

The Johanna Spyri archive

The Swiss Institute for Children's and Youth Media SIKJM is home to the Johanna Spyri archive, which comprises all the literary works of the Zurich-born writer as well as more than a thousand handwritten documents and letters by Spyri and her family. The archive also contains photos, original illustrations, memorabilia and other objects from the Heidi multimedia collection. The Johanna Spyri Foundation, which was set up in 1968 and supports the SIKJM, is committed to preserving the author's legacy and promoting research on her life and work.

The Johanna Spyri archive is a unique collection of historical documents, literature, media and other objects relating to the Zurich-born author and her work, including the widely successful novels *Heidi: Her Years of Wandering and Learning* (1880) and *Heidi: How She Used What She Learned* (1881). The Heidi multimedia collection, which comprises historical and current book collections, scholarly publications, bequests and other objects, spans 85 linear metres of shelving. Anyone who is interested in finding out more about Spyri and her work, its impact and reception at the time, can discover key information and documents at the Johanna Spyri archive, located in the publicly-accessible SIKJM library in Zurich.

Heidi and the literary work of Johanna Spyri

The literary works contained in the Johanna Spyri archive were collected more than 50 years ago; further objects have since been added to expand the collection. The centrepiece is a unique collection of various editions of the world-famous Heidi novels spanning three centuries, including 300 historical and more recent editions from German-speaking countries. The archive is also home to 600 translations of the Heidi novels in more than 40 different languages.

In addition to the Heidi collection, the archive houses all of Spyri's other literary works – a near-complete collection of all first editions, 750 German-language editions, and 500 duplicates that can be loaned to museums or other institutions for exhibitions. Although less well-known for her other works such as *Heimatlos: Two Stories For Children And For Those Who Love Children* (1878) and *Sina* (1884), these stories are also of literary and cultural historical interest, as well as central to the scholarly classification of Spyri's oeuvre.

Johanna Spyri archive bequests

When the Johanna Spyri Foundation was set up in 1968, a number of valuable collections were bequeathed including donations from the author's grandniece Marguerite Paur-Ulrich and grandnephew Theodor Heusser. Since then, the collection has continued to grow through various acquisitions and additional bequests – such as photographs, memorabilia and personal objects of the author.

For conservation purposes, more than a thousand of the archive's documents are kept at the Zurich Central Library's manuscript department, where they can be still be consulted by the public. The 'Johanna Spyri and family' collection deposited at the library is also freely accessible under Zbcollections. The collection contains an array of documents – publishing contracts and manuscripts as well as drafts and originals of famous illustrations used for Spyri's works, including ink drawings by Swiss painter Rudolf Mürger (1862–1927). The collection mainly comprises handwritten documents, in particular letters between Spyri and her family and friends, such as Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, as well as correspondence with the Kappeler family, Berta von Orelli-Ziegler and her French translator Camille Vidart. As large parts of Spyri's written estate were destroyed – partly by the author herself, partly during the war in Germany – the materials in the archive are invaluable. Later bequests have included letters, documents, copies and manuscripts from the author's immediate family and close friends – her husband Bernhard Spyri, her brother Jakob Christian Heusser, her father Johann Jakob Heusser and, above all, her mother Meta Heusser, who was also a poet.

Documentation and Heidi multimedia collection

The archive also houses a unique collection of documents on Heidi, and the impact and reception the Heidi stories have had since 1883. It holds 40 files containing articles, reviews, press material and encyclopaedia entries documenting the different adaptations of the iconic orphaned girl and her part in promoting Swiss culture and tourism. In addition, the collection includes originals by key contemporary illustrators Tomi Ungerer and Hannes Binder, as well as objects from the Heidi multimedia collection – Heidi board games, dolls and chopsticks, for example.

Because of its global reach, Heidi has also become a subject for research in the children's and youth media sector. The Johanna Spyri archive houses an extensive collection of both Swiss and international publications on the author, her work, and her social landscape, with a special focus on the enduring impact of the Heidi novels and their myriad adaptations over the years.

Swiss Institute for Children's and Youth Media SIKJM

The SIKJM is Switzerland's centre of expertise on literature for children and young adults. It promotes reading for young people, carries out research, works to raise awareness of literature for young readers, and develops a range of offers to help promote reading. It is not only home to the Johanna Spyri archive but also has a specialised library containing over 70,000 publicly-accessible media items – a veritable treasure trove of historical and contemporary books for young readers.

The institute was set up in Zurich in 1968 and is supported by the Johanna Spyri Foundation under private law. It is also associated with the University of Zurich. The SIKJM has its head office in Zurich and further offices in the French and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland.

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