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FOREWORD

The Nuremberg Mahzor

Ever since my early childhood I have been an avid reader of books. I spent every free minute reading, be it as a pastime, be it as a source of knowledge. I read not only all children books that were available to me, but also complete volumes of youth encyclopedias. This reading material included world literature and general subjects as well as Hebrew literature and Jewish topics. It is therefore no wonder that the name "Nuremberg Mahzor" was not unknown to me. The more so as the town of Nuremberg, in the municipal library of which the Mahzor was held for about 400 years at least, is in the same area from which my family hails. Both my maternal ancestors and the maternal ancestors of my father came from Franconia, a region in the state of Bavaria of which Nuremberg is the largest economic and cultural center. The prayers and rituals embedded in the Nuremberg Mahzor were those used by my ancestors for generations, ancestors who were deeply rooted in this Jewish tradition of worship and prayers.

So when I heard in 2002 that the grandchildren of Salman Schocken, who has succeeded in buying the Mahzor from the Municipal Library of Nuremberg and in bringing it to Israel, are planning to sell it through Sotheby's, Jemima and I immediately went to view it at the Sotheby's Tel Aviv offices. I was thrilled to inspect and to touch this famous codex. But the asking price was so high that we had regretfully to decline. We were apparently not the only ones to decline, because the Mahzor remained unsold.

Five years later, in 2007, when the curator of our Books and Manuscripts Collection, Angelo Piattelli, told me that Schocken's grandchildren were ready to sell the Mahzor at a reduced price, I immediately agreed to the purchase. The transaction was completed within days.

Now that the Mahzor belonged to me, the question was what to do with it. One thing was clear for me from the beginning: After hundreds of years during which the Mahzor was "imprisoned" in Nuremberg and after another 56 years in which it was held in the Schocken Library in Jerusalem but, as Prof. Jonah Fraenkel told me, not really accessible, neither for the public nor for scholars, it was high time to make this treasure available to all.

As a first step, the Mahzor was digitized at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem (today: National Library of Israel) and put on its website. On June 7th, 2007, the JNUL held a special event to celebrate this digitization. During the evening, Prof. Jonah Fraenkel, Prof. Bezalel Narkiss and Prof. Elhanan Adler lectured about the liturgy, the illumination and the digitization of the Mahzor.

The Mahzor was then transferred to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, where it was to stay for many years. It was exhibited on a long-term loan in the museum's permanent manuscript exhibition in the Jewish Art and Life wing till 2023. At present it is planned to show the Mahzor in dedicated exhibitions in libraries and museums around the world.

This is the story of how this unique item became a highlight in our rather extensive Books and Manuscripts Collection, comprising, inter alia, about one hundred mainly but not only Hebrew and Jewish manuscripts, about eighty Hebrew incunables and about forty incunables in various other languages. The Collection, in turn, is a subcollection of the David and Jemima Jeselsohn Collection. The two other subcollections are: Archaeology – Writings, Lamps and Numismatics and Weights – and Judaica – ritual objects used in the practice of the Jewish religion.

Ever since it became part of our collection, it was my intention to publish a volume of studies on the Nuremberg Mahzor. Now, almost a generation later, this has been achieved and the present volume is joining two earlier publications from the Books and Manuscripts Collection:

1. *Masorah and Text Criticism in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, by Jordan S. Penkower (2014), on a manuscript of an illuminated Sephardic Bible, copied on vellum by Moses Ibn Zabara in Spain at the end of the fifteenth century (JM 5).
2. *Armenian Manuscripts of the David and Jemima Jeselsohn Collection*, by Christina Maranci and Michael E. Stone (2023), on biblical, hagiographic, homiletic and liturgical texts from Cilicia, Constantinople and New Julfa, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries (JMS 4, 21, 22, 24, 34).

It is my pleasure to thank all those involved in the realization of this dream, first and foremost to Angelo Piattelli, the curator of our Books and Manuscripts Collection and the coordinator of this publication. Without his devotion and engagement this project would not have been realized.

Then my sincere thanks to Prof. Elisabeth Hollender for her extraordinary endeavors based on her vast knowledge, both in her contribution to this anthology and her work as editor of this volume. Not to be forgotten is Dr. Evelyn M. Cohen for her ever-present help in the editing of the contributions.

Thanks are also due to the various contributors, some of them not alive any more: Rahel Blum, Prof. Malachi Beit-Arié obm, Prof. Jonah Fraenkel obm. and Avraham Fraenkel, Anna Nizza-Caplan, Prof. Sara Offenberg and Michael Maggen. Thanks also to Fray Hochstein, the language editor, to Miriam Kornfeld, the copy editor, to Nomi Morag and Tal Bar-On, the graphic designers, to Silvia Rossi, the photographer and to Jonathan Nadav and his colleagues at the Magnes Press.

I do hope that the readers and users of this volume will appreciate and enjoy this publication on the Nuremberg Mahzor, being only the second publication dedicated to this unparalleled codex, following Bernhard Ziemlich's monograph, *Das Machsor Nürnberg*, published in Berlin back in 1886.

David Jeselsohn

INTRODUCTION

Among the medieval liturgical manuscripts from Ashkenaz, the Nuremberg Mahzor[1] takes a special place. Its size, its extraordinary selection of piyyutim and piyyut commentaries, and its lavish decoration that differs from the model used for many mahzorim in southern Germany make it a spectacular object. This aroused curiosity and interest, as reflected by those who are known to have viewed the manuscript, including Emperor Leopold I (1658–1705), who visited the Nuremberg Municipal Library in 1658, and several 17th and 18th century Christian scholars who wrote about the treasures of Nuremberg.

In the 19th century, several Jewish scholars studied the manuscript in Nuremberg, among them Leopold Zunz from Berlin and Rabbi Isaak Meier Eppstein from Jerusalem, culminating in the detailed study and description by Nuremberg rabbi Bernhard Ziemlich (1884–1886). Salman Schocken had hoped to acquire the manuscript already in 1934 and succeeded in adding it to his collection in 1951. The fact that during its 56-year stay at the Schocken Library in Jerusalem the Mahzor was rarely exhibited and not easily accessible to scholars and the wider audience shrouded the manuscript in mystery.

After the renowned collector Dr. David Jeselsohn bought the Nuremberg Mahzor in 2007, he had it restored by specialists, arranged for digital images to be published via the National Library of Israel, and generously agreed to a long-term loan

1 Belonging to the collection of Dr. David and Jemima Jeselsohn, Ms. 9. Like many famous manuscripts, the Nuremberg Mahzor is named after its previous place of residence, the Municipal Library of Nuremberg. Other manuscripts, such as the Amsterdam Mahzor, are named after the communities that owned them. These names do not imply the manuscript's place of production.

of the manuscript to the Israel Museum, where it was exhibited as part of the display "Illuminating the Script: Hebrew Manuscripts" until 2023. He also initiated the present volume, inviting scholars of different fields to research various aspects of the manuscript and to place the Nuremberg Mahzor, its history, physical condition, and contents into the context of contemporary scholarship.

The present volume contains chapters on the history of the Mahzor (Blum/Hollender), its codicology and paleography (Beit-Arié), liturgy and piyyut (Fraenkel/Fraenkel), piyyut commentary (Hollender), and artwork (Nizza and Offenberg), concluding with a description of the conservation process and insights into the history of the manuscript gained through it (Maggen). Together, these insightful investigations permit interesting conclusions as to the date and the likely origin of the Nuremberg Mahzor. An index of all piyyutim and piyyut-commentaries transmitted in the manuscript serves both future study of the Nuremberg Mahzor and study of Hebrew liturgical poetry in general.

The word mahzor literally means "cycle." Since medieval times it also refers to liturgical manuscripts and books that contain special prayers and liturgical poetry (piyyutim)[2] for holidays, special Sabbaths, fast days, and sometimes also life-cycle events. While a modern printed mahzor usually comprises multiple volumes, each containing all prayers for one holiday, medieval manuscript mahzorim contained the piyyutim for the whole year in one or two volumes. They were intended for the use of the prayer leader (hazan), who might have also used a second manuscript that contained the prayers.[3] In the case of the many larger two-volume Ashkenazic mahzorim, usually, one volume of the pair comprises the piyyutim from Hanukkah through Shavuot or — less often — the Ninth of Av, and the other includes those from Rosh ha-Shanah through Simhat Torah, sometimes with an appendix that

2 For a detailed introduction into liturgical poetry and its historical development, see Ezra Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975).

3 The word siddur (from *seder*: "order") is used for manuscripts and books that contain the prayers for weekdays and the Sabbath. The earliest known examples come from eastern communities and were transmitted in the Cairo Genizah. In medieval Ashkenaz, so called siddurim often included a selection of piyyutim for special Sabbaths in addition to the prayers for weekdays, Sabbaths and some holidays. The comparatively clear division between the two terms mahzor and siddur is modern.

contains piyyutim for *Shabbat Ḥatan* and *Shabbat Brit Milah*.[4] The Nuremberg Mahzor belongs to the smaller group of mahzorim that cover the whole year in one volume.

The oldest known Ashkenazic Mahzor manuscripts date to the 12th century. From the second half of the 13th century onwards, monumental, partly illuminated mahzorim were copied that visually embellished the synagogue service when displayed on a lectern for use by the hazan. Like all other liturgical manuscripts, they were commissioned by individuals who kept them at their home and had them carried to the synagogue.[5] They were thus both private and public, studied by individuals but seen, admired, and used in a communal environment. Most early mahzor manuscripts from Ashkenaz did not contain the full text of the standard prayers, referring to them by incipits only. In the 14th century prayer texts were included in some mahzorim, enabling the hazan to lead the service using one manuscript only, instead of having to use a second written source for the prayers. Although the Nuremberg Mahzor does not include all compulsory prayers, in certain sections it contains prayers in addition to a wealth of piyyutim.

We do not know much about the beginning of Jewish prayer and how it was first transmitted. The first known collection of compulsory prayers is *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (856 CE), written to answer a request from a diaspora community. Piyyutim, which possibly originated in the Land of Israel in the fifth century, were originally

4 While many variants to this model exist, all spring volumes contain at least the liturgies for the four special Sabbaths, Purim, Passover, and Shavuot, while the autumn volumes contain at least the liturgies for Rosh ha-Shanah, Yom Kippur, and Simhat Torah. Liturgies for life-cycle events can be contained in either volume or collected into a third codex together with minor festivals and piyyutim that have no fixed place in the yearly cycle.

5 A Yiddish inscription in the Worms Mahzor, dated 1272, blesses the person who carries the heavy book to the synagogue; see Chone Shmeruk, "The Versified Old Yiddish Blessing in the Worms Maḥzor," in *Worms Maḥzor. Ms Jewish National and University Library Heb 4°781/1. Introductory volume,* ed. Malachi Beit-Arié (Vaduz: Cyelar Establishment, 1985), 100–103. An etching by Albrecht Altdorfer, showing the entryway of the Regensburg synagogue, portrays a man carrying a large volume, most likely a mahzor for use by the hazan; see Suzanne Boorsch and Nadine M. Orenstein, "The Print in the North: The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 54, no. 4 (1997): 38.

transmitted separately from the prayers.[6] Mahzor manuscripts that combine prayers with piyyutim only came into existence when the selection of piyyutim was fixed in rites (minhagim), probably in Europe since the 9th or 10th century.[7] Unfortunately, we have no manuscripts that document how the collections of texts needed for prayer services were turned into the lavish objects produced in medieval Ashkenaz. While most of the research into Jewish liturgy focuses on its history and development, several studies have examined individual mahzorim or groups of manuscripts, contributing greatly to our understanding of texts and art present in liturgical contexts in medieval Ashkenaz.[8]

No two medieval mahzorim are identical, differing not only in their decoration and illumination, but also with regard to the texts contained. Scribes and their

6 See e.g. the collection known as "Mahzor Erez Israel," published by Joseph Yahalom from single folios that are today kept in various libraries (Josef Yahalom, *Mahzor Eretz Yisrael: A Geniza Codex* [Hebrew], Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1987). See also Michael Rand, "Was Mahzor Eretz Israel — A Geniza Codex Indeed Used in Eretz Israel? New Fragments of the Codex and Their Contribution to an Understanding of the Nature of Its Liturgical Rite" (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 82 (2014): 529–48.

7 Even within rites we can see development and the addition of piyyutim long after the rites were established and liturgical manuscripts produced. An example for a late change can be seen in MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 37 (Steinschneider 86), f. 72v, which transmits in the margins of the piyyuṭ אלהיכם יזריח שמשו (signed Judah) the following explanation: מנהג מגנצא שאין אומרי' שום אלהיכם בלבד לשבת וראש חדש ולנישואין ולשבת ברית מילה שיסדה רב' יקר מקולוניא ובנו הרבר' בונפנט הלוי החזן ז"ל הנהיג לומר במגנצא ("According to the rite of Mainz, one does not say any *Elohekhem*, except on a Sabbath that is Rosh Hodesh and on the Sabbath of the wedding week, and for *Shabbat Brit Milah* one uses the *Elohekhem* that R. Yaqar of Cologne composed, and his son, R. Bonfanṭ ha-Levi the hazan introduced the custom to say it in Mainz"). Yaqar ha-Levi lived in the second half of the 13th century, long after the original rite of Mainz had been established.

8 Important publications on Ashkenazic mahzorim include Gabrielle Sed-Rajna, *Le maḥzor enluminé: Les voies de formation d'un programme iconographique* (Leiden: Brill, 1983); Sarit Shalev-Eyni, *Jews among Christians: Hebrew Book Illumination from Lake Constance* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2010); Katrin Kogman-Appel, *A Mahzor from Worms: Art and Religion in a Medieval Jewish Community* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012). Full studies of individual manuscripts that discuss codicology, text, and images exist for the Amsterdam Mahzor (Albert van der Heide and Edward van Voolen, eds., *The Amsterdam Mahzor: History, Liturgy, Illumination.* Leiden: Brill, 1989) and the Worms Mahzor (Malachi Beit-Arié, ed., *Worms Maḥzor. Ms Jewish National and University Library Heb 4°781/1. Introductory volume.* Vaduz: Cyelar Establishment, 1985).

clients could decide to include more or less prayers, but the main cause of differences are the regional and local prayer rites that determined the selection of piyyutim and a limited number of variants in the prayer texts. The scholarly division of the main rites in two groups (Palestinian rites, Babylonian rites) is based on the two main ways of transmission from the Jewish centers of the geonic period into the Jewish diaspora. While the Sephardic rites are derived from the Babylonian tradition, the Italian and Ashkenazic rites were influenced from the Land of Israel, at least in their choice of piyyutim.[9] The Ashkenazic rite likely developed from the tradition of the Kalonymide family who immigrated from Northern Italy to Mainz in the early tenth century.[10] It split into different branches and — at the same time — grew to incorporate more and more piyyutim, so that different historical layers can be discerned.[11] Not all piyyutim were composed by local poets, many were transmitted from far away communities. Ashkenazic liturgy thus transmits texts from Byzantine Land of Israel, Italy, Ashkenaz, and even Sepharad. The main branches of the Ashkenazic rite are a Western branch used in the Rhine valley and an Eastern branch, to which the Nuremberg Mahzor belongs.[12] The detailed study of the texts transmitted in various manuscripts permits a description of different rites, their development and their relation to each other.[13]

9 For a more detailed list of rites and their relation to each other, see the diagram in David Stern, *Jewish Literary Cultures, vol. 2: The Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019), 189.

10 According to the prayer commentary of Elazar b. Judah of Worms, transmitted in MS Paris BN 772, f. 60. For the dating of the migration of the Kalonymide family to Mainz, see Avraham Grossman, *The Early Sages of Ashkenaz: Their Lives, Leadership and Works (900–1096)* (Hebrew), 2nd edition (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988), 29–44.

11 See Ezra Fleischer, "Prayer and Piyyuṭ in the Worms Maḥzor," in *Worms Maḥzor. Ms Jewish National and University Library Heb 4°781/1. Introductory volume*, ed. Malachi Beit-Arié (Vaduz: Cyelar Establishment, 1985), 49–53.

12 In addition to these two branches, a French rite and an Austrian rite are known. For a first discussion of the Ashkenazic rites, see Leopold Zunz, *Die Ritus des synagogalen Gottesdienstes, geschichtlich entwickelt* (Berlin: J. Springer, 1859), 59–75.

13 Numerous local rites existed, but few of them have been studied in detail. For detailed descriptions based on manuscripts, see Ezra Fleischer, "Prayer and Piyyuṭ in the Worms Maḥzor;" Ezra Fleischer, "Prayer and Liturgical Poetry in the Great Amsterdam Mahzor," in *The Amsterdam Mahzor: History, Liturgy, Illumination*, eds. Albert van der Heide and Edward van Voolen (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 26–43; Wouter Jacques van Bekkum, "List of Piyyutim Occurring in the Amsterdam Mahzor," ibid., 44–55.

Scholarly interest in Hebrew liturgical manuscripts as objects began with the early collectors of Hebrew manuscripts, including both Jews and Christians. In the 19th century, the study of liturgy and piyyut based on manuscript evidence began in the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the best-known scholars in the field being Leopold Zunz in Germany and Samuel David Luzzatto in Italy.[14] With the discovery of the Cairo Genizah at the end of the 19th century, interest shifted to earlier texts transmitted there, although editions of Ashkenazic piyyutim were published at the Schocken Research Institute for Hebrew Poetry in Jerusalem, mainly by Abraham M. Habermann. These focused on individual payyetanim, collecting evidence from various manuscripts. Renewed interest in Ashkenazic liturgy led to the publication of a critical edition of Mahzor Ashkenaz (Goldschmidt/Fraenkel) beginning in 1970.[15] While some piyyutim that are not included in the critical edition of Mahzor Ashkenaz are still hard to find, the general availability of the texts makes it possible to now study liturgical manuscripts as documentation of a specific rite and as objects, without detailed analysis of the texts and the possible variants transmitted in the individual manuscript. Thus, interest in the different rites was revived in recent years.[16]

14 See e.g. Samuel D. Luzzatto, "Mavo le-Maḥzor bne Roma," in *Maḥzor khol ha-Shanah* (Livorno: Belforte, 1856), vol. 1, 5–27; Leopold Zunz, *Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters* (Berlin: J. Springer, 1855); Leopold Zunz, *Die Ritus des synagogalen Gottesdienstes, geschichtlich entwickelt*; Leopold Zunz, *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* (Berlin: Louis Gerschel, 1865). A number of other scholars, mainly in Germany, published articles that discussed topics of liturgy in many of the journals affiliated with the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the latter half of the 19th century.

15 Given the enormous task, it is no surprise that the last of five volumes (Rosh ha-Shanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Passover, Shavuot) was published only in 2000. Avraham Fraenkel is currently working on a critical edition of Siddur Ashkenaz. At the same time, a few more editions of piyyutim by Ashkenazic poets were published. The different publication forms, mahzor vs. collected piyyutim by a single author, have different merits: the mahzor places each piyyut into its liturgical context, reminding the reader that payyetanim needed to follow patterns of connection between piyyut and prayer, while collected works allow for the study of texts that were composed at roughly the same time and place by an individual that can be identified.

16 This has sparked renewed interest in older publications, leading to the publication of a Hebrew and an English translation of Leopold Zunz's *Die Ritus des synagogalen Gottesdienstes*, under the titles *Minhage Tefila u-Fiyyut bi-Qehilot Israel*, translated by Ze'ev Breuer, edited by Avraham Fraenkel (Jerusalem: WUJS, 2022); *Prayer Rites of Synagogal Worship and their Historical Development*, edited and translated by Stefan Reif (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023).

New approaches to liturgical manuscripts combine knowledge gained from various methods of research in order to answer complex questions: Katrin Kogman-Appel interpreted the illustrations of the Mahzor Lipsiae based on its use in Worms and what is known about the Jewish community and the development of certain religious ideas there.[17] David Stern reads illustrations as commentary to the piyyutim they accompany and concludes that — independent of who produced the images — their function makes them "Jewish."[18] The more is known about a manuscript, the better it can serve as evidence in a quest to understand medieval Jewish communities, their life, and their interactions with their environment. This volume contains detailed analyses of different elements of the Nuremberg Mahzor that will permit it to be included in future discussions relating to medieval Ashkenaz and its cultural production.

The earliest mentions of the Nuremberg Mahzor do not consider the history of the manuscript to be a question of interest: since the authors in the 17th and 18th centuries knew the Mahzor to belong to the Nuremberg Municipal Library, they assumed that it had belonged to the Jewish community of Nuremberg which was expelled in 1499. They also transmitted a story of Viennese Jews allegedly wishing to buy the Mahzor, offering a staggering price of one gold coin per leaf, which the senate of the city is said to have refused.[19] In 1884–1886, Bernhard Ziemlich convincingly argued that the Nuremberg Mahzor was not produced in Nuremberg, since the detailed documents from the 14th century do not name the patron mentioned in the colophon as resident there. He suggested that the patron could have been a resident of Regensburg, where a Jewish community had been established in the 11th century and sufficient wealth for the production of the large manuscript

17 Katrin Kogman-Appel, *A Mahzor from Worms*.

18 David Stern, *Jewish Literary Cultures*, vol. 2, 179–204. This may explain the lack of scholarly interest in the artwork of manuscripts like the Nuremberg Mahzor that have much more subtle ties between text and image. As Anna Nizza and Sara Offenberg show in this volume, there are enough details in the artwork of the Nuremberg Mahzor to discuss its Jewish meaning. The question remains how to treat manuscripts that largely refrain from "narrative" illustrations and focus on architectural and geometric designs as embellishments of the texts. These, too, employ techniques and motifs known from their Christian environment, but is their use of their models less "Jewish"?

19 The story is most likely not based on facts, even though the Jewish community of Vienna was strong and wealthy in the middle of the 17th century, i.e. at the time that the presence of the Nuremberg Mahzor in the Municipal Library can be safely assumed.

was more easily available in the early 14th century. One of his arguments was, that the expulsion of the Jews from Nuremberg had been announced long in advance, so they would have had sufficient time to take their possessions with them, including this valuable manuscript.[20] The expulsion from Regensburg in 1519, on the other hand, took place rather suddenly, forcing the Jews to leave valuables behind. It is possible that it was at this time that the Nuremberg Mahzor fell into Christian hands.

In her study of the history of the Mahzor, Rahel Blum is able to show that the manuscript was owned by the Municipal Library of Nuremberg in 1646 and possibly even earlier, reflecting an early 17th century interest in "oriental" and unusual books and manuscripts. She does not find evidence as to where it was located before that time or when and from whom it was acquired. Her contribution recounts the often antisemitic descriptions and discussions of the Mahzor in the 17th and 18th centuries, showing how early assumptions and derogatory remarks were repeated by later authors. She also reconstructs from the municipal archives the surprisingly extensive but ultimately unsuccessful inquiries into the loss of eleven folios, reported by Bernhard Ziemlich in 1882, and is able to shed light on the negotiations that led to the sale of the manuscript to Salman Schocken in 1951.

The Nuremberg Mahzor is one of the largest known Ashkenazic liturgical manuscripts: its parchment leaves — originally 528 folios, of which 521 are bound in the current codex, one is kept separately and six are still missing — measure 50 x 37 cm each. While the colophon on f. 517v indicates the name of the patron, Joshua ben Isaac, and the year of the manuscript's completion, 1331, it does not name the place where the patron lived or the place where the manuscript was produced, nor does it name the scribes. Ignorant of the common practice of scribes to mark their names in the text, the first description of the manuscript by Johann Wülfer deducted from this that the scribe was afraid to mention his name, due to the assumed blasphemies found in the manuscript.[21] This has long been disproven, identifying the scribes by

20 Bernhard Ziemlich, *Das Machsor Nürnberg. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung des Ritus und der Commentarliteratur des Deutschen Machsor* (Berlin: Ad. Mampe, 1886), 11. His study was previously published in three installments in *Magazin für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, 1884–1886.

21 Johann Wülfer, *Theriaca judaica, ad examen revocata, sive scripta amoibaea [...] nunc primum Versione Latinâ, Justisque Animadversionibus aucta, & in publicum missa studiô Johannis Wülferi* (Nuremberg: Andreas Knorzius, 1681), 42. This was quoted widely by later Christian authors.

their marks. Malachi Beit-Arié shows in his analysis that the main text of the Mahzor was copied by a single scribe by the name of Mattaniah, while the commentary was copied by a second scribe, Jacob. Both added their own aesthetic element to the layout of the page, as Anna Nizza shows in her contribution. The third person involved in the production of the text was an anonymous vocalizer, who followed the system known as pre-Ashkenazic vocalization, based on the pronunciation of Hebrew in the Ashkenazic lands until at least up to the mid-fourteenth century.

Neither the patron nor the scribes are known from other sources, thus it is impossible to conclude from the colophon where the manuscript was produced. Codicology and paleography follow Ashkenazic customs, including the preparation of the unusually large parchment sheets, pricking, ruling, the size of quires, and scribal techniques such as line management, visualization of structural elements in the piyyutim, the use of apotropaic wishes at the bottom of pages or that of catchwords at the end of quires. Detailed discussions by Malachi Beit-Arié provide the framework in which the high scribal quality of the Nuremberg Mahzor compared to regular Ashkenazic manuscripts can be assessed.

The Nuremberg Mahzor was created to record and transmit the piyyutim (including selihot) that were recited on special Sabbaths, festivals, and public fast days, but includes also sections of the standard prayer service, so that a prayer leader using the manuscript would not have to repeatedly switch back and forth between a siddur and the large Mahzor during prayers. The editor of the Nuremberg Mahzor followed the Eastern Ashkenazic Rite, used in Jewish communities in the eastern part of Germany, Austria, or Bohemia. In their description and analysis of the liturgy and piyyutim in the Nuremberg Mahzor, Jonah Fraenkel and Avraham Fraenkel list all notable textual phenomena found in the standard prayers and discuss the selection of over 700 piyyutim contained in the manuscript. Unlike Ziemlich, who followed the yearly cycle in his description of the Nuremberg Mahzor, they follow the historical strata of the Mahzor, with detailed subdivisions of the European period. In addition to a few pre-classical piyyutim and the wealth of piyyutim by Elazar birabbi Qallir that can be expected in any Ashkenazic liturgical manuscript, they find two periods of Italian piyyut, and four periods of Ashkenazic piyyut, including a separate treatment of the poetic memory of the 1096 persecutions.

Selihot are treated separately. Here again we find texts composed by Qallir and his contemporaries, Italian selihot, three different periods of Ashkenazic selihot, in

addition to selihot imported from Spain and from the Byzantine cultural sphere. The Nuremberg Mahzor contains many piyyutim by Eastern Ashkenazic authors, among them Ḥayyim Palti'el, an excellent representative of the final period of Ashkenazic piyyut in the Nuremberg Mahzor, who was held in special reverence by the scribe of the manuscript, Mattaniah. Both of Palti'el's *yoẓer* sequences are included in the Mahzor, although the one for *Shabbat Yitro* is not complete. The fact that piyyutim are transmitted not only for the holidays, fasts, special Sabbaths, and Sabbaths of circumcision and the wedding week, but also for eight other weekly Torah portions, reflects an Eastern Ashkenazic tendency to adorn more services with piyyutim, of which the Nuremberg Mahzor is an outstanding example.

In addition to prayers and piyyutim, the Nuremberg Mahzor also contains many piyyut commentaries, copied into the margins by the second scribe, Jacob. He also included commentaries on the Five Megillot into the manuscript, namely Rashi's commentaries on Esther, Song of Songs, Ruth, and Ecclesiastes, and Joseph Kara's commentary on Lamentations. Piyyut commentary was a very popular genre in medieval Ashkenaz, it originated in the French rabbinic academies in the 11th century and developed further with each generation of scholars.[22] The editor of the commentaries in the Nuremberg Mahzor created the largest collection of piyyut commentaries (more than 400) in a single manuscript. Ziemlich had already shown that he drew from different sources, apparently without editing the individual commentaries.[23] Although the Nuremberg Mahzor does not transmit the only known commentary for any given piyyut, it does contain commentaries on several piyyutim that are given explanations in few extant manuscripts. Several of the commentaries in the Nuremberg Mahzor are unique insofar as they do not correspond to the other commentaries transmitted for these same piyyutim. While over half of the piyyutim in the Nuremberg Mahzor are accompanied by a commentary, this leaves a substantial number of piyyutim without commentary.

With some notable exceptions, the general rule for the presence of a commentary seems to be early inclusion into the Ashkenazic rites, probably because more commentaries were available for those piyyutim. In other cases, questions of poetic genres and the status of the payyetan as scholar and poet were important.

22 See Elisabeth Hollender, *Piyyut Commentary in Medieval Ashkenaz* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008).

23 Bernhard Ziemlich, *Das Machsor Nürnberg*, 1886, 47–76.

Commentaries from the tradition of *Ḥaside Ashkenaz*, who commented on piyyutim that had been incorporated into the Eastern Ashkenazic rite only, are also well represented. The distribution of piyyut commentaries in the Nuremberg Mahzor thus reflects the tendencies expressed in the history of Minhag Ashkenaz, its piyyutim and piyyut commentary as a genre.

While the texts contained in the Nuremberg Mahzor did receive scholarly attention, it is the artwork that probably attracted most interest from visitors who saw the manuscript, although it was not studied as much as admired. In addition to a full-page gateway framing the text on the first page of the Mahzor, 21 rectangular panels of different sizes adorn the initial words of eighteen piyyutim recited in the morning services, and three of the Five Megillot. Unlike many of the previously studied Ashkenazic codices, the Nuremberg Mahzor has no illustrative apparatus that accompanies the texts with scenes from rabbinic and medieval narrative tradition. In fact, it does not contain images of human beings.[24] Instead, the opening words were enhanced with burnished gold and surrounded by (mostly) colorful designs, decorated with geometric patterns, foliate scrolls, stylized leaves, and in some cases animals, hybrids or other imaginary creatures.

Anna Nizza argues in this volume, that the work was carried out by one main artist, possibly with the help of an apprentice. Her comparison of the art in the Nuremberg Mahzor with both Jewish and Christian art from the 14th century suggests that the decoration of the Nuremberg Mahzor was executed by an itinerant artist trained in a workshop in the Rhine Valley, possibly influenced by works of the Cologne-based Willehalm Master.

It is likely that the animals depicted in the Nuremberg Mahzor were chosen based on known animal symbolism, transmitted both in Jewish and in Christian circles, partly shared and partly in opposition to each other. The very small depictions of animals, e.g. in medallions in the corners of panels, ought to be understood in the context of similar depictions in other manuscripts. However, Anna Nizza reminds us that reinterpretations are always possible, based on the knowledge of the reader: is

24 There were different approaches to the depiction of humans in medieval Jewish art, given the biblical injunction against "making an image." Much has been written about the depictions and the various attempts to avoid full images; see literature referenced by Nizza and Offenberg in this volume.

the miniature ape sitting on a chamber pot and holding a mirror (f. 46v) a symbol of vice, or does it allude to the Talmudic story of Haman's daughter mistakenly emptying a chamber pot on her father's head while he was honoring Mordecai?

Using the piyyutim that are based on the Song of Songs as an example, Sara Offenberg argues that the allegorical creatures and hybrids almost hidden in the panels serve as visual interpretation of the texts they accompany, incorporating elements known from textual exegesis, such as midrash and Rashi's Bible commentary, as well as piyyut commentaries found in the Nuremberg Mahzor itself. The creator of the visual program of the Nuremberg Mahzor wished to transmit well-known interpretations and exegesis of the texts in small details that are visible only upon close inspection.

The conservation of the Nuremberg Mahzor was carried out in 2007 under the direction of Michael Maggen of the Israel Museum. It included conservation of the parchment of several quires, cleaning of many pages, resewing according to the correct order of quires, restoration of the binding, and the construction of a new bookcase. The process provided a unique opportunity to investigate the material history of the manuscript. Radiocarbon analysis conducted on samples of different components of the manuscript showed that it was repaired twice in the past, once in the 16th to 17th centuries, and once in the late 19th century. Only one of the older bosses on the cover still exists; the others were replaced during one of the earlier restorations, unlike the clasps for fastening the volume, of which only traces exist. The clasps were last mentioned in the mid-18th century.

The newly conserved manuscript was exhibited at the Israel Museum from 2007 to 2023, and an excellent digitization is available on the website of the National Library of Israel,[25] inviting future research into this unique manuscript. It should also be available on the planned website of the Jeselsohn Collection.

25 https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/judaism/jewish-people-treasures/mahzor-nuremberg.