


6-13-2014

Vol. 18 Editor's Note

Rachel Leket-Mor

Arizona State University, rachel.leket-mor@asu.edu

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

Leket-Mor, Rachel. 2014. "Vol. 18 Editor's Note." *Judaica Librarianship* 18: 1-4. doi:10.14263/2330-2976.1065.

Editor's Note

Welcome to Volume 18 of *Judaica Librarianship*. The number eighteen carries a distinctive meaning in Jewish popular culture. Decoded by the Hebrew letters *yod-ḥet* equaling that sum in gematria, then flipped to *ḥet-yod*, it is read as the word *ḥai* (“alive”) that represents wishes for a good, healthy life and a fresh start. This *ḥai* volume of *Judaica Librarianship* indicates indeed a new beginning in the life of AJL’s scholarly journal.

Throughout *Judaica Librarianship*’s thirty years of existence since Bella Hass Weinberg launched it in 1983, the journal has gone continuous evolution. Looking at the printed volumes in my office, a number of format changes are visible. The earliest volumes were printed in one color on glossy paper. Most of these were stapled through the fold, though a few were adhesive bound, as are the later issues. Starting with Volume 7, the paper has a matte finish. The size changed from 8.5" × 11" to 7" × 10" with Volume 12. Volume 12 was also the first issue with multicolor cover. More than just cosmetic makeovers, these format changes reflect shifting standards that expanded readers’ and authors’ expectations and, frankly, creative solutions during times of increasing publishing costs. These changes in turn clearly affected reading habits, as readers had to accustom themselves to hold printed issues of varying widths and numbers of columns. Thus the latest manifestation of this evolutionary process, Volume 18 of *Judaica Librarianship* is published online. Together with the recognizable purple title that inspired its design, our online journal continues the scholarly legacy of this fine publication in yet another new format.

The road from the last printed double issue 16/17, published in early 2012, to this fully online publication was neither easy nor short. There is no protocol for transferring print society journals into the digital realm, or one preferable formula, and finding the best new home for *Judaica Librarianship* necessitated thorough research. The Editorial Board and I examined several possible scenarios and evaluated a number of publishing options, ranging from a full service provided by commercial publishers to downright do-it-yourself publishing platforms run from a server under one’s desk.

At the end of this challenging process we decided to adopt the hosted publishing system of Digital Commons, operated by Bepress. By using this platform, we have full control over *Judaica Librarianship* and at the same time we don’t need to grapple with too many technological hurdles. This publishing system, favored by many library institutional repositories, allows us to share our content with all participants of this network and in addition delivers it to link resolvers and library discovery platforms, such as OCLC (WorldCat), Ex Libris (Primo), ProQuest (Serial Solutions/Summon), and EBSCO Discovery, as well as Google Scholar. Our journal is also included in CrossRef and all articles are assigned Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) to assure their discoverability. Moreover, the content of the journal is preserved in both the CLOCKSS and Portico programs.

Preserving the content of *Judaica Librarianship*'s back issues is of utmost importance, of course. Thanks to Laurel Wolfson of Klau Library, at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio, all print volumes of the journal that were not available in digital format (Vols. 1–10) are now digitized. This immense task necessitated the scanning of hundreds of pages, each article separately; in some cases, that meant scanning the same print page more than once. My heartfelt thanks to Laurel and her team! The next task in this major project is to assign the needed metadata to each of the articles and upload them to the platform. Little by little, I plan to do that in the next few months.

Two back issues are now available online, Volume 16/17 and Volume 15. We decided to make them freely available, or Open Access, and share them with the world. In the ten months since they have been accessible—we launched the online journal August 7, 2013—a staggering number of over 1,300 unique users have accessed our journal and our articles have seen more than 4,200 full-text downloads. This download rate, which is far faster than the circulation of the print issues or the reported downloads from database providers we work with, means that our effect on the international scholarly community is greater than ever before. The Editorial Board, as well as published authors of *Judaica Librarianship*, receive detailed monthly reports on these downloads.

The new volumes of *Judaica Librarianship*, starting with this one, will become Open Access twelve months after publication. Accessing the content of our journal during the first twelve months is one of the benefits of AJL members, since the journal is funded with membership dues. As librarians, many of us believe that information should not be put behind bars. We also know that Open Access does not mean “free”, as publishing incurs costs and is never free. Like many scholarly journals published by professional associations and learned societies—and even more so since our organization is in the field of Library and Information Science—this puts our nonprofit journal, based exclusively on voluntary work, in a hard situation. The Open Access model we chose (“green OA”) is a compromise that preserves the privileged premier access of AJL members while ensuring eventual dissemination of the journal’s content. Separating access to *Judaica Librarianship* from membership benefits will increase our impact on the scholarly world, however dues will still have to be paid in support of AJL activities, including publishing this journal. I encourage members’ feedback to improve our service and cost-effectively increase our impact. I hope that new models of publishing, including those based on libraries and learned societies collaborations, will mature soon enough to help *Judaica Librarianship* thrive in these changing times.

But enough about the *kanġan* and let’s talk about *mah she-yesh bo* (according to Avot 1:4, “don’t look at the container, but rather at what it contains”). Two articles in this volume explore matters of collection development pertinent to our profession. Sheryl Stahl and Joel Kushner’s article, “*Be-tselem Elohim*—In the Image of God: Identifying Essential Jewish LGBTQ Books for Jewish Libraries”, presents a full-scale plan for adding materials related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and questioning topics to Jewish libraries. The article provides a historical overview and a detailed bibliography, the first of its kind for Jewish libraries, with recommended materials

arranged by library type, for both sections of AJL. This bibliography, the authors write, “is only the start of what we hope will be a longer conversation.”

John Drobnicki’s article about views of public librarians on collecting Holocaust denial materials and making them available in public libraries is a follow-up to his 1992 research on the same topic. This empirical research reveals attitude changes that should be noted as we move to a post-survivors era. Coupled with the troubling findings of the 2014 Anti-Defamation League survey (ADL Global 100)¹—among them that “younger people are less likely to believe the historical accounts of the Holocaust”—it seems that the main challenges that librarians face today focus, more than ever, on educating for critical thinking and evaluation of materials, especially since a growing portion of Holocaust denial works are available freely on the Internet.

Dov Winer’s article about the Judaica Europeana project describes the future of the Internet, evolving from a web of documents to a web of “things”. Employing Linked Data technologies to aggregate Jewish content on the Internet, this promising project aims to connect different types of information sources, available from different providers around the world, via vocabularies embedded in their metadata. On a par with the Digital Public Library of America, this European-based project recruited dozens of Jewish libraries, archives, and museums around the world as participating members, led by the European Association of Jewish Culture, the Judaica library of the Goethe University Frankfurt, and the National Library of Israel.

Another European-based undertaking, the union catalog of the European Network of Judaica and Hebraica Libraries, is reviewed in Noémie Musnik’s article. This article outlines the history and challenges involved in establishing this library network, as well as the workflows among its participating institutions of this library network.

The Collections Section of this volume features Andrea Rapp’s article about the Shavzin-Carsch collection of historic Jewish children’s literature. The collection’s books, published as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, mark the very beginning of Jewish American children’s literature. Although some of the collection’s materials are scattered through research libraries, the Shavzin-Carsch Collection at the Isaac M. Wise Temple in Cincinnati, Ohio is the only comprehensive collection of literary and educational materials kept in their original, religious school setting. The missing history of Jewish American children’s literature can now be written thanks to this collection, described in Rapp’s article.

Marvin Heller’s article, “*Unicums*, Fragments, and Other Hebrew Book Rarities”, reminds us that book collections compiled in a scholar’s mind may be as vivid as tangible books shelved on library stacks. The books brought together in this article share one quality—a rarity of edition rather than that of content.

¹ “ADL Global 100”, accessed May 28, 2014, <http://global100.adl.org>.

Last but not least is Steve Bergson’s column, which rounds up studies pertaining to our profession in other publications. I would like to thank Steve for ten years of continued contributions to this useful and illuminating column, as this is his last “Scatter of the Literature”. Thank you, Steve!

My profound gratitude extends to the many who were involved in producing this volume, the first under my editorship: to all the dedicated authors and anonymous reviewers, naturally, and to the copy editors and proofreaders, first and foremost Judy Wolfthal, as well as Dina Herbert and Haim Gottschalk. Your contributions are essential to the success of this journal—please keep them coming! I thank all members of the Editorial Board for their help in many matters, big and small; above all for the involvement of Pearl Berger and Arthur Kiron in the process of transferring *Judaica Librarianship* online. I am grateful to Editorial Board member Jim Rosenbloom who helped me with sifting through submitted reviews. The immediate past Editor-in-Chief Zachary Baker deserves a special thank-you for his thoughtful advice, attentiveness, and years of mentorship. Thank you, Zachary. Additional thanks go to AJL’s Webmaster Nancy Sack and *AJL News and Reviews*’ Graphic Designer Karen Ulric for their help with technology-related issues. I would also like to thank Conservator Beverly Schlee, Collections and Scholarly Communications Officer, Jeanne Richardson and University Librarian Sherrie Schmidt, my colleagues and mentors at Arizona State University Libraries, for their continuing support of my activities as Editor-in-Chief of this journal. Lastly, I thank my family for tolerating me in the last few months; I admit that was not always easy.

Rachel Leket-Mor
Associate Librarian
Arizona State University Libraries
Tempe, AZ
rachel.leket-mor@asu.edu