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## When a Rabbi is Accused of Heresy

### R. Ezekiel Landau's Attitude Toward R. Jonathan Eibeschuetz in the Emden-Eibeschuetz Controversy<sup>1</sup>

Sid Z. Leiman  
Brooklyn College

Toward the end of Moshe Aryeh Perlmutter's study of R. Jonathan Eibeschuetz' attitude toward Sabbatianism,<sup>2</sup> the author lists a series of problems that he admits he cannot solve. Included on the list as especially perplexing was the enigmatic relationship between R. Jonathan Eibeschuetz and R. Ezekiel Landau. The passage reads:<sup>3</sup>

לא נפתרה השאלה בשל מה ולמה היו לו להרב יהונתן תומכים וסניגורים בין הרבנים הבלתי שבחתיים, וכן שאלת היחסים התמוהים שבינו ובין הרב יחזקאל לנדא.

Perlmutter, who basically was persuaded that Eibeschuetz was a Sabbatian, could not fathom why so many leading rabbis defended Eibeschuetz. That Landau, who was a notorious anti-Sabbatian, defended Eibeschuetz, was simply incomprehensible to Perlmutter.

In fact, the problem of the relationship between Eibeschuetz and Landau has proven to be enigmatic on other grounds as well. The Emden-Eibeschuetz controversy, which was initiated on that fateful Thursday morning, February 4, 1751, when R. Jacob Emden announced in

<sup>1</sup>To Marvin Fox, mentor and colleague, whose scholarship and demeanor imbue academe with כבוד התורה and כבוד הבריות.

<sup>2</sup>M. A. Perlmutter, ר' יהונתן איבשיץ ויחסו אל השבתאות, Tel Aviv, 1947.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 316.

his synagogue in Altona that an amulet ascribed to the Chief Rabbi – Jonathan Eibeschuetz – could only have been written by a Sabbatian heretic, did not cease with the death of Eibeschuetz in 1764. Emden continued to wage the battle against Eibeschuetz' memory, and against his descendants and disciples until his own death in 1776. Nor did the controversy end then; it simply entered a new phase, namely a scholastic one. With the rise of *jüdische Wissenschaft* and the publication of studies by scholars such as Graetz,<sup>4</sup> Kahana,<sup>5</sup> Scholem,<sup>6</sup> and Liebes,<sup>7</sup> the Emden-Eibeschuetz controversy has attained an immortality and a notoriety that one suspects will not soon be exhausted. *Jüdische Wissenschaft*, especially as represented by the aforementioned scholars, has tended to condemn Eibeschuetz. Rabbinic scholars – R. Reuven Margalioth<sup>8</sup> is typical – have tended to vindicate Eibeschuetz. Interestingly, both groups adduce Landau as proof of their positions, and this is the real enigma of the relationship between Eibeschuetz and Landau. Graetz,<sup>9</sup> for example, considered Landau to be an implacable enemy of Eibeschuetz, and therefore concluded that Landau's attitude itself was proof that Eibeschuetz was a Sabbatian. In striking contrast virtually every rabbinic defense of Eibeschuetz – the most recent one was published in Bnei Braq in 1981<sup>10</sup> – stresses the fact

<sup>4</sup>H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*,<sup>3</sup> ed. by M. Brann, Leipzig, 1897, vol. 10, pp. 339-524. Cf. S. P. Rabinowitz' critique of Graetz' account of the controversy in H. Graetz, *דברי ימי ישראל*, ed. and trans. by S. P. Rabinowitz, Warsaw, 1899 [photo-offset: Jerusalem, 1972], vol. 8, pp. 455-528 and 614-636.

<sup>5</sup>D. Kahana, "מהר"י אייבשיץ: זכאי או חייב", 6 השחר (1875) 232, 281-288, 338-344; "אמח ליעקב", 5 השחר (1899) 256-261, 327-332, 524-529, and 6 (1899) 137-143, 337-343. Cf. his *magnum opus*: תולדות המקובלים השבתאים והחסידים,<sup>3</sup> Tel Aviv, 1927, vol. 2, pp. 20-64, 129-145.

<sup>6</sup>Many of Scholem's studies treat aspects of the controversy. Among those most directly concerned with the controversy are his review of M. J. Cohen, *Jacob Emden: A Man of Controversy* in ספר קריה 16 (1939) 320-338; לקט מרגליות, Tel Aviv, 1941; תרביץ 13 (1942) 226-244; and "Eybeschuetz, Jonathan" in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem, 1971, vol. 6, columns 1074-1076.

<sup>7</sup>Y. Liebes, "מחבר ספר צדיק יסוד עלום; 1 דעת (1978) 73-120; "ספר צדיק יסוד עלום: מיתוס שבתאי", *משיחיותו של ר' יעקב עמדין וחסו לשבתאוח*; 2-3 דעת (1978-79) 159-173; *הנביא השבתאי ר' ליבלי פרוסניץ* "כתבים חדשים בקבלה שבתאית מחוגו" 52 (1983) 359; 49 תרביץ (1979-80) 122-165 and 5 (1986) 191-348; and cf. below, note 24.

<sup>8</sup>R. Margalioth [Margulies], *סיבה התנגדותו של רבינו יעקב עמדין*, Tel Aviv, 1941; *לדקטוריה: שנתון*, Tel Aviv, 1941; "לתולדות איש שם בלבוב"; 29 סיני (1951) 378-388.

<sup>9</sup>H. Graetz, "Ezechiel Landau's Gesuch an Maria Theresia gegen Jonathan Eibeschutz," *MGWJ* 26 (1877) 17-25.

<sup>10</sup>Y. S. Feder, *תולדות הדורות*, Bnei Braq, 1981, vol. 3, pp. 131-133.

that he was vindicated by no less a rabbinic scholar, and anti-Sabbatian, than Landau himself.<sup>11</sup>

What follows is an attempt to resolve the enigma alluded to above, and to present a fuller, more accurate, and more persuasive account of Landau's attitude toward Eibeschuetz than has previously been made available in the literature. We shall examine, however briefly, the primary sources, as well as the anecdotal evidence. Although modern scholarship ordinarily (and rightly) puts little or no stock in anecdotal evidence, it will become obvious as this presentation unfolds why an exception is justifiable for the purposes of this discussion.

It is important to note at the outset – together with Scholem<sup>12</sup> – that whatever our conclusions regarding Landau's attitude toward Eibeschuetz may be, they by themselves cannot prove Eibeschuetz' guilt or innocence regarding Emden's charge that Eibeschuetz was a Sabbatian. Thus, on methodological grounds we must reject Graetz' view that Eibeschuetz was a Sabbatian simply because – according to Graetz – Landau considered Eibeschuetz to be a Sabbatian.<sup>13</sup> On the same methodological grounds, we must reject every rabbinic defense of Eibeschuetz which bases itself on the fact that Landau vindicated Eibeschuetz.<sup>14</sup> Our focus, then will be on Landau's perception of Eibeschuetz rather than on the realities of Eibeschuetz' alleged Sabbatian leanings.

There is no evidence that Landau and Eibeschuetz ever met. When the Emden-Eibeschuetz controversy erupted in 1751, neither Landau nor Eibeschuetz had published any of the works that would later become landmarks of rabbinic scholarship. Nonetheless, both were widely known and well connected in rabbinic circles. Certainly, Landau had heard of Eibeschuetz. Long before 1751, Eibeschuetz had earned an international reputation for himself. Gems from his mouth appeared in print as early as 1729 in Judah of Glogau's קול יהודה, a popular anthology of the best rabbinic lectures (more accurately: חידושים) of 1729. Such anthologies were commonplace in the 18th century and were frequently reprinted.<sup>15</sup> Eibeschuetz' lectures at the *yeshivoth* of Prague and Metz

<sup>11</sup>Typical are the accounts in Y. Kamelhar, מפני הדור, New York, 1966, chap. 2, p. 5 [first edition: Munkacz, 1903]; Z. Lipsker, "תולדות הגאון רבי יחזקאל סגל לנדא", דגלנו 7 (1927), n. 4, p. 13, n. 5, pp. 12-13, and n. 6, p. 13; R. Margalioth, סיבת התנגדותו של רבינו עקיב מעמדין, p. 13; and T. Y. Tavyomi, אנציקלופדיה של תורה, Tel Aviv, 1954, p. 106.

<sup>12</sup>G. Scholem, "פרשיית בחקר התנועה השבתאית", ציון 6 (1941), p. 100.

<sup>13</sup>H. Graetz, "Ezechiel Landau's Gesuch," (see above, note 9), p. 25.

<sup>14</sup>See above, notes 10 and 11.

<sup>15</sup>Thus, four editions of קול יהודה appeared during the lifetime of Eibeschuetz. The most recent reissue is: New York, 1983. For the titles of other such

were assiduously recorded and widely distributed.<sup>16</sup> His former students occupied pulpits throughout Europe.<sup>17</sup> It is inconceivable that Landau had not read or heard about Eibeschuetz' Torah teaching by 1751. It is conceivable, however, that in 1751 Eibeschuetz had not yet heard of Landau, who was 23 years younger than Eibeschuetz.<sup>18</sup> Conceivable, but not likely, for in 1751 Landau was a rising star on the rabbinic scene. In 1734, at the age of 21, Landau was appointed *dayyan* at Brody, a major center of Torah scholarship.<sup>19</sup> Nine years later he was elected rabbi of Yampol, a small but distinguished settlement in Volhynia.<sup>20</sup> In the 1740's both Landau's and Eibeschuetz' names appeared prominently on the approbation pages of various rabbinic works. In 1752, at the height of the controversy, Landau and Eibeschuetz crossed paths for the first time. In a valiant attempt to bring the controversy to a close, Landau addressed letters to all the involved parties and to the leading Jewish authorities throughout Europe.<sup>21</sup> In them, he called for an immediate cessation of hostilities,

anthologies, see D. L. Zinz, גדולה יהונתן, Piotrkow, 1930-34 [photo-offset: Tel Aviv, 1968], p. 212; and cf. M. Piekarcz, בימי צמיחה החסידות, Jerusalem, 1978, pp. 30-31.

<sup>16</sup>Virtually all major collections of Hebrew manuscripts contain copies of Eibeschuetz' lectures as recorded by his students. Many have been published. See, e.g., the bibliography listed in N. Ben-Menahem, ed., חוברת לדוגמה, Jerusalem, 1964, pp. 13-24. For recent samplings, see J. Eibeschuetz, [ed. by E. Hurvitz] "הסברה על מסכת ביצה" 2 (1981-84) 71-75; "העמק 'חידושי הגאון רביהו יהונתן אייבשיץ זל'" 8 (1984) 7-29; שם עולם "חידושים הסברות למס חולין פרק ראשון ושני" (Scheider Memorial Volume), Wickliffe, Ohio, 1985, pp. 71-101; חידושי רבי יהונתן על מס ברכות, Jerusalem, 1986; "ברין מצוה מחמת מיתה" אבן ציון: ספר זכרון לבן ציון הכהן כהנא "ברין מצוה מחמת מיתה", Jerusalem, 1987, pp. 134-135.

<sup>17</sup>For a partial listing, see D. L. Zinz, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-283.

<sup>18</sup>Assuming the conventional date of birth assigned to Eibeschuetz – 1690. See, however, Y. Y. Greenwald, הרב ר' יהונתן אייבשיץ, New York, 1954, pp. 44-49 and notes.

<sup>19</sup>See, e.g., N. M. Gelber, ערים ואמהות בישראל (= תולדות יהודי ברודי, vol. 6), Jerusalem, 1955.

<sup>20</sup>Landau's Yampol is not to be confused, as it often is, with Yampol in Podolia. For Volhynian Yampol, and for the rabbis who resided there, see A. L. Gellman, הנדע בעיבורה ומשנתו, Jerusalem, 1970, pp. 2-3 and 161-165.

<sup>21</sup>The letter was published separately by Emden (in full) and by Eibeschuetz (in abridged form). Emden's version appeared in פתח עינים, Altona, 1756; Eibeschuetz' version appeared in לוחח ערוה, Altona, 1755, pp. 41b-43a [photo-offset: Jerusalem, 1966, pp. 102-105]. A comparison between the two published versions and the unexpurgated text, as it appears in manuscript form at Oxford in Joseph Praeger's נחלי אש, yields interesting (but not startling) results regarding the accuracy of Emden's and Eibeschuetz' transcription of primary sources. I plan to publish those results, together with an accurate transcription of the full text of Landau's letter, as a separate study. Precisely because of the general unavailability of the full text of Landau's letter, rabbis and scholars have been misled in their assessment of Landau's attitude toward Eibeschuetz. Aside

and proclaimed that due respect be accorded to Emden and Eibeschuetz by all. Landau basically vindicated Eibeschuetz by depicting him as one of the greatest rabbinic scholars of the generation. Landau ruled that, henceforth, anyone who would slander Eibeschuetz in any way would immediately be placed under the ban. On the other hand, Landau admitted that if not for the fact that the amulets were ascribed to Eibeschuetz, he would have concluded that their author could only have been a Sabbatian. Landau suggested the possibility that either he – Landau – had misread them, or else they were partially falsified between the time Eibeschuetz had written them and the time they were shown to Emden. In any event, all the amulets were to be returned to Eibeschuetz and were to be withdrawn permanently from circulation. Moreover, Eibeschuetz was proscribed from writing and distributing amulets ever again. No less embarrassing for Eibeschuetz was the stipulation that since numerous allegedly Sabbatian works – aside from the amulets – were circulating under Eibeschuetz' name, Eibeschuetz had to publicly condemn all those works by title and place their author under the ban.

In effect, Landau provided Eibeschuetz with a graceful exit out of the controversy. Emden's forces had threatened Eibeschuetz with a *דין חוררה*. Indeed, unless Eibeschuetz was prepared to defend himself before a Jewish court-of-law, he would be defrocked and placed under the ban. Thus, Eibeschuetz had been painted into a corner by the leading rabbinic authorities in Germany – either an appearance in a Jewish court-of-law or the ban – when out of left field, or, more precisely, Yampol, Landau came to his rescue. Landau's compromise, while personally welcomed by Eibeschuetz and by many of the moderates involved in the controversy, failed. It failed because Emden's forces rejected the compromise out of hand. They refused to cease hostilities, demanding nothing short of total capitulation. Indeed, Emden's sustained effort at character assassination of Eibeschuetz probably has only one parallel in the annals of Jewish history, namely, Emden's sustained effort at the character assassination of Landau. It will come as no surprise that Emden – somewhat guardedly – accused Landau of being a Sabbatian.<sup>22</sup> And that was among the nicer things he had to say about Landau.

Precisely because Landau's effort was intended as a compromise it is difficult to assess just what it tells us about Landau's attitude toward Eibeschuetz. As indicated, Eibeschuetz' supporters and detractors cited

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from the references cited above, notes 10 and 11, see the egregious account in A. L. Gellman, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-21 and 166-169.

<sup>22</sup>E. G., פתח עינים, p. 13a. Cf. Emden's *ספר הראב"ק*, Altona, 1769, pp. 147b-148b.

Landau's effort as proof of their view of Eibeschuetz. We shall refrain from further analysis of Landau's missive until we have had the opportunity to examine the remaining evidence.

In 1756, during the Ten Days of Penitence, Moses Brandeis, a cantor in Prague, slandered Eibeschuetz' name. The matter was brought to the attention of Landau, now Chief Rabbi of Prague. He immediately convened a rabbinical court and Brandeis was anathematized. The court ruled that he could no longer lead services; moreover, for a full year he must take his seat in the mourner's section of the synagogue. His penance would be completed earlier only if Eibeschuetz expressly sends a note to Landau indicating that he forgives Brandeis' indiscretion. Within eight weeks of the court's ruling, Eibeschuetz sent a note to Landau on behalf of Brandeis. The court reconvened and rescinded its ruling, with the proviso that should Brandeis ever again slight Eibeschuetz, he would never again be allowed to lead services in Prague or, for that matter, anywhere else.<sup>23</sup> Now it may be that Brandeis was not much of a cantor; and after listening to him lead a service any rabbi would have sought a means of placing him under the ban for at least a year. Nonetheless, no historian could be faulted for viewing this episode as clear evidence that Landau defended the honor of Eibeschuetz.

Our sources are silent until late in 1759 when a *yeshiva* student in Hamburg addressed an urgent appeal to Landau, informing him that Eibeschuetz' son, Wolf, and other Kabbalists in Wolf's entourage, were secret adherents of Sabbetai Zevi.<sup>24</sup> In his reply to the student, Landau indicated that he was sending a letter directly to Eibeschuetz, and ordering him to admonish his son and to expel all heretics from his community. Should Eibeschuetz refuse to comply,

או במקום חלול השם לא אחלוק כבוד לרב, ואעשה כל מה שבכחי.<sup>25</sup>

Landau goes on to advise the student that if he and other students at Eibeschuetz' *yeshiva* could arrange to study elsewhere, they should do

<sup>23</sup>S. H. Lieben, "Zur Charakteristik des Verhältnisses zwischen Rabbi Jecheskel Landau und Rabbi Jonathan Eibenschitz," *Jahrbuch des Jüdisch-literarische Gesellschaft* 1 (1903) 325-326. Cf. Bamberger's corrections in *JJLG* 4 (1906) 342-343.

<sup>24</sup>ספר התאבקות, pp. 51a-52a. For Wolf Eibeschuetz, see Y. Liebes, "חבור בלשון חוזה לר' וולף בן ר' ידונתן אייבשיץ על חברותו ועל סוד הנאולה," 57 קריה ספר "חבור בלשון חוזה לר' וולף בן ר' ידונתן אייבשיץ על חברותו ועל סוד הנאולה" 148-178, 368-379 and the literature cited there. Add to Liebes' bibliography: Y. Y. Greenwald, תולדות גדולי הדור: בית ידונתן, Maramarossziget, 1908, p. 27 (which blunts somewhat Liebes' criticism of Greenwald at p. 153, note 30); H. Sofer, אורח חיים, סימן פז, Jerusalem, 1970, שו"ת מחנה חיים, מהדורא תליתאה, רד"ך נגשר ותורת אמת, Satumare, 1928, pp. 58-59.

<sup>25</sup>ספר התאבקות, p. 52b.

so. Eibeschuetz' response to Landau is not extant, but from a letter addressed by Landau some six months later to the rabbi of Frankfurt,<sup>26</sup> we know that Eibeschuetz had in fact responded to Landau and indicated that he would acquiesce to Landau's demands. Regarding his son Wolf, Eibeschuetz noted that he had initially been moved by a divine spirit, but that it was now unclear whether Wolf was under the influence of pure or impure forces. No further correspondence or personal contacts between Landau and Eibeschuetz are recorded in our sources.

In 1762, Eibeschuetz – now old and worn – decided that he wanted to spend his remaining years far away from Emden, preferably in Prague, the city of his youth. Eibeschuetz, however, had left Prague in 1742 during the War of the Austrian Succession. Worse yet, he left Prague in order to assume the rabbinate in Metz, a city belonging to the enemy forces, namely France. Eibeschuetz was suspected of cavorting with the enemy and was banned from all Austrian lands. Through the Danish embassy, he petitioned Maria Theresa for the right to visit and ultimately settle in Prague. A copy of a letter purportedly sent to Maria Theresa by Landau, in response to Eibeschuetz' petition, was discovered in the archive of the Jewish community of Prague, and published by Graetz in 1877.<sup>27</sup> It is a devastating letter which states unequivocally that Eibeschuetz was a Sabbatian, that he had been placed under the ban by the leading rabbis in Germany and Italy,<sup>28</sup> and that Jewish law prohibits Landau and Eibeschuetz from residing together in the same city. The letter allegedly bears Landau's signature in Latin letters and in Hebrew, though the former signature was subsequently crossed out. The publication of this letter generated no small controversy between *jüdische Wissenschaft* enthusiasts who supported, and rabbinic scholars who denied, its authenticity.<sup>29</sup> The rabbinic scholars argued:

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 106a-b.

<sup>27</sup>H. Graetz, "Ezechiel Landau's Gesuch" (see above, note 9). For an abridged Hebrew version of Graetz' article, see H. Y. Gurland, "עדות נאמנה ביעקב" 2 הבקר אור (1877) 345-347.

<sup>28</sup>Graetz, *ibid.*, p. 19, expressed surprise at the mention of the "leading rabbis of Italy" as having placed Eibeschuetz under the ban, a fact otherwise unknown to him. But see Emden, שפת אמת ולשון זהרית, Amsterdam, 1752 [photo-offset: Jerusalem, 1971], pp. 34-35.

<sup>29</sup>See, e.g., G. Klemperer, "Das Rabbinat Prag: Jecheskel Landau," *Pascheles' Illustrierter israelitischer Volkskalender* 32 (1884) 94-96 [reissued in English as "The Rabbis of Prague: Ezechiel Landau," *Historia Judaica* 13 (1951) 60-61]; E. Duckesz, אוה למושב, Cracow, 1903, pp. 41-42 (Hebrew section), pp. XIX-XXII (German section); D. Simonsen, "Eine ungerechtfertigte Anklage gegen Graetz," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* 68 (1904), part 3, p. 31; J. Cohn, "Zur 'Rechtfertigung' des Herrn Prof. Graetz," *Israelitische Monatsschrift*, 1904, n. 2, p. 5-7; J. Hirsch, "R. Ezechiel Landau, Oberrabbiner in Prague, und seine

Why would Landau have signed the copy rather than the original? Why was the signature in Latin letters crossed out? Why can no one locate the original? How do we know that the letter was actually written by Landau and sent to the Austrian chancellery? The facts are, however, that although the original letter and (apparently) the copy discovered in Prague no longer exist, an examination of official Austrian records in 1919 established beyond cavil that on April 3, 1762 Eibeschuetz was denied permission to settle in Austrian territory. Moreover, attached to the record of this ruling was a note which read:

Ezekiel Landau, Jewish chief Rabbi of Prague, petitions that Jonathan Eibeschuetz' request that he be permitted to return to Prague, be denied.<sup>30</sup>

More importantly, a photograph of the letter that was discovered in the archive of the Jewish community of Prague is extant. The photograph, published some 50 years ago, apparently has gone unnoticed since then. A comparison of the signature on the photograph with other extant copies of Landau's autograph leaves no question about the authenticity of Landau's signatures on the document published by Graetz.<sup>31</sup> In sum, while we cannot be certain that the text of the letter discovered in the archive of the Jewish community of Prague was actually sent to the Austrian chancellery, it was certainly signed by Landau. Moreover, there can be no question that Landau did in

Zeit," *Freie Jüdische Lehrerstimme* 7 (1918), n. 3-4, pp. 32-35, n. 5-6, pp. 53-57; S. Wind, "לכבוד הדין של הטון ר' חזקאל לנדו לזמון ר' דודמן אייבשיץ," 6 בצרון (1945) 211-217; and S. Adler, "א.א.ב. חשכ" = הוצפה "אגרת מורי"ש של תרע"ב בידודה נדר ר' אייבשיץ," July 10, 1964.

<sup>30</sup>J. Mieses, "Beiträge zu Jonathan Eibeschuetz' Biographie," *Mitteilungen für jüdische Volkskunde* 21 (1919) 29-30.

<sup>31</sup>See S. Adler, "Ochrana cti moderními prostředky," *Věstník Židovské obce Náboženské v Praze* 5 (1938) 100-102. Adler claimed that both signatures on the copy were forged, basing himself on a sampling consisting of one authenticated Landau signature in Latin letters, and two genuine copies of Landau's Hebrew signature. An examination of a larger sampling of Landau's signatures, however, establishes the authenticity of the signatures on the Prague document beyond cavil. Thus, e.g., Adler claimed that two rows of dots that appear on Landau's genuine Hebrew signature were lacking from the Hebrew signature on the Prague document. In fact, they are lacking from many other authenticated samples of Landau's Hebrew signature. See, for example, the document with Landau's Hebrew signature published in *כרם שלמה* 9 (1986), number 2, p. 47 (the original of which can be examined at the Schwadron autograph collection at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem). Indeed, the Hebrew signature on that document ends with an elongated curlicue (visible only on the original document; it was not reproduced accurately in *כרם שלמה*) whose closest – and almost exact – parallel is the elongated curlicue at the end of the Hebrew signature on the Prague document.

fact petition the Austrian chancellery not to allow Eibeschuetz to return to Prague.<sup>32</sup>

On September 18, 1764 Eibeschuetz died in Altona. The news spread quickly and eulogies were delivered in Jewish communities throughout Europe. In Prague, Landau eulogized Eibeschuetz, and a portion of the eulogy was preserved and published.<sup>33</sup> It was hardly a typical rabbinic eulogy. To begin with, Landau offered an apology to those who might express surprise at Landau's delivering a eulogy over someone he was known to dislike. Landau admitted openly that he and Eibeschuetz were enemies. At one point, Landau said:

What can I say: If I list his virtues some will find what I say to be impressive, and others will destroy my pleasant words. So I say to you: If you want to hear from me the extent of this man's virtues, look at the lengthy letter that I wrote some 14 years ago. See how elaborate was my praise of him! But all this is not necessary. Just as one cannot deny the brightness of the sun at mid-day, so too it is impossible to deny the greatness of his Torah and good qualities. He was a great preacher; there was none like him. He dealt kindly with all humans, especially his enemies. He taught Torah to thousands of students, especially in the city of Prague. It is proper to eulogize; it is appropriate to cry.

Clearly, Landau had nice things to say about Eibeschuetz. Yet what we have here is probably unique in the history of eulogies delivered by rabbinic scholars over other rabbinic scholars. One of the greatest rabbinic authorities of all time, Landau, not only apologized for delivering a eulogy over another great rabbinic authority, Eibeschuetz, but found it necessary to justify why he was delivering a eulogy at all!

So much, then, for the hard evidence on Landau's attitude toward Eibeschuetz. We have deliberately suppressed two pieces of evidence, which we shall return to after we examine the anecdotal evidence. Careful historians, as indicated, do not put much stock in anecdotal evidence, and rightly so. Nonetheless, when properly controlled and weighted, the anecdotal evidence can sometimes provide insights that would have eluded us on the basis of the primary sources alone. Sensitive matters, after all, are not often reduced to writing by the *dramatis personae* themselves. We all say things that we would never

<sup>32</sup>Especially noteworthy is the fact that Landau's opposition to Eibeschuetz' return is recorded in our sources even prior to 1877, the year Graetz published the then recently discovered copy of Landau's petition. See G. Klemperer, "Rabbi Jonathan Eibenschütz," in W. Pascheles, ed., *Sippurim*, Prague, 1856, vol. 4, p. 330; cf. S. H. Lieben's personal communication to J. Hirsch in the latter's "R. Ezechiel Landau" (above, n. 29), p. 54.

<sup>33</sup>E. Landau, *דרוש היציל*, Warsaw, 1884 [photo-offset: Jerusalem, 1966], pp. 46b-47a. Correct Friedberg, *בית עקד ספרים*, Tel Aviv, 1951, vol. 1, p. 245, who mistakenly dates the first edition to 1899.

put in writing. The anecdotes that follow were first heard in Prague, mostly by *yeshiva* students who studied there during the fifty years following the death of Landau in 1793. These anecdotes were reduced to writing by these same students or their disciples, and published in a variety of sources emanating from mid-nineteenth century Prague. We wish to underscore the fact that none of these anecdotes derives from Emden or from Emden circles (the primary repository of anti-Eibeschuetz sentiment), nor are they 20th century fantasy.

1. When news of Eibeschuetz' death reached Prague, Landau refused to eulogize him. His wife implored him to deliver a eulogy, but his mind was made up. Finally, by means of a ruse she got her way. She called in the beadle and ordered him to announce in the marketplace and throughout the streets that the Chief Rabbi will deliver a eulogy for Eibeschuetz that same afternoon, immediately following the *minḥah* service. The beadle did as he was bidden. When he appeared beneath the window of Landau's study, Landau was startled by the announcement. He was about to expose the impostor, when his wife entered the study and, with a smile, admitted that she had arranged for the announcement. Since the decree had been issued, she added, it could no longer be rescinded.<sup>34</sup>
2. Landau eulogized Eibeschuetz from the pulpit, but the audience felt that Eibeschuetz was not being accorded his due. Landau was interrupted by a prominent member of the Prague Jewish community who shouted: "Rabbi, you will have to speak with greater enthusiasm! Don't forget who Rabbi Jonathan was!"<sup>35</sup>
3. A student who studied at the Prague *yeshiva* between 1829 and 1832 reported the following tradition concerning Landau. Despite his opposition to Eibeschuetz' amulets and mystical learnings, Landau recognized that Eibeschuetz was a profound talmudic scholar. He once said: Rabbi Jonathan's Sabbatian tendencies would hardly trouble me, if not for the fact that he is such a great יְהוֹנָתָן<sup>36</sup>
4. Two students reported that they once entered Landau's study and saw him pouring over a volume by Eibeschuetz, which he hastily

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<sup>34</sup>Kamelhar, *op. cit.*, p. 22, n. 7, who heard it from Dr. S. J. Fischer, Chief Rabbi of Prague. An earlier version appeared in print in 1884. See G. Klemperer, "Das Rabbinat Prag: Jecheskel Landau" (see above, note 29), pp. 100-102, who heard it from Dr. M. Hirsch, then Chief Rabbi of Prague who, in turn, heard it from his teacher.

<sup>35</sup>Klemperer, "Rabbi Jonathan Eibenschütz" (see above, note 32), p. 344.

<sup>36</sup>Klein, "Zuschrift an Herrn Moses Mendelson in Hamburg," *Literaturblatt des Orients* 33 (1848), column 526.

pushed aside as he noticed them enter, saying "Er ist doch ein Schebs gewesen!"<sup>37</sup>

In brief, if the anecdotal evidence is to be believed, it was no secret in Prague that Landau considered Eibeschuetz a Sabbatian. If so, how do we account for Landau's vindication of Eibeschuetz in 1752? Would Landau have vindicated Eibeschuetz if, in fact, he was persuaded that Eibeschuetz was a Sabbatian? How do we account for Landau's severe reprimand of Cantor Brandeis in 1756? Graetz<sup>38</sup> suggested that historical development accounts for the conflicting evidence regarding Landau's attitude toward Eibeschuetz. Graetz explained that until 1760 Landau was convinced that Eibeschuetz was innocent of the charges levelled against him by the Emden forces. In 1760 or thereabout, Landau chanced upon new evidence that persuaded him that Emden was right after all, hence the letter to Maria Theresa. One suspects, however, that not so much historical development as conceptual analysis may best account for all the evidence. But first, let us turn our attention to the final pieces of evidence, alluded to earlier, that bear directly on Landau's attitude toward Eibeschuetz.

The first piece of evidence derives from a letter addressed by an East European rabbi to his son, who at the time was attending Eibeschuetz' lectures at Altona. The letter was written in the summer of 1751, some six months after the outbreak of the controversy. In it, the distraught rabbi indicated that he was aware of the controversy surrounding Eibeschuetz and therefore was issuing a plea to his son that he abandon Eibeschuetz' *yeshiva* and return home. The rabbi did more than implore; he spelled out the dire consequences of coming under the influence of the wicked. At one point the rabbi wrote as follows:<sup>39</sup>

כי ביום שמוע שמעתי מהרב מהורר ר' יחזקאל מקק יאמפלי  
וחרגו בשני וממש שעיני נולה מים ואוי לאזנים ששומעות  
כדבר הזה ויש לי חרטה גדולה על זה שאחה לומד אצל  
שלא תתחבר ותלמד דרכו חס ושלום דרכי שאול יורדת אל  
חדרי מות ... ובאם שתשוב לביתך לקוח עמך שנים או שלשה  
קמיעות וראיה שלא יתחלפו רק שתדע שהיא בוודאי אמת  
מכתיבת ידו או העתקה מכתיבת ידו כדי לידע האמת וגם  
הרב מקק יאמפלי גם כן בקש במשותיה בעבור זאת.

<sup>37</sup>Klemperer, "Rabbi Jonathan Eibenschütz" (see above, note 32), p. 345. For evidence that Landau's library included a book by Eibeschuetz, see below, note 47.

<sup>38</sup>H. Graetz, "Ezechiel Landau's Gesuch" (see above, note 9), pp. 24-25.

<sup>39</sup>פנח עדים, p. 14b.

It would appear, then, that as early as summer 1751, i.e., almost a full year prior to Landau's vindication of Eibeschuetz, an East European rabbi heard an earful from Landau, enough to warrant an urgent plea that the son withdraw at once from Eibeschuetz' *yeshiva*. Moreover, Landau requested that the son, on his return to Eastern Europe, bring with him amulets written by Eibeschuetz, either originals or genuine copies. At the very least, Landau suspected Eibeschuetz and sought to examine the evidence first hand.

Turning to the final piece of evidence, some background information is necessary in order to appreciate its full import. R. David Oppenheim, Chief Rabbi of Prague prior to Landau, died in 1736. For reasons which need not detain us here, no successor was appointed. Instead Eibeschuetz, who frequently served as acting Chief Rabbi during Oppenheim's lifetime, was elected *Oberjurist*, i.e., President of the *בית דין* of Prague, but was denied the office of *Oberrabbiner*, i.e., Chief Rabbi of Prague.<sup>40</sup> Eibeschuetz served Prague with distinction until he left to assume the rabbinate of Metz in 1742. Indeed, no Chief Rabbi of Prague was elected until early in 1751, when prior to the outbreak of the Emden-Eibeschuetz controversy R. Aryeh Leib of Amsterdam was elected Chief Rabbi of Prague.<sup>41</sup> With the outbreak of the controversy, R. Aryeh Leib, who was Emden's brother-in-law, joined the leadership of the anti-Eibeschuetz forces. When R. Aryeh Leib's stance in the controversy became evident, the appointment to the post of Chief Rabbi was rescinded. R. Aryeh Leib, who had not yet left Amsterdam, unpacked his bags and continued to serve as Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam until his death in 1755.<sup>42</sup>

The most distinguished member of the anti-Eibeschuetz forces was neither Emden, nor R. Aryeh Leib, but rather R. Jacob Joshua Falk, the *זקן הדור*, Chief Rabbi of Frankfurt am Main, and author of the *פני יהושע*: Falk's uncompromising stand during the controversy ultimately led to

<sup>40</sup>See R. Zerah Eidlitz, *אור לישרים*, Jerusalem, 1972, ב' דרוש כ', p. 29:

מנדע לכל שמרם נסיעתו מפה וזה מלא מקום  
אב בית דין שדרכין תורה וחפץ ישיבה וכל הית  
דין מורה שזה מחפשי לביה תשמו לראש עליהם.

Cf. G. Klemperer, "The Rabbis of Prague: David Oppenheim," *Historia Judaica* 12 (1950), p. 152; and his "The Rabbis of Prague: Ezechiel Landau," *Historia Judaica* 13 (1951), pp. 76-77.

<sup>41</sup>S. H. Lieben, "Handschriftliches zur Geschichte der Juden in Prag in den Jahren 1744-1754," *Jahrbuch des Jüdisch-literarische Gesellschaft* 2 (1904), pp. 292-295, 320-322, 327-330. Cf. Emden, *אמת ושון וזריח*, pp. 45 and 47.

<sup>42</sup>See the previous note. Cf. Emden's eulogy of R. Aryeh Leib, *שאנה אריה*, Amsterdam, 1755, p. 6b, where he alludes to the Prague debacle.

his being deposed from the Frankfurt rabbinate.<sup>43</sup> After his deposition, Falk resided in Worms, from where he directed the campaign against Eibeschuetz. In 1753, at Worms, Falk addressed a letter to R. Aryeh Leib of Amsterdam, which was published by Emden in 1756.<sup>44</sup> The letter is dated ראש חודש אדר שני תקנ"ג, i.e., it was written approximately one year after Landau had circulated his famous letter vindicating Eibeschuetz. Falk's letter reads in part:

I was informed by the scribe who arrived from Frankfurt that persistent rumor has it that the rabbi of Yampol [Landau] has been appointed Chief Rabbi of Prague. I dismissed the rumor out of hand since not a hint of such an appointment has been heard anywhere in the communities surrounding us, not even among the wicked ones [i.e., the pro-Eibeschuetz faction] in Mannheim....You too would have heard about it. So I concluded that it was an outright lie. If I thought for a moment that it was true, I would include in the broadside we are about to publish an account of the *first letter* addressed by the rabbi of Yampol to all rabbis and *geonim* wherein he admitted that despite the fact that Eibeschuetz' abominations were well known to him, he beseeches all of us to take pity on the *honor of his Torah*, and to take into account the *profaning of God's name* that had occurred. In the light of these considerations he asked that we partially overlook Eibeschuetz' sins and treat him with leniency. So he wrote me in a lengthy letter; no doubt he wrote you the same. Now there appears to be more to the rumor than I thought, for yesterday I received a letter from Poland in which it is stated that the rabbi of Yampol openly announced that he was appointed Chief Rabbi of Prague. Moreover, he compounded his villainy by influencing the Chief Rabbi of Lvov to refrain from contributing yet another missive to the controversy, claiming that such action would be detrimental to his appointment to the Prague rabbinate. Landau found it necessary to wield his influence, for the Chief Rabbi of Lvov had convened an assembly of rabbis who were about to place Eibeschuetz under the ban and circulate letters to that effect throughout Europe and especially in Germany. Landau was explicit in justifying his intervention to the Chief Rabbi of Lvov: his appointment to the Prague rabbinate was due to Eibeschuetz' extraordinary efforts on his behalf....After searching diligently through my correspondence, I located the *first letter* sent by the rabbi of Yampol. Indeed, he denounces Eibeschuetz at length.

Falk's letter was published by Emden during the lifetime of Eibeschuetz, Landau, and many of the other rabbis mentioned in it. It is highly unlikely that the letter was forged by Emden; no document

<sup>43</sup>In general, see M. Horovitz, *Frankfurter Rabbinen*,<sup>2</sup> ed. by J. Unna, Jerusalem, 1969, pp. 125-166. (Significant material relating to the Emden-Eibeschuetz controversy was omitted from the Hebrew version, רבני פּוֹדוֹבּוֹרְסְק, Jerusalem, 1972, pp. 90-109.) Cf. D. L. Zinz, *עטרת ירושע*, Bilgoray, 1936 [photo offset: New York, 1982].

<sup>44</sup>פּוֹדוֹבּוֹרְסְק, pp. 13b-14b.

published by Emden has been proven to be a forgery. Quite the opposite: to the extent that modern scholars have been able to verify their content, the documents published by Emden were not only authentic, they were ordinarily published with great precision. It is especially unlikely that Emden would have published a forgery that could so easily be exposed. We shall discount the hearsay about Landau's activity in Poland; Falk may have been misinformed by his informant. But what remains incontrovertible is Falk's testimony about Landau's negative attitude toward Eibeschuetz *prior* to the publication of his famous letter of vindication in 1752.

In the light of all the evidence, it would appear that Landau was entirely consistent in his view of Eibeschuetz. He was persuaded that Eibeschuetz was, and continued to be, a Sabbatian. Some will suggest, perhaps, that we ought to distinguish between "suspicion" and "certainty" of guilt. It may be that Landau suspected Eibeschuetz of Sabbatianism, but was not convinced of his guilt. Falk's letter, the letter to Maria Theresa, and the anecdotal evidence indicate otherwise. Moreover, Landau's disciple and successor, R. Eleazar Fleckeles, preserves a tradition that he heard from his teacher regarding suspected Sabbatians. He writes:<sup>45</sup>

לפי הקבלה אשר בידי מאת מורינו הגאון האמתי:  
באנשים מצורעים הרעים האלה לא נכשל אדם מעולם  
בעון חושד בכשרים, כי מי שחושדין בו יש בו.

Thus, Landau was persuaded that Eibeschuetz was a Sabbatian. He was also persuaded that Eibeschuetz was one of the greatest masters of Torah of his generation. Landau's primary concern was with *כבוד התורה* and *חלול השם*. The former was to be maintained; the later was to be contained. These key terms – *כבוד התורה* and *חלול השם* – appear and reappear throughout Landau's famous letter of 1752, as well as in Falk's summary of Landau's first letter.<sup>46</sup> It was clear to Landau that Emden's approach of total exposure of, and capitulation by, Eibeschuetz, only aggravated the problem. The controversy had brought *כבוד התורה* to low ebb. *חלול השם* was rampant. Rabbinic authority was being ridiculed by Jew and Christian alike. Landau's solution was to drive Eibeschuetz' alleged (or: real) Sabbatianism underground. So

<sup>45</sup>שו"ת חסדו מאדובה, Prague, 1809 [photo offset: New York, 1966], vol. 1, סימן ה'. This was Fleckeles' rephrasing of a teaching he had received from Landau. Landau's formulation, preserved *ibid.* at סימן קכ"ב, is less striking but the import is the same.

<sup>46</sup>The terms *כבוד התורה* and *חלול השם* are displayed prominently throughout Landau's writings. See especially *דרוש הצלח*, p. 43b דף לשון הרע, and cf. Landau's reply to the *yeshiva* student in Hamburg (see above, note 25).

long as Eibeschuetz would publicly denounce Sabbetai Zevi and the Sabbatian writings ascribed to him, including the amulets, Landau was satisfied that Eibeschuetz would be identified publicly only by his Torah teaching, which was great indeed.<sup>47</sup> Once Eibeschuetz was publicly cleansed of his Sabbatian connections, anyone who spoke ill of this Torah giant was dishonoring the Torah itself. Hence Landau's swift action against Cantor Brandeis.

It was a brilliant attempt on Landau's part;<sup>48</sup> it failed<sup>49</sup> only – as indicated above – because Falk, Emden, and R. Aryeh Leib of

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<sup>47</sup>Consistent with Landau's approach is the fact that he was a subscriber to the first edition of Eibeschuetz, *אורים וחסמים*, Karlsruhe, 1775-77. See B. Brilling, "Israel Eibenschuetz as a Collector of Subscriptions," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 6 (1964), n. 4, pp. 142-149. Moreover, Landau cites a passage from Eibeschuetz' *אורים וחסמים* in his *ציון לנפש חיה לסדר נזיקין*, Jerusalem, 1959, p. 112 (cf., however, the editor's introduction).

<sup>48</sup>For a somewhat similar attempt, see the letter of R. Mordecai of Dusseldorf in Emden's *שפת אמת ולשון נהוריה*, pp. 59-60. R. Mordecai foresaw much that would transpire, and warned the Emden forces early in the fray that any frontal attack on Eibeschuetz was doomed to failure. He stressed the fact that Eibeschuetz was articulate, bold, and influential in governmental circles. In effect, he advised the Emden forces to adopt a strategy not unlike Landau's, one that would provide Eibeschuetz with a graceful exit. Apparently his advice was accorded the same reception as Landau's; his name never appears again in the literature of the controversy. On R. Mordecai of Dusseldorf, see B. H. Auerbach, *Geschichte der israelitischen Gemeinde Halberstadt*, Halberstadt, 1866, pp. 74-76.

<sup>49</sup>Although Landau's efforts failed at the time, ultimately his approach would prevail. Eibeschuetz' place among the giants of Torah scholarship for all generations (see the comments of R. Meir Simḥa of Dvinsk cited by Tavyomi, *op. cit.*, p. 103), and not among the scoundrels, as the Emden forces would have preferred it, if not largely due to his legitimization by Landau, has certainly followed the general contours established by Landau. Eibeschuetz followed Landau's prescription: he withdrew from circulation whatever amulets he was able to retrieve; he wrote no more amulets after the outbreak of the controversy (we have Emden's testimony to that effect); he publicly renounced all Sabbatian amulets or writings ascribed to him. His reputation would rest on his exoteric Torah teaching; virtually all his published work is in this area, and it is precisely his exoteric works that are printed and reprinted again and again. In contrast, his esoteric teachings would have no appreciable effect on later generations. Indeed, they remained underground after his death, as during his lifetime, until *jüdische Wissenschaft* would resurrect them (e.g., *שם עולם*, Vienna, 1891 and Liebes' forthcoming edition of *ואבוא היום אל העין*). If Landau's approach continues to prevail, as we suspect it will, the efforts of modern Jewish scholarship in the esoteric realm will have little or no impact on the traditional (i.e., *halakhic*) Jewish community.

Amsterdam were relentless in their pursuit of Eibeschuetz.<sup>50</sup> From their perspective, Landau had engaged in a cover-up, and hardly for the respectable reasons mentioned above, i.e., concern for כבוד החורה and חלול השם. Rather, Landau had sold his soul for the rabbinate of Prague. As R. Aryeh Leib of Amsterdam had learned from bitter experience, no one could serve as Chief Rabbi of Prague without Eibeschuetz' support. According to the Emden forces, Landau paid for that support by providing Eibeschuetz with a graceful exit from the controversy. This accounts, of course, for Emden's venomous attitude toward Landau.<sup>51</sup> Emden knew that Landau knew; if despite his knowledge Landau insisted on supporting Eibeschuetz, it could only be viewed as a cover-up.

Religio-moral imperatives and expediency sometimes move in the same direction. When a particular action is at once morally compelling and expedient, motivations need to be examined if judgments are to be made about character. Certainly, one suggestive interpretation of the facts is that Landau felt morally compelled to make an attempt at bringing the controversy to a close. That is proved expedient may well have been a welcome fringe benefit. Obviously, Emden felt otherwise.

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<sup>50</sup>The rationale of the Emden forces for rejecting Landau's compromise is poignantly argued in a broadside published by R. Aryeh Leib of Amsterdam in 1752. It reads in part:

I know full well that scholars of your stature are aware of the truth. You seek to rehabilitate him. But you are rehabilitating his body and public image at the expense of his spirit and soul! Our approach differs. We too seek to rehabilitate him, but we seek to rehabilitate his soul....In sum, such scholars as yourselves understand the essence of the matter. But you prefer to take pity on him and, as a facade, claim that your actions are for the sake of heaven, in order to reduce strife within the Jewish community, and in order to prevent profaning of God's Name among the nations. Quite the contrary, by your inaction God's Name is profaned among the nations and impurity increases among the Jews.

Although not addressed to Landau, it captures the essence of the rejectionist approach to a compromise such as the one put forward by Landau. See Joseph Praeger's נהלי אש, vol. 2, pp. 36-37.

<sup>51</sup>Emden's final act of vengeance against Landau (aside from the nasty comments in פתח עינים and ספר החאבקות; see above, note 22) came in the elections for Eibeschuetz' successor in 1764. Landau was among the candidates for the post. Fully aware of Emden's less than friendly attitude toward the previous incumbent rabbis of Altona, Hamburg, and Wandsbeck, the communal leaders sought to nip any future controversy in the bud by allowing Emden to select Eibeschuetz' successor from the list of finalists. Emden welcomed the opportunity with no small measure of delight. Landau, of course, didn't get the job. Cf. E. Duckesz, *op. cit.*, p. 53.