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## II. Visual Arts

Representations of the Ka’ba in Islamic art are found in two primary genres: miniature painting and ceramics. The oldest historical representation of the Ka’ba is found in an early 14th-century manuscript of the *Jami’ al-Tawarikh* (Edinburgh, University Library MS Or. 20, fol. 45r; see → plate 6b), a history of the world beginning with creation, written by Ilkhanid vizier Rashid al-Din (d. 1318). In this case, the Ka’ba appears within a scene in which Muḥammad is placing the black cornerstone of the Ka’ba onto a carpet. Each corner of the carpet is held by a member of a different tribe in an attempt to solve a dispute as to who would have the honor of carrying the stone before it is put back into place following the removal of idols and a rededication of the holy site, now in the name of Islam (Ettinghausen: 121; further on legends connected to the Ka’ba, see Wensinck/Jomier). Representations of the Ka’ba in narrative contexts also exist in 15th-century Timurid manuscripts of the *Khamsa* of Nizami (d. 1209), specifically in illustrations of the story of Laila and Majnun. Majnun, together with his father and other pilgrims, is seen approaching the Ka’ba during the ritual of the *hajj* (London, British Library Add. MS 25900, fol. 114v, dated 846 A.H./1442–43 CE; anthology made for Baysunghur, Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst MS I4628, fol. 305, dated 823 A.H./1420 CE; images in Ettinghausen: figs. 6–7, the latter erroneously labelled as held in the British Museum). In addition to such illustrations of texts, depictions of the Ka’ba on paper also appear on so-called *hajj*-certificates, 18th- and 19th-century documents confirming that a Muslim went on the pilgrimage to Mecca (for examples, see Porter: figs. 8, 14, 92). Similar illustrations appear in guides for pilgrims that also include images of other prescribed stations of the *hajj* (Milstein; Porter: 34–52). More schematic representations of the Ka’ba can be found in maps that were used to find the correct direction for prayer, the *qibla* (Porter: 64–66).

On Ottoman tiles, representations of the Ka’ba emerged in the 17th century and were produced into the 18th century (Ettinghausen; Erdmann; Porter: 118–19). These show the Ka’ba within representations of the sacred precinct of Mecca as a whole, rather than as a single building (for a comparison with a plan of the site, see Porter: 82–83). At times, the representation of Mecca is paired with one of Medina, with the Masjid al-Nabawi at its center, on the same or a second tile. A 17th-century example, now held in the collection of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (accession no. 48.1307), shows a bird’s-eye view of the Ka’ba and the mosque around it. In the upper section of this tile, a Qur’an passage emphasizing every Muslim’s duty to perform the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca is inscribed. Thus, such tiles may have been used as reminders to the faithful to complete the pilgrimage – their placement in mosques, e.g., on the porch of the Rüstem Pasha Mosque in Istanbul or in the Hagia Sophia in the same city (used as a mosque from 1453 until 1931) may support this argument. At the same time, the tiles may also have served as souvenirs for pilgrims, akin to the *hajj* certificate, although this is less likely considering that they were probably produced in İznik or Istanbul (Erdmann: 193).

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## Kabak, Aharon

Aharon Abraham Kabak (1883–1944) was a Hebrew author. Born in Smorgon in the province of Vilna, Kabak finally settled in mandatory Palestine in 1921. He played a central role in the literary, educational, and civic life of the city. After a few Zionist novels, Kabak introduced the realistic historical novel into Hebrew literature. The apex of his work is reached in *Ba-mish’ol ha-tsar* (1937, *The Narrow Path*). This novel offers a psychological and historical treatment of Jesus, drawing on evangelical accounts, Jewish sources, and pure invention. Kabak begins with a purely imaginative account of Jesus’ youth, a period not described in the Gospels (with the exception of Luke 2:41–52) or historical accounts. However, halfway through the novel, the omniscient narrator disappears, and the story is told from the points of view of Jesus and his devoted followers. One of Kabak’s main goals is to dis-

tinguish between the biblical Jesus and this imagined one, which he viewed as a myth created because of the human desire to see in Jesus more than just a charismatic preacher.

Perhaps the most interesting relationship involves Jesus and Yehudah Ish-Qerayot (Judas Iscariot). He is everything Jesus is not: cynical, depressed, and angry. Jesus tries his best to befriend him, and they enter into a somewhat uneasy relationship. Yehudah is the only friend of his youth who remains with him later, after he has become a leader of a group of disciples, and his role as confidant is key to the twist Kabak puts on the traditional gospel plot of betrayal: Yehudah, who understood Jesus better than anyone else, turned him in to the authorities because Jesus *wanted* him to do so.

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## Kabbalah

- I. Judaism
- II. Christianity
- III. Literature
- IV. Film
- V. Visual Arts

### I. Judaism

- Medieval Judaism ■ Modern Judaism ■ Modern Judaism – New Age Judaism

#### A. Medieval Judaism

**Introduction.** The mystical approach to the HB is essential to all teachings belonging to the field of Kabbalah (lit. "reception"). Besides its conventional meaning ("receiving a tradition"), the umbrella term Kabbalah denotes various esoteric methods and directions, in particular from the 12th century onward. Kabbalistic Bible commentaries focus first and foremost on the Torah in its strict sense (Pentateuch), on Song of Songs, and to a lesser extent on Psalms, Ruth, and Ecclesiastes. They feature theoretical explanations with ontological, theosophical, and eschatological relevance as well as practical exercises with an exegetical, meditative, or commandment-oriented impact. Specific genres in regard to the HB are also a) supercommentaries on kabbalistic explanations, e.g., *Me'irat 'enayim* (Enlightening the eyes; Ps 19:9) by Isaac of Akko (see "Isaac of Akko") on Nahmanides' commentary on the Torah, or the range of commentaries on the Zohar (see below), which is basically arranged as a homiletical

midrash on the Torah; b) "reasons of the commandments," like *Ta'amei ha-mitsvot* by Menahem Recanati (ca. 1250–1310); and c) to a certain extent, commentaries on the the Hebrew letters, including their shape, and their vocalization, for example *Sefer ha-Temunah* (Book of the Figure; 14th cent.), or *Ma-gen David* (Shield of David) by David ibn Abi Zimra (d. 1573). It is evident that different literary forms appear in books which are anthological in character, like the first kabbalistic work, *Sefer ha-Bahir* (Book of Brightness; cf. Job 37:21), though it was by and large conceived as a mystical midrash. In contrast to the philosophical preference for abstract concepts, basic kabbalistic terms were generally derived from the HB, either taken directly, like some of the names of the *sefirot* (see1 Chr 29:11), or through symbolic exegesis.

**1. The Setting of the Mystical Approach.** Aggadic speculations about the Torah as pre-existing wisdom and the blueprint of creation (cf. *BerR* 1:1) are surpassed in the kabbalistic perspective: the Torah became part and parcel of God's self-revelation, on the one hand being manifest within the dynamic system of the ten *sefirot*, i.e., emanated aspects forming the divine body, and on the other hand constituting Hebrew, the divine language or speech, including vowel points and intonations, as the spiritual origin of the creation process; the latter is already implied in the (pre-kabbalistic) *Sefer Yetsirah* (Book of Formation), and illustrated in the first kabbalistic commentary on this book by Isaac the Blind (ca. 1160–1235; son of Abraham ben David of Posquières), who derived the Hebrew word "letter" (*ot*) from the Aramaic root "to come" (*-t-*), expressing thereby the emergence from the first cause and the outcome of the sefirotic world (Scholem 1987: 278), which exists in multi-dimensional levels – each letter includes all other letters and a whole set of ten *sefirot*. Two kabbalistic schools can be differentiated as early as the 13th century, both of them following their own specific hermeneutic principles. The so-called prophetic-ecstatic school with its dominating representative Abraham Abulafia (see "Abulafia, Abraham ben Samuel") highlights various ways of letter-combination based on a theory of sacred names, accompanied by meditation techniques leading ultimately to what Abulafia calls the state of prophecy, namely the unification with the divine intellect. This mystical view and activity are based on the identification of the "perfect" Torah (Ps 19:8) as the sole ground of all forms of knowledge with the so called Active Intellect (Idel 1989: 34–37), which contains all forms of existence; in consequence, the Torah is compared by way of *gematria* (letter calculation) to both the "tree of life to those who lay hold of her;" (Prov 3:18) and to "Yiśra'el" (with the same numerical value [541] as *šekhēl ha-po'el* [active intellect] and *me'ushar* [happy]). In contrast, the theosophical-the-