

Jewish Illuminated Manuscripts: Torah as Art in Medieval Ashkenaz

Course Description:

Jewish illuminated manuscripts are among the treasured artifacts that have survived the trials of Jewish history and whose imagery provides a window into the Torah worldview of the Jews that commissioned them hundreds of years ago. The Leipzig Mahzor, produced in Germany in the 14th century, is a collection of piyyutim for holidays whose vibrant imagery reflect the teachings of the community's famed rabbi, R. Eleazar of Worms, the preeminent student of R. Judah the Pious, who led the Hasidei Ashkenaz movement. This course will trace the origins and structure of the Jewish communities of the German Rhineland and will provide an overview of their unique teachings and customs related to prayer, repentance, biblical exegesis, and piety. Primary text readings will be complemented with visual studies of the imagery found in the

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ing assignments which will count towards the midterm/final

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Spring 2020
ARTS 1975H
JHIS 4934H
JPHI 4933H

Attendance Policy: Every student is expected to attend the class meetings and participate in the class discussion. While I understand that there may be circumstances that require you to miss class, if you are absent for more than two meetings your grade will be affected

Secondary Readings are available through JSTOR and Canvas. Primary readings will be provided in class.

There may be a museum or rare book library visit: TBD

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations should make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, rkohn1@yu.edu during the first week of class. The office is located in 215 Lexington Ave, Suite 505. Once you have been approved for accommodations, please submit your accommodation letter and discuss any specifics with me to ensure the successful implementation of your accommodations.

Topics:

Introduction

Week 1:

Part 1: History

Week 2

Background: The Origins of the Jewish Communities of Ashkenaz

Primary Reading:

R. Eleazar of Worms, *Perushei Siddur Tefillah le-Rokea*, vol. I (Jerusalem: Makhon Haav Hershler, 1992) Introduction to Yishtabah, 228-229.

Robert Chazan, *Church State and Jew in the Middle Ages* "Bishop Rudiger of Speyer," 57 "Emperor Henry IV," 6063.

Secondary Readings:

Kenneth Stow, "By Land or By Sea: The Passage of the Kalonymides to the Rhineland in the Tenth Century," *Communication in the Jewish Diaspora*, ed. S. Menache (Leiden, 1970), 59-

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Digital facsimile and Online Resources

Secondary Reading:

Malachi Beit Arie, "How Hebrew Manuscripts are Made" in A Sign and A Witness: 2000 Years of Hebrew Books and Illuminated Manuscripts, 35-46.

The Making of Illuminated Manuscripts

Weeks 4-6

Materials

Scribes (A Female scribe Oxford Bodleian Library MS Can. Or. 89, fol. 257r

Vocalizer

Illuminator

Patron

Audience

What kinds of Hebrew texts were illuminated?

Reading:

Evelyn M. Cohen, "The Decoration of Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts" in A Sign and A Witness: 2000 Years of Hebrew Books and Illuminated Manuscripts, 47-

Live Demonstration of Illumination

Text layout

Parchment selection/preparation

Lining/preparation for writing

Script/paleography

Inks and paints

Gilding

Binding

What is iconography?

Standard

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Secondary Reading:

Eva Frojmovic, "Jewish Scribes and Christian Illuminators: Interstitial Encounters and Cultural Negotiation" in *Between Judaism and Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 281-301.

Artistic representations in Halakhah

Reading:

Vivian Mann *Jewish Texts on the Visual Arts*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-

(Midterm)

Part III: The Thought of *Hasidei Ashkenaz* :

Prayer and the Siddur

Primary Readings

R. Judah the Pious, *Sefer Hasidim* (Selections)

R. Eleazar of Worms, *Commentary to the Prayers of* (Selections)

Secondary Readings:

Ivan Marcus, "The Devotional Ideals in Ashkenazic Pietism" in *Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible Through the Middle Ages*, edited by Arthur Green (New York: Crossroad, 1989) 635-656-

Part IV: Text and Imagery

Week 11-14

Prayer and Piyyut

Primary Reading:

Sefer Hasidim par. 785, ed. Reuven Margalioth (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1957).

Secondary Reading:

Mordechai Breuer. "The sheliach Tsibur in Medieval Ashkenaz [Hebrew], "Dukhan" (1972-1978)

David Stern, "Jewish" Art and the Making of the Medieval Prayerbook" in *Ars Judaica* 2010, 23-44.

Image:

Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Voller 1102/I, Mahzor, Worms c. 1310, fol. 27r.

Midrash of the Song of Song as Imagery

Primary Reading:

R. Eleazar of Worms, *Drasha-Resached*. Simcha Emanuel (Jerusalem: Mekitze Nirdamim, 2006) Selections.

Images:

Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Voller 1102/I, Mahzor, Worms c. 1310, fol. 64v.

Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Voller 1102/I, Mahzor, Worms c. 1310, fol. 68v.

Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Voller 1102/I, Mahzor, Worms c. 1310, fol. 70v.

Shavuot Revelation and the Torah Initiation Rite in Ashkenaz

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Primary Reading:

R. Eleazar of Worms: Sefer Rokeah, Laws of Shavuot

Secondary Reading:

Ivan Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood: Jewish Acculturation in Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 141.

Image: Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Voller 1102/I, Mahzor, Worms c. 1310, fol. 130v-131r.

Repentance and Eschatology

Reading:

Sara Offenberg, "Illuminations of Kol Nidre in Two Ashkenazi Mahzorim" in *Ars Judaica*, 2011, 7-16.

Images:

Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Voller 1102/I, Mahzor, Worms c. 1310, fol. 31v. Michael Mahzor, Bodeleian Library, MS Mich. 627, fol 48r.

Padua Ashkenazi Mahzor, New York Public Library, MS, Heb. 224 fol. 333v.