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The Early History of Printing in the Ottoman Empire through the Prism of Mobility[1]

Abstract

This paper aims to examine the early stage of printing in the Ottoman Empire, focusing on mobile actors, tools and ideas. Which role did mobility play in the life of printers? How did it influence their professional life and how was it reflected in prefaces or afterwords of their printed books? The first Jewish, Serbian, Armenian, Greek and Muslim printers in the Ottoman Empire were foreign-born (Spain, Italy, England, France). Many of them had to remain mobile within and beyond the empire in order to escape persecution, religious censorship, business competition etc. Where did the knowledge of printing come from and how did it circulate? Were there any contacts between printers of different religious backgrounds and what role did the question of language and multilingualism play? By introducing case studies that originate from the early phase of printing in the Ottoman Empire (Sephardic legal code *ʾArbaʿa Ṭurim*, Constantinople 1493) until the first decades of the eighteenth century (İbrāhīm Müteferriḳa's printing activities), this article will mainly focus on the aspect of mobility in a Transottoman context. It will show the role of networks and connections between the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Europe for the development and spreading of book printing among Ottoman Jews and Christians.

Keywords: printing, mobility, Ottoman Empire, migration, book trade, censorship, intellectual exchange

1. Introduction

The main focus of this paper is on the role of mobility in the establishment, development and continuity of printing houses in the period between the late fifteenth and early eighteenth centuries. Mobility, in this context, can be understood as migration background, moving abroad for education, changing the place of work (being ready to move with acquired skills for printing and necessary equipment), selling and taking manuscripts and printed books abroad with the intent of contributing to further intellectual exchange etc. The early phase of printing in the Ottoman Empire was unthinkable without the mobility of various religious and ethnical groups and individuals. Expelled from Spain, Sephardic Jews technically became the real 'discoverers' of book printing in the Ottoman Empire in 1493, whereas official Ottoman printing was intro-

1 Funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG, German Research Foundation) – project number PA 736/9–1, within the framework of the SPP 1981 Transottomanica (313079038).

duced much later, in 1727. It is an irony or logic of history that both the Jewish and the Ottoman Muslim printing houses were started by immigrants. The pioneers of Jewish printing in the Ottoman Empire were the Sephardic brothers David and Samuel ibn Nahmias from Spain. On the other hand, the first Muslim to receive permission to establish the first official Ottoman press and to print Arabic and Ottoman Turkish texts in Constantinople was İbrāhīm Müteferriḳa, a convert of Hungarian origin.[2] Between the end of the fifteenth and early eighteenth centuries, Jews remained the main operators and users of printing tools and printed books in the Ottoman Empire. Active Transottoman networks also allowed Orthodox South Slavs, Armenians, Greeks and Christian Arabs to start printing activities in the empire in the period before Ottoman Muslim presses were established and the demand for printed books in Ottoman Turkish as well as Arabic increased. This paper aims to provide an overview of the development of printing among Jews and Christians in the Ottoman Empire, the contents of their book production, and the role of mobility and networks for their success in the first centuries of book printing in the Ottoman Empire before the official introduction of the Ottoman Muslim printing press in 1727.

The first part of this paper will focus on the role mobility played for Jewish printers and the development of Hebrew-language printing in the Ottoman Empire, whereas the second part is dedicated to the Christian printers' quest to introduce and spread printing among South Slavs, Armenians, Greeks and Christian Arabs. Although for Jewish and Christian printers Venice used to play an enormous role as a centre of printing in the Early Modern period, particular attention in this paper is paid to the Transottoman connections between the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Europe. For Hebrew printing, the connection to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was especially important; for the Christian Orthodox printers, networks between the Ottoman Empire, the tributary states Wallachia and Moldavia, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy played an essential role. This paper aims to make a contribution to research on the circulation of knowledge in the Transottoman context, which does not only imply intellectual exchange, but also the transmission of practical knowledge (printing skills, knowledge of the book market, as well as readers', sponsors', and patrons' interests and demands etc.) within the Ottoman Empire, as well as between the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Europe.

2. Hebrew Printing in Ottoman Cities and within the Transottoman Context

2.1. Sephardic Printers in Constantinople

> Since that day, when God confused the languages of the earth by the sudden and bitter expulsion from Spain…books were also abandoned in the trauma of destruc-

2 The corresponding *fermān* was issued by Aḥmed III in 1139/1727, authorising Saʿīd Efendī and İbrāhīm Müteferriḳa to establish a printing house and use Arabic script. This permission was limited to secular books. For the text of the decree in English translation, see Atiyeh 1995, 284–285.

> tion and the confusion of sudden change, for the constant afflictions have left us an empty shell…and because of troubles of the times and the lack of books, people have neglected the education of their children. So that even if they have the Chumash (Pentateuch) they lack the Targum and if they find that, then they lack the commentaries. May their hearts inspire them to spread the knowledge of the Torah in Israel…and to replace some of the numerous works which were destroyed.[3]

These words introduced one of the first books printed by Sephardic Jews in Constantinople in 1506 – the *Torah, Haftarot* (a series of selection from the books of Prophets) and *Five Megillot* ('Scrolls', the third major section of the *Tanakh*) with Rashi's Commentary. This introduction reminds its readers of the losses and damages that the Jewish inhabitants of Spain experienced after they were forced to leave their homeland. The traumatic experiences of the expulsion of 1492 could not be forgotten by their readers so soon, but the harm to the religious books and intellectual life of new generations of Sephardic migrants in the Ottoman Empire needed to be addressed by the printing team. They expressed their vocation and inclination to provide necessary editions to replace the lost ones in their struggle to preserve Jewish religious knowledge and support religious learning in the new, Ottoman environment. Moreover, the above-mentioned quote also explains the future curriculum of Hebrew printing with its particular focus on 'basic' sacred and religious books and compendiums, the main mission of printing being to preserve Jewish religious tradition in the Ottoman Empire in a conservative way, rather than create new philosophical or intellectual Jewish literature.[4]

Given that Sephardic printing houses had already met success in Italy and Spain in the second part of the fifteenth century,[5] it seemed to be a logical decision for Jews to initiate printing production in the Ottoman Empire using the skills and tools that they brought from abroad. The first book to be printed in the Ottoman Empire was the Jewish legal code *ʾArbaʿa Ṭurim* ('Four Rows', Constantinople, 1493). Printed in Hebrew by the brothers David and Samuel ibn Nahmias, Sephardic refugees from Spain,[6] this famous halachic compendium is the work of Jacob ben Asher (ca. 1270–ca. 1340) of Toledo. It was first published in 1475 by Meshullam Kusi, a physician and former scribe, in the Italian town Piove di Sacco. It is considered to be the first book to be printed and dated in the Hebrew script.[7] The code's title refers to the four (of twelve) rows of jewels on the High Priest's breastplate (Exodus 28:17).[8] It deals

3 Quoted in English from Na'eh 2001, 79; Yaari 1967, 18, 59–60; Freimann 1907, 30.
4 Na'eh 2001, 79; Ruderman 2010, 123.
5 The first properly dated book in Hebrew letters was printed in 1475 (20 years after Gutenberg's invention) in Reggio di Calabria (Italy). Some years later, Hebrew printing facilities from Italy were also brought to Spain (approximately in 1476/1479); Bloch 1976; Harris 2009, 19–20.
6 Tamari 2001, 9; Tamari 2002, 122; Offenberg 1996; Levy 1992, 38.
7 Harris 2009, 19.
8 Manutchehr-Danai 2009.

with laws related to the ritual slaughter of animals, food regulations, idolatry, mourning, marriage (including dowry and marriage contract) and divorce,[9] holy days and the Sabbath, prayers and blessings. According to Adri Offenberg, this book 'can without a doubt be called a bestseller among the Hebrew incunabula: including editions of its separate parts, at least thirteen editions of this work appeared within twenty years'.[10] The Nahmias brothers were possibly already active as printers in Spain, in Aragon. They must have passed through Italy before settling in Constantinople, as the typeface they used in *ʾArbaʿa Ṭurim* came from Naples.[11] The scholars who studied this first Jewish printed edition emphasised its great quality that could have only been attained by printers with long-term experience and excellent Italian printing tools and paper at hand.[12] Rabbi Elia ha-Levi acted as an editor or corrector of this legal code. He also composed a colophon, which expressed, what motivated the brothers Nahmias to prepare the *ʾArbaʿa Ṭurim* for print:

> We saw the excellence of this work and its great value in preference to other codes and that it is splendidly fitting and we made the effort to spread learning in Israel through the craftsmen Rabbi David Ibn Nahmias and his brother Samuel, may their reward be complete…And I have done my best to make it as perfect as possible by removing all errors imaginable; I, an insignificant man among thousands, Elia, son of Benjamin ha-Levi, may his soul rest in paradise. And truly, it is in the nature of this work that has come about through copying from one hand to another, that none can stand free from error, but thanks to an effort within the limits of things possible, a comparative perfection has been achieved. As the Sweet Singer of Israel has remarked: 'Who can discern errors?' (Psalm 19:13)…Friday 4 Tevet of the year five thousand two hundred and fifty-four, here in the large city of Constantinople, at the time of the great Mohammedan King Sultan Bayezid's reign, may he live and may the Lord help him and may He enhance his royal rule. Amen.[13]

The idea behind the printing of this legal code was to endow Ottoman Jews with legal knowledge. More specifically, legal issues caused numerous problems for rabbis, as three bigger Jewish communities (Romaniotes, Sephardim and Ashkenazim) had to define their status and their borders within the Ottoman Empire, in order to protect their religious traditions from the Muslim and Christian environment, but also to reject the influence of 'other' Jewish traditions. The term 'Israel' can be understood here also in a Transottoman sense – this code was printed to spread Jewish learning among all Jews, not only the Ottoman ones. The Nahmias brothers chose to print the same legal code that had already been printed as the first book in Hebrew two decades earlier in Southern Italy. Thus it is a sign of recognition of religious, legal and intellectual unity of an 'Israel' ignorant of political borders on the way to 'the for-

9 Van Boxel 1998, 119.
10 Offenberg 1996, 221.
11 Offenberg 1996, 225.
12 Offenberg 1992 and 1996.
13 Quoted in English from Offenberg 1996, 232–233; Yaari 1967, 59.

mation of a connected Early Modern Jewish culture'.[14] This preface praises the art of printing as opposed to copying manuscripts by hand, because proofing of the text before printing allowed to avoid most errors. Also, the editor, a scholar and a later head of a *yeshiva* (Jewish institution for higher learning) in Constantinople, emphasises the text's closeness to perfection and thus pride about the great quality of the Hebrew press.[15] The capital of the Ottoman Empire is not chosen by accident; it is a new trans-regional centre of Jewish culture and education that can only be strengthened by its function as a centre of Hebrew printing.[16] The mention of the sultan's name and the blessing of his rule deserve particular attention as a demonstration of loyalty, acknowledgement and appreciation of the new Sephardic subjects for their Muslim ('Mohammedan') ruler. Hence, Jewish printing in Constantinople also served to glorify the Ottoman ruler Sultan Bāyezīd II (r. 1481–1512), preserving his memory among Jewish subjects, too.[17] At least for twenty years, the Nahmias family remained the leading Jewish printers in Constantinople and published dozens of Hebrew titles.[18]

2.2. Jewish Printers and Texts between the Ottoman Empire and Poland-Lithuania

The first Hebrew work to appear in the Ottoman Empire, *ʾArbaʿa Ṭurim,* became the basis for Joseph Caro's (ca. 1488–1575) later halachic code, *Shulḥan Aruḥ* ('Prepared Table').[19] This compendium was destined to unify religious and everyday life practices of Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews in the Ottoman Empire, Western and Eastern Europe. The enormous success of Joseph Caro, a Sephardic rabbi from Ottoman Safed in Palestine, in codifying the Jewish legal and religious norms and its subsequent dissemination among different Jewish communities from Safed to Venice, from Salonica to Amsterdam and Cracow became possible only due to the printing technique.[20] *Shulḥan Aruḥ* was edited and printed for the first time in Venice in 1565 in Hebrew after revision in accordance with the current Index of Trent from 1564 that included new censorship laws regarding book printing.[21] Only three years later, in 1568, an abridged Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) version of this code entitled *Shulhan Hapanim* or *Mesa de el Alma* appeared in Ottoman Salonica.[22] The appropriation of the legal tradition of the *Shulḥan Aruḥ* among Ashkenazi Jews followed soon after thanks to the initiative of the rabbi Moses Isserles of Cracow. Another edition of the code, already with Is-

14 Ruderman 2010, 102.
15 Levy 1992, 38.
16 Hacker 1997.
17 On the subject of Jewish attraction and allegiance to the Ottoman state, see e.g. Levy 1992, 19–21.
18 Freimann 1907, 30–31; Hacker 1997, 20–30; Harris 2009, 47–48.
19 Harris 2009, 19.
20 Ruderman 2009, 10.
21 See Raz-Krakotzkin 2014, 104
22 Borovaya 2017, 44.

serles' comments, was published in Cracow around 1578–80.[23] It was not only a new edition, but an actual 'cultural translation' of this halachic code into the new circumstances of the Ashkenazi community in Poland. Appearance and dissemination of *Shulḥan Aruḥ* resulted in a major transformation of religious and legal practice of Ashkenazi Jews, a decline of the role of rabbinic authorities and a new epoch in the history of Judaism.[24]

The *Shulḥan Aruḥ* was not the only example of a Sephardic book that was in circulation among Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe. Some of these books arrived in printed form not only from Amsterdam and Venice, but also from Constantinople.[25] Other ones, such as the Hebrew treatise *Ṭa'ame haMitzvot* ('Reasons for the Commandments') of Rabbi Menahem ben Moses ha-Bavli, arrived from the Ottoman Empire as a manuscript and were printed in Lublin by Eliezer ben Itzhak Ashkenazi in 1571.[26] Rabbi Menahem, presumed to be originally from Italy, was active as a *dayan* (judge) in Trikkala (Ottoman Greece) until 1525 when he moved to Ottoman Palestine, where he died the same year as his book was published in Lublin (1571). Rabbi Menahem used to exchange correspondence with the above-mentioned Joseph Caro in Safed. It is not known when and under what circumstances ha-Bavli's treatise appeared in Poland-Lithuania. It can be speculated that the scholar's manuscript arrived via Jewish intellectual networks, possibly those of the famous printer Eliezer ben Itzhak. This last assumption is based on the fact that no later than in 1573–74 did Eliezer ben Itzhak, who started his printing career in Prague and continued in Lublin, move from Poland-Lithuania to Constantinople and later to Safed, keeping up with his profession also in the Ottoman Empire.[27] Although Jewish intellectual networks between the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Europe are yet to be studied in depth,[28] the given examples of close exchange between Ottoman and Eastern European Jewish scholars and printers illustrate the trans-regional character of Jewish networks that can be described as Transottoman cultural, intellectual and professional (among printers) connections.

Eliezer ben Itzhak and his son arrived with their own printing tools from Lublin to Constantinople in 1575 and found there a well-established Hebrew press of the Sephardic Ya'abetz brothers, Solomon and Joseph, who moved from Salonica to Constantinople and stayed active from 1559 to 1593.[29] In the Ottoman capital, Eliezer met his potential patron – the prosperous Romaniote David Kashti. In order to differentiate himself from Romaniote and Sephardic Jews, Eliezer took the last name Ashkenazi, thereby indicating his origin.[30] He was involved in the printing of a Romaniote rite

23 Ruderman 2009, 8.
24 Ruderman 2009, 12, 14.
25 Ruderman 2009, 11; Ruderman 2010, 102, 123.
26 Heller 2008, 110.
27 Freimann 1907, 154–155; Pilarczyk 2004, 60–64; Heller 2008, 112–119.
28 Tamari 2002, 121.
29 Na'eh 2001, 80–81.
30 His new surname appears already in his first title (*She'elot u'Teshuvot haGeonim*, 'Questions and Answers of the Geonim', *Geonic Responsa*) printed in Istanbul in 1575, 'printed by the

prayer book that Kashti commissioned from the Ya'abetz brothers.[31] Such a cooperation – certainly not without conflicts and rivalry – of representatives of three different Jewish communities was only possible in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, Eliezer printed several more titles together with his son Isaac; in one of them (*Makor Baruḥ*, 'Blessed Source', 1576?) he expressed his wish to move to the Holy Land.[32] Soon afterwards, Eliezer left Constantinople and undertook a long voyage to Ottoman Safed. Possibly, his main reason was religious – to live and print in *Eretz Israel*, in the holy city of Safed (one of the four holy cities in Judaism), close to Jerusalem. Additionally, printing books in Palestine seemed to be financially beneficial. It was a chance to avoid competition with Sephardic printers in Constantinople and to provide printed books for both sides – for numerous local scholars and Kabbalists in Safed, but also to export books printed in the Holy Land to the rest of the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Europe.[33] Eliezer brought printing tools to Safed and established the first local printing press. Together with another printer named Abraham Ashkenazi they printed their first book *Lekḥaḥ Tov* in 1571 ('Good Doctrine', a commentary on the book of Esther by Eliezer's young contemporary Yom Tov ben Moses Zahalon, 1558–1638). In the introduction to the printed edition, the author of the book commented on the events of some decades before, as in Rome (1553), Venice and other Catholic cities the Talmud was burned as a heretic book: 'Great was the cry of the Torah before God and when He remembered the covenant that He made with us at Horeb (Sinai), the Lord roused the heart of the printer Eliezer [so that] honor dwelled in our land.'[34] Zahalon encouraged others to also print their books at the press in Safed. Several more kabbalistic-homiletic books were printed in Safed until 1579, then Eliezer found himself again printing in Constantinople together with his Romaniote partner David Kashti. However, several years later, in 1587, Eliezer was back to Safed and printed three more books there.[35]

It was not only Ottoman Safed, but also the Moroccan city of Fez (1516),[36] and the Ottoman cities of Cairo (1557), Damascus (1605) and Smyrna (1657), where attempts were made to institute Hebrew presses. None of them were as successful as those of Constantinople or Salonica (since 1513), but Smyrna became a longstanding centre of early Hebrew printing as well.[37] The potential of mobility between bigger urban centres in the Ottoman Empire seemed to be acknowledged by Jewish printers from Spain, Italy or the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, who pursued the mobile printer

partners, together, the wise and honorable David Kashti and Eliezer ben Isaak Ashkenazi'; quoted in English from Heller 2008, 112; Yaari 1967, 31.

31 At least 42 pages of the prayer book were printed with Eliezer's type from Lublin; Heller 2008, 113–114.

32 Yaari 1967, 126–127; Heller 2008, 115.

33 Heller 2008, 115.

34 Quoted in English from Heller 2008, 117.

35 Heller 2008, 118–119.

36 The Moroccan city of Fez was not part of the Ottoman Empire until the famous capture of Fez in 1576.

37 Rowland-Smith 1989.

trade passed down over generations and put it to use in the Ottoman Middle East. One example is Gershom ben Eliezer Soncino, a descendant of one of the most famous Italian Jewish printers, Gershom ben Moses Soncino. Moses Soncino had already moved with his printing equipment between Lombardy, Naples, Rimini and Venice,[38] until he arrived in Salonica, and later in Constantinople in 1530 carrying on with Hebrew printing.[39] His grandson Gershom relocated from the Ottoman capital to Ottoman Egypt and ran a press in Cairo from 1557 to 1562 (until his death).[40] At least two Hebrew titles are known from the Cairo press – *Pitron haLomot* ('Interpretation of Dreams', 1557), and *Refuot haTalmud* ('Prescriptions of the Talmud', 1562). Their fragments were discovered in the *geniza* (storage place) of the Ben Ezra Synagogue of Cairo.[41]

One of the most important reasons for Jewish migration to the Ottoman Empire during the Early Modern period remained the religious factor. As the example of another famous printer from Poland, Samuel Helicz (born ca. 1515), illustrates, the migration from Cracow to Constantinople could mean a symbolical migration of faith from Catholicism back to Judaism. Samuel-Andrew Helicz, a member of a Jewish family of printers, the Helicz brothers,[42] converted to Catholicism under unknown circumstances in Cracow in 1537, and consequently opted for emigration in order to reconvert and return to printing in Hebrew. With his wife and children he went to Constantinople, where in 1551 he printed his first book, the *Pentateuch*, in the colophon of which he expressed his regret for attempting to change religions and the joy of returning to Judaism:

> Samuel (Heb. Shemu'el) said: Do not call me Shemu'el but rather Shevu'al who has returned to God (she-shav le-'el). After my return [to Judaism], I considered what to do. I said that this [i.e., printing the Bible] will bring me relief from my deeds and the toil of my hands.[43]

Scholars doubt that Samuel's previous decision to be baptised in Cracow occurred under big pressure or out of fear of persecution from the Catholic side. It seems that the Helicz family had their personal religious, social and economic reasons for leaving Judaism. The Helicz brothers were even active in persuading other Polish Jews to convert and were granted a monopoly on the import and sale of Hebrew books in Poland by King Sigismund I.[44] In 1540, Paul (Asher) Helicz prepared an edition of the New Testament (*Dos Naje Testament*) in Hebrew letters on the basis of Martin Luther's German translation. The Catholic bishop of Cracow, Piotr Gamrat, operated as a

38 See Marx 1969.
39 Mantovan-Kromer 2000, 212–213.
40 Harris 2009, 24.
41 Rowland-Smith 1989, 16; Na'eh 2001, 80.
42 Pilarczyk 2004, 67–70, 136.
43 Quoted in English from Teter and Fram 2006, 62.
44 Pilarczyk 2004, 69; Teter and Fram 2006, 39.

sponsor of this edition and saw a chance of a successful mission among Jews.[45] Although, as Christians, the Helicz brothers enjoyed multiple privileges and could expand their printing production for Jews, their success did not last long, since the Jewish community of Cracow was not interested in supporting apostates and thus refused to purchase their goods.[46] With financial support of the Cracow Chapter, the brothers moved to printing for Christians. Only Samuel chose to reconvert to Judaism and found himself in the Ottoman Empire, in the centre of Hebrew printing in Constantinople.[47]

2.3. Jewish Anti-Christian Polemics in Print

Although most of the printed texts in Hebrew were of a religious or legal nature, there were also copies of contemporary writings with anti-Christian tones – something that would have been impossible to print in Jewish typographies in European cities. For example, a philosophical treatise on Jewish dogmatic theology, written by the Sephardic scholar Abraham Bibago in Spain[48] shortly before the expulsion of Jews (1492), was for the first and final time printed in Constantinople in 1521.[49] The last part of this Hebrew book with the title *Derekh Emunah* ('The Path of Faith') contained an extensive critique of Christianity (incarnation of God etc.).[50] The chapter is based on accounts of a discussion that Abraham Bibago held with a Christian scholar at the court of John II, King of Aragon (r. 1458–1479), probably around 1460.[51] The main goal of *Derekh Emunah* was to urge all Jews including *conversos* not to abandon Judaism.[52] The knowledge and logical arguments contained in Bibago's treatise seemed to be valuable and useful not only for Jews in Spain, but also in the new Ottoman environment, where such texts could be printed without Christian censorship and disseminated among Ottoman Jews, as well as be sold to the Jewish communities abroad. The issue of conversion motivated another Sephardic author, whose name is unknown, to compose a long theological and philosophical treatise, *Fuente Clara* ('Clear Fountain'). The

45 Pilarczyk 2004, 69; Teter and Fram 2006, 54–55. Only one sample of this edition of the New Testament in Hebrew letters is preserved at the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow. In 2017 it was exhibited by the German Historical Museum in Berlin for the Reformation jubilee; Deutsches Historisches Museum 2017, 57.

46 Teter and Fram 2006, 47–51.

47 He printed at least three titles in Constantinople – the *Pentateuch*, a Hebrew translation of a Latin text of Judith, and the *Sha'arey Dura*, an often-copied Ashkenazic halachic handbook (first published by the Helicz brothers before their conversion in Cracow, in 1534); Teter and Fram 2006, 62; Na'eh 2001, 80.

48 See Lazaroff 1981, 2–4; Zonta 2006, 39.

49 Lazaroff 1981, 2. In addition to the *Derekh Emunah*, the only other work by Bibago to have been published was a small homiletic one on the topic of creation, *Zeh Yenahamenu* ('This One will Comfort Us'), in Salonica in 1522 (?).

50 There is a facsimile edition of this book, see *Derek Emunah* 1969; Kaburkova 2017, 261.

51 Lasker 1980, 300; Zonta 2006, 33.

52 Lazaroff 1981, 2, 6.

main subject of this originally secular book was to persuade Jews to remain faithful to Judaism, to warn them against conversions or even to win converts back to Judaism.[53] It was printed in Salonica in 1595 in Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) in the printing house of Matatya Bat-Sheva and his sons Abraham and Joseph (themselves Sephardic emigrants from Venice). It is obvious that *Fuente Clara* was very successful,[54] as it was reprinted in 1740 in Constantinople, this time in the printing house of Jonah ben Yaacov Ashkenazi (d. 1745).[55] An emigrant from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Jonah Ashkenazi played an extremely significant role in the history of Hebrew printing in the Ottoman Empire, making Constantinople 'the metropolitan of Hebrew printing in the entire Middle East'.[56] In 35 years he printed 125 titles in Constantinople and Smyrna (1728–1739).[57] Ashkenazi's critical attitude towards Christians and their proselytism found its place not only in the reprint of *Fuente Clara*, but also in the preface to the Judeo-Spanish *Pentateuch* (Constantinople, 1739):

> And in the whole Law, only the name of Israel is mentioned, and no other nation, even though Christians say that God abandoned us and took them instead, saying that we had sinned. But we can easily respond to them: they could say such things if God had achieved something by taking better people instead of us. But this is not so, as we see that those who say that God abandoned us and took them instead are much worse sinners who do not perform a single commandment of the Law (in particular, the commandment of circumcision or rules and injunctions of the Law which God told them to perform). So, why would God who knows the future abandon us without gaining anything? And knowing that this is not so but that they found themselves in power because of our sins, they are wondering why the Master of the Universe left them [Jews] in exile for so long despite their having such a holy law; and thus…they say that he abandoned us.[58]

It is interesting that this passage appears near the beginning of the introduction of a book so sacred for Judaism. Ashkenazi concludes by saying that 'the uncircumcised' chose the wrong law. This remark appears even before the explanation of what the 'right law' is. According to Olga Borovaya, this preface provides a short and simply formulated anti-Christian polemic intended for all those who open the Judaeo-

53 Romeu 2007, 93.

54 Moses Marx maintained that *Fuente Clara* should have had enormous success among its readership which later led to its near-disappearance, but was skeptical about the possibilities of exporting this book to Christian countries: 'It [*Fuente Clara*] was printed in Turkey, far from the grip of the agents of the Inquisition; and hardly any Jew would have had the boldness to bring it with him into a Christian country. We must, therefore, assume that it was the general Jewish interest in the subject, the reading and rereading of the book that caused it to vanish – the most honorable death a book can have.'; Marx 1956, 179–180. Nowadays only five copies of this writing are known; Romeu Ferré 2004, 122.

55 Romeu Ferré 2004, 129–130; Borovaya 2017, 227.

56 Na'eh 2001, 82.

57 Na'eh 2001, 82–83.

58 Quoted in English from Borovaya 2017, 226–227.

Spanish Bible.[59] There are different possible explanations as to why such a passage was desirable for the Sephardic community of the Ottoman Empire that had already long resided in Ottoman cities, as the issue of reconversions from Christianity to Judaism had lost its currency, and the community was hardly in danger of losing their faith through European or Greek Christian proselytism. Nevertheless, centuries of Christian accusations and claims against Jews were still hurtful and omnipresent and needed to be addressed in the Ottoman Jewish publications. It may also be possible that Jonah Ashkenazi reflected on his own experiences of the imposition of Christianity in Poland and made use of a new opportunity to finally articulate his view on interreligious competition without the bounds of Catholic censorship.

The cases examined in this part of the contribution demonstrate particular connections between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sphere of Jewish book printing. Hebrew manuscripts and printed books from the Ottoman Empire were accessible in Eastern Europe. Constantinople became known among Polish Jews as a centre of Hebrew-language press and printing, hence it became an attractive place for mobile Ashkenazi printers who sought religious tolerance, proximity to the Holy Land, intellectual connections to acknowledged Jewish scholars, alongside the economic advantages of an established book market in the Ottoman Empire. Transottoman networks of Jewish scholars, printers and patrons were a product of the mobility of individuals and objects, and certainly provided further possibilities of knowledge exchange and circulation between the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Europe.

3. Mobility of Christian Printers

3.1 South Slavs' Printing Presses in the Balkans

The first Christian printing presses in the Balkans were established by the Orthodox South Slavs already at the end of the fifteenth century. The initiative of founding the first printing house in the Balkans belonged to the ruler of Montenegro, George (Đurađ) Crnojević, who had spent some time in Italy and was married to a Venetian noblewoman.[60] The presumably Venice-trained printer-priest Makarije moved to the Montenegrin capital Cetinje in the 1490s, where with the support of George Crnojević, he printed his first book in 1494, the Church Slavonic *Octoechos* ('Book of the

59 Borovaya 2017, 226–227. The researcher suggested that this passage was triggered by the rabbis' protest against spreading 'European fiction that served as a medium for spreading Christian beliefs because it propagated the wrong values, "opposite to the Law of Moses"'; Borovaya 2017, 227.

60 Kilpatrick 2014, 36.

Eight Tones', a liturgical hymn book of Byzantine origin).[61] Makarije's printing skills, tools and paper for the press in Cetinje must have originated in Venice.

There were three main migration destinations for Serbian printers and printing presses: firstly, contacts with Venice as a centre for training in printing and press production; secondly, movement in the Balkans (between cities and monasteries); and thirdly, connections with Romanian lands. Interesting details about the organisation of the printing house in the Serbian monastery of Mileševo (1544–1545 and 1557) can be found in the preface of the first book to be printed there, Psalter, published in October 1544. On behalf of Daniel, the monastery's hegumen, it relates how he, together with the monks from Mileševo, wanted to initiate book printing in the monastery. That is why the hieromonks Nikanor and Savva, together with the hegumen of the monastery Banjska Mardarije, were sent to the 'Italian lands', to 'the worldly city of Venice'. From Venice, they 'brought everything that was necessary'. At that time they were able to produce printed forms in Mileševo and began printing divine service books.[62] Thus, it is clear that for Serbs printing materials remained an 'import product' from Venice. However, after acquiring these materials, nothing prevented them from printing in Serbian monasteries, which were centres of book culture and education even in the pre-Ottoman period.

The afterwords and prefaces of numerous Cyrillic books printed in Venice hint at the fact that their printers were often from the Balkans.[63] Venice was a place for them where it was possible to learn printing skills, where the presence of printing houses made it possible to print books (almost exclusively of liturgical nature) at a low cost, which were then sent to Orthodox churches and monasteries in the Ottoman territories. Having your own printing house in Venice was becoming a 'patriotic' task. The famous Serbian printer in Venice, Božidar Vuković, in the preface to the Prayer Book of 1520, explained that upon his arrival to Venice he saw Franks, Greeks and other peoples printing divine scriptures, and therefore he was burning with desire 'to prepare also our Serbian as well as Bulgarian ones on the printing press'.[64] In a later edition of 1536, the printer also explains what prompted him to emigrate and how he felt about his life in Venice.

Evidently, the printing business for Božidar Vuković in Venice gave numerous opportunities to preserve culture and traditions, producing not only books 'for the enlightenment of divine churches' in the Ottoman territories, but also printing machines for the Balkans. Undoubtedly, not only the care of the Orthodox churches motivated the printer, but also the financial benefit, given the huge demand for church service books in Serbian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, etc. in monasteries

61 Nemirovskiy 2009, 92–95. The very first printed edition of the Church Slavonic *Octoechos* was published several years earlier, in 1491, in Cracow (in the printing house of Schweipolt Fiol); Nemirovskiy 2009, 71–74.

62 Medaković 1958, 32. My translation.

63 Fin 2012.

64 Medaković 1958, 29; Pantić 1974, 48. My translation.

and parishes in the Balkans; another important factor being that many manuscripts were damaged during Ottoman raids. For example, it is known that Vuković's printing house cooperated with the Serbian monastery of Mileševo, where Venice-printed books were sold. This is known from the will of Božidar Vuković (1539), in which he ordered the completion of the water supply to the monastery, the means for this most likely coming from the 'books that are' in Mileševo.[65]

The intention to print Slavic books in Venice 'for export' to the Balkans is even clearer in the activities of Jakov Krajkov (mid. sixteenth century).[66] He 'left his fatherland Macedonia and came to Western countries near old Rome to the city of Venice for the sake of holy books'.[67] Jakov consciously went from Macedonia to Venice to study, in order to quickly learn and even take over the management of a whole printing shop (the owner of which was previously Božidar, and then his son Vicenzo Vuković).[68] It is known from the Psalter printed by Jakov in Venice (1569–1570) that one of the places of sale was the city of Skopje; whereas the target readership of the printing house was the Orthodox population of Ottoman Macedonia. There was probably a direct link between Vuković's former printing house in Venice and the bookseller Kara Trifun in Skopje, who, in turn, seemed to be the middleman between Balkan monastic centres and the Cyrillic printing house in Venice. ('And if someone needs any holy books, they are all brought to the place Skopje by Kara Trifun.').[69]

Not a single South Slavic printing press in the Ottoman Balkans had a long-term history in one place. Beyond the printing house of Cetinje and some phases of printing at the monastery of Mileševo (1544/5 and 1557), there were also presses in Goražde (1519–1523), at the Serbian monasteries of Rujan (1536–7), Gračanica (1539), and in Mrkšina Crkva (1562–1566), as well as in the cities of Belgrade (1552) and Shkodër (Scutari, 1563). Their short history can be explained by the unstable political situation in the Balkans and thus by the lack of regular financial support from the side of Orthodox noble patrons. On the other hand, the idea of movable presses in the monasteries and cities in the Balkans seemed to be attractive in the sixteenth century, as the number of places involved in printing proves.

The last two examples concern the 'migration' of printers from the Balkans to Wallachia. One example of such is the above-mentioned printer Makarije, who studied in Venice and started printing houses on the territory of Montenegro at the very end of the fifteenth century. In 1505–1506, he settled in Wallachia, where he printed *Liturgiar* in 1507, *Octoechos* in 1510, and the Gospel in Church Slavonic in 1512. It is still unknown where the printing house was based. The most common theory in historiography is that the printing house was located in the city of Târgoviște.[70] Moreover,

65 Čurčić 2008, 337. My translation.
66 For more information about this person, see Tsibranska-Kostova 2013, 25–37; Tsibranska-Kostova 2014.
67 Guseva 2003, 122–123. My translation.
68 Stojanović 1902, 21–22.
69 Guseva 2003, 12. My translation.
70 Rother 2002, 21–22; Panaitescu 1939.

Božidar Goraždanin's printing press moved to Târgoviște (Wallachia), where printing persisted (1544–1567) after his press in the town of Goražde (Bosnia and Herzegovina) had been closed.[71] This move was initiated by Dmitry Ljubavić, a printer trained in Venice. It is likely that his assistant – Priest Moses – also went with him (according to some assumptions, it was the printer Moses from Božidar Vuković's printing house in Venice, 1536–8). Despite the fact that Wallachia was itself a tributary state of the Ottoman Empire,[72] it was appealing to Serbian printers, since both the conditions there were safer for the printers (less raids) and the local rulers actively supported book printing. Wallachian and Moldavian sovereigns saw themselves as important patrons of Orthodoxy after the fall of Constantinople (1453), and the publication of Orthodox liturgical books to supply the monasteries and churches on Ottoman territories was an opportunity for them to prove their generosity. The demand for Cyrillic liturgical books (in Church Slavonic and later in Romanian) was even greater there than in the Balkans, thanks to the possibilities of distribution of printed literature in Wallachia and Moldavia, as well as among Orthodox Ruthenians in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Among the books that were printed by South Slavs, only liturgical books that were reproduced from the older manuscripts in Church Slavonic language were in use in the Orthodox churches and monasteries in the Balkans. There were no attempts to print contemporary theological or secular texts or to replace handwritten prayer books. Instead, the focus was on making religious books more accessible for local priests and monks so as to have them used in everyday church service alongside the manuscripts. This relatively short history of printing in the Balkans can be studied only in the context of Transottoman networks and mobility of Orthodox printers and the circulation of Church Slavonic printed books from the Ottoman South-Eastern Europe via Poland-Lithuania to Muscovy and the other way around in the Early Modern period.

3.2 Armenian Printing between Venice and Constantinople

The history of Armenian printing in the Ottoman Empire is unthinkable without the activity of mobile printers. Armenian printing was born at the beginning of the sixteenth century in Venice, thanks to the activity of the printer Yakob/Hakob Meghapart.[73] A few decades later another Armenian, Abgar Dpir, a native of Northern Anatolia, arrived in Venice. Between 1562–1567, he studied printing skills and even printed the Armenian calendar (*Khaṛnay p'nt'ur tumari*) and a psalter in Venice. In 1567, Abgar Dpir moved with his skills and press to Constantinople, where he first published a short grammar of the Armenian language (*P'ok'r k'erakanutiwn*). The Armenian printing house was housed in the church of St. Nicholas Topkari for a mere two years. During this time the printer managed to publish five books, including a psalter, a

71 Pantić 2008, 37; Čurčić 2008.
72 Kármán and Kunčević 2013.
73 Aslanian 2013, 36–37.

prayer book, and a church calendar.[74] Another Armenian book printer, Priest Yovhannēs/Hovhannēs T'ērznts'i, went to Rome and Venice for education and probably tried to establish his own printing press in Venice, but, at the end, he chose to establish a new printing house in Constantinople in 1587. The printing career of Yovhannēs/Hovhannēs Ankiwrets'i (meaning John of Ankara, also known as Giovanni Molino), who was trained in Venice and moved with his printing press to Constantinople in 1644, developed in a similar way.[75] However, most of Armenian printed books in the Ottoman Empire were still produced in Venice. Due to the mobility of Armenian clerics and traders, there were no problems in the delivery and distribution of books,[76] whereas the Armenian printing in Constantinople in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had little chance of success. According to the preface in Abgar Dpir's book, Armenian printing in Constantinople had to be coordinated not only with the Armenian Catholicos, but also with the Greek Patriarch and the Ottoman authorities; hence there had to be a significant effort made to overcome the bureaucracy. Moreover, the existence of an Armenian printing house in Constantinople was probably complicated by the competition between different Christian groups and denominations. The full autonomy from 'European' Armenian printers was in any case difficult to achieve, since all materials for the press had to be imported from abroad. Only from the end of the seventeenth century onwards can one speak about a new stage in the history of stable Armenian printing in the Ottoman Empire. Until then, Armenian diaspora networks provided access to manuscripts and printed books for Ottoman Armenians, thus overcoming political boundaries and forming Transottoman routes and landscapes for the book market and intellectual exchange.

3.3 Greek Printing

Turning to the question of the role of the 'migration factor' for the history of Greek printing in the Ottoman Empire, it is worth quoting an interesting source – the petition of the Greek Metropolitan of Paleopatras Theophanos to the Russian Tsar Mihail Fedorovič (1645):

> The Turks won't allow us [Greeks] to print books in Constantinople because the Franks who are in Constantinople prevent this and gain a victory through bribery… And therefore, O great Tsar, the poor Greeks must submit. And other peoples insult them [Greeks], not only Franks and Lutherans, but also Armenians and Jews. And they tell them that they [Greeks] have no empire and that they are not worthy to have their own printing houses and must therefore submit to the Franks… And it

74 Kevorkian 1999; Pektaş 2015, 16–17.
75 Kévorkian 1986, 35–36.
76 Sanjian 2012, 6; Aslanian 2013, 41–43.

> especially humiliates the Greeks that our enemies do not allow us to print our own books in Constantinople.[77]

Thus, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the Greek Metropolitan Theophanos complained to the Russian Tsar that the Greeks had no opportunity to print books in Constantinople. He named two factors that prevented establishing Greek printing houses, namely the policy of Ottoman authorities against the Greek printing, and also efforts of Europeans (Catholics and Protestants) living in Constantinople, ready to bribe Ottoman authorities to prevent the creation of printing houses. It is clear that the Germans and French had the widest access to printed matter (also in Greek) thanks to European printing, which the Greeks, it turns out, were deprived of. Even more interesting is the reference to Armenians and Jews who 'humiliate Greeks' because they do not have printing houses. The lack of own kingdom was a typical accusation the Greeks made against Jews, but not in this case, where the Greeks were subordinate to the Ottomans and deprived of 'their empire'. As for printing houses, it is interesting that the Metropolitan Theophanos mentioned Jews and Armenians, apparently the only religious groups that had their own printing press in Constantinople. It was not an accident that the addressee of the Metropolitan's petition was the Russian Tsar, since as per Theophanos' wish, Moscow had to become a centre of Greek book printing, of education in Greek, and translation from Greek into Russian.[78] It is not difficult to comprehend the great disappointment with the situation of Greek printing in Constantinople – some twenty years earlier, in 1627 the only attempt of initiating a Greek printing house in the Ottoman capital failed. Together with a 'mobile' printer, Nicodemos Metaxas, who moved his printing press from London to Constantinople, Patriarch Cyrill Loukaris launched the very first press with Greek letters in the Ottoman Empire. The earliest titles to be published were an anti-Jewish polemic writing by Loukaris and an anti-Latin treatise by Maxim Margounios. Shortly afterwards, as Theophanos later reported to the Russian Tsar, 'the cursed Franks saw it and betrayed the Patriarch to the Turks and wanted to kill him, and destroyed the printing press'.[79] The reason for the investigation by Ottoman authorities against the Greek press was the result of a complaint by the French Jesuits, who claimed that Loukaris and Metaxas were printing books that criticised the Prophet and Islam.[80] Even though an examination by Ottoman officials did not demonstrate any anti-Islamic content in the printed editions and thus the Jesuits' al-

77 'Turki ne povolyat nam [grekam] pečatat' knig vo Tsaregrade, poneže i nemtsy, kotorye prebyvaiut vo Tsaregrade, mešaiut ot zavisti svoei i osilivaiut oni svoeiu mzdoiu…I sego radi, deržavnyi velikii tsariu, smiriaiutsa bednye grečene. I braniat ih pročie narodi, ne tokmo nemtsy i liutori, no i armene i evreene. I govoriat im [grekam], čto ne imeiut tsarstva, i v tom est' oni oskorbleny ot pročih narodov, i v tom oni nedostoiny imet' pečati, i togo dlia pokariaiutsa nemtsom...Tolko i ot togo smiriaiutsa dlia togo, čto nedrugi naši ne daiut nam pečatati knig vo Tsaregrade'. Florya 1990, 221–222. My translation.

78 Florya 1990, 222.

79 Florya 1990, 222.

80 Hering 1968, 164–168.

legations could not be confirmed, the printing press in Constantinople was shut down after a few months in service.[81] Nicodemos Metaxas, a Venetian citizen, went to his homeland, the island of Kefalonia, bringing along what was left of his printing shop, which was damaged by the Ottoman authorities. It is believed that as the new Archbishop of the Ionian islands of Kefalonia, Zakynthos and Ithaca, Metaxas was able to continue printing on his native island, in the Fortress of St. George.[82]

It should be said that for Greeks, first of all the Greek hierarchs in the Ottoman Empire, the issue of printing played an extremely important role between the middle of the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is known that the emigration of most educated Greeks, caused by the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, had an adverse effect on Greek culture and education in the empire. Most of the educated Greek emigrants found refuge in Venice, Padua, Rome and other Western European cities. First of all, Greek printing was established in Venice, starting with the second half of the fifteenth century (1469). This is where the centre of the 'Greek Renaissance' developed.[83] Greek books, particularly Greek manuscripts, had a particular value for European scholars and intellectuals. Greek manuscripts became a very profitable commodity in the Early Modern period. Many European aristocrats and intellectuals purchased manuscripts for their libraries. The manuscripts were frequently sent by Greeks to Mount Athos and other Ottoman territories. Greek manuscripts were bought, copied, sent as gifts and used as the basis for new publications. For the Greeks in the diaspora, as well as for Ottoman and Venetian subjects, interest in books was largely due to the desire to preserve and save the Byzantine and ancient cultural heritage. A special role was given to book printing for replication of Greek texts and their distribution. Here, it is necessary to mention the support of German Protestant theologians who were interested not only in ancient, but also in the Byzantine religious and legal texts. It was the Protestants who saw the special value of the Orthodox tradition and hoped to bring the two confessions closer together, chiefly in matters of disputes against Catholics, but also to gather knowledge about Byzantine culture, language etc.[84]

The fact that Greek printing was introduced so late in the Ottoman Empire can be explained through different factors. On the one hand, it is apparent that the volume of Greek printing from Venice, Rome and German cities could satisfy the needs of Greek hierarchs and intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire, especially given the relatively low demand for books in general due to the decline in education among the Greek population of the empire. On the other hand, because of the censorship (primarily in Catholic Venice and Rome), not all kinds of Greek texts could be published in Southern and Western Europe. This particularly concerned anti-Catholic, and later anti-Protestant polemics – an important theme in the works of the Greek hierarchs.

81 For a detailed history of the Greek press in Constantinople, see Pektaş 2014, especially 110–114; Olar 2013.
82 Pektaş 2014, 122.
83 Geanakoplos 1962.
84 Zachariades 1941; Hering 1981; Wendebourg 1986.

For this kind of texts, Greek hierarchs needed alternative centres of book printing among the Orthodox population, with the support of Orthodox nobles and rulers. So, for a short time, at the very end of the sixteenth and in the early seventeenth centuries it was possible to print several Greek books in Lviv, Ostrog and Vilnius with the support of the local Greek diaspora and migrant Greek intellectuals. The future patriarch of Constantinople, Cyrill Loukaris, spent several years in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He not only helped to print at least one book written by his uncle, the Patriarch of Alexandria Meletios Pegas (Vilnius, 1596),[85] but also explicitly supported and encouraged the printing activities of the Orthodox brotherhood of Lviv (1614).[86]

After Loukaris' project of establishing a Greek printing press in Constantinople in 1627 malfunctioned, Greek hierarchs hoped for support of the Russian ruler. But the mission of the Metropolitan Theophanos (1645), as well as the later mission by the Patriarch of Jerusalem Dositheos II to persuade the Russian Tsar to found a Greek printing house in Muscovy failed. By the end of the seventeenth century, Greek printing moved in a familiar direction – to Wallachia and Moldavia, where especially Bucharest (including the Monastery of the Snagov) and Iaşi became the new centres of Greek printing culture. It was here that it became possible to use Greek printing for confessional polemics, to print numerous anti-Catholic and anti-Calvinist works of Greek hierarchs with the support of local rulers and without any repercussions.[87]

The history of early modern Greek printing can also be studied within a Transottoman framework, between the Ottoman Empire, Venice, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy. Greek connections to Eastern Europe were based on previous Byzantine, first of all, Orthodox ecclesiastical networks. These connections became even more intense in the post-Byzantine period, as Russian, Wallachian and Moldavian Orthodox rulers and nobles who often acted as patrons of churches and monasteries in the Ottoman Empire, supported Greek bishops and patriarchs financially. Although Constantinople was destined and desired to become not only the centre of Jewish and Armenian, but also Greek printing, because of its hinge function in the Mediterranean, it occurred to be impossible for Greeks in the Early Modern period to succeed with their initiatives there. The main reason for this failure remained the strong rivalry between different Christian denominations. The networks of Greek patriarchs, bishops, monks and merchants in the Ottoman tributary states and Southern, Central and Eastern Europe were instrumental in the development of Greek printing and the circulation of Greek printed literature in the Transottoman context.

85 Legrand 1885.
86 Golubev 1898, 201–202, 204.
87 Deletant 1983, 485.

3.4 Arabic Printing

Printing in the Arabic script with movable characters was also (like Hebrew, Greek and Armenian printing) initiated in Italy (in the city of Fano, in 1514). It was motivated by the publishers' desire to provide liturgical books for Arabic-speaking Christians in the Middle East.[88] Some decades later, in 1536–1537, the Venetian printer Paganino de Paganini prepared a full-length primer of the Qur'an in Arabic in order to distribute it among Muslims of the Ottoman Empire for a good profit.[89] However, even though Ottoman religious and secular authorities in principle never prohibited the import of printed books in Arabic language, e.g. for Arab Christians, they considered it inappropriate for European Christians to produce Muslim religious texts, especially when it came to the sacred text of the Qur'an. While European merchants were allowed to import books and pamphlets written in Arabic, Persian and Turkish[90], as per the *fermān* of Sultan Murād III from October 1588, the printed Qur'an was not to be imported into the Ottoman Empire until some centuries later.[91] Also, the famous permission for İbrāhīm Müteferriḳa to establish an official Ottoman printing press in 1727 was limited to the production of secular books; Muslim religious texts were never printed in the Ottoman Empire before the nineteenth century.[92] The following short passage shall give some insights on the history of printing in Arabic among Ottoman Christians and the role of mobility in the Transottoman context for its development.

In 1610, the Maronites of the St. Anthony monastery in Quzhayya (Mount Lebanon) printed the first book in Syriac and Arabic – a book of psalms.[93] The first Arabic (Christian) books in the Transottoman context were printed in Bucharest by a mobile printer of Georgian origin, Anthim the Iberian (1650–1716), who had been already famous for his Romanian and Greek prints under the patronage of the Wallachian prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (1654–1714). It was in Bucharest that the Archbishop of Aleppo and later Patriarch of Antioch Athanasius Al-Dabbas acquired the necessary tools and technical information bringing them back to Ottoman Syria in 1705 in order to start the first Arab printing press in the Middle East.[94] Since further financial assistance was needed for the Syrian Press, the Patriarch of Antioch Al-Dabbas sent twice an envoy to the Russian ruler Peter the Great (in 1707 and 1714) to get the necessary subsidy for his printing activities.[95] The Arabic edition of *Evangelion* (Aleppo,

88 Kreiser 2001, 20–21.
89 Wilson 2014, 33–34.
90 Atiyeh 1995, 283.
91 Wilson 2014, 38.
92 The first printed Islamic text in the Ottoman Empire appeared in 1803 when Sultan Muṣṭafā III's daughter Hadīce Sulṭān (1766–1822) financed the printing of one thousand copies of a book called *Vasiyetname* ('The Last Will'), a treatise on the basic articles of faith by the well-known Ottoman scholar İmām Birgivī (d. 1573); Wilson 2014, 42.
93 Feodorov 2009, 41.
94 Feodorov 2016, 164–195; Kilpatrick 2014, 47.
95 Pančenko 2012, 405; Kilpatrick 2014, 47.

1708) was sponsored by the Cossack hetman Ivan Mazepa.[96] These examples demonstrate how knowledge of Christian book printing in Arabic in Bucharest influenced the Patriarch of Antioch to initiate his own printing press in Ottoman Syria using technology from Wallachia and financial means from the Orthodox patrons in Poland-Lithuania and Russia. This comprehensive Transottoman network enabled the establishment and development of the first Arab printing press in the Middle East.

4. Summary and Outlook

All in all, it seems important to focus on the reasons for the mobility of printers in the Transottoman context. On the one hand, the level of migration in general since the mid-fifteenth century in connection with the conquest and expansion of the Ottoman Empire was of great importance. Not only Greeks, but also Armenians, Romaniote Jews, Albanians and the Slavic population of the Balkans found themselves in forced migration. For the Sephardic Jews, who were expelled from Spain, Constantinople and other major cities of the Ottoman Empire became the centre of immigration. It was the Greeks, Jews and Armenians who were known in the Early Modern age for their special mobility, which allowed them to explore new markets and trade routes.

On the other hand, one could only become a printer by training in a workshop, gaining practical skills and having access to materials and technologies that were not available in the Ottoman Empire but were well-developed, for example, in Italy. For most printers, mobility in the first centuries after the invention of book printing was absolutely necessary, searching for patrons and benefactors, sellers and buyers, authors and readers. The need for printing houses was not universal; only where there were universities, schools, any educational centres, and, therefore, demand for printed books. This set of factors complicated the development of printing in the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the technological progress remained an important factor practically until the end of the nineteenth century, motivating young people to get education as printers in Europe, as well as to import tools necessary for printing and publishing houses from abroad into the Ottoman Empire.[97]

It can be stated that only Jews were continuously successful as printers in the Ottoman Empire of the Early Modern period also thanks to their diaspora connections in Western and Eastern Europe. As for the different Christian groups in the Ottoman Empire, their printing attempts were less durable and fortunate than the Jewish ones. Still, the Transottoman framework allows to examine intellectual and technical exchange between Jewish and Christian printers and scholars between the Ottoman Empire, tributary states and Eastern Europe, in order to understand the role of mobility, and to reconstruct their transregional networks. Even after the official establishment of the Ottoman (Turkish) press through Müteferriḳa in 1727, the negative atti-

96 Pančenko 2012, 407; Kilpatrick 2014, 47.

97 On lives and activities of the Ottoman printers and publishers in the last decades of the eighteenth and first decades of the nineteenth century, see e.g. Beydilli 1995.

tude of Ottoman political and religious authorities towards printing of Muslim religious texts made printing hardly useful. One of the reasons was that a demand for secular texts not only among Muslims, but also among Ottoman Jews and Christians barely existed in the pre-modern period. The ban on printing religious texts could partly explain, why printing in Ottoman Turkish and Arabic remained sporadic in the Ottoman Empire almost until the second half of the nineteenth century.

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