

Nomination form

International Memory of the World Register

THE SARAJEVO HAGGADAH

ID Code [2016-06]

The Sarajevo Haggadah represents an exquisite example of the medieval Hebrew illuminated and decorative art. It is a manuscript written on parchment, with a series of superb illuminations. The Sarajevo Haggadah belongs to the most famous and most beautiful Hebrew illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages in the world. *Haggadah* in Hebrew means a story, a narrative, and this Haggadah comes into the category of so-called *Haggadot shel Pesah* – the Passover Haggadahs that are read on the occasion of the Jewish feast of Passover.

The Sarajevo Haggadah consists of part with illuminations and part with text. Illuminated part contains 69 miniatures on 34 folios (on the inner side of folios, outer side is blank). Illuminations represent certain narrative portions of the Pentateuch (the seven days of the Creation, the story of Cain and Abel, the story of Lot, the sacrifice of Isaac, the Exodus, the miracle of the Red Sea, Moses' Blessing etc.) with the main focus on the story of Joseph.

The part that contains text is written in Hebrew letters, Sephardic writing, neatly done and fully punctuated. This part has 50 folios, with a collection of lyrical works from the Golden Age of Jewish-Arab culture (10th-13th centuries), prayers for the Passover feast, and instructions for the supplements for the evening prayer on the Passover eve.

We propose the Sarajevo Haggadah to be nominated for the International Memory of the World Register, because we deeply believe that the manuscript deserves it by its historical value, artistic values and its global influence. And that is because the Sarajevo Haggadah has a journey and story unlike that of any other book. Not only is it one of the first, if not the only, illuminated Jewish manuscript, it has also survived a range of trials and tribulations over the centuries. The manuscript evokes of the times when Christians, Jews and Muslims lived together in the medieval Spain, testifies on expulsion of Jews from Spain, and also shows again the possibility of coexistence of Christians, Jews and Muslims in modern times, here in Bosnia and Herzegovina what is very important for Bosnian and Herzegovinian people. The Sarajevo Haggadah represents not only a significant item of Bosnian-Herzegovinian cultural heritage and tradition, but also belongs to the treasures of the world heritage. One of the things that makes this particular Haggadah so unique is that it is richly illustrated, which was against Jewish beliefs of the time. Also, the fact that it survived at all is no small miracle. It is known that the Haggadah went from Spain to Venice, and then to Vienna before landing in Sarajevo. Twice, it was rescued by Muslim librarians (once during the World War II and again during four years of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1990s). The former director of the National Museum of B&H, who saved the manuscript in 1990s, has explained why the manuscript matters for Bosnia and Herzegovina: "*The Haggadah came to Sarajevo for a reason. It was here to test us, to see if there were people who could see that what united us was more than what divides us. That to be a human being matters more than to be a Jew or a Muslim, Catholic or Orthodox. The Jewish heritage was as important to us as any other because it's what made Bosnia and Herzegovina the rich cultural mix that some people wanted to destroy. The Sarajevo Haggadah was a symbol of that.*"

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Owner

2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

Dr. sci. Mirsad Sijarić

2.4 Contact details

Name	Address	Telephone	Facsimile	Email
The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo, Zmaja od Bosne 3	+387 33 568-348	+387 33 262-710	kontakt@zemaljskimuzej.ba

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

If inscribed, the exact title and institution(s) to appear on the certificate should be given

The item being nominated: **THE SARAJEVO HAGGADAH**

Institution: **The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Sarajevo Haggadah, medieval Hebrew illuminated manuscript, originating from the mid 14th century (ca 1350). As to its geographic origin, the manuscript is Spanish, probably North Spanish. The Sarajevo Haggadah consists of 84 folios of parchment (without the blank leaves at the beginning and end, and the liturgical additions), measuring 160 mm by 220 mm, bound in 20 quires, mostly of 8 leaves per quire, with flesh side facing flesh, and hair side facing hair. The binding is not original. The Sarajevo Haggadah contains a series of illuminations on one side of the page only: 69 miniatures which are comprised on 34 folios at the beginning. The miniatures have frameworks in colour with spiral ornaments. On two folios miniatures are divided in four images on each folio, on 29 folios they are divided horizontally into two by a golden bar, and only on three folios are illuminated with one vertical miniature over the entire page. The illuminations show the history from the Pentateuch, starting from the Genesis, through Egyptian slavery and the Exodus, until the blessing of Joshua. The last four miniatures do not have a Biblical character.

On the following 50 leaves (folios) there is the text of the Haggadah, written on both sides in Sephardic type, fully punctuated. The text is rather decorated than illuminated, with the initial word of at least one paragraph boldly inscribed in large characters, in silver or gold, with floral motifs, dragons, animals etc. Only three units of the text are illuminated (f.3, f.25, f.31v). From folio 53 to folio 81 there is a collection of lyrical works. These poems are generally called Piyuth. On the folios 81-83 there are several prayers for the Passover feast. On the folios 83-93 excerpts from the Torah are written. Folios 94-98 contain transcribed chapters which are to be read on the first, second and the last day of the feast, as well as on the Day of the Song (f.96r). Folios 101-104 contain the instructions for the evening prayer on the Passover eve.

3.4 History/provenance

The word Haggadah is Hebrew for story or narrative, and such books have for centuries been known as Haggadah Sel Pesach – the Pesach Haggadah. The book consists of blessings that are spoken over wine, bread, while washing the hands, after meals, and forms a collection of stories, verses and prayers for the great festival of Pesach.

The manuscript originated in northern Spain in the second half of the fourteenth century, after 1350. This dating is based on the evidence of the clothing (robes with hoods, known to this day among the Jewish population from that area) and other objects depicted in the miniatures, and on some painted and decorative elements. For example, on the third page of the Haggadah, beginning with the words *Ha lahma*, three coats of arms are depicted. In the centre, near the top, above a painting of the entrance gate to a fort, there is an escutcheon with alternating dark red and gold bars, representing the arms of the city and province of Barcelona. In the right-hand lower section there is a crimson wing on a light-coloured escutcheon, the coat of arms of the Sauz family, and on the left, a bright red rosette on an escutcheon, the family crest of Queen Margaret of Aragon. The painter or purchaser paid special attention to these coats of arms, and a gilded rosette is to be found on pages six and nineteen on a flag, among lettering. All these features suggest that the Sarajevo Haggadah originated in the former Kingdom of Aragon, perhaps in Barcelona or its immediate environs (E. Weber, 1999, page 20), and that its purchaser must have been an extremely wealthy individual with certain connections at the Royal Court, or at least with access to it.

The manuscript began its journey towards Sarajevo around 1492, at the time the Jews were expelled from Spain. It was in Italy in 1609, as evidenced by a manuscript note by a censor from Rome: “Revisto per mi Gio. Domenico vistorini 1609” on page 105 (Sarajevo Haggadah, 1999, page 105). There is also a note on one of the blank pages on the sale of Haggadah, in which the names of the seller and purchaser are scratched and painted in white, stating that “the seller declares and certifies to have sold this Haggadah this day, Sunday August 25th 5270 (year 1510)”, (E. Weber, 1999, page 19). From this it may be concluded that the Haggadah was in Italy, probably in the north, that it changed hands during the sixteenth century, and that subsequently, presumably via Split and Dubrovnik, it reached the Balkans during the course of changes of residence.

Until it was sold, it belonged to the impoverished Cohen family, who retained it as a family relic, a memory of times of wealth and fame (Cohens were usually high in the clerical hierarchy). The Haggadah was sold to the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Cohen family for 150 Forints in 1894. After four years of studying and comparing this manuscript with others of its kind elsewhere in the world, Dr. David Muller and Dr. Julius Schlosser published a study on the Haggadah in Vienna in 1898. The Haggadah was returned to Sarajevo in October 1913.

Between the end of World War II and the beginning of 1992, it was housed in a special safe in the National Museum. It was rarely on display, and then only for a matter of hours:

- in 1996, on the occasion of celebrating the quadricentenary of the Jews’ settling in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- in 1988, during the exhibition “Jews in Yugoslavia”
- in 1995 on the occasion of Pesach

It was housed in a safe deposit box in the Union Bank from 1992 until December 2002, when it was placed in a specially designed exhibition space in the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, implemented thanks to the generous contribution of United Nations Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where it has been kept until today.

Legal status to date:

Based on information from the text of the catalogue “The Sarajevo Haggadah”, it has been established that the Supreme Court of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued a ruling stating that the Haggadah was the property of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that its keeper was the National Museum in Sarajevo.

Pursuant to Article 5, paragraph 4, Annex 8 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Article 39, paragraph 1 of the Code of Procedure of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments, at a session held on 21- 27 January 2003, the Commission to Preserve National Monuments adopted the Decision that the **movable property known as the Sarajevo Haggadah, property of Bosnia and Herzegovina, housed in the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo** (3 Zmaja od Bosne street) is proclaimed as a National Monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name	Address		
National Museum of Bosnia &	Sarajevo, Zmaja od Bosne 3		
Telephone	Facsimile	Email	
+387 33 262-710	+387 33 262-710	kontakt@zemaljskimuzej.ba	

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Name	Address		
Mirsad Sijarić	Sarajevo, Zmaja od Bosne 3		
Telephone	Facsimile	Email	
+387 33 668-025	+387 33 262-710	direktor@zemaljskimuzej.ba	

4.3 Legal status

The National Museum of B&H in Sarajevo, as the legal owner of the manuscript, was a state institution until 1992. Unfortunately, after the 1992-1995 war in B&H, the legal status of the Museum has remained unsolved, what in essence makes a threat to all its possessions, including the nominated manuscript.

4.4 Accessibility

As mentioned under paragraph, 3.4 , the Haggadah is being regularly displayed at the specially designed safe room at the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the visitors could enjoy its beauty and richness. Furthermore, the Haggadah under specific conditions and in the presence of museum monitoring team, might also accessible to the scientists and researchers, upon receipt of special authorisation by the museum management. However, in order to satisfy eventual request from the scientist the facsimile replica of Haggadah is also available for scientific research.

4.5 Copyright status

As the owner of the Sarajevo Haggadah, the National Museum is the sole holder of the copyright.

5.1 Authenticity

In 2001 (from 13 to 22 December 2001) a group of international experts engaged by UNESCO: Bezalel Narkiss from the Jerusalem University, Andrea Pataki from the Staatliche Akademie der Bildende Künste in Stuttgart, and Jean Marie Arnoult from the Bibliotheque National de France, Paris, examined the manuscript, confirmed its authenticity, and suggested only minor conservation interventions, which were performed by Andrea Pataki in 2001.

5.2 World significance

The superb medieval codex known as the Sarajevo Haggadah is certainly the most famous of Hebrew illuminated manuscripts: it is among the most beautiful and it is perhaps the most important. It is a significant specimen of the art of illumination, not unworthy to take its place among the historic medieval manuscripts. It is hence more than a priceless specimen of fourteenth century book illumination. It is at the same time the most important, faithful and complete testimony that has survived to the lost Jewish book art of the classical period.

Handwritten on bleached calfskin, the manuscript dates to the once-thriving Jewish community in Spain and describes events ranging from the Creation to the Jewish exodus from ancient Egypt to the death of Moses. A Haggadah is a narrative of the Exodus read at the Seder service during Passover. The 109-page text known as the Sarajevo Haggadah was presented as a wedding gift in the 14th century to a young couple in Barcelona, Spain. In 1492, when Spain expelled the country's Jews, a refugee brought the book to Italy. A rabbi later brought the Haggadah from Italy to Bosnia and Herzegovina and passed it down through his family until a descendant, Joseph Kohen, sold it to the National Museum in 1894. According to the above mentioned, the Sarajevo Haggadah is, for sure, one of Europe's most important Jewish relics. This manuscript is by all its features unique and irreplaceable, and its disappearance would be of great harm and impoverishment to the overall human heritage. Beside its rich history and artistic value, it has significant social importance, and bears witness to coexistent life of different peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Driven out of Spain and unwelcome in most of Europe, large numbers of Sephardic Jews settled in lands under the control of the Ottomans starting in the early 1500s. Bosnia was among the few countries in Europe that tolerated other ethnicities and Sarajevo became a rich cultural ferment that included Muslims, Catholics, orthodox Christians and many others, including Jews. The city of Sarajevo was often called Little Jerusalem.

5.3 Comparative criteria

1 Time

The manuscript originated in northern Spain in the second half of the fourteenth century, after 1350, the golden age of Spain. This dating is based on the evidence of the clothing (robes with hoods, known to this day among the Jewish population from that area) and other objects depicted in the miniatures, and on some painted and decorative elements. The manuscript began its journey towards Sarajevo around 1492, at the time the Jews were expelled from Spain and via Italy and Dubrovnik came to Sarajevo. From marginal notations we know it was sold in northern Italy in August 1510, and then examined by an Italian ecclesiastical censor in 1609. Subsequently it was brought to Sarajevo, Bosnia where the Jozef Kohen family sold it in 1894. Housed in the Bosnian National Museum, its fame attracted the interest of the Nazi invaders in 1941, which resulted in its being hidden in neighboring villages until after the war. During the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, just days before the National Gallery was bombed, it was once again removed and hidden. In December 2002, the first permanent public display of the newly restored Haggadah inaugurated the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a symbol of the hope for peace and democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2 Place

The manuscript contains decorations which show its Spanish origin (probably Barcelona) in the period of Jew-Christian-Muslim coexistence. On folio 3 there are three coats of arms: of the town and province of Barcelona, of the Sanz family, and of the Queen Marguerite of Aragon.

The Sarajevo Haggadah is housed in the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2002, with the help of several donors, the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina opened a special climate-controlled room for the manuscript, where the Sarajevo Haggadah still lies.

3 People

The manuscript evokes of the times when Christians, Jews and Muslims lived together in the medieval Spain, testifies on expulsion of Jews from Spain, and also shows again the possibility of coexistence of Christians, Jews and Muslims in modern times, here in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4 Subject and theme

The word "Haggadah" means telling. Indeed, within its 600-year-old pages this extraordinary, colourfully illustrated book tells of the diverse yet conflicted culture from which it emerged, as it tells the two thousand year old biblical history of the Jewish people and their Exodus from slavery in Egypt.

The book consists of blessings that are spoken over wine, bread, while washing the hands, after meals, and forms a collection of stories, verses and prayers for the great festival of Pesach.

The fame of Sarajevo Haggadah arises from its great age, beauty and sheer quantity of textual decorations and illuminated miniatures. The handwritten manuscript, written on vellum (calf skin similar to klaf used for a Sefer Torah), begins with 34 pages of miniature paintings. They are painted on one side of the vellum to prevent any bleeding of the paint from one side to the other. On these pages there are a total of 68 panel paintings that depict the Biblical narrative from the creation of the world through the death of Moses. The story of Joseph is given special attention in 17 panels. After this breathtaking introduction, the main text is written in a bold Sephardic script on both sides of the next 50 pages. The text is a wonder of decoration and embellishment displaying more than 50 ornamented and gilt word panels, assorted grotesques and floral decorations. The remaining 58 pages are relatively unadorned piyyutim, Biblical readings and prayers for the holiday.

The manuscript represents a book used in Jewish families on the occasion of the Passover feast, testifying a long and still alive tradition and social context.

5 Form and style

The Sarajevo Haggadah, a manuscript book, belongs to the group of Spanish-Provencal Sephardic Haggadahs. It was established with great certainty that the author of the manuscript was Jew, and the style is medieval Jewish, with the tradition of the group of Spanish illuminated Haggadas. The manuscript contains details which are specifically associated with

the Provence-Catalonia orbit. The series of illuminations is arranged in the fashion that had spread from France. The manuscript possesses the outstanding aesthetic, stylistic and linguistic values.

6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance:

Along with its historical and artistic value in general, the Sarajevo Haggadah today has a great emotional significance for the Jews and Jewish communities all over the world.

The Sarajevo Haggadah has endured the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsion of the Jews from southern Europe, the Nazi Holocaust and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It's been hidden under floorboards and in bank vaults, spirited out of danger by people willing to risk their lives, and shielded from the ravages of ethnic cleansing. Over six and a half centuries, this beautiful little book – which tells the story of the Jewish exodus from Egypt – has escaped the grips of enemies with hate in their hearts.



6.1 Rarity

Cecil Roth in his essay on the Sarajevo Haggadah says: “The superb medieval codex known as the Sarajevo Haggadah is certainly the most famous of Hebrew illuminated manuscripts: it is among the most beautiful: it is perhaps the most important. It is a significant specimen of the art of illumination, not unworthy to take its place among the historic medieval manuscripts. It is hence more than a priceless specimen of fourteenth century book illumination. It is at the same time...the most important, faithful and complete testimony that has survived to the lost Jewish book art of the classical period.

The Sarajevo Haggadah, a manuscript book, belongs to the group of Spanish-Provencal Sephardic Haggadahs. There are only a few remaining in the world, e.g. the British Museum houses a few major items, but experts regard the Sarajevo Haggadah as one of the most beautiful.

6.2 Integrity

The Sarajevo Haggadah has a journey and story unlike that of any other book. Not only is it one of the first, if not the only, illuminated Jewish manuscript, it has also survived a range of trials and tribulations over the centuries. The Haggadah was never publicly displayed. It was always kept in a special place and was available for viewing only to the select few. It was not seen, yet everyone knew about it. The Sarajevo Haggadah represents not only a significant item of Bosnian-Herzegovinian cultural heritage and tradition, but also belongs to the treasures of the world heritage.
