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## From Frankfurt to Jerusalem: Jewish Manuscripts in the Nauheim Collection at the National Library of Israel<sup>1</sup>

*Der vorliegende Artikel beleuchtet eine kleine, aber wertvolle Sammlung von Manuskripten des deutsch-jüdischen Sammlers Sigmund Nauheim (1874-1935). Während seine große Sammlung silberner jüdischer Zeremonialgegenstände heute im Jüdischen Museum Frankfurt am Main aufbewahrt wird, befinden sich seine Manuskripte und Bücher in der Israelischen Nationalbibliothek in Jerusalem. Neben der Beschreibung der Manuskripte wird der Artikel die Nauheim-Sammlung in den Kontext des Handels und der Sammlung von Hebraica und Judaica in der Zwischenkriegszeit stellen.*

*The present article sheds light on a small but valuable collection of manuscripts belonged to the German-Jewish collector, Sigmund Nauheim (1874-1935). While his large collection of silver Jewish ceremonial objects is today preserved in the Jewish Museum of Frankfurt-am-Main, his manuscripts and books are housed in the National Library of Israel (Jerusalem). Besides describing the manuscripts, the article will put the Nauheim collection in the context of the trade and collection of Hebraica and Judaica in the interwar period.*

Sigmund Nauheim was a famed German-Jewish collector of silver ceremonial objects, manuscripts, early printed books, drawings and paintings between the second half of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century. The story of his diverse and significant collection and its scattering among Nazi Germany, Mandatory Palestine and the rest of the world is deeply intertwined with two major topics: the collector's passion for Italy and Italian art and the dramatic impact Nazism had on Jewish culture as a whole.

While the study of the plundering, diaspora, and restitution of collections that had belonged to Jewish individuals and institutions is an expanding field in Jewish Studies, very little is still known about the trade of Hebraica and Judaica in Italy in the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Talking about Jewish manuscripts in particular, one

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<sup>1</sup> This contribution is a slightly revised version of the paper presented at the XI Congress of the European Association for Jewish Studies at the Jagiellonian University, Krakow (15-19 July 2018). I am thankful to Sapienza University of Rome for the award of a short-term fellowship that enabled me to conduct research in Jerusalem between January and June 2018.

Furthermore, I owe my gratitude to Yael Okun, Benjamin Richler, and Alexander Gordin for their guidance and assistance through the Nauheim collection at the National Library of Israel. Abbreviations used frequently: AJA (American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati); NLI (National Library of Israel, Jerusalem).

<sup>2</sup> For an overview on the plunder and restitution of Nazi-looted Jewish assets in Europe, see: Beker, Avi: *The Plunder of Jewish Property during the Holocaust. Confronting European History*, London, 2001; Rose, Jonathan (ed.): *The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation*, Amherst, MA, 2001; Glickman, Mark: *Stolen Words. The Nazi Plunder of Jewish Books*, Philadelphia, 2016; Gallas, Elisabeth: *A Mortuary of Books. The Rescue of Jewish Culture after the Holocaust*, trans. Alex Skinner, New York, 2019. On the case of the Jewish community of Rome, see Pugliese, Stanislao: *Bloodless Torture. The Books of the Roman Ghetto under the Nazi Occupation*, in: Rose, Jonathan: *The Holocaust and the Book*, pp. 47-58.

must bear in mind the words of Umberto Cassuto who, back in 1929, referred to Italy as the “breadbasket” of Jewish manuscripts, since a large number, if not the majority, of those preserved in the libraries all over the world, originally came from Italy or bore the traces of an Italian past.<sup>3</sup> Already in the eighteenth century, treasures of some Italian communities underwent a diaspora from Italy towards other European countries, the United States and later, in the following century, the State of Israel through donations to more lively communities or because they were sold to antiquarians and book dealers.<sup>4</sup> Of course, individual specimens and collections not originally coming from communities were also sold on the market.

Private correspondence among scholars, collectors, antiquarians, dealers, librarians, institutions and the like, testify not only to the richness of the market between WWI and WWII (and afterwards) as well to the liveliness of the networks of people involved, their interests and sometimes details around the purchases/selling and provenance of the items. The interest in Sigmund Nauheim and his collection originates from my research on the Galician Florence-based scholar Isaiah Sonne (1887-1960) who played a key role in these networks as an historian, bibliographer, palaeographer, librarian, collector and dealer himself.<sup>5</sup> On the basis of a letter sent to Alexander Marx, professor of history and librarian at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York, it seems that in August 1930, Sonne saw the only extant manuscript (today in the National Library of Israel) of the sixteenth-century Hebrew chronicle *Divre ha-yamim shel ha-apifior Paolo ha-revi'i ha-niqra Teatino* (“Chronicle of Pope Paul IV, known as the Theatine”) by the Italian moneylender Benjamin Neḥemiah ben Elnathan from Civitanova Marche.<sup>6</sup> Although he did not manage to purchase it, he was allowed to copy the booklet and he then published an annotated edition in the following year.<sup>7</sup> In a footnote of another article, Sonne wrote to have discovered that at some point between 1930 and 1931, the manuscript had come

<sup>3</sup> Cassuto, Umberto: *Manoscritti e incunaboli ebraici nelle Biblioteche d'Italia*, in *Atti del I Congresso mondiale dei Bibliotecari e di Bibliografia*, Roma-Venezia, 15-30 giugno 1929, Rome, 1931-1933, p. 2. Research conducted on a large sample of manuscripts at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the National Library of Israel confirmed the Italian provenance of about 50 percent of them (1,066 out of 2,044); see Richler, Benjamin: *Italy, the “Breadbasket” of Hebrew Manuscripts*, in: Simonsohn, Shlomo and Shatzmiller, Joseph (eds.), *The Italia Judaica Jubilee Conference*, Leiden-Boston, 2013, pp. 137-141.

<sup>4</sup> On some Italian cases, see Perani, Mauro: *Italia “paniere” dei manoscritti ebraici e la loro diaspora nel contesto del collezionismo in Europa tra Otto e Novecento*, in: Pilocane, Chiara and Spagnoletto, Amedeo (eds.): *Il collezionismo di libri ebraici tra XVII e XIX secolo*, supplement to *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 82/2-3 (2016), 63-91.

<sup>5</sup> Because of his advanced palaeographical skills and knowledge of Jewish printing, in 1933 Sonne was tasked by the Union of the Italian Jewish communities to compile the *Relazione sui tesori bibliografici delle comunità israelitiche italiane*, a sort of catalogue of the archival documents, manuscripts, and early printed books possessed by the libraries and archives of the Italian Jewish communities. Due to the interruption of the project, Sonne managed to write reports only about the materials held by 20 communities (Alessandria, Ancona, Casale Monferrato, Asti, Moncalvo, Ferrara, Florence, Genoa, Gorizia, Mantua, Modena, Reggio Emilia, Padua, Rhodes, Rome, Turin, Trieste, Venice, Vercelli, Verona). The typewritten inventories, today preserved in Jerusalem and Rome, have recently been published online by CDEC (Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea) along with historical notes on Sonne and this important project, see Roncolato, Stefania (ed.): *Il patrimonio archivistico e bibliografico delle Comunità israelitiche italiane*. Ovvero, *la Relazione di Isaia Sonne*. Note a margine, Milan, 2020: <https://www.cdec.it/progetti-editoriali/isaia-sonne-e-la-relazione-sul-patrimonio-bibliografico-e-archivistico-delle-comunita-israelitiche-italiane/>

<sup>6</sup> AJA, MS-513, Isaiah Sonne Papers, Isaiah Sonne to Alexander Marx, August 15, 1930, box 7, fold. 5. The original letter received by Marx is preserved at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, Special Collections, Alexander Marx Papers, box 44, fold. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Sonne, Isaiah (ed.): Benjamin Neḥemiah ben Elnathan: *Divre ha-yamim shel ha-apifior Paolo ha-revi'i ha-niqra Teatino*, in: Tarbiz 2 (1930-31), pp. 331-76, 477-502. See now Mampieri, Martina: *Living under the Evil Pope. The Hebrew Chronicle of Pope Paul IV by Benjamin Neḥemiah ben Elnathan from Civitanova Marche (16th cent.)*, Leiden-Boston, 2020.

into the hands of a German collector of Frankfurt named Sigmund Nauheim to whom he sent his appreciation.<sup>8</sup> According to this brief note as well as on the basis of archival research conducted on the Isaiah Sonne papers and correspondence in Cincinnati and Jerusalem, it seems that the two men did not know each other but they must have had a mutual acquaintance in Italy.

Who was Sigmund Nauheim? What were the interests and taste of a German-Jewish collector under Nazism? What was the fate of his remarkable collection?

## The Silver Judaica Collection in Frankfurt

Information about Sigmund Nauheim is quite sparse. Born in Zwingenberg in Bergstraße in 1874, after the premature death of his parents, he grew up in the Jewish orphanage of Frankfurt-am-Main. Later on, he acted as a proxy at the Schwalbacher & Co. chemical factory and as the head clerk of the Rothschild Bank in Frankfurt.<sup>9</sup> His business trips frequently brought Nauheim to Italy and, according to some archival evidence from the Institut für Stadgeschichte in Frankfurt-am-Main, he lived in Milan for about six months every year.<sup>10</sup> He returned from his last residency in Italy to Frankfurt in September 17, 1935 and died there a week afterwards, on September 25. He was buried in the Neue Jüdische Friedhof.

Over the years thanks to his frequent business trips, Nauheim was able to purchase many items and build a remarkable Judaica collection of about 200 ceremonial objects, among which there were Ḥanukkah and Shabbat lamps, *kiddush* cups, *besamim* and *etrog* boxes, circumcision implements, amulets, Torah mantels, *tallitim*, silver book bindings, manuscripts and early printed books.<sup>11</sup> The year after the book burning took place at Bebelplatz in Berlin (May 10, 1933) Nauheim, like other collectors, must have been aware of the urgency to protect his collection from the hands of the Nazis. Through his last will, dated December 19, 1934, Nauheim – who had no heirs apart from one sister – bequeathed his silver Judaica collection to the Museum Jüdischer Altertümer (Museum of Jewish Antiquities) in Frankfurt and his manuscripts and books to the Jewish National and University Library of Jerusalem (today, National Library of Israel).<sup>12</sup> He was not, of

<sup>8</sup> See Sonne: Une source nouvelle pour l'histoire des martyrs d'Ancône, p. 112.

<sup>9</sup> These details can be learned from Heuberger, Georg and Wachten, Johannes (eds.): Jüdisches Museum Frankfurt-am-Main, München, 1997, p. 53 and Bopp, Verena: Der Fall Nauheim: Raub oder Rettung? Eine Judaica-Sammlung im Museum jüdischer Altertümer, in: Bertz, Inka and Dörmann, Michael im Auftrag des Jüdischen Museum Berlin und des Jüdischen Museum Frankfurt am Main (ed.): Raub und Restitution. Kulturgut aus Jüdischem Besitz von 1933 bis heute, Göttingen, 2008, pp. 134-140.

<sup>10</sup> I thank Volker Harms-Ziegler for this information. A short note on Nauheim can be found in the folder S2/8.368, Sammlung Personengeschichte (which I did not consult personally), in the Institut für Stadgeschichte im Karmeliterkloster, Frankfurt-am-Main.

<sup>11</sup> See Bopp: Der Fall Nauheim, p. 135. On the description of the collection before the Nazi plundering, see Schönberger, Guido, Die Sammlung Siegmund Nauheim im Museum Jüdischer Altertümer in Frankfurt a.M., Frankfurt-am-Main, 1937. What remained of the collection (then transferred to new Jüdisches Museum) is described in Heimann-Jelinek, Felicitas: Was übrig blieb: Das Museum Jüdischer Altertümer in Frankfurt, 1922-1938, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1988.

<sup>12</sup> The document is deposited in the Archiv des Amtsgerichts Frankfurt-am-Main. According to the testament, Nauheim appointed his sister as his sole heir and donated 10,000 marks to several institutions, including the Jewish orphanage. See Bopp: Der Fall Nauheim, p. 135, n. 2.

course, the only German-Jewish private donor who transferred a collection to Mandatory Palestine immediately after the book burning.<sup>13</sup>

While the manuscripts and books made their way safely to Jerusalem in 1937, the silver collection destined to remain in Frankfurt had a less fortunate course. Indeed, in the Pogrom Night (9-10 November 1938) the Museum Jüdischer Altertümer was heavily plundered by the Nazis and a part of the Nauheim collection was lost forever.<sup>14</sup> While the more precious silver lamps were melted down, the items considered less valuable were first stored in the Historische Museum (Historical Museum) of the city and then robbed by the Gestapo.<sup>15</sup> Due to the pleading of the Ernstotto Count of Solms-Laubach, director of the Historische Museum (and Nazi activist), the Gestapo returned the items, including the remainder of the Nauheim collection. As suggested by Verena Bopp, in doing so, Count Solms certainly managed to rescue the objects from destruction or dispersion by the Nazis but he also enriched his own museum collection with notable pieces of art.<sup>16</sup> However, during the war the objects – both those which were rescued as well as those from the permanent collection of the Historische Museum – were moved to several places, before being finally deposited into a bunker in Frankfurt-Griesheim. After the war, part of the Nauheim collection was further dispersed in the USA and Israel as it was redistributed by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. Only in 1957, did the objects that had been stored in the Griesheim bunker (included 67 Hanukkah lamps from the Nauheim collection) resurface and were finally installed in the newly established Jewish Museum of Frankfurt, where they remain today.<sup>17</sup>

## The Manuscript Collection in Jerusalem

As already hinted above, the collection of manuscripts and books met a more fortunate fate. After the formal procedures, it reached Jerusalem safely in 1937. According to a note that appeared in *Kirjath Sepher*, the bequest consisted of 16 manuscripts (actually 17), 12 *megillot* Esther on parchment and 172 early printed books.<sup>18</sup> The Nauheim collection enriched the University and National Library with items of artistic importance, which is why it was considered to be “one of the most treasured possessions” of the library.<sup>19</sup>

Many of the manuscripts are indeed particularly precious as they feature beautiful illustrations and decorations with vivid colors. Some of them were also written on high quality parchment. The artistic characteristics as well as the paleographical and

<sup>13</sup> See, among others, Schidorsky, Dov: Das Schicksal jüdischer Bibliotheken im Dritten Reich, in: Vodosek, Peter and Komorowski, Manfred (eds.): Bibliotheken während des Nationalsozialismus, Wiesbaden, 1992, pp. 189-222; *ibid.*: Burning Scrolls and Flying Letters: A History of Book Collections and Libraries in Mandatory Palestine and of Book Salvaging Efforts in Europe after the Holocaust, Jerusalem, 2008 [in Hebrew]; Mahrer, Stefanie: Much More Than Just Another Private Collection: The Schocken Library and its Rescue from Nazi Germany in 1935, in: *Naharaim* 9/1-2 (2015), pp. 4-24.

<sup>14</sup> Bopp: Der Fall Nauheim, p. 135; Rauschenberger, Katharina: Das Museum jüdischer Altertümer 1922-1938. Die Entstehung einer neuen Wissenschaft und ihr gewaltsames Ende, in: Heuberger, Georg (ed.): Die Pracht der Gebote. Die Judaica-Sammlung des Jüdischen Museum Frankfurt-am-Main, Frankfurt-am-Main, 2006, pp. 12-23.

<sup>15</sup> Heuberger and Wachten: Jüdisches Museum, Frankfurt-am-Main, p. 25; Bopp: Der Fall Nauheim, p. 135.

<sup>16</sup> Bopp: Der Fall Nauheim, p. 136.

<sup>17</sup> Bopp: Der Fall Nauheim, p. 138.

<sup>18</sup> This note (Yediot Bet ha-Sefarim) is in: *Kirjath Sepher* 14/4 (1937-38), pp. 421-421a.

<sup>19</sup> See: *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Its History and Development*, Jerusalem, third edition, 1948, p. 103.



Two fine eighteenth-century Pesach *haggadot* enrich the Nauheim collection in Jerusalem, one of which was decorated and completed in Darmstadt in 1733 by the young Yosef of Lipnik in Moravia.<sup>30</sup> Some of the poems, explanations and picture captions of the illustrated *haggadah* are Yiddish translations. The other text for Passover comes from an unspecified place in Italy and features some notes in Italian transcribed in Hebrew characters.<sup>31</sup>

Another (now lost) Passover *haggadah* which must have been in the Nauheim collection before this was transferred to the Jewish National and University Library of Jerusalem in 1937, was copied in Mestre in 1470 for Ḥayyim Rapp Soten's wife.<sup>32</sup>

Besides being characterized by the presence of illustrated manuscripts, the small collection presents less adorned but no less important sources for the history of the Italian Jewish communities in the early modern period. The manuscript of the *Chronicle of Pope Paul IV*, already cited above, is an early nineteenth-century copy of the sixteenth-century lost autograph and bears the ownership marks of the Calef family of Ancona who borrowed the manuscript to Rabbi David Abraham Vivanti of Ancona in 1836.<sup>33</sup> As I had the chance to stress in my monographic study of this chronicle (and as already pointed out by Sonne in his edition), this text is a source unique in its genre for its accuracy and extensiveness of details, dates, names and descriptions of Paul IV's pontificate (1555-1559).

Among other historical sources in the Nauheim collection one must mention the *pinkas* of the *Ḥevrat Ḥesed we-Emet* of Reggio Emilia, which include the regulations, subscriptions and financial decisions taken by the burial society in the years 1742-1777 in Hebrew and Italian.<sup>34</sup> The names and signatures of the eight founders of the company can be read on folio 15. From the same geographic area and time, we encounter a booklet of memorial prayers of the community of Modena.<sup>35</sup> In the first part of the volume, they are noted the names of the deceased among the rabbis and the notable men of Modena. Thanks to the colophon, we learn that the scribe, who completed the manuscript in 1742, was the young Meshullam, son of the late Abraham Pavia.

The last three of the 17 manuscripts are almost entirely or partly in Italian. The first is a copy of the terms proposed by the representatives of the Jews of Venice, Marcuzzo Fricelle and Sanson Pescaruol, for the recommencement of Jewish moneylending in the Serenissima.<sup>36</sup> With this document, dated July 1573, the Jews of Venice promised to collect 50,000 ducats to finance loans to poor Venetians at a reduced rate. The other two works

<sup>30</sup> NLI, Ms. Heb. 8°983.

<sup>31</sup> NLI, Ms. Heb. 4°345.

<sup>32</sup> See Raspe, Lucia: *Portable Homeland: The German-Jewish Diaspora in Italy and its Impact on Ashkenazic Book Culture, 1400-1600*, in: Kaplan, Yosef (ed.), *Early Modern Ethnic Religious Communities in Exile*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2017, pp. 26-43. According to the record on *Sfardata*, which is probably based on Aron Freimann's article (see the bibliography cited in Raspe: *The German-Jewish Diaspora in Italy*, pp. 33-34, n. 26), the *haggadah* was in the Museum Jüdischer Altertümer in Frankfurt before it was officially closed in 1938 after the Nazi plundering (see above p. 4). *Sfardata* online: <http://sfardata.nli.org.il> [29.06.2020], record key oY806. The location of this manuscript today is unknown. I thank Lucia Raspe for this information.

<sup>33</sup> NLI, Ms. Heb. 8°984; see Mampieri: *Living under the Evil Pope*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>34</sup> NLI, Ms. Heb. 8°985.

<sup>35</sup> NLI, Ms. Heb. 8°977.

<sup>36</sup> NLI, Ms. Var. 55. On the copy of this document in the State Archives of Venice, see Ravid, Benjamin: *The Socioeconomic Background of the Expulsion and Readmission of the Venetian Jews, 1571-1573*, in: Malino, Frances and Cohen Albert, Phyllis (eds.): *Essays in Modern Jewish History. A Tribute to Ben Halpern*, New York, 1982, p. 48.

are a synagogue music piece for soloist and choir composed by Antonio Smoltz,<sup>37</sup> and a Hebrew-Italian parallel translation of the scroll of Esther by Tranquillo del Monte and Salvatore Poggetto, dated 1645.<sup>38</sup>

The small group of *megillot* Esther – the scrolls read in the feast of Purim recounting the miraculous salvation of the Jewish people from the hands of the evil Haman – is absolutely fascinating. Most of the scrolls are beautifully decorated and still preserved in their original wooden, silver or golden cases. While eight of the twelve *megillot* were produced in Italy between the first half of the seventeenth and nineteenth century, only two came certainly from the Netherlands and two from the Maghreb (likely from Morocco or Tunisia), where they were written and decorated between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> The two Dutch scrolls reflect the Sephardic influence both in the script and decoration with trees and flowers,<sup>40</sup> while the two Maghrebi clearly share some *mizrahi* features, like arches and geometric shapes in which the text is embedded.<sup>41</sup>

Among the Italian *megillot*, three of them stand out for their beautiful illustrations and coats of arms. It is not clear whether the earliest megillah dates back to 1562 or 1623.<sup>42</sup> What it is certain is the identity of the owner and the copyist. The scroll belonged to Shemuel bar Aharon Cohen and, as far as it can be possible to read in the colophon, it was copied by the young Yaakov Tsoref bar Shlomo Tsoref of Castelnovo. Drawings and decorations appear above and below the columns of the text and, at the end of the scroll, there is the coat of arm with the Cohen hands (a pair of hands raised in priestly blessing) and a lion. The second illustrated *megillah* was owned by Efraim of Tivoli in 1642.<sup>43</sup> Colorful ornaments of flowers and fruits appear above and below the text; the family emblem with two lions and a tower is reproduced twice. Another scroll, bought by Rabbi Elisha bar Ḥayyim Raphael Alatino in the year 1662, presents some pretty, colorful drawings of flowers and animals and a faded coat of arm of the family.<sup>44</sup> Another *megillah* on brown parchment was also realized in seventeenth-century Italy.<sup>45</sup> The remaining four Italian scrolls were produced between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century. They present less colorful illustrations and information about the owners and scribes is obscured.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>37</sup> NLI, Ms. Var. 56.

<sup>38</sup> NLI, Ms. Var 57. Attilio Milano possessed a copy made by Angelo Mosè Coen of this Roman version of the scroll of Esther, see Milano, Attilio: Il "Purim" in un ignorato poemetto del Seicento, in: La Rassegna Mensile di Israel 32/2-3 (1966), pp. 67-87; *ibid.*: Una rettifica sul poemetto di Purim, in: La Rassegna Mensile di Israel 32/6 (1966), pp. 271-272; Sermoneta, Joseph B.: Tredici giorni nella casa dei conversi: dal diario di una giovane ebrea del 18° secolo, in: Michael: On the History of the Jews in the Diaspora (1972), p. 293.

<sup>39</sup> This information is based on the description of the megillot preserved in the National Library of Israel by 1957, see Joel, Issakhar: Osef megillot Esther, in: Kirjath Sepher 32/2 (1957), pp. 230-240. One of the two Maghrebi megillot is indicated as hailing from Western Europe but both the script and the *mizrahi* style suggest that the provenance of this item should be located somewhere in the Maghreb. The NLI catalogue and the Ktiv website ([https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitalibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?&presentorid=MANUSCRIPTS&docid=PNX\\_MANUSCRIPTS990025916200205171-1#|FL88444130](https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitalibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?&presentorid=MANUSCRIPTS&docid=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990025916200205171-1#|FL88444130)) bear the wrong

provenance as in Joel: Osef megillot Esther, pp. 239-240, n. 35.

<sup>40</sup> See NLI, JER NLI 4°197/14 and 4°197/13. For their description, see Joel: Osef megillot Esther, nn. 37 and 39 respectively.

<sup>41</sup> See NLI, JER NLI 4°197/15 and 4°197/17; see Joel: Osef megillot Esther, nn. 31 and 35 respectively.

<sup>42</sup> NLI, JER NLI 4°197/20. Joel dated the manuscript to 1567; see Joel: Osef megillot Esther, n. 19.

<sup>43</sup> NLI, JER NLI 4°197/22; Joel: Osef megillot Esther, n. 21.

<sup>44</sup> NLI, JER NLI 4°197/11; Joel: Osef megillot Esther, n. 22.

<sup>45</sup> NLI, JER NLI 4°197/16; Joel: Osef megillot Esther, n. 23.

To conclude this description, according to the online catalogue of the National Library of Israel, there is also a photograph associated with the Nauheim collection.<sup>47</sup> The item portrayed is an Italian handwritten and decorated *shiviti*, namely a meditative representation of a menorah with the divine Hebrew name, the Tetragrammaton. According to the description on the website, the manuscript was realized by the young Shlomo son of Rabbi David Attias on behalf of Zekhariah Pugliese.<sup>48</sup> On the verso of the picture, an annotation attributed to Gershom Scholem reads: “Sig. Nauheim Trieste, Sammlung Nauheim in Fr[ankfurt].” It is unknown if the picture was included in the bequest and if the manuscript depicted in it still exists somewhere.

## The Nauheim Collection in the World: Some Research Perspectives

While it is possible to identify the manuscripts and *megillot* from the Nauheim collection at the National Library of Israel, the same cannot be said for the books,<sup>49</sup> which in the above-mentioned note from *Kirjath Sepher* included many Hebrew works printed in Italy as well as *sifre Judaica Italkim*, referring to the Jewish books in Italian.<sup>50</sup> Still according to the note, many of them were in perfect state of preservation and bound in their original bindings, of these, twelve are made of silver. One of them containing a *siddur* (prayer book) for the whole year according to the Ashkenazic rite and printed in 1749 in Venice by Bragadin, was studied by Hava Lazar.<sup>51</sup> A few years after the acquisition of the Nauheim collection by the library, Abraham Yaari had dedicated some attention to two other silver book bindings, enclosing a *mahzor* for the *shalosh regalim* (the three pilgrimage festivals, namely Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot) according to the Sephardic rite which was printed in Venice in 1774 and another Sephardic *mahzor* for Rosh ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur, published in Florence in 1734.<sup>52</sup> The close analysis of these silver book bindings and the coats of arms, which appear on their sides and spines, allowed Yaari and Lazar to connect the objects to the Italian Jewish families (Morpurgo, d'Italia, Diena, Ascarelli) they belonged to in the early modern period. According to Yaari, the silver bindings were originally designed to enclose other unknown volumes, as they would predate the eighteenth-century editions. Without entering into detail about the stylistic features of the bindings, it is sufficient to point out that silver bindings must have been expensive, that is why they were often used to enclose prayer books to be offered to the bride on the wedding day.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>46</sup> See NLI, JER NLI 4<sup>o</sup>197/12, 18, 19, and 21 and their corresponding descriptions in Joel: Osef megillot Esther, nn. 26, 28, 29 and 30.

<sup>47</sup> NLI, Archives Stacks, V 183 01 75 אסך הקמיעות.

<sup>48</sup> NLI, online: [https://www.nli.org.il/en/archives/NNL\\_ARCHIVE\\_AL003585482/NLI](https://www.nli.org.il/en/archives/NNL_ARCHIVE_AL003585482/NLI) [30.06.2020]. I thank Alexander Gordin for the information he provided about this photograph.

<sup>49</sup> The full list of the items mentioned by Hava Lazar in her article from 1977 was not found during my research period at the National Library of Israel in 2018. According to the description, this should have been “a detailed, typed list of the manuscripts and printed books in the collection, annotated by hand, probably by Nauheim himself;” see Lazar, Hava: Jonah, the Tower, and the Lions: An Eighteenth Century Italian Silver Book Binding, in: *Journal of Jewish Art* 3-4 (1977), p. 58, n. 1.

<sup>50</sup> See: *Yediot Bet ha-Sefarim*, in: *Kirjath Sepher* 14/4 (1937-38), pp. 421-421a.

<sup>51</sup> Lazar, Hava: Jonah, the Tower, and the Lions. For slightly-revised version of the article in Italian, see Lazar, Hava: Una preziosa rilegatura del Settecento italiano, in: *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 46/1-2 (1980), pp. 61-69.

<sup>52</sup> Yaari, Abraham: *Liqutim Bibliografim*, in: *Kirjath Sepher* 15 (1938-39), see pp. 513-514; *ibid.*: *Liqutim Bibliografim*, in: *Kirjath Sepher* 18 (1941-42), see pp. 187-188 and 190-191.

<sup>53</sup> For the identification of the families, see Yaari: *Liqutim Bibliografim*, in: *Kirjath Sepher* 18 (1941-42), p. 190.

Besides these brief references to these three *mahzorim*, we do not possess relevant information on the rest of the collection, which amounts to a total of 172 early printed books. The short description given by the above-mentioned note in *Kirjath Sepher* hints to the preciousness and artistic beauty of many volumes, including the *editiones principes* of the Tanakh, like that printed by Christopher Plantin in Antwerp in 1566.<sup>54</sup> The volumes of this edition bear many decorations in several colors and gold that must have been added after the print by a professional miniaturist.

On the basis of this little research, it can be assumed that Nauheim was genuinely interested not only in the content, but also in the beauty of the objects. His fine taste and love for early modern Italian art is also reflected in his collection of non-Jewish items which are now scattered in several places all over the world. Browsing the provenance descriptions in auction houses and museum catalogues, it was possible to discover that Nauheim also owned two sketches by Italian masters. Most likely after Nauheim's death, both came into the hands of a certain Alberto Sichel Morales in Venezuela.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, the genealogical search has only been able to reveal that Alberto Sichel Morales (ca. 1913-1973) from Caracas was the son of Max Sichel Nauheim (1878-1938).<sup>56</sup> How the latter was exactly related to the collector from Frankfurt and when the artefacts were acquired by Sichel Morales, is not yet known. Further research will clarify these obscure aspects and verify whether Sigmund Nauheim's sister, who was his sole heir, or he himself assigned the sketches to Max Sichel Nauheim or to his son Alberto.

These two art works – *The Fall of the Rebel Angels* (1712-15) by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770) and *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* by Giulio Carpioni (1613-1678) – are today preserved in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. and the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa respectively.<sup>57</sup> As far as it can be understood from the short description on the website (in the first case) and in a catalogue (in the second), both drawings were sold after Morales's death to the two galleries through a Christie's auction in London in 1974. On the same note, another drawing attributed to the Flemish artist Paul Bril (1554-1626), which had belonged to Nauheim and then to Sichel Morales, also went to a Sotheby's auction in the same year and again in Amsterdam in 2004.<sup>58</sup> Among the engravings and prints of Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) held at the Museo de Bellas Artes de Caracas, two prints from the series *Pinturas de Velázquez* also came from the Nauheim-Sichel Morales collection.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Yediot Bet ha-Sefarim, p. 421a.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Christie's Illustrated Catalogue, part 11, Important Pictures by Old Masters, 1974 and the catalogue of the National Gallery of Art of Ottawa: Dessins de Maîtres du Musée des Beaux-Arts du Canada, Ottawa, 1988, p. 49.

<sup>56</sup> This very brief but significant detail is based on the genealogical record on Geni.com: <https://www.geni.com/people/Alberto-Sichel-Morales/360038285080010902> [27.06.2020].

<sup>57</sup> See the website of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.: <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.54710.html#bibliography> [27.06.2020]. Another Tiepolo's drawing of Saint Michael and the rebel angels from the Sichel Morales collection went on a Christie's auction in July 2019 (lot n. 69): <https://www.lotsearch.net/lot/giovanni-battista-tiepolo-venice-1696-1770-madrid-46567868> [27.06.2020]. Carpioni's work is described in the catalogue of the National Gallery of Ottawa: National Gallery of Art: Dessins de Maîtres du Musée des Beaux-Arts du Canada, Ottawa, 1988, p. 49.

<sup>58</sup> Sotheby's, online: <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/lot.18.html/2004/old-master-drawings-amo940> [27.06.2020].

<sup>59</sup> Goya clandestino en Caracas, in: Caracas Crónica. Pequeñas historias de la Gran Caracas, 7.09.2014, online: <http://ciudaddelostechosrojos.blogspot.com/2014/09/los-caprichos-de-goya-en-el-museo-de.html> [27.06.2020]. However, the information according to which Sigmund Nauheim had moved from Germany to New York in the 1930s, moving part of

In addition to these works by early modern Italian and European artists, it seems that Nauheim was also fond of Italian contemporary art and an admirer of Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916), who was one of the major representatives of Futurism and had died at the age of 33 after falling from a horse during a military training in World War I. To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his birth in 1932, the municipality of Milan organized an exhibition of Boccioni's works at the Castello Sforzesco for the following year. During those years, some works were bought from private collectors and galleries, others were donated. In 1934, Nauheim – who had already borrowed seven folios for the 1933 exhibition – donated two other drawings (*Studio per il lutto* and *Profilo di testa femminile [Ines?]*) to the city of Milan.<sup>60</sup>

In the absence of Nauheim's private papers and correspondence, it is hard to say where he exactly acquired his numerous and diverse pieces – silver Judaica ceremonial objects, textiles, Jewish manuscripts, Esther scrolls, early printed books, silver book bindings, early modern Italian drawings and paintings, and more contemporary pieces of art – all that composes his stunning and scattered collection. While living in Milan, Nauheim must have known the Italian market scene very well and have been a habitu e of art galleries, antique dealers, bookshops, auction houses there and in other Italian cities. As in the aforementioned case of Sonne, research on the extant correspondence among collectors, sellers, scholars, librarians, artists, institutions, and private individuals related to the market of Italian Hebraica and Judaica can shed light on the building of private collections and their traces in the interwar and post-war periods.

Further research on other private and public collections as well as on material evidence and provenance of specimens will hopefully add other pieces to the story of this fine collection.

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his collection of paintings, books, engravings, and drawings, is clearly incorrect.

<sup>60</sup> Rossi, Francesca: Boccioni nei disegni del Castello Sforzesco, in: Rossi, Francesca (ed.), Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916). Genio e memoria. Catalogo della mostra (Milano, 25 marzo-3 luglio 2016), Milan, 2016, online: <https://www.artdirectory-marussi.it/mostre/boccioni-100-palazzo-reale-milano/> [27.06.2020].