

## Karaite Printing

Rare publications from the 16th century until World War I



- Medium: on microfiche
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- Including Marc21 records
- Including a free copy of the book *Karaite Judaism. A Guide to its History and Literary Sources* that contains the bibliography on which this collection is based.

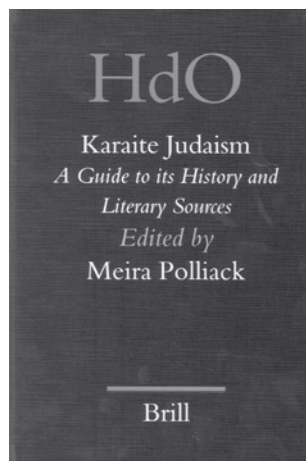
The collection is based on Barry Walfish's bibliography in: Meira Polliack Ed. *Karaite Judaism. A Guide to its History and Literary Sources*. Brill, Leiden 2003. Chapter 13, "Karaite Press and Printing" by Barry Walfish.

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## Karaite Judaism

*A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources*

Edited by Meira Polliack



- December 2003
- ISBN 978 9004122 51 2
- *Hardback* (xxxii, 984 pp., 3 illus.)
- List price EUR 231.- / US\$ 312.-
- Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 The Near and Middle East, 73

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PRIMARY SOURCE COLLECTION



## Karaite Printing



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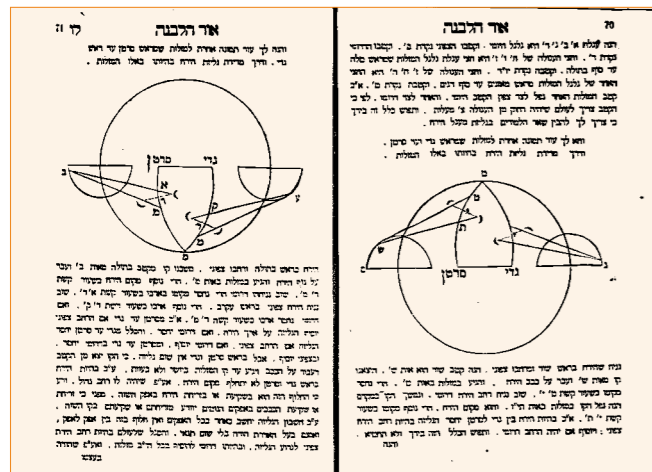
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# Karaite Printing

Rare publications from the 16th century until World War I

Advisor: Barry Dov Walfish, University of Toronto Libraries



the 18th century that the first Karaite press was established, in Chufut-Kale, only managing to produce an edition of the Karaite liturgy before closing down. In 1804 another press was established in Chufut-Kale, but it too was short-lived and its output limited. It was not until 1833 that a longlasting Karaite press was established, this time in Eupatoria. This was a time when the Karaite community in Eastern Europe was asserting its independence and forging a new identity separate from that of the Jewish community. The press in Eupatoria produced a steady stream of important Karaite works for over thirty years, before closing in 1867. During the remaining part of the century Karaite works were published by Rabbanite presses in Vilna, Vienna and Odessa. In 1894 the Karaite press was revived in Eupatoria and functioned until the outbreak of the First World War.

By filming in various libraries all over the world, IDC Publishers has put together a comprehensive collection of Karaite published works, comprising the bulk of the publishing output of this community until the early twentieth century. These works, published to educate the Karaite reader, offer a unique opportunity to explore the intellectual and spiritual world of this important, but somewhat neglected, Jewish sect.

## History

The Karaites are the oldest living Jewish sect, distinguished by their Biblicism and general rejection of the Talmud and rabbinic oral law. Originating in Babylonia in the eighth century, various dissident groups coalesced into a more or less unified sect by the end of the ninth century. The Karaites flourished in Jerusalem in the tenth and eleventh centuries and for a time posed a serious threat to rabbinic hegemony. The most important late medieval communities were in Egypt and Byzantium. The Byzantine community was established in the late tenth century but grew dramatically in the twelfth century after the fall of Jerusalem to the Crusaders in 1099. From Byzantium, the Karaites gradually moved on into Eastern Europe following the paths of the major trade routes to the Baltic Sea. Major communities during the late Middle-Ages and the early modern periods were established in Crimea, Galicia, and Lithuania. The introduction of the printing press and the mass production of books using movable type seem to have had little impact on this insular community. For several centuries only a handful of Karaite works were printed and these by non-Karaite publishers. It was not until

## The Collection

Karaite works were produced in small print runs and are therefore very scarce. Many of the more obscure items can only be found in the libraries of the Former Soviet Union, in other major Judaica libraries in Israel, Europe or the United States, or in private collections. IDC's staff combed the holdings of the major depositories of Karaite works and put together a comprehensive collection of Karaite published works, comprising the bulk of the publishing output of this community until the early twentieth century. These works, which include prayer books, biblical commentaries, philosophical works, halakhic treatises, works on astronomy and the calendar, textbooks and works of general interest published to educate the Karaite reader, offer a unique opportunity to explore the intellectual and spiritual world of this important but somewhat neglected sect. In recent years, since the fall of the Soviet Union, and the opening of the great Soviet libraries to scholars from the West, much interest has been generated by the vast manuscript collections in St. Petersburg and Moscow which hold many Karaite works as yet unpublished. This collection offers the reader an almost complete view of what the Karaites were reading in the nineteenth century, or at least of what the leaders of the community thought their members should be reading.

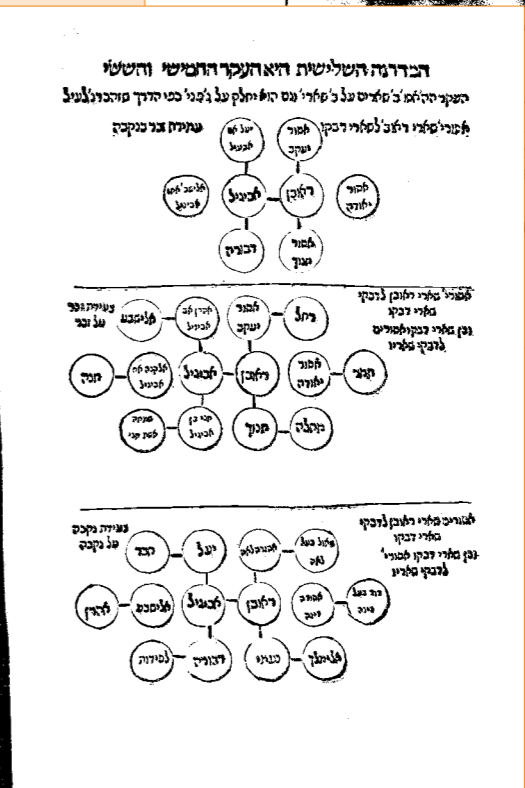
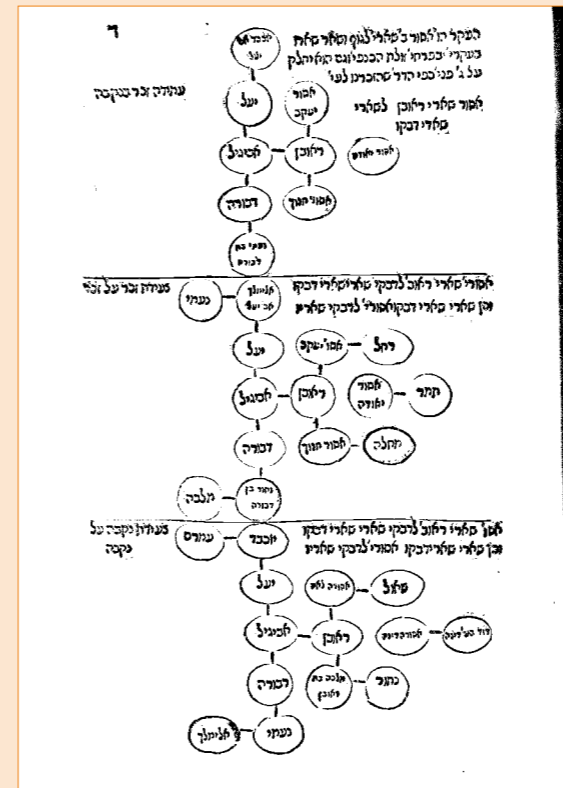
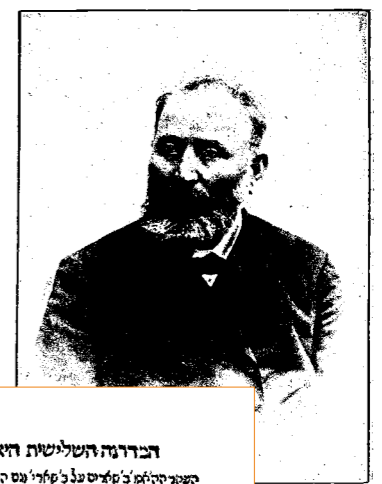
## Audience

This collection should be of interest to scholars of sectarianism, Karaism, History of Judaism, and East European Jewish History.

### THE WORKS HAVE BEEN FILMED IN THE FOLLOWING LIBRARIES

- Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, Amsterdam
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- Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati

- Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
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