

HEBREW BOOKS

FROM THE HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY



Toldot Yitshak al ha-Torah, by Izsák Weisz, published in Munkács in 1903/4

Microfiche Edition



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HEBREW BOOKS

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Microfiche Edition

The Harvard College Library's collection of Judaica is one of the most comprehensive in the world. Encompassing works from ancient, medieval, and modern times, it is a rich and indispensable historical resource.

Libraries and scholars now have an excellent opportunity to possess complete reproductions of close to 5,000 important Hebrew titles from Harvard's library. Harvard and K.G. Saur have joined in producing microfiche copies of carefully selected works, offering unprecedented access to otherwise unobtainable texts. Even scholars familiar with the range and breadth of Judaic works will discover within this microfiche collection many rare and unfamiliar titles. Libraries previously unable to obtain copies of these rare works, or interested in a preservation copy of those they already possess, will welcome this publication.

The Harvard Library's Judaica Collection

Hebrew books and Judaica in other languages have been an integral part of the Harvard University Library since the founding of the University in 1636. Teaching and research in Hebrew and related studies likewise have a long and distinguished history at Harvard. However, the development of a major research collection in this field is a product of more recent times. The twentieth century acquisitions of three superb collections – that of Ephraim Deinard in 1929, Felix Friedmann in 1951, and Lee M. Friedman in 1957 – elevated the collection to a position of international eminence in the field of Judaica.

In 1962, the Library's Judaica Department was established and charged with the responsibility for the systematic selection, acquisition, and cataloging of Judaica in general and of books in Hebrew and Yiddish in particular. The collection now encompasses some 150,000 volumes.

The catalog of the entire collection was recently converted to machine readable form, creating the largest data base of computerized Hebrew and Yiddish bibliographic data. This data is available on-line via Harvard's HOLLIS computer catalog and via the OCLC and RLIN national bibliographic networks.

Harvard's accomplishment in assembling its collection is all the more extraordinary given the publishing history and sometimes precarious physical condition of many timeworn Judaic works.

Often issued in small editions and frequently destroyed in the upheavals affecting Jewish communities in Europe and the Middle East, many of these books are virtually unobtainable today. Extant editions were often printed on acidic paper and are unfortunately well on their way to self-destruction.

Scope and Organization of the Microfiche Collection

Books included in K.G. Saur's *Hebrew Books from the Harvard College Library* were selected by Charles Berlin, the library's Lee M. Friedman Bibliographer in Judaica, with three factors in mind: research value, condition, and scarcity. Books known to be available in modern reprints or in editions on good paper were excluded. Therefore, works included are primarily eighteenth century through early twentieth century imprints, often printed in Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East, generally scarce, and frequently on now-brittle paper.

Hebrew Books from the Harvard College Library is especially rich in rabbinic literature: commentaries on the Bible, Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash; *responsa*; codes of Jewish law; homiletics; Jewish ethics; Jewish philosophy and theology; Hasidism; and kabbalah. There is also a wealth of literary and historical material.

Virtually every center of Hebrew printing is represented, from major centers in Europe, such as Amsterdam, Livorno, Frankfurt am Main, Vienna, Prague, and Warsaw, to those in the Middle and Near East such as Jerusalem, Istanbul, and Djerba. This collection, however, is particularly noteworthy for the large number of publications included from small towns and lesser-known locations in Central and Eastern Europe, such as Paks, Munkács, Korets, Zhitomir, and Sulzbach, and from Middle Eastern locations such as Baghdad, Susah, and Alexandria.

Hebrew Books from the Harvard College Library is organized into two sections, each comprising eight subject areas. Rabbinical subjects such as *responsa*, homiletics, rabbinic texts and commentaries, and Biblical commentaries are included in Part I, while secular subjects such as biography, history, *belles lettres*, and works in related languages such as Judeo-Persian, Ladino, and Judeo-Arabic are included in Part II. All titles are arranged within their subject areas by the Harvard College Library call number. In addition, a printed index offers ready access to the entire collection.

Hebrew Books from the Harvard College Library is at once an important preservation project and an excellent source of research material for scholars of many different disciplines – Jewish studies, theology, history, philosophy, language, and literature.

A Word About the Commentaries in this Brochure:

Recognizing the scholarly and historical significance of *Hebrew Books from the Harvard College Library*, Harvard and K.G. Saur invited nine scholars expert in the field of Jewish studies to evaluate and comment upon the fiche collection. Their comments provide valuable, authoritative information on both the content and context of the works in the collection.

Professor Marvin Fox, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts

Professor Michael A. Meyer, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio

Professor Herbert H. Paper, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio

Professor Aron Rodrigue, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

Professor David Roskies, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, New York

Professor Marc Saperstein, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri

Professor Menahem Schmelzer, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, New York

Professor Haym Soloveitchik, Yeshiva University, New York, New York

Professor Norman Stillman, State University of New York, Binghamton, New York

Part I

Rabbinical Works

Responsa

No formal court system existed in the early Jewish diaspora society. Legal and religious questions which could not be decided locally were forwarded to famous rabbinical authorities, who replied with a ruling which generally set forth their rationale and basis. These rulings – *responsa* – have formed the major part of the functional body of Jewish law from the ninth century to this day. *Responsa* rulings were obeyed by all Jewish communities of the diaspora: Kurdistan, Yemen, Turkey, North Africa, Poland, Russia, Central and Western Europe, and North and South America.

The cultural and legal significance of *responsa* is obvious. They are the court records of Jewish society for over a millennium; their influence upon Jewish life continues unabated. They also constitute the primary source of knowledge of Jewish society before modern times, and as such have been mined by historians and sociologists for over a hundred years. However, considering the enormous amount of material, scholars have only begun to utilize its vast cultural wealth.

Responsa, unlike chronicles and biographies written about the upper levels of society, reflect the most prosaic, and occasionally sordid aspects of daily life at every level of society. Business practices, popular beliefs, marital relations, social tensions and antipathies, all have found their way into what amounts to Judaism's court records. As such, they reflect the growth and evolution of Jewish community life worldwide.

Professor Haym Soloveitchik

Homiletics

Given the inherently ephemeral nature of the sermon, created not for posterity but for a particular group of listeners on a specific occasion, it is remarkable how many hundreds of volumes of sermons and homiletical writings exist. They comprise a body of literature that has been little studied and, except in a few world-class collections of Judaica, is largely inaccessible.

Yet these texts are of considerable importance for the study of Jewish history, literature, and thought. Many, to be sure, are rather standard fare, exploring recurrent intellectual problems or repeating commonplace criticisms of Jewish society. But scattered through this enormous literature are precious nuggets: the direct immediate response to a historical event, the story taken from a non-Jewish source and recast to illustrate a point to the Jewish congregation, the criticism of behavior that exposes the fault lines of Jewish society, the illuminating new interpretation of a well-known Bible verse or rabbinic statement.

Even when the sermons are not profound or original, they reveal something important: the demands and expectations of the listeners for whom they were intended, the level of their education, the ideas they would tolerate. The appearance in sermons of philosophical or kabbalistic teachings, simplified and popularized, is invaluable evidence for the diffusion of such teachings through Jewish society as a whole.

Particularly well-represented among the microfiche volumes is the eulogy, which, from the sixteenth century on, became one of the most significant expressions of the homiletical art. These texts are a rich and virtually untapped resource revealing biographical details about the figures which were eulogized, the image of these figures in the minds of their contemporaries, and the range of Jewish attitudes toward death and the afterlife.

All of the texts in this collection are valuable records of Jewish thought. Some of them reflect the sermon at its best: an act of dramatic communication between a preacher and a congregation expressing the poignant ambiguities of a unique moment in history.

Professor Marc Saperstein



▲
Derech yam, by Markus Stieglitz,
published in Munkács, 1900 (from *Rabbinic Texts*)

Religious Ethics

Works on Jewish ethics are in the great tradition of Western thought. These works range from theoretical discourses, which seek to set the conceptual foundations for a Jewish account of what is right and good, and didactic essays focusing on moral instruction, to sermons aimed at the improvement of character and moralistic writings in the form of commentaries on various rabbinic texts.

The teachings of these works normally fall within the framework of the *halakah*, the tradition of Jewish law. The authors do not aim at creating a new morality, but see themselves as specifying the teaching of the law as it relates to the moral life and the refinement of character. These works reflect the particular styles and interests of their time and place, as well as the religious and moral orientation of their particular group within Judaism.

The works contained in this collection are a remarkable sampling of the various types and genres of ethical works in Hebrew. They range in time from the twelfth century to the early twentieth century, and they reflect the traditions of Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewry, the diverse Jewish cultures of the orient and the occident. The authors range from prominent figures in Jewish learning and intellectual creativity, such as Moses Maimonides, to relatively obscure individuals.

This collection is a rich feast of the rare and unusual in the field. Scholars who are masters of the standard literature will be astonished to discover here important and fascinating treatises hitherto unknown to them. This is a major resource for research into moral theory and practice in the Jewish tradition.

Professor Marvin Fox



Codes of Jewish Law

The Jewish diaspora community has been united for the past two thousand years not so much by a common theology or even a common outlook, but rather by a common religious life: Passover, High Holidays, Sabbath observance, daily prayer, *kashrut* – in a phrase, a common religious regula, the *halakah*. Regulating almost every aspect of personal and communal life, the *halakah* applied to food preparations and consumption, marital relationships, and civil law and self-government.

The material in this section provides new depth to the study of Jewish law. The wide variety of works goes beyond the field's great classics and includes many of secondary or even tertiary stature, which enables us to get a clearer picture of what the popular academic discourse was like in a particular period. They also indicate shifting areas of special interest which we would not otherwise have known.

The collection also includes contemporary pamphlets on a variety of topics: issues raised by the Reform movement which sundered the Jewish community of Central Europe; religious questions raised by such developments as the railroad (Hayyim Kohen, Krakow 1884) or the economics of *kashrut* competition in the New World (Weinberger, 1904). Works on the reconstruction of religious education in Germany by no less a figure than Seligman Baer are to be found here; as are pamphlets of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the observance of the Sabbatical year in Palestine, an issue which split then both the East European Orthodoxy and the "Old Yishlil."

Especially noteworthy is the famed translation of the *Shulhan Arukh*, by R. Shimon Hakham, into Judeo-Persian, which quickly became and has remained the basic religious text of the Bukharan Jewish community.

Professor Haym Soloveitchik

Rabbinic Texts and

Commentaries

Ever since the Talmud was committed to writing, its study and interpretation has been an ongoing process. Seminal commentary was undertaken in Geonic times (eighth through eleventh century), however the great commentary was that of Rashi (R. Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes d. 1105). The Talmudic corpus is vast, and collation and comparison disclosed numerous contradictions between various passages. The dialectical schools of the Franco-German Tosafists (twelfth and thirteenth centuries), and that of Provence and Spain in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, set the basis for all subsequent interpretations.

Every generation has sought its own interpretation of Talmudic text. In this section are found some of the classical medieval commentators as well as several of the great scholars of the Ottoman Empire. The majority of the commentaries here, though, were authored in the past 150 years, and come from Jewish communities from Moscow to Djerba.

These commentaries may be divided into two main categories. The first consists of those works aimed at the elucidation of Talmudic text. The second group are those whose purpose was to determine the *halakah*, the practical decision. As the Talmud contains rules and regulations for the entire life of a Jew, this ongoing interpretation was and is the major sustained intellectual enterprise of the Jewish people.

The quantity and scope of the commentaries may come as a surprise even to Talmudic students. Hundreds of minor *halakic* figures, writing on specific *halakic* topics, are gathered here for the first time. The scope of their interest and the range of their writing gives a far more comprehensive picture than would be yielded by a study of any standard Talmudic library. In short, the Talmudic commentaries reproduced here provide an extraordinary depth to any Talmudic collection.

Professor Haym Soloveitchik

◀ *Zera Yitshak*, by Isaac ben Abraham Grahnbohm
published in Amsterdam, 1789
(from *Religious Ethics*)

Biblical Commentaries

The most famous of Jewish commentators, R. Solomon Yizhaki (Rashi, 1040-1105) wrote two monumental works of exegesis. The first, an extraordinarily comprehensive and illuminating commentary on the Babylonian Talmud, was recognized as a unique achievement which obviated the need for any comparable effort. Rashi's second magnum opus, a commentary on the Bible, revealed the same outstanding scholarship, but, in spite of its popularity and influence, never received acceptance as the authoritative Biblical interpretation,

Since Rashi's seminal work nine centuries ago, Jews have produced commentaries which have interpreted the Bible in light of changing intellectual assumptions and historical needs. Philosophers discovered in the Bible encoded statements of philosophical truths about the nature of the universe and its Creator. Kabbalists believed it to be overflowing with symbolic expressions of the mysterious inner dynamics of the Godhead. Preachers turned to it as an inexhaustible resource to inspire, challenge, and entertain their listeners; moralists drew from it lessons for proper behavior; and social critics employed it as the most effective anchor for their messages.

The foundation of Jewish life and thought, therefore, is not the collection of Hebrew books produced in the ancient Near East more than two millennia ago; rather, it is the dialectic of a sacred text subjected to constantly new interpretations. Partly due to the ambiguities of the original Hebrew text, and partly because of the absence of any institutional authority to declare a "correct" interpretation, the Bible remained for Jews not merely the expression of God's revered will, but an open-ended challenge to new creativity.

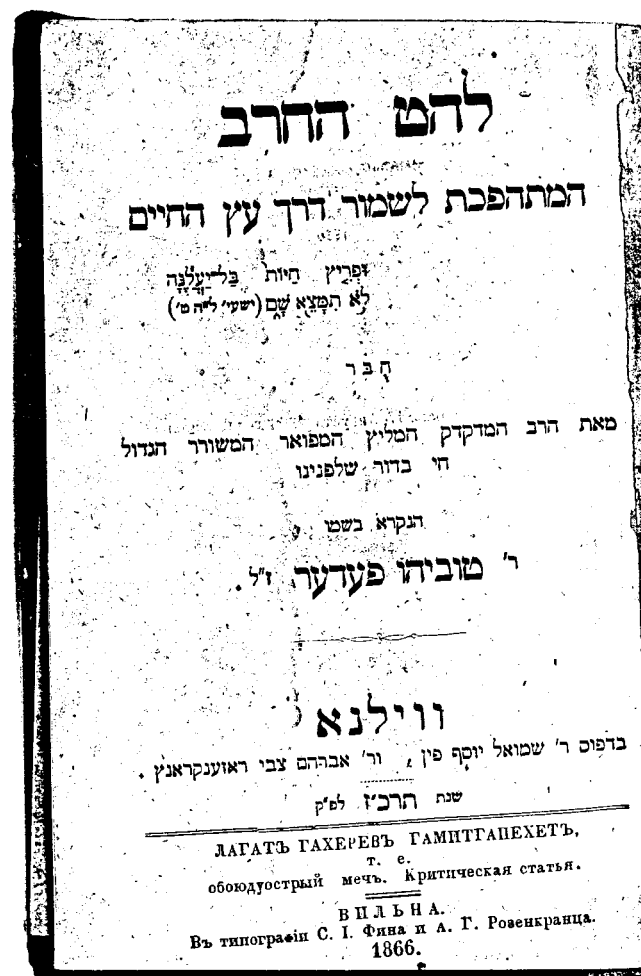
It is for this reason that the literature of Jewish Biblical commentary is such a rich resource not only for modern Biblical scholars but for anyone seeking to understand the nature of Jewish tradition. The works in this microfiche collection represent an extraordinary variety of intellectual concerns, ranging from the grammar and semantics of Biblical Hebrew to the rarified heights of mystical speculation. They focus not only on the Pentateuch, the most common subject of Jewish Biblical exegesis, but also on books that have been only slightly less repercussive: Job and the problem of providence and theodicy; Proverbs and ethical theory; Psalms and the dimensions of spirituality and faith. They come from all the major communities where Jews lived, and date from the eleventh century to the twentieth. These texts are, in short, the chronicle of the love affair between the Jewish people and the Bible, and no major collection of Judaica can afford to ignore them.

Professor Marc Saperstein

Kabbalah and Hasidism

Kabbalah and Hasidism are separate spiritual developments within Judaism, but they are intimately connected. The kabbalistic doctrines of the Zohar, and especially the later development of that doctrine in the teachings of Moses Cordovero and Isaac Luria, provide the theoretical conceptual framework for Hasidism. The classical kabbalah tends to be heavily theosophical, while Hasidism tends toward the moralistic. Nevertheless the teachings of Hasidism as a system of religious thought are unintelligible without the conceptual structures of kabbalistic teaching. Kabbalistic thought, especially from the thirteenth century on, offers a serious alternative to the philosophic way of understanding and relating to God. Abandoning the formal rationalism found in Jewish philosophy, the kabbalists tried to give an account of God and the world from an internal divine perspective.

The kabbalists read the primary sources of Judaism in strikingly new ways. Much of the literature of kabbalah, most notably the Zohar, is written in the form of commentaries on the Torah. In these commentaries, the Torah is read and explicated from the standpoint of the body of esoteric doctrine which forms the basic spiritual framework of kabbalah.



While Hasidism shares both the doctrines and exegetical modes of kabbalah, it places greater emphasis on the significance of these teachings for the world of man and the religious community. Hasidic literature tends to be more anthroposophic and more moralistic than the older kabbalah. While Hasidism produced major theoretical works, it often conveys its teachings through imaginative and heavily symbolic stories of the type which Martin Buber made popular.

This collection includes material which reflects the diverse types of kabbalistic and Hasidic literature. It offers a unique opportunity to confront works of great significance in the various genres of this literature, among them some earlier kabbalistic treatises of great value and interest, as well as many immensely important, and largely neglected, Hasidic works. There are also a number of secondary works such as histories of Hasidism and essays on individual Hasidic teachers and particular Hasidic movements. These limited edition works have long since disappeared as they were printed in small editions and on poor paper. In this collection they are made available to serious students of kabbalistic and Hasidic lore. Studying this collection will provide an indispensable supplement to the mastery of the classic literature of the field.

Professor Marvin Fox

Haggadoth and Liturgy

No book, with the possible exception of the Bible, has been as popular as the Passover Haggadah. This short book contains the story of the Exodus from Egypt and is recited by Jews the world over during the Passover Eve Seder ceremony – it is the Jews' eternal message of freedom. The range of Haggadoth encompasses thousands of commentaries, illustrations, translations, and simple editions of the text.

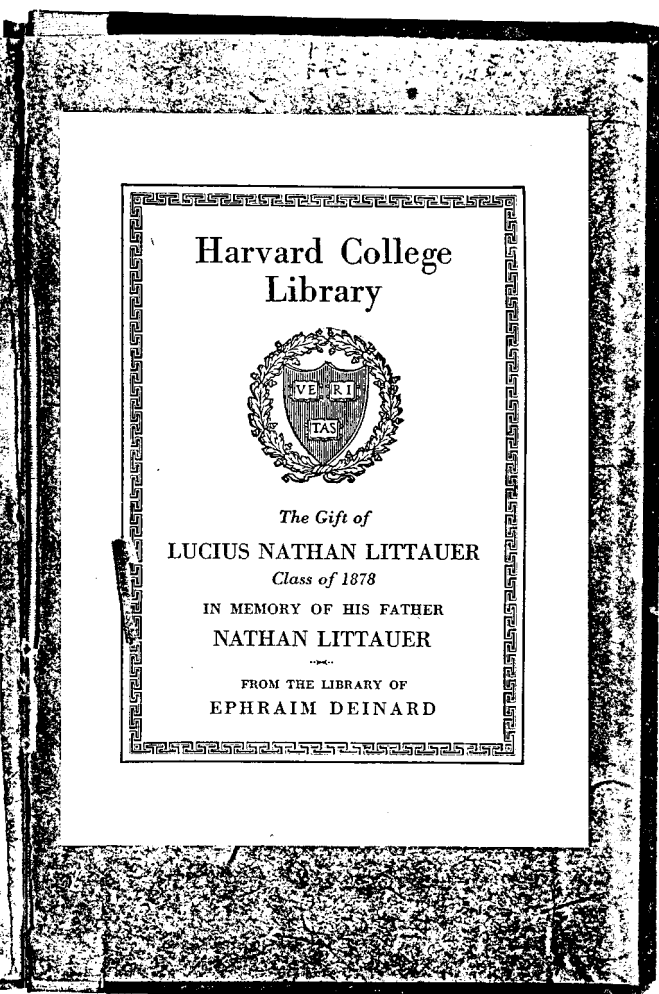
The collection of Haggadoth in *Hebrew Books from the Harvard College Library* represents a wide-ranging selection. Here are Haggadoth printed in large Jewish centers such as Jerusalem, Prague, and Warsaw, and in such smaller places as Shklov, Zolkiev, Zitomar, and Kolomea (all in Eastern Europe). Editions produced on paper that is rapidly deteriorating are side-by-side with editions that have withstood the ravages of time.

Over the millennia, representatives of various spiritual trends and movements in Judaism – rationalistic and mystical, religious and even secular – have added their own voices to the ever-growing chorus of Haggadah commentators. These too are all well represented. The most interesting aspect of the collection, though, is that it makes available a number of extremely scarce Haggadoth editions with commentaries by lesser-known rabbis. Many of these editions were never reprinted, and they are singular testimony to the literary activity of their authors. Here are: The 1818 Haggadah with a commentary by Shabbethai ben Aaron, *Tishbi Mevasser*, Rabbi of the small community of Tshashnik, Russia; the 1825 Haggadah with Isaac Maler's commentary, *Rinun Yitshak*; the 1865 edition with the commentary of Zevi ben David of Dobre, in Poland, *Zera kodesh*; Jacob Meir Liebrat's 1894 commentary, *Mi-bene Asher*, and others.

Featured in the collection are a number of unusual translations of the Haggadah, e.g., into Czech, Dutch, Hungarian, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Persian, Polish, Russian, and Slovakian.

Professor Menahem Schmelzer

◀
Lahat ha-herev ha-mithapekhet li-shemor derekhts ha-hayim, by Tuvyahu Feder, published in Vilna, 1867 (from *Biblical Commentaries*)



Part II

Secular Works

Philosophy and Theology

Hebrew writings in philosophy and theology generally attempt to provide a systematic exposition or defense of the major elements of Jewish faith. Such philosophical and theological studies usually arose in response to external challenges rather than as a result of internal intellectual activity.

From the early Middle Ages to the present day there has been an ongoing confrontation between Judaism and the dominant intellectual currents of each age. This confrontation stimulated Jewish thinkers to develop sophisticated accounts of their faith, which presented their ancient religion as an intellectually and spiritually viable option. From Sa'adia Gaon in the early tenth century and Maimonides in the twelfth century, to Moses Mendelssohn in the eighteenth century, to the present, a steady stream of Jewish philosophical and theological works have expounded Judaism in ways faithful to the classical sources while employing intellectual tools of the contemporary era.

This theological and philosophical literature takes many forms. There are the well-known major treatises which provide comprehensive and systematic accounts of Judaism. There are large numbers of openly polemical works which defend Judaism by exposing the weaknesses of other faiths and philosophies. These include anti-Karaite treatises. There are formulations of articles of Jewish faith, ranging from the first such work by Moses Maimonides to nineteenth century pedagogic works in the form of catechisms for children. This literature also contains large numbers of Hebrew translations of basic philosophical or theological studies. Among them are translations of dialogues of Plato, treatises of Aristotle, large numbers of works by Islamic philosophers who wrote in Arabic, and many others. All this and more constitute the core of Hebrew philosophical literature.

Most of the items in this collection are unavailable in any but the most specialized libraries. Included here are inaccessible and long out-of-print editions of major works by major thinkers. Here too are large numbers of less familiar works which are too often ignored or overlooked.

Mastery of this literature is essential for a sound understanding of the internal development of Jewish thought. Scholarly research requires familiarity with the lesser as well as the major works. This collection offers an unparalleled opportunity to gain both.

Professor Marvin Fox

Belles Lettres

This collection of chiefly nineteenth-century Hebrew literary ephemera, drawn from printing presses ranging from the Middle East to North America, goes a long way towards advancing our understanding of nineteenth-century Jewry.

The 1800's were a time of dramatic change in Jewish life. The century ushered in the renaissance of Hebrew and Yiddish literature and of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, and the merging of Hasidism with modern Orthodoxy. Jewish political ideologies emerged during this period, and it was the beginning of the mass migration to America. Perhaps most importantly, the nineteenth century ushered in the establishment of the first modern settlements in the land of Israel.

Harvard's collection of Hebrew literature offers a window into the creative efforts unleashed during this period. Here are little-known works of Hebrew epic verse, prose fiction, drama, autobiography, correspondence, literary criticism and translations, and festschriften. Several relatively recent areas of research – among them parody (including Ephraim Deinard's *ha-Ployderzak, o Me'urat tsif'onim: gazeta kelalit be-'ad kol ha-'olam*) and early works of Hebrew children's literature (such as Mordecai Bass's *Yalde Sha'ashu'im*) – are particularly well-represented.

Here, too, are panegyrics to famous men, eulogies, propagandistic verse, and polemics. Jewish social and religious life in the nineteenth century is reflected in halachic *responsa*, Hasidic hagiography, and journalistic essays on contemporary issues.

The very presence on this list of dozens of authors and titles unheard of even by specialists reveals how much territory still remains to be charted. This collection certainly breaks new ground.

Professor David Roskies

Mamlekhet kohanim, by Yitshak Leb Rozner,
published in Vienna, 1868
(from *Philosophy and Theology*) ►

Biography

Among Jews, the first biographies consisted of little more than a recitation of the works that notable students of the Torah wrote during their lifetimes. The eighteenth century Jewish enlighteners, the *makilim*, broadened their biographical interests to qualities of character and breadth of intellectual achievement. With the rise of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the early nineteenth century, we have the first critical biographies of prominent medieval commentators and philosophers. Later came biographies of the biographers themselves and of Jews remarkable for their prominence outside the Jewish realm.

This collection spans the spectrum of modern Jewish biographical writing. Especially well represented is the traditional variety of pietistic treatments of rabbis and scholars. Rabbi Akiba, Sa'adia and Maimonides are covered, as are less traditional figures from later years, Moses Montefiore, Adolphe Crémieux, and Mayer Amschel Rothschild, among them. Biographies of important figures in the early Zionist movement are included: Theodor Herzl, Ahad Ha-Am, and Eliezer ben Yehudah. Of particular note is Saul Rabinowitz's biography of Leopold Zunz, the founder of critical Jewish scholarship; it remains today the only full-length biography of Zunz. Of special significance are the three biographical works by the important Viennese scholar, Adolf Jellinek. And finally, of particular American interest is Max Raisin's early biography of Mordecai Manuel Noah, the man who wanted to establish an independent Jewish colony on the Niagara River.

Professor Michael A. Meyer

History

In Jewish culture, history as a genre, like biography, lagged far behind the study of Talmud. From the time of Josephus to the early nineteenth century, it was only the rare person in the Jewish community who turned his attention away from textual study to inquire about the Jewish past or record events of the present. Yet with the reemergence of the Jews onto the stage of general history, first as individuals and later as a people, Jewish writers began to devote inordinate attention to their past. Through understanding of their history, they sought to reshape Jewish existence.

Thus, since the nineteenth century, there has been an outpouring of Jewish historiography. About a half-dozen comprehensive multi-volume histories have been produced since then, as well as hundreds of topical works, and many thousands of more narrowly focused monographs.

Included here is a work by Marcus Fischer on the Jews in Mauritania, dated 1817. Fischer was one of the earliest Jewish historians in the modern period, and it is only recently that his pioneering role is beginning to be appreciated. There are, of course, works that portray Jews in Europe and also the United States, but this collection's particular strength lies in its coverage of Jews in North Africa and Asia – precisely those Jewish communities which have been given less than adequate attention by Jewish historians in the West. The items included range from the Jews of Morocco, Egypt, and Yemen, to those in India and China. Some are historical studies, others travel accounts. While some of these do not qualify as critical historiography, they are valuable to scholars as primary sources. The same is true for some of the contemporary documents (protocols, curricula for institutions of learning, etc.). As such, these old texts serve as valuable aids to contemporary work.

Professor Michael A. Meyer



Ladino

One of the great turning points in Jewish history was the mass expulsion of Jews from Spain in the late fifteenth century, and the end of open Jewish life in Portugal in the next half-century. When the Jews left the Iberian peninsula, they took the Spanish language with them. The majority of displaced Jews ultimately settled in the Balkans and Asia Minor.

In the vast mosaic of religious and ethnic groups that constituted the Ottoman Empire, an empire fairly insular given its expanse, the Jews kept their language. However, as the influx from Spain diminished, and as the links between Ottoman Jewry and the West grew weaker, this language embarked upon an evolution of its own, borrowing extensively from Hebrew and surrounding languages such as Turkish and Greek. In spite of its external influences, this language – Ladino, or more properly Judeo-Spanish – remained essentially Hispanic.

An enormous wealth of material was translated into Ladino. Translations of the books of the Bible were a popular genre; the collection contains a major translation of the Jewish Bible which appeared in Vienna between 1813-1816. This *Sefer Arba'ah 'Esrim* was followed by many other translations of the different books of Scriptures.

Notable within the collection is Ya'akov Kuli's 1732 work, *Me'am Lo'ez* – a vast, encyclopedic compendium of commentaries on the Bible that became the single most popular work among the Eastern Sephardim.

Works on education, morals, and especially the teaching of Hebrew were an important genre and are included. Here are Hayim Yisra'el of Belgrade's *Otsar ha-hayim*, Yehuda Alkalai's *Darkhe no'am*, and Moshe David Alkalai's *Livriko de primera klasa...*, all written by authors living in Serbia, all showing increasing concern with education and the Hebrew language. Many books on Hebrew grammar were published in Ladino in the nineteenth century, the most important of which were Menahel'tl Farhi's *Rav pe'alim* and Yitshak Bekhor Yuda's *Yavi mi-piryo*.

Collections of songs and poetry for the feast of Purim, usually published under the title *Conplas de Purim*, had been a particularly popular genre since the eighteenth century. Building on the tradition of these *Conplas*, drama began to make its appearance in Ladino in the second half of the nineteenth century. Western playwrights such as Molière and Shakespeare were translated, and original plays on biblical and other themes were written by Avraham Galante, Shabetai Yosef Gaen, Jakim Behar, Avraham Aharon Kopon, and others.

The twentieth century proved unkind to Ladino culture. Nationalism in the Balkans and Turkey led to the slow but irreversible abandonment of the spoken language. World War II annihilated Salonican Jewry, and the relatively untouched Jewish population of Bulgaria migrated en masse to Israel. Today the great majority of the Eastern Sephardim live in Israel, and Hebrew has replaced Ladino as their mother tongue. The Harvard collection represents a large sample of what is now a fast-disappearing language.

Professor Aron Rodrigue

Judeo-Persian

Judeo-Persian is a form of modern Persian which has been used for more than a millennium by Jews living in Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. Written in the Hebrew alphabet the language is virtually unknown by mainstream users of Persian who write the language in Arabic script. The Jew's continued use of virtually the same language has produced a significant Judeo-Persian body of literature.

In many ways, Judeo-Persian is important not only for the intrinsic value of its texts, but because the independent orthographic practices of Jewish scribes and authors facilitate the study of the history of the Persian language in general. The virtual similarity in the Islamic and Jewish versions of Persian enables scholars to trace grammatical and phonological items from modern colloquial Persian back to the fourteenth century. This duality provides both a fertile ground for the study of Persia's Jewish communities and an examination of the history of the Persian language as we know it primarily from Islamic sources.

The mid-nineteenth century's movement of Jews to Palestine sparked a publishing effort that yielded a considerable number of Judeo-Persian publications. Central to this effort was the renowned Bokharan rabbi, R. Shim'on Hakham, who published a virtual library of editions, original compositions, and a translation of a considerable part of the Bible.

This collection is significant in that it is representative of the larger publishing effort that was achieved in Jerusalem from the middle of the last century and well into this one. These works are hard to acquire, and they are of the utmost importance to anyone interested in research in Judeo-Persian.

Professor Herbert H. Paper

Hebrew Language and Grammar

Students of today's well-known languages are sometimes unaware that there is a long tradition of study of these languages. Grammars, dictionaries, and a variety of lexicons were written in earlier centuries by assiduous and often forgotten scholars. Many of these studies provide fascinating insights into the development of the language. We may and sometimes do ignore these studies, but they are of considerable historical and intellectual interest.

The Hebrew language has occupied Jewish scholars for many centuries; there is, accordingly, a considerable body of printed material on its study. This collection contains some 45 items, and spans the years 1762 through 1938. Most of the items compiled here are unavailable except in specialized collections.

This body of works on Hebrew language and grammar forms an extraordinary record of the long tradition of Hebrew linguistic study. These dictionaries and lexicons provide a fascinating and insightful record of the evolution of the Hebrew language and its continued study and analysis.

Professor Herbert H. Paper



Judeo-Arabic

Judeo-Arabic has a special significance among the major Jewish languages of the post-Talmudic era. It has had the longest recorded history (ninth century to present), the widest geographical diffusion, and – most importantly – it was the medium of expression during the Middle Ages for one of the foremost flowerings of Jewish cultural and intellectual creativity. It was in Judeo-Arabic that Sa'adya Gaon wrote the first systematic work on Jewish theology, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, Bahya Ibn Paquda wrote his still-popular devotional treatise, *The Duties of the Heart*, that Judah Halevi wrote his philosophical dialogue, *The Kuzari*, and that Maimonides wrote his masterful synthesis of Judaism and Aristotlianism, *The Guide of the Perplexed*.

The medieval language gave way in the late fifteenth century to modern Judeo-Arabic, its form far more heterogenous than the medieval variety. Most Judeo-Arabic literature is in the Maghrebi or Iraqi vernaculars. A much smaller corpus was produced in Egyptian and Syrian. The books included here offer an excellent representative sampling of this regional vernacular division. The vast majority are in some form of North African Judeo-Arabic, while a smaller percentage are in Iraqi Judeo-Arabic.

In addition to its great linguistic interest, this collection provides a unique window upon North African and Middle Eastern Jewish cultures during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. This was a period of major transition for the Jews living in the Islamic world. The elements of cultural continuity and discontinuity are amply reflected in the genres of published material provided here. Much of the collection consists of traditional works – homilies, halakic handbooks, devotional treatises, and translations and commentaries of Biblical and classical rabbinic texts. Popular entertainment works are also included: selections from the *Arabian Nights*, the tales of Juha, the *Sirat 'Antar*, and Arab songbooks.

The encounter with modernity and the penetration of western culture is documented in this collection by the Judeo-Arabic translations and adaptation of French and English novels that began to appear in the late nineteenth century. Translations of *Haskala* works, such as Mapu's *Ahavat Tsiyyon*, as well as works on Jewish history, foreign Jewish communities, and contemporary personalities, all bear witness to a rising Jewish consciousness that went far beyond local boundaries.

Professor Norman Stillman

◀ *Safinah maluf*, published in Tunis, 1905/06
(from *Judeo-Arabic*)

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