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VOLUME 9

The Roman Inquisition, the Index and the Jews

Contexts, Sources and Perspectives

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the Holy Trinity" (Trinità dei Pellegrini on the Piazza dei Pellegrini). According to Martin, the ceremony was always presided over by a cardinal "as it were, by office deputed to be president of this exercise ... and to make reporte to his Holiness of al things".⁶⁹ In a marginal note, the Cardinal is identified as Cardinalis Sanctae Severinae, i. e. Giulio Santoro. In his description of Santoro's role in censorship and expurgation of Rabbinic (Bible) commentaries and the Talmud, Martin explicitly connects the revision of Hebrew books with these sermons and with the conversion of the Jews.⁷⁰ It is therefore not unlikely that the collections preserved in Vat. Lat. 14628 and Borg. Lat. 149 were composed as resources for those who had to deliver the sermons.

Santoro's involvement in the revision of Hebrew books is apparently not a sign of friction between the Congregation of the Index,⁷¹ of which Sirleto was the president, and the Holy Office that was presided over by Santoro, but a task assigned to him as "President of the Congregation of Hebrew books". Collections of inadmissible passages were collected by censors, approved by the Index Congregation, usually revised by Robert Bellarmine, ratified by the *Magister Sacri Palatii* and finally presented to Giulio Santoro, supervising the revision of Hebrew books and presiding over the weekly sermons aiming at the conversion of the Jews. It is in this capacity that he, briefed by the Prefect of the Congregation of the Index, Guglielmo Sirleto, discussed the process of the revision with the Pope.

THE CENSOR AS A MEDIATOR: PRINTING, CENSORSHIP AND THE SHAPING OF HEBREW LITERATURE

Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin
Be'er-Sheva

The discussion on early modern censorship has significantly expanded in recent decades, and has become a fundamental element in the discussion of early modern culture. Following Paul Grendler and Antonio Rotondo's pioneering studies, many other scholars have contributed new dimensions to this issue, before and after the opening of the Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (ACDF).¹ These studies point up the complexity of the process, and its important role in the formation of cultural boundaries and the advancement of new modes of control. This discussion can also be viewed as part of the revision in the historiography concentrated on early modern Catholicism, and, in particular, of new approaches to the study of the Roman Inquisition, its historical role, and its attitude towards different bodies of knowledge. The control of knowledge is one aspect that challenges the image of the Catholic Church as a monolithic body opposed to any form of knowledge.² It reveals the internal debate, the objection to a severe policy of prohibition, and also the role of censorship in establishing modern patterns of control. Within another dimension, the discussion of ecclesiastical censorship was also integrated into the continuous discussion on the "print revolution" and the study of the various agents associated with the transition to print. From this point of view, censors were examined vis-à-vis other agents who participated in the production of literacy through the transition to print.

¹ See the introduction of this volume.

² For a discussion see William V. Hudon, "Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy—Old Questions New Insights", in *American Historical Review* 101/3 (1996), 783–804; John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Remaining Catholicism in the Early Modern Era*, Cambridge, Mass., London 2000. For a discussion on the attitude of the Church towards scientific knowledge see Rivka Feldhay, "Recent Narratives on Galileo in Context, or The Three Dogmas of the Counter-Reformation", in Jürgen Renn (ed.), *Galileo in Context*, Cambridge 2001, 219–238.

⁶⁹ Gregory Martin, *Roma Sancta*, 77.

⁷⁰ See note 14.

⁷¹ Fraguito refers to a positive and intimate co-operation between Sirleto and the Holy Office, "La censura", 174.

The study of ecclesiastical control over Hebrew literature may contribute another dimension and perspective to this discussion. The control over Hebrew literature is an exceptional case because of two factors: first, in that case censorship was explicitly associated with the other measures instituted against the Jews of that period: their frequent expulsions, ghettoization and economic restrictions, and the efforts to bring about their conversion. Another unique feature lies in the origins of this discussion in medieval Christian polemics against the Jews and their literature.

In spite of these unique factors, however, we may speak of the censorship of Hebrew literature only within the general framework of censorship established by the Catholic Church in this period. Censorship of Hebrew books was institutionalized as part of the general process, and according to principles similar to those that directed the establishment of surveillance. It developed in the same stages, by the same institutions (the Congregation of the Inquisition and the Congregation of the Index) and according to similar principles.³

Therefore, the Hebrew canon is a case study that provides us with the opportunity to reveal the dialectics of censorship as we can examine it on two different levels and in terms of two different discourses: the

³ For surveys see Abraham Berliner, *Censur und Confiscation hebräischer Bücher in Kirchengestalt: auf Grund der Inquisitions-Akten in der Vaticana und Vallicellana*, Frankfurt a.M. 1891; William Popper, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books*, New York 1899; Gustavo Sacerdote, "Deux Index Expurgatoires de Livres hébreux", in *REJ* 30 (1896), 257–283; Nathan Porjes, "Censorship of Hebrew Books", in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* vol. 3, 642–650; Isaiah Sonne, "Expurgation of Hebrew Books", in *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 46 (1942), 975–1014; Kenneth Stow, "The Burning of the Talmud in 1553 in the Light of Sixteenth Century Catholic Attitudes toward the Talmud", in *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 34 (1972), 435–59; Paul Grendler, "The Destruction of Hebrew Books in Venice 1568", in *PAAR* 45 (1978), 103–130; Fausto Parente, "La Chiesa e il Talmud", in *Storia d'Italia*, Annali 11, Gli ebrei in Italia, Torino 1996, 521–643; P. C. Joly Zorattini, "Censura e controllo della stampa ebraica a Venezia nel cinquecento", in Giuliano Tamani, Angelo Viviani (eds.), *Manoscritti, frammenti e libri ebraici nell'Italia dei secoli XV–XVI*, Giuliano Tamani, Angelo Viviani (eds.), Rome 1991; Marvin J. Heller, *Printing the Talmud: A History of the Earliest Printed Editions of the Talmud*, New York 1992; Mauro Perani, "Confrasca e censura dei libri ebraici a Modena fra cinque e seicento", in Michele Luzzati (ed.), *L'Inquisizione agli ebrei in Italia*, Roma, Bari 1994, 287–320; Fausto Parente, "The Index, the Holy Office, the Condemnation of the Talmud and the Publication of Clement VIII's Index", in Gigliola Fragnito (ed.), *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, translated by Adrian Belton, Cambridge 2000, 163–193; on censorship in Germany, see Stephen G. Burnett, "Hebrew Censorship in Hanau: A Mirror of Jewish-Christian Coexistence in Seventeenth Century Germany", in Raymond B. Waddington, Arthur H. Williamson (eds.), *The Expulsion of the Jews: 1492 and After*, New York 1994, 199–222.

terminology associated with print production, and that associated with Jewish-Christian theological polemics. Consequently, we can describe the participants in the process according to their religious identity (Christians, converts and Jews) as well as according to their professional activity in the printing process (printers, editors, censors). In this essay, I suggest viewing the convert censor as a mediator between different groups and as a participant in the transformation of Jewish literature into print and the transition of Jewish culture towards modernity. Censorship participated in the transition of Jewish discourse from polemics to a definition based on autonomous terms.

Furthermore, rather than being a measure directed against the Jews alone, censorship was initiated precisely because Christians were reading Jewish literature. Thus, it should be examined in the framework of the rise of Christian Hebraism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—that is, the growing interest of Christian scholars in parts of Jewish literature, and its role regarded as an essential for the understanding of the Scriptures and for the confirmation of the Christian faith.⁴ Although censorship should be seen also as part of the missionary efforts of the period, the primary aim of the Church in exercising censorship was to guard against the penetration of heresy and to prevent heretical readings. In its effect, censorship should be viewed as a means of incorporating Jewish literature into Christian discourse and into the category of permitted knowledge. The control over Hebrew printing, exercised through the application of the same categories that were employed in the examination of other literary corpora, provided a basis for the integration of Hebrew literature into the Christian corpus.

⁴ The literature on Hebraism is steadily expanding and moving in new directions. See recently Allison Coudert, Jeffrey Shoulson (eds.), *Hebraica Veritas? See also Frank Rosenthal, "The Rise of Christian Hebraism in the Sixteenth Century"*, in *Historia Judaica* 7, 167–191; Jerome Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony*, Athens 1983; Stephen Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Burtof (1564–1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century*, Leiden, New York, Köln 1996; Aaron Katzen, *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis: Seventeenth Century Apologetics and the Study of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah*, Cambridge, Mass. 1984. On Christian interest in the kabbalah, see François Secret, *Les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance*, Paris 1964; Chaim Wirszubski, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, Cambridge, Mass. 1989; Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, Chicago, London 1964; Bernard McGinn, "Cabalists and Christians: Reflections on Cabala in Medieval and Renaissance Thought", in Richard Popkin, Gordon Weiner (eds.), *Jewish Christians and Christian Jews From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, Dordrecht 1994, 11–34; Joseph Dan (ed.), *The Christian Kabbalah: Jewish Mystical Books and Their Christian Interpreters*, Cambridge, Mass. 1997.

The first detailed discussion devoted by the Church to the question of the surveillance of print took place at the Fifth Lateran Council and did not mention Hebrew literature at all. However, in the decree "Inter sollicitudines" promulgated after the Council by Leo X in 1516, the Pope explained that the need for control was occasioned, among other reasons, because "in different parts of the world, books, some *translated* into Latin from Hebrew, Greek Arabic and Aramaic, as well as books written in Latin and vernacular languages, contain errors opposed to the faith ..."⁵ In other words, at first Hebrew literature, as well as literature in Arabic and other languages, was considered dangerous only when it became accessible to Christians. It was not until the 1550s, when methods and principles similar to those applied to translations from the Hebrew were applied to Hebrew literature itself. Various instructions demonstrate that Hebrew literature was forbidden to Christians and Jews alike. Yet also after the institution of a mechanism of surveillance over Hebrew literature, translations of Hebrew literature were forbidden in certain cases, while the Hebrew original was permitted, as was notably the case with prayer books and works of Biblical exegesis. The prohibition against reading Hebrew literature also applied to areas in which no Jews lived, such as in the Iberian Peninsula. Although we may relate this to the struggle against the *conversos*, from the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church in that period, the problem posed by the *conversos* was different, as the latter had accepted Christianity and become part of Christian society. This was a reflection of the ambivalent attitude of the Church towards converts, and the anxiety that they might spread heresy within the Christian world.⁶

⁵ "in diversis mundi partibus, libros tam Graecae, Hebraicae, Arabicae et Chaldaee linguarum in latinum translatis, quam alios, latino ac vulgari sermone editos, errores in fide, ac perniciosas dogmata etiam religioni Christianae contraria ... continentes", *Sacrorum conciliorum ...*, Paris 1907–1927, vol. 32, col. 912–13.

⁶ The Spanish Index of 1583 prohibited Muslim and Jewish literature opposed to Christianity, and rabbinic literature in particular (Reusch, *Die Indices Librorum Prohibitorum des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen 1886. (Stuttgart Literarische Verein Bibliothek, vol. 17/6), 362. The Index also prohibited all books in Hebrew or in other languages dealing with Jewish rituals. Index Lisbon of 1581 explicitly prohibited the use of the Biblical commentaries of Rashi, Radak and the "Jensalemitie rabhis", both in Hebrew and in their Latin translations, as well as The "Zohar Bereshit". Reusch, *Die Indices*, 354. Similarly, the Latin translation of the Targum of Onkelos was also prohibited. The same holds true for the Index of Antwerp, published in 1571, which called for censorship of all Hebrew books, as well as books in other languages containing references to Jewish texts. Reusch, *Die Indices*, 320–28; Popper, *Censorship*, 55. On

Emphasizing the Hebraist framework of censorship neither excludes nor undermines the implications connected with the policy directed specifically towards the Jews, the main consumers of these books. However, it enables us to see the way censorship was integrated into the preparation of Jewish literature for printing. Censorship demonstrated the ambivalence inherent in the Hebraist discourse: the Hebraists created a cultural space in which Jews and Christians worked together on the basis of common principles and common cultural values. Hebraism contributed towards the redefinition of Jewish autonomy as part of the new definition of political and cultural space, and Hebraists often defended the Jews and their rights. Yet early modern Hebraism, in the Catholic as well as in the Protestant world, was fundamentally ambivalent in its attitude towards the Jews, and engendered contradictory images of Jews and Judaism. In fact, in many cases, it was associated with their exclusion and marginalization. The recognition of the value of Jewish literature also strengthened mission-ary tendencies, and was associated with anti-Jewish sentiments.⁷ The practice of censorship is bound up with all these aspects and demonstrates the interrelations between them. Hebraism is a discursive framework in which the transition of Jewish identity was made.

Within this process, there was a distinction made between the Talmud and the rest of Hebrew literature. Since the middle of the sixteenth century, the printing of the Talmud and its use were prohibited. In fact, the founding event of the surveillance over Hebrew literature was the public burning of the Talmud in several Italian cities.⁸ The Talmud was

censorship and the various indices in Portugal, see Bujanda, *II*, vol. IV. On the Index of 1581: Bujanda, *II*, 109–124, 427–552.

⁷ On the ambivalence embedded in the Hebraist discourse: Heiko A. Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of the Renaissance and the Reformation*, translated by James I. Porter, Philadelphia 1984; idem, Andrew C. Fix, Susan C. Karant-Nunn (eds.), "Discovery of Hebrew and Discrimination against the Jews: The *Veritas Hebraica* as Double Edged Sword in Renaissance and Reformation", in *Germania illustrata: Essays on Early Modern Germany presented to Gerald Strauss*, (Sixteenth century essays & studies, v. 18), Kirksville 1992, 19–34; Allison P. Coudert, "Seventeenth Century Christian Hebraists: Philosemitism or Antisemitism?", in A. P. Coudert, S. Hutten, R. Popkin, G. M. Weiner (eds.), *Judaean-Christian Intellectual Culture in the Seventeenth Century*, Dordrecht 1999, 43–69.

⁸ For the text of this order and the report of the Inquisition on its execution, see Moritz Stern, *Urkundliche Beiträge über die Stellung der Päpste der den Juden*, Kiel 1893, 98–102. The order was reprinted in Simonsohn, *Apostolic See*, VI, doc. 3165, 2887–2890. On the burnings in Italian cities, see Popper, *Censorship*, 32–7; Stow, "The Burning of the Talmud"; idem, *Catholic Thoughts and Papal Jewry Policy*, 1555–1593.

also included, alongside hundreds of other books and writers, in the Index issued in 1559. The Talmud remained forbidden later as well. Indeed, in the Index of Trent issued in 1564, the printing of the Talmud was conditionally permitted "if (the composition) appears without its title 'Talmud', and without the attacks and injuries directed against Christianity, it will be tolerated".⁹ However, this conditional permission did not lead to the republication of the Talmud. Several attempts to come to an agreement about printing an expurgated edition failed. The Talmud was again unconditionally condemned in the Index issued by Clement VIII in 1596.¹⁰

This prohibition had of course restricted and harmed the possibilities of study and reading for Italian Jews. Yet it is evident that it did not prevent the elites of Italian Jewry from becoming familiar with the Talmud. For this prohibition also included an explicit permission to possess most other Jewish books, including literature based on the Talmud. Hence a legitimacy was granted to many aspects of Jewish communal and intellectual autonomy. The application of censorship to Hebrew literature was an act of recognition of its legitimacy. The bull promulgated by Pope Julius III on 29 May 1554, which prohibited the possession and reading of the Talmud, also marked the application of the procedure of expurgation to the remainder of Hebrew books. This did not mean an intensification of repression, but rather an attempt at finding procedures that would enable most other works to be printed. In the following decades, we can observe the gradual development of a pattern of pre-publication censorship as well as supervision of Hebrew manuscripts and printed books. Following the order to ban the Talmud, the pre-publication censorship of Hebrew literature was first implemented at the Conti press in Cremona, which had been established in 1556. Later it was implemented in other printing houses. Following the establishment of the Congregation of the Index several commissions were appointed during the 1570s in order to determine the rules of censorship for Hebrew literature, including the possibility of reprinting an expurgated edition of the Talmud.

New York 1977; Benayahu, *Haskama ve-Reshut*, 27–30; Marvin Heller, *Printing the Talmud, 227–240*; Yaari, *The Burning of the Talmud in Italy* (Hebrew); Parente, "Chiesa", 583–598, and the detailed bibliography on burnings in various cities mentioned there.

⁹ Thalmud Hebraeorum, ejusque glossae, annotaciones, interpretationes et expositiones omnes, *si tamem proderint sine nomine Thalmud et sine injuriis et calumniis in religionem christianam tolerabuntur* (Reusch, *Die Indices*, 279; Bujanda, *II*, VIII, 691). Emphases not in original.

¹⁰ Parente, *The Condemnation of the Talmud*, 169.

Parallel to this, a network of censors, composed almost entirely of converts, began to emerge as part of a mechanism of censorship designed to examine other literary corpora. It was not until the 1590s, within the framework of the publication of the new Index and the institutionalization of censorship under Clement VIII that a relatively coherent network of censors developed. The most important and influential censor active during this period (until his death in 1621) was Domenico Gerosolimitano, whose imprimatur can be found on numerous copies of manuscripts and printed books he checked, and who, according to his own testimony, had expurgated thousands of books.¹¹ Gerosolimitano was called Shmuel Vivas prior to his conversion. According to his own account he had been born in Jerusalem and studied in a yeshiva in Safed, the center of Jewish revival at the period, where he acquired a Talmudic and Kabbalistic education. Later in life, he apparently moved to Istanbul, where he dwelt at the court of the Ottoman emperor and studied medicine and other sciences. In the 1590s, he moved to Italy, and in 1593 changed his religion and along with it, his profession. Until his death in 1621, he was active as a censor, checking books in Mantua, and later in Monferrato, Milan and eventually Rome, where he also served as a Hebrew teacher in the Collegio dei Neofiti.¹² Thus, Gerosolimitano was a man whose biography encompassed most of the fields of knowledge of the period, and who certainly merits an independent study. He helped train a large group of censors and fixed their working rules. Several other prominent converts worked along with him—in the early stages, Franguello and Eustachio, and at a later stage—Camillo Yagel and Renato da Modena, one of the most promi-

¹¹ Porges, "Der hebraeische Index expurgatorius", 228; idem, "Censorship of Hebrew Books"; Sacerdote, "Codici ebraici". Earlier censors were Jacobo Geraldino and Andrea del Monte in the 50s, and Laurentius Franguelis and Eustachio in the 70s, following the establishment of the Congregation of the Index.

¹² He may have served, for a certain time period, as a censor in Venice as well. See Pier Cesare Joly Zorattini, "Domenico Gerosolimitano a Venezia", in *Sefard* 58 (1998), 107–115; A.M. Rabbello, "Domenico Gerosolimitano", in *Enciclopedia Judaica* (197) vol. 6, col. 158. Domenico wrote a biography, parts of which were published by G. Sacerdote, "I Codici Ebraici della Pia casa dei neofiti in Roma", in *Arti della R. Accademia dei Lincei*, ser. 4, 10, 188; Ignazio Guidi, "Domenico Gerosolimitano", in *Festschrift A. Berliner*, Frankfurt 1903, 176–179. Aside from the sections published by Sacerdote, Guidi added further details based on a document found in the archive of Santa Croce by Tomasetti, which he published. This passage demonstrates that Domenico converted to Christianity in 1593, as it was written shortly before his death in 1621, and he states there that he had been a Christian for 27 years. As the biography in Vatican Neofiti 32 published by Sacerdote states that he converted at age 40, he must have been born around 1553.

ment censors of the seventeenth century.¹³ The expurgation of works which had already been printed or manuscripts which were in the possession of individuals—was strictly a phenomenon of the transition period. This kind of censorship is particularly visible in the form of the black spots that “decorate” many copies of surviving books. Its main historical significance was, however, that this practice determined and disseminated the rules according to which later editions of the composition were edited.

In this period the activity of the censors was unsystematic and far from consistent. We may definitely state that a not insubstantial percentage of Hebrew books extant at that period was not affected by Church censorship; this demonstrates that such censorship consisted of a series of individual projects, carried out in various towns and territories. Censorship projects did not always originate in the Church establishment, but were also undertaken on the initiative of secular rulers who sought to establish their authority through independent action designed to implement the principles determined by the Pope.¹⁴ In this respect, the case of Hebrew literature was no different from that of European literature in general during that time.

The Hebraist context was at the core of the production of Hebrew print in this period. Most of the Hebrew publishing houses operating in Italy in the sixteenth century, the main transition stage of Jewish literature into print, were owned by Christians who were clearly motivated

¹³ The list of the various censors and a partial itemization of the towns in which they were active in their later years may be found in the appendix of Popper, *Censorship*, 131–144. Popper (*Censorship*, 95–99) names approximately sixty converts active in censorship work in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some of the imprimaturs are in Hebrew and some in Latin or Italian. Their text is usually the same as that found in other books. See Beneyahu, *Hakama ve-Reshut*, 155 ff. Although many new details have come to light since then, the solid foundation provided by Popper enables us to trace the activities of censorship, while illustrating the provisional nature of the project.

¹⁴ Thus, in 1595, the Bishop of Mantua established a commission composed of three converts, headed by Gerosolimitano, and including Alessandro Scipione and Laurentius Franguello. The task of the Commission was to review the already published books and censor them. The censors erased certain words or replaced them with others, and sometimes tore out entire pages before returning the books to their owners. Their work continued for several years and included tens of thousands of copies. The commission later moved to Modena, at the invitation of the Duke, and subsequently to other places as well. Baruchson, “Starim ve-Korim”, 37–45, 37–45; Simonsohn, “Starim ve-Sifhot”, *idem*, *Mantua*, vol. 2, 504–7. The document on the establishment of the commission is cited by Stern, *HB*, 165–6, doc 158. Popper, 68–77, 93. Domenico reported that he had checked twenty thousand books. While some dispute the accuracy of these numbers, the differences are inconsequential. On the activity of Scipione, see Simonsohn, *Mantua*, 688–692.

by Hebraist sentiments. The central role of Christians in the publication of Hebrew books, as publishers, printers and editors, opens up a new dimension in regard to the question of censorship. The Hebrew publishing house was an exciting place for meeting and concourse among people of different cultural and religious identities: Christian Hebraists, Jewish scholars and converts. The process of editing and publication took place within an atmosphere animated by dialogue and dispute among them. This was the framework in which Hebrew literature as we know it down to today was essentially shaped.

The converts who were employed as editors in the print shops continued to deal with the same corpus of literature that served as the basis of their previous identity. Text editing was, for them, a means of building the bridge between their past and present religious identities. However, their intention was to preserve the text, to create a common text for both Jewish and Christian readers. Converts involved in print worked in accordance with the humanistic principles of editing that were common to all involved in this activity, and shared the same convictions as Jewish editors.¹⁵

The fact that most of the censors were also converts illustrates the complexity and ambiguity of the distinction between the terms “editor” and “censor”. Like the editors, those converts who were appointed as censors by the Inquisition also continued to deal with the same literary corpus they had studied prior to their conversion. Thus, the starting point for many of the censors and editors was similar; they emended the text with the intention of rendering it acceptable, to their new religious affiliation. This is especially marked in cases in which converts worked at the same time both in censorship and in editing.¹⁶ The cen-

¹⁵ On the involvement of Jews in the discussion of censorship see Sonne, “Expurgation”. On the role of converts in Bomberg’s print shop, see H. Yelion, “Cornelio Adelkind”, in *Kiryat Sefer* (1939); Sonne, “toch kdei kri’a ah”, in *Kiryat Sefer*, (1931), 278. The prevailing view today is that Adelkind converted at an early stage and that most of his editing work (including that performed in Jewish print shops) was done following his conversion to Christianity. Rabinowitz’s claim that the frequent signature “Adelkind of the House of Levi” indicates that he had not converted, is unfounded. On the contrary, as converts frequently preserved and emphasized their previous names, this serves as a support for the claim that he had converted previously (Haberman, *Cornelio Adelkind*, 10–11). Heller mentions also Fra Felice da Prato and Yeshayahu Parnas.

¹⁶ Among them were Paulus Eustacius, (Eliyahu ben Menachem of Nola, who converted after 1566), and Vittorio Eliano, in Comt Press in Cremona, and later in di Gara, Venice. According to his testimony in the colophon to *Bei Yosef, Tur Hoshen Mishpat* (Venice 1567): Vittorio Eliano, *iusta la copia della correctione de libri*. Come e nel officio dell’i clariss. Escutori contro la bestemmia.

sors were part of the debate that accompanied the editing of the printed book, and were an element in the power relations that underlay it. Thus, the censor helped shape the text, and his role was not substantially different from that of others agents whose activities we may read between the lines (or, more accurately, "between the words") of the text. Censorship, in other words, became an immanent part of publication.

The censor's guidelines were different from those of the editor: the censor turned to the Jewish text intending to erase all those passages that did not meet the criteria of the Church or that were perceived to be anti-Christian. The task of the censors was to protect the security of the souls of the faithful using the text, and to ensure that the Jews likewise adhere to the "universal" standards established by the Church. In several (although very few) cases, the censors' erasures led to the omission of passages that might have been preserved had they not intervened. But it would be incorrect to say that the elimination of those passages limited the possibilities for the development of Jewish culture. In fact, they were compatible with the main line of editing that accompanied the printing of Hebrew literature from its beginning.

It is only natural that the converts—both editors and censors, hoped that the "leveling" of these works in accordance with these criteria would ultimately lead to the conversion of the Jews, and many of them said so explicitly.¹⁷ As already mentioned, this was also the desire of the Christian editors and of other converts who dealt with printing.

However, the actual result was quite different: the activity of the censors protected the autonomy of the Jewish community, and this left wide scope, in effect full permission, to practice its ritual according to the Jewish law, as long as it was not based on anti-Christian sentiment. A close reading of the practice of censorship within the texts clarifies

¹⁷ Andrea del Monte composed a series of works designed to convince the Jews to convert, employing Talmudic proofs, in ways that illustrated the place and influence of Christian polemic literature in the process of conversion. The most prominent censor in the late sixteenth century, Domenico Gerosolimitano (to whose activity we shall return) expressed it on several occasions, including in the introduction to his "Index Expurgatorius" *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk*: "Turn to me, father and mother and Holy Spirit: may I possess the merit to be zealous for the faith of Jesus, His Messiah of valor, and enlighten the eyes of the nation who walks in darkness. His nation the children of Israel, so that they may see the right way, the way of eternal life, the way of our Lord Jesus, the anointed one of God". (Vatican manuscript 273, Introduction). In other places as well, he emphasized that he saw his entire work as a mission, whose aim was to convince Jews to become Christians, on the basis of their own writings.

that the censor left most texts untouched, and that its rules followed the same line taken by editors, Jewish and Christian alike, in that period.

The interesting fact is that censorship developed at the same time as real literary revolutions that transformed Jewish consciousness and the Jewish way of life. The printing of kabbalistic literature and the appearance of the *Shulhan Arukh* took place in the course of the institutionalization of control, and as part of the same process. The very period in which the censorial discourse developed was characterized by a multifaceted and exciting cultural ferment. In this era, many different and often opposing tendencies arose, and the Jewish community was shaken by violent debates over printing: centering on the kabbalistic corpus and, in a different way, on Azariah de Rossi's *Me'or Einayim*. On the one hand, the relations between Jewish culture and the various expressions of Christian culture expanded during this period. On the other hand, this era witnessed the development of approaches emphasizing the essential uniqueness of the people of Israel. The role of anti-Christian sentiments in the construction of these approaches was relatively minor, since the emphasis of the uniqueness of the Jews was articulated in autonomous terms and not directed against Christianity. Furthermore, later on, when censorship eased, this ferment died down as well. While censorship was not the cause of this change, it was a prism through which we may discern many aspects of the modernization process.

The principles of censorship were summarized in the *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk*, the Index Expurgatorius composed by Domenico Gerosolimitano, the most prominent censor in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The first manuscript dates back to 1596, and was subsequently continuously updated by the censor.¹⁸ Similar to other compositions in the genre, the *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk* consists of an introduction providing principles, followed by a detailed discussion of more than four hundred Hebrew books, including separate discussions of different editions of the same book. In some cases, the references also provide explanations for the erasures.

The introduction to the *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk* specifies the twenty rules that were to guide the censor's activities, determining the erasures that were required in the respective works. For the most part, these rules

¹⁸ Six manuscripts of this work have survived. They were extensively examined and discussed lately by Gila Prebor, *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk* (Dissertation, Bar Ilan University 2003, Hebrew).

derived from the main arguments which generally defined the Christian anti-Jewish polemic and the polemic against Hebrew literature (especially the Talmud), and are an echo of the arguments raised in polemic compositions written at this time. However, its implementation within a process of expurgation gave it a new meaning: the direct polemic claims were replaced by a detailed discussion of a long list of sentences and passages designed to neutralize the polemic and create texts that could be read by Christians as well. The arguments did not change, but the way in which they were employed did. In retrospect, this practice embodies an extremely wide-ranging change in the entire discourse: the public, declaratory polemic was replaced by a polemical dialogue over specific sentences, localized mainly in the print shops.¹⁹

The main concern of the *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk* was the elimination of attacks against Christianity, and of any possible anti-Christian reading. This included slanderous attacks against Christianity, passages denying the humanity of the nations of the world, or reflecting a desire for the destruction of the Christian world. Passages like "the nations of the world are not called human",²⁰ "The best of Gentiles should be killed", and a series of passages employing demonic metaphors to describe Christianity and the Church, and a call for revenge—were all eliminated completely, and were often excluded from later editions as well (although many similar expressions also remained in later printed Hebrew literature).

The central motive was the elimination of any term or passage that might be understood as harmful to Christianity. Among the phrases in this category we can also find the majority of the expressions that the *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk* demanded to be changed or erased. Words like *goy* (*convert*) (gentile), *meshumad* or *Edom*, i.e. words assumed to carry an anti-Christian significance (in general correctly so), appear time and again in Gerosolimitano's "survey" of Hebrew literature; these are also the expressions that in practice were erased by the various censors from printed books and manuscripts, as a glance at those texts will demonstrate.

¹⁹ The Index called *Index Neqfiti* (Censurae in Pentateuch), which is illuminated by Piet van Boxel in this volume, may be seen as an intermediate stage in the transition between the medieval polemics and the later index.

²⁰ *Tanhumot Et.* (Saloniki 1558), 104a, 121a; *Sefer Akedah*, (Venice), 262a, and others.

These terms played a formative role in the shaping of medieval Jewish discourse and in the Jewish polemic against Christianity. They constituted the Jewish discourse of the time and had an essential task in determining the boundaries between Jews and non-Jews. In medieval Europe, they were clearly and explicitly directed against Christianity. The censor's intervention rejected a definition of Jewish identity based on an anti-Christian polemic. This was done with the intention of permitting the contents themselves to remain intact. Among the rules that deal with contents that might be understood as anti-Christian, we always find a clause permitting the use of the prohibited terms if the context makes it clear that they are not part of an attack against Christianity. Thus, for example, rule number 1, dealing with terms relating to idolatry states: "If, however, it is understood to refer to idolatry that existed prior to the coming of our Lord, it is acceptable". In this same spirit, in many editions the word *goy* was replaced by *aku* "m (worshipper of celestial bodies), *min* (heretic) was replaced by *epikoros*, *Edom* was replaced by *Bavel* [Babylon], and similarly terms like "Canaanite" or *elilim* were promoted in order to direct reading away from anti-Christian understandings and create a field of reading common to both Jews and Christians against *elilut* (pre-Christian "idolatry") or, in some instances, Islam. This was done through the use of a wide range of phrases, many of which are still in use today. The search for replacements testifies to the constitutive dimension of censorship. It demonstrates that the aim was not the restriction of Jewish readings, but the channeling of those readings in a direction that was not anti-Christian, while enabling Christians to read these works.²¹

The use of code words, on condition that they were not directed against a specific, real subject, demonstrates how censorship sought to define Jewish reading. The censor recognized the Jews' right to self-definition in practice (even if this was not his intention), but rejected the polemic definition directed against the Christian majority, and the

²¹ The special sensitivity toward some of the expressions used to refer to Christianity was increased in response to Protestant propaganda, which condemned Catholicism as idolatrous. This is particularly evident in rule 2: "Any mention of the word *tzelamin* ('idols') should be followed by the words *shel aku* "m ('of worshippers of celestial bodies)')." manuscript Paris. Alliance 80H2 adds further: "likewise, when the word *tzurot* (idols) appears in the laws of idolatry, the words *shel aku* "m should be appended to it". These were the very terms that were employed in contemporary Protestant polemic literature to refer to Catholicism, and the censor was entrusted with the task of effacing these connotations, while defending Catholic forms of worship and faith.

faith that he had chosen to join. He created a literature that he can read and continue to possess as part of a permitted heritage, even as a kind of "trousseau" he brings with him into Christianity. The "other" implicated by the discourse is no longer a well-defined entity, i.e. Christians and Christianity, but is distanced from the contemporary polemic and becomes an abstract linguistic entity. In the process, he creates a common Jewish-Christian context, defined as opposed to *akku"m* (idolatry). The demand that the polemic be not directed against Christianity included the recognition that Judaism is not *akku"m* either. Of course, even after the changes were made, Jews could give an anti-Christian interpretation to the text if they so chose, as they often did.

The *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk* also explicitly states that the use of these terms is permitted in the context of halakhic discussion. Chapter 3 of the introduction states: "If, however, it deals with any of the laws of the Hebrews, such as the laws of the Sabbath or prohibited foods, or wine touched by a Gentile or such, it is acceptable". In other words, the separation from the Gentile, as formulated in Jewish law, is explicitly permitted. The clear intention is the preservation of the halakhic discussion, even with respect to laws that were explicitly formulated in order to separate Jews from Christians. In fact, in the codification and responsa literature, the censor left such passages almost completely intact. For example, censors did not intervene in matters concerning prohibited wine, vessels made by Gentiles, etc., even if they sometimes required that the word *goy* be replaced. Their refraining from erasures here amounted to a recognition of the Jews' right to maintain their separateness from Gentiles in the basic areas of life. The vast majority of the laws in these realms remained uncontested. The printing of the laws of *Avodah Zarah* (idolatry) was permitted in most cases, as long as the "other" was defined as the "worshippers of idols".²²

To a certain degree, the main thrust of censorship concurred with central elements of editing, and with the Jewish culture that developed in parallel. Even prior to the institutionalization of censorship, and even when the print shops were Jewish-owned, numerous anti-Christian passages were often eliminated, and words directed against Christianity

²² Thus, for example, the passages of halakhic literature dealing with the "festivals (*eidelhem*) of the Gentiles" and the prohibition to have any contacts with them in these days, were not prohibited, and *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk* merely demanded that the word *eidelhem* be changed to *hageitum* (a term that thus not contain the negative meaning). *Sefer Ha'alasi* with Shllei Gibborim, 1581, 1.

were dropped or replaced. This tendency is already apparent in the editions of several works printed by Soncino in the late fifteenth century, and was even more common in Christian printing houses. In many printed books, we find frequent though certainly not systematic erasures or replacements of the words *goy*, *meshumad* or *Edom*—terms that contained anti-Christian overtones. Entire passages containing curses against Jesus and the Christian faith were also completely eliminated. Censorial activity certainly accentuated this tendency, but, in the end, it was only part of a broader process, which began prior to the invention of print and continued to develop subsequently.

A notable fact is that it is precisely those editions in which the changes caused through the intervention of censorship were strictly preserved that were considered preferable by both the contemporary public as well as by modern scholars. Good censorship demanded the adaptation of the composition to the new framework of readings, in which—just as in the literature of codification—the declarations were formulated positively. The elimination of particular words during the stage of the preparation of the composition for print required that the sentence be reformulated in such a way that the relevant field of readings would remain, but minus the polemic references to the "other". We may thus conclude that the editions in which the level of censorship was high were those in which editing as a whole was stricter, and that the two aspects were integrated.

In addition, the *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk* required that many passages in which Jewish exegesis was formulated through conflict with Christianity and in debate with Christian interpretation also be erased, both in Midrashic literature as well as in Biblical commentaries based on the Midrash. The tenth paragraph of the introduction fixes explicit rules on this subject: "Any place in the Bible where there is a debate and disagreement between our faith and theirs, if a challenge be posed against our understanding, or if evidence be brought to support their understanding, even if the Christians and their scholars are not mentioned by name, the entire matter should be erased. But if the matter is explained according to their opinion, and no challenge is posed against our view, it is acceptable".²³ Thus, a change in Jewish reading was required, but

²³ On this basis, *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk* required the omission of anti-Christian polemic passages from *Sefer Ha-'Ikkarim*, but left the principles themselves intact. For example in Book One, Chapter 26, which summarizes the book, *Sefer Ha-Zikkuk* required the elimination of the passage denying Christianity the status of "a divine religion": "The other

we may understand this change as a challenge, rather than merely an act of extreme control. "Their understanding" is permitted, as long as it poses no "challenge to our view". In such cases, the matter clearly led to the omission of meaningful Jewish positions and claims, some of which (though definitely not all) were restored in later editions. This shows that their elimination was seen as damaging to the text and the formation of Jewish consciousness.

An area which may elucidate the multiplicity of factors pertaining to censorship is the editing and censorship of prayer books and festival prayer books (*mahzorim*), a field partially examined by Benayahu.²⁴ The *mahzorim* were the most popular products of the press, and they expressed many aspects of cultural and social change linked to the process of transition to print. In general, the scope of erasure required in this literature was minimal in Italian and Sephardic prayer books, compared to the more extensive censorship required of Ashkenazic *mahzorim*, which contained explicitly anti-Christian *piyutim*.

In all of the *mahzorim*, the censor demanded changes in two basic prayers. The first was the *birkat ha-minim*, the prayer against the heretics, in which changes took place already in the first printed versions, in the aim of muting the anti-Christian tone of the prayer. In most *mahzorim*, the words *meshumadin* (*converts*) and *minim* (*heretics*) ("For the *meshumadin* and the *minim* let there be no hope . . .") were replaced by the word *malshimim* (*informers*), a variant existing in earlier manuscripts of Sephardic *mahzorim*.²⁵ In the *mahzor* of the

laws, called *divine*, lay down other derivative principles under the fundamental ones, the removal of one of which makes the law fall. Thus the Christians put under the existence of God trinity and corporeality. But it is clear that this is opposed to the derivative principles which follow from the existence of God. Under reward and punishment they place the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. Without these it is clear that their religion cannot exist . . . (Joseph Albo, *Sefer Ha-ikkarim*, Isaac Husik, trans., Philadelphia 1946, vol. 1, 201). Domenico did permit, however, the publication of the remainder of the passage, as "it contains nothing against our faith, but against the faith of the Ishmaelites". In the Bragadin edition (*Sefer Etz Shaim*), 1618, the passage was emended to "for others, instead of the existence of God, lay down [the principles of] duality and corporeality", etc. (ibid. 38b). The Lublin edition of 1597 is uncensored. The other passages discussed there are also explicitly polemical. This holds true of the censor's demands with respect to Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* (Venice) as well. Here too, the erased passages were those which formulated arguments in debate with the Christian faith. Many of these passages were left out of later editions as well. On this basis, Chapters 25 and 26 of Book Three were erased from many manuscripts, as they are an explicit polemic against the polemic claims of Christianity against Judaism, and argue against Christian principles.

²⁴ Benayahu, *Haskama ve-Reshut*, 168–189.

Roman Jews (Soncino), the phrase was eliminated completely. This is another example of editing that preceded the institutionalization of censorship, with the aim of removing the polemic element from Jewish prayer. In later editions, the word *malshimim* was the more common textual variant.

Another prayer in which censorship intervened was '*aleinu leshebeah*, which was also the focus of Christian dispute in previous centuries as well. In some prayer books and *mahzorim*, the line "for He has not made us as the nations of the earth, for they bow down to vanity and nothingness, to a god that saves not" was eliminated, as is already attested in some manuscripts.²⁶ From the Middle Ages on, Christians correctly understood these verses as directed against Christianity.²⁷ Both in manuscripts and in several printed editions, we find a space of one or two lines where those sentences normally appear; this stemmed, in part, from the demands of the censors. By leaving this space, the editor clearly and permanently marked the fact that a line was missing there.²⁸ In the end, this line was restored to many *mahzorim*, but left out

²⁵ For a summary, see Benayahu, *Haskama ve-Reshut*, 172–3. For example, in the Spanish prayer book *Tenurot Tehinot* (1524), the prayer opens with the words *lanalshimim*, as was, apparently, the Sephardic version, rather than *laneshumadin*. This alteration was apparently incorporated into Ashkenazic prayer books at an early stage, even if originally, the prayer called for the destruction of the *minim*: "and for the *malshimim* let there be no hope, and may each and all of the *minim* be destroyed in a minute, and may all the enemies of Your people be speedily cut off, and may the evil kingdom be quickly uprooted; vanquish them speedily in our days" (Trin 1525). Similarly, Salonki 1548 and Venice 1549: "and for the *malshimim* let there be no hope and may all the evildoers vanish in an instant and may all Your enemies be speedily cut off; vanquish them speedily in our days". Similar formulations can be found in the Roman *mahzor*, Venice (1521) and Bologna (1541). The expression "the enemies of Your people" was replaced by "Your enemies".

²⁶ This sentence was already eliminated in *mahzor Imunot Thivot* (1524). Following "for they bow down . . .", we find a blank line. In other cases, the printers did not leave a blank line, and eventually all memory of this prayer was forgotten.

²⁷ On this, see Yaakov Elbaum, *Al Sineit Tikanei Noshah, Tarbiz* 42 (1973), 204–208. The '*aleinu* prayer was at the focus of Christian opposition already in the Middle Ages. Natfai Wieder, *Higabshur Noshah Ha-Tfila*, Jerusalem, Machon Ben-Zvi and Yad Ben-Zvi, 1998, 2, 453–468. Wieder sees the elimination of this line as a result of both external and internal censorship.

²⁸ Such spaces remained in several editions: Rimini 1521; Bologna, 1537, 1541; Mantua 1557, 1559—"for they bow down . . . and pray *el el lo yoshia'* (to a god that saves not), but we bend our knees and bow down". In the Italian *mahzor*, (Oxford Bodleiana 1067), the expression "to vanity and nothingness" was replaced with "idols" (*elitim*), and after the word "pray", a blank space was left. The censor erased passages of Sephardic literature that dealt with the sanctification of the holy Name in Spain and Portugal, and which included anti-Christian passages, but these were not part of the prayer book.

in many others. At least at later stages, but also already in this period, this version caused discomfort and discontent among Jews as well. Consequently, the omission remained in other *mahzorim* that were printed later on, down to our times. The passage is completely omitted not only in the prayer books of the Reform and Conservative movements, but in various Orthodox ones as well. Thus we see that the censorial act heralded a consciousness that would later develop among Jews.

As mentioned, Ashkenazic prayer books and other compositions reflecting the Ashkenazi tradition were subject to much more thorough and wide-ranging censorial intervention. Unlike the minimalist censorship of Italian and Spanish prayer books and *mahzorim*, here censorship had a major formative influence. In the framework of this censorship, many explicitly anti-Christian *piyyutin* were deleted from the *mahzorim*, including those expressing the expectation of the political destruction of the Christian kingdom and the expectation of vengeance that would take place as part of the messianic scenario.²⁹

While several of those passages had already been dropped prior to the institutionalization of censorship, many were erased only through the intervention of the censors. As was demonstrated already by S. D. Luzzatto, and later by Benayahu, some of the *piyyutin* that aggressively attacked Christianity had already been omitted from the Soncino edition (Fano, 1506). In the Bomberg edition, there were further omissions, and six *piyyutin* were replaced. In the words of Luzzatto, in a letter to Leopold Zunz in 1852: "know, my dear friend and illustrious sage, that between 1536 and 1548, a *riforma* was carried out among the Ashkenazim living in Italy, for it seems that one or more of the Italian

²⁹ Benayahu correctly argued that the expectation of the political destruction of the Christian kingdom is present in Sephardic *mahzorim* as well, but without the expectation of vengeance characteristic of many Ashkenazic *piyyutin*. For example, on the High Holy Days, "and all evil shall dissipate like smoke, and may You destroy the evil kingdom from upon the earth", which appears in the Sephardic *mahzorim* (*Thumot Thivot* 1524, 1544, 1581). With respect to this sentence too, we witness inconsistencies on the part of the censor and editor. For example, in the 1584 edition, in the prayers for the eve of Rosh Hashana, "For you shall cause the kingdom of sinners to pass from this earth" (*ibid.*, and in Sabionetta 1567 in the *Ne'ilah* prayer). This passage was erased by the censors both in print and in manuscript, as in the *mahzor* for Sukkot and the High Holy Days, (Oxford manuscript, Bodeliana 1067-7674 in the Manuscript Division, National Library, Jerusalem). On this, see Benayahu, 175-177. Benayahu described in detail the development of the prayer text versions, including the later expansion of the expurgation of *mahzorim*, demonstrating the inconsistencies in the process.

rabbis, perhaps the Mahara"m, were wise enough to purify the *Selihot* of anything that could provoke the anger of the nations against us, as they saw that the uncircumcised had begun to learn the holy tongue".³⁰ Some of the editorial changes led to radical changes in meaning. One such example was the change in the Hardenheim edition of 1546: the lines "they invent lies and falsehoods to accuse and attack us, may they be cast down from their councils and their thoughts, and may our eyes behold their downfall", were changed to "may Your goodness and the measure of Your mercy be bestowed upon us. May Your salvation, O God, exalt us". This is a clear example of the transition from one form of consciousness to another, in which the censorship of the Church is integrated into the internal process. We can cite a list of *piyyutin* that were eliminated both from early printed editions as well as from many manuscripts of the Ashkenazi *mahzor* of the Middle Ages.

The question as to whether this deletion resulted from censorship or was done voluntarily is problematic. Making a clear distinction between the two is probably impossible. The process of printing the Ashkenazic prayer books was linked to a broader cultural change, which indeed, it marks. Censorship was undoubtedly one of the causes and motivations for these erasures, but it was only part of a larger process. Daniel Goldschmidt exemplifies this difficulty. He wrote that these *piyyutin* were eliminated or abridged in most *mahzorim* as a result of "the fear of the censors, adding: 'it may well be that, in the course of time, the congregations found no reason for the reciting of these verses and found it inappropriate to inspire feelings of hatred and vengeance among the worshippers on the Day of Atonement'".

As in other places, the comment of the modern scholar is telling: he is uncomfortable with transferring the responsibility for such erasures to the censor, as he identifies with the values expressed by the erasure. He prefers to assume that "in the course of time" the deleted passages would have lost their significance.³¹ It appears that these two aspects

³⁰ *Igrot Shadda'i* (S. D. Luzzatto), published by She'altiel Izik Graber, Cracow 1893, vol. 8, 1142-3. The letter to Zunz, of 31 May 1852, examines the development of the *selihot* according to the Ashkenazic custom. Luzzatto doubts that the first printing of the *mahzor* took place in Ehrenheim. He remarks that "these emendations are not in the *selihot* that were customary in the Ashkenazic lands, but in *selihot* of Ashkenazim residing in Italy; the difference is quite evident in the Vienna edition of 1823, where one *mahzor* was printed for Ashkenazim in Ashkenaz, and another for Ashkenazim in Italy ...".

were indeed integrated; censorship was integrated into the change of consciousness.

Thus we see that the modern historian bears an ambiguous relation to censorship, since, in the end, he wholeheartedly identifies with its virtues. The modern historian occupies a common ground, even if he arrived there from two opposing directions. He feels the need to justify the very existence of such passages as the consequence of persecution, rather than as an essential part of Judaism. For Goldschmidt, such comments were the basis of a Jewish self-definition that wholeheartedly rejects such expressions and was grateful that they had disappeared from the standard *maḥzorim*. Although he collected and exposed all the passages that had been erased from the *maḥzorim*, it was not in order to incorporate them into current liturgy. He preferred the "traditional" *maḥzor*, i. e., the censored one!

Goldschmidt's sensitive remarks reveal the basic role of censorship. Censorship clarifies the transition of Jewish discourse, and participated in the shaping of modernity in different respects. As to other areas of knowledge, censorship prepared the groundwork for the principles and values that developed later. In significant ways, the modern Jewish reading continues that of the censor, along with that of his Jewish contemporaries that together were part of the broader Hebraist context. Not only did "liberation" from the shackles of censorship not lead to the resurgence of the suppressed values. It in fact led to the internalization of those very principles. Goldschmidt reveals aspects characteristic of the entire Jewish discourse.

I do not wish to draw a direct line between the censor and the "modern Jewish historian". The situation is more complex. The important point is that the discussion of censorship is essentially also a discussion of our own perspective. There is no other way to evaluate

censorship. I do not intend to ignore the repressive aspects of censorship, but rather wish to point to its presence in later Jewish discourse, most especially in the perspective from which Jewish history, including the history of censorship, was written. The point is not to "defend" the censor, or to ignore his intentions and motivations. The point is to enhance awareness of our own perspective, and thus improve our historical understanding.

The censors' involvement goes hand in hand with other main aspects of Jewish culture at the time, influenced only partially by the restrictions of the Church.³² The evaluation of Jewish culture in this period has seen a remarkable revision during the last decades, following similar lines as the historiographical revision of early modern Catholicism. The traditional attitude that saw censorship as nothing but oppression was based on the perception of the Counter-Reformation as a period marking the decline and stagnation of Italian Jewry, which allegedly followed the ideal and harmonious period of the Renaissance. This perception has been challenged lately by several scholars.³³ As Robert Bonfil has demonstrated, not only was the idealistic image of Renaissance Jewry exaggerated and distorted, it is in the period of the Counter-Reformation and Baroque, the period of segregation and ghettoization, that Jewish culture had more intimate relations with the Christian world than before.³⁴ Although Bonfil emphasizes the restrictions that were imposed on Jews, he has also analyzed the internal development of Jewish culture. While remaining distinct from Christian culture, it followed similar directions at the same time, responding to similar issues and questions. According to Benjamin Ravid's observations, the ghetto provided the Jews with a defined place within Christian society, allowing Jews to become an organic though marginal part of the larger Christian world.³⁵

³² Robert Bonfil, "Reading in the Jewish Communities".

³³ See the evaluations of the shift by Reuven Bonfil, David Ruderman, and Hava Tirosh-Rothschild: David Ruderman, "Introduction", in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. David Ruderman, New York 1992, 1-32; Hava Tirosh-Rothschild, "Jewish Culture in Renaissance Italy: A Methodological Survey", in *Italia*, 63-96;

³⁴ Bonfil, "The Historian's Perception of the Jews in the Italian Renaissance Period—Towards a Reappraisal", in *REJ* 14 (1984), 59-82; idem, "Change in Cultural Patterns of Jewish Society in Crisis: The Case of Italian Jewry at the Close of the Sixteenth Century", in *Jewish History* 3 (1988), 11-30; idem, *Jewish Life in Renaissance History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1994); idem, "Changing Mentalities of Italian Jews between the Periods of the Renaissance and the Baroque", in *Italia* 11 (1994), 61-79.

³¹ Daniel Goldschmidt, "Hashlama Le-Maḥzor", in *Kiryat Sefer* 31 (1955), 146-151.

Goldschmidt takes pains to point out that the content of the *plyvum* may best be understood: "In light of the desperate situation in which medieval Jews found themselves in Christian lands. They could not react to the constant persecutions with physical force, so they turned to their Father in Heaven, that He would render to their oppressors their just recompense, and remove Israel from slavery to freedom and from darkness to light. The extreme expressions found here are a spontaneous reaction to the injustice they suffered, a response from broken heartedness and bitterness of the soul, which corresponds to the deep (and somewhat primitive) piety of their authors. Whoever wonders at their extreme nature and cruelly, let him not forget in what period and under what conditions they were written". On these comments of Goldschmidt's and their broader cultural significance, see in the final chapter.

The same claim may be made for censorship. While censorship did limit what Jews could read and in this sense had a negative impact, it also allowed for the creation of an autonomous Jewish sphere and identity that was not predicated on the polemics against Christianity. Furthermore, censorship was not simply just better than expulsion, it resulted in the validation of Jewish literature as a legitimate part of both Jewish and Christian culture. The dialectics of censorship thus contribute another dimension to the discussion of the shaping of Jewish culture in early modernity. They clarify the ambivalent attitude of the Church, an ambivalence embodied within the Hebraist discourse. The minimal censorship employed in dealing with halakhic legislative literature demonstrates the autonomous sphere defined by the censors. In this case, the lack of significant expurgation is a statement that ensures Jewish autonomy.

Censorship thus participated in the larger process of the transition of Jewish identity to modernity: from a discourse based on theological terms and embodied within the theological debate to a definition of Judaism in terms of "ethnicity" and "culture", the concepts that were to dominate modern discourse. This was a long, multifaceted and complicated process, one in which Catholic censorship played only a limited role. But the printing press in general, and censorial discourse in particular, provide a unique opportunity to analyze the transition to modernity. As I have sought to demonstrate elsewhere, the entire Hebraist discourse embodies this transition.³⁵ Censorship became a constitutive element of the community, and part of the interactive framework in which the text and the reader were created simultaneously. It was a mediating factor between the book and its readers.

Thus, both in the act of conversion and in the act of censorship, the censors reveal aspects of modern Jewish discourse. The dialectics of censorship is part of the process of the redefinition of Jewish existence and Jewish identity in Europe. The censor participated in the definition

³⁵ Benjamin Ravid, "The Religious, Economic, and Social Background and Context of the Establishment of the Ghetto in Venice", in Gaetano Cozzi (ed.), *Gli Ebrei e Venezia: secoli xiv-xviii*, Milano 1987, 211-59; idem, "From Geographical Realia to Historiographical Symbol: The Odyssey of the Word Ghetto", in D. Ruderman (ed.), *Essential Papers*, 373-385.

³⁶ Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "The Return to the History of Redemption (Or, What is the 'History' to Which the 'Return' in the Phrase 'The Jewish Return to History' Refers)", in S. N. Eisenstadt and M. Lissak (eds.), *Zionism and the Return to History: A Reappraisal*, Jerusalem 1998, 249-279 (Hebrew).

of Judaism as a "religion", that is to say, as a set of rituals and beliefs that he himself rejected, and as an important textual tradition. While abandoning obedience to the Law, he continued to read the same corpus. Interestingly, through this approach, the censor dialectically prepares the foundation for the modern perception of Judaism and history. Dominant trends in modern Jewish thought were founded on the attempt to distinguish Judaism from polemics, and to locate Judaism as part of a "Judeo-Christian" culture. Jewish historians (including those who described censorship as an act of oppression) in fact shared the censor's ideas, and rejected the very passages he omitted. They tried to describe Jewish history as autonomous, yet compatible with dominant values. However, they transferred these values, while adopting the Protestant perception of the Catholic Church as an expression of reaction and arbitrary oppression. The study of censorship is thus a means to criticize the different aspects of that perspective.