

The First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians: Background and Organization

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"טובים השנים מן-האחד... והחוט המשלש לא במהרה
ינתק" (קהלת ד': ט', י"ב)

*Two are better than one... A threefold
cord is not readily broken.* (Ecclesiastes
4:9,12)

No idea comes *yesh me-ayin* (ex nihilo) and good ones are built upon each other, adding to them and improving them until there is a solid foundation. So it was with the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians. Manne Aronovsky, as convention coordinator in 1986, suggested that the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) celebrate its 25th anniversary in Israel, and Edith Lubetski, as President of AJL (1986-1988), proposed that the convention include Israeli as well as Judaica librarians worldwide. Bella Weinberg later suggested that AJL publish the papers in *Judaica Librarianship*. The latter proposal completed the *hut ha-meshulash* (threefold cord), to give the idea its permanence. And thus, the first fruits of years of labor are herein presented.

Planning

As in all significant achievements, the road to success was not easy. In the summer of 1986, Edith Lubetski contacted Esther Amiel, then president of the Israel Society of Special Libraries and Information Centers, to explore the possibilities of a joint effort. Ms. Amiel provided invaluable assistance in directing Edith to key individuals who would be of help. Edith Lubetski met with a number of key Israeli librarians in 1986 and 1987, and invited the following organizations to join in sponsoring the conference: Israel Society of Special Libraries and Information Centers, Israel Library Association, Hebrew University, Israel Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Association of Libraries of Judaica and Hebraica in Europe. All except the latter accepted immediately. Later, the

Center for Public Libraries (Israel) and Hebraica Libraries Group of Great Britain and Ireland joined.

Amnon Zipin was appointed cochair of the conference in December 1987. In the summer of 1988, Edith Lubetski arranged for a meeting of representatives from the above groups, and invited a few other leading Israeli librarians. She left Israel on August 8, and on August 9 Amnon Zipin met with the representatives of the Israel Library Association; Israel Ministry of Education and Culture, Cultural Administration of Libraries Department; Israel Society of Special Libraries and Information Centers; Jewish National and University Library; and other active Israeli librarians. A conference committee, with Amnon Zipin as chair, was then formed and planning began in earnest.

Amnon spent the rest of that summer in Israel trying to contract the services of a professional congress organizer. After meeting with several organizers and studying their bids, the conference committee decided to award the contract to Dan Kenassim, which then had the responsibility of arranging rooms, equipment, the printing of programs, and registration. The appointment of Dan Kenassim to handle conference logistics allowed more time to be devoted to programming by the librarians. The name of the conference was an issue, but in order to be inclusive of non-Judaica Israeli librarians, it was called the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians.

Programming

It was decided to provide three parallel tracks. The Israel Society of Special Libraries and Information Centers would run its own program. The other two tracks more closely paralleled the R&S (Research and Special Libraries) and

SSC (Synagogue, School, and Center) Divisions of AJL.

The SSC program was in the hands of Tili Raviv and other Israelis, while Marion Stein worked on SSC programming for AJL. Program suggestions were sent by mail to Israel. Communication was infrequent and beset by difficulties of language, as well as programming orientation.

One of the problems of the SSC participants in the conference was simultaneous translation, which was inadequate at times and nonexistent for the storytelling component. Further, there were insufficient opportunities to socialize. Besides the language barrier, there were only about fifty SSC librarians to mingle with six hundred Israeli counterparts.

Shortly after Amnon Zipin's appointment as cochair in 1987, he started both defining his responsibilities and devising a way to organize a successful program for the R&S section. As much as he tried to narrow the definition of his job to planning the program and speakers, it became evident very early on that he would also have to assume part of the overall organizational duties. He was in communication almost daily with Yaacov Aronson (Bar Ilan University), who facilitated communication with Israeli colleagues.

Although Amnon received input from the AJL committee and worked together with Israeli colleagues, he assumed final responsibility for all R&S programming. In an early planning stage, it was decided to take advantage of the high Israeli presence and to call upon the expert Judaica librarians there to be speakers in the R&S section. As you will read in the following pages, AJL was most enriched by that decision. The R&S program received rave reviews from AJL members, as well as others who attended the conference.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF JUDAICA AND ISRAELI LIBRARIANS

Editor's Note: The special section of this issue devoted to the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians contains seven papers presented in the "Judaica Research Libraries" track of the conference. Papers from the First International Symposium on Jewish Children's Literature are scheduled to be published in the forthcoming issue.

To put the seven papers in context, we have excerpted from the Conference Program information on all of the sessions in the research track. Abstracts - in Hebrew or English - of the majority of papers were included in the program, which was distributed to registrants. Bracketed notes within the listing below indicate which papers are represented in this issue.

The First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians

Program:

Judaica Research Libraries and AJL-R&S

[Association of Jewish Libraries – Research & Special Libraries Division]

LUBETSKI and ZIPIN (Continued)

All R&S programs were held in one room, with an average of 150 attendees. There was excellent interaction between R&S members and Israelis, as well as registrants from other countries. It did help that many R&S members speak Hebrew and had been acquainted with some of their counterparts in Israel before the conference. The conference generated great excitement about possibilities of shared projects and ongoing cooperation. Contacts were made, friendships forged, and a direction established. We look forward to the continuity and strengthening of those ties.

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Tuesday, July 3, 1990

- 08:00-08:45 - *Chairwoman:* Libby Kahane, Jewish National and University Library
The Index of Jewish Art
Ruth Jacoby, Hebrew University
- 08:45-09:30 - *Chairman:* Yitzhak Yudelov, Jewish National and University Library
Israeli Indexes to Hebrew Periodicals
Michael Rigler, Jewish National and University Library
- 10:30
Opening Ceremony
Chairman: Dr. Dan Ronen, Director, Division of Culture and Arts,
Ministry of Education and Culture
Guest of Honor: Zevulun Hammer, Minister of Education and
Culture
Greetings: Prof. Malachi Beit Arie, Director, Jewish National and
University Library
Keynote Speaker: Prof. Ezra Fleisher, Chairman, World Union of
Jewish Studies - "Sefer, Sofer, Safran" (Book, Author and
Librarian) In a Technological Age. [Published as a pamphlet.
Summary by Donna Kutnick in this issue.]
- 14:00-15:30 - *Chairman:* Zion Shorer, Jewish National and University Library
Judaica Cataloging: The Hebrew Bibliographic and Israeli Traditions
[Full paper in this issue.]
Elhanan Adler, University of Haifa Library.
Judaica and Hebraica Cataloging: Anglo-American Traditions
[Full paper in this issue.]
Prof. Bella Hass Weinberg, St. John's University, USA
- 16:00-17:30 - *Chairwoman:* Linda Lerman, Yale University, USA
Acquiring Privately Printed Hebrew Rabbinic Literature
Meir Wunder, Jewish National and University Library
Non-Traditional Judaic Research Collections
Dr. Michael W. Grunberger, Library of Congress, USA

Wednesday, July 4, 1990

- 08:00-09:30 - *Chairman:* Dr. Herbert Zafren, Hebrew Union College, USA
*The Codicological Data-Base of the Hebrew Palaeographical Project
as a Tool for Palaeographical Typology and Identification*
Prof. Malachi Beit Arie, Jewish National and University Library