

RESEARCH LIBRARIES

Creating Judaica Research Collections*

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Introduction

Since the 1970s, academic institutions across the United States have witnessed continuous growth in the number of Judaic Studies or Jewish Studies programs. The latest survey of these programs was published by B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations and the Association for Jewish Studies in 1979, and was entitled *Jewish Studies at American and Canadian Universities*. Although a decade old, its statistics offer insight into the magnitude of the number of such programs. Jewish Studies courses were offered at 346 colleges and universities, and graduate programs existed in 58 institutions. This represents a 15% increase since the previous B'nai B'rith survey, published in 1972.

A more recent publication by B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, *Jewish Life on Campus: A Directory of B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations and Other Jewish Campus Agencies*, issued in 1988, lists more than 400 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada that either participate in joint programs of Judaic Studies, offer courses in that area, and/or grant bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in Judaic Studies. Unfortunately, the limitations of this study are sufficient to prevent its direct comparison with the earlier surveys. Primary among its limitations is that the publication restricts itself to campuses with Hillel Foundations, eliminating perhaps dozens of institutions that have Judaic Studies, but no Hillel. Nonetheless, the trend is apparent. The 1988 B'nai B'rith directory shows a growth in the number of institutions offering Judaic Studies courses and in the development of new programs.

While many issues have been voiced as to the purpose of these programs vis-à-vis the community and the role of the Judaica scholar, one pragmatic issue that has yet to be addressed is the creation of a Judaica research collection. The primary resource for faculty and students alike on campus is the library. How are the libraries of this growing list of institutions handling the demands placed on them by new faculty, new courses, and new programs? The following questions are also addressed in this paper: How can a university library with minimal Judaica holdings support a newly formed program of study in this field and build a university-level research Judaica collection? What should the priorities be? What resources are necessary and what is available?

Creation of Judaica Collections

The act of creation does not occur in six days, or six months, or even in so many years. Creating a Judaica research collection is a painstaking and ultimately rewarding task with the mission to develop a systematic and consistent program that fully supports and anticipates the needs of the institution. Clearly, the availability of library resources directly affects the quality of teaching and research.

The handful of great university Judaica collections in the United States, such as those at Harvard, Yale, and Columbia, were built in the early decades of this century with major gift collections. But unlike the early decades of this century, the number of major private collections of Judaica available as gifts or for sale is insufficient to meet the current demands for collection development.

The creation stories of the great collections at the Hebrew Union College Library, the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the Library of Congress Hebraic Section, and the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library can be found in Adolph S. Oko's article, "Jewish Book Collections in the United States" in the *American Jewish Year Book* (1943).

The scarcity of these collections, together with the increased interest in Judaica book collecting, has inflated the cost of acquiring major collections. The late Prof. Salo Baron's library of 20,000 volumes was acquired in 1985 for Stanford University's Green Library, at a cost of \$1,000,000. David Langenberg's (1988) article, "The Taube-Baron Collection of Stanford University: The Bibliographer's View," described the highlights of the library of Prof. Baron. The Taube/Baron Collection of Jewish History and Culture now forms the core of Stanford's Judaica collection, but it is only a beginning in collection development for this field. To continue the development of the collection, Stanford University has sought to hire a Judaica Curator.

Specialized collections continue to be donated to Judaica libraries. Arthur A. Cohen's library of 3,000 titles on Jewish philosophy and theology, and his archival collection of manuscripts and correspondence were donated to Yale University in 1988. As valuable as they are, these private libraries represent but a small segment of the needs of a research-level collection. They add to the strengths of a well rounded collection, but cannot form the core on their own.

Book dealers are no longer packaging core collections for libraries to purchase. Today, libraries are competing for scarce resources in a market of fax machines, trans-Atlantic telephone calls, and a growing number of Judaica auctions.

In Charles Berlin's article in the *American Jewish Year Book* (1975), the vast library resources available in rabbinical seminaries, research institutions, colleges and universities in the United States are described. At the time of Berlin's study, only five college/university libraries, namely, Brandeis University, Columbia University, Harvard University, University of California at Los Angeles, and Yale University contained substantial Judaica collections of over 50,000 volumes. Twenty-

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two other colleges and universities held collections of 10,000–40,000 volumes, and 14 others held collections of 5,000–10,000 volumes. Another 50 or so institutions reported holding fewer volumes.

If one agrees with Berlin's assumption that at least 10,000 volumes are required for an undergraduate program in Jewish Studies, and at least 20,000 for graduate studies, then only 27 colleges and universities out of the approximately 300 institutions offering college courses in Jewish Studies in the mid-1970s—or 9%—held adequate library collections of Judaica. The numbers of volumes required today are higher than Berlin's 1975 figures. I estimate that a minimum of 15,000 and 30,000 volumes are now required for undergraduate and graduate work in Jewish Studies, respectively, and that a research-level collection should contain at least 75,000 volumes.

Michael Grunberger's (1989) paper, "From Strength to Strength: Judaica Collections Facing the Future," delivered at the Harvard Conference on the future of Judaica librarianship, refers to a 1988 survey of 37 libraries with Judaica collections of 1,400 to 350,000 volumes, conducted by Stephen Lehmann of the University of Pennsylvania. (That survey is scheduled to be published in August 1991 as an appendix to Garland Publishing's *Jewish-American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*.) The total number of volumes housed in these libraries has shown a substantial increase—from 2 million volumes at the time of the Berlin study to 3.5 million volumes in Lehmann's study.

What I find most striking is the number of libraries that Lehmann claims have substantial or even moderate Judaica collections: only 37 out of over 400. Berlin's survey listed 41 college and university libraries in the 5,000+ volume category. While we await the publication of Lehmann's survey, the inadequacy of many of our libraries' collections is apparent.

Collection Development

As libraries hunt for materials to fill their lacunae, a systematic approach to collection development must be employed to insure a well-rounded collection rather than a haphazard amassing of books. Several volumes on general collection development have been published in recent years. Blaine H. Hall's *Collection Assessment Manual for College and University Libraries* (1985) covers the major issues of collection measurement, client-centered measures, assessment for special purposes—such as weeding projects and es-

tablishing approval plans, statistical aids, sample survey instruments, and academic library standards as established by the Association of College and Research Libraries. To my knowledge, no collection assessment manual has ever been published for Judaica.

Edith and Meir Lubetski's *Building a Judaica Library Collection* (1983) offers acquisitions information on domestic and international book publishers and book dealers, as well as the antiquarian trade. Aware that much of the information is dated, Edith Lubetski and I have agreed to begin work on a second edition.

While several Judaica research libraries have created in-house documents regarding proposed collection development in a particular subject area, none has been published to date. The Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) provides the opportunity to create an online conspectus for Judaica, with room for assessment of current levels of acquisition as well as of the collection's depth. No institution has yet completed a conspectus for Judaica, primarily because of the enormous amount of time required to do this and the subjective nature of evaluating levels of strength. (Several libraries, including The New York Public Library, New York University, and Yale, use the RLG Conspectus for the three primary Library of Congress (LC) classes for Judaica, namely BM (Judaism), DS (Jewish history), and PJ (Hebrew language and literature). Jewish subjects can be found throughout the LC classification, however, and no library has done a conspectus on the basis of all the Jewish subjects enumerated in the scheme.)

Most college and research libraries utilize blanket order or approval plans established with a number of book dealers. These plans allow for the automatic supply of materials in specific subject areas, meeting established criteria as set by the library. Only Yeshiva University's German Judaica blanket order plan has been published. The plan, as described by Shmuel Klein and Zvi Erenyi in *Judaica Librarianship* (1985), is a model to be emulated, as it combines in-depth analysis of the profile with statistical commentary.

Until a collection development manual is developed for Judaica, the models for general collection development can serve as a guide. Each librarian of a Judaica collection needs to develop a method for analyzing what is on the shelf and a plan for future collection development.

Collection Assessment

Assessment of a library's collection can be achieved in several ways. Faculty can point to gaps in a collection in their particular areas of expertise. Consultants can be brought in to assess the collection. Bibliographies of various subjects can be searched against the collection. Interlibrary loan requests, new book recommendations, development of new courses or areas of study, and discussions with students researching senior theses or dissertations, or with members of the faculty on their current research interests, are all methods of uncovering immediate needs.

As an example of developing a new area of study, since Prof. Binyamin Harshav joined the staff of Yale University in the spring of 1987, a major effort has been made to develop research-level collections in Yiddish and Hebrew literature. Previously, Yale's holdings in these areas were minimal, representing only the major authors. In 1989, Yale University was successful in establishing a significant endowment in Yiddish literature. The initial three years of the endowment allow for the purchase of 10,000 volumes from the National Yiddish Book Center, immediately tripling the size of the previous collection. Yale has been able to create a comprehensive collective of Yiddish literature, which now includes reference materials, literary criticism, biography, literature and drama, history, Zionism, and numerous other categories of materials. Yale is still seeking to acquire an exhaustive collection or collections of Hebrew literature.

Collection assessment results in the formulation of a picture of the collection. Some subject areas will show strengths that can continue to be built upon. Analysis of other areas may indicate major gaps in the development of the collection. For most undergraduate programs there should be a core collection of Judaica that will not differ from institution to institution, but it is at the research level that an institution's special collections and depth of collection development are most significant.

Acquisitions

The standard acquisitions practice in most academic libraries is for book selectors to consult published bibliographies. National bibliographies, such as the *British National Bibliography*, *Deutsche National Bibliographie*, *Bibliographie de la France*, and *Bulletin critique du livre français* are only a few of the two dozen general bibliographies issued weekly, quarterly, or monthly that include Judaica. Specialized Judaica

and Hebraica current bibliographies include *Kiryat Sefer*, as well as regular articles in the *Jewish Book Annual*, *Judaica Librarianship*, and *American Jewish History*. Additionally, some book dealers specializing in Judaica and/or Hebraica issue catalogs of recently published materials or will respond to specific requests.

Other titles can be uncovered by reviewing currently received materials. The bibliographies and footnotes found in most scholarly works constitute a method of identifying additional titles in specific subject areas. Organizational newsletters often list pamphlets and in-house publications that do not receive adequate publicity in the book trade.

Ephemeral materials, such as broadsides, maps, videos, photographs, and sound recordings require an entirely different approach from that of the standardized book trade. Online bibliographic databases, themselves another format of published materials, can also be searched for additional citations.

There are standard bibliographic sources to consult in selecting Judaica and Hebraica. But for the Judaica bibliographer, creative exploration of all possible avenues results in a well-rounded and comprehensive collection.

Cooperative Collection Development

A small number of Judaica research libraries are represented among the membership of the Council of Archives and Research Libraries in Jewish Studies (CARLJS), which functions under the umbrella of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture. CARLJS provides a coordinated approach to addressing many of the pressing issues facing Judaica libraries, such as cataloging, preservation, and cooperative acquisitions programs. Currently, there are 37 CARLJS members, including archives, museums, institutes, seminaries, and colleges and universities. Of the 37, only 10 represent college and university libraries with Judaic Studies programs.

Nearly the same group of colleges and universities is represented by a second organization that was created in 1988: the Jewish and Middle East Studies Program (JAMES) of the Research Libraries Group (RLG). RLG is the parent body of RLIN, the only online bibliographic utility outside of Israel to offer a Hebraic vernacular capability. Development of RLIN's Hebraic capability was dependent on the continuous pressure and cooperative assistance

of the members of CARLJS, and on the commitment of the academic and research libraries that make up RLG.

While only 10 college and university libraries are members of CARLJS, all who are members of RLG can derive cataloging and acquisitions information from RLIN. The majority of Judaica research libraries in the United States are utilizing this network or adding their bibliographic records to it.

Collection development also involves preservation of materials. The two groups, CARLJS and the JAMES Program of RLG, are simultaneously working on microfilming projects to preserve collections, by assigning subject specializations to each member library.

Budget

It is obvious that the more funding there is, the greater will be the speed in building a Judaica library. Book budgets need to be upwards of \$75,000, and current serials budgets need to be at least \$7,500–\$10,000 to support 500 titles—a minimum for a research collection. Libraries must consider additional budgetary lines for pur-

chasing antiquarian titles, special collections, ephemeral items, and expensive microforms.

Facsimile and microform publishing have become significant sources for copies of archival documents, out-of-print books, catalogs of libraries, and serial and newspaper runs. A sample of recent facsimile and microform titles includes:

Archives of the Holocaust, a facsimile series of key documents and photographs from international archives, edited by Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton. 18 vols. (Garland Publishing): \$1,850 until 1/1/90, \$2,305 afterwards.

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While the costs are great, any library creating a research-level Judaica collection must inevitably purchase these sets, either to bring new titles to the collection or to preserve materials in a rapid state of decay.

The future development of research-level Judaic Studies collections in universities demands the close cooperation of university libraries, scholars . . . , and Judaica bibliographers.

Summary

As indicated above, only a small percentage of institutions offering courses in Jewish Studies or degree-granting Judaic Studies programs have significant Judaica libraries. Fewer still in number are libraries that employ full-time Judaica bibliographers and catalogers, whether for lack of funding for such positions or for lack of qualified candidates.

Creating a research-level collection of Judaica requires major support by the institution, to respond to the limited availability of traditional resources. It also requires the tenacity to approach collection development systematically and consistently. To be accomplished properly, the development of a collection requires a close, yet supportive and collegial working relationship with the faculty. It also requires the awareness of actual costs of salaries, books and serials, stack space, preservation, and related memberships. The future development of research-level Judaic Studies collections in universities demands the close cooperation of university libraries, scholars in Jewish Studies, and Judaica bibliographers.

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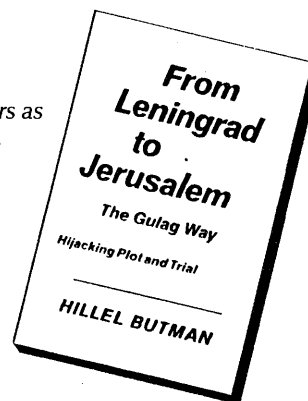
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