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## Vol. 20 Editor's Note

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## Editor's Note

Volume 20 of *Judaica Librarianship* is rich in research articles and essays that offer both retrospective studies (focus is on late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century in these thematic pairs) and current, cutting-edge topics that correspond to our new column for digital humanities projects in Jewish Studies.

The provenance and collection-building history of two library collections are recounted in the papers of **Rebecca Jefferson** (Dangerous Liaisons in Cairo: Reginald Q. Henriques and the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Manuscript Collection at Cambridge University Library) and **Rachel Misrati** (A Jewish National Collection for a Jewish National Library: The Abraham Schwadron Collection, Past and Present). Both authors applied close reading of archival sources to their research and both uncover and narrate personal conflicts and professional politics that were at work behind the scenes when these respective collections were amassed and processed. Both papers also remind us that library collections and archives are seldom just comprised of the cultural items they seek to preserve; more often than not, they bottle up the life experiences of their curators. Jefferson reflects on the significance of this “metalibrarianship” type of research and concludes that it “...aids our understanding of the ways in which Jewish libraries and archives have been assembled and organized over time; the forces and processes, organic and artificial, that have gone into shaping them; the information they retained and the information they excluded; and, most importantly, what a society values and what it casts aside.”

Misrati's paper sorts out old history shared by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Jewish National and University Library and at the same time celebrates the digital technologies that, thanks to the renewal project at the National Library of Israel (NLI), gave the Schwadron Collection's autographs and portraits new life and revamped their relevance. The renewal project at NLI is envisioned in another essay in this volume, authored by NLI's Consultant on Art and Exhibitions **Yigal Zalmona**, who is planning the library's future permanent exhibit (“A Library is not a Museum”?). Zalmona compares and contrasts the physical setting of the library with that of a museum and offers a fresh look on library exhibits.

**Rifat Bali's** essay (Istanbul's Jewish Bookstores: Monuments to a Bygone Era), relying on sources brought here in English for the first time, brings to life the cultural milieu in which Jewish bookstores operated and thrived in the crossroads city of Istanbul in the past century. These bookstores played an important role in Turkish intellectual life by both publishing major works (particularly İlyas Bayar's Modesty Bookstore) and creating reader communities around them. The place of bookstores and book dealers in the ecosystem in which libraries and librarians, publishers and printers, and ultimately readers take part cannot be overestimated and it is my hope that additional submissions on Jewish bookstores will find their way into *Judaica Librarianship*

(see for example Michael Winship’s 2008 article and 2015 directory on American bookstores and book distribution).<sup>1</sup>

The literacy ecosystem, or history of the book, is also the focus of the two research papers on children’s literature in this volume. **Ann Brener**’s article unveils an unknown chapter in the history of Omanut Press, one of the most respected projects in Modern Hebrew literature for children, that marked its centennial in 2017 (The Odessa Years: Shoshana Persitz and the Gamliel Library of Omanut Press [1918–1920]).<sup>2</sup> **Shulamith Berger** writes about the self-publishing endeavor of Yiddish author Moyshe Levin, who in the late 1930s wrote, illustrated, and printed children’s books under a pseudonym (Moyshe Levin [Ber Sarin] of Yung-Vilne and His Solo Publishing Venture for Children). Both articles study the text and illustrations with emphasis on the publishing circumstances of the respective Hebrew and Yiddish books, and both are accompanied by bilingual bibliographies.

The cover art of this issue focuses the limelight on Moyshe Levin’s remarkably moving illustration, reproduced from his 1937 book, *Ven ikh yel zayn a groyser* (When I grow up)<sup>3</sup>, that celebrates in imagery the qualities that Berger finds in Levin’s text: “curiosity, adventure, and hope”. I find the work of this “universalist spirit” as inspiring today as it must have been for the Jewish kids it was intended for during ever-darkening political times. The boy riding his homemade broomstick-airplane horse is calling,

*And when I want to fly*

*Up to the blue sky*

*I’ll mount the pony*

*Just whistle, “giddy-up!”*

*And the horse will obey*

*And stop when I say “whoa!”* (Translation by Berger)

The last item in the Essays and Research section is **Heidi Lerner**’s qualitative research paper (Hebraica Catalogers and Cataloging Roles in North America: Today and Tomorrow) that explores the emerging new landscape for the field in the wake of twenty-first century metadata creation schemes.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Winship, “‘The Tragedy of the Book Industry’?: Bookstores and Book Distribution in the United States to 1950,” *Studies in Bibliography* 58 (2007–2008): 145–184. doi:[10.1353/sib.2006.0005](https://doi.org/10.1353/sib.2006.0005); Michael Winship, “Directories of American Bookstores to 1950: Addenda And Corrigena,” *Studies in Bibliography* 59 (2015): 319–321. doi:[10.1353/sib.2015.0002](https://doi.org/10.1353/sib.2015.0002).

<sup>2</sup> Shoshana Persitz, an instrumental figure in the cultural, educational, and political life in Israel, is also represented in the Schwadron Collection and the Schwadron Archive.

<sup>3</sup> Wilno: U. Margolis i S. Klaczko. Lit. N. Mac i Syn, 1937, p. 3.

“The world in which we live is probably best described as a hybrid between the physical and the digital,” writes **Michelle Chesner** in JL’s exciting new column, JS/DH: An Introduction to Jewish Studies/ Digital Humanities Resources. This column aims to serve as a forum for reviewing digital humanities projects in Jewish Studies. For submissions, please communicate directly with Chesner at [mc3395@columbia.edu](mailto:mc3395@columbia.edu). In Scatters of the Literature column, **Haim Gottschalk** shares over two dozen citations of recently published studies.

The Reviews section includes JL’s **Arthur Kiron**’s reading of *Digital Judaism: Jewish Negotiations with Digital Media and Culture* (edited by Heidi Campbell; Routledge 2015). His essay brings to our attention studies that focus on digital technology and Judaism from a communication angle, thus providing us with a fresh look on the place of digital culture in our communal life—different than our information studies approach. **Barry Walfish** goes back to reviewing broadside collections (see his 1995 review on the microfilm set of the Jewish Theological Seminary)<sup>4</sup> in his essay on *The Writing on the Wall: A Catalogue of Judaica Broad­sides from the Valmadonna Trust Library* (edited by Sharon Liberman Mintz, Shaul Seidler-Feller, and David Wachtel; Valmadonna Trust Library, 2015), and describes this magnificent collection, which was recently acquired by the NLI.

Barry Walfish and Pearl Berger both retired from their day jobs at University of Toronto and Yeshiva University, respectively, as well as from the editorial board of JL since the last issue was out. Their many contributions to the profession of Judaica librarianship and AJL’s scholarly journal are summarized in our special editorials that celebrate their remarkable achievements. Pearl has been involved in JL since its very first issue (1983) as Associate Editor and was instrumental in the process of bringing JL online in 2013. Thank you, Pearl and Barry, for years of service!

This is the perfect opportunity to warmly welcome our two new editorial board members, Drs. Rebecca Jefferson, Head of Price Library of Judaica, University of Florida Libraries and Rachel Heuberger, Judaica Division, University Library Frankfurt am Main. Welcome, Rebecca and Rachel!

The perfect man of letters, Wagnerite, and past editor of JL Zachary Baker is retiring from Stanford University Libraries after a distinguished career that affected every single person in our line of work. Zachary’s distinct voice and significant contributions to our profession are honored in another editorial in this issue, accompanied by a list of his published works. I thank Arthur Kiron for putting our thoughts into words in his Tribute to Zachary Baker, Editor of *Judaica Librarianship* (2005–2012), on the Occasion of His Retirement; and Heidi Lerner for pulling a few internal strings at Stanford to facilitate this tribute. Knowingly and unknowingly, Zachary has been a mentor to many of us at AJL. For me personally, this *hashuver bibliyoteker* (eminent librarian) has been a beacon of immense knowledge, good humor, and friendship and it is thanks to him

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4 Walfish, Barry D. 1995. “Jewish Theological Seminary of America Library. Broadside Collection. Hamden, Conn.: Micrographic Systems of Connecticut for The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992. 3 microfilm reels. \$35.00 per reel + shipping.” *Judaica Librarianship* 9: 40-47. doi:[10.14263/2330-2976.1183](https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1183).

that I fell in love with librarianship. Thank you, Zachary, for being the best possible role model before, during, and after passing me the JL *dirizshor-shṭeḳele* (baton). Enjoy your retirement!

The publication of this issue of JL would not have made possible without the hard work of the authors, anonymous reviewers, and our excellent copyeditors Nancy Sack and Judy Woltfhal, whose help was vital. Thank you all, and congratulations!

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