

## Early Tanach Printings in the Yeshiva University Library

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**Description:** In August 2018, Dr. Parviz Lalazari donated two volumes of early Tanach (Hebrew Bible) printings to the library of Yeshiva University. One was a volume from a Tanach printed in Venice in 1524 by Daniel Bomberg (1483-1553) and the other was a volume from an Amsterdam publication by Moses Frankfurter (1672-1762). Beginning with just these two volumes, YU proceeded to locate other uncatalogued volumes so complete sets could be made. YU now has three Bomberg printings: 1524, 1546, and 1547. These Bible printings contain many early commentaries, as well as additional material on the Masorah, the traditional text of the Bible. Also completed was a set of the 1724 Amsterdam printing. This one also contained a large compilation of early and later commentaries. There were multiple copies, each one from a different owner. One owner appended to the volume handwritten information and newspaper clippings about his family. Other owners were in Poland and England, each bearing their stamps and inscriptions.

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Yeshiva University library owns many early Bible printings. This presentation will focus on only two. In August 2018 Dr. Parviz Lalezari, a clinical professor of Pathology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York donated three large folio volumes (40 cm) of early Tanakh (Old Testament) to the library of Yeshiva University. Two were from a Tanakh printed in Venice, Italy in 1524 by Daniel Bomberg, and the other was from a set published in 1724 by Rabbi Moses Frankfurter in Amsterdam. With the desire to make complete sets, we found other uncataloged volumes in the Rare Book Room

Daniel Bomberg (1483-1553), the printer of the first Lalezari donation, was born in Antwerp, Belgium and later settled in Venice. He learned the art of printing from his father Cornelius, and studied Hebrew as well. In 1516 he obtained permission to print Jewish works and produced almost 200 works. He is best known for his publication of a complete set from 1520 to 1523 of the Babylonian Talmud and the Talmud Yerushalmi. It should be noted that the pagination of his Talmud printing became the standard for all future editions. He also printed several Midrashic and liturgical works. After suffering financial losses due to competition with other Jewish printers, Bomberg returned to Antwerp in 1539. His printing shop closed in 1548.

Bomberg's other major production was the first rabbinic Bible, also known as *Biblia Rabbinica*, which began in 1517 and was completed in 1518. This was to be the forerunner of the famous *Mikraot gedolot* editions of Tanakh which exist today. Entitled *Arba'ah ve-esrim* [Twenty four] referring to the twenty-four books of the Old Testament, it comprises four volumes, containing the standard commentaries. Additional features of this printing include Targum Onkelos, Targum Yerushalmi and a Targum on the Book of Esther. The last volume includes a list of the 613 commandments and the Thirteen Articles of the Faith, both compiled by Moses Maimonides. Handwritten notes in black ink by former owners fill the margins of many of the volumes. Yeshiva University owns only volumes 2, 3 and 4.

The printing of another Bomberg Bible edition, the second rabbinic Bible, the Lalazari donation, started in 1524 and was completed in 1525. Bomberg states at the beginning of the printing that he started on 25 Kislev 285 [November 21, 1524] and at the end of the last volume he states that the printing was finished on 24 Tishre 286 [October 11, 1525]. The title page reads that this is the first printing which includes the Bible text, the Targum and the commentaries of Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and the Prophets with the commentaries of Ralbag [Levi ben Gershom] and Kimhi. However, it is the inclusion of the Masora Magna that makes this edition so important. Not only were Jews interested in this publication, but since Bomberg was Christian, his printing appealed to the Christian community, as well, especially the leaders of the nascent Protestant Reformation in their attempt to reinterpret the Bible. A product of this new Bible scholarship was the King James Bible. On the verso of the title page of vol. 1 are poems of praise written by Joseph ben Samuel Sarfati (-1527) and Elijah Levita (1469-1549), an Italian Hebrew poet and grammarian. The title pages are set in large architectural frames with the initial words of each book, set within decorative woodcut frames, and surrounded by Masoretic rubrics in a square pattern.

In the 1524 Venice edition, the donated volumes were vol. 3 which contains the Later Prophets, and vol. 4 which contains the Ketuvim (Writings). Vol. 1 contains the Pentateuch (Torah) and vol. 2, the Early Prophets. More importantly, vol. 4 also includes the Masorah Gedolah, commonly known as the Masora Magna. This

is a compilation of lists from the post-Talmudic period describing the various opinions about the correct spelling and vocalization of the Bible texts. These lists were combined by Jacob ben Hayyim ben Isaac ibn Adoniah (approximately 1470-approximately 1538) into a single compendium. This ultimately became the source and basis of our scriptural reading tradition. In the same volume there is a chapter explaining the differences between the Ben Asher and Ben Naftali versions of the Masora. Though the differences between them are slight, the Ben Asher version was accepted by most and is the formation of the famous Aleppo Codex of the Old Testament. At the head of the titles on the title pages of each volume are scriptural verses. Volume 1 reads Shaar ha-Shem he-hadash [New gate of G-d]; volume 3 : Kedoshim tihyu ki kadosh Ani [And You be holy as I am holy]; ; volume 4-5 : Shalom rav le-ohave Toratekha [Much peace to the lovers of Your Torah].

The Yeshiva University Library has another edition of Bomberg's Tanakh, the third Rabbinic Bible, printed in 1546. It is very similar to the 1524 edition, but has additions and corrections to some of the commentaries and an addition to the Targum Yerushalmi. In vol. 1 the commentary of the Baal ha-Turim (Jacob ben Asher) is in the margins. According to the colophon at the end of vol. 4, this edition was done by Bomberg and his partner Israel Cornelius ha-Levi Adelkind (active 1519-1554), who was also his proofreader and editor, and the printing was completed on 4 Tishri 309 [September 16, 1548]. The title pages have ornamental borders and titles are surrounded by quotations on four sides. The texts of the Bible and Targum are in double columns, in square script and surrounded by commentaries in Rashi script. All leaves are signed in Hebrew characters and Arabic numerals.

The library has multiple copies of the 1524 and 1546 editions, and because of the similarity in page layout, it was at times difficult to determine which volume belonged to which edition. By examining several OCLC records, we found notes specific to that set so we were then able to ascertain which volumes and copies belonged to which set.

The other known former owner of the 1524 edition was the famous Berthold Baruch Strauss (1901-1962) of London. He had an extensive collection of Jewish religious works which was later acquired by the Yeshiva University Library. M. L. Trieste and I. Nadel of Tulsa, Oklahoma also owned copies of volumes of the 1546 edition. None of the copies have their original bindings. While many were rebound in leather bindings, some were rebound in paper boards. Some pages have illegible handwritten Hebrew inscriptions. There are also many missing pages.

Other Bomberg Bibles in Yeshiva's collection are two single volume printings of the Pentateuch from 1523 and 1548 respectively, for synagogue and home use. The 1523 edition includes along with the Pentateuch itself, the Haftarot and the Five Scrolls with the Targum Onkelos and the commentaries of Rashi, Hizkuni and Ibn Ezra. The Five Scrolls also include the Targum of Yonatan ben Uziel. There is an introduction at the beginning of the first volume by R. Hezekiah ben Manoah (active 13<sup>th</sup> century), author of the commentary Hizkuni on the Torah. The text of the Pentateuch is in square Hebrew characters and the commentaries are in Rashi script. The 1548 edition includes together with the Targum Onkelos and Rashi's commentary, those of Nahmanides and the super-commentary of Isaac Aboab. We own three copies of this printing. Copy 1, which came from the Benjamin Rubinowitz Collection, has a wooden binding ; copy 2 is bound in paper boards; copy 3 is leather bound.

The other Lalezari donation was the Tanakh printed in Amsterdam in 1724 by Rabbi Moses Frankfurter (1672-1762), the son of Rabbi Simeon Frankfurter, and completed in 1728. Frankfurter opened a printing press in Amsterdam in 1721, and printed several Jewish religious works in Hebrew and Yiddish. He was also a dayan (religious judge) in Amsterdam and authored several books on Jewish law, as well as homiletic works in Hebrew and Yiddish. Among Frankfurter's famous works was *Nefesh Yehudah* (1701), a commentary on Isaac Aboab's ethical work *Menorat ha-ma'or*, with a Yiddish translation, *Zeh yehamehu* (1712), a commentary on the halakhic Midrash *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael*, and *Tov leket* (1749) on the laws of mourning. He also wrote annotations to *Hoshen mishpat*,

the fourth division of the Shulkhan arukh, as well as annotations to some of his father's works.

This Amsterdam Frankfurter Tanakh is a rabbinic Bible, the seventh, patterned after the Bomberg printings. Bearing the title *Sefer Kehilot Mosheh*, this edition includes 36 commentaries, especially on the books of the Prophets and the Ketuvim, ranging from medieval to contemporary, including his own, with the Masorah gedolah in the margins of each page. Of the sixteen new commentaries added by Frankfurter, to name a few, there are: *Keli yaqar* and *Keli paz*, both by Laniado, Samuel ben Abraham, -1605, and *Arama*, Meir ben Isaac, 1460?-approximately 1545. *Urim ve-tumim 'al Yesh'ayah*, *Yirmeyah*, *ve-Shir ha-shirim*. Many of the commentators themselves wrote introductions which were printed in this edition. Frankfurter engaged several proofreaders, and they all wrote introductions. There are also indexes to the Talmud. Unlike Daniel Bomberg's printings, this is the first Tanakh publication produced only by Jews. Volume 1 contains the Pentateuch; vol. 2, the Early Prophets ; vol. 3, the Later Prophets ; vol. 4, the Ketuvim.

The Lalezari volume of the Frankfurter edition joins the copies of four sets we already own coming from different sources. The former owner of the second copy of these sets, as indicated in an inscription in Hebrew at the head of the title page, was Hirsch ben Lazi Gutmann [Hirsch Gutmann, 1773-1841] of Oberdorf, Germany. A note affixed to the verso of the title page reads in German typescript "Sefer Kehilath Moshe". On the title page are handwritten genealogical notes in Hebrew by Gutmann. Inserted at end is a page with a handwritten list in Hebrew of the the names of his children. Two small newspaper clippings in German were later mounted on this leaf. One announces Gutmann's death, and the other, that of wife. This is followed by three pages of illegible handwritten notes in Hebrew. This set is leather bound with metal clasps and decorative metal pieces on the corners.

The third copy of the Frankfurter Tanakh in our collection has on the title pages two illegible stamps in Polish bearing the eagle and crown, the symbols of Poland. The former owner and donor unknown, an inscription in Polish reads: "Krolestwo

Polskie Burmistrz Miasta Obwodowego Lukowa” which means “Polish Kingdom, City Mayor of Lukowa District”, indicating the name of the town, Lukowa, wherein the volumes were once held. Some pages have reinforcement papers later inserted, stamped “Made in Poland”. They were probably transplanted from another book. Volume 4 of this same set was rebound by the Manhattan Chapter of the Yeshiva College Women’s Organization.

Copy 4 of the Frankfurter Bible is rebound in a modern binding. Stamped on the title page in Hebrew are the names of its former owners – Meir Barnet, of London, and Rabbi Avraham Aharon Yudelovitch (1850-1930) of Manchester.

Another copy of one of the Frankfurter sets was acquired by the the Yeshiva Library from Southeby’s, having come from the Silberstein-Boesky Charitable Foundation. The original owner, Nisim Semama (1805-1873), finance minister of Tunisia and a leader of Tunisian Jewry, split the four volumes into fourteen for convenience and rebound them in nineteenth-century red morocco gilt with his name in Hebrew and his initials N. S. engraved on the front cover. The initial word of each book is handwritten and some are decorated in gouache and ink in the panels, depicting unusual biblical scenes. For example, starting with the Exodus volumes there is a picture of Moses in the rushes, Moses and Pharaoh’s daughter, and Moses and Aaron addressing the Egyptian magicians. The numbers volume shows Pinhas the zealot holding the speared bodies of Zimri and Kozbi, Miriam stricken with leprosy, Moses striking the rock, and two spies bearing a huge cluster of grapes. Samuel opens with an illustration of King David being anointed in front of his brothers. In Psalms there is King David playing the harp.

These Bible volumes, Bomberg and Frankfurter, are far from being in perfect condition. Many have missing pages, torn pages, damaged covers, extensive foxing and worm holes. Some have damaged gutters which were restored with tape. The covers are not the original bindings. In one Lalezari volume some missing pages were replaced with pages from another edition. Yet, with an eye for detail and finding records for them in OCLC we were able to sort out the various editions and copies and accomplish our desire to make complete sets

from the three volumes of Lalezari donations, catalog them and make them accessible.