

COMMENTARIES

Vol. 4 No. 2

Editor's Note:

I met David Adler during Passover 1993, and told him that my daughter and I are great admirers of his children's books, especially Malke's Secret Recipe.

I assumed that Mr. Adler was familiar with Judaica Librarianship, but was surprised to hear that he had never seen the issue in which his award acceptance speech appeared. I subsequently sent him a copy of that issue, along with a cover letter suggesting that he consider subscribing to the journal because of the planned publication of papers from the First International Symposium on Jewish Children's Literature; his response follows.

The Association of Jewish Libraries welcomes as members anyone interested in Judaica librarianship: authors, publishers, booksellers, bibliophiles, etc. This journal welcomes contributions from non-librarians as well.

—B.H.W.

4-30-93

Dear Bella,

Thank you so much for the 1989 *Judaica Librarianship* issue. It's an outstanding journal and I was pleased to see my speech and read it again.

I just sent in my AJL membership application and check. I didn't know that as an author and not a librarian I could join, but I am happy to be able to become a member of AJL.

David [A. Adler]
Woodmere, New York

Vol. 6 No. 1-2

March 17, 1993

Dear Bella Hass Weinberg:

I was thrilled to receive the new issue of *Judaica Librarianship* (vol. 6, no. 1-2). It seems to me that, as time goes on, *JL* is evolving more and more into a magazine of utmost importance for Judaica librarians. I was interested in the reports

and papers of the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians. I was just a little bit disappointed that "The Beginning of Hebrew Printing" and "Thirty Years of the Hebrew Bibliography Project" were not among the printed papers delivered at the Conference.

To prove to you that I have actually read the magazine from A to Z, I would like to mention a few misprints that I thought would be worthwhile to correct:

On page 40, column 2, 10 lines from the bottom: "Falag family." The author probably was referring to the Palaggi family also known as Palachi.

On p. 41, col. 2, end of paragraph 2, and p. 42, col. 2, line 2 of parag. 3: "Yeted Ne'eman." "Yeted" should be changed to "Yated" (see Isaiah 22:23).

I would also like to mention that I have noticed that some entries in "Recommended Judaica Reference Works" are repeated in "Reference Works from Israel." Why register these works twice?

Finally, about the wood-choppers of Berdichev, I would like to suggest that they were probably not cutting-up trees but sawing and chopping-up logs of wood to be used for baking, cooking and heating. (There were no gas and oil ranges or burners in those days, you know!)

Shimeon Brisman

All speakers in the Judaica research library sessions of the First International Conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians were invited to submit papers for publication. We did, however, require submission of papers in English. In the past we have had some experience with translating Hebrew papers, and found this to be very time-consuming. In view of the large number of papers delivered in Hebrew at the Conference, we decided that translation had to be the authors' responsibility. Regrettably, none of those who spoke in Hebrew submitted papers to the journal. Abstracts of most of the papers were included in the conference program.

I, too, have noticed some of the same works registered in the columns "Recommended Judaica Reference Works" and "Reference Works from Israel." I have discussed this with the authors, and there will be an attempt to minimize the redundancy. Readers of these two columns have likely noted their classified arrangement, as well as the comparative annotations. The compilers of the American column would like to "round out" their list by citing major Israeli reference works, while the compiler of the Israeli column would like to continue to compare and contrast Israeli reference works with American ones. I hope that readers find these approaches complementary.—Ed.

March 15, 1993

To the Editor:

I would suggest that future issues of *Judaica Librarianship* be mailed with covering envelope. It is too valuable to be subjected to post office destruction!

Vol. 6, no. 1-2 just received—so valuable, though battered!

Sylvia B. Kruger
East Lansing, Michigan

As a result of Ms. Kruger's having called the problem to our attention, this issue is being mailed in a poly bag. The issue is also printed on permanent paper, and these two features should ensure its durability.—Ed.

22 March 1993

Dear Bella:

The new issue of *Judaica Librarianship* arrived a few days ago and I have not let it out of my sight. I am just about finished with the entire issue; it is quite extraordinary! As I have said before, the entire field of Judaica librarianship is indebted to you for so much.

By the way, Zachary Baker's article on genealogy is superb. Keep up the good work. Yasher koach!

Arthur Kurzweil
Vice-President, Jason Aronson Inc.
Northvale, NJ

April 20, 1993

Dear Bella:

As a researcher working in the areas of Hebraica and Judaica cataloging, particularly online, I would like to express my appreciation for the constant updating in the field which *Judaica Librarianship* provides. The last issue especially (Spring 1991–Winter 1992), with its proceedings of the Jerusalem conference of Judaica and Israeli Librarians, with Joan Aliprand's update of Hebrew character sets, with the numerous articles by you and others on Hebraica and Judaica subject cataloging, was invaluable to me.

Like most Judaica and Israeli librarians (and I am both), I always read every issue carefully, but this issue required a reading that was no less than cover-to-cover. No other publication anywhere covers the field on the level that *Judaica Librarianship* does.

Susan Lazinger
School of Library, Archive and
Information Studies
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Jerusalem, Israel

March 17, 1993

Dear Bella:

Many thanks for sending me a copy of the latest issue of *Judaica Librarianship*. It is an outstanding publication. As an editor, I am filled with admiration for the attractive design, readability, and brilliant organization of the journal's contents.

I found the Hoffman *et al.* article on Subject Headings very instructive and particularly enjoyed reading the paper on Judaica and Hebraica Cataloging you presented at the FICJIL in Jerusalem. Congratulations on a wonderful issue.

Sol Steinmetz
Executive Editor
Random House Dictionaries
New York, NY

Rabbi Steinmetz, formerly president of my synagogue, sent copies of the Random House Webster's College Dictionary (1992) to both my home and University offices. This dictionary serves as the journal's authority for English spelling, capitalization, and hyphenation, and it also includes many Hebraisms and Yiddishisms that have entered the English language. Rabbi Steinmetz has authored a book on the latter subject.—Ed.

March 12, 1993

Dear Mrs. Weinberg:

I appreciated seeing both my letter and your reply in the latest *Judaica Librarianship*. I believe that the results may help to clarify some concepts in uniform title cataloging. I shall refer to your sentence which reads: "From your Yom Ha'atsma'ut examples, I would infer the former pattern [in this you are correct], but this hides information from a user primarily interested in language."

On this point we either misunderstand each other or differ philosophically:

We might misunderstand each other in the sense that you might think that I consider a liturgy subheading as being a separate entity from the main part of the heading. You are correct about the Library of Congress view. It is proven by the latest phenomenon "Siddur (Sephardic). Hamesh Ta'anivot" (more about that later). But this is not my view. I consider "Siddur. Sabbath" (with or without rite), for example, to be one entity equal to Sabbath Siddur. I consider "Maḥzor. Yom Kippur" to mean Yom Kippur Maḥzor (as one entity). In that context language is *not* lost. Someone looking for a prayerbook containing only Sabbath prayers in French will find it under "Siddur. Sabbath + French." A prayerbook containing German Yom Kippur Eve prayers will be found under "Arvit. Yom Kippur. German."

We might differ philosophically with each other. You might hold that whichever prayerbooks—"Siddurim" or "Maḥzorim"—exist in a particular language should [be filed] next to one another. In this way, one who cannot find prayers in a particular language for a specific day can go to a more general prayerbook in that language. I do not hold that view. I, as a librarian, feel that I know where to go to find more general prayerbooks and can direct others to go there as well. I do know as well that Library of Congress holds the same position—as evidenced by the constructions of their headings.

If I were to follow the above view to its conclusion, why would I not do the same for Bible headings: e.g., "Bible. French. O.T. Pentateuch. 1991"?

One could possibly have the best of both worlds if one entered the prayerbooks in the way Library of Congress does, e.g., "Siddur. Sabbath. French" and then use their subject headings, e.g., "Siddurim—Texts," and, instead of subfiling by the whole heading, (i.e., "Siddur. Sabbath. French"), subfile by language and date

under those subject headings. That covers the liturgy in both ways, if one finds that to be useful.

On computer it probably does not matter which of the following elements are used or which elements come earliest: "Siddur," "Sabbath," "Sephardic," "French,"—so after a while this discussion may become academic.

Now, with the "Siddur (Sephardic). Hamesh Ta'anivot" invention, imagine the heading being interfiled with "Siddur. Sabbath (Sephardic)"—what a headache! I shall leave that headache with the Library of Congress and continue to ignore the rites.

Bernard H. Rabenstein
Hebraica Librarian
Hebrew Union College—
Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, OH

All of Mr. Rabenstein's points are well taken; I do not have a major disagreement with any of them in terms of cataloging theory. Based on my experience with user requests for a genre of Jewish literature in a specific language, however, I feel that it is helpful to place the language tag close to the initial element of a uniform title for a liturgical work or a classic text.

It is true that the order of elements is far more significant in a card or book catalog than in an online catalog with keyword search capability, and that permuted headings, e.g., "Siddur. Sabbath. French" and "Siddur. French. Sabbath" may be unnecessary in computerized catalogs. Recently, however, there have been a number of articles on effective display of headings with voluminous records in online catalogs; the order of subdivisions is crucial in this regard.

The need for main entry in computerized catalogs has also been questioned, since any access point can lead to a full bibliographic record. As the general cataloging community reconsiders its practices in light of the spread of the online catalog, we shall monitor the implications of change for Judaica catalogers. To reiterate the conclusion from my prior letter, "we need more research on the user approach to the catalog with regard to liturgical works." Computerization does not eliminate this need.—Ed.