

THE “FINZI MISHNAH” (JTS, MS. R934)
AND THE EARLY GENERATIONS OF THE FINZI FAMILY*

Introduction

The Finzi family is one of the oldest and best-known of the Italian Jewish families, its members having excelled in all walks of commercial and intellectual life over the course of the later Middle Ages and into the modern era.¹ In recent decades, several scholars have attempted to detail the early lineage of this illustrious family. The majority of these studies have focused on archival documents from cities in the Po River Basin.² To a lesser extent, scholars studying the early generations of the Finzi family have also considered the evidence of Hebrew manuscripts, particularly paratextual elements such as colo-

phons, bills of sale, and other signs of ownership.³ In what follows, I introduce an additional piece of paratextual evidence, the colophon of New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary Ms. R934—the so-called “Finzi Mishnah”—written in 1361 by one Binyamin the son of Yiṣḥaq Finzi, who includes his genealogy in the colophon.⁴ I will show that this colophon allows us to connect the evidence for two different branches of the Finzi family that have until now been studied in isolation from one another.

Considering the importance of the Finzi family, the conclusions adduced here regarding the family’s history are within themselves important for the history of Italian Judaism.⁵ In

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¹ See, for example, E. HOROWITZ, *Families and Their Fortunes: The Jews of Early Modern Italy*, in *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, ed. D. BIALE (New York: Schocken, 2002), 573–636.

² See especially V. COLONI, *Judaica minora: saggi sulla storia dell’ebraismo Italiano dall’antichità all’età moderna*, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà giuridica dell’Università di Ferrara, ser. 2a 14 (Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1983), 329–342; IDEM, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family: The First Generations* [Hebrew], in *Jews in Italy: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of U. Cassuto on the 100th Anniversary of His Birth*, ed. H. BEINART (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1988), 218–31; A.I. PINI, *Famiglie, insediamenti e banchi ebraici a Bologna a nel Bolognese nella seconda metà del Trecento*, in «Quaderni storici» 18, no. 54 (3) Ebrei in Italia (1983): 783–814; A. CAMPANINI, *Una famiglia ebraica a Bologna tra Medioevo ed Età moderna: i Finzi*, in «Zakhor: rivista di storia

degli Ebrei d’Italia» 3 (1999): 79–94; D. CARPI, *Il ramo padovano della famiglia Finzi da Ancona tra la fine del Trecento e l’inizio del Quattrocento*, in *L’individuo e la collettività: saggi di storia degli ebrei a Padova e nel Veneto nell’età del Rinascimento* (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 2002), 1–25. Important also is the much earlier work of A. CISCATO, *Gli ebrei in Padova (1300–1800): monografia storica documentata* (Padova: Società Cooperativa Tipografica, 1901).

³ See especially G. BUSI, *Menaḥem Finzi of Recanati: The True Name of an Old Acquaintance*, in «Materia Giudaica» 8, no. 1 (2003): 213–18, and the pioneering work of M. STEINSCHNEIDER, *Letteratura italiana dei giudei* (Roma: Tipografia delle scienze matematiche e fisiche, 1884), 51–56.

⁴ For a brief description of this manuscript with references to relevant secondary literature, see Yaakov Sussman, in collaboration with Yoav Rosenthal and Aharon Shweka, *Thesaurus of Talmudic Manuscripts*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and the Friedberg Genizah Project, 2012) [Hebrew], 556, no. 6018.

⁵ On the use of such manuscript paratexts as sources for the history of Italian Jewry, see M. PERANI, *Il manoscritto ebraico come fonte storica*, in «Materia giudaica» 9, no. 1–2 (2004): 79–101.

addition, as members of the Finzi family were in possession, during the medieval and early modern periods, of many significant manuscripts and printed books,⁶ a fuller picture of the Finzi family tree will be of help to scholars studying the history of the Jewish book.

The Early Generations of the Finzis in the Po River Basin

Vittore Colorni was the first scholar to seriously attempt to outline the early generations of the Finzi family, in an article published in Italian in 1983, and then later, with several significant updates, in Hebrew in 1988.⁷ Colorni's study is based primarily on archival material from Northern Italy, some of which had been published by Antonio Pini in his own studies of the Jews of Bologna.⁸ The presence of the Finzis in Bologna was also discussed, *inter alia*, in an extensive study of Jewish bankers in late medieval Bologna by Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli published in 1994,⁹ and then in a 1999 study dedicated to the Finzis of Bologna by Antonella

Campanini.¹⁰ In 2002, Daniel Carpi published a book chapter on the Paduan branch of the Finzi family in the early 15th century.¹¹ Lastly, several studies of medieval Jewish bankers elsewhere in the Po Valley have also mentioned members of this branch of the Finzi family.¹² In what follows, I briefly summarize the lineage of the first five generations of the Finzis of Bologna and the Po Valley as it has been reconstructed by these scholars. While there are disagreements on various issues pertaining to the lineage of this branch of the Finzi family,¹³ I believe that the general picture drawn initially by Colorni is correct and needs only slight modification in light of the documents adduced later by other scholars.

The first mention of the Finzis in archival documents comes from Bologna, where one Gaio, "iudeus de Roma," is mentioned in a 1353 document as the owner of a store near the chapel of S. Agata.¹⁴ His son Musetto had a lending business near the chapel of St. Stefano;¹⁵ between 1388 and 1392, Bonaventura of Perugia or Macerata operated this business, though it seems that the building in which it was housed near St. Stefano remained in the possession of the Finzi family.¹⁶

⁶ For one significant example that relates to the period of just after the period discussed in this article, see M. PERANI, *La cultura ebraica a Bologna tra Medioevo e Rinascimento nella testimonianza dei manoscritti*, in *La cultura ebraica a Bologna tra Medioevo e Rinascimento: Atti del convegno internazionale, Bologna, 9 aprile 2000*, ed. M. PERANI (Firenze: Giuntina, 2002), 29–70 (34–5), and below, note 40.

⁷ COLORNI, *Judaica minora*, 329–342; IDEM, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, cit. In the Hebrew version, Colorni was able to make use of PINI, *Famiglie, insediamenti e banchi ebraici*, cit. Earlier studies of the Finzi family include M. STEINSCHNEIDER, *Letteratura italiana dei giudei: Articolo III*, in «Il Buonarroti» XI (1876): 82–96, 113–26 (this article was reprinted in the 1884 volume *Letteratura italiana dei giudei*, that I reference in this article), and CISCATO, *Gli ebrei in Padova*, cit.

⁸ PINI, *Famiglie, insediamenti e banchi ebraici*, cit.

⁹ M.G. MUZZARELLI, *I banchieri ebrei e la città*, in *Banchi ebraici a Bologna nel XV secolo*, ed. M.G. Muzzarelli (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 89–157.

¹⁰ CAMPANINI, *Una famiglia ebraica*, cit.

¹¹ CARPI, "*Il ramo padovano*," cit. As I will note below, Carpi disagrees with Colorni in certain important ways, but for the most part, his conclusions agree with those of Colorni and his study enriches it tremendously, primarily with details that extend beyond the scope of this essay.

¹² E.g., R. SCURO, *La presenza ebraica a Vicenza e nel suo territorio nel Quattrocento*, in *Ebrei nella Terraferma veneta del Quattrocento, Atti del Convegno di studi Verona, 14 novembre 2003*, ed. G.M. VARANINI and R.C. MUELLER, Reti Medievali Quaderni di Rivista 2 (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2005), 103–21; E. TRANIELLO, *Tra appartenenza ed estraneità: gli ebrei e le città del Polesine di Rovigo nel Quattrocento*, in *Ebrei nella Terraferma veneta del Quattrocento*, 163–75.

¹³ See especially below, notes 18 and 19.

¹⁴ PINI, *Famiglie, insediamenti e banchi ebraici*, 784–85, 800; COLORNI, 231; CAMPANINI, *Una famiglia ebraica*, 80.

¹⁵ PINI, *Famiglie, insediamenti e banchi ebraici*, 800; COLORNI, 231.

¹⁶ MUZZARELLI, "*I banchieri ebrei e la città*," 96; CAMPANINI, *Una famiglia ebraica*, 82.

Gaio also had a son Guglielmo, who, according to a document of 1387, lived in the Porta Ravenna neighborhood of Bologna.¹⁷

Although Gaio is mentioned as having been “of Rome,” his grandson Musettino, Musetto’s son, is mentioned in documents from Bologna and from Padua as “of Ancona,” and, on some occasions, as “of Recanati”; at times the location is even more explicit, as a document will state not merely that he is “of” or “from” a certain location, but that he in fact currently lives there.¹⁸ On December 12th of 1368, Musettino and his nephew Musetto, the son of his brother Guglielmo,¹⁹ formed a banking partnership with Mele di Daniele da Recanati in Bologna.²⁰ Musettino formed a separate banking partnership in Padua in 1369.²¹ As noted first by Moritz Steinschneider, Musettino is listed as an owner of what is now Hamburg,

Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. Levy 13 (f. 2r), a manuscript of the Torah and Prophets with Rashi’s commentary completed in two stages, first in 1265 and then in 1269;²² as this manuscript remained in the possession of the Finzi family for some time, I will have reason to return to it at several points below. According to Carpi, while Musettino maintained business interests as far north as Padua, he was still in fact living in Ancona in 1375,²³ moving to Padua by November of 1377. Further, we know that he died in Padua before 17.10.1380, as it is then that his two older sons, Solomon and Gaio, petitioned to be guardians of their minor brother, Manuel.²⁴

Musettino’s sons—Solomon, Gaio, and Manuel—continued the partnerships that their father had set up in Bologna and Padua, eventually expanding their business into Montagnana,

¹⁷ PINI, *Famiglie, insediamenti e banchi ebraici*, 791; COLORNI, 231.

¹⁸ PINI, “*Famiglie, insediamenti e banchi ebraici*,” 800; CARPI, “*Il ramo padovano*, 2. Campanini (*Una famiglia ebraica*, 82) has suggested that Musettino da Ancona may actually have been Gaio’s brother, though this seems extremely unlikely in my opinion. Carpi (5 n. 18) is also suspicious of Colorni’s reconstruction, stating that there is no evidence to connect Musetto, Musettino’s father, with Gaio, “iudeus de Roma,” who operated in Bologna in 1353. Pini, though, has stated (*Famiglie, insediamenti e banchi ebraici*, 791, 800) that the documents from Bologna explicitly refer to Guglielmo Finzi and Musetto Finzi as sons of Gaio, and thus, I believe that Colorni’s reconstruction is accurate. See also the next note.

¹⁹ This Guglielmo had supposedly already died by this point, and should not be confused with Musettino and Guglielmo’s uncle, also named Guglielmo, who lived, as mentioned, in Porta Ravenna still in 1387 (I will have more reason to discuss this Guglielmo of the older generation below). Carpi (*Il ramo padovano*, 5) has suggested that Guglielmo, Musettino’s brother, should instead be identified as one “Guglielmo son of Musetto son of Binyamin,” a rabbi and doctor of “de Urbe” (i.e. Rome) who was in Recanati in 1360 (on whom see M. MORONI, *Prestatori ebrei ed economie cittadine nella Marca Anconitana, secoli XIII-XV*, in *La presenza ebraica nelle Marche. Secoli XIII-XX*, ed. S. ANSELMi and V. BONAZZOLI, Quaderni monografici di Proposte e ricerche 14 [Ancona: Proposte e Ricerche, 1993], 11–38 [16]). This would then mean that Musettino’s

grandfather was also named Binyamin, yet, as we have seen, he was named Gaio.

²⁰ PINI, *Famiglie, insediamenti e banchi ebraici*, 809–10 n. 43; COLORNI, 231; CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 3.

²¹ CISCATO, *Gli ebrei in Padova*, 19; COLORNI, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 219; CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 2–3.

²² STEINSCHNEIDER, *Letteratura italiana dei giudei*, 52, followed by Colorni (*The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 219), Carpi (*Il ramo padovano*, 4–5), and others. This is manuscript #44 in D.S. BLONDHEIM, *Liste des manuscrits des Commentaires bibliques de Raschi*, in «Revue des études juives» 91, no. 181 (1931): 71–101; see further the description in E. RÓTH and H. STRIEDL, *Hebräische Handschriften*, vol. Teil 3: *Die Handschriften der Sammlung H. R. Levy an der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg, Verzeichnis Der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*, VI, 3 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1984), 14–7. This manuscript was formerly Ms. 2 in catalogue no. 86 (from 1868) of the Berlin booksellers Adolph Asher & Co. Colorni (219 fn. 4), however, was unable to locate this manuscript following the sale of the Asher manuscripts. For the current whereabouts of these manuscripts, see now B. RICHLER, *Guide to Hebrew Manuscript Collections*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2014), 239 (Appendix I.1).

²³ *Ibid.*, 4. A document from later that year may place him as living in Rimini (*ibid.*).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Rovigo, Vicenza, and Mantua, though they remained at first living in Padua.²⁵ Manuele lived in Padua until he died, quite young, before the year 1404.²⁶ In December of 1415, Gaio, referred to as “R. Yiṣḥaq Finzi the son of Mošeh,” represented the Jewish community of Padua in a synod of the Italian Jewish communities that met in Bologna.²⁷ Gaio/Yiṣḥaq then moved to Bologna in 1426,²⁸ and died at some point between June 1431 and October 1442.²⁹ Solomon had moved to Bologna at an earlier point, towards the end of the 14th century.³⁰ He worked in Bo-

logna as a doctor and he also operated the bank near St. Stefano, which his son Jacob eventually took over briefly in 1432.³¹ Solomon represented the Jewish community of Bologna in the aforementioned 1415 synod, as well as at a later one that met in Forlì in 1418.³² Solomon was also an owner of Ms. Levy 13 (2r), and he died by 13.3.1420.³³

Manuel, the youngest of Musettino’s three known sons, had at least two sons of his own, Binyamin/Guglielmo and Yequiti’el/Consiglio, who are mentioned in documents from

²⁵ COLORNI, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 220-21; CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 6-19 (as noted by Carpi, Musettino also had a daughter, Dolcetta); SCURO, *La presenza ebraica a Vicenza*, cit.; TRANIELLO, *Gli ebrei e le città del Polesine di Rovigo*, cit. (Gaio and Solomon had a bank there from 1388); MUZZARELLI, *I banchieri ebrei e la città*, 96 (Manuele di Musetto da Recanati, perhaps Musettino’s son, had a bank near S. Ippolito in Bologna in 1388); S. SIMONSOHN, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua*, Publications of the Diaspora Research Institute 17 (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher Ltd., 1977), 199-201 (the three brothers established partnerships in Montagnana and in Mantua).

²⁶ CARPI, “*Il ramo padovano*,” 7. Robert Bonfil (*Società ebraica e società cristiana: riflessioni sul significato e sui limiti di una convergenza*, in *Ebrei e cristiani nell’Italia medioevale e moderna*, ed. M. Luzzati [Roma: Carucci, 1988], 231-60 [248-89], cited by CAMPANINI, *Una famiglia ebraica*, 81) has suggested that Manuele the son of Musettino should be identified with Menaḥem Finzi son of Moses Finzi of Manuta or Assisi, about whom there is much evidence from the mid-15th century. In light of the evidence brought by Carpi, this is impossible, as Manuel son of Musettino had died by the time of the events described by Bonfil. Nor should Manuel son of Musettino be identified as the scribe Menaḥem son of Mošeh who copied New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary, Ms. 2367, as Bonfil (n. 58) has suggested, as this scribe clearly states that his grandfather was also named Menaḥem (f. 60v, 67v), though it is indeed possible, as Bonfil (n. 59) has also suggested, that Manuel son of Musettino is the scribe Menaḥem son of Mošeh of Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 2275 (De Rossi 351; Richler 1485), containing the astronomical tables of Jacob b. David b. Yom-Tov, copied in Bologna in 1395 (on this manuscript, see PERANI, *La cultura ebraica a Bologna*, 42-3; A. FREIMANN, *Jewish Scribes in Me-*

dieval Italy, in Alexander Marx - *Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1950), 294 no. 306). On the correspondence between the names Manuel and Menaḥem, see V. COLORNI, *La corrispondenza fra nomi ebraici e nomi locali*, in *Judaica Minora*, 661-825 (759-761).

²⁷ COLORNI, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 221; CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 15, who correctly notes (12 n. 56) that this convention took place in late 1415, and not early 1416, as is often stated. For the text of the convention’s decisions, see S.J.H. HALBERSTAM, *Ancient Decrees decided in Bologna and Forlì in 5176 and 5178 for all of the Italians* [Hebrew], in *Jubelschrift zum siebzigsten Geburtstage des Prof. Dr. H. Graetz* (Breslau: Druck und Verlag von S. Schottlaender, 1887), 53-62 (54), reprinted in L. FINKELSTEIN, *Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (New York: Philipp Feldheim, 1964), 282; see also the important discussions of this synod and those that followed shortly thereafter in U. CASSUTO, *Gli ebrei a Fiorenze nell’età del Rinascimento*, Pubblicazioni del R. Istituto di studi superiori, pratici e di perfezionamento in Firenze, Sezione di filosofia e filologia 40 (Firenze: Galletti e Cocci, 1918), 25-30, and SIMONSOHN, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua*, 5-6. For the correspondence of the Italian name Gaio with the Hebrew name Yiṣḥaq, see V. COLORNI, *La corrispondenza fra nomi ebraici e nomi locali*, 738.

²⁸ CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 16.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 10, 12.

³¹ MUZZARELLI, *I banchieri ebrei e la città*, 110; CAMPANINI, *Una famiglia ebraica*, 82.

³² COLORNI, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 221; CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 12; HALBERSTAM, *Ancient Decrees*, 55, 62; FINKELSTEIN, *Jewish Self-Government*, 282, 288.

³³ COLORNI, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 222.

Padua, Vicenza, and Bologna.³⁴ The activities of Gaio’s sons, Alueccio, Consiglio, and Yosef, are attested in documents from Padua and in other sources.³⁵ Solomon had several sons, including Yeputi’el/Consiglio, Avraham, Jacob, and Manuel, all of whom seemed to have lived in Bologna.³⁶ Yeputi’el and Avraham divided several of Solomon’s books on 4.12.1421, and Avraham inherited Ms. Levy 13 along with several other manuscripts that we can identify.³⁷ Avraham died before 4.7.1434,³⁸ and was the father of Yiṣḥaq and of the famed polymath Angelo/Mordechai Finzi, both of whom eventually moved from Bologna to Mantua by 1434.³⁹ The aforementioned house in the St. Stefano neighborhood in Bologna was eventually divided up between several of Yeputi’el and Avraham’s descendants, until most of it was foreclosed in 1454.⁴⁰

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 221; CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 14-5, 21-23; SCURO, *La presenza ebraica a Vicenza*, (Manuele’s son Binyamin operated in Vicenza from 1413, and eventually Binyamin’s own son Manuele is also documented there); TRANIELLO, *Gli ebrei e le città del Polesine di Rovigo* (the continued presence of the business interests of the descendants of Gaio son of Musettino in Rovigo over the course of the 15th century); MUZZARELLI, *I banchieri ebrei e la città*, 105 (Manuele’s own sons, Binyamin/Guglielmo and Consiglio/Yeputi’el, operated a bank near S. Barbara from 1416). On the correspondence between the names Binyamin and Guglielmo, see COLORNI, *La corrispondenza fra nomi ebraici e nomi locali*, 716-17, and on Consiglio and Yeputi’el, see *ibid.*, 743-45.

³⁵ CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 19-21; Colorni does not discuss the descendants of Gaio son of Musettino.

³⁶ COLORNI, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 222; CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 12.

³⁷ COLORNI, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 222; in addition to Ms. Levy 13, Colorni lists also Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. Hebr. 162 (Schwartz 69), a 14th c. copy of Aderet’s *Torat ha-Bayit*, as having gone to Avraham on this occasion. To this route we should add also Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Hébr. 315, a manuscript of Alfasi’s *Halakhot* completed in 1333. Avraham’s son Angelo/Mordechai eventually inherited all three of these manuscripts. See also below, note 59.

The Recanati Finzis

In 2003, Giulio Busi published an article in this journal on the lineage of the famed kabbalist Menaḥem Recanati, whom Busi identified as a member of the Finzi family.⁴¹ After bringing comments of several authors that simply refer to the Recanati as a Finzi, Busi then quotes a family history written by the 16th century Rabbi and Kabbalist Ya‘aqov Yiśra’el the son of Refa’el Finzi (d. 1570) in his personal manuscript copy of a *Siddur* (Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 2232 [De Rossi 1326; Richler 934], f. 106v):

ואלה תולדות משפחתנו לבית אבותינו עד המאור הגדול הרב המובהק המקובל הקדוש כמהר"ר מנחם זלה"ה בכח' בנימן זלה"ה אשר חיבר הפירוש התורה הנקרא ריקנאטי כפי אשר מצאתי בכתובים בטרם כל הרב הקדוש כמהר"ר מנחם זלה"ה הוליד בנים ובתוכם הוליד בן אחד וקרא שמו בנימן⁴² בשם <זקנו>⁴³ ז"ל ובנימן הוליד את הרב הגדול כמהר"ר יהודה מכב"י פנצי זלה"ה

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ COLORNI, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 222-23. On Angelo, see the recent discussion in G. BUSI, *La cultura ebraica a Mantova tra Medio Evo e Umanesimo*, in *Lombardia judaica: I secoli aurei di Mantova e un caso emblematico della Shoah milanese*, ed. G. Busi and E. Finzi (Firenze: Giuntina, 2017), 9-38 (12-17). On the correspondence between the names Angelo and Mordechai, see COLORNI, *La corrispondenza fra nomi ebraici e nomi locali*, 763-65.

⁴⁰ Much has been written on this episode, particularly as it led to the drawing up of an inventory of the household including the library of Solomon, Angelo’s son (see SIMONSOHN, *History of the Jews in the Duchy of Mantua*, 677-78; PERANI, *La cultura ebraica a Bologna*, 34-5; HOROWITZ, *Families and Their Fortunes*, 592). For a summary of the events leading to the foreclosure, see COLORNI, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 224-25.

⁴¹ BUSI, *Menaḥem Finzi of Recanati*. To be sure, this was already pointed out many years ago by Aaron Freimann (*Union Catalog of Hebrew Manuscripts and Their Location*, 2 vols. [New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1964], vol. 2 §8400), although, as mentioned by Busi (n. 9), Freimann’s comment went unnoticed by scholars.

⁴² There appears here a marginal note that is too illegible to decipher.

⁴³ The deleted text may read “אביו.”

אשר גם הוא היה חכם גדול ומקובל גדול כאשר ראיתי מפרושי וגם כאשר שמעתי מפי זקני שהוא היה חכם ומקובל גדול וקדוש ומת בפלא בנשיקה וכן הקדוש כמה"ר יהודה מכב"י פנצי זלה"ה הוליד שני בנים שם האחד כח' שבתי זלה"ה ושם השני יצחק זלה"ה וכח' שבתי זלה"ה הנ' הוליד בן וקרא שמו יהודה בשם אביו זלה"ה <כמ"ר שבתי [...] נולד לו בן אחר ושמו יצחק והיה חכם [ומק]ובל גדול [...] א בקבלה [...] וכן ידו [...] [...] מת בפלא [...] נשיקה כאשר [...] מת [...] [...] כמ"ר יהודה⁴⁴ זלה"ה וכח' יהודה זלה"ה הנ' מת בחור והניח את אשתו הרה וכן אחרי מותו אשתו ילדה בן זכר וקראו שמו יהודה בשם אביו והוא הנקרא יהודה אליעזר זלה"ה פנצי ויהודה אליעזר זלה"ה הוליד בן וקרא שמו רפאל ה"ה הכבוד אבא מורי זלה"ה אשר הוליד והניח בעולם בנים ובנות והנה אנחנו שלשה בנים שם הגדול (....) כח' שמואל ז"ל אשר הניח בן אחד וקרא שמו אשר י"ל ושם השני כח' שלמה יצ"ו והשלישי אני הצעיר זעירא דמן חברי יעקב ישראל יצ"ו ומכח' יצחק זלה"ה בן הקדוש כמה"ר יהודה מכב"י פנצי זלה"ה גם לו נולד בן וקרא שמו יואב זלה"ה ולכח' יואב זלה"ה הנ' היה לו שלשה בנים ה"ה כח' רפאל וכח' יחיאל וכח' עוזיאל זלה"ה ובכולם יש בנים ובנות.

Now these are the generations of our family, of the house of our fathers, down to the great luminary, the renowned Rabbi, the holy kabbalist Rabbi Menaḥem of blessed memory, son of Rabbi Binyamin, who wrote the commentary to the Torah called "Recanati," according to what I found in the documents: First of all, the holy Rabbi Menaḥem generated many children and among them a son he called Binyamin with the name of his father of blessed memory. Binyamin generated the great Rabbi Yehudah Finzi of blessed memory. He too was a great erudite and kabbalist, as I could see from his commentaries. I also heard from my grandfather that he was a great and holy scholar and kabbalist; he died in a prodigious way through a kiss. The holy Yehudah Finzi of blessed memory generated two sons, the one named Šabbetai and the other Yiṣḥaq. Šabbetai generated

a son and called him Yehudah like his father. He generated also another son, called Yiṣḥaq, who was a great scholar and kabbalist. Yehudah of blessed memory died young leaving his wife pregnant. After his death, his wife gave birth to a son and called him Yehudah like the father. He was called in fact Yehudah Eli'ezer Finzi of blessed memory. Yehudah Eli'ezer generated a son and called him Refa'el. This was my honored father, my teacher of blessed memory, who had many sons and daughters. We are three sons: the elder was Šemu'el of blessed memory, who generated a son and called him Ašer, may he live forever! The second is Šelomoh, may his Rock and his Redeemer protect him, and I am the third, the youngest, Ya'aqov Yiśra'el. Also, the holy Yiṣḥaq of blessed memory, son of Yehudah Finzi had a son, named Yo'av. Yo'av had three sons: Refa'el, Yehi'el and Uziel and they all had sons and daughters.⁴⁵

Busi combined this family history with several other pieces of data. First in importance is the dates of birth of other members of the Finzi family, six descendants of one Yehudah and two sons of Yehudah's son Šabbetai, as recorded in Ms. Levy 13 (folios 136v—137v),⁴⁶ as well as the records of sale found on this manuscript, according to which the manuscript was sold by Šabbetai to his uncle Mošeh the son of Binyamin (f. 2r).⁴⁷ Busi also noted that the brothers Šabbetai and Binyamin, Menaḥem Recanati's nephews from his brother Yehudah, are listed as the two clients of a manuscript of Šelomoh ben Avraham Adret of Barcelona's *Torat ha-bayit*, copied by a scribe named Ezra in Recanati in 1313,⁴⁸ thus allowing us to place members of the Finzi family in Recanati already at this time.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ A marginal note, much of which is unreadable.

⁴⁵ BUSI, *Menaḥem Finzi of Recanati*, 215-16 (I use here Busi's transcriptions and translation, with slight modifications to each).

⁴⁶ The family members listed and their birthdates are as follows (BUSI, *Menaḥem Finzi of Recanati*, 217 n. 21): Yehudah's children Šelomoh (b. 1266), Šabbetai (b. 1270), Mošeh (b. 1275), Binyamin (b. 1283), Yehi'el (b. 1287), and Bruna (no date); and Šabbetai's sons Yiṣḥaq (b. 1289) and Yehudah (b. 1297).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 217-18.

⁴⁸ Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. ebr. 558, f. 102r. For the importance of this manuscript for what it tells us of the quick, cross-region-

al spread of Aderet's work, see S. EMANUEL, Piskei Rabbi Menaḥem of Recanati [Hebrew], *Shenaton Ha-Mishpat Ha-Ivri: Annual of the Institute for Research in Jewish Law* 25 (2008): 139-98 (165).

⁴⁹ Emanuel (*ibid.*, 166-7) has rejected Busi's reconstructions of the early Finzi family tree. Yet the difficulties that Emanuel finds are in fact the result of Emanuel's own misreading of Busi's article: according to Emanuel, Busi claims that the Šabbetai and Binyamin the sons of Yehudah mentioned in the colophon of Vatican, Ms. ebr. 558, from 1313 are the sons of Recanati's grandson Yehudah ("השושלת" השנייה נזכרת בקולופון של כתב יד שנעתק בעיר רקנטי בשנת 1313, שם נמסר כי כתב היד הועתק עבור ר' שבתאי ור' בנימין בני ר' יהודה בן ר' בנימין פינצי – ובוסי מניח כי שני האחרונים הם

As Busi’s focus was on the lineage of Menaḥem Recanati and on his being a member of the Finzi family, he did not attempt to synthesize the information he gathered from the Hebrew manuscripts with the information gathered by Colorni and others primarily from archival documents.⁵⁰ Considering the years in which these colophons and other paratexts were written and the generations that are referenced, Busi’s evidence informs us of members of the Finzi family that lived prior to the aforementioned Gaio Finzi “iudeus de Roma,” the first Finzi mentioned in archival documents, who operated in Bologna in 1353. As we saw already above, several documents from Bologna and from cities in the Po Valley refer to members of the Finzi family as “of Recanati.”⁵¹ But how exactly were the Finzis whom I discussed above, the descendants of Gaio who are mentioned in the archival doc-

uments from the north, related to the Recanati Finzis described by Busi?

The Evidence of New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Ms. R934

The colophon of the so-called “Finzi Mishnah,” now New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Ms. R934, a manuscript of the order *Mo’ed* of the Mishnah, allows us to answer this question. In the colophon, Binyamin, the scribe of the manuscript, identifies himself as follows: “אני בנימן בכמהר יצחק ישרו בכר בנימן בהר”⁵² שלמה בהר יהודה בהר בנימן פינצי בהר מנחם זלה”ה⁵³”, “I am Binyamin the son of Yiṣḥaq the son of Binyamin the son of Šelomoh the son of Yehudah the son of Binyamin Finzi the son of Menaḥem from the family of Ra”m” (f. 174r).⁵³

מ (נכדו ובנו של רמ”מ), which would place Menaḥem Recanati as merely an older contemporary of his own great-grandchildren. But in truth, Busi claimed that Šabbetai and Binyamin are the sons of Recanati’s brother Yehudah (Busi, 217: “It is reasonable to suppose that Šabbetai and Binyamin were nephews of Menaḥem. In fact, Yehudah must have been one of the two brothers of Menaḥem, the third being Mošeh ben Binyamin Finzi”). Busi’s reconstruction of the Finzi family tree still stands, yet Emanuel is correct to reject Busi’s claim that Recanati died before 1311, as Recanati is the author of a letter and witness on a divorce document sent from Macerata to Recanati’s cousin in Rome 1345 (Frankfurt a/M, Goethe Universität, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Ms. 8°81, ff. 37v–38r, printed in part in S.E. STERN, *A Collection of Decisions Regarding Divorce*, in *Rabbi Shiloh Refa’el Memorial Volume*, ed. Y.E. MOVSHOVITZ (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1998), 88–92 [91–2]), and I believe we should follow the general lifespan of c. 1260–c. 1345 that Emanuel adopts from Ta-Shma (I.M. TA-SHMA, *On the Sema”g, the Abridgedment of Sema”g*, and the Literature of Abridged Versions, in *Compendium Libri Sefer Mitsvot Gadol*, by Rabbi Avraham ben Rabbi Efraim, ed. Y. HOROWITZ [Jerusalem: Mekize Nerdamim, 2004] (Hebrew), 13–21 [19 n. 17]).

⁵⁰ The lineage of the Finzi family members discussed by Busi can be schematized as follows:

1. Binyamin
- 2a. Yehudah son of Binyamin
- 2b. Menaḥem son of Binyamin

2c. Mošeh son of Binyamin

3a. Šelomoh son of Yehudah, 3b. Šabbetai son of Yehudah, 3c. Mošeh son of Yehudah, 3d. Binyamin son of Yehudah, 3e. Yehi’el son of Yehudah, 3f. Bruyah son of Yehudah; 3g. Binyamin son of Menaḥem

4a. Yiṣḥaq son of Šabbetai, 4b. Yehudah son of Šabbetai; 4c. Yehudah son of Binyamin

5a. Šabbetai son of Yehudah, 5b. Yiṣḥaq son of Yehudah

6a. Yehudah son of Šabbetai, 6b. Yiṣḥaq son of Šabbetai; 6c. Yo’av son of Yiṣḥaq

7a. Yehudah Eli’ezer son of Yehudah; 7b. Refa’el son of Yo’av, 7c. Yehi’el son of Yo’av, 7d. ‘Uzzi’el son of Yo’av

8a. Refa’el son of Yehudah Eli’ezer

9a. Šemu’el son of Refa’el; 9b. Šelomoh son of Refa’el; 9c. Ya’aqov Yiśra’el son of Refa’el

10a. Ašer son of Šemu’el; 10b. Refa’el son of Ya’aqov Yiśra’el

⁵¹ See above, near note 18.

⁵² In the margin, a later scribe added here additional ancestors, but due to a tear in the manuscript it is impossible to fully reconstruct what is written. As this note is clearly an addition of a later scribe, and as the generations added anyway precede those discussed here, I do not believe that the note bears an impact on the argument of this paper. Mordechai Glatzer has suggested the following reading of the marginal note: “בהר יהודה בהר מנחם <ל היש []>” [] בהר” see his detailed description of the manuscript in Sfardata (no. 0D050).

⁵³ This manuscript indirectly teaches us also of Binyamin’s son and grandson: Considering the close

He finished copying this manuscript on the 2nd of Iyar 1361. Binyamin the son of Yiṣḥaq also copied Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Urb. ebr. 32, a manuscript that includes a few tractates of Yehudah the son of Binyamin

Anav's commentary on Alfasi's *Sefer ha-Halakhot*, along with the *Sha'arei Dura*.⁵⁴ Of particular importance is a note that Binyamin wrote (f. 107r) marking the inclusion of a gloss written by his father Yiṣḥaq in his own hand on the

proximity of its text to the version of the Mishna in Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 3173 (de Rossi 138; Richler 710), Michael Krupp (*The Relationship between MS Parma De Rossi 138 of the Mishna and MS Vatican 31 of the Sifra, Seder Eliyahu Rabba, and Zutta*, «Tarbiz» 49, no. 1/2 [1979]: 194–96) suggested that it is likely that Binyamin copied directly from the Parma manuscript before passing it on to his son, the “Mošeh the son of Binyamin Finzi” who appears as an owner of the Parma manuscript (f. 1v); Mošeh's own son, Yehudah, is then listed as a later owner of the Parma Mishnah (*ibid.*). For the relationship between the text-type of the Finzi Mishnah and that of the Parma Mishnah, Krupp relied on H. FOX, *A Critical Edition of Mishnah Tractate Succah with an Introduction and Notes* (Hebrew; Ph.D. dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1979), כב; see also for a similar conclusion, A. GOLDBERG, *The Mishna Treatise Eruvin* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1986) [Hebrew], נז, and Y. SUSSMAN, *Manuscripts and Text Traditions of the Mishnah* (Hebrew), *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies: Studies in Talmud, Halacha and Midrash*, 1980, 215–50 (221 fn. 36); but cf. E. PINCZOWER, *Mishna Masekhet Sheqalim: Textual Problems and a Critical Edition* (Ph.D. dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1998) [Hebrew], 73, who argues that the evidence of tractate *Sheqalim* mitigates the likelihood of such a relationship. In a recent encyclopedia entry on Parma Ms. 3173, Moshe Bar-Asher writes that on the manuscript's title page it is written “that the manuscript belonged to Mošeh Pinzi (*sic* – Y.L.), the 11th century copyist of תורת כהנים *torat kohanim*, Vatican MS 31” (M. BAR-ASHER, *Parma A Manuscript of the Mishna*, in *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. G. KHAN, 2013). This, however, is a mistake: To be sure, it is indeed likely that a scribe named Mošeh copied some sections of Parma Ms. 3173, as it seems that these sections were written by the scribe of Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. ebr. 31 (see B. RICHLER, [ed.], *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma* [Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library, 2001], 153; PERANI, *Il manoscritto ebraico come fonte storica*, 91), and, as Umberto Cassuto (*Codices vaticani hebraici: codices 1-115*, vol. 1 [Città del Vaticano: In Bybliotheca vaticana, 1956],

40) noted long ago, the scribe of Vatican, Ms. Ebr. 31 identified himself as Mošeh in the acrostics of the poetic lines written before and after the works copied in the manuscript (see also B. RICHLER, [ed.], *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library*, Studi e Testi 438 [Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2008], 20-1). But there is no way of knowing the last name of this Mošeh, and in any event, the signature of Mošeh Finzi on Parma Ms. 3173 is written in a hand that is clearly different and significantly later than that of the manuscript's scribe. Perani (*Il manoscritto ebraico come fonte storica*, 91) has noted that Mošeh Finzi, the owner of Parma 3173, is likely the Mošeh the son of R. Binyamin “from Bologna” who purchased London, The British Library, Ms. Or. 2855 (Margoliouth 517), a manuscript of *Sefer ha-Hinukh*, for 49 ducats in 1373. Furthermore, it is possible that his son Yehudah is the “Yehudah Finzi” who bore witness to the sale of Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Hébr. 20 in Bologna in 1399 (f. 466v); see STEINSCHNEIDER, *Letteratura italiana dei giudei*, 121; PERANI, *La cultura ebraica a Bologna*, 59. Cassuto wrote long ago that these names on the Parma Mishna are “of the family Finzi of Mantua”; see U. CASSUTO, *The Destruction of the Yeshivas in Southern Italy in the 13th Century* (Hebrew), in *Studies in Memory of Asher Gulak and Samuel Klein* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Press Association, 1942), 139–52 (151 n. 2), and now in English translation in *Sefer Yuhasin* 6 (2018): 47–70 (68 n. 63).

⁵⁴ See RICHLER (ed.), *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library*, 619, and earlier, FREIMANN, *Jewish Scribes in Medieval Italy*, 250 no. 59. On Yehudah the son of Binyamin Anav, see G. BUSI, *Libri e scrittori nella Roma ebraica del medioevo*, *Eurasiatica* 14 (Rimini: Luisè Editore, 1990), 40-1; I.M. TA-SHMA, *Talmudic Commentary in Europe and North Africa - Literary History*, vol. Part Two: 1200-1400 (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2000) [Hebrew], 187-88; and S. EMANUEL, *Hidden Treasures from Europe*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 2019) [Hebrew], 60-2. On his commentary to Alfasi's *Halakhot*, in addition to Ta-Shma, see also E. CHWAT, *Studies in the Alfasi Gloss-Supplements* (Ph.D. dissertation, Bar-Ilan University, 1995) [Hebrew], 75-6 (this manuscript should be added to Chwat's list of manuscripts).

exemplar from which he was copying. Binyamin writes that his father wrote this gloss “when they studied tractate *Hullin* in Camerino.”⁵⁵

I propose that Binyamin the son of Yiṣḥaq, the scribe of JTS Ms. R934 and of Vatican, Ms. Urb. ebr. 32, should be identified as the Guglielmo son of Gaio who is mentioned in documents from Bologna as having lived in the Porta Ravenna neighborhood in 1387.⁵⁶ The

earliest ancestor whom Binyamin records in the colophon is “Menaḥem of Ram,” followed by his son, “Binyamin Finzi,”⁵⁷ and then Binyamin’s son, Yehudah. These should be identified, I believe, as the grandfather, father, and brother of Menaḥem Recanati, whom we knew already to be the son of a Finzi named Binyamin and the brother of a Finzi named Yehudah.⁵⁸ Recanati’s brother Yehudah, who we saw mentioned in the

⁵⁵ See RICHLER, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican*, 619; this is proof that Binyamin, who copied Vat. Urb. Ebr. 32 for “my friend, Binyamin the son of Yiṣḥaq of Narni,” seemingly did so from a private copy he had inherited from his father.

⁵⁶ For the correspondence of Guglielmo with “Binyamin,” see COLONI, *La corrispondenza fra nomi ebraici e nomi locali*, 716–17. The birth year of Gaio/Yiṣḥaq’s grandfather Šelomoh is listed as 1266 in Ms. Levy 13 f. 136r, meaning that in 1387 Binyamin/Guglielmo could be in his 70s, or perhaps even younger.

⁵⁷ It is perhaps noteworthy that Binyamin considers the elder Menaḥem to be “of the Ra”m family” whereas it is this Menaḥem’s son, Binyamin—Menaḥem Recanati’s father—who is the first to bear the family name Finzi. We should recall in this context that Ya‘aqov Yiśra’el ben Refa’el Finzi began his own history of the Finzi family, found on Parma Ms. 2232, with this same Binyamin Finzi. To be sure, the Finzis are referred to as the “Ra”m family in numerous medieval and early modern sources. In colophons and signs of ownership, for example, the Finzi family is often associated, even interchangeably so, with the Ram family, as noted frequently by Richler in his catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Palatine Library in Parma (see, e.g., RICHLER, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma*, 105, 125, and 134). The issue of the origin and meaning of this epithet and of the name “Finzi” are beyond the scope of this paper (on the latter, see the discussion in CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 1–2), and I will therefore share only two additional pieces of evidence that I came across over the course of my research. The first comes from Oxford, The Bodleian Library, Ms. Opp. 598 (Neubauer 1260), completed in Bologna in 1428 (this manuscript should be added to Perani’s list of manuscripts copied in Bologna, published in PERANI, *La cultura ebraica a Bologna*). The scribe, whose name was erased but whose father’s name, Šelomoh, and last name, Finzi, are still legible, wrote in reference to someone mentioned in the copied work that “כי הוא ממשפחת ר”ם” “for he is of the Ra”m family,

which in *gematria* is Finzi, and was of my family” (f. 276r, a note transcribed by M. BEIT-ARIÉ, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to Vol. I*, ed. R.A. MAY (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 205)—i.e., both “ר”ם” and “פינצי” equal 240. This, it should be said, of course only works with the spelling “פינצי,” which is the spelling endorsed by R. Yosef Zarq, as opposed to the spelling “פנצי,” in his *Niv Sfatayim* (formerly London, Jews’ College, Ms. Montefiore 367, f. 118r–v), in a section published in J. HACKER, *R. Elija of Massa Lombarda in Jerusalem* (Hebrew), «Zion» 50 (1985): 241–63 and discussed more recently in CARPI, *Il ramo padovano*, 2 (in manuscripts, the spelling “פנצי” also appears on occasion). Second is that Yiṣḥaq Emanuel son of Yehudah (5b in Busis’ schema, see above note 50) writes in a sign of ownership on London, The British Library, Ms. Add. 14763 (Margoliouth 904) f. 2r that he is of the Ra”m family, which is “Finzi in la”az” (“ממשפחת ר”ם פינצי בלע”ז”).

⁵⁸ I do not believe that the name of Menaḥem Recanati’s grandfather had been known until now. The knowledge of his name may allow future scholars to better identify evidence pertaining to the life of the famed Kabbalist. For example, one wonders if he should be identified with “Menaḥem the son of Binyamin the son of Menaḥem” the client of Leiden, The University Library, Ms. Or. 4720 of the Palestinian Talmud, copied by Rabbi Yeḥi’el the son of Rabbi Yequti’el the son of Rabbi Binyamin *ha-Rofeh* in Rome in 1289. Israel Zvi Feintuch (*On the Mishna Used for the Yerushalmi Ms. Leiden*, in *Versions and Traditions in the Talmud: Studies*, by Israel Zvi Feintuch, ed. D. SPERBER [Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1985] (Hebrew), 13–50) famously argued that parts of this manuscript were copied directly from Parma Ms. 3173. As we have seen, Parma Ms. 3173 was in the possession of the descendants of Menaḥem Recanati’s nephew in the 14th c; the relationship between these two manuscripts may thus strengthen the possibility that Menaḥem Recanati was the client of the Leiden manuscript. While Menaḥem Recanati should almost certainly

family history in Parma Ms. 2232 and from the ownership signatures in Ms. Levy 13, is then the great-great-grandfather of Binyamin/Guglielmo the scribe of JTS Ms. R934 and of Vatican, Ms. Urb. ebr. 32, and the ancestor, via his great-grandson Gaio/Yiṣḥaq (Binyamin/Guglielmo's father), of the Finzis documented in Bologna and in the Po Valley. To phrase this as an answer to the question that I raised above: The North Italian Finzis discussed by Colorni *et al.* are the descendants of Menaḥem Recanati's brother Yehudah.⁵⁹

Besides for being able to now link these two branches of the Finzi family, we are also in a better position to now map the migration of

the Finzi family from Rome to Northern Italy. Yiṣḥaq, the father of Binyamin/Guglielmo the scribe of JTS Ms. R934, is referred to in the documents as "iudeus de Roma," and is said to have been in Camerino and Bologna. His descendants are located also in Bologna and then in cities and towns in the Po Valley, although some of them, namely his grandson Musettino, are still identified in archival sources as "of Ancona," and to a lesser extent, as "of Recanati" or Rimini. We can thus see the movement out of Rome, likely in the first decades of the 14th century,⁶⁰ northwest to Camerino, then farther in that direction to Recanati, followed by a migration along the coast before moving inland

not be identified with the scribe Menaḥem the son of Binyamin who was active in Rome towards the end of the 13th century and was a colleague of Yehi'el's, we need not assume that he was already living in Recanati by 1289 and thus could not have been the client of Leiden Ms. Or. 4720. For the suggestion that the Recanati should be identified with the Roman scribe Menaḥem the son of Binyamin, see M. DUKAN, *Menaḥem b. Benjamin, scribe et savant juif italien de la fin du XIII^{ème} siècle*, «Italia» 9, no. 1–2 (1990): 19–61, who ultimately rejects this option, and, in its defense, M. IDEL, *R. Menaḥem Recanati the Kabbalist* (Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv: Schocken Publishing House Ltd., 1998) [Hebrew], 55–65, supported by TA-SHMA, *On the Sema"ng, the Abridgement of Sema"ng, and the Literature of Abridged Versions*, 19 n. 17. This possibility was convincingly refuted by M. BEIT-ARIÉ, *The Identity of the Kabbalist Menaḥem Recanati* (Hebrew), «Tarbiz» 67, no. 4 (1998): 573–77 and by BUSI, *Menaḥem Finzi of Recanati*, 213–14. Idel (*Kabbalah in Italy, 1280–1510: A Survey* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011], 375–76 n. 50) has promised to return to this issue, but to the best of my knowledge he has not yet done so in print. On Recanati's biography, see also MENAḤEM RECANATI, *Commentary on the Daily Prayers*, ed. G. CORAZZOL, *The Kabbalistic Library of Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola 3* (Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2008), 21–34, yet note also the revised chronology of his life in light of the evidence cited above in note 49.

⁵⁹ The recognition that these two branches are related in this way allows to now reconstruct the history of the ownership of Ms. Levy 13 more fully (although not completely): The manuscript was likely created by Yehudah the son of Binyamin Finzi himself, in two stages, first in 1265 and then

in 1269; Yehudah inscribed in it the birthdates of his children. The manuscript was then passed on to Yehudah's son, Šabbetay, after his father's library was dispersed, who then inscribed in it the birth dates of his own two sons, Yiṣḥaq and Yehudah. As mentioned, Šabbetay sold the manuscript to his uncle, Mošeh, his father Yehudah's brother. The manuscript somehow made its way back into the possession of Yehudah's descendants, but it was not in the possession of Šabbetay's children, but rather, it was now in the possession of the descendants of Šabbetay's older brother, Šelomoh. The first of these descendants whose name can be deciphered is Mošeh the son of Mošeh (STEINSCHNEIDER, *Letteratura italiana dei guide*, 121; COLORNI, *The Lineage of the Finzi Family*, 219). It was then owned by his son, Šelomoh (STEINSCHNEIDER, 121; COLORNI, 221). Upon his death, Šelomoh's library was divided on December 4th, 1421, and the manuscript came into the possession of his son Avraham (STEINSCHNEIDER, 121; COLORNI, 222), and then, in February of 1446, it went to Avraham's son Mordechai (STEINSCHNEIDER, 121; COLORNI, 223). As noted by Steinschneider (121), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Hébr. 899, a manuscript of scientific works, similarly went to Mordechai on this occasion (f. 4r); Colorni (223) added also Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. Hebr. 162 (Schwartz 69), a 14th c. copy of Aderet's *Torat ha-Bayit*; and, as I noted above, to this route we should add also Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Hébr. 315, a manuscript of Alfasi's *Halakhot* completed in 1333; see above, note 37.

⁶⁰ On the continued presence of the Finzis in Rome in the early decades of the 14th century, see above note 49 and the evidence discussed below in Appendix I.

to Bologna and then onwards into the Po Valley proper. And with them, it seems, came a significant number of Hebrew manuscripts, only some of which are still known of today.

It is my hope that this brief essay will help future scholars further detail the histories of the Finzi family and their books. In the following appendices, I detail information on several other early members of the Finzi family; list the manuscripts discussed in this article; and provide a family tree of the first generations of the Finzis. An image of the colophon of JTS Ms. R934 is also appended.

Appendix I: Some Additional Members of the Finzi Family

Avigdor the son of Šelomoh

Avigdor the son of Šelomoh is listed as the client of three manuscripts written by Solomon b. Joseph in the 1330s: (1) Parma, Biblioteca Palatina Ms. 2068 (De Rossi 1422; Richler 551), a manuscript of David Kimhi’s commentary on the minor prophets; (2) the miscellany Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Hébr. 839; (3) a manuscript of Nahmanides’ commentary to Exodus in private possession. According to Richler, “Finzi” appears as Avigdor’s last name in the last of these manuscripts.⁶¹ In Parma Ms. 2068, Avigdor writes in his own hand comments to Zechariah 5:5-11 that he says that he learnt from his uncle “Mošeh the son of Yehudah of the Ram family.” Indeed, in another manuscript, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 3099 (De Rossi 694; Richler 677), produced by Menaḥem Šemah ben Avrahm *ha-Rofe* in Rome in 1323, Avigdor added a comment in which he listed his full lin-

eage as Avigdor the son of Šelomoh the son of Yehudah from the Ram family (f. 61r). We can conclude therefore that Avigdor’s father, Šelomoh, is to be identified as the Šelomoh who was the eldest son of Menaḥem Recanati’s brother Yehudah; Avigdor was thus the brother of Binyamin, the grandfather of Binyamin ben Yišḥaq the scribe of JTS Ms. R934.⁶²

The Descendants of Mošeh the son of Binyamin

In the sources I have discussed until now, only little mention has been made of the third son of Binyamin Finzi the son of Menaḥem, Mošeh—the brother of Yehudah and of Menaḥem Recanati—who, as mentioned above, appears as an owner of, Ms. Levy 13, having purchased the manuscript from his nephew, Šabbetai the son of Yehudah (f. 2r). From ownership marks on this manuscript, it can be seen that the manuscript did not remain in the possession of his descendants, at least not for that many generations, as it was eventually again in the possession of the descendants of his brother Yehudah.⁶³ The manuscript is thus not of help in learning of Mošeh’s offspring, but it seems that some archival documents can be of help in this regard: Maria Emilia Garutto has discussed documents pertaining to members of the Finzi family from San Gimignano, the earliest of which date to the 1330s, namely, one Musetto the son of Beniamino Finsi (*sic*) and his sons Manuel and Leuccio, who were known as having been of Rome.⁶⁴ I suggest that Musetto should be identified as the Mošeh in question, known from the contract and ownership signature on Ms. Levy 13 (f. 2r); the documents discussed by Garutto show that he had died by 1344.

⁶¹ RICHLER, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Palatina*, 105, where the connection between these three manuscripts is noted. See also the Sfar-data entry (#ZA35) for the manuscript in private collection, where it is suggested that this Avigdor the son of Solomon was the scribe of Budapest, The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Ms. Kaufmann A 130/1, the sole known manuscript of Joseph ibn Aknin’s commentary to Mishnah *Avot*, *Sefer ha-Musar*, copied in 1335 for his teacher Netanel b. Binyamin.

⁶² We should therefore entertain the possibility

that the copy of two letters on biblical matters in Parma Ms. 2068 (fols. 204r-208v) sent to “Menaḥem the son of Binyamin” may have originally been sent to Menaḥem Recanati by a member of the Finzi family, perhaps from Rome.

⁶³ See above, note 59.

⁶⁴ See M.E. GARUTTO, *Prestatori ebrei e prestatori cristiani nella San Gimignano del Trecento*, in *Miscellanea storica della Valdelsa* 118 (2013): 121–52 (136–37).

Lastly, several *Mahzorim* of the Roman rite contain a prayer written on occasion of a meeting of the representatives of the Jewish community of Rome with “the court” that took place on the 21st of Sivan/June 18th 1321.⁶⁵ This seems to refer to the court of Pope John Paul XXII, at the time in Avignon, as the Pope had ordered the burning of the Talmud in France and had been contemplating taking various measures against the Jews of Rome, where the Talmud was eventually burned on Shavuot of 1322.⁶⁶ The prayer itself is quite similar to that for Public Fasts outlined in tractate *Ta’anit* of the Mishnah, and the manuscripts include a halakhic comment on the prayer which is prefaced as follows:

זאת התפילה העתקתי מקונטרס אחד מכמה”ר שלמה בה”ר יצחק זלה”ה ומצאתי בסוף זאת התפילה מכתבת מורי הרב הנזכר וזה לשונו, זה מצאתי בפירוש מחצי סדר מועד האחרון ממ”ר יהודה יש”ר בכ”ר משה דפינצי מב”ע. ונראה שהיה צריך תיקון בקצת דברים...

I copied this prayer from a booklet of my teacher, R. Šelomoh the son of R. Yiṣḥaq, and I found at the end of the prayer, in the handwriting of my teacher, as follows, “I found this in the commentary of the second half of *Seder Moed* of my teacher R. Yehudah the son of R. Mošeh Finzi, and it seems that it needs correction in a number of ways...”⁶⁷

From the language of this note, it is unclear if the *prayer itself* was authored by Yehudah the son of Mošeh—meaning that he would

have operated in Rome around 1321—or whether it is the Halakhic comment that follows that is to be attributed to him.⁶⁸ Either way, as the earliest manuscripts containing this note are from the end of the 14th century, we can reasonably date this Yehudah the son of Mošeh Finzi as having flourished in the early to mid-14th century. He could then be a third son of Mošeh the son of Binyamin, but this information is not enough for us to be certain of this relationship.

Appendix II: Manuscripts Mentioned in this Article

Budapest, The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Ms. Kaufmann A 130/1

Cluj, The Romanian Academy of Sciences, Ms. O. 301

Frankfurt a/M, Goethe Universität, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Ms. 8081 (formerly Munich, Private Collection of Abraham Merzbacher, Ms. 45)

Frankfurt, Goethe Universität, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Hebr. oct. 12 (formerly Munich, Private Collection of Abraham Merzbacher, Ms. 90)

Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. Levy 13 (formerly Asher Catalogue no. 86, Ms. 2)

⁶⁵ E.g., Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 3004 (De Rossi 483; Richler 926), f. 173v; Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 3008 (De Rossi 959; Richler 890), f. 376r; Cluj, The Romanian Academy of Sciences, Ms. O. 301, p. 628; New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Ms. 4510 f. 304a; London, The British Library, Ms. Add. 27070 (Margoliouth 634), f. 53r; Oxford, The Bodleian Library, Ms. Opp. Add. fol. 11 (Neubauer 1057); Jerusalem, The National Library of Israel, Ms. 8^o4281 (formerly Breslau, Jüdische-theologisches Seminar, Ms. 67), f. 390r; Frankfurt, Goethe Universität, Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian Senckenberg, Hebr. oct. 12 (formerly Munich, Private Collection of Abraham Merzbacher, Ms. 90), f. 1v.

⁶⁶ For an account of this entire episode, see HERMANN VOGELSTEIN and PAUL RIEGER, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom*, vol. Erster Band: 139 v. Chr.—1420

n. Chr. (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1896), 305-9. See also E. BIRNBAUM, *Mahzor Roma: The Cluj Manuscript Dated 5159 A.M./1399 C.E. and the Public Fast in Rome in 1321 C.E.*, «The Jewish Quarterly Review» 76, no. 2 (1985): 59-95; S. GRAYZEL, *The Talmud and the Medieval Papacy*, in *Essays in Honor of Solomon B. Freehof*, ed. W. JACOB, F.C. SCHWARTZ, and V.W. KAVALER (Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Congregation, 1964), 220-45 (232-33), and IDEM, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century*, ed. K.R. STOW, vol. II: 1254-1314 (New York and Detroit: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America and Wayne State University Press, 1989), 316-19.

⁶⁷ Parma Ms. 3008, f. 378r.

⁶⁸ Richler (*Catalogue*, 222) is of the opinion that the prayer itself was composed by Yehudah the son of Mošeh Finzi.

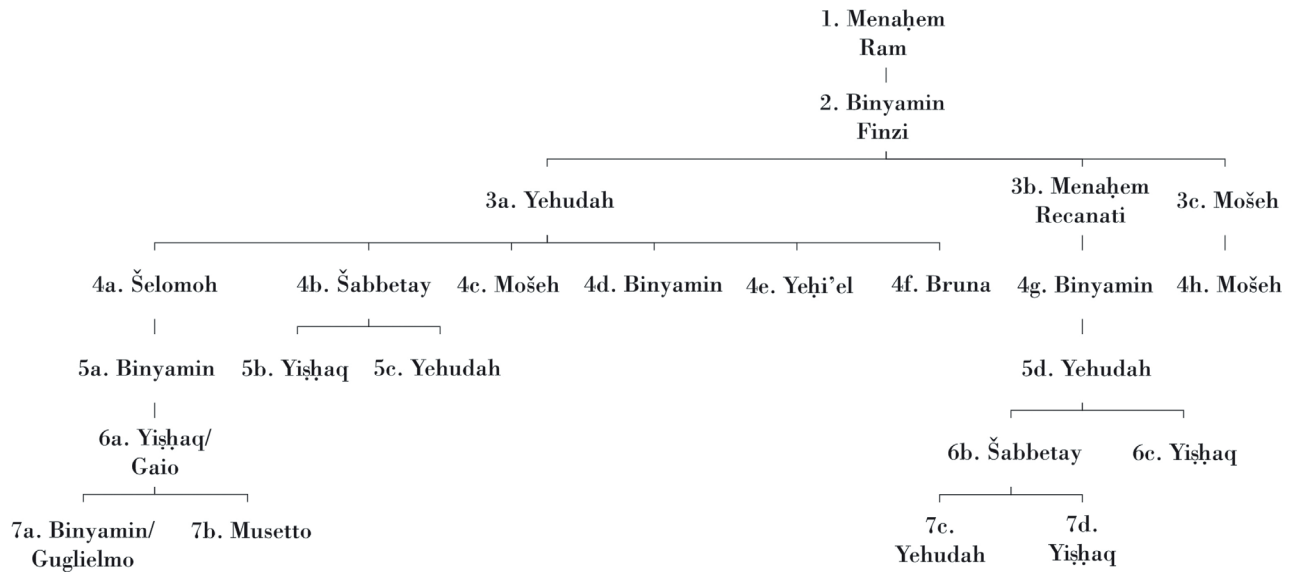
The “Finzi Mishnah” and the Early Generations of the Finzi Family

- Jerusalem, The National Library of Israel, Ms. 8^o4281 (formerly Breslau, Jüdische-theologisches Seminar, Ms. 67)
- Leiden, The University Library, Ms. Or. 4720
- London, Jews’ College, Ms. Montefiore 367 (formerly; current whereabouts unknown)
- London, The British Library, Ms. Add. 14763 (Margoliouth 904)
- London, The British Library, Ms. Add. 27070 (Margoliouth 634)
- London, The British Library, Ms. Or. 2855 (Margoliouth 517)
- New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary Ms. R934
- New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Ms. 4510
- New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary, Ms. 2367
- Oxford, The Bodleian Library, Ms. Opp. 598 (Neubauer 1260)
- Oxford, The Bodleian Library, Ms. Opp. Add. fol. 11 (Neubauer 1057)
- Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Hébr. 20
- Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Hébr. 315
- Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. Hébr. 899
- Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 2068 (De Rossi 1422; Richler 551)
- Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 3004 (De Rossi 483; Richler 926)
- Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 3008 (De Rossi 959; Richler 890)
- Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 2232 (De Rossi 1326; Richler 934)
- Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 2275 (De Rossi 351; Richler 1485)
- Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 3099 (De Rossi 694; Richler 677)
- Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms. 3173 (de Rossi 138; Richler 710)
- Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. ebr. 31
- Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. ebr. 558
- Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Urb. ebr. 32
- Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. Hebr. 162 (Schwartz 69)
- (Manuscript of Nahmanides’ commentary to Exodus in private possession)

Appendix III: The Finzi Family Tree

The following family tree extends from the earliest known member of the Finzi family, “Menaḥem of Ram,” until the generation of Binyamin the scribe of JTS, Ms. R934 (7a). The

family tree published by Colorni begins with Gaio (6a), the father of this Binyamin; the lineage discussed by Busi begins with the first Binyamin (2) and extends via the descendants of Menaḥem Recanati (3b).



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SUMMARY

The Finzi family is one of the oldest and best-known of the Italian Jewish families. In this article, the evidence of the colophon of New York, The Jewish Theological Seminary, Ms. R934 (also known as the “Finzi Mishnah”) is adduced in order to reconstruct the early generations of the Finzi family tree. While scholars have already attempted to reconstruct the family tree in the past, it is shown that this colophon allows us to stretch the family tree yet further back in time and to connect branches of the family that were otherwise studied in isolation from one another. Further, it is shown that this evidence can help us uncover the histories of various Hebrew manuscripts.

KEYWORDS: Hebrew Manuscripts; The Mishnah; Book History; The Finzi Family; Menaḥem Recanati.

Appendix IV: JTS Ms. R934 174r

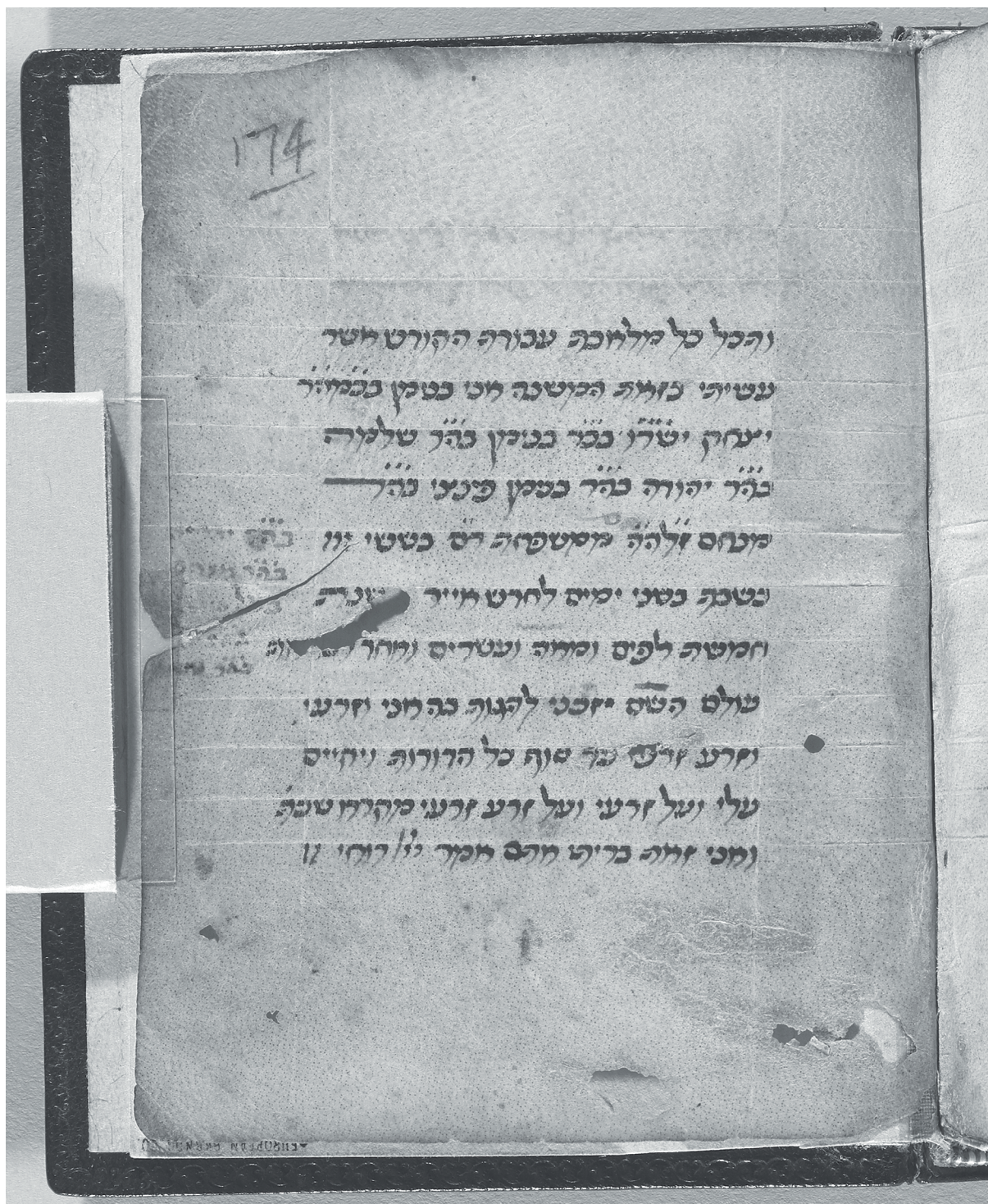


Image provided by The Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary.

