

FRAGMENTS AS OBJECTS: MEDIEVAL AUSTRIAN FRAGMENTS
IN THE JEWISH MUSEUM OF VIENNA

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This article reflects not only current academic research on medieval Austrian bookbinding fragments, but it also presents the tangible results of this project. The permanent exhibit, “Jewish Life in Medieval Austria” at the Museum for Medieval Jewry in Vienna (at the Judenplatz)¹—which was organized and then launched in December 2010 by Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, the curator at that time, and this author—uses medieval Hebrew fragments as symbols, structural means and connective threads, as real and striking representatives of the history as well as of the destruction of once flourishing communities. The findings from the long-standing project, “Hebrew Fragments and Manuscripts in Austrian Libraries” that comprise the core objects of this exhibit have been provided in cooperation with the Austrian National Library.²

Medieval Hebrew Manuscript Fragments in Austria—the Project

The Austrian project, just like the other cooperating projects of “Books within Books,” is dedicated to collecting, digitizing, identifying, analyzing, and describing all medieval Hebrew fragments in our country, in this case, Austrian libraries and archives. This effort was initiated in 1992 by Professor Ferdinand Dexinger (Institute of Judaic Studies, University of Vienna) in partnership with Professor Yaacov Sussmann (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem). During that first decade, until Professor Dexinger’s death in 2002, many collections were catalogued, but very few fragments were described and published.³ In its next phase, 2005–2008, this study was

¹ <http://www.jmw.at/museum-judenplatz> (8.5.2012).

² I extend heartfelt thanks to Dr. Andreas Fingernagel, Director of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books at the Austrian National Library, and his team for providing maximal access to this collection and sharing invaluable information on host volumes in a collegial (and non-bureaucratic) environment.

³ For literature on Josef M. Oesch and Alois Haidinger, see “Genizat Austria. Zwischenbericht zum Projekt “Hebräische Handschriften und Fragmente in österreichischen Bibliotheken,” in *Fragmenta Hebraica Austriaca. Akten der Session “Hebrew Manuscripts and*

coordinated by Professor Josef Oesch (Institute of Theology, University of Innsbruck) in cooperation with the Commission for Paleography and Codicology of Mediaeval Manuscripts of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. During that time, the project expanded rapidly, including the creation of its own website.⁴ When Josef Oesch retired in November 2008, the project became part of the Institute for Jewish History in Austria and joined the network, “Books within Books—Hebrew Fragments in European Libraries.”⁵

Long-term projects have both pros and cons. The website is now outdated, and needs to be both redesigned and revised to reflect state-of-the-art technology. At present, most of its illustrations are in black-and-white, so they will gradually be replaced by color and digitized media. In terms of content, its descriptions and specifications require systematical review and, if required, updates and corrections. At present, the website contains approximately 1800 images of approximately 1000 fragments. Another 100 (or so) fragments that have been catalogued must be identified, described and added to the website.

We anticipate that up to 1000 further fragments will be found in the Austrian National Library (whose holdings include the medieval university library), which is conducting its inventory of Hebrew sources and bookbinding fragments independently, though it too is affiliated with the Austrian manuscript project. This process is scheduled over a four-year timeframe, starting with a comprehensive inventory of Hebrew codices and their entries in the HANNA (the German abbreviation for *Handschriften, Nachlässe und Autographen*—manuscripts, assets, and autographs) catalogue, to be completed during 2013. This will be followed by a three-year, multifaceted analysis of Hebrew fragments in its massive inventory of codices and incunabula (2014–2016, projected). In its initial phase, the approximately 450 fragments that were removed in the 1920s and 1930s will be categorized—either anew or in greater detail—and, if possible, will be matched with their former host volumes and entered in

Fragments in Austrian Libraries” des International Meeting der Society of Biblical Literature in Wien, am 26. Juli 2007, eds. Christine Glassner and Josef M. Oesch, (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 783) (Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW, 2009), 11–31, 37, note 11.

⁴ www.hebraica.at (9.5.2012). This website is currently under reconstruction; its upgraded version will be online in September 2013.

⁵ <http://www.hebrewmanuscript.com/hebrew-fragments-databases.htm> (8.5.2012). On the history of the project through 2007, see Oesch/Haidinger, “Genizat Austria,” particularly 11–25.

the HANNA catalogue.⁶ In its second stage, a comprehensive search for manuscripts will be conducted, in an effort to find Hebrew fragments used as binding material. So far, 60 fragments have been found, and it can safely be assumed that the codices and incunabula from the Library of the Old University will bring copious additional findings to light. The next step will be a similar search for fragments in the bindings of printed editions up to the late 16th century. These findings would then be digitized in cooperation with the Library of the University of Graz, where a highly refined photographic technique using prisms has been developed. Upon completion, this project will have achieved a near-exhaustive inventory of fragments in the Austrian National Library.

Given the ongoing nature of this project, it is unlikely that surprising new findings will be made, with the possible exception of select parish and private archives. Thus the list of edited finds that was compiled by Josef Oesch in October 2007 accurately reflects the overall status of the Austrian search for Hebrew fragments,⁷ with the exception of materials discovered in more a recent search (from locations such as Library of the Franciscan Friary in Salzburg and the Archives of Bregenz and Hohenems in Vorarlberg). Moreover, in some libraries, codices have been examined whereas printed editions have not; in such cases, a complementary search is in order. Such endeavors are inevitably time consuming, with unpredictable outcomes. On the one hand, the search in the Library of the Canons Regular of St. Florian brought to light numerous previously unknown fragments. On the other hand, a review of 700 incunabula in that same collection yielded just a single fragment.

The distribution of Austrian fragments according to the main genres of Jewish religious literature resembles the findings in other places. Approximately 25% convey biblical texts from Torah scrolls, *Megillot Esther* and Bibles (*Humashim*); while fragments of psalms may have stemmed from prayer books, these too have been categorized as bible fragments. Aramaic translations of the Bible (*Targumim*) and Bible commentaries by Rashi comprise another 3%. Mishnah and Talmud fragments represent 27% of the total, constituting the largest fraction of this inventory (albeit by a

⁶ While the definitions that were developed by Arthur Z. Schwarz in 1925 provide basic concepts, they can be misleading at times, preventing accurate categorization of host volumes. Arthur Zacharias Schwarz, *Die hebräischen Handschriften der Nationalbibliothek Wien* (Leipzig: Strache, 1925). This catalogue is also available online: <http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/hs/kataloge/HSK0780.htm> (8.5.2012).

⁷ Oesch/Haidinger, "Genizat Austria," 29–31.

slim margin). Talmud commentaries represent 16%, here too dominated by Rashi, plus a few Tosafist commentaries. In contrast, midrashic literature and exegetical commentaries only make up 1% of the findings to date. Discussions of Halakhah and minhagim constitute another 6%—mainly from *Hilkhot ha-Rosh* by Asher ben Yehiel (ca. 1250–1327), on which Yisrael of Krems composed annotations (*hagahot*) in the early 15th century. Liturgy is represented also by 16% of the fragments, especially *piyyutim*, as well as selections from prayerbooks for festival (*mahzorim*) and daily use (*siddurim*). An additional 2% contain liturgical commentaries. The remaining 4% are from varied and less readily identifiable texts, including medical treatises, philosophical essays and business records.⁸

This body of fragments date from the late 11th century (in two cases) through the early 16th century. Most manuscripts are Ashkenazi in origin, plus a scattering of Italian and Sephardi documents.⁹ We are unable to discern whether these fragments came from volumes that were actually used by Austrian Jewish communities or whether they arrived in Austria as a commodity, namely recycled parchment. The potential for such “well travelled” fragments reinforces the importance of a pan-European approach to this research.

Some Austrian fragments represent previously unknown sources, such as a commentary on Ecclesiastes at the Library of the University of Salzburg, which could only have been authored by Rabbenu Tam or his brother Solomon ben Meir (two of Rashi’s three grandsons), that was identified and published by Simha Emanuel.¹⁰ On a par was the spectacular discovery of “a leaf of an unusual and unique Talmudic text,”¹¹ the Scroll of Fasting (*Megillat Ta’anit*) in the Library of the Benedictine Monastery in St. Paul in the Lavant Valley (Carinthia), found in the binding of Cod. 39c/4, *Summa Theologica* by Thomas Aquinas, copied in 1424 and bound

⁸ Almut Laufer, “Überlegungen zu Relevanz und Zielsetzung des Projekts ‘Hebräische Handschriften und Fragmente in österreichischen Bibliotheken’ aus jüdischer Sicht,” in Glassner/Oesch, *Fragmenta Hebraica*, 33–48, 39f. A more schematic distribution is outlined by Oesch/Haidinger, “Genizat Austria,” 15.

⁹ For example, an illustration and blessings from a Sephardi *Megillat Esther* found in Klosterneuburg, Cod. 1455, in Oesch/Haidinger, “Genizat Austria,” 18. Its host volume has not yet been identified.

¹⁰ Simha Emanuel, “Fragments of Unknown Biblical Commentaries,” in *Genizat Germania’—Hebrew and Aramaic Binding Fragments from Germany in Context*, ed. Andreas Lehnardt, (‘European Genizah’: Texts and Studies, 1) (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), 207–215, 211–215.

¹¹ Yoav Rosenthal, “A New Fragment of Megillat Ta’anit,” in Glassner/Oesch, *Fragmenta Hebraica*, 49–59, 51.

in Vienna some years later. The Hebrew fragment dates from before 1300, and its analysis was published by Yoav Rosenthal in 2009.¹² So far, the unparalleled finding of this project is a Tosafist commentary on the Talmud commentary by Meir bar Baruch (Maharam of Rothenburg) on Tractate *Pesahim*, that had been bound within a codex in the Library of the Canons Regular of Klosterneuburg (Cod. 436).¹³ This codex was finalised by Thomas Paungartner in 1423 and bound in red leather shortly after the Vienna Gezerah in 1420–21.¹⁴ Furthermore, Simha Emanuel recently identified the earliest Tosafist autograph found to date by using the aforementioned prism-equipped camera in the library at the University of Graz.¹⁵ Additional rare fragments from Austrian libraries are presented later in this paper.

*Fragments and Curatorial Design: The Permanent Exhibit
at the Museum of Medieval Jewry*

The vast majority of fragments in Austria have been found in books that were bound either in the second quarter of the 15th century or in the early 16th century. This timing plainly links these fragments with the forced evictions of Jews from Vienna and Lower Austria in 1420–21 and from Styria, Carinthia and Carniola in 1496/97, and the concomitant confiscations of their possessions.¹⁶ Six fragments of such provenance are displayed in the exhibition, representing that historical aspect. Among them is a fragment from a Scroll of Esther (ONB Cod. 4039 D2 2a), that had been detached from the collection of sermons, *Sermones de tempore, de sanctis et de festis*, by Thomas Ebendorfer von Haselbach (1388–1464), the theologian who served as Dean and Rector of the University of Vienna, and the only Christian to chronicle the cruel events of the Vienna Gezerah.¹⁷ The very

¹² Ibid., and in more detail in Yoav Rosenthal, “A Newly Discovered Leaf of Megillat Ta’anit and its Scholion.” *Tarbiz* 77 (2009): 357–410 (in Hebrew), and in Vered Noam, “In the Wake of the New Leaf of Megillat Ta’anit and its Scholion.” in *ibid.*, 411–424 (in Hebrew).

¹³ Laufer, “Überlegungen,” 43.

¹⁴ http://www.hebraica.at/_scripts/php/hbf_mssp3.php—select the menu labeled, “Handschriftenfonds”, then “Klosterneuburg, Augustiner-Chorherrenstift,” and then Signatur: Cod. 436, fol. I. As the website is under construction, please just give the library (Klosterneuburg etc) and the Signature.

¹⁵ See the contribution by Simha Emanuel in this volume.

¹⁶ Laufer, “Überlegungen,” 34 and 46f.

¹⁷ My thanks go to Friedrich Simader (Department for Manuscripts and Rare Books, Austrian National Library) for providing information on this host volume. On Thomas

sight of these fragments makes the visitors realize that even the tiniest and most damaged scrap of parchment represents an entire manuscript that had been handled and read, studied and used in prayer by Jews who lived in and were expelled from our region.

The Museum for Medieval Jewry is housed at 8 Judenplatz in Vienna, a building that was built in 1682, whose foundation walls were once part of an earlier structure in the medieval Jewish Quarter. A document from 1379–1381 mentions a certain Rötöl of Klosterneuburg as its owner from. In 1421, the building was seized by Duke Albrecht V, and later ceded to the City of Vienna.¹⁸ The medieval synagogue—excavated in 1995—forms the centerpiece of the museum. Analogous to manuscript folios, stones from the synagogue were misappropriated as construction material for the Faculty of Theology of the Old University on Bäckerstraße, “whose professors had been considerable initiators of the pogrom.”¹⁹

Thus, like so many remains found at the Judenplatz archaeological site, the synagogue too was uncovered in a fragmented state. In shaping this exhibit, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek and I decided to limit the display to objects that could be clearly traced to this locality. Therefore, reproductions of more visually engaging items from other medieval Ashkenazi communities, such as the famous wedding ring from Erfurt,²⁰ are

Ebendorfer and his *Chronica Austriae* from 1463, see Klaus Lohrmann, *Judenrecht und Judenpolitik im mittelalterlichen Österreich* (Vienna, Cologne: Böhlau, 1990), 302f. and 306. The edition of this chronicle by Alphons Lotzky, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores* (Nova series XIII) (Berlin, Zurich: Weidmann, 1967), is available online: http://www.dmg.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb00000693_00001.html?sortIndex=010:060:0013:010:00:00 (8.5.2012). Descriptions of events in *Liber Tercius*, p. 370f.

¹⁸ Reinhard Pohanka, “Der Judenplatz nach 1421,” (see contents: Zur Geschichte des Platzes) in *Judenplatz Ort der Erinnerung*, ed. Gerhard Milchram, on behalf of the Jewish Museum of Vienna, (Vienna: Pichler, n. d. [2000]), 108–117, 113. The Mandeles, a Jewish family, owned this property from 1862–1942, when it was confiscated; in 1950, the building was turned over to the Jewish Religious Community Vienna which then presented it to the “Misrachi” Society, whose synagogue is currently located on the first floor of the building. Paul Mitchell, Doris Schön, “Zur Bauforschung im Misrachihaus. Ein Haus der Judenstadt im Verlauf der Jahrhunderte.” *Wiener Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte, Kultur und Museumswesen* 4 (2000): 111–121, 120f.

¹⁹ Pohanka, “Der Judenplatz,” 110; on the excavations and the synagogue, see Heidrun Helgert and Martin Schmid, “Die Archäologie des Judenplatzes,” in *Museum Judenplatz zum mittelalterlichen Judentum*, ed. Gerhard Milchram, (Vienna: Pichler, n. d. [2000]), 17–49 and Heidrun Helgert and Martin Schmid, “Die mittelalterliche Synagoge auf dem Judenplatz in Wien. Baugeschichte und Rekonstruktion.” *Wiener Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte, Kultur und Museumswesen* 4 (2000): 91–110.

²⁰ A photo of this wedding ring is available online: <http://alte-synagoge.erfurt.de/jle/en/oldsynagoge/exhibition/> (8.5.2012). See Maria Stürzebecher, “Der Schatzfund aus der Michaelisstraße in Erfurt,” in *Die mittelalterliche jüdische Kultur in Erfurt, vol. 1: Der*

not included. Admittedly, we cannot ascertain whether the pottery, toys, comb and other wares found at the Judenplatz excavation belonged to Jewish households or whether the oversized iron key found in its rubble really locked the synagogue door.²¹ Since the Jewish or Christian origin and use of everyday objects cannot be differentiated, we decided to show the finest available examples, be they whole or fragmentary. Only twice did we commission craftsmen to reconstruct objects, for a mediaeval lute and a wine barrel, respectively.

The design of the exhibition room is understated—a 16th-century vault, with a sober atmosphere and natural light (Fig. 1, credit: www.wulz.cc). Its central elements are small showcases of equal size, spaced evenly throughout the room. Also, the objects are presented in a modest setting, giving room for the visitors' own imaginations and thoughts, for their own "mental cameras," so to speak. A film based about current research on the housing and construction of Vienna's Jewish Quarter in the Middle Ages is projected continuously, supplying information on individual buildings within the Jewish quarter and their inhabitants, co-existence and conflict with their Christian neighbors and the catastrophic Gezerah of 1420–21.

Neither Hebrew nor textual literacy are required for these fragments to communicate their aesthetics, their fragility or their undeniable devastation to their viewers. Everyone can witness the traces of violence: manuscripts have been cut into pieces of various dimensions that were then scratched and folded. At first glance, only the destruction of the manuscript, scroll or book is self-evident. After all, such secondary usage was standard practice among bookbinders in the Middle Ages, common to thousands of non-Jewish documents and books as well—an estimated 10% of medieval surplus and reused paper or parchment is of Jewish provenance.²² But when visitors take a closer look at the fragments in this exhibit on Jewish mediaeval history, they easily grasp that Jewish codices and scrolls would not have received such treatment, had their owners had peaceful lives (and deaths) and had their community experienced a prosperous future.

For this reason, we chose fragments not only as symbols of the destruction of Medieval Austrian Jewry, but also as reminders of our limited

Schatzfund. Archäologie—Kunstgeschichte—Siedlungsgeschichte, ed. Sven Ostritz, (Weimar: Beyer & Beran, 2010), 60–212, with a comparison to other medieval Jewish "treasure troves," 158–188.

²¹ For select pictures, see Helgert/Schmid, "Die Archäologie," 41–43.

²² Glassner/Oesch, *Fragmenta Hebraica*, 5; Laufer, "Überlegungen," 33f.

capacity to reconstruct the past. Furthermore these objects serve to evoke topics that cannot be covered in-depth in this rather modest exhibition. For the introductory station, we chose to display eight fragments, each as a representative of a religious or scholarly aspect of Medieval Jewish life: 1) Holidays by *Megillat Esther* (mentioned above);²³ 2) Mysticism by a messianic remark from a colophon on a commentary to *Hilkhot Bedikot* (or *Trefot*: laws for examining the ritual slaughter of animals): “Here *Hilkhot Bedikot* are concluded. May the One who is in the highest realm send us the Messiah, at this time may he flourish.” This fragment was found in a theological codex from of the first half of the 15th century.²⁴ Almut Laufer (Jerusalem) discovered that this colophon by a certain Rabbi Tevlen did not relate to the fragment’s content, but concluded the preceding paragraph (which was not preserved). The visible text was composed in the mid-14th century and has also been preserved in the *Hilkhot Trefot* of Ms Parma 2226 (= de Rossi 148), dated 1491–92. This fragment shows a clear association to the Austrian context through its mention of the “Wise One of Austria” in the main text and of Rabbi Abraham Klausner of Vienna (died 1408) in a marginal note.²⁵ 3) Scientific pursuits are symbolized by a medical fragment (discussed in detail below); 4) Local religious practices (*minhagim*) are represented in a section from *Hilkhot Niddah* (laws of female impurity) by Ele’azar ben Natan of Mainz (1090–1170);²⁶ 5) Liturgical poetry is denoted by a register of *piyyutim* whose date of origin and provenance have not yet been determined;²⁷ 6) Scholarship is

²³ See footnote 17.

²⁴ Austrian National Library, Cod. 4818_ONB_C34_2b. Henricus Gandavensis: Quodlibeta 15 theologica, first third of the 15th century, Vienna, provenance: University of Vienna.

²⁵ Benjamin Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma. Catalogue*. Palaeographical and Codicological Descriptions Malachi Beit-Arié (Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library, 2001), 199f, nr 880, Parma 2226 = De Rossi 148, 3. Ff, 58v–62v, Laws of *trefah*. Written description (by correspondence via e-mail, unpublished) by Almut Laufer from 28.10.2010.

²⁶ Sefer Ra’avan, Even ha-Ezer, Nidda, § 337. http://www.hebraica.at/_scripts/php/hbf_mssp3.php, select the menu labeled, “Handschriftenfonds,” then “Salzburg, Universitätsbibliothek (UB),” and then Signatur: Fragm. M II 293, 1r–2v. As the website is under construction, please just give the library (Salzburg etc) and the Signature. Copied in square 13th–14th century Ashkenazic script; UB Salzburg, Fragm. M II 293, 2r: back fly leaf of the incunabulum W III 178: Vivianus: Casus longi super Digesto Veteri. [n.p., n.d.] and others. Cover circa 1497, provenance: Bibliotheca Aulica Salisburgensis, removed in 1928.

²⁷ Register of *piyyutim*: Austrian National Library, ONB_A79_2_1v, removed from Cod. 3806: Quaestiones primi libri ex Summario theologiae. 15th century, Vienna. Probably bound in Vienna during the 15th century, later Mondsee Abbey.

symbolized by a commentary of Rashi;²⁸ 7) Halakhah by a fragment from Bavli, *Ketubbot*;²⁹ and, 8) Prayer is represented by a slender strip from a *siddur*.³⁰ In the process of selecting these objects, we also took aesthetic criteria into consideration, such as varying the forms and sizes of these fragments.

For each of the eight stations in this section, we present a subject which reflects Jewish life in medieval Austria and the linguistic and cultural topography of Ashkenaz, and which could be represented through contextualized objects. We developed a common group of elements for each station: an introductory text, one or more objects, one document, one medieval illumination and, of course, one fragment. Aural input was placed on equal footing with the visual aspect of this display: an audio guide provides original Jewish and some Christian sources, translated into German, with a special audio guide available for children that is read by youngsters. Naturally, English translations are provided for all texts as well.

The title of each station begins with an introductory quote followed by its theme, which is expanded in the narrative available through the audio guide. The headings and representative fragment for each station are as follows:

- 1) “Jews and other merchants...”—The Emergence of Austrian Jewry: features a fragment from a *Pesah Haggadah*,³¹ as the earliest text on Jewish migration.

²⁸ Rashi, Commentary on Psalms: Austrian National Library, ONB_A32_4_3r, removed from Cod. 4615: Thomas Ebendorfer de Haselbach: Sermones ad vulgus per circulum anni diebus dominicis, second quarter, 15th century—Vienna, Faculty of Arts of the University of Vienna. This fragment is also from the oeuvre of Thomas Ebendorfer (reference provided by Friedrich Simader, Austrian National Library).

²⁹ http://www.hebraica.at/scripts/php/hbf_mssp3.php, As the website is under construction, please just give the library (Melk etc) and the Signature. Select in Handschriftenfonds “Melk, Benediktinerstift”, select in Signatur: Fragm. IV, fol. 1r–2v (2r). Removed from incunabulum P 682, which contains two early printed books: 1) Iustinianus: Institutiones. With the Glossa ordinaria of Franciscus Accursius. Venice: Andreas de Soziis 1484, and 2) Díaz de Montalvo, Alonso: Repertorium quaestionum super Nicolaum de Tudeschis. Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, circa 1485. Provenance: library of the Benedictine Abbey Melk.

³⁰ Austrian National Library, ONB_A81_3_1a(1r): not mentioned in Schwarz, *Die hebräischen Handschriften*, its host volume has not yet been identified.

³¹ Austrian National Library, ONB_A72_1_1r: not mentioned in Schwarz, *Die hebräischen Handschriften*, its host volume has not yet been identified.

- 2) "...share our favor and good will."—Historical background of Jewish Life in the Middle Ages: with a very severely damaged fragment from a Pentateuch³² symbolizing the essence of Jewish existence.
- 3) "We, the Jews of the community of Vienna, announce..."—The Structure of the Jewish Community: with a fragment from Bavli *Eruvin*³³ as a sign of constructing Jewish space.
- 4) "A little sanctuary"—The Synagogue: with a fragment of a *mahzor* for Pesah.³⁴
- 5) "...take care of your students."—Teaching and Learning: with a blank section of parchment.³⁵ This ironic choice is actually a compromise on our part because, as will be explained below, the fragment that we had originally chosen for this station turned out to be unsuitable for this exhibit.
- 6) "What maintains the Torah..."—Means of Income. In the Austrian National Library, we found an intact parchment scroll from a medieval *mezuzah* (to reiterate, not a fragment),³⁶ which stands for the profession of the *sofer*, the scribe of holy texts. Its provenance is unknown.
- 7) "It is the custom to arrange everything in a beautiful manner..."—Celebrations: Here, of course, we chose the famous illuminated *ketubbah* fragment from Krems 1391 (Cod. hebr. 218 in the Austrian National Library), the sole known illuminated medieval Ashkenazi *ketubbah*.³⁷ The identities of the bridal couple, who are only referred to by their

³² Austrian National Library, ONB_A9_1_1r: (= Cod. hebr. 229): its host volume has not yet been identified.

³³ Austrian National Library, ONB_A34_1_1r; host volume: Cod. 4358—Theological composite manuscript, around 1420/30—Vienna. Provenance: bound in Vienna, later in the Library of the University of Vienna.

³⁴ Austrian National Library, ONB_A73_1_1v; its host volume has not yet been identified.

³⁵ Austrian National Library, ONB_Cod.4813_C32_1v. Even this small piece of parchment was removed from a codex: Cod. 4813: Thomas de Aquino OP: Summa theologia: Pars III., 15th century; Provenance: University of Vienna.

³⁶ Austrian National Library, ONB_E1_1.

³⁷ See an image in Markus J. Wenninger, "Nicht in einem Bett, aber doch auf einer Hochzeit. Zur Teilnahme von Christen an jüdischen Festen im Mittelalter," in *Nicht in einem Bett. Juden und Christen in Mittelalter und Frühneuzeit*, ed. Institute of Jewish History in Austria, (Juden in Mitteleuropa 2005) (St. Pölten: self publishing, 2005), 9–17. Online: http://www.injoest.ac.at/upload/JudeninME05_2_9-17.pdf (9.5.2012), 16. On this *ketubbah*, see Martha Keil, "Gemeinde und Kultur—Die mittelalterlichen Grundlagen jüdischen Lebens in Österreich," in Eveline Brugger, Martha Keil, Christoph Lind, Albert Lichtblau, Barbara Staudinger, *Geschichte der Juden in Österreich* (Österreichische Geschichte, 15) (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 2006), 15–122, 37f, image on p. 38, earlier literature p. 575, footnote 96. See also 'Genizat Germania', ed. Lehnardt, Fig. 2.

Hebrew names, have not been historically verified, though hypotheses exist: The groom, Shalom ben Menahem (Hebrew: the consoler, German: der Tröster) could be a son of Tröstl, from the Walich family of Vienna. The name of the bride, Tzemah bat Aharon (Hebrew: sprout), could correlate to the German name, Blümel; if so, she might be the daughter of “Aaron von Krems,” as the art historian, Karl-Georg Pfändtner, has suggested.³⁸ However, if Pfändtner is referring to Rabbi Aaron Blümlein von Krems, who died as a result of torture during the Vienna Gezerah in 1421, his daughter would have been married first to Shalom, then to Murklein (or Merklein) von Marburg/Maribor; for on April 27, 1442, she wrote a business document as a widow (“*Ich Plumel die Judin maister murckleins wittib zu marchburg.*”) and signed it in Hebrew with the words “*Plimel, Tochter des Rabbiners Aharon des Märtyrers, seligen Andenkens.*”³⁹ (Plimel, daughter of Rabbi Aharon the martyr, of blessed memory). Even if these identifications are not accurate, whoever commissioned this resplendent *ketubbah* was undoubtedly a member of the upper echelon of the Jewish community at that time.

- 8) “...and the *goy* himself put the wine in the cellar.”—Interaction between Jews and Christians: This fragment is from a Hebrew-French glossary of Psalms and Proverbs that Franz Staller (Linz) is currently preparing for publication. The transfer of language and culture that characterizes this text is illustrated by this example: the first line of the right column reads מוֹלֵל: “it [the grass] will be cut” (Psalm 90:6); and the first line of the middle column provides its translation in Old French, rendered in Hebrew transliteration, שֶׁרָא דֵטִיילִי—“*sera détaillé.*”⁴⁰

³⁸ Karl-Georg Pfändtner, “Ketubah,” in *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. Historisches Museum der Pfalz Speyer, (Speyer: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 196, picture on p. 197. This *ketubbah* fragment was removed from Cod. 4660, a manuscript that was also written in the 15th century. Provenence: Old University of Vienna.

³⁹ Steirisches Landesarchiv Nr. 5790, 27. April 1442. This record of Jewish women signing documents in Hebrew is rare for its level of personal agency and knowledge of Hebrew, indicating a high level of education. See Martha Keil, “Business Success and Tax Debts: Jewish Women in Late Medieval Austrian Towns,” in *Jewish Studies at the Central European University II (1999–2001)*, ed. Andras Kovács and Eszter Andor, (Budapest: Central European University, 2002), 103–123, 108–111.

⁴⁰ Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Tirol, Innsbruck, Ink. 107 D. 10, Fragm. 1b. This host volume has not yet been described. Research from throughout Europe has brought to light several additional glossaries of this type. See the contribution by Tamas Visi in this volume.

In this way, medieval Hebrew fragments are utilized in every station of this exhibit as an integral structural element.

Two Exciting New Fragments

I will now present two fragments in greater detail, one that represents medical practice in the introductory station of the exhibition and another that was initially intended for the station on “Teaching and Learning,” but was subsequently removed. Both provide new insights into Austrian and Ashkenazi medieval history and each tells a unique story.

1) *A Medical Fragment*

In 2009, Alois Haidinger discovered a relatively large fragment in the binding of a Codex of *Ennarationes* (explanations) composed by Augustine on Psalms, in the Library of the Canons Regular of St. Florian (Upper Austria). This text initially raised many questions.⁴¹ After consultation with Professor Tzvi Langermann (Bar Ilan University), an expert on medical texts, Almut Laufer placed this fragment in a medical context, determining it to be a Hebrew translation, *Bidi'at ha-sheten*, of the Arabic *Kitāb al-baul* a medieval manual on the medical analysis of urine by Yitzhak ben Shlomo ha-Yisraeli (Egypt and Tunisia, circa 850–920). This sizeable fragment consists of two bi-folios but, unfortunately, each of them was cut in two vertically; therefore, only half of this text remains. The library would not permit this fragment to be removed from its host volume, but did allow its reproduction (Fig. 2: Cod. XI/3, 3; courtesy of credit: Canons Regular of St. Florian). This fragment consists of an introduction, table of contents and ten chapters, referred to as “gates” (*she'arim*). The text appears to be in a 14th-century cursive script, and is written by two different hands. We have no knowledge of the translator, but three other Hebrew copies of this text have been preserved, two of Italian origin, now in Paris and Glasgow,⁴² and one Sephardi in Paris.⁴³ Given that the manuscript fragment and the host codex both date from the 14th century, they

⁴¹ This fragment has not been removed from its host volume. Host volume: Canons Regular St. Florian Cod. XI/3, 3; Augustine: Enarrationes in psalmos, 3rd part, 14th century. Provenance: old inventory St. Florian.

⁴² Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale héb. 1125 from 1324 and Glasgow University Library Hunt. 477 from 1489.

⁴³ 1436, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale héb. 1186. Researched by Almut Laufer (Jerusalem).

lack any connection to the Viennese Gezerah which also affected the Jewish communities of Upper Austria. How the fragment arrived in St. Florian is beyond our knowledge.

2) *A Hebrew Alphabet*

When searching for a fragment which could represent “Teaching and Learning,” I was delighted to find a fragment on our website which displays the Hebrew alphabet along with German transliteration, as if someone had been practicing his penmanship. The fragment served as the front pastedown of an incunabulum from 1484, from the holdings of St. Peter’s Archabbey in Salzburg.⁴⁴ The same year appears at the end lower section of the front pastedown (VDS1): *hebraice 1484*. The text is in brown ink on a paper bi-folio that measures 270 × 425, with writing on one side, rotated 90 degrees and glued on.

The upper section (VDS2) of the front pastedown has the Hebrew alphabet as its heading, with each letter framed above by its German equivalent and by its Hebrew name below. Beneath the alphabet are lines that seem to be practice writing or instructions for study in Hebrew lettering: the first line presents male first names Hans, Hermann, Walther, Michel, Simon; the second line lists craftsmen—*Goldschmied* (goldsmith), *Weber* (weaver) *Schuster* (shoemaker), *Schneider* (tailor), *Zimmermann* (carpenter); the third line has words that begin with “u” (*alef-vav*)—*uns* (us), *unrecht* (wrong), *undertenig* (subservient), the name Ulrikus; the fourth line shows words that start with the letter *vav*—*wasser* (water), *fest* (strong or feast), *wetter* (weather), *weil* (because), *viel* (a lot), *vell* or *fell* (wave or fur), the name Valentin, *fischer* (fisherman); the fifth line continues with words starting with *alef-yud*: *ich* (I), *yist* (is), *yzunt* (now), *ynwenig* (inside) or *eyn wenig* (a little bit), *yynniglich* (dearly), and *ytem* (probably Latin: therefore, so). In each of these five lines, the corresponding German letter appears above each Hebrew one. The last line is comprised of male first names once more: Jakob, Jobst, Jorg, Johannes, Jeronimus, Judeus. The following row repeats the alphabet, but this time with the numerical

⁴⁴ http://www.hebraica.at/_scripts/php/hbf_mssp3.php, select in Handschriftenfonds “Salzburg, Erzabtei St. Peter”, select in Signatur Ink. 182, VDS. As the website is under construction, please just give the library (Salzburg etc) and the Signature.

Its description needs to be corrected: The fragment in Incunabel 182 is glued to the inner face of the board. This volume contains manuscripts from Jacob de Forlivio, *Expositio in I librum canonis Avicennae, Venetiis, [1479]* and Dinus de Mugello, *De regulis juris. -Venetiis: Andreas Papiensis, 1484*.

value written above each letter. This vocabulary and selection of names do not suggest a Jewish milieu or Yiddish as the primary language of its copyist or author. The bottom row on the first folio of the front paste-down confirmed our suspicions unambiguously, where “*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum*” (Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee) is written in bold square letters (Fig. 3: Salzburg, Archabbey St. Peter, Ink. 182_VDS1). This quotation proves Christian provenance, perhaps clerical or monastic, and led to our recognition that this fragment could not be on display to illustrate Jewish learning and teaching (!).

Having become disqualified for its initial purpose in our exhibition, the question of the origin and usage of this fragment remained. Two instructional booklets on reading Hebrew that were published somewhat later suggest a setting whose scholars included German humanists and Christian Hebraists.⁴⁵ In 1514, the humanist Johannes Böschenstein had his 12-page Latin booklet, *Elementale introductorium in Hebraeas litteras teutonice et hebraice legendas*, printed in Augsburg.⁴⁶ In its introduction, Böschenstein, who was born in Esslingen in 1472, states explicitly that he was not from Jewish origins, though he had been taught the basics of Hebrew by Rabbi Moshe Möllin of Weißenburg.⁴⁷ Böschenstein explains that he then continued his studies with the famous humanist, Johannes Reuchlin. In 1505, Böschenstein began teaching Hebrew in Ingolstadt; then, in 1514, he began teaching in Augsburg where, at the request of his students and at Reuchlin’s insistence, he authored his introduction to Hebrew letters. Based on that booklet and a Hebrew Grammar that he had also published, he earned the nickname “The Second Revivalist” of the Hebrew language, after Reuchlin. In November 1518, Böschenstein began as a Hebraist at the University of Wittenberg, but he soon had a

⁴⁵ I am indebted to Christoph Cluse for bringing these two manuscripts to my attention (Arye Maimon-Institut für Geschichte der Juden, University of Trier).

⁴⁶ Johannes Böschenstein, *Elementale introductorium in Hebraeas litteras teutonice et hebraice legendas* (Druckwerk) (Augsburg: Auguste Oeglin, 1514), Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Signatur: 4 Exeg. 8a: online: http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set%5Bimage%5D=1&set%5Bzoom%5D=default&set%5Bdebug%5D=0&set%5Bdouble%5D=0&set%5Bmets%5D=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00012999_mets.xml (8.5.2012) or use the link <http://opacplus-bib-bvb.de>, simple search: Johannes Böschenstein.

⁴⁷ Not to be mistaken for the father of the famous Rabbi Jakob ben Moshe ha-Levi of Mainz, who is presumed to have died circa 1387 in Nuremberg. *Germania Judaica III: 1350–1519*, vol. 2: Mährisch Budwitz—Zwolle, ed. Arye Maimon, Mordechai Breuer and Yacov Guggenheim, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), 802, Nr. 38.

falling out with Martin Luther and departed from both the university and the city in early 1519.⁴⁸

As in the case of the Salzburg fragment, here too the Hebrew alphabet is accompanied by German transliteration, letter by letter (i.e., b, d, etc.), but without letter names (*bet, dalet*). For practical purposes, Böschenstein had the most central Christian prayers such as The Lord's Prayer, *Credo* and *Magnificat* printed in Hebrew translation as well as in their Latin originals and German translations. All Hebrew characters were printed in square (block) script, since cursive letters were not yet available for the printing press.⁴⁹

Almost 30 years later, in 1543, the German "*Elemental- oder Lesebüchlein*" (Elementary or Reading Booklet) by Paul Helicz⁵⁰ was published in Hundsfield, Silesia (today's Wrocław). The author's background differs from that of Johannes Böschenstein. Helicz was born into a family of Jewish printers in Cracow in the early 16th century; together with two of his brothers, Paul converted to Catholicism then, circa 1540, to Protestant Christianity. In that same year, he printed the Lutheran translation of the New Testament in Hebrew characters and, three years later, his Hebrew reader.⁵¹ Helicz aimed to facilitate his Christian readers' understanding of Jewish missives and letters of obligation as well as their calendrical and numerical system, to render Jewish business practices more transparent. This booklet's use of cursive script, presentation of the name of each letter (p. 3), inclusion of German words transcribed in Hebrew letters (p. 6)

⁴⁸ Hans-Jürgen Zobel, "Die Hebraisten an der Universität zu Wittenberg (1502–1817)," in *Altes Testament—Literatursammlung und Heilige Schrift: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Entstehung, Geschichte und Auslegung des Alten Testaments*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Zobel (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 212) (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1993), 201–228, 206. Luther referred to him in the third-person as "*Erzjude*" in a letter (*iudaeissimus*; *ibid.*, 207, footnote 46). Scheible mentions an anecdote by Melanchthon about Böschenstein's suspected ancestral line. See: Heinz Scheible, "Reuchlins Einfluß auf Melanchthon," in *Reuchlin und die Juden*, ed. Arno Herzig and Julius H. Schoeps, in cooperation with Saskia Rohde, (Pforzheimer Reuchlinschriften, 3) (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1993), 123–149, 132–134.

⁴⁹ Böschenstein, *Elementale introductorium*, without page numbers: [6] and [8]: Hebrew alphabet with German transliteration and *begadkefat* [9]: vowels [7]: vocabulary and names, such as *Martin* and *Pater*, in Hebrew letters [12]: The Decalogue [14]: The Lord's Prayer in Hebrew translation [15]: *Credo* in Hebrew translation, [16f.]: *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46–55) in Hebrew translation, being, however, a retranslation and not the underlying text, the Song of Hannah, 1 Sam. 2:1–10.

⁵⁰ *Elemental- oder Lesebüchlein des Paul Helicz*, printed in Hundsfield in 1543. Reproduction based on the exemplar in the Municipal Library of Breslau, ed. Verein Jüdisches Museum Breslau, (Breslau, no publisher given, 1929).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, "Introduction," without page numbers, by Max Silberberg.

and definition of each letter's numerical values (p. 8) all underscore its similarity to the Salzburg fragment. This content is followed by more complex numbers and a Jewish calendar (pp. 11–13). Paul Helicz includes three texts in Hebrew transliteration for the purpose of practicing reading and writing: the German translation of The Lord's Prayer (p. 14), a *send brif* (missive) that announces a fair (p. 14f) and a letter of obligation (p. 15f).

The latter version of the alphabet in particular demonstrates that the Salzburg fragment is relatively early but certainly not unique. Given that its host volume was written in St. Peter's Archabbey, we can posit with confidence that the author was a cleric. Whether he was a humanist and Hebraist as Böschenstein or had come from a Jewish family like Paul Helicz, whether he concentrated on the study of the Hebrew Bible or had planned to teach Hebrew language remain open questions, for the fragment will not disclose all its secrets.

As with each fragment in this exhibition, this one should be considered a representation of the history of an irretrievably destroyed Jewish community that cannot be reconstructed.