



No detail of Amsterdam's major extensions escapes Abrahamse's aggregation; the result is a lengthy book, at 470 pages. Yet the reader may be left wishing for deeper analysis of the rich material presented. Likewise, Abrahamse presents a wealth of well-selected images—not only period maps and artistic renderings of city views but also seldom-seen administrative documents such as auction maps of new building plots—but provides little additional interpretation. At times, the volume may feel like a long listing of painstakingly compiled minutiae, yet perhaps that is less a failing than an apropos reflection of its subject matter: after all, it was out of such minutiae that “the most meticulously planned city of Europe” (470) arose. For its comprehensiveness and breadth of scope, this work will undoubtedly become an indispensable aid to scholars of Northern European urban, economic, and social history.

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Sephardic Book Art of the Fifteenth Century. Louís U. Afonso and Tiago Moita, eds. Studies in Medieval and Early Renaissance Art History. London: Harvey Miller, 2019. 256 pp. €125.

Medieval manuscripts bear testimony to the historical and artistic context of their production. Moreover, they become living objects of history, for they contain evidence of various temporalities—dialogues between interlocutors through their marginal notes, and artists who have continued to decorate the manuscript throughout the centuries—while giving us an account of their trajectory from conception to their arrival in the hands of a patron or library. As Andreina Contessa notes, while fifteenth-century Sephardic manuscripts share a story similar to that of other medieval texts, they are particularly interesting because they provide evidence of their itinerant history: “Hebrew manuscripts were often damaged or destroyed and sometimes drifted from place to place, following the destiny of persecution, banishment and migration suffered by their owners” (175). This book offers a multifaceted examination of a series of Sephardic decorated manuscripts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which have not received much scholarly attention from art historians when compared to Sephardic manuscripts from previous periods. Nevertheless, they present unique and compelling examples of book art. In the introduction, the editors situate the book's contribution to the medieval Sephardic visual culture present in manuscript and incunabulum production by examining how they illustrate the artistic complexities and intercultural dialogue which their creation entails.

The book brings together ten different essays that consider the final stages of Hebrew art production in medieval Iberia. The essays encompass various disciplines and perspectives, including art history, codicology, astrology, and history of science, among

others. The first five essays present various aspects of the artistic decorations present in Sephardic bible production. Katrin Kogman-Appel examines the lesser-known yet interesting fourteenth-century Farhi Codex, created by Majorcan scribe and illuminator Elisha ben Abraham Cresque. The codex, which comprises one of the most lavish Hebrew illuminated manuscripts, is unique in that it follows the Islamic manuscript tradition rather than the Gothic art tradition in vogue during that period. Sarit Shalev-Eyni considers variations in illumination practices between the traditional Mudejar art present in the Sephardic Bibles of Castile, and the Lisbon School's preference for the fifteenth-century Italian and Flemish artistic repertoire. Shalom Sabar discusses how early Sephardic printers also devoted exceptional attention to detail through the careful choice of a fitting typography, design, layout, and decorative style for their incunabula. In their respective essays, both María Teresa Ortega-Monasterio and Javier del Barco analyze codicological and decorative aspects of several late medieval Iberian Hebrew bibles in order to assess similarities such as the page layout for specific poetic sections, textual organization, and micrographic designs.

The remaining five essays of the volume present examples of Sephardic medical, scientific, and astrological books, while also exploring the circulation of Sephardic manuscripts outside of the Peninsula post-expulsion. Tiago Moita presents a compelling essay that investigates the art of two manuscripts for the study of medicine, translated from Latin to Hebrew, while simultaneously considering the intellectual and professional role of Jewish doctors in late medieval Portugal. Similarly, Helena A. Carvalho and Luis C. Ribeiro explore Jewish scientific contributions in fifteenth-century Portugal through a series of astrological and medical manuscripts. Ilana Wartenberg studies non-decorative visual elements such as diagrams and tables, included in medieval Hebrew scientific treatises for didactic purposes. Andreina Contessa utilizes a series of Sephardic bibles to demonstrate how the scribes' colophons, micrographics, and illuminations illustrate the manuscripts' history of wandering, from the expulsions to their new homes among exiled communities. In the final essay, Luís U. Afonso reveals the interconnections between Europe, Asia, and Africa during a period of protoglobalization—with particular focus on the important travel hub of Sana'a in Yemen—by tracing the circulation of a single Sephardic bible. The Andalusian manuscript, with its skillful calligraphy and Islamic decorative motifs, became a model for other Jewish bibles produced in Yemen.

In sum, the editors are to be commended for bringing together a rich collection of essays that explore the artwork present in a group of lesser-known yet important and captivating fifteenth-century Sephardic manuscripts and incunabula. The volume's intersectional perspective makes it an excellent resource for Jewish studies specialists and for students and scholars interested in late medieval and early modern art history and Sephardic studies.

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