

# Markus Donath

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Alexander Scheiber wrote in 1966, that “the sofer and copper engraving printer from Nitra had an exceptional career after his death” referring to the articles dealing with Mordecai Sofer Stam’s artistic heritage. I am personally very grateful to this artist because his legacy virtually connects the scholars Ernest Naményi, Alexander Scheiber, and William Gross, all of whom I want to thank. It also links together the historical Judaica knowledge from various times and sources with collections today with both their present and their missing items. The fate of objects encapsulates the basic phenomena of Jewish museology.

I am proud to be their successor in writing about Mordecai Sofer, even though my contribution can only supplement their research, owing to information discovered with the passing of time.

In this article I would like to summarize the information about the heritage of Mordecai Sofer Stam, also called Markus Donath, as determined by the scholars mentioned above. I add my notes about their artworks according to the current situation in 2019. Several questions could still not be answered at the time of writing. Nevertheless, I think that defining the relevant issues can lead to further research.

## Historiography

The first literary mention of Markus Donath was made by Albert Wolf,<sup>1</sup> who published a long article about Jewish Art in the yearbook of the Jewish Museum in Hamburg at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> The information provided was based on his own collection in Berlin; the item mentioned was the copper-engraved *Sefirat ha-Omer* (Omer calendar) from 1833.

The first article specifically dealing with Markus Donath’s art was published in 1941 in the Memorial Volume dedicated to Bernhard Heller, teacher of the Rabbinical Seminary in Budapest.<sup>3</sup> The author of the article is Ernest Naményi, at that time curator of the Hungarian Jewish Museum, Budapest. In

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Wolf, “Etwas über jüdische Kunst und ältere jüdische Künstler,” *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde* 9 (1902): 12–74, here 72.

<sup>2</sup> On the history of the Association that established the museum, see Christine Schatz, “‘Angewandte Volkskunde’. Die ‘Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde’ in Hamburg,” *Vokus. Volkskundlich-wissenschaftliche Schriften* 14 (2004): 121–34.

<sup>3</sup> Ernest Naményi, “Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher der Biedermeierzeit: Markus Donath,” in *Jubilee Volume in Honour of Prof. Bernhard Heller on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed., Alexander Scheiber (Budapest: n.n., 1941), 252–61.

the article, he focuses on the copper-engraved works, but also refers to manuscript works by Donath in the ownership of the Jewish community in Nitra. There are four items listed: the pinqas of the Chevra Kadisha, the hazan's prayer book, a *Shiviti* tablet and a fragment of a prayer book. In the period of his research<sup>4</sup> Naményi could not view the items themselves but could only request information about them from the community's rabbi, Dr. Lazar Schweiger. In addition to the Nitra items, Naményi carefully described the items in the Jewish Museum: the handwritten mohel book (circumcision book) from 1833 and the engraved Esther scroll (Megillat Esther) from 1834.

Unfortunately, he provided only a short description of the Mizrah tablet but did provide an illustration. The picture confirms that the Mizrah tablet is a copperplate print made by Markus Donath. Surprisingly he did not mention the childbirth amulet from 1832 that had belonged to the Museum collection since 1925.

Thanks to his having published the article in German, it became widely known and cited. This article is the foundation of all succeeding publications concerning the art of Markus Donath cited in scholarly publications about nineteenth-century book culture.

After the Second World War the state of Jewish Studies became complicated in Hungary, as communist ideology tried to eliminate religious content. To keep up appearances, they allowed the Museum as well as the only Rabbinical Seminary in the Socialist countries to continue. After the death of Naményi (1957) and Philipp Grünvald (1964), Director of the Museum, Alexander Scheiber was left as the sole scholar of Jewish material culture.<sup>5</sup> As director of the Rabbinical Seminary, he was under continuous observation by the Communist State Security Service. His survival strategy was one of a continuous stream of publications in international media. He tried to elaborate on almost all of the previous writings dealing with Hungarian-Jewish culture, among them the works of Markus Donath. As a well-known rabbi and respected scholar, he served as the central figure of Jewish studies in Hungary and shared all his findings via (due to political circumstances) manifold and often minute publications. Maybe he did so not only for the sake of scholarly inquiry but also to show the vitality of Jewish culture in Hungary.

His first article about Markus Donath's legacy was published in Switzerland, titled: "Eine unbekannte Megilla von Markus Donath" (An unknown Megillah by Markus Donath).<sup>6</sup> At the basis stood a 1837 version of the engraved Esther scroll of Markus Donath that was donated to Scheiber by one of his

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<sup>4</sup> After 1920, the Trianon Peace Treaty Nitra belonged to Czechoslovakia, and in the interwar period, the communication was sometimes difficult, due to the political situation.

<sup>5</sup> For this period, see Zsuzsanna Toronyi, "The Fate of Judaica in Hungary During the Nazi and Soviet Occupations," in Julie-Marthe Cohen, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, eds., *Neglected Witnesses. The Fate of Jewish Ceremonial Objects During the Second World War and After* (Crickadarn: Institute of Art and Law, 2011), 285–306.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Scheiber, "Eine unbekannte Megilla von Markus Donath," *Israelitisches Wochenblatt* LXVI (1966), no. 9. Hungarian version: "Márkus Donáth ismeretlen rézmetszetű Megillája," *Új Élet* XXII, 6. sz.

community members, Dr. István Liebmann. This scroll was not mentioned by Naményi. In his article, Scheiber also mentioned the manuscript mohel book of the former Levi Collection, which was exhibited at the time in Amsterdam.

He published a second article<sup>7</sup> in 1971 when he received a copy of the Catalogue of the Feuchtwanger collection in the Israel Museum in which he recognized the childbirth amulet among the items published as being from Donath. I am still surprised that neither he nor Naményi realized that the same item was present in the collection of the Hungarian Jewish Museum as well since 1925.

In the 1973/74 issue of the *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*,<sup>8</sup> he published the photograph of a second Mizrah plate, which was eventually purchased by the Hungarian Jewish Museum in 1959. In this article he summarizes all of the works of art known from the hand of Markus Donath. This list includes five manuscripts, five copperplate engravings and, mistakenly, one stone lithograph. The last item refers to the childbirth amulet that is unambiguously an engraving.

This is the first report about the disappearance of the mohel book from the Jewish Museum in 1944. Just after the publication of the list of Markus Donath's works, Scheiber, by this time a worldwide recognized scholar of Jewish book studies, met with the Judaica collector Alfred Moldovan in New York. They were able to add a "new" item to the oeuvre: a manuscript mohel book from 1825 in Moldovan's collection. Subsequently, Scheiber published an article about the book in 1979.<sup>9</sup>

Although his article is the last addendum to the historiography of Donath's oeuvre, research interest did not stop in the last century. But much has been changed. Albert Wolf could understand the importance of the artist from the small Omer calendar in his own collection. Forty years later Naményi read his article, discovered more of Donath's objects in the collection of the Hungarian Jewish Museum and published as much as he was able. Decades later Alexander Scheiber continued. Without a collection to study (the museum's collection was no longer open for research) his publications are based on his amazing knowledge and networking, through which he was able to acquire books and catalogs and to meet other scholars and discuss his findings with them. Thanks to Scheiber, Markus Donath became an acknowledged artist, referenced many times by other scholars as well. We must point out Emile Schrijver,<sup>10</sup> Eva Frojmovic,<sup>11</sup> and Dagmara Budzioch. Thanks to the

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<sup>7</sup> Alexander Scheiber, "Eine Kindbett-Tafel," *Israelitisches Wochenblatt* LXXI (1971), no. 34. Hungarian version: "Márkus Donát nyitrai illusztrátor egy további műve," *Új Élet* XXV.8.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 10, no. 3/4 (Winter 1973/74): 80–82.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Scheiber, "Markus Donath's Mohel-book," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 12 (1979): 9–11.

<sup>10</sup> Emile Schrijver, "1816: Seder Tefillot u-Virkhot ha-Mohel," in *A Journey through Jewish Worlds: Highlights from the Braginsky Collection of Hebrew Manuscripts and Printed Books*, ed. Evelyn M. Cohen, Sharon Liberman Mintz, and Emile Schrijver (Amsterdam: Bijzondere Collecties Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Eva Frojmovic, "The Perfect Scribe and an Early Engraved Esther Scroll," *The British Library Journal* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 68–80.

digitization of collections worldwide, most of the referred works are available online and such research became much easier than ever before. Having said that, one must never underestimate the power of collegial friendship and conversation.<sup>12</sup>

### **Mordecai Sofer Stam Aka Markus Donath**

We know the scribe (*sofer*) from Nitra as both Markus Donath and Mordecai Sofer Stam. He refers to himself in his signed works with both names. He for sure earned his bread as a scribe of Torah scrolls, tefillin and mezuzot (that is, as a *sofer Stam*). His traditional Hebrew name containing his and his father's name was Mordecai ben Jozi. He must have been a self-conscious artist as we can read his name in every work of art made by him, always with his personal-name-plus-profession in the form of Mordecai Sofer (Stam). In one of his earliest manuscripts, dated 1820,<sup>13</sup> he inscribed his name five times in different places among the letters of the holy text (see 3v: below the micrographic eagle motif; 10r: with small white letters in the capital letters; 15r: above the two eagles depicted on the page; 15v: below the text, inside the frame; 16r: on the breast of a double headed eagle decorating the frame).

On the *Shiviti* from 1835 we can read his name as a decorative element with his characteristic ribbon-shape letters.

Although he used his Hebrew name in his manuscripts, we refer to him as Markus Donath. The name M. Donath, in German script, appears only at the title page of the engraved Omer calendar from 1834, but since the first publications<sup>14</sup> referred to his Omer calendar and also because his artistic style is easily recognizable, he became initially known by this name.

Why the name Markus Donath? In the Austro-Hungarian Kingdom in 1787, Joseph II ordered the Jews to adopt permanent German family names. To get relevant names, the Jews translated their father's names, hometowns, or professions into German. Donath is derived from the Latin Donatus (God has given), which sounds good even in a Jewish context. Since the administrative language of the Hungarian Kingdom was Latin up until 1844, this form was acceptable. Donath became a common Jewish family name in Hungary. Markus is simply a Latin/German/Hungarian version of Mordecai.

### **Working and Livelihood**

Naményi and Scheiber agree that Donath was a better scribe and illustrator than a copper engraver. They both admit, however, that he was among the first in the Jewish world to experiment with

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<sup>12</sup> I am grateful for the friendly discussion with William Gross, who became a real "hub" of all discussions concerning Jewish art.

<sup>13</sup> *Sefer Sod ha-Shem*, 1820. Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, COD Levi 45.

<sup>14</sup> Wolf, "Etwas über jüdische Kunst"; Naményi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher."

copper-engraved prints. It is most likely that his Omer calendar of 1832 in miniature form is the only Hebrew book entirely printed by copper engraving. As a scribe, he was both skilled and productive. In addition to tefillin and mezuzot, he crafted uniquely made manuscripts for community use, such as the Shiviti and a prayer book for the hazan, a Chevra Kadisha pinqas, and a few beautifully written and decorated mohel books. It could not have been a particularly lucrative business, because according to the records concerning the conscription (census) of the Jews in 1831/1832 he was impoverished ("poenitus depauperatus").<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, we have only one conscription record from the period of his active years, but it is clear that at least in the middle of his career he was poor.<sup>16</sup>

Donath lived in a small city in northern Hungary, relatively far from the artistic and/or printing centers of the region. The tradition of illuminated Jewish manuscripts, however, was flourishing in the wider region. Vienna, Lackenbach, Kittsee, and Trebitsch are in the same cultural region which employed skilled scribes who produced beautiful Jewish manuscripts. The peak of the luxury prayer book production was in the eighteenth century, so to earn his bread, Donath had to invent something marketable. He realized that the region he lived in, one of the most populated Jewish settlement areas, was relatively prosperous and he tried to align his activity to the needs of his customers. He started to produce copperplate engravings for the Jewish home: relatively short texts crafted in a beautiful and sometimes even meaningful form. Compared to the small, lavish luxury prayer books, Birkat ha-mazon (grace after meal) manuscripts and the like to dazzle wealthy Jews, his products were simpler and cheaper. His known copperplates are a childbirth amulet, a Mizrah table, an Omer calendar and two versions of the Esther scroll. All of them are for personal use in the Jewish home, containing traditional Jewish content and decorated with fashionable Biedermeier motifs, as well as elements of Jewish iconography. Supposedly his engraved prints served the new Jewish middle-class, which was able to pay a little bit more for a traditional item in a fashionable form.

### **Biedermeier Style for Traditional Content**

In the post-Napoleon era, Hungary prospered and was open to new ideas. The Jewish communities in western Hungary were among the first to adopt the ideas of the Jewish Enlightenment, the Haskalah, and started to emerge from their isolation. They postulated that Judaism must attenuate the severity of religious rules and make ceremonies both simpler and more attractive. This had a

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<sup>15</sup> *Conscriptio integralis populationis status judaeorum (...) anno militare 1831/32*. Consilium regium locumtenentiale Hungaricum: Departementum Judaeorum. Hungarian National Archives C55.

<sup>16</sup> The conscription lists his wife and four children as well. If he had children living with his household, he must have been relatively young in 1831/32.

spiritual and material impact on the design of religious objects.<sup>17</sup> The fashionable Biedermeier style of the objects links the Jewish community to the contemporary visual environment and refers to the social status aspired to by local Jews. This phenomenon is more evident in the case of ceremonial objects,<sup>18</sup> as can be seen in this Hanukkah Menorah made in 1840 by a Gentile silversmith in Vienna. The influence is discernible on the works of Markus Donath as well. The style of his crowns, baldachins conform to the commonly known royal-aristocratic insignia, while in his overdecorated typography he is more in tune with his own times.

However, besides this modern visual approach, he also made use of a more conventional iconography, serving his customers with the traditional, sometimes even superstitious artifacts such as the protective angels against Lilith,<sup>19</sup> the Menorah-Psalm,<sup>20</sup> the endless knot<sup>21</sup> and so on.

### The Impact of his Prints

Markus Donath was a skilled scribe, likely trained through an apprenticeship with one of the famous scribes of the region, or at least influenced by them. He had to learn the scribal art, the halakhic rules of writing, and the preparation of the parchment and the kosher ink. Making kosher ink is a tremendously complex task. There are different recipes, each consisting of some tannic acid (derived from oak galls), iron sulfate or blue vitriol, gum arabic, and lamp black. As Naményi and Scheiber both pointed out, as an etcher he was an amateur, who invented his knowledge by himself, based on his experiences as a scribe. To print copperplate engravings, he needed the same items: paper, ink, nitric acid, and linseed oil. All were easily accessible in the early nineteenth century, except for good quality paper to print.<sup>22</sup>

Fortunately, one of his copper engraving plates has remained, preserved in the synagogue of Ranizowiz, Poland. It was purchased by the National Museum in Kraków in 1938.<sup>23</sup> This plate is the original printing plate of the childbirth amulet or *kimpetbrivl* made in 1832. Ranizowiz is a small village in the Subcarpathian part of Poland, about 500 km from Nitra, with less than three-hundred Jewish inhabitants throughout its history. It is hard to imagine how the printing plate arrived there

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<sup>17</sup> Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, "An Interface between Jewish and Non-Jewish Culture in Central-Europe," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 37 (2004): 147–62.

<sup>18</sup> See for example the Torah decorations: Franz Lorenz Turinsky: Torah finials, 1806 (GFC 050.001.016); Johann Mayerhofer: Torah shield, 1819 (GFC 051.001.003).

<sup>19</sup> Shalom Sabar, "Naissance et magie. Folklore juif et culture matérielle," in *Les cultures des Juifs: Une nouvelle histoire*, ed. David Biale (Paris: Editions de l'Éclat, 2005), 594–635.

<sup>20</sup> Shubert Spero, "The Menorah-Psalm," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (2009): 11–17.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph and Yehudit Shadur, *Traditional Jewish Papercuts. An Inner World of Art and Symbol* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2002).

<sup>22</sup> According to contemporary geographic description of the region (Fényes Elek, *Magyar országnak 's a' hozzá kapcsoló tartományoknak mostani állapotja statistikai és geographiai tekintetben*, vol. 2 [Pest, 1837], 268) there was only one printing press in the county (printing only prayer books in Slovak) and three paper mills producing only cheap products, but not post or "dutch quality" papers.

<sup>23</sup> National Museum in Kraków, 230 (IV-M-2116), 183 × 125 mm.

and what was to reason to preserve it. The plate is still usable as figure 16 shows,<sup>24</sup> so it is imaginable that someone continued to print from it, even though we have no evidence of that. Most probably its mystical-sacral content – even in reverse writing – was the reason why they preserved it.

The distance of Nitra and Ranizowiz raises the question of the geographical stretch of Donath's impact. His manuscripts were made for the Jewish community of Nitra and for circumcisers in an area of around 200 km. Although we do not know how many copies of his etchings ever existed, according to the technical possibilities there could have been at least forty to fifty of each. His known etchings were donated to the Jewish Museum in Budapest by local Jews as collector's items without detailed provenance information. So, at that time, it is almost impossible to measure the scale of his impact on the contemporary scene of Jewish visual objects, but there are some items which encapsulate the possibilities.

Thirty years later Moses Wolf in Hunsdorf (Hungarian: Hunfalva, today: Hunocve, Slovakia) crafted a handwritten childbirth amulet<sup>25</sup> clearly after the model by Markus Donath. It is a home-made copy trying to imitate the lines of Donath's etching but decorated also with a papercut. There are two of these creations by Wolf still extant.

Another item belonging to the collection of the Jewish Museum, Budapest displays King Solomon, depicted in micrography.<sup>26</sup> It is a copperplate etching, and its style is so reminiscent of the works of Markus Donath that it is hard to not attribute it to him. What speaks against it, is the one missing element: his name. As we already discussed, he was a self-conscious artist displaying his name many times in each of his works. While we cannot prove that he was the artist, it is certain that his stylistic influence can be discovered on this sheet.

According to our knowledge as of today, we have a handful of his works in different collections and some textual evidence about the lost objects from his hand as provided by pre-Holocaust articles. We can suppose, therefore, that there are a few other copies in smaller collections still waiting for identification. Online accessibility and thorough research could help us to discover more works and enable us to make a profound socio-historical and art historical analysis.

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<sup>24</sup> See GFC 027.011.030, Amulet made in the 1990s from the original printing plate preserved in the National Museum in Kraków. The quality of the print is quite good.

<sup>25</sup> GFC 036.011.008.

<sup>26</sup> Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest, 64.1693.

## Works of Art Made by Markus Donath/Mordecai Sofer Stam of Nitra

### MANUSCRIPTS

#### Mohel Book, 1812/1813

Ink on parchment, polychrome painting, manuscript

17.5 × 11.9 cm, 27 leaves

**Text:** Sefer Brit qodesh

**Illustrations:** In this early manuscript, there are alternating polychrome and copperplate-like pen-drawings. Its visual program is not consistent, as if it were a selection displaying all his later features: the ribbon-shape characters, micrography, different frames and so forth. On a few pictures the influence of the Amsterdam Haggadah is discernible<sup>27</sup> as well as the mystical iconography such as the endless knot and the kabbalistic idea of two messiahs, depicted as a unicorn and lion lying together<sup>28</sup>

**Artist's name:** Mordehai Sofer Stam ben Jozi Sofer mi-Nitra on folios 3v, 4r, 5r

**Provenance:** It was made for Lipman ben Saul Ehrenfeld. Folio 19r, "I acquired this book from my brother-in-law, Lipman Ehrenfeld"; ownership entry on flyleaf: Hayyim Grunfeld. Donated to the Jewish Theological Seminary by Dr. H.G. Friedman

**Collection:** Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary New York, MS 8273. Available online at <http://www.jtsa.edu/library> and at <https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLIS/en/ManuScript/>

#### Sefer Sod ha-Shem, 1820

Ink on parchment, manuscript

16 × 12 cm, 20 pages, leather binding

**Text:** Sod Adonai by Rabbi David ben Aryeh Leib of Lida (c. 1650–1696)

**Illustrations:** The whole volume is decorated with pen-drawings in the manner of the copper engravings. The illustrations are similar (in some cases identical) with the previously written *Sefer Brit qodesh*, 1812/1813. We can see in this manuscript the visual influence of the imperial Habsburg iconography such as the baldachin flanking from a Habsburg-type crown.<sup>29</sup>

**Artist's name:** Mordechai Sofer Stam on pages 3v: below the micrographic eagle motif, 10r: with small white letters in the capital letters, 15r: above the two eagles depicted on the page, 15v: below the text, inside the frame, 16r: on the breast of a double-headed eagle decorating the frame, two small Ruta-shape ornaments containing a capital M and D as the monogram of his civil name

**Provenance:** Levy Collection, Hamburg

**Literature:** "Joodse verluchte handschriften" (Illustrated Jewish Manuscripts). Exhibition in the Jewish Historical Museum Amsterdam, 1961. Cat. no 49; Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," A1; Irina Wandrey, "Codex Levy 45," *Manuscript Cultures* 6 (2014): 275–78

**Collection:** Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, COD Levi 45. Available online at <https://www.sub.uni-hamburg.de/startseite.html>

#### Sefer Sod ha-Shem, 1823

Ink on parchment, manuscript

18 × 13 cm, 14 pages

**Text:** Sod Adonai by Rabbi David ben Aryeh Leib of Lida (c. 1650–1696)

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<sup>27</sup> Constance Harris, *The Way Jews Lived: Five Hundred Years of Printed Words and Images* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishers, 2009), 107; Kurt Schubert, "Die Weisen von Bne Braq in der Haggadailustration des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Artibus et Historiae* 9 (1988): 71–81.

<sup>28</sup> See Elliott Horowitz, "Odd Couples: The Eagle and the Hare, the Lion and the Unicorn," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (2004): 243–58.

<sup>29</sup> For the use of Habsburg imperial insignia on Judaica, see Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, "An Interface between Jewish and Non-Jewish Culture in Central-Europe," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 37 (2004): 147–62.



**Illustrations:** The whole volume is decorated with pen-drawings in the manner of the copper engravings

**Provenance:** Alexander ben Simon Halevi Goldenberg, Josef Gross Óbuda (today: Budapest)

**Collection:** GFC HU.012.002

### **Sefer Sod ha-Shem, 1825**

Parchment, paper, manuscript, pink leather binding

17 × 12 cm, 11 parchment pages and 15 paper pages with the notes of a mohel

**Text:** Sod Adonai by Rabbi David ben Aryeh Leib of Lida (c. 1650–1696)

**Illustrations:** The whole volume is decorated with pen-drawings in the manner of the copper engravings

**Provenance:** Benjamin ben Jacob Levi mohel (1829); Alfred Moldovan Collection

**Literature:** Scheiber "Markus Donath's Mohel-book"

**Collection:** Private collection, New York

### **Chevra Kadisha Pinqas, 1825**

Paper, manuscript, black leather binding

43 × 25 cm

**Illustrations:** Moses on Mount Nebo, Ezekiel's vision, resurrection of the Dead, frames with micrographic script

**Provenance:** In 1941 property of the Jewish Community of Nitra

**Literature:** Naményi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher," 256; Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," A2

**Collection:** Current whereabouts are uncertain. The information is based on the article by Naményi, who was informed by the wife of the local rabbi, Lazar Schweiger

### **Prayer Book, 1825**

Parchment, manuscript

34 × 25 cm

**Text:** Lekha dodi, Yequm purqan, Hazkarat neshamot, Blessing of King Franz (in German and Hebrew), Blessing on the local authority, land-steward Count Malonyai, *Luah* for 120 years

**Illustrations:** On 15 pages: decorative letters and ornaments

**Provenance:** In 1941 property of the Jewish Community of Nitra

**Literature:** Naményi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher," 256; Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," A3

**Collection:** Current whereabouts are uncertain. The information is based on the article by Naményi, who was informed by the wife of the local rabbi, Lazar Schweiger

### **Sefer Sod ha-Shem, 1833**

Parchment, manuscript

15,5 × 11 cm, 13 pages + 54 paper pages for notes

**Text:** Sod Adonai by Rabbi David ben Aryeh Leib of Lida (c. 1650–1696)

**Illustrations:** The illustrations are listed by Naményi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher"

**Artist's name:** On the title page: Markus Donath

**Provenance:** Donated to the Museum by Mayer Salamon rabbi of Turdosin (today: Tvrdosín, Slovakia) in 1915. The original inventory number was 339

**Literature:** Naményi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher," 256, illustrations 4–9; Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," A4. The title page is published by Naményi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher," illustration 4

**Collection:** Jewish Museum, Budapest. According to Alexander Scheiber, the object has been lost in 1944

### **Shiviti Tablet, 1835**

Parchment, manuscript

48.5 × 56.6 cm

Text: Shir ha-shirim, Qohelet, Psalms, Psalm 16:8

Illustrations: The entire sheet is made up by micrographic texts. Moses, Aaron, King David with a harp, King Solomon at his throne. In the middle of the sheet, a seven-branched candelabrum is left out

Artist's name: Mordecai Sofer ben R. Josel Sofer Stam: in a rectangular field bottom middle.

Mordecai Sofer: at the two sides of the sheet written with decorative ribbon-shape characters

Provenance: Donated to the Altes Jüdisches Museum, Vienna by W.B. Wolf from Pohrlitz (South Moravia) in 1899.

Collection: Jewish Museum Vienna, inv. no. 3129

### **Prayer Book, Fragment, n.d.**

Paper

Provenance: Nitra Jewish Community

Literature: Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," A5

## **PRINTS**

### **Amulet for Childbirth, 1832**

Paper, copperplate print

18.3 × 12.4 cm

Text: Psalm 20, Psalm 121; patriarchs and kings: Isaac, Adam, Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon; matriarchs: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. "Let Lilith, the first Eve, out (of this territory), (in the name of) Sinoy (Sanoy), Sinsnoy (Sansanoy), and Samengalof." The Midrashic legend of Elijah who protects the newborns, and all the names of Lilith. The formula: "The witch shall not live," in every possible permutation

Illustrations: On the top of the plate are two winged angels (putti) flanking a central inscribed shield, at the bottom a David-star shaped micrographic text

Artist's name: Mordechai Sofer Stam mi-q"q Nitra – in a small medaillon at the bottom of the plate

Provenance: Donated to the Jewish Museum, Budapest by Mihályné Weingruber in 1925. Original inventory number 1690e

Literature: Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," C10

Collection: Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest, 64.1235. Available online at <http://collections.milev.hu>

Other copy: GFC 027.011.426

Other copy: Feuchtwanger Collection 103/399

### **Copper Engraving Plate for Childbirth Amulet of 1832**

Copper, engraved, etched

18.1 × 12.5 cm

Text: See above

Illustrations: See above

Artist's name: See above

Provenance: Purchased from Szymon Rabinowicz of Ranizow near Rzeszow in 1938

Literature: Stanisława Odrzywolska and Monika Paś, *Judaica in the Collection of the National Museum in Krakow* (Kraków: Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie, 2018), cat. II/1, pp. 187–88, 198–99

Collection: National Museum in Kraków, inv. no. MNK IV-M-2116

### **Omer Calendar, 1833**

Paper, copperplate print

16° measurement provided by Wolf op cit., since the current whereabouts are unknown, we have to accept his information, which refers to 10 x 17 cm book-format.

**Text:** Shir ha-shirim, Book of Ruth, counting the Omer

**Illustrations:** "mit Tiergestalten und Engelköpfen reich ornamentiert ist und zu Anfang das ganze hohe Lied und zu Ende das ganze Buch Ruth in mikroskopisches Schrift auf je einen Seite zeigt" (richly ornamented with animal figures and angel-heads and at the beginning the whole Song of Songs, and at the end, the whole Book of Ruth are written in micrography each on one page)

**Artist's name:** Markus Donath

**Provenance:** Albert Wolff Collection, Berlin

**Literature:** Wolf, "Etwas über jüdische Kunst und altere jüdische Künstler," 72; Naményi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher," 255; Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," B6

**Collection:** Its current whereabouts are unknown

### **Esther Scroll, 1834**

Paper, copperplate print

21 x 134 cm

**Text:** Benedictions before reading of the scroll, Esther Scroll

**Illustrations:** Story of Esther. Most of the illustrations of the Scroll are based on the one by Shalom Italia, printed in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century

**Artist's name:** The name of Mordecai Sofer Stam appears twice: Mordechaj Sofer Stam with small white characters inside the large capitals of *va-yehi* (now it came to pass) at column 2 and in the imprint at the last column

**Provenance:** The scroll was donated to the Hungarian Jewish Museum, Budapest in 1915 by Lajos Steiner and his wife, from Budapest. The original inventory number in the collection was 713

**Literature:** Naményi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher," 254; Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," B7

**Collection:** Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest, 64.2228. Available online at <http://collections.milev.hu>

*Other copy:* Donated to the Hungarian Jewish Museum, Budapest by Frigyes Wahl in 1942. Original inventory number 3654; Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest, 64.2223

*Other copy:* One more copy of the scroll was donated to the Jewish Museum, Budapest in 1935 by Antal Vajda, but its whereabouts are currently unknown

*Other copy:* GFC o81.011.002

*Other copy:* Heikhal Shlomo – mentioned by Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate"

*Other copy on different form:* The original scroll cut and reassembled later in book form. Sotheby's Important Judaica 2015, lot 27

### **Omer Calendar, 1834**

Paper, copperplate print

10 x 6 cm, 17 pages in contemporary brown leather binding

**Text:** Shir ha-shirim, Blessings, Ana be-khoah prayer, Book of Ruth, Psalms and counting the Omer

**Artist's name:** On the title page in the middle the name Mordecai Sofer Stam, and at the bottom of the page M. Donat

**Provenance:** The book originally belonged to Jacob Hirsch, it was donated to the Hungarian Jewish Museum, Budapest in 1914 by Ödön Kálmán, rabbi of Jászberény. The original inventory number was 444

**Collection:** Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest, 64.627. Available online at <http://collections.milev.hu>

### **Omer Calendar, 1834**

Slightly different: the pages are the same as in the HJMA copy but in a different order.

**Collection:** GFC B.2016

**Esther Scroll, 1837**

Paper, copperplate print

22 × 129.5 cm

**Text:** Benedictions before the reading, Book of Esther

**Illustrations:** Most of the illustrations of the scroll are based on the one by Shalom Italia, printed in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century. Only slightly different from the 1834 version

**Artist's name:** Mordechai Sofer Stam (imprint)

**Literature:** Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," B/8

**Collection:** GFC 081.011.003

*Other copy:* Possession of Alexander Scheiber, donated to him by Dr. István Liebmann. Scheiber, "Eine unbekante Megilla von Markus Donath"

**Mizrah Plate, n.d.**

Paper, copperplate

12 × 9 cm

**Text:** Psalm 67, "Know before Whom you stand" (Berakhot 28b), Psalm 16:8, etc.

**Illustrations:** Psalm in the form of the Menorah, endless knot, geometric pattern around the texts

**Provenance:** Mentioned by Naményi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher," 255 as the property of the Jewish Museum, Budapest, but there is no evidence of it in the list of donations

**Literature:** Naményi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher," 255, illustration 3; Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," Bg

**Collection:** The whereabouts of the object are unknown

*Other copy:* Frankel Collection, Ramat Gan. Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate," Bg

**Mizrah Plate, n.d.**

Photocopy in the collection of the Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest

24 × 18 cm, framed

**Text:** mizrah me-tzad zeh ruah hayyim

**Illustrations:** Frame with rosettes in the four corners. The frame contains a text, that is undecipherable because of the photocopy. In the middle of the plate, two winged angels create a gate-shape place containing the word "Mizrah" written with ribbon-shape ornamented letters. The rest of the field contains an endless knot-shaped micrographic text

**Artist's name:** "Mordecai Sofer Stam mi-Nitra" in two small baldachins topped with the Habsburg crown on both sides of the plate

**Provenance:** The photocopy of an undefined original was acquired in 1959 by Philipp Grünvald, Director of the Hungarian Jewish Museum, Budapest. Original inventory number was 5472

**Literature:** Scheiber, "Marcus Donath's Second Misrah-plate"

**Collection:** Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest, 64.1225. Available online at <http://collections.milev.hu>

**Shir ha-shirim Plate, n.d.**

Paper, copperplate

25 × 20.5 cm

**Text:** Song of Songs

**Illustrations:** King Solomon on his throne depicted in micrography. The setting is almost the same as on page 4a of the mohel book from 1812/1813 (JTS New York) or on page 16a of the mohel book from 1820 (Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek). On both sides small medallions contain a Habsburg crowne and a canopy – the same as in the Esther scroll of 1834. At the top of the picture two putti holding a baldachin, which is also known from his oeuvre.

**Artist's name:** Does not appear on the sheet

**Provenance:** Donated to the Hungarian Jewish Museum, Budapest in 1959 by an unknown donor. Original inventory number was 5532

**Collection:** Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, Budapest, 64.1693. Available online at <http://collections.milev.hu>