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### Links in a chain: Early modern Yiddish historiography in the northern Netherlands (1743-1812)

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## 7. Successor chronicles. Amelander and his epigones (1740-1812)

### 7.1 Successor chronicles: towards a genre definition

Amelander's history book *Sheyris Yisroel* appeared to be a great stimulus for others to start writing history themselves as well. The book is, therefore, not only a culmination of earlier Hebrew historiography, but as well the start of a new, small but significant tradition of mainly Yiddish historiography. This new historiography in a way did exactly the same as Amelander did before them, they choose to continue an important and widely accepted history book. Whereas Amelander presented *Sheyris Yisroel* as the sequel to *Sefer Yosippon*, and thus narrated Jewish history from where Yosippon ended until his own times, Amelander's successors took *Sheyris Yisroel* as their starting point.

This procedure, resulting in the formation of a chain of history books each continuing where the predecessor stopped, is a specimen of what could be qualified as the successor tradition in Jewish historiography. It was, however, not a uniquely Jewish historiographical tradition, also in other cultures – Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist – the same approach towards historiography was very common. Knowing this, it might surprise that thus far barely any attention has been paid to this tradition. Although some authors writing about such sequels, continuations or successors, noted the procedure, a theory is still lacking. In this chapter I will present the relation between *Sheyris Yisroel* and its successors as a case study of the successor tradition in search for a better understanding of its dynamics.<sup>577</sup>

Before concentrating on the eighteenth century Amsterdam Jewish adoption of this tradition, it is worthwhile to look first after its origin and development. In ancient historiography historians often referred to predecessors, in a bid to benefit from their authority, but at the same time with the wish to imitate them. The rhetorical technique of 'imitation' was not a literal copying, but profiting from what predecessors had reached by continuing and emulating their work. In some cases this resulted in Latin and Greek chains of history books, with the often explicit belief underlying that the last in the line was also the best.<sup>578</sup> In medieval historiography the successor tradition had become one of the main trends

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<sup>577</sup> A first examination of this topic I presented in: Bart Wallet, 'Ongoing History: The Successor Tradition in Early Modern Jewish Historiography' in: Shlomo Berger and Irene E. Zwiep eds., *Epigonism and the dynamic of Jewish culture* [Studia Rosenthaliana 40] (Leuven/Paris/Dudley MA 2008) 183-194.

<sup>578</sup> John Marincola, *Authority and tradition in ancient historiography* (Cambridge 2003) esp. 217-257, see as well the appendices with Latin and Greek continuators.

because fitted best the dominant interpretation of history. History was, by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike, seen as the unfolding of God's plans with the world in which each detail, how unimportant it might look like, could have a part. Historiography was, therefore, teleological, written towards a yet unknown but certain end under the care of God's providential governance. History writing was thus basically chronicling past and present through a theological scope.<sup>579</sup>

An influential notion of biblical historiography was the idea of a chosen nation or group which served in particular as the bearer of God's promises for the future. For anyone living in present times it was of crucial importance to belong to that particular nation or group. Historiography served as one of the means to articulate such groups identities and their borders. Christian historiography started with Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (312), in which not political structures were chosen as the bearer of history but the church. In his book Eusebius stressed the importance of the apostolic succession, continuously providing lists of names of bishops in which a direct connection was made to the apostles and thus to the original teachings of Jesus. At the same time Eusebius made clear which preachers were heretics, deviating from the orthodox doctrine which was handed over faithfully by the authorized succession. Eusebius in his book presented the church as God's chosen people and stressed that its present leaders could be trusted as the guardians of the original doctrine. As such this history book was historical apologetic, to show the authority and reliability of the orthodox church. Eusebius wanted to strengthen his readers in their conviction that the church was God's agent on earth and the future recipient of the fulfillment of God's promises.<sup>580</sup>

Jewish historiography functioned in much the same way. Here it was not the apostolic succession, but the transmission of the rabbinic tradition that was central and considered the orthodox core of Judaism. Also here this authoritative tradition was separated strictly from heretics, such as the Karaites. The Jewish variant of this tradition, the *shalshelet ha-qabbalah* as presented in chapter 2, never fully developed in more elaborate historiography as was the case with Eusebius. But *shalshelet ha-qabbalah* clearly expressed the same convictions and philosophy of history in its stress on the validity of the rabbinic succession from Moses to

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<sup>579</sup> R.W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski, 'The history and origins of the Latin chronicle tradition' in: Erik Kooper ed., *The medieval chronicle VI* (Amsterdam/New York 2009) 153-177.

<sup>580</sup> Eusebius, *The church history*, translation and commentary by Paul L. Maier (Grand Rapids 2007) e.g. 119-120, 124-126, 138-140, 162-163, 167, 169; A. Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian historiography in the fourth century AD' in: idem, *Essays in ancient and modern historiography* (Oxford 1977) 107-126, esp. 110-117; G.W. Trompf, *Early Christian historiography. Narratives of retribution* (London/Oakville 2000) 109-157. An analysis of Eusebius from the perspective of modern communication theory provides: Doron Mendels, *The media revolution of early Christianity. An essay on Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History* (Grand Rapids 1999).

contemporary rabbis. History functioned as the background for the continuity of rabbinic tradition.

This dynamic of continuity as the backbone of a linearly developing history invited others simply to continue, which is exactly what happened. Eusebius' chronicle was influential both in the Western and Eastern variants of Christendom, and spawned several successor chronicles. In the Byzantine tradition Eusebius was continued by a triad of Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomenus and Theodoretus, continuing where Eusebius ended and writing from the same providential philosophy of history.<sup>581</sup> In the Latin world Eusebius became well known through the translation and continuation by Jerome, while Prosper Tiro of Aquitania, Hydatius and Rufinus also wrote translations, abridgments and continuations of Eusebius. These in turn prompted their own continuations: Prosper's work, for example, was continued by both Marius of Avenches and Victor of Tunnana. The chronicle of the latter was, furthermore, continued by John of Biclaro.<sup>582</sup>

Such a chain of successive chronicles developed in Jewish and Islamic historiography as well, although these did not have a standard chronicle comparable to Eusebius.<sup>583</sup> In Jewish historiography the genre of *shalshelet ha-qabbalah*, starting in the tractate Avot in the Mishnah, was further developed in the famous letter of Rav Sherira Gaon (986), updated in Abraham ibn Daud's *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* (c. 1160) and continued by Abraham ben Solomon of Torrutiel (b. 1482) and others.<sup>584</sup> In Islamic historiography the famous history book of Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari* (915), was prominent and continued by several others. In contrast to its Jewish and Christian counterparts, Islamic historiography recognized it as a separate genre and titled it the *dhayl* (continuation). The genre qualification was included in the title, as was the case with Qutb al-Din Musa al-Yunini's (d. 1326) *Dhayl Mir'at al-Zaman*, the continuation of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzi's (d. 1256) famous universal history *Mir'at al-Zaman fi Ta'rikh al-A'yan*.<sup>585</sup>

Why was this successor tradition so successful in medieval historiography? Three important reasons should be noted. First, this genre fitted well in the dominant philosophy of

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<sup>581</sup> Trompf, *Early Christian historiography*, 213-252.

<sup>582</sup> For these and other successor chronicles: R. de Schryver, *Historiografie. Vijftientwintig eeuwen geschiedschrijving van West-Europa* (Leuven, Assen/Maastricht 1990) 84-89; 101-102, 105, 112, 114-115, 134, 137, 139-140, 143-144, 146-149, 154-155, 158, 164. xxx (articles on Tunnana and Biclaro)

<sup>583</sup> For Hindu and Buddhist examples of the same tradition: Michael Witzel, 'On Indian historical writing. The role of the Vamçavalis', *Journal of the Japanese association for South Asian studies* 2 (1990) 1-57.

<sup>584</sup> A. David ed., *Two chronicles from the generation of the Spanish exile* [Hebrew; Kutresim 52] (Jerusalem 1979); cf. Adolf Neubauer, *Medieval Hebrew chronicles* I (Oxford 1887) 101-114.

<sup>585</sup> C.E. Farah, *The 'dhayl' in medieval Arabic historiography* (New Haven 1967); L. Guo, *Early Mamluk Syrian historiography. Al-Yunini's Dhayl Mir'at al-Zaman* (Leiden etc. 1998) 2vols.; C.F. Robinson, *Islamic historiography* (Cambridge 2003) 177-180.

history, namely that there was only one universal and immutable history which could not be changed, only continued. Therefore there was no need for independent research and accepted history books were not questioned. The task of the historian was to continue the project of his predecessors and to show that also in his own times there was no interruption of tradition and thus continuity in religious and political matters.<sup>586</sup> Also historians who did not choose the model of the successor chronicle, remained within the same tradition since they shared the same concept of history. They could start their history book with Creation, Noah or Moses, but then only abridged the accepted predecessors up until the time from which they were really starting their narrative. Their philosophy of history was not different from the ones in the successor tradition: they all wanted to show continuity in history, stressing God's providence and using a teleological methodology.

Second, the successor tradition was well suited to strengthen the legitimacy of the dominant religious and/or political elites. With the idea of apostolic or rabbinic succession at its base, historiography had no use to question earlier accounts of history. The authority of contemporary elites was grounded on the idea of continuity with widely accepted predecessors. Successor chronicles therefore accepted the account of earlier histories and presented today's rabbis, bishops or popes as the legitimate bearers of tradition. Most history books were structured according to the sequence of rabbis, bishops, popes and kings.<sup>587</sup>

Third, authority was also important for the authors themselves. In this time of history originality was not the most important characteristic of a historian.<sup>588</sup> To have his book of history accepted he preferably joined authoritative predecessors, hoping that as a continuation to these books his own work would be successful as well. As Marincola concluded for ancient historians, by continuing their predecessors work they expressed their wish to be seen as practitioners of a serious history.<sup>589</sup> The successor chronicler wanted to be regarded as a faithful bearer of the accepted historiographical tradition, and therefore chose to line up in a longer chain of history books. Historians were therefore deliberately epigonic by choice, they

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<sup>586</sup> A.J. Gurevich, *Categories of medieval culture* (London etc. 1985) 129. This contrasts with the more optimistic approach of ancient historians, who wanted to emulate their predecessors and were often very polemical; Marincola, *Authority and tradition*, 221-225.

<sup>587</sup> Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'Genealogy, form and function in medieval historiography' in: idem, *The past as text. The theory and practice of medieval historiography* (Baltimore/London 1997) 99-110.

<sup>588</sup> Schmale, *Funktion und Formen*, 94.

<sup>589</sup> Marincola, *Authority and tradition*, 254.

did not have the wish or intention to be an original intellectual presenting new and controversial interpretations of history.<sup>590</sup>

This successor tradition became seriously questioned by the rise of Renaissance historiography. Instead of ecclesiastical, providential historiography, politics as a secular category was rediscovered in classical pre-Christian Latin and Greek historiography. The reverence for traditional authoritative history books was also challenged by a new stress on originality and individuality. Historians no longer wanted just to continue, but started to look with new eyes and new questions towards earlier historiography. New chronologies, new interpretations, new methods and models were used and presented. Historians started to look for primary sources and used these to question the accepted history books. The sequence of bishops and the legitimization of their authority was no longer the premise of history, but was replaced by a more secular and political interpretation of history.

As Bonfil has demonstrated, Jewish historiography had serious problems to answer this shift in historical methodology and philosophy. As a group in society devoid of a political entity, a genuine Jewish political history was not within the reach of Jewish historians. The only interpretative model to combine Jewish and general political history was its antithesis, as the books that focus on persecutions and expulsions show. The other option was to present Jewish and general history in two separate sections, as is the case with David Gans' *Zemah David*.<sup>591</sup> As Gans' wrote: 'However, in order to separate the holy from the profane, I have set aside for these matters a special section of the book. Thus, that which deals with the living God will not be mixed with secular events.'<sup>592</sup> Moreover, Gans' choice also had to do with his fundamental historical interpretation that Jews living in Diaspora – under the last of the four kingdoms from the Book of Daniel – had a passive role in history, until the messianic age would start.<sup>593</sup>

Jewish historiography, therefore, continued writing history in the traditional way. Amelander's choice to first edit a Yiddish edition of *Sefer Yosippon*, and thereafter continue with *Sheyris Yisroel* was typical for the status of contemporary Jewish historiography. He was, however, not alone. In Christian historiography too, next to the new style of historical writing, the successor tradition was continued, in some cases well into the nineteenth century. In the

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<sup>590</sup> For the concept of epigonism, see: Berger and Zwiep, *Epigonism*, esp. 1-8.

<sup>591</sup> R. Bonfil, 'How golden was the age of the Renaissance in Jewish historiography?' in: A. Rapaport-Albert ed., *Essays in Jewish historiography* (Atlanta 1991) 78-102; idem, 'Jewish attitudes toward history and historical writing in pre-modern times', *Jewish History* 11 (1997) 7-40. Cf. David Biale, *Power & powerlessness in Jewish history* (New York 1986) 113.

<sup>592</sup> Cited after: Meyer, *Ideas of Jewish history*, 125.

<sup>593</sup> Degani, 'Structure of world history', 196-200.

Netherlands the principal Dutch history of the eighteenth century provides a good example: Jan Wagenaar wrote 21 volumes of his *Vaderlandsche Historie* (1749-1759), which was continued by both Joh. Munniks with seventeen volumes and Petrus Loosjes Azn. in no less than 48 volumes.<sup>594</sup>

With the ‘choice’ to write a successor chronicle, whether deliberate or as a mere consequence of the still dominant historical paradigm, Amelander and his own successors as well, accepted the underlying concepts of this type of traditional historiography. They accepted the authority of their predecessors and stressed the continuity both in history and history writing. Also the Amsterdam historians were epigonic by choice. This did not, of course, prevent them to take within the boundaries of the genre new courses, as the study of Amelander’s successors will show.

## 7.2 *Successors to Sheyris Yisroel*

After the publication of *Sheyris Yisroel* in 1743 several Amsterdam Ashkenazi Jews started to write historical works as well, an activity which before that time was barely undertaken by them. All of them chose to write in Yiddish, not in Hebrew, which was before Amelander the common language for historiography. In most cases the link with Amelander was in some way made clear, through a publication together with *Sheyris Yisroel*, the date of starting the chronicle or the title given to the chronicle. Only in two cases a clear link with *Sheyris Yisroel* is lacking, although these are also clearly part of the same interest in history. In the follow paragraphs we will analyse subsequently the various Yiddish chronicles written in the wake of Amelander’s magnum opus – while thereafter these writings will be evaluated from the perspective of the successor tradition in Jewish historiography.

### 7.2.1 *Braatbard’s Ayn Naye Kornayk fun 1740-1752*

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<sup>594</sup> L.H.M. Wessels, *Bron, waarheid en de verandering der tijden. Jan Wagenaar (1709-1773), een historiografische studie* (The Hague 1996). Earlier examples of successor chronicles in the Netherlands during the Renaissance era: Karin Tilmans, *Historiography and humanism in Holland in the age of Erasmus. Aurelius and the Divisiechroniek of 1517* (Nieuwkoop 1992) 300-303, 310-313, 317, 320. The Divisiechroniek was continued until the eighteenth century, whereafter Wagenaar and his successors took over: De Schryver, *Historiografie*, 155.

The first continuation is written in the decade after the publication of *Sheyris Yisroel*.<sup>595</sup> Although neither in the introduction nor in the text the history book of Amelander is mentioned, it is very likely that it is intended as a successor chronicle. There are three arguments that may support this claim. First, the chronicle starts where Amelander ended his history, in 1740. It could therefore be read as a direct continuation of chapter 34 on the history of Ashkenazim in Amsterdam, which finished with the appointment in 1740 of Aryeh Leib ben Saul – the son-in-law of Haham Zvi – as chief rabbi.

Second, the title is indicative, as it is a *new* chronicle. It has to refer to an earlier history book, but which one? We have no copy or even evidence of another chronicle before this one, written by the author himself or someone else, and also in the introduction the author is not hinting at an earlier work of himself. *Sheyris Yisroel*, however, was widely known and enjoyed popularity in such a degree that it is not too far-fetched to assume that the author by using the name *Ayn Naye Kornayk* wanted to repeat the same strategy Amelander had used himself: gaining acceptance by connecting to an authoritative predecessor.<sup>596</sup>

Third, the biography of the author, Abraham Hayim ben Zvi Hirsh Braatbard (1699-1786), is probably the most convincing clue connecting both projects. As Rena Fuks-Mansfeld has shown, Braatbard worked as a Hebrew type-setter in several Amsterdam Jewish printing firms, at least from 1725 until 1732.<sup>597</sup> Like Amelander, Braatbard worked on several publication projects of Moses Frankfurter and they even worked together on the *Magishe minha* project and on the publication of *Shevet musar*.<sup>598</sup> Both authors were active in the same industry and must have known each other rather well. It does not go too far to suggest, as Fuks-Mansfeld does, that Amelander has worked for a long time on *Sheyris Yisroel* and that Braatbard might well have been inspired by seeing his learned colleague collecting material and working on his history book. *Sheyris Yisroel* and *Ayn Naye Kornayk* both were written within the Hebrew

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<sup>595</sup> The manuscript is held in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana; signature Hs.Ros. 486.

<sup>596</sup> That Amelander's history book is published in 1743, while Braatbard already started in 1740, is no convincing argument not to believe that the 'new chronicle' was intended as a continuation to Amelander. As already demonstrated, Amelander ended his narrative in 1740, and Braatbard must have been collecting material at least from that time. But, as will be shown later, he wrote the chronicle largely retrospectively. Moreover, his material over the years 1740-1743 is not very much. Contra: R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Yiddish historiography in the time of the Dutch Republic', *Studia Rosenthaliana* XV (1981) 1, 9-19, there 15.

<sup>597</sup> R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Abraham Hayim ben Zvi Hirsh Braatbard. A Hebrew type-setter in the first half of the eighteenth century', *Zutot, perspectives on Jewish culture* 1 (2001) 133-137; next to the titles mentioned by Fuks-Mansfeld, Braatbard collaborated on: Yosef Moshe ben David, *Sefer haq Yosef* (Amsterdam 1730) 52v.

<sup>598</sup> *Sefer megishe minha, beleq sheni: nevi'im rishonim* (Amsterdam ...) at the final page of the text; Eliyahu ben Abraham Ha-Kohen, *Shevet musar* (Amsterdam 1732) 113r, 116v.



and Yiddish printing industry, which clearly acted as one of the Jewish intellectual centers in eighteenth century Amsterdam.<sup>599</sup>

The chronicle of Braatbard comprises the years 1740-1752, a period characterized by the author as absolutely unique, although he did not explain this uniqueness in comparison with other periods in history.<sup>600</sup> The book starts with the flooding in the meteorologically extraordinary winter of 1740 of the county Bentheim, a neighbouring German region very close to the Dutch Republic in religion, language and politics, and ends with the inauguration of the new Houtgracht synagogue in Amsterdam in 1752. As these two topics already reveal, Braatbard concentrated in his chronicle on the events in the Dutch Republic, and only now and then narrated what happened elsewhere. Even within the Dutch Republic he did not tell much about what happened outside the province of Holland, and specifically outside Amsterdam. The Braatbard chronicle is in that sense typical for a city chronicle.

Leo Fuks in his introduction to the Dutch translation of part of the chronicle suggested that Braatbard ended in 1752 because his father died a year before and the author probably had to take over his father's business as a money exchanger. Apart from the fact that we have no proof that Braatbard took over his father's position, it makes more sense to interpret Braatbard ending in 1752 out of his specific Amsterdam and Orangist focus. Braatbard clearly interpreted the inauguration of the new synagogue as an important apotheosis of Amsterdam Ashkenazi life, a happy end after a period of serious troubles also for Amsterdam Jewry. He therefore added, after the chronicle, as well the liturgy for the inauguration that the chief rabbi, Aryeh Leib, had composed. Furthermore, in 1752 stadtholder William IV of Orange, an important character in the chronicle of whom Braatbard was an outspoken and ardent adherent, was buried in Delft, thus providing for the chronicler a reasonable end.<sup>601</sup>

Unlike Amelander, who wrote a universal history book, Braatbard choose the genre of a chronicle. He documented contemporary times and structured the book according to the years with in total no less than 291 chapters.<sup>602</sup> While the title page showed the Christian years

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<sup>599</sup> Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Braatbard', 136-137.

<sup>600</sup> Abraham Hayim Braatbard, *A naye kornayk fun 1740-1752*, Hs.Ros. 486, introduction: אין קארץ צו שרייבן אזו לנג דיא וועלט ווערט שטיאן ווערט ניש ווידר אזו איין צייט קומן אז אין דיא צוועלף יאר גווען זיין.

<sup>601</sup> Fuks, *De zeyen provincien*, 7; Braatbard, *Kornayk*, final pages and chapter 281 (William IV), 285 (Naye Shul).

<sup>602</sup> The chronicle has 285 chapters, but in three instances Braatbard counted double and in one section he counted three chapters wrong, see notes 317-319. Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld abusively give a total of 295 in: *Hebrew and Judaic manuscripts* I, 218, although Fuks elsewhere gives a total of 285, e.g. in 'Ajn naye kronajk foen 1740-1752. Uit de kroniek van Abraham Chajim, zoon van Tsewi Hirsch Braatbaard, van den huize Couveren', *Maandblad voor de geschiedenis der joden in Nederland* I (5708) 1, 45-49, there 46.

1740-1752, in the book itself the Hebrew years are used: 5500-5512. Within the text both Christian and Jewish dates are used, without any apparent methodology behind it.<sup>603</sup> This dual use of Christian and Jewish dates could be interpreted as an indication of both the level of integration of Amsterdam Ashkenazi Jewry of which also the contents give testimony and of internal changes within the Ashkenazi world, including elements from contemporary culture in a Jewish framework. Twice Braatbard even forgot to start a new Hebrew year, jumping from 5503 to 5505 and from 5510 to 5512. Under 5503 and 5510, however, also events that happened in 5504 and 5511 were narrated. This is another indication that Braatbard thought in both Jewish and Christian years, and two times continued within the Christian year, but forgot to start a new Jewish year. Further evidence is provided by the first chapters of the years 5505, 5506, 5507 and 5508, which all start in the Christian years respectively 1745, 1746, 1747 and 1748; the years 5509, 5510 and 5512 are, however, starting with the Jewish years in the autumn of respectively 1748, 1749 and 1751.

The number of chapters devoted to the several years differ significantly, depending on the material Braatbard had. The section on the year 5506 (1745-1746) he concluded with: ווייטר שליס איך דז יאר דען איך קען ניט מער שרייבן אז וואס פוציארט איז.<sup>604</sup> The next chapter, which opens the new section on the year 5507 (1746-1747), however, opened with the announcement that in 1747 happened so much and that there are so many *חידושים* (news), especially related to the war, that Braatbard would even not be able to narrate it all.<sup>605</sup> The difference in number of chapters is shown by the next table:

Year	Number of chapters
5500 (1739-1740)	6 <sup>606</sup>
5501 (1740-1741)	6
5502 (1741-1742)	7
5503-4 (1742-1744)	16
5505 (1744-1745)	13
5506 (1745-1746)	9

<sup>603</sup> Compare e.g. chapters 55 and 57.

<sup>604</sup> 'I conclude the year because I can not write more than what had happened.' Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 57.

<sup>605</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 58. In chapter 55 this was already announced by Braatbard, ensuring his readers that he would not only tell what happened in detail but also would provide the *און ליגנו*, explanations.

<sup>606</sup> Braatbard twice numbered a chapter 6, which brings to total of chapters on 5500 on 7.

5507 (1746-1747)	26
5508 (1747-1748)	85
5509 (1748-1749)	70 <sup>607</sup>
5510-1 (1749-1751)	36 <sup>608</sup>
5512 (1751-1752)	8

This table shows that the stories that were the most important to Braatbard happened in the years 5508 and 5509. At the background of the chronicle is the War of the Austrian Succession, which lasted from 1740 until 1748, but in which the Dutch Republic was only involved since France attacked the Southern Netherlands in 1744. Most of the battles did not directly involve the Dutch and Braatbard only started documenting the war when it reached the Republic itself and the population started to ask for the elevation of William IV as stadtholder of all the seven united provinces. Braatbard documented the call for Orange and its success neatly in his section on 5508. Another consequence of the war was social unrest, caused by the high taxes to finance the war and by the economic effects which hit the trade, resulting in the 'Tax collectors' Rebellion (*Pachtersoproer*) of 1748. Ordinary people, mainly Orangists, attacked the houses of the tax collectors, who symbolized the corrupt and autocratic political style of the ruling class. Braatbard's account of the rebellion, in the section on 5509, is still considered one of the main sources on this event, offering at least one of the most vivid descriptions. In between the chronicle tells about the weather, the prices of food, criminality and events in the Jewish communities.

The chronicle in its present, final state must have been written at least after 1755, using earlier notes made by the author from 1740 onwards, while organizing his material in annual sections. That becomes clear in several ways. First, in an entry in the section on 5502 (1742) Braatbard tells about a pump erected on the Amstelveld and adds that it was finally removed in 1748.<sup>609</sup> Second, chapter 9 narrates that the *av beth din*, the acting chief rabbi, ordered to check all mazot if they were really kosher. Unfortunately he found out many were not, and to the dismay of many poor people they had to be burnt. Now, the title '*av beth din*' is followed by the traditional abbreviation *z"l*, *zikhrono livraha* (of blessed memory), an

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<sup>607</sup> Braatbard made a mistake in numbering his chapters, between chapter 179 and chapter 180 he gave three more chapters with wrong numbers. This makes the real number of chapters in this section not 70 but 73.

<sup>608</sup> Here Braatbard did also not count well and twice gave a chapter 241 and 264, which brings the real number of chapters in this section on 37 and the total on 291.

<sup>609</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 13.

indication that at the time of writing the person had died. The chief rabbi at that time was Aryeh Leyb, who died in 1755, indicating that the chronicle had been written thereafter.<sup>610</sup> More chapters in the chronicle have materials that crossreference to later years, all giving evidence that the book was edited afterwards and is not just a regularly updated diary.<sup>611</sup> The chronicle as we have it now was even not finished completely, in some chapters Braatbard left open spaces to write the dates in later.<sup>612</sup>

Braatbard made clear in his introduction that he wrote his book as a memory (לזכרון) for the coming generations, until eternity, and for both young and old people. He asked the readers to read the chronicle properly and assured them, both in the introduction and the concluding remarks of the book, that he wrote everything in a very precise and truthful way. An interesting remark is that he invited his readers to compare his chronicle with those written by others about the same period to find out that he did not lie about the past events.<sup>613</sup> Braatbard thus was well aware that he was not the only one chronicling contemporary events in Amsterdam, which could hint at other Ashkenazim or at non-Jewish chroniclers.<sup>614</sup> We have no knowledge of surviving Jewish chronicles documenting the same period, but this line might hint at more Yiddish historiography than presently extant to us.

The way Braatbard addressed his readers, stressing the importance of his chronicle, may well be an indication of a wish to have his book published.<sup>615</sup> The reworking of his material in a chronicle comprising the years 1740-1752 could be interpreted in the same way. Unfortunately for the author, despite his contacts within the Hebrew and Yiddish printing industry, his chronicle was not printed and only survived in manuscript form, most probably the autograph since binding, paper and the used Ashkenazi cursive seem to be contemporary. The manuscript has in total 202 8° foliopages, with the text covering 176 pages, and is bound in half-vellum with the title written on the spine. The chronicle was unknown and most likely kept in the family until, after the Second World War, the librarian Leo Fuks, acquired the manuscript in 1948 for the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana.<sup>616</sup>

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<sup>610</sup> Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld give abusively 1753 as the date of writing, but it must have been at least two years later; Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew and Judaic manuscripts* I, 217.

<sup>611</sup> See for example the chapters 41, 48 and 80.

<sup>612</sup> As the several chapters in the section on 5500 (1-6).

<sup>613</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, concluding remarks.

<sup>614</sup> The best known non-Jewish contemporary chronicling Amsterdam history is Jacob Bicker Rajje; Machiel Bosman, *De polsslag van de stad. De Amsterdamse stadskroniek van Jacob Bicker Rajje (1732-1772)* (Amsterdam 2009).

<sup>615</sup> Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Yiddish historiography', 15-16.

<sup>616</sup> Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew and Judaic manuscripts* I, x, 218.

There is one peculiar aspect about the manuscript. In the middle of the text, between the chapters 53 and 54, there are two pages, written partly in a different type, with three Hebrew *piyyutim*, liturgical poems. The first one is a prayer directed to ‘our God and the God of our fathers’, expressing trust in Him, confessing sins and asking for help against evil people, who are destroying cities and starting wars. The prayer consists of 7 lines. All words in the same line start with the same letter, the first line with the א, the second with the מ, and each line further one of the letters of the name אמשטרדם (Amsterdam). Each line has nine words, which is stressed by a sentence following the prayer: מיוסד בתשע אותיות שהוא כנגד ט שמורה על: חיים וקיים לעולם.<sup>617</sup> The letter ט, with the number value of 9, is in kabbalistic circles interpreted as a shortening for טוב, good, thus the prayer in a very symbolic way is asking for the good of Amsterdam. But ט is also referring to the ninth *sefirah* in the kabbalah, the יסוד, foundation, which is interpreted as the basis for the existence of the world grounded in God’s eternal existence.<sup>618</sup> In the creation story according to Bereshit 1, in its turn, the word טוב as a qualification is also frequently used. Amsterdam, in this way, is also rooted in God’s creation and connected to God’s eternity. The prayer is, therefore, passionately asking God to save the city of Amsterdam.

The second *piyyut* is a version of the traditional *Aneinu*, in which through repeating the sentence ‘answer us’ the community pleads before God for his help and protection. God is addressed as the God of Abraham, the fear of Isaac (Gen. 31, 42), the mighty one of Jacob, the helper of the tribes, the stronghold of the Matriarchs, the father of the orphans and the judge of the widows. The *Aneinu* prayer is said during the five traditional fasting days, such as the Tenth of Tisrei and Tisha be’ Av. It has, at such days or periods, a place at the *mincha*, evening, services during weekdays.<sup>619</sup>

In the final prayer God is asked for forgiveness because of the great sins, pleading for his mercy. Furthermore, his blessing and help is asked for the leaders of the country and its defense, and his anger over the murderous enemies. This prayer also has seven lines, the first letters of which form the word ‘Amsterdam’. The content of the prayer should therefore be connected with contemporary events in the city. Although the three prayers are not introduced, there are one line sentences in between in Yiddish indicating that these prayers are

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<sup>617</sup> ‘Founded on nine letters which equal ‘tet’/nine, safeguarding life and exist forever.’

<sup>618</sup> Daniel Matt ed., *The Zohar. Pritzker edition* 5 (Stanford 2009) 385.

<sup>619</sup> Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, *The Lord is righteous in all his ways. Reflections on the Tish'ah be-Av kinot* (Jersey City NJ 2006) 10-11, 39-41.

said by the community in synagogue (...דא אויף האט קהל ווייטר גזאגט...).<sup>620</sup> The three prayers should therefore be connected to the next chapter, 55, in which is narrated about the special *selibot* services that started from May 23, 1746 onwards, every Wednesday evening from 18:00 until 19:00 hours, because of the war with France. That is further substantiated by a contemporary Dutch pamphlet which provided the translation of the three prayers and the following standard prayers.<sup>621</sup> In this translation the play with the Hebrew language has disappeared, and likewise the sentence indicating the kabbalistic notions expressed in the first prayer. The prayers were specifically prepared, on order of the parnassim, on the occasion of the war, while also no less than 26 Psalms were to be recited.<sup>622</sup> At the end of the chapter Braatbard wrote that he even translated the *selibot* prayers into Yiddish (*taytsh*), but did not include them because he was not sure if he did well to do so.<sup>623</sup>

The chronicle is written in a very vivid style, in a colloquial Yiddish influenced by the Dutch vernacular.<sup>624</sup> Especially terms dealing with everyday life, such as products, money, and political structures, are taken from Dutch, while through Dutch also some French words entered his chronicle (גיפאצירט).<sup>625</sup> Sometimes Braatbard used the common Dutch word, but then provided his readers also with the proper Yiddish terminology. As for example twice in chapter 284: the first sentence on national donations held on March 5, 1752 for all poor school children in the Dutch Republic, where Braatbard wrote, that ‘איין קולעקטע גמאכט ווארן צו זאגן ...איין נדבה...’, and second, a bit later, writing about neighbourhoods: ‘...בירט אודר שכונה...’.<sup>626</sup> As the prayers referred to above already show, the Hebrew type-setter Braatbard was also familiar with the Hebrew language and now and then added some Hebrew phrases – mainly wishes –, but without turning his chronicle in a mixture of Yiddish and Hebrew which could have made it difficult to read for many.<sup>627</sup>

### 7.2.2 Kosman’s Chapter 36, 1771

<sup>620</sup> ‘Thereafter the congregation continued...’

<sup>621</sup> *Translaat van het Hebreuws gebed, der Hoogduytsche Joodse Natie, binnen Amsterdam, Dat in hunne Kerk, ter gelegenheid der Weekekyke Bedestonden, Die gehouden werden alle Woensdagen des Namiddags, de klokke zes uren, gedaan werd* (Amsterdam: by Eleke van Belkom, [1747]).

<sup>622</sup> At least since 1688 Jews participated in the nationwide special dayes of prayer, fasting and thanksgiving, which were proclaimed by the national authorities (States General) and had an important place in the Dutch civil religion; Peter R. van Rooden, ‘Dissenters en bededagen: Civil religion ten tijde van de Republiek’, *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 107 (1992) 703-712.

<sup>623</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 55 and the preceding pages for the three poems/prayers.

<sup>624</sup> Cf. Ariane Zwiers, *Kroniek van het Jiddisj. Taalkundige aspecten van achttiende-eeuws Nederlands Jiddisj* (Delft 2003) 450-510.

<sup>625</sup> Gepatsirt (happened); final sentence of chapter 55; chapter 185.

<sup>626</sup> ‘offerings or *nedove* were collected’; ‘neighbourhood or *shkhone*’; Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 284.

<sup>627</sup> See e.g. the introduction.

The most direct continuation of *Sheyris Yisroel* is added to the republication of the book in 1771 by Kosman ben Joseph Baruch, who in 1743 had printed the first edition together with his father-in-law Naphtali Herz Rofe. Kosman revealed in his introduction that *Sheyris Yisroel* had been received very well by the public and the book had already been out of print for a long period. Many people asked for a new edition, and therefore Kosman decided to provide one.

Kosman did even more. After Amelander's text, Kosman added one more chapter, written by himself. In this continuation 'I added everything which happened to our Jewish brethren in the whole world since the first edition', of course only as far 'as it is known to me'. But: 'particularly what happened in our community in Amsterdam'.<sup>628</sup> He was right to add that, because most of chapter 36 is devoted to what happened in the Dutch Republic, and specifically to Jews in the city of Amsterdam. He started his narrative in 1745 with the expulsion of the Jews from Prague and Bohemia, stressing the active role of Dutch Jewry and the Dutch States General in the revoking of the ban of expulsion by the Habsburg authorities in 1748. Parallel to this Jewish diplomacy trajectory, Amsterdam Jews collected money for the bereaved Bohemian fellow Jews.

Furthermore the remainder of the chapter concentrates exclusively on Dutch Jewish history, with two main themes: the house of Orange and religious developments. First, the elevation of William IV and William V to stadtholder in respectively 1747 and 1766 is told by Kosman, together with the enthusiastic reaction within the Jewish community. The same happened at the wedding of William V and Wilhelmina of Prussia in 1767 and during their Amsterdam visit one year later, when they were received in a synagogue decorated in orange. The visits of other royals or nobility, such as Edward August, duke of York in 1766, the king of Denmark and prince Heinrich of Prussia in 1768, were also recorded for prosperity.

Second, the death of chief rabbis within the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities was recorded by Kosman: in 1753 R. David Israel Athias died, in 1755 R. Aryeh Leyb and in 1760 R. Jitschak Hayim Abendana de Brito. Newly appointed were R. Saul ben R. Aryeh Leyb from Dubno, the son of the late chief rabbi, and R. Salomo Salem from Belgrade. Kosman as well chronicled the growth of the number of synagogues, a clear indication of the continuing expansion of Amsterdam Jewry. In 1752 the Houtmarkt synagogue was inaugurated, while in 1766 the Uilenburger synagogue started its services.

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<sup>628</sup> Menahem Man ben Shlomo ha-Levi Amelander, *Sheyris Yisroel* (Amsterdam 1771), verso-side of the title page.

Kosman's intention was to chronicle only the most important things, meant as a 'nice memory for our descendents'.<sup>629</sup> This resulted in a rather factual recording of past events, concentrating on the political and religious elites, while ignoring the political tensions in Dutch society and its impact on Amsterdam Jewry. He had the same Orangist conviction as Braatbard, but wrote in a much more sober style and failed to give explanations for historical processes. The contrast between Amelander's impressive history book, well written and with a broad overview, and Kosman's chapter is clear. In a way, Kosman betrayed Amelander's wide scope with adding his factual and geographically limited chapter. The last entry in Kosman's continuation is telling of his restrictive local scope: he concluded with the reopening of the Amsterdam Muider gate in 1771, which had been closed since 1769 due to a subsidence, whereafter he added the traditional wish for the rebuilding of the Temple soon and in our days.<sup>630</sup>

### 7.2.3 *Prinz' Kronik min shnas takmad ad shnas takmah, 1788*

This chronicle, written by Zalman ben Moshe Prinz, might as well be considered a continuation of *Sheyris Yisroel*.<sup>631</sup> The author mentioned in his conclusion that he had written two large chronicles, at least one of which he did not bring in print yet.<sup>632</sup> He introduced the first one as follows:

אונ' איך האב נאך איין אנדרן קראניק דש איז נאך עש שארית ישראל בימעלט. אונ' איז אויך אזוי גרויש. דש  
שרייבט ביז ר' משה חזן אויז.<sup>633</sup>

<sup>629</sup> SY, ed. 1771, introduction.

<sup>630</sup> Fuks makes mention of a copy of the first edition of *She'orit Yisrael* with in handwriting the continuation of Kosman added, but also with two more pages full of information. This might be the work of Kosman himself or of someone else. The copy was in his private collection, but is presently not part of the Fuks Collection at Tresoar, Leeuwarden. L. Fuks en R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Joodse geschiedschrijving in de Republiek in de 17e en 18e eeuw', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 2 (1972), 137-165, there 155.

<sup>631</sup> Only one copy is known and kept in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, Ros. 19 D 36. In 1870 another copy was sold to the Emanuel congregation in New York, and in 1936 mention is made of a copy in the library of Columbia University – which is presently not in its catalogues. For more on these copies, see: Zwiers, *Kroniek*, 77. The copy sold to New York was used by Meijer Roest for a re-publication with a Dutch paraphrase of the contents: Meijer M. Roest, 'Een Kronijkje van de jaren 1787-1788' *Israëlietische Letterbode* 1 (1875) Vols. 2-6.

<sup>632</sup> Roest is the only author who understood Prinz rightly that he had written two more chronicles; Roest, 'Een kronijkje', I; all other authors without further discussion assumed he had written only one chronicle; Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Joodse geschiedschrijving'; Zwiers, *Kroniek*, 77-78.

<sup>633</sup> 'And I have another chronicle in continuation to *Sheyris Yisroel*. And it is that large that it continues until R. Moshe Hazan.' Zalman ben Moshe Prinz, *Kronik min shnat takmad ad shnat takmah* (Amsterdam 1788) 9v.



Prinz thus wrote a continuation to *Sheyris Yisroel* up until the time of R. Moshe Chazan, which refers to the appointment of Moses ben Phoebus Glogau as a precantor in the Amsterdam Ashkenazi community in 1786.<sup>634</sup> Prinz expressed his intention to have this manuscript printed, in case his other history books would be successful. Unfortunately, this chronicle covering more than 40 years of Jewish history, was most probably never printed and the manuscript is lost to us, this reference being the only indication of its existence.

The second large chronicle was given a name inspired as well by *Sheyris Yisroel*: שארית עם קדוש (*Sheyris am kodesh*), the remnant of the holy people. Via the title Prinz referred to the *tabanun* prayer, starting with the words *Shomer Yisrael*, in which God's protection is asked for the *sheerit yisrael*, the *sheerit am ehad* and the *sheerit am kadosh*. In the final stanza the *piut* has:

שומר גוי קדוש  
שמר שארית עם קדוש  
ואל יאבד גוי קדוש  
המשלשים בשלוש קדושות לקדוש<sup>635</sup>

Prinz via this title not only connected his chronicle to Amelander's, but also expressed the same idea of Jewish past as the history of the remnant of Israel, a holy people. About the contents of this chronicle Prinz wrote that one could read miraculous histories in it, which he wrote down with pleasure. It is not completely clear whether Prinz had *Sheyris am kodesh* already printed or not, but he revealed at least one important aspect about the social role of history books in Ashkenazi Amsterdam, when he wrote:

מיין גרויש בוך צו צו הערן איז איין גרויש ליפהאברייא. אונ' דא שטיגן וואונדר זאכן אין בימעלט. דש בוך קען יעדער איינר הערן פֿר וויניג געלט.<sup>636</sup>

Prinz mentioned twice that his book was to be heard, showing that history books were read aloud in family circles or in other group meetings, a characteristic of early modern culture in which orality was still an important feature. History was both edifying and amusing,

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<sup>634</sup> Cf. the poem Moses ben Judah Pina dedicated to the same occasion, Hs.Ros. Pl. B-67.

<sup>635</sup> 'Guardian of the holy nation/ Protect the remnant of the holy people/ Don't let the holy nation be destroyed/ Those who proclaim three-fold sanctifications to the Holy One.'

<sup>636</sup> 'To listen to my large book is a great pleasure. It narrates about miracles. For little money everyone can hear the book.' Prinz, *Kronik*, 9v.

strengthening faith but at the same time a nice activity, being attractive for large audiences, therefore written in Yiddish and read aloud also for those not able to buy such a book or to read even Yiddish. The use of rhyme in some parts of the chronicle made it easier to read and repeat its contents.<sup>637</sup>

Also of *Sheyris am koudesh* we have no copy left, either in manuscript form or in print, but the present chronicle, *Kronik min shnas takmad ad shnas takmah*, is an extract by the author taken out of his larger chronicle and has been printed.<sup>638</sup> The *Kronik* is not the only trace left of Prinz' historical activities, also an historical poem on the impact of the Batavian Revolution on Amsterdam Jewry is still extant.<sup>639</sup> In his little *Kronik*, with in total no more than nine 16° folios, the tumultuous years 1784-1788 are narrated, during which the enlightened democratic Patriotic movement turned against stadtholder William V of Orange and the last one only succeeded in taking control of the country again with the help of the Prussians.<sup>640</sup> Just like Braatbard, also for Prinz national politics are the main story of his chronicle, told from the perspective of Amsterdam orangist Jewry.

The chronicle has fifty paragraphs and is structured according to the Jewish years, starting in 5544 (1784), with the rise of the Patriotic movement in the wake of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-1784), and ending in 5548 (1788), when the stadtholder was re-established in The Hague and the most prominent Patriots had left for France. Interesting is that Prinz used the Jewish and Christian years side by side, as in the first paragraph: שנת תקמ"ד למספרם, ל1784. The word 'according to their way of counting', shows that Prinz saw the Christian years as part of Dutch

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<sup>637</sup> Van Eijnatten, 'Communicatie en publieke orde', 347; on reading Yiddish books aloud: Berger, 'An invitation', 39; Gries, 'On reading and readers', 32.

<sup>638</sup> As becomes clear in paragraph 12, *Sheyris am koudesh* narrated this period with much more details than the *Kronik* did. Prinz, *Kronik*, 1v.

<sup>639</sup> The poem was before the Second World War in the Amsterdam collection of E.G. Vedder and consulted by Shatzky; after the war Jaap Meijer acquired a copy, which is now kept at the Amsterdam Municipal Archives. It is titled: לזכרון וואש דא איז גישעהן בק"ק אמשטרדם פון ר"ח ניסן תקנ"ה ביז חצי תמוז תקנ"ה אין קארצין בגריפן (Amsterdam 1798). Prinz deals in the song mainly with soldiers desecrating the Great Synagogue on Shabbat, a history also recounted by Wing in his chronicle. More on this poem: Shatzky, 'Letzte shprotsungen', 256; Shmeruk, 'Historical songs', 156-157; Gutschow, *Inventory*, 128 no. 469, in which she mistakenly doubts if a copy is still extant; Jonathan N. Cohen ed., *Hebraica and Judaica printed before 1900. Catalogue of the Jaap Meijer collection* (Amsterdam 1999) 32-33, no. 18. Shatzky mentioned in his article one more piece of narrative prose from 1798 as the product of Prinz, which is however disputed by others; Shatzky, 'Letzte shprotsungen', 257; Gutschow, *Inventory*, 127 no. 466.

<sup>640</sup> For a short survey of Dutch Jewish history in this period, see: Jozeph Michman, 'Prelude – Parnasim and Patriots' in: idem, *Dutch Jewry during the Emancipation Period 1787-1815. Gothic Turrets on a Corinthian Building* (Amsterdam 1995) 1-22.

<sup>641</sup> 'In the year [5]544, 1784 according to their way of counting, it really started everywhere in Holland.' Prinz, *Kronik*, 1r.

society. In the same way he provided dates of days as well, first the Jewish and thereafter the Christian date. Also Christian festive days are mentioned, like “Pentecost Tuesday”.<sup>642</sup>

Much attention is paid to what happened in the Jewish years 5547-5548 (in total 46 paragraphs), or the Christian years 1787-1788 (in total 47 paragraphs). 5544 (1784) received only one paragraph, 5545 (1785) two, while 5546 also received only one paragraph, which occurred already in 1787. Clearly the stress of the chronicle is laid on the period in which the Prussians fought the Patriots and the Orangists were in a winning mood. In contrast to Braatbard, who besides his main topics also provided all kinds of other stories, Prinz’ chronicle is structured very well and has a clear plot. All material is woven into a single narrative, with no digressions. Amsterdam is the place of action, while only a few important happenings outside Amsterdam are narrated, such as the refuge of the stadtholder in Benjamin Cohen’s house in Amersfoort and the arrest at Goejanverwellesluis by the Patriots of princess Wilhelmina on her way to The Hague.<sup>643</sup>

The chronicle is published in 1788 and must have been written in that same year, using material Prinz collected since 1784. One indication that he wrote the chronicle *aus einem Guss* rather than day by day or year by year, is the clear structure of the chronicle, centered around the civil war between Patriots and Orangists, while leaving everything else aside and clearly writing towards the climax: the re-institution of the stadtholder. Another indication are the dates, which are not in all cases provided correctly, showing that Prinz wrote some time afterwards (see note 456). For example, in paragraph 4 Prinz narrated about a certain captain Van Zon who wanted Jews to serve in the city guard as well. Prinz dated this event 1787, but it actually took place one year earlier.<sup>644</sup> The third indication is that Prinz provided information from the perspective of 1788, like that after the entry of the Prussian army in Amsterdam on 11 Octobre 1787 the Leidsepoort (Leiden Gate) remained open day and night ‘until now’ עד) (הנה).<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>642</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 1v, 8r; Prinz meant the so-called Third Day of Pentecoste. The Jewish dates Prinz provided do not in all cases correspond to the appropriate Christian ones, an indication that he wrote his chronicle afterwards or that he was just careless. See e.g. paragraph 23 which equals 22 Elul 5544 to 7 September 1787, which had to be 5 September; or in paragraph 35 where 4 Cheshwan 5548 is equaled to 14 October 1787, but should have been 16 October. Cf. Zwiers, *Kroniek*, 306, 313. The right date of the events is, however, the Christian one, indicating that this served as his main method of dating. See e.g. paragraphs 48 and 49 on the celebration of the birthday of William V, for which 29 Adar Rishon as the Jewish date is given, which equals to 27 March 1788, while the Christian date provided as well, 8 March 1788, is the correct one. Cf. the narration of the same events in: ‘Plegtigheden’, *Leeuwarder Courant* 15 March 1788, page 11.

<sup>643</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 2r, 2v.

<sup>644</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 1v.

<sup>645</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 5r.

Prinz not only wrote from an Amsterdam perspective, but also for an Amsterdam Ashkenazi public. From the information he gives, it is clear that he suspected that his readers were also familiar with the Amsterdam Jewish quarters. He speaks of *מייר אמשטרדאמירר*, ‘we Amsterdammers’, and mentions persons that must have been well known characters: the brother of Peysi Mitshe Royt (Red Hat), Reykhele Frantsman, Itsik Papirman and Shlemiel Khone.<sup>646</sup> There are no indications in the text that Prinz reckoned with an audience outside Amsterdam or the Dutch Republic.

Prinz’ purpose with his chronicle was two-fold. First, he saw the history he narrated as one full of God’s miracles, and therefore a strengthening of faith in God. In his introduction Prinz even wrote that God gave him the idea to write the chronicle. Second, the chronicle also has an entertaining function: people were supposed to forget their sorrows while reading the booklet.<sup>647</sup> While the first reason for the chronicle was widely accepted in Jewish historiography, the second one was often regarded with suspicion. Prinz, however, did not hesitate to write it down, because he must have known that for the people he wrote for – the Amsterdam Ashkenazim – this was precisely the reason why they were so fond of history books. Moreover, at least since the beginning of the eighteenth century there was already a tradition of publishing Yiddish books providing light entertainment, as is demonstrated by a Yiddish adaptation of Boccaccio’s *Decameron* titled *Sheyne artlekeh geshikhtn*.<sup>648</sup>

The chronicle is written in short sentences, with some parts in rhyme: the title page, part of the introduction, part of the paragraphs 32 and 38 and the final part in which the author told about his other books.<sup>649</sup> Because of this structure of short sentences, partly rhyming, it is perfectly suited to be read aloud. The language is contemporary Yiddish, with some influences from Dutch and French, but Prinz used Hebrew as well – and much more than Braatbard did.<sup>650</sup> Prinz spiced his narrative not only with jokes on the Patriots but as well with quotations from Tenakh (no less than 65 times – including references to the *parashiot hashavua* as date indications), the Talmud (tractate Jebamot), the Hagadah shel Pesah, Shabbat songs and the morning prayers.<sup>651</sup> A good example is paragraph 27 on the Jews in The Hague celebrating the surrender of the city to the Orangists:

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<sup>646</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 3v, 6r, 7r.

<sup>647</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, introduction.

<sup>648</sup> Marion Aptroot, ‘I know this book of mine will cause offence...’: A Yiddish adaptation of Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (Amsterdam 1710)’, *Zutot* (2003), 152-159.

<sup>649</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, title page, 1r, 4v, 7r, 9r.

<sup>650</sup> For a linguistic analysis of Prinz, in comparison with Braatbard and Wing, see: Zwiers, *Kroniek*, 450-570.

<sup>651</sup> See the Dutch translation of Zwiers, *Kroniek*, 300-321.

אונ' עש וואר אין דען האג שמחת בית השואיבה מיט דיא יהודים  
וימצא הדבר אשר חשבו ליהודים  
וויא דיא טעגין פרטייאן האבן וועלן שלעכטי זאכן טאהן מיט דיא יהודים  
ויכו בכל אויביהם ובביזה לא שלחו את ידם.

The tensions between the Patriots and the Orangist Jews are narrated with quotations from Ester Scroll, and hence at the same time interpreted as a continuation of the confrontation between the anti-Jewish Haman and the Jews. In the second line Ester 9, 25 is paraphrased, while in the fourth line Ester 9, 5 and 9, 16 are combined: 'The Jews in 'The Hague celebrated Simchat bet hasho'eva [the water ceremony during Sukkot], and it happened 'that the Jews thought' [after Ester 9, 25], that the adversaries [Patriots] wanted to do bad things with the Jews, 'and they struck all their enemies' [Ester 9, 5] 'but on the spoil they laid not their hand' [Ester 9, 16].<sup>652</sup> Biblical quotations thus do not only serve to show the author's knowledge, but also offer interpretations of contemporary events through associations.

Surprisingly, in paragraph 32 Prinz also wrote several lines completely in Hebrew, using a rabbinic style with some elements from traditional prayers. The passage is furthermore written in rhyme:

נהפך צרותינו  
ובא גאולה קטנה עלינו  
שנהפך מחשבותם הדעה שיחשבו עלינו  
ויקוים ביום הזה תשובת ה' בהרף עין שראינו בעינינו  
וכמעט בצהרים יחשבו להוריד החצים בגבולינו  
לכן על הנס הזאת נודה לך ה' אלוהינו ואלהי אבותינו  
לכן אנחנו מצפים שישלח לנו גואל צדק במהרה בימינו.<sup>653</sup>

The only possible explanation for this fragment has to be that Prinz wanted to show his ability in Hebrew, in order to raise his status within the Ashkenazi community as someone who was not only fluent in Yiddish, but also mastered the Hebrew language.

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<sup>652</sup> Cf. Zwiers, *Kroniek*, 308.

<sup>653</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 4v.

Prinz' chronicle is a well composed short history book in prose and poetry, documenting an important period in Dutch history but from a decidedly Amsterdam Jewish point of view. Prinz in that sense wrote a chronicle much like Braatbard, with the same view from below, thus offering a unique and vivid perspective on the political events in the Dutch Republic.

#### 7.2.4 Chronicle fragments, 1766 and 1779

While Braatbard, Kosman and Prinz all in some way directly connected their chronicles to *Sheyris Yisroel*, there are a few Amsterdam Yiddish chronicles which are written within the same genre but without an outspoken link with *Sheyris Yisroel*. They are nevertheless presented in this chapter side by side with the actual continuations, because they are also to be considered part of the same 'school' of Dutch Yiddish historiography and as such also influenced by the publication of *Sheyris Yisroel* in 1743.

The first history to be mentioned, are a couple of chronicle fragments which were until now unknown.<sup>654</sup> The manuscript, entitled *מנחם ציון*, The one that comforts Zion, is a volume with short summaries of *derashot* written down by Menahem Mendele ben Leyb z"l and held by him and some of his colleagues in Amsterdam synagogues and for the *hevra Lomdei bahurim*.<sup>655</sup> The manuscript is dated 5521 and with the Christian year 1760. All of the manuscript is in Hebrew, except a few additions written with different hands in Yiddish. These are found on the reverse side of the cover of the book opposite the title page, the first two pages, on both sides of the first numbered folio page after the title page and on a separate sheet of paper. These are, besides genealogical notes, a text in memory of a certain R. Gukher, attached to the so-called *Dritt Shul* (Third Synagogue), and two chronicle fragments.

It is not certain if these fragments were part of a larger body of history writing, or only written down in this family notebook to record two single important events. Stylistically it is, however, written in much the same way and with the same interests as the other Amsterdam Jewish chroniclers, like Braatbard and Prinz. The fragments seem to be written by different hands, suggesting that two different family members wrote them down. Both fragments are

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<sup>654</sup> I found them in a uncatalogued manuscript, kept at the library of the Catholic University Leuven, kept together with a couple of other Hebrew manuscripts from different places and periods. They are published for the first time with this thesis, see appendix 2.

<sup>655</sup> *Menahem Zion* has 164 numbered folios, and 11 folios more with indices, e.g. of the *derashot* according to the *parashiot ha-shavuab*. The *derashot* are mostly on the weekly lessons, but as well on parts of the Haphtarah, the Mishnah, and the Talmud Bavli.

also to be dated after the year appearing on the title page, 1760, but the same is true for some *derasha* notes, dated e.g. 5545 (1785).<sup>656</sup> *Menabem Zion* seems to have been a manuscript which was updated by different family members – whose names are chronicled in the genealogical fragments – over the course of several decades.

The first fragment gives account of the celebration in Amsterdam's Jewish quarter on 8 March 1766 of the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday of William prince of Orange, which was at the same time the day he assumed his position as stadtholder of the United Dutch Provinces. It was celebrated in all synagogues and the chief rabbi gave a sermon in honour of the new stadtholder William V. He had also written a song, starting with the words: *אראניה אישי יי ונהלתו* (Orange, man of the Lord, and his heritage). At eight o'clock in the evening lights were lit in all the streets and houses, and with the lights all kinds of motives – flowers, stars, houses, snakes – were expressed. On 13 March the parnassim R. Mordechai Rat and R. Maharim Maarssen went with a coach with four horses to The Hague to hand over a present to the stadtholder on behalf of Amsterdam Ashkenazi Jewry. The fragment is concluded in Latin script and in the Dutch language: 'Willem prins van oranie' (William prince of Orange).<sup>657</sup> The second fragment gives a detailed account of the thunderstorm of the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1779. Between five and half past five fire hit the earth, and the houses trembled. Lightning stuck two houses, which burnt down.<sup>658</sup>

The interest in the wellbeing of the family of Orange is shared by the author of the first fragment with Braatbard and Prinz. The weather is as well important to all chroniclers, not only Jewish. It is striking that many people started to write down their meteorological findings after 1 January 1779. Not only our author, others also must have experienced these weather conditions as highly exceptional and worthy of chronicling.<sup>659</sup> The importance attached to the weather is also demonstrated by Zalman Isaac Boel's Yiddish historical poem of only a few years later, documenting the severe winter of 1784.<sup>660</sup> One more similarity with the other chronicles is the parallel use of Jewish and Christian dates in both fragments, although preference is given to the Jewish date and the civil one is introduced as 'according to their way of counting'.

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<sup>656</sup> Menahem Mendele ben Leib, *Menabem Zion*, 129r.

<sup>657</sup> Menahem, *Menabem Zion*, unnumbered page opposite title page.

<sup>658</sup> Menahem, *Menabem Zion*, 1r.

<sup>659</sup> H.A.M. Geurts and A.F.V. van Engelen, *Historische weerkundige waarnemingen V* (De Bilt 1992) 87, 171, 194, 199, 254, 269, 288.

<sup>660</sup> Gutschow, *Inventory*, no. 434; J.S. da Silva Rosa, *Een Joodsch-Duitsche beschrijving van den strengen winter in bet jaar 1784 te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 1939); Shmeruk, 'Historical poetry', 149.

Both fragments are written in Yiddish, with some Hebrew words and spiced with Dutchisms. In the first fragment for example the words זאלדרז קעלדרש [attics, basements] are clearly taken from Dutch, while the second one uses words such as דונדר [thunder] and אקוראהט [accurate]. Also the use of the Latin script indicates at least a basic knowledge of the Dutch language.

## 7.2.5 Wing's *Lezikorn*, 1795-1812

### 7.2.5.1 Contents

Undoubtedly one of the most original and important specimens of Amsterdam Yiddish historiography is the chronicle *Lezikorn* [*Lezikaron*, As a remembrance] by Bendit ben Ayzek Wing over the period 1795-1812, a period of lasting changes for Dutch Jewry.<sup>661</sup> *Lezikorn* is just like the chronicle fragments of 1766 and 1779 no successor chronicle to *Sheyris Yisroel* in a direct sense, but has to be mentioned here as the conclusion of the blossoming of Yiddish historiography in the Netherlands, since after *Lezikorn* no other chronicles are known to us.

The opening of *Lezikorn* has, however, an implicit reference to *Sheyris Yisroel*. The chronicle starts in the winter of 1795, which is described as even colder than the one of 1740.<sup>662</sup> Since the author is born in 1761 he did not experience the winter of 1740 himself, but in the chapter in *Sheyris Yisroel* on Amsterdam Ashkenazi history this winter is presented as the most severe, that even the old people could not remember having experienced something like that before. People even died of the cold and birds fell out of the air.<sup>663</sup> Braatbard also wrote about this very cold winter, but since his manuscript was not published, it is obvious that Wing knew of the severity of the winter of 1740 through *Sheyris Yisroel*. By starting with this reference to *Sheyris Yisroel*, Wing connected his chronicle just as Braatbard, Prinz, and Kosman did to Amelander's *magnum opus*.

*Lezikorn* does not have an introduction, but simply starts in the winter of 1795, when the French armies entered the Dutch Republic and the enlightened Patriot party started the Batavian Revolution, resulting in the new Batavian Republic as a puppet state of revolutionary

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<sup>661</sup> I have given a first analysis in: Bart Wallet, 'Ideologie, politiek en geschiedenis. Bendit ben Eizek Wing en zijn Amsterdams kroniek *Lezikorn* (1795-1812)' *De Negentiende Eeuw* 29 (2005) 3, 185-204. Part of the information in this chapter on Wing's chronicle is based on the article.

<sup>662</sup> Bendit ben Ayzek Wing, *Lezikorn*, Hs.Ros. 74-I, 1.

<sup>663</sup> Amelander, *SY*, 140r.



France. In the chronicle the author gives detailed account of what happened from the start of the Batavian Republic until 17 August 1812, the day of the battle of Napoleon's *Grande Armée* with the Russians over the Russian holy city of Smolensk. The chronicle stops there, in the middle of the history of Napoleon's Russian expedition, because Wing died and was buried at Muiderberg cemetery on 20 September 1812.

The fact that Wing started his chronicle with the entry of the French armies in the Dutch Republic is a clear indication that he must have realized that he experienced important times worth documenting in a single chronicle. It also shows that political and military history is structuring his chronicle, giving it a plot in which all events got their own significance. Everything is described from a clear Amsterdam perspective, showing the consequences of the Batavian Revolution in the city and for the city authorities. But he is not limiting his attention to the city and also documented what took place in the political center of The Hague and increasingly gave attention to international politics.

*Lezijkorn* chronicles both Jewish and general history. Jewish history is mostly restricted to what happened in the Amsterdam Ashkenazi kehillah, with some attention for the Sephardim. Now and then Wing narrates about Jewish communities outside Amsterdam, such as the inauguration of the Uithoorn synagogue and the death of the Rotterdam chief rabbi. Jewish history outside the Batavian Republic only get marginal attention, Wing writes about the Paris *Grand Sanhedrin*, but mainly from the Dutch Jewish perspective, namely the discussion about whether or not sending representatives to Paris.<sup>664</sup> Once Wing writes about England Jewry, on the suicide of an important London Jew, Abraham Goldsmid, who shot himself in the throat.<sup>665</sup> Finally, he provides as background information to the French conquest of Kovno (present day Lithuanian Kaunas) that out of 4,000 inhabitants no less than 2,000 were Jewish.<sup>666</sup>

Amsterdam Ashkenazi history is prominently present in the chronicle. The information provided could be divided into three categories. First, much attention goes to the tensions between enlightened and traditional Jews, which ultimately resulted in the split of the kehillah for nearly ten years in a traditional *Alte Kille* and a progressive *Naye Kille* (1797-1808). Second, Wing shows the changes in the politico-juridical position of the Jews in society

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<sup>664</sup> 74, December 1807.

<sup>665</sup> 74, 10 October 1810; Goldsmid was born in the Netherlands and became a famous banker in London and the principal competitor to the Rothschild family. Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England, 1714-1830. Tradition and change in a liberal society* (Ann Arbor MI, 1999) 252-254.

<sup>666</sup> 74, 14 July 1812.

following the formal Emancipation decree of 1795, resulting e.g. in Jews being active in politics and being appointed in the civil service. Third, the chronicle is a rich source for the study of the social and religious stratification of Amsterdam Ashkenazi Jewry, in providing information about elections, appointments and deaths of parnassim, cantors and beadles, jubilees of people important in the community and short notices of weddings and deaths in his own family.

Next to Jewish, general history is documented in Wing's chronicle. Most of it could be characterized as political and military history, which compared to contemporary non-Jewish historiography is no surprise, since other historians and chroniclers also mainly wrote about institutional and political history.<sup>667</sup> Wing's attention to politics could be analyzed as three concentric circles, each dealing with another geographic realm. First, Amsterdam is the centre of his chronicle and Wing clearly identifies with the city as 'our city'. Political changes in the city are followed precisely and he also provides an insight in how the combating political ideologies, enlightened Patriotism and Orangism, were received among the Amsterdam population. Sometimes he writes about fires and public executions. Second, the changes on the national level of respectively the Batavian Republic (1795-1806), the Kingdom Holland (1806-1810) and as annexed provinces of the French Empire (1810-1813), is also prominently present. He describes the country as 'unzere medines' (our provinces), and documents the political turmoil in The Hague, new laws, but also shocking national events, such as severe storms causing many casualties and damages and the 1807 explosion of a gunpowder-ship in Leiden with devastating consequences.

The third level is international politics. Wing was well aware of the interaction between the three levels and therefore attached great importance to developments in international politics. Much attention goes to the relationship with England, during the Dutch Republic an important trading partner. Wing documents when there was postal service to and from England and when not. Also the war – as a puppet state of France – with the English, with battles in the northern part of the province of Holland and in Zeeland, was given due attention. Very hard for the Dutch, and also Amsterdam Jewry, was the Continental System introduced by Napoleon in 1806 as an embargo against British trade. Its consequences become duely clear from Wing's chronicle. From the moment Napoleon Bonaparte seized power, Paris is more and more present in the chronicle. Napoleon's wars, conquests, peace negotiations are documented on a daily basis. Important battles are described neatly, including the positions of

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<sup>667</sup> Denys Hay, *Annalists and historians. Western historiography from the eight to the eighteenth centuries* (London 1977) 181.

the armies, numbers of deaths, wounded and prisoners-of-war and the names of the prominent generals.

Wing shows his talent as a historian and political analyst in that he not only narrates the two stories of Jewish and general history, but links them as much as possible. He shows the interaction between the Amsterdam Jewish communities on the one hand, and municipal, national and international politics on the other hand. The relations between the authorities and the parnassim are described in detail, just as the consequences of governmental politics on the position of Amsterdam Jewry. The notion that with the Batavian Revolution also the position of Amsterdam Jews had changed, could be described as one of the principal ideas behind *Lezijkorn*.

The chronicle is structured both according to the Jewish and the Christian chronology. The chronicle starts with a heading of the Jewish year 5555, but in effect the first entry opens with the beginning of the Christian year 1795. Thereafter the chronicle provides both headings of the Jewish and Christian years. Furthermore Wing follows the Christian dates, starting with 17 January 1795 and ending with 9 September 1812. Sometimes the Jewish date is given as well, mainly by entries dealing with what happened within the Jewish community. The number of entries of every year differs greatly:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Entries</b>
1795	69
1796	40
1797	38
1798	64
1799	76
1800	29
1801	37
1802	16
1803	22
1804	13
1805	34
1806	74
1807	58

1808	89
1809	155
1810	93
1811	143
1812	144 <sup>668</sup>

The great differences could be explained by the important political developments. In 1795 the Batavian Revolution took place, with all its consequences, in 1798 there were a number of coups in The Hague, while in 1799 there was an English invasion in the northern part of Holland. The years thereafter it were mainly international political developments that caused a high number of entries: in 1806 the war between France and Prussia, in 1807 the continuation of this war and the war between France and Spain. Also for 1808, until the beginnings of 1809, much attention goes to the war in Spain. In 1809, then, it is the war between France and the Habsburg Empire, while the entries on 1810 extensively narrate the annexation of the Kingdom of Holland to the French Empire. In 1811 the recruitment of soldiers and the visit of Napoleon to Amsterdam are the main topics, while in 1812 Napoleon's Russian campaign is responsible for the high number of entries.

#### 7.2.5.2 Manuscripts

*Lezikorn* was, just as Braatbard's chronicle and the fragments, never published. We do have, however, a number of different manuscript versions of the chronicle, providing us a unique insight in the process of writing and copying the chronicle. When the first curator of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, Meijer Marcus Roest, published the chronicle of Zalman ben Moshe Prinz in the Jewish cultural magazine *De Israëlitische Letterbode*, he was consequently approached by Mozes M. Benjamins jr. in 1876 telling that in his family a much similar chronicle was kept. Roest found Wing's chronicle interesting to publish some parts of it as well in *De Israëlitische Letterbode*, in Dutch translation, and later on as well in German in the German Jewish journal *Jeschurun*.<sup>669</sup> Roest selected primarily those passages that narrated the internal

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<sup>668</sup> These are the number of entries in Hs.Ros. 74, but if we also include the ones only kept in Hs.Ros. 534-7 we have a total of 147 entries over 1812. For more on the different manuscripts of *Lezikorn*, see the discussion below.

<sup>669</sup> Meijer M. Roest, 'Uittreksel uit eene kronijk van de jaren 1795-1812' *De Israëlitische Letterbode* I-VI (1876-1880); idem, 'Aus der Amsterdamer Gemeinde 1795-1812' *Jeschurun* 1885, 40 – 1886, 40. Roest added some commentary, mainly giving the civil names next to the Jewish names used in the chronicle.

struggles within the Amsterdam Ashkenazi kehillah. Via Roest the chronicle became part of the collection of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana up to date.

The manuscript kept at the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana comprises no less than 10 handwritten copy-books. In three copy-books, Hs.Ros. 74, a continuous story is narrated from 1795 till 1812. The seven other copy-books, Hs.Ros. 534, comprise the draft version, with several overlapping passages. The producer of the manuscript is uncertain. Lejb and Rena Fuks argue that it must have been the writer Shlomo ben Hayim Jehiel Levie, who should have copied it in 1815. They argue so following a note of the former curator of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, J.H. Hillesum, on the cover of 74-I.<sup>670</sup> Ariane Zwiers mentions the opinion of L. and R. Fuks, and restricts herself to the remark that both manuscripts are written by the same author – whether this is Levie or someone else.<sup>671</sup> It is my opinion, as I will demonstrate, after studying both sets of manuscripts, that they are the autograph of Wing himself, except a few pages in 534-7.

The relation between the different versions of the chronicle reveal us the conception of the chronicle. First, I will concentrate on the various copy-books comprising Hs.Ros. 534. They contain the following:

534-1: Winter 1795 until 28 June 1804; 90 pages

534-2: Winter 1795 until 12 June 1797, 52 pages

534-3: 12 July 1797 until 16 December 1802; 52 pages

534-4: 25 August 1804 until 26 January 1809; 88 pages

534-5: 27 January 1809 until 5 June 1810; 94 pages

534-6: 12 July 1810 until 28 October 1811; 88 pages

534-7: 29 October 1811 until 9 September 1812; 74 pages

The copy-books 2 and 3 are the oldest version. Although they are written in a regular Ashkenazi cursive, they are clearly work in progress. Words, sentences, but sometimes also complete entries are crossed out (2, page 22; 3 page 41). Now and then, in a later stage, sentences are added (3, page 20). Once Wing after the description of a later event suddenly

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<sup>670</sup> L. and R. Fuks, *Hebrew and Judaic manuscripts in Amsterdam public libraries* (Leiden 1973) 218.

<sup>671</sup> Zwiers, *Kroniek*, 79-81. In an earlier article she, however, assumed that Wing produced the manuscripts himself: Ariane D. Zwiers, 'A Yiddish chronicle of the Batavian Republic 1795-1812' in: A.K. Offenbergh a.o. eds., *Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana. Treasures of Jewish booklore, marking the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Leeser Rosenthal 1794-1994* (Amsterdam 1994) 84-85.

האב פר געסין אום בעוה צו מעלדן... (2, page 44).<sup>672</sup> At the same time, it is clear that this version is not Wing's daily notebook. Not only because of the regular writing of the text, also because of the replacing of entries. In copy-book 3 on page 41 a subsection on 8 August 1801 was removed, which however on page 42, after a couple of other entries, occurred again, apparently in the place where Wing wanted the entry to have. Wing must have had an earlier version with the primal version of the entries. Possibly these were the small notes on paper which can be found in different places within the copy-books.

The second version could be found in the copy-books 1 and 4-7. The first copy-book comprises 90 unnumbered, neatly written pages. Just as the first version here there are no classifications within the text. The entries follow each other with separating lines, divisions in subsections or marginal indications for the beginning of a new entry. Short summaries in the margin, as in the final version in Hs.Ros. 74, are still lacking in this version. In copy-book 4 one could, however, discern a development towards the final version. Between the various paragraphs small lines indicating the end of a paragraph are made, while in the margin the new Jewish and Christian years are mentioned. Now and then already a summary is given in the margin (e.g. for the entry on 13 January 1807). Although this copy-book is written in a regular hand, some words and sentences are blotted out.

The development which started in copy-book 4, continued in 5-7. Here too there are separating lines and the years are mentioned. But, on the other hand, the copy-books more and more show that they are work in progress. While 5 is still fairly proper, 6 and 7 are chaotic, with a lot of erasures, inkblots and now and then blank pages. For example, there are two entries connected to 17 May 1809, one general and one Jewish. In 534-5 the general entry is written down in the copy-book, the Jewish entry however on a separate small piece of paper attached to the page with a needle. In Hs.Ros. 74 both entries are written down after each other. Another example offers 6 June 1809. In 534-5 the entry on this date is written later on in minute letters between two other entries. In 74 it became part of the running text.

Between copy-books 5 and 6 there is a gap of a few entries, which in turn are given in 74. The entries on 15 and 25 June, and 2, 3, 4, 9 and 10 July 1810 are missing. These must have been written either in an earlier version, as continuation to the series 534-2 and 3, or between both copy-books there must have been another, small copy-book or a collection of small

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<sup>672</sup> 'I have forgotten to mention above...'

notes, comprising the missing entries. In copy-book 6, by the way, many entries are crossed out with one or two strokes of ink. This might have happened when Hs.Ros. 74 was written and the author crossed out those entries he already wrote down in the definitive version.

Copy-book 7 is only partly used. Of the total of 138 pages only 74 are used. Besides, a single page is added. Remarkably, copy-book 7 continues the narrative further than in 74. A short entry not given in 74-III, is written down in 534-7 with the same hand. Thereafter someone else takes over and adds a few more pages, all dated 9 September 1812, but dealing with the situation of the French army in Russia in August. Stylistically it is, however, the same. It is one more argument for the idea that Wing himself was both the writer of 534 and 74. Wing wrote his chronicle in a complex process of different versions. When he became ill, someone else had to take over his work. From that moment on the handwriting changed. He probably dictated the last entries to his wife or one of his sons.<sup>673</sup>

The final version, Hs.Ros. 74, consists of three copy-books:

I: Winter 1795 until 22 May 1802

II: 1 June 1802 until 25 February 1811

III: 28 February 1811 until 26 August 1812

All three copy-books have the same format. The entries are classified according to dates. In conclusion of an entry a page long line follows. When there are more entries for one date, sometimes a new paragraph is started but no line is made, while at other times a line is made and for the same date a second entry is given. In the margin a short summary of the contents of the entry is given. Both the Christian and Jewish years are written down in the margin, most of the times in very large script.

Copy-book I has a title page drawn with ink, but only the title *Lezijkorn* is inscribed. A preface or introduction is missing. Copy-book II has only a ornamental title page, but nothing is inscribed, while copy-book III not even has a title page. The pages of the three copy-books are numbered and the numbers continue in each copy-book. Copy-book I has pages 1-123, copy-book II pages 124-314, while copy-book III continues from page 315 until 422.

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<sup>673</sup> Additional evidence for the argument that these manuscripts are the autograph, is what Meijer Marcus Roest wrote in his introduction to his selection out of this chronicle: ‘...deelde de heer M.M. Benjamins Jr. alhier ons mede, dat hij in het bezit is van eenige handschriften, geschreven door wijlen zijn grootvader B.I. Benjamins...’ Thus, in the Benjamins family these manuscripts were considered to have been written by Bendit ben Ayzek Wing himself. Roest, ‘Kronijk 1795-1812’, first issue (unnumbered page).

Especially on the first years we have three versions: 74-I and a part of II; 534-2 and 3 and 534-1. On the later years we only have two versions to our disposal: 74-II and –III and 534-4 till 7. Comparison between these versions shows that there are small differences, mainly to be traced back to the process of copying and editing the definitive version. For example, different spellings of words are used, but these are internally hardly consistent. Also the order of the sentences sometimes changes between the versions. Only now and then there are additions or erasures. The entry on 23 February 1795, for example, is much longer in 74-I than in 534-1, and while 534-1 has an entry on the funeral of two hazzanim at 27 March 1795, this is missing in 74-I. A complete entry lacking in the final version is, however, very rare. Most of the times in Hs.Ros. 74 the entry is a bit more elaborated or a bit more compressed. With regard to the contents there are no differences.

Now and then the order of the entries is different, showing that Wing in his final version sometimes chose a different order. One example is taken from the year 1806:

534-4	20 June	new prayer Shabbat Synagogue service
	24 June	Death of Dresden Couriers on peace
	19 July	Royal family leaving
74	20 June	new prayer and synagogue service Couriers on peace
	24 June	Death of Dresden
	19 July	Royal family leaving

In 74 the introduction of a new prayer in honour of the royal family of Louis Napoleon is linked to the description of the following synagogue service, where the prayer was used for the first time. In 534 these were still two independent entries, separated by a line. Unclear is why Wing replaced the entry on the couriers travelling between London and Paris, with the goal to start peace negotiations.

One marked difference is that in 534 the (Christian) months are written in Hebrew script, while in 74 Wing chose to write the dates in Latin script. In any case in both versions now and then Dutch fragments are added. In most cases this is highly functional for the



narrative. For example, sentences spoken in Dutch by enlightened Jews in synagogue are given in Dutch in the chronicle. In this way the shocking impact of using Dutch in public in synagogue becomes very clear. Between the Dutch fragments in 534 and 74 there are small differences. For instance, 534-1 has: ‘Meent gij dat nog die Oranje Tijd is/ neen wij zullen zelfs kiezen geen dispoten – want wij zijn vrij’, while 74-I gives: ‘Meent Gij Dat nog die Oranje tijd is/ Neen, wij zullen zelfs kiezen/ geen Dispoten/ want wij zijn nu vrij & Een vrij volk kunnen & zullen zelfs kiezen.’<sup>674</sup>

Also the names of Christians, such as authorities and military personnel, are in all versions written in Latin script. The same happens with the names of enlightened Jews such as Carolus Asser and H. de H. Lemon, sometimes accompanied by their Hebrew names, respectively Kalman ben Moushe Shouchet and Hirts ben Hirsh Wiener. This ‘scriptural policy’ of Wing accentuates the striving for integration of these progressive Ashkenazim. Also the Iberian names of the Sephardim are chronicled in Latin script, like Da Costa Athias (74-I, page 47).<sup>675</sup>

Next to Dutch, French and even Latin coloured Wing’s Yiddish. These ‘internationalisms’ were characteristic of late eighteenth century Western Yiddish, but the degree in which Wing uses these words show his familiarity with Dutch bourgeois culture that had adopted the French language if not completely, at least to a high degree.<sup>676</sup> To give just a few examples of French words used in Wing’s chronicle: *bataille*, *antichambre*, *desert*, *canaille*, *maire*, *artillerie*, *attaque*, while some words were Hollandized like *gedejeneerd*, *gerangeerd* and *gegalientiert* (*geguillotineerd*), indicating that Wing adopted these internationalisms via the Dutch language.<sup>677</sup> From Dutch Wing adopted in his Yiddish text the Latin expression *vice versa*.<sup>678</sup>

The Latin script, Dutch fragments and the internationalisms in Wing’s Yiddish manuscripts clearly point to a growing degree of integration in Dutch society. The author, apparently, assumed that his readers had mastered both languages and scripts well enough to read his chronicle. Of course, we should keep in mind that the chronicle was never printed and remained in manuscript, but at least for the most direct circle of family and friends he must

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<sup>674</sup> Translations: ‘Do you think it’s still the Orange period/ no we will choose ourselves no tyrants – because we are free’; and: ‘Do you think it’s still the Orange period/ no, we will choose ourselves/ no tyrants/ because we are free now & and a free people can & will choose themselves.’

<sup>675</sup> Hs.Ros. 74-I, 36, 47.

<sup>676</sup> Neil Jacobs, *Yiddish: a linguistic introduction* (Cambridge 2005) 45-46.

<sup>677</sup> Hs.Ros. 74-I, 43 (באטטאליע), 45 (אנטיחאהמבער), 56 (קאנאליעס), 58 (דעסערט), 76 (מערא), 97 (גידעשאניהרט), 98 (ארטעלרי); 74-II, 144 (אקטאקי), 147 (גראנשיהרט).

<sup>678</sup> Hs.Ros. 74-I, 101 (וויהוע ווערסט).

have felt free in his usage of languages. This multilingualism is unique for Wing's chronicle, and not shown by the earlier chronicles of Braatbard and Prinz, although the chronicle fragments also had one or a few words in Dutch and in Latin script. Since Wing was part of the conservative wing within the Amsterdam Ashkenazi community and condemned the use of Dutch within formal Jewish matters, his use could not be explained as a sign of progressivity. In the Amsterdam Jewish circles to which Wing belonged, knowledge of Yiddish and Dutch must have been common, just as the codeswitching between both languages. As Marion Aptroot has argued, in the late eighteenth century the barriers between internal and external multilingualism became blurred, and other languages than Yiddish and Hebrew were used for inner-Jewish communication. Not only progressive Jews, also members of the *Alte Kille* – as shown by the *Diskursn* – were part of this process.<sup>679</sup> In general Wing used in both versions of 534 less Dutch and Latin script than in 74. For example, in 534-6 in the entry on 14 July 1810 the text of the decree annexing Holland to France is taken up completely, but in Yiddish translation. Only the headings, like '1 Hoofstuk' [sic], are in Dutch. In 74 the whole decree is written down in Dutch and in Latin script (74-II, pages 282-286).

A more detailed comparison between the three versions shows, besides small differences in the order of words and sentences, differences in spelling and lexicon. Both versions in 534 are in general more plene in the spelling of words, e.g. וואשיר (534) versus וואשר (74) and גידרונגין (534) versus גדרונגין (74). As well, both versions of 534 use more words of Hebrew origins (whether part of the Yiddish language corpus or not), where 74 has replaced these partly by words of Germanic origins. A good example is one of the first sentences of the chronicle:

74-I: 1740 איזה ימים דש נאך קעלטיר וואהר אלו בשנת<sup>680</sup>

534-1: 1740 עז וואהר איזה ימים נאך קעלטיר אלו בשנת

534-2: 1740 עז וואהר איזה ימים נאך קעלטיר כמו בשנת

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<sup>679</sup> Marion Aptroot, 'Yiddish, Dutch and German among late 18<sup>th</sup> century Amsterdam Jewry' in: Jonathan Israel and Reinier Salverda eds., *Dutch Jewry: its history and secular culture (1500-2000)* (Leiden etc. 2002) 201-211. A linguistic discussion of a contemporary Yiddish song, with much the same features: I.M. Hillesum, 'A Hollendish-Yidish Kalelid fun sof 18tn yohrhundert', *Filologishe sbriftn* 2 (1928), 348-352.

<sup>680</sup> 'In these days it was colder than in 1740'.

In the oldest version, 534-2, the Hebrew word כמו is used, while the other two – including the final version 74 – opted for אלו. One more example shows this transition from Hebrew to Germanic alternatives:

74-I: משום דש פאטריאטישימיס אין האללאנד האט הולך וגובר גוועזן<sup>681</sup>

534-1: משום דש פאטריאטישימיס כאן במדינות האט גובר גוועזן

In the first version, 534-2, this sentence is lacking, showing that it was only added in the second version, 534-1, and reworked in the final version, 74-I. The reverse, however, we encounter as well, where a Hebrew word in 74 replaces a Germanic original in 534:

74-I: בינינו ובן הצרפתים<sup>682</sup>

534-2: צווישן אונז אונד דיא צרפתים

Although it is true that in 534 in general more Hebrew elements are used in the text, this does not happen in such a degree that we should characterize it as a conscious strategy of Wing to make the final version as pure Germanic a Yiddish as possible. Not only did he use too often a Hebrew word in 74 where he did not do so in 534 for such a conclusion, Wing in that should have been more consistent. In 74, for example, he used to denote the French both the Hebrew צרפתים and the Germanic פראנצויסן.<sup>683</sup> In general, Hebrew is used by Wing in Biblical quotations, for specific Jewish functions, like *parnassim*, for religious terminology and wishes (e.g. *Jamim tovim*), and for dates, numbers and interjecting words (משום, על ידי).<sup>684</sup>

In conclusion, the final version is Hs.Ros. 74, offering a continuous narrative from 1795 until 1812, and being the autograph. In Hs.Ros. 534 we are confronted with various earlier stages of the chronicle, including a few last entries which due to Wing's passing away were not written in the definitive version of the chronicle. The fact that the last entry is written in a different hand is a clear indication that after Wing became ill, someone else took over and wrote down the final entry, probably dictated by Wing. This part, however, was never written down in Hs.Ros. 74.

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<sup>681</sup> 'Because Patriotism in Holland had grown'.

<sup>682</sup> 'Between us and the French.'

<sup>683</sup> Cf. Zwiers, *Kroniek*, 457-458.

<sup>684</sup> Hs.Ros. 74-I, 35-36, 60.

There is one other manuscript of *Lezikorn*, presently kept at the City Archives Amsterdam.<sup>685</sup> In 1846 the prominent Amsterdam Jew Samuel Israel Mulder ordered a copy of the chronicle, probably to use it as a source for a history of Dutch Jewry.<sup>686</sup> He borrowed it from Mozes Benjamins, Wing's grandson. The author and poet Abraham Delaville copied the book, which was given the title *Sefer jaldei hazman*, and Mulder himself wrote a Hebrew introduction to the chronicle. The manuscript is a duplicate of Hs.Ros. 534, with the only difference that Delaville used his own spelling of the Yiddish language.<sup>687</sup> At the end Delaville added two pages with the names of 70 parnassim, classified according to years.

### 7.2.6 Trebitsch' Qorot ha-ittim

One more chronicle should be mentioned here, although it was neither written in the northern Netherlands nor in Yiddish. Still it could not be overlooked in a chapter on the continuations to *Sheyris Yisroel*, since it is an important sequel to Amelander's history book. Here it will suffice to stress its significance as a successor chronicle, without studying the book in more detail. The chronicle in case is written in rhymed prose by the Moravian Abraham Trebitsch (ca. 1759-1837) in both Hebrew and *Judendentsch*, German in Hebrew characters, and titled *Qorot ha-ittim*, the events of times.<sup>688</sup> Trebitsch went, like Amelander, to yeshiva in Prague and might have heard there for the first time about the history book of their alumnus. The title page of the book already clearly shows the connection to *Sheyris Yisroel*.

קורות העתים  
חלק ראשון

<sup>685</sup> Municipal Archives Amsterdam, archive 714, inv.nr. 99 (*not* 100 as the inventory gives). Mulder's Hebrew introduction could be found on de pages i-iv. The chronicle has 288 pages, plus 5 more for the introduction and 3 more for the list of Amsterdam parnassim. Michman knew of the copy written by Delaville, and compared it to the fragments published by Roest. Since he did not check the original copies held at the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, he was not able to properly explain the differences between Delaville and Roest; Michman, *Dutch Jewry*, 58, n. 10.

<sup>686</sup> On Mulder, see: Henriëtte Boas, 'De leraar Hebreuws van Eduard Asser: Samuel I. Mulder' in: idem, *Herlevend bevaard. Aren lezen in joods Amsterdam* (Amsterdam 1987) 45-57.

<sup>687</sup> Delaville's manuscript has just as Hs.Ros. 534-7 also the paragraph on 9 September 1812 (which is lacking in Hs.Ros. 74), writes also the Christian months in Hebrew script, follows 534-2 in the order of the sentences of the Dutch quotations, and has de same order as 534-4 regarding the events between 5-13 January 1809. This all shows that Delaville took 534 as his source manuscript.

<sup>688</sup> Studied seriously for the first time in: Jiřina Šedinová, 'Hebrew historiography in Moravia at the 18<sup>th</sup> century – Abraham Trebitsch (around 1760-1840)?' *Judaica Bohemiae* 10 (1974) 51-61; more extensively in: Iveta Vondrášková [now: Cermanová], 'The events of times' by Abraham Trebitsch of Mikulov (Nikolsburg). The chronicle and its relationship to the development of modern historiography' *Judaica Bohemiae* 37 (2001) 92-144.

ממקום שהשארית ישראל סיים, בפרק שלשים ושתים, משנת התק"א לבריאת ארץ ושמים, עד שנת תקס"א שאנו מונין היום, האמת כתבתי, ולא כזבתי, בנייר החקירה, ובדיו הידיעה, בקסת הסקירה, וקנה היגיעה.<sup>689</sup>

The author, Abraham Trebitsch, testifies to the popularity of *Sheyris Yisroel*, naming without further introduction the history book and presenting his book as the continuation from chapter 32 onwards. Trebitsch thus took the last chapter of *Sheyris Yisroel* on Central and Eastern European Jewry, documenting their history from the 1648 Chmielnicki pogroms until contemporary times. In this chapter also the history of the Jews in Prague, Bohemia and Moravia is prominently present. By continuing from chapter 32, and thus leaving the final chapters on Dutch Jews and the Indian and Chinese Jews aside, Trebitsch already revealed that his chronicle concentrates on Jewish and general history mainly in the Czech lands.

Trebitsch' chronicle documents the period 1740 until 1801 in chronological order, structured according to the Jewish years, and he did so since 'there is no writer who would desire to write up the new events'.<sup>690</sup> His objective was clearly to narrate contemporary history in sequence to *Sheyris Yisroel*, and thus demonstrates to have had the typical traditional successor conception of history, as a continuing story only in need of bringing up to date. Trebitsch – serving as a secretary to the Moravian Land Rabbinate in Nikolsburg - started writing his chronicle in the early 1790's and, while he was born around 1760, wrote the first part of his chronicle about a period of history he had not lived in himself. For that period he used written material, books, pamphlets, letters, and oral testimonies. Most of the chronicle, however, deals with the period of history Trebitsch experienced himself. Much attention goes to the various wars in which his region became involved, such as the Silesian Wars, the War of the Bavarian Succession and the wars of revolutionary France.<sup>691</sup>

The character of *Qorot ha-ittim* is much like the Amsterdam Yiddish successor chronicles to *Sheyris Yisroel*. Trebitsch concentrates on a rather short period of history, from a local perspective and mainly focusing on his own region. Like the Amsterdam chroniqueurs, he opted for the chronicle form, using the years and dates as structuring principle. He also writes both on general and Jewish history, showing – much like Wing – the intertwining of both.

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<sup>689</sup> 'The events of time. Part one. From where *Sheyris Yisroel* ends, in chapter 33, from the year 5501 from the creating of earth and heavens, until the year 5561 in which we are now, I have written the truth, and not I didn't lie, with proper research, and enough knowledge, strictly reviewed, and creating with hard work.' Abraham Trebitsch, *Qorot ha-ittim, beleq risbon* (Brünn 1801), title page.

<sup>690</sup> Trebitsch, *Qorot*, 5r.

<sup>691</sup> Vondrášková, 'The events', 108, 110-112, 120-121.

There is, however, one marked difference. While the Amsterdam chroniclers identified passionately with their city, the Republic and its authorities, Trebitsch showed no Czech or Moravian patriotic sentiment at all. He only identified with the Jewish community.<sup>692</sup>

That Trebitsch chose to continue *Sheyris Yisroel* and not David Ganz' *Tsemab David* is remarkable. The Prague Ganz showed just like Trebitsch much interest in Jewish and general history in Central Europe, and must have still been considered an important Jewish intellectual in late eighteenth-century Moravia.<sup>693</sup> Trebitsch also mentioned *Tsemab David* in his introduction as one of his sources, next to *Yosippon*, *Sheyris Yisroel* and Heilprin's *Seder ha-dorot*, but opted for *Sheyris Yisroel* as predecessor. This must have been not only because of *Sheyris Yisroel*'s popularity, but also because it was the book bringing history close by – up until around 1740 – and as well presented Jewish and general history in one running narrative, while *Tsemab David* separated these rigidly. *Sheyris Yisroel* and its authority must have been the best imaginable predecessor for what Trebitsch wanted to do: a chronicle on the events of the times, both within and outside the Jewish community.

Against the background of the relatively isolated position of Moravian Jewry, one could understand Trebitsch' attitude of non-identification with the surrounding population, while at the same time it gives some credit to Iveta Cermanová's claim that *Qorot ha-ittim* 'disrupted the Jewish isolation from the surrounding world and the occurrences in that world' through documenting general together with Jewish history.<sup>694</sup> Although the Habsburg emperor Joseph II in 1778 issued his 'Toleranzpatent', which granted Jews more possibilities, the Moravian Jews lacked the liberties Amsterdam Jews enjoyed. Trebitsch' political attitude is indicative of this marked difference between Amsterdam and Moravian Jewry. In comparison with the Amsterdam Yiddish chronicles Trebitsch' chronicle shows much the same historical outlook and method, strengthening the traditional conception of God as ultimate ruler of history and at the same time describing from a clearly Jewish perspective local, national and international politics.

As the title page showed, the book printed in Brünn 1801 was only the first half of the chronicle. For a long time people assumed Trebitsch did not write the second part. Therefore a Galicean *maskil*, Jacob Bodek, decided to continue on his turn Trebitsch' narrative in the chronicle *Qorot nosafot*, further events, chronicling Central and Eastern European history

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<sup>692</sup> Vondrášková, 'The events', 123.

<sup>693</sup> On the influence of Ganz on Trebitsch: Šedinová, 'Hebrew historiography', 55; Vondrášková, 'The events', 113-114.

<sup>694</sup> Vondrášková, 'The events', 131.

– both general and Jewish – from 1802 until 1830. It was published in 1851 in Lemberg together with Trebitsch's first half, annotated by Bodek.<sup>695</sup> Only quite recently the manuscript of Trebitsch's own second part was found in private ownership, documenting the period from 1801 until 1833. The Second Part deals with the Napoleonic wars and the restoration period within the context of the Habsburg Empire. Methodologically and stylistically Trebitsch continued simply his First Part, using as his main source the German-language Austrian press. A note on the title page shows that already in 1817 the state's censor refused the part of the chronicle that was ready at that time to be printed. In turn, this manuscript of the Second Part, was continued by an anonymous author in a few pages added to the manuscript up until 1871, with the same focus on mainly Czech Jewish history.<sup>696</sup>

Trebitsch's first part and its successive sequels are perfect illustrations of the continuation of the tradition of successor chronicles up until the nineteenth century, forming altogether a chain starting with *Yosippön*, continuing with *Sheyris Yisroel* and ending in a variety of different chronicles from Amsterdam, Nikolsburg and Lemberg.

### 7.3 The authors: socio-economic profiles

Who were the authors of the Amsterdam Yiddish chronicles? Generally they are thus far in historiography opposed to the intellectual Amelander and described as being part of the lower classes within the Ashkenazi community.<sup>697</sup> I would like to propose a different approach to the background of the authors and their relationship to *Sheyris Yisroel*. I will first introduce the authors and thereafter analyze their position within the social stratification of Ashkenazi Amsterdam.

To start with Abraham Hayim ben Zvi Hirsh Braatbard. He introduced himself as 'ממשפחת קווברין', from the Kovrin family, most probably a hint to the origin of the family in the Polish *shtetl* of Kobryn (presentday in Belarus). The family name Braatbard or Braatbaard,

<sup>695</sup> Reuven Michael, *Hakativa ha-historit ha-yehudit me-ha-Renaissance ad ha-et he-badasha* (Jerusalem 1993) 91-94.

<sup>696</sup> The second part of *Qorot ha-ittim* – which is in the private collection of Rabbi Josef Buxbaum in Jerusalem – is studied extensively in an unpublished Czech dissertation by Iveta Cermanová [Prague 2005], which includes the complete Hebrew text; a survey of the second part is given in: Iveta Cermanová, 'The second part of the chronicle "The events of times" ("Qorot ha-ittim") by Abraham Trebitsch of Mikulov (Nikolsburg)' *Judaica Bohemiae* 40 (2004) 22-60; idem, 'The censorship of Hebrew manuscripts in Vienna in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century: the case of Abraham Trebitsch' *Judaica Bohemiae* 39 (2003) 93-103.

<sup>697</sup> L. Fuks, 'De Jiddische kroniek van Abraham Chaim Braatbard (1740-1752)' *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 48 (1956) 113-171; Fuks, *De zeven provincien*, 8; Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Yiddish historiography' 16; the first step towards a redefinition is already given in: Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Baatbard'.

broad beard, was already in use by his father and should therefore not be applied directly to the chronicler. Abraham Hayim was born in May 1699 in Amsterdam to Zvi Hirsch ben Shmuel Braatbard (died Amsterdam 1751), while the name of his mother is unknown (died Amsterdam 1762). Braatbard thus was only six years younger than Amelander. He was the oldest of the family and had three sisters, Dina, Brendele and Edel, and also three brothers, Shmuel, Nathan and Shlomo. Braatbard – under his Dutch name Hyman Hartogs and living at the Houtgracht - married on 18 November 1729 in Amsterdam to Shifra Hayim (1704-1779), also born in an Amsterdam Ashkenazi family.<sup>698</sup> Together they had nine children: Shmuel (1734), Hirsh (1740-1826), Eva (1743-1794), David (1747-1807), Judith (1748) and four more daughters. This means that during the period Braatbard was writing his chronicle, he got most of his children. There is no mention made of the birth of the children in the text, indicating that Braatbard did not envision his chronicle just for his family but for a much larger public. Braatbard died in 1784 and was buried at Zeeburg cemetery, where the less well to do Amsterdam Ashkenazi Jews found their final resting place.<sup>699</sup>

Braatbard's father was a broker, a money-changer, and enjoyed a yearly income of 600 guilders.<sup>700</sup> Fuks suggested that after his father's death in 1751 Braatbard took over his position and had therefore to stop further developing his chronicle.<sup>701</sup> This might be the case. At least Braatbard's attention for the value of money and the currency rates in the chronicle shows that he was familiar with his father's profession.<sup>702</sup> As stressed before, Braatbard worked in the Jewish printing industry as a type-setter for Hebrew books. For that he needed a proper traditional Jewish education in order to become familiar with the Hebrew language and the traditional corpus of texts. Furthermore, as Fuks-Mansfeld demonstrated, he worked side by side Moses ben Shimon Frankfurter, Amelander and Elieser Susman Rudelsum.<sup>703</sup> There he must not only have got the idea to write a continuation to *Sheyris Yisroel*, but also become acquainted with the agenda of Frankfurter to encourage Yiddish publications.

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<sup>698</sup> MAA, DTB 717/309, 18 November 1729. Braatbard signed in Latin script, showing his familiarity with the Dutch language. He wife did not. He lived at that time at the Houtgracht, within the Jewish quarter.

<sup>699</sup> Genealogical information in this paragraph is taken from the database 'Ashkenazi Amsterdam in the eighteenth century' of the Dutch Jewish Genealogical Data Base Akevoth. The Braatbard family documented the expansion of the family on the fly-leaf of a copy of *Sefer miqra meforash* (Amsterdam 1749), presently in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, Ros. 1891 D 18. In case of differences between the database and the family genealogy, I followed the last one.

<sup>700</sup> Fuks, 'Jiddische kroniek', 114.

<sup>701</sup> Fuks, *De zeven provincien*, 7.

<sup>702</sup> E.g. Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapters 246 and 283.

<sup>703</sup> Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Baatbard', 136.



Kosman ben Joseph Baruch, also known as Jacobus Benedictus, was embedded in one of the most prominent Ashkenazi family networks in the Dutch Republic.<sup>704</sup> He was born in Amersfoort around 1717, a son to Baruch Kosman (1691-1720) and Rebecca Isaac Italiaander (1694-1735). His father came from Rotterdam, where his grandfather Moses Kosman served as a parnas; due to his marriage he moved to Amersfoort, the residence of a few important Jewish families making their fortunes in the tobacco industry. His mother, Rebecca, belonged to the Italiaander family, who together with the related Cohen family dominated the tobacco business and was active all over Europe. Rebecca's grandfather, Abraham Benjamin Italiaander, came – as the family's last name suggested – from Venice.<sup>705</sup> Kosman thus grew up in a wealthy Jewish family, which enabled him to get a good Jewish education – probably with private teachers.

As was the case with elite families all over Europe, but especially in the small Ashkenazi elite, there was a high level intra-family marriage. Kosman married within the family, with Anna Hartog van Embden (Amsterdam ca. 1721-Amsterdam 1777), a granddaughter of his aunt Marianne Italiaander. Her father, his cousin and from now on father-in-law, was Hartog Alexander van Embden, also known as Naphtali Herz Rofe.<sup>706</sup> He was besides medical doctor also publisher, among others of *Sheyris Yisroel* in 1743. Kosman moved to Amsterdam and entered the firm of his father-in-law as a printer, publisher and bookseller. First together, and after Naphtali Herz became blind in 1766, he continued the firm himself. Of Amelander's titles, apart from *Sheyris Yisroel*, he also republished *Magishe Minha* (1753, 1754, 1759, 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771) and the Torah edition with *Devek Tov* (1749).<sup>707</sup> Kosman's list further consisted out of the traditional genres, such as Tenakh editions, siddurim and mahzorim, but the Amsterdam Ashkenazi takkanot and a Yiddish weekly on books (אמשטרדאמשי יודיש וואכליכי גייש פּר צילר) were also printed by Kosman. He printed both in Hebrew and Yiddish.<sup>708</sup>

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<sup>704</sup> For the family genealogies, see: <http://home.zonnet.nl/h.muntjewerff/genealogy/josephvanembden/joseph.htm> and [http://stenenarchief.nl/genealogie/gezin/humo1\\_ashk/F1037/I1302/](http://stenenarchief.nl/genealogie/gezin/humo1_ashk/F1037/I1302/) and related pages (consulted 28 June 2010).

<sup>705</sup> Johannes Jacobus Herks, *De geschiedenis van de Amersfoortse tabak* [Economisch- en sociaal-historische onderzoeken, nieuwe reeks 5] ('s-Gravenhage 1967) 198-201.

<sup>706</sup> Hindle S. Hes, 'The Van Embdens. A family of printers in Amsterdam' *Quaerendo* 11 (1981) 1, 46-52.

<sup>707</sup> This last one was as well republished in 1767 by Joseph, Jacob, Abraham, sons of Solomon Proops: *Humash tikken saphrim* (Amsterdam 1767).

<sup>708</sup> Mirjam Gutschow, *Inventory of Yiddish publications from the Netherlands, c. 1650-c. 1950* (Leiden etc. 2007) nrs. 343, 375, 383, 386, 388, 389.1, 393-395, 398-399, 401-402, 404, 443; Shatzky, 'Letzte shprotzungen', 253-254.

Via both the family lines of his wife and himself Kosman was related to not only the Van Embden family but also to one of the most prosperous and influential Ashkenazi families, the Cohen's from Amersfoort, and to the progressive Asser family. Moses Salomon Asser, a nephew to Kosman's wife, in his autobiography described the family he grew up in as enlightened and intellectual, always in tension with the religious establishment. According to Asser, his grandfather, Naphtali Herz Rofe, was one of the very few progressive Jews in Amsterdam.<sup>709</sup> Kosman was, needless to say, close to Naphtali Herz, but via the rest of the family related to the ruling elite as well. Parnassim were all around him, just as business men and Jewish intellectuals. Not only his cousin and father-in-law, as well the husband of his daughter Sara (ca. 1751-1805), Joachim Benjamin van Embden (1741-1826) – also known as Yohanan Levi Rofe -, studied medicine at university. A university degree in general, and one in medicine in particular, was considered among the cultured Ashkenazi elite as a conclusion of someone's education, rather than an economic necessity.<sup>710</sup> Often, besides their academic profession, they continued to work in the family businesses. Thus Joachim, a cousin to Kosman's wife and a second cousin to himself, continued the family business together with Kosman's son Baruch (1748-1795). He entered the firm as a printer's apprentice, became a partner in 1770 and finally became the owner in 1785.<sup>711</sup> The third child of Kosman and Anna, Hartog (1758-1787), also worked in the printing firm, but lived relatively short, leaving his wife behind with one daughter.<sup>712</sup>

Kosman was, together with Naphtali Herz, among the ones to whom Joachim dedicated his medical dissertation, which he defended in 1761 at Utrecht university. About Kosman, Joachim wrote, interestingly: 'Cognato meo conjunctissimo, rerum talmudicarum pertissimo, in rebus theologicis praeceptorio meo colendo'. It shows that Kosman was familiar with the traditional Jewish corpus of texts, and that he studied together with Joachim.<sup>713</sup>

Kosman as a publisher and bookseller had access to all necessary sources to write history, while in his family network he could hear additional more or less confidential information. His chapter is, however, rather factual and does not offer surprising insights which could be expected from a person with Kosman's position. The progressive stand of most of his family, becoming clear in their choice for the *Naye Kille* during the 1797-1808 split,

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<sup>709</sup> I.H. van Eeghen, 'Autobiografie van M.S. Asser', *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 55 (1963) 130-165.

<sup>710</sup> Both external and internal factors led to the fact that Jews primarily studied medicine; David B. Ruderman, *Jewish thought and scientific discovery in early modern Europe* (Detroit 2001) passim, but esp. 50-52.

<sup>711</sup> Hes, 'The Van Embdens', 49-51.

<sup>712</sup> Gutschow, *Inventory*, nr. 409.

<sup>713</sup> Cited after: Hes, 'The Van Embdens', 50.

did not leave traces in his sequel to *Sheyris Yisroel*. On 26 February 1782 he was buried on Muiderberg cemetery, where the well to do members of the Ashkenazi kehillah found their resting place.

Like Braatbard and Kosman, Prinz was a scion of an Amsterdam Jewish family, of which his grandfather Salomon Nathan Prinz was at least already living in the city. Prinz was a generation younger than Amelander and Braatbard, born in Amsterdam in 1745 in a family of four children to Mozes Salomon Prinz (1717-1796) and Ester Hartog (1716-1782). Prinz married twice, first in 1768 to Branca Mozes Jacob (1741-1798)<sup>714</sup>, and the second time in 1798 to Abigael Eliaser Schoelapper (1747-1813). The first marriage resulted at least in one child, which died and was buried in 1769 at Zeeburg cemetery. Prinz died at 22 December 1806 and was buried also at Zeeburg.<sup>715</sup>

In his chronicle Prinz introduced himself to his reading public as a typical Amsterdam Ashkenazi Jew, living in the mainly Jewish Uilenburg quarter, next to Jitje the midwife.<sup>716</sup> Supplying such very specific information suggests that Prinz aimed primarily at fellow Amsterdam Jews, who knew his neighbour. The rest of his chronicle is written in a style supposing intimate knowledge of the geography and main characters of Jewish Amsterdam. Prinz qualified himself as *מענשטיר גלערנטיר און איין אום*, an unlearned person, thus positioning himself within the poor majority of the community, which was unable to study Talmud Torah.<sup>717</sup> One may wonder, however, if this was not merely modesty or simply a topos, since his chronicle is spiced with quotations from the traditional Hebrew corpus of religious texts, indicating that he was not just an ‘unlearned person’ but was very well at home in the key texts.

Prinz – who had a weak stomach and was therefore careful with regard to his food<sup>718</sup> - gave even more information about his socio-economic position in the chronicle. He described his daily occupation as being a *פֿעטיר בינדר*, a cooper who makes or repairs casks and wooden vats, further described as:

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<sup>714</sup> MAA, DTB 744/165, 13 May 1768; Prinz signed in Latin script, his wife with a circle. Prinz lived at that time in the Bakkersstraat, his wife in the Zwanenburgerstraat.

<sup>715</sup> [http://stenenarchief.nl/genealogie/gezin/humo1\\_ashk/F7038/I10966/](http://stenenarchief.nl/genealogie/gezin/humo1_ashk/F7038/I10966/) (consulted 23 June 2010), and related pages.

<sup>716</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, reverse side of the titlepage: *איך זלמן בן משה פרינץ וואון נעבין יטכי מולדת אויף אוילין בורג*. Prinz' Hebrew is not completely correct, *מולדת* should be *מילדת*.

<sup>717</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 9v.

<sup>718</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 7r.

און וואש איין מענש אלש איך בין דז טוא איך אייך זאגן. איך טוא אלץ טאג פֿר דיא פרנסה דעם ראץ שלאגן.  
דארום אויך אלז איר לייט איין טעות מעכט פֿינדן אזוי זעלט איהר לייט אן מיר עקסקוזירן.<sup>719</sup>

Writing his chronicles was for Prinz something he did after work in the evenings, and therefore he could have made some mistakes. Undoubtedly his position as a cooper was different from one in more intellectual surroundings, such as the rabbinate, schools or the book industry. At the same time it is remarkable that Prinz was a cooper, since there was a cooper guild active in the city, and most guilds chose from the moment Jews immigrated to the city in the late sixteenth century to protect the interests of the residing members and not to admit Jews within the guild. The only guilds known to have accepted Jews were the book industry, medical, bird buyers' and brokers' guilds.<sup>720</sup> Prinz' apparent success in becoming a cooper in Amsterdam demonstrates that, although it was hard work, he had acquired an economically not unstable position within the Amsterdam Jewish community. Prinz might have slipped through, but could also have been working on behalf of a non-Jewish cooper within the industry.

In his chronicle Prinz gave one example of his ability as a cooper. On 7 March 1788, a Friday, the celebrations for the birthday of the stadholder prince William V started.<sup>721</sup> The Orangist party, which was now again in power in the city, ordered that everyone should illuminate their houses – lighting all of the city from behind the windows with little cans in which candles were put. A run broke out on the little cans, and the prizes rose to one 'stuiver' (five-cent piece) a can. After narrating this, Prinz wrote:

צו מזל איך האב נאך יושט ביא גיפאל איין אלטי בליקה קאפי קעטיל דער היים גיהאט  
מיט איינגן לעכר דריין  
דא האב איך אלן צייט מיין קאפֿי אויף גיווארמט  
דש וואר נאך מיין בעשטע הויז ראט אונ' דער צו נאך איין ירושה פֿון איין עביר מימלה  
אונ' וויא איך דש גיהערט האב אלש דש אזוי גיהט איך ניט לאי  
אונ' האב דיא קעטיל אין שטיקר גשלאגין  
איך האב ניט קענן נאך דיא לומרט דער מיט גיהן

<sup>719</sup> 'And I will tell you what a person like me does. All day I make barrels for a living. Therefore, if you people will find a mistake, excuse me for that.' Prinz, *Kronik*, 9v.

<sup>720</sup> Jan Wagenaar, *Amsterdam, in zyne opkomst, aanwas, geschiedenissen, voorregten, koophandel, gebouwen, kerkenstaat, scholen, schutterye, gilden en reggeringe, beschreeven* 9 (Amsterdam 1766) 54, 159, 194-196, 199, 244.

<sup>721</sup> Prinz introduced 7 March as the birthday of the prince, which was actually 8 March. Most probably on 7 March the festive activities started, lasting till 12 March. On 8 March, Prinz narrates in his next chapters, the birthday was celebrated in the Amsterdam synagogues and in the Jewish quarters; Prinz, *Kronik*, 8r-9r.

עש איז נאך גוהט אלש מן זיך מיט עש זיינגן קען העלפן  
עש איז נור ווערילש גוט אונ' איך האב בליקז דרויש גימאכט אונ' בין אן דיא בערש דער מיט גיגאנגן  
איך האב נאך דרויש אנטפאנגין ו' זהובים י"ח ב"ש  
נור איך האב קיין אויף שלאק וועלן נעמן פון דיא לייט  
איך האב מיך דא ניט וועלן אן פֿר זינדגין<sup>722</sup>

Prinz was able to turn the old tin coffee kettle, a legacy of his great-aunt, into little cans which could be used for the illumination. At the same time this passage also shows his rather modest living, as he presents the kettle as his best household effects and as something which he could no longer bring to the pawnbroker. Apparently he was from time to time without sufficient money and then brought things to the pawnbroker.

The qualification by Jacob Shatzky of Prinz as the first proletarian author in Yiddish should, however, be regarded as not only too ideologically loaded, but as an underestimation of Prinz' actual economic position.<sup>723</sup> Although Prinz introduced himself as an unlearned Jew, and showed to be very familiar with and close to everyday life in Ashkenazi Amsterdam, he must have had a good traditional Jewish education and managed to obtain as a cooper a rather stable economic position. Another indication that Prinz was not among the poorest people in the Jewish quarters is that he was able to have his chronicle booklet printed, which surely must have cost him a considerable sum of money. That he must have enjoyed at least some success, could be extracted from the fact that a few years later he published a historical song on the effects of the political changes after the Batavian Revolution on Amsterdam Ashkenazim.<sup>724</sup>

The authors of the chronicle fragments could not be identified with certainty. But it is certain that they were written within the family circle of Menahem Mendele ben Leyb, the author of the notices on the weekly *derashot*. In the manuscript on several pages genealogical notes were written down, enabling us to reconstruct the family. The father of the main author, (Juda) Leyb Zalman, is remembered with a short notice after his death in 5547 (1787). The author himself was born in 5504 (1744), and he had a sister, Tserele (born 14 Cheshvan 5506,

<sup>722</sup> 'Luckily, I accidentally had still an old tin coffee kettle at home; with a few holes in it; I used to warm my coffee in it; it was my best household effect and moreover a heritage of my great-aunt; when I heard it went like that, I was not lazy; but broke the kettle in pieces; I could in any case not bring it to the pawnbroker; it is good when someone can help himself with what he has; it's only earthly material and I made six little cans out of it and I went with it to the market; I got six guilders and eighteen nickels for it; but I did not ask any extra charge from the people; I did not want to commit such a sin.' Prinz, *Kronik*, 8v.

<sup>723</sup> Jacob Shatzky, 'Di letste shprotsungen fun der yiddisher shprakh un literatur in Holland', *Yivo Bleter* 10 (1936) 232-265, there 254.

<sup>724</sup> Shatzky, 'Letzte shprotsungen', 256-257; Shmeruk, 'Historical songs', 156-157.

9 November 1745), and a brother: Menashe. The death of Menahem Mendele on 3 Iyar 5550 (17 April 1790) – and his burial one day later - is reported on the back of foliopage 40 by his son Zelig ben Menahem Mendele. On the back of the book cover one more name is mentioned, of which the relationship to the family is not clear, and surprisingly in Dutch, with Latin characters: ‘Amst.& den 17 mije 1763 Abr. Franz. den Jong’ (Amsterdam, 17 May 1763).<sup>725</sup>

Although we do not know much about the author of *Menahem Zion* and his family members, the most probable chroniclers, the manuscript offers us an insight in the circles the family lived in. Menahem Mendele gave *derashot* in synagogues and for hevrot, like the hevra Lomdei bahurim. In his manuscript he also made notices of the *derashot* of others, people he must have been familiar with. He mentioned, for example, the Amsterdam dayyan Itsik Frankfort, the son of the famous publisher Shimon Frankfurter and brother to Amelander’s teacher Moses Frankfurter. But also R. Leyb Wanefrieden (Levi Alexander Ziskind from Wanfried, born 1727, he passed away in Amsterdam 1797), who was attached to the beth hamidrash Talmud Torah and gave regularly lectures (shi’urim) on Shabbat. In the same circles R. Ber (Barend) Hitelmacher (1696-1774), a teacher at the Lomdei Torah, could be positioned, just as Hirts Hammelburg, the son of the late Amsterdam dayyan Feis Hammelburg, who shared his father’s insights with Menahem Mendele.<sup>726</sup> The author, thus, functioned within the religious infrastructure of Ashkenazi Amsterdam. That becomes clear as well from a short text in memory of the late R. Gukher, who served in the *Dritt Shul*.<sup>727</sup>

The manuscript contains one more page with information about the family, written by Mendele ben Zelig Mendele Hazan. As the name already indicates, this Mendele served as a cantor in synagogue and was insulted by two residing parnassim and a few others. He wrote their names down in the manuscript, ‘as an eternal memory’ and in order that his children would never mingle with their offspring. The parnassim were Fisl ben Ephraim and Shalom Cohen, the others Ayzek ben Hirsh Polak, Jonah ben Eliezer Hirschel, Hayim ben Yom Eshbe, Hayim ben Leib Noah, Ephraim ben Hayim Shechs and David Eli ben Saul Minden.<sup>728</sup>

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<sup>725</sup> Menahem Mendele, *Menahem Zion*, reverse side of the cover; unnumbered first and second folio pages; numbered folio page 1v; 38v, 40v.

<sup>726</sup> Other names mentioned are: Ayzek Polak, Zemele Melamed, Meir Frank, Meir ben Abraham Frank ha-niqra (also called) R. Meir Krin, the Ga’on Ber Madsht, Hayim b”b (Braatbard?), Leib ben Hirts Levi, Ati Keesing, Hayim Melamed and Lipman Gobits; Menahem Mendele, *Menahem Zion*, 96r, 101v, 102r, 104r, 107r, 109r, 113r, 116r, 120r, 122r, 126r, 145r, 156r.

<sup>727</sup> Menahem Mendele, *Menahem Zion*, unnumbered first folio page, v.

<sup>728</sup> Menahem Mendele, *Menahem Zion*, 1v.

Whoever of the family wrote the chronicle fragments, he was raised in a traditional Ashkenazi family, close to the religious establishment, and must have had a solid Jewish education. The fragments themselves are too short to say much about the authors, but the manuscript as a whole gives a clear indication of their social background.

The last Amsterdam Yiddish chronicler was Bendit ben Ayzek Wing (1758-1812). He was related to one of the other chroniclers, Zalman ben Moshe Prinz. Prinz was the grandson of Bele Bendit Wing, who in turn was the sister of Bendit ben Ayzek's grandfather. They both thus shared a great-grandfather. Further, Zalman's brother, Jacob ben Moshe Prinz, also married within the Wing family. The strong sense of family identity and the importance of the extended family in early modern times, make it probable that both chroniclers have known each other. Maybe even Prinz' engagement with historiography stimulated Wing to do the same for his own period.

Like Prinz and Braatbard, Wing grew up in an Amsterdam Ashkenazi family. His great-grandfather, Bendit Jacob Winnig, settled in the city in the seventeenth century. The family name was spelled in different ways, Winnig, Wienek and Wing all were in use. The confusion only ended when in 1811 everyone was required to register with a fixed surname, and the family adopted the name Benjamins. The background of the family, before settling in Amsterdam, is unknown. The final name Wing might indicate that they came from the German village of Windecken. That is at least the background of the same family name in Frankfurt am Main, from where many Jews emigrated to Amsterdam.<sup>729</sup>

Wing was born to Isaac (Ayzek) David Wienek (1731-1803) and Judith Mozes Levie-Content (1730-1805).<sup>730</sup> He was their eldest son, next to three more sons, Leizer (Eliaser, 1760-1822), Hayim (Hijman, born 1763), and Hirts (Hartog; 1762-1836), and a sister, Ester (1766-1839). The family was rather well to do, mother Judith brought into the marriage a dowry of no less than fl. 888,-. Father Ayzek, on his turn, bought in 1783 at a public sale the seat in the women's section of the synagogue which had thus far been in his father's hands, for fl. 280,-. That the family buried their loved ones at Muiderberg, instead of Zeeburg, is one more indication of their relatively prosperous economic position.<sup>731</sup>

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<sup>729</sup> Jits van Straten, Jan Berns, Harmen Snel, *Joodse achternamen in Amsterdam 1669-1850, een inventarisatie en een interpretatie/ Jewish surnames in Amsterdam 1669-1850, an inventarisation and an interpretation* (Bennekom 2002) 137, 212; cf. A. Dietz, *Stammbuch der Frankfurter Juden* (Frankfurt am Main 1910).

<sup>730</sup> See for the family genealogy: <http://akevoth.org/genealogy/ashkenazi/7702.htm> and related pages (consulted 28 June 2010); in addition genealogical material from the chronicle is used.

<sup>731</sup> [http://stenenarchief.nl/genealogie/gezin.php?id=F4585&hoofdpersoon=I6641&chosensize=50&direction=0&screen\\_mode=STAR](http://stenenarchief.nl/genealogie/gezin.php?id=F4585&hoofdpersoon=I6641&chosensize=50&direction=0&screen_mode=STAR) (consulted 28 June 2010).

In 1785 Bendit married Ester Philip de Jongh (1762-1821), a daughter of the influential Liepman ben Wolf Rintel (Philip de Jongh).<sup>732</sup> Together they got three children, David (1788-1815), Elkan (1790-1815)<sup>733</sup> and Mozes (1795- ). Mozes would continue the family after the early death of his brothers. Mozes' son, likewise called Mozes Benjamins, was the one who donated the chronicle to the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana on instigation of Meijer Marcus Roest. In 1811 the Wing family lived at Rapenburgerstraat 10, in the middle of the Amsterdam Jewish quarter. Wing's brother Leizer, who remained unmarried, lived with the family.<sup>734</sup> Not long after adopting the new family name Bendit died. He was buried at Muiderberg on 14 Tishri 1812.

Wing was close to the center of power in Ashkenazi Amsterdam. Although he himself never became a parnas, via his family he was very well informed about what happened at the highest administrative level of the kehillah. Possibly he was in contact with his namesake, the parnas Bendit ben Leman Wing Khalfen (Chalfon). This family member, a grandson of family founder Bendit Jacob Wing, was very prominent in the kehillah. His nickname, Khalfen, indicated his trade: a money-changer.<sup>735</sup> But Wing could get his inside information much easier. Both his father-in-law and his two brothers-in-law served as parnassim. Liepman ben Wolf Rintel was, just as his father had been, in the years Wing wrote his chronicle one of the most prominent and influential parnassim. Gradually he transferred his position to his son Elchanan ben Liepman Rintel, also known under his civil name Elkan Philip de Jongh.<sup>736</sup> The sister of Wing's wife, Rozetta or Reitsche, married within the family, with Liepman ben Itsek Rintel. He was a parnas as well. Finally there was the Nijmegen family, who via Ester's mother was related to the Rintels. This family too had parnassim and people on other significant positions.

Wing, thus, had an extensive network among the elite of Ashkenazi Amsterdam. Neither he, nor his father or brothers, however, ever acquired positions as parnas or in the administration of the poor relief. They must have had a position just below the ruling establishment. Still they had own seats in the Great Synagogue and Wing once was an elector

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<sup>732</sup> MAA, DTB 755/251, 22 September 1785; both Wing and his wife signed in Latin script, an indication that his wife too enjoyed a pretty good education. Wing lived at the Rapenburgerstraat, his wife at the Zwanenburgwal, both in the Jewish neighbourhoods of the city.

<sup>733</sup> Elkan left a manuscript on Hebrew vocalisation, דיני האזרחות, Hs.Ros. 362 (Fuks nr. 468).

<sup>734</sup> Leizer was fully part of family life and gave his nephew Mozes on behalf of his bar mitzvah a seat in the Great Synagogue (1808); the certificate is kept as Hs.Ros.Pl. C-4 in the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana (Fuks nr. 661).

<sup>735</sup> Straten a.o., *Achternamen*, 158.

<sup>736</sup> Bart Wallet, *Nieuwe Nederlanders. De integratie van de joden in Nederland 1814-1851* (Amsterdam 2007) 33, 38, 47, 94, 149, 156, 160-161, 184, 186, 251.



for the selection of a new chief hazzan.<sup>737</sup> He described his brother Leizer as one of the intimi of the chief rabbi.<sup>738</sup> About himself, Wing once wrote that he had great influence among the poorer Jews.<sup>739</sup> Wing's own economic position is not clear, but he must have been active in business, since in his chronicle several times he made mention of the bankruptcy of Amsterdam business firms.<sup>740</sup>

Samuel Israel Mulder, who let Abraham Delaville write a copy of the chronicle for himself, gave in his introduction more inside information on the Wing family. He described both the Wings and the Rintels as staunch Orangists. They also abhorred the activities of the progressive Jews, who acquired emancipation of the Jews and founded the *Naye Kille*. Wing's brothers Hirts and Leizer were known for their struggle against the *Naye Kille*, and the three brothers remained hostile to its former members also after the reunification of the kehillah. Wing lived close by the Ashkenazi synagogue complex, in the so-called Vinkebuurt.<sup>741</sup>

Mulder knew Wing's children well. The oldest one, David, he described as wise, pious and a lover of science (חכמה) and ethics (מוסר). Together with the second son, Elkan, Mulder studied after dinner the weekly Torah portion and other religious books (ספרים קדושים). The third son, Mozes, still alive during Mulder's time, became a parnas and the gabay of the hevra Gemilut Hasodim. Mozes lent the chronicle to Mulder, because he knew that the latter was interested in the history of the Ashkenazi kehillah.<sup>742</sup>

#### 7.4 Secondary intelligentsia

All Amsterdam chroniclers have a few characteristics in common. First, they grew up in Ashkenazi families with a history of several generations in Amsterdam. This explains their commitment with and concern for both the Ashkenazi kehillah and the city of Amsterdam. They also show a great familiarity with the political institutions of the Dutch and Batavian Republics, and a fine sense for the political and ideological differences within society. The

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<sup>737</sup> Wing, *Lezikorn*, Hs.Ros. 74, 13 August 1809.

<sup>738</sup> Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74: 9 February 1809.

<sup>739</sup> Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74: 30 November 1809.

<sup>740</sup> Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74-II: 301, 3 December 1810; 74-III: 328, 30 May 1811.

<sup>741</sup> Samuel Israel Mulder, 'Mavo' in: Wing, *Sefer jaldei ha-zman* (MAA, archive 714, inv.nr. 99), ii-iii; also Roest described Wing as a 'staunch adherent' to the Alte Kille in 'Kronijk 1795-1812', first issue; and likewise Shatzky, 'Letzte shprotsungen', 257: הגם ווינג איז זייער טענדענציעז און באלייכט דעם פראגרעסיווען פליגל פון דעם האלענדישן ידנטום מיט א פארביסענער איינזייטיקייט...

<sup>742</sup> Mulder, 'Mavo', iii.

character of their chronicles, for a large part city chronicles, could be explained by the shared Amsterdam background of the authors.

Second, the chroniclers show all that they had a proper traditional Jewish education, which was more than primary education at the *bedarim*. They were all well versed in the main sources of the Jewish tradition and had more than just a basic knowledge of the Hebrew language. But next to a Jewish education, they also enjoyed at least a basic education in Dutch. They signed their marriage acts in Latin script, used Dutch sentences in Latin script or in Hebrew characters in their chronicles and used Dutch sources – as the next paragraph will show. Just like Amelander they combined traditional Jewish knowledge with a familiarity with Dutch culture, while choosing to write in Yiddish for the majority of the Ashkenazi community.<sup>743</sup>

Third, their economic positions are also telling. Braatbard and Kosman were both working in the Jewish book industry, in positions where they came in contact with a large variety of sources as well as contemporary intellectuals. Wing, and probably Braatbard in a later stage, was active in business, while Prinz was the only one doing manual labour as a cooper. All of them had a more or less secure economic position, with Prinz as the only possible exception, as becomes clear from his familiarity with the pawnbroker. Kosman and Wing both belonged to prominent Ashkenazi families, with important networks, although their political and ideological positions were quite different, while Kosman's circle was more enlightened and Wing's more traditional. Important, however, to notice, neither Kosman nor Wing ever entered the small class of the ruling Ashkenazi elite themselves as *parnassim*, although they had many among their family members. All of the chroniclers wrote their histories next to their regular positions.

These characteristics of the Amsterdam Yiddish chroniclers give us a clear indication of their position within the social stratification of Ashkenazi Amsterdam.<sup>744</sup> They had acquired knowledge with was part of the domain of the traditional – religious and administrative – elites, but never acquired a comparable position. None of the chroniclers served as a rabbi or as a yeshiva teacher, or ever became a *parnas*. Each one of them had to be satisfied with a

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<sup>743</sup> The chronicles provide further evidence for Aptroot's thesis: 'In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Dutch Jews were more or less conversant with Dutch, which led to an increasing Hollandisation of Dutch Yiddish. (...) While most Jews, for better or for worse, spoke Dutch, few of them learned to read or write it.' The chroniclers were in that sense, with their Dutch knowledge, in the vanguard of the Ashkenazi community. Aptroot, 'Yiddish, Dutch and German', 204.

<sup>744</sup> The same formation of an alternative elite in Poland is described by Elhanan Reiner, 'The Ashkenazi elite at the beginning of the modern era: manuscript versus printed text' in: Gershon David Hundert ed., *Jews in early modern Poland* [Polin 10] (London 1997) 85-98.

position just under the traditional elites, within the modern and expanding branche of the book industry or in business. They, however, did not give up their intellectual aspirations, but used these for a different objective as they would have done when part of the elites. While the traditional religious elite wrote in Hebrew and primarily in the genres of halakhah, kabbalah and musar, they opted for the genre of historiography and chose to write in Yiddish.

The Amsterdam chroniclers, therefore, could be described as a typical secondary intelligentsia or elite. Characteristic for a secondary elite is that it has ties both upward to the ruling elites and downward to broader groups within a society. They are not part of the central ruling groups, but ‘maintain positive solidary orientations to the center and are not entirely alienated from the preexisting elites’, while at the same time they are close to ‘some of the broader groups of the society’.<sup>745</sup> As such they are well suited to function as an in-between between elites and wider strata of the population and often function as ‘bearers of sociopolitical transformation’.<sup>746</sup> Unlike the traditional elites, they do not have vested interests in the existing situation, while at the same time they are driven by a wish to change things not only for themselves but as well for broader groups in society. Members of a secondary elite are often caught in processes of change and differentiation, which was a typical condition of the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>747</sup>

The Yiddish chronicles of eighteenth century Amsterdam are the product of authors who on the one hand had partly a training and education through which they were closer to the religious and/or administrative elites – although without halakhic and kabbalistic knowledge –, but on the other hand did not have a fitting position. They were employed just below the elites, and in social and economic respects much closer to the broader strata of the Amsterdam Ashkenazi community. The unique socio-economic position made them best suited to be active on the borders between elite and popular cultures and between Dutch and Ashkenazi societies. The choice of both historiography and Yiddish fit well in this framework. Historiography, and especially contemporary history writing, was the perfect genre to bring together their interest in community and society and their wish to share their insights with the vast majority of the Ashkenazi community. Yiddish was best suited for this task. Members of the elites above them wrote in Hebrew, the lingua franca of the Jewish religious and intellectual world in which they participated. For them there was no pressing need to communicate in

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<sup>745</sup> S.N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, change, and modernity* (New York etc. 1973) 41-42, 346.

<sup>746</sup> Eisenstadt, *Tradition*, 346.

<sup>747</sup> Eisenstadt, *Tradition*, 91.

Yiddish, since they had their own networks and writing in Yiddish was in those circles even considered to be of lesser status. The secondary elite, however, although able to communicate in Hebrew, choose to write in Yiddish, the daily language of the broader community, to which they were socio-economically closer. The transformative capacities of the secondary intelligentsia had in this way an effect on the social status of Yiddish, becoming the language of the historiographical genre and an agent in the communication policies of the secondary elite.

The role of the successor chroniclers as a secondary intelligentsia is congruous with the analysis in the former chapter of Amelander as an intermediary between the Hebrew, Dutch and Yiddish domains. Although Amelander as an editor and author of a series of books had a slightly different position than his 'epigones', he was also an in-between between elites and community. Amelander's position was as a Jewish intellectual a bit more successful than Braatbard's, Prinz' and Wing's, and may be comparable to Kosman's, he still remained outside the formal structures of the ruling groups. His relatively better position might have served as a stimulus for his successors to engage in the same endeavour. Wittingly or unwittingly they were all transforming Ashkenazi culture and bridging gaps between various groups, while at the same time introducing new knowledge and new horizons.

#### *7.5 The sources for contemporary history writing*

Between Amelander and his successors there was, however, one marked difference. While Amelander wrote about centuries of history and on Jews in different geographical realms, his successors all concentrated on *Zeitgeschichte*, contemporary history, and restricted themselves to local and national history, with only some attention to international, European history. Amelander could use the rather small, but still significant corpus of Hebrew historiography, next to Dutch history books. The chroniclers, in their turn, because they were writing on their own time, did not have comparable texts to their disposal and had therefore to use different materials. The sources used by the chroniclers could be divided in three categories: written Jewish sources, written general sources and finally oral history and own experiences. These materials were often used as complementary sources, although there was a clear hierarchical

ordering which favored written over oral sources. Yet all sources, Jewish and non-Jewish, written and oral, were interacting and part of one 'information society'.<sup>748</sup>

### 7.5.1 *Written Jewish sources*

In the first category there was not much material available to the chroniclers. Braatbard only mentions letters from Jews in Frankfurt am Main directed to the Amsterdam Jewish leaders. The first of these letters told about locusts who darkened the air completely and finally settled on a field just outside the city. Only by using guns farmers and citizens achieved to expel them after two or three days. In his chapter based on this letter Braatbard gives a seldom insight in how he worked:

איין בריב הב איך הערן לייאנן בייא איין קצ[י]ן אויז פראנקפורט אן דיא מיין[.]. דיא בריב האב איך  
ניט קענן נאך לאזין אום זיא אין איין בוך צו זעצן[.]. דר ווייל איך אלי נייא זאכן הב אויף איין בוך גשריבן.<sup>749</sup>

Braatbard, in most cases, tried to copy the material he could get, including letters, and wrote it down in a book, most probably the source book for his chronicle. In this case he only heard the letter read aloud – on 13 October 1749 - in the house of an Amsterdam Jewish leader, but was unable to copy.

More letters arrived from Frankfurt, telling the Amsterdam Jewish leaders about the revolt in the local Jewish community in 1749. Jews broke in the *kaalshtub*, the community meeting room, and drove out their parnassim by force. Braatbard was amazed by this revolutionary event, and wondered why this exactly happened. A few chapters later he returns to the topic, since a lot of new letters had arrived in Amsterdam on the *makblonkes*, discord, in the Frankfurt Jewish community. The cause appeared to be a tax of a million guilders which the authorities levied on the Jewish community, which the parnassim had to raise from among the members.<sup>750</sup> Kosman at the start of his chapter narrates about one letter arriving from the

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<sup>748</sup> Cf. Robert Darnton, 'An early information society: news and the media in eighteenth-century Paris', *American Historical Review* 105 (2000) 1-35.

<sup>749</sup> 'I heard a letter from Frankfurt am Main read aloud by a leader. I could not reread the letter to place it in a book, as I have written down all new things in a book.' Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 241a.

<sup>750</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapters 241b, 249; the struggles were part of a larger series of battles within the Frankfurt Jewish community over the division of power, which was concentrated in the hands of a very small oligarchy; Dean Phillip Bell, *Jewish identity in early modern Germany. Memory, power and community* (Aldershot, Burlington VT 2007) 69.

Prague Jews in Amsterdam on their expulsion in 1745, requesting the help of their co-religionists.<sup>751</sup> Prinz, in his turn, did not use any Jewish written material for his chronicle.

Wing was a different case. First, he lived in a period in which the Amsterdam Jewish community was highly politicized and the battle between the various groups was, among other things, fought out in the public sphere via many publications. Second, he was close to the ruling establishment of the Ashkenazi kehillah and thus enjoyed entrance to the community archives. Wing thus used the publications of the enlightened society Felix Libertate, the series of pamphlets titled *Uri un' Hirsch* by Joachim of Embden, and the minute books of the Ashkenazi kehillah.<sup>752</sup> The first two materials, respectively written in Dutch and Yiddish, were widely on sale in the Amsterdam Jewish quarters. Of the series of pamphlets, by the way, no copies are left and Wing is the only source mentioning them. Another series of competing pamphlets, the *Diskursn* of the *Naye Kille* and *Alte Kille*, in turn were not used by Wing, although they enjoyed widespread popularity.<sup>753</sup> Next to the minute books of the kehillah to which Wing through his family members must have acquired access, he also used publications of the Amsterdam chief rabbi Moses Saul Loewenstamm. This must have been rather easily accessible for Wing, since he could have taken notice of these in synagogue when they were announced publicly, or via his brother who was intimate to the chief rabbi.<sup>754</sup>

Letters as sources for history writing were a new feature in early modern historiography. They were not only read aloud in public, but also copied and sometimes even printed as 'Neue Zeitungen'.<sup>755</sup> In all these forms, they served as material for chroniclers – also in Ashkenazi Amsterdam. The letters used by Braatbard and Kosman as well provide some insight in the information networks Amsterdam Ashkenazim were embedded in. Just like Amelander before, Frankfurt am Main and Prague are the Jewish communities with which most direct contact is maintained.

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<sup>751</sup> Kosman, *JY* ed. 1771.

<sup>752</sup> Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74: 17 March 1795; 2 April 1795; 18 October 1796, 19 October 1810. Also a governmental decree translated into Yiddish and printed by the Proops firm was consulted: Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74: 1 and 5 June 1802.

<sup>753</sup> A representative selection of these pamphlets are published and translated by Jozeph Michman and Marion Aprotroot in: *Storm in the community. Yiddish polemical pamphlets of Amsterdam Jewry 1797-1798* (Cincinnati 2002).

<sup>754</sup> Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74: 1 September 1810. Once Wing got an extract from M.S. Alexander, secretary to the Chief Consistory, of a letter of protesting Jewish school teachers, which testify that Wing had also access to the national Jewish organizational structures; Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74: 10 July 1810.

<sup>755</sup> Silvia Serena Tschopp, 'Wie aus Nachrichten Geschichte wird: Die Bedeutung publizistischer Quellen für die Augsburger Chronik des Georg Kölderer' in: William Layher and Gerhild Scholz Williams eds., *Consuming News. Newspapers and Print Culture in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800)* [*Daphnis* 37 (2008) 1-2] (Amsterdam/New York 2008) 33-78, there 56-58.

### 7.5.2 Written non-Jewish sources

The second category was much more important. All chroniclers used newspapers extensively. The Dutch Republic was a European centre of the press, where many local and international newspapers were printed and spread or exported. In the newspapers national and international news was provided, next to business and sea news and advertisements. The newspapers only gave the facts, acquired via a network of correspondents and by copying without hesitations from other newspapers, and did not give analyses or commentaries to the news. In Amsterdam, since 1672, all newspapers were centralized and came under the authority of the municipality and fused together into one title: the *Amsterdamsche Courant*. Three times a week the newspaper came out, on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Concurrence came from newspapers from other cities, like Haarlem and The Hague, which were famed for international news and news from the States General and the stadtholder's court respectively. In Amsterdam as well French, English and Italian newspapers were printed and distributed from there.<sup>756</sup> Only for a short period of time, as far as we know, there were Jewish newspapers in Yiddish, the *Dinstagishe un' Fraytagishe Kurantn* (1686-1687), the one printed by Kosman (although mainly dealing with news from the book industry): the *Amsterdamse Yudishe Vokhlikhe Nays Far Tseyler* of 1776, and later on the *Wochtenlikhe barikhtn* (1781).<sup>757</sup>

The Amsterdam Yiddish chroniclers could easily get newspapers, they were on sale and to read in many places in the city. Those chroniclers working in the book industry often were able to read the newspapers at work, since many publishing firms were at the same time bookshops. Nowhere the chroniclers make any mention of specific Jewish newspapers, and when they do name newspapers they are the Dutch. Braatbard no less than 16 times explicitly mentioned the newspaper as his source, while for many other chapters he must have used this resource as well.<sup>758</sup> The newspaper was his main source for news from outside Amsterdam, whether from the rest of the Dutch Republic or international. For example, Braatbard's narration of the battle between the French and the Dutch in the southern provinces is followed via the newspaper, just as this is the source for the fact that the peace negotiations

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<sup>756</sup> D.H. Couv e, *Van couranten en courantiere uit de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam 1951).

<sup>757</sup> Hilde Pach, 'Die Amsterdamer „Dinstagishe un' Fraytagishe Kurantn“ (1686-1687): wie j disch war die erste jiddische Zeitung?' in: Susanne Marten-Finnis and Markus Winkler eds., *Die j dische Presse im europ ischen Kontext, 1686-1990* (Bremen 2006) 17-25; idem, 'In Hamburg a High German Jew was murdered': the representation of foreign Jews in the *Dinstagishe un' fraytagishe kuranten* (Amsterdam, 1686-1687)' in: Kaplan, *Dutch intersection*, 213-223; Shatzky, 'Letzte shprotzungen', 254.

<sup>758</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapters 40, 56, 87, 165 (two times), 144, 145, 185, 193, 216, 223, 239, 246, 270, 271, 273.

were successful and that the French would leave the territory of the Dutch Republic.<sup>759</sup> How important the newspaper was for Braatbard becomes clear when he concludes a chapter on a severe storm in Amsterdam and surroundings and its devastating consequences, with:

אלי אונגליקן קען איך אום מיגליך שרייבן. דען די קראנט האט אלו ניט שרייבן קענן:<sup>760</sup>

Prinz used the newspaper as well as source, although he mentioned it only once in his short chronicle when he wrote that after the humiliating arrest of princess Wilhelmina at Goejanverwellesluis by the Patriots, her brother, the Prussian king, immediately sent his troops to help the Orangists in their civil war.<sup>761</sup>

Wing used for his large chronicle different newspapers, although he only scarcely mentions the name of the newspapers.<sup>762</sup> But that he used more than one, we know from his April 1797 entry where he tells that his account rests on two newspapers. Also on 4 April 1810 Wing informs his readers that he used several newspapers.<sup>763</sup> Wing mentioned, in contrast to Braatbard and Prinz, both Dutch and international newspapers. The Dutch newspaper he mentioned explicitly was the *Koninklijke Courant* (Royal Newspaper).<sup>764</sup> This newspaper, which was published by the government, had in the course of time due to the changing political situation different names. Wing notes every change of the name in his chronicle.<sup>765</sup> To what extent Wing used the newspapers as his source is clear from that his telling that an extra issue is published, so that he could add new information.<sup>766</sup>

The principal foreign newspaper mentioned is the *Hoff courant* from London, sometimes also named *Hoff gazēt*.<sup>767</sup> In periods with a normal post service with London this newspaper came directly to Amsterdam. In periods when this connection was interrupted, the

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<sup>759</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapters 165, 223.

<sup>760</sup> 'It is impossible to write about all misfortunes, because the newspaper could not write everything.' Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 87.

<sup>761</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 2v.

<sup>762</sup> E.g. Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 15 May 1805; 11 June 1806; 19 June 1806; 20 April 1808; 11 October 1808; Winter 1809; 17 May 1809; 5 June 1809; 18 July 1809; 31 October 1809; 2 January 1810; 23 March 1810; 4 April 1810; 9 April 1810; 3 July 1810.

<sup>763</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: April 1797; 4 April 1810.

<sup>764</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 24 September 1808; 22 July 1809; 7 November 1809; 25 February 1810; 4 April 1810. He also used the newspapers of Lieve van Ollefen and Redelinkhuizen, the first one being the *Nationaale Bataafsche Courant* (1795-1797); Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: April-May 1797.

<sup>765</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 20 July 1810; 21 July 1810.

<sup>766</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 13 June 1800; 2 June 1802.

<sup>767</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 17 October 1798; 12 November 1805; 31 July 1808.



newspaper followed another route. In 1807 and 1809, for example, it arrived via Vienna.<sup>768</sup> Most probably Wing must have meant the *London Gazette*, the official British court newspaper, which started in 1665. The newspaper had as well a French edition, titled *La Gazette de Londres*.<sup>769</sup> Wing, thus, did not have to read English in order to read this newspaper. But, in that case, of course, he had to be able to read French. Most likely, however, is that Wing himself never read the British newspaper, but only copied from the Dutch newspapers the entries they took over. For example, Wing's citation of the newspaper on the peace between England and Spain in 1808 could be found in the major Dutch newspapers, with reference to the English newspaper.<sup>770</sup>

Once Wing mentions explicitly a French newspaper: on 14 July 1810 he narrates that the contents of the decree of annexation of Holland to France is published in the *Moniteur* from Paris of 10 July.<sup>771</sup> He must have meant the *Gazette nationale ou le moniteur universel* (1795-1810), continued as the *Moniteur universel* (1811-1848). This newspaper was in then the most important French journal. In the Dutch newspapers often material was taken from the *Moniteur*, and Wing in turn took it over in his chronicle, as he did with the 14 July 1810 entry.<sup>772</sup>

Letters were another important source, often the chroniclers tell about letters arriving in the city full of information about what happened elsewhere. In some instances these letters were published in the newspapers, but in other cases they circulated among the Amsterdam population. Braatbard, for example, gave account of the severe winter of 1749 and its effect in Hamburg, which was so large that he would not have believed it were it not out of such a reliable source, a letter from Hamburg.<sup>773</sup> Another letter came in the same year from The Hague, narrating how the Turkish ambassador tried to murder a Jew but was eventually taken in the act and consequently expelled from the Dutch Republic.<sup>774</sup> Also letters from France, about the festivities in Paris in February 1749, were used by Braatbard.<sup>775</sup>

Wing used letters as well, but in contrast to Braatbard, he had full access to them. He quotes from letters of the Amsterdam burgomaster or The Hague ministers directed at the

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<sup>768</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 2 April 1807; 24 February 1809.

<sup>769</sup> K. Baschwitz, *De krant door alle tijden* (2nd ed.; Amsterdam n.y.) 87.

<sup>770</sup> See. e.g. *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant*, 2 August 1808.

<sup>771</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 14 July 1810.

<sup>772</sup> Wing must have had at least had some basic knowledge of the French language. His transcription of French words in Hebrew script, shows clearly that he was familiar with the French pronunciation of the words. For example, he writes פלע for *palais* and קאהר for *corps*. On the *Moniteur*, see: Baschwitz, *De krant*, 68-76. On the 14 July 1810 entry: *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant*, 14 July 1810.

<sup>773</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 205.

<sup>774</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 237.

<sup>775</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 207.

Ashkenazi parnassim.<sup>776</sup> A letter to his relative Bendit Wing Khalfen he even cited in full in Dutch.<sup>777</sup> Also for international political developments he used letters, but most of these letters were published in the newspapers and were as such not a new and unique source used by Wing.<sup>778</sup>

The same could be said of the extensive use by Wing of the bulletins of the French army, official periodicals through which the most important military developments were communicated to the population of France and its puppet states.<sup>779</sup> The army was very keen in organizing a continuous stream of information during the campaigns in Spain (1808-1809), the Habsburg Empire (1809) and in Russia (1812). They were issued by the French head quarters, which changed every time again. Wing noticed when the bulletins arrived via Paris in Amsterdam and used them abundantly.<sup>780</sup> Even when he did not find useful information in them, he made mention of it. The series from Spain comprised 33 bulletins, the one from Austria 30 ones. For the war in Russia Wing used 12 bulletins in Hs.Ros. 74, and one more in Hs.Ros. 534-7.<sup>781</sup> Since the bulletins were translated and published in the Dutch newspapers, that was the most easy way for Wing to have had access to this important source of information. The *Fenille politique du département du Zuiderzee/ Staatkundig dagblad van het Departement der Zuiderzee*, which was the official newspaper and continued the Royal Newspaper, even published the bulletins in French and Dutch.<sup>782</sup>

There were, however, more official publications used by the chroniclers. Both municipal and national authorities issued placards, ordering concrete measures in response to political and economic developments in national and city life. These placards were not only read aloud from the city hall but also hung in different places in the city, including the Jewish quarters.<sup>783</sup> The chroniclers took notice of these placards, as did Braatbard who told that in 1746 first via the newspaper, but thereafter also with a placard the Amsterdam population was

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<sup>776</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 26 June 1798; 26 May 1808.

<sup>777</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 26 June 1798.

<sup>778</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 1 April 1809; 20 July 1809; 4 August 1809; 31 July 1810.

<sup>779</sup> Napoléon and Alexandre Goujon, *Bulletins officiels de la Grande Armée* (2 Vols.; Paris 1822). A modern edition: Napoléon, *Proclamations orders du jour et bulletins de la grande armée* (Paris 1964).

<sup>780</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 7 May 1809.

<sup>781</sup> Wing, *Lezijkorn*, 74: 22 November 1808 until 7 March 1809; 7 May 1809 until 10 August 1809; 11 July 1812 until 26 August 1812; Hs.Ros. 534-7: 9 September 1812.

<sup>782</sup> See e.g.: *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant* 26 November 1808; 10 December 1808; 27 December 1808; 24 June 1809; *Fenille politique du département du Zuiderzee/ Staatkundig dagblad van het Departement der Zuiderzee* 11 July 1812; 12 July 1812; 13 July 1812; 14 July 1812; 15 July 1812 etc.

<sup>783</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 201.

ordered to pay extra taxes of 2% on one's possessions.<sup>784</sup> Wing did the same and even sometimes cited them *in extenso*.<sup>785</sup>

Two more general sources are mentioned. Braatbard was the only one of the chroniclers using pictorial material. When on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1752 William IV was buried in Delft, all over the Dutch Republic printed pictures were sold, giving those who were not present – among them Braatbard – an idea of how the funeral was conducted.<sup>786</sup> Prinz, in turn, made mention of pamphlets printed by the Patriots which were hung in the windows of the Amsterdam printing shops, where the public could read them.<sup>787</sup>

### 7.5.3 Oral sources and own experiences

Next to the newspapers, the third and final category was the most important source for the chroniclers: oral history and their own experiences.<sup>788</sup> All of them assure their readers many times that they were themselves present and witnessed everything and thus their accounts are reliable. Braatbard, in this way, narrates how a pick-pocket acted on the ice during winter time, about horrific public executions, festive illuminations in the city and the revolt against the tax collectors.<sup>789</sup> Braatbard was continuously on search for information, in order to include this in his chronicle. He was so even on Shabbat, as demonstrated by what he told about what happened on 14 September 1748. Prince William IV was in Amsterdam to settle issues with the city authorities. When Braatbard heard the rumor that some of the present magistrates would be set out of their offices, he went out to find out what was going to happen. He saw at Rusland, an Amsterdam street, the carriages of the magistrates who did not step out and stayed inside. At around noon, Braatbard told, everyone ran towards the city hall at Dam square where it was announced which magistrates were deposed and which new ones were given the

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<sup>784</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 56; see also chapters 206 and 253.

<sup>785</sup> Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74: 10 September 1799; 28 November 1805; 17 April 1808; 29 July 1809; 14 July 1810.

<sup>786</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, 281.

<sup>787</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 2v.

<sup>788</sup> These autobiographical references make the chronicles sometimes nearing egodocuments, if broadly defined, but the fact that these references nearly always deal with impersonal documentation and barely deal with personal thoughts and feelings gives them a distinct character; cf. J.H. Chajes, 'Accounting for the self. Preliminary generic-historical reflections on early modern Jewish egodocuments', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 95 (2005) 1, 1-15. They also differ from contemporary family chronicles and memoirs; Debra Kaplan, 'The self in social context: Asher ha-Levi of Reichshofen's *Sefer Zikbronot*', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 97 (2007) 2, 210-236; Robert Liberles, "'She sees that her merchandise is good, and her lamp is not extinguished at nighttime': Glikl's memoir as historical source', *Nashim* 7 (2004) 11-27.

<sup>789</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapters 46, 53, 95, 114, 120, 124. More eye witness accounts by Braatbard in the chapters 13, 19, 20, 41, 68, 71, 87, 140, 145, 146, 162, 208, 213, 218, 240, 266b, 271.

positions. Hereafter the lucky ones stepped out of their carriages and went to the 'Herenlogement', the hotel where the prince of Orange stayed, to thank him wholeheartedly. They formed a procession, which took half an hour. All the time Braatbard was watching and later recorded everything for his chronicle.<sup>790</sup>

Braatbard's role as a walking collector of information is both his strength and his weakness. His chronicle is unique in the sense that it provides a perspective on Amsterdam society and politics from the position of a regular Amsterdam inhabitant and an Ashkenazi Jew. He recorded what he saw in a very vivid way and gives us an idea of a popular understanding of what happened in the city. There were, however, limitations for Braatbard. His knowledge was often restricted to the public domain. A few times he narrated what happened on the streets, but as soon as the prince of Orange, the authorities or the bailiff went inside the city hall, their offices or houses Braatbard could not tell what took place inside. Only now and then via newspapers he later could add this information.<sup>791</sup> Once he was unable to narrate what happened, when, at the funeral of the admiral Hendrik Gravé in the New Church, the multitude of people made it impossible for Braatbard to enter the church in order to give account of the service.<sup>792</sup>

The chronicle fragments in *Menahem Zion* are both based on personal experiences, giving eyewitness accounts of the celebrations in the Ashkenazi kehillah when William V was elevated to the position of stadtholder in 1776 and the weather conditions in the beginnings of 1779.<sup>793</sup> Kosman's chapter barely provides any information about political developments or daily life in Amsterdam, but concentrates on the main events such as inaugurations of synagogues and delegations of the *parnassim* to the States General or the family of Orange. Kosman neatly gives the names of the delegates and short descriptions of the meetings with the authorities. He could have noted this information since 1743, but it is also very well possible that he used his network among the *parnassim* to acquire this information.<sup>794</sup>

Prinz wrote from his own experiences as well. He described how the war between the Patriots and the Orangists had an effect on daily life in Amsterdam, and often wrote out of the perspective of 'us Jews' or 'us Amsterdammers'. Specific for Prinz is that he more than the

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<sup>790</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 152.

<sup>791</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapters 157, 213.

<sup>792</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 218.

<sup>793</sup> Menahem Mendel, *Menahem Zion*, i, iv.

<sup>794</sup> Kosman, *JY* ed. 1771.

other chroniclers wrote about the emotions evoked by the events. Characteristic is the following passage on erev Yom Kippur 1787:

דיא זעלביגן צייט ווארן מיר יהודים אין אמשטרדם אין בטריפטן נארהייט גיוועזן  
אונ' בפרט דיא ערב יום כפור תקמ"ח דא האבן מיר אנדרשט ניקש גיזעהן דיא גאנצין טאג  
אלש קאנונין פֿר ביא רייטן אויף וועגינז דש דיא ערד האט דער פֿון גיציטרט  
אונ' מיר ווארן אין בטריפטן אנגשטן<sup>795</sup>

The war preparations of the Patriots in the city, with the Prussian armies nearing Amsterdam, made the Amsterdam Jews scared and Prinz recorded how he and his fellow Jews feared. Fear is the emotion Prinz wrote about most, but when finally the Orangists won he expressed the happiness among Amsterdam Jewry.<sup>796</sup> Prinz then tried to obtain Orange paper, which was sold by Itsek Papirman on Vlooienburg, in order to decorate his house. But when he approached the shop he saw a long line of people and found out that the prices were exorbitant. He was not able to acquire any of the new Orange paper and had to make do with some Orange line.<sup>797</sup> Next to emotions, Prinz wrote about how the city looked like during the period in which the gates were closed and outside the city the fields were inundated in order to keep the Prussians away.<sup>798</sup>

Wing must have experienced much of what he described in his chronicle himself, but yet he is very reserved in writing about his own presence or involvement. In 1798 he wrote that the parade of cannoneers was nice to see.<sup>799</sup> A parade of, among others, Jewish cavalermen he witnessed himself as well.<sup>800</sup> At more of such public events Wing was present and he took notice.<sup>801</sup>

Closer came, however, events in his own life circle. Thus he narrates about a winter shower in summer 1801:

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<sup>795</sup> 'In that time we Amsterdam Jews were in great fear./ and especially the day before Yom Kippur we saw the whole day nothing else/ but artillery passing by on horse carts, that the earth was trembling./ And we were sad and frightened.' Prinz, *Kronik*, 3v.

<sup>796</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 1v, 2v, 3v, 4v, 7v.

<sup>797</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 7v-7r.

<sup>798</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 4r, 4v, 6r.

<sup>799</sup> Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74: 4 March 1798.

<sup>800</sup> Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74: 19 May 1798.

<sup>801</sup> Wing, *Lezikorn*, 74: 19 June 1798.

די גרעשטע פר וואונדרונג וואהר פרייטאג אום יא שלעק האב מיט מיין אייגן הענד פר איין מיראקעל דש איז פון מיין דאק ארונטר גנומן אונ' וואהר נאך זא שטייף אונ' קאלט וויא מיטטיל אין ווינטר.<sup>802</sup>

The entries on marriages and deaths in the family are of course based on Wing's own account.<sup>803</sup> The same is true of the entry on the reprimand Wing got from the Minister of Police and Justice because of his resistance against the conscription of Jews in the army.<sup>804</sup> The most personal account we get when both sons of Wing are summoned for first the draft and thereafter the examination for military service. His youngest son, Elhanan, achieved, after being selected, to avoid military service because of his weak health. David, however, drew the second take a place by lot and only after much effort and stress was allowed to launch a substitute, who would serve in the army instead of him. That Wing was able to arrange a substitute for his son, indicates the relative wealth of the family.<sup>805</sup> These events were, however, the only times Wing deviated from his primarily political interest and offered some autobiographical details, which says much about the impact these events had on the author.<sup>806</sup>

Next to own experiences, conversations with eyewitnesses were important sources to the chroniclers. Braatbard was not only informed about the events in Frankfurt am Main via letters, but as well through conversations with pedlars who came from there to Amsterdam.<sup>807</sup> Also about the events in Prague in 1745, when the Brandenburg king conquered the city, Braatbard was informed by refugees from that city.<sup>808</sup> Another important source to Braatbard must have been his brother, Samuel Braatbard, whom he mentioned only once. In Amsterdam the guilds protested, especially at times of economic recession, against the activities of Jews working in the same branche but outside the guilds. When one of these guilds, the cotton printers, organized a campaign against their Jewish colleagues, these gave voice to their dissent

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<sup>802</sup> 'The greatest miracle was Friday at 11 o'clock. With my own hands as a miracle I took the ice from my roof and it was just as hard and cold as in the middle of the winter.' Wing, *Lezjekom*, 74: 22 July 1801.

<sup>803</sup> Wing, *Lezjekom*, 74: 13 September 1803; 23 September 1804; 2 January 1805; 6 March 1805; 11-12 March 1806; 22 August 1807; 24 September 1808; 31 January 1810.

<sup>804</sup> Wing, *Lezjekom*, 74: 30 November 1809.

<sup>805</sup> Wing, *Lezjekom*, 74: 15 March 1811; 20 January 1812; 9 February 1812; 10 February 1812; 17 February 1812; 19 February 1812; 6 March 1812.

<sup>806</sup> The general lack in the chronicles of family history, autobiographical details, financial bookkeeping details, markedly differentiates these chronicles from contemporary diaries as analysed e.g. in: Jeroen Blaak, *Literacy in everyday life: reading and writing in early modern Dutch diaries* (Leiden 2009).

<sup>807</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 241b.

<sup>808</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 36, 45.

via four of their leaders, being one of them Samuel Braatbard. Through his brother the chronicler must have got inside information about the progress of their case.<sup>809</sup>

Wing must have had comparable conversations with his family members, providing him with unique inside information. An example is the speech his brother-in-law Elhanan Rintel gave on behalf of the Ashkenazi kehillah while they were received in audience by king Louis Napoleon on 30 August 1808. Wing gave a neat account of its contents. While he himself was not present, he could only have heard of what took place during the meeting via his brother-in-law.<sup>810</sup> Wing also spoke eyewitnesses of events, like a Brabant businessman who experienced a fire in an Amsterdam inn.<sup>811</sup>

More oral resources for the chroniclers were the announcements made by the town-criers, going through the city with news on order by the municipal authorities.<sup>812</sup> The Ashkenazi community also had such a crier, who went through the Jewish quarters for announcements. Prinz, for example, gives account of the kehillah-crier inviting everyone to go to synagogue for special instructions related to the political situation.<sup>813</sup> All chroniclers noticed rumors in the city, while at the same time staying cautious about the reliability of this source of information.<sup>814</sup> Sometimes, however, rumors were deliberately left out as they were not to be believed. Rumors stood for the chroniclers on the bottom of the 'Informationspyramid': they had to be checked and verified, preferably with written documentation.<sup>815</sup>

Since the chroniclers wrote more than Amelander did on political and military history, their sources were overwhelmingly non-Jewish. Especially the newspapers were an extremely rich source of information to them, next to letters, pamphlets and eyewitness accounts, either from themselves or others. The chroniclers used these sources altogether and as many as possible, as did many of the contemporary non-Jewish colleagues. They had, in the words of Benedikt Mauer, a 'kumulativ-additives Kommunikationsverständnis': in order to reach an account of past events that was as reliable as possible, they connected material from a variety of sources. In constructing their narrative they attached to some sources more reliability

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<sup>809</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 204.

<sup>810</sup> Wing, *Lezjkor*n, 74: 30 August 1808.

<sup>811</sup> Wing, *Lezjkor*n, 74: 15 February 1795.

<sup>812</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapters 234, 239.

<sup>813</sup> Prinz, *Kronik*, 2r.

<sup>814</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapters 44, 112, 118, 149, 150, 152, 178, 183, 222, 256, 258, 266a, 271, 278; Prinz, *Kronik*, 4r; Wing, *Lezjkor*n, 74: 30 March 1809; 22 May 1809.

<sup>815</sup> Braatbard, *Kornayk*, chapter 128; cf. Henk van Nierop, 'And yea shall hear of wars and rumours of wars'. Rumour and the revolt of the Netherlands' in: Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer eds., *Public opinion and changing identities in the early modern Netherlands. Essays in honour of Alastair Duke* (Leiden 2007) 69-86.

than others: written sources stood above oral ones, official documents stood higher in the 'Informationspyramid' than newspapers. A story became more credible, the more sources provided it, and the more it came from 'higher' qualified sources.<sup>816</sup> The relative position of the chroniclers within the Ashkenazi community was ultimately connected to their possibilities of verification. Wing, with many *parnassim* in his family, had access to more resources than Braatbard had, who had to restrict himself mainly to the public domain and was unable to provide inside information from within the authoritative bodies of both the Ashkenazi *kehillah* and the city.

#### 7.6 Conclusion: Amelander and his epigones

This chapter presented a corpus of Yiddish historiography mainly written in Amsterdam – with the exception of Trebitsch' *Qorot ha' itim* – as 'successor chronicles' to Amelander's *Sheyris Yisroel*. What can we say, in conclusion, about the relation between Amelander and these 'successor chronicles'?

First, there are different ways to continue an authoritative work. Amelander himself chose to present his history work as the second part of *Sefer Yosippom*, but none of his successors followed the same procedure. Kosman wrote an extra chapter and added that to a new edition of *Sheyris Yisroel*, thus attaching his own history work even closer to Amelander's magnum opus than his example did with *Yosippom*. Braatbard, Prinz and Trebitsch all wrote 'successor chronicles' starting where Amelander ended, in 1740, and connecting their work via the title with Amelander's. Braatbard named his chronicle *A Naye Kornayk*, Prinz opted for *Sheyris am koudesh*, and Trebitsch presented his *Qorot ha'itim* in the subtitle as the continuation of *Sheyris Yisroel*.

Wing's chronicle is only indirectly a successor chronicle to Amelander, since it starts in 1795 and does not continue where Amelander or one of the other chroniclers stopped. He was, however, also influenced by *Sheyris Yisroel* and connected his chronicle in a more literary way to his example. Wing referred in the opening of his chronicle to the winter of 1740, a very severe one as Amelander wrote at the end of his book, and compared it with the winter of 1795. Braatbard, like Wing, also opened with the winter of 1740. Both Braatbard's and Wing's chronicles in this way continue Amelander's narrative. Finally, the chronicle fragments cannot

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<sup>816</sup> Benedikt Mauer, *'Gemain Geschrey' und 'teglich Reden': Georg Kölderer: ein Augsburger Chronist des konfessionellen Zeitalters* (Augsburg 2001) 49-69.



be linked to *Sheyris Yisroel*, but they give testimony to the fact that following the publication of *Sheyris Yisroel* history writing became a rather popular activity among Amsterdam Ashkenazim.

Second, the social position of Amelander and his successors has striking similarities. They all had a relatively good traditional Jewish education, mastered Hebrew and were familiar with the canonical corpus of texts.<sup>817</sup> However, they did not have positions that matched their intellectual background, but were active just below the religious and administrative elites. The book industry, in which Amelander, Braatbard and Kosman were active, offered a haven for Jewish intellectuals and, as a relatively new industry, was more open to those who wanted to push the borders. Prinz and Wing, who happened to be relatives, were active in manual labour and business and could only in their free time devote themselves to history writing. The social position of Amelander and his successors could be described as that of a secondary intelligentsia, people in between the traditional elites and the vast masses of the Ashkenazi community.<sup>818</sup> This position made them well suited to act as intermediaries and brokers between elite and popular cultures and Dutch and Ashkenazi societies, and therefore they all chose to write in Yiddish, while using Hebrew and Dutch sources. The fact that Amelander as an editor of several books was not only in temporal but as well intellectual terms somewhat ahead of his successors, only added to their wish to continue Amelander's work and achieve the same successes as he did.<sup>819</sup>

Third, the successors all accepted the authority of Amelander, continued his work for their own times, but did not rework any part of *Sheyris Yisroel*. The second characteristic of 'successor chronicles', as presented in the first paragraph of this chapter, is also adopted by the Amsterdam chroniclers: they strengthen the authority of the dominant elites. Kosman, who comprised the period 1740-1771, showed that in the most clear way, with continuing the sequence of Amsterdam Sephardic and Ashkenazi chief rabbis started by Amelander. Braatbard, Prinz and Wing also register the continuation of power within both communities. Nowhere the ruling elites are challenged with critical remarks.

Fourth, there are, however, clear generic differences between *Sheyris Yisroel* and its successor chronicles, at least at first sight.<sup>820</sup> While *Sheyris Yisroel* presented a world history of

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<sup>817</sup> This familiarity with Hebrew and the traditional corpus was typical for most authors of Yiddish books; Chava Turniansky, 'Yiddish and the transmission of knowledge in Europe', *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 15 (2008) 5-18, there 9-10.

<sup>818</sup> Cf. Reiner's 'alternative elite'; Reiner, 'Transformations', 80.

<sup>819</sup> Cf. Berger and Zwiep, 'Introduction', 2.

<sup>820</sup> Marincola has shown that in ancient historiography reference to predecessors did not mean that the continuators were not able to follow their own patterns and use techniques of contrast and polemic while continuing their work; Marincola, *Authority and tradition*, 221-225, 242, 254.

Jews over a long span of time, 70-1740, all successors are city or at best national chronicles and limited to one or more decades. While *Sheyris Yisroel* is a proper history book, the successors are *Gegenwartschronistik*, chronicling contemporary events. It is telling that both Braatbard and Prinz explicitly termed their manuscripts *Kornayk* or *Kronik*, which demonstrates that they were conscious of the historiographic tradition they joined. As far as I could establish, they were the first in the history of Jewish historiography to use this term, which originated in Christian medieval historiography. In Dutch society the term ‘chronicle’ (Chronyk/Chronijke/Kroniek) was widely used for both local and national history and as the heading for a short chronology in popular almanacs.<sup>821</sup> Wing, in turn, opted for a more traditional name: *Lezikorn*, referring to the medieval Ashkenazi tradition of *Sifrei zikaron* – books to function as a memory to persecutions and heroic deaths of Jewish martyrs.<sup>822</sup> His title might entail a pointed interpretation of the treatment of the parnassim and Chief Rabbi by progressive Jews and the authorities. However, as regards the methodology and contents of *Lezikorn* no significant differences to the earlier chronicles could be found.

While Amelander used the existing Hebrew historiography extensively, next to Dutch language history books, the successors had newspapers, letters and their own experiences as main sources. While Amelander opted for a thematic approach, with geography as an important structuration, all successors adhered to the annalistic method of chronicle writing. These differences, however, could also be overvalued. Braatbard, Kosman, Prinz and Wing all, in some way, continued Amelander’s chapter 34 on Dutch Ashkenazi history, while Trebitsch explicitly indicated that he continued from chapter 32 on Central European Jewish history. When we compare these chapters with the products of the successors, there are striking resemblances. Chapter 34 is also written in a chronological way, documenting a variety of topics, from the development of the Ashkenazi kehillah in Amsterdam, to the sequence of Amsterdam chief rabbis, weather conditions, a local revolt (the 1696 *Aansprekersoproer*) and a blood libel case in Nijmegen. The chroniclers documented the same topics for their own periods, and one could easily continue reading from chapter 32 to Trebitsch and from chapter 34 to Braatbard, Kosman, Prinz and Wing.

Fifth, there is nevertheless one important difference, which shows that within the boundaries of the genre of successor chronicles innovation took place. Amelander had some

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<sup>821</sup> The Short Title Catalogue Netherlands, for Dutch books published until 1800, enlists no less than 34 books with ‘Chronyk(e)/Kroniek’ in their titles.

<sup>822</sup> E.g. Ephraim of Bonn’s twelfth-century *Sefer Zikaron*.

interest in politics, but only from the perspective of Jewish history. He wrote about Roman emperors and Arabic khaliefs and their retinue, but mainly to document their attitudes towards their Jewish subjects. It is telling that in chapter 32 nothing is said about the political system of the Dutch Republic or about the house of Orange.<sup>823</sup> General history is only interesting to Amelander as background for Jewish history. All chroniclers, born in families who settled some generations earlier in Amsterdam, in turn, demonstrated a vivid interest in city, national and even international politics and document the developments on their own merit. Kosman adapts still the most to Amelander's scheme, he pays a lot of attention to the relations between the Oranges and the Jewish communities. The other chroniclers, Braatbard, Prinz and Wing all write exhaustively about politics, even in cases when there is no clear link with Jewish history. Wing neat documentation of the achievements of the French armies is only one example of this interest. Amelander's *Sheyris Yisroel* paved the way for his successors, who continued his work, but at the same time crossed existing boundaries and brought municipal and national politics within the Yiddish domain. In this way they could also be considered to continue the short lived life of the Amsterdam Yiddish press.<sup>824</sup>

The growing attachment to the own city and region and the political involvement – whether Orangist or patriotic – demonstrated by the chroniclers hint at an important development in eighteenth-century Dutch Jewry. Already before the Emancipation era Jews defined themselves in Dutch political terms, contributed to the public debates and fights – thus preceding the latter development of Jewish participation in national politics. As well, the local patriotism of which each chronicle gives a clear statement, paved the way for the rise of Dutch nationalism within the Jewish community. While in the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic the provinces and cities still had a strong political voice, during the Batavian-French period the country was centralized. Dutch Jews participated in both phases, transforming like other Dutchmen their local patriotism into modern nationalism.<sup>825</sup>

The concepts of 'successor chronicles' and 'epigones' mutually strengthen each other. While the first describes the nature of the book products, the latter concentrates on the authors. Both serve to connect the Amsterdam Yiddish chroniclers to Amelander and his

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<sup>823</sup> That Amelander did not write about the Orange family could be explained out of the fact that at the time of publication of *Sheyris Yisroel* it was the so-called Second Stadtholderless Era (1702-1747).

<sup>824</sup> Hilde Pach, 'Moushe's choices: was the compositor of the oldest Yiddish newspaper a creator or an epigone?' in: Berger and Zwiép eds., *Epigonism*, 195-204.

<sup>825</sup> Bart Wallet, 'Amsterdam in de Jiddisje geschiedschrijving. De vorming van een Amsterdams-joodse identiteit', *Grine Medine* 43 (June 2011) 3-9. Jaap Meijer, precisely for this reason, labeled Braatbard's chronicle as a symptom of early assimilation; Meijer, *Verstrooiing en verlichting*, 25-26.

*Sheyris Yisroel*. Epigones, as newly defined by Berger and Zwiep, are not just mere followers, but true carriers of culture and a dynamic force within its development.<sup>826</sup> The Amsterdam Yiddish chroniclers are a perfect example of this process, they deliberately chose to continue Amelander's work, did not step out of the authoritative successor tradition, which connected them to the whole body of Jewish historiography. But, at the same time, from within the boundaries of this traditional genre openness arises for the world the chroniclers lived in, expressing interest in city life and politics, national and international developments. Here it suffices to state that the study of the chronicles of Braatbard, the anonymous authors of the fragments, Kosman, Prinz and Wing demonstrated the dynamics of early modern successor chronicles through a variety of continuation strategies and both adhering to traditional patterns and opening new perspectives. To write a successor chronicle, in that sense, was more a strategy than a limitation.

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<sup>826</sup> Berger and Zwiep, 'Introduction', 3-4.