



Initial "A" at the opening of the Book of Judith in a bible from Citeau, Eastern France, 1109, showing Judith decapitating Holofernes. Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 14, fol. 158.

AA-ALP

AACHEN (Aix-la-Chapelle; in Jewish sources: שׂוֹן אַאָא, שׂא), city on the German-Belgian border; former capital of the Carolingian Empire. The delegation sent by *Charlemagne to the caliph Harun al-Rashid in 797 included a Jew, Isaac, who probably acted as interpreter or guide, and subsequently reported back to Aachen. Jewish merchants were active in Aachen by about 820. A "Jews' street" is known to have existed from the 11th century. The Aachen community, which paid only 15 marks in tax to the emperor in 1241, cannot have been large. In 1349 the Jews were "given" to the count of Juelich, who received their taxes and authorized Jewish residence in Aachen. The Jews were expelled from Aachen in 1629, most settling in neighboring Burtscheid. However, Jewish moneylenders were again active in Aachen about ten years later. They were included in the municipal jurisdiction in 1777. Prior to the inauguration of a Jewish cemetery in 1823, the Jews of Aachen buried their dead in Vaals across the border in the Netherlands. In 1847 the community was organized under the Prussian Jewish Community Statute. A Jewish elementary school was founded in 1845. The synagogue, built in 1862, was destroyed in the 1938 *Kristallnacht.

The Jewish population had increased from 114 in 1816 to 1,345 by 1933. In 1939, after emigration and arrests, there were 782 Jews living in the city. Others subsequently managed to

flee and the rest were deported between March 1942 and September 1944. After the war, there were 62 Jews in Aachen. A new synagogue and communal center were built at the expense of the German government in 1957. In 1966 the Jewish community of Aachen and environs numbered 163. As a result of the immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union, the number of community members increased from 326 in 1989 to 1,434 in 2003. Another new synagogue and community center were inaugurated in 1995.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: H. Jaulus, *Geschichte der Aachener Juden* (1924). **ADD. BIBLIOGRAPHY:** M. Bierganz, A. Kreutz, *Juden in Aachen* (1988); H. Lepper, *Von der Emanzipation zum Holocaust. Die Israelitische Synagogengemeinde Aachen 1801-1942*, 2 vols. (1994).

[Ernst Roth / Stefan Rohrbacher (2nd ed.)]

AARGAU, canton of northern Switzerland. A few Jewish families are known to have lived there during the Middle Ages. From the 17th to the mid-19th centuries Aargau remained the sole area of permanent Jewish settlement in Switzerland; Jews lived in the two communities of *Endingen and Lengnau, and it was they who waged the struggle for Jewish *emancipation in Switzerland. In the 18th century Aargau Jews obtained rights of residence and movement; these were conferred by special safe conducts and letters of protection against the payment

of high imposts, usually granted for a 16-year period. Jewish occupations were restricted to participation in the markets, the cattle and horse trade, peddling, and estate brokerage. Both communities possessed their own synagogues, sharing a cemetery and rabbi. The Jews in Aargau continued to pay the special taxes until their abolition by the Helvetic Republic in 1798. Rights of residence, trade, and ownership of real estate were granted to the Jews by the Helvetic government but were later revoked by the *Judengesetz* (Jews' Law) in 1809. The independent canton of Aargau was founded in 1798/1803. A law regularizing the status of the Jewish communities was passed in 1824 and, in conjunction with the General Education Act of 1835, regulated Jewish life and communal organization on the same principles as those governing similar non-Jewish institutions in the canton. In the 1850s two new synagogues were built, one in Endingen and one in Lengnau, and were later declared cantonal monuments. However, since the Jewish communities were not recognized as communities of local citizens, their members were debarred from canton citizenship. The Great Council of Canton Aargau authorized Jewish emancipation in 1862, but was bitterly opposed by the popular anti-Jewish movement and was subsequently repealed. The Jews of Aargau only obtained full rights of citizenship in 1878 after the Swiss federal parliament had intervened in their favor. Jews began to leave the region for other parts of Switzerland in the middle of the 19th century, their numbers dwindling from 1,562 in 1850 to 990 in 1900 and to 496 in 1950. In 1859 in the town of Baden a Jewish community was founded which built its synagogue in 1913 and erected a cemetery (1879). Between 1900 and the 1940s a small yeshivah was active under Rabbi Akiba Krausz. A Jewish Swiss Home for the Aged was established in Lengnau in 1903. At the turn of the 20th century services were sometimes held in the synagogues on Rosh Ḥodesh and for marriages. Aargau Jewish history came to public attention with the appointment of the first Jewish member of the Swiss government, Ruth *Dreifuss. In 2000, 342 Jews lived in Aargau.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: E. Haller, *Die rechtliche Stellung der Juden im Kanton Aargau* (1900); A. Steinberg, *Studien zur Geschichte der Juden in der Schweiz waehrend des Mittelalters* (1902); F. Wyler, *Die staatsrechtliche Stellung der israelitischen Religionsgenossenschaften in der Schweiz* (1929); F. Guggenheim-Gruenberg, in: *150 Jahre Kanton Aargau...* (1954); idem, *Die Juden in der Schweiz* (1961); A. Weldler-Steinberg and F. Guggenheim-Gruenberg, *Geschichte der Juden in der Schweiz vom 16. Jahrhundert bis nach der Emanzipation* (1966 and 1970). **ADD. BIBLIOGRAPHY:** W. Frenkel, *Baden, eine jüdische Kleingemeinde. Fragmente aus der Geschichte 1859–1947* (2003).

[Florence Guggenheim-Gruenberg / Uri Kaufmann (2nd ed.)]

AARON (Heb. אַהֲרֹן), brother of *Moses and *Miriam; founder of the priesthood in Israel.

Biblical Information

Aaron belonged to the tribe of *Levi (Ex. 4:14) and was the elder son of *Amram and *Jochebed (*ibid.* 6:20; Num. 26:59; 1 Chron. 5:29; 23:13). He was senior to Moses by three years

(Ex. 7:7), but younger than his sister (as may be inferred from Ex. 2:4). There is no narrative recounting Aaron's birth and nothing is known of his early life and upbringing. He apparently stayed in Egypt all the time Moses was in Midian and became known as an eloquent speaker (4:14). Aaron's marriage to Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab (6:23), allied him with one of the most distinguished families of the important tribe of Judah. His brother-in-law, Nahshon, was a chieftain of that tribe (Num. 1:7; 2:3; 7:12,17; 10:14) and a lineal ancestor of David (Ruth 4:19; 1 Chron. 2:10). The marital union thus symbolized the religio-political union of the two main hereditary institutions of ancient Israel, the house of David and the house of Aaron. Four sons were born of the marriage, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar (Ex. 6:23; 28:1; Num. 3:2; 26:60; 1 Chron. 5:29; 24:1).

The biblical narrative assigns Aaron a role subordinate to that of Moses. No mention is made of him in the initial theophany (Ex. 3:18; 4:12), and he is introduced into the events of the Exodus only because Moses resists the divine commission (4:14–16). He is to be Moses' spokesman ("prophet") to Israel (4:15–16) and to Pharaoh (7:1–2). He receives a revelation from God to go to meet Moses returning from Midian (4:27), and together the two brothers appear before the people, with Aaron performing his signs in their presence (4:28–30). Later, he performs wonders before Pharaoh. His rod turns into a serpent that swallows the serpent rods of the Egyptian magicians (7:9–12). In the ten plagues that befall the Egyptians, Aaron acts jointly with Moses in the first plague (7:19 ff.), operates alone only in the next two (8:1 ff., 12 ff.), is involved with Moses in the sixth and eighth (9:8 ff.; 10:3 ff.), and does not appear at all in the fifth and ninth (9:1–7; 10:21 ff.). For the rest, he is merely a passive associate of his brother. Although Aaron functions whenever the Egyptian magicians are present, it is significant that even where he plays an active role in performing the marvels, it is not by virtue of any innate ability or individual initiative, but solely by divine command mediated through Moses. Aaron's sons do not inherit either his wondrous powers or his potent rod. The secondary nature of Aaron's activities in the cycle of plagues is further demonstrated by the circumstance that he never speaks to Pharaoh alone and that only Moses actually entreats God to remove the plagues, although Pharaoh frequently addresses his request to both brothers (8:4, 8, 21, 25–26; 9:27 ff., 33; 10:16 ff.).

Strangely, Aaron plays no part at all in the events immediately attending the escape from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the victory hymns, and the water crisis at Marah (13:17; 16:1). He reappears again in connection with the incident of the manna (16:2–36), and at the battle with the Amalekites when, jointly with Hur, he supports Moses' hands stretched heavenward to ensure victory (17:10–13). Together with the elders of Israel, he participates in Jethro's sacrificial meal (18:12), but plays no role in the subsequent organization of the judicial administration. He does, however, again jointly with Hur, deputize for Moses in his judicial capacity while the latter goes up to the Mount of God to receive the Tablets (24:14). At the