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## Sephardic Ideas in Ashkenaz – Visualizing the Temple in Medieval Regensburg

### Introduction

An elaborate double page composition depicting the objects of the Temple concludes, with two other images, the Pentateuch section of the Regensburg Codex. The latter was produced, scholars believe, towards the end of the thirteenth century in that city and is now kept in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> A selection of implements, spatially unrelated, is spread out on a uniform blue background. The High Priest, in full ceremonial robes, is lighting the *menorah*, which, together with two flanking lions, occupies the entire right page (fig. 1). Regensburg was one of the cultural centers of Ashkenazic Judaism, a meeting point of intellectual schools. In this paper I argue that this unique representation of the Temple implements reflects something of the cultural variety typical of this city.

Somewhat similar compositions are well-known from the Sephardic cultural realm, where an elaborate imagery of the Temple implements developed during the late thirteenth century to become particularly popular during the fourteenth. A considerable number of illuminated Hebrew Bibles, most of them from the Crown of Aragon, display the objects of the sanctuary in a somewhat abstract arrangement of golden silhouettes spread over a plain white surface or an ornamented background. An early example occurs in the Perpignan Bible, produced in that city in 1299 (figs. 2 and 3).

The Regensburg double page is the only known Ashkenazic representation of Temple imagery that seems to be related in some way to the Sephardic compositional scheme. The image, however, presents many idiosyncratic features in relation to the Sephardic parallels. Compared with contemporary Sephardic counterparts, the Regensburg depiction of the *me-*

1 The codex contains the Pentateuch, the five *megillot*, and *haphṭurot*; for details see Bezalel Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, Jerusalem 1984, 124 f., pl. 29 (a revised and expanded Hebrew version of the original English, Jerusalem 1969); Florentine Mütterich/Karl Dachs (eds.), *Regensburger Buchmalerei von frühkarolingischer Zeit bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, exh. cat. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek and Museen der Stadt Regensburg, Munich 1987, cat.-no. 68; Ursula and Kurt Schubert, *Jüdische Buchkunst*, Graz 1983, 89–93. It was written, as an inscription on fol. 245r indicates, for “Gad ben Peter Halevi, the *parnas* of Regensburg.”

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Fig. 1: Jerusalem, Israel Museum, MS 180/52 (Regensburg Pentateuch), fols. 155v–156r, Regensburg, ca. 1300, the Temple implements, and the high-priest lighting the *menorah*

*norah* diverges<sup>2</sup> in some crucial elements. Yet more striking is the figure of the High Priest, which is absent in all the surviving Sephardic images. In the following I examine the background of these three aspects of the Regensburg image: the compositional scheme with its debt to Sephardic examples; the figure of the High Priest; and the representation of the *menorah*.

Numerous scholars have demonstrated that the imagery of the Temple implements spread over a double or triple page conveys the notion that, in the absence of a physical sanctuary in Jerusalem, the Bible is a “minor Temple.” Sephardic communities refer to the Bible as *miqdašyah* – “the Temple of God.”<sup>2</sup> Neither in the Sephardic manuscripts nor in the Regensburg Codex

2 See, for example, the dedication inscription of London, British Library, MS Kings 1. Solsona. 1384. fol. 2v: “A *miqdašya* [given] by myself, Isaac, the son of Judah of Tolosa za”l.” The dedication page is followed immediately by a depiction of the Temple implements. For a reproduction of the page, see Bezalel Narkiss/Aliza Cohen-Mushlin/Anat Tcherikover, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles. A Catalogue Raisonné*,

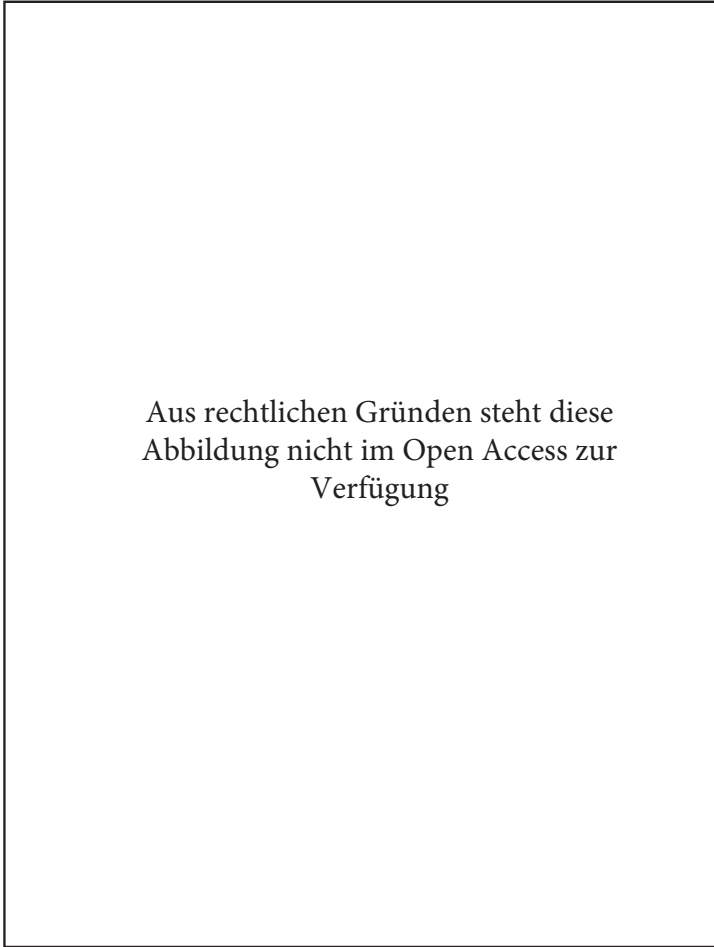
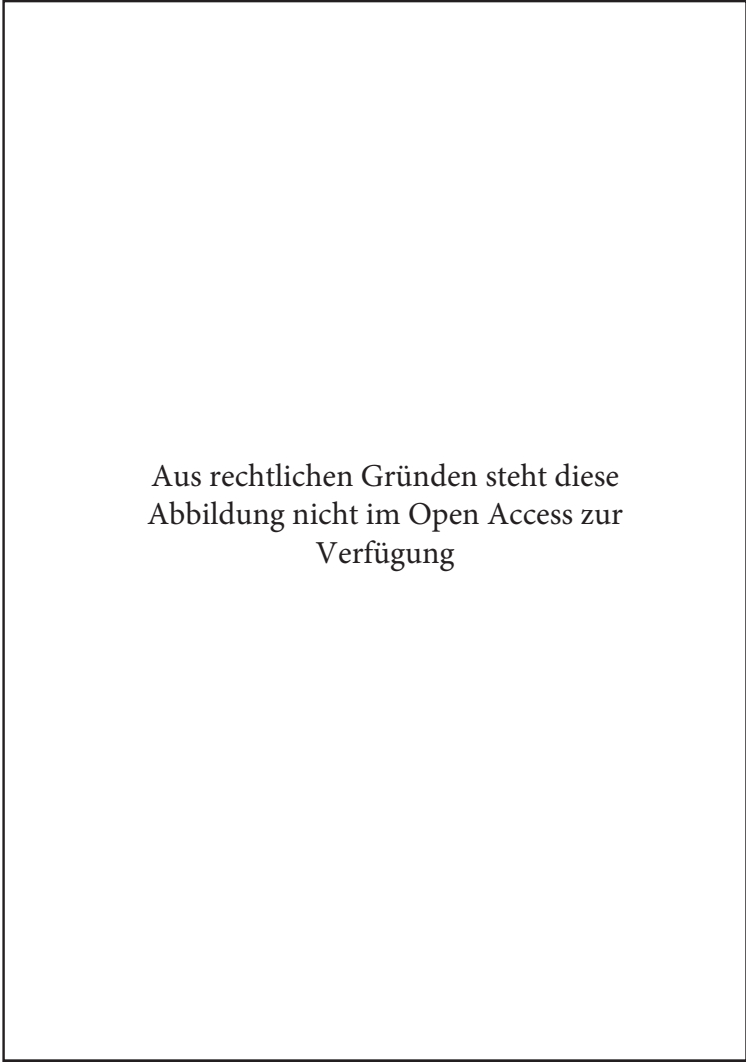


Fig. 2: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF), cod. hébr. 7 (Perpignan Bible), fol. 12v, Perpignan, 1299, the Temple implements (right page)

Oxford 1982, pt. 3, fig. 332; on the *miqdašya* tradition, see *ibid.*, pt. 1, 101; Joseph Guttman, *When the Kingdom Comes. Messianic Themes in Medieval Jewish Art*, in: *Art Journal* 27 (1967/68), 168–175; Eva Frojmovic, *Messianic Politics in Re-Christianized Spain. Images of the Sanctuary in Hebrew Bible Manuscripts*, in: *idem* (ed.), *Imaging the Other, Imaging the Self. Visual Representation and Jewish-Christian Dynamics in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period*, Leiden/Boston 2002, 91–128; Katrin Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art between Islam and Christianity. The Decoration of Hebrew Bibles in Medieval Spain*, Leiden/Boston 2004, 83.



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Fig. 3: Paris, BNF, cod. hébr. 7 (Perpignan Bible), fol. 13r, Perpignan, 1299, the Temple implements (left page)

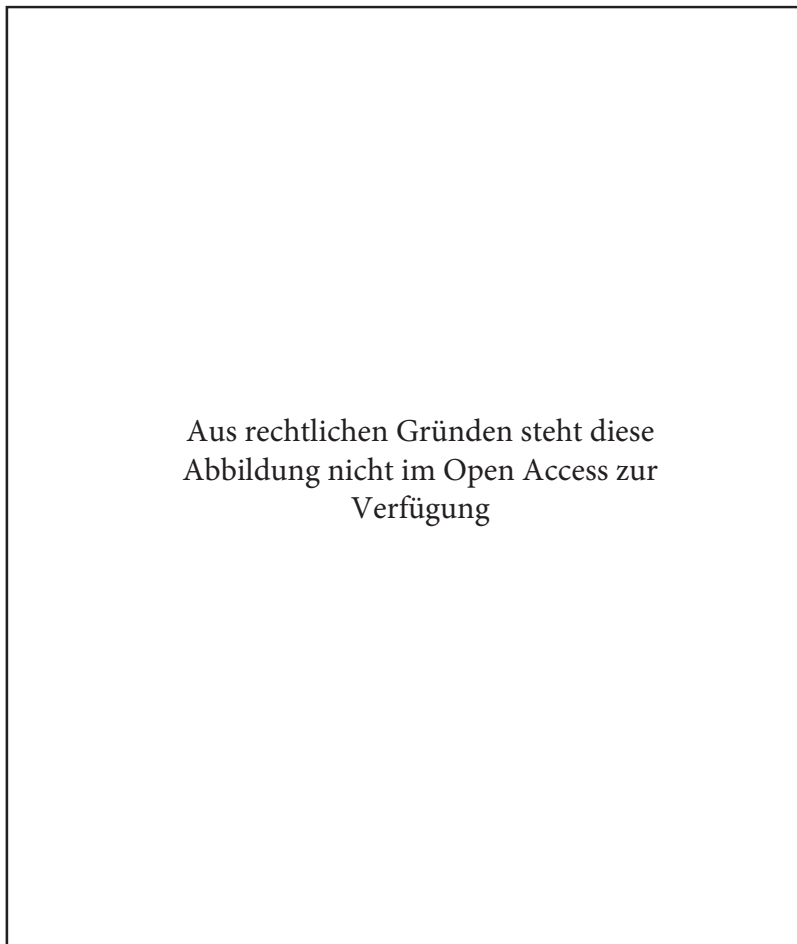


Fig. 4: London, British Library, MS Harley 1528 (Harley Bible), fol. 7v, Catalonia, first half of the fourteenth century, the Temple implements

do these representations function as illustrations, whether to the description of the desert tabernacle in the Book of Exodus, or to that of Solomon's Temple in the first Book of Kings. Rather, they appear as opening pages – or, as in the Regensburg Codex, closing the Pentateuch section – and represent the book as a whole. More importantly, these pages display, as many scholars have argued, the messianic future Temple that “God willing, will be built soon, in our days,” as the framing inscription of the Perpignan image de-

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Fig. 5: London, British Library, MS Harley 1528 (Harley Bible), fol. 8r, Catalonia, first half of the fourteenth century, the Temple implements

clares. The addition of the Mount of Olives, based on the vision of Zechariah (Zech. 14:3–4), in later examples (fig. 4) also clearly makes this point. Since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE, when the third Temple became an important aspect of messianic expectations, Temple-related imagery soon developed into one of the dominant themes of Jewish art.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas in late antiquity the future Temple was symbolically represented by the Ark of the Covenant, in the Middle Ages there were different approaches to the future Temple. The patrons and artists of Sephardic Bibles favored the arrays of sanctuary objects of the Perpignan Bible type. The images in the Sephardic Bibles taken as representations of the messianic sanctuary have attracted much interest among scholars during the past six decades. They were discussed in a pioneer study by Cecil Roth in 1953, who linked them to the late antique Temple symbols.<sup>4</sup> A few years later Carl-Otto Nordström shed further light on them, comparing them to images in a manuscript of Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica*.<sup>5</sup> These were followed by several publications by Joseph Gutman.<sup>6</sup> The notion that the Sephardic arrays of Temple implements represent the future Temple has been followed in recent scholarship as well, which offers more detailed and contextualizing analyses of the imagery against the background of contemporaneous Jewish scholarship.<sup>7</sup>

Medieval Jews had different ideas of what was to occur during the messianic era; what the political situation would be; and how the future Temple would appear on earth. Some believed it would be re-built and restored;

3 This development was studied in detail by Elisabeth Revel-Neher, *L'arche d'alliance dans l'art juif et chrétien du second au dixième siècles. Le Signe de la Rencontre*, Paris 1984.

4 Cecil Roth, *Jewish Antecedents of Christian Art*, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16 (1953), 22–44.

5 Carl-Otto Nordström, *The Temple Miniatures in the Peter Comestor Manuscript in Madrid*, in: *Horae Soederblumianae* 6 (1964), 54–81.

6 Gutman, *When the Kingdom Comes*; Joseph Gutman, *The Messianic Temple in Spanish Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts*, in: idem (ed.), *The Temple of Solomon. Archeological Fact and Medieval Tradition in Christian, Islamic and Jewish Art*, Missoula 1976, 125–145; idem, *Masora Figurata in the Mikdashyah. The Messianic Solomon Temple in a 14<sup>th</sup>-Century Hebrew Bible Manuscript*, in: 8<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the International Organization for Masoretic Studies, Chicago 1988, Missoula 1990, 71–77.

7 Elisabeth Revel-Neher, *Le témoignage de l'absence – Les objets du sanctuaire à Byzance et dans l'art juif du XI au XV siècles*, Paris 1998; Sarit Shalev-Eyni, *Jerusalem and the Temple in Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts: Jewish Thought and Christian Influence*, in: Mauro Perani (ed.), *L'interculturalità dell'ebraismo. Atti del Convegno internazionale Bertinoro – Ravenna, 26–28 maggio 2003, Ravenna 2004*, 173–191; Frojmovic, *Messianic Politics in Re-Christianized Spain*; Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art between Islam and Christianity*, 156–167.

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Fig. 6: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Poc. 295, Maimonides' Commentary to the Mishna, fol. 295r, Spain or Egypt, end of the twelfth century, plan of the Temple



others envisioned a heavenly structure descending miraculously from above together with the messianic city of Jerusalem. There is good reason to assume that the choice of a particular compositional scheme for a representation of the future Temple had much to do with the beliefs and the messianic concepts of those who designed it. It is one of the purposes of this paper to examine to what extent Sephardic concepts of the future Temple may have had an impact on the Regensburg composition. On the other hand, the way in which the *menorah* differs from its Sephardic parallels seems to indicate certain aspects of typical Ashkenazic approaches to messianism. The High Priest, finally, will take us to the world of Jewish mysticism as practiced by Ashkenazic Pietists, and by early Kabbalists in Spain and southern France.

### Sephardic Compositions of the Temple

The Perpignan Bible belongs to a group of manuscripts from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries presenting similar arrays. All the major implements are shown, their function is well understood, most of them are identified with captions, and their arrangement more or less reflects the order in which they are described in the Bible. From the 1330s on, Bibles from Catalonia and Aragon display variations of these early compositions in significantly less orderly and structured arrangements (figs. 4 and 5). Some of the implements – carefully planned, located, and marked by captions in the Perpignan Bible – now appear spread somewhat randomly over the page; errors occur in the iconographical details; the captions are left out. Many of these images – but not all – dedicate a full page to the *menorah*, and almost all of them include a small Mount of Olives.

Many of the iconographical details of these miniatures, especially those in the earlier group, appear to diverge from the biblical text, and, as I have shown elsewhere in detail, can be fully understood only in the light of Maimonides' elaborate descriptions of and comments on the Temple and its implements.<sup>8</sup> In both the *Mišneh Torah* and the Commentary to the Mishna, Maimonides wrote at length about the Temple, and manuscripts of the latter contain a plan of the sanctuary (fig. 6) meant to function as instructive information, not as decoration. The Sephardic Bible illuminations differ from these in character as they are primarily decorative. However, they recall Maimonides' sketch in their plan-like array; this applies in particular to the earlier examples – even though they lack the architectural features and are not meant to map out the precise location of each implement. Finally, the

8 Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art between Islam and Christianity*, 75–82.

design of the sacrificial altar in Maimonides' plans and the illuminations in the Bibles have much in common.<sup>9</sup>

Maimonides' extensive discussions of the Temple and its parts derive from his expectation of the future messianic sanctuary. According to the rationalistic world-view Maimonides represents, the messianic era is expected to be a stage of liberation from bondage and of the restoration of a Jewish state, where the perfect fulfillment of all 613 precepts will be possible.<sup>10</sup> Samuel, a talmudic scholar of the third century, had claimed: "There is no difference between this world and the world to come, except the liberation from bondage."<sup>11</sup> and Sephardic rationalist expectations of the messianic era are in line with this statement. The Temple is expected to be re-built in the messianic era, and sacrificial worship to be resumed. In Maimonides' words:

"He [the Messiah] will rebuild the sanctuary and gather the dispersed of Israel [...]. Sacrifices will be again offered<sup>12</sup> [...]. Do not think that the Messiah needs to perform signs and wonders, bring anything new into being, revive the dead, or do similar things [...].<sup>13</sup> Let no one think that in the days of the Messiah any of the laws of nature will be set aside, or any innovation be introduced into creation. The world will follow its normal course."<sup>14</sup>

9 Ibid.

10 Much has been written about Maimonides' approach to messianism and the literature can be listed here only in selection; Gershom Scholem, *Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism*, in: idem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*. London 1971, 1–36; David Hartman, *Maimonides' Approach to Messianism and its Contemporary Implications*, in: *Da'at* 2–3 (1978–79), 5–33 (Heb.); Joel L. Kraemer, *On Maimonides' Messianic Posture*, in: Isidore Twersky (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, Cambridge, Mass., 1984, vol. 2, 109–142; Aryeh Botwinick, *Maimonides' Messianic Age*, in: *Judaism* 33 (1984), 418–425; see Aviezer Ravitzky, "To the Utmost of Human Capacity." *Maimonides on the Days of the Messiah*, in: Joel L. Kraemer (ed.), *Perspectives on Maimonides. Philosophical and Historical Studies*. Oxford 1991, 221–256. Ravitzky criticizes earlier scholarship for focusing primarily on the restorative aspects of the Maimonidean concept and argues that he also presented a second, more utopian model of universal salvation of mankind. – Dov Schwartz, *Messianism in Medieval Jewish Thought*, Ramat Gan 1997, chap. 3 (Heb.). For the status of the law in messianic times, see also Howard Kreisel, *Maimonides' Political Thought. Studies in Ethics, Law, and the Human Ideal*, Albany, N. Y., 1999, chap. 1, esp. 20–23; on the Messiah, *ibid.*, 28 f.

11 Babylonian Talmud, *Bera-ḳot* 34b.

12 Moses Maimonides, *Mišneh torah hu ha-yad ha-ḥhazaqa le-rabbenu moše ben maimon*, Jerusalem 1957, *Sefer hašophṭim*, *Hilḳot melāḳim umilḥamot* 11:1; for an English version, see *The Code of Maimonides, the Book of Judges, Kings and Wars*, New Haven, Conn., 1949–1979, 238.

13 *Ibid.*, 11:3; English version, 239.

14 *Ibid.*, 12:1; English version, 240.

Maimonides begins his *Sefer 'Avodah*, the eighth book of the *Mišne Torah*, with some general thoughts about the construction of the Tabernacle and the Temple. In this context he writes:

“The Temple building erected by Solomon is clearly described in the Book of Kings. Furthermore, the building to be erected in the future, even though it is discussed in the Book of Ezekiel, is not fully described and defined therein. Therefore, those who built the Second Temple in the days of Ezra followed the pattern of Solomon’s Temple and adapted some of the particulars described in Ezekiel.”<sup>15</sup>

This idea and the explicit mention of the future Temple *to be built* correspond to the plan-like structure of Maimonides’ sketch in the Oxford Commentary to the Mishna (fig. 6), as if it was intended to offer guidelines for the future construction. As noted, the Sephardic representations of the Temple implements, especially those belonging to the earlier group, exhibit some iconographic relationship to Maimonides’ drawing and translate the instructive sketch into the more decorative medium of manuscript painting. In some sense, the original purpose of the Temple plan as guide towards the construction of a future sanctuary is thus preserved. The ultimate purpose of the scenario as envisioned by Maimonides is the personal salvation of each individual, in the sense of the “personal, eternal, and separate survival of the soul.”<sup>16</sup>

The naturalistic approach to messianism was developed by Sephardic philosophers. It replaced the earlier prevailing apocalyptic views, and was dominant among Sephardic Jews during the lifetime of Maimonides. In the course of the Maimonidean controversy, it began to loose ground. Especially during the initial phase of the controversy at the beginning of the thirteenth century, messianism played a major role. Maimonides’ way of dealing with the resurrection of the dead was one of the crucial issues and had initiated the controversy in the first place.<sup>17</sup> Critiques of the Maimonidean approach, together with the political threat of a Mongol invasion, and the circumstance of the Crusader Kingdom in the Holy Land, had a strong impact on messianic expectations, and the apocalyptic idea of messianic wars began to move back on stage and become more and more influential.<sup>18</sup> Dov

15 Moses Maimonides, *Mišneh torah, Sefer ha-’avodah, beth ha-behira* 1:4; Code of Maimonides, *Book of the Temple Service, The Temple* 1:4.

16 Schwartz, *Messianism in Medieval Jewish Thought*, 46 f., and chap. 3; see also Ravitzky, “To the Utmost of Human Capacity.” Maimondes on the Days of the Messiah.

17 See especially the position of Meir Halevi Abulafia (1165–1244); for more on Meir Abulafia, see Bernard Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition: The Career and Controversies of Ramah*, Cambridge, Mass., 1982.

18 Moshe Idel, *Jewish Apocalypticism: 670–1670*, in: Bernard McGinn (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 2: *Apocalypticism in Western History and Culture*, New York 1999, 213.

Schwartz argues that the Maimonidean controversy brought forth three different approaches to messianism: a rationalist one that followed the Maimonidean position to the extreme; a radical anti-rationalist one; and what Schwartz terms “a moderate naturalistic approach.” Due to the dominance of the naturalistic approach during the twelfth century in the Islamic cultural area, however, even extreme anti-rationalist scholars, though open to apocalyptic motifs, still tended to ground their concept in basic logic. This is even more perceptible among scholars who represented the moderate naturalistic approach, namely Nahmanides (1194–1270)<sup>19</sup> and scholars under his influence like Solomon ibn Adret (1235–1310) or Bahye ben Asher (1255–1340). Of major concern was the nature of the miracles that would or would not occur during the messianic period; the validity of the religious law; and the physical needs of men.<sup>20</sup>

In matters of the Temple, however, belief in the reconstruction of the future Temple continued among Sephardic scholars, even those of an extreme anti-rationalist approach. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the idea of the heavenly Temple descending from heaven was alien to Sephardic thought. There were other apocalyptic motifs that aroused the interest of Sephardic thinkers<sup>21</sup> – some of them interpreted allegorically – such as miracles of different kinds, the banquet of the righteous, and so on; the idea of the descending Temple, however, was not among them.<sup>22</sup>

Before we look more closely at the Regensburg image and examine how we can define its relationship to the Sephardic compositions, a few remarks on the messianic concepts common among Ashkenazic Jews are necessary. Whereas the expectations of many Sephardic Jews were deeply rooted in the naturalistic approach and opened to apocalyptic motifs only gradually, never leaving the firm grounds of natural order, Ashkenazic messianic expectations had an explicitly apocalyptic character harking back to late antique apocalyptic writings. They comprised views about miracles and signs from

19 Eva Frojmovic has linked the Sephardic Temple designs in general to the teachings of Nahmanides, see *Messianic Politics in Re-Christianized Spain*; in the early examples, in particular, the link to Maimonides seems, in my view, to be more obvious, see above, fn. 2; in the later examples less rationalist views may as well have played a role. Although these two scholars clearly had different worldviews, in matters of the Temple, and whether it was to descend from heaven or to be built, they do not contradict each other.

20 Schwartz, *Messianism in Medieval Jewish Thought*, chap. 6.

21 This process of apocalyptic ideas gaining ground in Sephardic thought is described in great detail in Schwartz, *Messianism in Medieval Jewish Thought*, chap. 6.

22 This is evident, for example in a poem by the Catalan Kabbalist Meshullam da Pierra; Chaim Brody, *Poems of Meshullam b. Solomon da Pierra*, in: *Yedi'ot ha-maḥon le-ḥeqer ha-šira ha-ivrit* 4 (1938), 3–117 (Heb.); for a partial translation, see Idel, *Jewish Apocalypticism*, 223f.; Solomon ibn Adret similarly spoke about the future Temple; *hidduše ha-rašba*. Peruš ha-haggadot, ed. Hayyim Moshe Feldman, Jerusalem 1991, 63.

above, eschatological catastrophes, messianic wars, a variety of myths about the messianic beasts to be served to the righteous at the messianic banquet, and others. Samuel's comment about liberation from bondage, which provided the basis for the Sephardic concept, was approached with a great deal of skepticism, re-interpreted, and understood only as referring to an initial phase of the messianic era, to be followed by more miraculous events. These would include fierce wars to overcome the powers of Satan who had usurped the rule of the world. The notion of a political-military victory is emphasized time and again.<sup>23</sup>

The third Temple will descend miraculously from heaven upon the city of Jerusalem. This notion is based on the so-called "Redemption Midrashim (*midraše ge'ulah*)," a group of early medieval texts nourished by apocalyptic writings of the late antique period<sup>24</sup> that had a great influence on Ashkenazic culture. In a commentary to the Pentateuch associated with the Ashkenazic Pietists, we read:

"The first and the second Temple were built by men and destroyed by men; but the [third] Temple will be established by God, who builds Jerusalem and the built Temple will descend."<sup>25</sup>

The same applies to tosafist approaches to messianism, studied by Ephraim Kanarfogel, who points out: "As far as I can tell, there are no medieval Ashkenazic rabbinic authorities who suggest that the third Temple will be built by human hands, despite the fact that there are a number of midrashic sources which record and support this view."<sup>26</sup> Tosafist attitudes combine naturalistic views with beliefs in miraculous, supernatural events. Some of them reflect an awareness of the Maimonidean concept,<sup>27</sup> but demonstrate a critical standpoint towards philosophical orientation, and most of their statements are in evident contradiction of Maimonides' views. At all events, in matters of the Temple, the notion of a heavenly structure miraculously descending upon Jerusalem was dominant. This applies in general also to Ra-

- 23 Apocalyptic views were discussed by Scholem, *Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism*; Idel, *Jewish Apocalypticism*; Joseph Dan, *Apocalypse Then and Now*, Tel Aviv 2000 (Heb.); specifically on the attitudes of French and Ashkenazi Tosafists, see Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Medieval Rabbinic Conceptions of the Messianic Age. The View of the Tosafists*, in: Ezra Fleischer et al. (eds.), *Me'ah She'arim. Studies in Medieval Jewish Spiritual Life in Memory of Isadore Twersky*, Jerusalem 2001, 147–169.
- 24 An example is the short text *Yemot ha-mušiah*, in: *Midraše ge'ulah*, ed. Judah Even-Shmuel, Jerusalem 1934, 95–98, discussed in Dan, *Apocalypse Then and Now*, 72 f.
- 25 *Peruš ha-roqeah 'al ha-torah Exod. 15:17*, ed. Yoel Klugmann, *Bne Brak* 2001, vol. 2, 81.
- 26 Kanarfogel, *Medieval Rabbinic Conceptions of the Messianic Age*, 160.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 148.

shi.<sup>28</sup> Kanarfogel, however, mentions a remark in the standard edition of Rashi's commentary to Ez. 43:11 which implies the notion of a human-built third Temple and explains that people study the measurements of the Temple in the Book of Ezekiel in order to be able to construct it when the time will come. Kanarfogel suggests that this is an insertion by a student and notes that it appears only in two out of eleven manuscripts. Neither is this statement included in the critical editions of Rashi's text.<sup>29</sup> What is interesting in our context is not necessarily whether it was Rashi or a student who uttered this remark, but that it implies that the notion of the future Temple to be built did figure, even if rarely in the world of the Tosafists.

The apocalyptic concept was occasionally visualized in Ashkenazic illuminated manuscripts. A Bible now in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan was written and decorated in 1236 in Würzburg. A series of paintings (figs. 7 and 8) show the messianic banquet of the righteous, *šor ha-bar*, *ziz*, and Leviathan, and seven heavenly circles with the four apocalyptic animals. As Zofia Ameisenowa showed many years ago, this imagery is based on one of the late antique apocalyptic texts – '*Otiyot de rabbi 'aqiv'a*'.<sup>30</sup> Another example is a miniature in the Bird Heads Haggadah produced around 1300 in southern Germany (fig. 9).<sup>31</sup> It shows the heavenly city in terms of a Temple structure that is expected to descend from heaven, an imagery that is – as Sarit Shalev-Eyni argues, most plausibly – inspired by Christian perceptions of the heavenly city.<sup>32</sup> The image in the Bird Heads Haggadah and those in the Ambrosiana Bible are all faithful representatives of the apocalyptic approach.

28 For example Rashi on *Sukka* 41a; *Roš ha-šanah* 30a; Kanarfogel, *Medieval Rabbinic Conceptions of the Messianic Age*, 158.

29 *Ibid.*, 159, fn. 24.

30 '*Otiyot de-rabbi 'aqiv'a*', in: *Bet ha-Midrash. Sammlung kleiner Midraschim*, ed. Adolph Jellinek, Vienna 1853, vol. 3, 12–64; Zofia Ameisenowa, *Das messianische Gastmahl der Gerechten in einer hebräischen Bibel aus dem 13. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur eschatologischen Ikonographie bei den Juden*, in: *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 79 (1935), 409–422, repr.: Lieselotte Kötzsche/Peter von der Osten-Sacken (eds.), *Wenn der Messias kommt. Das jüdisch-christliche Verhältnis im Spiegel mittelalterlicher Kunst*, Berlin 1984, 9–19. The banquet was among the apocalyptic motifs that interested Sephardic scholars; it was described by Bahye ben Asher, *Šulhan šel 'arb'a* 4, in: *Kitve rabbenu beḥaye*, ed. R. Hayyim Dov Chavel, Jerusalem 1982, 501–514. On the Ambrosiana image also Gutman, *When the Kingdom Comes*.

31 For a facsimile edition, see *The Birds' Head Haggadah of the Bezalel National Art Museum in Jerusalem*, ed. Moshe Spitzer, Jerusalem 1965.

32 Shalev-Eyni, *Jerusalem and the Temple in Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*. In this short paper Shalev-Eyni suggests in general terms a linkage between the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Temple representations and the different messianic concepts. However, she does not go into detail, as her discussion focuses rather on the Christian pictorial sources.

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Fig. 7: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, cod. 30–32 B. inf., vol. 3 (Ashkenazic Ambrosiana Bible), fol. 135v, southern Germany, 1236–1238, the messianic banquet

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Fig. 8: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, cod. 30-32 B. inf., vol. 3 (Ashkenazic Ambrosiana Bible), fol. 136r, southern Germany, 1236-1238, seven spheres of heaven and the four living creatures



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Fig. 9: Jerusalem, Israel Museum, MS 180/57 (Bird Heads Haggadah), fol. 47r, southern Germany, ca. 1300, the heavenly Temple

The Regensburg Temple representation has very little to do with these Ashkenazic renderings of messianic themes. Despite the differences in detail, the similarity to the compositional approach of the Sephardic images is striking.<sup>33</sup> The early Sephardic representations are more comprehensive than the Regensburg image; they tend to offer a full picture of the Temple paraphernalia, whereas the Regensburg Codex shows only a selection of implements. Literalness is in particular true for the early phase of the development of the Sephardic imagery, as represented by the Perpignan group, whereas the later Sephardic Bibles share with the Regensburg image a certain independence from the text. The impression of confusion in the later representations is stronger and there are numerous details that are not easy to identify and may be the result of misunderstanding. No organizing principle seems to support the composition.

There is some evidence that the Regensburg image was influenced by the compositional scheme of Sephardic Bibles in more than general terms. Rather, it followed a model also in some of the details. In the top left corner of the left page, we find a highly abstract rendering of the showbread table in the form of an oblong rectangle with twelve little tablets arranged in two rows of six. Those to the right are all inscribed with the word *lehem* ("bread") and those to the left with the word *panim* ("face") – the Hebrew for what is translated as "showbread." The design, the shape and the placement of the showbread table recall those of the Ark of the Covenant in the Perpignan Bible (fig. 2). There the ark is a bipartite rectangle with ten inscriptions, each referring to the opening word of a commandment. The Sephardic ark may have been misunderstood – perhaps by a Christian painter?<sup>34</sup> –, or deliberately re-interpreted to represent the showbread table. Whatever the circumstances, the composition must have been finalized by a Jewish artist, who realized the misunderstanding and tried to make the best of it by inserting the inscriptions referring to the showbreads. The ark, on the other hand, appears in the lower part of the composition, at a location where we often find the showbread table in the Sephardic parallels. It appears as a rectangular box drawn in perspective with rings at the corners, as indicated in the Bible. However, the carrying poles to be placed in the rings

33 See detailed comparisons by Schubert, *Jüdische Buchkunst*, 91 f.; and Bezalel Narkiss, *The Menorah in Hebrew Manuscripts from the Middle Ages*, in: Iris Fishhof (ed.), *In the Light of the Menorah*, exh. cat., Jerusalem 1998, 75 f. (Heb.), both emphasizing the similarities; Elisabeth Revel-Neher, *Le témoignage de l'absence. Les objets du sanctuaire à Byzance et dans l'art juif du XI<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1998, 87 f., concentrates on the differences.

34 Robert Suckale suggests a Christian workshop on stylistic grounds, in: Mütterich/Dachs (eds.), *Regensburger Buchmalerei von frühkarolingischer Zeit bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, 88.

are lacking. Four short feet, not mentioned in the Bible, give the ark a table-like appearance and one realizes that to some degree it recalls the form of the showbread table in the later Sephardic depictions (fig. 4). There the breads are arranged – as they should be – on two stands, as described in great detail by both Maimonides and Rashi,<sup>35</sup> and placed on a box-like table with feet. Below the miniature, in the lower margin, a two-line caption is added quoting portions from Exod. 25:10–20 and 1 Kgs. 8:7 that describe the ark and the cherubim.

Some other details also recall the Sephardic renderings: among these are forks, an altar ash scoop, the basin, the jar of manna, a pair of trumpets, and the Mount of Olives. The Regensburg page does not reproduce any of the Sephardic altar conventions,<sup>36</sup> but instead contains four table-like structures shown from above, each with two pairs of stylized feet.

We thus have a compositional scheme suggesting that the designer of the Regensburg Temple had seen a Sephardic example which made sufficient impression to induce him to devise a similar scheme. However, we can observe several characteristics in the Regensburg pages, namely the full page *menorah*, to be discussed below, and the olive tree, that appear in Iberia only at a later stage. Furthermore, the lack of organization that can be observed in the Regensburg composition seems to anticipate later Sephardic examples. It is possible that what we now believe to be typical for the later phase had already appeared in Iberia somewhat earlier. By the same token, it could perhaps be suggested that the Regensburg Pentateuch should be dated a few years later than 1300. However, if we follow Robert Suckale's stylistic observations on the Regensburg ateliers, this is rather unlikely.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps the later Sephardic representations on the one hand, and the Regensburg image on the other, are the result of independent modifications of the earlier convention. Moreover, as I have shown elsewhere, none of the Sephardic features that can specifically be linked to Maimonides appear in the Regensburg Temple image. It would seem that whatever the Sephardic model precisely looked like, the imagery – though the compositional scheme as such was preserved – was filtered for Maimonidean input.<sup>38</sup>

In short, the Regensburg image shares with the Sephardic parallels a similar compositional approach. It lacks, however, the specific Maimonidean

35 Moses Maimonides, *Mišneh torah*, 8. *Hilḳot beit ha-behirah* 3, 13–15; for the English version, see *Code of Maimonides*, 16; Rashi's commentary on Exod. 25:29; for an English version, see *Commentary to the Pentateuch*, trans. Morris Rosenbaum and Abraham Maurice Silbermann, New York 1973, 136.

36 For more details, see Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art between Islam and Christianity*, 156–168.

37 See above, fn. 34.

38 Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art between Islam and Christianity*, 78, 190.

background typical for the Sephardic renderings. Even without the particular references to Maimonides' concept, the choice of a composition that drew from the Sephardic illustrations with their plan-like arrays can more easily be associated with the notion of the reconstructed future Temple than with that of the sanctuary descending miraculously from heaven. We have seen that even among Sephardic scholars of extreme anti-rationalist positions, or among Kabbalists, the notion of the descending Temple was not taken up during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The adoption of a Sephardic imagery associated with Sephardic messianic concepts, both naturalistic and anti-rationalistic (and even kabbalistic), suggests an attempt to cope with these concepts on the part of the Ashkenazic patron-designer of the Regensburg Temple representation. He appears to have found an intellectual difficulty in adopting the apocalyptic notion of the future Temple descending from heaven.

### The High Priest

The upper right section of the left page is dominated by the figure of the High Priest lighting the *menorah*.<sup>39</sup> He is in full array with a headgear that has more of a bishop's mitre than of the *misnephet* mentioned in Exod. 48:4; he wears a checkered garment with bells attached at the hem, and the *'ephod* with the breast shield. The caption in the upper margin quotes Exod. 28:31–32, the description of the *'ephod*.

The design of the breast shield merits careful attention (fig. 10). It is composed of twelve little tablets schematically representing the precious stones inscribed with the names of the tribes of Israel. The script on the tablets is a bit worn down and not easily legible, but was clearly the work of a professional scribe with a command of Hebrew. Below the names of the tribes further letters can be discerned. "Ruben," consisting of five letters is accompanied by an *'aleph* in the lower line. "Simon," five letters, is accompanied by a *bet*. "Levi," only three letters, is accompanied by *reš*, *he*, and *mem*. These extra letters together form the name "Abraham." The next row begins with five letters for "Judah," and a *yod* in the lower line; followed by "Issachar" (five letters) accompanied by *šade*, and "Zevulun," (five) accompa-

39 Figural representations are common in Ashkenazic manuscript painting, but extremely rare in Sephardic Bibles; I have commented on this phenomenon on various occasions elsewhere. Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art between Islam and Christianity*, chap. 6; idem, *Christianity, Idolatry, and the Question of Jewish Figural Painting in the Middle Ages*, in: *Speculum* 84 (2009), no. 1, 73–107.

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Fig. 10: Detail of fig. 1: the high priest's breast shield

nied by a *het*. The third row starts with "Dan," consisting of two letters and underneath we can read first a *quph*, and after a space *yod*, *'ayin*, and another *quph*. The following "Naftali" (five) is accompanied by the letter *bet*. The extra letters combined form the names of "Isaac" and "Jacob." The name of "Gad" (two letters) is accompanied by the word *šivʿe* ("the tribes of"), that of "Asher" (three letters) by *yod*, *šin*, and *reš*. The tablet of "Joseph" has an additional *vav* and a *nun*. All these together spell out "the tribes of Yeshurun." The inscription of "Benjamin" (six letters) has no addition, but the last two of the six letters appear in the lower line. Thus each tablet contains six letters, altogether seventy-two.

The first medieval scholar to refer to the seventy-two letters in the inscriptions on the breast shield was Judah the Pious (d. 1217), active in Regens-

burg since 1195. In his *Sefer gematr'iot*, he linked the mystic notion of the seventy-two letters of the divine name (*šem ha-mephoraš*) with the High Priest's breast shield.<sup>40</sup> Based on the observation that the verses Exod. 14:19–21 each contain seventy-two letters, the tradition of the full name of God goes back to late antique Midrashim,<sup>41</sup> and was later expounded by Abraham ibn Ezra and Rashi.<sup>42</sup>

In a commentary to the Pentateuch, traditionally attributed to Judah's disciple Eleazar of Worms (ca. 1165 to ca. 1232), but apparently composed by one of his students (*Peruš ha-roqeaḥ*), we find a more explicit description:

"It is written in [the Talmudic tractate of] *Yoma* [73b] – twelve tribes, three fathers and the tribes of Yeshurun were inscribed on the breast shield. There were six letters inscribed on every stone [...]. There were seventy-two letters on the breast shield."<sup>43</sup>

This is followed by close to literal quotations from the *Sefer gematr'iot* linking the seventy-two letters to the name of God. Around the middle of the thirteenth century, we find the same motif again in a commentary to the Pentateuch composed by another student of Eleazar of Worms and grandson of Judah the Pious, Eleazar ben Moses, the Preacher. This text has survived in only two manuscripts, both from the sixteenth century: "On each stone there were six letters and the names of the three patriarchs and 'the tribes of Yeshurun' [were inscribed] with them."<sup>44</sup>

Originating thus, as it seems, in early thirteenth-century Ashkenazic pietistic circles, the motif appears around the 1290s also in Aragon. There, Bahye ben Asher (1255–1340) of Saragossa similarly linked the inscriptions on the breast shield with the tradition of the seventy-two letters of the full name of God. He gave a comprehensive description of each tablet with the precise letters on it, corresponding perfectly to the painting in the Regensburg Codex. He concludes the description by saying:

"You have six letters on each stone; this is to show you that the six days of creation depend on the twelve tribes. And there were seventy-two letters on the breast shield, because twelve times six makes seventy-two; and they correspond to the seventy-two letters of the Great Name."<sup>45</sup>

40 *Sefer gematr'iot le-rabbi yehudah he-hassid*, ed. Yaacov Israel Stall, Jerusalem 2005, vol. 1, 501; I am indebted to Ephraim Shoham-Steiner for this reference.

41 *Berešit rabb'a* 44:14, ed. Judah Theodor and Hanoah Albeck, Jerusalem 1965, vol. 1, 442; for an English version, *Genesis Rabbah. The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis. A New American Translation*, ed. Jacob Neusner, Atlanta 1985, vol. 2, 140.

42 Abraham ibn Ezra on Exod. 14:19; Rashi on *Sukkot* 54b.

43 *Peruš ha-roqeaḥ* on Exod. 28:17, ed. Yoel Klugmann, vol. 2, 151 f. Eleazar took a special interest in the name of God and composed a treatise on it (*Sefer hašem*).

44 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, cod. heb. 221, fol. 164r, Spain, sixteenth century.

45 *Rabbenu behaye. Bi'ur 'al ha-torah*, ed. R. Ḥayyim Dov Chavel, Jerusalem 1967, on Exod. 28:15, vol. 2, 298.

The motif of the seventy-two letters of the full name of God was commonly referred to in early Sephardic Kabbalah and can be found, for example, in the *Sefer ha-bahir*.<sup>46</sup> Bahye's interest in Kabbalah is well documented throughout his writings.<sup>47</sup>

Around the same time, the northern French scholar Hizkia ben Manoah also used this motif in his commentary titled *Hizquni*. He adduces first the talmudic background, and follows this with a graphic rendering of the breast shield (fig. 11) that has much in common with the design of the Regensburg shield. The addition of a drawing of the breast shield seems to be an innovation, as neither Judah the Pious nor Eleazar of Worms attached an image.<sup>48</sup> It appears in one of the oldest manuscripts of the *Hizquni*, dated to the thirteenth century.<sup>49</sup> In the words that follow the drawing, Hizkia seems to rely on Bahye: "All the letters add up to seventy-two letters and they correspond to the seventy-two letters of the full name of God."<sup>50</sup>

We can now attempt to reconstruct the journey of this motif during the thirteenth century and see at what station the Regensburg author of our image came to know it. It appears first in a pietistic context. As this version may have originated in Regensburg, where Judah the Pious lived for the last twenty-two years of his life, it would be tempting to suggest his version as the dominant source of our image. It appears, however, that the presentation of this motif in all the other texts which describe the breast shield in detail, pietistic or not, is more suitable for visualization than Judah's more abstract version, which only remarks that there were seventy-two letters on it. Both the author of *Peruṣ ha-roqeaḥ* and Eleazar ben Moses, the Preacher, cer-

46 *Sefer ha-bahir* 'al pi kitve yad ha-kedumim par. 110, ed. Daniel Abrams, Los Angeles 1994, 165 f.

47 For some background on Bahye ben Asher and his exegetical methods, see Avraham Grossman, *Biblical Exegesis in Spain during the 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, in: Haim Beinart (ed.), *Moresheet Sepharad: The Sephardi Legacy*, vol. 1, Jerusalem 1992, 142 f.

48 This applies to the manuscripts; in printed versions of *Peruṣ ha-roqeaḥ* a graphic rendering – perhaps prompted by manuscripts of the *Hizquni* – is inserted.

49 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Mich 568, fol. 109v; on the question whether this manuscript is an autograph, see *Hizquni. Peruṣ ha-torah le-rabbenu hizqia bar manoah*, ed. R. Hayyim Dov Chavel, Jerusalem 1981, introduction, 12 f., fn. 38; and Joseph Ofer, *The Commentary Hizquni and its History*, in: *Meggadim* 8 (1989), 69–83 (Heb.) suggesting that the manuscript was written by a scribe and corrected by Hiskia himself, adding the drawing together with a few other sketches; The sixteenth-century manuscripts of Eleazar the Preacher's text, see above, fn. 44, also include such drawings; however, there is no certainty that this was true also for earlier, no longer extant medieval manuscripts. The *Hizquni* also includes a sketch of the Temple; a discussion of Hiskia's sketches in relation to Maimonides' drawings and diagrams in Rashi's commentary to the Pentateuch, is beyond the scope of this study. A brief glance indicates that they do not have much in common; on the latter, see Gabrielle Sed-Rajna, *Some Further Data on Rashi's Diagrams to his Commentary of the Bible*, in: *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 1–2 (1993–94), 149–157.

50 *Hizquni* on Exod. 28:21, ed. R. Hayyim Dov Chavel, 301 f.

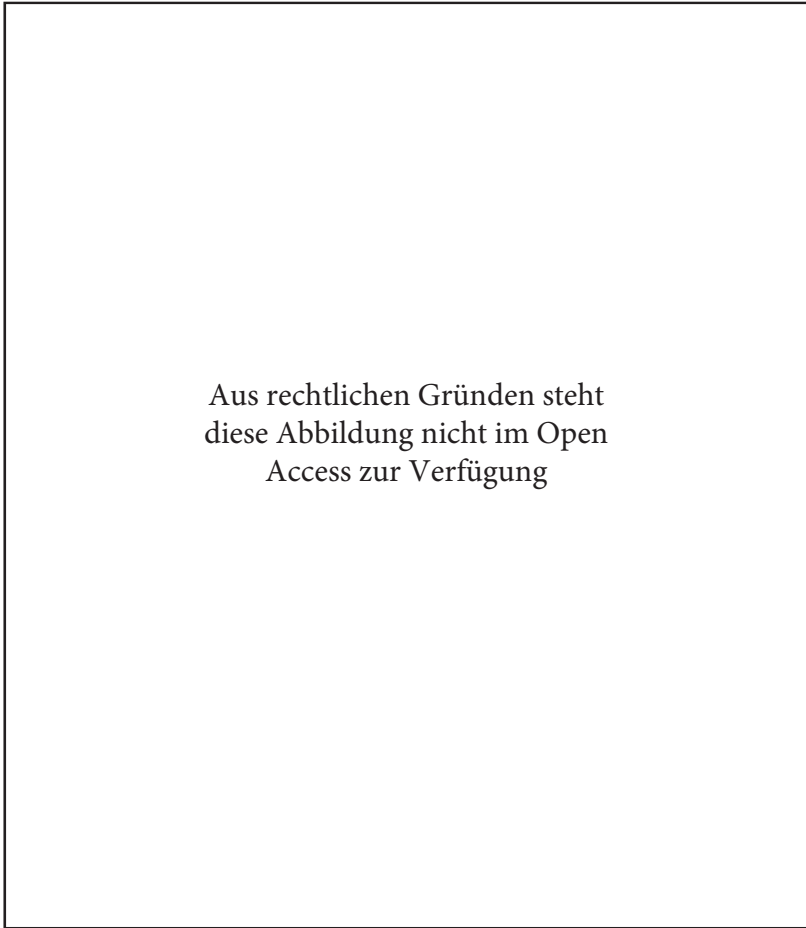


Fig. 11: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Mich. 568, fol. 109v, northern France, thirteenth century, Hiskia bar Manoah, Commentary to the Pentateuch *Hizkuni*, drawing of the high-priest's breast shield

tainly knew Judah's version, the former includes some literal quotations from it. Eleazar of Worms' teachings were highly influential all over Ashkenaz, and they were certainly also known in the town where his teacher had been active. Ivan Marcus has demonstrated that it was Eleazar who made his teacher's somewhat sectarian and esoteric doctrines more suitable for a



wider audience and that it was through this channel that pietistic motifs had a significant impact on Ashkenazic Jewry.<sup>51</sup> Eleazar's description of the breast shield would have been more suitable for visualization.

The motif of seventy-two letters on the breast shield did not appeal only to Pietists, but also to Sephardic scholars of a kabbalistic background. This is where Bahye ben Asher is to be located. Pietistic teachings were known among Sephardic Kabbalists and Bahye may have encountered the version of the *Peruś ha-roqeah*, even though he does not quote from it literally. He adds an explanation for the fact that the name of Benjamin consists of six letters and therefore has no addition. This remark is already found in a similar wording in *Peruś ha-roqeah*, but not in any other source. Whether Bahye's version may have been accessible in Regensburg is another matter. The question to what extent Sephardic scholarship had an effect on Ashkenaz is a complex one. Sephardic impact on scholars in the German lands can be observed in various fields. Since the second half of the thirteenth century, this applies especially to kabbalistic influence on scholars with mystical tendencies.<sup>52</sup> This certainly does not say anything about the specific possibility that Bahye's commentary was already available in Regensburg a few years after it was written. Evidence drawn from surviving manuscripts of the commentary does not seem to indicate that the text was known and used in the German lands.<sup>53</sup>

As to Hizkia ben Manoah, whose scholarly background is less well known and more difficult to define than that of Judah the Pious, Eleazar of Worms, and Bahya ben Asher, it is not quite clear if he was influenced by Bahye ben Asher or vice versa. Both directions can be taken into account;<sup>54</sup> Hizkia's

51 Ivan G. Marcus, *Piety and Society. The Jewish Pietists in Medieval Germany*, Leiden 1981, part 3.

52 For important remarks and more background on interactions between Pietists and Kabbalists, see Moshe Idel, *An Anonymous Kabbalistic Commentary of Shir ha-Yihud*, in: Karl Erich Grözinger/Joseph Dan (eds.), *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism*, Berlin/New York 1995, 139–154; in another context Idel observes specifically that Bahye knew a pietist explanation about the Name of God: *On R. Nehemia ben Solonon the Prophet's Interpretation of the Forty-Two Letters of the Name of God and the Book of Wisdom Attributed to R. Eleazar of Worms*, in: *Kabbalah* 14 (2006), 167, fn. 52 (Heb.).

53 Out of the twenty-nine medieval manuscripts of Bahye's commentary, of which copies are kept at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, none is of Ashkenazic origin. Nineteen are Sephardic, three from Islamic areas, two from Byzantium, one from Italy, and four of unknown provenance.

54 In an introductory poem, included only in the printed versions, not in the manuscripts, Hizkia mentions a variety of sources, some of which he gathered while "traveling to other countries," *Hizquni, introductory poem* (unpaginated), lines 20–22; Sarah Japhet, in a discussion on *Hizquni* Gen. 22, identified several of these sources, all of either northern

text is brief and concise, that of Bahye much lengthier, but on several occasions the wording is similar. It is well known that northern French tosafist scholarship had a great influence in Ashkenaz. Since the twelfth century, students from the Rhineland would go to study with tosafist scholars in France, and tosafist methods became more and more common in the German lands.<sup>55</sup> Abraham Reiner has shown that some students who were thought to be particularly revolutionary and innovative in their methods preferred not to return to the Middle Rhine, but rather to settle in Regensburg. A famous example of the first generation of Ashkenazic students in France is Ephraim of Regensburg. The town was ideally located from the point of view of twelfth- and thirteenth-century commerce and was a rising center, not only economically, but also politically and culturally, attracting innovative scholars who established Rabbinic schools there.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, Regensburg did not attract scholars of tosafist background alone, but also other unconventional individuals, in particular Judah the Pious.<sup>57</sup> Hizkia ben Manoah cannot be defined as a Tosafist in the purest sense of the term, as no *tosafot* to the Talmud have survived under his name. Neither is he known to have employed the dialectical method associated with the Tosafists. We also do not know if he shared with the Tosafists their Talmud-centered approach.<sup>58</sup> However, as Sara Japhet has shown, he was active in the vicinity

French or Sephardic Background: The *Hizquni* Commentary to the Pentateuch, Its Nature and Its Goals, in: Moshe Bar-Asher (ed.), Jubilee Volume for R. Mordechai Breuer, vol. 1, Jerusalem 1992, 91–111 (Heb.); repr. in Sara Japhet, *Collected Studies in Biblical Exegesis*, Jerusalem 2008, 364–382 (Heb.); theoretically there is also the possibility that Bahye was influenced by the *Hizquni*, given the fact that Sephardic anti-rationalists showed a great interest in northern French scholarship. I am indebted to Sarah Japhet for discussing these possibilities with me.

- 55 For general background on French tosafist methods among Ashkenazic scholars, see Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Tosaphists. Their History, Writings and Methods*, Jerusalem 1954, chap. 8 (Heb.); Avraham Grossmann, *The Earliest Ashkenazi Scholars. Their History, their Communal Leadership, and their Work*, Jerusalem 1981, chap. 8–10 (Heb.).
- 56 Avraham (Rami) Reiner, *From Rabbenu Tam to R. Isaac of Vienna. The Hegemony of the French Talmudic School in the Twelfth Century*, in: Christoph Cluse (ed.), *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages (Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries)*, Turnhout 2004, 273–281. For further background on the medieval community of Regensburg with references to earlier literature, Christoph Cluse, *Stadt und Judengemeinde in Regensburg im späten Mittelalter: Das 'Judengericht' und sein Ende*, in: Christoph Cluse/Alfred Haverkamp/Israel Yuval (eds.), *Jüdische Gemeinden und ihr christlicher Kontext in kulturträumlich vergleichender Betrachtung (5.–18. Jahrhundert)*. Internationale Konferenz an der Universität Trier, 18.–22. Oktober 1999. Zusammenfassungen der Vorträge, Trier 1999, 365–386.
- 57 For more information on Judah the Pious' presence in Regensburg, see Ephraim Kanarfogel, *R. Judah he-Hasid and the Rabbinic Scholars of Regensburg. Interactions, Influences, and Implications*, in: *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 96 (2006), no. 1, 17–37.
- 58 For a definition of the intellectual milieu of the Tosafists in great details, see Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages*, Detroit 1992, chap. 5.

of the Tosafists and in the broader sense he belonged to their culture, their mentality, and shared some of their scholarly interests.<sup>59</sup> The interaction between Ashkenazic and French scholars and their influence on Regensburg scholarship could thus provide a channel for Hizkia's text to reach the author of our image.

These observations lead to two possibilities. The use of the Sephardic compositional scheme may suggest that the Regensburg patron-designer knew and was interested in what Schwartz has called the "moderate naturalistic approach" to messianism. This approach was typical for the circle of anti-rationalist Sephardic scholars among whom Bahye counted himself. This leads to the rendering of the High Priest's breast shield with the seventy-two letters. Given that the motif appears in Bahye's commentary, one could speculate that there may have been a Sephardic depiction of the Temple with a reference – perhaps a non-figural one – to the shield. Such an image would have corresponded quite well to the cultural preferences of people like Bahye. There is, however, no evidence at all for such a pictorial tradition, and such an assumption would be highly conjectural. But it is quite possible that a Sephardic representation of the Temple in the form we know from surviving manuscripts lies behind the Regensburg image, and that this image was enriched by the textual motif that had reached the patron-designer independently, as part of the pietistic heritage or of kabbalistic teachings, both available in his immediate environment.

To come to terms with this question, the image may be examined for further links with the texts that describe the breast shield. The *Hizquni* provides several such links. First, the earliest graphic rendering of the breast shield occurs there (fig. 11). The drawing of the breast shield in the Regensburg image, its flatness and linear rendering with its graphic, rather than painterly quality – it looks rather like a piece of parchment attached to the High Priest's chest – seems to indicate that it might have been fashioned after a drawing of the kind found in the *Hizquni*. If the *Hizquni* manuscript indeed contained the earliest drawing of the motif, this would offer firm evidence that it is specifically this text that supported the Regensburg image.

More links can be observed between the Regensburg composition and the *Hizquni*. For example, time and again Hizkia lays special stress on light. Chapter twenty-five of the Book of Exodus first lists the various kinds of donations to be made by the Israelites towards the construction of the Tabernacle. Among others, the text mentions "oil for light (verse 6)," and Hizkia adds: "This entire pericope [is] about the construction of the building, but the king cannot enter his house before lights have been installed."<sup>60</sup> In the

59 Japhet, *The Hizquni Commentary to the Pentateuch*.

60 *Hizquni on Exod. 25:6*, ed. Hayyim Dov Chavel, 287.

description of the *menorah*<sup>61</sup> the central importance of the light becomes yet more evident. Hizkia's description of the *menorah* does not necessarily point out its physical features, but stresses the fact that it was meant to shed light on the showbread table; that the cups were arranged one under the other to collect overflowing oil; that the seven flames stand for the seven days of the week, and also for the seven planets. After all this, he explicitly describes the High Priest lighting the candlestick, which is mentioned in Num. 8:1–2 and therefore normally not discussed in commentaries to Exod. 25. Interestingly, Hizkia does not say a word about the wick tongs and ash scoops associated with the *menorah* and figuring prominently in almost all the Sephardic representations. Neither are they shown – as we have observed – in the Regensburg composition. Finally, in his description of the ark, Hizkia claims that it stood on small feet, as shown in the Regensburg image:

“And you should manufacture four golden rings (Exod. 25:12): these are small rings that were attached to the ark; at its four feet (*pa'amotav*): at the two broad sides [of the ark]. Some explain *pa'amotav* as feet, as [it is written, S. of S. 7:2]: ‘How beautiful are your feet in the shoes;’ [and Isa. 26:6] ‘the feet of the poor, the feet of the needy;’ it is not appropriate that the ark would be put directly on the earth.”<sup>62</sup>

In the same section, Hizkia also distinguishes between small rings – those mentioned above, and large rings:

“and two other large rings housed the poles; and these two rings were attached to the small rings and when the ark was put down, the large rings together with the poles were lowered [...]. since the Holy One Blessed Be He did not want the ark to be touched when the poles were attached; [two rings] on the one side and two rings on the other side, that is at the four feet [of the ark].”<sup>63</sup>

The feet of the ark are clearly discernible in the Regensburg image, as are the small rings at the back and the large ones in front.

Bahye's discussion of the Tabernacle, on the other hand, is replete with kabbalistic symbols and references to *merkavah* traditions. While there is a theoretical possibility that these ideas existed in the making of the Regensburg image, nothing in the way the pages are composed points decidedly in that direction. No specific link to Bahye's commentary beyond the description of the breast shield can be traced in the Regensburg Temple image. Moreover, judging from the manuscript evidence, it seems that Bahye's text

61 Ibid. on Exod. 25:31–39, 293f.

62 Ibid. on Exod. 25:12, 298. The word *pa'amot* received a variety of interpretations from medieval exegetes. Abraham ibn Ezra on Exod. 25:12 indeed explained them as feet, Rashi on Exod. 25:12, however, describes them as the lower corners; although Hizkia frequently relies on Rashi, in this case he follows the other tradition.

63 *Hizquni* on Exod. 25:12, ed. Hayyim Dov Chavel, 288f.

was not widely read in Ashkenaz. Neither does the *Peruš ha-roqeah* offer any specific link to the Regensburg pages beyond the description of the breast shield.

It is thus quite likely that, apart from a Sephardic pictorial source that provided the compositional scheme, it was also Hizkia's description of the sanctuary that shaped the Regensburg image. The *Hizquni* can be characterized rather as a compilation of various exegetical trends than as an original commentary.<sup>64</sup> However, it is not any specific innovative motif of Hizkia's linked to our image, that matters, but rather the particular combination of motifs found in his description of the Temple. As to the motif of seventy-two letters on the breast shield, it was in all likelihood known also from its pietistic background. But when we look at the graphic rendering in the *Hizquni*, and at the composition as a whole, the impact of this particular text seems to be more dominant.

### The Menorah

Before I come to conclusions about the nature of the cultural transfer that took place in producing the design of the Regensburg Temple image, a few remarks on the *menorah* are in order. It dominates the entire right part of the composition and covers a full page. This is unusual in contemporary Sephardic examples, which show the *menorah* integrated into the overall array of the ark and the showbread table, and normally occupying a bit more than a quarter of a page. This is the case in all the manuscripts of the Perpignan group (fig. 3). Full page representations of the *menorah* appear in Catalonia only around the second decade of the fourteenth century, and become frequent after 1350 (fig. 5).<sup>65</sup> Neither do the two lions appear in Sephardic Temple images. As on the facing page, the Regensburg image of the *menorah* is accompanied by captions in the upper and lower margins, quoting Exod. 25:31–33 and describing the candlestick in detail.

After the Jews lost political independence during the two revolts against the Romans, in 70 CE when the Temple was destroyed and in 135 CE when the Bar Kokhba revolt was suppressed, it was the *menorah* that first crystallized as an independent symbol. It began to appear not only as part of an array of Temple implements, as in the mosaic pavements of numerous synago-

64 For the sources he used, see Japhet, *The Hizquni Commentary to the Pentateuch*.

65 An exception is the *menorah* in the so-called Cervera Bible, Lisbon, Biblioteca nacional, MS III. 72, fol. 316v, which, however, does not belong to the category of Temple representations, but reflects the vision in Zech. 14:3–4. No implements are shown there; for a reproduction, see Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, pl. 6.

gues, but can be found frequently as an independent symbol indicating Jewish identity on tomb stones at Roman burial sites, for example.<sup>66</sup> Together with other symbols originating in the Temple, the *menorah* always carried an eschatological meaning, but, in addition to the many messianic symbols, the *menorah* evolved specifically into a sign of national identity. Moreover, it soon became generally recognized as such and was found all over the Jewish world.<sup>67</sup> If the *menorah* was intended as a symbol inheriting the national meaning it had acquired in late antiquity, this would imply that in our representations, the notion of the Temple received a certain national or political undertone.

Unlike the Sephardic renderings, the Regensburg image shows the *menorah* – as noted – without its biblical accompaniments, the wick tongs and ash scoops. This adds extra significance to its appearance as a symbol rather than solely a Temple implement. The stress on the symbolic meaning in a political-national sense is further implemented in the Regensburg Codex by the two lions flanking the *menorah* – another reminiscence of late antique imagery. Not only does the lion symbolize the royal tribe of Judah; it has been proposed by Ursula Schubert that in Jewish imagery of the Roman period, the two lions referred to the Patriarch of the Land of Israel and the Exilarch of Babylonia, the two Jewish authorities of the time, who represented the Jews to the gentile world. The lion as symbol stands for royal leadership in messianic times.<sup>68</sup> In post-70 CE late ancient Judaism, with the Land of Israel recently conquered by the Romans, the lion with its political implications had a well-defined representational function and appeared frequently in the art of that period.<sup>69</sup> But this connotation is rare in the Middle Ages and later periods, when the lion or the pair of lions became a motif associated primarily with the Torah shrine in the synagogue. With one exception in the fifteenth century, we do not find a lion in any medieval pictorial renderings of the Temple.<sup>70</sup>

Emphasis on the national aspect of messianic expectation is absent from the Sephardic examples, in particular those of the earlier phase. However, a tendency to highlight the *menorah* can be found in Hebrew manuscripts from

66 Lihî Habas, Identity and Hope. The Menorah in the Jewish Catacombs in Rome, in: Fishhof (ed.), *In the Light of the Menorah*, 69–72 (Heb.).

67 Israel L. Levine, *The Menorah in the Ancient Synagogue*, in: *ibid.*, 99–101.

68 Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 5a.

69 Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archeology in the Land of Israel*, Leiden 1988, 321–328.

70 Many of the later Sephardic examples display a full-page *menorah*; the *menorah* First Kennicott Bible from Corunna (1476) has a lion crouching at its foot (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Kenn 1). These features discussed against the background of late medieval Sephardic thoughts on messianism are the subject of a separate study now in progress.

France.<sup>71</sup> Both the naturalistic and the apocalyptic view of messianic times have certain political-national aspects and underscore the expectation that political independence will be re-established. As to the particulars of these political aspects, however, there are differences between the two concepts. The medieval naturalistic view in Spain, largely based on Samuel's dictum,<sup>72</sup> tended to play down the messianic scenario. Apart from the basic notion that Israel will be liberated from foreign bondage and the Jewish state will be restored, the naturalistic approach envisioned the messianic future rather in terms of personal salvation. The apocalyptic view, on the other hand, implied a whole range of politically charged events in a significantly more dramatic setting. At the center figure the messianic wars leading to the liberation of the people of Israel from foreign bondage and the Land of Israel from Christian domination. Holders of apocalyptic views tended to link contemporary political developments, such as the Mongol threat or the Crusader invasions, to the awaited messianic events.<sup>73</sup> The liberation from bondage – understood as a triumphant defeat of Edom-Christianity – thus took on an entirely different dimension.<sup>74</sup> The notion of messianic war was not new in the thirteenth century, but after 150 years of Crusader activity it enjoyed a great deal of relevance. Perhaps this shift to political symbolism in the Regensburg miniature in the form of the *menorah* with the two flanking lions communicates something of this idea.

71 In the so-called London Miscellany in the British Library, MS Add. 11639, a collection of Hebrew texts from ca. 1280, written and illuminated in northern France, we twice find the *menorah* being lit by the High Priest, fols. 114r and 522v; in the latter instance it is accompanied by an image of the Ark of the Covenant on the facing page; for a facsimile edition, see *The North French Hebrew Miscellany*. British Library Add. MS 11639, ed. Jeremy Schonfield, London 2003; another example is the slightly later Poligny Pentateuch from Burgundy, produced around 1300, now in Paris, BNF, cod. hébr. 36, fol. 283v, see Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, pl. 24; here too the *menorah* is lit by the High Priest, and no other implements are shown. Although these images of the *menorah* are certainly meant as reference to the Temple, none of them show it as part of a larger array of implements; rather, the candelabrum appears on its own.

72 See above, fn. 11.

73 Idel, *Jewish Apocalypticism*, 223.

74 See, for example, in a yet unpublished text contained in a manuscript in Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, cod. or. 25, attributed to a student of Isaac ben Abraham, a French Tosafist of the first half of the thirteenth century; I am indebted to Israel Yuval for his assistance in making this text accessible to me. In this account of the messianic scenario, titled *Homilies of the King Messiah and Gog and Magog*, the messianic wars, described in great detail, get most of the space. As Yuval shows, the author describes the wars in terms of Crusader realia: *Jewish Messianic Expectations Towards 1240 and Christian Reactions*, in: Mark Cohen/Peter Schäfer (eds.), *Toward the Millennium. Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco* (= *Studies in the History of Religions* 77), Leiden 1998, 108; see also Kanarfogel, *Medieval Rabbinic Conceptions of the Messianic Age*, 156f.

## Conclusion

The particulars of the cultural transfer that lies behind our image are multi-layered. The use of a compositional scheme imported and transferred from Spain – whether as part of a Sephardic illuminated Bible or, rather, a model book or a simple compositional sketch – implies that the Regensburg patron-designer knew the concept of the future Temple to be built and that he had a certain preference for it. This concept was then combined with the figure of the High Priest and the pietistic/kabbalistic motif of seventy-two letters on the breast shield. There is evidence that the commentary of Hizkia bar Manoah was the specific source of this motif, rather than a text of pietistic background. This does not necessarily mean that the designer of our image was not at all familiar with the pietistic background, but the specific links to the *Hizquni* speak for themselves. Finally, the composition also integrates some aspects of the apocalyptic approach, namely the stress on national implications communicated by the emphatic presentation of the *menorah*.

If a Sephardic compositional scheme representing a particular messianic approach was thus imported, transferred, and adopted in an Ashkenazic ambience, the question is whether the Regensburg patron-designer was aware of the meaning underlying the transferred composition. The adoption of a compositional concept common in Sephardic imagery could mean that the author of the Regensburg pages struggled with the concept of the heavenly Temple miraculously descending in the messianic era, and rather leaned towards the expectation of a future messianic Temple to be built. Admittedly, this would have been very untypical for an Ashkenazic patron. However, as observed above, the notion of a human-built Temple, even though extremely rare, made its way also into the mind of a student of Rashi, who noted the measurements of the Temple as an aid to the making of the sanctuary when the time would come. Assuming our patron's interest in the details found in pietistic thought, in kabbalistic scholarship, or in the *Hizquni*, it was certainly not a naturalistic concept with a Maimonidean background that he had in mind, but rather a more moderate version of it, typical for the circles of anti-rationalistic scholars, many of whom had a strong interest in Kabbalah. The image of the Temple implements in the Regensburg Pentateuch thus marks a meeting point of cultural interaction reflecting different directions of scholarly interest. The Jewish community of Regensburg, as we know it, was fertile ground for such a meeting point.

Finally, an as yet hardly noticed feature of the Regensburg Pentateuch strikingly exemplifies how the different scholarly traditions met in this particular city. A few comments about open and closed pericopes are inserted between the Pentateuch section and the Book of Esther (fol. 158r). The



semi-cursive script and the ink used for these lines seem to correspond to those of the first massoretor, who wrote the *massorah gedolah* for the Pentateuch section. The massoretor explains that in most cases he marked the open and closed paragraphs of the Book of Esther according to what he found in a manuscript written by Judah the Pious in the latter's own handwriting. Then he mentions divergences from Judah's system, all of French tosafist background, and all apparently available, as he claims, in manuscripts, again, in their authors' own handwriting. He lists Rabbenu Tam, Josef Tov Elem, and one of his own ancestors, Elijah the Elder, identified by scholars as Elijah ben Judah of Paris, a French Tosafist of the twelfth century.<sup>75</sup> These lines show that a wide range of sources from different backgrounds was available first-hand to scholars and scribes in Regensburg around the year 1300. Here the journey of the somewhat complex Temple imagery came to an end in an environment offering the most suitable ambience for an image that now appears as a meeting point of different ideas and scholarly positions.

75 Ernst Roth (ed.), *Monumenta Judaica – 2000 Jahre Geschichte und Kultur der Juden am Rhein*, exh. cat., Cologne 1963, no. D. 5; Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, 125.