

Ephraim Deinard

Bookman, historian and polemicist (1846-1930)

Hebrew Writings and Publications from the Library of the
Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion



90 titles including:

- Hebrew imprints from Russia, Austro-Hungary, Ottoman Palestine and America
- Polemics on sectarian movements (Karaim, Hasidism, Russian Subbotniki)
- Historical writings on East European and American Jewry, Zionism, and Eretz Israel
- Rare broadsheets, journals and Yiddish texts
- Bibliographic literature and Hebrew printing history

Advisor: Brad Sabin Hill, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, USA

Ephraim Deinard, bookman, historian and polemicist (1846-1930)

The Hebrew publications of Ephraim Deinard comprise a trove of historical and bibliographic material relating to Russian, Palestinian, and American Jewish history, Crimean and Karaite studies, anti-Hasidic polemic, modern Hebrew literature, and antiquarian Hebrew booklore. Scattered in libraries around the world, these works – some of which are excessively rare – are all made accessible in this unique IDC collection.

Bookseller, bibliographer, publicist, polemicist, historian, and memoirist, Latvian-born Ephraim Deinard (1846-1930) was one of the greatest Hebrew bookmen of all time, and played a significant role in the building of nearly every major Hebraica research collection in America early in the 20th century. As a prolific author, editor, and publisher, Deinard produced some 70 volumes whose subjects range from Jewish history and antiquities (especially of the Crimea, Russia, America, and the Holy Land), to treatises against Hasidism, Christianity, and Communism, parodies, medieval and modern Hebrew literature, Jewish religion, and especially booklore. His writings are a treasure-trove for the student of Hebrew bibliography.

Deinard's antiquarian activities, which involved constant travel throughout Europe, the Orient, and America, gave him a unique acquaintance with scholars, private collectors, fellow bookdealers, and libraries. A passionate Hebraist and Zionist, Deinard observed and participated in Jewish national activities on three continents, and came into contact and conflict with numerous Hebrew writers and Jewish communal and political figures. His wide-ranging knowledge and experience are fully reflected in his own voluminous writings, mostly in Hebrew, produced over more than half a century. His scope of interests, the intensity of his sentiments, the acerbity of his remarks, all coupled with his bibliophily, render Deinard's works a fascinating – if eccentric – source of contemporary Jewish historical and literary controversy, as seen in the margins of the Hebrew-reading world, before and after World War I.

The Crimea and Russia, Palestine, and Zionism

Much of Deinard's writing, including his travelogues, his Zionist works and his religious polemics, were rooted in his interest in history and antiquities. In his youth, which was spent at Chufut-Kale in the Crimea, Deinard assisted the Karaite scholar A. Firkovich in



M. N. Litinski, *Kuki riki* [satirical poems], ed. E. Deinard (Odessa, 1883).

compiling lists of ancient manuscripts, later sold to the Imperial Museum in St. Petersburg, relating to Karaite origins in the Russian lands. His first monographs deal with the life of Firkovich, the history of Crimean Jews, Krimchaks and Karaites, the Crimean War, and Crimean antiquities. His broader interest in Russian Jewish history, its religious sects (including the Judaizing Subbotniki of the Caucasus) and its proto-Zionists, is reflected in several works, not least in his volumes of memoirs.

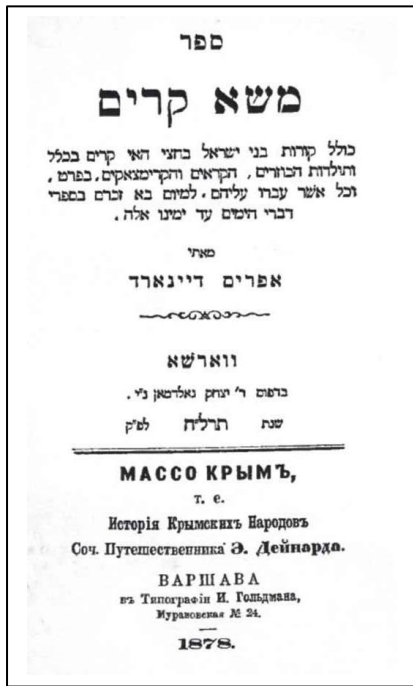
Deinard devoted a number of books to Palestine, Zionism, and related subjects, especially the Jewish national movement in Russia, Europe, and America. His narratives of trips to Palestine, Egypt, Syria, and every corner of Europe, focus on contemporary Jewish communities and their political affairs. (An approbation by Deinard, penned during one of his European tours, appears in a book of oriental homilies printed in Livorno.) Some of his earliest books, which were published in Pressburg, Austro-Hungary, before his emigration to America in 1888, deal with Jewish colonization. Some of his last books include an account of Turkish rule in

Palestine, a critique of British policy, and a critical biography of the Anglo-Jewish Maecenas and proto-Zionist Sir Moses Montefiore (complementing the extensive panegyric literature on this figure). While living in Palestine before the end of Ottoman rule, Deinard published texts and documents from manuscripts and old printed books, among them an account of anti-Jewish riots in Ancona, Italy, in the late 18th century. He also published S. Raffaeli's illustrated survey of ancient Hebrew coins, the first Hebrew book on this subject.

Polemics and Parodies

Deinard is remembered today as both a bookman and a prolific polemicist, two careers inextricably linked in his singular personality. Indeed, his works are devoted in large part to religious, political, and even bibliographical polemics. He attacked Hasidism and Christianity in equal measure, with plenty of bile left over for Communism, Reform Judaism, Kabbalah, Jewish apostates, and Karaism. Deinard reissued several early anti-Hasidic works, including two tracts of diverse authorship entitled *Zemir 'Aritsim*, as well as his own Hebrew translation of Israel Löbel's German diatribe. He edited another polemical text preserved in a Bodleian manuscript (one of several Oxford manuscripts edited by Deinard), and printed a previously unpublished anti-Hasidic work by the Russian *maskil* I. B. Levinsohn. It is noteworthy that all of these works are bibliographically complex in their authorship or publication history, and Deinard's editions have been the most accessible.

After Hasidism, Deinard's biggest bugaboo was Christianity. Over the course of 40 years, he published seven volumes of anti-Christian polemics, beginning with his first book in America, an edition of medieval Judeo-Christian disputations. He later reissued Crescas' 14th-century refutation of Christian beliefs, though his accompanying edition of an 18th-century anti-Christian polemic by David Nassy of Surinam was destroyed by fire.



E. Deinard, *Masa Krim* [Crimean Karaite and Jewish history] (Warsaw, 1878).

Deinard wrote several attacks on the Jewish biography of Jesus by J. Klausner (uncle of Israeli author Amos Oz), and his last printed book, *A Zoo Without an Animal*, questioned the existence of Jesus. Several of his books contain essays directed against Jewish converts to Christianity, among them the ill-fated antiquarian M.W. Shapira, who attempted to sell ancient Biblical fragments of questionable authenticity to the British Museum.

Deinard's concerns were eclectic. Aside from his editions of medieval and post-medieval Hebrew texts, mostly polemics, he wrote treatises on the rabbinic prohibition of *etrogim* from Greece (especially Corfu), and on the modern attempt to reestablish the ancient Sanhedrin. His two-volume *Alatah*, which is of bibliographic interest, attempts to show the *Zohar* to be a forgery, and that Beshtian Hasidism is Catholicism in disguise. Deinard's particular literary genius and satirical gifts are displayed in his *Kundes* ("Prankster") and *Ployderzak* ("Chatterbox"), written in the tradition and style of earlier maskilic or anti-Hasidic parodies. The latter, with its Yiddish title, mocks the flawed Jewish journalism of his day. These works are among the earliest of a whole genre of Hebrew parodies written in America shortly before and after 1900.

Hebrew Literature, Journalism, and Yiddish

Devoted to many periods and genres of Hebrew literature, Deinard published, aside from new or revised editions of early polemical tracts, various medieval and modern Hebrew texts, works by American Hebrew authors, and sharp critiques of modern Hebrew writing, including an attack on "Bolshevism" in literature. (His engagement with American Hebrew writing of the *fin-de-siècle* is also reflected in several book-length attacks on Deinard by his contemporary polemicist N.S. Libowitz.) Involved in Hebrew journalism since his youth, Deinard made several brief attempts to publish his own journals, including one of the first Hebrew papers in America, and a Zionist Yiddish paper at Newark, New Jersey, of which no copy survives. Deinard did not neglect Yiddish, and in his Odessa period published both Hebrew and Yiddish works by the Podolian-born historian and belletrist M. N. Litinsky. Some Yiddish texts appear in his Hebrew books, and he deals with Yiddish in his catalogs and bibliographies. One of his last books, *Devir Efrayim*, which was published just after the founding of the Yiddish Scientific Institute in 1925, contains a chapter on Yiddish.

Bibliography and Booklore

It is in the field of Hebrew booklore that Deinard made his greatest contribution to scholarship. After working on Karaite manuscripts in the Crimea, Deinard spent some years as an antiquarian and publisher in Odessa, where he issued his own dealer's lists. His bibliographic work in America began with a catalogue - from which his polemical introduction, already set in type, was expunged! - of the Sulzberger collection of Hebrew books and manuscripts in Philadelphia. (The collection went to the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.) He also prepared a catalog, never published, of Hebrew manuscripts acquired by the California magnate A. Sutro from M.W. Shapira's Jerusalem stock. (The collection, also catalogued by the wandering Hebraist S. Rubin, remained in San Francisco.) Through his travels, Deinard managed to assemble whole libraries of books and manuscripts, later described in sale catalogs and marketed to research institutions. He founded the great Hebrew collections in New York and Cincinnati, at the Library of Congress, at Harvard, Berkeley, and elsewhere, and he also sold manuscripts

to the famous English libraries in Oxford, Cambridge, and London.

Deinard's broad interest and expertise in rabbinic literature is evident in his bibliographical writings and antiquarian catalogs. His most important bibliographic works are various studies and annotated lists of American Hebrew literature, especially the two-volume *Kohelet Amerika*, which records books issued from 1735 to 1926. He was the first to devote attention to Hebrew books printed overseas by American authors. He also dealt with early Hebrew printing, recording post-incunabula, especially Italian, in *'Atikot Yehudah*, and he wrote about the history of Hebrew bibliography and of Hebrew printing, especially in Eastern Europe. The prospectus of Deinard's last library, subsequently acquired by Harvard, also contains a listing of ceremonial Judaica which passed to the Smithsonian.



E. Deinard, *Le-korot ha-yehudim be-Amerika* [American Jewish history] (New Orleans, 1925).

Deinard and Hebrew Printing

Deinard was interested in the history and spread of Hebrew printing and contributed to its development. His books were printed in eleven towns in Europe, Ottoman Palestine, and America, including Odessa, Warsaw, Pressburg (Bratislava), Vienna, New York, Newark, Kearny, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Arlington, and St. Louis. Deinard was the most prolific Hebrew author-publisher in New Jersey. He founded the presses in Newark and Kearny/Arlington, which in his most

productive year were operated in his home. At the end of his career, Deinard had sixteen volumes printed at the Moinester Press in St. Louis, more than he had printed in any other town. This press catered almost exclusively to émigré rabbinic authors from Eastern Europe, and Deinard's works stand out for their secular subject matter, among them the first Hebrew book on local American Jewish history. Of the books printed in St. Louis, some were "published" in New Orleans, a Hebraist center where he spent his last twelve years. (A further work, in preparation for publication at his death, never appeared.)

A number of Deinard's books are bibliophilic curiosities; several were printed in limited editions of 50 or 100 copies, some have survived in only a handful of copies, and one was said to survive in only a single copy. Reviving an old tradition in Hebrew printing, five of his books were printed on colored papers (blue, red, yellow, green, and gold), two of them using a variety of these papers, and one using red ink. Some of his books are unusual in their dimensions: several are very small octavos, and one work, appropriate to

Montefiore, is an oversize folio on gold paper. The narrow miniature *Zemir 'Aritsim* on colored papers is known as one of the great oddities of Hebrew booklore. Some books are enhanced with illustrative plates or other reproductions or fold-out leaves. The *Kundes*, another octavo on multicolored papers, contains cartoons taken from Goldfaden's first illustrated Yiddish periodical. A few volumes make use of unusual or complex typography.

Following a long tradition of false and fictional imprints in Hebrew publishing, especially in Eastern Europe, one of his books bears the imprint "Sodom" and another "Boltunovka" ("Chatter-town"), although in fact both were printed in Newark. A third rarity, on colored papers, bears the imprint "Tsevu'im" ("the painted capital of hypocrites"), "at the press of the Angel Raziel". Deinard's eccentric and combative personality is reflected in another textual-bibliographic idiosyncrasy: he is known to have printed special copies for specific individuals, with variant texts depending on the intended recipient, some copies differing considerably from each other.

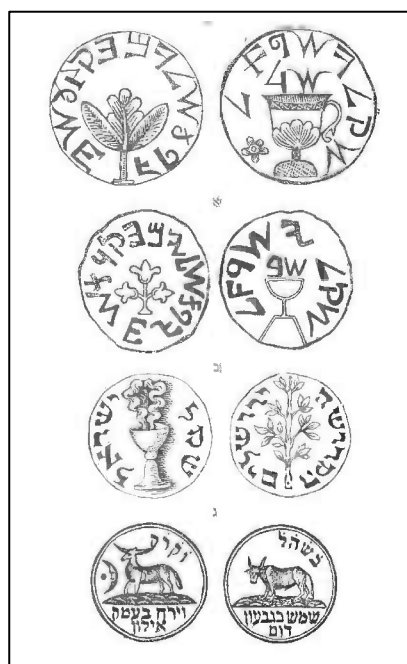
The Hebrew Union College Collection
Surviving copies of Deinard's many works are scattered in Hebrew research libraries around the globe; no library holds a complete set, and some of his books are excessively rare. The largest collections are held at the Hebrew Union College libraries in Cincinnati and Los Angeles, the Library of Congress in Washington, the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and Harvard College Library. The Deinard collection reproduced here, drawn from one of the oldest and largest Hebrew academic libraries in the world the Library of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (with a few additional rarities from the Seminary, YIVO, and the private Valmadonna Trust), includes books, pamphlets, journalistic pieces, and other ephemera from his press. To these have been added the detailed biographical dissertation by S. Berkowitz and some other studies on this unique literary figure – one of the most colorful characters in the history of Hebrew scholarship in America.

Brad Sabin Hill
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York



E. Deinard, *Ha-Ya'ar be-ein dov* [anti-Christian polemic] (St. Louis, 1929).

Cover illustration from: E. Deinard, *Ha-Kundes* [parody] (Sodom [i.e. Newark, New Jersey], 1890).



S. Raffaeli, *Matbe'ot ha-yehudim* [Coins of the Jews], ed. E. Deinard (Jerusalem, 1913).



E. Deinard, *Kohélet Amerika* [bibliography] (St. Louis, 1926).

Product information

General

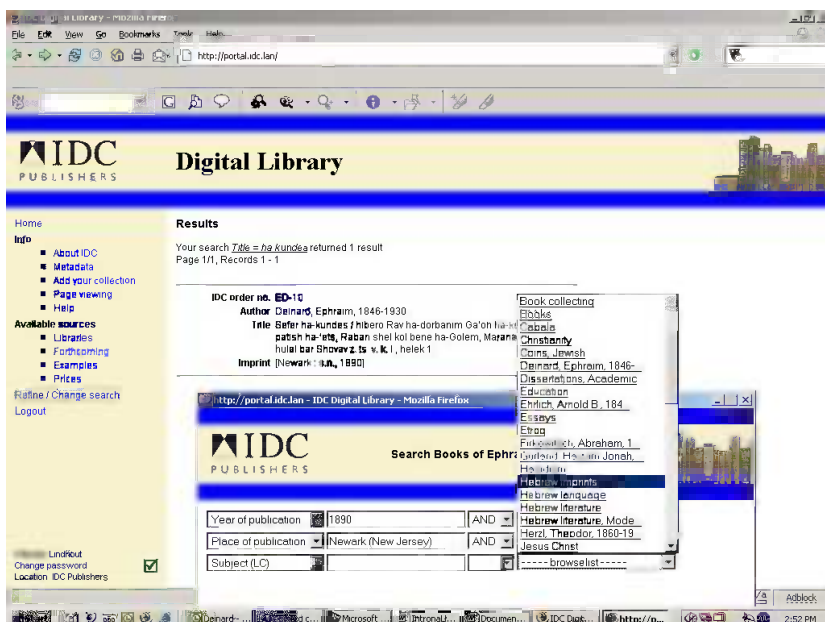
Scope	90 titles
External finding aids	Bibliographic records for all titles ordered are supplied in AACR2/MARC21 format
Prices	For price information, please visit www.idc.nl

Online

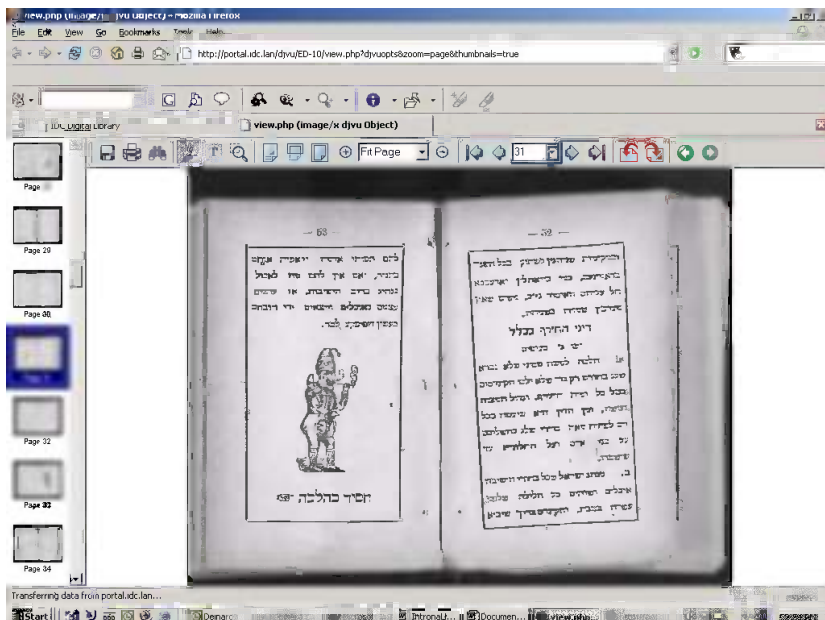
Images available in IDC Digital Library www.idc-digilib.nl

Microfiche

Number of fiche	154
Size of fiche	105 x 148 mm.
Film type	Positive silver halide
Reduction ratio	Varies depending on the size of the original
Internal finding aids	Eye-legible headers on every fiche indicating the author, abbreviated title, place and date of printing of each item.



The search options include: Keyword, Author / Creator, Title, Place of Publication, Year of Publication, Subject (LC), Language, IDC order no. and Institute ID



Bibliography

Berkowitz, S. *Ephraim Deinard (1846-1930): A Transitional Figure*, M.A. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1964.

____. 'Ephraim Deinard: Bibliophile and Bookman', in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 9 (Cincinnati, 1971).

____. 'Ephraim Deinard: A Portrait', in *Jewish Book Annual* 37 (1979-1980).

____. 'Deinard's "Or Mayer" Catalogue', in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 21 (Cincinnati, 2001).

Grossman, G. 'The Ephraim Deinard Collection', in her *Judaica at the Smithsonian* (Washington, 1997).

Hill, B.S. 'Ephraim Deinard and the Shapira Affair', in *The Book Collector* (London, 1997).

Kabakoff, J. 'Ephraim Deinard's *Kohelet America*', in his *Seekers and Stalwarts: Essays and Studies in American Hebrew Literature and Culture* (Jerusalem, 1978, in Hebrew).

Newman, L. 'Solomon Roubin and Ephraim Deinard, Cataloguers of the Hebraica in the Sutro Library in San Francisco', in *Semitic and Oriental Studies ... presented to W. Popper*, ed. W.J. Fischel (Berkeley, 1951).

Schapiro, I. 'Ephraim Deinard', in *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 34 (1937).

Trevisan Semi, E. 'Le Sefer Massa Qrim de Deinard: but parodique ou polémique?', in *Revue des Etudes Juives* 157 (Paris, 1998).

IDC Digital Library

www.idc-digilib.nl

Through IDC Digital Library, it is now possible to access (some of) our collections online. Digital Library is an addition to IDC's publishing program. Current and future IDC collections will therefore be available in both digital (online/local hosting) and analog (microform/paper) format.

Searching in the metadata is free of charge. Access to the images of the available titles is, however, only possible if the institute from which you are logging in to the Digital Library has subscribed to the selected collections or owns the originals that are accessible through the Digital Library.

For more (price) information, please visit www.idc-digilib.nl