



Jewish Work and Jewish Identity in the Middle Ages

Dr. Jonathan Ray

Jonathan Ray is the Samuel Eig Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Georgetown University. He holds a B.A. from Tufts University in History and Religion, and a Ph.D. in Jewish History from The Jewish Theological Seminary. Prof. Ray specializes in medieval and early modern Jewish history, focusing on Sephardic Jews. He is the author of *The Sephardic Frontier: The Reconquista and the Jewish Community in Medieval Iberia* (Cornell University Press, 2006), *After Expulsion: 1492 and the Making of Sephardic Jewry* (NYU Press, 2013), and several articles on Jewish history and culture. His forthcoming book, *Jewish Life in Medieval Spain: A New History* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022), illuminates interfaith relations in Spain from the Jewish perspective.

AN ITALIAN JEW DESCRIBES THE REVIVAL
OF SAFED UNDER THE OTTOMANS
(SIXTEENTH CENTURY)

Blessed are you unto the Lord

My brethren,

Be not angry that I do not write you at such length as I had intended to do.

What shall I tell you about this country, as so many people before me have reported its character and greatness in writing and orally? In general, I should like to tell you that, just as in Italy, improvements are being made and new settlements founded, while the population is increasing daily. Such is the case here too. He who saw Safed ten years ago, and observes it now, has the impression of a miracle. For more Jews are arriving here continually, and the tailoring trade grows daily. I have been told that more than 15,000 suits have been manufactured in Safed during this year, besides fancy suits. Every man and every woman who works woolen fabric earns an abundant living.¹

I have already made inquiries after the Ten Tribes. This matter is a miraculous thing in our eyes, and beyond the reach of all people who travel in distant countries, even more than a whole year's journey through a desert. Many people, and particularly travelers, told me for certain that on the road to Mecca many Jewish tent-dwellers live in the desert in the neighborhood of many Arabs who rob everybody who passes by. The Jews and the Arabs have an equal share in the booty. But when a Jew comes across, they offer him gifts and bring him to a safe place.² I heard many stories of this kind. When I was in Tripoli, a Jewish merchant came from Egypt who had 85 servants and handmaids, all Ethiopians. He carried with him a great deal of sugar, rice, paper and other articles; he sold and exchanged them and continued his voyage. Another Jew, a merchant from Tripoli, who carried precious stones and spices with him, came and told me that he had traveled by boat as far as Ethiopia. He saw many miraculous things during a storm on the sea. He traveled on a ship put together without iron nails.³ When he was there he saw people walking about naked,

¹ On the textile industry in Safed, see also below, p. 296, n. 6, and also Part One above, p. 89.

² These legends persisted into modern times. The Jews were usually associated with the people of Khaybar.

³ The boats that plied the Indian Ocean had an outer netting that held the hull together. See, for example, the thirteenth-century illustration of such a vessel in Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (Geneva, 1962), p. 108.

without any clothes because of the great heat. He himself wore nothing else than a shirt of linen, and even this was too heavy for him. He also told me that he had come as far as Sinyēl.⁴ This is a big town exclusively inhabited by Jews. They sold to the king of Portugal 40,000 loads of pepper a year. The money they received was used by them in commercial enterprises. They only recognize the Code of Maimonides and possess no other authorities or traditional law.⁵

I have no special news from the country, except that our gracious lord and king (Sultan Sulaymān) has marched from Constantinople into the territories of (Shah Ṭahmāsp) al-Ṣūfi,⁶ that is, into the Persian Empire. He has taken his land from him without a fight or a battle as far as Baghdad.

There is nothing new in all the Galilee. There is no particular news in Jerusalem (may it be rebuilt and reestablished speedily and in our days. Amen.), except they have brought water from a well which is on the road to Hebron into the fortress which has been built on Mount Zion. Powder and cannon have also been brought there to strengthen it. I have not been to Jerusalem so far, myself, because of my misfortunes. For on the 5th of Adar (February 10), I entered Safed, and a month later, my son Elijah's servant came, and there occurred that which occurred.⁷

Our sister was in Jerusalem and in Hebron for more than two months. You will hear from her own lips about whatever her eyes have seen. She brings with her also a list of the tombs of all the Saints buried in the Holy Land. It has been handwritten for her by the scribes in Jerusalem.

The ship arriving from Ragusa⁸ brought news of the death of Pope Clement VII⁹ and of the election of Cardinal Alexander Farnese¹⁰—may the Lord protect and keep him. I think he, too, will be favorably disposed towards the Jews. Because misfortunes overtook me as soon as I arrived. I have not done any work.

The Exile here is not like in our homeland.¹¹ The Turks hold re-

⁴ Probably Shinkali on the Malabar coast of India. This town had a Jewish community until it was destroyed by the Portuguese about ten years before this letter was written. See Walter J. Fischel, "Cochin," *EJ* 5: 622-23.

⁵ The importance of Maimonides' Code was probably due to the close ties with Yemenite Jewry.

⁶ He was the second ruler of the Safavid dynasty and reigned from 1524-76.

⁷ Dei Rossi's son had been captured by pirates and was being held for ransom.

⁸ The Italian name of Dubrovnik.

⁹ He was pope from 1523-34 and was favorably disposed towards the Jews.

¹⁰ He became Pope Paul III (1534-49). Dei Rossi's judgment about him was correct.

¹¹ He means to say that there is no anti-Semitism here as in Italy.

spectable Jews in esteem. Here and in Alexandria, Egypt, Jews are the chief officers and administrators of the customs, and of the king's revenues. No injuries are perpetrated against them in all the empire. Only this year, in consequence of the extraordinary expenditure caused by the war against Shah Tahmāsp al-Şūfi, were the Jews required to make advances of loans to the princes. Part of the money came from the taxes on the Jewish quarters and part came from town revenues which the Jews tax-farm. Scholars, however, did not have to pay a penny except for the poll tax.

All articles of commerce are available in these regions. Fibers, spun and unspun, are exported from Safed in great quantities, also gallnuts, scammony, oil, honey, and silk in smaller quantities. From the adjoining regions come crimson silk, Cordovan carpets, and all kinds of spices, including pepper, cloves, ginger, and cane-spices. Many people including Jews buy these goods as merchandise.

My daughter-in-law and my grandson Moses are here with me, and tomorrow we shall walk around Safed—God willing. My wife Sarah, since she has come to Safed has recovered with God's help. For the water and the air are unusually good. For this reason illnesses are few here, and therefore, the art of medicine does not flourish here, and physicians do not earn much of a livelihood. Sick people eat cucumbers, both of the large and small variety, squash, and many kinds of fruit.

Now I bless you as long as I live, I talk about you evening and morning, and I pray for you and for all the inhabitants of Italy. . . . Remember me to all our friends and acquaintances. And may the Lord grant that we see each other in the joy of Judea and Jerusalem together with all of Israel our brethren in our lifetime, speedily, and in our days. Amen.

In great, great haste, your brother David dei Rossi, who writes late on Saturday night, shortly before dawn, on the 9th of Nisan 5295 (14 March, 1535). Love and abundant greetings.

Letter of David dei Rossi from the
abridged English translation in F. Kobler,
A Treasury of Jewish Letters, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, 1953),
pp. 337-40, revised according to the Hebrew text in Yaari,
Letters from the Land of Israel, pp. 183-87.



2. Jacob Rader Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*

83.

Turkish Jewry

1553-1555

TURKEY in the sixteenth century was probably the most powerful empire in the world and sheltered a large and growing Jewish population which had fled from the various Christian lands of central and western Europe.

Among the exiles from the Spanish Peninsula who sought refuge in Constantinople was a family of Portuguese Marranos, the Mendes—known among Jews by the name of Nasi—a group of international bankers who had fled from Lisbon to Antwerp, then on to Venice, and finally to Turkey by way of Ferrara. In Venice, Gracia Mendesia Nasi, now the head of the house, was betrayed to the authorities (about 1549) by her sister who was anxious to wrest her own husband's estate from Gracia, into whose care it had been entrusted. Fortunately for Gracia, her nephew and business agent, Joseph Nasi, succeeded in inducing the Turkish Sultan Sulaiman II (1520-1566) to intervene on her behalf to recover the confiscated moneys taken from her as a Christian heretic. Sulaiman tolerated the immigration of Spanish Jewish artisans because he found them useful in the manufacture of munitions; he encouraged the immigration of the wealthy and cultured Spanish and Portuguese Marranos because of their commercial connections, their knowledge of European political conditions, and their unquestioned loyalty to the Moslem state which offered them a safe refuge from the arms of the dreaded Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions.

The following description of Turkish Jewry and of the Mendes is taken from the German diary of Hans Dernschwam. Dernschwam, who was born in Bohemia in 1494 and died there about 1568, was a trusted employee of the Fuggers, the richest international business concern in sixteenth century Europe. He was a highly educated man, had books of Jewish interest in his fine library, and was a friend of the Hebraist, Sebastian Münster. He travelled in 1553-1555 at his own expense through the Balkans, European Turkey, and Asia Minor, making notes of the things that interested him. He has considerable material on the Jews, although like other intellectuals of his day he disliked them.

[[Furthermore, the Jews and foreign merchants from Poland, Reussen [White Russia], Wallachia, and Hungary, as is their wont, know how to travel about in Turkey. No limitations are anywhere placed on their importing goods as long as they pay the custom duties to the sultan. [In most Christian lands limitations in importing goods were placed on Jews.] They march into a caravansary, wherever they want, run about in their own garb, and some of them have barely twenty or fifty florins worth of goods such as Hungarian knives, caps, Prussian russet-leather, brandy made of beer, linen, etc. Unquestionably all the Jews are spies for both sides [Christians and Turks] and he who has the courage can travel with these fellows anywhere, deep into the interior of Egypt or Asia. They travel in large bands, for the Arabs are desperate robbers. . . .

In Turkey you will find in every town innumerable Jews of all countries and languages. And every Jewish group sticks together in accordance with its language. And wherever Jews have been expelled in any land they all come together in Turkey as thick as vermin; speak German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Czechish, Polish, Greek, Turkish, Syriac, Chaldean, and other languages besides these.

As is their custom every one of them wears clothes in accordance with the language he speaks. Usually the garments are long, just like those of the Wallachians, the Turks, and the Greeks, too, that is, a kaftan. This is a long tunic, tied about at the waist, over which is a sort of skirt made of cloth of good quality and silk.

Just as the Turks wear white turbans, the Jews wear yellow. Some foreign Jews still wear the black Italian birettas [square caps]. Some who pretend to be physicians or surgeons wear the red, pointed, elongated birettas.

In Constantinople, the Jews are as thick as ants. The Jews themselves say they are very numerous. However, in the tax list of the past year of 1553 there are supposed to have been 15,035 Jews, not counting women and children, and 6,785 Christians, such as Greeks, Armenians, Caramanians, all of whom pay the sultan the tax called the *Kharadj* [tribute. Stephan Gerlach in 1574 estimated there were 30,000 Jews there]. The Jews are despised in Turkey as they are anywhere else; possess no estates although many own their own homes.

In those places where they can find shelter and have their own quarters or a place to make a living, they prefer to live in the houses of others and pay rent. Most of these houses belong to the mosques, to the priests. When the houses burn down the Moslem priests have to build them again. These houses are miserable, stinking affairs;

the people live one on top of the other so that it is only natural that they have an epidemic every year. They live in the lower part of the city near the sea.

Not far from Adrianople is a city on the Aegean called Salonica. It is believed that more Jews live there than in Constantinople; they say about 20,000. [Up to the end of the World War Salonica had more Jews than non-Jews.] Many are cloth-weavers whose products are sold throughout Turkey. . . .

In Alexandria, in Missr (that is to say, Cairo), in Aleppo, in Antioch in Syria, and in Jerusalem and everywhere else there are many Jews. Those Jews that are old, who have a little money, travel to the Holy Land, to Jerusalem, and still hope that they will some day all come together, from all countries, into their own native land and there secure hold of the government. [Jewish nationalism was very strong in the 16th century.] The well-to-do Jews send money to Jerusalem to support them, for one cannot make any money there, nor is there any money there. . . .

There are forty-two or more synagogues in Constantinople. Every Jewish nationality goes to its own synagogue.

The Jews lend nothing to the Turks. The latter are not to be trusted.

The Jews are allowed to travel and to do business anywhere they wish in Turkey, Egypt, Missr (that is, Cairo), Alexandria, Aleppo, Armenia, Tataria, Babylonia as far as Persia, Reussen, Poland, and Hungary. There is no spot in the world which hasn't some of its Jews in Constantinople, and there are no wares which the Jews do not carry about and trade in. Just as soon as a foreign ship comes in from Alexandria, Kaffa [now Feodosia in the Crimea], Venice, and other places, the Jews are the first to clamber over the side.

They import all the jewels that come to Constantinople from India by way of Persia. They can ask 200 florin for a stone that isn't worth a penny. . . .

Many Marranos—that is Jews who turned Christian, as in Spain, or voluntarily became Christians in other places—when they can't make an honest living abroad, go crooked, and in order to escape the gallows all come to Turkey and become Jews again. They endure contempt, poverty, hunger, and thirst in order to be able to have time for themselves and not be kept captive by the Turks like the Christians. They tolerate all sorts of knavery and roguery. They are not ashamed to commit any villainy.

Those Jews, too, who wander from country to country and allow themselves to be converted two or three times in order to make some

money and at the same time learn a trade, are all to be found in Constantinople and Turkey. Their trade supports them to some extent as, for instance, a bookbinder who was long settled in Breslau and who came here with two sons. His daughter came approximately the following year, in 1552. [This bookbinder probably pretended to be a Christian in Germany.] . . .

About the year 1552, before we entered Turkey, a scholarly German died at Constantinople. He knew both Greek and Arabic; got in among the Jews and accepted their faith. He also learned Hebrew. Must have committed a crime somewhere abroad or been an Anabaptist. Said to have studied at Wittenberg. [Anabaptist was the sixteenth century term for any radical. Today we use the term "Communist."] . . .

The Jews boast that many Christians come into the country every year and become Jews. Also, while we were still in the city, a number of Jews became Turks. . . .

There are all sorts of artisans among the Jews who make a living selling their products publicly, for in Turkey every man is free to carry on his trade at home, in a shop, or on the streets. [Whether he is skilled or not, knows little or much, no one has a word to say if he only pays his tax to the sultan and his rent for his shop. [Unlike the Christian lands, there were no limitations on Jews in Turkey in the practice of the crafts and commerce.] . . .

There are two cloth-shearers among the Jews and some among the Greeks, too. The Jews of Constantinople also have a printing press and print many rare books. They have goldsmiths, lapidaries, painters, tailors, butchers, druggists, physicians, surgeons, cloth-weavers, wound-surgeons, barbers, mirror-makers, dyers . . . silk-workers, goldwashers, refiners of ores, assayers, engravers. . . .

Their medical doctors cannot be learned in medicine and surgery for many of them know no Greek or Latin and are not students of philosophy. Those of whom I have heard know nothing beyond Hebrew and Arabic. They have stolen everything from Galen [a famous Greek medical authority, d. about 200 C.E.], and have a few prescriptions which they have gotten from Italian druggists in Italy and from their parents who were druggists' clerks. There are no other learned doctors in Turkey. There is one, however, by the name of [Solomon Ashkenazi, a famous physician and diplomat, d. before 1605] who used to frequent the embassies. He knows Latin, philosophy, and Italian well. He has brought speedy relief to some people.

The sultan has never used any but a certain Jewish physician [Moses Hamon, d. about 1554] who probably rendered good service

to him and the court. He was allowed to build a large stone house of three or four stories in the Jewish quarter. He died while we were at Constantinople. His son [Joseph] is also said to be a physician. He now has his father's position; is said to have a prescription to cure a bellyache. . . .

The Jews also have a few druggists, and as is usual in Turkey, they have dirty shops; not as among the Christians, stores, fine places. . . .

In 1553 an old Portuguese woman [Gracia Mendesia Nasi] came to Constantinople from Venice with her daughter and servants. The Jews are not in agreement as to who her husband was and what his name was. Some say he was called Diego Medes and his brother was named Francisco of Antwerp. [Dernschwam was confused. Her husband was Francisco Mendes and his younger brother was Diogo.]

She is reported to have escaped with great wealth from Portugal to Venice [about 1543] after her husband's death; is said to have a sister there who was supposed to come here, but has somehow been detained.

The Jews are very proud of her; call her a *seniora*. She lives also in luxury and extravagance; has many servants, maids also, among them two from the Netherlands.

She is said to have been formerly a Marrano and here to have become a Jewess again. She does not live at Constantinople among the Jews, but at Galata in a country home and garden for which she is said to pay a ducat a day rent.

The Venetians are reported to have arrested her and to have refused to let her go on. She is then said to have intrigued with the sultan's physician [Moses Hamon] who had a son and hoped she would give him her daughter. The sultan is then supposed to have taken the part of the *seniora* and they had to let her go from Venice.

Her husband [Francisco Mendes] is said to have been a Marrano, and when he died had begged of her that his remains be carried from the Christian land and sent to Jerusalem and there be buried. This she did in 1554. Accompanied by a large contribution the bones were sent there and were buried by the Jews.

She is a dangerous woman, like Barbara of Cologne [Cilli(?), the notorious German Empress, d. 1451]. Carries on a large overseas business in wool, pepper, and grain with Venice and Italy.

She had promised to give her daughter to a Portuguese or Spaniard. He has been at the court of the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Christian prisoners know him by sight. Is said to be her sister's son. [He was really a son of one of her husband's brothers.] The Jews who are around him daily do not agree as to his name, in order that

people should not learn to know such rogues. He is said to have been named Zuan Mykas [Juan Miguez] or Sixs; his father is said to have been a physician by the name of Samuel. [Juan Miguez was Joseph Nasi, later Duke of Naxos, husband of Reyna, daughter of Gracia.]

This rogue whom I have just mentioned came to Constantinople in 1554 with over twenty well-dressed Spanish servants. They attend him as if he were a prince. He himself wore silk clothes lined with sable. Before him went two janizaries with staves, as mounted-lackeys, as is the Turkish custom, in order that nothing should happen to him. He had himself circumcised in the month of April, 1554.

Right after this the aunt married off the daughter [Reyna] to him and before and after the wedding, for months, she entertained lavishly. The French ambassador [Condignac] also came over from Constantinople to Galata on St. Bartholomew's Day [August 24], and they were very ceremonious to one another. So the Jews tell me who were with them daily. Even as birds of a feather flock together, so do other scoundrels and betrayers of Christendom.

He is a large person with a black trimmed beard.

The servants who came with him and with the women have also all been circumcised and have become Jews; must have been thieves and Marranos who were whipped out of town in some other place. Since they now see how Jews are despised here and what a poor country Turkey is they are now said to regret their step very much, although before they came here they were bold enough. Such scoundrels will turn up again in the course of time among the Christians and commit villainy.

The *seniora*, whom I have mentioned, and her son-in-law live in such state that it would amply befit a prince. They feed about eighty people a day; must have cheated people somewhere. Something must be wrong with them. They allege that they have left a lot of wealth behind them; also that some is following them on the sea. And considering the cost of living in Turkey, their wealth will soon shrink here. They gave the pashas a lot, and distributed several thousand ducats to the poor Jews or their hospital.

The above mentioned Portuguese, like other Spaniards at the Imperial Court, must have practiced jousting and tilting. He brought in all sorts of equipment such as armor, helmets, guns, long and short lances, also battle axes and large and small muskets. And even at Galata in his garden he retained this mummery of having his servants tilt and joust. . . .

The Jews do not allow any of their own to go about begging. They have collectors who go about from house to house and collect

into a common chest for the poor. This is used to support the poor and the hospital.

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JE, "Constantinople"; "Mendesia, Gracia"; "Nasi, Joseph, Duke of Naxos"; "Nasi, Reyna"; "Salonica"; "Turkey."

3. Jacob Rader Marcus and Marc Saperstein, "The Barbers' Guild at Cracow, Poland 1639," in *The Jews in Christian Europe: A Source Book, 315-1791*

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The Barbers' Guild at Cracow, Poland

1639

There are records of Jewish guilds in Alexandria and Asia Minor as far back as the days of the old Roman Empire; and during the Middle Ages, too, Jewish craftsmen banded together into associations in a number of the Mediterranean lands. The older guilds were concerned primarily with charitable and religious activities such as providing for the poor, caring for the sick and attending to the bodies of the dead, and gathering together for study; these voluntary societies, or confraternities (*hevrot*), provided an intermediate level of identification and activity between the individual Jew and the community as a whole. The leaders of the society drafted their own rules (usually based on tradition) and enforced them on those who agreed to be members. Such rules therefore belong in a treatment of Jewish self-government.

Beginning in the seventeenth century, especially in Poland, Jews organized in an attempt to improve their economic status, particularly by maintaining appropriate standards and controlling competition. Their policy was: "live and let live" – for members. In this as in most other respects the Jewish guilds closely patterned themselves after their Christian models.

Jews formed their own associations through necessity. As Jews they could not participate in the religious life of the Christian guilds. Moreover, the Christian guilds made every attempt to limit the practice of their trades to Christians alone. But they were not successful, for Jewish guilds arose and were grudgingly tolerated by the Christian craftsmen, accepted by the state, and recognized by the Jewish community-council.

The following account describes the organization of Jewish master-barbers in Cracow in 1639. Although but seven in number they organized along guild lines. Barbers in those days – unlike their modern successors – did

considerable minor surgical work. The striped barber-pole, which still survives, symbolizes the bandaged, bleeding arm, and is reminiscent of the surgical work barbers once performed. In Cracow, as in other towns, there were trained Jewish physicians as well as male nurses. The barbers occupied a place somewhere between the two. Jewish barbers did not as a rule solicit Christian trade, for the Council of Four Lands objected, fearing that blood-letting would lay Jews open to the charge of ritual murder.

The selection, originally in Hebrew, is taken from the archives of the Jewish community-council of Cracow. By incorporating these laws into its records, the Jewish council made their provisions mandatory for every Jew in the city.

53.1 *Regulations of the Guild*

Whereas the association of barbers has noticed apprentices breaking away from their masters and considering themselves equal in knowledge to competent physicians, with the result that a great deal of distress has been caused by them, for they have endangered the lives of people through their blood-letting and their healing of bruises and wounds – for these apprentices are inexperienced in this important work since they have not served under good, competent physicians, but have based their work only upon their limited, confused intelligence;

And whereas they also hurt competent tax-paying [barber-]physicians and make it impossible for them to make a living and to support their families;

Therefore, the following seven law-abiding master-barbers:

Sender the barber¹

Shmerl the barber,

his brother, Hirsch,

Hayyim the barber,

Moses the barber – may his Rock and Redeemer guard him – and

Jehiel the barber,

have agreed – and have actually shaken hands and have made a binding compact – to affirm and to maintain in the most effective way possible everything that is specified below, as if executed in the presence of the highest court, and as if approved by the chief officials and the town council itself, namely:

¹ Sender was also the Jewish communal physician for the poor. The text says “seven,” but only six names are given.

1. First, they are obligated to make a weekly collection for charity among their members, receiving as much as the generous instincts of each one prompt him to give.²
2. No barber may keep in his shop more than one apprentice to teach the trade to. This apprentice must bind himself for three successive years.³ During the first two years the apprentice shall under no circumstance be permitted to bleed a patient; and even in the third year he shall not be allowed to let blood except when his master is at his side. This is in order that he may practice and accustom himself to the work properly, and not faint or become slipshod in his profession.
3. Each barber may, as is the custom, engage another apprentice as a partner who is to get one-third of the profits. However, such an apprentice may be employed only on the specific condition that the majority of the members of the above-mentioned association agree to allow him to become a partner; and once the majority of the members of the association have agreed upon him then none of them may, whether by an offer of money or by verbal inducements, coax him away. This same prohibition applies to the apprentice who has bound himself for three years. Whoever among the barbers violates this prohibition is required to give, as an unquestioned obligation, one old-thaler to charity, not to mention other severe penalties which will be imposed upon him.⁴
4. They have also agreed that all the apprentices who bind themselves to work in a barber shop – whether as an apprentice for three years or as a partner in the manner stated above – are compelled, first of all, to obligate and record themselves in the minute-books of the Jewish community to the effect that they will not marry a local girl, in order not to cast additional burdens on the people of this community – may their Rock and their Redeemer guard them!⁵ If anyone of these apprentices will not obligate himself in the matter described above, it will then be absolutely forbidden for any barber, under threat of the most severe penalties, to keep him in his employ even a single day.
5. The above-mentioned barbers have also bound themselves not to raise

2 This money might be used for the widows and orphans of guild members.

3 In the third year the apprentice became a journeyman and was paid. Before this he probably got his board only.

4 Money received from fines was usually applied to the expenses of the guild.

5 An apprentice was apparently too poor to support a wife.

prices and thus impose a burden upon the people of our community; they will accept the fee that people have been accustomed of old to pay for blood-letting, cupping, hair cutting, and the healing of bruises and wounds, so as not to give rise to any complaint against themselves on the part of the people of our community. On the other hand, they will not cheapen or lower – God forbid – their fees by being too liberal, and foregoing that which is their just due by accepting less than one groschen net from everyone for cupping. Whoever will transgress by treating the matter of fees lightly will always have to give to charity, as an unquestioned obligation, a half a gulden, not to mention other punishments, and both he and anyone he may send will be prevented from doing any more work.

6. The barbers have also agreed that if a member of the community should happen to call in a barber just for a short time and not be satisfied with him, and then take another in his place, the second is not permitted to begin his service until the customer pays the first barber for the work he has done and performed. And under no circumstance is the second barber permitted to cast any aspersions on the first colleague or to vaunt himself at his expense. It goes without saying that one barber should not poach upon the preserves of another, under threat of a fine which the officers and judges of the community will impose upon him.⁶

7. If it should happen that a householder summons two barbers at the same time, then if both arrive together while the wound is still open, they must share the fee and the expenses equally. If, however, one arrived first and closed the wound, the second barber is expected to leave the home of the patient immediately.

8. The barbers have also agreed that if a competent barber who does not belong to our community should settle in our midst, even though he be acceptable to the entire community, if he should be unwilling to bind himself by a hard and fast pact to accept all the rules above recorded, then the barbers are bound to uphold one another in opposing that man.⁷ They will employ every possible means to prevent him from doing his work until he submit to the observance and performance of all the above-mentioned prescriptions without the slightest omission.

⁶ The wife and children of a barber would sometimes steal customers away from his competitor.

⁷ Both Christian and Jewish guilds opposed anyone practicing their trade unless a member of the guild.

9. The barbers' association obligates itself to do likewise to barbers who are residents of our community but who are currently out of town. It will take rigorous measures to prevent them from doing any of the above-described work until they first agree to carry out all that has been recorded here.

10. These prescriptions apply particularly to sons-in-law. They are not to interfere with any of these above-mentioned provisions, but must carry them out; and the barbers are in duty bound to oppose them and to prevent them from engaging in the work.⁸

11. The seven barbers above mentioned have also agreed that there shall be brotherliness and friendship among themselves, and that during the three festivals they will have a good time, enjoy themselves to the full, and be glad and merry of heart.

Done in a binding form, with all the authority of rabbinic law, and with an actual handshake, this day, Sunday the 22nd of Kislev, [5]400. . . [December 18, 1639].⁹

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⁸ Sons-in-law, unless guild members, must not practice the trade.

⁹ In rabbinic law a handshake consummates certain kinds of deals.

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