

A Sign and a Witness: 2,000 Years of Hebrew Books and Illuminated Manuscripts (Studies in Jewish History)

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Appearing on the occasion of The New York Public Library's exhibition of the Hebrew book from antiquity to modern times, this beautifully illustrated volume will serve both as a preparation for viewing the exhibition (October 15, 1988-January 14, 1989) and as a guide to further inquiry into the subject.

Depicting the history and development of the making and distributing of Hebrew books from the Dead Sea Scrolls to modern times, this collection of essays and 100 illustrations (30 of them in color) examines, in a historical and cultural context, such topics as the decoration of Hebrew manuscripts, the origins of Hebrew printing, the Hebrew book in Christian Europe, translation into and out of Hebrew throughout the ages, and modern publishing. The contributors, all experts in their fields, share their knowledge in a manner that orients the novice, as well as informs the specialist. Many of the contributors offer new information, and some make material available for the first time in English.

The volume includes such highlights as Frank Moore Cross' examination of the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for the study of the Hebrew Bible; Mordecai Glatzer's investigation of hitherto unexplored aspects of the first Hebrew printed books; Michael Grunberger's description of the complementary roles that publishers and authors played in nurturing the nascent Hebrew literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; David Ruderman's exploration of Christian ambivalence towards the Jews and their literature; and Chaim Potok's reflections on how certain Hebrew books have greatly influenced his own writing.

Taken together, the essays in *A Sign and a Witness* treat the Hebrew book both as form and content. The volume reflects two themes in tension: the fundamental importance of the Hebrew book in itself, and the Hebrew book's role as a vehicle in the international traffic of ideas and meeting of cultures.

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