

FRIDAY EVENING: SHABBAT COMMENCES



FIG 1. ISIDOR KAUFMAN, FRIDAY EVENING (C. 1920). JEWISH MUSEUM, NEW YORK CITY (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

At sunset on Friday, Shabbat commences. In *Friday Evening* (Fig. 1), painted around 1920 by the Austro-Hungarian Jewish painter Isidor Kaufman (1853 – 1921), a woman sits by the Shabbat table. More than four centuries earlier, in 1484, a scribe by the name of Abraham Farissol (1451 – 1525 or 1526) wrote down, in Italy, a *siddur* (Jewish prayerbook) containing the evening prayer for Shabbat's beginning (Fig. 2).

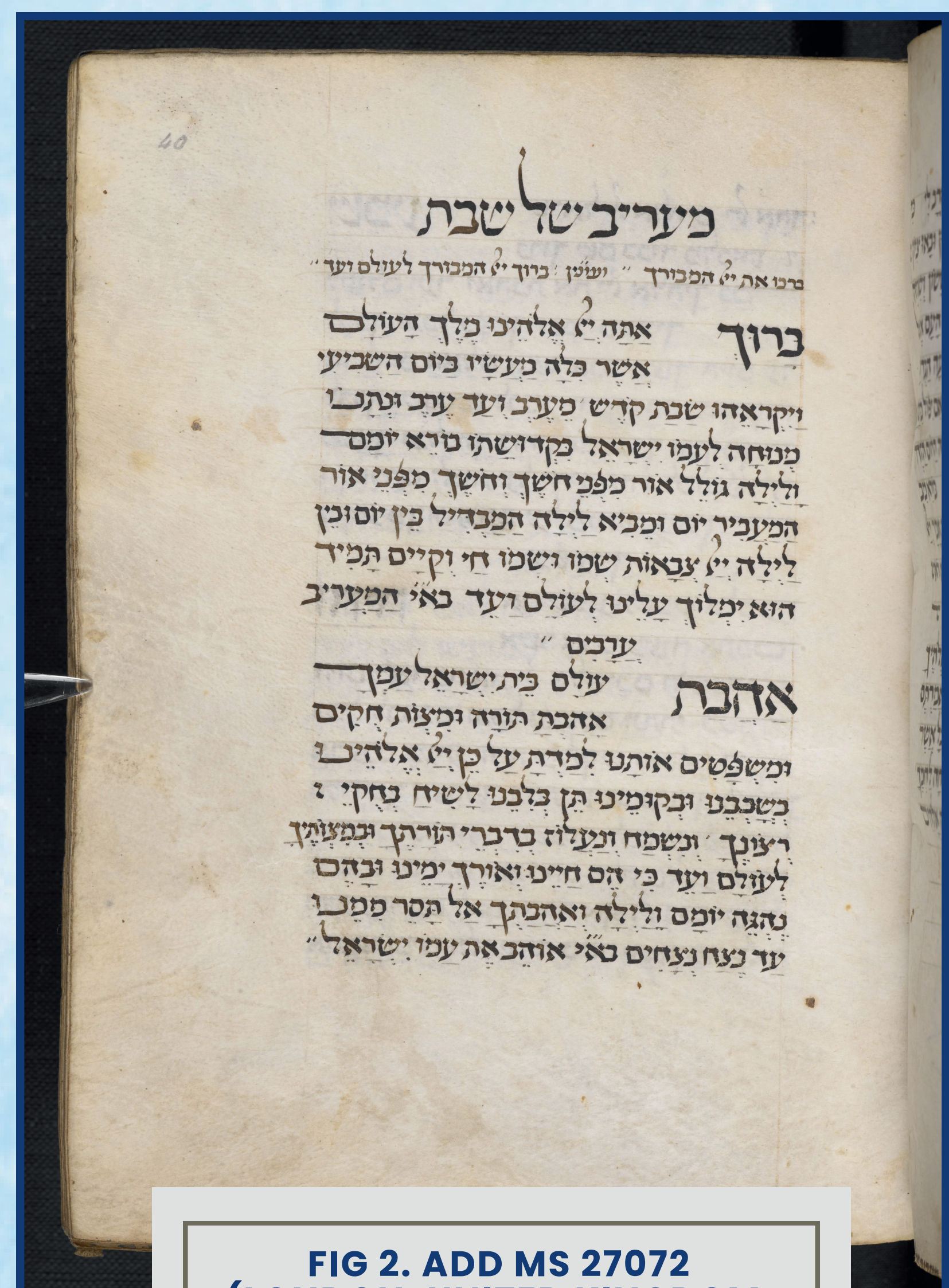


FIG 2. ADD MS 27072 (LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, BRITISH LIBRARY, HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS DIGITISATION PROJECT, PUBLIC DOMAIN), FOL. 40R

FRIDAY EVENING, PART II: THE BLESSING OF THE WINE

Shabbat is greeted with a *kiddush* ("sanctification"), as part of which wine is blessed and drunk. Cups used for that purpose ("kiddush cups") are often ornate, but this one is exceptionally so (Fig. 1). Silver-gilt, and with a detachable cover (Fig. 2), it was made in Vienna in 1723 for a Jewish courtier of high standing. On it, are depicted the twelve sons of the biblical patriarch Jacob—the ancestors of the Jews (Figs. 3 – 4).

Today, it is housed at the Met.

FIG 1.



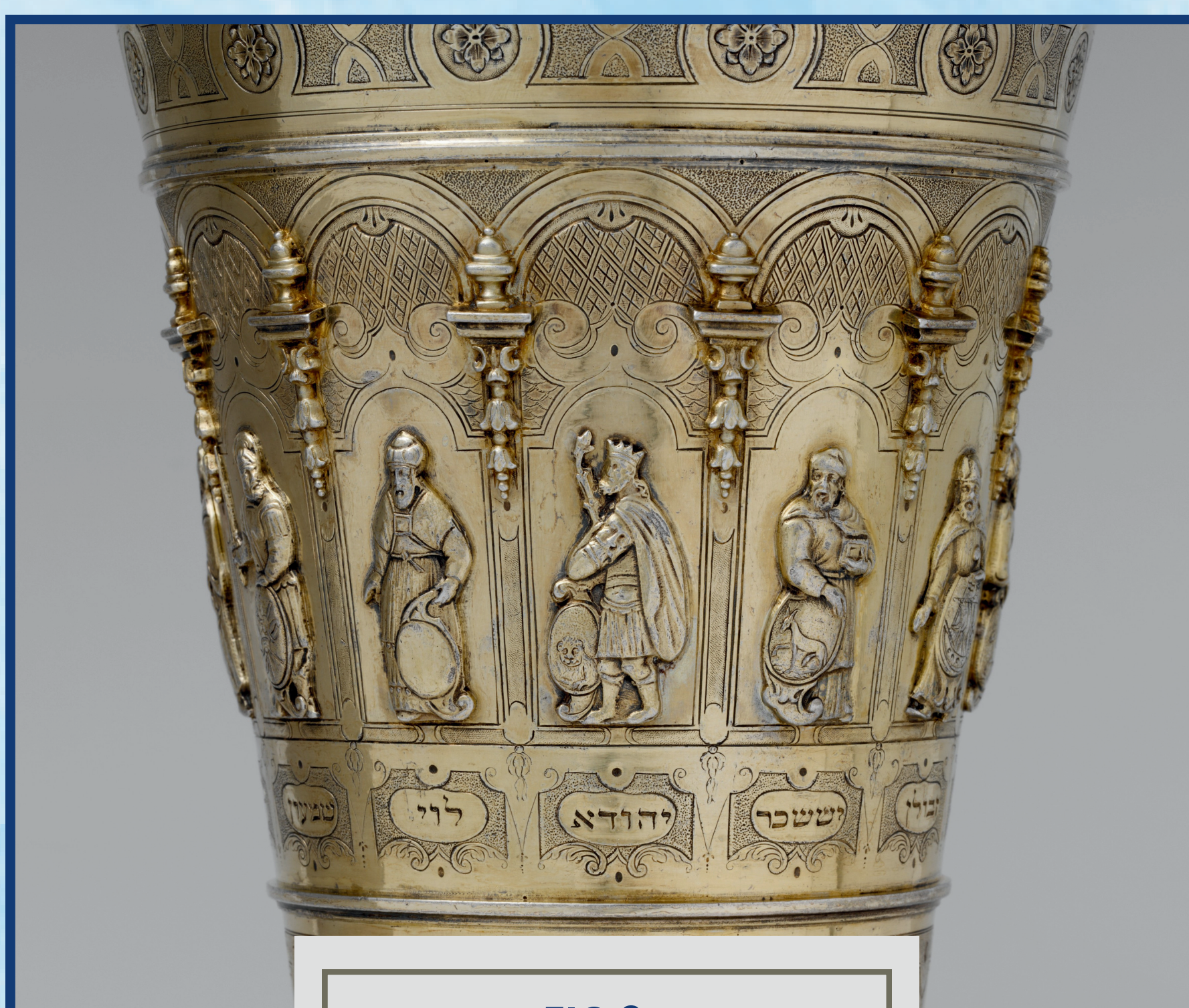
FIG 4.



FIG 2.



FIG 3.



Cup with cover with Hebrew inscriptions (1723), Metropolitan Museum, New York, 17.190.575a, b (public domain, via The Met's Open Access program)

FRIDAY EVENING, PART III: SHABBAT DINNER

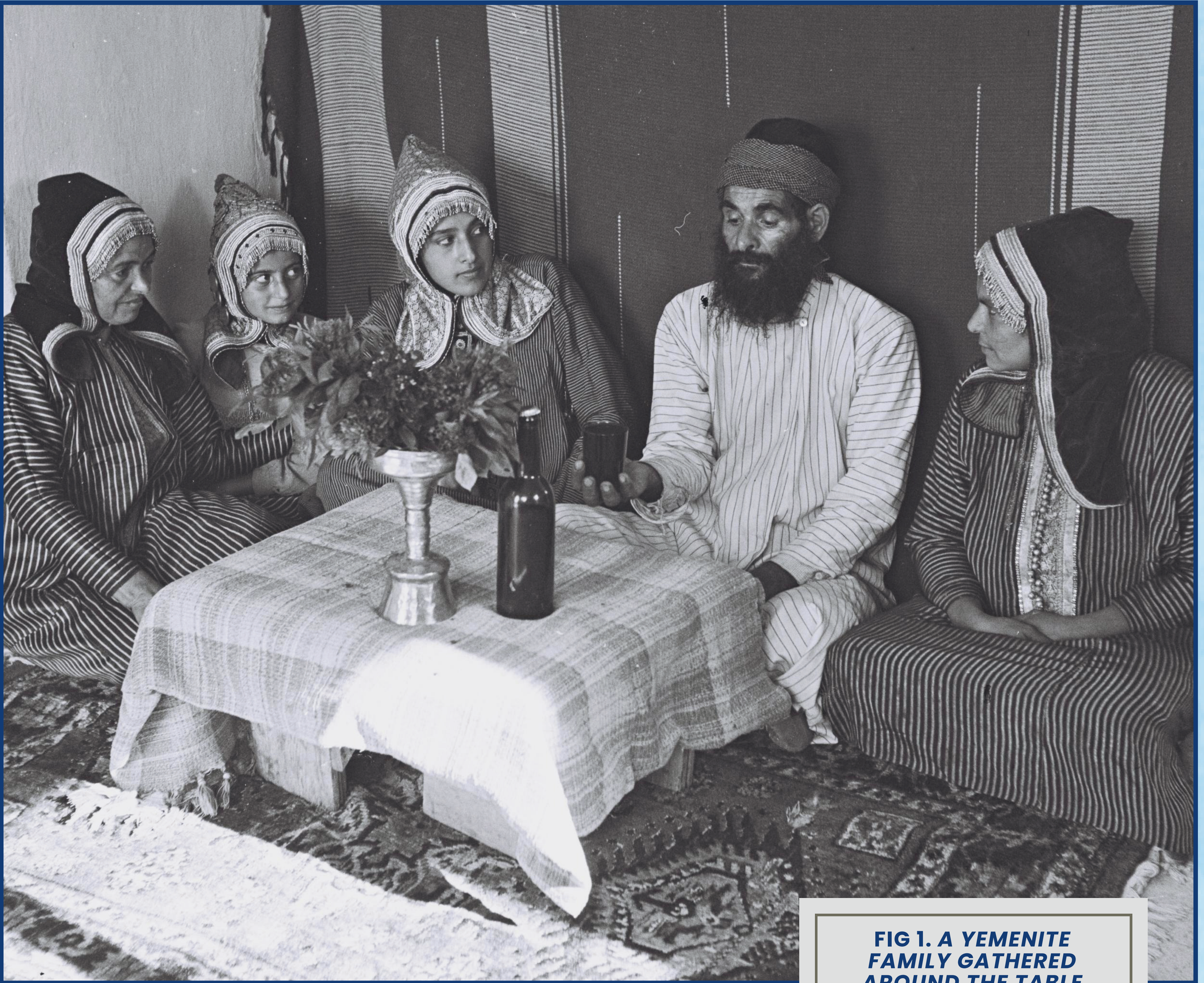


FIG 1. A YEMENITE FAMILY GATHERED AROUND THE TABLE DURING SHABBAT, 1947 (PUBLIC DOMAIN)



FIG 2. MEAL AT THE BEGINNING OF SHABBAT (MAALTIJD AAN HET BEGIN VAN DE SABBAT), 1963, ARCHIEF : FOTOCOLLECTIE VAN DE POLL (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

Next, comes Shabbat dinner. In a photo from 1947, taken in Yemen, a Yemenite Jewish family gathers for such a meal (Fig. 1), and in one from 1963, taken in Israel, an Ashkenazi Jewish family is busy eating one (Fig. 2).

SATURDAY MORNING: SYNAGOGUE

On Saturday morning, one goes to synagogue (also known as shul, or temple) to pray. One prayer recited on that occasion is the *Musaf* ("Addition"), a version of which (Fig. 1) is found in the aforementioned prayer book written down in 1484, in Italy, by the scribe Abraham Farissol (1451 - 1525 or 1526). To accompany that or other prayers, worshippers may sing a *piyyut*, "liturgical (prayer-related) poem." In 1301, in what later became the country of Germany, a scribe by the name of David bar Pesah wrote down such a *piyyut* (Fig. 2).

Likewise in Germany, though centuries later, Jews gathered for Shabbat services in the German town of Breisach, where they recited the *Musaf* prayer. A young man by the name of Heinz Bähr photographed them (Fig. 3). Shortly after, he immigrated to the United States, escaping the fate that soon befell the rest of his community.

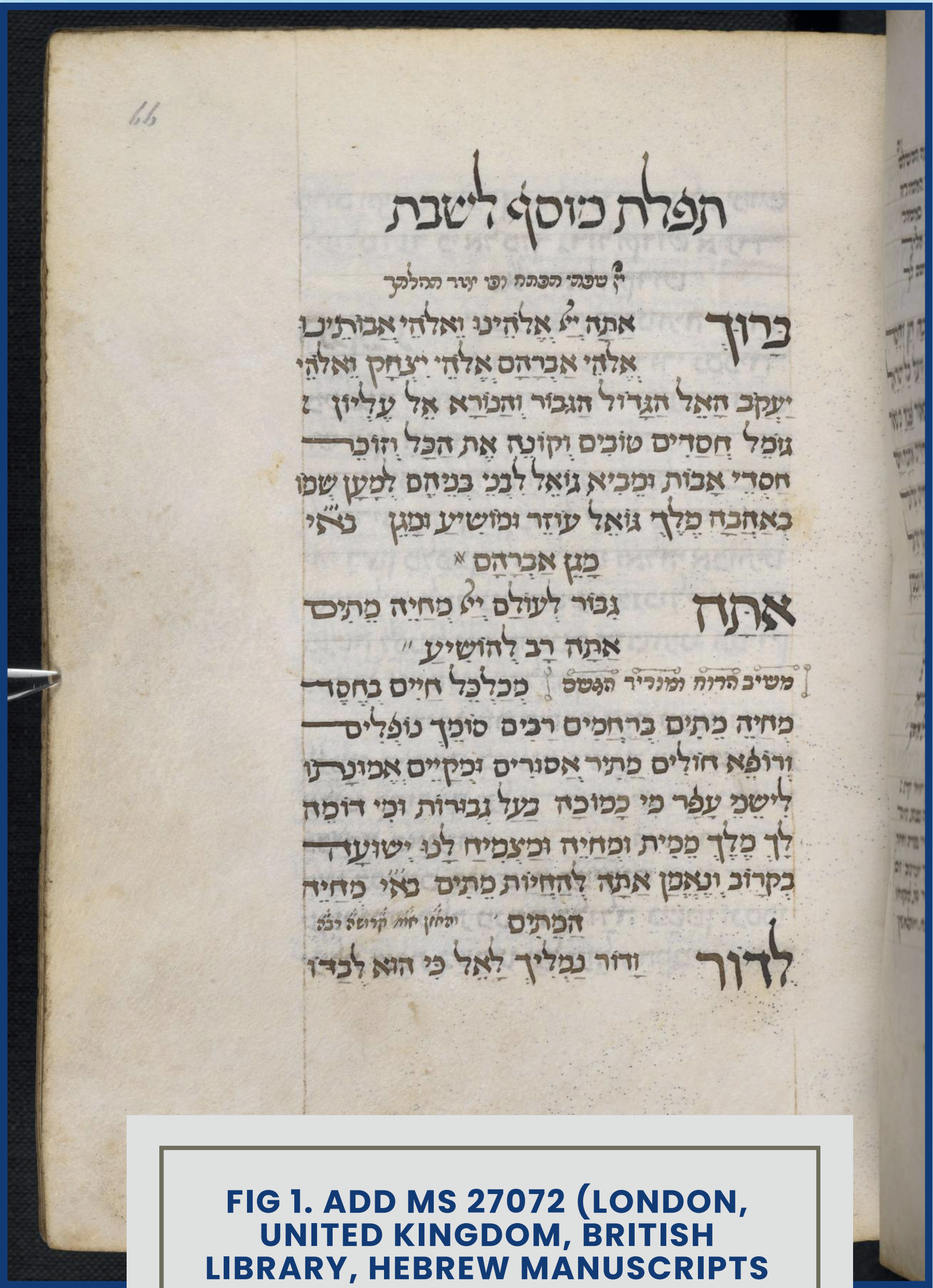


FIG 1. ADD MS 27072 (LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, BRITISH LIBRARY, HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS DIGITISATION PROJECT, PUBLIC DOMAIN), FOL. 66R.

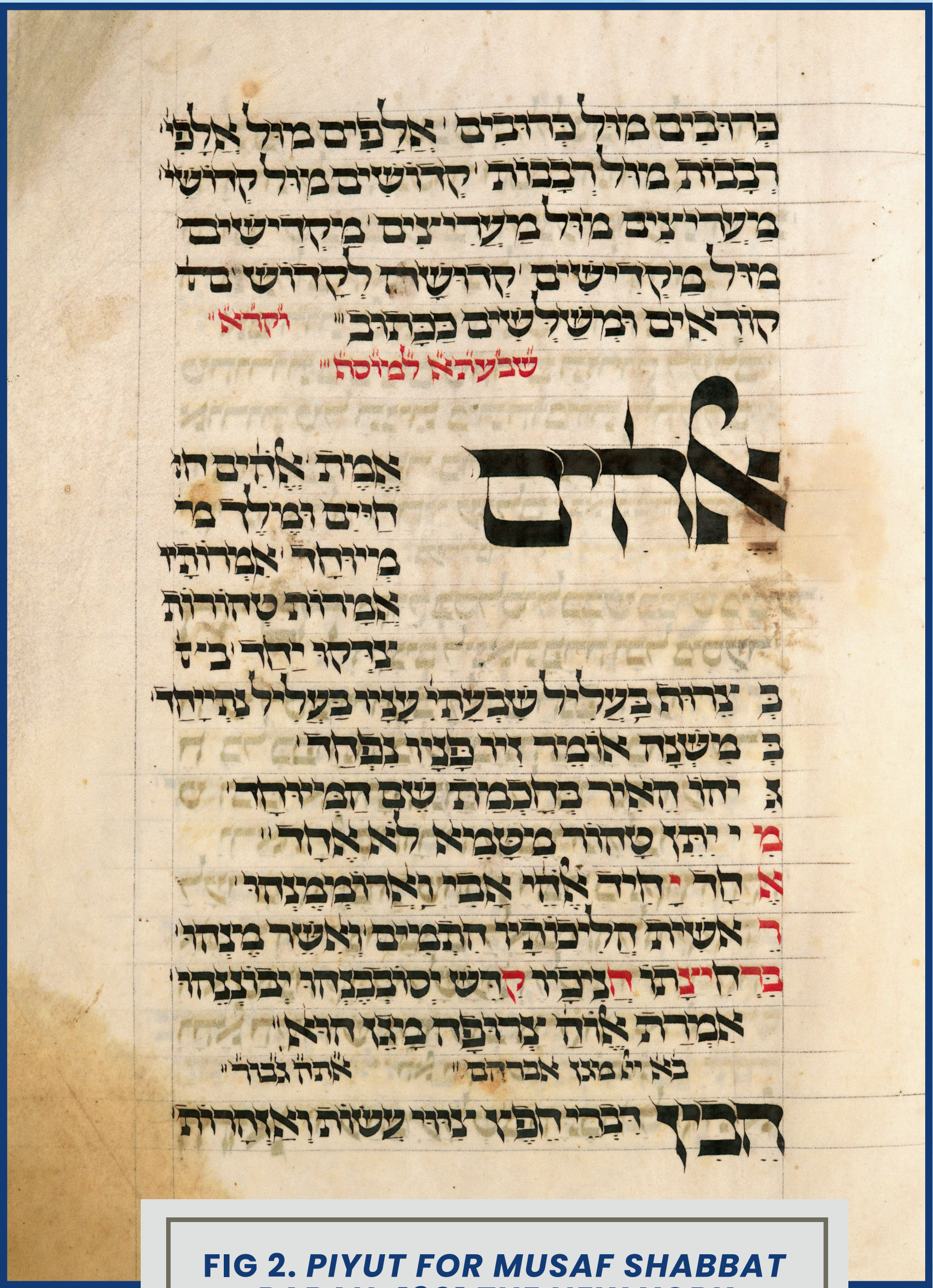


FIG 2. PIYUT FOR MUSAF SHABBAT PARAH, 1301 THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY DIGITAL COLLECTIONS (PUBLIC DOMAIN)



FIG 3. GERMAN JEWS GATHER FOR SABBATH MORNING PRAYERS IN THE SYNAGOGUE IN BREISACH, UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM (PHOTOGRAPH NUMBER: 69550). COPYRIGHT: UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM. PROVENANCE: ROBERT BÄHR.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON: REST

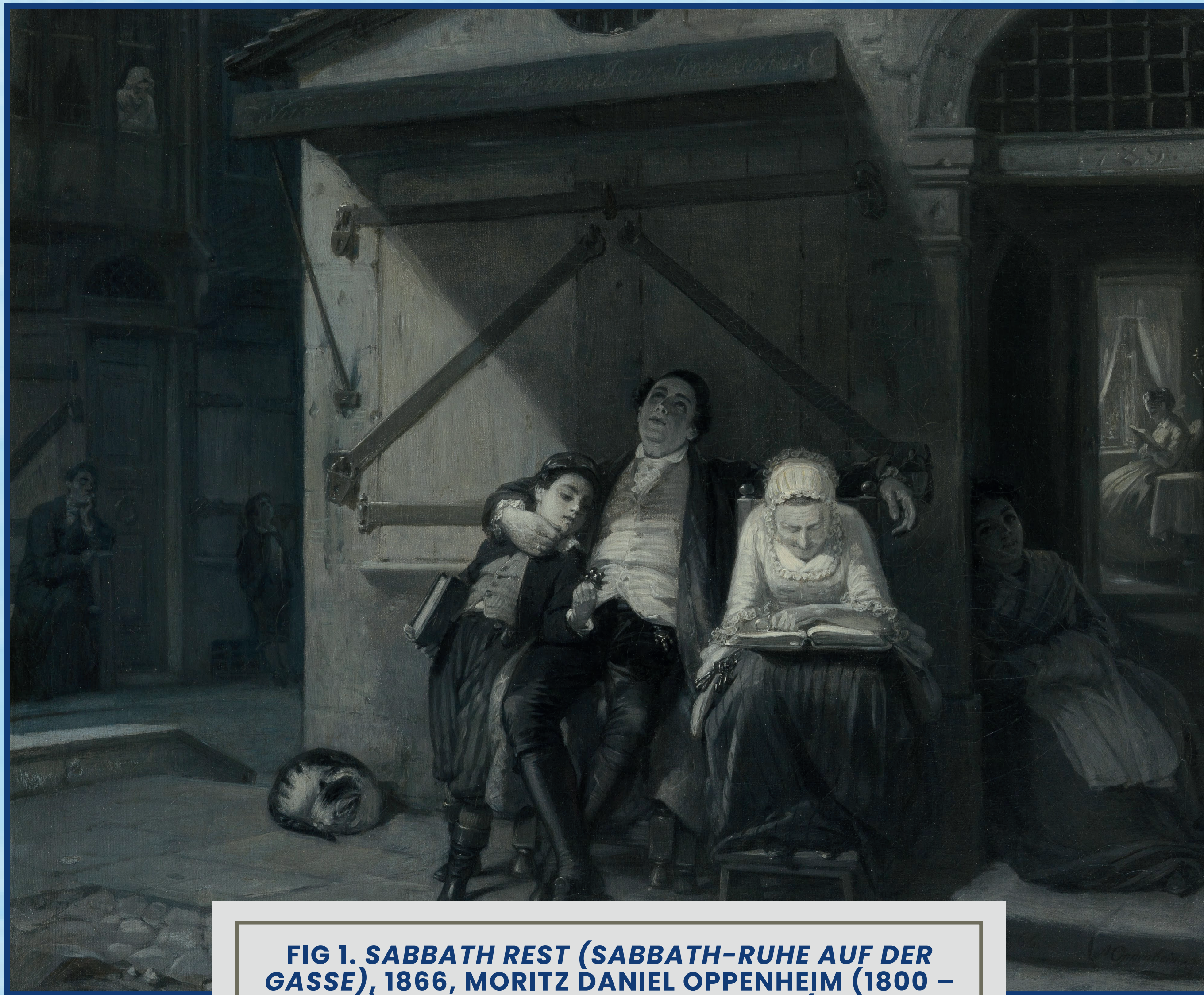


FIG 1. SABBATH REST (SABBATH-RUHE AUF DER GASSE), 1866, MORITZ DANIEL OPPENHEIM (1800 – 1882), JEWISH MUSEUM, NEW YORK (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

Now comes Shabbat rest, depicted here in two paintings aptly titled using variations on that phrase: *Sabbath Rest in the Alley*, painted in 1866 by the German-Jewish artist Moritz Daniel Oppenheim (1800 – 1882); and *The Sabbath Rest* (1894), by the Polish-Jewish Samuel Hirszenberg (1865 – 1908).

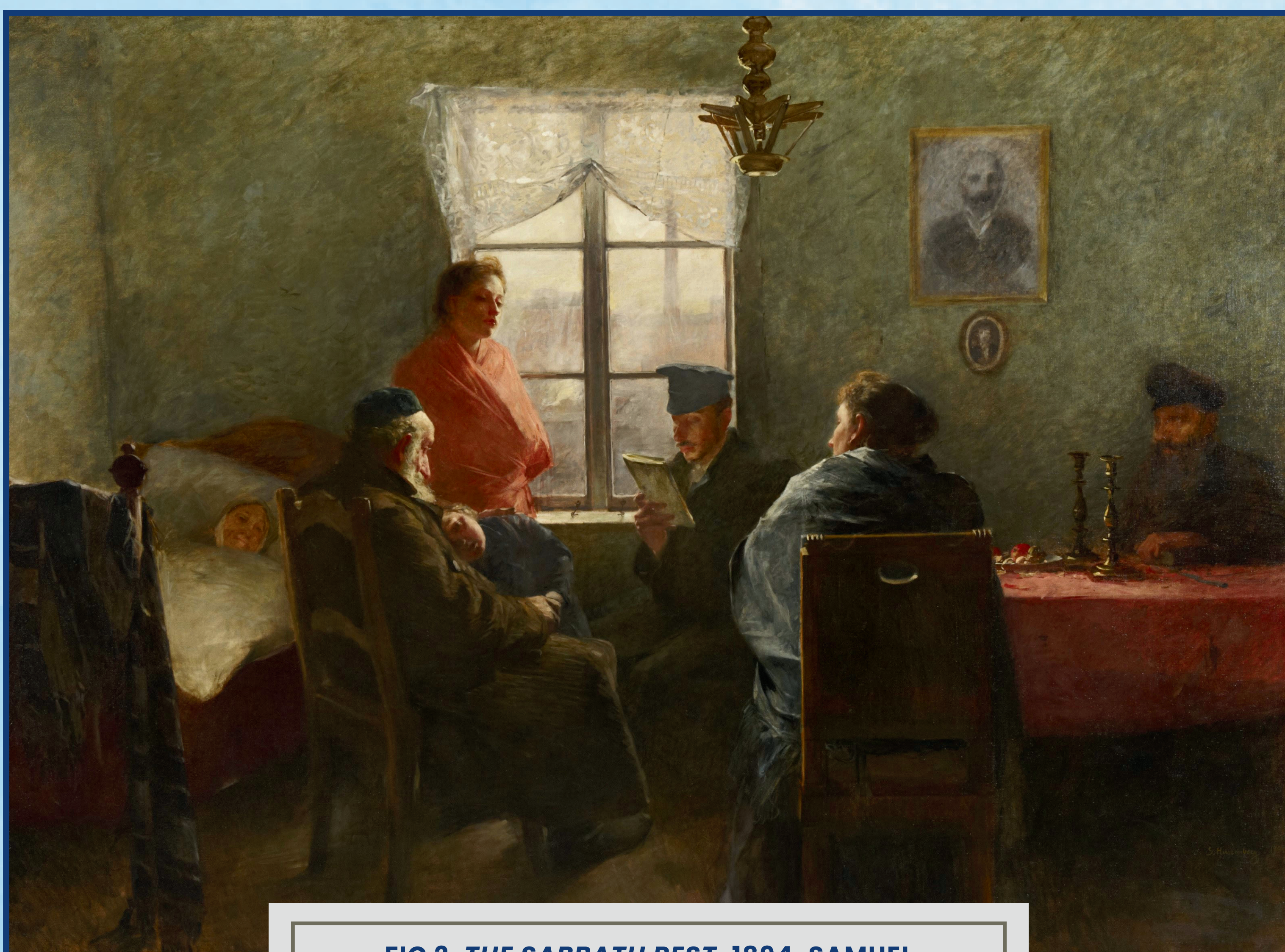


FIG 2. THE SABBATH REST, 1894, SAMUEL HIRSZENBERG (1865–1908), BEN URI GALLERY AND MUSEUM, LONDON (PUBLIC DOMAIN; COURTESY OF BEN URI GALLERY / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

SATURDAY EVENING: SHABBAT ENDS



FIG 1. THE CONCLUSION OF THE SABBATH (SABBATH-AUSGANG), 1866, MORITZ DANIEL OPPENHEIM (1800 – 1882), JEWISH MUSEUM, NEW YORK (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

With sunset on Saturday evening, Shabbat comes to an end. The ceremony of *havdalah* ("separation" in Hebrew) marks the transition from the holiness of Shabbat to the rest of the week. It is depicted in the 1866 painting *The Conclusion of the Sabbath* (Fig. 1), by the aforementioned Moritz Daniel Oppenheim (1800 – 1882). As part of *havdalah*, it is customary to smell fragrant spices—so that the soul, saddened by Shabbat's end, might be comforted. Those spices (*besamim* in Hebrew) can be placed in specialized holders, such as this turret-shaped one made in Poland around the end of the 19th century (Fig 2).



FIG 2. TURRET-TYPE BESAMIM BOX, MUSEUM OF TARNÓW LAND, MT.IV.1992 (NOT UNDER COPYRIGHT, COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF TARNÓW LAND)

YALE CONNECTIONS, PART I



FIG 1. PSALMS, JOB, PROVERBS, GENERAL COLLECTIONS, BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY MS 409, YALE UNIVERSITY (PUBLIC)

One can find a wealth of historical Shabbat-related items here at Yale, not least in the Beinecke Library. An illuminated manuscript, handwritten in Italy in 1467, contains the biblical books of *Psalms*, *Job*, and *Proverbs*. Fig. 1 is a photo of that manuscript's version of the Hebrew Bible's 90th psalm—that is, a prayer of praise to G-d—which is sung by Jews every Shabbat morning (that is, Saturday morning).

"Before the mountains were born, and you brought forth earth and world, and from eternity to eternity, you are G-d," that hymn, ascribed to the biblical Moses, declares. And in a page (Fig. 2) from his 1756 book describing Judaism to a non-Jewish audience, the German theologian Johann Christoph Georg Bodenschatz (1717 – 1797) illustrates Shabbat costumes—depicting, for instance, a stove keeping the Shabbat food warm on a continuous flame (first from below).



FIG 2. ZUR ERKLÄRUNG DER SABBATHS-CEREMONIEN, BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY MCF31 748, YALE UNIVERSITY (PUBLIC)

YALE CONNECTIONS, PART II

Ezra Stiles (1727 – 1795) was Yale's seventh president. A devout Christian, he was also interested in other religions—Judaism among them. That is reflected in this curious document, now kept at the Beinecke Library. Titled *Linguarum orientalium specimen quadrilinguale*, "A Quadrilingual Example of Eastern Languages," it can be divided into three sections, each set above the other. In the topmost one, the name of G-d is surrounded by text in four languages: Going clockwise, we find Hebrew, Syriac (a form of Aramaic), "Chaldean" (another form of Aramaic), and Arabic. The inscriptions, drawn from the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions, serve to glorify G-d and urge people to worship him. In the second, middle section, the aforementioned Arabic text is translated, word by word, into Latin. And the third contains a dedication, in Hebrew, to Ezra Stiles' son, also named Ezra: "Ezra Stiles, to his son Ezra, peace. Sept. 6. 1774."



**LINGUARUM ORIENTALIUM SPECIMEN
QUADRILINGUALE, EZRA STILES PAPERS, GENERAL
COLLECTION, BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND
MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY (PUBLIC).**