



THE MOST LAVISH HEBREW
ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT
IN EXISTENCE

NO OTHER HEBREW ILLUMINATED
MANUSCRIPT EQUALS THE SCOPE
AND RICHNESS OF THIS
MISCELLANY



THE ROTHSCHILD MISCELLANY

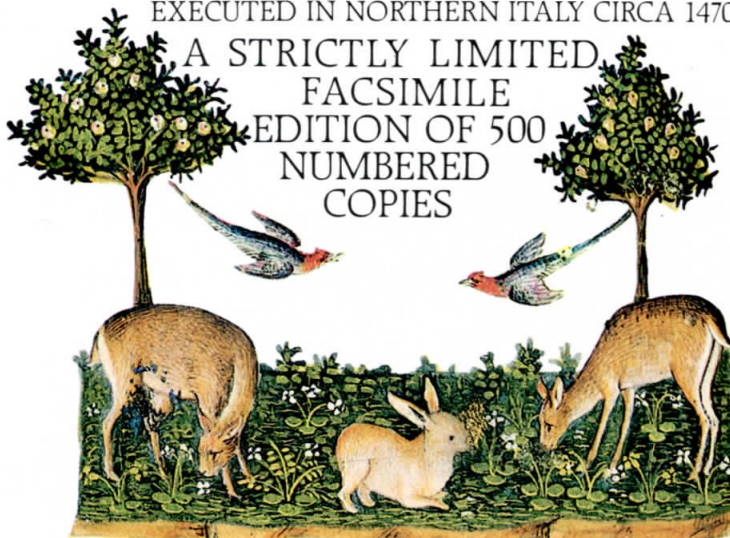


944 PAGES CONTAINING 70 RELIGIOUS AND
SECULAR WORKS, INCLUDING THE PASSOVER
HAGGADAH AND SIDDUR

816 ILLUMINATED PAGES AND MINIATURES
ILLUSTRATE IN EXQUISITE DETAIL ALMOST
EVERY CUSTOM OF JEWISH LIFE

EXECUTED IN NORTHERN ITALY CIRCA 1470

A STRICTLY LIMITED
FACSIMILE
EDITION OF 500
NUMBERED
COPIES





THE ROTHSCHILD MISCELLANY

The Rothschild Miscellany was commissioned by Moses ben Yekuthiel Hacohen probably around 1470 at the height of the Renaissance in Italy. It was a time when artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo executed their greatest achievements. It was also a time when the Jews in Italy came into contact with all sectors of society and adopted the way of life of the gentile aristocracy. They enjoyed the favourable attitude of some of the great Italian Princes such as the Medici of Florence and the Este of Ferrara. The prohibition by the Church for Christians to lend money for interest was highly beneficial to the Jewish community, many of whom prospered. The wealthy Jew became a man of the Renaissance with a taste for letters and art, and pleasure in affluent living.

Nonetheless, the Jews never became estranged from their Jewish intellectual and religious heritage. This was a period of unprecedented cultural activity amongst Italian Jewry producing scholars, artists, poets and physicians.

The Rothschild Miscellany as it is now known, is the most elegantly and lavishly executed Hebrew manuscript of that era. From its inception, it was planned as a sumptuous work to encompass, in minute detail, almost every custom of religious and secular Jewish life. The figure drawings and border decorations of the miniatures mirror the rich Italian Renaissance influence and were probably made in a workshop in the Ferrara region. Fanciful landscapes, spatial perspective settings and the precision of human and animal representations echo the style of the best artists who worked for the court of the Este in the third quarter of the fifteenth century. They may have been connected with the workshop of the artists who illuminated the famous Latin Bible of Borso d'Este.

The complete history of the Miscellany is somewhat of a mystery. From 1832 to 1855, the manuscript was in the Solomon de Parente collection in Trieste. It was later sold to the Rothschild family in Paris and remained there until it was stolen during the Nazi occupation and reappeared, after the war, in New York. Someone tried to sell it to Alexander Marx, librarian at the Jewish Theological Seminary, who realised it had been stolen from the Rothschilds and returned it to them in London. James de Rothschild was persuaded by Modechai Narkiss, director of the Bezalel Museum in Israel, that a manuscript of such importance was a national treasure and therefore belonged in Israel. In 1957, on hearing of Narkiss' illness, James de Rothschild sent it as a gift to Jerusalem.

The Rothschild Miscellany consists of more than 70 religious and secular works. Among the religious books are Psalms, Proverbs and Job and a yearly prayer book including the Passover Haggadah. All have textual illustrations for each festival and prayers for special occasions. The secular books include philosophical, moralistic and scientific treatises. The text, throughout the manuscript, is accompanied by marginal notes and commentaries of the sages.

This large collection of miscellaneous yet connected texts became the framework for an unprecedented programme of illumination. It contains a wealth of material illustrating almost every custom of daily life in a Jewish Renaissance household. Of 948 pages, 816 are decorated in minute detail in vibrant colours, gold and silver.

No other Hebrew manuscript equals the richness and scope of the illumination of this Miscellany.

THE LIMITED EDITION FACSIMILE

In 1980, when the publishers embarked on the Kennicott Bible facsimile, few believed that the colossal project could ever come to fruition. Five years later the Bodleian Library was moved to write that it was **"perhaps the most faithful and exact copy ever to be produced"**.

The Rothschild Miscellany, at the Israel Museum, proved to be an even greater challenge, for the publisher's philosophy dictates that a facsimile must be as close to the original as humanly possible. Tremendous efforts were made to acquire the finest materials and craftsmen to impart to each volume not only the presence but also the feel of an original manuscript.

In order to reproduce the Rothschild Miscellany (which is lavishly decorated on almost every page) in the same uncompromising way, a great deal of research and further technical development was required. The publishers moved

However, no printing process can adequately simulate the gold leaf in the manuscript and it was decided that the only way to reproduce raised burnished gold was to lay the leaf by hand, thereby achieving the richness and 'feel' of the original gold. Thus on 812 pages gold was "built up" so as to faithfully reproduce burnished gold. In addition the manuscript contains thousands of illustrations with powdered gold and flat gold leaf, and this too has been applied by hand in the facsimile.

The pages of the manuscript contain the minute pricking holes made by the scribe between which he ruled parallel lines to guide him in the writing of the text. Even these pin-size holes have been reproduced. Furthermore, the edges of the pages of the Miscellany are brown with age and irregular. In the facsimile each one has been laboriously cut to exactly the same size and shape as the original, then "aged" and finally gilt with 23 carat gold leaf at the very edges.

As the original binding of the manuscript no longer exists,



to Italy to supervise every stage of the facsimile's production and by combining craftsmanship and dogged determination with modern technology, remarkable results have been achieved.

The Rothschild Miscellany was hand-copied and illuminated on foetal vellum which is soft and translucent. The folios were studied for their thickness, weight and opacity and a new type of 'paper', virtually indistinguishable from the manuscript's vellum, was specially milled in Italy. The result is a fine, neutral pH, vegetable parchment, with the same natural characteristics of skin that makes printing on it very difficult indeed.

The printing of the minutely-detailed exquisite illuminations, in twelve colours, demanded a great deal of skill and perseverance of the Italian master-printer. Colour separations were made for each of the 948 pages; every one individually checked against the manuscript in Jerusalem and then re-proofed in Italy (up to four times for each page) until the colour was exactly right.

Iris Fishof, Curator of Judaica at the Israel Museum suggested an exquisite Italian binding of the period, worthy of the manuscript, which our craftsmen have copied in minute detail. The facsimile is bound in fine-grain, morocco goat-skin, blind-tooled with bevelled edges, hand-sewn head and tail bands and silver clasps on leather thongs. The upper and lower covers have silver corners and a centre-piece. The Israel Museum plans to rebind the manuscript in the same binding as the facsimile.

The companion volume, edited by the Israel Museum, was written by the five most eminent scholars who have discussed the art, iconography, palaeography, liturgy and history of this manuscript in great detail. This volume is in itself the most comprehensive work ever written about the Rothschild Miscellany and it is bound to the same exacting standards as the facsimile.

The facsimile and companion volume are presented together in a hand-made case and are accompanied by a certificate bearing the seal of the Israel Museum.

CONTENTS OF THE ROTHSCCHILD



FOLIO	MAIN TEXT	MARGINAL TEXTS
1v-39v	Psalms	Rashi commentary on Psalms
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40v-44r	Shimon b. Zadoq SIMANEY HATASHBEZ (Halakhic treatise)	
44r-44v	SIMANEY HAYYEY OLAM (Halakhic treatise)	
45v-61r	Job	Rashi commentary on Job
63r-65r	Jacob Nazir, Commentary on Job	
65v-78v	Proverbs	Rashi commentary on Proverbs
MISCELLANY		
79v	SIDUR Daily and Festival Prayers including benedictions	TASHBEZ
113v	for Hanukah	
114r	Purim	
118v	Circumcision	
120v	Wedding	
121v	Funeral	
123r	special Shabbatot	
127r	Travelling	SEFER HAYYEY 'OLAM
130v	New Moon	
131r	ROSH HASHANAH (New Year)	
132r	YOM KIPPUR (Day of Atonement)	
147r	HOSHANOT (for Feast of Tabernacles SUKOT)	R. Meir b. Barukh of Rothenburg SEFER HAMINHAGIM (Customs)
155v-166r	HAGGADAH (for Passover)	Maimonides, HILKHOT HAMEZ UMAZAH (Treatise on Passover)
166r-174r	PIRQEY AVOT (Sayings of the Sages from the Mishnah)	
174v-185r	Maimonides Eight Chapters (on Sayings of the Sages)	Abraham Ibn Daud SEFER HAQABBALAH (Historical treatise)
185r-197r	Maimonides, commentary on PIRQEY AVOT	Isaac ben Israel YESOD 'OLAM (Historical treatise)
		Joseph b. Yehuda alBargeloni SEDER HATANAIM (Historical treatise)
199r-214r	PIYYUTIM liturgical Hymns for PESAH	Joseph Ibn Aqnin of Barcelona SEDER OLAM INYAN HAMATBE'OT (Historical and numismatic treatise)
	SHAVO'OT, SUKOT, including SHEMINI AZERET (Passover, Pentecost & Tabernacles)	
214r-246r	Liturgical hymns for special Shabbatot	YOSIFON (Medieval pseudo Josephus) (Historical treatise)
246v-250v	Marriage hymns	
251r-268r	SLIHOT (Dirges)	
268v-272v	TAANIT ESTHER (Esther's Fast)	
273r	HAFTAROT (Readings from the Prophets)	
273v-274v	SHIR HAKAVOD, SHIR HAYIHUD (Hymns)	
275r-298r	YOSIFON	
298v-371r	Isaac Ibn Sahala MASHAL HAQADMONI (Fables of the Easterner or of the Ancient. Moralistic stories)	Yehiel ben Yequiel ben Benjamin harofe. SEFER HAMA'ALOT (moral treatise)
		Chronicles of Moses
		MIDRASH WAYISSA'U (historical treatise)
		'INYAN HIRAM MELEKH ZOR (historical treatise)
		Maimonides' Epistle to the Jews of Montpelier
		Yeda'yah hapenini BEHINAT 'OLAM (Philosophical treatise)
		Yeda'yah hapenini KETAV HITNAZLUT
		Epistles to Solomon ben Aderet (philosophical treatise)
		Judah Halevi Testament of TAHKEMONI (moral treatise)
		Isaac of Duren SHE'AREY DURA (Halakhic treatise)
372v-418r	ABRAHAM IBN HISDAI, BEN HAMELEKH VEHANAZIR (The Prince and the Hermit. Moralistic story)	
418v-433r	Pseudo Aristotle SOD HASODOT (Secret of Secrets)	
433v-457v	Hunayn B. Izhak MUSREI HAFILOSOFIM (Morals of the Philosophers)	Isaac of Corbeil, Ritual Decisions
458r-464r	Death of Alexander (moral treatise)	R. Gershon b. Jehuda TAQANOT (Halakhic treatise)
		Testament of Judah Hahasid (moral and custom treatise)
		Divergences of customs in Palestine and Babylonia
		Judgement after the death (moral midrash)
		Alphabet of Ben Sira (moral)
		Aggadot of the Talmud (historical treatise)
		Rules to establish the calendar
464v-466v	Joseph Ezovi QE'ARAT HAKESEF (Silver Platter. Moral treatise)	
466v-467r	Judah Halevi. Poem for Purim	
467v-470r	Judah Halevi. Poem for Pesah	
471r	Calendar for the years 1511-1528	
473r	Table of contents	



Fol. 1v. **ASHREI HA'ISH** "Happy is the man" is the beginning of the book of Psalms. The Talmud states that anyone who recites ASHREI three times a day is sure of life in the world to come. King David is playing a harp in an open meadow with does, stags, birds and a rabbit. This is one of 40 lavishly illuminated pages of psalms.



Fol. 65r. This idyllic, rural scene showing Job's wealth emphasizes the considerable ability of the artist in landscape painting.



fol. 64v. "and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." Job is seated within a portico flanked by his seven sons on his right and his three daughters on his left.

fol. 45v. "There was once a man in the land of Oz whose name was Job and that man was whole-hearted and upright and one that feared God."



fol. 65v. **MISHLEI** The Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David King of Israel: – "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge". King Solomon sitting at a lectern with an open book, an inkwell, knife and a quill. Six other men sit before him, five of them holding open books. The book of Proverbs is one of three "wisdom books" of the Hagiographa.

Detail from fol. 165v. "The congregation did Esther gather, for a three day fast on the Passover" and below "The head of the wicked household (Haman) didst thou smite on a tree 50 cubits high on Passover" A hymn recited on Passover recounting the times when Jews were saved. The prayers for Purim and Tā'anit Esther are also illuminated.



fol. 105v. **AL HAKOL YITGADAL** "Magnificent above all". The prayer preceding the Torah reading on Sabbaths and festivals. A bearded man wearing a talit holding a covered Torah is standing before a closed Torah ark covered by a parokhet.



fol. 118v. **BRIT MILAH** Covenant of circumcision is a symbolic initiation ceremony into the Jewish faith which originated with Abraham who, at divine behest, circumcised himself at the age of 99. The illustration shows an old man holding an infant. The MOHEL (circumciser), holding a knife, is bending before him. Behind the chair are the two initial words of the benedictions of the circumcision.

fol. 120v. **Wedding Ceremony**. The bride and groom standing on either side of an old man who is holding them by their right arms. The bridegroom holds out a ring to the bride. The main text contains the seven wedding benedictions, SHEVA BERAKHOT.



fol. 164v. In a landscape framed in gold. Sisera, in golden armour, flees from the arrows of three Israelites. Below, Daniel standing in a pit between two lions, talks to King Belshazzar.



fol. 79v. **MA TOVU OHOLEKHA YAAQOV** "How goodly are thy tents oh Jacob", the prayer recited on entering the synagogue. Depicted below is an old man standing with his right hand on his heart before an open ark of the Law in the synagogue. In the top right hand corner there is an old man reading a book and the word MAHRAM introduces the marginal text of Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg's "Parallels".



fol. 80r. **ADON OLAM** "Lord of the Universe", the hymn extolling the eternity and the unity of God is now usually sung at the end of Sabbath and festival services, but probably stems from Babylonia and appears as part of the liturgy since the fourteenth century.

fol. 147r. **HOSHANA** "Please save us" prayer for SUKKOT. HOSHANOT are usually recited on every day of SUKKOT. In the illustration a man wearing a talit holds three of the four species of fruit: LULAV, ETROG and HADAS.



fol. 113v. **AL HANISSIM** "For the miracles" Thanksgiving prayer added to the AMIDAH and to the Grace after Meals on Hanukah and Purim. On Hanukah a condensed account of the Hasmonean revolt is added.



fol. 132v. **ZOKHRENU LEHAYYIM** "Remember us unto life" Prayer inserted into the AMIDAH during ROSH HASHANAH. "O King who delightest in life inscribe us in the Book of life", the main theme of ROSH HASHANAH.



fol. 165r. **OMETZ GEVOOROTEKHA** "The power of thy mighty deeds didst thou display on the Passover." Illustration for a Passover PIYUT showing the hospitality of Abraham, who is setting a golden plate before three winged angels, and below, an angel throwing flames over Sodom.



fol. 217r. Judith is shown holding Holofernes' head. Judith who was young and beautiful, righteous and wealthy, attracted the enemy chief who invited her to a feast. Overcome by wine, he



fol. 103r. **NISHMAT KOL HAI** "The soul of every living being". Prayer expressing the gratitude men owe to God. In talmudic literature it is called the BIRKAT HASHIR (Benediction of the Song).

fell asleep whereupon she slew him. Also shown is Judah Maccabee who laid the foundation of the Hasmonean state. The main text is the book of Yosifon, the History of the Jews according to a mediaeval pseudo-Josephus.

fol. 155v. Preparation for Passover: A man is shown before an open cupboard using a feather and candle to search for and clear the leaven. Preparation of MATZAH: a woman kneeling mixes dough while a young man pours water



onto it. Next a woman is shown rolling the dough while a man pricks it. Another man puts the MATZAH into an oven with a silver dome and golden door.

fol. 157r. **MAH NISHTANNAH** "How different is this night from all other nights?" The first of four questions usually asked by the youngest participant of the Passover Seder service. The illustration shows a man and woman sitting at a



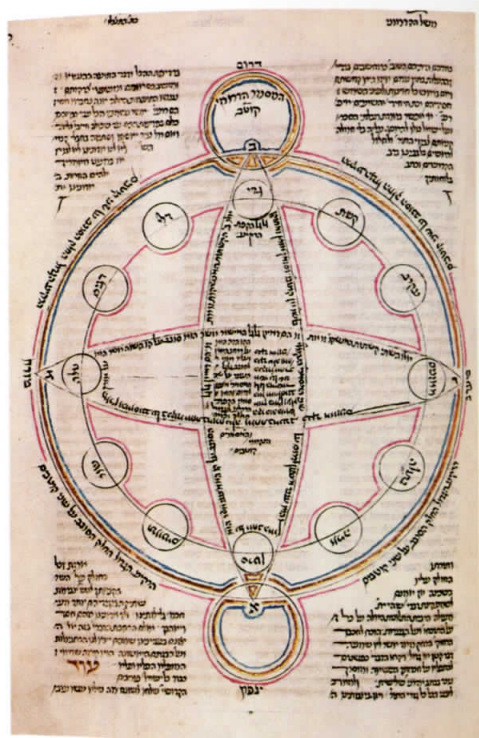
seder table while a servant pours wine. On the table is a candlestick, a cup and an open book all in burnished gold. In the lower part of the folio a servant brings in the seder plate containing matzah, maror and a bone. The illustrations are the finest to be found in any Haggadah.



fol. 312r. **MASHAL HAQADMONI** "Fables of the Ancient" by Isaac ibn Sahala is a collection of animal fables and moral tales similar to those in the Arabic KALILA and DIMNA. All 73 pages of this book are illustrated in minute detail. Here one can see a wolf and fox crouching while two rabbits watch them from outside the fence.



fol. 363r. The great firmament: The heavens are shown as a double circle around two intersecting ellipses. On the inner circle are twelve smaller circles inscribed with the names of the signs of the zodiac. Scientific instructions in the MASHAL HAQADMONI.



fol. 130v. **KIDDUSH HALEVANAH** Sanctification of the New Moon. According to the Talmud, whoever pronounces the benediction of the New Moon in its due time welcomes the "presence of the SHEKHINAH (divine presence)". A bearded man looks up at a silver crescent moon in a starry sky.



seder table while a servant pours wine. On the table is a candlestick, a cup and an open book all in burnished gold. In the lower part of the folio a servant brings in the seder plate containing matzah, maror and a bone. The illustrations are the finest to be found in any Haggadah.

SPECIFICATION

CODICOLOGY

Size 210 × 156 × 102mm (8¼" × 6¼" × 4") approximately. Page sizes vary slightly.
948 Pages, 474 folios numbered 0-473.
816 illuminated pages with raised burnished gold, flat gold, powdered gold, silver and brilliant, delicate colours.

PAPER

A paper mill in Italy worked for over a year to reproduce the opacity, texture and thickness of the 'vellum' (uterine) on which the manuscript was written. The paper they made is similar in feel to the vellum used in the Kennicott Bible facsimile which also took more than a year to develop and has been widely acclaimed as the closest likeness to vellum ever achieved. The 160gsm paper is uncoated, has a neutral pH and has been developed exclusively for this facsimile.

PRINTING

Printed offset litho in up to twelve colours. The manuscript was disbound and photographed flat, so all curvature close to the spine has been completely eliminated. The printed page is, therefore, exactly the same size as the original.

GOLD



The three different types of gold found in the manuscript have all been faithfully copied by hand in the facsimile.

BURNISHED GOLD The raised gold of the original has been reproduced without embossing. Craftsmen applied the gold metal leaf by hand to each page using a special building-up process so that the gold is raised as in the original. This is the first time that burnished gold has been reproduced in this way.

FLAT GOLD This was applied by hand using gold metal leaf.

POWDERED GOLD Gold powder was applied to all the illuminations that contain it in the original.

PRICKING

The scribe pricked minute holes on either side of each folio between which he would rule lines for his script. These tiny holes have been reproduced for the first time in a facsimile.

CUTTING

Each page has been cut to the exact size and shape of the original, aged and then gilt at the edges with 23 carat gold. No previously published facsimile has achieved this precision in accuracy of trimming.

BINDING

Fine Italian binding in morocco goatskin over wooden boards, blind-tooled on both covers and the spine. The book block is hand-sewn over hand-made head and tail bands, each leaf having first been cut, "aged" and then gilt with 23 carat gold leaf. The upper and lower covers have four silver corners and a silver centre-piece. Four silver clasps are attached by leather thongs.

COMPANION VOLUME



The five most eminent scholars have each contributed to the companion volume. The rich subject matter of the illustrations is described by Professor B. Narkiss (Hebrew University). Dr. A. Cohen-Mushlin (Hebrew University) deals with stylistic affinity and differences between the artists and their relation to general Italian illumination of the period. The historical and social background of the manuscript is thoroughly expounded by Professor S. Simonsohn (Tel Aviv University). The codicology and palaeography of the manuscript is discussed by Professor M. Beit-Arié (Jewish National & University Library) and Professor I. Tashma (Hebrew University) discusses the religious and liturgical content of the Miscellany.

The companion volume will contain a full table of contents and all texts and illustrations will be comprehensively indexed and cross-referenced.

Printed and illustrated with full-colour plates and finely bound to complement the facsimile.

PRESENTATION

The facsimile and companion are enclosed in a hand made, case to reflect the beauty of the manuscript.

EDITION

Strictly limited to 500 numbered and 50 'ad personam' copies. Each volume, discreetly numbered by hand inside the leather binding using minute steel dies, is accompanied by a numbered certificate carrying the seal of the Israel Museum.

Once all copies have been bound, the printing plates will be destroyed thus protecting the significant investment value of each facsimile.

PAYMENT

Cheques should be made payable to THE ISRAEL MUSEUM, ROTHSCHILD FACSIMILE. The Israel Museum, as trustees, hold all funds for release to Facsimile Editions only against shipping documents. The price of the facsimile includes the companion volume, the presentation case, shipping container, airmail delivery and insurance.

After five years in the making, the Kennicott Bible facsimile, published in March 1985, was then widely acclaimed as the finest facsimile ever made.

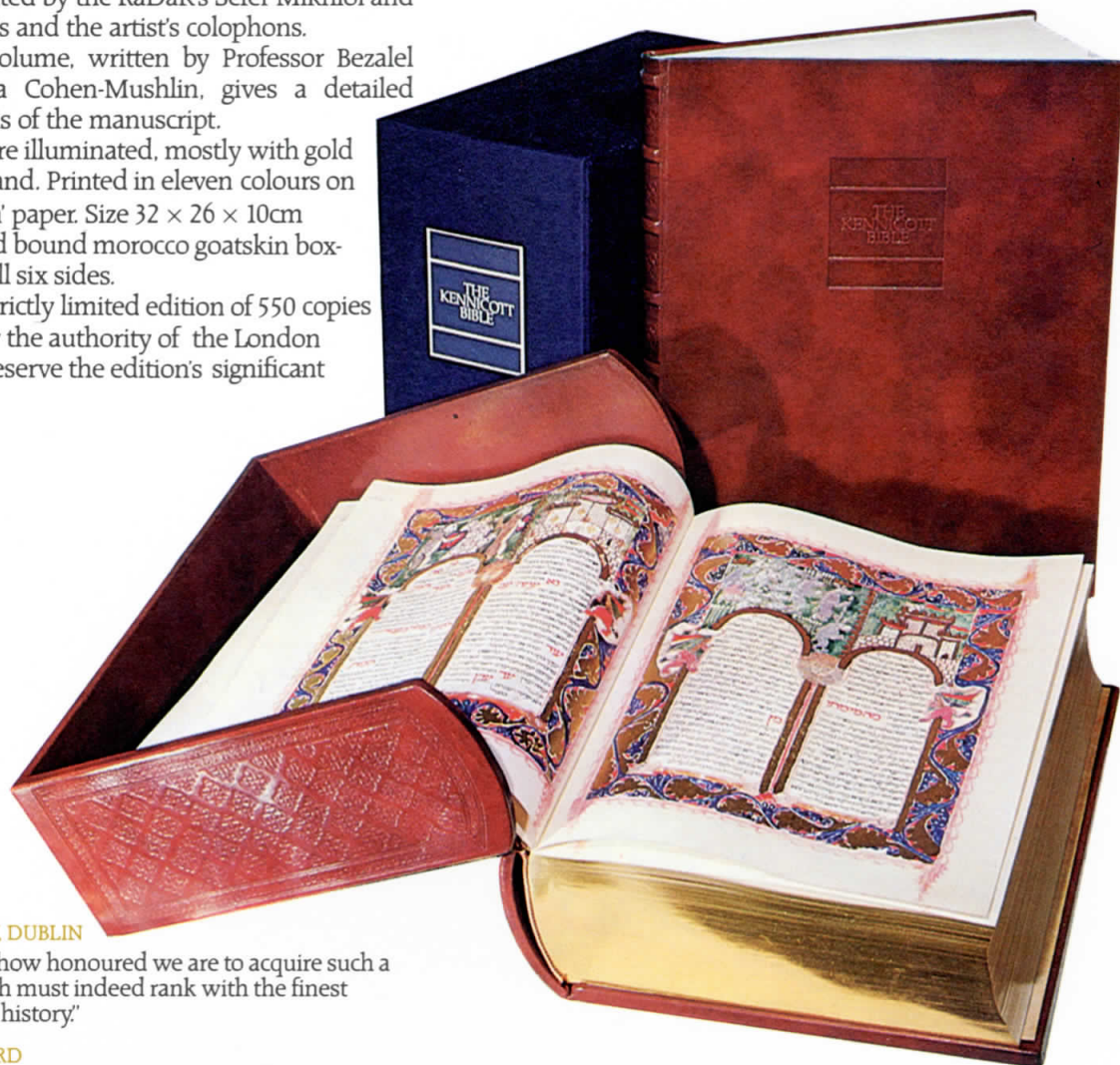
The original manuscript is the treasure of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and is probably the most beautiful Hebrew illuminated bible in existence. Completed in Spain in 1476, the clear, square script is vocalised, cantellated, massorated and lavishly illuminated. It is bound in a morocco goatskin box-binding embossed on all six sides. The 24 books of the Tenach are complemented by the RaDaK's Sefer Mikhlol and contain both the scribe's and the artist's colophons.

The companion volume, written by Professor Bezalel Narkiss and Dr. Aliza Cohen-Mushlin, gives a detailed description and analysis of the manuscript.

Of 922 pages, 238 are illuminated, mostly with gold and silver applied by hand. Printed in eleven colours on specially milled 'vellum' paper. Size 32 × 26 × 10cm (12½" × 10¾" × 4"). Hand bound morocco goatskin box-binding embossed on all six sides.

The plates of this strictly limited edition of 550 copies have been destroyed by the authority of the London Beth Din, in order to preserve the edition's significant investment value.

THE KENNICOTT BIBLE



TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY, DUBLIN

'I write to let you know how honoured we are to acquire such a magnificent work, which must indeed rank with the finest facsimiles in publishing history.'

BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD

"We know of no way in which the publisher could have done more to seek out all that is finest in contemporary craftsmanship in order to reproduce as nearly exactly as possible the colours of the miniatures in the original manuscript and the quality and texture of all the materials used therein."

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, CAMBRIDGE

"It has been superbly reproduced and is indeed worthy of the original manuscript. One would wish that all facsimile editions could be produced in such a careful and devoted fashion."

THE JEWISH NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, JERUSALEM

"... in our opinion one of the most beautiful facsimiles ever published."

TEL AVIV MUSEUM

"You have done an outstanding job creating this work of art, with its closeness to the original and its exquisite workmanship..."

THE JEWISH POST AND OPINION

"The publisher's perfectionism defies human limits, but is responsible for this production of a rare work of art."

THE ROTHSCHILD MISCELLANY



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