

YIDDISH PRINTING IN ITALY¹

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A considerable amount has been written about the role of Northern Italian Jews in the development of Yiddish language and literature throughout the 16th century. A great deal of information concerning Yiddish authors, books, and manuscripts originating in Italy is scattered within the comprehensive studies of Yiddish literature.² There are also more specific studies dealing with various aspects of Yiddish literature in Italy or with specific personalities and their works.³ While Yiddish works were included in the book lists of Hebrew printers and of Jewish printing houses in Italy, there is still an evident need for a comprehensive and exact list of all the Yiddish books printed in Italy. The chronological list of Yiddish books printed in Italy presented here⁴ is an attempt to fill this need.

It is well known that Yiddish books were not as carefully preserved as Hebrew ones. Apparently this is the main cause for the great number of Yiddish works that have been lost and which we know of only from secondary sources. We have yet to find copies of 13 [now only 12, see further] of the 35 books included in the following list. We have not yet located a copy of *Paris un' Viena* printed in Sabbioneta (No. *91), or a complete copy of the Verona edition [a complete copy has been found, see No. *69]. The rarity of Yiddish books from Italy leads us to assume that the following list is not complete. It is probable that here and there books were preserved of which we are unaware; or that some secondary sources which refer to Yiddish works escaped our notice. It is also likely that some of the works listed here from secondary sources are still buried in a library or archive in Italy or elsewhere. Therefore, it is our hope that the publication of this list will lead to the discovery of hitherto unknown books and that it will encourage further searches in libraries for books that have been assumed lost.

However, the main purpose of this list is to serve as a starting point for further research into Yiddish in Italy which produced some glorious pages in the history of the vernacular literature of

Ashkenazi Jewry in the 16th century. The purpose of this preface is to survey the history of Yiddish printing in Italy and it does not presume to present the entire history of Italian Yiddish literature. Anyone interested in that fascinating history must also examine the Yiddish manuscripts written in Italy as well as the Yiddish books composed in Italy but printed elsewhere, such as *Bovo d'Antona* by Elia Levita, which appeared in Germany in his lifetime and was never printed in Italy.

I

We have information about 33 Yiddish books printed in Italy from 1545 to 1609.⁵ At first glance this does not seem like an impressive number – until we compare the number of Yiddish books printed in Italy with the total number of Yiddish books printed in this period. A total of about 120 Yiddish books are known to have been printed from the 1530's to 1609 inclusively.⁶ Thus, the 33 books printed in Northern Italy comprise about 27% of all the Yiddish books printed in that period. Even merely quantitatively then, Italian printing houses played an impressive role in the production of Yiddish books in the 16th century, especially when we consider that the printing of all the other Yiddish books of the period was scattered over various lands in Western and Eastern Europe.

The earliest text to have been printed in Yiddish is found within a Passover Haggadah which appeared in the mid 1520's in Prague. The first Yiddish books were printed in Cracow, Poland, in the 1530's. Up to the mid 1540's individual books were printed in Isny, Konstanz, Augsburg, and Ichenhausen in Germany. Only in 1545 was the first Yiddish book printed in Venice. This was the translation of the Book of Psalms into Yiddish by Elia Levita, printed in 1545 without the Hebrew original (No. *53), and the first Yiddish translation of Psalms to appear in print. The initiative for the first Yiddish publication on Italian soil came from Cornelio Adelkind – a fairly well known

¹ This article by Prof. Chone Shmeruk (1921–1996) was published in Hebrew in 1982 (see Shmeruk, *Italia* in our "Bibliography to the Catalogue"). It consists of a preface on Yiddish printing in Italy and of a chronological list of books printed there, in which each item is examined individually in great detail and illustrated by extensive Yiddish and Hebrew quotations from the originals. In our presentation here, only the preface has been translated into English (by Agnes Romer Segal) and into Italian (by Claudia Rosenzweig) after all the necessary modifications were made (by Chava Turniansky and Erika Timm) in order to bring it up to date and adapt it to our bibliographical references (the abbreviated titles refer to our "Bibliography to the Catalogue"). The reference numbers of the books in Shmeruk's list which appear in his Hebrew preface have been replaced by the reference numbers in this catalogue, but they do appear in the bibliography note to each book for the sake of the interested reader.

² See Erik, Weinreich, *Bilder*; and Zinberg.

³ See the chapter on Yiddish literature beyond the German speaking area in Shmeruk, *Aspects*, 72–104 and the studies mentioned there. The study by A. Romer Segal, *Readers*, should be added to these.

⁴ See note I above.

⁵ From this total, I have excluded the two Passover Haggadot from 1629 and 1663 (Nos. *22 and *23) which are merely copies of an earlier printing and there is serious doubt whether they still served Yiddish speakers within Italy itself. See the discussion below. These Haggadot were included in my list for the sake of completeness only.

⁶ Romer Segal, *Readers*, 789 posited that until 1595 there were a total of 90 titles printed in Yiddish. My calculations are based on the entries in the Bibliography of Printed Yiddish Books until 1750 being prepared by the Yiddish Department of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

figure in the history of Jewish printing in Italy.⁷ Indeed, in the epilogue to Psalms⁸ he tells of his significant role in the printing of important Hebrew books in the Bomberg printing house in Venice. He relates there that in his old age he remembered that he had not done anything for women or for those men who had not learned in their youth and so did not know Hebrew. Therefore he had come to an agreement with Elia Levita that he would translate into Yiddish "first of all the Book of Psalms" "according to grammar". "And God willing", Adelkind promises, after Psalms he will print the Yiddish translations of Proverbs, Job, and Daniel. And if he lives to a ripe old age, he will ensure that both young and old will understand what is written in the entire Bible. Adelkind ends his epilogue, which is also signed by his partner Meir Parenzo, with an appeal to the public to buy the book so the partners would have funds to print Proverbs immediately after Psalms.

From the beginnings of Yiddish literature, the direct translations of the Bible and the epic poems based on Biblical books and their accompanying Midrashim naturally became a principal challenge for translators, poets, printers and publishers.⁹ Apparently Adelkind was very familiar with the Yiddish book market and he attempted to fit into it from a clear understanding of what was lacking in it. Until his printing of Psalms in Elia Levita's translation, only literal, direct translations of the Pentateuch with *Haftarot* and *Megillot* (Konstanz and Augsburg – both 1544), and the epic poems based on Samuel (Augsburg, 1544) and on Kings (Augsburg, 1543) had been printed in Yiddish. As stated above, Adelkind planned to embark upon the publication of four Biblical books which had not yet appeared in Yiddish in any form – Psalms, Proverbs, Job and Daniel. After these, he hoped to complete the translation of the entire Bible. To this project he attracted Elia Levita, who was well known to the Yiddish reading public and who was equally well versed in the Bible, in Hebrew and in Yiddish. The respected name of Elia Levita would likely have given the entire translation enterprise a stamp of authority and credibility right from the start.

However, Adelkind's project did not continue beyond Elia Levita's translation of Psalms. It is possible that Elia Levita, who by 1545 was already close to the age of eighty, no longer had the strength to provide the printers with translations of the other Biblical books.¹⁰ Although there is evidence of a Yiddish translation of Job dictated by Elia Levita, it seems to pre-date 1545 and to have no connection to Adelkind's planned project.¹¹

7 Cornelio Adelkind is mentioned in all the studies dealing with the history of the Hebrew printing in Italy and discussed in greater detail in A. M. Habermann, *The Printer Cornelio Adel Kind, His Son Daniel And A List Of Books Printed By Them*, Jerusalem 1980 (Hebrew).

8 See the English translation of this "epilogue" by Adelkind in: D. W. Amram, *Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy*, Philadelphia 1909, 187-198.

9 See Shmeruk, *Aspects*, 105 ff.

It may be that for unknown reasons the partnership between Adelkind and Meir Parenzo dissolved and Adelkind was unable to continue the translation project on his own.¹² However, it is also possible that the partners' expectation that the sale of Psalms would provide funds for the continuation of the project did not materialize. Perhaps this was the main cause for the dissolution of the partnership and of the project to print Yiddish translations of Biblical books – the project which marked the start of concerted activity in the area of Yiddish printing in Italy in the 1540's.

Beyond all these speculations, it is a fact that Elia Levita's Yiddish translation of Psalms was very well received and served many generations of Yiddish speakers throughout the Ashkenazi Diaspora in various later editions.¹³ The book was printed again in Italy, in Mantua in 1562, this time together with the Hebrew text and with the Hebrew commentary *Kav ve-naki* (No. *54). It is surely no coincidence that "the *haver* R. Shalom ben R. Avraham", "the learned man" who published or initiated the printing of this later edition of Psalms, had also previously planned the printing of "all twenty four [books of the Bible]" in Yiddish. We learn this from the title page of the Yiddish translation of the Apocryphal books of Susanna and Judith which appeared before 1562 (No. *95). After some time, Shalom ben Avraham and his partners began to print an edition of Psalms. The verso of its title page contains the promise to publish "Proverbs, Job and other books of the Holy Bible", apparently in the same format with Yiddish translation. This repeated reference to the same titles which had been mentioned in Cornelio Adelkind's promise in his 1545 publication, from which the 1562 edition of Psalms copied the Yiddish translation, suggests that we are dealing with direct echoes of the plan from the 1540's. This may have been an attempt to revive that plan in a different fashion; but this time too, it did not reach fruition and was interrupted after the publication of the first book. To complete the picture of Biblical works in Yiddish printed in Italy, we must take note of two other books of great significance. The first is the Yiddish translation of "the Pentateuch with selections from Rashi's commentary", with *Haftarot* and *Megillot* which was printed in Cremona in 1560 (No. *7). This was the most extensive typographical undertaking of all the Yiddish books to appear in Italy. New fonts, "beautiful and sharp", were ordered for its publication. Two earlier editions of Yiddish translations of the Pentateuch had already appeared in 1544. It is possible that these had gone out of print by 1560 or possibly the Jews refrained from using these works since [at least] one of them was the handiwork of

10 See Amram (note 8 above, 211) for Adelkind's testimony to Elia Levita's miserable situation in his old age in 1547.

11 Shmeruk, *Aspects*, 92 and note 30 there.

12 In Habermann (note 7 above), I did not find any mention of further ties between Cornelio Adelkind and Meir Parenzo after the printing of the Psalms.

13 Shmeruk, *Aspects*, 91 and note 29 there.

an apostate.¹⁴ The author of the introduction to the Cremona edition of the Pentateuch sharply criticized the earlier editions and actually even disqualified them since according to him "the earlier Pentateuchs often left out words, half rows, whole rows, whole verses and often a word or a concept was not correctly translated". If it is correct to identify "Yehuda ben Moshe Naftali of blessed memory, known as 'Leyb Bresh", who prepared this edition of the Pentateuch as "Yehuda ben Moshe the doctor, of blessed memory" who is listed among the rabbis of Venice in 1566,¹⁵ then it would have been possible to trust this translation without any misgivings. Indeed, unlike its predecessors, the Cremona printing saw two further editions which appeared outside of Italy.¹⁶

The other Yiddish book printed in Italy in the field of Bible was the epic based on the Book of Judges, written by "Yaakov tsu der kanen" (No. *11). This is the only extant printed epic on Judges and the only known edition of the epic. Yaakov tsu der kanen deliberately followed the example of earlier epics on Samuel and Kings and intended to complete the epic rendering of the earlier books of the Bible which were lacking. He began with Judges and at its close he expressed his wish to also merit composing an epic on the Book of Joshua – a wish that was not fulfilled.¹⁷ Yaakov tsu der kanen scorned the strophic structure of the Yiddish epics on Samuel and Kings which he found boring. Instead of the strophe of the earlier works which consisted of two couplets composed of 6-8 stresses, he designed his work in a strophe containing eight lines in alternating rhyme and of half the length of the lines of the earlier works. He exhibited considerable ability in the poetic composition of the book in which he made use of the commentaries of Radak and Rashi in addition to the Biblical source. I have not found any traces of Italian usage in his work. It is likely therefore that the manuscript of this work was brought to Italy from Germany, as the nickname "tsu der kanen" testifies; pointing as it does to Worms or Frankfurt am Main, where it was customary to refer to citizens by the signs over their dwelling places.¹⁸

II

A number of years passed from the appearance of Psalms in 1545 until we next hear of the printing of a Yiddish book in

14 See N. Shtif, "Der taytsh khumesht", *Di Tsukunft*, 1924, 568-573 and also his article "Ven-den", *Landau-bukh*, Vilna 1926, 119-122.

15 M. Benayahu, *Hebrew Printing at Cremona: its History and Bibliography*, Jerusalem 1971, 60 (Hebrew).

16 In Basel in 1583 and 1603 (see Steinschneider, *Catalogus*, Nos. 1190 and 1191).

17 Ch. Shmeruk, "Six would-be Yiddish Mantua books", *Alei Sefer* 8 (1980), 74-78 (Hebrew).

18 Shlomo Ettlinger, in his unpublished comprehensive genealogy book on the Jews in Frankfurt am Main (which is found in the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem) recorded in the house "tsur kanen"

Italy. Only in 1548 did a Yiddish translation of *Megillat Mattataihu* appear in Venice (No. *83). Since there is no extant copy, we do not know for certain who published the book. However, there is reason to assume it was Cornelio Adelkind who was trying his hand at a new area in Yiddish which had not been tried elsewhere. For shortly after, in 1552, we find his name again in two other Yiddish books printed in Venice which have survived (Nos. *32 and *63). One of these (No. *63) belongs to the same type of narrative prose, translated from the Hebrew, to which we can attribute the 1548 *Megillat Mattataihu* (No. *83). It is therefore reasonable to suggest that Cornelio Adelkind had a hand in some way in both the book from 1548 and those from 1552 which are no longer extant (Nos. *84-*87, *89). Perhaps these lost works were printed in the printing house of his son Daniel, as were the two books from 1552 which did survive. It is highly likely, as Habermann suggests, that "Cornelio wanted to introduce his son into the printing business" and to this end he initiated the project of printing Yiddish books and helped his son in their publication.¹⁹

Among the eight books printed in Venice from the years 1548-1552 (Nos. *32, *63, *83-*87, *89), the group of five works of narrative prose (Nos. *63, *83-*84, *86-*87) stands out. These works offer the Yiddish reader enjoyable reading matter from the wide range of narrative prose known among the Jews in the 16th century. Within this group we find works based directly on Hebrew sources in the form of translations or adaptations (Nos. *63, *83, *86, and perhaps *87), as well as works that came from external, non-Jewish sources, either directly or via Hebrew translations (No. *84 it seems). From the example of *Maysim di zeynen geshehen* (No. *63), the only work from the group of narratives to have survived, we can assume that all the works in this group were booklets of limited scope, of tens of pages, and relatively low cost, which made them easier to sell in large quantities. It is very possible that the printing of these booklets, which first appeared in Yiddish in Venice in the 16th century, was influenced by Italian examples.²⁰ These booklets are the beginnings of the phenomenon familiar in Yiddish from the 16th century until recent generations known as the "*mayse-bikhl*", a term which, due to its cheap typographical design, has become an expression used to denote widespread popular narrative.²¹ Other Yiddish booklets which appeared later

two Jews named Yaakov, one died in 1505 and the other in 1545. I am grateful to my friend A. Segal for this information.

19 See Habermann (note 7 above, 82) and Cornelio Adelkind's promise at the end of *Maysim di zeynen geshehen*, 1552 (No. *63) to print other "tales from the Gemara".

20 See under the entry *Istoria in: Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in Italy and of Italian Books Printed in Other Countries from 1465 to 1600 now in the British Museum*, London 1958, 343. Books which appeared in Venice are also mentioned there. See also F.J. Norton, *Italian Printers, 1501-1520*, London 1958, xxi, 163 for material concerning Nicolo or Zoppin. These matters require further clarification, also with regard to the use of italics as compared to the font generally used for Yiddish.

21 For greater detail see Shmeruk, *Prose*.

Italy, even outside of Venice, also belong with this narrative rose (Nos. *67, *92, *93, *95). Of these, there are extant copies only of the booklet *Mayse fun Beria ve-Zimri* (No. *67, incomplete) and we know of one other booklet (No. *95) from a later non-Italian edition. The content, form and scope of these books confirm the continuity of this phenomenon in Italy from the middle of the 16th century until its close. They point to the spread of the Yiddish "*mayse-bikhl*" from Italy to other printing centres in the Ashkenazi dispersion.²²

The small pamphlets containing a single or perhaps a few songs, known to us mainly from the 17th and 18th centuries,²³ are similar to the *mayse-bikhl* in terms of their typographical design. A *zemer* (song) of this type is found among the books which were published in Venice in 1552 and which did not survive (No. 85). It is difficult to know what the nature and content of these songs were. However, we can gain some idea of the nature of Yiddish poetry and of the bilingual poetry that contained parallel Hebrew and Yiddish versions as it was printed in Italy from the 16th century onwards. The songs which appear at the end of the book of commandments for women from 1588 (No. *61) and from R. Yaakov Ulma's bridal song which appeared at the end of the book of customs from 1593 (No. *41). This latter song was also distributed separately from the book of customs (No. *62).

Both the *mayse-bikhl* and the pamphlets containing one *zemer* or a few *lieder* belong to the type of Yiddish publications of which, because of their scope or size, very few have survived, even when they were printed in later periods. There are usually only single extant copies of most of these booklets from the 17th and 18th centuries, such as the *Maysim di zeynen geshehen* from Venice (No. *63). Usually these unique copies survived only in the David Oppenheimer collection in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. It is no wonder then that 8 of the 13 Yiddish titles printed in Italy which are no longer extant were almost certainly such small booklets (Nos. *83–*87, *92, *93, *95). We know of their existence only thanks to Leon Dina, whose list was the most precise of those submitted to the Church censor in Mantua in 1595. He seems to have had the characteristics of a collector.²⁴ We can assume that many of these Yiddish booklets

were lost and forgotten because of their small format. Some were mentioned in secondary sources and only a very few have actually survived.

One of the books printed in 1552 but lost was probably of broader scope. This was a prayer book (*Siddur*) in Hebrew with a Yiddish translation (No. *89). We know of only one publication of the prayer book in Yiddish prior to 1552 – that by Yosef ben Yakar in Ichenhausen, Germany, in 1544, but that prayer book contained only the translation, without the Hebrew text of the prayers.²⁵ In 1549 Cornelio Adelkind published in Venice an Ashkenazi prayer book containing only the Hebrew text but with a Yiddish title page, Yiddish page headings in part of the book, and the instructions in Yiddish for the *seder* in the Passover Haggadah included in the book.²⁶ This prayer book nicely reflects the situation in which many, worshipping in Hebrew, could not understand a title page or instructions in that language; therefore the publisher addressed them in their vernacular, Yiddish, so they would understand the order of the prayers and the necessary instructions. It was only one step from this type of prayer book to one that would bring a Yiddish translation of the prayers alongside the Hebrew original. Thus it is reasonable to suggest that it was Cornelio Adelkind, who had taken the first step in the 1549 prayer book, who also took the next step in the lost 1552 prayer book in which he included the Yiddish translation of the prayers, as is understood from the description of this prayer book in Leon Dina's precise list from 1595. Although his name is not mentioned in this testimony, it can be assumed that Adelkind's general path in the field of printing and his innovations point to him as the most likely instigator of the publication of the prayer book, perhaps with some type of cooperation of his son Daniel – like the type of partnership known to us from the Yiddish publications from 1552. If this hypothesis is correct, then once again a Yiddish book, which was first published in Venice due to Adelkind's initiative, served as a model for other printers who printed Hebrew prayer books with Yiddish translations in Mantua in 1562 (No. *13) and in Venice in 1599 (No. *14). This prayer book, as known to us from the Mantua edition, was quite faithfully replicated a few years later in Cracow in 1594.²⁷ It is possible that the source for all these 16th century prayer books was the Venice 1552 edition.

that this prayer book is "much more beautiful than our earlier ones which were printed twenty years ago". On the basis of this statement, Steinschneider, *Catalogus*, No. 2070, listed a prayer book from 1529 of which there is no extant copy. It is possible that this earlier edition already contained Yiddish texts and that the 1549 edition merely repeats whatever was in the earlier 1529 edition. See also Rivkind (*ibid.*, 32–33) concerning the Yiddish found in the prayer book from 1545 and in the *Selihot* from 1548, both of which appeared in Venice.

²⁷ See Shmeruk, *Poland*, 93–94, No. 32. The colophon of the Mantua edition of the prayer book (No. *13) speaks of hopes for a future printing of the *Yotzer* "and the other things from the *Mahzor*", presumably in accordance with the model of this prayer book, all with parallel Yiddish translations. However we have not found any evidence of the fulfillment of these promises. There is an unknown printing of a *Siddur Berakha* (code or order of blessings) according to the Ashkenazi rite from Mantua 1563 in the library of the University of Erlangen (No. *17e). This edition also contains instructions in Yiddish such as "this is the night-reading for when one goes to sleep" and the Haggadah includes a version of the Yiddish song *Almekhitzer Got* which is different from the version found in the 1562 Mantua edition.

Cornelio Adelkind addressed himself primarily to women already in his epilogue to Elia Levita's translation of Psalms from 1545 (No. *53). It should be noted that women were considered the most important audience for works written and printed in Yiddish. Thus it is natural that among the works whose publication Adelkind initiated and which his son Daniel printed there should also be an edition of *Mitzvot Nashim*, which was intended exclusively for women (No. *32). It seems that manuals of the women's commandments of *hallah*, *niddah* and *hadlakah* were in great demand in the 16th century. Therefore it is not surprising that this version of the book appeared again in Venice in 1588 (No. *33).²⁸

III

We do not know of any 16th century printers or printing houses, in Italy or elsewhere, which specialized exclusively in the printing of Yiddish works. Yiddish works were generally produced in printing houses which relied on Hebrew books for the livelihood of their printers and publishers. In Italy as elsewhere, fewer Yiddish than Hebrew books were printed in any given printing house in the 16th century. The one exception seems to have been in Verona.

The Verona printing house of the 1590's was merely a short, passing episode in the history of Hebrew printing in Italy. However, this episode is of great interest in terms of the Yiddish books printed there and also because of the printer who undertook their publication. At present there are only five known books printed in Hebrew font in Verona in the years 1594–1595.²⁹ Only two of these books were in Hebrew: *Minhah Belulah* – a commentary on the Pentateuch "by Avraham Menahem ben Yaakov ha-Kohen Rapa of

blessed memory from Porto", which appeared in 1594, and *Midrash Tanhuma*, which appeared in 1595.³⁰ Thus, unlike anywhere else in Italy, in Verona the majority of Jewish publications (three out of five) were in Yiddish (Nos. *19, *69, *70).³¹ All the Judaic books to appear in Verona were set and printed in the printing house of Francesco dalle Donne. "Avraham ben Mattathia from the tribe of Bat-Sheva ... from the Ashkenazi community", who printed Hebrew books in Salonica and Damascus,³² was also connected in some way to all the Verona publications.

Mattathia Bat-Sheva (=Basevi) and his two sons, Avraham and Avraham Yosef, apparently arrived in Salonica from Italy, perhaps from Verona itself, at the beginning of the 1590's.³³ "The brothers from the tribe of Bat-Sheva" are first mentioned as printers of a Hebrew book in Salonica in 1592.³⁴ They later appear as "partners" working at the command of their father in the book *Midrash Rabba* which was printed in Salonica in 1593–1594.³⁵ While according to the title page of this book the brothers acted as partners in its printing, it is also stated that the book was printed "in the house of the youth R. Avraham Yosef of the tribe of Bat-Sheva". The title pages of the books printed in 1594 in Salonica also indicate that they were printed in "the house of" Avraham Yosef, but his brother Avraham is not mentioned there at all.³⁶ The name of Avraham ben Mattathia appears again in the works printed in Verona only at the end of 1595.³⁷ It seems then, that in the years 1594–1595 Avraham ben Mattathia dwelt in Verona and the five books bearing his name appeared at that time. From the specific references in the Verona publications it turns out that Avraham was absent from Salonica while he dwelt in Verona for a few months before the month of *Nissan* 1594 and at least until the end of the month of *Av* 1595.³⁸

²⁸ See Shmeruk, *Aspects*, 13–14; 17–18. By the end of the 16th century *Seder Mitzvot Nashim* by Benjamin Aaron Solnik of Harodna had pushed aside all the other works in this field and at the start of the 17th century his book was even translated into Italian (No. *34; see below and in note 73). Clearly, the remarks made by Habermann (note 7 above, No. 90) concerning the Italian translation of this work at the end of his description of the 1552 edition are erroneous and stem from a later date since those remarks deal with the Italian translation of the other work by Benjamin Aaron Solnik as mentioned below. For further information about the different texts of commandments for women in Yiddish see Romer Segal, *Works*, passim. There is no basis in the text itself for the erroneous statement made by Amram (note 8 above, 253) to the effect that Daniel Adelkind dedicated the 1552 edition of *Mitzvot Nashim* to his father.

²⁹ The description of the *Maamadot* (No. *19) in H. D. Friedberg, *History of Hebrew Typography in Italy, Spain-Portugal and the Turkey*, Tel Aviv 1977, 84 (Hebrew) needs correction: this book appeared in 1595 and not in 1592 as noted there.

³⁰ See Steinschneider, *Catalogus*, No. 4289.1 and No. 3799.

³¹ This Verona edition of the *Ku-bukh* (No. *70) should be added to Friedberg (*ibid.*) Amram (note 8 above, 390) knew only of the two Hebrew books from Verona and M. Benayahu, "Yediot al hadpasat sefarim ve-hafazatam be-Italia", *Sinai* 44 (1954), 171 also lists only the Hebrew books. Dr. R. Bonfil has pointed out to me that in Verona there was only an Ashkenazi community and I thank him for this remark.

³² The mentioned version of Avraham ben Mattathia's name appears at the end of *Paris un' Viena* (No. *69). The formula "from the Ashkenazi community" appears in the title page of the commentary to Genesis Rabba *Matnot Kehuna*, Salonica 1595 (see I. Mehlman, "Hebrew Printing Houses in Salonika" in his book *Genuzot Sefarim, Bibliographical Essays*, Jerusalem 1976, No. 51.

Hebrew). Steinschneider could not decipher the meaning of "*SHB*" or "*SH*"³⁹ which precede the name Mattathia (see Steinschneider, *Catalogus*, No. 7862 as well as the two preceding entries relating to his father and brother). Friedberg (note 29 above) read it "Shabbetai" and I do not know on what basis. The most detailed information about the Bat-Sheva (=Basevi) family of printers in Salonica appears in Mehlman's study. Around 1561 Avraham ben Mattathia was in Italy, occupied with "raising funds to marry off a maiden" (see M. Benayahu, "Defusei Turкия she-eynam ela defusei Italia", *Sinai* 72 (1973), 176, 184). In 1565 he was in Damascus where he printed part of *Sefer Kesef Nivhar*. See also A. Yaari, *Hebrew Printing in the East*, Vol. 1, Jerusalem 1937, 29–30 (Hebrew).

³³ Mehlman, *ibid.*, No. 73.

³⁴ Mehlman, *ibid.*, No. 43.

³⁵ Mehlman, *ibid.*, No. 45.

³⁶ Mehlman, *ibid.*, Nos. 46; 49. Books Nos. 44, 47, 48, and 50 do not bear the printer's name.

³⁷ Mehlman, *ibid.*, No. 54 "In the house of the youth Avraham ben ... Mattathia Bat-Sheva" and similarly in books Nos. 55, 56, 57, 58 which appeared in the years 1596–97. As for No. 51, the commentary on Genesis Rabba, which according to its title page was "printed by the partners, the brothers, by the commandment of their father", it is clear that at the "outset of the work" in the month of *Tevet* 1595, Avraham ben Mattathia was still in Verona (see below) but it is possible that he returned to Salonica at the time of "the completion of the book on *Rosh hodesh* [?] 1595" if it was after the month of *Av*.

³⁸ The first date is the date of the completion of the printing of *Paris un' Viena*, and, clearly, he was already in Verona before this. The final date is the date of the completion of the printing of *Midrash Tanhuma*. See below.

From the description available to us, we do not know where to place the *Kü-bukh* (No. *70) in the chronological order of the Verona publications. From the four extant books it is clear that the first book to appear there was *Paris un' Viena* whose printing was completed in the month of *Nissan* 1594 (see No. *69). This was the second edition of the book which had appeared earlier in Sabbioneta (No. *91).³⁹ In the later edition, illustrations were added from the printing house of Francesco dalle Donne, who then used them in the Italian editions of the book. The book was printed in a typeface similar to Rashi font, with the addition of the diacritical marks used for Yiddish. It seems that the fonts generally used for Yiddish texts were not yet available in Verona.

From the colophon of *Paris un' Viena* we learn that Avraham ben Mattathia was its publisher. His expression of amazement at the beauty of Verona on the final page of this book is most interesting, for it stands in direct contrast to the feelings of alienation ("I am a stranger in a strange land") he registered in one of the books from Salonica that bears his name.⁴⁰

We learn of another role Avraham ben Mattathia played in Verona from the words of the proofreader at the end of *Minhah Belulah*, the second book to appear in Verona, whose printing was completed in the middle of the month of *Av* 1594: "R. Avraham B"SH (Bat-Sheva) stood among the artisans who performed the task of setting the type since these artisans were uncircumcised and new to the task of Hebrew printing."⁴¹ Since the colophon explicitly states that the book was printed "on behalf of" the author,⁴² it seems that Avraham served as the supervisor of the non Jewish typesetters during the printing of this work.

The Yiddish translation of *Maamadot* (No. *19) was the third book printed in Verona, at the end of 1594.⁴³ According to the title page, the colophon, and especially the long Yiddish introduction, it seems that Avraham ben Mattathia was once again the publisher of this book as well as the initiator of the entire undertaking. He ordered the translation from his cousin ("mayn geshvister kind") the *haver* R. Yosef Heilprun⁴⁴ knowing that these prayers had not yet been translated into Yiddish.⁴⁵ This book was already printed in the typefaces

generally used for Yiddish books of the period. Apparently they were especially ordered to Verona for the publication of Yiddish works.

The fourth book to appear in Verona was *Midrash Tanhuma*, which was completed in the month of *Av* 1595. This time Avraham ben Mattathia served merely as the proofreader of this book which was printed "on behalf of the dear and nice Yaakov ben Gershon Bak of Prague", a publisher of Hebrew books that appeared in various places in Italy. Among these was a Yiddish book whose printing was begun in Venice but was apparently never completed (No. *67).⁴⁶

As we have seen, it can be understood from the colophon of *Paris un' Viena* (No. *69) that Avraham ben Mattathia was the publisher of that book. It would therefore seem that he served in Verona as a publisher only for Yiddish books. The *Kü-bukh* (No. *70), which is the second known Yiddish collection of fables (the first is *Mishlei Shualim* by R. Koppelman, Breisgau 1583), presents not only chronological problems. [The following discussion on the chronology of the Veronese printings and on the authorship of the *Kü-bukh* has not become obsolete by the discovery and facsimile publication of the 1595 edition (see No. *70)]. According to Shabbetai Bass' description which is based on fragments of the original acrostic and on information concerning Avraham's activity in Verona, there is no doubt that Avraham was at least the publisher of this work. Was he also its author/translator from Hebrew and its transcriber/adaptor from German into Yiddish? It is difficult to make such an assumption in light of the fact that he was compelled to turn to his cousin, Yosef Heilprun, for the Yiddish prose translation of the *Maamadot* (No. *19). Would someone needing help in translating the *Maamadot* be capable of composing a rhymed Yiddish translation of the Hebrew fables? Furthermore, at least in one text of the *Kü-bukh* there are traces of an early Yiddish fable from the 14th century. For this reason, it seems that the problem of the authorship of the *Kü-bukh* which appeared in Verona in the 1590's will have to remain unsolved until further evidence is uncovered.

The printer's mark of Avraham ben Mattathia first appeared in

(see more about him below). If this is so, then Avraham ben Mattathia also had many relatives among the wealthy, pedigreed Ashkenazi families in Northern Italy. For more on Yosef ben Elhanan Heilprun see Shmeruk, *Poland*, 54, 97, 229.

⁴⁵ The *Maamadot* in Hebrew also became widespread only in the 16th century. About the connections between the *Maamadot* and the *Tkhines* in Yiddish see Solomon B. Freehof, "Devotional Literature in the Vernacular: Judeo-German prior to the Reform Movement", *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook*, 33 (1923), 375-424 and also Shmeruk, *Aspects*, 31.

⁴⁶ [For a somewhat different explanation see Timm, *Beria ve-Zimri*, passim]. Yaakov ben Gershon Bak was the founder of the printing house established by the Bak family in Prague. The press existed from 1605 for over 100 years (see Steinschneider, *Catalogus*, No. 7835). Cohen (see note 61 below) listed 28 editions in Yiddish (actually 27, since the 1590 Mantua edition does not exist).

two of the Yiddish books printed in Verona.⁴⁷ In *Paris un' Viena* it appeared on the final page within a transposed square frame in which his name is arranged on either side of the family crest, one half of which is a black eagle and the other half a white lion – each topped by a crown (see the last illustration to No. *69). I have not found this printer's mark in this form in any other book. A more developed version of this mark appears at the end of the Yiddish *Maamadot* surrounded by the words "Avraham son of my master, my father, the *haver shb* Mattathia ... Bat-Sheva", all within a special matching decorative border (see illustration to No. *19). This version of the mark later appeared in two Hebrew books in Salonica in 1599. Although these two books were printed "in the printing house of Mattathia of the tribe of Bat-Sheva ... by his two sons", here too, only Avraham's name appears in the printer's mark.⁴⁸ The Bat-Sheva family crest appears without any surrounding names following Avraham's signature at the end of *Midrash Tanhuma*, Verona 1595, and also at the end of a book from Salonica.⁴⁹ The crest without any names appears at the bottom of the frame of the title page in three other books printed in Salonica "by the brothers, the partners". This version of the crest first appeared in Salonica in the commentary to *Beresheet Rabba*⁵⁰ and later in two more books printed "in the house of the youth Avraham".⁵¹ Since I did not find this printer's mark in the books in which only his brother Avraham Yosef's name appears,⁵² I assume that this printer's mark is associated exclusively with Avraham Bat-Sheva.⁵³ Finally, it should be noted that Avraham, who printed Yiddish books while he was in Verona, served in Salonica as a partner in the printing of "the Song of Songs with translation into la'az".⁵⁴

IV

As I have said, the history of Yiddish printing in Italy is an integral and organic part of the history of Hebrew printing in

Italian cities. Just as Venice was well known in the 16th century as a centre for the Hebrew book, so too it occupied first place in the printing of Yiddish books in Italy. 23 of the 35 Yiddish publications known to us from 16th century Italy appeared in Venice. Moreover, if we exclude the three books printed in Verona in the 1590's (Nos. *19, *69, *70), when Hebrew books were being printed in Venice as well, we will see that the Yiddish books which appeared in Sabbioneta (No. *91), in Mantua (Nos. *11, *13, *54, *93, *94, *95) and in Cremona (Nos. *7, *92) were generally printed there during the years in which the printing of Hebrew books was prohibited in Venice. In our case, we are referring mainly to the 1550's – after 1554, and through the 1560's until 1564.⁵⁵ Indeed, all the Yiddish books printed in Mantua and Cremona whose publication date is clearly known appeared in those very years, between 1558 and 1564 (see Nos. *7, *11, *13, *54, *93, *94).⁵⁶ The only evidence of the publication in 1566 of *Sefer Mishlei Hakhamim* (Book of aphorisms of the Sages, see No. *96), a Yiddish translation from the book by Alharizi, is nicely verified by the "reprieve" that occurred between 1564 and 1568 during which it was possible to print Hebrew books in Venice.⁵⁷ By the way, this work, which was first published in Venice, appeared in four additional editions outside of Italy in the 16th and 17th centuries.⁵⁸ It is not known where in Venice the 1566 edition was printed, but all the other Yiddish books printed in Venice, from *Mitzvot Nashim* in 1588 (No. *33) to the Passover Haggadah in 1609 (No. *21),⁵⁹ were produced by various publishers and authors "in the house" of Giovanni di Gara.⁶⁰ Apparently, in that period the particular fonts used for Yiddish were available only in "the house" of di Gara.

The Yiddish books printed in Venice in that period included works that had already been published in Italy earlier; such as *Mitzvot Nashim* (compare Nos. *32 and *33), or the prayer book

Grendler, "The Destruction of Hebrew Books in Venice, 1568, *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 45 (1978), 103-130; B. Ravid, "The Prohibition against Jewish Printing and Publishing in Venice and the Difficulties of Leon Modena", in: I. Twersky (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, Cambridge, Mass. and London 1979, 135-153.

⁵⁶ We have evidence only of a single Yiddish book printed in Sabbioneta (No. *91), and this in itself may well be a testimony to the relation between the cessation of Hebrew printing in Venice and the activity of Hebrew presses in other cities. With the cessation of Hebrew printing in Venice, Cornelio Adelkind moved to Sabbioneta. It is reasonable to suggest that he brought the manuscript of *Paris un' Viena* with him to Sabbioneta and printed it there. For more on Adelkind's activity in Sabbioneta see Habermann, (note 7 above, 17). Apparently he arrived in Sabbioneta in 1553, for in 1552 he was still involved in producing books in Venice (see Nos. *32, *63).

⁵⁷ See Amram (note 8 above); Grendler (note 55 above, 110 ff).

⁵⁸ See Steinschneider, *Catalogus*, No. 5700, 6-10. From the copy of the book in the Hebrew Union College Library in Cincinnati it is possible to establish with certainty that the second edition of the book, which appeared in Prague, was printed in 1590.

⁵⁹ We should also include the booklet (No. *44), whose publication date is unknown, but which was printed by Giovanni di Gara.

⁶⁰ The Yiddish books printed by di Gara were not included in the list provided by Amram (note 8 above, 360-363).

⁴⁷ Concerning the Bat-Sheva family crest see C. Roth, "Stemmi di famiglie ebraiche italiane", *Scritti in memoria di Leone Carpi*, Jerusalem 1967, 174. Avraham ben Mattathia's printer's mark does not appear in A. Yaari, *Hebrew Printers' Marks from the beginning of Hebrew printing to the end of the 19th Century*, Jerusalem 1944 (Hebrew). Neither does it appear in *Minhah Belulah* but it appears without any accompanying names on the bottom of the last page of *Midrash Tanhuma*. The name of Avraham ben Mattathia only appears there at the end of his remarks as the book's proofreader.

⁴⁸ See Mehlman, *ibid.*, Nos. 64, 65.

⁴⁹ *Idem*, No. 66.

⁵⁰ *Idem*, No. 51.

⁵¹ *Idem*, Nos. 55, 58.

⁵² *Idem*, Nos. 46, 49.

⁵³ According to the markings on the books printed in Salonica by members of the Bat-Sheva family, it is necessary to distinguish between those printed by each of the brothers respectively and those which were printed in partnership by "command" of their father. However, this matter is beyond the scope of this study.

⁵⁴ Mehlman, *ibid.*, No. 67.

⁵⁵ On Hebrew printing in Venice and the years of paralysis of the Hebrew presses there see Amram (note 8 above, 263), which refers to the years 1555-1563; J. Bloch, *Venetian Printers of Hebrew Books*, New York 1932; P. F.

³⁹ See note 56 below.

⁴⁰ See Mehlman, *ibid.*, No. 66.

⁴¹ See fol. 208a. The proofreader of the book was "Avraham ben Yehiel Kohan Porto".

⁴² "In the name of Avraham Menahem ha-Kohen...of Porto". However, the date at the end of the author's epilogue after the family crest on fol. 207b is puzzling. It reads: "Written here in the holy congregation of Cremona, today Wednesday, the 24th of *Shevat* 342 by the short count [1582]."

⁴³ The printing begun on the week of the Torah portion *Hayyei Sara* and was completed on the week of the Torah portion *Vayishlach*. See the title page and colophon.

⁴⁴ It is almost certain that this was the brother of Yaakov ben Elhanan Heilprun

h Yiddish translation (compare No. *89 with Nos. *13 and *1). We also have a *mayse-bikhl* (No. *67) which was ordered a Prague publisher but printed in Venice. The three editions of the *Minhagim* in Yiddish (Nos. *40, *41, *42) stand out in contrast to these publications in terms of their content and geography, each one containing innovations. Also of note is the strated Haggadah with Yiddish translation from 1609 (No. *43), which was published twice more within a few years in the house of Calceoni in 1629 (No. *22) and in that of gadino in 1663 (No. *23).

Sefer Minhagim by Ayzik Tyrnau, which was written in the first half of the 15th century, initially appeared in print in Venice in 1566. By the end of the 16th century this book saw eight additional editions in Poland, Italy, and Austria.⁶¹ It seems therefore that in the second half of the 16th century this book was well accepted and widely distributed in the Ashkenazi diaspora. Many found in it all they needed to know about the customs of the Sabbath and the Holidays. Initially this book was not written for the learned. According to the author's introduction, the purpose of his work was "to arrange the customs of the entire year in their proper order to make them easier to find for everyone and also in simple language since it is for all, even for those who are not learned."⁶² However, it seems that such a work did not entirely fill its purpose. Even though it was formulated in Hebrew "simple language", there was still a need to create a parallel edition in the vernacular of the Ashkenazi community. Since the beginning of the 16th century the opposition and reluctance associated with the publication of Yiddish works dealing with commandments for women were overcome.⁶³ There was no longer any deterrent to publishing the *Minhagim* in Yiddish around the close of the 16th century. The first to do so was Shimon Levi ben Yehuda Gunzburg,⁶⁴ whose *Minhagim* in Yiddish first appeared in Venice in 1589 (No. *40).

Ayzik Tyrnau's name is not mentioned in these *Minhagim*. Shimon Levi Gunzburg even declares in his Hebrew introduction that the book is "the fruit of his travail" and "his position". However, also in the Yiddish version traces of Ayzik Tyrnau's work are clearly evident, even if Gunzburg did not mention a substantial amount. He did so by providing greater detail, especially in the text of the blessings and in various explanations. The laws are formulated in a simple and straightforward, yet precise style, as is required for this type of book. As Shimon

Gunzburg states in his clever Yiddish introduction, this book truly resolves any query about which one would consult a book of customs. The relationship between Ayzik Tyrnau's Hebrew *Minhagim* and the Yiddish *Minhagim* still needs comprehensive and exact examination. But it is now clear that this additional step, from the *Minhagim* in Hebrew "simple language" to a version in Yiddish, answered the needs of the contemporary public. Proof of this can be found in the forty known editions of the Yiddish version which were published throughout the Ashkenazi diaspora following the initial Venetian edition.⁶⁵

The additional editions of the Yiddish *Minhagim* which appeared in 1593 (No. *41) and in 1600 (No. *42) testify to the immediate success of the book. Moreover, the success of the first edition apparently motivated the publishers of the two later Venetian editions to make a greater investment and add illustrations. The illustrations in the third edition (No. *42) differ from those in the second (No. *41) and are definitely nicer. But apparently even illustrations have their own fate. The illustrations of the third edition (1600) were entirely forgotten while those of the second (1593) were copied in many Yiddish works for a long period of time.⁶⁶ There are no known illustrated Hebrew editions of *Minhagim*.

The 1593 edition of the *Minhagim* was the second Yiddish book with illustrations, after the Yiddish translation of *Sefer Yossipon* which was printed with lovely illustrations in Zurich in 1546. The phenomenon of copying illustrations from one edition of a book to the next, from one work to another, and from one textual context to another was very common in the history of printing in the 16th to the 18th century. This phenomenon is also well known in the history of the Yiddish book. All the Yiddish editions of *Sefer Yossipon* for over 200 years were published with illustrations copied from the Zurich edition. However, the most frequent and most extensive use of illustrations is from the Yiddish edition of the *Minhagim* from Venice. There were at least another 25 Yiddish editions of the *Minhagim* published by the mid 18th century with illustrations from the Venetian edition – in Amsterdam, Prague, Frankfurt am Main, Frankfurt am Oder, and Hamburg.⁶⁷ Furthermore, these illustrations also served additional purposes and different contexts in Yiddish works. The most common was the repeated use of illustrations from the *Minhagim* in the Yiddish editions of *Birkat ha-Mazon* (Grace after Meals) and in editions of this book containing the Passover Haggadah.

⁶⁵ Cohen (note 61 above) lists 28 editions in Yiddish (actually 27 for the 1590 Mantua edition does not actually exist). I have succeeded in finding evidence of 39 editions. See the chronological list of the Yiddish editions of Shimon ha-Levi Gunzburg's *Minhagim* up to 1800 in the appendix to my article "The Illustrations of the Minhagim, Venice 1593, in the editions reprinted in Prague in the 17th Century", *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, Vol. 15 (1984), 30–52, appendix, 34–35.

⁶⁶ See Ch. Shmeruk, "The Itinerary of an Illustration Since 1593", *Journal of Jewish Art*, Vol. VIII (1981), 54–59.

⁶⁷ See the chronological list mentioned in note 65 above.

There are at least ten known editions of *Birkat ha-Mazon* with Yiddish translation from before the mid 18th century which copied illustrations originating in the 1593 Venetian *Minhagim*.⁶⁸ Individual illustrations from the *Minhagim* served a variety of purposes and all the relevant material has not been collected yet.⁶⁹ Due to the rarity of the 1593 edition, the original source of these illustrations was frequently forgotten. Very often later reproductions, and even imperfect ones, were used and then presented as the original illustrations from other places and periods with strange and erroneous explanations, as I have already indicated elsewhere.⁷⁰ The illustrations of both Venetian editions (Nos. *41, *42) deserve a detailed study of their sources, style, later distribution, and especially their validity as rare visual evidence of Jewish life and customs at the end of the 16th century.

The Yiddish booklet *Dinim ve-Seder* by Yaakov ben Elhanan Heilprun (No. *44) belongs to a field related to that of the *Minhagim*, and is based on R. Moshe Isserles' *Torat ha-Hattat*. Prior to this, Heilprun had translated into Yiddish Shmuel Benveniste's *Sefer Orekh Yamim*, an ethical work dealing with the education of children. This translation appeared in Venice in 1598 (No. *45). Two years later, in 1600, Heilprun published in Venice his Yiddish translation of *Keter Malkhut* by R. Shlomo Ibn Gabirol (No. *20). The Yiddish texts of these booklets are certainly still valuable from a linguistic point of view, but the long dedications that accompany Heilprun's translations are most instructive in many respects. The translation of *Orekh Yamim* was dedicated to Roza, wife of R. Nehemia Luzzatto, brother of Simha Luzzatto who was the author of the article about the Jews of Venice. Heilprun introduces himself in his dedication as

⁶⁸ See Steinschneider, *Catalogus*, Nos. 2618; 2625; 2631; 2633; 2637; 2643; 2648. To these we have to add the editions published in Dyhernfurt in 1692 and in Amsterdam in 1723; see also Chava Turniansky, "The 'bentsherl' and the 'zemiroth' in Yiddish", *Alei Sefer* 10 (1982), 51–92 (Hebrew).

⁶⁹ See Shmeruk, *Plays*, in the appendix "The Illustrations of Acta from 1720", 521–532; C. Abramsky, "Some Early Illustrated Passover Haggadahs", *Two Prague Haggadahs, the 1556 Edition on Vellum and the 1590–1606 [?] Edition on Paper* (Verona 1978), 1–20 and also my article mentioned in note 65 above. A most instructive example is found in the *Minhagim* from 1593. On fol. 72b there is a discussion of the Torah portion of *Zakhor* (Deut. 25:17–19). Beside the text there is an illustration depicting a group of armed soldiers with cannons in the background, while in the foreground of the woodcut there stands a figure, apparently the commander of the troops, holding a spear in his right hand and a pistol in his left. The intention in the *Minhagim* was surely to depict the Amalekites to fit the context of the text. This illustration (see last illustration to No. *41) became the standard depiction of evil figures of all kinds. We find it at the end of a Yiddish *kine* on the massacres of 1648–1649 in Poland (a unique copy of this booklet, which was apparently printed in Prague shortly after the events it describes, is preserved in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, Opp. 8^o 1058^o). Whoever published this text (see Weinreich, *Bilder*, 194) identified the figure in the foreground with a "Cossack" in accordance with the new context in which the woodcut now found itself. This same figure of the Amalekites from the Venetian *Minhagim* was copied again in editions of *Sefer Tam ve-Yashar* in Yiddish in connection with the Torah portion of *Noah*, and there it represents the "villain" Nimrod (see the editions from Frankfurt am Main 1674 and Hannau 1718). For more on the illustrations in Yiddish books see Ch. Shmeruk, *The Illustrations in Yiddish Books of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: the*

Roza's cousin ("geshvester kind" and "kuzin").⁷¹ The translator, who lived in Verona at the time, says that he is "poor in possessions" and justifies the dedication with the need to lend importance to the small booklet by means of the name of the honourable matron to whom he presents the translation. Doubtlessly his wealthy relative found a way to recompense the translator and the publisher for this gesture. The same is certainly true for his other booklet, *Dinim ve-Seder*, which is dedicated to the eight years old Moskita, daughter of Hizkiya Printo, with added mention of the honourable women in her family. Yaakov Heilprun was Moskita's tutor and we may assume that the publication of the booklet with its fawning dedication to Moskita, her parents, and her family was also intended to be recompensed. No less transparent are the words of the dedication of the translation of *Keter Malkhut* to a matron of the Ottolenghi family. These efforts on Yaakov Heilprun's part shed light on the miserable status of the *intelligentsia* of his type in the Ashkenazi community in Italy. Even when he gained the status of official scribe of the Ashkenazi community in Padua at the end of his life, this public office could not guarantee him an honourable income.⁷²

Concerning Yiddish, Heilprun's activity is already connected to the decline of Yiddish literature in Italy at the beginning of the 17th century. The transition from translations of Hebrew into Yiddish to translations from Yiddish into Italian testifies to this decline. A few years after the publication of his Yiddish booklets, Yaakov Heilprun realized that even though there was a demand for Rabbi Binyamin Aharon Solnik's *Mitzvot Nashim*, which had achieved wide distribution, there would not be enough Yiddish readership for the book in Italy and it would be

Texts, the Pictures and their Audience (Yiddish – Texts and Studies), Jerusalem 1986 (Hebrew).

⁷⁰ See Shmeruk, *Plays*, 531 and note 9 there; Shmeruk, "The Illustrations of the Minhagim ..." (note 65 above).

⁷¹ Yaakov ben Elhanan Heilprun's Hebrew book *Nahalat Yaakov*, Padua 1623, was dedicated to Nehemia Luzzatto after his death. In the introduction to the book the author complains about "wandering from place to place". We learn from this introduction that he earned his living as a tutor in the homes of the wealthy and that he "ate at the high table of others". Apparently, he "specialized" as a tutor for the daughters in the wealthy homes of his relatives, as his introductions to Nos. *20 and *44 seem to point out. In the years 1579 and 1586 he was a guest in the home of his relative Mendel Ottolenghi and his wife Kayla (see No. *20). At the time of the publication of *Nahalat Yaakov*, he was already 70 years old (see further in the following note). M.A. Shulvass wrote about his familial connections in the introduction to his book: *Simha Luzzatto, Ma'amar al yehudei Venezia*, Jerusalem 1951, 10. The above-mentioned Yosef ben Elhanan Heilprun was almost certainly his brother.

⁷² See "Yaakov Heilprun ben Elhanan" in the index of *Minutes Book of the Council of the Jewish Community of Padua 1603–1630*, Edited with Notes by Daniel Carpi, Jerusalem 1979 (Hebrew). According to the documents 396, 777, 779 he began to serve as the community scribe in 1618. He died in 1625 (see documents nn. 585, 590, 591). A document (513) from 1623 testifies to his situation and status as "Scribe of the Holy Congregation". It relates how he pleaded before the officials "to grant him a gift and an aid". It was decided to respond favourably and to compel each groom in the community to give him half a silver scudo!

iser to translate it from Yiddish into Italian. He translated it in 1625 and it was printed in Padua in 1625, the year of his death.⁷³

One can learn indirectly about this process of decline from the last book to be printed in Yiddish in Italy in 1609 – a Passover aggadah with Yiddish translation (No. *21). This first edition of a beautifully illustrated Haggadah with Yiddish translation was apparently intended for export beyond Italy's borders. Its publication should be viewed against the general background. We must examine its publication in light of the three simultaneous printings of the same magnificent Haggadah which appeared with Yiddish translation in Judeo-Italian and in Judeo-Spanish, as well as in Yiddish.⁷⁴ This was a comprehensive, well thought out enterprise, whose purpose was to achieve the widest possible distribution due to the various translations and the illustrations.

The Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem there is a copy of the 1609 Haggadah printed on parchment especially for the *bahur* ... Gershon Parenz". According to A. Yaari's definitive identification, Gershon Parenz was the son of the family of Ashkenazi printers who were active in Italy in the 16th century. He was the nephew of Meir ben Yaakov Parenz, who had been Cornelio Adelkind's partner in the printing in 1545 of Elia Levita's translation of Psalms – the first Yiddish book to appear in Italy (No. *53). But the Haggadah printed for the young man, representative of the second generation of the Parenz family, was an edition with the Italian and not the Yiddish translation.⁷⁵

In his epilogue to the first Yiddish book printed in Italy (No. *53), Cornelio Adelkind rebuked Yiddish readers who read "secular" works which were mainly transcriptions from German into Hebrew letters. He offered the Yiddish translation of the Book of Psalms by Elia Levita as a pious substitute for the literature he opposed, and of which he specifically mentions books about "*Titrikh fun Bern oder fun der shönen Glük*" (see No. *97). Despite the conventional formulation of this tension between secular narrative prose and religious literature, it is evident that in the middle of the 16th century the Ashkenazim in Italy still read "secular" material in Yiddish which was derived from varying sources including transcriptions from the German.⁷⁶ In the introduction to Heilprun's translation of *Mitzvot Nashim* we find precisely this same convention. In this particular instance the translator offers his book, which is intended for young Jewish maidens, as substitute for the widespread Italian secular literature: Ariosto, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and *Amadis*.⁷⁷ Like the "private" Haggadah with the Italian translation belonging to the Ashkenazi youth Gershon Parenz from 1609, Heilprun's translation and his words opposing the reading of Italian literature give evidence of the consummation of the linguistic-cultural-literary change, which took place within the Ashkenazi community in Northern Italy during the 16th century, towards the neglect of Yiddish and the adaptation to the local linguistic environment and its reading habits.

published once again in three simultaneous printings, with their respective Yiddish (No. *22), Judeo-Italian (No. *29c) and Judeo-Spanish translation (Yudlov, Nos. 55–57). For other details see Habermann, *ibid.*, 266–268.

⁷⁶ For further information on this phenomenon see Shmeruk, *Aspects*, 24–39, as well as his other article published in the present book.

⁷⁷ Translated from the 1710 edition:

And so your daughters, even if they are not yet betrothed and are not yet brides, should read it, for it contains chapters which can be read without dealing with menstrual purity and immersion. It contains the laws of *hallah* and *hadlakah*. And from the first chapter to the thirteenth and the last one in the first part are all words of sanctity and piety dealing with the Divine service. And it is less harmful to read this book than Ariosto, the Hundred Novellas (Decameron), Amadis di Gaula and other such profane literature that is forbidden to read on the Shabbat as Moses our teacher stated, since one can only learn obscenity and vanity from them.

See what I have written about the reading of Italian literature among Italian Jewry, Shmeruk, *Aspects*, 133 and note 33 there.

LA STAMPA YIDDISH IN ITALIA¹

Chone Shmeruk

Molto è stato scritto sul ruolo svolto dagli ebrei dell'Italia settentrionale nello sviluppo della lingua e della letteratura yiddish durante il XVI secolo. Una grande quantità di informazioni su autori, libri e manoscritti yiddish originari dell'Italia sono sparse negli studi generali sulla letteratura yiddish.² Vi sono anche studi più specifici che trattano dei vari aspetti della letteratura yiddish in Italia o di specifiche personalità e delle loro opere.³ Mentre opere in yiddish sono state inserite nelle liste di libri di stampatori in ebraico e delle case editrici ebraiche in Italia, vi è ancora una evidente necessità di una lista completa e esatta di tutti i libri yiddish stampati in Italia. La lista cronologica dei libri in yiddish stampati in Italia che viene qui presentata⁴ è un tentativo di rispondere a questa necessità.

È noto che i libri in yiddish non sono stati conservati con l'attenzione con la quale sono stati conservati quelli in ebraico. Questa sembra essere la causa principale per cui sono andate perdute un gran numero di opere in yiddish, delle quali siamo a conoscenza solo grazie a fonti secondarie. Dobbiamo ancora ritrovare copie di 13 [ora solo 12, cfr. più oltre] dei 35 libri inclusi nella lista che segue. Non abbiamo ancora rintracciato alcuna copia del *Paris un' Vienna* stampato a Sabbioneta (n. *91), né una copia completa dell'edizione di Verona [una copia completa è stata ritrovata, cfr. n. *69]. La rarità di libri in yiddish in Italia ci porta a presumere che la lista seguente non sia completa. È probabile che qui e là siano stati conservati dei libri dei quali non siamo a conoscenza, o che non ci sia pervenuta notizia di fonti secondarie che fanno riferimento a opere in yiddish. È anche possibile che alcune delle opere qui elencate grazie a fonti secondarie siano ancora seppellite in una biblioteca o in un archivio in Italia o altrove. Speriamo pertanto che la pubblicazione di questa lista porterà alla scoperta di libri sino ad ora sconosciuti e che incoraggerà ulteriori ricerche nelle biblioteche di libri che abbiamo supposto perduti.

¹ Questo articolo del prof. Chone Shmeruk (1921-1996) è stato pubblicato in ebraico nel 1982 (cfr. Shmeruk, *Italia nella nostra* "Bibliografia al catalogo"). Consiste in una prefazione sulla stampa yiddish in Italia e in una lista cronologica dei libri che vi sono stati stampati, nella quale ogni voce viene esaminata individualmente e in modo molto dettagliato e illustrata da estese citazioni degli originali in yiddish e in ebraico. In questa nostra presentazione, solo la prefazione è stata tradotta in inglese (da Agnes Romer Segal) e in italiano (da Claudia Rosenzweig) dopo che sono state introdotte tutte le modifiche necessarie (da Chava Turmiansky e Erika Timm), in modo da aggiornarla e adattarla ai nostri riferimenti bibliografici (i titoli abbreviati rimandano alla nostra "Bibliografia al catalogo"). I numeri di riferimento dei libri della lista di Shmeruk che compaiono nella prefazione in ebraico sono stati sostituiti con i numeri di riferimento di questo catalogo, ma per i lettori che vi siano interessati appaiono nella nota bibliografica di ogni libro.

² Cfr. Erik, Weinreich, *Bilder*; e Zinberg.

Comunque, lo scopo principale di questa lista è quello di servire come punto di partenza per ulteriori ricerche sullo yiddish in Italia, che ha prodotto alcune pagine gloriose nella storia della letteratura vernacolare dell'ebraismo ashkenazita nel XVI secolo. Lo scopo di questa prefazione è quello di passare in rassegna la storia della stampa yiddish in Italia e non intende presentare l'intera storia della letteratura yiddish in Italia. Chiunque sia interessato a questa affascinante storia deve esaminare i manoscritti yiddish scritti in Italia come anche i libri in yiddish composti in Italia ma stampati altrove, come il *Bovo d'Antona* di Elia Levita, che fu pubblicato in Germania mentre l'autore era in vita e non fu mai stampato in Italia.

I

Siamo a conoscenza di circa 33 libri in yiddish stampati in Italia dal 1545 al 1609.⁵ A prima vista questo non sembra un numero considerevole - fino a quando non si confronti il numero dei libri in yiddish stampati in Italia con il numero complessivo dei libri in yiddish stampati in questo periodo. Tra gli anni '30 del 1500 e il 1609 sappiamo che sono stati stampati circa 120 libri in yiddish.⁶ I 33 libri stampati in Italia settentrionale rappresentano pertanto il 27% di tutti i libri stampati in quel periodo. Anche solo dal punto di vista strettamente quantitativo le stamperie italiane hanno giocato dunque un ruolo considerevole nella produzione di libri in yiddish nel XVI secolo, specialmente se si tiene conto del fatto che la stampa di tutti gli altri libri in yiddish dell'epoca è sparsa in vari paesi dell'Europa occidentale e orientale.

Il primo testo stampato in yiddish si trova in una *Haggada* pubblicata a Praga verso la metà degli anni '20 del 1500. Il primo libro in yiddish è stato stampato a Cracovia, in Polonia, negli anni '30 del XVI secolo. Fino al 1545 circa, singoli libri furono stampati a Isny, Costanza, Augsburg e Ichenhausen in Germania.

³ Cfr. il capitolo sulla letteratura yiddish al di fuori dell'area di parlanti tedesco in Shmeruk, *Aspects*, pp. 72–104 e gli studi ivi menzionati. A questi dovrebbe essere aggiunto lo studio di A. Romer Segal, *Readers*.

⁴ Cfr. *supra*, nota 1.

⁵ Da questo totale, abbiamo escluso le due *Haggadot* di *Pesah* del 1629 e del 1663 (nn. *22 e *23) che sono semplicemente copie di una stampa precedente e c'è un serio dubbio sul fatto che esse fossero usate dai parlanti yiddish nella stessa Italia. Cfr. la discussione sotto. Queste *Haggadot* sono state incluse nella mia lista solo a scopo di completezza.

⁶ Romer Segal, *Readers*, p. 789, sostiene che fino al 1595 c'erano un totale di 90 titoli stampati in yiddish. Il mio conteggio è basato sulle voci della Bibliografia dei libri yiddish a stampa fino al 1750, che viene preparata dal Dipartimento di Yiddish dell'Università Ebraica di Gerusalemme.