

Yehuda Miklaf is a designer-bookbinder by profession. He was born in Nova Scotia, Canada, in 1942 and immigrated to Israel in 1986. While working in the University of Toronto Library in the 1970s, he came to appreciate all aspects of fine book-making, bookbinding in particular. He took his first course in the art from Emrys Evans of the university's Rare Book Library, and later studied with Anton Lucas, binder at the Metropolitan Toronto Library. He was also a keen observer of the methods of Michael Wilcox, considered Canada's outstanding designer-bookbinder. After five years of binding as a hobby, Miklaf made it his full-time occupation, and he has achieved world-wide recognition as both a binder and printer. He is a regular contributor to specialist journals, such as *The Printer*, a monthly newspaper for letterpress enthusiasts, and *Counter*, the journal of the Center for the Book at the University of Iowa, for which he wrote a delightful article on his sometimes-fruitful-sometimes-frustrating quest for printing equipment and types. He also hand-printed an insert for the journal to distribute to its subscribers. Miklaf faithfully follows and exchanges information via e-mail with other subscribers to book-related groups on the book arts, letterpress, and papermaking.

Three years after his immigration, a serendipitous meeting with Gregory Robison, an amateur printer from the USA who happened to be in Jerusalem with a small press and a few drawers of type, enabled Miklaf to exchange bookbinding lessons for instruction in printing, which he had long sought. In 1989, he established the Shalom Yehuda Press, in honour of the Jerusalem street on which his apartment and workshop are located. A happy choice of streets, for orientalist Avraham Shalom Yehuda (1877-1951) had been a collector of Hebrew, Arabic and Latin manuscripts which are preserved in the National Library. Miklaf prints on a Vandercook SP-15 press and on a small Model No.3 platen press. Some of his works are printed on paper that he brought with him from Canada; some on imported paper and some on paper made by hand by two Israeli papermakers: Natan Kaaren of Kibbutz Sde Yoav, and Izhar Neumann of Zikhron Ya'akov (the Tut Neyar Workshop). Some early sample sheets in Hebrew and English were printed on mitnan, native hand-made Israeli paper.

Yehuda Miklaf soon became an expert in ferreting out old printing equipment and types, often about to be discarded. He located the matrices used by Dr. Moshe Spitzer's Jerusalem Type Foundry, as well as some of the old types themselves from other sources - albeit not always of the best quality and not in the most useful sizes for the private press. His workshop drawers include fonts of typefaces such as Hadassah, HaTzvi Rahat, Haim, Stam, and the old standby Frank-Ruehl. A number of these types are in display sizes only, and some fonts are not complete enough for book printing. Many of the old types remain in sacks, awaiting sorting and cleaning, in order to determine if there is enough of each font and size to enable printing. So as partially to solve the problem of so few available metal Hebrew types, Miklaf found a typefounder in Europe who cast the David type (in Didot sizes) from the old Jerusalem Type Foundry matrices which are kept in the Jewish National and University Library: Miklaf convinced the owner to donate these and some equipment to the Library.

After printing a single-sheet keepsake which is now a collectors' item, Miklaf's first book was a Hebrew translation of Beatrice Warde's 1932 classic lecture on the importance of invisible printing, "The Crystal Goblet," which Dr. Moshe Spitzer had translated the year before his death. The essay was re-edited and proofed by Daniel Spitzer, Moshe Spitzer's son. Miklaf then printed the 12 page booklet, hand-composed in 12- and 16-point David, on Byronic text paper. "The Crystal Goblet" was stitched and covered by Miklaf in heavy paper made by Natan Kaaren, and two copies were bound in leather.

Yehuda Miklaf prints both in Hebrew and English. Two of his books are miniatures. One of these gems is "Am I Now? - A Saying of Kwang-tse" (1993), as told by John Cage; the

Hebrew text is printed in six-point Frank-Ruehl and the English in eight-point Times New Roman on hand-made abaca paper made at the Tut Nayar Workshop together with linoblock prints in four colours. Randomly placed images were printed on one large sheet of paper that was folded after printing, using the same blocks but different colours for each side. Some copies were bound in goatskin, in a slipcase of marbled paper; others were bound in quarter cloth of various colours with marbled paper sides also made by Miklaf.

The other miniature book of the Shalom Yehuda Press, printed in 1995, is 'Ros (pron: Roz)', a poem by Brian McClafferty. Handset in eight-point Monotype Bembo, it is printed on dampened Frankfurt cream paper made by the Zerkall Mills, Germany, in a limited edition of 50 copies. The book opens with a delicate frontispiece linocut by the printer. The book received a Distinguished Book Award at the Eighth International Conclave of the Miniature Book Society in Pasadena, California, in 1995.

One of the most impressive books printed by the Shalom Yehuda Press is "If I Forget Thee... Poems by Arturo Schwartz", 1994, in an edition of 60 copies. The work is a collaboration between the printer, the Jerusalem artist Gary Goldstein, and the Italian art historian, poet and essayist Arturo Schwartz, when he was in Jerusalem to lecture and to document a book collection he had donated to the Israel Museum. Miklaf hand-composed the text in 14-point Bembo. The drawings by Gary Goldstein were printed from photopolymer blocks and hand-coloured by the artist. Miklaf printed one copy in which the illustrations were not coloured, and ten additional copies of the text only. These are striking in that they reveal the beauty of the typography alone, for illustrations tend to compete with the text for the eye of the reader. He bound the books in quarter goatskin, with one of his own linocut prints on the side papers, which includes images of himself, his co-authors and other persons related to their meeting at the Israel Museum. With the edition comes a recording of Arturo Schwartz reading his poetry.

The definition of a private printer preferred by Yehuda Miklaf was expressed by printing historian Will Ransom: "A private press may be defined as the typographic expression of a personal ideal, conceived in freedom and maintained in independence."