From Torah to Diaspora:
Highlights of the UCSC Library’s Jewish Studies Collections
Introduction

“Scattered among the nations of the world” (Ezekiel 6:8) for 2,000 years, the Jewish people have not just survived but in many cases have flourished and subsequently made significant contributions to the world at large. Adapting to local cultures has made the Jewish experience remarkably diverse and vital. At the same time Jews have maintained their integrity as a people and remain connected through the shared values and traditions embodied in the Torah – the Five Books of Moses – and subsequent teachings.

The Torah was meant to provide a framework for a people living in their own homeland but became instead the means of holding together a community spread across the world. The survival of the Jews as a people within the Diaspora is due to the role the Torah has played as a portable homeland.

Through selections from the UC Santa Cruz Library’s Jewish Studies collections this exhibit explores both the diversity of the Jewish experience – over distance, time and ideology – and the common threads of traditions and values that animate Jewish lives. To highlight this relationship we have included a relevant quotation from the Torah and related texts.

The following pages provide a guide, with a bibliography, to each case in the exhibit.

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With thanks to:

The Koret Foundation
Morris Brose Jewish Art Endowment
Bauman Jewish Studies Fund
Anne Neufeld Levin Holocaust Studies Collection Endowment
Jewish Chautauqua Society
Sharon Anolik and Orr Shakked
& other donors

for their generous support
of the Jewish Studies collections
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1: TORAH and TANAKH

The study of Torah is equal to them all.

Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 127a

Our exhibit begins appropriately with the Torah. Starting at the left-hand upright case, you will see examples of texts and commentaries demonstrating the continuing interpretation that is one of the hallmarks of the Jewish tradition.

Prominently displayed on the upper shelf is a Commentator’s Bible (Miqra’ot Gedolot). These pages show a portion of the Torah narrative, in Hebrew, near the center, with two English translations at the top. Commentaries by the classical sages make up the rest of the page. The Torah text displayed here narrates the crossing of the Sea of Reeds from Sh’mot (Exodus). The full passage is shown in the facsimile Torah scroll displayed at the back.

Other commentaries included here range from traditional interpretations, notably that of Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki), the 11th century French scholar, to a sampling of recent and especially feminist readings. The emergence of women’s voices in Judaism is a strong feature of this exhibit.

TALMUD and the ORAL LAW

Appoint yourself a teacher and acquire for yourself a study partner.

Pirkei Avot 1:6

In the lower half of this first case are examples of the Oral Law, including the Talmud and other law codes. These teachings and dialogues of the sages address how the Torah should be applied to religious practice and everyday life. On display are two volumes from different editions of the Babylonian Talmud. At the center of each page is the text under consideration surrounded by the opinions of sages of the time.

Also displayed here are examples of other codes and teachings. Some highlights include: the Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers); Midrash (legends which complete or explain the Torah narrative); a volume of the Mishneh Torah (Maimonides’s codification of the Talmud); and a Responsa (a modern-day contribution to the ongoing process of interpretation).
TORAH and TANAKH


TALMUD and the ORAL LAW


2: HAGGADOT

You shall say to your children,
“We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt ...”
Deuteronomy 6:21

The next case to your left shows a sample of Haggadot (plural of Haggadah). The Haggadah is the liturgy for the ritual of the Seder -- the Pesach (Passover) meal -- and includes a retelling of the Exodus story.

There may be no better example of how the core of Judaism has survived the Diaspora than the Haggadah, the most often reproduced and reinterpreted text in the Jewish liturgy. The three examples displayed here -- a Medieval illuminated manuscript, a modern rendering by artist Ben Shahn, and the “new age” Santa Cruz Haggadah -- show some of that range.

Yet, in spite of the obvious differences in style and perspective, they share a common purpose: each is integral to an annual ritual that unites Jews wherever they are in the world and each tells the same story, the escape from slavery in Egypt and its relevance to today. In this way the Haggadah continues an unbroken tradition now thousands of years old.

3: RITUAL and PRACTICE

This is the ritual law ...
Numbers 19:2

Moving to your left you will see a selection of texts related to Jewish observances and rituals. Open in the center of the case are the Artscroll Siddur, a traditional prayerbook, and the Book of Blessings, a modern reinterpretation of the Jewish liturgy by poet Marcia Falk: both texts display versions of the Kaddish (mourner’s prayer). Also displayed here are texts showing examples of a ketubah (wedding contract) and rimonim (Torah ornaments) as well as works about Jewish holidays.
HAGGADOT


RITUAL and PRACTICE


4: FOOD and COOKING

Prepare a dish for me to eat, that I may bless you ...

Genesis 27:7

The case behind you features books about Jewish food and cooking with an emphasis on a variety of cuisines reflecting the Diaspora. Yet again, this diversity is united by the core values of the dietary laws of kashrut and the rituals and observances at the heart of Jewish life. Those more familiar with the Eastern European Jewish diet may be pleasantly surprised by the rich and colorful traditions of Mediterranean Jews or the creative adaptions to food of the southern United States.

5–6: LIVING in the DIASPORA

I have been a stranger in a strange land.

Exodus 2:22

To your right, the next two cases offer a selection of works about the Jewish experience worldwide, highlighting some of the more remote and lesser-known or forgotten communities. These books demonstrate how far the Jewish Diaspora once reached and documents the lives and accomplishments of these communities. Shown are Jewish rug makers in Kurdistan, ranchers in New Mexico, painters in Italy, and ordinary people living ordinary lives in Moorish Spain, India and Iran.
Chiche–Yana, Martine.
La Table Juive : recettes et traditions de fêtes. Aix-en-Provence : Edisud ; c1990.
TX724 .C49 1990.

Food and Judaism / editors, Leonard J. Greenspoon, Ronald A. Simkins, Gerald Shapiro. Omaha, NE : Creighton University Press ; Lincoln, NE : Distributed by the University of Nebraska Press, c2005.


Leonard, Leah W.


Ferris, Marcie Cohen.
LIVING in the DIASPORA


LIVING in the DIASPORA continued


Perera, Victor, 1934–


Swetschinkski, Daniel M.
7: SOCIAL JUSTICE

Justice, justice shall you pursue ...
Deuteronomy 16:20

One of the core values of Judaism is the pursuit of justice. Concern for justice pervades the Tanakh (Torah, Prophets, and Writings) and subsequent codes that define Jewish ethical practices. In fact, many of the commandments of the Torah have been incorporated into the legal codes of the Western world. In addition, the mandate of tikkun olam (repairing the world) is an integral part Judaism. Is it any wonder that Jews have played a prominent role in social justice movements? This is a small sample of the titles we could have chosen for this particular category. Please note the strong presence of women activists in this section.

We have augmented this display with photographs of the authors. This was necessary because most of the texts here have been so heavily used that they needed to be rebound, their original covers lost, and therefore were not as interesting for display purposes. In the process we found that the photos added the authors’ vitality and passion to the display.

8: JEWISH WOMEN

Listen to her voice ...
Genesis 21:12

The next case to your left addresses the roles of Jewish women, incorporating a range of perspectives and experiences. Women, especially strong women – from Eve to Sarah, from Miriam to Ruth – have always had a central role in the Jewish tradition. Until recently, however, the traditional role of women within Judaism has been constrained. One outcome, as seen in the “Social Justice” section, has been for Jewish women to focus their energies in the secular arena. In the last fifty years, women have gained more opportunities for wider roles within Judaism and have revitalized many aspects of Jewish tradition and practice. These gains are evident throughout this exhibit.
SOCIAL JUSTICE

Abzug, Bella S., 1920–


Aptheker, Bettina.

Friedan, Betty.

Goldman, Emma, 1869–1940.

Gompers, Samuel, 1850–1924.

Hersh, Seymour M.

Kozol, Jonathan.

Partnoy, Alicia, 1955–

Steinem, Gloria.
Ehrlich, Elizabeth.

Firestone, Tirzah.


Greenberg, Blu, 1936-.

Morris, Bonnie J., 1961-.

Raver, Miki.

Roth, Joan.
DS115.2 .R68 1995


9: MODERN PHILOSOPHY & MYSTICISM

... so that you may obtain a teacher of righteousness.

Hosea 10:12

Behind you the next case contains a selection of works by modern Jewish thinkers, highlighting the current vitality and range of contemporary discourse. Featured are contributions in philosophy (Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel) and mysticism (Gershom Scholem, Aryeh Kaplan, and Lawrence Kushner).

10: JEWISH WRITERS

Make your books your companions.

Judah ibn Tibbon, 12th C.

Finally, the case to your right features the Jewish contribution to the world of letters. With room for less than a hundred texts we could not even scratch the surface, yet within these titles we were able to include more than a dozen Nobel and Pulitzer laureates. We hope you will find some surprises (Dorothy Parker? Cervantes? Jamaica Kincaid?) among the more obvious selections. The lower shelf displays selections of graphic fiction while the upper includes Jewish women writers from around the world. Did we miss any of your favorites?

Kushner, Lawrence, 1943–
BM723.K87 1983.


Be’ur Tanya. English.
Opening the Tanya : discovering the moral and mystical teachings of a classic work of Kabbalah / Adin Steinsaltz ; Hebrew text edited by Meir Hanegbi ; translated by Yaacov Tauber. San Francisco : Jossey-Bass, c2003–

Buber, Martin, 1878–1965.
BM723.B753 1958.

Kamenetz, Rodger, 1950–

Levenson, Alan T.
BM190 .L48 2006.


Kaplan, Mordecai Menahem, 1881–
JEWISH WRITERS

Abraham, Pearl, 1960–

Aciman, Andre.

   Two tales : Betrothed & Edo and Enam / translated from the Hebrew by Walter

Aguinis, Marcos.
   La cruz invertida; novela. Barcelona, Editorial Planeta [1970]

Amichai, Yehuda.
   The world is a room and other stories / translated from the Hebrew by Elinor

Appelfeld, Aron.

Appignanesi, Lisa.
   PR9199.3.A533 M46 2004.


   Crímenes ejemplares. Segorbe, Castellón, España : Fundación Max Aub ;

Auster, Paul, 1947–

Bank, Melissa.

Bellow, Saul.
   Herzog. New York, Viking Press [1964]
   PS3503.E4488H4.

Bester, Alfred.
   Golem 100 / illustrated by Jack Gaughan. New York : Simon and Schuster,
   c1980.

Bezmozgis, David, 1973–

Brin, David.

Brodsky, Joseph, 1940–1996.

   Yekl and The imported bride–groom, and other stories of the New York ghetto.
   New York, Dover Publications [1970]

Celan, Paul.

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de.

Chabon, Michael.

De Botton, Alain.

Diamant, Anita.


Eisner, Will.


Feierstein, Ricardo.

Feiffer, Jules.
PS3556.E42K58

PS3511.E46G52 1952.

Feuchtwanger, Lion, 1884–1958.
The Oppermanns / translated from the German by James Cleugh ; with an introduction by Ruth Gruber. New York : Carroll & Graf, c2001.

Fiedler, Leslie A.
PS3556.I32 A6 1999


Gaiman, Neil.
The Jewish Gauchos of the Pampas / translated by Prudencio de Pereda.

Ginzburg, Natalia.

Glück, Louise, 1943–
PS3557.L8F5 1983.

Glueckel, of Hameln, 1646–1724.

Gold, Michael, 1895–

Gordimer, Nadine.
PR6057.O63B8.

Graham, Jorie, 1951–

Grant, Linda, 1951–

Grossman, David.

Halter, Marek.

Handler, Daniel.

Hareven, Shulamith.

Heine, Heinrich, 1797–1856.
Bittersweet poems of Heinrich Heine; Mount Vernon, N.Y., Peter Pauper Press [1956]
PT2316.A4A8.

Heller, Joseph.

PS3515.E343C5 1953.

Horn, Dara, 1977–

Ibn Gabirol, 11th cent.

Ionesco, Eugène.
Exit the king. Translated from the French by Donald Watson. New York, Grove Press [c1963]
PQ2617.O6R63.
Jelinek, Elfriede, 1946–

Jhabvala, Ruth Prawer, 1927–
  PR6060.H3A82 1989

Jong, Erica.

Kaniuk, Yoram.
  The last Jew : being the tale of a teacher Henkin and the vulture, the chronicles of the last Jew, the awful tale of Joseph and his offspring, the story of secret charity, the annals of the Moshava, all those wars, and the end of the annals of the Jews / translated from the Hebrew by Barbara Harshav. New York : Grove Press, c2006.

Kertész, Imre, 1929–

Kincaid, Jamaica.


  The testing-tree; poems. Boston, Little, Brown [c1971]
  PS3521.U7T4.

Lester, Julius.

Levine, Philip, 1928–

Levy, Andrea.
  PR6062.E923 N48 1996

Lévy, Justine.

Liebrecht, Savyon, 1948–

Liss, David, 1966–
  PS3562.I7814 C64 2003.

Mailer, Norman.
  PS3525.A4152 N3 1948.

Mamet, David.

Montaigne, Michel de, 1533–1592.
Némirovsky, Irène, 1903–1942.

Nissán, Rosa.
PQ7298.24.I77 H5 1996.

Olsen, Tillie.

Oz, Amos.

Paley, Grace.

   PS3531.A5855A16 1942.

Pasternak, Boris Leonidovich.

Pekar, Harvey.
   The quitter / Dean Haspiel, artist ; Lee Loughridge, gray tones ; Pat Broseau, letters. New York : DC Comics, c2005.

Peretz, Isaac Leib, 1851 or 2–1915.

Piercy, Marge.
   PS3566.I4 A89 1999.

Pinsky, Robert.

Pinter, Harold, 1930–

Porzecanski, Teresa.

Potok, Chaim.

Proust, Marcel, 1871–1922.

Ragen, Naomi.

Rawet, Samuel.

Rich, Adrienne Cecile.
   The will to change; poems 1968–1970. New York, Norton [1971]
   PS3535.I233W5.
Roth, Joseph, 1894–1939.

Roth, Philip.

Sachs, Nelly.

Schwarz–Bart, André, 1928–

Scliar, Moacyr.

Senesh, Hannah, 1921–1944.

Sholem Aleichem, 1859–1916.

Shua, Ana María, 1951–


Singer, Israel Joshua, 1893–1944.


Spark, Muriel.


Spiegelman, Art.

Steimberg, Alicia, 1933–

Stone, I. F. (Isidor Feinstein)
Suberman, Stella.

Suez, Perla.


Uhry, Alfred.

Wasserstein, Wendy.

Wouk, Herman, 1915–
The Caine mutiny; a novel of World War II. Garden City, N.Y. Doubleday 1951. PS3545.O93C34.

Yehoshua, Abraham B.

Zweig, Stefan, 1881–1942.

Zwi, Rose.