

HEKSHERIM

The Research Institute for
Jewish and Israeli Literature
and Culture

The First Israelis Archives





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The State of Israel emerged from the written word.

From the ancient texts that keep historic Jewish culture alive, to the evolving language used by the first pioneers, a national identity was forged through the renewal of the Hebrew language. In this spirit, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev has committed itself to creating comprehensive research archives for the “First Israelis;” the authors, poets, playwrights and scholars who began writing after the establishment of the State and whose works reflect the historical and cultural currents that shaped Israel’s development.

Heksherim – the Research Institute for Jewish and Israeli Literature and Culture

is leading the way, building a broad-based collection of archival materials. The growing First Israelis Archives at the Institute aim to preserve the original and collateral materials of multiple writers “in context,” while providing an environment conducive to research. The rich and varied collection offers visitors rare access to an entire generation of writers, a treasure trove of works that have shaped the “new Israeli,” through multi-layered and diverse documentation of their creative processes and subsequent scholarship.

The Archives already include some of Israel’s most significant early writers, poets, playwrights, and critics: Ruth Almog, Nissim Aloni, Aharon Appelfeld, David Avidan, Yocheved Bat-Miriam, Maya Bejerano, Johnathan Geffen, Shulamith Hareven, Avraham Heffner, Jacqueline Kahanoff, Rina Litvin, Josef Mundy, Amos Oz, David Schütz, Mordechai Shalev, and Zeruya Shalev; as well as the libraries of Ophira Ben-Arieh, Nehemia Rapoport and Dahlia Ravikovitch; and collections from Yehuda Amichai, Uri Zvi Greenberg, Dan Pagis, Moshe Pelli, S. Yizhar, and Zelda.

A wide range of materials comprise the tens of thousands of items housed in the Archives, from Aharon Appelfeld’s original manuscripts to David Avidan’s typewriter and translations of Amos Oz’s books into dozens of languages. The archives include editions of books in translation; research papers and scholarly articles pertaining to the authors and their works; articles and interviews in newspapers, on television and radio in various languages; photographs and films; and correspondence and original manuscripts preserved under appropriate conditions and other items worthy of display.

The Archives are open to researchers, students and the general public in their new and spacious premises in the Helen Diller Family Center, situated on BGU’s Marcus Family Campus in Beer-Sheva. A new Visitors’ Center, comfortable work areas, and a friendly staff of professional librarians, students and volunteers welcome visitors.

Other Institute projects include the preparation of detailed annotated bibliographies (so far, bibliographies for Amos Oz, Nissim Aloni and Aharon Appelfeld) and documenting the lives of prominent Israeli poets and writers in film. The archives are an invaluable resource for scholars and students of Israeli literature from the establishment of the State and onwards.



ARCHIVES OF "THE FIRST ISRAELIS"

VISITORS CENTER

The Visitors Center is a novel and unique place of culture and learning, offering its visitors a rich literary and cultural experience. It presents the works and activities of Israeli writers, poets and playwrights from the founding generation: Amos Oz, Aharon Appelfeld, Ruth Almog, Nissim Aloni, David Avidan and many others, and their exceptional contribution to Israeli culture. The Archives, as a vibrant center for exhibitions and information, provide a fascinating intellectual journey into the creative process through original manuscripts, diaries, letters, certificates, artwork and original artifacts. A tour of the archives provides the general public with a glimpse into the creative activity that lies behind the scenes, accompanied by a guide and actors, and with the aid of cutting-edge software, databases and computers offering interactive activities.

Guided tours of the Archives or relating to one of the writers are available by appointment for groups of up to 12 people.



Heksherim – The Research Institute for Jewish and Israeli Literature and Culture at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev was created to study and promote the connections between culture and community in Jewish and Israeli society. Its main objective is to nurture young scholars whose work will combine academic excellence, cultural sensitivity and social commitment. The projects undertaken at the Institute are multidisciplinary and pioneering in their scope and methods of investigation and are made possible with the generous support of many organizations and people, including the Caesarea Edmond Benjamin de Rothschild Foundation, the Axel Springer Stiftung, the Skirball Foundation, and Stuart B. (z"l) and Toni Young. The founder and current Director of the Institute is Prof. Yigal Schwartz, a leading scholar of Hebrew literature and a literary editor.

Current projects at the Heksherim Institute:

"The Writers' House" – a community-academia center to be established in Beer-Sheva's old city. The Writers' House will host research groups, publish academic studies, and hold events, workshops and other activities related to literature aimed at the general public.

"The Arad Project" – based on the vision of Stuart B. (z"l) and Toni Young, and made possible by their support, the project encompasses a range of activities based on collaborations between the Dept. of Hebrew Literature and the residents of Arad, including lectures, conferences, workshops and tours in Arad and on the BGU campus.

"Israeli Writers' Lexicon" – a multi-participant project published in 2014, with 1,135 entries on literary figures in Israel.

"The Heksherim Lexicon of Israeli Literature" – the digital online continuation of the print lexicon to be launched in the summer of 2019. The interactive website will include all the entries from the print edition, as well as new ones. It will be updated on an ongoing basis by the Lexicon's editorial board.

"The First Israelis" – multi-participant and long-term research on literary works that have molded, to a large extent, the character of Israeli culture.

"The Archives Project" – aimed at bringing to public attention the cultural and literary treasures of the Archives, and transforming the Archives into a cultural center.

"Shir BaHeksher" – A series of evenings providing a stage for poets through poetry readings and open discussions on the essence of poetry, with audience participation.

The Heksherim Institute furthermore holds conferences and seminars across Israel and around the world in collaboration with leading academic institutions. It is responsible for a variety of publications, including:

"Massa Krittit" – a series of original and translated research monographs on Israeli literature and culture published up to 2017.

"Mikan" (From Here) – a journal of Israeli and Jewish literature and culture.

"BGU Review" – an online journal on Israeli culture in English. Each issue addresses a specific topic and is supported by the Axel Springer Stiftung.

"Ruach Tzad" (Side Wind) – A Hebrew prose series focused on books that stray from contemporary Hebrew literary conventions. Books from first time authors, alongside writers who already have a loyal following, are published through the series.

"Retro" – a book series dedicated to republishing works of Hebrew authors from the distant and nearer past. The series includes works that were published but never collected in book form, new editions and manuscripts published for the first time.

"Odot" – an online e-journal of literary criticism.

"Tsrif" (Shack) – a literary journal edited by students in BGU's creative writing program.



The First Israelis Archives

Writers, Poets,
Playwrights, Directors



David Avidan

Tel Aviv, Palestine 1934 – Tel Aviv, Israel 1995

The poet David Avidan strove throughout his life to break down barriers of language, genre and time. This mission was manifested in his many works concerning the future. His poetry displays daring innovation and an unusual use of language, which influenced many subsequent authors. His stormy life is reflected, among other things, in the experimental cinematic films that he created. The archive contains personal documents and correspondence, video and audio tapes, his newspaper columns, postcards and a wide range of visual materials.



Nissim Aloni

Tel Aviv, Palestine 1926 – Tel Aviv, Israel 1998

Nissim Aloni was one of the most outstanding and original Israeli playwrights, as well as a director, translator and novelist. His plays are notable for their visual richness, sharp social commentary and existentialism, and earned him widespread recognition both in Israel and abroad. The plays were staged in all the major theaters in Israel, reaching a wide audience, despite their complexity and innovative nature. Aloni was the recipient of the Israel Prize for Theater in 1996. His archive contains manuscripts, many translations, diaries, correspondence, and articles about his works. A comprehensive bibliography of his work was published by the Institute in 2014.



Ruth Almog

Petach Tikva, Israel 1936

Ruth Almog's stories and books frequently provoke debate regarding women's writing in general and the writings of Israeli women authors specifically. In addition to novels, she has written ten children's books, and has received many important prizes in recognition of her work. Almog also taught literature, and for many years wrote and edited the literary supplement of the Ha'aretz daily newspaper. The archive includes unpublished manuscripts, letters and newspaper clippings.



Aharon Appelfeld

Chernowitz, Romania 1932 – Jerusalem, Israel 2018

Aharon Appelfeld's life experiences as a young Holocaust survivor and the trials of his absorption in Israel reverberate in his books. Appelfeld wrote more than 45 books that have been translated into many languages. He won many important awards, including the Israel Prize for 1988 and the Nelly Sachs Prize (Germany, 2005). He was Professor Emeritus in the Department of Hebrew Literature at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. The archives contain, amongst other items, Appelfeld's original manuscripts.



Maya Bejerano

Kibbutz Eilon, Israel 1949

Bejerano is a poet, novelist, translator and critic. Her unique poetry is characterized by an inner musical tempo which creates compact and elegant song-like poems that have been set to music. She has been publishing her poetry and criticism since 1973 and has written prose for both children and adults. She received the Bialik Prize in 2002 for her life's work. The archive includes manuscripts, her published work, letters, and press clippings and scholarship.



Yocheved Bat-Miriam (Zhlezniak)

Keplits, Belorussia 1901 – Tel Aviv, Israel 1980

Yocheved Bat-Miriam's poems may not be easy to read or understand, but they thoroughly reflect her character and lifestyle. She made Aliya in 1928, and was married first to the poet Shimon Haboneh and then to the novelist Haim Hazaz. After her son Nahum was killed in the War of Independence, she wore black in mourning till she died. She was known for her personal connections with poets and authors of her generation, and for her creative independence and originality. Her letters, personal documents and gifts she received are stored in the archives.

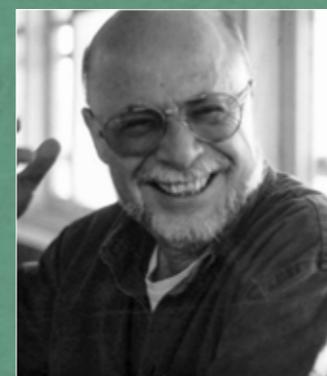


Johnathan Geffen

Nahalal, Palestine 1947

Geffen's oeuvre, which began with poetry published in 1968, encompasses pop lyrics, children's songs, novels, plays, newspaper columns and translations, many of which have become canonical in Israeli culture. His style has always been blunt and critical, as well as explicit about his political positions.

He is known for his unique critique of Israeli establishment, military and society through satirical poetry/stand up. The archive contains manuscripts, letters, audiovisual material and much more. The experience of submitting his archive to Heksherim is recorded in the first chapter of Geffen's autobiography, *The Writing Child* (2016).



Avraham Heffner

Haifa, Palestine 1935 – Tel Aviv, Israel 2014

The playwright and novelist Avraham Heffner is best known for his cinematic work and is considered to have made some of the best Israeli films of 1970s and 1980s. He received the Ophir Prize for his life's work in film in 2004. Heffner also wrote several important novels and books on film. The archive contains manuscripts, audiovisual materials, and more.



Shulamith Hareven (Ryftin)

Warsaw, Poland 1930 – Jerusalem, Israel 2003

Shulamith Hareven immigrated to Israel at the age of nine and lived in Jerusalem all her life. She authored 19 books encompassing poetry, stories, essays, critiques, political journalism, children's books and even one work of suspense fiction. She also translated books and plays and was a member of the Academy of the

Hebrew Language. Her works have been translated into 21 languages and have won wide critical acclaim. Her writing excels in its outstandingly rich and precise language and sharp social insights. The archive contains press clippings, correspondence, manuscripts, reviews and articles.



Jacqueline Kahanoff (Shohet)

Cairo, Egypt 1917 – Tel Aviv, Israel 1979

Jacqueline Kahanoff was an essayist and novelist. She was born in Cairo and grew up in a cosmopolitan society where she spoke English and French. She studied literature and journalism at Columbia University in New York, where she lived until 1951. She came to

Israel in 1954 and soon thereafter became the center of a literary salon scene in Tel Aviv. Her essays and articles were published in various newspapers and journals. The archive contains voluminous correspondence, clippings, articles and essays.



Rina Litvin (Biberman)

Hong Kong 1939 – Tel Aviv, Israel 2012

A poet, essayist and translator, Litvin was honored with the Tchernichovsky Prize for her exemplary translations into Hebrew (1989) and other awards. She specialized in literary essays about the art of translation, literature, great authors and culture, both local and global, and more.

Her masterful translations span a range of genres and places around the world, including poetry, prose, essays and plays. She translated primarily from three

languages, English, Spanish and Russian, including works by important authors such as William Faulkner, Virginia Woolf, Federico García Lorca, Jorge Luis Borges, Alexander Pushkin, Nikolai Gogol, Marina Tsvetaeva, and Lewis Carol. Litvin was also active in other literary realms, as a member of the editorial boards of publishing houses and of international forums (the Lewis Carol Society), as a lecturer, and a teacher of translation.

צילום: רחל הירש



Josef Mundy

Bucharest, Romania 1935 – New York, USA 1994

Mundy was a well-known anti-establishment playwright, stage director, publicist and author, active in Israel from the early 1960s and until his tragic death of a heart attack at the entrance to the La MaMa Theater in NYC. He studied theater at Tel Aviv University and went on to write plays influenced by the theater of the absurd, political theater and existential philosophy. His experiences as a rootless immigrant were central to his work. He also published scores of essays and articles in the local daily press, and in literary and theater journals.

Mundy was known for his struggle against censorship and his critiques of the management of Israel's public theater groups. He was also known for his temper and his extreme views made working in Israel difficult, but he enjoyed success abroad. He received the Levi Eshkol Prize for Creative Work posthumously (1994).

The Mundy archive contains manuscripts in Hebrew and in French, letters, columns and articles, playbills, personal diaries, and scholarship about his work.



Amos Oz

Jerusalem, Palestine 1939 – Tel Aviv, Israel 2019

Amos Oz, one of Israel's leading authors, wrote more than 40 works: novels, novellas, short stories and essays, as well as children's books. His books have been translated into 46 languages and he received many important awards, including the Israel Prize (1998), the Goethe Prize (Germany, 2005) and the Prince of Asturias Award (Spain, 2007). Oz was Professor Emeritus in the Department of Hebrew Literature and the incumbent of

the S.Y. Agnon Chair in Hebrew Literature. The Amos Oz archive contains over 40,000 items, including a complete collection of all editions of his books and their translations, and personal correspondence. Also available are comprehensive bibliographies of his works and their translations up until 2014 and a collection of reviews from the world press.

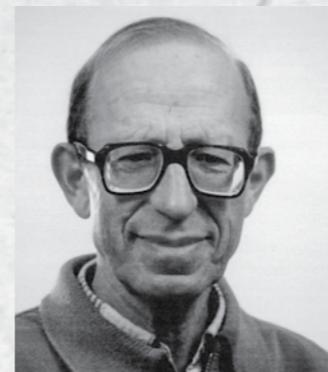


David Schütz

Berlin, Germany 1941 – Jerusalem, Israel 2017

David Schütz was an author, editor and scriptwriter. He arrived in Israel as a child, together with his brother, as a refugee from Germany. His early experiences play a central role in his writing, which range in style from expressionism to realism. The complex relationships between men and women, and between parents and children also feature as a major theme in his stories. His work has been translated into German and French, and he was awarded several important prizes.

Schütz also produced many important documentary films. His archive includes original manuscripts, newspaper clippings, movies that he was involved in, and personal correspondence.



Mordechai Shalev

Jerusalem, Palestine, 1926 – Kinneret, Israel 2014

Shalev was an essayist, scholar and literary critic, who was also devoted to education and taught at the Bet Yareach agricultural high school, as well as various colleges. He was famously reticent and humble, yet was highly respected by leading authors and scholars as a critic. Shalev sought to prove that modern Hebrew literature was not rooted in the Enlightenment movement, but rather in Judaism's early texts: the

Midrash, Golden age poetry from medieval Spain, and the Kabbalah. This became a central focus of his work. His most famous essay is a novel interpretation of Alterman's poetry and the unresolved conflict between Judaism and Zionism. He was also well-known for his critiques of Yeshayahu Leibowitz. A collection of his essays was published in 2018.



Zeruya Shalev

Kinneret, Israel 1959

A successful and highly regarded novelist, editor and poet, and the daughter of the literary critic Mordechai Shalev. Although she began her career as a poet, her first novel *Love Life* (1997) became a global best seller. Other novels were also highly successful and translated into dozens of languages. She has published children's books and has edited numerous books. Her archive includes manuscripts, letters, photographs and scholarship about her work in multiple languages.



Ophira Ben-Arieh (Chen)

Jerusalem, Palestine 1933 – Chicago, USA 2013

Collection of Books and dedications

A former high school teacher in Beer-Sheva, Ben-Arieh was a lover of literature who moved to Chicago with her husband in 1959. In 1986 she founded a Hebrew book club that met monthly for several decades. This literary salon became her life's work and was attended by leading novelists and scholars of Israeli literature. An annual prize in her name is awarded to students in the creative writing program of BGU.



Uri Zvi Greenberg (Tur Malka)

Bilyi Kamin, Galicia 1896 – Jerusalem, Israel 1981

Book collection

One of Hebrew's greatest expressionist poets, member of Israel's first Knesset for the Herut party, laureate of the Israel Prize in Literature (1957) and the Bialik Prize (three times). Greenberg wrote in Hebrew and in Yiddish. He came on Aliya in 1924 and married poet Aliza Tur Malka in 1950.

Greenberg published his works in pamphlets and in the daily press, describing in his poetry his horrific experiences during WW1, the pogroms in Lvov in 1918, and later in Israel in 1929 and 1936. Following the 1929 events, he joined the Revisionists and was critical of Britain and the Balfour Declaration, as well as Zionist leadership. His family perished in the Holocaust, and his laments for the Jewish people's tragedy were collected in the book *Streets of the River* (1951).

The collection at the archive includes dozens of books written by Greenberg, as well as scholarship about his work.



Dan Pagis

Rădăuți, Romania 1929 – Jerusalem, Israel 1986

Poetry collection

Pagis was a poet, scholar, editor and translator. He published six volumes of poetry beginning in 1949. His poems deal with the holocaust and his own experiences prior to the Holocaust.

He was a lecturer at the Hebrew University and a highly regarded scholar of Hebrew medieval poetry in Spain.



Moshe Pelli

Haifa, Palestine 1936

Collection of essays and notes

Pelli is a scholar of Hebrew Enlightenment literature and professor of Judaic studies at the University of Central Florida, where he is the Abe and Tess Wise Endowed Professor of Judaic Studies. He has written and published extensively on Jewish literature from the Enlightenment period, including several monographs and annotated bibliographies. He is the recipient of the Abraham Friedman Prize for Hebrew Culture in America (1992) and other prizes. The collection contains essays, articles, and newspaper clippings collected over his 50 years of academic activity.



Dahlia Ravikovitch

Ramat Gan, Palestine 1936 – Tel Aviv, Israel 2005

Personal book collection

Ravikovitch began publishing in the 1950s and is considered to be one of Israel's leading modern poets. She published eight poetry anthologies, three collections of short stories, as well as translating poetry and children's stories. She also wrote children's stories and published articles in newspapers. Her poetry is characterized by a unique combination of a personal feminist perspective with uncompromising political activism. Ravikovitch received numerous important prizes, including the Israel Prize. The archive houses her private library.



Nehemia Rapoport

Yelisvetgrad, Ukraine 1921 – Tel Aviv, Israel 2010

Hebrew poetry collection

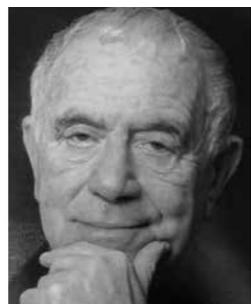
Rapoport was a dedicated collector of Hebrew poetry. He acquired his love of Hebrew culture at his parents' home and at the "Tarbut" (Culture) School in Vilna. He immigrated to Israel at the age of 13 and began working for the Israel Electric Corporation, where he was employed until his retirement. He expressed his great love of Hebrew poetry by collecting approximately 5000 volumes of poetry with publication dates ranging from the 1920s until the end of the century. The Rapoport Collection was donated to the archives in its entirety and is truly rich in range, containing many rare works.



S. Yizhar (Yizhar Smilansky)

Rehovot, Palestine 1916 – Gedera, Israel 2006

S. Yizhar is regarded as one of Israel's most illustrious writers and is considered an iconic representative of the first generation of "Sabras" (native-born Israelis). His writings excel in their unique style, which is characterized by virtuosity and consistently beautiful use of the language. Yizhar was a very prolific writer, publishing short stories, novels and essays. He was also a professor of literature and a member of the Knesset. He was awarded the Israel Prize in 1959, and received many other prizes. His works have been translated into foreign languages and adapted for the theater and television. The archive contains a collection of his hand-written letters.



Yehuda Amichai

Wurzburg, Germany 3.5.1924 – Tel Aviv, Israel 22.9.2000

Yehuda Amichai's poetry stands out for its refreshing and surprising combination of everyday language and quotations from a wide range of sources. Amichai won widespread recognition in Israel and abroad, including the Israel Prize in 1982 and other awards. His work has been translated into more than 30 languages. In addition to poetry, he also published two novels, plays and several children's books. The archive includes nearly 100 love letters that he wrote as a young man to one of his first girlfriends, as well as postcards and additional correspondence.



Zelda Schneersohn Mishkovsky

Ekaterinoslav, Ukraine 1914 – Jerusalem, Israel 1984

Zelda Schneersohn Mishkovsky published under the name of Zelda. She studied drawing in her youth and worked all her life as a teacher. She began publishing her work in the 1930s, beginning with short fantastical stories and, later, poetry. Her first book of poetry, *Pnai* (Leisure), was published in 1967 and established her reputation in the literary world. Through five additional poetry volumes and a number of anthologies, Zelda's unique voice had a profound impact on Hebrew poetry, and her lyrical poetry introduced her readers to spiritual worlds, experiences and beliefs that were unknown to them previously. The archive contains a collection of some 50 of her hand-written letters, as well as scholarship about her poetry.



Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) is the fastest growing research university in Israel. With 20,000 students, 4,000 staff and faculty members, and three campuses in Beer-Sheva, Sede Boqer and Eilat, BGU is an agent of change, fulfilling the vision of David Ben-Gurion, Israel's legendary first prime minister, who envisaged the future of Israel emerging from the Negev.

As it counts down to its 50th anniversary, BGU's mission continues to be effecting change, locally, regionally and internationally. With faculties in Engineering Sciences; Health Sciences; Natural Sciences; Humanities and Social Sciences; Business and Management; and Desert Studies, BGU is a university with a conscience, active both on the frontiers of science and in the community. Over a third of our students participate in one of the world's most developed community action programs.

The University is a recognized national and global leader in many fields, actively encouraging multi-disciplinary collaborations with government and industry, and nurturing entrepreneurship and innovation in all its forms. It is at the heart of Beer-Sheva's transformation into the country's cyber capital, where leading multinational corporations eagerly leverage BGU's expertise to generate innovative R&D. BGU welcomes exciting challenges in emerging fields of research and strives to bring new opportunities to Beer-Sheva and the Negev while continuing its pursuit of academic excellence and expanding its contribution to the community.

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