Reference Works from Israel, 1991–1992

Libby Kahane
Jewish National and University Library
Jerusalem, Israel

The directories, encyclopedias, biographical dictionaries, and bibliographies listed below are part of the collection of the Jewish National and University Library. Most were published in Israel, but some of them are in the Library because it is the Library’s aim, as the National Library of the Jewish people, to collect Judaica from all over the world. Some non-Israeli publications that may not have come to the attention of U.S. librarians are therefore included in this list.

The works are arranged in the following categories:

I. Bible
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Hebrew bibliographic data is given at the end of the article for all the starred entries. Translated titles in brackets are supplied for Hebrew works lacking English title pages. Starred page numbers indicate pagination in Hebrew letters. Price in dollars is given where known, otherwise, in NIS (New Israeli Shekels)—or other currencies—with approximate dollar equivalents.

I. Bible


This CD-ROM contains the full text of the Bible, Midrash, Babylonian Talmud with Rashi commentary, Jerusalem Talmud, and Mishneh Torah of Maimonides. It has an advanced retrieval program which runs on a PC and allows retrieval according to words, combinations of words, expressions, etc. It has a unique linguistic component for complete analysis of Hebrew: a search on a given word locates documents containing any syntactic form of it.

Further information about the system is available from Ofrer, Inc., 1 Executive Drive, Fort Lee, NJ 07024, Fax 201-947-1780.


Like number 6 in the Applicatio series (see JLu 4, no. 1–2, p. 151), this is arranged by subject and then by verses, with an author index. It lists 1,220 books and articles written between 1800 and 1989, dealing with various aspects of the text.

II. Dissertations


This list of almost 2,000 dissertations completed at Israeli universities between 1936 and 1990 includes about 900 on Judaica subjects. About ten percent of the theses were written entirely in English, and the rest have English summaries.

The bibliography is arranged by subject. Bibliographical descriptions are given in both Hebrew and English, and the author indexes are in Hebrew and English. Because it is often difficult to locate copies of dissertations, an effort was made to include full bibliographic information about the dissertations that were later published as books. This is an important tool for any Judaica library.

III. Catalogs of Exhibitions


Describes documents concerned with the history of the Jewish National and University Library (JNUL), with many facsimiles and colored plates. Among the facsimiles is an insurance policy for 34 crates of books sent from Odessa on September 16, 1895 to Dr. Joseph Chasanowich, who, in 1892, founded the Midrash Abarbanel Library, the forerunner of the JNUL.


This is an album-format catalog of an exhibition held at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem to commemorate 500 years since the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. The manuscripts and books described were written or printed in Spain before 1492 and are from the collection of the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. This catalog is an indication of the spiritual and cultural achievements of Spanish Jewry.
IV. Librarianship


This book is the result of the efforts of librarians at Bar-Ilan University to solve the dual problem of Library of Congress subject headings: Israeli readers' insufficient knowledge of English and the deficiencies of the system with respect to Jewish subjects.

The thesaurus represented by these two volumes (subject headings and index) includes over 20,000 subject headings in almost every field. It is an expanded version of the computer printout described in JL vol. 5., no. 1, p. 92.

The first volume is arranged alphabetically by Hebrew subject headings, with references to related terms, and the second volume is an English-Hebrew index, useful for creating English subject headings. Among the terms are Melaveh Malkah (cross-referenced from Seudah revi'it [fourth meal]), "Melaveh malkah—Halakhah," see also Halakhah (Orah Hayim), and Shabat—Halakhah; and "Melaveh malkah—Zemirot u-piyutim," see also Tefilot—Zemirot u-piyutim.

[A lengthy review of this work by Bella Hass Weinberg appears in this issue.]

V. Encyclopedias


This brief dictionary lists basic Judaica terminology for new immigrant children. Among the entries are terms connected with the synagogue, the commandments, the Land of Israel, the holidays, and important prayers.


An alphabetical list of terms and concepts found in a wide range of sources: Bible, Talmud, Midrash, halakhic books, and more. Each term is succinctly explained with its sources cited. This is intended for beginners as well as advanced students. Sample terms: hekker, hekdesh, 'asarah yuḥsin, 'asarah nisyonot.


Profusely illustrated in color and in black-and-white, one may find here names of prayers, names of books, persons, and concepts. Under the letter lamed, for example, appear the following entries: Lulav (palm branch), Leviatan (legendary whale), Luzzatto (Rabbi Moshe Hayim), and Lamed-vav tsadikim (thirty-six saints).

VI. Manuscripts


The manuscripts described here were seized by the Germans in October 1943 and transferred to Germany. Only in 1950 were they returned to Rome. Among them are Bibles, Liturgy, historical documents, and more. Most of them were written in Italy. There are indexes in Hebrew and Latin characters to persons, titles, and place names.


This catalog is a joint venture of the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem and the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Library in Leningrad (St. Petersburg), and is based on the card catalog of the former. The Firkovic Collection, which was acquired by Abraham Firkovic (1786–1874), a Lithuanian Karaite, includes manuscripts on many subjects, among them philosophy, medicine and halakhas. The list is in Hebrew characters, with author and title indexes.


The size and importance of the collection of Hebrew manuscripts at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York makes this guide an important reference work.


This catalog is part of a project to publish a critical edition of Rashi's commentary on the Talmud. To do so, all extant manuscripts must be collected, copied, and analyzed, and then compared with incunabula and other printed books and with quotations and paraphrases of the Rashi commentary found in later medieval commentaries.

Libraries throughout the world were searched for their Rashi manuscripts. Especially helpful in locating them was the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem.

Of current interest is the news that the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manu-

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This bibliography lists 398 books and articles (in 15 different languages) concerned in any way with Hebrew incunabula. In future installments of Tishby's study on Hebrew incunabula, when giving bibliographical references, he will cite only the number in this bibliography, rather than the entire reference.


**VIII. Hebrew Script**


A comprehensive treatment of the subject of Hebrew script, in a folio-size volume. Chapters include an historical survey of Jewish writing, the Hebrew alphabet in printing, writing materials, paleographic principles, various styles of lettering, and calligraphy. Includes a bibliography for further reading.

**IX. Talmud**


Topics of an ethical nature, such as Pride, Theft, Speech, and Suspicion, are listed alphabetically, with citations from the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud that pertain to the topic.


Abbreviations were often employed in rabbinic texts as a means of saving time and writing materials. This list, useful for the student of Talmud and other texts, is a comprehensive one. For example, for the abbreviation aleph-aleph, the author lists over 60 possible meanings.


Begun in 1981, this is a useful tool for the student of Talmud. For each topic it summarizes all the relevant commentators, with an emphasis on the *aharonim* (later commentators). The tractates covered in vols. 1–9 are Bava Mezia, Makkot, Sukkah, and Bava Kamma.


This compilation of expressions from the Talmud, Mishnah, Agadah, and Midrash is limited to those with legal connotations. Many of them, such as "The law of the land is the law," are in everyday use. Each entry explains the idiom and gives an example of its usage. The idioms are listed alphabetically, with cross references from component terms in the subject index, e.g., *En lo boshet* (He has no shame) [see] *Shoteh en lo boshet* (A fool has no shame). Among the subjects are: *av u-ven* (father and son) and *awedah* (loes).


First published in 1962 for the students in the author’s Talmud class at the Reali High School in Haifa. He intended to give them an understanding of basic terms in the Talmud, as well as of concepts with which they were unfamiliar, such as thithes and the sabbatical year. Appendices define the coins, weights, and measures mentioned in the Talmud, and include a ten-page list of commonly used abbreviations.

X. Halakhah


Arranged by category, this work enables one to find the law on a specific topic. For example, under the category "Mourning," the subcategory "Prayer" is followed by
phrases to identify the specific law, with page and paragraph number in the *Shulhan 'Aruk* (Code of Jewish Law) given for each.


Over 8,000 references to topics are listed in this index. Although the work of an amateur, it can make the *Code of Jewish Law* (Kitsur Shulhan 'Aruk, by Solomon Ganzfried, translated by Hyman E. Goldin) more accessible.


*Otsar Ha-poskim* is an index to responsa (rabbinical decisions) written over the past 1,200 years. Begun as a card file in Jerusalem after World War Two, it grew to some million cards relating to thousands of topics culled from over 3,000 halakhic works.

This card file is now being computerized. The 200,000 cards of *Hoshen Mishpat* have been input already and the material is available online. It is estimated that by 1996 the entire card catalog will be entered into the computer. All the Israeli Rabbinical Courts are connected to the database, as well as many other institutions and individuals. All it requires is a modem and a start-up disk. Subscribers are charged for connect-time only.

Responsa may be accessed by the paragraph number of the *Shulhan 'Aruk* or by topic. Responsa may also be retrieved within specific parameters, such as locality or period of time. Most of the responsa are displayed in the form of summaries, as they appeared on the file cards. However, the full text of some 40 books has already been input, and responsa in these are displayed as full text.

In 1947, to make the card file accessible, publication was begun with topics from *Even Ha-'ezor*. Since then, eighteen volumes of *Even Ha-'ezor* have been published. These were recently reprinted in small format and are being sold at the reduced price of about $100 for the set.

Some of the material which is available online is presented in the following book: [Sefer Otsar Haaposkim—Responsa Index, Hoshen Mishpat, Laws of Judges, Paragraphs 1–17: A Detailed Index to the Responsa Literature, Classified by Topics and Subtopics in the order of the Shulhan 'Aruk.] vol. 1. Jerusalem: Otsar Haposkim Institute (P.O.B. 5110), 1992. *278, 48 p.* In Hebrew.

This index is arranged in the order of the *Shulhan 'Aruk*, with an alphabetical subject index. It does not include the summaries of the responsa, as do the volumes of *Even Ha-'ezor*.

A significant factor in the indexing of halakhic books is that many of these works are out of print and can be found only in the largest libraries. To make the books more accessible, a project was begun to microfilm them. A catalog of the works already on microfilm is available from the Rudman Foundation; Jewish Writers Guild Cooperative Press and Micropublishing, P.O.B. 7545, Jerusalem.


This important work differs from *Otsar Haaposkim* (see entry no. 26) in that it is an index, only, while *Otsar Ha-poskim* supplies summaries of the halakhic decisions. This tool is arranged by the order of the *Shulhan 'Aruk*. Under each paragraph, the various aspects of the law treated in it are detailed, with the bibliographic references and page numbers of responsa indicating where each aspect is discussed.


Like the work described in entry no. 1 above, this CD-ROM contains the full text of the following books: Bible, Midrash, Babylonian Talmud with Rashi commentary, and Mishneh Torah. In addition, it contains 253 books of responsa covering a period of over a thousand years. With the powerful retrieval capabilities described above, it rivals *Otsar Ha-poskim*’s database, and presents full-text as well. However, while there are plans to add responsa to the database (and replace CD-ROMs gratis), it has far to go to reach the almost 3,000 responsa indexed by *Otsar Haaposkim*.

XI. Hebrew Language


This is a comprehensive bibliography on modern spoken Hebrew, as opposed to biblical Hebrew. It lists 966 items, written in languages other than Hebrew, and supplements Hebrew Books, Articles, and Doctoral Theses on Contemporary Hebrew Published in Israel, 1948–1980, published by the Council for the Teaching of Hebrew in 1984.

XII. Dictionaries


XIII. Hebrew Literature


This work lists books and articles in newspapers and periodicals, published letters, interviews, and translated works; indexes enhance its usefulness.

XIV. Biography


Printed and archival sources are given for each locality or region, with the names and addresses of the archives. This is an important source for the study of the history of the Jews in France since the 16th century.


Over 450 deceased Jewish graduates of Cambridge University are listed, with brief biographies and bibliographic references. There is an index by names of colleges.


This is a biobibliography of Jewish authors who lived in Spain between the tenth and fifteenth centuries. They wrote on a wide variety of subjects, including philosophy, science and halakhah. Several useful indexes are included: one for the various elements in each author's name, such as father's name or place name; the second for the names of the communities where the authors lived and worked; and a third arranged by periods and subdivided by subject, e.g., poetry, geography, responsa.


An alphabetic listing of names of Jews who lived in France during the Middle Ages, with information about the origin of each name, including the name in Hebrew characters when the origin is Hebrew; when and where each person lived; and bibliographic references. There is a general index of names and an index in Hebrew characters.

Additional sources for names of French Jews are the following archival inventories compiled by Roger Kohn:


XV. Jews Throughout the World


This bibliography lists over 2,000 items dealing with the Jews of Romania, published in Romanian, Hebrew, and other languages. Books on broader topics are listed if their indexes refer to this subject. The bibliography includes an index of names, places, and subjects.


This bibliography of books published in Poland dealing with all aspects of Judaica is the third in a series published since 1980 by the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland. A cumulated bibliography for the years 1980–1990 is planned.


Under the name of each region, this attractive annual lists names and addresses of community groups, synagogues, schools, libraries, and more.


This is a useful directory, covering many aspects of Jewish communal life. Vol. 1 lists educational institutions, Holocaust memorial centers, museums, and theaters. The listing of Jewish libraries and Judaica collections is especially comprehensive, covering 72 pages.

Vol. 2 lists major Jewish organizations and population statistics, with a special section on the former U.S.S.R. and one on localities whose Jewish population is under 1,000, such as Malta and New Caledonia, giving names of persons to contact.


The Research Center of Jewish History and Culture in Poland at the Jagiellonian University, which was founded five years ago, plans to publish a series of bibliographies which will deal with Jewish matters or Polish-Jewish relationships within the borders of Poland (including areas within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) from the 16th century on.

This first one is a bibliography of bibliographies listing 1,224 items arranged under broad categories such as Bio-bibliographies, Lists of the Jewish Press Published in Poland, and Reference Books concerning Polono-Judaica from the Fields of Literature, Theatre and Film. Some of the entries are annotated, and there is an index of names.


This comprehensive bibliography was compiled to make the study of American Jewry easier for Hebrew speakers. It is arranged by authors, with an index of subjects and persons.

XVI. Jewish History


Menasseh ben Israel established the first Hebrew printing press in Amsterdam, and had connections with the learned theological world of the 17th century and with Rembrandt and other painters. Towards the end of his life he obtained Cromwell's consent for the return of the Jews to England, from which they had been banned since the late 13th century. He attracted much attention during his lifetime, especially in his efforts toward the readmission of the Jews to England.

The bibliography, which deals only with the period between 1644 and 1657, lists 1,266 books, articles, and pamphlets. It is arranged by broad categories, such as Biography, Printer and Bookseller, Teacher of Spinoza, Excommunication, Ten Lost Tribes, Oliver Cromwell, Fiction and Drama, and is indexed by authors.


This catalog of books, articles, and dissertations on the history of Jews in Germany is arranged by regions and localities.


Under each locality, the author gives a brief survey of its history to 1918, with bibliographic references. There is also an index of personal names.


This is a continuation of Book of Subscribers, Part 2 (JL vol. 4, no. 2, p. 194.) In this volume, Katsav draws on 131 additional books for information about towns and cities in Europe. Some of these localities were not mentioned in the original volume, Sefer Ha-Prenumerantn, by Berl Kagan.

Under each locality Katsav lists the book in whose "Pre-subscription list" the place name appears. In the book's geographical index, the name of each locality is given in Latin characters, with the various versions of its name in Hebrew characters. This is useful as a source for the study of Jewish history in Europe up to the Holocaust.


This bibliography is organized by community: Cochin Jews, Bene Israel, Baghdadi Jews, Ashkenazi Jews, and tribal Jews. Included are primary sources, travelers' accounts, films, and modern scholarship. Also cited are general works which provide important material on the history of Indian Jewry.


This index to sources is useful as a companion volume to Doroth Rishonim: The History and Literature of Israel, by Isaak Halevy (Jerusalem: 1969; reprint of 1933 Frankfurt am Main edition). It gives the complete reference for each source in the Bible and Talmud cited in vol. 3, part 1, which deals with the period from the end of the Hasmonean dynasty to the days of the Roman governors.

XVII. Higher Education


The International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization in Jerusalem has been publishing aids for Judaica college programs since 1985. Other books published by the Center or in cooperation with it are:


years following the settlement of Jerusalem by Ashkenazim in 1816. Now, the first ten booklets have been reprinted, with name and subject indexes which make this an important reference book. Booklets 11 through 20 are to be reprinted with indexes in the near future.


Individuals active in many different fields of endeavor are profiled, with photographs.

Members of Betar (the youth movement of the Revisionist Zionist Movement) who fought during World War II are listed here. Some were partisans, some participated in ghetto uprisings, and some fought in the Allied armies. Each entry gives biographical information and details about the fighter’s activities during the Holocaust. Bibliographical sources are provided after each entry.


This album includes many color photographs of people and institutions. The individuals listed belong to a variety of professions.


This biographical tool lists over 1,000 women who made important contributions to Israeli life during the past hundred years. Among those described are Batya Churgin, who founded the Musicology Department at Bar-Ilan University; Amalia Cahana-Carmon, a librarian and teacher who is best known as a writer of short stories; and Margait Meyuhas (1873–1939), founder of a school for girls in Jerusalem.
Libby Kahane is Head of the Reference Service at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem.

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**OUR FIRST NAME IS JERUSALEM**

Jerusalem, the eternal city, is also home to the Jewish National and University Library, one of the world’s most important libraries for Jewish Studies. Its vast resources include Judaica and Hebraica of over 3 million volumes and more than 12,000 periodical titles. The National Library is the library of deposit for all material in Israel, and its collection development policy covers material in Jewish Studies published anywhere in the world.

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