TEXT AND POWER

Texts – books, essays, pamphlets, inscriptions, and written works of all kinds – have always been able to do things in the world. From antiquity to the present, texts command, incite, heal, and protect. A magical formula written around the inside of a clay bowl transforms that simple domestic object into a powerful talisman that subdues demons and ensures health and prosperity. Daily bulletins for soldiers on the front – bulletins whose words draw from the deep well of past Jewish heroism – inspired men to fight beyond exhaustion and despair.

When we hold a book in our hands, it is usually the words that most interest and affect us. The physicality of the actual object – how it was produced and how much it cost – is forgotten in the case of not only books but also daily newspapers, theater posters, and even Facebook posts. The words work such a spell on us, the readers, that we are dumb and blind to the power it takes to make them appear. This power is perhaps most evident in medieval manuscripts. Each and every manuscript is a unique work that demanded the labor of numerous artisans and experts: papermakers, binders, copyists, and, in the case of luxury items, painters and gilders. The most splendid manuscripts, many of which contain miniature paintings that still amaze us today, were commissioned by royal courts and noble families. The sovereign's authority was partially expressed in the economic power to create beautiful things. Power also enables the advancement of knowledge and art, as in the case of a ruler who builds universities, patronizes poets, or funds scholars. Likewise, a king can order that his own deeds be immortalized in texts, thus ensuring that his reign remains unforgotten – and that he retains control over the record of history.

Worldly power also intersects with the histories of texts after their production. As objects of value and storehouses of information, texts are captured in war, bought on the market, hidden for safety, and stolen outright. These later changes in ownership are often accompanied by changes to the text itself. The new owners write their names in the

margins and put their stamps on the flyleaves. Pious censors remove offending passages, wielding their power to erase any evidence of views that might challenge their own beliefs and positions. In even more extreme cases, censorship results in a text's destruction; we will never know how many great books have been burned, pulped, or locked away until they crumbled into dust.

But texts do not serve the powerful alone. Throughout history, religious and ethnic minorities, the working class, the underrepresented, and the underserved have used texts to give voice to their struggles. Texts can even create a sense of community and shared destiny where none existed before: for the readers of a certain newspaper or for those who recite a certain prayer together.

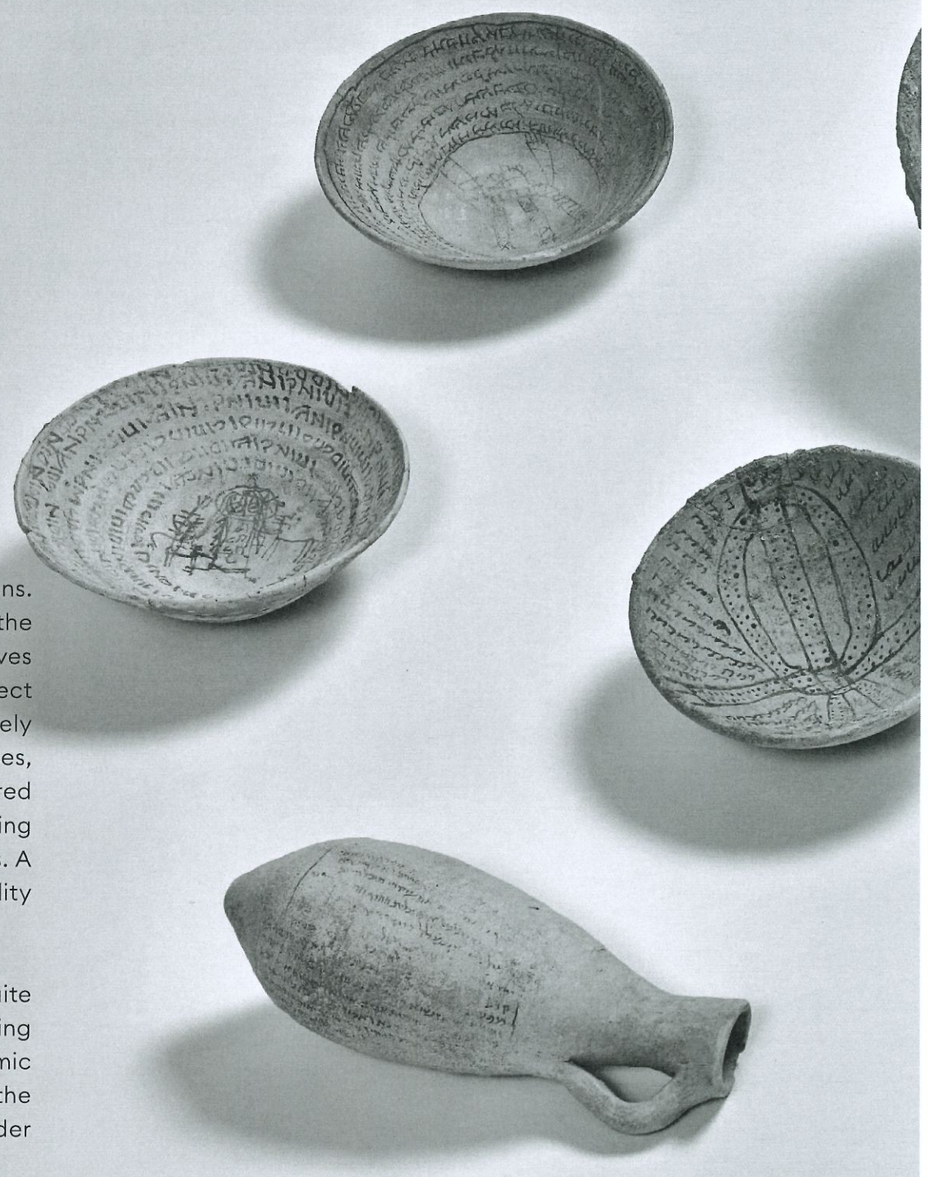
Perhaps the greatest power lies not with rulers, magicians, readers, or revolutionaries. Rather, it lies with authors whose imagination and craft produce words from the very air. We readers can only wonder from what depths and through what powers authors write. Often authors themselves are just as confounded as we readers: the realms of creativity are strange, dark, and unknown.

SAMUEL THROPE

A Babylonian Demon Trap

Magic Bowls, 5th–8th centuries

YOEL FINKELMAN



Ancient Babylonia was swarming with demons. These demons, understandably, frightened the mortals living there, who busied themselves with the question of how best to protect themselves. Evidence of demonic mischief appears widely in the Babylonian Talmud and other contemporary sources, which recorded several methods of protection: whispered adjurations, hand signals, avoidance of certain eating patterns, or caution when visiting known demonic haunts. A paid professional exorcist could be hired for higher quality protection.

Another method – not mentioned in the Talmud but quite popular nonetheless – was to trap the demons. When building a home, the homeowner could commission a ceramic bowl that would be overturned and buried underneath the entrance to the house, thereby trapping the demon under the bowl.

These were not, however, regular ceramic bowls. They contained elaborate incantations, usually written in Aramaic using Hebrew characters, commanding the cosmic forces of good who dwelled in the upper world to protect

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You could add the folios with this spread, if you wish. I would prefer not to have page numbers on bled-off images, but I can see that this is a tabletop / display case, rather than encroaching on the object itself

A variety of Babylonian incantation bowls of diverse sizes, forms, and scribes, fifth through eighth centuries. Top row, left to right: Ms. Heb. 9467.144; Ms. Heb. 9467.204; Ms. Heb. 9467.19. Middle row, left to right: Ms. Heb. 9467.156; Ms. Heb. 34° 6417.1; Ms. Heb. 9467.56; Ms. Heb. 9467.100. Bottom row, left to right: Ms. Heb. 9467.104; Ms. Heb. 9467.185; Ms. Heb. 34° 6417.3; Ms. Heb. 9467.59. All 9467 call numbers donated by Aliza Moussaieff in 2019. All 6417 call numbers donated by Victor Klagsbald in 2016.

Babylonian incantation bowls, fifth through eighth centuries.

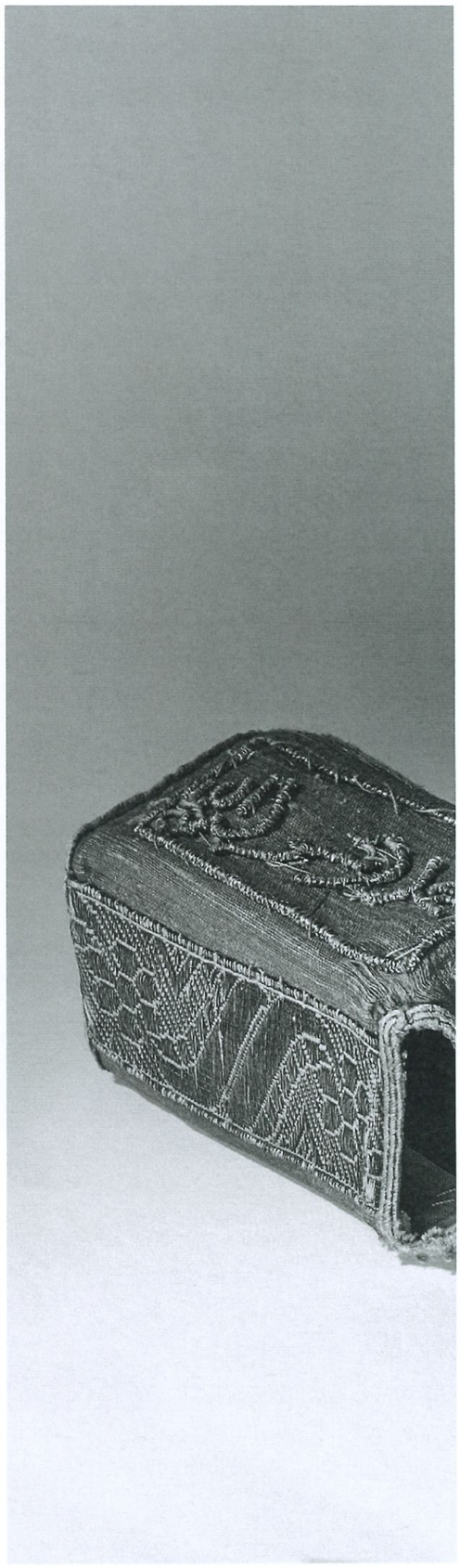
Left: A particularly large and deep bowl shows two female demons bound together. Ms. Heb. 9467.204.

Above/~~Right~~: The demon depicted here, despite being bound, seems to dance on birdlike claws. Ms. Heb. 9467.19. Donated by Aliza Moussaieff in 2019.

The Talisman

Miniature Qur'an, 10th century

OR AMIR



In 1683, the Ottoman Army laid siege to Vienna. In this decisive battle, which halted the Ottoman Empire's European expansion, Hapsburg and Polish forces defended the city against a huge army of Ottoman foot soldiers and cavalry.

Although we cannot be sure if it was in this or an earlier Ottoman attack on the city, the Ottoman troops left behind a most precious object: a miniature copy of the Qur'an, no bigger than the palm of the hand. Copied in the tenth century, the manuscript's early Kufic script remains clear and legible.

Miniature Qur'ans such as this were not meant primarily for reading. Physical copies of the holy text have traditionally been regarded as sacred objects, possessing talismanic and protective powers. There is a long history of miniature Qur'ans being carried on the body or attached to weapons or other objects as amulets. The Ottomans had a particular tradition of carrying into battle *sancak* (banner) Qur'ans, which were fixed to military standards. One seventeenth-century miniature painting even illustrates how these Qur'ans were affixed by chains to the staff finial. Perhaps our Qur'an was one of these.

This Qur'an, however, did not end its journey in Vienna. Almost two centuries later, it was returned, under unknown circumstances, to the Ottoman Sultan Abd al-Majid (1823–1861). The Sultan's seal appears on the book's decorative cover.

Left to righ: Textile cover; Metal case with the ornamental seal of Sultan 'Abd al-Majid (r. 1823–1861); and miniature Qur'an manuscript copied in the tenth century. The codex is open to the beginning of Surat al-Hujurat, folio 133r. The Abraham Shalom Yahuda Collection. Ms. Yah. Ar. 967.

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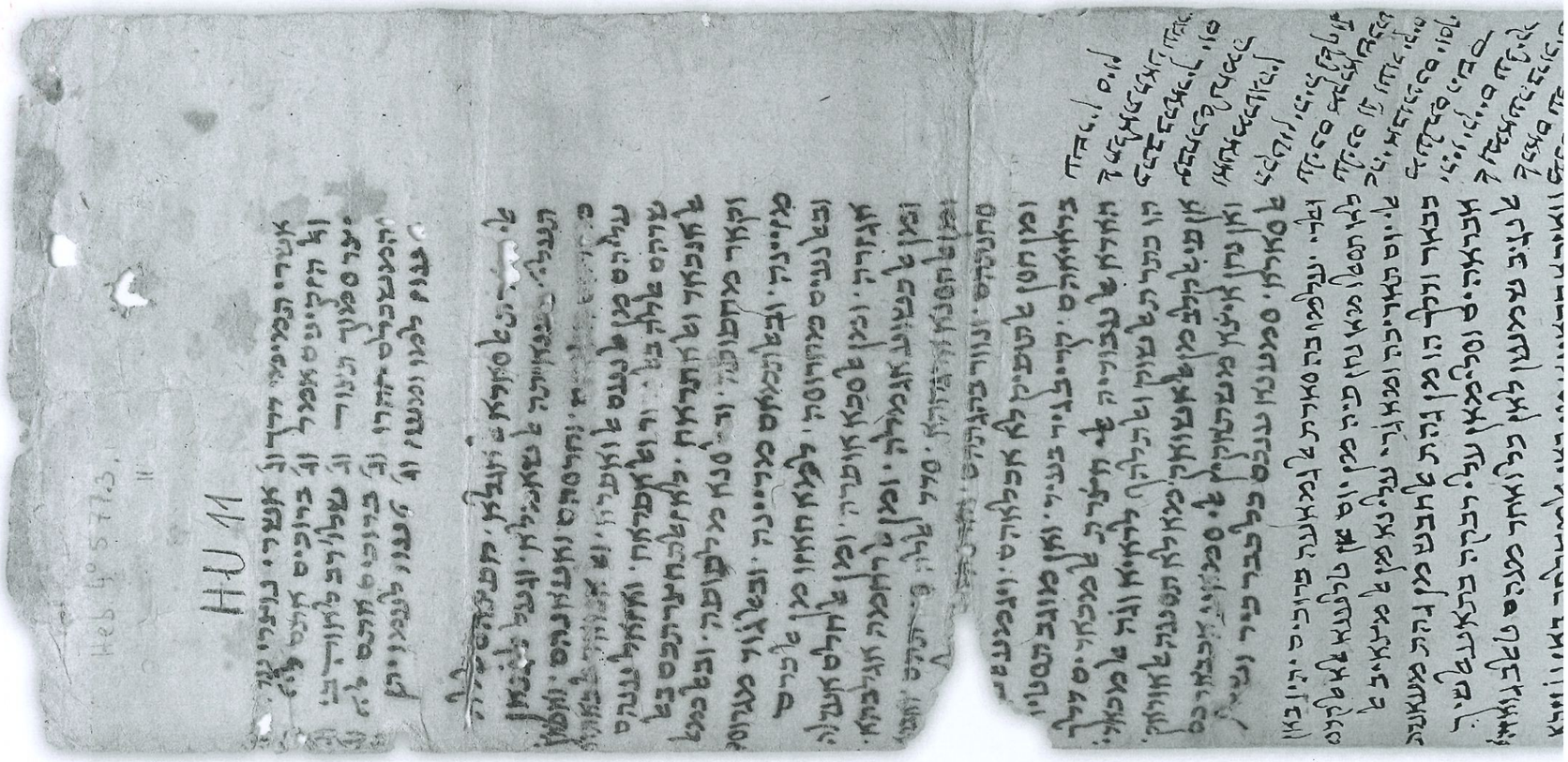
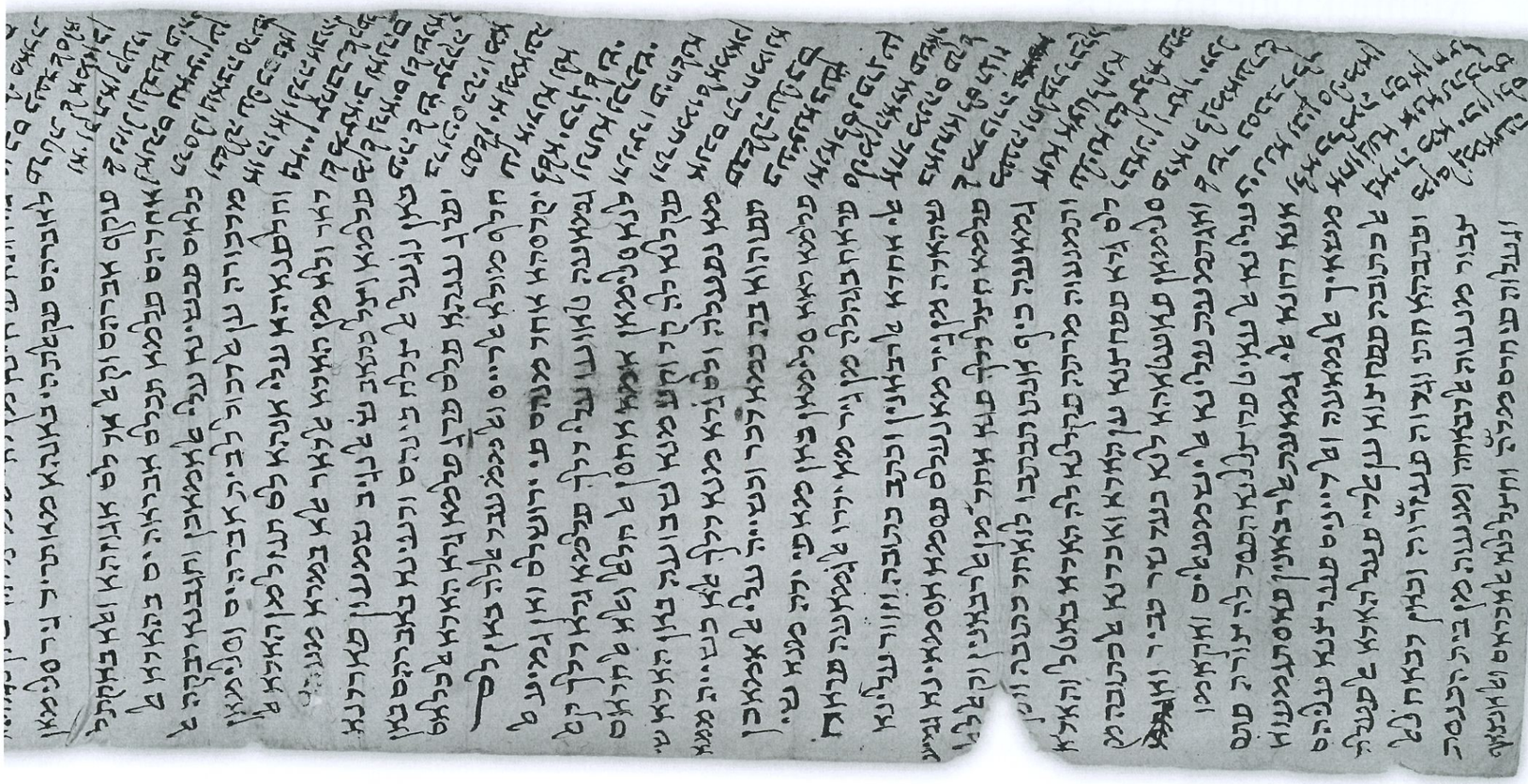


Love and Politics in the Cairo Geniza

Letter from Jerusalem by the Head of the Karaite Community, 14th century

EZRA CHWAT



Judeo-Arabic letter sent from the Karaite community in Jerusalem to that of Egypt, fourteenth century. It was preserved in the Cairo Genizah. Ms. Heb. 4° 577.3.11.

People have always been captivated by romantic intrigue. When that intrigue involves a forged marriage contract and international interactions between Karaite, rabbinic, and Muslim audiences in the fourteenth century, it is especially curious. Just such a story appears in a letter from the Cairo Geniza – the cache of about 400,000 largely Jewish documents from the ninth through the nineteenth century found in and around the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo.

The letter describes an incident that took place in the Karaite community in Jerusalem in the fourteenth century. Two men, Ibrahim and Suleiman, each insisted on marrying a woman named Rebecca. The community wanted her to marry Ibrahim, but she preferred Suleiman. Ibrahim threatened to murder either Suleiman or Rebecca if his proposal was rejected. In an attempt to subdue tensions, the Karaite community made Rebecca swear not to marry either of the two suitors.

When Ibrahim refused to give up on his hopes of Rebecca's hand, the leader of the Karaite community swore that no one would ever be permitted to marry Rebecca. Suleiman, in response, threatened to wed her illegally and even went to the rabbinic community in Jerusalem and secured a ketubah (marriage contract) by forging the witnesses' signatures. After the community discovered the forgery, Rebecca swore that she would not marry either of the two men.

The situation was further aggravated when one of the rivals went to the Muslim court, which imposed a fine on the other man. This letter, one of 800 fragments from the Cairo Geniza held at the National Library, was sent by the leaders of Jerusalem's Karaite community to the head of the Cairo Karaite community requesting advice on how to solve the predicament. We can only imagine what ultimately happened to Rebecca and her suitors.

Asalbay's Last Laugh

Mamluk Qur'an, 1508

OR AMIR

Throughout the fifteenth century, Egypt was ruled by a class of freed slaves known as the Mamluks. Mamluk Cairo was a thriving center for the slave trade, and scores of concubines, many from the Caucasus, were brought to the city to serve this military elite.

Yet the story of one slave named Asalbay is unique. She was purchased by Qaitbay (c. 1416–1496), one of the greatest rulers of the Mamluk Sultanate. She gave birth to his only son, Muhammad, who inherited the throne after his father's death. As the mother of the sultan, Asalbay enjoyed tremendous respect, influence, and wealth, retaining her status even after her son was ousted from power by remarrying his successor. Asalbay used her wealth to erect an impressive mausoleum complex outside Cairo, which also included a mosque and madrasa (religious college).

However, Asalbay came to a bitter end. After her second husband was murdered in 1501, she fell out of favor with the new sultan. Despite this, she remained wealthy, as evidenced by this impressive illuminated Qur'an, commissioned in 1508 for the students of the madrasa. Like other members of the Mamluk elite, who believed that the prayers of the living would help them accrue merit in the next world, the students' recitation of the Qur'an was meant to elevate the soul of their patron after her death.

That same year she made the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca; but, on her return, the sultan ordered her to retrace her steps and remain in exile. She died in Mecca in 1509 and was never buried in the mausoleum she had built. The funds she had designated for the maintenance of the mausoleum complex were lost, as was this copy of the Qur'an, only a few pages of which survive.

Close-up (left) and full page (right) of the illuminated title page of the fifth part (*juz'*), one of the thirty parts into which the Qur'an is divided. The margins include the details of the religious endowment established by Asalbay. Copied in Egypt, 1508. The Abraham Shalom Yahuda Collection. Ms. Yah. Ar. 1152.10.

A Pre-Modern Feminist Blessing

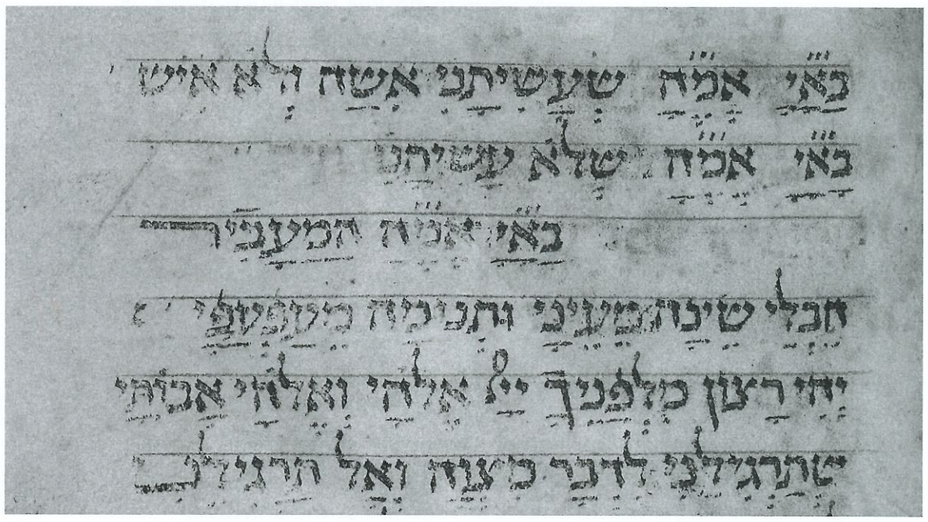
Siddur According to the Italian Rite, Copied by Abraham Farissol, 1480

DAFNA SIEGMAN

This fifteenth-century siddur offers a pre-modern feminist surprise. Traditionally, each morning, men thank God "who has not made me a woman." Between 1478 and 1485, Abraham ben Mordechai Farissol (c. 1451–1525) – a bold Italian scholar, scribe, polemicist, geographer, teacher, and communal leader – handwrote three prayer books for women from the wealthiest stratum of Italian Jewish society. In all three, he changed the traditional blessing to "for You have made me a woman and not a man."

The siddur held by the National Library was produced in Mantua, Italy, in 1480. It features gold filigree and intricate, colorful decorations surrounding the daily and holiday prayers, as well as a Passover Hagaddah, all according to the Italian traditions. The colophon notes that this siddur was commissioned by an anonymous man "in honor of a venerable woman." Scholars suspect that it was prepared as a gift for a woman from the banking family of Judah and Jacob Norsa, Farissol's patrons in Mantua.

In the dynamic cultural context of Renaissance Italy, it was hard to ignore the amplified role of Jewish women, a handful of whom were even certified as scribes and ritual slaughterers. The combination of the family's wealth and cultural capital and Farissol's own growing influence helped enable this small but culturally significant revision in the liturgy.



Italian-rite siddur written for a woman by Abraham Farissol, Mantua, 1480. Donated to the National Library by Felix Guggenheim in 1973.

Left: A rich illustration in green, red, and blue, along with a silver crescent, introduces the prayers for the new moon, folio 113a.

Right: Modifying the traditional text, the praying woman thanks God for creating her as a woman and not as a man, folio 7a. Ms. Heb. 8° 5492.

Secrets of Solomon

Liber de Arte Memorativa, 1600

STEFAN LITT

The dream of unlimited knowledge is as old as humanity. Countless generations of scholars and students have tried to find effective ways of gaining maximum knowledge, sometimes even turning to magic powers for this purpose. The *Ars Notoria* (*Notory Art*) was a medieval Christian text aimed at invoking protection from heaven and providing quick access to knowledge. It was believed to have its roots in King Solomon's wisdom but was, in fact, created in the thirteenth century by the occultist Michael Scot (c. 1180–1235), who linked it to Solomon's name for credibility.

One of the National Library's largest manuscripts, measuring 52 cm by 44 cm, is the *Liber de Arte Memorativa*, a richly illustrated text on parchment. Clearly related to the *Ars Notoria's* Solomonic tradition, this manuscript is more elaborate and offers a number of mnemonic principles whose impact is enhanced with figures and illustrations. It is thought to have been written by the English occultist and astrologer Simon Forman (1552–1611), known to have been close to Shakespeare's circle. Forman left his name in the manuscript's colophon, where he claims to have drawn and written the complete volume in his own hand in 1600. Entries in his diary suggest that he copied it from an older manuscript.

The composition of the *Liber de Arte Memorativa* follows the seven classic categories of knowledge: the Seven Liberal Arts. The unusual design of the manuscript indicates that it was intended for participation in semi-occult acts in which the reader's position in relation to the volume was of great importance. Its sheer size, different text orientations, predesigned but empty folios, numerous angelic figures, and rich use of gold and red in the illustrations and text frames offer us a window into the never-ending quest to unlock the secrets of the universe.

Simon Forman, *Book of the Art of Memory* (*Liber de arte memorativa*), London, 1550–1600. A page from the section dedicated to the study of dialectics. The use of different geometrical shapes likely enhanced the reading experience and facilitated memorization. Forman included distinctively Christian iconography, such as angels and crosses, throughout the treatise, probably to demonstrate his allegiance to Church doctrine despite its esoteric content. The Abraham Shalom Yahuda Collection, Ms. Yah. Var. 34, folio 10v.

The Scholar-Warrior of Dagestan

The Imam Shamil Manuscript Collection, 19th century

SAMUEL THROPE

The Muslim leader of the Caucasus, Imam Shamil (1797–1871), kept the Russian Empire at bay for twenty-five years. A gifted strategist and fearless warrior, Shamil led a guerilla resistance against the superior Russian forces. He united and inspired the people of the Chechnya and Dagestan regions and gained the admiration of kings and emperors around the world. In feats of daring that could have been scripted by Hollywood, Shamil escaped death more than once. When finally captured, he was granted clemency by the Czar and lived in elegance in St. Petersburg before dying in Medina in 1871.

In addition to his military leadership, Shamil was also a religious scholar and a preacher. His extensive knowledge was reflected in his manuscript library containing classic works and commentaries in the disciplines of Qur'an interpretation, the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, Islamic law, Sufi mysticism, as well as works written by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Caucasian Muslim scholars. Most interesting are the relatively large number of works on Arabic language, linguistics, and rhetoric. While the Caucasus is home to dozens of languages and was long ruled by Persian- and Turkish-speaking dynasties, Arabic has always served as a prestigious literary language.

Following his capture and exile in 1859, Shamil sought to reconstitute his library, which had been looted in his absence. His son Muhammad Ghazi continued his father's efforts, even after leaving Turkey to serve as an officer in the Ottoman Empire.

It may have been in Istanbul that the scholar and manuscript dealer Abraham Shalom Yahuda purchased around 130 volumes of Caucasian Muslim manuscripts, many of which bear Shamil's signature and seal. While the bulk of this collection was acquired by Princeton University, thirty of these manuscripts are in the National Library collection. These include an 1846 copy of sixteenth-century Egyptian scholar Ibn Hajar al-Haytami's work on the lawfulness of the first four caliphs, bearing Shamil's own stamp and endowment, and two manuscripts copied, in whole or in part, by Ghazi Muhammad, the first Imam of Dagestan.

Left: The opening folio of the tenth-century Arabic polemical work, *The Lightning Bolt (al-Sawa'iq al-muhriqa)*, by the Egyptian scholar Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, including the ownership note "from the library of Shamil" as well as Imam Shamil's stamp. Copied in Dagestan, 1846. Ms. Yah. Ar. 465, folio 2r.

Following pages: Dagestani copy of the important legal manual, *The Method for Students (Minhaj al-talibin)* by the thirteenth-century Damascene scholar Abu Zakariyya al-Nawawi, from 1756. This and other Dagestani manuscripts include extensive marginal notes and commentaries that spilled onto additional pages, which were later pasted into the existing manuscript. This copy was owned by Imam Shamil's son Kamil Effendi. The Abraham Shalom Yahuda Collection. Ms. Yah. Ar. 583, folios 129v–130r.

The Lending Library of the Ghetto

The Vilna Ghetto Archive, 1941–1943

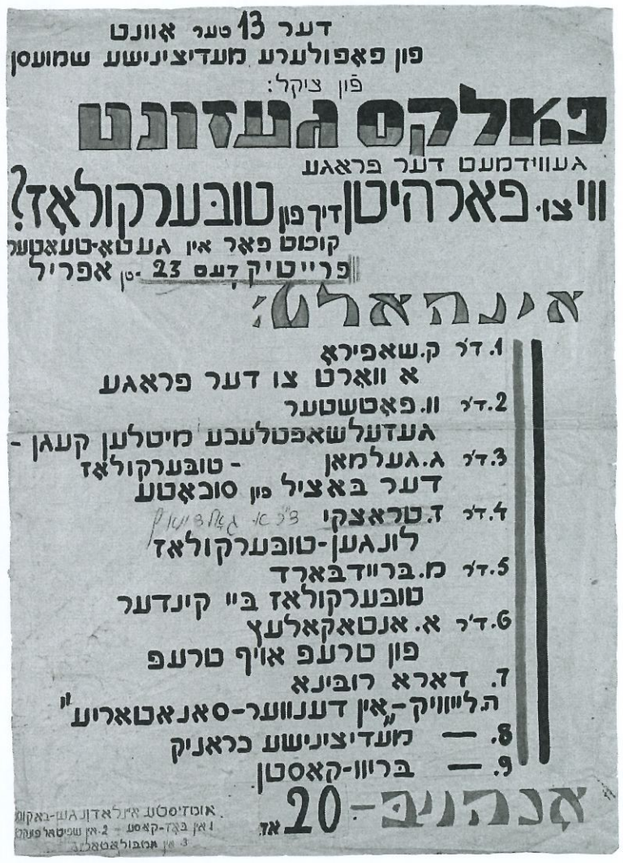
IDAN PEREZ

"A library in the ghetto where one is deprived of most elementary living conditions and where we are suspended between life and death every minute of our existence!... Who will come to read books there?" This pessimistic prediction, made by Dina Abramowicz (1909–2000) before the library opened in September of 1941, was proved wrong. The fact is that even after the Vilna Ghetto was established, the community maintained a rich cultural and spiritual life, with the Vilna Ghetto Library as its most important cultural institution. The Mefitse Haskalah Library, which had been founded in 1910, became the official library of the Vilna Ghetto, comprising nearly 45,000 volumes.

Dina Abramowicz, head of the library, later explained in her native Yiddish that the morning visitors had been "society ladies" who came to escape their frightening reality through sentimental Russian novels. In the afternoon, children would pour in, looking for classics such as *Around the World in Eighty Days* or *Tom Sawyer*. Later in the day, people who worked outside the ghetto, especially the "young idealists," would come in asking for Polish literature and non-fiction. Books were seen as a way of reaching out to the world from which the Jewish population of Vilna was now cut off.

The staff of the Vilna Ghetto Library prepared an annual 1941–1942 report that included full statistics of the library's activities and, in December 1942, even held a public celebration of their book loan. They also produced statistical reports about the library's collection, its various languages, loans, and readers, in which they wrote: "A book can take you over the ghetto walls to the world, to stolen freedom and life."

These reports can be found today in the National Library's archive of cultural life in the Vilna Ghetto.


דער 13 טער אוונט
פון פאפולערע מעדיצינישע שמועסן
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געווידמעט דער פראגע
ווי צו פארהיטן דירפון טובערקולאז?
קומט פאר אין אלטאג-טעאטער
פרייטיק דעם 23 טן אפריל
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1. ד"ר ק.שאפירא
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3. ד"ר א.גאלמאן - טובערקולאז
דער באציל פון סובאטע
4. ד"ר ז.טראצקי
לונגען-טובערקולאז
5. ד"ר מ.ברוידבארד
טובערקולאז ביי קינדער
6. ד"ר א. אנטאקאלעץ
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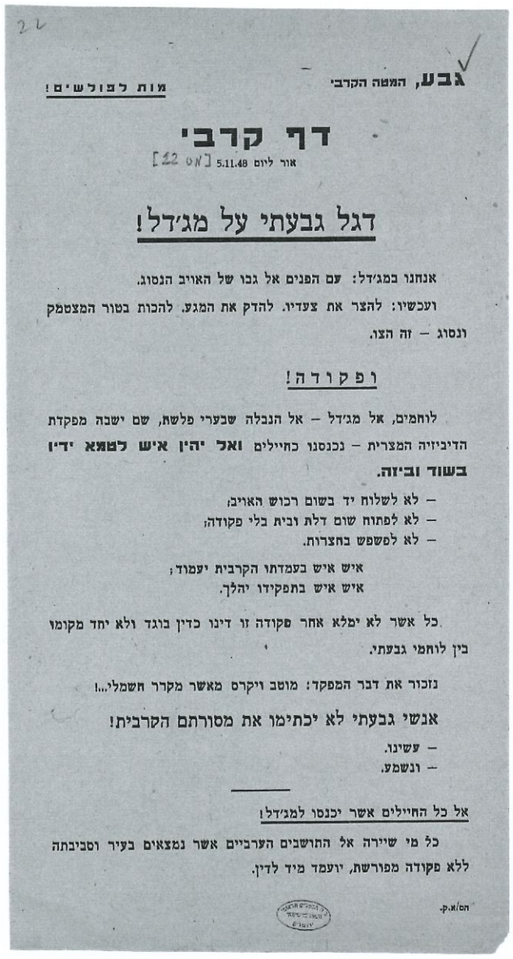
8. — מעדיצינישע כראניק
9. — ברוו-קאסטן
אנהויב - 20 אר

Documents from the archive of the Vilna Ghetto. Left: Colorful graphs break down the books borrowed from the lending library in the ghetto between 1941 and 1942 by languages and genres. ARC. 4° 1703. Right: A poster advertising a Yiddish-language lecture series in the ghetto on personal health and hygiene. ARC. 4° 1703/310.

The Vilna Ghetto in the Negev Sands

Abba Kovner, Givati Pamphlets, 1948

CHEN MALUL



גבע, המטה הקרבי מות לפולשים!

דף קרבי

אור ליום 5.11.48 [אס 22]

דגל גבעתי על מג'דל!

אנחנו במג'דל: עם הפנים אל גבו של האויב הנסוג.
ועכשיו: להצר את צעדיו. להדק את המגע. להכות בטור המצטמק ונסוג — זה הצו.

ופקודה!

לוחמים, אל מג'דל — אל הנבלה שבערי פלשת, שם ישבה מפקדת הדיביזיה המצרית — נכנסנו כחיילים **ואל יהין איש לפצא ידיו בשוד וביזה.**

— לא לשלוח יד בשום רכוש האויב;
— לא לפתוח שום דלת ובית בלי פקודה;
— לא לפשפש בחצרות.

איש איש בעמדתו הקרבית יעמוד;
איש איש בתפקידו יהלך.

כל אשר לא ימלא אחר פקודה זו דינו כדין בוגד ולא יחד מקומו בין לוחמי גבעתי.

נזכור את דבר המפקד: מוטב ויקרס מאשר מקרר חשמלי...!

אנשי גבעתי לא יכתימו את מסורתם הקרבית!

— עשינו.
— ונשמע.

אל כל החיילים אשר יכנסו למג'דל!

כל מי שיירה אל התושבים הערביים אשר נמצאים בעיר וסביבתה ללא פקודה מפורשת, יועמד מיד לדין.

הם/א.ק.

Abba Kovner, Combat bulletins printed for the Givati Brigade in the Negev during Israel's War of Independence, 1948. The Uri Avneri Archive. ARC. 4° 1994 04 18.

Above: "The Givati Flag on Majdal [Ashkelon]!"

Right: "Negevgrad."

On June 1, 1948, about 1000 soldiers in the Givati Brigade were mobilized to thwart the Egyptian Army's attack on Ashdod. Uri Avneri, then a Givati soldier, described receiving the battle orders:

> Suddenly we were all hushed. Someone began to address us... a thin little man wearing a steel helmet that was a few sizes too big — he looked like a rather strange bird. But we didn't laugh. He captivated us at first sight. That was how I came to know Abba Kovner, the division's cultural officer.

Abba Kovner (1918–1987) was no stranger to battles of the few against the many. During World War II, he was one of the founders of the underground resistance in the Vilna Ghetto and is famous for inspiring the rebels to fight to their death under the axiom: "Do not go like sheep to the slaughter." Now, in 1948, brigade commander Shimon Avidan drew on Kovner's rhetorical abilities and charisma and selected him to compose the combat bulletins distributed to the Givati soldiers every few days.

The combat bulletins served several purposes. They provided soldiers with updates on the progress of the fighting, reported on casualties, and conveyed orders. However, alongside these practical purposes, the bulletins also included rousing words of encouragement, urging the soldiers to continue the struggle against the Egyptians. Kovner's language echoes his earlier rhetoric as a partisan fighting the Germans: there is no choice but to fight to the end.

As in the Vilna Ghetto, Kovner continued to exert tremendous influence in 1948, now through the combat bulletins he composed. Avneri, who kept the bulletins in his archives, recounted: "When we brought ammunition and provisions to the soldiers, they fell upon the combat bulletins with equal fervor."

Voice of the People

Al-Ittihad Newspaper, 1944

SAMUEL THROPE

We will never know if the publishers of the inaugural May 1944 issue of the Arabic newspaper *Al-Ittihad* were aware of the historical and political earthquake that would soon engulf them. Imbued with a proletarian spirit and enchanted by the 1917 October Revolution, the editors sought to give voice to "Arab workers in Palestine," as the newspaper's masthead proclaimed. The newspaper was established not just to represent but also to build the working class of Mandatory Palestine: factory workers, employees of the British Army, and stevedores at the Haifa port.

Following the United Nations partition of Palestine in November 1947, which the newspaper supported, and especially after the establishment of the State of Israel, *Al-Ittihad* became one of the primary forums to support the Arabs who had remained in their homeland and to advocate for their rights. Under the military government that ruled Israel's Arab citizens until 1966, reporters and other newspaper employees were persecuted and even imprisoned, despite the fact that the newspaper was the official publication of the Communist Party, which was represented in the Knesset.

Al-Ittihad's most important function was to foster a Palestinian identity among Arabs in Israel and to serve as a forum for Arab writers, artists, and intellectuals. In fact, the newspaper's longest-serving editor, the writer and politician Emile Habibi (1922–1996), was known as "the teacher" precisely for his role in educating the first two post-1948 generations. Habibi was also responsible for turning *Al-Ittihad* into a daily newspaper in 1983, which led to its heightened influence in the late 1980s.

Front page of the first edition of *Al-Ittihad* Newspaper. On the right, an opening editorial entitled "Our Newspaper," May 14, 1944. R X2° PB 1855.

Prayer and Persecution

Siddur in Cyrillic Characters, 1986

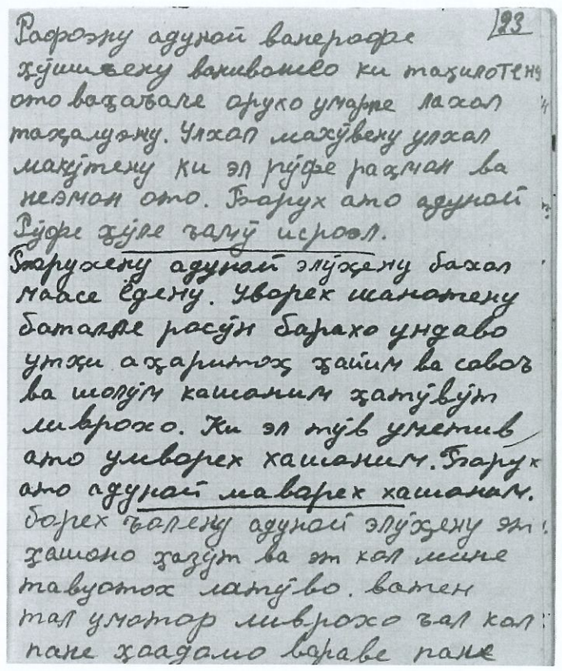
OLGA LEMPERT

The deeply traditional Bukharan Jewish community, steeped in Jewish practice and the local dialect of Judeo-Persian, faced a deep crisis with the rise of Communism in the region in 1920. While these Jews held a profound commitment to tradition, observance, and Scripture, the Soviet regime persecuted religion in general and Judaism in particular. Bukharan Jews could no longer freely teach their children tradition and Hebrew. It was primarily the older members of the community, who had grown up without Soviet oversight, who held on to the tradition.

In the 1980s, activists began to conduct underground Hebrew classes and even acquired a limited quantity of prayer books. But several generations had never been taught the Hebrew language or many aspects of the religion. When younger people felt a need to pray – perhaps upon the death of a religious parent or spurred by a renewed Jewish sentiment – they could not read the traditional liturgy in its original languages.

One solution was to transliterate the original prayers into the Cyrillic alphabet, which had been imposed by Soviet authorities, and to translate them into the Bukharan vernacular. A more knowledgeable community member could borrow one of the few prayer books and copy it by hand while adding translation and transliteration. Under these circumstances, the ancient and medieval tradition of the Jewish manuscript continued late into the modern period.

Such is the background of this manuscript prayer book with a Cyrillic transliteration and Bukharan translation from Tashkent, 1986 – just a few years before the Soviet Union was dissolved and Jewish communal organizations were allowed to reopen.



Manuscript siddur for weekdays, Sabbath, and Passover. Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 1986.

Opposite: ~~Left~~: A decorated title page introduces the prayers for Passover, including the dates on which the holiday occurs that year. Volume 2, non-numbered title page.

Above: ~~Right~~: A transliteration of part of the daily 'Amidah prayer into Cyrillic characters, Volume 1, folio 23a. Ms. Heb. 28° 7357.