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Artistic Innovation and Cultural Exchange: Sephardic Book Illumination ca. 1300, Burgos - Tudela - Soria

Innovación artística e intercambios culturales: Iluminación de libros sefardíes ca. 1300, Burgos - Tudela - Soria

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Abstract
Around 1260, after a few decades of consolidation, the illuminated Sephardic Bible reached its peak development in Toledo. Carpet pages inspired by the prevalent local mudejar visual culture were the focus of the illumination. The special close connection between the communities of Toledo and Burgos, and the constant Jewish mobility between northern Castile and southern Navarre spread the tradition of the illuminated biblical codex to regions where the mudejar visual culture was not predominant as it was in Toledo. These northern areas not only had a long local Romanesque tradition, but also became crossroads of various cultures. The resulting diversity, which provided fertile ground for creativity, affected the Sephardic book art that flourished in these areas around 1300. Two particular manuscripts that exemplify the phenomenon constitute the heart of this discussion: The Second Kennicott Bible of the Bodleian collection in Oxford and the famous Cervera Bible housed today in Lisbon. Shedding new light on these two manuscripts, each speaking a different visual language, will enable us to reveal the innovative profile of the books themselves and of the region in which they were produced.

Keywords: Sephardic illumination, royal mudejar art, Gothic, diversity, biblical codex, northern Castile, Tudela.

Resumen
Alrededor de 1260, después de unas décadas de consolidación, la Biblia sefardí iluminada alcanzó su máximo desarrollo en los *scriptoria* de Toledo. Las páginas de tapices, inspiradas en la cultura visual de la comunidad mudéjar local, fueron el foco de la actividad miniaturística.

La estrecha conexión entre las comunidades de Toledo y Burgos, y la constante movilidad judía entre el norte de Castilla y el sur de Navarra extendió la tradición del códice bíblico iluminado a regiones en las que la cultura visual mudéjar no era tan predominante como en Toledo. Estas zonas septentrionales no sólo tenían una larga tradición románica local, sino que se convirtieron en encrucijadas de varias culturas. La diversidad resultante, que proporcionó un terreno fértil para la creatividad, afectó al arte del libro sefardí que floreció en estas zonas alrededor de 1300. Dos manuscritos particulares que ejemplifican el fenómeno constituyen el corazón de esta discusión: la Segunda Biblia Kennicott de la colección Bodleian en Oxford y la famosa Biblia de Cervera que se encuentra hoy en día en Lisboa. El hecho de arrojar nueva luz sobre estos dos manuscritos, que desarrollan dos lenguajes visuales diferentes, nos permitirá advertir el perfil innovador de los libros en sí y de las regiones en las que fueron producidos.

Palabras clave: Iluminación sefardí, arte real mudéjar, gótico, diversidad, códice bíblico, norte de Castilla, Tudela.

In the early twelfth century, the economic boom along the pilgrimage roads to Santiago de Compostela, attracted Jews to the northern areas of Castile. Many of these newcomers arrived as refugees from Al-Andalus, in the wake of the invasions of the radical forces of the Almoravids (late eleventh century) and the Almohads (second half of the twelfth century).[1] In their new home, under the king's jurisdiction, they gained his protection and enriched his treasury.[2] They spread through the northern Castilian urban centres, small towns and semi-urban villages, between which they often travelled to make their livelihood.[3] The major *juderías* developed right on the main Camino; the largest and most prosperous was that of Burgos.[4] Because of its location at the intersection of several routes, Burgos was a major centre of long-distance trade and a lodestone for foreign merchants from the Iberian Peninsula (Navarre, Aragon, Catalonia) and beyond (France, Italy, Germany), many of whom chose to stay and became permanent residents. Jews originating in different areas were part of this local mosaic of ethnicities.[5]

Another vibrant ethnic mixture characterized the neighboring area of Navarre, the Pass, through which pilgrims coming from beyond the Pyrenees made their way to the central route of the Camino. Gascons, Basques, Navarro-Aragonese, Francos, Castilians, Jews and Muslims lived side by side in Navarre.[6] Political changes empowered the French component in the

[1] M. Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians in Medieval Castile: Tradition, Coexistence and Change*, Washington, D.C., 2016, p. 54.

[2] *Ibidem*, pp. 19-20; Y. Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1971, 1, pp. 85-90.

[3] Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians,* p. 74.

[4] F. Cantera, "La Judería de Burgos", *Sefarad*, 12 (1952), 59-104; *Sefarad*, 18 (1958), pp. 99-108; L. V. Díaz Martín, "Estructura Social", in Á. Montenegro Duque (ed.), *Historia de Burgos*, vol. II/1: Edad Media, Burgos, 1986, pp. 247-293, part. 282-293.

[5] Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, p. 59.

[6] B. Leroy, *The Jews of Navarre in the Late Middle Ages*, Jerusalem, 1985, p. 10.

kingdom. In 1234, Navarre was inherited by the counts of Champagne and the governors were delegated by the kings of France, who sent their officers and soldiers as well as monks of French origin to the area; the foreign Capetian customs blended with the local Navarrese and other Iberian traditions. [7]

Tudela, one of the two main urban centres of the small kingdom, was especially diverse. The southern edge of Navarre, with Tudela at its centre, was squeezed between Aragon and Castile, a geographic proximity that made the diffusion of neighboring cultural traditions easy. The town was founded by the Emir of Cordova in 800 to control the Ebro valley; in 1121 it was conquered by the king of Aragon. During the Reconquista, the Moors were transferred to the western part of the city and their mosque was turned into the Collegiate Church of Santa Maria la Mayor. The Jewish *juderias* and its three synagogues were situated at the heart of the Christian bourgeois quarters: next to the collegiate church, near San Pedro and near San Salvador. [8] Later on, according to data of 1340, they formed around 15% of the local population (the rest was comprised of Moors –10%, and Christians –75%),[9] a proportion which may shed light on previous decades as well.

This diversity, which provided fertile ground for creativity, had an effect on the Sephardic book art that flourished in these areas around 1300. The constant Jewish mobility within the northern areas of Castile and Navarre and the close connection between Burgos and the central community in Toledo spread the tradition of the illuminated biblical codex, and at the same time gave rise to innovations reflecting the vibrant diversity of the region. Two particular manuscripts that exemplify the phenomenon constitute the heart of this discussion: the Second Kennicott Bible of the Bodleian collection in Oxford,[10] and the famous Cervera Bible housed today in Lisbon.[11] Each of these manuscripts speaks a different visual language. Shedding new light on these will enable us to reveal the innovative character and the multi-visual culture profile of the books themselves and of the region in which they were produced. As we accompany the figures involved in the making of the two manuscripts, we will move back and forth within the northern Iberian areas, between Burgos, Soria and Tudela. Our journey, however, will begin in Toledo, where the Northern Sephardic biblical codex is rooted.

Toledo-Burgos: The Rebirth of a Tradition

Relations between the communities of the two royal centres of Burgos and Toledo were especially close. The community of Toledo had already been a significant centre under Muslim rule. The Arabic linguistic endurance after the Christian conquest (1085) enabled the continuity of the Sephardic cultural heritage of Muslim Spain. With the establishment of the city as a royal capital and the arrival of prominent Andalusian families escaping the persecutions, the

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 5; and Y. Assis, R. Magdalena, *The Jews of Navarre in the Late Middle Ages*, Jerusalem, 1990, pp. 22-24 (Hebrew).

[8] Leroy, *The Jews of Navarre*, pp. 9-10.

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 9.

[10] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Kennicott 2.

[11] Lisbon, National Library. Ms. 72.

economic prosperity and scholarly importance of the Toledo community, the largest in New Castile, increased.[12] Towards the end of the twelfth century, R. Meir Abulafia, the son of Todros, the leader of the community of Burgos, settled in Toledo. Abulafia married the daughter of a local resident, Joseph ibn Shoshan, the treasurer of Alfonso VIII, and there he established a rich scholarly career. Soon he became the leading Talmudist in Castile, whose influence exceeded the borders of the region. [13]

In 1227, R. Meir Abulafia published his work *Masoret Seyag la-Torah*, the result of a continuous project aiming to establish the accurate reading and writing of the Bible, including restoration of the text of the Tiberias masorah, [14] the grammatical notes on the Bible, which had been written down by the tenth century, along the margins of biblical codices.[15] For this purpose, R. Meir searched for Torah scrolls and biblical codices with the masorah notes, his clear preference being for old manuscripts, which he considered more reliable. Moreover, relying on his results and further investigations he prepared a Torah scroll, and in order to spread the message he initiated its use as a model for biblical codices, which would be produced locally and then sent northward and southward to different communities.[16]

The search for old biblical manuscripts, and the project of producing new biblical codices preserving old traditions that developed around R. Meir Abulafia was probably the background for the revival of the biblical codex in Toledo and for its close connections to the scribal work of the early eastern tradition, which had reached the Iberian Peninsula via North Africa.[17] In the earliest Sephardic examples, the scribal decoration played a minor role, but even in them the place of the mudejar aesthetic is apparent. Towards 1260, after a few decades of consolidation, the illuminated Sephardic Bible reached its peak development. The Muslim visual language of the eastern biblical codex inspired the use of the local mudejar visual culture prevalent in Toledo at that time. More than one hundred and fifty years after the Reconquista, when the illuminated Sephardic Bible first flourished, Toledo had not yet lost its earlier dominant Al-Andalusian aesthetic profile. Local examples of religious Al-Andalusian architecture not only retained their original style beyond the thirteenth century, but served as significant sources of inspiration for the local mudejar architecture that flourished then. In such a visual cultural atmosphere, the use of mudejar artistic forms in local Sephardic biblical codices can be regarded as an integral part of the general visual language of the city.[18]

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[12] Baer, *A History of the Jews*, v. 1, pp. 78, 83-84.

[13] B. Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition: The Career and Controversies of Ramah*, Cambridge MA, 1982, pp. 4-8.

[14] M. Breuer, *The Aleppo Codex and the Accepted Text of the Bible*, Jerusalem. 1976, pp. 12-13, 88-89; Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture*, pp. 35-38.

[15] M. Beit-Arié, C. Sirat, M. Glatzer, *Codices hebraicis litteris exarati quo tempore scripti fuerint exhibentes*, v.1: jusquà 1020, v. 2: de 1201 à 1079, v. 3: de 1085 à 1139/40, *Monumenta Palaeographia Medii Aevi: Series Hebraica*, Turnhout, 1997-2002.

[16] Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture*, p. 37.

[17] For a broader discussion, see my forthcoming article, "R. Meir Abulafia and the Revival of the Biblical Codex in Toledo".

[18] S. Shalev-Eyni, "Tradition in Transition: Mudejar Art and the Emergence of the Illuminated Sephardic Bible in Christian Toledo", *Medieval Encounters* 23 (2017), pp. 531-559, part. 535-536, 541-552.

Since, unlike in other geo-cultural centres in Europe, there was neither a local commercial book market nor mass production,[19] Jews, and usually the scribes themselves, served as illuminators, translating the mudejar patterns known from architecture and artefacts into carpet pages in manuscripts.[20] Soon afterwards, due to the close connections between the Jewish communities of Toledo and Burgos and the shared interest in accuracy of the Bible text and the production of biblical codices, [21] already developed at the time of R. Meir Abulafia,[22] the new visual Sephardic tradition of Toledo moved northward. This tradition was brought in the form of actual manuscripts and by scribes and illuminators wandering between the two communities.

On January 3, 1260, Menahem, son of Abraham ibn Malek, completed a sumptuous Bible for Isaac the son of Abraham Hadad. The manuscript, known as the Damascus Keter (being named for one of its later locations),[23] reflects the Toledo tradition, which was consolidated around the same time. Carpet pages located at the beginning and end as well as between the three sections of the Bible and before the Psalms, give the manuscript its main splendor.[24] The micrographic floral scrolls and interlacing patterns spreading along the whole page include texts of the grammatical notes of the masorah. The shapes are filled with colours and gold and the frame surrounding the page is written in larger script, a format also already known in eastern examples, from which this practice derives.[25] The motifs, however, are all local, inspired by mudejar art in Toledo.[26]

Both the scribe and the patron of the Damascus Keter were members of well-known families in Toledo, who left other written evidence.[27] However, the very end of the colophon mentions Burgos. Since this last word is readable only under ultraviolet light, it has been suggested

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[19] G.D. Greenia, "University Book Production and Courtly Patronage in Thirteenth-Century France and Spain," in D. J. Kagay, J. T. Snow (eds.), *Medieval Iberia: Essays on the History and Literature of Medieval Spain*, Ibérica 25, New York, 1997, pp. 103-128.

[20] For a broader analysis, see Shalev-Eyni, "Tradition in Transition", pp. 553-556. On the use of mudejar architecture and artefacts as models for the illumination, see K. Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art between Islam and Christianity: The Decoration of Hebrew Bibles in Medieval Spain*, The Medieval and Early Modern Iberian World 19, Leiden, 2004, pp. 64-66; G. Sed-Rajna, "Toledo or Burgos", *Journal of Jewish Art* 2 (1978), pp. 6-21, part. 18-19; E. Frojmovic, "Jewish Mudejarismo and the Invention of Tradition", in C. Caballero-Navas, E. Alfonso (eds.), *Late Medieval Jewish Identities: Iberia and Beyond*, New York, pp. 233-258, part. 241-245.

[21] For the relations between the two cities in terms of manuscript production, see Sed-Rajna, "Toledo or Burgos", pp. 6-21.

[22] In response to a request from Burgus, Abulafia composed another massoretic treatise, but it did not survive. Septimus, *Hispano-Jewish Culture*, p. 37.

[23] Jerusalem. Jewish National Library, Cod. 4º Heb 790.

[24] See e.g. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Illuminated_manuscript_of_the_Pentateuch,_Western_Europe_in_the_12th_century.jpg

[25] For the Eastern Hebraic biblical codices, see Beit-Arié, Sirat, Glatzer, *Codices hebraicis litteris*. For illuminated examples, see L. Avrin, *The Illumination in the Moshe ben Asher Codex of 895 C.E.*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor,1974; B. Narkiss, *Illumination from Hebrew Bibles of Leningrad originally published by Baron David Günzburg and Vladimir Stassoff*, Jerusalem, 1990; O. Vasilieva, B. Zaikovsky, A. Kantsedikas, *Masterpieces of Jewish Art, Russian National Library, Hebrew Manuscript Ornament*, Moscow/ Tel-Aviv, 2003.

[26] Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, pp. 64-65.

[27] I. Yoel, "A Keter from 1260 in the National Library", *Kiryat Sefer*, 38 (1962), pp. 122-32 (Hebrew).

that it was added at a slightly later date, when the manuscript may have been transferred north to Burgos.[28] Whether made in Toledo and brought to Burgos, or produced according to the Toledan tradition in Burgos by a Toledan scribe and artist for a Toledan patron, the Damascus Keter gives expression to the transfer of the tradition of the Sephardic Bible decorated with mudejar forms northward to regions with different cultural conditions. In Burgos the mudejar visual culture was not as prevalent as in Toledo, and was mainly restricted to royal contexts. Like other northern areas, the region had a long local Romanesque tradition.

Second Kennicott Bible: Burgos-Tudela-Soria

The meeting between the mudejar art characterizing the first Sephardic codices and the artistic climate of northern Castile and southern Navarre is reflected in diverse ways in a group of manuscripts produced around 1300. All are related directly or indirectly to Joshua ibn Gaon, a qualified scribe and illuminator. Joshua left his colophons in several illuminated biblical manuscripts, usually incorporating them in the grammatical notes of the masorah.[29] He usually noted his birthplace as Soria and his workplace as Tudela.[30] Based on stylistic and palaeographic features, some other biblical codices without colophons have been attributed to his hand or that of his immediate circle. His involvement in the production process differs from one manuscript to another, and in some cases, one can discern the presence of collaboration with additional professionals. Based on this evidence of cooperative effort and considering the short time in which the whole group was produced, scholars have suggested the existence of a Jewish workshop, with which Joshua worked in partnership, or which he may have directed.[31] While the existence of an actual workshop is uncertain, the present data does allow us to conclude that he was involved in some form of workshop-like cooperation in Tudela at the beginning of the fourteenth century, working for diverse patrons from nearby areas in Navarre and Castile.

One of the manuscripts attributed to Joshua's hand is the Second Kennicott Bible of the Bodleian Library, probably one of the earliest in the group (Figs. 1-4).[32] Although no colophon is included in the Bible itself, Joshua's name appears on a colophon written on the back of a plan of the Temple, which today forms folios 1 verso and 2 recto of the manuscript and was

[28] Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, pp. 65-68. The decoration of the *seder* marks may have been added at this later stage, *Ibidem*, p. 66.

[29] For the manuscripts related to Joshua Ibn Gaon, see B. Narkiss, G. Sed-Rajna, "La première bible de Josué ben Abraham Ibn Gaon", *Revue des Études Juives*, 130 (1971), pp. 258-259; T. Metzger, "Josué ben Abraham ibn Gaon et la masora du Ms. Iluminado 72 de la Biblioteca Nacional de Lisbonne", *Codices Manuscripti*, 15/5 (1990), pp. 1-27; B. Narkiss, A. Cohen-Mushlin, A. Tcherikover, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles*, v. I: *Spanish and Portuguese Manuscripts*, 2 vols., Jerusalem/London, 1982, pp. 22-34; G. Sed-Rajna, S. Fellous, *Les manuscrits hébreux enluminés des bibliothèques de France*, Leuven/Paris, 1994, nos. 15-16; Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, pp. 98-130; J. del Barco, "Joshua Ibn Gaon's Hebrew Bibles and the Circulation of Books in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods", in E. Alfonso, J. Decter (eds.) *Jewish Sacred Manuscripts in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, Turnhout, 2014, pp. 267-297.

[30] For the colophons, see Metzger, "Josué ben Abraham".

[31] Sed-Rajna, Fellous, *Les manuscrits*, p. 49; Del Barco, "Joshua Ibn Gaon's Hebrew Bibles", pp. 272-280.

[32] For the relatively early dating of the Bible, see Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, pp. 105, 109.

probably attached to the manuscript later, after its production. The codex itself opens with pages decorated with horseshoe shaped double-arches framing the list of 613 precepts according to their order of appearance in the Pentateuch. Gospel books exposing the local Mozarabic impact on illumination inspired this format, which became a regular component in this group and other manuscripts from nearby areas.[33] The dragons designed here in the spared ground technique to fill the spaces between the arches and their frames are more typical of Christian-European art as well. However, there are clear traces of the Toledan-Burgos tradition, supporting the relatively early date of the codex. The decoration program includes the traditional components of carpet pages at the beginning and end of the Pentateuch, as well as the marginal markings of the portions and the decoration of the masorah text along the margins,[34] all of which follow mudejar patterns and contribute to the mudejar-like appearance of the manuscript. A comparison between the half-page carpet panels at the end of the book of Malachi and the end of the Hagiographa in the Second Kennicott Bible (Fig. 1),[35] with the end of the book of Ruth in the Damascus Keter,[36] clearly shows the affinity of the Kennicott to the repertoire of vegetal scrolls of the Toledan tradition. Being the closest to the Toledan tradition of the whole group of codices related to Ibn Gaon, the Second Kennicott Bible can be considered a connecting link between the two groups of manuscripts. And yet, together with this clear connection, the emergence of a new variant is also discernible. This is especially apparent in combinations of interlacing patterns with the coat of arms of Castile in both a carpet page (Fig. 2) and the design of the masorah (Fig. 3).[37] A broader selection of the emblems of Castile (a three-towered castle), Leon (a lion), and France (a fleur-de-lys) is frequently incorporated throughout the manuscript as a series of golden images decorating the masorah in the upper and lower margins of the page (Fig. 4). This combination may reflect the special political situation of Navarre, which was at that time connected with the Capetian monarchy, while maintaining close cultural ties with the neighbouring kingdom of Castile-Leon.[38]

The search for the source of inspiration for the combination of the mudejar interlacing patterns and the emblem of the three-towered castle (and the lion) take us to northern Castile and more specifically, to the royal centre of Burgos, where mudejar was an aristocratic style adopted in royal circles. The main surviving example from the late thirteenth century is the Cistercian convent of Las Huelgas in Burgos, founded by Alfonso VIII and his wife Eleanor and authorised by the Pope in 1187. In this convent the monarchs were knighted by divine authority and it soon became the royal pantheon. The building was designed according to

[33] Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, p. 117.

[34] For the decoration program, see Narkiss, Cohen-Mushlin, Tcherikover, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, no. 3.

[35] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Kenn. 2, fols. 299v, 427r.

[36] Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Ms. Heb. 790, f. 348v; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Damascus_Keter,_Bible._Manuscript_on_parchment._Burgos,_Spain,_1260._End_of_the_book_of_Ruth.jpg.

[37] Interlacing patterns are also found in the Toledan tradition; (see e.g. Shalev-Eyni, "Tradition in Transition", figs. 2, 7); what is new is the combination with the heraldic motifs.

[38] Due to marriage between different royal houses, the combination of the Castile, Leon and French monarchy coats of arms can be found in Castile also. See e.g. the slightly later case of the sarcophagus of Don Alfonso de la Cerda (d. 1333) in Santa Maria la Real de las Huelgas, Burgos. Alfonso was the son of Ferdinand de la Cerda and his wife Blanche of France.

Fig. 1. Second Kennicott Bible, ca. 1300 (before 1306); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Kennicott 2, fol. 427r (Photo: Bodleian Library)

Fig. 2. Second Kennicott Bible, fol. 15r (Photo: Bodleian Library)

Fig. 3. Second Kennicott Bible, fol. 177v (Photo: Bodleian Library)

Fig. 4. Second Kennicott Bible, fol. 142r (Photo: Bodleian Library)

the prevalent Romanesque style, which in succeeding decades was followed by Gothic forms. However, the complex also includes mudejar architectonic entities,[39] among them the three chapels of the Saviour, the Assumption, and St. James; all show the combination of mudejar interlacing and repeated series of the royal emblem. The stucco ornamentations adorning the chancel arch of the St. James Chapel were patronized by Alfonso el Sabio and are dated to

[39] For mudejar art in the convent of Las Huelgas in Burgos, see M. L. Concejo Díez, *El arte mudéjar en Burgos y su provincia*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2003, pp. 235-316, and earlier bibliography there.

1275;[40] they closely parallel the medallions of the central nave of the Synagogue of Santa Maria la Blanca in Toledo, which were made at the same time.[41] Contemporary stucco decorations also adorn the ceiling vault of what had been the nuns' needlework room (*Sala de yesería de plata*) in the convent. These consist of interlacing patterns with the repeated symbol of Castile, surrounded by inscriptions from the Compline and Salve Regina (Fig. 5). The similar combinations –consisting of mudejar interlacing forms, the heraldic motif of Castile and sacred inscriptions– in the Second Kennicott Bible (Figs. 2-3), were inspired by these or similar examples of royal art that had appropriated and Christianized originally Islamic-like forms through the addition of the heraldic symbols and the sacred Latin words. It was the mudejar character of the mid-thirteenth century Sephardic illuminated Bible tradition developed in Toledo that inspired the use of local royal mudejar combinations in biblical codices made in the northern areas a few decades later.[42]

Fig. 5. Santa María de las Huelgas, yesería de la sala de plata del Monasterio, ca. 1260 (Photo: Patrimonio Nacional)

Since the inner spaces of Las Huelgas were not part of the public domain, we need to explain the Jewish access to royal mudejar art, which was not usually a part of the external visual reality in the northern areas during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The unique forms shared by the stucco ornamentations of the St. James Chapel patronized by Alfonso el Sabio and the renovations of the Synagogue of Santa Maria la Blanca in Toledo suggest that the same artists worked for both the King and the Jewish patrons. This possibility carries two levels of connection between Jews and royal art, that of the actual artists and that of the extent of Jewish involvement in the King's court. Once Jews encountered the royal monumental art, they could have employed similar combinations in their books.

Jewish exposure to the royal art styles may also relate to their direct connections with the Las Huelgas convent. Jewish and Moorish tanneries, probably working with mudejar patterns,[43] were active in workshops of the Hospital del Rey of Burgos, which since the early

[40] For the chapel, see J. M. de Azcárate, "La Capilla de Santiago en Las Huelgas de Burgos", *Reales Sitios*, 28 (1971), pp. 49-52; Concejo Díez, *El arte mudéjar en Burgos*, pp. 297-305.

[41] *Ibidem*, pp. 303-305.

[42] See Shalev-Eyni, "Tradition in Transition".

[43] For tanning as a common occupation among Jews in Navarre see Assis and Magdalena, *The Jews of Navarre*, p. 75. Cf. the connection between mudejar forms and the Iberian craft of bookbinding, S. Shalev-Eyni, "From Castile to Lisbon: The Sephardic Biblical Codex and Mudejar Visual Culture, Mid Thirteenth – Late Fifteenth Centuries", in T. Moita, L. Urbano Afonso (eds.), *Sephardic Book Art of the Fifteenth Century*, Turnhout, 2019, pp. 37-58, part. 51-54.

thirteenth century had been under the jurisdiction of Las Huelgas.[44] A royal charter granted to Las Hueglas a few years earlier lists the names of seven Jews, probably physicians, from Santa Cecilia in Briviesca. The seven would pay imposts to the convent and regularly supplied medical treatment for sick nuns in the convent.[45] These varied forms of direct contact between Jews and Las Huelgas explains the exposure to the royal art forms.

The patrons of the sumptuous second Kennicott Bible and similar manuscripts belonged to the upper stratum of Jewish society, among whom the adoption of the royal insignia could be found in other media as well. Some of these prosperous Jews owned seals with their symbols engraved on them; the royal emblems of the three-towered castle and the fleur-de-lys are among them. A few owners of such seals were related to the court and identified themselves with the king;[46] others adopted these heraldic motifs as signs of their high status. A fourteenth-century example is a quatrefoil, at the centre of which is the three-towered castle with battlements, surrounded by a square, around which the name of the owner, Todros ha-Levi son of Samuel ha-Levi, is written in Hebrew (Fig. 6). In the spaces beyond the square are four fleurs-de-lys.[47] A similar, smaller seal, which was found in Toro, was owned by Abraham son of Moses Crudo.[48] The three-towered castle as a sole emblem can also be found in community seals, such as that of Seville.[49]

The castle, a dominant repeated component in the landscape of Castile, which stands behind the coat of arms of the kingdom, also represented the reality of local Jewish history.[50] From the eleventh century on, the term "castle of the Jews" appears repeatedly in the sources. The mid-thirteenth century *Libro de los fueros de Castilia*, a collection of Castilian laws, describes the restrictions of such fortified entities.[51] In 1367, the phenomenon still existed, as testified by the demand of some townsmen at the *cortes* of Burgos to transfer the castles from the Jews and Muslims to Christians.[52] Older literature assumed the existence of a policy to settle Jews in castles in order to provide military assistance when necessary;[53] in 1170 Jews in Tudela were moved to the citadel, which they were to defend against the king's enemies and mob.[54] Recent research claims there is no clear evidence for this assumption in regard to Castile and Leon, and raises the possibility that this format of settlement was intended for the protection of the Jews.[55] In a similar vein, royal castles were also relevant for Jews, who were

[44] L. Martinez Garcia, *El Hospital del Rey de Burgos: un señorío medieval en la expansión y en la crisis (siglos xiii y xiv)*, Burgos, 1986, pp. 49-81; Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, p. 93.

[45] *Ibidem*.

[46] See the heraldic symbols of Castile and Leon in the special case of the Toledo synagogue (1353-1357) of Samuel ha-Levi Abulafia, treasurer of Pedro I; F. Cantera-Burgos, *Sinagogas españolas: con especial estudio de la de Córdoba y la Toledana de el Tránsito*, Madrid, 1984, pp. 65-149 and fig. 21.

[47] D. M. Friedenberg, *Medieval Jewish Seals from Europe*, Detroit, 1987, pp. 124-127, no. 50.

[48] *Ibidem*, pp. 130-131, no. 55. Here the castle is accompanied by two fleurs-de-lys and two crescent moons.

[49] *Ibidem*, p. 133, no. 57.

[50] Baer, *A History of the Jews*, pp. 79-81.

[51] Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, pp. 55-56 and n. 18.

[52] *Ibidem*, 74.

[53] Baer, *A History of the Jews*, pp. 80-81.

[54] *Ibidem*, p. 79.

[55] Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, p. 57.

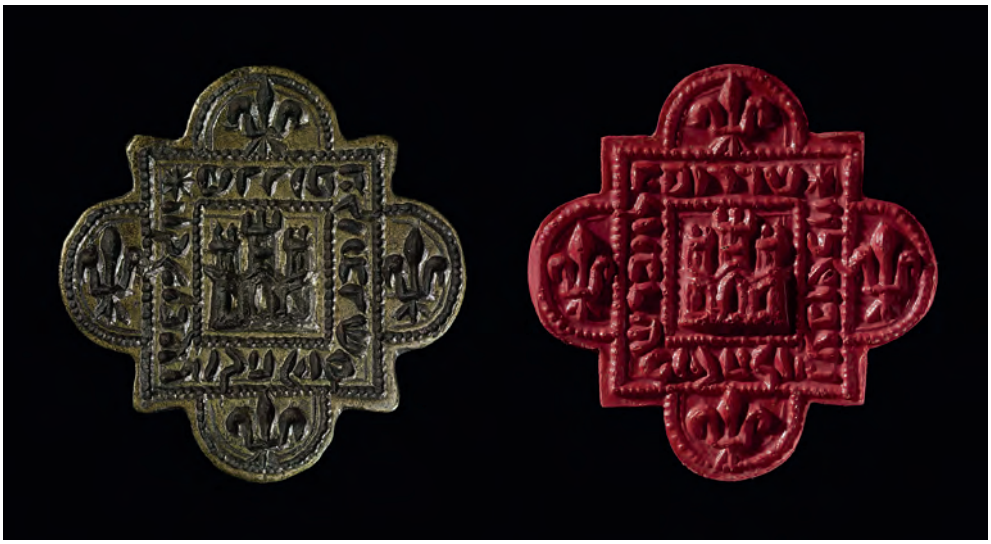

Fig. 6. Seal of Todros ha-Levi son of Samuel ha-Levi, bronze, 14thc; London, British Museum, OA.1570 (Photo: British Museum)

under their protection. In Burgos, for example, the highest concentration of Jewish habitants was located on the slopes of the hill at whose top the royal castle stood.[56] In Tudela, which was not part of nearby Castile, a strong royal castle, with fortified bridges over the Ebro and the Queiles, stood above the city, in the vicinity of one of the main Jewish areas.[57] Its impressive prominence in the local urban topography, as well as its historical association with the Jews,[58] may explain why the mid-fourteenth century local community also chose the castle as the symbol for its seal.[59] This community seal of Tudela, which is slightly later than our group of manuscripts, may add another perspective to the golden heraldic motif of the three-turret castle in the centre of the carpet page of the Second Kennicott Bible (Fig. 2).

The fluidity between the neighboring areas of northern Castile and southern Navarre has parallels in the career of Joshua ibn Gaon and in the final format of the Second Kennicott Bible. Joshua, born in Soria to a family of distinguished lineage,[60] moved to Tudela where, as

[56] *Ibidem*, p. 72.

[57] Leroy, *The Jews of Navarre*, p. 9.

[58] See above.

[59] Tudela, Arch. Nav. Comptos. Caj. 11, no. 15. II. For an image of the seal, see Leroy, *The Jews of Navarre*, p. 79.

[60] His brother Shem-Tov is well known as a scholar who integrated in an unusual way Kabbalah, Jewish Law, and masorah. Like Joshua he was also a qualified scribe, though he is known only from one biblical codex which he copied for himself, in which he incorporated the results of his investigations in the field of masorah. Like his brother he lived for some time in Tudela, though he produced his Bible in Soria. For his life and works, see D. S. Levinger, "R. Shem Tob Abraham Ben Ga'on", *Sefunot: Studies and Sources on the History of the Jewish Communities in the East*, 7 (1963), pp. 7-39 (Hebrew). The visual language of this manuscript is similar to the group of manuscripts in whose production Joshua was involved. For bibliography, see n. 29.

his colophons testify, he worked intensively between 1300 and 1301/1302. However, according to the colophon to the map appended probably later to the beginning of the original Second Kennicott Bible, by 1306 he had already returned to Soria. The map, an unusually detailed plan of the destroyed Temple,[61] was made for a specific patron, with whom Joshua had a special, close, artisan-patron relationship, as can be testified from the unusual wording of the colophon. Joshua explains that the plan was made to fulfil the aspiration of the beloved patron: "And out of my great love for him and in order that my love will always stay in his heart, I painted for him and his son…to explain a bit of the sacred work" (f. 2v). However, in the present state of the colophon, the name of the patron is overwritten by faint ink, pointing to a change in its destination.[62] Perhaps the patron died or lost his financial status. Perhaps Joshua ibn Gaon lost the respect of his patron. Any of these might explain Joshua's return to Soria. As already mentioned in the literature, the seven last words were also added in faint ink, and were not part of the original colophon.[63] They read: "Completed in the month of Adar, [in] the year 5066 after the creation (1306) in Soria." The original colophon opens with the wording "I, Joshua ibn Gaon from Soria"; the scribe would probably not indicate his origin if it was identical to the place where he was working. Therefore, the plan may have been prepared elsewhere,[64] probably in Tudela, and then Joshua returned with it to Soria, intending to sell it to another person, after the relations with the original patron ended unexpectedly. This dramatic change may relate to the inner social struggles stirring in the community of Tudela at that time, reflected in the communal statutes formally announced in 1305.[65] The unrest may also have affected the status of Joshua and the local market of manuscript production. The mentions of Soria and the year 1306 in the Second Kennicott Bible are the last dated traces that Joshua left behind.

A Cultural Meeting Point: Cervera – Tudela

Five years prior to the date on the map, while Joshua ibn Gaon was active in Tudela, he was involved together with other professionals in the production of the Cervera Bible (Figs. 7-12).[66] The Cervera Bible is one of the most famous Sephardic manuscripts, a unique artistic piece still waiting for a thorough study to reveal its hidden secrets. Analyzing the different stages of production of the manuscript is crucial for understanding the unusual appearance of

[61] For the description of the map, see Narkiss, Cohen-Mushlin, Tcherikover, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles*, pp. 24-27. For an analysis of the map and its context, see my forthcoming article "Between Tudela/Soria and Jerusalem: The Brothers Joshua and Shem-Tov Ibn Gaon and the Concept of the Destroyed Temple".

[62] Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art,* p. 101.

[63] *Ibidem*.

[64] *Ibidem*.

[65] F. Baer, *Die Juden im Christlichen Spanien*, *Urkunden und Regesten*, v. I: Aragonien und Navarra, Berlin, 1929, pp. 948-958.

[66] For the manuscript, see B. Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, Jerusalem, 1969, pl. 52; Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, pp. 123-126; J. A. Ramos, L. U. Afonso and T. Moita. "A Bíblia de Cervera: um manuscrito sefardita iluminado?", *Cadernos de Estudos Sefarditas*, 14 (2015), pp. 171-201. (Republished as: J. A. Ramos, L. U. Afonso and T. Moita. "A Bíblia de Cervera: um manuscrito sefardita iluminado (1299-1300)?", in C. Barreira (ed.), *Luz, Cor e Ouro. Estudos sobre manuscritos iluminados, Lisboa*, Lisbon, 2016, pp. 157-180.

this completed cultural product. The first stage of the manuscript leads to Cervera, most probably, as suggested by Katrin Kogman Appel, to be identified with Cervara del Rio Alhama, a small town situated about 39 km west of Tudela.[67] Samuel the son of Abraham ibn Nathan, the scribe of the main text, left a detailed colophon in which he tells that the production process began on the New Moon of the month of Elul 5059 (30 July1299) in Cervera, where he had arrived a short time earlier;[68] the original purpose of his arrival remains unknown.[69] While in Cervera, Samuel broke his leg, forcing him to stay there till his recovery. As a professional scribe, he accepted the offer of Sassoon, a well-to do local Jewish habitant, to devote his recuperation time to the copying of a whole Bible for him.[70] Sassoon was to supply the parchment and other materials needed and the biblical model from which the text would be copied, together with the proper conditions for carrying out this project, including room and board, probably in his own home. Samuel worked in the format prevalent among the biblical codices with which Joshua ibn Gaon was also working. Like in the Second Kennicott Bible, he arranged his quires in 12 leaves each and copied the text in two columns. He left spaces at the end of each book for small frames to include the number of verses, and a blank folio at the end of the Prophets for a traditional full carpet page.[71]

Ten months later, at the end of the month of Iyyar (19 May 1300) he finished copying the main text and wrote, at its end, the detailed colophon covering a whole page (f. 434r). Samuel indicated the dates of beginning and completion as well as the circumstances that had led him to stay in the small town, and the name of the patron, which was later erased by a new owner. He also refers to the number of quires of his work, indicating in two forms the number 36. A codicological examination shows that the main text does indeed hold 36 quires. Although in the literature the whole codex is attributed to his hand, a paleographic examination shows that another hand was responsible for the additional grammatical texts at the beginning and end of the codex within the traditional double arches and other shapes (Figs. 10-11). This slightly later stage did not take place in Cervera.

When Samuel completed the main text, his leg had already recovered and he was able to leave. Soon afterwards the manuscript was transferred to Tudela, and just 20 days after the completion of the main text, Joshua ibn Gaon started writing the *masorah* notes along the margins, designed in geometric and dragon-like forms (Fig. 7).[72] As observed by Thérèse Metzger, he inserted within the tiny text 20 colophons and signatures, providing valuable indications of the date and place,[73] the name of the patron (which was preserved here in some of the

[67] Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, pp. 125-126.

[68] Lisbon, National Library, Ms. 72, f. 434r; B. Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, Jerusalem, 1969, pl. 52.

[69] Not much is known about the small local community. In 1297, a Jew, Iuçe Finistriella, is mentioned in an official document as representative of the cathedral chapter of Calahorra, about 33 km north of Cervera, in relation to certain inhabitants who rented the chapter's estates in Cervera. See Soifer Irish, *Jews and Christians*, p. 92 and n. 63.

[70] The patron's name was erased from the colophon of the main scribe, but survived in some of the signatures inserted in the masorah, see Metzger, "Josué ben Abraham", pp. 5-6.

[71] For the decoration program, see Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, pl. 52; Ramos, Afonso, Moita, "A Bíblia de Cervera", pp. 179-184.

[72] Metzger, "Josué ben Abraham ibn Gaon", p. 6.

[73] *Ibidem*, pp. 1-27.

Fig. 7. Cervera Bible, Cervara del Rio Alhama and Tudela, 1299-1300; Lisbon, National Library. Ms. Ms Il. 72, fol. 11r (Photo: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal)

colophons),[74] and even his aspiration to make such a codex for himself one day (f. 219r). According to one colophon at the upper margin of the first folio of the main text (f. 11r, Fig. 7), Joshua started working on the *masorah* and its decoration on the 20th day of Sivan (8/9 June 1300); according to another (f. 185r) he continued working in the following month, Tammuz. However, Joshua did not complete the *masorah* for the whole Bible on his own. Some quires were masorated by another hand; yet others show the involvement of both hands. Joshua and his unknown colleague may have worked simultaneously, but it is more reasonable to assume that they worked one after the other; the additional hand completed those pages which Joshua had not, [75] possibly because he was busy with other projects.

It was probably in Tudela, in the same workshop or semi-workshop where Joshua worked, that the grammatical treatises were attached within the traditional double arches and interlacing geometric frames; all of them were drawn before the texts were copied. The stage of illumination followed. At the end of the codex the artist left an unusual colophon,

[74] *Ibidem*, pp. 5-6.

[75] *Ibidem*, pp. 7-8.

written on a single leaf (Fig. 8).[76] While Samuel, the main scribe, wrote his colophon with letters of the same size as the main text, and Joshua hid his numerous colophons within the tiny script typical of the masorah, the concise colophon of the illuminator, consisting of seven words, is designed in bold, zoomorphic, letters covering an entire page: "I Joseph the Frenchman illuminated and completed this book". The place of production, the dates and even the patron's name are missing. Since he does not mention the patron, we may assume that unlike Joshua ibn Gaon, who was in direct contact with Sassoon of Cervera who commissioned the work from him, Joseph's relations with the patron were indirect, possibly through Joshua.

Fig. 8. Cervera Bible, fol. 449r
(Photo: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal)

The precise wording of the colophon also requires explanation. Although usually regarded as the illuminator's colophon, Joseph the Frenchman does not mention only the task of "illumination", but also of "completion". The addition of the verb "to complete" in such a short colophon raises the question of whether Joseph filled another function in addition to that of illuminator. Usually the words "I completed" in scribes' colophons refer to the completion of the text, and they are often followed by a date;[77] here it appears independently.[78] The possibility that the function of "completion" refers to scribal work should not be excluded. Although the bold letters of the colophon cannot be compared with the tiny letters of the masorah, it may be that Joseph's was the second hand, the one that completed the masorah texts in the margins of several quires and single folios that Joshua left unfinished. Whether it was also he who added the grammatical treatises at the beginning and end of the codex or whether yet another person was involved is unknown. To the end of this Bible was added the grammatical text *Et Sofer* (The Scribe's Pen/Quill) by the Provencal scholar David Kimhi (1160–1235). This itself was an innovation and has no parallel in other contemporary biblical codices. It is worth noting that when the grammatical texts were added, a few ink illustrations were also

[76] J. Gutmann, *Hebrew Manuscript Painting*, New York, 1978, pl. 10.

[77] The verb "to complete" seldom appears in a context of completing texts which had missing sections.

[78] Joseph completed the design of those special letters throughout the biblical text that according to tradition were larger, a tradition shared by the Cervera Bible, the Second Kennicott Bible and other manuscripts of the group. Samuel prepared the preliminary shapes of these large letters and Joseph designed them as zoomorphic golden letters, similar to those he uses in his colophon.

added to fill some of the gaps between the text and the lower frame; among them are the lions, which are of the same type as Joseph's coloured images.[79]

While the identification of the additional *masorete* and the hand copying the grammatical treatises cannot be ascertained, the careful design of the bold letters in the colophon and the construction of the strokes creating each letter are clear indications that Joseph the illuminator was also a qualified scribe. The impressive and unusual colophon, as well as its extraordinary size and visibility, are not necessarily only a reflection of his originality or an expression of pride. He may have intended it as an advertisement for his work.[80] This would have been especially important for him as a newcomer (as the adjective "the Frenchman" may allude), who had not yet gained a local reputation.

Joseph's variations on the local Sephardic illumination developed in Tudela are unique. He adopted the use of the symbols of Castile, Leon and the French monarchy which were so prevalent in the Second Kennicott Bible,[81] but in his design, the mudejar context of these images was often missing. Moreover, when he represents the heraldic motifs in sequences of medallions including birds and fish, dragons and hybrids, they even lose their clear status as emblems.[82] Even at first glance, one can see that Joseph was trained as an illuminator elsewhere and that his basic visual language is different. His artistic roots are clearly revealed in images that were designed on the page without using the preliminary mudejar shapes. A telling example are those illustrations that appear at the end of Psalm 72 (Fig. 9), flanking an empty frame. One depicts a man holding the necks of two dragons who attack him, the other shows two interlacing dragons; both recall the Latin initial panels common in Gothic manuscripts. These raise the possibility that Joseph had direct contact with a late thirteenth century urban workshop beyond the Pyrenees.

The meeting between Joseph the Frenchman and the local Sephardic illumination tradition with its mudejar-like repertoire is striking. Joseph introduced figural art and a whole repertoire of animals, hybrids and other creatures typical of Gothic marginalia; some of his images appear at the beginning of books, pericopes or Psalms chapters as marginal marks, illustrating the biblical text they introduce.[83] But the importance and uniqueness of the Cervera Bible does not lie in exposing a dramatic case of the evolution of Sephardic illumination in Northern Iberia. It enables us to pinpoint an unusual event - an actual meeting point between the Gothic visual culture and the Sephardic, mudejar-like, tradition, before the two were integrated into

[79] Compare f. 6r, https://www.wdl.org/en/item/14158/view/1/11/, to fols. 118v and 448v. https://www.wdl.org/en/item/14158/view/1/898. It is worth noting that there is no correlation between the amount of space planned and the length of the additional texts included, resulting in unused space at the preceding section. On the other hand, the treatise at the end of the codex was not completed. It is unclear whether these are the result of miscalculation or changes in the choice or number of added texts.

[80] For colophons as advertisements, see R. H. Rouse, M. A. Rouse, *Manuscripts and their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200–1500*, 2 vols., Turnhout, 2000, v. 1, pp. 47, 179-180, 236 and v. 2, p. 150; M. Schiegg, "Scribes' Voices: The Relevance and Types of Early Medieval Colophons", *Studia Neophilologica*, 88/2 (2016), pp. 129-147, part. 143.

[81] See e.g. f. 7v; https://www.wdl.org/en/item/14158/view/1/14/

[82] Fols. 2v-3r; https://www.wdl.org/en/item/14158/view/1/4/

[83] Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, pl. 52; Ramos, Afonso, Moita. "A Bíblia de Cervera", pp. 189-194.

Fig. 9. Cervera Bible, fol. 332r (Photo: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal)

a new style whose diverse components are hard to separate and define. This is especially apparent in those cases where Joseph redesigned preliminary mudejar-like drawings made either by him or by another hand.[84] These two stages can be reconstructed. For example, the text on folio 440v is written within a mudejar-like interlacing double frame (Fig. 10). Joseph designed the double frame in gold and filled the spaces created between the two frames with the filigree pen-work that was prevalent in European illumination of the time. At this stage, the appearance of the page as a whole still retained some of its mudejar-like appearance. Joseph, however, added bestial figures in the four corners: a monkey and a half monkey-half human blowing the trumpets on the upper part, and a hound playing the viol and a goat blowing another instrument on the lower part; all are rooted in Gothic marginalia.[85] Their background was painted blue with small golden flowers. In another, similar preliminary drawing (f. 442v),[86] the spaces between the double interlacing frames were filled with birds and dragons, while the upper space, between the frame and the outer border, told a whole story: A hen and her chicks are shown pecking on the right, as a hound runs hopelessly after an eagle grasping one miserable chick in its claws. Two centaurs using their bows are shown in the lower corners. The hybridic result has lost the mudejar-like appearance of the preliminary drawing, but its two different cultural components are still easily distinguishable.

In his artistic work, Joseph embodied not only extraordinary meeting points between different visual cultures but also a strong sense of originality, reflecting the visible reality of the geo-cultural area in which he was active. The text in folio. 444v (Fig. 11) is designed in the form of a pointed arch, a variation on the repeated format for the additional grammatical

[84] See in this context also the two carpet pages, which Joseph left uncolored (fols. 9v-10r) and Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, pp. 123-124.

[85] Cf. Ramos, Afonso, Moita. "A Bíblia de Cervera", p. 194.

[86] https://www.wdl.org/en/item/14158/view/1/886/

Fig. 10. Cervera Bible, fol. 440v
(Photo: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal)

Fig. 11. Cervera Bible, fol. 444v
(Photo: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal)

texts.[87] The upper space beyond the arch represents an elaborate multi- towered castle with tiled roof. The two human figures shown in the upper part of the towers tell a story: On the right a knight, who is about to pull out his sword from its sheath, follows a man walking before him (on the left) and pointing forward while turning his head to the knight. Knights in different everyday positions and contexts are integral to marginal Gothic illumination of the time. However, while in the Gothic manuscripts they are often depicted along the margins on the spared ground of the parchment, in ours, together with the impressive castle, they dominate the page. The everyday environment with the frequent presence of castles in the landscape of the urban centres and countryside may have been one source of inspiration. The dominance of the bold royal castle, with its impressive ramparts, gates and fortified bridges over the river, watching over the city of Tudela,[88] is perhaps a more particular context. Soldiers and officers of the sovereigns who continued to arrive in Tudela and other regions in Navarre during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were visible everywhere.[89]

An even more prominent local aspect is reflected in the design of the unusual full- page miniature depicting the menorah of Zachariah (Fig. 12). The golden menorah was among the most common images in Sephardic illumination; a tradition that Joseph probably knew well as can be deduced from the design of its different components, depicted again on a smaller scale

[87] See also f. 445r. https://www.wdl.org/en/item/14158/view/1/891/. The two form an opening.

[88] For the castle in Tudela, see above.

[89] Leroy, *The Jews of Navarre*, p. 10.

at the end of the book of Exodus (fol. 60r). Nevertheless, unlike the traditional depiction, this vision located at the end of the Prophets section does not relate to the Tabernacle implements in Exodus 25 or to the common visual perception of the biblical codex as a sanctuary, but to the prophecy of Zachariah 4, an original context which has no parallel elsewhere at that period.[90] It depicts the menorah between two impressive olive trees bending inward towards it. The small black olives fall into two basins, from whose spouts the oil is pouring into another, central, bowl. From there the oil drizzles via seven channels into each lamp.

Fig. 12. Cervera Bible, fol. 316v
(Photo: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal)

Joseph followed the biblical text:

> … And he said to me, "What do you see?" And I said, "I saw, and behold [there was] a candelabrum all of gold, with its oil-bowl on top of it, and its seven lamps thereon; seven tubes each to the lamps that were on top of it. And [there were] two olive trees near it; one on the right of the bowl, and one on its left. (Zachariah 4, 2-3)

The miniature also refers to another verse appearing later in the same prophecy that mentions "two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains" (Zachariah 4, 12)". The combination of the two into one coherent vision is found in the work of mediaeval Jewish commentators, prominent among them are the local R. Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089/1092 –1164/1167) and the earlier French commentator Rashi (R. Shlomo Yitzhaki, Troyes, 1040–1105), who was also known in the Sephardic areas: [91]

> …"bowl on top of it"…. a sort of large round bowl. "and its seven lamps": a type of vessel into which oil and wicks are inserted. "seven tubes each": Seven small tubes leading to the lamps, for the oil flows from the bowl through those tubes into each lamp. "And [there were] two olive trees near it": Beside it were two trees upon which olives were growing, one on the right of the bowl, one on its left, etc. Here [the prophet] does not explain about the two golden vats mentioned below in the chapter, which are the bowls or vats of the oil press. [These vats] stand beside the olive trees. The olives beat themselves into the vats and are heated there as [if] in a vat or pit where olives are

[90] Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, pl. 52; E. Revel-Neher, *Le témoignage de l'absence: les objets du sanctuaire a Byzance et dans l'art juif du xie au xve siècle*, De l'archeologie à l'histoire, Paris, 1998, pp. 93-94; Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, p. 123; Ramos, Afonso, Moita. "A Bíblia de Cervera", pp. 195-196. The miniature is not located next to the text of Zachariah, but neither is it far away from the book, being at the end of Prophets.

[91] On the reception of Rashi in Spain, see A. Gross, "Spanish Jewry and Rashi's Commentary on the Pentateuch", in Z. A. Steinfeld ed.), *Rashi Studies*, Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1993, pp. 27–55 (Hebrew).

> generally packed. There they are pressed in the oil press, and the oil falls into the vats, and from the vats into the bowl, and from the bowl into the tubes, and from the tubes into the lamps…[92]

The detailed description by Jewish commentators, with whom Joseph, who is revealed here as an educated person, was acquainted, could have guided his designing of the details of his unusual miniature. However, the vivid semi realistic depiction of the olive trees alludes to the presence of an additional source of inspiration – the surrounding landscape. In southern Navarre, like in many other Iberian areas, olive trees and their cultivation, including the industry of oil pressing, were a familiar component.[93] To be sure, Joseph's trees are based on conventions learned as part of his artistic training, most notable in the design of the roots, but the presence of olive trees and oil presses in his nearby surroundings affected the result, which shows a clear affinity to real life. This is especially apparent when comparing the trees to the traditional illustrations of Revelation 11:3-5 (which is based on the Prophecy of Zachariah), describing the two prophesizing witnesses, who are "the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks". The iconographic components of the olive trees are usually stylized here, with little or no resemblance to reality. This is true not only for thirteenth-century English Apocalypses designed in geographic areas where olive trees do not grow,[94] but also for the Mozarabic tradition of the Beatus Apocalypse, in which a certain connection to the local flora is discernible.[95] Inspired by his familiar landscape, Joseph offered a tangible and unique visualization of the biblical prophecy, demonstrating his special skills and artistic individuality.[96]

Conclusion: A Vibrant Cultural Arena

The Second Kennicott and the Cervera Bibles were produced almost contemporaneously, in the same geo-cultural area by the same circles of scribes-artists. They can be defined as two poles of a group of manuscripts to which Joshua ibn Gaon was related. The Kennicott shows a clear connection to the Toledo-Burgos tradition, an indication of its relatively early date, and its illumination is purely decorative and largely aniconic. Like in the original Sephardic tradition, the main visual identity of the codex is mudejar, though here it was locally translated into royal-mudejar with the addition of the heraldic motifs within the interlacing patterns. Joseph the Frenchman, the illuminator of the Cervera Bible, was trained elsewhere and his different artistic profile significantly affected the final appearance of the book he was illuminating. He included a rich repertoire of animals and figures and moved away from both

[92] Rashi's commentary on Zachariah 4: 4. English after https://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/16208/showrashi/true

[93] For cultivating olives in Southern Navarre, see Leroy, *The Jews of Navarre*, p. 8.

[94] See e.g. the Douce Apocalypse, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Douce 180, p. 35.

[95] New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.644, fol. 149r; Gerona Cathedral, Ms. 7, fol. 164r.

[96] The inspiration provided by his surroundings is further noticeable in the design of the small marginal mark indicating the beginning of the prophecy, which is read in the synagogue during the morning of the Ninth of Av (fol. 244v). https://www.wdl.org/en/item/14158/view/1/488/. The text opens here with the words "I will take away their harvest, declares the Lord. There will be no grapes on the vine. There will be no figs on the tree, and their leaves will wither." Joseph designed the marginal mark as an original illustration to the text, in the form of a hand holding a dry, brown ivy autumn leaf, inspired by the vineyards that were also an integral part of his familiar landscape.

the mudejar character of the original Sephardic tradition and the mudejar-royal variant. However, due to the format and the mudejar frames of the preliminary drawings, it is possible to reconstruct the rare moment of meeting between two entirely different visual languages. The specific result is unique, but the cultural meeting it represents finds other expressions in additional manuscripts of the group, chief among them Ms. Hébreu 20 of the Bibliothèque Nationale of France, another manuscript in which Joshua ibn Gaon left his colophons.[97] According to one of them he wrote the masorah in Tudela, 5061 (1300/1301).[98] In another, he indicates the month of Marheshvan (October/ November 1300),[99] just a few months after his involvement in the copying of the masorah of the Cervera Bible. In this manuscript Joshua designed the masorah using geometric patterns that he had already used in the Second Kennicott Bible and the Cervera Bible, and accompanied them with his typical golden images surrounded by red outlines. Here one finds also the repertoire of dragons that he used in the Cervera Bible. Yet here Joshua went a step further, designing some of the masorah texts as illustrative components for the main text,[100] a method not found in the Cervera Bible but practiced by Franco-Jewish scribes from the 1230s. Moreover, small coloured images, also attributed to his hand, [101] appear here along the outer and inner margins as well as in between the columns, illustrating some words in the text. Unlike in the Cervera Bible, they appear as random visual associations and do not serve as division markers (though such markers probably inspired their inclusion); a few of them show affinity to local Mozarabic traditions.[102] Moreover, the Franco-Jewish tradition plays a dramatic role here in the work of the main scribe as well, who, according to one of the signatures in the masorah, was apparently Joshua ibn Gaon himself.[103] Whereas in the Sephardic Bible, as well as in the earlier eastern tradition, no initials or initial words were employed, in Paris 20 one can see initial words at the beginning of many of the books (Fig. 13: fol. 129r), a method prevalent in Franco-Ashkenazi biblical codices. That the Franco-Ashkenazi method was the source of inspiration is noticeable in the actual design of the bold letters themselves, which are inspired by the shape of letters made by quill, the scribal instrument used in the Franco-German domain, which had a different effect from that of the rigid reed used for writing in Sephardic manuscripts. The flexible quill enabled the graduated thickness and thinness of the letters' strokes; the small circle connecting the thin edges of some of the strokes in some letters was typical of the Franco-Ashkenazi script as well.[104] Almost none

[97] For the manuscript, see Sed-Rajna and Fellous, *Les manuscrits*, no. 15, Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, pp. 100, 110, 120, and J. Del Barco, *Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Hébreu 1 à 32. Manuscrits de la Bible hébraïque. Manuscrits en caractères hébreux conservés dans les bibliothèques publiques de France. Catalogues* (CMCH 4), Turnhout, 2011, pp. 112-120.

[98] Fols. 45r, 58v, 69r.

[99] Fol. 69r.

[100] Fols. 170r; https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10544753q/f344.item, 254r.

[101] M. Garel, *D'une main forte: Manuscrits hébreux des collections françaises*, Paris, 1991, no. 45.

[102] See the design of Noah's ark (fol. 13r); Narkiss, Sed-Rajna, "La première Bible", p. 268; Sed-Rajna and Fellous, *Les manuscrits*, p. 44.

[103] Fol. 58v; *Ibidem*, p. 43.

[104] Letters with dragons designed in ink using the spared ground technique, already in use by Joshua for the illumination of the double-arch opening pages of the Second Kennicott Bible, together with the design of the circles connecting the letters' strokes as flowers, have also parallels in contemporary Ashkenazi illumination.

Fig. 13. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, hébreu 20, fol. 129r (Photo: BnF)

of these unique features alluding to Franco-Ashkenazi inspiration have direct parallels in the work of Joseph the Frenchman in the Cervera Bible. Some of them may have been brought to Tudela by other itinerant scribes-artists and the manuscripts that immigrants carried with them. Unlike Joseph, Joshua was not a foreign illuminator making contact with the local Sephardic art. He represents the opposite phenomenon, a local Sephardic scribe-illuminator who was exposed to the scribal and artistic works of other cultural domains, and who was able, in an innovative way, to integrate some of their features in his scribal and artistic work.

As can be seen in Paris 20, the more Joshua adopted new scribal and artistic forms, the more he tended to relegate the mudejar interlacing patterns to a lower position. However, those who expect to see a gradual development from the presence of mudejar to a growing integration of local Christian and Gothic features would be surprised to see the visual language of another Bible which was made by Joshua ibn Gaon a short time later, in late 1301 or 1302.[105] Here Joshua left his signature on the first carpet page opening the manuscript, declaring he is

[105] Paris, BnF, hébreu 21. For the colophon dating the manuscript, see Metzger, "Josué ben Abraham", p. 2. For the manuscript, see Sed-Rajna and Fellous, *Les manuscrits*, no. 16; Kogman-Appel, *Jewish Book Art*, 101-105, 114-115; Del Barco, *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, pp. 124-130, and more bibliography there.

the producer of the first quire: "I Joshua ibn Gaon made the first quire of this book for the dear venerable physician, Abraham de Lería".[106] Another signature inserted within the masorah text identifies him as the *masorete* of the manuscript giving, in addition, his origin, his place of work (Tudela), and the year of production (fol. 263v).[107] The focus of the decoration of this Bible is the sumptuous carpet pages at the beginning and end of the Pentateuch and again at the end of the manuscript, as well as the traditional arched pages and circular patterns framing the preceding and concluding texts; most of these were designed with elaborate sophisticated mudejar interlacing patterns.[108] The local and Gothic elements are the ones that are almost absent here. The only deviation from the pure aniconic patterns can be seen in two carpet pages. At the centre of the sumptuous interlacing design of one carpet page is the rampant lion, the emblem of Leon (fol. 263v; Fig. 14), pointing again to royal mudejar art; the other shows a dragon in the centre (fol. 97v),[109] creating, together with the interlacing patterns, a hybridic combination, which stands out from the almost uniform mudejar visibility of the manuscript. The relatively late date of Paris 21 shows that Joshua ibn Gaon and his circle developed their aesthetic and artistic vocabulary in several parallel routes. Open to various visual traditions, they would have employed different visual strategies and components, either together or separately, depending on various factors. These factors may well have included the other producers involved as well as the patron's specific origin, cultural background and choice (which can be deduced from the selection of the preceding and concluding texts, also often changing from one example to another). This artistic pluralism resulted in an impressive diversity. Each item was a unique artefact with no exact parallel, reflecting in its own peculiar way the vibrant cultural and artistic climate of north Castile and Navarre, a multicultural crossroads.

Fig. 14. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, hébreu 21, fol. 263v (Photo: BnF)

[106] Sed-Rajna and Fellous, *Les manuscrits*, pp. 45-46.

[107] Metzger, "Josué ben Abraham", p. 2.

[108] Fols. 1v-4v, 97v-98v, 263v-265r, 368r-370r.

[109] https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8538800c/f200.item.r=H%C3%A9breu