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1998

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**Moses, Little Red Riding Hood and the Furniture Store:
Wimpels (Torah Binders) in the Yeshiva University Museum Collection**

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The Yeshiva University Museum (YUM) collection includes 56 examples of the type of Torah binder known as a *wimpel*¹. A Torah binder is a strip of fabric which is used to bind together the two staves and parchment of a Torah scroll. The Torah scroll, which contains the text of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible), is read in a cycle through the Jewish liturgical calendar. The proportions of the scroll thus change through the year, with one staff bearing the portion of the scroll which has been read, and the other staff bearing the sections to be read in the future. A Torah binder must be able to accommodate these changing proportions. The binder holds together the scroll, allowing the Torah to be covered with a textile Torah mantle and to be sufficiently rigid so as to stand upright in the Torah ark.²

A wimpel is a specific type of Torah binder used by Germanic Jews. Wimpels³ are Torah binders created from textiles initially used to wrap an infant at his circumcision. After the circumcision, a wimpel is inscribed with a formulaic dedicatory inscription. The Hebrew inscription lists the infant's name and his birth date and concludes with the wish, echoing the circumcision liturgy, "may God enable him to grow to Torah, to Huppah (the marriage canopy) and to good deeds." Wimpels were presented to the synagogue in a special ceremony known as *Schuletragen* (lit. bringing to the synagogue). This marked the child's first visit to the synagogue. In many communities the child was not brought to the synagogue until after he was toilet trained. In the *Schuletragen* ceremony, the wimpel was presented to the synagogue and was used for the first time to wrap the Torah. The child was encouraged to hold onto the staves of the Torah scroll (known in Hebrew as *Atzei Hayyim*, lit. Trees of Life) as the Torah is likened to "a Tree of Life to those who grasp her" (Proverbs 3:18). After the formal presentation, the wimpel was then used to bind the Torah scroll on specific occasions in the life of the child for whom it was dedicated. It was used at his bar-mitzvah at age thirteen, and on the Sabbath preceding his wedding. Wimpels were used in communities throughout Germany, in Bohemia, Alsace, Denmark, Switzerland, England and America. There are many slight regional variants in wimpel customs and in the exact wording of the dedicatory inscriptions.⁴

The wimpels in the Yeshiva University Museum collection stem from many sources, indicating the history of wimpel use. Many of the examples were presented to Yeshiva University by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR), an organization established after World War II for the placement of Jewish cultural artifacts whose original owners could not be located. The exact origins of these wimpels is thus unknown. Other wimpels were presented to the Museum as gifts from individuals. Most of these were family heirlooms, wimpels created for a grandfather of the donor, or in some cases for the donor himself. These heirloom wimpels indicate that often such binders were not housed in synagogues, but

remained private family possessions. Two of YUM's most important wimpels were a gift from the Museum's founders and patrons, and were purchased from a Judaica dealer and donated to the Museum. In 1994, YUM received a gift of 30 wimpels from Congregation Shaare Hatikvah, a Washington Heights synagogue. Washington Heights, the Upper Manhattan neighborhood where Yeshiva University's main campus is located, is a very important locale for wimpel tradition, as it was a center of World War II-era German Jewish emigré settlement, known as "Frankfurt on the Hudson".⁵ Many local synagogues continue to follow German Jewish liturgical customs. The Shaare Hatikvah wimpels include early examples brought from Germany and later examples crafted in New York.

The exact origins of the wimpel are unclear. The earliest published extant example appears to be an almost complete 1609 wimpel discovered in the *genizah* (repository for worn sacred items) of the Westheim synagogue.⁶ An example dated 1570 is reported to have been in the synagogue in Worms prior to World War II, but is presumed to have been destroyed, along with the synagogue, in 1938.⁷ Exceptionally few extant wimpels date before the first half of the 17th century. An almost complete wimpel in the YUM collection dated 1643 is among the earliest extant examples, and is earlier than examples in many other major Judaica collections.⁸ The 1609 Westheim example and the 1643 YUM example are similar in their simplicity. They are embroidered with decorative, even fanciful, lettering similar to that found in Ashkenazic manuscripts.⁹ The decorative motifs commonly found on later wimpels, such as depictions of zodiac symbols, marriage canopies and bridal couples, are not found on these examples.

Various literary sources provide early documentation of the wimpel custom, but do not point to a source for this practice. Anton Margaritha (born ca. 1490), the grandson of Rabbi Jacob Margolioth of Regensburg and a convert to Catholicism, and later to Protestantism, describes the wimpel custom in his anti-Jewish book *Der gantze jüdische glaube*, first published in Augsburg in 1530. Many rabbinic texts and compendia of religious customs from the 17th-19th century document the practice of converting cloths used to wrap infants at their circumcision into Torah binders, but they do not suggest an origin for this custom.¹⁰

One rabbinic source has been cited as a possible origin for the link between circumcision and the Torah binder. Rabbi Jacob Moellin of Mainz (1360? - 1427, known as the Maharil) was a famed scholar and leader of Germanic Jewry, and is well known for establishing many elements of German Jewish *minhag* (custom).¹¹ An episode is reported in the *Sefer Maharil*, a book by Moellin's student Zalman of St. Goar, first published in 1556. The Maharil was the *sandak* (the godfather who holds the infant) at a circumcision. When it was discovered that there was no "*mappah*" (Hebrew term for cover, often used to refer to Torah binders, but also used for many types of domestic or ceremonial textiles) to wrap the infant's legs after the circumcision, the Rabbi ordered that the "*mappah*" that was used to wrap the Torah scroll be used to wrap the infant. The Maharil explained that it was permitted to even use the parchment of the Torah scroll in this manner, as the infant's life was endangered. He said that the cloth should be "purified" from the blood and returned to the Torah scroll, and that charity should be donated so as not to obtain pleasure from the sacred without payment.¹² Bialer and Eis have claimed that this episode provides the source for the wimpel custom, and

that later generations recalled this event and emulated the Maharil by taking circumcision wrapping cloths and making them into Torah binders.¹³ This has been questioned by Hamberger, who points out that there is no actual connection between this one event in Mainz and the general German Jewish practice of creating wimpels. He also states that the Maharil did not ask that a new Torah binder be made, but rather that the *mappah* be returned to the Torah scroll. The Maharil asked that the mappah be laundered, while in Mainz it was traditional to leave the blood stains on the wimpel. Hamberger claims that it appears that the Maharil was familiar with the wimpel custom, as it was probably current practice during his lifetime, and thus it occurred to the Maharil to suggest that the Torah *mappah* be used to wrap the infant, as this textile had originally been used to wrap an infant.¹⁴ Although this is possible, it is certainly not evident in the text. In no way does the text suggest that the Maharil was familiar with the wimpel tradition. The term *wimpel* is not used, nor does the text mention that the *mappah* used to wrap the Torah was originally used to wrap an infant at his circumcision. The argument from silence suggests that the Maharil is unaware of the wimpel tradition, but any assertion of the Maharil's awareness or intention remains conjectural.

The physical process of creating a wimpel has often been described. Early sources such as Margaritha or Jousep Schammes (1604-1678) in *Minhagim de-K'K' Varmeiza (Customs of the H[oly] C[ommunity] of Worms)* specify that the wimpel is made from a *Windel*, a swaddling cloth.¹⁵ Recently, many authors have specified that the cloth used at the circumcision was cut to form the Torah binder. Bialer states "they cut the cloth that swaddled an infant after his circumcision into strips and fashioned it into a binder . . ."¹⁶ Eis describes wimpels as "typically . . . made from the cloth which covers the new-born male during the circumcision ceremony. This cloth is cut into four parts which are attached to each other in various ways."¹⁷ Mann and Gutmann write that "following the ceremony, the cloth was cut into strips and reassembled to form a binder . . ."¹⁸ Grossman describes the process of creating a wimpel "from the linen or cotton cloth that held the male infant during the rite of circumcision. The cloth was divided into strips, sewn together lengthwise and painted or embroidered . . ."¹⁹ Gutmann states that "it became the custom to take the swaddling cloth . . . cut it generally into four sections, stitch them together and embroider them to make a Torah binder."²⁰ In a entry on "Torah Ornaments" in the recently published *Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* this author writes that "the swaddling clothes were cut into strips, sewn together and embroidered or painted . . ."²¹ In fact, the conversion of swaddling cloths into Torah binders probably did not require any cutting or new sewing of the swaddling cloth, and this confusion appears to stem from a misunderstanding of swaddling and swaddling cloths.

Swaddling is the tight wrapping of an infant in bands of cloth, generally holding the infant's legs and arms still. It was the general practice for infants to be swaddled in medieval and early modern Europe. Swaddling began to decline in the mid-18th century, as many sought to liberate infants to more freely move and interact with their parents and surroundings. In Germany, swaddling remained commonplace into the 1840s.²² We know that infants were swaddled at their circumcision ceremonies from literary sources, as mentioned above, and from visual evidence. Many *mohel* books, manuscripts for ritual circumcisers containing the

liturgy for the ceremony and often a registry of circumcisions performed, survive from 18th century Germanic lands. A number of these are illustrated with depictions of contemporary circumcision ceremonies, and in many of these scenes the infant is shown tightly wrapped in a swaddling cloth.²³ The confusion as to the process of converting a swaddling band into a Torah binder probably results from a misunderstanding of historic infant wrapping practices. After the decline of swaddling, the general practice has been to wrap infants, often quite tightly, in large rectangular or square cloths, often known as receiving blankets. A receiving blanket would need to be cut into strips and these strips sewn together to create a Torah binder. However, in Germanic lands during the period when we first know of wimpel use and until the mid-19th century, infants were wrapped in swaddling cloths, and not in receiving blankets.

Although there are many surviving examples of 17th century wimpels, very few early swaddling cloths (which have not been transformed into Torah binders) survive. This is not very surprising, as infants were left in swaddling cloths for long periods of time. These textiles would have been heavily stained with excrement, and would have required frequent cleaning. When further laundering became impossible or the cloths became too stained or worn, swaddling bands would have been discarded or used for other purposes. Two early swaddling bands, probably Italian, are in the collection of the Bethnal Green Museum in London (B.878-1993 - late 16th c.; B.879-1993 - early 17th c.). Only one of these (B.879-1993) was available for examination. The construction and dimensions of this swaddling band correspond closely to the structure of most wimpels. The Bethnal Green swaddling band is made of five sections, with a total length of 393 cm. The sections are joined together with French seams. Unlike wimpels, but actually similar to many Italian Torah binders of the period, the two final sections of the swaddling band form a triangular end with two narrow tying tapes attached at the point.²⁴ The most important aspect of the Bethnal Green swaddling band vis a vis wimpels is its construction from joined sections. Seemingly, most swaddling bands were themselves made from joined textile sections, and in order to create a wimpel only the inscription and ornamentation needed to be added to the existing swaddling cloth. The joins between segments on extant wimpels are often decorative, employing faggoting, french seams or other techniques. Many wimpel segments span from selvedge to selvedge.²⁵ In the 17th to 19th centuries, due to limited loom widths and in order to avoid waste, the best way to create a long band was to join several selvedge widths together.²⁶

Swaddling cloths, being long, narrow fabric lengths, were well suited to use as Torah binders. They were long enough to be wrapped around the Torah and could accommodate the changing proportions of the scroll throughout the liturgical calendar. The similarity between the extant Bethnal Green swaddling band and contemporary Italian Torah binders (not of the wimpel-type) indicates the ease with which these two artifact types could be associated. It is not surprising that swaddling cloths and Torah binders became linked.

Although there is a form and function association between Torah binders and swaddling cloths, it is the conceptual and symbolic association which was probably central to the creation and maintenance of the wimpel tradition. The wimpel can be seen as a physical link

between the covenantal relationship established through circumcision and the covenant embodied in the Torah. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has written a careful analysis of the symbolic resonance of the wimpel.²⁷ The wimpel as a physical object is a concrete realization of the liturgical text recited at the circumcision and inscribed on the wimpel “may God enable him to grow to Torah, to Huppah (the marriage canopy) and to good deeds.” The wimpel provides a nexus between personal and communal covenant. This nexus is embodied in the wimpel’s functional connection to the Torah scroll and through the wimpel’s ritual use at life cycle events: at bar mitzvah -- marking a child’s entrance into maturity and his obligation to observe Torah commandments, and on the Sabbath preceding his marriage -- the dawn of multi-generational continuity.

A careful analysis of several wimpels in the YUM collection provides a greater understanding of the wimpel tradition. The earliest wimpel in the YUM collection, the almost complete 1643 fragment discussed above (83.89, top binder in accompanying photograph). This wimpel is made of plain weave, handwoven linen embroidered with polychrome silk floss. The edge of the first panel bears an irregular tear, with the loss of the first word of the inscription, the infant’s name. The wimpel is constructed of four selvedge-to-selvedge panels joined by elaborate faggoting. The embroidery of the inscription is linear in fashion, with no filling. It is not very skillfully or evenly done. The inscription is executed primarily in stem stitch, with occasional feather stitch detail and attempts at satin stitch and knots. The elaborate, decorative faggoting is executed in a different color thread, and has been attributed to another hand.²⁸ Four graphite lines provide a guide for aligning the Hebrew characters. This wimpel corresponds to the above analysis of early wimpel construction. An existing swaddling cloth, constructed of selvedge widths joined by a skilled needleworker, was later transformed into a Torah binder, through the addition of an inscription crafted by a less accomplished embroiderer.

YUM’s 1753 wimpel is typical of the many surviving examples of masterfully embroidered 18th century wimpels (83.88, middle binder in accompanying photograph). The embroidery is highly accomplished, employing a great variety of stitches to add texture and excitement to the composition. The inclusion of a figure of the biblical Moses, appropriate since the child for whom the wimpel was made was named Moshe (Hebrew for Moses), is an unusual feature, especially as the wimpel maker has here conflated Aaron’s High Priest’s garb with Moses’ usual attribute, the Decalogue. Note the decorative tassels at the wimpel’s end. The wimpel is made of four segments of plain weave, handwoven linen, joined at the selvedges with elaborate faggoting stitches. The embroidery, in polychrome silk floss and silver filet over a white silk core, is the work of an accomplished amateur, with inventive use of stitches.²⁹ This wimpel is decorated with the motifs frequently found on decorated wimpels: the birth date and the inscription text “b[orn in a] g[ood sign]” -- “*mazal tov*” are accompanied by a Zodiac sign, here Scorpio. The wish for growth to Torah is illustrated with a depiction of a man holding a Torah scroll beneath a canopy, and the wish for continuance to the marriage canopy is accompanied by a depiction of a wedding ceremony.³⁰

A 1919 wimpel in the YUM collection (77.143), acquired through the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, is embroidered with a variety of flat, looped and knotted stitches. The

embroidery was executed by two hands; the more skillful embroiderer was responsible for the precise outlining, while the variety of fill stitches was executed by the second, less accomplished maker. This may be a case of a more experienced mother or grandmother teaching a young girl embroidery skills. A wimpel, often a family needlework project, was well suited to such inter-generational exchange, and the wimpel can be thus compared to other needlework types, such as samplers, used to train young embroiderers. Wimpels are similar to samplers in that both types are regarded as “folk art”. Wimpels were certainly primarily crafted by amateurs (although many examples by professional makers are known), and they often exhibit a charming naiveté in design and execution. Wimpels are also similar in function to other well known Germanic folk art types, such as decorated baptismal certificates. In the 19th and 20th centuries, wimpels were more frequently painted, rather than embroidered, and the decorative use of ornamental motifs and lettering recalls Germanic *fraktur* traditions.³¹

Two painted wimpels in the YUM collection indicate the frivolity often found in Torah binders of this type, particularly in 20th century examples. A charming, playful character, appropriate for an artifact associated with small children, imbues the ornamental motifs in a 1930 wimpel (77.148) acquired through the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. This wimpel features secular children’s motifs, such as ducks, a soldier on a hobby horse, Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, alongside such specifically Jewish imagery as a Menorah and a portrait of a young boy with earlocks. This wimpel is constructed of four panels of linen with machine-sewn hems and seams. Although it is unlikely that in 1930 the infant was swaddled, the traditional construction of attached segments, based on early swaddling bands, has been maintained in this example. A 1946 wimpel (94.166, bottom binder in accompanying photograph) was originally presented to Congregation Shaare Hatikvah in Washington Heights. It was crafted by Rev. Reuben Eschwege, whose rubber stamp imprint is on the reverse.³² This wimpel is delightfully decorated with a panoply of 1940s decorative motifs, including a car and a grapefruit topped with a maraschino cherry. The traditional iconography of a Torah scroll and a wedding scene have been rendered in a contemporary fashion, with the bride’s dress modeled on the then current silhouette. This wimpel was made for Michael Reinheimer, and the inscription includes the date of his future bar mitzvah. The wimpel is constructed of one continuous strip of sheeting quality cotton, not from joined segments. It is perhaps the quintessential post-War Washington Heights wimpel, and the Reinheimer family’s neighborhood furniture store is featured with detailed depictions of a sofa, chairs and domestic furnishings.

A more thorough conceptual analysis of the wimpel tradition is needed. Wimpels are bands which provide a link between circumcision and Torah. These bands also link other divergent elements, categories often seen as polar opposites. The wimpel tradition links clothing and textiles, and provides a connection between the sacred and the profane. A wimpel is a folk artifact, yet it is based on a sophisticated theological concept. Wimpels are ceremonial objects which literally touch the most sacred artifact in Jewish life, the parchment of the Torah scroll. Yet, they are frequently ornamented with figural representations, despite concerns of graven images, and can bear frivolous or humorous imagery, seemingly unsuitable for such a sacred context. Wimpels are artifacts associated with both men and

women. They are crafted after circumcision and are used ritually by men, yet they are most frequently created by women and often bear depictions of women. They are associated with marriage, the uniting of men and women, and their text includes the wish for continuity to marriage.³³ The wimpels in the YUM collection provide an overview of a fascinating and complex textile tradition.³⁴

Notes:

1. The research for this paper was first begun in preparation for the Spring 1997 Yeshiva University Academic Colloquia Series, and was presented on March 3, 1997. A portion of this material was also presented to the Los Angeles Judaica Collectors Club on May 14, 1998.
2. A Torah binder is used in Ashkenazic (Western, Central and Eastern European) communities and in many Sephardic (Iberian-origin) communities. In these communities, the Torah is dressed in a textile mantle and is read horizontally on a reading table. In other communities, such as Iraq, Iran and Yemen, the Torah scroll is housed and read upright in a *tik*, a rigid Torah case.
3. The correct German singular and plural form of this term appears to be *Wimpel*. The plural form *Wimpeln* is found in some current literature, but appears to have been employed to readily differentiate between the singular and plural. In this paper the term "wimpel" will be used as an accepted English term, with "wimpel" as the singular and "wimpels" as the plural.
4. There is a small but growing literature devoted to wimpels. See P.J. Abbink van der Zwan, "Ornamentation on Eighteenth-Century Torah Binders," *Israel Museum News*, 14 (1978), 64-73; Ruth Eis, *Torah Binders of the Judah L. Magnes Museum* (Berkeley: Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, 1979); Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "The Cut That Binds: The Western Ashkenazic Torah Binder as Nexus between Circumcision and Torah" in *Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual*, V. Turner, ed. (Washington: Smithsonian, 1982), pp. 136-146; Binyamin Shlomo Hamberger, "Krikhat Mappah shel Sefer Torah (Wimpel)" (The Wrapping of the Torah Binder (Wimpel)), *Mitteilungen - K'hal Adath Jeshurun*, Rosh ha-Shanah 5758 (1997), 4-13. The recent bilingual exhibition catalogue *Mappot . . . blessed be he who comes: The Band of Jewish Tradition / Mappot . . . gesegnet, der da kommt: Das Band jüdischer Tradition*, A. Weber, E. Friedlander, F. Armbruster, eds. (Osnabrück: secolo Verlag and Hidden Legacy Foundation, 1997) is the most major publication to date on this topic, with several articles as well as catalogue entries. On the Schuletragen ceremony see Joseph Gutmann, "Die Mappot Schuletragen" in *Mappot . . . blessed be he who comes*, pp. 65-69.
5. On the Washington Heights German Jewish community see Steven M. Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson: the German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933-1983* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989).
6. Falk Wiesemann, *Genizah -- Hidden Legacies of the German Village Jews* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1994), p. 213.
7. Gutmann, "Die Mappot Schuletragen," p. 66. Gutmann also mentions a 1592 example discovered in the Westheim genizah, and refers (note 6) to Wiesemann, *Genizah*, but no such example is there discussed.
8. Based on published examples and recent inquiries it appears that the earliest examples in other collections include: Israel Museum, Jerusalem -- 1680; Jewish Museum, London -- 1647; Jewish Museum, New York -- 1667; Magnes Museum, Berkeley -- 1685; Jewish Museum, Prague -- 1668 (among a

collection of 1,223 Torah binders!).

9. For an analysis of the relationship of wimpels to Ashkenazic manuscript traditions see Emile Schrijver, "Ashkenazic Tradition and the History of its Script: Where do Torah Binders fit in?" in *Mappot . . . blessed be he who comes*, pp. 46-54. Schrijver challenges the claim that there is a direct connection between medieval Ashkenazic scribal traditions and the lettering found on wimpels.

10. On these sources see Gutmann, "Die Mappe Schuletragen," pp. 66-67 and Hamberger, "Krikhat Mappah."

11. See Sidney Steiman, *Custom and Survival: A Study of the Life and Work of Rabbi Jacob Mollin (Moelln) known as the Maharil (c. 1360-1427), and His Influence in Establishing the Ashkenazic Minhag (Customs of German Jewry)* (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1963).

12. *Sefer Maharil* (Jerusalem, 1969), p. 67.

13. Bialer, *Jewish Life*, pp. 185-186; Eis, *Torah Binders*, p. 12.

14. Jousep Schammes, *Minhagim de-K'K Varneiza* (Jerusalem: Mifal Toldot Hakhmei Ashkenaz - Makhon Yerushalayim, 1988), with notes by Yair Haim Bachrach and Binyamin Shlomo Hamberger, p. 157, n. 5.

15. Schammes, *Minhagim de-K'K Varneiza*, p. 157. The term "Windeľ" is transliterated into Hebrew characters in Schammes, as in Judeo-German or Yiddish usage.

16. Bialer, *Jewish Life*, p. 186.

17. Eis, *Torah Binders*, p. 11.

18. New York, The Jewish Museum, *Danzig 1939: Treasures of a Destroyed Community* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1980), p. 85.

19. Cissy Grossman, *A Temple Treasury: The Judaica Collection of Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York* (New York: Hudson Hill Press, 1989), p. 66.

20. Gutmann, *Die Mappe Schuletragen*, p. 66.

21. Gabriel M. Goldstein, "Torah Ornaments" in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 698.

22. On swaddling, see Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), pp. 196-199.

23. See for example Zvi ben Abraham of Bumzlau, *Seder ha-milah mi-sefer sod ha-shem*, Bohemia, 1751, Hs. Ros. 322, f. 9r, in the collection of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, Amsterdam, illustrated in S.R. de Melker, E.G.L. Schrijver and E. van Voolen, eds., *The Image of the Word: Jewish Tradition in Manuscripts and Printed Books* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Library and Jewish Historical Museum, 1990), cat. no. 80, fig. 62. On *mohel* books see Eva Frojmovič, "Illustrated Mohelbooks and Circumcision Liturgies" in *Mappot . . . blessed be he who comes*, pp. 55-61.

24. My thanks to Noreen Marshall of the Bethnal Green Museum for her assistance with this research. Descriptions of the Bethnal Green swaddling bands are based on e-mail correspondence with Noreen Marshall: January 23, 1998 and April 20, 1998. On early Italian Torah binders see Cissy Grossman, "Womanly Arts: A Study of Italian Torah Binders in the New York Jewish Museum Collection," *Journal of Jewish Art* 7 (1980), 35-43.
25. This can only be seen where the decorative joins do not conceal the segment edges, such as in wimpels with faggoting, but not in those with french seams or other closed joins.
26. My appreciation to Margaret Ordoñez of the University of Rhode Island for encouraging our discussion on the use of selvedge widths as wimpel segments during the TSA Site Seminar at YUM on September 24, 1998.
27. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "The Cut That Binds." Surprisingly, the authors and editors of *Mappot . . . blessed be he who comes* appear to be unaware of this important article.
28. YUM catalogue and condition worksheet -- 83.89, assessment by June Bové and Désirée Koslin, November 21, 1996.
29. YUM catalogue and condition worksheet -- 83.88, assessment by June Bové and Désirée Koslin, November 21, 1996.
30. For other examples of highly accomplished 18th century wimpels see van der Zwan, "Ornamentation." For the use of such wimpels as pictorial evidence, i.e. an analysis of wedding scene depictions as sources for understanding contemporary Jewish practices see V.B. Mann and R.I. Cohen, eds., *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage and Power 1600-1800* (New York: The Jewish Museum and Prestel, 1996), pp. 232-236.
31. For a discussion of wimpels as Jewish folk art see Norman L. Kleeblatt and Gerard C. Wertkin, *The Jewish Heritage in American Folk Art* (New York: The Jewish Museum, Museum of American Folk Art and Universe Books, 1984), pp. 77, 106, 110, 114-115, and Norman L. Kleeblatt and Vivian B. Mann, *Treasures of the Jewish Museum* (New York: The Jewish Museum and Universe Books, 1986), p. 116.
32. On Eschwege and for another wimpel by this artist see Kleeblatt and Wertkin, *The Jewish Heritage in American Folk Art*, pp. 114-115.
33. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "The Cut That Binds" provides an excellent basis for this conceptual analysis, which demands a more complete treatment than is here possible, due to space limitations. On the relationship between clothing and Jewish ceremonial objects, as well as for transformations and tensions between the sacred and profane, see *From the Secular to the Sacred* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1985).
34. The crafting of wimpels remains customary today only in the few Jewish communities closely adhering to traditional German Jewish custom. The wimpel tradition has declined greatly in recent decades. This decline is a result of the Holocaust's destruction of German Jewry, and is also due to the new popularity of elasticized Torah binders (due to their ease of use), following the widespread availability of elastic thread in the 1930s.

