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The Editor's Place: Samuel Boehm and the Transfer of Italian Print Culture to Cracow

ANDREA SCHATZ AND PAVEL SLÁDEK

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY saw many and varied contacts between Jews in Italy and Poland. The roles of rabbinical scholars, medical students, family, and trade connections have been explored, and the printing press, too, has been studied to some extent.¹ Just as particular attention has been given to the travels of Elia Baḥur (Levita) between Italy and Ashkenaz, scholars have looked at the printing press of Isaac Prostitz, “the Italian,” in Cracow to reflect on connections between Italy and Poland.² Samuel Boehm, the editor who worked in Northern Italy before joining Prostitz in Cracow, has repeatedly figured in such research without ever becoming its main character. This study is the first to focus on him, investigating his editorial activities and asking what his own com-

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1. See Jacob Elbaum’s seminal publications: “Kishre tarbut ben yehude Polin ve-Ashkenaz le-ven yehude Italyah ba-m[e’ah] ha-16,” *Gal-Ed* 7–8 (1985): 11–40, and Elbaum, *Openness and Insularity: Late Sixteenth-Century Jewish Literature in Poland and Ashkenaz* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1990), 33–54 et passim; Edward Fram, *My Dear Daughter: Rabbi Benjamin Slonik and the Education of Jewish Women in Sixteenth-Century Poland* (Cincinnati, 2007), 26–35; Majer Bałaban, *A History of the Jews in Cracow and Kazimierz, 1504–1868* (1931), trans. D. Weinfeld et al. (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 2002), 224–27 et passim.

2. Zeev Gries, “Print as an Agent of Communication between Jewish Communities after the Expulsion from Spain” (Hebrew), *Daat* 28 (1992): 5–17, and Gries, “The Figure of the Jewish Managing Editor at the End of the Middle Ages,” *Igeret ha-akademyah ba-yisre’elit le-mada’im* 11 (1992): 7–11; both reprinted in *Ha-sefer ba-ivri: perakim le-toldotav* (Jerusalem, 2015), 79–94 and 95–109.

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ments on his work can tell us about transregional connections and their effects on early modern print culture north of the Alps.³

This article will begin with Samuel Boehm's Italian period, clarifying biographical details and showing how this aspiring editor-corrector used paratexts to claim visibility for his role in producing books in the intricately woven networks of publishing in Padua and Venice. We will show how his remarks question hierarchies between author, publisher, editor, and printer. We will then explore the transfer of central elements of Italian print culture to Cracow: material (types and ornaments), the discourse on editing in the paratexts, editorial expertise concerning halakhic works, the organization of the print shop with fluctuating and overlapping roles for various actors, and the commitment to the transregional distribution of varied genres of Jewish knowledge. In a final step, we will turn to Boehm's own complex vision of the interrelated roles of transregional movement and local stability for Jewish cultural productivity.

CREMONA—PADUA—VENICE: GREAT EXPECTATIONS

It is in Cremona, in the wider circles of the city's rabbinical academy and its head, Joseph Ottolenghi, that we encounter Samuel Boehm for the first time. The Venetian Hebrew presses had been brought to a standstill following the papal ban against the Talmud in 1553 and the burning of Hebrew books in several Italian cities. Printing, however, continued in the Spanish-ruled Duchy of Milan, where Tobias Foa operated Sabbioneta's Hebrew press, while Vincenzo Conti established a new printshop in nearby Cremona.⁴ Among Conti's first books, printed in 1556, was a new edition of Isaac of Corbeil's *Amude golab*, and Boehm's name is mentioned in an endnote. The note explains that he procured funding for a meticulously prepared text: "A lion from up high, the *hakham*, R. Samuel Boehm, obtained the funds to print this holy work in trustworthy type, from beginning to end, and removed from it were all those leaves, bad and unclean shells, so

3. Isaac Gershon, who worked for the Venetian printers Zanetti and Di Gara after the period covered in this article, may be the only single editor having received an extensive study so far: Meir Benayahu, "Rabbi Yitshak Gershon," *Aufot* 13 (2001): 9–89; see also Yaacob Dweck, "Editing Safed: The Career of Isaac Gershon," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 17.1 (2010): 44–55.

4. We have found no traces of Boehm prior to his time in Cremona. Some scholars have suggested that Boehm had already been a famous corrector in Venice before moving to Cremona, but this seems based on an unsupported remark by Meir Benayahu, *Hebrew Printing at Cremona: Its History and Bibliography* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1971), 58; similarly: Benayahu, *Copyright, Authorization, and Imprimatur for Hebrew Books Printed in Venice* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1971), 27n2.

that one should not be punished, Heaven forbid.”⁵ The Cremona edition of *‘Amude golab* has, indeed, become famous for its sophisticated apparatus and for an elaborate description of the editing process, involving, it was claimed, the critical comparison of seven different manuscripts.⁶ The publisher’s note is anonymous, but a poem with an acrostic on the last page of the book tells the audience that Zanvil (Samuel) Pescarol took main responsibility for the editing process.⁷ Boehm would not be visibly involved in further works printed in Conti’s press, but it is safe to assume that no later than at this point he became familiar with the advanced editing practices that were supported by his efficient fundraising.

Boehm appears to be living in Cremona still in the summer of 1558, when his signature is included in a *pesak* by Ottolenghi that holds the key to important aspects of Boehm’s life.⁸ First, it shows that already in 1558 he was in contact with the wider world of Hebrew publishing, in which he would strive to succeed a few years later in Venice. The *pesak* was issued for Meir ibn Shushan,⁹ who was then involved in printing the first edition of Joseph Karo’s *Bet Yosef*,¹⁰ and the *pesak*’s first signatory was Meshullam Kofman ben Shemayah, who had served as a corrector for Giustiniani’s

5. Isaac of Corbeil, *Sefer ‘amude golab* (Cremona: Conti, 1556), 160v; see also Isaiah Sonne, “Expurgation of Hebrew Books—The Work of Jewish Scholars,” *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 46 (1942): 975–1015 (1001n77).

6. Isaac of Corbeil, *Sefer ‘amude golab*, 160r. As the title page indicates, the editors were aware of and could have used also the *editio princeps* (Constantinople, 1510). The final two pages of the book contain an errata list, but even this is introduced confidently as merely further proof of a meticulously prepared text.

7. For Pescarol’s role in Conti’s press, see Sonne, “Expurgation,” 1001–2; for his edition of *‘Amude golab* and censorship, see also Piet van Boxel, “Hebrew Books and Censorship in Sixteenth-Century Italy,” in *Jewish Books and Their Readers: Aspects of the Intellectual Life of Christians and Jews in Early Modern Europe*, ed. S. Mandelbrote and J. Weinberg (Leiden, 2016), 79–80; for his biography, see Ya’akov Boksenboim, *Igerot bet Carmi: Cremona 550–557* (Tel Aviv, 1983), 38–40.

8. In *She’elot u-teshuvot matanat ba-adam*, ed. Y. Boksenboim (Tel Aviv, 1983), 194–96; see also Mosè Giacomo Montefiore, “Un recueil des consultations rabbinique rédigé en Italie au XVI^e siècle,” *Revue des Études Juives* 10 (1885): 190; and see Benayahu, *Hebrew Printing at Cremona*, 58.

9. The *pesak* reports that ibn Shushan requested Ottolenghi to overturn a ban against him by Moses Provenzali, the leading rabbi in Mantua, because ibn Shushan had refused to testify in a legal case. The *pesak*, signed on 11 Av, grants ibn Shushan’s request, but does not support ibn Shushan’s counter-ban (*adraba*) against Provenzali. Provenzali’s response has been partially published by Isaiah Sonne: “Mosheh ibn Shushan u-madpise Sabbioneta,” *Kiryat Sefer* 8 (1931/32): 513–19 (518–19).

10. The first two volumes of Karo’s work had been published in Venice. When printing was transferred to Sabbioneta in 1553, ibn Shushan, “from the town of Safed,” appears in the colophon as publisher of the third volume, and he may have

Talmud edition (1545–51), and who would, in 1566, replace Boehm as editor-corrector for the second edition of *Bet Yosef*. Even more important, however, is David Noerlingen's signature on Ottolenghi's *pesak*, since Noerlingen's name appears also in a contract set up a few months earlier, on January 24, 1558, between Vincenzo Conti and two *hebrei*, David Noerlingen and Samuel ben Isaac of Verona. Shlomo Simonsohn, who published the contract, already suspected that Samuel of Verona was none other than Samuel Boehm.¹¹ This was plausible, but a direct link between Boehm and Noerlingen had not been established. It is Ottolenghi's *pesak* that shows that both did, indeed, meet and know each other. If we accept, therefore, Simonsohn's identification, we learn several additional details about Boehm: he had come from Verona, lived in the San Donato quarter of Cremona, and was present with David Noerlingen at a meeting in the house of Joseph ha-Levi on May 25, 1559.¹² At that time, the Spanish government had yielded to the pressure of the Roman inquisition, thousands of copies of the Talmud and other works had been seized and burned in Cremona, and the community fought for the return of the confiscated books that had been spared. At the meeting in Joseph ha-Levi's house, a majority of Cremonese Jews, among them Boehm and Noerlingen, approved the appointment of an attorney to represent them before the town's vicario "in the case of the Talmud."¹³

Returning to Conti's contract, it provides an intriguing picture of the relationship between a printer and his publishers. Boehm and Noerlingen invested 847 pounds, 5 soldi, and 9 dinars for Conti to print 650 copies of an unnamed work, on good paper, at the speed of one and a half sheets per day, with interruptions to incur a penalty, and with the publishers responsible for delivering on Fridays portions of the model text in legible script for the following eight days. Ottolenghi is named as arbiter, should corrections be required, and Conti himself would be responsible for obtaining

even acted as an agent (*shali'ah*) of Karo himself, according to the fourth volume, published in 1559; see Isaiah Sonne, "Mosheh ibn Shushan," 518.

11. Shlomo Simonsohn, "Hozeh le-hotsa'at sefarim 'ivriyim bi-Kremona," in *Scritti in memoria di Umberto Nabhon: Saggi sull'ebraismo italiano*, ed. R. Bonfil et al. (Jerusalem, 1978), 143–50 (Hebrew section).

12. Shlomo Simonsohn, *The Jews in the Duchy of Milan* (Jerusalem, 1982), 2:1356–57 (no. 3111). A further document, dated by Simonsohn to 1549–50, speaks of Samuele of Verona, who was appointed joint guardian with another member of the community for two children against their will (1149, no. 2645). Since Samuele's name does not include a patronym, it is not certain that this is an early trace of Samuel Boehm.

13. Simonsohn, *The Jews in the Duchy of Milan*, 2:1357. See also Renata Segre, *Gli ebrei lombardi nell'età spagnola: Storia di un'espulsione* (Turin, 1973), 33–37, and Moritz Stern, *Urkundliche Beiträge über die Stellung der Päpste zu den Juden* (Kiel, 1893), 117–35.

inquisitorial approval.¹⁴ The contract further mentions that the printing of the Zohar has already begun, and that all copies would have to be delivered to Boehm and Noerlingen at an agreed price, except for two that Conti would be able to keep for himself.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the contract does not specify the titles of the planned editions in whose printing Boehm and Noerlingen invested. Conti's major publication project in that year was an edition of Jacob ben Asher's *Arba'ab turim* with a fine apparatus, completed on 27 Av, which could well have been covered by the contract, but in the absence of names in the book's paratexts, there is no evidence for this. Given that already in December 1557 the Roman Inquisition began to press the Milanese authorities to take stronger action against Hebrew books in Cremona (copies were confiscated only in 1559), it is also possible that the contractual partnership was never actually established.¹⁶

We lose sight of Boehm for a couple of years, but when he reappears in 1562, his profile comes into sharper focus. He is now introducing himself as the *magiah*, the editor-corrector, of Meir ibn Gabbai's *Derekh emunah*, a handsome book printed in Padua in Lorenzo Pasquato's press.¹⁷ In his introduction, Boehm describes his move to Padua as the result of his desire to escape unspecified troubles, hinting almost certainly at the disruption of Jewish communal life and printing in Cremona in 1559,¹⁸ but his formulations also point to personal disappointments.¹⁹ We also learn that he served as a cantor in Padua and that his father died as a martyr (*kadosh*), since he signs as *Shmuel Pehm Sha"Ts mi-k"k Padu'ab ha-magiah ben ha-kadosh Rabbi Yitsḥak Pehm*.²⁰

14. For the full contract, see Simonsohn, "Hozeh," 146–50.

15. Simonsohn concludes that Boehm and Noerlingen acted as publishers for the Cremona edition of the Zohar (Simonsohn, "Hozeh," 146), but the contract does not specify this. For a survey of the early history of printing the Zohar in Mantua and Cremona, see Boas Huss, *Like the Radiance of the Sky: Chapters in the Reception History of the Zohar and the Construction of Its Symbolic Value* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 2008), 127–36.

16. See Stern, *Urkundliche Beiträge*, 117–18. It is also noteworthy that, with the exception of the *Arba'ab turim*, all six books issued by Conti between Sivan (May–June) 1558 and Sivan 1559 were edited by Vittorio Eliano; see Benayahu, *Hebrew Printing in Cremona*, 203–11.

17. The title woodcut, showing a pensive child, appears to have been created for a significantly smaller format, which gives a slightly improvised impression. For a description of the edition, see Marvin J. Heller, *Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden, 2008), 125–27.

18. See Heller, *Studies*, 126.

19. Meir ibn Gabbai, *Derekh emunah* (Padua: Pasquato, 1562), [1v].

20. We adopt the common spelling that renders פֶּהֶם (*Pehm*) as "Boehm." Samuel Boehm used this signature with slight variations throughout his editorial work.

Much to our regret, Boehm would never tell his readers more about his ancestors.²¹ But the father's name, Isaac Boehm, has proven suggestive: numerous scholars have taken it to refer to Isaac Boehm of Rome, the husband of Hannah (from Padua), daughter of the famous grammarian and author of Yiddish chivalric romances, Elia Baḥur.²² It may have been particularly tempting to associate Samuel Boehm with the great grammarian given the well-documented activities of two of Elia Baḥur's grandsons, Joseph and Elia, who learned the printing trade under their grandfather's tutelage in Isny and, after their conversion to Christianity, took on the names of Vittorio and Giovanni Eliano.²³ Vittorio Eliano played a prominent role as editor and censor in Cremona and Venice at the same time as Samuel Boehm was active there. The testimony of Vittorio's brother, however, casts serious doubt on the purported family connection. In an autobiographical account of his youth and conversion to Christianity, Giovanni speaks extensively about his family and their move to Cairo in 1549, and it is clear that Isaac of Rome died there, since Giovanni returned to Cairo in 1561 to find that Hannah still lived there and that his father had left behind many debts. Giovanni's account mentions nothing extraordinary about Isaac's death, making it highly improbable that it occurred as the result of anti-Jewish violence.²⁴

Even more significant is Samuel Boehm's own implicitly negative testimony in the only instance where he himself mentions Elia Baḥur. In

21. Moritz Steinschneider initially claimed (in his article on Hebrew typography) that the father rather than Samuel himself was from Padua but corrected this in his *Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in Biblioteca Bodleiana* (hereinafter: *CLH*, 2 vols. [Berlin, 1852–60]), col. 3040.

22. These claims rely mainly on unsubstantiated remarks by Ḥayyim Dov Friedberg, *Toldot ha-defus ha-ivri ba-'arim ha-eleb she-be-Eropah* [...] (Antwerp, 1937), 11, and Naphtali Ben-Menahem, "Ha-defusim ha-rishonim shel ha-'Shulḥan 'arukh,'" in *Rabbi Yosef Karo: 'Iyunim u-meḥkarim be-mishnat MaRaN ba'al ha-'Shulḥan 'arukh*", ed. I. Raphael (Jerusalem, 1969), 104. Benayahu, however, already rejected Friedberg's account, because Samuel Boehm calls his father *ba-kadosh* (the martyr); see his *Hebrew Printing at Cremona*, 95n6.

23. It is in their colophon for their grandfather's Yiddish chivalric romance that the brothers refer to their father as "Yitshok Behm fun Rom" (יצחק ביהם בון רום): Elia Baḥur, *Bovo d'Antona* (Isny, 1541); see also Gérard E. Weil, *Élie Lévi, humaniste et massorète (1469–1549)* (Leiden, 1963), 40. In the anonymous philosophical dictionary *Ruah ben* (Venice: Brucioli, 1544), they call their father Yitshak bar Yehi'el z"l (on the title page) and Yitshak ish Romi (in the colophon).

24. José C. Sola, "El P. Juan Bautista Eliano: Un documento autobiográfico inédito," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 4 (1935): 291–321; see also Robert John Clines, *A Jewish Jesuit in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Cambridge, 2019), 212, for 1561 as the date of Giovanni's return to Cairo. It should be added that Giovanni only mentions two siblings: Vittorio and a younger sister.

Cracow in 1574, Boehm edited a poetical digest of Gersonides' commentary on Job by a little known fourteenth-century Spanish author, Zarek Barfat.²⁵ The first edition had been prepared by Elia Baḥur with the help of his grandson Joseph a couple of years after their return from Isny, and was printed in Venice in 1544.²⁶ On the title page of his second edition, Samuel Boehm reprinted Elia Baḥur's preface, which begins with the words "I, Elia the Grammarian," and in his own preface he explains:

I searched tirelessly and found this book, which was printed thirty years ago in Venice. Because of its merits I decided to publish it [. . .] I also retained the preface, composed by someone other than me [*zulati*], as your eyes can clearly see. All Israel should know from the womb of whom those words came, as I do not want to wear a tallit that is not mine and take on a crown myself for something not owned by me.²⁷

Boehm's words show that he did not come across the book during his Italian years, and since he does not mention Elia Baḥur's name even when speaking of him, he gives the impression that the editor was of no particular interest to him. He may have exaggerated a bit, because Elia Baḥur was a controversial figure. But if he wanted to obscure a family connection, he could have simply omitted Elia's preface or refrained altogether from publishing the book. Note that when Vittorio Eliano tried to make a breakthrough in publishing books, he proudly signed his name as "the publisher Vittorio Eliano, grandson of the chief grammarian Elia Baḥur Ashkenazi."²⁸ Samuel Boehm's own evidence is, we submit, conclusive. He was no close relative of Elia and his grandsons, but rather forged his own independent path into the world of publishing.

Meir ibn Gabbai's *Derekh emunah*, a didactic work on the kabbalistic sefirot, was an excellent choice for an aspiring editor who sought to draw attention to his judgement and skills. It was the first time that a work by Meir ibn Gabbai, who introduced kabbalistic topics systematically to wider

25. B. Beer, "Bemerkung zu einer in Nr. 16 des Literaturblatts zum Orient enthaltenen Notiz des Dr. Carmoly, eine poetische Bearbeitung des Buchs Hiob betreffend," *Literaturblatt des Orients* 2 (May 22, 1841): 312–14, and Moritz Steinschneider, *CLH*, col. 2500, no. 7092, and col. 939–40, no. 4960.33–34.

26. Zarek Barfat, *Perush Iyov* (Venice: Brucioli, 1544), [1r], and Weil, *Élie Lévi*, 152–53.

27. Zarek Barfat, *Perush Iyov* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1574), [1v].

28. Isaac of Dueren, *Sba'are Dura* (Venice: Di Gara—Vittorio Eliano, 1563), 64v.

circles of readers, was printed in Italy.²⁹ The publication was, to the best of Boehm's knowledge, a first edition,³⁰ and it was a small book (only twenty-eight leaves in his quarto edition), on which he could bestow great care without incurring major expenses. This and other editions in which Boehm would be involved later feature his name prominently. Instead of being lost among flowery phrases toward the end of a note, it stands out at the very beginning, typeset in letters of the same size as the name of the book on the title page (see fig. 1). As Boehm would do later in his first Cracow edition, he expresses great expectations for his new employment:

I arrived here in Padua, but was idle even here until I noticed [. . .] this book [. . .] the foundation of all books, and in particular of books of Kabbalah [. . .]. And I saw yet another book, written by the same author, titled *'Avodat ha-kodesh*, a comely and wonderful book. May God grant us to edit it along with other books I have in mind, amen.³¹

Boehm's hopes, however, were not fulfilled in Padua. Lorenzo Pasquato was a relatively prolific printer in Italian and Latin, but for unknown reasons he printed only one further Hebrew work.³² Meir ibn Gabbai's *'Avodat ha-kodesh* was printed for the first time under the title *Mar'ot elohim* in Venice a few years after Boehm had signalled his intention to edit it, but instead of him, it was Shneur ben Judah Falcon, Meir ibn Gabbai's son-in-law, who published the book.³³

With his visually bold self-presentation as editor at the beginning of ibn Gabbai's *Derekh emunab*, Boehm sought to establish himself in a field where he did not lack competitors, among them Menahem Porto, Meir and Asher Parenzo, and Samuel Archevolti, who were active around the same time

29. Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, Conn., 1988), 255 et passim; Roland Goetschel, *Meir ibn Gabbay: Le discours de la Kabbale espagnole* (Leuven, 1981), 39.

30. As Ludwig (Lajos) Blau has shown, Shneur ben Judah Falcon had started printing the work already three years earlier in Constantinople, but it is not clear whether he finished the edition, of which only two leaves appear to have survived: Blau, "Die erste Ausgabe von Meir ibn Gabbai's דרך אמונה," *ZfHB* 10 (1906): 52–58; see BHB 333899.

31. Ibn Gabbai, *Derekh emunab* (Padua: Pasquato, 1562), [1v].

32. USTC lists 101 titles printed by Pasquato between 1561 and 1569 (the year of Boehm's arrival in Cracow), excluding the two Hebrew titles.

33. Meir ibn Gabbai, *Mar'ot elohim* (Venice: Griffio, 1567–68), 1r–v. When *'Avodat ha-kodesh* and another of Ibn Gabbai's works, *Tola'at Ya'akov*, first edited by Falcon in Constantinople (1560), are reprinted in Cracow (1576–77 and 1581, respectively), they do not include Boehm's name either, but Boehm refers to the Cracow edition of *'Avodat ha-kodesh* in his edition of *Sefer yubasin*.

אמר שמואל פיהם

ש"ץ מק"ק פדו"א המניה בן הקדוש רבי יצחק פיהם ז"ל
ה"ה ה'ר' ויהי בימים הרבים ההם ימים של צער וסער
סערו' הזמן אפפוני' סבבוני כתרונ' מנוחה הדריכוני'
קראתי למאהבי המה רמוני' ואני בתוך ההפכה לא
אדע לצאת אנה ואנה' ה' לא יתן מוט לצדיק נתן
בלבי לכה דודי נצא השדה שדה של תפוחי' כי חולת
אהבה אתה ועתה מה לך פה ומי לך פה הוציא מן
המקום' הנעתי עד פת פדו"א' וגם פה לא עשיתי
מאומה עד שקמתי וראיתי דבורה דבר דבור על
אופניו ספר זה להנאון הרב מהר"ר מאיר ז' גבאי ז"ל
השיב לאחד מתלמידיו שמו מהר"ר יוסף הלוי דברים
נוראים ומופלאים דבש וחלב תחרת לשונו יסקל
המסילה מ"אן להרים מכשול מדרך עמינו' מי בכס
מכל עמו יהי אלקיו עמו ויעל ויגע בקצחו ויאורו עיניו
כי זה הספר מעט הכמות ורב האיכות יסוד כל הספרי'
ובפרט ספרי הקבלה' המאמין לא יחיש להבין דבר
משל ומליצה' לא יכשל גם כי ילך במרוצה' ראה
זה חדש הוא' ועוד ראיתי ספר אחד חבירו המחבר
הנ"ל קראו עבודת הקודש חבור נאה ומופלא יזכינו
השם להגיהו עם שאר ספרים כאשר עם לבבינו אמן:

Figure 1. Meir ibn Gabbai, *Derekh emunah* (Padua 1562), [1v]. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Opp. 4° 648 (2).

in Venice. In his attempt to claim his place among them, Boehm draws attention to his name as confidently as Meir Parenzo, when he acted as publisher for Bragadin's edition of Maimonides' *Moreh nevukhim*,³⁴ and he includes extensive hints at his personal circumstances, such as found usually only in the paratexts of authors or particularly prominent editors.³⁵ When Boehm becomes involved in publishing important halakhic texts in Venice, he will also distinguish himself in more substantive terms through a detailed and expansive interpretation of the role of the editor.

Boehm's edition of Meir ibn Gabbai's *Derekh emunah* may have served as his entry ticket to the Italian center of Hebrew printing: Venice. In spring 1564, Boehm participated in preparing an edition of *Tur* and *Bet Yosef—Yoreh de'ab* for the Venetian printing house of Giovanni Griffio the Elder.³⁶ Griffio, a member of a dynasty of printers and publishers, printed in Italian and Latin from 1544 to 1576.³⁷ In 1563–64, he was active also in the Padua branch of the firm, run by his son Cristoforo,³⁸ and he may have come in contact with Samuel Boehm, while printing Sallust's *Coniuratio Catilinae* and Nostradamus's *Pronostico* there in 1563.³⁹ After a hiatus of several years following the burning of the Talmud and widespread confiscations of Hebrew books, Hebrew printing in Venice resumed in 1563, and Griffio was among those who tried to take advantage of the new opportunity.⁴⁰

34. Moses Maimonides, *Moreh nevukhim* (Venice: Bragadin, 1551), 1v.

35. See, e.g., Meir ibn Gabbai's closing words about the trouble of earning one's living in his *Tola'at Ya'akov* (Constantinople, 1560, [79r]; Cracow: Prostitz, 1581, 83v), or Meir Parenzo mourning his father in the colophon for *Yalkut Shimon* (Venice: Bragadin, 1566), 190r, and Adelkind expressing his personal investment in the publication of Elijah Baḥur's Yiddish translation of the Psalms in his preface (Venice: Adelkind—Parenzo, 1545), translated by D. W. Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy* (Philadelphia, 1909), 187.

36. According to the title page, the printing was completed on Friday 23 Iyyar 5324.

37. USTC lists 391 titles, some of which were produced by Giovanni Griffio the Elder together with his sons. See Paolo Tinti, "Griffio, Giovanni senior," in *Dizionario degli editori, tipografi, librai itineranti in Italia tra Quattrocento e seicento*, ed. M. Santoro et al., vol. 2 (Pisa, 2013), 525–27.

38. Tinti, "Griffio, Giovanni senior," 527–29.

39. USTC 854281 and 844915; see also USTC 804251, USTC 863751, and USTC 852444.

40. Steinschneider (*CLH*, col. 32, no. 174) set the hiatus in Hebrew printing in Venice as 1555–1563. See also Paul F. Grendler, "The Destruction of Hebrew Books in Venice, 1568," *PAAJR* 45 (1978): 110 for the list of all those who were involved in Hebrew printing after the hiatus.

However, as in the case of Pasquato, printing in Hebrew proved to be only a short episode in Griffio's long career. He printed fewer than ten Hebrew titles and gave up Hebrew printing entirely after 1567.⁴¹

In his full-page preface to the 1564 edition of *Tur* and *Bet Yosef—Yoreh de'ab*, Boehm explained the reasons behind the decision to publish this second volume of Joseph Karo's extensive commentary on the *Arba'ah turim*:

Yore de'ab, which has been published in print before, is already sold out and one cannot buy it even for a full or doubly doubled price. Messer Giovanni Griffio, the printer in Venice, decided to undertake the task and carry it out. And [. . .] I, the *magiab*, saw the glory and splendour of said book, as printed before in the press of the great prince, Master Magnifico Ser Alviso Bragadino, may his fame grow.⁴²

Boehm's polite reference to Bragadin is rather unusual and hints at the circumstances of the project. Alvise I. Bragadin, the founder of a family of Hebrew printers that flourished until the beginning of the eighteenth century, had printed *Tur* and *Bet Yosef—Yoreh de'ab* in 1551. In the month of Kislev (November–December) 1563, Bragadin resumed his activities, initiating a second edition of *Bet Yosef*, and a year later, in autumn 1564, he began to print Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh*, which had remained in manuscript for several years.⁴³ When quite a few individuals attempted to enter the market then (see table 1), Bragadin apparently decided to stake everything on one card—the first edition of Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh*—and thus Boehm's formulation might imply that Griffio reprinted the second part of *Bet Yosef* after an agreement with Bragadin, who was certainly in need both of capital and capacity for printing the *Shulḥan 'arukh*. The reprint copied the earlier edition in nearly every respect, including page breaks and index.

41. Amram, *Makers*, 350; Marvin J. Heller, *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* (Leiden, 2004), 1:xxi–xxii; Steinschneider, *CLH*, col. 3082–83, no. 9422, and Moritz Steinschneider and David Cassel, "Jüdische Typographie und jüdischer Buchhandel," in *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, ed. J. S. Ersch and J. G. Gruber, section II, part 28 (Leipzig, 1851), 21–94 (58–59n16).

42. *Tur* and *Bet Yosef—Yoreh de'ab* (Venice: Griffio, 1564), [1v].

43. At the end of each of the four parts, Karo noted the date and place of its completion, entering 2 Elul 5315 (1555) for the first part and 17 Adar I 5318 (1558) for the final part.

Table 1. The production of Hebrew books in Venice, 1563–64.

	YEAR	TITLE	PRINT SHOP / PUBLISHER	EDITORS
1.	1563, Fall	<i>Sha'are Dura</i>	Bragadin/Di Gara ⁴⁴ /Vit. Eliano	Menahem Porto (?) ⁴⁵
2.	1563, Winter	<i>Tur—Bet Yosef—Orah hayim</i>	Bragadin	Meir Parenzo
3.	1564, Spring	<i>Siddur</i>	Zanetti/Vittorio Eliano	Vittorio Eliano
4.	1564 Spring	<i>Tur—Bet Yosef—Yoreh de'ab</i>	Griffio	Samuel Boehm ⁴⁶
5.	1564, Summer	<i>Ma'amadot</i>	Zanetti/Di Gara	Vittorio Eliano
6.	1564, Fall	<i>Shulḥan 'arukh—Orah hayim</i>	Bragadin	Menahem Porto—Meir Parenzo
7.	1564	<i>Me'ir netiv</i>	Bragadin	Meir Parenzo

In his preface, Samuel Boehm praised the craftsmanship of the previous Bragadin edition, but also claimed that it showed textual problems that could be explained by the fact that “[a]t the beginning of his work, [Bragadin] had to transfer the text from a Sephardic script.”⁴⁷ To showcase the importance of the editor-corrector, he further spoke of the typesetters:

There is nothing new under the sun when errors befall the printed text. This will happen for various reasons. Sometimes the copy is faulty, and

44. The printer is not mentioned in the book, but the three crowns suggest an attribution to the Bragadin or Di Gara press. See Steinschneider, *CLH*, 5341.5, and Amram, *Makers*, 352.

45. There is a note by him, but he is not explicitly mentioned as editor; see Isaac of Dueren, *Sha'are Dura* (Venice: Di Gara—Vittorio Eliano, 1563), 1v.

46. Samuel Boehm says that he corrected the book with great care, “except for the first two quires, which were corrected by someone else.” *Tur and Bet Yosef—Yoreh de'ab* (Venice: Griffio, 1564), 398v.

47. *Tur and Bet Yosef—Yoreh de'ab* (Venice: Griffio, 1564), 1v.

it is impossible to ascertain how one should read what is written. It is small wonder then that the workers will make mistakes. And sometimes just before Shabbat or a festival the workers hurry to complete their daily task [. . .]. Then the editor must also hurry and peruse the text as if by the sight of lightning [Ezek 1.14] and direct his eye like arrows from a bow to each and every place—and this is impossible.⁴⁸

In the most interesting passage of his preface, Boehm claims that the *magiāb* (the editor and corrector) is not only responsible for the correctness of the text but also involved in establishing its meaning:

Sometimes there is an acronym or an abbreviation that is used in two ways. If the *magiāb* does not know how to stand in the battle ranks [bSot 44a] of *pilpul* or he is not an expert on the given talmudic passage [*ḥugya*], he will not understand. [. . .] Take for example the abbreviation ע"כ. It can be deciphered as עד כאן (end of quote) or על כרחך (of necessity) or על כן (therefore), from which completely opposite meanings will flow. Likewise, there are also plenty of abbreviations that one fails to comprehend, which happened to me many times. I will tell of just one such case, [which occurred] when I edited folio 154. Karo says: "Dispute of R"Y [Rabbi Yohanan] and R"L [Resh Lakish] and T"K of R"L (פְּלוּגָתָא דְּר"י וְר"ל וְת"כ דְּר"ל)." Eventually I understood that he wants to say: "Tanya kavvateh [it is taught] like R"L" and not, like in many other places, "Torat kohanim." And so we spelled it out in full.⁴⁹

When readers turn to the relevant page and gloss, however, they find that T"K is not spelled out consistently: the abbreviation is (partially) resolved only the second time it appears—a testimony to the fact that the claims of editors in paratexts cannot be taken at face value. At the same time, the effort to increase readability is noticeable: in the same gloss, three other abbreviations of the *editio princeps* are spelled out, and the typographic layout breathes much more freely.⁵⁰

In spite of his polite language, Boehm does not shy away from proclaiming that his task as the *magiāb* is, besides others, to shape the meaning of the text. It is important to bear in mind that Boehm wrote the following words in the preface to a halakhic compendium by Joseph Karo, the most respected halakhist of the sixteenth century and a living author:

48. *Tur* and *Bet Yosef*—*Yoreh de'ab*, 1v.

49. *Tur* and *Bet Yosef*—*Yoreh de'ab*, 1v.

50. *Tur* and *Bet Yosef*—*Yoreh de'ab*, 154r. One expression printed in full in the first edition, however, has been abbreviated.

We [. . .] removed as many thorns from Karo's vineyard as we could. This is not, God forbid, like one who glorifies himself in disgracing his neighbour. Even a dwarf riding on the shoulders of a giant sees further than the giant himself. This is our way: If we saw that there was a passage which was clearly erroneous we emended it. If there was some reading which was beyond our power, we showed it to the wonder of the generation [. . .] R. Meir of Padua and according to him we decided and did not turn right nor left. Sometimes there was a thing so difficult that I did not dare to tackle it and left it as it was. We corrected very many things.⁵¹

In the concluding words of his preface, Boehm made this offer to the users of his edition: "Whoever wants to see the errors that we emended should come to our study (*bet midrashenu*) and he will see them."⁵² Even if taken as a mere rhetorical flourish, this attests to the fact that neither Boehm nor his readers would consider the emendations of texts such as *Arba'ab turim* or *Bet Yosef* insignificant.

When we encounter Samuel Boehm again, he works for Giorgio (Zorzi) de' Cavalli, who printed in Latin and Italian between 1564 and 1570 and added some eighteen titles in Hebrew between 1565 and 1567.⁵³ In 1565, Boehm produced for Cavalli *Even ha-'ezer*, the third part of *Arba'ab turim* with *Bet Yosef*. The edition once again copies its predecessor (Sabbioneta, 1553). This time, however, Boehm was not the only one intending to complete a new set of *Bet Yosef*. In the summer of 1565, Di Gara, a major Venetian printer, published his own version of *Even ha-'ezer*, edited by Vittorio Eliano and Meir ben Harosh. We do not know whether Boehm was aware of his competitors, because his volume does not tell us when printing began and ended, but he was certainly keen to persuade potential buyers of the excellence of his work.

As usual, there is a page-long introduction by Boehm, this time in the form of a learned exposition (*derashah*) based on biblical verses and talmudic dicta, leading to the praise of the code *Arba'ab turim* with *Bet Yosef*. In

51. *Tur* and *Bet Yosef*—*Yoreh de'ab*, 1v. A comparison between the editions of *Bet Yosef* would be highly desirable, but has been beyond the scope of this article, which focuses on Boehm's self-representation as an editor. That Boehm's edition is not without its flaws, however, has not escaped the eye of a reader of the Bodleian's copy, who corrected the text of the *Tur* according to the *editio princeps*.

52. *Tur* and *Bet Yosef*—*Yoreh de'ab*, 1v.

53. USTC lists over 80 titles in Latin and Italian with Cavalli as printer or printed by others in his print shop. BHB lists 18 titles in Hebrew characters. See also Steinschneider, *CLH*, col. 3078, no. 9373, and Steinschneider and Cassel, "Jüdische Typographie," 59 (the list here is incomplete).

the heading, Boehm calls himself “the editor of the exemplar” (*magiab ba-be’etek*),⁵⁴ and in the text he refers to his preface for the second part of the code, which he prepared for Griffio. Boehm writes about the third part:

This book of mine [*sifr*], in particular, has many advantages: First, the types and external features are similar to *Tur Yoreb de’ab*, which has been already printed and whose character is universally known. Second, and this is most important, I edited the model text with great precision, indeed, and not as when I went over the part *Yoreb de’ab*, which I could only proofread while it was [already] being printed because I did not have time—and even so, praised be God, it came out excellent and magnificent. For this part *Even ha-‘ezer* though, heaven and earth are my witnesses that I always checked meticulously [the quire] before handing it over to be printed.”⁵⁵

While praising one’s own work is a *locus communis* in the discourse of the makers of Jewish books, Boehm claims here more space for himself than anyone else involved in the various Italian editions of *Bet Yosef* between 1550 and 1567,⁵⁶ and he further stresses his role, when referring to himself as the link between two editions printed by different firms. At the same time, it should be emphasized that Boehm’s words were not empty boasting. Although the decorative typographic material is different, Griffio’s *Yoreb de’ab* and Cavalli’s *Even ha-‘ezer* are indeed set in an identical way, and both feature closing notes by Boehm, accompanied by short poems, again with identical typography (see figs. 2–5).

The most important work published in print in the 1560s was without doubt Joseph Karo’s code *Shulḥan ‘arukh*.⁵⁷ Alvise Bragadin’s *editio princeps* was a handy quarto, edited and corrected by Menahem Porto, supervised by Abraham ibn Hini, and published by Meir ben Jacob Parenzo.⁵⁸

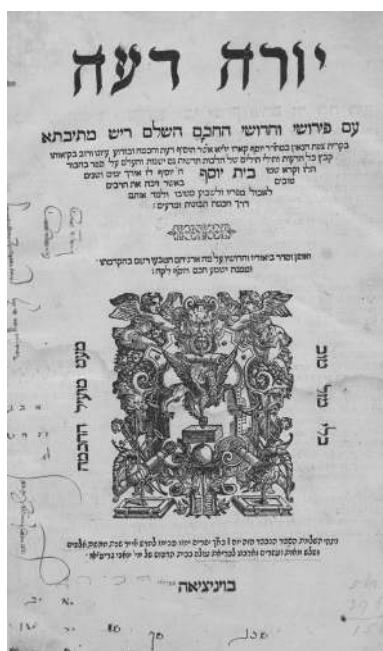
54. Boehm uses the same wording also in the colophon (*Tur* and *Bet Yosef*—*Even ha-‘ezer* [Venice: Cavalli, 1565], 232v).

55. *Tur* and *Bet Yosef*—*Even ha-‘ezer*, 2v. Boehm’s remarks show that after all the careful emendations, of which he speaks in his preface to *Yoreb de’ab*, he had little time to proofread, and it is even possible that readers complained about mistakes that had slipped in.

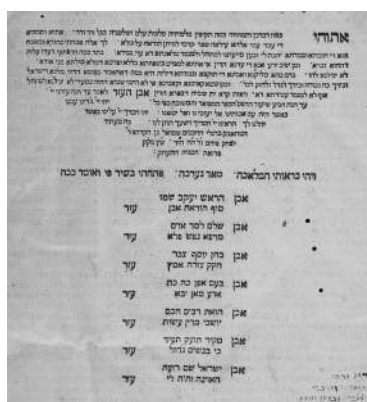
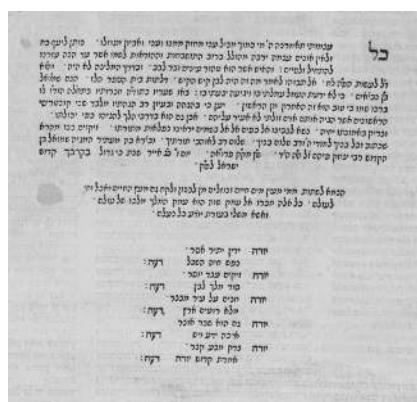
56. Prefaces were included in *Orah ḥayim*, 1550 (anonymous), *Yoreb de’ab*, 1551 (by Elia Ḥalfan), and *Orah ḥayim*, 1563 (by Menahem Porto). Although they are detailed, none is as extensive as Boehm’s.

57. On the first editions of *Shulḥan ‘arukh*, see Reuben Margoliot, “Defuse ha-‘Shulḥan ‘arukh’ ha-rishonim,” in *Rabbi Yosef Karo*, ed. Raphael, 89–100, and Ben-Menahem, “Ha-defusim ha-rishonim.”

58. Abraham ibn Hini (Abenini) supervised printing on behalf of Solomon Alashker, the Egyptian rabbinical leader and sponsor of the edition, as explained



Figures 2–3. *Tur and Bet Yosef—Yoreh de'ab* (Venice: Griffio, 1564), title page (left) and *Tur and Bet Yosef—Even ha-'ezer* (Venice: Cavalli, 1565), title page (right). The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Opp. fol. 762 and Opp. fol. 767.



Figures 4–5. *Tur and Bet Yosef—Yoreh de'ab* (Venice: Griffio, 1564), 398v (left) and *Tur and Bet Yosef—Even ha-'ezer* (Venice: Cavalli, 1565), 235v (right). The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Opp. fol. 762 and Opp. fol. 767.

The printing started on 18 Kislev 5325 (November 22, 1564) and was completed in the autumn of 1565.⁵⁹ A year later, two editions, both in folio, started to appear in Venice, one by Griffio (December 1566–April 1567), and the other by Cavalli (February–July 1567). Samuel Boehm's signature in the colophon of the Cavalli edition, completed on Thursday, 27 Tamuz 5327 (July 4, 1567), is the last trace of his activities in Italy.⁶⁰ The edition does not contain any further paratexts related to Boehm, who obviously acted merely as one of the publishers.

During this period, Boehm appears to have lived in Padua and Venice, since his signatures are associated with both places in the documents on the Tamari-Venturozzo affair, published in 1567.⁶¹ The documents show that Boehm had been in contact with Samuel Venturozzo, who had reneged on the bill of divorce he had agreed to give to Tamar, the daughter of the Venetian physician Joseph Tamari.⁶² In a letter to Tamari, Boehm accuses Venturozzo of having forged his testimony,⁶³ and in further brief statements he expresses his agreement with the rabbinical judgements in favour of Tamari.⁶⁴ Even more important than Boehm's marginal involvement

in Menachem Porto's preface to *Even ha-'ezer* ([1v]), which is not included in all copies of the work. Ibn Hini, a "resident of Egypt" (*mi-tošhave Mišrayim*), figures also as the sponsor of Levi ibn Ḥabib's *Responsa*, printed at the same time in Venice in an unnamed press with the title frame that will be used afterwards by Cavalli and Prostitz.

59. The separate title pages for each of the four parts provide the date on which printing started, with the fourth part, printed the last, begun on 6 Ḥeshwan 5326 (October 1, 1565). For details, see Ben-Menahem, "Ha-defusim ha-rishonim," 102.

60. Joseph Karo, *Shulḥan 'arukh* (Venice: Cavalli, 1567), colophon (no foliation), where Abraham 'Alon, "born in the land of the Draa River in the Maghreb," is mentioned as his coeditor. 'Alon had published, among others, Isaac Canpan-ton's *Darkhe ha-talmud* (Venice: Zanetti, 1565) and *Midraṣh ha-ne'elam 'al megilat Rut* (Venice: Zanetti, 1566), mentioning in these works that he currently resided in Safed.

61. *Hatsa'ab* (Venice: Cavalli, 1567), 11v (4 Adar I, Venice), 14r (7 Adar, Padua).

62. Shlomo Simonsohn, "The Scandal of the Tamari-Venturozzo Divorce" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 28 (1959): 375–92; and for a useful summary, see Howard Tzvi Adelman, "Jewish Women and Family Life, Inside and Outside the Ghetto," in *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, ed. R. C. David and B. Ravid (Baltimore, 2001), 161–64.

63. *Hatsa'ab*, 9v.

64. *Hatsa'ab*, 11v, 14r, and 55v–56r. Also represented in the publication with testimonies are Meshullam Kofman (see above) and Abraham 'Alon (see above); *Hatsa'ab*, 4r et passim (Kofman), and 10v ('Alon).

in the affair is another detail revealed in these documents: Boehm signs no longer as the cantor of Padua, as he had done in all his publications since 1562, and instead is introduced as *ba-ga'on morenu ba-rav R. Shmu'el*, signalling that he had by then obtained rabbinic ordination.⁶⁵

In the same year 1567, we come across a title page illustration that connects all the places of Boehm's career in Italy and is yet firmly associated with his work in Cracow. It is the architectural woodcut for the title page of the second and last Hebrew book printed by Lorenzo Pasquato in Padua, Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov's *Derashot ha-torah*,⁶⁶ showing a small depiction of the Akedah in the top panel, over which an eagle hovers. This woodcut had been used by Conti in Cremona⁶⁷ and by Cavalli in Venice.⁶⁸ After its appearance in Padua, it will next be seen adorning the title page of Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh—Orat ḥayim* with Isserles's *Mapah*, printed in 1569–70 in Prostitz's press in Cracow with Boehm's energetic editorial involvement.⁶⁹

What may have motivated Boehm to leave Italy for Poland? A first reason is suggested by the four known Venetian editions that explicitly mention Samuel Boehm: his involvement in printing and publishing almost certainly lagged behind his aspirations. Although editing and correcting two parts of the *Turim* with *Bet Yosef* can count as a major achievement, even if these were reprints, Boehm's engagement in printing and publishing remained sporadic and did not lead to a stable relationship with any of the Italian printing firms. He was not employed when Griffio resumed

65. *Haṭoa'ab*, 9v and 55v. This is confirmed by Boehm's edition of Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh* from the same year that refers to him as *ba-rav kevod morenu ba-rav R. Shmu'el* (colophon, no foliation). In Cracow, too, he will be addressed as *morenu* (Moses Isserles, *Torat ha-ḥatat* [Cracow: Prostitz, 1569], colophon). On rabbinic titles in Italy, see Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Italy*, trans. J. Chipman (Oxford, 1990), 28–33, 35–37, 90–94 et passim.

66. Shem Tov ben Joseph ibn Shem Tov, *Derashot ha-torah* (Padua: Pasquato, 1567), 1r. The title page tells us that Pietro del Portelvecchio sponsored the publication, whose text and layout simply copied Giustiniani's earlier Venetian edition of 1547: the number of folios is identical and most of the columns start with the same word; see also Heller, *Studies*, 128. The book was therefore not printed on Boehm's initiative and did not require his editorial skills. Heller assumes that as a resident of Padua, Boehm was likely to have been involved, but even if he supervised printing, his task would have been minimal; see Heller, *Studies*, 129–30.

67. Conti used it for Joseph Colon's *She'elot u-teshuvot* (1557), Jacob ben Asher's *Arba'ab turim* (1558), and the second title page of the *Zohar* (1558).

68. In 1565 it appears on the title page of Levi ibn Habib's *She'elot u-teshuvot* (without a printer's name), and in 1566, it is used by Cavalli for *Rabenu Bahya, Sefer rabot*, and *Midrash ḥamesh megilot meba-rabot*.

69. For its further use in Cracow, see the appendix.

printing the remaining parts of *Bet Yosef*, as the latter entered into an agreement with Meshullam Kofman for a third edition of *Orah hayim* and with Samuel Archevolti for *Hosben mishpat* and the *Shulḥan 'arukh*.⁷⁰ In competition with a very experienced corrector (Meshullam Kofman), a well-known rabbinical scholar and poet (Archevolti), and, as we saw earlier, a publisher with family ties to the author (Falcon), Boehm appears to have struggled to make his mark. Further developments, too, in Venice as well as in Cracow, may explain why he decided to leave for Poland.

MOVING TO CRACOW

We cannot know when Boehm made this decision, of course, but if the matter had not yet been settled in early 1568, the rapidly deteriorating situation for Venetian Jews and Hebrew printing in that year would have constituted a further and rather compelling reason for his departure. The outward signs of the crisis are unmissable: the two Venetian presses for which Samuel Boehm had worked ceased production of Hebrew books in late December 1567.⁷¹ Between 1568 and 1570, Hebrew printing in Venice stopped almost entirely, with a set of biblical texts printed by Di Gara apparently the only exception.⁷² The reasons and dimensions of the crisis of the Venetian Hebrew press have been explored by Paul Grendler, who shows that the tensions between Venice and Constantinople in the 1560s cast their shadow also on Christian-Jewish relations in the Republic and fueled suspicion and hostility toward Jews.⁷³ In September 1568, sentences were issued that ended the short period of renewed productivity among Hebrew printers in Venice that had begun in 1564. Numerous titles were condemned retrospectively for contravening censorship and seeking “with diverse means to subvert our true and holy Christian faith.”⁷⁴ Their sponsors and publishers were fined, several print runs were ordered

70. The Venetian merchant Hayyim ibn Saruk sponsored this further reprint of *Orah hayim* and may have expressed a preference for Meshullam Kofman. On ibn Saruk's precarious situation in 1566, see Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden, 1995), 101–22.

71. Griffio completed ibn Gabbai's *Mar'ot elohim* on 27 Tevet 5328, and Cavalli completed his *Mabzor* on 25 Tevet 5328.

72. Steinschneider, *CLH*, col. 36–38, nos. 201–8 and 214; Yeshayahu Vinograd, *Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book*, 2 vols. (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1995), 255, no. 561; BHB 182228, 182227, and 304507; Grendler, “The Destruction of Hebrew Books,” 113–14. Di Gara was the first of the Venetian Hebrew printers who slowly resumed publishing; see BHB and Vinograd, *Thesaurus*, 255, nos. 563–75.

73. Grendler, “The Destruction of Hebrew Books,” 103–30; and for further details, Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 55–76.

74. Grendler, “The Destruction of Hebrew Books,” 112.

burned, others to be sold only outside the Republic, and yet others were seized by the authorities.⁷⁵

In light of these events, it is not difficult to see why Venetian printers might have been willing to sell typographic material to Isaac Prostitz when he sought to establish himself in a more auspicious setting north of the Alps (see appendix). In Venice, the situation remained unstable, and the existence of the entire Jewish community was threatened in 1571, when, after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus and the battle of Lepanto, the Senate voted to expel Ashkenazim and Levantini as soon as the community's *condotta* would expire. It was only in the summer of 1573, after a peace treaty had been signed with the Ottoman Empire, that the Senate was persuaded to renew the *condotta*.⁷⁶ Hebrew printing in Venice resumed very hesitantly in 1571, with just Di Gara and Bragadin still present, and with their production only beginning to thrive again in 1574.⁷⁷ At that point, the Prostitz press had already established itself firmly as a significant purveyor of Hebrew books for European, and possibly also Ottoman, Jews.

Samuel Boehm must have arrived in Cracow by the summer of 1569, when he served as editor for the newly established firm of Isaac ben Aaron of Prostitz. Friedberg was the first to cast the few elusive and mostly indirect pieces of evidence about Prostitz and Boehm into a story of Prostitz's *Wanderjahre* spent in Italian printing presses where he also met Boehm.⁷⁸ Let us sum up the known facts. On October 15, 1568, Prostitz received a

75. Cavalli, for instance, was fined 100 ducats, and 2,400 copies plus several bales of works published between 1566 and 1568 were ordered to be burned. Griffio was also fined 100 ducats, and, among others, an unknown number of copies of *Bet Yosef*—*Even ha-'ezer* (edited by Boehm for Cavalli) were ordered to be burned, while 800 copies of the remaining parts of *Bet Yosef* were confiscated. Grendler, "The Destruction of Hebrew Books," 114 (where it is also noted that Di Gara and Zanetti faced similar injunctions).

76. Grendler, "The Destruction of Hebrew Books," 119–20; Benjamin Ravid, "The Socioeconomic Background of the Expulsion and Readmission of the Venetian Jews, 1571–1573," in *Essays in Modern Jewish History: A Tribute to Ben Halpern*, ed. F. Malino and P. Cohen Albert (Rutherford, N.J., 1982), 27–55; Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 74–76 and 87–94.

77. A further interruption appears to have been brought about by the Great Plague, 1575–1577; see Grendler, "The Destruction of Hebrew Books," 130, but this requires further investigation.

78. Friedberg, *Toldot ha-ḏefus ha-'ivri be-Folanyab* (2nd ed., Tel Aviv, 1950), 5. Selected parts of his story are repeated in, e.g., Abraham Yaari, *Hebrew Printers' Marks from the Beginning of Hebrew Printing to the End of the 19th Century* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1943), 138, in Krzysztof Pilarczyk, *Talmud i jego drukarze w pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej: z dziejów przekazu religijnego w judaizmie* (Cracow, 1998), 177–78, and in Marvin J. Heller, *Further Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden, 2013), 39.

royal privilege that permitted him to print Hebrew books. The privilege itself appears to be lost, but we learn of it when it is withdrawn: Sigismund II Augustus's injunction against Prostitz's press, issued on November 2, 1569, recapitulates the details of the permission granted to "Isaiae [sic]" and "his legitimate successors" a year earlier,⁷⁹ and addresses him also as "Isaia [sic], son of Aaron, a Jew of Italy from Kazimierz" (*Isaiae filii Aaronis iudaei Itali de Casimiria*). Italy is mentioned again a year later, on November 15, 1570, when the privilege is restored to "Isaac the Italian" (*Isaaco Wloch* [sic]).⁸⁰ Along with the typographic material brought to Cracow from Venice, these two legal documents form the only evidence of Prostitz's link to Italy.

After a short-lived attempt by the Helicz brothers to set up a Hebrew press in Cracow (1534–41),⁸¹ the only active Jewish print shops in East-Central Europe before Prostitz's arrival existed in Prague and Lublin. In Lublin, two members of the Shaḥor family had opened a press around the year 1550,⁸² but its activity was sporadic. Even after launching the ambitious project of printing the Babylonian Talmud in 1559, there was a hiatus between 1563 and 1567. Krzysztof Pilarczyk rightly suggested that the opening of the Prostitz firm complicated the position of the Lublin printers,⁸³ who must have regarded Prostitz as a dangerous competitor (see table 2). They had invested their limited resources into printing the Babylonian Talmud, copies of which were scarce, and thus secured reliable sales, mostly to yeshivot.⁸⁴ In light of this it is significant that Prostitz's royal

79. Jan Ptaśnik, "Nowe szczegóły do drukarstwa i księgarstwa w Krakowie," *Kwartalnik historyczny* 38 (1924): 85–91 (89); see also Majer Balaban, "Zur Geschichte der hebräischen Druckereien in Polen," *Soncino-Blätter* 3 (1929–1930): 47.

80. Ptaśnik, "Nowe szczegóły," 90; Balaban, "Zur Geschichte," 48. The epithets "Wloch" or "Włochowicz" can be found repeatedly among Jewish families of Cracow, pointing to their Italian origins; see Balaban, *A History*, 224–27 et passim.

81. Balaban, "Zur Geschichte," 1–2; Pilarczyk, *Talmud*, 178; Magda Teter and Edward Fram, "Apostasy, Fraud, and the Beginnings of Hebrew Printing in Cracow," *AJS Review* 30.1 (2006): 31–66.

82. A. M. Haberman, "Ha-madpis Ḥayyim Shaḥor, beno Yitshak we-hotno Yosef b"r Yakar," in *Studies in the History of Hebrew Printers and Books* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1978), 127. The earliest imprints, dated before 1550, listed by some bibliographers, are not extant and highly dubious.

83. Pilarczyk, *Talmud*, 97.

84. Already in 1561, the high rabbinic court (*bet din gadol*) of Poland, Russia, and Lithuania protected the production of the Lublin Talmud by obligating all the yeshivot to coordinate their curriculum and to teach "tractate after tractate, as they are printed"; see Israel Halperin, "The Council of Four Lands in Poland and the Hebrew Book," in Halperin, *Eastern European Jewry: Historical Studies* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1968), 79–80.

Table 2. The production of the Lublin Jewish printing press before the arrival of Isaac Prostitz to Cracow (1553–68).

	YEAR	TITLE	NOTE
1.	1551	<i>Maḥzor</i>	BHB 306656
2.	1553	<i>Piyutim, yotsrot ve-zulatot</i>	BHB 310427
3.	1553–54	<i>Siḏḏur</i>	BHB 308450.
4.	1556	<i>Mazalot shel adam</i> (8 fol. in 8°)	BHB 302497
5.	1557	<i>Pentateuch</i>	BHB 201624
6.	1557	Hai ben Sherira (attr.), <i>Pitron ‘inyan ḥalomot</i> (16 fol. in 8°)	BHB 301337
7.	1557/1563	Al-Ḥarīzī, <i>‘Inyan refu’ot ha-geviyah</i> (8 fol. in 16°)	BHB 200538
8.	1559	<i>Babylonian Talmud—Shevu’ot</i>	BHB 333955
9.	1560	<i>Babylonian Talmud—Gitin</i>	BHB 333955
10.	ca. 1560	Solomon ben Eliezer ha-Levi, <i>‘Avodat ha-Levi—More tvedek</i> (48 fol. in 4°)	BHB 170465
11.	1562	<i>Maḥzor</i>	BHB 306658
12.	1562	<i>Babylonian Talmud—Pesahim</i>	BHB 333955
13.	ca. 1566	Eliezer b. Isaac, <i>She’elat ‘inyan ha-neḥamah</i> (16 fol. in 8°)	BHB 168389
14.	1567	<i>Maḥzor</i>	BHB 306659
15.	1567	<i>Babylonian Talmud—Betsa</i>	BHB 333955
16.	1568	<i>Babylonian Talmud—Sukab</i>	BHB 333955
17.	1568	<i>Babylonian Talmud—‘Erwin</i>	BHB 333955

privilege from 1568 included the permission to print the Babylonian Talmud, according to the text of its retraction: “[. . .] he may be able and capable to print Hebrew books, Talmud and others he may desire, [. . .] and to sell them in our realm.”⁸⁵ This privilege was withdrawn, the decree

85. Ptaśnik, “Nowe szczegóły,” 89; Balaban, “Zur Geschichte,” 47; Pilarczyk, *Talmud*, 180–81. In contrast, a slightly earlier privilege, issued to the Lublin printers, permitted printing and distributing Hebrew books without mentioning explicitly the Talmud; *Dyplomatarysz dotyczący Żydów w dawnej Polsce*

states, because “pious and erudite men” testified that the books already printed, “especially the Talmud,” contained “blasphemies against our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and even against the most Holy Trinity.”⁸⁶ When the king renewed the privilege in November 1570 and Prostitz was reauthorized to print Jewish books, the permission excluded the Talmud and other books that could cause “great harm to the Christian religion.”⁸⁷ Prostitz started to print the Talmud only in 1578, two years after the Lublin editions had been completed, which indicates that by then some coordination between the two firms had been achieved.

Although we know nothing about Samuel Boehm’s involvement in the negotiations between Prostitz and the Royal Chamber, the affair is nevertheless indicative. Prostitz had been able to obtain a royal privilege, and although shortly after his first editions in 1569, it was revoked and his types and printed books were confiscated, he was able to have it renewed one year later, and in 1571 launched several major projects. This strongly testifies to his diplomatic skills, financial security, and very likely political support by the leaders of the Cracow Jewish community. All this indicates that Samuel Boehm had reason to join Prostitz with renewed great expectations and trust.⁸⁸

SAMUEL BOEHM’S ROLES IN PROSTITZ’S FIRM

Boehm’s position in Italian firms and later in Cracow was that of an editor-corrector, appointed to manage the production of a specific edition, which entailed such wide-ranging responsibilities that the more general terms of “print professional”⁸⁹ and “producer” more aptly reflect them. His position

na źródłach archiwalnych ośnuty (1388–1782), ed. M. Bersohn (Warsaw, 1910), no. 102, 75.

86. While Pilarczyk looked for opposition against printing Jewish books among professors of the Cracow Academy (Pilarczyk, *Talmud*, 183), Magdalena Bendowska and Jan Doktór argue that the Christian scholars “were not acting on their own initiative,” implying that it was a Jewish party, acting on behalf of the Lublin press, who informed on Prostitz (*The Amsterdam of Polish Jews* [Warsaw, 2016], 25–26). This appears unlikely, however, since such a denunciation could have easily backfired: the revocation itself may have harmed Prostitz, but its wording aimed at unspecified Jewish books in general and the Talmud in particular (see Pilarczyk, *Talmud*, 182).

87. Ptaśnik, “Nowe szczegóły,” 90; Balaban, “Zur Geschichte,” 48–49.

88. The last publication with Boehm’s name in Venice is Cavalli’s edition of the *Shulḥan ‘arukh*, completed in Tammuz (June–July) 1567, and the first publication with his name in Cracow is Naphtali ben Menahem’s *Perush le-miḏraṣh ḥamesh megilot*, begun on 15 Av (July 29) 1569.

89. Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London, 2011), 13.

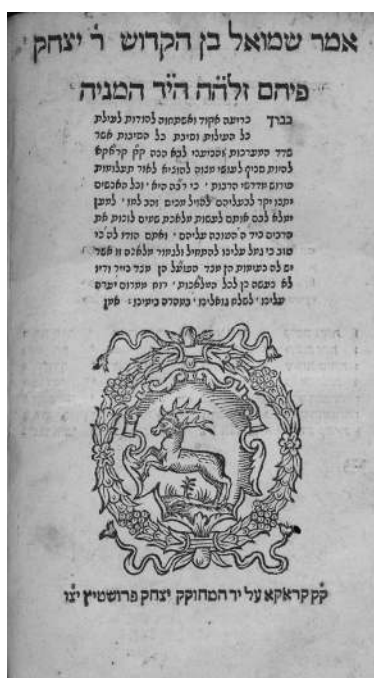
gave Boehm considerable authority in shaping the text, but at the same time he had to respect the conditions set by an agreed schedule, which determined the tempo of the work, as we have seen in the case of *Bet Yosef—Yoreh de'ab* and as also stipulated in Boehm's and Noerlingen's contract with Conti. The newly established Cracow press followed this pattern, and so even decisions pertaining to editing, which was otherwise Boehm's domain, were determined by the pace and efficiency of the presswork. In addition, the editor had to respect the marketing strategies of the publishers who funded the particular edition, probably often investing money that was not theirs, and so expecting a quick payback. In his roles of editor, corrector, and producer, Boehm was never fully autonomous but rather worked in variously hierarchized constellations.

His first two Cracow editions can serve as a good example. A living author, Naphtali Hirtz ben Menahem of Lemberg, decided to publish his commentary to Midrash Rabbah, and Boehm must have relished this first opportunity to publish a manuscript since his debut in Padua. In his preface, he tells his readers that he had been instrumental in arranging for the printing when he arrived in Cracow: "I turned this way and that, and behold, [I saw] a pure letter from the gaon [. . .] R. Naphtali, called Hirtz [. . .], head of the yeshiva in the holy community of Lemberg in the Russian land, and in it [I found] a live coal, which had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs [Isa 6.6]."⁹⁰

The work was published in two volumes. Both title pages are proudly decorated with the words "printed here in the holy community of Cracow," set in unusually large letters (fig. 6). Prostitz's name is set around a signet which features a deer, hinting at the name of the author (Gen 49.21) and indicating that he financed the edition.⁹¹ In two notes, one following the

90. Naphtali ben Menahem, *Perush le-midrash ḥamesh megilot rabab* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1569), 2v. The terms *Rusi'ab* (Latin: "Russia") and *Royen* (Latin: "Ruthenia"; German: "Reussen") were interchangeable at the time; see, e.g., Maciej Miechowita, *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis Asiana et Europiana et de contentis in eis* (Augsburg, 1518), chap. 1.

91. Andrea Jelínková, "Hebrew Printing in Moravia at the Beginning of the 17th Century," in *Hebrew Printing in Bohemia and Moravia*, ed. O. Sixtová (Prague, 2012), 157n33. The financial involvement of the author is further implied by his introduction, which repeatedly encourages prospective readers to buy the book (Naphtali ben Menahem, *Perush le-midrash ḥamesh megilot rabab*, 2r–v) and also by Boehm in his note: "the gaon [. . .] wanted to benefit the public and to publish [his commentary] in print" (*le-bavi'o le-vet ba-defus*); Naphtali ben Menahem, *Perush le-midrash ḥamesh megilot rabab*, 2v. That the author was not entirely satisfied with the edition is documented by a copy in the NLI (R 8° 75A 379), which includes the author's appendix with further commentary on the Five *Megilot*, "so that nothing will be missing in the second edition."



Figures 6–7. Naphtali ben Menahem, *Perush le-midrash ḥamesh megilot rabah* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1569), [1r] (left) and 38r (right). The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Opp. 4° 252 (2).

author's introduction and the other closing the book, Boehm introduces himself as *magiah* and newcomer to Cracow, a “city full of both Torah and greatness,” where he gets involved with enthusiasm in the publishing activities of Prostitz’s new firm.⁹² Although neither of the notes contains specific details about Boehm, the presence of the voice of the *magiah* and the prominent place given to his name in the book were a novelty in East-Central European Jewish publishing.⁹³ Boehm’s concluding note (fig. 7) and a poem, composed by David Darshan, which celebrated the author and the quality of the printing craft (*yofi ha-defus*),⁹⁴ were also both new features of Italian origin.⁹⁵

92. Naphtali ben Menahem, *Perush le-midrash ḥamesh megilot rabah*, 2v; see also the colophon, 35v.

93. Naphtali ben Menahem, *Perush le-midrash ḥamesh megilot rabah*, 2v. An important exception is the preface of Abraham ben Avigdor, editor and commentator of *Arba‘ab turim — Oraḥ ḥayim* (Prague: Gershom ha-Kohen, 1540), 1v–2r.

94. Naphtali ben Menahem, *Perush le-midrash*, 38r.

95. A telling detail shows, however, that Boehm was not eager to highlight his own Italian background: his edition showcases Italian features, he works in the

A closer look at the chronology of the publication of the two volumes reveals the editor's dependence on the printers. Reversing the normal sequence, the part on the Five Megillot was printed first (15–29 Av = July 29–August 12, 1569), and the part on the Pentateuch, including the author's preface to the whole work, followed (1–12 Elul = August 14–25). Boehm explains: "This was just because the printers, to hurry and to hasten the work, as can be seen, put the latter to the front, that is, printed first [the commentary on] the Five Megillot and then [the commentary on] the Pentateuch."⁹⁶

In the following years, Boehm was responsible for printing several of the most important works issued by the Prostitz press. For some of them, he acted as the editor, responsible for preparing the model text (the exemplar). This was the case, for instance, with Isserles's *Torat ha-ḥatat* (1569) and *Shulḥan 'arukh—Orat ḥayim* (1569/70–71). When acting also as a publisher, Boehm had to provide funding in advance and could encounter financial difficulties, as was the case when he edited Joshua ibn Shu'aib's *Sefer ha-derashot* (1573–75).⁹⁷

city of Moses Isserles, who had published his first book, a commentary on Esther called *Mehir yayin*, with Conti in Cremona and entertained close contacts with his relative Meir Katzenellenbogen, the Maharam of Padua, and the concluding poem is by David Darshan, who had lived in Northern Italy for several years—and yet, Boehm nowhere mentions Italy and drops "Padua" from his name. He will reinscribe his Italian origins into his signature only a few years later: "Samuel [. . .] Boehm [. . .] from the land of Italy [*me-eret Lo'ez*], editor here [. . .] in the holy community of Cracow" (Alexander Suesslin, *Sefer ba-agudab* [Cracow: Prostitz, 1571], 2v). For David Darshan's Italian years, see his *Shir ba-ma'alot* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1571), 8r et passim; Jacob Elbaum, "Rabbi David Darshan mi-Krakov u-khlalim she-klal ba-agadah uva-midrash," *Aufot* 7 (1993): 282–83; David Darshan, *Shir baMa'alot l'David (Song of the Steps) and Ktav Hitnazzelut l'Darshanim (In Defense of Preachers)*, trans. H. G. Perelmuter (Cincinnati, 1984), 14–19. Another famous printer in Cracow, Jan Januszowski, had links to Italy as well, having studied in Padua before taking up printing in 1577 (Alodia Kawecka-Gryczowa, ed., *Drukarze dawnej Polski od XV do XVIII wieku*, 1:1 [Wrocław, 1983], 70), but we have found no indication of contacts between the presses in Cracow and Kazimierz.

96. Naphtali ben Menahem, *Perush le-midrash ba-rabot meba-torah* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1569), 2r.

97. Joshua ibn Shu'aib, *Sefer derashot 'al ha-torah* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1573–75), 1v. In his endnote, Boehm alludes to financial troubles, explaining that "because of those walking on a winding way" (Jdg 5.6) he was "forced [. . .] to let printing rest for one and a half years," until unnamed benefactors enabled him to recover and complete the edition. See Pavel Sládek, "Printing of Learned Literature in Hebrew, 1510–1630: Toward a New Understanding of Early Modern Jewish Practices of Reading," in *Print Culture at the Crossroads: The Book in Central Europe*, ed. E. Dillenburg, H. Louthan, and D. B. Thomas (Leiden, 2021), 392.

For other books, he had to leave the role of editor to others and served rather as a producer. For Alexander Suesslin's *Sefer ha-agudab* (1571), for instance, the publisher and main editor was Joseph ben Mordecai Gershon Katz (1510–1591), Moses Isserles's brother-in-law, who is identified on the title page and in the preface as the “editor of the exemplar” (*magiah ba-be'etek*).⁹⁸ Boehm signed merely as “the corrector” (*magiah ba-defus*), limiting his role in this instance,⁹⁹ while describing proofreading as a family undertaking: we learn from his note that he must have married at some point and had sons, who assisted him with this task: “Israel knows that the bread of the laziness we did not eat, neither I nor my sons, may God protect them, who support my hand and who are involved in God's fair and bright work [i.e., printing].”¹⁰⁰

Completely different was the arrangement for printing Solomon Luria's *Hokhmat Shelomoh* (1586). Three publishers approached Boehm with the permission of Luria's sons Wolf and Yehiel to suggest the publication of the text-critical notes and emendations collated from Luria's handwritten annotations in the margins of his copy of the Babylonian Talmud. For this project, Boehm served as a coeditor and copublisher (*maḏpiu*).¹⁰¹ He and his three companions probably entered into a contract with Prostitz for using his print shop and workers, producing and later selling all the copies on their own, which explains why Prostitz's name is nowhere mentioned in the book. This arrangement was common in Italy, where books were often marked as “printed in the house of” (*niḏpas be-vet*), although the name of the owner is usually known, while it is missing in the case of *Hokhmat Shelomoh*.

98. Suesslin, *Sefer ha-agudab* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1571), 2v. For Joseph ben Mordecai Gershon Katz, see Israel Halperin, *Acta congressus generalis Judaeorum regni Poloniae (1580–1764) — Pinkas wa'ad arba' aratsot* (Jerusalem, 1945), 29, no. 89, and n. 4; Asher Siev, *Rabbi Moses Isserles (Ramo): His Life, Works, and Ideas* (New York, 1972), 63–68; for the years of his life, see Moses Isserles, *She'elot u-teshuvot*, ed. A. Siev (1970; repr. Jerusalem, 2018), 146–47, no. 24, n. 24.

99. Suesslin, *Sefer ha-agudab*, 2v and 228v.

100. Suesslin, *Sefer ha-agudab*, 2v.

101. Solomon Luria, *Hokhmat Shelomoh* (Cracow, 1586), 2r. Boehm formulates his apology in the plural and uses expressions like “we editors and publishers.” The date of the edition on the title page (*shenat shalom ve-sha"lvab*) has been considered ambivalent, e.g. by Steinschneider, who dated the publication to 1581 or 1587 (*CLH*, col. 2366, no. 6950.1). But nothing indicates that the first *vav* in *ve-sha"lvab* should not count (see also the same expression in *Sefer rabot* [Cracow: Prostitz, 1587]); Stefan Bathory, who is mentioned on the book's title page, died in December 1586.

Finally, Boehm could also act independently: he edited the text and was the sole publisher for Solomon Almoli's *Pitron ḥalomot* (s.a.)¹⁰² and, as discussed below, acted in the same capacity for Abraham Zacut's *Sefer yuḥasin* (1580–81). While Samuel Boehm's presence in the Cracow press was in many respects essential, his roles were multiple and, as the above examples show, cannot be reduced to having been Isaac ben Aaron Prostitz's associate and in-house editor.

SAMUEL BOEHM AS THE EDITOR OF ISSERLES'S HALAKHAH

Samuel Boehm's most important activities in Cracow were centered on the figure and heritage of Rabbi Moses Isserles. When the printing of Isserles's *Torat ba-ḥatat* was completed in November 1569 (Steinschneider called it *editio pulchra*),¹⁰³ Boehm was prominently present as the editor of the work. Isserles's preface, covering slightly more than two pages, explains that his work follows the structure of Isaac of Dueren's *Sha'are Dura* and clarifies halakhah following later authorities and the customs of "these countries," not the least to counter the growing influence of Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh*.¹⁰⁴ This is followed by Boehm's "Editor's Preface," set in slightly smaller type but still covering one full page and adorned with a heading of the same size as Isserles's "Author's Preface." In defining the merits of the book, Boehm himself adopts an authoritative stance—and it soon becomes clear that his perspective has changed since he has left Venice. Boehm no longer praises the Sephardic author without reservations, but rather takes up Isserles's line of argument and highlights the differences between Sephardic and Ashkenazic traditions:

The gaon [Karo] [. . .] is a Sephardi, and in all the lands of the East, Maimonides' books have become very widespread, with the vast majority of communities deciding according to his opinion, while many of those

102. Solomon Almoli, *Pitron ḥalomot* (Cracow, s.a.), 104v.

103. Isserles, *Torat ba-ḥatat* (1569), 127v. Steinschneider, *CLH*, col. 1830, no. 6483.13.

104. Isserles, *Torat ba-ḥatat* (1569), 2v. On the significance of Isserles's *Torat ba-ḥatat* and his glosses on Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh* for reshaping the Ashkenazic transmission of halakhah by replacing layers of teachings that had been communicated in person, locally, orally, and via manuscript, with a new model that relied on the printed text and its translocal dissemination, see Elchanan Reiner, "'Aliyat 'ha-kehilah ha-gedolah': 'Al shorshe ha-kehilah ha-yehudit ha-'ironit be-Folin ba-'et ha-ḥadashah ha-mukdemet," *Gal-Ed* 20 (2006): 13–37; Elchanan Reiner, "The Ashkenazi Élite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript versus Printed Book," *Polin* 10 (1997): 85–98.

who are with us from among the later authorities, who certainly are not “reed cutters in the pond” [bSan 33a], oppose his opinions with reasons and proofs on their side. And we in particular, the people of God, that is the Ashkenazim of various nations [*umot*] and languages, are accustomed to decide according to the Rosh and his son, the author of the *Turim*.

Boehm then points out, however, a small matter that Isserles did not mention: “And Karo, may his Rock protect him, already explained [. . .] in his aforementioned introduction that he did not speak about such people [*‘al ka-eleb*], since ‘each river [follows] its own course’ [bHul 18b].” Karo had, indeed, inserted a caveat somewhat casually at the end of his introduction to *Bet Yosef*: “And if, in some lands, they prohibit in some matters, although we took the opposite decision, they should hold fast to their custom, since they already accepted the words of the sage who prohibited, and prohibited it is to them to act as if it were permitted.”¹⁰⁵ Boehm thus finds in Karo’s own words space for diversity in religious practice, and he uses this to justify Isserles’s approach:

In light of this, the readers of my preface (insignificant as it is) [will understand] the way chosen by the gaon [. . .] Moses [. . .], when he made a digest of the laws of *isur ve-heter* according to what is customary in the holy communities of Poland, Russia [*Rusi’ab*], Bohemia, and Moravia, and perhaps everywhere [as far as] the Yiddish language [*leshon Ashkenaz*] reaches amongst the Jews.¹⁰⁶

Joseph M. Davis pointed to the importance of the broad geographical definition of the work’s intended audience and highlighted that while Isserles himself spoke only vaguely of “these countries” (*medīnot elu*), it is in the paratexts, arranged by the editor, that specific places are listed. Thus, the title page echoes the editor’s preface, when it refers to the current customs in “Poland, Lithuania, Ruthenia [*Royen*], Bohemia, Moravia, and Ashkenaz.”¹⁰⁷ Davis also showed that Boehm’s words provoked a reaction from Hayyim ben Betsal’el, the eminent rabbinical leader in Friedberg and brother of Judah ben Betsal’el, in his *Vikuaḥ mayim ḥayim*.¹⁰⁸ Let us emphasize — Hayyim ben Betsal’el reacts explicitly to the words of an editor:

105. E.g., in Joseph Karo, *Bet Yosef—Yoreh de’ab* (Venice: Griffio, 1564), [2v].

106. Isserles, *Torat ha-ḥatat* (1569), 3v.

107. Joseph Davis, “The Reception of the *Shulḥan ‘Arukh* and the Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity,” *AJS Review* 26.2 (2002): 262–64; Isserles, *Torat ha-ḥatat* (1569), 1r.

108. Davis, “The Reception of the *Shulḥan ‘Arukh*,” 264.

Behold, the Rav himself [Isserles] wrote in the preface of his book only about the custom of his country and did not mention the custom of Ashkenaz at all. But in the preface of the editor [*ba-magiab*], Poland, Russia, Bohemia, and Moravia are mentioned explicitly, and he further extended the boundaries and wrote: “And perhaps everywhere [as far as] the Yiddish language [*leshon Ashkenaz*] reaches amongst the Jews.”¹⁰⁹

It is a symptomatic paradox that due to R. Hayyim ben Betsal’el’s reluctance to publish his works in print,¹¹⁰ Boehm’s words circulated in various editions of *Torat ba-ḥatat*, while their repudiation in *Vikuaḥ mayim ḥayim* was printed only 140 years later.¹¹¹ In his preface, Boehm formulates rather independently an influential opinion about the relevance of a major halakhic work. He was motivated certainly in part by the publisher’s economic interest in attracting the widest possible audience. But his identification with Ashkenaz is also noteworthy (“we [. . .] the Ashkenazim”).¹¹² While Hayyim ben Betsal’el objected to the inclusion of German Jews, one wonders whether Boehm might have had in mind also the Italian Ashkenazic community, when he reiterated Isserles’s polemics with the “Sephardic” halakhah of Joseph Karo, which, by means of repeated Venetian editions of *Shulḥan ‘arukh*, had the potential to undermine the *minbag* of the Italian-Ashkenazic communities.¹¹³

A further element of the editor’s preface is significant. Isserles had organized his work meticulously and created an extensive index,¹¹⁴ adopting

109. Hayyim ben Betsal’el, *Vikuaḥ mayim ḥayim* (Amsterdam: Proops, 1711), 6r.

110. See Reiner, “The Ashkenazi Élite,” 85–89; Elchanan Reiner, “Temurot bishivot Polin ve-Ashkenaz ba-me’ot ha-16—ha-17 vеха-vikuaḥ ‘al ha-pilpul,” in *Ke-minbag Ashkenaz u-Folin: Sefer yovel le-Hone Shmeruk: Kovets meḥkarim be-tarbut yehudit*, ed. I. Bartal et al. (Jerusalem, 1993), 22n20.

111. Boehm’s preface was included in Prostitz’s reeditions of *Torat ba-ḥatat* in 1577 and 1590–91. In the undated fourth Cracow edition, Boehm’s preface is still retained, but without his name. Steinschneider (*CLH*, col. 1831, no. 6483.18) dates this edition to 1592–1612, i.e., after the third edition and before Isaac ben Aaron Prostitz’s death. Prostitz moved to his native Moravian town of Prostitz (Prostějov) after 1600 and was active there as a printer from 1602. However, as noted by Andrea Jelínková (“Hebrew Printing in Moravia,” 158–62), his successors used his name in Cracow imprints until his death in 1612.

112. Isserles, *Torat ba-ḥatat* (1569), 3v.

113. See Boehm’s reformulation of this point in his endnote to *Shulḥan ‘arukh—Yoreh de’ab* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1577–78), 114r: “laws customary in the regions with the languages of each people and country, Poland, Ashkenaz, Bohemia, Moravia, Ruthenia, Lithuania, and their outgrowths and offshoots.” Could “outgrowths” and “offshoots” (*agafehem veba-miṣta’afim me-hem*) mean Ashkenazic Jews in Italy?

114. Isserles, *Torat ba-ḥatat* (1569), 2v.

Italian standards for the presentation of the text. In parallel, Boehm transfers to Cracow the Italian editorial discourse that highlights the excellent organization and accessibility of the text. The very first book associated with Boehm, the Cremona edition of Isaac of Corbeil's *Amude golab*, had already featured a remarkable apparatus and intriguing language to promote it.¹¹⁵ In his introduction to *Torat ha-ḥatat*, Boehm uses the same language, which celebrated King Solomon for “weighing” (*ve-izen*), “exploring,” and making the Torah intelligible by means of his parables: he had made “ears” (*oznayim*), handles, for the Torah.¹¹⁶ While the metaphor of the “handles” had become a commonplace in sixteenth-century paratexts to promote the usefulness of a printed edition, Boehm applies both the biblical verse and the midrash to Isserles himself. He puts Isserles on a par, rhetorically, with the king-sage to shift then the emphasis to the searchable character of the book:

Not only is the gaon, the light of Israel [. . .] Moses Isserles, let him live long, a sage; he also taught the people knowledge, and he weighed and explored, arranging and organizing the road for man to find easily what he is looking for. [. . .] Previously, the teaching of *iur* and *beter* was like a chest without handles [. . .] but the spirit of the exalted and esteemed gaon awakened and he made handles for it according to the path taken by the Rosh in his responsa. That is, he established general principles [*kelalim*] and then specific rulings derived from each section, placing them at the end of the book to serve each and everyone like the key a man takes in his hand to enter a hall, so that anyone who has a certain problem may go to the table of these general principles, and rather than getting weary and tired, he will find [. . .] what he needs among the general principles or among the specific rulings.¹¹⁷

Torat ha-ḥatat follows Isaac of Dueren's *Sba'are Dura* by adding a second part on the laws of niddah. Here, Isserles chose to present the relevant sections from Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh—Yoreh de'ab* with his *hagabot* and his preface for the entire work, producing a prospectus for the publication of

115. Isaac of Corbeil, *Amude golab* (Cremona: Conti, 1556), [160r]. See Sonne, “Expurgation,” 999, and Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, “Persecution and the Art of Printing: Hebrew Books in Italy,” in *Jewish Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of David B. Ruderman*, ed. R. I. Cohen et al. (Cincinnati, 2014), 99, both also referring to *Amude golab*.

116. This was based on Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah (1.1.8) and its playful interpretation of Kohelet 12.9. On *ShirR* 1.1.8, see David Stern, *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), 63–66.

117. Isserles, *Torat ha-ḥatat* (1569), 3v and 86v.

the complete *Shulḥan 'arukh* with his commentary.¹¹⁸ Thus, *Torat ba-ḥatat* signals the beginning of the attempt to establish the hegemony of Cracow's halakhah over the newly conceived Ashkenazic lands, now defined, according to Boehm, by the use of the Yiddish language.¹¹⁹ Boehm's own note, following Isserles's preface, refers back to his earlier remarks on the need for a counterpart to Karo's Sephardic halakhah and then focuses again on the organization of the text.¹²⁰ Boehm acted as an editor, while the publishers (*madpisim*) are mentioned without names,¹²¹ and it is Boehm who celebrates "the quality of the paper and ink and the beauty of the book" in a poem that highlights his and Isserles's name.¹²²

In retrospect, this was indeed the pinnacle of Boehm's career as a maker of books. Less than two months after completing the printing of *Torat ba-ḥatat*, the Prostitz press—with Samuel Boehm as the editor—started to publish the first part of Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh* with Isserles's glosses, called by Isadore Twersky the "embodiment of Halakhah which Jewish history has proclaimed supreme."¹²³ But in contrast to his eloquence in other editions, Boehm here adopts a rather reserved style and restricts himself to a short note, where he follows Isserles's preface and celebrates the author of the *hagabot*, expressing the hope to be able "to print also the other parts" of the work.¹²⁴

Printing Isserles's halakhic works formed the center of the activities of the Prostitz press during the first years of its existence, and the wish to

118. Isserles, *Torat ba-ḥatat* (1569), 85r–100v.

119. As Elchanan Reiner has shown, the new "textbook" for Isserles's yeshiva—Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh* with Isserles's glosses—turned a Sephardic text "to be read" into an Ashkenazic text "to be studied" and annotated, first by Isserles and then by leading rabbis of subsequent generations, while works traditionally studied in Ashkenazic yeshivot—*Sefer Mordechai*, *Sha'are Dura*, and *Arba'ah turim*—gradually lost their significance; see Reiner, "The Ashkenazi Élite," 96–98. On the *Arba'ah turim* in the curriculum of the yeshiva, see Mordechai Breuer, *Oholei Torah (The Tents of Torah): The Yeshiva, Its Structure and History* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 2003), 141–43.

120. Isserles, *Torat ba-ḥatat* (1569), 86v.

121. Isserles, *Torat ba-ḥatat* (1569), 3v.

122. Isserles, *Torat ba-ḥatat* (1569), 127v.

123. Isadore Twersky, "The *Shulḥan 'Arukh*: Enduring Code of Jewish Law," *Judaism* 16.2 (1967): 156.

124. Joseph Karo and Moses Isserles, *Shulḥan 'arukh—Orah ḥayim* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1569/70–71), 2v. Gabriel Goldberger shows that Isserles used several editions of Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh* for composing his *hagabot*, among them Boehm's edition for Cavalli, and he also points to the differences between the first Cracow edition of *Shulḥan 'arukh—Orah ḥayim* (1570) and subsequent editions, from 1580 onwards, which deserve further investigation. See Gabriel Goldberger, "Nusah ha-*Shulḥan 'arukh* ve-hagabot ha-Rema," *Tsefunot* 2.4 [8] (1990): 84–89.

disseminate Isserles's halakhic decisions and to establish his authority can also be found in works not authored by him. Jacob Weil's *Sheḥitot u-vdikot*, edited by Boehm and printed in 1577, several years after Isserles's death, was accompanied by glosses whose author, Tsvi bar Isaac Jacob, introduces himself as a butcher of twenty-two years and mohel in Cracow, who seeks to use Isserles's authority as a shield against objections: "Each time I came across something new, I showed it to [. . .] Moses Isserles and debated with him and others."¹²⁵ Tsvi Isaac refers to Isserles's rulings and admits with resignation: "What can I do if [. . .] Moses Isserles already gave his verdict."¹²⁶ According to the title page of the second part of the book (*Bedikot*), the text had been "emended letter by letter according to [. . .] Moses Isserles," whose notes were added as well.¹²⁷

When the printing of the *Shulḥan 'arukh* with Isserles's glosses was resumed with the part *Yoreh de'ab* in November 1577, Samuel Boehm was there. His preface appears on the same page as that of Isserles, and they share equal space. Boehm begins with general reflections on exile and Torah, quoting from Ovadiah Sforno's *Kavanot ha-torah*,¹²⁸ before asserting his commitment to Isserles's work:

The part *Orah ḥayim* of the *Shulḥan 'arukh* has already been printed and his judgement and quality have come to light. As of today, we do not even have one copy because all of them have been sold. [. . .] God knows and Israel will learn that I worked [on this edition] with all my strength and love in public and in secret with the gaon Moses Isserles both during his life and after his death. [. . .] I said: What can make a servant desirable to his Master in Heaven if not the multiplication of books without end?¹²⁹

In the concluding note, signed on 19 Tammuz (5)338 (June 24, 1578), Boehm expressed his gratitude for completing the second volume and also his hope to print the remaining two parts of *Shulḥan 'arukh* with Isserles's

125. Jacob Weil, *Sheḥitot u-vdikot* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1577), *Sheḥitot*, 2r and 9v.

126. Weil, *Sheḥitot u-vdikot*, *Sheḥitot*, 6r. On the relationship between "theoretical" and "practical" halakhic expertise, see Reiner, "'Aliyat 'ha-kehilah ha-gedolah,'" 14–15.

127. Weil, *Sheḥitot u-vdikot*, *Bedikot*, [10r]. Tsvi Isaac mentions his personal consultations with Isserles, see 8v, 26r, and 38v. On Isserles's *bagabot*, cited throughout this edition, see Asher Siev, *Rabbi Moses Isserles* (Hebrew; New York, 1972), 176n16.

128. Ovadiah Sforno, *Be'ur 'al ha-torah* (Venice: Griffio, 1567), 87v.

129. Joseph Karo and Moses Isserles, *Shulḥan 'arukh—Yoreh de'ab* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1577–78), 2v.

glosses.¹³⁰ They were both published together with the second edition of *Orah hayim* in late 1579 (*Hošben mishpat*) and summer 1580 (*Even ha-‘ezer* and *Orah hayim*), but for unknown reasons they bear no trace of Boehm’s involvement.

A VARIETY OF GENRES FOR A TRANSREGIONAL MARKET

Prostitz’s press, although famous today for its halakhic publications, also played an important role in transforming other aspects of printing north of the Alps. Readers were invited to buy new works of contemporary authors,¹³¹ while the presses of Prague, Lublin, and of the Helicz brothers in Cracow had previously provided them almost exclusively with classical and liturgical texts (see tables 2–3).¹³² In addition, the press extended the range of genres printed and readily available north of the Alps. While Boehm remained heavily involved in the publication of halakhic works, he also turned to homiletic and ethical literature, Bible commentaries, history, and geography. Particularly significant is the fact that several of the works promoted by Prostitz’s press were shaped by kabbalistic teachings, among them Boehm’s edition of Joshua ibn Shu‘aib’s sermons and the reprints of Moses ibn Gabbai’s works (in which Boehm was not visibly involved).¹³³ This points to a further and interlinked development:

130. Karo and Isserles, *Shulḥan ‘arukh—Yoreh de‘ah*, 114r.

131. Alongside famous authors such as Isserles and Karo, the press also promoted lesser-known contemporary writers, most of them from the same or neighbouring regions, such as Yehiel Mikhel Moraftshik and the authors and translators of Yiddish works, but these authors often took a leading role in the publishing process themselves, and Boehm’s name is not mentioned in their editions.

132. Abraham ben Avigdor’s glosses on Jacob ben Asher’s *Arba‘ah turim* had been a notable exception, alongside the (anonymously published) Yiddish works *Mirkevet ha-mishneh* (Cracow: Helicz, 1534–35) and *Azharat nashim* (Cracow: Helicz, 1535). During Boehm’s years in Cracow, a few further contemporary authors were published: the Gersonides press printed Isserles’s *Torat ba-‘olab* (1569), Judah Loew’s *Gur aryeh* (1578), his *Derush na‘eh* (1583–84), and *Menorat zehav* (ca. 1581), attributed to Solomon Luria; the Lublin press printed Isaac Hayyut’s *Pahad Yitshak* (1572/73). For the complete list of Prague prints for the period of Boehm’s activity in Cracow, see table 3.

133. On the diversification of genres and the reception of kabbalistic literature north of the Alps, see Elchanan Reiner, “‘En tsarikh shum yehudi lilmod davar rak ha-talmud levado’: ‘Al limud ve-tokhne limud be-Ashkenaz bime ha-sefer ha-rishonim,” in *Ta Shma: Studies in Judaica in Memory of Israel M. Ta-Shma*, ed. A. Reiner et al. (Alon Shevut, 2011), 2:705–46; Elchanan Reiner, “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. M. Graetz (Heidelberg, 2000), 229–47.

Table 3. The production of the Prague Jewish printing press before and after the arrival of Isaac Prostitz to Cracow (1549–81).¹³⁴

	YEAR	TITLE	NO. IN SIXTOVÁ'S CATALOGUE
1.	1549	<i>Maḥzor, Part I</i>	25a
2.	1550	<i>Maḥzor, Part II</i>	25b
3.	1551	<i>Seliḥot</i>	26
4.	1555	<i>Tēfilat rosh ḥodeṣh</i>	27
5.	1556	<i>Tēfilot mi-kol ha-ṣhanah</i>	28
6.	1556	<i>Seder haḡadab shel pesaḥ</i>	29
7.	1562	<i>Prayers for minḥab and ma'ariv</i>	30
8.	1566	<i>Tēfilat mi-kol ha-ṣhanah</i>	31
9.	1569	Moses Isserles, <i>Tōrat ha-‘olab</i> ¹³⁵	32
10.	1578–79	Judah ben Betsal'el, <i>Gur aryeh</i>	33
11.	1579	<i>Seliḥot . . . ke-minḡag Pehem, Poln, Merbren, Extraikh ve-Shleziyah</i>	34
12.	1580–81	<i>Orḥot tsadikim</i>	35
13.	1581	Solomon Luria (attr.), <i>Menorat zahav tabor</i>	36
14.	1581	<i>Sidur</i>	37
15.	1583–84	Judah ben Betsal'el, <i>Derush na'eh . . . be-ṣhabat teshuvah</i> (in 2°)	38
16.	1583–84	Judah ben Betsal'el, <i>Derush na'eh . . . be-ṣhabat teshuvah</i> (in 4°)	39
17.	1586	<i>Maḥzor mi-kol ha-ṣhanah</i>	40
18.	1586	Petaḥyah Moses ben Joseph, <i>Tēḥinah</i>	41

¹³⁴. Based on Olga Sixtová, “Hebrew Printing in Prague 1512–1672” (Czech; Ph.D. diss., Charles University, 2017).

¹³⁵. The near-decade-long interruption of the activity of the Prague Jewish press between 1569 and 1578 remains an enigma. The publication of Isserles's *Tōrat ha-‘olab* in Prague seems to have had its origin in Isserles helping the printer, Mordecai ben Gershom, in a legal dispute in 1568. See Olga Sixtová, “Jewish Printers and Printing Presses in Prague 1512–1670 (1672),” in *Hebrew Printing in Bohemia*, 46.

in Cracow, Boehm dedicated a significant part of his editorial activities to works of authors, editors, and printers who had been active in Eretz Israel, Constantinople, and Venice.¹³⁶ He edited Zarek Barfat (based on Elia Baḥur's Venetian edition), Abraham Zacut (based on Samuel Shullam's edition from Constantinople), Abraham Farissol (based on a manuscript), and Solomon Almoli (with a title page referring to a prior edition from Constantinople).¹³⁷ Boehm's most eloquent expression of his dedication to the printing press as a facilitator of the transregional circulation of Jewish knowledge can be found in his preface to ibn Shu'aib's *Sefer derashot* (1573–75). He had resolved, he writes, already many years ago “to print and publish” the work of the great scholar, issued fifty years earlier in Constantinople (1523), because it could rarely be found outside the Ottoman lands (*gelilot Togarma*) and the few available copies “came at the price of gold and many pearls, and those were thought to be like kings who kept them locked away in their storage houses.” Boehm then explains that he decided to make widely accessible a work whose importance had been highlighted already by both Karo and Isserles.¹³⁸ That Boehm could realize a plan that may have been going back to his Italian years once he was in Cracow, but not without encountering problems and delays, as we have seen above, shows in a nutshell how both agency and dependency characterized the editor's ambivalent position.

In Cracow, Boehm was, of course, not the only one interested in a connected world of Jewish knowledge. Such interest was promoted by Prostitz's publications also where Boehm was not involved. Naphtali ben Menahem presented his midrash commentary as a response to Avraham ben Asher's *Or ha-sekbel*, written in Safed and printed in Venice just two years earlier.¹³⁹ The itinerant Moses Yakar Ashkenazi, who moved between Constantinople and Poland, was able to publish his *Petah 'enayim* with

136. The contrast to Prague and Lublin is obvious. Already Zunz noted that Prague's press published “only ten Orientals” (“nur zehn Orientalen”): Leopold Zunz, “Annalen der hebräischen Typographie von Prag, vom Jahre 1513 bis zum Jahre 1657,” in *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1845), 303.

137. In fact, the Constantinople edition had already been the second edition, see BHB 110663.

138. Ibn Shu'aib, *Sefer derashot*, 1v.

139. As noted by Jacob Elbaum (*Openness and Insularity*, 119 and n. 113), the Cracow edition of Naphtali ben Menahem's commentary attests to Polish-Italian connections in several ways. In his introduction, Naphtali refers critically to Abraham ben Asher's *Or ha-sekbel* (Venice: Griffio, 1567), and in the margins, references to a Venetian edition of Midrash Rabbah (1545 or 1566—the pagination was identical) are included. Elbaum further points to an exemplar of Naphtali ben Menahem's commentary in the collection of the JTSA (BM517.M63 A7 1641b), which bears an owner's inscription from Verona, dated 1581. See also

Prostitz,¹⁴⁰ and the reprint of Moses ibn Gabbai's *Avodat ha-kodesh* was commissioned by Tsvi ben Isaac Oystaykh for his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Most importantly, Prostitz and Boehm were dedicated to publishing Moses Isserles's comments on Karo, the "Sephardi," that attained lasting significance. The interest in engaging with diverse strands of transmission and keeping them present for a wide audience that could be found in Isserles's city must have resonated with Boehm's Italian commitment to printing as a practice with a global outlook. As Boehm's preface to ibn Shu'aib's sermons shows, it was a commitment driven by economic and Jewish communal interests that, from the editor's point of view, had become intertwined.

This global orientation found its counterpoint in the dedication to the halakhic, linguistic, and cultural world of Ashkenaz. An important facet of the transfer of Italian print culture to Cracow was the sustained commitment to Yiddish works and translations, among them some beautifully produced editions¹⁴¹—an aspect in which Boehm was never visibly involved, but which resonates in his capacious definition of Ashkenaz as a transregional sphere based on the Yiddish language.

REFLECTING ON TRANSREGIONAL MOVEMENTS AND CONTACTS: EDITING ZACUT AND FARISSOL

Boehm's edition of Abraham Zacut's *Sefer yuḥasin*, a compendium focusing on the history of halakhic transmission, marks both continuity and discontinuity with his earlier work in Prostitz's press. In his preface, Boehm tells his readers that he himself had planned to write a chronicle that would offer a comprehensive and accurate account of Jewish history from the beginnings to the present day. But then, he says, he discovered Zacut's *Sefer yuḥasin* in Cracow's synagogue (*bi-me'at mikdash*), and he resolved to reprint this work with various supplements.¹⁴² As a result, we never get to meet Boehm as an author in the modern sense of the word. But his edition of *Sefer yuḥasin* shows how he expands his interpretation of his role as an

Benjamin Williams, *Commentary on Miḏrash Rabba in the Sixteenth Century: The "Or ha-Sekbel" of Abraham ben Asher* (Oxford, 2016), 167–69.

140. Yitzhak Yudlov, "Likutim le-toldot ha-defus ha-'ivri be-Folin," *Yeshurun* 1 (1996): 457–58.

141. See Erika Timm, "Das jiddischsprachige literarische Erbe der Italo-Ashkenasen," in *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. M. Graetz (Heidelberg, 2000), 174.

142. Abraham Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1580–81), lv. A fuller analysis of Boehm's edition of Zacut's work is included in Andrea Schatz's book on exilic history among early modern European Jews (in progress).

editor, and how he himself perceives the significance of transregional movements and connections.

The book that Boehm found in Cracow was Samuel Shullam's *editio princeps* of *Sefer yuḥasin* (Constantinople, 1566). Shullam had taken the composite nature of the work as an invitation to take a rather flexible approach to the manuscript that was available to him: he deleted significant sections, such as about the expulsions from Iberia, on which, as he says, he planned to write himself,¹⁴³ and he added new material, most notably the *Igeret Sherira Ga'on*, a chronicle of Ottoman sultans, and his own paraphrasing translation of Josephus's *Against Apion*.¹⁴⁴ Boehm continued this flexible approach, deleting and adding material, as we shall see, to prepare a new edition of *Sefer yuḥasin* that would appeal to readers north of the Alps.¹⁴⁵

At first glance, Boehm's edition appears to complement and complete the printing of the *Shulḥan 'arukh* in Cracow. Zacut himself had presented a "hybrid" work, emphasising the usefulness of the main part about the tannaim and amoraim as a handbook for the study of halakhah,¹⁴⁶ while also including wider aspects of political and cultural history. Boehm adds Moses Isserles's annotations to Isaac Israeli's chapter on world history and halakhic transmission in his *Yesod 'olam* (part 4, chapter 18), and Isserles's further notes on the history of halakhic transmission from the geonic period to the present day. Clearly, such a book could serve rabbinic teaching and study very well, as Boehm himself had demonstrated when quoting one of Isserles's glosses in his preface to ibn Shu'aib's *Sefer ha-derashot* (1573–75) to situate the author within wider networks of halakhic transmission.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, Boehm uses his preface to place *Sefer yuḥasin*

143. Abraham Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (Constantinople, 1566), [144v].

144. For Shullam's reception of Josephus, see Joanna Weinberg, "Early Modern Jewish Readers of Josephus," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 23.3 (2016): 275–89; for the Samaritan chronicle he added and its role in Boehm's edition, see Steven Fine, "They Remembered That They Had Seen It in a Jewish Midrash': How a Samaritan Tale Became a Legend of the Jews," *Religions* 12.8 (2021): 635, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12080635>.

145. The Constantinople edition ended with a rabbinic approbation, prohibiting the reprint of the work—or the acquisition of reprints—for ten years; Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (1566), 176v. For the rare instances of such approbations in the Ottoman Empire, see Joseph R. Hacker, "Authors, Readers and Printers of Sixteenth-Century Hebrew Books in the Ottoman Empire," in *Perspectives on the Hebraic Book: The Myron M. Weinstein Memorial Lectures at the Library of Congress*, ed. P. K. Pearlstein (Washington D.C., 2012), 40–41 and n. 105.

146. Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (1580–81), 2v–3v.

147. Ibn Shu'aib, *Sefer derashot*, 1v. The edition ends with *Seder 'olam zuta*, with specific years added in parentheses, up to the Babylonian exile. Elchanan Reiner has emphasised the role of Boehm's edition of Zacut's work, including *Yesod 'olam*

firmly within the genre of historical and geographical writing, and he adds excerpts from Abraham Farissol's as yet unpublished geographical treatise *Igeret orhot 'olam*. Boehm's edition, therefore, contributes significantly to the diversification of genres printed for Ashkenazic readers that the Prostitz press had initiated. In this regard, Boehm's resolve to print Zacut's *Sefer yuḥasin* as a halakhic and historical work testifies to the consistency and continuity of his editorial practice.

And yet, the publication also marks a surprising moment of discontinuity. Until then, Boehm's dated editions had born the imprint of Prostitz's press.¹⁴⁸ Now, in 1580, Prostitz's name is nowhere mentioned in the volume, and the same will be true for Boehm's next (and final) publication, his edition of Solomon Luria's *Hokhmat Shelomoh* (1586). Moreover, just as Prostitz's name can no longer be found in Boehm's editions, Boehm's name disappears from Prostitz's publications. Printing of *Sefer yuḥasin* started in Tammuz 1580, just a few days before Prostitz begins printing his second edition of Jacob Weil's *Sheḥitot*, from which all traces of Boehm's earlier editorial involvement were removed, and the volumes of Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh*, printed between autumn 1579 and summer 1584, including the reprint of the second part, *Yoreh de'ah*, no longer bear Boehm's name either. This complicates our understanding of the role of Boehm's edition of *Sefer yuḥasin* in the wider contexts of printing and halakhic study in Cracow: it signals frictions and a (partial) parting of ways rather than a harmonious conclusion.

The reasons for this remain speculative. Did Boehm withdraw on his own accord from Prostitz's main publication project at the time, the *Shulḥan 'arukh* with Isserles's commentary? This would come as a surprise, given Boehm's own fervent expressions of commitment to the project in 1577–78. It is tempting to presume instead that old age intervened and that Boehm felt no longer capable of supervising a project of considerable scope and ambition, such as the printing of the *Shulḥan 'arukh*. This, however, appears unlikely given that, after editing *Sefer yuḥasin*, Boehm embarked on a project that was no less demanding than printing the *Shulḥan 'arukh*, namely the publication of Luria's *Hokhmat Shelomoh*. Whatever the reasons, it is clear that the professional relationship between Prostitz and Boehm

with Isserles's glosses, as part of the curriculum in Cracow's yeshiva: "Yashan mipne ḥadash: 'Al temurot be-tokhne limud bishivot Polin ba-me'ah ha-16 veyeshivato shel ReMA bi-Kraka," in *Zekhor davar le-'avdekha: Aṣufat ma'amarim le-zekher Dov Rappel*, ed. S. Glick (Ramat Gan, 2007), 201–5.

148. Boehm's undated edition of Solomon Almoli's *Pitron ḥalomot*, published without Prostitz's imprint between 1576 and 1586 (the reign of Stefan Bathory, who is mentioned on the title page) belongs to the same group of works, but it is not clear whether it was printed before or after *Sefer yuḥasin*.

changed around 1580. From now on, Boehm uses Prostitz's workshop as an independent contractor,¹⁴⁹ drawing on letters, very few ornaments, and the skills of the workers.¹⁵⁰

What did Boehm achieve as an independent editor and publisher? Many features of his edition look familiar. Boehm improves the Constantinople edition considerably by applying his usual editorial techniques: he clarifies the layout, adds punctuation marks, and spells out many abbreviations.¹⁵¹ At the same time, Boehm's editorial work appears at times somewhat inconsistent. He was, for instance, remarkably unconcerned with Christian religious expectations regarding an acceptable text.¹⁵² Thus, he keeps a polemical passage about the date of Jesus's birth, which, according to Zacut, was incorrectly calculated by his followers, and only omits the subsequent discussion of *minim*. And while he does not include a polemical passage discussing the meaning of the word *mešumad*, he does not substitute *šhemad* in reports on persecutions.¹⁵³ Boehm does consider, however, that he publishes in Christian lands when it comes to political matters: Shullam's praise for the Sultan in various places of the book is significantly toned down.¹⁵⁴

Boehm is also mindful of his Jewish audience: he inserts taboo language, changes the text or leaves space instead of printing the word "Yeshu," but he does so, again, very unsystematically.¹⁵⁵ Most famously, Boehm only

149. There are very few examples for this before 1580: Yehiel Mikhel Moraftshik published *Minḥab ḥadaṣah*, his commentary on *Pirke avot*, with Prostitz's press but without the printer's name (ca. 1576), and the anonymous editor of *Otiyot de-Rabi Akivab* did the same (1579).

150. This would include the workers responsible for the numerous sketches illustrating Luria's work.

151. Inevitably, he also inserts a few mistakes, such as confusing the words *zeman* (time) and *makom* (place) in Zacut's introduction (3r).

152. In contrast to Italy, no systematic censorship of Jewish books existed in Poland, but the case of the accusations against Prostitz in 1569 shows that Christian authorities could intervene. In addition, Boehm might have wished to prepare a book that could easily be sold in Italy, but this does not seem to have influenced his editorial decisions.

153. See Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (1580–81), 133v–134r, where Zacut gives an account of the massacres and mass conversions in Christian Spain in 1391. This led to heavy-handed expurgation when the edition reached Italy, as Luigi da Bologna's deletions in the copy of Harvard's Houghton Library show (HOU GEN Heb 11235.225.80*).

154. Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (1580–81), 152r and 154r. For Luigi da Bologna, the remaining words were still too respectful of the Sultan: he blots out "Selim, may his majesty be exalted and his kingdom elevated" (134v).

155. Compare, e.g., Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (1580–81), 11r (where Zacut's "to exclude the story of Jesus and his disciples" on Saul's reign [Acts 13.21] is replaced

prints Zacut's first account of the transmission of *Sefer ha-Zohar*, where the historian points out that the book was "revealed" after Nahmanides and Asher ben Yehiel, who had not known of it, but that it nonetheless faithfully records the oral transmission of Simeon bar Yohai's teachings, just as the Mishnah, Sifra, Sifre, and Tosefta reliably transmit Akivah's sayings.¹⁵⁶ Boehm omits, however, Zacut's second report on the origins of the Zohar with Isaac of Akko's detailed account of his inquiries about the authorship of the Zohar, which suggests that Moses de Leon may have composed the work himself and tried to enhance its value by falsely attributing it to Simeon bar Yohai.¹⁵⁷ While Shullam had printed an abbreviated version of Isaac of Akko's report, but distanced himself vigorously from it,¹⁵⁸ Boehm is not even inclined to provide his readers with the material for a debate about the origins of the Zohar. As so often, it is impossible to determine whether an economic interest in preserving the acceptability of the edited work or an intellectual reluctance to spread doubt about the reliable transmission of the Zohar, whose halakhic relevance had been promoted by Karo, were responsible for Boehm's decision—or both.¹⁵⁹

Boehm's famous deletion of Isaac of Akko's report, although a significant alteration of the text, counts among his smaller editorial interventions. It was in other respects that Boehm substantially reframed and expanded his role as an editor. A first indication of this can be found on the title page, where Boehm adds to Shullam's list of the volume's various parts an equally long list of his own supplements, foregrounding the role of the editor as a creator with "scissors and paste."¹⁶⁰ In Christian contexts, compendia or compilations were intended to help navigate the new abundance

by "to exclude the *goyim*") and 41r (where Boehm leaves blank space for Zacut's references to Jesus and to Nero as *anti Qriſto*) with 136b (where Boehm prints "Yeshu ha-notzri").

156. Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (1580–81), 42r.

157. Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1580–81), 133r.

158. Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (1566), 142r. Zacut had presented the report in miscellanea on the tannaim and emphasised the unresolved nature of the question (Abraham Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin*, ed. H. Filipowski and A. Freimann [3rd ed., Jerusalem, 1963], 88–89), while Shullam, who did not print the miscellanea, moved the report to the later entry on Moses de Leon, thus indirectly reinforcing the impression that the Zohar was a forgery.

159. Boehm's omission did not go unnoticed: for Elijah Delmedigo's and Leone Modena's comparisons of the first and second editions of *Sefer yuḥasin*, see Yaacob Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah: Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice* (Princeton, N.J., 2011), 95–98.

160. See Anthony Grafton, *Inky Fingers: The Making of Books in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 2020), 1–28 (quote on 4) on Joannes Boemus's authorship of *Omnium gentium mores, leges et ritus*.

of information.¹⁶¹ In Jewish contexts resources were fewer, but just like their Christian counterparts, Zacut and Shullam promised to make new and accurate knowledge available by gathering, selecting, correcting, and updating existing material. The literary form of the compilation rendered the boundaries between authorship and editorship porous. Finding in Shullam's extensive and confident editing a model for himself, Boehm collects additional printed and manuscript material and declares in his preface that the task of the editor is not only useful but innovative: "Look, this is new; nothing like this existed before; Samuel Shullam was the name of the first printer, and Samuel Boehm has come lately; this is my name [. . .] and my memorial for all generations."¹⁶²

Among the most obvious additions to Zacut's work is a "preamble" that Boehm inserts between the prefaces and Zacut's main text, but for which he claims authorship only indirectly, as if hesitant, after all, to fully adopt the role of an author.¹⁶³ Boehm's main concern in his preamble is the calculation of years and generations, occasionally interrupted by brief mid-rashic narratives, by a reference to the kabbalistic identification of Henoch with Metatron, and by a digression, based on *Sefer Yosippon*, about Alexander the Great finding the burial place of Kenan in India. An interesting part of the preamble is a long quote from *Yalkut Shim'oni* on the transmission of the "secret of 'ibur," the calculation of the calendar from Adam to Abraham and Moses.¹⁶⁴ Here, Boehm offers a metanarrative on the

161. Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven, Conn., 2010), 173–229. On Zacut's work and the emerging genre of miscellanies, see Eleazar Gutwirth, "The Historian's Origins and Genealogies: The *Sefer Yubasin*," *Hispania Judaica Bulletin* 6 (2008): 57–82.

162. Zacut, *Sefer yubasin* (1580–81), 1v. An editorial decision that is difficult to interpret is Boehm's omission of Shullam's paraphrasing translation of Josephus's *Against Apion*. It may have been motivated economically: if Boehm wanted to add material to the book, it was prudent to save expenses elsewhere. In addition, the translation may have appeared expendable, because the kind of philosophically oriented literature to which *Against Apion* belongs did not form part of the genres promoted by Prostitz's press. The decision to omit the work may have been taken only after the main part had been printed, since Boehm kept Shullam's reference to the appended *Against Apion* on f. 136v.

163. When Zacut discusses the number of years between Adam and the Flood, Boehm adds "as we already said above in detail and with explanations," thus pointing to his authorship of the "preamble"; Zacut, *Sefer yubasin* (1580–81), 8r.

164. Zacut, *Sefer yubasin* (1580–81), 5r–v; *Yalkut Shim'oni*, Bereshit, 41; Boehm's folio number refers to Parenzo's edition (Venice: Bragadin, 1566), vol. 1, 11v. The preamble ends with a page on the divergence between an "old manuscript" and Bahya ben Asher in their calculation of years from the creation to the Babylonian exile. The page has been papered over in many copies, with the paper then removed again to reveal the text, not without partially damaging it.

establishment of the calendrical year as the basis of all accurate historical writing, mixing a scientific interest in methodology with a rather less scientific reliance on midrash, and touching on the link between astronomy and history without making it explicit.

Boehm's most revealing interventions in the book can be found, however, in his preface and in the supplements at its end, where he presents himself not as a diffident author but rather as a confident editor who reflects on transregional movements and connections.

Boehm's rhymed preface takes a poetic form that harks back to his Italian beginnings.¹⁶⁵ It starts by describing how he found himself on the move: "In a land of drought I lived and found no rest; I was hurled from nation [*gol*] to nation [. . .]; and in each wave that reached me, all my endeavours were lost." Boehm then describes how he found "a land where one may eat bread without lack of understanding," a place of *torah* and *piḥpul ḥarīf*, inhabited by decent people, where he decided to settle until God would restore Zion. It was here that he considered a new plan: "And when God granted me rest on all sides, I considered writing a pleasant book, recording the events of the times and the order of the world [*divre ba-yamin ve-seder ba-'olam*] from beginning to end."¹⁶⁶

In these passages, Boehm depicts mobility and stability in sharply contrasting terms. Echoing his prefaces from the 1560s, when he introduced himself to new readers in Padua as a troubled person who was forced to move to a new place by adverse circumstances, he associates movement with disruption and loss. Creativity and innovation, by contrast, are associated with newfound stability. It is in times of rest that, according to Boehm's preface, readers can show interest in history and geography, it is in such circumstances that he is able to resolve to remove all error from existing chronicles and to compose a new historical work, and it is in the undisturbed space of Cracow's synagogue where he finds Zacut's work, which can serve as the reliable guide he had meant to compose himself.

Boehm's edition of *Sefer yuḥasin*, however, does not only highlight the nexus between regional stability and cultural productivity. It also promotes

165. It consists of seven stanzas, each beginning with the word *crets* and ending with the words *dor va-dor*. Thus, Boehm alludes on the one hand to the notion of the earth being divided into "seven lands" (*sheva' aratzot*), which he may have found in *Ma'arekhet ha-elohut*, ch. 13 (see Ferrara, 1557, 233v; Mantua, 1558, 174v), where it is also related to the seven climates, or in the Zohar. On the other hand he points to the biblical verse that has served many Jewish historians as a justification of their endeavours: "Remember the days of old, consider the years of ages past [*dor va-dor*]" (Deut 32.7). The preface thus situates inquiries into geography and history within profoundly Jewish contexts.

166. Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (1580–81), 1v.

a transregional perspective that appreciates the role of Jewish communities across the world for the transmission of halakhah and the continuation of Jewish life in exile. Among the supplements that Boehm adds to Zacut's work are Isserles's notes on the recent history of rabbinic transmission in Ashkenaz and Poland. Isserles makes a point of establishing Poland's significance as a new center of rabbinic learning,¹⁶⁷ and of inscribing it into a transregional history of transmission that, so far, had focused on Sepharad, Tsarfat, and Ashkenaz. Isserles then ends with a confident note on the large number of rabbinical scholars elsewhere, in particular in the Ottoman Empire and North Africa (*u-vifrat be-erets Yishma'el u-ve-artsot ha-ma'arav*), thus acknowledging multiple centers of Jewish life beyond Europe.¹⁶⁸

Preceding Isserles's notes, Boehm presents excerpts from Abraham Farissol's *Igeret orḥot 'olam* that widen horizons even further to include observations on the immense numbers of Jews living in India and even further to the East, at the edges of the known maps of the world, in Serica, which Ptolemy placed in today's North China and Mongolia.¹⁶⁹ Remarkably, Boehm chooses passages from Farissol's work that minimize the immediate messianic dimension of reports about Jews beyond the known world: David Reuveni, who still played a significant role in Farissol's work in 1525, when it was completed, is only mentioned cursorily now.¹⁷⁰ The emphasis is on Christian reports about vast lands with numerous Jewish kingdoms and kings, many people and many precious possessions.¹⁷¹ But these reports, too, serve a specific Jewish purpose. Boehm introduces Farissol's work as follows:

Novelties I have found in the book *Orḥot 'olam* by [. . .] Abraham Farissol [. . .] and I decided to attach it to *Sefer yuḥasin* to console and fortify the heart of the oppressed in this bitter and [. . .] long exile [. . .], for which the opponents of our sacred Torah and our enemies scorn us and

167. See Reiner, "Yashan mi-pne ḥadash," 202–3.

168. Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (1580–81), 165r.

169. For Farissol and his treatise, see David B. Ruderman, *The World of a Renaissance Jew: The Life and Thought of Abraham ben Mordecai Farissol* (Cincinnati, 1981), 131–43.

170. Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1580–81), 155r–v. Boehm does not include Reuveni's mission to Rome in his few lines about him and focuses on the large number of Jewish tribes and kings in the report and the promise of an end to exile.

171. In the passages chosen by Boehm, Farissol draws mainly from Fracanzano da Montalboddo's anthology of travel reports, *Paesi novamente ritrovati* [. . .] (Vicenza: Vicentino, 1507).

tease us, saying that our hope has been lost [. . .] And [indeed] we do not have prophets [. . .] and because of our sins we remain few out of many, there is no king nor prince etc. [Hos 3.4]. [. . .] But we do have brethren, our saviours, the Ten Tribes, and among them [we find] a king and princes and numerous people.¹⁷²

Here, Boehm refers to Christian polemical interpretations of Jacob's promise that "the sceptre will not depart from Judah" (Gen 49.10), and he uses new European knowledge of distant places to refute supersessionist claims. While God's promise to preserve his people and their sovereignty may seem to apply no longer to Jews and to have been transferred to Christians, it becomes strikingly obvious that this is an erroneous interpretation, according to Boehm, if one looks beyond Europe and the Mediterranean world: in Central and East Asia, Jews still hold the "sceptre" and reign over vast kingdoms. Boehm relies on historical and geographical writings to craft an argument against Christian polemics that is grounded in both biblical stories and early modern global perspectives—an approach that will remain relevant far into the modern period.¹⁷³

Boehm's preface suggests that it is important to differentiate between two facets of movement: the destructive moment of forced dislocation and the constructive moment of relocation in a place where people are settled and renewed productivity is possible. Obviously, he relied on some forms of the migration of people and books: Zacut's work must have found its way from Constantinople to Cracow, and Boehm must also have been able to acquire a manuscript of Farissol's work, composed in Ferrara, before it was printed in Venice (1586). Yet it was possible to publish this material in Cracow because the city offered some continuity and stability. What emerges is a dialectical picture: it is the absence of forced migration, disrupted networks, and imposed reorientations that makes it possible to establish productive connections and sustain transregional perspectives on Jewish life. Boehm had set out as an editor-corrector who supported such connections and perspectives through his activities. In his edition of *Sefer yuḥasin*, he eventually also promotes them in his own words and through his own interpretation of their significance.

Samuel Boehm died in the summer of 1588, on 13 Sivan (5)348.¹⁷⁴ The significance of the editor's work and the transience of his memory is illustrated

172. Zacut, *Sefer yuḥasin* (1580–81), 155r.

173. See Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History* (Oxford, 2009).

174. Hayyim Dov Friedberg, *Toldot ba-ḏefus ba-ivri be-Folanyab*, 13, citing the *pinkas* of the *ḥevrab kadishab*, Cracow, 44v. Friedberg also claims that Boehm was

by the new edition of Isaac of Corbeil's *Amude golab* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1596), with which Boehm's career had begun. It now includes in its apparatus frequent additions from Karo's *Shulḥan 'arukh* with Isserles's glosses, attesting to the gradual integration of the work into the Ashkenazic world of rabbinical studies. Boehm's name, too, is mentioned but only as part of the colophon from 1556, which mentioned his involvement in procuring funding for the work, with no indication that the Cremonese editor had until quite recently played a formidable role in Cracow's Hebrew press.

CONCLUSION

The new Cracow print shop emerged from a remarkable synergy between local and transregional dynamics. A temporary decline of the Venetian Hebrew press on the one hand and the new demands of the market for printed books in Poland on the other hand created a unique opportunity for establishing a new print shop in Cracow, fashioned after Italian models.

Transregional awareness and agility among authors, editors, and printers was supported by the local leadership that looked favorably upon their initiatives. Moses Isserles and other Polish scholars supported Boehm and Prostitz's skills and ambitions, being themselves involved in lively transregional interactions. Isserles's support manifested itself also in financial terms, as we are informed by Boehm: he cofinanced the *editio princeps* of the first volume of *Shulḥan 'arukh* with his *bagabot*.¹⁷⁵ That the new Hebrew press also enjoyed Christian political support becomes obvious, when Prostitz manages to obtain the royal privilege and to avert its temporary rescinding rather swiftly. Transregional networks, which made possible not only the mobility of people but also the careful planning of business enterprises between Italy and Cracow, the transfer of material resources,

born in 1503, because he must have been sixty-six years old when arriving in Cracow in 1569, according to his preface to *Sefer yuḥasin*. Friedberg does not provide details, but he obviously read Boehm's use of *gerḥayim* in the words *gilgu 'l galga* as pointing to the age of sixty-six years. There is no context, however, to support this claim. Boehm's son Israel appears to have served as a Shamash and Sofer in Cracow for many more years; Friedberg, *Toldot ha-defus ha-ivri be-Folanyah*, 13n4, gives 1 Adar I 376 (1617) as the date of his death, citing again the *pinkas* of the *hevrah kadishah*, Cracow, 70v.

175. Joseph Karo and Moses Isserles, *Shulḥan 'arukh—Orah ḥayim* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1570), 2v. As it is rare that funding of Hebrew books is explicitly acknowledged, the reference to Isserles's financial support can be interpreted as a deliberate announcement of Isserles's support for Prostitz's press. The edition mentions yet another sponsor, Nathan bar Moses Petlitzer, who cofinanced the edition at a later stage (see 127v).

professional skills, and literary preferences, clearly shaped Samuel Boehm's life and work profoundly.

The rapidity with which the Eastern European Jewish scholars began to use the services of the Prostitz press as authors and editors indicates that they were well acquainted with the most recent trends in the production of printed books and could both produce and absorb new Hebrew and Yiddish genres. A sharp sense for changing cultural preferences and audience expectations among authors, editors, and printers along with transregional connections facilitated the transfer of Italian print culture to Cracow. The Cracow press remained active in the following decades, and the Lublin and Prague Jewish presses, too, adopted the Italian model that Boehm and Prostitz had introduced in East Central Europe.

Appendix:

The Early Cracow Typographic Material

It did not escape earlier scholars that Prostitz's press used typographic decorations of Italian provenance, and some argued that he must therefore have worked in Italian presses.¹⁷⁶ A closer analysis of these typographical elements confirms their Italian origin but cannot tell us how exactly Prostitz acquired them and whether Boehm was in some way involved in their acquisition and transfer. Tracing their journey demonstrates, however, that Italian printers of Jewish books did not hesitate to collaborate and to share their typographic material, as it can be attributed to various presses. The general decline of the Venetian Hebrew print in late 1560s explains why the material was available for Prostitz and Boehm to purchase.

The most prominent of the decorative elements brought from Italy to Cracow was the folio title page frame surmounted by an eagle.¹⁷⁷ In Italy, it had been used by Conti, Cavalli, and Pasquato, and could have been acquired from either Cavalli or Pasquato, as shown above.¹⁷⁸ In Cracow it was used for the first time in *Shulḥan 'arukh—Orah ḥayim* (1569/70–71), and in the following years in *Krovetz*, a Yiddish translation of the mahzor (1571), Alexander Suesslin's *Sefer ha-agudah* (1571), Joshua ibn Shu'aib's *Sefer derashot 'al ha-torah* (1573–75), and in the parts of the *Shulḥan 'arukh* that were printed between 1578 and 1583 (fig. 8).

176. See Pilarczyk, *Talmud*, 177–78, and Friedberg, *Toldot*, 5.

177. For the description, see Heller, *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book*, 2:589. See also Daniel Sperber, "Isaac of Prostitz's Akedahs," in *Esikolot: Essays in Memory of Rabbi Ronald Lubofsky*, ed. A. Strum (Melbourne, 2001), 218–19. We owe the last reference to Jelínková, "Hebrew Printing in Moravia," 158n37.

178. See Benayahu, *Hebrew Printing in Cremona*, 26–27; Heller, *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book*, 2:589.



Figure 8. Joseph Karo, *Shulḥan 'arukh—Orah ḥayim* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1570), [1r]. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Opp. add. fol. III. 52.

In the early Prostitz editions, cartouches were often used to mark and decorate the divisions between different parts of texts. A small cartouche, used for the first time by Prostitz already in 1569,¹⁷⁹ appears earlier in the *Bet Yosef—Even ha-‘ezer* printed by Cavalli (1565) and edited by Boehm (fig. 9)¹⁸⁰ and in ibn Shem Tov’s *Derashot ha-torah* (1567).¹⁸¹ A large car-

179. Isserles, *Torat ba-ḥatat* (1569), 2v, 20r, 34r, etc.

180. *Tur and Bet Yosef—Even ha-‘ezer* (Venice: Cavalli, 1567), 2r.

181. Ibn Shem Tov, *Derashot ha-torah*, 2r. With the exception of the outer frame, this cartouche was modeled after one used by Giustiniani in the 1540s and in Levi ibn Ḥabib’s *She’elot u-teshuvot* (Venice: s.n., 1565), 2r. Although a more detailed



Figure 9. Moses Isserles, *Torat ha-hatat* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1569), 2v. Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, 990011757710205171.

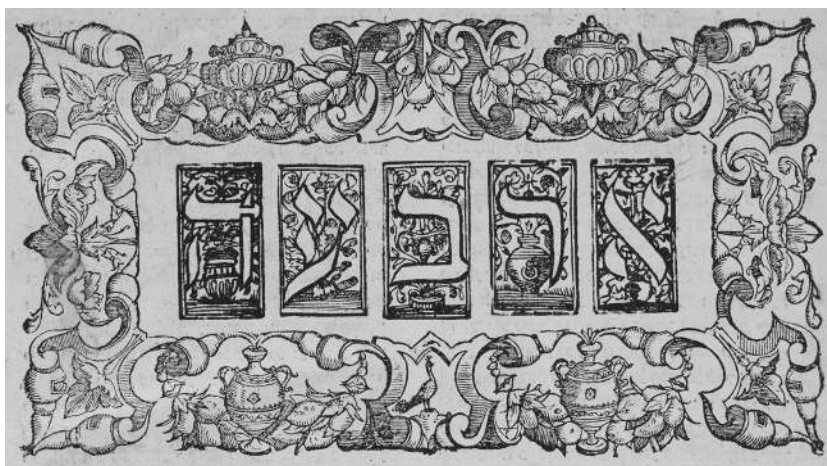


Figure 10. Alexander Suesslin, *Sefer ha-agudab* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1571), 1r (second foliation). The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Opp. fol. 719.

touche with floral motives and four prominent vases was first used in Cracow in 1571.¹⁸² The last appearance in Italy was in a *Maḥzor*, printed by Cavalli in December of 1567 (fig. 10).¹⁸³

Between 1569 and 1580, the Cracow editions used a set of xylographic decorative letters. Their design is of a very common type, which goes back to Soncino and Bomberg firms and was used in East Central Europe throughout the seventeenth century. Careful comparison with select Venetian editions shows that some of the matrices, transferred to Cracow,

analysis of the typographic material will be necessary to identify the printer, the edition bears some similarities with the 1564 *Sha'are Dura* printed by Bragadin (note the references in the outer margin).

182. Suesslin, *Sefer ha-agudab* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1571), 1r, 67v, 122r, 173v, 195v, 216r.

183. *Maḥzor* (Venice: Cavalli, 1567), 1:7r, 2:42v, et passim.



Figures 11–13 (left to right). *Shulḥan ‘arukh* (Venice: Cavalli, 1567), [1r]; Ovadiah Sforno (Venice: Griffio, 1567), 27r; Naphtali ben Menahem, *Perush le-midrash ha-rabot* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1569), 20r. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Opp. 4° 248 (1), Opp. fol. 865, and Opp. 4° 252.

had been used by Griffio in his editions of *Tur—Hosben mishpat* and Ovadiah Sforno’s Torah commentary, both printed in 1567 (figs. 11–13), and at least two of them also in Cavalli’s *Shulḥan ‘arukh*.¹⁸⁴

Prostitz and Boehm acquired decorative material and even the types in Italy to give their editions a markedly Italianate look.¹⁸⁵ That this was strategic and in consonance with their overall business plan emerges from the fact that they also commissioned new typographic material which closely copied Italian models for Hebrew books and were certainly well known to Jewish readers. Two woodcut title page frames stand out in this respect, both using a combination of architectural gate with prominent floral garlands. The frame with two turns of garlands was copied after a frame featured in several editions of Giustiniani (figs. 14–15), while the frame with three turns of garlands was copied after a frame used by Di Gara (figs. 16–17).

It would be desirable to know more about the origin of several other distinct decorative elements used by the Prostitz press from the very outset and markedly non-Italian in origin. This is true especially of the beautiful title page woodcut border that appeared for the first time in the 1569

184. This can be explained by the fact that Cavalli borrowed or rented them from Griffio, unless they belonged to Boehm already at that point. The initials are used also in the *Maḥzor* printed by Griffio in November 1567.

185. The Prostitz press used Italian types consistently even after Prostitz’s sons took over. Besides the obvious aesthetic reasons, it was perhaps due to the requirements for technical compatibility of all the equipment. Andrea Jelínková, personal conversation, March 2021.



Figures 14–15. *Hamishbah ħumshe Torah* (Venice: Giustiniani, 1551–52), [1r]; Jacob Weil, *Sheḥitot u-ḏikot* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1577), [1r]. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Opp. 4° 9 and Opp. 4° 541.



Figures 16–17. Judah ha-Levi, *Kuzari* (Venice: Di Gara, 1547), [1r]; Judah he-Ḥasid, *Sefer ha-ḥasidim* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1581), [1r]. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Opp. 4° 870 and Opp. 4° 944 (1).



Figure 18. Moses Isserles, *Torat ha-hatat* (Cracow: Prostitz, 1569), [1r]. Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, 990011757710205171.

edition of Moses Isserles's *Torat ha-hatat* (fig. 18), and which was authored by Lucas Cranach,¹⁸⁶ and the signet of a deer, used in the very first Prostitz edition (figs. 6–7).¹⁸⁷

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186. We owe the identification to Petr Voit, who dated it to 1520s.

187. Ben Menahem, *Perush le-midrash hamesh megilot rabab*, title page.