of the Prague Jewish society, defined by wages and personal property, all these rabbis belonged predominately to the second lowest “social class”.<sup>37</sup> That made them politically impotent to reverse anything (including a Sabbatian treatise to be printed or sold). Only a handful of high ranking rabbis, members of the chief rabbinate and the rabbinical court, would have had potentially adequate economic and social strength to eliminate the printing or sale of Sabbatian literature. However, all previously mentioned studies indicate that the offices of both institutions were, in the late seventeenth century, subordinated to a persistent political struggle between two factions.<sup>38</sup> Their political strength was thus very weak and any of them could pay with his office in punishment for just one imprudent deed.

David ben Abraham Oppenheim, who was appointed on consent of both factions, was the first chief rabbi of Prague able to reverse (or generally prohibit) Sabbatian printing or to put a ban on the sale of Sabbatian literature. His lifelong appointment<sup>39</sup> is the best evidence for his unshakable position within the Prague Jewish community. Although no study on David Oppenheim takes

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chief rabbis and other important Jewish people in Prague of that time in more details: Alexandr Putik, 'The Prague Jewish Community in the Late 17<sup>th</sup> Century and Early 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries', in *Judaica Bohemiae*, vol. 35, 1999, pp. 4–140; Alexandr Putik, 'The Prague Sojourn of Rabbi Jacob Emden as Depicted in his Autobiography Megillat Sefer', in *Judaica Bohemiae*, vol. 42, 2006, pp. 53–124; Alexandr Putik, 'Prague Jews and Judah Hasid. A Study on the Social, Political and Religious History of the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries. Part One', in *Judaica Bohemiae*, vol. 38, 2002, pp. 72–105; Alexandr Putik, 'Prague Jews and Judah Hasid. A Study on the Social, Political and Religious History of the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries. Part Two', in *Judaica Bohemiae*, vol. 39, 2003, pp. 53–92; Alexandr Putik, 'Prague Jews and Judah Hasid. A Study on the Social, Political and Religious History of the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries. Part Three', in *Judaica Bohemiae*, vol. 46, No. 1, 2011, pp. 33–72.

- 33 The most tempting being that Sabbatians were no threat to them, either because there were no Sabbatians, or better because the rabbis themselves were Sabbatians. Nonetheless, the indifference (or rather avoidance) of scholars to Sabbatianism as it was common up to the mid twentieth century is the most likely explanation.
- 34 No researcher approaches the rest of the Prague rabbis on a wider level, information about them is given just in the context of the chief rabbi. A. Putik only estimates their number and their positions in the social strata of the Prague Jewish community at the turn of the eighteenth century. See below.
- 35 As well as in the case of Cacham Tzvi and Moses Hagiz, in Amsterdam.
- 36 The number increased up to 150 in 1720'. See Putik, 'Prague Jews, Part One' (see note 32), p. 97.
- 37 Ibid. p. 100–101.
- 38 See: Putik, 'The Prague Jewish Community' (see note 32); Putik, 'Prague Jews, Part One' (see note 32).
- 39 David Oppenheim was the Chief Rabbi of Prague from 1703 until his death in 1736. Moreover, from 1713, he was simultaneously the Chief Rabbi of Bohemia.

his attitude towards Sabbatianism into account, a certain conclusion could be drawn. David Oppenheim's approach to Sabbatianism was indifferent, agnostic or even sympathetic, but absolutely not hostile.

This deduction can be drawn from the events which happened in his close circle. First of all, there was a meeting of prominent Sabbatians held in Mikulov/Nikolsburg, in late 1698 or early 1699.<sup>40</sup> Other events are linked to some of the participants of the meeting. Between the years 1700 and 1703, Judah Hasid and his co-religionists wandered through the lands of Moravia and Bohemia soliciting assistance for their exodus and settlement in the Holy land.<sup>41</sup> David Oppenheim was the Moravian land rabbi and subsequently the chief rabbi of Prague at the time, and there is no known resistance from his side to the campaign.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps the most telling is David Oppenheim's attitude toward Sabbatians in the Hayyun controversy. Elisheva Carlebach titled this attitude the "policy of silence".<sup>43</sup> Nehemiah Hiyya Hayyun was given a *haskamah* by David Oppenheim but Hayyun abused this *haskamah* for publishing another book, the cause of the whole controversy.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, the initiators of the controversy, Chacham Tzvi and Moses Hagiz, exploited Oppenheim's name in favour of their campaign. Both sides strove for Oppenheim's support but none gained it. Oppenheim's only response to the controversy was disappointment with both sides, expressed in his private correspondence. No official public statement or action was undertaken by David Oppenheim.<sup>45</sup>

A similar "policy of non-interference"<sup>46</sup> by Oppenheim can be supposed considering the 1725 excommunication of Sabbatians in Prague. This ban was just one of seven issued in various communities that year. The bans were intended to protect Jewish society against Sabbatianism. However, the Prague excommunication was actually a tricky one as P. Maciejko revealed.<sup>47</sup> Since it contained ambivalent phrasing<sup>48</sup> and signatures mostly of known Sabbatians, it turned into a Sabbatian "pamphlet". David Oppenheim simply did not sign

40 Among others, there were Judah Hasid, Hayim ben Solomon Malakh, Joshua Heshel Tzoref, and Tzvi Hirsh ben Jerahmeel Hotsh.

41 In Bohemia, the emissaries largely lobbied in Prague.

42 Still, the lack of evidence is no proof. Moreover, there is a possibility that he was not aware of the events, due to his frequent absence from Nikolsburg. However, in the context of all events with Sabbatian backgrounds occurring in his very close proximity, all this seems unlikely.

43 Elisheva Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy: Rabbi Moses Hagiz and the Sabbatian Controversies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 76–80.

44 See notes 24 and 25.

45 Carlebach (see note 43), p. 124–125.

46 Or again with E. Carlebach it could be said the „policy of silence“.

47 Maciejko, 'Coitus' (see note 27), p. ix–xvii.

48 Ibid., p. xii–xiii.

the ban. It is not clear if David Oppenheim knew the true nature of the ban,<sup>49</sup> but his tendency not to interfere in Sabbatian matters publicly is a more likely explanation for not signing the ban than to presuppose Oppenheim's sympathy or antipathy to Sabbatians.<sup>50</sup>

Since after Oppenheim's death, the subsequent chief rabbi of Prague was Isaac ben Yechiel Michel Spira, a teacher and father-in-law of the most famous Sabbatian, Yehonatan Eybeschütz, an anti-Sabbatian effort to suppress Sabbatian printing in Prague could not be supposed between Oppenheim's death and Landau's appointment.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the first clearly documented anti-Sabbatian chief rabbi of Prague was Yechezkel ben Yehuda Landau, known for his lenient attitude in the Emden-Eybeschütz controversy.<sup>52</sup> He was appointed in 1754, a date corresponding with the end of open-minded public Sabbatian appearances.<sup>53</sup>

Contrary to the inner Jewish censorship the external, gentile, censorship definitely had a strong influence on the lack of Sabbatian and anti-Sabbatian literature in Bohemia and Moravia. The re-Catholicization process of Czech lands had begun with the defeat of the Czech nobility in the battle of the White Mountain in 1620. State control of book production was an essential part of the process. The main objectives of the censors were not only the signing and sealing treatises intended for printing, but also the inspection of books already printed or imported from abroad, and searching for illegal ones. Producers, distributors, owners, and other people handling illegal books who were identified were put to justice, fined and sentenced. The confiscated illegal books

49 It can be assumed that he did, as did many other rabbis of the time.

50 Oppenheim's potential antipathy to Eybeschütz can also be taken into account.

51 The Spira family's long inclination to messianism, and particularly the obscure affinity to Sabbatianism, deserved further research.

52 According to Sid Z. Leiman, there were basically three attitudes to Eybeschütz in the controversy; the most rigorous one being held by Jacob Emden: that Eybeschütz should be excommunicated in any case. The "clever" one, stated by Jacob Joshua Falk: that Eybeschütz should be forced to plead his guilt (being a Sabbatian) and be compelled to repent. The lenient one suggested by Yechezkel Landau: that a general ban (on Sabbatians) should be disseminated and all *gedoley ha-dor* should be asked for signing (including Eybeschütz). For more, see Sid Z. Leiman, "When a Rabbi is Accused of Heresy: The Stance of Rabbi Jacob Joshua Falk in the Emden- Eybeschütz Controversy", in *Rabbinic Culture and Its Critics. Jewish Authority, Dissent, and Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Times* ed. by Daniel Frank and Matt Goldish (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008).

53 There is a thesis that Y. Landau was elected as the Prague Chief Rabbi just for his lenient approach to Y. Eybeschütz and that the election was the result of the influence of Prague Sabbatian circles. Originally Aryeh Leib of Amsterdam, Jacob Emden's brother-in-law, should have been elected Spira's successor. The thesis indicates strong political influence of Prague Sabbatians in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century and thus supports the thesis of the article that there could not be a sufficient anti-Sabbatian political strength to suppress Sabbatian printing before 1754. See David Katz, *A Case Study in the Formation of a Super-Rabbi: The Early Years of Rabbi Ezekiel Landau, 1713-1754* (College Park: University of Maryland, 2004) Ph.D. Thesis, p. 332-359.

were burnt, very often publicly. The same practice was, more or less, exerted on Jewish books.<sup>54</sup> In principle, there was a constantly growing list of banned Jewish books. The list comprised of the Talmud, Talmud-derived literature, and Kabbalistic treatises in general. Every manuscript intended for printing (or an inspected book) not included in the list underwent a detailed proof-reading procedure.

The procedure ended in three ways: a manuscript was approved for printing with no objection (or an inspected book was not confiscated); a manuscript was returned with objections to its content, and after a correction of the text was approved for printing (or some passages of an inspected book were blacked out and the book was returned to its owner); a manuscript was rejected for printing and was submitted to the list of banned Jewish books (or an inspected book was confiscated and added to the list). The procedure for reprinting was simplified and took much less time.<sup>55</sup>

The above-mentioned affinity between Sabbatian and generally Kabbalistic literature is the main reason for the non-existence of printed Sabbatian literature in Prague. Sabbatian literature did not reveal its genuine nature ostentatiously but concealed it. Sabbatian literature is indeed one and the same with Kabbalistic literature, just with allusions to the name of Shabtay Tzvi<sup>56</sup> hidden to the extent that even anti-Sabbatian rabbis at the time were not able to confidently recognize all the Sabbatian treatises. Moreover, some Sabbatian treatises are originally Kabbalistic, furnished with Sabbatian explanations,

54 Still, state oppression, book raids, and confiscation varied in time and place, and predominantly depended on the censor's personality. Generally speaking, the oppression was stronger from 1672 on, when Prague's printing houses were re-opened, up to the 1720s. State oppression reached its peak in Bohemia at the beginning of Franciscus Haselbauer's long-lasting appointment (1712–1756). In 1712, a coordinated raid on forty-seven households in the Prague community was undertaken, and 1,171 books were confiscated (499 were burnt; 349 were "corrected" and returned to their owners; and 323 were returned to their owners without any "correction"). An edict was issued in 1714 ordering that every Jewish book in Bohemia had to be brought into the Prague Old town hall within six weeks or be confiscated (the unrealistic conditions were changed and the operation lasted up to the year 1717. Nevertheless, the two aforementioned events perhaps forced David Oppenheim to move his famous collection of Jewish manuscripts and books). However, after that, the intensity of the oppression slowly declined in the course of time. Contrary to the fading oppression, the process of censorship remained intact until Joseph II's reforms in 1781. The censorship of Jewish books in the Czech lands was under the oversight of an ordinary. In the case of Bohemia (and Prague in particular), it was the Archbishop of Prague and the Prague consistory. Because of the shortage of Hebrew language (and naturally Yiddish as well) experts in the Bohemian Ordinary, censors were recruited from amongst the professors of Charles-Ferdinand University. To supplement their poor knowledge of the language and rabbinical (and generally Jewish) literature, baptized Jews were also hired. With the appointment of the censor, Franciscus Haselbauer (1712–1756), the post of Prague Jewish pre-censor was established. The pre-censor would have referred Christian authorities to disputable passages of manuscripts intended for printing, and have negotiated with them in Jewish favour. See Putik, 'The Prague Jewish Community' (see note 32), p. 28–37.

55 Ibid.

56 Or other formulations of the words.

additions or “corrections”, as is the case with the well-known *Qitzur Shney Luchot ha-Berit*.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to the official printing in Prague, illegal printing also existed. Other than the fact that it existed, it is very hard to uncover further information about this black market. The existent illegal printings naturally do not bear any clear information about their producers or about the province of production.<sup>58</sup> The existence of other illegal books can only be inferred from miscellaneous contemporary sources. The illegal printing of prayer books is documented, for example.<sup>59</sup> The black market would have been a good opportunity for Sabbatian propaganda, but no known contemporary source is indicative of it. Though the possibility cannot be abandoned completely,<sup>60</sup> two aspects reduce this possibility to a minimum.

Considering theological, cosmogonic and cosmological Sabbatian treatises<sup>61</sup> the amount of possible readers, and above all, buyers, has to be taken into account. This kind of literature demands a very high level of education, including knowledge of Hebrew and Kabbalistic disputations. Such an education was definitely beyond the grasp of the vast majority of the population. Concealment, possible prosecution, and the low demand made printing these Sabbatian treatises a precarious business with no profit guaranteed. Therefore, the only two Sabbatian treatises written in Bohemia and Moravia existed only in manuscripts until recently.<sup>62</sup>

The second aspect is the nature of the Sabbatian religious movement. According to Gershom Scholem, two distinct attitudes of believers developed after the failure of Shabtay Tzvi in 1666. The majority returned to their beliefs before the outbreak of the Sabbatian movement, but a significant minority refused to renounce their belief in the messianic role of Shabtay Tzvi and calculated the date(s) of his future reappearance or resurrection. The latter should have observed their faith mostly secretly or semi-secretly, although some Sabbatians demonstrated their belief publicly.

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57 It said that the introduction by Yechiel Michel Epstein contains allusions to the name Shabtay Tzvi, and that these allusions are all its Sabbatian nature. See Yeshayah ben Abraham Horowitz, Yechiel Michel Epstein, *Qitzur Shney Luchot ha-Berit* (Fürth, 1693).

58 Olga Sixtova identified Baq's printing house as the producers of some of these illegal books; still other aspects (for example distributors, ways of distribution, average customers) remain unknown. Olga Sixtova, 'Jewish Printers and Printing Press in Prague 1512–1670 (1672)', in *Hebrew Printing in Bohemia and Moravia* ed. by Olga Sixtova (Prague, 2012), pp. 33–74, (p. 73–74).

59 See Putik, 'The Prague Jewish Community' (see note 32), p. 28–37.

60 The lack of evidence is not sufficient proof.

61 Meaning the cornerstones of Sabbatian literature.

62 Leibele Prossnitz, *Zaddik Yesod Olam: Interpretation of the Book of Ruth* (Jerusalem: Yeshivat Or Hozer, 1983); Eibeschutz Jonathan, *And I Came This Day unto the Fountain* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2014).

The nature of their religious movement after Shabtay's conversion varied from the "Halakhic" to the antinomian. The "Halakhic Sabbatians" followed the Halakha, which was observed by the majority with just a few minor variations.<sup>63</sup> This group of Sabbatians very often tended to asceticism. The antinomian Sabbatians followed the so called "celestial Halakha", a reversed Halakhic system: what was forbidden became permitted and vice-versa. Elisheva Carlebach revealed that after the conversion of Shabtay Tzvi, there were other Jews believing in the immediate coming of the messiah alongside the Sabbatians. Analysing an eighteenth century text *Shire Yehuda*, she uncovered the author's belief that the appropriate time for immediate redemption was delayed because of omitting just two amens. It is essential that the text composed by this "messianic enthusiast"<sup>64</sup> is devoid of any Sabbatian specifics.<sup>65</sup>

Alexander Putik discovered an identical religious attitude amongst the Jews of Prague in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century. This, as Putik calls it, "acute messianism" was deduced from the sympathy of Jewish leaders in Prague to Yudah Hasid's messianic project, and from the altered practice of recording names in the Prague *Mohelbuch*. This state of affairs lasted up to 1720, when the synagogue of Yudah Hasid's followers was destroyed.<sup>66</sup>

The findings of both scholars indicate more general aspects of Jewish religion of that time. Jews were more sensitive toward the immediate coming of the messiah since the spread of Lurianic views throughout the masses. This messianic enthusiasm varied to a great extent and depended on individual personality. There were groups of Sabbatians. There also were groups of their opponents who still believed in the immediate coming of the messiah while denying the messianic aspirations of Shabtay Tzvi.

The attitudes of the majority towards Sabbatian messianism varied over time and place. The peaks of sympathy were generally reached around the years 1706 and 1714, when the re-appearance/resurrection of Shabtay Tzvi was predicted, and at places where an enthusiastic Sabbatian preacher arrived or emerged. However, keeping the aspiration unresolved, the large majority of Jewish society was agnostic to the messianic role of Shabtay Tzvi, at least at the end of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. A similar situation prevailed in Bohemia and Moravia. There is little known evidence for Sabbatian activity from after Shabtay Tzvi's conversion

63 The best known are the celebration of the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av and the 10<sup>th</sup> of Tevet instead of fasting, and reciting the 21<sup>st</sup> Psalm three times a day.

64 As Elisheva Carlebach called its author, Yehudah Leib Zelechov.

65 Elisheva Carlebach, 'Two Amens That Delayed the Redemption: Jewish Messianism and Popular Spirituality in the Post-Sabbatian Century', in *The Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series*, vol. 82, no. 3, 1992, pp. 241–261.

66 Putik, 'Prague Jews, Part One – Three' (see note 32).

until 1697.<sup>67</sup> In that year, a Sabbatian meeting was held in Nikolsburg, and then Judah Hasid and his emissaries wandered through both lands until 1702. Perhaps one of them instigated Leibele Prossnitz<sup>68</sup> for his career of a Sabbatian preacher.<sup>69</sup> Around 1705, an affair concerning a Sabbatian circle in Prague broke out. The famous Sabbatian Nehemiah Hayyun travelled throughout Moravia and Bohemia in 1713. From that time on there is a lack of evidence until the involvement of Yehonatan Eybeschütz and Leibele Prossnitz in the 1725 confiscation of Sabbatian documents. Even though there is sufficient evidence of Sabbatians and their activity at certain stages, there is little information on the nature of their religious practise. This lack of information can be a reflection of the agreement between ritual customs of Sabbatians and the rest of the population. The lack of evidence for antinomian activity among Sabbatians in Moravia and Bohemia further supports this assumption.<sup>70</sup> Analysing the only document describing religious practice of a Sabbatian in more detail serves as the best example. The document is a passage on Leibele Prossnitz in *Bashraybung fun Shabtay Tzvi* by a beadle (Hebr. *shamash*) of the Ashkenazic community in Amsterdam Leib ben Ozer.<sup>71</sup> The author claims that he wrote down the story about Leibele Prossnitz exactly as he had heard it from the mouth of savants and that it had been confirmed by prominent people.<sup>72</sup> There is not much doubt about the veracity of the text. Though, Leib ben Ozer admits that he previously had a liking to Sabbatianism,<sup>73</sup> the eventual hostility of the ex-sympathizer does not contaminate the text about Leibele Prossnitz; an event when Leibele Prossnitz sacrifices a black rooster to the *sitra achra* is the breaking point of the story, changing the narrator's attitude towards Leibele Prossnitz.<sup>74</sup> If the story was a fabrication of Leib ben Ozer himself, it would not contain such a twist. The attitude would be the same from the beginning to the end.

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67 There is only information on the activity of Issachar Beer Perlehefer in Prague, and of Mordecai Mokiach Eisenstadt in Bohemia and Moravia.

68 A toponym derived from the Moravian town of Prostějov/Prossnitz, the Moravian hometown of Leibele after his marriage.

69 As well as a prophet and a messiah.

70 Jacob Emden accused Schöndel Dobrushka, a benefactress of the Moravian Sabbatians, of sexual impudence. See Jacob Emden, *Sefer Hitavqut* (Lvov: Michal Wolf, 1877), fol. 19v, fol. 24r, fol. 30v, fol. 32v, fol. 43r, fol. 45v, fol. 50r, fol. 82r. However, Emden's accusation has to be taken with great reservations.

71 Leib ben Ozer, *Sipur Ma'ase Shabtay Tzvi: Basharybung fun Shabtay Tzvi* (Jerusalem: Mirkaz Zalman Shazar, 1978), pp. 167–212.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 167.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

74 Up to this event, the attitude of the majority of Jews in Prossnitz was sympathetic or indifferent towards Leibele Prossnitz. The attitude was rather hostile or at least suspicious afterwards.

Since 1702, Leibele Prossnitz gradually won favour of the vast majority until only a few opponents were left. Up to the sacrifice of the rooster, in the late 1706,<sup>75</sup> Leibele's "extraordinary" deeds used to be explained as those of a prophet of God. Afterwards his deeds were regarded as fraudulent, and just a handful of his adherents remained loyal. Nevertheless, the religious practice of Leibele Prossnitz as described persisted intact all the time. Except for the sacrifice, Leibele's religious practice is described within the framework of contemporary Halakha. Furthermore, Leibele Prossnitz is described as going beyond average "orthodox" practice. His frequent fasts and immersions in the *mikveh* indicate an ascetic inclination.

Up to this point, just one of Leibele's deeds in the story is considered heretical or antinomian, and there is no implication that Leibele Prossnitz ever wanted his adherents to transgress contemporary Halakha. In fact, there is no indication of antinomian Sabbatian religious practice in Moravia and Bohemia at all. Therefore, it could be concluded that Sabbatians and other messianic enthusiasts of the late seventeenth and of the early eighteenth century did not differ expressively in religious practice. Hence, there was no need for specific Sabbatian literature, but just the "standard" liturgical, *musar* and *hanhagot* books.

## Conclusion

The inner Jewish (rabbinical) censorship had no influence on the lack of Sabbatian printing in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century Prague. There are two reasons for that, in principle. Up to the appointment of David Oppenheim, the Prague rabbis lacked adequate economic, political, and social strength. Contrarily, David Oppenheim and his successor in the chief-rabbinate of Prague, Isaac ben Yechiel Michel Spira, kept the policy of not interfering in the Sabbatian matters publicly. Thus the first openly anti-Sabbatian rabbi with adequate political and social strength in Prague was Yechezkel ben Yehuda Landau after 1754.

On the other hand, the external state (church) censorship had great influence on the lack of Sabbatian printing in Prague. Since Kabbalistic literature was generally banned in the Bohemian lands, the indistinctiveness between Sabbatian and Kabbalistic treatises made the official printing of Sabbatian literature in the late seventeenth century and in the first half of the eighteenth

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<sup>75</sup> Or early 1707; it is not possible to infer the exact date from the text. See Ozer (see note 75), p. 179–180.



century in Prague impossible. The state's books censorship of the time was pertinacious.

Alongside the official Jewish printing industry in Prague, an illegal one also existed. None known sources indicate illegal Sabbatian literature printed in Prague, yet the possibility cannot be excluded completely since the lack of evidence is not the evidence of lack. However, two aspects reduce the possibility to a minimum: "Theological", cosmogonic and cosmological Sabbatian treatises demand a very high level of education beyond the grasp of the vast majority of the population. These treatises garner a small amount of potential readers all around the world and thus put their publishers in uncertainty of any profit. Illegal production and distribution (within the Bohemian lands and abroad) and possible prosecution made this business even more precarious in Prague.

The story of Leibele Prossnitz in *Bashraybung fun Shabtay Tzvi*, the only source describing ritual customs of a Moravian/Bohemian Sabbatian in detail, does not contain any transgression of contemporary Halakha. The conformity of Sabbatian and non-Sabbatian Halakha, and the near conformity in their religious practice mean that Bohemian and Moravian Sabbatians did not require separate, specific Sabbatian printings of liturgical, *musar* and *hanhagot* literature.

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# Images

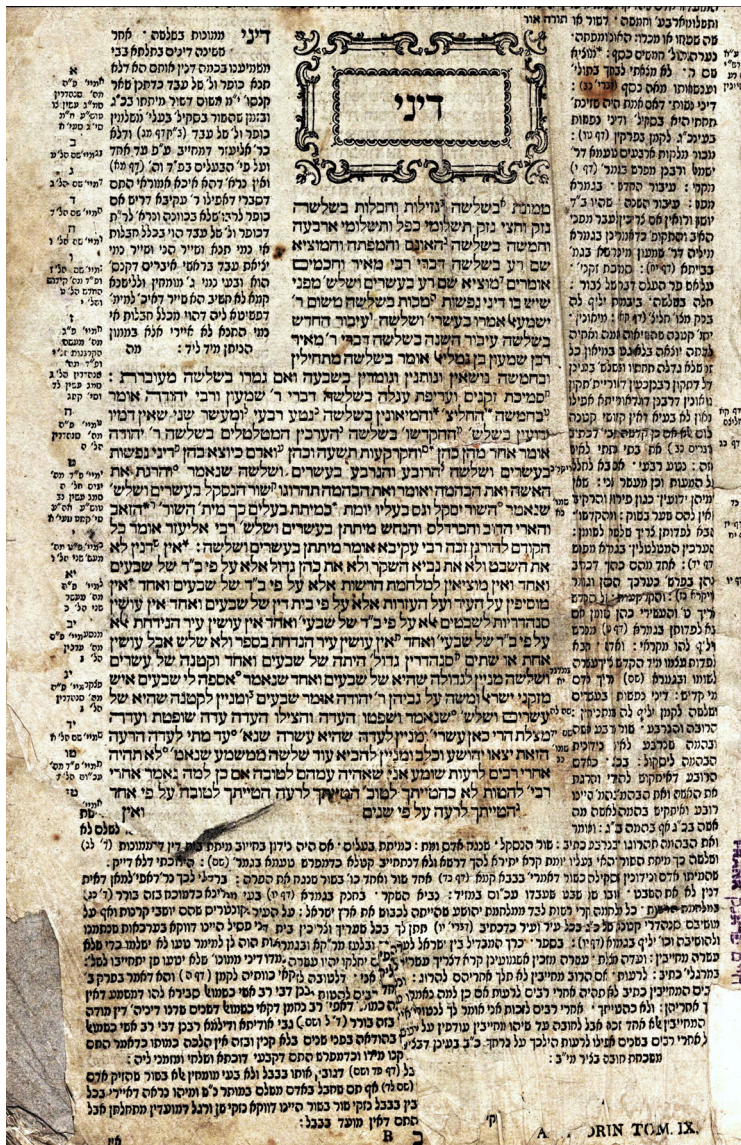


Image 2: Page from Hraschanzky's Talmud edition, tractate Sanhedrin, Vienna, 1795; library of the Kurt-and-Ursula-Center of Jewish Studies, Palacký University, Olomouc (henceforth CJS)

# Christian Printers as Agents of Jewish Modernization? Hebrew Printing Houses in Prague, Brno and Vienna, 1780–1850\*

Louise Hecht

The paper traces the general socio-political changes in the Jewish and Christian society of the Habsburg Monarchy from the mid-eighteenth until the mid-nineteenth century; first, it assesses the impact of laws and state institutions on printing and printing houses in general. In the second part it maps the Hebrew printing houses in Prague, Brno and Vienna between 1780 and 1850 (with an emphasis on Vienna) and analyzes their output on a comparative level. Based on the fact that during most of the period under consideration the Hebrew printing presses in the Bohemian lands and Vienna were owned by Christians, it furthermore considers the intriguing question, whether Christian printers actively tried to promote the modernization of Jewish society by publishing maskilic literature.

As Elchanan Reiner and other scholars of Jewish booklore have established in their studies in the last twenty years,<sup>1</sup> Jewish reading culture slowly developed since the late sixteenth century. This process was due, among others, to Yiddish language publications that addressed women and lesser educated strata of Jewish society.<sup>2</sup> Just as in the Christian society, the establishment of printing

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1 Elchanan Reiner, 'The Ashkenazi Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript versus Printed Book', in *Polin* 10 (1997), p. 85–98.

2 On early Yiddish prints and their prospective audience cf. Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs: Listening to the Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), p. 5–6 (+ fn. 5 and 6); Shmuel Niger, 'Yiddish Literature and the Female Reader', in *Women of the Word*, ed. by Judith Baskin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), p. 70–90 (abridged English translation of a Yiddish article, originally published in 1919).

houses and the dissemination of books instigated far-reaching changes in all areas of Jewish intellectual life. The changed study habits of the Jewish intellectual elite after the spreading of authoritative legal codices in print<sup>3</sup> and the dissemination of books in the vernacular incited the democratization of Ashkenazi Jewish culture during the early modern period.

However, in central European society communication and information considerably improved in quality and quantity during the eighteenth century and knowledge became a central factor for upward social mobility, as Jürgen Habermas stated in his influential book *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, in 1962. Frédéric Barbier, relying on Habermas' study, recently affirmed that this "secondary revolution of the media"<sup>4</sup> was not brought about by technical innovations, as the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century or the development of electronic media in the twentieth;<sup>5</sup> nevertheless, book production dramatically increased. Since mid-eighteenth century children were targeted as a new reading audience, while women and lower strata of the bourgeois society were more vigorously recruited. As a consequence, literary genres diversified and formerly unknown or less familiar genres, such as textbooks, readers, journals and novels gained acceptance. The dissemination of new reading habits that preferred extensive over intensive reading,<sup>6</sup> proved to be of crucial importance for the development of the *Leserevolution* (reading revolution)<sup>7</sup> in the second half of the century and finally produced the so-called *Lesewut* (reading mania) around 1800.

Similar phenomena concurrently emerged in the Jewish world, as Zeev Gries demonstrated in his research on the Jewish book market and the readers' community.<sup>8</sup> Parallel to the German Enlightenment, the Jewish Enlightenment, or Haskalah movement, zealously pushed for a language shift. The German enlighteners gradually replaced the scholarly Latin by the German

3 Cf. Elchanan Reiner, 'Beyond the Realm of Haskalah: Changing Learning Patterns in Jewish Traditional Society', in *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 6 (2007), p. 123–133 (Hebrew).

4 Barbier's term refers to Marshal McLuhan's argument in his ground-breaking book *The Gutenberg Galaxy* that the technology predominantly used in a certain period (i.e. scripture/handwriting, moveable type/print, electronic media) heavily impact on the socio-economic and political structure of the society; cf. Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

5 Frédéric Barbier, *L'Europe de Gutenberg: Le livre et l'invention de la modernité occidentale* (Paris: Belin, 2006), p. 220–221.

6 While the terms are usually applied to language study today, it originally referred to the transition from a restricted corpus of (predominantly religious) texts to a broad range of general reading matters, cf. Sven A. Jørgensen, Klaus Bohnen, Per Øhrgaard, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, 1740–1789: Aufklärung, Sturm und Drang, frühe Klassik* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1990), p. 85.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 80.

8 Zeev Gries, *The Book in the Jewish World, 1700–1900* (Oxford et al.: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007), p. 13–34.

vernacular and thereby included women and lesser educated parts of society into the public discourse; the Haskalah movement, on the other hand, remained rather exclusive.<sup>9</sup> The Maskilim (Jewish enlighteners) encouraged the use of “pure biblical Hebrew” (purged of Aramaic words and phrases that are typical of the traditional rabbinic idiom) and sought to transform it from a sacred tongue into a scholarly language. Yet, the highly sophisticated Hebrew of the Haskalah movement required many years of study and was thus inaccessible to women and lesser educated men alike.

Simultaneously, central European Jewry underwent a language-shift from western Yiddish to high-German, with “German printed in Hebrew letters” (also called *Judendeutsch*) as an intermediary stage. This codeswitching was enthusiastically welcomed by the Maskilim. The Maskilim considered perfect mastery of the German language a precondition for the successful – and from their perspective desirable – integration of Jews into the majority population; this integration should abolish the – from their point of view – disturbing opposition between being a Jew and being a citizen. Regarding the role of German, the Maskilim’s position perfectly corresponded with the language policy of central European (specifically Habsburg) state authorities vis-à-vis Jews.

Like all enlighteners, the Maskilim advocated a sweeping reformation of traditional (Jewish) society which they sought to bring about by a far-reaching educational campaign.<sup>10</sup> This campaign included the re-structuring of the traditional institutions of Jewish education (hadarim and yeshivot) by integrating secular studies and new teaching methods. Hence, the Maskilim revolutionized Jewish literary genres by introducing textbooks and readers for Jewish and general subjects into the Jewish library. Furthermore, they wrote pedagogical literature and established journals in order to spread their ideas and to create a Jewish “Republic of Letters”. Following the developments in the gentile society, the Maskilim sought to educate Jewish society to extensive reading since the second half of the eighteenth century.

For the sake of this study, Haskalah literature is defined as reading material produced by Maskilim for a Jewish audience in Hebrew or German printed in Hebrew letters; it comprises non-traditional genres in Jewish literature (journals, textbooks and books on secular subjects), as well as maskilic Bible

9 For the consequences of the language shifts in general and Jewish Enlightenment, especially regarding women, cf. Louise Hecht, ‘The Haskalah in Bohemia and Moravia – a gendered perspective’, in *The Enlightenment in Bohemia: Religion, morality and multiculturalism*, ed. by Ivo Cerman, Rita Krueger, Susan Reynolds (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2011), p. 253–272 (p. 260–1).

10 On the educational impetus of Maskilim, especially in the Bohemian lands, cf. Louise Hecht, *Ein jüdischer Aufklärer in Böhmen: Der Pädagoge und Reformler Peter Beer, 1758–1838* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), chap. 3.



translations and Bible commentaries. For practical reasons, maskilic books in other European languages had to be excluded from the survey.

Based on the above-mentioned considerations the paper will explore the following assumptions:

1. Since Maskilim only constituted a small minority within Jewish society, they had to rely on the support of the state and/or institutions within gentile society for the dissemination of their reform ideas.
2. Despite the humble number of Maskilim, the output of Haskalah literature in the Habsburg Monarchy between 1780 and 1850 was significant.
3. During most of the period under consideration, the Hebrew printing presses in the Bohemian lands and Vienna were owned by Christians.
4. Can Christian printers and publishers thus be considered instrumental in promoting Haskalah in the Habsburg Monarchy? Additionally, what was their role in the dissemination of Haskalah literature?

In order to better understand the role of Hebrew printing houses, I chose a comparative approach, assessing the printing houses of Prague, Brno and Vienna. By investigating the history and output of the Hebrew printing houses in these three cities, the paper aims at a maximum diversity. Prague boasted a large and established Jewish community with a venerated tradition in Jewish printing that de-generated and re-generated between 1780 and 1850. Brno, as a royal town, had a *privilegium de non tolerandis iudeis* from 1454 that was only abolished in 1848. It meant that Jews were not allowed to live inside the city; therefore, it hosted neither a Jewish community nor individual Jews.<sup>11</sup> In Vienna, on the other hand, individual Jews were tolerated, but for the period under consideration there was neither a formal Jewish community with corporate rights nor any tradition in Hebrew printing. Since the printing shops in Prague and Brno are comprehensively covered by two papers in this volume (Dagmar Hudečková for Prague and Thomas Soxberger for Brno), I will only summarize their findings and focus on the establishment of Hebrew printing in Vienna.

## Historical background – State Institutions

The political situation in the Habsburg Monarchy substantially differed from neighboring countries; this also impacted the book market. The political fragmentation of the German lands encouraged the establishment of printing houses and publishers even in many small towns, and thereby considerably

<sup>11</sup> From the end of the eighteenth century onward, however, individual Jews (e.g. tobacco lease holders) could get permissions to reside in the outskirts of the city.

promoted the book market, whereas a relatively high degree of centralization impeded similar developments in the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>12</sup> Due to this lack of competition, the number of printing houses in the Habsburg Monarchy as well as the quality of their output remained low. While Maria Theresa sought to raise the standards of printing during her reign, she did not endorse a considerable increase in the number of printing shops. According to her trade regulations for printers from 1771, printing houses were only to be established in provincial capitals and major cities, in order to prevent “harmful competition”.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the centralized political power of the Habsburg Monarchy made it more difficult to circumvent censorship than in the German lands,<sup>14</sup> where printers could sometimes avoid censorship problems by moving to more liberal places. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the printing profession and the book market in the Habsburg Monarchy severely lagged behind other places, like Italy, France and the German lands.

The quality and quantity of books and printed matters in the Habsburg Monarchy were far from satisfactory; readers, therefore, used to satisfy their demand through import, mostly from the German lands. This caused an undesirable cash flow abroad. The mercantile system, the economic doctrine of the era, sought to maximize foreign trade surplus. Printing houses as well as the necessary supply and equipment for printing, like paper production and type-foundry, were thus mainly assessed from an economic perspective. They were urged to compete with foreign products. Traditional privileges and monopoly rights were granted rather restrictively (e.g. to the Viennese printer Johann Thomas Edler von Trattner for type-foundry), because Maria Theresa feared that monopolies could harm the boom of the Austrian printing trade.<sup>15</sup> Along these lines, the Court Decree from 18 September 1767 finally removed printers from the jurisdiction of universities (i.e. the Jesuits) and incorporated them into the Chamber of Crafts and Commerce.<sup>16</sup> As a consequence, the

12 Peter R. Frank/Johannes Frimmel, *Buchwesen in Wien 1750–1850: Kommentiertes Verzeichnis der Buchdrucker, Buchhändler und Verleger* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2008), p.vii.

13 Christian d’Elvert, *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Statistik Mährens und Österreichisch-Schlesiens, 1. Bd. Geschichte des Bücher- und Steindruckes* (Brno: Rohrer’s Erben, 1854), p. 78.

14 Frank/Frimmel, *Buchwesen in Wien 1750–1850* (see note 7), p.vii–viii emphasize that censorship – although more leniently applied in the Hungarian part – was exercised coherently throughout the Habsburg Monarchy.

15 Ibid., p. 78–80 and Anton Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte, 1482–1882*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Verlag des Comités zur Feier der 400-jährigen Einführung der Buchdruckerkunst in Wien, 1887), p. 82–88, 94, 97–98, 78.

16 Ibid., p. 103. There were already previous attempts to remove printing from the realm of universities and incorporate it into the Bureau for Crafts and Commerce (e.g. in Moravia with a rescript from 10 February 1753). However, the universities for some time successfully asserted their traditional rights, cf. d’Elvert, *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Statistik Mährens* (see note 13), p. 78.

material situation and subsequently also the public image of printers considerably improved during the reign of Maria Theresa.

Another significant factor that boosted the book market in the Habsburg Monarchy during the eighteenth century was a lenient copy right policy. Only a minority discussed copy right issues under the precepts of intellectual property. The majority viewed copy right from the point of utility theory, governed by the mercantile system; they encouraged the reprint of foreign books, while concurrently claiming protection for local production.<sup>17</sup> The peculiar political situation after Maria Theresa's accession to the throne helped to advance this practice. Copy right was protected by imperial privileges in the Holy Roman Empire. Since Maria Theresa was the ruler of the Habsburg Monarchy, but not the Empress of the Empire (an office she had secured for her husband Franz Stephan of Lothringen), she deliberately made no mention of these imperial privileges in the hereditary lands. Reprints of foreign books and authors were thus in fact legalized; domestic books, on the other hand, were protected against unauthorized reissues.

The essential impact, however, was brought about by the reform of higher education and the implementation of compulsory primary education, as part of Maria Theresa's reformation policy during the 1760s and 1770s. Regarding universities, the abolition of the Jesuit Order that had ruled higher education was of crucial importance; after its removal from all institutions in 1773, universities were transformed into (secular) state-governed bodies. The regulation of primary education in 1774 had the most immediate effect on the printing business. It enormously stimulated the production of readers, textbooks and pedagogic writings in general.<sup>18</sup> Already in 1772 the *Normalschulbücher-verlag*, a publishing house for textbooks and pedagogic literature was established in Vienna; equivalent publishing houses were founded in Prague and other provincial capitals in the following years.<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, Maria Theresa's literacy campaign, multiplied the number of (potential) readers; on the other hand, it inspired enlighteners to outline their ideas about the reformation of society. Despite the emphasis on domestic production, the new value attributed to knowledge and information definitely helped the literary market to unfold and to internationalize the book trade.

<sup>17</sup> Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte* (see note 15), p. 103–4.

<sup>18</sup> Louise Hecht, "Um die Judenschaft in Böhmen...der bürgerlichen Bestimmung immer näher zu bringen": Jüdische Schulen und Schulbücher in Böhmen, in *Kommunikation und Information im 18. Jahrhundert: Das Beispiel der Habsburger Monarchie*, ed. by Johannes Frimmel and Michael Wögerbauer (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2009), p. 265–279.

<sup>19</sup> Alena Köllner, *Buchwesen in Prag von Václav Matěj Kramerius bis Jan Otto* (Vienna: Edition Praesens, 2000), p. 16, 36.

Similar developments also occurred in Jewish society. Just as their gentile peers, Maskilim sought to establish a literary market and a public sphere that would rely on critical thought and discussions rather than on tradition. Although the formation of an alternative intellectual elite and the dissemination of Enlightenment values enormously progressed since the 1750s, the Maskilim's efforts were impeded by (gentile and Jewish) censorship as well as by economic interests.<sup>20</sup> Due to the minor number of Maskilim within Jewish society, most printers did not consider maskilic literature a lucrative business and thus refrained from publishing it. However, the reorganization of Jewish education in the Habsburg Monarchy in the last quarter of the eighteenth century helped the Maskilim to enhance their project. With Joseph II's Edicts of Toleration for the Jewish population, issued between 1781 and 1789,<sup>21</sup> Maria Theresa's laws for compulsory education from 1774 were extended to the Jewish population. During the next decade more than 200 German-Jewish schools opened their gates throughout the Monarchy; especially in the Bohemian lands they produced the enlightened public the Maskilim were hoping for.

## Censorship

Freedom of thought, i.e. the liberation of critical thinking from the tutelage of church and state, is the bedrock principle of Enlightenment. Hence, the abolishment of censorship was one of the fundamental claims of enlighteners, as pointedly voiced by Immanuel Kant in his famous tract "What is Enlightenment?" in 1784.<sup>22</sup> While Kant tried to deflect political implications in his treatise, censorship became fairly politicized during the eighteenth century in the Habsburg Monarchy, i.e. it was transferred from the orbit of the church to the state. Already in 1737, the censorship of newspapers was removed from the realm of the universities (i.e. the Jesuits); in 1743 books with political content followed, leaving only theological and juridical subjects in the hands of the Jesuits.<sup>23</sup> As part of her administrative reforms, Maria Theresa estab-

20 On censorship of Jewish books (especially in Prague), cf. Alexandr Putik, 'The Censorship of Hebrew Books in Prague, 1512–1670 (1672)', in *Hebrew Printing in Bohemia and Moravia*, ed. by Olga Sixtová (Prague: Academia, 2012), p. 187–212 and Iveta Cermanová, 'Karl Fischer (1757–1844): The Work of a Hebrew Censor', in *Judaica Bohemiae* 43 (2007–8), p. 5–63.

21 On the chronology cf. Louise Hecht, 'Toleranzpatente', in *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*, Dan Diner (ed. in chief), 7 vols., (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2015), vol. 6, p. 137–141.

22 Cf. e.g. Immanuel Kant, 'An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?', in *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. by James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 58–64 (p. 59–60).

23 Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte* (see note 15), p. 114.

lished a central censorship office, the *Bücher-Revisions-Commission* (later called *Bücher-Censurs-Hofcommission*), in 1749; it asserted the political essence of censorship. From 1750 onward, publications multiplied and the censors' field of activity expanded; they prepared new censorship rules that applied to the whole Monarchy and since 1754 published directories of forbidden books. However, until 1780 only 15% of the censored books were banned for political reasons, while about 60% were outlawed because of religious and moral considerations. Censors believed in the seductive power of literature and thus sought to protect the ever-broader audience against the emulation of false models.<sup>24</sup> Bourgeois society and the formation of the bourgeois public sphere that are closely linked to the establishment of the literary market were still hampered by the shackles of censorship during Maria Theresa's reign.

Therefore, Joseph II's censorship regulations from 11 June 1781 proved to be of crucial importance for the book market.<sup>25</sup> The regulations fairly relaxed censorship rules, in order to encourage public discussions and to promote enlightened policy, particularly the principles laid down in the Edicts of Toleration for Protestants and Jews. In October of the same year, Joseph II reiterated the decree, this time explicitly including Jewish books.<sup>26</sup> Contrary to Maria Theresa, he generously awarded licences for printing houses, and in April 1788 practically granted freedom of trade. The new liberties caused a flood of pamphlets and brochures that contributed to the formation of a vital public discourse and furthermore to a boom in the printing business. A window of opportunities opened up for clever businessmen that established dozens of printing houses in order to satisfy the demands of the reading audience. Moreover, Joseph II continued the copy right policy of his mother; in January 1781 he decreed that the reprint of domestic books constituted a severe violation of laws and was to be punished harshly, since it harmed scholarship, printers

24 Norbert Bachleitner, 'Von Teufeln und Selbstmördern: Die Mariatheresianische Bücherzensur als Instrument der Psychohygiene und Sozialdisziplinierung', in *Kommunikation und Information im 18. Jahrhundert* (see note 18), p. 201–215 (p. 202–5).

25 Norbert Bachleitner, Franz M. Eybl, Ernst Fischer, *Geschichte des Buchhandels in Österreich* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), p. 112–6 and Cermanová, 'Karl Fischer' (see note 20), p. 9–10. Censorship was tightened again after 1786 and finally re-introduced by Franz II after 1792.

26 Guido Kisch, 'Bücherkunde und Bibliographie (Booklore and Bibliography)' in Guido Kisch, *Forschungen zur Rechts-, Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte der Juden* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1979 = *Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. 2), p. 326–360 (p. 336). In a rescript from 7 October 1781 regarding censorship of Jewish books, Joseph II answered a submission by the Court Chancellery stating that he did not intend to issue separate legislation for Jewish books and ordered the abolition of the still existing censorship office in Moravia; cf. A.F. Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, vol. 1 (Vienna/Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1918), p. 501, no.207.

and trade. The reprint of foreign books, on the contrary, was considered a part commerce and did not fall under the same provisions.<sup>27</sup>

For the Jewish and Hebrew book market these bright prospects were hampered by the ideological underpinnings of the Edicts of Toleration that sought the acculturation of Jews, although they carefully avoided interfering in the religious sphere.<sup>28</sup> In all Edicts, it was explicitly stated that the use of Hebrew and Hebrew letters should be reduced and, in the long run, abolished in every sphere except for religious practice. Consequently, the establishment of new Hebrew printing houses was thwarted. The Edict for Vienna from 2 January 1782, furthermore, stated that Viennese Jews were neither allowed to form a community nor to establish their own printing press. They should rather order their prayer books and other necessary Hebrew books from Prague, where printing presses were (allegedly) sufficiently equipped to provide for their religious needs.<sup>29</sup> Due to the poor condition of Prague's Hebrew letterpress, however, Joseph II liberalized Hebrew printing and in a rescript from 6 October 1789 promised privileges to everyone who wanted to establish a Hebrew printing press.<sup>30</sup>

Interestingly though, all Hebrew printing presses in the Bohemian lands and Vienna either were in Christian hands or passed into Christian hands during Joseph II's reign. It was not before 1826 that Moses Israel Landau, the grandson of Prague's former chief rabbi Ezekiel Landau, could again establish a Jewish printing house in Prague. On the other hand, Jews increasingly started publishing books in the German language and Latin letters in Christian printing houses.

## Prague

Prague is one of only two major central European cities with a continuous Jewish population since the Middle Ages (the other being Frankfurt/Main). Consequently, Prague hosted a respected Jewish community that boasted a centuries-long tradition of Jewish learning and Hebrew printing.<sup>31</sup> At the beginning of the eighteenth century Prague was probably the biggest Jewish city world-

<sup>27</sup> Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte* (see note 15), p. 104.

<sup>28</sup> Derek Beales, *Joseph II: Against the World, 1780–1790*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 203–9.

<sup>29</sup> Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien* (see note 26), p. 494–5.

<sup>30</sup> Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte* (see note 15), p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> On the beginnings of Hebrew printing in Prague at the end of the fifteenth century cf. Olga Sixtová, 'The Beginnings of Prague Hebrew Typography, 1512–1569', in *Hebrew Printing in Bohemia and Moravia*, ed. by Olga Sixtová (Prague: Academia, 2012), p. 75–122 (p. 75).

wide and hundreds of foreign students bustled about the town's yeshivot. However, Maria Theresa's expulsion decree from 1744/45 and the harsh conditions for their return in 1748 dealt a severe blow to the economic situation of the Jewish community and Hebrew print alike.

The latter became more than obvious, when the government examined the capacity of Prague's Jewish printing houses in August 1781.<sup>32</sup> In the course of this examination it turned out that the two traditional Jewish printing presses, namely that of Yehuda Bak (then leased by Samuel/Shmuel Falkeles) and Moses Katz (run by Israel Beer Jaiteles) were in rather unfortunate condition. Katz had only two printing presses at their disposal and Bak but one. Also their stock of Hebrew fonts was in a deplorable condition – they owned just three, respectively two different types.<sup>33</sup> The paper used by the two publishing houses together amounted to merely two thirds of the (legally) imported books. In order to improve the quality and quantity in output, the report by the Hebrew censor Leopold Tirsch suggested (1) banning the import of foreign books, (2) involving the Hebrew censor in book distribution and (3) advising all Jewish communities of Bohemia to advance money for necessary investments. Although these suggestions were in line with the policy of centralized administration and the economic principles outlined above, they were only very partially applied. From 1783–1787 the *Baksche und Katzsche Buchdruckerei*, a merger between the two printing houses, was operated by a consortium of seven affluent members of Prague's Jewish community. After hefty investments and initial success the turnover stagnated and the consortium reported heavy losses.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, they decided to sell the business to Barbara Elsenwanger, the widow of the Christian printer Anton Elsenwanger. Herewith, Prague's 300 year tradition of Hebrew print in Jewish hands came to a halt.

Until 1824, when Moses Israel Landau (1788–1852) entered the printing house Franz Johann Scholl as a patron to establish the *Orientalische und Occidentalische Buchdruckerei Scholl & Landau*,<sup>35</sup> Hebrew printing was exclusively in

32 Aron Freimann, 'Die hebräischen Druckereien in Prag von 1733–1828', in *Soncino-Blätter: Beiträge zur Kunde des jüdischen Buches* vol. 3 (1929/30), p. 113–119. For an updated comprehensive overview of the checkered history of Hebrew printing in Prague during the relevant period cf. Iveta Cermanová, 'The Fall and Rise of Hebrew Book Printing in Bohemia', in *Hebrew Printing in Bohemia and Moravia*, edited by Olga Sixtová (Prague: Academia, 2012), p. 215–237 and the article by Dagmar Hudečková in this volume. This summary, by and large, follows their account.

33 The Viennese Court printer Trattner disposed of 8 different Hebrew fonts in the same period, Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte* (s. note 15), p. 87–8.

34 Cermanová, 'The Fall and Rise of Hebrew Book Printing' (see note 30), p. 223 attributes the failure to the lack of professional experience by the consortium.

35 One of the first books printed by Scholl & Landau was Hermann Engländer's *Enkat Bene Temutha: Eine Sammlung hochdeutscher Gebethe für gebildete israelitische Frauenzimmer* (1824,

the hands of Christian publishers. Between 1750 and 1826, when Moses Israel Landau established himself as an independent printer,<sup>36</sup> Prague's publishing houses printed approximately 300 titles in Hebrew letters, i.e. in Hebrew, Yiddish and *Judendeutsch*. About 50 titles, forming less than 20%, can be considered maskilic literature, with a substantial rise in maskilic output after 1800.<sup>37</sup> These figures might not seem impressive per se, but considering the state propaganda that promoted acculturation and the growing pressure on Jews to publish in non-Jewish languages and to use the Latin alphabet, the output is quite remarkable. During this period, 12 out of the 15 typesetters that could be traced so far were Jews.

## Brno/Brünn

While Prague hosted the biggest Jewish community in central Europe, the royal town Brno had a privilege *de non tolerandis judies* from 1454. However, Brno was/is also the capital of Moravia; Moravia (despite the *Familianten Laws* of 1726) was populated by approximately 25,000 Jews in mid eighteenth century.<sup>38</sup> But the only Hebrew printing press that had operated in Prostějov/Prossnitz in the first two decades of the seventeenth century (roughly 1603–1613) was an ephemeral phenomenon.<sup>39</sup> In 1750, Alois Edler von Sonnenfels, Johann Michael Tauffer and Franz Joseph Neumann, three Jewish converts to Catholicism, therefore suggested to register all Hebrew books extant in Moravia and to invest the revenues in the establishment of a Hebrew printing house.<sup>40</sup> Franz Joseph Neumann simultaneously applied for the privilege to set up a Hebrew

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Collection of prayers in standard German for educated Israelite women], printed in Hebrew letters.

36 Cermanová, 'The Fall and Rise of Hebrew Book Printing' (see note 30), p. 231.

37 The figures are extracted from Yeshayahu Vinograd, *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: The Institute for Computerized Bibliography, 1993–95) and the research project *The Library of the Haskalah*, conducted at Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv University and the University of Potsdam, between 2007 and 2010.

38 Kestenbergl-Gladstein, Ruth. *Neuere Geschichte der Juden in den böhmischen Ländern*, vol. 1. (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1969), p. 1 + note 1.

39 Cf. Andrea Jelínková, 'Hebrew Printing in Moravia at the Beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century', in *Hebrew Printing in Bohemia and Moravia*, ed. by Olga Sixtová (Prague: Academia, 2012), p. 153–163.

40 According to Bruno Mauritz Trapp, 'Jüdischer Buchdruck in Mähren', 10.9.1924, WStLA, Biographisch Genealogische Sammlung Leon Ruzicka, Kt. 5, M 3. On the history of the printing house cf. Aron Freimann, 'Die hebräischen Druckereien in Mähren', *Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie*, (XX, 1917), p. 33–44; d'Elvert, *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Statistik Mährens* (see note 13), p. 78–102; Milena Flodovorá, Bedřich Nosek, 'Auswahlkatalog hebräischer Drucke Brünnener Provenienz', in *Judaica Bohemiae* 11,2 (1975), p. 83–104; Zdeněk Šimeček, 'Knížní obchod v Brně od sklonku 15. do konce 18. století (Brno: Archiv města Brna, 2011), p. 416–426 and the article by Thomas Soxberger in this volume.



printing house in Brno, his city of residence, since he considered the large Jewish population of Moravia his potential customer base.

Despite harsh protests of the Jesuits, the privilege was finally granted to Neumann in 1753. In 1754 Franz Joseph Neumann started to operate the press, using “foreign letters and workers”.<sup>41</sup> He even received the permission to employ Jewish typesetters, provided that he housed them in his workshop in Brno’s suburb Krona. After his death in 1760, his widow Anna Franziska continued to run the business. In the meantime, Alois von Sonnenfels had cast a covetous eye on the printing house. Since Anna Franziska Neumann refused to sell the enterprise, Sonnenfels used his political connections to have Neumann’s Hebrew books subjected to strict censorship. Consequently, Anna Franziska Neumann moved the Hebrew printing shop to Mikulov/Nikolsburg, to the seat of the Moravian chief rabbi, while the German printing press remained in Brno. During that time, the later Viennese printer Joseph Hraschanky served as an apprentice in Neumann’s Hebrew press in Mikulov/Nikolsburg. In August 1778 Anna Franziska moved the business back to Brno, where it was taken over by her second son Joseph Karl Neumann in 1779.

During the 1780s the printing house enjoyed its heydays that terminated at the end of the decade due to competition by Viennese printers. Notwithstanding the economic difficulties, Joseph Karl Neumann continued running the business until his death in 1797. Thereafter, Neumann’s partner Joseph Rossmann took over and kept running the press until 1802/03. During this period, however, the business suffered severely from the competition of Joseph Hraschanky who had opened a branch of his Viennese printing shop in Brno, in 1795. After Rossmann’s death in 1806, his heiress sold the Hebrew press to Anton Schmid in Vienna and the German press to Trassler and Gastl in Brno. Traces of an additional printing house that was allegedly run by Bezalal/Gottlieb Jeitteles (1765–1821, Brno), the second son of the famous Prague physician Jonas Jeitteles during the 1820s in Brno, could not be located.

Neumann’s printing shop catered mainly to the local Moravian market. Corresponding to the traditional orientation of Moravia’s Jewry, the output of Haskalah literature, especially of original works, was quite low. However, the Hebrew translation of Moses Mendelssohn’s *Phaedon* by Isaiah Beer-Bing from Metz was reprinted in 1798; in the same year David Friedländer’s edition of Mendelssohn’s Hebrew paraphrase of the *Phaedon* with the title *Sefer ha-Nefesh* (Book on the Soul) was republished.<sup>42</sup> During the following year,

41 Trapp, ‘Jüdischer Buchdruck in Mähren’ (see note 39).

42 Moses Mendelssohn, *Phaedon hu Sefer ha-Sharat ha-Nefesh* (Brno: Josef Rossmann, 1798), reprint of the edition Berlin: Chevrat Chinukh Ne’arim Publisher, 1787; Moses Mendelssohn, *Sefer*

a reprint of Baruch Linda's textbook *Reshit Limudim* and an anonymous collection of anecdotes on the life of Joseph II (German in Hebrew letters) appeared.<sup>43</sup>

## Vienna

Between the second expulsion in 1671 and the year 1852 Jews did not enjoy corporative rights in Vienna, but could only gain residence as individuals in exchange for a high toleration tax. Since there was no Jewish community, there was no tradition of Hebrew printing in the city. The Edicts of Toleration changed neither of these conditions. For religious Hebrew books, authorities referred Vienna's Jewry to Prague, as mentioned above. But the meager quality of Prague's printing culture in the late eighteenth century caused affluent Viennese Jews to purchase their books in foreign countries, much to the dislike of the imperial treasury.

In 1786, shortly after the privileged court printer and publisher Joseph Lorenz Edler von Kurzböck (1736–1792) had established cooperation with the skillful type-founder Ernst Mannsfeld, the authorities prompted him to stock up on Hebrew letters.<sup>44</sup> Kurzböck had already received a twenty-year privilege for printing "Illyrian and Oriental languages" by Maria Theresa in 1770, in particular to accommodate the need of the Orthodox Church for religious books domestically; he was ennobled for his merits in the field in 1776.<sup>45</sup> Kurzböck ordered Hebrew types from Amsterdam which was known for its high quality prints. Following Joseph II's rescript from 1789 that liberalized Hebrew press, he started printing (religious) Hebrew books, namely a few sheets of the Babylonian Talmud, a Mishnah edition and *Machzorim* (holiday prayer-books). Although the published pages of his Talmud edition were widely acclaimed thanks to his first-rate fonts and fine paper, he never finished the publication; the Mishnah edition, on the other hand, was completed by Anton Schmid in 1793,<sup>46</sup> shortly after Kurzböck's death. Furthermore, Kurzböck received permission to send his apprentices for training to the Academy of Oriental Languages (*Orientalische Akademie*); the already-mentioned Anton Schmid and

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*ha-Nefesh*, with a German translation by David Friedländer (Brno: Josef Rossmann, 1798), reprint of the edition Berlin, 1787.

43 Barukh Linda, *Reshit Limudim* (Brno: Josef Rossmann, 1799), reprint of the edition Berlin: Chevrat Chinukh Ne'arim, 1789; on the life story of Joseph II, cf. the article by Thomas Soxberger in this volume, no. 26.

44 Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte* (see note 15), p. 47.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 43–5.

46 *Mishnayot*, 6 vols. (Vienna: Edler von Kurzböck, Anton Schmid, 1793); the edition is digitized by the Austrian National Library.

Josef della Torre started their careers in Hebrew printing with Kurzböck and got their professional formation at the Academy of Oriental Languages; it seems that Kurzböck did not employ Jewish correctors though. Since Kurzböck died in 1792, his impact on Viennese Hebrew printing culture was limited; his output comprised merely of religious books.<sup>47</sup>

The Moravian-born Joseph Hraschanzky (1752–1806) competed with Kurzböck for the establishment of the first Hebrew printing press in Vienna. He had learned the craft in Mikulov/Nikolsburg in the 1760s with Anna Franziska Neumann's Hebrew letterpress; after coming to Vienna in the 1770s, he worked with the court publishers Trattner and Kurzböck.<sup>48</sup> In 1784 he opened his own printing press, where he published many legal texts and some works on Czech grammar; in the same year he applied for the exclusive privilege to open a Hebrew printing house in Vienna. Although his request was declined, he was allowed "to print Hebrew books on his own account and risk".<sup>49</sup> Hraschanzky ordered his types from Ernst Mannsfeld in Vienna; while his letters did not achieve the quality of the Amsterdam fonts, they were significantly superior to the ones used in Prague, Brno and Lviv/Lemberg. His allegedly first Hebrew publication, 32 pages of the Mishnah, is dated to 1787–8.<sup>50</sup> In 1790 Hraschanzky finally became "privileged German and Hebrew printer"; and after 1795 even "privileged German and Hebrew court printer".<sup>51</sup> From 1791–7 he published the Babylonian Talmud that, according to experts' opinion, excelled in quality of print but was tainted with careless proof-reading.<sup>52</sup> Simultaneously, Hraschanzky successfully advocated his rights against the inroads of Joseph Karl Neumann from Brno, who tried to gain a privilege on prayer-books for Vienna's "Turkish Jews";<sup>53</sup> in 1795 Hraschanzky even obtained the right to open a branch in Brno. In the late 1790s Hraschanzky applied for the

47 Cf. 'Der ebräische Buchhandel in Wien', in *Vaterländische Blätter für den österreichischen Kaiserstaat* (28 June 1815), p. 314–316; a reply with numerous remarks and corrections was published in the same journal, (27 March 1816), p. 137–144.

48 Reinhard Buchberger, *Hraschanzky: Geschichte und Bibliographie einer Wiener Buchdruckerei (1785–1813)*, unpublished MA thesis (Vienna: University of Vienna, 2008), p. 10.

49 NÖLA, NÖ Regierung, A – Indices in Kommerzsachen, 4. 1785, H, p. 1.

50 *Mishnayot: Pirkei Berakhot* (Vienna: G. Hraschanzky, 1787–8); but since the publisher's name is abbreviated "G. Hraschanzky", it might have been published by Hraschanzky's son Georg in 1806 and predated to 1787–8.

51 Buchberger, *Hraschanzky* (see note 48), p. 30–2.

52 Cf. image 2.

53 Buchberger, *Hraschanzky* (see note 48), p. 33–4; on the history of Vienna's Sephardic community, cf. Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz, Gerhard Milchram, *Die Türken in Wien: Geschichte einer Jüdischen Gemeinde* (Vienna: Holzhausen, 2010).

privilege to sell his Hebrew books in Western Galicia that had become part of the Habsburg Monarchy after the third partition of Poland in 1795.<sup>54</sup>

After Joseph Hraschanzky's sudden death in 1806, his son Georg (b. around 1783) carried on the business. He focused on Hebrew prints and, between others, supplemented his father's edition of the Babylonian Talmud under the supervision of the Jewish corrector Aron Pollack.<sup>55</sup> Due to the political and financial crisis during the Napoleonic Wars Georg Hraschanzky had to sell the printing house to his former factor Georg Holzinger in 1813; Holzinger successfully continued the letterpress between 1814 and 1837. He managed to survive the war years by exploring new markets; his Sephardic corrector Israel Bechar Heim from Belgrade, for instance, suggested printing prayer-books with a translation into Judeo-Spanish that could be profitably sold on the Balkan and to the Ottoman Empire in large quantities.<sup>56</sup>

From 1787 to 1813 Hraschanzky's Hebrew printing house published approximately 100 Hebrew titles;<sup>57</sup> but less than 10% of this output can be classified as Haskalah literature; the most prominent among them are Mendelssohn's Bible translation in several volumes, the Mishnah tract *Pirkei Avot* with a German translation and a commentary by David Friedländer and Herz Homberg's *Imre Shefer*.<sup>58</sup> During this period, Joseph and Georg Hraschanzky employed at least ten Jewish typesetters, who received the permit of residence in the city thanks to their work in the printing press.<sup>59</sup>

The most prominent Hebrew printer in Vienna was certainly Anton Edler von Schmid (1765–1855) who became the trade mark of the city's Hebrew letterpress around 1800. Schmid had been learning the craft with Kurzböck since 1785 and also studied at the Academy of Oriental Languages; his *nom de guerre*, "Hebrew Schmid", derived from there.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Schmid befriended-

54 WStLA, Hauptregistratur, Nr. 36 (Politica 1797, Tomus 2), fol. 176r.

55 'Der ebräische Buchhandel in Wien' (see note 47), p. 139.

56 Ibid., p. 142.

57 According to the bibliography in Buchberger, *Hraschanzky* (see note 48), p. 96–109.

58 Cf. Peter Beer, 'Über Literatur der Israeliten in den kaiserl. österreichischen Staaten im letzten Decenio des 18. Jahrhunderts', in *Sulamith* 2, 1–2 (1808–9), p. 342–357, 421–6, 42–61 (p. 351); on Homberg's *Imre Shefer*, cf. Louise Hecht, *Ein jüdischer Aufklärer in Böhmen: Der Pädagoge und Reformator Peter Beer, 1758–1838* (Köln: Böhlau, 2008), p. 157–163.

59 Buchberger, *Hraschanzky* (see note 48), p. 36–7; also NÖLA, NÖ Regierung, H – Indices in Judensachen, 7. 1791–1793, 1791, H, pag. 4; NÖLA, NÖ Regierung, H – Indices in Judensachen, 7. 1794–1795, 1795, H, pag. 15 and passim. On Isaak Wepernik cf. Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien* (s. note 26), p. 46, 178; NÖLA, NÖ Regierung, H – Indices in Judensachen, 12. 1802–1807, 1802, H, pag. 1; NÖLA, NÖ Regierung, H – Indices in Judensachen, 12. 1802–1807, 1803, H, pag. 7; NÖLA, NÖ Regierung, H – Indices in Judensachen, 12. 1802–1807, 1807, H, pag. 23; NÖLA, NÖ Regierung, H – Indices in Judensachen, 13. 1808–1811, 1808, H, pag. 2; NÖLA, NÖ Regierung, H – Indices in Judensachen, 7. 1791–1793, 1793, H, pag. 7.

60 Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte* (see note 15), p. 47.

ed Jewish scholars to broaden his scope of knowledge. His familiarity with Jewish learning gave him an edge over his competitors regarding the demand among Jewish readers. During his first years in business, he even went to fairs in several cities (Brno, Pest, Debrecen), to meet his target audience and to sell his books directly.<sup>61</sup> In 1792, shortly before Kurzböck's death, Schmid purchased the latter's superb Hebrew letters from Amsterdam to open his own printing shop. In the beginning his initiative was thwarted by Hraschanky, who sought to establish himself as the sole Hebrew printer in Vienna. Thus Schmid issued his first publications under Kurzböck's name.<sup>62</sup> Only in 1793, reiterating Joseph II's decree that granted freedom for Hebrew printing, Anton Schmid was granted permission to start his own enterprise. Joseph della Torre (1768–1832) who shared the same professional training at Kurzböck's and the Academy of Oriental Languages, served first as factor and then as managing director in Schmid's printing house; upon Joseph della Torre's promotion to managing director, Adalbert della Torre (1796–1871) followed in his father's steps.<sup>63</sup>

After having established his reputation in Hebrew print, Schmid purchased Kurzböck's university publishing house in 1805; subsequently he also acquired letters for the Arabic, Persian and Syrian language. In his sample book from 1827, Schmid showcased eight fonts for the latter languages and 33 different Hebrew fonts; these included *Rashi*, cursive and *Judendeutsch* letters.<sup>64</sup> He issued a complete Talmud edition, *Mishnayot*, the Bible, a number of traditional legal compendia and prayer books. However, he also published a significant number of maskilic literature; the most important among them were Mendelssohn's Bible translation in several (new) editions and a continuation of Mendelssohn's project, i.e. the translation of the Prophets and the Scriptures, that came out under the serial title *Mincha Chadasha*.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, he issued Hebrew grammar books, school books, and from the 1820s onward maskilic journals in Hebrew.

Between 1816 and 1825 Anton Schmid donated a total of 251 works (consisting of 591 volumes) to Vienna's Court Library (today the Austrian National Library); he made a similar donation to the Jewish religious school in Vienna. Honoring his merits for the Hebrew printing culture in Vienna (and in the

61 Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte* (see note 15), p. 143–4.

62 E.g. the 6 vols. of *Mishnayot*, published in 1793, cf. note 46.

63 Frank/Frimmel, *Buchwesen in Wien 1750–1850* (see note 12), p. 36.

64 *Abdruck der Schriften in der k.k. priv. und n.ö. Landschafts-Buchdruckerey des Anton Edlen von Schmid* (Vienna: Anton Schmid, 1827), p. 16 (Arabic), p. 18–21 (Hebrew).

65 The first volumes of this serial were the books *Joshua* and *Judges*, translated by Me'ir Obernik, published in 1792, cf. Beer, 'Über Literatur' (s. note 58), p. 352–3. A new edition published from the 1810s onward bore the serial title *Kitevei Qodesh*, cf. Images 3–7.

Habsburg Monarchy at large), Schmid was ennobled in 1825.<sup>66</sup> On 26 October 1839 Schmid transferred the business to his son Franz Edler von Schmid (1811–1884).<sup>67</sup>

Already on 16 July 1838 Franz Schmid signed a partnership agreement for ten years with the Prague Jew Jakob Isaak Busch (1785–1864?), who had come to Vienna the year before, to work as a translator for Anton Schmid.<sup>68</sup> Busch entered the business with the capital of 30,000 fl. and became a partner with equal rights.<sup>69</sup> Responsibilities were divided though; while Franz Schmid was involved with the technical side of production, Busch was to manage the economic issues of the business; Jakob Busch's minor son Isidor Israel (1822–1898) was explicitly mentioned as a co-worker. On 30 December 1847 the contract was dissolved by mutual agreement.<sup>70</sup> Franz Schmid continued running the business until 1849, when the printing house merged with that of Adalbert della Torre.<sup>71</sup> Thereafter, Franz Schmid left Vienna and settled in Graz.

When Jakob and Isidor Busch (1822–1898) entered the letterpress of Franz Schmid as partners, they were the first Jews to own a Hebrew printing house in Vienna.<sup>72</sup> Their inaugural publication was Max Emanuel Stern's women's prayer-book *Die frommen Zionstöchter* from 1841; since 1842 they issued the popular yearbook *Kalender und Jahrbuch für Israeliten*, both publications in German. Isidor Busch, who was actively engaged in the 1848-revolution, left for the US after the defeat of the revolution in December 1848 together with his wife and son. In 1849 he established a German and Hebrew book shop in New York with the stock from Schmid's printing house he had brought with him from Vienna; for promotion he printed a catalog of 214 Hebrew books that were divided into the following categories: Talmudic works, miscellaneous works, school books, Bibles, prayer books, Hebrew books.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, he issued the short-lived journal *Israel's Herald*, the first Jewish weekly in

66 Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte* (see note 15), p. 144–7.

67 WStLA, Merkantil- und Wechselgericht, A3, Faszikel 3, Firmenakten, Anton Edler von Schmid.

68 WStLA, Merkantil- und Wechselgericht, A3, Faszikel 296, Firmenakten, Franz Edler von Schmid.

69 On 4 March 1845 the police administration inquired at the commercial court about the date upon which Busch had entered the business as a partner; as an independent businessman Busch had to remargin Tolerantation tax, while correctors and translators were exempt, cf. *ibid.*

70 The dissolution was legally binding after the confirmation by the commercial court from 5 February 1848, *ibid.*

71 After his training with Schmid, Adalbert della Torre applied for his father's license as a (Hebrew) printer, which he received in 1841, cf. Frank/Frimmel, *Buchwesen in Wien 1750–1850* (see note 12), p. 36 and Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte* (see note 15), p. 219.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 215.

73 *Catalogue of Hebrew Works*, published in Vienna, for sale by I. Busch, editor of *Israel's Herald* (New York: John F. Trow, 1849).

America. In fall 1849 the family moved from New York to St. Louis, Missouri, where Jakob Busch joined them in 1852.<sup>74</sup>

As is generally known, Schmid's books excelled not only in quality of print and paper, but also in meticulous proofreading. Because of his professional expertise and generous payment he could hire outstanding Maskilim as correctors. Anton Schmid's Hebrew printing house became a hub for aspiring Maskilim from the Habsburg Monarchy and beyond; like Juda Loeb Ben Ze'ev (1764–1811), who was born next to Krakow and moved to Vienna around 1800; Me'ir Obernik (1764–1805) from Prussian Silesia and Samuel Detmold (1764–1829) from Westphalia; Hermann Engländer (1779–1864) from Moravia, Moses (Michael) Schwarzfeld from Bohemia and Max/Me'ir Letteris (cc. 1800–1871) from Galicia.<sup>75</sup> Since Haskalah emphasized the importance of grammar studies, all of them proved to be most scrupulous about the Hebrew language. Besides enhancing the quality of Schmid's prints, these Maskilim were intellectuals and authors themselves. Many of them left behind invaluable libraries of books and manuscripts in various languages.<sup>76</sup> Quite naturally, these Maskilim seized the opportunity to promote their own books and additional Haskalah literature. It is thus hardly surprising that the inventory of Jewish books that Israel Knöpfelmacher purchased in 1853 together with the Hebrew book shop in Seitenstettengasse (next to the synagogue) from Anton Schmid,<sup>77</sup> contained about 50% Haskalah titles.

## Conclusion

Anton Schmid's Hebrew printing house (as well as the others discussed in this paper) neatly exemplifies the hypothesis that Christian printers, either willingly or inadvertently, became agents of the Jewish Enlightenment. Christian printers had to employ Jewish typesetters and correctors as the true specialists

<sup>74</sup> 'Isidor Bush, Jewish Pioneer: "A Man for all Seasons", St. Louis, Missouri', Jewish Museum of the American West, <<http://www.jmaw.org/isidor-bush-jewish-st-louis/>> (accessed 5 January 2016).

<sup>75</sup> On the impact of the Jewish correctors on Anton Schmid's printing house, cf. Andreas Klöner, 'Forschungsbericht: Hebräischer Buchdruck in Wien. Der Talmud aus dem Strudelhof: Die jüdischen Korrektoren des hebräischen Buchdruckers Anton Schmid', in *Biblos* 55, 2 (2006), p. 115–127.

<sup>76</sup> The most precious one is probably that of Me'ir Obernik with books and manuscripts worth 2,600 fl., cf. WStLA, A 2 Verlassenschaft Meir Obernik 4889/1805; Ben Ze'ev's estate mentions 800 books and the estate of Hraschansky's corrector Aron Pollak lists 101 different items (some items including various titles), cf. WStLA, Zivilgericht, Faz. 2, Verlassenschaft Benseff and WStLA, MZ, Faz. 2, Verlassenschaft Aron Pollak.

<sup>77</sup> *Hebräischer Verlagskatalog der Anton Edler von Schmid'schen Buchhandlung in Wien* (May 1853); Knöpfelmacher's purchase of the bookshop was registered by the authorities only in August 1854, cf. WStLA, Merkantil- und Wechselgericht, Faszikel 3, 94/87, Israel Knöpfelmacher.

in the field. Since Maskilim engaged in Hebrew grammar and language studies, they were ideal candidates for the job. But if the Christian printers hired Maskilim, the latter were likely to use this position for advancing their own agenda and strongly influencing the output of the printing house. The cooperation between Christian printers and Jewish correctors could thus serve as an example for what Jacob Katz has termed the “semineutral society”.<sup>78</sup> According to Katz the “semineutral society” was defined as an association between Christians and Jews that exceeded utilitarian interest and served to foster intellectual bonds, promoting Enlightenment on both sides. The fruitful cooperation between Jewish workmen and Christian entrepreneurs depicted in this paper not only subverts a common stereotype about labor division between Jews and Christians, it also highlights the difference between the discussed printing houses and the ones in Galicia (i.e. east-central and eastern Europe), where Hebrew printing presses were not owned by Christians.

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78 Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770–1870* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973), chap. 4.



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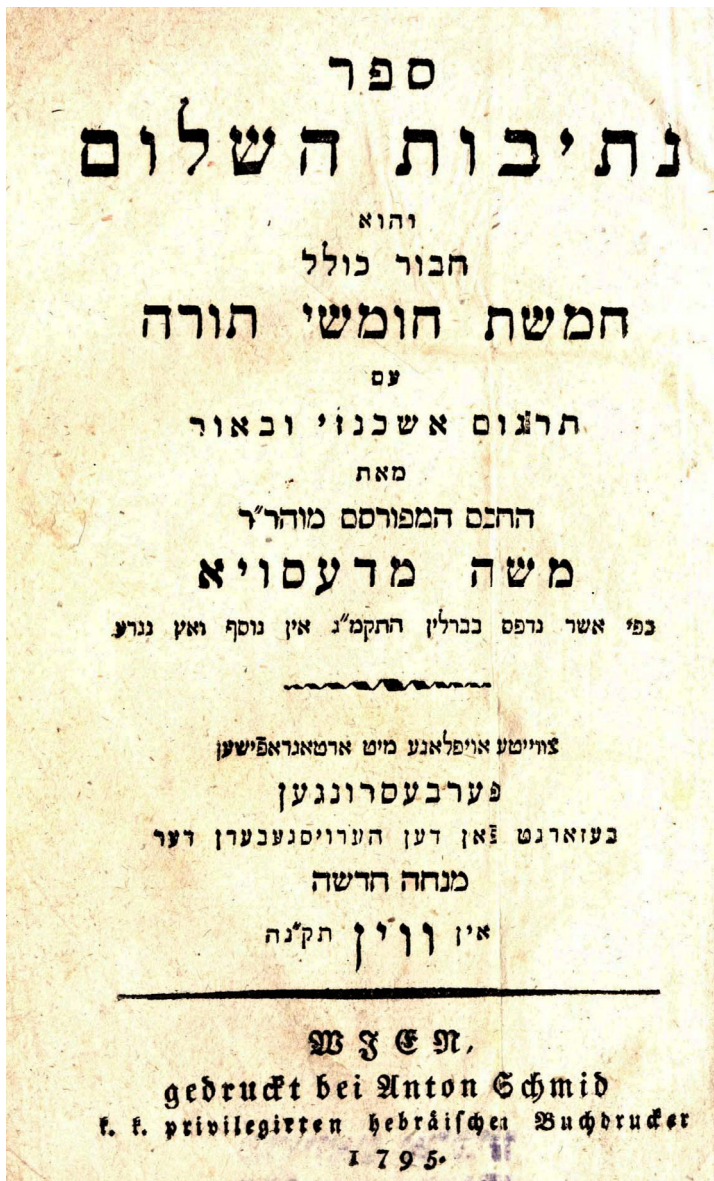
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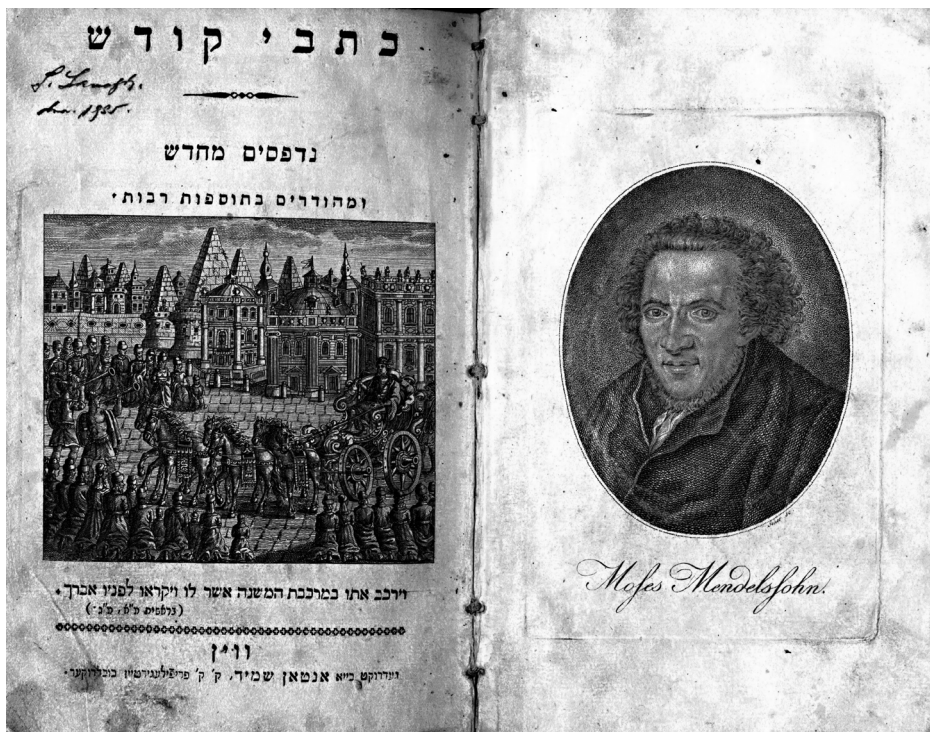
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## Images



**Image 3:** Title page of Mendelssohn's Bible translation for the book Vayikra, corrected second edition, printed by Anton Schmid, Vienna, 1795; library of the CJS



**Image 4:** Title page of Moses Mendelssohn's Bible translation for the book Bereshit, with several commentaries (among others by Herz Homberg) and a portrait of Moses Mendelssohn, printed by Anton Schmid, Vienna, 1818; library of the CJS



**Image 5:** Title page of Mendelssohn's Bible translation for the book Vayikra, with several commentaries (among others by Herz Homberg) and a portrait of Hartwig Wessely, printed by Anton Schmid, Vienna, 1831; library of the CJS



**Image 6:** Title page of Me'ir Obernik's translation of the book of Isaiah, with several commentaries (among others by Herz Homberg) and a portrait of Me'ir Obernik, printed by Anton Schmid, Vienna, 1818; library of the CJS

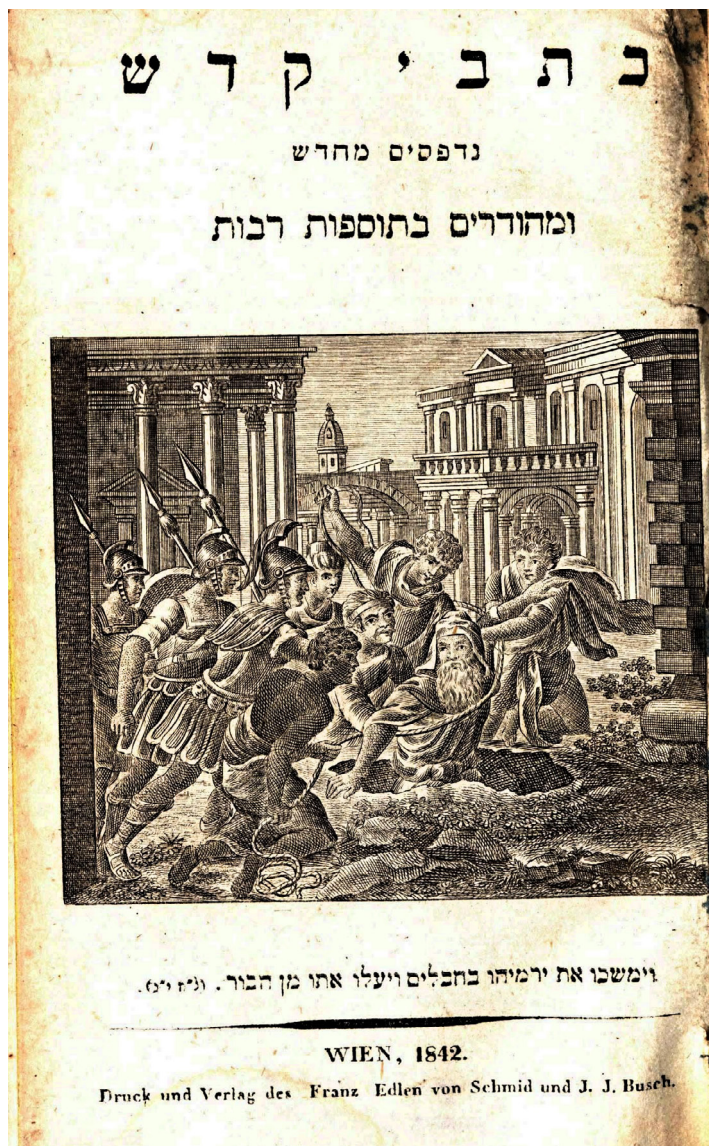




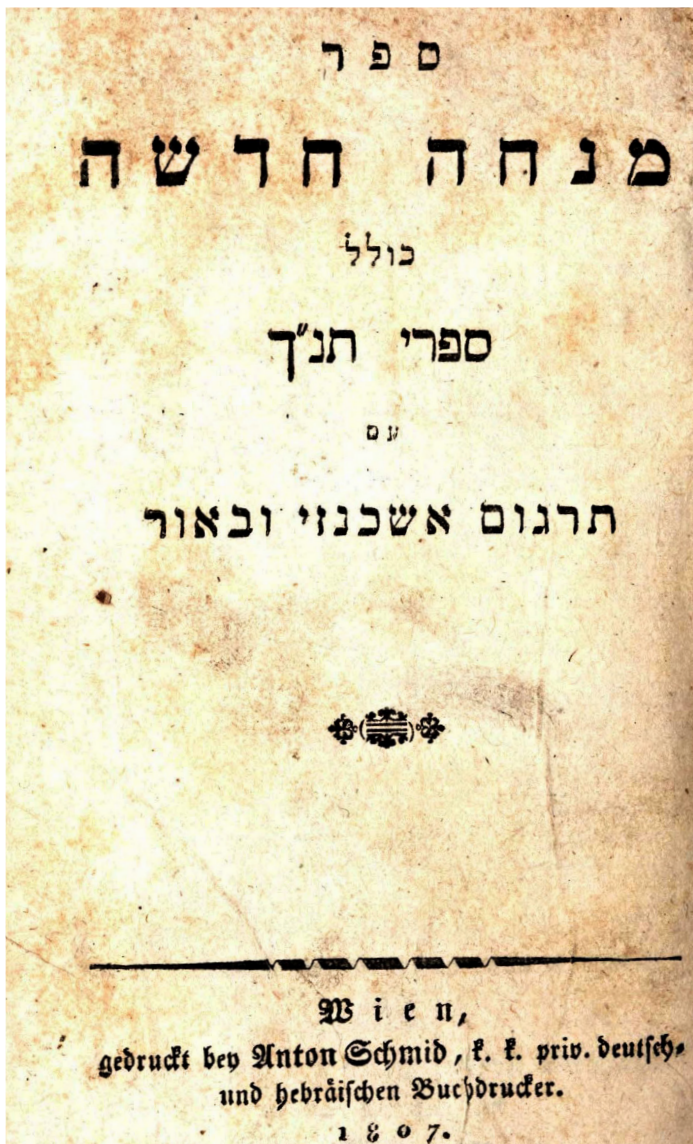
**Image 7:** Title page of Me'ir Obernik's translation of the book of Samuel, with commentaries, printed by Anton Schmid, 1817; library of the CJS



**Image 8:** Title page of the German translation of the books of Chronicles, with commentaries and the Mavo by Juda Leib Ben Ze'ev, printed by Franz Edler von Schmid and Jakob Busch, 1841; library of the CJS



**Image 9:** Title page of the German translation of the book of Jeremiah, with commentaries and the Mavo by Juda Leib Ben Ze'ev, printed by Franz Edler von Schmid and Jakob Busch, 1842; library of the CJS



**Image 10:** Title page of Samuel Detmold's translation of the later prophets (book of Ezekiel), with enlightened commentary, printed by Anton Schmid, Vienna, 1807; library of the CJS



**Image 11:** Title page of Machzor with a German translation by Mendel Emanuel Stern, part three for Erev Yom Kippur, published by Israel Knöpfelmacher & sons, Vienna, 1862; library of the CJS

# Eighteenth Century Yiddish Prints from Brünn/Brno as Documents of a Language Shift in Moravia\*

Thomas Soxberger

The Western Yiddish dialect of Moravia disappeared in the course of the nineteenth century and was replaced by the German language. This language shift was a consequence of the social changes in the Jewish communities that announced themselves already in the second half of the eighteenth century. This article looks for evidence of the process of replacement of Yiddish in the output of the printing press of Franz Josef Neumann and his successors in the city of Brünn/Brno. This firm produced more than 90 Jewish books during the approximately fifty years of its existence, mostly in Hebrew. However, a significant part of these works – about one third of them – are either fully or partly in Yiddish or German (printed in Hebrew letters). In the category of non-Hebrew books, Yiddish texts are prevalent, mostly reprints of popular ethical works. In contrast to that, the small number of texts in German are evidence for the gradual advance of Haskalah and of the growing importance of German in Jewish life.<sup>1</sup>

**Moravia remains a widely uncharted area for Yiddish studies. Based on the evidence available, it is taken for granted that a “Western Yiddish” dialect was in use in the Moravian Jewish communities up to the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of only three generations, migration to larger urban centres and social upward mobility resulted in a major language shift. As**

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1 For help and advice in researching the rare books I deal with in this article, I want to express my thanks to Louise Hecht (Olomouc), Sharon Gordon (Jerusalem) and Dieter J. Hecht (Vienna).

2 Ruth Kestenbergl-Gladstein, *Neuere Geschichte der Juden in den böhmischen Ländern* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr / Paul Siebeck, 1969, pp. 357–359. In this important work on Jews in the Bohemian land during the Haskalah period, Kestenbergl-Gladstein mentions Yiddish, or “böhmisches bzw. mährisches Judendeutsch” on several occasions in passing (see Index p. 409 f.) Her approach is not very systematic and she does not attempt to make a clear distinction between Yiddish and German written in Hebrew letters.

a result, by the end of the nineteenth century, Moravian Jews had turned into a mostly middle class, urban group, where German and Czech were spoken.

This article cannot deal with this topic in a comprehensive way. All I can try is to point to the topic of Yiddish in Moravia and draw attention to the interesting case of Yiddish prints which document the use of Yiddish and German among Jews in Moravia during the second half of the eighteenth century.

The starting point of this article on Yiddish printing in Brünn/Brno is a few sentences in a short summary of the history of Hebrew printing in Moravia:

In Bruenn (Brünn/Brno), capital of Moravia, a Hebrew press had been founded in 1754 on the initiative of the Moravian chamber by Joseph Neumann which until 1802 produced mainly liturgical items, works of edification in Yiddish for the local market and those of local authors.<sup>3</sup>

The statement that “works of edification in Yiddish” were printed in Brünn/Brno during the second half of the eighteenth century is actually quite surprising. Given the time and place, it is not self-evident that these books were in Yiddish at all. The end of the eighteenth century is a period of rapid decline of Yiddish printing in the areas of Western Yiddish in Germany. At the same time, the Habsburg Monarchy followed the concept of mercantilism, therefore it makes sense that some of the demand for Hebrew and Yiddish works was met by new printing shops in the Austrian lands. On the other hand, this was already in a period when the language shift towards German took place, which can be observed in the changes of reading habits and the language of Jewish printing. The question, therefore, is whether the supposedly Yiddish publications were in Yiddish at all, and if so, how many Yiddish books were printed in Brünn/Brno during the period of 1754–1802, when Joseph Neumann and his successors were active. The next question is whether the gradual shift towards the use of German in the Jewish communities – or at least among their educated elites – is somehow discernible in the output of the printing shop in Brünn/Brno. As I attempt to demonstrate, the Brünn/Brno prints are quite complex in their linguistic makeup.

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3 'Hebrew Printing – Modern Period: Austria', in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jewish Virtual Library – [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0016\\_0\\_16101.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0016_0_16101.html)

## The last traces of Yiddish in Moravia

From the point of view of Yiddish, Moravia was, up to the nineteenth century, a transitional area between the Western Yiddish areas of the German lands and the area of Eastern Yiddish in Poland and Galicia. It can also be seen as a borderland of the Yiddish language area, since the neighboring provinces of Upper- and Lower-Austria as well as the so called *Innerösterreich* did not have a significant Jewish population during the early modern age. Since the end of the Middle Ages, no Jewish communities were allowed to exist on the territories of Styria and Carinthia, when in 1496 Maximilian granted the wish of the Estates to expel all Jews. Restrictions of Jewish movement and settlement were also in place in Upper and Lower Austria in the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Age. Following the expulsions of the Austrian communities in 1420/21 and from Vienna in 1670, many emigrants resettled in the neighboring territories of Bohemia, Moravia and in Upper Hungary (present-day Slovakia).

Unlike the neighbouring Archdukedom of Austria, Bohemia and Moravia had a significant number of Jews and organized Jewish communities during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. While the royal towns of Moravia were closed to Jewish settlement since the middle of the fifteenth century, Jews lived in more than 50 smaller towns under the patronage of nobility. These Jewish quarters, quite often not more than a street, were known as the *Judengasse*, Jewish street.<sup>4</sup>

In an essay on Yiddish literature in Galicia, the Yiddish writer and researcher Max Neugröschel (Mendl Naygreshl) describes the language situation of Viennese Jewry in the late nineteenth century, which was largely of Moravian descent. He states that the 1870s were a major cultural turning point:

“Jews [...] coming from Western Hungary [...] and the Provinces of Bohemia-Moravia [...] still spoke – especially the older generation – a language of their own (Western Yiddish), which had by then all but lost its linguistic force and took on the appearance of a “refined” German dialect.

In the seventies of the last [i.e. nineteenth, T.S.] century they still possessed their own, although declining, literature in their language. This literature experienced in the course of time a complete degradation and was

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4 Kestenbergl-Gladstein (see note 2), p. 9, note 36 and p. 11; Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community* (Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 2000), p. 18f.



transformed into “Shmontses fir unzere layt” and cheap jokes. Its main features became bawdiness and low-life pornography.”<sup>5</sup>

In these few sentences in which Neugröschel sums up the language shift of Moravian Jewry, he hints at the fact that Yiddish not only disappeared in the course of the nineteenth century, but that in the course of this process, it left some traces in popular entertainment and in “low culture”.<sup>6</sup> But these interesting phenomena are out of the scope of this article.

The transition from Western Yiddish to Modern German created a transitional linguistic phenomenon, a kind of “Jewish jargon” of German among Moravian Jews. There was an awareness that the German used among Jews was not always “correct”, that it differed from the standard among Gentiles.

It seems that for some time, this Judeo German was used and tolerated in private, but was rather frowned upon in public. Anecdotal evidence for this can be found in Viennese literature of the Fin de Siècle period. For example, Arthur Schnitzler hints to “Jewish speech” several times in his novel *Der Weg ins Freie*, which is set in Vienna of the 1890s. He characterizes the speech of the “older generation” of the Viennese Jewish bourgeoisie with its mostly Moravian background.<sup>7</sup>

A late example of the literary use of “Jewish speech” can be found in Friedrich Torberg’s immensely popular book “Die Tante Jolesch oder der Untergang des Abendlandes in Anekdoten” (Aunt Jolesch or The Decline of the West in Anecdotes)<sup>8</sup>, first published in Vienna in 1975, does refer to this language question on several occasions. Torberg takes care to explain to the readership that his Moravian relatives still used in private speech a “Jargon” which “preserved traces of the ‘Judendeutsch’, which was once spoken in the Ghetto [sic!]”.

5 Mendl Naygreshl, 'Di Moderne Yidische Literatur in Galitsye (1904–1918)', *Fun noentn over* (New York: CYCO, 1955), p. 367f. As an example of the “declining” literature in Western Yiddish we can point out the Jargon comedies of a certain P. Schwarz, who at least for part of his life lived in Proßnitz and Vienna. It is telling that these Jargon comedies, printed between 1850 and 1870, were published in Latin letters and contained glossaries of Yiddish expressions. For details see Brigitte Dalinger, *Trauerspiele mit Gesang und Tanz* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2010), pp. 53 ff.

6 What Neugröschel calls “pornography” obviously alludes to the collections of (so called) “Jewish jokes” by Avrom Reitzer, which ranged from the plainly silly to the outright obscene, with titles like “Not for children” of *Masel-Tov: Nix für Kinder*, *E Ladung feiner saftiger Schmonzes, pickfeiner Schmüs und takev bechovedter Lozelech*. (Wien and Leipzig: J. Deubler’s Verlag (no year)), or *Gut Schabbes, Jüdische Witze. Eine Sammlung von Lozelech, Schmonzes und Meisses für unsere Leut* (Wien and Leipzig: J. Deubler’s Verlag, 1900).

7 For example, we meet the character “old Mr. Ehrenberg” who does not try to hide his “Jewish accent”, which his children find embarrassing. Arthur Schnitzler, *Der Weg ins Freie* (Vienna, 1908).

8 Friedrich Torberg, *Die Tante Jolesch oder der Untergang des Abendlandes in Anekdoten* (München/Wien, 2013). English translation: Maria Poglitsch Bauer and Sonat Hart, *Aunt Jolesch or The Decline of the West in Anecdotes* (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 2008).

As an example, Torberg quotes the dictum of “Tante Jolesch” that “E Gast is e Tier” (“A guest is a beast”). In this short sentence, we find the typical Western Yiddish “e” for the indeterminate article “ein” and also the form “is” for German “ist”, which is a general feature of Yiddish.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, I want to add a quote of the Viennese writer Hermann Broch by (or about) his (unloved) father. Josef Broch, who was born in the Moravian Jewish community of Proßnitz/Prostějov in 1852, had moved to Vienna in his youth, where he was successful in the textile business.<sup>10</sup> In a letter, Hermann Broch sums up his father’s educational principles with the sentence “Ä Kind gehört gestraft.”<sup>11</sup> Even if this quote is lacking the charm of the sayings of “Tante Jolesch”, it is reminiscent of their laconic sound. It cannot be said whether this is an authentic quote by Broch Senior. But it seems to me quite telling that in the use of the little word “ä”, the son ascribes to his Moravian-born father a “typical” accent. With this little detail, he depicts the father as somebody for whom jargon was the “natural” language of family life.

## Yiddish or German in Hebrew letters? Yiddish printing in Brünn/Brno

The statement of the Encyclopaedia Judaica which I quoted at the beginning assumes that Joseph Neumann’s printing shop produced mainly Yiddish works for a “local market”. This calls for the question, what this “local market” was. Since there was no sizeable Jewish population in the city itself, “local market” must refer to the Jewish communities of Moravia.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, when the Neumann enterprise was active, printing in Western Yiddish was already in decline. The question therefore is: whether these books in *Jüdisch-deutsch* (Judeo-German) are actually in the kind of language that is now mostly called Western Yiddish or whether they are rather German in Hebrew letters. Since languages are fluid phenomena, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as a period of language shift, saw the production of Jewish texts in a transitional and hybrid language, that does not fall neatly into one category or the other. Since bibliographers did not often concern themselves too much with these questions, we are left with confusing information.

<sup>9</sup> Friedrich Torberg: *Die Tante Jolesch*, 34<sup>th</sup> ed. 2013, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19–20.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Michael Lützeler, *Hermann Broch. Eine Biographie* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch, 1988) p. 33.

For example, the comprehensive Hebrew bibliography “Otsar ha-Sefer ha-‘Ivri” (Jerusalem 1993) by Yeshayahu Vinograd seems to confirm at first that a considerable number of Yiddish books were indeed printed in Brünn/Brno.<sup>12</sup>) Vinograd counts 94 titles published by Franz Josef Neumann and his successors. 26 of these books, he notes, are in Yiddish or contain text in Yiddish.

As we will see, Vinograd’s identifications of the language are not always accurate. To a large extent Vinograd seems to have based his references on the Hebrew bibliographer Aron Freimann.<sup>13</sup> Freimann, however, does not use the term Yiddish, but rather the ambiguous terms jüd[isch]-deutsch (Judeo-German) or notes that the Hebrew text is “mit jüd[isch]-deutscher Übersetzung”. *Jüdisch-deutsch* in this case, as in many others, can refer to (Western-) Yiddish as well as to the old tradition of translating Hebrew, the *taytsh*, and to Modern German in Hebrew letters. In some cases, Freimann is actually more accurate than other bibliographers. In his bibliographic notes, he describes 12 works issued by the printers of Brünn/Brno as containing *jüdisch-deutsch*. In three more cases, he takes care to note that the texts are “Deutsch mit hebr. Typen”, i.e. German in Hebrew letters.

The references given by Vinograd were checked by me with the catalogue of the Jewish National and University Library, which owns a large number of the very rare prints from Brünn/Brno.

## German in Hebrew letters

Before going into details about the prints, let us say a few more words about “German in Hebrew letters”. This is quite a common phenomenon in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. We have to bear in mind that German Jews retained the use of their own script as a cultural marker for quite some time and therefore the use of Hebrew script to write and print German was quite common during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>14</sup> Despite a certain awareness of Yiddish (or the dialect used by Jews) as a language that was distinct from the German of the gentiles, *Jüdisch-deutsch* (Judeo-German) was used as a broad term for a wide range of linguistic phe-

12 Yeshayahu Vinograd, *Otsar ha-Sefer ha-‘Ivri* (Jerusalem, 1993), pp. 109–111. There are two more Hebrew books printed in Brno listed in this bibliography for 1854 and 1860 respectively.

13 A. Freimann, ‘Die hebräischen Druckereien in Mähren’, *Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie*, (XX, 1917), pp. 33–44.

14 Marion Aptroot/Roland Gruschka, *Isaak Euchel: Reb Henoch, oder: Woß tut me damit. Eine jüdische Komödie der Aufklärungszeit*. Textedition von Marion Aptroot und Roland Gruschka, mit einleitenden Beiträgen von Marion Aptroot, Delphine Bechtel, Shmuel Feiner und Roland Gruschka. (Hamburg: Buske 2004 = jidische schtudies 11), p. 47ff.

nomena. Actually, this was still quite common up to the 1920s and caused some confusion. Especially after the Second World War, the situation became reversed, and as we see in the example of Vinograd's bibliography, Yiddish now covers the whole area of prints in Yiddish, German in Hebrew letters and the large range of linguistically hybrid phenomena in between.

Already in the 1960s, when Yiddish studies were established in Germany, researchers were strongly aware of the problem of terminological inconsistency of *Jüdisch-deutsch* versus "Jiddisch". Some argued that the term *Jüdisch-deutsch* or Judeo-German should be allowed back to describe texts which are not "proper" Yiddish, but German in Hebrew letters.<sup>15</sup> This proposal has been strongly contested ever since, and as far as I can see, no real consensus or consistency of terminology has been achieved until today.

As a rather recent example of an attempt to revive the term Judeo-German I will quote the bibliography "Yiddish Printing in Hungary" by Szonja Komoróczy. Here, the author tries to solve the question by defining "the language of [publications that are essentially Modern High German in Hebrew letters] as Judeo-German [...] and goes on with stating:

I have tried to identify the exact [language] used in the books, when possible. Items marked as written in Judeo-German use a transitional language: they are essentially in German, but printed with Hebrew characters. In some cases this language still retains certain linguistic features of Yiddish, in other cases they even include special diacritics for German vocalization, using Umlaut above the Hebrew characters for the appropriate German sound".<sup>16</sup>

As her reviewer Zakhary Baker pointed out, this designation "risks conflation with Yiddish proper". The "linguistic conundrum", as Baker calls it, lies in the fact that one term is used to cover the transitional language of texts which, as Komoróczy herself admits, are very different: from texts that are "essentially in German, but printed with Hebrew characters", to cases where the "language still retains certain linguistic features of Yiddish".<sup>17</sup>

In my view, the term *Jüdisch-deutsch* is not useful, since it risks the conflation of different linguistic phenomena into one term. It does not answer what qualifies as a "linguistic feature of Yiddish". Quite often, the perceived "difference" from Modern German is not much more than orthographic and due

15 Werner Weinberg, 'Die Bezeichnung Jüdischdeutsch. Eine Neubewertung', *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*, (1981), pp. 253–290. A detailed discussion, and refutation, of Weinberg's opinion can be found in Aptroot/Gruschka 2004, (see note 14).

16 Szonja Ráhel Komoróczy, *Yiddish Printing in Hungary: An Annotated Bibliography* (Budapest: Center for Jewish Studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2011), p. 12.

17 Ibid.

to the use of Yiddish writing conventions, like using the letter “Yud” both for “i” and “ü”, “Ayin” for “e” and “ö”. This can make a text appear more Yiddish at first glance. Therefore, as Komoróczy points out in the quote cited above, some printers did actually use diacritic marks to indicate “the appropriate German sound”– to avoid the appearance of dropping the *Umlaute*, which was obviously deemed to be a Jewish linguistic feature (and not proper for an educated audience).

What we can conclude is that up to the nineteenth century, Hebrew letters for German texts were used to make certain texts more accessible for a Jewish audience which primarily read texts in Hebrew letters. As an example of this I want to point out the anonymous work “Lebens Beschreibung Josef II.”, which was printed in Brünn/Brno in 1899. In its long subtitle, which also serves as an introduction, it is clearly stated that the book was “rendered into Hebrew letters to make it in general more useful to the Jewish nation.”<sup>18</sup>

In her discussion of the editorial principles of the “Jüdisch-deutsche Monatschrift” published in 1802 in Prague Kestenbergl-Gladstein points out that the intention was to reach an exclusively Jewish audience (and to be able to speak frankly about some matters, while keeping the discussion inside the community).<sup>19</sup> It seems that in the Bohemian lands and for the Prague Haskalah, the Hebrew alphabet was seen as a strong marker of cultural identity at least up to around 1830.<sup>20</sup>

In dealing with eighteenth century texts, the Western Yiddish specialist Erika Timm resorts to the description of certain texts as “Western Yiddish in a state of disintegration”.<sup>21</sup> Timm’s definition has the merits of avoiding the inflexible dichotomy that is implied by the question “Yiddish or German?” as well as the ambiguities of the outdated term *Jüdisch-deutsch*. My suggestion for such late Western Yiddish texts is “transitional” Western-Yiddish to differentiate them from “German in Hebrew letters”.

## Historical background of Jewish printing in Brünn/Brno during the period of 1754–1802

The activities of the printer Franz Josef Neumann were clearly connected to modernization attempts of the Habsburg administration in the eighteenth century and the economic concepts of mercantilism. The few biographical details

18 *Lebens Beschreibung Jozef II.*, see no. 26 in the list at the end of this article.

19 Kestenbergl-Gladstein (see note 2) pp. 194–195.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 161f.

21 Erika Timm, *Yiddish prints in a Franconian Geniza*, (Jerusalem: Akademon, 1988), p. 59.

that are known about the life and social status of the printer show a man who had tried his hands at several profession, but was not a printer by training. According to the research of the local historian Heinrich Flesch, Neumann was a citizen of Brünn/Brno since 1736 and originated from Zamoszcz, Poland. Since Jews were actually not allowed to live in the city of Brünn/Brno itself until 1848, it is not surprising that Neumann was a convert to Catholicism.<sup>22</sup> Aron Freimann noted that Neumann was a former “Consumo-Mauttheinnehmer”<sup>23</sup>, (i.e. a collector of duties on traded goods) whereas the researchers Milena Flodrová and Bedřich Nosek mention that he was for some time a scribe and also a translator of Hebrew books.<sup>24</sup>

Joseph Neumann did not act alone in the founding of the printing company. The attempts to set up a Hebrew printing press in Moravia can be traced back to 1750, when Alois Wiener Edler von Sonnenfels, professor of Oriental languages at Vienna University, presented a plan to that effect to the Moravian chamber together with Franz Josef Neumann. The arguments in favor they introduced were influenced by current mercantilist theories. Moravia was to benefit economically if Jews were to get their supply of books through local printers and authorized imports only. The petitioners also suggested the creation of a fund to set up a printing shop, which was to be supplied from the fees that were to be paid for imported books.<sup>25</sup> But only on April 28, 1753 Neumann obtained a privilege to trade with Hebrew books and to run a Hebrew printing press in Brünn/Brno, which was finally set up in 1754.<sup>26</sup>

When Franz Josef Neumann died in 1760, his widow Anna Franziska continued the business and moved the business to Nikolsburg/Mikulov in 1762, but most printing still took place in Brünn/Brno, where the printing shop was supervised by her son Franz Leopold. Her second son Josef Karl learnt the printing trade and was old enough to take over the family business in 1779, which had moved back from Nikolsburg/Mikulov to Brünn/Brno the year before.<sup>27</sup> When Josef Karl died in 1797, his business partner Josef Rossmann paid the debts and continued for a few more years, until 1802/03.<sup>28</sup>

22 Heinrich Flesch, 'Aus jüdischen Handschriften in Mähren', *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für die Geschichte der Juden in der čechoslovakischen Republik*. (II Jahrgang, 1930) pp. 285–292. (p. 292, note 37).

23 Freimann (see note 13), pp. 33–44.

24 Milena Flodvora/Bedřich Nosek, 'Auswahlkatalog hebräischer Drucke Brüner Provenienz', *Judaica Bohemiae*, XI/2 (Praha: Statni zidovske muzeum Praha 1975), p. 85f.

25 Ibid. p. 84.

26 Freimann (see note 13), p. 36.

27 Ibid. p. 36f.

28 Ibid. p. 41.

A “Sefer habrit” printed in 1797 contains a list of booksellers from which the book could be bought not only in Brünn/Brno, but also in Prague, Nikolsburg/Mikulov, Vienna, Pressburg/Bratislava, Breslau, Krakau/Krakow and Lemberg/Lvov. It can be supposed that other books from the Neumann printerer could also be obtained there. This means that the printer was not confined to the local market of the Moravian communities.<sup>29</sup>

Details about the enterprise can also be found in a fragment of a catalogue issued by Franziska Neumann. A. Freimann quoted from the catalogue in order to show that the firm did not only sell books from its own production, but also dealt in censored Hebrew books from other printers, as well as in various religious items. Freimann notes that Franziska Neumann announced an “alef beis zvei’erlei’ gatung: degolim far den[e]n kind[e]rn in unt[e]rshidlikhn feini farbn” (alef beys of two kinds, flags for children in different colors) – also giving us a nice example of Western Yiddish in the process of transition to Modern German.<sup>30</sup>

## “Works of edification”: Yiddish prayer and Musar (Ethical literature)

Neumann’s printing shop is credited with having produced “liturgical items, works of edification in Yiddish for the local market and those of local authors”. This rather unclear statement leaves the reader to guess that “liturgical items” were Hebrew books, while “works of edification” supposedly were in Yiddish. As will be shown, the situation was a bit more complex than that.

Out of the books which were available for analysis to me, I could make certain that the following are actually in Yiddish:

- > *Sefer Goder Geder: Kreftige tshuve gebeter beshas milchome: eini sho far tfilas mincho mispalel zain zol alle anshe ma’ase vi oich alle frumi vaiber bifrat ali mel-amdim mit ihren talmidim.* (Brünn: ‘515 [1754/55]). “Maker of Fences: Powerful prayers of penitence in time of war: to pray one hour before the afternoon prayer, which all upright men and also all pious women and especially all the teachers with their pupils should pray”

The title of this “tkhine”, or prayer of supplication, shows the use of a “transitional language”, a somewhat Germanised Western Yiddish. A closer look at the work confirms that the text has strong Western Yiddish features.

29 Milena Flodovora/Bedrich Nosek (see note 24), p. 102, n. 35.

30 Ibid., p. 36.

The next print is rather intriguing, because it falls into the two categories at the same time: German and Yiddish prints:

- > *Machsor ke-Minhog Peham Polin u-Raisen ve-im pirush bi-lshon taitsh*, (Brünn '516 [1755]).

This *Machsor* was not only one of the first prints by Franz Josef Neumann. It deserves special attention also because it gives us an interesting example of the multilingual output of the printer. While the prayers are, of course, in Hebrew, it also contains a translation – called “*Taytsh*” which at first glance seems to be purely German. Further, there is an added commentary (also referred to as “*Taytsh*”) called “*Hadaras koydesh*”, which is clearly in Yiddish.

At second glance, the *Taytsh* of the prayers, a translation which does not use any Hebrew words, is not necessarily Modern High German. The translation rather follows an old tradition of *taytshn* in the meaning of “translating”. *Taytsh* is a specific literary language, developed for the task of a faithful translation of Hebrew (especially the *Chumash*), which does not mean that it was at any time a spoken Judeo-German language.<sup>31</sup>

A considerable part of the Yiddish texts printed in Brünn/Brno does actually belong into the category of devotional literature, since they are works of Yiddish *musar*, didactic ethical literature. But since they were reprints of time-honoured works of this kind, they do not fit the bill of being works by local authors. We find the following works of traditional *musar*:

- > Salomo Ben-Simon Wezlar from Fürth: *Sefer Cheqirov ha-Lev* (Brünn, Josef Karl Neumann's [1783/84]);
- > Meir ben Isaac Sheliach Tsibbur: *Akdamus (with Megilas Rus)* (Brünn: Josef Karl Neumann '554 [= 1783/84]).
- > Binyomin Mosafiya: *Zekher Rav* (Brünn: Josef Karl Neumann '550 [1789/90]).
- > Yedaya Penini: *Sefer Bechinot ha-Olam [Bechinos olam]*. (Brünn: Josef Karl Neumann, '557 [1796/97]).
- > Sabbatai ben Jesaja Horowitz: *Tsavo'at Ga'on ha-Gadol he-Chasid Moh' Sheftel*. (Brünn., Josef Karl Neumann '557 [1796/97]).

The expanded title of the last quoted work states that it is a work “*izt zer nitslekh fir veiber und gemeine leite: vayl dafon file muser ob tsu nemen izt*” or “... very useful for women and common people, since it contains a lot of moral advice”. Apart from confirming that it is indeed a work of *musar*, a practical ethical device, we also get an example of already Germanised Western Yiddish. Judging by the moral tone that is employed by the translator in the

31 On the development of “*Taytsh*” and its place in the history of the Yiddish language see Erika Timm (unter Mitarbeit von Gustav Adolf Beckmann), *Historische jiddische Semantik. Die Bibelübersetzungssprache als Faktor der Auseinanderentwicklung des jiddischen und des deutschen Wortschatzes* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005).



preface, I would also place a unique translation of the Book of Tobit into the *musar* category:

- > Sefer Tuvya. Gedruckt in der Königlichen Stadt Brünn / cum Licentia Superiorum (5520 [1760].)

According to the bibliographer Sarah Zfatman, this translation is independent of other known translations.<sup>32</sup> Although the preface of this work suggests that it is a translation into German (with Yiddish traces), a closer look at the text reveals it to be written in Western Yiddish. If this translation is indeed different from any others, it might provide another example of a specific late Yiddish title from Moravia.

A quite late example, which is difficult to place into any genre, but which could also be broadly covered with the term *musar* is

- > Abraham Trebitsch, Hirsch Menaker: *Ruach Chayyim*, (Nikolsburg: 1785.)

The text of this account of possession by a “Dybbuk” is in Hebrew and in Yiddish, which offers us another example of late (or transitional) Western Yiddish.

One of the most curious titles in the output of the Neumann printers is a little Purim comedy (*purim-shpil*), the title of which I am giving here transcribed (not translated!):

- > “Mordechai und Ester, eine komische Operette in einen [sic!] Aufzug von R. Leib Zimble”, printed in 1790.

Despite the German title, it obviously and intentionally uses German and Yiddish or a mixture of both. The main character is Mordechai, who speaks a richly idiomatic Yiddish. The contrast of his idiom to the formal German of the King’s court in Shushan is of course exaggerated for comic effect. This is a common device in Purim plays and can also be found in the Haskalah comedies of that time.<sup>33</sup> But this is not a Haskalah comedy, but a quite traditional Purim play. When Mordechai meets a “Shvalye” (Chevalier) and a “Fräulein” at Queen Esther’s court, he reminds them that he knew their parents, who were simple-living, pious Jews.<sup>34</sup>

The fact that a text using German and Yiddish (and obviously mocking assimilation and imitation of “goyish manners”) was created towards the end of the eighteenth century shows that Yiddish was alive, but also, that German (and “German manners”) already had a strong foothold in the Jewish community: German had become the language of “better society” in the Jewish

<sup>32</sup> Sarah Zfatman, *Yiddish Narrative Prose* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1985), no. 129, p. 134.

<sup>33</sup> Theatre writers of the Haskalah period like Isaac Euchel used the device of putting Yiddish against German frequently, see for example Euchel’s comedy “Reb Henoch” (see note 14). The intention, however, was quite different from the traditional Purim play.

<sup>34</sup> Leib Zimble, *Mordechai und Esther* (Brünn, 1790), Neinter Auf Zug.

street. Mordechai does find some consolation in the statement of Esther in Judeo-German: “Ikh habe fun mayne gloybnz flikhti[n] nikhtz fer gesn (I have not forgotten anything of the obligations of my faith)”.<sup>35</sup>

The latest known example of a Yiddish print from Brünn/Brno indicates that the printers in Brünn/Brno saw demand for Yiddish up to the end of the eighteenth century, *Sefer Gedulas Moyshe. in dizen sefer vert far tsel di gedule fun Moyshe Rabeynu olov ha-sholem [...] /Brünn: '560 [1799/1800]*. “Revelation of Moses. In this book, the greatness of our teacher Moses is accounted, peace upon him ...” The *Revelation of Moses* is a Yiddish translation of a little medieval mystical Midrash. In my opinion, this example of Yiddish devotional literature shows that Rossmann was printing for an audience with traditional reading habits. It might point to a certain Chassidic influence in Moravia at that time.

### German texts in Hebrew letters from Brünn/Brno: Haskalah, practical advice and contemporary history

If the output of the printers Neumann and Rossmann reflects an actual demand among the readership, then we can conclude that modern German was already present in Moravian Jewish communities by the middle of the eighteenth century. As an example for an unexpectedly early use of German I want to point out the *Seder Tefilat Yom Kipur Qatan bi-Lshon ha-Kodesh uvi-Lshon Ashkenaz*, (Brünn: '515 [1755, printer Franz Josef Neumann]). These prayers for the “Minor Day of Atonement” are, of course, in Hebrew, but are accompanied by translated prayers that are simply and purely German.<sup>36</sup> The only traces of Yiddish to be found in this print, as in some others, are telling “slips” or inconsistencies by typesetters or correctors. They seem to be indications that the printers of Neumann were still rooted in a Yiddish tradition of printing and spelling. The interesting thing about this print is that from the founding stages of the printing press in Brünn/Brno, the German language was already present. On the other hand, Yiddish clearly was also in use and remained so right up to the end of the century. What is even more interesting, in my view, is that the observance of the day preceding a New Moon is a cabbalistic innovation. The use of a German translation shows an interesting exception to the general rule that the use of Yiddish was connected to traditional observances.

Other examples of this type of religious works in German are:

35 Leib Zimble, *Mordechai und Esther*, Vierter Auf Zug.

36 In this case, Vinograd did not mention in his bibliography that the book contains other than Hebrew text: Vinograd, (see note 12), p. 109.

- > *Qinot le-Tisha be-Av: ke-Minhag Polin, Peham, Mehrin, Ungarn, im Megilat Eikha.* (Brünn:, '559 [1798/99])

The “Qinot” are in Hebrew only, while “Eikha” (Book of Lamentations) has a parallel translation in modern German. The same is the case with a translation of the psalms that was published by Rossmann:

- > *Tehilim: Meturgam bi-Leshon Ashkenaz tsakh.* (Brünn:, '557 [1796/97])

The subtitle “bi-lshon ashkenaz tsakh” might point towards a new awareness for language – since the point is made that it is in the “pure” language of Ashkenaz. Although “loshn ashkenaz” was used to mean Yiddish as well, in this context, I assume, it actually refers to the German translation.

In one case, the use of German is clearly connected to the Haskalah movement, as in the case of David Friedländers translations of Jewish prayers:

- > *Gebete der Juden auf das ganze Jahr, übersetzt und mit erklärenden Anmerkungen versehen von David Friedländer.* (Brünn: Karl Neumanns hebräische und deutsche Druckerei, '557 [1796/97]).

The book is actually an unauthorised reprint of the Berlin edition of this book. Therefore, there is no actual connection of the author to Moravia or Brünn/Brno, but it is telling that the printers obviously thought that it would find a reading audience for prayers in German. In this context we can mention another book to be found in Vinograd’s bibliography,<sup>37</sup> although I have not been able to find it in any catalogue so far and have therefore not seen the book itself. The title *Fershidne Zegenshprikhe* is certainly German: “Verschiedene Segensprüche” means “Assorted Blessings”, so it is most likely another prayer book in German.

Quite exceptional among the books of mostly religious content is a work called *Der Follshtendige Landadfokat*, (Brünn: 1898/99). As Aron Freimann already pointed out<sup>38</sup>(though Vinograd ignored this), this book is a transcription of a German text into Hebrew letters, a book that had appeared in German in several editions in Brno/Brünn in the 1790s.<sup>39</sup> The title of the Jewish edition is identical to the German, only rendered with Hebrew letters. It is a book of legal advice and so belongs to the literary genre of *Briefsteller*- a handbook in

<sup>37</sup> See Vinograd (see note 12), p. 110.

<sup>38</sup> Freimann (see note 13), p. 42.

<sup>39</sup> The full German title, which is the same in the edition in Hebrew letters: *Der vollständige Landadvokat : worinn alle im menschlichen Leben nöthige Geschäfts-Aufsätze, als: Bittschriften, Promemorien, Kontrakte, Schuldverschreibungen, Bürgschafts-Aufsätze, Obligationen, Zeugnisse, Testamente, Gewalt oder Vollmachten, Quittungen etc. nach den bestehenden kais. königl. Gesetzen zu finden, und ohne Hülfe eines Advokaten abgefasst werden können. Nebst einem Anhang, in welchem alle fremde juridische Sprüche und Ausdrücke, so wie man selbe von höhern Stellen erhält, in ihrer wahren Bedeutung erklärt werden.* Vierte Auflage, Brünn bei Johann Georg Gastl, Buchhändler in der Sattlergasse (n.d.). Online ressource: <<http://vd18.de/de-sub-vd18/content/structure/43735447>>

the form of letters for different occasions. The purpose of the “Landadvokat” is, as the subtitle states, to enable people to write legal contracts in German by themselves, without the need of an *Advokat* (lawyer). One wonders, though, what the purpose of transmitting this book into Hebrew letters was. The writing of legal contracts in Hebrew letters had been interdicted since the year 1784.<sup>40</sup>

Another work with secular content is the anonymous collection of anecdotes from the life of Emperor Josef II. It obviously targets an audience with an interest in contemporary history: *Lebens B[e]shreibung Jozef II.* (Description of the life of Josef II). A preface to the work clearly states that the purpose of printing a German text with Hebrew letters is to make the book more accessible to a Jewish readership. The text is a transliteration with no efforts at translation. So German was thought to be fully comprehensible for a Jewish readership, the letters being the barrier rather than the language itself.

The last book to mention in the category of German in Hebrew letters (and also one of the last to be printed by Rossmann) is:

> Abraham ben Reuben Trebitsch, *Zeit Geschichte* (Brünn/Brno: 1801).

*Zeit Geschichte* is the German version of Abraham Trebitsch’s work *Qorot ha-Ittim*. It offers a history of European monarchs, including the emperors of Austria, from 1741 to 1801. Trebitsch’s work is a continuation of Menahem Mann ben Solomon ha-Levi’s *She’erit Yisrael*, which traced Jewish history back to the year 1740.<sup>41</sup> The author was born in the little town of Trebitsch, Moravia, about 1760. Later in his life, he lived in Nikolsburg/Mikulov, where he was secretary to the *Landesrabbiner*, or Chief Rabbi, of Moravia.<sup>42</sup>

## Conclusion

Trying to answer the questions I raised in the first paragraphs of this essay, my conclusion about the statement that a “Hebrew press [in Brünn/Brno] until 1802 produced mainly liturgical items, works of edification in Yiddish for the

40 Kestenbergl-Gladstein (see note 2), p. 39.

41 Trebitsch’s work has been well researched, see: Jiřina Šedinová, ‘The Hebrew Historiography in Moravia in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Abraham Trebitsch, circa 1760–1840’ *Judaica Bohemiae* 10 (1974), pp. 51–61; Iveta Vondrářková (Cermanová), ‘The Events of Times by Abraham Trebitsch of Mikulov (Nikolsburg): The Chronicle and Its Relationship to the Development of Modern Historiography’ *Judaica Bohemiae* 37 (2001), pp. 92–144; Iveta Cermanová, ‘The Second Part of the Chronicle ‘Qorot ha-Ittim’ by Abraham Trebitsch of Mikulov. A Contribution to the Research of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Jewish Historiography’ in *Judaica Bohemiae* 40 (2004), pp. 22–60.

42 Iveta Cermanová, ‘Avraham Trebitsch of Mikulov’ in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews of Eastern Europe*, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research <[http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Avraham\\_Trebitsch\\_of\\_Mikulov](http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Avraham_Trebitsch_of_Mikulov)>

local market and those of local authors”, though not exactly untrue, certainly has to be modified.

According to my research at the present stage (taking into account that not all works were accessible for analysis) I can conclude that 96 titles (94 prints from Brünn/Brno as identified by Vinograd and two more from Nikolsburg/Mikulov) are known. Among these, 25 books were identified by Vinograd as containing Yiddish, to which we have to add one title which contains Yiddish text, but is not mentioned as such by Vinograd; another one which he does not list at all Mikhel Epstein’s translation or digest of *Shney luchos ha-Brit*; and the two titles from the Nikolsburg/Mikulov period, mentioned by Freimann, which brings the total to 29. Thus, a bit less than a third of the books produced in Hebrew letters by Franz Josef Neumann and successors do contain German or Yiddish.

As I have noted, not all books were available for analysis. But for at least 15 of these titles it can be said that they are (partly) in Yiddish. It turns out that another 8 prints (or 9, if *Segensprüche*, as mentioned above, is in German) actually are, fully or partly, in German. Just by counting titles, Yiddish seems to be prevalent over German at a ratio of about 2:1.

When we look at the use of Yiddish and German in the prints by Joseph Neumann and his successors, we can discern that the language shift which was going to take place in the Jewish Communities of Moravia left its first traces in their output. Therefore, the printing shop was part of a larger socio-economic development from the middle of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century.

We see that the printers in Brünn/Brno were still serving a Yiddish readership, which was not only local or restricted to Moravia. Quite a few of these books were reprints of time-honoured works, especially of the genre of Yiddish *musar*-literature. This strengthens the argument made by Kestenberg-Gladstein that the use of (in her terminology) “Bohemian and Moravian Judeo-German” was closely connected with traditional ways of life and religious observance.<sup>43</sup> It seems to me that the *Sefer Ru’akh Chayim*, which originated from Nikolsburg/Mikulov, as well as the Purim-play *Mordekhai und Ester* with its mocking of assimilation, confirm this observation.

Although some of the supposedly “Yiddish” titles are actually German, a significant part of the production of Brünn/Brno printers actually contained some Yiddish text. The selection of titles also seems to indicate that they were more than just a random by-product of the printing enterprise. The enterprise of Neumann and his successors saw its decline in a significant period

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43 Kestenberg-Gladstein (see note 2), p. 359.

for Hebrew and Yiddish printing. On the one hand, Hebrew printing in Vienna was on the rise and the Brünn/Brno printers could not compete with the more effective output of the Viennese printers Josef Hraschansky and Anton Schmidt.<sup>44</sup>

At the same time, competition on the markets further to the East became stronger. Between the 1780s and the 1820s, Jewish printing in Eastern Europe took off as the focus of Jewish culture in general shifted from Western to Eastern Europe. This new development is partly due to a change in the legal and economic environment. Russia began to follow mercantilist concepts – as the Habsburg Monarchy had done earlier. State-wide and local elites sought to restrict import of Jewish books and to encourage local production.<sup>45</sup>

Also, in Russia there was a rising regional demand for Hebrew and Yiddish texts in a period of demographic explosion coupled with cultural and religious change which were marked by the rise of Chassidism as well as of its opponents, the *Misnagdim* and Maskilim. These cultural developments resulted in the rise of the new literary standard of Yiddish, with Eastern Yiddish dialects now forming the basis of the printed language.<sup>46</sup> At the beginning of the nineteenth century Yiddish printing in the West ceases to exist.

What we see in the Yiddish and German prints from Brünn/Brno is a period of transition before the language shift actually takes hold. The pattern, though, is not straightforward. Certainly, Yiddish titles are nothing surprising in the 1850s. We could also expect that Yiddish would give way to German at some point and might have disappeared towards the end of the century. But right up to the end of the eighteenth century we find reprints of time-honoured works of *musar*-literature. We also encounter two original works in Yiddish, which give us a hint that Yiddish was a language still in active use among the Jews in Moravia at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

On the other hand, we can see that Moravian orthodoxy was less concerned with traditional form when it came to the language question. The influential *Landesrabbiner*, the Chief Rabbi of Moravia, for forty years, Mordechai ben Avraham Benet (Markus Benedikt, 1753–1829), was known for his pragmatic approach to the challenges of modernity. In this, he differed from the uncompromising views of his contemporary, Moshe Sofer (Chatam

44 A. Freimann (see note 13), p. 43.

45 Kenneth B. Mosse, 'Printing and Publishing after 1800', in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research <[http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Printing\\_and\\_Publishing/Printing\\_and\\_Publishing\\_after\\_1800](http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Printing_and_Publishing/Printing_and_Publishing_after_1800)>

46 Cf. Dov-Ber Kerler, *The Origins of Modern Literary Yiddish*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

Sofer) of Pressburg/Bratislava.<sup>47</sup> Kestenberg-Gladstein points out that Mordechai Benet was actually “ein Feind des Jüdisch-Deutschen” – an enemy of Judeo-German.

If this was indeed the case, it would mean that Yiddish did not have the backing of the religious establishment in the Bohemian lands. It is not surprising that it had all but disappeared in the course of a few generations and left only traces in a jargon which was looked at with disdain and, later on, with a certain amount of nostalgia as a reminder of the old times of the “Moravian Ghetto”.

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47 Adam S. Ferziger, 'Banet, Mordechai ben Avraham', in *The Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, [http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Banet\\_Mordechai\\_ben\\_Avraham](http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Banet_Mordechai_ben_Avraham)

# Bibliography of Yiddish and German in Hebrew Letters in Brünn/Brno and Nikolsburg/Mikulow

## Period of Franz Josef Neumann (1754–1760)

1755

1.

סדר תפילת יום כפור קטן: בלשון הקודש ובלשון אשכנז

Brünn '515 (1755).

Hebrew prayer for the fast before a new moon, with a translation in Modern German (!) in Hebrew letters.

2.

ספר גודר גדר: קרפטיגי תשובה גיבעטר בשעת מלחמה

Brünn, '515 [=1754/55]

(Western) Yiddish.

1756

3.

מחזור. חלק שני. כמנהג פולין, מערהין ורייסן. בלשון טייטש עם פירוש

Brünn '516 (1755/56)

Hebrew with two kinds of translation (*taytsh*): the prayers are in the style of *Taytsh*, a Germanised literary language for the purpose of Bible translation. In contrast, there is an added commentary (also referred to as *taytsh*), the *hedaras koydesh* in a richly idiomatic Yiddish. My impression is that the language is much closer to Eastern Yiddish than the literary Western Yiddish.

1758

4.

הגדה של פסח

Brünn, '518 [=1757/58]

Not seen.



1760

5.

ליב סופר בן חיים חזן

קינות לתשעה באב: ומגילת איכה עם פירוש לשון אשכנז

Brünn, '520 [1759/60]

Although “Loshn Ashkenaz” can mean German, in this case the language is a very idiomatic Yiddish, containing no obvious influences of German.

6.

מעשה טוביה

Gedruckt in der Königlichen Stadt Brünn / cum Licentia Superiorum 5520 [=1759/60]. According to Zfatman this translation of the Book of Tobit is independent from other known translations.<sup>48</sup>

(Transitional) Western Yiddish.

## Period of Anna Franziska Neumann in Nikolsburg/Mikulov

In 1761, Josef Neumann's widow Anna Franziska took over the family business together with her oldest son, Franz Leopold.

1767

Anna Franziska Neumann moved the seat of the firm to Nikolsburg/Mikulov where it stayed from 1766 to 1779. Only two prints in Hebrew and Yiddish (?) from this period are known:

7.

סדר התחינה

Nikolsburg 1767.

According to Freimann, “Techinnot jüd.-deutsch”. Not seen.

8.

סדר קריאת שמע שעל מיטתו

Nikolsburg 1767.

According to Freimann, “Nachtgebete mit jüd.-deutscher Uebersetzung”. Not seen.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Sara Zfatman (see note 32)5, Nr. 129.

## Period of Josef Carl Neumann (1783–1790)

1784

9.

Salomo Ben-Simon Wezlar of Fürth

ספר חקירת הלב

Brünn:, '544 [1783/84] bei Josef Karl Neumann  
(Western) Yiddish.

10.

Meir ben Isaac Sheliach Tsibbur:

מגילת רות עם פירוש המלית... והוספנו בו אקדמות

Brünn, Josef Karl Neumann '554 [= 1783/84]  
(Western) Yiddish

11.

ספר אלדד הדני

'Brünn, Josef Karl Neumann '554 [=1783/84]  
(Western) Yiddish.

1785

12.

Abraham Trebitsch, Hirsch Menaker:

ספר רוח חיים: איין מעשה נורא פון איין רוח דער וואר אין איינם יונג דער אלט איזט צווייא  
אונד צוואנציג יאהר

Brünn, 1785.

The book of the ... A story about a spirit that was in a young man of twenty-five ... This is a version of the account of a supposed possession of a young man in Nikolsburg by the soul of a deceased, or Dybbuk in (transitional Western) Yiddish. It was also printed in the same year in Hebrew. Freimann states that this was printed in Brünn/Brno and not by Anna Franziska Neumann in Nikolsburg/Mikulov.<sup>49</sup>

1788

13.

Yitzkhak Halevi Spits

הגדה של פסח

Brünn, '548 [=1787/88]  
Not seen.

<sup>49</sup> A. Freimann, (see note 13), p. 38.

1790

14.

ליב צימבלער Zimble, Leib (Löb?)

מרדכי אונד אסתר, איינה קאמישע אפערעטטי אין איינן אוף צוג  
פון ר' ליב צימבלער אין מוזיק גזעצט

Brünn, '550 [1789/90]

The language is an obviously deliberate mix of (transitional Western) Yiddish and German to achieve comical effects.

15.

Binyomin Mosafiya:

רב זכר

Brünn, '550 [=1789/90]

Hebrew and (Western) Yiddish.

16.

[מעשה בוך]

Brünn, '550 [=1789/90]

The existence of this print is not verified and only based on a mention by A. Freimann in "Die hebräische Druckereien in Mähren". He owned a few printing sheets of the book and identified them as belonging to a print from Brünn/Brno.<sup>50</sup> The short examples of the text supplied by him seem to indicate a text in transitional (strongly Germanised) Western Yiddish.

1791

17.

פרשידני זעעגנשפריכי

Fershidne zegenshprikhe

Brünn, [1790/1791?]

The existence of this title, which is mentioned by Vinograd, could not be confirmed.<sup>51</sup> The title hints at a prayer book in German.

<sup>50</sup> A. Freimann, p. 44.

<sup>51</sup> See Vinograd (see note 12) p. 110.

1796

18.

Yedaya Penini:

בחינות עולם. עם בקשות הממיל"ן

(Title added in Latin script: *Bechinos olam*)

Brünn, '557 [=1796/97]

Hebrew and (Western) Yiddish.

1797

19.

Horowitz, Sabbatai ben Jesaja

שעפטל בן ישעיה

שעפטל 'מוה החסיד הגדול גאון צוואת

איזט זער ניצליך פיר ווייבר אונד געמיינע לייטע: ווייל דאפאן פילע מוסר אב צו נעמן איזט

(The Testament of the Great Scholar, the Pious Rabbi Sheftl [...] being very useful for women and common people because there is a lot of ethical advice to be taken from it.)

Brünn, '557 [=1796/97] Hebrew and (Western) Yiddish.

20.

Friedländer, David

גבעטי דער יודן אויף דאס גאנצי יאהר

איבערזעצט אונד מיט ערקלעהרונדן אנמערקונגן פאן דוד פרידלענדער

Brünn, '557 [=1796/97]

Modern German in Hebrew letters. The book is an unauthorized reprint of the 1786 Berlin edition.<sup>52</sup>

21.

Jona ben Avraham Girondi

איגרת התשובה

Brünn, '557 [=1796/97]

Hebrew and (Western) Yiddish.

52 On Friedländer's prayer book see for example Uta Lohmann, 'David Friedländer, Isaak Abraham Euchel und die Gebeteübersetzungen in ihrem bildungshistorischen Kontext' in Marion Aptroot, Andreas Kennecke, Christoph Schulte (Hg.): *Isaac Euchel. Der Kulturrevolutionär der jüdischen Aufklärung*. (Hannover: Wehrhah Verlag, 2010), pp. 105–133.

## Period of Josef Rossmann (1797–1802)

1797

22.

תהילים: מתורגם בלשון אשכנזי צח

Brünn, '557 [=1796/97]

Hebrew and German in Hebrew Letters.

Although “Lashon Ashkenaz” very often does mean Yiddish, in this case it indicates Modern German in Hebrew letters, showing occasionally only faint traces of Yiddish influence in orthography, and occasionally in single words.

1799

23.

קינות לתשעה באב

כמנהג פולין, פיהם, מעהרין, אונגרן, עם מגלת איכה מפורש א"ל וביאור

Brünn, '559 [1798/99]

Kinot in Hebrew, while Eikho has a parallel translation in modern German.

24.

Yedaya Penini

בקשת הממין: מהמליץ נעתק ללשון אשכנז מאת בנימין וואלף פרערא

Hebrew and (Western) Yiddish.

25.

דער פאללשטענדיגע לאנדאדפאקאט

וואורין אלע אים מגשליכען לעבן נעטהיגען געשעפטס איופזעצע צו פינדען אונד אוהנע

הילפע איינעז אדפאקאטען אבגעפאסט ווערדען קעננען

[Der vollständige Landadfokat, worin alle im menschlichen Leben nöthigen Geschäfts-Aufsätze [...] zu finden und ohne Hilfe eines Adfokaten abgefaßt werden können ...].

Brünn, '559 [1798/99]

Modern German in Hebrew letters.

26.

לעבענס בשרייבונג יאזעפס 2. איינע היסטאריש-ביאגראפישע גשיכטע

[Lebensbeschreibung Josefs II, eine historisch-bibliographische Geschichte. Um der jüdischen Nazion dieses berühmte Werk gemeinnütziger zu machen haben wir es mit hebräischen deutschen [sic!] Letern in unserer Druckerei auf gelegt, hoffen daher das Vergnügen der gesamte jüdische Nazion und ihren Beifall zu erwerben, daß selbe es um einen biligen Preis kaufen werden.]

Brünn, '559 [1798/99]

Modern German in Hebrew letters. As the foreword indicates, no translation into Yiddish was attempted, but better accessibility to a Jewish readership through Hebrew letters.

1800

27.

ספר גדולת משה

אין דיזען ספר ווערט פֿר צילט דיא גדולה פֿון משה רבינו ע"ש

Brünn, '560 [1799/1800]

(Western) Yiddish.

28.

Epshtain, Yechiel Mikhel ben Avraham ha-Levi

ספר עץ חיים

דאז איזט דאז קעסטליכי ספר שני לוחות הברית אויף טייטש שטעלט

Brünn, [1800],

"Sefer Ets Khayim, that is the wonderful book Shney Lukhot ha-Brit in translation ..."

The title is not mentioned by Vinograd. A copy is in the University Library Heidelberg: <<http://katalog.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/titel/67090933>>

Western Yiddish in a modernised, *daytshmerish* spelling.

1801

29.

Chajat, Mosche Abraham ben Reuben (Abraham Trebitsch)

צייט געשיכטע

[Zeit Geschichte].

Brünn, 5561 [1800/01].

Modern German in Hebrew letters.

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## Images



**Image 12:** Title page of Sefer Eldad ha-Dani, a medieval Jewish legend about the ten lost tribes, Hebrew and (Western) Yiddish, printed by Josef Karl Neumann, Brno, 1784; National Library of Israel

# Pressing Matters: Jewish vs. Christian Printing in Eighteenth Century Prague\*

Dagmar Hudečková

The aim of this article is to examine the issue of Hebrew letterpress from the eighteenth century. A period of stagnation occurred in this era and the purpose of this paper is to discover the causes of this occurrence. Additionally, the phenomenon of cooperation of Christian and Jewish printers in this area in the late eighteenth century will be examined closely. This text works with the term "Hebrew letterpress", even though it does not describe the nature of production in the eighteenth century precisely. The production of Yiddish books and books about Judaism written in German (i.e. Hebrew grammar books or textbooks) must be included in the concept of Hebrew letterpress. Books in Yiddish created a significant part of Jewish printing houses production in the first half of the eighteenth century.

## Living conditions of Prague's Jewish ghetto during the eighteenth century

A number of factors hit the life of the Prague Jewish ghetto during the eighteenth century: natural disasters and epidemics on the one hand, the hand of the monarch and his power on the other. There are several essential sources for understanding the situation in the ghetto. We can discuss the specific terms about the population thanks to a census. The population of the Jewish ghetto at the beginning of the eighteenth century can be estimated at 11,517 people. 64 percent of them were over 10 years old, 36 percent of the age of 9 or less.<sup>1</sup> According to the census from 1729 we can divide the population by

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1 Alexandr Putik, Prague Jews and Judah Hasid. A Study on the Social, Political and Religious History of the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries: The Prague Jewish Community

occupation and livelihood. Craftsmen and skilled workers made up 30 percent, unskilled manual laborers made up 3 percent; bankers, money changers and dealers made up almost 60 percent. The remaining approximately 7 percent of the population were employed in the synagogues, as teachers and schoolmasters, officers or as doctors.<sup>2</sup> Viennese officials encouraged the Emperor Charles VI to deal with an uncontrolled growth of the Jewish community. Due to this factor, the Emperor instituted a committee in 1714 designed to examine the possibility of reducing the Jewish population living in Prague and diminishing their economic influence. The results were the notorious *Familianten Laws* of 1726 which limited the number of Jewish *familiants* – heads of families that were allowed to live in Bohemia legally, only the oldest son could marry and continue the family.<sup>3</sup> A decree of Empress Maria Theresa considering the expulsion of Jews which was issued in December 1744 had a great significance in the life of the Jewish community. The Jewish population was accused of high treason and collaboration with Prussian soldiers who besieged and later occupied Prague. Due to this decree, Jews were forced to leave Prague before 31 January 1745 and then along with the Jews from the countryside to leave the country.<sup>4</sup> The deadline for leaving was extended until the end of March. The Jewish departure from Prague changed the economic situation of Prague – prices rose and the guild representatives recommended the return of Jews to the city.<sup>5</sup> This led to the Empress' permission to return in July 1748. The return was gradual – the first group came back to Prague at the beginning of August, this group had the task of preventing further deterioration of the Jewish town. The returnees had the duty to fill out sworn declarations and thanks to this there is a partial survey about the returning population. The return was also subject to a payment of the so-called *Tax of Tolerance* amounting to 300,000 Rhenish gold, this resulted in a considerable impoverishment of the community. In the social (socio-economic) sphere, this led to a further escalation of social differences and economical costs, a further blow to the community. In the following years, the community focused on solving the problems related to the return, an indirect evidence of this is the clearly distinct pause in the Hebrew letterpress. According to Otto Mune-

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in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries' in *Judaica Bohemiae*, XXXVIII (2003), (p. 74.)

2 Ibid., p. 91–93.

3 Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community* (University of California Press, 2000), p. 21.

4 The term for leaving the country was 31 June 1745.

5 Lucie Petrusová, Alexandr Putík, *Sworn Declaration of Prague Jewish Families, 1748–1749 (1751): Edition of a source on the return of Jews expelled by Maria Theresa* (Praha: Židovské muzeum v Praze, 2012), p. 7–8.

les, there are no Hebrew or Yiddish books in Prague published between the years 1739 and 1750. Another significant intrusion into the life of the Jewish ghetto was a fire which broke out during the night between 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May 1754. Damages were enormous, only the western part of the district was left untouched. Further, some of the local synagogues were damaged (i.e. Old-New or Maisel).<sup>6</sup> Although the community received financial loans from Viennese banks, the post-fire restoration meant further economic decline. By this time, according to Milada Vilímková,<sup>7</sup> the community was still repaying the loans provided to it after the previous fire in 1689.

Unfortunately, the situation within the community was not easy either. There were not only significant social differences, but also differences of policy and opinion which often led to disagreement that affected the letterpress heavily. This situation reached its peak after the ban of book printing in the ghetto and the imprisonment of Rabbi Lipman Heller in the seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup> The disagreement did not decrease during the eighteenth century. Rabbi Ezekiel ha-Levi Landau said:

*“Unfortunately, God inflicted heavy blows on our community, first a sword of war, then a siege and plunder and then a great fire which destroyed possessions and estates. And what little was left had to go to the recovery of burned houses... This heavy punishment affected me as well, as the Heavenly Father brought me her so that I can behold such misery of the poor as I had never seen in Poland.”*

At this time, the Jewish community in Prague was the scene of political disputes between the supporters of Rabbi Yonatan Eibenschütz, who in 1741 went to Altona,<sup>9</sup> and his opponents. The supporters of Eibenschütz prayed for his return from abroad, so they were not well-disposed towards the incoming Rabbi Ezekiel Landau and he perceived this antipathy towards himself.<sup>10</sup>

A new era in Jewish policy begins with the rule of Maria Theresa's son, Emperor Joseph II. New regulations were implemented by decrees (a series of Edicts of Tolerance) and they were not universal.<sup>11</sup> There was a specific regulation designed for each region. His regulation significantly affected

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6 Tomáš Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě* (Praha: Sefer, 1993), p. 84.

7 Milada Vilímková, *Židovské město pražské* (Praha: Aventinum, 1993).

8 More in Olga Sixtová (ed.), *Hebrejský knihtisk v Čechách a na Moravě* (Praha: Academia, 2012), p. 205–206.

9 Today part of Hamburg. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 120–121.

11 Louise Hecht, *Moderní dějiny českých Židů* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2013), p. 20.

many areas of their lives. For example, compulsory schooling was expanded to Jews and they were allowed to attend all types of domestic colleges and universities, or they could also cultivate the land (while they employed exclusively Jewish menials). Apart from these “positive” changes, there were also controversial or even negative changes. The introduction of compulsory military service in 1787 due to the series of wars was accepted rather negatively.<sup>12</sup> The language regulations which restricted the usage of Yiddish as a means of communication by Jews were perceived as controversial, because Jews were forced to use German or Czech for all official communication. The Hebrew language, however, was not affected, since it was used only as a liturgical language and not as means of everyday communication. The fact is that many Jews considered the usage of Yiddish an undesirable jargon.<sup>13</sup> This opinion was also shared by censor Karl Fischer, who therefore urged them to use German.<sup>14</sup> This was followed by the language-related regulation of adopting permanent names and surnames in German.<sup>15</sup> The reforms of Joseph II were intended to build a centralized state with a modern industrial economic base from an inconsistent empire. Interestingly, the Emperor did not release Jews from the obligation to pay the *Tax of Tolerance* nor did he limit the still valid *Familianten Laws*. The so called *Systemalpatent* was issued during the reign of Francis II,<sup>16</sup> at the end of the eighteenth century, but this patent did not mean any improvement in terms of Jewish civil rights.<sup>17</sup> The whole eighteenth century can be, in terms of the Jewish community in Prague, considered a difficult period in which the community had to deal with many serious events ranging from natural disasters to the expulsion or reduction efforts of rulers. A slow decline of the community is noticeable, not only in terms of its importance but especially from an economic point of view, because the repair of damages or payments to authorities reached high amounts. No wonder that a decline in the Hebrew (Jewish) letterpress comes hand in hand with the general decline.

12 Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein, *Neuere Geschichte der Juden in den böhmischen Ländern: Erster Teil: Das Zeitalter der Aufklärung 1780–1830* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1969), p. 70.

13 Marie Krappmann, *Úvod do jazyka jidiš a jeho historie* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2013), p. 16.

14 Iveta Cermanová, Jindřich Marek, *Na rozhraní křesťanského a židovského světa: příběh hebrejského cenzora a klementinského knihovníka Karla Fischera (1757–1844)* (Praha: Národní knihovna České republiky, 2007), p. 108–109.

15 Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein (see note 12), p. 28.

16 Francis II. (1768–1835), the last Holy Roman Emperor and then the first emperor of the Austrian Empire where he became Francis I.

17 Hecht (see note 11), p. 23.

## Hebrew printers and their production during the eighteenth century

Two Jewish printing houses with more than one hundred years of tradition could be found at the beginning of that century in Prague – the Bak family printing house and the Katz family printing house. The Katz printing house was established first, although the exact date of founding is not known, it is known that it had to be the first half of the sixteenth century, since it was founded by the printer and hence the founder of the printing dynasty Gershom ben Shlomo Cohen who died in 1545. The Bak printing house was probably founded at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the founder Yaakov ben Gershom Bak died in 1618. He probably came from Italy, where he was employed by several local printers.<sup>18</sup> Both printing houses experienced their best period at the beginning of their existence, in the sixteenth and at the beginning of the seventeenth century. A particularly heavy blow for them was the intervention of the consistory in 1669. A probably illegal reprint of an anthology of Talmudic Haggadah *Ein Yaakov*, which was legally published in Prague in 1622, occurred this year at the Bak printing house. The Jesuits received the denunciation based on incomplete information and then they informed the consistory about the illegal printing of the Talmud. This was followed by the commission decree according to which printing houses should be sealed. Then there was an extensive raid accompanied by confiscation of books, among others, in synagogues of Prague. This incident caused serious cultural and moral damages. Jewish letterpress was allowed again after 1672. A new censorship system was also introduced: books were judged by a Jesuit professor of Hebrew and the final verdict was brought by the archbishop's consistory.<sup>19</sup> The Bak printing house recovered more easily from this prohibition than the competing printing house; the Katz printing house resumed its activities in 1678, and experienced a period of stagnation until 1685. Its revival came after a take-over by a consortium of unknown owners, who owned it in 1706 and later it became the property of the grandsons of Moses Katz, who died in 1659. The head of the Bak printing house in the early eighteenth century was the great-great-grandson of the founder, Moshe ben Jacob, who employed his son Judah as a typesetter since 1705. After Moses' death, the printing house went into the hands of his cousin Israel ben Josef ben Yehuda Bak, who employed his two sons Yehuda Moshe and Yom Tov Lipmann. These two demonstrably worked together to run the printing house until the 1760s, also employed their

18 Printers like Francisco dalle Donne or Daniel Zanetti. *Hebrejský knihtisk v Čechách a na Moravě*, p. 62.

19 *Hebrejský knihtisk v Čechách a na Moravě* (see note 8), p. 205–212.

sons Moshe Löb and David ben Lipmann as typesetters. But even together they could not face technical decline and financial difficulties.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the competition had the same technical and economic problems.

Therefore, in the second half of the eighteenth century, both printing families preferred renting their printing houses instead of operating them as an independent business. The Katz printing house was rented to Israel (ben) Beer Jaiteles, who was not trained in the bookmaking craft. Putík's *Sworn Declaration*<sup>21</sup> shows only one man of this name – Israel Beer Jaiteles living with his wife Cheye in Rabiner Gassen and his profession was *Silberhandel*, silver trade.<sup>22</sup> The Bak printing house was also rented and the tenant was Shmuel ben Mendel Falkeles, also known as Flekeles. He unsuccessfully attempted a merger of the two printing houses already in 1762. Neither he nor his associates, Falkeles's brother Bezalel and brother-in-law Shmuel ben Leyzr Bachur,<sup>23</sup> were trained in the letterpress craft. The *Sworn Declaration* again shows only one person of this name and that is Shmuel Falkeles living with his wife Perl in Beles Gassen and his profession was feather trade.<sup>24</sup>

Already in the late 1770s, at a time when both Jewish printing houses were in the hands of tenants, Christian printers started working in the same sector. One of the first printers, who were involved in Jewish letterpress, was one of the most important Christian printers Jan Nepomuk Ferdinand Schönfeld<sup>25</sup> (also known as Ferdinand Edler von Schönfeld), who had his own printing house in the Old Town since 1773. It is not clear to what extent Schönfeld cooperated in the publishing of a total of three Hebrew books in which his name can be found in colophons. He is listed as the printer in the colophon of a two-part edition of the *Bigde Yesha* by the author Yesha ben Simcha Wiener. This commentary of the *Shulchan Arukh*<sup>26</sup> was issued twice, in 1774 and in 1777;<sup>27</sup> according to the information in the colophon of this print, the printer Schönfeld worked together with the printer and tenant of the Katz printing house Israel (ben) Beer Jaiteles along with typesetters Fayvel ben Simon Abeles, Gabriel ben

20 Petr Voit, *Encyklopedie knihy: starší knihtisk a příbuzné obory mezi polovinou 15. století a počátkem 19. století* (Praha: Libri, 2008), p. 85.

21 *Sworn Declaration of Prague Jewish Families, 1748–1749 (1751): Edition of a source on the return of Jews expelled by Maria Theresa*, p. 7–8.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

23 Also known as Samuel Poucher.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 154.

25 Jan Nepomuk Ferdinand Schönfeld (1750–1821), son of printer Antonín Jan Schönfeld.

26 *Shulchan Arukh* is the most widely consulted legal work of Rabbi Joseph ben Ephraim Karo (1488–1575).

27 Otto Muneles, *Bibliografický přehled židovské Prahy* (Praha: Státní židovské museum, 1952), p. 86.

Neta Utitz and Zelig ben Yona Bumsla.<sup>28</sup> In 1669 Schönfeld issued a Passover Haggadah, illustrated by 8 woodcuts, again together with typesetter Fayvel ben Simon Abeles.<sup>29</sup> Three years later, Schönfeld returned to Hebrew letterpress and published a book on Talmudic disputation *Minchat ani* by Joseph Zalman ben Meir of Pressburg (nowadays Bratislava),<sup>30</sup> and a year later, in 1781, published a reprint of the German-language textbook by David Friedländer (first published in Berlin in 1779) *Lesebuch für jüdische Kinder*, which includes among others, the basics of Judaism from the pioneer of Haskalah Moses Mendelssohn.<sup>31</sup> The widow of printer Ignaz Franz Průša, Jana (Johana) Průšová,<sup>32</sup> in German called Johanna Pruschin, joined the history of Jewish letterpress in 1777. She published a collection of prayers called *Sefer Likutey Tzvi*<sup>33</sup> by Zebi Hirsch ben Hayim of Fürth.

The year 1781 is very important in the history of the Jewish letterpress. As mentioned in the first chapter, Joseph II acceded to the imperial throne in 1780 and immediately began a series of reforms meant to lead mainly to greater state control and centralization of state power. Among others, his interest returned to the situation in Prague's Jewish ghetto. In October 1781, an order was given to examine the conditions of Hebrew printing houses and suggest steps which could help to improve them. According to the researchers,<sup>34</sup> the Emperor was interested in the Jewish letterpress as a subject of fiscal policy and as part of steps taken by the state that were to prevent the outflow of money abroad via imports or even smuggling of books printed abroad, especially in border areas with Germany. The Commission reports showed that the Katz printing house with I. B. B. Jaiteles had only two hand presses. For comparison, the printer Schönfeld had, at the same time, eight hand presses available in his workshop and this number increased to unprecedented eighteen hand presses in the 1790s. The situation was not much better in regards to printing fonts – typesetters could use only three types of fonts, the Hebrew block font, Rashi font and the so-called “Jewish” font, and only in limited quantities.<sup>35</sup> Consumption of paper clearly shows that the printing houses certainly

28 Yesha ben Simcha Wiener, *Bigde Yesha* (Praha: Jan Nepomuk Ferdinand Schonfeld, 1777).

29 *Sefer Haggadah shel Pesach* (Praha: Jan Nepomuk Ferdinand Schonfeld, 1777).

30 Ibid., p. 50.

31 Muneles (see note 27), p. 90.

32 Jana Průšová (before 1743 – after 1789), widow of Matěj Bedřich Koudelka, owner of a printing house, the surname Průšová acquired by marriage with Ignác František Průša.

33 Bedřich Nosek, Auswahlkatalog hebräischer Drucke Prager Provenienz aus dem 18. Jahrhundert in den Sammlungen des staatlichen jüdischen Museums in Prag : III. Teil : 1700–1799. in *Judaica Bohemiae*, XIV (1978), p. 51.

34 Josef Volf.

35 *Hebrejský knihtisk v Čechách a na Moravě* (see note 8), p. 219.



did not prosper – for the year 1781 they consumed only about 25 packages of printing paper. The Bak printing house with Shmuel Falkeles had only one hand press and even fewer fonts than the Katz printing house, but their consumption of paper was the same as in the Katz printing house. Both printing houses consumed about 50 packages of printing paper, equivalent to 5 cents<sup>36</sup> of paper. For comparison, the import of Hebrew books from abroad accounted to between 70 and 80 cents of books.<sup>37</sup> In this period, imports significantly exceeded domestic production, and this only included legally imported books that were registered by Czech censorship authorities. We have no clear evidence about the illegal import, but we can assume that it accounted for about the same volume. Censor Leopold Tirsch said that printers from Fürth and Sulzbach<sup>38</sup> could skillfully imitate Prague imprints and Jews from the border area were often involved in smuggling of books across the border. Import was officially tolerated only for those book titles which were not available at home. Censor Tirsch compiled periodic reports on legal import of books.<sup>39</sup> Authorities came up with a number of suggestions to help the local letterpress, from the introduction of a new system of organization of state supervision to proposing a total ban on imports of Hebrew books from abroad. The tenants of both printing houses were aware of their status and willing to invest into their businesses – Jajteles promised 2,000 fl and Falkeles 1,500 fl, but censor Tirsch was very skeptical about these proposals. Firstly, he did not believe that those amounts were sufficient to accelerate the printing business. Secondly, he believed that the tenants were not able to put these amounts together.<sup>40</sup> A further criticism of the tenants was that neither of them had been trained in the letterpress craft and, according to him, they were engaged in other businesses than the letterpress. These comments and suggestions, either from the commission or censor Tirsch, resulted in the emergence of a united Bak-Katz printing house led by a consortium of several wealthy members of the Prague Jewish community: Wolf Simon Frankl, Eliezer Glogau and Moshe David Tausig. According to sources they accepted, reluctantly and under pressure from the outside, the majority view was that the Jewish community did not have

36 Cent, older unit of measure = 120 pound = 61, 6 kg, *Architektura: Lexikon architektonických prvků a stavebního řemesla*, p. 245.

37 Josef Volf, Příspěvky k dějinám českého knihtisku, písmolijectví, knihkupectví a antikvariátu na počátku 19. století: Z dějin židovských knihtiskáren v Praze v 18. a 19. století. *Časopis národního musea. Oddíl duchovnědný*, 99 (1925), p. 155–156.

38 Fürth and Sulzbach, cities in present-day Bavaria, hosted eminent Jewish communities and important printing houses in the eighteenth century.

39 *Hebrejský knihtisk v Čechách a na Moravě* (see note 8), p. 218.

40 *Příspěvky k dějinám českého knihtisku, písmolijectví, knihkupectví a antikvariátu na počátku 19. století: Z dějin židovských knihtiskáren v Praze v 18. a 19. století*, p. 156.

enough resources to sustain their own printing house. The purchase price of each printing house can be considered very low if compared to the sums the tenants wanted to invest in the printing houses. The consortium bought the Bak printing house from the granddaughter of Yehuda Bak Rösl<sup>41</sup> for 500 fl and the Katz printing house from Jajteles for 550 fl.<sup>42</sup> In order to support the development of local letterpress the Gubernium forbade the import of titles which were released by the united Bak-Katz printing house. The consortium had to invest into equipment, a high amount of up to 20,000 fl. The increase of production of their printing house in the first year of its operation is evidence that the consortium actually made this investment. The majority of the 18 titles published by the united printing house, for example *Pirkey Rabbi Eliezer*, an aggadic-midrashic work on the Torah<sup>43</sup> or a book about ritual rules, *Isur ve-Heter*,<sup>44</sup> by Jona ben Avraham Gerondi, come from the first year of ownership by the consortium, 1783–1784.<sup>45</sup> The printing house employed the aforementioned typesetters Fayvel ben Simon Abeles, Gabriel ben Neta Utitz, who were joined by other employees, including a descendant of the original owners, David ben Lipmann Bak. The period of prosperity did not last long. Already, after less than two years, the printing house began to stagnate slowly. In a statement to the authorities, the owners explained that the capital entered into the company did not grow; the printing house was still passive despite the financial injection. In 1786 this fact led to a sale of the printing house to a Prague printer Ignatius<sup>46</sup> Elsenwanger.<sup>47</sup> The year 1786 is therefore considered the end of Jewish book printing in Prague in Jewish hands.<sup>48</sup> This situation lasted 40 years, until 1826, when Moses Israel Landau<sup>49</sup> opened his own printing house.

41 Daughter of Moses Löb Bak and his wife Rückel, daughter of Mendel Steinitz. *Hebrejský knižník v Čechách a na Moravě* (see note 8), p. 22.

42 The fact that the Katz printing house was repurchased from Yeiteles suggests that it had not been owned by the Katz family for some time before the purchase.

43 *Auswahlkatalog hebräischer Drucke Prager Provenienz aus dem 18. Jahrhundert in den Sammlungen des staatlichen jüdischen Museums in Prag: III. Teil: 1700–1799*, p. 45.

44 Jona ben Avraham Gerondi, *Isur veHeter* (Praha: Bak-Katz printing house, 1784).

45 The Authorship of Jona ben Avraham Gerondi is questionable.

46 Latin version of the Czech name Hynek.

47 Ignatius Elsenwanger (1764/65?–1790?), son of the printer Antonín Elsenwanger.

48 The Integrity of Hebrew letterpress was kept for some time by the printing house of family Neumann in Brno, which produced books only sporadically between the 1760s and 1780s and was then sold to Josef Rossmann, the owner of a coffee house. Even he and after him his heiress Rosalia Kassali could not raise letterpress in Moravia. The printing house ended up in an auction in 1816. Milena Flodrová, Bedřich Nosek. *Auswahlkatalog hebräischer Drucke Brüner Provenienz*. in *Judaica Bohemiae*, XI. (1975), p. 86–89.

49 Moses Israel Landau was a grandson of the Prague Rabbi Ezekiel Landau and son of the *maskil* Israel Landau.

Ignatius Elsenwanger led the printing house until his untimely death four years later, and his widowed wife Barbara led it after him<sup>50</sup> with the help of factors.<sup>51</sup> The Elsenwanger printing house managed to increase its production and in the last fifteen years of the eighteenth century released a large number of titles from different genres. It published, for example, two of the three Talmudic novellas<sup>52</sup> by Rabbi of Prague Ezekiel Landau *Tziyun le-Nefesh Chayah al Masekhet Beytza* and *Tziyun le-Nefesh Chayah al Masekhet Brakhot*<sup>53</sup> or other works by this Rabbi of Prague as a commentary on the *Shulchan Arukh Dagul me-Revava*<sup>54</sup> or *Chok le-Israel*<sup>55</sup> containing *mitzvot* with the commentary by Maimonides<sup>56</sup> and an enlightened interpretation. The edition of the tract about geography of the sixteenth century *Igeret Orchot Olam* by Avraham Fari-sol was also a significant achievement.<sup>57</sup> Most of these titles were supported by the son of Rabbi Ezekiel Landau – Israel Landau, who worked in the printing house as an editor.<sup>58</sup> In addition to such important works The Elsenwanger printing house published smaller and punier titles such as a collection of funeral speeches *Olat Chodesh ha-Shlishi* or a manual about measures *Zikhron Yosef*.<sup>59</sup> This printing house also did not prosper long, after 1796 it attenuated its activity. Anton von Schmid from Vienna unsuccessfully tried to buy the printing house at this time in order to gain a monopoly position in Hebrew letterpress in the Habsburg Monarchy.

As above-mentioned, Christian printers began to work in the Hebrew letterpress already at a time when the separate printing houses of Bak and Katz existed. This phenomenon appeared for the first time in the 1770s and continued in the coming years. Since the 1780s, together with a renewed and united Bak-Katz printing house, both branches of the Diesbach family worked in the Hebrew letterpress. One of the branches of the Diesbach family was

50 Barbora Elsenwangerová (?–1804).

51 Factor, an important employee of a printing house, one of the fittest journeyman. An unusual phenomenon for Jewish letterpress. *Encyklopedie knihy: starší knihtisk a příbuzné obory mezi polovinou 15. století a počátkem 19. století*, p. 258.

52 Each novella is a commentary on one of the tractates of the Talmud – *Beytza* (part Mo'ed) is about allowed and prohibited works for a feast; *Brakhot* (part Zera'im) is about liturgical regulations; *Psachim* (part Mo'ed) is about Passover regulations.

53 Ezekiel Landau, *Tziyun le-Nefesh Chayah al Masekhet Brakhot* (Praha: Elsenwanger, 1791).

54 *Ibid.*, p. 108.

55 Ezekiel Landau, *Chok le-Israel* (Praha: Elsenwanger, 1789).

56 Moshe ben Maimon (1135/1138–1204), one of the greatest philosophers of Medieval era. *Úvod do judaistiky*, p. 141, 150.

57 *Bibliografický přehled židovské Prahy* (see note 27), p. 104–113.

58 Ezekiel Landau, *Tziyun le-Nefesh Chayah al Masekhet Beytza* (Praha: Elsenwanger, 1799).

59 *Bibliografický přehled židovské Prahy* (see note 27), p. 107, 109.

represented by Josef Emanuel Diesbach,<sup>60</sup> it was later taken over by his wife Eva<sup>61</sup> and another branch of the family was represented by Jan Josef Diesbach.<sup>62</sup> In the 1780s it published rather few titles. Josef Emanuel initially issued one part of the above-mentioned Talmudic novels of Ezekiel Landau *Tziyun le-Nefesh Chayah al Masekhet Psachim*. Then he published two textbooks for mathematics and astronomy: *Sefer ha-Mida Kane* and *Sefer Shvihey de-Rakia*.<sup>63</sup> His next enterprise was a guide for writing documents with the rules for determining the Jewish calendar *Seder Tikkune Shetarot*<sup>64</sup> and two collections of sermons by different rabbis: *Sefer Eretz Tzvi*<sup>65</sup> and *Sefer Tzeyda Barukh* that are arranged according to weekly sections of the Torah and festive Shabbats.<sup>66</sup> In 1785, Jan Josef published a collection of 14 sermons given in Prague synagogues between 1766 and 1769 under the title *Sefer Or la-Yesharim* and two years later another collection of sermons by various rabbis called *Sefer Olat Chodesh ha-Sheni*.<sup>67</sup> After these collections, Jan Josef Diesbach published an anthology of letters and recommendations of Yonatan ben Natan Eibenschütz *Luchot Edut*, in 1788.<sup>68</sup> In the same year he became a tenant of the printing house of the Archbishop of Prague. After Josef Emanuel his wife Eva continued in the Hebrew letterpress, her impressum appeared already in 1792, i.e. two years before the death of her husband.<sup>69</sup> That year saw the issue of a posthumous work *Sefer Ya'arot Dvash* by the significant Talmudist and Kabbalah expert Yonatan ben Natan Eibenschütz,<sup>70</sup> with contributions from Shmuel Falkeles and the typesetter Moshe Utitz. An ethical piece followed – a conversation between Sense and Soul *Likutey Avraham* by Avraham Yitzhak from Schwersenzu<sup>71</sup> as well as smaller publications such as a funeral sermon on the death of the aforementioned Ezekiel Landau (*Drush le-Hesped Even ha-Ot Ezekiel le-Mofet*) or a Hebrew commentary on the books of Esther, Ruth and

60 Josef Emanuel Diesbach (?–1792/1794), founder of a printing dynasty.

61 Eva Diesbach (1733–1810), wife of Josef Emanuel.

62 Jan Josef Diesbach (1758–1807).

63 *Auswahlkatalog hebräischer Drucke Prager Provenienz aus dem 18. Jahrhundert in den Sammlungen des staatlichen jüdischen Museums in Prag : III. Teil : 1700–1799*, p. 48.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

65 *Bibliografický přehled židovské Prahy* (see note 27), p. 94–99.

66 *Sefer Tzeyda Barukh* (Praha: Joseph Emanuel Diesbach, 1786).

67 *Bibliografický přehled židovské Prahy* (see note 27), p. 98.

68 *Auswahlkatalog hebräischer Drucke Prager Provenienz aus dem 18. Jahrhundert in den Sammlungen des staatlichen jüdischen Museums in Prag : III. Teil : 1700–1799*, p. 49.

69 *Encyklopedie knihy: starší knihtisk a příbuzné obory mezi polovinou 15. století a počátkem 19. století*, p. 211.

70 Yonatan ben Natan Eibenschütz, *Sefer Ya'arot Dvash* (Praha: Eva Diesbach, 1792).

71 *Bibliografický přehled židovské Prahy* (see note 27), p. 107.

Lamentations *Shtey Gulot ha-Kotarot*.<sup>72</sup> The last Hebrew book printed in the Diesbach printing house in the eighteenth century was a collection of poems *Sefer Zeved ha-Melitsa* by Volf Zeev ben David ha-Kohen Buchner.<sup>73</sup> Eva Diesbach, together with her son Sebastian, continued in the Hebrew letterpress until the beginning of the nineteenth century. They published several titles but after 1809 the printing house was bought by the former factor František/Franz Sommer.<sup>74</sup>

Another Christian printer who joined the Hebrew letterpress was Antonín Hladký.<sup>75</sup> He was active in this field only during the years 1789–1791. A maximum of six titles can be attributed to him during those years, but sources differ significantly.<sup>76</sup> In 1789, he issued a Talmudic disputation *Shisha Zironey Aruga* by Shlomo Zalman Emmerich<sup>77</sup> and explanations for stories of Rabba bar Hanna *Amud ha-Shahar* by Shimon ben David Oppenheim.<sup>78</sup> This title, according to some sources, was a plagiarism of a book Baruch Linda issued a year earlier in Berlin.<sup>79</sup> A year later he issued another title: a commentary on the Talmudic tractate Megillah *Pitchej Tzedek* by Aharon Ber Perls.<sup>80</sup> And in 1791, he even published two titles: the biblical book of Job with a German translation and an elegy on the death of Mayor I. S. Fränkels.<sup>81</sup> One source<sup>82</sup> attributes one more title to Antonín Hladký<sup>83</sup> in the same year – a commentary on Haftarat called *Ahavat Yehonatan* by Yonatan ben Natan Eibenschütz. Another source attributed this title to Josef E. Diesbach.<sup>84</sup> Thus his involvement in the Hebrew letterpress ends.

72 *Bibliografický přehled židovské Prahy* (see note 27), p. 108.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 107–109.

74 Petr Voit, *Encyklopedie knihy: starší knižní a příbuzné obory mezi polovinou 15. století a počátkem 19. století* (Praha: Libri, 2008), p. 211.

75 *Hebrejský knižní tisk v Čechách a na Moravě* (see note 8), p. 225.

76 *Bibliografický přehled židovské Prahy* (see note 27); Manuscriptorium.cz; Aron Freimann, *Die hebräischen Druckereien in Prag von 1733–1828*.

77 Shlomo Zalman Emmerich, *Shisha Zironey Aruga* (Praha: Antonín Hladký, 1789).

78 Shimon ben David Oppenheim, *Amud ha-Shahar kolel chochmot atzumot im vikuač gadol me-chakhmey itan* (Praha: Antonín Hladký, 1789).

79 *Oppenheim, Simon ben David*. [on-line]. Available from: <<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11737-oppenheim-simon-ben-david>>. Accessed 25 March 2015

80 Aharon Ber Perls, *Pitchej Tzedek* (Praha: Antonín Hladký, 1790).

81 Mundeles (see note 27), p. 104.

82 Yonatan ben Natan Eibenschütz, *Ahavat Yehonatan* (Praha: Antonín Hladký, 1791).

83 Antonín Hladký (?–1804).

84 Aron Freimann, *Die hebräischen Druckereien in Prag von 1733–1828*, *Soncino Blätter*, 3/2–4 (1930), 113–143, p. 121.

## Conclusion

As suggested, there were Christian printers who helped, at least partially, to maintain the continuation of the Hebrew letterpress in Prague in the second half of the eighteenth century. Should the Hebrew production of Christian printers be evaluated based on the above, there are no signs of elevation of Hebrew printing culture. Due to their limited knowledge all Christian printers collaborated with Jewish craftsmen who were necessarily employed as typesetters, proofreaders or editors. The second part of the article suggests that these employees “wandered” between printing houses. Further, the influence of Christian printers on Hebrew production in their printing houses cannot be overestimated. The main aim of their undertaking was financial profit. The quality of books has an impact on their price. So the production of Hebrew books was more dependent on the financial options of the Jewish community and largely also on state censorship, which influenced the production. It should also be noted that none of the Christian printers worked exclusively in the Hebrew letterpress. They continued the production of various genres of gentile books. The last thirty years of the eighteenth century, therefore, could be described as a period in which the differences between the Christian and Jewish press extensively washed away and when printers from both communities, either voluntarily or under pressure of circumstances, managed to cooperate quite successfully.

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## Images



**Image 13:** Title page of Moses Israel Landau's German translation of the book of Joshua, with commentaries and explanations by Wolf Meyer, printed by Moses Israel Landau, Prague, 1833; library of the CJS



**Image 14:** Title page of a new German translation of the first book of Samuel, with commentaries and explanations by Wolf Meyer and Moses Israel Landau, printed by Moses Israel Landau, Prague, 1835; library of the CJS



**Image 15:** Title page of A. Benesch's German translation of the book of Ezekiel, with commentaries and explanations by Moses Israel Landau, printed by Moses Israel Landau, Prague, 1836; library of the CJS



**Image 16:** Title page of Moses Israel Landau's German translation of the book of Job, with commentaries and explanations by Moses Israel Landau, printed by Moses Israel Landau, Prague, 1836; library of the CJS

# Wolf Pascheles: The Family Treasure Box of Jewish Knowledge\*

Kerstin Mayerhofer and Magdaléna Farnesi

This article provides a short summary on the editing and publishing work of the Prague-based editor and publisher Wolf Pascheles (1814–1857). He is mostly famous for his *Sippurim*, which have been widely covered within the academic world. However, the women's literature and the popularization works printed by Pascheles are hardly reflected in scholarly literature. The article aims to shed some light on Pascheles' treasure box of Jewish knowledge alongside his *Sippurim* and the purpose Pascheles followed with publishing the works in it.

**“Möge das Reich des Lichtes und der Wahrheit in Israel immer weitere Ausbreitung gewinnen, der Geist immer heller, das Herz immer wärmer werden, und möge es dem Herausgeber vergönnt sein, durch dieses wie durch andere nützliche Werke, die er herausgibt, dazu beizutragen.”<sup>1</sup>**

Wolf Pascheles

Following the words of Ruth Kestenberg-Gladstein, “[t]he intention was to introduce Jewish spiritual treasures, especially Jewish folklore, to educated Jews and Gentiles, as the authors, i.e. the ‘Israelite scholars’, were convinced that

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1 Wolf Pascheles ed., *Sippurim: eine Sammlung jüdischer Volkssagen, Erzählungen, Mythen, Chroniken, Denkwürdigkeiten und Biographien berühmter Juden aller Jahrhunderte, insbesondere des Mittelalters 4* (Prague: Pascheles, 1856), pp. 1–2 (foreword). [„May the kingdom of light and truth be ever so broadly dispersed in Israel; may the spirit become lighter and the heart become warmer and may the publisher, who publishes this and other useful works, have his share in it.” Transl. K.M.]

they represented general human values,”<sup>2</sup> this article aims to summarize the popularization activities of Wolf Pascheles and his publishing house. According to the Webster dictionary, the word “popularization” has two meanings. The first one is an interpretation of the subject in an easy, understandable manner. The other one is the act of making a matter accessible to the general public.<sup>3</sup> Pascheles managed to fulfill both purposes. However, Pascheles did not only aim at a broad audience of his publications, his portfolio was also manifold; he contracted a wide range of well-known contributors. Young and upcoming authors such as Meir Letteris, Siegfried Kapper, Salomon Kohn and Gustav Karpeles, well-known and honorable religious authorities such as Saul Isaac Kämpf, scholars and teachers of Hebrew and other oriental languages such as Emanuel Bondi and Jacob Raphael Fürstenthal and even women writers like Fanny Neuda were among the most popular authors with the Pascheles publishing house.

Already by the mid nineteenth century, Wolf Pascheles’ publishing activities had come a long way. His success was based on hard work and labor from early age on. Born on 11 May 1814 in Prague, Pascheles grew up in a poor family. His mother died early and his father could not support him financially, which made the young Wolf Pascheles work as a tutor. Soon enough, Pascheles sensed a change in the book market, started to sell books from his *Pinkel* (backpack) and quickly got into publishing his own books. Among his first publications were new editions of classical Hebrew texts such as the *Megilat Esther* but soon Pascheles also focused on a broader audience and started to sell prayer books especially for women. As soon as 1836, Pascheles – aged 22 – founded his publishing house in Prague and established himself as a publisher of popular literature.<sup>4</sup> The opening of a bookshop in Prague (1836, Breite Gasse/Široká 264–5) and one in Brno (1844, Dominikanerplatz/Dominikánské náměstí 354) followed quickly thereafter.<sup>5</sup> Pascheles’ connections within

2 Ruth Kestenbergl-Gladstein, *Heraus aus der "Gasse": Böhmens Juden im 19. Jahrhundert* (Münster: LIT, 2002), pp. 14–24; cit. p. 24.

3 Cf. the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (online). <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/popularization>> Accessed 23 November 15

4 Cf. Salomon Winger, *Große jüdische National-Biographie, mit mehr als 8000 Lebensbeschreibungen namhafter jüdischer Männer und Frauen aller Zeiten und Länder. Ein Nachschlagewerk für das jüdische Volk und dessen Freunde*, vol. 4 (Cernäuti: Ária, 1929), p. 610; Constant von Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich, enthaltend die Lebensskizzen der denkwürdigen Personen, welche seit 1750 in den österreichischen Kronländern geboren wurden oder darin gelebt und gewirkt haben*, vol. 21 (Vienna: K.k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1870), p. 317–318.

5 However, it is unknown how long Pascheles was able to maintain the bookshop in Brno and/or whether he passed it on to someone else later. Cf. Michael Wögerbauer, ‘Eine “Topographie des Buchwesens in den Böhmisches Ländern”? Ein Versuch zur Rekonstruktion regionaler Einheiten in der Buchforschung’, in *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Buchforschung in Österreich* 1 (2009), p. 31–42 (p. 40).

the book market were manifold and remarkable. Not only did he contract young and aspiring authors who could celebrate their first successes with the Pascheles' publishing house, Pascheles also had a keen sense of what his readers were looking for. He was convinced that there was "a growing Jewish audience for texts in literary German, printed in German letters, not in Hebrew type".<sup>6</sup> With the beginning of Jewish printing, most of the books were printed in Hebrew characters only because the books' language was mostly Hebrew. It was not until the first books were published in Yiddish or a vernacular language that other sets of letters were needed. While Hebrew characters were still used for Yiddish publications, the first Judeo-German works were printed in the so-called *Weiberdeutsch* script.<sup>7</sup> By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as the Haskalah also had its influence on scripture and script: limiting Hebrew to sacred texts and completely condemning both Yiddish as a language and *Weiberdeutsch* as a script, German letter printing came into fashion. German texts printed in German characters became "more easily accessible" also to "a new group of Prague Jewish readers".<sup>8</sup> Pascheles printed books both in Hebrew and in German letters and always focused on a high quality production of his publications in both scripts. In this way he was able to serve the local book market in a twofold way and could reach both the conservative readers and the new group of acculturated and enlightened Jewish citizens who were no longer familiar with the Hebrew script.<sup>9</sup>

After Pascheles' early death in 1857, his two sons, Jakob and Samuel took over the publishing house. From 1864 onwards, it was Pascheles' son-in-law,

6 Peter Demetz, *Prague in Black and Gold: The History of a City* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1997), p. 208.

7 Especially in the Anglo-American scholarly world there is some dissent concerning various terms in the field of Jewish (vernacular) languages and script. Often, terms like Yiddish, Judeo-German and *Weiberdeutsch* are used synonymously (cf. e.g. the entry on "Judeo-German (redirected from *Weiberdeutsch*)" in the Jewish Encyclopedia; <<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14818-weiberdeutsch>>. Accessed 5 January 2016). In fact, Yiddish refers to the language spoken in the Ashkenazi world and is a mixture of German, Hebrew and Slavic both in grammar and in its lexis. Yiddish texts are written using Hebrew square script. The term Judeo-German, however, refers to a variant of Western Yiddish as well as to the custom of writing texts in German but using Hebrew characters, widespread in the German lands from the late seventeenth century onwards. *Weiberdeutsch* is, in fact, a different sort of font used for writing Judeo-German texts. Its characters are very similar to Rashi script though not identical. On the terminological inconsistency both in the field of language and typography cf. also Thomas Soxberger's article 'Eighteenth century Yiddish prints from Brunn/Brno as documents of language shift in Moravia' in the present volume.

8 Demetz (see note 6), p. 284. For more detailed information cf. Ruth Kestenbergl-Gladstein, *Neuere Geschichte der Juden in den böhmischen Ländern: Das Zeitalter der Aufklärung, 1780–1830* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969), pp. 191–195 and Louise Hecht, *Ein jüdischer Aufklärer in Böhmen: Der Pädagoge und Reformator Peter Beer (1758–1838)* (Köln: Böhlau, 2008), pp. 218–221.

9 The latter tendency can be seen also in the later editions of the *Sippurim* for Hebrew and Yiddish words the enlightened reader was no longer able to understand also from its lexical and contextual meaning (let alone would be able to read in Hebrew script). Cf. Demetz (see note 6), p. 284.



Jakob Brandeis (1835–1912), who managed the publishing house under his own name. Brandeis himself passed the business on to his son Richard in 1911, who kept the publishing house running successfully until the 1930s.<sup>10</sup> But already by the end of the nineteenth century, the publishing houses of Wolf Pascheles, his son Jakob W. Pascheles and his son-in-law later on had become a center of German-Jewish literature in Prague and beyond.<sup>11</sup>

This article focuses on how Pascheles' publishing portfolio evolved over time and circumstances and how he managed to make Jewish legends and knowledge – traditional and modern – accessible to Jews and Gentiles alike. His *Sippurim*, first published in 1846, only ten years after Pascheles first set foot in the field of printing and publishing, reached a wide audience not only within the Jewish communities in Prague and beyond, but soon became popular also with non-Jewish readers. Numerous editions have been published until the present, some of which already appeared while Pascheles was still in business, and were distributed and sold not only in Prague but also in Vienna, Frankfurt, Leipzig and other large cities inside and outside the Habsburg territory.<sup>12</sup> Covering various Jewish legends, tales, memorabilia, myths and chronicles, the *Sippurim* were meant to serve as a “national history book”.<sup>13</sup> Still, the *Sippurim* are far more than a collection of fairy tales and stories such as the collections of Grimm and others. Pascheles clearly followed the romantic concept of collecting folk poetry and legends as means of preservation. This concept can be seen in German literature in the middle of the nineteenth century when the Grimm brothers and others started to reform and set up a new canon of *Volksliteratur*. However, the general agenda of Pascheles' *Sippurim* was a more reformatory one. By having a number of young and revolutionary Jewish authors contribute – among them Letteris, Kapper and Karpeles –, not only in the *Sippurim* but also later on in the *Jüdische Universalbibliothek*, which his son and son-in-law continued to publish, Pascheles managed to establish a Jewish tradition using educated middle-class methods. His works focused on what the new Jewish bourgeoisie was looking for – cultural improvement, moral ennoblement, *Kultur* and *Bildung* in a romanticized and nationalized form that followed German examples. By adopting German bourgeois ideals,

10 Cf. Florian Krobb, “Dina, was sagst du zu dem zuckrigen Gott?” Salomon Kohn und die Prager deutsch-jüdische Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts’, in *Von Franzos zu Canetti. Jüdische Autoren aus Österreich. Neue Studien* ed. by Mark H. Gelber et al. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996), pp. 7–24 (pp. 9–10).

11 Cf. Florian Krobb, *Selbstdarstellungen: Untersuchungen zur deutsch-jüdischen Erzählliteratur im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000) p. 58.

12 Cf. Krobb, ‘Dina’ (see note 910), pp. 7–24.

13 Wolf Pascheles ed. *Sippurim: eine Sammlung jüdischer Volkssagen, Erzählungen, Mythen, Chroniken, Denkwürdigkeiten und Biographien berühmter Juden aller Jahrhunderte, insbesondere des Mittelalters* 3 (Prague: Pascheles, 1854), p. 4 (foreword).

the Jewish middle class also created new gender models where women became the carriers and promoters of traditional and cultural education alike.<sup>14</sup> These new principles can be seen in most of the books published by Pascheles in the mid-nineteenth century Prague covering a variety of different genres and opening up to a broad readership including women and children and re-defining their place in society.

### “Ein [...] Bild der jüdischen Nation in allen Zeitaltern bis auf die Gegenwart herab”<sup>15</sup> – Jewish Tales and Legends

Already in 1845, Wolf Pascheles published Meir Letteris' *Erbauliche Betrachtungen, hebräische Sagen und Dichtungen* [*Edifying Meditations, Hebrew Legends and Poetry*] which covered a range of classical Jewish prayers translated to German, Hebrew poetry (some in its Hebrew original and some translated into German), rabbinical and Talmudic tales and legends.<sup>16</sup> Two years later, when the *Sippurim* were published, Pascheles' publishing house rose to a great success. Soon, Pascheles' works became the keystone for what would later be seen as the beginning of the “Jewish-Bohemian historical narrative that became the predominant genre within the Jewish literature system of Bohemia.”<sup>17</sup> In his first collection, Pascheles combined old Jewish tales, known from oral tradition or in written form from the Mishna, Talmud and Midrash, with several folktales composed especially for publication in the *Sippurim*.<sup>18</sup> Whereas the first part of the collection recalls classical anthologies of Jewish tales from the Talmud and Midrash, the newly-written texts focus on Bohemia in general and especially on Prague as the center of Bohemian-Jewish history. Published on the eve of the 1848 revolution, Pascheles' *Sippurim* had a special underlying intention. By drawing on tales from the middle ages and connecting them to the

14 Cf. Benjamin M. Baader, *Gender, Judaism and Bourgeois Culture in Germany 1800–1870* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 2006), pp. 17–21.

15 Pascheles, *Sippurim* 3 (see note 13), pp. 3–4. [“An (...) Image of the Jewish nation through the ages until present times.” Transl. K.M.]

16 Meir Letteris, *Erbauliche Betrachtungen, hebräische Sagen und Dichtungen* [*Edifying Contemplations, Hebrew Tales and Poetry*] (Prague: Pascheles, 1845), p. 45 (table of contents).

17 Gabriele von Glasenapp, ‘Geschichte und Erinnerung: Die Popularisierung der Historie in jüdisch-historischen Erzählungen in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts’, in *Historisches Bewusstsein im jüdischen Kontext: Strategien – Aspekte – Diskurse* ed. by Klaus Hödl (Innsbruck/Vienna: Studien-Verlag, 2004), pp. 71–86 (p. 75).

18 As Pascheles acted rather unreflectingly and included whatever suited his concept of Jewish folktales, harsh criticism on the first volume of the *Sippurim* appeared soon after its publication, e.g. in the weekly journal *Der Orient* 7 (1848): col.97–98.

readers' present, the *Sippurim* managed to establish a new perception of Jewish self-confidence and pride in the Jewish historical tradition.<sup>19</sup>

The aim of Pascheles' publication project, which continued well into the twentieth century,<sup>20</sup> was threefold. On the one hand, Pascheles wanted to "save the plentiful treasure of tales and legends from falling into complete oblivion and decline".<sup>21</sup> Herein, he drew on the romantic concept of folk poetry and legends and of collecting them for preservation. By doing so, Pascheles aimed at re-enforcing a new Jewish self-confidence and creating a "truthful book for [the Jewish] people, sort of a poetic Jewish family treasure box."<sup>22</sup> This clearly shows how Pascheles followed the German trend of collecting and creating *Volkssagen* in order to empower people's own heritage and past. The German discourse on legend and nationhood had been established by authors such as Jacob Grimm, Achim von Arnim and others and by the middle of the nineteenth century had already made its impact on Jewish circles. By combining literary narrative (i.e. the telling of a story in an elaborate, literary form where the event which is told and the way it is told are equally important) and historiography, as Pascheles had already done in his first volume of the *Sippurim*, Jewish emancipation was given acceptance and status by its own literary production.<sup>23</sup> Finally, Pascheles also wanted to "find an attentive ear for the regional Jewish history and tradition within the central European

19 Cf. Gabriele von Glasenapp, *Aus der Judengasse: Zur Entstehung und Ausprägung deutschsprachiger Ghettoliteratur im 19. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996), pp. 138–151.

20 For the editorial history of the *Sippurim* cf. Gabriele von Glasenapp, 'Popularitätskonzepte jüdischer Folklore: Die Prager Märchen, Sagen und Legenden in der Sammlung *Sippurim*', in *Populäres Judentum: Medien, Debatten, Lesestoffe* ed. by Christine Haug et al. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2009), pp. 19–45 (pp. 23–25). Chone Shmeruk focuses on the Yiddish translations of the *Sippurim* and onto the composition of the *Sippurim*'s contents at large. Shmeruk shows that many of the tales incorporated in the *Sippurim* were translated from Yiddish and/or written down for the first time. Many of the tales had only been transmitted orally and passed from one generation to the next for a long time. It is interesting to note that these tales were put down in German rather than in Yiddish in the *Sippurim*; however they incorporated a variety of Yiddish terms. As enlightened readers were no longer familiar with both Yiddish tradition and language, a system of annotations was added to some of the *Sippurim* tales with time. Cf. Chone Shmeruk, 'Der Proger Pascheles-farlag un di schajchessn fun sajne bicher zu jidisch', in *Jiddische Philologie: Festschrift für Erika Timm* ed by. Walter Röhl (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999), pp. 21–26 (pp. 22–26).

21 Wolf Pascheles, *Sippurim: eine Sammlung jüdischer Volkssagen, Erzählungen, Mythen, Chroniken, Denkwürdigkeiten und Biographien berühmter Juden aller Jahrhunderte, insbesondere des Mittelalters 1* (Prague: Pascheles, 1853), foreword.

22 Wolf Pascheles, *Sippurim: eine Sammlung jüdischer Volkssagen, Erzählungen, Mythen, Chroniken, Denkwürdigkeiten und Biographien berühmter Juden aller Jahrhunderte, insbesondere des Mittelalters 2* (Prague: Pascheles, 1853), foreword.

23 Cf. Johannes Sabel, *Die Geburt der Literatur aus der Aggada: Formationen eines deutsch-jüdischen Literaturparadigmas* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), pp. 201–203.

German-speaking realm” and wanted to show that “the legends of the Jews of Prague [were] worthwhile telling”.<sup>24</sup>

Following this threefold intention, Pascheles made his publications accessible to a target group that included more than the traditional addressees of Jewish literary production. The popularization of his works, especially of the *Sippurim*, soon involved the general public including women and children. The concept of the family as a place of transmission of a nation’s literary heritage is especially apparent in the *Sippurim*.<sup>25</sup> It also served as an inspiration to later Prague-based Jewish-German authors such as Franz Kafka and Max Brod, who came into contact with the Jewish tales and legends told in the *Sippurim* already at a young age. Thus, the *Sippurim* helped to shape Jewish identity and awareness even in the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup>

Progressive and stripped of their (solely) religious context, the *Sippurim* opened the gates of the Prague Jewish quarter also to Gentiles, who willingly adopted the legendary material, processed it and passed it on as their own heritage up to this day. One of the most famous legends incorporated in the *Sippurim* is the story of Rabbi Löw and his Golem. In fact, it was the first time that the Golem story was put into written form as a whole after it had been circling in Jewish oral tradition from medieval Spain up to central Europe.<sup>27</sup> The Golem story became popular as an old Jewish legend both inside and outside of the Jewish realm also when the German *Volkskultur* writers Arnim and Grimm took it up and published their own versions, though in a much more negative tone.<sup>28</sup> At the turn of the century, the Golem finally entered mass me-

24 Gabriele von Glasenapp and Florian Krobb, *Jüdische Geschichtsbilder aus Böhmen: kommentierte Edition der historischen Erzählungen von Salomon Kohn* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2005), p. 200 (afterword). On Czech-Jewish national historiography cf. Louise Hecht, ‘Kreative Geschichtsschreibung: die *Ramschak*-Chronik und die Geschichte der Juden in Böhmen’ in *Zwischen Graetz und Dubnow: jüdische Historiographie in Ostmitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* ed. by Francois Guesnet (Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsanstalt, 2009), pp. 33–61 (pp. 38–53).

25 Popularization works like the *Sippurim* that aimed at a broad audience and especially at all members of the Jewish family were common in those times. Another example can be found in Ludwig August Frankl’s *Libanon* (1855), which was conceptualized as a “poetic family book” (subtitle).

26 cf. Glasenapp, Krobb (see note 24), pp. 197–199.

27 Several references to Rabbi Löw and/or the Golem can be found in sources that date earlier than the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The story was most prominent within Polish Hasidic circles that attributed the tale to medieval Prague. However, only in 1847 when Leopold Weisel (1804–1873) had written down his version of the Golem tale, which was later incorporated in the *Sippurim*, the story became highly popular throughout central Central Europe as a whole. Weisel’s version features a living giant made from mud by Rabbi Löw whereas many of the other earlier and way shorter texts report mostly of either one the other. Cf. Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 95–113.

28 On the history of the Golem legend from medieval times to nineteenth century Prague and its socio-political aspects cf. Cathy S. Gelbin, *The Golem Returns: From German Romantic Literature*

dia, thanks to the widely popular novel by Gustav Meyrink (1915) and the silent film *Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam* [*The Golem – how he came to life*] by Paul Wegener (1920). The theme had reached a more epic dimension by then and the figure of the Golem himself served as a marker for upcoming modernist principles, initially corrupt, yet highly creative.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the legends of Rabbi Löw became part of the canon of Czech legends and impact Czech culture until today, with their influence reaching all the way to the Czech pop-culture. The works of singer-songwriters Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich (1931) or Jiří Slitr and Jiří Suchý (1965) are just some examples of how successful the Golem's entrance into mass media has been since the beginning of the twentieth century. Voskovec/Werich's theater play and Slitr/Suchý's song about the Golem became extremely popular and widely known in the Czech lands and form a part of the national treasure.<sup>30</sup> Until today, Czech people both old and young, as well as international students of the Czech language, are familiar with the Golem songs and can easily sing along. Both Voskovec/Werich and Slitr/Suchý transmit the Golem legend completely stripped of Jewish meaning and place it in a Gentile secular environment. It is not only music, though, that shows the Golem legend's influence on modern pop-culture. Prague is full of numerous restaurants, pubs and bars bearing the name of and/or a reference to the Golem. It is used as a nickname (e.g. for the Czech strongman and multiple world record holder in the Guinness Book of World Records René Richter), stars in multiple international twentieth and twenty first century movies and TV productions (e.g. *Golem*, a Polish sci-fi movie from 1980; *The Golem*, a US TV movie from 2000; as a character in the US TV series *Supernatural* from 2005) and turned into probably the most famous tourist souvenir alongside Charles Bridge miniatures and Czech beer mugs.

However, there were many more doors that Pascheles helped open with his *Sippurim*. His publishing efforts and their later fruits served as a common platform not only for Jews and Gentiles, but also for Czech and German speaking writers, who dealt with the Prague quarter and its stories in their own ways, yet every group with considerable enthusiasm. Prominently the Golem legend links the Prague Czech and German literary traditions, although adopted and adapted first by the German-speaking milieu and only

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to *Global Jewish Culture, 1808–2008* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: The University of Michigan Press, 2011), pp. 41–55.

29 On modernist designs and alterations of the Golem story cf. *ibid.*, pp. 97–123.

30 Cf. Veronika Ambros, 'How Did the Golem (and Robots) Enter Stage and Screen and Leave Prague?', in *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe. vol. 4: Types and stereotypes* ed. by Marcel Cornis-Pope (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010), pp. 308–320 (pp. 317–319).

later by the Czech-speaking one.<sup>31</sup> Books such as the *Sippurim* were supposed to fight both socio-cultural and religious disintegration of their Jewish readers.<sup>32</sup> And indeed, affirming Jewish identity as an enlightened identity was part of Pascheles' concept. Due to their "uniqueness in genre and their significance," the *Sippurim* became extremely successful and "extended way beyond Prague and Bohemia onto the whole German-speaking Central European area."<sup>33</sup> Even though the *Sippurim* can be seen as "one of the most important and long-lasting Jewish publication projects in German-speaking Central Europe,"<sup>34</sup> there is much more to Pascheles' portfolio, that contributed to his aim of forming a new enlightened German-speaking Jewish national (but yet local Czech) identity.

### "Das religiöse Gefühl [...] wecken und nähren"<sup>35</sup> – School Books for Young and Old

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Hebrew language had been marginalized and pushed back into the field of religious and traditional literature. Yiddish and Judeo-German were also receding due to maskilic influence, as has been mentioned above. Many enlightened readers were no longer able to read and understand neither Hebrew nor Yiddish properly. This in turn led to a growing need for engaging in the studies of the Hebrew language again. First Hebrew textbooks came out, but their goal was not the education and forming of a Talmud student who should read and understand complex texts in Hebrew. Furthermore, the new schoolbooks for youth and adults alike aimed more at familiarizing educated middle-class Jewish readers with basic language skills and vocabulary to get in touch with terms and concepts of their own tradition. Pascheles' readers wanted to be able to relate again to the variety of Hebrew and Yiddish terms and linguistic concepts featured in the Jewish tales and legends covered in the *Sippurim* and other publications by Pascheles. He quickly recognized this trend and started to include schoolbooks into his publishing portfolio. Since the 1850s, Pascheles published mostly the works by Emanuel Bondi (1819–1908), the Bohemian pedagogue and director

31 Cf. Gelbin (see note 28), pp. 41–51.

32 Krobb, *Selbstdarstellungen* (see note 10), pp. 60–61.

33 Glasenapp, Krobb (see note 24), p. 194.

34 Ibid.

35 Emanuel Bondi, *Pi'ullim: Neuestes Bilder-ABC: Hebräische und deutsche Lautir-Methode mit entsprechenden Uebungs-Beispielen* (Prague: Pascheles, 1853), foreword. ["Awaken and nourish religious awareness." Transl. K.M.]

of the Jewish elementary school in the Moravian town of Pohrlitz/Pohořelice; the first book in this genre was *Torat Sfat Qodesh* (1848), a so called *Theoretisch-praktisches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache für Schul- und Privatunterricht* [Theoretical and practical text book of the Hebrew language for the use in school and private teaching]. This work featured methods for acquiring reading skills in both Hebrew and Judeo-German, Hebrew prayers and a table of Hebrew words with both German and Czech translations. Further editions appeared (1849/50 and 1856), offering a German translation, but also a Hungarian translation and even a French translation alongside the German.<sup>36</sup> This fact exemplifies that *Torat Sfat Qodesh* was not published for the local Jewish audience, but for Jewish readers all over the Habsburg Monarchy and maybe perhaps also for possible Gentile readers who wanted to make efforts in learning Hebrew. The book was very successful and was republished several times, also in a number of revised editions, during and after Pascheles' lifetime.

*Torat Sfat Qodesh* is essentially written in German only interspersed with Hebrew words, sentences and smaller shorter texts to practice the language. It is, therefore, also printed in the common European way from left to right. For *Torat Sfat Qodesh*, this is hardly surprising. However, also Bondi's *Mikhtavei Sfat Qodesh* (1857), a collection of Hebrew tales and sample letters, is printed in the European left-to-right layout, even though it is completely in Hebrew, featuring only some annotations plus a short foreword and afterword in German. It can only be speculated why Pascheles chose this layout for a Hebrew book, but it points toward a disconnection from traditional awareness for the Hebrew language of both the publisher and target audience. It had become so uncommon for enlightened readers to use Hebrew books and read "the other way round" that maybe a book printed in the common European style suited the reader more, even though it did not serve the book's content well. Books like this document the secularization process that Pascheles tried to counteract with his publications. The readers of this book were not expected to gain a university degree in Hebrew language; but the book was easily accessible and provided a part of Pascheles aspirations of shaping a new Jewish identity that drew on the traditions of the forefathers but with modern means and instruments.

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36 Cf. Pascheles, *Sippurim* 2 (see note 22), p. 254. The French-German edition was not published for the French market, but rather for a German-speaking audience who, by comparing the Hebrew words with German and French, could simultaneously improve both their Hebrew and French skills.

## Das Gemüth zur Andacht stimmen<sup>37</sup> – Prayer Books and Manuals for Religious Devotion

Prayer books formed another important part of Pascheles' publishing activities. The first prayer books, Siddurim and Torah editions both in Hebrew and German were not issued by Pascheles himself but only published and sold on commission. Pascheles himself, however, was responsible for more modern prayer books. Alongside the religious works in a traditional form he ran a number of publications which clearly show the maskilic tendencies of the time. Increasingly, women became the center of attention and a new target group for religious literature. Already in the early 1840s, Pascheles started to print literature for women, consisting mostly of prayer books written in a fashionable manner and stressing the emotional value in religious life, which had not received much space in Judaism before. Enlightenment and the emergence of bourgeoisie had also started a process of evaluation of traditional family and educational roles. The roles of women and Jews alike had shifted tremendously within both family and society. Women now made their own personal "specifically female, indispensable contribution to society."<sup>38</sup> Especially in Jewish households, as men and fathers started to exercise their political and civic rights and to become active in the public sphere, women were left at home with their children and the responsibility for traditional education. As the sole breadwinners, men could no longer engage in traditional educational activities. It was now the women's and mothers' task to provide "for the physical and emotional needs of husbands and children at home".<sup>39</sup> But in order to pass on traditional knowledge and values, women themselves had to be properly educated. Already in the sixteenth century, the first prayer books especially for women were issued and for a long time remained the classical standard prayer literature women would use, a sort of a female version of the Siddur. The so-called *Tkhines* were written in Yiddish and compiled particularly to meet the needs of women and their ways of life as maidens, brides, mothers and grandmothers. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the demand for women's literature increased significantly. As the first novels were published,

37 Wolf Pascheles, *Gebete für israelitische Frauenzimmer: Zum Gebrauche sowohl in der Synagoge als auch zur häuslichen Andacht* (Prague: Pascheles, 1844, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition), foreword. [‘Attune the mind to prayer and devotion.’ Transl. K.M.]

38 Baader (see note 14), p. 19.

39 Louise Hecht, "Hours of Devotion": Fanny Neuda's prayer book for women', in *Bet Debora Journal "Generationen/Generations"* 1 (2013), 34–41 (p. 35).



devotional literature started to flourish again as well and women were given new spiritual importance based on devotion.<sup>40</sup>

In 1844, Pascheles published the third edition of his first collection of prayers for women. The *Gebete für israelitische Frauenzimmer* [*Prayers for Israelite Women: For Public Use in the Synagogue as well as for Domestic Devotion*] were compiled by Wolf Pascheles himself, however, he does not make the origin of the prayers clear. However, this was one of the first major works that he did not sell on commission but published himself. The book soon became successful and thus helped Pascheles improve his publishing business. The first two editions (the publication years of which are unknown) were printed in what Pascheles calls “Judeo-German letters”<sup>41</sup> (i.e. essentially in German but with Hebrew characters in the form of *Weiberdeutsch*<sup>42</sup>), whereas he used German characters for the third edition in 1844.<sup>43</sup> Also, all of the traditional Hebrew terms were translated into German with the help of future rabbi Daniel Ehrmann who also contributed to the *Sippurim* later on. Pascheles describes his decision for using German letters as a means of offering the content of his book in a new form that was “in tune with [the] present times”<sup>44</sup> so that also readers, who were no longer used to reading Hebrew letters, could find pleasure and joy in using the book.

The same principle can be seen in the *Tachanune Bat Yehudah* [*Beg for Mercy, ye, Daughter of Judah*] by Meir Letteris, which Pascheles published in 1848.<sup>45</sup> It is not by chance that Letteris chose to open his book *Tachanune Bat Yehudah* with a poem by Johann Gottfried Herder, one of the Weimar philosophers. It confirms what both Haskalah and Enlightenment had propagated; namely that women were not only the carriers of Jewish identity but they were sup-

40 On the Haskalah and especially on the shift from the traditional understanding of women's and men's roles in society cf. Hecht, *Ein jüdischer Aufklärer* (see note 8), pp. 324–337; Louise Hecht, ‘The Haskalah in Bohemia and Moravia – a Gendered Perspective’, in *The Enlightenment in Bohemia: Religion, Morality and Multiculturalism* ed. by Ivo Cerman, Rita Krueger, Susan Reynolds. (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2011), pp. 253–272; Bettina Kratz-Ritter, *Für ‘fromme Zionstöchter’ und ‘gebildete Frauenzimmer’: Andachtsliteratur für deutsch-jüdische Frauen im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Hildesheim et al.: Olms, 1995).

41 Pascheles, *Gebete* (see note 37), foreword.

42 See note 7.

43 The same process can be seen with Beer's *Gebetbuch für gebildete Frauenzimmer mosaischer Religion* [*Prayer Book for Educated Women of the Mosaic Religion*], first published in 1815. Cf. Hecht, *Ein jüdischer Aufklärer* (see note 78), pp. 324–337.

44 Pascheles, *Gebete* (see note 3637), foreword.

45 Letteris had published the first edition of his prayer book with his employer, the k. k. Hofbuchdruckerei G. Haase Söhne in Prague in 1846, where he supervised the Oriental section from 1840 onwards. But the book only succeeded when Pascheles printed a new edition two years later. Cf. Zohar Shavit et al. *Deutsch-jüdische Kinder- und Jugendliteratur von der Haskala bis 1945. Die deutsch- und hebräischsprachigen Schriften des deutschsprachigen Raums. Ein bibliographisches Handbuch* (2 volumes; Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996), vol. 2; p. 690.

posed to cultivate the German bourgeois ideal and German culture as much as a domestic piety. This was part of the incorporation of the German middle-class ideal into Jewish life. Public prayer was still in the male domain, yet in the course of time it lost its significance and was pushed into the background by domestic prayer and devotion. Since women were the keepers of the domestic sphere and family, Jewish religious life rested upon the shoulders of women.<sup>46</sup> Thus, a slightly pathetic verse from Herder is anything but surprising in this context. The purpose of the book is declared in the subtitle: *Devotional Book for Israelite Women for Public and Domestic Devotion for all Stages of Life as Maiden, Bride, Wife and Mother*.<sup>47</sup> The book is dedicated to “the noble, Lady Judith Montefiore, who is generous and strong in faith”.<sup>48</sup> The wife of Sir Moses Montefiore who combined Victorian virtues with devotion to Jewish causes constituted a fitting role model for the female reader. The book also contains a quotation in French, which presupposes an educated middle-class reader, who was expected to understand French. The aim at the German *Bildungsbürgertum* is explicitly mentioned in the introduction to *Tachanune Bat Yehudah*. It is geared toward “educated Israelite women” and supposedly presented the prayers in a “true-hearted and easy style” yet “free of tirades and declamations of a cheap romance heroine.”<sup>49</sup> Beside prayers, the book also contains several short pedagogic and spiritual texts appropriate for the female audience:

“We are adding a few useful Jewish legends and religious poetry [...], as well as customs and religious instructions for Jewish women, partly to educate the reader and partly to provide her with some devotional exercise in addition to the hours that are officially dedicated to worship.”<sup>50</sup>

By the time *Tachanune Bat Yehudah* was published, women’s prayer book literature had not yet been established as a fixed literary genre. Thus, the books were not subjected to any special criteria and could easily take up various literary materials besides prayers. This made it possible to promote

46 Cf. Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1991); Simone Lässig, *Jüdische Wege ins Bürgertum: Kulturelles Kapital und sozialer Aufstieg im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), pp. 326–361; Baader (see note 14), pp. 19–41.

47 Meir Letteris, *Tachanune Bat Yehudah: Andachtsbuch für Israelitische Frauenzimmer zur öffentlichen und häuslichen Andacht in allen Verhältnissen des Lebens als Jungfrau, Braut, Gattin und Mutter* (Prague: Wolf Pascheles, 1865).

48 Ibid., p.II.

49 Ibid. pp. V–VI.

50 Ibid. p.VI.

a reformatory agenda within the genre. That books like *Tachanune Bat Yehudah* are addressed to educated women was also intended as a side blow on traditional readers who were reluctant to change and reform. The connection between education and bourgeois ideals serves as a means for setting the enlightened readers apart from their “uneducated” counterparts, caught up in traditional structures of religious and social life.<sup>51</sup>

Letteris’ prayer book was a great success not only for the author himself but also for its publisher Pascheles. In the course of six years, *Tachanune Bat Yehudah* sold widely inside and outside the Bohemian lands and was soon out of stock. This was not only because of its contents and the presentation of the prayers and tales in an enjoyable and comprehensible way, but also due to “the splendid typographic setting of the book” that caused many readers to give Letteris’ book “preference over similar publications”.<sup>52</sup> This fact, in turn, led to broad recognition for Pascheles and his publishing house. A combination of aspiring authors, trendy genres and content as well as the high quality production of books turned Pascheles into one of the most notable and successful publishers in Prague already, several years after he had started his business.

In an “incessant endeavor to offer [his audience] something modern and exquisite,” Pascheles published another outstanding prayer book soon after his success with *Tachanune Bat Yehudah* and hoped that this publication would also be “accepted as something new and fitting”.<sup>53</sup> And indeed the book soon became a bestseller. Fanny Neuda’s *Stunden der Andacht* [*Hours of Devotion*] was widely recognized; it is probably the most famous prayer book for Jewish women all over the world and is still used by many women.<sup>54</sup> When it was first published by the Pascheles publishing house in 1855 it was the first prayer book for women to be written by a woman. Fanny Neuda (née Schmiedl, 1819–1894) was not only the sister and daughter of a rabbi, but also the wife of a rabbi. Her husband, Abraham Neuda, was a rabbi in the Moravian town of Loschitz/Loštice and an educated and liberal man. After his early death, Fanny Neuda dedicated her prayer book to him. The title *Stunden der Andacht* thus has a twofold meaning. Though not uncommon for a women’s prayer book (cf. other works by Letteris, Landau and Philippon, just to name a few), the

51 Cf. Hecht, *Ein jüdischer Aufklärer* (see note 8), pp. 330.

52 Letteris (see note 47), p.VII.

53 Fanny Neuda, *Stunden der Andacht: Ein Gebet- und Erbauungsbuch für Israels Frauen und Jungfrauen, zur öffentlichen und häuslichen Andacht, so wie für alle Verhältnisse des weiblichen Lebens* [*Hours of Devotion: A Book of Prayers and Edification for the Women and Maidens of Israel, for public and domestic devotion, as well as for all Occasions in Women's Lives*] (Prague: Pascheles, 1858, second edition), p.XI.

54 For the re-editions, tradition of the work and various translations cf. Hecht, “Hours of Devotion” (see note 39), p. 41.

title also refers to Neuda's grieving over her husband's death. The book's subtitle in turn refers to the book's content as a manual of *Prayers and Edification for the Women and Maidens of Israel, for Public and Domestic Devotion, as well as for all Occasions in Women's Lives*. The phrasing of both the title and subtitle shows Fanny Neuda's enlightened approach to prayer literature and to the newly established role of women and mothers as the religious authorities and guardians of Jewish custom for their children and the whole family. The book quickly gained remarkable popularity and run into twenty eight editions until WW II. We can only speculate what made *Stunden der Andacht* so popular among other, similar works of the genre, which were already common at Neuda's time. In her foreword, Neuda herself doubts the perfection of her work and calls it only another prayer book in a series of "various excellent scriptures of the same nature".<sup>55</sup> Still, she is sure that there are ways in which women can communicate better with one another; men, "however educated they may be, yet cannot put themselves into all situations and occasions of women's life" while a woman only has to "look into her own heart to read in the hearts of her sisters; she only needs to recall her own experiences in order to share other's joys and sorrows."<sup>56</sup>

Neuda's work is extraordinary by the literary quality of the text, which is beautifully and sensitively written and at the same time is very modern and fresh in style. Also the content is extraordinary, since Neuda combines traditional Jewish values and customs with new enlightened concepts and role models for women. Being written by a woman herself, the book also offers a slightly different perspective than the one of a "superior" male author trying to educate an intellectually inferior reader. On the other hand, it is important to mention that Neuda's book did contain all the principles of (Jewish) women's middle- class morality just as her times required.<sup>57</sup>

All these facts combined contributed to the great success of *Stunden der Andacht* which remained on Jewish women's bedside tables well into the twentieth century as a testimony of the literary quality and the general values represented in the book. A visitor of an internet forum dedicated to Fanny Neuda remembers her Grandmother's copy of the book:

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<sup>55</sup> Neuda (see note 53), p.X.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p.XI.

<sup>57</sup> This can be illustrated by the women's *mitzvot*; while *Hadlakat ha-Ner* (lightening of Sabbath and holiday candles) and *Challah* (baking of the Sabbath bread) are included in the book as they are in accordance with enlightened middle class female activities, the *mitsvah* of *Niddah* (concerning the menstrual cycle) was excluded. Cf. Hecht, 'Hours of Devotion' (see note 39), pp. 39–41.

“My childhood memory of my maternal grandmother, Thekla Bechhof, who had to leave her German birthplace and home in 1937, is of her praying from Fanny Neuda’s *Stunden der Andacht*. She kept the slim black volume in the chair in which she sat daily. No doubt she’d brought it with her during those difficult turbulent times. I remember being told: “sie betet Neuda” [she is praying Neuda]!”<sup>58</sup>

Publishing not only the first, but also several consecutive editions, Pascheles participated in *Stunden der Andacht*’s success. Again, his concept of supporting young and unknown authors as well as up to date topics and enlightened concepts had proven beneficial.

### “Viele nützliche und erheiternde Zugaben”<sup>59</sup> – Pascheles’ Volkskalender

The general upswing of liberalism at the end of the 1860s affected both press and literary production. Reactionary works sold less well and thus were published less. In turn, calendars, almanacs, yearbooks and anthologies came into fashion again. Pascheles quickly adopted this new trend and published the first Jewish *Volkskalender* [*Popular Calendar*] in 1852/53, which sold well and stayed popular through many years. Pascheles himself managed to publish two more editions, now under the title *Illustrierter Israelitischer Volkskalender* [*Illustrated Israelite Volkskalender*] which formed one of the first illustrated Jewish periodicals.<sup>60</sup>

Compared to the many other calendars issued at the same time, Pascheles’ calendar aimed more at the literary amusement of its readers.<sup>61</sup> Still, it featured classical calendar information, such as international trade and fun fair dates, as well as timetables and price lists of all the common railway and

58 “Sharing Stories – Inspiring Change.” *Fanny Neuda*. <<http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/neuda-fanny>>. Accessed 23 November 2015.

59 Wolf Pascheles ed., *Illustrierter Israelitischer Volkskalender für das Jahr 5614 [Illustrated Israelite Volkskalender for the Year 1853/54]*. (Prague: Pascheles, 1853). [“With many useful and amusing additions.” Transl. K.M.]

60 On the *Illustrated Israelite Volkskalender* and its further editions issued by Pascheles’ heirs cf. Jacob Toury, *Die Jüdische Presse im Österreichischen Kaiserreich: Ein Beitrag zur Problematik der Akkulturation 1802–1918* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), pp. 35–37; Gabriele von Glasenapp, “Die Meisterwerke der Poesie und Wissenschaft den Massen zugänglich machen.” Brandeis’ Jüdische Universal-Bibliothek: Geschichte, Programm und Profil einer Prager Verlagsreihe, in *Leipziger Jahrbuch zur Buchgeschichte* 19 (2011), pp. 117–171.

61 Cf. Gabriele von Glasenapp, ‘Jüdische Kalender, Almanache und Jahrbücher: Zur Geschichte und Bedeutung eines “vergessenen” Mediums’, in *Die jüdische Presse im europäischen Kontext: 1686–1990* ed. by Susanne Marten-Finnis, Markus Winkler (Bremen: edition lumière, 2006), pp. 73–88 (p. 82).

steamboat routes.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, Pascheles had many authors contribute to his calendar who had already published other works with him (Letteris, Markus Hein and Gutmann Klemperer, just to name a few) and whom readers would easily recognize contribute to his calendar. Though the calendars are less important from a literary point of view (in comparison to e.g. the *Sippurim*), they document how well Pascheles exploited the literary market to his own advantage; he cleverly used his *Volkskalender* as a means of advertisement. At first, only part of the back cover was used to promote the books Pascheles had newly published. In the course of time, the advertisement section was continuously expanded to almost one third of the calendar by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>63</sup> Pascheles found a suitable platform for advertising his books as he had done previously as part of other publications, especially in the *Sippurim*, or in different weekly and daily journals and newspapers throughout the Habsburg Monarchy, e.g. in the *Der Orient*,<sup>64</sup> in the *Fremden-Blatt*,<sup>65</sup> or in the *Wiener Zeitung*.<sup>66</sup>

## “Ein poetischer Hausschatz des Judentums”<sup>67</sup> – Conclusion

The books published by Wolf Pascheles are internationally known until today. Starting from nothing, Pascheles soon managed to establish himself and his publishing house among the most successful and renowned not only in Prague but also across the borders of the Czech lands. His publications show genuine intuition for the literary market as well as for the needs and demands of the readers. Already with his first works, Pascheles addressed a broad audience, reaching from scholars and laymen to the whole Jewish family including women and children. Readers with a traditional Jewish background could equally turn to Pascheles' books as could enlightened folks. By not excluding any possible target group, Pascheles was not only very successful and highly respected, he reached a much broader audience in Prague and beyond than many other Prague-based publishing houses. He cleverly managed to use the literary market for his own advantages, by issuing books the readers were

62 Cf. Pascheles, *Volkskalender* (see note 59).

63 Cf. Gabriele von Glasenapp, 'Jüdische Kalender, Almanache und Jahrbücher' in *Handbuch der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur* ed. by Hans-Otto Horch (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. 514–523 (p. 519).

64 Cf. e.g. *Der Orient* 1 (1841), p. 448.

65 Cf. e.g. *Fremden-Blatt*, 13.03.1856, col.3987–1.

66 Cf. e.g. *Wiener Zeitung*, 13.06.1853, p. 144.

67 Pascheles, *Sippurim* 2 (see note 22), foreword. [“A poetic Jewish family treasure box.” Transl. K.M.]

asking for with perfect timing. Often, Pascheles was the first to explore new literary genres (e.g. the literary narrative in a modern form as seen in the *Sippurim*) or to publish something unique (e.g. a prayer-book for women written by a woman). Having young and promising authors contribute to his *Sippurim*, his *Volkskalender* and publishing also other works written by them was also an additional strategy of Pascheles to promote himself. Furthermore, he would publish the same authors again and again, which strengthened the recognition value of his publications. Readers who had liked the stories of certain authors in the *Sippurim* would not hesitate to buy other books by the same authors published by Pascheles later. This strengthened the bond not only to the authors, but also to the Pascheles publishing house and bookshop. To keep his business going, Pascheles smartly placed appealing advertisements in newspapers and later also in his own publications. His mixture of re-editing respected works and constantly publishing new and revised editions of previous big sellers proved enormously successful. His books were produced on a very high technical level and beautifully set in both German and Hebrew letters, sometimes also featuring exquisite illustrations.

What Pascheles had in mind, when he compiled *Sippurim*, when he issued prayer books for women, a *Volkskalender* and schoolbooks for children and adults alike was a kind of Jewish family treasure box, which would educate his contemporaries as well as their children and children's children in an entertaining way. By taking up various genres but always following the path of Haskalah, Pascheles established a Jewish canon which served as a genuine expression of a new Jewish self-confidence and cultural awareness. This new Jewish identity, communicated by Pascheles' works, was no longer a traditional religious one. It was no longer the studies of Hebrew, Talmud and traditional literature that served as a means of strengthening the feeling of togetherness and collective identity. With his delicate prayer books in vernacular languages and contemporary folktale collections that drew upon the glorious past of the Jewish people, Pascheles did not only establish a new form of Jewish literary production. His publications also served as instruments for "transmitting Jewish identity into a new era; modernizing its form but ensuring its continued existence."<sup>68</sup> Or, in Pascheles own words about his works and efforts:

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68 Glasenapp, Krobb (see note 24), p. 202.

“Surely, times have changed and so have the conditions; mockery and exclusion are no more connected with the word ‘Jew’. We stepped out of the old darkness into the new light.”<sup>69</sup>

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69 Pascheles, *Sippurim* 4 (see note 1), pp. 1–2 (foreword).



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## Images



**Image 17:** Title page of Heymann Arnheim's German translation for the book Vajikra, with Haftarat and commentaries by Heymann Arnheim, miniature edition, published by Wolf Pascheles, printed by Moses Israel Landau, Prague, 1855; library of the CJS

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Image 18: Advertisement for Wolf Paschele's new publications on the last page of the Viennese newspaper Fremdenblatt from 13 March 1856



**Image 19:** Title page of Machzor with a German translation by Moses Israel Landau, for Erev Yom Kippur, published by Jakob Wolf Pascheles, Prague, 1885; private collection Hecht

# Table of Images

- Image 1:** Peter Beer, Gebetbuch für gebildete Frauenzimmer mosaischer Religion, Prague: E. W. Enders, 1815.
- Image 2:** Talmud Babhli, Tractate Sanhedrin, Vienna: Hraschanzky, 1795.
- Image 3:** Moses Mendelssohn, Sefer Netivot ha-Shalom: Vayikra, second edition, Vienna: Anton Schmid, 1795.
- Image 4:** Moses Mendelssohn, Sefer Netivot ha-Shalom: Bereshit, new edition with the serial title Kitvei Qodesh, Vienna: Anton Schmid, 1818.
- Image 5:** Moses Mendelssohn, Sefer Netivot ha-Shalom: Vayikra, new edition with the serial title Kitvei Qodesh, Vienna: Anton Schmid, 1831.
- Image 6:** Kitevei Qodesh: Sefer Yeshayahu, German translation by Me'ir Obernik, Vienna: Anton Schmid, 1818.
- Image 7:** Kitevei Qodesh: Sefer Shmuel, German translation by Me'ir Obernik with corrections by Shmuel Detmold, Vienna: Anton Schmid, 1817.
- Image 8:** Kitevei Qodesh: Sefer Divrei ha-Yamim, fourth edition, with commentaries and the Mavo by Juda Leib Ben Ze'ev, with corrections by Juda Jeitteles, Vienna: Franz Edler von Schmid and Jakob Busch, 1841.
- Image 9:** Kitevei Qodesh: Sefer Yirmiyahu, fifth edition, with commentaries and the Mavo by Juda Leib Ben Ze'ev, Vienna: Franz Edler von Schmid and Jakob Busch, 1842.
- Image 10:** Mincha Chadasha: Sefer Yechezkiel, German translation by Shmuel Detmold, Vienna: Anton Schmid, 1807.
- Image 11:** Machzor, part 3 for Erev Yom Kippur, with a German translation by M. E. Stern, sixth edition, Vienna: Israel Knöpfelmacher & sons, 1862.
- Image 12:** Sefer Eldad ha-Dani, Hebrew and Western Yiddish, Brno: Josef Karl Neumann, 1784.
- Image 13:** Sifrei Qodesh: Sefer Yehoshua, German translation by Moses Israel Landau, with commentaries and explanations by Wolf Meyer, Prague: Moses Israel Landau, 1833.
- Image 14:** Sifrei Qodesh: Sefer Shmuel, part 1, German translation, with commentaries and explanations by Wolf Meyer and Moses Israel Landau, Prague: Moses Israel Landau, 1835.
- Image 15:** Sifrei Qodesh: Sefer Yechzkiel, German translation by A. Benesch, with commentaries and explanations by Moses Israel Landau, Prague: Moses Israel Landau, 1836.
- Image 16:** Sifrei Qodesh: Sefer Yiobh, German translation by Moses Israel Landau, with commentaries and explanations by Moses Israel Landau, Prague: Moses Israel Landau, 1836.



**Image 17:** Chamisha Chumshei Torah: Sefer Vayikra, German translation and commentary by Heymann Arnheim, second edition, in miniature, Prague: Wolf Pascheles, 1855.

**Image 18:** Advertisement for Wolf Pascheles in Fremdenblatt 13 March 1856, p. 22.

**Image 19:** Machzor, for Erev Yom Kippur, with a German translation by Moses Israel Landau, Prague: Jakob Wolf Pascheles, 1885.

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