

12-31-2006

Vol. 12 Editor's Note

Zachary M. Baker

Stanford University, zbaker@stanford.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://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

Baker, Zachary M.. 2006. "Vol. 12 Editor's Note." *Judaica Librarianship* 12: v-viii. doi:10.14263/2330-2976.1097.

Editor's Note

BEGINNINGS, OLD AND NEW

As I write, I am looking at the very first issue of *Judaica Librarianship*. Dated Fall 1983–5744, volume 1, number 1 is 44 pages in length and is printed on glossy paper stock. In the center of the stark, white-on-black cover, is a photograph showing a Hebrew catalog card that is superimposed onto the screen of a Zenith Data Systems computer monitor. The cover illustration directs the reader to “Hebrew Cataloging at Hebrew Union College on an Apple II+,” an article co-authored by David J. Gilner, Ellen Siegel Kovacic, and Herbert C. Zafren.

Contributions such as theirs placed *Judaica librarianship* (lower-case) on the map of library and information science, thereby staking *JL*'s claim as the flagship journal for our burgeoning field. The credit for that signal achievement goes to those who write for the journal, to be sure, but above all it is due to its visionary founders, Dr. Bella Hass Weinberg and Dr. Marcia W. Posner.

In her inaugural editorial column, “In the Beginning,” Bella Hass Weinberg pointed to the following factors as justifying the need for a journal such as *JL*:

- ◇ the increasing professionalization of the field;
- ◇ the increasing complexity of librarianship;
- ◇ the increasing interdependence of libraries; and
- ◇ the internationalization of the field.

An additional factor—not mentioned, but implicit in this journal's very first cover story—is the constantly changing technological environment in which libraries and librarians operate. The ongoing revolution in information retrieval and delivery helps to explain why the traditional library has had its doom foretold by more than one techno-seer.

The present issue of *JL* represents a new beginning of sorts. Regular readers are doubtless aware that this journal has not always appeared as punctually as originally envisaged. From a semi-annual publication, *JL* evolved into an annual (in all but name), a biennial, and most recently, an irregular publication. That is one of the occupational hazards of running an all-volunteer editorial operation, which *JL* continues to be. Our present objective is to publish the journal *annually*, and we will do our best to ensure that issues appear in a timely fashion.

One element of the present issue is genuinely new, and that is its *look*. The redesign was carried out in consultation with the expert staff of G&H Soho, in

Hoboken, NJ. That firm specializes in graphic arts services, and has produced an array of handsome books and journals of both a general and Jewish character.

MAINTAINING A BALANCED MIX OF ARTICLES AND REVIEWS

JL's publisher, the Association of Jewish Libraries, is an amalgam, with its two divisions—for School, Special, and Community Center Libraries (SSC), and Research and Special Libraries (R&S)—happily collaborating on many fronts. For evidence of the remarkable synergy that results from this partnership one need only leaf through the latest issue of the *AJL Newsletter*, read the constant flow of messages on AJL's Ha-Safran listserv, visit the AJL Convention Proceedings Web page on the AJL website, or attend one of the Association's annual conventions. Relatively small in numbers (just over 1,000 individual and institutional members), AJL is an organization that is truly greater than the sum of its parts. Contributions in each issue of *JL* address a diversity of topics, in the hope that the journal will appeal to the broadest spectrum of AJL's constituency.

In the present issue we have sought to maintain the traditional balance of articles, so that each and every one of our readers will find something of interest. Volume 12 contains substantial contributions to library history by Faith Jones and the late Myron M. Weinstein. Using the recent 350th-anniversary celebrations as a springboard, Pearl Berger offers a report on the present state of the Judaica library and archival field in the United States, along with a wish list for the future. Cheryl Banks, Ellen Cole, Lisa Silverman, and Linda Silver offer their expert guidelines "on the special elements that contribute to excellence in the Jewish content of books for children and teens." Shoshana Langerman reports on a fascinating experiment in extending public library service—and training in librarianship—to the under-served population of *Haredim* in Jerusalem. The issue also includes expertly reviews written by Arthur Kiron and Roger S. Kohn, along with the "Scatter of the Literature" column by Steven M. Bergson. Finally, we have included a special section to commemorate two notable colleagues who, sadly, are no longer with us—Shimeon Brisman and Herbert C. Zafren.

REMEMBRANCES

I wish to add my personal recollections of these and other distinguished Judaica library leaders whom we have lost during the past few years.

- ◇ Though modest in demeanor, Mae Weine cast a long shadow on the profession through the Weine classification system that she devised for small, specialized Judaica libraries. Mae, who was one of AJL's founders and past presidents, passed away in 2004. Hers was an enduring presence in the profession.

- ◇ Over a span of more than five decades, Herbert Zafren (who died in the summer of 2005) was one of our guiding spirits. Like Mae Weine, he was a founder and past president of our Association. This issue of *JL* includes eulogies by several of his AJL and HUC–JIR colleagues. Evidence of his lifelong commitment to Judaica librarianship is expressed in an appeal that he sent to the Jewish Institute of Religion back in 1944 (while he was still in his teens), on behalf of the Hapoel Hamizrachi Library in Baltimore. Herb's letter is reproduced on page 15, courtesy of Philip E. Miller, head of the Klau Library in New York.
- ◇ The three volumes in Shimeon Brisman's *Jewish Research Literature* series stand among the greatest bibliographical achievements in the entire realm of Judaica and Hebraica. Brisman's successor as Jewish Studies bibliographer at the University of California–Los Angeles (UCLA), David Hirsch, offers his tribute to this peerless scholar-librarian, who died in 2004.
- ◇ Rosalie Katchen was a mentor to an entire cohort of Hebraica catalogers, both through her pioneering contributions to cataloging in the online era and in her pivotal role as coordinator of the Hebraica names authority (Heb–NACO) funnel project. All those who knew Rosalie felt acutely the untimely loss, in 2000, of this extraordinarily knowledgeable and gracious individual.

Finally, a few words about the late Myron M. Weinstein (1927–1998) and his article, “The First Deinard Collection at the Library of Congress”: Shortly after I became editor, my immediate predecessor (and editor of volume 11), Linda P. Lerman, sent me a box containing her editorial files. As I plowed through them I came across Myron's manuscript. An exhaustively researched labor of love, his article brings to life an array of well-known historical personages—Cyrus Adler, Jacob Schiff, and the cantankerous Ephraim Deinard among them. Each of these gentlemen played an essential role in transforming the Nation's Library—the Library of Congress, that is—into an incomparable repository of Hebraica.

For many years Myron worked alongside the legendary head of LC's Hebraic Section, the late Dr. Lawrence Marwick. This shy, deeply erudite, and somewhat reclusive individual succeeded “L” in 1980 and served as head of the Hebraic Section until 1984, when he retired. (Dr. Michael Grunberger was appointed to that post in 1985.) “The First Deinard Collection at the Library of Congress” is a vivid and evocative saga of a Heroic Age in library collection building.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many capable hands went into the making of this issue.

First of all, a tip of the proverbial hat to all of those whose contributions appear here and to the anonymous referees (you know who you are!) who offered their

expert comments regarding the authors' manuscripts. I would like to thank all of the members of the editorial board, and especially Barry Walfish and Anne Dublin, the associate editors for R&S and SSC, for their regular feedback and encouragement. AJL's current president, Ronda Rose, and immediate past president, Pearl Berger, have been unstinting in their support for *Judaica Librarianship*. My immediate predecessor, Linda Lerman, and her co-editor, Leah Adler, were generous with their time and suggestions. *Ve-aḥaron aḥaron ḥaviv*, I wish to thank the founders of this journal, Marcia Posner and Bella Hass Weinberg. Bella in particular has been a mentor and a close colleague for the past three decades, and I never fail to be impressed by the breadth and depth of her expertise in the realms of both *Judaica* and librarianship.

Zachary M. Baker
*Reinhard Family Curator of Judaica
and Hebraica Collections
Stanford University Libraries*