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Scatter of the Literature, 2014–2016

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Scatter of the Literature, 2014–2016*

AJS News: The Library Issue (March 2016).

The e-newsletter of the Association for Jewish Studies tackled in its March 2016 issue the place of the library and librarians in the field of Jewish Studies. The issue was comprised of the following two articles.

1. Baker, Zachary. 2016. "Information Literacy and Jewish Studies." *AJS News: The Library Issue* (March), accessed March 28, 2016, <u>http://ajsnet.org/ajsnews-library-resources.htm</u>.

Based on his own experiences with the reference encounter as well as teaching a research methods course in Jewish Studies, Zachary Baker details how the landscape of resources has shifted from print to online. Although much can be found online, information literacy skills remain the same in the Age of Discovery and "there is nothing 'forever' about the web—or digital resources in general."

2. Chesner, Michelle. 2016. "On the Myriad Capacities of a University Librarian." *AJS News: The Library Issue* (March), accessed March 28, 2016, <u>http://ajsnet.org/ajsnews-university-librarians.htm</u>.

Addressing the academic world, Michelle Chesner answers the question of "what can they [librarians at your university] do for you?" Chesner outlines the various roles a librarian has in a research library, whether all done by one person or by multiple individuals, and describes how librarians may benefit Jewish Studies scholars and collaborate with them. Communication is key to make this collaborative relationship work, "the most important thing to know about Jewish Studies librarians is the importance of *communication*."

Ben-Ur, Aviva. "Archival Practices: The Creation of a Portuguese Jewish Identity." *Kristòf: Revista Sosialkultural* 16, no. 2 (2015): 17–25, accessed March 9, 2016, <u>http://works.bepress.com/aviva_benur/21/</u>.

This article discusses the relationship of Caribbean Jews to their communal archives, focusing on the Dutch colonies of Curaçao and Suriname, homes to the largest Jewish communities in the eighteenth-century Americas. "Communal archives can be oceanic in their expanse. French historian Arlette Farge likens national archives to be an avalanche or a flood. They are 'excessive and overwhelming,' and delving into them is like 'a dive, a submersion,

^{*} Editor's note: Wherever possible, annotations to these citations are based on those provided by indexing and abstracting services.

perhaps even a drowning,' she writes. But for Portuguese Jews in the Dutch Caribbean, the archives they created and carefully preserved for 175 years—until the Emancipation of the Jews in 1825—were the very oxygen of the community."

Cohen, Julie-Marthe. "Relics of the Second World War: Dealing with Missing and Misplaced Objects in the Jewish Historical Museum Collection." *Studia Rosenthaliana* 45 (2014): 57–74. doi: <u>10.2143/SR.45.0.3021381</u>.

Cohen's article discusses the restoring of ceremonial objects, books, and manuscripts stolen by the Nazis to their respective museums. After the war, the Allies discovered the objects that were stored away by the Nazis. Some were returned to their respective owners. Unfortunately, many of the objects were considered ownerless and were not returned, as their owners were not identified. Cohen discusses how Amsterdam's Jewish Historical Museum recovered its stolen objects through her research into the history of its collection during and after World War II. She describes the fate of the collection after the objects were stolen, the collection as a whole before the war, the items that were returned, and finally the creation of her database.

Chaueka, Yaacov, Nachum Dershowitz, and Ephraim Nissan, eds. *Language, Culture, Computation. Computing—Theory and Technology: Essays Dedicated to Yaacov Choueka on the Occasion of His 75th Birthday, Part I.* Springer, Berlin. 2014.

This Jubilee set of three volumes constitutes a appropriate tribute to Yaacov Choueka, a computer scientist, mathematician, computational linguist, and lexicographer: he is one of the founders of the fields of full-text information retrieval, computational linguistics, humanities computing, and legal databases. The three volumes comprise sixty-one chapters, and are each devoted to a broad theme. The present first volume, Computing— Theory and Technology, contains twenty-two chapters, clustered around the themes: The Jubilarian: Yaacov and his Oeuvre, theory of computation, science computing and tools for engineering, and information retrieval.

Gasztold, Brygida. "The Continuing Story of the Yiddish Language: The Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts." *Text Matters* 5, no. 1 (2015): 28–40. doi:<u>10.1515/texmat-2015-0003</u>.

The Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts connects Yiddish culture with the American one, the experience of the Holocaust with the descendants of the survivors, and a modern idea of Jewishness with the context of American postmodernity. Created in the 1980s, in the mind of a young and enthusiastic student Aaron Lansky, the Yiddish Book Center throughout the years has become a unique place on the American cultural map. Traversing the continents and crossing borders, Lansky and his co-workers for over thirty years have

been saving Yiddish language books from extinction. The Center, however, has long stopped to be merely a storage house for the collection, but instead has grown into a vibrant hub of *Yiddishkeit* in the United States. Its employees do not only collect, distribute, digitalize and post online the forgotten volumes, but also engage in diverse activities, scholarly and cultural, that promote the survival of the tradition connected with Yiddish culture. A separate project is aimed at conducting video interviews that record life testimonies of the speakers of Yiddish.

Goldsmith, Marina, and Elhanan Adler. "RDA in Israel." *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 52, no. 6–7 (2014): 677–687. doi:10.1080/01639374.2014.925023.

Israeli cataloging has traditionally followed American standards, with the exception of vernacular cataloging for Hebrew, Arabic and Cyrillic scripts. Each change in American rules has led to the need to adjust Israeli cataloging standards accordingly. The Library of Congress decision to implement Resource Description and Access (RDA) in April 2013 led to the conclusion that the Israeli libraries had no choice but to also adopt RDA. The Israeli Inter-University Cataloging Committee held several meetings in 2012 and 2013 regarding the implications of RDA. This article summarizes the unique issues of Israeli cataloging, the preparations for adjusting them to RDA, and for nationwide implementation.

Hess, Cordelia. "'Some short business trips.' Kurt Forstreuter and the Looting of Archives in Poland and Lithuania, 1939–1942." *Yad Vashem Studies* 42, no. 2 (2014): 91–122.

While other aspects of Nazi cultural looting and the role of historians in the development and promotion of the German expansionist ideology have been researched extensively, the role of archives within the National-Socialist ideology and administrative system has been largely neglected. In this article, Cordelia Hess discusses the role one archivist played during the war. Hess recreates the life of German archivist Kurt Forstreuter, who, although not an official member of the Nazi Party, enthusiastically assisted the Nazis in looting the archives in Poland and Lithuania. Hess describes how Forstreuter violated archival practices as he removed the records from their context. Forstreuter would also mention in his reports the number and location of Jews in local Jewish communities; these reports used the Nazis for executing their deportation plans.

Hill, Brad Sabin. "A Century of Hebraica at the Library of Congress." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 106, no. 1 (2016): 101–129. doi:10.1353/jqr.2016.0005.

One of the most revered libraries in the world, the Library of Congress was late in developing its Hebraica collection. The Arkansas-born Assyriologist Cyrus Adler (1863–1940), a founder of the Jewish Publication Society, of the American Jewish Historical Society, and of the new (American) series of the Jewish Quarterly Review, helped changed that situation. Adler "was intimately involved with American Jewish intellectual life and books. (His uncle was the noted Hebrew bibliophile Mayer Sulzberger, a benefactor of the Seminary library.) From the start of his career as librarian of the Smithsonian in 1892, Adler was convinced that a Hebrew collection should be held in the nation's capital. Twenty years later he played midwife to its founding, acting as advisor to the Librarian of Congress, Herbert Putnam (of the publishing family), and the German-born Jewish philanthropist Jacob H. Schiff," and helped developed the Hebraica and Judaica collection at the Library of Congress.

Keinan-Schoonbaert, Adi and Miriam Lewis. "Digitising the British Library's Collection of Hebrew Manuscripts: Challenges and Insights." *Journal of Digital Media Management* 4, no. 2 (2016): 123–136.

The British Library's collection of Hebrew manuscripts is one of the most significant in the world. Funded by The Polonsky Foundation, the Hebrew Manuscripts Digitization Project has been digitizing 1,250 manuscripts since 2013, in line with the Library's commitment to digitization and opening up access to its collections. The main aim of this paper is to describe the project's digitization experiences and challenges. By building digital scholarship and engagement directly into the workflow of this project it has been possible to create new interactions and opportunities to this unique and significant collection.

Levi, Talya. "Note: Russia and the Stolen Chabad Archive." *Georgetown Journal of International Law* 46 (2015): 915–946, accessed March 9, 2016, <u>https://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/law-journals/gjil/recent/upload/46-6-Kozey-Note.pdf</u>.

The unprecedented levels of theft, destruction, and displacement of cultural property during World War II has led the international community to grapple with questions of restitution. Achieving complete restitution remains nearly impossible because much of the affected cultural property is dispersed and hidden throughout the world. Moreover, many governments refuse to return cultural property, even when the rightful owner or heir is known, asserting that such property is justly in their possession as a result of expropriation and nationalization. A prime example of such government action is Russia's decades-long refusal to return to the Jewish Chabad sect an archive of sacred books, manuscripts, and handwritten teachings (collectively, the "Archive") that were seized by the Russians after World War II, and which continue to remain in Russian possession. Despite a ruling in Chabad's favor by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, Russia has maintained its position that the United States lacks jurisdiction, and that under Russian law, the Archive has been nationalized and is thus Russian property. This Note argues that Russia is obligated to return the Archive to Chabad because (A) Russian laws on cultural property violate international law; (B) Russia's refusal to return the Archive is contrary to its own public policy with regard to cultural property; and (C) ultimately, the exception set forth for Jewish property requires that Russia return the Archive to Chabad.

Lithgow, Rachel. "The American Jewish Historical Society and Technology." *American Jewish History* 99, no. 1 (January 2015): 99–101. doi:10.1353/ ajh.2015.0005.

The article describes the American Jewish Historical Society's initiative to develop a "onestop shop" for American Jewish history, in partnership with other historical societies across the United States, including the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Mahrer, Stefanie. "'Much More than just another Private Collection': The Schocken Library and its Rescue from Nazi Germany in 1935." *Naharaim* 9, no. 1–2 (November 2015): 4–24.

This article reconstructs for the first time the rescue of the Schocken Library, one of the largest privately owned book collections, from Nazi Germany. The library consisted of over 60,000 volumes of rare and precious Hebrew and German books, manuscripts, and incunabula. The books were shipped from Germany to Mandate Palestine in the years 1934–1937 and the library is one of the few collections that completely survived National Socialist destruction and looting. The case of the Schocken library can help us understand all of the many challenges involved in successfully relocating a library of its size. Without a network of professionals, experience dealing with authorities and unlimited funds, an operation like the shipment of the Schocken library was in Jerusalem, the way in which it was perceived changed. From the contemporary perspective of the owner, the merchant and publisher Salman Schocken, and from the perspective of its users and visitors, the library was perceived as a place of continuity in exile rather than as a place of saved books. The micro-historical perspective not only allows us to understand how historical subjects interpret the world around them but also how they try to influence historical processes.

Prebor, Gila, and David Gordon. "Collection Development and Censorship in Torah Studies Libraries in Israel." *Collection Management* 40, no. 1 (2015): 27–55. doi:10.1080/01462679.2014.965862.

This study, using a qualitative-narrative research technique, and allowing for the views of selectors from various types of Torah study libraries to be examined, "primarily aims to discuss the collection development policies in Torah libraries, particularly censorship policies implemented as part of a policy, with an emphasis on how prohibited books are rejected."

Rosen, Rhonda. "What's a Nice Jewish Book Group Doing in a Catholic University? The Book Group as a Community Outreach Tool." *College & Research Libraries News* 76, no. 6 (June 2015): 328–331, accessed March 9, 2016, <u>http://crln.acrl.org/content/76/6/328.full</u>.

The book group is a staple of the public library system. For years public libraries have used it to gather readers of different genres (mystery book lovers), to celebrate holidays or different times of year (seasons, summer reading programs), and to appeal to diverse patron groups (children's reading groups, student recreational reading groups). At Loyola Marymount University (LMU), a medium-sized private Jesuit university, we decided to use the book group as a way of reaching out to our neighboring communities. This article describes how we used the traditional book group to promote a new academic program and the unanticipated success it continues to have in reaching those outside our campus. The Jewish book and discussion group, now finishing its sixth year, has been a valuable way to bring people from all over the greater west side of Los Angeles to our library and to our campus for many educational and cultural programs that LMU offers.

Schenkolewski-Krol, Silvie. "Jewish Archives and Archival Documents: Israel and the Diaspora." *Archival Science* (July 23, 2015): 1–18. doi: <u>10.1007/s10502-015-9249-1</u>.

Throughout 2000 years of exile, Jews amassed documentation reflecting their creativity and organization wherever they lived. Communal archives dating since the Middle Ages have survived. In addition, documentation about Jews is found in archives of rulers, governments, and cities. Conditions changed in the twentieth century due to new developments: the rise of the Jewish national movement, leading to the establishment of the State of Israel, and the destruction of thousands of communities and their cultural possessions in the Holocaust perpetrated against European Jewry by the Nazis. The centrality of Erets Israel and Israel in Zionist ideology led to the concept that it should be the locale for Jewish archives. Thus, for example, in 1933 the archives of the World Zionist Movement were transferred from Berlin to Jerusalem. The situation became more acute after World War II: If entire or partial archives of destroyed communities survived, to whom do they belong-the states in which they were created or the Jewish people? This dilemma also faces existing communities without archival consciousness. Should everything be concentrated in Israel? In recent years, there has been a change in the paradigm of Israel–Diaspora relations. In a global transnational world, with constantly developing technical means, archives can remain in the communities that created them, provided they are maintained and made available to the public in accordance with accepted archival practice.

Smith, Sonia. "Library Instruction for Romanized Hebrew." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 41, no. 2 (2015): 197–200. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2014.08.003

University students, looking for records in Hebrew language in the library catalog often face difficulties finding material due to the unfamiliarity with the Library of Congress rules for romanization. These difficulties might hinder their search results. This paper will present the findings of a study conducted McGill University that investigated students' abilities to romanize Hebrew titles so they can consequently search these in the library catalog and will show how library instruction can be a very successful tool for providing students with the knowledge they require to retrieve these title.

Stokoe, Christopher, Gabriele Ferrario, and Ben Outhwaite. "In the Shadow of Goitein: Text Mining the Cairo Genizah." *Manuscript Cultures* 7 (2014): 29–34.

The widespread digitization of manuscripts has brought about an era of unprecedented access to a range of important historical collections. However, the lack of substantive metadata associated with these online digital collections represents a significant barrier to those wishing to navigate them in order to identify manuscripts relevant to a particular research question or theme. This article proposes a novel solution to cataloging based around text mining published editions, commentaries and other secondary literature in order to automatically generate a rich searchable electronic catalogue. This research explores a range of techniques from the fields of information retrieval (term-weighted vocabularies), natural language processing (named entity recognition) and text analysis (topic models). The initial results demonstrate the potential for these approaches to produce significant volumes of descriptive metadata which, when evaluated in the context of retrieval effectiveness, provide suitable evidence on which to perform analysis and make discoveries. A search engine which recommends manuscripts based on the contents of our automatically derived catalogue achieves a Precision (*@* 10 of 0.54, which significantly beats a baseline strategy of random selection.

"Stories Told / Histoires que l'on raconte: Selected Writings on the Jewish Public Library of Montreal." *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 22 (2014), accessed March 9, 2016, <u>http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/issue/view/2261</u>.

This special issue of *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* is dedicated to the centennial of the Jewish Public Library (JPL) in Montreal, Quebec. The issue opens with a preface by the Argentine Canadian intellectual Alberto Manguel and ends with Irving Layton's afterword, originally published in 1948 as the introduction to the *Annual Library Book of the Jewish Public Library*. The five articles included in this issue, summarized below, are edited versions of talks given on October 26, 2014, in a full day symposium entitled Stories Told.

 Anctil, Pierre. "'Créée par le peuple et pour le people': Réflexions sur les origines historiques de la Bibliothèque publique juive de Montréal." *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 22 (2014): 32–53, accessed March 9, 2016, <u>http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/ view/39640/35915</u>.

The JPL was founded in the wake of two broad ideological movements that had permeated the city since the beginning of the large Eastern-European migration. On the one hand, the institution was influenced by modernist and universalist concepts found in the Haskalah, promoted among others by Montreal thinker Reuben Brainin; and on the other, it benefited form the exceptional organizational strength of a left-wing Zionist party born out of the 1905 Russian Revolution, Poale-Zion. The author highlights this historical conjuncture, by exploring the first annual report of the JPL published in 1915, which bears numerous testimonies to that effect.

 Baker, Zachary M. "'A Goodly Tent of Jacob, and the Canadian Home Beautiful': The Jewish Public Library in the Civic Sphere during the 1950s." *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 22 (2014): 54–86, accessed March 9, 2016, <u>http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/ view/39641/35916</u>.

The article reviews the range of collections and services offered by JPL. It outlines the challenges encountered by the JPL due to population shifts, demographic transformations, and political upheavals. In the 1950s the JPL in Montreal went from being a private library to a civic library. Zachary Baker discusses this transformation based on audio recordings of four events, emphasizing that, "the audio medium itself lends to our comprehension of these events in ways that written transcripts (even if they existed) would not. Languages, accents, registers, inflections, nuances, pauses, hesitations, ad-lib remarks by the speakers—all of these are conveyed by the recordings. The physical presence of the original audiences and their reactions to the words uttered on those occasions are also palpable. And for those ceremonies that took place out of doors, the honking of automobile horns in the distance and the hum of airliners flying overhead transport today's listener through time and space by means of an auditory time capsule. 'The medium is the message,' the noted Canadian cultural critic Marshall McLuhan wrote in 1964."

3. Raby, Eva Roskies. "'If You Build It, They will Come": The Norman Berman Children's Library, 1983–2013." *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 22 (2014): 87–106, accessed March 9, 2016, <u>http://cjs.journals.</u> <u>yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/view/39642/0</u>.

As the Jewish Public Library approaches its centennial, it is evident that its Children's

Library plays an important role in Jewish communal life. It is here, through discovery of Jewish resources, children's literature and music and through interaction of patrons and staff, that young parents and their families explore their cultural heritage and connect to one another. Moreover, they do so in the building that is the central address for the Montreal Jewish Community. In attempting to fulfill its mission, which is underscored by its name—Jewish Public Library—the Children's library seeks to engage the Jewish and wider communities through cultural programs, diverse collections and dedicated, professional staff; to facilitate learning; to engage the minds, hearts and imaginations of children; and to participate in community efforts to ensure an active, enriched, cultural life.

 Robinson, Ira. "Ninety-Nine Meetings: The Jewish Public Library of Montreal in its First Century." *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 22 (2014): 16–31, accessed 9, 2016, <u>http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/view/39647/35921</u>.

By way of narrative, Ira Robinson examines the reports presented to the members of the JPL of Montreal annual meetings and pieces together a history of the library. The annual reports are uniform neither in language nor in style. "However they all attempt to present a fair summary of the JPL's position and activities in the year under review and hence, taken collectively, they make an appreciable contribution to the institution's history."

 Schwartz, Stephanie Tara. "Spaces of the Jewish Public Library: A Photographic Essay." *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 22 (2014): 107–121, accessed March 9, 2016, <u>http://cjs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cjs/article/view/39643</u>.

In this photo essay, Stephanie Tara Schwartz reflects "on the places of the Jewish Public Library (several of its physical locations in the built environment) and its spaces—as a lending institution, an invaluable archive, a cultural institution, and something more. Drawing on theories of *Thirdspace* and the *punctum*, this paper explores everyday Jewish life in and around the JPL through four visual case studies. This method exposes the mechanisms of the library as a work-in-progress, bringing to light the everyday negotiating that defines and redefines the institution—both its folks and elite functions—and its users in a changing urban environment.

Traum, David, Andrew Jones, Kia Hays, Heather Maio, Oleg Alexander, Ron Artstein, Paul Debevec, Alesia Gainer, Kallirroi Georgila, Kathleen Haase, Karen Jungblut, Anton Leuski, Stephen Smith, William Swartout. "New Dimensions in Testimony: Digitally Preserving a Holocaust Survivor's Interactive Storytelling." In *Interactive Storytelling*, edited by Luis Emilio Bruni, Sandy Louchart, Sarune Baceviciute, and Henrik Schoenau-Fog, 269–281. Springer International Publishing. 2015. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-27036-4.

This paper describes a digital system that allows people to have an interactive conversation with a human storyteller (a Holocaust survivor) who has recorded a number of dialogue contributions, including many compelling narratives of his experiences and thoughts. The goal is to preserve as much as possible of the experience of face-to-face interaction. The survivor's stories, answers to common questions, and testimony are recorded in high fidelity, and then delivered interactively to an audience as responses to spoken questions. People can ask questions and receive answers on a broad range of topics including the survivor's experiences before, after and during the war, or his attitudes and philosophy. Evaluation results show that most user questions can be addressed by the system and that audiences are highly engaged with the resulting interaction.

Valone, T. Fielder. "Rescued from Oblivion: The Leyb Koniuchowsky Papers and the Holocaust in Provincial Lithuania." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 85–108. doi:10.1093/hgs/dcu019.

Much of our knowledge of the Holocaust in Lithuania is based on experiences in or near Vilnius and Kaunas. In the smaller towns, where tens of thousands of Jews lived before the war, so few survived that first-hand accounts are rare; all the less do official German sources offer a window onto events, recording little more than overall numbers. The present contribution draws attention to a lesser-known collection of survivor testimonies gathered after the war by Leyb Koniuchowsky, primarily in Germany's Feldafing displaced persons camp. Case studies of ritual humiliation of Jews by their small-town and village neighbors, experiences in a minor camp complex, and the pursuit of vengeance by one survivor who gained temporary employment in the postwar Soviet security services, point toward the place of oral testimony in elucidating events in hard-to-document places. They raise questions about whether events in better-known localities were "typical" or not.

Van Dyke, Gerrit. "Finding Religion: An Analysis of Theology LibGuides." *Theological Librarianship* 8, no. 2 (2015): 37–45, accessed March 9, 2016, <u>https://theolib.atla.com/theolib/article/view/384</u>.

This paper, although not pertaining directly to Judaica collections, compares religion and theology library guides created on the Springshare's LibGuides platform. The sample of

library guides was taken from thirty-seven institutions, including universities granting undergraduate and graduate degrees in religion or theology as well as seminaries for professional clergy. "Data on LibGuides content, such as books, e-books, journals, databases, librarian contact information, and others, [were] compared and analyzed. Resources especially tailored to religious and theological studies [were] also highlighted."

Winn, Samantha R. "Ethics of Access in Displaced Archives." *Provenance: Journal of the Society of Georgia Archivists* 33, no. 1 (2015): 6–13, accessed March 9, 2016, <u>http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/provenance/vol33/iss1/5/</u>.

This paper presents an exploratory review of archival literature on access to displaced archives. In order to understand the ethical imperatives that govern access to displaced archives, archivists must navigate a complex web of competing moral claims, contradictory legal frameworks, shifting national security norms, and customary practices that reflect centuries of colonization, occupation, and conquest. In the absence of either rigorous professional engagement or a clear ethical framework, institutions managing displaced archives may establish policies that unnecessarily restrict access, violate the values of the creators, privilege certain groups of users over others, or inflict harm upon members of the originating community.