HISTORIC LIBRARIES FORUM
BRIEF GUIDES TO NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGES, 2
HEBREW

Introduction
This publication is intended as a brief guide for those without knowledge of Hebrew who find themselves dealing with books in that language in a library context. Dealing with a book in Hebrew can be daunting for those unfamiliar with the language. Not only is the alphabet different, but it is also usually printed without vowels, meaning that knowledge of the alphabet is not in itself enough to decipher a title page or transcribe it in Roman letters. This guide aims to provide enough information to recognise the most common titles and types of Hebrew work and to identify records to download or copy from other library catalogues.

Reading Hebrew
Hebrew is written from right to left, so Hebrew books open from the right hand side, hence the title page can be found at what would be the back of an English book.

The alphabet
The Hebrew alphabet is made up of 22 consonants. 5 of these have a 'final' form, which is used when the letter appears at the end of a word. There are no capital letters.

Letter	Final form	Name	Letter	Final form	Name
א		Alef	ל		Lamed
ב		Bet/Vet*	מ	ם	Mem
ג		Gimel	נ	ן	Nun
ד		Dalet	ס		Samekh
ה		He	ע		ʻAyin
ו		Vav̱	פ	ף	Pe/Fe*
ז		Zayin	צ	ץ	Tsadi (or Tsadiḳ)
ח		Ḥet	ק		Ḳof (or Ḳuf)
ט		Ṭet	ר		Resh
י		Yod (or Yud)	ש		Shin/Śin*
כ	ך	Kaf/Khaf*	ת		Tav̱

*The name of this letter varies according to its vocalisation – see further below

Note that the appearance of the letters can vary a little depending on the typeface. An internet image search for 'Hebrew typefaces' will show different examples.

Vocalisation
In order to read a Hebrew word, the consonants need to be vocalised: for example the word שבת could be read as *shabat* (the sabbath), *shavat* (he rested), *shevot* (rest!) or *shevet* (seat, dwelling). Additional signs (see under Romanisation below) are sometimes printed to indicate vocalisation – this is common in Bibles, prayer books, poetry and children's books – but generally the vocalisation has to be inferred from the context.

Romanisation

There is no universally accepted system for writing Hebrew in Roman letters, but the one widely used in library catalogues is the [ALA-LC Romanization Scheme](#). This aims to approximate the modern Israeli pronunciation of Hebrew. The scheme uses special characters for some letters, the Unicode for which is given below.

Consonants

Hebrew		Romanisation	Unicode	Hebrew		Romanisation	Unicode
א		ʼ or disregarded*	02bc	ל		l	
בּ		b		מ	ם	m	
ב		v		נ		n	
ג		g		ס		s	
ד		d		ע		ʻ *	02bb
ה		h		פּ		p	
ו		v̲ (if a consonant)	1e7f	פ	ף	f	
ז		z		צ		ts	
ח		ḥ	1e25	ק		ḳ	1e33
ט		ṭ	1e6d	ר		r	
י		y		שׁ		sh	
כּ	ך	k		שׂ		ś	015b
כ	ך	kh		ת		t	

*The letters alef and ʻayin are 'silent' letters, which are indicated in the romanisation scheme only by symbols. In some cases, such as the beginning of a word, the alef is disregarded completely.

Vowel signs (the circles represent the consonant above or below which the vowel symbol appears)

Symbol	Sound	Symbol	Sound
◌ַ	a	◌ֵ (with vertical bar)	e
◌ָ	a or o	◌ִ (with vertical bar)	i
◌ֱ	e	וֹ	o
◌ֵ	e	וּ	u
◌ִ	i	◌ְ	e or disregarded
◌ֺ	o	◌ֲ	a
◌ֻ	u	◌ֳ	e
◌ֱ (with vertical bar)	e	◌ֳ	o
◌ַ (with vertical bar)	ai		

'Rashi' script

Most Hebrew books are printed in the standard 'square' type, but part or all of some books, particularly rabbinic literature, are printed in a different type, generally called Rashi script:

Hebrew letters in square and Rashi type								
ט = ט	ח = ח	ז = ז	ו = ו	ה = ה	ד = ד	ג = ג	ב = ב	א = א
ס = ס	ן = ן	נ = נ	ם = ם	מ = מ	ל = ל	ך = ך	כ = כ	י = י
ת = ת	ש = ש	ר = ר	ק = ק	ץ = ץ	צ = צ	ף = ף	פ = פ	ע = ע

Source: Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashi_script

In cataloguing, Rashi script is transcribed using standard Hebrew characters, with identical romanisation.

Other languages written in Hebrew script

As well as Hebrew, a number of other languages are written in Hebrew script, such as Aramaic, Yiddish, Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) and Judeo-Arabic. Aramaic is romanised as Hebrew. Romanisation schemes for Yiddish, Ladino and Judeo-Arabic can be found on the [Library of Congress website](#).

Yiddish can be recognised by the frequent appearance of certain letters and combinations of letters:
- ע (e)
- וו (v̲)
- יי (ey)
- ײַ (ay)
- וי (oy)
- פֿ (f)

Ladino is often printed in Rashi script.

Searching library catalogues

Many catalogue records (those of the Library of Congress, for example) include both Hebrew and romanised script. If your computer/library management system is set up to do so[*], the easiest way to locate a record for a Hebrew book is to type the bibliographic details in Hebrew to locate a record that also includes romanisation.

If this is not possible or unsuccessful then try looking for some familiar keywords (see p. 7-8) and search using those.

Grammar

Prefixes

The definite article ה (usually vocalised as *ha-*, but can be *he-* in some circumstances) is prefixed to the beginning of a word, e.g. ספר *sefer* means '(a) book', while הספר *ha-sefer* means 'the book'. There is no indefinite article.

Prepositions may also be prefixed to the beginning of a word, e.g. ל (to); ב (in); מ (from); the vocalisation varies depending on the word that follows.

The letter ו at the beginning of the words means 'and'; again the vocalisation varies.

Plurals

Plurals of nouns are formed by the addition of ים (*im*) or ות (*ot*) at the end of the word (there may be changes in vocalisation), e.g. ספר *sefer* (book), ספרים *sefarim* (books); אב *av* (father), אבות *avot* (fathers).

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[*] In Windows, this is easily done via the Region and Language settings. The Hebrew keyboard layout can be found at http://www.qsm.co.il/Hebrew/keyboard.htm

The construct

Two nouns are often joined together in a 'construct chain' to express a possessive relationship; sometimes the vocalisation of the first word changes, e.g. בית *bayit* (house), מדרש *midrash* (study), בית מדרש *bet midrash* (house of study).The plural ending ים *im* changes to י *e* e.g. בנים *banim* (children), ישראל *Yiśraʾel* (Israel), בני ישראל *bene Yiśraʾel* (children of Israel).

Numbers and dates

Hebrew letters also have a numerical value, and are commonly used instead of Arabic numerals for both page numbers and dates, especially in older works.

Letter	Numerical value	Letter	Numerical value	Letter	Numerical value
א	1	י	10	ק	100
ב	2	כ	20	ר	200
ג	3	ל	30	ש	300
ד	4	מ	40	ת	400
ה	5	נ	50		
ו	6	ס	60		
ז	7	ע	70		
ח	8	פ	80		
ט	9	צ	90		

Other numbers are indicated by combining letters and adding the numerical values together:

Letters	Numerical value	Letters	Numerical value	Letters	Numerical value
יא	11	טז*	16	כא	21
יב	12	יז	17	תש	700
יג	13	יח	18	תקמא	541
יד	14	יט	19		
טו*	15				

*These do not follow the same pattern as the other numbers between 11 and 19 as combining a י with a ה or ו would spell out part of the divine name and is avoided for religious reasons.

Although it is conventional to begin with the largest number, letters can be combined in any order (see below on chronograms).

Page numbering

Note that it is often the leaf rather than the page that is numbered in Hebrew books. Sometimes there are two sets of numbering, with the pages numbered in Arabic numerals while the leaves are numbered with Hebrew letters.

Dates

Imprints usually give the date in the Hebrew calendar (using letters – see above) and may or may not include an equivalent Gregorian date. The Hebrew calendar conventionally dates from the creation of the world and is 3,760 years ahead of the common era (AD), e.g. (most of) the year 2000 corresponds to the Hebrew year 5760. The initial thousand is frequently omitted, giving a 3 letter date, which may be indicated by the abbreviation לפ״ק *li-f. ḳ*. Such a date is easily converted to the Gregorian calendar by adding 1240, e.g. תש״ס = 760, add 1240 = 2000. Alternatively, you can use a date converter such as www.hebcal.com/converter.

It should be noted, however, that the Hebrew year starts in September or October, so the year 760 ran from September 1999 to September 2000. Unless the exact date is given it could correspond to one of two Gregorian years.

In cataloguing, the corresponding Gregorian date is given in square brackets if it does not appear in the item, e.g. 760 [1999 or 2000]

Hebrew dates in older works are frequently given as chronograms, i.e. as a word or sentence (often a biblical quotation), where the numerical value of each letter is added together to give the date. Sometimes only certain letters of the word/sentence are used, which are indicated by larger print or some kind of mark (see example 3, p. 16)

Some useful vocabulary

English	Romanisation	Hebrew
commentary, explanation	be'ur	באור/ביאור
printing house	bet defus	בית דפוס
publishing house	bet hotsa'ah (la-or)	בית הוצאה (לאור)
in the year	bi-shenat	בשנת
page(s), leaf/ves	daf/dapim	דף/דפים
printer	defus	דפוס
sermon(s)	derashah/derashot	דרשה/דרשות
haggadah (prayer book for the Passover meal; plural haggadot)	hagadah/hagadot	הגדה/הגדות
printing	hadpasah	הדפסה
printed, brought to press	huva li-defus	הובא לדפוס
publisher	hotsa'ah (la-or)	הוצאה (לאור)
religious law(s)	halakhah/halakhot	הלכה/הלכות
note(s)	he'arah/he'arot	הערה/הערות
preface, introduction, foreword	haḳdamah	הקדמה
composition, treatise, essay	ḥibur	חבור/חיבור
novelty/ies (usually refers to 'novellae', new interpretations of religious texts)	ḥidush/ḥidushim	חדוש/חדושים
new	ḥadash/ḥadashah	חדש/חדשה
part(s)	ḥelek/ḥalaḳim	חלק/חלקים
Yiddish	Yidish	יידיש
collection(s), anthology/ies	yalḳut/yalḳutim	ילקוט/ילקוטים
published	yatsa la-or	יצא לאור
composition, work	yetsirah	יצירה
old	yashan/yeshanah	ישן/ישנה
volume(s)	kerekh/kerakhim	כרך/כרכים
manuscript(s)	ketav yad/kitve yad	כתב יד/כתבי יד
table(s); calendar(s), almanac(s)	luaḥ/luḥot	לוח/לוחות
collection(s)	leḳeṭ/leḳaṭim	לקט/לקטים
collected	liḳeṭ	לקט/ליקט
language	lashon	לשון
essay(s)	ma'amar/ma'amarim	מאמר/מאמרים
by	me-et	מאת
preface, foreword, introduction	mavo	מבוא
printer(s)	madpis/madpisim	מדפיס/מדפיסים
edition; volume	mahadurah	מהדורה
bookseller(s)	mokher/mokhre sefarim	מוכר/מוכרי ספרים
publisher	motsi la-or	מוציא לאור
author	meḥaber	מחבר
maḥzor (a type of prayer book; plural maḥzorim)	maḥzor/maḥzorim	מחזור/מחזורים
custom(s)	minhag/minhagim	מנהג/מנהגים

tractate(s) (of the Talmud or Mishnah)	masekhet/masekhtot	מסכת/מסכתות
index(es)	mafteaḥ/maftehot	מפתח/מפתחות
place	maḳom	מקום
text, version, (liturgical) rite	nusaḥ	נסח/נוסח
the Ashkenazic rite (see p. 15)	nusaḥ Ashkenaz	נסח/נוסח אשכנז
the Sephardic rite (see p. 15)	nusaḥ Sefarad	נסח/נוסח ספרד
appendix/cies, addendum/a	nispaḥ/nispaḥim	נספח/נספחים
order(s) (see p. 13-15 under Mishnah and prayer books)	seder/sedarim	סדר/סדרים
siddur (a type of prayer book; plural siddurim)	sidur/sidurim	סדור/סדורים
series; weekly portion (of the Torah)	sidrah	סדרה
author(s); scribe(s)	sofer/sofrim	סופר/סופרים
story/ies	sipur/sipurim	ספר/סיפור/ספורים
book(s)	sefer/sefarim	ספר/ספרים
Yiddish	ʻIvri ṭayṭsh	עברי טיטש/טייטש
Hebrew	ʻIvrit	עברית
editor	ʻorekh	עורך
by	ʻal yad/ʻal yede	על יד/על ידי
with	ʻim	עם
page(s), column(s)	ʻamud/ʻamudim	עמוד/עמודים
judgement, legal decision	pesaḳ/pesaḳim	פסק/פסקים
commentary, interpretation	perush	פרוש/פירוש
chapter(s), section(s), weekly portion(s) (of the Torah)	parashah/parashot/parashiyot	פרשה/פרשות/פרשיות
introduction, preface, foreword	petaḥ davar	פתח דבר
pamphlet	ḳunṭres	קנטרס/קונטרס
responsa (see p. 15)	she'elot u-teshuvot	שאלות ותשבות
song(s), poem(s)	shir/shirim	שיר/שירים
of	shel	של
year(s)	shanah/shanim	שנה/שנים
title page(s); chapter(s)	shaʻar/sheʻarim	שער/שערים
additions; Tosafot (commentaries on the Talmud)	tosafot	תוספות
Talmud	Talmud	תלמוד
The Babylonian Talmud	Talmud Bavli	תלמוד בבלי
The Jerusalem (or Palestinian) Talmud	Talmud Yerushalmi	תלמוד ירושלמי
translation (may refer specifically to an Aramaic translation of the Bible – see p. 13)	targum	תרגום

Proper nouns
Personal names
Until the early modern period many Jewish names consisted of a first name and patronymic, e.g. Yosef ben Avraham (Joseph son of Abraham); in Arabic-speaking countries they sometimes used the Arabic *ibn* instead of *ben* e.g. Abraham ibn Ezra. Names also sometimes included a place of origin, e.g. Jacob ben Sheshet Gerondi (Jacob son of Sheshet of Gerona).

Some common place names
There are many variations in the spelling of non-Hebrew place names (and in the romanisation of these spellings), but some of the most common are given below:

English	Romanisation	Hebrew
Izmir	Izmir	אזמיר
Amsterdam	Amśṭirdam	אמשטירדם
Antwerp	Anvirshah	אנווארשה
Germany	Ashkenaz	אשכנז
Basel	Basiliʾah	בסיליאה
Berlin	Berlin	ברלין
Warsaw	Ṿarsha	ווארשא
Vilna (Vilnius)	Ṿilna	ווילנא
Vienna	Ṿin	ווין
Venice	Ṿenitsiʾah	ויניציאה
Lvov (Lviv)	Levov	לבוב
Lublin	Lublin	לובלין
Livorno	Liṿorno	ליוורנו
Lemberg (Lviv)	Lemberg	לעמבערג
Mantua	Manṭovah	מנטובה
Spain	Sefarad	ספרד
Fürth	Firda, Fyorda	פירדא, פיורדא
Prague	Prag	פראג
Frankfurt am Main	Franḳforṭ de-Main	פרנקפורט דמיין
Constantinople (Istanbul)	Ḳushṭandina	קושטאנדינא, קושטאנדינה, קושטנדינא
Krakow	Ḳraḳo	קראקא
Salonika (Thessaloniki)	Śaloniḳi	שאלוניקי

Abbreviations

Abbreviations are very common in Hebrew, especially in rabbinic literature. Abbreviations are indicated by the sign ״ (gershayim), or an apostrophe, for example אב״ד a.b.d, short for av bet din (the head of a religious court). Many Hebrew abbreviations are acronyms, i.e. they are pronounced as words, e.g. רש״י Rashi, short for Rabbi Shelomoh Yitsḥaḳi.

The divine name *yod he ṿaṿ he* is frequently abbreviated to יי, י', ה' or ד'.

Some common Hebrew abbreviations:

Meaning	Romanisation	Term	Romanisation	Abbreviation
my lord, my teacher and rabbi (honorific)	adoni, mori ṿe-rabi	אדוני, מורי ורבי	admor	אדמו״ר
			ado. m. ṿe-r.	אדומו״ר
			a.m. ṿe-r.	אמו״ר
son of the rabbi	ben ha-rav	בן הרב	beha-r.	בהר'
			b. ha-r.	בה״ר
son of Rabbi	ben rabi	בן רבי	b. r.	ב״ר
leaf, number	gilayon	גליון	gil.	גל"
the rabbi	ha-rav	הרב	ha-r.	הר'
i.e.	zot omeret	זאת אומרת	z.o.	ז״א
may his memory be a blessing (used after the name of a deceased person)	zikhrono li-verakhah	זכרונו לברכה	zal	ז״ל
issue, number	ḥoveret	חוברת	ḥov	חוב'
no place given (s.l.)	ḥaser maḳom	חסר מקום	ḥ.m.	ח״מ
no publisher given (s.n.)	ḥaser motsi la-or	חסר מוציא לאור	ḥ. mo.l.	חמו״ל
misprint; sic	ṭaʿut defus	טעות דפוס	t.d.	ט״ד
the honourable rabbi, Rabbi (honorific)	kevod ha-rav Rabi	כבוד הרב רבי	k. ha-r. R.	כהר״ר
my honourable teacher and rabbi, Rabbi (honorific)	kevod mori ha-rav Rabi	כבוד מורי הרב רבי	k.m. ha-r. R. k. mo. ha-r. R.	כמהר״ר כמוהר״ר
manuscript	ketav yad	כתב יד	ket. y.	כת״י
manuscripts	kitve yad	כתבי יד	kit. y.	
by the abbreviated era (see p. 6)	li-feraṭ ḳaṭan	לפרט קטן	li-f. ḳ	לפ״ק
edition	mahadurah	מהדורה	mahad.	מהד'
my great teacher and rabbi, Rabbi (honorific)	mori ha-gadol ṿe-rav Rabi	מורי הגדול ורב רבי	m.h. ṿe-r. R.	מהור״ר
my teacher, the rabbi (honorific)	mori ha-rav	מורי הרב	m. ha-r.	מה״ר
			mo. h.	מו״ה
			mo. ha-r.	מוה״ר

my teacher, the rabbi, Rabbi (honorific)	mori ha-rav Rabi	מורי הרב רבי	mo. ha-r. R.	מוהר״ר
publisher	motsi la-or	מוציא לאור	mo.l.	מו״ל
my teacher (and) my rabbi (honorific)	mori v̯e-rabi / mori rabi	מורי ורבי / מורי רבי	m. v̯e-r. / mo. r.	מו״ר
number	mispar	מספר	mis.	מס'
son of	ibn	אבן	n.	ן'
by	ʿal yad / ʿal yede	על יד / על ידי	ʿa.y.	ע״י
according to	ʿal pi	על פי	ʿa.p.	ע״פ
Rashi's commentary	perush Rashi	פירוש רש״י	pe. Rashi	פירש״י
holy community (used before place names)	ḳehilah ḳedoshah	קהילה קדושה	ḳ.ḳ.	ק״ק
Rabbi	Rabi	רבי	R.	ר'
Rabbi Moses Maimonides	Rabi Mosheh ben Maimon	רבי משה בן מימון	Rambam	רמב״ם
(the title of a legal work)	Shulḥan ʿarukh	שולחן ערוך	Shu. ʿa.	שו״ע
responsa (see p. 15)	sheʾelot u-teshuvot	שאלות ותשובות	sh. u-t.	שו״ת
Six orders (i.e. the Mishnah or Talmud)	Shishah sedarim	שישה סדרים	Shas	ש״ס
(the title of a legal work)	Shulḥan ʿarukh	שולחן ערוך	Sh. ʿa.	ש״ע
The Torah, Prophets and Writings (i.e. the Hebrew Bible)	Torah Neviʾim Ketuvim	תורה נביאים כתובים	Tanakh	תנ״ך

For a list of common abbreviations, with romanisation, see
http://library.princeton.edu/departments/tsd/katmandu/hebrew/open.html
See also the Wikipedia article List of Hebrew abbreviations, which includes translations.

Common types of Hebrew work

Bible

The Hebrew Bible contains the same books as the Christian Old Testament, but in a different order. It is divided into three sections:

- תורה Torah (Pentateuch, The Five Books of Moses)
    - בראשית Be-reshit (Genesis)
    - שמות Shemot (Exodus)
    - ויקרא Ṿa-yiḳra (Leviticus)
    - במדבר Be-midbar (Numbers)
    - דברים Devarim (Deuteronomy)

- נביאים Nevi'im (Prophets). May be further subdivided into:
    - נביאים ראשונים Nevi'im Rishonim (Early Prophets)
        - יהושע Yehoshu'a (Joshua)
        - שופטים Shofṭim (Judges)
        - שמואל Shemu'el (Samuel)
        - מלכים Melakhim (Kings)
    - נביאים אחרונים Nevi'im Aḥaronim (Latter Prophets)
        - ישעיהו Yesha'yahu (Isaiah)
        - ירמיהו Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah)
        - יחזקיאל Yeḥezḳi'el (Ezekiel)
        - תרי עשר Tere Aśar (The twelve minor prophets):
            - הושע Hoshe'a (Hosea)
            - יואל Yo'el (Joel)
            - עמוס 'Amos (Amos)
            - עובדיה 'Ovadyah (Obadiah)
            - יונה Yonah (Jonah)
            - מיכה Mikhah (Micah)
            - נחום Naḥum (Nahum)
            - חבקוק Ḥavaḳuḳ (Habakkuk)
            - צפניה Tsefanyah (Zephaniah)
            - חגיי Ḥagai (Haggai)
            - זכריה Zekharyah (Zechariah)
            - מלאכי Malakhi (Malachi)

- כתובים Ketuvim (Writings)
    - תהלים Tehilim (Psalms)
    - משלי Mishle (Proverbs)
    - איוב Iyov (Job)
    - חמש מגלות Ḥamesh megilot (Five Scrolls)
        - שיר השירים Shir ha-Shirim (Song of Solomon, Song of Songs)
        - רות Rut (Ruth)
        - איכה Ekhah (Lamentations)
        - קהלת Ḳohelet (Ecclesiastes)
        - אסתר Ester (Esther)

- דניאל Dani'el (Daniel)
- עזרא 'Ezra (Ezra)
- נחמיה Neḥemyah (Nehemiah)
- דברי הימים Divre ha-yamim (Chronicles)

The Torah is often printed on its own, divided into the sections read in the synagogue each week. Such a volume is known as a *Ḥumash* (from the Hebrew for five) and may have the title חמשה חומשי תורה *Ḥamishah ḥumshe Torah*. It may include the *Haftarot*, selections from *Nevi'im* that follow each week's Torah reading, and also by the Five Scrolls, which are read on festivals.

Bibles are frequently published with commentaries, the most common being that of Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac, 1040–1105). They are also frequently published with one or more Aramaic translations, known as targums, the most common being Targum Onkelos. Bibles with commentaries and/or translations are often printed with the biblical text in the centre and the commentaries/translations around the edge.

Mishnah

The Mishnah is a collection of Hebrew oral traditions compiled at the beginning of the third century. It is divided into six *sedarim* (orders), each of which is further divided into tractates (*masekhtot,* singular *masekhet*):

- זרעים Zera'im (Seeds) concerning agricultural matters
  - ברכות Berakhot
  - פאה Pe'ah
  - דמאי Demai
  - כלאים Kilayim
  - שביעית Shevi'it
  - תרומות Terumot
  - מעשרות Ma'aśerot
  - מעשר שני Ma'aśer sheni
  - חלה Ḥalah
  - ערלה 'Orlah
  - ביכורים Bikurim

- מועד Mo'ed (Holy time) concerning the Sabbath and festivals
  - שבת Shabat
  - ערובין 'Eruvin
  - פסחים Pesaḥim
  - שקלים Sheḳalim
  - יומא Yoma
  - סוכה Suḳah
  - ביצה Betsah
  - ראש השנה Rosh ha-Shanah
  - תענית Ta'anit
  - מגילה Megilah

- מועד קטן Moʻed ḳaṭan
- חגיגה Ḥagigah

- נשים Nashim (Women) concerning family law
  - יבמות Yevamot
  - כתובות Ketubot
  - נדרים Nedarim
  - נזיר Nazir
  - סוטה Soṭah
  - גיטין Giṭin
  - קידושין Ḳidushin

- נזיקין Neziḳin (Damages) concerning civil and criminal law
  - בבא קמא Bava ḳama
  - בבא מציעא Bava metsiʻa
  - בבא בתרא Bava batra
  - סנהדרין Sanhedrin
  - מכות Makot
  - שבועות Shevuʻot
  - עדויות ʻEduyot
  - עבודה זרה ʻAvodah zarah
  - אבות Avot
  - הוריות Horayot

- קדשים Ḳodashim (Sacrifices) concerning sacrifices and the Temple
  - זבחים Zevaḥim
  - מנחות Menaḥot
  - חולין Ḥulin
  - בכורות Bekhorot
  - ערכין ʻArakhin
  - תמורה Temurah
  - כריתות Keritot
  - מעילה Meʻilah
  - תמיד Tamid
  - מידות Midot
  - קנים Ḳinim

- טהרות Ṭeharot (Purity) concerning ritual purity and impurity
  - כלים Kelim
  - אהלות Ohalot
  - נגעים Negaʻim
  - פרה Parah
  - טהרות Ṭeharot
  - מקואות Miḳṿaʾot
  - נדה Nidah

- מכשירין Makhshirin
- זבים Zavim
- טבול יום Ṭevul yom
- ידים Yadayim
- עקצין Aḳatsin

Talmud

A collection of rabbinic commentaries on and additions to the Mishnah, known as the Gemara, was compiled around the 6th century. The Gemara is written in a combination of Hebrew and Aramaic. Together the Mishnah and Gemara form the Talmud, of which there are two versions: the Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*) and the Jerusalem (or Palestinian) Talmud (*Talmud Yerushalmi*). The Talmud is usually published with commentaries, particularly those of Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac, 1040–1105) and the Tosafot (pupils and descendants of Rashi). In printed editions the text of the Mishnah and Gemara are printed in the centre, with the commentaries around the outside.

Prayer books

There are two main types of Hebrew prayer book: *siddurim* (singular *siddur*), which contain prayers for weekdays and sabbaths (and sometimes also festivals) and *maḥzorim* (singular *maḥzor*), which contain prayers for festivals. Another common type is the *haggadah* (plural *haggadot*), which contains prayers and readings for the Passover meal, or *seder*.

Ashkenazim (Jews originating from central and eastern Europe) and Sephardim (Jews originating from Spain and Portugal) have different rites (*nusaḥim/minhagim*), and within these there are many variants.

Legal codes

These are works which codify Jewish law in a systematic manner. The most well known are *Sefer ha-halakhot* by Isaac ben Jacob Alfasi (1013-1103) (also known as *Hilkhot Rav Alfas* or *Hilkhot ha-Rif*), the *Mishneh Torah* (or *Yad ha-Ḥazakah*) by Moses Maimonides (1135-1204, also known as Rambam), the *Arbaʿah Turim* (or *Tur*) by Jacob ben Asher (ca.1269-ca.1340) and the *Shulḥan ʿarukh* by Joseph Caro (1488-1575).

Responsa

Responsa (*she'elot u-teshuvot*) are collections of legal questions addressed to authorities in Jewish law together with the answers.

Midrash

Midrash is a type of rabbinic commentary on the Bible. There are many collections of *midrashim*, including *Midrash rabbah* on particular books of the Bible (eg *Bereshit rabbah* on Genesis); the *Mekhilta* of Rabbi Ishmael and the *Mekhilta* of Rabbi Simeon ben Yoḥai (on Exodus); *Sifra* (on Leviticus); *Sifre* (on Numbers and Deuteronomy); *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* and *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*.

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Vanessa Freedman
June 2016, Sivan 5776

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Examples

Examples of Hebrew titles and imprints from Hebrew Books.org

1. Bible www.hebrewbooks.org/44111

חמשה | חומשי תורה | עם | תרגום אונקלוס. ופי' רש"י ז"ל. והפטרות לכל השנה. | ועם | חמש מגלות | ופ'
בעל הטורים שפתי חכמים, תולדות אהרון.
שטעטטין | בדפוס של ע. שרענצעל | שנת תרכ"ה לפ"ק

Ḥamishah | ḥumshe Torah | ʿim Targum Onḳelos, u-fe. Rashi zal, ṿe-Haftarot le-khol
ha-shanah, | ṿe-ʿim | Ḥamesh Megilot | u-fe. Baʿal ha-Ṭurim Śifte Ḥakhamim, Toldot Aharon.
Shṭeṭṭin | Bi-defus shel E. Shrentsel, | shenat 625 li-f. ḳ.

The five books of the Torah with Targum Onkelos, and the commentary of Rashi, may his
memory be a blessing, and Haftarot for the whole year, and with the Five Scrolls and the
commentaries Baʿal ha-Ṭurim, Śifte Ḥakhamim and Toldot Aharon.
Stettin. At the press of E. Shrentsel, [in] the year 625 by the abbreviated era [1864 or 1865]

Note that the punctuation signs that look like full stops actually function as commas.

2. Talmud www.hebrewbooks.org/45295

מסכת הוריות | עם פירוש רש"י
נדפס | באמשטרדם | בבית ובדפוס של ... משה פרנקפורט ... | שנת תפ"ז לפ"ק

Maskehet Horayot | ʿim perush Rashi
Nidpas | be-Amśṭerdam | be-vet uvi-defus shel … Mosheh Frankfurṭ … | Shenat 487 li-f. ḳ.

Tractate *Horayot* with Rashi's commentary
Printed in Amsterdam at the house and press of Moses Frankfurter [in] the year 487 by the
abbreviated era [1726 or 1727]

*The ellipses indicate where honorifics etc have been omitted. Note that some of the
information on the title page is in Rashi script.*

3. Prayer book www.hebrewbooks.org/52609

מחזור | מכל השנה כמנהג אשכנז ופולין
נדפס | באמשטרדם | בבית ובדפוס המשותפים | ... יוחנן לוי רופא וגיסו | ברוך ואחיו הירץ מוכרי ספרים |
בשנת לשמוע אל הרנה ואל התפלה לפ"ק

Maḥzor | mi-kol ha-shanah ke-minhag Ashkenaz u-Polin
Nidpas | be-Amśṭerdam | be-vet uvi-defus ha-meshutafim | … Yoḥanan Leṿi Rofe ṿe-giso |
Barukh ṿe-aḥiṿ Hirts mokhre sefarim | bi-shenat 545 li-f. ḳ.

Prayer book for the whole year according to the rite of Germany and Poland
Printed in Amsterdam at the house and press of the partners … Yoḥanan Leṿi Rofe and his
brother-in-law Barukh and his brother Herz, booksellers, in the year 545 by the abbreviated
era [1784 or 1785]

The ellipse indicates where honorifics have been omitted. Note that the date is from a chronogram made by combining the values of the enlarged letters: ל (30), ה (5), ת (400), פ (80), ל (30).

4. Legal code www.hebrewbooks.org/40526

<div dir="rtl">

שלחן ערוך | אבן העזר | מהגאון ... יוסף קארו ...
ווילנא | בדפוס והוצאת "ראם" | תרפ"ה

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Shulḥan ʿarukh | Even ha-ʿezer | meha-gaʾon … Yosef Ḳaro …
Ṿilna | bi-defus ṿe-hotsaʾat "Rom" | 685

Shulḥan ʿarukh Even ha-ʿezer [one of the four sections of the *Shulḥan ʿarukh*] by the learned … Joseph Caro …
Vilna. Printed and published by "Rom", 685 [1924 or 1925]

The ellipses indicate where honorifics have been omitted: 'the learned' is included since it is grammatically joined to the word 'by'.

5. Responsa www.hebrewbooks.org/43232

<div dir="rtl">

ספר | שאלות ותשובות | להגאון ... נסים גירונדי ...
ווארשא | בדפוס ... יצחק גאלדמאן ... | שנת מכבוד הגאון רבינו נסים זללה"ה לפ"ק

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Sefer | Sheʾelot u-teshuvot | leha-gaʾon … Nisim Gerondi …
Ṿarsha | bi-defus … Yitsḥaḳ Goldman … | shenat 642 li-f. ḳ.

The book of responsa by the learned … Nissim Gerondi …
Warsaw. At the press of Isaac Goldman … [in] the year 642 by the abbreviated era [1882]

The ellipses indicate where honorifics have been omitted: 'the learned' is included since it is grammatically joined to the word 'by'. The Hebrew date is from a chronogram made by combining the value of the letters מכבוד הגאון רבינו נסים זללה, *but in this case the Gregorian date is also given at the bottom of the title page.*

6. Midrash www.hebrewbooks.org/37459

<div dir="rtl">

ספר | מדרש רבה | עם פירוש | מתנות כהונה
לבוב בשנת תרל"ד | ע"י המדפיסים ... אברהם יצחק מענקיש | ומו"ה אליעזר מארגאשיש ...

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Sefer | Midrash rabah | ʿim perush | Matnot kehunah
Levov bi-shenat 634 | a.y. ha-madpisim … Avraham Yitsḥaḳ Menḳiś | u-mo. h. Eliʿezer Margoshiś

The book of *Midrash rabbah* with the commentary *Matnot kehunah*
Lvov in the year 634 [1873 or 1874] by the printers … Abraham Isaac Menkis and my teacher the rabbi Eliezer Margoshis …

The ellipses indicate where honorifics have been omitted: 'my teacher, the rabbi' is included since it is grammatically joined to the word 'and'.