A STUDY OF SOME UNKNOWN HAND-PAINTED MEGILLOTH OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

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In our previous study of the oldest illustrated megilloth depicting scenes from the Book of Esther we were able to ascertain that, with the exception of one which can be ascribed to the end of the fifteenth century, it is only in various megilloth dating from the seventeenth century onwards that we begin to find a fully-developed cycle of illustrations to the Book of Esther.

The purpose of this second study is to continue our examination of the illustrated Megillah by discussing some megilloth whose illustrations belong to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Moreover, it was precisely the eighteenth century which produced the greatest number of illustrated megilloth, for in the following century this art appears to have declined, the illustrated megilloth of the nineteenth century being both limited in number and of lower artistic quality; some are engraved, and therefore do not

1 For permission to have photographs taken of the scrolls in their charge I am indebted to Dr. K. B. Gardner and Dr. Rosenwasser of the British Museum, M. F. Salet of the Musée de Cluny, Mr. S. Cohen of the Jewish Museum in London, and Dr. W. Irtenkauf of the Württembergische Landesbibliothek at Stuttgart. My sincere thanks are also due to Dr. P. Skrine of the University of Manchester for his devoted help in rendering my text into readable English.

For permission to reproduce photographs I am indebted to the Trustees of the British Museum (Pl. I(a) and (b) and Pl. II(a) and (b)), the Head Curator of the Musée de Cluny (Pl. II(c), Pl. III(a) and Pl. iv (a)), the Trustees of the Jewish Museum (Pl. III(b) and Pl. IV (b)), the Keeper of the University Library, Strasbourg (Pl. II (c)), and to the Keeper of Manuscripts at the Württembergische Landesbibliothek (Pl. II(d)).

Pl. IV(c) is reproduced from P. Goodman, The Purim Anthology (Philadelphia, 1949), Fig. 4, and I am grateful to the Jewish Publication Society of America for permission to reproduce this illustration.


4 Namely the John Rylands Megillah and the Liverpool Athenaeum Megillah.
concern us,\(^1\) and those hand-painted are merely decorated with flowers and plants.

This study will therefore deal with *megilloth* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, periods which excelled in the production of hand-painted *megilloth*. We cannot hope to mention all those extant within the limited scope of this article. There are still a considerable number of hand-painted *megilloth* in public or private collections which so far have not been brought to the attention of scholars. Perhaps future articles will place these on record.

The *megilloth* chosen for this study are practically unknown. Although some of them have been indicated in catalogues, none of the articles on illustrated *megilloth* already published, and none of the books on Jewish art which also deal with *megilloth*, has mentioned them. As we shall see, only two have been referred to: one at the British Museum (MS. Or. 1047) and one belonging to the Jewish Museum in London.

We shall begin this study with a close examination of B.M. MS. Or. 1047. This has been described by G. M. Margoliouth\(^2\) in the usual manner: he gives dimensions, mentions that there are illustrations, and concludes: "German hand, probably of the sixteenth century". This author has made a similar but more detailed statement as to the date of this *Megillah* and its illustrations in a later publication:\(^3\) "The British Museum MS. Or. 1047, which is of German origin and probably belongs to the sixteenth century, contains on the upper and lower margins and in the space between the columns a large variety of coloured drawings, representing the events recorded in the book."

Before undertaking any discussion as to the date of this *Megillah*, we should perhaps describe its illustrations in greater detail.

\(^1\) An engraved *Megillah* of the nineteenth century is described by Ernest Naményi, *Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher der Biedermeierzeit* (Markus Donath), in Jubilee Volume in Honour of Professor Bernhard Heller (Budapest, 1941), pp. 252-7.


\(^3\) "Hebrew Illuminated MSS.", in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 20 (1907-8), 134.
The scroll, which is made up of eight strips of vellum, measures 47 cm. by 380 cm. It is written in fourteen columns, each measuring 29.5 by 18 cm. The illustrations fill the spaces above, below and between the columns, following the horizontal and vertical lines, these spaces sometimes being divided into several scenes. There are indeed some other hand-painted or engraved megilloth in which all the free space surrounding the rectangular text-columns is filled with illustrations, but these rarely depict scenes from the story of Esther in the vertical spaces; these are usually filled either with decorative patterns or isolated standing figures. The artist of B.M. MS. Or. 1047 did not plan the order of his illustrations very carefully beforehand; consequently we shall find some illustrations relevant to the text in one column overlapping and placed above or below another column. Moreover, the artist did not always arrange the illustrations in a very precise sequence around the text columns. As we shall see later, some illustrations should be followed from the space above the column down to the space below it, while the contrary also occurs, the sequence of scenes, starting in the space below the text-column, winding up along the left-hand side of the column to finish in the upper space. If we compare the disposition of the illustrations around the text columns in both the Liverpool Athenaeum Megillah and in B.M. MS. Or. 1047, we cannot fail to notice the very meticulous order in which the artist of the former places his illustrations close to the corresponding text. This cannot be said in the case of the British Museum Megillah.

We shall begin by describing the scenes illustrated in the British Museum Megillah. With the exception of one illustration, all have a Hebrew inscription, consisting of single words or groups of words taken from the text of the Book of Esther. Although the illustrations could be described without reference to the inscriptions, it is significant that they correspond exactly to the scenes depicted; furthermore, these inscriptions are an additional proof that the artist was Jewish, as both the illustrations

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1 The only other megillah with illustrations entirely surrounding the text is the one in the Liverpool Athenaeum. Cf. B.J.R.L., xlv. pp. 174 ff.
2 Cf. p. 89 below (between III and IV).
3 Cf. p. 92 below (IX, below).
4 Cf. p. 92 below (X, below).
and the inscriptions were made at the same time and by the same person, the ink being identical.¹

We shall describe the illustrations of the scroll in the following order: (a) those above or below the fourteen text-columns, from the right to the left, generally one above and one below each column; (b) those between the text-columns, several scenes to be read downwards.

I. Above: (Pl. II(a)), a long table; at its extreme right-hand end, Ahasuerus in profile, wearing a crown; seated along the table, six men, full face, and at the extreme left a seventh, in profile. With the exception of Ahasuerus on the right, all seven are designated by an inscription (Esther i. 14): “Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia.”²

Below: seven men standing, some carrying a sword or lance; all are wearing green hats and dark blue cloaks, official robes, since the words above each figure (i. 10) designate them as: “Nehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that ministered in the presence of Ahasuerus the king.”

Between I and II: (1) The execution of Vashti:³ a woman reclining on the ground with her head leaning on a low stool. Above her a crown indicates her to be the queen; behind her, the executioner stands with raised sword. Above is an inscription ii. 1: “... he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.” (2) A man seated at a table writing a decree, with the inscription: “The king’s scribe.” (This alludes to i. 22.) (3) Two soldiers standing (inscription indecipherable). (4) Just below, and almost effaced, a group of women with the inscription (ii. 2): “that they may gather together all the fair young virgins.” On their left, a man seated,

¹ It should, however, be noted that most of the inscriptions having faded, another hand has rewritten them, carefully following the original lettering. But some of these inscriptions were not retouched by this second scribe, so that they are now quite illegible. Mention will be made of these as they occur.
² All translations of the Hebrew inscriptions are taken from the Revised Version of the Bible.
with a plant in his hand (ii. 8): "Hegai, keeper of the women."

II. Above, and following the scene above I: a row of trees and a servant standing near the table, pouring wine for the princes. The inscription reads (i. 5): "the garden."

Below: a man, wearing a costume of oriental appearance and a turban, seated at a reading-desk on which lies an open book. This depicts Mordecai. Before him, three men, all wearing hats; these doubtless represent Jews. The inscription is as follows (ii. 5): "there was a certain Jew . . ., whose name was Mor­decai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish."

Between II and III: (1) Esther standing before Hegai. The inscription reads (ii. 9): "And the maiden pleased him." (2) A group of young women, one standing apart, with the inscription (ii. 8): "when many maidens were gathered together . . . Esther was taken", the intervening words being omitted. (3) A young woman holding a plant in her hand. Inscription (ii. 7): "And he brought up Hadassah." ¹

III. Above: a man, wearing a turban, holding a flower and standing outside a palace; a staircase leading up to it and, next, the interior of the palace, with the inscription (ii. 9): "and the seven maidens, which were meet to be given her." The illustration therefore depicts Hegai, Esther, and the maidens he had given her.

Below: Ahasuerus placing the crown on Esther's head and holding the sceptre out towards her. Inscription (ii. 17): "he set the royal crown upon her head." Next to this scene; the king's feast for Esther: a table, with a soldier at each corner and Esther standing between two of them on the left-hand side; four men are seated, full face, at the table. Inscription (ii. 18): "Then the king made a great feast unto all his . . . servants."

¹ See The Babylonian Talmud, ed. I. Epstein (London, 1938), vol. viii, The Tractate Megillah, 13a, ibid. p. 75: "Why then was she called Hadassah? After the designation of the righteous who are called myrtles, for so it says (Zech. i. 8) 'And he stood among the myrtle trees'." See also Ginzberg, op. cit. p. 384: "Hadassah, or Myrtle she is called, because her good deeds spread her fame abroad, as the sweet fragrance of the myrtle pervades the air in which it grows. In general, the myrtle is symbolic of the pious, because, as the myrtle is ever green, summer and winter alike, so the saints never suffer dishonour, either in this world or in the world to come."
Between III and IV: (1) Two men being hanged on a tree; inscription (ii. 23): “they were both hanged on a tree.”¹ (2) Bigthan and Teresh, standing close to each other, talking together; on the other side of a wall, Mordecai overhearing their conversation. Inscription above Mordecai (ii. 22): “And the thing was known to Mordecai.” Inscription above Bigthan and Teresh (ii. 21): “two of the king’s chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus.”²

IV. Above: Haman, wearing the red costume and breastplate of a soldier and carrying a sword and a lance, standing in the open in front of several men; one of these is kneeling in front of him, the others are removing their hats as a sign of reverence. Inscription (iii. 1): “did king (Ahasuerus) promote Haman.”

Below: Ahasuerus, on the throne, holds out the royal ring to Haman, standing before him. Inscription (iii. 8): “And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus.”

Between IV and V: (1) Mordecai standing before Haman. Inscription (iii. 2): “But Mordecai bowed not.” Haman is wearing the same costume as before. (2) Haman standing alone, a raised sword in his hand. Inscription (iii. 5): “then was Haman full of wrath.”

V. Above: three men seated on chairs in the open air, with a servant pouring wine into a glass. Inscription (iii. 15): “and the king and Haman sat down to drink.”

Below: the scribe writing letters containing the orders against the Jews; Haman, sitting opposite the scribe and dictating to him, is wearing the enormous ring given him by Ahasuerus. Inscription (iii. 12): “and there was written according to all that Haman commanded.” Next to this, soldiers marching. Inscription (iii. 15): “The posts went forth in haste by the king’s commandment.”

Between V and VI: (1) Mordecai in mourning, barefoot and wearing shapeless garments, leading a group of Jews, all of them also in mourning. Inscription (iv. 1-2): “and cried with a loud and a bitter cry: And he came even before the king’s gate.” (2)

¹ This refers to Bigthan and Teresh.
² Chronologically scene 2 comes before scene 1.
Esther's servant brings clothing to Mordecai. Inscription (iv. 4): "and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai." (3) Hathach goes to Mordecai. Inscription (iv. 6): "So Hathach went forth."

VI. Above: Esther seated on her throne inside the palace; three armed attendants standing beside her and two maidservants entering the room. Inscription, almost illegible (iv. 4): "And Esther's maidens and her chamberlains came and told it her; and the queen was exceedingly grieved."

Below: two scenes. Left: Esther seated on the ground, her hair hanging loosely down one side of her face; in front of her a group of women, also sitting on the ground. Inscription (iv. 16): "I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king." Right: Ahasuerus on his throne, wearing a crown and holding out his sceptre to Esther. Inscription (v. 2): "and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre."

Between VI and VII: (1) Mordecai, in mourning, hands Hathach a copy of the decree for Esther. Inscription (iv. 8): "Also he gave him the copy of the writing." (2) Hathach brings the copy of the writing to Esther. Inscription (iv. 9): "And Hathach came and told Esther." (3) Hathach returns to Mordecai to give him Esther's first reply. Inscription (iv. 12): "And they told to Mordecai Esther's words." (4) Mordecai seated on the ground, next to him a group of Jews; this occurs during the three days' fast ordered by Esther. Inscription (iv. 17): "So Mordecai went his way."

VII. Above: Esther, wearing a crown and seated at a table, with Ahasuerus standing on the right and Haman on the left; the various small figures represent attendants, one of whom is blowing a trumpet. The inscription above this scene is almost illegible, the ink having completely faded; the last words can, however, be deciphered (v. 5): "to the banquet that Esther had prepared." To the left of this scene, Haman, having left Esther's palace, passes in front of Mordecai, who refuses to rise in deference to him. Inscription (v. 9): "(Haman) was filled with wrath."

Between VII and VIII: (1) Haman's wife Zeresh and some armed men, his friends. Inscription (v. 10): "Nevertheless Haman refrained himself; and went home." (2) An empty
gallows with a ladder leaning against it. Inscription (v. 14): "and he caused the gallows to be made." (3) Ahasuerus reclining in a four-poster bed. Inscription (vi. 1): "... could not the king sleep."

VII. Below: Men carrying heavy books. Inscription (vi. 1): "to bring the book of the records of the chronicles." The leader standing in front of Ahasuerus' bed, with an open book in his hand on which are written two extracts from vi. 1-2: "and they were read before the king... that Mordecai had told of Bigthan and Teresh."

VIII. Above: Ahasuerus on his throne, inside the palace; two armed guards standing behind Haman, who is speaking to the king. Inscription (fragments from vi. 10): "Then the king said... Make haste... and do even so to Mordecai... let nothing fail." Next to this scene, to the left, Haman cutting Mordecai's hair (Pl. I (a)). This is not in the text of the Book of Esther. To the left, Haman is seen leading the royal horse, which is bearing the crown by which the king intends to honour Mordecai. Inscription (not in the text): "Haman went to Mordecai."

Between VIII and IX: (1) Mordecai seated on the horse, led by Haman; Haman's daughter emptying the contents of a chamber pot on to her father's head (Pl. I (a)). Inscription (not in the text): "Haman's daughter pours filth from a vessel." Next to Mordecai and Haman there is a second inscription—unlike most others not in a cartouche—which is in the same hand as all the others. This inscription is an adaptation of vi. 11 and reads: "And Haman caused Mordecai to ride on horseback and proclaimed before him." (2) Haman, seated, speaks to his wife Zeresh, with whom there is a young man, perhaps a son. Inscription (vi. 13): "And Haman recounted unto Zeresh his wife." (3) Two elegant courtiers, walking, each wearing a sword. Inscription (vi. 14): "and hasted to bring Haman."

1 This inscription is written with the same ink as that used for the drawing of the book. Thus the text was written by the artist who illustrated the Megillah. In the Rylands Megillah, on the letter brought from Mordecai to Esther by Hegai, there is also an inscription relevant to the text, cf. B.J.R.L., xliv. p. 167.

2 This illustrates an episode narrated in a Midrash; we shall return to this episode later.
VIII. Below: Esther's banquet. On the right, three men blowing trumpets; next, three figures seated: Ahasuerus, then Haman holding a goblet, and lastly Esther, wearing a crown and pointing towards Haman. On the left is a servant pouring wine into a cup. Inscription (vii. 1): "So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen."

IX. Below: Ahasuerus standing between two trees, which indicate that he is walking in the garden. Inscription (vii. 7): "And the king arose in his wrath." The next scene, which coincides with the previous one, extends above and below IX and between IX and X, and depicts ten men, each holding an axe and chopping down trees (Pl. I (b)). Next to each figure is the name of one of the ten sons of Haman, written in a small cartouche, and reading from the lower margin to the upper (ix. 7-9): "Parshandatha; Dalphon; Aspatha; Poratha; Adalia; Aridatha; Parmashta; Arisai; Aridae; Vaizatha."¹

X. Above: Haman kneeling in supplication before Esther, who is reclining on her four-poster bed; they are being watched by Ahasuerus. Two inscriptions; next to Ahasuerus (vii. 8): "Then the king returned out of the palace garden . . ." and above Haman: "and Haman was fallen upon the couch whereon Esther was." To the left of the above group, a servant, standing. Inscription (vii. 9): "Then said Harbonah."

Between X and XI: (1) Haman being hanged on the gallows. Inscription (vii. 10): "they hanged Haman on the gallows." (2) Haman's house, with the inscription (a variation on viii. 1): "This is Haman's house which was given to Esther." (3) A vineyard, belonging to Haman's house.

X. Below: Esther before Ahasuerus. There is an empty cartouche, but the illustration would doubtless depict Ahasuerus offering Haman's house to Esther.

XI. Above: Ahasuerus, seated on his throne in royal apparel, handing Mordecai the royal ring. The inscription in the cartouche reads (viii. 2): "And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman." Next to this scene, on the left: a

¹ This also illustrates an event recorded in a Midrash, to which we shall refer later. It should be noted that on Pl. I(b) only nine sons are visible, the tenth son being painted below the next text-column to the left.
scribe writing at a table piled with folded letters. Inscription (viii. 9): "Then were the king's scribes called at that time."

XII. Above: two messengers carrying sacks on their backs. Only the first word of the inscription in the cartouche, "posts" (viii. 10), can be deciphered.

XI. Below: A rhinoceros and two elephants being led by a man. The inscription is taken from viii. 10 and in the Revised Version reads: "riding on swift steeds that were used in the king's service, bred of the stud." There is, however, some uncertainty about the exact meaning of the words in question, though they obviously refer to the animals on which the messengers were riding: the artist therefore chose to draw those exotic animals of which he had seen pictures and which he imagined would be suitable in the context.

XII. Above: Mordecai, wearing the royal apparel, is greeted by a man who has removed his hat. Inscription (viii. 15): "in royal apparel of blue and white."

Between XI and XII: A very high gallows, from each of the ten arms of which a figure is hanging; a ladder is placed against each arm. Inscription (ix. 10): "The ten sons of Haman."

Between XII and XIII: Three depictions of the houses and gates of a walled town. Inscription (ix. 6): "And in Shushan the palace."

XII and XIII. Below: the Jews attacking their enemies. Inscription (ix. 6): "the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men."

XIII. Above: Jestors playing instruments. Inscription (viii. 16): "The Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honour." Next to this scene, on the left, people seated on the ground and, seen from the back, watching the jesters of the preceding scene. Inscription (ix. 19—there are only selected Hebrew words of this sentence): "The Jews . . . that dwell (in the unwalled towns), make . . . a day of . . . feasting, and a good day."

Between XIII and XIV: (1) A young man bringing a bowl of fruit to an elderly man seated on a chair. Inscription (ix. 22):

1 The Authorised Version gives: "and riders on (mules), camels and young dromedaries."
"and gifts to the poor." (2) A man sitting at a table, holding in one hand a bowl of fruit and in the other a fruit; another man standing next to the table. Inscription (not in the text) : "Two portions as gifts to the poor." 

(3) A young man bringing a bowl of fruit to a seated man. Inscription (ix. 19 and 22, the same words occurring in both verses): "and sending portions one to another." (4) The circumcision of a young man. This is a very unusual illustration, and the only one of its kind known to us in an illustrated megillah. The man carrying out the circumcision is kneeling in front of a naked male figure, who is being held by another man standing by a chair. The inscription (viii. 17) explains the presence of such an illustration in a megillah: "And many from among the peoples of the land became Jews." 

XIV. Above : Esther and Mordecai, seated at either side of a table, writing the second letter. Both figures wear crowns. Inscription (ix. 29): "Then Esther the queen . . . and Mordecai the Jew wrote."

XIV. Below : Two ships at sea, with the inscription (x. 1): "upon the isles of the sea." This verse refers to the tribute which Ahasuerus exacted from the whole of his empire.

On the left side of XIV we find seven jesters, each playing a different musical instrument. Hebrew names have been written next to six of these jesters. They are the following: Beer, Shimon, Chayim, Hirsh, Wolf, and Nachem. These names are not in the same hand as the inscriptions in the cartouches, and have certainly been added by an owner of this Megillah. They are all men's first names and as they are evidently Ashkenaz (i.e. belonging to the German-speaking Jews), we can assume that this Megillah was at one time in the possession of an Ashkenaz family.

The subjects chosen by the artist of this Megillah point to his

1 This illustrated the custom of giving at least two kinds of food to the poor.

2 This illustration is considerably removed from the text from which the inscription is taken, in column XI. It may, however, have been the intention of the artist to place this scene only towards the end of the scroll, when he could show, amongst the various scenes of rejoicing after the Jews had passed through all their ordeals and were free from persecution, that other people would adhere to their creed.
remarkable originality; their iconography is confirmed by additional inscriptions taken from the text, with which the artist was undoubtedly well-acquainted. For instance he depicted Esther holding a spray of myrtle in her hand, an allusion to her Hebrew name Hadassah (myrtle).

Let us now consider some other unusual illustrations in this scroll. At the end of the Megillah the artist depicted a very unusual scene, the circumcision of a young man, not of an infant as is generally shown in illustrations of circumcisions in Hebrew manuscripts,1 the law of circumcision applying on or after the eighth day.2 The artist of the Megillah, alluding to the text in which the conversion of nations is mentioned, showed the conversion of a young man, the conversion of any male to Judaism being marked by circumcision.3 We should add that the depiction of this scene is unique in illustrated megilloth.

What is probably another example of this artist’s originality in interpreting the text occurs in the representation of ships at sea for the text (x. 1) “and upon the isles of the sea.”

It should be noted that we find in this Megillah the first known illustration of the text “upon the isles of the sea”. The other seventeenth-century megilloth, such as the Rylands Megillah and the Liverpool Athenaeum Megillah, do not contain any illustration of this text. However, that type of eighteenth-century scroll which contains herms, and of which there are many examples,4 contains the illustration of a ship beneath the last text-column. Various hand-drawn illustrations in megilloth of the eighteenth century also depict ships beneath this text. For instance the Megillah in the collection of M. Loinger at Strasbourg contains the illustration of a ship towards the end. At the time we connected it

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1 We have seen several similar illustrations in a prayer-book at the Palatine Library, Parma, and one in the prayer-book at the Bibliotheque de la ville de Nimes. Both manuscripts are of the fifteenth century.
2 If the child is too weak or too small at birth, the circumcision only takes place once the child has attained the normal weight of an eight-day-old boy.
3 See Genesis xvii for the conversion of Abraham and Ishmael.
4 See for instance the scroll at the Landesbibliothek at Fulda (MS. A6), of which the first few text-columns with their illustrations are reproduced in the Encyclopaedia Judaica, vol. 6 (1930), Fig. 3 (between cols. 812-813).
with this verse (x. 1). Our interpretation is now confirmed by the inscription in B.M. MS. Or. 1047.

In addition to these three very original interpretations of the text, the artist does in several instances use the Midrash to the Book of Esther as a source for his illustrations. This in itself is nothing new. Jewish artists had made use of various Midrashim to provide subjects in illuminated manuscripts throughout the whole of the Middle Ages. The Midrashim to the Book of Esther likewise were used by Jewish artists. However, in the British Museum Megillah we find additional illustrations to these Midrashim which so far have not been discussed by scholars. The only other Megillah containing illustrations of the same nature is the Liverpool Megillah, which we described cursorily in our previous study, knowing that we should have to return to a fuller discussion of the significance of these illustrations in a further study, when discussing the British Museum Megillah.

The scene of Haman cutting Mordecai’s hair (Pl. I (a)) is explained in a Midrash and in the Talmud. The story is as follows: “When Haman set about arraying him with the royal apparel, Mordecai refused to put it on until he had bathed, and had dressed his hair. Royal apparel agreed but ill with his condition after three days of sackcloth and ashes. As luck would

1 Cf. our study of this Megillah, “Un type inconnu de Megillah illustrée”, in Bulletin des nos communautés (Strasbourg), vol. 18, no. 6 (March 1962).

2 We should note that no explanation of the significance of the presence of ships in various eighteenth-century megilloth has to our knowledge so far been proposed.


4 Some of these illustrations are mentioned by Rachel Wischnitzer, “Der Estherstoff in der jüdischen Illustration”, in Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums, xxxviii (n.s. 1930), 388 ff., and also in “The Esther Story in Art”, in The Purim Anthology, op. cit. pp. 224 ff. We have added some new examples to those mentioned in the above works in our article “Die Illustration einiger Midraschim zum Buche Esther in der jüdischen Kunst”, in Das neue Israel (Zurich, 1963), xv. 563 ff.


6 Tr. Megillah 16a, cf. Epstein, op. cit. p. 95: “(For so a Tanna stated: Haman was a barber in Kefar-Karzum twenty-two years).”

7 Ginzberg, op. cit. p. 438.
PLATE 1 (a) Left: Detail from B.M. MS. Or. 1047. Seventeenth century, second quarter. Right: Haman cutting Mordecai's hair; left: Haman leading the royal horse; below: Haman's daughter. (b) Right: Detail from same: the sons of Haman felling trees.
(a) Above: The seven princes. Detail from B.M. MS. Or. 1047.
Centre. (b) Left: Haman, from B.M. MS. Add. 11832. Eighteenth century, second half.
(c) Middle: Haman, from the Strasbourg Megillah. Eighteenth century, second half.
(d) Right: Haman, from the Stuttgart Megillah. Eighteenth century, second half.
(e) Below: Mordecai in mourning, from Cl. 17503 (Musée de Cluny). Eighteenth century, second half.
PLATE III  (a) Left: Text-column and illustration from Cl. 18305 (Musée de Cluny). Eighteenth century, first half.  
(b) Right: Text-column and illustration in the Megillah at the Jewish Museum, London. Eighteenth century, first half.
PLATE IV

Mordecai preaching to the Jews.

(a) Above: From Cl. 18305.

(b) Centre: From the Megillah at the Jewish Museum, London.

(c) Below: From the Megillah at the Academy of Sciences, Budapest.

Eighteenth century, first half.
have it, Esther had issued the command that the bathkeepers and barbers were not to ply their trades on that day, and there was nothing for Haman to do but perform the menial services Mordecai required”; we also find this scene depicted in the Liverpool Megillah.¹

The second hitherto unknown illustration of a Midrash is the scene of Ahasuerus in the royal garden, watching the ten sons of Haman cutting trees (Pl. I (b)). In the Liverpool Megillah we see only six sons,² but the Hebrew inscription says “The sons of Haman are cutting trees”. A Midrash relates that angels, in the guise of Haman’s sons, were felling trees while Ahasuerus was in the garden,³ so that he would become angry and rush back to the palace in order to see Haman prostrated before Esther and conclude that the latter intended to assault her.

It should be pointed out that the representation of Haman in supplication before Esther in the British Museum Megillah is also inspired by the Talmud and a Midrash, in so far as Haman is depicted kneeling in front of Esther’s couch. The Midrash ⁴ says that: “An angel (Gabriel) intervened, and threw Haman upon the couch in a posture as though he were about to do violence to the queen”, and the Talmud ⁵ records: “... an angel came and made him fall on it.”

Another illustration of a well-known episode from the Midrash to be found in the British Museum Megillah is the scene of the triumph of Mordecai, when Haman’s daughter pours filth on her father’s head (Pl. I (a)). But as we already find it depicted in the fourteenth-century Machzor at Leipzig,⁶ in the fifteenth-century Alba Bible,⁷ in the Liverpool Megillah and in a great number of

² Ibid. p. 177.
³ In the Rylands Megillah we see Ahasuerus in his garden, which is depicted by two trees. But there are also two men standing next to them. It appears as if the man on the right is breaking the tree with his hand, and the man on the left damaging the second tree with a sickle or bent knife.
⁴ See Ginzberg, op. cit. p. 442.
⁵ Tr. Megillah, 16a; cf. I. Epstein, op. cit. p. 97.
⁶ At the Universitätsbibliothek, MS. V. 1102. A reproduction of it may be found in our article in Das neue Israel, Fig. 3.
illustrated *megilloth* of the eighteenth century,¹ it has no particular iconographical importance here.

Having noted the particularities in the subject-matter represented in B.M. MS. Or. 1047, let us consider its date. We have seen above² that Margoliouth ascribed it to the sixteenth century, and although he used the term "probably" in two instances, he never proposed an earlier or later date for it.

A second statement as to its date comes from M. Adler.³ However, he gives no reason whatsoever for proposing a different date, and in his study of the *Megillah* belonging to the Parish Church at Great Yarmouth he makes some striking mistakes. Firstly, he states that: "The only manuscript in the British Museum that can compare with the Yarmouth manuscript is Or. 1047, a large manuscript of the seventeenth century, full of amusing drawings." This statement is incorrect, there being no possible comparison between these two illustrated scrolls.⁴ Secondly, M. Adler draws attention to a grave error in the Guide to the Parish Church at Yarmouth, where the *Megillah* was falsely ascribed to the fifteenth century, but concludes that: "I have obtained the opinion of two authorities upon Hebrew manuscripts to the effect that the Scroll must have been written at the commencement of the present century ⁵ by a German Jew, and not by a Spaniard." We therefore cannot rely on M. Adler's statement ⁶ as to the date of the British Museum *Megillah*.

If we look at the types of costume represented in it, we find that they can be dated at the earliest to the end of the sixteenth

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¹ For instance in a *megillah* at the Jewish Museum, London, of which we shall speak further on.
² See p. 85.
⁴ Margoliouth, op. cit. in *JQR*, xx. 135, alludes to this statement, but rightly treats it with the utmost caution when saying: "Another illuminated roll of Esther (which, however, I have not personally seen) is preserved in the parish church of Yarmouth. It seems to exhibit affinities with the British Museum MS. just spoken of."
⁵ By "present century" the nineteenth century is of course meant.
⁶ The scroll at Great Yarmouth is an engraved *megillah*, and in our opinion belongs to the first half of the seventeenth century. However, quite apart from the date which we propose, to say that this scroll was written in the nineteenth century is a judgement which cannot be regarded as reliable.
century, and at the latest to about 1630-40. For instance, puffed hose, covering the thighs only and tied below the knee, were still worn during the first quarter of the seventeenth century.\(^1\) Another important detail is the way the beards of the men are cut: the cheeks are clean-shaven, leaving only a small triangular beard on the chin and the thin moustache. Further, the hair is worn long, falling on either side of the face, so that it reaches to the shoulders. Several portraits by Van Dyke, for instance, painted during the fourth decade of the seventeenth century,\(^2\) depict heads of a kind similar to those in the group of the seven princes (Pl. II (a)). Another good example of this type of portrait may be seen in a drawing by Ferdinand Bol.\(^3\)

Further points of comparison between MS. Or. 1047 and certain drawings and painting of the seventeenth century may be suggested. For instance, the seated figures, seen from the back watching the jesters (above columns XIII and XIV), are placed in attitudes almost identical with that of the seated apprentice in a painting entitled "A tailor's workroom" by Quiringh Gerritsz Brekelenkam (1620-68).\(^4\)

We can also compare the type of ship shown below column XIV with remarkably similar ships in a drawing entitled "Big sea-battle near Kijkduin" by the Dutch artist Jan Abrahamsz Beerstraten (1622-66).\(^5\)

From the various comparisons which we have proposed here, it becomes clear that stylistically the illustrations of B.M. MS. Or. 1047 belong to about the second quarter of the seventeenth century.

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\(^1\) See, for instance, a drawing of a musketeer by Jacques de Gheys (1565-1629), a Flemish-Dutch painter. This drawing is in the collection of the Rijks Prentenkabinet, Amsterdam; it is reproduced in Walter Bernt, *Die niederländischen Zeichner des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1957-8), fig. 246.


\(^3\) 1616-80. This drawing is in the collection of H. Oppenheim, Esq., London; it is reproduced in W. Brent, op. cit. Fig. 86.

\(^4\) This painting is at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. For a reproduction of it, see Eduard Plietzsch, *Holländische und flämische Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1960), Pl. 51.

\(^5\) In the collection of the Rijks Prentenkabinet at Amsterdam. Reproduced in W. Berndt, op. cit. Fig. 40.
They could not have been produced before 1620, and it seems most unlikely that they were produced later than 1660. They show similarities to Dutch art of the first half of the seventeenth century, and it is very probable that they were executed in Holland, where there was a small Jewish community in Amsterdam at the beginning of the century, whose numbers were increased from about 1620 onwards by the settlement there of numerous Sephardim and Ashkenazim. The British Museum Megillah would thus be somewhat older than the Megillah at the Liverpool Athenaeum and both would be of Dutch origin; this would partly explain certain similarities of subject. Thus Holland was the place of origin of two very finely illustrated Megilloth, and we can further say that B.M. MS. Or. 1047 is beyond doubt the oldest known fully illustrated Dutch megillah.

The British Museum Megillah and the Megillah at the Athenaeum are not the only ones in which, next to the illustrations, there are Hebrew inscriptions taken from the Book of Esther. We shall now mention two megilloth, rather popular in type, both belonging to the second half of the eighteenth century. One of these is at the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire at Strasbourg (MS. 4053) and has some short inscriptions in Hebrew; the other, B.M. MS. Add. 11832, has no inscriptions but was obviously copied from a scroll with illustrations of the same type as those in the Strasbourg Megillah. In both, the drawings of human figures are extremely primitive; one might almost think they were the work of a child. Yet the fact that we find almost identical illustrations in two scrolls excludes such an assumption and leads us rather to assume that they were the work of people of the same vicinity, the same town, perhaps. This does not exclude the possibility that one was copied directly from the other.

When we turn to the script, we find that there are considerable differences between the two scrolls. The text of the one at the British Museum is somewhat unusually written in thirty-eight circular text-columns, each measuring about 67 mm. in

1 There are also two megilloth with inscriptions in Yiddish, to which we shall refer later.

2 This is a further example of megilloth with the text written in circles. We mentioned three megilloth of this type in B.J.R.L., xliv. p. 155, n. 2.
diameter, the width of the Scroll being 12 cm. and its length approximately 360 cm. The Scroll at Strasbourg is much wider (23 cm.), but its length is less than half that of B.M. MS. Add. 11832, measuring only 163 cm. The writing itself in the two scrolls is very different and obviously the work of two scribes.

The Strasbourg Megillah contains a larger number of illustrations, and these are placed in the free spaces around the text-columns; but the remaining free space is also filled with drawings of plants and, in some cases, animals and birds. There are ten text-columns in this Scroll, with the following illustrations:

I. Above: a man seated at a table, which is supposed to represent the feast of Ahasuerus.

II. Above: Vashti’s execution;¹ a woman standing (inscription: “Vashti”) and, to the left, a man holding a sword (inscription: “Memucan”).²

Between II and III: a soldier holding a lance.

III. Above: Mordecai. Inscription (ii. 21): “Mordecai sat in the king’s gate.”

III. Below: two men hanging on gallows, with a bird (raven?) next to each gallows. Inscription beneath the two men (ii. 21): “Bigthan and Teresh.”

V. Above: Haman leading the royal horse on which Mordecai is riding. There are two inscriptions: beneath Mordecai:³ “and he brought Mordecai on horseback through the streets . . . and he arrayed him with the royal apparel”, and beneath Haman: “and Haman . . . mourning, and having his head covered.”

VI. Below: three storks, surrounded by tendrils and leaves.

VII. Above: a woman seated at a table, and a man kneeling in front of her, holding his hat in his right hand. The scene represents Haman imploring Esther’s forgiveness. Inscription beneath Haman (vii. 7): “and Haman stood up to make request for his life.”

¹ As already mentioned above, the text of the megillah does not mention this execution.
² The first of the king’s seven chamberlains (i. 10); but it was also Memucan who later advised Ahasuerus to punish Vashti (i. 16-20), and for this reason the artist of this Megillah gave this name to Vashti’s executioner.
³ This inscription is based on vi. 10-11.
VIII. Above: two unicorns on either side of a tree.

IX. Above: Haman hanging on the gallows (Pl. II). Inscription (vii. 10): "So they hanged Haman on the gallows."

X. Above: six men hanging on gallows. Above the last figure on the left there is an inscription: "Haman." There are no names above the other five figures.

X. Below: five men hanging on gallows, but no inscription. The artist has depicted in these two scenes the ten sons of Haman (ix. 7-10) and Haman himself once again.¹

If we compare the Strasbourg Megillah with the one at the British Museum (MS. Add. 11832), we find that some of the scenes are very similar not only in subject but also in composition, i.e. figures wearing similar costumes and in almost identical positions. However, figures are never depicted in the upper or lower margins of MS. Add. 11832; such illustrations are here confined to the spaces between the text-columns or to the beginning and end of the Scroll. As to the free spaces above and below the text, they are filled with drawings of flowers and plants. We may observe that most of these are identical in shape and colouring in both Megilloth.

An important detail in MS. Add. 11832 is the presence of a colophon at the end, which reads: "Written by Abraham, son of the highly honoured Rabbi Moses, in the year 381 [i.e. 1621] of the minor reckoning." Margoliouth, who reproduced this colophon in his description of the Megillah,² seemed to accept this date, since he did not voice any doubt as to the authenticity of the inscription. He says: "written by Abraham b. Moses, A.M. (5) 381 (A.D. 1621)."

However, on looking closely at the script of this colophon and at that of the text of the Megillah, we can see that inks of two different colours were used; the ink used for writing the colophon is distinctly darker. Moreover, some of the actual letters

¹ It is not unusual to find a depiction of eleven figures hanging on gallows in an illustrated megillah, by which Haman and his ten sons are meant. In the Liverpool Athenaeum Megillah, for instance, these eleven figures have their names inscribed next to them, so that there can be no doubt as to their identity.


³ Ibid. loc. cit.
are very different, namely the א, the ב, the ג, and the ד, which upon examination, clearly show that the scribe of the Megillah wrote in a more flowing hand than the one who wrote the colophon.

It can be assumed that both scripts are contemporary, the colophon having been added by an owner who wanted his Megillah to bear the date of its execution.

As already mentioned, the Megillah in B.M. Add. 11832, like the one at Strasbourg, belongs to the second half of the eighteenth century. We shall, however, come back to the question of their dates further on.

The few illustrations in B.M. MS. Add. 11832 are as follows:

(1) At the beginning, before the first text-column: a man wearing eighteenth-century costume, but very clumsily drawn, appears to be walking up some steps; he might even be seated, the steps being those of a throne, in which case this figure would represent Ahasuerus. Next to him there are houses, all drawn without any attempt at perspective. These houses have gabled roofs, and probably represent Shushan.

(2) To the right of column VIII, a soldier holding a sword, and to its left, a woman standing. This scene depicts the execution of Vashti, and in the Megillah at Strasbourg these two figures are represented in an almost identical manner ¹ with an inscription indicating their names.

(3) On either side of column X: two rampant lions, their fore-legs supporting the circular text-column.

(4) On either side of column XIV: two unicorns rampant.²

(5) On either side of columns XVI and XVII: two men, each holding a lance aimed at a bird perched on a tree in the space between the columns.

(6) Between columns XXV and XXVI: a man wearing peculiar garments and a hat, representing Mordecai. An almost identical figure, with similar clothing, occurs in the Megillah at Strasbourg, where an inscription mentions Mordecai.³

(7) Between columns XXXII and XXXIII: Haman hanging

¹ See above, p. 101.
² There are two identical unicorns in the Strasbourg Megillah; see above, p. 102.
³ See above, p. 101.
on the gallows (Pl. II (b)). In the Strasbourg Megillah Haman is wearing the same clothing (Pl. II (c)) and the shape of the sword is similar.

(8) At the end of the text, after column XXXVIII, a bad drawing of a house with a sloping roof, on either side of which a man is standing; they are perhaps supposed to represent jesters. Some attempt seems to have been made by the artist to depict a house and garden in front of this house. There is no perspective whatsoever in this drawing.

The colophon, giving the year 1621, is written in the free space between the roof and the garden.

We must admit that the quality of the drawings both in the Strasbourg Megillah and in B.M. MS. Add. 11832 is extremely poor. Though they might be taken to be the work of a child, their presence in two scrolls denotes that they were produced by an adult.

As to the date of these two megilloth, there can be no doubt that both belong to the second half of the eighteenth century; the costumes alone prove this. A further reason for excluding the possibility that B.M. MS. Add. 11832 might have been written at the beginning of the seventeenth century and the illustrations added almost two centuries later, is that the scribe who drew the circles guiding the text-columns at the same time and with the same ink drew the two horizontal lines which delimit the upper and lower margins. These margins are filled with flowers and plants, likewise drawn in the same coloured ink. The same ink is also used for the delineation of the figures between the text-columns. Thus the text and the illustrations were executed at the same time, perhaps by the same person.

The date which we propose for B.M. MS. Add. 11832 and the Strasbourg Megillah, the second half of the eighteenth century, can also be confirmed by an engraving of a popular type,1 executed by Jean-Baptiste Ghys (who died at Tournay in 1799), showing people carrying out various crafts. One of these figures, an officer, is wearing exactly the same uniform and carrying the same type of sword as the hanging Haman in the two Megilloth

(cf. Pl. II (b) and (c)). The artists of these scrolls might have seen popular prints of this kind and used them as models.

Both Megilloth were doubtless produced in a German Jewish (ashkenaze) community, as the script alone indicates, and both date from the second half of the eighteenth century. The catalogue at Strasbourg ascribes its Megillah to the eighteenth century, but follows this date by a question mark, showing that the author of the catalogue was by no means sure. The date accepted by the British Museum catalogue (1621) for MS. Add. 11832 is far removed from that to which we must now ascribe it.

Other Esther scrolls with painted illustrations, accompanied this time by inscriptions in Yiddish, will now be examined. So far we have only traced two such scrolls, one at the Württembergische Landesbibliothek at Stuttgart (Or. fol. 72) and the other at the Musée de Cluny (Cl. 17503). Both are well executed and artistically far superior to the two megilloth just described, though they, too, both belong to the second half of the eighteenth century. Moreover, a close similarity can be detected in various details, such as the drawings of flowers and plants and representations of Haman hanging, between the scrolls at Strasbourg, Stuttgart and the British Museum, which leads us to suppose that they were illustrated in the same part of Germany.

There is a brief description of the Megillah at Stuttgart in an unpublished catalogue at the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, in which we find the following significant point: "... deutscher Herkunft, 18. Jahrhundert."

The Stuttgart scroll is made up of eight text-columns, with free spaces, equal to about the width of one column, at the beginning and at the end, in which there are decorative illustrations. The dimensions are 14.2 cm. by 142 cm.

1 Margoliouth, in the Catalogue already mentioned, loc. cit., says: "German hand" for B.M. MS. Add. 11832.


3 This catalogue in manuscript mentions that the description of the Scroll was made by Rabbi Dr. Rieger on 16 July 1923.
The illustrations depict mainly human figures, sometimes birds and flowers, and, in one case, two lions. Almost all are placed in the margins above and below, or at the sides of, the text-columns, a disposition which we have already observed. There is, however, one important distinction, namely, each isolated figure or group of figures above and below the text is placed within a circular or oval medallion, around which are written popular inscriptions in Yiddish. The figures in the vertical spaces between the text-columns are surrounded by rectangular frames, and in two cases the inscription is written above the figure, in an arch, and in two others below the figure, in a straight line, but in the remaining cases there are no Yiddish inscriptions.

The illustrations are as follows: in the space before the first text-column: two lions rampant, supporting with their fore-legs an empty medallion surmounted by a large crown.

I. Above: Ahasuerus standing, holding a wine-glass in his right hand and a sceptre in his left. Inscription: "King Ahasuerus was well filled with wine; Vashti should come naked."

Below: Vashti standing, also with a wine-glass in her right hand and a sceptre in her left. Inscription: "Vashti will not do so, alas, and for this she gets her reward."

Between I and II: a man holding a lance and sword. Inscription: "Memucan."

II. Above: two women strangling Vashti. Inscription: "Because Vashti refused the king, therefore (she) was killed by two women."

Below: Memucan dressed as a chamberlain, mace in hand.

1 In the above-mentioned manuscript catalogue at Stuttgart none of the illustrations has been analysed; the only mention made of them is the following: "... mit zahlreichen farbigen Randzeichnungen."

2 It can be assumed that the scribe had intended to write the initial prayer for the reading of the book of Esther in this space.

3 Dr. Rieger wrote in the catalogue at Stuttgart: "die Umschriften der Randbilder sind jüdisch-deutsch." However, he did not copy any of these inscriptions and we are here publishing them for the first time. They have been translated into English. A transliteration of the original Yiddish seemed to us of little value.

4 This idea also has its source in a Midrash. The same scene is found in various eighteenth-century engraved megilloth.
Inscription: "The king bestows favour on Memucan, so that he may do as he pleases."

Between II and III: a soldier blowing a trumpet. Inscription: "The king has it proclaimed on trumpets, why he is having Vashti killed."

III. Above: Mordecai robed. Inscription: "Mordecai has a pretty maiden; for the king she shall be a bride."

Below: Esther holding a plant (presumably a myrtle). Inscription: "Esther she is called; the king takes her as a wife."

Between III and IV: Bigthan and Teresh, each hanging on a gallows, on which is perched a bird and next to which there is a tree. The inscription merely gives their names.

IV. Above: Ahasuerus. Inscription: "King Ahasuerus knows a young man who gives him foolish counsel."

Below: Haman, dressed as a chamberlain, holding a mace. Inscription (only partly legible): "His name is Haman."

Between IV and V: Haman weighing. Inscription: "Ten thousand talents of silver has Haman given for the Jews."

V. Above: Mordecai, with an open book in his hand and wearing a prayer-shawl. Inscription: "Mordecai has discovered it; he says prayers of penitence."


Between V and VI: Haman and his wife Zeresh. Inscription: "Zeresh tells Haman that he should build a high gallows." Beneath this group there is a depiction of a gallows.

VI. Above: Haman and Ahasuerus. Inscription: "The king tells Haman how he should do great honour to Mordecai."

Below: Mordecai, seated on the horse, is led by Haman, who is blowing a trumpet. No inscription.

Between VI and VII: Half a gallows, from which five sons of Haman are hanging; a bird is perched on top of the gallows.

VII. In this column are written the names of the sons of Haman in the usual manner, i.e. the ten names on the right, and the word ve'et (and) forming another column on the left. In scrolls of the Book of Esther there is thus a large free space between these two columns of single words. In this Megillah the artist has
filled this space with a depiction of Haman hanging on the gallows, with two birds facing each other above it. Above the figure of Haman his name is written (Pl. II (d)).

Between VII and VIII: Other half of gallows with the remaining five sons.

VIII. A floral design in the upper and lower margins. The free space at the end of the Scroll is filled by an arch supported by columns. It was probably supposed to contain the prayers said after the reading of the scroll. Not only the inscriptions show that the Scroll at Stuttgart belongs to a German-speaking region. In the illustrations, too, the costumes worn by the figures are characteristic of those depicted in contemporary art in Germany. The representation of Haman hanging (Pl. II (d)), his costume and the delineation of the figure itself are very similar to the two previously mentioned 1 in the Megillah at Strasbourg (Pl. II (c)) and in the one at the British Museum (Pl. II (b)). In addition, the plants and flowers are almost identical in the three scrolls. It is possible that the artist of the Stuttgart Megillah copied these details from a scroll like those at Strasbourg and at the British Museum. They may have fascinated him, whereas he evidently did not choose to imitate the drawings in these Megilloth, which are very mediocre.

The contrary view, that the scrolls at Strasbourg and at the British Museum were copied from the one at Stuttgart, was certainly not the case. Apart from the examples already mentioned, the illustrations are all quite different (i.e. the execution of Vashti, 2 the figures of Mordecai). Moreover, the limited number of illustrations in the two scrolls is a further proof that they were devised by the scribe rather than copied from a profusely illustrated Megillah such as the one at Stuttgart. Nevertheless the latter, like the other two, can be ascribed to the second half of the eighteenth century.

The second Megillah with inscriptions in Yiddish and artistically also of a popular type, though definitely superior to the

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1 See above, pp. 102 and 103-104.
2 In the scrolls at Strasbourg and at the British Museum a decapitation is depicted, whereas in the Stuttgart Megillah we see the strangulation of Vashti by two women.
one at Stuttgart, is at the Musée de Cluny. It has never been mentioned in a publication, nor was it at the “Synagoga” Exhibition (Recklinghausen and Frankfort-on-Main, 1960-1), where several illustrated megilloth belonging to the Musée de Cluny were exhibited.

Before entering into a discussion as to its date, let us describe its various illustrations, giving translations of the inscriptions to be found next to some of them. The width of this Scroll is 22.4 cm. and its length 161 cm. The text is divided into nine columns, but the names of the ten sons of Haman are not written in a separate column as is usually the case; instead, they occur in the lower right-hand corner of the seventh text-column, forming a small and independent column within the larger one.

The beginning of the Scroll was at some time damaged, and the first text-column has been rewritten by another scribe on a sheet of parchment added later to the Scroll. Immediately before the text-column on this added sheet are found the benedictions for the reading of the Megillah. Above the text-column are drawn three interwoven wreaths made up of leaves, in which someone has written the words: “France, Russie, Prusse, Autriche.” These words were obviously added after the Megillah had entered the possession of a Franco-Jewish family during the nineteenth century.

As usual the illustrations are in the margins of the scroll, and above the figures depicted in the spaces between the text-columns are inscriptions in Yiddish, within circular frames, explaining some of the adjacent scenes above or below a text-column.

1 As the Scroll was in the possession of a French family during the nineteenth century, it could have been illustrated in Alsace. However, the inscriptions bear no traces of the Alsatian dialect; this has been kindly confirmed by M. Richard Neher, Conseiller à la Cour, who is also a specialist in Alsatian-Jewish literature.

2 See our study in B.J.R.L., xlv. p. 155. Some further exceptions can be added. In B.M. MS. Add. 8132 the ten names are written very close to the second word ve’et, so that the two columns of words are only half as wide as the text-column itself. In B.M. MS. Harley 7620 the ten names are arranged in two columns with five in each one, and the word ve’et is written in two identical columns, thus making four columns in all.

3 In an unpublished handwritten Register at the Musée de Cluny it is stated that the Megillah was given to the museum by: “Mme. veuve Hart Derenbourg en souvenir de M. Derenbourg, Membre de l’Institut.”
Below these figures the artist has painted flowers, generally sunflowers. At the end of the Scroll he has drawn a heart, with a flame emerging from its top and with four small sunflowers around it; this has no Jewish significance, and was probably copied from some illustration of a popular type.

In this *Megillah* at the Musée de Cluny (Cl. 17503) we find depictions of the following scenes or figures:

Between I and II: a man with a lance. Inscription: "King Ahasuerus was well filled with wine: so he ordered Vashti to be brought in naked. However, Vashti did not want to do this: for which she received her deserved reward." ¹

II. Above: the execution of Vashti; she is kneeling on the ground, with the executioner standing next to her.

Below: a man riding a horse and blowing a horn; one of the king’s messengers (i. 22).

Between II and III: a man with a cane. Inscription: "Memucan says that Vashti’s head should be chopped off: and that it should be proclaimed on trumpets that to any wife who does not obey her husband the same should be done."

III. Above: a man standing beneath an arch; Mordecai (ii. 5).

Below: a woman; Esther (ii. 7).

Between III and IV: Ahasuerus holding a sceptre. Inscription: "Ahasuerus had proclaimed this ordinance: that a beautiful maiden should be sought for him."

IV. Above: Haman (?).

Below: a man.

Between IV and V: a man walking. Inscription: "Mordecai the Jew has at his home a beautiful maiden: for the king she shall be a bride: Esther is her name."

V. Above: a man.

Below: a woman holding a fan; probably Esther preparing herself to go to the king (v. 1).

Between V and VI: a man seated at a table, holding scales; Haman weighing the silver (iii. 9).² Inscription: "Haman

¹ We notice that this inscription is almost identical with the one in the *Megillah* at Stuttgart. Cf. above, p. 106.

² This illustration with its inscriptions should have been placed one or two columns back by the artist.
wants to give ten thousand talents of silver for the lives of the Jews: Mordecai says the prayers of penitence and has it told to Esther.”

VI. Above: Ahasuerus and Esther seated at a table; depiction of the first meal (v. 6). We notice, however, the absence of the third figure (Haman).

Below: Mordecai in mourning (iv. 1), wearing a prayer-shawl, which is placed on his head in the traditional manner. He is holding a book in his hand, on which are the words פן ה' י İnternet ענו (forgive us), taken from the prayers said during the days of penitence (Pl. II (e)).

Between VI and VII: Ahasuerus holding a sceptre. Inscription: “Ahasuerus has a bad dream and calls for the scribe and has the book of chronicles searched through.”

VII. Above: a man seated at a table on which lies an open book; in the background are two figures hanging on gallows. The illustration depicts the reading to Ahasuerus of the story of Bigthan and Teresh, recorded in the chronicles (vi. 2).

Below: a man and a woman standing on either side of a gallows; no doubt Haman and his wife Zeresh in front of the gallows built for Mordecai (v. 14).

Between VII and VIII: Ahasuerus. Inscription: “The scribe reads how the king was saved by Mordecai from being killed by Bigthan and Teresh: but Mordecai received no reward.”

VIII. Above: Haman hanging on the gallows (vii. 10).

Below: a man pointing upwards towards Haman on the gallows.

Between VIII and IX: two gallows, on each of which five figures are hanging (i.e. the ten sons of Haman, ix. 7-10). Inscription: “Haman and his ten sons are hanged upon a gallows, and the king gives everything to Esther and Mordecai: Esther writes everything down so that the Jews should remember it their livelong day.”

IX. Above: Esther seated at a table, writing (ix. 29).

Below: two men, each holding a goblet, representing the feasting of the Jews (ix. 22).

An unusual and interesting way of depicting a person reading about an event.
From this description of the illustrations we can see that the artist did not work from a model, since his figures are of a hitherto unknown type. Nevertheless he lacked invention and usually confined himself to the depiction of single isolated figures, some of which could not even be identified because they have no special function and do not wear a specific costume by which they could be distinguished. He did, however, show some imagination when depicting the reading of the chronicles to the king (VII above), or the figure of Mordecai in mourning (Pl. II (e)). On the whole he is a good draughtsman, well able to draw people walking, for instance; he also observes such details as clothing and facial expressions. All the figures are dressed in clothing of the second half of the eighteenth century. The men usually have three-cornered hats, ample coats and high boots, and carry walking-sticks. We find people dressed in this manner in an engraving by Bernardo Bellotto (1742-80) of a view of Dresden, with two groups of men talking in the foreground.\(^1\) This engraving, although by an Italian artist, depicts a German landscape and is influenced by German art. Similarly this Megillah at the Musée de Cluny, although of a popular type, shows similarities to German art of the period. It thus provides a fourth example of a hand-painted Megillah executed in a Jewish community in Germany during the second half of the eighteenth century.\(^2\)

Besides the four above-mentioned eighteenth-century megilloth, all more or less of a popular type, we find some scrolls belonging to the first half of the eighteenth century which may well stand comparison with the work of first-class artists of that period in Europe, as they are particularly well executed.

The megilloth which we shall now describe, and with which we shall conclude the present study, belong to a group of hand-painted megilloth executed by artists who were very familiar with the baroque and rococo styles. We have examined two such

\(^1\) A reproduction of this engraving can be found in Augusto Calabri, *La gravure italienne au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, G. Van Oest, 1931), Pl. XV.

\(^2\) In its short description of this scroll, the Register at the Musée de Cluny, mentioned above (see p. 109, n. 3), makes the following erroneous statement as to its origin and date: "art hollandais, fin XVI."
megilloth which have not been published or made the subject of any description hitherto. One is at the Musée de Cluny (Cl. 18305), the other at the Jewish Museum in London. A third can be compared with these two; it forms part of the David Kaufmann Collection at the Academy of Sciences at Budapest (MS. 14). Our knowledge of it is obtained from a description made by D. Kaufmann; moreover, some of its illustrations have also been reproduced. Naményi is apparently the only writer ever to have mentioned the Megillah at the Jewish Museum; he groups it with the Megillah at Budapest and a third, belonging to the Jewish community at Padua, which we shall, however, not discuss here.

The Megillah (Cl. 18305) at the Musée de Cluny, which is undoubtedly the most important hand-painted Esther scroll in the collection of this museum, has so far apparently never received the attention of any scholar. Naményi does not mention it when listing a large number of illustrated megilloth in two studies dealing with the illustrated scrolls of Esther, nor was it exhibited at the "Synagoga" Exhibition.

Its dimensions are 52 cm. by 434 cm. The text is written in sixteen columns. A separate sheet of parchment, 52 cm. wide by 53 cm. long, belongs to the Scroll, and on it are written, in two columns, the prayers to be said before and after the reading of the Book of Esther. However, the text of these prayers was not written by the scribe of the Megillah, nor can the illustrations be by the same artist, since they are not so well drawn as those in the Megillah itself.

1 This Megillah has at present no catalogue number, as the catalogue of the Jewish Museum is not yet completed. At the beginning of the scroll the number "N.13" is written in ink, but this was probably done before it was acquired by the Jewish Museum.


4 Unfortunately we have so far not been able to obtain any reproductions of it.


6 See above, p. 109.
Let us now describe the illustrations. The entire Scroll may be described as depicting a wall with regularly spaced arched openings in which the text is inscribed. These openings or bays are surmounted by a delicate balustrade, interrupted at the crown of every second and third arch by a rococo cartouche containing a symbol of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, above which curl the irregularly shaped volutes of a cornice. Seated on the volutes over each cartouche is a putto holding a wreath in one hand and in the other a garland on which is perched a bird. These garlands link urns which are placed at regular intervals along the top of the balustrade. Above every first arch the balustrade is interrupted not by a cartouche but by a large escutcheon, which contains a simple decorative pattern, is surmounted by a shell, and is framed by volutes and garlands. Between the bays, pairs of twisted pillars on high pedestals stand out from the wall; above their pseudo-corinthian capitals putti are suspended, their arms reaching out towards the urns on the balustrade above the pairs of columns (Pl. III (a)).

Below each bay, beneath the text-columns, the wall is adorned with a relief in a rococo frame. It is these reliefs which depict scenes from the Book of Esther. They are as follows:

I. The feast at Shushan (i. 3). In this scene there are two tables; the men are seated at the table on the right, the women on the left.

II. Ahasuerus on his throne, asking the wise men for advice (i. 13). All are seated.

III. The maidens are presented to Ahasuerus (ii. 13). A group of seven maidens with an eighth standing apart. The king appears to be speaking to her; she probably represents Esther chosen from amongst the other maidens.

IV. Ahasuerus placing the crown on Esther’s head (ii. 18); both are standing. Behind Ahasuerus are four pages, two of whom are carrying the train of his royal robe.

V. Bigthan and Teresh hanging on the gallows (ii. 23). Around the gallows are groups of bystanders, some of whom are pointing at the hanged men.

VI. Ahasuerus gives Haman his ring (iii. 10).
VII. Esther speaking to Mordecai. Close to them there is a small figure, no doubt representing one of Esther's attendants.

VIII. Esther before Ahasuerus, who is seated on his throne and is holding out his sceptre to her (v. 2).

IX. Ahasuerus sitting up in his bed; in front of it a group of men, the first holding an open book. He is reading the book of chronicles to the king (vi. 1).

X. Haman, blowing a horn, leads the horse on which Mordecai is mounted (vi. 11).

XI. Ahasuerus, returning from the garden, sees Haman sitting near Esther, who is reclining on her couch (vii. 8).

XII. The letters are sent out by posts on horseback (viii. 10).

XIII. The Jews attacking their enemies (ix. 5).

XIV. The ten sons of Haman hanging on the gallows (ix. 7-10).

XV. The rejoicing of the Jews (ix. 22). They are ranged round two tables (Pl. III (a)).

XVI. Mordecai speaking peace to the Jews (x. 3) (Pl. IV (a)).

After this description of the illustrations, let us examine the order in which the symbols of the tribes, mentioned above, are placed. Each occupies a cartouche beneath a putto holding a wreath, and there are therefore ten in all and not twelve, occurring in the following columns:

II. A man holding a mandrake in each hand: Reuben.

III. The walled town of Sichem: Simeon.

V. The Urim and the Thummim: Levi.

VI. A lion: Judah.

VIII. The sun and the moon: Issachar.

IX. A ship: Zebulun.

XI. A snake: Dan.

XII. Soldiers marching: Gad.

XIV. A hind: Naphtali.

XV. An olive tree: Asher (Pl. III (a)).

The artist has thus omitted the symbols of the last two tribes, having had no suitable space left in which to include them.

1 The Book of Esther records (iv. 5 ff.) that Esther twice sent Hatach to speak with Mordecai, and did not speak to him herself. There is, however, a Midrash (Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, 50) which states that Esther herself spoke to Mordecai. This illustration may have found its source here.
The illustrator of the separate sheet containing the prayers for the reading of the Scroll has on the whole copied the lay-out of the *Megillah* itself. The two text-columns are written inside two adjacent arched bays. There are similar twisted pillars with pseudo-corinthian capitals on either side of the text-columns, though they are not in pairs as in the *Megillah*. The balustrade has been omitted, but there are three putti holding flowers and garlands, seated in similar attitudes to those in the Scroll. The large escutcheon and the urn above the text-columns are also copied from the *Megillah*. Beneath the text and between the bases of the twisted pillars are two illustrations in elaborate rococo frames. The first depicts a large deserted square in a town, in the centre of which stands a gallows on which a figure is hanging; this represents Haman. The second is a strange depiction of the Jews killing their enemies; an enormous figure is lying on the ground surrounded by men who are hitting it with large hammers. No doubt this scene has some symbolic meaning, such as men trying to destroy an indomitable enemy.

The *Megillah* at the Jewish Museum is in many ways similar to this one, although there are also a number of differences between them. The text is written in seventeen columns, the dimensions being 38 cm. by 400 cm. There is no special sheet for the prayers and this may be lost, though by this we do not mean to suggest that all illustrated megilloth had separate sheets containing the prayers, whenever these were not written at the beginning or end of the scroll.

The text is written in almost identical arched openings in a wall, each flanked by pairs of free-standing columns with pseudo-corinthian capitals, standing on pedestals. In this *Megillah*, however, there is no balustrade above the architrave; the urns containing flowers stand directly on it, above the columns. Over the arches there are ornamental escutcheons surmounted by crowns and flanked by putti. Alternating with these motifs are allegorical figures, seated on shell-like thrones beneath which the architrave is interrupted by elaborate cartouches containing Hebrew inscriptions always taken from biblical texts. As we shall see, these texts relate to the illustrations beneath them; the corresponding allegorical figure is however not always of any significance.
as far as the illustration or the biblical quotation are concerned.

The illustrations are to be found below each text column, between the pedestals supporting the twisted columns, as in the Scroll at the Musée de Cluny. There are therefore seventeen illustrations in the Jewish Museum Megillah, as opposed to the sixteen in the Musée de Cluny Scroll.

The Scroll opens with an escutcheon in the free space before the first text-column. It has been left empty, and it is possible that it was designed to contain the owner's name. This escutcheon has a more elaborately drawn frame than those above the text-columns. At the top of the frame is a drawing of a child's head surrounded by a garland. Above it is a crown, similar to those above the other escutcheons, though not flanked by putti.

The illustrations in the seventeen columns are the following:

I. The feast at Shushan (i. 3). All eight figures are seated at one table.

II. The king speaks to the wise men (i. 13); he is on his throne, whereas all the men are standing.

III. Mordecai walking with Esther (ii. 7), represented as a young girl leading an aged man. The two are walking in a field, with mountainous scenery in the background.

IV. The king receives the maidens (ii. 13). They are standing in one group, which is not the case in the Megillah at the Musée de Cluny.

V. Bigthan and Teresh hanging on a gallows (ii. 23). In the background is a view of a town.

VI. Haman offers the king a bag of silver (iii. 9-11). The attitudes of the king's hands and head indicate his refusal of Haman's gift.

VII. Esther's servant bringing clothing to Mordecai (iv. 4). The latter is turning away, thus showing that he does not wish to accept them.

VIII. Esther before Ahasuerus (v. 2).

IX. The chronicles being read to the king (vi. 1). Several men are depicted, each holding a book.

X. Haman leading Mordecai on the royal horse (vi. 11). The artist has also depicted Haman's daughter leaning out of a window
and throwing filth on to her father’s head, as related in a *Midrash*.

XI. The king, returning from the garden (vii. 8), sees Haman lying outstretched on the foot of Esther’s bed.\(^1\)

XII. The letters are sent out by posts on horseback (viii. 10).

XIII. Mordecai, dressed in royal apparel, issues forth from the king’s palace (viii. 15). In the background is a town.

XIV. The ten sons of Haman hanging on a gallows (ix. 7-10).

XV. The rejoicing of the Jews (ix. 22). The artist has depicted two couples dancing (Pl. III (b)).

XVI. Two men carrying plates of food, meeting in a field. In the background are some houses. They are probably “sending portions one to another” (ix. 22).

XVII. Mordecai speaking peace to the Jews (x. 3) (Pl. IV (b)). The allegorical figures and the Hebrew inscriptions of biblical quotations are to be found above nine of these illustrations to the Book of Esther.\(^2\)

Above I. A woman pouring a liquid from a vase, perhaps symbolizing wastefulness. This is unlikely to be the symbol of a spring because of the obvious gesture of throwing the liquid away. The inscription reads (Proverbs xxv. 16): “Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee.” The text also relates to Ahasuerus’ banquet depicted beneath, where the king in his drunkenness forced Vashti to appear naked in public.

Above III. A woman holding a flowering branch; perhaps an allegory of righteousness? Inscription (Isa. xl. 6): “and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.” This could apply to Esther, called Hadassah,\(^3\) and to the way she is depicted in this Scroll, acting as a help to Mordecai.

Above V. Allegory of the law. A woman holding a scroll of the Torah (the Law) covered with the *Torah mantle*, ornamented with small silver towers surmounted by bells, in her right hand, while with her left hand she is supporting two stone tables.

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\(^1\) This illustration comes close to the detail related in the Talmud, namely, that Haman was thrown onto the bed by an angel; cf. above, p. 97.

\(^2\) These figures do not all correspond to known allegories, and seem rather to have been created by the artist of the *Megillah*.

\(^3\) See above, p. 88 and note.
of the Law. The inscription reads (Hosea ii. 22 = 20 in the Revised Version): "I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness." This applies to Mordecai, as the scene below depicts Bigthan and Teresh on the gallows, reminding us that Mordecai saved the king’s life.

Above VII. Allegory of the sea. A female figure next to whom is an anchor. Inscription (Proverbs iii. 5): "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart." This relates to the illustration of Mordecai refusing the clothing sent to him by Esther, by this pretending to show that only through mourning and prayers could the Jews be saved. And the anchor could be a symbol of the firmness of this faith.

Above IX. Allegory of war. A female figure holding a spear and a shield. Inscription (Ps. iii. 6 = 5 in the Revised Version): "I awaked; for the Lord sustained me." This applies directly to the illustration, showing the king’s sleepless night.

Above XI. Allegory of strength. A woman holding a stone column; a lion lying next to her. Inscription (Sam. I, ii. 10): "and he shall give strength unto his king", which could refer to Ahasuerus ordering the hanging of Haman; the illustration below depicts the wrath of the king against Haman.

Above XIII. Allegory of Justice. A female figure holding scales and a sword. Inscription (Proverbs xvi. 11): "A just balance and scales are the Lord’s." This applies to Mordecai leaving the king’s palace dressed in the royal apparel.

Above XV. Allegory of Music. A woman playing a cello, with a sheet of music on her right knee. The inscription (Habakkuk iii. 19): "For the chief musician on my stringed instruments", refers to the depiction of the Jews rejoicing and dancing (Pl. III (b)).

Above XVII. Allegory of the bounty of the earth. A figure holding a cornucopia and a twig with leaves. The inscription (Haggai ii. 9): "and in this place will I give peace", refers to Mordecai preaching peace to the Jews (Pl. IV (b)).

The Megillah in the Kaufmann Collection at the Academy of Sciences, Budapest, bears a strong resemblance to the Scroll at the Jewish Museum. The Kaufmann Megillah has been well
described by D. Kaufmann and his description has been republished, though without any additional details, by M. Weisz. A second short catalogue of the Kaufmann Collection merely mentions this Scroll. This detailed description of the Megillah does not, however, name the subjects of the illustrations beneath the text-columns, and this makes any full comparison with the Jewish Museum Scroll impossible. D. Kaufmann does, however, mention the general design of the architectural décor surrounding the text-columns, which is similar to that of the Jewish Museum Scroll, and he also describes in detail the allegorical figures and the inscriptions.

There is one important difference between the two scrolls; in the Kaufmann Megillah the inscriptions are contained in the escutcheons supported by the putti above every second text-column and alternating with the allegorical figures, so that they cannot refer to the same scenes as in the Jewish Museum Scroll, assuming these scenes to be identical.

The two final illustrations in the Scroll, which are the only ones known to us, namely, the two figures bringing portions and Mordecai speaking to the Jews (Pl. IV (c)), appear in the same order in the Jewish Museum Scroll, though with slight differences in composition, as we shall see later. Therefore it can safely be said that both scrolls were copied from a single prototype.

We will now give a considerably shortened translation of Kaufmann's description of this Megillah:

The text is written in sixteen columns, and the Scroll has a width of 38 cm. and a length of 453 cm. In addition it also has a separate sheet of parchment with two text-columns for the
prayers, with the same pattern of twisted pillars and arched bays as in the Scroll.¹

This is the order of the allegorical figures, followed by the inscriptions, above the text-columns:

I. Music.  II. Proverbs xxv. 16.
III. Figure for Esther (?).  IV. Song of Songs ii. 2.
V. Figure for Mordecai (?).  VI. Proverbs iii. 3.
VII. Figure with a musical instrument (?).
VIII. II Kings iii. 15.
IX. Figure with a light (?) in her left hand and an open book in her right hand.  X. I Sam. ii. 35.
XI. Figure dressed in armour leaning against a lion, with her right hand touching an upright stone column.
XII. Proverbs xviii. 10.
XIII. Figure holding in her right hand a sword and in her left hand scales.  XIV. Proverbs xvi. 11.
XV. Figure with a branch of a palm tree in her right hand and a cornucopia in her left hand.  XVI. Genesis xliii. 23.

From this it appears that most of the allegorical figures are the same in both Megilloth. However, the Kaufmann Scroll has eight and the Scroll at the Jewish Museum nine such figures. As Kaufmann does not mention a figure with an anchor,² this is probably the missing ninth figure. As for the biblical quotations, we find Proverbs xxv. 16 and Proverbs xvi. 11 in both Scrolls, but not above the same illustrations to the text;³ all the other quotations are different.

Having examined the three Scrolls, we must now decide (a) about the relationship between the artists of these Scrolls and (b) the date of these Megilloth and the country where they were executed.

An answer to the first question has already been provided by Naményi,⁴ but it must be regarded as unsatisfactory. He maintains that the following three illuminated Megilloth were the work of one artist: the Scroll at Padua, the Scroll in the Kaufmann Collection, and the Scroll at the Jewish Museum. For reasons

¹ This is the case in the Musée de Cluny Scroll; see above, p. 113.
² Col. VII in the Jewish Museum Scroll.
³ Cols. I and XII in the Jewish Museum Scroll and Cols. II and XIV in the Kaufmann Scroll.
⁴ See op. cit. in R.E.J., loc. cit.
already stated ¹ we cannot refer here to the Scroll at the Synagogue at Padua, so that the statement made by Naményi only concerns us for the other two Scrolls.

To begin with, may we say that we do not see the hand of the same artist in these two. One has only to compare the two final illustrations in them in order to realize that the artist of the Jewish Museum Megillah (Pl. IV (b)) is a far better draughtsman, as is shown by the fact that his line is drawn with far greater firmness and with far more ease than is the case in the illustrations in the Kaufmann Megillah (Pl. IV (c)). The scene of Mordecai speaking to the Jews ² is treated by the artist of the Jewish Museum Scroll in a relatively elaborate manner, and depicts a great number of figures gathered in front of Mordecai, who is speaking to them from a raised pulpit fixed to a pillar, such as can be seen in some synagogues. Moreover, the artist has respected the relative proportions of the Jews standing in a group and of Mordecai higher up above them, so that he appears slightly smaller than the figures on the ground. Finally, the ornamental frame drawn round this scene encloses it while at the same time providing space for the figures.

In the Kaufmann Megillah (Pl. IV (c)) the group of Jews does not form a unity. Mordecai is standing in a pulpit which is almost on the level of the ground, yet he appears taller than the Jews supposed to be standing below him. If we look at the frame around this scene, it is obviously drawn in a clumsy manner; as it is too close to the figures, it covers the feet of some of the Jews on the right and touches Mordecai’s hat on the left. There can therefore be no doubt that the illustrations in these two Scrolls are the work of different artists.

As for the Musée de Cluny Megillah, it is evidently the work of a third artist. He is undoubtedly the best of the three; he

¹ See above, p. 113.
² R. Wischnitzer, op. cit. in Purim Anthology, p. 244, says that this scene in the Kaufmann Megillah represents “The Purim Rabbi.” In our opinion this is a misinterpretation, as the Purim Rabbi is a jester, a man dressed up as a Rabbi just for the day of Purim, in order to amuse people. As the illustrations of these Megilloth are all definitely based on the text, the above-mentioned scene cannot be other than Mordecai speaking to the Jews, as related at the end of the Book of Esther.
has a good feeling for space, as is shown by the fact that he places most of the episodes depicted in a landscape setting, with trees in the background. He is also very fond of including various perspectives in his drawings. Thus in the scene of Mordecai speaking to the Jews (Pl. IV (a)) the figures are all standing in an interior, with two oculi in the wall in the background and a door to the right; the artist may have had the interior of a synagogue in mind. Such details are lacking in the Jewish Museum Megillah (Pl. IV (b)). Although Mordecai is also speaking from a pulpit, there is nothing to suggest a wall in the background or to give the impression of a room: the scene might be taking place in the open air. Differences such as these point conclusively to the work of two different artists; thus we have three Megilloth illustrated by three artists.

Turning to the second question, namely, the date and the origin of these Megilloth, let us first mention the opinions already advanced.

In the first place, Kaufmann ¹ makes no allusion whatsoever to the problem, nor is there any additional information in the catalogue by Weisz, where several new points are taken up. The first attempt at naming a date for this Scroll was made by R. Wischnitzer,² who suggests that it derived from the Howitt Scroll,³ an engraved scroll attributed to Shalom Italia and supposed to bear the date 1637. However, at no point does Mrs. Wischnitzer say whether the Kaufmann Megillah belongs to the second half or the end of the seventeenth century, or to the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁴ In a second publication, however, Mrs. Wischnitzer ⁵ gives the date "18th century" to the two scenes already mentioned in the Kaufmann Megillah. Lastly, Naményi ⁶ suggested eight years later that the Kaufmann and the Jewish Museum Megilloth were "probablement du

¹ Loc. cit.
² See op. cit. in M.G.W.J., p. 387.
³ Now in the collection of the Jewish Museum, London.
⁴ Loc. cit. : "Das in der Howitt-Rolle geschaffene Vorbild wird nun weiter ausgebaut. Die Rolle von David Kaufmann, jetzt in der Akademie der Wissenschaften, Budapest, bezeichnet die nächste Etappe."
⁵ Op. cit. in Purim Anthology, for Figs. 4 and 23.
⁶ Cf. op. cit. in R.E.J., p. 38.
XVIIIe siècle”, and some time later ascribed them both to the eighteenth century.\(^1\)

Although all these Megilloth have an architectural décor in which the presence of twisted columns reminds us of the Italian baroque of the second half of the seventeenth century, such columns appear only from about the end of the seventeenth century in Central Europe, and are then found in almost all baroque churches in Central Europe and in Bavaria during the eighteenth century. As an example we might mention the church at Weltenburg, built between 1716 and 1721 by the brothers Aegidius Quirinus and Cosmo Damian Asam, where there are similar pairs of twisted columns with corinthian capitals at the altar. In a drawing by the same architect Aegidius Quirinus Asam (1692-1750) of a design for a circular chapel,\(^2\) we see an architectural detail with a balustrade on which various figures are placed,\(^3\) similar to the Jewish Museum and Kaufmann Megilloth. Similarities in the drawing of the allegorical figures, the treatment of draperies, the way the figures are seated on a balustrade and the architectural design of the whole can be seen in a water-colour by Isaac de Moucheron (1667-1744) showing a landscape with a palace, with allegorical figures seated on a balustrade. This painting, dating from the early eighteenth century, is entitled “Italian summer palace in a park”.\(^4\)

There are further points of comparison. The elaborately shaped escutcheons surmounted by shells in the Musée de Cluny Megillah (Pl. III (a)) closely resemble the escutcheon placed on a balustrade at the top of a fountain designed by Juste-Aurèle de la Meissonier (1693-1750).\(^5\) The frames around the illustrations between the pedestals of the pillars in the three Megilloth, which are quite definitely rococo in style, remind us of a stucco decoration at the Cuvilliés Theatre at Munich,\(^6\) which dates from the

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\(^1\) Cf. op. cit. in *Jewish Art*, col. 434.

\(^2\) In the collection of the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich.

\(^3\) Reproduced in the catalogue of the exhibition *The Age of Elegance, the Rococo and its Effect* (The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1959), Fig. 259.

\(^4\) In the collection of the Kunsthalle, Hamburg; it is reproduced in W. Benf, op. cit. Fig. 423.


\(^6\) This detail is reproduced in the catalogue of the exhibition *The Age of Rococo* (Munich, 1958), Pl. 1.
second quarter of the eighteenth century. Similar frames containing scenes reminiscent of those in the Megilloth even as far as the composition is concerned, are to be found in a calendar made in Rouen in the eighteenth century.  

If we take all these elements of style into consideration, it is obvious that these megilloth cannot be ascribed to a date before 1700 or much later than 1750. It also seems most probable that they were executed in Central Europe, Austria and Bavaria being the most likely regions.

The various hand-painted megilloth discussed in this article have provided further details of the development of these illustrated scrolls up to the second half of the eighteenth century. Owing to lack of space we have had to omit some interesting and original hand-painted scrolls; most of those chosen for this study have, however, the advantage of being practically unknown, and no reproductions of them have hitherto been published. They originate in three regions of Europe: B.M. MS. Or. 1047 most likely in Holland, the four popular scrolls in western Germany, and the last three mentioned in this study, the Kaufmann, Jewish Museum and Musée de Cluny scrolls, probably in Central Europe. The latter cannot be called "popular", since they are far superior to the four scrolls from western Germany; of these the Strasbourg Megillah and B.M. MS. Add. 11832 belong to one group, while the scroll at Stuttgart and the one at the Musée de Cluny (Cl. 17503) contain similarities in the Yiddish inscriptions added to their illustrations.

We have pointed out the presence in B.M. MS. Or. 1047 of an unusual and very elaborate cycle of illustrations. It must not be forgotten that in another seventeenth-century scroll (the Liverpool Athenaeum Megillah) the cycle is also very developed. In both these scrolls use is made of midrashim for the illustrations and in both there are inscriptions taken from the Book of Esther. We would suggest that full cycles of this kind came into being at the beginning of the seventeenth century and that they were not continued for more than one century. Moreover, since these are the only two scrolls of this kind known, very few megilloth with

developed cycles of illustrations can ever have been executed. The popular German scrolls, on the other hand, contain only very limited cycles of illustrations. Finally, the central European baroque-rococo scrolls contain partly original cycles, though some of the scenes depicted show analogies to cycles in some of the Italian engraved megilloth of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the latter, however, there are no traces of the rococo style. It is our aim to deal with these engraved megilloth in a further study.