

1. Marvin Heller, *Further Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book*, pg.305

On August 12, 1553, Pope Julius III issued a papal bull ordering the confiscation and burning of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds. In a time of religious turmoil and repression in Europe – the Counter-Reformation – this particular decree represented the culmination of a dispute between two printers, neither of whom were Jewish, over competing editions of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* with the glosses of Rabbi Meir Katzenellenbogen of Padua.

2. The players

- Daniel Bomberg Christian publisher, best known for producing the *Mikra'ot Gedolot* Bible
- Marcantonio Giustiniani Christian patrician publisher, drove Bomberg out of business
- Alvise Bragadin Christian publisher, published Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* with Rabbi Meir
- R' Meir Katzenellenbogen Chief Rabbi of Padua
- R' Moshe Isserles Chief Rabbi of Cracow

3. Frontispiece of the Giustiniani 1550 edition of *Mishneh Torah*

<http://hebrewbooks.org/pdfpager.aspx?req=11791&pgnum=1>

We have also decided to print at the end that which was written on the page by one sage, head of the rabbis of Padua, Rabbi Meir, "new each morning" [a play on Lamentations 3:23], who wrote of his own heart in the Maimonidean edition printed anew by Bragadin, introducing his head between the early giants. We consulted wise and complete people, near and far, and in truth, they counseled us not to print them in this book, lest they not appear correct to many students of Torah - as will be clear to any who examines one preface on the other side of this page. But in truth, we printed them to satisfy the desire of every man, "doing the will of each man" (Esther 1).

4. Code of Jewish Law, Choshen Mishpat 212:1

One may transfer, through sale or gift, only items of substance. Intangible items may not be transferred.

5. Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Isserles, #10

We will not abandon our part. We declare that all Israel, and anyone known as Israel, should not purchase any new copy of Maimonides other than those which emerge from the hand of the aforementioned Gaon or those whom he has empowered, for the following four reasons...

6. Talmud, Bava Batra 21b

Rav Huna said: If an alley resident establishes a mill, and another alley resident establishes one before him, the former is legally able to prevent this, saying, 'You are interrupting my livelihood.'

7. Mordechai Bava Batra 516

Where a street is closed on three sides, and only on one side is it open for entry, and Reuven lived near the closed end and Shimon came to live near the open end, such that a non-Jew could not enter the street without passing Shimon's entrance, the law is that Reuven can prevent this [new business], like the view of Rav Huna.

8. Talmud, Bava Batra 22a

Rav Dimi of Neherdaa brought dried figs by boat. The Exilarch said to Rava: Go and see; if he is a young scholar, set up the market for him.

9. Midrash, Sifra Behar 3

How do we know that when you sell, you should sell only to your friend? 'And when you sell to your friend.' And how do we know that when you purchase, you should purchase only from your friend? 'Or you purchase from your friend.'

10. Talmud, Ketuvot 19b

Rabbi Ami said: One may not keep an unchecked sefer torah for 30 days; it is written, 'Do not maintain corruption in your tent.'

11. Bragadin's note, **הסכמה ורשות בדפוס ויניציאה**, M. Benayahu, pg. 24

And I know that when... [he] will see that I have begun to publish the twenty-four and Rav Alfasi, he, too, will race to the battle to do this work, and not sooner as he did with me regarding Maimonides. With this I will know that you will praise me, for it is due to me that books will be available cheaply.

12. Marvin Heller, *Further Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book*, pg.310

Anticipating a loss on his investment, Giustiniani appealed to Pope Julius III for relief. The Pope assigned the Giustiniani-Bragadin dispute to a committee of six cardinals – the Congregation of the Inquisition – for investigation. The committee was headed by Cardinal Giovanni Pietro Caraffa, the future Pope Paul IV. Both sides were represented by apostates, whose charges soon deteriorated into an attack on the Talmud. Under Caraffa's direction, the committee reported in favor of burning the Talmud, and on August 12, 1553, the Pope issued a bull ordering the confiscation and burning of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds. On the Jewish New Year, September 19, 1553, the Talmud was burned, first in Rome and then elsewhere.

13. Amnon Raz Krakotzkin, *Persecution and the Art of Printing*

The burning of the Talmud extended the Bet Yosef's role, as it contained a substantive number of quotations from the banned composition, and was thus perceived as an invaluable source of talmudic knowledge.