JEWISH EGODOCUMENTS: REVELATION OF THE SELF IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

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Keynote address by Natalie Zemon Davis, University of Toronto: “Revealing, Concealing: Ways of Recounting the Self in Early Modern Times”

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EARLY MODERN WORKSHOP: Jewish History Resources

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Revealing, Concealing: Ways Of Recounting The Self In Early Modern Times

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The study of autobiography has enlarged dramatically since Georg Misch pronounced in his magisterial study a half century ago that it was at best a European genre, with individual consciousness at its core, germinating in Augustine’s Confessions and fully blossomed in the Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In contrast to his view, multiple forms of self-narrative have been discovered even within the bounds of Christian Europe, composed by women and men, artisans and workers along with the learned and great— even dictated by those unable to wield a pen. Webs of family consciousness have turned out be as much a stimulus as concern for the self, even for a man as devoted to inner exploration as Michel de Montaigne. Indeed, just following Misch’s canon, we note that Augustine, son of a Berber mother, was writing his Confessions of and from North Africa, that Michel de Montaigne (like Saint Teresa) had conversos in his background, and that Jean-Jacques Rousseau left his native Geneva for France.

Likewise, evidence for Jewish autobiography has multiplied since Judah Goldin pointed out in his foreword to a volume of Hebrew ethical wills that these death-bed texts were partway to a self-portrait. In 1976, when Goldin wrote those words, if one wanted to go to beyond the excerpts valiantly published by Leo Schwarz in his Memoirs of My People Through a Thousand Years to get to a printed edition or responsible translation of the known classics of early modern Jewish autobiography — say, Asher Halevi from Alsace, Leon Modena of Venice, Glikl Hamel of Hamburg and Metz, and Jacob Emden of Altona— one had available only the editions of central or eastern European scholars from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The picture is different today, with critical editions of at least some
of these autobiographies newly published, and many more early modern self-narratives unearthed, as exemplified in our conference itself.

Interestingly enough, the recognition of the importance of Arabic self-narrative has a similar rhythm. Back in 1485, the Egyptian jurist and man of letters Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti opened his autobiography with an affirmation of abundance:

Scholars from ancient to modern times have continually written biographical accounts of themselves. They have done so with praiseworthy intentions, among which is “speaking of God’s bounty” in thanks, and also to make known their circumstances in life so that others might emulate them. . . , so that those who do not know of these circumstances should learn of them, and so that whosoever might later wish to mention them in works of history or in biographical dictionaries might draw upon their accounts.

Al-Suyuti then named nine predecessors from the last three centuries, who had written autobiographies either as separate works or as part of history books or of biographical dictionaries.¹ Despite this, in 1937, when the great scholar Franz Rosenthal made a compilation of Arabic autobiography over many centuries, he knew of only twenty-three texts in all, and his negative judgment of them echoed the narrow criteria of Georg Misch, for whom Rousseau’s individualism was the touchstone. “None of the[se Arabic] autobiographies,” said Rosenthal, “came into being out of a consciousness of the individual value of the uniquely personal.” (A rare exception in western scholarship was Shmuel Goitein, who brought the social and cultural activities of the medieval Mediterranean to life through his research on the fragments from the Cairo Geniza. Such experience opened Goitein to the multiple genres and rhetorical devices in Arabic self-narratives and led him to comment in 1977, “I was impressed by the endless number of individuals whose personality is clearly brought out, in one way or another, by these ancient Arabic narratives.”)

Against the standard view, Dwight Reynolds led a team of scholars to produce a volume in 2001 entitled Interpreting the Self, which documents and gives theoretical grounding to the copious Arabic autobiography over the centuries. Not surprisingly, the book begins with a chapter on “The Fallacy of Western Origins” and argues for a less parochial concept of
notions of the self and how it can be narrated. It seems to me that our work on Jewish self-narrative can contribute to this goal as well.

This afternoon, I’d like to consider certain features of that self-presentation in early modern times, stressing what people decided to reveal and especially to conceal about themselves. Let’s start with the essential question of the frame: the genre in which a man or woman has chosen to speak about the self and the audience he or she expects for the account. The stand-alone life is the most recognizable model. To give three seventeenth-century examples: the merchant Glikl Hamel wrote her life — her husbands, her children, her business, her worries and moral reflections, punctuated by folk tales — in Yiddish for her “dear children and grandchildren.” The learned rabbi Leon Modena wrote his life, Hayyei yehuda, Life of Judah — his preaching triumphs at Venice and publications, his calamities and gambling, his family — in Hebrew for “my sons, the fruit of my loins and to their descendants, and [for] my students, who are called sons.” Marie de l’Incarnation wrote her spiritual autobiography — her movement from artisan and widowed mother in Tours to mystic and then Ursuline teacher and missionary to the Amerindians of Québec — in French for her son, whom she had abandoned for God years before.

None of these three intended their Lives to be published. Glikl Hamel would have been troubled if her tales had got beyond the family, and that’s where her manuscript stayed till 1896. Leon Modena expected some limited circulation among his former Jewish students, but would not have wanted this manuscript to travel much farther. He, too, got his wish, for the first public notice of the Life of Judah was in the mid-nineteenth century at the hands of Jews recording the history of Jewish scholars. The destiny of Marie de l’Incarnation’s spiritual autobiography was different. Encouraged by her confessor to write her Relation, as she called it, Marie had extracted a promise from her son Claude, now a Benedictine in France, either to burn the manuscript after he’d read it or to pass it on to her Ursuline niece. Once she died, the son published the life, with his own commentaries; he included in the preface Marie’s letter eliciting his promise that only he and her niece would lay eyes on the manuscript, thus demonstrating to readers his mother’s humility about her graces and his own rightful breach of faith in making them available to the world.
Dom Claude had turned his mother’s written life into a collaborative venture, but ever once in a while an early modern autobiography was born from dictation. The example I want to describe is from 1831, though it recounts the life of a woman born in 1788: The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave. Related by Herself. The first slave narrative we have from the lips of a woman, it was told to a young abolitionist writer, Susanna Strickland, who claimed she was “adhering to [Mary’s] own simple story and language,” and then was published in London by Thomas Pringle, the secretary of the Society for the Abolition of Slavery. It recounted Mary Prince’s early life in Bermuda, where she was sold away from her slave mother, her cruel treatment at the hands of owners there and in Antigua, her conversion to Christianity and marriage to a good black carpenter, the refusal of her brutish owners to let her buy her freedom, and her final escape from them during a visit to England. Printed in three editions in 1831, The History of Mary Prince gave support to the Parliamentary bill of 1833 emancipating the 800,000 slaves in the British West Indies.²

From this sample of stand-alone lives, let’s turn to self-narratives that are entwined with or are associated with other genres. I’ll start with a form that, like The History of Mary Prince, involves a speaker and a writer: the reports of Christian missionaries about their converts. The Jesuit Relations from Canada in the seventeenth century include long quotations from their converts about life history and emotional transformation, expressed originally in an Algonquian or Iroquoian tongue and translated into French by the Jesuits for publication. The Jesuits were good linguists, but who knows how close these speeches come to the actual words of the Amerindian speaker?

An example to whose reliability I can better attest is drawn from late eighteenth-century Suriname, from its rain-forests, where the Moravian Brethren had been working to for several decades to convert the Maroons. One of their few successes was a man named Alabi, descendant of slaves who had fled from the plantations of Jewish settlers and who was himself heir to the chieftaincy of the Saramacca tribe. His Creole tongue, Saramaccan, was in part derived from the Portuguese spoken by the Jewish settlers; and after his baptism under the name of Johannes Arrabini, he
collaborated with one of the missionaries on a Saramaccan-German dictionary. The Moravian diaries and reports are full of references to and quotations from Alabi, even letters that he dictates in Saramaccan and which the brothers translate into German.

In my past life (they quote him as saying as he neared thirty), I had no peace of mind. First I had to feed my soul [explain jeje, jorka], then I had to pacify my Gado, then I had to placate someone who had recently died so that he would not kill me, then I had to make an Obia and purify [myself with it]. Now I am free from all these burdens, torments, and fears. I thank my beloved Redeemer who has freed me.  

And years later, as he neared sixty, he recounts his past with two old-time converts:

I was the leader at every dance and merriment, as you all know. You also know that as heathen, we indulged in every abomination, in gluttony and drunkenness. I was the chief drummer, and you, Joshua, and you Andreus, were the chief singers and noise-makers. Our women and children danced with us, and we spent whole nights in every kind of profaneness and wild uproar. We carved idols in wood, or formed them of clay, consecrated them, put food and drink before them, commended ourselves to their protection, and fell down with our children prostrate before them, addressing them with great earnestness and telling them our wants, which were connected only with external happiness. We thought we were doing good deeds, but we were worshipping the devil. And yet God had mercy on us.  

Alabi’s fragments of autobiography ring with vivacity and insight about his young adulthood, and are less formulaic than the lebenslaufen written by Moravian converts in North America.  

Another move by those who wanted to recount their own life was to attach it to a biography of others. From medieval times, Arab authors of biographical dictionaries, the tabaqat so beloved by Islamic scholars, would sometimes write his own life and sandwich it in among those of the luminaries. Whatever foibles they might include, they thus became part of a community of people whose credibility could be taken seriously, an important trait in a cultural tradition depending on chains of transmission.  

In western Europe, some people linked their story to that of a close relative or eminence. Montaigne compared himself to his father numerous
times in his *Essais*, and opined that his adult self was in part a fulfillment of his father’s design. The scholar Jacob Emden, starting his autobiography when he was in his fortieths, opened with an account of his ancestors and then branched into a full biography of his father, the renowned rabbi Zevi Hirsh Askhenazi. The complexity in Emden’s writing, as he tells his children of God’s gifts to him and of his woes, comes from the juxtaposition of biography and autobiography, his own life repeating his father’s, but also diverging from it and allowing Emden to state his grievances against his honored progenitor.

Christian women, when not writing as mystics or pilgrims, sometimes used their husbands’ lives as a path to self-narrative. For instance, the French Calvinist and noblewoman Charlotte Arbaleste wrote a history of her husband Philippe du Plessis de Mornay, a leading figure in the French Wars of Religion, and was able to thread her life story into his. In seventeenth century England, the Puritan Lucy Apsley Hutchinson appended a brief life of her own to her biography of her husband Colonel John Hutchinson, an important leader in the English Revolution. This format legitimated these women’s comments on public life as well as their self-description.

Yet other genre links, even more ambitious, were possible for self-narrative. As the influential representative and defender of Jewish communities in the Holy Roman Empire in the days of Maximilian and Charles V, the Alsatian Joseph of Rosheim wove his own actions and interventions into a Hebrew chronicle of the travails of the times. On a larger scale, the jurist-diplomat-scholar Ibn Khaldun, writing from North Africa in his rhythmic Arabic around 1400, appended his autobiography to the end of his *Book of Examples*, that celebrated introduction to universal history and account of world history to his own day. His autobiography contributed to the historical narrative itself, as he visited courts from al-Andalus to Cairo and met with the Mongol conqueror Tamberlane in Damascus. But more important, Ibn Khaldun inserted biographies of his teachers and his teachers’ teachers into his life story; he thereby established his reliability and worth as a scholar who, as he claimed in the beginning of *Book of Examples*, was about to give his readers “a new science.”

Ibn Khaldun’s travels were subsumed under his life history, but other authors made their travel the vector of the narrative and organized their
presentation of self around it. Let me mention two examples here, both dear to my own research. The first is The Book of the Cosmography and Geography of Africa, written in Italian in 1526 by a man known in Europe as “Leo Africanus,” but who had been born al Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmed al-Wazzan in Granada, about the time that Muslim kingdom fell to its Spanish Catholic conquerors. Brought up and educated in Fez, al-Wazzan became a diplomat for its sultan. In that capacity he traveled throughout North and sub-Saharan Africa, and the eastern Mediterranean to Istanbul. Returning from Cairo to Fez in 1518, his boat was seized by Christian pirates and he was delivered to Pope Leo X, who, beside being a patron of letters and art, was trying to raise a crusade against the Turk. After a year’s imprisonment, al-Wazzan converted to Christianity and was given the pope’s names Giovanni Leone. For the next seven years he remained in Italy, teaching and transcribing Arabic for highly placed persons, preparing an Arabic-Hebrew-Latin dictionary with a learned Jew, and finally writing books—of which the Geography of Africa was the most important—to present the world of Africa and Islam to European readers. In 1527, he returned to North Africa and Islam, probably never to know that his Africa book would be published in 1550 in Venice and become a European bestseller.

The Geography of Africa is a book of mixed genres—a geography, a history, and a travel account, a rihla, a form of writing of long duration in Arabic writing, here produced in Italian. Al-Wazzan organized the book by geographical units: the kingdoms of the Maghreb, with extended treatment of Morocco; the Land of the Blacks; and then Egypt. But as he moves from town to town, village to village, mountain range to desert, he incorporates many stories from his own life as they relate to that place: from his boyhood, where he talks of shrines he visited and his beliefs about djinns, to his adulthood, where he describes dangerous adventures on his caravans, his conversations with diplomats, local Jews, judges, and traders, his reception at different courts, and much more. Facilitated by the travel frame, the portrait that emerges is of a flexible, widely experienced, and well-educated man, with his own judgments, but still curious about different ways that people live and think. We’ll return to this strategy of self-portraiture and its silences in a moment.
My second example is *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Suriname*, written in the late 1770s and 1780s by John Gabriel Stedman, and finally published, with illustrations engraved from Stedman’s drawings, in 1796 in London. Born in the Netherlands to a Scottish military father and a Dutch mother, Stedman followed his father into the Scots Brigades, while enjoying a free-roving youth in the Netherlands. In 1773, he became a captain in a special unit recruited to help settlers in the Dutch colony of Suriname put an end to Maroon uprisings and raids on the plantations (the rebels were not Alabi’s Saramacca, who had already made peace with the colonial government, but another grouping of tribes).

Stedman’s *Narrative* recounts his years in Suriname from his arrival in early 1773 to his departure in the spring of 1777. Like al-Wazzan’s *Geography*, it is a book of mixed genres, here triggered by Stedman’s adventures in Suriname. It is a military history, the European soldiers bogged down in the insect-laden swamps of the rain forests, whose pathways the Maroon rebels know perfectly. It describes the flora and fauna of Suriname and gives something of the colony’s history; it provides an ethnography of the indigenous peoples who shared the rain forests with the Maroons and of the African slaves who grew the sugar and coffee on the plantations. It offers ethical and political commentary on slavery, condemning strongly the cruel punishment of slaves but defending it as an institution for people of African origin so long as they are humanely treated. And it recounts Stedman’s affectionate intimacy with a beautiful young slave named Joanna, their time together, the birth of their son Johnny, and his sorrow at having to leave them behind in Suriname, Joanna still a slave. Throughout Stedman portrays himself as man of sentiment, with empathy for even the Maroons he must kill, indignation at extravagant cruelty, and appreciation for quality wherever he saw it. Here, too, I’ll return in a moment to this strategy of self-portraiture and some of the trouble at its heart.

Early modern self-narratives surface in genres other than those I’ve mentioned so far. For instance, testimony and confessions in criminal trials engender self-portraiture, albeit within a frame established by the authorities. During our workshop, Sara Nalle will lead us through the revealing
testimonies of *conversos* before the Spanish Inquisition, and I myself have been scavenging criminal records in Suriname as a source for self-narrative from slaves, who otherwise leave us little direct quotation. For now, let me just stress that whatever the genre framing an ego-document, both the genre and the intended audience will have implications for the construction of the self, both for what is said and what is not-said.

What do I mean by the “not-said,” by the silences, and omissions in a self-narrative? I don’t mean some kind of failure of individual consciousness, as if all self-portraits had to be measured by the intentions and practice of Michel de Montaigne. Rather I am inquiring about concealment or omission that is invited by the ego-document itself, that is somehow intrinsic to its story.

Two examples come to mind from Glikl Hamel’s autobiography. The first concerns business, whose ups-and-downs, successes and uncertainties provide a dramatic line throughout her book, from the early achievements of Glikl and her first husband Haim in Hamburg to the spectacular bankruptcy of her second husband Hirsch Levy in Metz. Along the way, Glikl named and denounced business partners who were dishonest and cheated Haim. This was safe enough, for her settling of scores would remain in Hebrew within her family network. Only once she provided no name: a Jewish merchant who, after Haim’s death, had given a bad credit rating to her young and now orphaned trading sons so that they could not get their bills of exchange honored on the Hamburg bourse. Even while calling on God to avenge her sons, Glikl said only of the merchant “I cannot blame the man I have in mind because I do not know his thoughts. Humans judge by what the eyes see, God by the heart.” This man’s power and relation to the family were too important to risk gossip.

This is a minor, tactical concealment. Another silence cuts more deeply into Glikl’s life, that of her range of feeling for Hirsch Levy, her second husband. In the early books of her autobiography, composed not long after Haim Hamel died at age forty-three, she evoked the great love, comfort, and exchange that existed between the two of them, even in times of trouble. Description of intimate feeling was, thus, part of Glikl’s palette for painting her past. She remained a widow for more than a decade, refusing offers from all over Germany, and then in 1699, agreed to marry the
widower Hirsch Levy of Metz, wealthy financier, purveyor to the army of Louis XIV, and leader of the Jewish community.

Glikl’s account of the start of this marriage was composed two years after their wedding, in the wake of the spectacular and humiliating bankruptcy of Hirsch Levy. She erupted in anger and self-reproach for having agreed to this marriage, which had so unexpectedly brought her hardship and dishonor. She did not accuse Hirsh of bad business practices—“my husband was a good man and wealthy, as he represented himself to be. . .he carried on a big business and was honest”—it was the fault of his creditors and the times. But this did not lessen her deep disappointment at the misfortune.

But there is a second muted theme in these pages. “I should not have thought of marrying again,” she reported to the children who will one day read her book, “for I could not hope to meet another Haim Hamel.” As she neared Metz, she was filled with “melancholy” even though her future husband’s letters to her had been full of respect and cheerfulness, “Did I have a foreboding of the outcome? Or was my heart troubled at taking another husband?”

Once installed in Hirsch Levy’s house where she “saw more gold and silver than [she] had seen in any wealthy man’s house in all of Germany,” she had frequent reminders from her stepchildren and new in-laws of how things were done by Hirsch’s first wife Blumchen, who had died only the year before. And then, Glikl said, “my husband groaned a good deal at night. Many times I asked him what ailed him; he always answered nothing. . . that it was just his nature. . . But since the whole world told me how happily he had lived with his first wife, I imagined that he could not forget her.” Her in-laws assured her that he had also groaned at night during his first marriage, but, “at times,” said Glikl, “it still bothered me.”

In Glikl’s relation with Hirsch Levy, we have a story she decided not to tell in all its fulness. In the last book of her autobiography, written in 1715 after Hirsch had been dead for a few years, she still recalls their time of troubles in reduced circumstances, but speaks of Hirsch with respect—for his piety, for the standing he had once had in the community, and the contribution he had made to it—and with empathy for his afflictions. “The Holy One took him to Himself. . . he is gone to his rest, leaving me in
penury and sorrow.” But as for what love there may have been between them, Glikl did not record it for her children.

Leon Modena’s Life of Judah also carries enigmatic passages that invite questioning – as in his reference under “Miseries of my heart” to “My son Mordecai. . . with Raphael Spira. . . and after his death, with the Morisco, may his name be blotted out.” But here I want to stress the other side of the coin: that is, how much is revealed about himself and his Jewish community in the autobiography, written in Hebrew for his sons and his students. Quarrels, conspiracies, and enmities in the Ghetto; Jewish fences in cahoots with Christian thieves; mischievous if beloved sons, quarrelsome if devoted wives; and especially Leon’s own passion for gambling that recurs throughout his whole life, jeopardizing his daughters’ dowries and his family’s well-being; this is the Jewish life that emerges along with Leon’s eloquent sermons and learned publications and those of other Jewish scholars. Leon offered a different picture in his History of the Rites, Customes, and Manner of Life of the Present Jews throughout the World, originally written in Italian for King James I around 1615, and published in Paris in 1637 and the next year in Venice. The feuds of the Ghetto are effaced, and the Christian readers hear only of the “Pitie and Compassion [of the Jewish Nation] toward all people in want”; no word of Jews caught up in games of chance, even on the allowed holidays, like Hanukkah and Purim.

The Hebrew Life of Judah, kept in manuscript, was a safe space for experience and affect that should be kept hidden from the Christians. If Christian habitués of the Ghetto, and there were some in Venice, knew something of these Jewish secrets, the public face of Jewish rites and customs was to be moderate and benevolent, an answer to scholarly anti-Semitic treatises of the day. (aside on Leon’s concerns about the Catholic Inquisition, Jewish doctrine, “nothing but praise”)

The revealing/concealing, truth-telling/dissimulating axes also have their place in the books of Hasan al-Wazzan and John Gabriel Stedman, and in each case, we also have a second source that can illuminate the strategies of their self-narratives. In the Geography of Africa of al-Wazzan, it was his religious positioning he had to obscure. As a Christian in Italy, Giovanni Leone had to write a text which would not offend his Christian readers, on whose favor his life and liberty depended. But as a Muslim, Hasan ibn
Muhammad al-Wazzan had to write a text which, if it fell into Muslim hands, could be defended one day when, as he said, he planned “to return safe and sound, God willing, to North Africa.”

He gives a clue to his strategy in an opening folktale. He had been giving a general review of the virtues and vices of people living in different parts of Africa. But would readers think he himself, as an African, had only the vices and not the virtues? To dissuade them of such judgment, he tells the tale of an amphibious bird, who could live either on the air or in the sea. He stayed with the birds until the king of the birds came around to collect taxes. Whereupon he dove immediately into the water and lived with the fish until the king of the fish came around to collect taxes, when he immediately shot out of the water back to the birds. And so he continued without ever paying taxes.

The author concludes from this that whenever a men sees his advantage, he always follows it . . . I will do like the bird . . . If the Africans are being vituperated, [this writer] will use as a clear excuse that he was not born in Africa, but in Granada. And if the Granadans are being railed against, he will find the excuse that he was not brought up in Granada.

In his book, then, al-Wazzan was promising to truth-tell about Africa and himself but without being pinned down. He gave ample evidence of having lived most of his life as a Muslim and of his Muslim education, though almost always referring to himself as “this writer” or as “he.” (The “I will do like the bird” is one of three or four first-person usages in the 900-page manuscript.) He described the four schools of Islamic law at Cairo with admiration for the debates he had heard; he lauded the insight of the great theologians he had read like al-Ashari and al-Ghazali; he praised the piety of holy men in the Atlas mountains, whom he knew. The criticisms he made were not those of a Christian outsider, but of a Sunni jurist: mockery of popular superstition, condemnation of Shia heresy. He even referred to Muhammad several times as the Prophet. To be sure, he never inserted the invocation which in Muslim writing must always follow the Prophet’s name, such as “may God bless him and give him peace”—but then he did not insert in his manuscript the adjectives of derision —“satanic,” “damnable,” “fraudulent,” and the like—which a Christian author was required to use in referring to Muhammad and his teachings, especially if a convert.
Al-Wazzan’s current status as a Christian was revealed to readers only in the colophon of his manuscript, where he used his Christian name “Joan Lione Granatini.” He described learned Nestorians and Jacobite monasteries, but steered clear of their Christian doctrine. He referred to a Christian prayer only once, saying that a poison sold in the kingdom of Nubia was so strong that it could kill a man “in the time it would take to say a Pater Noster.” Warfare between European Christians and Muslims in North Africa over the centuries and in battles in which he participated, he reported with remarkable balance.

The impartiality in al-Wazzan’s book was exceptional for the sixteenth century, both among Muslim and Christian writers. Indeed, his Christian humanist editor, Giovanni Battista Ramusio, strengthened the Christian reference for the 1550 publication in Venice, and among other changes replaced “in the time it would take to say a Pater Noster” with the adverb “suddenly.” The translators of the printed French, Latin and English editions went farther. Where al-Wazzan had written in his manuscript that there had been Jewish and Christian kingdoms in Africa “until the coming of the sect of Muhammad. In the year 268 of the Hijra, the people of Libya became Muslims by certain preachers,” the French translator said instead “the damnable Mohammedan sect began to spread in the year 268 of the Hijra. Then disciples of Muhammad came to preach . . . and by deceptive words and false exhortations drew the hearts of the Africans to their false and Satanic law.”

Still, even in the printed versions of al-Wazzan’s book his psychological and spiritual strategies for describing Africa and himself to Europeans –playful, dissimulative, distancing, likening—- come through and reveal a person living with a double vision.

The knotty problem in the self-narrative of John Gabriel Stedman in Suriname was otherwise. He, too, indicates its source to readers through a folktale, the story of Inkle and Yarico, much told in Europe since the seventeenth century. Shipwrecked in the Caribbean, the merchant Inkle had been cared for and protected by the lovely Yarico, with whom he had lived in a cave. Inkle persuaded Yarico to come back to England with him, but then, when their boat docked at Barbados, he sold her into slavery.
Stedman is no Inkle, he assures the readers of his Narrative. He tells them that after first seeing the beautiful slave Joanna, “so much distinguished above all the rest of her Species in the colony,” he had poured out to her mistress and to the administrator of her plantation his hope to purchase Joanna, educate her, and “even to make her [his] lawfull Wife in Europe.” He describes their arrangements together in the next years, living some of the time in a little cottage he builds on a plantation where he has a military base and delighting in the birth of their son Johnny. As his departure nears, the self-described impecunious Stedman borrows money from a generous Christian widow, a Mrs. Godefroy, to purchase Joanna, with the agreement that Joanna will be Mrs. Godefroy’s slave until Stedman pays off the debt from Europe. His son Johnny he manages to manumit free of charge.

Mrs. Godefroy then urges Stedman to take Joanna and Johnny on the boat to Europe with him, even though his loan has not been repaid. Stedman then quotes himself, “I [invited] Joanna still to accompany me,” but she refused even if it meant that they would never meet again. She would stay in Suriname “first from a Consciousness that with propriety she had not the disposal of herself – and secondly from pride, wishing in her present condition rather to be one of the first amongst her own class in America, than as she was well convinced to be the last in Europe at least till such time as fortune should enable me to establish her above dependence.”

That time was never to come, Stedman continues in his Narrative. He says nothing about trying to retrieve her, but reports hearing of her death several years later and then says he married a Dutch woman the following spring. He receives his son Johnny to his welcoming arms and raises him with his own children in England. Not only is he no Mr. Inkle, he is man of refined and romantic sensibility who recognizes virtue wherever he sees it and acts with humane judgment.

Stedman’s journal, which he kept all during his Suriname years and afterward, reveals a different story, though not a treacherous Inkle. No sign of any plan early or late to bring Joanna to Europe and perhaps one day marry her, though Stedman does see to it that her reading skills expand. No borrowing from Mrs. Godefroy with promises for repayment, but rather Stedman purchases Joanna for a moderate price, sells her for a profit to Mrs.
Godefroy, with the commitment that the elderly and kindly widow will manumit Joanna one day in her will. Though he hears once from Joanna after his departure, so the journal reveals, he does not write her back, and he weds a Dutch bride before, not after learning of Joanna’s death: she died still a slave, for Mrs. Godefroy outlived her. Yet the Suriname journal does show Stedman’s affection for Joanna while he’s with her—“I make baskets for the girl I love” —and includes a charming drawing of the three of them at their cottage, later reproduced unidentified in the Narrative. He sustained the memory of his son Johnny for his beloved mother, and when Stedman made his will not long before he died in 1797, he asked that the curl of hair that Joanna had given him at his departure be buried with him.

Thus, Stedman emerges not as someone who wanted to relive his early manhood and actually do something different, but as someone who wanted to rethink it and rewrite it in the Narrative both to assign more honor to himself, and also to pay what he saw as tribute to a woman slave of color. His knotty and unstable story stimulated more response than he could have imagined. Critics of slavery and other readers of the Narrative wondered why Stedman had not paid back his debt to Mrs. Godefroy, or opined that Joanna had been wise not to trust how he’d behave if she returned to Europe with him. Others used the Joanna-Stedman tale as ammunition for the abolition of slavery, well beyond anything its author intended.

One of the likely readers of Stedman’s book was Susanna Strickland, whom we have met in 1831 taking down the “history” of Mary Prince, the former slave of Antigua. As a final example of revealing/concealing, let us look once again at that History, for it gives us an inkling of what a slave woman might want to say or not say about intimacy with a white man. After the History was first published, the former owners of Mary Prince wrote indignantly to the publisher Thomas Pringle: they defended their reputation, and attacked Mary for “ingratitude” and “depravity,” while withholding details “too indecent to appear in a publication likely to be perused by females.” Pringle wrote to an abolitionist friend in Antigua who knew Mary Prince and the former owners well. He responded that Mary was “a slave of superior intelligence and respectability.” Prior to her marriage, she had “a connexion with a white person a Captain . . ., which I have no doubt was broken off when she became seriously impressed with religion. . . Such
This intimate liaison with a white man had not been recounted in The History. There Mary had said only that after her first prayer meeting with the Moravians, “I felt sorry for my sins... I prayed God to forgive me.” A gentleman named Captain Abbot surfaced, but only as a helpful person lending her some money to help buy her freedom. She had paid it back to him when her manumission was denied. For the second and third printings of the best-selling History, published in the same year of 1831, Pringle just added the two letters he’d received as an appendix, creating an interesting dialogue with the Strickland/Mary Prince text.

Two years later the aggrieved former owner sued Pringle for libel, and in the course of the trial we hear Mary Prince’s voice. Here is the report of the Court of King’s Bench:

She had lived seven years before her marriage with Captain Abbot... not in the house with him, but slept with him sometimes in another hut which she had... One night she found another woman in bed with the Captain in her house. This woman had pretended to be a friend of the witness [Mary Prince]. (laughter) Witness licked her, and she was obliged to get out of bed. (a laugh) The captain laughed, and the woman said she had done it to plague witness. Witness took her next day to the Moravian black leader, when she denied it, and witness then licked her again (a laugh). The woman then complained before a magistrate... and when the story was told, they all laughed, and the woman was informed that she must never come again with such tales or she would be put in the stocks... She [Mary Prince] parted with Captain Abbot on his killing a man on board one of [her master’s] vessels. She had been a member of the Moravian [Church] and discharged herself in consequence of her connexion with Caption Abbot. She was kept from [attending services] for seven weeks. She told all this to Miss Strickland when that lady took down her narrative.6

This fascinating and very believable story Mary Prince and Susanna Strickland decided not to include in the published History. Strickland may have thought it unsuitable for the abolitionist cause and Mary Prince may have preferred to tell it only to her sister slaves and ex-slaves, but not to give...
it general circulation among high-minded English reformers. Whatever the case, the tension between the two instances of self-narrative enriches Mary Prince’s story rather than undermines it.

Indeed, the two arguments of my talk have been intended to amplify our tools for interpreting self-narratives. The author’s choice of genre and audience shapes the channels in which his or her voice can sound, enlarging possibilities in some directions, limiting them in others, offering chances for play, inversion, and transgression. The author’s sensibilities further determine what he or she will tell or reshape or try to hide away, but the knots, as I’ve called them, or shimmers or eruptions in the self-portrait — especially when we can compare two tellings — bring us added appreciation for these people of the past, for their struggle to understand themselves and their hope that their story might make a difference to someone else.

Natalie Zemon Davis
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELF-NARRATIVES REFERRED TO IN THIS ESSAY [starting from Glikl Hamel on p. 4, since the German translation begins only there]


al-Wazzan, Hasan [“Leo Africanus”]. *Libro de la Cosmogrophia [sic for “Cosmographia”] et Geographia de Affrica.* V.E.MS 953. Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Rome


Divre Binah
Dov Ber Brezer (Birkenthal) of Bolechów, 1800
Introduction

The texts presented here are excerpted from a 329-page-manuscript in cursive Hebrew entitled Divre binah. The book was completed in 1800 but never published. It is devoted mostly to the Sabbatian and Frankist phenomena; the genre to which the text belongs is open to discussion. Its author is Dov Ber Brezer or Bikenthal of Bolechów (1723-1805) in western Galicia. He was a merchant dealing mainly in wine that he imported for noble clients from Hungary. The base of operations for his business was L'viv (Pol. Lwów; Ger. Lemberg) where he rented space for his wines in the basement of a building owned by Carmelite monks. Dov Ber is the author of another work, a memoir, fragments of which were published in 1922. He is known to history primarily for his role as translator for Rabbi Hayyim Rapoport who had to respond in 1759 to the accusation by the Frankists that Jews use Christian blood to bake unleavened bread on Passover. In choosing the excerpts, I selected some passages that I hope will lead to a discussion of matters related to self-presentation, but also to a consideration of self-reflection in the text. Who is this person? What are his fears, his anxieties? I have also included passages that represent some of the many ways in which the document throws light on its time and place of composition. NOTA BENE: The Hebrew text is riddled with errors of grammar and spelling as well as syntactical infelicities and stylistic disjunctions. All these are faithfully preserved in the transcription.

Brief Bibliography


The Memoirs of Ber of Bolechow (1723-1805), Translated from the original Hebrew ms. With an introduction, notes and a map by M. Vishnitzer (Wischnitzer), London: Oxford University Press, 1922.


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Understanding Words

Divrei Binah

1800

Translated by Gershon David Hundert, McGill University, CANADA

Divrei Binah [Selection 1]

Dov Ber Brezer (Birkenthal) of Bolechów, 1800

Prepared by Gershon Hundert, McGill University

The book

UNDERSTANDING WORDS:

Resolute

Increasing strength to speak aright

And with the help

Of the One who graciously grants wisdom to man, may my words be acceptable to the ear that hears them. Devoid

Of wisdom a worm of the House of Jacob

In the year

560

According the small cycle

Here Bolechów, may the Rock and Redeemer protect it.

I named
This composition

*Divre Binah* (Understanding Words)

Because, as an acrostic, the words hint at my name

Dov Ber

And also because the value of the letters in *Divre Binah* (plus one) is 284 in *gematria*:

My name, Do”v Be”r.

Thus, may the Lord grant me the wisdom and understanding to understand and know [how to] publish my words, the product of my ideas, as it is said:

Gird up your loins like a hero, go and take courage and do not let your hand weaken,  

But speak your words and record your deeds  

So that lies told against our religion may be banished.

**Understanding Words**

May my entire life rise to praise the Creator

Devout adoration of the God who watches over me during all my days, during all the crises I have faced,

All the days and years of my life. Until now, God has granted me mercy,

And in my old age his favour has not ceased. I dwell here in my pleasant house in a tranquil holy community. I lack nothing, all is well. And I said, it is time to act for the Lord whose Torah we have violated.

The little Talmud we learned in our youth from wise men, may they rest in peace, our teachers in desperate times

Their taste has not stayed in us, though their scent has not changed.¹

I spent most of my life trading in Hungarian wine on the Gentile streets of the holy community of Lwów, in the courtyards of Non-Jews and priests. Those Christians were jealous of us. Virtually daily, defiantly, they opened their mouths and spoke to us, addressing us with pride and contempt: You lack the ability to answer in matters of faith. Your ancient wisdom is lost, no person wise in physics and metaphysics is left among you. You are all perplexed. For nothing is left to you but your Talmud, which leads you away from the Christian religion (in their minds the proper Faith) with absurdities and numerous lies.
For this they hate us more than all the idolaters who ruled in past times, and who would cause trouble and sorrow for the people of Israel. All those idols and their worshippers have disappeared from the world. No one speaks their names, or the names of the nations that worshipped them. So it will be with all the enemies of God who follow lying religions.

_Divre Binah [Selection 2]_

Dov Ber Brezer (Birkenthal) of Bolechów, 1800

In my childhood I lived in an inn that belonged to my father. People of the different nations of our region passed by seeking hostel and would stay there. On many occasions, their first words were against the Oral Torah, the people of Israel, and their beliefs. And the people of Israel are insulted but do not insult. They bear humiliation and do not respond. This is because there was no one among us who shared their language and education. Even when we had convincing answers, it was as nothing in their eyes. As a child I understood their words and their purpose and that some Jew could respond to them convincingly, even attacking their religion, if he were able to formulate his words in their language and in accordance with their ways of learning.

From that time I became zealous and determined to use all my abilities to study and learn their language perfectly. In this way I would be able also to read their books composed by ancient and recent authors. Since I devoted my spare time to this, I learned the grammar and the content of their language. Nevertheless, in my youth I feared reading their books because they are much detested among our people who view them as forbidden, until their came into my hands the book, _Lehem Yehuda_ written by the scholar of bygone days, Rabbi Yehuda Yuda ben R. Shemu’el Lerma the Sephardi, rest in peace. It is a commentary on _Ethics of the Fathers_ and I saw his explanation of the statement of Rabbi Elazar: Be eager to study the Torah and know what to respond to a heretic: _i.e._ it is necessary to know their books to find the source of their error.”

_Divre Binah [Selection 3]_

Dov Ber Brezer (Birkenthal) of Bolechów, 1800

Then we understood why matters developed this way. It was during our conversation with the priest Wieniawski about the Sabbatian sect and their deception in the matter of their conversion to Christianity. This is the story: Once, as was his custom, he arrived in the town of Khotyn [Chocim] on the Muslim side of the border to trade in fine and expensive horses which were brought to the fairs there called _ataks_. A Jew, apparently happy to see him there, greeted and bowed to him asking after his health. In consternation the priest asked, “How do you know me?” The Jew answered, “how could my lord not recognize me? I am your servant Józef Krzyżanowski. I served you faithfully for two years as a Christian. After coming to regret...
what I had done as useless, I returned to my first faith, the best of all. This person was a young resh dukhna, i.e. a belfer from Lwów who had converted to Christianity. The Gentiles placed him with Wieniawski whom he served as a lackey. This infuriated the priest who cursed him, invoking his own god, for this deed. Now, this apostate had learned the language of the Muslims. He would circulate among the merchants attending the fair, the ataks mentioned earlier, to sell horses and acted as an agent for them. He saw the priest buying horses according to his needs and preparing to leave. The agent filed a claim against his lord the priest with the Muslim court called divan. A restraining order was issued and delivered to the priest’s inn forbidding him to leave until the case between him and his convert servant had been resolved. The priest was obliged to settle with him and pay him his wages. As this was happening the Jew ridiculed their faith saying, “no Jew ever believed in your religion, and if they converted there must have been some compulsion or desire for material gain.”

This is what the famous apostate Niedzielski did recently in Lwów. He deceived the lord Duke Wyżycki, Archbishop of Lwów, telling him a dream he had invented. The Bishop adopted him and with the support of the Bishop [Niedzielski] stole his father’s entire legacy of 60,000 złp. from his widowed mother, who was left with her young sons and daughters naked and without means.

We return to the first matter: This convert said to the priest, you should know that Niedzielski will arrive here shortly with all his wealth. Over there is his house, built of stone bricks on which he has expended 12,000 złp. Once he has sent a further 6,000 złp., construction will be finally completed. Then he will come here and return to his religion. The priest was enraged by these words and after returning to his home in Lwów, he went immediately the next day to the residence of the Duke and Bishop Wyżycki mentioned above to greet him. At the time, the canons were also in attendance. After asking after the health of the Bishop and the other priests, he looked around and saw the apostate Niedzielski standing in the Bishop’s great hall. He was dressed like a tovarish, that is, like a Polish army officer – the Bishop had also arranged this honour for him. He also put him in charge of the income from all of his holdings making him general treasurer of his wealth. The income from his property alone amount to more than 100,000 złp. in addition to other large gifts from the lords and from Jews lehavdil.

The priest Wieniawski said, “my lord Niedzielski why are you tarrying here, your house has been built in Chocim? Why do you not go there?” And he turned to the Bishop and the priests and spoke to them in Latin telling them the story of the convert, his lackey - how he had come of his own free will to convert with no inducement from anyone. I myself was his godfather, in Russian кум, at the apostasy or Christian baptism. Within a few weeks he had learned to read and write Polish and all of the customs and rites of our Christian religion. He conducted himself as a God-fearing man, and was never late to hear the prayers pronounced by the priest. He was responsible and punctual in the performance of his work in my house. I decided to be a father to him and to adopt him as my son. Then, when I came to Chocim and
a Jew greeted and bowed to me, happy to see me, I understood nothing until he told me he
was Józef Krzyżanowski. I was angered and I cursed and reviled him as a heretic. And he told
his fellow believers how this pan also is preparing himself to return to his faith. He has
already purchased land and a splendid stone brick house is being constructed. He has
expended 12,000 złp. and only another 6,000 złp. is required by the builders to complete their
task. And he swore by the crucifix, as is their custom, that all that he said was true.

The priests of the cathedral chapter accepted and believed the words of the priest Wieniawski
and they advised their lord the Duke and Archbishop not to delay and to appoint a different
treasurer to oversee his affairs in place of Niedzielski and to remove the latter from his post.
Not only was he removed from authority over the treasury and the Bishop’s income, but also
the sum of 60,000 złp. - his father’s legacy – that he had stolen, was taken from him and
placed in the hands of a trustee appointed by the Lwów city authorities on the command of
the Bishop.

From that time the priests of Lwów were revolted by apostates, particularly the priest
Wieniawski our overlord. He became the enemy of all apostates and decided that under no
circumstances would he accept any Jew as a Christian convert. He refused several times to
accept Jewish converts to his service and did not even want them in his sight. On the other
hand, most of his business dealings were with Jews. Still, he wanted no contact with apostates
whom he reviled.

_Divre Binah [Selection 4]_

Dov Ber Brezer (Birkenthal) of Bolechów, 1800

Some German merchants told me that immediately after taking up residence in Brno, Frank
himself went to Vienna and spoke to the Emperor. And he said what he said, that the
emperor is without pride and sees all faiths as acceptable. He says that Heaven grants a
person the choice to believe whatever is fitting in his eyes. And at the beginning of his reign,
1786 according to their count, it was ordered that when the annual calendar was published in
the German language it be called _toleranz calendar_, that is that all faiths are equal and
tolerated in the view of the government of his excellency, the emperor.

In 1790, at the beginning of the great war against the French, this evil man, Jacob Frank, and
his heretical followers left Brno. He wanted to be closer to the French to investigate their
beliefs. He had heard that they deny the belief in Jesus of Nazareth. They accompanied him to
Offenbach, which is near Frankfurt a/M close to the French border. There he became ill and
died. They buried him in the Christian manner with full honours as was written in the
newspaper in the year 5751.
Endnotes

1 After Jeremiah 48:11.

2 Cf., The Memoirs, p. 79f: I learned also the Polish language to please my father who wanted me to know it. He kept a tutor in his house, an educated Polish gentleman, who made me conversant with Polish speech and writing. I learned it perfectly in a very short time. Moreover, I studied Latin and understood the principal part of its grammar. After my first wife left, some of the people in our community began to gossip about me and to suspect my faith, saying that I learned these things, God forbid, not for God’s sake, and I had to give up my secular studies.

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ספרא
דברי בינה

**תwróci**

*תולי גובר* *מישרין לזרם*

*רביע ע"ב

*תולעת לבר* 

*מדעת* 2*ל>').* ליעבט תוריה

*shall* *шение*

*לישועה וזלמה
על כביר בית מבית בינה מרותם שם.

והם עלה כלㄧב תדוב כנפיו בניה ושם.

ונתן עניין עלי את הבינɍה ושם דנרי

וصحロック פז' ד' לינון ונייה עלייו עלושכמ לブランド

לפיו דבורי. ופיוני העבורה.- לאמור אזור

אצני מבקר isError. ל'עונות מתוכך. וolson תוך

ידך. מלקדס דבורי. ולקחט בפסר

את כל מעשיך

לפיים האלמנטים שמח נך דנוינ לפקר

ועם 3

דבר בינה

* * *

יתעלה הבירה ויתפואר נזר

* * *

כל מעורר

וכלה השפה על אחר החורשת אוצר מעודי. וכל המפורקות על עניין.
בימי ברחמיו' דעזרוני הנה עד ומאודי בנפשי חיי שני ימי במשך באין שליו קנאוה בביתי יושב והנני. חסדיו עזבוני לא ישישי המעט הפרנו שתורתו'لد לעשות עת אמרתי טוב כל ليי מחסר העתים בצוקות רשתינו'לadoo המונים וברוחם בניו stand הרזים יינות ממ춤'יצאתי חיי ימי והנוצרים באותן בניו קנאו ושם והכומרים ערלים ובחצרות פוערים נגדינו פיהם היו חוק ولבלי. אומרים לנו היו ממש יום ולא להשיב פה لكم אין. דוברים עלינו עתק ווזף ובגאוה: הקדימה חכמתכם מכם אבדה כבר. האמונה והנнии בעסקי לוהרים. וה Hick рабים עם אלה Ricky. אלהワーク עובדי מכל וטיי אותנו שונאים לזה ב.4' Divre Binah [Selection 2 Dov Ber Brezer (Birkenthal) of Bolechów, 1800
והיה נילוחו/software ב払い בשתי כרכים: ראשון - שבעה ימים. שני - כ嫫ים ימים. בᴿᵧ organisers, משלוחים חומרים ו𫛠וים.}

בנ衃י עריבグגואר בזבובים. עטיעות הפרדס אוים מושלמים. על שעתיי ובראש שברבר בלטום בילדה.

בריר השתייכות או שילשולים צמחים. עטיעות震惊ים נחבת. וראק שבктивות הביצות מבריחים גננת, שירב לב.

אתיי שישו הער לשלחת. בטושבה נצחה אתי נגדי. רכ שתרד" לפדר למוד י. ושלש שיתם:

vrolet יה גאים בבשיר. גורפיה בלב ש_documents. להתאימה בבילות:

לאריה שלדים של חבר שלしてる. כל שיאཔלו לחרוק ובם ב الإرهاب שונג. ממחזרות החורות והקדמות:

אמר שלדרים של deix שלטוע לשון. כל שיא骅 לחרוק ובם ב الإرهاب שונג. ממחזרות החורות והקדמות:

עפ' 6

ירהתי. על שלדום הער להגיא שוחזר החרם הקדמון והר "יתוי.

עד שיתפוג לייד ספור להגיא שוחזר החרם הקדמון והר "יתוי

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4 עד המ שתרש לאמיקורס

[Divre Binah [Selection 3

Dov Ber Brezer (Birkenthal) of Bolechów, 1800

עפ' 281

ואחרי את נורה לっ אתיי וחבר. חות שמחים hebtינון◾ע כוכר וולונטרפ קכניי כח ה"ז.ז

ורשת המנה נמסק השמוע של şaヲיא. רא היא

ווחור הלכה ◆משק את בא ליער החסינ שבכלי גובלת מיסות

הישמואלין זפננות צוח להפרים עלMessageType "פורים יקיר הישראלי והנздание בידידים שיחיה נקריסファンס. ופגע בעזו איה שופח לעממה השכלה והשתהמל ותתניה המכות זאאם ואלייה פאוד על האותי. השיח והידוה זאמר

יא אליאדו אל התוכן ◆אני אתה דבך

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שמיאלו.ؤكد הבדיחי הברה על היד ודרה את אציקסוס והדם

סמסטר למס קומ הראח התוכן הכוכר ◆וקון פוסים כדי צורב. והחלתי לעבר לעבר לותר בהנה. להנה הצורה

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ולמה

שלומו

אחריו

בישאף

ולשון

ובנותיה

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שות

עם

ניעדיעלסקי

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והוכרח

ששה

לשהרה

בעצמי

"ויזיצק

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כמה

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שבשמד

מכל

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מנнецמוד

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טרון ד"סauses副会长. בצרוindi שהיה נЇים למשטר הצרפתים והיה בעצמו Qaeda. מסתבר כי "סילולicyuous树木 וירטואליות, וארון מברשת."

בשנת תשכ"א, ועל פי הכרוז על מנהיגי אמריקה, כמו גם אותו הדוכס, הבנאים ענין כפיי הכל שייגמר פוליש.

זה אלפים ששים ושש�"ר וצריך "זה פולישע; וכונים אמתיים. אלהhiftותיו, שכל כמנהגם וערב בשתי לאדוניהם קולם ואהבתו. והתרו ל"הנוגיעוסקי כומר. לדברי מאד האמינו. הגהומיעaneyו היו הצפירים, כומרי זהא בשמעם ויהי. בישאף וארץ הדוכס לוידי ויבשרו. דההגמון הדכתה אוצרת מידו ושיקחו נעדיעלסקי של בו מקומו שלו להקסע אחר גזבר ויתמנה הדבר יאחר שלא חדש הגזבר בוידו אז שהיו הסמויים הסך גם אף. הgageומון דהключа אוצרת מידו נלקחו לבד; שלחה נעשה ואני. הgageומון הדוכס בizioni שיתמנה אלף ששים בizioni לבוב עיר מראשי קציניו לזה שכתחנו אפאטרפסין לוידי ונקד מידיו נלקחו ל"כנשגל אביו מירושת פוליש הזהובים: הgageומון לכל גדול שנא נעשה ל"הנשלנו שררה ווינאוסקי. הכומר ובערבי. דלבוב הפעילות בעיני המומרים ריח באשזהזאת ומעת המומרים. היה וה złewish המסויים ושות שלצווים לא יכלו דבד עליים כשהם עולם שירות לאיזה או עבדות לום: בעיניו מאד וונאוסקין לדבריכれ היו לא משומדים.

[Divre Binah [Selection 4

Dov Ber Brezer (Birkenthal) of Bolechów, 1800]

ואיזו אווליס סוחרי אשכנזים אמרו לי: "שפורפראנגק

עמר_boot וירוג וודר על הקיסר "נ"ל". חיך בחתולה לנו.

ביצוע זה בציר וירוג וודר על הקיסר לאו. חיך בחתולה לנו.

ביצוע בזזיר וודרIAL שshedיבר את הקיסר לאו. והיה בו שום ניוויה

לפני כל האמונות. באפורט שמתחמקים יונך לאמון הבורא להאמר כל מה

客商' 326

שיכושר לפורט. וזא פקודת בחתולה ממשלאה בשנת 1786 לממשרא

שכעכלות השונים גדפוא בלושי אחד התכבות אשכנזים נגרא מצלאנצא יאלנדה.

.levels של האמונות הכים שורים ופוסלבליים זו חות מקושרו

ירה" לווה בוצקתכ" ל"ב החתולה המושלאה הצרעה דבר בעבר.
מעיר.

האפיקורסים...

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**Endnotes**

1. ראה: זיכי, יד, 2.3.


3. רבי אלעזר [בן ירין] אומר: ורשק למלמד תורה; ודע מה שישב לאמפרוס; ודע לפני מי אמרת נfaith אמן; נאומןいま בועל (מלאcjęך ישילה לשרפ פמליה). (אותפרנק, ב.ד,ᴀ)

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Divrei Binah, 1800

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Pawel Maciejko, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

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1. I had a vision in Salonika. The following words were spoken to somebody: Go lead the wise Jacob into the chambers. When you come with him to the first chamber, I admonish you that all the doors and gates be opened to him. When I entered the first chamber, a rose was given to me as a sign by which I could go on to the next and so on consequenter from one room to the next. And so I flew in the air in the company of two maidens the beauty of whom the world has never seen. In these chambers I saw mainly women and young ladies. In some, however, there were groups of students and teachers, and whenever the first word was spoken to me, I immediately grasped from it the whole matter and the full meaning. The number of these rooms was innumerable; in the final one I saw the First [Sabbatai Tsevi] who also sat as a teacher with his students, dressed in frenkish clothing. He immediately asked me: Are you the wise Jacob? I have heard that you are strong and brave-hearted. I was walking this path, but have no strength to go any farther; if you want, you must strengthen yourself and may God help you, for great many ancestors took that burden upon themselves, went on this road, but fell. Then he showed me through the window an abyss which was like the Black Sea, clothed in extraordinary darkness, and on the other side of the abyss I saw a mountain which seemed to touch the clouds. And so I shouted, Be that as it may, I will go with God’s help! And so I began to fly on a slant through the air into the abyss until I reached its very bottom, where, having touched the ground, I stopped. Walking in the dark, I came to the edge of the mountain. I realized that because of the steep smoothness of the mountain it will be very difficult to climb it. I will be forced to clamber up with my nails and use all my strength until I reach the top. As soon as I stopped there, a beautiful scent surrounded me and I saw many True-Believers. Seized by great joy, I did not yet want to climb to the very top of the mountain, saying to myself: I will rest awhile here. And sweat poured from my head like a river in flood because of the effort I made in order to climb this mountain. When I am well
rested, then I will come up on the mountain towards all the good which is found there. And this is what I did: I let my feet hang down and sat with my body and hands on the mountain. Then I went up to the top of the mountain.

33. As I told you before, when I was taken to the rooms where all the kings and Patriarchs of Israel were, they told me: Jacob, we have come so far, from here you must go on alone. I am a prostak - I answered - and have no wisdom; how will I go there? Don't worry about that - they answered – it doesn’t matter, for wisdom is hidden in the lowest of places. Nevertheless, I still held back. Suddenly the First, having put me on a table and having opened the window, showed me an abyss, saying: Look at this impassable place. We cannot go there, but you, if you hadn't held back, would have less difficulty in passing your road. Yet since you delay you must suffer great sufferings. At that time I saw all the burdens, which I will have to take upon myself. And so I was pushed into that abyss.

34.... What kind of an achievement would it be, if God lead the world with wise men and scholars? God wants to come forth in this world only with the meanest and the lowest, so that his power will be demonstrated. Just consider and look at me, there was no greater prostak than I, who was as if deprived of any sense; but wisdom, as I said, comes forth from nothing. When, at the age of 18, I was in Bucharest at the house of a certain lady, who was 24 years old, I had with me spools of gold and silver worth 100 #. I sold them to her for 500 #. This greatly amazed me, yet not thinking much about it I hid the money and went my way, saying to myself: if she gives me voluntarily, why shouldn’t I take it? The lady was very rich. She had about 1200 servants, all of them young people, especially chosen. Her husband was not present at that time and was away at his estates. She summoned me and asked me to sit near her. I did so and I saw that the servants started to slip out of the room one by one, till I was left alone with her. The servants closed the doors behind them and the lady began to persuade me that I should spend the night with her, and demanded that I satisfy her desire. She offered 1000 sacks of levs, saying that if I agree to do that voluntarily and willingly then I'll be given in dublo. Look how many handsome and attractive slaves I have here, but I want only you, and already tonight. If in the future you have a desire for me, I will not deny you, but my need and desire must absolutely be quenched this night. I wanted to run away, but all the gates were locked. Then she said: if you don't do it willingly, you will be forced to do it. Then I realized: if I break the window and jump out, then I will make much noise. In a word, gathering all my valuables, I asked her to keep them and asked her permission to go out to the porch, to which she agreed and came out with me. That porch was very high above the ground and the yard was full of sharpened poles; beyond the poles the river flowed. At tried to understand how far I would have to jump to reach the water, and so, throwing off my shirt, I jumped straight into the water, and, swimming away, I went home. The following day I went to her and got back my valuables and my shirt. I did all this because I am a prostak. A long time thereafter, I was told that she was a great astrologer and, having recognized me, desperately wanted to have union with me.
35. Once I was traveling with my business partner through some villages. He ran into peasants to whom he owed money, so they stopped us. I wanted to fight them, but they said: We have no issue with you, it is the other one who owes us 900 lev. My partner knew that I had 600 lev with me. The peasants tied the debtor up and he began to lament saying, Jacob, for God's sake, give me 400 lev, this will satisfy them and I will go free. As soon as I get home I'll take my wife's corals, worth 100 #, and I will give them to you. I agreed to it and gave him the money. When we go back home, I asked for the corals. My partner answered: my wife is sleeping now, tomorrow morning I'll give them to you, and for the kindness you did me, I will also give you an cart with iron wheels, which is at my father's. In the morning my partner fled with his wife and everything he had in the house. I went to his father with the note, which he had given me to take the cart, but it wasn't given me. His father told me that his son owed him more money and put the wagon in the yard surrounded with a high fence. At midnight I came there with two ladders. I tied them together and put them against the fence. I took the cart weighing 100 ok on my back, carried it over the fence, and, having descended the ladder with it, I carried it on my back for half a mile to Romani. The father ran after me but everybody denied him the cart saying that his son had done me greater damage by taking the 400 lev. This was the second display of my simplicity.

36. Having come to the river Totroz, I found there 150 wagons, standing on the shore, afraid to go farther because of the high water. Without saying anything, I took my robes, put it and my sacks on my head, and, in spite of the most terrible danger, I swam across the river with my horse. From the other shore, people shouted at me: 'What are you doing?' 'For God's sake why do you take such a risk?' Listening to no one, I swam across and on the same day I travelled 6 miles to Romani. The people had to wait there 11 days. When they reached Romani, they asked about me and were shocked seeing me alive. And my simplicity did this.

49. I was ordered to go to Poland, but I did not want to do it saying: 'How can I, such a prostak, go on this path. There are here two scholars, Rabbi Issohar and Mardoch. Let them go'. So I was told: 'They won't listen to your advice here, you are chosen by God.' When I still was unwilling, then they began to throw stones at me. And since you are holding back, it was said, you will have to go in poverty. If you delayed more, then you would have been led chains. You must do what is necessary. As for your heart, it is free and can do whatever you like. I was only shown the places and paths which I will have to tread, and all obstacles that I will face. And I was told: You are Jacob, don't be afraid of anything, do everything wherever your hand reaches.

57. In [17]59 the Lord said in Iwanie, There was a man who had a pearl of inestimable value. It had not been pierced. He went with it from one great city to another searching for a master who could make a hole through it, promising to pay him lots of money for the work, if he undertook to do it without doing any. None of the greatest masters wanted to undertake the job. Finally, he was offering 1000 # for the work, but no one would dare do it. Not being able to do anything with his pearl, he went to an apprentice whose master left his house, and
without warning him of the danger of perforating a pearl, said: Take this pearl and drill me a hole through it; I will pay you well for it. The apprentice took the pearl and drilled a hole through it fearlessly. The man paid him well and, fully satisfied, went on his way. Thus it is here. Many wise men wanted to drill but could not, because they were afraid, but I was chosen, because I am a prostak, who with the help of my God, will drill through everything and will lead to everything.

103. As see me before you as a prostak, you should have concluded from that that all laws and teachings will fall. If scholars were needed then they would have sent you one who knows everything.

300. That same witty Jew, on seeing 12 pullets roasting on a spit at the home of another Jew, asked me: ‘Jacob, how do you want me to pay you to eat all these 12 pullets? 12 ok, I answered. I sat down and ate all 12 of the pullets. The owner came with his wife screaming: ‘What are you doing?!’ But I pushed them all out, saying, that I was hired to do so, because I was a prostak and did not understand their anger. I merely thought that I should do what I was hired to do. Having eaten, I went home for dinner. The Jew followed me and asked: but Jacob, you just ate. How come that you are going to eat dinner again? I replied: my first eating was for pay, and only now I am going to eat my own dinner.

515. I chose you and I wanted to lead you to a place which is not yet known to any man. Even though they would be displeased there, I would turn it into a joke. Only to shorten the road, like I told about what I did to the king in Jassy. Several times I sent supplications through his ministers but they did not reach him and my pleas was never shown to him. So I acted like a fool and, having caught him by the robe, I told him: I made you a king over this land and you pay no attention that justice be done; if it will continue to be so, you will no longer be king. The king and his ministers laughed at that. Then I gave him a supplication. Then, having read it, he rendered me justice. Therefore I was chosen, for I am a prostak and no other, learned, wise, and proud could have performed such a trick.

579. In my youth my member was so lively that when a man wanted to climb a tree I erected it for him, and he stood onto it, and he climbed the tree. Also in the coldest water it would still stand. And when I went among the maidens I had to tie it up, because otherwise it would pierce through my trousers.

688. I was a prostak and did not even know when the Shabbat fell, for I lived among Christians. A woman brought me a loaf of bread on Friday evening and I knew from that that it will be Shabbat tomorrow. I understood that the bread meant the Shabbat. Once the woman fell ill and did not bring me the bread, so I failed too to celebrate the Shabbat. I went around in everyday clothes, opened the shop, and all the merchants were laughing and that I did not keep the Shabbat. Having seen it, the Jews said: Today is the Shabbat!. What are you doing?! I asked them, But how come, I was not brought bread. How is it Shabbat? They gave me to understand that the bread is not Sabbath, but that one invisible thing comes and that is
called Shabbat. I told this occurrence to my father. He answered: Do not worry, for sometimes the Shabbat goes off and hides.

762. In my youth I traveled to a village, where nobody ever saw a Jew. I came to an inn where young boys and farm-hands gathered. The girls were spinning there and the boys were telling them stories to amuse them. When they saw me, one of them began to mock me and make fun of me in order to make me angry. He said: Once the Jewish God and the Christian God went for a walk. The Christian God punched the Jewish God in the snout, saying: Why do you wear on your head what I wear on my feet? --I said to them: I also tell you a story. Once St. Mahomet and St. Peter once went for a walk. Mahomet said to Peter: I have a great lust to fuck you the Turkish way. Peter didn't want to, but Mahomet was strong, and tied him to a tree, and had his way. Peter screamed for his butt hurt: I will accept you as a saint, but don't do that to me. Thereafter the farm-hand said: You know what? We will make peace among us. We won't say anything of your God and you don't say anything against our St. Peter.

962. I cannot explain to you what confusion there is now in the world. Just as you yourselves see, that your understanding is muddled, so the thinking of all the kings will become confused. Thus I, a prostak, have been chosen, and cast among them as it clearly stands: Before him kings will close their mouths.

1157. I was a prostak and didn't know anything but the verse: Szama Isruel Adonai Elohaihi, Adonai ehet. Hear o Israel, our God, one God. When I was fighting a powerful robber, I screamed out that verse. When I pronounced the word ehet, one, I cut off his, so I said to myself that the Echet cut off his head.

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Zbiór Słów Pańskich w Brunnie mówionych
The Collecion of the Words of the Lord spoken in Bruenn
1770s-1780s

Prepared by Pawel Maciejko, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

1. Miałem widzenie w Salonice, jakoby mówiono do kogoś w te słowa: Pójdź, poprowadź mądra Jakób, a skoro do pierwszego przyjdiesz z nim pokoju, napominam ci aby mu wszystkie drzwi i bramy otwierano; skorom do pierwszego wszedł pokoju, dano mi różnicę na znak, z którą bym mógł iść do drugiego, a tak consequenter z jednego do drugiego, i tak ulatywałem na powietrzu, mając sobie dodane dwie panny, których piękności świat nie widział; w pokojach tych najwięcej kobiet i panien widziałem, w niektórych zaś były całkowite zgromadzenia uczniów i nauczycieli, a gdzie mi tylko pierwsze słowo powiedziano, jużem z tego całość i wiadomość zupełną pojął; pokoi tych było moc niezmierna, w ostatnim zaś ujrzałem pierwszego, który również siedział jako nauczyciel ze swymi uczniami, odziany w szatę frenską, ten mi zaraz zapytał: Tyż to jesteś mądry Jakób? Słyszałem, że ty jesteś mocy i odważnego serca, do tego kresu szedłem ja, lecz odtąd dalej nie mam mocy postępowania, jeżeli chesz, umocnij się, niechaj ci Bóg dopomoże, bo bardzo wielu przodka wzięło ten ciężar na się, szli w tę drogę, lecz poupadali. Wtem pokazał mi przez okno tego pokój otchłań, która do czarnego podobną była, okryta czarnością nadzwyczajną, a od tej otchłani po drugiej stronie widziałem górę, której wysokość zdawała się samych dotykać obłoków. Wtem zawołałem: Bądź co bądź pójdź przy pomocy Bożej; i tak poczęłem ukośnie na powietrzu w tę przepaść ulatywać, póki aż do dna samego dostałem się, gdzie namacawszy ziemię stanąłem. Idąc po pociemku, zbliżyłem się do brzegu góry, a widząc, że dla płaskości (przykrości) góry miałem trudność wzbicia się na nią, musiałem się rękami i paznokciami wszelką mocą nań wdrapać, póki do wierszuku przybił. Skorom tam stanął, zaszedł mię nadzwyczajny zapach i bardzo wielu prawowiernych tam znajdowało się. Zdjęty wielką radością, nie chciałem od razu
całym ciałem wyjść na góre, mówiąc sam w sobie: Odpocznę tu nieco, gdyż pot tak lał się z głowy mojej, jak potop rzeki płynie przez tę męczarnią, którą miałem w wdrapywaniu się na góre, gdy zaś dobrze wypocznę, dopiero wejdę na góre do tego dobrego, co się tam znajduje. Toż uczyniłem, spościłem nogi jeszcze w dole, a ciałem i rękoma siedziałem odpoczywając na górze. Wtem wszedł na góre.

33. Tak, jakem wam wprzódy rozpowadział, gdy mię do pokojów owych zaprowadzono, w których wszyscy królowie izraelscy i patriarchowie znajdowali się, mówili oni do mnie: Jakóbie, dotąd my szli, odtąd ty sam iść musisz. Jam prostak - odpowiadziałem - i nie mam rozumu, jakim sposobem ja pójdę? Nie troszcz się o to, odpowiedzieli, nic to nie szkodzi, mądrość w najpodlejszym ukrywa się miejscu. Pomimo tego odciągałem się jeszcze. Wtem ów pierwszy, postawiwszy mię na stole i otworzywszy okno ukazał mi przepaść, mówiąc: Patrzaj to nieprzebyte miejsce, my tam iść nie możemy, ty zaś, gdybyś się nie tak odciągał, miałbyś mniej trudności w przebyciu twojej drogi, ale że zwlekasz, to musisz wszelkie przejść ciasności. I podówczas widziałem wszystkie ciężary, które na się wziąć musialem. I tak pchnięto mię w tę przepaść.

34. Imość w roku 1785 zapytała raz w Brunnie mię, za com ja sobie obrał ludzi samych prostaków i bezrozumnych, czemuć ją nie wziął pomiędzy kobietami, ona by mię była zapewne nie ustąpiła. Tak ja jej odpowiedział: Co by to za kunszt był, żeby Bóg z mądrymi i uczonymi świat wyprowadził? Bóg koniecznie z najniższymi i najpodlejszymi chce wyjść na świat, aby z takowego miejsca moc Jego okazana została, zwaź i patrz na mnie, już nie było większego nade mnie prostaka, tak właśnie jakby kto był wcale z rozumu obrany; lecz mądrość jakem mówił z niczego wynika. Będąc w Bukareszcie w 18 roku u pewnej Pani, 24 lat mającej, miałem przy sobie cyfki złota i srebra na 100 gr wartości, prętałem je u niej za 500 gr, co mię mocno zadziwiło, lecz nie myśląc wiele schowałem pieniędze, i poszedłem w swą drogę, mówiąc sam do siebie: gdy mi dobrowolnie daje, za cóż nie mam brać? Pani ta była bardzo bogata, miała około 1200 służących, a sam lud młody i dobrany, mąż jej podówczas był nieprzytomny i na dobrach znajdował się, wtem ona zawoławszy mię prosiła bym usiadł około niej, tom uczynił i widziałem, że jeden za drugim służący wysuwali się z tego pokoju, a ja sam z nią pozostał. Służący drzwi za sobą zamknęli; zaczęła mię ta pani namawiać abym u niej przenocować i żądała bym jej chęci zadość uczynił, ofiarując mi tysiąc worków lewów, a jeśli dobrowolnie i chętnie na to przystaniesz, to ci dam in dublo, patrzaj ile tu mam ładnych i powabnych niewolników, ale ja ciebie koniecznie pragnę i to tej nocy, a gdy ty w dalszym czasie będziesz chęć miał ku mnie, ja ci wzbiorną nie będę, tylko jedynie pragnienie i chęć moja koniecznie tej nocy dogodzona być musi. Ja chciałem uciec, lecz wszystkie bramy zamknięte były, co ona poznawszy po mnie rzekła: Gdy dobrowolnie nie uczynisz tego, to z musu czynić będziesz. Wtem pomiarowałem: jeżeli okno wybibę i wyskoczę, narobię zgęsz, słowem: wziąwszy wszystkie me klejnoty dałem jej do potrzymania i sam prosiłem o pozwolenie wyjścia na ganek, na co ona zezwoliwszy, poszła ze mną. Ganek ten był bardzo wysoki od dołu, na podwórzu pełno bitych palów, a za palami płynęła rzeka, w tym namysliałem jak daleko
wyskoczyć musiałem abym obces w wodę się dostał i tak zrzuciwszy z siebie dziubę, skoczyłem prosto w wodę i popłynąwszy prostopadle się udał do domu. Nazajutrz poszedłem do niej, odebrałem klejnoty i suknię moją. Tom wszystko uczynił dleatego żem prostak. W wielkim potem przeciągu czasu, powiedziano mi, iż ona była wielka gwiazdziarka, a poznawszy mnie, koniecznie chciała mieć ze mną połączenie.

35. Jadąc raz z moim wspólnikiem po wsiach, wspólnik wlazł pomiędzy chłopy, którym on był dłużej; chcąc dalej jachać, kilku chłopów przyszedsłyszy zatrzymywał nas, ja chciałem się rzucić na nich, lecz oni rzekli: My do ciebie nic nie mamy, ten drugi winien nam 900 lewów, wiadomo zaś było menu spółkowi, że ja miałem 600 lew przy sobie. Chłopi związał dłużyńka, on zaczął lamentować mówiąc: Jakóbie przebóg, czy to, daj mi 400 lewów, to ich za cały mój dług uspokoję i uwolnię się, skoro przyjdę do domu wezmę od mej żony korale 100 gr wartujące i oddam ci. Jam przystał na to - dałem. Powróciwszy upominałem się o korale. Żona śpia teraz, odpowiedział wspólnik, jutro z rana dam ci je, a za wygodę, którąś mi uczynili, podaruję ci wóz kowany, który u mego ojca stoi. Rano wspólnik z żoną i ze wszystkim, co miał w domu, uciekł. Pobiegłem do ojca jego z pismem, które mi dał na odebranie woza, ale mi i tego nie dano, mówił ojciec, iż mu syn więcej winien i dla bezpieczeństwa wziął wstawił ten wóz w podwórce ogrodzone wysokim płotem. Ja w pół nocy przyszedsłym z drabinami dwiema, które związał i przystawiwszy do płota wziąłem na plecy wóz ważący 100 ók, i ten przeniósłszy z nim drabiny, zaniosłem go o pół mile aż do Romana na sobie. Biegał za mną gospodarz, lecz wszyscy odsądzili go od woza, dowodząc, iż mi syn większą szkodę uczynił z zabranymi 400 lewami. To druga sztuka mojej prostoty.


57. (56) W Iwaniu mówił Pan: roku 59. Był pewien mający perlę bez szacunku, ta nie była
przeciurawioną, jeżdżił z nią od jednego do drugiego wielkiego miasta szukając majstra, żeby mógł dzierżę w niej zrobić, obiecując mu przednią zapłatę, byleby on się podjął bez najmniejszej szkody (by nie rozłupaną została) to wykonać. Żaden z największych majstrów nie chciał się tej roboty podjąć. Na ostatek dawał już 1000 gr., ale nikt nie chciał się odważyć. Nie mogąc sobie dać rady z tą perłą, udał się ów człowiek do jednego czeladnika, którego majster był wyszedł podówczas z domu, i nic mu nie wystawiając niebezpieczeństw w przekłuciu perły, rzekł: Weź i prześwietrj mi tę perłę, ja ci dobrze zapłacę. Czeladnik ten pierwszy wziął ją i dobrze prześwidał bez bojaźni, ów mu dobrze zapłacił i pełen ukontentowania pojchał w swą drogę. Również i tu tak wiele mdrych ludzi chciało prześwidać i nie mogli, bo się obawiali, ale mnie obrano, bom prostak, który z pomocą Boga mojego, prześwideruję wszystko i przyprowadzę do wszego.

103. (102) Widziecie mnie przed sobą prostaka, stąd wam wnieść należało, iż wszystkie prawa i nauki upadną, gdyby potrzebowano uczonych, to by wam byli posłali takiego, co świadom wszystkiego.

300. Tenże sam uczesny Żyd widząc dwanaście kurczat na różnie zatkanych u innego Żyda, zapytał mnie: Jakóbie, wiele mam ci dać, abys zjedł wszystkie te dwanaście kurczat? Dwanascie ok, odpowiedziałem. Siadłem i zjadłem te dwanaście kurczat. Gospodarz ów z żoną przyszedł z krzykiem, com to zrobił. Lecz ja wypchnąłem wszech, mówiąc, żem był na to najęty, bom był prostak i nie rozumiałem się na złocie, którą przez to wyrazdzam, tylko myślałem, że tak czynić trzeba, do czego mi. Po zjedzeniu poszedł dopiero do domu na obiad. Ów Żyd szedł za mną i pytał: Jakóbie, wszakies dopiero zjedł, jak to, idziesz znowu. Och, ten chleb jest Sabbathem, raz kobieta ta zachorowała i ukrywała, że w najzimniejszej wodzie, ja ci dobrze zapłacę. Czeladnik ten ów mu do jednego czeladnika, złodziej, że nie ten chleb jest Sabbathem, raz kobieta ta zachorowała i ukrywała, że w najzimniejszej wodzie, ja ci dobrze zapłacę. Czeladnik ów z żoną przyszedł z krzykiem, com to zrobił. Lecz ja wypchnąłem wszech, mówiąc, żem był na to najęty, bom był prostak i nie rozumiałem się na złocie, którą przez to wyrazdzam, tylko myślałem, że tak czynić trzeba, do czego mi. Po zjedzeniu poszedł dopiero do domu na obiad. Ów Żyd szedł za mną i pytał: Jakóbie, wszakies dopiero zjedł, jak to, idziesz znowu na obiad? Pierwsze jadło moje było najęte, odpowiedziałem, a teraz dopiero jem swój obiad.

579. W młodości mojej tak było żywe przyrodzenie moje, że gdy raz jeden młodzieżeczka chciał wleźć na drzewo, podniesłem mu je stojące i wlał po nim. Także w najzimniejszej wodzie zawsze stało. A gdym szedł między panny musiałem je przywiązywać, bo bez tego, to by na wylot przebiło me suknie.


762. W młodości przyjazdalem do jednej wsi, w której nigdy nie widziano Żyda. Zajazdalem do jednej gospody, gdzie się dziewczi i chłopi poschodziły. Dziewki przedły tam, a parobki im

962. Ja wam mówic nic nie mogę, co się mieszka teraz po świecie. Tak jak wy siebie samych widzicic, iż rozum wasz jest zamiatwany, tak wszyscy królowie zamięszane zostaną w myślach swych, a mnic wybrano prosaka i rzucono między nich, jak stoi wyraźnie: Na niego zamkną królowie usta swoje.

1157. Ja byłem prostak i nie znalazłem jak ten wiersz: Szema Isruel, Adonai Eloheini, Adonai chet - Stuchaj Izraelu, Bóg nasz, Bóg jeden A gdym się bił z mocnym rozbójnikiem i krzyknąłem ten wiersz, a przy wymawianiu tego słowa echet, jeden, tom mu się ściął głowę i mówilem sam w sobie, że mu ten echet ściął głowę.

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**Citation Information**

Zbiór Słów Pańskich w Brunnie mówionych
, 1770s-1780s

Prepared by Pawel Maciejko, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

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Discussed here are a number of excerpts from the travel accounts of Hayim Joseph David Azulai, an emissary who travelled to Europe on two separate journeys in the middle of the eighteenth century in attempt to collect charity for the Jews of Palestine. The accounts were first published in part in the late nineteenth century in Livorno and again in their entirety in Jerusalem in 1934. Their editor Aron Freimann titled the entire volume *Ma’agal Tov*, after Azulai’s title of the account of the second journey.

Azulai’s travel accounts offer a fascinating and fragmentary account of his troubles as a traveler, of his frequently fraught exchanges with Jews from various communities in Europe, and of his wonder at the splendor and luxury of eighteenth-century Europe. In my presentation, I want to use Azulai’s encounter with Hebrew books on his travels as a means to examine his interface with other Jewish communities as well as the West. Building on the work of Meir Benayahu, Yaron Tsur, and Matthias Lehmann, I ask what role Hebrew books played in Azulai’s frequently difficult experience with the Ashkenazi communities of central Europe and what function his own travel played in the composition of his published works?

**Editions of *Ma’agal Tov***:

Livorno: Benamozegh, 1879.
Piotrków: S. Belkhotovski, 1879.

**Selected scholarship on Hayim Joseph David Azulai**:


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**Citation Information**

Yaacob Dweck, Princeton University, USA
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Excerpt #1

11 Av 5514/ 30 July 1754

From there [Seligenstadt] we went to the Holy Congregation of Hanau. At the entrance to the city, the gatekeepers would not allow us through. I sent a note to the rabbi, and my eyes failed me while I waited. (Ps. 69:4) In the end, I gave some money to the gatekeeper and they let me pass. As I arrived, the beadle came out to greet us in a terrible fury. But he was compelled to bring us to his home. I said to him: ‘let us go and see the rabbi, head of the court, for it disrespectful to the land of Israel for me to be here with you.’ And I came this day (Gen. 24:42) to the rabbi and gave him my dossier as well as the account book. He looked through it all and responded that he did not recognize a single signature among them, for who could say whether what was inscribed there was true. As we were talking, I saw the book, Bet Shmuel on Even ha-Ezer on the table, and I began to engage in casuistry with him about the laws of isolation. When he saw (Gen. 44:3) that I had the scent of Torah, he greeted me with a bright countenance and pure utterances, by opening his blind eyes on the walls.

Excerpt #2

12 Av 5515/ 20 July 1755

Because I had brought lettera di cambio from London, I had to return them to their owner. For three hours I wandered through the streets of Paris, on its boulevards and broadways (BT Sab. 6a). ‘It is a large land,’ (Jud. 18:10), ‘whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth,’ (Isa. 23:8). As I was walking on one of the streets, I saw statues of Louis XIV and Henry IV and all the kings they had conquered, ‘made of burnished brass’ (Ez. 1:7), ‘the work of the hands of a cunning workman,’ (S. of S. 7:2). Señor Yaakov took me to the office of the head academy who they call the Directeur de l’Académie des Sciences. I was
there together with him for about five hours. He showed me the volumes they composed and printed annually that pertained to all the different sciences. He would read out to me some of the subjects, and I understood the basic outline. I saw anatomical works. ‘Behold the iniquity,’ (Ps. 51:7) they spend their days with these sciences, making innovations and inventions. I went to the library and I saw some twenty people reading and copying. I asked the attendant if there were any manuscripts of Maimonides. He answered: ‘today the reading room for printed books is open; on Friday, the reading room for manuscripts will be open. Come on Friday and I will show you all of your manuscripts; in any case we have printed volumes of Maimonides. If you like, you are welcome to read them.’ Out of respect, I took a copy of Maimonides with the commentary *Migdal Oz*. I sat there and read two chapters. Afterwards, I got up and saw all sorts of different Jewish books. But they were a small fraction of a much larger group. There are houses filled with books of all different religions and sciences in all different languages. Truly an object of wonder.

Excerpt #3

8 Sivan 5533/ 30 May 1773

Although I had wanted to go to Livorno, I was afraid I might be taken prisoner, for the Muscovites ‘hath built and compassed with gall’ (Lam. 3:5). The sea was filled with Muscovite corsairs and wicked Greeks. My heart melted and turned to water, one cannot imagine my constant anguish, day and night. Until I heard that on the coast of Tunis there were no Muscovites and there was a ship sailing for Tunis and from there to Livorno. I decided to travel on it and remain onboard for a day or two as they unloaded cargo at Tunis, and from there I would proceed to Livorno. I took precautions to receive authorization from the Imperial consul that I was a resident of Livorno. Two Jews had to testify that my married daughter was in Livorno. I received it. But it was all for naught: because my dress and my language bear witness that I am a Levantine. But perhaps it will help.

Excerpt #4

Kislev 5534/ November-December 1773

My coming to Tunis occurred against my will, due to the wicked ship captain who I feared would not let me sound the *shofar* on *rosh ha-shanah*. And also because of *kippur* and *sukkot*. And because the ship was in terrible condition. After *sukkot* I began preparing myself, for I wanted to sail to Livorno immediately but the wealthy man and his son pressed me daily and detained me for a very long time. On a number of occasions, I was actually at the point of departure when the man’s son took an oath in order to detain me. The port was twelve hour’s journey, and one needed the king’s permission. He [the son] would swear that he would seek to detain me. It was a great burden upon me, and ‘Joseph could not refrain himself,’ (Gen. 45:1). But their kindnesses overcame me, their gifts given with respect and without asking: nothing was lacking to me to such an extent that I did not even need to leave the house. They
treated me with respect and sought to examine all of my writings and my books, inquiring especially whether or not I had kabbalistic ones. I had in my possession two manuscripts whose content I shall now describe. Behold, when I went to Egypt in 1764 with R. Abraham ibn Asher, of blessed memory, and R. Yom Tov Algazi, may the Lord protect him, we stayed with a wealthy man, R. Menasseh, of blessed memory, on our way to Istanbul. The aforementioned wealthy man took a liking to me and detained me. I remained there for seventy days, deliberating whether or not to send for my family, and by-the-by, I was not even going to the house of study but I remained in private study at home.

I went to S. Israel Sullam to examine the writings of our master and teacher, Rabbi Hayyim Vital, may his sacred memory be a blessing, which he had taken as security from R. Joseph Bilado on a loan of 50 reales. But R. Joseph Bilado was a broken and impoverished man and he had claimed them for his debt. They were manuscripts written in the very hand of our master and teacher R. Hayyim Vital, of blessed memory. Among them, I saw a wondrous manuscript of our master and teacher R. Hayyim Vital, may his sacred memory be for a blessing, containing practical Kabbalah and the science of letter combinations, among other things from the tanaim. I borrowed this book along with several others. I went and isolated myself with it. I had just begun to understand some of this method and was incredibly excited, but as I was examining it, I nodded off and saw our master and teacher R. Hayyim Vital, may his sacred memory be for a blessing. I posed a question to him, and he responded to me. He gave me a glass of wine to drink, and I woke up. I was extremely happy. I had hoped to free myself for the evening but I had to have dinner with the wealthy man R. Menasseh, of blessed memory. At his table people behaved inappropriately, joked around, and the like, to the point that it was almost midnight. I listened in silence but I was not in my home where through careful study of the aforementioned book ‘I will pursue, I will overtake.’ (Ex. 14:19). But I was unprepared lest some danger befall me. I fastened upon this line of reasoning to the point that in the morning after prayers I brought the aforementioned books back to the aforementioned S. Israel and gave up on them.

Several months later my family arrived from the Holy City. For several years I busied myself with communal duties, family, illnesses, and the like. I did not give a single thought to the aforementioned book. I went to the holy city of Hebron and resided there for three years and four months before departing on this mission as an emissary. When I arrived in Alexandria, they told me that S. Menahem Mir had two kabbalistic books in manuscript. I asked for them and they were brought to me. One of them was the aforementioned book of Rabbi Hayyim Vital, may his sacred memory be for a blessing, and the other was an early astronomical treatise in manuscript among other things. I was stunned by what I saw. For S. Israel is alive and well, understands such books, is a scholar, and wealthy. How could this book have gotten here? I stared at it, studied it, examined it, and remembered it. This was the very same book. I said to the aforementioned R. Menahem: ‘know that this is an extremely rare book, be very careful not to loan it to anybody, keep it with you, stowed away like a pearl.’ He responded to me: ‘I myself cannot read a single bit of it, what good is it to me? If you would like it, take it.'
It will bring me great pleasure, take the two that I brought in the market in Egypt. I tell you that S. Israel Sullam knew that I bought them and sent to tell me that they were his and he wanted to buy them back. But I responded that I bought them in public in the middle of the street from the estate of R. Naftali, a guest who had been here.’ These are the words of S. Menahem. I was shocked to see how this book had travelled and ended up in my hands several years later and could not figure it out. I gave thanks to His name for bequeathing me this book.

I had a crate of books and when I had said I didn’t know Kabbalah, I had taken this book out and hid it among my clothes. Miraculously when they came and searched my books they did not find it among them for it certainly would have been lost, just as Moses had taken the second book on astronomy against my will. Over there, no claim has any effect and all my pleas to have it returned were to no avail and it was never returned. They always wanted to open the small crate that contained my writings but I guarded the keys. One time they forced themselves upon me, took my keys and sought to take my notebook, but I began to shout imprecations until they returned them. One day, I forgot a section of Birke Yosef which I was in the process of writing. There were many sages there and as I was speaking with them they took my books. Later on, I sought them but I found them not, (S. o. S. 3:1) I asked for them but no one responded. I was greatly pained by this and I said something to the Qaid and screamed at them until they brought them.
ông וב ביתי ל. שבית נשואה ואנני התחננתילקחmtreeוכל. אם מוסקובית לא היה אני התהלהבلقדרה. אשלח ואני התכין והתחבש. זה התלבש שלצידי ולא צדתי אתプラ. את שלחתי ואמרתי: "אני זזה בFormData של צד. אתה מתאפק. עם מתך ובו ואחרי משך זמן זמן. אני לא רוצה שיתון אינני אני. לי יותר ממך נמלトップ הלילה. אתה מטרון. הוא ברקע, והנה נשתה.=" 53 בוליוון ואנו צידי. או כל זה أجل השם.}<

בכל הנוגעסכם. אז היה זה תהליך. אע"ר שהובאו מתכנת ואuserinfo ענינים והייתי itself. לא עניין שם שיש לי. לא עניין שם יש לי. 15

בכתרו בבית, יש להכין. ויקףスピードי. 열. האחד שקראתי של מהספן. לא עניין שם. אף כל זה במכتبادل שלב. סוף שעה שלא אנחנו. לא עניין שם. לא עניין שם. לא עניין שם. לא עניין שם. לא עניין שם. לא עניין שם. לא עניין שם. לא עניין שם. לא עניין שם. 54
In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European scholars established complex networks of correspondence for the circulation of information and ideas. Usually, this “literary commerce” concerned the acquisition and distribution of books and specimens, thereby ensuring the progress of research. This sort of epistolary social sphere also profoundly transformed eighteenth-century culture, ultimately leading to the legitimization of new models of scholarship rooted in cooperation, autonomous from older structures of patronage, and engaged with society and politics. It was one of the characteristic and lasting products of the early modern Republic of Letters.

An example of such literary commerce is the correspondence between Livornese Sephardi savant, Joseph Attias (1672-1739) and Modenese historian Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672-1750), one of the most respected protagonists of the early Italian Enlightenment. The extant twenty-four letters that Attias sent to Muratori between 1724 and 1734 are today held in the Archivio Muratoriano/52.3, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Modena. Most of Attias’ letters contain information about his scholarly interests, requests or offers for books and scientific specimens, personal and literary news about common acquaintances, along with some details about current events in his life. Thus, the exchange differs greatly from earlier examples of correspondence between Jewish and Christian scholars, such as that between Solomon Azubi and Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, or between Isaac Orobio de Castro and Philip van Limborch. Attias’ letters were not a vehicle for polemic or apologetic discussion, and in fact never referred to theological questions.

Two of Attias’ letters, written almost nine years apart, at the very beginning and end of his known correspondence with Muratori, also provide autobiographical narratives that offer an early example of “life writing,” or ego-document, composed by a Jewish author for a non-Jewish friend. The
first, shorter text, written on December 22, 1724, presents a succinct summary of Attias’ background, education, and aspirations. The second text, dated November 20, 1733, spans over six tightly handwritten pages that elaborate on his upbringing, intellectual inclinations, and accomplishments.

“Life writing” was an accepted scholarly custom by the early eighteenth century. Unlike previous Jewish authors, such as Leone Modena, Attias did not have to elaborate on his engagement with it. The very fact that Muratori had expressed an interest in his background was sufficient for this Jewish savant to present him with details about his early years, youth, endeavors, and intellectual proclivities. In this sense, Attias’ letters mirror the growing interest in autobiography and the increasingly widespread notion among eighteenth-century individuals that one’s personal experiences are inherently interesting. Additionally, these documents reflect many of the conventions of self-representation in the Republic of Letters, although their author’s Jewish identity renders them quite unusual.

The autobiographical letter was a sub-genre within the literary correspondence of the Republic of Letters. As a strategy of self-representation, this practice was frequent among seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars who used it to control and protect their cultural legacies and reputations and to shape intellectual genealogies, both individual and collective. It was also a common method by which scholars advanced their fame and forged new networks of friendship and patronage.

While Attias’ letters are representative of certain prevalent norms in the broader community of contemporaneous scholars, as a Sephardi Jew he was nonetheless a highly atypical member of the Republic of Letters, a literary space that incorporated Protestant and Catholic authors, but included only a handful of Jews (and mostly, later in the century). If any autobiographical letter entails strategies of self-representation, then, Attias’ life narratives should be subjected to especially careful scrutiny. What kinds of balancing acts were required of an early eighteenth-century Jewish intellectual who aspired to participate as a peer in an eminently non-Jewish social and cultural sphere? By studying Attias’ autobiographical letters as consciously crafted narratives of the self – exploring how Attias chose to depict himself, what credentials he emphasized and what elements he glossed over – it will be possible to identify the ways in which a Jewish scholar justified and demonstrated his merit and worth as an exponent of the Republic of Letters.
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An Italian edition of all letters sent by Attias to Muratori, with simplified spellings and no abbreviations, has appeared in Maria Grazia di Campli and Carla Forlani, eds., *Edizione nazionale del carteggio Muratoriano. Carteggi con Amenta... Azzi* (Florence, 1995).

I consulted and copied the letter below in the Biblioteca Estense, Modena. Original spellings and abbreviations are maintained throughout; the text below is significantly different from the version published by Di Campli and Forlani.

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Letter to L.A. Muratori (December 22, 1724)
Lettera a L.A. Muratori
December 22, 1724

Translated by Francesca Bregoli, Queens College of the City University of New York, USA


December 22, 1724

“[… ] My ancestors took refuge in this land from Spain, therefore the language I drank with my mother’s milk is Spanish. In my Nation’s schools, by way of practicing, I learned a bit of Hebrew, which I subsequently cultivated together with the other Oriental languages by means of the grammatical methods of those very Jews who lived in the 12th and 13th century, and of the Christian Hebraists. Afterwards, in Florence, I studied Aristotelian philosophy according to the school of sig. Dr. Giannetti and the principles of mathematics through a disciple of sig. Viviani. Since in this country everyone is busy and immersed in their own businesses, there are no conversations or literary gatherings. I must pass my time as best as I can, enticing some foreigners encountered by chance in the local shops or the store [bookstore] of sig. Donato Donati, and attracting them to my place with the excuse of seeing a few books I have been putting together. [… ] I resolved to abandon commerce and live isolated on my modest revenues. To this end I renovated and enlarged the house where I live, and here it will be my greatest pleasure to serve You…”

Citation Information
Letter to L.A. Muratori (December 22, 1724)
December 22, 1724
Translated by Francesca Bregoli, Queens College of the City University of New York
Livorno, 22 dicembre 1724

[...] I miei antenati si sono refugiati in questo paese dalle Spagne, e però la lingua che ho bevuto col latte è la spagnuola, e nelle scuole della mia Naz.ne ho imparato per pratica un po’ di lingua ebraica, che poi ho coltivato coll’altr’lingue orientali per mezzo de’ metodi grammaticali degli stessi ebrei del secolo 12 e 13 e dei Cristiani Ebraizanti. Doppo presi in Firenze la Filosofia Aristotelica alla moda del sig.r D.r Giannetti ed i principi della matematiche da un discepolo del sig.r Viviani. E come in questo paese son tutti occupati ed immersi ne’ Negozi, non vi è Conversazione né Crocchio Letterario, e bisogna passarsela alla meglio allettando alcuni Forestieri che s’incontrano casualmente per le boteche o nel magazino del s.r Donato Donati, amassandoli in casa col motivo di vedere alcuni pochi libri che vado mettendo insieme. [...] Ho risoluto d’abbandonare il negozio e vivere ritirato colle mie modeste entrate, per il qual fine o rimodernato e ampliata la casa di mia abitazione, e quivi avrò grandiss.mo piacere di servire VS ill.ma [...]  

Archive: Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Modena, Archivio Muratoriano 52.3
Letter to L.A. Muratori (November 20, 1733)
Lettera a L.A. Muratori
November 20, 1733

Translated by Francesca Bregoli, Queens College of the City University of New York, USA


November 20, 1733

“To satisfy Your inquiry about my signature, I have to tell You, in all philosophical frankness, that I was born with a burning desire and the greatest curiosity to know, more as a way to get to comprehend the extent and limits of human knowledge than to practice any profitable profession, or [obtain] some honorary office, by these means. When I opened my eyes I realized that it would not be possible to proceed without the help of languages, both living and dead. Although my father had been a lawyer and a student in Salamanca (and then became a merchant), I could find at home only eight volumes of Spanish comedies by Lope de Vega, Calderon, Montalbàn, Solis, Salazar and other playwrights of extremely dissolve poetry, which mixed tragedy and comedy and, moreover, were authored by people unfamiliar with Greek literature; beside these volumes of comedies, there was a lonely Latin Bible printed in Paris and a small treatise on some astronomical quadrants by Gemafriusius.

Until I was 15 I had a teacher of Spanish with whom I studied reading and writing, and a tutor for Hebrew, whom we paid a little more than two paoli per month. But the poor fellow was not able to teach it to me, since he did not know it himself to begin with. At the same time, through my mother’s influence, they started making me velvet clothes with ribbon trims and golden tassels, etc.

When I turned 16, I was betrothed to a little niece of mine, a daughter of an older brother of mine, because my old father, who had me with his second wife, hoped with this to leave us
i.e., the two parts of the family] as allies and in peace (what followed is too long to discuss by letter).

So behold me 18, with a wife by my side; we spent the first little monies earned from investing the dowry on a diligent Latin teacher as well as a rabbi, who had perfect mastery of the Hebrew Bible and Hebrew grammar. I stocked up daily on authors writing in good Latin, though very poorly printed, because the country was much more backward (lit. barbaric) then; and thus I also began acquiring some books of Hebrew literature, which I hid away in an airy room outside my house and away from my father’s gaze, who used to reproach me, since those few books that I would let him see seemed to him already unnecessary and superfluous.

Thus I went on for a while, gathering all the foreigners who went through [the port]. I learned arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy from somebody called Piselli, a good engineer who died in the siege of Gaeta; and I would sometimes travel to Florence, where I learned Aristotelian philosophy with some new modifications from sig. Giannetti, whose brother is currently a lecturer in Pisa. I forgot to say that before getting married I had learned [to read] music perfectly, and how to play the harpsichord and the double harp, so that I can improvise an accompaniment on these two instruments while singing. Since they are very similar to each other, it is worth noticing, the practical study of one made the other easier to play, and that helped me when composing music. Back to my frequent trips to Florence, I had conversations with men of letters and academics on their summer vacations from the University of Pisa; out of necessity, because of some disputes which arose between members of my family, I had to apply myself to civil and canon law. I served as my own counsel, acquainting the judges of the situation on my own behalf; therefore I had to get some books on Roman law. In addition, there was the torture of having to study statutory law, found in the handwritten, unpublished statutes attributed to Paolo di Castro, alongside a long series of laws and edicts published in the “city of laws,” as Florence is called, and finally the legal statute of Livorno, commercial laws, maritime laws, and Jewish rites [i.e., laws]. Eventually I managed to acquire some peace thanks to my money, and by knowing how to write up a deed or legal instrument with a more specific know-how than our inexperienced notaries. In Florence, then, I visited the academies and became close friends with men of the best taste, enjoying their intimacy and confidence, which I maintained until their death. Lately, I recruited a brood of young and highly talented men as a way to make up for their loss, such as sig. Dr. Cocchi, abbé Perelli, cavalier Venuti, etc.

After I learned French, I acquired most of the literary journals, histories, and memoirs of the Académie Royale, together with the methods of the various sciences as composed by the French. I am a bit more uncertain in English, and I own some books only to consult them as originals, because I do not trust their translations. In Arabic, Syriac and Samaritan I can understand those passages that help me with Hebrew literature and to penetrate the sentiments of Bochart and other eminent non-Jewish men of letters, who are Hebraists.
Although I have always disliked meddling with theological matters, and especially with polemics, I have been very upset by the impertinence of some people who immediately want to talk about religion: if you answer courteously, avoiding conflict, they call you apathetic (and on such an important matter!), if you joke, unbeliever, if you object, stubborn and obstinate. So, I try to abstain from it whenever I can. Finally, just as the most serene Duke of Modena was so kind as to summon me and listen to me for a whole night, on my way to France, my royal lord amused himself several times in my company, quizzing me on languages and sciences, and he honored me with the title of “doctor.” Sig. Marchese Rinuccini, secretary of state and war, imitates him when he writes to me [i.e., using the title “doctor”], and so do sig. Senator President Ricci, moderator of the University of Pisa, and all the doctors of the said University, hence I could no longer refuse [the title], as I had done until that moment with the crowd of knights, gentlemen, and men of letters that vied with each other to make me a doctor. Here I am, a doctor just like Dr. Ricciardi, the Tuscan poet who, having been sent to teach moral philosophy at the said University, replied to Grand Duke Cosimo: “I am no doctor,” to which he retorted, “I am making you one.” And just last week my Nation bestowed on me the title of rabbi. As for the name Filalete, there are already two Joseph Attiases in Livorno and one in Amsterdam, so letters addressed to me used to go astray because of the ambiguity of the name. That is why I took the nickname “Filalete,” which scholars gave the historian Josephus, because my friends teased me about my particularly strong love for truth. I was forgetting to say that the blessed memory of the illustrious sig. Dr. Redi, during the visits that he made to Livorno with the most serene Cosimo, used to call on the botanist Cestoni, where they conducted experiments and held conversations of the most refined taste over natural history. I was born in 1672 and traveled around Italy, where I dwelled in the principal cities for many months, and in France, particularly in Paris, where I met the great men of our time. I do not want to bore you any longer; if I will have better health, I will tell you further details of my life in other letters [...].”

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November 20, 1733

Prepared by Francesca Bregoli, Queens College of the City University of New York, USA

Livorno, 20 novembre 1733

Per soddisfare il dubbio di VS ill.ma quanto alla mia sottoscrizione, io devo dirle
coll’ingenuità filosofica, di esser nato con un ardente desid.o e moltiss.ma curiosità di sapere,
più per arrivare a comprendere l’estensione ed i limiti del sapere umano che per esercitare
alcuna proffess.ne lucrosa, è carica onorifica, con q.sti mezi. Quando ho aperto gl’occhi me
n’accorsi che senza l’aiuto delle lingue, tanto viventi che morte, non si poteva andar avanti, ed
abbenche, mio Padre era stato Avvocato e graduato in Salamanca (e poi datosi alla mercatura)
non ho trovato altri libri in casa che 8 tomi di comedie spagnuole di Lope di Vega, Calderon,
Montalban, Solis, Salzar, e altri Autori teatrali di sregolatiss.ma Poesia, mescolando la
tragedia colla comedia, e finalmente, composte da Persone aliene della letteratura greca; oltre
i detti tomi di comedie v’era una solitaria bibbia latina di edizione di Parigi e un piccolo
trattato di alcuni quadranti astronomici di Gemafrisio.

Fino a 15 anni ebbi il maestro di leggere e scrivere in lingua spagnuola, e un pedante di lingua
ebraica, a cui si pagava poco più di due pavoli al mese, e il poverino perché non la sapeva
consequentem.te non me la poteva insegnare; nello stesso tempo, a persuasione di mia madre,
mi facevano abbiti di velluti galonati e frangiati d’oro, etc.

Arrivato a 16 anni mi promessero in matrimonio ad una mia nipotina che nasceva da un mio
fratello maggiore, con la speranza di mio vecchio padre (che mi haveva havuto dalla seconda
moglie) di lasciarci in alleanza e pace. (ciò che ne seguì è lungo per scriversi in lettera).

Ecconi agli anni 18 con la moglie accanto, i p.mi quattrinelli de frutti della dote si spesero in
un Maestro assiduo di lingua latina, ed in un Rabino che possedeva perfettamente la Bibbia
Ebraica, e gramatica di questa lingua, e giornalmente si andava facendo la provista degli
autori di buona latinità, ma di cattiviss.ma edizione, perché il Paese era m.to più barbaro
allora, così ancora mi andava provendo dei libri di letteratura ebraica, e questi libri si rimpiatavano in una stanza ariosa fuori di casa mia dal cospetto di mio Padre, che mi bravava, parendoli quei pochi che io li lasciavo vedere eccessivi e superflui.

Così s’andava un po' avanti, ricettando tutti i forestieri che passavano, e da uno chiamato Piselli bravo ingegniere che morì nell’assedio di Gaeta, imparai l’Aritmetica, Geometria, e Astronomia; dava delle scappate a Firenze, dove dal sig.r Giannetti Frattello di quegli che presentem.te è Lettore in Pisa, ho havuto la sua Filosofia Aristotelica con alcune novità; mi scordai di dire che avanti prender moglie haveva imparato perfettam.te la Musica e sonare il cimbalino e l’Arpa doppi, a segno che accompagnò all’improviso a cantare con questi due strum.ti, i quali, per ess.re similiss.mi, è da notarsi, che lo studio pratico in uno, mi facilitava l’eseguire nell’altro, e mi giovarono per comporre in musica. Tornando poi ai viaggi frequenti di Firenze, trattavo con i Letterati e i Dottori che la state si ritirano nelle vacanze dello Studio di Pisa, e per necessità essendo nati delle liti fra la mia Famiglia bisognò che mi applicassi al Gius civile e cannonico, e facevo le mie consultazioni a mio favore, informando i Giudici, e questo mi pose in impegno di provedermi di libri legali alla Romana, e in oltre v’era il tormento dello studio del Gius statu[t]ario, che si trova negli statuti manoscritti che si dicano fatti da Pavolo di Castro e inediti ed in una infinità di Leggi e Bandi pubblicati nella Città delle Leggi che così dicesi Firenze, e per ultimo delle leggi dello Statuto di Livorno, leggi mercantili, leggi marine, e Riti ebraici. Hò conseguito per fine il procurarmi la Pace a forza de' quattrini, e saper distendere una scrittura, o strum.to con più precise intelligenze di ciò che fanno i n.ri inesperti notari. In Firenze dunque mi sono trovato nelle Accademie, e contratto dell’Amicizia stretta cogl’uomini di miglior gusto, e goduto della loro’ confidenza che ho conservato fino alla loro morte, e ultimamente hò reclutato la loro perdita con una covatura di giovani di gran talento, fra q.ali il sig.r D.re Cocchi, Abb.e Perelli, Cav.re Venuti, etc.

Imparata la lingua Francese, mi sono provisto della magg.r parte de' giornali de Letterati, Istorie e memorie dell’Accademia Regia e de metodi de varie scienze, composti da Francesi, e nella lingua Inglese vado zoppicando, e ho alcuni libri per poterli consultare come originali non fidandomi delle traduz.ni. Della lingua Arabica, della siriaca, e samaritana, posso intendere i passi, che mi aiutano alla letteratura ebraica, e a internarmi nei sentimenti del Bocharto, e di altri insigni letterati non Ebrei ma ebraizanti, e non ostante che sempre ho havuto repugnanza d'ingerirmi nelle materie teologiche, particolarm.te nelle polemiche, mi son trovato molto inquietato dall’impertinenza di alcuni che subbito subbito vi entrano nella Religione, se si risponde cortesem.te fuggendo il contrasto, siete un indolente (in materia così importante), se scherzando, miscredente; se obbiettando, caparvio e ostenato, che però sempre che posso me n’astengo. Finalm.te, siccome il seren.mo di Modona ebbe la bontà di chiamarmi e sentirmi una intera nottata nel mio passar per Francia, il mio Real signore si è divertito spesse volte meco, interrogandomi delle lingue e delle scienze, con onorarmi di darmi il nome di Dottore, e a sua Immitazione il sig.r Marchese Rinuccini, segretario di stato e di guerra, mi scrive così, come il sig.r Presid.te senatore Ricci Moderatore dello studio di Pisa, e tutti quanti i DD.ri della d.a Università, non ho potuto ripugnar più come fino allora...

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havevo fatto alla folla de tt.i i Cavalieri, ss.ri e letterati, che à gara mi addottoravano. Finalm.te, eccomi addorato come il D.re Ricciardi, Poeta Toscano che, sendo stato mand.to à legg.e morale nel d.o stud.o rispose al G.n Duca Cosimo io non sono Dottore, il quale replicò io v'addottoro, ed hora la settimana passata la mia Naz.ne mi dichiarò Rabino. Quanto poi al nome Filalete, essendovi in Livorno due Josef Attias, e uno in Amsterdam, con l'equivoco di q.ti nomi si straviavano le mie lettere, però hò preso il Filalete, che i letterati hanno dato a Gioseffo Istorico, e perché i miei amici mi burlavano per la mia delicatezza di amar tanto la verità. Mi scordava di dire che la B. M. dell'insigne S.r D.r Redi, nelle campagne che faceva col Ser.mo Cosimo à Livorno, si fermava dal Cestoni speziale, dove si facevano sperienze e discorsi di rafinatiss.mo gusto nell'Istoria naturale. Son nato nel 1672, e ho viaggiato per l'Italia, fermatomi più mesi nelle città del p.mo ordine, ed in Francia, e particolarm.te in Parigi, dove hò conosciuti i grandi huomini della n.ra Età. Non voglio più tediarla e, se haverò più salute, con altre mie gli dirò altre minuzie della mia Vita [...] 

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A Brief Introduction to the Texts.
Sara T. Nalle, William Paterson University

Thinking about ego-documents such as memoirs or autobiographies, one quickly realizes that the documents generated in the course of an Inquisitorial trial in principle are not very different from others in the genre. When a defendant decides to call for a scribe and dictate his confession (or on rare occasions, write his own) he confronts all the same issues self-presentation, self-image, and narration. Even interrogations which result in lengthy self-declarative statements in a sense are ego-documents, in that the same deliberate positioning of self takes place. The difference is one of degree! Although we want to privilege autobiographies because we think that somehow they bring us closer to “what really happened,” we must realize that their authors are no more obliged to represent the truth than are inquisitorial defendants. Yet, we are prepared to assume that the formers’ motive is to “set the record straight” while the latters’ goal is to conceal the truth and confuse their audience. In reality, we must be equally suspicious of both types of ego-documents and apply to them the same methods of analysis.

For two generations now, historians have mined inquisitorial trials to study religious ideas and various forms of social deviance. Along the way, some memorable individuals have emerged from the transcripts. Nonetheless, few of the many authors who have used inquisitorial materials have been interested explicitly in the genre of ego-documents or in the questions that are raised by this seminar. Inquisitorial documents require a high degree of interpretation on the part of the historian, but the analysis applied is for the purpose of arriving at some conclusion about religious belief or some other topic external to what often are quite ambiguous texts. For example, in my own book on the would-be messiah Bartolomé Sánchez, I was more interested in Sánchez’s ideas and the interplay between the peasant and his inquisitors than in how he consciously (or unconsciously) presented himself to the world, even though Sánchez’s extensive confessions provide an excellent opportunity to study the issues addressed by this seminar.

While a few excerpts from Sánchez’s trial would provide ideal fodder for a seminar on ego-documents, he was neither a Jew or converso, so I have chosen instead to present two examples of confessions from my current study on ethnic identity and the family in Early Modern Spain. One chapter in the book deals with Spanish converso families in the
sixteenth century. The two transcripts I have prepared illustrate the problem of intergenerational conflict in the early sixteenth century: how did members of the younger generation, brought up after 1492 in an all-Christian world, deal with parents who continued to practice Judaism? To what degree did they themselves start down the path towards assimilation? That is the subject matter of the confessions. However, their analysis is terribly compromised by the defendants’ need to convince the inquisitors that they were in fact faithful Christians. Perhaps subjecting these texts to analysis as ego-documents will help clarify both the facts presented in the confessions as well as their authors’ intention.

In Gaspar de San Clemente’s confession, he is at pains throughout to present himself as a committed Christian and to distance himself from his siblings and parents. In 1492, several members of his family emigrated to Portugal; afterwards the older generation tried to maintain contact across the border and even intermarry to preserve their property intact. Gaspar became both the emissary and potential husband who would serve to keep the family together, a future which ultimately he rejected.

Francisco Martínez’s pathetic confession revolves around how he betrayed his father in order to save his own life. Martínez’s confession clearly reveals how he tacked back and forth, torn by his father’s pleas for help, his duty as a son, and his need for self-preservation. Here, we can see how he justifies his actions to calm his conscience and earn leniency from the inquisitors.

Bibliography

General considerations relevant to dealing with early modern texts.


Essays centering on the use of ego-documents, particularly the Italian libri di famiglia, in discussing issues of family history.


Letters of remission are certainly ego documents, and present all the same problems of interpretation as do inquisitorial confessions.


Includes an article by Avriel Bar-Levav on Jewish ethical wills as ego documents.

Written at the height of the fascination with texts and post-modernism.

Spain, and the Inquisition.
Valuable for the primary sources presented, with a nod toward the concept of Inquisitorial ego documents.
Includes lengthy transcripts of Sánchez’s confessions.

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Copyright © 2011 Early Modern Workshop
Tryal of Gaspar de San Clemente  
Proceso contra Gaspar de San Clemente  
1541

Translated by Sara T Nalle, William Paterson University, USA

Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca, Sección Inquisición, legajo 148, exp. 1787  
Trial against Francisco Martínez, apothocary, resident of Deza.  1533

Interrogation 18 January 1533

It could be around New Year’s that they were saying in Deza that there would be an auto de fe in Cuenca and my father, Bachelor Diego Martínez, whose wife was being held prisoner, asked me to go there. On Saturday, January 4, on the other side of Arcos I ran into the Holy Office’s deputy [alguacil], who I asked if they were going to have an auto in Cuenca, and the deputy answered, where was I from and where was I going, and I said that I was Bachelor Diego Martínez’s son and I was coming to Cuenca because they had told us that there was going to be an auto. The deputy said that they weren’t having an auto but the scaffolding was done, and it wouldn’t be long before there was one. I said that I wanted to go back to my house since they weren’t going to do it and I had something else to attend to, and the deputy said that if I wanted to go to Cuenca I was welcome to do so, and to go home also, that I should do what I wanted, and so he went on ahead. I stayed with someone called Medrano, resident of Deza, to give him some letters for the lawyers who were working on the Bachelor’s wife’s case, and I went straight home to Deza, and I neither ran into nor saw the deputy.

Once home, in presence of the vicar, Joanes del Altopica, my father asked me how did it go, if I came alright, and I replied that yes, praised be God, but that I had run into the Holy Office’s deptuy near Arcos, and that’s why I came back. This happened in my house, and after the vicar and other people had gone, my father the bachelor took me aside and said to me, “God help me! What is this? The deputy is coming here to Arcos; he told you he was coming!” I told him yes, but that I also thought that he was going to Deza because the Holy Office’s people never say where they’re going to or where they’re coming from.

Then the bachelor said, “God help me! What is this? That woman [i.e., his wife] has been there so long; I have the strongest feeling that, either because of the amount of time she has been there in order to get out, or because of torture, she has said something about me and has hurt me– I need to get out of here, I can’t live in this place. My wife, come good or bad, yes
or no, I need to go. Where do you think I should go? By your life, give me some advice!

I told him that since he had to go that it seemed to me that he should go to some friend’s house around there, and that he could spend the night and the next day there. If it looked like he could come back, good, and if not, then leave, and my father said, “I want to go to Berdejo or Torrelapaja to Mosén Jaime’s house.”1 Then he decided and it seemed better to him to go to Tordesalas2 to Pero López’s house, but since Pero López is a tithes collector and has many guards who would see him enter and ask him where he was going and coming from, since I had told him that it seemed good to me that he go there, and I was telling him what he ought to do, the bachelor was thrown into confusion over if he would go to Portugal or to France. He decided to go to Portugal by going via his wife’s sisters’ homes, because one lives in Peñaranda, and another in Roa, and by the house of one of his sisters who’s in Castromorcho,3 and he decided to go to Bión4 because it was right on the road to the house of one Benito de las Heras, his friend. He said he would spend the night there and the next day, which was Sunday, and at nightfall he would leave.

Now that the bachelor wanted to say goodbye to me, I said to him, “And those children— how are you leaving them?” and the bachelor answered me, “There’s some wheat— I entrust them to you for the love of God, and if their mother comes right they won’t lack for food, and if wrong, then let God do whatever serves him. You have to give me your pony.” I said to him that if I gave him the pony then they would say that I had given him advice and I had given him the pony so he could leave, and they would arrest me. Crying, the bachelor said to me, “Because you are my son, for the love of God, a poor old man like me, where can I go on foot on those roads ahead?” Then I gave him the pony and so he left, and a boy went with him, a son of his called Dickie (Diaguito), and I said to Diego, “Brother, where are you leaving him?” and the boy told me, “I’m leaving him by the Castellan’s meadow” and then I asked him what he [i.e., their father] had said, and the boy said, “he has told me that he will write you around Easter, god willing” and that he told him that if they asked for him that I should said that he was going to Reznos5 and [the next line is garbled but suggests they said their goodbyes]

On Sunday the deputy arrived in the town of Deza, and in the afternoon the deputy, the vicar, and one Diego de Haro went to my house and came inside, but they did not find me there, and without knowing that they were at my house I went home and ran into them there. The deputy asked me where my father was, and I told him that he wasn’t in town, that I believed he was in Reznos or in Miñana.6 I told him by the oath I had taken that he was in Reznos or in Miñana, and if he wasn’t there, then they would pick up his trail there. The deputy locked me up in a room and went on the road to Miñana, and immediately I spoke to the vicar and said, “Sir, I have taken an oath, and my soul is worth more to me than my father or my mother, and for my conscience’s sake, do me the favor of getting a messenger, and I will pay for him.” He singled out one of his friends to go after the deputy, advising him how my father was on the run and the route he was taking, and so went off one Pedro Herrero. Then, since I wasn’t confident about this, I said again to the vicar that he look for another man, that I would pay for him to go to Miñana or Bion after my father and to tell him that the deputy was after him and to come back, and that if he wouldn’t do it that he should take him prisoner. The messenger went off and then the vicar came back again and I told him to send
another messenger in case the first one missed the deputy, to tell the deputy my father’s route because the second messenger wasn’t from Bion.

The fiscal’s accusation charges him with advising his father to escape, which he did. The votos are light—reprimanded, 27 January 1533. Ordered to appear in Deza in his shirt without belt or cap, and pay 16 ducats for masses to be said by the Santo Oficio.

Endnotes

1Villages across the border in Aragón, about 10 and 15 miles away, respectively.
2Tordesalas is about 20 miles north of Deza, inside Castile but outside the Inquisition of Cuenca’s jurisdiction.
3Peñaranda de Duero is 100 miles west of Deza on the way to Portugal; Roa is 25 miles beyond that, and Castromocho yet another 60 miles westward.
4Place name as yet unidentified.
5A village about 15 miles to the north of Deza.
6Another nearby village. Here, Francisco gives out the false information that his father told him to say.

Citation Information
Trial of Gaspar de San Clemente, 1541
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Proceso contra Gaspar de San Clemente
Trial of Gaspar de San Clemente

1541

Prepared by Sara T Nalle, William Paterson University, USA

Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca, Sección Inquisición, legajo 148, exp. 1787
Proceso contra Francisco Martínez, boticario, vecino de Deza. 1533

Interrogation 18 January 1533

Dijo que podrá haber que otro día del año nuevo se dijo en Deza que en Cuenca se haría auto [de fe] y que el bachiller Diego Martínez su padre, cuya mujer estaba presa, rogó a este confesante que se llegase acá, y que el sábado, cuatro del dicho mes, este confesante pasado a Arcos topó con el alguacil de este Santo Oficio, al cual preguntó si se hacía auto en Cuenca, y el dicho alguacil le replicó que dende era y a donde iba, y este confesante le dijo que era hijo del bachiller Diego Martínez y venía a Cuenca porque les habían dicho que se hacía auto, y el dicho alguacil dijo que no se haría auto porque los cadahalsos estaban hechos y que no podría tardar de hacerse, y que este confesante dijo que se quería volver a su casa pues no hacían y tenía otro negocio en que entender, y el dicho alguacil replicó y dijo que si quisiese ir a Cuenca que bien podía y si volver, también, que hiciese lo que quisiese, y que así pasó adelante el dicho alguacil, y este confesante se quedó con un Medrano, vecino de Deza, para darle unas cartas para los letrados que entendían en la causa de la mujer del dicho bachiller, y se volvió por el camino derecho hasta Deza, y nunca alcanzó ni vió al dicho alguacil.

runs into his father and warns him

Y llegado en presencia de Joanes del Altopica, vicario, el dicho su padre preguntó a este confesante que cómo se volvía, si venía bueno, y que este confesante le respondió que sí, loores a dios, pero que había topado con el alguacil del Santo Oficio encima de Arcos, el cual le había dicho que no se hacía auto y que él iba a Arcos, y que por eso se volvía, y que esto pasó en casa de este confesante, y después de idos el dicho vicario y otras personas que allí estaban, el dicho bachiller su padre apartó a este confesante, y le dijo, “¡Válame dios! ¿Qué es esto? –que el alguacil viene acá a Arcos; os dijo que venía” y que este confesante le dijo que sí,
pero que también pensaba que iba a Deza porque las personas de este Santo Oficio nunca decían donde iban ni dende venían.

father panics; fears his wife has implicated him

Y que el dicho bachiller dijo, “¡Válame dios! ¿Qué es esto? Tanto tiempo ha que está allá aquella mujer; yo tengo grandísima sospecha que, o por el tiempo que ha estado allá por salir de allí o por tormentos, que ella ha dicho alguna cosa de mí y que me ha dañado -- yo me quiero apartar de aquí, yo no tengo de vivir en este lugar, que mi mujer, venga bien que venga mal, por sí o por no, yo me quiero ir, ¿qué os paresce adónde me iré? ¡dadme consejo por vuestra vida!”

Son gives advice

Y que este confesante le dijo que pues que se tenía de ir que le parecía que se debía de ir a casa de un su amigo por allí, y que allí podría estar aquella noche y otro día, y si le parecía de volverse, bien, y si no, irse, y que el dicho su padre dijo, “Yo me quiero ir a Berdejo o a Torrelapaja¹ a casa de Mosén Jaime,” y que después acordó y le pareció mejor de ir a Tordesalas,² a casa de Pero López, y que como el dicho Pero López era dezmero y tenía muchas guardas que le verían entrar y le preguntarían que donde iba o venía, como quiera que este confesante le había dicho que le parecía bien que se fuese allí, y él le aconsejaba lo que debiese hacer,

Father decides to go to Portugal

y que el dicho bachiller estaba puesto en perplejidad si se iría a Portugal o a Francia, y acordó de irse a Portugal por irse por las casas de las hermanas de su mujer, que la una vive en Peñaranda y la otra en Roa, y por casa de una hermana suya que tiene en Castromorcho,³ y tomó por acuerdo de irse a Bion⁴ porque era camino derecho a casa de un Benito de las Heras, su amigo, y que allí dijo que estaría aquella noche y otro día, que era domingo, y a la noche se iría.

Son asks about the children and worries about getting arrested

Y que ya que el dicho bachiller se quería despedirse de este confesante, este confesante le dijo “¿Y estos niños, cómo los dejáis?” y que el dicho bachiller le respondió, “Ahí queda trigo -- yo os los encomiendo por amor de dios, que si su madre saliere bien no les faltará de comer, y si mal, haga dios lo que fuere servido. Vos me habéis de dar vuestra haca.” Y que este confesante le dijo que si le daba la haca, que dirían que él le había avisado y le había dado la haca para que se fuese, y le prenderían, y que el dicho bachiller llorando dijo a este confesante “Porque sois mi hijo, por amor del servicio de dios, ¿un pobre viejo como yo, dónde tengo de ir a pie por esos caminos adelante?”

father escapes with a young son

Y que entonces este confesante le dió la haca, y que así se fue, y salió un niño con él, un hijo suyo que se llama Diaguito, y este confesante dijo al dicho Diego, “¿Hermano, dónde le
dejas?” y que el dicho niño le respondió, “Déjolo en el prado del alcaide,” y que este confesante le preguntó que qué él había dicho y que el niño le dijo, “hame dicho que para Pascua de Flores, placiendo a dios, os escribirá,” y que le había dicho que si preguntaban por él que dijese que había dicho que iba a Reznos,⁵ y que esto para saron (??) su padre de deste confesante, y este confesante en lo senento (??),

Francisco arrested and questioned
y que otro día domingo llegó el dicho alguacil ala dicha villa de Deza, y a la tarde el dicho alguacil y el vicario y un Diego de Haro fueron a casa de este confesante y entraron dentro y no le hallaron allí a este confesante, y este confesante sin saber que los susodichos estaban en su casa se iba para allá y los topó, y que el dicho alguacil le preguntó que a dónde estaba su padre y que este confesante le dijo que no estaba en la villa, que creía que estaba en Reznos o en Miñana,⁶ y que entraron en casa deste confesante, y el dicho alguacil le tomó juramento que le dijese la verdad donde estaba el dicho su padre

Francisco betrays his father and aids the Santo Oficio
y que este confesante le dijo que para el juramento que tenía que estaba en Reznos o en Miñana y que si allí no estuviese, que allí hallarían rastro de él, y que el dicho alguacil le dejó preso en una camara y se fue él la via de Miñana, y incontinentiente este confesante habló al vicario y le dijo, “Señor, yo tengo hecho juramento y mi alma es más que mi padre ni mi madre y por descargo de mi conciencia me haga merced que busque un mensajero, que yo lo pagaré” y le señaló un amigo suyo para que fuese tras el alguacil, avisándole como se iba [su padre] huyendo y la via que llevaba, y así fue un Pedro Herrero, y que después no confiándose en esto tornó a decir al dicho vicario que buscase otro hombre, que él lo pagaría para que fuese a Miñana o a Bión tras el dicho su padre y le dijese que el dicho alguacil le andaba a buscar, que se volviese, y que si no lo quisiese hacer que lo tomase preso, y que así fue el dicho mensajero y que tornó otra vez a hablar al dicho vicario y le dijo que enviase otro mensajero por si el primero faltase al dicho alguacil para que avisase al dicho alguacil de la via que el dicho su padre llevaba porque el segundo mensajero no había de Bión.

The fiscal’s accusation charges him with advising his father to escape, which he did. The votos are light—reprimanded, 27 January 1533. Ordered to appear in Deza in his shirt without belt or cap, and pay 16 ducats for masses to be said by the Santo Oficio.

Archive: Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca, Inquisición, leg. 145, exp. 1772

Endnotes
¹Villages across the border in Aragón, about 10 and 15 miles away, respectively.
²Tordesalas is about 20 miles north of Deza, inside Castile but outside the Inquisition of Cuenca’s jurisdiction.
3Peñaranda de Duero is 100 miles west of Deza on the way to Portugal; Roa is 25 miles beyond that, and Castromocho yet another 60 miles westward.

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Trial of Gaspar de San Clemente
Proceso contra Gaspar de San Clemente
1541

Translated by Sara T Nalle, William Paterson University, USA

ADC Inq. Leg. 145, exp. 1772 Gaspar de San Clemente

Presented in Sigüenza, January 10, 1540

San Clemente to me, Domingo de Arteaga, by
Confession in Sigüenza
Gaspar de San Clemente, prisoner
[age: 38]

Most Reverend and Magnificent Lords

[first page of the confession is a preliminary statement affirming Gaspar's desire to confess and blaming his misdeeds on the devil]

Firstly, I say that often I saw and heard my parents in fear of being prisoners of the Holy Office, and my mother, who is called Isabel de la Peña, quarrelled many times with my father because they had come back from Portugal, where they had converted to Christianity, saying that every day she was going around looking for the boogeyman. I heard this more than twenty-two years ago. My mother also very much wanted to go to Portugal and see a brother she had there, who is called Gabriel de la Peña, and I think it was so she wouldn't be arrested by the Holy Office, because once I heard her say, talking while at home, that she was afraid
they were going to arrest them because she had made "desollas de carne" one Friday after they had returned from Portugal, and she regretted it.

Also, she would say to Francisco de San Clemente and her other sons that they should go see her brother in Portugal, and Francisco and Juan de San Clemente went there, and when they came back, they said that my mother's brother was a bad Jewish man who said and did Jewish things, but not saying or declaring what things.

Many times I saw how Juan de San Clemente dishonored and called my parents heretic Jews, and they were afraid of his blabbing on account of the things he said when they didn't give him what he wanted.

Also, I remember that my mother and father told me and my siblings that we should believe in the Jewish faith, that it was the good and true one, and that we would be saved in it, and they told us that we should say some prayers that did not seem to me to be Christian ones. At the time that they were doing this, my mother, Ysabel de la Peña, was ill, and I and my siblings were somewhat lukewarm, and they told us so much that they scrambled our brains, and we said, yes, we believed in it. This happened two or three times although I think that before this they had told this to my siblings, since they were older and I was young then. My siblings and I who were there at the time were Francisco, Juan, and Jerónimo de San Clemente, and María de San Clemente, wife of Francisco Jerónimo, and this could have taken place about twenty-four years ago, more or less. And I heard each one of my siblings here named say that they so believed.

Item, at the time when my mother was ill, I saw how they stewed up a pot of beef and they covered the whole top with dough, and they give it to her to eat. I saw this and ate from it, and I don't know what stew it was other than it seemed to me that it was different from the one we ate on other occasions. Before this, I saw how my mother wouldn't eat pork fat or fatty meat, only lean, and I saw my mother take the meat in her hands and say, "Get out of here, this meat is really fatty!" and then she would give it to the maids. This was when she was out of bed, because for a long time she was ill, and what I say about the stews, they were adafinas because I heard my parents call them that. By my recollection this would have been about twenty-two years ago.

Item, at my father's house I remember that when I was young I saw how certain people came inside and prayed Jewish prayers like the ones I declared above, and these people were Pedro de Carrión and Francisco López d'Escoto and Pedro de Carrión's wife, and Diego de Aguilera and Francisco d'Esguevillas, and the said Gaspar de San Clemente and Ysabel de la Peña, my parents, and Francisco de Vargas. I don't recall the prayers they said or manner of prayer. [Adds later in the interrogation of Feb. 3 that this happened two or three times in the kitchen, 25 or 26 years ago. Gaspar names many other peopleB his brothers, parents, etc. "Each time this took place my father and the oldest of the people there said certain prayers and I did not
understand nor do I know what they were, and they weren't in Latin or Spanish because I
know how to read Latin and Spanish, and they weren't one or the other; instead they were as
different as Basque is from Spanish. When they were praying, sometimes they were sitting
down and other times they were praying standing up. They would say them towards a wall,
and after they had prayed, some of the people some times, other times other ones would take
certain steps backwards and forwards toward the wall..." He saw his brothers Juan and
Francisco do the same, but not his other siblings, and his father would preach to them the law
of Moses, and the people would affirm it.

Also, I declare that about sixteen years ago, more or less, a man from Portugal sent by my
mother's brother, Gabriel de la Peña, came to my father's house, asking him that he send over
there one of his sons, and he would give him his estate and he would marry him with one of
his wife's nieces. My father told me did I want to go, and I went to Our Lady of Guadalupe,
and from there I arrived at the city of Elvas, where my uncle lived, and he welcomed me when
I arrived.

The next day was Saturday and he asked me if I ate meat. I said that it wasn't the custom in
my country, and my uncle's wife said to him, "Aren't you ashamed to be asking that of a youth
like him?" They fed me and a man who came with me, and I was there four days.

I left for the city of Evora and Estremoz to take some letters that I carried from Bishop don
Fadrique, who was the bishop of Sigüenza, and the man who had come to Sigüenza with the
letter [from his uncle] went with me. While talking on the road he asked me if I liked that
country and people, and I told him that it seemed wrong to me because there were and there
seemed to be really evil men [bellacoBknav], and this man said to me, "Here they aren't such
good Christians as over there [meaning Spain] because here they aren't punished and you're
going to get married to your uncle's niece." I told him I didn't know. So we got to the city of
Evora and I delivered the letters I carried like I said, and I was there on Saint John's Day
(June 24) in a monastery on the outskirts of the city, and the next Saturday morning I went
into the city and that man with me, and he took me to see the city. Going down a street, he
went into a house and I waited for him, and said to him, "Why did you go off, what have you
done?" "I came to talk here but since today is Saturday those devils didn't want to answer
much less see us." The house was open and watered, and I didn't see anyone in the entryway,
and I asked him, "What did you go in for?" "To deliver some letters from a New Christian
that they gave me in Elvas," and then we went for a walk. On Monday we left for Elvas and
on the road this man told be about wicked lifestyle of the New Christians in Portugal.

After two days we got to Elvas, and my uncle talked to me about if I wanted to marry his
wife's niece, and I told him that I would go home and tell my father. Then he replied, "If you
come here, I will give you everything I own, and when you come again don't bring with you
that youth, who is an Old Christian, just you come by yourself." I answered that he paid
attention, and he said to me, "If he does, then I'm not talking because he is a malicious man, and I am not justifying my life to you." I told him, "What do you have to justify to me if one had to?" and he, "If I should want to go to Castile, I would go," and I said, "Why don't you dare?" and he said because of the Inquisition, which arrested them and took away their property, and I asked who doesn't do it so that he won't be arrested, and he said to this, "Over there there are great persecution." I told him, "I say that although there is persecution, it's better to be there and be Christian and not to say that." To this my uncle replied, "Go with God and leave me, because I must die in the faith I was born in, and I too will be saved like you in yours, since you're a Christian." Then he told me to tell my father that he asked him to send him his answer if I had to marry his niece or not, and while talking then he told me that if I wasn't such a kid that he would tell me a little to say to my father. I said, "What did you want [to say]?"] and then he told me that the Messiah they waited for had not yet come and they awaited him every day."

This upset me so much that the next day I left for Medina del Campo where I had to buy merchandise for my father, and since I had come by way of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I got the idea that I would not marry my uncle's niece because I had the desire not to, for which I give thanks to Jesus Christ Our Lord. When I got back to Sigüenza, my father welcomed me, and a day or so later he asked me if I had liked my uncle's wife's niece, and I told him to leave me alone, they could go to Hell, and I wouldn't marry her because they were evil men. With that, my father shut up. At this time, Nuño Vaez, the castle warden of Pelegrina, was staying at my father's house, and I gave him some letters I had for him, and he asked me what I thought, and I told him what was going on and how they were bad people and not for anything in the world would I go there nor marry.

After that, my father asked me again what my uncle had said to me, and I told him what I stated and declared above, and saw how my father rejoiced in the words I told him my uncle had said, and he asked me to go over there to marry.

Also I say that while I was in Portugal in the city of Elvas, I heard my uncle say that he rarely sent for meat from the butcher's shop, and I asked him what did he eat, and he said that he ate chicken, and when he ate beef, sometimes to avoid going to the butcher, he had it slaughtered at home by a New Christian who did it the way the Jews used to slaughter. While talking about other things, I left the conversation and went for a walk through the city and when I got back to the house, I found there a man with whom my uncle was talking, and as I came in the man left, and I asked my uncle, "Who was that?" and my uncle told me that he was a New Christian by name of Moscoso, who sometimes slaughtered the meat that he was going to eat, and I told him, "I've never heard of such a thing in my life!" and the conversation stopped because I didn't want to say anything more to him. This took place two days before I left his house for Castile.
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Trial of Gaspar de San Clemente
1541

Prepared by Sara T Nalle, William Paterson University, USA

ADC Inq. Leg. 145, exp. 1772 Gaspar de San Clemente, vecino de Sigüenza. (1540)
presentada en Sigüenza a diez días del mes de enero Gaspar de San Clemente
de mil y quinientos y cuarenta años ante mí Confesión en Sigüenza
Domingo de Arteaga, por el dicho
Gaspar de San Clemente, preso
[age: 38]
+

Muy Reverendos y Magníficos Señores

[first page of the confession is a preliminary statement affirming Gaspar’s desire to confess and blaming his misdeeds on the devil]

Primeramente digo que muchas veces ví y oí a mis padres tener temor de ser presos por el Santo Oficio y mi madre, que se llama Ysabel de la Peña, reñía muchas veces con el dicho mi padre porque se habían venido de Portugal donde se volvieron cristianos, diciendo que acá andaba cada día catalcoco, y esto oí habrá más de veinte años, y así mismo la dicha mi madre tenía gran deseo de se ir a Portugal y ver a un hermano suyo que allá tenía, que se llama Gabriel de la Peña, y creo que era por no ser presa por el Santo Oficio porque una vez le oí decir estando hablando en casa que tenía temor que los habían de prender porque había hecho desollas de carne un viernes luego como vinieron de Portugal, y que tenía pena de ello.

Y así mismo decía a Francisco de San Clemente y a los otros sus hijos que fuesen a ver al dicho su hermano a Portugal, y fueron allá el dicho Francisco de San Clemente y Juan de San Clemente [Gaspar’s brothers] y de que vinieron, dijeron del dicho su hermano de mi madre como era un mal hombre judío que decía y hacía cosas de judíos, y no diciendo ni declarando
qué cosas.

Y ví cómo muchas veces el dicho Juan de San Clemente deshonraba y llamaba de judíos herejes a mis padres y le habían miedo a su lengua de las cosas que decía cuando no le daban lo que quería.

Item digo que me acuerdo que mi madre y padre nos decían a mí y a mis hermanos que creyesemos en la ley de los judíos, que aquella era la buena y verdadera y que nos salvaríamos en ella, y decían que rezasemos oraciones, que no me parecieron de cristianos, y al tiempo que esto hacían era estando mala la dicha mi madre, que se llamaba Ysabel de la Peña, y yo y mis hermanos estuvimos algo tibios y tanto nos dijeron que nos volcaron nuestro seso, y dijimos que sí creáramos en ella, y esto fue dos o tres veces aunque creo que antes de esto a mis hermanos, como eran mayores, lo habían dicho porque yo era pequeño entonces y los hermanos que allí nos hallamos éramos Francisco y Juan y Gerónimo de San Clemente, y María de San Clemente, mujer de Francisco Gerónimo, y esto podrá haber que pasó hasta veinteicuatro años poco más o menos. Y a cada uno de los dichos mis hermanos que en este capítulo tengo nombrados les oí decir que así lo creyían.

Item digo que al tiempo que mi madre estaba mala que ví como guizaban una olla con carnero y la atapaban con masa toda la boca y le daban de comer de ella y lo ví y comí de ella y que no sé qué guisado era más de que me parece que era diferente de el que comíamos otras veces, y antes de esto ví como la dicha mi madre no comía tocino ni carnegorda sino magra y que ví a la dicha mi madre tomar la carne en las manos y decía, “¡Quita allá, qué gorda es esa carne!” y así la daba a las mozas, y esto era estando levantada de la cama, porque mucho tiempo estuvo enferma, y lo que digo de las ollas, eran adafinas porque así lo oí a mis padres, y que esto habrá que pasó según mi memoria veinteidos años poco más o menos.

Item digo que en casa del dicho mi padre se me acuerda que ví siendo pequeño como entraron ciertas personas y rezaron oraciones de judíos como las que de suso tengo declaradas, que eran las personas Pedro de Carrión y Francisco López d’Escoto y su mujer de Pedro de Carrión y Diego de Aguilera y Francisco d’Esguevillas y los dichos Gaspar San Clemente y Ysabel de la Peña sus padres, y Francisco de Vargas, y de las oraciones que rezaban y de la manera del rezar no se me acuerdo. [Adds later in the interrogation of Feb. 3 that this happened 25 or 26 years ago 2 or 3 times, in the kitchen. Gaspar names many other people—his brothers, parents, etc. “Cada una de las dichas veces el dicho su padre y las más antiguas de las dichas personas rezaron ciertas cosas que este confesante no entendió ni sabe lo que se eran, y que no eran de latín ni de romance porque este confesante sabe leer el latín y el romance y no era de lo uno ni de lo otro sino tan diferente cuanto es lo vizcaíno de lo castellano, y que cuando así lo rezaron estaban algunas veces asentados y otras en pie y rezándolo. Lo decían hacia una pared y después que lo habían rezado, algunas de las dichas personas unas veces los unos, otras veces los otros daban ciertos pasos hacia atrás y hacia adelante hacia la dicha pared...” he saw his brothers Juan and Francisco do the same, but not
his other siblings, and his father would preach to them the law of Moses, and the people would affirm it.]

Marriage arranged
Item digo que puede habér hasta dieciseis años poco más o menos que vino a casa de mi padre un hombre de Portugal que lo enviaba Gabriel de la Peña, hermano de mi madre, rogándole que enviase allá un hijo suyo y que le daría su hacienda y lo casaría con una sobrina de su mujer, y el dicho mi padre me dijo a mí si quería ir y yo fue [sic] a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe⁴ y desde allí me llegué a la ciudad de Elvas⁵ adonde vivía el dicho mi tío y de que llegué me hizo buen recibo.

Fasting and meat
Y otro día era sábado y preguntóme si comía carne. Yo dije que no se usaba en mi tierra⁶ y la mujer del dicho mi tío le dijo, “¿No habéis vergüenza a un mozo como ése preguntar eso?” y así me dieron a comer por sí a mí y a un hombre que iba conmigo, y estuve allí cuatro días

New Christians in Portugal
Y me partí para Evora ciudad y a Estremoz a llevar unas cartas que llevaba del obispo don Fadrique obispo que era de Sigüenza,⁷ y se fue conmigo el hombre que había venido a Sigüenza con la carta. Y en camino hablando me preguntó que si me contentaba la tierra y gente y yo le dije que me parecía mal porque eran y parecían grandes bellacos, y este hombre me dijo, “Acá no son tan buenos cristianos como allá, porque acá no los castigan y vos casaroseís con su sobrina de vuestro tío,” y yo le dije que no sabía. Y así llegamos a Evora ciudad y dí unas cartas que llevaba como he dicho y estuve allí día de San Juan [June 24] en un monasterio fuera de la ciudad, y otro día de mañana sábado fue [sic] a la dicha ciudad y aquel hombre comigo, y me llevó a mostrar la ciudad, y pasando por una calle entró en una casa y yo le esperé y le dije, “¿A qué salió, qué habéis hecho?” “Vine hablar aquí y cómo es hoy sábado estos diablos no querían responder ni menos aún vernos,” y estaba la casa abierta y regada y no ví gente en el portal y le dije, “¿A qué entrastes?” “-- a dar unas cartas de un cristiano nuevo que me dieron en Elvas” y así luego nos fuemos [sic] a pasear, y el lunes partimos para Elvas y en el camino me decía este hombre el mal vivir que hacían en Portugal los cristianos nuevos, y

Marriage proposal
llegados a Elvas a cabo de dos días me habló el dicho mi tío si me quería casar con la sobrina de su mujer, y yo le dije que iría a mi tierra y lo diría a mi padre, y entonces me respondió, “Si acá os venís yo os daré cuanto tengo, y

Suspicion and anger against Old Christians; fear of the Inquisition
 cuanto vengáis no traigáis con vos ese mozo, que es cristiano viejo, sino veníos solo” y yo le respondí que hacía al caso⁸ y él me dijo, “Si hace, no hablo porque es hombre malicioso, y no os doy cuenta de mi vida” y yo le dije, “¿Qué cuenta me ha de dar si hay que dar cuenta?” [él dijo] que “si yo osase ir a Castilla yo iría,” y dije que, “¿Por qué no osaba?” y dijo que por la
Inquisición, que los prendían y les tomaban las haciendas, y yo le dije a quien no hace porque no le prendan, y a esto me dijo, “Grandes persecuciones hay allá,” y yo le dije, “Yo digo que aunque haya persecuciones, que es mejor estar allá y ser cristianos y no decir eso” y

His uncle professes his faith
a esto me respondió, “Anda con dios y déjame, que en la ley que nací tengo de morir, que también me salvaré como vos en la vuestra, que sois cristiano.” Y así me dijo que dijese a mi padre como le rogaba que le enviase luego la respuesta si me había de casar con su sobrina o no, y me dijo así hablando que si no fuera yo tan mozo que me dijera un poco que dijese a mi padre. Yo le dije, “¿Qué quería?” y entonces me dijo que el Mesías que esperaban no era venido y que cada día lo esperaban y

Gaspar shocked and cuts off contact
a esto estuve tan turbado que luego otro día me partí para Medina del Campo donde había de comprar mercadería para mi padre, y como yo había venido por Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, inspiró en mí a que no me desposase con la dicha su sobrina porque yo lo llevaba en voluntad de lo cual doy gracias a Nuestro Señor Jesu Christo. Y así venido a Sigüenza el dicho mi padre me recibió bien, y luego a otro día me preguntó que si me había contentado la sobrina de su mujer de mi tío, y yo le dije que me dejase, que los daba al diablo, que no me casaría con ella, que eran malos hombres. Y entonces calló el dicho mi padre. Y a esta sazón posaba en casa del dicho mi padre Nuño Vaez, alcaide que era de Pelegrina, y le dí cartas que traía y me dijo, “¿Qué me parecía?” al cual le dije lo que pasaba y como era mala gente y que por cuanto hay en el mundo no iría allá, ni me casaría.

And discovers that his father is still secretly Jewish.
Y después el dicho mi padre me tornó a interrogar qué me había dicho mi tío, y yo le dije lo que arriba tengo dicho y declarado y conocí que el dicho mi padre se había holgado de las palabras que le dije que decía el dicho mi tío y me rogaba que me fuese a casar allá.

Uncle’s attempts to keep kosher
Yten digo que así mismo le oí decir al dicho mi tío estando en Portugal en la dicha ciudad de Elvas como pocas veces enviaba por carne a la carnecería y yo le pregunté qué comía y él me dijo que comía pollos y que cuando comía carnero algunas veces lo hacía matar en su casa por no ir a la carnecería, que se lo mataba un cristiano nuevo al modo que los judíos lo solían matar, y estando hablando sobre otras cosas dejamos la plática y me fue [sic] a pasear por la ciudad y de que volví a la dicha casa, hallé en ella a un hombre con quien estaba hablando el dicho mi tío y como yo entré se fue el dicho hombre y yo pregunté al dicho mi tío, “¿Qué, quién era aquel?” y el dicho mi tío me respondió que era un cristiano nuevo que se llama Moscoso, el cual le mataba la carne que él había de comer algunas veces, y yo le dije, “Nunca tal oí en mi vida” y así cesó la plática que no conté de le decir más y esto fue dos días antes que me partiese de su casa para Castilla.
Defends carrying weapons and riding horseback against Inquisitorial prohibition

Yten digo que después de la determinación de la causa de mi padre como es notorio y Vuestras Reverencias lo saben y es notorio las largas y grandes enemistades que yo he tenido y al presente tenía en la ciudad de Sigüenza sobre la muerte de Cristobal de San Clemente mi hermano, traje armas para defensa de mi persona en la dicha ciudad de Sigüenza y fuera de ella y en otras partes donde andaba entendiendo en mis negocios sin tener habilitación del Señor Inquisidor General, y esto fue por espacio de mes y medio porque fue desde 25 de febrero del año de 1527, que la causa del dicho mi padre se determinó hasta diez de abril siguiente que hube habilitación y también algunas veces andando caminos anduve en caballo.

In the audience, he adds that “también vió que los dichos su padre y madre les doctrinaban y enseñaban que se vistiesen camisas limpias los sábados y según algunas veces les decían a este confesante y a los dichos sus hermanos que se las vistiesen por honra y guarda de los dichos sábados.”

**Archive:** Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca, Inquisición, leg. 145, exp. 1772

**Endnotes**

1. Additional information in this last sentence appears to be prompted.

2. *Adafina* was the word used for sabbath stew. David M. Gitlitz and Linda Kay Davidson have collected and adapted many examples from Inquisition trials for their cookbook, *A Drizzle of Honey, The Lives and Recipes of Spain’s Secret Jews* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999) but record no reference to bread dough being used to cover the stew pot.

3. I.e., shuckling, called “sabadeando” in Spanish.

4. A famous shrine at the height of its popularity, located in Extremadura, not far off the road to Portugal.

5. Elvas is the first city one comes to on entering Portugal from Badajoz, Spain. On the same road, travelling towards Lisbon, next are Estremoz and then Evora.

6. For Christians, Saturdays were a meatless fasting day.

7. Fadrique de Portugal Noreña, bishop of Sigüenza from 20 June 1519 to 23 February 1530.

8. Seems to be a variation of “hacer caso” (pay attention).

9. Medina del Campo, near Valladolid, was Castile’s main commercial center and host to an annual fair.

10. The Castle of Pelegrina, owned by the Bishop of Sigüenza, was about 5 miles south of the city of Sigüenza.
Rabbi Emden (1698-1776) was one of the most significant figures in eighteenth century Jewish life. Reared in a learned home, he was a preeminent scholar whose achievement in the field of rabbinic literature was substantive and significant. He was a highly prolific author, whose literary oeuvre contains works on all genres of rabbinic creativity. Toward the end of his life he witnessed the emergence of the Haskalah and, unlike some of his more traditional colleagues, was sensitive to the shifting nuances of thought represented by that movement and was aware of the changes in Jewish life that it potentially represented. Finally, Emden played a major role in the eighteenth-century battle against Sabbatianism and, in the last two and a half decades of his life, fully devoted himself to exposing and hounding all vestiges of the movement.

Among Emden’s many works is Megillat Sefer, one of the most unusual, open, revealing, and unself-conscious egodocuments in Jewish and even general history. Written between 1752 and 1766, this work existed only in manuscript form for one hundred and thirty years, first in Emden’s hand and then in the hand of someone who copied the original. Emden’s handwritten version is no longer extant and only the copy exists. The work was first published in Warsaw, 1896 by David Kahane. In 1979 it was printed again in Jerusalem by Abraham Bick-Shauli who claimed that he was correcting mistakes in the earlier Kahana edition although his version is much less reliable, to the point of being worthless. I am now completing a new edition of this work with an introduction and extensive annotations. This work is a multi-faceted one and deserves analysis on a number of different levels. My interest in my presentation is to focus on one aspect of this fascinating work, what motivated Emden to write it, thereby situating this work in the context of other early modern Jewish examples of such writing.
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May my Father, Who keeps truth forever (Ps. 146:6), keep you. By the light of God, gather together and listen (Gen. 49:2) to Jacob so that the Almighty, my God, your God and the God of your fathers may hearken unto you (Jud. 9:7).

[Let me tell of the] decree (Ps. 2:7) and let me ascribe righteousness to my Maker (Job 36:3). And I will say, You, O Lord my God, have done many things; [Your wonders and Your thoughts are for us, none can compare to You]; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be told (Ps. 40:6). . . . . . Where is one who could weigh? Where is one who could count [the towers]? (Isa. 33:18). Even [his friends have distanced themselves from him] (Prov. 19:7). It is impossible to force the judgment or defer its appointed hour. O Lord, my God, I will exalt You, [I will give thanks to Your name for You have done wonderful things,] even councils of old (Isa. 25:1). The Lord revealed Himself to me (Jer. 31:2) through the deeds and actions which He has shown me against [my enemies] (Ps. 23:5). . . . . . Would that my words were inscribed (Job 19:23) in a book, hewn forever upon a rock (Job 19:24) in the record of the House of Israel (Ezek. 13:9), [so that] children yet to be born will arise and tell to their children (Ps. 78:6), to a future age (Ps. 48:14). Then our mouths shall be filled with laughter . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . and injustice.

I shall commence with my paternal grandfather, the father of my father, may the righteous man’s memory serve as a blessing, whose name I bear.
vessels of diverse form (Esther 1:7), the bitter lies that were perpetrated and occurred in this matter are already well known and disseminated among those still alive. They remember well the events of that harsh occurrence which is not yet fifty years old. It was also publicized in several works and pamphlets which were printed regarding it, during the time of that difficult conflict which lasted about a full year. In particular, the prominent Hakham Hagiz, may he rest in peace, fixed them in print. [He was] the first to enter the fray and presented the narrative of the event in the pamphlets, War Unto the Lord and Disaster of the Wicked and others. It is difficult for me to present all those details and to record them in this book. Behold, they would fill up many sheets and would still not be finished.

In addition, the later calamities cause one to forget the earlier ones, for one calamity at a time is enough. (We do not find it possible to fully record, in all its details and judicial ramifications] even this actual current event, which motivated me to write this scroll in order to memorialize the wonders of God, may He be blessed, and His kindness, old as well as new (Song of Songs 7:14). The father to the children will make known (Isa. 38:19) its truth; all that occurred to the father occurred to the sons.) Therefore I will not deal [in great detail] with this matter which occurred over forty years ago.

Although I was then young of mind when I began to blossom like the young priests who cracked the skull of an alien who [dared] serve [in the Temple] and, like the pained Levites, I raised my voice (Gen. 39:15), the voice of Jacob (Gen. 27:22), and placed my hand and finger between the hairs [atop the lips] to establish a written memorial (Ex. 17:14) reflecting that event, without deviating to the right or to the left. Because of its wide prominence, I have presented to you, beloved reader, with truth and in faithfulness, only the essence and the core of the destruction [described] in this, my delicate and tender scroll. [I do so] in order to save you from the stumbling block conflicts and to bestow upon you a blessing this day. And that you may know and make known that the incident [which occurred to] my revered father, may his memory be for a blessing, is identical to that which befell me in the incident of the abominable Eibeschuetz, may the name of the wicked rot (Prov. 10:7). They are precisely equivalent. What happened to the father happened to the son. For at the outset they turned him over to the members of the Triple Community to inform them as to what his judgment should be and the nature of his amulets. Afterwards (the aforementioned faction that gained supremacy through falsehood and evil means . . . ) regretted this. . .

Let us now return to where we were.
Before I commence with the story of what occurred to me I will make the truth known that I have not come to this that my name and praise be declared (Ex. 9:16). For I know myself, that that I have no merit at all; not Torah, not wisdom and not greatness do I have as an inheritance that I should glorify or distinguish myself. Would that I not place on my parchment that which will make known my shortcomings. For all the men in the gate of my people know (Ruth 3:11) that I have chosen lowliness. From the day I began to gain knowledge I recognized my [little] value and my defects. Therefore, for this reason alone I do not care and am not worried if my lowliness will become known to all. For it is only truth that I have loved.

On account of three reasons I came to this point to explain my occurrences in writing. I will not refrain from informing my descendants about all my matters to the extent to which possibility allows. And if I do not reach them all, at least I will mention everything I remember as of now and that which occurred to me until now.

Indeed, the strong reason that motivated me to do this is to make known the kindnesses of God upon me from my youth, in spite of the fact that much has afflicted me, it would not be believed if it were told. . . . I was almost in dire trouble (Prov. 5:14), in difficult circumstances and mishaps without even a moment’s surcease. The Lord, may He be blessed, rescued me from them all and aided me until now. He has punished me severely, but did not hand me over to death (Ps. 118:18). . . . I therefore said that I would proclaim your Name, O Lord, to my brethren (Ps. 22:23), my children and my descendants so that I forget not His kindnesses and my soul not forget all His bounties (Ps. 103:2). And amid the multitude I will praise Him for He stands at the right of the destitute, to save [him] from the condemners of his soul (Ps. 109:30-31). The multitude of His wonders that He wrought for me, the most impoverished of my clan, I will make known to a future generation. Therefore listen all who fear the Lord who constantly placed my soul in my hand. My mouth gives praise with joyous language (Ps. 63:6) and with my quill I will express the multitude of His kindness. I will cause praises to be heard aloud, so that the final generation might know; children yet to be born will arise and tell their children (Ps. 78:6). They will praise the Lord for He is good, His steadfast love is eternal (Ps. 118:1, 29) for he has saved the soul of the needy from the hands of evildoers (Jer. 20:13).

And, second of all, to strengthen the hands of the weak ( Isa. 35:3), those crushed in spirit (Ps. 34:19) and broken of heart, who are offended and pursued for no iniquity in their hands as I am today (Isa. 38:19). Upon my neck am I pursued from those who hate me for no reason, those who repay me with evil instead of good harass me for my pursuit of good (Ps. 38:21). May many see it and be awed, and they shall trust in the Lord (Ps. 40:4). May they put their trust in God, and not forget the works of the Lord (Ps. 78:7). May their hearts not falter from the multitude of powerful ones (Isa. 29:5) and from the hatred of the arrow tongued men (Gen. 49:23).
Third, so that the sun of my righteousness should shine forth and nothing rest upon it because of the wicked who have plundered me, my mortal enemies who surround me (Ps. 17:9). They have slandered me, making me odious among the inhabitants of the land (Gen. 34:30), to destroy me with a sword in their hands with their lies and recklessness which have spread to every side and corner. Their shame is throughout the land (Zeph. 3:19). Many of their libelous writings will certainly remain in the world for some time. Therefore, necessity has compelled me to clarify my case before God and man. May my righteousness go forth like a light. Those who are not innocent will be saved (Job 22:30). Truth is my witness; behold it will serve as a vindication for me, for my children and my descendants, may God protect them.

I will commence with the story of what occurred to me in order to recognize the righteous acts of God (Michah 6:5), that all who put their hopes in Him will not be ashamed and all who trust in Him will not ever be humiliated. [He is] a help in distress, very accessible (Ps. 46:2) as I have seen with my own eyes many times.

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Megillat Sefer
, 1752-1766

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Megillat Sefer
1752-1766

Prepared by Jacob J. Schacter, Yeshiva University, USA

[114a] אבר' ישרים והmmoר אמת עלולמ

ביואר ה' התקבצו ושמרו את的应用

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Scripture

 printed in Hebrew.

The Hebrew text is presented alongside the English translation, with the text for the first page of Megillat Sefer 1752-1766 prepared by Jacob J. Schacter, Yeshiva University, USA. The text is presented in a readable and accessible manner, with the Hebrew text on the left and the English translation on the right. The text is formatted in a clear and organized manner, with paragraphs and sections clearly marked. The page dimensions are 612.0x792.0, and the text is presented in a natural and readable format.
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Publisher: Shuldberg Brothers and Partners, Warsaw, 1896Moreshet, Jerusalem, 1979
Archive: the manuscript is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford

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, 1752-1766

Prepared by Jacob J. Schacter, Yeshiva University, USA
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A famous and central rabbi in the Ashkenazi world of his time, R. Naphtali Ha-Kohen Katz (Stepan, Volhnia ca. 1650 – Orta Kiya, Turkey 1719) had a life of wanderings. He was born to a family of scholars and rabbis that was connected to the Maharal of Prague, and was captured by the Tatars as a young child. After he was released he became a great scholar and a practical kabbalist, was rabbi of Poznan, and than rabbi of Frankfurt am Main. The fire that reduced the Jewish quarter to ashes in 1709, which started from his home, ended his career, and he was arrested and had to leave the city. He died near Constantinople on his way to the Land of Israel and was buried there. In his lifetime he published one big book – Semichat Hachamim, Frankfurt am Main 1704-1706. He began also to print Pi Yesharim in Frankfurt am Oder in 1704, but the printing stopped after only the first sheets of paper had been printed. Ten years after his death his ethical will was published for the first time in Berlin in 1729, and again in Constantinople in 1734, this time in the framework of another book of R. Naphtali, which deals with death practices, that are also the topic of part of the will. Since then the ethical will of R. Naphtali Ha- Ha-Kohen Katz became quite popular, and was printed more then 30 times, often with omissions. The last printing is part of a vast edition of the writings of R. Naphtali in 6 large volumes, published by the Jerusalem kabbalistic yeshivah Ahavat Shalom in 2001, in which the text of the will is corrected according to a manuscript.

As noted by the late Shmuel Werses in his seminal study of Hebrew autobiographies, ethical wills are the source of the Hebrew autobiography genre. In the ethical will of R. Naphtali, concerns of identity after death lead to personal testimonies of emotions and acts, making this one of the first early modern Jewish egodocuments.

For further reading:
Avriel Bar-Levav, "When I was Alive: Jewish Ethical Wills as Egodocuments," in Rudolf Dekker, ed., *Egodocuments and History: Autobiographical Writing in its Social Context since the Middle Ages* (Rotterdam: Erasmus University, 2002), 47-59.

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**Citation Information**

Avriel Bar-Levav, The Open University of Israel, Israel
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"The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and evermore" [Job 1:21]. It is written: "Man knows not his time" [Eccles. 9:12] and it is [also] written: "That he will command his children and his household after him" etc. [Gen. 18:19]. These seem like two contradictory verses, because the time might come suddenly, God forbid, "for the days of man are like a shadow that passes away" [Ps. 144:4]. And you should fear a sudden death, God forbid, or dying without being able to speak. [...] You must reproach yourself and mend your ways before death, as was the case with Jacob, Moses, and David, who reproached themselves near their death. But where is all this if one dies suddenly, God forbid? A third verse can decide between the two, in saying: "And the living will lay it to his heart" [Eccls. 7:2], refraining to matters of death. You should prepare a will while you are still in good health, and have your strength. So it occurred to me to do, and so indeed I did. [...] Now, I will charge regarding my wife and my sons, in matters of this world. You, my beloved wife Esther Sheindel, once from our great love we shook hands [usually signaling a legal commitment] together that when either of us should die, the other would pray to die, so that we might quit the world together. I, however, have reconsidered – what have we to do with the secrets of the Merciful One? Certainly, if we live long; additionally, God's decree is fine and acceptable, and a person should not himself spoil [the divine decree], especially if we should not live a long life, Heaven forbid. You hereby have my pardon, and may you live a hundred years, and lay by good deeds your entire life. I completely undo [our compact], as if had never been. If, Heaven forbid, the opposite is decreed [i.e., that you die first], you should do the same [i.e., pardon me, as I have to you], "and the Lord will do what
He deems right" [I Chron. 19:13].
I ask you, my beloved, my faultless dove, not to remarry, so that no man will touch your body again. Although I need not ask of you this secret thing [i.e., an allusion to the Kabbalistic esoterica relating to the problems her remarriage would cause after the resurrection of the dead], because of your piety, and since your place in the World to Come is reserved for you, your share will be as mine and your lot will be my lot. Also, you are too old to be wed. I add these words, however, out of my overwhelming love for you. I will pray for you that you should live.

My beloved, my dearest one, as you were faithful to me during my lifetime in this world, so, too, show to me the mercy of truth [a set phrase referring to actions connected with the burial of the dead] after my death, and forgive me for the sin of not fulfilling my obligation in paying your ketubah [marriage contract] after all the goodnesses that you bestowed on me during my lifetime, and that were [bestowed] by your father, my father-in-law, the gaon [an honorific referring to scholarship], of blessed memory; it is not proper to repay good with evil. We do not deduce what is possible from what is impossible, for I was unable to do so, therefore, please forgive, please pardon, please excuse me, that I may not be called "the wicked man [who] borrows and does not repay" [Ps. 37:21]. [Rather,] may I have repose in the World to Come. Let not "lawlessness grow into a rod of wickedness" [see Ezek. 7:11], and I be called wicked, Heaven forbid. I am certain of your righteousness, that you shall place "we shall do" before "we shall hear" [see, e.g., Exod. 19:8], and forgive me for the rest [of her ketubah payment that he is not capable of giving her].

And now, all that remains after me, silver, gold, jewelry, and movable objects, the household utensils, tin, copper, and the other vessels, whatever the mouth can speak and the mind can think: all is yours, completely and irrevocably, forever. My sons shall have no claim to them, whatever the mouth can speak and the mind can think, not even a single perutah [an insignificant coin]. Let them not think [i.e., that they have any claim to them], for I did all this in honesty. They, or any one of them, shall have no [claim under] oath or oath by implication, or the taking of [a vow containing the word] herem [i.e., an especially severe vow] and a strong manner of possession, against you at all, not even a mere complaint shall they have against you. Even if it were the case that I were to become rich without bounds before my death, for "is there a limit to the Lord's power?" [Num. 11:23], nonetheless, all is yours, in the most effective manner, by the regulation of the Rabbis. You shall have the upper hand, and all your life it shall be yours. What you leave afterwards, [you shall leave] blessing after you; it shall belong to my sons, the beloved and cherished, may God preserve and protect them. I am confident that they shall not think ill of me or of you, for they are righteous and pious, each and every one is equal for good and blessing.

My beloved, my partner, if you wish to live with one of your children in your old age, then choose a good place, where you are certain that you will not be shown disrespect, neither by your son nor by your daughter-in-law, but to the contrary, those who will honor you and treat you with great respect, as it was when you were with me during my lifetime. In my opinion it will be good with our son the rabbi, Rabbi Isaac Katz, who is the eldest among them, and [for]
other reasons. I tend to think, however, that you should live by yourself, that nothing untoward befall you, Heaven forbid.

My beloved, my wife as my own body, go to my grave the eve of every Rosh Hodesh [= new month]. If I merit to be buried where you will reside, then go the eve of every Rosh Hodesh to pray for my soul and for yours. And what will be possible for me to do, for you as well, shall be to pray before the Throne of Glory for you - this I shall do, too.

My beloved, my spouse, I request of you, that you take care greatly that all the stipulations of this will be fulfilled, from the time of my illness until after twelve months [after my death], and my merit shall be dependent on you.

From the first money of the larger debt that is owed me from the Volhynia district, from the very best, two thousand gold coins shall be set aside by the senior gabbaim [officials] for the poor of the Land of Israel. [The monies] collected "as a beam for decorative moldings" [i.e., to the full extent, and from the best of the funds; see BT Ketubot 86a], according to the law of religious trust monies, that are subject to the senior gabbaim. They shall take them by assignatio [= payment order] the sum of two thousand Polish zehuvim [= gold coins] for the poor of the Land of Israel. It is as if it has already been collected by the senior gabbaim [officials] for the poor of the Land of Israel. I, too, declare a ban against the state that will delay the payment, for even a single hour, and if they will delay it, I shall deliberate with them in the World to Come. I am certain that the congregation of the Lord shall make haste to pay this immediately.

Further, the sum of two hundred gold coins shall be given from this debt to the burial society, the grave diggers of the community of Ostrow, and the sum of two hundred gold coins shall be given to the burial society, the grave diggers of the community of Stepan. That is, the communities, may God preserve and protect them, are to give the amount to the society, and they are to deduct them from the state, as the poll tax; and the aforementioned burial societies will purchase with this an ornament for the synagogue that will seem fit to them. This shall be named after them, only let me be remembered for good orally. For I was a gabbai for several years with the aforementioned burial societies. And this shall be a memorial for me.

You, my sons, may God preserve and protect you, with whom God has favored me and given me this - these, my fit sons, are [my] true progeny, excluding the perverse sons [i.e., demonic spawn, resulting from sexual sins, such as nocturnal emissions], who are the plague of humans, with whom I have no truck: "nothing comes of them, nor of their abundance, nor of their wealth; nor is there preeminence among them" [Ezek. 7:11], for they are the spawn of licentiousness. I have already sent them away from me, I have expelled them to a barren region through which no man has passed and in which none dwelled; there shall be their death, and there shall be their burial. They shall not come forth, for they shall not inherit with my sons, and they have no allotment or inheritance with us. Only, I command my fit sons born to me from my fit wife, modest in her deeds, who is called by the name fitting for her, Esther Sheindel, may she live, the daughter of the great gaon, our teacher and master, the rabbi, R. Samuel Shmelke, may his memory be for the life of the World to Come. These are
the rabbis, mentioned by name. The first is the rabbi, R. Isaac Eisik Katz, may his light shine; the second is the rabbi, R. Mordecai Katz; the third, the rabbi, R. Bezalel Katz; the fourth, the rabbi, our teacher and master, R. Samuel Shmelke Katz, and the fifth, the rabbi, our teacher and master, R. Shealtiel Eisik Katz – all of them, "the Lord is over them, they live" [Isa. 38:16]. May they live for the World to Come with their wives, their sons, and their daughters, the fit fruit of their loins, too, along with my son-in-law the rabbi, our teacher and master, R. Saadiah Isaiah, may his light shine; and my son-in-law, the rabbi, our teacher and master, Wolf, may God preserve and protect them, with their sons, and their daughters, the fit fruit of their loins, all as one are good. Listen to me, and live.

[...]
You, my fit sons, may God preserve and protect you, who are knowledgeable in all, who are capable of standing in the palace of the King, the Monarch of the world, excluding the demonic spawn, whom I banished and who descended to the great abyss, only you, whom I mention by name: I request of you, for you are familiar with the will of Jacob, who said to Joseph, "I, when I was returning from Paddan, etc." [Gen. 48:7]. Its meaning is that of the commentary of Rashi: I know that in your heart you feel some animus for me, etc. Nonetheless, he sought that he show him the mercy of truth. I, too, like him in this matter, request of you the mercy of truth, and that you should not in your heart feel any [animus] for me for my not having left you an inheritance of silver and gold, as is the way of the world. For everything is a decree from God. The truth, in verity, [is that in] the will that I made in Frankfurt on Main, I mentioned you for good and blessing. Although I left all that I possess to my wife for her entire lifetime, as is proper and correct, nonetheless, my order regarding you is to leave for each a small Torah scroll with the silver and ornaments that belong to them. And also the books of novellae that I had, I divided into five portions, that is, all the Kabbalah books that I had, the likes of which are not to be found in the world, and the books of novellae of my forefathers, "the holy ones that are in the land" [see Ps. 16:3]; the novellae that I composed; my Talmud, in 4 volumes, the notes from my studies and novellae all my life; the books of practical Kabbalah; and the large amulet, I weighed everything, equally, into five portions, so that each of you would have some keepsake. Also some keepsake of silver vessels; also, for my sons-in-law, I set aside for each what he is to receive, and other things that are as I recall: the kaporet [Torah Ark curtain] that I purchased for sixty Reichsthalers [i.e., a big sum], to set aside for the synagogue for a burial place. A tear drops from my eye when I remember all those, for the hand of the Lord touched me and burned all that I had, including the Torah scrolls. I sold some [of the books] because of those exigent circumstances, everything I prized, the book of my forefathers, Kabbalistic books, two volumes of the Talmud, with three wonderfully remaining in my possession. For I collected individual tractates to bind them like the first ones; also an amulet remained; a book of practical Kabbalah, and six small, and a bit large, Torah scrolls, and some small amount of money that remained shall be for my wretched wife, immediately from the beginning, some perutot [i.e., a small sum] to spend, so that she would not be humiliated, Heaven forbid. For one cannot rely on any person, but only on God's mercies, who is the Judge of widows. I went forth from my domain,
to be a wanderer and sojourner in a not good and spacious land [the opposite of Exod. 3:8], earning a livelihood with difficulty, with my life hanging in the balance, as I awaited gifts from others, with few gifts and much shame, due to my numerous sins. My wife, may she live long, your mother the lioness, was incapable of doing anything and finding any perutah [i.e., not even meager sums], for she was created solely for the service of the Lord. And what was done to me - theft, robbery, and bloodshed - in Poznan and in Frankfurt a. Main, I will write separately, and I will not send their gray hair down to Sheol in blood [following I Kings 2:9], for God shall judge between us. I shall also record the matters regarding Poznan and other matters; aside from this list, every person who has grieved me is forgiven and pardoned.

Now, what shall I do for you, my sons, since a pauper like me has nothing, no money. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there" [Job 1:21], to my eternal home [i.e., to the grave]. I took nothing with me. God is the One who impoverishes and makes rich, who brings down and raises up. Look and see, my father, of blessed memory for the life of the World to Come, not only did he not leave me any inheritance, for I purchased all the books that I had from my forefathers and jewelry for the full price, from other people. Also, he left two sons, my eminent brothers: our honored master and teacher, R. Isaiah of Brod and the rabbi, our master and teacher, R. Aryeh Jehuda Leib, head of the academy and head of the rabbinical court of the community of Plotsk and its surroundings, and a single daughter, she was the modest Marat [= Mrs.] Felka, may her soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life. The situation was extremely pressing at that time, and I did not have food even for a single meal, and I lived in someone's house in a very small room after I had been a captive. Nonetheless, I gladly took them [i.e., the two sons and the daughter] to me. The Lord provided me with respectable livelihood and clothing for them, and I enabled them to study. They are accomplished men, great scholars. I provided them with wives, and I gave [in marriage] my sister to a man, all corresponding to the honor of our family. I did not discredit my family, Heaven forbid, and I cared for them, to travel a long distance to their weddings, when the snows were melting, "that the rushing mighty waters not overtake him" [Ps. 32:6, i.e., becoming a torrent of water]. Additionally, I supported my late brother, our master and teacher, R. Menahem Mendel of Kartchin, my relative, who was impoverished, and [his upkeep] was upon me, and afterwards, when he died, he left three daughters, bereft of all. This touched my heart, and I gave them [in marriage] to husbands respectfully, thanks to God, and I had no mention [in his brother's will, to provide for the daughters]. The Holy One, blessed be He, raised me up and brought me "here, which can only mean kingship" [BT Zevahim 102a, i.e., to my current favorable position]. All my high state [literally, kingship] and my rabbinic standing was gained honestly, thanks to God, unlike other rabbis. I took no great or small action [i.e., to receive the position] in any rabbinate in which I served all those years. Now, in the Lord's love for me, the Lord punished me severely, and honor was taken from the place of its vitality to a bitter place [a wordplay, replacing kaved - liver (see BT Hullin 46a) with kavod - honor], for "I had such great bitterness" [Isa. 38:17], "the Lord has brought me back empty" [Ruth 1:21].
Now, the Lord, "in whose ways my fathers walked" [from the wording of Jacob's deathbed blessing to Joseph, Gen. 48:15], and who nourishes the entire world, "from the horns of oxen to the eggs of vermin" [BT Shabbat 107b], He will send His angels before you to show you the way in which to walk, and the deeds that you shall do. He will raise your esteem with honor, and He will provide for you from His holy hand, that is full, open, and broad, so that you will not need the gifts [i.e., charity] of flesh-and-blood, nor their loans. I, too, shall make a list of what shall remain after my wife's death, for, in my opinion, the Torah scrolls, the [book of] Haftarot [supplementary weekly synagogue readings from the Prophets], and the amulet, will remain, for she will not sell [them] unless there will be great exigency. I will list in a true document, how and what you shall divide, and this list shall be in my wife's possession. I shall cause for you to be helped; If I will have an opportunity in the world of truth after I receive [divine] judgment and all my punishment, I shall pray before the Throne of Glory on your behalf. And if, Heaven forbid, I will be among the rejected [i.e., from Heaven], and none shall remain banished [based on II Sam. 14:14]; nevertheless, one should take heed [based on BT Pesahim 110b]. I will arouse the merit of our holy Patriarchs on your behalf. And as I acted faithfully toward you in this world, "I will maintain my integrity" [Job 27:5, where this maintenance of integrity is only until death] to you, forever - only come to my grave. And as for you, as well: I request of you, too, to act faithfully with me after my death, for the rectification of my soul. Here the dead inherit the living, for "a son confers privileges upon his father" [BT Sanhedrin 104a], and comport yourselves as I command you today in this will. I need not exhort you concerning [the recital of] the Kaddishim all twelve months. The Kaddishim are insignificant in comparison with [leading the] prayer, for the Kaddishim were instituted only for children and the uneducated, who are incapable of leading the prayer, which is not the case for you. Understand, the main thing is to pray [i.e., to lead the prayers] on weekdays, with Kaddish and Barkhu ["Bless," that may be recited only in a quorum and that introduces the main parts of the morning Shaharit and evening Maariv prayers], whenever this is possible. And when you are traveling, whenever it is possible to assemble a quorum, even in the field, in a place not of danger. Then assemble a quorum to pray and recite the Kaddishim. Also study on my behalf, specifically, a lesson every day after prayer, morning and evening, and the study and the Kaddishim will be on my behalf, if there will be a quorum for the Rabbis' Kaddish. If there will not be a quorum, then the study shall be [i.e., accounted as if it were] mine [i.e., to my credit]. Similarly, in all lessons, study with a quorum forever, even after the twelve months; recite Kaddish by yourselves for a fixed lesson, and do not search for a mourner, unless there will be a scholar, a mourner, always in the lesson; then leave the Kaddish for that mourner. Their merit [i.e., that of the other deceased and the Kaddish reciter] will be to my merit, because [this is an] a minori ad majus inference: in the twelfth month, the recitation of Kaddish ceases, because of the custom of not regarding one's father as being [totally] wicked [the underlying assumption being that only the totally wicked spend twelve months in Gehinnom; and the recital of the Kaddish for only eleven months implies that the deceased was not totally wicked]. I forego my honor; to the contrary, this [actually] is to my honor. [Only] in your homes, however, act thusly, but not in public, so as
not to steal [the recitation of the \textit{Kaddish}] from the mourner.

Act in this manner during your mother's lifetime, as well, for she will forego on my account, as she was faithful with me during my lifetime, and it is an obligation to fulfill the testament of the dead [see BT Gittin 15a]. You are obligated to study the entire twelve months according to the order of study that I wrote for the aforementioned quorum and be rewarded. That is, chapters of \textit{mishnayot} corresponding to [the letters of] my name, the tractate of Berakhot with my novellae in my work \textit{Kedushah u-Verakhah}, and the introduction \textit{Semikhat Hakhamim}. Everything is to be studied theoretically and in detail, especially \textit{shitat hilulim} [see \textit{Kedushah u-Verakhah}, pp. 338-426]. You are permitted to respond and correct any simple mistake, and I shall be thankful and not ashamed. Do not fear to respond, but write to one another: "Mathun, Mathun: that makes four hundred \textit{zuz}" [see BT Berakhot 20a]; and do not let the reasoning [for not reciting \textit{Kaddish} twelve months, which would indicate his] being a wicked person, be an obstacle for you [i.e., that would keep you from performing this all twelve months]. For study is not only in order to extricate a person from Gehinnom, but also [is a way] to ascend from one level to the next. Go and see what is brought in \textit{Zohar Hadash}, \textit{Midrash Ruth}: "It happened that R. Zamirai taught Torah to a person, the son of a wicked one, and he became a Torah scholar, namely, R. Nahum ha-Pekoli [= the cotton dealer]. The wicked one came to him in a dream and said to him: 'From the day that my son learned a single verse I was taken out of my judgment [i.e., his punishment ceased]; when he reads the \textit{Shema} my judgment is removed, whether during the day or during the night. When my son was called "Rabbi," my judgment was completely removed. When he studied in the academy and was called "My master," a seat in the Garden of Eden among the righteous was prepared for me. Each day that new teachings in the Torah are recited in his [= the son's] name, I am adorned with the supernal crown of the righteous. Happy is the portion of one who left a son who labors in the Torah in this world." See to what extent a good son exonerates his father. Accordingly, you, my sons, may God preserve and protect you, you are all wise and discerning to study in [a quorum of] ten, and to teach something new, from now on, forever, every day, [as] the \textit{tamidin} [= the daily sacrifices] in their order [i.e., every day]. Do not be deficient in [the mercy of] truth with my soul, which is your principal remaining for the World to Come [see the Morning Blessings]. Only, have the proper intent in the aforementioned study, as well, and set fixed times for Torah [study] and prayer, also on my behalf, and my merit will be dependent on you. For it is an obligation to fulfill the testament of the dead; and the obligation of honoring one's father is applicable even after his death. Set such times forever, and you will also be relieved on the day of judgment of the second question: "Have you set times for Torah [study]?" [see BT Shabbat 31a]. All my brothers and my grandsons, too, shall conduct themselves in the same manner on my behalf, for they were as sons to me. All my close relatives for whom I acted beneficially in this world to the best of my ability, they, too, should act on behalf of my soul to the best of their ability in Torah and prayer.

You, my sons, may God preserve and protect you, after the death of your mother the lioness, too, engage in Torah and prayer in accordance with all that is written above on her behalf. After twelve months, do all this, and have the proper intent for both of us, for my name and
for hers, "for a lamp for one is a lamp for a hundred" [BT Shabbat 122a]. And after I will have received my judgment and received my recompense, so that the accusers will not be able to shut me up and say "Enough," to prevent him [= me], from being an advocate for my sons, I shall gaze upon you favorably, also by the agency of good advocates, our holy forefathers, that you and your children may live long, and be saved from any trouble and distress, and from any plague and illness. In general, just as I acted favorably with you in this world, when I die, I will maintain my integrity with you in the world of truth. For you are all wise and discerning, fearing sin. Be strong and resolute in the fear of the Lord all the days that you live on the earth. I redouble my promise and bequests [i.e., both material and spiritual], be assured that I shall pray on your behalf, and you will aid [one another]. May the Merciful One answer you and hear your cry, for all that you need, from now and forever. Amen.

You, my sons, may God preserve and protect you, this will, concerning both heavenly matters and the affairs of this world, [is written] entirely with the fear of Heaven. Copy it, so that it will be with each of you, bound finely with some book, and it is good for it to be finely bound with a book of piety and ethics. Also send it to my brothers, my grandchildren, the important members of my family, and to all those [living] close and far.

When I was stricken in my body and my money, and my eyesight was taken away, my son-in-law R. Judah Leib and his eminent wife, my modest daughter, the rabbi’s wife, Marat Kila, may her soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life, passed away at an early age, and I drank from the cup of consolations for them - then their son, my grandson, R. Hayyim, shall be as a son to me in every respect, and he, too, shall act towards my soul in the same manner: with greater alacrity than my other grandchildren. And even if some pious person shall desire to copy this will, he shall be permitted to do so, perhaps he will learn from it some reverence, and his merit, as well, shall be dependent on me. This shall be on condition that it is sensed that, in doing so, he does not act haughtily or in order to aggrandize himself; or in order to deprecate anything or for zealousness. For it is written [Micah 6:8]: "walk modestly with your God," and the person who does not think accordingly shall sense this and distance himself from this [i.e., from haughtiness].

Let you be mindful of this will all your days, and read it constantly, if possible, on the eve of every Rosh Hodesh, which would be good. At any rate, [read it] four times a year, namely, on the Fast of Gedaliah, on [the [fastday of] the Tenth of Tevet, the eve of the Rosh Hodesh of Nissan, and on [the fastday of] the Seventeenth of Tammuz; and as an inviolable law, during the Ten Days of Repentance. All of this, besides the yahrzeit [the anniversary of one's death], which is an obligation, both my yahr zeit and that of your mother, and may the fear of Heaven always increase for you. May the Merciful One plant in your hearts love and fear of Him, for all time, Amen.

I caution you to confirm and fulfill everything in this testament, and you are to caution your children, as well, as if I had adjured them to adjure their children.

You, my beloved sons, may God preserve and protect you, the priests who are anointed for greatness, whom I mention by name now as I bless you, excluding my sons from the wicked woman, afflicted with leprosy [i.e., his demonic offspring from Lilith, as a result of nocturnal
emissions] - may they be negated and effaced so that they will utterly not be remembered. Only you, my fit sons from my wife, the most proper of all women, who always fulfilled the will of her Father in heaven and the will of her husband. I come to caution the adults regarding the children, and the children regarding the adults, to conduct [yourselves] with love and with fraternity for each other. Also with my sons-in-law and my daughters your sisters, and my daughters-in-law, be as Simeon and Levi, the brothers of Dinah, that each should rejoice in his fellow's rejoicing, and also the opposite, Heaven forbid. The older ones are to guide those younger than them. The young are to act respectfully toward the older ones, the older by his age, and the younger by his age. Although you are all wise and temperate, fulfill [what is taught by] the amplification of the [seemingly] extra [letter] vav in [Exod. 20:12]: "and ve-[your mother" – to include your older brothers [see BT Ketubot 103a], and be loving and amicable to each other, like a friend of Job [a wordplay: Iyov, and immediately following:], and not become an enemy [oyev]. As regards what you will need from one another, each should help his brothers, including my son-in-law - with good things, words of solace one to each other. Write a letter one to the other, and let each write Torah novellae to his brothers. For you all are great sages. Let each one make known to his fellow his affairs, nature, quality, and standing. [I.e., tell each other] whatever is new with each one, whether good [news] or bad, Heaven forbid, and let not grumbling sunder you apart. I decree, by nidui, herem, and shamta [three types of severe social ostracism, that form the acronym nahash, serpent], that one should not hate his brother, his sister, or his brother-in-law, as you were brethren and loving friends in my lifetime. I especially caution my worthy daughters-in-law who were not raised in my house and did not see our behavior, that they attire themselves in the fear of Heaven and cast off the attribute of pride, and be loving, too, without enmity, to each other, and always speak with one another, the men with the men, and the women with the women. And if anyone were to hinder this, so that one woman would not talk to another, and one man, not to another, because of hatred or bearing a grudge, I will judge and you will be found liable. I greatly request this, be not joined to idols like Ephraim, lest those who sit in the gate talk about them, "and you will find favor [and approbation] in the eyes of God and man" [Prov. 3:4]. I double and triple this caution, and request twice and thrice regarding this secret thing. For peace is great, yea, with every person, and certainly let nothing come between brothers. I shall conclude with the Priestly Blessing, that concludes with "peace." Let you be like the five sons of Mattathias, the Hasmonean High Priest, with one mind, and just as Mattathias their father blessed them, so shall I, too, bless you.

Now, my son, the rabbi, R. Phinehas Isaac ha-Kohen, the oldest of the brothers: continue to grow in Torah, [worldly] wisdoms, and actions, as Isaac son of Abraham, who planted and reaped [literally, found] a hundredfold [see Gen. 26:12], as [the verse's] simple meaning, in his wealth, and in its exposition, in the gates that are found in the halakhah - so, too, may the Lord bless you, that you may plant but not cut [i.e., that your children not die in your lifetime; see BT Moed Katan 9b]; and as Phinehas sons of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, with whom He made an everlasting covenant and gave him his covenant of peace, so, too, "may the Lord grant you peace" [this and below are from the Priestly Blessing: Num. 6:24-
And you my son, the rabbi, R. Jacob Mordecai ha-Kohen, may you be blessed as the Patriarch Jacob was blessed by his father, and may it be fulfilled for you, in general and in detail. May you be highly regarded by the Jews and be highly regarded by the Jews and popular with all his brethren [see Esth. 10:3, and the change from "most of" to "all"]. May your "fame spread through all the provinces [Esth. 9:4], flowing myrrh (mor dror [Exod. 30:23, which BT Hullin 139b sees as an allusion to Mordecai in the Torah] as Mordecai, Bilshan [see Ezra 2:2; Neh. 7:7], the redemption came by his agency, thus, "may the Lord bless you."

And you my son, the rabbi, R. Bezalel ha-Kohen, may you be magnified and sanctified [language taken from the Kaddish] as Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur of the tribe of Judah, who was endowed with a divine spirit, was full of Torah, wisdom, discernment, and knowledge, to join together the letters with which the heavens and the earth were created, and who made the Tabernacle, so that the Divine Presence would rest upon Israel by his agency and be blessed, thus, "may the Lord bless you."

And you my son, the rabbi, R. Samuel Shmelke ha-Kohen, may you be elevated like the prophet Samuel, who was comparable to Moses and Aaron in his priestly service, who judged Israel, and said: "Testify against me, in the presence of the Lord and in the presence of His anointed one" [I Sam. 12:3]; a heavenly voice appeared in his academy, and it said: "I am witness" [see BT Makkot 23b]. He derived no benefit from people [see BT Berakhot 10b], rather, "it is the blessing of the Lord that enriches" [Prov. 10:22], thus, "may the Lord bless you."

And you my son, the rabbi, R. Shealtiel ha-Kohen, the son of my old age, arise and ascend as Shealtiel and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, whom the Lord called "My servant," who was made as a signet [see Hag. 2:23]; and who was chosen by the Lord and built the Second Temple, so that the Divine Presence would rest upon Israel by his agency; and who will recite Kaddish in Paradise, for the [new] teaching that the Holy One, blessed be He, will expound among the righteous and the Patriarchs in Paradise, and afterwards he will bless David, thus, "may the Lord bless you" in His mercy.

And you my son-in-law, the rabbi, R. Saadiah Isaiah, may the Lord be your support [sa'adkha] to aid, sustain, and aggrandize, like the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz, who was comparable to Moses; with whom the Holy One, blessed be He, spoke mouth to mouth; who reproached Israel, and the book was written of his prophecy; who [= Isaiah] saw more than Ezekiel; and who was "a townsman who saw the king" [BT Hagigah 13b], before the King who reigns over kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, thus, "May the Lord bless you."

And you my son-in-law, the rabbi Zeev Wolf, be praiseworthy like Benjamin son of Jacob, who did not know the taste of sin; who died because of a serpent; in whose portion the Temple was built; and who rests between His shoulders {Deut. 33:12}; may he consume the foe and divide the spoil [see Gen. 49:27]; may he further merit to study and to teach, thus, "May the Lord bless you."

You, yes you, including your wives and daughters and all else that is yours, may you be included in this blessing of mine, and may the Lord add to you a thousandfold thus.
My grandson R. Hayyim, may he adhere to the living God and study the Torah of life, may he have a good life, a lengthy life, a blessed life, a life of peace; and may [this blessing] include his sisters.

My brothers, the rabbis, their sons, and all that is theirs, their wives, the sons of my sisters, and all my great and worthy family members, all my relatives, and all my sons-in-law, the excellent rabbis and proper leaders; and all those who acted kindly with me in my lifetime, and will act kindly with my wife, my sons, my grandsons, and all the members of my family, both near and far [i.e., geographically], may they be blessed from heaven by the living God with the blessing "of the dew of heaven" [Gen. 27:28] and the blessing of "the deep that couches below" [Gen. 49:25]. May they be given the blessing of the Patriarch Abraham, that they may grow to multitudes upon the earth, and let there not be calamity and crying in their midst.

May the burial society that will show to me the mercy of truth and will act in accordance with this testament receive a twofold and redoubled blessing, with every gain, salvation, and consolation. May the Merciful One bless each and every one of them in His name. Let not the blessing of a common priest like me be light in your eyes. Blessed are you all, be blessed. With your permission, with your permission, with your permission, my bond has been severed, I am going to my people [i.e., am going to die], while you go to good life and peace; perform commandments and good deeds all your days, a lengthy life with bountiful good and blessing.

So speaks the one who blesses, your father and beloved one, who is worried about standing at the crossroads, that are considered to be dangerous, unescorted, a distant path, taking little; I fall wounded, gone astray, fallen down [the initial letters of the Hebrew words form an acrostic of his name: Naphtali], from a place of action to a place of nonaction. Here, too [i.e., in this world], I did nothing. The one who seeks mercy and compassion, and awaits salvation, to guide me to peace, and rescue me from any enemy and ambush, beasts, and all manner of affliction, from any adversary and evil occurrence on this way. May I merit "to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord, to frequent His temple" {Ps. 27:4}, to shelter under the wings of the Divine Presence, to go from strength to strength, and from dwelling to dwelling in Paradise with the righteous and pious of the world, whose copious tears fall.

Naphtali, son of my master, my great father, excellent in his generation, our master and teacher, the rabbi, R. Isaac, the righteous priest, may his memory be for the life of the World to Come.

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על פי דפוס ראשו דברין תפ"ס (1729), על הוספות ותיקונים מכתב די, הובאה והוספה, ירושלים תשא"א.

ל' תנ"ך והלכה
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ויש להושת פלטמות וחיללה
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וזרכתי אחראי בטומא
והחיות אחראים לברעם וגו
והיכן הוא והיכן אפרסתי לרצות את בני
וזרכתי אחראי בטומא
והחיות אחראים לברעם וגו

ובאתי דומם [לברשים] וסיווה קדים מהנה
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ובشاء הארוך
אזכרו כי במשה ידיעו את טיחו ות健康产业ו כממש הקדוש תheten אל ה' ב”ה [ברכי חיים] ליווד שם באהוב.

ויור רצון שתחגו שאפת חוה.

אותו" ה ואדה" ד שיגדה גנימותר ושיהו" ה "ב"ה.

כל זאת עד אתה זור השם עתה י”ג.

כנגד ש�מו נשבר מצה והם

ויור רצון שיתלב עמו במדת הרוחים בשעתה, שבעה עינון החנשים על החados.

והוא פקודנו ברוחים רומ.

[...]

אזכרו כי באתי את חתי מחר ב”ש את נה𠂽יו [ת”ה] כי ב predecessו ואת צדJonathan תydıין אבדיו.

שאם ימות את הנמצא לבקש [ר”ם] ואת שימעתי במק.

בוא픈 שטף בטם את מ። העלם.

ות坐着 ואחרים שביר חタイミング.

כי בדין עם הדיעה לצה משם.

בודא יאמר כל א됨ו נאותו ויהי בכי גורידה אלה לו קץ והאמנה שאר מגובה

ולא שימל בצלמנ.

והמשל אל לא יימיאו נאותו חלילה.

בכק בנבי מזוותך

שהיתדזה cata מזאה ו.friends.

[ותסכנ] מץ מזדהז臨 יבצבי כל יא חיר.

והרבה זריך הנני מעניםケアאי לא היה.

וככם נועשי ובאהאם חלילה נוגרת הגדולה חליפה.

הו; ידוא בצלני יעשה.

בכשימים מתפתיות יוזן המשלו שליש נפשם לא יאש.

שלא י溘 במר שם אחד עד.

אף שאט’à צייד לבוש על ריא אא מדשיך.

ופותפיות לעולמא תבש.

томלקך ידה חלק ומגלchers יא גורל.

בששו הקשת מיתוח ולאש.

אך גוּריה programas הם מדבר עסב עכי.
וחיי בעדך ואתפל העולם בזה ביי אתי באתי
העולם בחיי אתי
באמנה היית
כאשר חביבתי אהובתי
מותי לאחר
אמת של חסד עמדי
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כתובתך
בפרעון
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אמו
ככתי
אשתך
انتخاب
ולא
בנך
 Rape the mountain, she will.

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 Rape the mountain, she will.

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 Rape the mountain, she will.

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 Rape the mountain, she will.
אברהם אשתו קוניה חכמה, חכמה, חכמה, חכמה, חכמה, חכמה, חכמה, חכמה, חכמה, חכמה.
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בה"ה [הלא תמל] העבודה העקרית בשם
הראשהarbeit ברי צחקinces מ"נ'
והשיג Arbeit רالجزר פרבריכים מ"נ'
והשליש Arbeit בבריאלאלך מ"נ'
ורבני Arbeit גורלה שמקרא האיילוק ב"נ'
והמשמש Arbeit מרואלאי אריצייכים מ"נ'.

כולם ה"לא יخلفו רחל ווהוד האב עם בשים ובניהם ובנניות והזורי הליצים הכשרים ענ כו'.

והתיי Arbeit פוריה צ Schumer ישועיה סעדיה מוהר Arbeit והחתני כה סעanedאה סעדיה מוהר Arbeit והחתני

לкраשת Arbeit בཕולгал Arbeit הנמאשתי Arbeit בנויים היא בהם עם Arbeitם חכמים כל להם.

ולShield Arb wherein arb לבקיא Arb משחר Arb לעשות Arb להשימ Arb ללמד Arb ללמד Arb התורה

ול kıים Arb ל kıים Arb ל kıים Arb ל kıים Arb ל kıים Arb ל kıים Arb ל kıים Arb ל kıים Arb ל kıים Arb ל kıים Arb ל kıים Arb

וההוא Arbeit משיר Arb כן Arbeit הקדוש Arb כן Arbeit הקדוש Arb והיתם Arbeit והתקדשתם כתיב Arb הקדושה

היא הנגד ראו עשת Arb בבאר Arb לבקיא Arb Arb לבקיא Arb לבקיא arb לבקיא Arb לבקיא Arb לבקיא arb לבקיא Arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb لבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb לבקיא arb
י锲ון

building 12th-century walls around the city.
וננה מהאנשה כלב ביניו
כי לשון מינו לא ימי אך כָּאשׁך
טרומ צאלה מבנוא אמי ותוהו אשוב שכן לעלעה
ולכָּלreturnValue עמי שעָרו
האלהים והחוכרים הממשיר מיִמרֶם
(Bytes no.101
Arieh Ziv)
כי לכל ספריט שלחדי ממאובני המצות קָדֶשׁ כָּפסָח אוּשׁיָם חָרוּם
אָף ששתינו שְּבִי אֲשֶׁר אוּשׁיָם חָרוּם כָּבוֹד מוהר" יִשָּׁעְיָה מְבָרָא
והרָב מוהר"ל אַרְיֵה יְוהֵי לֵי ר"מ זָּבוּב"ד קֶפַּלנָאק אֵנֹפֵי
בות את אתי איה ויתון הקגבינה פָּרָת פַּשְּׁקָא הָעָבָב ישנה איה חייה דועה לְאַזָּא חָאוֹת
אורית משכנתה בחזרה קים מאר אתי חטב
ותפי כל זה הקגבינה אליח בשומחוה
וזה; שונים לפרטתם והלש cinéם בבזדות נהיה למלדו
הנהמה אאָסְיָם נְבֶכֶרֶים לְומֵיָים גְּדוֹלִים
נהתיה למב שסיים
אות אחדות נתח לאשה
הלכ ליפ כרָבְדִים משוכחתו ליא פָּסָנָא למספחָה חלידוה.
וטפלתי עומכתי ליש עול ההנהמה לדריך רְהוּקה
بعث התבות שלגינה משות לשקיו מים ריבъем חייג' ומי.
וזה את אתי ההנהמה מורה"ה מנהמ מְעָלֶלֶד פְּקרָאָשׁי קָרְבַּיָה שִׁדוּּה עַכנ גָּדוֹל וייה מַוסָּל עַל
 Vương כה מעת נהיה שולשת בחזרה פגון לבי
נהתיה לאוש認め בבזדות ת"ל (תחתית לאל)
לא איה לי שוממ רEnviar
הקד"ה גולגל ויביאני עו חלד והמלכות
וכל החרבון שליו צי בתשורה (ת"ל) לא כָּא שריאי רבני
לא עשתה שומ טעוסלה דחלח שבון בשומ הרבח שתייח י TORTH אואח השגיה.
וננה באחתה ה'; אואחי יירبي יגנכי יגנכי חכבר ממקום וייהה למקום מרדה
כים מרי לי ריקר והשביון ד"ה
וננה האלימים אשר התהלכל חאורתי ל الفنيINESS אשר ויוהו מקורי ראומא דע ביצי כָּנין
אוה ישלת מְלָכָאָיָי לָפַיכָם חזורתי לכס הדרד אשיר ללייב או ואית המעשה אשר אישון
והוא יורו קרבנבה בכבוד
והוא יירפי לאכמה בכבוד מְיוֹדַוָה הקדושה המקלה בתוחנה והרוחבה
שלא מְצוֹר ליידי mutually בין ושם ולא ליידי הלוֹאמה
ואני השה נג כר רשימה מה שירשא אוחרי מים אשר
יכ יושרי לדריך הכפר תורין הצָּט'ה(ר'ertos[?]):וֹקְמִי מִשְׁמוֹת
cילא médecin או לא ליידי נזק דָּוִל.
אני מצה אתочек על הקדישים כל י"ב חודש.
אמות הקדישים מחן ותועד עד היום והפיללת
כי הקדישים לאとのこと אלא בשכלי התנוקות במぎ האדרים שאך יולדים לתחפלים ולפי העדות
מה שניאן וכל האמונה
התקווה העיקר להתחפלות בחול להדגים בכרך כל דמעות שהיתה באפשים
ובשחתנו בברר כל דמעות שהיתה באפשים ולהות את פנים שהיתה שקרות סכנה.
ואו לא יהיה נגון של ידיה הלימודים שיל.
וכי כל השיעורים שלתהליך בצנין על פי כות א原則 י"ב חודש
callocר הקדיש scrambled על השיעורים התקבץ לא התפיש אחר אבל
אינו לא שוריד יותר למו כהוكة שלהויה או אכל
ואו לא חיה תקיויה הוואו ויודעוה הליה.
כלה והותר בנהויה י"ב שופקתי לטר קדיש בשכלי触摸 שלן לחשט לאבדו רשת.
אני מולא על בבריר
נגוררו זו י"ב והומר בבריר
כ Technician התנהגו כ ROLE הפרידים
ולישל ל zobowiąz את האלב.
ואף בויחי אמאן התנהגו כ
כי דוא אליחו גבר אנואר יהודיה האמנים את בריי
ולצע לעיון_Port צבי.
אתי מתוך ל⊱ ליי י"ב חודש סדר יום הלימוד שלפי יום והנהרי ז europé
влекатель פאר מישון סדרי שמ
מעסתי ברוך עם והושם בחיבור קורש והרכה
והקדמות מפילות את בטוס.
הכל הלימוד בינוינו, הפרשו שישת הלילות.
ונחן לכל רשות לחקוק ולנהגי וחוזי שיאמרו ביעלמה,
ואדחה ולא א보호.
אך לא יבוחל ולהשיב.
ודיבר יד, והם.

למזרז מוח אובל אבר וחוזי חוויה.
ואל תוחה לכל האמנים אולא לחששו לפישל הלƤן, לחרר הלימוד והנה לברך ליזה אלה מتخاذ הבם.
ריק מג לו חינהו מדריך וברוח.
לפק והכי חובהו והחר חזר רוח.
מעש דריב ודימרי שילמה חזרה לחוזהו בן בררה ריפויה וגייתו חלמי חמב.
והוז לבר גו חפוק.

וכו לך זה הולך נשיט החלום אמר לך:
וניהים דריך ברויה — אפקו יד מני דינה.
כני דריך קיריה שמעה — סלקן ידרוא יבר ברมะ ברויה דמנה בדה.
כני דריך יי בר — ענברר דני מגל כל.
כני דאמסתא וקור לה בר — אתנונור אוריס ברנו דוני דבר.
וכל זאמה קדרבניה ואפרתיה משמיה — מעשרים ילו ברמעה דמידראה אשתיגר.
ואזאה יאמה וחוקלן דשבר ברה דלעג בואיסה באלה תעמה וולך "זעך אeah".
ודיר חמל בראיב מק דבר.

לכל אתך ביני "זי הלכל חכמים ורגבים לוער חלמי魍יטי והולך חזרה בר.
מעתה עד תולע כל ים חזורי סדרה.
[השל] של התאם עם תغذيות לא החסר.
וזאם חקור קיריה לוכל טלולע הבא.
ורח חכמים ומברך כל ח综合治理ו.
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וכלו חכמים ובמרך כל ח综合治理ו.
וכלו חכמים ובמרך כל ח综合治理و.
 מתングל המלך ופשרו ומקל גנס ומדהילה.
כלל הדבר באשרkiye ביימה סמואלה chacem בו העולמות
וא לא נגועmasked והぉות מחכמים יברעם דיאקנונ
כי כלולאם ההם ברגנום עמוק יראות חכם.
וזהו יושבתו ביצחון לה כלים ואחר אתם והימים על העדונה.
encerו הבהרה וה_attribים שלה לפני להם שחקלא בעדם,
 căngו הבהרה וה_attribים שלה לפני להם שחקלא בעדם.
ואתם ימים בנעי לעורות.

והתרם הזה יענה אתכם ושמוע בכל עקרותיכם כל העקרות שעלה מעטה ודו ט initComponents.

אתם בינייכם.

הFormGroupเอาות במליל דMediaPlayer או بغסקת הצלות הוה כלול היה יירה שמימה.
ינווקו אתו והויה את כלו או תואת מאמומדפק פה צל איהו ספר,
ונבו כלית ממרוכע או צל ספר הירואו ומדמה.
גנ תשלוח לאותו ולבנדיי ולבנ משמחת השושבוחות ובלכל קרובות והרוחות.

וכאמרו שבלקלחתו בגופדם ובלקהל מעמור עדני
שהכלל הצלות כל השניב החות יצליוב’ ר יהודה לייב.
ואשתו השוסבה היא בת הצלונה מרתק קלאה אשר
ושחרים כללים חסינים.
ואר גנ גנכי רב חיים וייה בול כלל זבר,
וניתמר סכין יבר מחקר המחיא מובור מימר מ.InputStreamReader.
ואף אם אמרו אחר ירצה ירצה רבים הצלות ומדמה atmosחון בר.
 KeyValue תואר שרגנינו בבראש יצלאי שלמה ויררה לא impoverי אותי ואלאגו אתו בזרד אלוקות.
ותдерגו לכל מע אולקיך תפוכ.

ותראי החיה ואשר לכל בולם תtrerושי והתריחק מזה.

ותרטי זו התיה בגנד טינכהו כל מעכים,
והתקראו אתיה תמיי אם פספר לכל עצור ראש חודה מע טוב,
ונפל’ פ [שלג כל פנים]’ תפוסים בשעת
והם בצומ הצלוות בברש בברש ראש חודה עכיפי בר’; התמאה.
ובחקו הם יונכר בשרישה מי תשובה.
והכל הצלות היואפרים zeigt או חובר
וה צי לועז์ שערו של אמסם.
והתמיי יחוס תלב ירח שמימה.

ותרתם הוה טושתכלב מסתום והוזר את כל חומם אמן.
על כל דברי הזוות בושת את מותיררכם לאשרoklyn ושחיינו גם לאתיים.
כליא השכונות שישבון לבליה.

אתם אוחרים בן ישו’ המצותים למשטרה ולהודה.
אשר דפרים שעשתו על תברכת אחת.
לארוקם בן המרשה ובוגר העתים יצלה וימתן מז צלוכל זכר וייקוד.

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ברח ברור ובנינו מצא את התפקיד השוכן במעלות האדם שמעלה תלמידים זקנים ושכירים ב糧ו ברגים וברוחון.

쳐ם לישראל בעננים וסמכים ועל הרגים.

נ옹ה על נחלות ותгеול על לוחות.

ויתקנו נזרך מ.TestCheckולים וסוכלים כדי יקירו חזר ושוב.

ואם שיע들도 והלכות ואישות חלומות עם החוקים והחברות.

בכל הלכות והמגעים והפוטרים ואישים יחיו.

ולא יתעדים עוד חירום.

כזו ששלח שיבא עץ זית עומד ו.ORDERattery.

והם שיעדו בים ו⎤ות ואישות שיעדו בטור תיל והם שיעדו על כל.

כזה לתовать לדר חלילות.

כזה פשיטן בברר ושלום בחירות ונ明らונא.

כזה פשיטן בברר ושלום בחירות ונ明晰ונא.

כזה פשיטן את טב ושלום בחירות ונ明晰ונא.

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כזה פשיטן בין תמים את החברה בין דברי שומר, בפרשת: "ק[לא הים] שלחנו את המ飾 בחיות חיות."

ואין אסיפות חכמה חכמה משמשות בלוחות.

וחתבות חומשי וביתתינו מסדרי והם שומרים על כל.

ואשר ברך מחמשי אביי בן להםقدב ומאכלי.

חיה בינו חרח רכז פﺫית אתו חָכֹמִיỷי קָוָמִיを与יה.

חיה הולך ונגור חוזה מהחברה וה坌חלים.

כיצד קב אברא ה(ord זֵר וּמֶזָּא מַאָה שְׁעִירָם, כְּפָשַׁט - כְּפָשַׁט)

ל commodioso - בושריוMichelle בחלקה.

כזביורה - בושריו Michelle בחלקה.

וחותעי לא חתすべて.

לכסים בן עליון בן אמור חכמים אישר לחר - הזיר עלגו ונהו זברון שים -
שלום

אוותה בֵּינֵיה רַבָּי יֹרֵכָדִי עִיקָב הָכהֹנָה

הָכהֹן כְּשָׁר עַמָּר עִיקָב אֲבָנֵי נָּאוֹב

יְרוּשָׁלַיְמָה בְּךָ בַּכּוֹל הַמַּחֲזוֹת

וֹתִיָּה גַּזְלָה לִהוֹדוֹדִים וּרְצִי לְךָ אֲלֵי

וְשֵׁמוּנֵי הָכֹלָה בְּכָל הַמַּחֲזוֹת

רָאוֹ נְגָם רְחוּב

כְּמִרְכָּד בֵּלְשָׁן אָשֶּר בָּאָה גַּאֲוָה עֲלֵיה

כְּנִיְכָּרָבָא

ואוֹתָה בֵּין הָרָבָּי רַבָּי בֶּצַלָּלָה הָכהֹנָה

תַּנְוָדֵל וּתָהֲקָדְשָׁן בְּבֶצַלָּלָה בְּךָ בְּפַרְעֹה דָּוִד לִפְתַּחְיָה

אַשְׁרָה הָיָה יָדוּעֲשׂ ויָדֵן עַל הָיָה מַלֶּא בַּחֲרֹרֶיהָ בַּכּוֹלָהֶיהָ וַיַּעַדֶּה

לְצַרְחָא אַוָּהָוָה בְּכָל שְׁמוֹי אֲוֹרִי

וּעָשֶׂה הַמַּשָּׂכֶנָה שִׂירָנָה עָלְּיוֹ בֵּי יִשְׂרֹאֵל מַעֲבָרָה

כְּנִיְכָּרָבָא

ואוֹתָה בֵּין הָרָבָּי רַבָּי שְׁמוֹאל שְׁמַעְלַה כָּכֹתָן

תָּסִיְרֵם שְׁמוֹואַל הָכֹתָנְיָא אַשְׁרָה הָיָה שְׁקִילָהּ כְּמַשָּׂהָהוּ בַּכּוֹלָהֶיהָ בַּכּוֹלוֹתָהֶיהָ

אַשְׁרָה שְׁפֵאָו אַיִּשָּׂרָאלוֹ

אַמָּרָה עֶן בִּנְדֻגָּהְיָא וּנְבָדִית מַשָּׂיוֹת

וּרְאוּפֵיָה תָּבְרֵי קוֹל בְּכָל מַדָּרֵשׁ בְּרָא אָסֻר

וּלָא הָיָה גַּבֶּהוּ מְבָרָבָהוּ כְּא מְבָרָכֵה הַיָּה 통ש וְתָהֲשֵׁר הַיָּה

כְּנִיְכָּרָבָא

ואוֹתָה בֵּין הָרָבָּי רַבָּי שְׁמַעְלַהוּ שָׁאָלָלָיָא כְּרַיֵּי הָכהֹנָה בְּכָל וּמְדָרָא

תָּנְוָוָהוּ וּתָהֲקָדְשָׁו בְּשָׁאָלָלָיָא וּרְוָבָלָיָא בְּכָל שָׁאָלָלָיָא פָּחָה יְוָה

אַשְׁרָה כָּרָיָה הֵם עָבָרָו הַחוֹשֵׁם כְּמַשָּׂהוּ לַסְּפַע

וּגְבֹּרָה לֶהֶם בֵּי שִׁוָּהוּ שִׁחמָה בֵּי יִשְׂרֹאֵל מַלֶּא עַל יִו

וּנְעָתִי לֶמֶרְחֵי קְרֵיָה בֶּן עֵזוֹ אַל נְאַמָּה שִׁירֵהוּ שִׁירוּשׂ הָכֹדָר בֵּרֵךְ הָיוּ בֵּי הַצְּדָקָיָהוּ הָאֲבָבֻתָוּ לַעֲדָה בֵּן עֵזוֹ

וּאָוָה כְּכָרָבָא וּדְוָא —

כְּנִיְכָּרָבָא אָוָל בְּרָחָמוּת

ואוֹתָה תַּתְיָה הָרָבָּי רַבָּי תְּשִׁיעִי יִשּׁעִי הָמְקוֹמָה הָיָה בָּסָעְדָרָה עַל זָרוּ עַל עַל

חַזְּפֵרָא כְּשִׁיעָה בְּכָל אוֹמְרָי הַנְּבִיא

אַשְׁרָה הָיָה שְׁקִילָהּ כְּמַשָּׂהָהוּ בְּרַבָּיָיו רַבָּיָיו שְׁמוֹאֵל מְצֻבָּרָה עָמָו הָכָּבָּד הֲפָה אֲלָפָה

וּרְוָכָה אֲלָי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנַחֲמָה סְפַר בִּנְבָאָהוּ

וּרְאוֹה יִוָרָה מְזִיקוּאֲלוֹ הָוָה בְּכָר כָּשְׁר לַפְּנֵי מִלְכָּי מְדָלִיָּהוּ הָכָּבָּד

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כְּנִיְכָּרָבָא גָּאָלוּ

ואוֹתָה התַּתְיָה הָרָבָּי רַבָּי מְדָהוּ רְבֵינוֹ יֶבֶס אֲבָכָל

תַּתְיָהוּוּ בְּכָל מִלְכָּי יְבָשָׁא וְעָבָרָה שִׁלֶּט הָבָּרָהוּ וּרְאוֹה
ונכון גם התמיד נתמך ונתמך ונתמך ברכה בצורתו של רבים钟 זרים, ומשם, זה יוסק ברכה עליכם בכל עמיד.

ונכד יריב ישע ברוים, ישם ברוים, ישם בראש, ישם על שולח, וחוזיון בכל.

אותי הרבות וברכות וכל אשר להם ושיהם בתוכם אחד מהשלמות הנוגשים וה_Errובים.

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וכל אשר יברך את אתה את ביתך ואתל את חסכתך ואת שיתות ובני בנדני,

וכל בני משתחו התורכים והורוקים.

יתברך Millionen חיות ומשם מבית את всем ברכה ורותเผה.

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ולא לייה פריך צוותה מבית.

וה апрהם קוריש אתו גנול אתו חסשת את אמת.

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ברוכים אתם לכלכם בחרים חיות.

ברשותם ברשותכם ברשותכם נתפרד הזהיל.

ונבג על כל.

אותם תלמי חולים טובים ולאשלום.

ותגמל מנוחה ומנשימים טובים כל יו חכים.

והם אורות בו לכלם בחרים חיות.

יכול דבר המבך.

א犏ים ואחיבים ההוא אלגומ על פרשת דרכי אשר הוא בשחרת שכנם.

והכול בלו חלוה ארוחה חיותו הוא קולו.

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וב כל הסעשרות השכלה.

השאול תסד ותורמות וalezaו אותו.

לזרוקים לשלמים והענילן מקום כל איש ואורו והיזה רועה ומקל מטי פרענות.

ומכל שיון ופעמים בין בורו.

ואמד האוהב בחלק או בחלק בחלק יהוה חכום חכום חכום שכננה.

וללך כליל אל חל מיישב להישבה בן עון עם זרייך וה💖י עולמ

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שליש
בדמעות
המעתיר
נפתלי
בנ לאוהני אבי הנבון הפורפוג בדורי
נורתי ורבינו הרב רבי יצחק כ"נ
זכרונו לברכה לכל הנעורים הנה


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Introduction

In the late seventeenth century, Beila bat Jacob Perlhefter prevailed upon her husband, Issachar Baer ben Judah Löw of Eibeschutz, also known by Beila’s family name as Baer Perlhefter, to write a book in memory of their seven deceased children. So Beila informs the reader of that book, Sefer Be’er Sheva, in her introduction to it. Baer, a known Sabbatean, was a teacher of the Christian Hebraist Johann Christoph Wagenseil, then a member of Abraham Rovigio’s circles in Modena, Italy, and after leaving there, was involved with publishing interests and served as a rabbinic judge in the couple’s native Prague. For the most part, Beila traversed Europe with her husband, but thanks to their separation for a time, in the late 1670s, while Baer was at Wagenseil’s court in Altdorf, she has left a series of learned letters she wrote in both Hebrew and Yiddish to Wagenseil himself and to her husband. These were first introduced the Early Modern Workshop by Elisheva Carlebach during its first gathering in 2004.

Nathanael Riemer of the University of Potsdam has studied the nine extant manuscripts of Sefer Be’er Sheva and identified various stages of editing. Eight manuscripts, most from the late eighteenth century, are based on a single early version of the book. The ninth, owned by the Oxford Bodleian, and written by Beila and Jacob themselves, represents a second version, apparently re-edited for publication, although it never was actually printed. This manuscript (Ms. Oxford Bodleian 148) includes the version of the introduction appearing here, which was rewritten by Beila after Baer finished writing the body of the book.

Beila’s introduction does not conform to conventional definitions of “autobiography,” and is certainly not a platform for examination of the self. It is rather, “autobiographical writing,” a term encompassing a much broader range of
writing about oneself, occurring in a variety of contexts. Such definitions and distinctions can be examined by briefly comparing Beila’s introduction to *Sefer Be’er Sheva*, standing as it does at the margins of the genre, to Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller’s indescribably better known “Megillat eivah,” often considered one of few examples of a work approaching “true autobiography” by Jewish writers in this period.

Broadening the generic boundaries of autobiographical writing can also allow for the insight that while Beila’s introduction is not, by almost any measure, comparable to Glikl’s memoirs, there is much to be gained by comparing the two women themselves: highly literate contemporaries, from central Europe, who maintained large households and then, struck by depression and loneliness, answered an urge to write. Indeed, Beila’s book of mourning as a memorial to her dead children suggests a mirror image of Glikl’s bequest to her children, a book meant to facilitate their familial memory.

**Bibliography**


Ms. Oxford 148  (Jerusalem film no. 22440)  
כ"א קספורד בודלי 148

2v: [col. 1] “The sun rises and the sun sets, And glides back to where it rises.” (Eccl. 1:5) That is \textit{teitsch}, for what King Solomon, may he rest in peace, said: “The sun shines and it rises early. And in the evening it sets and re-enters the gates that it steals into in the evenings, its light shines there, inside.” He means that as soon as the sun sets, so its light is not lost, but rather is turned away from this world and shines in another [land? – ms. unclear], as one explains these words so that common people will understand them. For the arrangement is used by all wise book authors, that they do not write something that is well known to everyone, and [merely] appears beautiful to the eye. So, then, how would the great wise man Solomon write such a proven matter in the beginning of his book? In exactly that manner, one must also understand the other verses, that he wrote before these, and said, “these are the words of Kohelet, Solomon son of David, King in Israel: I now see, One generation goes, another comes, but the earth remains the same forever.” (Eccl. 1:4) That means that one generation goes away from this world, that is to say, a family dies off from this world. And another family is born, but the earth remains eternally. [col. 2] Now this is, once again, a matter that is well understood by everyone. So, one must understand that King Solomon, may he rest in peace, wrote such matters only as an allegory, which has a meaning for three transitory periods, that which was happy in its beginning, as when the sun shines on the land with its bright light, and in the end, the happiness is again upturned. As the sun whose shine sets, as soon as it sets, its light is not lost but rather is only covered by the sky. And in morning, it shows its light again in the world, pushing away the dark clouds. Therefore, a person in a unstable period, whose happiness has set, should not despair and think s/he is guaranteed sorrow or happiness. Nothing is eternal, every time period reverses itself. After a [period of] happiness a [period of] sadness generally follows. And after the sadness, a
consolation or happiness quickly comes. Such times can be compared to a family that dies off from this world. And a new, happy family is created. As we shall write in detail with God’s help. One must also understand that with these three verses that I recounted above three different periods are distinguished in the human life. [ms. unclear] be only that the person lives well. Or lives badly. Three [types] of people are distinguished in this life. That one says I was born living well, I have inherited happiness [2r] and riches from my parents and parents’ parents, for they were all rich, and highly esteemed. Our good fortune (mazal) is therefore providential, that we have such wealth and status, one atop the other. And conduct themselves in this supposedly very courtly manner, as if it were a disgrace that they would occasionally offer a “good morning” or “good evening” to a poor person, or return his greeting. And they converse with them in the streets very little, for they seldom stand or walk or sit with them. Das macht their wealth and the happiness of their children. They know nothing of mentioning God’s punishment (even) once. For they have never once experienced such punishment, because of this they speak haughtily with a pretentious mouth. And they have little fear of sin and their prayer is therefore not diligent or devout as the prayer of the poor, or of those punished by God who pray to God from the bottom of their hearts and cool themselves with such prayer as if they were with God Himself, appearing to speak and console themselves with such (external?) prayer, hoping that God will give what they ask of Him. However, many wealthy people think that this means that all the good fortune and wealth follow [them] and think whoever has this is master of the earth. [ms. unclear] But according to this fantasy, he can [col 2] never have enough money and respect. The more he has, the more he wants, and supposes that his wealth and status will be his and his children’s eternally. Therefore, King Solomon comes to warn the rich and make him understand that this wealth and the honor men give him will not be directed at him forever. That when he has already collected so much wealth and honor, it does not help him at all, it has no lasting value. And it cannot protect him from death, for he must leave everything behind him, he cannot take it with him. And it is also not certain that his children will have wealth and honor. Of this King Solomon says: “The words of Kohelet,” that is teitsch for, “these are the words or the speech of the Head Collector, who has collected the wealth and all the honor and wisdom from this world and says: ‘I was king in Jerusalem’(Eccl. 1:12), who had dominions from the rising of the sun to the other end of the world where the sun goes down, and I see now in my old age that all is foolishness, for I cannot enjoy such [things] in the grave. And had I collected such for my children, well, I cannot be near [them] forever, so that I could lead them in their riches and have an eye on them all the while. For, in all times, the order of this world is that the older generation goes from this world and a new [3v] generation comes in place of the old that dies off. And who knows if my children, like me will be so sensible or fortunate, that they their honorable wealth and honor will possess. Therefore, a person should suffice himself with what God has given him through honest business. And diligently ask of God that he and his people should all be healthy and have good happiness, so that he and his children always have their livelihood so that they can serve God with joy. The second interpretation (meaning) is understood through the third verse that Solomon said here in
Kohelet he said, “And the sun shone,” he wrote this verse counter to despairing people, who are divided into three parts. The first part are the rich people who end up in poverty, they are like the son that shines in the morning and goes back under in the evening. Such people think that it cannot be that they would be left in their poverty. Rather, they adopt for themselves stealing or robbery and other evil ways so that they can recover their wealth; these pay no heed if God has already disavowed them. The second part are people who pass their lives in this world with suffering with which they are punished by God. And, one finds one part of them who do not meekly accept this from God but say: “Am I the greatest sinner, that God punishes more than other people?” or say: “I do not know that I have committed a great sin, therefore I do not know what I should consider such a sin. And I know that many evil people who do very well; have my piety and charity not helped me? I could have saved [myself the trouble].” So he thinks that God should have made him wealthy, as Job thought that God should pass no bad judgment on him, because of which he said: “I am innocent, without iniquity.” (Job 33:9) This is teitsch for “I am immaculate, turned away from impurity and have no sins and You, God, have nevertheless punished me and you frequently twist justice and let the righteous and evil alike do well, and frequently you allow the evil one to do very well, and the righteous does badly, meaning you are not properly precise in your judgment, and you have [ms. unclear] my name and that I am called is Job, but you meant my name is “enemy” (the word is transformed by switching one Heberew letter, from יָוִיב to אוֹיב),” that is teitsch for “I am [ms unclear] and I have served you faithfully [ms unclear] such [3r] faithful service not understood. Thus God answers him: “You foolish Job! Pull your hair from your head, you will not see two hairs growing from one follicle, for each hair has grown specifically from its follicle, so that the force of blood would not flow to them too strongly. As I have not erred with these hairs that I would let two hairs grow from one follicle, how would I then err between you and another man? You well deserve a greater punishment than you have received, however, because I see that your evil words come out of great pain, that you spoke while suffering from agonies, so I forgive you those words, for I do not punish men for the evil words that they say to me out of their pain or suffering. But you wonder about with regard to the evil person’s happy days, so you must know that Godly matters cannot be fully grasped, for they are very deep and difficult to understand. You must study better if you wish to understand the justice of such laws.” Now, some poor people think likewise, also, frequently, those with no doubt in God. Therefore, King Solomon comes to answer all three, men like the rich and the poor and the punished, by means of a verse and writes against wealth: “and the sun shines,” that is teitsch for the sun casts light, that is to say, the one whose wealth is gone, should not wonder that the richness has departed from him, [col. 2] for man is compared to the sunshine, that shines early in the morning and goes underneath again in the evening, and often is obstructed in the middle of the day. One should not, however, understand from this that the sun has left when it descends. Rather, it shines its light, covered in its house, which we cannot see in this world, because of the sky that is in front of it. Therefore, in exactly the same way, when the rich man has already been lost in poverty, [it is as if] his sunshine has descended. So he must not think that he cannot
be helped. Rather, he must know that his good fortune still secretly lights blessed stars, and
good fortune is still with him, that the sun can shine again brightly for him. When he only
accepts this virtuously from God, so it will no longer happen this way in his life. So from this,
one must understand, that God does this for his good, (therewith/so that), his sins or the sins
of his parents or other people’s sins will be atoned, while He has not punished those who
should turn away from their evil deeds. If he the power to punish them otherwise, for God
always punishes the good whom he loves. Therefore his light shines clear and bright in the
Garden of Eden. In this way, it can be understood that the people who are constantly poor or
otherwise suffer God’s punishment in this world, can always hope for joy and happiness in
this world, or they should wait for their complete happiness in the Garden of Eden. About
this, King Solomon, may he rest in peace, made his analogy and said: “As soon as the
sunshine no longer shines, so is its light not lost, but rather lights in heaven, more brightly
than it lights this world.” It happened in the same manner to me, Beila son of the officer, the
honored Rabbi Jacob Perlhefter z”l, from the holy community of Prague, wife of the learned in
Torah, highly esteemed, our teacher Rabbi Baer Eibeschutz, rabbinic judge, may his maker
protect him, here in Prague, the unstable times wreaked havoc and the unfortunate hours
surrounded [me] entirely, and my good fortunate and happiness that I had (with) my
children was overthrown , and I continue daily to endure their death and suffer its pain. Four
boys and three girls who were born to me were lost to me in the deathly time. And, so great
was my sorrow, I could not tell out from in. And my husband consoled me and said: “Leave
off your misery and mourning already, one must accept God, what God sends to men. And
God does not accept the great amount of crying and mourning that man does over the dead.
One can learn this from King David, may he rest in peace, whose first son whom he had from
Batsheva died. So he went into the bath and ate and drank and was entirely cheerful. While
beforehand, during the child’s illness, he had been very faithful, and fasted, but after the
child’s death he was cheerful. For he said: ‘While the child was ill, I prayed to God that He
would make the child healthy again; however, the child died, so I did not find it appropriate
for a person to mourn more over him, for I cannot make him alive again, and the moaning
and crying will be understood as if God had given him an unjust judgment, and all men must
die in the end, so I will come to him in the world to come. So there, I will be able to be happy
with him.’ So you too can well learn from King David, that one should not mourn for dead
people. And how can you understand these matters better than King David, on whom the
holy spirit rested, understood them? Therefore, let your mourning come to an end and be
consoled. And if you think that our sins are a cause, as a worthless man who does not
understand says and scolds his fellow: ‘You have no children because of sin’ and thinks that
he does not have many more sins than his fellow, and means to say that God loves him more
than his fellow. And this understanding is false, for sins do not come to kill children, which
our sages indicate in the Gemara (in Moed Katan) and say: “Children, life and food are not
dependent on merit, but on fortune (mazal)” That is teitsch for “the birth of a child, or
upbringing of children, and long life and livelihood are not dependent on piety or wickedness,
but rather each comes according to its luck.” Be he a pious or an evil man, so it may be that he has no fortune for these three things, mentioned above. It can often be that the same man is an evil man, but has good fortune in all these three things; with the upbringing of children, and long life, and wealth. . . . .

[4r, col. 2] And my husband brought me many such proofs and analogies and stories from the Gemara and Midrash about children’s death, as will be found in this book, with God’s help. And his words gave me comfort. So I pleaded with him daily about this, that he should write his words down for me, so that I or others who are laden with pain or mourning could gain consolation from this book, or achieve replenishment. But my husband was busy with writing his [5v] three other books, which he wrote in the holy tongue. One is his Sefer derashot (Book of Sermons) that he preached here in Prague on Sabbaths. He gave this book his name, Alei Be’er. The second books is a commentary on Sefer h ovat halevavot that he called by his name Be’er lah ai ro’i. The third is called by his name Be’er mayim h ayyim; it describes the sanctification of the month with all the skills that one can understand well by means of the learned study of the stars. Because of these compositions, he did not want to give time to this teitsch writing. But I pleaded with him so long and reminded him of the words of our sages who said in Ethics of the Fathers, “‘Be careful with a minor commandment as with a major one, for you do not know the reward of a commandment.’ (Ethnics of the Fathers 2:1) That means that a person should be as careful to perform a commandment that is little regarded by people, still he should perform it, so while it is all for the good that he is occupied with performing a difficult or esteemed commandment, so one cannot know for which commandment God gives a greater reward, when God loves one commandment more; so it is appropriate for you, in the right time, [col. 2] to do more than the other (commandments) that one can always perform, so long as a person lives. Therefore it is appropriate that you write me this book in this time, for another such book is always needed.” And indeed, when my husband heard such words from me, my words appealed to him very well and he said to me: “Because you have indeed spoken a word of wisdom, so I will write such for you with God’s help, so that you and the other mourning hearts will find a consolation or joy in the book,” and he said: “I shall write this book in seven parts, as against our seven children who died, and each part will be called by the name of one of our dead children.”...

[5r, col. 1] . . . and all the seven parts will be a book, that will be called, for their names, Be’er Sheva, this is teitsch for seven wells, or seven springheads, out of which now flow a consolation for the living and a merit for the souls of the seven dead children who were taken before God, as we should have offered seven sacrifices on seven altars for the seven parts of this book. And as a source of consolation should again flow out of these seven springheads, a washing clear or a flood washing away of all sadness from all the mourning and moaning hearts. And I have one more reason, that this book, with God’s help, is called by the name Be’er sheva, for my name “Baer” and although the name “Baer” is written with an ‘ayin in the middle and the word “be’er” as an ‘alef in the middle, according to Heberw grammar of the
letters ‘alef, het, ‘ayin, hay, when the ‘ayin is correct, an ‘alef can also stand in its place.

Endnotes

¹ Teitsch, literally: “German,” is the word used to indicate the vernacular early Yiddish in which Sefer Be’er sheva and its introduction are written, as distinct from lashon hakodesh (literally: the holy tongue), the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Bible and Rabbinic literature that is quoted in its original language within the body of this introduction. As is common in Yiddish writing of the time, such direct quotations in Hebrew/Aramaic are written, in the original, in a square script different from the “waiber-schrift” (literally: women’s writing) in which most of the manuscript is written. The two scripts are represented by different fonts in the accompanying Yiddish original of this document as well.

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Sefer be’er sheva (introduction)
, c. 1690s

Translated by Rachel L Greenblatt, Harvard University, USA
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Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller, “Megillat eivah”: short selection

Hebrew

From the text of a booklet version printed in many places over the past decades and retrieved on May 31, 2011 at:

http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/vl/tohen.asp?id=210

Page 16:

Page 16:

שנת הנ"ל שלמתי כל העשרת האלפים זהובים רייניש באשיש העוזר האמתי השי"ת לחודש תמוזוביום שני
ולמחרתו נסעתי אני ואשתו, ובני בן הזקונים התו על החתונה יום שמחת לבי לק"ק לובלין לישא את הבתולה מרת אסתר בת הקצין מהור"ר יחיאל בן
הרופא המומחה החכם כמר שלמה לוריא, זללה"ה הוא חתן הקצין המופלג בעשירות ובמידות טובות ר' משה ליזרש מק"ק
בריסק דליטא . . .

English

Translated from the Hebrew by Rachel L. Greenblatt

And on the second day of the month of Tammuz in that year (5391/1631), I paid off all the 10,000 Reichsthalers with the true help of God. And the next day I set off, I and my wife, and my son, son of our old age, the intelligent young man Abraham, whom the spirit of wisdom already filled, thanks to God, to his wedding, day of heart’s joy, in the holy community of Lublin, to marry the maiden Miss Esther daughter of the leader our teacher Rabbi Yehiel, son of the expert doctor, the wise man, the honorable Rabbi Solomon Luria, may the memory of the righteous be for a blessing; he is the son-in-law of the officer, outstanding in wealth and good qualities, R. Moses Lazarus from the holy community of Brisk in Lithuania.

Yiddish

Version published by Max Erik on the basis of Ms. Oxford-Bodleian Heb. 2209 in:

ס, אונ' צו מארגנס בין איך גצוגין קען יום ב' בחודש תמוז שצ"א הב איך בע"ה אן גצאלט גהט אלי עשרת אלפים קנ
לובלין מיט מיין וויייב אונ' מיין יונגשטין זון הבח' בער אברהם שי', דעם איך שוין גילערנט הב, אויף זיין חתונה

pp. 210-11:
On the second day of the month of Tammuz in that year (5391/1631), I paid off all the 10,000 Reichsthalers fine, and the next day I set off for Lublin with my wife and my youngest son the young man Baer Abraham, may he live, whom I had already taught, to his wedding in mazel tov, for he married the maiden Esther daughter of the honorable R. Yehiel son of the expert doctor the leader our teacher Rabbi Solomn, may his memory be a blessing; and he is the son-in-law of the officer, of great wealth and a good, dear man, R. Moses Lazarus from Brisk in Lithuania.