UIT DE BIBLIOTHECA ROSENTHALIANA: THE COLOPHON PAGE OF THE ESSLINGEN MAḤZÔR

Author(s): E.G.L. SCHRIJVER

UIT DE BIBLIOTHECA ROSENTHALIANA

THE COLOPHON PAGE OF THE ESSLINGEN MAḤZÔR[*]

E.G.L. SCHRIJVER

During the thirteen years of its presence in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana the thirteenth-century Esslingen *Maḥzôr* (Hs. Ros. 609) has not yet received the attention it deserves. The only article exclusively dealing with the manuscript appeared in the eighteenth volume of this journal.[1] Here an attempt will be made to give a detailed analysis of one of the most fascinating pages of the manuscript, i.e. the colophon page (f. 127r), whereby some new light will be shed upon the hitherto almost completely unknown history of the manuscript.

On the colophon page, as is so often the case in mediaeval manuscripts, a variety of scripts can be seen, which can roughly be divided into four different texts: (1) the scribe's colophon and the accompanying punctuator's colophon; (2) "8 lines written in an obscure and hardly readable faded cursive script"[2]; (3) "strange black squares, both closed and open"[3]; (4) a bilingual inscription, written perpendicularly across the above-mentioned eight lines. Besides some minor annotations and pen trials can be seen.

185

Ill. 1: The colophon page of the Esslingen *Mahzôr*.

186

The colophon

The Hebrew text of the scribe's colophon reads like this:[4]

<div dir="rtl">

אני קלונימוס בר' יהודה שיחיה לאורך

ימים כתבתי עם הקולמוס שבח ותודה

לחי עולמים זה המחזור לר' [.] ברבי

[...] יהי רצון שוכן שחק' שיורישנו

לבניו ובניו לבניהם ובניהם לבניהם

ובניהם לדור אחר עד סוף כל הדורות

אמן אמן אמן סלה וסיימתיו במדינת

אשלינגא ביום חמישי שמונה ועשרים

לחדש טבת שנת חמשים לאלף הששי

חזק ונתחזק קלונימוס הסופר לא יוזק

לא היום ולא לעולם ובני ישר' כולם

עד שירד גמל בסולם אמן חזק ב'נ'

בגימ' סיום

</div>

The punctuator's colophon:

<div dir="rtl">

אני יוסף המכנה יוזגריש הנקדן נקדתיו גם באותו זמן ועדן נחמד לקרות בו וגם חמדן

</div>

Translation of the copyist's colophon:
I, Qallônîmôs son of R. Yehûdah – may he live for many days to come –, have written this *mahzôr* with the quill – praise and thanks to Him who lives forever – for R.[.] son of Rabbi [. . .]. May it be the will of Him Who Dwells in Heaven that he will give it as an inheritance to his sons, and his sons to their sons, and their sons to their sons and their sons to the next generation, until the end of all generations. Amen, Amen, Amen, Selah. And I completed it in the town of Esslingen on Thursday, the 28th of the month of Tevet, in the year 5050. *Hazaq we-nithazaq* ("with renewed strength"), Qallônîmôs the scribe, may he not suffer today, nor in eternity, nor anyone of the Children of Israel, until a camel descends[5] a ladder. Amen. *Hazaq* in gematria is *siyyûm*.

---

4   The original text has been vocalized; this vocalization is, for technical reasons, not given here, but on the photograph (ill. 1) it can be read rather easily.
5   *Yrd*, meaning ascending, and not descending, is frequently used in the early mediaeval mystical literature, e.g. the *Hêkalôt*-literature. There, however, *yrd* can only mean going up, in the sense of going up to the *Merkavah*, the heavenly throne; for climbing a ladder *'lh* is used. Cf. P. Schäfer, ed., *Konkordanz zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, I (Tübingen, 1986) p. 315, 316 (Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum, XII) [*yrd*] and P. Schäfer, ed., *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen, 1981) § 182, 199, 237, 436, 768, 812 (Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum, II) [*'lh*]. I owe these references to the benevolence of my friend and colleague Ms. A. Kuyt, researcher at the Juda Palache Institute, University of Amsterdam. We should, of course, not forget that scribes very often take unexpected liberties in their colophons.

187

Translation of the punctuator's colophon:

And I, Yôsef, called yôzgrîš[6], the punctuator, punctuated it at the same time and place, it is nice and pleasant to read in it.

In the third line the copyist hardly left any space after the *reš*; even a short name like Noah could have hardly been written there.[7] Although we can think of an abbreviation of a name, it proved impossible to read any letter, either in this line or in line 4, even with the help of an ultraviolet lamp.

On the basis of the colophon and the vocalization the reading of the name Esslingen,[8] a well-known mediaeval Jewish community in Württemberg, on the river Neckar, is certain. The fact that a scribe worked in Esslingen and that he received an order to write a *maḥzôr* proves once more that there was a substantive Jewish settlement in Esslingen during the thirteenth century. Jewish scribes were members of a living community and did not usually work on their own. The possibility that our Qallônîmôs is identical with a Qallônîmôs ben Yehûdah who was killed in Renchen in the year 1301 cannot be ruled out.[9]

In the colophon a camel descending a ladder is mentioned instead of the usual ass. Although I do not know of any other manuscript mentioning a camel in this otherwise very common expression, the very fact that another animal is chosen to play the ass's role is not particularly uncommon. In his *Vorlesungen über die Kunde hebräischer Handschriften*[10]

---

[6] The reading of this word is not certain. The most probable explanation is the following. The name should be read as *Yôzgrîš, Yôz-* being an abbreviation of the name *Yôsef* (the *samekh* is very uncommon in mediaeval Yiddish), *-gris* being an archaic German suffix, meaning 'grey': *Yozgris* = 'grey Yosef'. Another, less probable explanation is the reading of the suffix as *-gais*, an ancient suffix with an uncertain etymology, in which case the first three letters cannot only be read as *Yôz-*, but also as *Jude-* (with *dalet*): *Judegais*; according to E. Förstemann the suffix *-gais* quite frequently occurs in combination with the name of a certain ethnical group. Apart from the phonological problems involved, the most important drawback is the fact that the suffix is, again according to Förstemann, very old, at times even pre-mediaeval, and that it seems to have vanished not too long afterwards. The reading *Yozgris* is therefore more probable. It goes without saying that, on the basis of the name Yôsef only, it has not been possible to identify the punctuator. Cf. E. Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, I (Bonn, 1900²) clmns. 588-590 (*-gais*) and 674-675 (*gris*). I owe the explanation *Yozgris* to F.J. Hoogewoud.

[7] This has also been noticed by Prof. M. Beit-Arié in a questionnaire of the Hebrew Palaeography Project (HPP F 24).

[8] For further information on the mediaeval Jewish history of Esslingen, cf. Z. Avneri, ed., *Germania Judaica* II, 1 (Tübingen, 1968) p. 227-232; J. Walk, ed., *Pinkas Hakehillot. Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities . . . Germany: Württemberg, Hohenzollern, Baden* (Jerusalem, 1986) p. 43-46 [Hebr.]; our variant spelling, with final *aleph*, is not recorded.

[9] Cf. F.J. Hoogewoud, "Het Machzor uit Esslingen . . .", p. 22 and J.A. Brombacher, "The Esslingen Maḥzôr . . .", p. 108.

[10] M. Steinschneider, *Vorlesungen über die Kunde hebräischer Handschriften. Deren Sammlungen und Verzeichnisse* (Leipzig, 1897) p. 48-49.

188

Moritz Steinschneider gave several examples of animals, as well as human beings, featuring instead of the ass.[11] He does not, however, mention a camel either. On the basis of Talmud Bavli *Berakôt* 56b, the use of a camel can nevertheless be explained in a satisfactory manner. There, in a discussion about the interpretation of dreams, it is stated that one who sees a camel in his dream is delivered from death which was decreed for him from heaven. R. Ḥama, son of R. Ḥanina, explained this with an allusion to Genesis 46:4, where God told Jacob not to fear and to go to Egypt, because He would accompany him: ואנכי אעלך גם־עלה ("and I will surely bring you up again"). So, R. Ḥama believes the word גמל to be a *notarikon* of גם־עלה.[12] The connection between this talmudic dream and Jacob's dream about the ladder is obvious and makes the explanation even more plausible.

The abbreviation בגימ׳, should undoubtedly be read as *be-gêmaṭriya*.[13] The letters *bet* and *nun* (and not *gimmel*) in the preceding line should be considered as graphic fillers, as can be seen from the short lines inside the letters, which indicate that the letters should not be read. The numerical value of the letters, *ḥet, zayin* and *qof* (115), differs only one from the numerical value of the letters *samek, yod, waw* and *mem* (116). This difference does not have to worry us: in his *Sefer Pardes Rimmônîm* the famous kabbalist Moses ben Jacob Cordovero (1522-1570), one of Isaac Luria's teachers, listed nine variant forms of *gematria*. The fourth variant is the one in which the number "one", representing the numerical value of the word itself, is added to the sum of the numerical value of the letters of this word. So, *ḥazaq* (115) + 1 (= 116) equals *siyyûm* (116).[14]

[11] For further information see e.g. A. Altmann's well-known article: "The ladder of ascension", in: E.E. Urbach, e.a., ed., *Studies in mysticism and religion presented to Gershom G. Scholem on his seventieth birthday by pupils, colleagues and friends* (Jerusalem, 1967) p. 1-32.
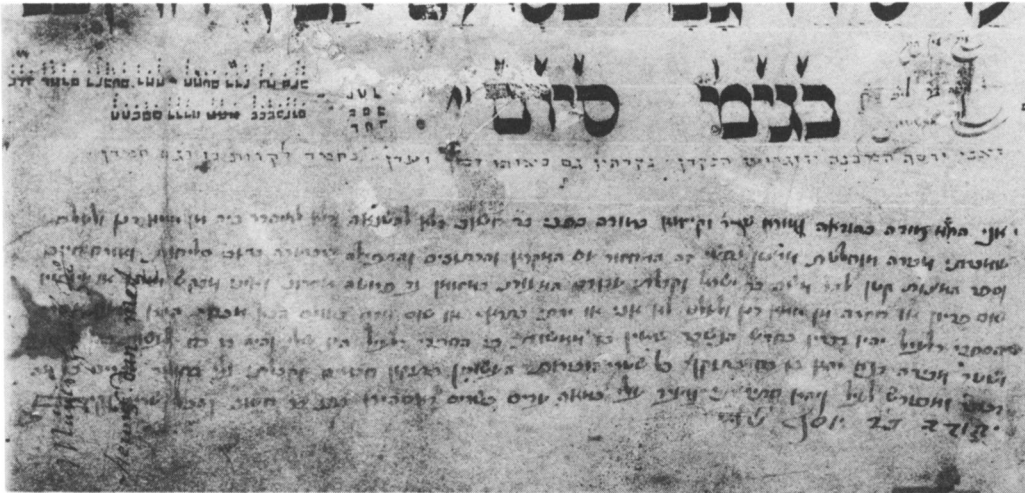
[12] For *notarikon*, i.e. the interpretation of a word as the abbreviation of two or more words, the thirtieth hermeneutical rule, see e.g.: W. Bacher, *Die exegetische Terminologie der jüdischen Traditionsliteratur*, I (Leipzig, 1899) p. 125-128 and II (Leipzig, 1905) p. 124; S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine. Studies in the literary transmission, beliefs and manners of Palestine in the I Century B.C.E. – IV Century C.E.* (New York, 1950) p. 69, 73 ff. (Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, XVIII) and the various encyclopaedias s.v.

[13] For *gematria*, i.e. the computation of the numerical value of letters, the twenty-ninth hermeneutical rule, see e.g.: W. Bacher, *Die exegetische Terminologie . . .*, II, p. 27-28; S. Gandz, "Hebrew numerals", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* IV (1932-1933) p. 86-108; S. Lieberman, *Hellenism . . .*, p. 69, 72-73 and the various encyclopaedias s.v.

[14] Moses ben Isaac Cordovero, *Sefer Pardes Rimmônîm . . .* (Cracow and Nowy Dwor, 1591) part 30, ch. 8, f. 202v-203r; this place is mentioned by G. Scholem in his article "Gematria" in the Jerusalem *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, VII, clmns. 373-374. Cf. M. Steinschneider, *Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* (Berlin, 1852-1860) 6452,8. In this explanation the dots which have been placed above the letters have not been taken into account; on the basis of other abbreviations in the manuscript, where the dots should not be taken into account either, this is justified.

A mediaeval deed of sale

At the bottom of the colophon page eight rather faded lines, written in an Ashkenazi cursive hand, can be seen:

Ill. 2.

Transcription:

1 - אני הח״מ מודה בהודאה גמורה שריר׳ וקיימה כמודה בפני ב״ד חשוב דלא להשנאה ודלא
למיהדר ביה מן יומא דן ולעלם

2 - שמכרתי מכירה מוחלטת מרצון נפשי זה המחזור עם המקרא והכתובים והתפילה שבתוכה
כתובי׳ סליחות ואורח חיים

3 - וספר המצות קטן להר׳ משה בר׳ ישראל וקבלתי עבורם המעות המזומן עד פרוטה אחרונ׳
ואיני מבקש ממנו ומיורשיו

4 - ואם פדיון או חזרה מן יומא דן ולעלם לא אני או ירתי בתראי או שום אדם בעולם הבא
מכחי הבא לטעון אחרי

5 - הספרי׳ דלעיל יהיו כבדין כחרש הנשבר שאין בו ממשות כי הספרי׳ דלעיל היו שלי
והיה בו כח לעשות בהן כרצוני

6 - ושטר מכירה דנה יהא בו כח בתוקף כל שטרי מכירות העשויין בתיקון חכמים וקבלתי
עלי כחומר ולקיים בו מה

7 - דכתי׳ ומפורש לעיל ויהא חתימתי מעיד עלי כמאה עדים כשרים דאסהידו בפני
ב״ד חשוב והכל שריר וקים

8 - יהודה ב״ר יוסף שליט

Translation:
1. I, the undersigned, state with a perfect, a valid and a legal statement, as if I made a

190

statement before an important *Bêt Dîn*, without returning or coming back on it from this day till eternity,

2. that I sold, as a definite sale of my own free will, this *maḥzôr*, together with the books of the Prophets and Hagiographa and a prayer-book with penitential prayers and *Ôraḥ Ḥayyîm*

3. and the Small Book of Commandments written in it, to Mošeh, son of R. Yiśra'el, and I received for them the amount due up to the last *perûṭah*[15] and I will not ask it [back] from him, nor from his inheritants,

4. and when there will be redemption or ransom, from this day till eternity, [then] I, or my inheritants, or any man who comes out of my name to demand

5. the above-mentioned books, will be heavy like a broken potsherd, which is not of any substance, because the above-mentioned books were mine and I had the right to do with them what I wanted.

6. And this deed of sale, may it have the power of all the deeds made up with the approval of the wise; and I will consider it my task to materialize what

7. is written and explained above, and may my signature bear testimony for me like a hundred righteous witnesses, bearing testimony before an important *Bêt Dîn* and everything will be fixed and firm,

8. Yehûdah, son of R. Yôsef, may he live for many days to come.

Jewish law does not consider a purchase complete by mere verbal agreement.[15] Therefore the former owner of a manuscript was obliged to make up a deed of sale, a *šeṭar mekîrah*, in which he should state that he refrained from all his legal rights to the manuscript. Such deeds are not rarely found written in manuscripts though hardly any have been published. The important manuscript catalogues very often give the names of these former owners as they appear in these deeds, but they do not usually contain the complete texts. Form and structure of these deeds are rather traditional. A standard deed contains the following elements: the name of the seller, the name of the buyer, a place, a date and the names of two witnesses.[16] In our case only the name of the seller, Yehûdah son of R. Yôsef, and the name of the buyer, Mošeh son of R. Yiśra'el, are mentioned. In this respect the deed differs decisively from the one published in the *Soncino Blätter* by A.Z. Schwarz, where all above-mentioned requirements were fulfilled.[17] The lack of a place and a date in our deed must, of course, be regretted, but on the basis of the script it seems justified to consider it of fourteenth-century Ashkenazi origin. An additional argument in favour of this early dating is the frequent occurrence of Aramaic phrases in the deed. Early deeds were almost completely written in the Aramaic language, but in the course of time more and more

---

15 *Perûṭah* = a very small coin.
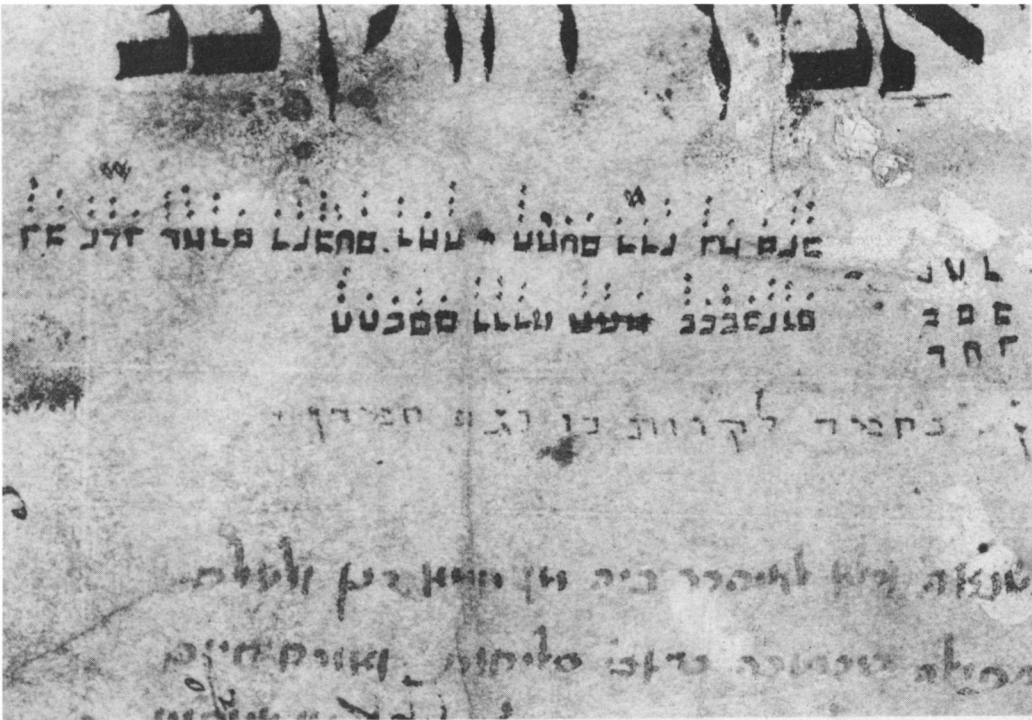16 Cf. *Mišneh Tôrah, Sefer Qinyan, Hilkôt Mekîrah*, I, 1.
17 One gets a good impression of the contents of these contracts from A. Gulak, *Ôẓar ha-šeṭarôt ha-nehûgîm be-yiśra'el* (Jerusalem, 1926) (*Sifriyyah mišpaṭît*, V) [Hebr.].

Hebrew elements were allowed in the texts.[18] Yehûdah bar Yôsef solved the absence of witnesses by accrediting his signature with the strength of a hundred witnesses, a rather stereotype formula indeed.

The possibility that Yehûdah bar Yôsef was the first owner of the manuscript should not be ruled out, but, as has been noticed before, the space available in the colophon for the name of the owner is very small and it is not easy to see how his name could have been abbreviated to fit in it.

The transaction apparently concerned more than one book: a *maḥzôr* (the complete text of our *maḥzôr*, see below), the books of the Prophets and the Hagiographa, a prayer-book with *Selîḥôt* and *Ôraḥ Ḥayyîm* and a *Sefer Miẕwôt Qaṭan*. Perhaps the date of writing of Jacob ben Asher's (1270-1340) *Arba'ah Ṭûrîm* may be considered as a *terminus post quem*. I have not been able to trace the other manuscripts; in view of the mediaeval and renaissance Hebrew book burnings it seems rather unlikely that they have survived.
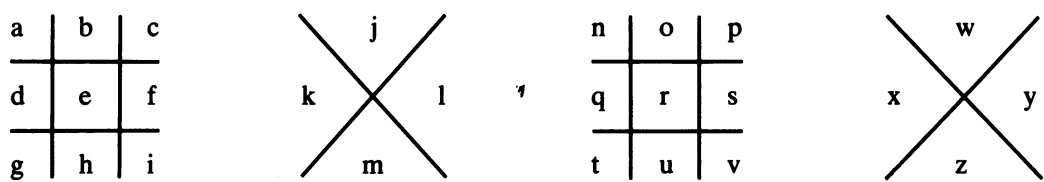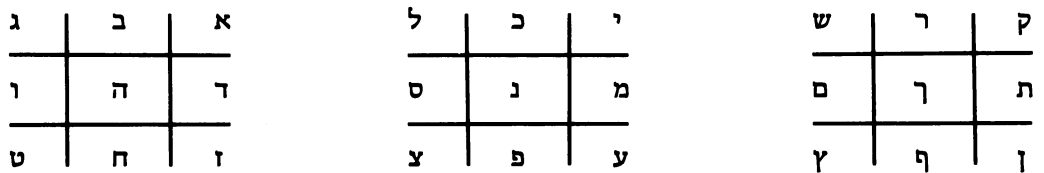
A cryptographic ownership inscription

Ill. 3.

---

[18]   A.Z. Schwarz, "Eine Verkaufsbestätigung des Geršom Soncino", *Soncino Blätter. Beiträge zur Kunde des jüdischen Buches* I (Berlin, 1925) p. 14-15. It should be noted that this contract does not involve a Hebrew manuscript, but a Hebrew incunable.

192

Right below the colophon, on the left-hand side, two lines written in a variant of the so-called "Freemasons' cipher" can be seen.[19] This cryptographic alphabet makes use of a sort of noughts and crosses diagram, in which according to a system of monalphabetic substitution, every letter has its own graphic representative:

a	b	c
d	e	f
g	h	i

j / k l / m

n	o	p
q	r	s
t	u	v

w / x y / z

The various letters are represented by their own part of the diagram, and depending on their being taken from the first or the second diagram, one or two dots are placed above those signs. An *e*, for example, is written·like □, *x* like $\dot{>}$. When we apply this scheme to our manuscript it is evident that the open triangles from the second and fourth diagram are missing, and that a coherent text cannot be put together, neither according to our scheme, nor according to a variant scheme. After some pleasant moments of trying and playing with the signs the Hebrew alphabet turned out to be used instead of the Latin. The text reads from right to left, as could have been guessed from the position of the inscription on the page. The Hebrew alphabet has been transformed into the following cryptographic alphabet of 27 ciphers (the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet + 5 final letters), with one, two or three dots placed above the signs depending on their being taken from the first, the second or the third diagram.

ג	ב	א
ו	ה	ד
ט	ח	ז

ל	כ	י
ס	נ	מ
צ	פ	ע

ש	ר	ק
ם	ך	ת
ץ	ף	ן

When we cryptanalyze the inscription the following Hebrew plaintext can be read:

משה בן לאא החבר רבי נפתלי הירץ זצל מן הילדסום {בכב ב}יי הנובר

Translation:
Moses, son of the honoured Naftali Hertz, of blessed memory, from Hildesheim [near] Hanover.

People have always felt the need to develop and use secret writings, in order to achieve a certain, e.g. strategic goal, or just for pleasure. The use of the Freemasons' cipher for

---

[19] Cf. A. Gulak, *Ôẓar ha-šeṭarôt . . .*, p. XXVII.

193

Jewish purposes, even using the Hebrew alphabet is, however, not mentioned in literature. The Freemasons' cipher is believed to have been popular with Freemasons since the sixteenth century.[20] It goes without saying that Freemasons were very often forced by political circumstances to use a secret alphabet. The composer of our cryptographic Hebrew inscription can very well have been inspired by the Freemasons' example; many contacts between, often emancipatory, Jews and Freemasons have existed.[21] However, the specifically Jewish structure of the inscription – as reflected, for example, in the title *he-ḥaver* and in the abbreviations which accompany the names – is obvious.

This can only mean that our composer received a traditional Jewish education, and that he, most probably, was still an observant Jew. The possibility that he was a Freemason himself can, it may be added, not be ruled out completely, but we should keep in mind the fact that quite a lot of lodges refused to accept Jews.[22] It proved possible to identify this Moses Hertz as the eldest of Naftali Hertz's and Sarah bat Sender's three sons (they had three daughters as well). The family lived in Hildesheim during the eighteenth century, where Moses was working as a *Hoffaktor* for the *Fürstbischof* of Hildesheim, in which capacity he was owed 16.000 *Reichstaler* by the authorities in the year 1775. Furthermore, he was governor of the Jewish community of Hildesheim. He must have been born somewhere near the year 1720, the assumed year of birth of his younger brother Benjamin, who died in 1788 and is a forefather of the well-known physicist Heinrich Hertz (1857-1894).[23]

Moses Hertz was not very experienced in cryptography. He obviously made some mistakes, for example the strange triple *yod*, instead of the expected Yiddish *bay*, which may have been struck out. Further, I am not sure whether he wrote a *yod* or an incorrect *aleph* as the last letter of the name Naftali. He most probably tried to write a few letters below the colophon on the right-hand side; there the letters *mem, šin* and *he* (or *waw*) can be read. When Moses found out that there was not enough space for his complete inscription he decided to write it at the left-hand side, in fact adding the noughts and crosses diagram as well. A few centimeters above the three trial letters the name *Mordeḵay* can be read, but only when we read the text from left to right; so, beside monalphabetic substitution Moses (deliberately?) made use of transposition, another well-known cryptographic technique. The name is followed by three other letters, *'ayin, yod, aleph*, perhaps an abbreviation, for which I could, however, not find a satisfactory explanation. I

[20] A bulk of information on cryptography can be found in: D. Kahn, *The Codebreakers. The story of secret writing* (London, 1966), where the Freemasons' cipher is discussed on p. 772; an interesting survey of "Cryptology" is found in the fifteenth edition of *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XVl (Chigago etc., 1986) p. 913-924. Further references to the Freemasons' cipher can e.g. be found in: C.F. Vesin, *Traité d'obscurigraphie, ou art de déchiffrer . . .* (Paris, 1838²) p. 80-84; A. Langie, *De la cryptographie. Étude sur les écritures secrètes* (Paris, 1918) p. 21-22; A. Lange and E.A. Soudart, *Traité de cryptographie* (nouvelle édition; Paris, 1935) p. 60-61; L.D. Smith, *Cryptography. The science of secret writing* (New York, 1943) p. 18-19; J.R. Wolfe, *Secret writing. The craft of the cryptographer* (New York etc., 1970) p. 49.
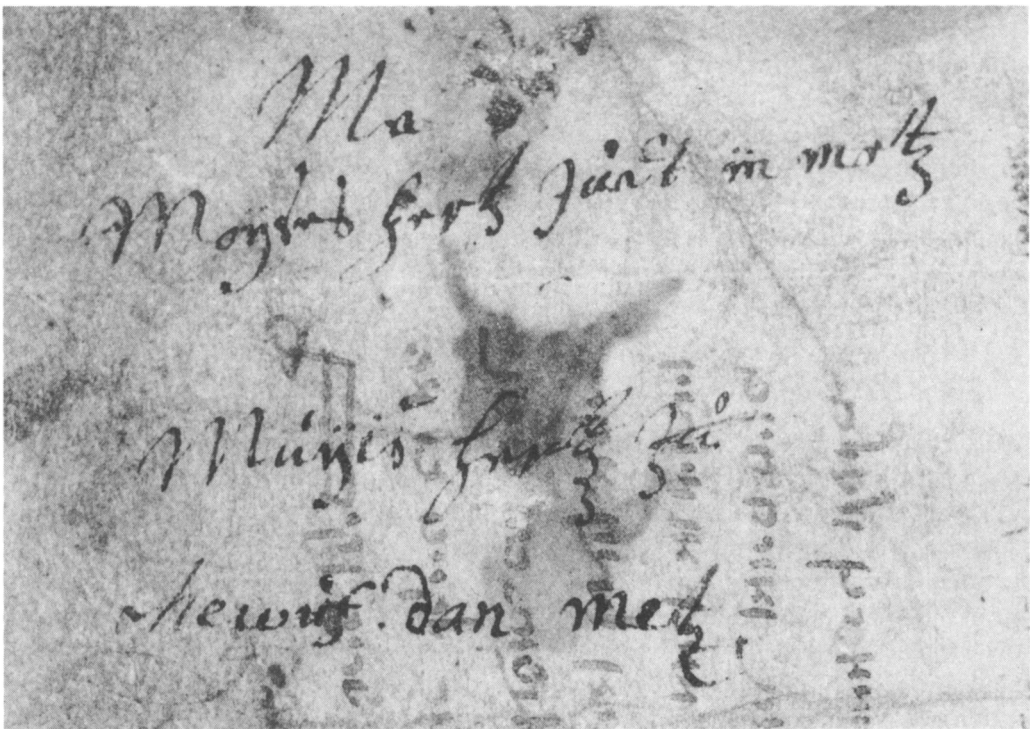
[21] Cf. L.D. Smith, *Cryptography . . .*, p. 18-19. Similar substitution ciphers seem to be of mediaeval origin.

[22] Cf. e.g. J. Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe, 1723-1939* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970).

[23] Cf. J. Katz, *Jews and Freemasons . . ., index*.

194

have, unfortunately, not been able to identify this Mordekay either. Perhaps he was the one who inspired Moses Hertz to write his cryptographic lines.

A bilingual German-French note

Ill. 4

Transcription:
{Ma}[25] | Moyses Hertz Judt in Metz | Muyis Hertz {zu}[26] | chewief dan Metz

Moses Hertz may have left Hildesheim somewhere in the 1780s and have gone to Metz, in Lorraine.[27] There he either made arrangements to have the *maḥzôr* sent to his new place of

---

[24] For more information see: P. Eltzbacher, *Aus der Geschichte meiner Familie* (Berlin, 1928) p. 19 ff.; A. Rexhausen, *Die rechtliche und wirtschaftliche Lage der Juden im Hochstift Hildesheim* (Hildesheim, 1914) p. 105, 106, 114 (Beiträge für die Geschichte Niedersachsens und Westfalens, XLIV); *Neue deutsche Biographie*, VIII (Berlin, 1969) p. 712-713.

[25] The word "Ma" cannot be explained and should be considered as a scribal error.

[26] The word "zu" has been struck out.

[27] The only, not too strong external evidence for this assumption is the fact that Moses' brother Benjamin Wolf succeeded him as *Hoffaktor* in the year 1781; cf. P. Eltzbacher, *Aus der Geschichte . . .*, p. 20. For the influx of Jews in Metz at the end of the eighteenth century, cf. A. Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York etc., 1968) p. 121-132.

195

residence, or perhaps bought the manuscript. The wording of his cryptographic ownership inscription does not exclude this last possibility. When the first is the case the bilingual note has been made by some German messenger, a postmaster or an assistant. Metz had been in French hands since 1552, but most of its inhabitants were at least verbally bilingual. That is why the German sender (for the sake of clarity?) wrote a French translation of "Moses Hertz, Jew in Metz": "Moïse Hertz, juif dans Metz" – "juif à Metz" would be the correct form – in the manuscript, but in an entirely phonetic manner: "Muyis Hertz, chewief dan Metz". He wrote it in such an unusual way, either because it was dictated to him, or because he, at least being able to speak some French, wanted to entrust it to a messenger who did not know French.[27] When Moses Hertz actually bought the manuscript in Metz, the note has probably been made by the bookseller who sold him the *maḥzôr*. What speaks against this last assumption is the fact that the text has been written across the Hebrew deed of sale, without the slightest respect for the written words; it is rather improbable that a bookseller would do such a thing.

The history of the Esslingen Maḥzôr

Apart from the four texts I dealt with in this article several other annotations can be seen. In the right-hand margin the following can be read: אני עזריאל בן מוהר׳׳ר | איתמר ז׳׳ל | [...] | ש׳ץ : "I, Azri'el ben Ittamar Šaẓ, of blessed memory"; this Azri'el also wrote his name on f. 79v. The inscriptions should, on the basis of the script, be dated somewhere in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The Hebrew word *anî* has been written at the right-hand side of the colophon. Next to the colophon and the deed of sale, on both sides, some up to now illegible non-Hebrew words have been written. A more substantive, and more important, Hebrew inscription, in a nineteenth-century Ashkenazi cursive hand, has been written next to the abbreviation *be-gêmaṭriya* in the last line of the colophon. It reads: מקק מיץ הקק :מקק מיץ הקק | [...] | ר׳ משה ב׳׳ר ליב [כץ] | לקק אמסטירדם ק׳׳ק from Metz | [. . .] | R. Moses, son of R. Layb [*Kaẓ?*] | to Amsterdam. In Amsterdam the manuscript was sent to a binder, who bound it in two volumes.[28] It is not certain whether the first volume – on the spine of the book on the second panel the words *Maḥzôr sênî* have been printed – comprised the liturgy for *Rôš ha-šanah* as well. The present text begins with the cantor's repitition of the *Mûsaf* for *Yôm Kippûr* and contains the liturgy for *Sûkkôt* as well. In any case this first volume should be considered as lost.[30]

What does all this mean to the history of the manuscript? The manuscript has been written in the year 1290, and was sold, perhaps by the first owner, somewhere in the

---

28   It should be noted, however, that he tried to use Latin letters for writing the French sentence, sometimes (e.g. in the name Hertz) relapsing into his native Gothic (*Fraktur*) script.

29   The watermarks in the paper fly-leaves prove that the paper is of Dutch origin, as has already been noted by J.A. Brombacher, *"The Esslingen Maḥzôr . . .",* p. 107, n. 5.

30   The strange wording of the text on the spine of the book, *maḥzôr šenî,* remains unexplained; perhaps we must think of a library of a Jewish community in which the manuscript reposed, together with other *maḥzôrîm,* during the nineteenth century.

196

fourteenth century. An unknown owner, Azri'el ben Ittamar, wrote his name in the manuscript in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Then Moses Hertz of Hildesheim bought the manuscript in the second half of the eighteenth century. Moses Hertz went from Hildesheim to Metz; it is not certain whether he bought the yet complete manuscript in Hildesheim or in Metz, neither where he added his cryptographic ownership inscription. In the same period an illiterate noodle wrote the unusual bilingual inscription across the deed of sale. From Metz the manuscript was brought to Amsterdam, probably in the nineteenth century, and in Amsterdam, being bought by the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana from a Belgian private collector in the year 1975, it was given its well-deserved rest. It should be hoped that more researchers feel called upon to study this fascinating and important *maḥzôr*.