

## From the Holbein Bible to the Amsterdam Haggadah

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Unlike hand-illustrated Haggadah, printed Haggadah pictures have not yet been the subject of an in-depth, critical, art-historical appraisal. Jul. v. Schlosser devotes little space to them in his *Haggadah von Sarajewo* of 1898, limiting himself to a fleeting characterization of several illustration styles which he knew from printed editions of two Prague, two Mantuan, and one Amsterdam Haggadot.

The *Bibliographie der Osterhaggadah* (Bibliography of Easter Haggadah) by S. Wiener published in 1902 showed that the number of printed Haggadah pictures is quite extensive. This number was considerably increased through information in the bibliographical publications of A. Freimann, Weinberg, and Löwenstein, primarily in the journal for Hebrew bibliographical works and in the yearbook of the Jewish literary society, and most recently supplemented through the bibliography on the “Konteres hahagadot” by Abr. Jari, published in 1930 in Jerusalem.

Initially, art-historical research did not keep apace with bibliographical records. Apart from Alb. Wolf,<sup>1</sup> who focussed on the engraver of the Amsterdam Haggadah of 1695, researchers only made general comments on Haggadah print illustration, the value of which lies more in the additions made to images. Contributions by Th. Zlocisti<sup>2</sup> with many pictures from the Mantuan Haggadah, and by H. Frauberger<sup>3</sup> with images from the Mantuan, Venetian, and a variant of the Amsterdam Haggadah, are of this kind. A selection of pictures from Haggadah prints with few, but reliable dates, was provided by Hugo Herrmann.<sup>4</sup> The “Jüd. Bücherei,” published in 1922 by Karl Schwarz, included series of images from the Prague, Mantuan, and Amsterdam Haggadot.<sup>5</sup> Despite comments made in the accompanying text, it should be noted that the pictures from the Amsterdam Haggadah are not from the Wiesel edition of 1695, but from the edition published by Salomo Proopf in Amsterdam in 1712, whose picture cycle differs considerably from that of the older edition. Pictures from illustrated Haggadot, especially of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, can be found in Erich Toeplitz’s notes published by the “Ges. z. Erforsch. j. Kunstdenkmäler” in 1925 and 1928, and on the Menorah in 1925.

Publications by the Soncino Society provided important impulses: the essay by Ernst Weil “Venetian Haggadahholzschnitte aus dem 15. Jahrhundert” (Venetian Haggadah Woodcuts from the 15<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>6</sup> and the facsimile edition on the fragmentary Haggadah with woodcuts published by the Theological Seminary, New York.<sup>7</sup> Both publications—the former, however, being based on the assumption that the Venetian woodcuts really came from a Haggadah and not from a series of illustrations for the bible—prove that the Prague Haggadah is not the oldest woodcut Haggadah.

The Prague Haggadah of 1526/7 was published in 1926 as a facsimile by Benzion Katz and Heinr. Löwe (Monumenta Hebr. 1). In addition, I refer to my own essay on Haggadah illustrations in the Encyclopaedia Judaica, B. 7, accompanied by images.

## The Amsterdam copperplate Haggadah of 1695

When turning our attention to the Haggadah with copperplate engravings, a prerequisite is a knowledge of the pictorial cycle in hand-illustrated Haggadot. Woodcut Haggadot which preceded the Amsterdam copperplate Haggadah will be dealt with separately; it must be said here, however, that their pictorial cycle, with regard to content and form, largely follows on from the hand-illustrated Haggadot of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Research has revealed that medieval figurative Haggadah illustration is based on that in Christian bibles, only becoming an entity in itself in time.<sup>8</sup> In my essay on Haggadah illustrations in the Jewish Encyclopedia, I refer to the existence of an older pictorial cycle based on ornamental Pesach symbols of *matzah* and *maror*. These figurative illustrations were grafted onto the liturgical nucleus of the Haggadah pictorial cycle. In Haggadot, the Christian Pentateuch cycle is included in the form of an appendix, as something foreign, while expanding at the same time on the liturgical symbols in the text sections, interspersed with figurative elements, ultimately transferring biblical images to the text—as long as these have something to do with the subject in the Haggadah—while other biblical images, i.e. the whole appendix was dropped. In this way, something completely new was created: the Haggadah pictorial cycle. In Spanish Haggadot both could frequently be found in the 14<sup>th</sup> century next to one another: the text illustration and pictorial appendix. In Ashkenazic Haggadot on the other hand, the fusing and embellishment process of the pictorial cycle was completed. This development is also expressed in the titles of the pictures. These were previously citations from the Pentateuch; later comments on the Haggadah.

In the light of the preceding development, the illustration of the Amsterdam Haggadah is a surprising step backwards—a step backwards despite the opulence of the pictorial design: a reduction in the number of liturgical images, the cumulation of biblical pictures, the prevalence of the biblical concept. That contemporaries also saw this as a step backwards is shown in the alterations, namely the additions made to the Haggadah picture cycle of 1695<sup>9</sup> in the edition of 1712.<sup>10</sup> One can only understand the intention of the publisher of the second edition once one has familiarized oneself with the illustration of the first.

The Haggadah with copperplate engravings of 1695 is no. 48 in S. Wiener's bibliography. The folio volume has a frontispiece, 26 sheets with texts, and a map which is folded in the middle and bound in such a way that it forms two sheets. In the imprint on the frontispiece it can be read that the Haggadah "was printed by Moses Wesel on his own press and at his own initiative in Amsterdam in the year 5455." Wesel does not mention I. Sonne<sup>11</sup> among printers in Amsterdam and names an Amsterdam print of 1692 by Kosmann Emmerich as the first copperplate Haggadah. As the whereabouts of copies of this edition are not specified, I was not able to establish if this is a different Haggadah or the same. The question still needs to be clarified.

The pictures and the border on the frontispiece of the Wesel Haggadah are copperplate engravings; the two flower vase vignettes are woodcuts.

The aedicula on the frontispiece comprises two grooved columns with the figures of Moses and Aaron in front. Between the columns, with a curtained valance above, six round medallions with figurative scenes are suspended on threads—top center: Expulsion from Paradise; below, second row, right: the Flood; left: Noah and the Ark; third row, right: Abraham and Melchizedek, left: Lot's daughter; bottom center: Jacob's Ladder.

The images in the text occupy the lower half of the sheets. The sequence of the images is as follows:

- 1 recto Flower vase
- 4 recto Wise Men in Bnei Brak
- 5 recto The Four Sons
- 5 verso Abraham Smashes the Idols
- 6 recto Abraham and the Three Angels
- 7 verso Moses Killing the Overseer
- 8 verso The Finding of Moses
- 9 recto Moses and Aaron before the Pharaoh, right: Miracle of the Snake
- 10 recto Plague of Frogs
- 10 verso The Downfall of the Egyptians
- 11 verso The Exodus
- 12 recto Receiving the Law
- 13 recto Pesach Lamb
- 17 recto Flower vase
- 18 recto David in Prayer
- 24 recto Temple
- 27 verso ) Map of the Holy Land with the Division of the Land
- 28 recto ) among the Tribes

After the title on the frontispiece are the words in Hebrew: "With the addition of the Journey through the Desert up until the Division of the Land among the Tribes and a picture of the Temple. Engraved by Abraham bar Jakob, descended from our father Abraham." Abraham bar Jakob's signature in Hebrew is also on the map, in the lower margin of folio 27 verso, below a small Jonah scene. Above the woodcut vignette on folio 1 recto it reads: *Seder* according to the *minhag* of the Ashkenazim and Sefardim. The two methods for printing images, the woodcut and the copperplate engraving, are praised in the subsequent lines: "Earlier, it is said, images were carved in wood which was not so beautiful; today, when images are engraved on copperplate, people can see the difference; it is as between light and darkness."

It can, therefore, be assumed that copperplate engravings as illustrations for the Haggadah were included for the first time in this edition. Generally speaking, the use of copperplate engravings in Hebrew are of an earlier date. The portal on the frontispiece of the Amsterdam Haggadah is a variant of borders used on frontispieces in earlier prints. Lipmann-Mühlhausen's *Sefer haNitzachon*, an Altdorfer print of 1644, already includes an engraved frontispiece;<sup>12</sup> the bible printed in 1679 in Amsterdam by Ury Feibusch b. Aaron ha-Lewi, in a Jewish-German translation, also has a copperplate engraving on the frontispiece. Both are

related to the Amsterdam Haggadah and draw on the same source. The “Seder Berakhot” (Order of Blessings), an Amsterdam print by Albertus Magnus, 1687, bears the initials of the engraver B.G. on the frontispiece copperplate engraving. According to Alb. Wolf<sup>13</sup> these refer to the Jew Benjamin senior Godines.<sup>14</sup> That Abraham bar Jakob, who identifies himself as the engraver of the temple and the map of the Holy Land (he may possibly have engraved the other images too, without mentioning these expressly), was a Jew from birth, is doubted by Wolf due to the strange phrase “descended from our father Abraham.” He considers him to be a proselyte. A number of different proselytes can indeed be found in the book trade at this time.<sup>15</sup> Whether, however, to contradict Wolf,<sup>16</sup> a proselyte could not have been called the son of Abraham, should not go unmentioned. Our Abraham calls himself the son of Jacob.

Let us now address the picture cycle in the Amsterdam Haggadah. That it begins with the Wise Men in Bnei Brak is striking, as preparations for the feast, the removal of *chametz*, cleaning vessels and baking *matzot* are normally shown in such illustrations. The depiction of the father of the house, how he pronounces the different blessings, and especially the family Pesach meal are imperative. This Haggadah however has none of these. Even the Bnei Brak scene is not the standard one. No students surprise the Wise Men who have been telling of the Exodus from Egypt all night long, informing them that the time had arrived to read the morning prayer. What can be seen is a table set for a feast, a large gathering of men being eagerly served with wine and food by servants. The image would not be easily understood without the explanatory title.

The Four Sons on folio 5 recto are characterized in the traditional manner—the wise one, dressed as a scholar; another, the wicked one, as always depicted as a warrior; the two others, are as usual less succinct: as a foolish and as a simple person. What is new is that the four characters are not shown individually but together in one picture. The four figures each adopt their own specific pose but without any correlation to one another as if they had been cut out of different compositions. The other pictures illustrate events from books in the bible; even the Pesach feast does not depict a commemorative festival within a Jewish family but the Israelites about to depart from Egypt.

This scene in particular leads us to the clue to explaining the character of the whole pictorial cycle. It is nothing other than the Pesach feast from the Five Books of Moses in the Luther translation with woodcuts by Hans Holbeins the Younger.<sup>17</sup> The other pictures reveal their affinity with Holbein’s images for the bible, namely with his woodcuts in *Historiarum veteris instrumenti icones ad vivum expressae*.<sup>18</sup> Some show more obvious signs of their origin; others are less recognisable. Some are based on the composition of a scene of the same name; others make random use of their point of reference. The composition of “Abraham and the Three Angels” is the same; “The Defeat of the Egyptians” has much in common with the drowning Egyptians and with “The Rebellion of Korah” in Holbein’s *Icones*; “David in Prayer” assumes the same posture as Moses kneeling before God; the idolators making sacrifices at an altar in the picture of Abraham fol. 5 are not dissimilar to the worshippers of the Golden Calf in Holbein’s *Icones*; Holbein’s “Tower of Babel” is repeated in the architecture of Rameses, the city of labor. Even the map of the Holy Land at the end has a

counterpart in Holbein's work—the image of the Tabernacle, around which the tribes of the Israelites camped, each one in its own tent.

Compositionally, an unmistakable connection exists between the copperplate engravings in the Amsterdam Haggadah and woodcuts from the two cycles of biblical images by Holbein. Stylistically however they are very different. The question is if it can be proven that the Amsterdam Haggadah really does have its origins in the Holbein bible, as another source on the Laws may also have been available.

We know that Holbein did not devise the composition of his bible illustrations himself. His first series draws on the Cologne bible by Heinrich Quentel of around 1479; the second reveals correlations with Italy. In addition, German bible illustration influenced Upper Italian woodcuts.

It is not a question here of priority: what is of importance to us is that Cain slaying Abel, with the brothers' altars visible in the background—a woodcut from a Venetian print “Bergomensis, Supplementum Chronicarum” of 1486<sup>19</sup>—is most likely the model on which “Abraham Smashing the Idols” is based. Related compositions are the Haggadah pictures of “Moses before the Pharaoh”; the murals by Benozzo Gozzoli on the Campo Santo in Pisa, with the “Defeat of the Egyptians” by Cosimo Rosselli in the Sistine Chapel, and with “Abraham and the Angels” by a pupil of Raphael in the Vatican loggias. The pictorial cycle was first schematized in woodcuts in the Venetian Malermi bible of 1492 and later, in a simpler form, in the engravings of Mark Antony, among others, reproduced in line with works created by Raphael's generation of artists. If then, a hundred years or more later, an artist makes use of the accumulated treasure of forms, it is not easy to disentangle the bundle of influences. The question as to whether the Amsterdam Haggadah adopted the German or the Italian version of the pictures cannot be answered unambiguously, even if many an image, especially the Pesach feast, seems particularly German (in the Gothic stylistic sense) and would speak in favor of a German origin.

No definitive conclusion can be deduced from a cultural-historical approach either. Jewish printers kept up the Italian tradition in Amsterdam in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, supported in particular by the Sephardim. However, it can be seen that our Haggadah was intended for use both for Sephardic as well as Ashkenazic prayer services. If we look at the previous woodcut Haggadot, an idiosyncratic mixture of German and Italian influences can be detected. The Prague Haggadah of 1527 and the Mantuan one of 1560 characterize this mixture. Without taking a closer look at these two illustrated Haggadot I would like to point out that Michelangelo's Jeremiah on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel was used as a model for one of the Wise Men in the Mantua Haggadah, as already noted by J. v. Schlosser,<sup>20</sup> and as I recently discovered, a figure from Psalm LII in Holbein's *Icones* for one of the Four Sons.

In the case of the Amsterdam Haggadah, identification is all the more difficult as the images are not faithful copies, as in the latter example, but later creations which only share the same compositional pattern with the woodcuts. The format of the engravings is considerably larger, the figurative scenes are enlivened by additional characters, the whole is set within an opulent

staffage with architectural and landscape elements. The painterly treatment of folds in the garments, the effect of aerial perspectives, the delicately nuanced hatching on the copperplate engravings give the 17<sup>th</sup>-century printed image means enough to blur its origins from that of the rough woodcut.

By coincidence, the immediate source from which the picture cycle in the Amsterdam Haggadah is drawn, has been discovered. Mr. S. Kirschstein was made aware that a Haggadah with illustrations by Merian was being offered at auction outside Germany, I believe. No further details about this Haggadah are available.

I followed this up. Merian is the name of a distinguished family of artists of Swiss heritage, connected to the many volumed *Theatrum Europaeum*. There was a Matthäus Merian the Elder (d. 1650), two sons of his, Kaspar (d. 1686 in Holland) and Matthäus the Younger (d. 1687), to mention just those family members who could be of interest in our investigation, as the daughter, who made a name for herself with drawings of butterflies, is presumably to be excluded.

Matthäus Merian of Beisel, as the eldest Merian called himself in his works when he took over the publishing house and bookshop of his father-in-law, De Bry, and settled in Frankfurt, published illustrations of the Old Testament, the *Icones biblicae*, with verses and rhymes in three languages in 1625/26. If one considers that Merian did not draw figures—his strength lay in *vedute* of cities, having established his reputation through his topographical views of Stuttgart, Heidelberg, and other places—and bearing in mind that the complete Holy Scripture contains 258 copperplate engravings, most of which were made by assistants, then one will not overestimate Matthäus Merian's share in the illustrations in the bible. His sons worked alongside on works for the publishing house. In a dedication in *Icones*, Merian speaks highly of Dürer, Lucas Kranach [sic.] and Holbein, and he had much to be grateful for from these Masters, even if he were not unreceptive to Italian influences either. Daniel Burckhardt<sup>21</sup> believes that Merian's importance in the history of art is to be seen in the fact that the artist from Basel was able to study several works by Holbein the Younger in his home city, which have since been lost or destroyed, only to survive to this day as copies created by him. He presumes that Merian engraved the copperplates to the Five Books of Moses while still in Basel, before his move to Frankfurt.

For us, Merian is especially important as we found that the Amsterdam Haggadah is modeled on his bible pictures. Sometimes one could even speak of the beneficial spreading of cultural values and perceptions: in the case of the Amsterdam Haggadah, the failure to recognize correlations is all the more unusual since the *Icones biblicae* and, even more so, the later publication *Die gantze Hl. Schrift*, was a uncommonly popular book. The Merian bible was published in innumerable print runs and editions, ultimately with lithographs; whole generations grew up with it in Germany. In the first book of *Poetry and Truth* Goethe talks of Merians's voluminous illustrated bible.

That it found its way to Holland does not come as a surprise. M. Merian had already settled in the Netherlands by 1616. As Burckhardt elucidates, the quarto format used for *Icones*<sup>22</sup> was

supposedly chosen because it was popular in Holland. With its brief text in three languages (Latin, German, and French) the volume was undoubtedly intended primarily for export. Later editions with the complete Holy Scripture, the German Luther Bible,<sup>23</sup> in which the images from all the three parts of *Icones* were included as text illustrations, were in the folio format,

Both editions, quarto and folio, also appeared later in Holland—the *Icones* with a text in six languages, including Flemish and Dutch. The copperplate engravings, based on Merian, were made by Pieter Hendricksz Schut, who was active between 1650 and 1660.<sup>24</sup>

To explain the influence of the Merian bible on Haggadah illustration it can be argued that its inherent Puritan-Protestant spirit, manifested in particular through the avoidance of depictions of God—in its place we see the name of God in Hebrew letters surrounded by an aureole—was akin to the Jewish spirit. This may certainly have been of importance, however in the woodcut Haggadot of the Renaissance there is also evidence of borrowings from the Holbein bible which did not eschew the depiction of God. The Haggadah, it seems, has always been receptive to inspiration from contemporary biblical illustrations commonly in use (as has been proven for the Middle Ages), and has processed these more or less independently. In the Amsterdam Haggadah, however, the degree of independence is low.

The very first scene with the Wise Men in Bnei Brak has literally been taken from Merian. fol. 77 in *Icones biblicae*, Part I, however, depicts Joseph and his brothers. Here it can be seen why the image does not fit the material in the Haggadah exactly. Minor discrepancies can be found in it that are not merely of a stylistic nature. The view through the three windows in the background of the surrounding area—the city *vedute* that Merian liked to flaunt—is missing here; the windows are closed. “The Finding of Moses” is not an exact copy of the scene of the same name on fol. 81 in *Icones*; “Moses and Aaron before the Pharaoh” on the other hand has been taken, unchanged from fol. 85. The same goes for the “Plague of Frogs” from fol. 87; the Pesach feast from fol. 89 and the image of the Temple from fol. 93 which, in the Haggadah, only differs on account of the missing staffage figures. Marginal differences can be seen in “The Defeat of the Egyptians,” that is due to the fact that the image was not modeled on the engraving from *Icones* but on the slightly modified engraving from a series of images by Merian on biblical and profane subjects.<sup>25</sup> “Abraham and the Three Angels” has also been taken from this series of copperplate engravings.

The reconstruction of the Temple in *Icones* may well not have been created by Merian himself. It is remarkable in that it already depicts the architectural feature of the nave. Much later, Salom Italia engraved Solomon’s Temple based on designs by Jacobo Jehuda Leone. The nave style probably has its origins in an extensive series of reconstruction attempts which, nevertheless, were not able to supersede the central-plan style of building. The older notion of the Temple along the lines of the Mosque of Omar, namely with a dome because the Crusaders mistook this mosque to be the old Temple, is something that is found both in Christian as well as in Jewish depictions and is a subject that cannot be dealt with in any greater detail here.

The figure of “King David in Prayer” in the Haggadah is the tax collector in “The Pharisee and the Tax Collector” to be found in Part II, fol. 75 as well as in the 3<sup>rd</sup> New Testament section of Merian’s *Icones*. The engraver of the Haggadah kept the architectural staffage and the kneeling figure and only left out the sauntering Pharisee. Small changes can be seen in the addition of a lyre on the altar steps and the Psalm book on the altar itself, the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) in the radiant gloriolate above the altar has also been modeled on a work by Merian. This motif, even with Hebrew letters, is frequently used by the engraver from Basel. It is particularly interesting to see the Haggadah illustrator’s treatment of the Four Sons in the bible. For this, no suitable exemplary model existed. The characters of the four figures, however, had to match that of the traditional story which meant that he brought together figures from several sources. It is interesting that the figure for “the child who does not know how to ask” is “Hannibal Swearing Eternal Enmity toward Rome” from Merian’s series of engravings on Ancient Roman history.<sup>26</sup> “Tam,” the simple child, is not without humor, and comes from Merian’s *Icones*, Part II, fol. 55, “Samual Anointing Saul.” His head inclined, leaning on his staff, he appears helpless; in reality however he is in this position to make sure that no drop of the anointment is lost. The “Wicked Son” is a warrior from the series of engravings on biblical and profane stories, and the “Clever Son” is based on a figure from the Hannibal picture with a few changes made to the position of his arms, or else perhaps a faithful copy from another image among the immense opus from the Merian publishing house. “Moses Slaying the Egyptian,” also from the cycle of works on Roman history, is a copy of the engraving “The Killing of Remus.”

The figurative decoration on the map of the Holy Land, e.g. the small Jonah composition, can be found by Merian in several very different variations. The figures from the scene when the Law is received, also from Matthäus Merian, are remarkable in that they are shown in Turkish costume as in the images “Bayezid II Gives a Banquet” and the “Siege of Constantinople.”

Apart from the majority of images which the Haggadah illustrator took from Merian’s engravings, either without any changes, as complete images or as details, there are only very few pictures that reveal deviations from these. The Amsterdam Haggadah of 1695 is as such not different from the Haggadah with Merian’s engravings. A number of copies have survived to this day. More numerous is the later Amsterdam edition, printed by Salomo Proops in 1712, which differs from the Moses Wesel edition both in the design of the pictorial cycle (through considerable additions) and in the facture. By comparing the two editions, a view of the development of Haggadah illustrations in the 18<sup>th</sup> century emerges that not only preserved Merian’s legacy but also expanded upon it.

### **Amsterdam copperplate Haggadah of 1712**

Having established that the illustration of the Haggadah of 1695 is abstracted from engravings by Merian, the ratio of the same to the bible illustrations of Hans Holbein appears in a new light. One can reasonably assume that this ratio was rooted in a certain tradition. The Mantuan Haggadah even features a woodcut from Holbein’s *Icones*, as we have already seen. In the development of Haggadah illustration it would, therefore, be no surprise if recourse were

repeatedly taken to Holbein's works, reworking these again and again. The situation, however, is a different one: the illustrator of the Amsterdam Haggadah did not arrive at Holbein himself but through the mediation of an interpreter. He does not have to have known the woodcuts in Holbein's *Icones* and in the *Five Books of Moses* at all; he only knew Merian's later creations or Schut's copies based on Merian in the form of copperplate engravings. The correlation between the Amsterdam Haggadah and the Holbein bible was fortuitous only in as far that Holbein dominated bible illustration for a century and Haggadah illustrators who, for certain reasons, sought examples in Christian bible illustrations, repeatedly came across him.

Haggadah illustration is an offshoot of respective Christian bible illustration. In no other Haggadah, however, is the dependency so absolute as in the copperplate Amsterdam Haggadah. And it was precisely this Haggadah that was to become the most widespread in Central and Eastern Europe. It was reprinted, copied with woodcuts, duplicated in the block printing technique, and copied by book illuminators. The path taken by the borrowed illustration in the Haggadah, created according to foreign patterns, is the path from art produced by guilds to folk art, and it is interesting to observe how folk art emerged in this genre—taking a foreign form and expressing the subject matter more crudely, on the one hand, while also adapting the material to create something more popular.

Initial steps toward Judaizing the material are to be found in the 1696 edition. However, no form of reconfiguration is to be expected here which requires radical compositional changes. The reduction of the number of men sitting at the table to five in the image of the "Wise Men in Bnei Brak," transformed from the scene with Joseph, would have meant making such an incisive reworking. For this reason the engraver only omitted the heads in the background while leaving the figures in the foreground untouched. Instead, the men, including the servants, are given head coverings as befits pious Jews, and the picture is transformed into a night scene as called for by the material. How did the engraver accomplish this change? Candles were put in the chandelier, lamps placed on the ground alongside the wine and on the serving table, the windows were closed, the view into the open was deleted. Through moving the light sources from the outside to the inside, alterations to the distribution of light and shade were required. The shadow in Merian's work, cast by daylight entering from the side, was removed. However the artist did not manage to create the effect of light and shadow in the room, generated by artificial light sources. His knowledge of how shadows are projected was not sufficient, and so he limits himself primarily to surrounding the candlelight with oval halos. Furthermore, the use of shadow elsewhere is arbitrary.

The only formal trait which is not solely a result of the interpretation of the material but equally well based on the stylistic change that had meanwhile been completed, can be seen in the chair on which the Wise Man at the head of the table is seated. In Merian's case it is a hard chair with a narrow horizontal wooden board as a backrest; here it is an armchair with a gently angled, softly upholstered back: we are on the threshold of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when thought was given to cosiness and comfort. The consideration given to the need for comfort on the Pesach night bearing the ritual demands in mind, is also articulated.

The style of the reworking, as seen in the scene in Bnei Brak, characterizes the approach adopted by the engraver of the Haggadah to the original in general. Another example of this adaptation to suit the Haggadah text is the scene with Abraham and the three angels. In Merian's work, the Sacrifice of Isaac is shown in the background, set in a mountainous landscape. The Haggadah engraver replaces the mountains with a lake and depicts two men in a boat which must be taken as an illustration of the reference in the Haggadah: "And I took your Patriarch, Abraham, from beyond the river." The pictorial motif of Abraham in a boat appears in the Prague Haggadah. The picture with the four questioning sons is the only one which was not adapted but newly created, even if it is also a mosaic modeled on Merian's images. What is missing are depictions of the *seder* meal celebrated by a Jewish family and the reciting of blessings. The Prague and Mantuan Haggadot include these. In the Venetian Haggadah, these have been simplified and grouped together to form a uniform whole, and include the Egyptian plagues, all of which are illustrated. In the Amsterdam Haggadah we only have the Plague of Frogs and this, too, is based on Merian, from his bible cycle. The blessings at the beginning of the Haggadah are not illustrated at all in this case, nor is the family *seder* meal.

The new edition of the Amsterdam Haggadah of 1712 introduced changes. This edition was brought out by the large Jewish printing company Salomo b. Josef Proops in Amsterdam. It has the same format as the 1695 edition but a different layout and is, therefore, not a faithful reprint. It is the Haggadah no. 59 in the bibliography of S. Wiener. The well-preserved copy that I used<sup>27</sup> is incorrectly bound, whereby the different sequence includes a number of images.

The Amsterdam Haggadah of 1712 comprises a frontispiece, 31 sheets with texts, and the map of the Holy Land at the end.

fol. 1 recto Vignette  
 fol. 1 verso Two ornamental initials with figures  
 fol. 2 recto 13 Small *seder* scenes combined to form one plate  
 fol. 3 recto Ornamental initial  
 fol. 3 verso Two ornamental initials  
 fol. 4 verso Ornamental initial  
 fol. 9 verso Moses Slaying the Egyptian  
 fol. 10 verso The Finding of Moses  
 fol. 11 recto The Exodus  
 fol. 12 recto above Initials; below Plague of Frogs  
 fol. 12 verso top Initials, bottom Miracle of the Snake and Moses and Aaron before the Pharaoh  
 fol. 5 verso Wise Men in Bnei Brak  
 fol. 6 recto top Initials; bottom The Four Sons  
 fol. 7 verso Abraham Smashes the Idols  
 fol. 8 recto top Initials, bottom Abraham and the Angels  
 fol. 13 recto 10 Plagues in 10 scenes, combined to form one plate  
 fol. 13 verso Initials

fol. 14 verso The Defeat of the Egyptians  
 fol. 15 recto Receipt of the Law  
 fol. 16 recto Top Initials; bottom Pesach Lamb  
 fol. 16 verso Initials  
 fol. 17 recto Initials  
 fol. 18 recto Initials  
 fol. 18 verso Initials  
 fol. 20 recto Concluding vignette  
 fol. 23 recto David in Prayer  
 fol. 24 recto Initials  
 fol. 24 verso Initials  
 fol. 28 verso Initials  
 fol. 29 recto Temple  
 fol. 31 recto Map of the Holy Land with the division of the Land among the Tribes

The decorative initials in the text as well as the two vignettes are woodcuts, the other images copperplate engravings. The aedicula on the frontispiece is different from that of the 1695 edition in that, instead of the six Moses medallions, the removal of the shoe in front of the Burning Bush, based on an engraving by Merian, is to be seen. The two woodcut vignettes are different. Apart from the rearrangement of the sheets which was the bookbinder's mistake, four pictures have been moved and placed in a different position in the text. These are: 1. The Miracle of the Snake, 2. The Plague of Frogs, 3. The Defeat, and 4. The Exodus, which appear here in the sequence 4, 2, 1, 3.

On the frontispiece, after extolling the "beautiful" pictures, it reads: "engraved on copper by the artist who is the most accomplished in the art of engraving." The name of the artist is not mentioned. The name Abraham bar Jakob is only engraved on the map of the Holy Land, exactly as in the 1695 copy.

The ornamental initials, which are scattered throughout the text, fill squares approx. 3½cm high, the first letters being set off against genre scenes in the background. These little pictures illustrate the blessings and other places in the text, such as the removal of leavened bread, the blessing of the wine, the light, the questioning *seder* child, the passage: "With a strong arm Moses, who is given the rod from heaven"; the magicians in front of the Pharaoh; the passage: "This matzo ... this maror ..."; David with the lyre; a blessing "Blessed art thou, O Lord." In this manner the whole text is accompanied by pictures which are closely related to it. The pictures are also repeated when the same phrases are repeated in the text. The woodcut cycle compensates for the lack of explicitly Haggadah images in the copperplate engraving cycle. But that's not all—the different stages of the family *seder* celebration are all depicted: on fol. 2 recto one sees the various ritual acts, the washing of hands, distributing *matzot*, etc. in 13 small copperplate engravings in two columns, six in each column and the 13<sup>th</sup> in a wider format below.

On fol. 13 recto, where the plagues are listed, they are similarly illustrated in small pictures and arranged as one plate with three engravings each in three rows, the 10<sup>th</sup> engraving being at the bottom in the center.

The scope of illustrations was significantly expanded by the three new picture cycles—in the ornamental initials and in the two plates—expanded and deepened as, with the exception perhaps of the Plagues, these are not bible pictures but illustrations created especially for the Haggadah. The question is, who created them? The originator is not to be found in the immediate circle around Merian. Whether a Jew or a Christian, the artist was intimately familiar with the ritual of the Haggadah and knew the woodcut Haggadot which preceded our copperplate Haggadah equally well. It is enough to leaf through these Haggadot and soon the model is found. It is the Venetian Haggadah which has survived in numerous printed versions, the oldest of these being from the year 1629. The various editions come with translations into Judeo-Spanish, Italian, and Jewish-German, and have an impressive number of woodcuts, including the three cycles known to us: the initials with figurative scenes, the *seder* images and the Egyptian plagues.

The execution of the originals in the Venetian Haggadah are of exceptional vitality. The number of ornamental initials is greater here and their format slightly larger. The letters in the Amsterdam version are more rigid and straighter, the drawing of the figures is coarser and highback chairs appear instead of the Renaissance Savonarola chairs. The *seder* pictures are larger in the original woodcut edition than in the copy with copperplate engravings. In this cycle, the Savonarola chairs have been retained by way of exception. The images differ from the woodcuts on which they were based through the use of cross hatching. The most faithful are the copperplate copies of the plague images. Deviations are primarily to be found in the sequence and positioning of the small pictures. I used the edition from 1760 which was printed in Venice by Stamparia Vendramina with an Italian translation, a copy of which is in my possession. One of the oldest editions still in existence, the one printed in 1629, is held in the library of the Jewish congregation in Berlin (no. 9181). The older editions were brought out by the Bragadin publishing house in Venice which later merged with the Vendramin printing company. In Wiener's bibliography, the Venetian Haggadah of 1629 is listed with Italian, German, and Judeo-Spanish editions (numbers 30, 31, and 32). The description of the different editions there, however, is insufficient (the number of sheets is not given), so that an identification can only be made according to year, place of print, and details on a commentary included. That of Leon de Modena is probably never missing in Venetian illustrated Haggadot.

The addition to the Amsterdam Haggadah of three picture cycles from the Venetian Haggadah, as undertaken in the 1712 edition, is evidence that the older version of 1695 with the little changed bible illustrations borrowed from Merian, did not meet the requirements placed on Haggadah illustration. The endeavor to gain greater independency from Venetian book production, as achieved in Amsterdam, was not entirely successful in the field of Haggadah printing. However, the notion of creating a different type of Haggadah to replace Venetian woodcut illustrations was not abandoned. Like the Bomberg typeface from Venice, Venetian woodcuts were also considered old fashioned and technically obsolete by Dutch

printers. Their replacement by copperplate engravings was first seen in frontispieces where Italian, Augsburg, and Prague woodcuts were taken as models and copied as engravings. Renaissance forms were remodeled in the process in the Baroque manner. In the Amsterdam Haggadah the complete illustration, with the exception of the final vignette and the ornamental initials, is engraved. Why precisely the ornamental initials were executed as woodcuts and not engraved in copper can probably be explained by the fact that more copies can be made with a woodcut and that it is, therefore, better suited for an alphabet.

The supplemented, completed Amsterdam Haggadah of 1712 draws on tradition. As no illustrator could be found in Amsterdam who was able to create an independent Haggadah cycle, images from the Venetian picture cycle were adopted. Perhaps the need for independency was not that great; what does seem to have been important was to expand on the material in the illustrations, especially those with a liturgical content.

After one augmented version, a Judaization of the Merian pictures was made when reworking the illustrations in the 1712 edition. The slightly grotesque-looking hats in Holbein's Pesach lamb scene is modified in the form of contemporary headgear while carefully maintaining the outlines. In the Bnei Brak scene a new detail comes to light: one of the French windows in the background is open and an adult figure and a boy, obviously the disciples who tell the Wise Men that daybreak is coming, can be seen standing on the threshold. The light from the candle is correspondingly far away; a suggestion of daylight enters the room through an *oeuil-de-boeuf* window, creating shadows which are missing in the 1695 edition. The modeling of the figures is bolder than in the older version, the cross layers more frequent and dense. While matching precisely, with the exception of a few minor alterations, e.g. the pattern on the carpet and the cloud formation, etc., the main difference between the Merian engravings in the Haggadah of 1712 and those in the edition of 1695 is largely the use of shadow and the fracture of the layers of lines. The shadows are often on the opposite side; the lighting is intended to create a contrasting effect. The foreground and the surfaces to the front are deep in the shadows enabling a richer differentiation between shades in the areas toward the back. The image of the Temple and the figure of David, eerily elongated by the shadow, are decisively more effective than in the 1695 edition.

We do not know who the engraver was who created the plates for the new edition. If it were the same Abraham bar Jakob,<sup>28</sup> who made engravings of Merian's pictures, why did he not add his name on the frontispiece, as in the 1695 edition? 17 years lie between the two editions which were published by different printers. The changes made in the treatment of light suggest another artistic temperament and a more experienced hand. Unaltered, and therefore accompanied by the name of Abraham bar Jakob, is only the map of the Holy Land.

How the Judaization process was continued in more recent Haggadah illustration is a subject that goes beyond the scope of the title "From the Holbein bible to the Amsterdam Haggadah." In the light of our subject, however, one further Amsterdam edition of the Haggadah with Merian engravings deserves mention which characterizes the shift toward folk art, also with regard to the technique used. If we did not know that the engravings in the Amsterdam Haggadah of 1695 were modeled on Merian's work, then we would have been easily tempted

to assume that this Haggadah illustration—that appeared much later in 1765, albeit in the form of woodcuts—was the original. The whole development would have gained a completely different slant through this reversal of facts. One could have assumed that another woodcut cycle had existed, the whereabouts of which is still unknown, of which only later versions have survived. In the light of the Merian version, however, this interpretation of the development process seems impossible. The series of etchings in the Amsterdam Haggadah was created first, then the series of woodcuts afterwards. A publisher, focussed especially on editions with Jewish-German translations, Herz Levi Rofo (Naftali Herz ha-Levi, physician, from Emden) and his son-in-law Koßmann procured this edition. It is no. 115 in S. Wiener's bibliography.

Like the Venetian Haggadah, the Amsterdam edition of 1765 includes the Zli Esch commentary by Leon of Modena and a German explanation in Hebrew script.<sup>29</sup> Its illustration comprises the Haggadah pictorial cycle of 1695 and the ornamental initials of the Venetian Haggadah, as already to be found in the 1712 edition. The *seder* and plague pictures are not included here. The illustration of the printed edition of 1765 was influenced by the two older versions. It comprises a frontispiece and 32 sheets.

The frontispiece has no ornamentation and there is also no map of the Holy Land at the end. In part, the woodcuts show the pictorial composition of the etchings in the Merian picture cycle sometimes shown in the opposite order. The sequence is:

- fol. 5 verso Wise Men in Bnei Brak
- fol. 6 verso The Four Sons
- fol. 7 recto Abraham Smashes the Idols
- fol. 5 verso Abraham and the Angels
- fol. 9 verso Moses Slaying the Egyptian
- fol. 10 recto The Finding of Moses
- fol. 11 verso Moses and Aaron before the Pharaoh; Miracle of the Snake
- fol. 12 recto Plague of Frogs
- fol. 12 verso The Defeat of the Egyptians
- fol. 13 verso The Exodus
- fol. 15 recto Receiving the Law
- fol. 15 verso Pesach meal
- fol. 21 verso David in Prayer
- fol. 30 recto Temple

Some of the woodcuts bear the Latin monogram "NM." The compositions are greatly simplified, such as in the Plague of Frogs for example, where the difficult diagonal view has been changed to a primitive frontal perspective. The ornamental initials, scattered throughout the text, do not draw directly on the woodcuts of the Venetian Haggadah but are modeled on copies in the Amsterdam edition of 1712, from which the chairs with the high backs have been taken, the simplified, fleeting delineation of the figures, the changes to the costumes, as well as small differences in the drawing of the feather duster, among other things. In the Haggadah we come across a peculiar development—from woodcut to copperplate engraving

and back to woodcut again. 18<sup>th</sup>-century woodcuts are much more roughly executed compared to the older ones. The name Salomo Salman of London who “added the beautiful pictures, the woodcuts” is mentioned on the frontispiece. It is difficult to say what exactly is meant here by “added.” The typesetters and printers who worked on the edition are listed at the end of it: “[Created] by the typesetter who worked on this holy script, Eisik ben Moses Gans, Amsterdam, and the typesetter Manes ben Salomo of Amsterdam, and the printer Leiser Herz Segal of Amsterdam, the printer Leib ben David, the setter Josef ben Salomo of Falkenstem, the printer, the young Schema ja ben Benjamin Engelsch of Amsterdam.”

The Amsterdam Haggadah of 1760, in which the Merian pictorial cycle is reproduced in the form of woodcuts, was preceded by woodcut Haggadot with much smaller, schematized images from the same picture cycle, such as the Offenbach, the Fürth, and other editions, each of which only partly reproduces the cycle of pictures. These printed works differ so much that they cannot be considered Amsterdam Haggadot. They belong to folk art variations of the Amsterdam Haggadah which appeared in a number of different forms in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>1</sup> Mitt. f. jüd. Volkskunde, 1902, issue 9.

<sup>2</sup> East and West, 1904.

<sup>3</sup> Mitt. d. Ges. z. Erforsch, jüd. Kunstdenkmäler, 1909, 5/6.

<sup>4</sup> Chad Gadjä, 1914.

<sup>5</sup> Issues 3, 4, and 5.

<sup>6</sup> Soncino sheets, 1925.

<sup>7</sup> Publication 7, 1927.

<sup>8</sup> J. v. Schlosser illustrated this especially with reference to the Sarajewo Haggadah, a Spanish Haggadah from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, in his work of the same name. I trace this development with reference to the Spanish Haggadah in “Illuminated Haggadahs,” Jewish Quarterly Review, XIII, 1922, which I have dated differently to Schlosser. In the “Darmstädter Haggadah” by B. Italiener, A. Freimann, and August Mayer, in which my corrections were noted, the development in the use of Ashkenazic material can be particularly clearly followed. Borrowing from the pictorial cycle for the Christian bible does not necessarily mean that no Jewish pictorial cycle existed in the Hellenistic and Early Byzantine periods. However, it will have been reduced to such an extent in the Islamic cultural circle that Jews in Spain in the 13<sup>th</sup> century would have had to look for the connection in Christian bible illustration.

<sup>9</sup> I used the copy owned by Mr. Salli Kirschstein, Berlin.

<sup>10</sup> I used the copy in the library of the Jewish Congregation in Berlin.

<sup>11</sup> Printing, Enc. Jud. vol 6.

<sup>12</sup> Fig. Jewreiskaja Encyclopaedia, B. 14, article on typography, Russian,

<sup>13</sup> Op. cit. p. 57.

<sup>14</sup> Fig. Jüd. Lexikon, B. 1, article on Berachah.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Article on printing by I. Sonne in the Encyclopaedia Judaica, B. 6.

<sup>16</sup> I would like to thank Mr. Jeh. Gutmann for pointing out this exception.

<sup>17</sup> The Old Testament, printed by Adam Petri 1523. Basel. With woodcuts by Hans Holbein and Urs Graf. The copy held in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin has been used here. I would

like to thank Dr. Rosenberg from the Kupferstichkabinett who helped me establish the proportion of Holbein prints in the Basel edition.

<sup>18</sup> Printed by Melchior and Caspar Trechsel, Lyon 1538.

<sup>19</sup> Leo S. Olschki, *Le Livre Illustré au 15e s.*, Florence 1926, fig. 216.

<sup>20</sup> That Schlosser wrote of Michelangelo's Moses instead of Jeremiah is, of course, a slip of the pen.

<sup>21</sup> Matthäus Merian, Basel 1907–1909.

<sup>22</sup> The first part was published in 1625, the second in 1626, and the third in 1630 in Strasbourg by Zetzner. Parts I and II in one volume can be found in the Kupferstichkabinett, Part III in the Preuß. Staatsbibliothek.

<sup>23</sup> Published by Zetzner in 1630. A copy can be found in the Preuß. Staatsbibliothek.

<sup>24</sup> The Dutch editions were published by Nicolaus Visscher. The university library in Wrocław has a copy of the quarto edition which does not specify either the place or the year of printing. The Universitäts-Bibliothek Göttingen has a folio copy, printed in Amsterdam, without a date.

<sup>25</sup> I used the Berliner version.

<sup>26</sup> The Kupferstichkabinett has a copy.

<sup>27</sup> The Bibliothek der Jüdischen Gemeinde Berlin, no. 20999.

<sup>28</sup> To the question raised by Alb. Wolf as to whether Abraham bar Jakob was a proselyte or not, it should be mentioned that the signature of Abraham bar Jakob on the frontispiece of Horowitz, *Schene Luchot ha-Berit*, 1698— an engraving by the artist, to which Wolf refers— does not confirm this supposition. On the contrary: the abbreviation "ba'r" (בִּיד), as written there, shows that Abraham was the "son of the rabbi" Jacob. I would like to thank Mr. Jehoschua Gutmann, who examined the signature in the copy kept in the rabbi seminary in Berlin, for this information. This form of address proves that he had a Jewish father.

<sup>29</sup> The copy owned by Mr. Salli Kirschstein, Berlin, Nikolassee was used here. I would like to thank the kind collector as well as the director of the library of the Jewish congregation in Berlin, Dr. M. Stern, most sincerely for repeatedly letting me have access to Haggadah prints.



Feasting on the Pesach lamb, copperplate engraving from the Amsterdam Haggadah, 1695



Pesach meal, woodcut by Hans Holbein the Younger



**Pesach meal, engraving by Matth. Merian the Elder**



**The Four Sons, engraving from the Amsterdam Haggadah, 1695**



**Samuel anointing Saul, engraving by Merian**



**Hannibal declares the Romans to be his eternal enemies, engraving by Merian**



Picture of a battlescene by Merian



*Seder*, woodcut from the Venetian Haggadah, detail, print from 1760



*Seder*, engraving from the Amsterdam Haggadah, detail, 1712 edition



*Seder*, woodcut from the Venetian Haggadah, detail, print from 1760



**Abraham and the Angels. Engraving from the Amsterdam Haggadah, 1695**



**Abraham and the Angels, engraving by Merian**



**Abraham and the Angels, from the Amsterdam woodcut Haggadah of 1765**