aid and often the urging of the very authorities to whom the denunciation had been made. The manner of execution usually followed that obtaining in the host country, such as bloodletting from an arm, drowning, strangulation, or stoning. Some of the talmudic rules of evidence were waived. In 1380 the Jews of Castile were denied the right of capital punishment. Other bodily penalties—again mainly in Spain—were amputation and mutilation of limbs (mainly for sexual offenses), cutting off the nose and ears, cutting out the tongue (in the case of informers), gouging out the eyes, shaving of head and beard, and stripes. Flogging was most common, particularly in lands like Germany where capital punishment was not resorted to. There were two kinds of lashes: the biblical statutory 39 stripes and the discretionary rabbinic penalty, which could be severe or very light, aimed at inflicting not pain but rather public shame. In Babylonia the person punished in this way had his hands and feet tied as he lay on a bench in the courtroom. More customary was the symbolic penance at the threshold of the synagogue between the afternoon and evening daily services. Shaving the head or beard, which was dreaded more than bodily mutilation, was reserved mainly for assault and battery, adultery, or fornication with a gentile maiden.

The most severe social penalty was the *ḥerem,* with its associated "donkey's burial," interment by the fence of the cemetery, far from respectable graves. Another punishment was expulsion—most customary in Spain and Poland-Lithuania—from the town or even from the country for a stated period or permanently. Sometimes a man's entire family was banished with him. This penalty was imposed on suspected murderers who had only one witness to testify against them, for assault and battery resulting in death, for wife-beating, fornication, stealing, and forgery. The **Mahamad* community council of the Sephardi Jews of Hamburg expelled moral or business offenders for several years to Amsterdam or elsewhere. For card-playing and similar offenses German Jewry was accustomed to banish the recalcitrant from the local synagogue. A bankrupt was sometimes ordered to sit for three years behind the *almemar.* For libeling a friend, a woman was ordered to change her seat periodically in the women's gallery of the synagogue. Various penalties involving loss of title or prestige were imposed. For insulting a fellow Jew the culprit would be denied the title of *morenu* or *ḥaver* in Ashkenazi Jewry. The right to be called to the reading of the Torah was withdrawn in certain cases. Often an announcement would be made in all synagogues that for a stated offense a person could not be trusted as a witness or to take an oath.

Institutionally imposed punishment ran parallel to punishment self-inflicted by people who wanted to do penance for their sins. The *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz, in particular Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, developed a detailed and exacting system of penance, the *teshuvat ha-mishkal.* Throughout the Middle Ages and early modern times such offenders as mothers who smothered their infants in sleep, people who killed unwittingly, or persons who committed undetected sexual transgressions would ask the rabbi to impose on them strict penances, which included public confession and self-vilification. Denial of participation in and benefit from communal and religious services was considered a severe penalty. The sinner could also be deprived of certain citizenship rights, such as membership in the plenary assembly and the right to vote. Most damaging socially and economically—especially in Eastern Europe—was expulsion from a *ḥevrah* by the *kahal,* since expulsion from a guild could also mean the loss of livelihood. The *kahal* was especially strict with its own employees or other communal functionaries. A **badḥan* ("jester") would be forbidden to perform at weddings and musicians to solicit their customary holiday gifts. The *kahal* possessed much more serious weapons against persons who refused to cooperate: exorbitant taxes, frequent billeting of troops, and, in Russia during the *Cantonist troubles, drafting the son into military service. Fines and confiscation of property were very common.

With the weakening of Jewish autonomy in modern times these penalties became, in various stages in different countries, obsolete and inoperative.

See also *Banishment; *Reward and Punishment. [I.L.]

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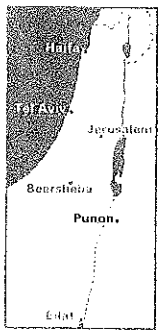


PUNON (Heb. פּוּנֹן), encampment of the Israelites in Edom, between Zalmonah and Oboth (Num. 33:42–43). It is identified with Khirbat Faynān, the Greek Phainon, in the Arabah. Remains of ancient copper mines abound in the area, the richest being at Umm al-ʿAmad. The copper ore of Punon was exploited from Chalcolithic times onward. There is evidence of extensive settlement at the end of the Early Bronze Age and in Iron Age I. The name of the Edomite prince Pinon (Gen. 36:41; I Chron. 1:52) may be connected with the locality. The mines were reopened in Nabatean times and continued to be exploited throughout the Roman and Byzantine periods. They were worked by condemned criminals, as well as Christian martyrs and bishops. Remains at the site include the foundations of a basilica and an inscription mentioning a bishop Theodorus. According to the Madaba map, the place where the Israelites were saved by the *copper serpent was located near Punon. The place was included in the fortifications of the Roman *limes,* Ala Prima miliaria Sebastena being stationed there (*Notitia dignitatum,* 73:32).

Bibliography: Frank, in: ZDPV, 57 (1934), 218–19, 221–24; Alt, in: ZDPV, 58 (1935), 6ff.; Glueck, in: AASOR, 15 (1935), 32–35.

[M.A.-Y.]

PURIM (Heb. פּוּרִים), the feast instituted, according to the Book of *Esther (9:20–28), by *Mordecai to celebrate the deliverance of the Jews from *Haman's plot to kill them. Purim (Akk. *pūrū,* "lots") is so called (Esth. 9:26) after the lots cast by Haman in order to determine the month in which the slaughter was to take place (Esth. 3:7). Purim is celebrated on the 14th of Adar, and in Hasmonean times it was known as the "Day of Mordecai" (II Macc. 15:36). The Jews of Shushan celebrated their deliverance on the 15th of Adar (Esth. 9:18), and this day became known as Shushan Purim. Out of respect for Jerusalem, it is said, the day is still kept by Jews living in cities which had a wall around them "from the days of Joshua" (Meg. 1:1). Thus in present-day Israel Purim is celebrated in Jerusalem on the 15th, but in Tel Aviv on the 14th. In leap years Purim is celebrated in the second month of *Adar.

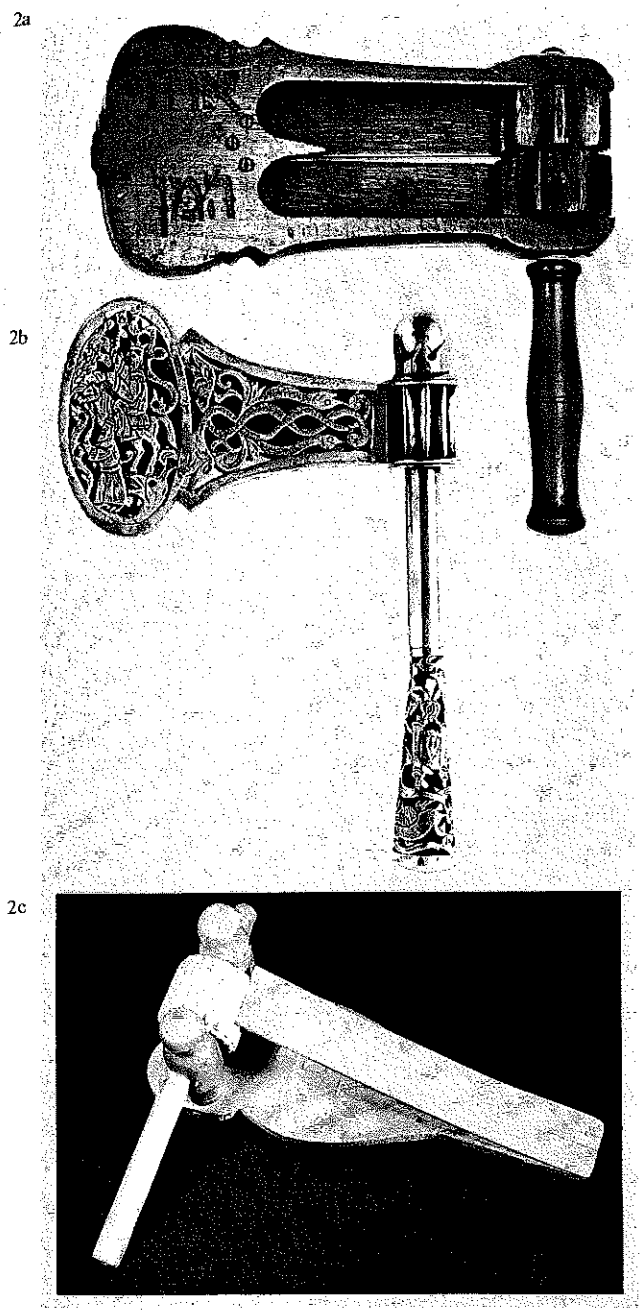
The chronological difficulties such as the identity of King

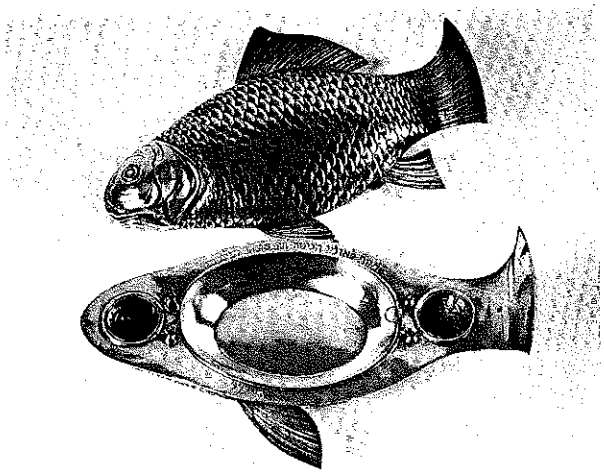
*Ahasuerus and the absence of any reference in the Persian sources to a king having a Jewish consort; the striking resemblance between the names Mordecai and Esther to the Babylonian gods Marduk and Ishtar; the lack of any reference to Purim in Jewish literature before the first century B.C.E.; the language of the Book of Esther, which suggests a late date—all these have moved the critics to look elsewhere than the account in Esther for the true origin of the festival. Various conjectures have been made (see *Scroll of Esther) but the problem still awaits its solution. In any event the festival had long been established by the second century C.E. when a whole tractate of the Mishnah (*Megillah*) was devoted to the details of its observance, especially to the rules governing the reading of the Scroll of Esther, called in the rabbinic literature the *megillah* ("scroll"). Purim is a minor festival in that work on it is permitted, but it has been joyously celebrated in Jewish communities as a reminder of God's protection of His people. However, the widespread acceptance of the festival as only minor is reflected in the popular Yiddish saying that as a high temperature does not denote serious illness neither is Purim a festival.

Figure 1. Poster advertising a Purim fete in New York, 1863. Courtesy Leon J. Obermayer, Philadelphia, Pa.

The main feature of Purim is the reading of the Book of Esther, the *megillah,* with a special cantillation. *Megillot* are frequently decorated, sometimes with scenes from the narrative. Since according to the midrashic interpretation the word *ha-melekh* ("the king"), when it is not qualified by Ahasuerus, refers to the King of the universe, some *megillot* are so written that each column begins with this word. It would seem that originally the *megillah* was read during the day, but eventually the rule was adopted to read it both at night and during the day (Meg. 4a). It is customary to fold the *megillah* over and spread it out before the reading since it is called a "letter" (Esth. 9:26, 29). The four verses of "redemption" (2:5; 8:15–16; and 10:3) are read in louder voice than the other verses. The custom of children to make a loud noise with rattles and the like whenever the name of Haman is read, in order to blot out the "memory of Amalek" (see Deut. 25:19; and Esth. 3:1 and I Sam. 15:8–9 for Haman was a descendant of Amalek) is ancient and still persists, though frowned upon as undecorous by some authorities. It is the practice for the reader to recite the names of the ten sons of Haman (Esth. 9:7–9) in one breath (Meg. 16b) to show that they were executed simultaneously. The custom has also been seen, however, as a refusal by Jews to gloat over the downfall of their enemies (C.G. Montefiore and H. Loewe (ed.), *A Rabbinic Anthology* (1938), 53). The Torah reading for Purim morning is Exodus 17:8–16.

The Book of Esther (9:22) speaks of "sending portions" (*mishlo'aḥ manot*—abbreviated to *shelakhmones*) to friends on Purim and of giving gifts to the poor. The rule is to send at least two "portions" of eatables, confectionery, and so forth, to a friend and to give a present of money to at least two poor men. A special festive meal is eaten on Purim afternoon toward eventide. Among the special Purim foods are boiled beans and peas, said to be a reminder of the cereals Daniel ate in the king's palace in order to avoid any infringement of the dietary laws, and three-cornered pies known as *hamantashen* ("Haman's ears"). There has been much discussion around the saying of the Babylonian teacher Rava (Meg. 7b) that a man is obliged to drink so much wine on Purim that he becomes incapable of knowing whether he is cursing Haman or blessing Mordecai. The more puritanical teachers tried to explain this away, but the imbibing of alcohol was generally encouraged on Purim and not a few otherwise sober teachers still take Rava's saying literally (see, e.g., H. Weiner: *9½ Mystics* (1969), 207). The laws of Purim and the reading of the *megillah* are codified in Shulḥan Arukh, OḤ 686–97. Various parodies of sacred literature were produced for Purim, the best known of which, *Massekhet Purim,* is a skillful parody of the Talmud with its main theme the obligation to drink wine merrily and to abstain strictly from water. The institution of the Purim rabbi, a kind of lord of misrule,

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MASKERED BAL, BY GELEGENHEID VAN HET JOODSCHE PURIM-FEEST. 4

Figure 2. Purim noisemakers, sounded by children when the name Haman is read from the *megillah*. a. German, 18th century, $9\frac{3}{4}\times 10\frac{1}{2}$ in. (25×27 cm.). Wood, inscribed *arur Haman* ("cursed is Haman"). b. New York, 20th century, $6\frac{1}{4}\times 5$ in. (16×11.5 cm.). Silver, incised with a scene of Haman leading Mordecai on the king's horse and other decorations. Both from Jerusalem, Sir Isaac and Lady Wolfson Museum in Hechal Shlomo. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem. c. Alsace, 19th century, wood with carved *magen David*. Nancy, Musée Historique Lorrain à Nancy.

Figure 3. Silver plate for *mishlo'aḥ manot* ("sending gifts") on Purim. The fish form symbolizes the month of Adar. Austria, 19th century, $15\frac{3}{4}$ in. (40 cm.). Jerusalem, Israel Museum. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem.

Figure 4. "The Masked Ball," engraving after a drawing by P. Wagenaar, Holland, 1780, showing Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam dancing against a background of special tapestries illustrating the Purim story. Jerusalem, Israel Museum. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem.

Figure 5. Wooden Purim pastry forms. a. Holland, 18th century. Jerusalem, Israel Museum. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem. b. and c. Central Europe, 19th century. Jerusalem, Sir Isaac and Lady Wolfson Museum in Hechal Shlomo. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem.

Figure 6. Reading the Purim *megillah* (Scroll of Esther) at Yavneh, a religious kibbutz in southern Israel, 1970. Courtesy Government Press Office, Tel Aviv.

who recites Purim Torah, the frivolous manipulation of sacred texts, was the norm in many communities. Some have seen in all this an annual attempt to find psychological relief from what otherwise might have become an intolerable burden of loyalty to the Torah (Druyanow, *Reshumot*, 1 and 2). Under the influence of the Italian carnival it became customary for people to dress up on Purim in fancy dress, men even being permitted to dress as women and women as men. The *Adloyada carnival in Tel Aviv has been a prominent feature of Purim observance in modern Israel.

In the kabbalistic and ḥasidic literature much is made of Purim as a day of friendship and joy and as the celebration of God at work, as it were, behind the scenes, unlike Passover which celebrates God's more direct intervention. (God is not mentioned in the Book of Esther.) The "lots" of Purim are compared with the "lots" cast on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:8), what human beings call "fate" or "luck" being, in reality, only another manifestation of God's providential care. So highly did the kabbalists esteem Purim that they reported in the name of Isaac Luria that the Day of Atonement is "like Purim" *(Yom ke-Furim)*.

While some Reform congregations abolished Purim, others continued to celebrate it as a day of encouragement and hope, some even arguing that it helped Jews to express their aggressive emotions and to sublimate their feelings of wrath and hatred (W. G. Plaut, *The Growth of Reform Judaism* (1965), 224).

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PURIM KATAN (Heb. פּוּרִים קָטָן; "minor Purim"), the name given to the 14th and 15th days of the first month of *Adar in a leap year, when *Purim is celebrated during the second month of Adar. (The Karaites were the only sect to celebrate Purim during the first Adar in a leap year.) According to talmudic tradition, Purim should be celebrated in the second Adar because that was the date of the original Purim (which occurred in a leap year). The rabbis also wanted to bring the period of the redemption of Esther closer to that of the redemption of the Israelites from Egypt celebrated in the following month of Nisan (Meg. 6b). Purim Katan has none of the ritual or liturgical features of Purim: the *megillah* is not read, and no gifts are sent to the poor (Meg. 1:4). The **Al ha-Nissim* prayer is not said, but fasting and funeral eulogies are prohibited (Meg. 6b). Also, **Taḥanun* is not recited on these days, which are considered a minor occasion of rejoicing (Sh. Ar., OḤ 697:1).

Bibliography: Eisenstein, Dinim, 337; G. Ki-Tov, *Sefer ha-Toda'ah*, 1 pt. 1 (1958), 297. Editorial Staff [ED.]

PURIMS, SPECIAL. Following the talmudic injunction that one must recite a special thanksgiving benediction on returning to the place where one was once miraculously saved from danger (Ber. 54a), the custom evolved for Jewish communities or families to celebrate the anniversary of their escape from destruction by reciting special prayers and with a ritual similar to that of Purim. (See: A. Gumbiner's note to Sh. Ar., OḤ 686.) These special communal Purims are called *Purim Katan ("minor Purim"), or Mo'ed Katan ("minor holiday") or Purim . . . (followed by the name of the community or the special event). In many cases special Purims were preceded by a fast comparable to the Fast of *Esther. In addition, on the Purim Katan itself the story of the personal or communal salvation was often read from a scroll *(*megillah)* in the course of a synagogue service in which special prayers of thanksgiving, in the style of *piyyutim*, were offered. Sometimes the **Al ha-Nissim* prayer and the **Hallel* were inserted into the ritual. The traditional Purim observances of enjoying a festive meal and giving charity to the poor were also applied to special Purims.

Bibliography: C. Roth, in: HUCA, 10 (1935), 451–82; 12–13 (1937–1938), 697–99; Y. T. Lewinski (ed.), *Sefer ha-Mo'adim*, 6 (1956), 297–321; M. Steinschneider, in: MGWJ, 47 (1901–21) ff.; A. Danon, in: REJ, 54 (1907). ibid [ED.]

PURIM-SHPIL (Yid. lit. "Purim play"), monologue or group performances given at the traditional festive family meal held on the festival of *Purim. There is definite evidence that use of the term *Purim-shpil* was widespread among all Ashkenazi communities as early as the mid-16th century. The earliest written record in which the term

LIST OF SPECIAL PURIMS

Purim of . . .	Observed on	Established in	Reason for Observance
Algiers (called Purim Edom)	4th Ḥeshvan	1540	Saved from destruction in Spanish-Algerian wars of 1516–1517 and 1542
Algiers (called Purim Tammuz)	11th Tammuz	1774	Saved from danger.
Alessandria Della Paglia (Italy)	25th Av	1779	Saved from massacre.
Ditto	2nd Ḥeshvan	1797	Saved from riots during revolutionary war.
Ancona	21st Tevet	1690	Saved from earthquake.
Ancona	15th Tishri	1741	Synagogue escaped destruction by fire.
Ancona	24th Adar	1775	Jewish quarter saved from conflagration.
Ancona	12th Shevat	1797	Saved from riots in revolutionary war.
Angora/Ankara/(called: Purim Angora or Purim Sari-Kiz)	21st Elul	?	Saved from blood libel accusation.
Angora, called Purim Abazza	11th Iyyar	?	?
Angora, called Purim de la Turquito	14th Tammuz	1775	Saved from blood libel accusation.
Avignon	24th Tammuz	?	?
Avignon	28th Shevat	1757	Escaped dangers of a riot.
Baghdad	11th Av	1733	Relieved from Persian oppression.
Belgrade	19th Sivan	1822	Saved from destruction during Turko-Serbian war.

Purim of . . .	Observed on	Established in	Reason for Observance
Breche (Champagne, France)	14th Adar	1191	Chief Jew-baiter executed
Cairo	18th Shevat	?	?
Cairo, called Purim Mizrayim	28th Adar	1524	Saved from extermination.
Candia (Crete)	18th Tammuz	1583	Saved from collective punishment for treason, during Turco-Venetian conflict
Carpentras	16th Kislev	1512	Saved from riot.
Ditto	9th Nisan	1692	Saved from annihilation.
Ditto, called Yom va-Yosha	21st Nisan	1651	Saved from threat of massacre.
Casablanca, called Purim Hitler	2nd Kislev	1943	Escape from riot and Nazi occupation.
Castille (Spain) called Purim Martinez	1st Adar	1339	Saved from annihilation following accusations by Jew-baiter Gonzales Martinez, king's adviser.
Cavaillon (Provence)	25th Iyyar	1631	Plague ended.
Ditto	29th Sivan	1677	Saved from blood libel accusation.
Cento (Italy)	12th Av	1820	Escaped from fire.
Chieri (Italy)	1st Av	1797	Saved from danger of war.
Chios (Greece), called Purim de la Senora ("Purim of the Good Lady")	8th Iyyar	1595 (or 1820)?	Saved from death during Franco-Turkish war.
Cuneo (Italy)	5th Kislev	1799	Synagogue saved from destruction by shell.
Ettingen (Germany)	18th Iyyar	1690	Saved from destruction by enemies.
Ditto	29th Sivan	1713	?
Ferrara	24th Kislev	?	Saved from destruction by fire.
Ditto	18th Iyyar	1799	Escaped war riots.
Fez	22nd Kislev	1840	Saved from destruction.
Florence	27th Sivan	1791	Escaped sacking and riots.
Fossano (Italy)	18th Nisan	1796	Saved from bomb explosion during war.
Frankfort on the Main, also called: Purim Winz or Purim Fettmilch	20th Adar	1616	Expelled Jews readmitted to town and chief Jew-baiter, Fettmilch, executed.
Fulda	15th Elul	?	?
Gumeldjina (Thrace) called: Purim de los ladrones ("Purim of the thiefs")	22nd Elul	1786	Saved from collective punishment for allegedly instigating robbers to sack town.
Hebron	1st Av	?	Saved from collective punishment and execution by Ibrahim Pasha.
Ditto, called Purim Takka ("Window Purim")	14th Tevet	1741	Saved from annihilation by miraculous find of ransom money on the windowsill of synagogue
Ivrea (Italy)	1st Shevat	1797	Escaped plundering during revolutionary war.
Komotini (Gumurjina, Gumuldjina) (Greece)	22nd Elul	1768	Saved from destruction during Turkish suppression of Greek revolt.
Kovno	7th Adar (II)	1783	Privileges of civic freedom granted by King Poniatowski.
Leghorn	12th Shevat	1742	Saved from destruction in earthquake.
Ditto	25th Tevet	1810	Plague ends.
Ditto	16th Adar	1813	?
Lepanto (Greece)	11th Tevet	1699	Saved from destruction during Turkish war.
Medzibezh (Poland)	11th Tevet	1648 or 1649	Saved from annihilation by Chmielnicki's bands.
Morocco	13th Nisan	1771	Saved from annihilation.
Mstislavl (Russia)	4th Shevat	1744	Saved from slaughter by Cossacks.
Ditto	3rd Kislev	1844	Saved from collective punishment for alleged rebellion against authorities.
Narbonne	20th Adar	1236	Saved from riots.
Oran	6th Av	1830	Saved from massacre before arrival of French troops.
Ostraha	23rd Nisan		
Ditto	7th Tammuz	1734 or 1768	Saved from pogrom.
		1792	Saved from destruction during Russo-Polish war.
Padua called Purim di fuoco ("Fire Purim")	11th Sivan	1795	Saved from fire.
Ditto, called Purim di Buda	10th Elul	1684	Saved from massacre during Austro-Turkish war (in Budapest).
Ditto, called Purim dei Sassi (?)	Shabbat "Bo"	1748	?
Pesaro/see also: Urbino and Senigallia	?	1799	Escaped damages of war.
Pitigliano (Italy)	15th Tammuz	1757	Collapse of school roof, no casualties.
Ditto	15th Sivan	1799	Saved from damages during revolutionary war.
Posen	1st Heshvan	1704	Saved from death during Polish-Swedish war.
Prague	14th Heshvan	1620	Saved from sacking and riots by protection of Emperor Ferdinand II.
Ditto, called Vorhang Purim ("Curtain Purim")	22nd Tevet	1622	Beadle of synagogue saved from hanging for keeping stolen curtains.
Purim Byzanc (observed by Jews of Thrace)	14th Adar	1574	Saved from extermination.
Ragusa	?	1631	Saved from accusation of blood libel.
Rhodes	14th Adar	1840	Saved from annihilation.
Ritova (Lithuania) called Purim Jeroboam b. Nebat	14th Adar	1863	Jew-baiter Count Aginsky died.

Purim of . . .	Observed on	Established in	Reason for Observance
Rome	1st Shevat	1793	Ghetto saved from assault and fire.
Sa'na	18th Adar	?	Saved from extermination.
Sarajevo	4th Ḥeshvan	1819	10 leaders of Jewish community freed from prison and saved from execution.
Senigallia (Italy)/see also: Urbino and Pesaro	15th Sivan	1799	Saved from annihilation during war by escaping to Ancona.
Sermide (Italy)	25th Tammuz	1809	Saved from earthquake.
Shiraz, called Purim Mo'ed Katan	2nd Ḥeshvan	1200 or 1400	Permitted to practice Judaism after having been forced to convert to Islam.
Sienna	15th Sivan	1799	Saved from destruction during revolution.
Spoleto	21st Sivan	1797	Saved from annihilation during revolutionary war.
Ditto	7th Adar	?	?
Syracuse (Sicily), called Purim Saragossa	17th Shevat	1425	Saved from destruction for alleged treason by honoring King Alfonso with empty cases of Torah Scrolls.
Tetuan and Tangiers, called Purim de las bombas, or Purim de los Christianos,	2nd Elul	1578	Saved from destruction during Moroccan-Portuguese war.
Tiberias	7th Elul	1743	Saved from danger of war.
Ditto	4th Kislev	?	?
Trieste	14th Adar	1833	Leading Jew-baiter died.
Tripoli and Tunisia	25th Shevat	?	?
Ditto, called Purim Sheriff or Purim Kadebani ("False Purim")	24th Tevet	1705	Saved from destruction by hostile ruler, Khalil Pasha.
Ditto, called Purim Borghel	29th Tevet	1793	Saved from destruction during occupation by Borghel Pasha of Turkey.
Tunisia, called: Purim Sheleg ("Purim of Snow")	24th Tevet	1891	Jewish quarter saved from natural disaster.
Tunisia	15th Shevat	?	?
Turino	1st Av	1797	Saved from war and sacking.
Urbino	11th Sivan	1799	Saved from war and riots.
Verona	20th Tammuz	1607	Permission granted to lock ghetto gates from inside instead of from outside.
Vidin, Bulgaria, called Purim de los borrachones ("Purim of the Drunken")	4th and 5th Heshvan or 9th–10th	1806	Saved from annihilation following accusation that the ruler had been poisoned by his Jewish physician.
Ditto	2nd Adar	1878	Saved from destruction during Russo-Turkish (Balkan) war.
Vilna	15th Av	1794	Saved from destruction during Russo-Polish war.
Zborow (Galicia)	12th Tevet	?	Saved from annihilation because of blood libel accusation.

Family purims

Altschul family of Prague	22nd Tevet	1623	Head of family, Ḥanokh Moses, saved from death.
Brandeis family of Jungbunzlau (Bohemia), called Povidl Purim "Plum Jam Purim"	10th Adar	1731	David Brandeis and family saved from accusation of having killed gentiles by poisoning plum jam.
Danzig family of Vilna, called Pulverpurim ("Powder Purim")	15th Kislev	1804	Family of Abraham Danzig, author of *Ḥayyei Adam*, saved from explosion of magnesium.
Elyashar family of Jerusalem	2nd Nisan	?	Saved from death.
Heller family of Prague	1st Adar	1629	Head of family, Yom Tov Lipmann, rabbi of Prague saved from death sentence.
Jonathan ben Jacob of Fulda (Germany)	17th Tammuz	?	?
Maimon family of Lithuania	?	1750	Grandfather of Solomon Maimon saved from death sentence for blood libel.
Meyuḥas family of Jerusalem	16th Adar	1724	Head of family, Raphael Meyuḥas, escaped death by highwaymen.
Samuel Ha-Nagid of Spain	1st Elul	1039	Saved from death plot of conspirators.
Segal family of Cracow	1st Iyyar	1657	Family saved from drowning in river while escaping from pogrom.
Treves family (?)	Shabbat "Va-Yeẓe"	1758	Escaped from fire.

The Karaites observe a special Purim on 1st Shevat, in memory of the release from prison of one of their leaders, Yerushalmi. The exact date of the event is unknown.
The followers of *Shabbetai Ẓevi observed a special Purim on 15th Kislev, because on this day in 1648, Shabbetai Ẓevi proclaimed himself Messiah.

Figure 1. Masked Purim players in a woodcut from the *Venice Minhagim Book*, 1601(?). Jerusalem, J.N.U.L.

appears is at the beginning of a lengthy poem relating the events of the Book of Esther with the aid of appropriate midrashic material, composed about 1555 in Venice by a Polish Jew (*Lieder des Venezianischen Lehrers Gumprecht von Szczebrszyn*, ed. by Moritz Stern (1922), 18). From the context it appears that the poem was intended as a *Purim-shpil*. However, there are extant manuscripts of Yiddish poems on the Purim story dating from at least the 15th century, and from the start of the 16th century printed versions began to circulate. Well into the 19th century this type of poem continued to be defined as a *Purim-shpil* (e.g., *Purim-Shpil*, Warsaw, 1869 and 1874). At first the term *Purim-shpil* was used to define a monologue during which the performer sometimes appeared in costume. The monologues were mostly rhymed paraphrases of the Book of Esther, as well as parodies on liturgical and other holy texts, such as a "kiddush" or a "sermon" for Purim, composed to entertain the audience. Together with the more complex forms, the monologue form of *Purim-shpil* continued to appear in Eastern Europe until World War II.

Manuscript fragments and other evidence from the second half of the 16th century attest the gradual enlarging of the *Purim-shpil* to include presentations by several performers. One such fragment includes a contest between cantors from Poland, Italy, and Germany; it may be assumed that this is a combination of three earlier satirical monologues. Other fragments show evidence of growing complexity in dramatic expression blended with the traditional parody. Judging from the extant material it is probable that during the 16th century and until at least the mid-17th century, the subject matter of the *Purim-shpil* was drawn from contemporary Jewish life and was based on well-known humorous tales. This type of *Purim-shpil* also survived in Eastern Europe until World War II (16 *Purim-shpil* texts of this non-biblical type were published in the collection, *Yidisher Folklor* (1938), 219–74). In its initial and developing stages, the *Purim-shpil* often parallels the German *Fastnachtspiel*, as evidenced from texts of the 15th and 16th centuries. The *Purim-shpil* in all its varieties was usually presented in private homes during the festive family meal; the performers, who wore masks or primitive costumes, were generally recruited from among yeshivah students. In the course of time the *Purim-shpil* became the object of competition between groups of performers recruited not only from among students but also from among apprentices, craftsmen, and mendicants; even professional entertainers saw in the *Purim-shpil* a field for their activity. By the 16th century, the prologues to the *Purim-shpil* had developed a conventional form, which included blessings for the audience, an outline of the contents of the performance, and an introduction of the actors; conventional epilogues had also developed, including parting blessings and appeals for an ample reward. (One of the shorter prologues reads in part: "Good Purim, good Purim, my worthy audience! And do you then know of Purim's significance? . . ." And an excerpt from an epilogue reads: "Today Purim has come in, tomorrow it goes out. Give me then my single groschen and kindly throw me out! . . .") Like the *Fastnachtspiel*, the Purim performance was introduced, conducted, and concluded by a narrator (leader of the performance), traditionally called *loyfer*, *shrayber*, or *payats*, and, as in the *Fastnachtspiel*, profanity and obscenity of an erotic nature are outstanding elements of the humorous effects.

Well-developed texts on biblical themes presented as *Purim-shpils* began to appear in the late 17th century. Naturally, the subject of the oldest surviving text of this type, a manuscript of 1697, is the story of the Book of Esther, popularly known as the *Akhashverosh-shpil*. In the 18th century the repertoire expanded to include *The Selling of Joseph* and *David and Goliath*, and in the 19th and 20th centuries East European performers presented *The Sacrifice of Isaac, Hannah and Penninah, The Wisdom of Solomon,*

Figure 2. Three Purim jesters with musical instruments and a jug of wine, from a *minhagim* book, printed in Amsterdam by Proops, 1707. Jerusalem, J.N.U.L.

Figure 3. "Purim at Home," a painting by Moritz Oppenheim, Germany, 19th century, depicting a family being entertained by Purim players. New York, Oscar Gruss Collection. Photo Frank Darmstaedter, New York.

etc. (A collection of this genre of *Purim-shpil* was edited by Noah Prylucki in *Zamlikher far Yidishn Folklor* (1912), 125–88; (1917), 143–5.) Most of these biblical works retain the conventional form of *shpil* with prologues, epilogues, parodies, vulgar language, the traditional narrator, and, often, stories unconnected with any biblical theme. These older forms are very apparent in the above-mentioned text of 1697 and in a similar version of an *Akhashverosh-shpil* printed at Frankfort in 1708 (which appears in J. J. Schudt's *Juedische Merckwuerdigkeiten*, 3 (Frankfurt and Leipzig (1714), 202–25). The printed version of the *Akhashverosh-shpil* was burned by the city fathers of Frankfort presumably because of the play's indecent elements. This was probably the reason for a public notice of 1728 in which the leaders of the Hamburg community banned the performance of all *Purim-shpils*. To assure compliance with the ban, fines were threatened and special investigating officers were posted.

As early as the beginning of the 18th century, the biblical *Purim-shpil* reflected many trends of the contemporary European theater in its literary style, choice of subject, and scenic design. Previously marked by extreme brevity, not exceeding a few hundred rhymed lines, and by the limited number of performers, the *Purim-shpil* became a complex drama with a large cast, comprising several thousand rhymed lines performed to musical accompaniment in public places for a fixed admission price. Nonetheless, the plays maintained a connection with Purim and were performed during the appropriate season. From the early 18th century there are extant texts of such plays and evidence of performances in Frankfort, Hamburg, Metz, and Prague, and, later in the century, in Amsterdam and Berlin. Although there is an historical tie between the traditional *Purim-shpil* and the more developed biblical dramas of a later era, the term *Purim-shpil*, if strictly applied, refers only to those early, short performances at family gatherings.

Chone Shmeruk [CH.SH.]

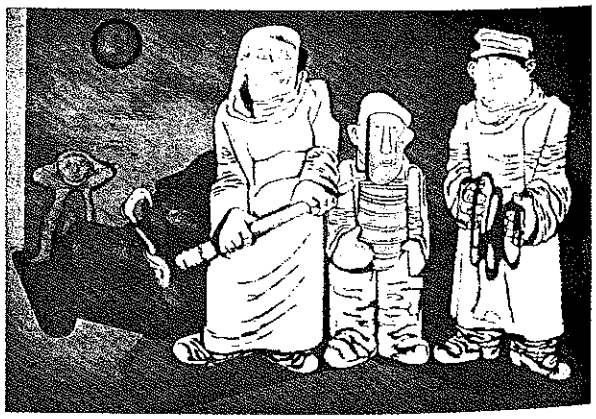

Figure 4. "Purim-shpil" by Yankel Adler, 1931. Oil, 49×69 in. (124×175 cm.). Tel Aviv Museum.

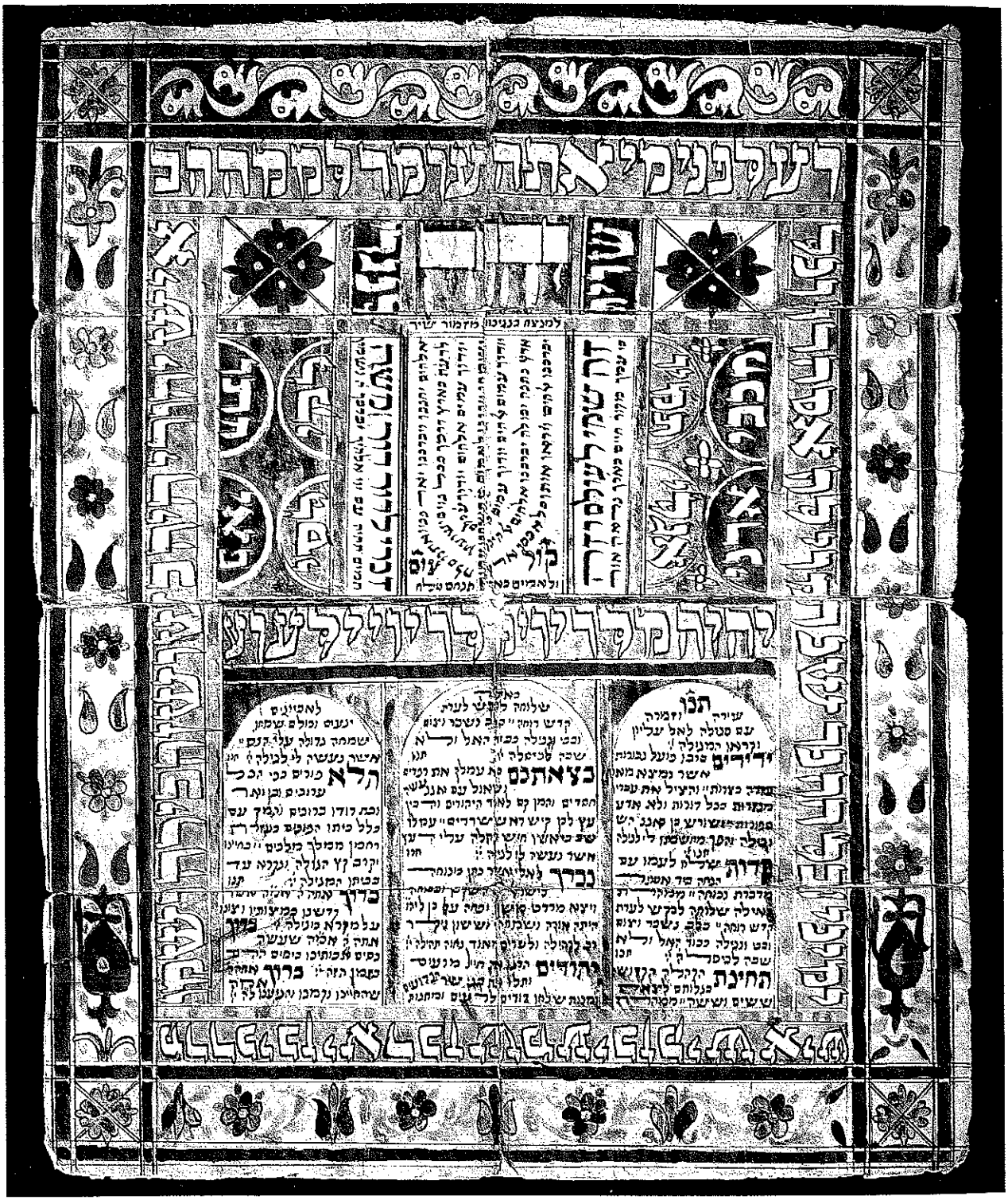

PLATE 6. Purim *shivviti,* Iran, c. 1800. This synagogue plaque contains the normal *shivviti* texts, as well as prayers, blessings, and quotations relating to Purim. Paper, 13×17 in. (33×43 cm.). Jerusalem, Michael Kaufman Collection. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem.

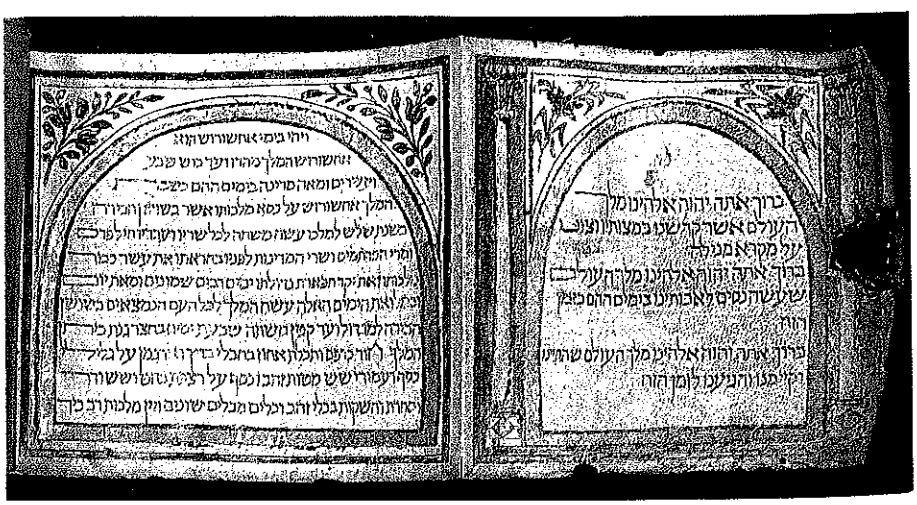

PLATE 7. *Megillah,* Lisbon, 1816. Parchment and wood. Jerusalem, Sir Isaac and Lady Wolfson Museum in Hechal Shlomo. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem.

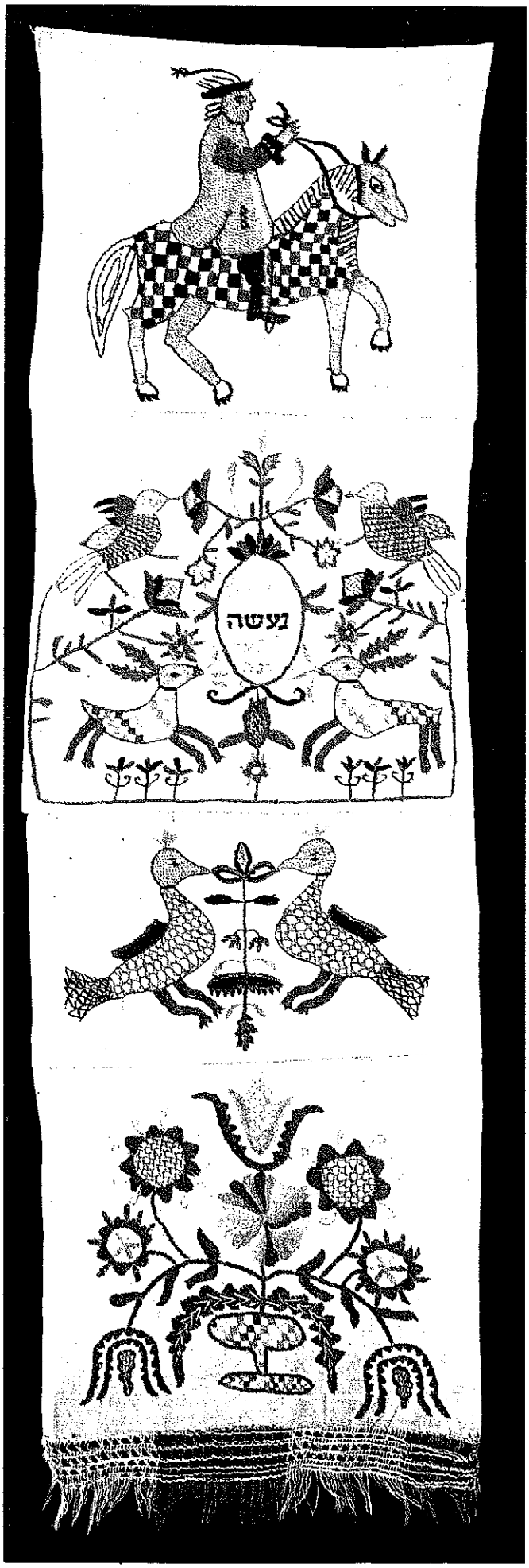

PLATE 5. Embroidered linen hand towel for use at the Purim meal. South Germany, 1812. Jerusalem, Israel Museum. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem.

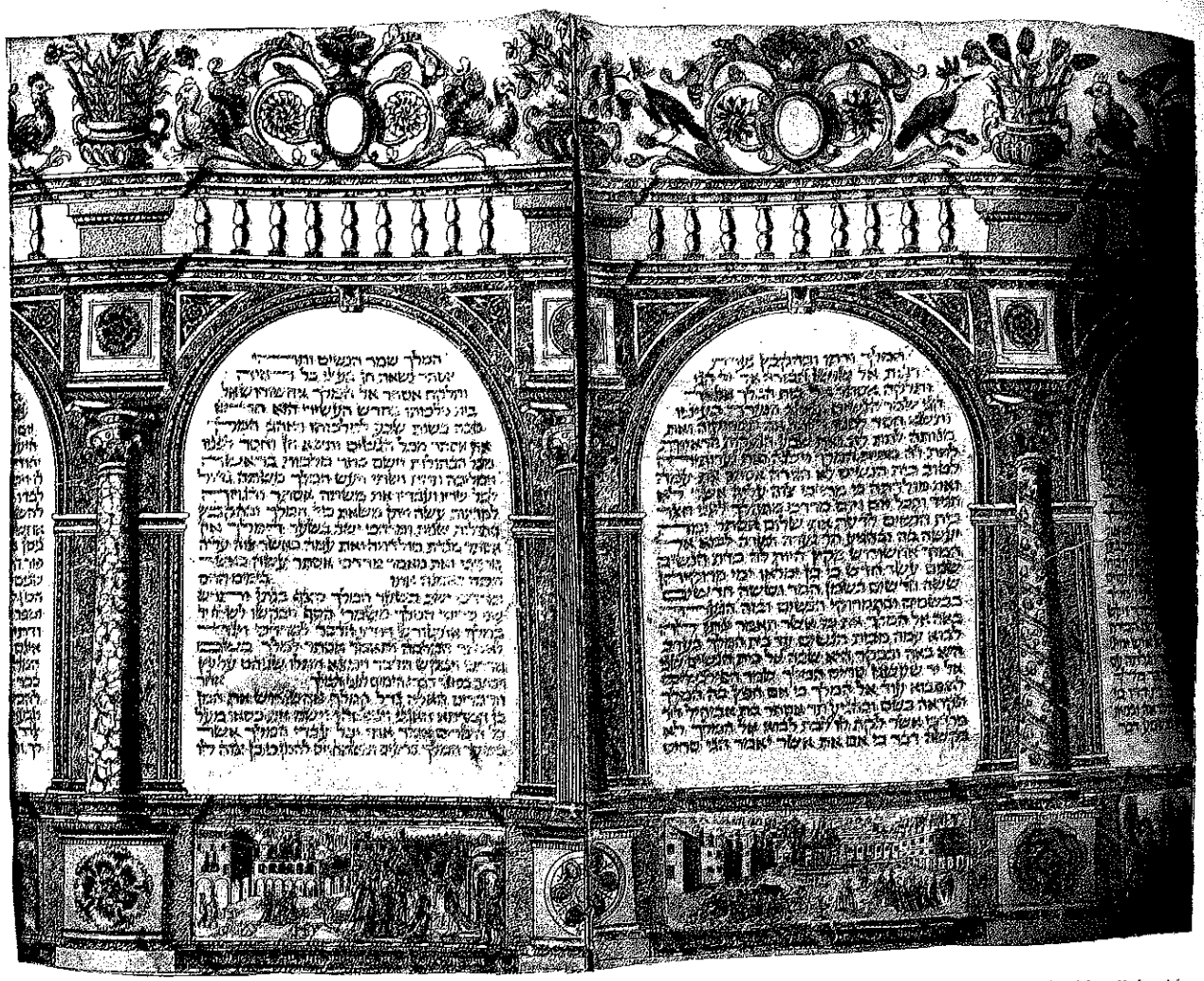

PLATE 3. *Megillat ha-Melekh*, Italy, 18th century. A "king's scroll" is so designed that every column begins with "the king." In this example, the scenes from the Purim story are in Italian Renaissance style. Parchment, 10½ in. (27 cm.). Formerly New York, Michael Zagaysky Collection. Photo Malcolm Varon, New York.

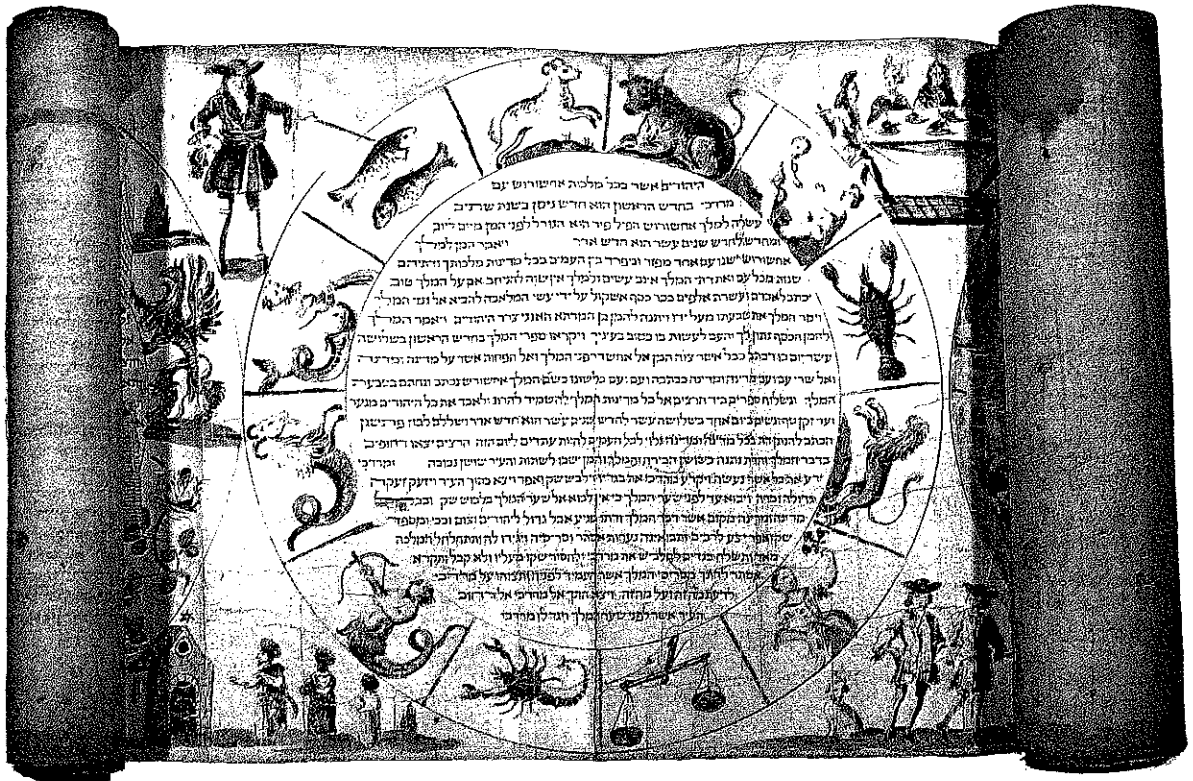

PLATE 4. *Megillah*, Alsace, c. 1730. In this Esther scroll the text is written in a series of decorated circles. This section is illustrated by signs of the zodiac. Other illustrations include Purim scenes, human and animal figures, birds, and flowers. Parchment, 10 in. (24.5 cm.). Jerusalem, Israel Museum. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem.

Purim

PLATE 1. *Megillah,* China, early 19th century. Scroll made for the survivors of the "lost" community of Kai-Feng-Fu. The archer, who represents the executioner, is flanked by a list of Haman's sons. Cecil Roth Collection. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem.

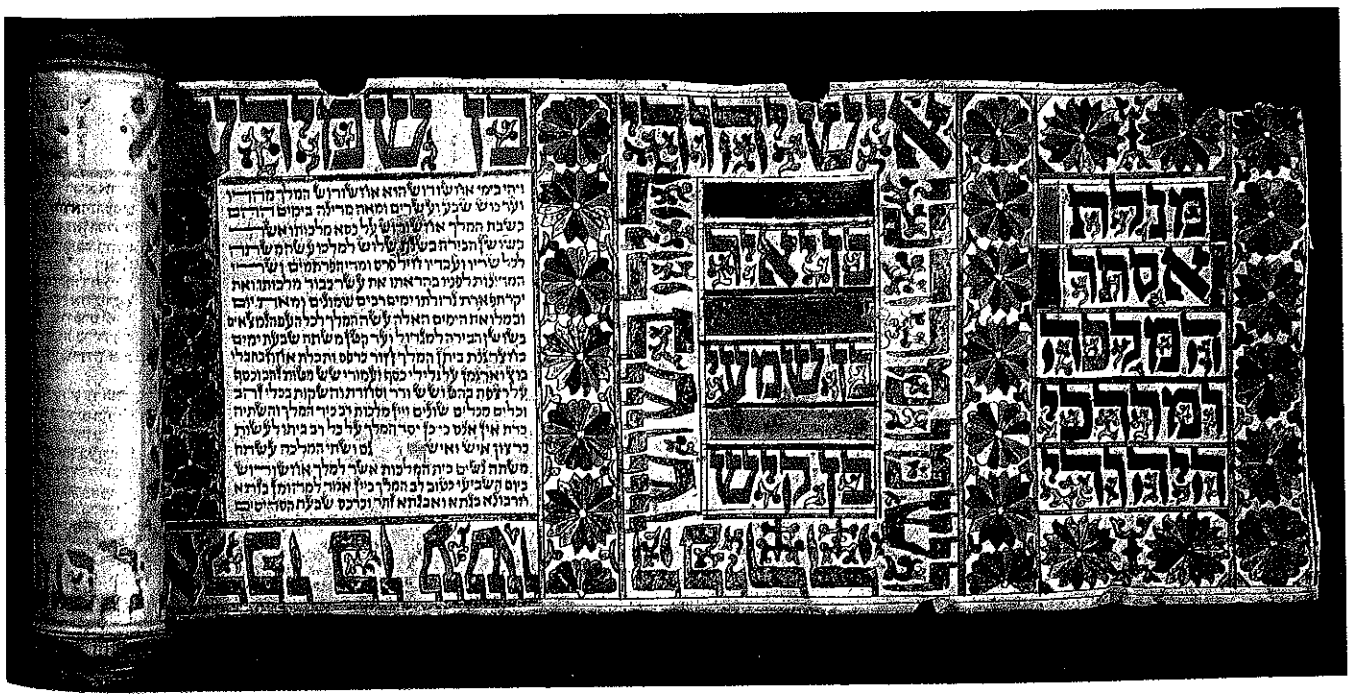

PLATE 2. *Megillah,* Morocco, early 19th century. The decorative panels give the genealogy of Mordecai and Haman, tracing the former to Abraham and the latter to Esau. Parchment, 48½×5 in. (123×13 cm.). Jerusalem, Sir Isaac and Lady Wolfson Museum in Hechal Shlomo.

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