

“Readers seeking primary texts, documents, images, and artifacts constituting Jewish culture and civilization will not be disappointed. More important, they might even be inspired.”

—**Booklist, Starred Review**

“A feast of Jewish culture, in 10 Volumes.”—**Chronicle of Higher Education**

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The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization

Volume 1: Ancient Israel, from Its Beginnings through 332 BCE

The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization is a comprehensive, ongoing project gathering material from biblical times to the 21st century to create an unprecedented collection that reveals Jewish creativity, diversity, and cultural contributions around the globe.

On March 23, 2021, Yale University Press will publish *Volume 1: Ancient Israel, from Its Beginnings to 332 BCE*, edited by Jeffrey H. Tigay and Adele Berlin. This volume covers a period that witnessed the initial development of many phenomena that would come to define Jewish culture and civilization—the Hebrew language and alphabet, Israelite/Jewish law and religion (in particular, monotheism), and the books of the Hebrew Bible—that Tigay and Berlin describe as “Israel’s greatest and most distinctive cultural achievement.”

Volume 1: Ancient Israel is chronologically the first of a monumental anthology of primary sources. It covers the longest time period of any of The Posen Library volumes, reaching back into the second millennium BCE and extending into the fourth century BCE. It contains selections from what became the Hebrew Bible, Israel’s anthology of major literary works that subsequently influenced millions. As Tigay and Berlin note, “the Bible contains accounts of Israel’s past, visions of its destiny, and scenes from daily life. It exemplifies its authors’ literary art, their spiritual worldview, their civil and religious laws, their vision of society and critique of its shortcomings.”

Volume 1: Ancient Israel includes:

- biblical and extrabiblical material to provide a more complete picture of the culture of ancient Israel;
- the remnants of everyday life in the form of documents, household and ritual items;
- the beginnings of diaspora communities;
- extensive editorial introductions to the kinds of texts included in the Hebrew Bible, illustrating that the Bible is not a single, monolithic book, but a collection of very different types of writing, each with its own character and purpose.

The volume's organization by genre encourages readers to discover the lyricism of biblical poetry, the ethical power of prophecy, and the gripping stories of innovative long prose narratives. By juxtaposing extrabiblical inscriptions and documents side by side with biblical materials, the volume illuminates the legal, religious, and cultural environment of the Israelites of that time. Drawing on archaeological evidence, a rich sampling of visual and material culture complements the written texts, including images of buildings and tombs, decorative art, figurines, musical instruments, ritual objects, and everyday items such as ceramic containers, seals, and coins.

“The Posen Library challenges the primacy of religion as the dominant mode of Jewish life and culture over the centuries,” explains editor in chief Deborah Dash Moore. “It is a somewhat controversial way of approaching the Jewish past and Jewish culture and civilization. The Posen Library explicitly contends that how Jews earned a living, related to each other in community, and decorated their homes is as worthy of understanding as how Jews wrote commentary on Torah.” ***Volume 1: Ancient Israel*** illustrates where it all began.

Unlike an encyclopedia, The Posen Library puts readers directly in touch with original works, unmediated by interpretation. Curated by leading scholars, the selections span a wide range of genres: religious and political writing, nonfiction, fiction, memoir, painting, photography, sculpture, and architecture. Sacred and secular texts, translated from an extensive array of languages, appear side by side. Featuring selections by both acclaimed and underappreciated writers, artists, and thinkers, The Posen Library offers new perspectives on well-known works and brings to light many that should be better known.

To make the collection accessible to everyone who reads English, the project includes the interactive Posen Digital Library (www.posenlibrary.com) as well as—when complete—10

beautifully produced print volumes to be published by Yale University Press. Currently, four volumes are available online and in print, covering the periods 1750–1880 and 1918–2005.

About the Editors

Jeffrey H. Tigay is Emeritus A. M. Ellis Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages and Literatures in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the University of Pennsylvania, where he taught from 1971 to 2010.

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Deborah Dash Moore is Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor of History and Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. She is editor in chief of *The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization*.

About the Posen Library

The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization consists of The Posen Digital Library (PDL), available at posenlibrary.com, and the 10-volume print anthology of Jewish culture published by Yale University Press. The Posen Library is a collection curated by leading Jewish Studies scholars offering unprecedented access to thousands of primary sources reflecting Jewish creativity, diversity, and culture worldwide, spanning biblical times to the twenty-first century. Many of these original sources are works translated into English for the first time.

The Posen Digital Library (PDL) currently includes 2,400 primary sources—including paintings, drawings, photographs, sculpture, fiction, poetry, literature, cartoons, prayer book passages, first-person accounts, and so much more. As each print volume of *The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization* anthology is released, the entire collection will ultimately grow to more than 6,500 sources, approximately 90 percent of which will be available to a worldwide audience through the PDL.

Praise for the Posen Library

Booklist Top Ten, Religion Reference Sources, Booklist Editors' Choice, Reference

“. . . with examples drawn from every medium and area of Jewish life, this is the composite story of how a creative people laughs, sings, thinks, acts and prevails against history's greatest odds.”
—**Best Books of 2020, Chosen by Mosaic Authors (Part II)**

“This set will serve to improve teaching and research in Jewish studies at institutions of higher learning and, at the same time, promote, maintain, and improve understanding of the Jewish population and Judaism in general.”—**Booklist, Starred Review**

“A groundbreaking anthology that reflects the exuberance, diversity and vitality of modern Jewish life.”—**Moment Magazine, A Moment Magazine Notable Book of 2012**

Volume 1: Ancient Israel, from Its Beginnings to 332 BCE

Edited by Jeffrey H. Tigay and Adele Berlin

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