

Connecting Histories

Jews and Their Others in
Early Modern Europe

Edited by Francesca Bregoli and
David B. Ruderman

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Chapter 3

A Sixteenth-Century Rabbi as a Published Author

The Early Editions of Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe's *Levushim*

PAVEL SLÁDEK

Recent research in the field of early modern Jewish book culture reveals the complex nature of the transformations of the reading public and the complicated relationship between the surviving manuscript culture and the new medium of the printed book, as well as the diversity in rabbinic attitudes to these trends.¹ The impact of the printed text has been recognized as a “critical dimension in understanding the emergence of early modern Jewish culture.”² What follows is a case study of the early publishing history of Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe. It builds on the rich paratextual evidence present in the early editions of his works and in the works of authors related to him. By exemplifying how a rich cluster of interrelated paratexts enables us to reconstruct the preferences of an individual author, we can further a more nuanced understanding of early modern Jewish cultural tendencies, such as mobility, information management, and intercommunal relations.³

The paratexts in the early editions of Jaffe's works demonstrate the wish of their author to go beyond local boundaries and to communicate his

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knowledge universally and to anonymous recipients. They show his conviction that the printed book—rather than manuscripts or oral tradition—would serve this purpose. Indeed, the bulky tomes of Jaffe’s works were read already during his lifetime in Poland, the Bohemian lands, and Italy, as well as in the Land of Israel. Importantly, the publishing history of Jaffe’s *Levushim* is indicative not only of the accelerated circulation of texts in the age of print but also of the obstacles that early modern authors and publishers encountered. The mechanical reproduction of learned Hebrew texts, addressing rather limited readership, often struggled with the general lack of capital on the part of publishers and might have been hindered by the existence of already printed, competing texts.

“I Will Diminish the Amount of Time I Spend Studying with My Students”

Mordecai Jaffe⁴ was born around the year 1535 in Bohemia.⁵ It is assumed that he studied in Poland with Moses Isserles and with Solomon Luria.⁶ His teacher of kabbalah and the sciences was Mattathias Delacrut.⁷ After completing his studies, Jaffe returned to Bohemia and served as a rabbi in Prague. During the years of uncertainty resulting from the second attempt of Emperor Ferdinand I to expel the Jews from the Bohemian lands (1557), Jaffe found refuge in the Moravian town of Sternberg,⁸ but in 1561 he decided to leave for Italy and spent ten years in Venice. He returned to central-eastern Europe and held rabbinic positions in Grodno, Lublin, and in Kremenetz; he was one of the leaders of the Council of Four Lands.⁹ In 1592 he again moved to Prague to serve as chief rabbi, probably as a result of an arrangement between the Prague and Poznań communities, the latter having appointed the Maharal, politically unacceptable for the Prague elders, as their rabbi.¹⁰ The Maharal left for Poznań, and four years later he and Jaffe switched positions. Jaffe spent the rest of his life as chief rabbi of Poznań, remaining active until the last moment, as proved by a circular letter that he dictated two days before his demise on March 7, 1612.¹¹

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Jaffe was author of a multidisciplinary work, which he called *Levushim* (Garments). It covered halakhah, biblical exegesis, and the three most important extra-halakhic disciplines (astronomy, philosophy, and kabbalah). Not only was Jaffe a prolific author, but he also fully embraced the new medium of the printed book and regarded the printed text, and not the manuscript or oral transmission, as the supreme medium for the communication of knowledge. In criticizing the endless pilpulistic debates of yeshiva students, Jaffe claimed: “Therefore, when I saw that I was naked (Gen. 3:10), I trembled with fear lest I die in that state of nakedness. I said to myself, ‘It would be beneficial for me to depart from the practices of a number of my contemporaries. Therefore I will diminish the amount of time I spend studying with my students. But let me build for myself a tranquil habitation wherein I can dwell alone, so that I might be able to clothe myself with a new garment to cover my nakedness.’”¹²

For the “new garment” to cover Jaffe’s nakedness, it must not only have had written form but also have been published in print, as he asks the Lord to give him merit “to begin and to complete the printing of the remaining ‘garments’ one after another, so that all of them are printed.”¹³ Although texts continued to be copied and studied in manuscript form, many scholars, including Jaffe’s teacher R. Moses Isserles, thought of the printed book as a distinct and more efficient medium and wrote as if they presumed the universal availability of printed books (or expressed the same attitude in lamenting their scarcity).¹⁴ When Jaffe’s commentary to the *Guide of Perplexed* breaks off at the beginning of part 3 with the statement “From here on, the printed commentaries should suffice,”¹⁵ the author implicitly assumes that *all* his hypothetical readers have at their disposal the same standardized “library,” made up of printed books.¹⁶

The rabbinic authors who adhered to this position advertised their books as freestanding study material. Thus, Abraham Horowitz included among the benefits of his *Hesed Avraham*, a commentary on Maimonides’s *Eight Chapters*, the fact that, “from now, the yeshiva student [*baḥur*] will not have to listen to [the lectures on] the *Eight Chapters* from the lips of his master between the terms as he would do for several years. . . . Instead, he shall listen to [the instruction in] Mishnah and Gemara.”¹⁷

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In the sixteenth century, printed books would be increasingly employed in the teaching process of the yeshiva too, as noted by Elchanan Reiner in the relation to R. Moses Isserles's academy in Cracow.¹⁸ Local publishers would also coordinate their publishing program with the curriculum of the yeshivas in the region. The Lublin printers of the first Polish edition of the *Talmud* (1559–76) secured the official declaration of “the leaders of the yeshivas in the three lands of Poland, Little Russia, and Lithuania [who] agreed unanimously and confirmed their strict regulation by their signatures that they will study in all the yeshivas of the three abovementioned lands one Talmudic tractate after another according to their being printed by them [i.e., the Lublin printers].”¹⁹

The growing use of printed books in the yeshiva is palpable in that originally unofficial texts such as teachers' notes for lectures or marginal notes in the exemplars of books owned even by less prominent men were published in print. The printers of the posthumous Cracow edition of *Ḥokhmat Shlomo* by Solomon Luria inform readers that the text was “copied from [Luria's] notes . . . on all tractates which he taught in his yeshiva with the students and pupils who would listen to his voice.”²⁰ The publishers further say that Luria's private notes “were published in print to merit many . . . because both little and big will be able . . . to buy for themselves *Ḥokhmat Shlomo*, which was printed in a small volume so that everyone can place it in his pocket and his purse.”²¹ The original form is then explained by the editor, the Italian Jew Samuel ben Isaac Pehm (i.e., Böhm), whose family came from Bohemia: “And know that the *gemarot* owned by the celebrated author from which we copied these notes were for the most part the Bomberg first edition.”²² In the second edition of *Ḥokhmat Shlomo* (Cracow, 1612), the printers emphasize that they “print for the moment one tractate, namely, that of Sanhedrin . . . because this tractate is being taught all over this country.”²³ Similarly, Samuel Eidels (Maharsha) did not hesitate to send to the Prague printers a partial set of his novellae on Yevamot, based on “what [the students] of the *Ḥevra ḳadisha* [Holy Brotherhood] in Poznań investigated and newly derived.”²⁴ Two years later, the complete set, covering the whole tractate, was published in Basel.²⁵ In all these cases, the printed book is aimed to disseminate as

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teaching material texts not directly written for publication.²⁶ In the words of Samuel ben Isaac Pehm: “Be sure that whoever will acquire this book [*Hokhmat Shlomo*], will acquire a teacher—as if the celebrated rabbi Solomon Luria were alive!”²⁷

Jaffe’s apparent urge to get his works published in print, obvious from the material presented below, was motivated by his aspirations to implement his own texts as teaching materials not only in Poland but universally. When appending a selection from *Minbage Tirna* to the second part of his halakhic code, Jaffe was explicit about his dream: “You will not need any other book, only the ‘embroidery’ of the *Levushim*.”²⁸

His proclaimed neglect of the yeshiva was not only a rhetorical device. In criticizing Jaffe’s code, Joshua Falk argued that its flaws resulted from the fact that Jaffe, whom he dubs a *manbig kehillot* (community leader), was absorbed in communal affairs.²⁹ Jaffe’s signature under important *taqqanot* of the Council of Four Lands, when he was traveling at an advanced age,³⁰ and his involvement in the case of the divorce list issued in Vienna on his death-bed, show him as a man busy with communal politics.³¹ Continuous distraction, combined with an almost obsessive urge to write and publish books, resulted in what more rigorous halakhists of the period perceived as authorial carelessness. When polemicizing with Joseph Karo’s interpretation of the *Tur* in the compendium *Bet Yosef*, Benjamin Aaron Slonik excused Karo, who “probably did not wish to formulate a ruling but only spoke academically,” and instead attacked Jaffe who adopted Karo’s view in his *Levush*:

Yet our teacher, Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe, let him live long, copied this legal decision into his book from *Bet Yosef* although he does not bring any proof. The way of this scholar in his book is always that he copies everything that exists in the works of the recent scholars whatever it is and does not pay attention to whether such thing is appropriate to be included into the book from the halakhic point of view or not. He resembles a fisherman who takes all the fish indiscriminately [after BT Bava Kama 41b–42a]. I have already

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discussed this ruling personally . . . with this scholar and he was unable to give me a real answer, he only made excuses.³²

“My Efforts Will Be in Vain”

The story of writing the *Levushim* is symptomatic of the acceleration of literary exchanges and new dynamics of textual production in the age of print. Jaffe started to work on his halakhic code shortly after the publication of Karo’s compendium *Bet Yosef* (1550–58), even before he left the Bohemian lands. He wished to produce “an abridgement of [Karo’s] work just citing the laws themselves to which he [Karo] arrived.”³³ His attempt was first marred by Karo’s own *Shulḥan ‘Arukh* (1564–65): “While in Venice I heard that the master [i.e., Karo] had already informed the Italian printers that he was sending them an abridgement of his great work, entitled *Shulḥan ‘Arukh*, for publication. When I heard this I ceased my own work. . . . For I said: ‘My efforts will be in vain. . . . For surely Karo’s abridgement will achieve pre-eminence . . . therefore my work will make no impact at all.’”³⁴

When the *Shulḥan ‘Arukh* arrived in Venice, Jaffe found it “exceedingly brief . . . and moreover, . . . his decisions generally accord with those of Maimonides. . . . However, in our lands we do not as a rule follow Maimonides’ views.”³⁵ Jaffe returned to his work, only to learn for the second time that his code would compete with another potentially authoritative work:

While I was working on this project the news arrived in Venice that my master and teacher, Rabbi Moses Isserles of the community of Cracow had himself begun working on a project similar to my own, i.e., to explain the practices current in our lands. So once again, yet a second time, I desisted from my work. . . . After these things the printed editions of the books . . . *Shulḥan ‘Arukh* and the glosses of . . . Moses Isserles finally became available. And I saw that both works were exceedingly brief. . . . Therefore I said, “Now the time has come for me to return to my work.”³⁶

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The introduction to *Levush ha-Tekhelet* reveals much about authorship in a period when the mobility of people, ideas, and texts increased and thus accelerated. As a resident of Venice, Jaffe learned that Karo worked on an abridgment of *Bet Yosef* in Safed. He could peek into the clear copy of *Shulḥan ‘Arukh* in the printing house in Venice and the news reached him there of Moses Isserles working on his annotations in Cracow. At the same moment, he knew that his own output would be scrutinized for originality and hesitated to compete with potentially authoritative works, which he expected would achieve universal acceptance, thus excluding alternative works of the same genre. Also in the opening note to the *editio princeps* of *Levush ha-Tekhelet*, Jaffe talks about “what happened to [him] several times from these two pillars of the world,”³⁷ as if Joseph Karo and Moses Isserles did him injustice. Jaffe’s confessions convey an impression of strong frustration from unfulfilled ambitions, which should be taken seriously despite the abundance of literary topoi.

The Lublin Editions

The first edition of a work by Jaffe was printed in Lublin in 1590 by Kalonymos ben Mordecai Jaffe, his second cousin.³⁸ The Lublin press issued the first two parts of Jaffe’s halakhic code, called *Levush ha-Tekhelet* and *Levush ha-Hur*, covering the first of the four parts of *Arba‘ah Turim*. The thick volume in folio, consisting in total of almost three hundred folios, features two books in one.

Preparing a text for the press was a time-consuming and financially demanding venture for an early modern author. To cite just one example, Joseph Karo complained about publishing practices in his *Bedeḳ ha-bayit*, printed only posthumously in 1605 in Salonika: “After the Lord enabled me to compose the book *Bet Yosef* and to print it, it was disseminated all over the Jewish realm. [The Lord] helped me to review and check it and I introduced changes, explanations, additions, and critical notes. . . . Also, the printers omitted many things. And I planned to introduce these new things in [the text] when it would be printed for the second time, but I did not

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succeed because they rushed to print it for the second time and many times again before they received my letter.”³⁹

Adrian Johns called “the locking-up of capital during printing itself” to be the “bugbear of printers” (and, for that matter, of all those involved in the making of the book),⁴⁰ explaining thus the haste and carelessness with which they usually operated. Not surprisingly, early modern authors wished to attend to the printing personally or to delegate trustworthy supervisors for that task. Jaffe decided to partner with a certain Joseph ha-Lavan, a student of Moses Isserles.⁴¹ Jaffe’s relations with Joseph ha-Lavan are indicative of the financial demands faced by authors and the compromises that financial partnerships might result in.

Joseph ha-Lavan wished to publish a set of glosses to the *Shulḥan ‘Arukh* indicating the sources of the laws in *Bet Yosef*.⁴² Jaffe, who clearly yearned to establish himself as a freestanding halakhic authority and did not content himself with the position of mere commentator, criticized Joseph’s work, especially the idea of printing it “around the *Shulḥan ‘Arukh*,” and claimed the superiority of his own work because it did not exclusively depend on Karo.⁴³ According to Jaffe, Joseph accepted the criticism and suggested that they “participate [*nishtatef*] in printing the book *Levush Malkhut*.” The Hebrew term *nishtatef* implies financial participation, thus clarifying Jaffe’s motivation to partner with someone whom he in fact considered a lesser scholar—Joseph almost certainly contributed toward the cost of the printing.

The hierarchy between the two coauthors was set in writing. In the following passage, Jaffe seems to quote from an actual contract, which stipulated the conditions of the coexistence of two texts by two different authors in the same book: “I agreed but under the following condition: I shall not subtract or drop on the floor anything of what I have written in my *Levush Malkhut*. . . . And I shall do only this: if at times I find something original in your words that was omitted in my own . . . I shall indicate it as ‘a note’ and everybody will know from whom the words originated.”⁴⁴

Joseph ha-Lavan’s glosses provide cross-references between paragraphs, indicate overlapping themes and laws, and at times become lengthier and analytical. In some cases, however, as he tells the reader with a barb of criticism aimed at Jaffe, he could not find a cross-referenced passage, because

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“R. Mordecai Jaffe sometimes changed the order for some reason . . . while I followed strictly the *Shulḥan ‘Arukh* because my book is its commentary, as explained in the introduction.”⁴⁵

Joseph took it on himself to edit both his own and Jaffe’s text and also act as corrector. He tells us in a note that the printers were in a great hurry and so he had less than a month for corrections.⁴⁶ Indeed, the errata cover no less than eleven pages. Joseph ha-Lavan also apologized for the truly mediocre quality of the illustrations and diagrams, which were not even inserted in the text but appended at the end: “The reason being that the artist did not pay enough attention to draw them . . . according to how they were drawn before him.” The printers left empty spaces in the text (although inconsistently), so that “the smart person who has eyes in his head can paste all the pictures in the appropriate places.”⁴⁷

During the printing, R. Jaffe very likely resided in Kremenetz, which gave Joseph the opportunity to act independently.⁴⁸ Whether Jaffe checked the text in the process of the publication, which unfolded in several phases, is impossible to determine.⁴⁹ However, he fully pronounced his dissatisfaction when the first two parts of his code were republished about thirteen years later, again in Lublin.⁵⁰

Although the introductory note including the passage from the contract with Joseph remained unchanged, its presence in all subsequent editions having been possibly stipulated by the same contract, the text was substantially altered. Jaffe made certain changes in the *Levush* but, above all, “deleted many of the glosses which were printed in the first edition, authored by the original editor [Joseph] on his own and without the consent of the author.”⁵¹ Jaffe made thus very clear who was the master of the house: now there is just one “author” (*meḥaber*) who controls the book.⁵²

Extra-Halakhic Disciplines

Three years after printing his first books in Lublin, Jaffe, by then a Prague resident, published a set of three nonhalakhic works with the same press, still operated by his relative Kalonymos Jaffe. For commercial reasons, the

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printers changed the order of the three works from that intended by Jaffe. In accordance with his didactic theory of the “ascending ladder,” Jaffe’s original project moved gradually from halakha (1–5), through ethics (6) and biblical exegesis (7), to three meta-halakhic disciplines: philosophy (8), astronomy (9), and mysticism (10), progressing from the “speculative sciences dealing with the nature” to “the science of astronomy, which deals with the intermediate world,” and only then “ascending even higher . . . into the Pardes of wisdom . . . , the science of kabbalah.”⁵³ Thus the trio of commentaries was intended to open with the commentary on the *Guide*, followed by the commentary to the Laws of the Sanctification of the New Moon, and concluding with the commentary on Recanati.⁵⁴

The printers, however, placed kabbalah at the front (10, 8, 9), disregarding the author’s intended progressive logic. It is clear from the printers’ note that sales were what mattered to them most. It was not complicated calendrical issues (9) nor the explication of the *Guide of the Perplexed* (8), but rather the supercommentary to Recanati’s popular kabbalistic work, printed together with the original text, that would increase sales: “Although it has been repeatedly printed before, [Recanati’s commentary] cannot be found [anywhere] in the world because the buyers purchased it for its excellency.”⁵⁵ To attract the buyer, the scientific part on the calendrical issues (9) is praised for its diagrams and for the glosses of Judah bar Nathan ha-Levi Ashkenazi, “who entered the Pardes of wisdom and returned in peace with thorough knowledge and insight, to add innovative notes.”⁵⁶ Moreover, in his own introduction, Judah bar Nathan Ashkenazi openly categorizes his glosses as kabbalistic, while he eulogizes Jaffe as the ultimate universal scholar to whose glosses he would himself add explanations.⁵⁷ The reordering of the three nonhalakhic works on the part of the printers, disrupting the overall logic of Jaffe’s works and blatantly favoring kabbalah over science and philosophy, is indicative of the growing tendency toward popularization of kabbalah, and consequently also of the decline of interest in natural sciences in Ashkenazic lands. Clearly, not science but kabbalah would, according to the publisher, sell the volume.

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Cracow, Prague, Venice, and Prague Again

Between 1594 and 1599, the three remaining halakhic parts of the *Levushim* were published in Cracow by a Lublin bookseller, Naphtali bar Tu-vyah Hirsch-Altschuler, and his coinvestor Joseph ben Menahem Israel.⁵⁸ Shortly after, Jaffe found a new and devoted secretary, Joseph Sofer ben Solomon ha-Levi of Poznań.⁵⁹ His laudatory poetic introductions are present in the Prague editions of Jaffe's works, starting with the 1603 edition of *Levush ha-Orah*, a supercommentary on Rashi. Joseph Sofer was involved in publishing a number of books⁶⁰ and had literary ambitions of his own, as is apparent from a *seliḥah* about two brothers martyred in Warsaw in 1596, mentioned by Jacob Elbaum. The publication has a lengthy introduction, signed in May 1597 by none other than Mordecai Jaffe himself, calling the author "the chief scribe of the *beit din* here in the holy community of Poznań."⁶¹

The Prague edition of *Levush ha-Orah* displays careful collaboration between the printer, editor, and author. Besides the title page, it has an unusually high number of decorative elements throughout the text, governed by a coherent iconographic plan that seems to express messianic hopes. On the verso of the title page, it features a popular emblem of the Jerusalem Temple, copied from the printer's mark of the famous Venetian printer Marco Antonio Giustiniani, who used it from 1545.⁶² In Prague, this iconographic motif was used for the first time in the 1569 edition of *Torat ha-'Olah* of Moses Isserles, a groundbreaking edition that marked the expansion of the Prague Jewish printing press beyond the local market.⁶³ While in *Torat ha-'Olah* the device separates the three parts of the work and relates to its content, dealing with the allegorical-philosophical interpretation of the Temple architecture, utensils, and rituals, its use in the *Levush ha-Orah* has different meanings. Together with the woodcut initials, directly copied from Venetian models, the Jerusalem Temple vignette evoked Italianate connotations.⁶⁴ At the same moment, it was combined with another woodblock, clearly cut to complement the former, featuring a lamb or a sheep with lions and surrounded with the citation of Isaiah 29:1–7, speaking of "Ariel" as the

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personification of Jerusalem, and Psalms 48:9, referring to God strengthening the city of Jerusalem.⁶⁵ The same motif and the hope for the rebuilding of Jerusalem is repeatedly expressed in several paratexts authored by both Jaffe and Joseph Sofer, while the decorative elements underline these motifs throughout.⁶⁶

Although the printers of the *Levush ha-Orah* tried their best to please the author, Jaffe wished to publish his works in Italy. Italy was regarded as the most important center of printing in Hebrew characters; thus, for example, the editor of the 1596 Cracow edition of Isaac of Corbeil's *'Amude Golah* prided himself in that "nothing similar to this [book] has been accomplished in the whole kingdom of Italy."⁶⁷ Yet not even Italian presses were immune to the general precariousness of the publishing business, and so in 1609 Jaffe wrote: "A number of hardships and mishaps occurred to R. Joseph Sofer S[egan] L[ivyah] from Poznań, before he printed the books of *Levush Malkhut*. He traveled to and stayed in the holy community of Venice but he did not succeed there and so he returned to his inn. Now the Lord prepared [Jonah 2:1] to him noble gentlemen, namely, . . . the leader of the community, Mr. Joseph bar Meir Brandeis ha-Levi, together with his son-in-law and with his son. They kindly offered to help with the printing of the aforementioned book in the holy community of Prague."⁶⁸

Jaffe's secretary was one of many who failed in their attempts to print a book in a specific printing house. To give just one related example, Jaffe's student Issakhar Eilenburg wrote in his *Tsedah la-Derekh*, "During my stay in Venice I worked on the edition of the present book to publish it in print."⁶⁹ However, only the second version was published, much later, by the author's son in Prague in 1624. Eilenburg shared with his teacher the desire to be published in Italy, and it is symbolic that when his *Sefer Beer Sheva'* was printed in Venice in 1614, it contained an enthusiastic approbation by Jaffe.

Jaffe's attempt to publish his halakhic code in Venice is also interesting in the light of the effort of the Polish supercommunal structures to protect the local printers against the Italian presses, which were their main competition.⁷⁰ In 1593 and again in 1594, the Council of Four Lands decided that

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“the books printed here [i.e., in Cracow] or in Lublin are forbidden to be printed in Italy.”⁷¹ When arranging for the third edition of his code, Jaffe clearly did not feel obliged to conform to this regulation.⁷²

The whole set of the halakhic code was printed in Prague in 1609, and both Jaffe and Joseph Sofer in their respective notes told the same story about Joseph’s abortive journey to Venice. Jaffe found in Joseph Sofer an ideal secretary who served with devotion as editor and agent in promoting the publication of Jaffe’s books. Joseph’s lengthy eulogies are scattered through all the Prague editions of Jaffe’s books and were retained in the second Prague edition (1622–24).⁷³ Joseph Sofer wished to help establish Jaffe’s work as complete and authorized, speaking of the Prague edition as the “second by the author himself,” a disclaimer against the original Lublin version. Moreover, the new edition contained “many additions besides those resulting from the inquiries sent to him by eminent scholars [even] from distant places . . . to which [Jaffe] responded with correct utterances as though from Sinai.”⁷⁴ Sofer claimed that Jaffe’s explanations of the laws were thus suitable even for laymen.

Joseph Sofer’s résumé of the printing history of the *Levush ha-Tekhelet* indicates that technical and aesthetic quality was an important parameter when selecting the place for publication. Joseph says that he went first to Venice, but

it happened for a reason that the book was printed in Prague. And so the work was begun in this holy community, which is a place wonderfully equipped with . . . all the different tools. And this book has been already printed in the Polish land and because of the desirability and merit [of the text] all the [copies] were sold. However, whoever will see them both [i.e., the Poznań and Prague editions], will be able to compare and tell the difference . . . they do not look alike! Your eyes will be persuaded by seeing the beautiful paper and ink in the pleasing letters that allow everything to shine. [The Prague edition] has everything necessary for a banquet of print [*se’udat ha-hadpasah*]!

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While Joseph Sofer pointed to the beauty of the Prague edition, its sponsor, the Prague communal leader and businessman Moses bar Meir Segal Brandeis, was more explicit about the mediocrity of the previous editions: “It was printed in the Polish land twice already but by lazy printers with limping hands. . . . This is why we set a consortium to print it beautifully and with excellence here in Prague.”⁷⁵

Venice and Central-Eastern Europe

The ties between the major communities in central-eastern Europe (Prague, Cracow, Lublin, and Poznań), on the one hand, and Venice, on the other hand, have been noticed by scholars, but little is known about the dynamics of that connection.⁷⁶ Jaffe was among those central-eastern European scholars who spent time in Italy and retained ties to that country after his return home.

In the published records of the case of the *ḥalitsab* (a ritual absolving a widow and her brother-in-law from levirate marriage) of the Maharal’s son-in-law Abraham Wallerstein from 1607–8, Mordecai Jaffe is listed as the chief decisor, with two of his rulings present. Besides two other scholars residing in Bohemia and Poland, two Italian rabbis were invited to give their opinions. One of them, Joseph ben Solomon Kitzingen from Italy, resided with his father-in-law, David Altschul, in Prague.⁷⁷ Finally, “the present decisions were sent to Italy to . . . Rabbi Leib Saraval from the holy community of Venice.”⁷⁸ Saraval supported the decision of the other scholars, declaring the *ḥalitsab* invalid, but reacted to the argumentation of Jaffe, who then answered with another letter.⁷⁹

Jaffe was very proud of his contacts in Venice, as exemplified by a responsum “about a case that occurred in Venice,” which he included quite inorganically in his legal code, “although the Venetian authorities have already issued their ruling.”⁸⁰ The link between Jaffe and Saraval (d. 1617),⁸¹ unless they met during Jaffe’s stay in Venice, was Saraval’s student Jacob ben Elhanan Heilbronn. Several members of the Italian Heilbronn family moved to Poland-Lithuania,⁸² and Jaffe had contacts with at least two of them.

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Together with the Maharal, Jaffe wrote a *baskamah* (approbation) for *Em ha-Yeled* (Prague, 1597), a teaching guide for Hebrew language instructors published by Jacob's brother, Joseph ben Elhanan Heilbronn.⁸³

Jacob ben Elhanan edited and published a little volume called *Nahalat Ya'akov* (Padua, 1623), a collection of responsa by different authors, sent as answers to the editor's queries over several decades. The editor confessed in the introduction that he wandered from place to place and felt homesick.⁸⁴ Upon his return to Padua he realized that he did not own anything to leave to his descendants to be remembered by;⁸⁵ the book, which has the feel of a *liber amicorum* to it, would thus be his legacy. The volume displays a number of translocal rabbinic relationships. It includes an approbation and a short responsum by Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz from Prague, authored during a stop in Venice on his way to the Land of Israel;⁸⁶ among the responsa sent to Heilbronn, there is one by Mordecai Jaffe, signed in Poznań in 1605,⁸⁷ as well as one by Saraval, in which he referred to Jaffe's opinion and favored it over Isserles's.⁸⁸ Heilbronn's volume additionally shows that despite increased mobility,⁸⁹ sixteenth-century Jews retained a strong bond to their homelands. In the 1560s Jaffe complained about feeling lonely in Venice, having been expelled from "the land where he was born" (*erets moladeti*), and he returned to central-eastern Europe. Jacob ben Elhanan Heilbronn had a similar feeling in Poznań and moved back to Italy.

The Venice Edition

Less than ten years after his death, Jaffe was finally published in Venice. Although there seemed to be growing interest in central-eastern European halakhic authors, it was still not easy to be published in Italy. Gedalyah ben Solomon, who copied and brought to the Venetian press two works by Meir of Lublin, experienced almost the same frustration as Joseph Sofer some two decades earlier: "It is now already four and half years that I have been residing here in the famous city of Venice. And I wandered . . . from place to place . . . and there is nobody I can rely on except on the mercy of our Father in heaven. . . . And it is only because of these holy and precious books that

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I have been dwelling here all that time to bring them out of potentiality to reality by the means of print.”⁹⁰

The Venice edition of the *Levushim* was printed by Giovanni Cajun in 1619–20 for Pietro and Lorenzo Bragadini. It was edited by Leon Modena,⁹¹ who also did the corrections.⁹² Modena himself speaks of Jaffe as the “latest authority” (*aḥaron she-be-aḥaronim*) in one of his responsa⁹³ and seemed to be personally involved in the choice of the title for a publication that was, according to Meir Benayahu, the major publishing enterprise of a time in which relatively few Hebrew books were printed in Venice⁹⁴ and the Bragadini publishing house was the only active firm.⁹⁵

The Venice edition of the *Levushim* is visually quite pleasing, although it displays a certain carelessness in craftsmanship.⁹⁶ It featured Jaffe exclusively as a halakhist, including only the first five parts of the *Levushim* on the *Tur*. It seems that his exegesis, philosophy, astronomy, and kabbalah were not interesting for the Venetians, although they would encompass only one or two extra volumes, and so economic concern probably was not the reason. Interestingly enough, the Venice edition was conceived not for export but for the local public: Modena wrote that he corrected Jaffe’s Hebrew and also put into brackets those *minhagim* that were specific for the Ashkenazic Jews in the author’s lands, but were not relevant for “Sephardic and Italian Jews.”⁹⁷ That the Venice edition was not intended for the non-Italian market is further corroborated by the fact that another edition appeared in Prague between 1622 and 1624. This edition too included the halakhic sections only.

Limits of the Printing Revolution

Mordecai Jaffe was a conscious author, aware that the medium of the printed book could surpass the physical limitations of personal instruction. Jaffe wished and—for some time—succeeded in achieving not only local but universal recognition and was published and studied in Italy and in the Land of Israel. His achievements become apparent only if the *Levushim* is not interpreted anachronistically as an unsuccessful attempt to defeat the *Shulḥan*

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‘Arukh but rather as one of the only two all-encompassing codifications of the halakhah composed in the period under consideration, which incited significant although often critical response from subsequent generations of rabbinic scholars.⁹⁸ The unattractive Lublin *editio princeps* was already widely received, as is clear from the fact that scholars often commented on glosses found therein, but absent in subsequent editions.⁹⁹ In the 1609 Prague edition of *Levush ha-Tekbelet* Jaffe mentioned a letter sent to him, which spoke of “Jerusalem scholars, who in a holy group study regularly the book of *Levushim*, every day after leaving their synagogue.”¹⁰⁰ Jaffe’s claim for the popularity of his code in the Land of Israel is corroborated by the existence of manuscript glosses that Rabbi Abraham ben Mordecai Azulai (ca. 1570–1643), who moved to Hebron from Morocco in 1599, added to the Venice edition of Jaffe’s code.¹⁰¹ As demonstrated by Moshe Halamish, Jaffe did not shy away from incorporating a strong kabbalistic component in his rulings, which made it naturally attractive for the pietistic circles in the Land of Israel.¹⁰²

Jaffe’s case also documents how the distribution of knowledge accelerated in the sixteenth century and how the printing press not only increased the volume of circulated texts, but at the same time also enabled a particular text to dominate the market and exclude alternatives. Originality became a requirement, and thus Jaffe became deeply frustrated when some of his authorial plans were thwarted by competing authors, such as Joseph Karo and Moses Isserles in the case of his halakhic code, or the Maharal in case of the supercommentary to Rashi.¹⁰³

Finally, Jaffe’s case documents yet another aspect of early modern Jewish printing as an entrepreneurial venture, one much less highlighted by scholars: its unpredictability. For instance, Jaffe’s collection of sermons is advertised in the general introduction to the *Levushim* and it is mentioned by David Gans in a laudatory paragraph on Jaffe (1592).¹⁰⁴ In 1603 Jaffe took stock of his publishing endeavors: “Praise and thanksgiving to the holy God who granted me the privilege of publishing in print nine of the *Levushim*, which I tailored according to how they are enumerated in the general introduction. And the tenth is also the holy of holies, namely, sermons that I preached before many people, young and old. . . . It is hidden with me and sealed in my treasury because the expenses to publish it in print are too

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high for me. . . . However, it is freely available to all my visitors and whoever wishes to make a copy, is permitted to do so.”¹⁰⁵

The sermons have never been published, however, and no manuscript copy survived.¹⁰⁶ In other cases, it took Jaffe decades to publish books that were completed long beforehand; his nonhalakhic works appeared only once and in mediocre quality. Neither Jaffe’s ardor and high status nor the devotion and support of his secretaries and sponsors could always guarantee his success. The story of the early editions of Mordecai Jaffe’s *Levushim* reveals much about the mechanisms behind Hebrew printing in the sixteenth century but also raises fundamental questions about its nature: was it a success or a failure?

228. For a specific burial case that was impeded, see *Das Grüne Buch*, Leo Baeck Institute, Berthold Rosenthal Collection, AR 637, box 4, folder 2, fol. 107b.

46. Schammes, *Customs*, vol. 1, no. 134; vol. 2, no. 284.

47. *Sefer Maharil* (Jerusalem: Mif'al Torat Hakhme Ashkenaz; Makhon Yerushalayim, 1989), no. 466.

48. Hahn, *Yosif ometz*, no. 956.

49. On communal expectations, see Judah Galinsky, “Commemoration and the Heqdash in the Jewish Communities of Germany and Spain During the 13th Century,” in *Stiftungen in Christentum, Judentum und Islam vor der Moderne. Auf der Sucht nach ihren Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden in religiösen Grundlagen, praktischen Zwecken und historischen Transformationen*, ed. Michael Borgolte (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005), 197.

50. This was a specific reference in the liturgy for the Days of Awe.

51. R. Juda Löw Kirchheim, *The Customs of Worms Jewry* [Hebrew], ed. Israel Mordechai Peles (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayim, 1987), 134 n. 5. The first reason he offered was that if God were not to take mercy on the supplicant, he would be dead as well.

52. Psalm 19:15; Kirchheim, *Customs*, 63.

53. Hahn, *Yosif ometz*, no. 956.

54. Gary Anderson, “Redeem Your Sins by the Giving of Alms: Sin, Debt, and the ‘Treasury of Merit’ in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition,” *Letter and Spirit* 3 (2007): 39–69.

55. Similarly, see Frederick S. Paxton, “The Early Growth of the Medieval Economy of Salvation in Latin Christianity,” in *Death in Jewish Life: Burial and Mourning Customs Among Jews of Europe and Nearby Communities*, ed. Stefan C. Reif, Andreas Lehnhardt, and Avriel Bar-Levav (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 23–26.

56. Kirchheim, *Customs*, 135 n. 6.

57. Judah Galinsky, “Public Charity in Medieval Germany”; idem, “Charity in the Medieval Ashkenazi Synagogue,” paper read at the Sixteenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, July 29, 2013.

58. Bruce Marshall and Peter Gordon, eds., *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

CHAPTER 3. A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY RABBI AS A PUBLISHED AUTHOR

This is an expanded version of a paper that was first researched during my residence as a fellow at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Jewish Studies in Philadelphia. It

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was given at “Controversies, Conversion and Dialogue: Jews and Christians in Time and Place,” a conference in honor of Elchanan Reiner, which took place in Cracow, June 22–23, 2015. The completion of the paper was enabled by repeated visits to the Bodleian Library in Oxford and especially to Houghton Library, Harvard, which holds a rich collection of early prints of R. Mordecai Jaffe’s works. I am grateful to Konstanze Kunst and to Olga Sixtová for generously sharing their thoughts on Jaffe and different materials with me. The work was supported by the European Regional Development Fund project “Creativity and Adaptability as Conditions of the Success of Europe in an Interrelated World” (No. CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/16_019/0000734).

1. Elchanan Reiner, “The Ashkenazi Élite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript Versus Printed Book,” *Polin* 10 (1997): 85–98; idem, “A Biography of an Agent of Culture: Eleazar Altschul of Prague and His Literary Activity,” in *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Michael Graetz (Heidelberg: Winter, 2000), 229–247.

2. David Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), 99.

3. For the already classical application of the notion of “paratext” to Jewish book culture, see Shlomo Berger, *Producing Redemption in Amsterdam: Early Modern Yiddish Books in Paratextual Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

4. Joseph Perles, “Geschichte der Juden in Posen,” *Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 13, no. 11 (1864): 409–15. For a brief general contextualization of Jaffe’s personality and thought, see Lawrence Kaplan, “Rabbi Mordechai Jaffe and the Evolution of Jewish Culture in Poland in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 1983), 266–81; for a detailed analysis of the central-eastern European rabbinic culture during Jaffe’s later years, see Joseph M. Davis, *Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller: Portrait of a Seventeenth-Century Rabbi* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004); on Jaffe’s philosophical thought, see Lawrence Jay Kaplan, “Rationalism and Rabbinic Culture in Sixteenth-Century Eastern Europe: Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe’s *Levush Pinat Yikrat*” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1975).

5. Jaffe speaks of Bohemia as his native country in the general introduction to *Levushim*, in *Levush Malkhut* (Jerusalem: Zikhron Aharon, 2004), 1:28. In his concluding note to *Levush ha-Orab* (Prague, 1603), 91b, he speaks of getting married in the spring of 1553.

6. Asher Siev, *Rabbi Moses Isserles: His Life, Works, and Ideas* [Hebrew] (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1972), 96–97.

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7. Jacob Elbaum, *Openness and Insularity: Late Sixteenth-Century Jewish Literature in Poland and Ashkenaz* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990), 149. Jaffe refers to Delacrut as his teacher in the introduction to his supercommentary on Recanati's Torah commentary, *Levush Or Yeḳarat* (Lublin, 1594), [1b].

8. In the concluding note to his supercommentary to Recanati (Lublin 1594, 182a), Jaffe wrote: "I give praise to God who gave me the merit to complete my explanations of the book of Recanati . . . today, on Friday, 5 Adar I, in the year of 320 here in Sternberg." On the expulsion, see Helmut Teufel, "Zur politischen und sozialen Geschichte der Juden in Mähren vom Antritt der Habsburger bis zur Schlacht am Weißen Berg (1526–1620)" (diss., Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1971), 35–40; Samuel Steinhert, "The Expulsion of the Jews from Bohemia in 1541" [Hebrew], *Zion* 15 (1950): 70–92. The instability is amply documented by the archival materials published in Gottlieb Bondy and Franz Dworský, eds., *Zur Geschichte der Juden in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien von 906 bis 1620* (Prague, 1906), 1:421–58, nos. 582–623.

9. David Gans, *Tsemah David* (Prague, 1592), 1:64b.

10. Alexandr Putík and Daniel Polakovič, "Judah Loew ben Bezalel, Called Maharal: A Study of His Genealogy and Biography," in *Path of Life: Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, ca. 1525–1609*, ed. Alexandr Putík and Daniel Polakovič (Prague: Academia–Jewish Museum in Prague, 2009), 73. The political affinity between the two scholars is clearly visible from the fact that Mordecai Jaffe was among the authorities who supported Maharal in his campaign against the slander called the "Nadler affair." See Jaffe's short responsum included in Maharal's *Netivot 'Olam* (Prague, 1595–96), 90b; and Israel Halperin, ed., *Pinḳas Va'ad Arba' Aratsot: Liḳuṭe Taḳḳanot, Ketavim, u-Reshumot* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1945), 4–5; on this affair in general, see Elchanan Reiner, "Yibus and Libel: Maharal, the Bezalel Family and the Maharal of Prague" [Hebrew], in *Maharal, Overtures: Biography, Doctrine, Influence*, ed. Elchanan Reiner (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar, 2015), 101–26. Although, unlike Jaffe, the Maharal disapproved of the codifications of the halakha, they shared a dislike for the pilpul method (cf. *Levush 'Aṣeret Zahav* 242:30).

11. 3 Adar II 5372. Meir ben Gedalyah of Lublin, *Sheelot u-Teshuvot* (Venice, 1618), 87a–b. The letter was signed on 1 Adar II "with weak hands." An added note explains that because his signature was illegible, Jaffe asked for official authentication to be appended. The communal scribe who confirmed the document was Joseph Sofer, who will be mentioned later. The text of Jaffe's gravestone was reproduced by Perles, "Geschichte," 414 n. 15: מו"ה מרדכי יפה ז"ל | ג' ואדר שנת ש"ע"ב ציון זה לראש הגאון אב"ד |

12. *Levush Malkhut*, 1:28 (tr. Kaplan, *Rationalism*, 369). The metaphor of "dress," reflecting the individual's merit, was quite common, see, e.g., Joseph Karo's *Maggid*

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Mesbarim (Jerusalem: Yosef ben Yitshak ha-Kohen, 2007), 3, no. 21: “Know that if you see in your dream that [your] clothes are torn up, it indicates that your deeds are deficient.”

13. *Levush ha-Tekhelet* (Prague, 1609), [1b].

14. Siev, *Rabbi Moses Isserles*, 166–67.

15. *Levush Pinat Yikrat* (Lublin, 1594), 30a (tr. Kaplan, *Rationalism*, 167).

16. Cf. Pavel Sládek, “Typography and the Practices of Reading: The Lesson of *Tzemab David* (1592),” *Judaica Bohemiae* 51, no. 1 (2016): 47–77.

17. Abraham Horowitz, *Hesed Avraham* (Lublin, 1622), [1b]. It is not haphazard that the printer picked this very passage from author’s introduction and paraphrased it on the title page: “The road will be paved for all yeshiva students to enter these *Chapters* without the necessity to listen at all to somebody else” ([1a]).

18. Elchanan Reiner, “Yeshiva: The Yeshiva Before 1800,” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. Gershon David Hundert (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008), 2:2052, col. 2.

19. Israel Halperin, “The Council of Four Lands in Poland and the Hebrew Book” [Hebrew], *Kiryat Sefer* 9, no. 3 (1932/33), 373. Cf. Krzysztof Pilarczyk, *Talmud i jego drukarze w Pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej* (Cracow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1998), 75–108; Raphael Nathan Rabinowicz, *Maamar ‘al badpasat ha-Talmud* (Munich: Huber, 1877), 54–61.

20. Solomon Luria, *Hokhmat Shlomo* (Cracow, 1587?), [1a].

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, [1b].

23. Solomon Luria, *Hokhmat Shlomo* (Cracow, 1612), [1a].

24. Samuel Eidels, *Zikbron Devarim* (Prague, 1598), 6b.

25. I am grateful to Olga Sixtová for this information and references. Cf. Samuel Eidels, *Zikbron Devarim* (Prague, 1598), his *Hidushe mi-Masekhet Y[om]’T[ov] u-mas[ekhet] Yevamot* (Basel, 1600), and also his *Hidushim me-Masekhet Nida* (Prague, 1602).

26. Reiner, “The Ashkenazi Élite.”

27. Luria, *Hokhmat Shlomo* (1587?), [1b].

28. *Levush ha-Hur* (Lublin, 1590), [112a].

29. Joshua Falk, *Meirat ‘Enayim*, printed together with *Shulhan ‘Arukh*, *Hoshen Mishpat* (Prague, 1614), introduction.

30. Jaffe issued his approbation to Moses Heilbron’s *Zikbron Moshe* (Lublin, 1611) in May 1606 in Gniezno “during the fair.”

31. See the series of documents relating to the case in Meir ben Gedalyah of Lublin, *Sheelot u-Teshuvot* (Venice, 1618), 77a–89b, especially the lengthy responsum by Jaffe

(85b–87a), his approbation of Maharam’s decision (87a), and his circular letter against those who falsely boasted that Jaffe was on their side in the controversy.

32. Benjamin Aaron Slonik, *Mašat Binyamin* (1632), 49b. On Slonik, see Edward Fram, *My Dear Daughter: Rabbi Benjamin Slonik and the Education of Jewish Women in Sixteenth-Century Poland* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2007). For other examples of criticism of the *Levush*, see Chaim Tchernowitz, *Toledot ha-Poskim* (New York: Jubilee Committee, 1947), 3:110–11.

33. General introduction to the *Levushim*, tr. Kaplan, *Rationalism*, 372.

34. *Ibid.*, 373–74.

35. *Ibid.*, 374–75.

36. *Ibid.*, 371–83.

37. *Levush ha-Tekhelet* (Lublin, 1590), ib.

38. Marvin J. Heller, *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 2:847.

39. Joseph Karo, *Bedeḳ ha-bayit* (Salonika, 1605), ib.

40. Adrian Johns, “The Coming of Print to Europe,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. L. Howsam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 111.

41. *Levush ha-Ḥur* (1590), [112a].

42. *Levush ha-Tekhelet* (1590), ib.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Levush ha-Ḥur* (1590), [112a].

46. *Ibid.*, [117a].

47. *Ibid.*, [115a–116b] (the illustrations) and [116b] (Joseph ha-Lavan’s note).

48. David Gans in his *Tsemah David* (Prague, 1592, 1:64b) lists R. Jaffe’s appointments preceding his arrival to Prague in 1592 in the sequence Grodno, Lublin, Kremenez. Jaffe’s term in the last mentioned city is dated ca. 1590–92 also by Herman Rosenthal in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (s.v. “Kremenetz”; cf. s.v. “Grodno”).

49. *Levush ha-Tekhelet* and *Levush ha-Ḥur* have separate title pages, and moreover the latter has been printed in two inorganically connected parts (83b *vacat* and the text continues on 1a).

50. Bibliography of Hebrew Book (MBI), no. 136554. Moritz Steinschneider (*Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, Berlin: Ad. Friedlaender, 1852–1869, no. 6229, 2) rightly identified the Lublin provenance of the typographic material. The two printers, whose names are mentioned in the colophon, worked in Lublin between 1602 and 1605 but the *terminus ante quem* is November 1603, when the “second edition”

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is mentioned in the appendix to the *Levush ha-Orab* (Prague, 1603). The hypothesis that this edition was perhaps partly produced in Poznań, formulated tentatively by Perles (“Geschichte,” 412–13 n. 11) and repeated without hesitation and further proof by Krzysztof Pilarczyk (*Leksykon drukarzy ksiąg hebrajskich w Polsce* [Cracow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2004], 127 and 247), was rejected as unfounded already by Louis Lewin (“Hebräische Drucke und Drucker aus Grosspolen,” *Soncino Blätter* 1 [1925–26]: 172). The only confusing fact is that the exemplar in the Bodleian (Op. fol. 819), consulted by Steinschneider, seems to be incomplete, lacking the first title page and the general introduction to the *Levushim*, which, if located, might contain the details of the place and the date of this edition. See also Christoph Wolfius, *Bibliotheca Hebraea* (Hamburg: Liebezeit, 1715), 793.

51. *Levush ha-Tekhelet* and *Levush ha-Ḥur* (1603?), 265b. Jaffe actually expurgated all the freestanding material from Joseph’s glosses and retained only some of the cross-references.

52. A thorough comparison of the different editions of Jaffe’s halakhic code remains a desideratum and is beyond the scope of this essay. A perusal of the passages that Jaffe altered between 1590 and 1603 reveals that his code was actually studied and many points provoked debates. Cf. *Levush Malkbut*, OH 185:8, and also the material appended to *Levush ha-Orab* (1603, [93a–95b]), featuring Jaffe’s reactions to attacks related to a number of his rulings. The polemical character of these amendments, incorporated already in the second edition of the code, is stated in the introductory note of the appendix.

53. General introduction to the *Levushim*, tr. Kaplan, *Rationalism*, 399.

54. On the curricular issues in Jaffe, see Davis, *Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller*, 33–34; David Ruderman, *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 88–90.

55. *Levush Or Yekarot* (1594), 1b.

56. Ibid. Judah bar Nathan was Jaffe’s student (Perles, “Geschichte,” 411 n. 9).

57. *Levush Eder ha-Yakar* (1594), 1b.

58. *Levush ‘Ateret Zabav Gedulah* (Cracow, 1594); *Levush ‘Ir Shushan* (Cracow, 1596); *Levush ha-Buts ve-ha-Argaman* (Cracow, 1598/9). The publisher is called a “bookseller” (*mokher sefarim*) in *Levush ‘Ateret Zabav Gedulah*, 222a, and in *Levush ‘Ir Shushan*, 224b. He also published other books in Cracow; see Hayim Dov Berish Friedberg, *Toldot ha-Defus ha-Ivri be-Polonyah* (Antwerp: Hayim Dov Berish Friedberg, 1932), 15.

59. Joseph Sofer ha-Levi of Poznań is mentioned in Halperin, *Pinḳas Va’ad Arba’ Aratsot*, p. 25, no. 82, and p. 29, no. 87. He is probably identical with Joseph ben Solomon Segal me-Pozna, the owner of a manuscript of Israel ben Petahiah Isserlein’s man-

ual on dietary laws (MS JTS Rab. 551, Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, call no. F 39240).

60. Cf. Joseph Sofer's note, recommending to prospective buyers the *Sefer Raven* of Eliezer ben Nathan (Prague, 1610), [1b]; Joseph Sofer acted as the publisher of the third edition of a kabbalistic work of Judah ben Abraham Kalats, *Sefer ha-Musar* (Cracow, 1598), [1b].

61. Elbaum, *Openness and Insularity*, 274 n. 96 [MBI 135552]; according to Elbaum, it was published in 5358 (1597/8).

62. Marvin J. Heller, "The Printer's Mark of Marco Antonio Giustiniani and the Printing Houses That Utilized It," in *Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 44–53.

63. For the description, see Olga Sixtová, "Jewish Printers and Printing Presses in Prague, 1512–1670 (1672)," in *Hebrew Printing in Bohemia and Moravia*, ed. Olga Sixtová (Prague: Academia and the Jewish Museum in Prague, 2012), 46.

64. The form of the woodcut initials present in *Levush ha-Orab* follows that of the Bomberg firm in the 1540s, which became popular not only in Prague but also in Cracow. Cf. *Sefer ha-Agur* (Venice: Bomberg, 1546); Ibn Shuaib, *Sefer ha-Derashot* (Cracow: Isaac b. Aaron Prostitz, 1573–75).

65. The exact meaning of the motif of lions with a lamb or a sheep is dubious. Iconographically, the lions resemble the "protective" lions known from numerous Jewish textiles and silver objects (cf. also the signet of Judah Leib Schedel, featuring the "Bohemian" lion with the inking balls in the colophon of *Levush ha-Orab*). Given the citation of Isaiah 29, speaking of the oppression of Jerusalem by the nations, it might refer by contrast to Micah 5:7/8, where Israel is compared to a young lion, destroying the nations. Cf. David Kimhi's commentary ad loc. and also to Psalm 48:9. On the connection between the lion as a zodiacal sign for the month of Av, in which the Temple has been destroyed, and Israel, see *Pesikta Rabbati*, ed. Friedman (Vienna, 1880), 133b, nos. 27–28. Based on the evidence of the frequent collaboration of Prague Jewish printers with their non-Jewish counterparts, the woodblock was most probably cut by a Christian artist.

66. Cf. *Levush ha-Orab* (Prague, 1603), 2a (on both sides of the signet), 84a (Jaffe's note to the following diagram of the Land of Israel), 91b (Jaffe's versified colophon), [92a] (Joseph Sofer's note). Jaffe obviously liked the theme and used the formulation 'galuyot Ariel' as late as in 1612 in addressing the recipients of the circular letter, referred to above (note 11).

67. Isaac ben Joseph of Corbeil, *Amude Golab—Sefer Mitsvot Kaṭan* (Cracow, 1596), [160a].

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68. *Levush 'Ir Shushan* (Prague, 1609), 206b.

69. *Tsedah la-Derekb* (Prague, 1624) to Leviticus 16:16.

70. Halperin, “The Council,” 373.

71. *Ibid.*, 370–71.

72. Cf. *ibid.*, 371.

73. Cf. the introductory eulogy to *Levush ha-Tekhelet* (Prague, 1609), 2a, where Joseph Sofer wove the name and the place of residence of the author into fifteen lines of honorific predicates.

74. *Levush ha-Tekhelet*, 2a.

75. *Levush ha-Tekhelet*, 2a. Meir’s son Simon, who accompanied him to Venice, married Gitel, the daughter of the Maharal (Alexandr Putík, “Ursachen und Folgen des Prager ‘Rabbinerumsturzes’ des Jahres 1579,” *Judaica Bohemiae* 46 [2011], Supplementum, 57). On Meir’s business activities, see Marie Buňatová, *Die Prager Juden in der Zeit vor der Schlacht am Weißen Berg: Handel und Wirtschaftsgebaren der Prager Juden im Spiegel des Liber albus Judeorum, 1577–1601* (Kiel: Solivagus-Verlag, 2011), 265, 277.

76. See especially Buňatová, *Die Prager Juden*, 185–91, 213; Elbaum, *Openness and Insularity*, 42–49; Fram, *My Dear Daughter*, 32–36 and the literature therein.

77. *Pesaḳim bi-Devar Ḥalitsah* (Prague, 1608?), [1b] and [3a]; Putík—Polakovič, “Judah Loew ben Bezalel,” 60.

78. *Ibid.*, 1b.

79. It would be easy to bring mirrorlike examples of central-eastern European authorities having been invited to give their opinion on Italian halakhic controversies. Cf. Moses ben Jehiel Porto-Rapa, *Palge Mayim* (Venice, 1608), on the controversy about the mikveh in Rovigo, containing among others the ruling by Moses Mordecai Margoliot of Cracow (12b–14a).

80. *Levush ha-Buts ve-Argaman* (Prague, 1609), 114b; the responsum reacts to a question regarding a person who pretended to be a *koben* to derive profit and was reprinted in the subsequent editions of Jaffe’s code.

81. David Malkiel, *Stones Speak: Hebrew Tombstones from Padua, 1529–1862* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 79.

82. Elbaum, *Openness and Insularity*, 48 and *passim*.

83. The approbations by Jaffe and the Maharal reappear in the second edition of the work, published a year later in Cracow under the title of *Luah ha-dikduk*. See Irene Zwiep, “Adding the Reader’s Voice: Early Modern Ashkenazi Grammars of Hebrew,” *Science in Context* 20, no. 2 (2007): 170–73.

84. Jacob ben Elhanan Heilbronn, *Nahalat Ya’akov* (Padua, 1623), 4a–b.

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85. On writing or publishing a book as a memorial, see Rachel Greenblatt, *To Tell Their Children: Jewish Communal Memory in Early Modern Prague* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2014), 107–16.

86. Heilbronn, *Nahalat Ya'akov*, 41b.

87. *Ibid.*, 59a–60a.

88. *Ibid.*, 13b.

89. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, 23–55.

90. Meir of Lublin, *Meir 'Ene Hakhamim* (Venice, 1618), 268b.

91. Howard E. Adelman and Benjamin C. I. Ravid, “Historical Notes,” in *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's "Life of Judah,"* ed. and tr. Mark R. Cohen (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 214, n. v; Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy*, Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1990, 190–192. Rabbi Leib Saraval, mentioned above, ordained Modena as a rabbi.

92. Cf. Meir Benayahu, *Copyright, Authorization, and Imprimatur for Hebrew Books Printed in Venice* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Makhon Ben-Tsvi, 1971), 38, 53.

93. Leon Modena, *Sheelot u-Teshuvot Zikne Yebudah*, ed. S. Simonsohn (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1956), no. 57.

94. Benayahu, *Copyright*, 231.

95. David Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy* (Philadelphia: J. H. Greenstone, 1909), 372–74.

96. At times, the foliation is faulty beyond reason; e.g., one sequence in the Venice edition of *Levush 'Ir Shushan* (1620), goes 152, 159, 146. Gross mistakes of typesetting have not been corrected; e.g., a whole paragraph is printed upside down in *Levush ha-Buts ve-Argaman*, 56a, par. 130:5. The press operators (*Pressenzieher*) sometimes did not apply appropriate strength, and so, at times, the impression is barely visible. I consulted a copy in the library of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies in Philadelphia, call no. CJS BM520.9.J3.

97. *Levush ha-Tekhelet* (Venice, 1619), 1b.

98. E.g., Rabbi Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller, who moved to Prague during Jaffe's term as the chief rabbi of that city, wrote a book-length collection of critical notes on Jaffe's code under the title of *Malbushe Yom Tov*, printed only in the nineteenth century (Warsaw, 1895) but cited frequently by Elijah Spira in his commentary on the *Levush*, *Orah Hayyim*, published in Prague (*Eliyab Zuta*, 1689 and 1701). A manuscript of *Malbushe Yom Tov* is also present in David Oppenheim's collection (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Op. 297).

99. *Levush Malkhut*, editor's introduction, 1:8.

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100. *Levush ha-Tekhelet* (Prague, 1609), 243a (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Op. 820).

101. *Levush Malkhut*, editor's introduction, 1:6. Cf. also London, British Library, MS Or. 6833, a Yemenite manuscript containing a compilation of various metatexts related to *Shulḥan 'Arukh*, including "abridgment of the laws from the *Levush*" (title page) and sections from *Levush ha-Ḥur*, *Hilkhot Rosh Ḥodesh* (219a–221a). G. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1915), part 3, sect. 8, pp. 584–85, no. 1159.

102. Moshe Halamish, *Kabbalah: In Liturgy, Halakhab and Customs* [Hebrew] (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2011). Jaffe was open even to the popularization of kabbalah via liturgy, as indicated by the mention of his name among those who supported the publication of Israel ben Moses's *Tanim Yaḥdav* (Lublin, 1592), a commentary to Psalms, excerpted from the *Zohar*.

103. Jaffe added a detailed note to his *Levush ha-Orab*, explaining the circumstances of his composition of the supercommentary to Rashi, motivated by the fact that Jaffe's note to Deuteronomy 33:19 has the same point as Maharal's brief gloss in his *Gur Aryeh* (1578). Jaffe feels obliged to explain that he was writing his supercommentary already since his marriage in 1553 (*Levush ha-Orab* [Prague, 1603], 91b).

104. Gans, *Tsemah David*, 1:64b.

105. *Levush ha-Orab* (Prague, 1603), 91b, author's note.

106. Cf. Elbaum, *Openness and Insularity*, 243–44.

CHAPTER 4. NEW KABBALISTIC GENRES AND THEIR READERS IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

Research for this chapter was completed at Tel Aviv University thanks to a postdoctoral fellowship (2014–16) I received from the Azrieli Foundation. It also builds on my doctoral dissertation, "Kabbalah in Print: Literary Strategies of Popular Mysticism in Early Modernity" (PhD diss., Concordia University, Montreal, 2013).

1. David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010).

2. Joseph Hacker, "The Intellectual Activity of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Isadore Twersky and Bernard D. Septimus (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 95–136.

3. Daniel Abrams, "The Cultural Reception of the *Zohar*," *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 19 (1999): 279–316.

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