

‘BIQQURE HA-‘ITTIM ARE THE FIRST FRUITS ... WHICH INCLUDE SOME
NICE THINGS AND MATTERS OF KNOWLEDGE AND BENEFIT’:
THE HEBREW PERIODICAL OF THE HASKALAH IN GALICIA¹

Overall description of the *Biqqure ha-‘Ittim* Index Project

Pursuant to the publication of the *Ha-Me’assef* Index – *Sha’ar LaHaskalah: An Annotated Index to Ha-Me’assef, the First Hebrew Periodical (1783-1811)* – in 2000 by Magnes Press,² I continued with the indexing project of the early Hebrew Haskalah periodicals. Now, upon completion of this phase, I am presenting the second monograph and Index – a computerized and annotated index to *Biqqure ha-‘Ittim*, the journal of the Haskalah in Galicia and the Austrian empire that was published in Vienna from 1820 to 1831. The book is titled *Biqqure ha-‘Ittim – Biqqure ha-Haskalah [Biqqure ha-‘Ittim – the ‘First Fruits’ of Haskalah]*.

Biqqure ha-‘Ittim was the second major Hebrew periodical, which was published continuously for several years after the demise of *ha-Me’assef*.³ Some critics even considered *Biqqure ha-‘Ittim* to be a direct continuation of *ha-Me’assef*, notwithstanding the difference in style and contents. Undoubtedly, the launching of the Viennese journal marks the transition of the centre of Hebrew Haskalah literature from Germany to the Austrian empire.

The pages of the new periodical attest to the transition of the ‘centre of gravity’ to Vienna as the *maskilim* were attempting to establish their own version of the Enlightenment. Having gotten their ideology from Berlin, they endeavoured to translate it to the needs of the new local circumstances. In the 1820s, the journal became the central organ of publication by established Haskalah writers as well as by aspiring writers who were destined to make a name for themselves in years to come. Now, with the assistance of the current Index, it is possible to trace the developmental

¹ The following article represents a section of the English Abstract of the monograph and index on *Biqqure ha-‘Ittim*, published by Magnes Press, *Biqqure ha-‘Ittim – Biqqure ha-Haskalah [Biqqure ha-‘Ittim – The ‘First Fruits’ of Haskalah]* Jerusalem 2005.

² M. Pelli, *Sha’ar la-Haskalah [Gate to Haskalah]: An Annotated Index to ha-Me’assef, the First Hebrew Periodical (1783-1811)*, Jerusalem 2000.

³ *Biqqure ha-‘Ittim*, 1-12 (1820-1831).

processes of these writers and of the Galician school in its formative years.

As its name implies, *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* represented the 'first fruits' harvested by the *maskilim* in the Austrian empire, ranging from Galicia to Moravia and Italy. Their creative writings, as well as their intellectual and scholarly essays in *Judaica* and *Hebraica* and in the general area of the humanities and the sciences, can be found in the journal. Their works covered a diversified range of topics and disciplines such as literature, language, Scripture commentary, history, science, and education. As a scholarly journal, *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* published essays on ethics, religion and philosophy as well as learned biographies of past Jewish luminaries, especially in the field of Jewish scholarship.

All in all, this periodical facilitates a glimpse into the Hebrew Enlightenment in the Austro-Hungarian empire as the so-called Galician Haskalah was attempting to carry on the tradition established by the German Haskalah. Like its German predecessor, its main goal was to resuscitate the Jewish people by reviving the Hebrew language and its literature and by modernizing and updating Hebrew culture.⁴

The Index to *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*, which will be published shortly, is an alphabetical author-and-subject index, which covers all articles, essays, biographies, poems, stories, fables, epigrams, news, editorial comments, and announcements included in all sections and departments of the 12-volume journal. This comprehensive list contains cross-references to items reprinted from the first Haskalah journal, *ha-Me'assef*. In addition, the Index lists all title pages (covers) of the volumes and title pages of sections and departments as well as the publisher's notices usually printed in German with Hebrew letters. Also, all communal reports, general and practical information and monetary tables, printed in German with Hebrew letters. All articles and items printed in the only German supplement bound with volume five were also included. These German titles, whether in Hebrew characters or in Gothic script, were translated into

⁴ See M. Pelli, *The Age of Haskalah*, Leiden 1979, ch. 4, on the Hebrew language in the Haskalah, 73-90, and my article on the revival of Hebrew in the Haskalah, 'The Revival of Hebrew Began in Haskalah: *ha-Me'assef*, the First Hebrew Periodical, as a Vehicle for the Renewal of the Language', *Leshonenu la'Am* 50.2 (1999) 59-75 (Hebrew). See also, idem, *The Circle of ha-Me'assef Writers at the Dawn of Haskalah*, Israel 2001, ch. 6, on Hebrew, 175-195 (Hebrew).

Hebrew. All materials from the calendar *‘Ittim Mezumanim*, published with the first two volumes of *Biqqure ha-‘Ittim*, but omitted from almost all available copies of the journal in research libraries, were also listed. I found these rare copies and incorporated their listings in the Index. Similarly, other omissions from volumes one and two, as discussed in the Introduction, were included in the Index as well.

The cross-referenced author-and-subject headings cover such topics as concepts, events and public affairs, institutions and organizations, contemporary and historical personalities and authors, various literary genres and book titles. Also, Judaic subjects, such as Bible, Talmud, Hebrew language and literature, translations, and disciplines in the humanities and in the sciences. Entries within each author and subject heading were also sorted and arranged alphabetically, as customary. Annotations were added to many entries, identifying authors, deciphering initials, and providing cross-references and some bibliographical data. The indexing was done, for the most part, according to the system used by Haifa University Library for its *Index to Hebrew Periodicals*.

As stated in the English abstract to the previous Index on *ha-Me’assef*,⁵ I began to work on the *ha-Me’assef* Index in the early 1970s, proceeding on and off while continuing to do research on the literature of the Haskalah. Throughout the years, rare volumes of *ha-Me’assef* were checked in research libraries in Israel, Europe and America, and a complete, updated and annotated working copy of the journal was compiled. Based on this working copy, the Index was keyed into a bi-lingual computer, while a software programme, written especially for this project, expanded, cross-referenced, sorted, and arranged all entries according to our specifications. Needless to say, bibliographical and editorial work and proofreading accompanied each phase of the indexing activities. Since 1998, similar work was done on the *Biqqure ha-‘Ittim* Index, leading to its completion in 2004.

The ‘inventory’ of the Index contained 916 original entries, which were cross-referenced and expanded in the final run of the software to 3,532 items. The final output (prior to final editing) culminated in 227 double-column, folio-size pages totaling some 136,914 words and 3,608,064 bytes.

⁵ *Sha’ar la-Haskalah*, ii.

Now, upon its publication, the Index should serve as a reliable reference tool for viewing and reviewing the major topics and issues that occupied the minds of the editors and the writers of the journal. Readers may now examine the scope and the character of the material published in the 12 volumes of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*. Likewise, it is now convenient to assess the contribution of participating authors to the Haskalah literature, and to explore various literary genres employed by the authors and editors of the journal. Similarly, the writers' cultural and intellectual endeavours in various aspects of Judaica, Hebraica, and secular disciplines are now conveniently sorted and arranged.

From a literary point of view, the organized literary 'inventory' of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*, classified according to genres, lists, for example, 265 poems, 17 stories, 16 idylls in prose, 66 fables, 78 epigrams, 40 riddles, as well as 18 biographies (including items recycled from *ha-Me'assef*). For the student of Jewish intellectual and social history, religion, education and Jewish life, such categories are also available in the index.

Following is an abridged abstract of the Introduction to the *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* Index. The analytical Introduction examines the background that led to the publication of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* in Austria and to the transition of the centre of the Haskalah from Germany to Austria. As part of this background, several periodicals that were published elsewhere after *ha-Me'assef* had been closed have been probed for possible influence on *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*. An evaluation of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* and its editors and writers in light of their literary, cultural and intellectual publications on the basis of an analytical study of the Index, is presented in the Introduction.

The transition of the Haskalah from Germany to Austria

The Introduction to the Index examines some of the cultural trends that developed among the *maskilim* in Germany since the demise of *ha-Me'assef* first in 1797 and then in 1811, relating them to the emergence of the Haskalah in Austria and to the launching of the periodical *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*. The folding of *ha-Me'assef* came as a result of the changes in cultural needs of the intellectual elite among the *maskilim* who increasingly resorted to the use of German and German culture and literature instead of Hebrew. This trend is documented in the correspondence

between the first editor of *ha-Me'assef*, Isaac Euchel, and its last editor, Shalom ha-Kohen,⁶ and in the writings of the contemporary *maskil* Judah Loeb ben Ze'ev,⁷ among others.

Nevertheless, there were attempts to revive that Hebrew journal. First, in 1799, there was an unsuccessful attempt, as Ha-Kohen prompted Euchel to assume again the editorship of *ha-Me'assef*.⁸ Then, in 1809, ha-Kohen himself launched the new *ha-Me'assef*, which continued publication for three years, till 1811. Seven years after the closing of the journal, in 1818, there was an attempt to publish selections from *ha-Me'assef*, a plan that most probably did not materialize.⁹

The emergence of the Haskalah in Austria is said to have been a gradual process, following in the footsteps of the Berlin Haskalah, although its course eventually took a somewhat different path. While the early buds of the Haskalah in Austria could be traced to the Tolerance Edict of Joseph II in 1782, other trends facilitated the introduction of the Haskalah to the empire. This writer notes that two institutions which became active in Vienna in these years led to the growing interest in the Haskalah. They were the Hebrew printing presses, which employed Hebrew proofreaders and editors, and the beginning of modern Hebrew schools and the practice of private Hebrew tutoring. Both institutions attracted noted Hebrew writers and educators, the carriers of Hebrew culture, to Vienna. These Hebraists were instrumental in cultivating the Hebrew culture in their new place. Among them were prominent *maskilim*, such as Shmuel Romanelli, Judah Loeb ben Ze'ev, Shlomo Löwisoohn, and Meir Obernik.

⁶ Sh. ha-Kohen, *Ktav Yosher: An Epistle of Righteousness*, Vienna 1820, 95f. (Hebrew). Euchel, the first editor of *ha-Me'assef*, bemoaned in 1800 the changing times in his florid style: 'I have also tasted the dregs of the cup of reeling [the cup of poison], which came up on the nation of Judea and its enlighteners. The days of love have passed, gone are the days of the covenant between me [or between it, namely the Hebrew language] and the children of Israel [...]. They have run away, and they have gone!'

⁷ J. Loeb ben Ze'ev, *Otzar ha-Shorashim: [Treasure of Roots]* I, Vienna 1807, in the introduction, 17f. (my pagination) (Hebrew).

⁸ M. ha-Levi Letteris, *Sefer Mikhteve 'Ivrit: [Book of Hebrew Writings]*, Vienna 1866, 136f. (Hebrew).

⁹ *Ankündigung für Freunde der hebräischen Litteratur*, Berlin 1818, a 15 page pamphlet bound at the end of volume 1 of the new *ha-Me'assef* (1809), which I found in the State library in Berlin. It was also published as an article, 'Ankündigung für Freunde der hebräischen Litteratur', *Jedidja* 2, 1, 1, 117-122.

When Shalom ha-Kohen came to Vienna in 1820 at the invitation of Anton Schmid, the publisher of Hebrew books and owner of the printing press,¹⁰ to become a proofreader and editor, he found the ground prepared for launching a journal, following somewhat in the footsteps of *ha-Me'assef*.

Phenomena of Jewish and Hebrew Periodicals in the early 19th century

While this is the generally accepted overview of the backdrop leading to the appearance of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*, this writer undertook to examine some other phenomena on the Jewish publications scene that he believes have some bearing on the launching of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*.

The first phenomenon is the publication of several Jewish journals, which attempted to fill the lacuna of the demised Hebrew journal, *ha-Me'assef*. In 1806, between the first *ha-Me'assef* and the renewed one, two Jewish educators, David Fraenkel and Joseph Wolf, published a German periodical, *Sulamith*.¹¹ It undertook to promote culture and humanism among the 'Jewish nation' and to advocate brotherhood and tolerance. In addition to the bulk of material in German, *Sulamith* also published poems and articles in Hebrew. Its interest in Hebrew was also manifested in articles in German which were dedicated to leading Haskalah authors such as Naphtali Hirsch Wessely and Judah Loeb ben Ze'ev. In addition, the journal published bi-lingual poems by Shalom ha-Kohen. *Sulamith* was intended to serve the remnants of the Hebrew *maskilim* who wished to read a Hebrew periodical or were nostalgic about *ha-Me'assef* and its authors.

The second German Jewish periodical was *Jedidiah*, published first in 1817 by Jeremias Heinemann, as a religious, ethical and pedagogic quar-

¹⁰ On Schmid, see M. ha-Levi Letteris, 'A Few Words Concerning the History of the Printing Trade', *Biqqurim* 2 (1866) 20-38 (Hebrew). Also H.D. Friedberg, *The History of Hebrew Printing in those Cities in Europe*, Antwerp 1934, 94-101 (Hebrew); A. Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte 1482-1882*, Vienna 1887, 143-148; J. Jacobs and S. Mannheim, 'Schmid, Anton von', *Jewish Encyclopaedia.com*; P. Csendes, ed., *Österreichische biographisches Lexikon 1815-1950 X*, Vienna 1994, 24; R. Julius, 'Anton von Schmid – Royal Printer and Nobleman', *Jewish Book Annual*, 51 (1993) 195-202.

¹¹ *Sulamith*, Herausgegeben von D. Fränkel und Wolf, Leipzig 1806. It was 'eine Zeitschrift zur Beförderung der Kultur und Humanität unter der jüdischen Nation'.

terly.¹² It, too, carried articles and poems in Hebrew, and was intended as well to serve Hebrew *maskilim*.

Meanwhile in Amsterdam, the Hebrew society 'Tongeleth' launched its Hebrew periodical, *Biqqure Tongeleth*, in 1820, prior to the publication of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*.¹³

This writer asserts that these three periodicals must have been on the desk of Shalom ha-Kohen and Anton Schmid when they were contemplating their plans to publish a new Hebrew journal in Austria. Unquestionably, the orientation of these periodicals, the nature of the material they published and their contents, and the service that they rendered to the German and Hebrew reading public prompted the publisher and editor to undertake a similar enterprise in Austria. Apparently, the very title of the Amsterdam periodical *Biqqure Tongeleth* had influenced the editor's decision to use a similar title for *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*.

Announcing the launching of an annual and a calendar

In March 1820, Schmid announced that he was going to publish a calendar, titled *'Ittim Mezumanim*, and an annual by the name of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*.¹⁴ The simultaneous publication of the annual and the calendar attests to an innovative concept. According to this writer, these two publications were interrelated and interdependent, a view that has not been discussed in any critical writing on *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*.

To understand this innovative concept, this writer proposes to examine the contemporary phenomenon of Jewish pocket calendars. The contents, style and essence of some calendars were examined while particular attention was given to Joseph Perl's special calendar, *Tzir Ne'eman*. It was published in 1814-1816, with a literary section titled 'Luah Ha-Lev'.¹⁵ The combination of a calendar and a literary section is said to

¹² *Jedidjah*, eine religiöse, moralische und pädagogische Zeitschrift I, 1 (1817).

¹³ בכורי תועלת, חבור כולל, שירים, מאמרים למוזיקים, ומכתבים אשר נחברו ונאספו יחד על ידי אנשי חברת תועלת, אמשטרדם ה' תק"פ

אנקינדיגונג איינעס פאלשטענדיגען איזראעליטישען קאלענדערס אויף דאז יאהר תקפ"א. A. Schmid, אונטער דעם טיטעל עתים מזומנים

לוח על שנת תקע"ד לבריאת עולם לחשבון עם ישראלי עם לוח נוצרי רומא, ולוח יונים ורייסען וחגאות שלהם... ונוסף לזה לוח הלב אשר כל קורא בו ימצא מרגוע לנפשו, טארנאפאל תקע"ד

ציר נאמן הלוח השני: ציר נאמן לשנת התקע"ה, לוח השנה משנת חמשת רומא ולוח יונים ורייסען עם ימי חגיהם... ונוסף לזה לוח אלפים תקע"ה לבריאת עולם לחשבון עם ישראל עם לוח נוצרי רומא ולוח יונים ורייסען עם ימי חגיהם... ונוסף לזה לוח הלב אשר כל קורא בו ימצא מרגוע לנפשו, טארנאפאל תקע"ה

have impacted the editorial decision of the editor and publisher of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* regarding the nature and contents of their envisioned journal.

Thus, it is the conclusion of this writer that *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* at its inception was planned as an almanac, incorporating data, business and practical information with intellectual and literary material. It was intended to combine literature and commerce, knowledge and practical information. The impact of Perl's calendar is evident by the similarity in general concept and contents. Additionally, some items in Perl's calendar and literary supplement, as discussed in the monograph, were emulated in *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* and in *'Ittim Mezumanim*. The calendar and the journal supplemented and complemented each other, thus having almanac materials published also in *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*.

This editorial concept behind the publications lasted for the first two years, 1820 and 1821. After the second year, the calendar ceased publication, while the editorial concept of the journal changed gradually with the replacement of editors following the initial editorship of Shalom ha-Kohen, who was the editor of volumes 1-3 (1820-1822). Subsequently, Moshe Landau edited volumes 4-5 (1823-1824); Shlomo Pergamenter – volume 6 (1825); Bernard Schlesinger edited volumes 7-8 (1826-1827); volumes 9-10 (1828-1829) were edited by Isaac Shmuel Reggio and the last two volumes, volumes 11-12 (1830-1831), were edited by Judah Jeiteles. Thus, the journal assumed a different editorial course which transformed it into the major Haskalah outlet for creativity and research done by Hebrew writers in the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Trends in *Belles Lettres* and general topics in *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*

This section in the Introduction presents an overview of several literary genres and forms of literature, and cites some of the central issues and topics discussed in the twelve volumes of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim*. The overview is based on the listings in the Index. Some discussion of the literary genres in the early period of the Haskalah may be found in my previously published works.¹⁶ The sum total of the 'inventory' of *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* attests to the *maskilim*'s quest for literary forms, linguistic styles and var-

¹⁶ See M. Pelli, *Kinds of Genre in Haskalah Literature: Types and Topics*, Israel 1999 (Hebrew); idem, *The Circle of ha-Me'assef Writers* (Hebrew).

ious areas of intellectual pursuit. They endeavored to express themselves in a language that they were trying to revive. They further wished to delineate their experience through the prism of literature and to depict their inner thoughts and feelings about their unique condition as they were trying to resuscitate Hebrew literature and culture.

Poetry was the most popular kind of literature published in the journal, as it had been in *ha-Me'assef*.¹⁷ There were some 265 poems published in *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* as compared to 122 in *ha-Me'assef*. One can attribute this apparent increase in poetic output to the inclusion in the journal of a whole book by Luzzatto, *Kinnor Na'im*,¹⁸ which contained many poems, as well as the inclination of many young and aspiring writers to express themselves in poetry. Among the sub-categories of poems in the journal were poems devoted to nature, which advocated the ideal of living in the purity of nature. Other poems centred on the changing seasons, mostly spring, a time of renewal, which was chosen as a metaphor for the revival of the people. Several others were religious in tone and faithful in orientation. Some of the poems conveyed hope, while others highlighted sorrow, death, lamentation, and consolation. Dwelling on these themes, a few poets expressed their belief in afterlife. As had been customary in *ha-Me'assef*, several *maskilim* published occasional poems in praise of their rulers and community leaders.

Many of the poems were translations and adaptations from the German and from other European languages. Such were the translations from the canonical corpus of German literature by Gessner, Lessing, Kleist, Herder (recycled from *ha-Me'assef*) as well as others by Bürger, Klopstock and Schiller.

In prose, the Index lists some 17 stories (including the recycled prose from *ha-Me'assef*), 16 idylls in prose, and 4 biblical stories. Another genre in prose published in *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* was the Dialogue of the Dead, a genre which had been popular in the previous century and was found also in *ha-Me'assef*.¹⁹ It was a dialogue taking place in the afterlife

¹⁷ See the chapter on poetry in *The Circle of ha-Me'assef Writers*, 23-72.

¹⁸ S.D. Luzzatto, 'Kinnor Na'im', *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* 6 (1827) 113 (Hebrew).

¹⁹ See the chapter on the Dialogues of the Dead in my book *Kinds of Genre*, 48-90.

between the Hebrew language and Naphtali Hirsch Wessely.²⁰ As part of fiction, *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* published one satire, by Isaac Erter.²¹

Fables constituted another frequent genre in the journal. Sixty six fables were published (including recycled fables from *ha-Me'assef*), which were classified as Aesopian, narrative fables, rhymed fables, and poetic fables.²² Some of the fables were adaptations from the writings of Gessner and Lessing (recycled) and Herder. Among some of the other genres published in the journal were riddles, epitaphs, and biographies.

Reviewing the Index for outstanding topics which interested the *maskilim*, one notices the great number of articles in *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* on the Hebrew language, about 67, indicative of the special attention that the *maskilim* understandably displayed toward that subject. Other major areas of interest included biblical topics and textual interpretation, on which the Index lists 54 items. Education, a major vehicle for change, has 23 items, and Jewish history some 15. In the sciences, the Index listed 34 articles. Similarly, there were some 16 items of news and several entries on the Jewish community. All in all, the Index is indicative of the rich contents and diversified subjects of the 'first fruits' of the Galician Haskalah.

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²⁰ M. ha-Levi Alter, [שיחה מתים בין השפה העברית ונפתלי הירץ ויזל על מצב השפה], *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* 6 (1826) 5-24.

²¹ I. Erter, 'Mozne Mishqal' [Scale], *Biqqure ha-'Ittim* 3 (1823) 166-169 (Hebrew).

²² See the chapters on the fables in my books *Kinds of Genres*, 116-137, and *The Circle of ha-Me'assef Writers*, 99-127.