

The Dr. Gene Scott Bible Collection

STATION 51: "TORAH, TORAH, TORAH!"



Complete Hebrew Torah Scroll

13th Century Hebrew Torah

The Torah, the most sacred of Hebrew religious documents, consists of the Mosaic Books, or **Pentateuch**: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Torah scrolls were carefully prepared by Jewish scribes for existing synagogues, using a number of techniques to insure scrupulous accuracy,

including counting all the characters several ways, several times.

This caution was in stark contrast to the contemporary manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate Bible ([Station 3](#)), that resulted in massive corruption of the Latin text. In fact, Erasmus' Greek-Latin translation of 1516-22 ([Station 12](#)) demonstrated that virtually every chapter of the Latin Vulgate Bible was corrupt.

Though Jewish communities were scattered throughout Europe, wherever persecution eased or a haven was offered, a watershed event occurred for them in 1492 (the year Columbus sailed to America) when Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain gave the Jews of Spain a simple choice: persecution by the dreaded Inquisition until they converted to Catholicism, or exile to whatever safe haven they (along with the Moors) could find. The Spanish example served to incite waves of similar anti-Jewish persecution throughout Europe, as the Inquisition ran riot. As Jewish communities were scattered to the winds, they often preserved their Torah scrolls by burying them in elaborate sarcophagi.



This scroll was originally prepared on the finest sheepskin parchment by the Jewish scriptorium in Alsace-Lorraine (near present-day Strasbourg, France), during the 13th century. It was used in a synagogue in Bucharest (modern Romania) between 1250 and 1500 AD, and then, probably in reaction to the persecutions of that period, it was ceremonially buried and remained hidden for nearly 500 years! After the "Iron Curtain" came down in 1990, it surfaced once again.

The scroll is over 80 feet long, and is virtually complete. Such a Torah ranks with the greatest rarities of Judaica; modern synagogues would treasure it above all other treasures of their faith. Given the mass destruction of Jewish synagogues (and their contents) over time, and especially during World War II, it is indeed a miracle that this scroll survived, and is able to bear witness to the long tragic history of the Jews in Europe. We owe a great debt to those who cared for God's Word through the centuries, and made possible the correction of the manifold errors of the Medieval church that had corrupted the text to achieve their own ends.

Hebrew Torah Scroll - Circa 1600 A.D.

From a synagogue at Safad, this scroll was prepared for a group of Spanish Jews who found haven at Safad from the cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition. Carefully (and beautifully) written on thick leather, the scroll shows several corrections in a hand different than that of the original scribe. The text included on this scroll is from the Book of Genesis, 24:42 through 42:6.



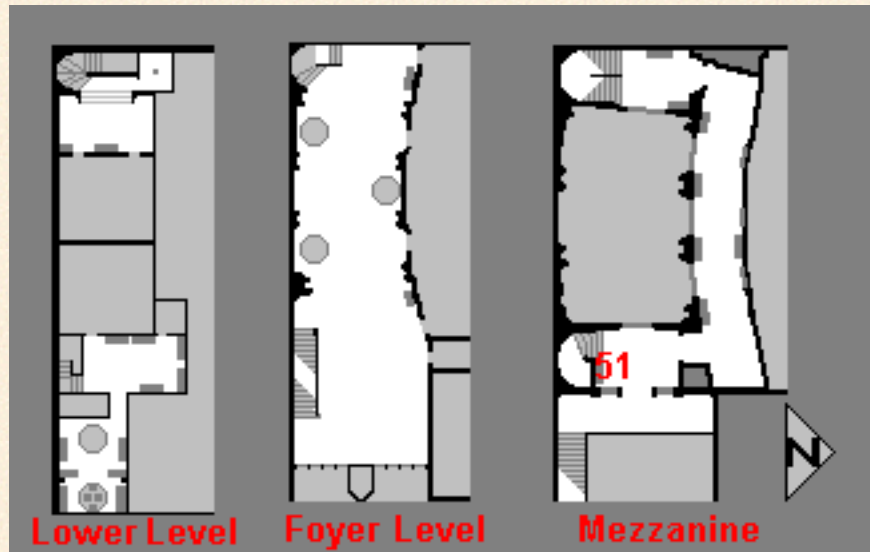
"Lamentations of Jeremiah" *megillah*

Other Hebrew items shown at this Station include early American editions of the Psalms and the Hebrew Bible. Don't miss Hutter's Hebrew Bible of 1587, shown at [Station 7](#).

STATION LOCATION MAP

Below is a floor plan map of the Cathedral in 3 sections, one for each level. The first section is the Lower Level, the second is the Foyer Level, and the third is the

Mezzanine Level. This station is a Wall case on the Mezzanine Level, at the red #51.



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