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**ON OBJECTS OF ANCIENT RITUAL ART IN
SYNAGOGUE AND HOME¹**

BY

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WITH 151 ILLUSTRATIONS

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The second issue of the *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft* brought a treatise on construction and decoration of old synagogues; now, an exposition on old ritual objects in synagogues and home shall be provided.

It cannot be more than an enumeration of objects that must be designated as Jewish and several remarks about their form, color, and ornamentation; since, like in synagogues, also here, a systematic scholarly work providing an account of art historical and esthetic development is impossible at this time. Before it will be possible to tackle this, for a long time, research will have to continue on this modest basis, which will be provided by the following observations so far.

The ancient written sources as far as synagogues and synagogue utensils are concerned are highly tenuous and inaccurate to boot. On material, form, and design of the latter, one usually learns only when an innovation was contested, a rabbi was consulted. From the vast number of rabbinical expert opinions all parts relating to ritual objects must first be extracted and explicated. Such a reference work is currently missing.

Likewise, the historical development of ceremonies according to time and countries, attire and utensils has not been written as yet.

Precise liturgical rules on the utensils provided by an authority recognized by all Jews are not existent. It is not well known how the utensils must have looked like in the first millennium CE or, unfortunately how they actually looked like since almost all monuments from earlier periods are lacking. The gaps in development are much larger for objects than for synagogue buildings. Only very few objects have survived that were created before the 16th century CE; illuminations provide information on few of them from earlier times. When the number of those turning their attention to the investigation of ancient Jewish utensils will be much larger, then, of course, many a surprising find will be made. However, to be able to engage a large circle of scholars and artists for this task and since usually the characteristics of the Jewish ritual are completely foreign to them, it is very important to start out by enumerating at least the objects used in it.

In the following shall be dealt with:

1. Ritual objects for the synagogue,
2. Ritual objects for the home,
3. Other objects used only by Jews in the forms indicated.

The Megillah, the Haggadah, the Omer book will be included in the list for now; the Megillah because of its lathed handle, the Omer book and other books because of their oftentimes handsome covers. Yet, their true place will be in a special issue, which shall deal with the ornamental character of the Hebrew script and, besides the adorned script, also with the illustrated works of print.

Hence, the purpose of the following treatise is to call attention to the various objects. Excluded are, therefore, only those objects saved up for future issues because of the script, the objects that are more in the realm of Jewish folklore studies, and all those where artistic design is almost impossible.

I. RITUAL OBJECTS FOR THE SYNAGOGUE.

To form a Jewish congregation, ten adult male Israelites are required. The joint prayers can be said in any unadorned room. A Torah scroll is quickly added as well as an ark at the east side of the room for its storage. Only gradually, Torah decorations are acquired, a small synagogue is built, and—when the community members' wealth and the community itself grow—a large synagogue constructed with artistic décor.

Anyone descending the steps from the entrance of a large synagogue, scrutinizing the room until he climbs to the Ark of the Covenant will initially find only few objects that inspire the artist to decorate them; nevertheless, the following objects demand consideration.

1. Torah ark, 2. Curtain, 3. TORAH SCROLL, 4. Torah wimple, 5. Torah mantle, 6. Rimoni, 7. Crown, 8. Shield, 9. Pointer; moreover 10. Reader's stand (stand and railing); 11. Reader's stand cover; furthermore 12. Eternal Light, 13. Light for the deceased, 14. Hannukah lamp and cover on which it is placed, 15. Chandelier and sconces, kiddush cup, 17. Spice box. Part of the synagogue's complete inventory are also 18. Washing cups for the Cohanim, 19. the chair for the rabbi and the prayer leader, possibly also for the community head; 20. Circumcision chairs; 21. Canopy [chuppah] and 23. Shofar. Endowed with artistic design are sometimes also 23. Offering box, 24. Washing basin, 25. Carrier of eruv matzoth, 26. Megillah, and 27. Prayer books.



Fig. 1-4 Gold sandwich glasses from the catacombs in Rome.

1. THE TORAH ARK

The Torah ark, Hebrew aron hakodesh, is the cabinet-like container where the Torah scrolls are kept. It is always placed against or built in the middle of the synagogue's east wall.

Since in Biblical times Torah scrolls existed, there must have been Torah arks as well; nothing is known about their appearance.

The oldest representations of Torah scrolls can be seen in the peculiar gold sandwich glasses found in the Jewish catacombs in Rome (Fig. 1-4), which date from the first centuries of the Common Era. They are very important for our purpose also otherwise; they feature the two lions facing each other, which are still used as a popular symbol on Jewish objects, birds, fish, the seven-branched candelabrum, the shofar, the kiddush cup, the matzah, the bitter herbs. In Fig. 1, the Torah ark is wider than high, with two outward-opening doors; a flat pierced gable forms the top. Its interior features nine compartments containing nine Torah scrolls. In Fig. 2, the Torah ark is higher than wide, has outward-opening doors and a hemispheric top, the interior consists of only two parts with three scrolls each; also in Fig. 3, the Torah ark is higher than wide, with outward-opening doors, three compartments and six Torah scrolls and a semicircle top. This ark seems to have a massive base as well. In these three arks, the Torah scrolls are in a horizontal position. If one reckons the cross section of a Torah scroll, which does not seem to be tied or not tightly tied, at 24 cm, the closet shelves at 8 cm, the base at 30 cm, the semicircle-shaped top in the center at 40 cm, this would result in a height of 3×24 and 3×8 and 30 and $40 = 1.66$ m for the Torah ark in Fig. 3, while its depth must be 57 cm since the rolls are in a horizontal position. The Torah ark in Fig. 4 is more slender, less deep, and of different design, with a base, a closet with two columns, a top with a larger gable at the center and to smaller gables at the side, with two outward-opening doors; the interior contains four compartments, with six Torah scrolls resting in a slanted position.

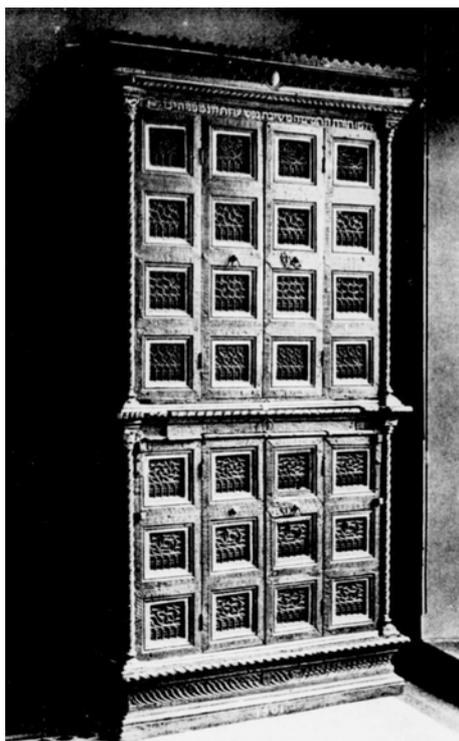


Fig. 5 Torah ark from the synagogue in Modena from 1505. Original at the Musée Cluny in Paris

The oldest extant Torah ark, which is kept at the Musée Cluny (Fig. 5) comes from an old synagogue in Modena for which it was completed in 1505. It is 2.65 m high, 1.30 m wide, and 70 cm deep. It is from walnut wood decorated with 54 small carved panels in openwork technique in Gothic style featuring seven different patterns.

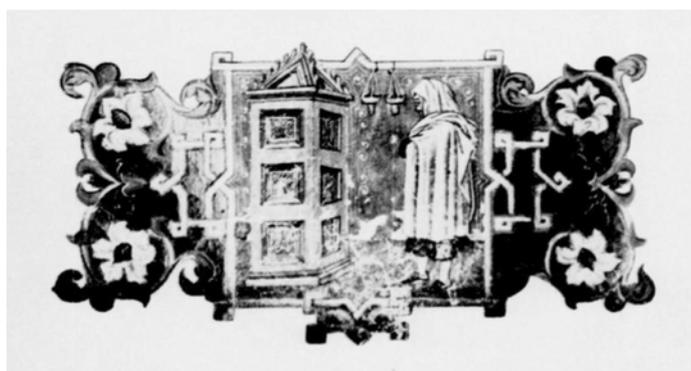


Fig. 6 Illustration of a Gothic Torah ark in the manuscript “Yad HaChazaka” by Maimonides, in the ownership of Mr. Hermann Cramer in Frankfurt am Main

Each panel is surrounded by an intarsia ornament executed in four different patterns; twisted columns red and black painted or gilt-plated in the corners. On the front side of top and base there

are outward-opening double doors; between the two, there is a drawer. The upper part serves for the storage of the Torah scrolls that were in use; whether the lower part served as genizah to store the holy books no longer in use, as is currently still the case in several arks, can no longer be determined. In an oval shield on the top, also on the frieze of the top and the frieze of the base, an unadorned Hebrew square script is affixed.

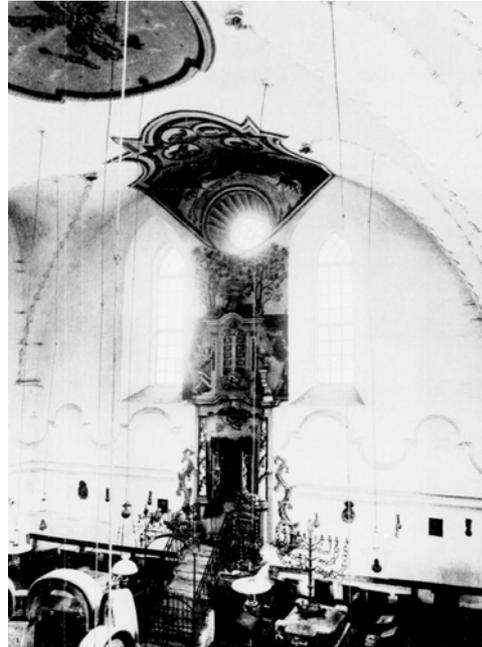


Fig. 7 Torah ark from the synagogue in Husiatyn in Galicia

A similar Torah ark is depicted in the beautiful Maimonides manuscript of Mr. Cramer in Frankfurt am Main (Fig.6), with Gothic shapes, upward tapered like a roof with crabs on the roof areas. A similar ark is depicted in a manuscript at the Bibliotheca Rossiana in Lains near Vienna.

In the Talmudic period, the ark itself was carried around on the street; hence, it was mobile. All arks mentioned so far seem to have been mobile. Mobile arks are very frequent in home synagogues; they are 1 m high or less, though always high enough to easily accommodate an adorned Torah scroll. However, also diminutive Torah scrolls were written for traveling purposes that are hardly more than 20 cm high; they were stored in small wooden, silver-coated chests. Such a small Torah ark is depicted in No. 1 Fig.10.

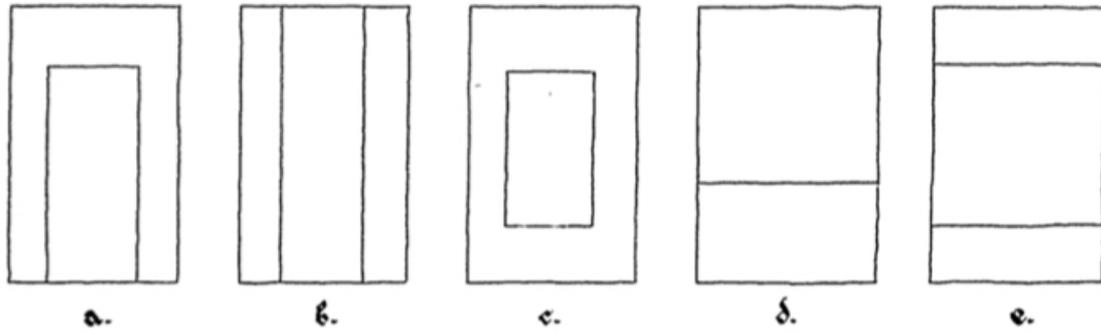


Fig. 8 Sketches of Torah curtains

Though it cannot yet be determined since when Torah arks must be counted among immovable objects. However, they are tightly connected to the eastern wall already since the 16th century. For instance, in Worms where the smooth stone construction features simple wooden doors that are equipped with archaic locks, or else in Padua (No.2 Fig. 42) where, built from the most precious timbers, it is assembled into a noble work of art connected to the wall. Examples are provided in No.1 Fig. 4, 14, No.2 Fig. 5, 23, 33, 39, 41, which are from the 16th and 17th century. A nice example is the Torah ark from the synagogue in Husiatyn in Galicia (Fig.7); it is an elaborate work of carpentry and wood carving combined with decoration from wrought iron. The finial of the wrought-iron door displays a repoussé, openwork crown with lions on both sides; through the door, one reaches six steep stone steps leading to the Torah ark that features on both sides leafwork-entwined columns. It is surmounted by an elaborate, carved top very tastefully combined with painting that extends beyond the round window and displays symbols from the zodiac.



Fig. 9 Torah curtain with gold embroidery on velvet. Synagogue in Padua

Although layout and décor of the Torah arks demonstrate great variety, the latter is nevertheless achieved by few means; few motives such as the two lions, the crown, the Tablets of the Law, the twisted or leafwork-entwined columns are combined with ornaments that are necessitated by the layout's structure. They are made according to the tastes prevailing at the time of their creation and have no other particularity than that granted them by the motifs. However, in the selection of the precious timbers, the rare, colorful types of stones, an emphasis on the extraordinary significance of the Torah ark is expressed, most tellingly in the 17th and 18th century, whereas more modestly in the 15th and 19th century.

The interior is in most cases very simple. In more ancient Torah arks, any means to separate the individual Torah scrolls is oftentimes missing. Slightly slanted, the adorned scrolls lean against the back wall, one against the next. When the Torah scrolls are removed, nothing but a hollow space with plain walls remains. Some synagogues from the 19th century have simple devices, with crossbars separating the individual rows of Torah scrolls or pegs to keep the individual scrolls upright or as functional as in Modena (No.1 Fig. 7 and 8). In newer

constructions, light and air in the interior as well as equipment contributing to the protection of the precious Torah scrolls are provided.

2. THE CURTAIN

Part of the furnishings of a Torah ark is the curtain, Hebrew **paroches** [sic!].

It is only absent in very small Torah arks for miniature scrolls.

In synagogues of the Spanish and Portuguese rite, the curtain is mounted inside the Torah ark while in the synagogues for the German and Polish rite, usually outside the doors. In the latter case, the curtain has a special valance to cover the drawstring for opening and closing while this is absent in the former, which, moreover, is usually made from thinner fabrics.



Fig. 10 Torah curtain with valance. Synagogue in Mainz. Color drawing by Alb. Hochreiter and R. Schmutz

The curtain size depends on the size of the Torah ark's doors, thus it varies.

Their color also greatly varies. On the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, some communities choose a **black** curtain, others remove the curtain altogether. On New Year and the Day of Atonement, a **white** curtain is used. For all other feast days, light-colored curtains are preferred. There is no fixed universally applicable rule regarding color even in wealthy synagogues that own numerous curtains. Therefore, one sees curtains in blue, red, brown, yellow, green, chamois, purple, or other colors according to the donor's taste—since most of the time, the curtain is a gift. Rarely are they without ornamentation.

With few exceptions, the curtains are from silk or velvet. Knotted curtains from wool or camelhair are rare; I only know of one in Padua (No. 1, Fig. 15) and one at the large synagogue in Venice. Curtains from silk or velvet usually feature gold- or silver embroidery or appliqué work from soft leather.

As already mentioned, single-colored but richly embroidered curtains are quite frequent, also simple ones assembled from two differently colored textiles; the most common arrangements are shown in Fig. 8; either a small rectangle is attached or sewn on the basic fabric, such as in a; or three fabric panels are sewn together, whereby the middle one is wider than those on the sides, such as in b; or a smaller, sometimes rectangular sometimes square, differently colored piece of fabric forms the center, such as in c; or the rectangular curtain features an upper square part in one color and a lower one half the size in a different color, such as in d; or the square part forms the middle and the smaller upper and lower stripes are in a different color, such as in e. No explanation is known for this. Nevertheless, one might assume that such arrangements were deliberately chosen. Thus, one notices that in older curtains, the embroidered script does not extend beyond a stripe and the seam; particularly those shaped as in b.



Fig. 11 illustrations of a Torah scroll wrapped around a rod in the manuscript "Yad HaChazaka" by Maimonides, in the ownership of Mr. Hermann Cramer in Frankfurt am Main

These one- and multicolored curtains with or without valance were often abundantly embroidered and expensive works of art in the 16th, 17th, and 18th century. No.1, Fig.3 and No.2, Fig. 41 show such curtains, elaborately decorated with gold embroidery, which have no valance, yet, are mounted on the outside of the Torah ark. The decoration consists of stylized flowers and tendrils; it features a fill pattern without a surrounding border. Fig. 9 shows a curtain decorated with relief embroidery in gold; there are tendrils on all four sides; from the four corners, small ornaments point to the center that has a symmetrically arranged shield-like bordure of embroidered relief flowers for an embroidered flower and script. This curtain from the synagogue in Padua is without a valance. A very elaborate old curtain with valance from the 17th century is in the possession of the Mainz community (Fig. 10). On an orange-yellow background, it displays two columns decorated with arabesques in the most delicate gold embroidery and entwined with sewed-on leaves that end above in a vase filled with flowers. Beneath a crown in a middle field is Mount Sinai with two olive trees with fruits, which symbolically allude to the written and oral teaching, bounded by a fence that Moses was supposed to build around the mountain upon God's command before obtaining the Law. The red sky lit up by lightning and the earth darkened by clouds are skillfully indicated by colors. Depicted above, on the valance from red velvet, are three crowns in relief embroidery decorated with colorful stones. Designated by their initial letters are the crown of the teachings on the right side, the crown of the kingdom on the left side, and the crown of the priesthood in the middle. Beneath, also designated by initials, are five images with

utensils from the Temple in Jerusalem; from right to left: the seven-branched candelabrum, the washing basin, the Tablets of the Covenant, the sacrificial altar, and the showbread table.

On other copious curtains, the lions, the rams—being popular symbols—pious sayings, the name of the donor, place and year of manufacture, also the information in whose memory the curtain was donated, and such can be seen; additionally, there are flowers and tendrils and arabesques of various kinds, either in colorful silk, or embroidered flat though mostly in high relief with gold- or silver threads; there are also curtains whose entire decoration is made from sewn-on bands, small leather stripes as well as pearls. Even precious stones are affixed on Torah curtains as a sign of appreciation for this object.

3. THE TORAH SCROLL

THERE ARE STRICT RULES GOVERNING THE MANUFACTURE OF A TORAH SCROLL WITH THE PENTATEUCH IN HEBREW SQUARE SCRIPT, WHICH EXCLUDE ANY ARTISTIC EMBELLISHMENT. IT IS USUALLY FROM PARCHMENT, RARELY FROM LEATHER, WHICH MUST BE PREPARED SOLELY BY JEWS AND ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PREPARING THE MATERIAL FOR THE TORAH. ONLY TENDONS FROM CLEAN ANIMALS CAN BE USED FOR SEWING TOGETHER THE INDIVIDUAL PARCHMENT SCROLLS. FOR WRITING PURPOSES ONLY A SPECIALLY PREPARED INK AND QUILL MUST BE USED; THE LETTERS MUST BE WRITTEN THE WITH UTTERMOST PRECISION AND STRICT DIMENSIONS, AND “MINIATURE CROWNS” ARE PERMITTED ONLY ON SEVEN LETTERS, ETC.

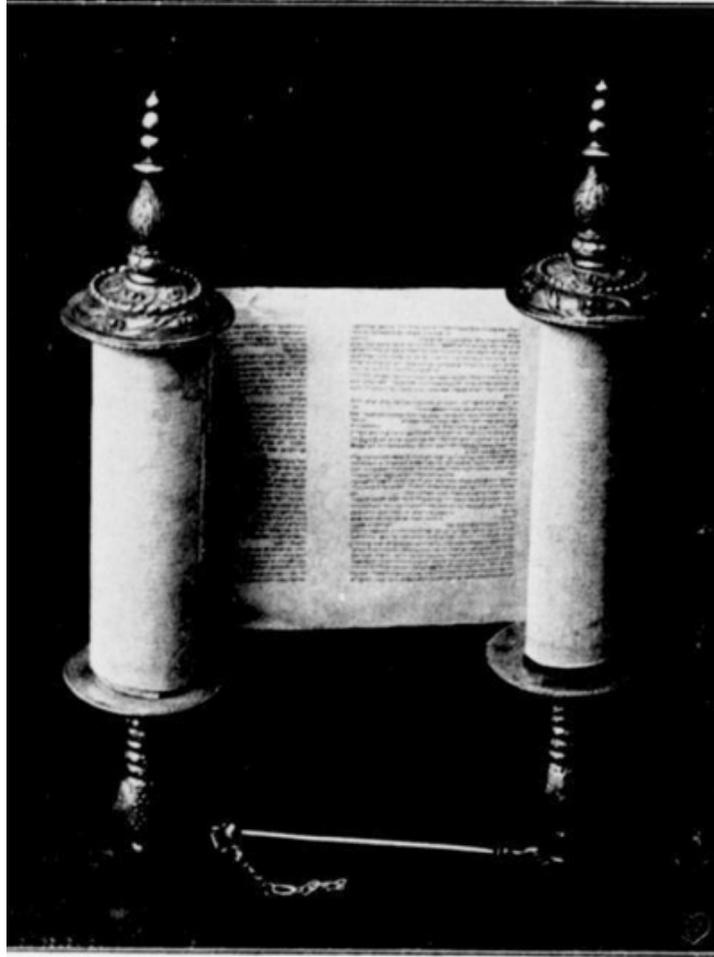


Fig. 12 Torah scroll in the ownership of the Israelite orphanage “Wilhelmspflege” in Stuttgart

AS MANUSCRIPTS, THE TORAH SCROLLS REPRESENT A SPLENDID ACHIEVEMENT; ANY FURTHER DECORATIONS ARE SPURNED (FIG. 12).

HOWEVER, THEY IMMEDIATELY EMERGE ON THE TORAH SCROLLS’ FIXTURE. IT SEEMS THAT IN ANCIENT TIMES THERE WERE NO FIXTURES (COMP. FIG. 1-4); THE PORTUGUESE JEWS WRAPPED THE SCROLL AROUND A ROD (FIG. 11). NOW, HOWEVER, BEGINNING AND END OF THE SCROLL ARE WRAPPED AROUND A WOODEN TWISTED ROD. BOTH RODS, CALLED “TREE OF LIFE”, HEBREW “ETZ HAYIM,” DISPLAY ON THEIR HANDLES BELOW AND ON THEIR TIPS A GREAT VARIETY IN THE PROFILE, IN THE SEGMENTATION; THE WOOD IS SOMETIMES INLAID WITH IVORY AND NACRE OR HANDLE AND TIP CONSIST OF LATHE-TURNED OR CARVED IVORY OR ELSE THE WOOD IS COVERED WITH SHEET METAL OR COATED WITH CHASED SILVER OR GILT COPPER. ON THE RIMONIM, WHICH ARE PUT ON TOP OF THE WOODEN TIPS, SEE LATER.



Fig. 13 and 14 Italian Torah wimple, Musée Cluny in Paris

4. TORAH WIMPEL

To keep both parts of the scrolls together and protect them against dust, they are wrapped with a ribbon, oftentimes also with two ribbons.

In Italy, one frequently finds two ribbons; the lower one is from single-colored silk, plain, and completely covers the parchment; wrapped on top is a ribbon abundantly embroidered with arabesques and flowers or equipped with openwork lacework. In Italian Torah scrolls, the script (Fig. 13 and 14) emerges very unassumingly next to the elaborate ornamental, yet rarely figural, decoration.

In Germany and as far as the Polish rite is in use, the script is the main thing, and it is accompanied by symbolic or figural, though usually not artistic, depictions. These sashes, called

wimpel, are brought by boys on their first visit to the synagogue to wrap them around the Torah scroll. This wimpel is inscribed in decorated Hebrew script with the boy's and his father's name, year and day of birth, and the in almost all cases identical blessing: "May he be raised in the paths of the Torah and be escorted to the wedding canopy and good deeds." Among the decorated letters of the script, there are frequently images such as of the reader holding the Torah scroll, the canopy (chuppah) with the couple beneath, a man donating to the poor, the blessing hands or the washing basins if the father is a "Cohen," a zodiac sign referring to the day of birth, flowers, and such.

While Italian Torah sashes usually consist of a single ribbon, the four stripes of the German Torah sash from linen diapers are sewn together or crocheted along the width.

The oldest extant Italian wimpels are from the late 15th, the oldest German ones from the early 16th century. It was customary to keep these wimpels at the synagogue. In some places, e.g., in Worms, several hundred pieces are kept and have evolved into a civil registry thanks to thorough organization.

The oldest pieces are artistically the most beautiful ones; they are meticulously embroidered along a precise drawing; later on, in the 17th and 18th century, they were embroidered in a more cursory manner; then they were no longer embroidered but colorfully painted, and eventually only the fabric was inscribed with ink.

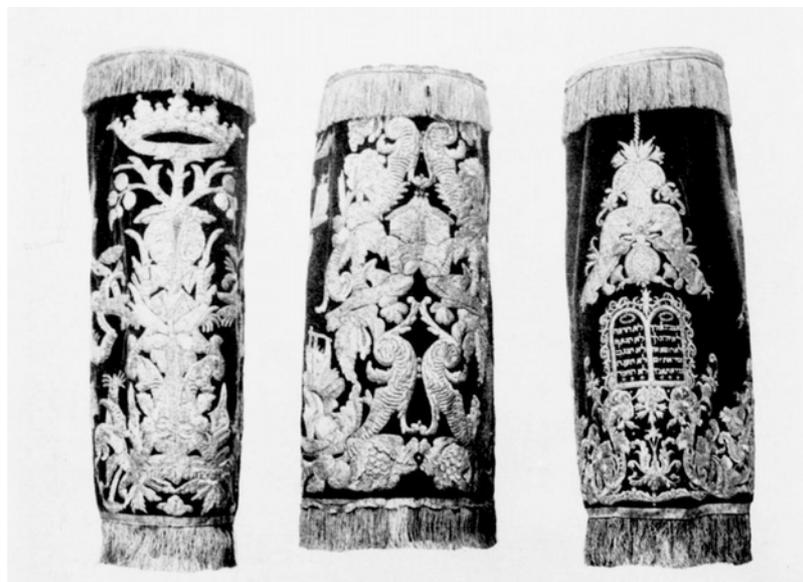


Fig. 16, 17, and 18 Three Torah mantles. Synagogue in Padua

5. TORAH MANTLE

The Torah scroll wrapped in the wimpel is covered with the Torah mantle, called mappah.

It consists of silk or velvet and has two parts; the headpiece with two holes through which the tops of the two rods, on which the ends of the Torah scroll are affixed, are inserted and the mantle, open or closed in the back, covering the scroll.

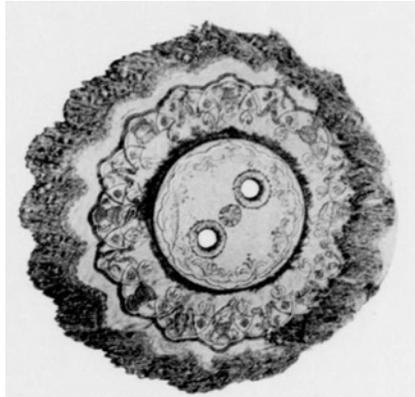


Fig. 15 Headpiece of a Torah mantle. Synagogue in Rome

The flat headpiece stiffened with pasteboard (Fig. 15) usually features only ornamental decoration and fringes that appear also on the mantle's edgings.

By contrast, the mantles are usually abundantly decorated. While the most ancient (16th c.) feature very thoroughly executed yet modest flat embroidery, pieces from the 17th and 18th century usually display a splendid or crude relief embroidery from silver- and gold threads on cotton. In the 19th century, the flatter goldwork embroidery is more often in use. As a complement, pearls, colorful stones, sometimes precious stones are added. In silken mantles, the effects of the multicolored brocade patterns are brought to bear, in the velvet mantles either hardly any unembroidered place is left, or there are embroidered stripes broadening toward the bottom with unembroidered fabric stripes in-between; often, there is a broad embroidery with leaves and tendrils in front, in-between Hebrew script, crowns, Tablets of the Covenant, lions, emblems, the multicolored breastplate of the high priest, utensils from the Jerusalem Temple; even a Torah scroll complete with adornment was embroidered on the front of the Torah mantle (Fig. 16, 17, 18).

Large synagogues own numerous mantles in various colors, like the Torah curtains used for certain festivals. Numerous and highly valuable pieces are still extant that follow in their pattern contemporary style, unfortunately, objects from the Middle Ages are no longer extant, apparently a consequence of the vandalism to which everything belonging to a synagogue fell prey.



Fig. 20 Rimonim. Synagogue in Padua
Fig. 21 Rimonim. Synagogue in Padua

6. RIMONIM

Mounted on the wooden tops of the rods at the Torah scroll's ends, called Etz Hayim (English Tree of Life), is a peculiar pair of silver decorations for the Torah scroll called rimonim (English pomegranates). They are already mentioned by Maimonides, but the pieces known to me so far are from the 16th century and are not in the shape of pomegranates. It seems, this shape was retrieved only in the 18th century (Fig. 19). Frequently there are tower-like shapes. Above a cylindrical, smooth, molded or pressed or foliage-chased foot that hemispherically widens upward is an openwork cylindrical, oblong or differently shaped hollow vessel decorated with balustrades, alcoves, and such (Fig. 20 and 21) that tapers to the top and ends in a tip. Sometimes it ends in chased flowers or a vase with flowers. Small bells or drop-shaped bells on chains ring while the Torah scroll they adorn is carried around.



Fig. 19 Rimonim. Synagogue in Ichenhausen

Despite the similarities of their main shapes, the rimonim have turned out to be a Torah decoration enabling the goldsmith to showcase his creativity. Not only in the use of special motifs suitable here, but also technically, there is plenty of variety. Chased, cast, repoussé works, variously colored gilding, opaque and translucent glaze, filigree work in connection with pearls and precious stones provide these rimonim with a great variety thus endowing a wealthy synagogue's open Torah ark (No. 1 Fig. 14) with a festive appearance.



Fig. 22 Crown. Musée Cluny

7. CROWN

In many places, particularly in Italy, a silver crown, *keter* in Hebrew, is placed over the two *rimonim*.

In some places the wooden tips are coated with copper or sheet silver, but otherwise kept simple. The crown is directly mounted, sometimes alone, on the wooden tips (Fig. 22). Usually, however, crown and *rimonim* are jointly applied, in which case, the *rimonim* overtower the crown (No. 1 Fig.12). In Casale Monferrato there are even three crowns, one on top of the other (No. 1 Fig.11).

The crowns, of which many are still extant in Southern Germany and Italy, usually feature 1 to 3 narrow cylindrical bordures with arabesques or a dedicatory inscription. The finial usually features abundant repoussé work showing festoons, arabesques, flowers, or emblems according to the tastes of the period. In their measurements, in their shape, in their structure, in their layout, in their ornamental motifs, but also regarding technique, there is no great variety in the extant crowns manufactured between 1650 until 1770.

6. TAS

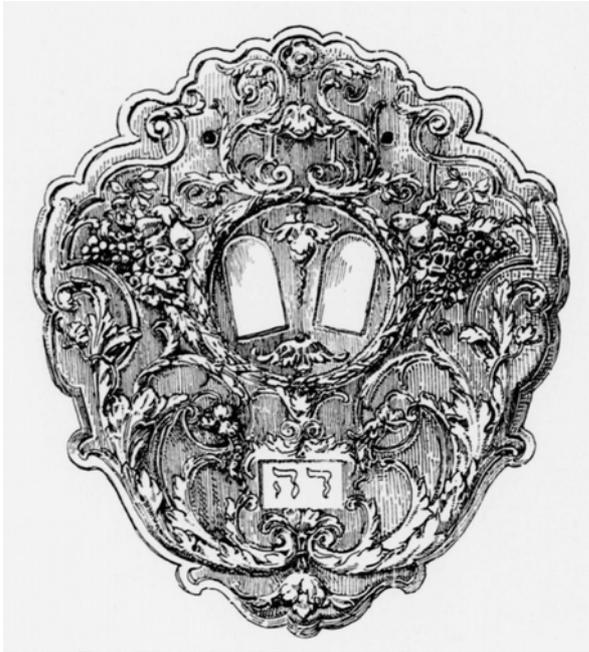


Fig. 23 Tas from silver. Musée Cluny. Drawing by C. Geyer

Fig. 24 Tas from silver. Synagogue in Friedberg in Hesse. Drawing by H. Kratz

Also part of the Torah's decoration is the shield, Tas in Hebrew, which almost always is made from silver. It is held by a silver chain and covers the center of the Torah mantle, which is usually embroidered with emblems.

Many tas are extant, with the most ancient being from the 17th century. The earliest pieces are rectangular, but longer than wide; then come the rectangular ones that are higher than wide, later on, the upper narrow side has a semicircular protrusion, then are egg-shaped plates and various other basic shapes with edges bent straight, serrated or lobe-shaped edges.



Fig. 25 Tas from silver. Synagogue in Ichenhausen. Drawing by Albert Hochreiter

Usually they are repoussé work from thin sheet silver (Fig. 23) or made in openwork and decorated with tendrils, flowers, soldered-on figures, angels, small angel heads, lions (Fig. 24), stags, small columns, crowns, grapes, Tablets of the Law, themselves decorated with alcoves imitating the interior of a Torah ark. It is not uncommon for an Italian tas to look like part of a crown. Many display, behind an insertion at the center, up to seven small rectangular silver plates, at times with beautifully decorated Hebrew script (Fig. 25), which indicate the festivals and can be changed. Small bells are frequently hanging from the lower edges.

7. THE POINTER

Hanging on a chain from the upper ends of the tips of the breastplate, more rarely from a hook on the breastplate, is the pointer, yad in Hebrew. The yad serves for following the text while reading from the Torah scrolls since its letters should be protected and not touched by hand. The handle of this silver rod has undergone various designs. Sometimes it is round, then twisted, also rectangular; once short and thick, another time long and thin; sometimes massive, sometimes hollow, smooth or openwork; frequently it ends in a sphere from semi-precious stone, agate, jasper, etc. set in silver or silver filigree with a small hook for the chain.

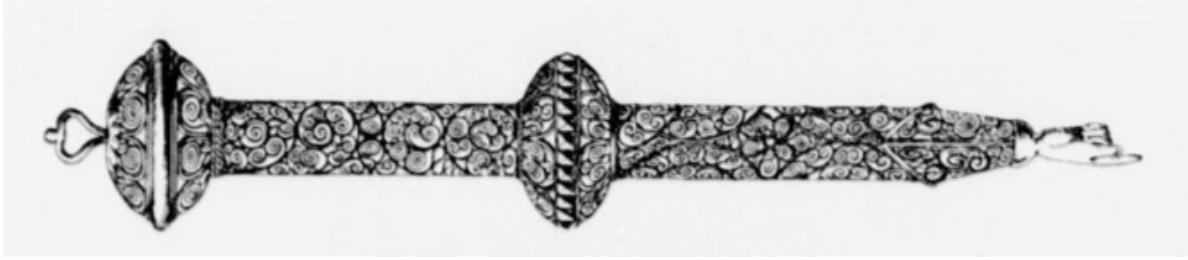


Fig. 26 Pointer from silver filigree. Bavarian National Museum in Munich. Drawing by Albert Hochreiter
Fig. 27 Pointer from silver. London. Drawing by Viefers

In shaping the lower part of the pointer, the goldsmith would usually keep to the original meaning of the term “yad”—hand. Rarely does it assume the shape of an arm, in this case, an inscription is frequently on its cuff; most of the time, the handle directly transitions into a hand with a pointed or bent index finger that is adorned with a ring or a precious stone. In Rome there are also pointers in the form of a palm branch or those that look more like a palm branch than a hand.



Fig. 28 Reader's stand from a synagogue in Modena. Musée Cluny.



Fig. 29 Reader's stand from the synagogue in Worms. Drawing by Albert Hochreiter.



Fig. 30 Reader's stand from a manuscript at the British Museum in London.

Sometimes in a metal handle, too, there is an arm from ivory, coral, or amber. This trinket has inspired artists and goldsmiths to create the most delicate designs since numerous beautiful pieces are extant. Engraving, etching, damascening, enamel, niello, filigree (Fig. 26), variously colored plating, use of various carveable raw materials, cast, chasing (Fig. 27), adornment with pearls and precious stones were all able to bring about an attractive work of art.

The Torah scroll together with the Torah wimpel, the Torah mantle, the rimonim, the crown, the breastplate, and the pointer constitute the most important part of the ritual objects in a synagogue. Yet, how remote we still are from describing these objects' historical development can already be seen in the fact that so far no piece is known to us that can be dated with any certainty to the Middle Ages.

8. THE HAZZAN'S STAND, THE READER'S STAND, AND THE ENCLOSURE

The oldest still extant reader's stand is from the old, long since demolished synagogue in Modena, where it used to be together with the above-mentioned Torah ark (Fig. 28). The front

wall of this wooden stand has six panels with carved late Gothic rosettes. Probably, this object was manufactured around 1505 as well.

From the 17th century is the stone foundation of the reader's stand in Worms (Fig. 29) topped with a wooden board.

Other materials than wood or stone were not used in the manufacture of the hazzan's stand and the reader's stand. Both of them are usually kept quite simple; a bit of carving or inlay with variously colored timbers can be found. By contrast, there is great variety in the design of the enclosure.

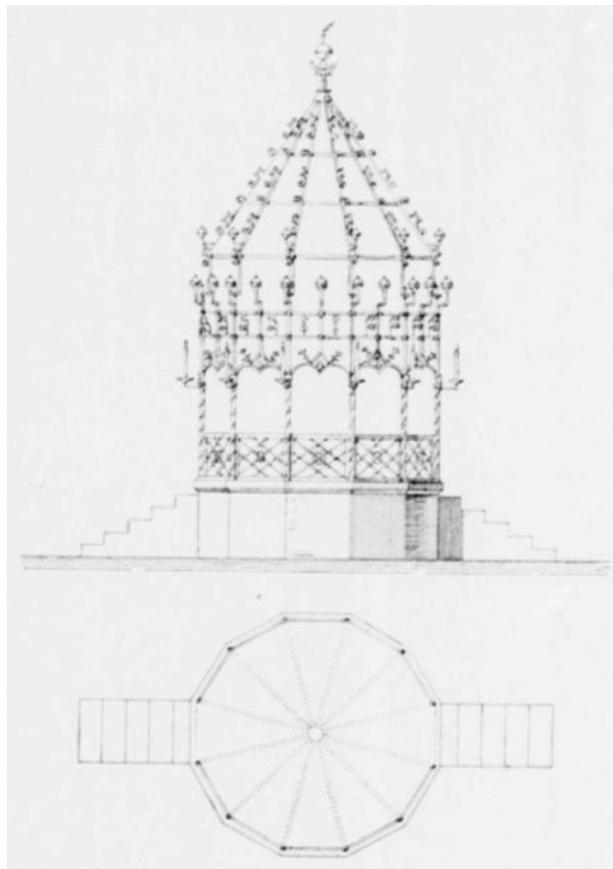


Fig. 31 Wrought-iron almemor of the old synagogue a.d. Casimir near Cracow. After a drawing by Essenwein.

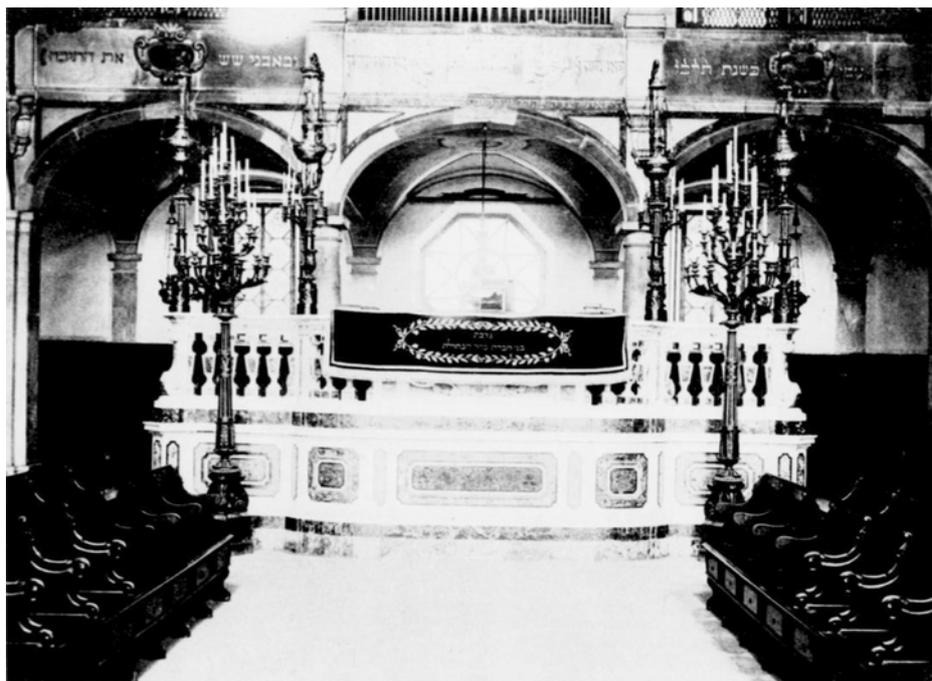


Fig. 32 Almemor from marble from the synagogue in Livorno.

The enclosure, in which the reader's stand is located, is square, rectangular but also round or oval. Almost always raised by a podium, oftentimes two or three steps lead to its platform; in the Orient, sometimes up to twelve. In the square enclosure's interior are the reader's stand and several coffer-like benches for those who participate in the reading, the Torah scrolls' dressing and undressing, and carrying around. Usually there are staircases on two sides, as for the rest, there is a surrounding balustrade with carved or delicately lathed, oftentimes also painted rods or balusters; at the four corners are high poles held together on top by transverse rods. They might have served as support for an embroidered canopy cover. Various enclosures of this kind are shown in No. 1 Fig. 2; No. 2 Fig. 29, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40.

As further examples can be mentioned an early Gothic enclosure from wood on marble columns in a 15th-century manuscript at the British Museum (Fig. 30), the wrought-iron enclosure from the 16th century from Casimir near Cracow (Fig. 31), and the precious enclosure from colored marble from the synagogue in Livorno (Fig. 32).

9. THE READER'S STAND COVER

The stand is covered with a cover from silk and velvet, usually with precious embroidery. The cover is either the size of the stand or as wide as the stand with long ends hanging down on both sides or only wide enough so that the Torah scroll placed on it will not jut out. There is no fixed norm, neither temporal nor local. One might be inclined to state that in Germany, square covers

can be found more frequently while in Italy overhanging narrow covers are more common; in several synagogues there are many, such as in Rome. Suitable quotes, the donor's emblem and dedication are embroidered in gold and silver (Fig. 33 a and b); or a fictitious, fantastical depiction of the city of Jerusalem or its Temple is given in some embroidery technique, also Mount Sinai with the Tablets of the Law can be seen or the holy vessels and utensils in charming string ornament.

These elaborately decorated covers served also other purposes. They were used as curtains in the synagogue, as décor in the sukkah, in Rome itself in earlier times as decoration of the streets where the Jews in the States of the Church payed homage to the new pope.



Fig. 33 a and b. Reader's stand cover from the synagogue in Rome



Fig. 34 Eternal Light from a synagogue in Strasbourg. Drawing by El. Wildt

10. THE ETERNAL LIGHT

In front of the Torah ark, the so-called Eternal Light is burning. The light issues from a burner of a simple oil-filled green or colorless glass. The glass carrier is almost always artistically designed. The lamp containing the glass is hanging from one or more delicate chains that are divided by chased, openwork, or colorful knobs (Fig. 34). Material, shape, and decoration are varied. In the earliest times, they were from gold, in the Orient in the Middle Ages from enameled glass (comp. Fig. 30), later from silver- or gold-plated copper, also from silver. One can find vase-shaped, hanging, rectangular, hexagonal, and octagonal shapes, in short, any contemporary type of decoration.

Like in the Orient where from a chain, which stretches in front of the Torah ark, several continuously burning oil lamps are suspended, also in wealthier old synagogues in the Occident, there are sometimes several abundantly decorated lamps with the Eternal Light (comp. No. 2 Fig. 41). However, each vessel contains just one light.

There is no definitive rule. At all times, artists have made use of the freedom to choose the basic material, design, and decoration.

10. THE LIGHT FOR THE DECEASED

In commemoration of the deceased, their relatives oftentimes light one or several wax candles, which burn at the synagogue during service.

The vessels in which the candles are placed greatly vary; also the place where they are positioned changes. Sometimes, simple candle holders are attached in certain intervals to a parapet surrounding the synagogue (No. 2 Fig. 33), sometimes wall lamps are affixed for this purpose in suitable interstices of the synagogue walls, such as the objects in No. 2 Fig. 31 that are adorned with lustrous oval brass plates; sometimes, a round, wrought-iron stand built to hold a large number of candles is placed next to the entrance or in the middle of a longitudinal wall of the synagogue.

Most frequently though, one finds an artfully designed wrought-iron rack placed for this purpose to the left of the Torah ark. Fig. 35 shows a simple example of this kind.

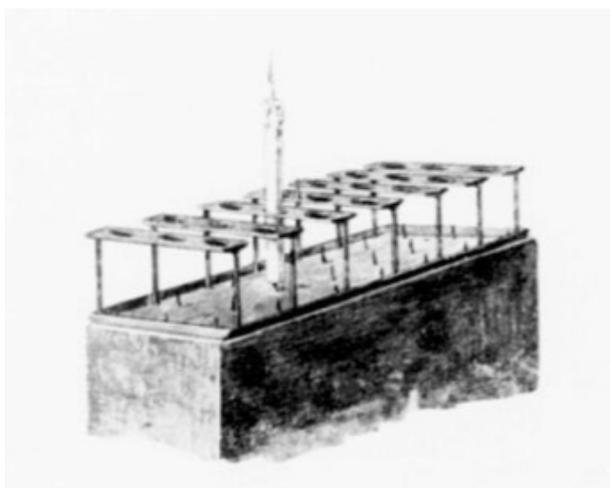


Fig. 35 Light for the deceased. Synagogue in Bechhofen, Drawing by Albert Hochreiter.



Fig. 36 Signet with seven-branched lamp, 7th century. Original in the ownership of Baron Edmonde Rothschild in Paris.

11. HANNUKAH LAMP AND COVER ON WHICH IT IS PLACED

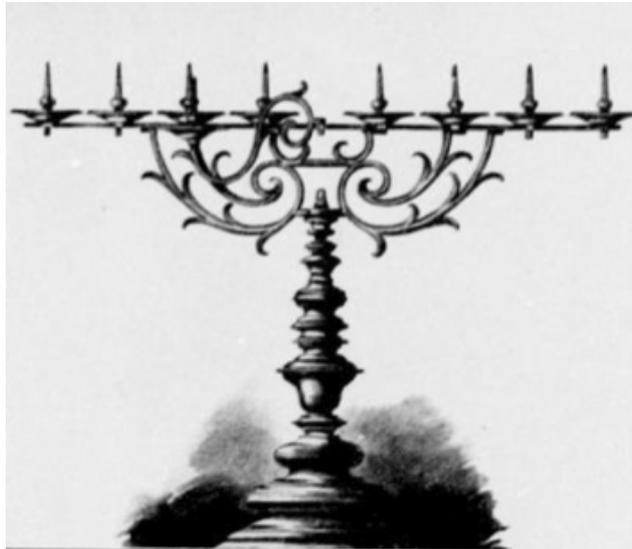


Fig. 37 Hannukah lamp from yellow brass. Drawing by Albert Hochreiter.



Fig. 38 Hannukah lamp from yellow brass. Synagogue in Cleve. Drawing by Albert Hochreiter.

Placed to the right of the Torah ark is the Hannukah lamp usually used during the Feast of Dedication. On the gold sandwich glasses from the Hebrew catacombs in Rome (comp. Fig. 1-4), on the signet allegedly from the 7th century in the ownership of Baron Edmund Rothschild in Paris (Fig. 36), on parchment paintings from the 12th century, it still appears with seven branches. The extant objects, the most ancient is from the 16th century, have eight and more branches and in addition a slightly raised or specially shaped branch, the so-called servant, Hebrew shamash. Hannukah lamps rarely have oil lamps, usually they are equipped for wax candles or gas, most recently also for electrical light. Generally, they are from yellow brass, neatly twisted or cast. Fig. 37 provides an example of a simple Hannukah lamp with nice proportions; abundant is Fig. 38 with hands, jutting out from the stem, that hold the branches; a very delicate work is the lamp depicted in Fig. 39 from the synagogue in Padua; the foot, the stem ending in the “servant” and the eight branches, four coming out symmetrically from each side, are abundantly chiseled, the arms are adorned with lovely small leaves. Entirely differently designed is the Hannukah lamp from Pogrobyszcze, Fig. 40.



Fig. 39 Hannukah lamp from yellow brass. Synagogue in Padua.

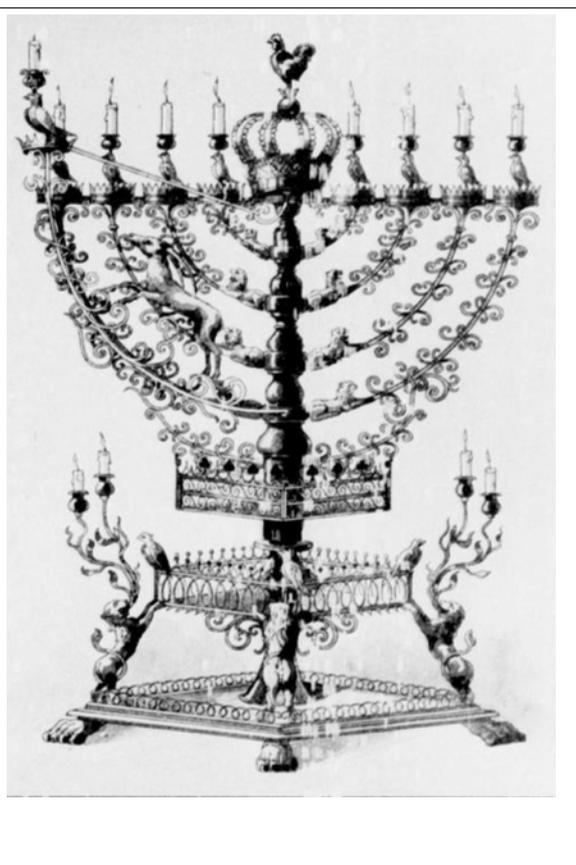


Fig. 40 Hannukah lamp from yellow brass. Synagogue in Pogrobyszcze. Drawing by Mathias Bersohn in Warsaw.

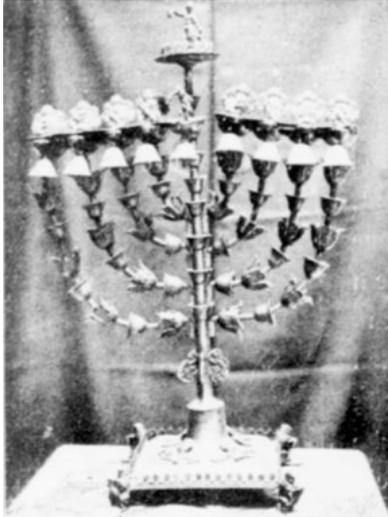


Fig. 41 Hannukah lamp from silver. Original in the ownership of Georg Speyer in Frankfurt am Main.



Fig. 42 Detail from the above.



Fig. 44 Medieval Hannukah lamp. Collection Dr. Albert Figdor, Vienna.

A rhombic plate resting on four lion's paws, from whose center the stem ascends, which ends in a large openwork crown with a rooster on top. At the plate's four corners are lions rampant carrying with their forefeet an openwork lattice mounted on a rhombic plate, on which a bird is sitting on each of the four corners. Two of the lions have a two-branched lamp in their jaws. A third openwork lattice on a rhombic plate surrounds the stem. Four branches on each side, starting with sitting lions and ending with light-carrying birds standing in crowns, are equipped with candles required for the eight days of the festival. The movable servant does not feature a sitting lion, instead a large jumping ram. Most of these so very diverse Hannukah lamps are from yellow brass, few from bronze, iron, or even silver. Since they were usually donated to the synagogue, dedicatory inscriptions with the donation year are not uncommon. These inscriptions show that early shapes were used over a long time; many a Hannukah lamp is from the 18th century, which according to appearance and decoration, one might have dated to the 16th century.

While the foot may be round, rhombic or otherwise, the branches usually expand flatly in only one direction. In Polish synagogues, round Hannukah lamps with multiple flames seem to have been in not infrequent use.

It is the rule that the Hannukah lamp on a base from wood, stone, or wrought iron stands to the right of the Torah ark. In exceptional cases, it is also affixed on a parapet at the center in front of the Torah ark during the Hannukah feast.

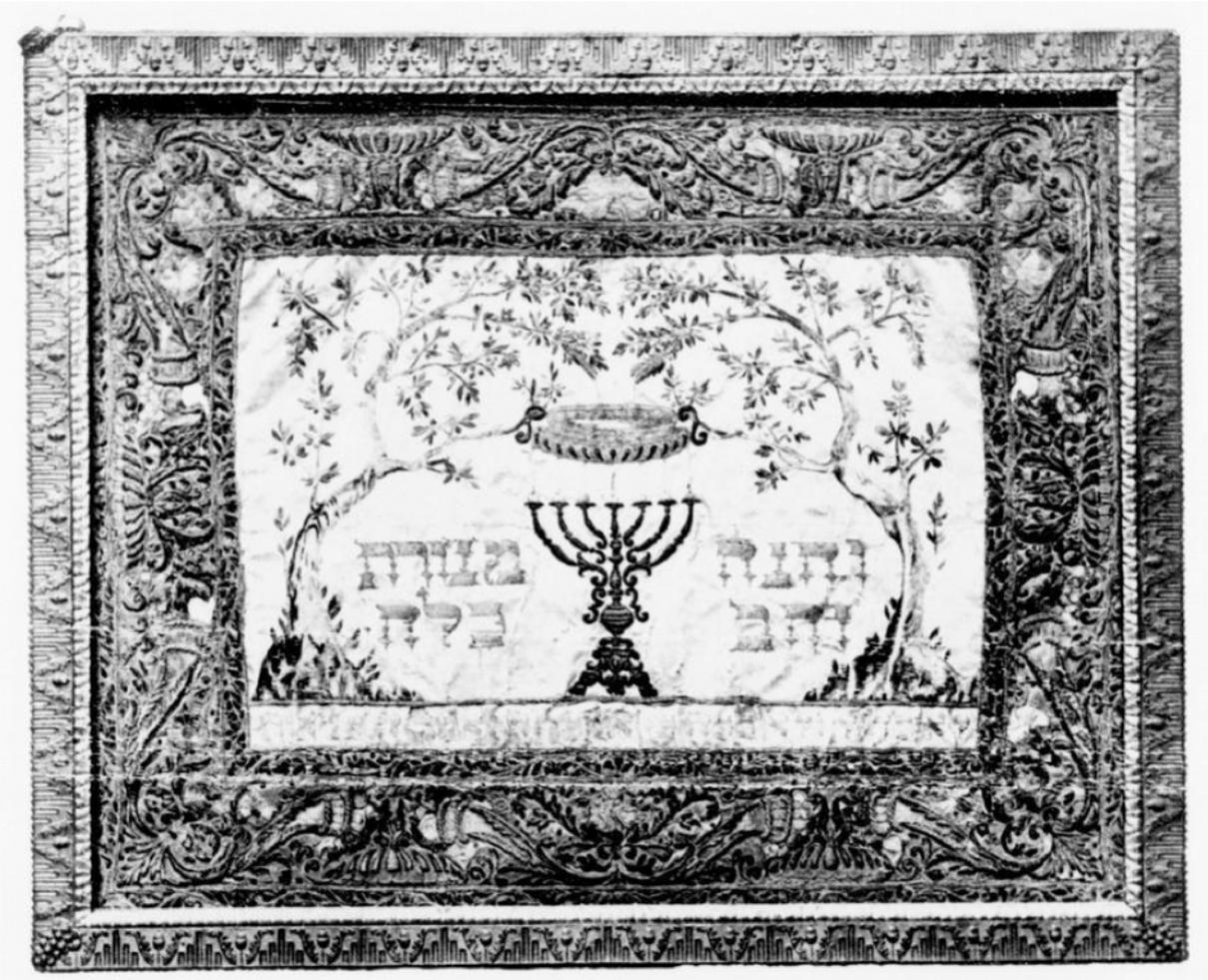


Fig. 43 Cover for the Hannukah lamp. Synagogue in Padua.

For the Hannukah celebration at home, wealthy families have a delicately and abundantly decorated Hannukah lamp, which also otherwise makes for a beautiful silver decoration in the room. Usually, such lamps have a solid foot, mostly square-shaped, eight branches, and the branch for the servant; the middle column is slightly higher than the branches and is usually topped by a small cast figure. There is a great variety to be seen among those still extant. Many are evidence of artists having designed it and superb, broadly skilled hands-on goldsmiths having executed it. A beautiful example is shown in Fig. 41 and the detail in Fig. 42; this is the Hannukah lamp owned by the widow of Georg Speyer in Frankfurt am Main.

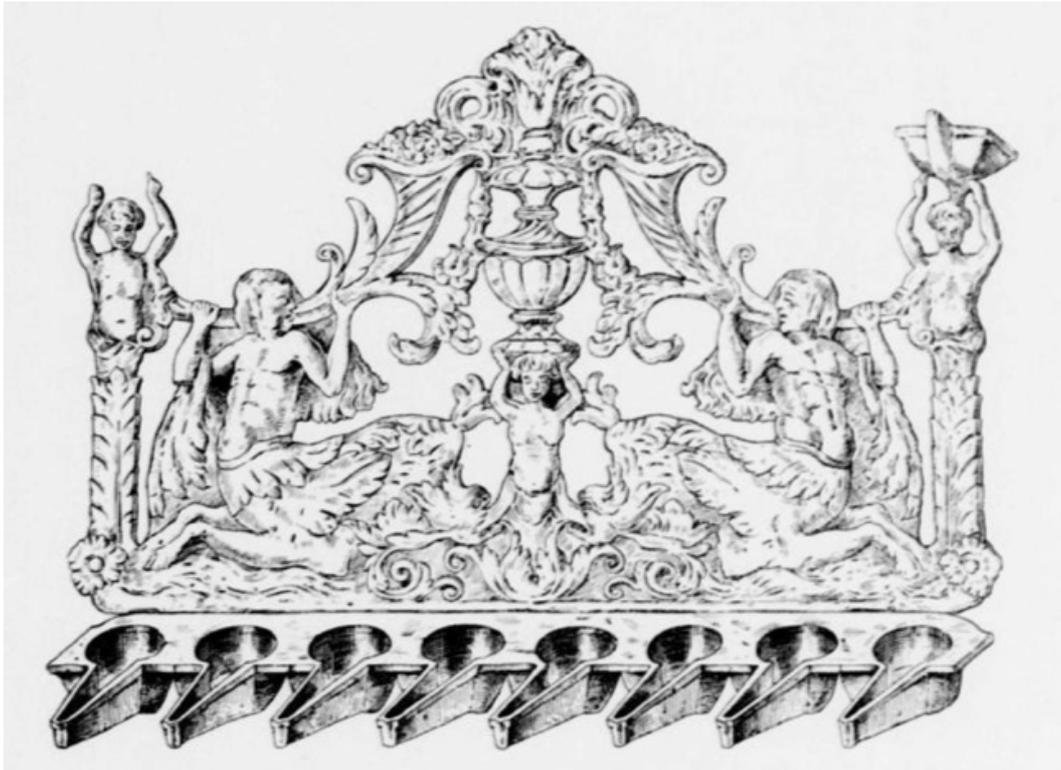


Fig. 45 Italian Hannukah lamp. Museo civico Turin. Drawing by Albert Hochreiter.

In noble Israelite homes, the cover on which it stands is at times artistically embroidered with emblems and quotes referring to the Hannukah feast. Fig. 43 gives an idea of how such covers look; it depicts a cover that is spread out beneath the Hannukah lamp in a synagogue in Padua.

One very important object for our work is the small Hannukah lamp since numerous highly artistically designed pieces of this kind exist. This is a lamp, usually with oil lights and only in recent times equipped for candle light, for eight to ten flames apart from the servant's flame.

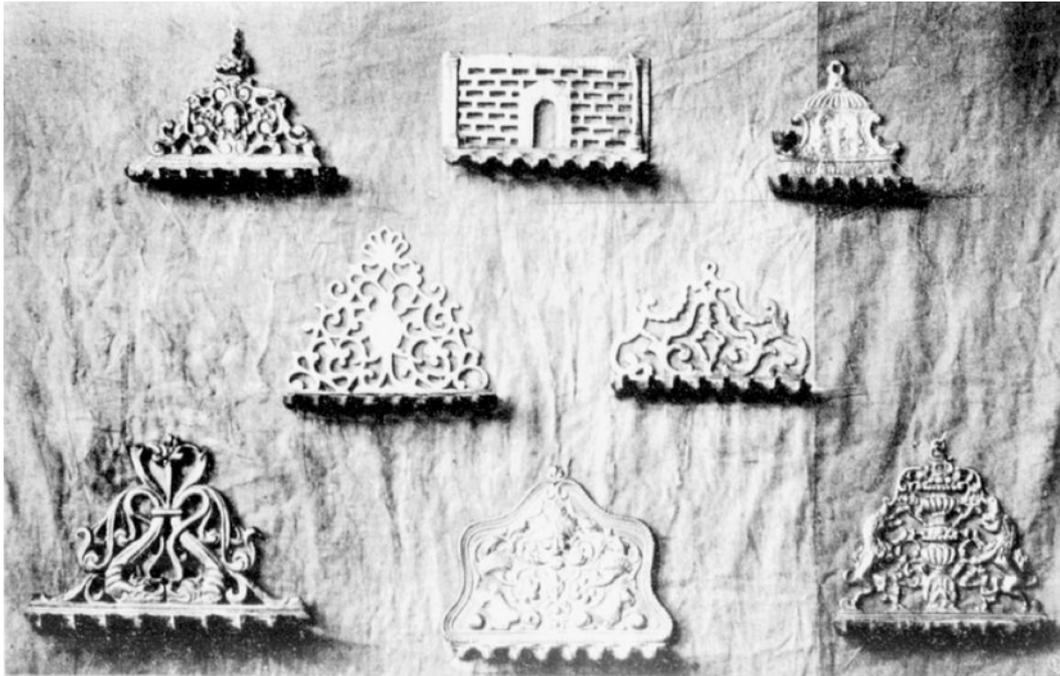


Fig. 46 to 53 Italian Hannukah lamps. Cavaliere Guggenheim, Venice.

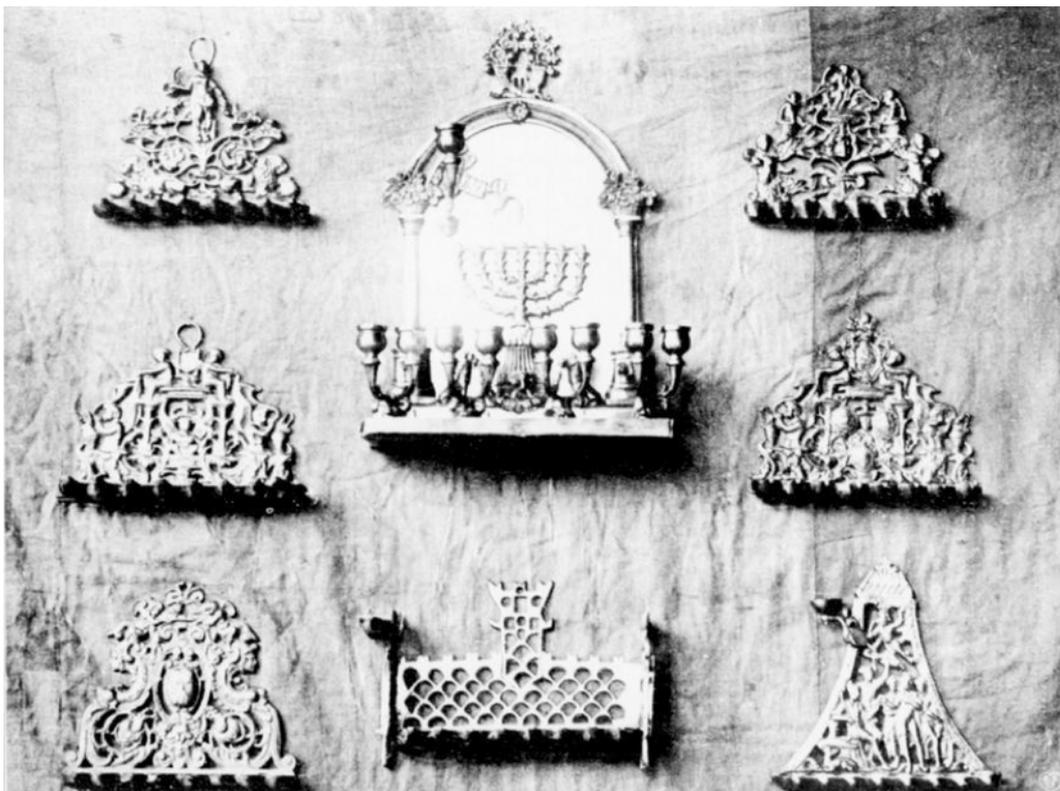


Fig. 54 to 61 Italian Hannukah lamps. Cavaliere Guggenheim, Venice.



Fig. 62 and 63 Kiddush cups. Musée Cluny, Paris.



Fig. 64 Kiddush cup 18th century. Drawing by Viefers.

Fig. 64 Kiddush cup 19th century. Privy councilor von Wilmersdörffer in Munich. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter

Fig. 66 Kiddush cup 18th century. Drawing by Viefers.

Examples of these objects are extant that undoubtedly originate in the Middle Ages, such as Fig. 44 (from the possessions of Dr. Albert Figdor in Vienna) with eight flames and the servant, a row of columns with arches, above with a Hebrew inscription referring to the light, flanked by two lions, and with three medallions in the triangle above.

Similar medieval pieces are in the Straus Collection at the Musée Cluny in Paris, at the museum of the “*Gesellschaft zur Konservierung jüdischer Altertümer*“ in Vienna, and elsewhere in English and German private ownership. Shape and design proved to be so popular that it was maintained over centuries as can be discerned in pieces that show the Hebrew script within a Rococo border while everything else has Early Gothic character.

Overall, the triangular shape is popular also in the variously designed later Italian objects of this kind. The decorative motifs show great variety, arabesques, mascarons, light-bearing figures, angel heads, crown-bearing lions, sitting and upright lions, dolphins, fantastical figures, heraldic shields, depictions of a burnt offering, depiction of Noah, Moses, and Aaron on the seven-branched lamp, the Judgement of Solomon (as enlightenment of the spirit), and a thousand other things were affixed to this important and widely used object by artists from the 16th, 17th, and 18th century; that way, it becomes a treasure trove of already processed motifs that can be applied in other Jewish objects as well.

In most cases, these small lamps feature a loop and a smooth back plate to mount them on a wall; some have the shape of a Torah ark.

The majority of the extant objects are from yellow brass or brass or bronze. Yet, there are also numerous pieces cast, chased, or pressed from silver. Small Hannukah lamps from clay, porcelain, or glass are rarer; extremely rare are those from gold or red copper, the most ordinary ones are from sheet metal so that in Jewish parlance, the entire category is called “Hannukah iron.” Figures 45 to 61 show examples of the various models of smaller Hannukah lamps.



Fig. 67 Besamim box. Musée Cluny, Paris.



Fig. 68 Besamim box. Musée Cluny, Paris.

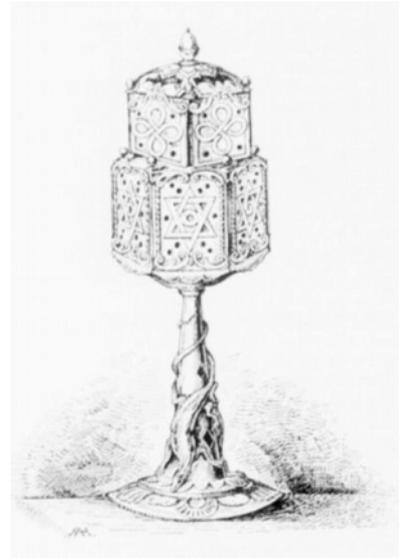


Fig. 69 Besamim box. Synagogue in Ancona. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter.



Fig. 70 Besamim boxes. Musée Cluny, Paris.



Fig. 71 Besamim boxes. Szegedin.

12. CHANDELIERS, CANDELABRUMS, AND SCONCES

For festivities, synagogues were always brightly lit. To this day, wealthy synagogues still have great numbers of abundantly decorated chandeliers cast from yellow brass and beautiful, twisted candelabrum, as can be seen in No. 1 Fig. 23, 31, 33, 39, 40, 41. Chandeliers made from wrought iron or Bohemian or Venetian glass and sconces made from yellow brass or brass are rare.

There is great variety in shape, decoration, and number of branches. Only rarely do decorative motifs or a Hebrew dedication indicate their designation for a synagogue, in most cases these are chandeliers and sconces that could equally be or were used for other purposes, in a vestibule, hall, or church.

Only the large number of chandeliers suspended from the ceiling remains distinctive for synagogues; in churches, only the Eternal Light is usually suspended from the ceiling.

Similar lamps, but smaller scaled, one also finds in the Jewish home.

13. KIDDUSH CUPS

Drinking cups for the Shabbat celebration are in all synagogues. They are made from serpentine (Fig. 62 and 63), cut, engraved, decorated with a depiction of Jerusalem or the Temple, or from silver; very rare are golden cups or goblets. Delicately shaped drinking cups for the wine, which is drunk after saying the blessing—kiddush— at Shabbat entry or on holidays, have been common in private homes; a Hebrew inscription or a chased figural representation indicated their purpose. Unfortunately, old samples are very rare; they were melted down in times of need. One can still find, however, many silver-gilt cups with embossed flowers and fruits from the 17th century or more recent imitations without any special signs. Fig. 64 shows a cup from the 17th century, Fig. 65 a cup from the 18th century; both with foot. Fig. 66 shows a cup without foot with rolled up ornaments from the 19th century.



Fig. 72 Besamim box in pear shape. In private ownership.



Fig. 73 Besamim box, German, 16th century. Collection Sally Fürth, Mainz. Drawing by J. Lasius

14. THE SPICE BOX

A commonly used utensil at Shabbat end is the spice box. In the simplest examples, this is a container from pewter with four compartments, covered with a lid or in the shape of a drawer with four compartments for four different spices.

Already early on, a shape became popular that looked like a little tower. Since these spices are called in Hebrew “besamim,” one frequently hears in Jewish circles the expression “besomim tower” (or “psum box”).

An item in the Straus Collection from the 18th century (Fig.67) is probably modeled in its upper part after an original from the Romanesque style period. Another one (Fig. 68) from the 17th century is the imitation of a Gothic piece. Fig. 69 is a beautiful original from the 16th century from the synagogue in Ancona. The object with silver filigree and inlaid enamel and rhinestones is from the 18th century (Fig. 70), and the object in Fig. 71, tall and in its proportions not perfectly slender with disproportionately large flags on the sides, is from the 19th century.

In many cases, these little towers are related to the rimonim produced at the same time.

Among the frequently occurring shapes are besamim boxes in the form of fruits (Fig. 72). From a wider, differently designed foot ascends a branch with a fruit (quince, pear, apple) among leaves, which can be twisted off easily to be filled with spices and which emits via small openings a pleasant aroma. Pieces symbolically arranged and in good taste belonging in this group are extant.

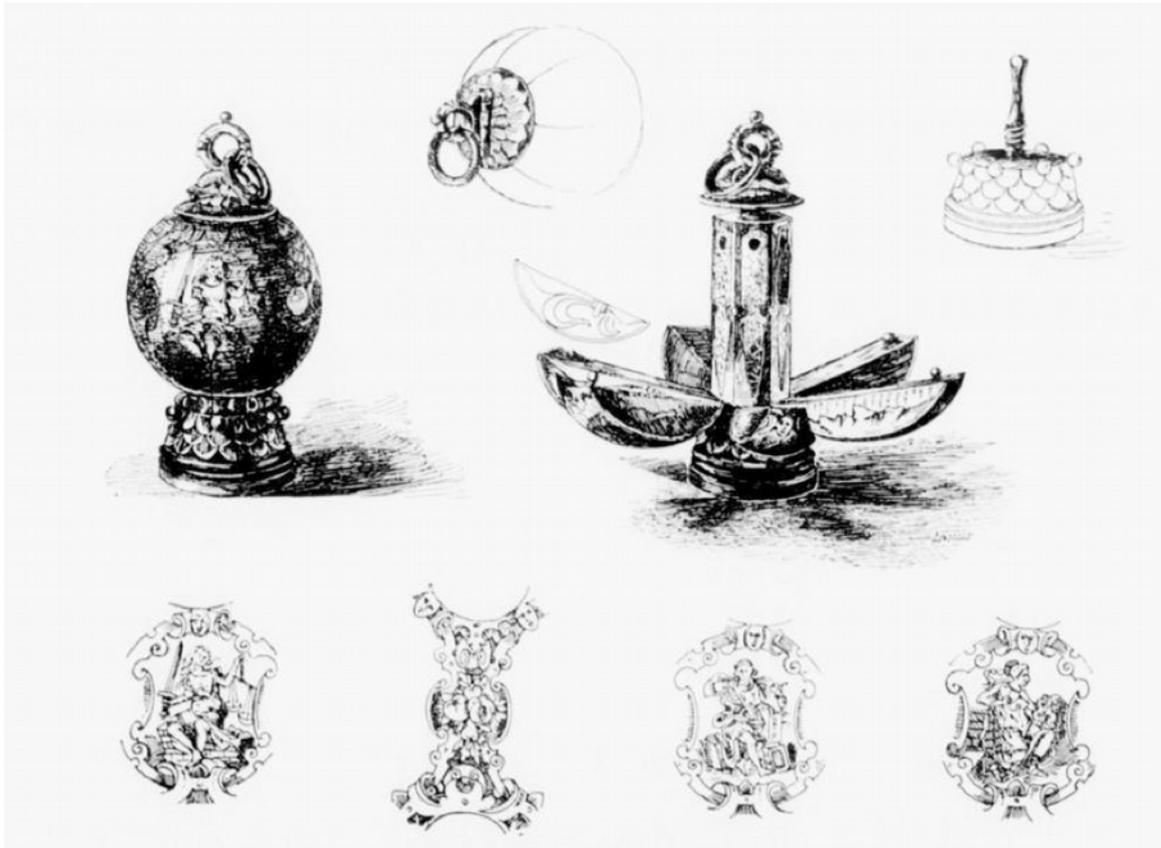


Fig. 74 Besamim boxes, German, 16th century. Collection Sally Fürth, Mainz. Drawing by J. Lasius.

Many families have also small spice boxes from silver with varied lid decoration; there are three-dimensional flowers, cut or cast or with openwork arabesques; or enamel; sometimes also boxes from ivory or gold with decoration appropriate to the material. Typical for these boxes are always the three or four interior compartments; rarely are there more compartments. Sometimes the names of the spices to be placed in the individual compartments are inscribed (negelen [Yiddish for cloves], anise, etc.). Fig. 73 shows a beautiful example from the 16th century in the outstanding silver collection of Mr. Saly Fürth in Mainz.



Fig. 75 to 79 Besamim boxes, silver, German, 17th to 18th centur, private owners.

Fig. 80 Wash pan and jug. Historisches Museum Frankfurt.

A box as represented in Fig. 74 is very rare; it is an extremely interesting piece not only because of its overall shape, its decoration, but also because of its construction and arrangement of the six small spice containers. The actual spherical container rests on a round, slightly tapered foot and concludes with a rosette-like lid with clasped rings. The comparison of the utensil's main part with an orange seems to me appropriately chosen. Like the individual parts of an orange, also

here, the six small spice containers forming the body are arranged in a way so that they become a sphere when folded up.

The core of this sphere is a hexagonal, vertically upright prism; on its side, upon closing, each of the inward lying surfaces of the small spice containers with the button located here latches into the respective indentations of the center piece.

Here, the spice containers' side walls display as decoration alternating engravings of a mask as crescent moon and half of the French fleur-de-lis. These sides as well as the small surface leaning against the core, which constitutes the sliding lid with the spice name, are fire-gilt.

When folding up the individual parts toward the fixed core—which is enabled by the hinges on the lower edge—then by screwing down the concluding rosette—which is running on the upper end in vertical threads—it is possible to hold the body together through pressing down.

Rosette and foot display chased scale décor, which is pleasantly animated at the foot by small spheres that are arranged directly under the middle part of the smaller hinges so that they serve the folded down spice boxes as point of support. It should be mentioned here that at the foot, both the lowest plate as well as the foot itself can be unscrewed beneath the sphere's body. In the first case, one obtains a container, in the latter, an upright pin with a hammered spoon-like end; this small spoon serves to extract spice from the container.

The sphere's surface seems accomplished in its décor. It is adorned with three most delicately worked female figures whose position and attributes point to *Justitia*, *Fortitudo*, and *Temperantia*. The figures are characterized by abundant framing, hanging fruits individually depicted. The composition reminds of the Augsburg and Nuremberg master goldsmiths of the 16th century. It is not uncommon in the art trade to find quaint medallions or small boxes, sometimes in the shape of acorns, small apples, pears, oranges, sometimes in the shape of lidded vases, little lanterns, little bottles, or heart-shaped, from silver, with filigree, engraved, etched, chased, in enamel, which also feature three, four, or six interior compartments; these are *besamim* boxes worn by women as jewelry, allegedly by weak women on the so-called long day to get refreshed and invigorated by the aroma when the long fast becomes inconvenient. Fig. 75 to 79 show excellent German samples from the 17th century; there are numerous pieces in delicate shapes.

15. THE WASHING UTENSILS

Among a synagogue's inventory are also washing utensils for the hand washing of the *Cohanim* before saying the blessing. In many synagogues there are donations by wealthy Jews, precious silver-chased washing jugs and washing bowls and abundantly embroidered towels. Fig. 80 shows a simple washing utensil from pewter with Hebrew script on the plate.

16. THE CHAIR FOR THE RABBI AND THE PRAYER LEADER

In newer synagogues, chairs and benches lack any artistic value. In the past, chairs were connected to desks for the placement of prayer books and with compartments to hold the prayer shawls. In that case, the desks' sides were nicely cut, sometimes carved or painted.



Fig. 81 Circumcision chair. Synagogue in Rome.

In Italy, one has either on both sides of the Torah ark or on the almemor an elaborately designed chair for the rabbi, another one for the prayer leader. No. 2 Fig. 39 provides an image. No. 1 Fig. 16 shows a chair copiously decorated with carvings and colorful inlays for the rabbi.

Slightly more adorned than the rest are sometimes also the chairs of community members who participate in the removal, carrying around, raising, undressing, and dressing of the Torah scroll (comp. No. 2 Fig. 40).

17. THE CIRCUMCISION CHAIRS

In the past, it was not uncommon to perform circumcisions at the synagogue. While the utensils needed are usually owned by the mohel who performs the circumcision, the circumcision chairs are usually in synagogue ownership. Older samples have become very rare. More often, these are two-seat benches (bisellium) such as the beautiful example from the Siena synagogue at the *Königliches Kunstgewerbemuseum* in Berlin, sometimes two identical armchairs, one of which—Chair of Elijah—remains empty, the other serving the godfather during circumcision, sometimes a larger armchair and a lower chair without armrest, the former for the godfather, the latter for the mohel, or else, only a circumcision chair is used for the godfather despite being called “Throne of Elijah.” The synagogue in Worms owns a beautiful lathed circumcision chair with painting and script; the congregation in Rome owns a valuable upholstered, abundantly decorated circumcision chair in Empire style (Fig. 81). Inscription and theme of all images indicate the purpose of this piece of furniture.

18. THE CANOPY

Only in few synagogues can a canopy, chuppah in Hebrew, still be found. In many communities, it is owned by a private person who rents it out for weddings. It is a piece of fabric, square or rectangular, large enough to leave space beneath for the rabbi and the couple, held high by four rods that are sometimes nicely lathed or colorfully painted, crowned by knobs or vases or otherwise. In some synagogues rods are kept, onto which a carpet or a Torah curtain are tied on the occasion of a wedding.

The canopy of Husiatyn (Galicia), supported by four simple rods, displays a knotted carpet with the sign of David at the center (Fig. 82). Various forms are displayed in Fig. 83 to 88, which represent canopies embroidered on Torah wimpels (17th till 19th century). These examples could be greatly increased as oftentimes canopies were embroidered or painted on Torah wimpels; they are probably copied from an original and show many a useful motif such as the pomegranate, which can be used as symbol of fertility.

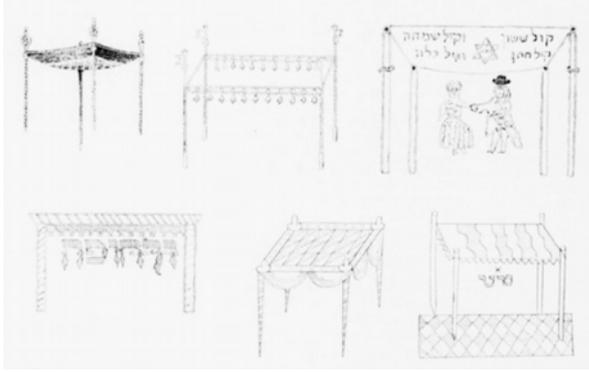


Fig. 83-88 Depictions of canopies on painted or embroidered wimpels. Drawing by R. Halenz.

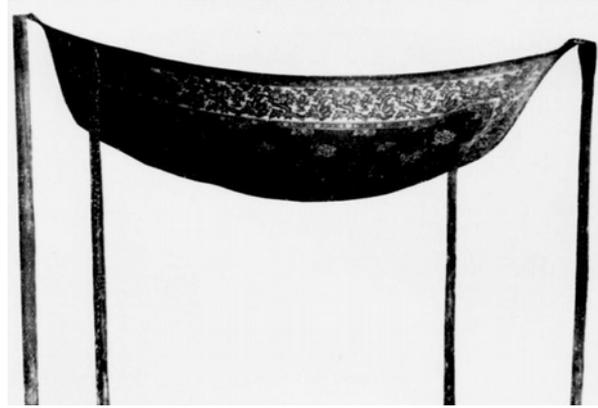


Fig. 82 Chuppah (canopy) in Husiatyn in Galicia.

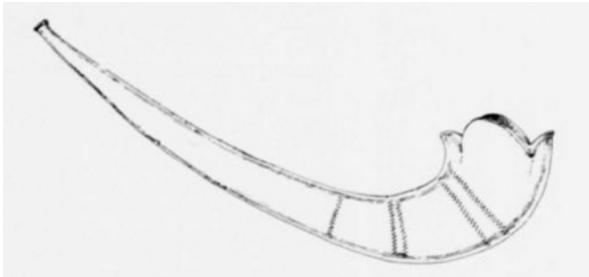


Fig. 89 Shofar from Germany. Private ownership. Drawing by Viefers.



Fig. 90 Shophar from India.

19. SHOFAR

On New Year's Day, the shofar, a ram's horn, is blown at the synagogue. Hence, the inventories of well-organized communities always contain several shofars.

This device is already mentioned in the Pentateuch. Depending on the country, horns of an ibex, ram, or other animals were chosen, yet, cattle horns must be excluded.

Most shofars are very simple; a lobed (Fig. 89) or jagged edge at the large opening and carved lines are the most modest decoration, or a devout quote, the dedication of the donor in Hebrew script. Sometimes on top and at the bottom, a comb is delicately carved out from the horn or the entire horn is engraved with arabesques or a twisted horn is etched with a surrounding ornament (Fig. 90). But there were also shofars with golden mouthpieces, painted shofars, and pieces fitted with silver.

The horns usually found in synagogues nowadays do not look as if artists had been involved in designing this device.

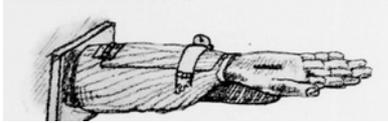


Fig. 91 Offering box at the synagogue Witzenhausen in Hesse. Drawing by Fritz Epstein in Kassel.

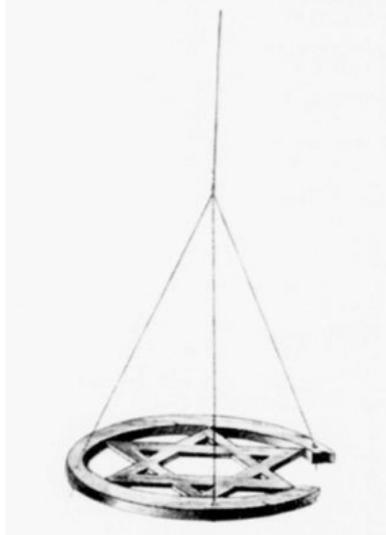


Fig. 94 Carrier of the Eruv matzoth. Synagogue in Bechhofen.

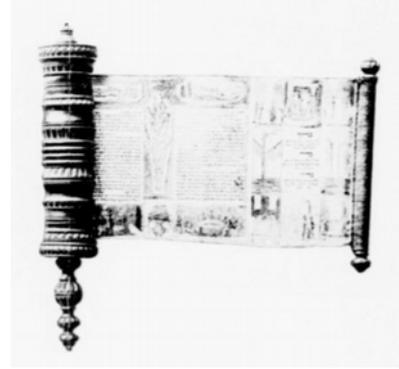


Fig. 95 Megillah, Italian, 17th century.



Fig. 96 Megillah, Oriental, in metal case. Drawing by Viefers.

20. OFFERING BOX

In Siena, but also in other synagogues, I saw quaintly shaped, artistically delightful offering boxes, which invite synagogue visitors to share their means with the poor. Quite drastic is the shape at the synagogue in Witzzenhausen in Hesse (Fig. 91, 92).

21. WASHING BASIN AND FOUNTAIN

A washing basin for hand cleansing from chased copper and with dedicatory inscription is not unusual at the entrance of a synagogue. In the court yard of the synagogue in Elizabethgrad in southern Russia is a round iron barrel with six water faucets. At the synagogue of Pesaro (Fig. 93) is a beautiful marble fountain.

22. CARRIER OF THE ERUV MATZAH

Above the entrance to the synagogue of Bechhofen, a round board decorated with the shield of David is suspended from three threads (Fig. 94); it holds the eruv, the matzah, which is acquired with community funds and indicates the community's cohesiveness. In Fürth it hangs from the almemor, in Worms, it is mounted in the Rashi shul; usually, however, the matzah is kept in a tin can.

23. THE MEGILLAH

During the Purim feast, the Book of Esther is read aloud both at the synagogue as well as at home. It is written on a parchment scroll that is frequently affixed on one end to a rod from wood or ivory. In complete Megilloth, one finds besides the Esther scroll also a small parchment sheet with the prayer. The scrolls, which are written either on parchment or on leather, feature plain unadorned square script or individual letters with miniature crowns, like in a Torah scroll, or individual letters, sentences, paragraphs, individual parts surrounded by decorations in copper engraving, woodcut, colorful drawing; not infrequent are also Megilloth with images illustrating the events in the Book of Esther, in which the same images keep occurring over the centuries; yet, very frequently, one can also find on ancient samples novel and peculiar compositions when the inhabitants of the ghetto were involved in the adornment of the Megillah. The Megillah became an object of book printing on parchment already in the 16th century, and numerous copies were later painted over in colors according to the taste of the artist or the child.

Because of the casing that was meant to protect the scroll from dust, the Megilloth frequently emerged as a delightful ornamental object. Fig. 95 shows an open Megillah, Fig. 96 a closed one in an Oriental metal case.

24. PRAYER BOOKS

So far, I have found prayer books in folio or printed Bibles in proper leather covers with manually applied gilding always as an inventory of Dutch, rarely of German synagogues.

II. RITUAL OBJECTS FOR THE HOME

The number of ritual objects used in the private home of a wealthy observant Jew is even greater than those used in the synagogue since many of them are common to both synagogue and home; such as the Torah ark, Torah curtain, Torah scroll, Torah wimpel, Torah mantle, rimonim, crown, pointer—as soon as a Torah scroll is kept in a house, a service can be held—but also the Hannukah lamp, the kiddush cup, the spice box, and the Megillah.

Strict regulations apply only to few of the common ritual objects in the house; the artist is almost always at complete liberty regarding decoration so that he is also free to use figurative representation in painting and sculpture as he desires. Therefore, frequently motifs are used from the imagery-rich language of the Bible that render the objects particularly charming. Therefore, they were gladly accepted in museums of applied art although their purpose frequently remained unknown.

In any house where observant Jews reside, one finds at least at the doorpost of the entrance, usually also on the doorposts of the living rooms, 1. the mezuzah.

In the apartments of many Jewish families, especially of Polish Jews, usually 2. the mizrach is attached to the east wall.

Used on Shabbat are: 3. the Shabbat lamp, 4. the candelabrum, 5. the havdalah candle, 6. the bread cover. Used during the Feast of Tabernacles are: 7. the sukkah, 8. the lulav, 9. the etrog carrier. Characteristic of the Festival of Lots or Purim are besides the already mentioned Megillah 10. the Purim plates. During the Pascha or Passover festival various peculiar objects emerge in the homes of wealthy observant families, together with those already mentioned. Lamps, kiddush cups, and spice boxes emerge; furthermore 11. the Haggadah, 12. the Seder table cover, 13. the Seder bowl, 14. the Seder cover, 15. the fabric to cover the three matzoth, 16. the rack for the roasted egg, 17. the wheelbarrow for the charosseth, 18. the receptacle for the bitter herbs, 19. the Seder cup. In the time between Passover and the Feast of Rejoicing of the Torah [sic! correct: giving of the Torah] 20. the Omer book is used. The canopy under which on the day of the giving of the Torah a new Torah scroll is carried from the donor's home to the synagogue distinguishes itself from the chuppah only in that the cover is attached to ten rods.

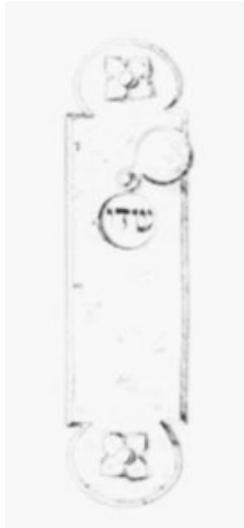


Fig. 97 Mezuzah from wrought iron. Historical Museum Frankfurt am Main. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter.

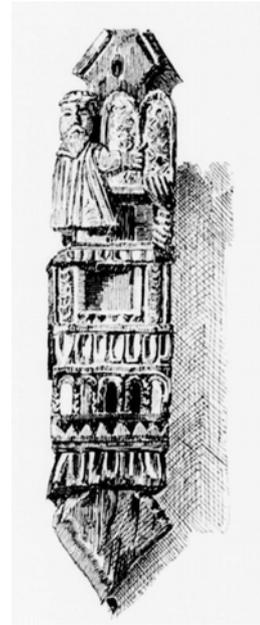


Fig. 98 Mezuzah from wood. Collection F. David, Kassel. Drawing by Fritz Epstein.

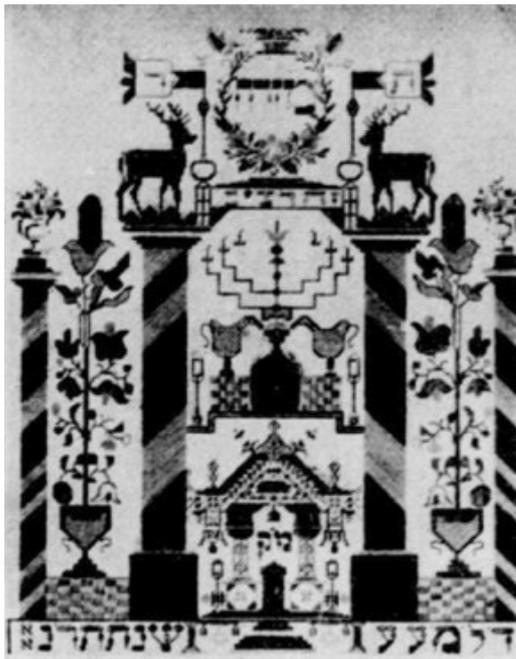


Fig. 99 Mizrach from paper canvas, Elizabethgrad in Southern Russia. Reported by Dr. S. Weissenberg.

1. THE MEZUZAH

In houses of observant Jews, it is common for a mezuzah to be affixed at least to the doorpost of the entrance to the apartment. This is usually a small wooden container for a small parchment roll inside, which contains a certain Bible passage in Hebrew script. Usually, a small part of this container is open or covered by glass. Only the Hebrew designation for God is visible behind the glass screen.

In many containers the parchment cannot be seen. In Armenia, but also in other places, the container is carved into the doorpost.

In many houses, mezuzoth were also in the interior rooms. Since they are sometimes made to fit with the room's design, they have frequently assumed an artistic appearance of their own. The wrought-iron mezuzah depicted in Fig. 97 is from the old Judengasse (Jews' lane) in Frankfurt am Main, now kept at the historical museum in Frankfurt am Main. From the Kassel area is the wood-carved mezuzah depicted in Fig. 98. In Hesse, wood-carved mezuzoth are common.

In the past several years, large quantities of mezuzoth from olive wood have started to be produced and marketed in Jerusalem; however, these are mostly simply lathed cases.

2. MIZRACH

In the homes of observant Jews in the eastern parts of Germany as well as the various Polish regions, it is customary to mount a picture panel on the east walls of living rooms or also other rooms, which indicates the direction of Jerusalem. It is called mizrach, east in English. Such panels are painted or carved, even carved in marble or alabaster, or from stone from the Dead Sea or they are from embossed or embroidered leather and feature a fictitious representation of the City of Jerusalem or a depiction of the Temple or a devout quote referring to Jerusalem or various other symbols and ornaments connected to the Jewish rite. Fig. 99 displays a mizrach stitched on paper canvas, from Elizabethgrad in Southern Russia.

3. THE SHABBAT LAMP

In Jewish households, hanging lamps above the table where the Shabbat ceremony is held used to be customary and were oil-fired. Usually, the lamp was suspended from a toothed rod suspended from the ceiling so that it could be raised and lowered according to need; the lamp had receptacles for 7, 8, 9, or 10 lights arranged in a round; sometimes they are equipped with special slots for the wicks and have drains that end in a bowl that collects the superfluous oil. Fig. 100 shows such a Shabbat lamp for seven arms. Fig. 101 a similar one, abundantly designed and remade for candles. A third example is already depicted in No. 1 Fig. 17.



Fig. 100 Shabbat lamp. Bavarian National Museum. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter.

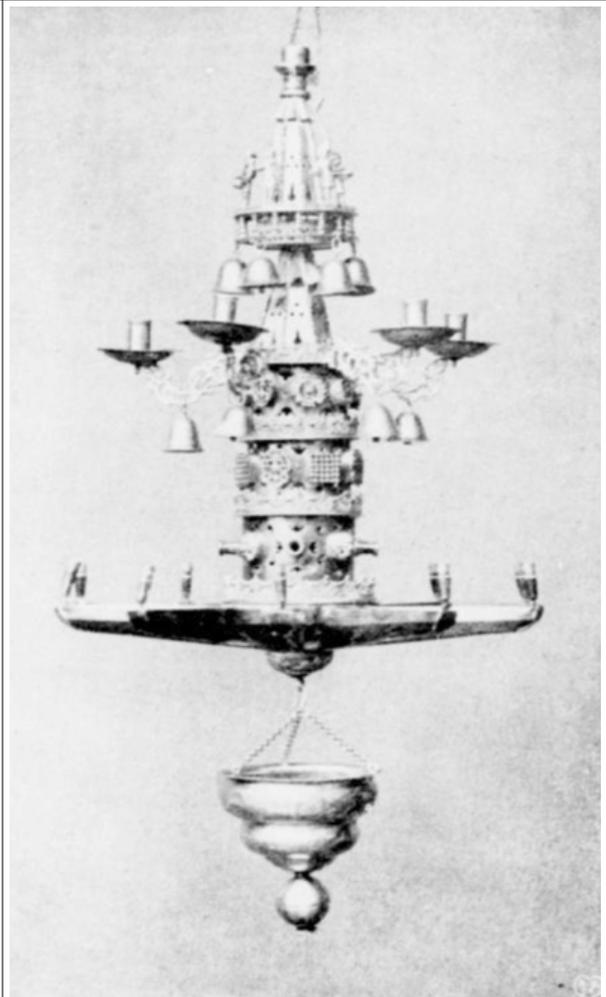


Fig. 101 Shabbat lamp. In private ownership. Frankfurt am Main.

Many Shabbat lamps from yellow brass as well as from silver with three-dimensional and other decorations are extant. Also the simple ones display such an original form—thanks to the arrangement of the surrounding lamps, the toothed hook, the oil drains, and the bowl to catch the superfluous oil—that in recent decades, they have become a popular furnishing item in the smoking rooms of upper-class mansions.

The ordinary forms are called “Metz lamps” either because they were produced or marketed from here.



Fig. 102 Candelabrum. In private ownership. Drawing by Viefers.

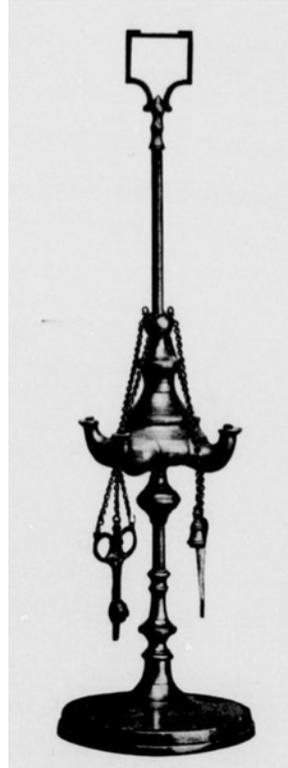


Fig. 103 Candelabrum, Italian. In private ownership.

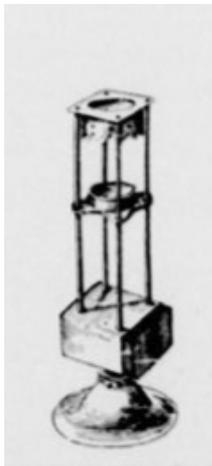


Fig. 104 Havdalah candle holder.



Fig. 105 Lulav.

4. THE CANDELABRUM

The usually three-light candelabrum, rarely with five burners, can be frequently found in the congregations of the Polish rite and is called “Cracow lamp.” In this case, Cracow must probably be understood as the place of production of a certain, frequently recurrent form. The lamps are usually cast from yellow brass (Fig. 102).

In Italy, candelabrams for oil have survived into the 19th century, with five or more closed oil receptacles and equipped with scissors and small pliers, for the lamp’s maintenance, suspended from chains (Fig. 103).

5. THE HAVDALAH CANDLE

With “Jewish candle” one refers to two candles braided around each other; sometimes, though rarely, three candles are braided together. The container, in which they are placed, has a push apparatus and a drawer where the spice used also on Shabbat is kept. Fig. 104 shows a simple example.

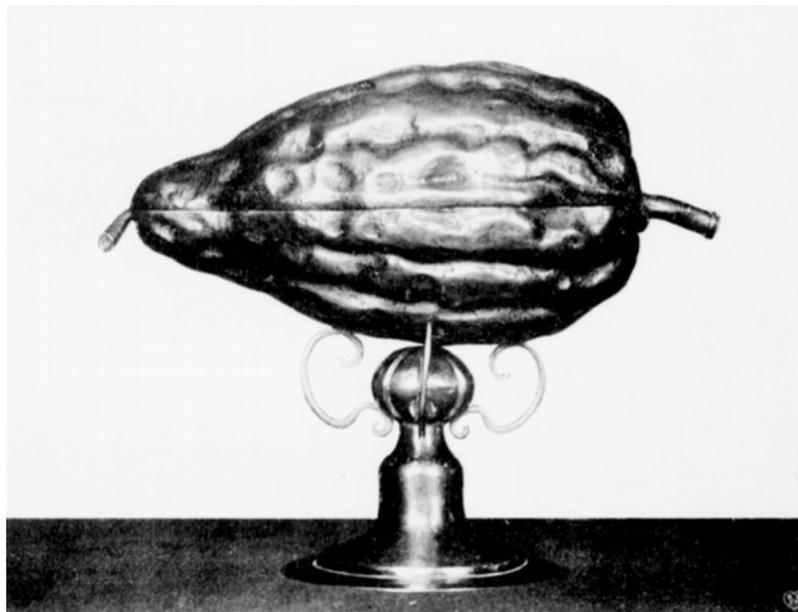


Fig. 106 Etrog box from gilt silver. Original David Reiling Mainz.

6. THE BREAD COVER

The bread over which the head of the household says the blessing is often cloaked with an embroidered cover that displays the blessing with adorned inscriptions or some emblem. The cover's shape is either square or rectangular; rectangular covers are usually twice as long than wide. They can still be frequently found in families, however, works from the 16th and 17th century have already become quite rare.

7. THE SUKKAH

So far, I have seen artistically designed sukkoth only in illustrations in works from the 16th and 17th century. They either have a triangular cross section, get their light through slanting windows and are inside copiously decorated in good taste with flowers and wreaths or else they have the usual shape of a garden shed. In more recent times, especially in densely populated cities, a porch, a space with balcony is decorated with flowers and festoons for this purpose.

8. THE LULAV

Parts of palm leaves and willow- and myrtle branches are braided together in a specific orderly manner and combined, resulting in a peculiarly shaped frond that is moved in a certain direction by Jews during certain prayers on the Feast of Tabernacles. Since they are made from perishable material, they are newly prepared every year before the Feast of Tabernacles; yet, they are kept in Jewish homes and sometimes used as ornamental motif like the Jewish candle; therefore, they should be mentioned here; they are of pleasing form, but do not allow for any further artistic development (Fig. 105).

9. THE ETROG BOX

A peculiar lemon shape, the so-called apple of paradise [term used by author], twice or three times the size of a regular lemon, is also required for the Feast of Tabernacles. It is stored in a box, which in its simple form resembles a velvet case, but at times assumes the shape of a small chest and is decorated with various adornments to distinguish this rare object (Fig. 106). In the past, it was extremely difficult for individual communities to obtain an etrog; very long-winded reports exist of cumbersome journeys undertaken by foreign Jews and of great sacrifices for the community, which became necessary to obtain the etrog for the Feast of Tabernacles and to be ritually equipped.

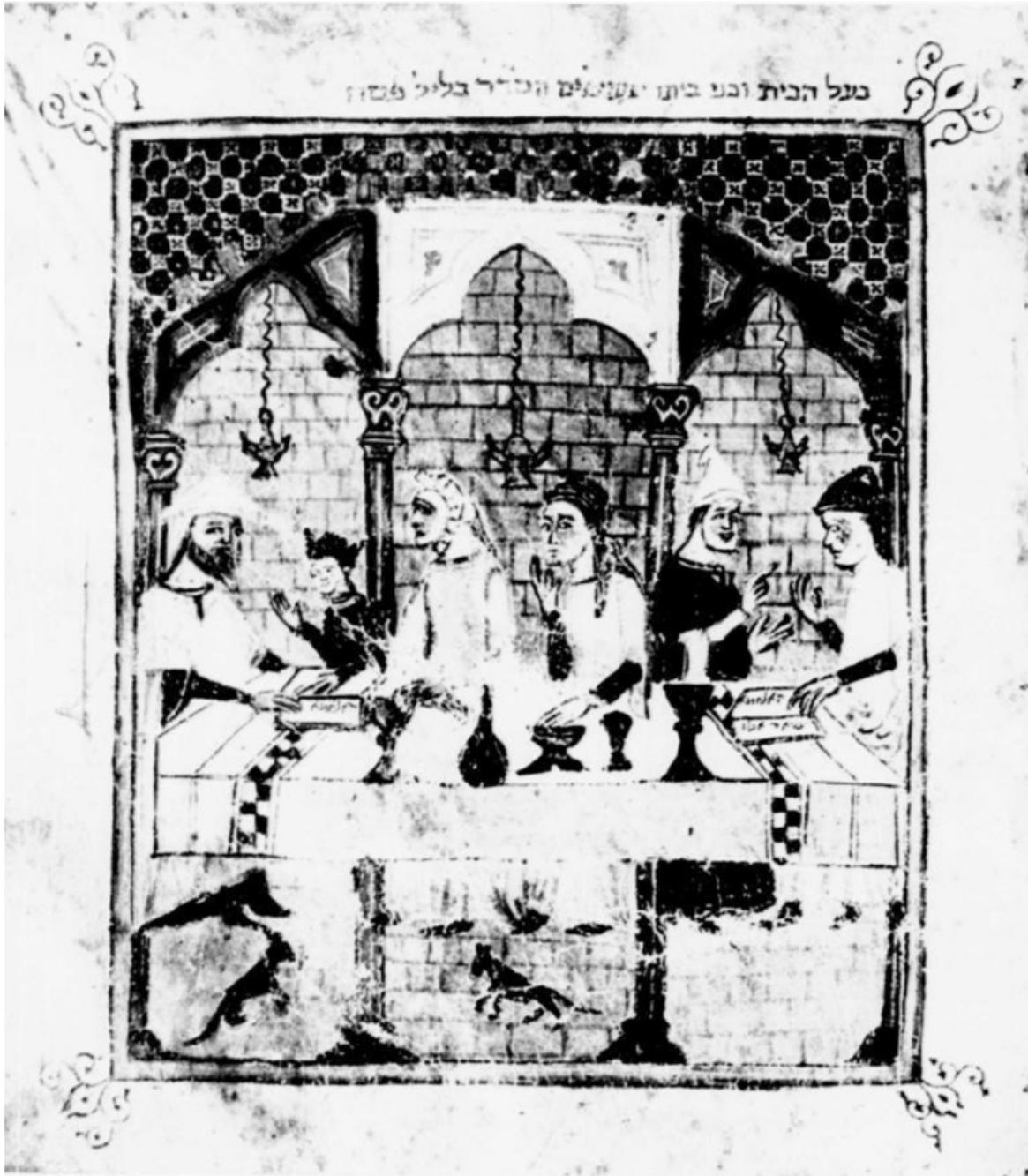


Fig. 107 Depiction of the Passover feast. Miniature from a medieval Haggadah at the British Museum in London.

10. THE PURIM PLATE

In the past, pewter plates were specially designed with quotes, arabesques, and all sorts of engravings; gifts of cake, spices, dishes, and such that Jews send to each other during the Purim feast are placed on them. No. 1 Fig. 19 shows such a plate, which is erroneously designated here as Seder plate.

Passover celebrations in various places are the source of a special abundance of objects enabling artistic design; this has been done with abandon.

11. THE HAGGADAH

The Haggadah is a much-loved family book that has appeared in print in numerous illustrated editions, but that is also extant, according to my current knowledge, in many handwritten copies dating back to the 12th century. The Haggadah contains, with prayers mixed in, a description of the events in Egypt before and during the exodus and on the way to the Promised Land. Apart from the manifold participation of artists in the book's design, there are abundantly adorned covers of this book with blind embossing, gold print, inlays of colorful leather, painting, chased brass corners, or three-dimensional ornamentation. Fig. 107 from a medieval manuscript, a Haggadah, at the British Museum shows a Jewish family on Passover.

12. THE SEDER TABLECLOTH

Leading the Seder is a truly challenging task for the head of the household. As an aid, in case his memory fails him, one has Seder tablecloths displaying the most important parts of the prayers (Fig. 109) or at least marking the order of the initial words as in No. 1 Fig. 20. Both pieces are calico prints, but there are also, albeit rarely, tablecloths from white linen where the individual words are alternately embroidered with red and blue yarn.

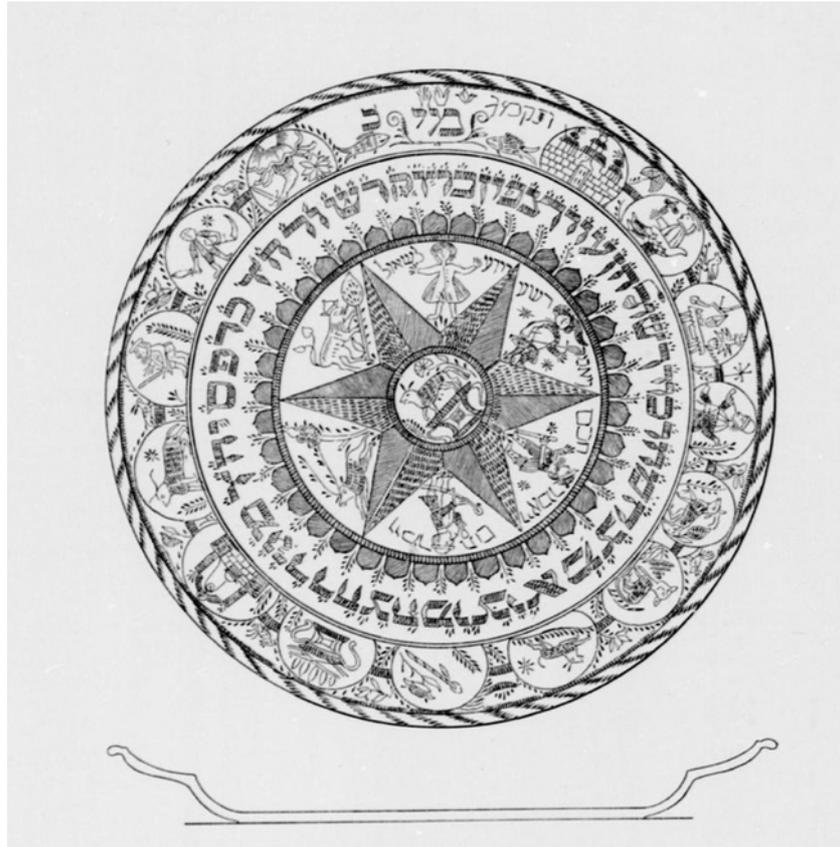


Fig. 109 Seder bowl. In private ownership. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter.

13. THE SEDER PLATE

To accommodate the three unleavened breads, wealthy families have either a round plate from pewter abundantly decorated with engravings (Fig. 109) or oval plates with variously formed edges from silver, more rarely from faience. The representations on these Seder plates are of great diversity. Artistic compositions recalling some event from the Jewish people's turbulent life in Egypt or during the exodus to the Promised Land can be seen surrounded by ornaments in the style of the period they were manufactured.

14. THE SEDER COVER

At the center of the Seder table covered with a white tablecloth is oftentimes an embroidered cover, with satin stitch or appliqué, which usually depicts a Jewish family sitting at a table on which the Paschal lamb is served. So far, I have seen about twenty such covers with the same topic, which follows in its composition a related depiction in handwritten or printed Haggadoth (Fig. 110).



Fig. 108 Seder table cover. In private ownership.

15. THE FABRIC TO COVER THE THREE MATZOTH

In Southern Germany there are still towel-shaped covers (Fig. 111) whose design is associated with the manner in which the three matzoth are supposed to be placed on top of each other. Various emblems can be found starting from Adam and Eve to the building of Jerusalem with quotes mixed in, in decorated Hebrew script with date and place of manufacture, sometimes also with a mention of the lady's name who has created the object.



Fig. 110 Small Seder cover. Geheimrat von Wilmersdörffer, Munich. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter



Fig. 111 Fabric to cover the three matzoth. In private ownership. Drawing by Viefers.

16. THE RACK FOR THE ROASTED EGG

Among the works of goldsmiths that can sometimes be found in museums and at antiques dealers' is also the object shown in Fig. 112. It seems like a double goblet, of which one is circular, the other oval-shaped. Frequently, the most curious reasons, even technical and constructional ones, were given for this shape. In reality, this object is destined to accommodate the roasted egg that plays a role on Passover.

17. THE WHEELBARROW FOR CHAROSSETH

A similar object, which if in a museum is usually described as a sugar bowl, is the wheelbarrow for the charosseth. A special paste of figs, nuts, lemons, almonds, and similar fruits—brought to the boil in wine or vinegar and with lots of spices—is the charosseth, used in various places on Passover to commemorate the Jews' servitude in Egypt, which is offered to the Seder participants on silver wheelbarrows. At times, as in Fig. 113, a little tong, at times, a shovel and a pick referring to the hard labor are attached to this wheelbarrow to help taking from the paste. As far as I can tell thus far, they are most commonly used in Italy.



Fig. 114 Horseradish bowl. In private ownership. Drawing by Hub. Kratz, Friedberg in Hesse.

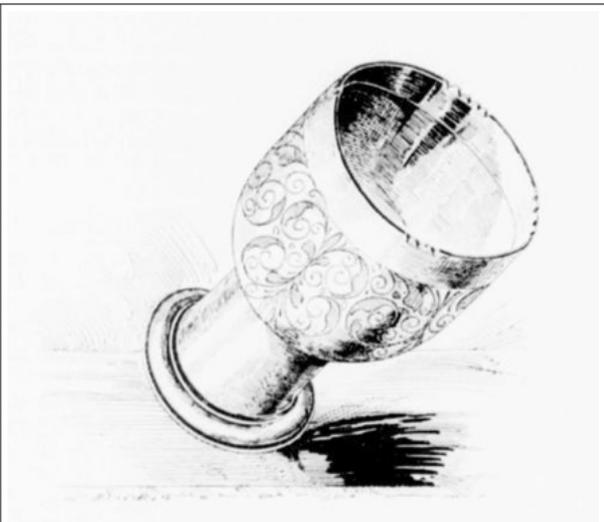


Fig. 115 Seder cup. Kunstgewerbemuseum Düsseldorf. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter.

18. RECEPTACLE FOR THE BITTER HERBS

In commemoration of the bitterness of Egypt, bitter herbs play a role on Passover. Fig. 114 shows a horseradish bowl of peculiar shapes, which in turn demonstrates that even entirely unremarkably parts of a certain ceremony can give rise to inventive shapes.



Fig. 112 Rack for the roasted egg. In private ownership. Drawing by Viefers.

19. THE SEDER CUP

During the Seder, the head of the household says the four blessings over the wine. As seen in Fig. 115, there are cups, which through grooves on the edge, 1,2,3,4, indicate to the head of the household, if he does not forget to turn the cup, which blessing he has to say.

From the utensils used on Passover, quite a few are likely to still emerge. For future investigations, it is highly recommended that Jewish families are asked to name and show all the utensils that were used in their home, at their parents' home, possibly in their ancestors' homes since in most recent times, the Seder is only rarely celebrated with the festiveness customary in the past.

20. THE OMER BOOK

In the 49 days between the Passover feast and the feast of the giving of the Law, a small book plays a large role, in which certain sayings are recorded for these days that are to be spoken on these days. It is called the Omer book. It is not uncommon also for Omer books, like Haggadoth, to be elaborately decorated. Omer books are still extant in numerous handwritten copies on parchment or paper and often have a copious cover with gold print and delicate fillets.

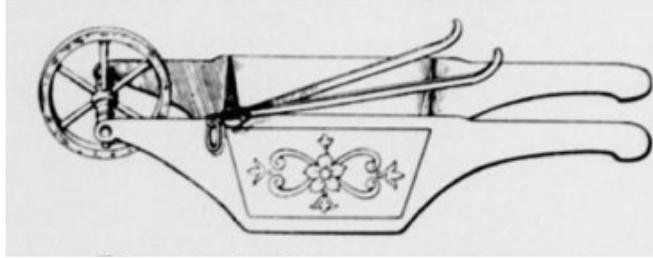


Fig. 113 Wheelbarrow for the charosseth. In private ownership. Drawing by Viefers.

III. OTHER OBJECTS USED ONLY BY JEWS IN THE INDICATED FORM

Apart from the objects dealt with in the previous chapters, several need to be discussed still; they are more or less connected to the Israelite ritual, or are at least used in the indicated forms or indicated manner precisely by Jews, and have sometimes survived in artistic designs of times past.

All those objects were deliberately omitted that were never a subject of artistic design or are more a subject of folklore studies than of ritual.

Remaining are the following: 1, the tallit, 2. the arba kanfot, 3. pouches for storing the prayer shawls or bathing towels, of which embroidered samples have survived.

Among the trinkets worn by Jewish women are 4. the pendants, those worn by men are 5. the miniature Bibles in decorated capsules.

The Jewish kitchen has also a number of particular features. It is the task of Jewish folklore studies to identify them. To mention here are 6. the matzah and the tools to produce it, 7. the Purim cake and the mold for preparing it.

For circumcision, apart from the already mentioned circumcision chair, there is also the woven or embroidered 8. pillow placed on it, furthermore 9. the circumcision knife, 10. the safety plate, 11. the sponge box, 12. the small sand bowl, 13. the flask, 14. the rattle, and 15. the double goblet.

Among the objects used for betrothal and marriage are 16. the Siblonos girdle, 17. the ring; at times, particularly in Italy, one finds old marriage contracts written on parchment, ketuboth (on this in a later issue); there are also 18. belt clasps that are worn depending on the inscription either for the wedding or on the long day. A few words will be devoted to the 19. cups of associations and societies.

A very important group of objects are 20. the gravestones, all the more so since gravestones have survived in old cemeteries, which through their design have borne witness, without any interruption to speak of, definitely from the year 1000 to this day. However, there exists considerable literature on gravestones and Jewish cemeteries as well as lots of illustrations. For now, this topic will have to be dealt with here only briefly.

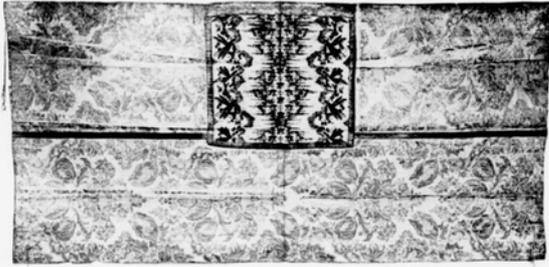


Fig. 116. Tallit. Original im Besitze der Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler. Geschenk durch Herrn Josef Levison in Düsseldorf.



Fig. 117 Arba Kanfot. Original in the ownership of the Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler. Donated by Mr. Julius Goldschmidt in Frankfurt am Main.

Fig. 116 Tallit. Original in the ownership of the Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler. Donated by Mr. Josef Levison in Düsseldorf.

1. THE TALLIT

The tallit is a rectangular fabric, Fig. 116, about two meters long and one meter wide, which has to be worn at the synagogue in a way that its center covers the head; the ends of the fabric are flatly folded or wrapped together at the chest. At the four corners of both ends, square pieces of the same fabric, approximately 10 square cm, are applied, and from the middle of these four corners the tzitzit are suspended. Actually, the tallit is supposed to be from pure sky-blue dyed sheep's wool, usually, however, white color is used.

Wealthy Jews also have striped fabrics, white silk with blue stripes and white, unbleached tzitzit. The striped fabrics are sometimes abundantly embroidered with satin stitch in silk with flowers, arabesques; there are also prayer shawls with a 20 square cm piece from sumptuous material—gold, silver, brocade, or velvet—sewn at the place that has to cover the head; these parts are called crown, atarah; the cloth sewn onto the four corners is often from the same material as the crown; at times, crown and this cloth are decorated with pearls and precious stones.

In 16th-century Egypt, it was customary to embroider the prayer shawls with verses from the Scripture (see Löw, *Graphische Requisiten und Erzeugungen bei den Juden*).

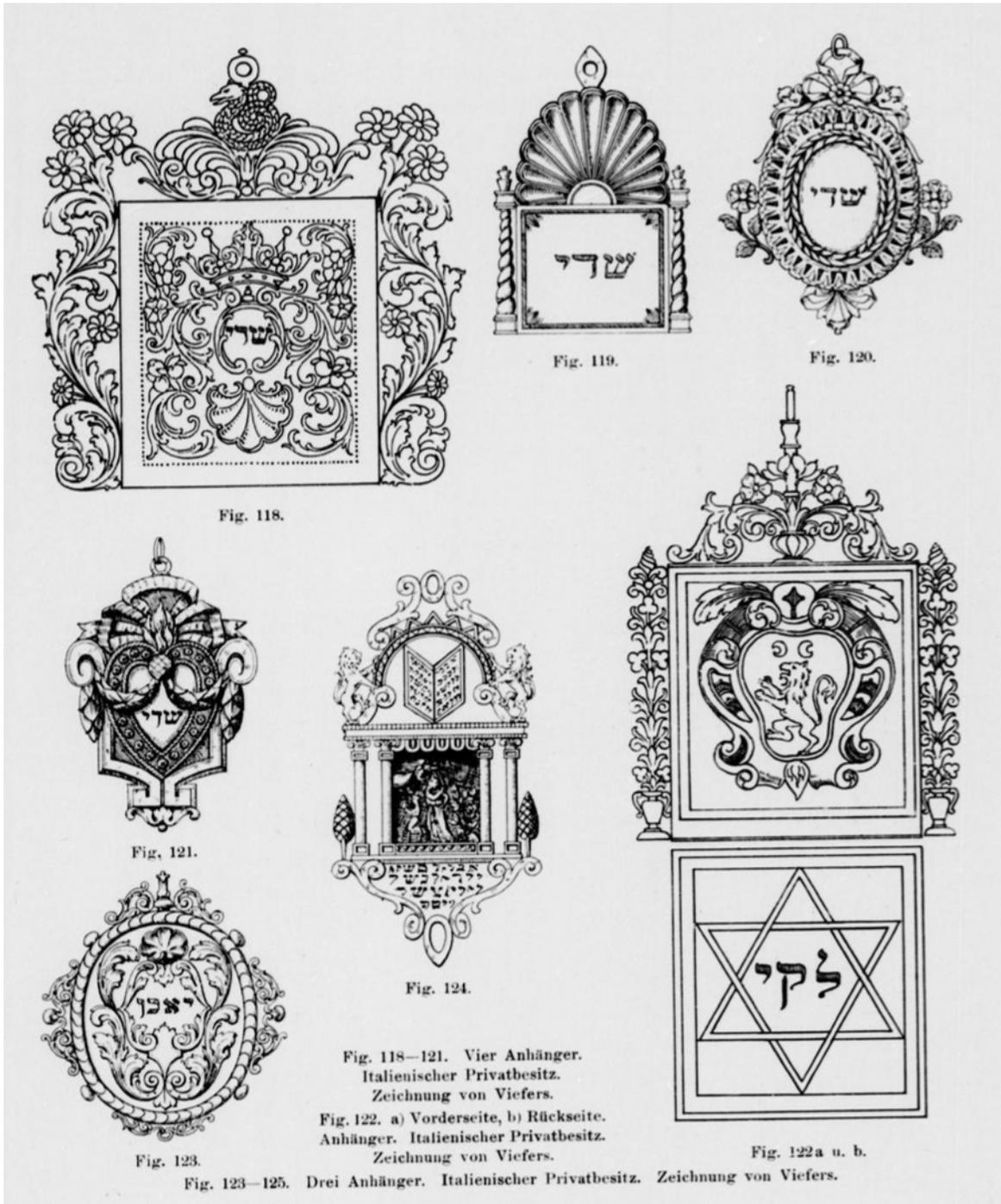


Fig. 118.

Fig. 119.

Fig. 120.

Fig. 121.

Fig. 124.

Fig. 123.

Fig. 118—121. Vier Anhänger.
Italienischer Privatbesitz.
Zeichnung von Viefers.

Fig. 122. a) Vorderseite, b) Rückseite.
Anhänger. Italienischer Privatbesitz.
Zeichnung von Viefers.

Fig. 122a u. b.

Fig. 123—125. Drei Anhänger. Italienischer Privatbesitz. Zeichnung von Viefers.

Fig. 118-121 Four pendants. In Italian private ownership. Drawing by Viefers.
 Fig. 122 a) front b) back. Pendant. In Italian private ownership. Drawing by Viefers.
 Fig. 123-125 Three pendants. In Italian private ownership. Drawing by Viefers.

2. THE ARBA KANFOT

The arba kanfot, sometimes called the small tallit, is worn either directly on the body or over the shirt. It consists of two square pieces of fabric, whose sides are of 40 cm length; these two pieces of cloth are held together by two ribbons from the same material placed over the shoulders. On the four lower corners, two on the chest, two on the side of the shoulders, are small square patches called wings (kanfot) from whose center emerge the tzitzit; it is usually white.

But there are also arba kanfot from silk in different colors and sometimes copiously embroidered with silk threads (Fig. 117).

A beautifully ornamented tallit is sometimes presented to the rabbi or a wife gives it to her husband as a gift; together with a pouch, with an embroidered Bible verse, to store it in.

3. POUCHES FOR THE PRAYER SHAWL OR FOR STORING THE BATHING TOWELS

The ritual bath required by law has brought about beautiful buildings in the Middle Ages, some of which are still extant in Speyer, Friedberg (Hesse), Worms, Andernach, and other places. Special pouches holding the bathing towels have survived and can sometimes still be found in wealthy families as heirlooms from times past. They feature a Hebrew inscription relating to the bath surrounded by ornaments in more or less artistic embroidery.



Fig. 125.



Fig. 127 Embroidered pillow for a circumcision chair.

4. THE PENDANTS

In Italy, one frequently sees Jewish girls wearing a chain around the neck with a pendant from nacre or silver with a handsomely decorated border and with God's name in Hebrew script in the center (Fig. 118 to 121). This is not an object of superstition, rather an object of public statement of affiliation to the Jewish religion like the silver cross that young Christian girls frequently wear as jewelry. Such Shaddai from the 15th century have survived in Italy and from here to this day. Fig. 122 a and b, 123 to 125 display more forms.

5. MINIATURE BIBLES

Through the development of photography it has recently become possible to produce the Bible in miniature format, 2 cm wide, 4 cm high, ½ cm thick. It is placed in a medallion-like metal case, which consists in its simple forms of painted sheet iron, at times it is abundantly decorated by a goldsmith. While some Jews wear it as a means of protection, others wear it as a trinket on their watch chain.

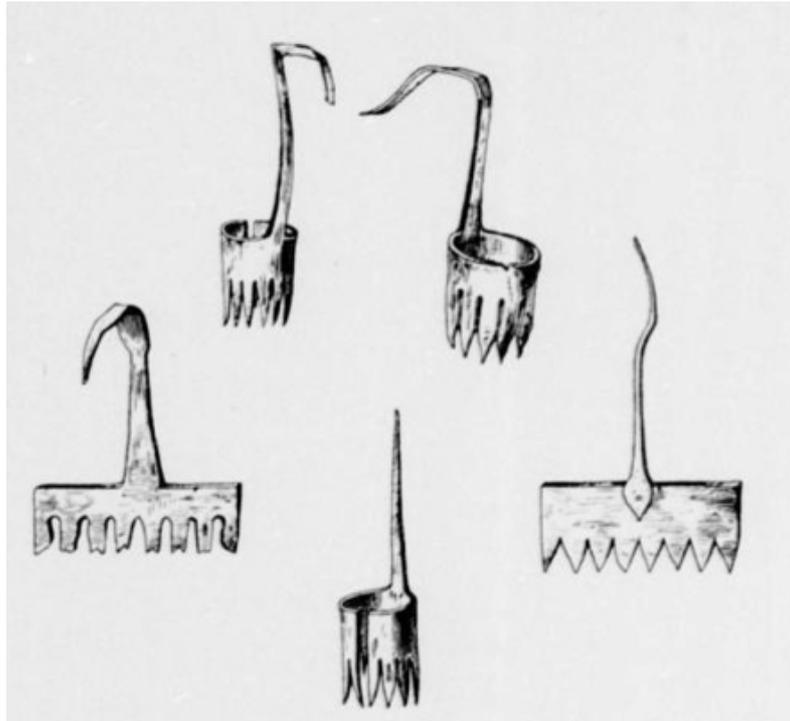


Fig. 126 Various matzah irons. Historical Museum Frankfurt am Main. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter.

6. THE MATZAH AND THE TOOLS TO PRODUCE IT

Nowadays, the unleavened bread is factory-made, but is still also baked in Jewish households. It no longer displays any particular pattern except that of the picturesque effects produced by the bubbles. Yet, quite a number of iron pliers with stamp-like indentations for geometrical patterns are still extant. Moreover, on miniatures from the Middle Ages, handsomely patterned matzoth can frequently be seen. The iron tools (Fig. 126) that are kept at the museum in Frankfurt am Main fail to provide any particularly artistic patterns.

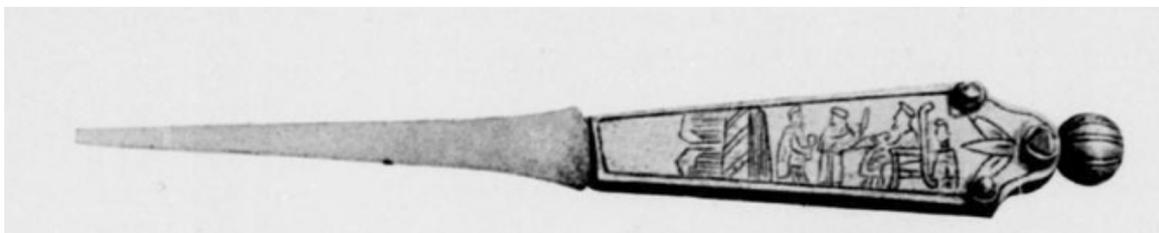


Fig. 128 Circumcision knife. Bavarian National Museum, Munich. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter.

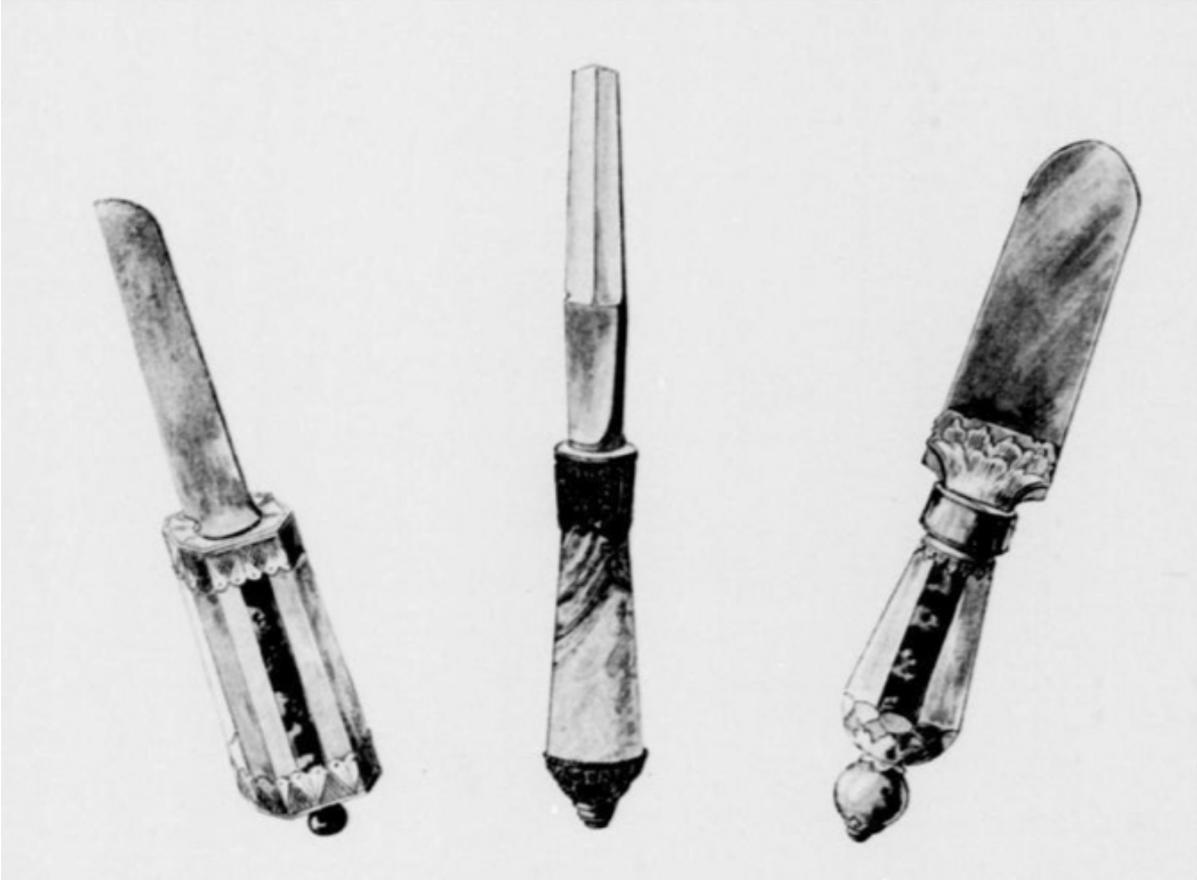


Fig. 129-131 Three circumcision knives. Historical Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter.

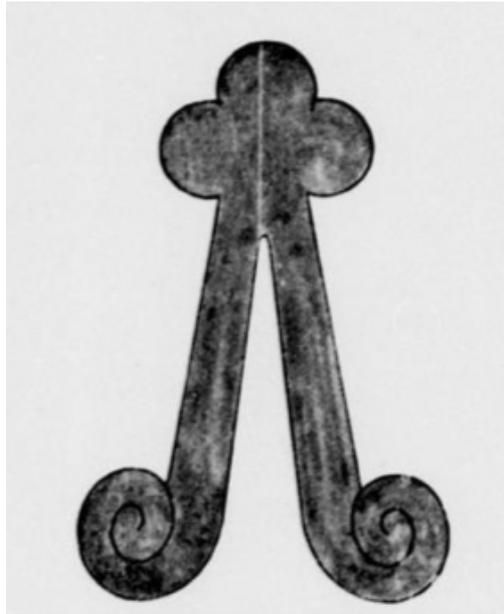


Fig. 132 Safety plate. Historical Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter.



Fig. 133 Small sand bowl with circumcision depiction on the bottom, with script around the edge. Musée Cluny, Paris.

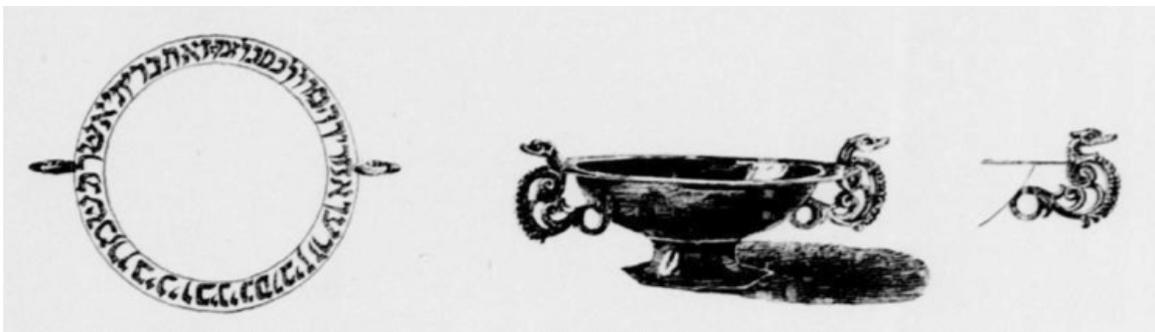


Fig. 134 Small sand bowl. Collection Sally Fürth, Mainz. Drawing by Jul. Lasius.

7. THE PURIM CAKE AND THE MODEL TO PREPARE IT

As already mentioned, on Purim, families give presents to each other. In some areas, gingerbread-like pastries are prepared, which are decorated with various Hebrew symbols with the help of models from wood or plaster.

8. THE PILLOW FOR THE CIRCUMCISION CHAIR

The circumcision chair's seat shown on page 58 is copiously designed. Frequently, however, there are wooden benches and chairs on which a woven or embroidered pillow is placed that display images relating to the circumcision. Fig. 127 shows such a pillow.

9. THE CIRCUMCISION KNIFE

The most frequently occurring shape of a circumcision knife is a steel knife sharpened on both sides with a handle from jasper, rock crystal, ivory—rarely metal—mounted with silver or artistically refined by repoussé work or chasing. Fig. 128 to 131 provide four examples.

10. THE SAFETY PLATE

To remove the praeputium without damaging other parts, a silver plate (Fig. 132) is used that has a pleasing shape and is sometimes also engraved with inscriptions.

11. THE SPONGE BOX

A silver box, with engravings sometimes showing depictions relating to the topic, sometimes quotes, sometimes ornaments of their own, contains a sponge for dabbing the blood.

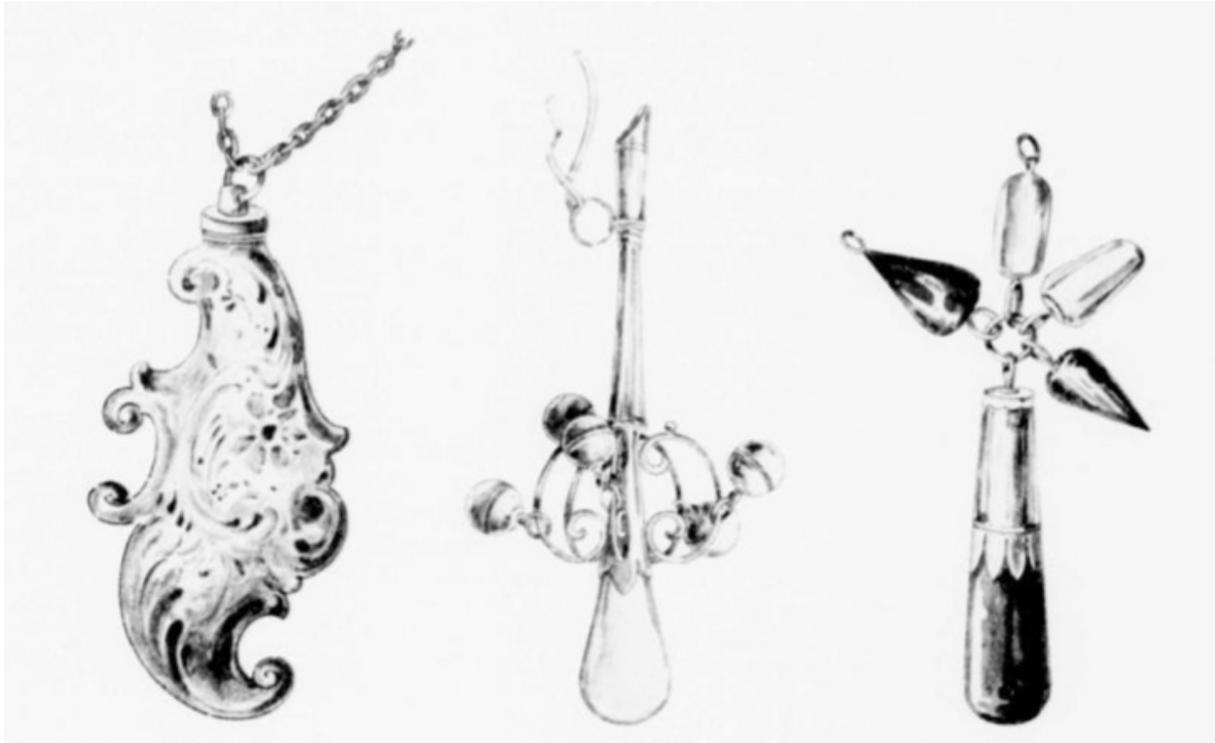


Fig. 135 Flask. Historical Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Drawing by Alb. Hochreiter.

Fig. 136 Rattle with whistle. Historical Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Drawing by Albert Hochreiter.

Fig. 137 Toy for children as godfather gift. Historical Museum, Frankfurt am Main. Drawing by Albert Hochreiter.

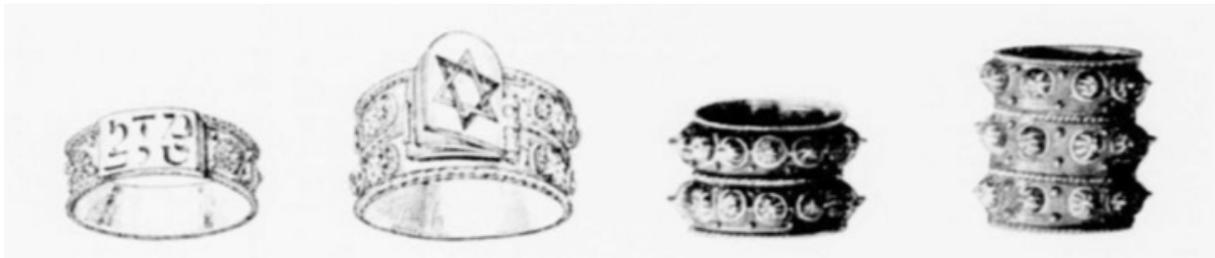


Fig. 138 – 141 Four rings



Fig. 142 Belt clasp. In private ownership in Leipzig.

12. THE SMALL SAND BOWL

In many cases, artists have devoted extreme diligence to the design of a small bowl intended to accommodate the severed praeputium. Fig. 133 and 134 show two nice samples from the 16th century, of which one features a depiction of a circumcision in the bowl and both a related inscription on the flat edge.

13. THE FLASK

A flask (Fig. 135) contains hemostatic powder; these flasks, too, have survived in many appealingly decorated samples.

14. THE RATTLE

Rattles connected to whistles are used as presents from the godfather, of which Fig. 136 displays a nice example. Also Fig. 137 shows a similar object that godfathers like to give to the child as toys.

15. THE DOUBLE GOBLET

Sometimes one finds two silver goblets without feet twisted together; these are the so-called Elijah cups, which are used for Passover as well as in the circumcision and marriage ceremony.

16. THE SIBLONOS GIRDLE

In the past, it was customary for the groom to present the bride with an elaborately structured silver belt. Sometimes it is described to some extent in old writings; in its main forms, it has survived in various kinds of chains in Southern Germany, which, however, are almost solely recent factory goods.



fig. 143 Goblet. Men's charitable association in Worms.

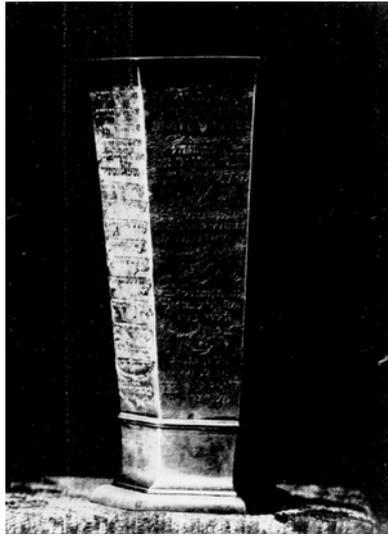


Fig. 144 Six-sided pewter cup with Hebrew inscriptions on the walls. Men's charitable association in Worms.



Fig. 145 Jug. Men's charitable association in Worms.

17. THE RING

Congratulatory rings from gold and gilt silver have survived in large numbers and in wonderful examples as delicate works of art from the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th century. Fig. 138 to 141 provide four examples of simple pieces.

18. THE BELT CLASP

Among a groom's wedding gifts there is sometimes a belt equipped with a richly decorated clasp. Fig. 142 provides a sample of these items from a private owner in Leipzig.

19. DRINKING CUPS OF FUNERARY SOCIETIES OR CHARITABLE ASSOCIATIONS

Already early on, societies or associations have been established by Jews, which are tasked in cases of death with making provisions for a proper funeral and allaying the distress of the surviving dependents, or else associations for mutual help and such. Through foundations and judicious financial investment these societies have acquired large assets. Some of them, existing already for 200 or 300 years, still have several very interesting cups that were used at annual assemblies. Thus, the Israelite men's charitable association of Worms owns superb works of art from times long gone, among other things, two cups depicted in Fig. 143 and 144 and the pitcher in Fig. 145.

On the six-sided cup, the names of the respective chairmen are engraved; they provide a drastic picture of the decline of the art of engraving if one compares the oldest drawings of the crown, the wreath, the scriptures with the more recent ones. The goblet is a very quaint mix of artistic norms as executed in the Augsburg and Nuremberg pineapple goblets from silver and in the guild goblets from pewter. The melon-shaped stein with silver repoussé flowers is a beautiful Southern German work of art from the 17th century.



Fig. 146 Renaissance gravestone. Museo civico, Bologna. Drawing by Albert Hochreiter.

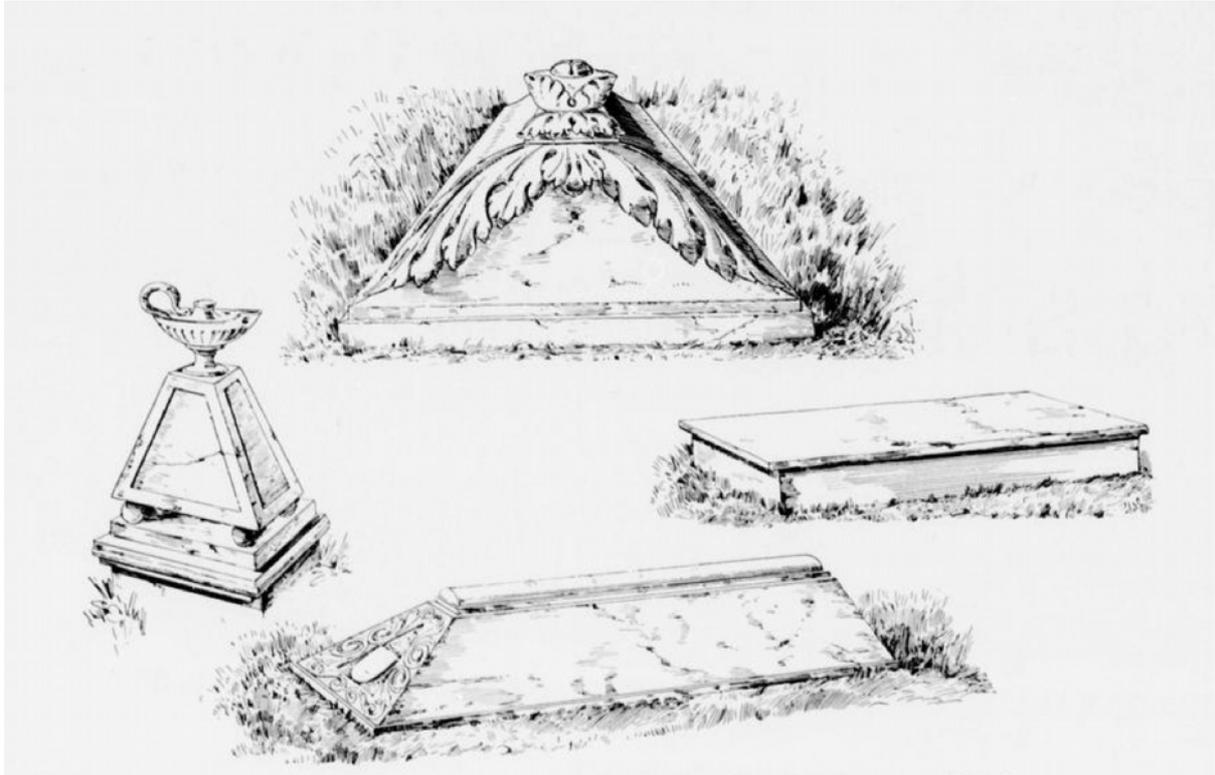


Fig. 147 to 150 Four gravestones from the Jewish cemetery in Pisa. Drawing by Albert Hochreiter.

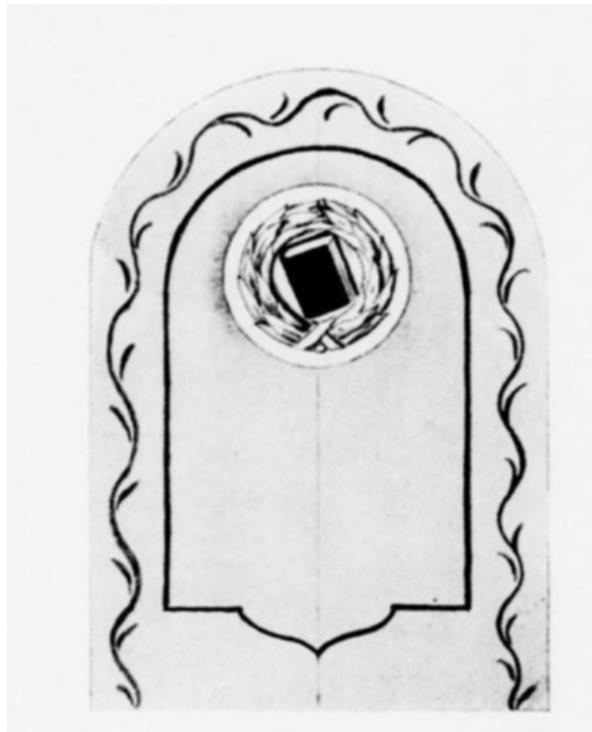


Fig. 151 Gravestone from Pappenheim in Bavaria.

20. GRAVESTONES

It should be pointed out here that in the investigation of Jewish cemeteries and gravestones, the various forms and various ornaments are carefully studied.

The oldest gravestones in Prague from the Middle Ages feature simple inscriptions without ornaments. Date determination has provided material for the most divergent opinions among experts.

At the cemetery in Worms, simple rectangular stones with recessed inscriptions and Gothic tracery have survived single or in pairs, similar to the gravestone fragment from Bern.

Graves from the 16th century from Italy sometimes feature, as in Fig. 146, upright headstones with elaborate framing. The horizontal headstones shown in Fig. 147 to 150 are at the old Jewish cemetery in Pisa. Decoration as well as inscription are on those mentioned thus far either recessed or raised.

At the cemetery in Pappenheim in Bavaria, there is a number of gravestones with painting and gilding from the 18th century. Thus in Fig. 151, the external tendrils are painted green, the frame inside red, the book in the rosette brown. On other gravestones, the color blue or gold is used.

As already mentioned, in the various works on Jewish cemeteries and headstone inscriptions, a large number of graves are depicted, which, however, had been subject to scholarly research only because of their inscriptions. Here, only form and ornamentation of the gravestones need to be investigated. However, it would be expedient to attempt such an investigation into the historical development of the Jewish gravestone only after the collection of images thus far will have been expanded by much more photographs.

CLOSING REMARKS

The task set at the beginning to provide a brief enumeration of the objects used in the Jewish ritual or used by Jews in the forms mentioned has hereby been fulfilled. This enumeration, together with the illustrations, will for the time being provide a sufficient basis for all friends of our endeavors who through their research will enable us to obtain bit by bit the documents required for a history of Jewish monuments of art.

It cannot be overstated that no more time must be wasted; there are dangers lurking from more than one direction. Small, very ancient communities are dissolving since their younger smart members have moved to large, economically more vibrant communities. Old objects are sold, others burned or melted down. I personally was once witness when on a single day in a silverware store, forty small spice towers were sold to be melted down. That day, there were no special items among them, yet, who knows how many beautiful old objects were destroyed on other days apt to fill a gap in our enumeration or be evidence of a developmental stage.

Lately, many objects, as I mentioned in the context of the Shabbat lamp, are redesigned for completely different purposes. Customs are gradually fading away and very frequently, it is possible to hear how certain celebrations used to be performed in the parents' or grandparents' home, which nowadays have been dropped, or which featured certain ornamental objects that have disappeared.

Therefore, in concluding, I want to sincerely ask everyone to endeavor at supporting our society as much as possible through information on extant ancient objects, through images of them, through donations to our society's collection, or through financial contributions.

(Translation: Lilian Dombrowski)