Text

The attribution to the Upper Rhine region was first suggested by Karl Vollers in 1906, based on a stylistic comparison with the most celebrated example of the late medieval upper Rhenish school, the Heidelberg Manesse Codex. In his 1964 facsimile edition of the illuminated pages of the Mahzor Elias Katz followed in the same lines. In his contribution to Katz’ volume, Bezalel Narkiss, although in principle accepting the attribution to the upper Rhine school, expressed some reservations on the grounds of the somewhat stiffer style of the Leipzig pages. He also observed several links between the Leipzig Mahzor and the Bird Heads Haggadah, a manuscript for which a Franconian provenance has been claimed. They may have been written by the same scribe, a certain Menahem; in both manuscripts words with the grammatical root *nun-het-mem* as in Me**n**a**h**e**m** are decorated. Aliza Cohen-Mushlin, in her contribution to the 1986 commentary of the facsimile edition of the first volume of the Worms Mahzor of 1272, now attributed to Würzburg, discusses various stylistic relationships between the latter and the Bird Heads Haggadah. On the same occasion Cohen-Mushlin also addressed the Leipzig Mahzor as, although stylistically related to the Worms Mahzor and the Bird Heads Haggadah, revealing still stronger influences from the upper Rhine school.

Recent research, however, has ignored any, even if tentative, expressions of doubt about an upper Rhenish provenance of the Leipzig Mahzor. In 2003 Judith Raebler compared it to a Cistercian Breviary from Freiburg im Breisgau and suggested the latter as place of origin. In a public lecture the curator of manuscripts in the Leipzig Universitätsbibliothek, Christoph Mackert, compared the Mahzor with the *Weltchronik* in St. Gall attributed to Zurich, thus confirming Vollers’, Katz’, and Narkiss’ earlier suggestion of an upper Rhenish provenance.

All these discussions are based exclusively on stylistic evidence and focus primarily on comparisons with the Manesse Codex, the St. Gall *Weltchronik*, or the Breviary from Freiburg im Breisgau. The text version was not considered as a parameter towards attribution, nor was any attempt made to correlate the imagery of the decoration program and its cultural, intellectual and historical background with the stylistic evidence. The imagery as it was devised in the intellectual ambience of medieval Jewish Worms is the subject of this book. But it is by means of the text version that a clear conclusion regarding the attribution of the Leipzig Mahzor to that community can be reached. The stylistic question will be re-visited here only briefly. In any event, its usefulness in the attribution of the manuscript is limited. Artists, like scribes, were flexible in traveling. This may be particularly true for the urban setting of the production of Jewish manuscripts. Whether the decoration of the Leipzig Mahzor was entrusted to a Christian workshop or executed by Jews, we shall perhaps never confidently know. Its imagery, however, was, as I hope to show, defined by members of the community it was to serve. It may be possible that the task of painting was executed by an artist trained in an upper Rhenish style, but this does not mean that it was produced in that same region, that the imagery was designed there, or that it served an upper Rhenish community. Looking at the Mahzor as a whole, the contribution of the painting style and technique to the understanding of the program and even in determining its provenance dwindles in significance. Artists and scribes were in frequent movement; ideas, intellectual ambience, and specific characteristics of rabbinic scholarship and praying rites were bound to the particular texture of their immediate society.

In the following pages the attribution of the Leipzig Mahzor will be re-assessed, in an attempt to determine its place not simply in a certain region that housed a certain workshop adhering to a certain stylistic school, but in terms of the community that produced and used it. The textual evidence discussed in detail in the present chapter indicates Worms as the place where the Mahzor was commissioned, written and used. The textual rite preserved in the Leipzig Mahzor, however, is not merely a tool to attribute the manuscript as accurately as possible. The observation of the Worms praying rite and other local rites can lead much beyond the basic issue of attribution to questions about the function of these rites in the lives of medieval Jews and the patterns of communal religious practice. The attitude of Ashkenazi Jews to prayer and the recitation of liturgical poetry make clear that these religious practices with their fixed and repetitive forms can be considered rituals. Hence the Mahzor is a ritual object. Bearing in mind what anthropologists say about rituals, an analysis of the Leipzig Mahzor leads to an understanding of the role rituals play in one particular community’s shaping its identity. Worms was the home of the person(s) who designed the decoration program and determined the contents of its miniatures. The role of the Leipzig Mahzor in coming to terms with this identity is double: first, it is in itself a ritual object; second its iconographic program includes references to rituals together with other religious themes and symbols embedded in the world view of its makers.

As Lawrence Hoffman points out liturgists and anthropologists understand two different things when they use the term “rite.” A liturgist refers to a rite as the particular liturgical tradition. Anthropologists “use the word to describe a discrete item of human behavior.” The following chapters work with both notions and I shall therefore distinguish between “rite” by which I mean a particular liturgical tradition or order, and “ritual” by which I mean certain acts of worship. I am well aware that ritual is much more than that, but within the framework of this book, this is the way, how it should be understood. It should be noted, finally, that the traditional Hebrew usage distinguishes for these forms of religious behavior between *minhag* for rite, as the rite of Worms, for example, and *seder*, which translates into order. The former means literally “custom” and the forth chapter will address this way of understanding a “rite.” The latter encompasses many those aspects that modern anthropologists attach to rituals. Whereas some social scientists seek distinctive definitions for “rites” and “rituals” (apart from the above mentioned one), some use them broadly as synonyms. Therefore, and for practical reasons, I take the liberty to use these terms in the way they are outlined here.

*Liturgy and Liturgical Poetry - Some Introductory Remarks*

Before we look more closely at the Leipzig Mahzor’s text version a few general remarks about medieval Jewish liturgies are in place here. These will also guide the reader through the ensuing discussion of the decoration scheme.

The basic form of Hebrew liturgy was already well developed in the late antique period. It consists of an evening prayer (*aravit*); a morning service (*shaharit*), with a special additional prayer for Sabbaths and holidays attached to the morning prayer (*mussaf*); and an afternoon service (*minhah*). Apart from the biblical readings to be performed on Sabbaths and holidays during the morning prayer, each of these services consists of the recitation of *shema Israel*, and the *amidah*, a prayer composed of eighteen benedictions (only seven on Sabbaths and holidays). In medieval sources the *amidah* is considered as *the* Prayer and is often referred to simply as *tefillah* (prayer). Quite early, when the Rabbis began to develop a new verbal liturgy to replace the sacrificial cult, certain rules became established and were applied to liturgical practice. From the beginning, a clear preference was given to communal prayer. Prayers that addressed the divine holiness require the presence of at least ten men. A prayer-leader should be chosen “to fulfill the obligation of many,” that is to recite the prayers, whereas the members of the community, presumed to be unskilled in the precise wording, answered “Amen.”

The *shma* and the *amidah* developed as core elements already during the tannaitic period, at a time when no canonical prayer book yet existed. Such early developments of prayer were influenced by questions of priority, and whether prayer or study was more important. These issues occupied Jewish scholars deep into the talmudic period. Scholars disagree as to when the statutory prayers were finalized. Ezra Fleischer assumed that already during the talmudic period there were fixed formulae, even if different ones in different communities. Others, like Stefan Reif, for example, think that the process of liturgical canonization may have continued well into the geonic period. The main difficulty in dealing with these issues is the fact that the culture that produced these formulae was basically an oral culture. Full textualization of the prayers took place much later and continued for several centuries. Israel Ta-Shma discussed several sources showing that in twelfth-century Rhineland prayers were still recited by heart.

Due to the nature of the canonization of prayer as an ongoing process, the rites that now emerged in Palestine and Babylonia differed to some degree. As a by-product of the ever-increasing Babylonian dominance in matters of religious law, the Babylonian prayer formulae became more and more dominant in most parts of the Jewish world. The Palestinian tradition, however, continued to influence local rites in Europe, especially in the German lands, even though in their basic form rites commonly used in the Ashkenaz also followed the Babylonian guide. The Palestinian heritage spread to Syria, Byzantium and Italy and via the latter reached the Rhineland, where it became a crucial ferment in the emergence of Ashkenazic custom and prayer. In contrast, the Sephardic rites were indebted almost exclusively to the Babylonian tradition, followed basically also by the French rite, which, however, at some point opened to a limited influence from the Rhineland.

The most striking aspect of the Palestinian tradition is the emergence of liturgical poetry. Already during the late antique period the Jews of Palestine began to elaborate on the core elements of the statutory prayer by means of poetic embellishments known as *piyyutim*. Scholars have suggested several reasons for the development of these poetic additions. Fleischer assumed that the *piyyutim* were aimed at breaking into boredom, an unavoidable by-product of fixed prayer formulae that would soon become monotonous. Another theory links the emergence of liturgical poetry to restrictions imposed by Justinian the Great in the sixth century, limiting Torah readings and homilies during the Jewish service. The *piyyut*, goes the theory, functioned as rabbinic teachings disguised, so to speak, as prayers. This notion is based on the interpretation of a statement by the geonic scholar Pirqoi ben Baboi in the ninth century, which criticizes the practice of *piyyutim*. Pirqoi argues that the original purpose of the *piyyut,* to overcome such restrictions, is no longer relevant at his time. I shall come back to the question of *piyyut* critique in more detail in Chapter Five.

A first flowering of liturgical poetry took place in the late antique period in Palestine, when the basic genres of *piyyutim* were established. This chapter in the history of Hebrew poetry is associated with the figures of Yossi ben Yossi in the fourth or fifth century, Elezar Qallir and Yannai, probably in the sixth. This Palestinian tradition of liturgical poetry met with reservations –at times with open criticism– on the part of Babylonian scholarship. In the realms that came to be dominated by the latter, *piyyut* never struck root to the same degree as in the German lands, where the Palestinian tradition continued to be of determining influence. The composition of liturgical poetry never played the same role in Iberia, for example, as in Ashkenaz; neither was the recitation of *piyyut* a central activity of synagogue worship in the Sephardic communities. But in the German regions *piyyut* turned into one of the major aspects of local custom. Ashkenazic Jews also made a point of dwelling on the continuity of this custom from the Palestinian tradition up to Rhenish poetry. However, some Geonic and Sephardic scholars did compose *piyyutim* which, in terms of form, were largely indebted to Muslim poetry. Sephardic compositions have gained much fame, especially from the point of view of poetic genres and forms. But the issue of tradition and continuity from the Palestinian sources was never as important there as it was in the Rhineland. Neither did these poems play the same major role in religious life and synagogal worship as in the German lands. It is there that we encounter a flourishing period of religious poetry and the many Rabbinic authorities of the Middle Ages who were also noted poets.

The typical Ashkenazic Mahzor contains only *piyyutim*, whereas the statutory prayers were included in the Siddur. Often worshipers knew the latter by heart. It is the *piyyutim* that mark the main differences between the various local rites in Central Europe.

The poetic embellishments of the recitation of *shema Israel* and the *amidah* follow a defined structure and specific poetic forms. The type of the main *piyyut* attached to the recitation of *shema Israel* for the morning prayeris known as *yotser,* and is followed by several other *piyyutim* forming what is normally referred to as the “*yotser* complex” (*ma’arekhet hayotser*). It consists of the *yotser* itself, followed by the *ofan,* the *me’orah*, the *ahavah*, the *zulat*, and the *ge’ulah*, the recitation of *shema Israel* itself being performed after the *ahavah* section. A similar complex developed for the evening service, the *ma’ariv*. The liturgical embellishments embedded in the *amidah* prayer are called *qrovah*. These parts can be of different types: either the more common *qedushta’ot,* or the *shivatot.* The *qrovah* complex is mostly divided into eight different *piyyutim.*

The Franco-German prayer rite evolved in three main versions. The differences are discernible primarily in the poetic embellishments, hardly ever in the fixed structure of the statutory prayer. The French rite, *minhag tsarfat*,emerging in the school of Rashi, ceased to exist with the expulsions of the Jews from Capetian France in the early fourteenth century. Reminiscences of this rite continued to exist in three communities in Piedmont, namely Asti, Fossano, and Moncalvo where some of the expelled French Jews settled. The Western Ashkenazic rite, referred to in medieval Jewish sources as *minhag reinus*, prevailed along the Rhine. In prayer books produced after the invention of printing this rite was commonly referred to as *minhag ashkenaz*. Since the early modern period this rite has been commonly used in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, England, northern Italy, and later also in the United States of America. The borders between the Western and Eastern Ashkenazic rite shifted in the course of time. When these rites first crystallized the Western one reached a line running near Nuremberg, Rothenburg and Regensburg, whose communities all followed already the Eastern rite. From the fourteenth century on, this line began to move further to the East, to reach the river Elbe. The Eastern rite was referred to also as *minhag beheim* (Bohemia), or *minhag ostreich* (Austria), and during the modern period, when it became typical for Eastern Europe as *minhag polin* (Poland). Several communities in the US also follow this rite.

The majority of illuminated Mahzorim belong to the Western Ashkenazic rite. A prominent exception is the Nuremberg Mahzor, now in the private collection of David and Jemima Jeselsohn, which was recently attributed by Jonah and Avraham Fraenkel to the Eastern rite, and may originate from Bohemia. This conclusion appears in contradiction to Narkiss’ argument, which is based on stylistic analysis, attributing the Nuremberg Mahzor to the Upper Rhine. This would be another example of disagreement between stylistic evidence and analysis of the text version.

*The Prayer Rite of Worms*

Apart from this basic distinction between East and West, several regional variants can also be observed. The most distinctive of these regional rites developed in the medieval community of Worms. In its early form it goes back to Meir ben Isaac who was active in Worms during the eleventh century, a period of particular flourishing of rabbinic activity there, and continued to develop and change until the early modern period. Meir ben Isaac is known in contemporary written records by the designations “*sheliah tsibur*” (prayer-leader) and “*hazan*”. The second scholar instrumental in developing the rite was Eleazar ben Judah of Worms in the early thirteenth century (d. 1232), author of several later *piyyutim* and an authority on matters related to custom and one of the leading figures of Ashkenazi Pietism.

Scholarly attempts to reconstruct the medieval rite of Worms focused first on several early modern compilations of customs from Worms, extant in manuscript form. A Mahzor of the Worms rite was copied in 1604 by Jacob Oppenheim (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Michael 434–435). A compilation of the customs of Worms was written by Judah Liva Kirchheim between 1625 and 1632. A similar compilation was produced by Juspa Shammash (Manzpach) between 1648–1656. In 1714 Sinai Zekelin Loans printed an edition with the special *piyyutim* of Worms. Around the same time he also made a handwritten copy of Kirchheim’s text of 1625. A compilation of *piyyutim* for Yom Kippur based on Sinai Loans’ text was published in 1737 in Sulzbach by Aaron Halevi of Worms.

From here we can go back to earlier sources reaching into the late Middle Ages. The attribution of medieval manuscripts to the Worms rite faced two main difficulties. First, it was not clear to what extent the rite developed and underwent changes since the Middle Ages. Second, a certain degree of confusion was created by the Worms Mahzor, now in Jerusalem (National Library of Israel, cod. 40781), which owes its name to the fact that it was kept in this community from at least 1565 until 1938 when the synagogue of Worms was burnt down. It was saved from destruction, rediscovered in 1943 and hidden from the Nazi regime. Today we know that the two volumes of the Worms Mahzor are of separate origins, and that they were bound together at some later stage. We also know, that the first volume was most likely produced in Würzburg. Little is known, however, about the second volume. Its text version has never been examined; there is no colophon; and we do not know, when it was joined with the first volume.

Until the question of the first volume’s origin in Würzburg was settled in the commentary to the facsimile edition of 1985, there was a great deal of uncertainty as to what degree the Worms Mahzor can, should, may or may not be related to the medieval rite of Worms. In an early description in 1959 Daniel Goldschmidt observed that the early modern sources for the Worms rite do not rely on the Worms Mahzor. Still, as Leopold Zunz before him, he was certain that the Mahzor was actually written in the community it is known to have served for centuries. At that point he considered it as a potential tool to understand the development of this rite between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries. One particular feature first led scholars to doubt the origin of the book in Worms. It contains numerous marginal notes that refer to the Worms rite. Furthermore, some pages were added at a later stage with texts to be read according to this rite. From these additions and corrections it was inferred that the Mahzor was actually not produced in Worms. Malachi Bet-Arié observed that the first volume contains many more such marginal notes than the second, and suggests that the latter was not in use before the sixteenth century. He also speculates that the first volume may have been transported to Worms after the destruction of the Würzburg community during the Rintfleisch persecutions in 1298. Theoretically it is thus possible that the second volume did originate in Worms, that it did not call for any marginal notes to adapt the rite to the Worms usage, and that it was bound together with the first, Würzburg volume at some time after 1298. This is, of course, a speculation, and needs to be confirmed by a detailed examination of the text. Some typical features of the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur rite of Worms can indeed be observed, but not all of them. At this point, however, it cannot be excluded that the second volume of the Worms Mahzor was written and used in that same city.

In 1970 Goldschmidt published the first two volumes (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) of the Ashkenazic Mahzor according to the different regional rites. The project was continued in collaboration with Fraenkel and in 1981 a third volume was published (Sukkot), to be followed by the last two volumes, edited by Fraenkel alone, Pesah in 1993, and Shavuot in 2000. Goldschmidt and Fraenkel distinguish between a whole range of regional rites. Each volume is accompanied by a list of manuscript sources. For the reconstruction of the medieval rite of Worms Goldschmidt and Fraenkel relied, apart from the early modern sources, primarily on two manuscripts, a Mahzor in the Michael collection (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Michael 436) from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, and one in Parma (Biblioteca Palatina, MS 2893, de Rossi 960) from the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The latter survived only as a fragment and contains now parts of the service for Rosh Hashanah.

The Bodleian Library keeps a manuscript of the *Sefer Maharil* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Opp. 296)*,* a description of local customs associated with Jacob ben Moses Moelin (“*Maharil*,” d. 1427) and compiled by his student Zalman of St. Goar. Jacob Moelin was an authority on custom, and the text mainly describes the rites of his own city, Mainz, but refers occasionally to variants from other places. A later hand added marginal notes referring specifically to the rite of Worms. It is not known at what date these annotations were made. From the school of Jacob Moelin comes another –as yet unpublished– text from 1430, describing customs from Worms related to the obligatory prayer and entitled *Minhagim Tovim* (“Good Customs”). It does not refer much to the *piyyutim*, but occasionally offers some information. The text is kept today in Warsaw, and it quotes Eleazar of Worms extensively.

Additional research of the rite of Worms was published in 1986 in Ezra Fleischer’s contribution to the commentary volume of the facsimile edition of the first volume of the Worms Mahzor. Fleischer’s analysis of the text version confirmed that the first volume of the Mahzor is unlikely to have been produced in Worms, as it does not reflect the rite of the community it was named after in later centuries and until today. This was confirmed by several other scholars’ observations published in the same volume and pointing to Würzburg the most plausible provenance. Numerous marginal glosses and amendments in the manuscript indicate divergences from the Worms rite. Although focusing on the Worms Mahzor Fleischer’s comparative research offers further means to approach the Worms rite. He pointed out several characteristics, especially concerning the special Sabbaths before Passover which are not included in Goldschmidt and Fraenkel’s work. Fleischer pursued a similar comparative method in his analysis of the Amsterdam Mahzor. An important source used in both these studies was a manuscript in London (British Library, MS Add. 10456), which is a Mahzor featuring the Cologne and Mainz rites, and containing later marginal indications of the Worms usage. It was written in 1349 and the indications of the Worms rite are apparently still later, so that the London manuscript would seem to reflect characteristics of the Worms rite at a significantly later stage.

Towards the publication of the facsimile edition of the illuminated pages of the Leipzig Mahzor in 1964 Narkiss consulted Goldschmidt about the text version of the manuscript. In a footnote Narkiss reports that Goldschmidt “found [it]… to be generally of the ‘use of Worms’.” Narkiss was reluctant to accept Goldschmidt’s opinion, which contradicted his stylistic attribution to southern Germany, specifically the upper Rhine region. He undertook a short, partial comparison between the Leipzig text and some of the early modern sources for the Worms rite, and concluded that there were too many divergences. He also examined parts of the Leipzig Mahzor in comparison with the marginal notes in the mentioned London manuscript (MS Add. 10456), and again observed several differences between these indications and the Leipzig version. He focused on these features to argue against Goldschmidt’s assertion and thus to confirm his own conclusions, drawn from stylistic analysis. To the Worms Mahzor he referred with caution, remarking that there is no certainty about its origin.

Goldschmidt and Fraenkel used the Leipzig Mahzor only to a limited degree in their reconstruction of the different prayer rites. Whereas Goldschmidt attributed it explicitly to the Worms rite, Fraenkel later expressed some ambivalence about this conclusion. In the 1970 volumes the Leizpig Mahzor was unambiguously defined as one of three manuscript representative of the rite of Worms, together with MS Michael 436 and the Parma manuscript (see above). In the 1981 volume, however, the Leipzig Mahzor was not listed under the Worms representatives. Here only MS Michael 436, Kirchheim’s work and the Sulzbach edition were consulted. In the 1993 volume, for Pesah, the Leipzig Mahzor is included with a remark that its text is still not exhaustively studied, that in some respects it reflects the rite of Worms, but, on the other hand, “it certainly is not a true representative of the rite of Worms.”

Throughout the history of research into the Leipzig Mahzor Goldschmidt’s two brief comments concerning the rite of Worms, remained a footnote, and the attribution to the Upper Rhine region stood firm. A careful re-visitation of the text of the Leipzig Mahzor confirms Goldschmidt’s initial conclusions, strongly suggesting that the book was produced to serve the community of that city. Let us look first at some marginal notes attached to the text of the Leipzig Mahzor by later owners. These notes appear to have misled earlier scholarship. An inscription informs us that in 1553 one David bar Samuel Dekingen purchased the Mahzor. The surname Dekingen is known among Jews of Worms and the surroundings. More importantly, four of the numerous marginal references refer explicitly to the rite of Worms (noting the “holy community of Worms”). Glosses of this kind often indicate, as we have seen in the case of the Worms Mahzor, where the main text diverges from the actual rite common at the time or the place where the gloss was applied. Dozens of such glosses mark divergences from the Polish rite; these were added at some date after the early seventeenth century, when the Leipzig Mahzor moved to Poland to serve a community that prayed according to the eastern rite. In the case of the Worms Mahzor, where numerous marginal notes of this kind can be found, especially in the first volume (see above), they proved an important indication that it was not originally written for the community of Worms. A analogous conclusion was reached also in the case of the Leipzig Mahzor and the four above-mentioned marginal notes were interpreted as evidence that the Leipzig Mahzor could have been produced anywhere *but* Worms, and that only during the second half of the sixteenth century it served an owner from Worms until it found its way to Poland in the seventeenth.

It is striking, however, that in a two-volume Mahzor in use in Worms around 1555 only *four* such glosses would refer to divergences from the usage of Worms. The rite of Worms contains many more distinctive features and one would expect them to be indicated in many more such glosses, as indeed is the case in the Worms Mahzor, or the Leipzig Mahzor during the Polish chapter in its history.

The notes in question appear in the second volume on fols. 76v, 115r, 156v, and 169v and they all refer to the service of penitential prayers –*selihot*– for Yom Kippur. The first gloss appears near the evening service for the eve of Yom Kippur and reads: “in the holy community of Worms the order of *selihot* is written down one by one.” The second gloss on fol. 115r is more explicit and lists the titles of the *selihot* to be read during the morning service of Yom Kippur according to the arrangement customary in Worms (to be discussed in detail below). Examination of this list shows, that it corresponds in almost every detail to the original arrangement of the *selihot* as featured in the main text on the same page, but with the addition of a few more *selihot*. As the former gloss, this one also refers explicitly to the “holy community of Worms” and, at its end, to the “order of *selihot* written down one by one.” This does not mean that we have here an entirely different rite; rather it indicates that these additional *selihot* had been added to the rite by the sixteenth century. The third gloss, on fol. 156v refers to *sare qodesh hayom* (Princes of holiness)*,* a *seliha* for the *mussaf*. The note indicates that if Yom Kippur falls on a Sabbath, it is to be recited during the *minhah*, as common in the “holy community of Worms.” The last gloss on 169v relates to the *selihot* for the Yom Kippur afternoon service and notes that *adonai elohe rabat tseraruni* (Often have I been attacked ) should be said in “the holy community of Worms” and that it is “written on paper.” This indicates that the text of the missing *selihah* (on which more details will be given below) was perhaps available on a sheet of paper to be added to the volume. This may well have been the case during the sixteenth century. The missing *selihah,* by the way, is added also on the margins of fol. 121v, next to the *selihot* for the morning service, when it was, according to the sixteenth-century Worms practice, also recited.

Given that more than 200 years lie between the production of the Leizpig Mahzor and these early modern amendments, they cannot serve as evidence that the Leipzig text diverges materially from the medieval Worms rite. They would, undoubtedly, be a useful instrument to employ in describing the development of the rite between the early fourteenth and the mid-sixteenth centuries. In short the marginal references to the rite of Worms were hastily interpreted to show that the Leipzig text as a whole diverged from the Worms rite and that its later use by the early modern community of Worms made it necessary to indicate such divergences. But in fact, these glosses do not tell us anything specific about the medieval rite of Worms, but rather about early modern additions to it. The fact that they refer to the “order of *selihot* written down one by one,” finally, seems to confirm, indeed that the main text follows this order as expected.

The following paragraphs will introduce the features in which the Worms rite diverges from the general Western Ashkenazic rite, and will demonstrate that the Leizpig Mahzor includes all of these features. For the purpose of the present analysis and in the attempt to determine the home of the Leipzig Mahzor, these features can be divided into three groups. (1) Clearly distinguishable and outstanding characteristics of the Worms rite traceable only in Worms and appearing in both the early modern sources and the medieval manuscript sources; (2) features that apparently crystallized only in the early modern period and the lack of them in the Leipzig Mahzor cannot be indicative of provenance.

I shall use the evidence gathered by Goldschmidt, Fraenkel and Fleischer and compare it to the Leipzig Mahzor. This evidence, as we have seen, is based on the early modern text sources and several medieval manuscripts, which I have re-visited towards the current analysis. In particular, I considered MS Michael 436, the earliest extant manuscript source associated with the Worms rite, and consulted the Warsaw text *Minhagim Tovim* where relevant.

Let us look more closely at the first group. Early modern evidence of the Worms rite indicates that in the *qedushtaot* for the seventh and eighth days of Pesah the liturgical formula *adonai melekh* (God is king, God is king, God rules for ever and ever) is inserted, followed by *uvechen lekha ta’ale qedushah* (Holiness will ascend towards you). Fleischer notes that this sequence was apparently the practice among “early Ashkenazim” and that Ephraim of Bonn mentions it as such in the twelfth century. Among the examined manuscript sources the formula appears in the morning prayer after the *qrovah* for the seventh and eighth days only in the Leipzig Mahzor (where it received the later gloss “not to be recited” in the inner margin) and in MS Michael 436. None of the other illuminated Mahzorim follows this practice. In the Worms Mahzor the formula was added at a later stage.

The Leipzig morning service for the eighth day of Passover has the *yotser vayosha or Israel* (The light of Israel will save it) by Meir Sheliah Tsibur, instead of *ata he’arta* (You illuminated), commonly recited according to the Western Ashkenazic rite. MS Michael 436 has the same version as the Leipzig Mahzor, indicative, in principle, that this is a feature of the Worms rite. London Add. 10456 and the Amsterdam Mahzor, however, show that this was the case apparently also in Cologne.

One of the most striking characteristics of the Worms rite concerns the *yotser* and the *ofan* for the second day of Shavuot. Instead of the common *yotser - ayelet ohavim matanat sinai* (Delightful as a gazelle is the gift from Sinai), known also for frequent artistic embellishments, the Leipzig Mahzor follows the Worms rite and features another *yotser - adir vena’eh* (Great and beautiful), composed, as the Leipzig Mahzor prominently indicates, by “Rabbenu Meir Sheliah Tsibur,” the very scholar to whom the roots of the Worms rite are attributed. *Ayelet ohavim* was added by a later hand on the margin of the same page. In the first volume of the Worms Mahzor *adir vena’eh* was added later, at the end of the codex. Instead of either of the commonly recited *ofanim - amarot tehorot* (Pure words)or *arahot er’elim* (Heavenly hosts of angels), the Leipzig Mahzor has *kevodo ot beribo’ot* (His glory is very great) of the Worms rite. In the Leipzig Mahzor *arahot er’elim* was added later, in the margin. Both *adir vena’eh* and *kevodo ot beribo’ot* appear also in MS Michael 436, the former being accompanied by a later gloss noting that *ayelet ohavim* should be recited here and that the text is to be found at the beginning of the manuscript. Both *piyyutim* were added at the end of the Worms Mahzor, while the latter was in use in this community. They appear in the seventeeth-century Mahzor MS Michael 434–35, and are also listed in the marginal additions to the *Sefer Maharil*, and in Kirchheim’s and Shammash’ compilations.

A typical *piyyut* of the Worms rite, as indicated in all early modern sources of the rite, is the *ma’ariv* for the first night of Rosh Hashanah, entitled *ashre ha’am yod’e teru’ah* (Happy the people who have learned to acclaim you). According to Jacob Moelin the custom of reciting a *piyyut* on the eve of Rosh Hashanah as such is typical for Worms and goes back to Eleazar ben Judah, the author of *ashre ha’am*. Jacob Moelin also noted that the custom of saying a *ma’ariv* was followed in other communities, but other *piyyutim* were recited there.

The *ma’ariv* for the second night *kesse uri* (Time of light) is also a typical feature of the Worms rite. The Leipzig Mahzor contains both these prayers, as does MS Michael 436. They are not included in the second volume of the Worms Mahzor, which starts immediately with the morning service. Shalev-Eyni observed that the Tripartite Mahzor, a manuscript produced around 1320 in the Lake Constance region, also contains the *ma’arivim* as an alternative together with others belonging to the French rite. The compiler of the Tripartite Mahzor offers two such alternatives on several occasions. Shalev-Eyni suggests that the scribe was aiming at several options of distribution, or that the members of the Jewish communities in the upper Rhine region were of different origins, and such an arrangement would enable all of them to use the same Mahzor.

The various regional rites differ in the sequence of the *selihot* for Yom Kippur. *Selihot,* a genre of penitential prayer,are recited during all the services of Yom Kippur, on each occasion a different selection in a specific sequence. Goldschmidt distinguished between the following rites: the general Western Ashkenazic rite; Alsace; Swabia and Switzerland; Nuremberg; the rite of the Ashkenazim in Italy; Worms; and Cologne. Let us look, for example, at the sequence of *selihot* for the morning service, beginning on fol. 115r of the Leizpig Mahzor, where the above-mentioned gloss appears referring to the Worms rite. The Mahzor gives the following *selihot*: (1) *ana ho’el* (It may please you to forgive); (2) *ta’aleh tefilatenu* (Our prayer may ascend); (3) *akh bemetah din* (Unrelenting judgement); (4) *enosh rimah* (Man worthless as a maggot); (5) *al be’apkha* (Not in anger); (6) *akh bekha ledal ma’oz* (A refuge for the poor); (7) *shofet kol ha’arets* (Judge of the whole world); (8) *adonai adonai el rahum* (God, mercyful God); (9) *elohim al dami ledami* (O God, keep not your silence over my blood); (10) *emunat omen etsot* (True faith). The same *selihot* in this very sequence appear in MS Michael 436. The *minhagim* books of Kirchheim and Shammash list almost the same sequence. The only difference is that between (6) and (7) another additional *selihah* is inserted (*adonai elohe rabat tseraruni* - Often have I been attacked). The latter is –as mentioned above– lacking in the main text of the Leipzig Mahzor (it was added in a cursive script on the margins of fol. 121v), and also in MS Michael 436. The marginal list added in the sixteenth century conforms to Kirchheim’s and Shammash’ lists in every detail. Given the correspondence of the *selihot* sequences in the Leipzig Mahzor and MS Michael 436, there is good reason to assume that in the fourteenth century the ten *selihot* as they appear in these two manuscripts were commonly used in Worms, and that further additions and changes were made at later stages. The second volume of the Worms Mahzor may reflect another stage of this development. The sequence is the same as in Leipzig Mahzor and in MS Michael 436, but it also includes *adonai elohe rabat tseraruni;* the same is true for the glosses applied to the copy of the *Sefer Maharil* kept in Worms around the middle of the fifteenth century.

Each *selihah* is preceded by a group of biblical verses, mostly from Psalms. Those in the Leipzig Mahzor do not correspond to the verses quoted by Goldschmidt; however, they conform almost entirely to those in MS Michael 436, the second volume of the Worms Mahzor, and those appearing in the early modern sources of the Worms rite.

The Western and Worms rites also differ concerning the *piyyut* that concludes the *selihot.* In the Western Ashkenazic rite the *selihot* on the eve of Yom Kippur were concludedby *otkha edrosh* (I shall seek you), and those of the morning service were followed by *adaberah tahnunim* (I shall entreat for mercy). In the Worms rite these two are interchanged; *adaberah* is said on the eve of Yom Kippur, and *otkha edrosh* during the morning prayer. The same occurs in the Leipzig Mahzor, MS Michael 436 and the second volume of the Worms Mahzor. It was also noted in the *Sefer Maharil*.

Another special characteristic of the Worms Yom Kippur service, seen in the Leipzig Mahzor, MS Michael 436, and the second volume of the Worms Mazhor, is the addition of *ele ezkerah* (I shall recall) after the *selihot* sequence of the *mussaf*. A special *selihah*, finally, *az kashti weharavi* (My bow and my sword), was said in Worms at the end of the *selihot* sequence reciting during the afternoon service. Again we find it also in MS Michael 436, the second volume of the Worms Mahzor, and in the Leipzig Mahzor, where a part is missing with a marginal gloss referring to the omission. Although it can certainly be regarded as a typical Worms feature, this *selihah* is included also in the Tripartite Mahzor, whose compiler tended, as we have seen, to combine bits and pieces of different rites.

In the rite of Worms the service on the eve of Sukkot includes another of Eleazar of Worms’ *piyyutim*, the *ma’ariv* *ata levadkha atita or* (You are wrapped in a robe of light) found also in the Leipzig Mahzor and MS Michael 436. It is not included in the second volume of the Worms Mahzor, which, as observed above, did also omit the *ma’arivim* for Rosh Hashanah.

The same is true of another of Eleazar’s *piyyutim*, the *ma’ariv* for the eve of Shemini Atseret, *erehamkha* (I shall adore you), It occurs in MS Michael 436, but not in the second volume of the Worms Mahzor, which, again, omits the *ma’ariv*. A last typical feature of the Worms rite found in the Leipzig Mahzor is the *qedushta* *ahot asher lekha kasafta* (A sister you have chosen) for the morning service on Shemini Atseret, seen also in MS Michael 436, and the second volume of the Worms Mahzor. This is a rather rare case of a late antique *piyyut* –it was composed by Eleazar Qallir– that can be defined as a typical Worms feature. Most other *piyyutim* typical for Worms were written by scholars from Worms or poets who were in some way or another associated with Worms.

The features described above offer ample evidence that the Leipzig Mahzor belongs to the Worms rite. All the important and striking characteristics of this rite, as they are extracted by Goldschmidt, Fraenkel and Fleischer and traceable in the early modern and the medieval sources, are included in the Leipzig volumes.

There is yet another set of characteristics of the Worms rite from which the Leipzig Mahzor diverges. These, however, reflect the rite specifically during the early modern period. It is on these features, on which Narkiss focused primarily in his comparison, rejecting Goldschmidt’s suggestion that the Leipzig text follows the Worms usage. For instance: one of the best-known *yotsrot*, often embellished in illuminated Mahzorim, is *iti melevanon kallah* (Come with me from Lebanon, my bride) to be recited on the “Great Sabbath” before Passover. Based largely on commentaries to the Song of Songs and using various motifs of love and marriage this prayer was recited in early modern Worms only when a wedding took place during the same week. Medieval manuscripts, however, including the illuminated Mahzorim, the Leipzig Mahzor, and MS Michael 436, all contain the *piyyut*; none of them indicates that it is to be recited only on the occasion of a preceding wedding. The Worms Mahzor has a later marginal gloss “not to be recited.” This was added after the book had reached Worms and began to serve that community in the sixteenth century. Moreover, as Fleischer observed, Jacob Moelin did not note anything special with regard to this prayer, but merely mentions it as a common *yotser* for the Great Sabbath. Likewise, no remark is made in the Worms glosses to the *Sefer Maharil*. It is thus a feasible assumption that during the early fifteenth century *iti milevanon kalah* was still recited in Worms as everywhere else.

A similar process can be observed with regard to *elohim baita moshiv yehidim* (God leads home the lonely), a *ma’ariv* recited on the second night of Shavuot and included in the Leipzig Mahzor. Judging from medieval sources this *ma’ariv* was in common use at various places; it is included in MS Michael 436, and also in the Worms Mahzor and other illuminated Mahzorim. In the fifteenth century Jacob Moelin noted that it is recited at “some places.” In the glosses added in Worms to the manuscript of the *Sefer Maharil* it is already listed as one of the special Worms features, and judging from the early modern sources, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was indeed a typical component of the Worms rite. As such it is understood by both Fraenkel and Fleischer.

The Shavuot and Pesah liturgies originally contained Aramaic translations of the Torah portions and the readings from the Prophets together with several *piyyutim* in Aramaic embellishing these readings. Later in the Middle Ages –although an exact date cannot be determined– these translations were gradually given up. In the eleventh century Meir Sheliah Tsibur composed a special *piyyut* entitled *aqdamut milin* (Preamble), associated with the readings and recited on Shavuot. At some time between the late medieval and the early modern period the Aramaic translations were omitted and only the poem *aqdamut milin* was said. Subsequently the *piyyut* itselfwas omitted in some places, especially in Worms. This can be observed already in MS Michael 436. The Leipzig Mahzor has no Aramaic texts at all for the Pesah liturgy. For Shavuot, however, it has *aqdamut milin* followed by the Aramaic readings. The Worms Mahzor, about forty years older than the Leipzig Mahzor still has parts of the Aramaic readings for Pesah and also for Shavuot, which are similar to the Leipzig version. Other illuminated Mahzorim reflect various stages of this development. At all events, the appearance of the *piyyut* or the Aramaic readings does not say anything about the rite of Worms, but rather reflects a development over several decades.

These latter characteristics of the Worms rite, not found in the Leipzig version, thus crystallized only during the early modern period. They are not typical for its medieval version. It should be kept in mind that especially during the Middle Ages, the Worms rite, or any other rite for that matter, was still dynamic and subject to evolution and change. Features that developed only after the Middle Ages thus cannot contribute any evidence concerning the medieval Worms rite. Their absence in the Leipzig Mahzor is not a factor in determining for which medieval community this book was produced.

One last feature associated with the Worms rite calls for explication. *Kevodo yegale* (His glory will be revealed) is a short *ofan* to be recited during the morning service on Shemini Atseret as part of the *yotser* complex. In Goldschmidt’s and Fraenkel’s edition of the Mahzor for Sukkot it is marked as a typical feature of the Worms rite, indicating as one of two manuscript sources the second volume of the Worms Mahzor. It does not appear in the Leipzig Mahzor, neither in MS Michael 436, and it is thus possible that it entered the Worms rite at some stage later than the early fourteenth century. Kirchheim and Shammash agree here with the Leipzig Mahzor and note explicitly: “no *ofan* is to be recited.”

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To conclude - the Leizpig Mahzor contains all the features exclusively typical for the Worms rite and not found anywhere else. However, it also includes features which, although typical for Worms, may have spread elsewhere during the Middle Ages, beyond the cultural borders of this community. Some features typical of the later Worms rite, finally, are not found in the Leipzig Mahzor, indicating that they were added to the rite only at a later stage. The Leipzig Mahzor thus not only emerges as an early witness to the medieval prayer rite of Worms, but can offer valuable data about the medieval developments of this rite of which not much is known. What is relevant to the contextualization of its decoration program is the fact that it was the community of Worms and its scholars who were behind the concept, the contents, and the messages of its imagery.

It was thus not David bar Samuel Dekingen’s purchase of the Leipzig Mahzor in 1553 that brought the manuscript to Worms. Rather it had been produced in that very city about 220 years earlier. There is, finally, evidence, that by 1604 it was still there. This leads us back to MS Michael 434–35, a Mahzor, declaredly of the rite of Worms, written in that year. In comparison to its medieval forerunners this manuscript is rather crudely written in sloppy script, lacking the careful layout typical for the medieval Mahzorim. The manuscript also includes some crude decorations, mostly of ornamental nature. At the beginning, however, for the services of the special Sabbaths before Pesah, we find three illustrations, faithful, even though amateurish *replicae* of their parallels in the Leipzig Mahzor. The illustration for *el mitnasse* (God, the mighty one) for *shabbat sheqalim*, the first of the special Sabbaths, displays an initial panel with scales flanked by medallions with the four living creatures (figs. 00 and 00). It will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six. The initial *zakhor* (Remember) for *shabbat zakhor* (figs. 00 and 00) shows a somewhat enigmatic iconography of four male heads in profile wearing Jewish hats. The third adorns the opening of the *yotser* *ot hi lehodesh* (The sign for the month) for *shabbat hodesh* (figs. 00 and 00) and shows the figure of a man pointing to the moon. All three images are marked by their unique iconography unparalleled in other medieval Mahzorim. In the second volume we find three more such cases. The decoration of the *qrovah* *– etan hikir* (The steadfast believer) is decorated with a simple architectural frame (fig. 00) reminiscent of its more lavish counterpart in the Leipzig Mahzor (fig. 00). It is striking to observe that the Leipzig Mahzor is the only medieval Mahzor that this particular *piyyut* received any embellishment at all, as it is normally not included in any of the medieval decoration programs. The same is true for the design of an initial panel decorating a *piyyut* of the Sukkot service (fig. 00); it is clearly copied from the Leipzig Mahzor (fig. 00). Another initial decoration for a *piyyut* for the same holiday is embellished with two toiled serpents (fig. 00), again, clearly recalling a similar version in the Leipzig Mahzor (fig. 00).

It is apparent that MS Michael 434-5 used the Leipzig Mahzor also as a text model, even though it was adapted to the seventeenth-century version of the Worms. Certain specific links can be observed. For example, as the Leipzig Mahzor, MS Michael 434–35 begins with *shokhen ad merom* (He who dwells on high), a statutory prayer to be recited before the *yotser* complex. This prayer is the only statutory prayer included in the medieval Mahzorim, and the Leipzig Mahzor is the only book that displays it at its beginning. In both manuscripts *Shokhen ad marom* is followed by the service for Hanukka, a feature likewise not applying to other Mahzorim, which often begin with the services for the special Sabbaths.

This indicates that by the time of the production of MS Michael 434–35 the Leipzig Mahzor was still kept in Worms and reached Poland only at a later stage. It can, perhaps, be speculated that it may have migrated to the East in consequence of a violent persecution that took place in Worms in April 1615. The Jews were readmitted in 1616, and not much is known about those Jews who did not return to Worms, and perhaps made their way to the East. The synagogue was severely damaged during the pogrom and it is certainly possible that the Mahzor was removed from the commnity at that time. However, as nothing is known about the history of the Leipzig Mahzor at the same time, and since it cannot be traced in any source material, this has to remain a speculation. These observations, however, not only point at the presence of the Leipzig Mahzor in Worms in the early years of the seventeenth century, but they offer further support, that, indeed, it was considered a prominent representative of the Worms rite. Otherwise it would not have been chosen as a model for a declared “Mahzor for the entire year according to the rite of Worms,” as the title at the beginning of MS Michael 434–35 indicates.

The second volume of this Mahzor, finally, includes two other decorations, for which the second volume of the Worms Mahzor served as a model: the gate for the embellishment of *sha’are rahamim* (Gates of mercy)(fig. 00), is copied from the parallel in the Worms Mahzor (fig. 00); likewise the flower design for the *piyyut* *shoshan emeq* (The lily of the valley, fig. 00), is a copy of the same design in the Worms Mahzor (fig. 00). This supports my suggestion that the second volume of the Worms Mahzor was, indeed, also a Mahzor of the Worms rite.

The forgoing discussion defines the Leipzig Mahzor as a document of the medieval praying rite of Worms. The subsequent chapters will shed light on the role the examination of its imagery can play in grasping the mentality of the community that used this very rite.