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The Moralized Bible in Spain

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written by the famous Shem Tov Ibn Gaon in Soria in 1313.

These manuscripts, as well as the early editions of Spanish Hebrew (and non-Hebrew translations) biblical texts, have obvious importance both for the history of the text as well as the eventual creation of a critical edition of the Bible.

Commentaries

Menahem b. Saruq in the tenth century apparently composed the first work in Spain dealing specifically with the Bible, although it was a dictionary rather than a commentary per se. This work, *Mahberet*, became famous due to its citation by Rashi (Solomon b. Isaac), famous commentator of France and Germany, and because it aroused the opposition of the important school of Hebrew grammarians centered around Córdoba and Lucena, and whose scientific investigation of Hebrew made possible the development of exegesis of the text. Both Samuel Ibn Naghrillah the famous poet and prime minister of the Muslim kingdom of Granada, and the philosopher and poet Solomon Ibn Gabirol composed commentaries on parts of the Bible, which have been preserved only in citations by later authorities.

The most important commentator of the Spanish tradition—though he spent much of his life traveling outside Spain—was Abraham Ibn Ezra. His commentaries exhibit a solid base of Hebrew grammar and good sense, replete with criticisms of some of his predecessors, from al-Andalus and other lands (Moses Ibn Chichatillah is particularly important), as well as a remarkably “modern” skepticism as to the divine origin of parts of the Torah and the traditional authorship of certain books of the Bible.

Bahya b. Asher of Zaragoza, a fourteenth-century author of a qabbalistic commentary on the Torah, claimed that Maimonides had also composed a commentary, but this is extremely doubtful since no one else mentions such a work (nevertheless, Maimonides’ frequent analysis, allegorical and otherwise, of biblical statements made his legal and philosophical writings an important source for biblical interpretation in Spain).

Other important eleventh-century commentators include Judah Ibn Balcam (whose commentaries are in Judeo-Arabic) and Isaac Ibn Yashush, who also expressed skepticism about the Mosaic authorship of parts of Genesis.

In Aragón-Catalonia, under the influence of *cabala*, biblical commentary took mostly a homiletical-mystical direction. Most famous of these was Moses b. Nahman (Nahmanides), followed by the aforementioned Bahya b. Asher. However, Ibn Adret included

some extremely important remarks on the Bible in his *responsa* and in scattered comments in his other writings. “Pietists” of the next generation, such as Nissim b. Reuben and Jonah b. Abraham Gerundi, tended to interpret the Bible along strictly homiletic lines.

In the thirteenth century in Castile, David Qimhi of Narbonne wrote several of his commentaries, there were marked by the careful grammatical analysis characteristic of Ibn Ezra (although with a good many flighty allegorical digressions and considerable anti-Christian polemic), The “pietistic” homiletical approach was firmly established in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Jacob b. Asher of Toledo, son of the famous German scholar who became head rabbi there, typifies this in his Torah commentary, as does the far more important and interesting commentator Joseph Ibn Nahmias. By then, of course, the *Zohar*, composed chiefly or entirely by Moses de León, and qabbalistic works of that school also exercised a profound influence on biblical commentary. Finally, in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, the work of allegorists like Isaac ‘Arama and especially Isaac Abravanel (not composed until after the Expulsion) must be mentioned, of course. Rationalism had given way to homiletic flights of fancy.

NORMAN ROTH

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BIBLE IN SPAIN, THE MORALIZED

Moralized Bibles were an essentially French fashion that lasted from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. Their highly selective and fragmentary scriptural texts, their popularizing interpretive glosses or “moralizations” based on the work of twelfth-century commentators like Hugh of St. Cher and the *Glossa Ordinaria*, and most conspicuously their vast programs of illuminations are what separate moralized Bibles from their more common cousins, the hundreds of medieval historiated Bibles and dozens of *Bibliae pauperum*. The most famous *Bibles moralisées* (of the fourteen now extant and distributed among eighteen codices) were executed in the Parisian style in the first half of the thirteenth century and linked to commissions by King Louis IX, his mother Blanche (Blanca) of Castile, and other members of his family. One distinguished *Biblia moralizada* was copied and translated into Castilian in Spain.

There are two preeminent three-volume sets of Latin moralized bibles copied in France and covering the entire Christian scriptures. One set is now divided between Oxford (Bodley 270b, reported as having been “acquired” by Sir Christopher Haydon during the sack of Cádiz in 1569), Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale Latin MS. 11560), and London (British Library, Harley 1526–1527).

Another complete three-volume set is still together in the treasury of the Cathedral of Toledo. The final quire of the last volume (one of the very few imperfections in the Toledo set) had already been detached from its binding by the beginning of the fifteenth century and currently forms part of the holdings of the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. Since Louis IX and Blanche of Castile are shown in the closing illumination of the Morgan fragment as equals, the moralized Bible now in Toledo must have been executed during her regency while Louis was still a minor, between 1226 and 1236. The reasons for the loss of this *cuaderno* with the royal portraits are unknown, but since the French throne later supported the claims of the heirs of Fernando de la Cerda (1255–1275) to succeed their grandfather, Alfonso X (1221–1284), the almost surgical extraction of this quire could have been already performed during the reign of Sancho IV (1284–1294), Alfonso’s second son who forcibly replaced his father as king.

Diplomatic and dynastic ties between Spain and France were especially strong in the early thirteenth century. Blanche of Castile was the daughter of Alfonso VIII of Castile and wife of Louis VIII of France, which made her son Louis IX cousin to Alfonso X. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the Toledo *bible moralisée* would have made a fitting coronation present for the young Spanish scholar and prince in 1252, or perhaps one of the dynastic exchange gifts when Alfonso’s eldest son and heir betrothed Louis IX’s daughter Blanca in 1266, or when he married her in 1269. Historians held that the common name of this bible, the *Biblia de San Luis*, arose from its association either with King Louis (r. 1236–1270) or with St. Louis of Anjou (1274–1297), bishop of Toulouse, one-time prisoner of Alfonso III of Aragón and later prisoner of Jaime II of Aragón. If these volumes acquired their name by passing through the hands of Bishop St. Louis, then the date of their arrival in Spain would have been considerably later, well after Alfonso’s death, which would leave unexplained the avenues of physical transmission. The evidence from the testament of Alfonso X dated 21 January 1284 resolves this issue in favor of his personal ownership. The next undisputed mention of the great moralized French Bible is in an inventory of the cathedral of Toledo from

1539, although there are apparent witnesses as early as 1466 and perhaps earlier.

The great *Biblia de San Luis* contains an astonishing range of miniatures, some thirteen thousand in the three volumes, and was regarded by the learned king as both an important dynastic and devotional object. It is surprising therefore that this vast exemplar of high French Gothic manuscript illumination exercised little appreciable influence in terms of chromatic palette, composition, or theme on any the Alfonsine corpus of miniatures.

Finally, there is a Spanish *Biblia moralizada* (Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid 10232), also known as the *Biblia romanceada en latín y castellano* or the *Biblia de Osuna*, after a subsequent owner. It is a massive project, almost entirely without illuminations, that includes a vernacular translation of the allegorical interpretations of scriptural passages. The codex was executed in a three-column format in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century for someone who knew this French source well and who also had authority over it for the time that it took to execute the bilingual manuscript—perhaps one of the archbishops of Toledo, as many of them well-known bibliophiles. The importance of this moralized Bible resides in its independent translation of sacred scriptures and glosses. The illuminations were omitted not by accident, but probably because executing them was beyond the means of the patron and the capabilities of the local craftsmen. There are occasional expansions and extrapolations on the Latin source material in the Spanish and a few incidences of brief descriptions of the pictures in the source text. The *Biblia de Osuna* was apparently meant as a companion or reader’s copy to protect the great *Biblia de San Luis* from unnecessary use.

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BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

Castilian from Vulgate

The first known Castilian version of the Bible from the Vulgate goes back to the middle of the thirteenth century: as the oldest monument of literary prose, it proves that Castilian was no longer merely an oral medium between Arabic and Latin (as the vernacular had been in the "Toledo school of translators") but had come into its own as a written language. The manuscripts in which it has come down to us, though directly complementary and not complete, are Escorial I.1.8 (abbreviated E⁸) and I.1.6 (E⁶), transcribed, the latter in the original Castilian probably soon after composition (the New Testament possibly a few years later), the latter by a Navarro-Aragónese copyist of the early fifteenth century (the missing part of Genesis-Leviticus 6.7, is supplied in Castilian, by Escorial Y-1-6 as part of Alfonso X's *General Estoria* vide infra). Both E⁸ and E⁶ show some old readings from the earlier Hispanic tradition of the Latin Bible; nevertheless they stem substantially from the Vulgate in its thirteenth-century stage, known as the Parisian Bible because of the *librarii* of the Sorbonne who circulated it (collated by Wordsworth and White in their edition of the New Testament, and by the Benedictines of San Gerolamo in Rome in the yet unfinished edition of the Old Testament).

The Psalter in E⁸ occupies a place apart as a version allegedly from Hebrew ("según cuemos está en el ebraigo"), attributed to Hermannus Alemannus, whom we know as the translator into Latin of Arabic (Averröan) commentaries on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Rhetorics*. Whether the attribution is trustworthy or not, it is significant that we find a biblical version associated with a scholar whose activity is attested to in Toledo for the years 1240 and 1256. As to the original, on close scrutiny it proves to be a conflation of the Latin Psalter, especially the Jerominian *iuxta hebraeos*, and the Hebrew Massoretic text (Morreale, 1980). It is interspersed with moral glosses yet unidentified, none allegorical.

A second translation of several biblical books appears in the framework of the *General estoria* of Alfonso X of Castile, a history of mankind since Creation

that the king planned along with his *Primera Crónica General* or *Estoria de España* (1270), in which the story of Moses was told in one brief chapter as the background for the settlement of Spain by Japhet's son Tubal. This universal history was to be built around the core of a paraphrased Bible on the pattern of Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* (along with biblical glosses, Josephus, St. Augustine, Beda, Rabanus Maurus, and other sources), and combined with secular history, following the chronology of Eusebius' *Chronicle*. Literal renderings of Scripture were used for the canticles and the benedictions of Moses in Exodus 1: 15; and Deuteronomy 32, and 33:2–29, the Psalter, and Wisdom books. While in the paraphrased parts biblical matter is adapted to a more current style, avoiding parataxis and repetition, and often changing direct into indirect speech, the direct translations are a mixture of word-for-word renderings and circumlocutions, which make the Alphonsine version in many ways inferior to the preceding E⁶-E⁸ Bible. They point to a *Biblia romanceada* text that may have come earlier, and, in any case, ready for use. No traces of a non-Christian hand are found in these sections, in spite of the king's proverbial tolerance toward other religions, and the well-known part Muslims and Jews played in his works. The underlying text is of the same type as E⁶-E⁸ but not the same.

According to Alfonso's purpose (see the prologue of the *Crónica de España*), the authors of the *General estoria* did their best to explain the structure of sacred history by showing the unity of its parts. At the beginning of each book they took pains to translate Jerome's introductions and other prefatory matter, which give insights into various aspects of the biblical books and their early versions. The result was a monumental work, and much larger than the *Bible historiale* composed ten or twelve years later by Guyart des Moulins (as the largest of its kind produced in the Middle Ages, it assured the presence of the Old Testament in Castilian culture).

The biblical matter was thus distributed among the first four volumes of equal size: part 1, Pentateuch; part 2, Kings; part 3, Song of Songs, Proverbs, Wisdom, Ecclesiastes (in Salomon's alleged "autobiographical" order), and Psalms, Part 4 Joel and Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Tobit, Job, Ezekiel, and Chronicles with IV Kings intercalated at various points; part 4, Daniel, Obdiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Habakkuk, Judith, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, and a literal translation of Ecclesiasticus. Parts 1 and 4 stem from the Alphonsine scriptorium (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS 816, and Vatican Library Latin MS 539, dated 1280). For part 5 we have to turn to Escorial I.1.2, which contains