



In and Out, Between and Beyond

Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe

Editors: Elisheva Baumgarten and Ido Noy

The Max and Iris Stern Gallery

Mount Scopus Campus of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

June, 2021 - September, 2022



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Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe Encounters Israeli Art

Elisheva Baumgarten

Misunderstanding of the present is the inevitable consequence of ignorance of the past. But a person may wear himself out just as fruitlessly in seeking to understand the past, if he is totally ignorant of the present...This faculty of understanding the living is, in very truth, the master quality of the historian.¹

With these words, Marc Bloch, one of the foremost social historians of the twentieth century, captured a foundational paradox of the study of history. The past is "a foreign country,"² but it shares elements with the present. Although historians seek to understand the past on its own terms, they use the tools, sensibilities, and mentalities of the present to do so. Bloch goes on to argue that the "love of life" is what drives the historian to the past, while the connection to the present is what makes this *métier* worth pursuing. It is this complexity that makes the study of history so fascinating.

¹ Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, repr. 1992), p. 43.

² David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and the topic revisited in his *The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

The exhibition *In and Out, Between and Beyond: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe*, physical and virtual, can be seen as an embodiment of Bloch's observation. It aims to establish a link between past and present, displaying the scholarly work of a group of medieval historians that study the Jews of medieval Europe, as well as responses to and interpretations of this work by contemporary Israeli artists. This is one of the culminating projects of the European Research Council-funded research group *Beyond the Elite: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe*. Focusing on the Jews of medieval Ashkenaz from the time of the First Crusade in 1096 until the mid-fourteenth century, the scholars in this study team examine the lives of the Jews of northern and western Europe, concentrating on the Jews of northern France, the Holy German Empire, and, to a lesser extent, those in medieval England, often referred to as the Jews of medieval Ashkenaz.

Since the inception of the project in the fall of 2016, the team has worked to construct a history of everyday Jewish life in medieval Europe which includes those who were not part of the learned elite alongside those who were learned, about whom we know more. Rather than spotlighting the dramatic events of this period, we have trained our sights on its everyday moments. In addition to engaging with as wide a swath of medieval Jewish society as possible in our study, we have sought to shed light on an intriguing historical reality: the integration of Ashkenazic Jews within their Christian surroundings, alongside their maintenance of a distinct ethnic identity and religious practices. Unraveling this complexity meant asking how medieval Jews in northern Europe involved themselves in the surrounding environment, and simultaneously separated themselves from elements of it. The fact that the vast majority of our written sources have been left behind by members of the elite sectors of society made this inquiry particularly difficult. How could we hear the voices of Jews who were neither learned nor powerful? This was our greatest challenge.

The entirety of everyday life is too rich for the reach of even a generously funded project. Thus, we organized our work along four axes: ritual, spaces, objects, and people. The axes, which often intersect, permitted the development of diverse perspectives on medieval Jewish life. They were our gateway into the lives of the medieval Jews, whether in or out of the spotlight of the documentation that survived.

These four organizing categories are evident throughout the exhibition. As the viewer "enters" medieval urban space through the city gate, moving from the house, to communal areas, to the city at large, and finally exiting the city, s/he experiences space within and outside the urban towns and centers in which medieval Jews lived. The displays show rituals practiced daily, weekly, annually, and across the life cycle. Objects in the medieval sources we study inspired the modern creations, which accentuate different aspects of their functions in medieval life. The medieval people, who, of course, cannot be recalled or summoned, nonetheless leave their mark with the words they wrote and their presence; one can imagine them throughout the city, drawing water from the well, singing on the Sabbath, and conducting their business as the local churches chimed their bells. Medieval Jews did not live in ghettos. So, as we envision them, we must also envision their Christian neighbors, with whom they did business and shared daily life. Sometimes these relations were friendly, sometimes less so, but at all times they took place within the confines of a shared urban space. Seeking to present these complex lived realities, we chose three spatial categories for the exhibit: In and out, between, and beyond and have used them to express the fluidity and entangledness of medieval Jewish life.



Fig. 1: Our research team and the artists in conversation.

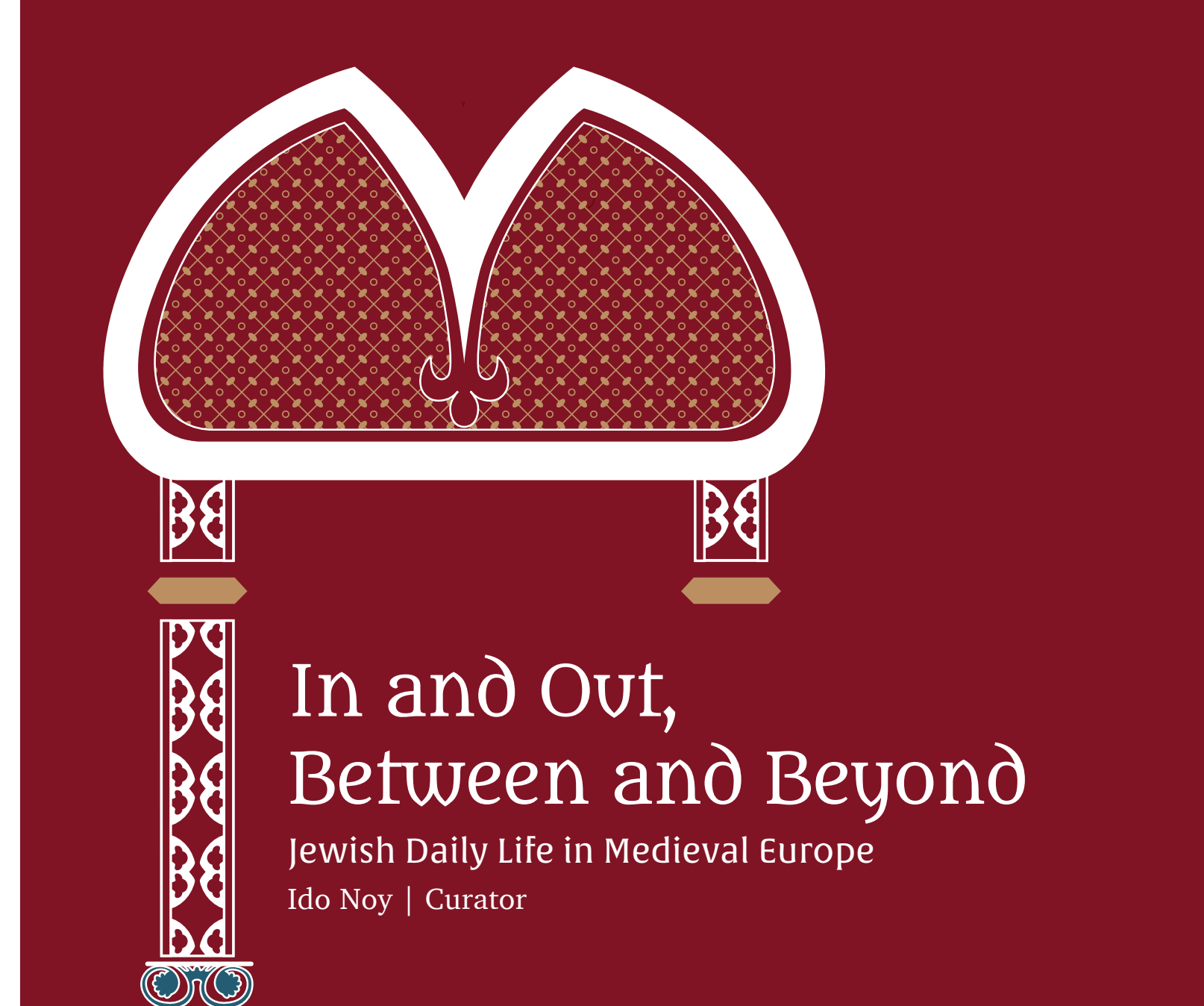
To complement the medieval basis of this installation, we provided a distinctly modern perspective. Dr. Noy orchestrated what turned out to be an intensely fruitful exchange between the research team and seven Israeli artists, who then produced contemporary expressions of the historic ideas under discussion (fig. 1). The results can be seen in the Max and Iris Stern Gallery and in this catalogue. Collaboration with these artists, and, particularly, with Kalman Gavriel Delmoor, whose calligraphy spans the entire 17-meter wall of the show, opened up new vistas on our own historical work as well as exciting prospects for communication. Above all, dialogue with the artists has stimulated novel questions for further research. Each visitor who visits the gallery or views the online exhibit will experience it from their own perspective and in their own language – in Hebrew, English, or Arabic. We hope that visitors will come away from this encounter, a bridge between past and present, with new insights into what was and new notions about what could be.

In and Out, Between and Beyond: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe was conceived after I was honored with the Michael Bruno Memorial Award by the Israel Institute for Advanced Study in 2016. The prize, I was told, was to be used for a scholarly project unlike any I had ever undertaken before. As part of our work on the *Beyond the Elite* research project, we have consistently dedicated time and thought to bridging the academy and the broader public. Toward this goal, we created a website for Israeli teachers whose curriculum includes the medieval period, held numerous open events, and presented our research in popular forums such as high schools, synagogues, and community centers. These efforts were driven by the desire to demonstrate to a wide audience the relevance of the medieval past to the modern present. The presentations led to the idea of an installation at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem geared towards the general public. This vision has expanded during the past months of pandemic to a virtual exhibit.

Dr. Ido Noy, the curator of *In and Out, Between and Beyond: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe*, was an obvious partner for this endeavor. He was part of the first cohort of the research team and completed his doctorate within its framework in 2018. Our discussions about a

potential exhibition led to the concept at the exhibition's core, suggested by Ido after a series of conversations. The members of the team who contributed to the exhibition are those who belonged to the team during the period the exhibition was planned, from the spring of 2019 to the fall of 2020. Alongside our research as a group, each team member has his or her own research project; these projects have already resulted in original academic research and promise to produce additional innovative scholarship over the years to come. While team members primarily work on their own, they share various areas of interest, and there are multiple ways in which their research intersects. They can be divided geographically, although some work on multiple geographies. The team members also vary according to areas of interest within medieval life: economics, family life, social relations, royal-Jewish interactions, and more. As a team, our sum is greater than our parts, although each element of our work stands on its own merit. I am grateful to the team members who have participated in this exhibition: Dr. Tzafrir Barzilay, Dr. Neta Bodner, Nureet Dermer, Aviya Doron, Miri Fenton, Albert Kohn, Dr. Andreas Lehnertz, Dr. Eyal Levinson, Amit Shafran, and Hannah Teddy Schachter, as well as to Dr. Ido Noy for his guidance and leadership. Together, we wish to thank Audrey Fingherman Zabari, who has enabled all of our collaborative efforts.

We invite those perusing this catalogue or visiting the gallery, whether in real life or online, to enjoy the fruits of our study. Everyday life and its routines differ from place to place and period to period, and yet they share many characteristics over time. It is our hope that, inspired by our interweaving of medieval and modern, you will experience these connections between past and present.



The exhibition *In and Out, Between and Beyond: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe* that opened in the Max and Iris Stern Gallery at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in June 2021 is among the final fruits of the European Research Council research group *Beyond the Elite: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe*, headed by Prof. Elisheva Baumgarten. It offers a fascinating perspective on how Jews and their Christian neighbors lived their lives in and around medieval cities. Reflecting its textual origins, the exhibition is comprised of sixteen units, at the heart of each of which stands a primary source from a particular literary genre. These sources run the gamut from chronicles and commentaries to books of Jewish law and custom, to poems, tax records, and even magical formulas. In literary terms, the exhibition is a kind of album, an intriguing miscellany of Jewish medieval memory.

The curatorial challenge was a compelling one. How to present polychromatic studies within a single unitary arc? How to translate historical research into today's uber-diverse media? The curatorial process itself began in 2018 accompanied by the ongoing work of the research group, and was guided by three distinct themes: In and Out, Between and Beyond. The choice

of spatially related concepts turned out to be a felicitous one. With it, we could successfully sidestep the two thematic categories that have dominated the Jewish museum since the late nineteenth century: the Jewish life-cycle and the Hebrew calendar. Notably, these traditional themes have the advantage of appearing to capture Jewish life from the womb to the tomb, as the popular expression goes. Such prisms do indeed shed light on select members of the community – but leave many others in the shadows. Importantly too, the traditional twofold categorization privileges peak experiences, setting aside the nitty-gritty of everyday life.

People and societies are part of the landscapes in which they live. For medieval Ashkenazic Jews, the tangible physical homeland in Europe was embedded within a distinct Christian majority. In this space, Christians and Jews engaged in complex relationships that involved, among many other things, violence and trauma. The Crusades, which were primarily aimed at Muslims in the Holy Land, also affected many Jewish communities throughout Europe. Other acts of violence toward Jews were perpetrated following blood libels, as well as host-desecration and well-poisoning accusations, reaching an apex in the mid-fourteenth century, around the Black Death. Hatred and persecution were deeply ingrained in the scholarly collective memory, and for some historians have formed the backbone of their research. An alternative approach, put forward over the past decades, has spotlighted the involvement of European Jews in their surrounding Christian environments, underlining ongoing relationships, partnerships, and affinities.

Both perspectives find strong support in the historical accounts from the period. This exhibition strives to present this complexity: the viewer will encounter polemics and pain alongside many manifestations of daily coexistence. Such historical entanglement serves as the conceptual foundation of *In and Out, Between and Beyond*, where medieval Jewish and Christian histories are intricately entwined.

Visitors to the gallery are invited to engage with the exhibition through textual, visual, material, and acoustic means. The display includes 2D and 3D printed models based on medieval artifacts. Alongside the reproductions, the viewer will find original works created especially for the exhibition by contemporary artists – infographics, prints, animation, video-mapping, sound-art, and site-specific installations. The creation of the exhibition was an intensely collaborative effort: after meeting with the research team, each artist was asked to provide his/her own artistic expression regarding the historical subjects.

The overall design of the exhibition was dictated by the space in which it is housed, known as the "Little Gallery" at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The gallery is a rectangular space of about 90 square meters, built mostly of large glass walls. This transparent gallery is always visible to the many pedestrians passing through the Mount Scopus campus on their way between the Central Library and the Maierdsdorf Faculty Club area. While the space has two openings, a main entrance on one side and a back door on the other, the display does not try to force visitors into a linear narrative. Rather, it is divided by pillars into three distinct spaces, reflecting our guiding themes: In and Out, Between and Beyond. The curatorial logic stemmed from possible associative connections between sources and objects. Thus, we placed the historical sources along the long gallery wall, and the objects in the center and along the glass walls. Visitors may begin by reading the historical sources and continue by viewing the objects, or vice versa. We envision viewers making their own way among the offerings of the exhibition. The path is theirs to forge.

In and Out, Between and Beyond: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe is part of a series of events marking the achievements of a five-year journey in which the *Beyond the Elite: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe* research group set out to search for historical "treasures." Such treasures were indeed discovered – albeit in a form other than silver and gold. Unearthed were cultural assets of knowledge, precious pieces of the as-yet incomplete puzzle of Jewish life of a long-bygone time. It is with profound pleasure that we set these pieces before you.



All places shown on the map relate to historical sources discussed in the catalogue and/or the exhibition.
The map was made by Ruhama Bonfil, Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Articles



Jews Sailing on the Rivers

Tzafrir Barzilay

[About] Reuben and Simeon, who happened to be in one city. Reuben had a ship loaded with salted fish, which [he planned] to sail with to another city [in order to sell the fish]. And he came across Simeon, who wished to load another ship with fish and also sail to the same city [to sell the fish]. [So Reuben] told [Simeon]: "what do you want now with fish? I have a ship loaded with them. I will save for you [from my ship] a certain amount, worth so and so marks, and you should go to the same marketplace, and buy there [other] commodities worth the same amount of money as I gave you in fish. And I will sell the fish, and you will sell whatever [commodities] you bring [buy], and when we meet again, each of us will receive back his expenses, and we will divide the profits." And so they did.¹

Meir son of Barukh, *Responsa*, Germany, thirteenth century

¹ Meir son of Barukh of Rothenburg, *Maharam's Responsa* (Prague edition), ed. Moses Arye Blakh (Budapest, 1895), §898.



Fig. 1. Cologne and its Rhine river port. Woodcut by Michel Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff in the Nürnberg chronicle. Hartmann Schedel, *Liber chronicarum*. Nürnberg, 1493, fols. 90v-91r. Public Domain.

The passage above is excerpted from a responsum sent to a German scholar, perhaps R. Meir of Rothenburg or one of his students, in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. It describes a business partnership between two Jews, Reuben and Simeon (both stock names), who wish to bring commodities from one city to another, the second city being a major marketplace. The aim of the agreement was to prevent direct competition between the two Jewish merchants, and ensure that they made the most out of their business trip. In addition to issues of trade and economic activity, this passage reveals another major aspect of Jewish life: travel along the rivers (figs. 1-2). The aforementioned exchange was most likely a sailing operation along the Rhine, one of Europe's major rivers. Reuben easily convinces Simeon to switch his operation from importing fish from one city to another to trade in other goods. Thus, it seems that these traders were not interested in a particular commodity, but in profiting from the differences in prices of different commodities in different markets. The river, which allowed for the fast and cheap transfer of large amounts of goods, made this kind of operation possible.

But rivers were more than just trade routes. They permitted quick communication and travel between the towns and cities located on their banks, as sailing was much easier, safer, and cheaper than traveling over land. One can say that the major rivers served as a network of "highways" in the Middle Ages, and it is no coincidence that many of the major cities of inland Europe were built on the banks of these rivers. Jews were drawn to these major urban centers and used the rivers to develop their businesses and connections between the different communities. In Germany, the Jewish centers of Mainz, Speyer, and Worms (the "ShUM" communities) were established on the Rhine, and while they were known for being centers of rabbinic learning, they also served as commercial hubs. These cities were linked to older Jewish communities via rivers like the Rhine and the Mosel. During the early stages of Jewish settlement, these isolated communities, dispersed through the vast lands of the German Empire, could have hardly existed without this connection.²

² For the geographical development of the Jewish settlement in the German Empire, see maps in *Geschichte der Juden im Mittelalter von der Nordsee bis zu den Südalpen*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp (Hannover: Hahn, 2002).



Fig. 2. A River Ship - Second Nürnberg Haggadah, Franconia, 1470-80. Courtesy of David Sofer Collection, London, fol. 41. Photograph by Shalom Sabar.

In north-eastern France, Jews used the Seine and its tributaries to maintain regular contact with the Jews of England. R. Barukh son of Isaac, who lived in the area in the twelfth century, mentions that "to pass the sea to the island called England usually takes [the ships] one day, if the wind is good."³

³ Barukh son of Isaac, *Sefer haTerumah* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute, 1979), 133, §225. Also cited in R. Simhah son of Shmuel of Vitry, *Mahzor Vitry*, ed. Simon Hurwitz (Nürnberg: J. Bulka, 1923), 126.

The rivers enabled Jewish scholars from northern France to study in the rabbinic centers of the southern Rhineland (and vice versa), with R. Solomon son of Isaac of Troyes, known as Rashi, being the most famous example. They made it possible for Jews from different cities, many miles apart, to conduct business with each other, to marry each other, and to establish common institutions. The fact that many of the communities of northern Europe had overlapping regulations or similar liturgy and structural organization stemmed to a significant degree from their geographical location. For example, in Solomon son of Samson's chronicle, the author wrote about the community of Cologne in the mid-twelfth century, stating that "from that place [Cologne] came life, and food, and common judgment to our brethren scattered in distant locations."⁴ While Cologne was not known as a rabbinic center, its location at a strategic point on the Rhine, where the river becomes shallower, made it an important place. Sea-faring ships coming from the northern sea could not continue sailing south up the Rhine and had to unload their cargo in Cologne. Any cargo destined to continue southwards had to be reloaded to river-faring ships or boats (see fig. 1).⁵ This made Cologne into an important economic center and home to a bustling marketplace. Solomon son of Samson asserted that while the rabbinic heartland of Germany was established further down the Rhine, in the early twelfth century its economic and administrative center was located in Cologne. The two centers supported each other, a connection which the convenient travel along the Rhine made possible.⁶

As the Jewish settlement in Germany gradually expanded eastward, other rivers started to play a more important role in Jewish life. Europe enjoyed prosperity over the course of the thirteenth century, its economy expanding tenfold. Jews, many of whom were traders, craftsmen, and businessmen, enjoyed this trend and their communities grew larger and richer. Jews (and Christians) started traveling eastwards, to inhabit the lands available there. As in the west, major rivers helped to support the new settlements, and cities along their banks flourished. The Jewish centers of Würzburg (on the river Main), Nürnberg (on the river Pegnitz, a tributary of the Main), and Regensburg (on the river Danube) started to grow in economic and cultural importance during this period.⁷ They kept their ties with the older Jewish centers as people travelled back and forth along the Main and the Danube.

Jews would sail with their goods along the Rhine, and such trips are discussed in a matter-of-fact tone in the passage cited above. Still, travel raised a host of halakhic questions. The thirteenth-century German rabbi Eliezer son of Joel haLevi of Bonn, known as Ra'aviah, referred to this reality in his halakhic writings. Could a Jew leave a ship on which he traveled when it arrived at its destination during the Sabbath, and under what circumstances could Jews partake of foodstuffs brought on board at such a time? If a Jew died aboard a ship on the Sabbath, could the body be removed on the same day?⁸ As we can see, river travel was common for thirteenth-century Jews, although such travel entailed significant halakhic challenges. These challenges were amplified by the fact that Jews traveled on ships owned and operated mainly by Christians. Few European Jews were sailors, though some were ship owners or users. Every ship that Jews boarded was thus a place of close contact between them and Christians. Notably, Ra'aviah, who was well aware of this reality, did not suggest that Jews avoid traveling with Christians.

⁴ Eva A. Haverkamp, ed., *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs* (Hannover: Hahn, 2005), 400–401.

⁵ Hartmann Schedel, *Liber Chronicarum* (Nürnberg, 1493) ff. 90–91.

⁶ For one such traveling venture, from Cologne up the Rhine, that went astray: Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, ed. Abraham M. Habermann (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1970), 34.

⁷ See maps in Haverkamp, ed. *Geschichte der Juden*.

⁸ Eliezer son of Yoel haLevi of Bonn (Ra'aviah), *Sefer Ra'aviah*, ed. Victor Aptowitz, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: Harry Fischel Institute, 1963), 1: 414, 417–21, 424–26, 428, §385–390. See also Barukh son of Isaac, *Sefer haTerumah*, 132–133, §224–25.

The written and visual sources that have survived from medieval Europe are mostly silent about Jewish travel. Yet, we know that Jews, who tended to be urban and engage in trade, moved around quite a bit. Our sources do mention scholars seeking the advice of their teachers who lived many miles away, merchandise being transferred quickly from one marketplace to another, and family ties established despite the distance between different communities. Considering the location of these communities through the vast lands of northern Europe and the difficulties of medieval transportation, it is clear that river travel played a major role in facilitating these everyday connections.

Further Reading

- ❖ Alfred Haverkamp, "Jews and Urban Life: Bonds and Relationships," *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Age: Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries*, edited by Christoph Cluse, 55–69. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.
- ❖ Martha C. Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism in Europe, 1300*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- ❖ Jonathan Romain, "River Jews: Medieval Jews along the Thames as a Microcosm of Anglo-Jewry," *Jewish Historical Studies* 43 (2011): 21–42.
- ❖ Michael Toch, *The Economic History of European Jews: Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012.
- ❖ Jean Verdon, *Travel in the Middle Ages*, translated by George Holoch. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.



Treasure Hunt

Jews, Property, Catastrophe

Ido Noy

Isaac the Pious came to the house of his ancestors [Rabbi David the Parnas and his wife] to check the treasures which had been hidden there from the days of his ancestors. He came to the cellar and found them, for the enemy had not touched them. He said to himself: "Of what value is all this money to me now, since the enemy 'fulfilled their purposes,' distancing me from the Lord and to causing me to rebel against the Torah of our holy God. Moreover, a certain priest requested that I recover [the treasure] with him. Will I find any further merit in this money? Neither silver nor gold accompanies a man to the grave – only repentance and good deeds."¹

Chronicle of Solomon son of Samson, Germany, mid-twelfth century

¹ "Chronicle of Solomon son of Samson," in *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, ed. Robert Chazan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 263.



Fig. 1. Miscellany of jewelry, part of the Weißenfels Treasure, discovered in 1823-6 near Weißenfels. Hidden circa 1348/9. Kulturstiftung Sachsen-Anhalt, Kunstmuseum Moritzburg Halle (Saale). Photograph by Punctum/Bertram Kober.

This brief excerpt from the *Chronicle of Solomon son of Samson* tells one of many stories concerning the events in Mainz at the time of the First Crusade (1096), during the persecutions of Jewish communities in the Rhineland region. The source describes how a certain Isaac the Pious, son of R. David the Parnas, was forced to convert to Christianity. He returned to his parents' house and found the fortune that his father, one of community leaders, had hidden before his death. The text goes on to describe his repentance and return to Judaism.

This dramatic description sheds light on a common phenomenon in the pre-modern era – the hiding property of for security purposes. When it comes to medieval Jews, we are fortunate to have not only historical evidence, but also archaeological findings – as many as ten treasure troves attributed to Jewish owners have been discovered over the last 200 years. Some parameters can help us identify a Jewish treasure trove.² The first is the archaeological and chronological context of the findings – do the location and time of burial fit our knowledge of Jewish residence patterns and history in the area and Jewish-related events that took place there? Another indication is the inclusion of objects with explicitly Jewish uses, iconography, or inscriptions. Thus, for example, the treasure troves found in Weißenfels (1823-26), Colmar (1863), and Erfurt (1998) were identified as Jewish based on wedding rings bearing the Hebrew

² Michael Toch, "Medieval Treasure Troves and Jews," in *Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar*, eds. Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenbaum, and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate 2007), 273–96.

inscription "mazel tov" (figs. 1-3).³ Another treasure trove attributed to Jews was discovered in Kuttentberg (1968), today Kutná Hora in the Czech Republic. The inventory of this trove consisted of coins and tableware. Two of five virtually identical silver goblets included Jewish features: one bore a Hebrew inscription of the name "Ze'ev" and the other a coat of arms consisting of three contemporary "Jewish-huts" (*Judenhuts*) on a shield.⁴

These treasure troves, as well as other troves attributed to Jewish owners, often contain a mix of identifiably Jewish and Christian artifacts, suggesting that they belonged to Jewish merchants or pawnbrokers. Moreover, their composition implies that these pawnbrokers preserved little distinction between their own private property and items taken as security for loans. One must note that the capital they accumulated was partly invested in their business and had no separate physical existence beyond the business itself. Some of this capital, however, was nonetheless maintained in the form of coins, ingots, and other valuables – objects that could be moved from place to place with relative ease, but could also be stolen or looted.

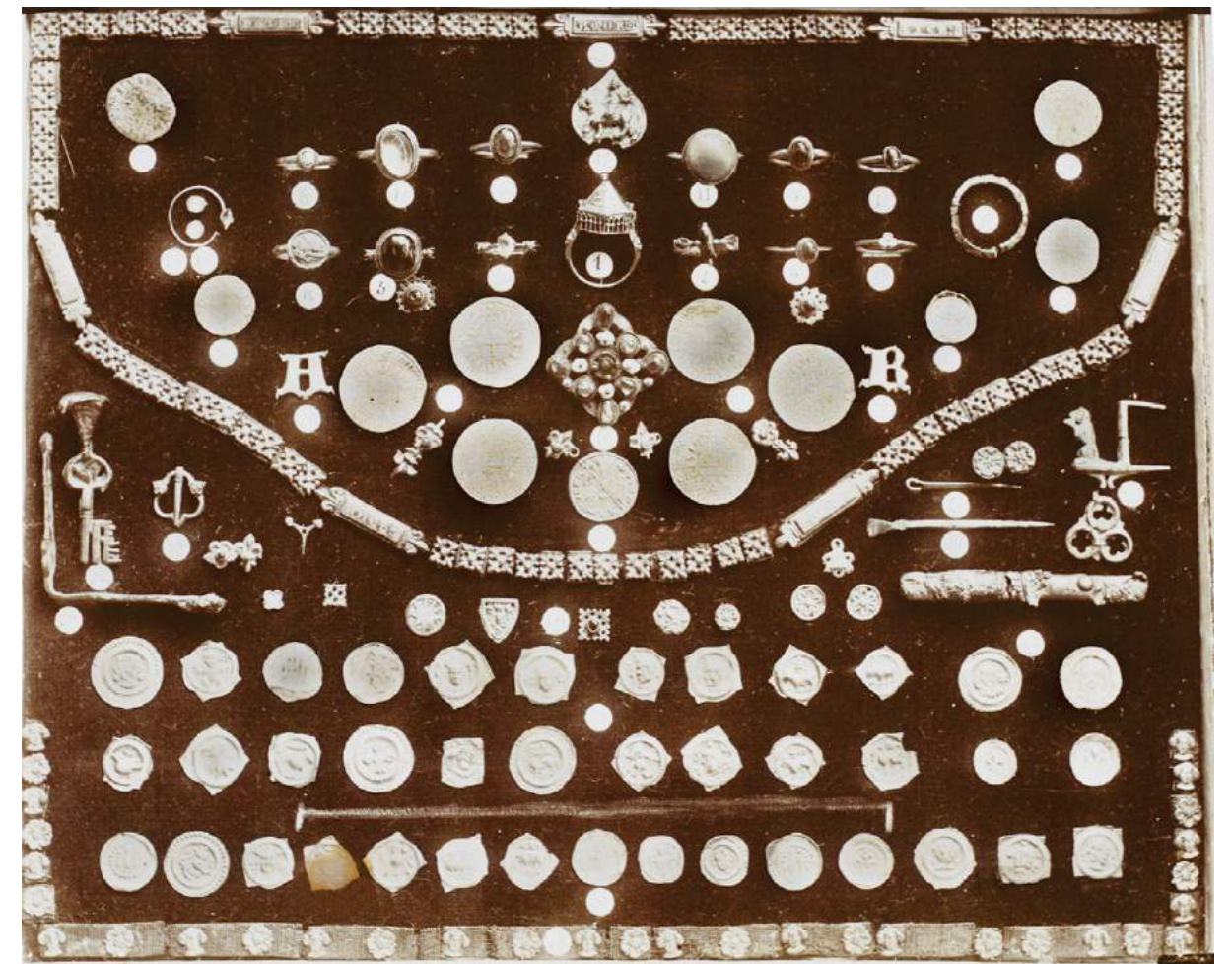


Fig. 2. Miscellany of jewelry and coins, part of the Colmar Treasure, discovered in 1863 in the Jewish Quarter of Colmar, France. Hidden not before 1342. Paris, Musée De Cluny – Musée national Du Moyen Âge. Photo © Rmn-Grand Palais. Musée De Cluny – Musée national Du Moyen-Âge.

³ See note 5 in my "The Mazal Tov Ring and the Ketubbah" in this catalogue.

⁴ Nürnberg, Germanische Nationalmuseum, inventory number: HG 11628.



Fig. 3. Miscellany of jewelry, tableware, coins and ingots, part of the Erfurt Treasure, discovered in 1998 in the Jewish Quarter of Erfurt, Germany. Hidden before 1348/9. Courtesy of the Thuringian State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology. Photograph by Brigitte Stefan.

We should not be surprised by the fact that the "enemy" (including that certain priest who requested Isaac to recover the treasure with him) did not find the treasure that was hidden in the cellar. Historical and archaeological evidence from this period reveals that Jews hid valuables in a variety of places, some quite creative: inside chests and locked rooms, in the interiors of walls, under beds, inside chimneys, and in underground basements. Such valuables were only meant to be hidden for a limited time, as the owner intended to use the property again in the future. The concealment of valuables for longer periods of time was planned in advance, and tended to make use of prepared hiding places which could hold a large number of sizable and/or heavy objects. In contrast, items were often hidden for the short-term in casual, accessible locations, enabling the owner to retrieve them quickly.

There are a number of possible reasons why Jews, including David the Parnas, felt the need to hide their belongings. Possessions were routinely hidden in order to protect them from thieves. In the absence of an institution responsible for the maintenance and storage of private property, such as a bank, each owner was forced to protect his or her own private and commercial property. However, it is likely that there were also less conventional reasons for hiding property. Family disputes, especially regarding the distribution of property and finances, could motivate people to conceal their assets. Property owners may also have hidden their wealth in order to avoid paying taxes, not only to Christian authorities, but also to the Jewish community. Another reason for the hiding of valuables in the Middle Ages, at least in Jewish communities, was anxiety associated with violent outbreaks by Christians, which not only endangered lives but also came

hand-in-hand with looting and economic uncertainty. Whatever the reason for initially concealing the property, the abandonment of these objects suggests that their owners (whether Jewish or Christian) met with some catastrophe that prevented them from returning to retrieve their property.

David the Parnas is an example of such a case – a person prevented by dire circumstances from claiming his belongings. Moreover, had his son Isaac the Pious not known where his father had hidden the possessions, they might not have been discovered at that time or at all. Many historical sources indicate that this example is one of many. During the Middle Ages, European Jews were subject to continuous persecution during which individuals, families, and sometimes entire communities were exiled or perished, leaving no one to retrieve their property. The notion that the Jews had hidden and abandoned their assets motivated people from the surrounding areas to begin searching for valuables in places where Jews had lived. Many treasures were surely retrieved in the Middle Ages, while some were left untouched until recent times.

Most treasure troves discovered over the past two hundred years can be attributed to one of history's most traumatic events for Europe in general and European Jews in particular – the outbreak of the Black Death between 1347 and 1352. The epidemic eradicated one-third of Europe's population. Jews died of the plague no less frequently than their Christian neighbors; at the same time, many were killed in riots that broke out after Jews were accused of deliberately poisoning water sources and causing the epidemic. After the Plague, the survivors, Jews as well as Christians, conducted extensive searches for hidden Jewish property. One instance among many is documented in Speyer 1349, when the city council blocked access to the Jewish area and demanded exclusive rights to any money and valuables found there.⁵ During that year, searches for Jewish property were also conducted in Erfurt and objects worth a total of 3410 marks were found and sold.⁶

The story about R. David the Parnas and Isaac the Pious sheds light on two contradictory (or complementary) phenomena that were part of the daily lives of Jews in the Middle Ages: on the one hand the routine hiding of valuables, and on the other, attempts to unearth them. For scholars interested in medieval Jewish history, such treasure troves are worth more than any specific object found within them. Each trove holds valuable historical information about the original owner, as well as the time, place, and circumstances of the deposit. Additionally, the troves sometimes contain information about the circumstances that prevented these owners from returning to retrieve their property.

⁵ Zvi Avneri, "Speyer," *Germania Judaica: Von 1238 bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968), 2:779.

⁶ Toch, "Medieval Treasure Troves and Jews."

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And it has been passed down to me from my teacher, our Rabbi Simcha of blessed memory, that all those who are repentant (*ba'alei teshuvah*) need immersion.¹

Isaac son of Moses of Vienna, *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, Ashkenaz, thirteenth century

This thirteenth-century text instructs Jewish penitents to complete their internal contrition by executing an external action, namely, immersion. In Jewish tradition, ritual immersion involves full bodily submersion in water that has not been drawn by human effort. Such immersion, which is performed in the nude, is usually associated with specific biblical categories of impurity, outlined in Leviticus (chaps. 11-15). These biblical sections lay out certain rules of purity and purification, some of which later became obligatory in Jewish rabbinic law (*halakhah*).

¹ Isaac son of Moses of Vienna, *Sefer Or Zaru'a* (Zhitomir, 1862), 1:40, §112.



Fig. 1. Speyer ritual bath, view into the shaft from the ante chamber. Speyer, Germany, twelfth century. Photograph by Ido Noy.



Fig. 2. Speyer ritual bath, view upwards into the shaft. Speyer, Germany, twelfth century. Photograph by Ido Noy.

They include various types of washing of people and of objects, and in some cases also full ritual immersion. By the Middle Ages, however, most of the biblical directives regarding purity were no longer in effect, considered either impossible or irrelevant following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

A major exception, which remains in effect today among some Jews, was the immersion of married women following menstruation, childbirth, or miscarriage.



Fig. 3. Friedberg ritual bath, view upwards from water-side into the shaft. Friedberg (Hesse), Germany 1260. Photograph by Ido Noy.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, both men and women in Germany and France practiced a range of other immersions. The source that opens this article mentions one of these types – the immersion of a penitent. Another is the somewhat overlapping immersion in preparation for the Day of Atonement, highly attested in written sources from the end of the eleventh century and onwards.² New immersion ceremonies were devised to meet the specific needs of Jews living in medieval western Europe, such as the immersion of a Jew who had been baptized (whether forcibly or willingly) and later wished to return to his/her faith of origin.³

These practices were showcased by a new type of space, monumental ritual baths (*mikva'ot* plural, *mikveh* singular). Medieval ritual baths found in certain areas of Germany, France, and northern Spain have unique architectural characteristics that are incomparable with earlier models. While many *mikva'ot* dating from the Second Temple period in the Land of Israel have been discovered, these were often small and rarely



Fig. 4: Friedberg ritual bath, view downwards towards the immersion pool. Friedberg (Hesse), Germany 1260. Photograph by Ido Noy.

² Neta Bodner and Ariella Lehmann, "So that a Person Sees Himself as if He was Created that Very Same Hour": Ritual Immersion of Men, Utensils and the Public in Jewish Ritual Baths in Germany in the Middle Ages," *Chidushim: Studies in the History of German and Central European Jewry* (2019): 47–83 (Hebrew).

³ Paola Tartakoff, *Conversion, Circumcision and Ritual Murder in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 99–103 and 117–120, Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Brothers from Afar: Rabbinic Approaches to Apostasy and Reversion in Medieval Europe* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2021), 27–66.

decorated. The medieval *mikva'ot* in Worms, Speyer (fig. 1-2), Cologne, Friedberg (fig. 3-4), Montpellier, Besalú, and Offenburg differ dramatically.

Unlike Second Temple *mikva'ot*, medieval ones were not filled with rainwater but rather ground water, and they were not private but public, situated near the community's synagogue. Perhaps most saliently, they were monumental undertakings built on a grand scale. These deep-dug baths included large halls and decorative elements such as elbow capitals (Speyer), flying buttresses (Friedberg), and polychrome masonry blocks (Worms and Cologne). Unlike the earlier ones, the medieval *mikva'ot* were dug deep underground to reach natural springs that welled into the pools from below.

Clear ground water still fills the deep-water pools in Friedberg, Speyer, and Worms today. Besides being dug deep underground the medieval ritual baths were lit from above with openings to the sky, connecting earth below the immerser and heaven above. These *mikvaot* featured the most updated architectural solutions of their day, such as groin and barrel vaults with a wide opening at their summit.

In their use of ground water, these ritual baths were defined not only as *mikva'ot* but also as springs (*ma'ayan*) or living waters (*mayim hayim*). This was the highest grade of water stipulated for immersion, as noted in tractate *Mikva'ot* (Mishnah 1:1-7). The latter term is also rich with symbolic potential. The prophet Jeremiah, for example, alludes to God as the source of living waters (*makor mayim hayim*): "For my people have done two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water" (Jeremiah 2:13).

Immersing in these baths in medieval Europe must have been an extraordinary experience, as they looked and functioned like no other public monument in Europe at that time. Descending the long staircase towards the water, the immerser wore little or no clothing, and was presumably alone in the narrow semi-circular corridors (Worms, Speyer, Cologne). The full-body dunk occurring in unheated water under a massive shaft open to the sky was ripe with possible associations for the immerser, such as "from the depth I called thee o God" (Psalm 1:130). Such unique experiential potentialities of the spaces could echo the symbolism of immersion as a means for repentance and spiritual renewal.

Another recurring characteristic of the medieval *mikveh* was the element of surprise for the immerser. S/he would not have glimpsed the pool until they were a fair way down, bringing an element of surprise to the meeting with the water. Only at the water's edge could two things become visible for the first time – the opening from which the light shone above, and the water below. The revelation of the underground rooms, and especially the glistening pool, would have been particularly spectacular during the day, when dim and glowing natural light glimmered underground as one descended towards it. Immersing at night, a flame- or moon-lit descent would have held its own unique ambiance, walking downwards in the subterranean corridors with the flickering glow of the flame in the shadowy underground halls. The steps – unusually high – would have slowed down the visitor, necessitating careful walking and therefore taking note of the descent. A ray of light from the oculus guided the entire walk, leading the user to the water and potentially drawing the gaze up to the sky when reaching it.

Such innovation in the design of the architectural setting of the *mikveh*, unique to the High Middle Ages in western Europe, influenced the atmosphere during immersion ceremonies that took place in the space. In these ritual baths, immersion occurred in a spectacular architectural setting, vast in size and beautifully designed. Since all immersions, whatever their purpose,



Fig. 5. Cologne Cathedral, view eastwards to the altar. Cologne, Germany, erected in the twelfth century (additions fourteenth century, completed nineteenth century). Photograph by Ido Noy.

shared this common setting, the immerser always enjoyed the experiential benefits such a space afforded. One might even speculate that the development of spectacular sites for purification was a factor in the expansion of immersion practices beyond set biblical and mandatory religious categories. The connective theme amongst the various types of immersion is transformation: be it persons making the shift from impure to pure, vessels crossing over from a Christian maker to a Jewish user, someone converting from a different faith to Judaism or a Jew returning to the faith after apostasy. For those following the advice offered in *Sefer Or Zaru'a* quoted above and immersing as part of a repentance process, the immersion was meant for the spiritual goal of return from sin. Having the immersion occur in such a spectacular space could have heightened the sense of change, of the soul or self being cleansed with the washed body. Immersion spaces, then, may have impacted on the resurgence of immersion ceremonies.

Such use of architecture was hardly a Jewish invention. It was also characteristic of Christian architecture in the same areas and at the same time (fig. 5). The excessive size of immersion spaces meant for a straightforward and intimate ceremony was akin to the excessive size of Romanesque naves in the churches of the same cities, such as the exceedingly large cathedrals of Speyer, Worms, and Cologne. As European cities competed for the highest steeples, longest church naves, widest cloisters, and most ornate sculpture, the Jewish ritual baths were also built deeper and wider, with sophisticated construction solutions and ornate capitals and architectural ornament. The monumentality of the Jewish ritual baths invites examination of them, like

their Christian counterparts, as buildings designed to communicate the fortitude and religious commitment of the community that founded them. At the same time, their design strengthens significant elements of the ceremony, like the processional axis in contemporaneous churches. The great construction effort – logistic and financial – communicated the political power of the community and its ability to spend significant funds on public building, traits associated with Christian Gothic and Romanesque tendencies. The Christian involvement in these monumental constructions seems to have included masons, some of whom perhaps on the churches in the same cities.⁴ Such cultural interaction in my opinion went beyond the identity of the workmen, however, and shows inherently shared assumptions about what architecture could contribute to religious space and ritual.

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- ❖ Joseph Shatzmiller, "Les bains juifs aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles," *Médiévales* 21(2002): 83–89.

⁴ For a discussion of the identity of the workmen based on stylistic comparison and analysis of the mason's marks see: Stefanie Fuchs, "Die Friedberger Mikwe im kunsthistorischen Vergleich," *Insitut Zeitschrift für Architekturgeschichte* 9, no. 1 (2017): 5–14.



And There Was a Wedding in Town

Everyday Family Life in Medieval Ashkenaz

Eyal Levinson

Reuben laid charges against Simeon: "My wife and I were guests in your house, because there was a wedding in town. And you had an unmarried daughter [*bat betulah*], and you convinced my wife to lend gold earrings worth three *zekukim* to your daughter to wear at the wedding, and so she did, and she [your daughter] went to the wedding, and when she returned she went to sleep in the winter room, and slept. And [while she was asleep] the gentile maidservant stole the earrings from her [your daughter's] ears and went away. Therefore, I demand that you pay me their worth." Simeon replied: "It is true that your wife did me a favor, but she took in return [for the stolen earrings] the earrings of my daughter, and your wife still has them. I will abide with whatever the court decides." Reuben replied: "But your earrings worth only half a *zakuk*.... therefore, Simeon is not to be blamed [for the loss] because this is a question of ownership and although she

[the daughter] was wrong as she didn't put them in a safe place [*mekom shmirah*], she is not to be blamed ... and because he [the father] is not expected to pay for these [stolen] earrings, Reuben has to return to him [to Simeon] those earrings [which were substituted for the golden earrings]."¹

Eliezer son of Nathan, *Sefer Ra'avan. Sefer Even ha'Ezer*, Mainz, Germany, twelfth century

Sometime during the twelfth century, a wedding was held in one of the Jewish communities along the Rhine river, possibly in Mainz, and guests came from afar to celebrate with the young couple and their families. In one household, a family hosted a man and his wife, out-of-town guests who came to participate in the celebration. The host, Simeon, convinced his guest to lend her gold earrings to his daughter. We know of the story because something went awry and necessitated the intervention of a rabbinic court – the earrings were stolen.

This story appears in a halakhic discussion, originating in Mainz and reported by R. Eliezer son of Nathan (1090–1170). As is often the case in halakhic literature, the male protagonists have generic names, Reuben and Simeon, and the women remain nameless. Moreover, there is neither mention of the place where the incident occurred nor an exact date. The story reappears, with only minor variations, in halakhic literature from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries, as an example of the laws related to borrowing (*dinei sho'el*). This is, however, a valuable source not only for scholars interested in the history of halakhah but also for social/cultural historians, and particularly for those studying everyday life in medieval Ashkenaz. My aim in this article is to demonstrate what the source reveals about medieval Jewish culture, and especially about wedding celebrations and Jewish family life.

Jewish weddings in Ashkenaz during the High and Late Middle Ages were festive occasions attracting community members as well as out-of-town guests. These Jewish communities were relatively small (a large one, like the Cologne community, consisted in the mid-fourteenth century of approximately 75 households), and oftentimes a suitable match could only be found in another community. We do not know why Reuben and his wife decided to stay with Simeon's family. We do know that in Germany during the Late Middle Ages, hundreds of celebrants could gather for such an occasion. This happened, for example, at the wedding of the son of R. Haim, the brother of R. Asher son of Yehiel (1250–1327), whose wedding was attended by more than five hundred people.² During the twelfth century, when the communities were smaller, weddings probably attracted fewer participants, but even then, people like Reuben and his wife had to be lodged and fed when they came from out of town. In the early thirteenth century, the author of *Sefer Hasidim* warned people who invited out-of-town guests to attend their weddings and expected their guests to be hosted by the local Jewish community, that they must feed their guests and not expect others to do so.³

1 Eliezer son of Nathan, *Sefer Ra'avan hu Sefer Even ha'Ezer*, ed. David Deblitzky (Bene Beraq: 2012), 3:172.
2 Israel Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1926), 189.
3 Judah son of Samuel, *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Judah Wistenetzki (Frankfurt am Main: Wahrmann, 1924), §1178.

Young women and men particularly favored wedding celebrations. These festivities were always good opportunities to dance in mixed-gender company and to court future spouses.⁴ Some young women and men, like Simeon's daughter, borrowed special jewels, belts, and clothes to beautify themselves for these occasions. The sources also attest to groups of young men who traveled, sometimes long distances, to attend weddings of friends and relatives.⁵ Sometimes, these young men stole chickens and other goods from the local Jews. The communal ordinances (*Takkanot ShUM*) issued for the first time in Mainz in 1220 prohibited such delinquent behavior, but apparently with little success.⁶ Three years later, a similar prohibition appeared in the ordinances enacted in Speyer.

In addition to gaining some knowledge about wedding celebrations, the story allows us to draw, in broad strokes, a picture of daily life during this period. We are told, for instance, that the father had to convince Reuben's wife to lend her earrings to his daughter (Reuben's wife did not voluntarily offer them), and that the daughter went to the wedding, came back and went to sleep. There is no mention of the parents rebuking her for forgetting to put the earrings in a secure place (*mekom shmirah*) before she retired to bed. It rather appears that the parents not only allowed their daughter to go to the wedding but also made sure she looked her best, wearing a pair of gold earrings.

A Christian maidservant, who was part of this Jewish household, was accused of stealing the earrings at night – while the daughter was asleep – and then running away with them. Hebrew, Latin, and vernacular sources from medieval Ashkenaz attest that having Christian servants, both male and female, was not a rarity in affluent Jewish households during the High and Late Middle Ages.⁷ Some of them, like the one in our story, also slept in Jewish houses, despite strong opposition from church authorities. This type of inter-religious interaction was part of a wider social phenomenon in which Christians and Jews frequented each other's homes.⁸ In several towns, documentation shows that there were Jews and Christians who lived in close proximity; some of these individuals shared yards and even had joint latrines.⁹

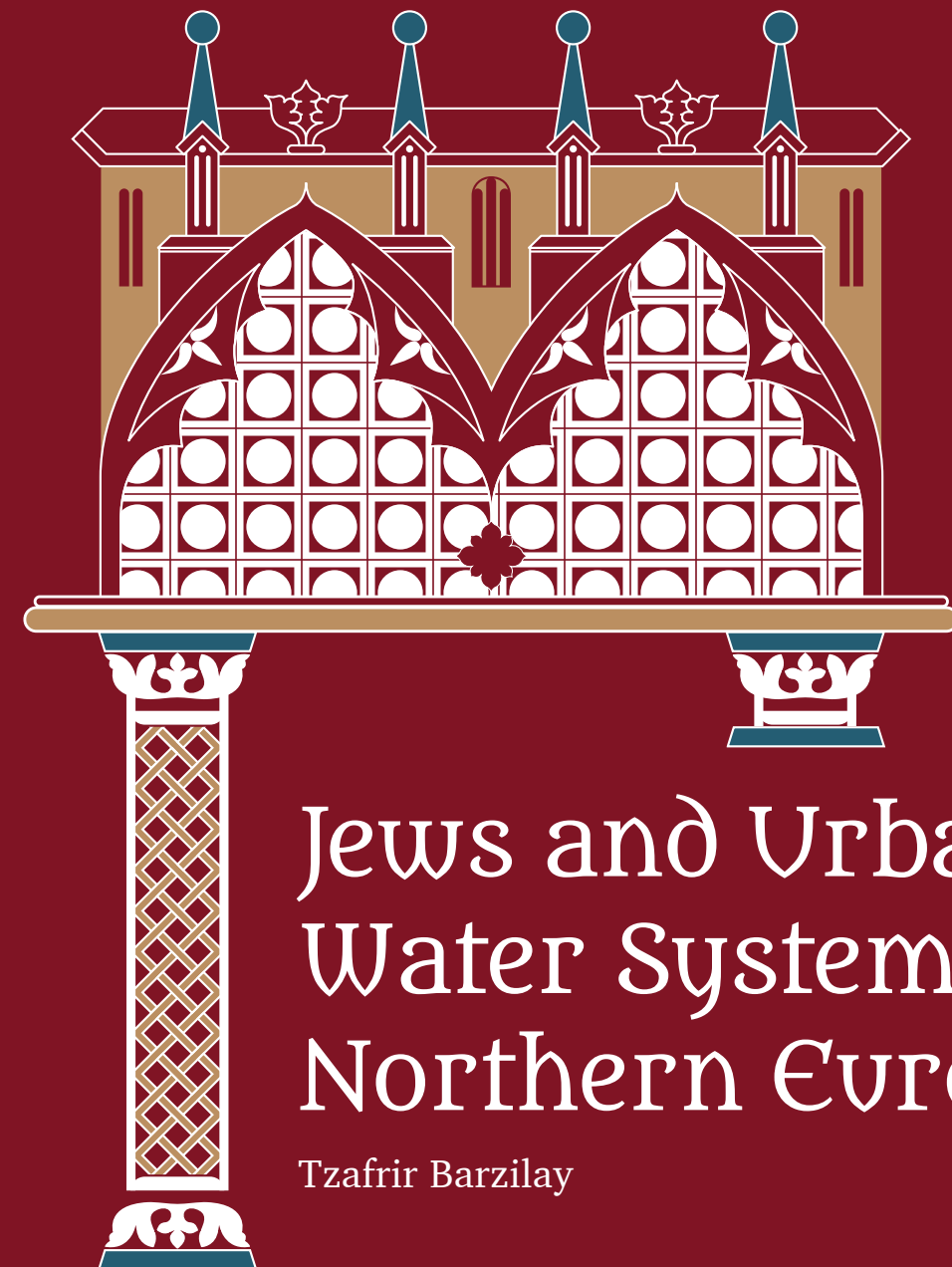
The brief halakhic discussion does not reveal much about the dwelling itself. It does, however, mention that after returning from the wedding, the daughter of the family went to sleep in a room called "the winter room [*beit hahoref*]," the room with the fireplace, mainly used during the long winter months. Mentions of this room appear in numerous halakhic stipulations originating in medieval Ashkenaz, including discussions regarding whether it was permitted according to Jewish law to enjoy the warmth generated from a fire lit by Christian servants on the Sabbath.¹⁰

4 Eyal Levinson, "Youth and Masculinities in Medieval Ashkenaz" (PhD diss., Bar Ilan University, 2018), 72 (Hebrew).
5 Irving A. Agus, ed., *Teshuvot Ba'alei haTosafot* (New York: Talpith, 1954), 208–09.
6 Louis Finkelstein, *Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1924), 240.
7 Elliot Horowitz, "Between Masters and Maidservants in the Jewish Society of Europe in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Times," in *Sexuality and the Family in History: Collected Essays*, eds. Israel Bartal and Isaiah Gafni (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1998), 193–212 (Hebrew).
8 Andreas Lehnertz, "Christen im öffentlichen und privaten Raum der mittelalterlichen Judenviertel," *Münchner Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* 14 (2020): 29–44.
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10 See, for example, Alexander Zusslin haCohen, *Sefer HaAgudah Helek Rishon miSeder Mo'ed*, ed. Eleazar Brizel (Jerusalem, 1966), 9.

This story came to our attention because a dispute broke out between the host and his guests. The intention of Rabbi Eliezer son of Nathan, who reported this incident, was not to disclose for future generations aspects of everyday life. Nevertheless, this terse source allows us a glimpse into medieval Jewish daily life, the domestic spaces these Jews inhabited, and the social interactions that occurred therein. It also holds some information about hospitality, youth culture, and gender constructs. Although we may not be able to draw general conclusions from this one source, by piecing together sources holding similar and additional information, we can draw a rich picture of everyday life in medieval Ashkenaz.

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Jews and Urban Water Systems in Northern Europe

Tzafrir Barzilay

The decree regarding a male or a female gentile [Christian] servant who draws water from a water hole located in the public sphere, and brings it to a house of a Jew [on Sabbath]: As long as the hole is in the private sphere, and is ten [*amot*] long and four wide [about 1.8 by 4.5 meters], our rabbi, Rabbenu Tam permits one to drink [the drawn water], since the Jew could have gone there and drunk from it. And it is all the more permissible if the gentile brings the water from the river, as the Jew could have drunk there easily.¹

Barukh son of Isaac (text included in *Mahzor Vitry*), North-Eastern France twelfth century

¹ Simhah son of Shmuel of Vitry, *Mahzor Vitry*, ed. Simon Hurwitz (Nürnberg: J. Bulka, 1923), 139.



Fig. 1. A medieval bronze Romanesque fountain, The Marktbrunnen, Goslar, Germany, early thirteenth century. Public Domain. Photograph by Ursula Roseau.

of water was accessible for the Jew in a way that he could theoretically drink from it himself without breaking halakhic decrees related to the Sabbath. If the source required one to draw the water using a mechanism forbidden for use on the Sabbath, for example a rope and pulley often used in wells, then the Jews could not use the water, even if a non-Jew drew it for them.

This short passage sheds light on the routine task of accessing water in the world of the Jews of northern Europe. R. Simhah, R. Barukh and Rabbenu Tam lived in the twelfth century in north-eastern France.³ At the time, this was one of the most urbanized areas of Europe, flourishing with the famous Champagne fairs. Economic prosperity allowed for the development of new public infrastructure, including public water sources. Many of the municipal authorities ordered the digging of water channels and moats for defense and industry, as well as wells, pools, and even fountains which supplied the population with drinking water. As cities became more prosperous

This passage, taken from a twelfth-century halakhic commentary by R. Barukh son of Isaac, and incorporated into a collection of liturgical texts by R. Simhah of Vitry, reflects on the possibility of sending a Christian servant to draw water from public water sources on the Sabbath.² It refers to a halakhic decree stating that it is forbidden to carry water (or objects in general) through the public space on the Sabbath. This type of carrying is, however, permitted within one's own house or yard, i.e., in the private sphere. But what if a non-Jewish servant draws and carries the water for a Jew? Is the Jew allowed to benefit from the work of his or her Christian servant on the Sabbath, and drink water brought from the public sphere? Based on the position of the great Rabbenu Tam (Jacob son of Meir, c. 1100-1171), R. Barukh decreed that it was permissible, as long as the relevant source

and populated, old solutions for obtaining water became less feasible. In the earlier Middle Ages, private wells or the river supplied the urban population with water, but growing urbanization rendered these sources insufficient. The river was often polluted in late medieval cities, as it was used as a drinking source for livestock and also for bathing, laundry, and urban industries. Additionally, urban sewage tended to flow into the river, making it unsafe for drinking. In this new reality, municipal authorities had to build public water systems to provide their citizens with potable water, which individuals relied upon for their daily needs (figs. 1-5).⁴ Jews, who often dwelt in the cities, were no exception. When they turned from using their own private water sources to relying on the public ones, halakhic questions arose, like the one presented in the passage above. Drawing water from one's private well would have circumvented the need to send a servant to the public water sources, but this text indicates that such a solution was not a commonly available one.

Moreover, this passage tells us about the ways in which Jews accessed these public sources. Buckets of water would be brought from the public well or a fountain once or twice a day and stored in a large vessel at home, to be used for drinking, cooking, and washing of hands. This involved intensive labor, and families who had servants sent them to perform this task. In some places, there were people employed as public water carriers, who would carry water to the home of anyone willing to pay. Less well-off Jews had to carry the water themselves. As the wells and fountains were public, they often met their Jewish and Christian neighbors there. In cities that also had public pools for laundry or other uses, people, and women in particular, spent many hours near the water. In short, these water sources became urban meeting places, hubs of

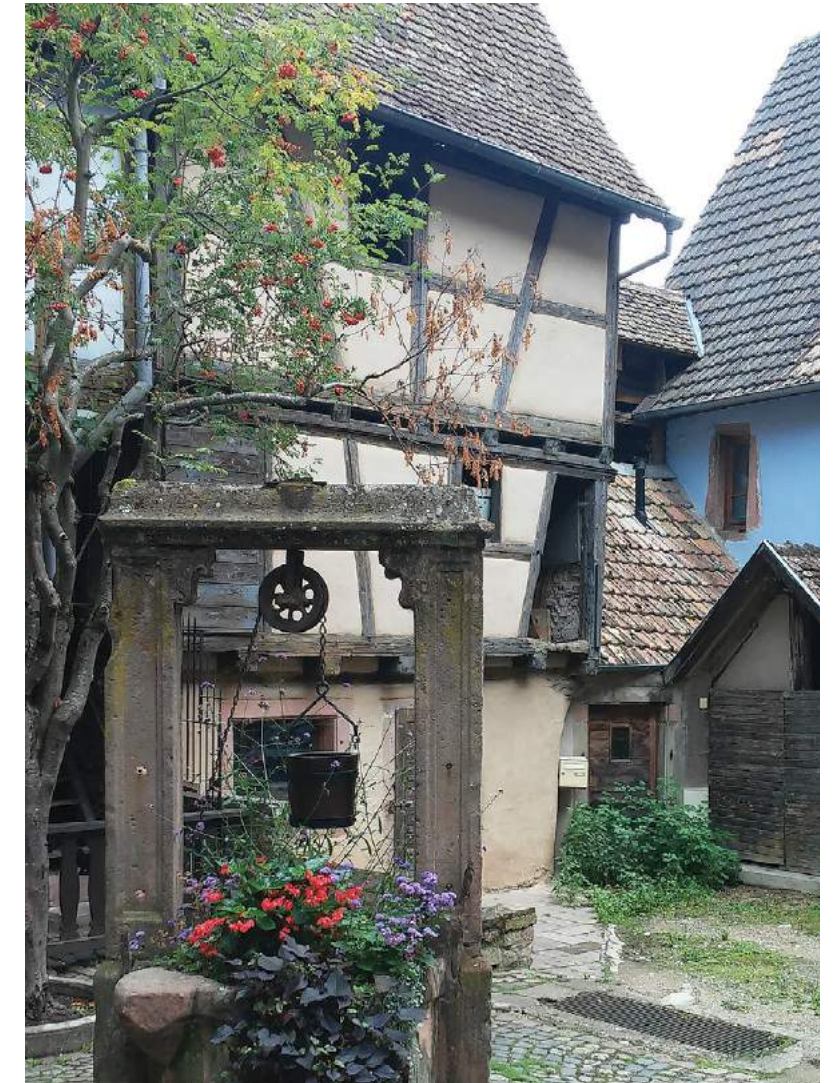


Fig. 2. A late medieval well, Riquewihr, Alsace, France. Photograph by Tzafrir Barzilay.

² *Mahzor Vitry* rephrases, with a slightly different emphasis: Barukh son of Isaac, *Sefer haTerumah* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute, 1979), 153, §252.

³ R. Simhah lived in Vitry, Rabbenu Tam in Ramerupt and Troyes, all in Champagne. For R. Barukh: Simcha Emanuel, "Biographical Data on R. Baruch son of Isaac," *Tarbiz* 69 (2000): 423-40 (Hebrew).

⁴ Jean-Pierre Leguay, *L'eau dans la ville au Moyen Âge* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2002); Carole Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies: Communal Health in Late Medieval English Towns and Cities* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013).



Fig. 3. Drawing water from a fountain – Second Nürnberg Haggadah, Franconia, 1470-80. Courtesy of David Sofer Collection, London, fol 2. Photograph by Shalom Sabar.

symbolic reenactment of the Crucifixion, traditional for Christians during Holy Week, the man assumed that local Jews were trying to recreate this event.⁵ In our context, that of local water sources, it is notable that an everyday encounter involving a mundane activity like watering horses could spiral into a major interreligious conflict.

The Blois affair reminds us that in addition to being a daily necessity, water carried cultural and religious meanings. It played a major role in both Jewish and Christian rites, and the fact that Jews had to share water sources with their Christian neighbors raised halakhic questions. For example, the early thirteenth-century *Book of the Pious* (*Sefer Hasidim*) mentions a certain town in which Jews wished to live but faced a problem as there was only one major water source available there. Christians used that water source for performing ordeals, legal rituals designed to determine the guilt or innocence of criminals by placing them within water.⁶ Interestingly, the water ordeal was also performed

information, gossip, and interaction, especially for the lower classes. As urbanization processes expanded during the High and Late Middle Ages, so did the reliance on public water sources, with the social exchange this entailed.

Jews and Christians usually shared their water sources peacefully, as they regularly shared other urban spaces. Sometimes, however, interactions around water use deteriorated into violence. In 1171, in the city of Blois, in central France, 31 Jews were executed after being accused of the ritual murder of a Christian boy. The affair developed from a random meeting between R. Isaac son of Eleazar of Blois and a local Christian horseman. Both were watering their horses in the Loire River, on the night before Passover, which was also three days before Easter. Apparently, the Christian thought a piece of leather which R. Isaac was carrying was the body of a male child. Perhaps due to the sym-

in Blois to establish the aforementioned claims brought against the Jews. As part of this process, priests blessed the water in the name of Christ, so that the water would reveal the divine truth regarding the criminals.⁷ Thus, the author of *Sefer Hasidim* advised, Jewish women should not use this water for ritual immersion, and Jews should not immerse their vessels there and recite the relevant traditional blessings. Sharing water for everyday use, then, was deemed an acceptable reality, but water used for ritual purposes required a separate source.⁸

Visual sources complement this picture. Illustrations from the *Second Nürnberg Haggadah* and the *Yahuda Haggadah*, both created in mid-fifteenth-century Franconia, probably in Nürnberg itself, show Jews drawing water from public water fountains for another ritual: baking matzah for Passover.⁹ Such images reflect an everyday reality, as municipal records from Nürnberg show that Jews regularly relied on the local public water system for their daily water supply. They had to do so when drawing water for baking matzah as well, despite the halakhic strictures regarding the cleanliness and coolness of the water used for this purpose. This stimulated halakhic discussion, as an image in the *Yahuda Haggadah* reveals. Still, by the end of the Middle Ages, private water systems had become so rare and public water systems so common in major northern European cities that Jews were left with no alternative but to partake of the public amenities, even



Fig. 4. Medieval urban fountain – Second Nürnberg Haggadah, Franconia, 1470-80. Courtesy of David Sofer Collection, London, fol 22. Photograph by Shalom Sabar.

5 Abraham M. Habermann, *Sefer Gzeirot Ashkenaz veTsarfat* (Jerusalem: Tarshish, 1946), 133–34, 142–46; Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, ed. Abraham M. Habermann (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik 1970), 30–33.

6 Judah son of Samuel, *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Judah Wistenetzki (Frankfurt am Main: Wahrmann, 1924), §1369.

7 Robert Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Margaret H. Kerr, Richard D. Forsyth, and Michael J. Pyley, "Cold Water and Hot Iron: Trial by Ordeal in England," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22 (1992): 573–95.

8 Shlomo Eidelberg, "Trial by Ordeal in Medieval Jewish History: Laws, Customs and Attitudes," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 46–47 (1978–1979): 105–120; Elisheva Baumgarten, "Seeking Signs? Jews, Christians, and Proof by Fire in Medieval Germany and Northern France," in *New Perspectives on Jewish-Christian Relations*, eds. Elisheva Carlebach and Jacob J. Schacter (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 205–25.

9 *Yahuda Haggadah* (Jerusalem, Israel Museum, Ms. 180/50) ff. 1v–2r; *Second Nürnberg Haggadah* (London, David Sofer Collection - formerly: Jerusalem, Schocken Institute Library, 24087) ff. 1v–2r; Steven Fine, "The Halakhic Motif in Jewish Iconography: The Matzah-Baking Cycles of the Yahuda and Second Nürnberg Haggadahs," in *A Crown for a King: Studies in Jewish Art, History and Archaeology in Memory of Stephen S. Kayser*, eds. Shalom Sabar et al. (Berkeley: Magnes Museum, 2000), 105–24; Katrin Kogman-Appel, *Die zweite Nürnberger und die Jehuda Haggada: Jüdische Illustratoren zwischen Tradition und Fortschritt* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999).



Fig. 5. Medieval well - Second Nürnberg Haggadah, Franconia, 1470-80. Courtesy of David Sofer Collection, London, fol 12. Photograph by Shalom Sabar.

Further Reading

- ◆ Tzafrir Barzilay, "Ancient Waters from New Fountains: Municipal Water Sources in Fifteenth-Century Haggadot from Nürnberg," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 28 (2021).
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- ◆ André Guillerme, *The Age of Water: The Urban Environment in the North of France, A.D. 300-1800*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988.
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- ◆ Israel J. Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, translated by Barbara Harshav. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

if they would have preferred to use private supervised sources for ritual uses.

These processes of urbanization and the growing reliance on public water sources shaped the practical reality of Jews and the ways they practiced their rituals, as well as their connections with their Christian neighbors. Northern European Jews, who were primarily city dwellers, lived at the nodal point of these processes.



Inclusion and Exclusion

Evidence from Thirteenth-Century Tax Rolls from Paris

Nureet Dermer

These are the Jews of the city of Paris:

Haguin, from London	10 Livres
Lyon, from Tillieres, son-in-law of Davi from England	58 Sous
Samuel, son-in-law of aforementioned Haguin	58 Sous
The woman Miriam cohen	16 Sous
The wife of Mousse Sahor, and his son Jacob	36 Sous
Mousse, moneylender	20 Sous
Fillon, the girl from Corbeil	70 Sous
Joie, the flour miller, widow	8 Sous
Haquin, moneylender, and his wife	12 Sous

Extract from the tax list of Paris, France, 1292¹

1 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits. Français 6220, fol. 78r.

This excerpt from the 1292 Paris tax roll (fig. 1) reveals important socio-economic aspects of everyday relations between Jews and Christians in this royal city in the late Middle Ages, particularly during the decades leading up to the expulsion of the Jews from France in 1306 by Philippe le Bel. Seven tax records from the years 1292–1313 attest to a tax levied on the inhabitants of the city of Paris. This tax, called the *taille*, was derived from the annual revenues of the inhabitants, akin to today's income tax.² The lists documented approximately 25% of Parisian inhabitants: the indigent and those exempt from taxation, such as students, guests, and holders of individual privileges, were excluded from the rolls. It is likely that most people who paid the *taille* and were included on the lists were also those who were considered *bourgeois*.³ Despite these obvious lacunae, the tax rolls tell a larger story of medieval Jewish life in a Christian society.

The rolls contain not only the names of taxpayers and their individual occupations but also a wealth of information about people living in Paris – addresses (both street and parish), family ties, geographical origins, and amounts of tax paid in the years 1292, 1296–1300, and 1313. The *taille* from 1292, for example, includes around 10,000 households, almost 100 of which were Jewish. The inclusion of Jewish as well as Lombard and Christian residents permits a revealing comparison between these populations and indicates that Jews and Christians lived as next door neighbors. Unlike other areas in medieval Europe, there was no Jewish quarter or a certain street of Jews in late thirteenth-century Paris. According to the rolls, Jews lived on five main streets: *la Tacherie*, *rue Neuve Saint Merri*, *Franc Mourier*, *la Court Robert*, and on the bridge called *le Petit Pont* and the street that it led to. In this respect, it is evident that Jews were integrated in the urban space, although clearly demarcated by the authorities, as well as by their neighbors.

The *taille* of Paris also elucidates spatial features of late thirteenth-century Paris. A recent systematic study, based on the *taille* as well as other historical documents, maps, and archaeological evidence, has yielded a set of digitized maps of Paris from the early fourteenth century until the end of the

A. uilart le joudin	70	P	7	obert de cecygn	2000
parce de pousier	70	P	8	lennec la edure	2000
meine la cote	70	P	9	uill. le plater	70
obert charles	70	P	10	ebert le ferre	70
ebert le couteurier	70	P	11	uill. de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	12	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	13	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	14	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	15	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	16	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	17	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	18	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	19	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	20	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	21	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	22	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	23	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	24	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	25	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	26	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	27	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	28	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	29	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	30	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	31	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	32	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	33	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	34	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	35	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	36	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	37	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	38	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	39	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	40	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	41	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	42	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	43	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	44	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	45	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	46	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	47	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	48	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	49	ebert de l'ebert	70
ebert de feneu	70	P	50	ebert de l'ebert	70

Fig. 1. Excerpt from the 1292 tax list from Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fr. 6220 fol. 78r.

twentieth century.⁴ In addition to the outline of the streets, the maps also indicate the locations of public buildings, bridges, and churches.

Contrary to the common historiographical claim that medieval Jewish occupations in Europe were concentrated in the money markets (i.e., pawning and moneylending), the tax rolls reveal that Jewish men and women from Paris held diverse occupations: some Jews were involved in the silk and wool industry, while others were goldsmiths, merchants, moneylenders, drapers, and flour millers.⁵ There is also evidence of Jewish pharmacists. Nonetheless, some occupations were closed to Jews, such as formal training in medicine, tavern keeping, and all work connected to food preparation or provision. Once more, the lists demonstrate how Jews were situated between various social and economic strata of society.

Jews, both men and women, interacted on a daily basis with their Christian neighbors. This is especially evident when examining the details regarding Jewish couples who acted as professional moneylenders.⁶ Some previous research suggested that Christian women who sought credit specifically in the tax rolls of Paris preferred female Jewish moneylenders. Let us take the example of *Haquin Marc-d'argent et sa fame*, from the 1292 list. The fact that Haquin's wife is mentioned with him, and that they were both considered heads of the household, attests to the wife's role in their joint business, since only heads of household were mentioned in the lists. One can assume that they both were in frequent contact with Christian clients. Scholars have investigated such economic ties between Jewish and Christian women and men in France in the thirteenth century, attesting how Christian couples jointly took loans from Jewish couples, and that Jewish women lent money to Christians – women, men, and couples. The evidence of the *taille* reinforces these conclusions and indicates that while women often provided loans to other women, they also worked with men, or in some cases the couple worked together and offered loans to Christian couples.

Despite these constant interactions, it is noteworthy that the Jewish inhabitants of Paris appear in the tax rolls separately from the Christian population, at the end of the lists. We see, then, that Jews seems to have been equal participants in the Parisian fiscal obligations and lived on the same streets as their Christian neighbors, yet the city authorities perceived the Jews as a distinct group. Not only the Jews, however, were listed separately in the tax lists. Groups such as the Lombards, servants, and maids (*chambrière*), as well as those living outside the city walls, also had their own tax classification, listed separately from other inhabitants of the city. A look at the total tax paid by the Jews of Paris reveals that Jews paid approximately one percent of the total tax collected, in each of the years it was levied, similar to their estimated share in the overall population of the city. This differs from other geographical areas, such as the tax collected in thirteenth-century England, where, according to current research, Jewish participation in tax payments was higher than their share in the population.⁷

The *tailles* of Paris leave us with intriguing questions. The Jews of Paris were included only in the *tailles* of 1292, 1296, and 1297, yet their expulsion from France did not occur until 1306. Their

2 Joseph R. Strayer and Charles H. Taylor, *Studies in Early French Taxation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939); Al Slivinski and Nathan Sussman, *Tax Administration and Compliance: Evidence from Medieval Paris* (London: Centre for Economic Policy Research, 2019).

3 Boris Bove and Claude Gauvard, eds., *Le Paris du moyen âge* (Paris: Belin, 2014).

4 Hélène Noizet, Boris Bove, and Laurent Jacques Costa, eds., *Paris de parcelles en pixels: analyse géomatique de l'espace parisien médiéval et moderne* (Saint Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2013).

5 See, for example, the analysis of the silk industry in medieval Paris, based on the tax lists, among other documents, in: Sharon A. Farmer, *The Silk Industries of Medieval Paris: Artisanal Migration, Technological Innovation, and Gendered Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017); and the examination of different occupations in the tax lists by: David Herlihy, *Opera Muliebria: Women and Work in Medieval Europe* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990).

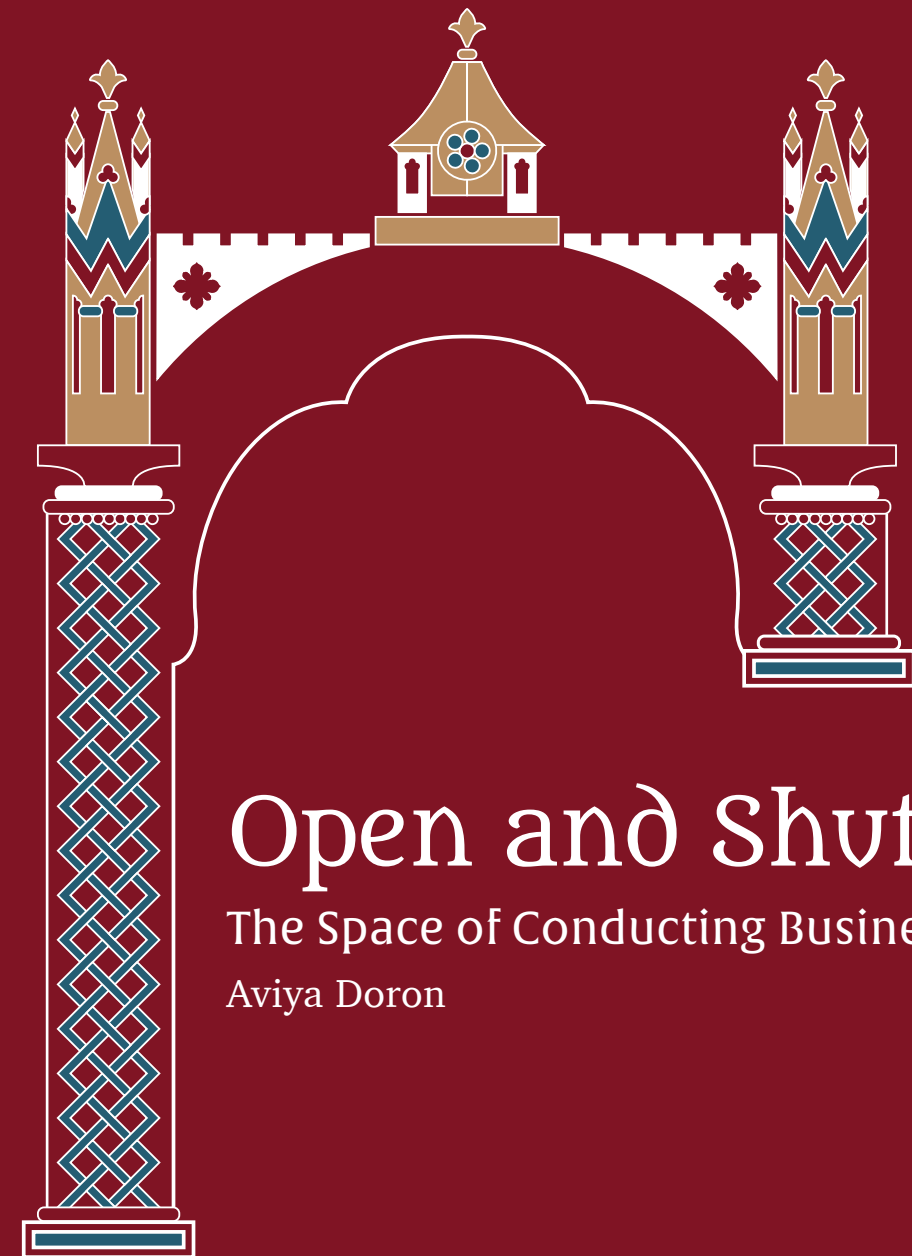
6 William Chester Jordan, *Women and Credit in Pre-Industrial and Developing Societies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

7 Julie Mell, *The Myth of the Medieval Jewish Moneylender* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

absence from the tax rolls of 1298 until 1300 is therefore surprising. Was some sort of unique tax levied on the Jews from 1298 on? Is there a linkage between the exclusion of the Jews from the tax lists and their expulsion in 1306? In other words, is their absence a reflection of a change in the attitude towards them that would eventually result in expulsion? The answers to these questions and more await future research.

Further Reading

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Open and Shut Case

The Space of Conducting Business

Aviya Doron

Rachel claimed against Leah: "I gave you two sheets and a belt to sell" ... And she [Leah] replied: "I lost the sheets and the belt with my own [property], for many things were stolen from me" ... And Leah countered and claimed against Rachel: "I have lost for myself three quarters, because gentiles had also given me [merchandise] to sell, and when I told them that I have lost theirs with mine I would have been exempt from paying them back, only that you [Rachel] came and yelled in front of all my neighbors and said: 'you say that [things] were stolen, but it isn't so; rather, you have saved [these items] for yourself and claim they were stolen.'

And my neighbors went and repeated this to those gentiles, and they came and stated: 'one of yours says that you yourself kept the merchandise while you say that it was stolen,' and I was made to repay them..."¹

Anonymous author, included in *Responsa of Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg and his Colleagues*, Germany, first half of the fourteenth century

Throughout the Middle Ages, public scrutiny and oversight of transactions were crucial features of economic exchange. Specifically, it was the marketplace, the most basic and accessible economic hub of the city, where transactions occurred in the open and during the day, that created a place for public or community oversight and circumstantial witnessing and that, in turn, accorded transactions legitimacy. Whereas the marketplace was perhaps the ultimate space where such oversight could take place, the norms of public transparency and scrutiny, dictated by the nature of exchange conducted in the marketplace, went beyond the physical boundaries of the marketplace and was regularly applied to other spaces in the city. As testified to in this early fourteenth-century responsum, whose recipient is unknown, the close living arrangements in the urban settlements of the German Empire created implicit oversight over one's more or less private business endeavors. Consequently, while Rachel aired her grievances against Leah in front of the neighbors, it was their voluntary intervention in the conflict that caused Leah to incur even greater financial losses. Given the importance of communal oversight in validating transactions, how did Christian authorities employ the public space of the city to regulate economic interactions between Jews and Christians living in the German Empire during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries?

One important source of evidence for such regulation is the legislation that has become known as the Jewish trade privilege, which first appeared in the privileges granted by Henry IV to the Jews of Worms and Speyer in 1090 and remained valid until as late as the fifteenth century. These state that in the event that an item sold or given to a Jew as a pawn is claimed as stolen, the Jew has the right to receive monetary compensation. Accordingly, this compensation should be given to the Jew by the person claiming to be the rightful owner.² This privilege differed from the contemporaneous legal codes in the German Empire, wherein an individual caught with stolen goods was tried as a thief. Over time, the eleventh-century imperial privilege permeated into customary law, resulting in its use in territorial courts and eventually its codification in local legislation.

The first instance where an essential change in the privilege is found is in the provision of the *Sachsenspiegel*, a compilation of territorial customary law in Saxony written by a local juror named Eike von Repgow between 1225 and 1235. Contrary to the previous versions of this privilege, the *Sachsenspiegel* introduced the issue of transparency, or public oversight, in relation to the initial transaction between a Jew and a Christian, stating that Jews could retain their privilege as long as they could prove using the testimony of two witnesses that they had

1 Simcha Emanuel, ed., *Responsa of Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg and his Colleagues* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2012), 759–760, §388.
2 Dietrich von Gladiss and Alfred Gawlik, eds., *MGH Diplomata Regum et Imperatorum Germaniae VI: Heinrici IV. Diplomata* (Weimar: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1952), Speyer: no. 411, 543–47; Worms: no. 412, 547–49.

received the pawn during the day and not behind closed doors.³ The significance of the space in which the transaction occurred, as one enabling transparency and public oversight of the exchange, is reinforced by the function of the witnesses in the provision, who were expected to validate not that said goods were purchased in good faith, but rather that the transaction took place in a public setting.

Following the *Sachsenspiegel*, later compilations of customary law all included some variations on the necessity of the public nature of the initial transaction. Additionally, legislation from Nürnberg from the second half of the thirteenth century further detailed the public validation of the initial exchange. In the Jewish regulations of the city (*Judenordnungen*), which regulated Jews' receipt of pawns among other matters, there appears a clause relating to the acceptance of stolen goods, not only requiring Jews to swear an oath of purchase in good faith, but also to prove that they received the pawn in front of their door, not inside the house.⁴ Thus, the specification of the space is more explicit than in the *Sachsenspiegel*, as the regulation clearly addresses the Jewish home, specifically the door, as the barrier between the outer, public space, subject to oversight, and the inner space of the home. In such a way, even though witnesses were not necessary for the procedure of redeeming the pawn, proof was required of the public oversight of the initial transaction.

Even though some provisions stressed the importance of the public execution of transactions, specific stipulations of the Jewish trade privilege appeared around the second half of the thirteenth century that not only dealt with the public nature of the initial transaction, but also with business conducted in private within the Jewish home. Such was the case in the statutes of the royal city of Dortmund from the middle of the thirteenth century. Among other matters, these state that once a Jew took a defaulted pawn beyond the threshold of his or her house for resale, he or she could no longer provide assurances of the legality of the possession if the goods were later claimed as stolen.⁵ This provision is notable as it acknowledged a frequent outcome of lending on pawns: namely, the debtor's default that resulted in the lender having to sell the pawn to redeem the initial loan. Considering that the Jewish trade privilege dealt with the receipt of stolen goods as pawns, in such cases selling the pawn was perhaps the only recourse for Jews to profit from the transaction, as the thief was unlikely to return and pay the debt.

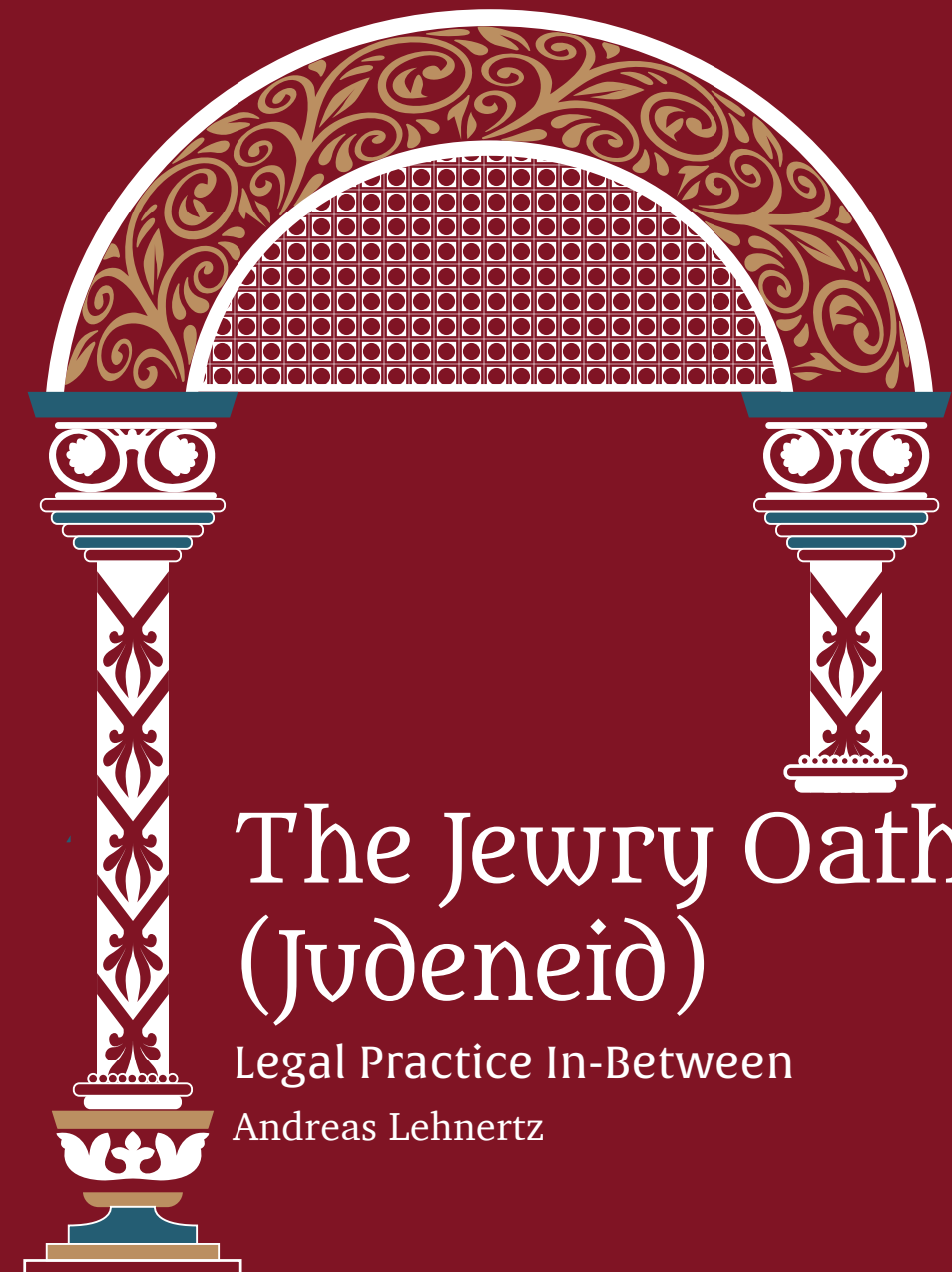
Interestingly, this provision moves the inclusion of the marketplace and its norms from the initial transaction to the final sale on the market. By revoking the Jews' right to provide warranties on items that were claimed to be stolen outside the threshold of their home, the Dortmund statute used public space to deter Jews from dealing in stolen goods. Similar to the regulation from Nürnberg, by stating that the Jew could not provide the warranty for the goods outside the threshold of the home, even though it appears in the context of sending the pawn to the marketplace, a clear line is drawn between transactions that occurred privately, inside one's home and without public oversight, and those that were subject to public oversight anywhere outside the home. While focusing on a different stage of the transaction, the Dortmund statute provided the same distinction between honest and dishonest activities, and therefore between activity that was subject to legal protection and activity that was not.

3 Friedrich Ebel, ed., *Sachsenspiegel Landrecht und Lehnrecht*, Book III/7 (Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1953), 120.
4 Moritz Stern, ed., *Die israelitische Bevölkerung der deutschen Städte. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Städtegeschichte mit Benutzung archivalischer Quellen*, vol. 3: *Nürnberg im Mittelalter* (Kiel, 1894–1896), 215.
5 Ferdinand Frensdorff and Otto Francke, *Hansische Geschichtsquellen: Dortmunder Statuten und Urtheile* (Halle: Georg Olms Verlag, 1882), 40–41, no. 39; Bernhardt Brilling and Helmut Richter, *Westfalia Judaica: Urkunden und Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in Westfalen und Lippe* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1967) 3: 41–43 (no. 17).

While the meaning of oversight in relation to Jewish economic activities was subject to different interpretations in different localities throughout the German Empire, the norms of transparency and public oversight prescribed by the marketplace were enlisted to serve as surety, whether to the advantage or disadvantage of Jews. The case of Rachel and Leah indeed demonstrates how powerful implicit oversight was in determining one's economic standing, with individuals crossing religious boundaries to impose punishment against perceived transgressors. Even though the exact location where Rachel yelled in front of the neighbors is not mentioned, it is clear that this interaction was somehow exposed to the neighbors' oversight. Likewise, Leah believed that Rachel had somehow encroached on her rights by allowing the neighbors a glimpse into their personal affairs and conflict. Thus, whether deliberately or not, Rachel's outburst propelled a greater chain of events, wherein public oversight played a decisive role, not only in bringing the details of the case to the Christians' knowledge, but also in subsequently providing validation for the Christians' claims. This powerful tool, which relied on informal participation, was indeed adopted by municipal authorities and inserted into formal legal codes regulating economic transactions that were sensitive, or prone to dishonest behavior. As a result, the stipulations to the trade privilege created a distinction between the home which, as a space for economic activity, was considered private, secretive, and questionable, and the public space of the city, whether street or market, which was subject to communal or social oversight and was therefore considered legitimate.

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The Jewry Oath (Judeneid)

Legal Practice In-Between
Andreas Lehnertz

Once there was a very rich *Hasid* (an upright man). And he never took an oath in his entire life. Before his death, he summoned his son in the presence of the elders of the city and told him: My son, beware never to take an oath, even if it is the truth, and I will give you everything I own, since I earned all my wealth because I guarded my tongue from ever swearing. And the son answered: I will uphold your command to never swear, even if it is the truth.¹

Anonymous scribe, *Sefer haMa'asim*, Northern France, thirteenth century

This story from the thirteenth-century Hebrew book *Sefer haMa'asim* tells the tale of two men, a father and his son, who categorically refused to take oaths. For its readers, this was a fantastical

¹ Quoted and translated in Rella Kushelevsky, *Tales in Context: Sefer haMa'asim in Medieval Northern France* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 131.

tale, hardly possible to imagine. As the story unfolds, the plot thickens: the son, who has promised to follow in his father's non-oath-taking footsteps, is beset by false creditors who he can shake only by taking an oath regarding his financial doings. This, needless to say, the son would not do. He is thus left in an intolerable legal situation.

What would the son have said if he had agreed to take such an oath? The Erfurt Jewry Oath (in German, *Judeneid*), which served to release accused Jewish individuals from such allegations provides an answer to this question (fig. 1).



Fig. 1. The text of an oath Jews took to cleanse themselves from accusation. The Erfurt Judeneid, Erfurt, Germany, circa 1200. Erfurt, Stadtarchiv, 0-0/A XLVII, No. 1.



Fig. 2. A Jew is taking an oath on the Torah scroll. Siddur, Franconia, between 1294–1325. New York, Courtesy of The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, MS 8972, fol. 118r.

It reads:

The thing you are accused of, [you swear that] you are not guilty [of it]. So help you God. The God who created heaven and earth, leaves, and grass, which have never existed before. And if you swear falsely, the earth that swallowed Datan and Aviram shall swallow you. And if you swear falsely, leprosy that left Naaman and befell Gehazi shall befall upon you. And if you swear falsely, the laws which God gave Moses on Mount Sinai, which God himself wrote with his fingers on the stone tables, shall swallow you. And if you swear falsely, all the writings which are written in the five books of Moses shall judge you. This is the Judeneid, which Bishop Conrad gave this city [of Erfurt].

This text was written in German around the year 1200 in the urban commune of Erfurt (present-day Germany). It is a *Judeneid*, an oath of truth that Jews took in legal situations involving Christians, intended to create trust between two parties. Oaths were a normal part of life for both Christians and Jews in medieval communities. They were used regularly in various forms for different situations such as naturalization, taxation, litigation before a court of law (such as in this Erfurt *Judeneid*), after release from imprisonment, and so on.

This particular oath from Erfurt is the oldest *Judeneid* known in the German language. As such, it served as a model for the many *Judeneid* texts that followed over the next three hundred years in urban communes throughout Germany. As the record states, it was given by Conrad, archbishop of Mainz (1183–1200), who was the lord of the Jews of Erfurt at this time. The urban commune was then celebrating its sovereignty and receiving such a text was favorable for the whole city. Indeed, by presenting the urban commune and its Jews this *Judeneid*, the archbishop of Mainz laid a fundamental legal foundation for Jewish life in the city of Erfurt. The document was perceived as a privilege for the Jews of Erfurt. This text is our earliest indication of a Jewish presence in this medieval city; all other sources date between fifty and one hundred years later.

The *Judeneid* text was constructed to satisfy both Christian and Jewish legal practices. Only themes from the Hebrew Bible shared by both religions appear in the text of the oath – Moses, the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai; Datan and Aviram, who conspired against Moses (Num. 16); and Gehazi, who betrayed Naaman (2 Kings 5). These subjects were familiar to both Jews and Christians.

The particular oath text from Erfurt was used when Christians accused Jews of wrongdoing. By taking this *Judeneid*, Jews could free themselves from these accusations as part of a litigation process before a court. The oath itself provided a route for Jewish vindication. From the Late Middle Ages on, we have abundant evidence for the use of such *Judeneid* texts, especially in Christian law courts. The fact that such oaths were utilized for hundreds of years, points to their efficacy.

What made these oaths so efficacious? The aforementioned biblical themes were a vital component. Another aspect, although not addressed by the Erfurt *Judeneid* text, is the ritual setting within which the oath was taken. Oath-taking always entailed a strict choreography in the Middle Ages – whether Jews, Christians, or Muslims were involved. Some *Judeneid* texts from other cities record this choreography, thus giving us access to their content. The ritual included sacred objects, a set place, and sometimes a particular time. The text of the oath itself often specified certain hand gestures and mandated an audience of witnesses as well as the judge.

Christian sources refer to the *Judeneid* as oath-taking "according to their (i.e., the Jews') customs," and there is evidence of the Jews's role in negotiating this procedure. As such, both Jews and Christians communicated their understanding of legal practices via the *Judeneid*. All this was crucial for the efficacy of the oath, which was a tool meant to instill trust. If the vows accompanying the ritual were not believed, then it would not have contributed to the communal well-being. The biblical references were by no means taken lightly by medieval Jews or Christians, and one can assume medieval people preferred not to take oaths when it was not necessary. In fact, many sources show that cases were settled before the court to avoid oath-taking.

When Jews had to take an oath, the procedure took place in a public space such as the synagogue, the *schulhof* (synagogue's yard), or the council hall. A ritual object was used, usually the Torah scroll or a Pentateuch codex (fig. 2). Some sources even report the use of the door ring (i.e., the door pull) of the synagogue as a supplemental sacred object. A hand was placed upon this sacred object while a Christian official, such as a judge, spoke the text. Jews repeated the text word for word or replied "amen" at the end. Although the choreography varied over place and time according to the custom of each city, in each case the exact ritual was essential to the act of oath-taking and was followed precisely. The ritual of the *Judeneid* was taken seriously, both by those who took and accepted them and by the audience that functioned as witnesses. In sum, oath-taking was one of the central aspects of daily life for Jews in the medieval Holy Roman Empire on a legal as well as a social basis.

Further Reading

- ❖ Guido Kisch, "A Fourteenth-Century Jewry Oath of South Germany," *Speculum* 14 (1940): 331–37.
- ❖ Andreas Lehnertz, "The Erfurt *Judeneid* between Pragmatism and Ritual: Some Aspects of Christian and Jewish Oath-Taking in Medieval Germany." In *Ritual Objects in Ritual Contexts*. Erfurter Schriften zur Jüdischen Geschichte 6, edited by Claudia Bergmann and Maria Stürzebecher, 12–31. Jena, Quedlinburg: Bussert & Stadeler, 2020.
- ❖ Amnon Linder, "The Jewry-Oath in Christian Europe," *Jews in Early Christian Law. Byzantium and the Latin West, 6th–11th Centuries*, edited by John V. Tolan and Nichols R. M. De Lange, 311–58. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014.
- ❖ Raphael Straus, "The Landshut Jewry Oath," *Historia Judaica* 3 (1941): 41–43.
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Backing the Wrong Horse?

Risk and Liability in Pawns

Aviya Doron

Reuben claimed against Simeon: "I have lent you a horse, and at the time I lent it to you I informed you that it seemed to me that the gentiles who pawned the horse to me had stolen it, therefore be careful with it, that it won't be forced out of your hands." And Simeon replied: "you did not inform me of anything, and your horse is stolen, and he who owns the horse came and took it."¹

R. Haim (Eliezer) son of Isaac, *Sefer Teshuvot Maharah Or Zaru'a*, Ashkenaz, second half of the thirteenth century

¹ Haim son of Isaac, *Sefer Teshuvot Maharah Or Zaru'a*, ed. Menahem Avitan (Jerusalem: 2002), 250, §226.



Fig. 1. A Jew receiving a horse as a pawn. *The Wolfenbütteler Sachsenspiegel*, illuminated legal customary book, Meißen, fourteenth century. Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 3.1 Aug. 2°, fol. 27v.

Beginning in the late eleventh century, the medieval economy underwent a process of expansion that was supported by growth in the supply of credit. As part of this transformation, moneylending emerged as the main professional occupation of Jews living in the German Empire, although it was not solely a Jewish profession, nor were all Jews professional moneylenders at the time. The above quote, a responsum sent to R. Haim son of Isaac of Vienna, a late thirteenth-century scholar, discusses the question of liability for the loss of a horse. In this case, the loss was the outcome of a complicated business transaction which involved various people at different points in time. The story begins with Christians pawning a horse to a Jew, who in the responsum is given the stock name "Reuben," in exchange for a loan.

Credit transactions took place over an extended period of time and thus involved greater risk than simple acts of exchange. The ever-present risk of default, in which debtors were not able to repay their loans, called for the incorporation of a range of security measures. Among these measures we find warrantors, sworn oaths, chirographs, and other forms of signed or sealed contracts containing various contractual obligations. Despite the existence of such security measures, in the German Empire, Jewish moneylenders relied primarily on pawns to serve as collateral in credit transactions.

These pawns, which presumably were of greater value than the original sum of the loan, allowed the creditor to avoid incurring loss in the event of the debtor's default, by selling the pawned object. Theoretically, then, the pawn eliminated the risks in credit transactions, while exerting pressure on the debtor to repay the loan. However, specific objects that were given as pawns, such as the horse in the case sent to R. Haim, complicated credit transactions, and introduced new risks and parties to the exchange. Beyond these additional risks, the complications involved in caring for a living animal also raised numerous points of friction between the owner of the animal and the Jewish creditor as to who would be held liable if any misfortune befell the beast.

The moment a horse was transferred into the temporary possession of a Jewish creditor, a host of practical concerns arose. First and foremost, where was the animal to be kept – in one's own home or with a third party? Who would purchase food for the animal, and provide for its medical care, should the need arise? Despite its significant upkeep demands, a horse had distinct advantages in comparison to other pawns of similar value. In the event of the debtor's default, which would result in the resale of the pawn, horses were relatively simple to offload. Additionally, the horse could be put to work for the moneylender while it was in his or her custody leading to an additional income.

Considering these clear advantages, it is not surprising that there is ample evidence of Jews engaging in credit transactions secured by pawned horses (fig. 1). Perhaps the most extensive and detailed information about such cases is available in the *Frankfurter Gerichtsbücher*, court records from the imperial court in Frankfurt, which had jurisdiction over all the town's citizens, including Jews. These records contain claims that Jewish creditors brought to court, primarily following the default of their debtors. Among these extensive records, there are over 400 cases between 1330 and 1400 involving horses that were kept as pawns being transferred to the custody of a Jewish lender following the default of their debtor(s). While most of the records simply documented sums of money, horses are the physical item that appears most frequently in these records. Furthermore, many of these cases attest to Jews keeping the pawned horses in their own homes and suing their debtors for the associated costs.

Beyond the daily burden of feeding and caring for the animal, which, as the court records indicate, Jews certainly expected their creditors to pay for, it seems that a much greater risk for both creditors and debtors was the possibility of loss. A responsum to R. Isaak of Oppenheim, dating to the first half of the fourteenth century, sent by R. Meir son of Yehuda Katz, offers some indications to the practice of liability for horses:

... Because it is my opinion that in our times a pawn of a gentile that is in the hands of a Jew is the responsibility of the Jew... but those who lend on [the basis of] horses are used to condition, in our land [*medinatenu*], that in the event that they [the horses] are lost, they are the gentile's responsibility.²

This responsum seems to differentiate between two practices of liability, one for those who kept "regular" pawns, and another for those who kept horses. This is perhaps not surprising, since the risk of losing a horse was far greater than for a non-living pawn. A similar distinction between pawned horses and other types of pawns appears approximately a century earlier in the *Sachsenspiegel*, a compilation of customary law for the territory of Saxony, written by the local juror Eike von Repgow in the 1220s. The relevant clause in the legal book discusses the question of liability for pawns that were damaged while in the creditor's possession. While the *Sachsenspiegel* does not specifically relate to Jews' possession of pawns, it does state that if the creditor cannot return the pawn undamaged, he must compensate the debtor for the pawn's value while losing the initial amount given as a loan. However, if horses or other animals died while they are in the creditor's possession, without fault of the creditor, he was not required to pay compensation.³

It seems, then, that a definite practice existed whereby liability for any misfortune was assumed by the debtor. Municipal legislation from Nürnberg from the late thirteenth century, however, reveals a different attitude specifically toward Jews' liability for pawned horses. For example, the *Judenordnungen* of the second half of the thirteenth century, regulating Jewish pawnbroking among other matters, stipulated that Jewish moneylenders were obligated to pay damages for a lost horse, including compensation for the rope or harness with which the horse was tied.⁴

One might speculate whether this regulation was a response to an existing practice, wherein Jews did in fact hold their debtors liable in the event of loss, as both the *Sachsenspiegel* and the responsum seem to indicate. Regardless, we see that Jewish halakhic authorities as well as Christian municipal authorities identified horses as a pawn with special characteristics, requiring and receiving its own treatment. Notably, crime posed a threat to credit transactions well before the Jewish creditor ever accepted a horse as a pawn. Returning to our case, the conflict between Reuben and Simeon arose because the gentile who had pawned the horse to Reuben had stolen it. The mobility of horses made them perfect stolen goods – the thief could simply ride to the next town, pawn the horse for a pretty penny, and leave the creditor to deal with the legal repercussions. The Jewish trade privilege, initially granted to the Jews of Worms and Speyer by Henry IV in 1090 and later extended to all the Jews of the

2 Simcha Emanuel, ed., *Responsa of Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg and his Colleagues* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2012), 749–53 before responsum §382.
3 Friedrich Ebel, ed., *Sachsenspiegel Landrecht und Lehnrecht*, Book III/5 (Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1953), 119.
4 Moritz Stern, ed., *Die israelitische Bevölkerung der deutschen Städte. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Städtegeschichte mit Benutzung archivalischer Quellen*, Nürnberg im Mittelalter (Kiel: 1894–1896), 3:216.

Empire, entitled Jews to receive compensation for stolen items found in their possession.⁵ In the thirteenth century, though, as this privilege was legislated in territorial and municipal legal codes, Jews were required to prove that their transaction was made in good faith, or in a prescribed manner, subject to public oversight. These restrictions, of course, increased the risk incurred by Jewish pawnbrokers.

We also find a propensity to assume a high degree of risk in regard to horses in the *Frankfurter Gerichtbücher*, where several records refer to Jews claiming horses from "a guest from Nürnberg" or simply an "unnamed guest." Without the minimal knowledge of the debtor's name, one wonders whether these moneylenders ever expected their debtors to repay the loan. Despite the real and present risks in such transactions, horses emerge as a popular pawn in the context of Jewish creditors and their Christian clients.

Further Reading

- ❖ David Schnur, *Die Juden in Frankfurt am Main und in der Wetterau im Mittelalter: Christlich-jüdische Beziehungen, Gemeinden, Recht und Wirtschaft von den Anfängen bis um 1400*. Wiesbaden: Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen, 2017.
- ❖ Joseph Shatzmiller, *Cultural Exchange: Jews, Christians, and Art in the Medieval Marketplace*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.
- ❖ Daniel Lord Smail, "The Materiality of Credit: Debt Collection as Pawnbroking in Late Medieval Mediterranean Europe." In *Crédit en ville au Moyen Âge*, edited by Claire Billen et al., 95–110. Marne-la-Vallée: Société Française d'Histoire Urbaine, 2018.
- ❖ Haym Soloveitchik, "Usury and Moneylending," *Collected Essays*, vol. 1, part 2. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013.
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5 Dietrich von Gladiss and Alfred Gawlik, eds., *MGH Diplomata Regum et Imperatorum Germaniae VI: Heinrici IV. Diplomata*, vol. 2 (Weimar: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1952), Speyer: no. 411, 543–47; Worms: no. 412, 547–49.



Timely Negotiations

On Jewish Time and Christian Time in
Medieval Ashkenaz

Elisheva Baumgarten

A Jew should not say to a non-Jew, "until the day of the idolatrous holiday" or "until a certain saint's day." Rather, he should say "so many weeks," as it is written: "Make no mention of the names of other gods; they shall not be heard on your lips" (Ex. 23:13), and it is written: "And no more will you call Me Ba'ali. For I will remove the names of the Ba'alim from her mouth, and they shall nevermore be mentioned by name" (Hos. 2: 18-19). And even the names of their holidays that are called [by the name of a saint, like Michael], a Jew should not mention them, nor should he say to a non-Jew, "[make an oath] on your belief in your God," and he should not say to him "on your Christianity."¹

Judah son of Samuel, *Sefer Hasidim*, early thirteenth century, Germany

¹ Judah son of Samuel, *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Judah Wistenetzki (Frankfurt am Main: Wahrmann, 1924), §1348.

This source from the early thirteenth century deals with the confirmation of business arrangements between Jewish and Christian partners. Its author, R. Judah son of Samuel he-Hasid (the Pious) of Regensburg (d. 1217), instructs his readers to avoid terms used in everyday medieval business practice. As is often the case, the behavior prohibited by the authority is quite normative.

Medieval life in Christian lands, especially in urban centers, was organized according to the Christian calendar. Church bells announced the time of prayer at different churches, those of religious chapters and orders as well as the local parishes and, in cases of larger cities, cathedrals. The bells punctuated the days, weeks, and months in correspondence with Christian holidays.² Jews living in urban spaces were familiar with these schedules and their meanings, just as they recognized the preparations for different festivities in the cityscape and understood their implications. Scholarship has amply demonstrated that time in medieval Europe was Christian time. But how did Jews organize their communal time within Christian time? How much did they know about the values that Christian time embodied?

The source above indicates that Christian holidays served as markers of the financial calendar for Jews and Christians alike. Servants were hired all year round, but their contracts were often renewed on Feb. 2, when the Purification of the Virgin Mary was celebrated. Some texts tell us that Christians who worked for Jews expected bonuses around this time, perhaps reflecting its coincidence with the holiday of Purim.³ Beyond specific days in the calendar year, the fiscal year was split into four periods of thirteen weeks. The winter period spanned from Christmas to the Feast of Annunciation, also known as "Lady's Day;" the spring, from Annunciation to St. John the Baptist's Day; the summer, from St. John the Baptist's Day to Michaelmas; and the fall, from Michaelmas to Christmas. These days, which corresponded roughly to the equinoxes and solstices, had accompanying religious and civic rituals, and were the standard times for repaying loans and extending contracts. For Jews who were active in the local and regional economies, such days, like those of the fairs that were organized at set times of the year and associated with specific saints, impacted their everyday affairs.

The second part of the source refers to a related common practice: the making of commitments, whether in a formal court setting or informally, between individuals. Here, we read of the custom to undertake an obligation either by uttering an oath or by making a declaration using the name of God or a saint. The text above quotes an accepted formula, "on your Christianity," indicating one of the ways in which Jews and Christians made promises to each other.

What did it mean for Jews to be so deeply immersed in Christian time? How did they approach the continuous stream of Christian practices and symbols that they encountered in their everyday lives? Christian calendars in Hebrew manuscripts give us a glimpse of the complexity of their attitudes. Such calendars, like the one below (fig. 1), have been found in over a dozen medieval Hebrew manuscripts.⁴

2 Paul Perdrizet, *Le calendrier Parisien a la fin du moyen âge: D'après le breviaire et les livres d'heures* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1933); Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers, 1240-1570* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); For a Jewish perspective on this matter: Elisheva Carlebach, *Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 115–60.

3 Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 131–32.

4 Sacha Stern, "Christian Calendars in Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts," *Medieval Encounters* 22 (2016): 236–65; Justine Isserles and C. Philipp E. Nothaft, "Calendars Beyond Borders: Exchange of Calendrical Knowledge Between Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe (12th-15th Century)," *Medieval Encounters* 20 (2014): 1–37; Elisheva Baumgarten, "Shared and Contested Time: Jews and the Christian Ritual Calendar in the Late Thirteenth Century," *Viator* 46 (2015): 253–76.

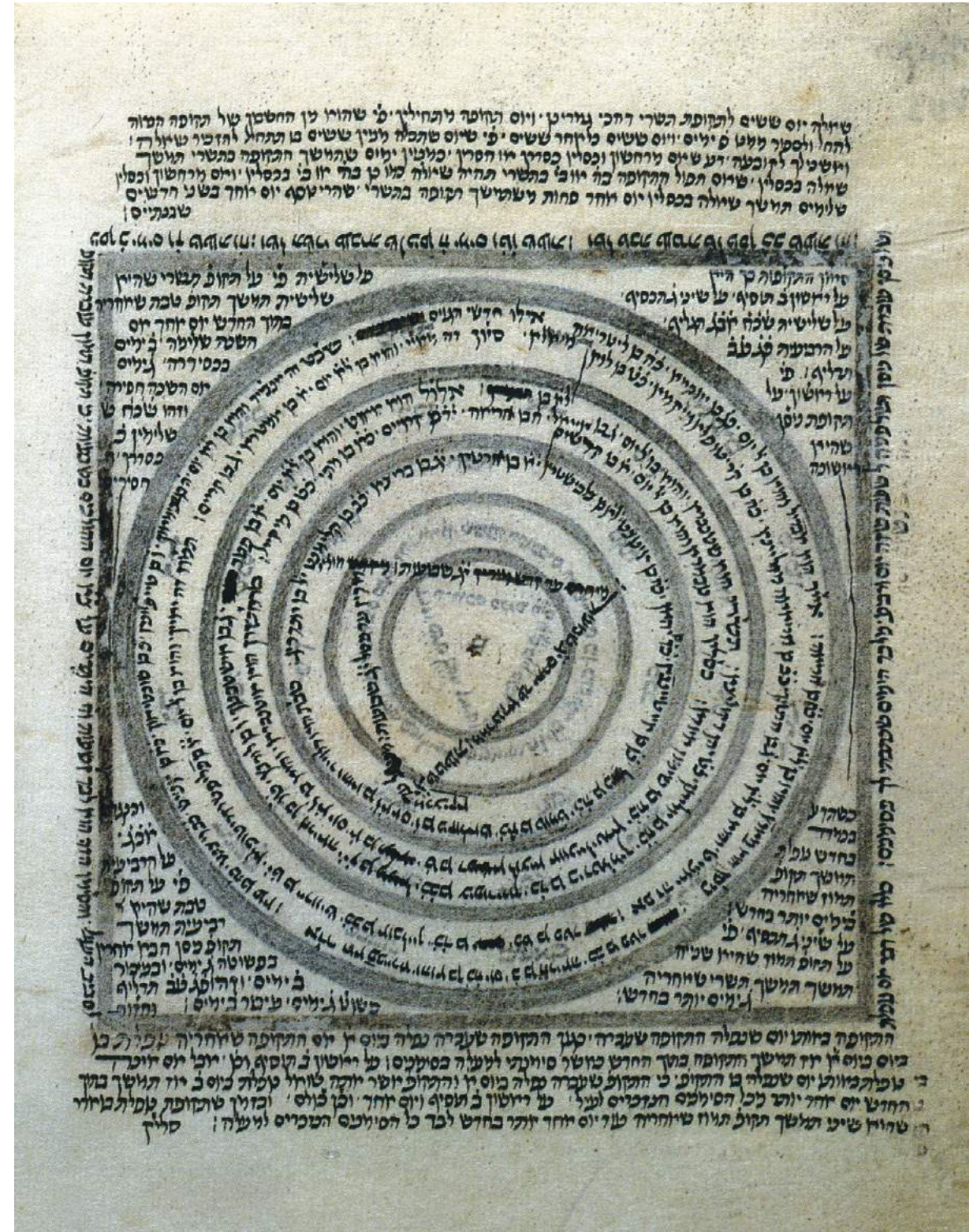


Fig. 1. North French Miscellany © The British Library Board, MS Add. 11639, fol. 542v.

This illuminated calendar, produced in Paris during the last third of the thirteenth century, appears at the end of a miscellany that includes a prayer book, the Pentateuch and other weekly readings, and piyyutim, as well as exegesis, standard forms for business and personal

interactions (marriage contracts and divorce), and more.⁵ Among such material is calendric information that relates only to the Hebrew calendar and this Christian calendar. Our calendar begins: "These are the holidays of the gentiles and their abominations: Shevat is January, and it has thirty-one days." It goes on to enumerate important saints' days, some of them more general and others specific to its vicinity, in this case, Paris.

This calendar draws our attention in two important ways. The first is that saints' days are identified by name alone. No information is provided about activities that take place on the day or about market locations. Apparently, a Jew was expected to know what happened and where on St. Agnes' Day (Jan. 21) and St. Vincent's Day (Jan. 22). Each of these days had accompanying customs, be they fasting or feasting, which had repercussions for business. Moreover, some saints' days were code for specific economic opportunities. The famous medieval fairs of Champagne, which took place for six weeks six times a year and which made Champagne central in the medieval northern French economy, were timed to coincide with the saints' days. For example, two fairs took place in Troyes. The summer fair (known as the "hot" fair) began on the Tuesday following the Feast of St. John the Baptist, and the winter fair began the day following All Saints Day (Nov. 2). The scribe who wrote down these dates assumed that the calendar user would know what took place and where.

Alongside this element of familiarity, there is a second significant feature in this calendar. The triangle in the center of this folio of the manuscript documents the four quarters of the fiscal year, the basis for loans and other agreements. It reads:

From *Nittel* (Christmas) to *Marcheque* (Annunciation) 13 weeks, from *Marcheque* to *Yohram* (St. John the Baptist Day) 13 weeks, from *Yohram* to St. Maurice Day 13 weeks, from St. Maurice Day to *Nittel* 13 weeks.

This part of the calendar is highly illuminating. From it, we learn something about the "internal speak" of medieval Jews. Mary is referred to as *Haria* (literally, feces); the feast of St. John the Baptist is called *Yohram* (based on Ex. 22:19 and the association between the word John and the word *Yohram*, meaning "will be banned"), Peter's name is written as Peter *hamor* (Peter the ass), and St. Simon is called *Tzimaon* (thirst). Such naming clearly conveyed a profound Jewish contempt for Christian sanctity. The calendar even begins with the statement "these are the holidays of the gentiles and their abominations."⁶ None of this escaped the early modern censors, who blacked out these words in the manuscript.

As we can see from our two sources, we are dealing with a complex reality. Jews lived in Christian space and functioned in Christian time. At the same time, tensions between Jews and Christians and theological differences were ubiquitous in medieval culture. Both elements were part of daily life, and both were ingrained in daily practice. This is evident in a second calendar, written for internal Jewish practices (fig. 2).

5 A facsimile edition was published with a companion volume of articles on the manuscript, *Companion Volume to Edited Manuscript from Thirteenth Century France in Facsimile*, ed. Jeremy Schonfield (London: Facsimile Editions, 2003).

6 On Jewish practices of referring to Christian sacrality by a variety of pejoratives and invectives, see Yaacov Deutsch, "Jewish Anti-Christian Invectives and Christian Awareness: An Unstudied Form of Interaction in the Early Modern Period," *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 55 (2010): 41–61.

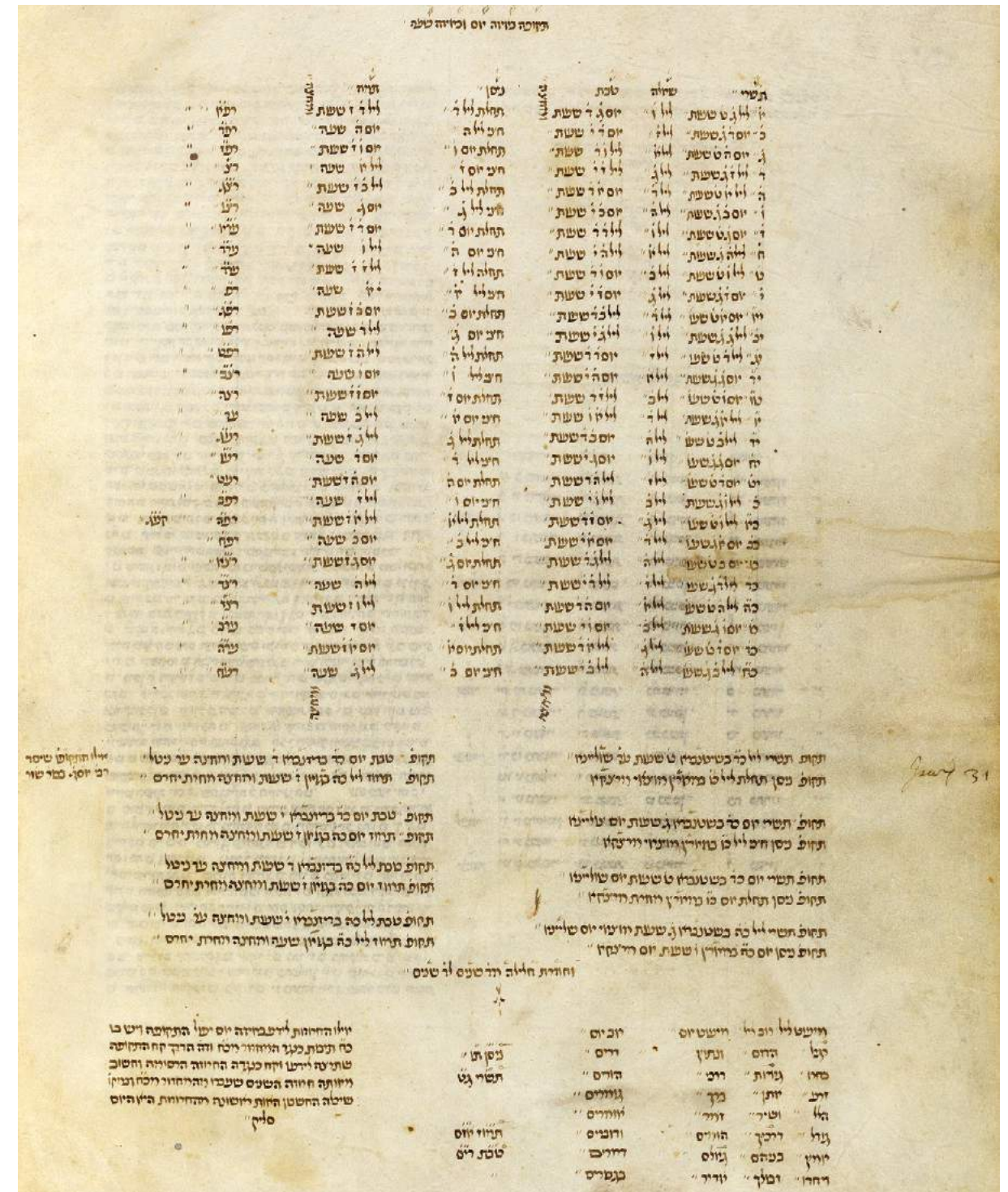


Fig. 2. A list of *tekufot*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS héb. 407, fol. 235v.

This manuscript is part of a common set of calendric materials that appeared in many medieval prayer books, as well as in special books concerning the calendar. A central aspect of such compilations concerned the occurrence of the *tekufah* (the solstices and equinoxes, literally "period"). The specific time was crucial for ritual purposes and key to astrological beliefs.⁷

7 Carlebach, *Palaces of Time*, 160–89.

The top of this folio details the occurrence of the *tekufah* and is entitled "*Tekufah*, on what day and from what hour." It shows the "cycle" of solstices and equinoxes using the Hebrew calendar. The middle part of the folio contains an alternative list attributed to a twelfth-century northern French rabbi, R. Joseph Bekhor Shor, from Orléans. This list reveals the deep immersion of medieval Jews within Christian time. The occurrence of each *tekufah* here uses non-Jewish dates, that is, Christian holidays and saints' days. The entanglement of Jewish and Christian time is evident in every line of this list. The author writes:

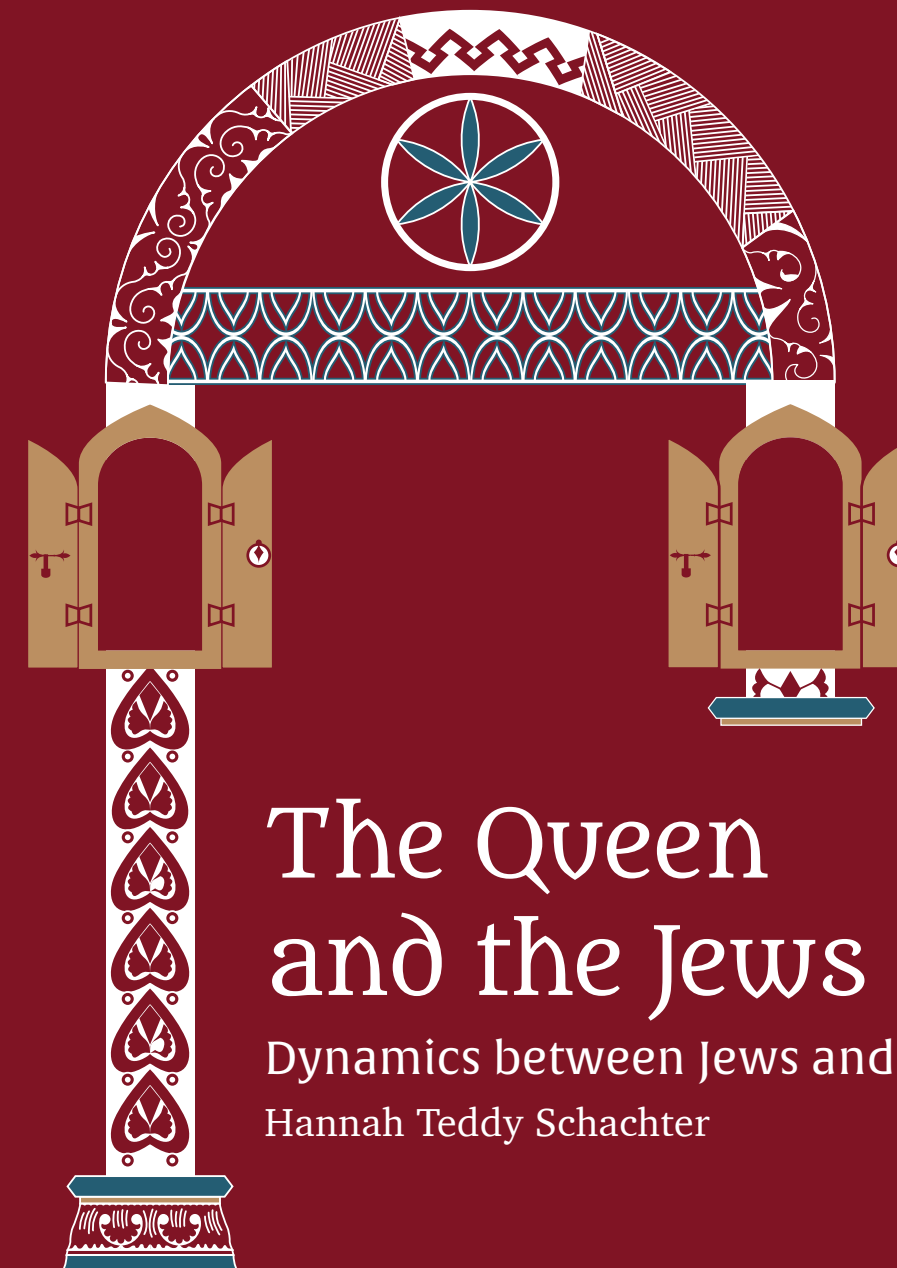
The tekufah of Tishrei is the 24 of September, at 9 hours on the eve of Soleine; the tekufah of Tevet is the 24 of December, at 4 hours on Christmas (*Nittel*) eve; the tekufah of Nissan is the eve of the 26 of December, at the end (*motza'ei*) of Annunciation (*Marcheque*); the tekufah of Tamuz is the 25 of June, at ten and a half hours, the day after St. John the Baptist's Day (*Yohoram*).

Here, the different calendars merge into one – in the service of Jewish practice.

Returning to our opening passage from *Sefer Hasidim*, R. Judah was probably expressing more of a hope than a halakhic ruling. Medieval Jews lived within Christian urban culture, and their everyday lives were structured by Christian framings of time. Nonetheless, Jews used internal codes to assert their difference from the surrounding Christianity and their aversion to Christian sanctity. This religious difference asserted itself in the context of everyday interactions. Although R. Judah advises his readers not to accept oaths made by Christians using saints' names or even in the name of Christianity itself, this too was business as usual. Encoded within these practices was thus both a shared culture and a declaration of difference.

Further Reading

- ◆ Elisheva Baumgarten, "Shared and Contested Time: Jews and the Christian Ritual Calendar in the Late Thirteenth Century," *Viator* 46 (2015): 253–76.
- ◆ Elisheva Carlebach, *Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011.
- ◆ Justine Isserles and C. Philipp E. Nothaft, "Calendars Beyond Borders: Exchange of Calendrical Knowledge Between Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe (12-15 Century)," *Medieval Encounters* 20 (2014): 1–37.
- ◆ Sacha Stern, "Christian Calendars in Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts," *Medieval Encounters* 22 (2016): 236–65.



Go forth and see, daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals, on the day of the gladness of his heart. Words of Sponsa to the virgins (Song of Songs 3:11).

That King Solomon is crowned by his mother on his wedding day signifies [that] Ecclesia, the Holy Church, has been betrothed to Christ, to the one deity. She [...] preaches to the Jews, telling them to leave the blindness of their disbelief and to recognize Christ as true God.

Anonymous scribe, *Moralized Bible*, Paris, c. 1234¹

This illuminated biblical commentary on the Song of Songs 3:11 is found in one of the most costly Gothic masterpieces and anti-Jewish artworks of the High Middle Ages, the moralized

¹ *Moralized Bible*, Tesoro del Catedral MS s.n. II: 78r A1-2.

Bibles (fig. 1).² This manuscript, likely the third of its kind, was a royally commissioned picture Bible made in the workshops of Paris during the second quarter of the thirteenth century. Probably intended as a wedding gift for the young King Louis IX of France (r.1226-70),³ it has been called a "mirror of princes" (*Speculum principum*),⁴ a pedagogical and doctrinal model of behavior for kingly rule, and has been studied as a reflection of this king's relationship with the Jews during his reign.⁵ But what of its patroness, Queen Mother of France Blanche of Castile (r.1223-1252)? How are Jewish-queenly relations reflected in this work, and how does it mirror the behavior of this queen?

A medieval queen, of course, had many roles, but mediation was among those most significant.⁶ Traditional readings of history have called her the channel between king and heir, the nexus between king and subjects, even the dynastic link between two nations seeking alliance. Although she seldom ruled officially in her own right, medieval queens often stepped in for husbands on expedition or sons in minority. Just as Blanche interceded with religious and lay Christian communities, so too did she intervene in Jewish life and livelihood within her royal borders. Still, as queenly intercession was rarely formalized, the shrouded documentary evidence has not yet captured or characterized Jewish-queenly relationships in the Middle Ages.

Art and ritual are useful starting points. Medieval queens were concerned with shaping their dynastic memory and commemorating their families in visual and material objects, such as cathedral architecture and manuscript illumination. These objects were expressions of piety and power, often providing vivid insight into how the queen was seen, how she saw herself, and how she sought to be remembered.

The regency of Queen Blanche of Castile, for her son Louis IX of France, is an example of mediation that spanned decades, from the king's childhood to his absence on Crusade.⁷ Royal attitudes toward Jews became increasingly restrictive in northern France at this time and, while few have questioned Blanche of Castile's involvement, a number of examples indicate her mediation: royal ordinances to suppress Jewish usury in 1227, 1228, and 1230 were promulgated by the Queen Regent in the young king's name.⁸ A few years later, in the 1240s, royal efforts to investigate and censor the Talmud were reported

by some Hebrew accounts as the enterprise of Queen Blanche.⁹ A third instance deals with royal efforts to convert Jewish subjects via missionizing and monetary incentives,¹⁰ some of these documented while the realm lay in Blanche's hands.¹¹ Even from such documentary sources, one could argue that the hallmark of the queenship of Blanche of Castile was indeed her mediation, and no less in Jewish affairs than in any other aspect of the realm.

Additionally, like many queens of her time, Blanche invested much in the material construction of her dynastic memory, and evidence suggests that the Jewish presence in the realm played no small part.¹² Filled with representations of Jews and Judaism, these moralized Bibles are but a few of the queen's many great contributions to the Gothic arts that provide insight into her image.¹³ Much like other medieval kings, who relied on figures like King Solomon, King David, and Christ as biblical models of rulership for their role and self-representation,¹⁴ Blanche relied on biblical women, often the Virgin Mary. The mother, Queen of Heaven and mediator between heaven and earth, served well to convey expectations of the queen's duties as mediator between the king and his people. One popular medieval representation of the Virgin included scenes of her enthronement with Christ and/or her coronation by Christ in heaven – scenes that, by the largesse of the Crown, decorated the tympana of an even greater number of cathedral portals across France for townspeople and passersby to see.¹⁵ In these scenes, too, the Jewish presence could be found.

One example is in the source below (fig. 1), where we find a pair of coronation scenes relating to one biblical verse in which King Solomon is crowned by his mother Bathsheba; the text reads: *Go forth and see, daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals, on the day of the gladness of his heart* (Song of Songs 3:11). True to the biblical text, the top roundel scene depicts the coronation of King Solomon seated on his elevated throne. To the right, his mother Bathsheba, wearing the typical coif of the early thirteenth century, sits at his side to place the fleuron crown on his head. Like the biblical verse in which Solomon is crowned by his mother, the lower image, a commentary or "moralizing" roundel, represents all the necessary elements of the typical Coronation of the Virgin scene: a couple (Christ and Mary) is seated on a cushioned bench splitting center. They are flanked on either side by two figures, here by *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga*, the

2 See the discussion in Robert Branner, *Manuscript Painting in Paris During the Reign of Saint Louis: A Study of Styles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

3 Daniel Weiss, *Art and Crusade in the Age of St. Louis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 67; John. Lowden, *The Making of the Bible Moralisée: Volume I: The Manuscripts* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 131.

4 James Heinlen, *The Ideology of Reform in the French Moralized Bible* (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1996), 194–95.

5 M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, "Kingship and Crusade in the First Four Moralized Bibles," in *The Capetian Century: 1214-1314*, eds. William Chester Jordan and Jenna Rebecca Phillips (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 71–112; Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible moralisée* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

6 Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); John Carmi Parsons, "The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England," in *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women*, eds. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth Maclean (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 147–77; Paul Strohm, "Queens as Intercessors," in *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 95–119, 99–102.

7 Lindy Grant, *Blanche of Castile, Queen of France* (London: Yale University Press, 2016); Élie Berger, *Histoire de Blanche de Castille, reine de France* (Paris: Thorin & Fils, 1895).

8 William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Phillip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

9 Vikkuah Rabbeinu Yehiel miParis, ed. Samuel Grünbaum (Thorn: C. Domrowski, 1873). See discussion in Judah Galinsky, "The Different Hebrew Versions of the 'Talmud Trial' of 1240 in Paris," in *New Perspective on Jewish-Christian Relations: In Honor of David Berger*, eds. Elisheva Carlebach and Jacob J. Schacter (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 109–40; John Friedman, Jean Connell Hoff, and Robert Chazan, *The Trial of the Talmud: Paris, 1240* (Toronto: PIMS, 2012); William Chester Jordan, "Marian Devotion and the Talmud Trial of 1240," repr. in *Ideology and Royal Power in Medieval France: Kingship, Crusades and the Jews* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 61–76.

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12 Judith Kogel, Patricia Stirnemann, "A Portrait of Abraham Ibn Ezra (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal MS 1186)," in *Illuminating the Middle Ages: Tributes to Prof. John Lowden from his Students, Friends and Colleagues*, eds. Laura Cleaver, Alice Bovey, and Lucy Donkin (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020), 157–63.

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14 John Carmi Parsons, "The Intercessionary Patronage of Queen Margaret and Isabella of France," in *Thirteenth-Century England VI*, eds. Michael Prestwich, R. H. Britnell, and Robin Frame (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1995), 191; John Carmi Parsons, "The Queen's Intercession," 153–57; Lois L. Huneycutt, "Intercession and the High Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos," in *Power of the Weak*, 126–46.

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Fig. 1. Bathsheba crowns Solomon; Below: Ecclesia preaches to convert the Jews. *Moralized Bible*, Paris, France, circe 1234. © M. Moleiro, *The Bible of St Louis*, vol. II, f. 78r. A1-2.

personifications of the Holy Church (at left) and Judaism (at right), not uncommon in Marian coronation imagery.¹⁶ An angelic being swoops overtop to deliver divine approval of *Ecclesia's* nomination.

Unlike typical Coronation of the Virgin scenes, however, the central elements here are jumbled. Instead of Christ bestowing the crown on the Virgin, the Virgin – already crowned – bestows the divine crown on Christ. This inversion of the traditional scene is further complicated by the Virgin's headgear, a complete veil resembling that worn by royal widows and Queen Blanche herself. Assuming the role of crowning Christ in this sequence, the widowed queen is the embodiment of supreme authority. Despite the king's divine reception of the terrestrial sphere of earth and sea or moon and sun, relationships also evocative of those between Christ and the

Virgin, the center of gravity in this image does not lie with him. Rather, our attention remains with the queen and her disquieting gaze directed at the woman, *Synagoga*, standing on the periphery. The queen, seated between the king and the Jewish figure, looks to *Synagoga* with the accompanying description of this image reading:

... Ecclesia, the Holy Church, has been betrothed to Christ, to the one deity. She ... preaches to the Jews, telling them to leave the blindness of their disbelief and to recognize Christ as true God.

To the far left, Ecclesia, the Holy Church, awaits her nuptials with Christ and preaches from the evangelium in her hand. *Synagoga*, while reserved, does not wear the traditional blindfold and meets the gaze of the queen, who swivels in a protective gesture toward the young Christ/king, subdued in his divine royalty. Within this moral image urging Jewish conversion, the Queen of Heaven and mediatrix to earth proclaims her watchful eye on the Jews to monitor that peace is held among men and that earth fulfils its heavenly plan.

The medieval viewer was accustomed to understanding the myriad overlapped meanings of an image. Considering the context of this image – in a book possibly gifted to the young king on the occasion of his wedding and proclaimed majority as monarch – one can easily perceive layered narratives of Blanche Queen of France, Mary Queen of Heaven, and the Jewish position in salvational history. If this image indeed reflects how Blanche of Castile wanted to be remembered – among other things with a watchful eye on the Jewish presence and a dominant position to mediate between king and Jewish subject – then it may be a clue as to why the queen interceded to suppress Jewish usury while the king was a minor and to assist in Jewish conversion efforts while he was away. Even more so, it is perhaps no wonder that the French monarchy, and Blanche in particular, would have led the investigations of the Talmud in the 1240s, charging that it contained slurs against the Virgin. If Blanche had identified so strongly with the Marian model of queenship, these allegations would have provided motivation enough for her.

In the end, living in Christian kingdoms was a reality of Jewish life in medieval northern Europe. Monarchs exercised a great deal of control over Jews, on matters ranging from where they could live to how much they paid in taxes, as well as aspects of their communal infrastructure. By the early decades of the thirteenth century, monarchs were also making significant efforts to convert Jews to Christianity. While the king was the head of this monarchical structure, he made extensive use of mediators. Medieval queens often filled this role, mediating between the king and the Jews behind the scenes. As queens, especially in France, were among the greatest early patrons of the arts, and had images of royalty and power chiseled, emblazoned and illuminated on objects in many medieval cities, their art sheds light on this mechanism of mediation. These objects and their visual language broadcast the beliefs and attitudes of their rule, portraying not only the queen's active role in the religious life of the kingdom, but also a variety of possible dynamics between Jews and their rulers in the Middle Ages.

¹⁶ Such as in the south façade of the Strasbourg cathedral, sculpted while Blanche of Castile was active c.1220s-1235. See Annette Weber, "Glaube und Wissen – Ecclesia et Synagoga," in *Wissenspopularisierung: Konzepte der Wissensverbreitung im Wandel*, ed. Carsten Kretschmann (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003), 89–126; Nina Rowe, *The Jew, the Cathedral and the Medieval City: Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Jeremy Cohen, "Synagoga Conversa: Honorius Augustodunensis, the Song of Songs, and Christianity's 'Eschatological Jew,'" *Speculum* 79 (2004): 330–31.

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The Jews shall wear hats, which are pointed. In this way, they can be distinguished from the Christians, so that one recognizes them as Jews.¹

Anonymous scribe, *Schwabenspiegel*, Swabia, Germany, 1275/76

This passage in the *Schwabenspiegel*, a legal code originating in Swabia (Germany) from 1275/76, suggests that Jews in medieval Germany in the thirteenth century did not wear clothing that distinguished them from their Christian neighbors. Indeed, based on other visual and written sources, we know that Jews tended to follow general trends in fashion. After all, by the thirteenth century, fashion had begun the ongoing project of blurring the distinctions in appearance between different social groups in urban environments, making it harder to tell

¹ *Schwabenspiegel*, §214:10, quoted in Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judeas-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld* (13.–20. Jh.) (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994), 277.

them apart. Sources tell of Christians who were distressed when they would greet someone they thought was a cleric with great respect, only to find out that he was a Jew.

There were growing calls to enforce specific codes of dress in order to make social groups outwardly recognizable. These calls aimed to solidify the social hierarchy through clothing and symbols, and included differentiation among members of the various craft guilds, as well as identification of clerics and Jews. As a result, Christian officials and the church reiterated the alleged need for Jews to wear distinctive signs. One such sign – by far the most prominent in the German Empire – was the pointed hat (in Latin, *pileum cornutum*), to be worn by Jewish men.

Prior to the papal legislation of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which decreed that all Jews must wear distinctive signs, the *Judenhut* already appeared in illuminated Christian codices. The abovementioned *Schwabenspiegel*, as well as church legislation from 1267, specified that the Fourth Lateran Council's demand for a distinctive Jewish sign ought to be fulfilled through the donning of a pointed hat. The 1267 church synod in Wroclaw 1267 stated:

The Jews should resume wearing the pointed hat which they had been wearing in those regions and which in their boldness they dared abandon.

This demand was similarly made in 1267 in Vienna, and also applied to Prague and Salzburg. Jews, it implies, had once worn the Jew's hat (*Judenhut*), and should resume wearing it regularly.

The visual figure of the "Jew" was pervasive in the High and Late Middle Ages. The pointed hat was ubiquitous in urban spaces, often featured on church wall paintings and windows. Such images of Jews wearing the *Judenhut* are still visible today in medieval churches and cathedrals throughout central Europe. Despite its ubiquity, however, the *Judenhut* remains a puzzling object whose provenance is shrouded in mystery. Archeological sources are silent about it, as, for the most part, are Hebrew written sources. We do find some mention of the *Judenhut* in Christian legal sources, and it is frequently depicted in Christian visual sources. Perhaps most interestingly, however, the *Judenhut* is overwhelmingly present in Hebrew illuminated manuscripts (fig. 1). It appears on coins minted by Jewish coiners, and on Jewish seals that we find as waxen impressions on records (figs. 2 and 3). Jews regularly used this symbol in their personal, communal, and artistic self-representation. The question thus arises: Was the *Judenhut* indeed a sign of shame, and if so, why did the Jews appropriate and display it?

Let us briefly review the evidence. Many illuminated Hebrew manuscripts depict adult male Jews wearing the *Judenhut* while fulfilling ritual acts. Young Jewish boys and Jewish women, however, are not portrayed wearing this garment in the manuscripts. As noted, Jewish seals frequently feature the *Judenhut*, albeit not those of women. Some of them show a stereotypical face of a Jew with a long beard wearing the pointed hat – precisely how Christian art depicted Jews. Intriguingly, many Christians chose the pointed hat in their personal seals (fig. 4), often in combination with the face of a Jew wearing a long beard. These Christians had the family name "Jew" (in German *Jud*); in Latin sources as well as in Latin seal inscriptions, they received the name "called the Jew" (in Latin *dictus iudeus*). We do not know if these Christians came from Jewish families who had converted to Christianity. The images on their seals, however, created a direct reference to their name through the symbol of the *Judenhut*, a connection that was immediately evident to whoever saw the seal. Based on these seals and pictorial depictions, it appears that the *Judenhut* was not necessarily negative or exclusively anti-Jewish.



Fig. 1. Two praying Jews are wearing Jews' hats. The *Birds' Heads Haggadah*, Franconia, circa 1300, Jerusalem. The Israel Museum, MS 180/50, fol. 15v. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem by Ardon Bar-Hama.

The pointed hat also appears semi-regularly in Christian art. The biblical patriarchs are depicted with it; in the city seal of Toulouse, the proto-martyr Saint Stephen is portrayed wearing a *Judenhut*, while *Judenhut*-wearing Jews are stoning him; Jesus' father Joseph is sometimes shown with a pointed hat; and in a thirteenth-century psalter for the French king, Saint Louis, Jesus himself wears one. Clearly, in none of these cases was the *Judenhut* a negative symbol.

Perhaps the best-known depiction of a Jew with a *Judenhut* as a neutral marker is that of Süßkint of Trimberg from the early fourteenth century (fig. 5). The poet is depicted in a lively discussion with a bishop and other clerics. The clothes Süßkint wears are identical to those of the bishop.



Fig. 2. Three Jew's hats in a shield. Seal of Moses son of Menahem, impression in wax attached to a record from Zurich 1329. Zurich, Staatsarchiv, CI, Nr. 277 (Impression 2).



Fig. 3. Three Jew's hats in a shield. Seal of Moses son of Joseph haLevi, impression in wax from Constance 1332. Karlsruhe, Generallandesarchiv, Best. 3, Nr. 3016 (Impression 6).



Fig. 4. The head of an imaginary Jew with a Jew's hat (*Judenhut*) and the inscription: + S(IGILLVM) CHVNRADI. IVDEI [...]IN. Seal of the Christian Conrad Jud from Unterholzing. Impression in wax attached to a record from Regensburg, 1342. Regensburg, Spitalarchiv, Urkunde Nr. 445.

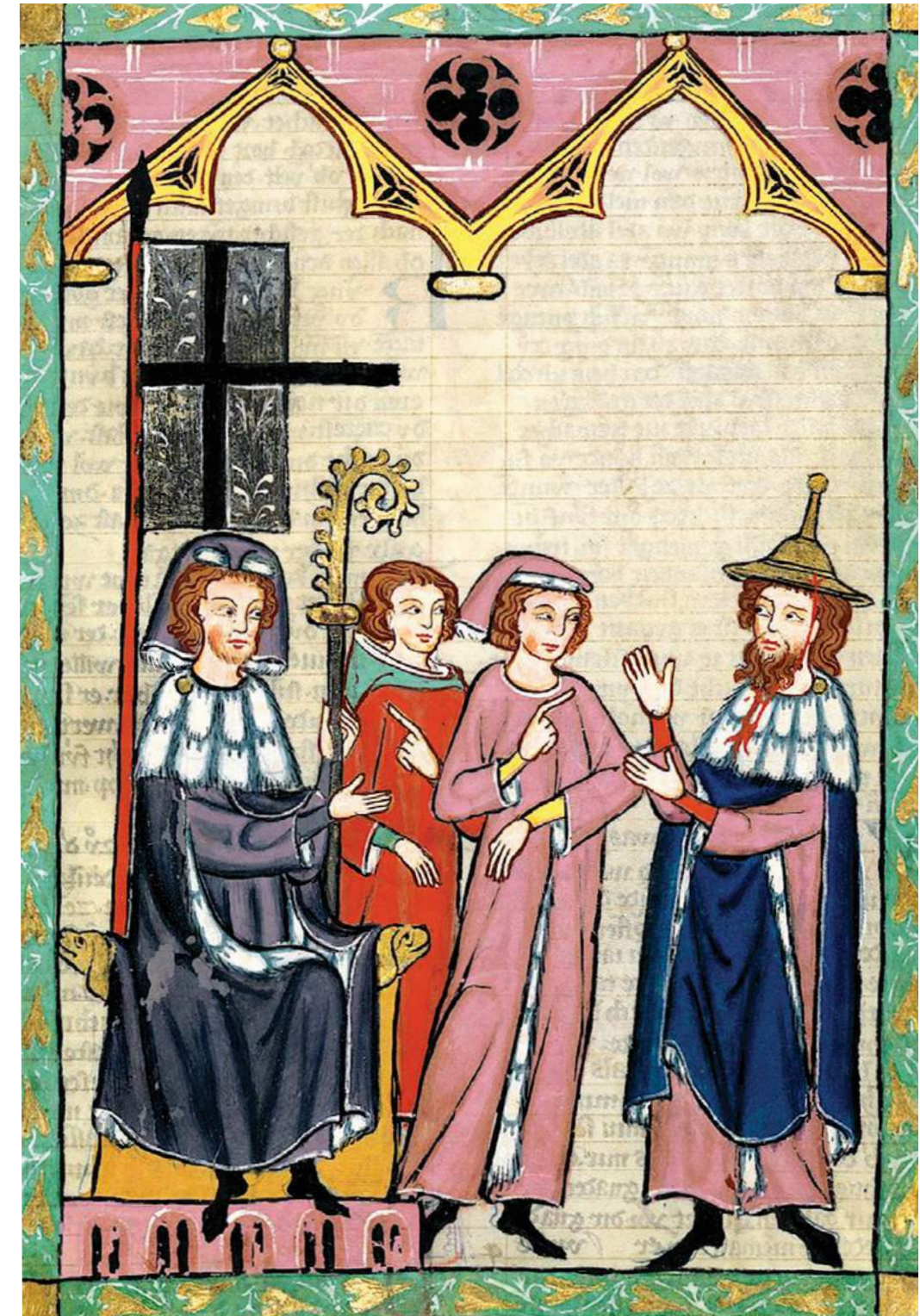


Fig. 5. Süßkint of Trimberg in a discussion with a bishop and his clerics. *Codex Manesse (Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift)*, Zurich, circa 1300-1440. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. germ. 848, fol. 355r.

Only the point hat distinguishes him from his interlocutors. The fact that not only Christians but also Jews chose to adopt the *Judenhut* as a representative symbol suggests that the image had at least a neutral – and perhaps even positive – meaning for them.

The *Judenhut* slowly disappeared from Jewish seals and Hebrew illuminated manuscripts during the second half of the fifteenth century. The reason for this, it seems, was the introduction of a new sign that was understood as pejorative: the yellow badge, which Jews were forced to wear. Unlike the *Judenhut*, this badge was depicted only rarely in Hebrew illuminated manuscripts.

Even if the *Judenhut* was neutral rather than negative, we can safely assume that it communicated to viewers that the wearer was Jewish. For Christians who chose the pointed hat for their punning seals (i.e., a seal where the image refers to its owner's name in the seal inscription), the hat simply represented their name, "Judeus." The *Judenhut's* function as a signaling device of this kind seems to have inspired the punishment for Christian women who had sexual contact with Jewish men, as recorded in several sources. These Christian women – and not the Jews – were escorted out of the city by a large and noisy audience while a provisory *Judenhut* was placed on their heads. Below, we read the description of such a Christian woman, called the *Ringgerin*, from late fourteenth-century Zurich:

The *Ringgerin* shall be placed on a cart and escorted through the city to all public places where announcements take place. Also, a little *Judenhut* made of paper shall be put on her head when she is escorted through the town with two guard horns [i.e., signal horns used by guards].

It is tempting to speculate that, in such depictions, the act of sexual intercourse with a male Jew symbolically turned Christian women into Jews. In any case, our brief overview indicates that it was not the *Judenhut* itself that communicated negativity, but rather the context in which it appeared.

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Match-Making Magic among Medieval French Jews

Amit Shafran

To know whether a certain man will marry a certain woman and what will be their fate if he will marry her: Go and calculate his name along with hers and add to the amount ו,י [16] and take out¹ ט,ט [9, again and again]. If the remainder is ט [9] he won't marry her, and if he will marry her they will not succeed; and if א,א² – the sign of Venus, and [therefore] it is good, redemption and pleasure will be between them; and if ב [2] – the sign of Mars, [therefore] bad luck, hate, fighting, and jealousy will be between them; and if ג [3] – that is the hate, a[nd] and if ד [4] – the sign of Mercury, [therefore] they will love each other, but their livelihood will be far;³ and if ה [5] – the sign of Jupiter, [therefore] both good and bad between them; and if ו [6] –

¹ Meaning: "divide by."

² If the remainder is 1.

³ Financial struggle.

the sign of Saturn, [therefore] a terrible tragedy will happen between the[m] and if ז [7] they must not be together, so they will not become widowed; and if ה [8] [he will marry] the daughter of an outstanding famil[y] and great love will be between them⁴

Isaac son of Isaac, Chinon, France, c.1250

Love and marriage have always been among the great human concerns. And no wonder – for what could have more of an impact on one's life than one's life partner? One means for influencing the success of a marriage was magic. The text cited above is an example of magical practice, aimed at determining the fate of a match. It is found in a French manuscript copied not long before the expulsion of the Jews from France (1306). More than 250 pages of spells, incantations, magical recipes, and rituals were recorded in this tiny book, about the size of a deck of cards (fig. 1). The owner of the book was a man named Isaac son of Isaac, who lived in the French city of Chinon around 1250. Isaac copied many of the recipes in his own hand, including the one translated above.

This incantation is based on a Jewish practice known as *gematria* [גימטריה]: an alphanumeric code that assigns a numerical value to the letters of a name, word, or phrase. It instructs users to sum the numerical value of the bride and groom's names, to add sixteen to the amount, then subtract nine repeatedly (which is equivalent to dividing by nine), until left with a remainder between one and nine (meaning – no remainder at all, a number that can be divided by nine).

Numerology is the study of the divine or mystical meaning of numbers, illustrated in the recipe above. It is deeply connected to astrology – the study of the movements and relative positions of celestial objects in order to decipher divine information about human affairs and terrestrial events. In Isaac's formula, the remainder left from the calculation of names represents a planet, and a certain destiny; the number 1 represents Venus, indicating a lucky and loving match; while a remainder of five represents Jupiter, meaning a mediocre relationship with many ups and downs.

Let us take, as an example, perhaps the most famous couple in the Hebrew Bible, that of Abraham and Sarah. To determine the luck of this match, one would first calculate the numerical value of the names "Abraham" and "Sarah":

Abraham 248 = 40 + 5 + 200 + 2 + 1 :[אברהם]

Sarah 505 = 5 + 200 + 300 :[שרה]

Therefore, Abraham and Sarah = 248 + 505 = 753

To the result, the user then adds sixteen: 753 + 16 = 769

The next step is dividing the amount – in this case 769 – by nine, until left with a remainder between one and nine:

$769 / 9 = 85$ (remainder = 4)

Finally, we can decipher the destiny of Abraham and Sarah: the remainder of the numerical value of their names is 4, a number related to the sign of Mercury: "and if ד [4] – the sign of Mercury, [therefore] they will love each other, but their livelihood will be far." Indeed, the story

4 Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. héb. 633, fol. 124v.

of the biblical couple includes times of hunger and poverty, besides a complicated, yet loving, relationship.

What can a magical practice like this teach us about match-making in medieval Ashkenaz? How did Isaac, or his community, use magical practices and recipes, and how did such rituals manifest themselves in their everyday life? One answer to those questions can be found in the stars. In medieval Europe, the celestial sphere, and especially the planets within the solar system, were considered to have significant influence on earth, the human body, and one's fate and character. Astrological signs were associated with times of the year, days of the week, and even specific hours; with the four elements of creation – earth, air, water, and fire; and with medicine. During the Middle Ages, technologies and practices were developed in order to benefit from the power of astrological signs and celestial bodies, in both personal and communal events, and to ensure good luck for the user.

In Jewish tradition, the relation between luck and astrological signs is even more straightforward, since the words "luck" and "star" are identical: *mazal*. To have good luck was to have a good astrological map or the celestial sphere behind you. The wish for good luck and lucky opportunities was particularly present at weddings. The crucial moment when the destiny of two people

was tied together for the rest of their lives, and the very beginning of a new family, created a rich tradition where every detail was packed with significance. Ashkenazic weddings were often scheduled for Friday morning, "the day of Venus," especially lucky for matters of the heart; and astral marks associated with love, luck, and fertility were painted upon the couple's *chuppah* [חופה], the canopy under which a Jewish couple stood during their wedding ceremony. Moreover, a *Huppastein* (marriage stone) was often installed in the synagogue, carved in stone with a star alongside the blessing "mazal tov." At the end of the wedding ceremony, the groom would toss a glass full of wine at the star in order to protect the wedding and the marriage from demons and evil forces. Sometimes, the groom even engaged his bride with a "mazal tov ring."



Fig. 1. Miscellany of spells, incantations, magical recipes, and rituals. Isaac son of Isaac, Chinon, France, c.1250. Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS héb. 633, fol. 124v.

The blessing *mazal tov* was a pun meaning both "congratulations" and "good luck," as well as "have a good [astrological] sign." Immediately after the groom gave his bride her ring, the guests shouted "mazal tov!" That is no coincidence, of course: the bride's reception of her wedding ring marked the first moment of couplehood. Accordingly, it was imperative that, at this very moment, luck be everywhere: it should be seen and heard by the entire universe, including by any problematic forces like demons that might be interested in interrupting the event. The custom of wedding guests proclaiming "mazal tov!" dates to the thirteenth century and is mentioned in *Sefer HaNiyar* (The Paper Book), an anonymous French halakhic text:

...And the custom was, when the public entered [the wedding], to summon witnesses for the betrothal ceremony and show them the betrothal ring... and the groom would say '[by accepting this ring] you will become my exclusive spouse according to the customs of Moses and Israel,' and the guests answer "mazal tov!"

Luck, then, for medieval Jews, came in many shapes and practices: material culture associated with signs and celestial bodies; times and dates; blessing; and even magic. All combined in the effort of ensuring the couple's future.

Whether couples made use of the match-making formulas found in Isaac of Chinon's book, or if this ritual influenced users' decisions about future matches, is lost to history. We do know, however, that good luck was one of the parameters considered in matches in Isaac's cultural context. The Ashkenazic public maintained a belief in the power of astrological signs, luck, magical recipes, and popular rituals, and took great pains to leverage these tools for the benefit of themselves and their loved ones.

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The Mazal Tov Ring and the Ketubbah

Ido Noy

...And he came before us, the honorable R. Jacob of Ulm, may he live, and told us that he has pawns of silver, a gold-plated belt, and two golden rings from you. In each of these rests a rock called a diamond, along with another *kiddushin* (betrothal) ring, which was engraved with M" T [mazal tov]. And he said that for many days you have not redeemed your deposit and that he is in need of his payment...¹

Moses son of Isaac haLevi Mintz, *Responsa of Rabbenu Moshe Mintz*, Germany, fifteenth century

In this responsum of Moses son of Isaac haLevi Mintz (Maharam Mintz c.1415–c.1480), which deals with the mundane issue of loans and pledges, we encounter an intriguing medieval Jewish marriage custom, namely, a ring with the Hebrew inscription "mazal tov" (literally: good constellation [of

¹ Moses son of Isaac haLevi Mintz, *She'elot uTeshuvot Rabbenu Moshe Mintz (Maharam Mintz)*, ed. Jonathan Shraga Domb (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 1991), 1:179, §70.



Fig. 1. Mazal Tov Ring, part of the Erfurt Treasure, second quarter of the fourteenth century. Courtesy of the Thuringian State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology, inventory number: 5067/98. Photograph by Brigitte Stefan.

stars]/good luck) used for betrothal (*kiddushin*), a ceremony in which the couple is formally engaged to be married. Three such rings were discovered in Weissenfels,² Colmar,³ and Erfurt (fig. 1),⁴ dating to the early fourteenth century. All three rings share a similar design, most notably the Hebrew letters מ-ז-ל-ט-ו-ב (M-A-Z-A-L-T-O-V) engraved on the top of a miniature architectural structure at the top of the ring's bezel.⁵

Undoubtedly, mazal tov rings were used as part of the Jewish marriage ritual. The ring's decorative elements, however, might have precluded its use in the betrothal ceremony itself.⁶ It is thus worth considering what additional functions these rings might have served. We find mazal tov rings used for purposes other than betrothal in two illustrations for "Order of the Bride and Groom," included in a Jewish prayer book (*siddur*) produced in 1481 in Pesaro (present-day Italy).⁷

The first illustration depicts the highlight of the Jewish betrothal ceremony, in which the bridegroom places a plain gold ring on the bride's index finger (fig. 2). The second portrays the moment in which the bridegroom gives the marriage contract (*ketubbah*, pl. *ketubbot*) to his bride (fig. 3). A close look at the second illustration shows that the *ketubbah* is rolled up and fastened by a golden ring with a raised element on its bezel, an object reminiscent of the Ashkenazic mazal tov ring. The illustrator clearly distinguished between these two gold rings – an unadorned ring for betrothal, and a



Fig. 2. *Kiddushin*, Siddur, Pesaro, Italy, 1481. Formerly of the David Kaufmann collection, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. MS A380, Vol.II, fol. 230r. Courtesy of the Center for Jewish Art, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Fig. 3. The Ring and the *Ketubbah*, Siddur, Pesaro, Italy, 1481. Formerly of the David Kaufmann collection, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. MS A380, Vol.II, fol. 231v. Courtesy of the Center for Jewish Art, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

² Halle (Saale), Kunstmuseum Moritzburg, inventory number: Mo-LMK-E-162.

³ Paris, Musée national du Moyen Âge, inventory number: Cl.20658.

⁴ Weimar, Thüringische Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie, inventory number: 5067/98.

⁵ A similar design is featured on a "mazal tov" ring from Munich (Schatzkammer der Residenz, inventory number: 52). It is mentioned in an entry already in 1589: "Ein Alter guldiner Ring, umb und umb mit Herbäyschen Buchstaben, auf dem Castn steht ein Tabernacul einem Sacramentheußl gleich." See *Die Münchner Kunstkammer*, eds. Dorothea Diemer, Peter Diemer, and Lorenz Seelig, 3 vols. (Munich: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008), 1: 308.

⁶ For a discussion on the use of decorated rings for kiddushin, see Daniel Sperber, *Minhagei Yisrael: Mekorot veToldot*, 8 vols. (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 2003), 4:143–48 (Hebrew).

⁷ Budapest, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Ms. A380, fols. 231r, 231v. This manuscript was stolen from the library's collection at the beginning of the 1980s.



Fig. 4. Miniature for Herr Wilhelm von Heinzenburg, Codex Manesse. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, CPG. 848, fol. 162v.

heavily decorated one for the *ketubbah* holder – suggesting that their respective designs are tailored to their ritual uses.

Marriage contracts, like Torah scrolls and other ritual documents and letters, were written on one side of paper or parchment and then rolled into scrolls. Such documents were then tied using various materials and techniques. A metal ring such as the one depicted above could have served this purpose. As only a handful of Italian marriage contracts dating to before the sixteenth century have survived, we cannot determine whether Italian Jews used metal mazal tov rings to fasten such documents.

There is a pronounced similarity between the *ketubbah* holder shown in the Italian prayerbook and the three mazal tov rings from the German lands. But did medieval German Jews also use metal ring holders to fasten their rolled-up marriage contracts?

Or were these rings in fact used as part of the wedding ceremony? There are some indications that German Jews used scroll-like *ketubbot*. For example, an illustration of the marriage of Moses and Zipporah in the *Yehuda Haggadah* for Passover, produced in Franconia between 1470 and 1480, features a *ketubbah* scroll.⁸ In order to test the hypothesis that mazal tov rings were used to fasten these documents, we may compare the measurements of the Ashkenazic mazal tov rings described above to the measurements of illustrated marriage contracts from Germany. One of the earliest examples of the latter was produced in 1391/2 for the marriage of Zemah, daughter of R. Aaron, and Shalom, son of R. Menahem in Krems an der Donau (?).⁹ The original dimensions of this document were approximately 600x740 mm. It would have been impossible to insert this parchment into any of the Ashkenazic mazal tov rings, which have an inner diameter of approximately 20mm. However, the illuminated Krems *ketubbah* is exceptional, since most Ashkenazic marriage contracts were not adorned, and it can be assumed that their average size was significantly

smaller than that of the Krems *Ketubbah*. If Ashkenazic *ketubbot* were indeed much smaller, they could potentially have fit (when tightly rolled) into the Ashkenazic mazal tov rings.

Alternatively, mazal tov rings may have functioned as an adornment to the *ketubbah*. One finds similar metal rings in the *Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift*, a corpus of illuminated medieval German love poems (*Minnelieder*) that was produced in 1300-1340 for the Manesse family in Zurich. Many images in the codex illustrate iconography of courtly love typical of that era, including the bestowing of gifts and handing over of various documents – possibly letters and love poems. One illustration, for the poems of Wilhelm von Heinzenburg (before 1262–1293), reveals additional details about the nature of the gifts. It depicts a young man bestowing three gifts upon his beloved: a roll accompanied by a wallet and a gold ring set with a stone (fig. 4).¹⁰

Since, in the Jewish wedding ritual, the bestowal of the *kiddushin* ring precedes the handing over of the *ketubbah*, if mazal tov rings were indeed attached to the *ketubbah*, they must have served a purpose other than *kiddushin*. If so, these massive and precious rings would have played a visual and aesthetic role: they would have drawn attention of the participants and guests to the ritual, thus highlighting the groom's rights and responsibilities in relation to his bride.

In addition, the ring's design has symbolic significance in the context of Jewish marriage. The architectural structure on the bezel may symbolize to the building of the couple's new home. Alternatively, it may represent the Temple in Jerusalem according to contemporary depictions (or, for that matter, other building and architectural elements representative of the Temple, such as the synagogue, the Holy Ark, or the *bimah*), thus commemorating the Temple's destruction and implying its future reconstruction.¹¹ Another important feature is the Hebrew inscription, "mazal tov," which conveyed the message that the use of such a ring would increase the likelihood of a successful marriage.¹²

Returning to the initial passage quoted from the Maharam Mintz's responsum, we may now ask: Was the anonymous individual who failed to redeem his deposit the original owner of the ring, waiting to bestow it on his bride? And, perhaps most poignantly, did this mazal tov ring fulfill its function and bring good fortune to the young couple?

8 Jerusalem, Israel Museum, Ms. 180/50, fol. 11v.

9 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 218.

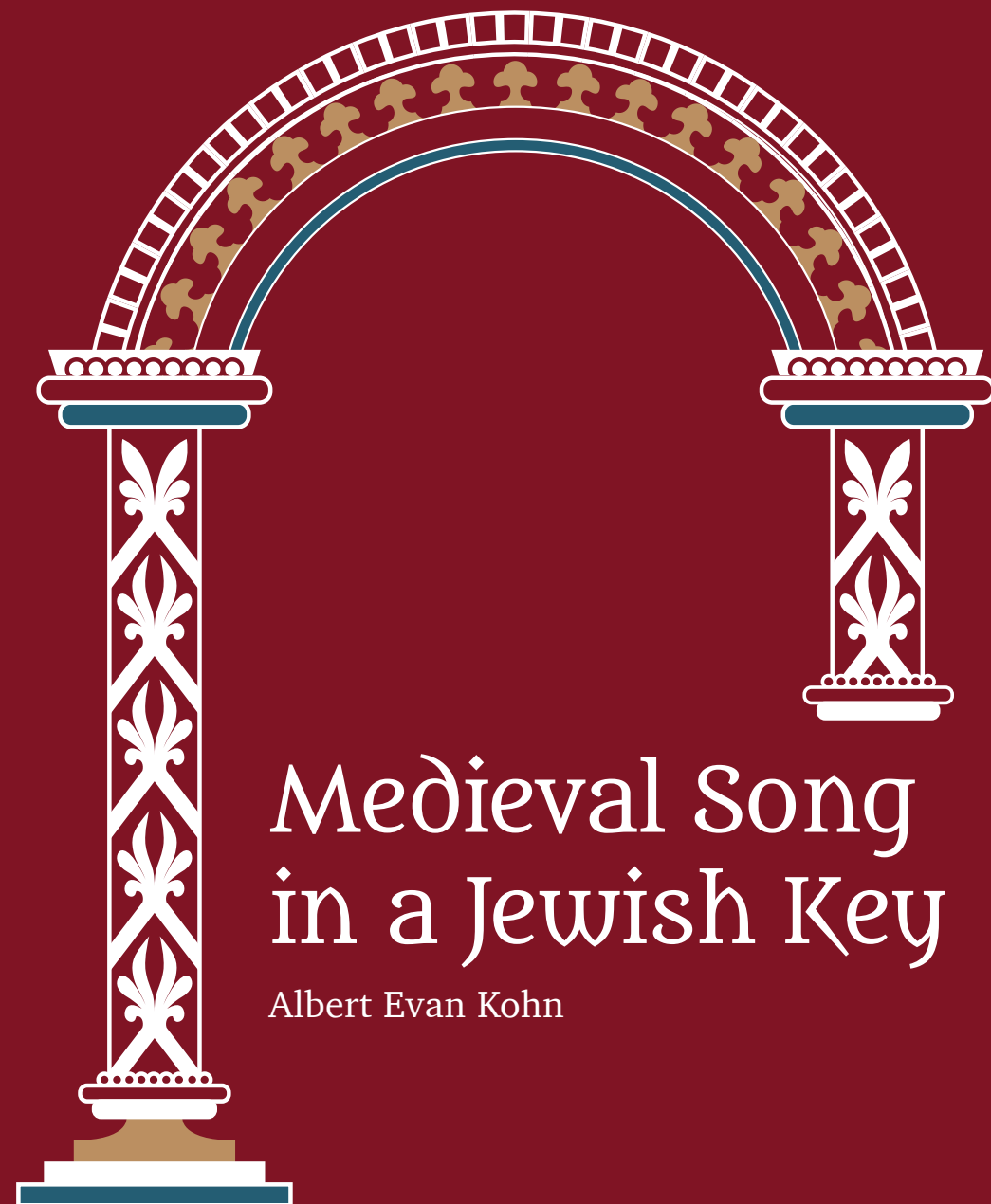
10 Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, CPG. 848, fol. 162v.

11 Shalom Sabar, *Mazal Tov: Illuminated Jewish Marriage Contracts from the Israel Museum Collection* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1994), 43–78. Idem, "Messianic Aspirations and Renaissance Urban Ideals: The Image of Jerusalem in the Venice Haggadah, 1609," *Jewish Art* 22/23 (1998): 295–312; Pamela Berger, *The Crescent on the Temple: The Dome of the Rock as Image of the Ancient Jewish Sanctuary* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 197–223.

12 Moshe Idel, "The Zodiac in Jewish Thought," in *Written in the Stars: Art and Symbolism of the Zodiac*, ed. Iris Fishof (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 2001), 21–26.

Further Reading

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- ❖ Jules M. Samson, *The Jewish Betrothal Ring (or Mazal Tov Rings)*, 1982 (unpublished).
- ❖ Daniel Sperber, *Minhagei Yisrael*, vol. 4, 143–48. Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1995 (Hebrew).
- ❖ Maria Stürzebecher, “Der Schatzfund aus der Michaelisstraße in Erfurt. In *Die mittelalterliche jüdische Kultur in Erfurt*, edited by Sven Ostritz, vol. 1: 94–99. Weimar: Thüringische Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie, 2010.



Medieval Song in a Jewish Key

Albert Evan Kohn

Thereby, it is permitted for one to use candlelight to pray from a liturgical booklet when the eve of Yom Kippur falls on Friday night or to recite liturgical poems when the eve of the holiday falls on Friday night. Even though the candle is low and within reach, feeling the presence of the congregation prevents one from inadvertently adjusting it and desecrating the Shabbat. In our own region of the exile, it happens frequently that on Friday nights of a wedding, we will sing around the table from songbooks. Even though the candle is low and within reach, the rabbis have not been concerned about the potential to desecrate the Shabbat.¹

Isaac son of Moses of Vienna, *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, Vienna, Austria, thirteenth century

¹ Isaac son of Moses of Vienna, *Sefer Or Zaru'a* (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayim, 2001), 2: §43.

Much like today, the medieval world was full of music and song. The chants of monks resounded through monasteries, royal courts were graced with the ballads of troubadours, while musicians filled the streets with the sounds of their voices and instruments. Song was not restricted to the professional class and the educated elites, but permeated the daily lives of ordinary men, women, and children. Students studying Latin were trained to sing their grammatical tables, parents sang songs to lull their children to sleep, and taverns resonated with the tunes of drunken merriment.

Medieval Jews were in no way absent from the musical life of the city. Any festive occasion, such as the birth of a child or a holiday, could inspire community members to celebrate with song. Depictions of Jews playing instruments in medieval manuscripts indicate that these moments of singing could be accompanied by instrumental music and dance as well.² In the above source, R. Isaac son of Moses of Vienna (1200-1270), one of the most prominent rabbinic figures in medieval northern Europe, remarked that it was common for Jews to gather on Friday evening and sing songs in celebration of community weddings. While this comment appears as part of a larger discussion about the minutiae of Jewish law, it permits a glance at an important facet of Jewish communal life: singing.

In medieval Jewish life, singing was both a festive pastime and an important spiritual practice. Thirteenth-century guides for circumcision ceremonies state explicitly that one's obligation to rejoice is fulfilled by, among other things, singing.³ Raising one's voice with others in song was, according to this understanding, deemed to be inherently joyous. This meant, though, that on more somber occasions, singing could be judged inappropriate. R. Israel Isserlein (1390-1460) is said to have sung at every Sabbath meal except during weeks of communal sadness, such as after the murder of a Jew in the community.⁴ Like their Christian neighbors, Jews also ascribed religious importance to singing, beyond its celebratory function. The image of the biblical King David composing the Psalms with harp in hand helped shape such pious understandings of singing.⁵ According to *Sefer Hasidim*, a collection of Jewish law and lore from the thirteenth century, singing both manifested and made palpable one's love of God: "Love of God . . . causes a person to sweetly sing songs that fill one's heart with joy in the love of God."⁶ Other teachings from *Sefer Hasidim*, seeing a more practical spiritual value in singing, explain that humming the tune of a pleasant song could help one focus during prayer.⁷ In these ways, singing suffused every sector of medieval Jewish life.

One of the most central times for singing was the Sabbath, mentioned here by R. Isaac as the time at which the community would celebrate weddings. The Sabbath offered numerous opportunities for communal singing even when there was no wedding. According to a frequently cited piece of rabbinic lore, the angelic responsibility to serenade God with song was passed on to the Jewish people every Sabbath.⁸ Though musical instruments were prohibited, Jews fulfilled this responsibility with great vigor by raising their voices in song throughout the



Fig. 1. The Piyyut *Dror Yikra* (Dunash ibn Labrat (920-990)) and the marginal note instructing the reader to sing the poem to the tune of a vernacular French Troubadour song. *Mahzor Vitry*, France, 1204. New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, MS 8092, fol. 38v. Courtesy of The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

holy day. Already in the eleventh century, R. Yosef Tov Elem (c. 1050), an influential French sage, recounted how his coreligionists would escort the Sabbath as she departed on Saturday evening as they would for a visiting Queen: with voices raised in song.⁹ Sabbath singing was also a mainstay of domestic Sabbath life. Families would take a break from their festive meals to sing praises of God and the holy day.¹⁰

² See the illustrations discussed and reproduced in Suzanne Wijsman, "Silent Sounds: Musical Iconography in a Fifteenth-Century Jewish Prayer Book," in *Resounding Images: Medieval Intersections of Art, Music and Sound*, eds. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 313-33.

³ Jacob haGozer, *Sefer Zikhron Berit laRishonim*, ed. Yakov Glassberg (Berlin: Tzvi Hirsch, 1891), 1:68.

⁴ Yosef son of Moshe, *Leket Yosher*, ed. Amichai Kinarti (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayim, 2013), 2:73-74.

⁵ See, for example, *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Reuven Margoliot (Jerusalem: Mossad haRav Kook, 1957), 151, §147.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 240, §300.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 163, §158.

⁸ Isaac son of Moses of Vienna, *Sefer Or Zaru'a* (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayim, 2001), 2:51-52.

⁹ *Mahzor Vitry*, ed. Aryeh Goldschmidt (Jerusalem: Makhon Otzar haPoskim, 2008), 2:206.

¹⁰ See my article, "'To Sing on Shabbat, Night and Day, Each Person at Their Table': On the Formation of the Custom to Sing Shabbat Zemirah in Medieval Europe," *AJS Review*, Forthcoming.

Jews, like their Christian neighbors, frequently sang in their vernacular languages. Kirsten Fudeman has shown that vernacular singing was an important way by which those untrained in Hebrew, primarily women and children, could participate fully in communal festivities.¹¹ Yet, we have few extant examples of vernacular songs that were incorporated into communal Jewish singing. Most songs known to have been sung communally by Jews were composed instead in a poetic Hebrew. While this means that some may have not understood what they were singing, the wide-ranging familiarity with Hebrew in medieval communities indicates that participation would not have been impossible for non-elites. This is especially true if community members grew up hearing and singing these songs regularly, just as they did the liturgy.¹²

These Hebrew songs were drawn from the liturgical poems written by famous poets from across the Jewish world like Yehuda Halevi (1075-1141) of Spain or Simon son of Isaac (950-1020) of southern Germany. The songbooks, which began to be produced in the thirteenth century, collect anywhere from a few to dozens of songs and would have been owned by wealthy Jews or by the community. In his comments, R. Isaac mentions how these books would be used by those singing Sabbath and wedding songs. While some core songs were popular throughout medieval Europe and appear in songbooks from across the continent, every community had songs specific to their own cultural environment. For example, collections of songs for the Sabbath from medieval Italy privilege the work of the thirteenth-century Italian poet Daniel son of Yehiel of Montalcino (c. 1300), whose songs do not appear at all in Ashkenaz.¹³ Similarly, manuscripts from Germany that record the French liturgical rite include satirical dirges about the expulsion of the Jews from France that likely would have only been sung by French Jews.¹⁴ With allusions to both biblical and rabbinic literature, all the Hebrew songs celebrate the themes of the day, whether they be the love of bride and groom at a wedding, the creation of the world on the Sabbath or anything else. Frequently, songs veered from the spiritual majesty of the day to physical revelry. With the same lyrical sophistication, singers would rejoice in the food, wine, and rest that accompanied communal celebrations.

Although we have ample evidence for communal singing and the songs that were sung, we have no extant music from medieval Ashkenaz. It is not until the eighteenth century that Jews began to write down their own songs with musical notation. So what tunes were Jews using to sing their songs? Manuscript evidence suggests that numerous tunes were orally transmitted through Jewish communities. In many Jewish songbooks, marginal notes instruct that specific Hebrew songs are to be sung to the tune of other assumedly popular songs.¹⁵ While this tells us nothing about the tune itself, it does suggest that communities had particular tunes to which they sang certain songs. Such well-known community tunes would have helped community

11 Kirsten Anne Fudeman, "'They Have Ears, But Do Not Hear': Gendered Access to Hebrew and the Medieval Hebrew-French Wedding Song," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96 (2006): 542–67. For more on this Hebrew-French song, see Samuel N. Rosenberg, "The Medieval Hebrew-French Wedding Song," *Shofar* 11 (1992): 22–37.

12 For discussion of memorization of Hebrew liturgy among medieval Jews, see: Ephraim Kanarfogel, "Prayer, Literacy, and Literary Memory in Jewish Communities of Medieval Europe," in *Jewish Studies at the Crossroads of Anthropology and History*, eds. Ra'anan S. Boustán, Oren Kosansky, and Marina Rustow (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 250–70.

13 For an example, see: Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, Ms 1965, fols. 10v-13v and 35r-39r. Little is known about Daniel son of Yehiel aside from a few of his poems and his link to the famous Anaw family.

14 Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Ms Cod. Parm. 1912, fol. 37v.

15 For the limited current discussion of this practice, see: Raphael Loewe, "A Thirteenth-Century Piyyut Set to French Music," *Revue des études juives* 161 (2002): 83–96 & n. 73; Anne Ibos-Augé, Brigitte Lesne, and Colette Sirat, "Du texte à la musique: Enjeux d'une reconstruction mélodique. Juifs et trouvères – Chansons juives du XIIIe siècle en ancien français et en hébreu," in *Philologie et Musicologie: Des sources à l'interprétation poético-musicale (xiie-xvie siècle)*, eds. Christelle Chaillou-Amadiéu, Oreste Floquet, and Marco Grimaldi (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2019), 29–34.

members participate by humming along, even if they did not know the sometimes complex lyrics of each song.

Some rabbis were deeply concerned about Jewish communal tunes being adopted by Christians and consequentially warned about the importance of keeping Jewish and Christian tunes separate.¹⁶ Musical segregation, however, was impossible in urban environments aflush with melodies and songs. R. Eliezer son of Joel (1140-1220) reports that it was common in his community for Jews to hire Christian musicians to perform at their celebrations, including on the Sabbath.¹⁷ Jews also adopted Christian tunes and used them for all forms of communal singing throughout the Middle Ages.¹⁸ In one collection of Sabbath songs, a marginal note instructs the reader to sing the poem *Dror Yikra*, composed by the tenth-century Hebrew poet Dunash ibn Labrat (920-990), to the tune of a vernacular French Troubadour song (fig. 1).¹⁹

While singing could and did occur in almost any setting, many of our Hebrew sources stress that the most welcome space for song was the home. In the above source, R. Isaac describes his coreligionists singing around a table that was most likely the domestic dining table. Many songbooks explicitly position Sabbath singing in the home when they state that one should sing either when one has returned home from the synagogue or between various courses of the meal. These and other comments demonstrate that singing was rooted in the home and was an important expression of Jewish domestic piety in the Middle Ages. Various texts point to this culture of domestic musicality when they praise parents for teaching their children tunes and songs.²⁰ Although scholarship has emphasized the medieval religious life of the church and synagogue, the home was also an important place for pious expression. This was likely even more true for Jews, who had a multitude of rituals meant to be performed in the home. Instead of yielding to a mandated liturgy as they did in the synagogue, in their homes Jews could choose the songs, the tunes and the choreography for their domestic musical performance. Be it from the home, synagogue, or street-corner, Jewish voices and songs contributed much to the polyphony of sounds accompanying daily life in medieval cities.

16 See, for example, *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Reuven Margaliyot (Jerusalem: Mossad haRav Kook, 1957), 302, §428-429.

17 Eliezer son of Joel, *Sefer Ra'aviah*, ed. David Deblytski (Bnei Brak: David Deblytski, 1989), 2:326–27.

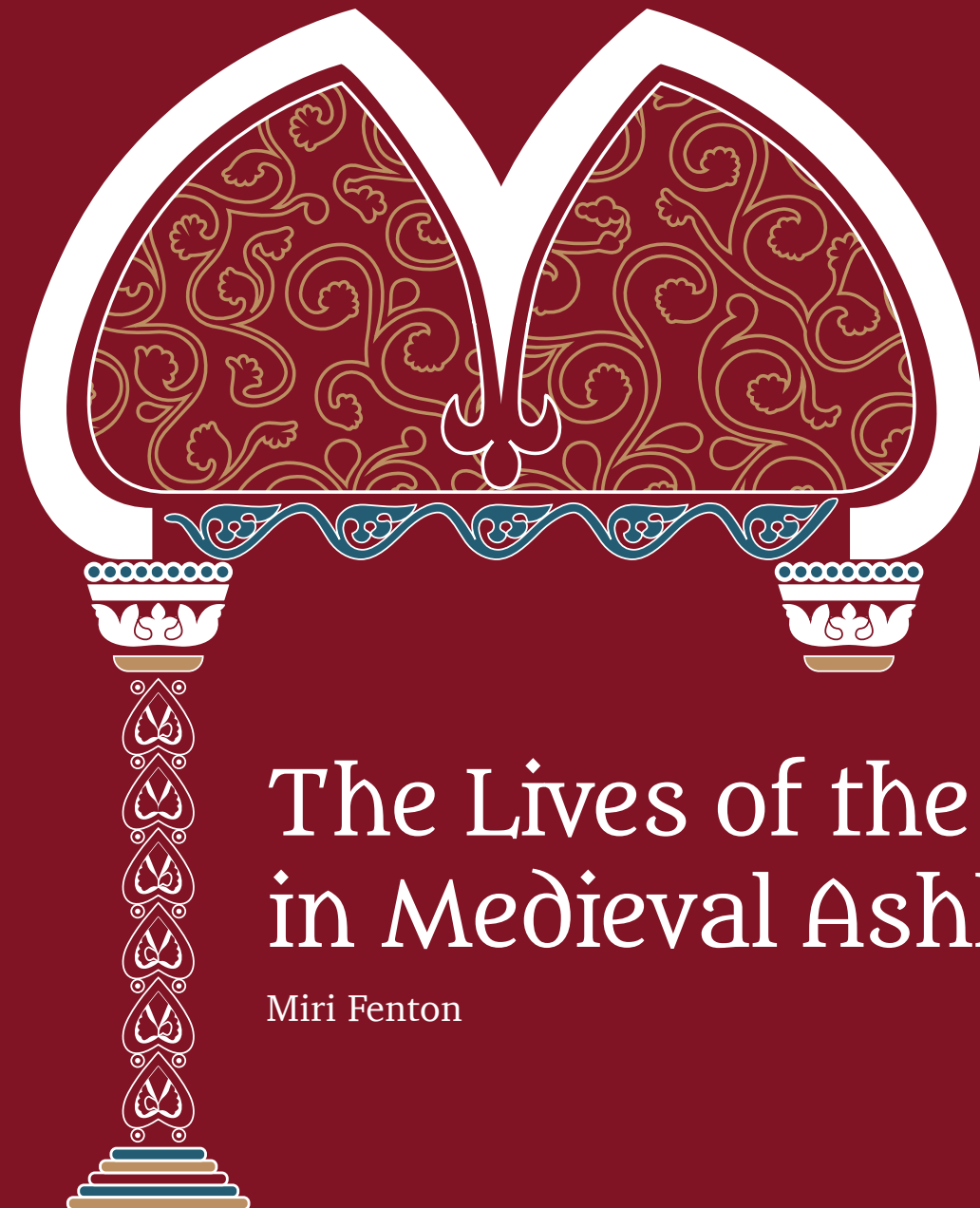
18 Edwin Seroussi, "Jewish Music and Diaspora," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 31–32; Diana Matut, *Dichtung und Musik im frühneuzeitlichen Aschkenas* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 2:39–61.

19 New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Ms 8092, fol. 38v. For discussion of this song and melody, see: Anne Ibos-Augé, Brigitte Lesne, and Colette Sirat, "Du texte à la musique: Enjeux d'une reconstruction mélodique. Juifs et trouvères – Chansons juives du XIIIe siècle en ancien français et en hébreu," in *Philologie et Musicologie: Des sources à l'interprétation poético-musicale (xiie-xvie siècle)*, eds. Christelle Chaillou-Amadiéu, Oreste Floquet, and Marco Grimaldi (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2019), 34, 37-39.

20 See, for example, Eleazar of Worms (1176-1234) who praises his daughters for reciting songs learned from their mother. *Gezerot Ashkenaz veTsarfat*, ed. Abraham M. Habermann (Jerusalem: Sifrei Tarshish, 1945), 165–66.

Further Reading

- ❖ Sarit Shalev-Eyni, "The Aural-Visual Experience in the Ashkenazi Ritual Domain of the Middle Ages." In *Resounding Images: Medieval Intersections of Art, Music and Sound*, edited by Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly, 189–204. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015.
- ❖ Kirsten Anne Fudeman, "'They Have Ears, But Do Not Hear': Gendered Access to Hebrew and the Medieval Hebrew-French Wedding Song," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96 (2006): 542–67.
- ❖ Kirsten Anne Fudeman, *Vernacular Voices: Language and Identity in Medieval French Jewish Communities*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.
- ❖ John Haines, *Medieval Song in Romance Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- ❖ Albert Evan Kohn, "'To Sing on Shabbat, Night and Day, Each Person at Their Table': On the Formation of the Custom to Sing Shabbat Zemirot in Medieval Europe," Forthcoming in *AJS Review*.



The Lives of the Dead in Medieval Ashkenaz

Miri Fenton

There is a night that the souls come out of their graves, like on the eve of *Hoshanah Rabbah* [the seventh day of *Sukkot*, considered to be the final day of divine judgement for the year following the Days of Awe], when the moon is out, and they [the souls] go out and pray. And two people went out and hid themselves in a place in the graveyard and heard one of the souls say to her friend: "let's go out and pray." All the souls together left [their graves] and prayed and entreated [God] for mercy so that a death sentence would not be pronounced on the living, and also that those who were to die would turn back from their evil ways and [they prayed] that the ill are made well and [they prayed] about all matters of life and death, and [they prayed] for themselves to quickly remove judgement from them, and [they prayed] for others and their communities. Another year on the eve of *Hoshanah Rabbah* two other people went [to the graveyard

to overhear the prayers of the dead]. All the souls left their graves except one virgin who had died before the sabbath. [The other souls] told her to come out [of her grave]. She said: "I cannot because my father had been rich and then he became poor and he buried me without clothes." And they [the two living people hiding in the graveyard] heard that some of the souls said: "we should not gather together [to pray] because years ago the living discovered and told the rabbis that we do so, rather each soul should pray in their own grave so that the living will not hear and tell the people [of our prayers]". And they [the living people] were angry with the father and took clothes and clothed the virgin.¹

Judah son of Samuel, *Sefer Hasidim*, early thirteenth century, Germany

This story is one of many exempla (moralizing stories) in *Sefer Hasidim* (Book of the Pious) that refers to the relationship between the living and the dead. Medieval Jews did not think that dead people simply ceased to be or to participate in the lives of their families and local communities. Medieval stories from a range of genres feature dead people making contact with living friends or relatives in order to convey a message or provide comfort.² Three specific aspects of the ‘lives of the dead’ provide helpful context for understanding the import of this exemplum. First, through their souls, the dead continued to possess some sort of consciousness that was contiguous with their living selves. When the dead prayed or made contact with the living in these stories, they are identified as members of their Jewish communities and, in some cases, even individually recognized.³ Second, as in this exemplum, dead people could communicate – with God, each other, and living people. Moreover, when the dead communicated openly, the living could understand them.⁴ Third, though the soul underwent a process of separation from the body, for medieval Jews there remained a link between body and soul. As in this story, the burial location often demarcated a soul’s potential sphere of movement. Souls seem to have ‘resided’ with their corpses in the grave, leaving to pray or make contact with the living but not permanently wandering or floating aimlessly through space like ghosts.⁵ The extent to which this understanding of the dead reflected a comprehensive position on the afterlife is debatable. However, in order to function as literary exempla, at a minimum these beliefs must not have directly contravened popular understanding and experience.

The dead, in our story, have agency in the world of the living. Through prayer, they were able to intercede on behalf of the living. This marks an important departure from the Talmudic parable on which this exemplum is based. In *Massekhet Brakhot*, the Talmud recounts the question of whether the dead know about what transpires in the world of the living or the future. "On the eve of *Rosh Hashanah* (the Jewish New Year)... [a pious man] went and slept in the cemetery. He heard two spirits conversing with each other. One said to the other: My friend, let us roam

1 Judah son of Samuel, *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Judah Wistenetzki (Frankfurt am Main: Wahrmann, 1924), §1543.
2 For example, "The Ethical Will of Judah Asheri," Israel Abrahams and Lawrence Fine, eds., *Hebrew Ethical Wills* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006), 163–200.
3 For example, Meir son of Barukh of Rothenburg, *Sefer Hilkhoh Smakhot haShalem*, ed. Akiva Dov and Jacob Aaron Landa (Jerusalem: Akiva Yosef Press, 1976), §89.
4 Eli Yassif, ed., *Ninety-Nine Tales: The Jerusalem Manuscript Cycle of Legends in Medieval Jewish Folklore* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2013), 176; Eyal Levinson, "Youth and Masculinities in Medieval Ashkenaz" (PhD diss., Bar Ilan University, 2017), 98.
5 *Sefer Hasidim*, §319.

the world and hear from behind the *pargod* what calamity will befall the world.⁶ The other spirit said to her: I cannot [go with you] as I am buried in a mat of reeds, but you go, and tell me what you hear." The friend returns and explains which crops will be blighted the following year. The story continues with the spirits having an almost identical exchange the following year. On the third year, after the pious man recounted what he had heard to other people, the spirit buried in the mat of reeds said: "My friend, leave me, [the] words that [have been exchanged] between us have already been heard among the living."⁷ Implicit throughout this story is that the woman buried in a mat of reeds, and not in death shrouds, was embarrassed to be seen without proper clothes. The commentator R. Yom Tov Isbilli (c. 1260–1320, known by the acronym Ritva) explained that although the corpse itself could not move, spirits appear with the image of their corpses. Thus, the improperly clothed spirit was too embarrassed to leave the grave dressed only in a mat of reeds.⁸

While the structure of the Talmudic story is closely mirrored in the high medieval exemplum, there are some important differences between the texts. First, unlike in the Talmud, in the medieval story the dead did not predict the future, but rather attempted to intercede to help themselves and the members of their communities. Second, while the Talmud makes no mention of the status of the woman’s family, in the medieval story the inadequate burial shrouds were attributed to her father’s poverty. Finally, in the Talmud, though the dead woman’s mother eventually finds out that she is buried in a mat of reeds, nothing is done to remedy the situation. However, the medieval story implies that the woman’s body was exhumed in order to properly clothe her corpse in shrouds before reburying her. In the medieval world, the importance of death shrouds went far beyond the traditional respect for the corpse, and had become sufficiently important that it was conceivable, if uncommon, to exhume a corpse to dress it properly.⁹

This relationship between the living person and their corpse ties into a range of beliefs about the nature of the body, the afterlife, and the world-to-come in medieval Ashkenaz. These beliefs had implications for what happened to the corpse after burial. The corpse continued to bear traces of the life lived by the person even after burial, and so there was a trend to mete out physical punishments mirroring the four biblical death penalties: stoning, burning, beheading, and strangulation. For example, Eleazar of Mainz made very specific requests in his testament, written before he died on the first day of *Rosh Hashanah* in 1357. He instructed that "at a distance of thirty cubits from the grave, they shall set my coffin on the ground, and drag me to the grave by a rope attached to the coffin. Every four cubits they shall stand and wait awhile, doing this in all seven times so that I may find atonement for my sins."¹⁰ This request, made in an effort to be resurrected free of sin, demonstrates the belief in the link between body and soul that endured in death.

6 Rashi explains that the *pargod* is the partition that separates the Divine Presence from the world.
7 Babylonian Talmud, *Massekhet Brakhot*, 18b.
8 Ritva, *Massekhet Brakhot*, 18b.
9 Jacob son of Moses, *Leket Yosher. Pesakim uMinhagim*, ed. Jacob Freimann (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kaufmann, 1904), 1: §2. See also: Jaume Riera i Sans, "Fosas vaciadas: exhumación de restos judíos en la Edad Media," in *Et amicorum: estudios en honor al Profesor Carlos Carrete Parrondo*, ed. Efreim Yildiz (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2019), 287–93.
10 *Midrash Rabbah*, §65.

Medieval people were preoccupied with how the physical breakdown of the body after death could be reconciled with ultimate resurrection in the world-to-come.¹¹ Because of the ardent belief in resurrection, death did not mark the final end of a person’s participation in the Jewish world. While the body might change after death and then after burial, to some extent the person would always be embodied. Thus, when the dead returned to convey a message, they were often identifiable. Though there were some parallels in the theological questions occupying high medieval Christian theologians and Jewish authors, there are notable differences between Jewish and Christian understandings and treatment of corpses at this time. Most fundamentally, the Christian practice of dividing the corpse up after death for ease of transport to distant gravesites was anathema to medieval Jews.

However, for both Jews and Christians, the theological and the practical met in the idea that the body contained active power even after death. Medieval saints, monks, and kings were often considered not altogether dead until long after their burial. This is reflected in the culture of reliquaries as well as in stories of the corpses of saints and kings performing miracles on the way to the grave.¹² For Jews too, the corpse had an impact after death, though this impact was less immediately healing. Torah learning stopped in the immediate vicinity of a corpse,¹³ and the water in the house where a person had died was deemed dangerous to drink.¹⁴ As is still practiced today, those of priestly descent (*kohanim*) were not allowed to be in the same enclosed space as a corpse.¹⁵ Moreover, reverence for the practices of marking the graves of the deceased with stones, notes, and candles, as well as the enduring practice of pilgrimage to the graves of rabbis, is indicative of the long-lasting power of the deceased.¹⁶ Jewish attitudes toward death and beliefs about the afterlife were both informed by and developed distinctly from contemporary local Christian beliefs.

Ultimately, death in medieval Ashkenaz did not mark the end of participation in communal Jewish life. The role of cemeteries, whose layout often reflected the social make-up and hierarchy of the community, cemented the importance of the dead in the lives of Jews in the medieval world.¹⁷ Cemeteries were used not only for burials and funerals, but also for a range of memorial rites and communal gatherings invoking the assistance of the dead.¹⁸ In some instances, including the above exemplum, death even enhanced people’s involvement in communal life as intercessory prayer demonstrated awareness of and engagement with the affairs of the living.

11 David Shyovitz, "You Have Saved Me from the Judgement of Gehenna": The Origins of the Mourner's Kaddish in Medieval Ashkenaz," *AJS Review* 39 (2015): 49–73.

12 Julia Smith, "Relics: An Evolving Tradition in Latin Christianity," in *Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond*, eds. Cynthia J. Hahn and Holger A. Klein, Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2015), 41–60.

13 Eleazar son of Judah, *Sefer haRokeah haGadol* (Jerusalem: S. Weinfeld, 1960), Hilkhot Avelut §313.

14 Shimshon son of Tzadok, *Sefer Tashbetz Katan* (Warsaw, 1901), §442.

15 Yaakov son of Moshe Levi Moelin, *Shut Maharil*, ed. Yitzhok Satz (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayim, 1979), §65.

16 Ivan G. Marcus, *The Jewish Life Cycle: Rites of Passage from Biblical to Modern Times* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2004), 213–14; Daniel Sperber, *Minhagei Yisrael: Mekorot ve-Toldot* (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 2007), 3: 140–151.

17 Avriel Bar-Levav, "We Are Where We Are Not: The Cemetery in Jewish Culture," *Jewish Studies* 41 (2002): 15–46.

18 Nathanja Hüttenmeister and Andreas Lehnardt, "Newly Found Medieval Gravestones from Magenza," in *Death in Jewish Life: Burial and Mourning Customs among Jews of Europe and Nearby Communities*, eds. Stefan C. Reif, Andreas Lehnardt, and Avriel Bar-Levav (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 213–24; Elliott Horowitz, "Speaking to the Dead: Cemetery Prayer in Medieval and Early Modern Jewry," *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 8 (1999): 303–17.

Further Reading

❖ Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?: Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

❖ Sylvie Anne Goldberg, *Crossing the Jabbok: Illness and Death in Ashkenazi Judaism in Sixteenth- through Nineteenth-Century Prague*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

❖ Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Peering Through the Lattices: Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period*. Detroi: Wayne State University Press, 2000.

❖ Lucia Raspe, "Sacred Space, Local History, and Diasporic Identity: The Graves of the Righteous in Medieval and Early Modern Ashkenaz." In *Jewish Studies at the Crossroads of Anthropology and History: Authority, Diaspora, Tradition*, edited by Ra’anan Boustán, Oren Kosansky, and Marina Rustow, 147–63. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

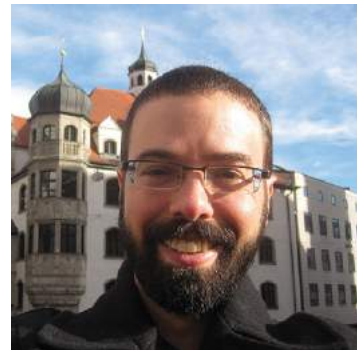
❖ David I. Shyovitz. *A Remembrance of His Wonders: Nature and the Supernatural in Medieval Ashkenaz*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.



Participating Historians



Prof. Elisheva Baumgarten is the Yitzchak Becker Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry and the History Department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She studies the social and religious history of the Jews of medieval northern Europe, (1000-1400). Her research focuses on the social history of the Jewish communities living in the urban centers of medieval Europe and especially on daily contacts between Jews and Christians. It seeks to include those who did not write the sources that have reached us, with a special interest in women and gender hierarchies. Prof. Baumgarten runs the *Beyond the Elite* research team, and her current work derives from this project. She also currently serves as the academic head of the Mandel Scholion Center for Interdisciplinary Research in the Humanities and Jewish Studies.



Dr. Tzafrir Barzilay is a Kreitman postdoctoral research fellow at Ben Gurion University of the Negev. Dr. Barzilay completed his PhD at Columbia University (2016) and then joined the *Beyond the Elite* research team as a postdoctoral fellow (2016-2019). He is the author of *Poisoned Wells: Accusation, Persecution and Minorities in Medieval Europe, 1321-1422* (University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming). Dr. Barzilay is currently investigating lay beliefs and practices pertaining to water in Jewish and Christian life from 1050 to 1450 in Europe, focusing on the tensions between the different meanings attributed to water by Jews and Christians in the context of its wide range of practical and ritual uses.



Dr. Neta Bodner is an art historian whose research focuses on medieval religious architecture, examined in conjunction with ceremonies, religious experience, and symbolism. Her PhD examined representations of Jerusalem in Italian Christian religious architecture. She currently studies the architecture of Jewish ritual baths in Germany and France. Dr. Bodner was a postdoctoral fellow in the *Beyond the Elite* research team (2016-2020), and a Rothschild Yad Hanadiv fellow at the University of Oxford (2018-2019). In fall 2020, she joined the Open University's senior staff as a lecturer in the History of Art and Architecture.



Nureet Dermer is a PhD candidate in the Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and a member of the *Beyond the Elite* research team. She holds a BA in Economics and Accountancy, and was a certified public accountant for ten years before embarking on an MA in Jewish History. Her MA thesis, entitled "The Jews in the Tax Lists (taille) of Late Thirteenth-Century Paris: The Socio-Economic and Cultural Lives of Jewish Men and Women in Christian Neighborhoods," examines socio-economic and gender elements of the everyday lives of Parisian Jews during the last decade of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries. Her PhD, entitled "Between Expulsions: Daily Encounters between Jews and Christians in Northern France, 1285-1394," focuses on the everyday socio-economic, legal, and cultural interactions between Jews and Christians in northern France during the calamities of the fourteenth century, and especially in the periods between the three expulsions of Jews from the French realm.



Aviya Doron is a PhD student in the Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a member of the *Beyond the Elite* team. Her research explores risk and trust in Jewish-Christian economic interactions in the German Empire (1280–1420). She asks how risk was conceptualized, experienced, and overcome in interreligious personal contacts, and which institutionalized mechanisms governing economic exchange helped build and sustain trust. Combining legal and administrative archival sources in Latin and German with responsa literature, her research draws on institutional economic history, social-network analysis, and the history of daily life. Identifying and understanding mechanisms for evaluating risk and building trust can shed new light on the role of economic incentives in shaping the boundaries between religious conflict, and daily economic and social contacts.



Miri Fenton is a PhD candidate in the Department of Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a member of the *Beyond the Elite* team. Her work compares and contrasts the everyday lives of Jews in the Crown of Aragon and Kehillot SHU"m (communities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz), from 1100 to 1347. She aims to use social history and social theory to investigate oft-overlooked legal and social issues that belie the realities of Jewish communal life. Miri holds a BA in history, and an MPhil in philosophy of religion, from the University of Cambridge. She was the Henry Fellow at Yale Graduate School 2011-2012, and studied at egalitarian yeshivot in New York and Jerusalem for two years.



Albert Evan Kohn, originally from Philadelphia, USA, is a research associate at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a member of the *Beyond the Elite* team. He completed his undergraduate work at the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University and an MPhil at the University of Cambridge before moving to Jerusalem. His work explores the diverse set of ideas, activities and people which animated domestic life in the cities of medieval France and Germany. His project considers how the home was understood and functioned as a potential meeting ground for Jews and Christians who entered one another's houses to work, conduct business, or spend time together. His current publications examine the domestic rituals of bedtime prayer and table singing.



Dr. Andreas Lehnertz is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Martin Buber Society at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Prior to that, he was a postdoctoral research fellow in the *Beyond the Elite* project. He is a social historian who studies Christian-Jewish relations, Jewish craftspeople, Jewish and Christians sealing practices, as well as Jewish oath-taking, in medieval Ashkenaz. Dr. Lehnertz's PhD, entitled *Judensiegel im spätmittelalterlichen Reichsgebiet. Beglaubigungstätigkeit und Selbstrepräsentation von Jüdinnen und Juden (Jewish Seals in the Late Medieval Holy Roman Empire: Sealing Practices and Self-Representation of Jewish Men and Women)*, was published by Harrassowitz in 2020. He is currently writing his second book about Jewish craftspeople in medieval Ashkenaz.



Dr. Eyal Levinson is a postdoctoral research fellow in the *Beyond the Elite* project. Dr. Levinson studies youth, men, fatherhood, and masculinities in medieval Ashkenaz. His dissertation (Gender Studies Program, Bar Ilan University, 2018) is entitled "Youth and Masculinities in Medieval Ashkenaz." Eyal is the author of *Who Grow their Forelocks and Wear Knightly Clothes: Young Jewish Men in Medieval Ashkenaz: between Rabbinic and Knightly Masculinities, Chidushim: Studies in the History of German and Central European Jewry* 21 (2019): 14-46 and "Male Friendship in Medieval Ashkenaz," in *Friendship in Jewish Culture, History, and Religion*, ed. by Lawrence Fine (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2021).



Dr. Ido Noy is an art historian and curator who specializes in Jewish art, with a particular interest in ritual and ceremonial objects. He is a postdoctoral research fellow in the *Beyond the Elite* project. In his current research, he studies the way medieval Jewish history is exhibited in contemporary Germany. His PhD dissertation dealt with ceremonial jewelry used in Jewish Ashkenazi weddings during the Middle Ages. Dr. Noy was a member of the Center for Jewish Art at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for six years, where he documented ancient and medieval Jewish art and served as the head of the Bezalel School Documentation Project. Most recently, Dr. Noy was the chief curator of the 2019 Jerusalem Biennale for Contemporary Jewish Art.



Hannah Teddy Schachter is a PhD candidate in the Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a member of the *Beyond the Elite* team. Originally from Texas, she studied at Clark University, the European Institute of Jewish Studies in Sweden, and the College of Jewish Studies in Heidelberg, Germany, before coming to Jerusalem. She is interested in how Jews engaged with monarchies and courtly culture in the European Middle Ages, with royal women a particular focal point. Her doctoral project uses art, literature, and administrative sources to explore the relationship between Jews and queens in thirteenth-century northern France, with a special focus on Blanche of Castile, Queen of France, who reigned during the years 1223-1252.



Amit Shafran is an MA student in the History Department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a member of the *Beyond the Elite* team. Her thesis examines a thirteenth-century Hebrew manuscript containing magical texts for rituals related to different aspects of communal and family life: marriage, fertility, health, and reputation. In her research, she analyzes these formulas in the context of daily life, focusing on the worldview of Jews in northern French communities and their ideas about magic, science, and the natural world.



Participating Artists



Andi LaVine Arnovitz was born and raised in the United States. She earned her BFA from Washington University in St. Louis and immigrated to Israel in 1999. Arnovitz is a printmaker and multimedia artist whose primary source of inspiration is paper. Her work has been shown in exhibitions around the world, and her works are part of many museum collections.



Kalman Gavriel Delmoor is an American-born calligrapher and Jewish scribe (Sofer STaM) who lives in the Old City of Jerusalem. Delmoor's love for the Hebrew letter led to his work as an independent Jewish scribe, producing handmade ritual and sacred objects as well as contemporary conceptual art.



Tali Megidish (Dov Abramson Studio) Dov Abramson's award-winning studio in Jerusalem combines design, illustration, and animation for clients with creative projects that explore contemporary Israeli and Jewish identity. Tali Megidish joined the studio team in 2018 and currently leads branding, design, and illustration projects.



Inbal Ochyon is a Tel Aviv-based illustrator and animator who received her BFA from the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design. Ochyon has broad experience in visual development for both commercial and independent productions. Her films have been screened in festivals around the world.



Arik Weiss is a multidisciplinary artist of contemporary Judaica. Weiss takes Jewish philosophical ideas from various time periods in the form of biblical verses, sayings, customs, and rituals, and intertwines them with contemporary objects, thus charging them with new meanings. Weiss's works have been displayed in museums and galleries around the world, and some are part of the permanent collection of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.



Adi Weizmann is a multidisciplinary artist who lives and works in Tel Aviv. Weizmann earned her MFA from Haifa University and is fascinated by Israeli architecture. She explores abandoned buildings and their surrounding ruins, and investigates their relationship with observers. In her artwork, Weizmann creates site-specific installations, drawings, and prints.



Refael Lidor Yashar (Refa.design) is a product designer based in Tel Aviv. He earned his B.Des from the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design. Yashar is an expert in high-end technologies such as computer-aided design (CAD) and three-dimensional printing of various materials.



Catalogue

Sources

Kalman Gavriel Delmoor

Ink on parchment. Scanned and printed (fusion wall).

2100x300cm

Kalman Gavriel Delmoor is a calligrapher and a Jewish scribe (Sofer STaM). In his work, titled *Sources*, Kalman integrates into a single artwork the sixteen historical sources discussed in the exhibition. This artwork is a seventeen-meter-long monumental mural in which Delmoor rewrites the Hebrew, Latin, and vernacular sources using traditional tools and techniques. His work thus preserves the textual nature of the sources but at the same time imparts new visual meanings to each one individually, as well as to all of them as a whole.



Illustrations:



River Sailing

Immerse Yourself

Hidden Treasures

Welcome!



The Deepest Well

Head Tax

Doing Business

Commerce



I Swear to God

Its Time!

Your Majesty

The Jewish Hat



Shooting for the Stars

Mazal Tov!

The Piyyut

The Cemetery



River Sailing

ראובן ושמעון שהיו בעיר אחת והיה לראובן ספינה אחת טעונה דגים מלוחים כדי להוליכה לעיר אחת ומצא שמעון שהיה רוצה לטעון ספינה אחת דגים להוליכה גם [כן] לאותה העיר א"ל מה לך עתה ולדגים יש לי ספינה אחת טעונה מהן לקוחי 'בכך וכך ליטר' לך לאותו ידיד פלוני וקנה שם פרקמטיא בכמות אותו הכסף שנתתי בדגים ואני אמכור הדגים ואתה תמכור מה שתביא וכשנבא יחד ויוציא כל אי קרן שלו והריוח נחלק ביחד וכן עשו.

Meir son of Barukh of Rothenburg, *Maharam's Responsa* (Prague edition), ed. Moses Arye Blakh (Budapest, 1895), §898.

היה ציידים מש

ויבא מר יצחק החסיד אל בית אביו ויבא אל המרתף
 לראות הכיטובות שם מיובבות ויאמר בלבו: מה שוה לי עתה כל הממון הזה, הואיל ועשו בי האויבים מזימות
 עמם מייבבות אביי ויבא אל המרתף בן האויבים ויאמר
 וימצא כי לא נגעו בלבו בזה הכיטוב הזה הואיל מזימות לכם כדרי להרחיקני מעם ה' ולהמריד בתורת אלו כד יצו
 הקדוש ועוד כד ביקשני להבריאני עמו האם יש כלי
 עוון ואלוין מלויין כלם לאדם לבית עולמו לא כסף ולא זהב
 וימצא שם **טובי**

Hidden Treasures

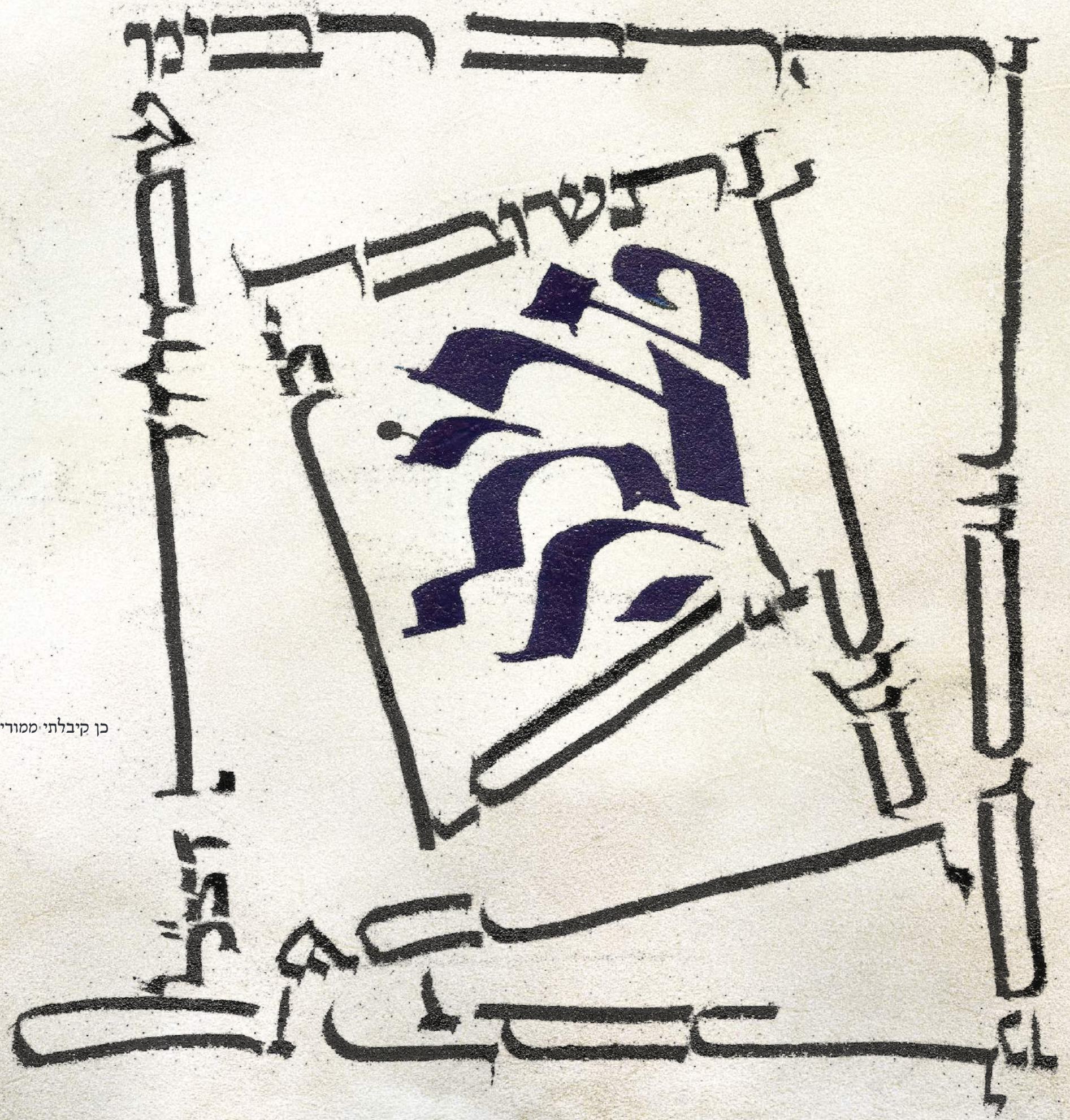
... ויבוא מר יצחק החסיד אל בית אביו לראות המטמונות אשר היו טמונים שם מימות אביו, ויבא אל המרתף וימצא כי לא נגעו בו האויבים. ויאמר בלבו: מה שוה לי עתה כל הממון הזה, הואיל ועשו בי האויבים מזימות עמם יי ולהמריד בתורת אלהינו הקדוש, ועוד כי גלח אחד ביקשני להבריאני עמו, האם יש לי עוד צדקה בממון הזה. ואין מלויין לו לאדם לבית עולמו, לא כסף ולא זהב אלא תשובה ומעשים טובים.

"Chronicle of Solomon son of Samson," in *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, ed. Robert Chazan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 263.

Immerse Yourself

כן קיבלתי ממורי הרב רבינו שמחה זצ"ל שכל בעלי תשובה צריכין טבילה.

Isaac son of Moses of Vienna, *Sefer Or Zaru'a* (Zhitomir, 1862), 1:40, §112.





Welcome!

ראובן טען לשמעון נתאכסנתי בביתך אני ואשתי והיו נישואין בעיר והיה לך בת בתולה ופייסת מן אשתי להשאיל לכתך עגילים של זהב שלה והיו שוים ג' זקוקים להתקשט בהן לנישואין עשתה כן. והלכה בהן לנישואין ובחזירתה השכיבה עצמה בבית החורף וישנה. והשפחה גויה גנבה העגילים מאוזניה והלכה לה. ואני תובע דמיהן ממך. והשיב שמעון ודאי כן הוא עשתה לי טובה ולקחה היא העגילים של בתי חילוף עגילים שלה ועדיין הם בידיה ומה שיחייבוני בית דין אעשה. וראובן השיב והלא אין העגילים שלך שוים כי אם חצי זקוק [...] הילכך שמעון פטור שהרי שאלה בבעלים היא שהחליפו עגיליהם. ואע"פ שפשעה שלא הניחתם בחדר במקום שמירה, פטורה דפשיעה בבעלים היא [...] וכיון שפטור שמעון מלשלם אותן עגילים חייב ראובן להחזיר לו אותם עגילים שלו.

Eliezer son of Nathan, *Sefer Even haEzer*, ed. David Deblitzky (Bene Beraq, 2012), 3:172.

The Deepest Well

משפט עבד גוי או שפחה השואבים מים בשבת בשביל ישרי מבור שהוא ברשות הרבים ומביא בבית ישרי. ועוד שהבור [הוא] רשות היחיד עשרה ורוחב ארבעה. מתיר ר"ת לשתות. לפי ישרי היה יכול ללכת ולירד בבור ולשתות שם וכ"ש אם הגוי מביא מן הנהר מותר שהיה יכול הישרי לשתות שם בקל.

Simhah son of Shmuel of Vitry, *Mahzor Vitry*, ed. Simon Hurwitz (Nürnberg: J. Bulka, 1923), 139.

במזמור

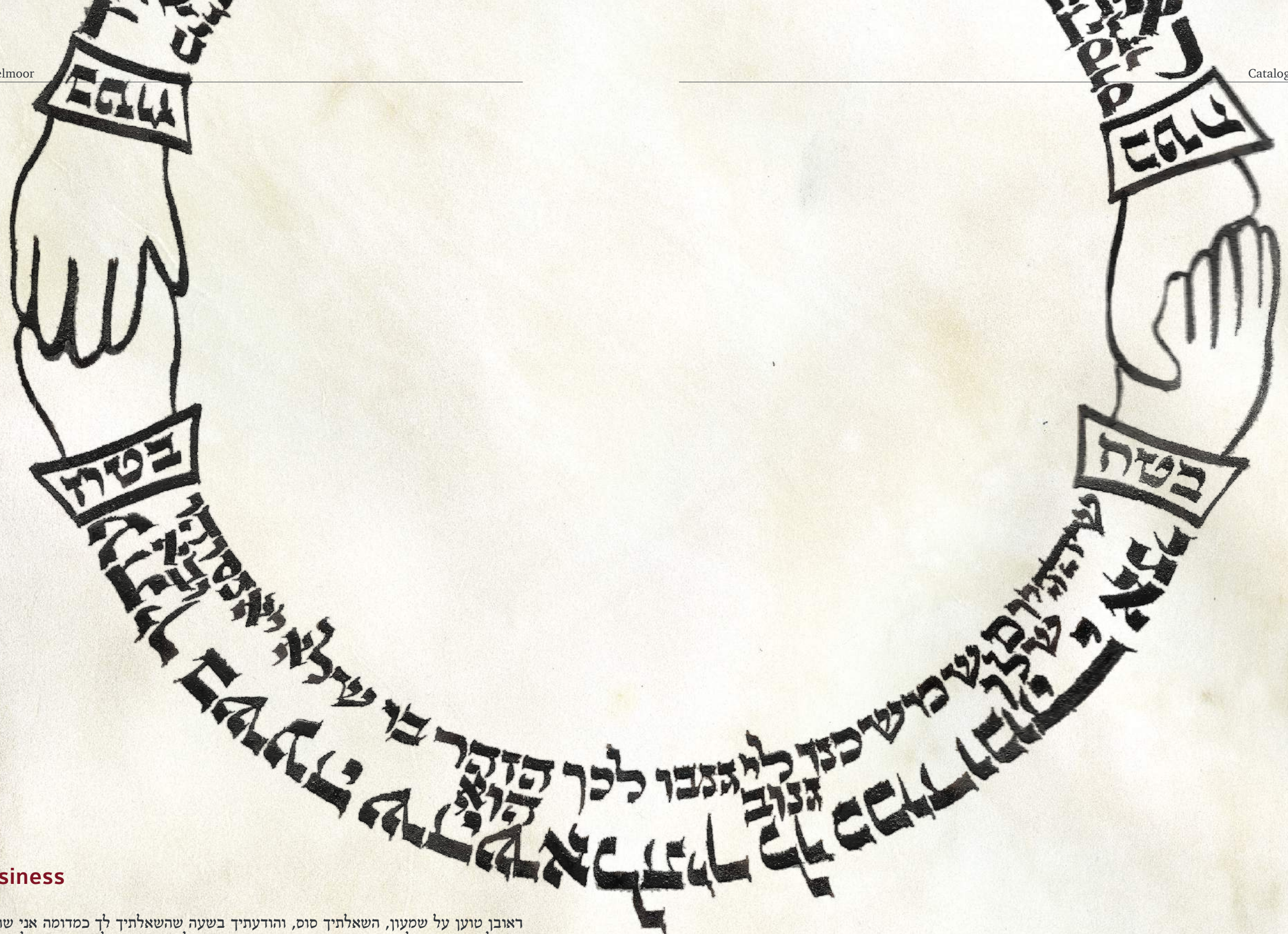


משפט עבד גוי או שפחה השואבים מים בשבת בשביל ישרי מבור שהוא ברשות הרבים ומביא בבית ישרי. ועוד שהבור [הוא] רשות היחיד עשרה ורוחב ארבעה. מתיר ר"ת לשתות. לפי ישרי היה יכול ללכת ולירד בבור ולשתות שם וכ"ש אם הגוי מביא מן הנהר מותר שהיה יכול הישרי לשתות שם בקל.

Head Tax

Ce sont les juifs de la ville de paris	
Haguin landenaise	10 livres
Lyon, de tillieres, gendre davi l'aiglelet	58 sous
Samuel gendre haguin devant dit	58 sous
La fame dieu le croisse cohen	16 sous
La fame mousse sahor et jacob son fuiz	36 sous
Mousse marc d'argent	20 sous
Fillon la fille de corbueill	70 sous
Joie la fariniere veuve	8 sous
Haquin marc d'argent et sa fame	12 Sous

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits. Français 6220, fol. 78r.



Doing Business

ראובן טוען על שמעון, השאלתיך סוס, והודעתיך בשעה שהשאלתיך לך כמדומה אני שהגויים שמשכנו לי גנבו לכך הזהר בו לא יאנסוהו מידך. השיב שמעון אתה, לא הודעתני כלום, והסוס שלך גנוב הוא ובא אשר לו הסוס, ולקחו...

Haim son of Isaac, *Sefer Teshuvot Maharah Or Zaru'a*, ed. Menahem Avitan (Jerusalem, 2002), 250, §226.



Commerce

רחל טענה על לאה נתתי לך למכור ב' סדינים וחגור... והיא משיבה הפסדתי הסדינים והחגור עם שלי, כי נגנבו לי הרבה דברים... וחזרה לאה וטענה על רחל הפסדתי לי ג' רביעים, כי גם גוים נתנו לי למכור, וכשאמרתי להם הפסדתי שלכם עם שלי הייתי פוטר עצמי מהם, אלא שאת באת וצעקת בפני כל שכיניי ואמרתי: את אומרת שנגנב, איננו כך, אלא בעצמך שמרת ואת אומרת שנגנב לך. והלכו השכינים והגידו לאותם גוים, ובאו עלי ואמרו לי והלא מכם אמרים (שאת) בעצמך שמרת ואת אומרת שנגנב לך, והוצרכתי לפרוע להם...

Responsa of Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg and his Colleagues, ed. Simcha Emanuel (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2012), 759-60, §388.

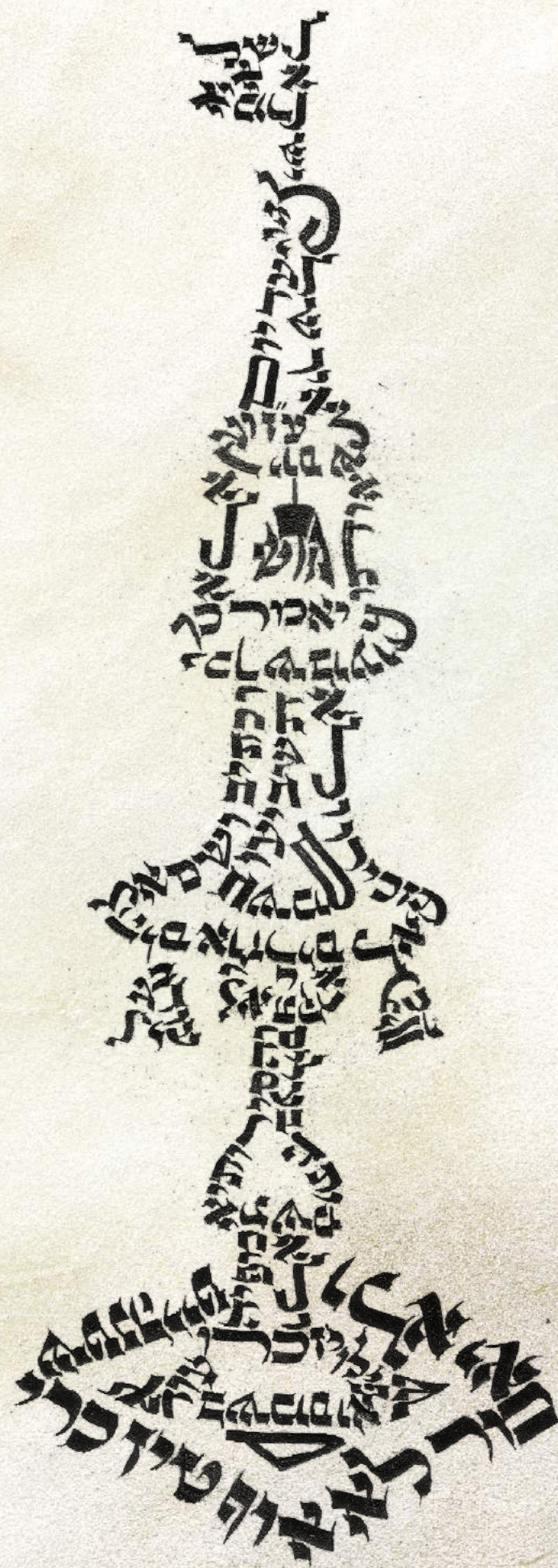
כועשה בוזסיד אוד שיה עשיר
 מאוד ולא נשבע מיכיו ובשעה פטירתו
 קרא לבנו לפני זקני העיר וא"ל בני
 הזהר שלא תשבע כלל אפילו באבות
 ואני אתן לך כל נכסיי שכל העושר
 שיש לי בשבועל ששכורתי אז — נ פי
 משבועה וענה לו אקיים ציוויך ולא
 אשבע אפילו באבות



I Swear to God

מעשה בחסיד אחד שהיה עשיר מאוד. ולא נשבע (בימיו) מימיו. ובשעה פטירתו קרא לבנו לפני זקני העיר.
 וא"ל: בני, הזהר שלא תשבע כלל אפילו באמת, ואני אתן לך כל נכסיי, שכל העושר שיש לי בשביל ששמרתי
 את פי משבועה. וענה לו: אקיים ציוויך, ולא אשבע אפילו באמת.

Rella Kushelevsky, *Tales in Context: Sefer haMa'asim in Medieval Northern France* (Detroit:
 Wayne State University Press, 2017), 131.



Its Time!

שלא יאמר ישראל לגוי עד יום איד של ע"ז ועד יום של אותו קדש אלא יאמר כך וכך שבועות וכתוב ושם אלהים אחרים לא תזכירו ולא תשביעו בשמם וכתוב ולא תקראי לי עוד בעלי והסירתי את שמות הבעלים מפיה ולא יזכרו עוד בשמם ואפילו שם אידם לא יזכור ישראל ולא יאמר לגוי באמונה שיש לאלהיך וגם לא יאמר לגר שם עבודה זרה אפילו להיות לוצץ בה ולא יזכיר בשמם ואל ישבע ביהודת שלו.

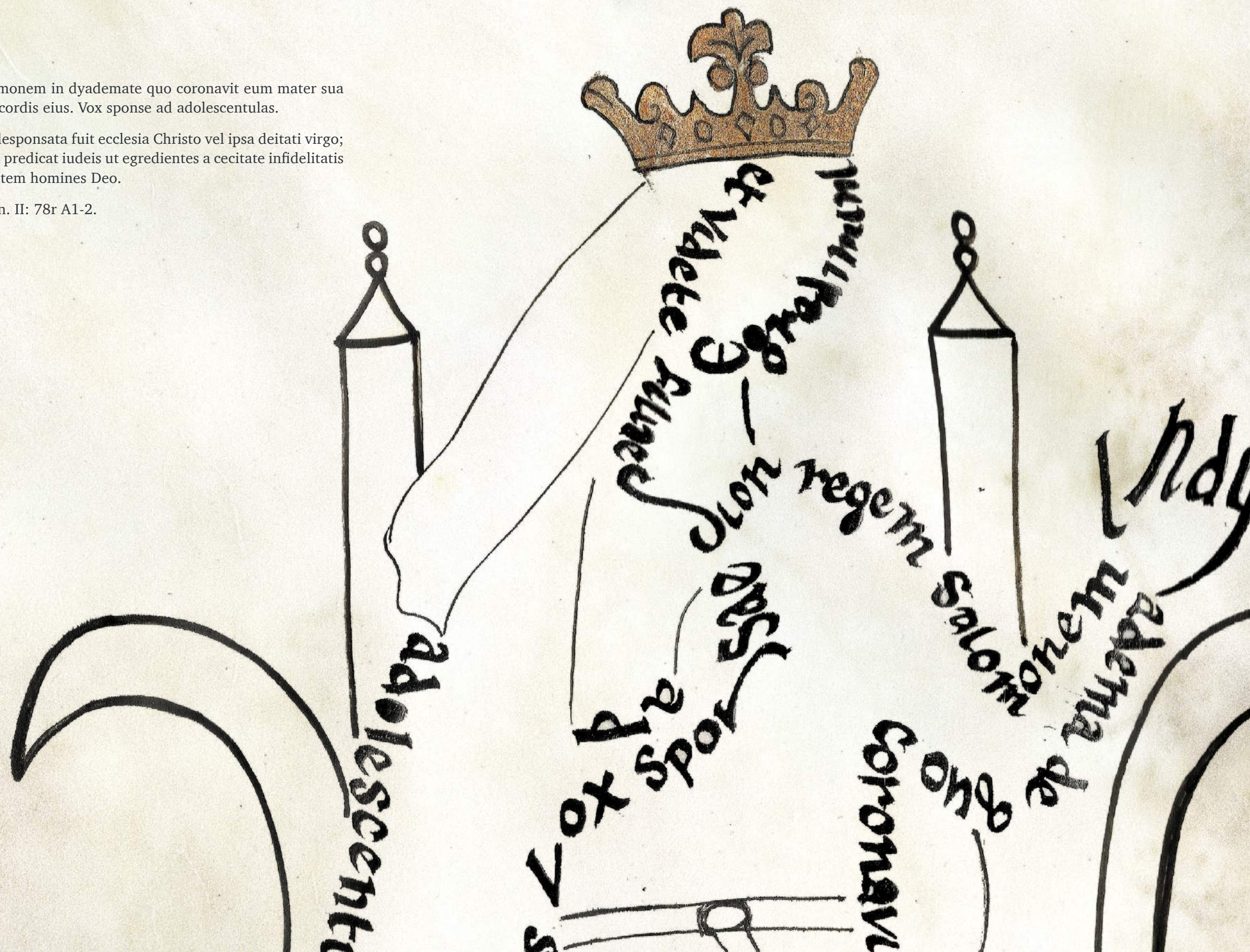
Judah son of Samuel, *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Judah Wistenetzki (Frankfurt am Main: Wahrmann, 1924), §1348.

Your Majesty

Egredimini et videte filie Syon regem Salomonem in dyademate quo coronavit eum mater sua in die desponsationis illius et in die leticie cordis eius. Vox sponse ad adolescentulas.

In annunciatione que fuit initium caritatis desponsata fuit ecclesia Christo vel ipsa deitati virgo; ecclesia ergo de gentibus conversa ad fidem predicat iudeis ut egredientes a cecitate infidelitatis agnoscant Christum verum Deum pacificantem homines Deo.

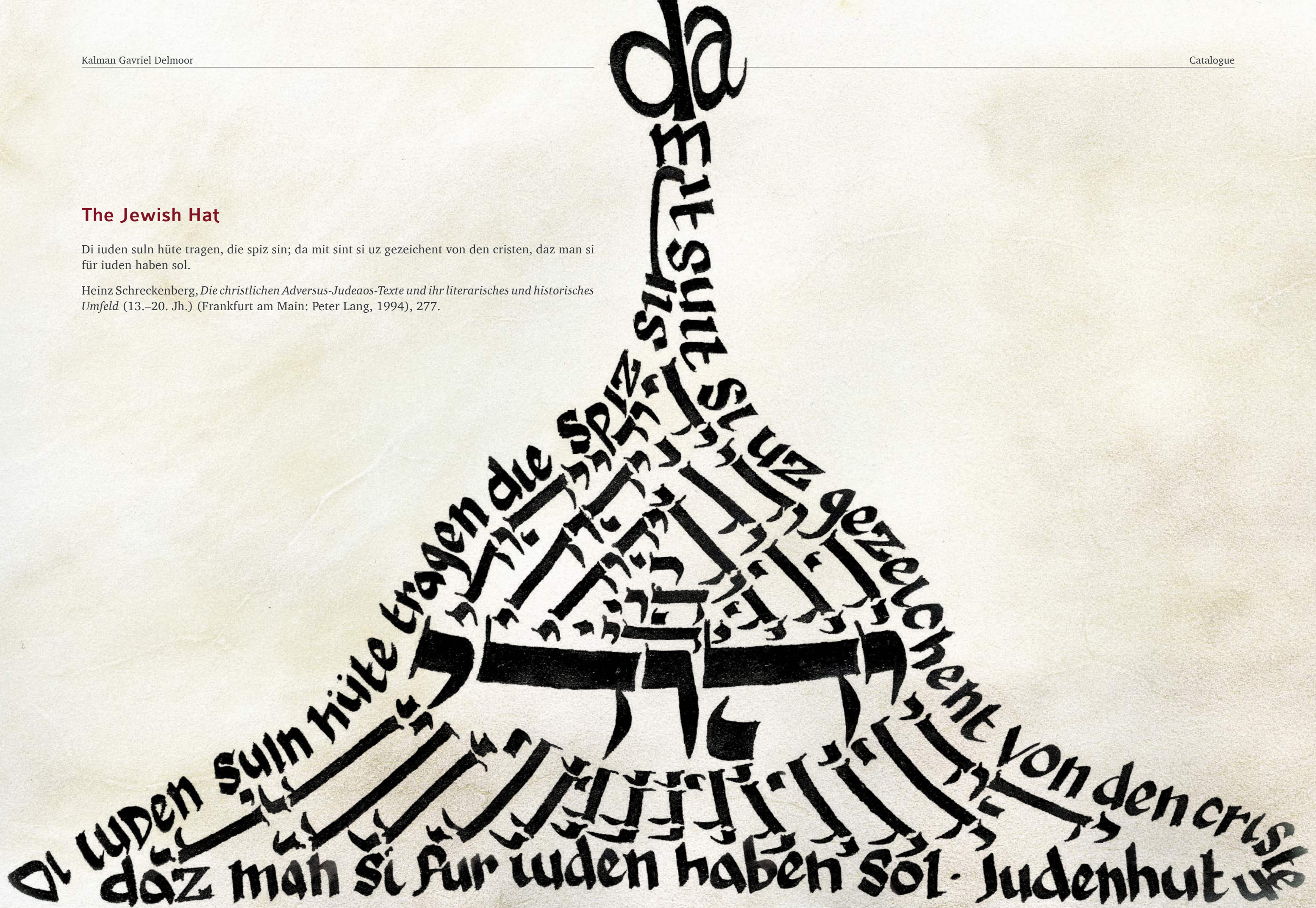
Moralized Bible, Tesoro del Catedral MS s.n. II: 78r A1-2.

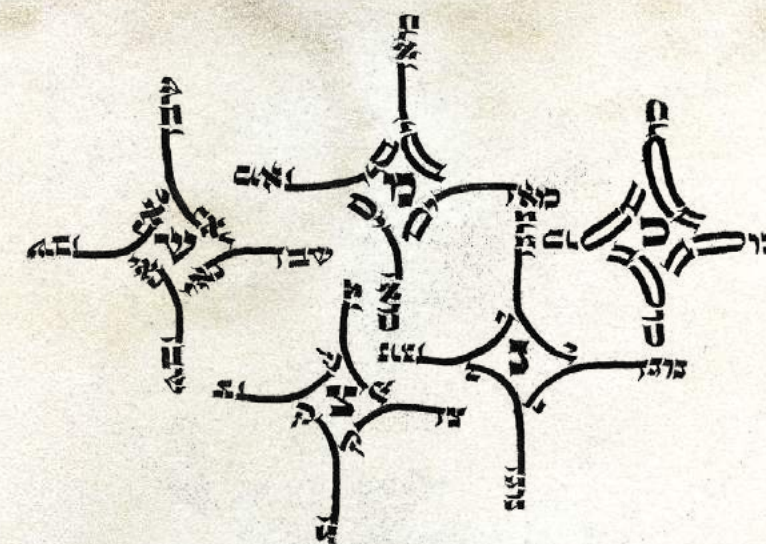
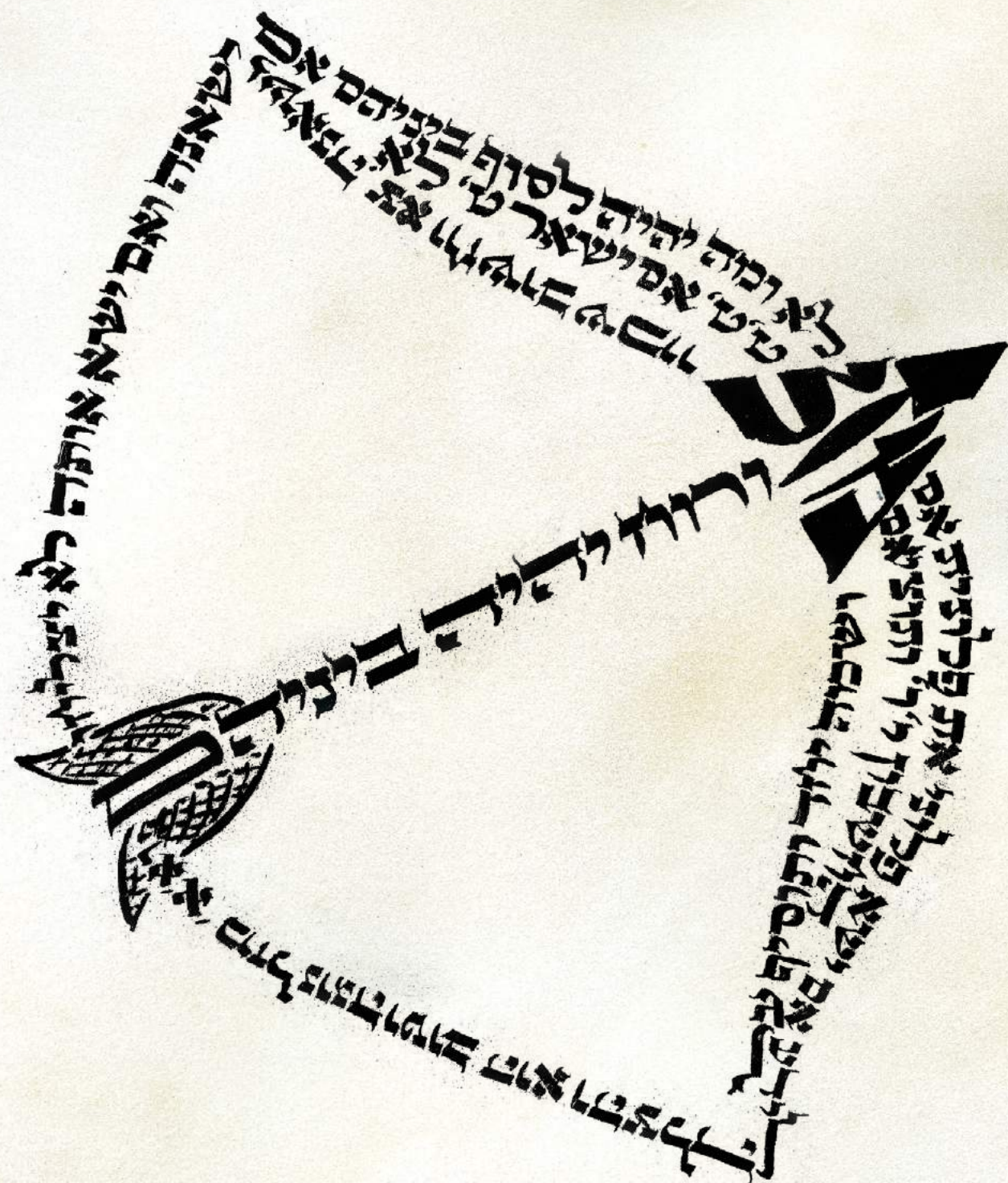


The Jewish Hat

Di iuden suln hüte tragen, die spiz sin; da mit sint si uz gezeichnet von den cristen, daz man si für iuden haben sol.

Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld* (13.–20. Jh.) (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994), 277.





Shooting for the Stars

לידע אם ישא פלוני את פלונית אם לא ומה יהיה לסוף ביניהם אם ישאנה) צא וחשוב שמו ושמה יחד ותוסיף על החשבון י'ו' ותוציאם ט'ט' אם ישאר ט' לא ישאנה ואם ישא אותה לא יצליחו וא'א' מזל נוגה וטוב הוא והצלה ורוח יהיה ביניהם* ואם ב' מזל מאדים רעה ושנא[ה] מדיבה וקנאה יהיה ביניהם* ואם ג' היא השנאה ו ואם ד' מזל כוכב ואוהבים זה את זה אבל פרנס פרנסתם תהיה רחוקה * ואם ה' מזל צדק טוב ורע ביניהם* ואם ו' מזל שבתאי רעה גדולה תהיה ביניהם) ואם ז' לא יהיו יחדו שלא יתאלמנו* ואם ח' בת גדולים) אהבה תהיה ביניהם.

Isaac son of Isaac, Chinon, France, c.1250, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. héb. 633, 124V.

Mazal Tov!

...בא לפנינו הנכבד ר' יעקב אולמא שי', ואמ' לנו שיש לו ממך משכונות כסף, חגורה מצופה זהב, ושתי טבעות זהב, וכל אחת יש בו אבן שקורין דימונט, ועוד טבעת קידושין שכתוב עליו מ"ט [מזל טוב], ואמר שנמשך זה ימים רבים שלא פדית אותו, ואומר שצריך הוא מעותיו...

Moses son of Isaac haLevi Mintz, She'elot uTeshuvot Rabbenu Moshe Mintz (Maharam Mintz), ed. Jonathan Shraga Domb (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 1991), 1:179, §70.



ביה"ק לאכלא א"י להתפלל בליל יום וכן י"ט עזרא לאכלא א"י
 בליל יום וכן י"ט עזרא לאכלא א"י להתפלל בליל יום וכן י"ט עזרא לאכלא א"י
 עזרא לאכלא א"י להתפלל בליל יום וכן י"ט עזרא לאכלא א"י
 בליל יום וכן י"ט עזרא לאכלא א"י להתפלל בליל יום וכן י"ט עזרא לאכלא א"י
 עזרא לאכלא א"י להתפלל בליל יום וכן י"ט עזרא לאכלא א"י

The Piyyut

מותר לכל אחד להתפלל בתפלותיו וכן יו"ט שחל להיות בע"ש מתפלל פיוט לאור הנר אע"ג דמתתאי מפני
 שאימת צבור עליו. ומעשים בכל יום במלכותנו בארץ כנען בע"ש בחופות מזמרים על השלחן בסדורי זמירות
 אע"ג דהנר מתתאי ולא חשו דבותינו לדבר זה.

Isaac son of Moses of Vienna, *Sefer Or Zaru'a* (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayim, 2001), 2: §43.

The Cemetery

ויש לילה שהנשמות יוצרות מן הקברות כגון בליל הושענא רבה יוצאות כשהלבנה יוצאת יוצאות ומתפללות. וכבר יצאו שנים והחביאו עצמם במקום אחד בבית הקברות ושמעו שאחת אומרת לחבירתה נצא ונתפלל יחדיו. יצאו כל הנשמות והתפללו ובקשו רחמים כדי שלא יגזור מיתה על החיים וגם אותם שימותו שישובו מדרכם הרעה ובחולי קל ועל כל עניין של חיים ושל מיתם ועל עצמם למהר לסוד דין מעליהם ועל אחרים והגידו לקהלם. לשנה אחרת בליל הושענא רבה הלכו שנים אחרים וייצאו מן הקברים רק בתולה אחת שמתה קודם שבת אמרו תצאי. אמרה איני יכולה מפני כי אבי היה עשיר וידד מנכסיו וקברה בלא בגד. ושמעו שמקצת מן הנשמות אמרו לא ניקבץ יחדיו כי כבר שנים גילו עלינו לרבים אלא כל אחד ואחד יתפלל בקברו שלא ישמעו החיים והגידו לעם. וכעסו לאב ולקחו בגדים והלבישו לאותה בתולה.

Judah son of Samuel, *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Judah Wistenetzki (Frankfurt am Main: Wahrmann, 1924), §1543.



The City Gate

Ink on parchment. Scanned and printed on sticker.

180x250cm

The entrance to the gallery space is through an illustrated gate designed to simulate an entrance into medieval urban space. The gate is modeled on an illustrated title page in the second volume of the *Worms Mahzor**, which includes the following portion of the morning prayer for the service of the Day of Atonement "Blessed be Thou ... who opens the gates of mercy...." Title pages with illustrated gates such as this one can be found in many Ashkenazic *mahzorim*. They serve to invite their readers into the textual space.

The gate at the entrance to the gallery consists of a pair of columns that holds an ornate portal. While the Gothic buildings at its top seem to signal a medieval European city, the text within the gate implies a double message: the city may also represent heavenly Jerusalem.

In placing the image of a city gate at the entrance to the gallery, the curator has alluded to the theme and content of the exhibition, which puts textual sources at its center. Entering the gallery, one can imagine the Jewish spaces of medieval Europe, an urban milieu that is conveyed to modern readers via the written word, mediating images, spectacles, and materials.

**Mahzor Worms*, Würzburg, last quarter of the thirteenth century, National Library, Jerusalem, Israel. Ms. Heb. 4°781, fol.73r.



Treasure Troves

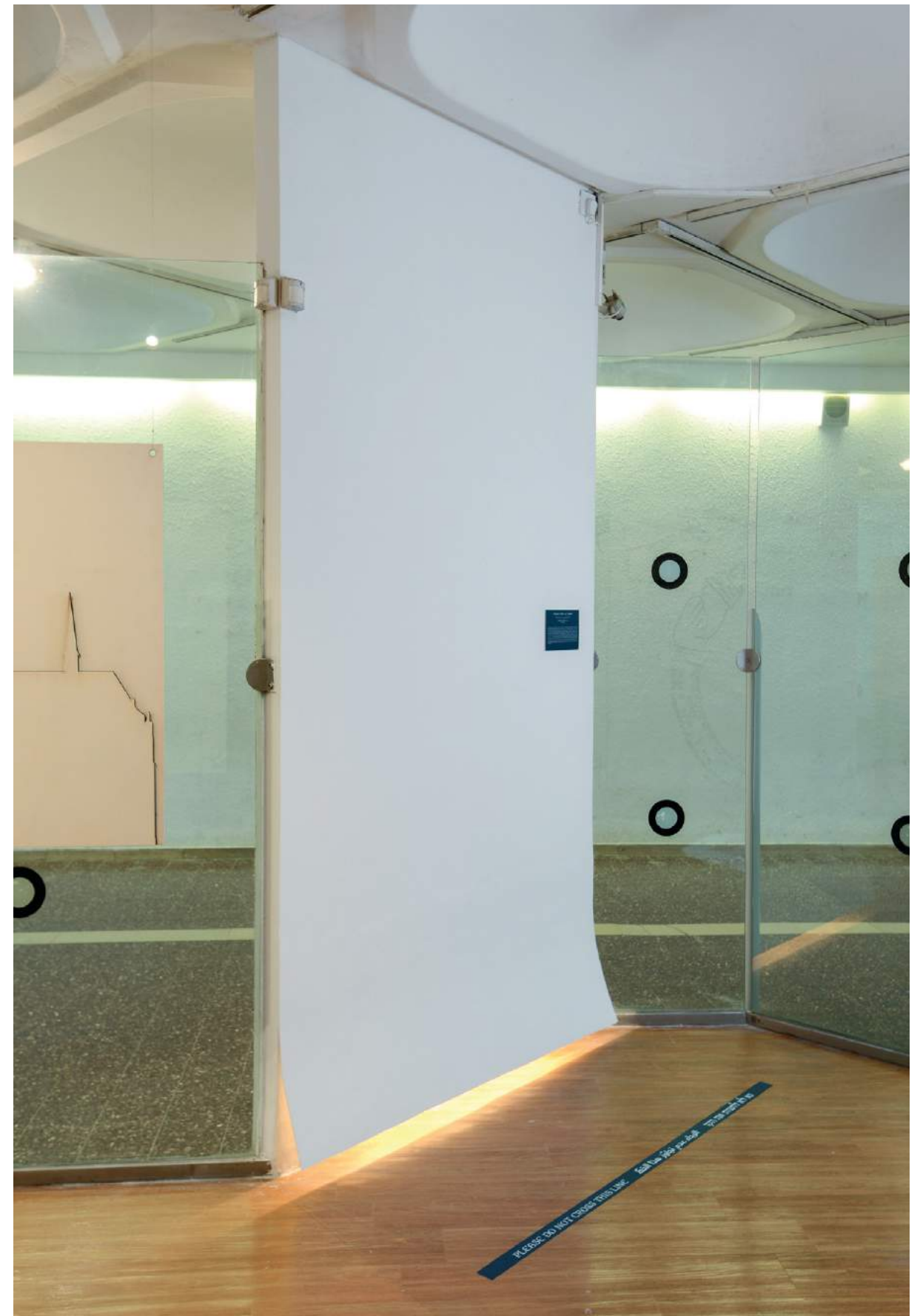
Adi Weizmann

Sculpting with plaster, LED

150x300cm

Adi Weizmann's installation explores the exposure of medieval Ashkenazic treasure troves. Before the invention of modern safes, valuables were often hidden by their owners. This concealing was primarily intended to protect the belongings from theft and looting, but also occurred as the result of family disputes, and in order to avoid tax payment. Violent outbursts and tension with Christian neighbors were additional reasons that Jews hid valuables. Whatever the reason for property hiding, the abandonment of these valuables implies a situation in which the owners were prevented from returning to the hiding place in order to retrieve the property.

Weizmann concealed her installation inside one of the gallery walls. She left a narrow crack from which a warm bright light emanates. Rather than being constructed of gold, silver, or precious stones, Weizmann's is rather a conceptual treasure that conveys the value of historical knowledge.



The Mikveh and the Church of Friedberg

Refael Lidor Yashar (Refa.design)

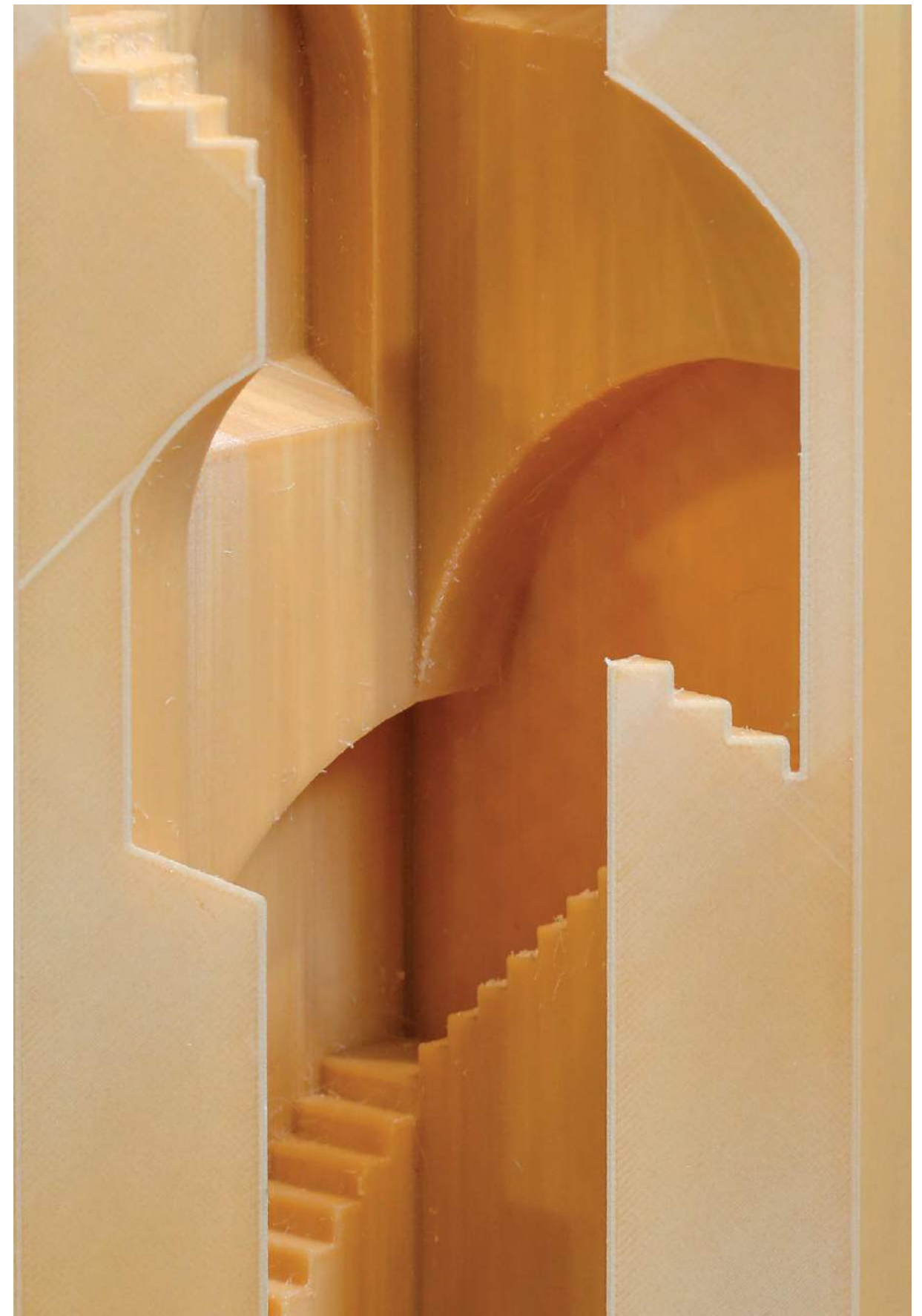
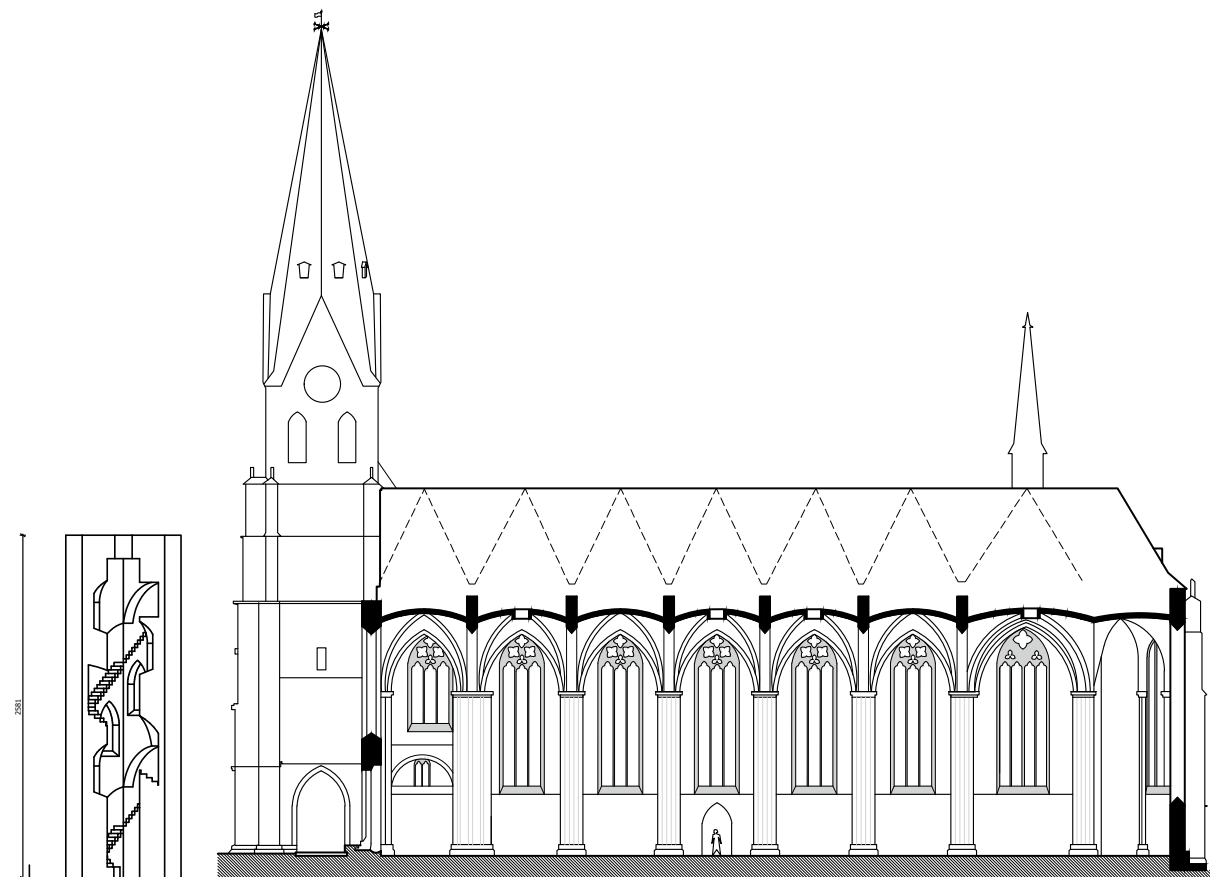
PLA, wood. Computer-Aided Design*, 3D Printing (FDM), Laser Cutting

150x150x10cm

This scaled-down installation represents the monumental architecture of *mikva'ot* (ritual baths, sing.: *mikveh*) as built in Germany and France during the thirteenth century. The *mikveh* is an underground structure that leads to a pool of groundwater. It was used for the immersion and purification of both women and men. These *mikva'ot* were quite deep. For example, one found in Friedberg, in the state of Hesse, is built as a rectangular shaft of about 25 meters deep. Another unique architectural feature of these ritual baths was a narrow window set at the top of the building, which was used to light the inner space with natural sunlight or moonlight.

Monumental *mikva'ot* appeared in an era of great European architectural achievement, namely, when the Gothic style reached its peak. In Friedberg, the church and the *mikveh* were built at around the same time and probably by the same builders and craftsmen. Yet, unlike the church, which stands out in the cityscape, the mikveh is hidden from its urban surroundings.

*Courtesy of Michael Bodner and Moriya Erman, architects.



Living Waters

Inbal Ochyon

Video Mapping of 2D Animation

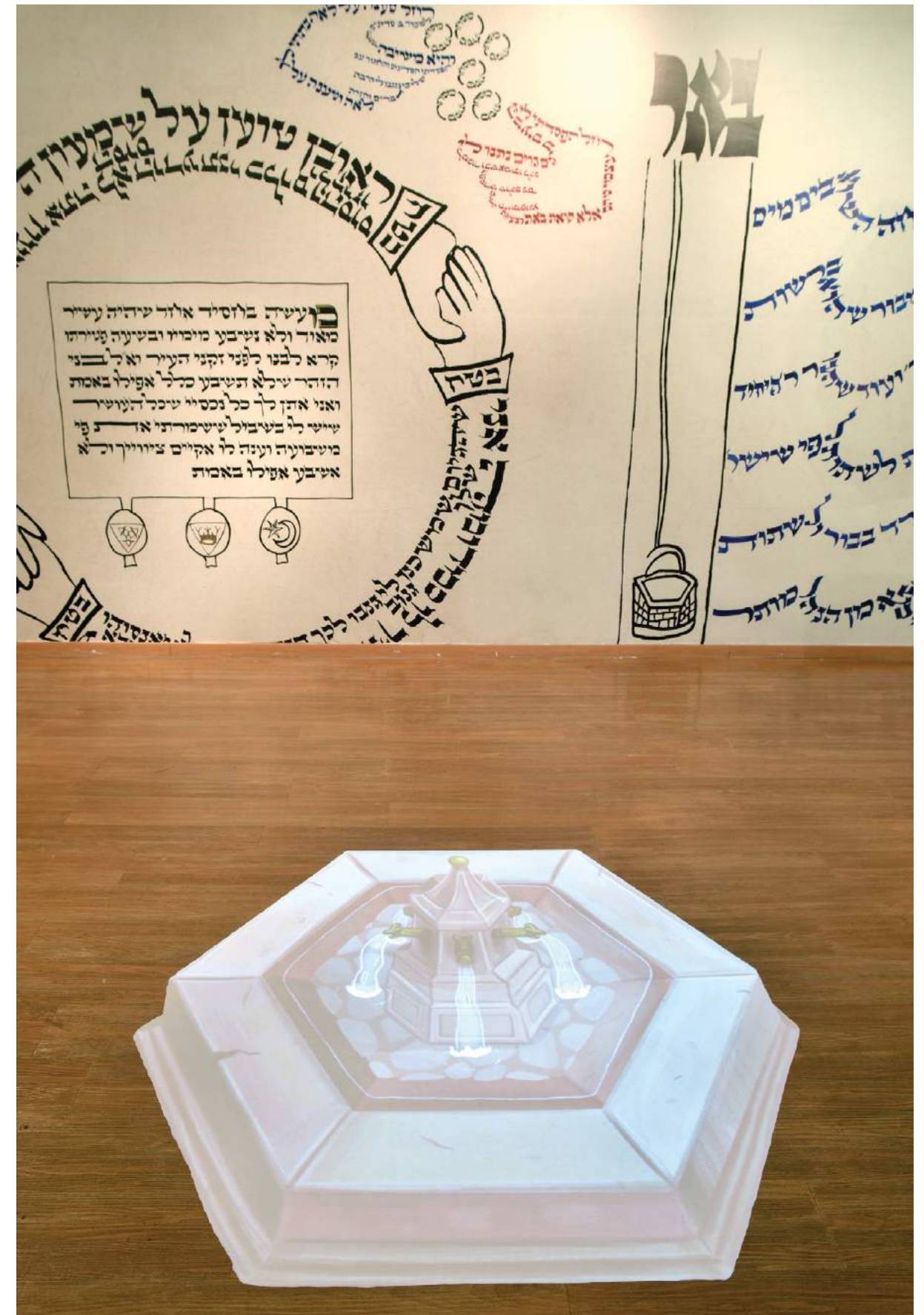
150x150cm, 00:12:45

Access to clean water for drinking, cooking, and bathing has always been an essential, everyday need. City dwellers in high and late medieval Europe often obtained water from public wells and fountains, most of which were located in city squares and on central streets. Due to their importance in daily life, urban water sources became social meeting places, including between Jews and Christians.

The animated fountain *Living Waters* was created by the animator Inbal Ohayon. Its construction is based on surviving medieval water sources, as well as on depictions of water sources taken from Hebrew and Latin illuminated manuscripts of the period. Ohayon's fountain operates with animated "running" water. Located at the heart of the exhibition space, it forms a virtual meeting place where visual and acoustic events take place, as well as a kind of city square where visitors to the exhibition may meet.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsV6jD-L1UM>



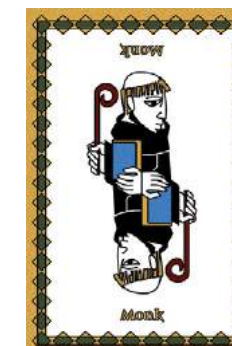
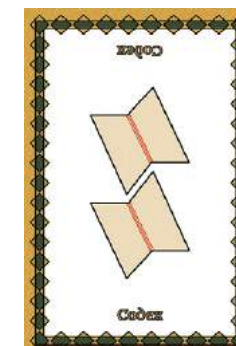
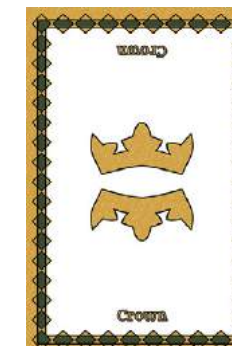
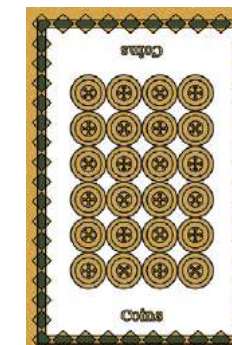
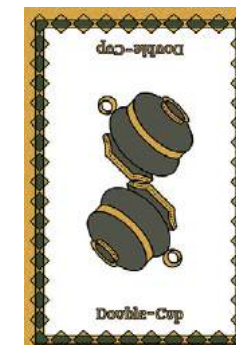
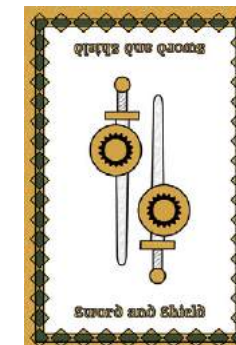
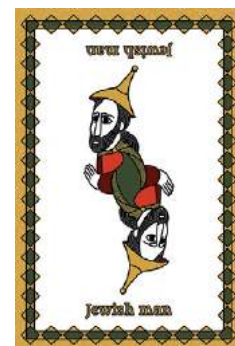
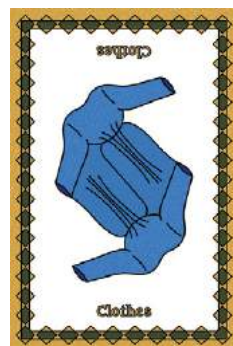
Geschäft

Tali Megidish (Dov Abramson Studio)

Digital print

300x150x5cm

Studio Dov Abramson's infographic presents Jewish participation in the medieval European economy through the medium of an economic "game." The economic activities of Ashkenazi Jews in the Middle Ages, most of whom lived in urban spaces, encompassed a wide range of professions. Among these, many Ashkenazic Jews, men and women alike, provided interest-bearing loans in exchange for pawns. Credit transactions were carried out throughout the city, on the streets and at markets, as well as within the private homes of Jews. These activities took place despite the demand of the authorities that such transactions be carried out in broad daylight and in public, so as to be under their supervision and witnessed by the populace. Among the business partners and customers of Jews, a broad spectrum of the Christian population is represented: peasants, artisans, guild members, merchants, clergy, and nobles. The card game developed by Tali Megidish of the Dov Abramson Studio recalls tarot cards, which began to take shape in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The deck itself echoes the complexity of the economic system and thus features players from all strata of society, various venues in which such transactions took place, and material objects that were used as goods or pawns.



Jewish Seals

Refael Lidor Yashar (Refa.design)

Wood-PLA, parchment. Computer-Aided Design, 3D Printing (FDM), paint

20x20x1.5cm (each)

Seal impressions represent a phenomenon of both legal and economic significance: the signing of documents for the purpose of verifying a person's identity. Medieval Christians and Jews, especially those who were wealthy, held such personal and familial seals. Jewish communities also had special communal seals. Numerous seal impressions that have been preserved to this day, in city archives across Europe, reveal the identities of their owners as well as some of the textual formulas and symbols popular in that era.

While originally only a few centimeters in diameter, the three 3D printed models on display have been significantly enlarged. All three represent different visual aspects of medieval seals. The first seal exhibits three Jewish hats (*Judenhut*) inside a shield surrounded by a bilingual inscription that identifies an individual by his first name and name of his father. At the center of the second seal is a contemporary Jewish symbol, a crescent moon and star. The bilingual inscription on this seal implies a communal context (modelling this seal on the example of Regensburg). The third seal has a royal fleuron crown at its center. This is an extraordinary symbol that is meant to reflect the economic ties Jews had with individuals and institutions from different strata of European society, including the nobility and royalty.

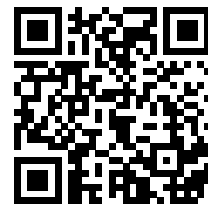


For Whom the Bells Toll

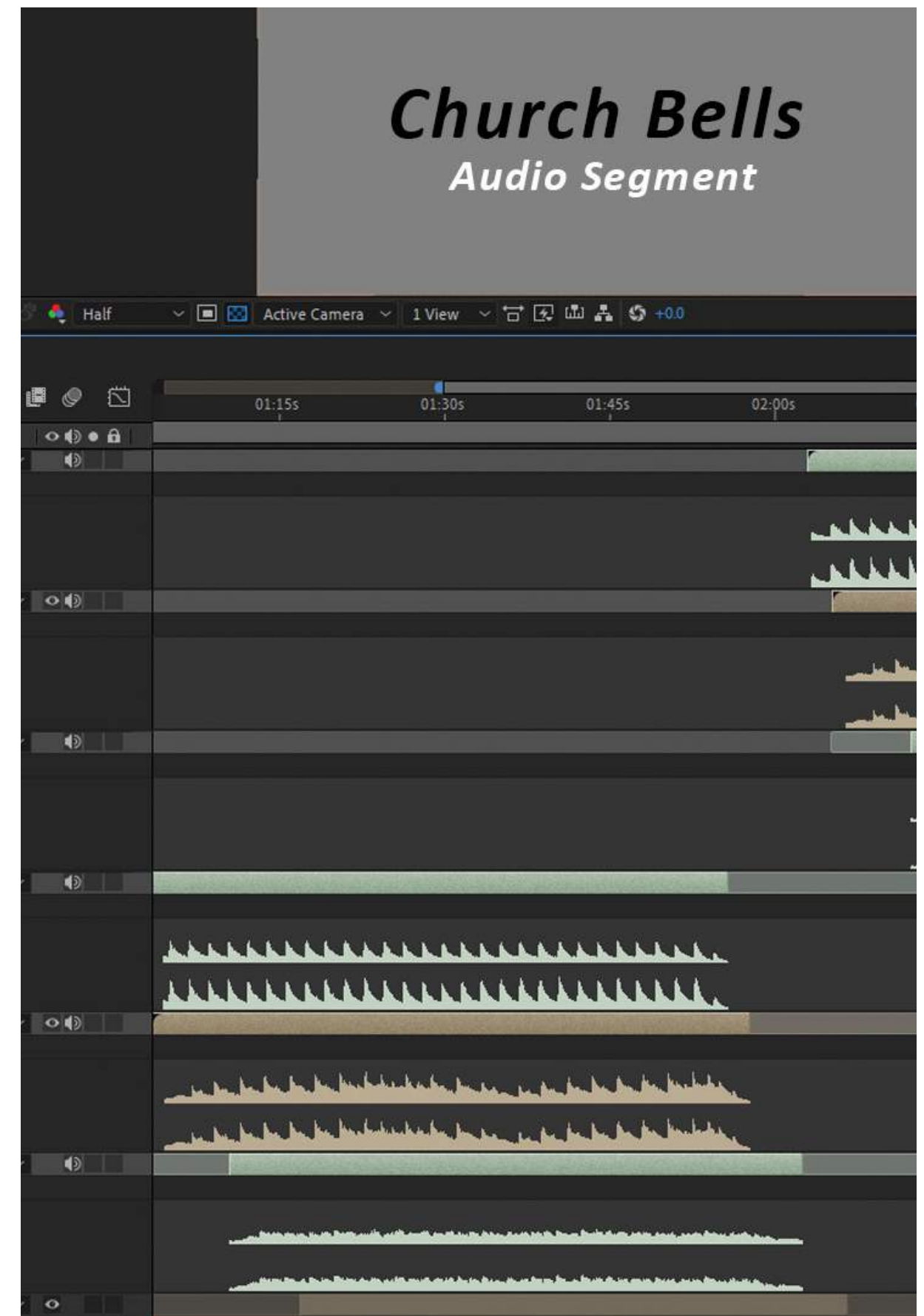
Inbal Ochyon

Audio Segment, 00:01:16

The audio segment *For Whom the Bells Toll*, which resonates in the exhibition space, exposes the visitor to the acoustic experience of a Christian city in medieval Europe. Among the most prominent sounds in the urban space are the ringing of bells in cathedrals, churches, and monasteries. Bell-ringing was used to announce the time of prayers, warn of imminent dangers, and mark festive events as well as death and remembrance. The acoustic effect depended on the dimension and structure of each bell as well as on the topography of the surroundings. Bell-ringing could be heard within a radius of a few kilometers, a geographical range that included the entire area of a medieval city. Jews living in Christian Europe conducted their lives within two parallel systems, Jewish time and Christian time. The Jewish realm of time included daily prayers, as well as the weekly and yearly cycle of Sabbaths and holidays. Like all other city-dwellers, Jews were exposed to the urban (Christian) time and followed it, especially in connection with daily activities in the marketplace.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Svuxlo0yPLU>



Your Majesty

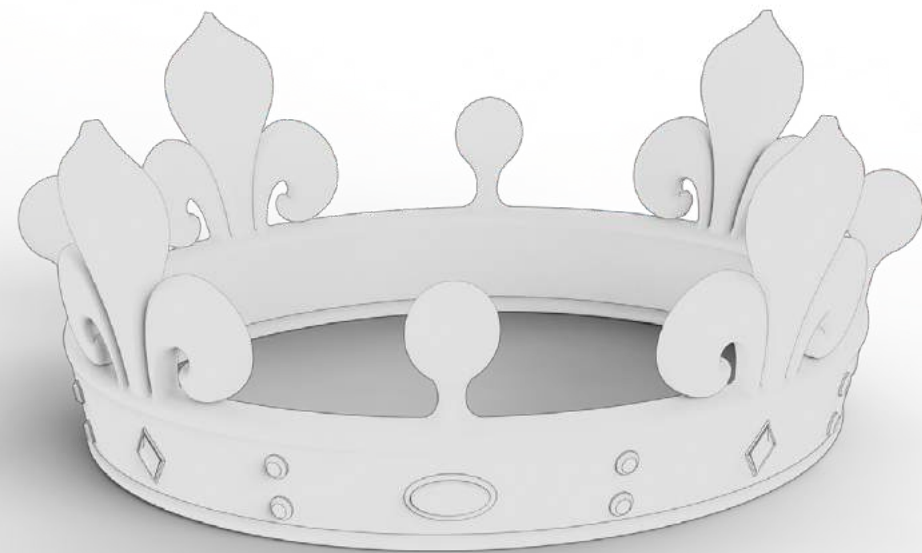
Refael Lidor Yashar (Refa.design)

PLA, Computer-Aided Design, 3D Printing (FDM)

24.9x20x9cm

Jewish life in medieval Europe was largely conducted within Christian kingdoms. Reflecting the enormous power that Christian royalty wielded over Jewish communities, this 'golden' crown was specially molded for the current exhibition using solid modeling computer-aided design (CAD). The model was then 3D printed using special polymers (PLA). The overall design of the crown is based on an illustration* taken from the Bible moralisée manuscript produced for the French royalty in Paris c.1230. The illustration depicts the owners of the manuscript, King Louis IX of France (r.1226-1270) with his mother Queen Blanche of Castile (r.1223-1252). Both are represented with the proper insignia: the king is holding a scepter and a globe, and both are seated on elaborate thrones, in royal dress, and wearing royal crowns.

*Queen Blanche of Castile, *Moralized Bible*, France, Paris, circa 1234. The Morgan Library, New York, MS M.240 fol. 8r.



His Name. Her Name.

Arik Weiss

Digital Print on parchment. Steel

3000x100x10cm

Arik Weiss' installation engages with the nexus of words, letters, numbers, and meanings using a Jewish practice known in Hebrew as *gematria*.

Like Weiss, Isaac son of Isaac, who lived in the French city of Chinon around 1250, practiced *gematria*, and used it as a tool to inform all aspects of Jewish life, including health, livelihood, travel, and love. One of the formulas in Isaac's own miniature manuscript predicted marital success by analyzing the first names of the couple.* This formula combines *gematria*, arithmetic, and astrology.

The calculation involves a four-step process:

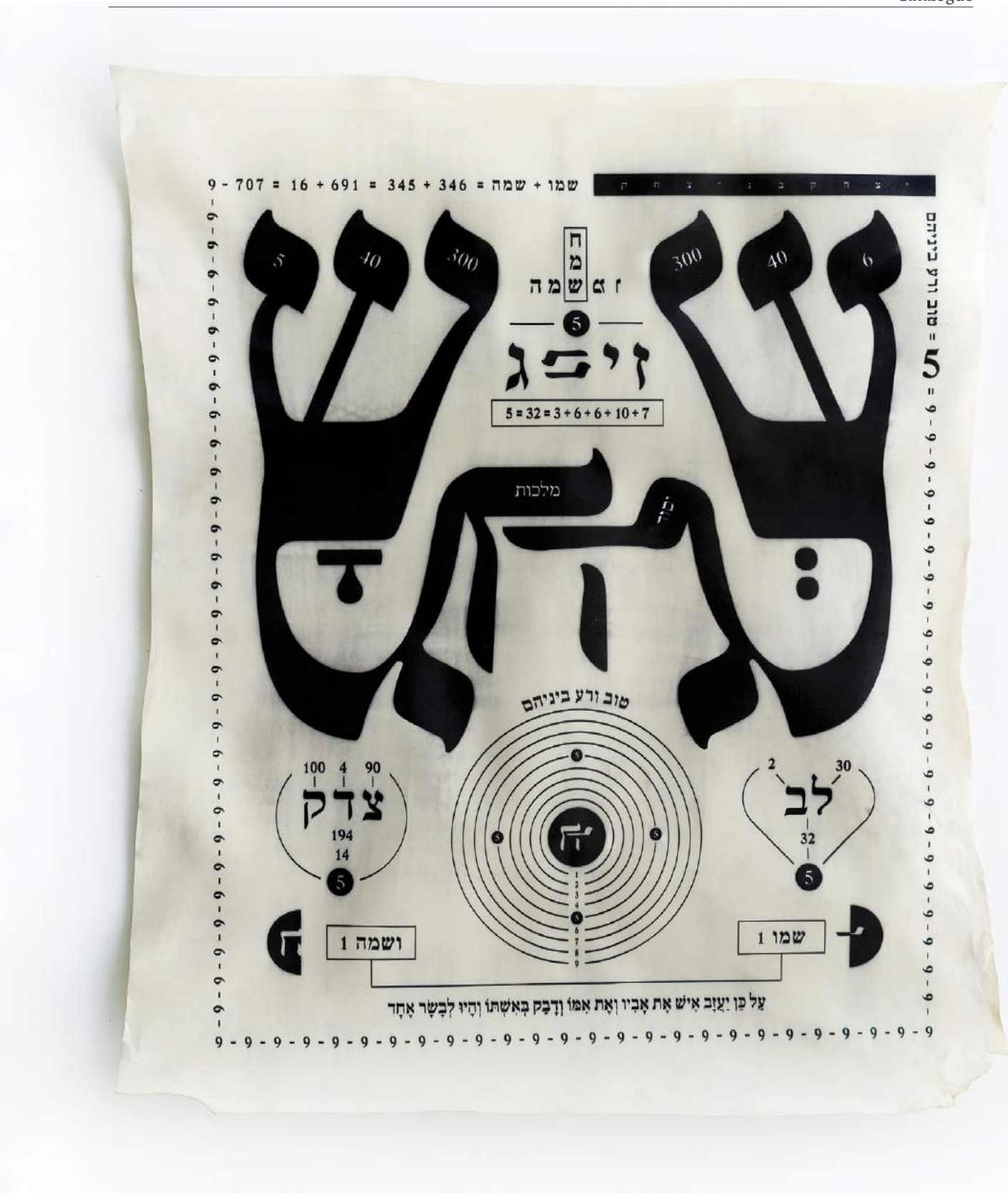
- 1. Calculating the numerical value of all letters in *gematria*.
- 2. Adding the number sixteen.
- 3. Dividing by nine until left with a remainder between one and nine.
- 4. Matching the remainder to the appropriate planet and extracting the meaning, namely, the marital fate of the couple.

Weiss' artwork takes Isaac son of Isaac's calculations to a new level. For the purpose of the installation, Weiss left aside the use of specific names and instead entered in the formula the pair of Hebrew words "his name" and "her name." This yields a principled answer as to whether a relationship between any given man and any given woman will succeed.

The result obtained, the number 5 and the planet Jupiter, is rather unsurprising: "both good and bad."

*Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. héb. 633, 124v.

Remainder	Planet	Marital Fate
1	Venus	Goodness, redemption, and pleasure
2	Mars	Bad luck, hatred, fighting, and jealousy
3	-	Hatred
4	Star (Mercury)	They will love each other, but their livelihood will not be good
5	Jupiter	Both good and bad
6	Saturn	A terrible tragedy will occur
7	-	They must not be together in order for them not become widowed
8	-	Great love
9	-	They will not succeed



א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ת
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	200	300	400

Mazal Tov Ring and Ketubbah

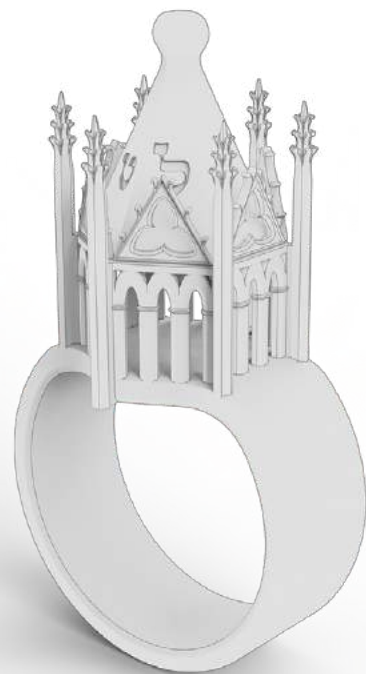
Refael Lidor Yashar (Refa.design)

PLA, parchment. Computer-Aided Design, 3D Printing (FDM)

20x15x39cm; 18x13.5x40cm

Mazal Tov rings were used at the Jewish wedding for betrothal (*kiddushin*), and apparently also served as a metal clips that held and adorned the rolled wedding contract (*ketubbah*). Medieval mazal tov rings had a distinct design, a hoop with a miniature of an architectural structure at its top. Some were discovered in medieval Ashkenazi treasures troves while others emerged hundreds of years later in the antiques market.

The mazal tov rings in the display were specially made for this exhibition. They are not exact replicas, but rather are based on a number of medieval rings that share similar characteristics. One ring consists of a hexagonal structure with a high dome inscribed with the Hebrew letters M-A-Z-A-L-T-O-V. At the top of the second ring is a rectangular structure with a gable roof. Inscribed on each of its sloping roof panels are the Hebrew words: MAZAL and TOV. Both rings were modeled using solid modeling computer-aided design (CAD). The enlarged models were then printed with a 3D printer using special polymers.



Dror Yikra

Medieval Europe was filled with music and songs that resounded through monasteries, reverberated in the streets, and filled the homes of everyday people. Jews participated fully in the musical life of the European cities, both by singing on their own and, occasionally, together with their Christian neighbors. An example of how Jewish and Christian musical life came together is documented in a unique early thirteenth century manuscript of *Mahzor Vitry*, an important liturgical work in northern France. Like other *mahzorim*, this manuscript includes numerous piyyutim (liturgical songs) that were sung throughout the Hebrew year. One of these, *Dror Yikra*, was written by Dunash ibn Labrat in tenth-century Spain. In the margin of the folio containing *Dror Yikra*, a note in Hebrew letters instructs that the piyyut should be recited to the tune of: "טויציל קצינט אננמורל" (*Tuit cil qui sont en namoral*). The melody of this song, which was composed by an anonymous Christian in the thirteenth century, was recently identified in another manuscript preserved in the National Library of Paris*. While this tune was used by Christians as a melody for the song *Court de paradis*, depicting a glorious divine feast in heaven at which guests dance and sing, it was adopted by Jews for their weekly Shabbat table-songs.

*Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 25532.

He will proclaim freedom for
His children
And will hold you as the apple
of His eye
Pleasant is your name, which
will not be destroyed
Repose and rest on the Sabbath
day.

Seek my sanctuary and my home
Give me a sign of deliverance
Plant a vine in my vineyard
Look to my people, hear their
laments.

Tread the wine-press in Bozrah
and in Edom that city of might
Crush my enemies in anger and
fury
On the day when I cry, hear my
voice.

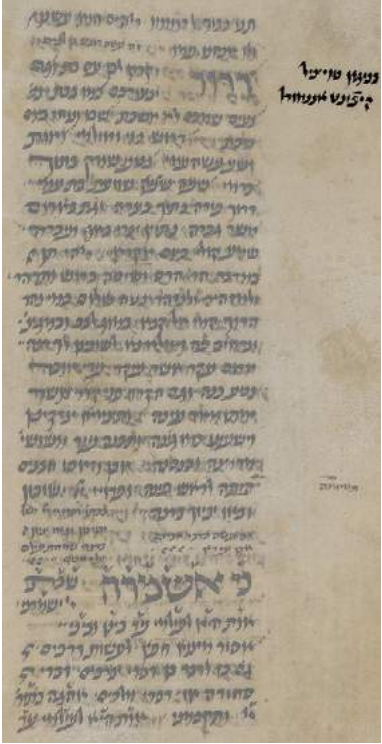
Plant, O God, in the mountain
waste
Fir and acacia, myrtle and elm
Give to those who teach and to
those who obey
Abundant peace, like the flow of
a river.

Repel my enemies, O zealous
God
Fill their hearts with fear and
despair
Then we shall open our mouths
And fill our tongues with Your
praise.

Uproot Edom that has uprooted
Devastate the whole plantation
that he has constructed
Cast a shadow too, over the face
of Kedar
Who has caused great pains
to me.

And let our vindication and
salvation sprout as if a garden
and the city be built and
rejoiced over
as far as Madmannah and
Sansannah.

The stone rejected by the
builders has become the chief
cornerstone
and the ransomed of God shall
return
and come to Zion in song.



Dror Yikra
Ink on parchment. Scanned and
Printed (fusion wall) | 150x300cm

The piyyut *Dror Yikra* (Dunash ibn Labrat 920-990) and the marginal note instructing the reader to sing the poem to the tune of a vernacular French Troubadour song (detail). *Mahzor Vitry*, France, 1204. New York, The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, MS 8092, fol. 38v.

Dror Yikra | Dunash ibn Labrat

Alla Franscesca (according to the original melody)

00:03':24

Brigitte Lesne (vocals, harps, direction); Pierre Hamon (flutes, direction); Lior Leibovici (vocals); Vivabiancaluna Biffi (violin); Michaël Grébil (lutes).



Courtesy of the European Institute of Jewish Music (IEMJ)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uElOCvrM2DE>

Reliquary

Andi LaVine Arnovitz

Painted Steel, textile. Readymade

200x200x100cm

Andi LaVine Arnovitz's installation deals with the final stage of the life-cycle: death, burial, and mourning. But was death truly final? According to beliefs prevalent among medieval Jews and Christians alike, the dead continued to be involved in the lives of their families and communities. These perceptions led to the development of Jewish customs that were performed around death. Arnovitz's reliquary installation showcases the material culture associated with burial. The semi-transparent boxes, which simulate gravestones, simultaneously reveal and conceal ritual objects, as well as everyday objects, that were used to prepare the dead for interment. Many of these objects are still used for Jewish burial today.





The Max and Iris Stern Gallery



פנים וחוץ, בתווך וס חיי יום יהודיים באירופה בימי

התעוררה בגיהנום, בתוך ומבחוץ. חיי יום יהודיים באירופה בימי
פנימיים ואיריס שטרן. מקס ואיריס שטרן. מקס ואיריס שטרן.
התעוררה בגיהנום, בתוך ומבחוץ. חיי יום יהודיים באירופה בימי
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פנימיים ואיריס שטרן. מקס ואיריס שטרן. מקס ואיריס שטרן.

In and Out, Between and Beyond Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe

The exhibition *In and Out, Between and Beyond: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe* is among the final fruits of the European Research Council research group *Beyond the Elite: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe*, headed by Prof. Elisheva Baumgarten that studies daily life in the Jewish communities of medieval Ashkenaz. The team has worked to construct a history which includes those who were not part of the learned elite alongside those who were learned, about whom we know more. Rather than spotlighting dramatic events of this period, we have trained our sights on its everyday moments. In addition, we have investigated a complex historical reality: the integration of Ashkenazic Jews within their Christian surroundings, alongside their maintenance of a distinct religious identity.

Reflecting its textual origins, the exhibition is comprised of sixteen units, at the heart of each of which stands a primary source from a particular literary genre. The curator, Dr. Ido Noy, orchestrated a fruitful exchange between the research team and seven Israeli artists, who then produced contemporary installations based on medieval artifacts, as well as original works created especially for the exhibition by contemporary artists. Rather than being constructed along a specific linear narrative, the space is divided by pillars into three distinct spaces, reflecting our three guiding themes: In and Out, Between and Beyond. Visitors may begin by reading the historical sources and continue by viewing the objects, or vice versa. We envision viewers making their own way among the displays at the exhibition and experiencing these connections between past and present.



دخول وخروج، ما بين وما بعد الحياة اليومية لليهود في أوروبا في العصور الوسطى

من "الدخول والخروج، ما بين وما بعد: الحياة اليومية لليهود في أوروبا في العصور الوسطى" أحد المنجزات الأكاديمية التي حققها فريق البحث "ما بعد النخبة" التابع لمجلس الأبحاث الأوروبية (ERC)، برئاسة الأستاذة الدكتورة إليشيفا باومغارتن التي تبحث في الحياة اليومية لدى المجتمعات اليهودية الأشكنازية في العصور الوسطى. يتطلع فريق البحث بناء صورة تاريخية فريدة تحيط ببعض الشؤون الأساسية، أولاً، الاهتمام بالقصص الشخصية والقصص الجماعية لليهود الذين لم ينتموا إلى النخبة الاجتماعية ولم يتركوا ثروة أثرًا مكتوبًا ثانيًا. إبراز الأحداث اليومية على وجه الخصوص، إلى جانب المواقف المعقدة التي نشأت غالبًا باعتناق الباحثين والدارسين. كذلك يمس البحث عناية خاصة بفهم العوامل المختلفة والمعقدة التي أحاطت بوجود اليهود في أوروبا الوسطى من حيث البعد الديني، فاتهم كانوا منخرطين في البيئة المسيحية التي وا فيها، ولكنهم حافظوا في الوقت نفسه على الهوية الدينية التي تفرغهم.

من المعرض إلى ربط المعاصر بالخبر من خلال الجمع بين الأبحاث التي تتناول اليهود الأشكناز في العصور الوسطى والأعمال الفنية الإسرائيلية المعاصرة يشتمل المعرض على ست عشرة وحدة فنية، بحيث تشمخ كل وحدة حول نص تاريخي مستمد من أنواع أدبية مختلفة قام بها المعرض. الدكتور عيدو نوي، يدعو سبعة فنانين وفنانات إلى عرض أعمالهم الفنية التي تعبر عن القضايا البحثية وتصور جوهرها، وذلك من أجل الربط بين القديم والحديث. بين تاريخ العصور الوسطى والحاضر، هذه الأعمال الفنية هي ثمرة تعاون بين الفنانين وأعضاء فريق البحث. فنية التواصل التي جرى بينهم في العام 2019، وما تحلله من حديث ومناقشات عن الجانب البحثي والجانب الفني، قد دفعنا إلى ابتكار هذه الأعمال الفنية التي تلامس البحث التاريخي وتعبّر عنه تعبيرا رصنا.

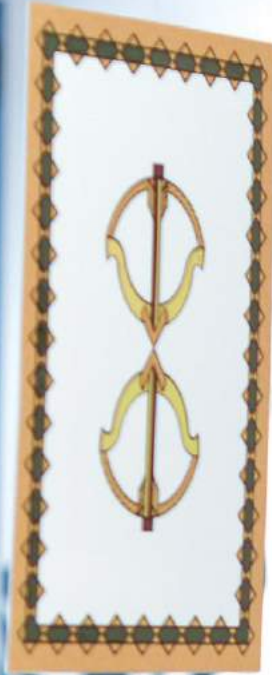
نودعي المعرض أن يفرض على الزوار قصة متسلسلة من البداية إلى النهاية، بما يتكون المعرض من ثلاثة أقسام مختلفة تمثل ثلاث فترات مستقلة: "الدخول والخروج"، "ما بين"، و "ما بعد". وهي الفترات التي كانت الموجة والفكر في الكتابة التاريخية، وفي الإبداع الفني، وفي عمل أمين المعرض، يتحكم اختيار المسار الذي يمشي فيه جؤولتكم في المعرض، نرغب بكم وترجو أن تكون زيارتكم وقراءتكم بل المعرض وسيلة إلى ملازمة الروابط بين الماضي والحاضر وإلى التفكير فيها.



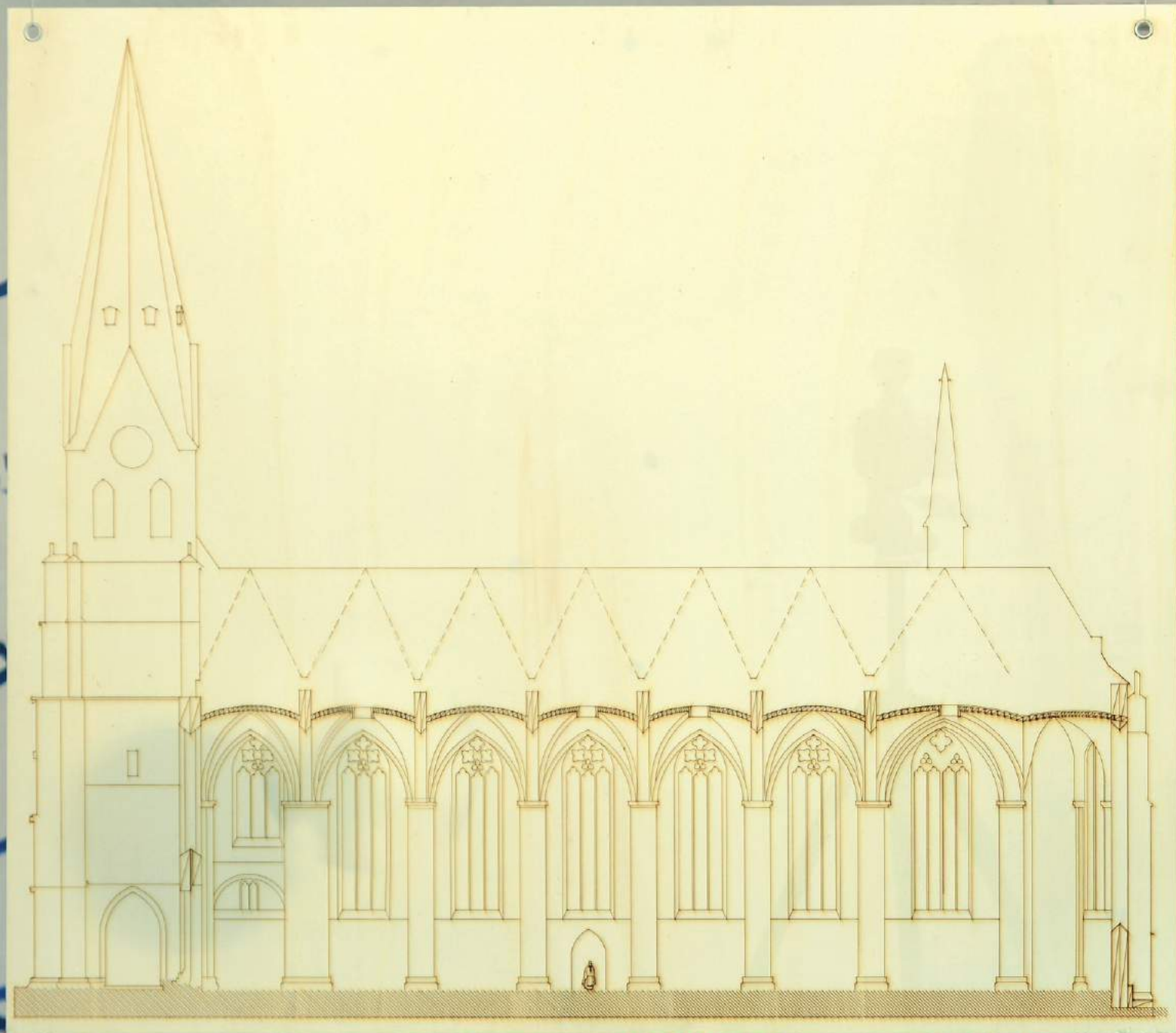


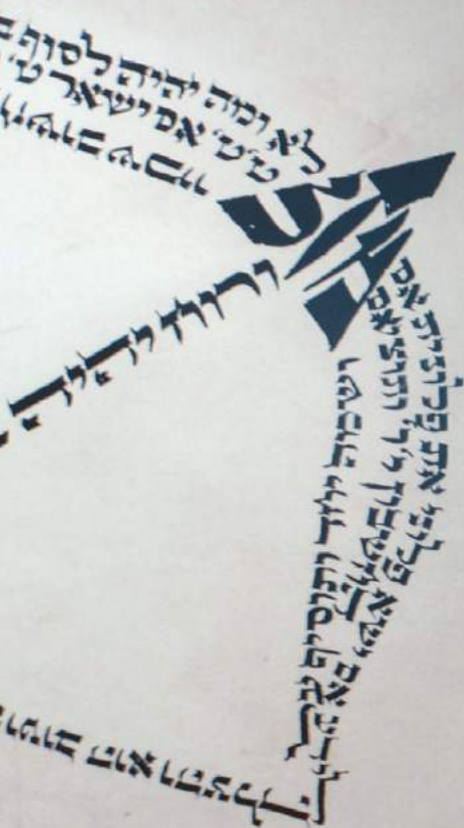
בְּהַר לְבָנֵי אֶזְרָא לְהַתְּפִיל בְּתַפְלֵי וְכַן יֵשׁ עוֹלָלָה יִרְתֵּ
 בְּעַשְׂמֵת פִּלְלֵי פִיטֵי לֵאמֹר הִלֵּל אֱלֹהֵי מִיתָא מִמֵּינֵי עֵלְמִית
 צְבֹרָה עַל יוֹדֵי מַעַלְלֵי בְּכָרִי'ם בְּמִלְכּוֹתֵי בְּנֵי אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן
 בְּנֵי עַבְדֵי אֶזְרָא מִזְמֹרֵי מִזְמֹרֵי עַל יְהוֹזָבָב סֹדֵר אֲבִירֵי אֱלֹהִים
 דְּהִלָּךְ בִּיתָא לְאֵלֵי עַלְמֵי בּוֹדֵינִי לְהַבִּיר זֶה

[illegible]



Welche
di luten suln hute tragen
daz man si für luden haben sol.



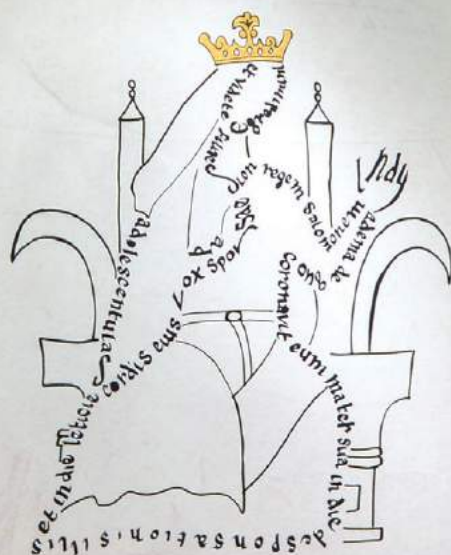
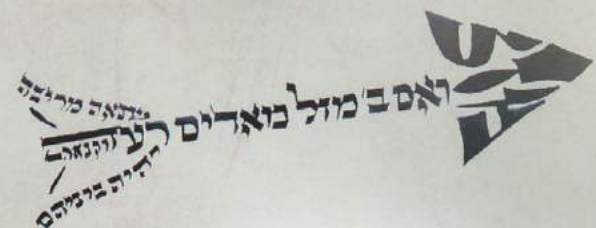


da Zeit suit stuz gezeichnet von den cristen

die luden suln hute tragen die spitz

daz man si für luden haben sol. Juderhut

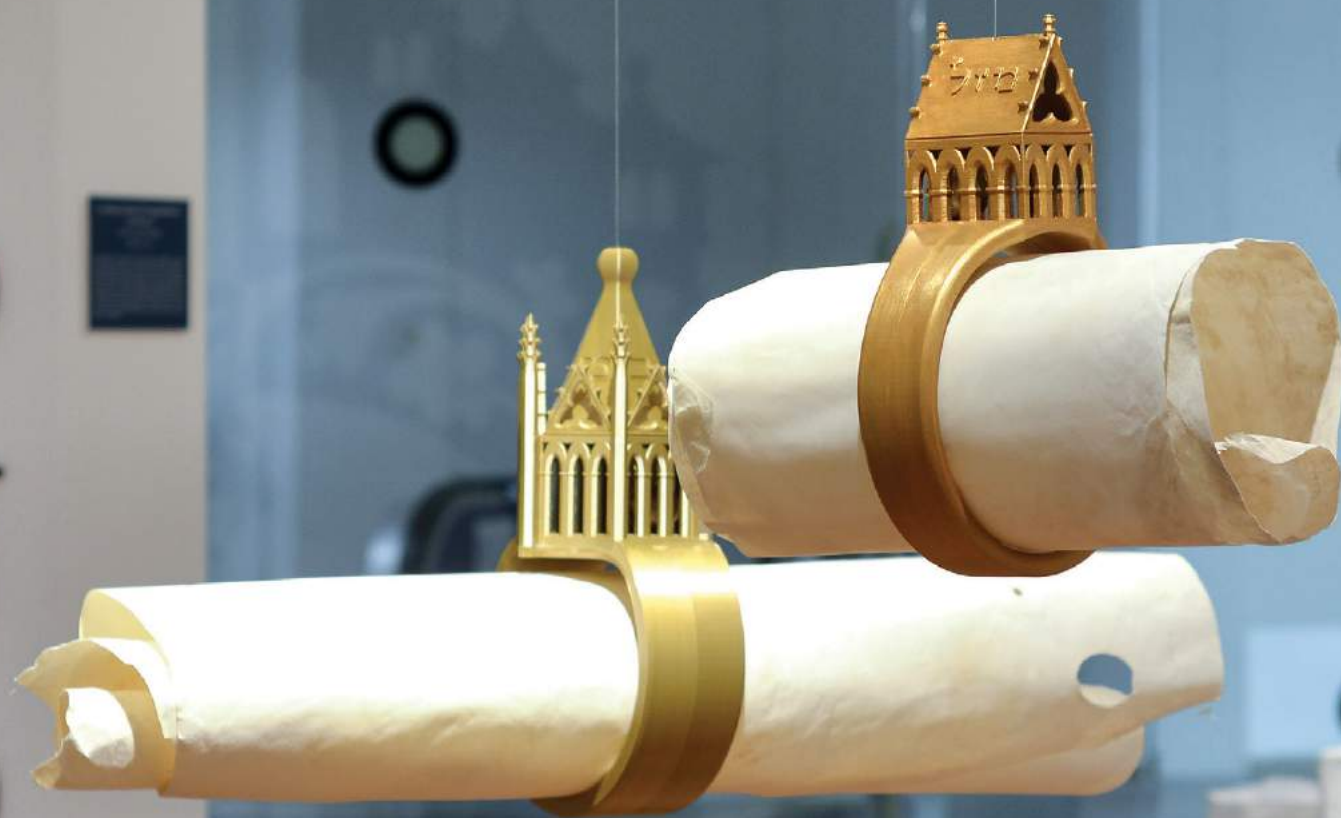
et in die tunc
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regem Salom



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de Paris d*



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This book, produced for the exhibition *In and Out, Between and Beyond*, presents the scholarly work of a group of historians who study the Jews of medieval Ashkenaz at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in dialogue with the work of contemporary Israeli artists. This is one of the culminating projects of the European Research Council-funded research group *Beyond the Elite: Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe*.

Since the inception of the project (fall 2016), the team has worked to construct a history which includes those who were not part of the learned elite as well as those who were learned, about whom we know more. The research team trained its sights on everyday moments, investigating daily routines and the ways medieval Jews understood their lives amidst their host cultures. At the heart of this work is the complexity of the circumstances in which medieval Jews lived: the integration of Ashkenazic Jews within their Christian surroundings, alongside their maintenance of a distinct religious identity. To complement the medieval study underlying this endeavor, the exhibit's curator, Dr. Ido Noy, orchestrated a fruitful exchange between the research team and seven Israeli artists, who then produced contemporary expressions of the historic ideas under discussion. This book, mirroring the structure of the exhibit, is comprised of sixteen articles. Each one is built around a primary source from a particular literary genre. The colorful catalogue at the end of the volume documents the objects created especially for the exhibition that was displayed physically at the gallery on the Mount Scopus campus of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and can still be viewed virtually.



Beyond the Elite
Jewish Daily Life in Medieval Europe

