An Illustrated Scroll of Esther from the Collection of the Jewish Historical Institute as an Example of the Gaster I Megilloth

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The illustrated Esther’s scroll C-331 from JHI collections is one of about twenty preserved manuscripts falling into the category described as Gaster I. They can now be found in various collections in Europe, Israel and the United States. These scrolls were produced in Italy (most likely in Venice) in the latter half of the 17th century (arguments to support the hypothesis are presented in the text). They stand out with the richly ornamented borders (illustrations embracing no fewer than 36 episodes based on the narrative from Esther’s Book, pleatings, a floral pattern, an expansive decoration with which the scroll begins and ends), which were impressed on parchment from copperplate engraving. The copies were painted by hand with multi-color tempera, and the Hebrew text of Esther’s Book was written by a scribe. In addition to the embellishments, the article presents the handwriting and the alignment of the text in the scroll, with a brief history of megilot Ester ornamentation presented in the foreword.

**Keywords:** Esther’s scroll; megilloth Esther; Esther’s Book; Italy; 17th century

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Scrolls of the Megilloth is the second studio album by Australian Christian extreme metal band Mortification. The band's most famous release, this album is full-on death metal, with the thrash metal roots barely showing, and possibly their most extreme album to date. According to AllMusic, the album "garnered the band some attention from the heavy metal underground" and contains "some of the most frightening vocals ever recorded." In 2010, HM Magazine ranked Scrolls of the Megilloth number 17 on the The secular character of the Book of Esther (the divine name is never mentioned) and its strong nationalistic overtones made its admission into the biblical canon highly questionable for both Jews and Christians. Apparently in response to the conspicuous absence of any reference to God in the book, the redactors (editors) of its Greek translation in the Septuagint interspersed many additional verses throughout the text that demonstrate Esther's and Mordecai's religious devotion. These so-called Additions to the Book of Esther do not appear in the Hebrew Bible, are treated as canonical in Roman Among the treasures within the collections of the National Library of Israel, there is a unique Book of Esther, which this year celebrates 400 years of existence. What is particularly interesting about the scroll, inscribed in 1617, are the illustrations that adorn it. They seem almost cartoonish, and the scribe and illustrator, Moshe Ben Avraham Pascarol, was not afraid to look directly at the atrocities described in the scroll, and accentuate them, in order to achieve a dramatic effect. Many of the violent scenes, such as the decapitation of Vashti as well as the hanging of Haman and his son