



The idea of the seder plate, the *k'arah*, is recent. A special plate is not mentioned in the Mishnah's account of the seder, nor in the commentary on the Mishnah, the Gemara. In a commentary written around the year 1000, there is some mention of a basket into which all the symbolic foods were put. In fact, many Sephardic communities still use a basket for the seder objects. The plate itself is probably an innovation of about the 5th century C.E.

Some sources attribute the first actual description of how the plate should be arranged to the medieval commentator Maharil (Rabbi Jacob ben Moses Moellin, c1360-1427), the foremost talmudist of his generation and head of the Jewish communities of Germany, Austria, and Bohemia. Others argue that the configuration was started by the 16th century kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Ben Solomon Luria ("Ha-Ari"). Regardless of its origin, this arrangement became the standard which we still follow:

ביצה		זרוע
BEITZAH		ZEROA
	מרור	
	MAROR	
כרפס		חרוסת
KARPAS		HAROSET
	חזרת	
	HAZERET	

Notice that two triangles can be deciphered. The top triangle (*Beitzah, Zeroa, Maror*) contains symbols that are known as "*mid'oreitah*" (from the Torah) – biblically ordained symbols. The bottom triangle (*Karpas, Haroset, Hazeret*) consists of three symbols which are "*mid'rabanan*" (from the rabbis) – stipulated by the rabbis as they developed the form of the seder ritual.

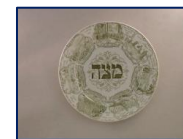
(From *The Art of Jewish Living: The Passover Seder*, by Ron Wolfson, and *The Complete Family Guide to Jewish Holidays*, by Dalia Hardof Renberg. To learn more, check out these and other sources from the Maxwell Abbell Library.)

The seder plates from the Janger Family Collection represent years of dedicated research resulting in a premier assemblage of examples from continental Europe and England. They are on loan to the Rissman Family Kol Ami Museum through the generosity of NSS Beth El members Lois and Richard Janger. These plates were on display at the Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 2007. That show was curated by Arthur M. Feldman. The Kol Ami Museum relied upon Mr. Feldman's knowledge and expertise in preparing the current exhibit. We are grateful for his assistance.



This early 20th century **Coalport** Passover place setting consists of a soup bowl, soup saucer, large plate, medium plate, small plate, cup, and saucer. Each piece features a border of gold foliage and vine decorations on a white background, with a central motif that features a crown flowing with a canopy, surrounding a menorah. The Hebrew inscription, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt ~ You shall relate the story to your son on this day" appears on the plates and inside of the cups.

Ridgways (England, 1920) produced ceramic seder and matzah plates in multiple colors and languages, several of which appear in this exhibit. The order of the seder is written in Hebrew and English around the rim of the seder plates. The matzah plates are embellished with the word "matzah" in Hebrew, surrounded by the Four Questions and cartouches enclosing scenes of the seder, copied from the Amsterdam Haggadah. The matzah plates on display are titled in Hebrew and English or Hebrew and French.



The multi-sectioned **Karlsbad** porcelain plates (Czechoslovakia, late 19th/early 20th century) contain slight spelling errors, likely made by craftsmen unfamiliar with Hebrew. Note that the word "ביצה" (egg) is spelled with a כ in the place of a ב, and the word "כרפס" (green vegetable) ends with a ם instead of a ס. In the top section of the seven-part plate, the words "סדר הקערה" (seder plate) contain multiple errors, including a ם instead of a ס, a ר in place of a ד, and a צ instead of an ע.

Blown in Murano, Italy (1998) and painted in Venice by **Gianfranco Penzo**, this plate features a picture of the seder taken from the Sarajevo Haggadah (Barcelona, Spain, 14th century). A facsimile of the haggadah is displayed next to the plate.

