Scatter of the Literature, 2008–2013

Steven M. Bergson

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, safran-can@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://ajlpublishing.org/jl

Part of the Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons, Information Literacy Commons, Jewish Studies Commons, and the Reading and Language Commons

Recommended Citation


The article is about the books, journals, and manuscripts left behind by Palestinians in West Jerusalem during the 1948 war. The principal repository of these books is the National Library of Israel—at the time, the Jewish National and University Library, which was a department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. According to the last official figures available, approximately 30,000 books were collected between May 1948 and late February 1949 and incorporated into the National Library collections. It is possible that a greater number was collected, but it has not been possible to obtain written documentation to this effect. It should be emphasized that the focus here is the books collected solely in West Jerusalem; the article does not address the fate of the tens of thousands of books abandoned elsewhere in the country.


The article examines the fate of hundreds of thousands of Jewish-owned books that had been looted by the Nazis. By the end of World War II, these books were scattered all across Europe, and within a very short time, they became the focus of bitter conflicts between three official elements—the Jewish organizations in the United States, Britain, and Palestine, the American government, and the surviving Jewish communities in Europe. The Jewish possessions created a series of difficulties, diplomatic as well as economical and administrative. But as it soon turned out, first and foremost they created a political problem, deeply rooted in a battlefield over the Jewish past, the victims’ memory, and the link between the ruin of the European Jewry and the establishment of the State of Israel.


The article discusses the electronic thesis and dissertation (ETD) project at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Be’er Sheva, Israel. It describes the status of the ETD movement in Israel as part of the worldwide spread of ETDs as reported in the literature. It also examines openness to ETDs by faculty and by publisher discipline.

---

* Editor’s note: Wherever possible, annotations to these citations are based on those provided by indexing and abstracting services.

The article discusses the collection of Eliasaf Robinson, Israel’s most prominent antiquarian bookseller. The collection consists of approximately five hundred printed volumes and 34.5 linear feet of archival materials.


This study considers the structure and linking strategy of Hebrew websites of several nonprofit organizations. Since nonprofit organizations differ from commercial, educational, or governmental sectors, it is important to understand the ways they utilize the web. Fifty-four nonprofit organizations in Israel were surveyed, most of them having at least one hundred volunteers. The organizations belonged to four main groups: economic aid and citizen rights organizations, health aid organizations, organizations supporting families and individuals with special needs, and organizations for women and children.


This paper reports the results of an off-line survey of the information needs of members of the Israeli public about public and governmental services and entitlements. The questionnaire included questions on the information needs and major sources of information for fulfilling these needs. The respondents were mainly concerned about health, transportation, and education related issues, but work relations were also of primary concern. The preferred sources of information were family and friends, followed by the Internet. There was very low awareness to the Israeli Citizen Advice Bureau (SHIL), that maintains physical offices throughout the country, telephone hotlines and an extensive web site, and its aim is to provide citizen-related information.


The article explores the emergence of an Israeli phenomenon of bilingual literature for children in 2011 focusing on Hebrew-Amharic children’s literature. Bilingual literature emphasizes a work of literature that is presented with a bilingual text. Bilingualism should
be recognized as an interdisciplinary area involving linguistics and various branches of behavioral sciences including anthropology, psychology, and sociology.


An archivist from a kibbutz in the north of Israel has been managing the kibbutz archive for close to a decade. The archivist at the kibbutz in question re-evaluates her kibbutz’s history while incorporating values of egalitarianism and feminism into the archive.


Spertus has been an important educational and cultural resource since it opened in 1924 as an educational center for Chicago’s Jewish community. That important foundation remains, but over the decades Spertus has expanded to serve broader goals, adding programmatic centers to serve an increasingly diverse population and a much wider geographic sweep. Today Spertus provides a dynamic learning environment made vibrant through a synergy of academic and cultural resources, proudly based in Chicago but reaching out to the world.


The Azrieli Foundation’s Elin Beaumont describes its Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program and how school libraries can help students access the stories. While many of the memoirs are suitable for readers fourteen and older, the series as a whole is intended for senior high school and adult readers.


Results of a survey conducted in 2005–2006 regarding the extent of use of digital resources by students and researchers in five universities in Israel and the ratio of use between authorized electronic information resources provided by academic libraries, and the Surface Web. About eighty percent of respondents reported a high or very high frequency of use of the Surface Web for seeking information for their study or research. In contrast, only about twenty-eight percent of the respondents reported high or very high use of academic e-journals, forty percent high or very high use of digital databases, and only about thirteen percent high or very high use of e-books. A situation in which aca-
demics use the Surface Web two or three times more frequently than more authoritative digital information sources provided by their library indicates a severe problem related to the quality of information used, which may severely harm the quality and credibility of research based upon it.


This article presents ideas for an integrating activity for archival research on the Holocaust. The authors analyze how they can improve Holocaust-related collection descriptions for research, which they will make available online, and how EHRI provides travel grants for transnational access to existing infrastructures in Holocaust research. Both approaches help them overcome that Holocaust-related material is geographically dispersed and address the challenges for historical research stemming from the way documentation on the Holocaust has been attempted up to now.


A cross-curricular digital storytelling activity in which students in grades 7–9 use digital, visual, and media literacy in World War II / Holocaust unit are outlined.


The Hebraic and Near East Sections of the African and Middle Eastern Division of the Library of Congress sponsored the second day of a two-day conference on Iranian Jewry. In addition to organizing a display of library resources, there were presentations from scholars on topics as varied as the *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, Jews in Medieval Persian cultures, and the image of Jews in Iranian cinema.


The article reviews the virtual exhibition “Ontario’s Small Jewish Communities” at [http://www.ontariojewisharchives.org/exhibits/osjc](http://www.ontariojewisharchives.org/exhibits/osjc).

The article describes and discusses the Holocaust collection at McMaster University. The collection spans more than a decade—1933 to 1945—and consists of nearly 2,000 letters in several different languages from or to prisoners in Dachau, Buchenwald, and Auschwitz, as well as in Gestapo prisons and POW camps. In many instances there are series of letters written by the same prisoner. There is also a diary of the Nazi evacuation from Ravensbrück, as well as a hand-fashioned recipe book, which prisoners exchanged among themselves. The collection also includes books, posters, magazines, newspapers, and air-drop leaflets.


Previously unknown data from central Russian archives show that Soviet, post-Soviet, and Western historians have substantially overestimated the number of Soviet citizens evacuated in 1941 and 1942. This research note advocates a central database of evacuated Soviet Jews’ names, including social and demographic information on each. The author suggests as its basis name lists and card catalogs from central and regional archives in Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and other republics of the former USSR, as well as from the Tracing and Information Center of the Russian Red Cross. The database would afford more precise information on the numbers of refugees from, and victims of, the Holocaust in the occupied Soviet territories, improve possibilities for the sociological and demographic study of both groups, and help ascertain heretofore unknown names of Soviet Jews martyred by the Nazis and their allies. The database would serve such pragmatic purposes as genealogical research and compensation cases of the Claims Conference.


Florida congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz visited the Library of Congress in May to deliver the keynote address for Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM). The article discusses the JAHM Coalition, founded in 2007, which helps to foster harmony between communities and to raise awareness in the non-Jewish community of the significant contributions Jews have made in all aspects of American life.

The article reports that the Library of Congress holds the digital facsimiles of the Washington Haggadah and the Szyk Haggadah, which are illustrated renditions of the Jewish classic text recited at the Passover meal or seder. The text recounts the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The former was created by Joel ben Simeon in 1478 and the latter by Polish-Jewish artist Arthur Szyk. Discussed are the haggadot’s histories and the backgrounds and other works of their authors.


Based on Nicholas’s framework for assessing information needs, this research aims to construct a profile of both Israeli older adults and their information needs regarding laws and social services. Data were collected by questionnaires answered by 200 older adults born in Europe, Asia, and Africa, who attended social clubs for older adults. The results indicated that older adults primarily require information for dealing with changes in their lives. They do not know enough about the laws and services existing for their benefit. Significant correlations were found between the age, educational level, self-reported health status, and the subjects in which they are interested, the function that the information served and the information delivery type. It is likely that we are witnessing the first signs of the influences of the baby boom generation on older adults’ information needs profile.


Since the end of World War II, the English language has become the lingua franca of science publications worldwide. Science publications written in other languages do not gain the same exposure to the international scientific community as does the material in English. In this sense, non-English articles constitute an “invisible science” for the rest of the scientific world. This study compares publications indexed in the academic-oriented Hebrew Index of Periodicals (IHP) database with those in the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) in order to document the amount of scientific material published in Israel, where Hebrew is the native language. Except for abstracts, which are sometimes given in English, as well as Hebrew, and therefore provide some idea of a paper’s content, most of this research remains hidden from the international scientific community. The SCIE and IHP databases for our examination cover the three grand disciplines: the exact and life sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Additionally, the study probes the coverage of medical publications in the two databases. The difference between old
and emerging disciplines in the use of a language other than Hebrew is observed and non-English citation patterns for various disciplines are examined. The results confirm the dominance of English as the lingua franca of science and point to the large number of scientific studies in Hebrew that lack international exposure.


In many languages abbreviations are very common and are widely used in both written and spoken language. However, they are not always explicitly defined and in many cases they are ambiguous. This research presents a process that attempts to solve the problem of abbreviation ambiguity using modern machine learning (ML) techniques. Various baseline features are explored, including context-related methods and statistical methods. The application domain is Jewish Law documents written in Hebrew and Aramaic, which are known to be rich in ambiguous abbreviations. Two research approaches were implemented and tested: general and individual. Our system applied four common ML methods to find a successful integration of the various baseline features. The best result was achieved by the SVM ML method in the individual research, with 98.07 percent accuracy.


The article offers information on Queens Library at Hillcrest in New York City. The library was opened to the public in 1980. Community Library Manager Francesca Bishop cites the increasing presence of teenagers in the library, which has many older customers. She adds that Queens Library is changing its collection to accommodate the varying needs of its customers, which include Chinese-speaking people. The collection also includes materials about Jewish culture and history.


The article provides a biographical portrait of Adolf Neubauer, who worked at Oxford’s Bodleian Library from 1868 to 1900. Initially, Neubauer was a sublibrarian who prepared Oxford’s first catalogue of Hebrew manuscripts and he was later appointed Reader in Rabbinic Hebrew.
The Holocaust was one of the most significant events of the twentieth century, and it had impact on many different areas, including politics, psychology, sociology, ethics, philosophy, and religion. As such, it is not surprising to find that there is a great deal of Holocaust coverage on the Internet. Yet there is a kind of unevenness to the Holocaust sites, with some focused on personal and individual experiences and others of broader scope. This article draws attention to some of the best sites available. It also aims to cover some of the sites addressing related areas impacted by the Holocaust.

In 1998, Misha Defonseca, the recently confessed author of a hoax, *Misha: A Mémoire of the Holocaust Years*, filed suit against Mt. Ivy Press after it failed to make the book a success in the United States. Defonseca’s ghostwriter also sued the publisher, on the grounds that her name had not appeared on the cover of the book. In 2001, a court in Massachusetts held that Mt. Ivy Press had fraudulently asserted that it was an expert in marketing books and awarded $33 million in damages to Defonseca and her ghostwriter for “unfair and deceptive business practices.” Jane Daniel, the owner of Mt. Ivy Press, is currently in court attempting to overturn the judgment. She discusses the implications of the court’s ruling for the publishing industry.

To celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica at the University of Florida, the Price Library launched the first stage of a project to digitize an important, special collection of anniversary editions of Jewish newspapers from around the world. This article provides the history of the collection, need for this project, steps involved in digitization and digital collection building, and future events based on the feedback to the initial project, which will include outreach, subsequent individual and collaborative digital collection development projects, online exhibits, and more.

The article reports that the Jewish Public Library/Bibliothèque Publique Juive (JPL) of Montreal, Quebec will become the first library to adopt Resource Definition Access (RDA)/Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) standard by im-
implementing FRBR/RDA capabilities of its Virtua integrated library system provided by VTLS. JPL implemented the Chamo Social Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) when it joined VTLS in 1994. Information on Virtua is offered.


The writer describes her recent experience of speaking at a Jewish literary salon in the wake of publishing a book about her conversion to Catholicism. She explains that a heated discussion erupted after she read out a portion of her book and that she consequently decided never to attend another literary salon. She describes how she changed her mind after receiving a supportive e-mail from a woman who took part in the event.


For nearly a century, teaching Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* in schools has been questioned, because of perceived religious prejudice. Defenders of Shakespeare are encouraged to fight censorship with a constitutional right to read. Definers of literature are left out when a defense of the play is required. Both potential censor and concerned parent could better observe reasons to protect the play through explanations of its merits presented alongside legal discourse. The school librarian will defend controversial classics more effectively if legal and literary judgments are used together to answer the wrath of the censors.


The paper studies attitudes towards and perceptions of the Internet by ultra-Orthodox women who are members of closed online forums. The forums constitute a unique environment for ultra-Orthodox women, where they can talk amongst themselves anonymously on issues that may be illegitimate in their community. Findings show that the ultra-Orthodox women who browse closed designated forums view the Internet as constructive and empowering, but also as a challenge to the ultra-Orthodox lifestyle. They acknowledge that the rabbis allow using the Internet only for work–related purposes from the workplace and not from home, and yet they formed online relationships, especially with other ultra-Orthodox women. The findings demonstrate a sense of ambivalence among the ultra-Orthodox women about the Internet. As independent women living in communities with strict supervision and enforcement patterns, they want to continue and be a part of the ultra-Orthodox community, and yet maintain a site, i.e., a forum, of their own.

The continued prominence of genocide and Holocaust education, along with the movement toward the affective in social studies curricula, the advent of the Internet, and continued scholarship in the field, has led to the availability of a staggering array of digital resources for teachers. These resources have the potential to enhance genocide and Holocaust education by providing robust content resources and interactive opportunities for students to develop new skills and understanding. In this article, the authors identify new digital media resources and strategies that engage students in authentic learning experiences about genocide and the Holocaust. Using F. W. Newmann and G. G. Wehlage’s framework for “authentic instruction,” the authors identify digital media that engage students in moral and ethical valuing, emphasize historical inquiry, and are relevant to the world outside of school.


The article presents information about the British Holocaust Memorial Day, scheduled for January 27, 2013 and focusing on initiatives from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust charity. According to the article, many of the activities organized in 2012 occurred at libraries. Topics include the “build a bridge” theme of the 2013 event and informational and promotional resources that are available for librarians online.


The article explores the state of the market for books for Jewish children in the United States in 2011. It discusses the distribution of free Judaic books to families in the United States and Canada by the PJ Library Program. It also assesses the effect of developments such as online social networking and electronic-books on the market. The tradition of some publishers such as Holiday House to publish books on Judaism is noted.


The author reflects on key works of Israeli literature for children and how new bilingual collaborations help promote dialogue through the recognition of “self” and “other”, mirrored in each other’s languages.
The Institut Evreiskoi Proletarskoi Kul’tury (IEPK; Kiev Institute of Jewish Culture), based at the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (UAS), was one of two such organisations in the interwar period. This article discusses the fate of its archive, a rich source that included material from Leningrad and elsewhere, in the wake of two interventions: firstly, its sudden closure in 1936 by the Soviet authorities and, secondly, the Nazi occupation of Kiev in World War II. As a consequence, the archive was scattered to the winds, ending up in two continents.


Shortly following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, an American mobile exploitation team was diverted from its mission in hunting for weapons for mass destruction to search for an ancient Talmud in the basement of Saddam Hussein’s mukhabarat (secret police) headquarters in Baghdad. Instead of finding the ancient holy book, the soldiers rescued from the basement flooded with several feet of fetid water an invaluable archive of disparate individual and communal documents and books relating to one of the most ancient Jewish communities in the world. The seizure of Jewish cultural materials by the mukhabarat recalled similar looting by the Nazis during World War II. The materials were spirited out of Iraq to the United States with a vague assurance of their return after being restored. Several years after their arrival in the United States for preservation, the Iraqi Jewish Archive has become contested cultural property between Jewish groups and the Iraqi Jewish diaspora on the other hand and Iraqi cultural officials on the other. This article argues that the archive comprises the cultural property and heritage of the Iraqi Jewish diaspora.


The article discusses the legendary Gershwin brothers, who are responsible for many successful Broadway musicals, and the Gershwin collection which is held by the Library of Congress.


The most disturbing thing about the publication of the hoax Holocaust story Angel is the potential damage it does to the publishing industry. The book, authored by Buchenwald survivor Herman Rosenblat and championed by talk show host Oprah Winfrey, has been
dumped by Berkley after a flurry of controversy. The fact that the staff at the company failed at any time to question the truth of the tale is particularly unfortunate in the wake of similar scandals in recent years that have shaken the reading public’s faith in the industry’s capacity as a guarantor of authenticity. At a time when the traditional house model is being challenged from all quarters by digital forces, the economy, and self-publishing, this is unforgivable. Surely it would have been simple enough to declare the story as “based on a true story,” as in the case of the children’s book of the same account.


The article reviews the website Dartmouth Jewish Sound Archive, available at http://djsa.dartmouth.edu, which hosts a digital archive of Jewish sound and music recordings from Dartmouth College.


The article features the “The Ram Granot Bar Mitzvah Book” by Israeli papercut artist Archie Granot, donated to the Library of Congress.


The article provides a description and history of the only dance library in the State of Israel. The library collections cover all fields of dance and movement in Israel and the world and contains approximately 5,000 books in different languages (English, Hebrew, French, Russian, Spanish, Italian, German, Swedish, Danish, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, and Hungarian); 3,000 dance creations on video; journals in different languages dating back to 1926; archives documenting dance and dancers in Israel; international archives that cover dance activities all over the world; and historic costumes, accessories, pictures, albums, and documentations of some of the most famous dancers and dance personalities of the twentieth century.


This article investigates the forms of classification and indexing found in yeshivah libraries in the State of Israel. The research goal was to analyze classification and indexing
systems in these libraries, examine how they evolve, and to compare the yeshiva classification systems used in practice to Jewish studies classification in other classification systems. This study discusses classification systems and the cognitive, philosophical, and administrative processes that lie behind them.


Nearly half a century after it first came into effect, Israel’s legal deposit law has been amended to make its provisions in accordance with and appropriate for the digital age. Other considerations guiding legislators were the necessity to adjust the law in response to laws (particularly Basic Laws) passed since the original deposit law was enacted. This paper traces the legislative history of the law through primary documents and compares it to similar laws passed in other countries over the past decade. It concludes that while the deposit of electronic materials was the primary justification for the new legislation, the legislators failed to craft the language of the new Books Act to reflect this goal. While some elements of the new law are a vast improvement over the older legislation, the Books Act is not suitable for meeting the challenges of preservation and documentation of cultural heritage in electronic formats.


A history of the Judaica library from its modest beginning as a 200-volume synagogue collection to a resource that utilizes three locations (the Temple, the Jewish Community Center, and the West End Synagogue), all maintained by a single librarian.


The article reports that a digital version of Maimonides’s Mishnah Torah has been made available online by the Bodleian Libraries.


The article discusses the various archives and libraries that collectively house archival materials about the Jewish communities of the United Kingdom.

The article discusses Anouk Markovits, author of the novel *I Am Forbidden* and a former member of the Satmar Hasidic community. The article examines the plot of the book, which traces a Jewish family between 1939 and 2012, and looks at how Markovits uses characters to examine issues in religious fundamentalist communities. The article also looks at the importance of literature to Markovits and her decision to write.


Most scholars familiar with the vast holdings that constitute the International Tracing Service (ITS) archives have assumed that these were helpful primarily for the study of the Holocaust and its aftermath in Western and Central Europe. The author of the following study shows that these holdings offer substantial resources for students of Eastern Europe as well. In the first part the author explains why this is so, and in the second part moves on to a case study of a camp that the Romanian occupation maintained at Vapniarka in Transnistria. This case study draws upon other archival sources as well, demonstrating how ITS holdings complement other research resources, adding new dimensions to our understanding of the Holocaust in the East.


The Internet Age can lead to three possible scenarios for school libraries: status quo, change, or obsolescence. This study examines the ramifications of school library websites for the work done by Israeli school libraries and the services they provide. It is based on an analysis of the Internet sites of seventy-eight school libraries in Israel, in-depth interviews with nine librarians in Israel, questionnaires completed by twenty-two librarians in the United States and other countries, and a review of literature on the subject. The findings of the study suggest that school libraries in Israel are in the status quo phase; however, there is a slight move toward the change scenario in which the library will continue to exist but will offer a different mix of services.


The fragments of the Cairo Genizah are spread out in more than seventy libraries and private collections worldwide, and there is an ongoing effort to document and catalog all extant fragments. This article explores three levels of extraction of catalog data from
digital images of the fragments. First, images should be captured in a way that permits standardized automatic processing. Second, the images can be processed to detect elements such as image foreground, regions of written text, and lines of the text, thereby allowing for the automatic assignment of conventional catalog measurements. Third, modern computer-vision tools and statistical inference techniques may be used to identify fragments that might originate from the same original codex. Such matched fragments, commonly referred to as “joins”, were heretofore identified manually by experts, and presumably only a small fraction of existing joins have been discovered to date. The authors present what might be the first effort to address all three levels successfully within a large-scale project, detailing the various design choices and describing the techniques and algorithms used for the Cairo Genizah digitization project.


The article presents a Judaica librarian’s review of the best picture books and illustrated books for older readers that deal with the Holocaust, including recent winners of AJL’s Sydney Taylor Award.


The article discusses the Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide in London, England, focusing on the comments of the library’s learning engagement manager Toby Simpson on how materials archived at the library can be used by librarians preparing for the 2013 Holocaust Memorial Day. Exhibits at the library concerning the escape of Jews to Albania during World War II, propaganda aimed at children in Nazi Germany, and the 1936 Olympic Games sporting competition are mentioned.


Holocaust denial literature has been treated inconsistently in library collections. At one time Holocaust denial literature was classed and subject headings assigned with Holocaust literature. After specific Library of Congress classification numbers and subject headings for Holocaust denial and Holocaust denial literature became available in the 1990s, works of Holocaust denial and Holocaust denial literature became split in library collections, both in online catalogs and on the shelves. A review of the classification and subject treatment for five well-known works of Holocaust denial was conducted in the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) member catalogs. Collocation of material
on the shelves is a popular discovery tool of library users. Works classed together are
assumed to be about the same topic. When works of Holocaust denial are classed with
works about the Jewish Holocaust, it may inadvertently lend them credibility. Librarians
have an ethical duty to reclassify works that have been misidentified in their collections.
Most libraries do not collect heavily in this subject area and it would not create an undue
burden to reclassify and remark these titles. It would provide a valuable service to the
library user.


The article presents information on the exhibition “The Snowy Day and the Art of Ezra
Jack Keats,” at the Jewish Museum in New York City through January 29, 2012, which
features the work of Ezra Jack Keats, author and illustrator of the book *The Snowy Day*.


This paper aims to provide an alternative method of building quality collections for Jew-
ish Studies collection development professionals in small and medium-sized academic
libraries with highly restricted budgets. Awarded books cover a vast variety of subjects
of interest to Jewish Studies collections. Since many of the books are also published by
academic presses, the use of identified Jewish Studies book award sources should be con-
sidered by bibliographers responsible for building Jewish Studies collections in non-sec-
tarian college libraries with very limited budgetary resources. The comprehensive list of
awards, nominated and winning titles, as well as the subject analysis presented herein, is
the first of its kind. This can be used by Jewish Studies bibliographers to build and im-
prove their collections and can also serve as a model for building other interdisciplinary
subject collections.


The article discusses challenges of presenting the Arab-Israeli conflict honestly in chil-
dren’s literature. The author notes that quality of writing is obscured by debate over
whether the author presented the proper point of view. Two books, *A Little Piece of
Ground* by Elizabeth Laird, told from the point of view of a Palestinian child, and *Broken
Bridge* by Lynne Reid Banks, told from an Israeli point of view, are discussed. Laird is
quoted saying the two books should be taught side by side.

The State Archive of Venice and the Marciana Library (Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana) are a veritable treasure house for documenting Jewish life in Venice in past centuries. As result of a recent research visit by Gianfranco Miletto to the former state of the Serenissima, the last will and testament of the famous rabbi and philosopher Shemuel David Luzzatto (Shadal) came to light. In addition to this, Guido Bartolucci discovered the perhaps only extant manuscript of the *Discorso* in the Biblioteca Marciana. It sheds new light on the question of the composition and use of this apologetic piece of writing by the rabbi of Venice. This research note publishes only the documents, enumerating at first the exceptional data contained in both of them, contributing to a better understanding of the biography of Luzzatto. A later publication, English translation and future studies of all the extant documents on Luzzatto’s family will evaluate these texts in a broader biographical context.


The preface to a sixteenth century Hebrew book entitled *Deveḳ ṭov*, a supercommentary on the Pentateuch, includes an apology by the author for not citing all his sources. In his defense, he cites a passage in the Jerusalem Talmud that discusses the obliteration phenomenon. Following the trail of Jewish sayings on the importance of citation leads to a discussion of stealing ideas, i.e., plagiarism. Details of the search process, cataloging issues, incomplete indexes, and descriptions of complex locator systems found in Hebrew texts, concordances, and full-text databases are included. This detective work led to the discovery that *Deveḳ ṭov* was itself obliterated by incorporation into a later commentary on the Pentateuch.