

וישקף ד' וסימ' על פניו ס' ויעל ד' ר' וסימ' ענה יד בארבה יקח ויעל מ' יפתה ויחברו ג' לול' יעו ויעל ויחברו ס'
ויח' ד' וסימ' את חלקה שדה יס' את כל דוד את הנק' אתה ד' שמדון ס' ל' ויח' ד' וסימ' זאת תורה כל הבק' ויאמר ארונה ארבעה שלחנות



Jewish Art

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והמלך דוד וזקן בא במים ויכסרו
בבגד יסולא יחסלו ויאמרו לו יכדיו
יבקשו לארץ המלך נערה בתולה
ועמדה לפע המלך ותהילוסנתו שנה
בחיך וחס לארץ המלך ויבקשו נערה
יפה בכל גבול ישראל וימצאו את
אבישנה שונמית ויבאו אתה למלך
והנערה יפה עד מאד ותהיל למלך סכנת
ותשרתהו והמלך לא ידעה וארניה
בן חנית מתנשא לאמר אנא מלך ויניש
לורכב ופרשים וחמשים איש רינים
לפניו ולא יעזבו אביו מי ולא מרדיו
בכה עשית ונסהו אטובת ארמא ואתו
ילדה אחרי אב שלום ויהיו רבדיו ים
יואב בן ערויה ועסאביתר הכהן וייעזרו
אחרי ארניה ועדוק הכהן ובניהו בן
יהוידע ונתן הנביא וישמע' ורי'
והנבזרים אשר לדוד לא היו ועסאביתר
ויזכח ארניהו יצא ויבקר ומריא ים
אבן החולת אשר אינ' עין רגל ויקרא
את כל אחיו בנה המלך וכל אנשי
יהודה עבדי המלך ואתנתן הנביא
ובניהו ואת הנבזרים ואת שלמה אחיו
לאקרא ויאמר נתן אל בתי שבעאס
שלמה לאמר הלא ישמע' עתמ' מלך
ארניה ובן חנית וארניה דוד לא ידע

מרו וערבאר שבעי שבעים אלה איש
וישלח ידו המלך ירושלם לשחתה
וינחם יהוה אלהיה ויאמר למלאך
המשיחית בעסר כעתה הרף ידך ומלאך
יהוה היה יעסנך הארונה היכסי
ויאמר דוד אליהוה
בראתי אתה מלאך המכה בעסו יאמר
הנה אנכי חטאתי ואנכי העית יואלה
הינאנמה עשותה ינא ידך ב' וכביתאנ'
ויבאנר אל דוד ביום
ההוא ויאמר לו עלה הקס ליהוה
מזבח בנך ארניה היכסי ויעל דוד
מזבח כ' אשר ענה יהוה וישקף
ארונה וירא אתה מלך ואת עבדיו
יעברים עליו ויעא ארונה וישתרו
למלך אפיו ארניה ויאמר ארונה
מדוע בא ארניה המלך אל עבדיו ויאמר
דוד לקנות מעמך את הגר' לבנות מנוח
ליהוה ותעצר המנפה מעל העם ויאמר
ארונה אל דוד יקח ויעל ארניה המלך
הטוב בעיני ראה הבקר לעלה והמרנס
וכלי הבקר לעצים הכלנת ארונה
המלך למלך ויאמר ארונה אל המלך
יהוה אלהיך ירינך ויאמר המלך אל
ארונה לא ביקנו אקנה מאותך במחיו
ולא אעלה ליהוה אלהי עלות חנם
ויקן דוד את הגר' ואתה הבקר בכסף
שקלים חמשים ויבן שם דוד מזבח
ליהוה ויעל עלות ושלמים ויעתר יהוה
לאר' ונתן עז המנפה מעל ישראל

והמלך דוד ב' ר' פ' וסימ' שמע' שלח זקן ס' וחס ב' וסימ' וחס לארץ המלך וחס להם וסימ' ב' בשמשא כלכא רמון א' א' א' א'
ארניה ח' וסימ' בתנשא ויהיו רבדיו ויעתה הנה והשמוי עהבאה הרבועי וחברו ויעמם הלויס' תנזרפס' ארניה ב' וסימ' הנבזרים ז' מ' וסימ' ושמע'
ורעי' ואתנתן הנביא עליו המוסים קראו זאת בגוים אלה עשורדה ואתכל נבא עסאביתר וסימ' שבעת ד' וסימ' כי מלך יקח ויפ' בשלותו ב' ב' ב'

The Kennicott Bible. A complete facsimile edition with an Introduction by Bezalel Narkiss and Aliza Cohen-Mushlin. Facsimile Editions, London, 1984.

Illuminated manuscripts are hidden treasures for most lovers of Jewish art. Unlike paintings or ritual objects which are more often exhibited prominently in museums and cultural centers, the odd illuminated manuscript, which is at times exhibited, can only be opened in one place, showing a double page. To most art lovers it is not as easy to go into a library or museum and to study thoroughly each page of an illuminated manuscript, as it would be to look at an object or even to handle it. By not studying an illuminated manuscript one misses a great deal of an art which throws light and understanding on Jewish history and material culture. Facsimiles of complete illuminated manuscripts are therefore essential substitutes for the actual manuscript. A facsimile can be handled more easily than the fragile manuscript itself; and by its mere duplication it can be made available in libraries as well as to private owners and can therefore be enjoyed by many art lovers.

The more accurate the facsimile, the better the actual manuscript can be simulated and the more enjoyable it is to the viewer. In recent years several facsimiles of Hebrew illuminated manuscripts have appeared on the market. Most of them are of illuminated haggadot. The Darmstadt Haggadah and the Bird's Heads Haggadah were

among the first Ashkenazi manuscripts to appear; the Sarajevo and the Golden Haggadot were only partial facsimiles of Sephardi manuscripts. These were followed by more recent publications of non-medieval Haggadot. Because of its large size, a complete illuminated Hebrew Bible has never been produced in facsimile. The recent publication of the Kennicott Bible in facsimile form is therefore an important and unique occurrence which should be celebrated. Among the giant Sephardi Bibles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Kennicott Bible is undoubtedly the most sumptuous and extensively illustrated manuscript to have survived the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.

The manuscript was copied in 1476, less than twenty years before the expulsion, in the city of La Coruña in the province of Galicia in north-western Spain. The scribe, Moses Ibn Zabara, proclaims in his colophon that he copied, vocalized and massorated the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible for Isaac, son of Don Solomon di Braga. He also copied the grammatical treatise by R. David Kimḥi which was bound in the beginning and at the end of the manuscript.

The illumination of the manuscript was executed by Joseph Ibn Ḥayyim, whose illuminated colophon completes the volume. The text of the Bible was copied in beautiful square Sephardi script, in two text columns, clearly legible even to a modern reader. Most of the pages are decorated and illustrated with a large variety of human, animal, vegetable and other decorative motifs, some of them text illustrations preceding books and por-



Fig. 1. Menorah, First Kennicott Bible. La Coruña, 1476. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ken. 1, fol. 120v.

tions of the Bible. A patriarchal David, for instance, appears at the beginning of the first book of Kings, where he is mentioned in the text as an aging king (fol. 185r; see front cover of this volume). David Kimhi's grammatical treatise is sumptuously framed by colourful arcades with a variety of motifs, such as depictions of grotesque scenes, like an army of rabbits besieging the wolves' castle (fol. 442v). Among the text illustrations are Jonah being swallowed by the large fish (fol. 305r), and two full pages illustrating the various implements of the Temple in Jerusalem (fols. 120v–121, Fig. 1).

There is no other Spanish Bible of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries which has such rich illuminations, both full carpet pages and text decoration.

The facsimile recently published by Facsimile Editions of London is a superb example of what such an edition should be. The publishers have managed to simulate the original manuscript to the extent that it can be and is exhibited in some museums as though it were the original Kennicott Bible, paying particular attention to the texture of the paper which simulates the original vellum, and to accurate colour reproduction, including the burnished gold and silver. The peculiar box-like binding retains the original form in which the thirty-nine quires of the Bible were placed, as it is bound in the Bodleian Library today. The pleasure of handling, reading, browsing through and studying the facsimile can not be less than the pride and joy felt by Don Isaac di Braga when he first received the manuscript in 1476. The success of the publishers in producing such an accurate facsimile has hardly ever been matched, not only in facsimiles of Hebrew but also of Latin, Greek or other manuscripts.

The production of the introductory volume, which matches the brownish red Morocco binding and uses hand-made paper, is of a similar high quality. The text of the introduction written by Bezalel Narkiss and Aliza Cohen-Mushlin, both of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, elucidates the mysteries of the Kennicott Bible. The authors describe the manuscript and its production, throwing light on the historical background as well as the personal backgrounds of the patron, the scribe and the artist. Part of their writing is the result of previous studies duly acknowledged by the authors. The collation of all this material, as well as the authors' new findings and interpretation, make this introduction an important contribution to the understanding of the Kennicott Bible and its origins.

The story of the collaboration between patron, scribe and artist is fascinating. The patron, Isaac di Braga, son of a rich merchant from Portugal who probably settled in La Coruña and coveted an illuminated manuscript—the Cervera Bible of 1300—is one of the heroes of the story. Since he could not acquire the original, he ordered a similarly magnificent Bible from the most illustrious artisans of his period. The scribe, Moses Ibn Zabara, whose accuracy and legible script, famous from copying other

manuscripts, made him known as “the Angel”, is the second protagonist of this story; and the third is the artist Joseph Ibn Hayyim, whose style, unique and unparalleled in any other manuscript, is shown by the authors to be eclectic. He used as models a variety of sources ranging from Hebrew and Latin manuscripts, mainly the Cervera Bible but also secular art of his period. One surprising model is constituted by playing cards, which were used profusely by the artist, both for animals and birds as well as for the aging King David. The authors also deal at length with the unique box binding of the Kennicott Bible and set out to prove that, although it is contemporary with the manuscript itself, the quires may have been differently arranged within the box and possibly not sewn. They also publish for the first time a leather case in which the entire Bible and its binding were placed, probably for carrying purposes at the time of the expulsion. This was probably made in Spain around 1492, and it bears the name of the original patron, Isaac.

Extensive and important as the introduction is, one regrets certain omissions. Among the many figural illustrations, the origins of which the authors have revealed, there are some which they did not manage to decipher, and therefore the entire repertoire of the eclectic artist is not known. His stylistic origins are also not revealed in their entirety. Besides the Portuguese and the Spanish stylistic elements, there are some which are not explainable, such as the human and animal motifs resembling stitched appliqué patches which are known from contemporary Spanish textile hangings, but which do not appear in any similar illuminated manuscript. Could Joseph Ibn Hayyim have been a maker of appliqué hangings who fancied illuminating a single manuscript? It is not otherwise clear why such a skilled artist did not leave any other manuscript, especially since his flat “appliqué” illumination does not appear in any other contemporary school of illumination. Doubts exist in the authors' description of the outer case of the Bible, which may indeed not be of Spanish origin, but from southern France or Italy, where the expelled Isaac di Braga may have found a temporary haven. The lack of an index to the introductory volume is a serious omission in such an important text. Lastly, the layout of the introductory volume is very strange, in particular the unaesthetic placing of the pictures, and the fact that the illustrations are not numbered consecutively, making it necessary to turn from one page to another to follow them as one reads the text. The hand-made paper chosen for this volume is not suitable either for colour or for black and white printing. None of this, however, detracts from the fluency of the text of the introduction and certainly not from the beauty and accuracy of the facsimile. It is a pleasure to have the possibility to read and enjoy a facsimile as rich as the Kennicott Bible.



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