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Vol. 14 Editor's Note

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Editor's Note

OF MERGERS AND METADATA

In May 2006 the two leading purveyors of bibliographical data, the Research Libraries Group (RLG) and the OCLC Online Computer Library Center, announced their plans to merge—effective almost immediately [OCLC, 2006]. Many of us were taken aback by the two bibliographical utilities' announcement; the RLG Union Catalog (originally known as RLIN) was in effect the database of record for most of the Hebraica cataloging community. RLIN was first off the mark to introduce Hebrew script into catalog records, and a quick perusal of this journal's previous issues reveals that the participation of Hebraica librarians was essential toward the introduction of that capability. Two years have passed since the OCLC-RLG merger and the verdict is now in: It has proceeded very smoothly and the resulting synergies have greatly benefited our readers.

Consequently, this seems an especially appropriate juncture for *Judaica Librarianship* to survey recent developments on the cataloging front. In his article "The Changing Landscape of Hebraica Cataloging," Daniel Lovins provides an overview of the upheaval that is affecting the entire library profession, as viewed from the vantage point of those who are responsible for generating metadata. "For catalogers, the magnitude of change is such that the very word 'catalog' seems to be losing traction," Lovins writes. The promises and perils of this transformation-in-progress are eloquently summarized in his article.

In addition to providing robust bibliographical descriptions in their catalog records, many Judaica libraries have addressed the particular needs of their collections through the use of specialized shelf-classification schemes. Among these is the one that was devised by David H. and Daniel Elazar. In "The Making of a Classification Scheme for Libraries of Judaica," David Elazar shares his reflections on the system that he and his late brother devised, and he spotlights the pivotal role that librarians have played in its continuing development. The Elazar System is widely used today, especially in smaller libraries.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The year 2008 marks a notable milestone for lovers of children's literature—and for the Association of Jewish Libraries: It has been forty years since AJL began to sponsor its prestigious awards for children's literature—and the thirtieth year since these awards have borne the name of Sydney Taylor, author of the *All-of-a-Kind Family* series. In "Recognizing Jewish Children's Literature for Forty

Years," Kathe Pinchuck, the current Chair of the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee, outlines the history and mission of these awards, and reveals the impressive impact that they have made on the North American children's literature scene as a whole. Her article is accompanied by a summary of award winners for the fortieth-anniversary year, prepared by the Award Committee's previous Chair, Rachel Kamin.

YIZKOR BOOKS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Memorial books for the European Jewish communities that were destroyed during the Nazi Holocaust first began to appear while the war was still raging. Michlean J. Amir and Rosemary Horowitz offer an introduction to the genre, an overview of the books' contents, and an update on recent developments relating to their publication and dissemination. One of the most notable of these developments is the award-winning digitization project jointly mounted by the New York Public Library and the National Yiddish Book Center, through which the contents of most *yizkor* books are now readily accessible (http://yizkor.nypl.org/). No longer is it necessary for researchers to travel far and wide in order read these remarkable historical documents. The Information Age now delivers these resources directly to the researcher's desktop.

EX OCCIDENTE LUX

"For instruction shall come forth out of Zion . . ." (*Ki mi-Tsiyon tetse torah* . . . ; Isaiah 2:3). Worshipers chant this passage when the Torah is removed from the ark during services. Roger S. Kohn shows us, in "No Disneyland," that *torah* can emanate from locales that are about as far removed from Zion as one might imagine. And although Disneyland may symbolize California to the world, that stereotype is belied by the cultural and intellectual riches that are to be found in the Golden State. So, perhaps we should not be too surprised to read that the University of California, Los Angeles—one of world's most distinguished research universities—early on developed extensive holdings of printed Judaica and Hebraica, under the expert guidance of its renowned Jewish Studies Bibliographer, Shimeon Brisman.* To the scholarly universe, Brisman will of course long be remembered for the three indispensable volumes that he produced for his *Jewish Research Literature* series. In "No Disneyland," Roger Kohn painstakingly documents Brisman's exertions on both of these fronts.

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* Indeed, a respectable monograph could be written about the Golden State's extensive array of Judaica library resources, which run the gamut of institutions: public and private universities, the State Library, rabbinical seminaries, Jewish museums, Holocaust memorial centers, synagogues, Jewish community centers, and Jewish day schools.

REVIEWS (1): *STUDYING THE JEWISH BOOK*

> Arthur Kiron contributes a detailed and penetrating review of this recently pub-
> lished study (in English translation) by the Israeli scholar Zeev Gries. Our
> reviewer comes to this assignment from his superb vantage point as Curator of
> Judaica Collections in the University of Pennsylvania Library, the host institu-
> tion for the Manfred R. Lehmann Memorial Master Workshop in the History of
> the Jewish Book. An intellectual historian with strong interests in book history,
> Arthur Kiron offers a critical, in-depth appraisal of this notable addition to the
> literature.

REVIEWS (2): AND SPEAKING OF ANNIVERSARIES . . .

> It has been precisely twenty-five years since Volume 1, Number 1 of *Judaica
> Librarianship* first hit the newsstands in the autumn of 1983. So, it is highly fit-
> ting that we observe this anniversary by welcoming the founding editor of this
> journal, Bella Hass Weinberg, to the ranks of this issue's contributors. A former
> President of the American Society of Indexers, she reviews a pioneering work,
> the very first full-length book on indexing to be published in Hebrew. (That
> book's author, Shoshana Langerman, is a past contributor to *JL*, as well.) It was
> an honor for me to serve on the journal's editorial board under Bella's leader-
> ship, and it is equally an honor to mark this anniversary by sharing her formida-
> ble expertise on indexing with our readers.

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SOURCES

[OCLC, 2006]. "RLG to combine with OCLC" [press release], May 3, 2006: http://
www.oclc.org/news/releases/200618.htm (accessed July 11, 2008).