




The Hebrew Printers of Sulzbach in Upper Palatine

by
 Willie Glaser

 <p>A Sulzbach printer's mark, below the Hebrew wording "in Sulzbach"</p> <p>(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)</p>	Table of contents
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Sulzbach's Jewish History



The territory of the Principality of Sulzbach in the late 18th century

According to historians the first settlement of Jews in Sulzbach took place approximately in 1305. The community was destroyed during the Black Death persecution period (1348/49).

In 1614 the Principality (Duchy) of Sulzbach in Upper Palatine was separated from the Duchy of Pfalz-Neuburg and gained complete independence in 1656. Both states were originally created to supply secondary branches of the Wittelsbacher family ruling Bavaria and the Palatine with a subsistence typical for German princes of the "ancien regime": A tiny, non-continent territory granting at least the tax income of a few subjects and the more than modest splendor of one's own court and capital, in this case the small town of Sulzbach. Also these territories were involved in the ongoing struggle between the Protestant fraction of the family from the Palatine and the Catholic Bavarian Wittelsbachers in Munich after the end of the Thirty Years War (1618 - 1648). In Sulzbach this conflict was ended in 1652 by an agreement on the common use of the churches by both Protestants and Catholics.



Blowing the Shofar (from a Sulzbach book of the 18th century)

(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

The Jews profited from this dawning tolerance and the fact that the Duke of Sulzbach was always in need for more subjects to pay his bills. As a consequence in the Sulzbach territory two of the few considerable Jewish community in ancient Bavaria evolved, Sulzbach and Floss.

The Jewish community in Sulzbach was established again some 300 years after its destruction, in 1666 and became a classical example of a rural Jewish community in Bavaria. A synagogue was built in 1687. In 1745 some 25 Jewish families lived in Sulzbach. The Duchy of Sulzbach was united with Bavaria in 1777 which became a kingdom in 1806. By 1813 no more than 65 families made up the community.

By the middle of the 19th century the Jewish population of Sulzbach started to shrink due to emigration. By 1933 only a handful of Jews were living in Sulzbach. In 1934 the town of Sulzbach was united with a neighbouring community to become Sulzbach-Rosenberg.

Sulzbach's Hebrew Printers

In 1669 Duke Christian August (1632 -1708) gave the printer Isak Kohen Juedels from Prague permission to establish a Hebrew printing press. In 1851 the Sulzbach presses stopped printing.

The idea and thrust to establish a Hebrew printing press in Sulzbach did not originate with the Jewish community. It was because of Duke Christian August philanthropic and scientific striving and his pronounced quest to master the teachings of Kabbalah (mystical doctrine) and the Hebrew language, which established the Sulzbach printing fame.

This little town became very famous throughout the Jewish world for the printing of Siddurim (daily prayer books), Machzorim (festival prayer books) and the Talmud. The Sulzbach press printed some 300 works.

An Early Dispute about the International Copyright

The printing of certain editions of the Talmud in 1763 resulted in a well known dispute between the Sulzbach printers Aron and Naftali Salman and the Amsterdam printer brothers Proops: The Amsterdam Proop brothers felt their printing rights were threatened. It was the custom in those days to secure rabbinical approval for publishing a new edition of an important work. This rabbinical seal also banned the reprint of a Talmud issue for a certain time, usually 10 to 20 years. The printing of the Talmud was very costly, for this reason the printers tried to shut out the competition. The Sulzbach printers did not believe in such time restrictions. Many famous Rabbonim (Rabbis) in Europe became involved in this far reaching fight. One could say this was the infancy of the copyright law.



The Tower of Babel (from a Sulzbach book of the 18th century)

(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)



Noah and his ark (from a Sulzbach book of the 18th century)

(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

Female Printers

One of the fascinating aspects of Hebrew printing is the contribution of Jewish women practicing their craft as typesetters. Historians tell us, that from the time of "Incunabula" the cradle days (ca. 1455 - 1500) to the present some 200 Jewish women were involved as patrons, publishers and typesetters.

Regarding Sulzbach it is to be noted, that Rachel, the daughter of the printer Isak Kohen Juedels was a typesetter. She learned her craft in her father's printing shop. In 1691 she set type for Moses Bloch, a printer in Sulzbach. The colophon (a description about details of printing of a volume, usually placed at the end of the publication) of the edition of Hovot Ha-Levavot (duties of the heart) bears the notation, that Rachel was one of the two typesetters for this volume.

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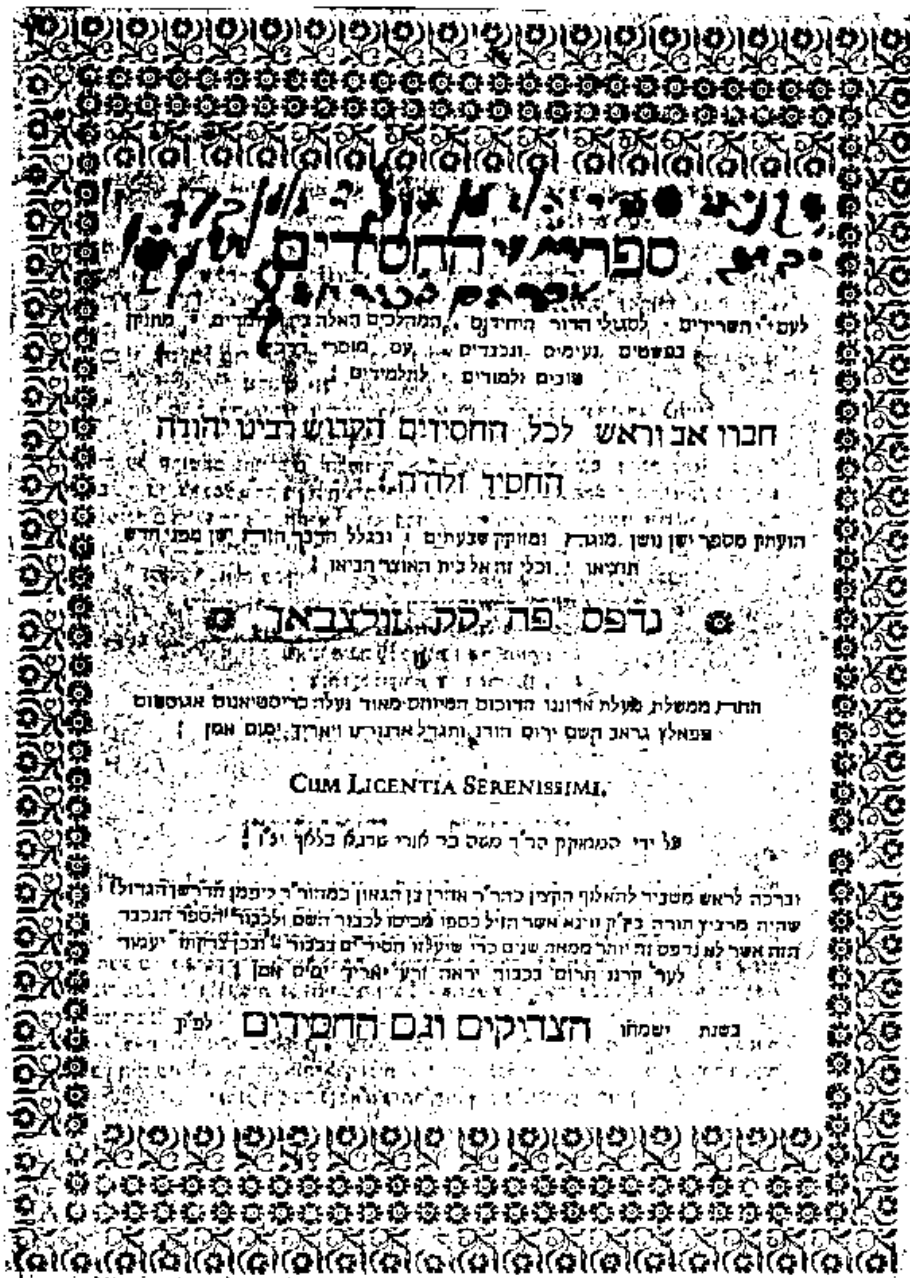
Willie Glaser

See also: The history of the old Hebrew books of Fuerth by *Willie Glaser*.

Literature and Sources

- Encyclopaedia Judaica, keywords "Hebrew printing" and "Sulzbach".
- Peter Klaus Hartmann: Bayerns Weg in die Gegenwart. Regensburg 1989.
- Dr. Josef Prys: Hebraeische Buchdruckereien im Gebiete des heutigen Bayern. In: Nachrichten fuer den juedischen Buerger Fuerths. Fuerth 1794.
- Israel Schwierz: Steinerne Zeugnisse juedischen Lebens in Bayern. Munich 1992.
- Website <http://www.us-israel.org>.
- Website <http://www.virtualgeula.com/archival/eng/preserva.htm>.

Example #1



(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

Sefer Hachassidim (book of the devout) by Rabbi Jehuda Hachassid. Text book of the 13th century Chassidic movement. Sulzbach 1685. Around the title some handwritten notes. The Latin "Cum Licentia Serenissimi" is the short version of "Cum Licentia Serenissimi Domini Electoris Palatini, qua Ducis Solisbacensis" = Licensed by His Most Revered Lordship, the Elector of Palatine and Duke of Sulzbach.

Example #2



(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

Machzor prayer book for the festivals of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, first part according to Polish ritual. Sulzbach, 1756. In Hebrew letters the names of Meshulam Salman and Aaron (Fraenkel?) are mentioned. Counterpart to the Machzor of 1762 according to German ritual.

Example #3



(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

Hamachzor Chelek Rishon (order of festival prayer book). First part according to Minhag Ashkenazi (German ritual). Sulzbach 1758. Moses and Aaron to the left and right of the portal decorated with

garlands made of oak leaves. Biblical scenes in the six medallions, top to bottom, left to right: Adam and Eve being driven out from the Garden of Eden, the Tower of Babel, Jacob's Ladder, Noah and Ark, remaining two unknown.

Example #4

זרות ב' אהרות טהורות

מ ע צ א נ ו ת

סדר טהרות

עם פירוש הגאון מוהר"ר עובדיה מכרמנורה
ועם תוספות יום טוב

זהה סיים תיים סמקור נובע ' ואם באתי לספר בשבחן הייתי גורע
כי קצר המצע מהשתרע :

הכרם הגאון הגדול המפורסם ר"מ • ור"ג ואב"ד הישראלי • מהר"ר יום טוב ליפמן
גד"ו • בן האלוף בהר"ר נפון זל"ה • בן האלוף ובהר"ר משה וולדשטיין זל"ה • לוי העלר •
חנן הישיש המרוס • המור"ג • המנוח • בתהר"ר אהרן אשכנזי זל"ה • מק"ק פראג :

ונתתנו • כי טהורות ראשונות ואחרונות • כדגאון הכחבר נר"ו • ושרי
לאות על יד יד צעופה כורה בצצבת ילדים • לומר
ראה זה • הרש הוא :

והנה כעיון רב הקיטיב על ידי תגייהם בקאים בטוב ההנה

בזרצבאך

Cum Licentia Serenissimi Domini Electoris
Palatini. qua Ducis Solisbacensis.

נדפוס המדוכה בהר"ר בשלם ולבן יר"ו : בן המנוח המפורסם מהר"ר אהרן זל"ל :

בשנת זכס"ף משנה קחו בירכס לפ"ק :

לאל טלואט טלואט טלואט

(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

Part one of the collection of works of Raw [Rabbi] Alfas. Sulzbach 1762. See printer's mark beneath the canopy.

Example #6

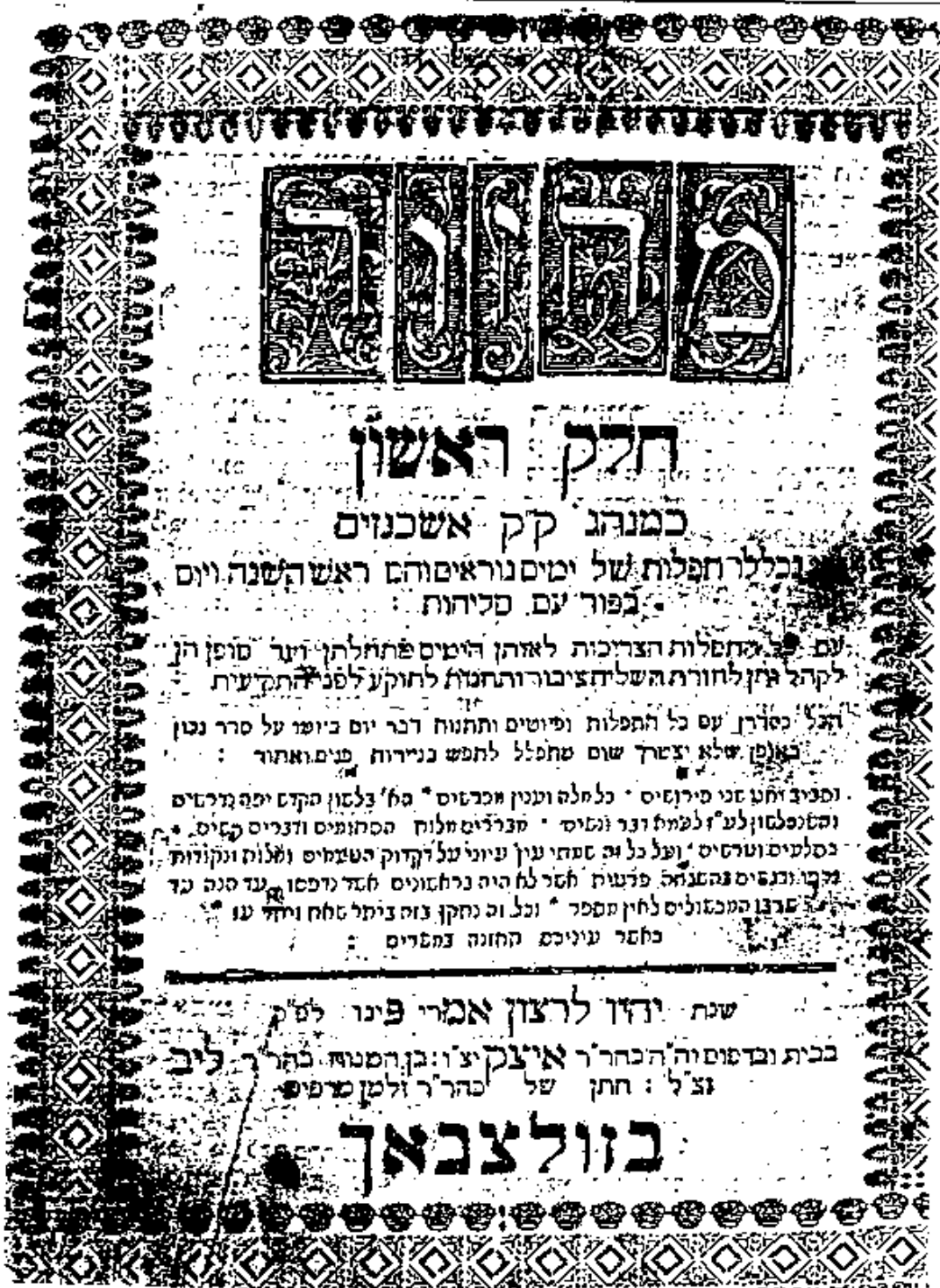


(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

Machzor prayer book for the festivals of Pessach, Shevuoth and Sukkoth according to German ritual. Sulzbach 1762. Under the Hebrew location of the place of printing "in Sulzbach" (sixth line from the

bottom) the Latin imprimatur of the Duke of Sulzbach. Third line from the bottom: Printed in the printing house of Meshulam Salman. Second line from the bottom: Aaron (Fraenkel?).

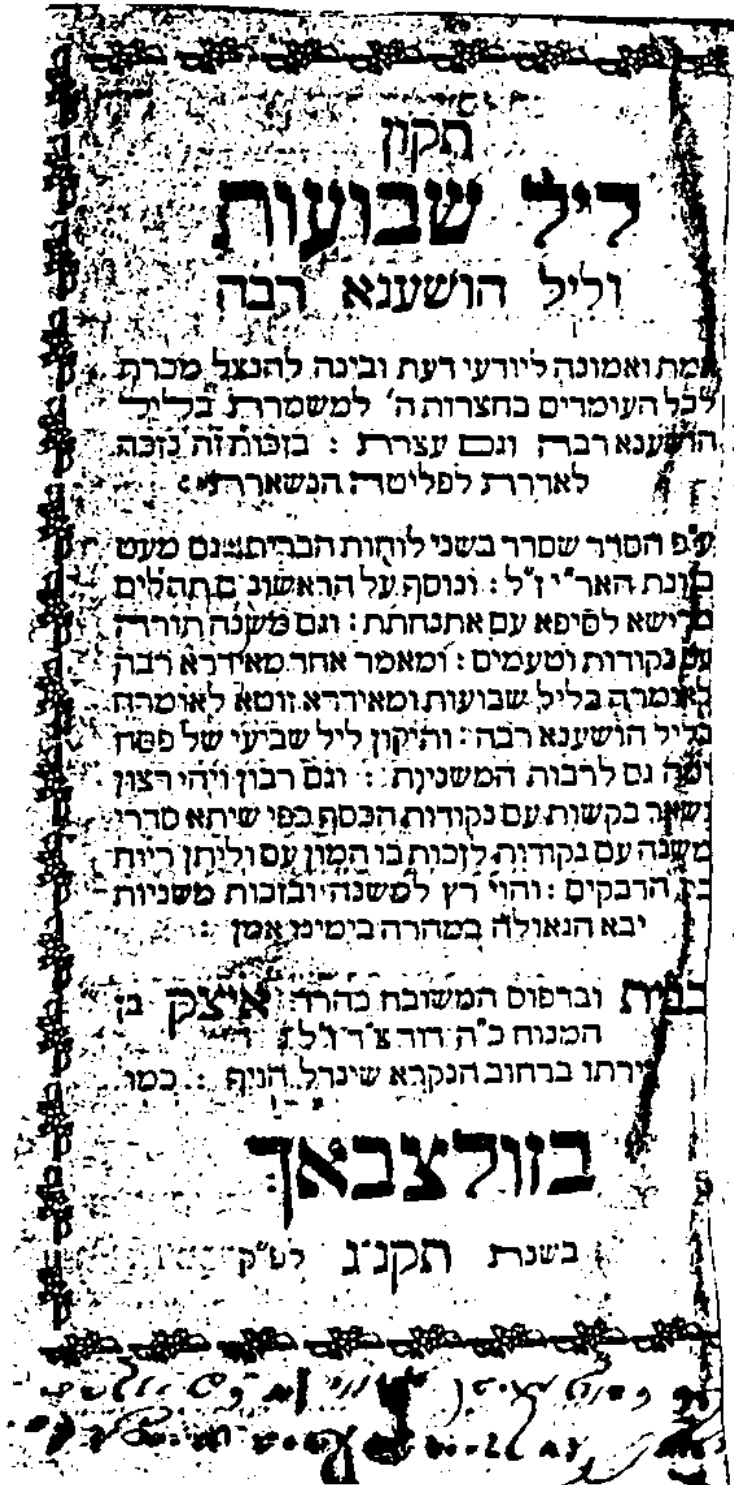
Example #7



(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

Machzor prayer book, first part for the festivals of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur according to Minhag Ashkenazi (German ritual). Sulzbach 1768. The title in beautifully designed letters with floral decor.

Example #8



Prayer book for Tikun Leyl Shevuoth and Hoshanah Raba (7th day of Sukkoth festival). Sulzbach 1793. At the bottom handwritten remarks.

Example #9



(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

Machzor prayer book, first part for the festivals of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur according to Polish Minhag (ritual). Sulzbach 1795. Top centre Jacob's dream of the heavenly ladder, to his left

and right biblical scenes. To the left and right of the portal the biblical figures of Isaac and Abraham, bottom centre printer's mark of Sekiel (Salman?) Madfis, to its left (blowing of the Shofar) and right again scenes from the bible.

Example #10

מתזור
עם

כוונת הפייטן

חלק שני

כְּמִנְהַג אֲשֶׁכְּנִים וְשִׁאֲרוֹ קְהֵלוֹת קְרוֹשׁוֹת עִם לִשׁוֹן אִשְׁכְּנוֹ עִם הַבְּרִית קוֹדֵשׁ
וְבוֹ נִכְלְלוּ חַפְלוֹת שְׁלֹשׁ רַגְלִים וְהוּא

סוכות פסח שבועות

עם כל התפלות הנרצות לאותן המעשים מתחמתן ועד סופן הן להקטיל וכן לחורט הסלח טכור הכל על סדרו ומקומם
סדמיונו לא היה בכלל המחזורים עבדעפיש כמולם עד היום :

והוסכנו בו לשון אשכנו על כל התפלות • וקראת פתח • חמנה עשרה • זפרטיות • זכפטרות

ואלה מוסף על כל המחזורים שנמצאים בעולם

דיני והנהגת התפלה : דיני קריאת שמע : דיני שמונה עשרה : דיני קריש
דיני קריאת התורה : דיני ברכת כהנים : קהלת שיר השירים רוח אלוט סוף טייטט
אנו נאך פיל ניאמי זאפין האכן ועיר ער אפארט מין דין ייט מחזור ופאלי רפרט גלייכן ניט לו פינדן זיין
מין אנדרי סחזורים דיט ביי הערט גדרוקט זיין :

ואחרון חביב

זעלס איבר אלו גאפאטי מעלות זעהר ניטג אונ גויכט מיט • בחיין דא דורך מיין יעדל ער סטיהן קטן
דפאמין האלט פון יעדל פיוט וואו זיין עיקיר טבון התפלה מיט • מוכ לומהר דס טייטט זעלס סידר
שקראמנים גירוקט אמאין ערקאצרוג גיכט זי דעם גאיינין עילם • נור אלזער ויין בשעת התפלה דיט
זייט ניט לו אלוט דען גליין טייטט פון יעדל פיוט דאריך לו זיימין • אלוט האכן איך דיט :

כוונת הפייטן

אונן מיץ יעדל פיוט געטעלט מין קורלין • דען מין האלט פון יעדל פיוט • בלי ויין דער חון סנגן מין זאל
קון מין יעדל הכוונת הפייטן זייטן • זעלס מין תועלת גזול לתפלה לכל יודא שמים זעלס

נדפס

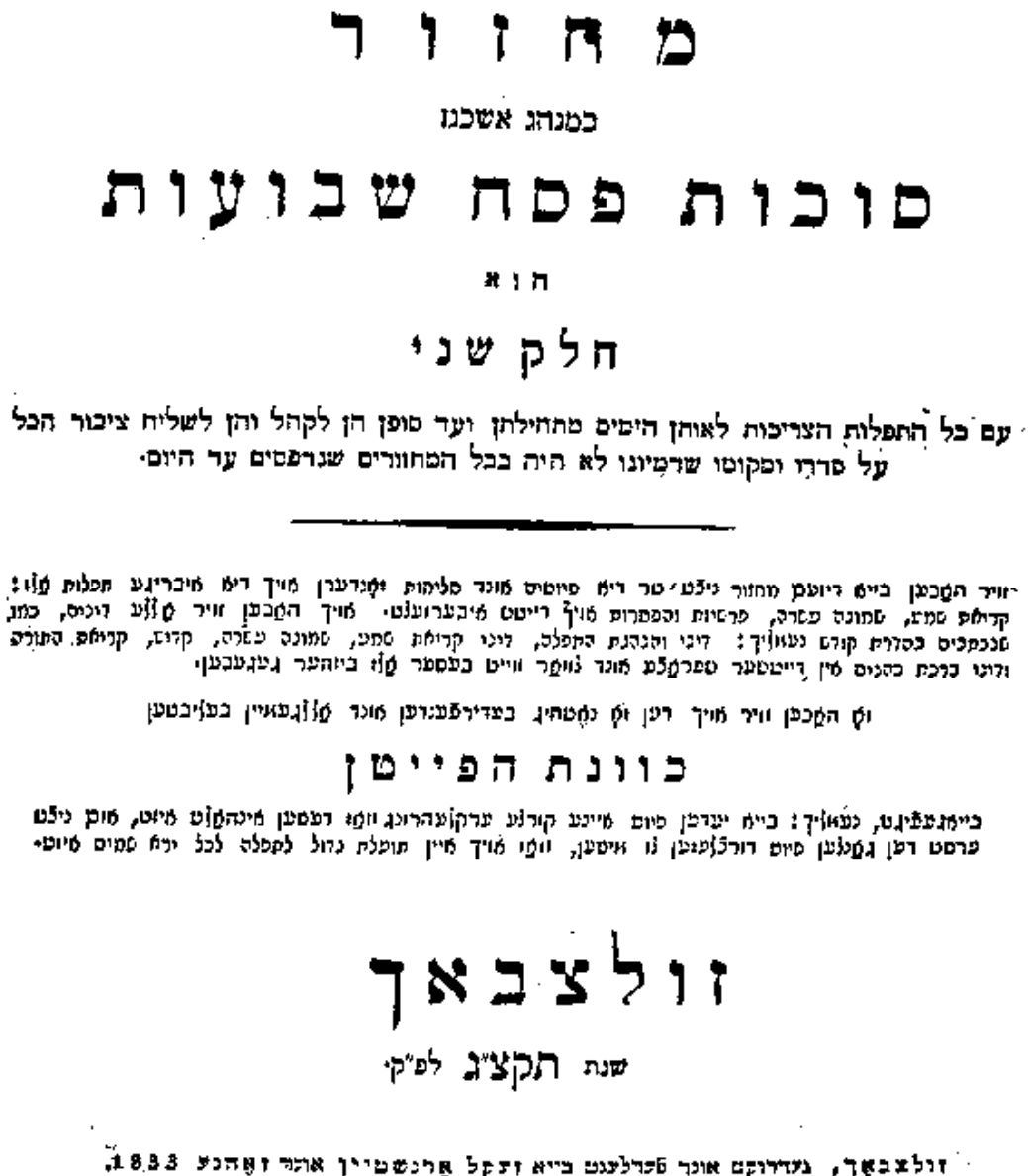
בזולצבאך

בבית וברפוס של כהדר זענקל בן כהדר אהרן
בשנת תקנ"ה לפ"ק

(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

Machzor prayer book for the festivals of Sukkoth, Pessach and Shevuoth, according to German Min-hag (ritual). Sulzbach 1802.

Example #11



(Photo: Willie Glaser by courtesy of CJCNA)

Machzor prayer book for the festivals of Sukkoth, Pessach and Shevuoth according to German (Ashkenazi) ritual. Sulzbach 1833. In the very last line German in Hebrew letters: "Gedruckt im Verlag bei Sekiel Arnstein und Soehne 1833" = Printed by Sekiel Arnstein and sons' printing house, 1833.