

EIGHT JUDAICA BOOKS FROM THE LIBRARY  
OF THE YOUNG REFUGEES OF VILLA EMMA

The *Fondazione Villa Emma. Ragazzi ebrei salvati* in Nonantola, Modena, owns a collection of books that originally belonged to the library of the young Jewish refugees of Villa Emma, in Nonantola.<sup>1</sup> The books were left behind when the group left the villa following the dramatic events of September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1943, when German troops entered Nonantola. Fearing to be arrested and deported to the Fossoli concentration camp and then to Germany, the adult leaders and the seventy-three young refugees, originally

from Germany, Poland, Austria, Hungary, Croatia, and Bosnia, found shelter in the local Seminary and in private homes in Nonantola, with the exception of one of them, the sixteen year old Salomon Papo who had been hospitalized in a sanatorium in the village of Gaiato di Pavullo (Modena), because of tuberculosis.<sup>2</sup> With the help of smugglers contacted by Goffredo Pacifici, between October 6<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, divided in three groups, they managed to cross the Italian border at Ponte Tresa and entered Switzerland,

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Fausto Ciuffi, Director of the *Fondazione Villa Emma. Ragazzi ebrei salvati*, for his permission to study and publish the books. I wish to thank Giuliano Tamani and Tsipora Baran, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia for their comments. On the recovery of the books and the history of their acquisition and information concerning the whole collection see [www.fondazionevillaemma.org](http://www.fondazionevillaemma.org). According to the testimony of Norma Piccinini «Inside the villa there was a very rich library. Among their leaders I remember Boris [ ... ] He had a lot of books written in different languages. When they left, I was entrusted with all of them [i.e. the books] .... After the war Boris came back and fetched them. [ ... ]» (my translation) N. PICCININI, *I giorni di Villa Emma*, Modena 1978, pp. 29-30. Boris Jochvedson alias Georg Bories (Rostov 1900-Meran 1948) a talented Russian pianist, grew up in Tiflis and graduated in Prague in 1921. He moved to Berlin where he studied at the Stern'sche Konservatorium and later worked at the Opera House and as a private piano teacher. In 1940 he left Germany and in Zagreb he joined the group led by the young *madrik* Josef Indig (Virovitica, Croatia 1917 - Gat, Israel 1998). He then moved with Indig and the group to the Lesno Brdo manor in Slovenia, where they spent about one year, then to Nonantola and finally to Switzerland. In Lesno and Nonantola Bories and Indig supervised the education of the young refugees, with the help of Helene Barkic. He gave piano and Maths lessons, Indig modern Hebrew and History and Barkic taught scientific subjects, see J. INDIG ITHAI,

*Anni in fuga*, Giunti 2006 (*Yalde Villa Emma*, Tel Aviv 1983); H. VOIGT, *Villa Emma. Ragazzi ebrei in fuga. 1940-1945*, Milan 2002 (*Villa Emma. Jüdische Kinder auf der Flucht. 1940-1945*, Berlin 2001). After 1945, Bories returned to Nonantola, with Marco Schoky and Ruth Drucker, former members of the Villa Emma group and turned the villa into an *achshara* and a center for displaced persons and Holocaust survivors, where other former Villa Emma youths, on their way to Palestine, stopped for a while. VOIGT, *Villa Emma*, cit., p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> The first group, forty adolescents from Germany, Austria, Hungary and Poland, arrived in Nonantola by train on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1942, with Indig and eight other adults: Georg Bories, Mauricy Anwin, Helene Barkic, Alexander and Erna Licht, Marco Schoky (Marek Silberschatz), Robert Stein and Josefina Weiss. They settled in Villa Emma, a forty-six room country mansion, built in 1898 by Carlo Sacerdoti a Modena landowner, that had been rented for them by the *Delasem*. A second group of thirty-four youths from Croatia, Bosnia and a girl from Germany, accompanied by Jakov Maestro and Maurizio Romano arrived in April 1943. Other adult Jewish refugees lived at the villa: Emilio Freilich, Ruth Kalischer, Armand Moreno and Hersz Nafatali Schuldenfrei and the *Delasem* members Laura Cavaglione, Umberto Jacchia and Goffredo Pacifici. There were also six other adults, members of two Jewish families from Lybia, who fled to Switzerland with the group. Pacifici was instrumental in smuggling the group into Switzerland. He remained in

where they spent the following two years and eventually, in 1945, most of them sailed to Palestine.<sup>3</sup> The original library possibly counted over eight hundred books, journals, musical scores, calendars and almanacs. Among the ninety-four extant volumes, mainly novels in German and Italian, there are eight Judaica books: two grammars, three prayer books, a history monograph, a journal issue and a memorial volume.<sup>4</sup> Some of the books had been donated to the refugees of Villa Emma by the *Delasem*, the Italian Jewish rescue organization.<sup>5</sup> The core of the library had been probably brought by the refugees to Nonantola from Zagreb and Lesno Brdo.

The two grammars are different editions of the Hebrew grammar by Moses Rath, first published in German in Vienna in 1914 and later translated in Polish. The first volume from Villa Emma is a copy of the 1920 German and Hebrew edition, the other is the English version published in 1921. Rath's grammar is a well-known work: in addition to the German and Polish edi-

tions, in 1920 both Romanian and Hungarian editions were issued.<sup>6</sup> Also Franz Kafka worked on that textbook when he started his self-instructed study of Hebrew around May 1917, on his own copy of the second edition.<sup>7</sup> The name Sonja Borus is written in pencil on the title page of this volume. Perhaps Sonja, who was originally from Berlin, was the owner of this volume, or more likely, the one who studied on it, left notes and worked on some of the exercises.<sup>8</sup> In her diary there are frequent references to her work on Modern Hebrew. For example while in Lesno Brdo she writes: «Sunday, 15.2.1942. In half an hour we have *Iwrit* (sic) with Jäger. His name is Mundeck» or «Wednesday, 29.4.1942. On Monday classes started again, regularly. I am really putting a lot of effort in learning». Or, a month later: «Monday, 18.5.42. Now we have classes. In a short while we have *Iwrit* with Josehko» [i.e. Josef Indig]. About half a year later in Nonantola, she wrote: «Tuesday, 16.2.43. Josehko teaches me *Iwrit*, and he will also explain

Italy to help other Jews and on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1944 was arrested at Ponte Tresa, sent to Fossoli and deported to Auschwitz on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1944, where he died with his brother Aldo. Salomon Papo was arrested and deported to Auschwitz from Fossoli on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1944. There he was killed, upon arrival. VOIGT, *Villa Emma*, cit., p. 228.

<sup>3</sup> Indig and the first group of forty-six young refugees sailed from Barcelona on the *Plus Ultra* on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1945. The second group followed on August 21<sup>st</sup> and a third group sailed from Marseille on August 30<sup>th</sup>. Others decided to go back to Yugoslavia and two joined relatives in the United States, VOIGT, *Villa Emma*, cit., p. 264-265.

<sup>4</sup> For images and descriptions of a wide choice of the extant volumes see [www.fondazionevillaemma.org](http://www.fondazionevillaemma.org).

<sup>5</sup> The *Delasem* organization (*Delegazione per l'Assistenza agli Emigrati Ebrei*) was created by the Union of the Italian Jewish Communities on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939. It was based in Genoa and was directed by Lelio Vittorio Valobra. When Valobra left to Switzerland in November 1943 Massimo Teglio, from Genoa, became the new director. For safety reasons, the *Delasem* office and storehouse were relocated at Villa Emma, INDIG, *Anni in fuga*, cit., 215.

<sup>6</sup> The Hungarian edition was edited by Rath; the Romanian by Avram Rappaport. Various copies of this work are today in the National Library of Israel,

[www.nli.org.il](http://www.nli.org.il).

<sup>7</sup> I. BRUCE, *Kafka and Cultural Zionism. Dates in Palestine*, Madison 2007, p. 165, with previous bibliography.

<sup>8</sup> Sonja Borus (later, Shoshana Harari), was born in 1927 and left Berlin on January 29<sup>th</sup> 1941 with fourteen other girls. The group had been organized by Recha Freier (née Schweitzer, 1892-1984), who in 1932 founded the *Jugend Aliyah* and the Berlin-based organization *Jüdische Jugendhilfe* and managed to rescue about five thousand Jewish children and adolescents from Germany and Poland to Palestine, via Yugoslavia. Sonja and her friends were guided by a slightly older girl, Tilla Nagler and managed to illegally enter in Yugoslavia. After a period of internment in Krško, they were entrusted to the care of the young *madrik* Josef Indig by Freier, who then left to Palestine with other children and hoped the girls would have joined her right after. After a year spent in Lesno Brdo, in Slovenia, Sonja with Indig and the group moved to Nonantola. After September 8<sup>th</sup> 1943 Sonja went in hiding with the Piccinini family in Nonantola and in October 1943 the group fled to Switzerland, where they remained until 1945 and then left to Palestine. Sonja settled in Galilee in kibbutz Eilon. In 1947 she moved to Ruhama (Negev) probably following Recha Freier. Sonja spent her life in Ruhama, apart from a brief

me a lot about Psychology. This gives me a joy you cannot imagine. Now I will do my best to learn a lot and I will work with great care».<sup>9</sup>

On the English edition of Rath's grammar, on the front page one reads the name Laura, followed by a hard to read last name, written in black ink, possibly indicating the owner of the book.<sup>10</sup>

The third volume is the 1941 Italian translation of the work by the Belarusian-born historian and activist Simon Dubnow titled *Breve storia di Israele. Dalle origini ai nostri giorni*, originally published in Yiddish. The 1941 Italian edition, translated from French, was published after censorship, in a period of heavy limitations on publication and circulation of books by Jewish authors.<sup>11</sup> Dubnow's work was intended for Jewish schools and perhaps it was donated or brought to Nonantola by the Zionist activists from the Florence Jewish community they had befriended with, or by the *Delasem*. Perhaps the book was meant to be used by the Villa Emma youths in their History classes, or to learn about Jewish history and culture, and practise Italian as well. It contains numerous illustrations documenting the life and accomplishments of Jews ranging from ancient Near Eastern synagogue remains photographed in Mesopotamia, to the then recently inaugurated library of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, in British Mandate Palestine.

The fourth volume is a journal, the 1937

July-August issue of «La rassegna mensile di Israel». This, a well-known journal, was founded in 1925 by Dante Lattes and Alfonso Pacifici, prominent figures of Italian religious Zionism. The journal stemmed from their previous editorial experience, the weekly journal *Israel*. At first, the new journal was published occasionally.<sup>12</sup> Later on, as of 1930, it was issued monthly and was directed by Lattes alone, who was also the editor of «Corriere israelitico» and of the publishing house *Casa editrice Israel*. The issue from Villa Emma library is one of the last ones before the journal forcibly ceased its publication because of the Italian anti-Jewish legislation and the outbreak of Second World War. It resumed publication in 1948 and continues to these days. It contained articles on Jewish history and culture, intended for a learned Jewish audience. It was not an academic journal, as the contemporary «Rivista israelitica», the scientific journal of the Rabbinical College in Florence, founded and published by Samuel Hirsch Margulies (1858-1922) who, incidentally, had been the mentor of Dante Lattes. Nonetheless, «La rassegna» published philological articles that could have well appeared in a scientific journal. For example, in the 1937 issue one finds the article by Emanuel Artom (1915-1944) on new epigraphic discoveries from Palestine, where he illustrated (some of) the Old-Hebrew inscriptions from ancient Lakish, discovered in 1935, with a brief discussion of their features and onomastics.<sup>13</sup>

period during the Israeli Independence war, when the younger kibbutz members were sent to Tel Aviv for safety reasons. Back to Ruhama she married Yusef Harari, a Russian immigrant and raised their four children. In 2014 she published her diary: S. BORUS, *Sonjas Tagebuch. Flucht und Alija in den Aufzeichnungen von Sonja Borus aus Berlin, 1941-1945*, Berlin 2014. An Italian edition edited by Klaus Voigt is in preparation.

<sup>9</sup> BORUS, *Sonjas Tagebuch*, respectively, cit., pp. 46, 60, 61, 85 (my translation of relevant entries).

<sup>10</sup> Possibly Laura Cavaglione? In that case she could be the young medical doctor from Genoa and *Delasem* member who joined the group at Villa Emma in August 1942.

<sup>11</sup> On the history of publication of this book, M. SARFATTI, *Gli ebrei nell'Italia fascista. Vicende,*

*identità, persecuzione*, Torino 2007, p. 215, n. 340. Enrico Levi was in charge of the edition of the volume. In his 2005 interview (L. PICCIOTTO, *Salvarsi. Gli ebrei d'Italia sfuggiti alla Shoah. 1943-1945*, Einaudi 2017, p. 358) he recalls his editorial work and his two visits to the Ministry of Popular Culture in Rome, to meet the requests of fascist censorship. The book was published thanks to a grant from the Ascarelli family in Rome.

<sup>12</sup> A. FOA, *Gli ottanta anni della «Rassegna»*, in «La rassegna mensile di Israel» Vol. LXXV, N. 1-2, Gennaio-Agosto 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Emanuel Artom was a promising young historian whose interests focused on Ancient History and Jewish History. On September 9<sup>th</sup> 1943 he volunteered for *Partito d'Azione* and in November he joined a Partisan brigade of Italia Libera. He was

Or the Italian translation of an article on the Song of Songs by Moses Hirsch Segal (1876-1968), first published in the journal «Tarbiz» in January 1937.<sup>14</sup> In addition, «La rassegna» published narrative and essays on contemporary issues. For instance, in the 1937 issue there is a short story by the Belarusian-born and later Israeli writer Gershon Schofman (1880-1972) translated from Hebrew by Dante Lattes. Finally, an article by the foremost intellectual and Second World War hero Enzo Sereni (1905-1944) on Jewish emigration to the United States, where he illustrates the situation of Jewish communities in America in the 1930s, their use of Yiddish, the activities of the Joint Distribution Committee and Zionism in America, with some concluding remarks on the threat on Europe represented by Nazi Germany.

The fifth book is a memorial volume for Rav Angelo Sacerdoti (1886-1935) published in 1936 by the Jewish Community in Rome after his untimely death. The first section contains biographic notes, articles illustrating his work and endeavours, appeared in periodicals (*La comunità israelitica*, *Israel*, *Le Judaïsme Sépharadi*) upon his death, and a speech for the celebration of his 25<sup>th</sup> jubilee. In the second section, an elegy by Angiolo Orvieto, the *shloshim* eulogy pronounced by Umberto Cassuto (“Nel trigesimo”) and the text of his epitaph in the Verano cemetery, in Rome. The third section contains a collection of eight works, homilees, lectures and speeches by Rav Sacerdoti, dated from 1913 to 1934. Among them the speech pronounced in 1921 to welcome King Victor Emmanuel III, upon his visit to the Great Synagogue of Rome and the text of a lecture on the newly founded He-

brew University of Jerusalem delivered in 1923, at the Conference of Jewish Studies in Rome.

It seems likely that these last two books in Italian and the relatively old journal issue (dated five years before the arrival of the first group of young refugees in Nonantola) were brought to Villa Emma by the *Delasem* when its office was moved there, or by Matilde Cassin and Raffaele Cantoni, the two Florence Zionist activists who became good friends of the group.<sup>15</sup> One cannot say whether any of these works in Italian, or perhaps only Dubnow’s monograph, were used in the classes.

The last three volumes are prayer books. They are two *maḥazorim* printed in Leghorn by Salomone Belforte in 1936, in 1939 and 1940. It is probable that they had been donated to the Villa Emma refugees by the *Delasem*. Its representatives, in fact, were concerned about the religious life at the Villa as one reads in Indig’s memoirs and also in Sonja’s diary.<sup>16</sup> As in numerous other cases, the *Delasem* also provided the Jewish refugees they offered assistance to with religious books, and what was needed for religious celebrations.<sup>17</sup> Inside one *maḥazor* (n. 7 below) there is a palm leaf fragment, a *lulav*, used in the liturgy of Sukkoth and between other pages of the same book, other dried flower fragments, left by some of the Villa Emma refugees.

Finally, the last volume is a small prayer book published in Frankfurt am Main by Lehrberger & Co. in 1926. Apparently the less significant among the others, it has a high documental value: on the first page there is the owner’s name, Hans Vohs, not one of the Villa Emma refugees, but another adolescent, who fled from Nazi Germany, probably in 1939.<sup>18</sup>

made a prisoner in March 1944, tortured in prison in Turin, where he died, on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1944.

<sup>14</sup> *Tarbiz* was founded in 1930 by Jacob Nahum Epstein at the Institute of Jewish Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is still published today.

<sup>15</sup> As one reads in the diary of Sonja Borus (BORUS, *Sonjas Tagebuch*, cit., pp. 80-81) and in Indig’s memoirs (INDIG, *Anni in fuga*, cit., pp. 201-202, pp. 217-218) where one finds references to their meetings with Matilde Cassin, later in Israel Rachel Vardi (1921-2006) and Raffaele Cantoni (1896-1971) and the reciprocal visits they exchanged in Florence

and Nonantola. On the Florence group M. LONGO ADORNO, *Gli ebrei fiorentini dall’emancipazione alla Shoà*, Firenze 2003, pp. 167-168.

<sup>16</sup> VOIGT, *Villa Emma*, cit., p. 138, cites a letter by Valobra to Umberto Jacchia, who had just been appointed director of the Villa Emma community. Indig and Sonja’s perplexities about prayer as imposed by the *Delasem* members may be found in his memoirs (INDIG, *Anni in fuga*, cit., p. 195) and in her diary on 16.8.42 (BORUS, *Sonjas Tagebuch*, cit., p. 71).

<sup>17</sup> R. DE FELICE, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, Milano 1993 (new revised edition), p. 430.

<sup>18</sup> A reconstruction of his story is in preparation



# Book Catalogue

1) Hebrew grammar, dual language, German and Hebrew (Fig. 1a, 1b). Hardbound, olive-green cardboard and cloth jacket. 226 mm., 188 pages (Hebrew section), 188 pages (German section).

Author: Moses Rath (1887-1967).

Title: (German section: on left jacket and first page) in Hebrew: *Sefat 'Ammenu* [The Language of Our People]. *Lehrbuch der Hebräischen Sprache für Schul- und Selbstunterricht. Mit Schlüssel und Wörterverzeichnis. Erste praktische Methode zur Erlernung der hebräischen Sprache in Wort und Schrift. Einführung in die Literatur. I. Teil.* Inked stamp: "DELAS-EM" "Villa Emma Nonantola (Modena)". (Hebrew section, in Hebrew: on right cover, partly damaged, title lost, author's name only). On the first page, in Hebrew letters: *Sefat 'Ammenu. Sefer le-hora'at ha-lashon ha-'ivrit diqduqah we-sifrutah. Le-batte-sefer u-le-mitlammedim. Mahadurah shishit betiqqunim u-millu'im.*

Publisher: self-published, 1920, sixth revised edition (Printed by Vernay, Wien).

2) Hebrew grammar, dual language, English and Hebrew (Fig. 2). Hardbound, blue cardboard and cloth jacket. 217 mm., 188 pages (Hebrew section), 188 pages (English section).

Author: Moses Rath (English translation by Paula Arnold-Kellner).

Title: (English section, on first page) in Hebrew, *Sefat 'Ammenu* [The Language of Our People]. *Hebrew Grammar and Reader for Schools and Selfinstruction, with a Key and Vocabulary. Being the first practical Handbook for Teaching the Spoken and Written Hebrew Language. Introduction in the Literature.* (He-

brew section, on first page) in Hebrew: *Sefat 'Ammenu. Sefer le-hora'at ha-lashon ha-'ivrit diqduqah we-sifrutah. Le-batte-sefer u-le-mitlammedim. Mahadurah shishit be-tiqqunim u-millu'im. Bound with a 20 pages supplement, Hebrew and English title: Mafteah la-Targumim we-la-shi'urim she ba-Sefer Sefat 'Ammenu. Key for the Translations and Exercises of the Hebrew Grammar Sefat 'Ammenu.*

Publisher: self-published 1921 (Printed by Johann N. Vernay, Vienna).

3) History monograph, in Italian. (Fig. 3). Softbound, soft cardboard cover, sand color, main title in red. Damaged copy. Large damage probably due to liquid spill, affects bottom of front page, down to page 60. 225 mm., 278 pages, with 84 B/W photographs.

Author: Simon Dubnow (Mscislaū, Belarus 1860-Riga, Latvia 1941).

Title: *Breve storia di Israele. Dalle origini ai nostri giorni*, translated from French by Raul Elia and Alfredo Sarano (*Précis d'histoire juive. Des origines à nos jours*, Paris 1936, first published in Yiddish: *Idishe Geshikhte far Shul un Haym (Jewish History for School and Home)*, Riga 1934).<sup>19</sup>

Publisher: Casa editrice Israel, Florence 5701 - 1941 - XIX.<sup>20</sup> Biblioteca Dario Ascarelli.

Price: L. 20 (Italian liras).

4) Monthly journal. (Fig. 4). Soft cover, sand color. Damaged copy, stains, broken spine. 242 mm., 75 pages.

Editor: Dante Lattes (Pitigliano, Grosseto 1876-Dolo, Venezia 1965).

Title: «La rassegna mensile di Israel» Vol. XI, no. 11-12.

Publisher: Casa editrice Israel, 1937.<sup>21</sup>

by this writer.

<sup>19</sup> On the editorial work by Enrico Levi see above, note 11. Fascist censorship requested the elimination of the introduction by Dante Lattes and numerous emendations to the text and elimination of the last chapters on Zionism and National rebirth. Moreover, the book could not be sold, but had to be distributed privately. As Levi recalls he added a foreword indicating that the volume was «not a complete translation of the original French edition, in compliance with the regulations of the Authorities» ("Questo volume, in ottemperanza alle disposizioni

delle Superiori Autorità, non è la integrale traduzione del testo originale francese"). Furthermore, without permission, at the end of the last chapter he added ten lines, containing words of hope for the future of the Jews and a final statement in larger font: "Jewish History continues" ("La Storia ebraica continua"). This last addition went unnoticed by fascist censorship.

<sup>20</sup> The year of publication, 1941, also according to the Jewish calendar and, side by side, the fascist era.

<sup>21</sup> The publishing house *Israel* was directed by Dante Lattes, see above.

Price: L. 7 (Italian liras). Yearly subscription: L. 60 (Italy); L. 70 (abroad).

Table of content: "Nahum Sokolow", by Izhaq Gruenbaum, 468-476; "Il Cantico dei Cantici" (The Song of Songs), by M. H. Segal, 477-495 (from «Tarbiz» VIII/2, 1937); "America ebraica 1937" (Jewish America 1937), by Enzo Sereni, 496-525; "Antiche iscrizioni ebraiche recentemente scoperte" (Recently Discovered Old Hebrew Inscriptions), by Emanuel Artom, 526-529; La Barriera (*Racconto*) (The Barrier, short story, from G. Schofman, *Kitve*, Tel Aviv 5687 [1927], translated from Hebrew by Dante Lattes), by Gershon Schofman, 530-535; Bollettino Bibliografico (Book Reviews and Suggested Readings, 536-540).

5) Memorial volume, collection of writings (Fig. 5). Soft cardboard cover, sand color. Slightly damaged copy, stains on the back. 242 mm., 130 pages, with 2 B/W illustrations (portrait of Rav Sacerdoti; Rav Sacerdoti greets King Victor Emmanuel III, inauguration of the memorial plaque for the I World War Jewish casualties at the Great Synagogue in Rome).

Editor: La comunità israelitica di Roma.

Title: *In memoria di Angelo Sacerdoti*.

Publisher: Istituto romano di arti grafiche di Tumminelli & C., Rome 1936.

Table of content: Preface, 5; La breve vita (His short life, biographic notes, 7); Le molte opere 11-25 (The numerous works), I. Dalla stampa periodica (Articles from periodicals: *La comunità israelitica*, year III, n. 3, March 1935, *Israel*, year XX, n. 22, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1935, *Judaïsme Sépharadi*, year 4, n. 27, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935); II. Dalle parole dei compagni di lavoro e di fede (From the words of his work and faith companions), Il compianto e la ricordanza, 49-59 (Mourning and memory) I. Elegia per la morte di Angelo Sacerdoti (Elegy upon the death of Angelo Sacerdoti, by Angiolo Orvieto); II. Nel trigesimo (*Sheloshim* eulogy, by Umberto Cassuto); III. Sul sepolcro, nel Cimitero del Verano (On his tomb, in the Verano Cemetery). Dai discorsi e dagli altri scritti di lui, 61-125 (From his speeches and other writings). I. Programma d'azione (Agenda); II. Dignità ebraica (Jewish Dignity); III. Partendo per il fronte (Going to war); IV. Per i caduti in guerra (For the war casualties); V. L'Università ebraica di Gerusalemme (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem); VI. Simone Luzzatto; VII. I primi due comandamenti del Decalogo (The first two

Commandments of the Decalogue); VIII. Dovere fraterno (Brotherly duty).

6) Prayer book: *Maḥazor le-Yom Kippur* [Prayer book for the Day of Atonement] (Fig. 6). Hardbound, burgundy cardboard and cloth jacket, 200 mm., 190 pages. On the spine, in Hebrew, in gold: *Kippur*. On the title-page, a double red ornamental frame, with citations from Lamentations 5: 21: (on top) «Take us back, O Lord, to Yourself, and let us come back.» (continues to the left) «Renew our days as of old». Leviticus 16: 30 (to the left, continues at the bottom and to the right): «For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before the Lord.» (to the right) From the prayer *Neilah le-Yom Kippur*: «For Your right hand is stretched forth to receive penitents.»

Within the internal field, in Hebrew: *Maḥazor le-Yom Kippur ke-minhag q. q. Sefaradim she-be-Kushtantina u-medinot mizrah u-ma'arav we-Italiya 'im-tefillot ha-'or ha-mufla ha-Ar'i, zeker ṣaddiq we-qadosh li-vraka, we-mispar Hemdat ha-yamim 'im ha-ga'ot Morenu ha-Rav R. Ḥayyim Moda'i, zeker ṣaddiq we-qadosh li-vraka, 'im baqqashot Morenu ha-Rav R. Dawid Pardo, zeker ṣaddiq we-qadosh li-vraka, u-mispar Oṣar Neḥmad we-nissah Haṭarat Nedarim u-Mora'ot we-tefillot*

[According to the prayer rite of the Sephardim living in Constantinople, Eastern and Western lands, and in Italy. With the prayers of Yiṣḥaq ben Shelomoh Luria (Ha-Ari). With the notes of Ḥayyim Moda'i. Of blessed and pious memory, with the *baqqashot* of Dawid Shemu'el ben Ya'aqov Pardo, of blessed and pious memory, from the work *Oṣar neḥmad* (Precious Treasure) and addition from the work *Haṭarat nedarim* (Release of vows), confession, ... *Poh Livorno* [In Leghorn]

*Shanat 696 le-p''q* [Year 696 according to the minor reckoning (= 1936)]

Publisher: *Me-yad Shelomoh Belforte we-havero* [Salomone Belforte and his partners]

7) Prayer book: *Maḥazor le-Rosh ha-Shannah we-Yom Kippur* [Prayer book for the New Year and for the Day of Atonement] (Fig. 7). Hardbound, burgundy cardboard and cloth jacket, 200 mm., 114+190 pages. On the spine, in gold Hebrew letters, partly reconstructed: *Yamim Nor[a'im]* (Days of Awe).

In Hebrew, within a double red ornamental frame (like that on the previous book), from Numbers 10: 10 (on top): «And on your joyous occasions» (continues to the left) «your fixed festivals and new moon days, you shall sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings» (continues at the bottom) «and your sacrifices of well-being. They shall be» (continues to the right) «a reminder of you before your Lord: I the Lord am your God.» A stamping, in blue ink “DELA SEM. Villa Emma Nonantola (Modena)”, partly covers the top portion of the ornamental frame and the verse «And on your joyous occasions».

Title page, in Hebrew: *Maḥazor le-Rosh ha-Shanah, ke-minhag k.k. Sefaradim she-be-Kushtandina u-medinot mizrah u-ma'arav we-Italya 'im-tefillot ha-'or ha-mophela' ha-Ar'i, zeker ṣaddiq we-qadosh li-vraka, u-mispar Hemdat ha-yamim 'im ha-ga'ot moher" R. Hayyim Moda'i, zeker ṣaddiq we-qadosh li-vraka, 'im baqqashot moher" R. Dawid Pardo, zeker ṣaddiq we-qadosh li-vraka, u-mispar Oṣar Neḥmad we-nissah Hatarat Nedarim u-Mora'ot we-tefillot*

[“According to the prayer rite of the Sephardim living in Constantinople, Eastern and Western lands, and in Italy”. With the prayers of Yishaq ben Shelomoh Luria (Ha-Ari) con le note di Hayyim Moda'i. With the *baqqashot* of Dawid Shemu'el ben Ya'aqov Pardo, extracts from the work *Ozar neḥmad* (Precious Treasure) and additions from the work *Hatarat nedarim* (Release of vows), confession, ... and the prayer Hayyim Yosef Dawid Azulay (Hidda) ... *Poh Livorno* [In Leghorn] *shanat 699 le-p"q* [Year 699 according to the minor reckoning = 1939]

Publisher: *me-yad Shelomoh Belforte we-havero* [Salomone Belforte and Co. Printers and Booksellers]

Bound with the same volume, on page 115, Prayer book: *Maḥazor le-Yom Kippur* [Prayer book for the Day of Atonement] (Fig. 8). On title page, within a double red ornamental frame (like the two previous ones), from Lamentations 5: 21: (on top) «Take us back, O Lord, to Your-

self, and let us come back.» (continues to the left) «Renew our days as of old.» Leviticus 16: 30 (to the left, continues at the bottom and to the right): «For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before the Lord». From the prayer *Neilah le-Yom Kippur* (to the right): «For Your right hand is stretched forth to receive penitents».

Title page, in Hebrew: *Maḥazor le-Yom Kippur* [Prayer book for the Day of Atonement] *ke-minhag k.k. Sefaradim she-be-Kushtandina u-medinot mizrah u-ma'arav we-Italya* [According to the prayer rite of the Sephardim living in Constantinople, Eastern and Western lands, and in Italy]

Publisher: *me-yad Shelomoh Belforte we-havero* [Salomone Belforte and Co. Printers and Booksellers]

*Poh Livorno* [In Leghorn] *shanat 700 le-p"q* [Year 700 according to the minor reckoning = 1940]

The printing enterprise of the Belforte family in Leghorn, still operating today, dates back to 1805, when Yosef ben Shelomoh Belforte published a book of prayers in Hebrew. Yosef had worked for Eliezer Yosef Hayim Sa'adun, from the renowned family of Jewish printers in Leghorn, while his father Salomone Belforte was another Jewish printer.<sup>22</sup> In 1821 Yosef's son, Salomone Belforte, published four Hebrew prayer books with Mosè Isaia Tubiana and in 1834 he established the *Salomone Belforte and his partners*, in partnership with the brothers Moise and Israel Palagi and their enterprise became the leading printing company of Hebrew books in Leghorn.

8) Prayer Book. (Fig. 9). Black cloth, 120 mm. On the spine, partly readable, Gebete [Prayers].

Printed, on left, first page: in Hebrew: *Tefillah ve-tahanunim* [Prayer and supplications] kolel [includes] *ha-tefillot shel kol ha-shanah* [prayers for the whole year] *mi-yede yom be-yomo* [day by day].

In Latin letters: Tefillah Vetachanunim

<sup>22</sup> On the Belforte printing company and the Belforte family, S. GUASTALLA (ed.), *Le api della Torah: Storia di una famiglia di editori ebrei livornesi*, Livorno 2001. See also A. KIRON, *La casa editrice Belforte e l'arte della stampa in Ladino. The Belforte*

*Publishing House and the Art of Ladino Printing*. In occasione del bicentenario della Casa Editrice Salomone Belforte & C. On the occasion of the bicentenary of the Salomone Belforte & C. Publishing House. 1805-2005, Leghorn 2005.

Publisher: M. Lehrberger & Co, Frankfurt a.M. (Rodelheim), 1926.

On the right page, handwritten, in black ink: top center, in Latin letters: Hans Vohs

Handwritten, in Hebrew: *vešaddiq be'emunato y'hieh* («The righteous will live for his faith» Habakuc 2: 4). Below it, in Latin letters: „Der fromme Mensch lebt in seinem Gottvertrauen“ («The righteous will live for his faith») Zur Erinnerung an die [In memory of the] Synagogengemeinde M.Gladbach [community of the synagogue of M.Gladbach] in Latin letters: 13. Juli 1935 [“July 13th, 1935”] in Hebrew letters: *Shabbat Khuqat-Balaq yb' Tammuz TRSH* in Latin letters: Der Lehrer [“the Teacher”] Der Vorsitzende [“the President”] Handwritten signatures: Heldmann S. Vohssen

The book contains the prayer (*Tefillah*) and the supplications (*Taḥanunim*, Daniel 9: 3 and 18) to be recited after the prayer.

On the right page, originally blank, there are handwritten notes, in black ink. On top, in elegant cursive, is the name of the owner of the book, Hans Vohs. Below is a citation from the book of Habbakuk (Hab 2: 4) in unvocalized Hebrew script. The date is probably that of the *bar mišwah* of Hans Vohs, who read the *parasha Khuqat-Balaq* (Numbers 19:1-25:9) on Shabbat, July 13th, 1935, as recorded in Hebrew, below the date. Therefore the prayer book was a gift for Hans Vohs, on behalf of the Jewish community of M.Gladbach, today Mönchengladbach, a town in the region of Northern Renania-Vestfalia, when he became *bar mišwah*.<sup>23</sup>

Eleonora Cussini

DSAAM

Università Ca' Foscari Venezia

e-mail: cussini@unive.it

## SUMMARY

The paper examines the small Judaica section of the fairly recently recovered library of the young refugees of Villa Emma, in Nonantola (Modena). The Judaica section is a small segment of the original library that originally counted over eight hundred books. The Hebrew books are two grammars, a journal issue, a memorial volume, and three prayer books. It seems probable that at least some of the books were used by the refugees in the classes organized at Villa Emma and beforehand, in the Lesno Brdo manor by their *madrich*, Josef Indig, as part of their training in Modern Hebrew and History.

**KEYWORDS:** Villa Emma; Hebrew books; Holocaust survivors.

<sup>23</sup> For an image of the M.Gladbach synagogue in Karlstraße, today Blucherstraße, see [www.juedisches-gemeinden.de](http://www.juedisches-gemeinden.de), Mönchengladbach. On No-

vember 11<sup>th</sup>, 1938, the synagogue was burnt down by the Nazis.



# Eight judaica books from the Library of the Young Refugees of Villa Emma



Fig. 1a - Rath, Hebrew grammar, German and Hebrew. Cover, German.

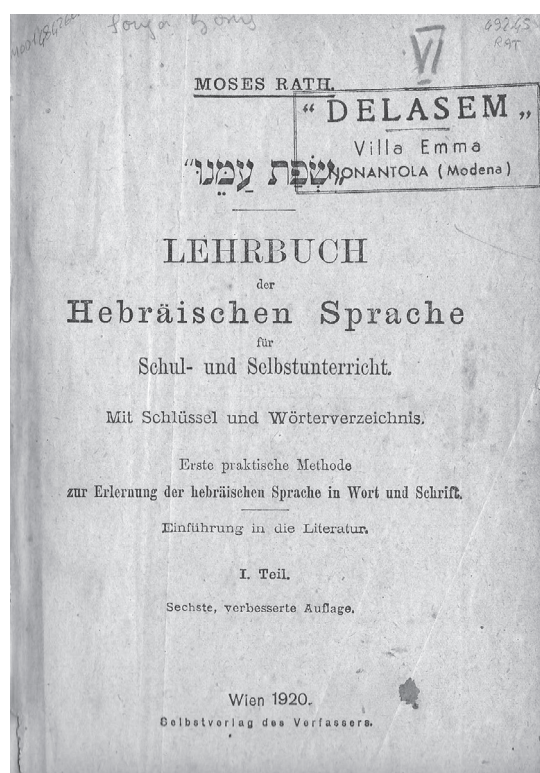


Fig. 1b - Rath, Hebrew grammar, German and Hebrew. Title page.

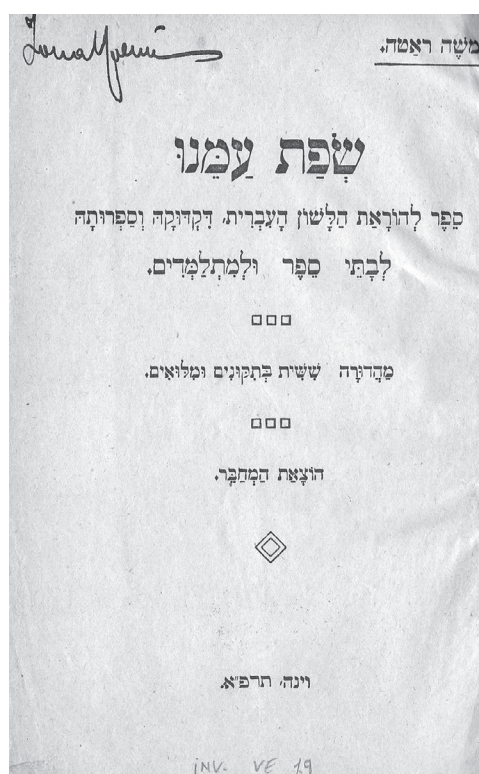


Fig. 2 - Rath, Hebrew grammar, English and Hebrew. Title page.

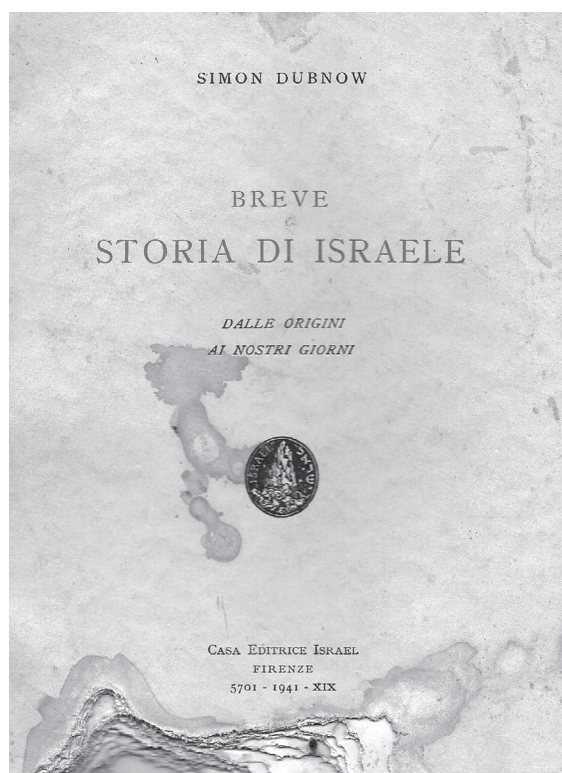


Fig. 3 - Dubnow, Breve storia di Israele. Dalle origini ai nostri giorni.



Eight judaica books from the Library of the Young Refugees of Villa Emma

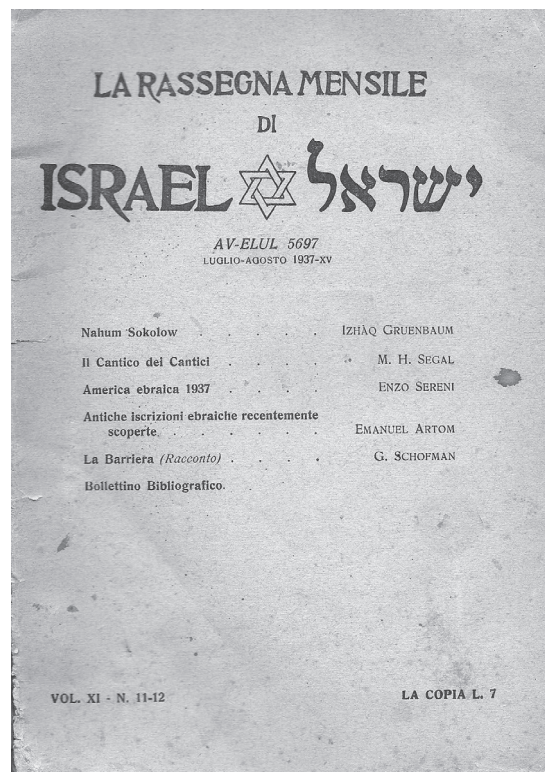


Fig. 4 - La rassegna mensile di Israel Vol. XI, no. 11-12.

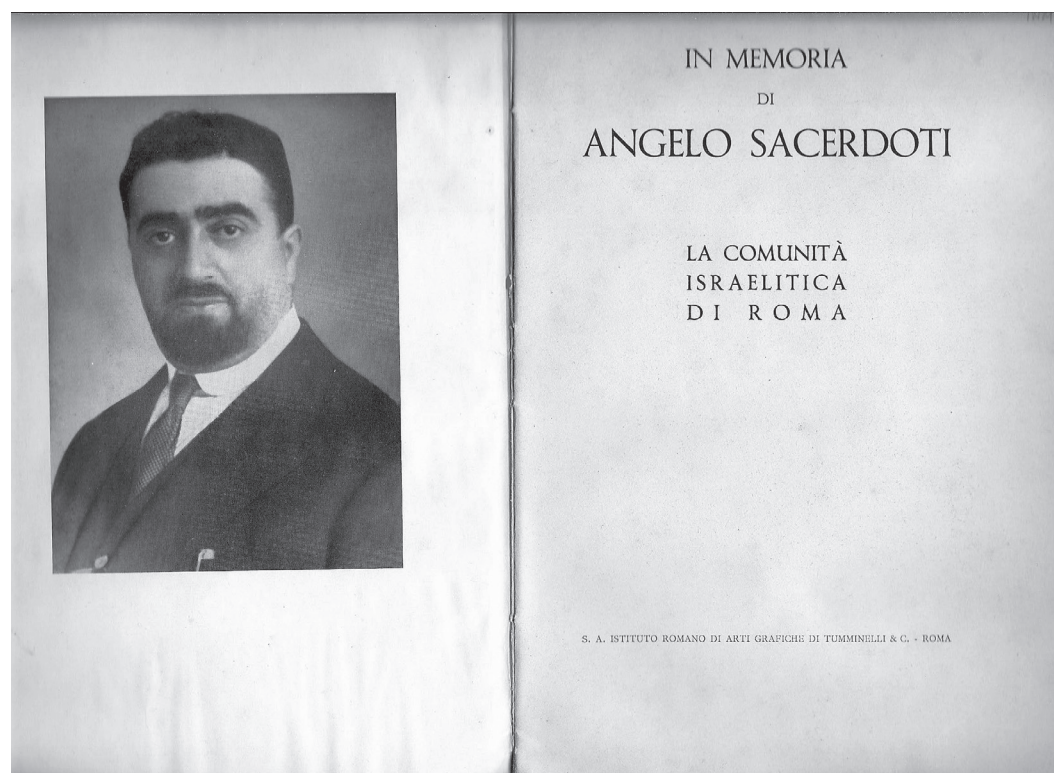


Fig. 5 - In memoria di Angelo Sacerdoti.



Fig. 6 - *Maḥazor le-Yom Kippur*.



Fig. 7 - *Maḥazor le-Rosh ha-Shanah*.



# Eight judaica books from the Library of the Young Refugees of Villa Emma



Fig. 8 - Maḥazor le-Yom Kippur.



Fig. 9 - Prayer Book. Title page and handwritten notes.

