

INVENTORY TO THE
JEWISH BOOKPLATE COLLECTION

Jonathan Rodgers, N.E.H. Manuscript Processor
Hebrew Union College Library

NOTE TO RESEARCHERS

Provenance

The largest part of the Jewish Bookplate Collection was donated in 1968 to the Hebrew Union College Library by Rabbi Philip Goodman of Jerusalem. Another important part of the collection was removed from the Israel Solomons manuscript collection. The rest of the collection was acquired by exchange or donated.

Statistics

Linear feet of shelf space occupied: ca 20

Number of containers: 20 1/8 x 5 1/8 x 12 inch telescoping card
file boxes and 2 vertical storage boxes.

Approximate number of items: ca 10,000

Processed by: Jonathan Rodgers

Date completed: 1979

Access and citation

The Jewish Bookplate Collection is open to researchers deemed to be qualified by the Librarian. The original collection and its microfilm are available in the Hebrew Union College Library. A suggested form for at least the first citation is:

Bookplate: owner: Marco Birnholz, No. 29. Etching by Michel
Fingesten. 1927. Jewish Bookplate Collection,
Hebrew Union College Library, Cincinnati, OH.

Property and literary rights

The Hebrew Union College Library owns the property rights to the Jewish Bookplate Collection. Information concerning the literary rights may be obtained from the Librarian.

Acknowledgments

The preparation of the inventory to the Jewish Bookplate Collection was made possible under the project supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C.

Related material

The Philip Goodman Bookplate Correspondence, Ephemera, and Catalogue Collection (with index), The Hebrew Union College Bookplate Correspondence, The Israel Solomons Bookplate Correspondence, The Israel Solomons Biographical and Genealogical Notes, The Jewish Occasional Graphics Collection (removed from the Jewish Bookplate Collection). In addition to these primary sources, the Library owns a large collection of books about bookplates. Most of these publications contain, besides text and catalogues, actual bookplates or their reproductions.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Jewish Bookplate Collection is a vast collection of bookplates owned primarily by Jews or executed by Jewish graphic artists. These may be bookplates with or without Jewish themes. Bookplates of Jewish institutions and of Judaica and Hebraica library collections are also included, as are non-Jewish bookplates containing, for example, Hebrew or Old Testament passages or themes.

The bookplates have been placed into mylar 5" x 8" envelopes or, if oversized, encapsulated between sheets of mylar. The envelopes are stored in telescoping card file boxes, the oversized in vertical storage boxes.

The order of the collection is alphabetical by the name of the owner. Institutional plates are ordered by the institution's name. Multiple plates belonging to one and the same owner are in chronological sequence with the undated bookplates first; and within the same year, the order is alphabetical by artist. If both date and artist are unknown, the order is arbitrary. If, however, the owner is not indicated on the plate, it is placed at the end of the collection in the anonymous file and is ordered alphabetically by the artist's name. Plates of both undetermined ownership and artist are stored in the first box in arbitrary order.

The bookplates have then been indexed on catalog cards. Here the same order in which the plates are stored in the boxes is followed. In addition to main card entries by owner, there are artist entries referring to owners

or to anonymous. There are cross-references to main entries from the names of donors to libraries and from collection names. Anonymous plates whose artists cannot be identified are unindexed. Thus, one bookplate is likely to be accessible by at least two or, in fewer instances, by three catalog cards.

The information offered by the owner, or main, card includes the name of the owner (and, if necessary, the number of the plate); the name of the artist, when known; the technique and date of execution, if known; occasional biographical facts, such as place of residence, vital dates, and occupation and interests of the owner or artist or reference to such information in secondary literature; the name of the donor of collection; and the name of the person in whose memory the donation was made; and, in brackets in the lower right corner, references to information to be found in the Israel Solomons Biographical and Genealogical Notes. In this file can be found, in the same order as the bookplates, biographical notes, obituaries, genealogical information, signatures, photographs, and descriptions of bookplates. Finally, an "O" in brackets here indicates that the plate is oversized, while "Dupl." in brackets indicates that a duplicate is available for exchange. Artist cards list the owners for whom the artists have executed bookplates. And donor or collection cards refer to the recipient or owner institutions.

Sample cards

Owner card:

Birnholz, Marco, pharmacist; Vienna.	165
artist: Prof. Emerich Schafren; Vienna.	
lithograph	
1935	

[O]

Artist card:

Schafren, Prof. Emerich artist
- Birnholz, Marco: 163, 164, 165, 166

Donor card:

Tavel, Rabbi Henry
see Hebrew Union College Library. Cincinnati: 52

Collection
Card:

Jüdische Kultusgemeinde
Mannheim Collection
see Hebrew Union College Library. Cincinnati: 52
see also Tavel, Rabbi Henry

Both the above donor and collection cards refer to:

Hebrew Union College Library. Cincinnati: 52
Jüdische Kultusgemeinde Mannheim
Collection.
Gift of: Rabbi Henry Tavel

Besides the bookplates stored in the boxes, several hundred plates, still in their books, are to be found already catalogued in The Hebrew Union College Library Shelf List Drawer #332. These are not indexed in the catalogue to this collection.

Some of the important graphic artists and engravers well represented in the Jewish Bookplate Collection are: Ephraim M. Lilien, S. S. Levadi, Alfred Cossmann, Hermann Struck, Uriel Birnbaum, Señor Ismaël Smith, Paul Süß, Rose Eisner, Todros Geller, Karl Frech, Michel Fingesten, Samuel Yates, Joseph Budko, Viteslav Fleissig, Endre Vadász, and Robert Herrmann.

The bookplates' owners and artists come from both Eastern and Western Europe, England, America, and Israel. The dates begin in the mid 18th century and reach the present day. The 20th century is best represented. From an aesthetic point of view, the strongest part of the collection is perhaps those bookplates executed in the early third of the 20th century, up to the Second World War, by artists in Vienna and Eastern Europe. Marco Birnholz' personal collection of 203 bookplates is exemplary of the technical abilities and artistic accomplishments of these graphic artists.

The collection contains original drawings and sketches, after which plates were produced, as well as the bookplates reproduced from the original designs. The techniques of execution include nearly every possible one: etchings, wood-, and copper-engravings, woodcuts, clichés, linoleum cuts, heliogravures, autotypes, zinc clichés, lithographs, scissors cuts, lead cuts, etc. There are also reproductions of plates cut from publications and photographic reproductions, including microfilm negatives.

Bookplate of:

- 1) A.S. Yahuda.
- 2) Albert Einstein. Artist: Erich Büttner.
- 3) Henryk Bard. Artist: Ephraim M. Lilien.
- 4) Helen and Norman Bentwich.
In this *ex-libris* is a scene from Jerusalem as well as the first words of the phrase "If I forget thee O' Jerusalem, let my right hand wither..." Artist: Amy Drucker, 1919.
- 5) Philip Goodman. Artist: Ernest M. Fleischman.
- 6) Ephraim M. Lilien.
Ephraim Moses Lilien (1874-1925) was the first artist to concentrate on distinctive Jewish bookplates. He created the term "mi-sifre" (from the books of) for "*ex libris*."
- 7) Frieda Zadik.
- 8) Sassoon David Sassoon.
This bookplate, together with that of Isaac Mendes, features a coat of arms, and is one of the few armorial type bookplates with Jewish significance. These include the lion of Judah, a palm tree, a pomegranate, an olive branch, a flying dove with a branch, and a Hebrew phrase for truth and faith. The Sassoon family of India was known as the "Rothschilds of the East."
- 9) Isaac Mendes.
Benjamin Levi of Porthsmouth, England, who engraved this bookplate for Isaac Mendes of London in 1746, may have been the first Jew to create an *ex libris*.
- 10) Elizabeth Watson Diamond. Artist: Endre Vadasz, 1939.
- 11) Paula Steiner. Artist: Hugo Steiner, Prague.
- 12) Edith Tichauer.
- 13) Ann Braff.
Ephraim M. Lilien created this bookplate for the Berlin pianist, Anna Braff. On the piano is a bust of Chopin; the first line of music is that of Hatikvah, Israel's nation anthem; the bottom line is the signature A flat major and chords by Chopin.
- 14) Frances Radbill. Artist: Sara Eugenia Blake.
- 15) Dr. Walter Burger.
- 16) Kenneth Midlo. Artist: Fritz Botelle-Celle.
- 17) Weisz Imre.
- 18) Josef Fischhof. Artist: Alfred Cossmann, Vienna.
- 19) Hanna Petersen, 1909.
- 20) Jose Batille. Artist: Frans J. Ijserinkhuisen, Amsterdam.

TREASURES OF THE LIBRARY: BOOKPLATES

- 21) Louis Lion. Artist: Franz Stassen.
- 22) Pierre Edmond Levy. Artist: Alberto Helios Gogliardo.
- 23) Paula Petitot.
- 24) Vera and Chaim Weizmann.
Bookplate of the first president of Israel and his wife, Vera. Artist: Rockwell Kent.
- 25-32) Bookplates of the Birnholz Family.
Marco Birnholz was a collector and co-creator of bookplates. At thirteen he had a bookstamp created for himself. During his years as a medical and pharmacological student, Birnholz began collecting bookplates. In 1913, he had his first bookplate made by A. Rosenberg-Remy. His bookplates reflect his profession as a pharmacist; his hobbies of mountain climbing and listening to music; and Jewish interests. He had bookplates made for his wife, Alice, his daughters, Ruth and Lily, and his sister, Freda. Some two hundred of over three hundred fifty bookplates in the Library's collection were executed for the Birnholz family.
- 33) Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Klau Library, Cincinnati. Artist: Noel Martin.

Although bookplates existed prior to the invention of the printing press, printing made private ownership of many books possible. Frequently, owners identified their personal collections with labels which read *ex libris* ("from the library of"). Artists were soon commissioned to create bookplates which might include symbols, accessories, or armorial crests reflecting the owners' status or vocation.

The earliest bookplate known to be owned by a Jew dates to the middle of the eighteenth century. The Library's Jewish bookplate collection contains over 10,000 bookplates commissioned by Jewish owners or executed by Jewish graphic artists. Many artistic techniques are represented: etchings, wood and copper engraving, woodcuts, lithographs, and scissor cuts.

According to Israel Solomons, collector of *ex-libris*, the perfect bookplate "should immediately suggest to the beholder the owners' principal interests and to an extent it should be biographical." In this exhibit, a sample of the Library's collection, are bookplates from both known and unknown individuals. As you glance through the exhibit infer what you can of these people who loved their books and wished to mark their ownership.