

**David Stern, Christoph Markschies,
and Sarit Shalev-Eyni, Eds.**
*The Monk's Haggadah:
A Fifteenth-Century Illuminated Codex from
the Monastery of Tegernsee, with a Prologue
by Friar Erhard von Pappenheim*
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The close kinship between Passover and Easter, each a ritual meal commemorating a people's deliverance, has never been good for Jewish-Christian relations. During the Middle Ages, long periods of coexistence brought shared symbols into a kind of mutual antagonism as well as influence, while regular convergences of the Julian-Gregorian and Jewish calendars kept bringing the holidays into a tense proximity, fanning suspicions and often sparking Christian anti-Jewish violence. It was this historical and religious affiliation of the two holidays that was foremost in the mind of Erhard von Pappenheim, a south German Dominican, when, sometime between 1490 and 1492, he sat down to pen a most unusual treatise: a Christian explication of the Passover haggadah. The small tractate in the form of a prologue, preserved in autograph and in one manuscript copy, was written at the behest of Konrad V. Ayrinschmalz, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Quirinus at Tegernsee (Upper Bavaria), who had recently come into possession of the illuminated haggadah which survives today in the Bavarian State Library in Munich.

The prologue is a remarkable document. Taking his readers on a virtual tour through the haggadah, Erhard produced something like the first "ethnographic" account of the seder meal, its prayers, its ritual customs, and its symbolic foods. That he did so largely on the basis of his own translation of the Tegernsee manuscript (which he annotated in Latin along the way) is impressive enough; unlike many Christian Hebraists of his era, Erhard's Hebrew literacy was deep, and his description of the seder is remarkably accurate. To corroborate his descriptions of key aspects of the ritual, such as the preparatory search for leaven (*bedikat hametz*), Erhard supplied information gleaned from late medieval Jewish books of

customs (*sifrei minhagim*). For other, more arcane areas of Jewish custom, he turned to a very different source: the recorded “confessions” of Jewish suspects in the ritual murder trial of Simon of Trent (1475), the proceedings of which, the friar explains, he translated “into our vernacular language” (p. 116). With no apparent skepticism, Erhard describes how the head of the household sprinkles the blood of Christian infants into the six unleavened cakes made before Passover, using “more or fewer drops, depending on how much [blood] he has . . . even though, they say, a single drop will suffice” (p. 116). Christian blood, he reports, is also added to the wine for the *kiddush*, where the blessing is accompanied by a declaration, “This is the blood of a Christian child” (p. 118). The chanting of the *dayenu* incorporates the same blood-infused wine, we are told, sprinkled out of the chalice, drop by drop, during the invocation of the Ten Plagues (p. 119).

To the modern reader's surprise, Erhard is not set on demonizing the Jews or the Passover rite. Only at the conclusion of his prologue does the friar turn polemical, sharply separating the seder and the eucharistic meal of the Mass (likewise the latter's biblical archetype, Jesus's parting supper in the *cenaculum*). Striking though the similarities are, Erhard explains, “there is the utmost difference in the thing itself, in the intention, in its effect and its meaning. For they [the Jews] seek the shadow in the material thing; revenge in its intention; useless busyness in its effect; and the temporary deliverance from Egypt as its meaning . . . We, however, in the holy church . . . symbolize the sweetness of the eternal banquet of the heavenly homeland above . . . truly we taste it beforehand” (p. 128).

Judged solely by this final argument, or by his resort to long-standing tropes of theological anti-Judaism, not to mention his willingness to credit confessions about Jewish ritual cannibalism extracted under torture, Erhard von Pappenheim would seem to be in the same league as hardened polemical opponents of Judaism such as Petrus Nigri (1434-84), the Dominican controversialist with whom Erhard presumably collaborated during the Trent trials; or those early sixteenth-century Jewish converts to Christianity who agitated for the destruction of Jewish books while providing expert “testimony” to the perfidy of the Jews, such as Victor von Carben (1442-1515), Johannes Pfefferkorn (d. 1523), and Anthonius Margaritha (b. c. 1500). Yet much more than genre sets Erhard apart from them. Persecutory thinking and mythmaking are absent from his account. Though he evinces belief in the blood libel, he does not speculate about Jewish superstitions (e.g., about the magical efficacy of blood); and when all is said and done, he professes no special interest in the conversion of the Jews. As a Christian Hebraist whose primary focus is neither the Bible nor Kabbala, Erhard defies easy categorization. As David Stern remarks, the prologue's author “appears to be an unusual figure” (p. 86).

Offering a nuanced understanding of this unusual figure—and the peculiar character of his little ethnography of Passover—is but one of the signal accomplishments of *The Monk's Haggadah*, a beautifully produced critical edition of Codex Hebraicus Monacensis 200, with illuminating essays by two historians, David Stern (Harvard University) and Christoph Markschies (Humboldt University), and one art historian, Sarit Shalev-Eyni (Hebrew University). Another accomplishment is its comprehensive presentation of the Tegernsee manuscript

itself. Dateable to the 1470s or 1480s, the book has long been known to experts for its high-quality calligraphy and crisp, colorful miniatures. In overall appearance it is a typical production of south German or Austrian scribes and illuminators, but Shalev-Eyni's exemplary codicological analysis of the manuscript, its stages of production, and its iconographic program points toward a very different conclusion. Her contribution details the book's many expected parallels with other haggadahs from this same region and period, comparisons that reveal an undisputable core authenticity. And yet the book also displays several striking deviations from the norm, iconographic eccentricities without comparison in the whole known corpus of medieval haggadot. First among these is an enthroned, bearded figure wielding a sword overhead on folio 17r, a portrayal which replaces the divine "outstretched arm" traditionally used to illustrate Deuteronomy 26:8. Second is the appearance of a Christ-like Messiah figure galloping toward Jerusalem's open city gate upon a white horse, rather than the traditional donkey, set in the bas-de-page of the *Shefokh* page, where it illustrates Psalm 79:6 ("Pour out your wrath . . ."). Two additional motifs that, in Shalev-Eyni's estimation, "convey clear Christian associations" are a seated figure in a Jewish hat on the *kiddush* page, making a gesture of eucharistic benediction over the chalice, and a bearded man who makes the same gesture over an unleavened loaf, set alongside the initial *Ha* ("this") which begins the phrase, "This is the bread of affliction" (p. 41).

What to make of this "seemingly Jewish haggadah with a hidden Christian subtext," as Stern puts it (p. 17)? Did the book begin as an authentic haggadah made for a Jewish patron, and then later undergo modification for a new owner? Or might it have been conceived from the start as a Christian Hebraist fiction, a cultural curiosity meant for display as a relic of ossified Jewish culture? What constellation of interests produced this hybrid, an "authentic haggadah meant for Christians, not Jews . . . a monk's haggadah"? (ibid).

All three authors recognize that the manuscript and Erhard's prologue offer only so much internal evidence—enough to prompt the question but never to answer it. Answers are sought, instead, in the tangle of circumstances that carried the book from its putative first (Jewish?) owner(s) to the man who gifted it to the monastery, Paulus Wann (d. 1489). Though the actual space devoted to him in these pages is slender, Wann emerges as a prime suspect—a religious official with the means, opportunity, and motive to get hold of such a book. Educated at the University of Vienna (as Erhard was), Wann later became a member of its theological faculty and was also active as a book dealer. He had just been appointed canonical preacher at Passau cathedral when several men—four Jews and their Christian accomplice-turned-accuser—were implicated in a conspiracy to steal and desecrate the host. This affair resulted in torture-executions, coerced baptisms, an expulsion, and the razing of Jewish houses and the synagogue, where a pilgrimage shrine to the Holy Savior (Salvatorkirche) was then established by Bishop Ulrich von Nußdorf on August 16, 1479. Not only was Wann a close associate of Ulrich at the time, but in his sermons he had agitated against usury and, by implication, the Jewish presence in the city. To say, then, as Marksches does in his crisp historical essay, that the Passau host-affair "may

have aroused [Wann's] interest in the Jewish ritual of Passover and its book" is something of an understatement (p. 64). By all indications Wann acquired the haggadah during the persecution of the Jewish community, and very possibly, as Shalev-Eyni suggests, in an unfinished state. Were other hands afterward involved in remaking the book in its new owner's image, or in preparing it for its new life as Tegernsee Judaica? This, alas, is where the trail of evidence ends.

Collaboration is a word that captures the happy intercourse of scholars who bring differing forms of expertise to bear on a common problem. Likewise, it can describe the cooperation of scribes, rubricators, vocalizers, illuminators, and book-binders in the production of a manuscript, or the interpretive exchanges carried on between readers, commentators, editors, and collectors. Stern extolls the virtues of collaboration in his lively introduction, and *The Monk's Haggadah* is a shining vindication of this model of collective scholarship. But collaborator is also a dirty word, evoking treachery and complicity. However the book landed in Wann's possession—ethno-curiosity, supersessionist thinking, or antiquarian desire—it seems fair to consider the monk's haggadah as a spoil, and its adaptive reuse by its Christian owners a kind of occupation—a "cultural transfer" enabled not by cooperation but by persecution. The accusations, trials, executions, and expulsions that rippled through the Jewish communities of the imperial south in the closing decades of the fifteenth century were in many ways the culmination of Habsburg efforts to clear its territories of Jews, starting with the so-called *Wiener Geserah* of 1420-21. They had the support of the Viennese theologians, whose extended circle included all the men mentioned above. That persecution was thinly justified by a host-theft affair (in Enns) that may have provided the model for Passau's. The editors have dedicated *The Monk's Haggadah* to the memory of Wann, "without whom neither the Codex nor this book would exist" (frontleaf). In light of this lamentable history, this will strike some readers as an odd choice.

Misgivings about the way expropriations, thefts, violences, and conquests deliver cultural artefacts into our possession should never divert the historian's effort to understand them on their own terms, of course. As an object of singular historical and art-historical significance, the Tegernsee haggadah is richly served by this intelligent and handsome volume, in which it is published for the first time. The three principle essays are followed by four valuable appendices: a full codicological description of the manuscript (by Shalev-Eyni), the text of Erhard's Latin prologue (edited by Markschies), an English translation of the prologue (by Erik Koeneke and Stern), the text of the haggadah as it appears in Cod. hebr. 200 (translated by Stern), and a gorgeous set of color plates that effectively make the book a facsimile. Scholarly notes are extensive, up-to-date, and richly informative, a boon to future researchers in Jewish-Christian relations, European religious and intellectual history, medieval studies, art history, iconography, and codicology.