CHAPTER 12
What Do We Know about Hebrew Printing in Guadalajara, Híjar, and Zamora?

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Information on Hebrew book production in Spain during the fifteenth century is scant. Much historical evidence disappeared as a result of the destructive actions of the Inquisition, culminating in the expulsion of the Jews from the Hispanic Kingdoms in 1492 (excluding Navarre) by Fernando II of Aragon and Isabel I of Castile.

The tenth part of the famous Catalogue of Books Printed in the xvth Century Now in the British Museum of 1971 describes the Spanish and Portuguese incunabula in the collection in London, with the exception of the Hebrew books. However, in the “Introduction to the Presses,” with reference to Konrad Haebler’s two volume Bibliografia ibérica of 1903 and 1917, two Hebrew fragments are conjecturally assigned to the somewhat mysterious Jewish printer Juan de Lucena, assisted by his ostensibly Christian daughters—Beatriz, Catalina, Teresa, and Juana—in Montalbán or Toledo. De Lucena’s name is mentioned in several records of the Spanish Inquisition from the years 1481, 1485, and 1530. Witnesses reported that he had published and sold Hebrew printed books (“ebrayco de molde”). Still, it is not possible with the help of this information to attribute specific Hebrew books or fragments to a press belonging to De Lucena. Apparently, one was not aware in 1971 in the British Museum that complete colophonied copies of the editions to which these two single-leaf fragments belonged (Rashi’s Commentary on the Pentateuch and Jacob ben Asher’s Tur hoshen mishpat) had already been discovered in 1937.

* Dedicated to the memory of my good colleague Gerard van Thienen (1939–2015).
by Isaiah Sonne\(^3\) and in 1934 by Aron Freimann,\(^4\) respectively. They appear to have been printed in Guadalajara in Castile, an important and wealthy center of Jewish learning, by Solomon ben Moses ha-Levi Alkabez. The first work is a signed edition of Rashi’s *Perush ha-torah* from September 5, 1476, which actually has to be considered the earliest known dated Iberian Hebrew book.\(^5\) Like the first dated Italian Hebrew book, which happens to be the same text, it is known from only one complete copy, discovered in the 1930s in the Biblioteca Capitolare at Verona by Isaiah Sonne. The semi-cursive text types used have much in common with the Sephardi handwritten script of the period, requiring numerous ligatures and kerning (or overhanging) types (fig. 12.1). In the colophon a type-cutter, Pedro de Guadalajara, is mentioned by name. Sonne probably correctly doubted whether this Pedro should be identified with the wandering Christian printer Petrus Brun from Geneva, whom Haebler identified as the “Maestre de talla Pedro,” mentioned in a colophon by Antonio Martínez from Seville in 1486.

The next known dated and signed production of the press, from which Haebler only knew one leaf and which he attributed to Juan de Lucena in Toledo or Montalbán, appeared during the week of December 24–30, 1480. It is the first separate edition of Jacob ben Asher’s *Tur hoshen mishpat*, a copy of which Aron Freimann had discovered in the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana in 1934.\(^6\) *Hoshen mishpat* was followed by two other separate parts of Jacob ben Asher’s *Turim*, this time without the name of the printer or place, and undated: the *Tur yore de’ah*, of which again only one complete copy is known, in the

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