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## Vol. 13 Editor's Note

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# Editor's Note

## “NOS ANCÊTRES LES GAULOIS”

For generations this textbook phrase connected schoolchildren in France to their putative forebears, the ancient Gauls, a Celtic people that was conquered by Julius Caesar's Roman legions. The phrase reminded young Frenchmen and women of their nation's glorious history, whose origins can be traced back through the millennia to a prehistoric era shrouded in the mists of time. It would be difficult to understate the powerful hold that the ancient Gallic heritage has maintained on the popular imagination in France. Indeed, the mythologizing of this heritage has provided rich fodder for *Astérix et Obélix*—that series of humorous comic books beloved of young and old alike.

What, you might well ask, prompts these seemingly fanciful editorial musings? A glance at the contents of volume 13 of *Judaica Librarianship* suggests an answer. No, the authors of the articles and reviews included here are by no means engaged in mythmaking. Rather, through painstaking research and close analysis they reveal the valiant efforts of generations of bibliographers—our “ancestors”—to erect a stable and usable structure for the documentation and study of the Hebrew and Jewish book.

Thus, in “Johann Heinrich Hottinger and the Systematic Organization of Jewish Literature” Seth Jerchow and Heidi G. Lerner document the pioneering attempt by a seventeenth-century Swiss—and Christian—scholar to impose order on the seeming chaos of *Judaica* and *Hebraica*. Fast-forward to Roger S. Kohn's article, “Creating a National Bibliographic Past: The Institute for Hebrew Bibliography,” which underscores the goals and limitations of the latest, and most comprehensive project to list imprints in the Hebrew alphabet.

The reviews in this volume complement these historical–bibliographical essays. The recently published *Catalogue of Hebrew Incunabula from the Collection of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, by Shimon Iakerson, is reviewed by Barry Dov Walfish; Yosef Goldman's exhaustive bibliography of *Hebrew Printing in America, 1735–1926* is reviewed by Arthur Kiron; and the final volume in the unfinished Jewish Research Literature series by the late Shimeon Brisman, *A History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances*, is reviewed by Roger S. Kohn. The volume concludes with “Scatter of the Literature,” a survey of recent articles of relevance to *Judaica* librarianship, compiled by Steven M. Bergson.

If there is a moral to the story, it is that our work as librarians, bibliographers, and archivists rests upon a solid foundation that has been many centuries in the making.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The editorial board of *Judaica Librarianship* includes representatives from the Research Libraries, Archives, and Special Collections Division (RAS), and its Synagogue, School, and Center Libraries (SSC) Divisions of the Association of Jewish Libraries. For four decades the first of these divisions bore the name Research and Special Libraries—and the abbreviation R&S. At the forty-first annual convention (Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 2006), members of R&S voted to change the division's name so as to reflect the fact that its constituency includes both librarians and archivists. The hope, moreover, is that the name-change will encourage archivists to participate in the Association's regional and national gatherings, as well as in its publications.

*JL* is AJL's peer-reviewed journal. As its editor, *my* hope is that its contents will reflect the research concerns of the Association as a whole. I look forward to receiving your feedback regarding the current issue . . . and to receiving your submissions to future issues.

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