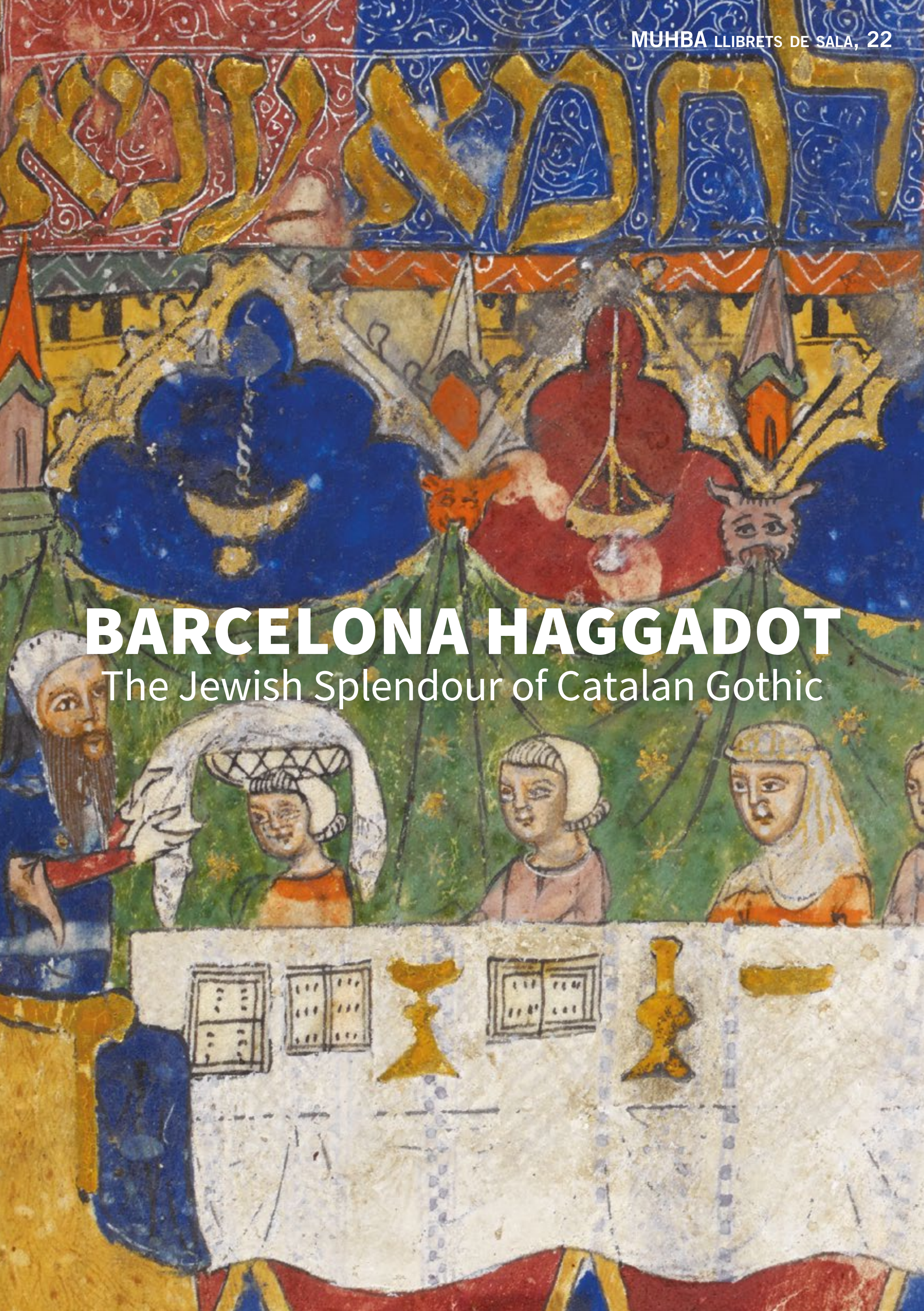


BARCELONA HAGGADOT

The Jewish Splendour of Catalan Gothic

MUHBA
MUSEU D'HISTÒRIA DE BARCELONA

BARCELONA HAGGADOT

The Jewish Splendour of Catalan Gothic

Ajuntament
de Barcelona

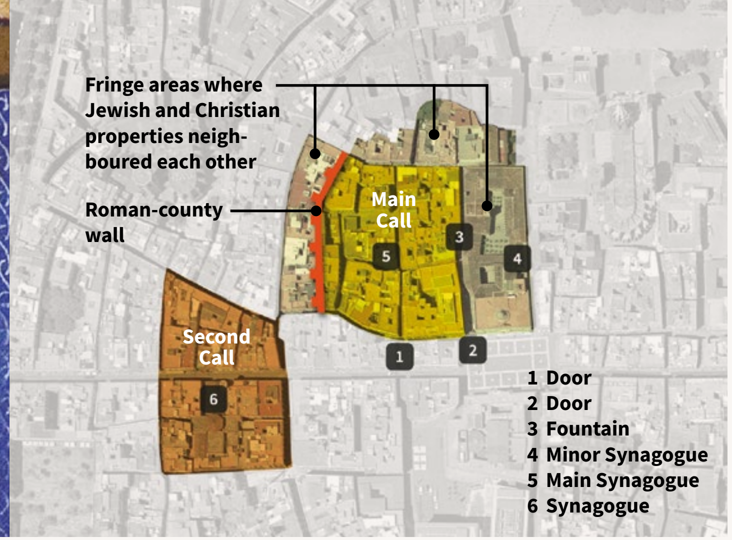
Barcelona, the seat of a monarchy and a hub of Mediterranean trade, had an urban ethos that was receptive to the most innovative artistic influences in the opening decades of the 14th century. At this juncture in the Gothic era, the city's workshops constituted a highly active centre for the production of Haggadot, manuscripts that contain the ritual of the Passover meal, which were commissioned by families living in the *Call* (Jewish quarter) in Barcelona and in other Jewish communities. Jews and Christians alike worked on Haggadot and shared the same style and iconographic models.

The Museu d'Història de Barcelona reunites in the exhibition **Barcelona Haggadot**, for the first time in more than six centuries, an extensive selection of these splendid works of the Catalan Gothic period that were dispersed around the world when the Jews were expelled.

Barcelona Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 28v

THE BARCELONA JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE 14TH CENTURY

Rabbi Gamaliel and his followers. Sarajevo Haggadah. Zemaljski Muzej Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, f. 25r



The Barcelona Call. Barcelona's Jewish community lived in the western quarter of the city during the High Middle Ages. This area, or Call, as Jewish quarters were known in Catalonia, was defined in the late 11th century. In response to the rise in the number of inhabitants in the Call, King Jaume I authorised Jews to settle on land near the Castell Nou (new castle) outside the old defensive walls. This second Jewish quarter was known as the Call Menor. Even though the Jewish community increased in size, it seems they always amounted to less than 10% of the city's population.

A large and powerful community

The first documents that record the presence of Jews in Barcelona date from 875-877. The Jewish community in the city was the largest in medieval Catalonia and in all the lands that were part of the realm of the Crown of Aragon and Catalonia. Barcelona was famed as the "city of sages" among the Jews, as theology, science, philosophy, poetry and the Kabbalah all flourished there. Three of the most eminent figures in the intellectual history of Catalan and European Judaism lived in Barcelona's Jewish quarter: the scientist and translator Abraham bar Hiyya in the 11-12th centuries; the jurist and theologian Salomó ben Adret in the late 13th century; and the philosopher Hasday Cresques in the late 14th and early 15th centuries.

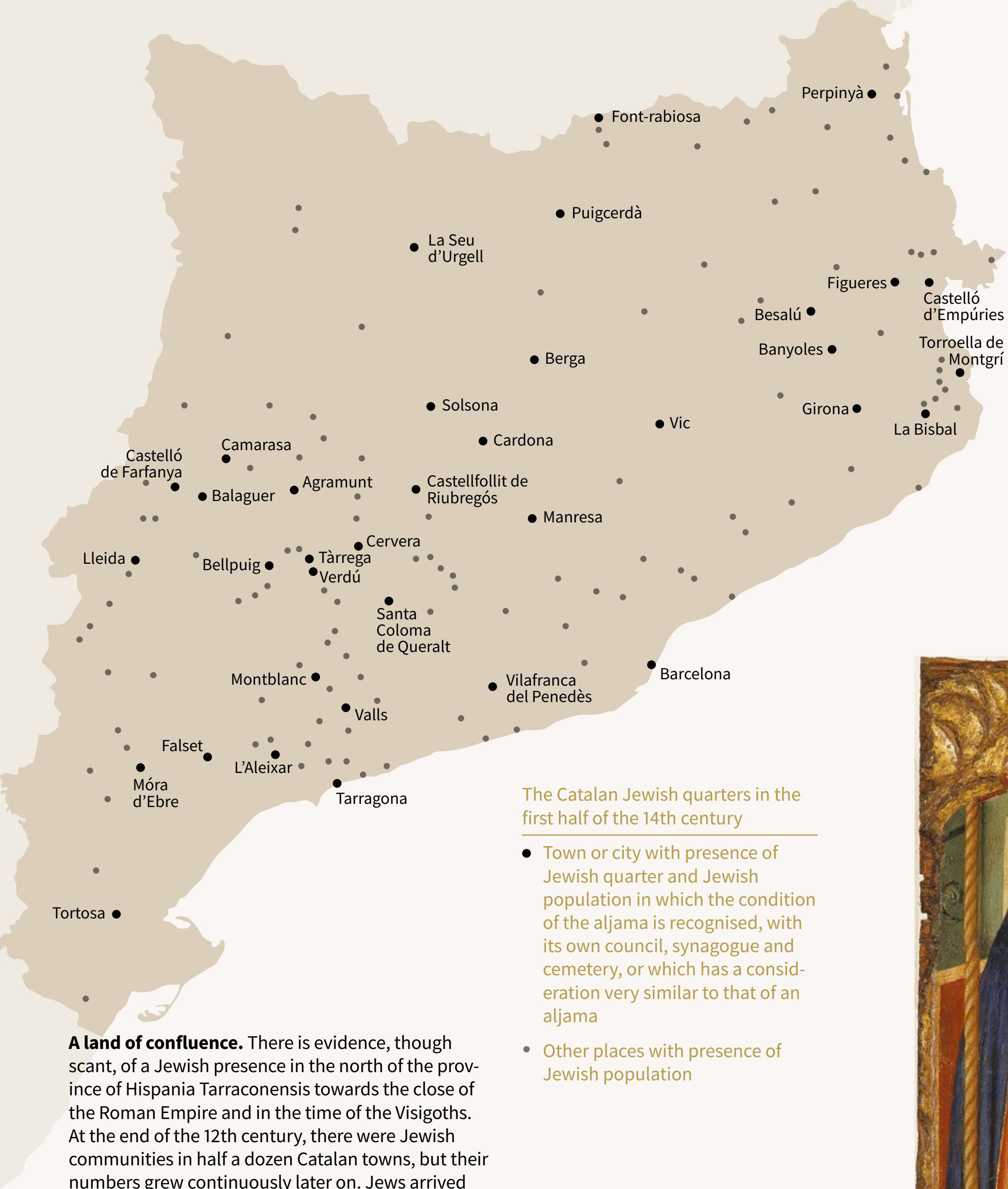
Barcelona: a cultural magnet. The Jewish community, or aljama, of Barcelona, famed for its rabbinical school, was one of the epicentres of European Jewish culture in medieval times. In the 13th and 14th centuries, rabbis such as Salomó ben Adret, Nissim Reuben Gerondí and Issac ben Sheshet Perfet influenced the orthodoxy of medieval Judaism during times of extreme controversy.

The Catalans Jews

In the Late Middle Ages, Jews living in the towns and cities of Catalonia worked in the main as traders and moneylenders. They were regarded as the king's property and were influential, despite their increasing stigmatisation by the Church. They formed a large population and their relations with other communities of the Iberian Peninsula, around the Mediterranean and in Europe were good. Among their number were jurists, scientists, physicians, poets, philosophers and theologians. Many communities disappeared following the attacks that took place in 1391, including the Barcelona aljama, and the Jewish population in Catalonia thereafter was considerably smaller until their final expulsion by the Catholic Monarchs in 1492. The many Jews who remained were forced to convert, but that is another story.

Mahzor Catalonia, c. 1300. The National Library of Israel, MS. heb. 6527.

Prayer book with micrographic drawings for the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). The copyist or scribe, named Jacob, seems to have been active in Barcelona in the second quarter of the 14th century.



The Catalan Jewish quarters in the first half of the 14th century

- Town or city with presence of Jewish quarter and Jewish population in which the condition of the aljama is recognised, with its own council, synagogue and cemetery, or which has a consideration very similar to that of an aljama
- Other places with presence of Jewish population

A land of confluence. There is evidence, though scant, of a Jewish presence in the north of the province of Hispania Tarraconensis towards the close of the Roman Empire and in the time of the Visigoths. At the end of the 12th century, there were Jewish communities in half a dozen Catalan towns, but their numbers grew continuously later on. Jews arrived from elsewhere in the Iberian Peninsula, in particular after the conquest of Mallorca (1229) and Valencia (1238), and from the East and from Africa. There was a large wave of immigration from Occitania in the early 14th century due to expulsions ordered by the King of France, as a result of which the Jewish population in Catalonia may have reached its maximum size shortly before the Black Plague epidemic of 1348.

The end of the Jewish community in Barcelona

The Barcelona Call was attacked between 5 and 8 August 1391 during the series of anti-Jewish uprisings that devastated the communities in the Iberian Peninsula that year. A mob assaulted the Call and sacked it. Many of its residents took refuge in the Castell Nou, seeking the protection of the king's forces, but they were driven out and forced to choose either baptism or death. Once King Joan I heard of the attack on the monarchy's most important call, he left Zaragoza and made his way to Barcelona. When he arrived, he found 150 Jews had been killed and many of the buildings in the Call had been damaged. The King, through Hasday Cresques, attempted to rebuild the aljama of Barcelona but in vain.

Saint Stephen's Dispute with the Jews. Circle of Ferrer and Arnau Bassa, c. 1340-1350. MNAC. Museu d'Història de Catalunya, Barcelona.

St. Stephen's preaching to the Jews evokes the confrontation in the form of a religious dispute, in which the Jews are forced to listen to friars' sermons, the purpose being to lead them out of error and make them convert. The Christian saint is the preeminent figure in the image, though the Jews are allowed to debate and are not portrayed in a disparaging manner. In contrast, the Jews in some paintings from the second half of the 14th century are clearly vilified, with many images depicting their supposed wickedness.

Hasday Cresques' account of the 1391 attack on the Jewish quarter in a letter to the community in Avignon, copied in a document of the 15th century. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina.

"The following Saturday [5 August 1391], the Lord unleashed his wrath like fire, scorned his temple, profaned the crown of his Torah, tearing the community of Barcelona apart. That day there were some 150 deaths. The rest of the community fled to the castle and saved themselves. The enemy sacked the Jews' streets and set fire to some. But the city's chief magistrate played no part in it, making every possible effort to save them and supplying them with food and drink. There were deliberations over whether the perpetrators of the villainy should be punished, but then the mob rose up, a great crowd, against the city's leaders and assaulted the Jews in the castle using bows and crossbows, attacking and assailing them there at the castle."

THE GREAT JEWISH CELEBRATION OF PASSOVER

Barcelona Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 20v

The first of feasts

The Jewish Passover or *Pesach* is the most important feast in the Jewish religious calendar. It dates back to Biblical times and is held over the course of seven days in the month of *Nisan*, in the spring, to commemorate the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and their miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, as told in the Book of Exodus in the Bible. When the Temple in Jerusalem was still standing, every man had to make a pilgrimage there to offer a lamb in sacrifice. Following the temple's destruction in the year 70, during Roman rule, Jews stopped making sacrifices there and celebrated Passover as a family with an elaborate festive meal, the *Seder*.

Preparing the Passover meal: 1) the distribution of food; 2) preparing the home; 3) preparing the meal.
Golden Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 15r

The *seder* or passover meal

According to Jewish tradition, the table is sacred, as it is the allegorical representation of an altar where the head of the family officiates and where the food is transfigured into an offering to the godhead. *Matzah* (unleavened bread) and *maror* (bitter herbs) must be eaten during the *Seder*, since they are a reminder of the exodus from Egypt and the hunger the Israelites suffered during the 40 years they spent wandering in the desert. In addition, however, appetising foodstuffs, sweetmeats and wine are consumed to celebrate the Jews' freedom and arrival in the Promised Land of Israel. The order in which the food must be eaten and the readings, prayers and songs should be recited and sung are set down in the Haggadah. The wish "Next year in Jerusalem!" brings the ritual meal to a close.

Bread and wine. There must be three pieces of matzah bread on the table, one on top of the other, covered by a cloth. This is the bread of affliction, cooked in a hurry without allowing it to rise. The three matzot represent the division of the Jews into the Kohenites, Levites and Israelites. During the meal, four cups of wine are drunk to express the joy of salvation and the fulfilling of God's four promises: "I will free you from the forced labour of the Egyptians, rescue you from their oppression, and redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as my people and I will be your God." (Exod. 6:6-7)

Stamp for marking matzah bread, 14th century. Museu de la Vida Rural, l'Espluga de Francolí

The Last Supper in the Christian faith represents the Passover meal which, according to the Gospels, Jesus celebrated in Jerusalem with his disciples the night before he was crucified. This central scene in Christian iconography provides an opportunity to allude to the matzah and wine, the Christian symbols in the Eucharist, as the basic foodstuffs shared by Christ and his disciples.

The Last Supper. Alterpiece of the Virgin of Sixena. Serra Brothers, 1363-1375. MNAC. Museu d'Història de Catalunya, Barcelona.

"They baked matzah loaves from the dough they had brought out of Egypt, since it was unleavened; because they had been driven out of Egypt without time to prepare supplies for themselves." (Exod. 12:39)

***Matzah* and *maror* series.** Medieval Haggadot produced in the Iberian Peninsula are notable for their emphasis on two very important elements in the Passover meal: the *matzah* bread and the bitter herbs or *maror*, which appear in every Haggadah. So important is the bread that the Passover feast is also known in Hebrew as *Chag haMatzot*, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Illustrations of round matzah encouraged the development of geometrical decorative motifs, often regarded as Islamic in inspiration, which also appear in some Catalan Bibles.

"These are the bitter herbs that we will eat. Our children have asked, 'What is the reason for them?' It is because the Egyptians made the lives of our ancestors in Egypt so bitter and miserable." (Passover Haggadah)

The order of the *seder*

The Hebrew word seder means ‘order’ and has come to be used as the name of the Passover meal due to its strict order, which is laid down, step by step, in the Haggadah. The ritual developed from the *simanim* or symbolic words in the Haggadah, which indicate what action must be done, what must be recited, what must be eaten and what must be prayed. These key words make up the various parts of the ritual. These words are given special prominence in the book and are illuminated in a wealth of colours and filigree work.

The Haggadah and passing on the tradition

Children are central to the Passover meal. The rituals and symbols intrigue them and adults can explain their meaning and fulfil the commandment in Exodus (13:8): “On that day you are to tell your son, ‘It is because of what Adonai did for me when I left Egypt.’” To keep them attentive during the meal and to teach them about its meaning, the children participate in the recital of the ten plagues of Egypt and in the singing of the song *Ma Nishtanah* (Why is it different?) about the special nature of the night of Passover. They must also play the parts of the four sons mentioned in the ritual and ask four questions about the meaning of the feast.

The fifteen symbolic words* in Haggadot

1. *Kadeish* קדש
(Blessing) The wine is blessed and the first cup of wine is drunk.

2. *Ur’chatz* ורחץ
(Ritual hand-washing). The first washing of the hands at the start of the meal.

3. *Karpas* כרפס
(Celery) A piece of celery is dipped in salt water as a reminder of the tears shed during the period of slavery in Egypt.

4. *Yachatz* יחץ
(The breaking of the middle matzah) The middle matzah of the three matzot on the table is broken. The larger piece of the broken matzah (afikoman) is set aside to be eaten at the end of the meal.

5. *Magid* מגיד
(The story of the Passover) The prayer of the bread of affliction is recited and the story of the liberation from Egypt is told, during which the children ask the four questions. The second cup of wine is drunk.

6. *Rohtzah* רחצה
(Ritual hand-washing) Second hand-washing, accompanied by a blessing.

7. *Motzi* מוציא
(Blessing of the matzah) The three matzot are picked up and blessed.

8. *Matzah* מצה
(Prayer over the matzot) The matzah bread is eaten.

9. *Maror* מרור
(Bitter herbs) Bitter herbs are eaten as a reminder of the bitterness of slavery and of the hardship suffered in the desert during the flight from Egypt.

10. *Koreich* כורך
(Maror sandwich) This is known as the ‘sandwich of Rabbi Hillel’, and is to be eaten while reclining to the left.

11. *Shulchan Orech* שולחן עורך
(Laying the table) The festive meal is eaten.

12. *Tzafun* צפון
(Hidden) The larger portion of the second matzah (afikoman), which had been put aside in a secret place for eating as dessert, is found.

13. *Bareich* ברך
(Grace) Grace is said in thanks for the food, and the third cup of wine is drunk.

14. *Hallel* הלל
(Praise) The prayers said at every religious feast are recited. The fourth and last cup of wine is drunk.

15. *Nirtzah* נירצה
(Conclusion) The end of the meal. The desire to hold it “Next year in Jerusalem!” is expressed.

*according to the Ashkenazi tradition and nowadays. Some medieval Catalan Haggadot contain ten.

The four sons of the Torah. There is a passage in the Haggadah featuring four archetypal sons, representing the four different attitudes of humankind to the tradition: “The Torah speaks of four sons: one who is wise, one who is wicked, one who is simple, and one who does not know to ask.” Each of them asks a question about the event, the answers to which explain some of the laws of the Passover, the meaning of the ritual, God’s intention when he established it, and the obligation to pass on these instructions from one generation to the next.

Barcelona Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 34-35

JEWISH SPLENDOUR DURING THE CATALAN GOTHIC

Golden Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 14v

Catalan Gothic and Haggadot

In the opening decades of the 14th century —a time when the economy and urban areas were still growing— the finest exponents of the Catalan Gothic came to the fore in Barcelona. This was also the period when illuminated Jewish codices were being produced. The haggadot and other Jewish manuscripts produced in the main in Barcelona are notable for the miniatures they contain. The majority of them date from the most advanced period of Lineal Gothic, precisely when Italian innovations in the conception of space and figures were being introduced. In this climate of artistic renewal, it is not unusual to find stylistic and iconographic exchanges between Christian and Jewish works and there were some illuminators who worked on both.

The Guide for the Perplexed, Ferrer Bassa, c. 1347-1348. Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, MS Heb. xxxvii

The Guide for the Perplexed. This copy of the Guide for the Perplexed by Maimonides was commissioned by Menahem Bessalel, a physician in the service of Pere el Cerimoniós, from Ferrer Bassa (c. 1290-1348), the master of the leading painting studio in Barcelona. It provides evidence that the Jews closest to the royal court were interested in the new trend towards the Italian style in art developing at that time. As a result of this shared environment, the decoration in the margins of the pages not only enriches the book but also features elements found in some of the decorations in Haggadot.

The Gothic style of Catalan Haggadot. Over the course of the 13th century, Byzantine pictorial models fell out of favour and the Gothic style became fully established in Europe. In Catalonia, the early Lineal Gothic gave rise to forms of stylisation in which there was a new appreciation of the outlines of the figures. Catalan painting of the 14th century evolved towards a second Lineal Gothic period in which greater interest was shown in volume. In the second quarter of the century, the devices of Tuscan models were adopted, with a sweeping renewal in the depiction, meaning that the figures are set in believable three-dimensional spaces.

↑ The Usages and Constitutions of Catalonia. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, f. 67

← Golden Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 11r

↓ Sarajevo Haggadah. Zemaljski Muzej Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, f. 20r

A shared iconography. Some Haggadot contain illuminations directly inspired by Christian iconography associated with episodes in the Old Testament or the Gospels. Either Jewish miniaturists copied and adapted them or some Haggadot illuminators were Christians.

1. Moses travels to Egypt. Moses, his wife Zipporah and their two sons Gershom and Eliezer, go back to Egypt to free the Israelites (Exod. 4:20). The formal composition of the episode is established using Christian models for the scene of the flight into Egypt as recounted in the Gospel According to Matthew (Matt. 2:13-14).

2. The burning bush. The burning bush is another example of this shared iconography. The Golden Haggadah faithfully follows the Bible story in Exodus, in which the figure that appears in the bush on fire is the angel of the Lord (not God himself), but it also includes elements adopted from 13th-century Christian models, such as the repetition of the figure of Moses.

3. The story of Lot. The story of Lot's flight from Sodom, with the ruins of the city in the background and his wife turned into a pillar of salt, is recounted using clearly similar forms and iconography in both the Golden Haggadah and the Morgan Bible.

4. Mourning the dead son. In the depiction in the Golden Haggadah of the tenth plague, in which firstborn sons die, a mother is shown mourning the death of her child. The scene replicates the standard model of the mother and child in the Massacre of the Innocents or of the Christian Pietà, which shows the sorrowful Virgin Mary cradling Jesus' dead body on her lap.

1a. The Flight into Egypt, Duccio di Buoninsegna. Panel of the Duccio Maestà, 1308-1311. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena
1b. Golden Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 10v
2a. Morgan Bible. The Morgan Library and Museum, New York, f. 7v
2b. Golden Haggadah, f. 10v
3a. Golden Haggadah, f. 4v
3b. Morgan Bible, f. 4r
4a. Golden Haggadah, f. 14v
4b. Pietà, Ferrer Bassa, 1346. Wall painting in St Michael's chapel at the Monastery of Pedralbes, Barcelona


1a


1b


3a


3b


2a


2b


4a


4b

Illumination techniques

Fifteenth-century books in Hebrew followed the same approaches to illumination as Gothic books on parchment or, in the case of more refined works, on vellum. Once the writing part of the book had been done, the process then moved onto the preparatory and final drawings, to which, gold leaf was applied in the most lavishly decorated works. The drawings were then coloured using a wide variety of pigments used with binding media such as gum arabic, egg or glues from various sources. The cost varied according to the complexity and the materials used.

The process of illumination of the Prato Haggadah
The Prato Haggadah is an unfinished work that allows us to see the process of illuminating a Gothic manuscript and the technique employed. In some folios it is possible to observe the state of the drawing prior to the application of gold leaf or colour. In others, however, is completed, with gold and pigments colouring the titles and borders. Other Haggadot, such as the Barcelona Haggadah, also contain unfinished pages.

Prato Haggadah. The Jewish Theological Seminary Library, New York, f. 19r, f. 27v and f. 7v

THE HAGGADOT IN CATALONIA

Sister Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 27v

The making of Catalan Haggadot

The illuminated Haggadot are the most outstanding works in the entire Catalan Jewish artistic legacy. It is still difficult to date them precisely, but a formal and palaeographic study reveals that as a group they were produced in the 14th century. The most elaborate Haggadot, at least, were probably made in Barcelona, though their heraldic and stylistic elements and their formal composition only allow us to state with certainty that they come from workshops located in Catalonia or in the lands under the Crown of Aragon and Catalonia. It should be borne in mind that books were not alone in circulating, as the miniaturists who produced them also travelled about.

Heraldry in Haggadot. Heraldic emblems help to determine the origin of some Haggadot. The presence of the coat of arms with four red pallets on a golden background, the device of the monarchs of the House of Barcelona, places the origin of the Sister, Sarajevo, Kaufmann and Barcelona Haggadot within the Crown's lands.

Barcelona Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 61r

Artistic classification of Haggadot. The structural, stylistic and iconographic similarities between these Haggadot enable connections to be drawn between them. It is also possible to classify them according to the version of the Hebrew text they contain. In some cases, they may even be the work of a single workshop. Even so, there are evident differences between them.

1320
1325
1330
1335
1340
1345
1350

GROUP 1. The Golden Haggadah served as the model for the Sister Haggadah, as it provided the inspiration for the compositions and iconography in the later work, though it is clearly different in style. The Graziano Haggadah, which contains very little in the way of illustration, contains motifs similar to some in the Sister Haggadah.

Golden Haggadah, f. 4v

Sister Haggadah, f. 4v

GROUP 2. Of all these Haggadot, the two that most closely resemble each other are the Rylands and the Brother Haggadot, both from the iconographic and the stylistic point of view. The Mocatta Haggadah is more closely related to the Rylands Haggadah, despite being a more modest work, as the same artist did the micrographic drawings in both.

Rylands Haggadah, f. 13v

Brother Haggadah, f. 1v

GROUP 3. The Sarajevo Haggadah and the Modena-Bologna Haggadah very clearly resemble each other in some aspects. In the case of the Prato Haggadah, however, though stylistic similarities between it and the other two can be seen, conclusive iconographic comparisons cannot be made as it remained unfinished.

Sarajevo Haggadah, f. 22r

Modena-Bologna Haggadah, f. 3r

The iconographic programme of Haggadot. The opening group of miniatures tend to be the most striking visual part of the work, followed by the text of the Haggadah and liturgical poems (*piyyutim*), which may also contain illustrations. At the start of the book, before the text begins, there are Biblical picture cycles. The images that deal with the Passover ceremony come next or appear in the text. The decoration in the margins, with human and zoomorphic figures, plant motifs and imaginative themes, embellish some of the folio borders.

1. Sister Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 2v
2. Rylands Haggadah. John Rylands University Library, Manchester, f. 17r
3. Brother Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 8r
4. Barcelona Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 24v

1. BIBLICAL CYCLES

1.1 Genesis
- The Creation of the World
- Adam and Eve
- Cain and Abel
- Noah
- Abraham
- Isaac
- Jacob
- Joseph

1.2 Exodus
- Pharaoh orders that every Hebrew boy that is born must be thrown into the Nile.
- Moses' childhood
- Miracles in front of Pharaoh and his officials
- The Plagues of Egypt
- The Departure of the Israelites
- The Crossing of the Red Sea
- The Dance of Miriam
- The Gathering of the Manna
- The Tablets of the Law

1.3 Other books
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

2. CEREMONIAL SCENES
- Preparing the Passover meal
- The Passover meal
- The rabbis
- The four sons
- The Passover Lamb
- Matzah
- *Maror*

3. DECORATIONS IN THE MARGINS

4. HERALDRY

5. OTHER FIGURATIONS

5. Sarajevo Haggadah. Zemaljski Muzej Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, f. 1v
6. Sarajevo Haggadah, f. 28r
7. Sister Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 16r
8. Sarajevo Haggadah, f. 32r

The type of script. The type of lettering used in writing most of these Haggadot is termed Sephardi square script. This kind of script was widely used around the whole of the Iberian Peninsula. The letters are elegant and uniform in line, with a tendency towards cursive forms that lean leftwards, as Hebrew is written from right to left.

Kaufmann Haggadah. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára, Budapest, f. 21v

Haggadot in the context of the illumination of Hebrew manuscripts. The first illuminated Jewish Bibles appeared in the Iberian Peninsula in the 13th century. Judaism is an aniconic religion—as are the eastern tradition and Islam—and so geometrical ornamentation and illustrations of liturgical objects were used to decorate these books, with any representation of the godhead avoided and human and animal figures very sparingly used. In contrast, the Catalan Haggadot are notable for their figurative cycles. They contain a complex graphic narrative like that of some contemporary Latin psalters.

The order in which the images are read. The Hebrew system of reading from right to left means that the compositions must be designed in the same direction. Consequently, scenes are generally arranged in the opposite order to that found in Christian art.

↑ Sarajevo Haggadah. Zemaljski Muzej Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, f. 3v

← Golden Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 4v

Haggadot from northern Europe

Catalan Haggadot differ from Hebrew manuscripts that are more influenced by the tendency towards geometrical forms and the reluctance to depict figures, also found in Al-Andalus, as they share a passion for visual narration and figuration with Hebrew manuscripts produced in more northerly areas. Even so, there are considerable differences between the Ashkenazi tradition of northern and central Europe and the Catalan Haggadot as regards the type of script, the content of the text and the illustrations. Unlike Catalan Haggadot, which usually devote a whole page to a Biblical cycle, the Ashkenazi Haggadot tend to have the illustrations alongside the text. In addition, some place more emphasis on the description of the Passover meal than the Catalan Haggadot.

Ashkenazi region of medieval Hebrew manuscripts

According to M. Beit-Arie, *The Codicological Data-base of the Hebrew Paleography Project*, Jerusalem, 1993

The Birds' Head Haggadah. The Birds' Head Haggadah is one of the earliest surviving illuminated Germanic Hebrew manuscripts. It takes its name from the fact that the Israelites human figures all have a bird's head (or griffin's head), whereas Egyptians have a human head. This phenomenon is also to be seen in other 13th-century manuscripts from southern Germany.

The Birds' Head Haggadah. Southern Germany, c. 1300. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, f. 24v

Barcelona Haggadah

This manuscript contains illuminations done in a style that is still within the parameters of the Lineal Gothic but it already features motifs employed by Catalan workshops working in the Italian style in the second quarter of the 14th century. It has no opening pages with narrative scenes, as found in other Haggadot, but most of the pages are illuminated with episodes from the Bible and it includes numerous scenes of the ritual of the Passover meal. The pages are richly decorated with gilded initial words and embellishments in the margins, featuring human figures, symbolic foodstuffs, plant motifs and real and fabulous animals such as gryphons and dragons. It is also notable for its depictions of musicians and musical instruments.

Barcelona Haggadah, c. 1340. The British Library, London, MS. Add. 14761

On this page: f. 66v, f. 24v, f. 26v, f. 61r

On the following page: f. 30v

Golden Haggadah

This is the most sumptuous of the Haggadot connected with Catalonia and also the oldest. It was illuminated around 1320 in accordance with the style of the Lineal Gothic. It opens with 14 completely illuminated pages on a diapered gold leaf background, hence its name. It is a court manuscript related to the Usages and Constitutions of Catalonia held in Paris and is the Haggadah most closely akin to the Christian forms of representation. The illustrations are the work of two miniaturists who shared the same general stylistic approach. The images are in keeping with the trends in quality painting being done in northern Europe, but at the same time they reveal an Italian influence in the depiction of buildings and threedimensional spaces.

Golden Haggadah, c. 1320. The British Library, London, MS. Add. 27210

On this page: f. 2v, f. 5r, f. 9r

On the following page: f. 15r

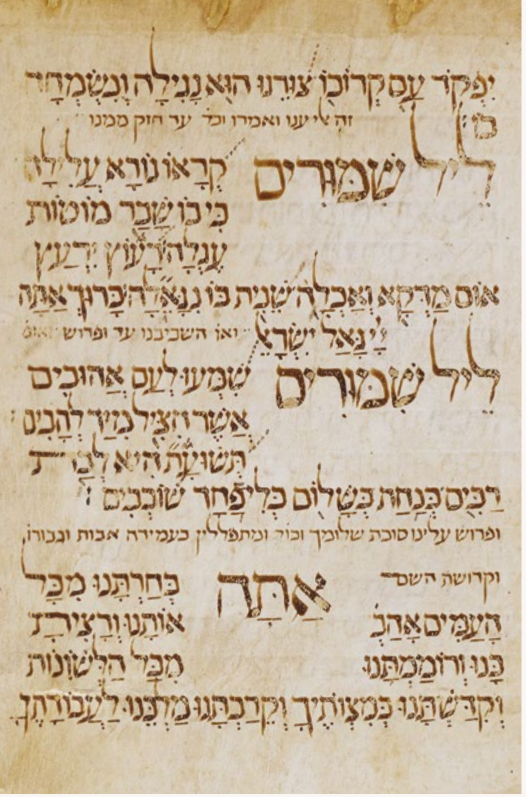
Sister Haggadah

This Haggadah is so-named because of the iconographic similarities it shares with the Golden Haggadah, as it follows the same model, though it is not a complete copy and there are considerable differences in style. The Sister Haggadah dates from the second quarter of the 14th century and adopts the formulae of Italian origin, though they are here simplified and it is more naive and popular in its pictorial concept. In addition to the main scenes, it has many illuminated words and numerous examples of filigree work. The images that fill a whole page in the Sister Haggadah and the Golden Haggadah resemble each other in their iconography but the artistic quality of the illuminators is very different. However, the similarities are more significant in the decorative treatment of the text folios.

Sister Haggadah,
c. 1325-1335. The British Library, London,
MS. Or. 2884

On this page:
f. 15r, f. 47v, 3v

On the following page:
f. 18r



Graziano Haggadah

This is the only one of these Haggadot in which a date related to its creation appears, that of its sale in 1328, meaning that we can be certain that it dates from the first third of the 14th century. It is a Haggadah in which there are very few illustrations, among them the matzah bread, bitter herbs and one of the rabbis in the ceremonial account of the Seder, as well as some framed initial letters. All the attention, then, is on the text, arranged on the 35 pages of the Haggadah in a beautiful and clear Sephardic square script. There are close stylistic similarities between this and the Sister Haggadah, including some pages that are identical in the distribution of the text and in the ornamentation.

Graziano Haggadah, c. 1300-1328. The Jewish Theological Seminary Library, New York, MS. 9300

On this page: f. 4r, 19v

On the following page: f. 22v

Brother Haggadah

The Brother Haggadah was produced around the 1330s and is so-named because of its connection with the Rylands Haggadah, though recent studies indicate that the Rylands Haggadah derives from the Brother Haggadah. They are both notable for their strict following of Biblical texts, and their similarities suggest that they could have been made in the same workshop or that they followed the same model. The Brother Haggadah focuses on the cycle of the Exodus. The settings and the highly expressive characters reveal that the illuminators were unaware of northern Gothic models and had only a slight knowledge of the more innovative Italian art. The saturated colours stand out against the rich backgrounds, with gold and with abstract and figurative motifs. The full-page episodes are framed by geometrical decorative motifs.

Brother Haggadah, c. 1330. The British Library, London, MS. Or. 1404, f. 9r, f. 14v, f. 17r, f. 5r

Rylands Haggadah, c. 1330-1349. The John Rylands University Library, Manchester, Heb. MS. 6, f. 18v, f. 19r

Rylands Haggadah

Written and illuminated in the second quarter of the 14th century, this work was produced using the same iconography, configuration and style as the Brother Haggadah, which in fact served as its model, though the Rylands Haggadah is richer. They share the same dense decorative formulae and the same composition of the main iconographic themes, but even so there are differences. The images in the Rylands Haggadah express a more biting political discourse than the Brother Haggadah. Its iconography is cruel towards non-Jews at times and it emphasises the suffering of the enemies of Israel. The manuscript also differs from other Haggadot produced in the Iberian Peninsula because it features micrographic drawings containing a wealth of plant, geometrical and animal motifs.

On page 38:
Brother Haggadah, f. 7v
On page 39:
Rylands Haggadah, f. 19v

Mocatta Haggadah

The manuscript of the Mocatta Haggadah also contains the Song of Solomon and the books of Ruth and Kohelet (Ecclesiastes). The text is presented inside beautiful blue, red, green and gold borders, with depictions of hybrid creatures and friezes of micrographic text in the margins. The document is attributed to the scribe Jacob, who perhaps also did the illuminations. The author seems very familiar with other Haggadot, but does not manage to produce illustrations of the same quality as in other works. The Mocatta Haggadah is notable, however, for the micrographic reproductions of rabbinical homilies (Midrashim) and prayers. Jacob, who was working in Barcelona in the second quarter of the 14th century, probably also worked on the Rylands Haggadah and the Mahzor Catalonia.

Mocatta Haggadah, c. 1330-1340. University College London Library Services, Special Collections, MS. Mocatta 1

On this page: f. 29v, f. 33v

On the following page: f. 39v

↑ Sassoon Haggadah, c. 1320. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, MS. 181/41, f. 2v, f. 84v, f. 42v

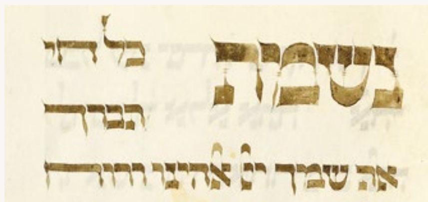
Sassoon Haggadah

Although the Sassoon Haggadah forms part of a codex with a small size, it also contains liturgical poems and biblical passages related to the Passover and the festival of Shavuot. This haggadah from the first quarter of the 14th century contains several full-page miniatures, but mostly illustrations that accompany the text. Even though is written in square and semi-cursive Sephardic script, like the rest of the Catalan haggadot, the style of the illuminations, with elongated figures and a decoration of hybrid creatures with human and zoomorphic forms, could point to a miniaturist of French origin. From an aesthetic point of view, it is related to the Barcelona Haggadah and the Kaufmann Haggadah.

Prato Haggadah

The writing of this Haggadah, dated to the second quarter of the 14th century, began in Sephardic square lettering using the formalisation typical of Catalan Haggadot, but it continued in northern Italy in the 16th century in the Ashkenazi manner. There are some resemblances with the Sarajevo Haggadah and the Modena-Bologna Haggadah, but because the cycles were not completed it is difficult to compare in depth their iconography. The delicate marginal decorations and the lack of elements associated with the ritual of the meal indicate that this must have been a book to be read in public in the synagogue before the Passover meal.

↓ Prato Haggadah, c. 1325-1350. The Jewish Theological Seminary Library, New York, MS. 9468, f. 9v, f. 54r, f. 36r



Sarajevo Haggadah

The Sarajevo Haggadah probably dates from the second quarter of the 14th century, though some authors believe it was produced after the Black Plague outbreak of 1348. It follows Italian models, as seen in the degree of complexity in the depictions of the settings, but the volume of the figures is less developed. Traces of the previous tradition of the Lineal Gothic can still be seen in the work. Using a schematic narrative style, it tells the stories of Genesis and Exodus from the creation of the world to the death of Moses, including the scenarios of the Passover meal. The Sarajevo Haggadah is famous for its illustrations and because of the many dangers it has faced since it was created. The Modena-Bologna Haggadah was made in the same workshop as the Sarajevo Haggadah.

Sarajevo Haggadah, c. 1325-1350. Zemaljski Muzej Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, MS. 1

On this page: f. 4r, f. 34r

On the following page: f. 31r

Modena-Bologna Haggadah

All that has survived of the Modena-Bologna Haggadah are two separate fragments. Included in a prayer book or Mahzor for Jewish holidays, the manuscript is in a pictorial style reminiscent of that of the Sarajevo Haggadah. The copy is incomplete and the images are arranged in an unusual order. The first part, held in Modena, has no opening but begins with the discourse on the plagues of Egypt, presents the matzah and the maror and ends partway through Psalm 117 in the Hallel. The Bologna fragment begins with the second part of the same psalm and continues with the remaining psalms and prayers that conclude the Haggadah. After this come beautiful full-page miniatures on the plagues which, in the original page order, must have appeared at the very beginning of the manuscript before the folios now held in Modena.

Modena-Bologna Haggadah, c. 1325-1350. Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, MS. 2559; Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Modena, MS. Cod. A.K.I. 22-Or. 92

On this page:
Mòdena, f. 6v; f. 3r

On the following page:
Bolonya, f. 3r

Kaufmann Haggadah

The Kaufmann Haggadah was illuminated by more than one person. The most important miniatures, which take up a whole page, follow the schemas of Italian origin common in the realm of the Crown of Aragon and Catalonia during the third quarter of the 14th century. Borders and human figures were later added to the original iconographic programme, which already featured some of these elements. The Kaufmann Haggadah is notable for the quality and detail of its illustrations, though some pigments have considerably deteriorated. Originally the opening pages told the story of Moses, followed by the ritual of the Passover meal. But nowadays, and since some point before the 16th century, the order of the pages has been altered.

Kaufmann Haggadah, third quarter of the 14th century. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára, Budapest, MS. A 422

On this page:
f. 3v, 43r, 1v

On the following page:
f. 2r

Cambridge Haggadah

This Haggadah, which follows the Provençal rite, is included in a book of prayers for the Sabbath and other feasts, as well as liturgical poems in Aramaic, late rubrics and inscriptions in Judaeo-Arabic. It has been dated to the close of the 14th or early 15th century, making it the most recent of those displayed. The illustrations are limited to the matzah and the maror and a pair of initial words with floral and plant motifs. The Cambridge Haggadah is notable, however, for its profuse decorations of the initial words in filigrees in blues in blues, reds, blacks, purples and gold.

↑ Cambridge Haggadah, close of the 14th or early 15th century. Cambridge University Library, MS. Add. 1203, f. 59r, f. 67r, f. 67v

Poblet Haggadah

The Poblet Haggadah is an example of the type that has been most common in the homes of the not so wealthy families in Barcelona's Jewish quarter. The importance of the text underpins the work, which contains very few miniature motifs, among them an architectural frontispiece, which draws on the tradition of the Lineal Gothic, used as a way to highlight the start of the text on the bread of affliction. The use of polychrome is simple, there are no anthropomorphic figures and line prevails over colour. The name of the first owner of the Haggadah, Momet de Perelada, appears on one of its pages. The manuscript spent some time in Italian lands before returning to Catalonia and it is now the sole medieval Haggadah codex held in the country.

↓ Poblet Haggadah, close of the 14th century. Biblioteca del Monestir de Poblet, MS. 100, f. 1r, f. 32r, f. 2r

THE SURVIVAL OF A BODY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The dispersal of the Catalan Haggadot

Some Jewish families took their Haggadot with them, along with other manuscripts in their private libraries that had not been destroyed in the attacks of 1391, when they were expelled in 1492 or earlier. Only a small number of all these manuscripts have survived and those that have tend to be the ones of greatest artistic value, which over time have been acquired by collectors and later by libraries and museums. The notes made by the various owners who inherited these codices or purchased them, as well as the annotations by censors who checked them, make it possible for us to trace part of their journey to their present whereabouts.

Map showing the whereabouts of the Catalan Haggadot

Most of the Catalan Haggadot seem to have travelled initially to Italy. A number went on from there to other places such as the Balkans, France and Germanic lands. They were subsequently purchased as items of outstanding artistic value by private collectors before being later acquired by museums and libraries, especially in Britain (the British Library, University College London, University Library of Cambridge and the John Rylands University Library). The Poblet Haggadah is today held in Catalonia and is the only one to have left and then returned.

THE HAGGADOT IN HISTORY

The dog and the hare of Israel. The hare represents Jacob and the people of Israel, whereas the dog represents those hunting them. In the Barcelona Haggadah, however, the roles are swapped, with the hare receiving homage from the dog.

Barcelona Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 30v

A message of community cohesion

Generation after generation down the centuries, participants in the Seder have taken on the role of the Israelites in the Bible, commemorating that distant past with a hope for a better future. The Haggadot enable them to keep up the ritual of the meal on the night of Passover and, in the Middle Ages, these manuscripts were a key element in bolstering the Jewish identity, often amid difficult historical circumstances for the community. Illuminated Haggadot were not limited solely to illustrating the text but, during the wait before the return to Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah, created a narrative that looked to the future, with a rich and complex iconography full of symbols that can be interpreted in many different ways.

Haggadot today

The Passover Haggadah has an unalterable central text to which liturgical poems and prayers have been added and others removed over the centuries. In addition, illustrations have been included, featuring a specific iconography in accordance with the cultural tradition of each time and place. Numerous editions have been issued since the invention of the printing press, in particular from the 19th century onwards, and it remains a living tradition today. The Messianic symbology and the idea of returning to Israel contained in it are still the pillars of Judaism. Practising and non-practising Jews alike continue to read the Haggadah every Seder to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt.

The return to Israel. Every Haggadah ends with the phrase “Next year in Jerusalem!”, the expression of the hope that Passover will be celebrated the following year in the holy city of Judaism. The repetition of this desire down the generations has contributed to the historical continuity of the idea of the return to the Land of Israel.

Barcelona Haggadah. The British Library, London, f. 88r

BARCELONA HAGGADOT.
The Jewish Splendour of Catalan Gothic

EXHIBITION

Organization and production: MUHBA - Museu d’Història de Barcelona, Institut de Cultura, Ajuntament de Barcelona

Project direction: Joan Roca i Albert
Project coordination: Mònica Blasco i Arasanz
Curatorship: Ana Bejarano, Josep-Lluís Carod Rovira and Manuel Forcano
Scientific advisement: Rosa Alcoy
Documentation: Alba Barceló and Iris Garcia Urbano
Historical revision: Carles Puigferrat

Exhibition coordination: Iris Garcia Urbano
Exhibition design: Marta Galí i Brillas and Marta Oristrell i Santamaria
Graphic design: Enric Garrido i Gabarrón, Marta Galí i Brillas and Marta Oristrell i Santamaria
Museographic Production and Installation: Croquis
Graphic Production and Installation: GROP exposicions i museografia SL
Production of display cases: Grupo Floria and Croquis

Preventive conservation: Lídia Font, Anna Lázaro and Carla Puerto, with the collaboration of Corebarna and Arte y Memoria
Transport of originals: SIT Grupo empresarial
Insurance management: Marsh SA, Willis S&Cc and Blackwall Green
Insurance companies: Hiscox SA, National Suisse and Lloyd’s of London

Audiovisual:
Script: Mònica Blasco and Iris Garcia Urbano
Production: Batabat
Musical research: Edwin Seroussi
Interactives:
Script and coordination: Mònica Blasco and Iris Garcia Urbano
Documentation: Ramon Pujades
Production: Creueta 119

Translations and linguistic consultancy: Sue Brownbridge, Josep Lluís Carod Rovira, Rosa Chico, Itai Ron and Yair Ben-Hoor
Advisement on Jewish transcriptions: Pere Casanellas
Image copyright management: Iris Garcia Urbano and Photoaisa

Programmes and Activities: Mònica Blasco and Teresa Macià
Education: Teresa Macià, Gemma Bonet, Imma Masdevall and Cristina López
Visits and itineraries: Fragment
Communication: Àngels Bertran
Marketing: Aurora de la Rosa
Management support: Eulàlia Cartró
Visitor information: Carles Mela and Expertus
Security: Senén Vallès, Punto y Control SA and Grupo 69
Maintenance: Enrique Alonso and Gregorio Aranda

Exhibited works loaned by: Biblioteca del Monestir de Poblet, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria – Su concessione del Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, MNAC. Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, MTA Könyvtár és Információs Központ, Museu de la Vida Rural, The British Library, The John Rylands Library - Courtesy of The University of Manchester, The Jewish Theological Seminary Library, The National Library of Israel, The Syndics of Cambridge University Library and University College London Library Services - Special Collections

Thanks to: Jai Anguita, Biancastella Antonino, Paul Ayris, Annalisa Battini, Luca Bellingeri, Aleksandra Bunčić, Carol Burrows, Adnan Busuladzic, Rita de Tata, Emma Denness, Timna Elper, Gillian Furlong, Mark Furness, Dorothy Goldman, Rebecca Ilani, Anna Izquierdo, Anne Jarvis, Roly Keating, Ágnes Kelecsényi, David Kraemer, Rachel Laufer, Dalia Levinsohn, Isabel Lobo, Rachel Misrati, Neus Moyano, Jamie Nathan, Erland Kolding Nielsen, Barbara O’Connor, Ben Outhwaite, Erik Petersen, Jordi Puig, Ramon J. Pujades, Ramon Rosich, Josep Serra i Villalba, Nily Schorr, James S. Snyder, Hanne Karin Sørensen, Lluc Torcal, Oren Weinberg and Havva Zellner

MUHBA has the support of Cercle del Museu:

Institutional partners:
Societat Econòmica Barcelonesa d’Amics del País, Consell Econòmic i Social de Barcelona, Ateneu Barcelonès, Sport Cultura Barcelona, Associació Consell de Cent - Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània - Fundació Centre Internacional de Música Antiga - Associació d’Enginyers Industrials de Catalunya - Cambra de Comerç de Barcelona - Fundació Museu Històricosocial de La Maquinista Terrestre i Marítima i Macosa

Sponsors:
el Periódico · abertis · Aigües de Barcelona · gasNatural fenosa · REPSOL

Associated:
iGuzzini

Friends:
Canon · GRUP JULIÀ

With the support of: EL AL

Collection MUHBA Llibrets de Sala

Edition: Ajuntament de Barcelona, Institut de Cultura, Museu d’Història de Barcelona

MUHBA, direction: Joan Roca i Albert

Barcelona Haggadot.
The Jewish Splendour of Catalan Gothic

Texts: Ana Bejarano Escanilla, Josep-Lluís Carod Rovira, Manuel Forcano Aparicio and Rosa Alcoy Pedrós
Editorial coordination: Iris Garcia Urbano
Design and layout: Andrea Manenti
Translation: Sue Brownbridge

Print: Gràfiques Ortells

First edition: March 2015

ISBN: 978-84-9850-694-5
D.L.: B.12113-2015

www.bcn.cat/barcelonallibres
www.museuhistoria.bcn.cat

MUHBA
MUSEU D'HISTÒRIA DE BARCELONA

MUHBA Llibrets de sala

1 **Shanties. The informal city**
2 **Connected Barcelona, transnational citizens**
3 **Barcelona and the Jocs Florals, 1859**
4 Cerdà i Barcelona. La primera metrópoli, 1853-1897
5 **Salomon ben Adret. Barcelona, 1235-1310**
6 **We've got our Seat 600! The path to recovery without democracy**
7 **The water revolution in Barcelona**
8 **Murals in the spotlight. The paintings in the Capella de Sant Miquel**
9 **Calicoes, 1736-1847. The origins of industrial Barcelona**
10 Barcelona, vint històries musicals
11 L'enginy de postguerra. Microcotxes de Barcelona
12 **Feeding the city. The supply of Barcelona, from the 13th to the 20th centuries**
13 Música, Noucentisme, Barcelona
14 La bandera de Santa Eulàlia i la seva restauració
15 **The World of 1714**
16 Fabra & Coats fa museu
17 **Urban Monasteries in Times of War. Sant Pere de les Puel·les and Santa Clara de Barcelona, 1691-1718**
18 Música, guerra i pau a la Barcelona moderna i contemporània
19 La cartografia medieval i Barcelona
20 **Barcelona in Late Antiquity. Christianity, the Visigoths and the City**
21 Els jueus a la Barcelona medieval. MUHBA El Call

Ajuntament
de Barcelona