THE EARLIEST ENGRAVED ITALIAN MEGILLOTH

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THE term "engraved megilloth" is used to describe those scrolls of Esther the illustrations of which were produced by means of engravings on wood blocks or copper plates, the text itself being written by a scribe as laid down by Jewish law. Illustrated megilloth of this kind first made their appearance towards the latter part of the sixteenth century, and became fairly common during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Towards the end of the eighteenth century and during the first half of the nineteenth some pastiches of earlier eighteenth-century models were produced, of which we know of two examples, one in the University Library at Rostock and the other probably still in the Jewish Museum at Budapest. A peculiarity of these two examples is that the text of the Book of Esther is for once not handwritten but engraved on the same copper plates as the illustrations, so that the engraved text is surrounded by the engraved illustrations on each of the copper plates required for

1 For the preparation of this article I have received a great number of microfilms of megilloth from many libraries and private collections. I wish to express here my gratitude to the Keepers and owners of these collections for their kind co-operation. All are acknowledged where appropriate in this article. I am also most grateful to my friend Dr. P. Skrine of the University of Manchester, for his kind help in going through my text before it was printed.

For permission to reproduce photographs I am indebted to Mr. R. Hall, Librarian of the John Rylands Library (Pl. I(a) and Pl. II(a)), to Mr. F. Salet, Head Keeper of the Musée de Cluny (Pl. IV(b and d)), to Dr. I. Joel, Keeper of Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem (Pl. IV(a)), to the Trustees of the Jewish Museum, London (Pl. III(b)), to the Director of the Biblioteca Palatina, Parma (Pl. III(a) and Pl. IV(c)), to Rabbi S. D. Sassoon, Letchworth (Pl. II(c)), and to Mr. Victor Klagsbald, Paris (Pl. I(b) and Pl. II(b)).


3 See Ernest Name'nyi, "Ein ungarisch-jüdischer Kupferstecher der Biedermeierzeit (Markus Donath)", in Jubilee Volume in Honour of Prof. Bernhard Heller (Budapest, 1941), pp. 252 ff.
the complete text. But, as already mentioned, the Book of Esther may not be used in a printed version for reading aloud to the congregation, though members of the congregation may if they wish follow the minister's reading in a printed book, or even in a scroll containing the printed text. These two more recent examples of engraved megilloth may well be rather exceptional, but it is known that parchment scrolls of Esther containing only the printed text existed as far back as the second half of the sixteenth century. These scrolls were printed in 1560 in Riva di Trento¹ but it may be assumed that no engravings were added to them. However, none of these printed megilloth has survived, and A. Marx supposes that they were intentionally destroyed² once Moses Provenzale of Mantua had declared that no such megilloth were to be used.

It is uncertain whether or not any attempt was made in the second half of the sixteenth century or during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to combine the printed text and the engraved illustrations on a scroll of Esther, as was done later on, as indicated above. It is, however, significant that the first printed haggadoth with abundant wood-cut illustrations began to appear at the very beginning of the sixteenth century. One example is thought to have been printed in Constantinople in 1515, another was printed in Prague in 1526, one at Augsburg in 1534 and another at Mantua in 1560, all with illustrations showing people in various scenes connected with the Passover story and the Book of Exodus.³ But it must be pointed out that in fact there

² Op. cit. p. 81: "Es sind einmal 16 Megillot auf Pergament gedruckt worden, von denen freilich keine Spur auf uns gekommen ist... Moses Provenzale in Mantua... entscheidet... sich absolut gegen die Brauchbarkeit der gedruckten Pergamentmegillot und findet schon die Existenz solcher Exemplare bedenklich, da sie irrtümlich benutzt werden können. Es ist wohl anzunehmen, daß diese Entscheidung zur Vernichtung der 16 gedruckten Exemplare führte."
³ For some partial reproductions of the printed haggadoth and their illustrations enumerated here see E. D. Goldschmidt, The Passover Haggadah, its sources and history (In Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1960), and Abraham Yaari, Bibliography of the Passover Haggadah from the earliest printed edition to 1960 (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1960).
was no religious objection to printing the text of the haggadah, unlike that of the Book of Esther, which must be read from a hand-written scroll; hence the possible destruction of the earlier specimens of printed illustrated megilloth, together with those without illustrations.

In contrast to hand-painted megilloth, of which a considerable and heterogeneous number were produced, fourteen of which we have previously described and of which many are still unknown, it must be stated that engraved megilloth are far fewer and much less varied in type. But to avoid any misconceptions at this point, we should further make it clear that, though they are more limited in type, the number of extant copies of each type is considerable, the total easily exceeding that of all extant hand-painted megilloth. There is nothing exceptional in this; copies made of a painting are always limited in number and seldom fail to show some more or less important variants. Copies executed by hand allow the artist the full use of his imagination and offer new possibilities to his urge for artistic expression, whereas in engravings the very fact that every plate can produce numerous identical copies results in a smaller variety of types and a greater number of individual examples of each. Another peculiarity of the engraved megillah is that the text could be added just as well by the person acquiring a copy as by a professional scribe commissioned to write the text in, whereas it must seldom have occurred that a person able to pay an artist to paint scenes on the borders of a megillah would write in the text himself instead of asking a scribe to do so. However, it must not be forgotten that a good number of hand-painted megilloth are no more than the work of amateurs, in the case of both text and illustrations.

Documents concerning early engraved megilloth are so scarce that it cannot be ascertained at what date they were first produced. None has survived from the first half of the sixteenth century. Not until the second half, when the megillah already mentioned was printed at Riva di Trento, do we find any fragments.

There exists a sheet of parchment from this period which has

1 Bulletin, xlv. 148 ff., and xlvi. 84 ff.
an engraved border showing putti among scroll-work and cary­
atides; inside the border are the blessings read before and after
the reading of the megillah. Sheets of this kind containing the
blessings are often independent of the scroll on which the text
of the Book of Esther is written. But it is also quite usual to
have scrolls in which the blessings are written at the beginning
and the end, or even all at the beginning, preceding the text.
In some megilloth an empty space, where the blessings were
supposed to be written, can be seen at the beginning or at the
end of the scroll. In one type of engraved megillah (with which
we shall not deal here) the artist has drawn five figures, each
holding an escutcheon on which parts of the final blessings were
to be inscribed. In some of these megilloth the blessings have
not been added, and the escutcheons remain blank.

The sixteenth-century engraved sheet referred to above,
although quite separate from a scroll containing the full text,
might well have had the same ornamentation as the scroll itself. This is all the more likely since the method employed for most
engraved megilloth throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth
centuries was to use the same plate for several sheets of parch­
ment which, when sewn together, made up one scroll, though

1 This sheet is reproduced in Jüdisches Lexikon, vol. iv, cols. 607-8. Also in Rachel Wischnitzer, “The Esther Story in Art”, in Purim Anthology, ed. Philip Goodman (Philadelphia, 1949), Fig. 54.

2 There is a reproduction of this engraving in Encyclopaedia Judaica, vol. i, col. 708.

3 In Jüdisches Lexikon, loc. cit., the caption beneath the reproduction of this fragment states: “Schluß einer Megillah . . .”. Yet judging only by this repro­duction (the present whereabouts of the sheet being unknown) we are of the opinion that it can safely be recognized not as the final part of a scroll, as the caption claims, but as a completely separate piece of parchment. It may even represent the beginning of a scroll, as was suggested by Mrs. Wischnitzer when referring to it in op. cit. in Purim Anthology, p. 231 in the following terms: “It is the initial leaf of a scroll with the blessing for Purim . . .” It does, in fact, have on it the initial as well as the final blessings and consequently it cannot be the end of a scroll. However, it is now impossible to prove that it was at the beginning of a scroll rather than a completely independent strip of parchment, since the repro­duction in the Jüdisches Lexikon, reprinted in Purim Anthology, is the only one by which it is at present known, and this does not permit any decision to be made as to whether the sheet has any needle marks on its outer left-hand border indicating where the parchment was attached to the scroll itself. Nevertheless, it seems far more likely that it was a separate sheet.
some additional small engraving might be superimposed on the main engraving. The repetition of the same pattern on each sheet is also known to have been widely practised in the case of hand-painted megalloth from the sixteenth century onwards, the oldest extant dated example being the mid-sixteenth-century megaloth written at Castelnuovo, now in the Jewish National and University Library at Jerusalem; of which we have already given a description in a previous article.

The engraved sheet in question is, however, not dated, but it apparently bears the signature of an Italian artist named Andrea Marelli. Although we have not been able to read this name on the reproduction of the engraving in the Jüdisches Lexikon, and still less on the reproduction taken from the Lexikon in Purim Anthology, we follow the statement in the Lexikon that it is by the hand of Marelli. Mrs. Wischnitzer has also repeated this attribution; apparently she did not have the original engraving to hand since she writes: “The Jüdisches Lexikon, IV. 607, has fortunately reproduced the fragment of a Megillah the location of which is unknown.”

Of engraved works by Andrea Marelli very little has survived. His name is, however, mentioned in various works on artists from which we learn that he was a painter, engraver and art dealer, originally from Siena, who worked in Rome from 1567 to 1572. He is also known for an engraving entitled Paupertas, which is a copy of a Dürer engraving. Under what circumstances Marelli was commissioned to engrave the plate for the

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1 MS. Hebr. 4° 197 20.  
2 Bulletin, xlvi. 165-6, Pl. II (c).  
3 loc. cit.  
4 Fig. 54.  
5 The caption for this reproduction in Jüdisches Lexikon further states: “Aus dem 16. Jahrhundert; Kupferstich.”  
7 Cf. Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart (Leipzig, 1930), under A. Marelli; Charles Le Blanc, Manuel de l’amateur d’estampes (Paris, 1856), ii. 604; François Brulliot, Dictionnaire des monogrammes, marques figurées, noms abrégés, etc., avec lesquels les peintres, dessinateurs, graveurs et sculpteurs ont désigné leurs noms (Munich, 1832), vol. i, no. 580a; Adam Bartsch, Le peintre graveur (Vienna, 1808), ix. 239.

8 This is stated by Le Blanc, loc. cit. However, A. Bartsch (loc. cit.), who mentions this engraving by Marelli, says that it is a copy of an engraving by H. Aldegrever.
above *megillah* is unknown. The engravings on it certainly date from the latter part of the sixteenth century, to judge by their style, and, although Marelli was working in Italy, a similar decorative frame in which occur atlantes and also scroll-work with masks can be seen in a German engraving of about 1574, the approximate date of his engraving on the *megillah* fragment.

Another engraved *megillah*, in our opinion belonging rather to the very end of the sixteenth century and more recent in date than that of Marelli, was one in the Frauberger collection. It does not bear the engraver’s signature. Frauberger reproduced only a fragment of it but this is sufficient to show that, unlike the Marelli engraving, which was printed on the separate sheet containing the blessings, the engraving in the Frauberger fragment was used on a series of sheets sewn together to make up one *megillah*. In general lay-out the engraving has similarities with the Marelli engraving; we have a frame, with winged figures standing to the left and right within its vertical borders, while the upper and lower parts of the frame show scroll-work and a mask. The draughtsmanship of the figures is not of high quality; they tend to be rather heavy, and we do not consider this engraving to have been the work of an Italian artist, but rather of one of a northern country. Frauberger considers it to have been produced in France, but he was perhaps too ready to attribute his *megilloth* to French and Spanish origins, and

1 Reproduced in Paul Heitz, *Originalabdruck von Formschneider-Arbeiten des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Strasburg, 1890), Pl. XXI.

2 Wischnitzer, in *Purim Anthology*, p. 231, refers to this *megillah* in the former Frauberger collection, but makes only a general statement as to its date, merely placing it in the “sixteenth century”. A century is too large a period when dating an engraving.

3 The same author (loc. cit.) further states that this *megillah* “is possibly in this country [U.S.A.] now”.

4 Reproduced in Heinrich Frauberger, “Verzierte hebräische Schrift und jüdischer Buchschmuck”, in *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler*, V/VI (1909), Fig. 17.

5 Op. cit. p. 13: “Fig. 17 einen Teil einer ebenfalls französischen Megilla.”

6 Frauberger was one of the first to carry out research on Jewish art and Jewish ritual objects, so that errors inevitably made by this pioneer may be excused by those following in his footsteps. However, it is necessary to point them out. Moreover, of the seventeen details of 16 *megilloth* reproduced in his study, all but one were in his possession. Having such an important collection of illustrated
we feel justified in saying that it was in fact produced in a northern country, Germany or Holland.

As to the date, Frauberger must also have considered it to be of the end of the sixteenth century, as he wrote that "its text is surrounded by richly ornamented baroque cartouches". The designation of a style as baroque generally implies the seventeenth century, but some art critics consider many works of art of the late sixteenth as baroque. It must be supposed that Frauberger adhered to this school of thought.

Another megillah consisting of several sheets with the same engraved motif on each and conceived in the manner of the Marelli and Frauberger engravings, that is, with a frame around the text, is in the Palatine Library at Parma. However, unlike these two, the engraved frame of the Parma megillah contains various kinds of flowers, while human figures, putti, atlantes, etc., are not represented. This is the most simplified of the three types of megillah engravings just described, but we think that it, too, is the work of an Italian artist.

As to its date, it can be placed at the very end of the sixteenth century, and therefore belongs to approximately the same period as the Marelli and Frauberger megilloth. A similar opinion has been expressed by De Rossi, in his catalogue of Hebrew manuscripts in the Palatine Library, where he suggests the sixteenth century or the beginning of the seventeenth.

From these three very similar types we may conclude that towards the latter part, and at the very end, of the sixteenth century, the first engraved megilloth were made up of decorative frames inside which the text of the Book of Esther, or perhaps only the blessings for the reading of it, were added. Further, it appears that this type was first executed by Italian artists, and the Frauberger megillah, even if we attribute it to an engraver megilloth, it is more than likely that Frauberger did not compare them with similar ones before writing his study, since he does not mention any others of the same type as his own. Thus he was led into making errors when speaking of the origin of some of them.

1 Loc. cit.: "den add Text... in reiche Barockkartuschen gefaßt ist."
2 MS. Parma 3305, Cod. de Rossi 54.
3 Cf. MSS. codices hebraici Biblioth. I. B. De Rossi (Parma, 1803), i. 25, Cod. 54: "Estheris Volumen membr. sec. XVI vel in. XVII."
active in a northern country, betrays the direct influence of sixteenth-century Italian art.

It is not surprising that, as we find the oldest extant examples of engraved scrolls of Esther with decorative motifs to be of Italian origins, so, too, the oldest extant scrolls with engravings of illustrations relating to the story of Esther were first executed in Italy. It seems more than likely that these were produced during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and it will be useful to give a detailed description of them.

Whereas the three engravings mentioned above were reproduced several times on the same scroll, in the type of scroll we are now considering three different plates bear the illustrations, with several illustrations on each plate. Besides these plates, two further engravings of a purely ornamental kind, but each with variations, are printed at the beginning and end of the scroll. The decoration at the beginning consists of the following design: in the centre an escutcheon supported by two rampant lions, with an elaborate drawing of abundant foliage, growing out of the upper and lower points of it, spreading out over the opening section of the scroll. The escutcheon may have been intended to bear the name of the owner, or else, which seems more likely, since there is always an escutcheon in the corresponding decoration at the end of the scroll, the two escutcheons were to have written in them the blessings said before and after the reading of the megillah. Yet among the various megilloth of this type known to us, none has any inscriptions in these escutcheons, neither blessings nor the name of an owner.¹

Towards the right-hand outer border of this decoration, in a semicircular formation, we have a leopard, an eagle, a stag, and a lion. Their presence may have some symbolical value, since they often appear on Jewish ritual objects; but they cannot be of any significance on a megillah in so far as they are not connected with the story of Esther.

The decoration at the end of this type of megillah does not depict animal or birds, only flowers and plants. The escutcheon,

¹ The megillah of this type at the Casanatense Library in Rome, Cod. 4851, has the stamp of this library inside each escutcheon, doubtless added some centuries after its execution, when the scroll entered the library.
which is of a different shape from that at the beginning of the scroll, grows out of a horizontal stem on each side of which rich foliage and various flowers sprout symmetrically. The initial and final decorations, although apparently placed where they are in order to fill a blank space, add the ornamental elements necessary to give complete harmony to the whole.

Along the scroll, above and beneath the text and separating the text-columns, the decorative elements and illustrations are disposed in the following manner. The illustrations are always above and below the text-columns. The columns are grouped in pairs, with a band ornamented with a floral motif separating each pair from the next (Pl. I (a-b)). There are thus nine double text-columns (i.e. eighteen), to which is added a nineteenth and final one standing alone and also separated from the last double column by a band. Further, just before the first double column and after the last single one there are similar bands. As the space left for the double columns is 10 cm., for the last column it is less than 6 cm. The different distances separating the ornamented bands in the case of the nine double columns and in that of the last single one also affect the length of the illustrations; those above and beneath the double columns are thus almost twice as long as the two final illustrations for the single one. All these illustrations are separated, and preceded or followed, by an intricate plaited-work design, and this also occurs below and above the bands, making both these decorative motifs one unit separating the text from the illustrations and also appearing at the beginning and end of the scroll, though excluding the richly ornamental decorations described in detail above, these being added after the plates making up the scroll were printed.

Although these features are common to all megilloth of this type, two different models, engraved by two artists, can be distinguished by the shape of the frame around the illustrations. The various decorative elements enumerated above are, however, almost identical, the one being a direct copy of the other. The

1 A reproduction of the decoration at the end of this type of megillah may be seen in Fraugherber, op. cit. Fig. 2.
2 Cf. ibid. Figs. 2 and 4.
illustrations of what we consider to be the archetype are all contained within a frame of polylobed shape (Pl. I(a)), whereas the copy has its illustrations placed in rectangular frames (Pl. I(b)). The difference between the shapes adds one peculiarity to the ornamental plaited-work between the illustrations. Although of the same pattern in both scrolls, it is linked with the polylobed frame in the archetype, becoming part of it, as it were, whereas in the copy it forms an entity unconnected with the rectangular frame.

To avoid possible confusion in the descriptions of these two very similar megilloth, of both of which several examples exist, we shall for convenience refer to the archetype as Megillah Gaster I, and to the copy of it as Megillah Klagsbald.

It should also be said that the plaited-work in the Klagsbald Megillah is less well drawn than that in the Gaster I Megillah, and the same is true of all the illustrations and decorative designs in the two models. Further, the elaborately-drawn decorations at the beginning and end of these megilloth are not identical, since in the Klagsbald Megillah two flowers appear in the place of the escutcheons. But the engraver of the Klagsbald Megillah has retained the two rampant lions on either side of the flower, and has also reproduced the four beasts.

1 Rylands Gaster Hebrew MS. 710. We know of other examples of this same model in the following libraries and collections: Cambridge, University Library, MS. Add. 1013; Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College Library (this megillah is the one in the former Frauberger collection, two fragments of which are reproduced in Frauberger’s publication, mentioned above, Figs. 2 and 4); Great Yarmouth Parish Church; Jerusalem, National Bezalel Museum (a fragment of this megillah is reproduced in Purim Anthology, Fig. 47); Marburg, Westdeutsche Bibliothek, ehem. Preußische Staatsbibliothek, MS. Or. oct. 2947; Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, Cod. 4851 (a fragment is reproduced in E. Munkacsi, Miniatiirművészet Italia könyviaraiiban hebr codeszek (Budapest, 1938), Pl. XVI, Fig. 58).

2 Collection of Mr. Victor Klagsbald, Paris. We know of a further example at Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek, MS. 1254 (a fragment of this is reproduced in T. Ehrenstein, Das Alte Testament im Bilde, p. 911, Fig. 66). The above lists of megilloth of the Gaster I and Klagsbald type are limited to examples we have actually seen. From descriptions we have read, we can infer, however, that there are others at Frankfort (Historisches Museum, Inv. no. 15258) and the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York: we do not know to which group they belong. A further example was formerly in the Berlin Kunstsammlung; its present whereabouts are unknown.
Why then has he introduced the rectangular frames for the illustrations of the scroll? On close examination it will be noticed that these have been printed with twenty separate small plates between the plaited-work (Pl. I(b)) ; indeed the mark of the edges of these small plates is still discernible on the parchment. It now becomes clear why the engraver of this Megillah, when copying an example of the Megillah Gaster I, did not follow the lines of the plaited pattern to their very end, where they join the polylobed frame (Pl. I(a)), but made them join on to each other at each end of the plaited pattern (Pl. I(b)). It was so that he could afterwards print the illustrations, engraved separately on small plates, within the empty spaces.

This method offered new possibilities to the engraver, as he was now no longer obliged to copy the three plates as found in the Megillah Gaster I, where, in fact, they are absolutely necessary, since the nine illustrations above and the nine below the double text-columns as well as the last shorter ones above and below the final single text-column, are all engraved directly on the main plates.

The two megilloth are of approximately the same dimensions (160 cm. long by 16·5 cm. wide) with some variation in the external dimensions of the parchment, the borders of some scrolls having been more trimmed in subsequent centuries.

The engraver of the Klagsbald Megillah has also followed the lay-out of the text in double columns, with a final single column. When he copied the Megillah Gaster I he drew in all two plates to contain the entire text; one 39 cm. in length, on which he drew three sets of ornaments with plaited-work to contain three groups of double text-columns, and one about 12 cm. in length, with these ornaments, to contain the final single text-column. He then printed the first plate three times, which gave him his nine double text-columns. He also engraved the decoration at the beginning and end of the scroll on two separate plates; their lengths are about 13 cm. and 12 cm. In the Megillah Gaster I these lengths are the same. The printers had to bear in mind the additional 13 or 12 cm. required for these decorations when choosing the parchment on which the first and last plates of the Gaster I and Klagsbald Megilloth were to be printed.
The illustrations and various decorative elements in *megilloth* of the Gaster I type and those derived from it, such as the Klagsbald, Friedmann and Kirschstein *megilloth*, as also of the Gaster II type, were made with wood blocks in the following way: the lines engraved on the block were not filled in with ink but left empty, so that when printed on the parchment, the outlines of the drawing were indicated only by very faint lines left by the contact of the engraved plate with the parchment in the printing press. The decorative elements and illustrations were then coloured in with a brush.

The illustrations in both these scrolls are as follows, and occur in this order in both:

- **Text-columns I and II.** Above: the feast of Ahasuerus (i. 3).
  Below: the feast of Vashti (i. 9).
- **III and IV.** Above: the messengers are despatched (i. 22).
  Below: the young virgins are brought to the palace (ii. 3).
- **V and VI.** Above: the king chooses Esther from among the maidens (ii. 17).
  Below: (right) Mordecai at the king’s gate overhears the plot of Bigthan and Teresh (ii. 21); (left) the king promotes Haman (iii. 1).
- **VII and VIII.** Above: (right) the king’s scribes write all that Haman had commanded (iii. 12); (left) Esther with her maidens and chamberlain in the palace courtyard (iv. 4) and Mordecai standing in the background by the city gate.
  Below: (right) Esther calls for Hathach (iv. 5); (left) Hathach speaks to Mordecai (iv. 6). See Pl. I (a and b).
- **IX and X.** Above: (right) Esther before the king (v. 2); (left) the king and Haman at the banquet given by Esther (v. 6).
  Below: (right) Zeresh, Haman’s wife, pointing to the gallows she had advised Haman to build, Haman and a friend standing beside her (v. 14); (left) the king is read to at night (vi. 1). For these two columns see Pl. I (a and b).
- **XI and XII.** Above: (right) Haman before the king (vi. 6); (left) the triumph of Mordecai (vi. 11). In this illustration we again see a representation of the episode related in the *Midrash*, according to which Haman’s daughter, leaning out of a window, threw filth on to her father’s head. 1
  Below: (right) Esther’s second banquet for the king and Haman (vii. 2); Haman, on the ground, begs Esther for his life (vii. 7) while the king looks on; (left) Harbonah speaks to the king (vii. 9).
- **XIII and XIV.** Above: (right) the hanging of Haman (vii. 10); (left) Mordecai before the king (viii. 1). See Pl. II (b).
  Below: (right) Esther beseeches the king to reverse Haman’s decree (viii. 5), while in the background we see the king’s scribes (viii. 9); (left) mounted messengers are despatched with the king’s new decree (viii. 14).
- **XV and XVI.** Above: (right) Mordecai before the king (viii. 15); (left) men seated at a table, representing the rejoicing of the Jews at Shushan (viii. 15).

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Below: the Jews fighting their enemies on the 13th of Adar (ix. 5).

XVII and XVIII. Above: (right) Esther and the king (ix. 12); (left) the ten sons of Haman hanging on the gallows (ix. 7-10).

Below: men seated at a table, partaking of a meal, representing the feasting of the Jews at Shushan (ix. 18).

XIX. Above: (right) Esther writing letters to the Jews (ix. 29); (left) the letters are despatched (ix. 30).

Below: jesters making music and dancing.

From the relatively numerous subjects of the illustrations in megilloth of the Gaster I type, it can be inferred that early Italian engraved megilloth were abundantly illustrated.

The question of the date of this type of megillah ought now to be considered. Between the megillah Gaster I and the Klagsbald megillah a short time elapsed, certainly not more than a few decades. That the former is the archetype and the latter a copy of it becomes evident as soon as one compares the almost clumsy manner in which the human figures are drawn in the Klagsbald megillah with the equivalent illustrations in the megillah Gaster I; the same is true of the ungainly lines of the plaited-work and the floral ornaments. It is therefore surprising that so far no distinction has been made between the Gaster I and Klagsbald Megilloth, though an excellent opportunity arose as recently as 1961, at the Synagoga Exhibition at Frankfort. In fact, the catalogue of this exhibition, describing the Megillah Gaster I at Marburg,\(^1\) states that this example has "the same copper engravings as have Nos. 127\(^2\) and 128\(^3\) in this catalogue, and the Megillah in the Casanatense collection No. 4851",\(^4\) which latter is a Megillah Gaster I. Surely the presence at this exhibition of four megilloth, two of the Gaster I and two of the Klagsbald type, should have drawn the attention of specialists to the differences between them.

The first date we should try to ascertain is obviously that of the Gaster I Megillah. Frauberger,\(^5\) the first to reproduce part

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1 MS. Or. oct. 2947, described under no. 124 of the Frankfort exhibition catalogue.

2 I.e. the Klagsbald Megillah in the collection of Mr. Klagsbald.

3 I.e. the Klagsbald Megillah at Erlangen, MS. 1254.

4 Cf. Cat. of Synagoga Exhibition, Frankfort, no. 124: "Exemplare mit denselben Kupferstichen, Katalog Nr. 127, 128 und Megillah in der Sammlung Casanatense Nr. 4851."

of a scroll of this type, considers it to be sixteenth-century and attributes it to Italy. But some years before, the Gaster I scroll at the Casanatense Library had been catalogued by Gustavo Sacerdote as "belonging to the beginning of the seventeenth century." For the megillah in the former Gaster collection, now in the Rylands Library, we have the following note in a manuscript catalogue of this collection, perhaps in the hand of Dr. Gaster himself, concerning the date and origin: "... Italian-XVI event. earlier." However, other more thorough opinions as to the date of the Gaster I Megillah have been voiced.

One opinion, given by Michael Adler for the scroll at Great Yarmouth Parish Church, states: "The Church Guide declares the manuscript to belong to the latter half of the 15th century, its writer having been a Spanish Jew. ... An examination of the writing of the scroll, and the condition of the vellum convinces me that the age ascribed to it in the Church Guide is erroneous. I have obtained the opinion of two authorities upon Hebrew MSS. to the effect that the scroll must have been written at the commencement of the present century by a German Jew, and not by a Spaniard." The only conclusion to be drawn from this statement is that he attributed this Megillah to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

A more acceptable opinion as to the date of this type of megillah has been put forward by Mrs. Wischnitzer in two publications. Although in neither does she reproduce part of a megillah of this type, we can easily deduce from the examples to which she refers that she has the Gaster I or Klagsbald type in mind. But in her view they were drawn after

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1 Cf. Cataloghi dei codici orientali di alcune biblioteche d'Italia (Part VI), "Biblioteca Casanatense di Roma" (Florence, 1897), pp. 477-662.
2 Ibid. p. 478: "... appartenente al principio del secolo XVII."
3 In the Department of Manuscripts at the John Rylands Library.
4 Cf. ibid. p. H 21, MS. 710.
5 "Notes on the Jews of Yarmouth", in The Jewish Chronicle, 1895 (13 September), pp. 15-16.
7 In the Encyclopaedia Judaica, loc. cit. she states: "Zum gleichen Typ gehört die Rolle der Berliner Kunstsammlung, Invent. Nr. 3944, ferner nach der
paintings by the French artist Antoine Coypel (1661-1722), or, at least, after an imitation of one of Coypel’s works. In her second study she considers this type of megillah to have been copied from paintings by Coypel and that in this type of illustrated scroll we have a copy on a smaller scale of Coypel’s “Esther before Ahasuerus”. Apart from the question of the date she proposed, this type of megillah, if it really was copied from paintings by Coypel, must stand comparison with them; yet if the illustration of the scene of Esther before Ahasuerus in the megillah is compared with the painting of the same subject by Coypel, it becomes evident that there can be no question of the one being a copy of the other, since the composition of the scene and the grouping of the figures are quite different. Besides, it must be recognized that the engravings, even those in the Megillah Caster I, are the work of a popular second-rate artist, and it would therefore be presumptuous to maintain that they were modelled on a painting of high artistic quality. Popular illustrations of this kind are often the products of the imagination of the artist or copied from other works of a popular type. Moreover, Coypel was not the only seventeenth century painter to depict biblical scenes; Rembrandt and Poussin, to name only two of the most famous, drew and painted many, while paintings of Esther before Ahasuerus were produced by several artists of the period. Thus the engraver of the Megillah Caster I would have had a wide range of models and it is rash to conclude that it was necessarily Coypel’s paintings which inspired him.

Beschreibung von M. Adler zu urteilen, die Rolle der Pfarrkirche in Yarmouth; Frauberger reproduziert (in Mitt. V/VI, Fig. 2 und 4) unter der Bezeichnung ‘Italienisch, 16. Jht.’ ein Exemplar, das mit dem genannten verwandt sein dürfte.”

1 In the Encyclopaedia Judaica, loc. cit. she states: “Er geht auf eine von dem französischen Maler Antoine Coypel (1661-1722) oder nach ihm gemalte Vorlage zurück.”


3 Cf. Pl. 1(a and b), above left-hand double text-column.

4 A pen-and-ink drawing by Rembrandt of Esther before Ahasuerus is in the Cabinet des Dessins of the Louvre.
Further, in the text quoted above, Mrs. Wischnitzer indicates that one of these scrolls bears the date 1680, which leads her to the assumption that this was the year of its execution. This could well be, as far as the writing of the text is concerned. But for the illustrations this late date must be rejected. In any case, when giving this date Mrs. Wischnitzer should have been aware of the fragility of a theory which places the painting by Coypel at approximately the same time as the illustration of the megillah in question, for Coypel did not execute his painting of Esther before Ahasuerus before, or even in, 1680; it is known that he painted it around 1697 and exhibited it some years later, in 1704, at the annual "Salon". Of course, Coypel was well known in French artistic circles from an early age, and was just twenty years old when elected a member of the Académie in 1681; but his paintings of biblical subjects were produced a good many years later.

Other statements of a general nature as to the date of the Gaster I and Klagsbald Megilloth have been made more recently. For the Megillah Gaster I at the Casanatense Library, Munkacsi gives as date the seventeenth century, thus closely following the indication given by Sacerdote in his catalogue mentioned above. Ernest Naményi keeps to the same date and in so doing refers to Munkacsi. As for the Klagsbald Megillah, in an exhibition catalogue prepared by Mr. Klagsbald in which this Megillah is very briefly described, it is assigned to: "Italie, XVIIe siècle." On the other hand, at the Synagoga Exhibition at Recklinghausen in 1960-1, the Megillah Gaster I at Marburg was placed "around 1700", while the Klagsbald Megilloth, the one belonging to Klagsbald and the other at Erlangen, were both placed well

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1 This painting is at the Louvre (no. 170) and the precise title given by Coypel is "L'Évanouissement d'Esther", the painter having been inspired by the tragedy of Racine rather than by the Book of Esther, where it says (v. 2): "... so Esther drew near."

2 Cf. Louis Dimier, Les peintres français du XVIIIe siècle... histoire des vies et catalogue des œuvres (Paris and Brussels, 1928), i. 130.

3 See op. cit. p. 48.

4 See p. 394.

5 In his article "La miniature juive au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècle", in Revue des études juives, cxvi (1957), 37-38.


7 See B64 and B65 in the Recklinghausen exhibition catalogue.
within the eighteenth century. No reasons are given in the catalogue for these very late datings. The exhibition was transferred to Frankfort in mid-1961, but the dates given for the megilloth remained the same.\(^1\) When some of the manuscripts exhibited here were shown at Amsterdam later in the year, the date of the Megillah Gaster I at Marburg had, without explanation, been moved to the eighteenth century,\(^2\) the assumed date of the Klagsbald Megillah at Erlangen remaining unchanged.\(^3\)

We have now seen that the type of engraved megillah described here has been thought to belong to the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and even nineteenth centuries, but that despite these astonishingly different dates, most of the writers dealing with this type have considered it to be Italian.\(^4\) Only Mrs. Wischnitzer sees in it the influence of a painting by a late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century French artist, while some writers offer no opinion.

Our own opinion is that the Megillah Gaster I belongs to the beginning of the seventeenth century, not only because the type of clothing depicted in its illustrations was worn then at the latest, but also because the architecture represented belongs to the end of the sixteenth century or, at the latest, the beginning of the seventeenth. The decorative elements, like the two cartouches, are without doubt of a type which belongs to the beginning of the seventeenth century, while the plaited-work is of no determined date, this type of ornamental device having been used in illuminated manuscripts since medieval times. It is frequently found in manuscripts from the fourteenth century onwards, and increasingly becomes a marginal decorative element; during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it is often seen along the margins of illuminated pages in Flemish as well as French and Italian manuscripts. The engravers of the late fifteenth century and of the sixteenth continued to use this type of plaited-work in some of their engravings for printed books,

\(^1\) See nos. 124, 127 and 128 of the Frankfort Synagoga catalogue.
\(^2\) See no. 64 of this catalogue: "18e eeuw."
\(^3\) Ibid. no. 65; the scroll of this type belonging to Mr. Klagsbald is not mentioned in the Amsterdam catalogue.
\(^4\) Cf. the various Synagoga catalogues, and also the above-mentioned catalogues and publications by Frauberger, Gaster, Klagsbald.
particularly in Italy. No doubt the engraver of the *Megillah Gaster* I took engravings in printed books, rather than the illuminated page of a manuscript, as a model for his plaited pattern. Finally, the composition of the small scenes clearly indicates that they can only date from the beginning of the seventeenth century. There is a fair amount of movement in each, but the grouping of the figures shows no evidence of the loose placings of figures occurring in compositions of the second half of the seventeenth century.

It is, therefore, impossible to regard the various statements quoted above respecting its date as valid. However, it may be accepted that it was executed in Italy, although, as it is a popular work, one must hesitate before assigning it to a definite place. Similarities in popular art from one country to another are widespread during the seventeenth century; for instance, we find illustrations very similar to those in the *Megillah Gaster* I in a series of wood engravings depicting biblical subjects, amongst them one of Esther before Ahasuerus, engraved at Amsterdam at the beginning of the seventeenth century in the workshop of Erven Weismuller. The technique of engraving and even the composition of the scenes contain similarities, though elements such as the style and architecture lead to the conclusion that the *Megillah* is doubtless the work of an Italian engraver, while the Amsterdam engravings were clearly done by a Dutch artist. On the other hand, an example showing many similarities to the illustrations in the *Megillah Gaster* I, in style, costume, and architecture, is an earthenware plate with an illustration of the Judgment of Solomon, dating from the first half of the seventeenth century. Although produced in France, it is in the so-called Italo-Nivernais style, in which, however, the Italian element clearly predominates. Indeed, this latter comparison reveals in a more positive way the Italian style evident in the engravings of the *Megillah Gaster* I.

As for the *Megillah* Klagsbald, since we have already noted that it is without any doubt a copy of the *Megillah Gaster* I, its

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date is most likely to be before the middle of the seventeenth century; however, since the draughtsmanship is very poor, we shall not attempt to attribute it to any particular country. Although Klagsbald\(^1\) considers it to be Italian, and the same point of view is given in the various Synagoga Exhibition catalogues, we think, without, of course, excluding Italy, that it could just as well have been engraved in Holland, where the engraver would in any case have used the Italian Megillah Gaster I as a model.

The Klagsbald Megillah is, however, not the only example to have been derived from the Megillah Gaster I. We know of two others, though one is not a faithful copy, as was the Megillah Klagsbald. The first, and certainly the less interesting, omitted the richly decorated parts of the original, and apparently only copied the illustrations within the polylobed frames. This Megillah\(^2\) used to be in the collection of Dr. Ignaz Friedmann in Budapest. As we have only a rather poor reproduction of the first text-column of it, we cannot even ascertain whether its illustrations are engraved or simply hand-painted. In the latter case it would be included in this study for the sole reason that it was derived from the Megillah Gaster I. In the Jüdisches Lexikon no reference was made to this scroll in the text on illustrated megilloth next to which it is reproduced. Beneath the reproduction we are merely given the name of its owner and the description “Augsburger Megillah”. Does this mean that it was written and illustrated at Augsburg, or merely acquired there by Dr. Friedmann? 

In the reproduction we are given the first text-column, with an illustration above and beneath it, at first sight very similar to the illustrations inside the polylobed frames of the Megillah Gaster I. However, though the composition of the illustration above the column\(^3\) is very similar to the one in the Megillah Gaster I, where we have the feast of Ahasuerus, the one below does not recall any of the other small scenes in the other Megillah. The subject of this scene cannot even be identified with certainty on the reproduction, though it probably depicts the hanging

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\(^1\) Cf. Exhibition catalogue of the Musée d’Art Juif, op. cit. no. 150.
\(^2\) Reproduced in Jüdisches Lexikon, vol. iv, Pl. CXXI.
\(^3\) In the Friedmann Megillah the first text-column is a single one.
of Haman, as a gallows can be seen. This indicates that such elements as the polylobed frames and the disposition of the illustrations above and below the text-column are a free adaptation of those in the Gaster I Megillah, one at least being copied from it. The remaining illustrations in this scroll, and indeed the existence of any others, cannot be discussed until its present owner is known. In these circumstances we do not intend to propose any date for it. It may have been executed during the eighteenth century, but even the nineteenth cannot be excluded as a possibility. Nor can we say where it was made.

The second Megillah, the ornamentation of which is in some details copied from the Gaster I type, is one which was formerly in the Kirschstein collection. In the case of this scroll it is easier to distinguish the similarities. At the beginning of the Kirschstein Megillah, before the first text-column, there is an engraved frontispiece of a type frequently found in seventeenth-century printed books, namely an arched opening with twisted columns on each side supporting an elaborately decorated triangular pediment, which contains an empty oval cartouche. Within the arched opening is a second cartouche inside which has been engraved a printer's mark: a palm tree with a rampant lion on each side of it. This is the sign of the Foa family, who had established a printing-house at Sabbioneta, near Mantua, in the middle of the sixteenth century. This frontispiece recalls the elaborate decorative design at the beginning and end of the Megillah Gaster I mentioned above. Its purpose is partly decorative but also partly to include the name of the printer or engraver, as on the first page of a printed book. The text of the Kirschstein Megillah is written in 26 text-columns with one

2 For a reproduction of the first four text-columns of this scroll cf. ibid. Pl. IX, Fig. 184.
3 The Jewish engraver Shalom Italia, whose engraved megilloth we shall not deal with here, also placed a frontispiece bearing his name at the beginning of his scrolls. One of these is reproduced by Stephen S. Kayser and Guido Schoenberger in Jewish Ceremonial Art (2nd ed., Philadelphia, 1959), Pl. LXXV, no. 149, and others may be seen in the article by Mordecai Narkiss cited below, p. 406, n. 2.
4 On the reproduction we have only the first four, but additional information about this scroll is given in the Kirschstein catalogue, loc. cit.
illustration beneath each. This lay-out is obviously unlike that of the Megillah Gaster I. Similarly, the dimensions of these two scrolls are very different, the Kirschstein scroll (21·5 cm. by 434 cm.) being much larger. It is the decoration alone which undoubtedly derives from the Megillah Gaster I, the illustrations below the text being, here too, in polylobed frames which, furthermore, are linked to each other by an intricate plaited pattern remarkably similar to that of the Gaster I scroll. There can be no doubt that its engraver had seen the other scroll. The rest of the decoration in the Kirschstein scroll is quite different; between and above the text-columns are two repeated floral patterns which only slightly recall the pattern between the text-columns in the Megillah Gaster I.

Since the illustrations are superior in number to those in the Gaster I scroll, there can be no question of their being a copy. As he had to invent at least six scenes, the engraver appears to have redrawn all twenty-six, judging by the first four, the only ones of which we have a reproduction and which show entirely different compositions for each scene. The Kirschstein Megillah, to judge from the illustrations and the frontispiece, dates from the middle of the seventeenth century, and is thus a few decades later than the Megillah Gaster I. But, like the latter, it was executed in Italy and perhaps even printed by the Foa family at Sabbioneta, though in some Hebrew printed books of the seventeenth century we have noticed that the printers' marks used on a frontispiece are not necessarily those of the printer of the book itself. This may also apply to the Megillah; the Foa escutcheon may have been used for decorative purposes only by any Italian Jewish printer.

Having now seen that two important engraved megilloth derive from the Megillah Gaster I, namely the Klagsbald and Kirschstein scrolls, and that both were executed around the middle of the seventeenth century at the latest, it is interesting to observe that, despite its poor quality, the Klagsbald Megillah in its turn gave rise to a further type, of which only three examples

1 The Kirschstein catalogue states that the latter was made "vor 1700", a date fairly close to the one we propose, if by "before 1700" the author meant several decades earlier, that is, around the middle of the seventeenth century.
are known to us. One was formerly in the Gaster collection and is now in the Rylands Library, the second is in the Palatine Library at Parma, and the third was in the former Frauberger collection. We shall henceforth refer to this type of Megillah as Megillah Gaster II.

The technique used in this type is similar to that of Gaster I-Klagsbald, as the engraved parts are all coloured in; this was not done by the same hand, judging from the examples which still exist. The width of the Gaster II Megillah (27 cm.) is much greater than that of the Gaster I-Klagsbald Megilloth. However, it is very close to them since its illustrations are almost identical in composition and the scenes depicted are practically the same; indeed, there can be no doubt that its illustrations were copied from a megillah Klagsbald, since in it we again find scenes inside rectangular frames, such as were first used in the latter for technical reasons, so as to be able to print these small scenes on the parchment, separately from the previously printed main decorative elements.

Let us describe the general lay-out of the Megillah Gaster II. It consists of a series of arches supported by pilasters which are separated by columns with Corinthian capitals on high pedestals. It is between these pedestals that the small illustrations already mentioned occur. Above the arches is a balustrade which in turn supports the following ornamental devices: directly above each arch is an heraldic motif consisting of an escutcheon in the centre, above which is either a double-headed eagle or a peacock displaying its tail-feathers. From each side of the escutcheon issue flowers and plants, two birds, facing outwards, being perched on the latter. Two kinds of bird are represented, the escutcheon with double-headed eagle having a turkey on each side, the escutcheon with peacock having a cock instead. Between these heraldic motifs, and also standing on the balustrade, directly above the columns, are wide shallow vases

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1 Ryl. Gaster Hebrew MS. 711. 2 Cod. De Rossi 436-MS. Parma 3322. 3 Cf. op. cit. in MGEjK, V/VI, p. 13 and Fig. 12. 4 Cf. p. 390 above. 5 The Megillah Gaster II at the Rylands Library has been damaged by water. During the Second World War many of the late Dr. Gaster’s manuscripts were spoilt by water as the result of an air-raid attack on London. Consequently some of the colours in this Megillah have faded.
containing flowers of alternating kinds. A further detail to be noted are the rosettes on each pedestal and above each capital (Pl. II(a)).

Apart from the subjects and composition of the scenes, which are very close to those in the Gaster I and Klagsbald Megilloth, the Gaster II also copies the ornamental devices which we constantly see in all these scrolls, though some modifications are introduced; the heraldic lions, occurring in both Gaster I and Klagsbald, are omitted, whereas the escutcheon, missing in the initial decoration of the Klagsbald, is present. In the scroll in the Rylands Library this escutcheon in fact contains the blessings said before the reading of the Megillah—a detail we have not found in any megillah of the Gaster I type, while the scroll at the Palatine Library does not have these blessings in this escutcheon but another drawing of a double-headed eagle instead. The initial decoration in the Gaster II retains the four beasts, but they are badly drawn; nor are the foliage and flowers as well drawn, or placed in the same positions, as in the two earlier megilloth.

The Megillah Gaster II in the Rylands Library is made up of four sheets of parchment of varying lengths; the first contains four arches, the second six, the third four and the fourth five. It seems probable that in the two other Gaster II scrolls known to us the number of arches on the second and fourth sheet varies slightly. It appears that the engraver of this megillah drew two plates, one with only four arches and the second with seven. We have come to this conclusion after examining the sequence of the escutcheons above the balustrade. In fact, these do not alternate regularly. On the first sheet their order is: eagle, peacock, peacock, eagle; on the second: eagle, peacock, eagle, peacock, peacock, eagle; the third repeats the order of the first; while the fourth has eagle, peacock, peacock, eagle, eagle. The last one with an eagle has not been used on the second sheet, and the two first, with eagle and peacock, are not on the fourth. The first and third sheets were evidently

1 We possess a complete microfilm of the Manchester scroll, but have photographs of only parts of the one at Parma, while of the former Frauberger scroll only a small section is reproduced, loc. cit.
printed with a plate on which the engraver had drawn four arches, while the second and fourth were printed with a second plate containing in all seven arches. The only possible explanation for the reproduction of only six of the seven arches on the second sheet seems to be that its length was not sufficient to have the whole plate reproduced on it. In order to obtain the full number of nineteen arches, corresponding to the nineteen small illustrations in the scroll, the full plate with its seven arches could not be printed on the last sheet either, since the first three sheets already contained fourteen arches between them. In this case, however, the printer could only print the last five arches, and not the first five, since the plates for several types of megilloth, including the Gaster II, are engraved in such a manner that both the beginning and the end of the whole decorative lay-out are clearly indicated, firstly to allow four pairs of sheets to be sewn together at certain points, and secondly to show the beginning and end of the scroll exactly. Had he chosen the first five arches he would obviously not have been able to print the final decorative design on the last strip of parchment.

Of the nineteen scenes depicted in the Megillah Gaster II, the first eighteen are identical in subject and composition with those in the Klagsbald Megillah. Let us take one example as a comparison between the two (Pl. II(a and b)): the scene showing (right) the hanging of Haman and (left) Mordecai before the king. In these the groups are the same and only a careful scrutiny of the lines of each engraving reveals any differences between them. A difference is more easily discernible in the scene which depicts Mordecai overhearing Bigthan and Teresh; in the Gaster I-Klagsbald Megilloth, we see a fountain in the courtyard, whereas in the Megillah Gaster II we have the courtyard but not the fountain. The only illustration in Gaster II not to have been merely copied from the preceding two scrolls is the nineteenth and last. While in the other two there are twenty illustrations, the final two depicting (a) Esther writing letters to the Jews and messengers carrying them away, and (b) jesters making music and dancing, in the final illustration of the Gaster II scroll we see (right) the scenes in (a), and (left) the people rejoicing. The engraver of Gaster II has thus combined
the two illustrations, changing the second considerably. This nineteenth illustration thus precludes any hypothesis that the plates used for the illustrations in Gaster II might be the same as those used for the Klagsbald Megillah; the engraver of Gaster II had to make a nineteenth plate. and if he was able to engrave a special composition on one plate, surely he could equally well have copied the first eighteen illustrations in the Megillah Klagsbald?

It seems most likely that the Gaster II scroll was executed in Italy. This is indicated by the lay-out of the whole design; the balustrade above the arches, with its vases containing flowers, is reminiscent of Italian gardens of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century. Single arches of similar type, surmounted by vases, were often used at the beginning of the seventeenth century as frontispieces to printed books, and we also find them in Hebrew books printed in Italy. For instance, a Bible in four volumes, printed in Venice in 1617 by Pietro and Lorenzo Bragadin, has a frontispiece in which an arched gateway supports a triangular pediment with vases placed on each side of it. Another example with a similar frontispiece, and with columns on either side of the arch, occurs in an edition of the Bible printed by Joannes Calioni at Venice in 1635. Since we date the engravings of the Megillah Gaster II about 1640-50, they might even have been made by one of the engravers working for a printer of Hebrew books in Italy.

Very few scholars have dealt with this type of megillah. The scroll at Parma is briefly mentioned by De Rossi in his catalogue. He considers it to be Italian of the "last century" ("sec. elapsi"), that is, the seventeenth, since he compiled the catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in his collection (now at the Palatine Library) towards the end of the eighteenth century. Frauberger, too, for the megillah of this type in his collection, states (loc. cit.): "Italy, 17th century." In the catalogue of the former Gaster collection we find "XVI or XVII" (loc. cit.). The suggestion made by these writers that this type was executed in the seventeenth century thus broadly corresponds with our own

opinion, although we date it to within a more limited period, namely the first half of the century. However, none of these scholars has suggested that its illustrations are a copy of those in the *Megillah* Klagsbald. Nor apparently has any scholar yet stated that the *Megillah* Gaster II was in its turn used as a model by an engraver named Griselini, who copied it, merely adding a few slight variations to the general decorative lay-out.

Before comparing these two types, Gaster II and Griselini, we should like to discuss this almost unknown engraver. The existence of a *megillah* ornamented with engravings and bearing the name of the artist who executed them, no doubt towards the end of the first half of the seventeenth century, helps to fill in the somewhat nebulous background of extant engraved *megilloth*. Even if it was Andrea Marelli himself who signed the plates containing engravings of caryatides which decorate part of a *megillah* containing the blessings,¹ and even though Marelli was active during the second half of the sixteenth century, that is, about half a century before Griselini, there can be no comparison between the two *megilloth* as far as subject-matter is concerned. Marelli's plate could have been engraved for any text, Hebrew or otherwise, so vague and general is the relation between his figures of putti and caryatides to the text of the Book of Esther, whereas Griselini is the first engraver of importance to have reproduced episodes from the story of Esther for his *megillah*. It should, however, be noted that he was not the only engraver to sign his name on a *megillah* illustrating scenes from the Esther story, as around the middle of the seventeenth century we have a Jewish engraver named Shalom Italia, signing the plates he engraved, sometimes in Hebrew characters and sometimes in Latin.² But Shalom Italia can scarcely be called anything but a second-rate artist and often quite simply an imitator, whereas Griselini was an original artist and a good draughtsman too. Nothing seems to be

¹ Cf. pp. 385-86 above.
² For a well-documented study on the work of this engraver, see Mordecai Narkiss, "The illustrations of Shalom, the son of the honourable Rabbi Mordecai Italia (1619-1655)?" (in Hebrew), in *Tarbiz*, xxv (1955-6), 441-51, 8 figs., and xxvi (1956-7), 87-101, Figs. 9-18. Despite his Italian origin we do not deal with Shalom Italia as an engraver of *megilloth* in this article as he worked mainly in Amsterdam.
known of his life, but one may assume that he was Italian because of his name and also, as we shall see, because he worked for the Italian printing-house of Bragadin in Venice. But apparently he did not acquire any renown outside the restricted world of printing, as no work on the lives of artists mentions him, not even the professedly complete and monumental work by Thieme and Becker or the specialized works dealing only with engravers of the past, such as those by Le Blanc, Brulliot, Bartsch or Nagler.

Griselini was, however, rediscovered by several Jewish writers, and his name is therefore not unfamiliar to some scholars. But it should be pointed out from the start that most of these writers made the unfortunate error of confusing him with Francesco Griselini, when in fact he did not add his first name to his signature on the megillah. Yet it is clear that Erich Toeplitz,¹ the first to mention Griselini, did not make this error. He pointed out that the signature "Griselini" was followed by the letter "f.", which it was customary for Italian artists from the Renaissance onwards to add to their signatures, and which is, of course, simply an abbreviation of "fecit". Toeplitz was inclined to think that Griselini was a Jew, but in our opinion this is unlikely. We also gather from the article that he worked for Hebrew book-printers, as, besides the engravings for the megillah, he also made a series of four full-page engravings to serve as frontispieces to the four sections of a Hebrew Bible, to which we shall return presently.

The question as to whether Griselini was a Jew was taken up in 1930 by Sigfried Silberstein, who states that he was "according to the evidence a Jewish engraver".² But this statement was not based on any evidence, and although Silberstein does not even refer to Toeplitz's article, it may be assumed that he had read it and thus had come to a conclusion which Toeplitz had never drawn in such a categorical way. Silberstein does not mention the "f." after Griselini's signature, and Mrs. Witschnitzer³ also fails to comment on it, so it can only be supposed

¹ See his "Griselini, ein jüdischer Stecher", in Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt (Frankfort, 1928), no. 10, pp. 310-11, 1 fig.
² Cf. op. cit. p. 7: "... Griselini, nachweisbar als jüdischer Stecher....
³ Cf. op. cit. p. 383: "... die in Venedig von Griselini gestochene Rolle...."
that neither attached any importance to it. It further appears
that, apart from Silberstein, the writers who subsequently
mention Griselini, Mrs. Wischnitzer included, had not read
Toeplitz's article, since the "f." for "fecit" is interpreted as
"F." standing for Francesco, which happened to fit Griselini.
In fact a Francesco Griselini, also an artist, lived in Venice in
the mid- and later eighteenth century, but to interpret the "f."
in such a way is, of course, quite incorrect. There is no founda-
tion for thinking that this megillah was engraved by an artist
working about the middle of the eighteenth century, and we shall
later show what an error it was to make the Griselini Megillah
about a century younger when in fact it belongs to the end of the
first half of the seventeenth century.

Various writers have persisted in calling Griselini "Fran-
cesco". The first occasion was in 1932, when the initial letters
of the name, "Fr.", appeared in the sale catalogue of the Kirsch-
stein collection. It can only be concluded that the author of
this entry was thinking of Francesco Griselini. Almost thirty
years elapse before we find any further references to this Megillah
as being the work of Francesco Griselini; then Mrs. Wischnitzer
spoke of Francesco Griselini as its engraver. Since 1949 no
scholar has questioned the authenticity of the name Francesco.
Thus, I. Joel speaks of Francesco Griselini, M. Narkiss also
calls him Francesco, as do E. Namenyi and A. M. Habermann.
Finally, in the catalogue of the Synagoga Exhibition at Frankfort,
a megillah signed "Griselini" is attributed to Francesco Gris-
elini. We maintain that it is an error to have added "Fran-
cesco", since so far no-one has been able to determine the
first name of the Griselini who engraved the Megillah.

2 See op. cit. in Purim Anthology, p. 240.
3 "Catalogue of the megaloth in the Jewish National Library, Jerusalem" (In Hebrew), in Kirjath Sepher, xxxii (1956-7), 239, no. 27.
6 "The Jewish Art of the Printed Book", in Jewish Art, col. 473.
7 In the Klagsbald collection, Paris. Cf. Frankfort catalogue, op. cit. no. 133:
"Illustrationen Kupferstiche von Francesco Grisellini [sic]..."
Moreover, who was this Francesco Griselini, and what do we know of him? He is known to have been an artist of little renown, more of a dilettante, and also a writer, who lived in Venice in the second half of the eighteenth century; he called himself “Griselini, dilettante in geometria e in architectura militare”. The only work he is known to have done as a painter was the re-painting in 1762 of a map of the world executed in 1540 by Giovanni Battista Ramusio\(^1\) for the Doge’s Palace at Venice; his work was therefore rather that of restoration. The renovated map was then exhibited at the Doge’s Palace on 24 December 1762.\(^2\)

It is evident that Francesco Griselini could not have executed the megillah, as its style clearly shows that it belongs to the first half of the seventeenth century. The Griselini of the megillah must have lived in the early or mid-seventeenth century; certainly not in the eighteenth, as some scholars have maintained. This is one of the causes of the confusion. There is a second, more awkward, point which has contributed to the mistake. This is the presence on three dated megilloth signed “Griselini f.” of the colophon of a scribe named Arje Loeb ben Daniel, who states in them that he wrote one of these scrolls in 1746, one in 1747 and the third in 1748. However, only two scrolls bearing a colophon giving the name Arje Loeb ben Daniel and dated 1747 and 1748 have been mentioned in previous publications.\(^3\) No mention has so far been made of the year of execution (1746) inscribed on the first scroll and, still more surprising, not even its colophon (which also gives the name Arje Loeb ben Daniel) has been mentioned before, although this scroll\(^4\) has been exhibited twice, at the Synagoga Exhibition at Recklinghausen and

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\(^1\) His name is also spelt Ramnusio; he was a well-known Italian humanist, historian, geographer and cartographer and lived from 1485 to 1557.

\(^2\) I am indebted to Professor Giuseppe Fiocco for this information.

\(^3\) These two scrolls are in the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, Heb. 4° 197-no. 24, and in the collection of Rabbi Sassoon, Letchworth, MS. 15. The latter seems to be the one in the former Kirschstein collection; its colophon is given in the sale catalogue of this collection (loc. cit.). We shall give further details to justify this assumption later in this article, p. 423.

\(^4\) The scroll in the Klagsbald collection. However, it does not figure in the catalogue of the exhibition held in 1958 at the Musée d’Art Juif in Paris (op. cit.), where almost all the megilloth in this collection are briefly described. (Klagsbald is its author).
Frankfort, and was briefly described in the catalogues of these exhibitions. Before dealing with Arje Loeb ben Daniel and these three dated megilloth, we should recall that Griselini not only engraved the plates for a megillah but also made four engravings of biblical subjects which were incorporated in a still extant edition of a Hebrew Bible printed in Venice in the Bragadin printing-house during the years 1739-46, in which year it was completed on the first day of the month of Elul. There was a copy of this Bible in the collection of the Museum Jüdischer Altertümer at Frankfort, and it is to this that Toeplitz refers and from which he reproduces the first engraving, which occurs at the beginning of the Bible, just before the main title page, which bears the date 1739.

Habermann mentions this Bible very briefly in his article already quoted, but when referring to the “Fine copper engravings for the title page of the Venice Bible of 1746, published by the Bragadin Press . . .” he does not specify how many engravings it contains, nor where an example of it may now be seen. Nevertheless, since he gives the same date of publication and the same publisher’s name as Toeplitz and, even more important, states that the engravings “. . . were executed by the Christian artist Francesco Griselini”, he obviously had the same Bible in mind. The engraving from the Bragadin Bible reproduced by Toeplitz bears a signature identical with the one in the megillah, reading “Griselini f.” Moreover, the style of drawing and the technique of engraving used in the megillah and in the Bible are those of the same artist. There can be no doubt that the same Griselini executed both works, and this shows that he was commissioned by Jews or by printers working with Jewish publishers to execute engravings of such subjects as were fit to be looked upon by Jews observing law and tradition.

Thus, for instance, the frontispiece of the Bragadin Bible depicts the giving of the Law to the Jews. It is a representation of a type conventional in seventeenth-century European art, yet it follows the Jewish tradition of avoiding any image of God. The engraving shows Moses on the summit of Mount Sinai.

1 Cf. the two catalogues (op. cit.) under B 66 and no. 133 respectively.
2 See Toeplitz, loc. cit.
which is covered by clouds and thus rendered partially invisible; Moses is kneeling and holding up the two separate tablets of the Law towards an oval space, visible amongst the clouds above him, from which beams of light radiate, symbolizing the presence of God on and around the holy mountain. To make this idea even clearer, Griselini has written the following Hebrew words inside the oval space: “I am the Eternal, thy God” (Exodus xx. 2). These are the first words of the Ten Commandments and with them the artist intended to convey the voice of God itself pronouncing the very words of the Commandments on Sinai, on purpose omitting any figured representation, however partial, of a divine image. The latter, he knew, could not be introduced into an illustration for a Hebrew Bible for the use of Jews, whereas in Christian religious art of that time, and from the Middle Ages onwards, artists did not hesitate to draw a corresponding image whenever a scene was to be illustrated in which God appears. In the lower part of the engraving we see Aaron standing about half-way up the mountain, which is surrounded by a wooden fence, while in the plain around, tents are pitched and the people are looking on; all these details are taken from Exodus xix. 24, which shows that Griselini knew the text well. Beneath the engraving and just above the engraver’s signature is a second Hebrew inscription, a quotation from Exodus xix. 19, reading “Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.” It seems probable that Griselini himself wrote these inscriptions on the plate; it was not unusual for Christian artists to write Hebrew inscriptions on their paintings and drawings from the Renaissance onwards; particularly in Italy, where Hebrew was studied by the Humanists and where many of the printers of Hebrew books, from the late fifteenth century on, were Christians, as were Bomberg and Bragadin.

Among other examples of Hebrew inscriptions on engravings is one in a work by Bocchi, reproduced in a publication of 1555 entitled Symbolicae quaestiones, in which is the text from Genesis i. 2 “... and the Spirit of God was hovering on the face of the waters.”¹ We may assume that Christian artists copied these

Hebrew inscriptions from printed Bibles and that Griselini did the same. Bocchi, in his engraving of God creating the world, represented God as an elderly man, with long beard and flowing hair, arms outstretched, hovering in space above the universe He is creating, and bearing a resemblance to the figure of God in Michelangelo's Creation of the Universe in the Sistine Chapel. But Griselini knew how to avoid any depiction of the figure of God in his engraving of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. This discipline could only have been acquired by direct contact with Jews who were able to advise him as to what subject-matter may be depicted by an artist in a sacred book, and since Griselini worked for printers of Hebrew books, he, of course, had the necessary guidance. In fact, Toeplitz indicates that there is a notice on the title-page of the Bragadin Bible saying that it was published under the auspices of Doctor Isaac Foa and that the direction of the printing was given to Benjamin ben Aaron Polako. These two scholars were working for the Bragadin printing-house during the first half of the eighteenth century, and surely Jewish scholars were attached to it from its foundation, early in the seventeenth century, for the reading of proofs and the guidance of printers. With such men Griselini certainly had frequent contact, and through them he must have learnt something of the way in which Jews of that period regarded illustrations in Bibles or megilloth.

Besides the engraving already mentioned, we have in this same Bible three others, each bearing the signature of Griselini. Like the first, they precede title-pages from which we learn that, together with the books they introduce, they were printed in different years. Thus the Book of the early prophets bears the date 1742, that of the later prophets 1740, while the Hagiographa were printed in 1741. The somewhat illogical order in which this Bible was printed, the second part appearing later than the fourth and last (1742), shows clearly that these printers did not necessarily follow a programme, but simply worked according to their own convenience. This might explain the use of the Griselini plates, doubtless executed during the first half of the

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1 See Toeplitz, loc. cit., who gives the subjects of each of these three engravings but does not reproduce any of them.
(a) Part of a *Megillah* Gaster l. c. 1615 (Rylands Gaster Hebrew MS. 710).

(b) Part of a *Megillah* Klagsbald. c. 1635 (Victor Klagsbald Collection, Paris).
(a) Part of a Megillah Gaster II. c. 1640 (Rylands Gaster Hebrew MS. 711).

(b) Detail from the Megillah Klagsbald.

(c) Detail from a Griselini Megillah. c. 1650 (MS. 15 of the Rabbi S. D. Sassoon Collection, Letchworth).
(a) Part of a Griselini Megillah, c. 1650 (Parma, Bbl. Palatina MS. 1217).

(b) Part of a post-Griselini Megillah, c. 1675. (London, Jewish Museum MS. 7).
(a) Detail from a Griselini Megillah. c. 1650 (Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Heb. 4° 197 24).

(b) Detail from a post-Griselini Megillah. c. 1675 (Paris, Musée de Cluny, Cl. 12296 D).

(c) Detail from the Griselini Megillah at Parma.

(d) Detail from the post-Griselini Megillah at the Musée de Cluny.
seventeenth century, in a Bible printed between 1739 and 1746. The subjects of the three engravings are: (1) Joshua, Samuel and David standing in a landscape, with a view of a town; (2) Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah standing between various architectural constructions; (3) David praying in a columned hall. There are Hebrew inscriptions on all three; on none is God represented.

What was Toeplitz's idea of their date? As the Bible was printed in 1746, he does not seem to have been troubled about a possible difference between this date and that of the engravings. He states that "the picture . . . shows the style of its period," and a few lines later reaches a general conclusion, which might or might not include the engravings: "In any case, this particular edition of the Bible belongs to the first half of the eighteenth century." We may assume that the Griselini engravings in the Bragadin Bible also seemed to Toeplitz to belong to the first half of the eighteenth century.

Most of the writers mentioned were apparently inclined to place Griselini in the first half of the eighteenth century, but not all of them because of his engravings in the 1746 Bible, since they do not all mention this Bible when speaking of him. They did so rather because of the dates marked by the scribe on some of the Griselini megilloth, as already mentioned. About these we shall give more details later. Let us first summarize the views of these writers. Mrs. Wischnitzer mentions "the Megillah engraved by Griselini in Venice . . . during the first half of the eighteenth century," and later maintained this point of view, referring to "Francesco Griselini active in Venice around 1740". Habermann, who knows Griselini from the Bragadin Bible, does not try to date the engravings, merely stating "Fine copper engravings for the title-page of the Venice Bible of 1746, published by the Bragadin Press, were executed by

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1 However, Toeplitz (loc. cit.) does not mention or translate these inscriptions or even give the reference for them.
2 Loc. cit.: "Das Bild . . . im Stil der Zeit versehen . . . .
3 Ibid.: "Jedenfalls gehört die genannte Bibelausgabe zu den Druck-
5 Cf. Purim Anthology, p. 240.
the Christian artist Francesco Griselini" (loc. cit.). Apparently he did not intend to distinguish between the date of the Bible and that of its engravings. Naményi also places Griselini in the eighteenth century, as he writes "The Christian engraver Francesco Griselini of Venice also produced a beautiful megillah in 1748".1 In the Synagoga catalogue for Frankfort the place and date of execution of the engravings are given as "Venice, 1748."

The only scholars among those quoted above who attribute the name Francesco to Griselini, yet who do not definitely place him in the eighteenth century, are I. Joel and M. Narkiss. In fact, Narkiss merely says "that Griselini copied an engraved Megillah, executed in Italy in about 1680".2 But if Griselini copied from a model dating from about 1680, he might equally well have done this towards the end of the seventeenth century as in the eighteenth, so we must assume that Narkiss had in mind that all preceding writers on the subject had placed Griselini around 1740 or at least in the first half of the eighteenth century.3 Moreover, he wanted to make Griselini a contemporary of the printer "Gad Foa", who was still alive during the second half of that century. In his catalogue of the megilloth at the Jewish National and University Library at Jerusalem (loc. cit.), Joel leaves aside all consideration of the date of the Griselini engravings, and merely gives the date on which the Griselini Megillah was written, namely 1747, which is given near the end of the scroll. But, in a catalogue of this kind, it is, after all, not essential to date the engraving in one of the scrolls mentioned. Similarly, for the Griselini Megillah MS. 15 in the Sassoon collection at Letchworth, the author of the catalogue4 only indicates that

1 Loc. cit. in Jewish Art. The same text in French figures in loc. cit. in REJ.
2 Loc. cit. in Tarbiz, xxvi. 99, n. 69.
3 In the same note (69), the late Mordecai Narkiss announced that he would shortly publish a further article dealing with the evolution of the megillah in general, and that in it he would show the original Megillah of about 1680 and the copy made by Griselini from it. However, to our great regret this article never appeared. As we shall later deal in greater detail with the relationship between the two scrolls, all we shall say at this point is that we consider this "Megillah of about 1680" to be a copy of the Griselini Megillah.
the script is of an "Ital. sq. hand, 18th cent.", as this scroll bears 
the scribe's colophon giving the year 1748. As in the previous 
case, the question of the date of the engravings is not raised.

Although Toeplitz assumed that there was hardly any differ­
ence between the date of the final printing in 1746 of the Bragadin 
Bible and the date of its engravings, it must be remembered that 
it was he who regarded the engravings in the Griselini Megillah 
as being seventeenth-century. Although his statement that this 
_Megillah_ is "no doubt to be attributed to the seventeenth 
century" is somewhat tentative, he is nevertheless the only 
writer to have made so pertinent an observation. One should 
perhaps not stress the fact that he went on to say that, for the 
sake of comparison, the reader should look at the reproduction of 
a megillah which he thought a Griselini, for, although in some ways 
slightly similar, it is essentially different, and happens to be the 
one from which, in our opinion, the Griselini Megillah derived. 
The one Toeplitz refers to is reproduced in _Mitteilungen der 
Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler_, vol. V/VI, 
Fig. 12, and has been dealt with above.2 Another who apparently 
confuses the Gaster II and Griselini Megilloth is the compiler of 
the Kirschstein sale catalogue. He also refers to the reproduc­
tion in the _Mitteilungen_ in conjunction with the former Kirsch­
stein Griselini Megillah, though he specifies "The reproduction 
of a very similar Megillah is in the _Mitteilungen_. . .".3 The 
wording here, by the use of "similar", is more acceptable.

We should further mention part of another megillah, undoubt­
edly by Griselini, to judge from the style of the reproduction in the 
article by Namenyi.4 Rather surprisingly Namenyi does not 
refer in his article to a Griselini Megillah when he describes (in 
col. 436) Fig. 218. But he obviously had in mind a post-
Griselini scroll, as seems clear from his original article in the 
_Revue des études juives_, of which the English translation in 
_Jewish Art_ is in places an abridgement. Indeed, in the French

1 Loc. cit.: "... wohl dem 17. Jahrhundert zuzu­schreiben."
2 pp. 402 sqq. on the Megillah Gaster II.
3 Loc. cit.: "Abb. einer sehr ähnlichen Megillah in Mittlgn., V/VI, S. 90, 
Fig. 12" (Instead of p. 90 it should be p. 10; a printer's error doubtless caused 
this mistake).
4 Op. cit. in Jewish Art, Fig. 218.
text Naményi refers to three post-Griselini scrolls belonging to three different collections (see below, p. 430), while in the English version we read, more generally, "several copies of which are extant". He also points out in both articles that the last scene in these scrolls represents the entrance of the Messiah into Jerusalem. And this particular iconography (as noted later, p. 427) is only found in the post-Griselini Megillah. The inscription beneath the reproduction reads: "Scroll of Esther with engraved borders. Italy, 17th cent." There is no mention of the owner nor any allusion to the engraver Griselini, and the fragment does not come from any of the Griselini meglilot known to us. Nor do we know whether it was Naményi who placed the caption beneath the reproduction, C. Roth, the editor of this book on Jewish art, or some third person who considered this scroll to be seventeenth century. It is to be hoped that in any future edition the name of the owner will be given.

The only megillah signed Griselini which has been stated to belong to the seventeenth century is the one in the Biblioteca Palatina at Parma. This did not belong to the De Rossi collection, and therefore is not mentioned in his printed catalogue. It was acquired some time after his death, and is catalogued under MS. Parma 1217 in a manuscript register kept in that library. We read there that the scroll is "decorated with engraved ornaments and figures, executed by Griselini"; the date is given as seventeenth century. This is the only case in which a Griselini megillah has been definitely attributed to the seventeenth century.

Before giving our own conclusions as to the date of the Griselini Megillah, let us first describe its lay-out, its illustrations and their subject-matter. At first sight the lay-out in a Griselini Megillah (Pl. III(a)) is almost identical with that in a Megillah Gaster II (Pl. II(a)). In both we see a design consisting of a series of arches supported on pilasters separated by columns, all on high pedestals. The illustrations are contained in rectangular frames between these pedestals. Above the arches are similar balustrades, upon which are vases containing flowers,

1 "... decorata di fregi e di figure a stampa eseguite dal Griselini."
each directly above a column, while above each arch is the same heraldic device, an escutcheon on which a peacock or a double-headed eagle is perched; from each side of the escutcheon plants and flowers spring and on the lower part of these plants stand pairs of birds facing outwards (Pl. IV(c)).

There are, however, some major differences between the two. Griselini, who probably copied from a *megillah* Gaster II, drew every detail in an original and personal manner. His plate has four arches and above each one, on each side of the escutcheon, a different pair of birds is to be found; beginning from the right of the plate we have the following pairs: cocks, turkeys, hoopoes and pigeons. Above the escutcheon the peacock alternates regularly with the double-headed eagle; in the vases flowers alternate with small orange-trees. Further, the whole of the architectural design of the Griselini *Megillah* is intricately worked; for instance, the shaft of each of the four columns has a different decorative motif: reading from right to left, the first is fluted, the second marbled (Pl. III (a)), the third decorated with lozenges, while on the last is a climbing, leafy tendril. It should be noted that the fluted columns are drawn as half-columns at the beginning and end of the plate, so that they appear as one column (Pl. III(a)) in the finished scroll when the printed sheets are sewn together, following the method already described for the *Megillah* Gaster II.¹ Unlike the engraver of the latter, who made two plates of different sizes, Griselini drew only one, with four arches. Another kind of ornamentation peculiar to the Griselini plate is the various types of moulding, such as the pearls for the cornices of the balustrade, or the bands with rosettes on the cornices, on the outer edges of the arches, and framing the illustrations (Pl. III(a) and Pl. IV(a and c)). No such decorations are to be seen on the architectural design of the *Megillah* Gaster II (Pl. II(a)). Other striking features in the Griselini scroll are the three beautifully-drawn kinds of flowers, and the Roman ornamental motif of the *Patera*, always placed in pairs on the impostos and pedestals of the four columns, those on the impostos being smaller than those on the

¹ Cf. p. 404.
pedestals. This type of decoration is much simpler in the *Megillah* Gaster II. In addition Griselini puts rosettes in triangles in the spandrels of each arch; similar triangles also appear in the spandrels of the *Megillah* Gaster II, but without this or any other design (cf. Pl. II(a) and Pl. III(a)). However, one further point common to both scrolls may be observed: on the upper and lower horizontal margins, quite separate from the architectural design, both engravers drew two parallel border lines serving as a frame to the whole design—something we have not encountered in any other type of illustrated *megillah*, except the post-Griselini *Megillah*, which we shall discuss in due course. It is on the lower border line of the Griselini *Megillah* that the signature "Griselini f." occurs, placed right at the end of the engraved plate below the pedestal of the final half-column (Pl. III(a) and Pl. IV(a)).

Having analysed the similarities and differences between the architectural and decorative elements of the Gaster II and Griselini scrolls, we shall now briefly consider the subject-matter of the illustrations in the latter, which bear no resemblance, either in style or in iconography, to the illustrations in the former, which yet had apparently served as a model. There are in all twenty illustrations, separately engraved, some depicting two scenes within the rectangular space usually taken up by one.¹ They show the following scenes:

1. The feast of Ahasuerus (i. 3).
2. The feast of Vashti (i. 9).
3. The messengers are despatched (i. 22).
4. The young virgins are brought to the palace (ii. 3) (Pl. IV(a)).
5. The king chooses Esther from amongst the maidens (ii. 17).
6. (Right) Passers-by honour Haman (iii. 2).
   (Left) Mordecai standing in the entrance of a palace (iii. 2).
7. (Right) Scribes writing the decree (iii. 12).
   (Left) Esther and her maidens watch Mordecai walking, wearing mourning apparel (iv. 2 ff., not exactly as in the text).
8. (Right) Esther speaks to Hathach (iv. 5).
   (Left) Hathach with Mordecai (iv. 6).
9. (Right) Esther before the king (v. 2).
   (Left) The banquet (v. 6).

¹ As noted above (pp. 404-405) the *Megillah* Gaster II has only nineteen illustrations, copied from a model with twenty, cf. also pp. 392 sq. above.
10. (Right) Haman and his friends standing in front of the gallows (v. 14).
   (Left) The king being read to at night (vi. 1).
11. The triumph of Mordecai (vi. 11); Haman's daughter emptying a chamber-pot out of the window.¹
12. The second banquet (vii. 2) with a view of the garden to the left.
13. (Right) The hanging of Haman (vii. 10).
   (Left) Ahasuerus speaks with Mordecai (viii. 1).
14. (Right) Esther before the king (viii. 3).
   (Left) The scribes write the new decree (viii. 9).
15. (Right) Mordecai in royal robes before the king (viii. 15).
   (Left) Fighting scene (ix. 5).
16. Fighting scene in the palace at Shushan (ix. 6) (Pl. II(c)).
17. (Right) The king speaks to Esther (ix. 12).
   (Left) The hanging of the ten sons of Haman.
18. The feast of the Jews and their exchange of gifts (ix. 22).
19. (Right) Esther and Mordecai writing (ix. 29).
   (Left) Letters being sent to all the Jews (ix. 30).
20. View of a city surrounded by a hexagonal wall, with a monumental polygonal building with an elevated dome; this represents the city and Temple of Jerusalem. From the hills in the background, and also in the foreground, men in groups or alone are making their way towards the city, one (foreground, right) is on horseback.

This last scene is not depicted in any other megillah, whether engraved or hand-painted, save the post-Griselini scroll which is a faithful copy of Griselini, but the subjects of the other nineteen occur in one or other of the scrolls so far described.

However, what strikes us as an innovation is the composition of each illustration. The figures are set in a well-defined architectural background in a style akin to that of Italian early baroque architecture: imposing palaces with porticos and balustrades, standing on either side of broad streets or around spacious squares. In these illustrations there is a feeling of space and depth quite lacking in the earlier megilloth. Moreover, although Griselini imitated the architectural design of Megillah Gaster II, as shown above, it seems certain that all twenty illustrations in his Megillah were compositions of his own invention. He may, therefore, be considered the most original and most talented of all megillah engravers. The technique he used to incorporate the twenty illustrations, having engraved a single plate which could contain four, is not the same as that described for the Klagsbald and Gaster II scrolls.² On close examination we have noted that

the first four illustrations in the Griselini Megillah were engraved directly on the plate, so that on each of the five strips of parchment required for a complete scroll of twenty empty arches (in which the scribe was then to write the text) there were at the first stage of printing five succeeding series of the first four illustrations. Meanwhile the sixteen other illustrations were each engraved on small separate plates; these could only be printed in their appropriate position once the repeated engravings of the first four illustrations had been carefully erased. This technique of erasing one engraving in order to print another in the same space seems to have had its complications; thus we find in some of the Griselini megilloth traces of the first engraved illustrations along the outer edges of the one printed afterwards, the reason being that the printer had not entirely erased the first.\(^1\) In some of the Griselini Megilloth it also occurred that, when these small plates were printed separately, the illustration was not always placed squarely in the space provided.\(^2\)

Another striking feature of these sixteen separate plates is that all but one have been numbered; this must have been done so that they could be printed in correct order. It should be noted that the fifth illustration, i.e. the first to be printed as a separate plate, has no number, while the sixth has the number 6, and so on up to 20. These numbers were marked on the front of each plate, towards the top, so that consequently they appear towards the top of the engravings.\(^3\) Despite the numbering of the small plates, the various Griselini Megilloth known to us do not always have twenty plates. Although Griselini had originally planned a scroll of twenty arches, i.e. five prints of his engraved architectural design of four arches, which, when sewn together, would take the text of the Megillah,\(^4\) we know of two

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\(^1\) For instance, the Griselini Megillah in the Klagsbald collection has traces of the original engraving around several of its illustrations.

\(^2\) The Griselini Megillah in the Sassoon collection (MS. 15) contains an example reproduced here, Pl. II(c).

\(^3\) This can be seen, for instance, on Pl. II(c); the illustration has the number 16.

\(^4\) The scroll at the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, Heb. 4° 197—No. 24, and the one in the Klagsbald collection have all the twenty arches for the text, with the corresponding twenty illustrations beneath them, all in the correct numerical order. However, in the latter, the text of the Book of
Griselini scrolls which are made up of four prints of the main plate and thus have in all only sixteen arches, in which, however, the whole text has been written. In this case there are, of course, only sixteen illustrations. Moreover, despite the fact that the fifteen final small illustrations are clearly numbered to avoid any confusion in their order, in these two scrolls the order of the illustrations or, more precisely, the order of the numbers on the small engravings, has not been respected by the printer.

We give here the order of the illustrations with the numbers corresponding to the list of illustrations given above (pp. 418-19):

(a) for MS. Parma 1217:
- On the first print: 1, 2, 3, 5.
- On the second print: 6, 7, 9, 10.
- On the third print: 11, 18, 13, 15.
- On the fourth print: 16, 17, 14, 19.

Besides the inexplicable exceptions in the order of these illustrations, and the fact that the fourth illustration has been erased in order to reproduce the fifth in its place for no apparent reason, we note that the following illustrations are missing: 4, 8, 12, 20.

(b) for MS. Sassoon 15:
The order of the illustrations on the four prints is identical with that in the Parma Megillah; consequently, illustrations 4, 8, 12, 20 are missing.

The only conclusion to be drawn is that the unusual order of the small numbered plates in two Griselini Megilloth must point to a deliberate rearrangement of the illustrations, and not, as one

Esther has been slightly constricted, so that it takes up nineteen arches, the twentieth containing the Blessings read before and after the reading of the scroll. The reproduction of a fragment of a Griselini Megillah, in Jewish Art (loc. cit.), already mentioned, is certainly of a complete set of twenty illustrations, for we can see on it the end of illustration 5, then 6 and 7, and finally the initial section of 8. Had it been a Griselini Megillah with sixteen illustrations only, as we shall see in two examples below, illustration 8 would have been missing, so that 7 would have been followed by 9.

1 These two scrolls are in the following collections: Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS. Parma 1217; Letchworth, Rabbi Sassoon, MS. 15.
would think in an isolated instance, to a mistake by the printer. There are two possible explanations for this: (a) that the small plates numbered 8, 12 and 20 had been lost in the course of time, but that despite this, a printer wanted to reproduce this Megillah, if only in an incomplete state, or (b) that this Megillah could be ordered from the printer either with all twenty arches for the text or with only sixteen, though for the same text. The scribe apparently had no difficulty in confining the text to the space provided for it. Of the four megilloth signed Griselini known to us, three were written by the same scribe, Arje Loeb ben Daniel, yet in the one at Jerusalem the text continues to the very end of the twentieth arch, in the Klagsbald example the text goes to the end of the nineteenth arch, while in the one belonging to Rabbi Sassoon, in which there are only sixteen arches, the text is written within these. The second of these theories therefore seems the more tenable, namely that the two apparently incomplete Griselini Megilloth were ordered in this form.

What induced the printer to change the order of the small illustrations? No doubt he thought that the subjects of 4, 8, 12 and 20 could be more easily sacrificed than those of 17, 18 and 19, which would otherwise have been omitted; as we shall see, he particularly wanted 17 to be retained. That he placed 18 and 11 and 14 between 17 and 19 might be explained as follows: in both the Parma and Sassoon scrolls, which were obviously written by different scribes, the arch containing only the ten names of Haman’s sons and written in the traditional manner (forming one column on the right) is the fourteenth. Further, in both scrolls the illustration beneath this fourteenth arch is number 17, showing the hanging of the ten sons.

1 Illustration 4, as pointed out above, is not on a separate small plate but is engraved directly on the principal plate (cf. p. 420).

2 This is not an exceptional case; we know of other engraved megilloth, such as some of the Shalom Italia scrolls or the so-called “Herms” scrolls, where the number of arches for the text is not always the same.

3 It seems likely that the person who commissioned this scroll from Arje Loeb ben Daniel asked him to leave space in the twentieth arch for the inclusion of the Blessings.

4 In the Griselini Megillah at Jerusalem, we have the names of the ten sons in the seventeenth arch, with the corresponding illustration 17 beneath. But it should be noted that in this arch, in the space which is usually empty since the
Therefore, we may assume that the printer was aware of the need to have 17 beneath the fourteenth arch, and, consequently, in order to follow the logical sequence of illustrations in relation to text, he could not help changing the order of the twenty illustrations originally intended for twenty arches.

Having described the lay-out and illustrations in the four Griselini Megilloth of which we have been able to study the originals, we must now decide the date of the engravings. Most scholars consider that it was executed in the eighteenth century, due to the error of attributing it to Francesco Griselini; moreover, some have thought that the colophon by Arje Loeb ben Daniel in the Megillah in the former Kirschstein collection, now MS. 15 in the Sassoon collection, giving the year 1748, was a further proof of this date. Thus Mrs. Wischnitzer declares that "this scroll dates from the first half of the 18th century"; although she does not mention which Griselini Megillah she had in mind, it is most likely to have been the one described in the Kirschstein catalogue, as she refers to this catalogue and its Griselini Megillah in a more recent publication when stating names form one column, a later artist has also drawn a gallows on which Haman's ten sons are being hanged. On the other hand, in the Griselini Megillah in the Klagsbald collection these names are written in the sixteenth arch, while illustration 17 is beneath the adjacent arch; however, this had to be, since in this scroll the text ends in the nineteenth arch. (Both these scrolls were written by Arje Loeb ben Daniel.)

1 The catalogue of this sale (loc. cit.) states: "... geschr. von Löb, Sohn des Daniel aus Görz [?] im Jahre 1748."

2 In the Kirschstein catalogue and in the Sassoon catalogue (loc. cit.) the colophon with the name of the same scribe and the year 1748 are given for this Griselini Megillah. What is, however, more important and allows us to make this assumption is the statement in the Kirschstein catalogue that the text is written in sixteen divisions, which, as described above, is the same for the Sassoon scroll. However, not even a part of this scroll was reproduced in the Kirschstein catalogue, which alone would have confirmed this assumption, since the Sassoon catalogue does not specify the former owner. Finally, the dimensions given for this scroll in the Kirschstein catalogue vary slightly from those we have taken, while the dimensions in the Sassoon catalogue are also slightly different from ours and from those in the Kirschstein catalogue. However, when measuring a scroll of parchment of considerable length, mistakes frequently occur. Our theory therefore still awaits further confirmation.


that Griselini was “active in Venice around 1740”. Naményi, who gives the year 1748 for the execution of this type of *megillah*, must certainly have been thinking of the one in the former Kirschstein collection. Similarly, Narkiss had in mind the Griselini *Megilloth* with the Arje Loeb ben Daniel colophons, since he put Griselini well after “about 1680”, the approximate date of a *megillah* which Griselini was “supposed” to have copied. As for Toeplitz, he was inclined to admit that the engravings in the Bragadin Bible, printed between 1739 and 1746, were executed by Griselini at about that time, while his *Megillah* could well have been seventeenth-century. These scholars have therefore tended to base the date of the Griselini engravings on a written inscription on these scrolls, or on the Bragadin Bible, rather than by deciding their date from their style.

Since we have no doubt that the engravings were executed during the second quarter of the seventeenth century, and not later than the middle, as their style corresponds perfectly to that of this period, we can only explain the presence of dated colophons, giving the years 1746, 1747 and 1748, on three of the Griselini *Megilloth*, by suggesting that these plates had been preserved in Venice, where Arje Loeb ben Daniel was working as a scribe.

1 Already cited above, p. 414, when discussing the Griselini problem in general.
2 Cf. above, p. 414.
3 Described in more detail above, pp. 414, 415.
4 We give here a translation of the colophon in the Griselini *Megillah* in the Klagsbald collection: “By the hand of the humble Arje Loeb son of Rabbi Daniel, may his memory be a blessing, from Gorye, residing in Venice, [5]506, according to the minor reckoning [= 1746]”. The translation of the colophon in MS. Sassoon 15 reads: “By the hand of the humble Arje Loeb, son of Rabbi Daniel, from Gorye, 508 [= 1748]”. Neither of these colophons has been published in Hebrew. However, the colophon of the *Megillah* at Jerusalem has been published in Hebrew by I. Joel (loc. cit.) and we here give a translation of it: “By the hand of Arje Loeb, son of Rabbi Daniel, from the holy community of Gorye, 5507 [= 1747]”. The town of Gorye is in Little Poland. Narkiss (op. cit. p. 99), mentions “a scribe originating from Little Poland, Daniel ben Rabbi Mordechai from Goraj [sic] . . . who had written the text of the *megilloth* executed by the Italian engraver Francesco Griselini” (original text in Hebrew). Obviously he made a mistake when writing “Daniel ben Rabbi Mordechai”, as he must have meant Arje Loeb ben Daniel, the only scribe to have written the text of some of the known Griselini *megilloth*, and in all of whose colophons we find a mention of his home-town, Gorye, and in one of which Venice is also mentioned.
around the year 1740, and where he had written other types of megliloth,1 and that they were still being used by printers during the first half of the eighteenth century. It might even have been at the Bragadin printing-office2 that the plates for the Griselini

1 There can be no comparison between the styles of these megliloth, all with often clumsily drawn figures and decorations, and that of the Griselini megliloth. They are in a variety of styles, from the late sixteenth century to the mid-eighteenth. We are at present preparing an article for this Bulletin on the various scrolls of Esther with colophons by Arje Loeb, but it might be apposite to mention them here. There are four: (1) In the Museum of the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. The colophon has been translated by F. Landsberger, “The Jewish Artists before the Period of Emancipation”, in Hebrew Union College Annual, xvi. 363. (2) In the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York. The colophon has been translated by A. Marx, “The Library and Museum”, in The Jewish Theological Seminary of America Register, 1931/32 (New York, 1931), p. 155. (3) In the Klagsbald collection. A translation of the colophon was made by V. Klagsbald, Catalogue, op. cit. p. 17, no 153. (4) Joodse Historisch Museum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. 48. The colophon is only mentioned in the Synagoga Catalogue, Frankfort, no. 127.

2 We hazard this suggestion, although there are no documents to prove it. As we have seen, Toeplitz also thinks that Griselini worked for the Bragadin printing office but is unwilling to commit himself as to the period of his activity as an engraver, saying: “Wann der Künstler bei Bragadini gearbeitet hat, und wo er sonst noch gewirkt hat, das entzieht sich noch unserer Kenntnis.” On the other hand, Narkiss (op. cit. p. 99) states that “these megliloth were engraved at Venice by the Italian engraver Francesco Griselini who had been commissioned to do so by the family of printers named Foa, and especially by Gad Foa” (original text in Hebrew). He gives no explanation for his choice of the Foas as the printers for whom Griselini worked; however, we note that Toeplitz twice mentions the name of the Foas in his short article, specifying the printer’s mark of the Foas figures on the back of the first engraved frontispiece of the Bragadin Bible, and that this Bible was published under the auspices of Doctor Isaac Foa. The Foa mark, already mentioned above (see p. 400), had been used by them from the middle of the sixteenth century; they kept the motif of the two lions on either side of a palm tree for several centuries; in fact we still have it in the eighteenth century, framed by a rococo cartouche, for Gad, son of Isaac Foa of Venice (reproduced in The Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. x, under “Printers’ Mark”).

Printers of Hebrew books sometimes used the marks belonging to fellow-printers for either decorative or commercial purposes, naturally with their consent (see above, p. 400). Therefore it would seem that the only conclusion to be drawn from the presence of the Foa mark in this eighteenth-century Bragadin Bible is that the Bragadin press at that time obtained permission to add the Foas’ mark to some of their books, since the Foas collaborated with them in printing Hebrew works. We know of several Hebrew books printed during the second half of the eighteenth century by the Bragadins with the collaboration of Gad, son of Samuel Foa. Cf. G. B. De Rossi, De Editionibus Hebraeo-Biblicis Appendix Historico-Critica ad Nuperrimam Bibliothecam Sacram Le Longio-Maschianam
Megillah were kept, in the same way in which these printers used engraved Bible illustrations by Griselini, also executed around the middle of the seventeenth century, judging by their style, for their edition of the Bible in the 1740s. Only thus can these engravings, signed "Griselini f.", all executed almost a century earlier than was hitherto believed, be accounted for.

About a quarter of a century after Griselini, an anonymous engraver produced a strikingly close copy of the Griselini Megillah. In it, the lay-out of the design is, at first sight, identical with that of the Griselini scroll. The subjects of the illustrations, also twenty in number, are the same and the compositions very similar. Only the style shows that this post-Griselini Megillah was executed around 1670-80. For instance, in the illustration reproduced in Pl. IV(b), facing the square where a carriage is bringing young virgins to join those already assembled, there is a building whose façade has a pediment which has all the characteristics of the late baroque style of the second half of the seventeenth century; the volutes, for example, are drawn with greater elegance and their curves far more accentuated than those on the pediment of the same building in the Griselini Megillah, which are drawn in a timid early baroque manner (Pl. IV(a)). The artist of the post-Griselini Megillah is clearly superior as a draughtsman, and this is chiefly due to his knowledge of the style of his own period, the second half of the seventeenth century, when Griselini was perhaps no longer alive.3

(Erlangen, 1782), pp. 66, 69, for examples of the years 1755, 1776, 1777. See also A. Berliner, Aus meiner Bibliothek. Beiträge zur hebräischen Bibliographie u. Typographie (Frankfort, 1898), who mentions on p. 74 a commentary by Rashi, etc., prepared by Gad, son of Samuel Foa and printed at Venice by Bragadin in 1778. From these examples it seems doubtful whether this Gad, son of Samuel Foa, had an independent printing-office. We might add that since Narkiss says a "Gad Foa" ordered engravings for this Megillah from Griselini, and since both Gad, son of Isaac Foa, and Gad, son of Samuel Foa, lived during the eighteenth century, he must have had one of the two in mind; this leads one to suppose that Narkiss considered our Griselini to have been still alive in the eighteenth century (cf. above, p. 414) when he executed this Megillah.

1 Compare Pl. III(a) and (b).
2 Again compare Pl. III(a) and (b), and Pl. IV(a) and (b).
3 Griselini can scarcely have drawn this Megillah some thirty or forty years after the one bearing his signature; had he done so, he would certainly have signed it in some way.
This is particularly evident in the composition of his scenes; he groups the figures in a more harmonious way than does Griselini, adding more figures to a scene in order to make it more vivid. We see this in the picture of the virgins in front of the palace, where the horse-drawn carriage is depicted arriving on the square in great haste, the horses still galloping, whereas the same carriage in the Griselini Megillah is depicted with the horses completely motionless; not satisfied with this, the artist of the second version of the illustration has added a man on horseback just behind the carriage, to enhance the impression of the arrival of an important group of travellers. In the same way, we see in each of the twenty post-Griselini illustrations more figures and more elaborate architecture, although the scenes depicted are the same in both scrolls.1

A new iconographic element is to be noted in the last illustration, the twentieth,2 where the man on horseback on the left, riding towards the walled city representing Jerusalem, is preceded by a herald blowing a horn. The artist wished by this to stress the messianic theme of the city of Jerusalem as it had first been depicted by Griselini, by adding the man blowing a ram's horn; according to Jewish tradition this figure represents the Prophet Elijah, who will thus precede the Messiah riding on an ass,3 the latter being an image taken from one of the prophecies of Zechariah.4

None of the twenty illustrations in the post-Griselini Megillah

1 The dimensions of the Griselini Megillah are the same as those of the post-Griselini scroll. In the various examples we have measured, the width of the parchment varies from about 25 cm. to 26 cm. The complete width of the plate in the Griselini is 24-6 cm. and in the post-Griselini 24-5 cm. The small separate plates with the illustrations measure 7-2 cm. by 2-6 cm. in the former and 7-5 cm. by 2-7 cm. in the latter. In both, the arches in which the text is written measure about 11-7 cm. in height by 8-3 cm. in width. The length of the plate with its four arches is almost 47 cm. in both. Slight variations of a few millimetres occur here in the various scrolls; the parchment may have shrunk or stretched slightly in the course of time.

2 Note the addition to illustration 7 in the post-Griselini scroll of a depiction of "the posts go out" (iii. 15).

3 It is difficult to decide whether a horse or an ass is depicted in the two Megilloth in this scene.

4 Zechariah ix. 9.
has a number on the front of the plate\(^1\) and, unlike the technique in the Griselini scroll, there are twenty separate small plates, while the main plate with the architectural design has no illustrations beneath its arches. In this way, the erasure of the first four illustrations as in the Griselini scroll was avoided.\(^2\) The architectural design in the post-Griselini scroll is at first sight identical with that of its model. However, a careful examination of the details reveals that the outer lines on the borders of the plate are without any ornaments in the Griselini scroll, while in the post-Griselini scroll they are filled with the same rosettes as on the various architectural mouldings in both scrolls.\(^3\) Another detail worth mentioning, and which proves that the plate with the architectural design in the post-Griselini scroll cannot be the same as the one in the Griselini scroll, is the position of the shading on the short and moulded columns forming the balustrade above the arches; in the Griselini Megillah the shading has been drawn on the left side of these columns,\(^4\) while in the post-Griselini Megillah it is on the right of the columns of the balustrade.\(^5\)

We do not know the number of extant post-Griselini Megilloth. The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America must certainly possess some copies.\(^6\) So far we have been able to assemble microfilms or photographic copies of post-Griselini Megilloth from the following collections: Budapest, Academy of Sciences, MS. A 15, from the former Kaufmann

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\(^1\) To observe the right order in printing they were perhaps numbered from 1 to 20 on the back.

\(^2\) The Griselini and post-Griselini scrolls, like the earlier engraved megilloth Gaster I, Klagsbald and Gaster II, are usually painted in with water-colours although, contrary to the Gaster types, the Griselini and the post-Griselini have all been printed with inked plates. We know of only two Griselini scrolls, the Parma and Sassoon ones, which have only the marks of the printer's ink from the engraved plate. All the post-Griselini scrolls known to us are painted.

\(^3\) Compare for instance Pl. III(a) and (b), Pl. IV(a) and (b) and Pl. IV(c) and (d) for these two types of border decoration. However, these outer lines on the upper border are not visible on Pl. III(a).

\(^4\) See Pl. III(a) and Pl. IV(c).

\(^5\) See Pl. III(b) and Pl. IV(d).

\(^6\) On recent enquiry at this Library I was informed that there was no catalogue or even hand-list of its illustrated megilloth.
EARLIEST ENGRAVED ITALIAN MEGILLOTH 429


Elisabeth Moses reproduces part of a megillah which we identify as a post-Griselini scroll from its style and composition. She does not refer to it in her article nor does she give the name of its owner, her remarks on illustrated megilloths in general being here somewhat cursory (ibid. pp. 176-77). The caption states that it is sixteenth century and probably Italian, but this date is far too early. This megillah could not have been executed before the second half of the seventeenth century. We agree, however, with her suggestion that it is Italian.

The date of the post-Griselini Megillah has not been determined in any previous publication, and scholars have been vague


2 The Jewish Museum has informed us that it is seventeenth century. We were also recently informed by them that a catalogue of the collection was being prepared.

3 This scroll is not mentioned in any catalogue of this Museum. It was exhibited at Recklinghausen and is mentioned in the catalogue of this exhibition (op. cit. B66) as “Italian, 18th century”. However, what is more disturbing in the short description given there is the erroneous statement that the engravings were by Griselini (“Kupferstiche von Grisellini” [sic]), when there is in fact no engraver’s name on it.

4 Not included in any printed catalogue of the Vatican Library; there is only a manuscript description of it there in which no date is given. A great many of the illustrations in it were reproduced by Ernö Munkácsi, op. cit. Pl. XIII, Figs. 48-52 and Pl. XIV, Figs. 53-55 for the following illustrations: 10, 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 20. Munkácsi also indicates there that this scroll dates from the seventeenth century.

5 This scroll has not been included in a printed catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in this collection, but it has been exhibited at Recklinghausen under B 66 (“18th century—Griselini”) and at Frankfort under no. 132 (“Kupferstiche von Francesco Grisellini [sic], Venedig 1748”). It is surprising that, despite the absence of his name in these post-Griselini scrolls, they have been attributed to Griselini and the eighteenth century retained as their date in these recent exhibitions.

on this point. In fact, the only statement made about it is by Mrs. Wischnitzer, who writes: "Francesco Griselini, active in Venice around 1740, a non-Jewish engraver known from other Hebrew works supplied by him with engravings, has used the Vatican scroll as a model for his Purim scrolls." By "Vatican scroll" Mrs. Wischnitzer could only mean the post-Griselini Megillah mentioned above. It seems surprising that she did not notice that the Griselini engravings were older than those in the post-Griselini scroll. In any case she does not give a date for the latter. Narkiss, who obviously follows Mrs. Wischnitzer—his article was published about seven years later—states "that Griselini copied an engraved Megillah, executed in Italy in about 1680". Again it is difficult to understand how it could be thought that Griselini copied a megillah of about 1680, when the contrary was the case. He must have been thinking of the Vatican scroll, but unfortunately does not give any reference to the scroll he had in mind. Namenyi has completely overlooked the relationship between the Griselini and post-Griselini scrolls. He first speaks of the latter, of which he mentions three (in the Vatican, at Budapest, and in the Zagayski collection in New York), which he says "... apparaissent dès le XVIIe siècle ...". But a page later, after having described two quite different types of engraved megilloth, one of them "probably Italian" (though we consider both to have been executed in a northern country and therefore shall not deal with them here), Namenyi unexpectedly returns to the scroll engraved by Griselini, which he says was "executed in Venice in 1748". Thus he hardly does more than repeat Mrs. Wischnitzer concerning the date of the Griselini Megillah, and, in spite of the fact that she noted a direct relationship between the two scrolls, remains unaware of it. Consequently we may conclude that there has been no precise dating of the post-Griselini Megillah by any scholar. As for those who have placed it in the eighteenth century, they have been no more inaccurate than the scholars who called our Griselini an engraver of the second half of the

3 Cf. above, p. 414.  
5 Cf. Synagoga catalogues (Recklinghausen and Frankfort), loc. cit.
eighteenth century. We, for our part, are certain that the date of the Griselini Megillah is around 1640-50, while its copy, the post-Griselini Megillah was executed around 1670-80, as we have shown here, basing ourselves on stylistic evidence.\(^1\)

The aim of this study has been to establish the dates of execution of the oldest extant Italian engraved megilloth and to show that during practically the whole of the seventeenth century engravers referred back to earlier examples of illustrated scrolls of Esther. The fact that the earliest engraved illustrations for megilloth occur in Italy during the second half of the sixteenth century, as in the scroll designed by Andrea Marelli or those derived from it, such as the ones in the former Frauberger collection or the Palatine Library at Parma, is in itself not surprising, since decorations were made on Italian hand-painted megilloth during the second half of the sixteenth century (for instance the Castelnuovo Megillah). Similarly, in the Rylands Megillah we have an early seventeenth-century Italian hand-painted scroll with twenty-eight illustrations to the Book of Esther and in the engraved Megillah Gaster I, also of the beginning of the seventeenth century, we likewise encounter a series of twenty illustrations. From then on, the development of the engraved illustrated megillah could not but progress. As we have shown, the Megillah Gaster I served as a model for the Megillah Klagsbald (second quarter of the seventeenth century) and also for the Kirschstein scroll (middle of the seventeenth century) and the Ignaz Friedmann scroll (far more recent and without artistic value), while in its turn, the Megillah Klagsbald served as a model for the illustrations of the Megillah Gaster II (second quarter of the seventeenth century). One part of the latter was in its turn copied around the same period (end of the first half of the seventeenth century) by the engraver Griselini, whose illustrated Megillah was then to serve as a model for the

\(^1\) It should be mentioned that in most of the post-Griselini scrolls known to us the text is written in only nineteen of the twenty arches. The twentieth is empty in the Budapest, Musée de Cluny and Tübingen scrolls. In the Vatican scroll the twentieth contains the Blessings read after the scroll, while those read before are written on the narrow blank space preceding the first printed plate. We might add that none of the other post-Griselini scrolls here mentioned includes these Blessings.
engraver of the post-Griselini scroll (around the middle of the second half of the seventeenth century).

It is indeed surprising to find all these types of engraved megilloth being produced in Italy within less than three-quarters of a century; it shows that there was a great demand for them. Furthermore, we see that at least six artists were engraving illustrated megilloth during this comparatively short period.

On the northern side of the Alps the position is quite different. It was not until the first half of the eighteenth century that engraved megilloth with similar cycles of Esther illustrations were executed in the Low Countries, in Germany, and in Central Europe.

ADDENDUM

When discussing the Kirschstein-Guggenheim Megillah (sup. xlv. 160-163), which we have only seen in reproduction, we attributed it to the second half of the fifteenth century. This opinion, based on stylistic evidence, was shared by one of the greatest experts on illuminated manuscripts, A. Goldschmidt, who reached the same conclusion in the early thirties, although Mrs. Wischnitzer claimed in 1930 that the script can not be pre-seventeenth century and in 1949 that the scroll was a forgery. In July 1964 we were informed by Professor Gutmann of Cincinnati that the late Professor Landsberger, after reading our comments, had told him that when he saw the Megillah before its sale he thought it a forgery. In the light of this we feel we must for the present withdraw our earlier opinion as to its date and suspend judgement until its present location is established and we can examine it personally.

Nevertheless we must point out again the surprising intermingling of several quite different styles in this Megillah, namely, those of a fourteenth century Spanish Haggadah in the British Museum (MS. Or. 2737) and of later German illuminated Haggadoth of the fifteenth century (Nuremberg I and II, and Paris, Bibl. nat. MS. hebr. 1333). If this Megillah is a forgery, then it was certainly produced by copying the reproductions of these Haggadoth in Müller and Schlosser's volume on the Sarajevo Haggadah (1898), since these manuscripts had not previously been reproduced and were almost unknown.