

## HISTORY AND MEMORY OF SELF: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF RABBI JACOB EMDEN

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In the unfolding of the Jewish historical experience, the literary genre of autobiography is a relatively late arrival. While others in the societies within which Jews lived chose to express themselves in this manner, Jews opted for other forms of self-expression. Ancient and medieval Jewry could not boast of the equivalent of an Augustine, an Abelard, a Teresa of Avila, a Dante, or others whose literary oeuvre included a major work of this sort. It was not until early modern times that autobiography began to become a more accepted and popular form of Jewish discourse.<sup>1</sup> In attempting to account for this phenomenon, a contemporary scholar has speculated that it reflects the centrality of the group over the individual in premodern Jewish life. He wrote: "In the classical [Jewish] tradition the individual is so firmly embedded within communal, legal and historical structures that his or her separate inner drama is simply not viewed as a significant source of meaning for the tradition as a whole. . . . Although the individual is responsible for his actions, the meaning of his life is absorbed in collective structures and collective myths."<sup>2</sup>

It seems to me, however, that the reason lies elsewhere, not in the individual-communal dichotomy but rather in the acknowledged hierarchy of values within the individual himself or herself. What I believe we have here is an expression on the individual level of the general phenomenon noted by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi on the national level. In his *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Yerushalmi pointed out that "although Judaism throughout the ages was absorbed with the meaning of history, historiography itself played at best an ancillary role among the Jews, and often no role at all." Specific historical details paled into insignificance compared to what really mattered, the overarching patterns and archetypes of sin and punishment, exile and redemption. The unique specificity of particular historical events was blurred as they were simply assimilated into a search for the larger meaning and significance of history. The repetitive, cyclical, and ahistorical nature of liturgy and ritual overshadowed and ultimately marginalized the details of the historical realm. The larger issue of the Jewish people's relationship with God mattered; the smaller issue of the story of that people's history did not.<sup>3</sup>

Writing the story of the group (history) is, in this regard, parallel to writing the

story of the individual (autobiography). Just as concern with the Jewish nation's relationship with God made historiography irrelevant for the people as a whole, so did the Jew's personal quest for that relationship make autobiography irrelevant for the individual. What was important for the premodern Jew was not the specific details of his or her personal life but rather the larger metaphysical issues of his or her relationship with God and with His divinely revealed Torah. It was the quest for spirituality rather than the daily mundane experiences of life that served as the ultimate focus of both national and personal Jewish endeavor. As a result, the most significant aspect of a life was not what made it different and distinct from others—that is, the details of the particular events specific to that life—but rather, on the contrary, what that life had or was expected to have in common with other lives. Hence, no story of one's own life was a story worth telling.<sup>4</sup>

This state of affairs continued even into the seventeenth century, when there appeared two very important autobiographical works written by Glückel of Hameln and Leone da Modena.<sup>5</sup> The confluence of these works, as well as a handful of other more minor ones from that century,<sup>6</sup> does not yet represent a fundamental shift in the attitude of Jews toward such writing. Such a change does not occur, indeed, until the appearance of Solomon Maimon's *Lebensgeschichte* in 1792.<sup>7</sup> Rather, they continue the tradition of isolated autobiographical writings being produced here and there throughout the Middle Ages<sup>8</sup> and, like them, need to be examined not as necessarily heralding a new genre in Jewish literary writing but individually, unrelated to and independent of one another.

Nevertheless, scholars have pointed to two background factors that both of these major seventeenth century works had in common. One, which they shared with Christian autobiography, was "concern for one's family—for recording its history, its triumphs and disasters, and its recipes for living, and for passing these on with the patrimony to the next generation."<sup>9</sup> The other is the literary model of the *zava'ah*, or ethical will, which reflects a desire to bequeath to the next generation not only an economic inheritance but a spiritual one as well, with the life story serving moral and didactic purposes.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, in the case of Leone da Modena, Natalie Zemon Davis identifies three elements that combine to characterize that work: confession (Modena often referred to his "sins" in general, with specific focus on the terrible adverse effects and negative consequences of his inveterate gambling), lament for the calamities and miseries he suffered through life, and, finally, celebration of his accomplishments as a writer and preacher. She fits Modena's work into the category of the autobiographical strategy identified by William L. Howarth as "autobiography as oratory" (as opposed to autobiography as drama or as poetry).<sup>11</sup>

The eighteenth century brought with it the autobiography of one of its most colorful and controversial figures, *Megillat sefer* by Rabbi Jacob Emden (1697–1776). Reared in a learned home, Emden was a preeminent scholar whose

achievement in the field of rabbinic literature was substantive and significant. He was a highly prolific author, whose literary oeuvre contains works on all genres of rabbinic creativity. In addition, Emden played a major role in the eighteenth-century battle against Sabbatianism and, in the last two and a half decades of his life, fully devoted himself to exposing and hounding all vestiges of the movement. Finally, Emden lived long enough to witness the emergence of the Haskalah. Unlike some of his more traditional colleagues, he was sensitive to the shifting nuances of thought represented by that movement and was aware of the changes in Jewish life that it potentially represented.<sup>12</sup>

Among the works produced by this unusually prolific writer was *Megillat sefer*, one of the most unusual, open, revealing, and unself-conscious autobiographies in Jewish and even general history.<sup>13</sup> It is a multifaceted work and requires analysis on a number of different levels: (1) motivation or authorial intent—what prompted Emden to write it? (2) structure, content, and even balance—why did Emden highlight or stress some information and experiences over others? (3) value as an objective historical document—simply speaking, how reliable is it? (4) window into the inner, intimate, private, and personal life of the author—what does it tell us about Emden himself?

On the face of it, the book as a whole seems curiously unbalanced and the selectivity of its contents somewhat strange. Why is it, for example, that Emden devotes roughly the first fifty pages, fully one quarter of the entire book, to a biography of his father, the great rabbinic scholar, Hakham 'Tsevi Ashkenazi?<sup>14</sup> True, Hakham Tsevi was a very important figure in his son's life, but the amount of attention devoted to him seems well out of proportion in a book purported to be about Emden himself.

Second, how does one explain what appears to be a disproportionately large amount of space devoted to degrading, destroying, and vilifying Rabbi Ezekiel Katzenellenbogen, a recognized rabbinic and communal authority of the period who served as chief rabbi of Emden's Triple Community for over three and a half decades, from 1713 until his death on July 9, 1749?<sup>15</sup> In a long and rambling tirade, Emden repeatedly poked fun at what he characterized as Katzenellenbogen's unintelligible speech and handwriting; accused him of greed, theft, perversion of justice, and other major violations of Jewish law; asserted that he lacked simple common sense; claimed that he unfairly took advantage of his position; and charged that he was abysmally ignorant of even basic, elementary features of Jewish law and tradition.<sup>16</sup> Why this tremendous animus against Katzenellenbogen in the first place and, also, why is it here, expressed to such extremes in a book ostensibly devoted to the story of Emden's own life?

There are less significant apparent anomalies, nuances, and emphases that also call for comment. Why did Emden go out of his way to describe his experience as rabbi in the city of Emden (from 1729 to 1733) in a very positive light, and why was he so careful in delineating the circumstances under which he felt forced to leave there?<sup>17</sup> Of course, it is natural for an author to present himself in as favorable a light as possible, but is there something else relevant here that could provide a different perspective for these as well as similar comments?

The key to all these enigmas lies in a correct appreciation of the precise purpose of this book. Emden had a specific goal in mind, and it was not at all to simply record his own life story for posterity. Once properly understood, it perfectly explains and clarifies all these otherwise inexplicable imbalances, emphases, and anomalies.

Emden offered the reader of *Megillat sefer* three different explanations to account for why he wrote it. First, he said, he wanted to remember and to publicize God's many kindnesses to him, which enabled him to overcome all the adversities and calamities that afflicted him through life:

To make known the lovingkindness of God to me from my youth, in spite of the fact that much afflicted me. . . . I was [exposed] to almost all hardships, to difficult occurrences and mishaps without even a moment's surcease. The Lord, may He be blessed, rescued me from them all and aided me until now. He has punished me severely, but did not hand me over to death (Psalms 118:18). . . . I therefore said that I would tell of your Name, O Lord, to my brothers, my children and my descendants so that I will not forget His kindnesses and my soul not forget all His bounties (Psalms 103:2). . . . That a future generation might know—children yet to be born—and in turn tell their children (Psalms 78:6) and they should praise the Lord for He is good, His steadfast love is eternal (Psalms 118:1, 29) for he has saved the soul of the needy from the hands of evildoers (Jeremiah 20:13).

Second, he wrote, he said, to strengthen others who were similarly afflicted by providing them with faith to persevere in spite of all the difficulties they encounter, "to strengthen weak hands, those broken of spirit and afflicted of heart. . . . May many see it and stand in awe, and trust in the Lord (Psalms 40:4), that they might put their confidence in God, and not forget God's great deeds (Psalms 78:7)."

And finally, he wrote, he said:

In order that the sun of my righteousness should shine forth . . . because of the wicked that oppress me, my deadly enemies that encompass me about (Psalms 17:9). They have slandered me, making me odious among the inhabitants of the land (Genesis 34:30), to destroy me by their hands with their insults, lies and recklessness which have spread to every side and corner. Their shame is throughout the land. Many of their libelous writings will certainly remain extant in the world for some time. Therefore, necessity has compelled me to clarify my case before God and man. My righteousness will go forth as the light. He will deliver the guilty (Job 22:30). Truth is my witness. Behold it will serve as a vindication for me, for my children and my descendants, may God protect them.<sup>18</sup>

Who are these "wicked . . . deadly enemies" to whom Emden refers, whose slander and libel motivated him to take up his pen in self-defense?

On Thursday morning, February 4, 1751, Emden made an announcement in his private synagogue, located in his home in a suburb of Hamburg, asserting that the author of an amulet he had recently examined could not possibly be anything other than a follower of the false messiah Shabbetai Tsevi. Although Emden did not directly assert that Rabbi Jonathan Eybeschütz was responsible for the amulet, it was a well-known fact that it was prepared by none other than

Rabbi Eybeschütz, the recently elected chief rabbi of the greater Hamburg Jewish community. This accusation of Emden's, which charged someone who was probably the greatest rabbinic figure of his generation of being guilty of outright, blatant heresy, was a most serious one, and it gave rise to one of the most intense, explosive, bitter, nasty, and repercussive controversies in all of Jewish history.<sup>19</sup>

For some time prior to Eybeschütz's arrival, an unusually large number of women in the Jewish Triple Community of Altona, Hamburg, and Wandsbeck, then under unified jurisdiction, had died during childbirth. After becoming chief rabbi, Eybeschütz granted the request of some pregnant women to provide them with amulets, which, they believed, would protect them from death. Shortly thereafter, Eybeschütz was accused of including cryptic references to Shabbetai Tsevi in the amulets he issued, and the matter was brought to the attention of Emden. After first refusing to become involved, a claim he often repeated in the ensuing months and years,<sup>20</sup> Emden made that fateful announcement on that Thursday in February, initiating a battle to which he wholeheartedly dedicated himself with single-minded zeal and devotion until his own death twenty-five years later.

The Triple Community's lay leadership was extremely upset by this extraordinarily serious charge leveled against their newly elected chief rabbi. The very next day, on Friday, February 5, they made a public announcement in Altona's Great Synagogue rescinding Emden's right to hold religious services in his home, a special privilege he had been granted by the community when he had arrived in Altona eighteen years earlier, in 1733.<sup>21</sup> The following week they decreed that no one could have any personal contact with Emden for four weeks, revoked the privilege of operating a printing press that he had been granted by two successive Danish monarchs, and ordered him to leave the community within six months. Emden refused to leave and was placed under house arrest.<sup>22</sup>

The controversy began to escalate as each side turned to others for support. Over the course of time, Emden won the assistance of R. Joshua Falk, chief rabbi of Frankfurt-am-Main, R. Samuel Hilman, chief rabbi of Metz, and his brother-in-law, R. Aryeh Leib, Ashkenazic chief rabbi of Amsterdam. In addition, R. Ezekiel Landau, then chief rabbi of Jampol, also became convinced of the correctness of Emden's position although he was more circumspect in expressing his opinion out of a desire to achieve some sort of compromise.<sup>23</sup> Eybeschütz too began to rally his supporters, drawn in large numbers from the many students he had taught over the years in Prague and Metz. Just a few weeks after the outbreak of the controversy, on February 21, the chief rabbi delivered a major sermon in Altona's Great Synagogue in which he sharply denied the charges leveled against him and strongly condemned, in the harshest of language, anyone associated with Sabbatianism.<sup>24</sup> Tensions did not abate, and sensing that he was in personal danger, Emden fled to his brother-in-law in Amsterdam some three months later, on Saturday night, May 22, 1751, leaving his wife and family behind. Unfettered now by any fears of personal safety or by any communal restraints, Emden intensified his struggle against Eybeschütz and sought further support for his position

from other religious as well as secular authorities. On June 30, 1752, the Danish authorities ruled that Emden had a right to return to Altona and to live there in peace. He left Amsterdam on July 26 and arrived back in his home nine days later.

The entire Triple Community was split into pro-Emden and pro-Eybeschütz factions. Personal insults, physical fights and even street brawls became common between members of the contending groups. Local secular authorities and the Danish monarch were drawn by both sides into the conflict, as were leading rabbis from other Jewish communities in Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, Italy, Hungary, Holland, Turkey, France, Lithuania, the Ukraine, and Palestine. Hamburg's police were summoned to quell disturbances, local newspapers carried accounts of what had become a major cause célèbre for Jews and non-Jews alike, and the violence spilled over into the marketplace, fairs, the cemetery, private homes, the synagogue, and even onto the floor of Hamburg's stock exchange (Bourse). Excommunications and counterexcommunications of people as well as books were traded across Europe. Proclamations, insults, threats, and denunciations were hurled by one faction against the other, and the tension and bitterness continued even after Eybeschütz died more than thirteen years after the controversy began, on September 18, 1764.

There is no question that in this *Megillat sefer* text Emden is referring to his controversy with Eybeschütz, raging with full force when these words were written in the 1750s.<sup>25</sup> And although he refers to the first rationale as being the "strongest," and while the first as well as second explanation he presents do play an important role in the work, as we shall see, in spite of their rather conventional nature (to publicize the great extent of God's kindnesses<sup>26</sup> and to give his fellow Jews strength and faith to overcome suffering), there is equally no question that the overriding primary impetus behind *Megillat sefer* was a desire on the part of Emden to clear his name and vindicate himself in his controversy with Eybeschütz. As it turns out, the bulk of the work is almost a point-by-point refutation of specific criticisms leveled against Emden by his opponents in the controversy. From this perspective, authorial intent, structure, content, balance, and emphasis become crystal clear. There is no doubt that it is the Emden-Eybeschütz controversy that serves as the "center of gravity" for this work, and the "riddle" of its meaning is solved.<sup>27</sup>

From the very outset of this bitter conflict, Emden was accused by the pro-Eybeschütz forces of being grossly disrespectful to contemporary Torah scholars and to even more illustrious great rabbis of previous generations and of being simply an inveterate agitator and petty, jealous troublemaker with a long history of being rejected by all with whom he came into personal contact.<sup>28</sup> His reputation was being sullied and potentially ruined by these and other constant and relentless attacks upon him. He wrote this work, he claimed, with the explicit intention of defending himself from these charges by setting the record straight for

his contemporaries and for posterity. *Megillat sefer* is a carefully crafted attempt by Emden to defend himself in his controversy with Eybeschutz. Its major goal was nothing other than to present a judiciously formulated effort to salvage, in whatever way he could, an increasingly battered reputation.

Attempting to account for his extreme anti-Sabbatianism, manifested in his single-minded opposition to Eybeschutz, in sources other than a bitter, contentious, and cantankerous personality, as he was accused of having, Emden took the trouble to invoke, at great length, the image, model, and precedent of his revered father. Hakham Tsevi was himself involved in a bitter struggle against Nehemiah Hiyya Hayyun, whom he had accused of being a Sabbatian while serving as the Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Amsterdam in 1713.<sup>29</sup> Emden invoked his father's struggle against Hayyun as a model and precedent for his own struggle against Eybeschutz some forty years later. Here were, in both cases, heroic figures possessed of great rabbinic learning, waging lonely and intense battles against the accursed Sabbatian heresy, at odds with the established communal leadership and at great personal risk. Emden repeatedly asserted, in *Megillat sefer* and elsewhere, that it was his revered father's experience that served as the paradigm after which he modeled his own behavior, referring to himself on a number of occasions as "a zealot, the son of a zealot (*kana'i ben kana'i*)"<sup>30</sup> and noting as often that "whatever happened to the father happened to the son (*kol mah she-ira la-av ira la-ben*)."<sup>31</sup> A fully positive and sympathetic treatment of Hakham Tsevi was, therefore, absolutely crucial and essential for his own defense. Although postponing the presentation of his own life story until the book was well underway helped account for a work that Israel Zinberg characterized as having a "unique construction,"<sup>32</sup> it was vitally necessary and fit perfectly with his primary motive in composing the work.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Hakham Tsevi's own reputation was under attack by Emden's opponents in the controversy. Not only did they assert that Emden was forced out of the town that bears that name against his will (see below), they also charged that Hakham Tsevi was expelled from Amsterdam in 1714 in the wake of the Hayyun controversy. Hence, an accurate presentation of his father's life story, setting the record straight, was crucial for Emden as well.<sup>34</sup>

This interpretation similarly accounts for Emden's attacks on Katzenellenbogen and the rather intense bitterness with which he expressed them. Emden was depicted in general as a troublemaker and agitator but was also specifically accused of showing gross disrespect for Katzenellenbogen, the chief rabbi of his community, who had died prior to the outbreak of the controversy, in 1749. In a letter to Emden's brother-in-law, R. Aryeh Leib, then chief rabbi of Amsterdam, dated in the spring of 1752, the lay leadership of the Triple Community charged:

He led with madness, not listening to the voice of a teacher, leader or judge of his community. He attacked the holy ones on high, the sages of the city and its rabbis, particularly our master, the Gaon, R. Yehezkel [Katzenellenbogen], of blessed memory, in whose shadow we have lived for these thirty-six years. He [i.e., Emden] considered him as one of the boors and printed about him words which should be burned. The least [of

the calumnies] he wrote about him was that he did not read, nor study nor serve scholars. All his humbling of himself in the introduction to his book was not an expression of humility but he spoke the truth; he is not worthy to be depended upon for his rulings.<sup>35</sup>

Emden was very sensitive to this charge and went to great lengths to defend himself in a number of works he wrote related to the controversy. It is possible to characterize Emden's response as taking three distinct forms. One approach was to take the offensive, turning the tables on Eybeschütz by accusing him of exhibiting much greater disrespect for the former chief rabbi than he, Emden, had ever shown. When Emden addressed himself to this letter in his point by point refutation of Eybeschütz's *Luhot 'Edut*, he turned the tables on his arch-opponent and charged that the latter's alleged respect for Katzenellenbogen was a fraud:

Now, please listen [to a story] about the piety of this tyrant and persecutor of Jews [i.e., Eybeschütz], about his deeds and his nature in honoring scholars and the Torah itself. Allow me to tell you something about him that will cause the hair on the flesh of the listener to bristle and his ears to tingle. It once happened that a young man, Zalman son of R. Abraham Fürth, travelled from here to Metz with the permission of the old head of the rabbinical court, R. Yehezkel [Katzenellenbogen], may he rest in peace. The rabbi told him that when he arrives in Metz he should greet the head of the rabbinical court there [i.e., Eybeschütz], this evil heretic, and should relate to him on his [i.e., R. Yehezkel's] behalf that he asks of him to study his book, *Kneset Yehezkel*, which he will enjoy. When he came there, the young man fulfilled his mission. Behold he, the devil of the toilet, was coming out of the bathroom where he met his natural needs. The young visitor (who was related to the heretic's wife) related to him the words of R. Yehezkel in his name. Then this heretic answered and said, "You spoke correctly. His book is very precious to me. I therefore keep it in the bathroom and, when necessary, take a page from it to wipe myself, as I just did." When the aforementioned young man returned here, he related this story before all. . . . So does he hold the book of R. Yehezkel in precious honor!<sup>36</sup>

Emden actually repeated this bizarre charge elsewhere in his writings where he stressed its authenticity. On another occasion he introduced this report with "I will relate it as I heard it from a reliable, learned man" and concluded it as follows: "These were the words that I heard and that were related to me in truth. An enduring witness in the heavens (Psalms 89:38) [will testify] that I did not consciously change anything. I did not fabricate words from my heart."<sup>37</sup>

Emden also responded to this charge by taking two apparently opposite positions. First, he claimed that, when warranted, he did come to the chief rabbi's defense. He made specific reference to a lengthy monograph he printed some sixteen years earlier, entitled *Iggeret bikkoret*, written in support of a position taken by Katzenellenbogen. In 1736 the question arose as to whether a person whose diseased right testicle had to be surgically removed fell into the category of a *patsu'a dakah* who is prohibited by biblical law (Deut. 23:2) from having marital relations. Rabbi Katzenellenbogen's hesitation at that time in allowing this individual to remain married to his wife was strongly opposed by Rabbi Moses Hagiz, a leading contemporary scholar and polemicist, and Rabbi Samson Bloch, a local judge in Altona. Katzenellenbogen turned to Emden for support and was rewarded with a strong defense of his position.<sup>38</sup> Emden often pointed to



his *Iggeret bikoret* as proof that he was not simply indiscriminately contrary and negative when it came to the chief rabbi and that, therefore, in those cases where he did think Katzenellenbogen was wrong and expressed himself accordingly, he was simply following hallowed rabbinic tradition and practice. "Such has always been the way of Torah," he asserted, to argue and debate its laws and rulings whenever one felt compelled to do so. If Rav Yosef could wonder whether the great R. Abiathar "is an authority who can be relied upon [*bar samkha*]" even though the prophet Elijah appeared to him and God Himself confirmed his point of view (*Gittin* 6b), then certainly he could legitimately do the same with regard to Katzenellenbogen.<sup>39</sup>

But in addition and at the same time, especially in *Megillat sefer*, Emden took an almost diametrically opposite position. He bitterly and repeatedly attacked Katzenellenbogen personally, implicitly arguing that such a wicked and unworthy individual eminently deserved whatever criticism and disrespect he had expressed against him. Among other charges, he belittled what he described as the chief rabbi's incredibly low level of Torah learning: "What can we say about the study of his novellae, his interpretations and his sermons which literally led to farce and mockery. It is incredible to relate all the absurdities, nonsense, imaginations, hallucinations and foolishness. All who heard them were forced to burst forth in laughter. Any knowledgeable, understanding reader will be stunned by his decisions and rulings as I have demonstrated in writing."<sup>40</sup> Emden even went so far as to claim that, on a number of occasions, the chief rabbi publicly displayed such abysmal ignorance regarding the simple pronunciation of a biblical verse or the meaning of straightforward talmudic passages that he aroused the derision of all who heard him.<sup>41</sup> He even recorded that someone allegedly said the following when Katzenellenbogen first arrived in the Triple Community as chief rabbi: "If R. Yehezkel would have come before me when I was the administrator of the elementary school for a license to be a teacher [*melamed*] in the Triple Community, I would not have given it to him."<sup>42</sup>

He accused Katzenellenbogen of being overly servile to the local lay leadership<sup>43</sup> and charged that, due to the chief rabbi's well-known dishonesty, the local secular authorities barred him from exercising judicial authority in Hamburg.<sup>44</sup> In addition he mercilessly ridiculed Katzenellenbogen's behavior:

He was capable of sitting day and night drinking to inebriation. He ate excessively everywhere and with everyone, particularly at a circumcision or wedding feast, in the company of boors and ignoramuses to the point that he became a mockery in the eyes of all the masses. The dignitaries were ashamed that he so denigrated and profaned the honor of the Torah in public.<sup>45</sup>

He made a farce and a mockery in the synagogue whenever he led the congregation in prayer. Whosoever did not see or hear the manner of his chanting and the sound of his chirping did not ever see mockery. It was a source of great scorn and derision to the point where the scoffers who frequented the drinking houses would play and sing the melodies of the aforementioned head of the rabbinical court, mimicking all his characteristics, movements and ways when they wanted to increase the laughter and to multiply the fun by entertaining the people who came there. All those who were present and gathered for this fun burst forth in laughter.<sup>46</sup>

Faced with the obvious question as to how such an alleged total misfit was able to secure and maintain the position of chief rabbi of one of Europe's foremost Jewish communities for close to four decades, Emden claimed that he got the position only through "great machinations and powerful cunning"<sup>47</sup> and kept it due to "his extraordinary luck [which] helped him."<sup>48</sup> In a word, the worse Katzenellenbogen was made to be, the better could Emden justify his disdain for him. Once again, the larger context of the Emden-Eybeschütz controversy is crucial for a proper understanding of this work.<sup>49</sup>

Putting *Megillat sefer* into this context goes a long way to explain not only Emden's wide-ranging excursus about Hakham 'Tsevi and his verbose diatribe against Katzenellenbogen, but it also provides a sharper perspective from which more clearly to understand and appreciate other parts of the work as well. For example, while it is perfectly natural to expect Emden to put as positive a spin as possible on his brief stint as a rabbi in the community by that name, certain specific details and subtle nuances of his presentation gain new clarity when seen from the perspective of the controversy. Two of his enemies' accusations are relevant here: (1) their assertion that he harbored an intense feeling of jealousy against Eybeschütz, who was elected to the prestigious position of rabbinical head of the Triple Community, an office that they claimed Emden desperately craved for himself;<sup>50</sup> (2) their description of him to the secular authorities as quarrelsome and cantankerous, unable to live anywhere in peace and, as proof, accused him of having been expelled from Emden rather than leaving from there on his own volition.<sup>51</sup>

Acutely sensitive to both of these charges and very much aware of their negative implications in his battle against Eybeschütz, Emden repeatedly asserted that he was courted by the community of Emden and "forced" to accept a position he never sought or wanted; that he was highly popular there, well respected by Jews and Gentiles alike; that the entire community benefited materially and spiritually from his presence; that the community constantly urged him to remain in their midst as spiritual leader despite his often-expressed desire to leave; that the only reasons he eventually did leave were the sicknesses repeatedly suffered by him as well as by members of his household and his growing discomfort with the rabbinate; that the community honored him when he left and went so far as to delay appointing his successor for a number of years in the vain hope that he would return.<sup>52</sup> While one would expect to find such assertions in any type of autobiography, acknowledging that they were specifically presented as part of Emden's defense of his position in his controversy with Eybeschütz lends them greater force, clarity, and significance.<sup>53</sup>

To a lesser extent, this perspective also sheds light on another part of the autobiography, Emden's description of his early years in Altona. Once again, to counteract his enemies' assertions to the contrary, Emden stressed how he arrived in the community to an enthusiastic welcome from its inhabitants, who granted him the special privilege of holding private prayer services in his living quarters; that he retained their respect and high esteem for close to two decades; that he

repeatedly benefited the community in ways both financial and spiritual; that, until circumstances forced him against his will to assume a more active role, he consistently maintained a low profile, did not seek communal involvement, worked hard for a living while concentrating on his Torah studies, and, he added elsewhere, virtually did not even walk out of his house.<sup>54</sup> Here too, with the controversy lurking directly in the background, these assertions take on a new urgency, clarity, and significance.<sup>55</sup>

This analysis of *Megillat sefer* is also significant because it may provide yet another, hitherto underappreciated autobiographical strategy or motive in addition to those already described above, that of “autobiography as polemic.” Stung by criticism leveled against him by the followers of Rabbi Eyseschutz and desperate to vindicate himself of all the charges and keep his opponents on the defensive, Emden resorted to the best weapon at his disposal, his pen, and polemicized against his adversaries by means of this life story. In a classic article, Frances R. Hart characterized three “formal principles in autobiography”: confession, apology, and memoir. Apology is defined as “personal history that seeks to demonstrate or realize the integrity of the self. Memoir is personal history that seeks to articulate or repossess the historicity of the self.”<sup>56</sup> This characterizes *Megillat sefer*; it is both apology and memoir, “realiz[ing] the integrity” and “repossess[ing] the historicity of the self” through the medium of polemic.

In an early work on the subject, Arthur M. Clark presents a “four-fold classification” of autobiography, suggesting that it reflects “a kind of need . . . for either sympathy, or self-justification, or appreciation, or communication.”<sup>57</sup> In Emden’s case, the correct assessment is all of the above. Although written ostensibly for a close limited circle,<sup>58</sup> it is clear that Emden’s intended audience was the world at large.<sup>59</sup> True, Mortimer J. Cohen was surely guilty of gross overexaggeration when he wrote that, “the chief purpose of Emden’s existence was the destruction of the belief in Shabbetai Zevi” or that “the key to his life is to be found in his consuming hatred of the Sabbatian heresy.”<sup>60</sup> This overly narrow and limited assessment of Emden fails to take into account a deep devotion to traditional Torah study and a prodigious (almost astounding) literary output on all genres of Jewish intellectual creativity. But at the same time, there is no question that, once the controversy with Eyseschutz began and Emden felt the need to write the story of his life, he interpreted everything he previously experienced from its perspective. He imposed his present reality onto the contours of his past life.<sup>61</sup>

While the analysis solves one series of problems (i.e., the question of motivation as well as selectivity or balance), it raises another crucially important one (i.e., the value of the text as an objective historical document). The question of the historical value of autobiography in general has received a great deal of attention in the scholarly literature of this field. Scholars have long noted the skepticism

that must be attendant upon utilizing autobiography as a source of biography or history. Clearly, there are many factors other than objective truth that determine how a person chooses to be remembered for posterity. At best, one's memory is selective, suppressing some experiences and highlighting others; at worst, the past can be consciously distorted and intentionally falsified. "I have changed nothing to my knowledge," wrote Yeats, "and yet it must be that I have changed many things without my knowledge."<sup>62</sup> In his novel *Nausea*, Jean-Paul Sartre noted that "everything changes when you tell about life; it's a change no one notices: the proof is that people talk about true stories. As if there could possibly be true stories; things happen one way and we tell about them in the opposite sense."<sup>63</sup>

Bruno Bettelheim wrote, "As a Freudian, I believe what Freud said about biographies applies even more to autobiographies, namely that the person who undertakes such a task binds himself to lying, to concealment, to flummery."<sup>64</sup> Bernard Shaw went so far as to write: "All autobiographies are lies. I do not mean unconscious, unintentional lies; I mean deliberate lies."<sup>65</sup> And T. H. Huxley averred, "Autobiographies are essentially works of fiction."<sup>66</sup> Herbert Leibowitz notes at the beginning of his work on American autobiography entitled *Fabricating Lives* that, "because the autobiographer often dresses up in fictions and disguises himself in slanted fact, the reader must pass like a secret agent across the borders of actuality and myth."<sup>67</sup> In the first volume of her autobiography, Lillian Hellman wrote, "Thirty years is a long time, I guess, and yet as I come now to write about them the memories skip about and make no pattern and I know only certain of them are to be trusted."<sup>68</sup> And the list of examples goes on and on. Autobiography is recognized to be a mixture of "design and truth," "fact and fiction," "Dichtung und Wahrheit."<sup>69</sup> Surely, autobiographies tell a great deal, but they do not necessarily tell the story of their author's life *wie es eigentlich gewesen*.<sup>70</sup>

If such caution must be exercised in general, it must surely be used in the case of *Megillat sefer*, where it is clear that Emden's present agenda explicitly and consciously determined his description of the past. If autobiography in general is a combination of the past and the present—presenting the past through the prism of the present—how much more so is it in the case of *Megillat sefer*, where the crucial needs of the present directly shaped the presentation of the past and where Emden's "memory spoke" what was necessary in his self-defense.<sup>71</sup> And if it determined and shaped that description, could it not also have colored or distorted it? To what lengths was Emden prepared to go to defend himself? Was he prepared even to ignore or distort the truth in order to fulfill his a priori explicitly stated objective?

There is no question that, on occasion, the answer is yes. Emden's outrageous treatment of Katzenellenbogen, discussed above in detail, is a good example of this. In fact, one wonders how Emden could not have realized that by leveling such highly unsubstantiated and wildly exaggerated charges against the learned chief rabbi he was only undermining his own credibility and, ultimately, the very

defense he sought to present. Furthermore, on another occasion, Emden wrongly projected his hatred of Eybeschütz back to a point some three decades before their controversy. In 1722, a full three years before the first time Eybeschütz was ever accused of Sabbatian sympathies, Emden saw him while on a visit to Prague. Although he then had no reason whatsoever to harbor any resentment against Eybeschütz, Emden described his encounter with him as follows:

They showed me, through the window of my uncle's house where I lodged, how he ran like a deer [*rats ka-tsevi*] through the streets and markets. I refused to look at him. He also sent [a messenger] to inform me that if I would agree to honor him by coming to his house, he would make an effort on my behalf to save the aforementioned books that were taken from me and return them to me for no payment. I did not want to see his countenance. I would rather have lost the books than greet his insolent face.<sup>72</sup>

Emden's description of this incident, written some three decades after it occurred while he was actively engaged in his heated controversy with Eybeschütz, clearly reflects the jaundiced eye of a bitter opponent whose present bias distorted his perception of the past. Not only is there no evidence of any animosity between these two men prior to the controversy, but Emden himself even noted on many occasions that when Eybeschütz first arrived in Hamburg to assume the position of chief rabbi of the Triple Community in September 1750 they enjoyed a cordial and mutually respectful relationship.<sup>73</sup> The subjectivity of this later reconstruction by Emden is obvious. Also significant is Emden's choice of the phrase *rats ka-tsevi* to describe Eybeschütz in this passage. The allusion to his association with Shabbetai Tsevi is subtle but telling and obviously anachronistic.

Nevertheless, other than these examples and a few others,<sup>74</sup> as well as those few occasions when his memory was innocently blurred by the passage of time,<sup>75</sup> it is my distinct impression that Emden did not deliberately go out of his way to distort the truth in order to present himself in a more favorable light. Emden was very interested in history, and he possessed a keen historical sense, often citing several different sources, including Gentile ones, to prove the historical accuracy of his description of various events. His concern for providing an accurate historical record of the Sabbatian movement accounted for a number of his works, and on the whole, this concern was carried over as well into his version of the story of his own life.<sup>76</sup>

Finally, Emden's version of his story is remarkable in the extent to which it provides an open window into the inner, personal, and private life of its author. This feature of *Megillat sefer* is so unusually remarkable and extraordinary that it has distracted readers of the work away from what I consider to have been its main purpose, its polemical intent.<sup>77</sup> Here too the general enterprise of autobiographical writing offers different and even conflicting models. Some autobiographies—those of Albert Schweitzer, Freud, and Croce in modern times, for example—provide only an objective, detached, and impersonal portrait, with the author

writing about himself as if he were another person. In effect, he is nothing more than his own biographer, presenting only information that would be equally available to anyone else interested enough in him to write his biography. Other autobiographies, by contrast—those of Rousseau, Henry Miller, and Gandhi, for example—are very private, with their authors sharing the most personal intimacies of their lives—attitudes, impressions, and feelings—that could be known only to them. In these cases, the author describes himself as only he himself can, providing information not possibly available to anyone else about the “invisible circumstances” or “domestic privacies” of his life and not just its “public occurrences.”<sup>78</sup> While both types of autobiography provide important biographical information for the historian, only the latter peels away the external layer and provides a direct unmediated glimpse into the inner life—the fears, frustrations, and feelings—of their author.<sup>79</sup>

Emden's *Megillat sefer* is such an intensely personal, private, and intimate presentation. He described not only what happened to him but what it was like to be him, and the extent of the intensely personal and intimate details of his life that he shares with his readers is nothing less than absolutely astounding. He graphically described, sometimes in all their gory details, his various illnesses, failures, and manifold personal embarrassments. With rare frankness and unusual candor, he vividly and graphically described a rash on his private parts as a child and other bodily ailments; his impotence on his wedding night; the difficulty he had in forcibly removing a worm from his bowels; various urinary and penile ailments; occasional sexual feelings, frustrations, and needs; repeated marital conflicts; consistent mental depressions, and more.

Although *Megillat sefer* was carefully crafted by Emden as a defense in his controversy with Eybeschütz, as noted above, the inner Emden repeatedly burst forth, naturally and spontaneously, without, it seems, any intentional forethought. In some of the other self-revelatory autobiographies—Rousseau's, for example—the author makes a considered programmatic statement, promising to “reveal myself absolutely to the public, nothing about me must remain hidden or obscure.” “I have displayed myself as I was,” writes Rousseau, “as vile and despicable when my behaviour was such, as good, generous and noble when I was so.”<sup>80</sup> Solomon Maimon, too, promised to tell the “Truth,” “whether this shows me, my family, my people or others in a favorable light or no.”<sup>81</sup> But Emden never made such a statement; in his case, intimate disclosure was instinctive and uncontrived, not conscious, studied, or deliberate.

This unmediated impulse for self-revelation is not limited to *Megillat sefer* but is forthcoming in some of his other works as well. For example, in comparing his own religiously regulated sex life with the looseness of Sabbatian sexual mores, Emden had no compunctions about informing his reader that “Behold it is now several weeks that I am separated from my wife. Because of her incessant menstrual flow, she could not achieve the [required state of] ritual cleanliness. I suffered pain due to the withholding of my desired function and natural need to discharge the surplus [semen] which is gathered. It is not possible for me to do

so for I have no other woman besides her to release me from my tension." It was not as if he lacked sexual desire, continued Emden. "On the contrary, our inclination is greater than yours, as our rabbis wrote, 'The greater the man [the greater his Evil Inclination].'"<sup>82</sup> In discussing the permissibility of ingesting a liquid laxative on the fast of the Ninth of Av, Emden noted in a matter-of-fact way that he himself depended on it once to help his bodily function.<sup>83</sup> And in describing the physical effects of his examining a legal document for seven consecutive hours, he noted how he almost jeopardized his health by not "doing my needs" for such a long period of time.<sup>84</sup> Finally (and there are other examples as well), in the process of telling a story in *Megillat sefer*, Emden noted matter-of-factly that since "it never occurred [to me] that he would come so quickly, I first tasted something and also needed to 'cleanse' myself."<sup>85</sup> While the modern reader would consider such an unusually high degree of self-revelation as inappropriate and therefore at cross-purposes with Emden's desire to defend himself against attack in his controversy with Eybeschütz, this does not seem to have been the case for Emden at all. While all indications are that an eighteenth-century reader would share the modern assessment of such revelations as inappropriate, this did not stop Emden from sharing them, as unconventional as such a presentation was for his time. It would appear that nothing for him was unseemly, unbecoming, or inappropriate.

Furthermore, in trying to understand these repeated unself-conscious and self-derogatory comments, one should not overlook the fact that a litany of Emden's multifaceted life's problems fits well with the other (first two) explanations he gave for writing this work—to publicize the extent of God's kindnesses and to give his fellow Jews strength and faith to overcome suffering.<sup>86</sup> Although secondary in their importance, as noted above, these two reasons do play an important role in helping to explain the significance and context of particularly this type of self-revelation by Emden. After all, the more Emden was able to overcome in life, the greater the level of God's kindness and the more significant role model he could be for other Jews who suffered in similar or other ways.

Totally unself-conscious about virtually every aspect of his life, Emden just wrote what he felt and, as a result, provided the careful and responsible psychobiographer with a mine full of important information. As befitting its author, *Megillat sefer* is an important work—in its own right and as a link in the transition of Jewish autobiographical writing, to the extent to which it existed, from medieval to modern times.

#### Notes

1. My thinking about autobiography in general has greatly benefited from the work of Marcus Moseley, "Jewish Autobiography in Eastern Europe: The Pre-History of a Literary Genre" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity College, Oxford, 1990), although I disagree with him regarding the specific focus of this article. See below.

2. Alan Mintz, "Banished from Their Father's House": *Loss of Faith and Hebrew Auto-*

biography (Bloomington, Ind., 1989), 7, 206. For a previous example of this explanation, see Henrietta Szold, introduction to *My Portion* by Rebekah Kohut (New York, 1925), ix:

That Jewish literature should be deficient in personal material lay in the nature of Jewish life as it was perforce constituted. In the overwhelming sum of Jewish communal woe and communal aspiration, the individual sank out of sight. His personal desires, trials, and successes were frail straws rapidly swirled out of sight on the stream of community life. From the Jewish point of view the public weal was better served by reticence than by self-expression. In the moving Jewish drama, the chorus alone was vocal.

See too Richard L. Rubenstein, "The Promise and the Pitfalls of Autobiographical Theology," *Art/Literature/Religion: Life on the Borders* (*Journal of the American Academy of Religion Thematic Studies*) 49: (2) (1982):125.

3. Y. H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, 1982), xiv. None of the printed critiques of this book affect this basic thesis. See, for example, Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley, Calif., 1993), esp. 1–21; Ivan G. Marcus, "Beyond the Sephardic Mystique," *Orim* 1 (autumn 1985): 35–53; Abraham Melamed, "The Perception of Jewish History in Italian Jewish Thought of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Re-examination," in *Italia Judaica: Gli ebrei in Italia tra Rinascimento ed Età barocca* (Rome, 1986), 139–70; Robert Bonfil, "How Golden Was the Age of the Renaissance in Jewish Historiography?" in "Essays in Jewish Historiography," *History and Theory*, Beiheft 27 (1988): 78–102.

4. See Cecil Roth, "The Memoirs of a Siennese Jew (1625–1633)," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 5 (1928): 353: "In a people so predominantly intellectual, the vicissitudes of worldly existence were of secondary importance by the side of the record of spiritual achievement. The Jew was interested in what a man thought and said, rather than in what he did"; Bal-Makhshoves (Elyashav), *Geklibene Shriften* 3 (Warsaw, 1929), 61: "The Jew is, however, by nature, in old as in middle age a type of Ecclesiastes who asserts: 'There is nothing new under the sun'; he has little interest in the external forms of a life which change with the times. He is more interested in the core and, according to his philosophy, the core of a person's life does not change, only its outer forms" (this passage is cited, in an abridged translation, in M. Moseley, *Jewish Autobiography in Eastern Europe*, 69); R. Rubenstein, "The Promise and the Pitfalls," 126.

M. Moseley, pp. 69–70, also adds another consideration that should be kept in mind with regard to East European Jewry: the absence of any form of secular literary discourse in Hebrew or Yiddish before the end of the nineteenth century. See too David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge, 1984), 134–35, and the treatment of his position by Moseley, pp. 92–100.

5. Glückel's work was first published by David Kaufmann, ed., *Die Memoiren der Glückel von Hameln 1645–1719* (Frankfurt am Main, 1896). German translations were published by Bertha Pappenheim (1910) and Alfred Feilchenfeld (1913; reprinted 1914, 1920, 1923, 1979, 1987). For the best, albeit flawed, English translation, see Beth-Zion Abraham, *The Life of Glückel of Hameln 1646–1724, Written by Herself* (London, 1962). The work has been most recently treated in N. Z. Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth Century Lives* (Cambridge, 1995), 5–62. In addition to the secondary literature cited in her extensive notes (pp. 220–59), see her "Riches and Dangers: Glikl bas Judah Leib on Court Jews," in *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage and Power, 1600–1800*, ed. Vivian B. Mann and Richard I. Cohen (Munich and New York, 1996), 45–57; S. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 2nd series (Philadelphia, 1908), 126–47; Hildegard Hummel, "Dei 'Memoiren' der Glückel von Hameln; das Schicksal einer jüdischen Frau um die Wende des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv Bibliographia Judaica: Jahrbuch* 2–3 (1990): 7–26; Chava Turmiansky, "Ha-sippurim bi-yetsiratah shel Glikl Hamel u-mekorotehem," *Mehkarei Yerushalayim bi-folklor yehudi* 16 (1994): 41–65.



For Modena's autobiography, see Daniel Carpi, *Sefer hayyei Yehudah le-R. Yehudah Aryeh mi-Modena* (Tel Aviv, 1985); translated into English by Mark R. Cohen and published with a number of introductory essays and historical notes by other scholars. See Mark R. Cohen, trans. and ed., *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's Life of Judah* (Princeton, N.J., 1988). See too M. Moseley, *Jewish Autobiography in Eastern Europe*, 114-91.

6. See, for example, C. Roth, n. 4, above; Alexander Marx, "A Seventeenth-Century Autobiography," *JQR* 8 (1917-1918): 269-304; partially reprinted in idem, *Studies in Jewish History and Booklore* (New York, 1944), 178-97; Asher B. Eliezer Halevi, *Sefer zikhronot R. Asher ben Eliezer Halevi*, trans. M. Ginsburger as *Die Memoiren des Ascher Levy aus Reichshofen im Elsass (1598-1635)* (Berlin, 1913); Yitzak min ha-Nevi'im, *Medabber tahpukhot*, ed. Daniel Carpi (Tel Aviv, 1985). Most of these works, as well as R. Yom Tov Lipmann Heller's *Megillat evah* and the sixteenth-century Abraham b. Hananiah Yagel's *Ge'izzayon* and others, are all discussed by M. Moseley, *Jewish Autobiography in Eastern Europe*, 108-244. For Yagel, see *A Valley of Vision: The Heavenly Journey of Abraham ben Hananiah Yagel*, trans. and ed. David Ruderman (Philadelphia, 1990). On Heller, see Joseph M. Davis, "R. Yom Tov Lipmann Heller, Joseph b. Isaac ha-Levi, and Rationalism in Ashkenazic Jewish Culture 1550-1650" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1990), 475-500. Davis points out (pp. 482-83) that *Megillat evah* belongs to "a special sub-genre of memoiristic writings that recount stories of deliverance from danger," including *Megillat R. Meir* by Meir ha-Kadosh, *Megillat purei ha-kela'im* by Hanokh b. Moses Altshuler, and Samuel Taussig's story in *Megillat Shmuel*. Also, Gershom Scholem refers to *Sefer ha-hezyonot* of R. Hayyim Vital as an "autobiography." See his "Shir shel Yisrael Najjar be-fi ha-shabbeta'im," in *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume*, ed. S. Löwinger and J. Somogyi (Budapest, 1948), 41, n. 2. Meir Benayahu refers to the "diaries" of R. Samuel Aboab. See his "R. Shmuel Aboab's Letters to the Palestinian Captives in Malta and Messina," *Journal of Maltese Studies* 3 (1966): 68; idem, "Iggerot R. Shmuel Aboab le-hakhmei erets Yisrael she-nishbu bi-Maltah u-be-Messinah," in *Sefer zikkaron le-Shlomoh S. Meir* (Jerusalem, 1956), 17.

There are also a number of eighteenth-century autobiographies that have not yet received scholarly attention. Among them are "Korot Mosheh Vasertsug u-Nedivas Lev Aviv ha-Mano'ah R. Isser z"l," *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft* 8 (1910): 87-114, and *Zikhronot R. Dov mi-Bolihov*, ed. M. Wischnitzer (Berlin, 1922). See also the work of Samuel Jacob Hayyim Falk, the "Baal Shem of London," partially described by Hermann Adler, "The Baal-Shem of London," in *Festschrift zum Siebzigsten Geburtstage A. Berliner's*, ed. A. Freimann and M. Hildesheimer (Frankfurt A.M., 1903), 1-9; idem, "The Baal Shem of London," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, 1902-1905 (London, 1908), 148-73, and utilized by Cecil Roth, "The King and the Cabalist," in *Essays and Portraits in Anglo-Jewish History* (Philadelphia, 1962), 143ff, and more fully by Michal Oron, "Dr. Samuel Falk and the Eibeschutz-Emden Controversy," in *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*, ed. K. F. Grözinger and J. Dan (Berlin and New York, 1995), 243-56; idem, "Mistikah u-magiah bi-London be-me'ah hayod het—Shmuel Falk ha-Baal Shem mi-London," *Sefer Yisrael Levin*, ed. R. Tsur and T. Rosen (Tel Aviv, 1995), 2:7-20. Both "Di Zikhroynes fun Mozes Porges," *Historische Schriften* 1 (1929): 253-96, and Aaron Isaacs, *Minnen. En judisk Kulturbild fran Gustaviansk tid*, ed. A. Brody and H. Valentin (Stockholm, 1932), move into the nineteenth century as well. For various versions of the latter work, see J. Shatzky, *YIVO Bletter* 3 (1932): 268-70; 9 (1936): 284-87. R. Moscs Hagiz also wrote an autobiography, but it is no longer extant. See Meir Benayahu, "Sefarim she-hibram Rabi Moshe Hagiz u-Sefarim she-hots'iam le-Or," *Alai sefer* 4 (1977): 142, no. 9; Elisheva Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy: Rabbi Moses Hagiz and the Sabbatian Controversies* (New York, 1990), 281, n. 2. His opponent Nehemiah Hayyun's *Moda'ah Rabah* (Amsterdam, 1714) might also fall into this category. See

also Levy Alexander, ed., *Memoirs of the Life and Commercial Connections . . . of the Late Benjamin Goldsmid, Esq., of Roehampton: Containing a cursory View of the Jewish Society and manners* (London, 1808).

The extremely significant *Sefer yesh manhilin* by R. Pinhas Katzenellenbogen (Jerusalem, 1986) has only recently begun to receive the attention it richly deserves. See Gershon D. Hundert, "Polish Jewish History," *Modern Judaism* 10 (October 1990): 262; Emanuel Etkes, "Mekomam shel ha-magiah u-b'alei ha-shem bi-hevrah ha-Ashkenazit bi-mifneh ha-me'ot ha-17 ha-18," *Zion* 60 (1) (1995): 77-104; Moshe Rosman, *Founder of Hasidism: A Quest for the Historical Ba'al Shem Tov* (Berkeley, Calif., 1996), 14, 20-25, 29-32. For a study of autobiographical accounts by German Jews who converted to Christianity between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, see Elisheva Carlebach, "Converts and Their Narratives in Early Modern Germany: The Case of Friedrich Albrecht Christiani," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 40 (1995): 65-83. For an opposite example, an autobiographical account of a Portuguese Christian who converted to Judaism in the first half of the seventeenth century, see B. N. Teensma, "De Levensgeschiedenis van Abraham Perengrino, Alias Manuel Cardoso de Macedo," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 10 (1) (1976): 1-36.

7. For a bibliography of editions of this work, see Noah Y. Jacobs, "Ha-sifrut 'al Shlomoh Maimon," *Kiryat Sefer* 41 (2) (1966): 257-58. For more recent studies, see Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore, 1986), 124-32; Ritchie Robertson, "From the Ghetto to Modern Culture: The Autobiographies of Solomon Maimon and Jakob Fromer," *Polin* 7 (1992): 12-30; Adam Teller, "Sefer ha-zikhronot shel Shlomoh Maimon: Behinat Meheima'ut," *Gal-ed* 14 (1995): 13-22; M. Moseley, *Jewish Autobiography in Eastern Europe*, 75-83.

8. See, for example, Joshua Prawer, "Ha-otobiografiah shel Ovadiah ha-ger ha-normani," *Tarbiz* 45 (3-4) (1976): 272-95; idem, "The Autobiography of Obadyah the Norman, a Convert to Judaism at the Time of the First Crusade," in *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, ed. Isadore Twersky (Cambridge, 1979), 1:110-34; Nahum Golb, "Megillat 'Ovadiyah ha-ger," in *Mehkarei 'edot u-genizah*, ed. S. Morag and I. Ben-Ami (Jerusalem, 1981), 77-107; Yisrael Yuval, "Otobiografiah ashkenazit me-ha-me'ah ha-arba-esreh," *Tarbiz* 55 (4) (1986): 541-66; translated and adapted into English by Zippora Brody as "A German-Jewish Autobiography of the Fourteenth Century," *Binah* 3 (1994): 79-99; Michal Oron, "Autobiographical Elements in the Writings of Kabbalists from the Generation of the Expulsion," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 6 (2) (1991): 102-11; Mordecai Pachter, "Yomano shel R. Elazar Azikri," in *Mi-tsefunot tsefat* (Jerusalem, 1994), 121-86. Arnaldo Momigliano, "A Medieval Jewish Autobiography," in *History and Imagination: Essays in Honor of H. R. Trevor-Roper* (London, 1981), 30-37, and reprinted in idem, *On Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Middletown, Conn., 1987), 222-30, analyzes a work written by a Jew describing his conversion to Christianity.

In this connection, see also the journal of R. Joseph of Rosheim (1471-1547) in J. Kraeuer, "Rabbi Josefmann de Rosheim," *REJ* 16 (1888): 84-105.

9. See Natalie Z. Davis, "Fame and Secrecy: Leon Modena's Life as an Early Modern Autobiography," in Mark R. Cohen (see n. 5, above), 51, 53-55. The article was reprinted in "Essays in Jewish Historiography," *History and Theory*, Beiheft 27 (1988): 103-18. See too idem, *Women on the Margins*, 19-20. Alan Mintz, *Banished from Their Father's House*, 8, also draws attention to "the family-centered motives for writing. Authors usually attempted to confirm the worthiness and antiquity of their genealogies and to establish their own place within the cycle of family fortunes and misfortunes."

10. Davis, "Fame and Secrecy," 56-57; idem, *Women on the Margins*, 20-21; A. Mintz, *Banished*; D. Bilik, "The Memoirs of Glikl of Hameln: The Archaeology of the Text," *Yiddish* 8 (2) (1992): 17-20; M. Moseley, *Jewish Autobiography in Eastern Europe*, 210. R. Pinhas Katzenellenbogen's *Sefer yesh manhilin* (n. 6, above) also fits into this category.

Is it also possible to conjecture that Glikl was influenced by the early medieval *Yossipon*

and later *Shevet Yehudah*—both historical chronicles of sorts—which we know she read? See C. Tumiansky, “Vegen di literatur-mekoyrim in Glikl Hamels Zikhroynes,” in *Keminhag Ashkenaz u-Polin: Sefer yovel le-Chone Shmeruk* (Jerusalem, 1993), 170–72; Davis, *Women on the Margins*, 243–44, n. 130; 254, n. 193.

11. Davis, “Fame and Secrecy,” 58–61. For an example of a different sort of autobiography, as “an act of therapy,” see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley, Calif., 1967), 165–66, 181. See too John Sturrock, “The New Model Autobiographer,” *New Literary History* 9 (autumn 1977): 581, where he characterizes Michel Leiris’s autobiographical work as “an exercise in self-therapy.” A. Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, 241, n. 25, describes Solomon Maimon’s autobiography (n. 7, above) as “a story of progressive personal enlightenment.” William Bell Scott referred to his autobiographical effort as an attempt at self-improvement. “These attempts on my part have had a self-educational excuse. I have thought to understand myself better by their means,” he wrote. See W. B. Scott, *Autobiographical Notes* (New York, 1892), 1:2, cited in K. Rinehart (n. 70, below), 184.

12. For a full assessment of this fascinating and multifaceted individual, see my “Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1988).

13. Throughout this essay, I refer to the Warsaw, 1896, edition of *Megillat sefer* edited by David Kahane even though it is not a fully accurate transcription of the manuscript (which itself is only a copy of the original). Acknowledging and claiming to correct some of the mistakes in the Kahane edition, Abraham Bick-Shauli reprinted *Megillat sefer* in Jerusalem, 1979, but his version is much worse than Kahane’s. He recklessly and irresponsibly added to or deleted from the text, switched its order, and was generally inexcusably sloppy. As a result, his edition is absolutely and totally worthless. I am completing a new critical edition of *Megillat sefer*, with an introduction and extensive annotations, to be published by Mossad Bialik in Jerusalem. I am also preparing an English translation to be published by Yale University Press.

Kahane’s edition of *Megillat sefer* has recently been translated into French, but since it is not based on the manuscript version of the work, the translation is incomplete and imprecise. See Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, *Mémoires de Jacob Emden ou l’anti-Sabbataï Zewi* (Paris, 1992).

14. *Megillat sefer*, 7–53. A full treatment of the life and intellectual profile of Hakham T’sevi remains to be written. The best study of him to date remains that of Judith Bleich, “Hakam Zebi as Chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazic Kehillah of Amsterdam (1710–1714)” (master’s thesis, Yeshiva University, 1965).

15. Katzenellenbogen, too, has not yet received the treatment he deserves. See, meanwhile, I. T. Eisenstadt, *Da’at kedoshim* (St. Petersburg, 1897–1898), 103–4; E. Duckesz, *Iyah le-moshav* (Cracow, 1903), 21–29; N. Rosenstein, *The Unbroken Chain* (New York, 1976), 337–39.

16. *Megillat sefer*, 122–40.

17. *Ibid.*, 99–114.

18. *Ibid.*, 54–55, with slight corrections from the manuscript (A. Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* [Oxford, 1886], 590, no. 1723:2), 140b–142a (p. 141 precedes p. 140 in the manuscript).

19. The complete story of this extraordinary chapter in Jewish history remains a major historical desideratum. Primary literature includes about a dozen polemical tracts by Emden (see Y. Rafael, “Kitvei Rabi Ya’akov Emden,” *Areshet* 3 [1961]: 252–61, 272–76); J. Eybeschütz, *Luhot’ edut* (Altona, 1755); I. Halperin, *Pinkas va’ad arba aratsot* (Jerusalem, 1945), index, s.v. “Yehonatan ben Nata Eybeschütz” and “Ya’akov ben T’sevi Emden” (see I. Halperin, “Der Va’ad Arba Aratsot un zayne batsivngnen mit oisland,” *Historische Schriften* 2 [1937]: 77–78); I. Trunk, “Le-birur ’emdato shel Avraham ben Yoski, Parnas va’ad daled aratsot, bi-mahloket ben Yehonatan Eybeschütz ve-Ya’akov Emden,” *Zion* 38 (1973),

174–78; M. Rosman, “Samkhuto shel va'ad arba aratsot mi-huts le-Polin,” *Bar Ilan* 24–25 (1989): 25–27. Important material is still in manuscript, most notably, *Gahalei esh* by R. Joseph Prager, a leading member of the Emden faction, presently found in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. See A. Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, 755, no. 2189. For a preliminary description of the manuscript, see idem, *MGWJ* 36 (1887): 201–14, 257–68. Also, German documents relating to the controversy are found in the archives of the Hamburg City Council. Some were used by M. Grunwald (see below) in his reconstruction of its events.

Secondary literature on the controversy includes H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden* 10 (1897): 347f, 495–508; Graetz-Shefer (S. P. Rabinowitz), *Divrei yemei yisrael* (Warsaw, 1893), 8:455–528, 614–36; M. Grunwald, *Hamburgs deutsche Juden* (Hamburg, 1904), 89–124; D. Kahana, *Toledot ha-mekkubbalim, ha-shabbeta'im ve-ha-hasidim* (Odessa, 1913), 220–64, 129–45; D. L. Zinuz, *Sefer gedulat Yehonatan* (Pietrkov, 1930–34), 31; M. Balaban, *Le-toledot ha-tenu'ah ha-frankit* (Tel Aviv, 1934), 72–78; M. J. Cohen, *Jacob Emden: Man of Controversy* (Philadelphia, 1937), 118–257; M. A. Perlmutter, R. Yehonatan Eybeschütz *ve-yasoo el ha-shabbata'ut* (Jerusalem, 1947); B. Brillling, “Das Erste Gedicht auf einen Deutschen Rabbiner aus dem Jahre 1752,” *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* 2 (1968): 38–47; idem, “Der Hamburger Rabbinerstreit im 18. Jahrhundert,” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 55 (1969): 219–44; M. Carmilly-Weinberger, *Censorship and Freedom of Expression* (New York, 1977), 86–92; S. Leiman, “The Baal Teshuvah and the Emden-Eibeschutz Controversy,” *Judaic Studies*, vol. 1 (1985); idem, “Mrs. Jonathan Eibeschutz's Epitaph: A Grave Matter Indeed,” in *Scholars and Scholarship: The Interaction Between Judaism and Other Cultures* (New York, 1990), 133–43; see n. 23, below.

20. See *'Edut bi-Ya'akov* (Altona, 1755), 4b–6b (see n. 30, below); *Sefer hit'avkut* (Lvov, 1877), 7b–9b; *Iggeret purim* (still in manuscript; see Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, 755, no. 21901; MS Mich. 618), 3a–13b.

21. See J. Emden, *Megillat sefer*, 115; *'Edut bi-Ya'akov*, 14a; *Shevirat luhat ha-aven* (Altona, 1756), 41b. Evidence is also forthcoming in the communal records of the Triple Community found in the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem, AHW 17a, p. 47a.

22. For this very early stage of the controversy, see *'Edut bi-Ya'akov*, 6b–8b; *Sefer hit'avkut*, 9b–11b; *Iggeret purim*, 14a–18a.

On November 11, 1743, Emden received permission from the Danish king, Christian VI, to operate a Hebrew printing press in Altona. After the king's death, Emden reapplied for permission from his successor, Frederick V, and received it on February 20, 1747. For the text of the formal document of permission as well as the correspondence between Emden and the secular authorities that preceded it, see B. Brillling, “Zur Geschichte der Hebräischen Buchdruckereien in Altona,” *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 11 (1975–1976): 41–56. See also idem, “Die Privilegien der Hebräischen Buchdruckereien in Altona (1726–1836),” *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 9 (4) (1971): 156–57, 160.

23. For Landau's complex position in the controversy, see S. Leiman, “When a Rabbi Is Accused of Heresy: R. Ezekiel Landau's Attitude toward R. Jonathan Eibeschutz in the Emden-Eibeschutz Controversy,” in *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism, Intellect in Quest of Understanding: Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox* (Atlanta, 1989), 3:179–94.

24. Eybeschütz printed this sermon at the end of his *Luhot 'edut*, 72a–78b.

25. See *Megillat sefer*, 11 (reference to 1752); 51 (to 1757). See too p. 33, where Emden clearly asserts that the Eybeschütz controversy was “that which motivated me to construct this scroll as a book, to establish a memorial for the wonders of God, may He be blessed, and his kindnesses, new as well as old.” See also pp. 89, 118.

26. See too Emden's postscript to the first volume of his *Mor u-ketsiah* (Altona, 1761), 103a (reprint, Jerusalem, 1996, p. 284), where he describes a miracle that occurred to him and concludes with praise and blessing for God.

27. For the phrase "center of gravity," see Philippe Lejeune, *L'Autobiographie en France* (Paris, 1971), 60; cited by M. Moseley, *Jewish Autobiography in Eastern Europe*, 13. For "riddle," see Robert J. O'Connell, "The Riddle of Augustine's 'Confessions': A Plotinian Key," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 4 (1964): 327–72.

See also *Megillat sefer*, 118: "It is not my desire to elaborate upon his shame . . . only that which is necessary for my defense I will not hide, to instruct my children and descendants to remove [the] grievance from upon me."

28. For references to this charge in the literature of the controversy, see *Sefer hit'avkut*, 12a; *Iggeret purim*, 9a, 30b, 33a (printed in my "Rabbi Jacob Emden's *Iggeret Purim*," in *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature* [Cambridge, 1984], 2:445), 37b; *Shevirat luhat ha-aven*, 60b; *Mitpahat sefarim* (Lvov, 1870), 3; *Megillat sefer*, 171. See also *She'ilat Yavets* 2:21; "Hatsa'ah le-sefer luah eresh," printed at the end of *Sefer ets avot* (Amsterdam, 1751), 76a; *Luah eresh* (Altona, 1729), 77b, 78a–b (n. 55, below).

29. On the Hayyun controversy, see, most recently, E. Carlbach, *Pursuit of Heresy*, 75–159.

30. The source of the phrase is *Sanhedrin* 81b, referring to Pinhas, son of Elazar the Priest. For examples of it in Emden's controversy-related writings, see *Edut bi-Ya'akov*, 4b (he notes that others referred to him in this manner as a way of encouraging him to become involved against Eybeschütz but that he initially refused, citing his father's difficulties with Hayyun as a negative role model), 62b; "Meteg la-hamor," *Sefer shimush* (Amsterdam, 1762), 21b; *Sefer hit'avkut*, 76a; *Petah enayim* (Altona, 1756), 3b; *'Akitsat akra* (Amsterdam, 1752), title page, 14b; *Sefat emet u-leshon zehorit* (Altona, 1752), title page, 5, 36, 47 (reprinted in E. L. Landshuth, *Toledot anshei ha-shem u-pe'ukatam bi-adat Berlin* [Berlin, 1884], 73).

31. The source of the phrase is *Midrash Tanhuma*, Lekh Lekha 110. 9 (13), referring to Abraham and his descendants. For examples of it (in both singular and plural) in Emden's writings, see *Megillat sefer*, 33; *Edut bi-Ya'akov*, 23a, 30b, 32b; *Sefat emet u-leshon zehorit*, 37; *Mor u-ketsiah* (Altona, 1768), vol. 2, introduction, 2a. See also *Torat ha-kena'ot* (Amsterdam, 1752), 66a, and *She'ilat Yavets* 1:75, end.

32. I. Zinberg, *Di geshikhte fun der literatur bay yidn* (New York, 1943), 5:244. This is reminiscent of Stendahl's comment at the end of chap. 2 of his autobiography, *The Life of Henry Brulard* (New York, 1958), 17: "After all these general reflections, I'll proceed to get born."

33. See Heinz Moshe Graupe, *The Rise of Modern Judaism: An Intellectual History of German Jewry, 1650–1942* (Huntington, N.Y., 1978), 61. Cf. M. Moseley, who characterizes the entire first part of *Megillat sefer* dealing with Hakham Tsevi as "a genealogical preamble" (p. 367) with "lengthy digressions" (p. 389). While I accept his assertion that such a preamble is "characteristic of pre-modern autobiographical writing in general and of Jewish in particular," the two examples he cites, those of Glückel of Hameln's *Zikhroynes* and Leone da Modena's *Hayei Yehudah* (on both, see n. 5, above), provide no real precedent for the exceptionally large amount of space devoted to Hakham Tsevi in *Megillat sefer*. Clearly, the explanation for it must be sought elsewhere. Davis, *Women on the Margins*, 231, n. 53, also places Emden's description of his father's life at the beginning of *Megillat sefer* within the "frame of family interest."

Moseley is correct, however, when he points out (p. 390) that this construction poses a structural problem for Emden because, having already mentioned some aspects of his own life in this first section, he is forced to repeat them when finally describing them in the context of his own life. However, this was a price that Emden was more than happy to pay for the polemical advantage he gained by his choice for the first section of his work.

34. See *Edut bi-Ya'akov*, 22b–23a; *Torat ha-kena'ot*, 33b; *Sefer hit'avkut*, 7b; *Megillat sefer*, 34.

It is also interesting to note that Emden does not feel the need to justify his writing this

work until *after* he presents the life story of his father. Only when he begins to focus on his own life, fully one quarter of the way through the book, does Emden feel compelled to offer those three reasons discussed above to justify it. Although, as indicated, the story of Emden's father's life was crucial for understanding his own, Emden apparently recognized the difference between biography and autobiography. A biography of his father needed no justification; an autobiography of his own life did need one. More work should be done on the medieval Jewish attitude toward and production of biography (even hagiography) in order to place Emden's work—a mixture of biography and autobiography—into a more sophisticated context. See, for example, Arthur M. Lesley, "Hebrew Humanism in Italy: The Case of Biography," *Prooftexts* 2 (May 1982): 163–77.

35. J. Eybeschütz, *luhot 'edut*, 17b. All three of these characterizations of Katzenellenbogen by Emden can be found in *She'ilat Yavets*, 1:164, end. That volume was printed shortly after the chief rabbi died and shortly before the controversy began. See *Megillat sefer*, 132; *Iggeret purim*, 32b. Emden also repeated these claims in *Iggeret purim*, 31b–32a.

36. *Shevirat luhat ha-aven*, 42b.

37. *'Edut bi-Ya'akov*, 40b. See also *Bet Yehonatan ha-sofer* (Altona, 1763?), 12a–b; *Iggeret purim* 27a, 33a.

38. The first edition of the work was published in 1749. See *Megillat sefer*, 154.

For Moses Hagiz, see E. Carlebach, *Pursuit of Heresy*. Bloch was the author of several rabbinic works on the Mishnah and *Shulhan 'arukh*. See E. Duckesz, *Hakhmei AHW* (Hamburg, 1908), 24–26 (Hebrew), 9–10 (German).

39. *'Edut bi-Ya'akov*, 40b. See also 41a; *Sefer hit'avkut*, 9a; *Iggeret purim*, 32b; *Shevirat luhat ha-aven*, 42a.

40. *Megillat sefer*, 134; see also 122, 135. *Iggeret purim*, 31b.

For examples of this, see *She'ilat Yavets* 2:9, 10, 34–37, 39–42, 58, 60, 99, 167; see esp. 1:164: "He did not read or study. His teachers did not explain it to him or he did not sufficiently serve them"; 1:171: "Whence does he derive his authority to uproot a *halakha* which was established and agreed upon by all the earlier and later sages of Israel. . . . All this is without any rhyme or reason or any proof at all, only that he so dreamt a dream. . . . His method is unknown. Perhaps he forgot or perhaps he never learned or he wrote [it] while dozing and lying down."

Emden made general reference to these anti-Katzenellenbogen responsa as a group in *'Edut bi-Ya'akov*, 40b, and *Shevirat luhat ha-aven*, 23b. In *Iggeret purim*, 32a, Emden argued that he benefited the community by publicly opposing many of the chief rabbi's rulings, thereby saving many from error.

41. *Megillat sefer*, 135. See too *'Edut bi-Ya'akov*, 40b: "He did not know an explicit verse."

42. *Megillat sefer*, 135.

43. *Ibid.*, 41, 122, 127–28, 133–34, 136. See also *Sefer hit'avkut*, 1b, and *Iggeret purim*, 31b, 41b: "He excessively demeaned himself before the wealthy and greatly flattered those with money"; *Shevirat luhat ha-aven*, 25a. Emden also noted that Katzenellenbogen received presents from his rich constituents. See *Megillat sefer*, 123, 128.

44. *Megillat sefer*, 41–42, 134.

45. *Ibid.*, 136–37.

46. *Ibid.*, 138–39.

47. *Ibid.*, 124.

48. *Ibid.*, 122. See also 123–24; *Iggeret purim*, 31b.

49. Others have long noted the extreme intensity of Emden's animus versus Katzenellenbogen and have suggested various explanations for it. See, for example, Graetz-Slicfer, *Divrei yemei yisrael* 8: 493, n. 2; 494, n. 1; 523–24, n. 1 ("the desire for victory"); S. Bernfeld, "Dor holekh ve-dor ba," *Hashilo'ah* 2 (1897): 73, 75 (Emden resented anyone who occupied the rabbinical position he considered as "the inheritance of his ancestors"); Ben-Zion Katz,

"Rabi Ya'akov Emden u-tekhumato," *Hashilo'ah* 4 (1898): 342–43 (he resented the fact that Katzenellenbogen pressured the community's lay leadership not to allow him to print a responsum critical of the chief rabbi). On this latter point, see D. Kahane, "Emet le-Ya'akov," *Hashilo'ah* 5 (3) (1899): 259–60. S. Chones, *Sefer toledot ha-posekim* (Warsaw, 1929), 561, even goes so far as to say that Emden opposed Katzenellenbogen because he supported Eybeschütz! As indicated, I believe that all these explanations miss the real point.

50. See J. Eybeschütz, *Luhot 'edut*, 43b; 'Edut bi-Ya'akov, 16b, 29a; *Sefat emet*, 43; *Iggeret purim*, 4a; *Sefer hit'avkut*, 12a.

51. 'Edut bi-Ya'akov, 10b, 29a.

52. In addition to *Megillat sefer*, 99–114, see other controversy-related tracts: 'Edut bi-Ya'akov, 13b–14b, 29a; *Shevirat luhat ha-aven*, 41b; *Torat ha-kena'ot*, 55b. See also *She'ilat Yavets*, 2:24.

53. See above at n. 34.

54. *Megillat sefer*, 115f. In addition, see 'Edut bi-Ya'akov, 5b, 14a; *Shevirat luhat ha-aven*, 23b, 41b–42a.

55. Other passages in *Megillat sefer* assume a clearer focus as well. For example, in criticizing R. Moses Hagiz, an older contemporary, Emden wrote (p. 118): "It is not my desire to elaborate upon his shame. . . . *only that which is necessary for my defense* will I not hide, to teach my children and descendants, to remove accusation from upon me" (emphasis added).

A similar analysis—Emden's need, beginning in 1751, to defend himself against opponents who accused him of being a troublemaker who evinced only disrespect for illustrious rabbinic predecessors—explains why Emden began publishing his attack on R. Shlomo Zalman Hanau's *Sefer sha'arei tefillah* (Jessnitz, 1725) in 1751. Although he composed his *Luah eresh* in 1729, he was reluctant to publish it (for reasons explained in my forthcoming introduction to a new edition of this work [Bnai Brak, 1998]) and began to do so only after the outbreak of the Emden-Eybeschütz controversy in an attempt, as he explicitly writes, to defend himself against this very attack. See "Hatsa'ah le-sefer luah eresh" (n. 28, above), 76a. See too D. Kahane, "Emet le-Ya'akov" (n. 49, above), 257–58.

56. F. Hart, "Notes for an Anatomy of Modern Autobiography," *New Literary History* 1 (spring 1970): 491.

57. Arthur M. Clark, *Autobiography: Its Genesis and Phases* (Edinburgh, 1935), 22.

58. See, for example, "to my brothers, my children and my descendants" (p. 431, above).

59. Indeed, at times Emden clearly indicates this. For example, after presenting a long story about how the lay leaders of the community of Emden were fooled by unscrupulous characters seeking charity, he writes: "May the princes listen and take heed and not trust their wealth" (*Megillat sefer*, 110). He also refers to this work in his other writings. See, for example, *Mor u-ketsiah* (1761) 1:103b; 2:2a; (1996), 286, 289.

For additional examples of this phenomenon, see Louis A. Renza, "The Veto of the Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography," in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney (Princeton, N.J., 1980), 293.

60. M. J. Cohen, *Jacob Emden: Man of Controversy* (Philadelphia, 1937), 23.

61. In a footnote, M. Moseley, *Jewish Autobiography in Eastern Europe*, 395, n. 82, already noted the "polemic purpose" of this work that, in my opinion, is its fundamental focus. E. Carlebach writes ("Converts and Their Narratives," 74): "The life story . . . is not told for its own sake; it is transcended by its larger inspirational meaning." Substitute "polemical" for "inspirational," and one has a perfect description of *Megillat sefer*.

It is also interesting to note that once Emden reaches the point in his autobiography when he is describing current events (*Megillat sefer*, 177), the work changes from autobiography to diary, from reflecting on events of the past to recording events of the present. For a similar phenomenon in Leone da Modena's autobiography, see M. Moseley, 122–26.

Having suggested this type of autobiographical strategy, I have no doubt that a reanalysis of many such works (e.g., Yizhak min ha-Nevi'im's *Medabber tahpukhot* [n. 6, above]) will lead to considering them as part of this category.

62. W. B. Yeats, Preface and "Reveries over Childhood and Youth," in *The Autobiography of William Butler Yeats* (New York, 1953), 2.

63. J. P. Sartre, *Nausea* (New York, 1964), 39.

64. B. Bettelheim, *Freud's Vienna and Other Essays* (New York, 1990), ix.

65. Cited in A. M. Clark (n. 57, above), 14.

66. Charles Darwin and Thomas Henry Huxley, *Autobiographies*, ed. Gavin de Beer (London, 1974), 100.

67. H. Leibowitz, *Fabricating Lives: Explorations in American Autobiography* (New York, 1989), 3.

68. Lillian Hellman, "An Unfinished Woman," in *Three* (Boston, 1979), 279. See Maurice F. Brown, "Autobiography and Memory: The Case of Lillian Hellman," *Biography* 8 (winter 1985): 1.

69. See Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (Cambridge, 1960); Ross Miller, "Autobiography as Fact and Fiction: Franklin, Adams, Malcolm X," *Centennial Review* 16 (summer 1972): 221-32; J. W. Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Leipzig, 1903).

What Emily Dickinson once wrote in one of her poems is very relevant to the problematics of autobiography: "Tell all the truth, But tell it slant. Success in circuit lies." See Richard B. Sewall, "In Search of Emily Dickinson," in *Extraordinary Lives: The Art and Craft of American Biography*, ed. William Zinsser (Boston, 1986), 73.

For recent studies on the cognitive approach to the problematics of autobiography, seeing it within the framework of memory research, see Gillian Cohen, *Memory in the Real World* (London, 1989), 117-28.

70. In this context, I have found the following articles, in addition to those cited elsewhere in this article, particularly helpful: Keith Rinehart, "The Victorian Approach to Autobiography," *Modern Philology* 51 (February 1954): 177-86; Stephen A. Shapiro, "The Dark Continent of Literature: Autobiography," *Comparative Literature Studies* 5 (December 1968): 421-54; Karl J. Weintraub, "Autobiography and Historical Consciousness," *Critical Inquiry* 1 (June 1975): 821-48; Lionel Gossman, "The Innocent Art of Confession and Reverie," *Daedalus* 107 (summer 1978): 59-77.

71. The quote comes from the title of Vladimir Nabokov's autobiography, *Speak, Memory* (New York, 1966).

72. *Megillat sefer*, 82. See *Megillah* 28a: "One is prohibited from looking at the face of a wicked man."

73. See, for example, *Sefer hit' avkut*, 10a: "and behold I swear that I love the Rabbi"; *Iggeret purim*, 4b, 13a: "and I swear to you that I love him as you do and more"; *Shevirat luhat ha-aven*, 22b, 23b, 39b; 'Edut bi-Ya'akov, 7a, 17b. Cf. 'Edut bi-Ya'akov, 30a.

74. See, e.g., S. Leiman, "Mrs. Jonathan Eibeschuetz's Epitaph," n. 19, above.

75. Emden sometimes publicly acknowledged that he forgot various facts. See, for example, *Megillat sefer*, 54, 56, 85, 92.

76. For Emden's attitude to history, see my "Rabbi Jacob Emden: Life and Major Works" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1988), 516-29. For an example of Emden's historical accuracy, see Meir Benayahu, "H'a-hevrah kedoshah' shel Rabi Yehudah Hasid ve-'aliyah le-erez Yisrael," *Sefunot* 3-4 (1959-1960): 167-68.

77. See, for example, B. Z. Katz, *Rabbanut, hasidut, haskalah* (Tel Aviv, 1956), 2149-50; A. Bick (Sha'uli), "R. Ya'akov Emden—Ruso Ivri," *Moznayim* 33 (3-4) (1971): 275-77; idem, introduction to *Megillat sefer* (Jerusalem, 1979), 9-13; M. Moseley, *Jewish Autobiography in Eastern Europe*, 365-82. See too Micha Yosef Berdichevsky, "Shetei nashim bi-hayeit Ya'akov Emden," *Ha-tekfah* 10 (1921): 515-16.



78. For these phrases, see Samuel Johnson in *The Rambler*, no. 60 (October 13, 1750), cited in *Biography as an Art: Selected Criticism, 1560-1960*, ed. James L. Clifford (New York, 1962), 42.

79. For these and other examples, see Stephen Spender, "Confessions and Autobiography," in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. J. Olney (Princeton, N.J., 1980), 115-22.

80. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth, 1953), 65, 17. See too p. 169: "I promised to depict myself as I am."

81. Solomon Maimon, *Hayyei Shlomoh Maimon*, trans. S. Perlman (Tel Aviv, 1942), 170, cited in M. Moseley, *Jewish Autobiography in Eastern Europe*, 75, n. 1.

82. "Shevet le-gav kesilim," *Sefer shimush*, 47a. For other explicit statements about the physical dangers attendant upon irregular sexual intercourse, see the first volume of Emden's *Siddur, Bet El, 'Amudei shamayim* (Altona, 1746), 352a-57a. It is precisely in this context that Emden framed his support for the halakhic permissibility of a concubine (*pilegesh*); see *She'ilat Yavets* 2:15.

For another very personal statement in this connection, see *Iggeret purim*, 42b.

83. *Sha'arei shamayim* (Altona, 1747), 71b-72a.

84. *Divrei emet u-mishpat shalom* (Altona, 1776), 29a.

85. *Megillat sefer*, 193.

86. I plan to deal with other aspects of this work, e.g., the state of its only extant manuscript, its literary style, and later reactions to it in the introduction to my forthcoming critical edition (n. 13, above).

# Jewish History *and* Jewish Memory

*Essays in Honor of*

YOSEF HAYIM YERUSHALMI

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