



The Jerusalem Crown (Keter) Bible (2-Volume, slip-cased set): The Bible of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

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A beautiful, slip-cased edition of *The Jerusalem Crown (Keter) Bible*, printed in Israel on acid-free Bible paper. Crimson, partially gold-embossed linen cover.

The manuscript usually referred to as the Aleppo Codex is also known as keter (crown; arabic taj); “Crown of Aleppo”; or; “Crown of ben Asher.”; Written in the early 10th century in Tiberias, it is the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. The vocalization signs and accentuation marks as well as the masorah (a system of comments cross-referencing the spelling and the occurrence of particular words) were inserted by Aaron ben Asher, the most famous grammarian and scribe of his time. Because of his great attention to detail and accuracy, the keter became the most authoritative Hebrew Bible text.

The codex has a rich and dramatic history. It was stolen in the 11th century and brought to Egypt. It is believed that Maimonides copied from it in Cairo when he wrote his own torah scroll, and there are indications that he referred to the Aleppo Codex when preparing the hilkhot sefer tora section of his most famous work, the Mishneh Torah. From Cairo the codex was moved to Aleppo in the 14th century, where it remained in the Jewish community for more than 500 years. In 1947, anti-Jewish riots took place in Syria, protesting the UN resolution to divide Palestine. The synagogues in Aleppo were burned and the codex was presumably damaged in a fire. It was hidden until it could be brought to Israel in 1958. Unfortunately, a considerable portion—almost the entire first five books—was missing.

Renowned scholar Rabbi Mordechai Breuer worked for nearly 20 years reconstructing the lost parts. In 1956, the Hebrew University Bible Project in Jerusalem began making plans for an electronic version of the Bible based on the Aleppo Codex. As a result, Bible scholars now have what is widely believed to be the most accurate Hebrew Bible of all, and an alternative to Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, which is based on the Leningrad Codex. The Jerusalem Crown Bible, Keter Yerushalayim, is the first print edition of the Aleppo Codex. Jerusalem publisher Nahum Ben-Zvi worked with Zvi Narkiss, who created a new typeface, derived from the calligraphic square script of the original codex. The text was set in three columns, and then chapter and verse notations and the names of the weekly torah portions and their divisions for synagogue reading were added.

In a short appendix Rabbi Breuer explains the principles of the text reproduction and lists the deviations from the Leningrad Codex. Dr. Mordechai Glatzer, a worldwide recognized expert in the history of printing, edited the companion volume. It contains contributions on various aspects of the manuscript's significance and in-depth descriptions of its history. Notably Dr. Yosef Ofer's introduction to the Masorah clarifies where the codex's authority stems from and why its text can be regarded as nearly error free. The realization of the Jerusalem Crown project was made possible through the generosity of the publisher Thomas Karger and the Karger Family Fund, Basel.

The Jewish Publication Society is the exclusive distributor of *The Jerusalem Crown Bible* in North America.

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