SCATTER OF THE LITERATURE

Donna Kutnick
Neumann College
Aston, PA

This column was introduced in the preceding issue of Judaica Librarianship *(vol. 5 no. 2, p. 248).*

Please send articles of interest to Judaica librarians that are found in other journals – both Jewish and general – to:

Donna Kutnick
Library Director
Neumann College
Concord Road
Aston, PA 19014

Adler, Elhanan. "Decisions and Changes Regarding the Cataloging in the University Libraries," *Yad Lakore,* vol. 25, no. 2 (Jan. 1991), p. 69-74. In Hebrew.

This is a report of the Inter-University Sub-Committee on Cataloging and Collection Development. The committee was founded in 1983 to help standardize cataloging practices and procedures in Israeli university libraries. Although the libraries all followed AACR2, their results were not always the same. From 1984 to 1986, the committee worked on problems in descriptive cataloging. In the end, everyone had to make compromises, and cooperation between branches of the seven university libraries was encouraged.

Some major decisions concerning cataloging issues were made by the Sub-Committee: how to treat variations in the spelling of Hebrew words lacking vowels; when to capitalize non-Hebrew words; whether to use English or Latin names for the classics; the use of abbreviations; how to catalog Israeli military material; and how to catalog foreign-language books translated into English.

Fleischer, Ezra. *Books, Librarians and Libraries in a Technological Era.* Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library Press, 1990. 15p.

Speech delivered at the opening session of the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians, Jerusalem, July 3, 1990. In Hebrew.

In his welcoming remarks to the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians, Fleischer noted that the traditional Jew pauses to recite a blessing before he takes action. He discusses the importance of this pause and the disturbing absence of one in the new struggle of culture versus technology. Fleischer feels that man should pause before he embraces technology. However, he notes that the thrust of our educational curriculum, which emphasizes quick solutions to problems, does not leave time for pause and contemplation. One has difficulty giving the humanities their just due in the present technological age. Fleischer sees libraries as the last bastion in the struggle to preserve the humanities. As guardians of our cultural heritage, librarians must undertake the awesome task of preserving this heritage.

Grunberger, Michael. "A Collection Spanning Centuries: LC is One of World's Foremost Centers for Hebraic Studies," *Library of Congress Information Bulletin,* vol. 50, no. 12 (June 17, 1991), p. 227-229.

In the summer of 1991, The Library of Congress held an exhibit honoring its Hebraic Section, entitled "From the Ends of the Earth: Judaica Treasures of the Library of Congress." The result was an eclectic blending of items relating to the Jewish-American experience, along with Hebrew incunabula and other examples of published works spanning centuries of Jewish history.

In his description of the exhibit, Grunberger, Head of LC's Hebraic Section, traces the history of the library's collection of Hebraica. The core collection comes from the library of Ephraim Deinard and was donated by philanthropist Jacob Schiff at the beginning of the 20th century. The collection expanded during this century and includes not only books from the American Jewish experience (including a substantial Yiddish collection), but also books received from Israel as a result of the enactment of Public Law 480 in 1958.

Also represented are rabbinics, liturgy, Hebrew literature, and numerous Holocaust *yisker-bikher,* which are of interest to genealogists.

[A review of "From the Ends of the Earth," by Esther Nussbaum, is summarized below.]

Lazinger, Susan S. "ALEPH: Israel's Research Library Network: Background, Evolution, and Implications for Networking in a Small Country," *Information Technology and Libraries,* vol. 10, no. 4 (December 1991), p. 275-291.

Lazinger, a lecturer in library science at the Hebrew University, traces the need for and development of the online system ALEPH (Automated Library Expandable Program Hebrew University of Jerusalem). Initial attempts to link Israel's university libraries were unsuccessful for both economic and practical reasons. Each library had different requirements, but all recognized the compelling need for a standardized cooperative system.

Weighing all options, the libraries settled for a decentralized approach which allowed individual libraries some flexibility and a good deal of autonomy. One example is the decision not to adhere to the MARC format. As Elhanan Adler noted, " . . . there is no question that ultimately the Israeli library community will wish to align itself with international bibliographic standards . . . . "(p.283). However, economics and pragmatism prevailed in every case; short-term expediency was preferred over long-term possibilities.

Despite many flaws, ALEPH has succeeded in giving individual Israeli libraries both flexibility and access. The result has been a compromise between a controlled system like RLIN (the Research Libraries Information Network) and a decentralized system. Ultimately, each library and each country must decide what is the most practical way to achieve its goals. For the moment,

ALEPH appears to be the right answer for Israel's academic libraries.

Miller, David Neal. "Bibliography as Ideology," *Yiddish*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1991), p. 63-74.

Miller, the author of *Bibliography of Isaac Bashevis Singer, 1950 - 1959*, reminds us that bibliography belongs to the category of literary criticism because it shapes the opinions of readers. Underestimating the bibliographer's editorial strength has always been a factor in literary criticism, especially in the case of Isaac Bashevis Singer. This situation is the result of several phenomena: Singer wrote in a language understood by a small minority; many of his works initially appeared in serial form in Yiddish newspapers; and, in fact, many original published versions of his works are unidentified and, if they have been, are very difficult to locate.

There is ambivalence by Jewish and Israeli writers towards Yiddish as a living language. Moreover, there is another argument among Singer scholars as to which approach is preferable in presenting bibliographic data on Singer's Yiddish works: romanization or the original script. The proponents for romanization argue that through this method, the title is put in context with other Singer works for those people who do not know Yiddish but are able to search titles in Latin characters. The lack of standardized norms for printing Yiddish is still a problem, with many printers employing Hebrew graphemes.

Indeed, the bibliographer, like the editor and compiler, has an intellectual agenda, a point of discussion that he wishes to advance. By determining what language access the reader will have to Singer, the bibliographer to a large extent determines the opinions one will eventually form regarding Singer, his work, and his role in literary history.

Nussbaum, Esther. "Judaica Treasures at the Library of Congress," *Amit Woman*, vol. 64, no. 2 (November-December 1991), p. 11-14.

Esther Nussbaum reviews the exhibit, "From the Ends of the Earth: Judaica Treasures of the Library of Congress." Briefly describing the history of the collection, from its founding in 1914 as the Semitic Division, Nussbaum describes its growth, as it expanded into areas not only relevant to the American Jewish experience, but reflective of Jewish culture throughout the ages.

Special mention is made of "Judaica firsts," including books from the library of Thomas Jefferson on great Jewish philosophers, as well as histories of the Jews' battle against the Romans. There are woodcut illustrations of blessing the Sabbath candles (text in Yiddish, published in Amsterdam), books of poems by Emma Lazarus and Penina Moise, and a handwritten copy of Irving Berlin's song, "God Bless America." With access to The Rare Book and Special Collections Division as well as to the Hebraic Section, the exhibit's curators were able to present the diverse nature of the American Jewish experience.

Rippin, Andrew. "Microsoft MS-DOS with Hebrew & Arabic Language Support," *Bits & Bytes Review* (April 1990), p. 17-20.

This article is basically a hands-on manual for the installation of MS-DOS HLS (Hebrew Language Support). The program Rippin describes has both Hebrew and Arabic capabilities; surprisingly, he finds that the Arabic DOS system is more successful than the Hebrew.

It is recommended that Judaica librarians read this article in conjunction with loading the software. The printed documentation for the program is *Microsoft MS-DOS Manager's User's Guide Hebrew Supplement*, to be used along with the *MS-DOS Manager User's Guide*.

This article reminds the Judaica librarian of the constantly improved programs with bi- and multilingual capabilities, and that a multilingual integrated catalog is not far away.

Rowland-Smith, Diana. "Review of *Karaite Bible Manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah* (by Geoffrey Khan . . . Cambridge University Press, 1990)," *L'Eylah*, (Sept. 1991, No. 32), p. 59-61.

Vol. 9 in the Cairo Genizah Series of Cambridge University, contains seventeen documents, texts, and Bible fragments thought to be derived from the Karaites. A sect that was founded in Babylonia in the early 8th century, the Karaites believed that the Bible was the only real authority, and they rejected the Oral Law. For a short period, they constituted a threat to normative Judaism, but the polemical works of Saadia Gaon, written to counter the Karaite threat, resulted in a strengthened rabbinic Judaism.

The unusual characteristic of Karaite documents is that Hebrew was written in Arabic letters. This phenomenon was discussed in the nineteenth century, when Reinhart Hoerning, a German scholar, published other manuscripts of the Karaites. Khan's book demonstrates conclusively that some of the fragments sold by Jerusalem dealer William Shapira to the British Museum in the 1880s had been obtained in Egypt and were Karaite manuscripts. These newly published manuscripts shed additional light on the Karaites and their beliefs, and give us a clearer picture of Jewish life in the tenth century.

Weinberg, Bella Hass. "Defining the Scope of Judaica: Complementary Problems in Bibliographic Control and Bibliographic Organization," *Library Acquisitions: Practice & Theory*, vol. 15, no. 2 (1991), p. 155-163.

The author discusses the overlapping involvement of the bibliographer and the subject cataloger in the field of Judaica. This is partly a result of the unique nature of the subject and its possible definitions. The author points out four areas which can and do overlap at different points, and discusses them from two perspectives: that of the bibliographer and that of the cataloger. The major issues discussed are: overlap of Judaica with Hebraica and Israeli publications; continuous phenomena in Jewish studies; Judaism as a religion *vs.* Jews as an ethnic group; and Who is a Jew?

Disagreeing with those who feel that cataloging is an isolated component of library technical services, the author argues that cataloging and collection development are intertwined. A successful Judaica acquisitions librarian must also have a good knowledge of cataloging to be most effective. With the advent of Hebrew online systems (e.g., RLIN), the boundary between these two areas should become less distinct.

Wolpe, David J. "And Another Thing ...: The Gentle Art of Gift-Receiving," *Logos*, 1/2 (1990), p. 55-56.

The author, who is director of the Ostrow Library, University of Judaism (Los Angeles), writes about a common dilemma faced by many librarians: whether to accept old collections. There is something about personal libraries that makes them difficult to discard: they symbolize "a gesture of benevolence to the ages." Despite the fact that a Judaica library may already own many of the items, and that, consequently, there really are no practical justifications for keeping these old collections, the books nonetheless represent a culture and a way of life that is rapidly disappearing. In a more personal sense, they remind us of the lives of those who once owned the books. And for that reason, we keep the books.

Zahavy, Tzvee. "On the Computer Front: The CD-ROM Computer Resources: Rabbinic Literature and Bibles: *Computerised Torah Treasure; Master Search Bible; The FABS Reference Bible; The Bible Library.*" *Association for Jewish Studies Newsletter* second series, No. 5 (#41) (Fall 1990), p. 3-6.

Four packages relevant to research in Jewish studies are described and evaluated in terms of such features as retrieval capabilities, documentation, and support. The packages are highly recommended.

Donna Kutnick is the Director of Library and Media Services at Neumann College, Aston, PA, and is currently the President of the Philadelphia Area Chapter of the Association of Jewish Libraries. She previously served as Assistant Director of the Mordecai M. Kaplan Library of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Ms. Kutnick has also worked at The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Gratz College, Brandeis University, 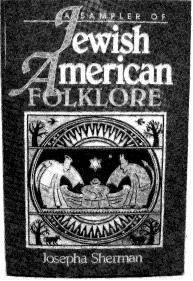and the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem.