

*Editor's Note: The following paper was not delivered at the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians, but it describes a tour of Judaica libraries in Israel taken in conjunction with that conference. It is therefore being included in this special section. — B.H.W.*

## A Bibliographic Pilgrimage to Jerusalem\*

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In June-July of 1990 I spent three weeks in Jerusalem, in order to attend the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians, and to visit libraries in Israel. Official leave and additional support were granted by the British Library for part of my stay.

Although it was my first visit to the Holy Land, I spent nearly all my time in Jerusalem, an ancient city which is today the greatest repository of Hebrew and Jewish books in the world. From the very moment I arrived I was engulfed in bibliography. At the airport I was met by Dr. Hagit Matras, a folklorist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who kindly lodged me at her family villa not far from the University. On the first evening, Dr. Matras shared with me the computerized fruit of her extensive bibliographic research: a stemma of the medieval and later Hebrew genre known as *segulot u-refuot* ("charms and cures"). This is an arcane area of Hebrew booklore which I have followed with some interest and involvement (bibliographically, not medically) over the years.

The conference to which I had been invited, the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians, opened with a reception at the Jewish National and University Library (JNUL), on the campus of the Hebrew University. The conference itself was held not far from the campus, and librarians from Europe, North America, and Israel were in attendance. Papers were given by librarians, curators, academic bibliographers, automation and

information scientists, as well as by figures in Israeli cultural and educational life. The subjects of these papers were diverse, and catered to a variety of interests within the spectrum of Hebraica, Judaica, and Israeli librarianship.

### Conference Papers of Interest to Hebraica Bibliographers

Of manuscript interest was "The Codicological Database of the Hebrew Paleographical Project as a Tool for Paleographical Typology and Identification," given by Dr. Malachi Beit-Arié, Director of the JNUL, who will be delivering the Panizzi Lectures at the British Library in 1992. This paper was coupled with one on "Cataloging Hebrew Manuscripts at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts," given by Mr. Benjamin Richler, director of the Institute. Of particular interest to students of printing was the fundamentally important study presented by Dr. Mordechai Glatzer, "The Beginning of Hebrew Printing: Rome or Mantua?" Dr. Glatzer demonstrated convincingly, on the basis of both typographic and nontypographic evidence, that Hebrew printing began in Mantua and *not* in Rome. (I was able to share this information immediately with my other Jerusalem host, Mr. David Waiman, an amateur bibliographer who had just prepared a catalog of his family's collection of Hebrew incunables, containing some of the Mantuan and Roman imprints.)

Far more controversy was generated by the session on preservation microfilming of books and periodicals, where divergent approaches - and interest groups - were in evidence. Of no less interest were papers on privately printed rabbinica, the Hebrew Bibliography Project, specialized Judaica collections, and Israeli yeshiva (seminary) libraries, given by Meir Wunder and Dr. Jonathan



**H.J.D. Azulai, *Seder Avodat ha-kodesh* (Jerusalem, 1841), the first Hebrew book printed in the Holy City. *BL* 1977. c. 5**

Joel of the National Library, by Dr. Michael Grunberger, head of the Hebraic Section at the Library of Congress, and by Yaakov Aronson, director of the Bar-Ilan University Library, respectively. Lastly, I should also mention the historical-theoretical papers on Hebraica and Judaica cataloging prepared by Dr. Elhanan Adler of the University of Haifa Library, and by Dr. Bella Hass Weinberg, a distinguished American professor of librarianship associated with the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York.

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The closing session, which I chaired, included papers by two leading historians of the Hebrew book, both based at Bar-Ilan University (in Ramat-Gan, near Tel-Aviv). Dr. Zipora Baruchson, head of the program in library and information science, spoke on "Private Jewish Libraries of the Renaissance," studying data provided by book-lists prepared as a result of censorship in Mantua ca. 1600. These lists led to the rediscovery of not a few otherwise unrecorded early Hebrew imprints. Dr. Sara Frankel, head of the rare book department of the university library, described her own adventures in "The Far-Reaching Search for Rare Books: Hebrew Printing on the Island of Djerba."

### Meetings with Hebraica Bibliographers

The conference gave the participants an opportunity to meet colleagues from around the world, and to discuss mutual interests and concerns. I met distinguished figures in the world of Hebrew bibliography and booklore, enabling me henceforth to associate faces with title-pages of bibliographies I have known for years. There were some new names as well, such as E. Marziano, whom I met at the closing session. His recently published *Bené Melakhim* surveys the history of Hebrew books in Morocco, where Jews at Fez first introduced typography in Africa early in the 16th century. In some cases I can now associate faces with libraries, not least of them being that of Mrs. Jaffa Baruch, keeper of the Ets Haim seminary library in Amsterdam. The plenary evening banquet on 3 July, attended by some 1,000 guests, was surely the largest gathering of Hebraica-Judaica librarians in history. The conference also permitted foreigners to meet the principal Israeli book dealers, among them several suppliers of the British Library.

### Treasures of the JNUL

Much of my time, both before and after the conference, was spent at the JNUL, where I visited nearly every department and special collection. Many librarians extended their courtesies to me; but in particular I must acknowledge the consideration of Dr. Beit-Arié, in whose codicological files I found valuable studies of paper, and the generosity with time of Mr. Isaac Yudlov, the leading Hebrew bibliographer, whose catalog of the

Mehlman collection at the National Library (1984) is one of the greatest achievements of Hebrew rare book bibliography. Mr. Yudlov shared with me his extensive notes on numerous bibliophilic editions and other rarities in the Library's collections. Thanks to him, I saw not one but two copies of a Passover Haggadah printed on orange-painted paper at Prague in 1713. I am not ashamed to say that in every corner of the National Library I discovered bibliographies and reference literature unknown to me. Among these was a typescript catalog entitled *Treasures from the Library Ets Haim/Livraria Montezinos of the Portuguese Israelitisch Seminarium Ets Haim, Amsterdam*, which, as I learned, was prepared anonymously by Mr. Yudlov.

A special treat was my visit to the Hebrew Bibliography Project, directed by a native of Jerusalem, Mr. Baruch Mordechai Cohen. Launched and largely carried out before the age of automation, the Project aims to record every Hebrew printed book from the incunabular period to 1960: its card files - which have been microfilmed - are massive. The Project is now approaching completion; only the horribly complex sections on Bible, Liturgy, and Talmud remain to be done.

Of the large bibliographic-reference collections in the building of the National Library, the most impressive is the one in the main reading room for Jewish and oriental studies, equally divided between Hebrew and Arabic/Islamic literature. Not surprisingly, I reacquainted myself here with long-forgotten tools, but will always associate this reading room particularly with a volume called to my attention by the Austrian-born superintendent, Mr. Riegler. The volume is Wachstein's *Die Hebräische Publizistik in Wien* (Vienna, 1930), which had never previously passed through my hands. After using it in Jerusalem, I now suggest it, confidentially, to researchers in London.

Across from this reading room is another reading room, the newest in the library, where the private library of the late Gershom Scholem is housed. Professor Scholem, the German-born Jewish intellectual historian and bibliographer of Kabbalah, was intimately associated with the National Library from his arrival in Palestine in 1923. The Scholem Library, which now serves as the rare book read-

ing room of the National Library, is a small oasis of warmth, brightness, and tranquillity. Here I found not only all of Scholem's own publications in the field of Jewish mysticism, but also the full range of dealers' and sales catalogs of which he made use (though not his own marked Poppelauer catalogs from Berlin, acquired by the British Library and described by the late Dr. Goldstein in the *British Library Journal* in 1981).

Another treasure house of bibliography, and a place of pilgrimage for manuscript researchers from around the world, is the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts. Here are to be found films of virtually all the Hebrew manuscripts preserved in the western world, including most of those at the British Library, and a vast array of catalogs. Moreover, scholars at this Institute have themselves cataloged many of the foreign collections; for example, the catalog prepared by Drs. Allony and Löwinger is the most important guide - albeit in Hebrew - to the Gaster collection at the British Library. The Institute's huge card catalog includes a valuable subject classification, and an equally valuable linguistic classification: special sections on the various languages written in Hebrew script, including Yiddish, Judezmo, Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Persian, Judeo-Greek, Karaite Tatar, etc., as well as Samaritan. This catalog was recently reproduced on microfiche by Chadwyck-Healey in Paris, and this fiche version is now in constant use in the Oriental Reading Room of the British Library. The director of the Institute, Mr. Benjamin Richler, was most helpful, and kindly offered me a copy of his newly-published introduction to the field, *Hebrew Manuscripts: A Treasured Legacy*. I also acquired a copy of the Institute's recent *Catalogue de la collection Jack Mosseri*, describing a famous collection assembled in Egypt early in this century.

The National Library's Department of Manuscripts, adjacent to the Institute, houses one of the world's great collections of Hebrew manuscripts. Here I first sifted through the archives of S. Poznanski (1864-1921), the Polish historian and bibliographer of Karaism, where I found the Hebrew typescript of his *Bené Mikra*, a biobibliographic lexicon of Karaite literature, and also an exhaustive list of Karaite personal names recorded through the ages, with

אוהב ה' שערי ציון מכל משכנות יעקב

ספר

הבת ירושלם

המאיר לארץ ולדורים • לחשביע מלא כף נתת בלבות  
ישראלים • מסוב הארץ וירושלם ת'ו' במשדים  
אשר יסודתו בהרדי קדש בספרדים • ואסף איש מהור ולקט  
באמרים • מפי ספרים ומפדים • ובשם אמרו נאמרים • ער  
קדש וכפדים • ושכונת קברות יקדים • זכותם יגן לדור הדורים

תחת פתגמת אדונינו המלך האדיר הסוד שולמן עברול  
מאגיד יר"ם •

נרפס על תכשט הדטס ומשחת משה ויהודית סי"ז :

ע"י רב המדעים תכס עדיף ומ'כנו"ם ישראל בהרב הסוד ומכר"ד  
אברהם זלל"ה :

פה עה"ק ירושלם תובב"א

מרום מראשון מקום מקדשינו



סגת ובירושלם תמוצו לפ"ק :

הגזל טבאט לא לוג טבאט סקמולו טבט " לטו

ירושלם ירושלם ירושלם ירושלם ירושלם ירושלם ירושלם ירושלם ירושלם ירושלם

מה ידירות משכנותיה " צבאות נכספה וגם כלתה נפשי להצרות "

Hayim Horowitz, *Hibat Yerushalem* (Jerusalem, 1844). BL 1938. c. 7

occasional indication of dates, compiled on slips of paper of various sizes. I also saw Poznanski's handwritten location list of Karaite manuscripts, arranged according to library, including six full pages devoted to the holdings of the British Library.

The other archive which I worked through, and for which there is unfortunately no finding aid, was that of the

Galician-born Hebrew bibliographer A. Yaari (1899-1966). Yaari was perhaps Israel's greatest bibliographer, producing numerous studies and pioneering bibliographies of Hebrew printing in the oriental lands and in Constantinople, and of editions of the Passover Haggadah. In addition to a complete set of his newspaper articles, I found his massive catalog of Jewish women printers, and various notes towards other

unpublished studies, most notably a bibliography of Hebrew printing in Salonika. Yaari was intrigued by the exotic and weird corners of Hebrew bibliography: among the numerous envelopes devoted to curious subjects was one marked "Hebrew books that have been eaten" (on a literary passage describing a famine in which books were consumed).

The Department's collections are not confined exclusively to Hebraica. I was especially interested to examine the celebrated archive of the Galician-born Yiddish writer Melech Ravitch, the most cosmopolitan of 20th-century writers in this language, who lived on all continents and spent his last years in Montreal. Apart from translating Kafka and writing numerous literary works, Ravitch produced a multivolume personal lexicon of Yiddish writers, artists, and cultural figures. His immense archive has been ably indexed by a Yiddish specialist, who showed me the large card file which is near completion. Lastly, I made the acquaintance of the learned Arabist, Mr. Ephraim Wust, who is currently preparing - in Arabic - the catalog of Arabic manuscripts held in the National Library.

The director and staff of the Manuscript Department were all most helpful, but in particular I must mention the Hasidic bibliographer Y. Mondshine (Mondschein), whose Bar-Ilan dissertation on the Hebrew printer Israel Joffe in Kopyl, Belorussia, is a model of descriptive bibliography and deserves to be published. Mr. Mondshine kindly provided me with copies of his published bibliographies of Habad Hasidic literature, which are equally original contributions.

It goes without saying that the National Library is a meeting place of minds, but for me it was a meeting place of walking books, or walking catalogs. World-famous scholars and bibliographers, acknowledged giants in their fields, casually passed through the halls; of course, I was after the bibliographers. In the Scholem Library, I met Prof. Meir Benayahu, an historian and bibliographer, the author of important volumes on 16th-century printing in Venice, Cremona, and Riva di Trento. Prof. Benayahu, who has now completed a study of Daniele Zanetti, a Venetian printer of Hebrew, kindly shared with me useful information gleaned from his own valuable private library. It was equally a

matter of chance that I made the acquaintance of a young scholar from New England, who just happened to have in press a study of Hebrew printing in France after the Terror. The sheer concentration of Hebrew bibliographic expertise in the one building was both exciting and chastening.

### The Schocken Library

I tried to visit as many of the important Hebraica libraries of Jerusalem as I could manage within a few weeks. I was most impressed by the Schocken Library, which was established by the German-Jewish publisher and collector Salman Schocken after his emigration to Palestine during the Nazi period. The Schocken collection is one of the great collections of Hebrew manuscripts and rare printed books. The library has a number of small reading rooms, and a very full reference collection on Hebrew bibliography. Of most interest to me were two unique card catalogs, which are not as widely known as they deserve to be. The first was prepared by the current head librarian, Mrs. Estie (Davis) Ben-David, formerly librarian of the Valmadonna Trust Library in London. It is an index, by place of printing, to the famed Steinschneider's list of "Typographi" included within his *Catalogus librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* (Berlin, 1860). More precisely, Mrs. Ben-David has arranged - in a brilliant job of cut-and-paste - Steinschneider's entries for printers/press-workers/correctors/editors according to the town of their imprints. The importance of this compilation cannot be overestimated; historians of places of printing cannot afford to ignore it. A microfiche reproduction would be of incalculable benefit to scholars. The other unique card catalog is the Schocken Library's own imprint catalog, arranged chronologically by country and town of imprint. There is, to my knowledge, no other comprehensive and accessible imprint catalog of a major Hebrew collection in the world, even at the National Library in Jerusalem. I found the Schocken imprint catalog to be particularly valuable for East and Central European towns, whose Hebrew printing has never been fully surveyed.

The Schocken Library also contains the archival collection of Moses Nahum Jerusalimski of Kamenka (1855-1914), a



**The new Hebrew printing press in Jerusalem, from Hayim Vital, *Sefer ha-Goralot* (Jerusalem, 1863). BL 1969. b. 58**

mine of correspondence with printers, publishers, and booksellers, rich in documentation on printing and censorship in Eastern Europe late in the 19th century. Here I found, for example, much unique material on the availability and cost of paper, including so-called *regal* paper, in printing shops in Warsaw ca. 1881. The private library of the author Karl Wolfskehl, whose Jewish family was one of the most ancient in Germany, having settled in Mainz in the 9th century, was another of Salman Schocken's acquisitions. Part of the collection has been sold off, but all the Hebrew and Judaic books, including some manuscripts, remain. The complete typescript catalog, filling many bound volumes, is an awesome and inspiring monument to the man and his times.

### The Ben-Zvi Institute

The other main attraction for me among Jerusalem libraries was the Ben-Zvi Institute, located in the former residence of the second president of the State of Israel, Izhak Ben-Zvi. An ethnographer, Ben-Zvi studied the Jewish communities of the Orient, and the Ben-Zvi Institute is devoted to this same subject. The library holds one of the outstanding collections of oriental Hebrew books, including works produced from India to the Maghreb. It is particularly strong in Judeo-Arabic literature, whose broader printing history has never been surveyed, although a number of local studies and bibliographies have been prepared. It was a joy to meet, after years of only bibliographic acquaintance, the unassuming scholar who heads this library, Mr. Robert Attal. A native of

Paris, Mr. Attal has spent his life collecting the documentation on the Jewish communities of North Africa, Asia, and Greece, and his book-length bibliographies on each of these subjects are standard reference tools. He is now completing a monumental bibliography of Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic printing in Tunis, which was the most prolific center of Judeo-Arabic printing in the world. Mr. Attal has already recorded some 1,300 titles, and his bibliography promises to be a major addition to the study of the intellectual and typographic history of North African Jewry. I was grateful for the time he shared with me, and for the bibliographic references ("*Je me souviens d'un livre sur papier rose de Djerba*") [I remember a book on pink paper from Djerba] which he so easily culled from the fund of his memory.

By happy coincidence, the most handsome library building in Jerusalem, designed by the Israeli-Canadian architect Moshe Safdie, was opened during the librarians' conference. It is the Jerusalem branch of the Hebrew Union College Library of Cincinnati, and is a western library in design, function, and convenience. Built of Jerusalem stone, it numbers among its features a "rare book tower" (shades of Umberto Eco, or perhaps the chained library at Hereford?).

### Museums

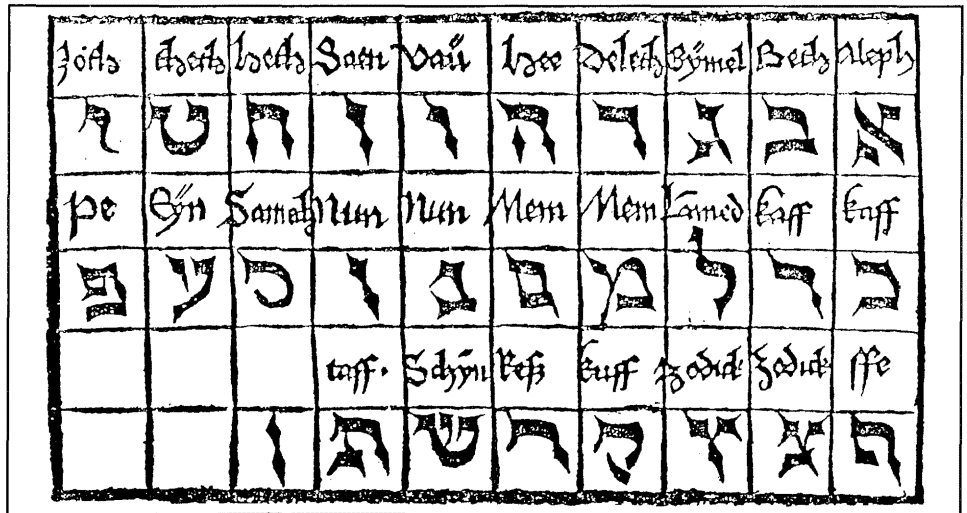
It was impossible to visit all the libraries of Jerusalem, but I could not overlook the "Shrine of the Book." In this museum are housed the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest Hebrew Biblical and sacred texts, which are also among the oldest manuscripts in the world. The memorable architecture of the museum is modeled on the desert jars in which the scrolls were found. No one looking at these ancient texts - which are unraveled along the circular walls of a darkened room below ground - can be indifferent to the history which surrounds them, and the displacements of time and space which did not sever the connection of Jews with their books. After seeing the scrolls, I understood all the better the meaning of the Koranic phrase, "a people of the book."

Foremost among the other museums I visited was the Israel Museum, where the permanent exhibition of Judaica - including manuscripts, ritual art, and even a

complete, original Renaissance Italian synagogue - is superb. The broad display of illuminated Hebrew manuscripts from the Middle Ages to the 18th century is breathtaking. The catalogs and other publications of the Museum are of high quality, and I broke all my vows and bought a whole pile, not least of them *Illustrated Haggadot of the Eighteenth Century* (1983). I also called at the L.A. Mayer Memorial Institute for Islamic Art, where a single small leaf of a Koran drew my attention. Believed to originate in Iraq in the 9th century, it was written in Kufic script on red-orange parchment. This went well with my interest in colored papers, and I was also able to make use of the Institute's research library, where I found valuable information on papermaking in the Near East.

My last museum visit in Jerusalem was, appropriately, to the Jerusalem Museum, situated at the Jaffa Gate, near the Armenian Quarter in the Old City. The Museum, built within the walls of the "Tower of David" citadel, traces the history of the Holy City from earliest antiquity to the recent past. The colorful displays are mounted in a succession of large rooms, each devoted to a different period, arranged chronologically. Of special significance to me was the display on early printing in 19th-century Jerusalem. First undertaken by Armenians, typography was begun soon thereafter by Jewish printers, who went on to issue books and newspapers in abundance. The Museum includes a reproduction of the press established with the assistance of Sir Moses Montefiore of Ramsgate, and a montage of early publications in Hebrew. (See related illustrations accompanying this article.)

In Me'ah She'arim, the ultra-orthodox, Yiddish-speaking quarter near the Old City, where men and boys in black coats and sidelocks, and women in modest dress and covered hair, maintain a way of life that has changed little since its transplantation from the *shtetlekh* of Eastern Europe, are bookshops filled with liturgies, Talmuds, amulets, and mystical tracts. In one shop my host, Dr. Matras, found a new-old book of folk remedies, and in another I found a Hebrew commentary published in St. Louis early in this century, written by a rabbi "of the holy congregation of Toronto." Not far from this quarter I came upon La Bibliothèque Sépharade,







“Salomon’s Press” in Jerusalem, 1990.

gave me some of his own bibliographies to read while he concocted a wonderful pickle broth in the kitchen.

Unfortunately, I had brought no camera with me, but there is a special place in Jerusalem at which I would have liked to be photographed. One day, after much meandering in unfamiliar streets, I landed at a dilapidated 19th-century building, number 8, Harav Kook Street. Passing through the gate, I saw painted on the white wall the words *Defus Salomon* (Salomon’s Press). [See photo.] My own ancestors, the Salomon family of Jerusalem, founded this press in the mid-19th century and from it they issued *Ha-Levanon*, the first newspaper published in Palestine. The press still functions today, though much reduced in

activity, and is still run by the last printer of this family. This distant cousin shared with me the history of the family and the press, and provided mementos of both. Among these was a large family portrait (taken shortly after my grandmother left Jerusalem for Paris), in the center of which sits the founder of the press.

Jerusalem has always been a source of inspiration to writers and dreamers. I look forward to my next bibliographic pilgrimage, to discover more of their books.

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