

Rosaline and Myer Feinstein Lecture Series, 1996

Was Gutenberg Jewish? And Other Conundrums: Exploring the Margins of Jewish Bibliography By Herbert C. Zafren

Introduction by Michael W. Grunberger

I am especially pleased to introduce this plenary session, which marks an important milestone for the Council of Archives and Research Libraries in Jewish Studies (CARLJS) and its sponsor, the National Foundation for Jewish Culture (NFJC). This is the inaugural Myer and Rosaline Feinstein Lecture of the NFJC's Jewish Endowment for the Arts and Humanities. The NFJC, which is the central cultural agency of the American Jewish Community, is dedicated to strengthening Jewish continuity and fostering an indigenous American Jewish culture.

The NFJC sponsors three councils which together represent the building blocks of contemporary Jewish cultural life in America: the Council of American Jewish Museums, the Council of Jewish Theaters, and, of course, the Council of Archives and Research Libraries in Jewish Studies. CARLJS encourages, supports, and furthers development of North American archives and research libraries serving advanced scholarship in Jewish Studies. It fosters cooperative efforts and resource sharing, advances understanding and support of libraries and archives, and facilitates scholarly use of research collections in Jewish Studies.

The Feinstein Foundation Lecture, of which this is the first, is delivered by a senior librarian, bibliographer, or archivist. CARLJS has decided that the specific topic of the annual lecture will be left up to the individual speaker – but that it must fall within the broad scope of Judaica bibliography. The lecture series is designed to provide perspectives on Judaica librarianship through the eyes of the profession's most gifted and skilled practitioners.

We could not have selected a more appropriate speaker for this inaugural lecture than Professor Herbert C. Zafren, Director of Libraries Emeritus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. After all, Herb Zafren has been the key “inaugurator” of much in our professional lives that we now take for granted. His career has been devoted to Judaica Librarianship – in all its glorious variety - and he has been and is our profession's primary builder. I mean that literally and figuratively. Look around you – the Association of Jewish Libraries, a professional association more than 1000 strong, with almost 200 in attendance here in Toronto; CARLJS, with its more than 30 institutional members – can be traced in large measure to the vision, commitment, and skill of a small but dedicated group of founders, within which Herb Zafren was the prime mover.

While president of the Jewish Librarians Association in 1965-66, Professor Zafren was instrumental in merging it with the Jewish Library Association, which became the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL), and then he served as AJL's first president. He was a founding member

of the Council of Archives and Research Libraries in Jewish Studies, served as its president twice and as chairman of the Judaica Conservancy Foundation. He has served as vice-president of the World Council of Jewish Archives.

At his home institution, Hebrew Union College, Herb has taught and has directed and built four libraries – both in an architectural sense and in collection development, microfilming and conservation projects, automation, management techniques, etc. He is the editor of the Judaica bibliographical journal *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* and its companion monographic series *Bibliographica Judaica*.

Herb Zafren is a respected and sought after library consultant. In 1987, for example, he led the International Library Evaluation Team set up in connection with the re-accreditation of the Ben Gurion University of the Negev. I was fortunate enough to be a member of that team. I watched him successfully navigate through a highly complex political minefield to come up with an honest assessment of the situation in the library, along with a set of doable recommendations that were conveyed clearly and tactfully to the university's board. Observing Herb in action was a privilege, and that experience served as a tutorial for me in the business of library management, evaluation, and priority setting. His method then (as it is now: witness the title of this lecture) was to ask questions – and then ask more questions, which inevitably leads one to greater understanding.

Over the course of his forty-five year career, Herb Zafren's commitment to Judaica Librarianship writ large and writ miniscule has been absolute. He is our premier practitioner – building a world-class library at HUC; he is an eminent “library scientist” with publications in the fields of reference, bibliography, and library science; and he is a meticulous scholar of the Hebrew book, who has written extensively on the history of printing, with special emphasis on the book as artifact. Clearly, Herb Zafren is the epitome of the “scholar/librarian.”

Let us begin with the conundrum of the “music man.”

Shabtai Bass is known as the “father of Hebrew bibliography” because of his book, *Sifte Yeshenim*, which was published in Amsterdam in 1680. It was the first systematic Jewish attempt to record all extant Hebrew books and manuscripts. Shabtai had been a singer in the Altneuschule in Prague and always included some musical reference with his name, like “meshorer” or “bass” – he must have had a deep voice. When he was a publisher in Dyhernfurth after 1689, the title page woodcuts of a number of the books from his press contained an image of a man holding musical notes. In Figure 1, the man and his music are at the top of the woodcut. In Figure 2, “music man” is at the bottom. It was to be expected that some bibliographer would assume that the image was a likeness of Shabtai himself, and indeed Abraham Yaari did. [1] However, another giant among Judaic bibliographers, Isaac Rivkind, chided Yaari and in effect said “Gotcha” when he pointed out that one of the two woodcuts had already appeared in Amsterdam in 1682 in a book entitled *Seder Hayotsrot*, one part of a multi-part prayer book (Figure 3). [2] Rivkind declared that this was a “wandering” woodcut – not at all an unusual

thing in those days – used first by the Amsterdam printer Phoebus ben Aaron Halevi and years later by Shabtai. It was not produced for Shabtai, said Rivkind, and, therefore, was not his likeness.

I was the still young editor of the journal where Rivkind published his disagreement with Yaari, and I respectfully pointed out to him that I believed his conclusion might be incorrect, though I permitted it to be published. [3] I had a number of reasons, which I conveyed to Rivkind, for suspecting something fishy. I thought that more research needed to be done.

What bothered me was that 1) other copies of *Seder Hayotsrot* printed by Phoebus in Amsterdam in 1682 had a different woodcut title page (Figure 4); 2) Amsterdam was the prestigious center of Hebrew printing at the time, and printers in other cities often tried to disguise their books as Amsterdam productions; and 3) the woodcut in question had been used in at least eight other books that were printed in Dyhernfurth [4] and, to my knowledge, in no Amsterdam book other than the one in question. Shouldn't one, under these circumstances, suspect that the text on the "music man" title-page that identified the place, printer, and date as Amsterdam, Phoebus, and 1682 might be false? The methodological question was how to resolve two conflicting "facts": an obvious relationship of the woodcut to Shabtai Bass in Dyhernfurth after 1689 and an obvious use of the same woodcut in Amsterdam in 1682, with no relationship to Shabtai.

My approach was to seek evidence that might yield a resolution that was highly probable and not merely possible.

A close examination [5] of all of the wood and metal ornamental devices used by Shabtai in his Dyhernfurth books showed that he deliberately copied many ornaments used in Amsterdam but that none of the ornaments was exactly the same as Amsterdam's. Figures 5a and 5b show very similar, but not identical, woodcuts of a bear flanked by two men and various animals and a pair of cherubs. [6] Analysis of the typefaces that Shabtai used in his books revealed that they too were very similar to those of Amsterdam, but there were subtle differences in design and size in every case. In other words, there was a unique and identifiable set of printing paraphernalia in Dyhernfurth, which had no exact reflection in any Amsterdam book that I knew. When the *Seder Hayotsrot* with the music man was compared closely with Dyhernfurth books and Amsterdam books, it matched Dyhernfurth in every respect and did not match Amsterdam in any respect. This is as close to proof as one can get that the book was produced after 1689 in Dyhernfurth despite what its title page says.

A corollary conundrum is Why did Shabtai print a false place, date, and publisher? One possible explanation is that he was trying to pass off the book as an Amsterdam publication – pure and simple fraud – to give it more "glitz."

Another more charitable explanation is also a little more involved. Let us say that, when Shabtai was ready to leave Amsterdam for Dyhernfurth some time between 1682 and 1689, he bought some Amsterdam books so that he would have something to sell while he was getting his own printing establishment under way. Let us further assume that the multiple-part prayer book, one part of which was the *Seder Hayotsrot*, was among the stock that he bought. It is likely that the

prayer book was unbound and that customers could opt for which parts they wanted to buy. For this and other reasons, the number of available copies of each part undoubtedly varied. By the time he had sold almost all of the copies of the *Yotsrot*, his printing shop may well have been functioning. What would have been more natural than to take one of the last copies in to his shop foreman and ask him to print a new supply of the book, copying the old one exactly? The literalist foreman not only had the text of the book copied but also the text of the title page. This scenario could account for the anomaly that we have been struggling with, namely, a seemingly Amsterdam book printed with type and woodcuts that were available only in Dyherfurth.

There is a little more. Shabtai seemed to be a very self-centered person. The titles of two of his works begin with the word יתפש which Shabtai himself admits is a play on his name שבתי,^[7] only one letter being different. He used his name in an acrostic and musical motifs in chronograms. He was instrumental in having the letters of his name printed larger than surrounding letters in a text (Figure 6). ^[8] Thus, it was entirely in character for him to decide to place a likeness, or at least a symbol, of himself on his books.

This kind of analysis recognizes the artifactual aspects of books. Just as pottery and other objects of use and art are artifacts for the archaeologist to describe, often in great detail, in order to learn about the culture that produced them, so books are artifacts that need to be investigated and described, sometimes in great detail, to enable bibliographers to glean the story behind their production, by whom, when, where, and why. Just as the content of a book reflects the intellectual milieu of its origin, so the book as artifact reflects the economic, social, artistic, and technological world in which it was produced.

Having mentioned technology, let us turn to the subject of printing, even as we recognize that bibliography applies also to non-print material like manuscripts, tablets, disks, or CD-ROMs and to non-codex formats like broadsides, playing cards, scrolls, etc. Lest we isolate printed books too severely, however, let us keep in mind the continuity between and among the formats and especially the virtual truism that the early printed book was a conscious imitation of the manuscript and that the invention of printing was motivated largely by the desire to mass-produce a substitute equivalent for the manuscript.

Our next conundrum then, is What were the essential components of the invention in Europe of printing by means of movable metal type? This question has relevance to the later question of possible Jewish involvement in the invention.

Actually, printing consisted of a series of inventions and modifications of existing tools. We think of the printing press as an essential part of the invention, but oil presses and binders' presses were long in existence and could be modified for printing. Paper and parchment had also long been used, as had been ink. But a considerable amount of chemical experimentation must have been necessary to develop inks that would not bleed too much when used with metal type in a press and would dry quickly and thus avoid smudging and offsetting from sheet to sheet. Metallurgy was called upon to develop an appropriate metal for the type – an alloy that would have these characteristics: 1) liquefy at a relatively low temperature, 2) harden very quickly below that temperature, 3) take ink easily, 4) transfer ink to paper smoothly, and 5) be hard enough to withstand the pressures of the press and to be used over and over. Artistry, perhaps

akin to the artistry of the manuscript scribe, was necessary for the design of the type. Art metal work, as may have been familiar from coin-making, was called upon to cut the letter design into a piece of hard metal which became the punch (Figure 7a). The punch was then literally hammered into a bar of soft copper, thus transferring the letter image and thereby converting the bar into a matrix for making multiple copies of each letter (Figure 7b). Perhaps the most important breakthrough was the casting instrument or variable-width mold. Successful movable-type-printing depended on making type that has two constant dimensions and one variable one. The variable dimension was to accommodate narrow, average, and wide letters. One constant dimension is the height of the letter (for example from the bottom to the top of the “h”); the other is the size (from the bottom to the face) of the type piece itself, so that when the type is set up, there will be a uniformly flat surface to ink and transfer images to paper. Using the matrix of each letter as the bottom of the mold, it was then possible to pour molten metal into the mold and cast out hardened individual and interchangeable pieces of type.

In Figure 8, we can see what an early piece of type looked like. The accidental printing, in Mantua before 1480, [\[9\]](#) of a piece of type, that must have fallen into the press, unintentionally preserves a side-view picture for posterity.

Given the variety of knowledge and skills needed for the printing enterprise, it is not surprising that bookbinders, goldsmiths, metallurgists, and other metal workers were among those who figured in the invention.

Next conundrum: Were Jews involved? To this question the answer is that some Jews were almost certainly among the early experimenters. In Avignon in 1444, a goldsmith from Prague named Procop Waldvogel taught two people an “art of artificial writing.” Of greater interest to us is a contract dated 1446 between Waldvogel and a Jew named Davin of Caderousse to deliver 27 Hebrew letters, cut in iron, and other implements of the secret art. [\[10\]](#) The Hebrew alphabet, you will recall, contains 22 letters and five final letter forms. So the 27 iron letters could conceivably have been punches for a font of type.

Was Gutenberg Jewish? Robert Singerman and Michael Pollak published an essay [\[11\]](#) on this subject which reports on several articles by Isaac Mayer Wise in the *American Israelite* in 1880 and 1890 that refer to a family tradition that Gutenberg was an ancestor of Wise, and that he was indeed Jewish. Singerman and Pollak also call attention to other literature on both sides of the question of Gutenberg's religion and background. They come to no conclusion about Gutenberg, and neither shall I.

Precious little is actually known about Gutenberg's life. The secrecy surrounding the experimentation that clearly was going on in the 1430s into the early 1450s helps to hide facts. In place of facts, many theories have been proposed to fill the gaps in our knowledge. One of these theories has been presented by Ursula Katzenstein, a bookbinder and a student of fifteenth century binding. In her Portuguese volume on the origins of the book, Ms. Katzenstein presents the hypothesis that Mair Jaffe, an important bookbinder in the middle of the fifteenth century, was the real inventor of printing and that Gutenberg was only the entrepreneur behind him. [\[12\]](#) Mair was a cut-leather-binding artist, his family had been involved in the production of coins, and he was also a scribe, known in the literature as Meir Jaffe, who knew all about paper,

parchment, ink, etc. In other words, he combined in himself all of the skills that printing required.

It came to Ms. Katzenstein's attention that the cyclotron at the University of California at Davis, which had earlier been used to split atoms, was being used in humanistic studies – indeed in bibliography. It could determine through its non-destructive x-ray emissions the exact chemical composition of what it tested, a kind of chemical fingerprint. The scientists at Davis had already tested three or four copies of the Gutenberg Bible because the ink used in them was unusually black compared with other early printed books. They found that it contained large amounts of copper and lead.

In a gutsy suggestion, Ms. Katzenstein proposed that the Cincinnati Haggadah be tested by the Davis cyclotron. It is one of the surviving manuscripts written by Meir Jaffe, presumably the same person as the binder. Her hope was that the ink of the manuscript would be similar to the ink of the Gutenberg Bible and thus make her identification of Mair as the printer more plausible. Under very high security, I took the world-famous haggadah to California, stayed with it while it was tested, and brought back the disappointing result that the ink contained very little copper and almost no lead and thus had no relationship to the ink of the Gutenberg Bible. These data do not destroy Ms. Katzenstein's hypothesis; they simply do not help it.

So, Gutenberg, or somebody, produced the first printed book in Europe about 1455. Jews began to print Hebrew books, first in Italy by about 1469 and then in Spain in the mid-1470s. They were actually the first to bring printing to Portugal, in 1487, and to Constantinople in 1493 after the expulsion from Spain in 1492. They were later to be the first to print in Africa, in Fez, in 1516.

How shall we go about describing printed books? Of course, for different purposes, the amount of detail that we include in a description will vary. But what are the elements that are likely to help us identify the item and place it into some desired context? Information taken from the title page or colophon may include author, title, place, publisher and/or printer, and date. We already know that sometimes this kind of information is wrong, so we finger through the book and look for other characteristics: the type used, metal and wooden ornaments, printers' devices, maybe watermarks in the paper, whether and how pages or folios are numbered, whether there are running titles, whether the quires (or signatures) are “signed” with Hebrew or roman letters, etc.

The first Constantinople book, a Hebrew book, has been the subject of bibliographical controversy for a long time. Though it has the date 1493 in it explicitly, some bibliographers have preferred the date 1503 because the second book printed in Constantinople is dated 1505, and a gap from 1493 seemed intolerable to them. The most recent study of this book, however, emphasizing an analysis of the paper used, has virtually clinched the 1493 [\[13\]](#) date. In any particular study, it is hard to know which data will turn out to be conclusive.

Some years ago, I compiled a bibliography of Hebrew Bible editions, with and without commentaries, and of commentaries with and without Bible texts, for the period 1469-1528. [\[14\]](#) Among these 142 early editions, many, given our present state of knowledge, could not be dated precisely. Despite these limitations and other cautions which I called attention to, the list proved

to be very fertile ground for interesting observations and hypotheses. Among them were the following:

- 1) There is an unexpected chronological progression, i.e., at first commentaries alone were printed, then text and commentary, and finally, text alone.
- 2) Among the text editions, the whole Bible, Pentateuch, Haftarah, Megillot, and Psalms predominate.
- 3) Commentaries on the Pentateuch outnumber commentaries on all other books by at least five to one. Editions of Rashi's Commentary on the Pentateuch are most numerous – as expected – but the commentaries by Bachya ben Asher and Nachmanides are surprisingly not far behind.
- 4) Individual or small groups of books printed are Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Most of the historical books and the prophets were not separately printed.

Some hypotheses which were based on the observations were:

- 1) The Pentateuch and commentaries on it probably enjoyed first place in the Bible curriculum of that period.
- 2) If profit was a motive – and I believe it was – early printers produced commentaries in large numbers because enough manuscripts of the Pentateuch or Bible texts already existed to satisfy the demand in that period.
- 3) Printing text and commentary together on the same page was much more easily accomplished than writing them on the same page. Thus, printing enabled the pedagogic advance of studying text and commentary from one book.
- 4) The demand for study books was satisfied first. Then, texts without commentaries, used more for ritual and liturgical purposes than study, flooded the market and revolutionized the availability of such books.
- 5) Contemporary educators gave scant attention to Joshua-Kings, Latter Prophets, and Chronicles.

What started out as a pedestrian bibliographical list led to suggestive food for thought for historians of education and historians of the book as well as for Bible scholars.

As printing spread from place to place, it spawned another conundrum: the “war of typefaces.”

In the early decades of printing, printers used many different typefaces. Consciously trying to make their books look like manuscripts, the type designers imitated the best local handwritings. Some printers were more successful than others, and the typefaces that they used also became models for other printers. In this “war” between successful typefaces and local writing styles, the

types of the important Italian printing family, Soncino, soon won out. Soncino's homogenized Sephardic square and rabbinic (or so-called Rashi) types prevailed and became the norm (Figure 9).

There was no Hebrew printing north of the Alps in the fifteenth century. When Jews began to print in Ashkenazi territory in the sixteenth century, they could design type that imitated local Ashkenazic hands or mimic the already successful Soncino types. In fact, they did both. An undeclared war between Ashkenazic and Sephardic types began. Gothic-looking Ashkenazic square types (Fig. 10 is an extreme example) held their own for quite a while, but the Ashkenazic rabbinic style yielded to the Sephardic rather quickly. Ashkenazic rabbinic was soon on the way to oblivion.

When literature in the vernacular languages (German, English, French, etc.) began to be printed in quantity, printers seemed to be reluctant to vulgarize the type styles they had been using for Latin. So they introduced new type designs that were neither roman nor italic in appearance. When Jewish printers, by the late 1530s, began to print a good bit of Yiddish, they apparently felt a comparable reluctance to use the typefaces that they used in “holy” books. The discarded Ashkenazic rabbinic was rescued from oblivion. It became the type style that was used for Yiddish for several centuries. (Figure 11 shows a fifteenth century Ashkenazic rabbinic handwriting and a Yiddish typeface.) Another unusual typeface can be found in a Bible which was published in Hamburg in 1587. Edited by Elias Hutter, it uses a combination of thick letters and hollowed-out, or outlined, letters (Figure 12). Some bibliographers report that another edition appeared one year later in 1588, but I have never been able to find a copy and think this is an error. [\[15\]](#) The massive book, often issued in two large volumes, did appear again in Hamburg in 1596 and 1603, and in Cologne, also in 1603.

Note that Hutter edited the text in such a way that the fully inked letters represent the 3-letter root – Hutter believed that every Hebrew word, not just most verbs, had a 3-letter root – and the outlined letters are the prefixes and suffixes. What a clever way to teach Hebrew!

So the Bible sold well, as attested by the four or more “editions.” Right? Wrong! A careful scrutiny of many copies leads to the conclusion that all of the copies were printed in 1587, though *possibly* a few leaves were printed anew for the later issues. Stuck with a big remainder from the 1587 printing that did *not* sell well, the publisher reissued the book with new title pages, changed dates, and modified preliminary pages to try to get rid of the copies that were left. [\[16\]](#)

Once again, rigorous analysis yields a different truth from the one that first meets the eye.

From the huge Hutter Bible, I turn to an unimposing little *siddur* that has generated a startling mass of comments by numerous bibliographers over several centuries. [\[17\]](#) First described as a 14-leaf prayer book, it was printed without vowels, three columns to a page. Later it was described as a 24-leaf book. While a few copies have survived on their own, most surviving copies had been bound into books dating from 1680 to 1693, written or published by our old friend Shabtai Bass.

There are legitimate questions that can be asked about this booklet:

- Does it consist of 14 leaves or 24 leaves – or both?
- Can Shabtai Bass have been associated with the production of the *siddur* even though the colophon gives the date as 1677/78 and Shabtai did not come to Amsterdam where the book was printed until after 1678?
- Why is the colophon, normally an end-of-book feature, on the verso of leaf 14?

Other problems derive from the unwarranted surmises and guesses of the many bibliographers who have written on the subject.

Some bibliographers, not knowing or not believing that a couple of surviving copies have only fourteen leaves, simply assumed that the booklet was issued all at once as 24 leaves. One imaginative, but rather uninformed, speculation was that the colophon was placed on leaf 14 because that's where there happened to be space. The speculator should have known that printers have various techniques to make space. In this instance, they made a few leaves two lines longer than the rest and thus created the space at the end for the colophon.

Other unsupported speculations connected Shabtai with the entire booklet despite the 1678 date. One writer on the subject assumed that the *siddur* was a best seller, and only the few remaining copies were attached to some of Shabtai's books. The reverse was also speculated: the *siddur* was so unattractive and sold so poorly that it was attached to Shabtai's books to get rid of unsold copies.

The actual printing history, revealed by a careful examination of the book, can be outlined as follows: The colophon on leaf 14 verso (the page on the right in Figure 13) marks a completed 14-leaf *siddur*, printed by an Amsterdam printer, Jacob Chayim ben Moses de Cordova. That this was all that Jacob Chayim intended to print in 1677/78, the date in the last line of the colophon, is demonstrated by the formulaic Hebrew words “*slik, slik, slik*” (“stop, stop, stop”), by the absence of a catchword on the bottom of this page – all of the other pages have catchwords – and by the simple fact that some of the surviving copies have only 14 leaves. There is no reason to believe that Shabtai was involved in any way with these fourteen leaves.

Sometime after 1678, supplementary leaves were printed and were added to the *siddur*. Differences from leaves 1-14 in type, ornaments, and printing techniques argue for a different printing establishment – or more than one – for the supplementary leaves. One example should suffice: On leaves 1-14, there is only one running title at the top of each page and one catchword at the bottom of each page other than the last. On leaves 15-24, on the other hand, each column is headed by a running title, and there is a catchword at the foot of each column (for example the page on the left in Figure 13).

At least one reason for suspecting that the ten supplementary leaves were not printed and added all at once is that the formulaic “*slik, slik, slik*” makes another appearance at the bottom of leaf 22 verso (page on right in Figure 14), presumably to signify the intended end of the eight-leaf supplement. Then, lo and behold, four more pages – two leaves – of *zemirot* were added to the book. A second supplement, if you will! A reasonable conjecture is that the musically

compulsive Shabtai Bass may have gotten into the act. Perhaps he was responsible for at least this second supplement, the *zemirot*, and then distributed some of the *siddurim* as addenda to his own books.

A refrain that I have repeated a number of times today, in various ways, is the importance of carefully examining the book/artifact and of recording accurately what one finds. Equally desirable is the avoidance of theories, guesses, and speculations, unless they are acknowledged as such and are grounded in firm data. In other words, our goal should be the rigorous collection and critical analysis of facts. As part-time bibliographic scholars – which is all that any of us can hope to be these days – we need more reliable tools than memory and intuition if we are to match and surpass the generations that preceded us.

I would like now to introduce the concept of what I have called a “typographic profile” as a functional tool for accurately placing and dating books when their place, printer, and/or date is absent or distorted.

The only “typographic profile” that has been published, to my knowledge, is one that I compiled some years ago. [\[18\]](#) It is a profile of Shabtai Bass – who else? – printer in Dyhernfurth from 1689 to 1718. A typographic profile, I wrote, should contain the following elements:

- 1) A list of the books attributed to a particular press – namely, the artifacts;
- 2) A list of the books examined, so others will know what you have and haven't seen;
- 3) A list of the secondary literature on the place and printer;
- 4) A record of all title page cuts;
- 5) A record of all typefaces and sizes;
- 6) A record of the metal ornaments;
- 7) A record or description of the ornamental and illustrative cuts;
- 8) A description of other distinguishing features (watermarks, signatures, etc.); and
- 9) A listing of problems with or without solutions.

Let's look at a few samples from some of the categories:

Figure 15 shows the “music man” on a *Haftarot* title page from 1693. Note that the woodcut has a break that was not present in the Five Scrolls (Figure 2), also printed in 1693. Which do you think was printed first?

Figure 16 shows a record of some of the types used, their sizes, and the books they appeared in. One can often determine when a printer acquired new type by noting its first appearance.

Figure 17 shows a list and facsimiles of small metal ornaments, or fleurons, cast from a mold like letters, and their sizes.

Figure 18 shows some of the woodcuts used in Dyhernfurth.

All of these tools can help with the relative dating of books that lack dates.

It is hard to say when one should publish the data she or he has collected. If too few artifacts have been studied, the profile might be too thin. But one need not wait until all or even most of the artifacts have been examined. Publish early and add to the profile later and invite others to add to it, also.

Because only one profile, and two addenda to it, [\[19\]](#) have been published so far, I emphasize the concept and the methodology rather than the finished product. I used the Dyhernfurth profile material before the profile was published to determine that the *Seder Hayotsrot* was published there, not in Amsterdam. Also, to make the comparison with Amsterdam, I had to collect data on many Amsterdam printers – data that are not yet ready to be published.

Whether one publishes or not, the method can be valuable in any bibliographical research. It calls for being systematic and rigorous in gathering, measuring, recording, organizing, comparing, analyzing, and interpreting the data. Such a process enables the expansion of our knowledge because it allows us to use what is known to elucidate what is unknown, thereby moving it into the realm of the known. Much remains to be done.

I have a confession to make. I committed the perhaps unpardonable sin of writing the abstract of this lecture before I finished preparing the complete lecture. I later realized that time restraints were about to eliminate a couple of topics mentioned in the abstract. Since I look upon the abstract as a kind of performance pledge, I will at least introduce these topics very briefly.

The first is type specimens. Published as advertising broadsides or pamphlets by type foundries or printers, they provided samples of the typefaces and fleurons that were available. Often they contain Hebrew fonts. Figure 19 shows a very early specimen sheet from Nuernberg, 1525. [\[20\]](#) The two Hebrews are in the Ashkenazi tradition. The next specimen sheet (Figure 20), from a Frankfort on the Oder foundry, shows various sizes of square type (some with vowels), rabbinic, and Yiddish. [\[21\]](#) Figure 21 shows a veritable garden full of “flowers” or fleurons or ornaments. [\[22\]](#) Sometimes the ornaments that a printer has available in her repertoire may add more individuality to her books than the types used.

While I have so far found only one specimen sheet crucial to my research, I believe that their utility in helping to identify places, printers, and dates will be recognized more and more as artifactual study expands.

The second almost omitted subject is early copyright. While I know very little about the history of copyright, I have come across a number of cases of informal, or moral rather than legal, appeals for protection that I have found to be interesting. For instance, some copies of a Hebrew

Bible printed in Amsterdam in 1705 contain a little poem in four lines that declares taboo any copies of the book that lack a signature. This method of discouraging “piracy” continued off and on into the twentieth century. In many cases, the text says that the book is stolen if it lacks a signature. [23] Some of the books use the same or virtually the same wording as that in the 1705 Bible. It is at least curious that, in seeking a bit of protection for their own products, some authors and publishers copied without shame or acknowledgement from those who went before them.

The study of the book as an artifact is that aspect of “bibliography” that has claimed most of my research time and energy. This kind of study takes us back in time and gives us a wonderful sense of being there. As we examine the books, we feel as though we are looking over the shoulders of those who made them. We are perhaps even more than observers; we are almost contemporary participants.

I would like to close with a quotation in rhymed Yiddish from a colophon of a *machzor* with Yiddish translation printed in 1735. [24] Maybe you will find it as charming and touching as I do:

Di taytshe oysies hob ikh gezetst mit mayner hand;

Rivke bas ... Yisro'el ba'al hamadpis bin ikh genant.

Drum, ir libe layt, ven ir shoyn ayn to'es gefint,

Oy gedenkt dos es hot gezetst ayn kint.

And freely translated:

I set the Yiddish letters by hand on my very own;

Rivka, daughter of the printer Yisroel, is how I am known.

So, dear people, should you find an error wild,

Please remember that it was set by a child.

1. A. Yaari, *Digle Hamadpisim...* (Jerusalem, 1943), p. 51.
2. I. Rivkind, “Gilgule Misgarot,” *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 5 (1961) : Hebrew page 8.
3. *Ibid.*, Hebrew pages 8-9.
4. H.C. Zafren, “Dyhernfurth and Shabtai Bass: A Typographic Profile” in *Studies in Bibliography in Honor of Edward Kiev* (New York : Ktav, 1971), pp. 547-548 and Zafren,

- “More on Dyhernfurth,” *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 10 (1971/72) : 63.
5. Ibid., and H.C. Zafren, “The Value of ‘Face Value’,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 40-41 (1969–1979) : 555-580, esp. pp. 565-569.
6. Some metal ornaments and woodcuts are so similar that a careful measurement and comparison are needed to tell them apart.
7. *Sifte Yeshenim* and “*Sifte Chachamim*” in the Amsterdam, 1680, edition of the Pentateuch.
8. The example shown in Figure 6 is from Shabtai Bass, *Sifte Yeshenim*, (Amsterdam, 1680) leaf 4a.
9. A. Freimann (and M. Marx), ed., *Thesaurus Typographiae Hebraicae Saeculi xv* (Berlin, 1924-31), A10,2.
10. P. Requin, *L’Imprimerie a Avignon en 1444* (Paris : A. Picard, 1890).
11. R. Singerman and M. Pollak, “A Curious Document Attributing a Jewish Background to Johann Gutenberg,” *Printing History* 3 (Volume II, No. 1, 1980) : 31-34.
12. U. Katzenstein, *A Origem do Livro* (Sao Paulo : Editora Hucitec, 1986), chapter 10.
13. A.K. Offenber, “The First Printed Book Produced at Constantinople,” *Studia Rosenthaliana*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1969) : 96-112.
14. H.C. Zafren, “Bible Editions, Bible Study, and the Early History of Hebrew Printing,” *Eretz-Israel* 16 (1982) : 240-251.
15. H.C. Zafren, “Elias Hutter’s Hebrew Bibles,” in *The Joshua Bloch Memorial Volume*, edited by A. Bergen, I.S. Meyer, L. Marwick (New York : Public Library, 1960), pp. 29-39.
16. Ibid., esp. pp. 33-39.
17. H.C. Zafren, “The 1678 Siddur and the *Sifte Yeshenim*,” in *The A.M. Habermann Memorial Volume* (Lod : Makhon Habermann, 1983), pp. 273-276.
18. See note 4 above.
19. Ibid., and S.C. Reif, “Again the Musical Title Page,” *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 10 (1971/74):57-61.
20. The original of the Nuernberg, 1525, specimen sheet of the printer Johann Petreus is in the Deutsches Buch- and Schriftmuseum in Leipzig.
21. It is unusual for a type specimen sheet to contain only Hebrew character specimens. Figure

20 is from the foundry of Philipp Glaser, Franfort on the Oder, 1742. The original is in the Stadt- and Universitaetsbibliothek, Frankfurt am Main, Mappe III, Nr. 14.

22. From the foundry of Johann E. Luther, Frankfort on the Main, 1666.

23. I.S[onne] and H.C.Z[afren], "Notes on Signatures Found in Hebrew Books," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 1 (1953) : 16-17.

24. The *machzor* was printed in Neuwied in 1735 by Israel ben Moshe.