

The Printing Museum

The Printing Museum- Soncino Jewish Printers Study Center- was launched in 1988, on the occasion of the V centenary of the publication of the first complete Jewish Bible with vowels and accents. It is located in a tower building of the XV century.

The history of the print is connected with the village and with the story of a Jewish family coming from Speyer, in Germany. Because of the several persecutions, the family of a doctor- rabbi, called Israel Nathan, were forced to leave Speyer and, after a lot of peregrinations, they arrived in Soncino. With the permission of the Duke of Milan, they were allowed to stay. At the beginning, they lent money but, with the founding of the Monte di Pietà in 1472, they had to stop their activity. That's why they became printers. Israel Nathan had the idea of applying the recent technique of *printing with movable types (thanks to Gutenberg) to his own language*. He created a Jewish typography in Soncino. On 22nd April 1488 it was published the first complete Jewish Bible with vowels and accents.

Giosuè Salomone, following the procedure of his father Israel Nathan, printed in Soncino about 25 editions and he brought the art of the printing to a high level. Later on, the family were forced to leave Soncino. Giosuè Salomone went to Naples where he printed, in 1492, the second edition of the Jewish Bible while Gershom moved first to Brescia, where he printed a pocket edition of the Bible (a copy of this one will be used by Martin Luther to translate the Bible into German), and then to Barco (near Orzinuovi, in the province of Brescia), where he printed the Selichot (a book of prayers).