

FEDERAL AGENCY FOR CULTURE
AND CINEMATOGRAPHIC
RUSSIAN ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM

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HISTORY
AND CULTURE
OF JEWISH
PEOPLE ON
THE TERRITORY
OF RUSSIA

БИБЛИОТЕКА
СПбФ Ин-та востоковедения
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With best
compliments,

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(Yakerson)

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וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם, עֲבָרִי אֲנֹכִי; וְאֵת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם,
אֲנִי יִרְא, אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה אֶת-הַיָּם, וְאֶת-הַיַּבֶּשֶׁת.

*“And he [Jonah] said to them, I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord,
the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land” (Jon 1:9)*





S. An-sky, a member of an ethnographic expedition conversing with dwellers of the Volynsk Province Russia (Russian Ethnographic Museum)



The realization of the idea to establish a museum entitled *History and Culture of Jewish people on the territory of Russia* on the premises of the Russian Ethnographic Museum is quite in vein with St. Petersburg, the cultural capital of Russia. The idea to create a museum dealing with the problems of the interconnection of the culture of multinational Russia and the world's culture is not a new one. As early as the beginning of the 19th century, the organization of such a museum was among the activities of the Jewish History and Ethnography Society founded in 1908. The museum existed in 1916–1929. Several ethnographic expeditions headed by the writer and public figure S. An-sky (pen-name of Schlome-Zeimel Rappoport; 1863–1920) were sent to Ukraine in 1912–1914 with the target to gather materials for the museum's expositions.

Research in Jewish ethnography began even earlier. Thus, A. Fedchenko, on the instructions of the Imperial Society of Lovers of Natural Science, Anthropology and Ethnography at Moscow University, carried out ethnographic research in Turkestan resulted in the demonstration of a Bukhara Jew's costume at the Polytechnic Exhibition of 1872. Later, the costume was transferred to the Dashkov Museum in Moscow. From its beginning, the Russian Ethnographic Museum, founded as the Ethnographic Department of the Russian Museum of Alexander III in 1895, included among its activities the collection of objects of Jewish ethnography. In 1903, on a commission from the Museum, N. Gogol-Yanovsky purchased a Jewess' wedding costume from M. Charukhchev, a known Caucasus merchant and collector. The research work of F. Volkov in Western Ukraine laid the foundation of the Ashkenazi collection in the Russian Ethnographic Museum. The acquisition of the items of Jewish ethnography is also connected with the name of A. Miller, who in 1907–1909 travelled to the Eastern Caucasus and in 1908 to



Byelorussia. In 1911, A. Serzhputovsky went for a trip to boroughs and small towns in the Polish Kingdom inhabited mostly by the Jews. In 1900–1930s, S. Dudin, K. Kavtoradze, M. Plisetsky, S. Preobrazhensky, I. Pulner and other known researchers from Moscow, Petersburg (Leningrad) collected items of Jewish culture.

In 1920–1930s, the two large museums, one in Moscow (the Central Museum of Ethnology, later-the Museum of the Ethnography of the Peoples of the USSR) and one in Leningrad (the State Museum of Ethnography, now the Russian Ethnographic Museum) continued their studies in Jewish ethnography. In 1937–1941, in the collections of the State Museum of Ethnography, a Jewish section already existed. In following years the Museum's collection continued to grow. Recently, a collection gathered by V. Kucherov, a resident of Tashkent, entered the Museum's funds.

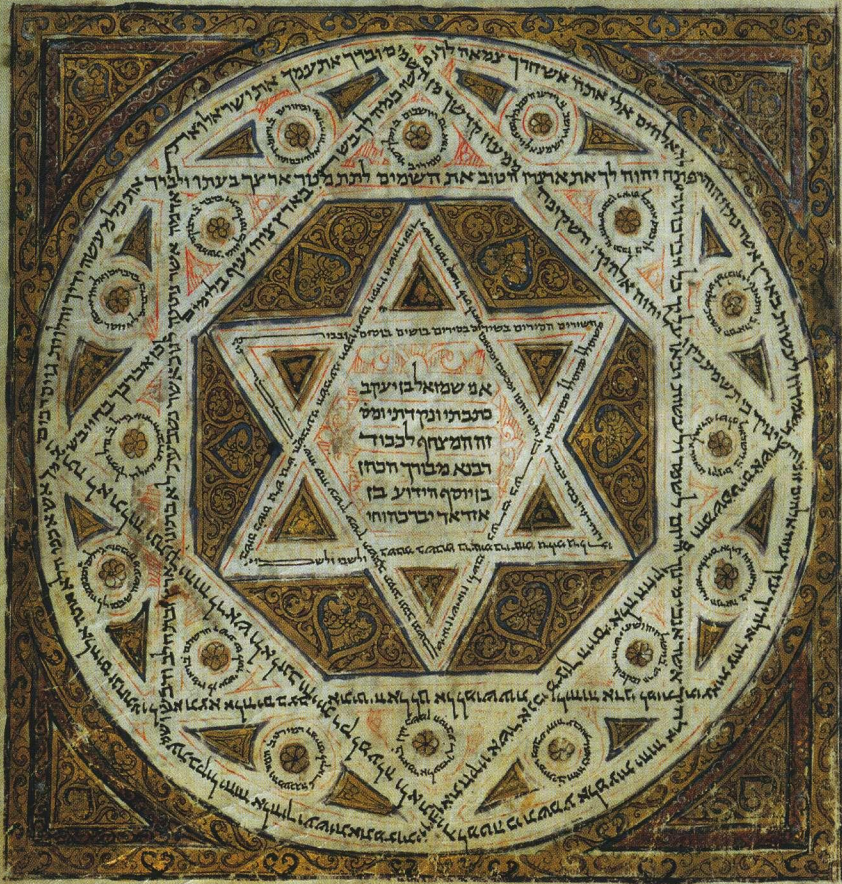
The items of Jewish ethnography at present time are concentrated in the Russian Ethnographic Museum, which accepted collections of different provenance, with the collection of S. An-sky as its nucleus. Most part of the items displayed in the exhibition entitled *History and Culture of Jewish people on the territory of Russia* are from the collections of the Russian Ethnographic Museum as well as the Russian National Library, St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, the State Museum of the History of Religion, The Hermitage, the Military Medicine Museum and other city's museums.

The organization of the exhibition *History and Culture of Jewish people on the territory of Russia* has two targets: to demonstrate the development of museum work both in the country and St. Petersburg and to show the role of each people in the process of the formation of Russian civilization.

The exposition occupies some rooms in the first floor of the Russian Ethnographic Museum and consists of two sections. In the first one,



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Hebrew Bible
 Cairo, Egypt. 1008
 (Russian National Library)



the materials on the formation of Jewish civilization and culture are displayed; the second section is devoted to the domestic culture of Bukhara, Georgian, Gorsky and Ashkenazi Jews from the late 19th-early 20th centuries. The Information Centre is a single whole with the exhibition complex.

There are many different opinions concerning the origin of the English word 'Jew'. It is commonly accepted that the Middle English word 'Jew' is from the Old French *giu*, earlier *juieu*, from the Latin *iudeus* from the Greek *Ioudaios*. The derivations of the word 'Hebrew' are also used to describe a Jewish person in other languages, the Russian word *yevrey* among them. The word goes back to *'ivri* in Hebrew, meaning 'one from the other side (of the river).

Israelites trace their common lineage to the biblical patriarch Abraham who is equally revered in Judaism, Islam and Christianity. He was a migrant to the land of Canaan. On his way to the Near East Abraham crossed the Euphrates. This event might take place in the 18th century BC. In the course of the 2nd millennium BC the local agricultural tribes inhabiting oases on the territory of Canaan assimilated with the nomadic stock-breeding newcomers of Western Semites. This assimilation resulted in the appearance of Ancient Jew people. This period was characterized with emergence of the monotheistic religious tradition and composing of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible), with the Torah, also known as The Five Books of Moses, as its part. All these components as well as the Jewish calendar initially were characteristic for one ethnic culture only. Later, they entered a number of the traditions of the world's civilization built on Central European principles. After Assyria and Babylon conquered the Kingdom of Israel and destroyed the First Temple in the 8th–6th centuries BC Ancient Jew people continued to exist. Since that time on the forms



of their public organizations proved to be the model of the further evolution of the Jewish people with the centre in Judaea, including a vast diaspora in Mesopotamia and, on the eve of the Our Era, on the territory of the East and West Mediterranean area.

The destroying of the Second Temple by Romans physically ruined the centre, the population of the Land of Israel were expelled and were able to live in diaspora only. Instead of the only Temple “houses of assembly” (*synagogue* in Greek) appeared, the sacrifices in the temple gave way to prayers and the people’s motherland turned to be their books.

In the Middle Ages the work on the creation of the Jerusalem (4th century AD) and Babylon (6th century AD) Talmuds were compiled; phylosophy and secular Jewish literature emerged; exegetics of the Bible, religious mysticism (*kabbalah* in Hebrew) and religious laws (*halakhah* in Hebrew) continued to develop. The texts, the observation of the letter of the law and its interpretations turned to be the basis for the Jews’ survival under various political, economical and social conditions of their dispersion between Ismail and Edom, i.e. between Islamic and Christian civilizations. The most peculiar feature in the history of the Jews in the Middle Ages and Our Era is their centuries-long existence in close contacts with the culture and domestic life of surrounding peoples. The Jews, in different historic periods lived almost in every country in the Near East, in Central Asia, in North Africa and Europe. By the end of the 18th century most of European Jews-Ashkenazi lived on the territory of Eastern Europe.

The accepted literary language of the Jews remained Hebrew, termed *leshon ha-kodesh*, i.e. ‘the holy tongue’, the language in which the Hebrew scriptures (*Tanakh*) were composed, however the daily speech of the Jewish people was different, depending on the country they lived. Some distinctive



1925 № 1419

נדה

שמיני

מסכת

של פסוקי טהור מלכותי

שמיני אומ' כל הנסיחין שבתן אדם חתום די לבו אם תמלא תרומה וטמא' סגנון כח
 המטה ראשון ואחריו לא יאמר כי הכי והצטוף חושבת ים לבית החינו' או
 היה בדיק מלי מקמי הכי אלא חתום וכו' כתי' היום העמדה קיימ' לך כס' ה' א' חס' כל
 המים הממזלות כמית הדב' : משקדים לסקוד בדיק עמדה כח' באבת ומזלחה טהור ולמס'
 דמי' ק' ג' שלום אט' שלום / כט
 אכס
 שמיני אומ' כל
 אומר כל הנסים דין ש
 שעתן הלל אומ' מפקדה לפקדה ואמרו
 למים הרבה וכו' כמי' א' לא כד' ב' וזה הלא
 כד' ב' וזה אלא

דין חוש
היוסף
שמיני

בה בדיק ראשון לטמא וממלאו כל המזאת סתם שפחה רוח כעמיה אכל תוך דוקני בדיק'
 המיוחד טהרות היא כמ' בדיק עמדה תח' א' כ' טהרה - לא כ' כ' כ' זה סתמי' יתר מרוא' דמאי
 כלי היא ימים רבים לא מקמי' לה כותלי בית הדין : ולא כד' ב' וזה שנקל יתר מרוא' :

א ב

סג' מלכותי
מלכותי

זק מלכותי

א ב



פירו' משנת אבות לרב הגדול העובהק
מורנו הרב רבנו משה בן מיימון ז"ל

שמואל

אמר

בן יהודה אבן תבון זאת המסכת ז"ל מסכת אבות ידוע מסדר ישועו סדור
בין מסכת עדיות ומסכת נזו ולא נמצא לה גמרא והרב הגדול רבי משה
בן מיימון ז"ל פירשה בלשון הגרי בכלל פירושו למשנת טיתא סדרי פירשה
כלה בלשון זהו והרחיב במסכת הזאת המאמ' להיותה יקרה בעניני משנ
שהי מדבר במדן האד החטובו והישרו והשחיתו והמעוותו אשר החשבות
והישרות מהן מפנות הדרך ומסקלות המסלה העולה אל המעלות השכליו
כמו שאמר החכם טמע עצה וקבל מוסר למען תחכם באחרייתך וזמ
ובמעלות השכליו יטיב המטיב אל ידיעת בוראו כמו שאמר החכם הכוזב על
החכמה אם תבקשנה ככסף וכמטמונים תחפשנה אז תבין יראת ה' ודעת
אלהים תמצא כלומ' בבקשך החכמה ככסף וחפשך אותה כמטמונים ר'
דנצה בזה בקשה וחפוש בזריות והשתדלות יתרה שהמבקש על דרך הזאת
אין ספק שימצא מבוקשו ויגיע אליו אז תבין יראת ה' ותגיע אל ידיעת
ז"ל בהבנת יראת ה' הבנת אמתת דעות התורה שהיא יראת ה' והיו בידו מ'
מקובלים לכו קודם בקשת החכמה ובחכמה ידע אמתתם והנרצה בהם
נרצה לומ' במציאות דעת אלהים טידע מציאות ה' יתבר במציאות מונת
לא בקבלה לבד כאשר היה לפני בקשו החכמה וידיעת ה' יתברך אין ספק
שהיא תכלית האדם כמו שאמר הנביא ע"ה כי אם בזאת יתהלל המתהלל הש
השכל ידוע אותי כי אני ה' עשה חסד מטפט וזדקה באר כי באלה חפצתי
נאם ה' ונאע"ם שהרב ז"ל פיר זה הפסוק פירו' טוב בפרק כד מן החלק ה'
השלישי מספר מורה הנבוכים וחדש לנן בו חדוש גדול לא יערבנו זהב
וזכוכית והנ' מה שהבין ממל' בארץ יש לי בפירושו תוספת מעט ראיתיהו
לזכרו הנה שפי קצת מלתיו דרך אחרת והם במלות כי באלה חפצתי יש לי
בהן חדוש אין ספק אצלי בטובו ואמתתו כמו

ב א



dialect forms developed, for example, Judæo-Arabic, Judæo-Persian, Judæo-Spanish and so on. Yiddish is the Judæo-German language developed by Ashkenazi Jews.

The common heritage of Jewish people was the strict observation of biblical norms of Judaism which dictated the inner isolation of each separate Jewish community, its constant and unbroken reproduction in the frames of religious traditions, obligatory observation of *kashrut*.

The earliest of the material evidence of the existence of Jewish settlements on the territory of Russia refer to the early centuries of Our Era. Most of them are found in the zone of former Greek colonies on the territory of the North Black Sea coast area: in Bosphorus and Chersonesos, as well as in Tanais and Olbia. The main monuments shaped as stone stelae are concentrated on Kerchensky and Tamansky Peninsulas and refer to the 1st–6th centuries AD.

At the same time with the appearance of Jewish settlements in the North Black Sea coast area the Jews penetrated onto Trans Caucasus territory what is affirmed with some Jewish epitaphs found in the vicinity of Mzkheta in Georgia. They refer to the 3rd century AD. Georgian chronicles of the later Middle Ages fixed the first appearance of the Jews in Georgia in the 6th century AD, and traditional Georgian Christian historiography speaks of the role of the Jews in the process of converting the country to Christianity.

There is information on the adoption of Judaism in Khazar kaganat, one of the largest states in southern Russia in the early Middle Ages, which refers to the mid-8th-early 9th centuries. Some sources speak of the rabbinic character of Judaism of Khazars. At the same time there is a version concerning the popularity of Karaism among them.



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