

4-26-2016

Vol. 19 Editor's Note

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Recommended Citation

Leket-Mor, Rachel. 2016. "Vol. 19 Editor's Note." *Judaica Librarianship* 19: 1-2. doi:10.14263/2330-2976.1210.

Editor's Note

The contributions in Volume 19 of *Judaica Librarianship* shed light on diverse aspects of our discipline, both in practice and theory. More than the sum of its parts, this issue conveys, in my mind, a sense of recognition of the true force behind the library institution. Librarians are those who shape collections and services, who are entrusted with increasing their home institutions' cultural weight within the community; librarians are the keepers of cultural memory, those who let it be preserved or forgotten in libraries, as late Umberto Eco proclaimed.¹ This issue revisits these professional duties and I hope that as much as it is thought-provoking you will find it invigorating.

The opening article in this issue introduces an archival collection that encompasses a variety of formats and subject matters, all springing from the personality and life experiences of Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi who donated his papers to the University of Colorado. Curator Stephanie Yuhás guides us in this paper through the facets of the Schachter-Shalomi Collection and documents the process that brought together multiple materials acquired through several accessions—artifacts such as the Rainbow *talit*; print materials ranging from printouts of fax messages to posters to handwritten notes to books; and visual, audio, and video items in various formats, including born-digitized—to create a collection that focuses on the Jewish Renewal movement as part of the Post-Holocaust American Judaism Archive at the University of Colorado.

The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Library at the University of Haifa, Israel is the focus of the article co-authored by Cecilia Harel, Yosef Branse, Karen Elisha, and Ora Zehavi. As one of the most advanced research libraries in Israel, the University of Haifa library served as incubator to projects such as the *Index to Hebrew Periodicals*, the digitization of Hebrew journals—a project spearheaded by JSTOR and the National Library of Israel—and the initiation and hosting of various digital databases that serve the university's faculty and students as well as the general public.

The last paper, “Phonemic Conversion as the Ideal Romanization Scheme for Hebrew,” came into being after I invited Uzzi Ornan, one of the leading linguists in Israel, to contribute to *Judaica Librarianship*. What sparked my curiosity was a brief reference to libraries in Ornan's 2013 *In the Beginning was the Language* (Jerusalem: The Academy for Hebrew Language, 252), together with the fact that none of the sources studying romanization of Hebrew in the context of libraries cited his earlier work on *ta'atík* (language conversion). What began as a translation of Ornan's Hebrew manuscript evolved into an undertaking to bring together the two long-lost conceptual relatives, and ended up with a co-authored article that may give birth to theoretical deliberations and alternative discovery tools.

¹ Umberto Eco, “The Library as a Model for Culture: Preserving, Filtering, Deleting, and Recovering,” a talk delivered at Yale University on October 18, 2013. It is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGPVJvHwXgQ>, accessed April 1, 2016.

This issue of *Judaica Librarianship* is rich in book reviews owing to the fact that a number of books in our area came to fruition since the publication of Volume 18. One of these books, published in Israel, became quite controversial immediately with its publication by virtue of its sensitive topic. Gish Amit's *Ex-Libris: Chronicles of Theft, Preservation, and Appropriating at the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem* (Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, 2015)² is represented in this issue with two contributions: A translated and annotated version of Zeev Gries's Hebrew essay presented orally on the eve of the book's publication,³ and Arie Dubnov's review which was composed a few months later. Both essays were simultaneously submitted to *Judaica Librarianship* and we decided to publish both of them since they complement each other with their differing points of view.

The role that Jewish libraries play in the community whose heritage they preserve in their curated collections is further explored in the essays of David Foster and Arthur Kiron, who reviewed, respectively, Alejandro Dujovne's *A History of the Jewish Book: Argentine Jewish Culture as Seen through Its Publishers, Booksellers, Translators, Printing Houses and Libraries* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2014; in Spanish) and Charles Berlin's *Harvard Judaica in the 21st Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard College Library, 2014). These review essays reflect on the participatory nature of the library as a cultural institution, both within the library profession and in the larger cultural framework of the community.

Last but not least is an essay by *Judaica Librarianship*'s past editor, Zachary Baker, who reviewed *Constellations of Atlantic Jewish History, 1955–1890: The Arnold and Deanne Kaplan Collection of Early American Judaica*, edited by Arthur Kiron (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Libraries, 2014). Baker juxtaposes the Kaplan Collection with the Cairo Genizah when commenting on the “ephemeral ‘trash’ of the American Jewish past” and its usefulness to historians of *Judaica Americana*. Making a full circle from the Post-Holocaust American Judaism Archive at the University of Colorado to the Arnold and Deanne Kaplan Collection of Early American Judaica at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries, these collections exemplify the role of libraries and of librarians in the building process of collective memory.

My heartfelt thanks to all contributors of this volume, as well as the insightful anonymous reviewers, and the volunteers who helped with copy editing: Judy Wolfthal, Marlene Schiffman of Yeshiva University, and Henry Wudl of Hebrew Union College–JIRS. I also welcome Haim Gottschalk (Library of Congress) as the new Scatter of the Literature columnist. Congratulations!

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²The book is only available in Hebrew, but two of Amit's articles in English (2011, 2013) were listed in Steven Bergson's 2014 Scatter of the Literature column (*Judaica Librarianship* 18, 167–183; doi:[10.14263/2330-2976.1033](https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1033)).

³The public event (February 12, 2015) was recorded on video and is available on the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute website (Hebrew only), at <http://www.vanleer.org.il/en/event/ex-libris-chronicles-theft-preservation-and-appropriating-jewish-national-library> (Zeev Gries's talk is the third).