



LEATHER-BOUND BOOK OF ILLUSTRATIONS, ZE'EV RABIN, BEZALEL SCHOOL OF ART, PALESTINE CIRCA 1930

£950.00

A marvellous leather-bound book of illustrations from the Bezalel Art School depicting ten different places in Palestine alongside Biblical scenes. The illustrations are by Ze'ev Rabin, a leading figure in the Israeli art movement. Rabin's signature can be seen beneath the drawings. The drawings (and signature) are not drawn on the book directly, but instead printed out on paper and pasted on the book's pages. The book layout is such that the page preceding an image has a rectangular cut-out, so the image on the next page can be viewed as though it were framed. The book was made in Jerusalem circa 1930 and was a gift from the Town Clerk of Tel Aviv to a Captain Booth-Tucker. At 32cm tall, this is quite an impressive book.

The front of the book has a metal picture of Rachel's Tomb. The words 'Grave of Rachel' are written in Hebrew beneath the picture. In the bottom-right corner 'Bezalel' is written in Hebrew, and in the bottom-left is the word 'Jerusalem', also in Hebrew. On the first page of the book there is an official letter from the Tel Aviv Town Clerk. It thanks a Captain Booth-Tucker for his support towards the people of Tel Aviv and wishes him a happy Christmas and New Year. The letter is dated 'Xmas 1938'.

The first image in the book is of Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock is seen in the foreground surrounded by buildings and trees. The illustration is framed with golden pillars resting on lions at the sides and the top frame has two gazelles leaping among foliage. The following image is of Hebron, a contrast to the previous one. We are immediately drawn to the green hill with red and white flowers. On the hill we see Abraham about the sacrifice his son, Isaac, when a messenger of God stops him.

The next image is of Jericho. Green fields and palm trees are seen. In fact, the Hebrew bible describes Jericho as the 'City of Palm Trees'. Settlements and their inhabitants are visible on the outskirts with mountains in the distance. Jaffa is the next illustration featured. A rich, blue sea is prominent in this drawing. This is the port of Jaffa and we can see sailing ships and fisherman. Surrounding this calming scene are hectic whirlpools, and below is Jonah and the big fish who swallowed him. This is significant because Jaffa is the port from which Jonah began his journey out to sea.

Haifa is another port city. Here we see tall, luxurious palm trees towering above the city. The hill overlooking the buildings are scattered with colourful flowers and the sea stretches out beneath the sunset. Haifa is located by Mount Carmel, a culturally and historically significant mountain range. Elijah the Prophet is often thought of when discussing Mount Carmel, and he was said to have sometimes lived there. He can be seen in the corner of this image in his chariot among the clouds.

Tiberias is depicted similarly to the previous drawings. A sunset drops over the coastal city with boats coming and going. Palm trees sway over buildings and people stand on rooftops with their children. Beneath this scene, another takes place featuring robed men sitting in deep thought. Rabin also uses the setting sun to capture the beauty of Safed, a Holy place in Judaism. Safed is the highest city in Israel and today is a popular destination for travellers. Its winding streets, occupied by men and their animals, break up the buildings and trees. Fields stretch beyond under the flaming red sun. The bottom of the picture is lined with animals.

The Tower of David is depicted. The impressive citadel stands on the edge of the Western gate to the Old City of Jerusalem. It is drawn from below, making it seem even more awe-inspiring. The surrounding pattern is something one might find on the ceiling or walls of an ancient building. It uses criss-crossing arches to present pink flowers. The following image is of the Western Wall, or the Wailing Wall. People can be seen in deep prayer at the wall. It is one of the holiest and most important sites for a variety of groups.

The final image in the book is of the Tomb of Rachel. This is also the image of the book's cover, and so this nicely brings the book to a complete circle. This image is in more detail. Unlike the previous drawings where they were all set during the day or evening, this one is set at night. The sky is a navy blue with stars strewn across the sky.

This is an incredible book celebrating a variety of cities and biblical scenes! A great item for anyone who appreciates art or Judaica.