

Compiler's Introduction

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**Jewish Translation History: A bibliography of
bibliographies and studies**

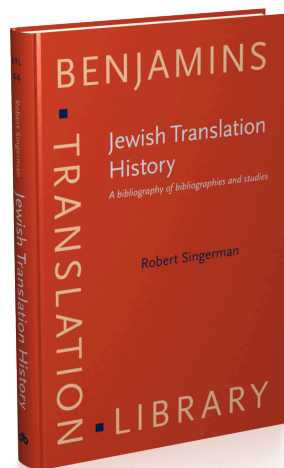
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Compiler's Introduction

The work presented here is a broadly conceived attempt to identify bibliographies as well as published research and studies treating translation activity in the Jewish context, to or from Arabic, Hebrew, Yiddish, Judezmo, etc., from ca. 900 C.E. to the present day. Until now, there has never been a unified bibliographic record of Jewish translation history and its scholarly treatment. It should be emphasized at the outset that the scope of this endeavor is limited to translation research and bibliographies of research and is not in any way to be considered an inventory of individual works of fiction or non-fiction written in Hebrew or Yiddish, for instance, or of individual Hebrew or Yiddish works translated into any of the world's languages.

The citations have been gathered and verified from an exceedingly diverse field of polyglot research literature published through the year 2002; unpublished theses and dissertations are also included to a certain extent. No effort has been made to scan the international weekly Jewish press or Israel's numerous dailies or their important literary sections and supplements. Missing also are the forewords/afterwords to individual translations. A selection of critical reviews of individual translations has been included for their relevance to questions of translating style, proficiency, and the overcoming of semantic barriers to translation across cultures. Materials on adaptations and transcriptions into the Hebrew alphabet from other languages are included for tracing the transfer and absorption of foreign texts and ideas into Jewish culture.

As the first research bibliography in its field, this work, while comprehensive and far-reaching in terms of its chronological, topical, and linguistic parameters, makes no claim of being definitive. Explanatory notes have been added whenever deemed necessary; many notes are given to guide readers to related studies. In light of my goal to identify the core literature in a poorly integrated, yet active interdisciplinary field of study (there is, for example, no journal or academic center devoted to research in Jewish translation history), this bibliography is expected to help facilitate research in comparative literature, the study of scientific and medical texts and their transmission in the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods, or the reception of modern Hebrew literature by European and American readers.

For purposes of this bibliography, Jewish translation history embraces four core components enumerated as follows:

1. Translations, transcriptions, or adaptations from any language into any of the Jewish languages written in the Hebrew alphabet; namely Hebrew, Yiddish, Judezmo, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Italian, etc. The subject content need not be related to Jewish life or culture in any way, nor is Jewish authorship a criteria for inclusion.
2. Translations or adaptations of works originally written in any of the Jewish languages into other languages. The thematic content need not strictly be related to Jewish life or culture in any way, though Jewish authorship can generally be assumed.
3. Translations of works of undisputed Jewish content or themes but not necessarily of Jewish authorship and/or involving a Jewish language.
4. The individual translator's role in translating to or from any of the Jewish languages, with special focus on the Middle Ages and the participation by Jews in the great east-to-west transmission of Greek and Arabic learning into Latin or other European languages.

As previously stated, the work presented here is in no way an attempt to list the translations of works by any particular author, though I have generously included author bibliographies so the reader may know of their existence. My broad coverage, including popular articles prepared for a general readership and book reviews of selected scholarly monographs, is an attempt at comprehensiveness in anticipation of what a potential historian of Jewish translation activity might reasonably want to be informed of, leaving to this scholar the decision to reject any item as peripheral or void of research value.

The field of Bible translation history (e.g., the Septuagint and the Targums, or the ancient Greek and Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, respectively) is unarguably of vast proportions and is best left for others to chronicle, though I have included a modest number of relevant studies as a means of introducing the topic for further reading and investigation. Studies about the notable Bible translations by Saadiah Gaon, Moses Mendelssohn, Isaac Leeser, the Jewish Publication Society of America (1917), and Franz Rosenzweig in collaboration with Martin Buber, among others, are presented in recognition of the acknowledged landmark status of these translations against the backdrop of Jewish cultural history.

This bibliography does not attempt to survey the activities of Israel's professional translators with respect to their commercial translation of scientific, medical, and technical literature from Russian, for instance, into English, or Israeli translation of a non-literary nature as it may relate to the cinema, television, judicial and parliamentary proceedings, school texts, psychometric inventories, achievement tests, and the like. Neither is this work concerned with machine translation, simultaneous interpretation, or language policy in Israel, nor the sociolinguistics of Arabic in Israel, extended to encompass issues related to Arabic-Hebrew diglossia and codeswitching. Although Arabic literature written by Israel's Arabs or the

literature produced by Israel's Christian communities can be regarded as Israeli literature, this is not, strictly speaking, a bibliography of Israeli translation history but, as it pertains to the modern state of Israel, of research about books read in Hebrew translation by Israel's population, or translated from Hebrew into other languages, including Arabic.

The name entries of authors or translators given in this resource generally reflect those adopted by the American library community, though I have not hesitated to provide full middle names whenever known. The few entries that remain unseen by the compiler are denoted by means of an asterisk in front of the author's name. Yiddish titles are romanized according to the Standardized Yiddish Romanization whereas the treatment of Hebrew titles generally adheres to American library practice recommended by the Library of Congress. In listing Hebrew and Yiddish monographs, the alternate English title has been provided in brackets; when no such title is found in the book, the compiler has supplied it. Avraham Even-Shoshan's *ha-Milon he-hadash*, 5 vol. (Jerusalem, 1997), has been my final authority on Hebrew vocalization and, hence, Hebrew romanization. It should be noted that no effort is made in this bibliography to record a book's publisher or its series; however, an attempt is made to indicate the existence of reprint editions. Occasional liberties have been taken by altering the capitalization of titles or their punctuation in the interest of maintaining a consistent style.

An earlier version of this bibliography was published as a centenary tribute to Moritz Steinschneider's monumental *Die hebraeischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher* [The Hebrew Translations of the Middle Ages and the Jews as Interpreters], Berlin, 1893.¹ In my introduction, I closed, "Finally, it is the compiler's hope that the present inventory of research will awaken an interest among experts to begin planning for the long-overdue new 'Steinschneider.'" Happily, Charles H. Manekin (Philosophy Dept., University of Maryland) has now announced his work on translating and updating Steinschneider's masterpiece into a "digitalized bibliographical database that will aid the study of premodern Hebrew science, philosophy, and medicine".² Unlike Steinschneider's classic, the coverage of the present bibliography treats a much longer time span, with considerable attention given to modern developments such as the *Haskalah*, or Jewish enlightenment movement, Yiddish and Judezmo translation activity, and Israel as a translating center of Hebrew literature.

This bibliography concludes my work in an emerging area of research that still awaits definition and scholarly coordination leading to academic courses, conferences, and a scholarly journal. My project, together with that of Charles Manekin upon its completion, will provide a solid foundation upon which to build.

R. S.

Feb. 13, 2002

Notes

1. Robert Singerman, "Jewish Translation History: A Bibliography of Bibliographies and Research." *Bulletin of Bibliography* 51 (1994): 303–23; 52 (1995): 55–67, 133–52 (1165 entries).
2. Charles H. Manekin, "Steinschneider's *Die hebraeischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters*: From Reference Work to Digitalized Database." *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 7 (2000): 152. Although the database component remains under construction, Dr. Manekin, in partnership with the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities, has developed a website for The Steinschneider Bibliographical Database, at <http://www.mith.umd.edu/steinschneider/>.