לזכור יהודית

Remembering Judith

traditions of Hanukah



1746, The Jewish Museum

The Historical Traditions

What is Hanukah?



- **Two versions we think of**:
  - The "American/ Aspirational" (comfortable)
  - The "Historical/ Academic" (uncomfortable)
- **The lost traditions and why the matter:**
  - The idea of "civilizations" (biblical/ rabbinic/ medieval/ modern)
  - Ongoing Revelation: What does each generation need?

No.



Yes.



The Book of Judith

Remember to Remember Judith…

- Debated as to Hebrew or Greek composition
- No Hebrew original survives (hence, drops from Hebrew Bible Canon)
- *But* from Maccabean Kingdom: 100BCE, after reconsecration of Sanctuary by Judas Maccabeus in 164 BCE
- Outline (Dr. Debra Levine Gera, TheTorah.com):
  - 8:1-36 Judith takes control of her besieged city
  - 11:5-19, 12:1-4, 13-18 Judith seduces and kills Holophernes, the siege general
  - 14:1-4 Judith sets military policy for Jewish army
  - 15:8-16:20 "Song of Judith" (praise of Gd's victory)
  - 16:20 Returns to quiet domestic life
  - 16:21-25 Death 105, mourning by all of Israel




HANUKKAH
HEROINE
HISTORY

The Book of Judith

Hasmonean Dynasty Code

- Nebuchadnezzar = Antiochus IV Epiphanes
- Holophernes = General Nicanor of Seleucid Kingdom
- Pseudepigraphical Literature and “Jewish Time”



Where is Judith missing?

- **“Cannonical” Literature**:
  - Mishna, Tosefta (200-400 CE)
  - Talmud (600-1250 CE)
  - Classical Rabbinic Midrash (175-900 CE)
- **הספרות החיצונית/ “External” Literature :**
  - Greek: Philo, Josephus
  - Hebrew: Dead Sea Scrolls



Judith i by Jules-Claude Ziegler

Where does Judith re-emerge?

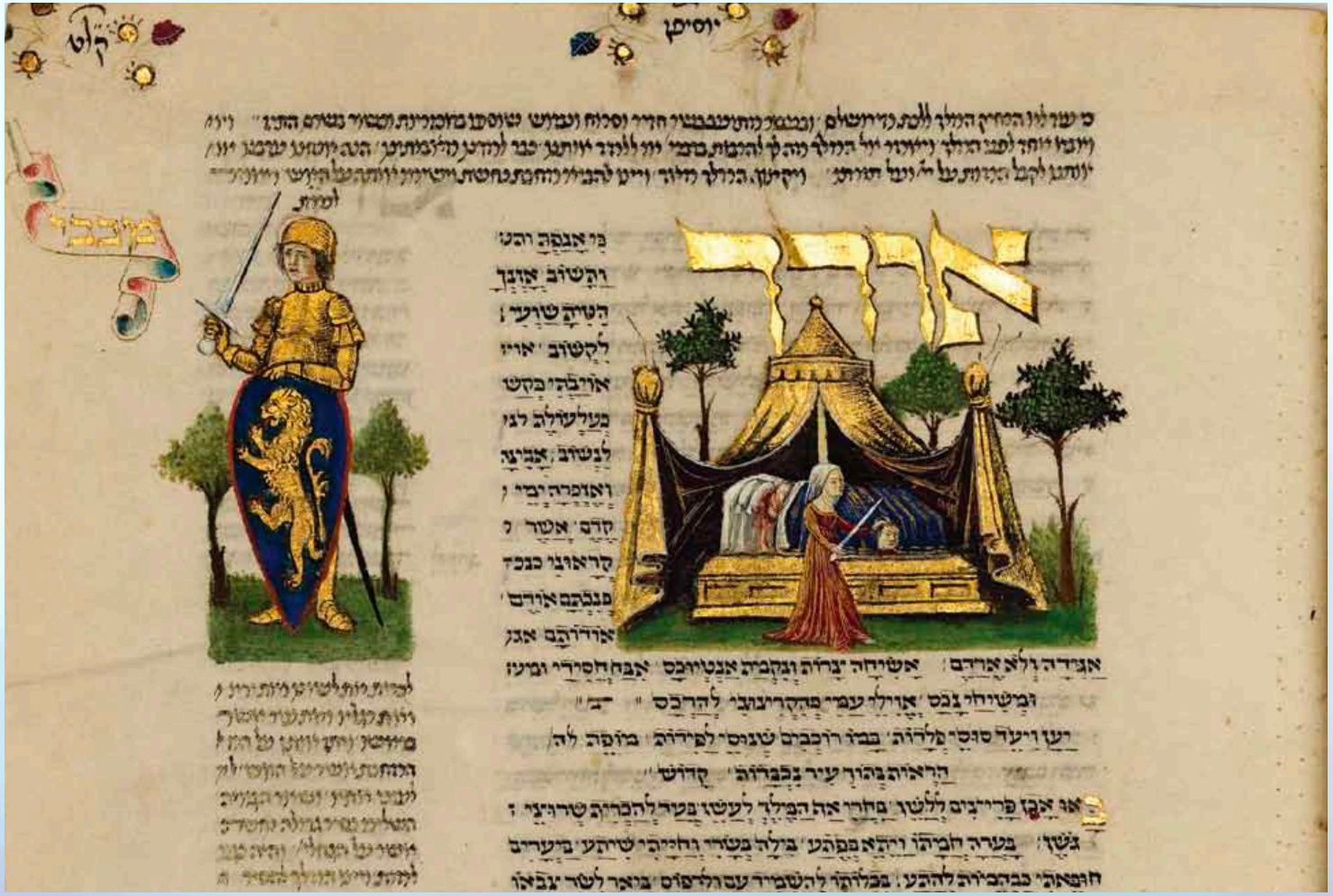
- **COMMENTS on "Cannonical" Literature**:
  - Talmud (600-1250 CE):
    - Rashi's Comments, *ius primae noctis, Rashbam, Ran, Rif*
  - Classical Rabbinic Midrash (175-900 CE):
    - Rashi on Ezekiel 21:18, Cites *Piyyut*
- **הספרות החיצונית/ "External" Literature :**
  - Judith Midrashim (11th c. onward)
  - The "Kol Bo" (13th -14th c.)



Judith and Holophernes, Birmingham Museum of Art

פיוט: אודך כי אנפת בי

Piyut: *Odekha Ki Anafta Bi*



A 15th century Italian illustration for Odekha Ki Anafta. (Rothschild Miscellany, Jerusalem, Israel Museum, Ms. 180/51, fol. 217r, Italy 1470-1480.)

Re-emergence in Talmud Comments

Rashi (1041-1105), b. Shabbat 23a, *ius primae noctis*

היו באותו הנס – שגזרו יוונים על כל בתולות הנשואות להיבעל לטפסר תחלה ועל יד אשה נעשה הנס:

Rashi: They were part of the same miracle – when the Greeks decreed that Jewish virgin brides were to be bedded first by the ruler (*ius primae noctis*), a woman brought about the miraculous rescue.

(Following Dr. Deborah Levine Gera)

Re-emergence in Biblical Comments

Rashi (1041-1105), Ezekiel 21:18

כִּי בֹחַן וּמָּה אִם־גַּם־שֵׁבֶט מֹאֵסֶת לֹא יִהְיֶה נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יֱהוִֹה׃ {פ}

Consider: How shall it fail to happen, seeing that it even scorns the rod? —says the Sovereign GOD.

Rashi: He will not be My son will no longer be in the world. Jonathan also rendered it "they will not exist," but the rest of the verse he did not render in this [i.e., Rashi's] way, but so it appears to me. I heard many explanations for it, and I saw [others] in books of interpretations, but they did not appear correct to me, and the 'payat' who composed for Chanukah [for the morning of the first Sabbath]: "That which disdained all wood stabbed the adulterer," supports me, for he called the sword "that which disdained all wood." Jonathan rendered in this manner: (verse 15) אוֹ נָשִׁישׁ. because the tribe of the house of Judah and Benjamin rejoiced at the tribes of Israel when they were exiled for worshipping idols, and they returned to stray after wooden images. He, too, explains אוֹ נָשִׁישׁ as a rhetorical question.

(Following Dr. Deborah Levine Gera)

Re-emergence in *Tosefot* (Rashi's Students)

Rashbam (1085-1174), Tosefot to b. Megillah 4a

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: נָּשִׁים חַיָּיבוֹת בְּמִקְרָא מְגִילָּה, שֶׁאַף הֵן הָיוּ בְּאוֹתוֹ הַנֵּס. וְאָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: פּוּרִים שֶׁחָל לִהְיוֹת בְּשַׁבָּת, שׁוֹאֲלִין וְדוֹרְשִׁין בְּעִנְיָנוֹ שֶׁל יוֹם.

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi also said: Women are obligated in the reading of the Megilla, as they too were significant partners in that miracle. And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi also said: When Purim occurs on Shabbat, one asks questions and expounds upon the subject of the day.

Women are obligated in reading the Megilla. From it appears that women may fulfill the obligation on behalf of others, from the fact that it does not say "to hear the reading of Megilla." And this is also implicit in Arachin (2b), which states, "All are obligated in the reading of Megilla." And it concludes, "All are obligated, to include what?" And it answers, "To include women," implying that they may even exempt men. But it is difficult, because in the Tosefta it states explicitly that a tumtum cannot fulfill the obligation on behalf of his gender or another species, and an androgynos can fulfill the obligation for his gender and not for another gender. And it is obvious that a woman is no greater than an androgynos. And so ruled the author of Halakhot Gedolot, that a woman may fulfill the obligation for her gender but not for men. And one can respond that we would have thought that their reading is ineffective even to fulfill the obligation for women; it comes to teach that they are obligated - that all are obligated in listening, servants, women and children. (Following Dr. Deborah Levine Gera)

כל בו - *KOL BO* (13th c.)

ונשים חייבות בנר חנוכה שאף הן היו באותו הנס. פי׳ שהאויבים באו לאבד הכל אנשים ונשים וטף. ויש מפרשים שעל ידי אשה אירע להם הנס הגדול ההוא ושמה יהודית כמו שמפורש בהגדה בת היתה ליוחנן כהן גדול והיתה יפת תואר מאד ואמר המלך יון שתשכב עמו והאכילתו תבשיל של גבינה כדי שיצמא וישתה לרוב וישתכר וישכב וירדם ויהי לה כן וישכב וירדם ותקח חרבו וחתכה ראשו ותביאהו לירושלים וכראות החיל כי מת גבורים וינוסו. ועל כן נהגו לעשות תבשיל של גבנה בחנוכה.

Women are obligated to light Hanukkah candles, for they too were included in the miracle. This means that the enemies came to destroy everyone, men, women, and children, and there are those who say that the great miracle occurred through a woman. Her name was Judith, as the story goes, and she was the daughter of Yochanan, the high priest. She was extremely beautiful, and the Greek king wanted her to lay with him. She fed him a dish of **cheese** to make him thirsty, so that he would drink a great deal and became drunk, and recline and fall asleep. And it happened just that way, and once he was asleep, she took his sword and cut off his head. She brought his head to Jerusalem, and when the armies saw that their leader had been killed, they fled. For this reason, we have the custom of eating a cheese dish on Hanukkah.

(Following Dr. Deborah Levine Gera)