12-31-2008

Langerman, Shoshana. Miftuaḥ: ʿiyun u-maʿaśeh (Indexing: Theory and Practice). Azor: Tcherikover, 2007.

Bella Hass Weinberg
St. John's University - New York, prof_wberg@yahoo.com

*Vinograd, Yeshayahu (1993). *Otsar ha-sefer ha-'Ivri: reshimat ha-sefarim she-nidpesu be-ot 'Ivrit me-reshit ha-defus ha-'Ivri bi-shenat 229(1469) 'ad shenat 623 [1863] [Thesaurus of the Hebrew Book]*. Jerusalem: ha-Makhon le-bibliyografyah memuḥshevet, 1993. 2 vols. [Now available as a fully-searchable CD-ROM through the year 1948. See vol. 2, pp. 378–406, for the output of books printed in Hebrew letters in Livorno.]

Walfish, Barry Dov (2003). "Karaite Press and Printing," *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources*, ed. by Meira Polliack (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 925–962. [Includes a bibliography of printed Karaite works on pp. 933–958.]

[Yaari, Abraham (1934)]. Bet ha-sefarim ha-le'umi veha-universita'i bi-Yerushalayim. Ḳiryat sefer (Jerusalem) [Supplement]. *Reshimat sifre Ladino ha-nimtsa'im be-Vet ha-sefarim ha-le'umi veha-universita'i bi-Yerushalayim [Catalogue of Ladino Books Held in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem]*. Compiled and introduced by Abraham Yaari . . . [Jerusalem]: ha-Ḥevrah le-hotsa'at sefarim 'al yad ha-Universiṭah ha-'Ivrit, 694 [1934].

Yaari, Abraham (1936–1940). *ha-Defus ha-'Ivri be-artsot ha-mizraḥ [The Hebrew Book in the [Lands of the] East]*. [Jerusalem]: Ḳiryat Sefer; ha-Ḥevrah le-hotsa'at sefarim 'al yad ha-Universiṭah ha-'Ivrit,[1936–40]. 2 vols. [Discusses Hebrew printing in Safed, Damascus, Aleppo, Cairo, Alexandria, Aden, Calcutta, Bombay, Poonah, Cochin, Madras, and Baghdad.]

Yaari, Abraham (1947). [Supplement to *Hebrew Printing in the East*], *Ḳiryat Sefer/ Kirjath Sefer*, vol. 24, no. 1 (July 1947), pp. 65–72.

Zafren, Herbert C. (1971a). "Dyhernfurth and Shabtai Bass: a Typographic Profile," in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History and Literature, in Honor of I. Edward Kiev*, ed. by Charles Berlin (New York: Ktav, 1971), pp. 543–580.

Zafren, Herbert C. (1971b). "More on Dyhernfurth," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, vol. 10 (1971–1972), pp. 62–68.

Zafren, Herbert C. (1977). "Amsterdam, Center of Hebrew Printing in the Seventeenth Century," *Jewish Book Annual*, vol. 35 (1977/1978), pp. 47–55.

Zafren, Herbert C. (1982). "A Probe into Hebrew Printing in Hanau in the 17th Century or, How Quantifiable is Hebrew Typography?" in *Studies in Judaica, Karaitica and Islamica, Presented to Leon Nemoy on His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. by Sheldon Brunswick (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1982), pp. 273–285.

Zafren, Herbert C. (1983a). "The 1678 Siddur and the Siftei Yeshenim: A Methodological Exercise," in *The A. M. Habermann Memorial Volume*, ed. by Zvi Malachi (Lod: Habermann Institute for Literary Research, 1983), pp. 273–287.

Zafren, Herbert C. (1983b). "Variety in the Typography of Yiddish, 1535–1635," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. 53 (1983), pp. 137–163.

Zafren, Herbert C. (1986). "Early Yiddish Typography," *Jewish Book Annual*, vol. 44 (1986–1987), pp. 106–119.

Zafren, Herbert C. (1997). "Hebrew Printing by and for Frankfurt Jews—to 1800," in *Jüdische Kultur in Frankfurt am Main von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart; ein internationales Symposium . . .* hrsg. von Karl E. Grözinger (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997, pp. 231–271).

Reviewed by Bella Hass Weinberg, St. John's University, Queens, NY

SCOPE OF THE BOOK

The work under review is intended to convey concepts of indexing to native speakers of Hebrew. The book includes a Preface in English, but no table of contents in that language. The scope and organization of the book can most efficiently be conveyed through a translation of the Hebrew table of contents:

Chapter 1: Indexing: What is it?
A. Indexing as part of information organization
B. Purposes of indexing
C. The place of indexing in the information system

Chapter 2: The history of indexing in Hebrew books

Chapter 3: Basic concepts of indexing
A. Indexing versus classification
B. Coordination at the indexing stage versus coordination at the searching stage
C. Search techniques in databases

Chapter 4: Various types of indexes

Chapter 5: Languages of indexing (free language vs. controlled language)

Chapter 6: The thesaurus and its structure

Chapter 7: Process of indexing

Chapter 8: Indexing policy

Chapter 9: Evaluation of indexes

Chapter 10: Indexing non-scholarly literature

Chapter 11: Indexing in the Internet

Many chapters have sub-subheadings that are not enumerated in the table of contents. These include rubrics for the special problems of indexing in Hebrew.

INTERESTING POINTS

As one would expect, the book devotes more space to the history of Hebrew indexes than do general textbooks of indexing. I was amazed to learn that the Mif'al ha-Bibliyografyah ha-'Ivrit, despite its lengthy entries, does not record the inclusion of indexes (p. 36). Langerman cites a study of Hebrew book indexing done by librarians with a thesaurus: for nearly a third of the assigned terms, there was no information in the books (p. 135)!

Catalogers will find it interesting that the author disagrees with the Israeli library practice of using *ketiv ḥaser* (the classic defective spelling of Hebrew) for headings (pp. 92–93). The headings (descriptors) in Hebrew thesauri illustrated in the book all feature *ketiv male* (full spelling, in which *matres lectionis* represent vowel points).

QUIBBLES

I consider the information conveyed valid—for the most part. The section on postcoordination (combination of terms at the searching stage) is imbalanced in that only the advantages of this technique are enumerated. I have reviewed the disadvantages (Weinberg, 1995). A later chapter on thesaurus development discusses when terms should be precoordinated (pp. 152–153), but there is no cross reference to it from the earlier chapter. Langerman fails to make the point that precoordination (combination of headings and subheadings) is essential in the print environment (Milstead, 1984, p. 187).

Boolean OR is not explained clearly (p. 63). The complex example is Educational Achievements of High School Students in English and Math. The author alternates between AND and OR in the text, and never states the key application of OR—to link synonyms. The general caution for using the NOT operator (relevant documents may not be retrieved) is not given, either (p. 64).

Bibliographies are not clearly differentiated from indexes: Shunami's *Bibliography of Jewish Bibliographies,* described (p. 87) as an index in book form, is not really an index.

I strongly disagree (Weinberg, 1999) that an index term should be assigned only when a book devotes at least half a page to a topic (p. 74). Many of the figures in *Miftuaḥ* provide poor models of indexing, e.g., with an excessive number of locators after a heading. There are 34 page references for the heading *beḥirah* [choice selection] in figure 6, a sample Hebrew book index, and 40 entries for the heading *zehut Yiśre'elit* [Israeli identity] in figure 7, a sample journal index.

Langerman integrates her own recommendations for formulating Hebrew thesaurus descriptors with those of an international standard for thesauri. She recommends inverting many head-

ings to bring the keyword to the fore, but natural language order is basic to thesauri. Catalogers have no doubt observed that the Library of Congress has "uninverted" many subject headings in recent years, under the influence of the NISO thesaurus standard (1994, p. 13).

A 1984 paper is cited for the problems of searching databases on the Internet. While the Internet—as we now know it—was still quite young (National Academy of Engineering, 2007), the most advanced technology discussed in the cited paper is videotext. Some points in the 1984 paper are germane to the Web, but they do not scale up.

GLOSSARY

The glossary is arranged by Hebrew technical term and gives their English equivalents. The glossary is incomplete, however; among terms that should have been included is *munah movil* [= lead term?] (p. 98). The English equivalents of some terms are given in the text only, e.g., Metadata (p. 238).

An English-to-Hebrew glossary would have been useful for those making a transition from English indexing manuals to this book.

DESIGN OF THE BOOK

The book appears to have been photo-offset from a word-processed original. The information design is poor: page numbers are in the gutter margin, which makes proceeding from the index to the text cumbersome. There are no running headers or footers. These paratextual features are found in thirteenth-century manuscript books (Avrin, 1991, p. 221). Running heads enhance browsability, e.g., when chapter titles are given. A running head for the title of a book facilitates its identification and citation when one is dealing with a photocopy of a page or chapter from a book.

The sequence of reference matter is non-standard. A list of illustrations belongs at the front of a book, after the table of contents. Furthermore, this list in *Miftuah* gives figure numbers only, and so it takes time to hunt for the page of a given figure. A bibliography should be placed right before the index, especially in a book with author-date references.

Hebrew search terms and name headings (p. 93) are not typographically differentiated from the running text. The text of *Miftuah* is set in a modern italic font, while the summaries at the end of chapters are set in an old-fashioned square font on a grey background. This combination of fonts is not to my taste.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

As not much has been published about indexing in the Hebrew language, that component of the bibliography is small, but I assume complete. I was pleased to learn of a new history of the Hebrew book that deals with indexes (p. 36).

The English-language section of the bibliography is incomplete in that it does not include all the works cited in footnotes. At first it seems that only classification schemes, such as the Universal Decimal Classification, are omitted from the bibliography, but important articles, such as Hans Wellisch's history of Hebrew concordances (cited on p. 38) and the description of *Hebrew Subject Headings* published in *Judaica Librarianship* (cited on p. 266), are missing as well. It would have been useful to include in the bibliography URLs for the websites cited in the text.

Several of the references do not cite the latest edition of a work—information that is easy to get from Web catalogs. There is, for example, a second edition of Wellisch's encyclopedia of indexing (1996)—although in some ways I prefer the first (the second edition is marred by frequent references to a draft NISO standard for indexes that was not approved). Langerman cites only an international standard for thesauri, published in 1985; the NISO standard issued in 1994 has been highly influential internationally.

Miftuah reproduces a page from the 1984 edition of *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors*, with no reference to the latest print edition (Educational Resources Information Center, 2001) or the online version, despite the book's frequent examples from the field of education.

Errors in the bibliographic references are discussed in the following section.

ERRATA

The Hebrew text has hardly any errors, just about a dozen missing or superfluous letters and transpositions (mainly in derivatives of *mafteah!*). The relatively small English-language components of the book are, however, marred by numerous typographical errors, notably "Pratice" on the English title page. There are incorrect page numbers in references to figures (e.g., p. 132), and many mismatches between the author-date references in the text and the corresponding forms in the bibliography, e.g. "Lacaster" (p. 25) for Lancaster. My surname is Weinberg in the bibliography, but *Vainberg-Has* in the Hebrew text (p. 38). Incorrect

prepositions are given in several corporate names, e.g., Institute "of" Scientific Information ("for" is correct), which can affect searching. The publisher Kluwer is garbled as "Kulwer" (p. 244). Cities of publication are misspelled, e.g., "Bathesda" (p. 251); "Betesda" (p. 270).

Accuracy is so important in cataloging, bibliography, and indexing.

THE INDEX

The index to *Miftuaḥ* is set in one column per page and takes up only two-and-a-half pages. Obviously not an exhaustive index, it does not cover the cited authors in the book, although the importance of citation indexing is discussed.

It is considered good practice to have *double-posting* in book indexes, i.e., to provide page references for synonymous headings that have only one locator, rather than a cross reference to the preferred term (Wellisch, 1996, p. 151). That feature, which saves the time of the user, is lacking in this index.

LANGUAGE

The verso of the title page indicates that the Hebrew text was reviewed by an editor; it reads beautifully. Not so the English preface, which includes awkward expressions such as "indexing ways."

The book should be read by Judaica librarians in countries other than Israel who want to master the Hebrew vocabulary of library-information science.

CONCLUSION

This is a necessary book for Israeli students of library-information science. It is not a how-to manual of database indexing—and certainly not of book indexing—but a useful introduction to infor-

mation science concepts for native speakers of Hebrew. Libraries that collect technical literature in Hebrew will want to order this book.

I hope the second edition will be carefully proofread, and have an up-to-date bibliography, complete glossary, and exhaustive index, as well as better graphic design.

SOURCES

Avrin, Leila. (1991) *Scribes, Script, and Books: The Book Arts from Antiquity to the Renaissance.* Chicago: American Library Association, 1991.

Educational Resources Information Center (U.S.) (2001) *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors.* 14th ed. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 2001. Online edition: http://eric.ed.gov (accessed September, 17, 2007).

Milstead, Jessica L. (1984). *Subject Access Systems: Alternatives in Design.* Orlando: Academic Press, 1984.

National Academy of Engineering (2007). *Internet Timeline:* http://www.greatachievements.org/?id=2984 (accessed October 29, 2007).

National Information Standards Organization (1994). *Guidelines for the Construction, Format, and Management of Monolingual Thesauri* (Z39.19–1993). Bethesda: NISO Press, 1994. [A 2005 edition, with a different title, can be downloaded from www.niso.org/standards/.]

Weinberg, Bella Hass. (1995). "Why Postcoordination Fails the Searcher," *The Indexer,* vol. 19, no. 3 (1995), pp. 155–159.

Weinberg, Bella Hass. (1999). "Exhaustivity of Indexes: Books, Journals and Electronic Full Text," *Key Words,* vol. 7, no. 5 (1999), pp. [1], 6–19.

Wellisch, Hans H. (1996). *Indexing from A to Z.* 2nd ed. New York: H. W. Wilson, 1996.