

## "The Philipppson Bible: A World of Science and Art"

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Ludwig Philipppson's translation of the Hebrew Bible appeared in a 3-volume edition published in Leipzig (1858). Philipppson, a Reform rabbi who trained as a classicist, created an intriguing and grandly authoritative archive of image-text interface. Encyclopedic in appearance, the book is a masterpiece of graphic design. It contains various languages and alphabets, an expanded scientific apparatus, and a remarkable series of some 700 illustrations, wood-engravings produced and assembled from various sources. What is shown here is not the religious drama of the so-called Old Testament, but a world of natural and cultural history. The sacred text is presented within commentaries and images that were informed by contemporary intellectual discourses: the natural sciences, ethnology, archaeology, and the history of art.

We all know that this was the book from which Sigmund Freud was educated as a child. Re-gifted with the Bible at the age of 35, its text-image schema produced layers of memory in Freud's imagination throughout his lifetime. "Freud's Philipppson" is a topic unto itself, with ramifications too numerous and perplexing to be discussed here. But the engravings have yet to receive due attention in any inquiry. Philipppson's overwhelming reliance upon scientific depictions of flora and fauna, Orientalist ethnography, romantic landscapes of destruction, and Egyptian as well as Greco-Roman antiquities, reinforces the sense that what is presented in this Bible belongs to the empirical world of *Wissenschaft*, or knowledge for its own sake.

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