

# Hiding in Plain Sight: Toward a Celebration of Hebraica Catalogers<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

This survey of 17 current and former Hebraica catalogers is based on interviews, personal testimonies, and published sources that attest to professional challenges and accomplishments in the field. Together with short biographical accounts, these narratives convey the considerable education, training, and skill required for creating and contributing records to shared bibliographic/authority databases.

Eleven Hebraica catalogers contributed their own texts, and I created entries for four other catalogers. (Unless otherwise noted, texts were provided by the catalogers themselves.) Other catalogers who were recognized in previous publications are: Janet Heineck (University of Washington Libraries),<sup>2</sup> Yitzhak Kertesz (Leo Baeck Institute Library, New York),<sup>3</sup> Paul Maher (Regional and Cooperative Cataloging Division, Library of Congress),<sup>4</sup> Daniel J. Rettberg (Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion),<sup>5</sup> and Barry Dov Walfish (University of Toronto Libraries).<sup>6</sup>

Two articles previously published in this journal are relevant to contextualize the constantly changing work of Hebraica catalogers. Daniel Lovins's 2008 article, "The Changing Landscape of Hebraica cataloging," frames the then-new reality for catalogers:

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1. I thank all those who have helped, in various ways, in compiling this survey: Claire Dienstag, Yossi Galron, David Gilner, Leonard (Aryeh) Gold, Rachel L. Greenblatt, Gary Johnson, Arthur Kiron, Linda P. Lerman, David B. Levy, Vardit Samuels, Amanda Seigel, Lyudmila Sholokhova, and Naomi Steinberger. I also acknowledge the material support received from my current employer, the Library of Congress, and the sustained encouragements from my supervisor, Aaron Taub, section head, Israel & Judaica cataloging section.

2. Jamie Swenson, "A legacy built on language," *Report to Contributors, University of Washington*, 2017, accessed August 2, 2021, <https://www.washington.edu/giving/recognition/report-to-contributors/rtc-2017/a-legacy-built-on-language>.

3. Zvi Erenyi, "Yitzhak Kertesz (1956–1995): In Memoriam," *Judaica Librarianship* 9, no. 1–2 (Spring 1994–Winter 1995), 132–133 (1995), <https://ajlpublishing.org/index.php/jl/article/view/185>.

4. "Paul Maher named JACKPHY AOC," *LC Cataloging Newslines: Online Newsletter of the Cataloging Directorate* 9, no. 6 (May 2001), Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/catdir/lccn/lccn0906.html>.

5. Arthur Kiron, "Daniel J. Rettberg, 1952–2013," *Judaica Librarianship* 18: 13 (2014), <https://ajlpublishing.org/index.php/jl/article/view/445>.

6. Rachel Leket-Mor, "Barry Dov Walfish, the Cataloger-Bibliographer-Scholar Librarian," *Judaica Librarianship* 20: 19–20 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1289>.

After all, what does it mean to catalog something that is not even owned by one's library? Today, the object cataloged is often a temporary file on a remote server or a website that changes form and content on a daily basis. What was once thought of as the catalog looks increasingly like a "knowledge portal," a gateway to resources that the library may never have selected or purchased in a traditional sense. (1)

Catalogers excel at joining forces and relying on an increasingly international, cooperative infrastructure to share bibliographic records. Lovins celebrated the beginning of the US-based library consortium, OCLC, and the National Library of Israel. Another international resource frequently used by Hebraica catalogers is the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF).<sup>7</sup> Authority records are crucially important, as they allow all the bibliographic records associated with a creator of a work to appear in a search, whether the name as it appears on the work is Mosheh ben Maimon, ha-Rambam, Moses Maimonides, or Moïse Maïmonide.

Lovins's conclusion about the pace of change in cataloging practices is worth quoting here:

[But] by most accounts, the change hasn't happened quickly enough, and a sense of malaise still haunts the profession. Perhaps most disturbingly, more than sixteen years after the emergence of the World Wide Web, catalog records are still created using a Web-unfriendly encoding scheme from the 1960s, designed primarily for the formatting and printing of catalog cards. The issue of whether bibliographic control is still needed in the age of Google is particularly poignant for non-Roman catalogers. Advances in optical character recognition (OCR), full text scanning, keyword searching, and social tagging, have indeed opened up vast new avenues for organization and discovery. Much of this is still tied to Western languages, but increasingly includes non-Roman script languages as well. Hebraica catalogers have an important role to play, however, in developing standards for machine processing, building the Virtual International Authority File, shaping development of a truly international cataloging code, and providing high-quality structured metadata to Hebraica items whether they be "in the catalog" or out on the open Web. (10)

The other relevant article is Heidi G. Lerner's "Hebraica Catalogers and Cataloging Roles in North America: Today and Tomorrow" (2017). For that article, the author surveyed 23 Hebraica catalogers in North American research libraries to learn how they prepare for and respond to "ongoing changes within the profession." Lerner's purpose in her quantitative survey was different from mine, as she set out to "develop awareness of the current job functions that members of a specific cataloging community carry out and how they might be changing" (137). Most interesting in Lerner's survey was the amount of time spent on specific Hebraica resources. Because of budget constraints, retirements, or moving staff from one job to another, many university libraries and especially the smaller ones utilized the expertise of Hebraica catalogers for cataloging

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7. <https://viaf.org/>.

non-Hebraica materials. The anxiety noted by Lovins in 2008 was also expressed by Lerner’s respondents almost a decade later: 80 percent of them knew that their job responsibilities were changing soon. They wanted to remain employable and therefore volunteered or were assigned to work with new cataloging standards at their employing institutions.

## THE FIELD OF HEBRAICA AND JUDAICA LIBRARIANSHIP IN THE LONGUE DURÉE

Most libraries today separate public and technical services. The person who interacts with patrons is generally a bibliographer. Catalogers are not generally encouraged to offer public service at the reference desk. In the past, however, bibliographic and cataloging functions were united. Dr. David J. Gilner, former director of libraries at the Hebrew Union College (HUC), sent me “a highly selective list of Hebrew catalogers in the last century” (July 23, 2021). The first name mentioned was Moses Marx (1885–1973), who served as librarian at HUC between 1926 and 1955, and whose “work as a *bibliographer* [emphasis added] is easy to document.” Moses Marx catalogued Hebrew and non-Hebrew incunabula and his scholarship is published in the HUC-issued *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*. With Marx, indeed, we encounter the blended role of the bibliographer and the cataloger as it existed a century ago. He and his brother Alexander (1878–1953) at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York City are now mostly remembered for their role as bibliographers. It is easy to understand why: their authored articles, based on the treasures that they helped acquire and catalog for their institutions, had their names attached to them.

The next name mentioned was Bernard Rabenstein, or Bernard Hugo (Baruch Naftali), 1944–2009, who worked at HUC between 1963 and 2004. “Reb Bernele,” as he was dubbed by his colleagues, was the head of Hebrew cataloging from 1980 onward. Being foremost a cataloger and not a bibliographer, Rabenstein ensured that contemporary Hebrew printed books arriving at the library were properly described in the card catalog.

Upon his arrival at HUC in 1963, Rabenstein encountered the third person named by Dr. Gilner, Rabbi Dr. Israel Otto Lehman (1912–1980), the HUC curator of manuscripts and special collections<sup>8</sup> since 1968. Lehman cataloged some thousand Hebrew manuscripts and produced a catalog of the Hebrew manuscript collection. Lehman was born in Berlin and studied at Oxford, where he took Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic dialects and North Semitic inscriptions. He obtained his ordination in Berlin in 1939 and his doctorate at Oxford in 1960. His personal collection of 10,000 books and manuscripts became the core of the Judaica collection at Texas Christian University’s Brite Divinity School Library” (OCLC record no. 868185999). Like Marx before him, Lehman published widely in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* and elsewhere. Both Marx and Lehman were experts in cataloging Hebrew manuscripts, the jewels of the Klau Library at HUC-Cincinnati. Rabbi Dr. Lehman worked at HUC between 1957 and 1980. His position was later occupied by Dr. Daniel J. Rettberg (1952–2013), who served between 2001 and 2013, and since 2015, by Dr. Jordan Finkin. Except for “Reb Bernele,” none of these librarians, manuscript curators, and bibliographers was chiefly a cataloger of the ordinary.

8. <https://archives.tcu.edu/repositories/2/resources/3>.

Only in the last paragraph of his document did Gilner allude to what constitutes the theme of this essay: “Of course, there were very many other individuals, librarians, and library technical assistants, who cataloged tens of thousands of Hebrew books during their careers in Cincinnati.” Those individuals are written out of the history of the Hebrew book for a simple reason: bibliographic records—whether on cards or in electronic format—are anonymous. The articles written by the Marx brothers, Israel Otto Lehman, and Joshua Bloch (New York Public Library) have historical, permanent value. At my own institution, and probably at most other institutions, there is an internal mechanism for identifying the creator of a bibliographic record. But this information is for administrative purposes only and has no lasting historical value. Donors of library materials often get the attention of library administrators, and their generosity is indicated by donor notes in the catalog but the contributions of catalogers are anonymous.

## SEVENTEEN TESTIMONIES OF HEBRAICA CATALOGERS

### 1. JOAN BIELLA: MY LIFE IN HEBREW CATALOGING

Early life: 1947–1964. I’m one of the few Hebraica catalogers who did not come to the field via the Bible, either Jewish or Christian. Born in California to two secular humanist English teachers, my perspective on the field is perhaps unique—hopefully in a useful way. My interest has always been in languages as artifacts, not in the literature which embodies them. In my youth I imagined I would study linguistics and probably end up teaching it, a dry and analytical subject which I pictured as divorced almost as far as possible from human ambitions or passions.

Egypt: 1964–1965. The year after my graduation from high school, my family spent a year in Egypt, where my father taught American literature as a Fulbright professor. I studied Arabic there and thought it a lovely language.

University career: 1965–1978. When we returned to the United States, I entered college at Harvard and soon found that the science of linguistics did not suit me. Instead, I pursued Arabic and eventually found a home in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures. There I met T.O. Lambdin, my Vaterprofessor, and went on to study many of the Semitic languages with him, beginning with Hebrew and ending with Akkadian, with occasional excursions into Hittite and Middle Egyptian. My senior thesis concerned the second column of Origen’s Hexapla (compiled ca. 240 C.E.), which presents the text of the Hebrew Bible transliterated into Greek characters including vowels. The topic foreshadowed the chief preoccupation of my professional career in the study of Hebrew vowels. Eventually I earned a PhD in comparative Semitic philology, a field so esoteric as to be unmarketable. There was only one teaching position in my subject, and my *Vaterprofessor* occupied it.

MLS: 1978. Finding myself in New Haven, Connecticut, desultorily composing my doctoral thesis, I took the opportunity to acquire a master’s degree in library science at Southern Connecticut State College. PhD in hand but rendered somewhat less exotic by my MLS, I was able to obtain paid work.

Israel and the Albright Institute: 1979–1982. My first library position was at the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem. I was hired to re-catalog a library of 60,000 volumes according to the Library of Congress classification system. The project exposed me to masses of L.C. cataloging. When I returned to the United States, I was to discover that AACR2 had (perhaps unfortunately) taken over American cataloging. It was a system virtually unknown when I studied library science in Connecticut, and unheard of, probably to this day, in my small Jerusalem library. The benefits of my few years in Israel were, however enormous, exposing me to spoken Hebrew and Arabic (what a rush!) and enabling me to travel extensively around the country guided by archeologists. Princeton: 1982–1990. After my years in Jerusalem, I was hired as a Hebrew cataloger by Princeton University, where I received excellent training in modern AACR2 cataloging by the legendary Don Thornbury. He received his own training at the Library of Congress and encouraged me to communicate frequently with the then-named Office of Descriptive Cataloging Policy. In those far-off days we corresponded by snail mail, using typewriters. Princeton cataloged using the RLIN bibliographic database, which during my tenure there developed Hebrew script capability. I became something of a local expert in the Hebrew ramifications of RLIN cataloging (not to be confused with a “real expert,” of whom there were then few or none). Eventually I was given opportunities to teach courses in RLIN around the U.S. and at the Library of Congress field office in Cairo.

In this period, I became a member of the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) and the Middle East Librarians Association. Over the years I presented many conference papers to these groups concerning problems of Hebrew and Arabic cataloging, and participated in the cataloging committees of both associations. My special contributions included lavish PowerPoint presentations.

Library of Congress: 1990–2013. In 1990, I accepted a position as Hebrew cataloger at the Library of Congress, where I was trained (again) by Paul Maher, the man who wrote the book on Hebrew cataloging. “The Book” was his *Hebraica Cataloging* (1987), a compilation of solutions to many cataloging problems solved for him in his own training. By no means all of the solutions presented in this manual were self-explanatory or even entirely logical (at least to judge by the reactions of many who have tried to use it). But the relief of having “authorized” policies and practices aided immeasurably in the standardization of Hebrew cataloging. This in turn greatly improved access to *Hebraica* cataloging by all contributors to (especially online) databases.

One of the chief preoccupations of my career at Library of Congress was the preparation of a second edition of *Hebraica Cataloging*, with the assistance and support of many colleagues at AJL. The new edition appeared online in 2015.

Two other projects of great importance grew out of the collegiality of AJL librarians in the era of AACR2 and RLIN: the NACO *Hebraica* Funnel project and the Heb-NACO listserv. The first of these prepares catalogers of *Hebraica* to participate in the Library of Congress’s Name Authority Cooperative Program. It established authorized, standardized forms of names of persons, places and bodies for use in cataloging. The Heb-NACO listserv is an online forum for discussion of

Hebraica cataloging problems and questions, drawing on the varied expertise of catalogers from many countries.

Near the end of my 23 years at the Library of Congress, the AACR2 cataloging rules were replaced by a new system, Research Description and Access (RDA). An enormous worldwide project was undertaken to introduce the new rules to catalogers and train them in their use. I participated in the training program with, of course, particular reference to Hebraica cataloging. Perhaps the replacement of the AACR2 worldview by that imposed by RDA contributed to my subsequent withdrawal from active cataloging, but life goes on.

Retirement: 2013 to present. Now retired in California, I still spend a lot of time thinking about Hebrew vowels, but seldom speak or write about them. My colleagues at Library of Congress and in AJL carry on the struggle for standardized access in many ways, though I judge from what I read in Heb-NACO that slavish subservience to the Library of Congress as arbiter of strictly Hebraica-related cataloging practice is on the wane. What does the future hold? Best of luck, fellow catalogers!

## **2. JERRY-ANNE DICKEL (GERALDINE A. DICKEL), TECHNICAL SERVICES, YALE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

I fell into Hebraica cataloging. I had been a doctoral student in Hebrew Bible at Yale (1989–1999)<sup>9</sup> and I was in the dissertation phase of my studies, which was not going well. I had done fine in my class work and on my comprehensive exams and orals, but a book was published in England that was on the same topic as my dissertation and I never recovered from that downturn. So, when it was time to look for a job, the library was an obvious choice because I had languages, a lot of experience using libraries, and I had worked as an assistant to the reference library at the Yale Divinity School while I was a student.

I began my library career in October 1999 as a copy cataloger for German. I was trained in cataloging by Steven Arakawa, who was extremely knowledgeable about cataloging policies, rules, and issues. After two years I moved into a copy-cataloging position that had become open on the Hebraica cataloging team. Daniel Lovins was the team leader, who trained me in Hebraica cataloging. At this time, I began the MLS program at Southern Connecticut State University. I did most of the program online, all except for the last course on research methodology. I only took one class a semester, so it took seven years for me to complete the degree. During this time, I was expanding my Hebraica cataloging knowledge for different formats: serials, video recordings, and sound recordings in addition to monographs, using documentation to help me learn. I would catalog with the Hebraica cataloging manual open on my lap. Yale also had very good documentation on cataloging (mostly written by Steven Arakawa). I was also able to take classes at the library on subject headings and serial cataloging.

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9. My education included a BFA in Studio Arts (Syracuse University, 1976), a master's in occupational therapy from New York University (1983), a master's in divinity from Union Theological Seminary (1989), and a MLS from Southern Connecticut State University (2007).

The Hebraica catalog librarian position became open in 2009, but Yale put in place a hiring freeze, so I did not officially become the Hebraica catalog librarian until July 2012. I began attending AJL regularly, the first conference I went to as a librarian was the one in Houston. I initially got involved by volunteering at the registration desk and in the hospitality room. I helped create AJL podcasts of sessions back when we were recording sessions. I attended the RAS cataloging committee meetings and became a member in 2014, then served a two-year term as chair (2016–2018). I did not continue for a second term as chair because I knew that I would be retiring. I helped with the review of the Hebraica Catalog manual for RDA, and edited the manual while I was chair. I gave a presentation in the Collection Highlights session at the 2017 AJL meeting in New York City, on an archival collection that I had worked on: The American Jewish Immigration Collection.<sup>10</sup>

I began learning Hebrew with the study of biblical Hebrew at Union Theological Seminary in New York. I had the equivalent of two years of biblical Hebrew classes there, along with Hebrew bible classes. I took some classes in *midrash* at Jewish Theological Seminary of America during this time. One of the classes was my first experience with unpointed texts, and with Mishnaic Hebrew. I had to work very hard in that class as the other students were well ahead of me in reading Hebrew. Fortunately, I found a book on Mishnaic Hebrew grammar in the library that was very helpful, and I had a very nice study partner—she was good at reading the unpointed Hebrew and I was good at Hebrew grammar, so we made a good team.

I continued to study biblical Hebrew and Hebrew bible at Yale, along with biblical Aramaic, Ugaritic and Akkadian. The summer after my first year at Yale, I went to Israel and studied Modern Hebrew at Hebrew University in the summer school. I also travelled, and I went on several hiking trips with the Society for Protection of Nature in Israel. I was very busy with my studies at Yale and was not able to keep up with the study of Modern Hebrew after I returned from Israel.

After I joined the Hebraica catalog team, Yale Libraries started a program which was called the “learning plan”. This program allowed us to use work time for studies or classes or other activities related in some way to our job. I used this program to audit Modern Hebrew classes at Yale and in this way improved my modern Hebrew greatly. I never really became fluent, but I had enough to be able to do the cataloging. I also audited Hebrew classes that were focused on Israeli society and culture, which were great for expanding my knowledge.

What helped me to be successful in my work:

- I received excellent training from Steven Arakawa and Daniel Lovins on cataloging in general and on Hebraica cataloging in particular. These and other librarians have been mentors and sources of accurate information. Librarians at AJL also have been extremely important for helping me learn Hebraica cataloging. I took two semesters of cataloging

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10. The slides for my presentation can be seen here: <http://works.bepress.com/geraldine-dickel/1/>.

at Southern Connecticut State College, but I learned far more about cataloging on the job and through AJL catalog librarians.

- Learning modern Hebrew was obviously essential. My studies of biblical Hebrew were also useful in that these studies gave me a greater understanding of biblical Hebrew grammar, which helps in romanization of modern Hebrew.
- The availability of good documentation and good tools has also been essential. I frequently used Yale’s documentation, the *Hebraica* cataloging manual, AJL’s RAS cataloging wiki, Library of Congress documentation, and other documentation. *Rav Milim*, *Malmed*, and other lexicons and reference material have been very helpful. Another very helpful action was to look at the work of other *Hebraica* catalogers. I have often looked in the Library of Congress catalog to see how they have handled certain issues.

### 3. CLAIRE DIENSTAG, YESHIVA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY<sup>11</sup>

Claire went to St. Paul Central High School, MN, and to Hebrew school five days a week and Sunday mornings. Every afternoon, after class dismissal, she walked to Hebrew School for an hour and a half. In college, she earned a BA in education and a master’s in library science. Upon graduation she served as an assistant to the assistant director of the University of Minnesota Library and as librarian in the biomedical library at the university. She joined the New York Public Library Jewish Division in 1959, became principal cataloger in 1971. The division was part of the reference division and all staff was engaged in cataloging (Hebrew and Yiddish) and serving at the front desk. Ultimately, Claire developed a specialty in cataloging. She was promoted for her good work and given major responsibility in teaching and reviewing the work of the other staff members, and guiding them. This was the time of card catalog, with drawers of cards for the author/title and subject headings that she helped patrons to use.

As far as her involvement in AJL, she considered herself to have had “a minor role,” her husband being more involved in the creation of the organization—yet she was the editor of the *Jewish Library Association Bulletin*.

Claire married Jacob Dienstag in 1965. She takes pleasure in reporting on how they met. She had come from St. Paul during vacations to explore the possibilities of finding a position as a *Judaica* librarian in New York, as “New York was the best place to find *Judaica* libraries.” She investigated Yeshiva University, Stern College, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and of course New York Public Library. At Yeshiva University, she was interviewed by the person who

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11. Sources: Claire Dienstag, “Modifications Made by the New York Public Library to RILIN *Hebraica* Records,” *Judaica Librarianship* 8: 27–30 (1994), <https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1225>; Claire Dienstag, “The Ellis Island of the West: The Galveston Movement and Jewish Immigration to the American Midwest,” Fifth Avenue Synagogue webinar, June 13, 2021, accessed November 11, 2021, <https://youtu.be/Q8q0XAkp7ck>; interview, Claire Dienstag, July 31, 2021; 1940 Federal Census, accessed through Ancestry.com by Gary Johnson, November 12, 2021.



would become her husband. They were married for forty-two years.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. ROSALIE E. KATCHEN, BY AARON L. KATCHEN (JERUSALEM, ISRAEL)<sup>13</sup>

Rosalie claimed that her Hebrew language skills were greatly enhanced by the year she spent at the Hebrew University (1965–1966), always crediting that year of study with having honed both her scholarly and linguistic abilities. These capabilities were further enhanced by some great teachers in the library program at Simmons University, under whom she thrived and who constantly challenged her to refine her research and technical skills. Coming off of her prior training under the guidance of Dr. Charles Berlin, the head of the Judaica Division of the Harvard Library, who saw her potential upon graduation from Simmons with a 4.0 average, she was awarded membership in the honor society Beta Phi Mu. Her cast of mind was embodied in something he always stressed, that it was the eye for detail that made for a great catalog. Furthermore, her advanced degree in Jewish history both suited her intellectual cast of mind and enabled her to understand well both the modern standard scholarly and literary volumes as well as the rare books and manuscripts that she was called upon to process and catalog. Lastly, the re-cataloging of the Brandeis University library collection into the Library of Congress system under the guidance of Dr. Charles Cutter both stimulated her thinking on classification and trained her further in producing what would be necessary in an online environment.

Indeed, it was that period of time and her place in the field of library and information sciences in the 1980s and 1990s that tapped into her innate sense of order, management, and clarity in producing a record that would embody her high standards for proper style and format. Perhaps that is just rhetoric on my part, but I do think that her grace was perhaps what she unwittingly sought to evince in each record she produced. Perhaps also, the ideas of authority control, proper romanization, and all those coordinating factors that advances in online cataloging helped standardize in those years were very much at the fore of her consciousness. I know that the Funnel Project was very close to her heart as well; she was proud to be among its founders and would be pleased with what it achieved.

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12. For more information about Jacob I. Dienstag, who served as the librarian of Yeshiva University's Mendel Gottesman Library of Hebraica/Judaica for thirty years (1940–1970) and the first president of AJL, see Edith Lubetski, "An Interview with Jacob I. Dienstag, President of the Association of Jewish Libraries, 1967," *Judaica Librarianship* 5, no. 2 (1990): 154; David B. Levy's interview and essay, "Learning from Scholar Librarians," *Proceedings of the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries*, Charleston, SC, June 19–22, 2016: 1–153, accessed August 2, 2021, <https://jewishlibraries.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LevyFullText2016.pdf>.

13. Sources: Rosalie E. Katchen, "Retrospective Conversion of Hebraica at Brandeis University," *Judaica Librarianship* 4 (1): 20–22 (1988); Rosalie E. Katchen, "Hebrew Online: Current Issues and Future Concerns: A View from the Field," *Judaica Librarianship* 5 (1): 22–25 (1990); Rosalie E. Katchen, "Hebraica Recon Project at Brandeis University," *RLIN Focus* 6 (June 1994): 5–6. Rosalie E. Katchen, "Use or Non-Use of Parallel Linking Fields in RLIN for Hebrew Script Access Points," *Judaica Librarianship* 8 (1–2): 31–32 (1994), <https://ajlpublishing.org/index.php/jl/article/view/35/25>; Rosalie E. Katchen, "Hebraica Authority Control at Brandeis," *Judaica Librarianship* 8 (1–2): 56–60 (1994), <https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1231>; Heidi G. Lerner, "In Memory of Rosalie Katchen: A Tribute Delivered on June 24, 2001," *Proceedings of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries* (La Jolla, CA, June 24–27, 2001), <https://jewishlibraries.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/lerner-katchen.pdf>.

## 5. PETER KEARNEY, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

When I began the study of Hebrew, I had no idea that I would be using that language some 36 years later as a Hebrew cataloger. I had a course in Hebrew for one semester as part of my study of theology in Rome, preparing for ordination to the Catholic priesthood. I recall receiving a Hebrew happy new year greeting, *le-shanah tovah*, from a friend of my mother who was puzzled when I wrote her a month later that I was still working on it. The problem was that the letters were in cursive, which neither I nor my professor could read.

While in full-time Bible study after ordination, still in Rome, I attended a Hebrew course for immigrants in Israel at Ulpan Etzion. I was able to stay for only about two months and so missed much of the course. I recall one fellow student, a French priest who had worked to help the Jews in France (Righteous Gentile) and was now welcomed in Israel. I recall how he seemed to be struggling with the language more than anyone else in the course. His name was Marcel Dubois and he went on to be a professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University and popular as a public speaker in Hebrew.

A couple of years after I returned to America, I had the great fortune to be asked to write a commentary on the book of Joshua for *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*. I was later assigned to teach the Bible at Catholic University in Washington DC, where I completed the commentary. I felt grateful for the insight that Joshua 5:9—where the Lord says to Joshua, “Today I have removed the reproach of Egypt from you”—should really be translated, “Today I have rolled flint knives upon you,” with God being named as the agent of the circumcision which Joshua had performed in 5:3. As far as I know, I am still the only one who has this view.

I eventually resigned from the priesthood and Catholic University to marry my late wife, **Clare**. About a year later I found employment at the Library of Congress. After nine years in the Copyright Office, I was accepted to the intern program, a marvelous year of learning about the library with the possibility of moving to a different branch if there was a vacancy and the applicant was qualified. A subject cataloging position opened on the Hebraica team and I was graciously accepted. Soon afterwards, I obtained a leave of absence to go to an ulpan in Israel, this time to Ulpan Akiva in Netanya. It had been created and was directed by a wonderful lady who befriended me and promoted my career, the late Shulamit Katznelson. I was there for the happiest and most enriching four months of my life.

My contribution to the world of cataloging back at Library of Congress included writing a skit each year to be put on at the AJL annual conference. The skits usually combined a greatly modified story or myth, such as Jason and the Golden Fleece, for example, together with parodies of songs and matters of current interest in the cataloging world. They were well received, and our staff loved preparing them. Joan Biella contributed much to their text and Henry Lefkowitz to their filming. Our biggest success was at the meeting of the AJL at LC, when the skit told the story of what happens to a book at LC, from when it is a tree, then paper, and eventually a book

on an LC shelf, a story ornamented with parodies of songs from *Fiddler on the Roof*.

From the many subject headings I proposed, I recall with special gratitude and satisfaction the one on Zion, Mount (Jerusalem). It took a lot of work to cover all the possible variations for that heading, but it felt like a great privilege to embark on the task. It summed up for me what a subject cataloger ought to do: be thorough and clear and work at it till you get it right. Also, when you have had enough experience, welcome the chance to teach other catalogers as they come along.

During my last two years as a full-time subject cataloger, our beloved team leader Lenore Bell encouraged me to learn enough descriptive cataloging to be promoted to senior cataloging specialist in the year before I retired (2006) and then became a part-time volunteer cataloger.

## 6. ROGER S. KOHN, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

I came late in my professional life to Hebraica cataloging.

I joined the Library of Congress in September 2003 as a cataloger (GS-10), when I was fifty years old. I had trained as a medieval historian in France, specializing in French Jewry in the second half of the fourteenth century (PhD Paris-Sorbonne, Paris-IV, 1979). I had also trained to teach modern Hebrew in France, where I was working part-time as archivist of two Jewish Parisian institutions. I came to the United States in 1981, having received a Fulbright fellowship to Harvard University (1980–1981), a research fellowship at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, OH (Summer 1981), and a post-doctoral research fellowship at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (1981–1982). In all these three places in the United States, I continued to spend most of my time in libraries and archives working on my research, medieval French Jewry, and on French nineteenth century archival collections found in the United States. I was archivist at Yeshiva University (1984–1988) where my staff and I produced five inventories of Yeshiva archival collections, and at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (1989–1991), where I produced an inventory to the French Jewish communities record group (1991).<sup>14</sup>

In September 1991, I became the first Reinhard Family Curator of Judaica and Hebraica Collec-

14. Other publications include: “Jewish Publishing in France,” *Jewish Book Annual* 41 (5744, 1983/84): 35–47; “The Second Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*: ‘Snapshot’ or ‘Lasting Monument’?” *Studies in contemporary Jewry* 24: 193–205 (2000); “Of Descartes and train schedules: evaluating the Second Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Wikipedia, and other general and Jewish studies encyclopedias,” *Library Review* 59, no. 4 (2010): 249–260; “No Disneyland: Biography and Bibliography of Rabbi Shimeon Brisman (1920–2004),” *Judaica Librarianship* 14: 57–79 (2008), <https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1074>; “Creating a National Bibliographic Past: The Institute for Hebrew Bibliography,” *Judaica Librarianship* 13: 27–40 (2007), <https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1081>; “A Treasured Legacy (II): Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library,” *Library History* 21, (November 2005): 175–188; “A Treasured Legacy: Hebrew Manuscripts at the Bodleiana,” *Library History* 20 (July 2004): 95–116; Bibliography and Index to Liber, Maurice, 1884–1956. *Les juifs et la convocation des Etats généraux* (1789), reprinted with a preface by Gerard Nahon. Louvain: E. Peeters, 1989.

tions at Stanford University Libraries. While in California, I completed my master's in information studies (College of Information Studies, Drexel University, 1993). Between 1998 and 2003, I was living in Cleveland, OH, working part-time first, then unemployed for two years when the position of cataloger opened at the Library of Congress.

My first assignment at Library of Congress was to enter the online catalog the subject headings that Rabbi Theodore Wiener (1918–2006) was jotting on slips for each book that he cataloged as a volunteer after his retirement from the library. Because of my researcher experience, the emphasis of my training was first on subject analysis. The training was gradual, starting first with books in English, then books in Hebrew, assigning subject headings with Benjamin (Ben) Fryser guidance, training in descriptive first in Latin characters, then in Hebrew with Joan Biella. There were occasional tests of my competencies which I found very stressful to allow me to proceed up on the pay scale. Ultimately, I achieved the highest grade possible for my position in 2016 (GS-13) and declared independent, after thirteen years of service, under a new supervisor.

I find cataloging very rewarding, always stimulating my curiosity. Every book is a new beginning. I like the attention to details, checking if the book has already been cataloged elsewhere, and how. I see the cataloging of Rabbinics as the most difficult type of Hebraica cataloging and this is what I do most now. Establishing a name authority, verifying the authorized form at the National Library of Israel or at Bar-Ilan University Library, cataloging books before publication (“E-cip” or “PPBL”), cataloging motion pictures, all this I enjoy. In the regular flow of books ready for cataloging arriving in the Hebraica and Judaica section, I select for my cataloging only books with no existing cataloging (“origRes”). In September 2015, I volunteered to and continued to participate in the BibFrame pilot project, which has helped me understand better descriptive cataloging and the fundamental changes that cataloging is experiencing.

I have served in a few ad hoc committees at Library of Congress. At AJL, I have volunteered my time to edit the Ha-Safran column for *AJL Newsletter* (1994–1997), serve on the Reference Books Award Committee (1994–1999), and coordinate the job opportunities column (1996–2004). Since 1991, I have contributed over 125 book reviews to *AJL Newsletter* and *AJL News and Reviews*.

Cataloging is experiencing major shifts, moving away from a strictly enforced rules with a model of a perfect cataloging record to the realization that artificial intelligence and the semantic web makes the human intervention partially redundant. The recent concept of “cataloger’s judgment” will lead to less consistency in the particulars—enriched as each cataloger sees fit—but retrieval will still be possible from the core elements of the bibliographic record.

## 7. LEONARD MATHLESS<sup>15</sup>

**Bella Hass Weinberg:** ... he called me after the publication of the Library of Congress guide, *Hebraica Cataloging*,<sup>16</sup> expressing interest in writing about the rules with which he disagreed [ . . . ] Although Leonard left no formal publications (to my knowledge), it is the purpose of this piece to demonstrate he did indeed leave a rich legacy to Judaica librarians [ . . . ] I remember that Leonard received an award at an AJL Convention [1993] for contributing the most Hebraica records to the RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network) database . . . Leonard was recognized for the quality of his cataloging records as well as the quantity. Quality of cataloging is the focus of this tribute. . . Leonard Mathless's bibliographic records exemplified the idea of the catalog as a reference tool. He was a cataloger who stimulated new questions in a researcher's mind and could himself provide the answers on the basis of his extensive knowledge of Judaica . . .

**Linda P. Lerman:** Those who had the privilege to work with Lenny knew him as the consummate professional who took great pride and satisfaction in his work. His career began at Ohio State University as a Hebraica cataloger . . . In 1987 Lenny was promoted to chief Hebraica cataloger, supervising a second cataloger responsible for Arabic and occasionally Hebraica cataloging and support staff . . . In April 1987, I assumed the newly created position of Judaica bibliographer (later Judaica curator) and began a nearly six-year close working relationship with Lenny. From the first, I appreciated Lenny as a strong, consistent, and relentless cataloger who succeeded in maintaining a high quality in his work while meeting the goals for quantity too . . . The [Yale] library administration often noted the synergy between collection development and technical services with regard to the Judaica and Hebraic collection. They wanted to know how things worked so well, how so much was accomplished. It was simple. Mutual respect and confidence in your colleague's professionalism . . . Lenny was the best colleague and friend imaginable.<sup>17</sup>

## 8. CAROLINE R. MILLER, RESOURCE ACQUISITIONS AND METADATA SERVICES, UCLA LIBRARY

I started as a library assistant at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, CA typing cards in

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15. The first two sections are reproduced from *AJL Newsletter* (Nov./Dec. 1997), cover, 13 (currently unavailable electronically).

16. *Hebraica Cataloging: A Guide to ALA/LC Romanization and Descriptive Cataloging*, prepared by Paul Maher, Senior Descriptive Cataloger Descriptive Cataloging Division, 1987. Online edition, slightly revised, 2005. [https://www.loc.gov/cds/desktop/documents/Hebraica\\_cataloging.pdf](https://www.loc.gov/cds/desktop/documents/Hebraica_cataloging.pdf).

17. Additional information received by personal communication with Lerman (July 26–27, 2021): I recall the meticulous work Leonard did in . . . processing a significant gift of Yiddish materials . . . It wasn't an existing "collection," but a collaboration initiated by me with Aaron Lansky . . . we located a donor who agreed to donate \$300,000 to purchase Yiddish materials from the National Yiddish Book Center [NYBC; now the Yiddish Book Center] . . . The donation included funds to hire a Yiddish cataloging assistant for 2–3 years . . . [and] for processing, preservation, and conservation of the collection. NYBC published an issue featuring the gift, see also Matt Fassler, "At Yale: Our Sterling Judaica Collection," *Urim v'Tumim* 4, no. 2: 15–17 (Winter 1989/Hanukka 5750; *Urim v'Tumim* was a student quarterly of Yale's Jewish Community); Linda P. Lerman, "New Yiddish Book Endowment," *Nota Bene; news from the Yale Library* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1989); Linda P. Lerman, "Access to Hebraica at Yale," *Nota Bene; news from the Yale Library* 4, no. 1 (spring 1990). He also migrated Yale's printed Hebraica shelf list, comprised of acquisitions slips arranged by title, to RLIN.

Hebrew and English for the library in the early 1980s. Margo Gutstein was the cataloger there. That is when I got interested in libraries and cataloging. In 1985–1986, I spent the year volunteering in the at Ben Gurion University library, where I worked in the cataloging department. I did bibliographic checking for English materials and filed in the card catalog, a job that spurred me to go to library school. My background in Hebrew came from attending Jewish day school. I also minored in Jewish studies during my undergraduate education.

I went to library school at UCLA, where I graduated in 1989 after having done a cataloging internship at the University of Judaism (UJ; now the American Jewish University). I was then hired as a professional cataloger at there. The UJ was a charter member of the group that implemented non-Roman scripts in RLIN. That became available in 1988, making use of a cooperative catalog for the first time in the library. I printed our Hebrew/Yiddish records on card stock. I felt like I was a pioneer in making Hebrew script records more widely accessible.

I left UJ in 1993 and joined the UCLA Library as a Hebraica cataloger. UCLA was an OCLC library and I quickly had to get used to Romanization-only records. OCLC did not add Hebrew script until 2005. In 1993, UCLA sent me to the YIVO Institute in New York to take a course on Hebraica Cataloging offered by Bella Hass Weinberg. It was there that I learned the true intricacies of what is involved in Hebraica cataloging. I was sent to the Library of Congress to learn how to contribute NACO records in Hebrew in early 1994, prior to the establishment later that year of Hebrew NACO Funnel Project. The Heb-NACO listserv was created to support the Funnel. In 2000, I wrote an article about it with Joan Biella for *Judaica Librarianship*.<sup>18</sup>

I continued to attend AJL conferences for several years and at one point was a member of the RAS cataloging committee. Due to conflicting job demands, I got away from regularly cataloging Hebraica materials, although I continue to do so as time permits.

## 9. RABBI CLIFF MILLER

Rabbi Cliff was born in Detroit, Michigan, and from his younger years wanted to be the rabbi of a traditional American Conservative congregation. And he did. He has been a Jewish chaplain in Wichita Falls, Texas, in Bangkok, Thailand, and Bellevue, Nebraska, and a pulpit rabbi in Rockville, Maryland, Germantown (Philadelphia), Bayside Hills (Queens), Scotch Plains, New Jersey, Minneapolis, Minnesota, East Windsor (NJ), and Bayonne, New Jersey.

Rabbi Miller begun acquiring his knowledge of Hebrew at quite a young age from the United Hebrew Schools of Detroit while attending Detroit public schools from kindergarten through grade ten and in the summer camp Ramah in Wisconsin. At this camp and many others in North America, the campers had to converse in Hebrew for all their activities, not only during Hebrew prayers. Later young Miller taught at other Ramah Camps for almost a decade. In New York

18. Caroline Holt, and Joan Biella, “Selected Topics on Hebraica Cataloging from the Heb-NACO Listserv,” *Judaica Librarianship* 10 (1–2): 21–28 (2000), <https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1148>.

City, Miller studied at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) while also earning a bachelor's degree from Columbia University.

Years after studying at the JTS for the degree of Doctor of Hebrew Literature in Liturgy, he earned a degree of Master of Library Service from Rutgers University and interned at the JTS Library. All through library school, he pictured himself as working upon graduation in public services. Interning at the reference desk, he discovered that reference was not the mind-stretching, fulfilling role he had imagined. Instead, he enjoyed cataloging, so when a reference slot was offered to him, he declined it. For him, cataloging is like solving crossword puzzles. Since the 1966 fire at JTS Library, he has cataloged books without covers or title page. He enjoys working with different languages in different character sets, and discovering the title, author, place, publisher, date, and subject contents of a book that seems determined to keep its identity secret.

#### **10. BERNARD H. RABENSTEIN (1945?–2009)<sup>19</sup>**

After Bob Singerman left and before Ellen Siegel Kovacic came to Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati), Bernie was appointed coordinator of Hebrew cataloging and I was appointed coordinator of Roman cataloging. We worked together to switch from ALA to International Standard Bibliographic Description punctuation to get ready for AACR2. Bernie was part of the projects to produce Hebrew catalog cards using an Apple II+ computer and then fully finished cards sets from RLIN records, when we joined RLG. When we implemented our VTLIS OPAC library system, Bernie worked closely with Ellen on matters touching on Hebrew records. He also took part in the transition from the Freidus cataloging system to LC in the mid-1960s. Bernie supervised the filing of cards in both the Hebrew titles catalog and maintenance of the Freidus catalog. He was an exacting teacher, and everyone relied on his knowledge of how cards were to be filed in both catalogs.<sup>20</sup>

Bernie was a master of puns, especially multilingual Hebrew-Yiddish-English-Yeshivish puns. He was a real pleasure to have as a member of the library staff.

#### **11. RUTH A. RIN, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARY<sup>21</sup>**

I was at Penn from 1974 to 2010. As you can see on my website,<sup>22</sup> I currently am involved in translation and tutoring. What I would have to say about my contribution to the field are well-

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19. Source: personal communication with David Gilner, August 6, 2021.

20. See his correspondence with Bella Haas Weinberg: "Catalog Departments," Commentaries, *Judaica Librarianship* 2, no. 1–2 (1985): 4.

21. Sources: personal communication with Ruth Rin, July 12, 2021; "Departures," Penn's 2011 *Jewish Studies Program Newsletter* 14, [https://jwst.sas.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/files/Jewish\\_Studies\\_Newsletter\\_Fall2011.pdf](https://jwst.sas.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/files/Jewish_Studies_Newsletter_Fall2011.pdf), accessed October 09, 2021; Personal communication with Arthur Kiron, July 13, 2021.

22. <https://www.alefbethebrewtranslationandtutoring.com/selected-translations>, accessed July 12, 2021.

known things, such as our participation first in OCLC, then RLIN, then OCLC again, contributing to the national databases of Hebraica materials, as well as to NACO headings.

I was chair of the AJL cataloging committee for three years back in the 1990s and in that capacity the committee made several proposals to LC regarding subject headings . . . From 1964 to 1983, my mother, Shifra Rin (M.A. in Semitic Studies), was Hebraica bibliographer and cataloging librarian at Van Pelt-Dietrich Library of the University of Pennsylvania. She came to Penn directly from Library of Congress, where she was Hebraica cataloging librarian for about two years. When I first came to Penn in 1974, I was a general cataloging librarian, cataloging English, French, and some Italian. From 1983 to 2000, I was both the Hebraica bibliographer and Hebraica cataloging librarian. In 1999, a new position of a Judaica curator was created, fulfilled by Arthur Kiron. Since then until my retirement, I continued to serve as Hebraica cataloging librarian.

**Arthur Kiron, University of Pennsylvania Library:** As the selector of Hebraica before my position was established. . . Ruth created the Penn Libraries’ original approval plan with Hanan and Helen Rivkin of Jerusalem Books. Among the significant collections Ruth cataloged were the Dzialowski Holocaust Memorial Collection<sup>23</sup> and the Israel Biderman Collection.<sup>24</sup> Notably, Ruth created an invaluable guide to searching Hebraica in Franklin, our online catalog.<sup>25</sup> She also donated her parents’ library; her father Svi Rin was a major scholar of ancient Semitic languages at Penn.<sup>26</sup> As noted by Heidi Lerner of Stanford University Libraries to Robert Bovino, head of our library’s original cataloging department (2008), Ruth had “an extraordinary command of the complexities of Hebrew language, literature, grammar, and philology. Her catalog records, whether newly created or derived from existing cataloging reflect a reliability of romanization that is perhaps the most precise and correct being created in the United States . . . Ruth, because of her wide knowledge of language, culture, and history [was] able to provide reliable and accurate subject analysis where others might make mistakes.”

## 12. MARLENE SCHIFFMAN, YESHIVA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

I studied Hebrew all my life, but not very effectively. My real knowledge came from an *ulpan* I attended for a year in Beer Sheva sponsored by Ben Gurion University and a summer *ulpan* at Hebrew University. While a grasp of Hebrew language, especially grammar, is very important for a Hebraica cataloger, it is equally important to have competency in Bible and liturgy, as so many of the titles and quotations come from these sources. A cataloger has first to recognize that the phrase to be dealt with is biblical or liturgical in nature; then it has to be Romanized in accordance with its original Hebrew or Aramaic pronunciation, not its modern Hebrew iteration. Familiarity with Jewish law and Jewish history is also valuable. I attend the Association for Jewish

23. [https://franklin.library.upenn.edu/catalog?q=+Dzialowski+Holocaust+Collection.+&search\\_field=subject\\_search](https://franklin.library.upenn.edu/catalog?q=+Dzialowski+Holocaust+Collection.+&search_field=subject_search).

24. <https://franklin.library.upenn.edu/bento?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=israel+biderman+collection>.

25. <https://www.library.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/docs/lkcajs/Searching-Hebraica-Titles-at-Penn.pdf>.

26. <https://franklin.library.upenn.edu/bento?q=From+the+Library+of+Prof.+Svi+Rin+and+Shifra+Rin>.



Studies (AJS) conferences when able and have long advocated a greater connection between AJL and AJS. There is so much information to be learned at AJS, especially about current academic trends in Judaic studies.

I got into Hebraica librarianship because it combines my knowledge of Jewish subjects and my interest in librarianship. I attained my MLS at Columbia University's department of library and information science (which unfortunately closed), specializing in the humanities track. I later obtained a master's in history with a certificate in archival management from New York University.

My first position was at Temple Beth Sholom in Roslyn Heights, NY where I reorganized the library with the advice of Marcia Posner and worked with the religious school classes. I attended meetings of the Long Island Chapter of AJL but became more involved in AJL when I started to work at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1984. While I worked there for five years, I began to do programming in AJL's New York Metropolitan Area chapter (NYMA). This was a time when NYMA was quite active and sponsored spring and fall conferences, a cataloging workshop, a reference workshop, and a day school workshop every year.

In 1989–1990, I spent a year in Israel where I attended classes at the Hebrew University in Jewish history. When I returned, I started working in technical services at Yeshiva University (YU). I was on the programming committee for the AJL 1993 national convention in New York, and subsequently became NYMA cataloging coordinator, vice-president and president.

I have attended every national AJL conference but one since 1986. I have written and edited articles for *Judaica Librarianship* and written book reviews. Papers I have presented at AJL have been inspired by my work. For example, I have spoken about the Baruch Strauss collection and the Louis Lewin archival collection, both at YU, the YU experience of joining the NACO Hebraica Funnel—both at the initial stages and 25 years later—and chronograms found in Hebrew books.<sup>27</sup> I have been prompted by my NACO work to be interested in Jewish onomastics, and I gave a paper at the World Union of Jewish Studies on the way in which LC establishes Hebrew names, quite an eye-opener for the audience that included the person who is charged with devising English equivalents for Hebrew street signs. For the sixtieth anniversary of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 2008, I organized a session at the Cleveland AJL conference that featured John Kampen, a Scrolls scholar.

Later on, Joyce Levine, AJL's publications chair, was charged with updating *Creating a Collection*, fifth edition, and I agreed to help. I did not know it was going to be such a major project. Together with Leslie Monchar, I selected and annotated hundreds of books, creating new categories and greatly expanding the book. Joyce formatted our sixth edition and made the publication arrangements in 2015.

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27. An updated version of which will be published in the Leah Adler memorial volume currently being prepared by YU librarians.

One of the most interesting aspects of cataloging is the NACO Funnel. A group of us from various libraries were trained in 1993 by Joan Biella and Rosalie Katchen, of blessed memory. I am the representative for YU, so I submit names to the chair of the Funnel on behalf of YU catalogers who encounter a conflict of names or a reason to establish or update an authority. It is detective work to differentiate names and determine who is the author of the work in hand. Often we email the authors who generally respond with the needed information and, in some cases, express delight at being listed in LC's authority file. Our ability to provide details was expanded by the adoption of RDA in August 2012. Cataloging is always a learning process, and the willingness to adopt new standards and the ability to pay attention to small details are certainly requisite skills. Such is the case when we learned to catalog new formats such as DVDs or online theses. And didn't we all have to learn how to make PowerPoint slides?

As a member for some years on the RAS cataloging committee, I have participated in many discussions that resulted in policies on Romanization, individual subject headings or class numbers that had to be changed or updated. I have lately suggested corrections to the Christian biases inherent in subject headings.

Internally, as part of the YU Libraries' strategic plan, I chaired the staff development work group. This group offers lunchtime learning programming and organizes an annual mini symposium. Also, it was decided to start a staff newsletter, and I was appointed editor. I determined that in order for it to be timely, it had to appear quarterly. As editor, I have to keep up with what is going on in the library generally, in all the departments. I cover the AJL and highlight the YU participants' papers, announce publications by our staff, interview new staff members in order to introduce them, relate personal news, and cover the library talks we sponsor in which faculty members discuss their most recent books. The news ranges from the recent flood in the basement to the OCLC COVID briefings and the YU COVID policies from the HR department. A cataloger has to feel oneself part of the technical services department but also part of the larger institution, a member of the team working for a common goal.

Adaptability is key here, too. When our newsletter platform needed to change from a template in Word to Canva, I had to investigate a new platform with our IT department, and, once Canva was chosen, I had to learn it overnight. I did not find their tutorials very helpful, so I turned to a sure thing—a person under 25 (actually a grandchild under 15)—and I was able to convert the content to Canva before the next newsletter was due!

Taken together, all these activities of a cataloger are quite diverse. Keeping abreast of the latest cataloging rules, mastering the computer codes, and checking the Romanization are just a small part of the job. Writing, editing, presenting papers, programming, and chairing various committees are also often required. Hebraica catalogers can use their talents to contribute to the enterprise that is *Judaica* librarianship while creating for themselves a challenging and intellectually stimulating career.

### **13. JASMIN SHINOHARA, HEBRAICA CATALOGER, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA LIBRARY**

I was born in Indiana to Israeli parents. Thanks to them, I grew up hearing Hebrew constantly. We went back and forth between Israel and Indiana a few times in my youth, but we ended up staying in Indiana. While in Israel, I had the opportunity to spend first and second grades in the Israeli school system and to formally learn to read and write Hebrew. Even after returning to Indiana, my parents had us continue our Hebrew studies at home during our elementary years. We also went to Israel in the summers to spend time with family. At home, like many immigrants' children, our parents would address us in their native Hebrew and we children would respond in English, the dominant surrounding language; during summers we were immersed in Hebrew and spoke the language with our family and with peers at day camp.

In high school, I chose to learn German in fulfillment of the foreign language requirement. I chose German because I knew it was closely related to Yiddish. I found the language easy to learn and studied five years of German in my four years of high school. Though my Israeli grand- and great-grandparents would speak to each other in Yiddish on occasion, I did not learn Yiddish till my year after high school, when I was at Hebrew University. I am very hesitant to attempt speaking in Yiddish since it comes out sounding more like German, but my studies have enabled me to handle Yiddish library materials with confidence.

My undergraduate degree is from Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women. I was originally a chemistry major, but I was happy to end up with a Jewish studies degree. I also put my natural aptitude for attention to detail to use as a copyeditor for the school newspaper and other publishers/publications. I began copyediting while at the Hebrew University and continued till after completing my undergraduate degree. After graduating from Stern, I returned to Israel to study in Michlalah Jerusalem College's Israeli program, supporting myself with copyediting work. Though I was thriving in my studies at Michlalah, the year was 2001; between 9/11 and the beginning of the second Intifada, terrorism and violence spurred my decision to return home to Indiana.

It was then that my sister told me about a friend studying library science. I researched the field and was excited to discover how the profession closely aligned with my interests and talents. I earned my master's in library science at Indiana University (IU). Obviously, the cataloging class with its focus on so many details was my favorite, and I was able to work as a graduate assistant for my cataloging instructor, a cataloger for IU's main library. This experience would later be instrumental in getting my first professional job.

I recall scouring the online job boards during my job search. Finally, one day, there it was—the perfect job; I was so thrilled by the posting that I remember calling out, “I think I found my dream job!” That job ad was for Marcia Goldberg z”l position at the University of Maryland (UMD). Between the requirement for “bibliographic knowledge of Hebrew” and “familiarity with Rabbinics,” I felt confident the job would suit me “to a T,” as it indeed did and continues

to do. I was at UMD for a little over six years when I got the call from Ruth Rin, whom I had met at a Library of Congress training session, encouraging me to apply for her soon-to-be vacant position at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn).

Both while at UMD and in my current position at Penn, most materials I catalog are contemporary Israeli publications in print and in audio or audiovisual formats. These are in Hebrew with some Yiddish and Ladino and the occasional other Judeo language added to the mix. Before Penn created and filled the position of Judaica special collections cataloging librarian, I also enjoyed working on rare books and manuscripts. One of the aspects I like best about my work is that I am constantly exposed to new and varied facets of the Jewish world writ large which feeds the life-long learner in me.

Another area of my work that I enjoy is collaborating with colleagues at other institutions. These relationships are fostered by AJL. I first attended an AJL conference right after starting at UMD (they were still called conventions back then). The professionalism and camaraderie were wonderful, and I have not missed a year yet. I presented for a cataloging forum at my second conference and again a few years later. At some point I was invited to join the cataloging committee, whose membership rotates, as an official member. I have served as both a committee member and chair, and I also serve as the committee's wiki administrator. Our wiki is the site of record for Hebraica cataloging policies, procedures, reference aides, and committee archives.

To address the next generation of Hebraica catalogers, I would emphasize that the most important skill a Hebraica cataloger needs is a solid command of the Hebrew language and its grammar. Romanization and even cataloging can be learned on the job, if necessary (I learned how to Romanize while at UMD), but Hebrew language and grammar cannot be taught on the job. While I will grant that there is a question of the necessity of Romanization in catalogs of the future, for the present, Romanization continues to be a fundamental part of Hebraica and other non-Roman script cataloging. And certainly, you have got to love those details.

Some of the major changes to the field that I have witnessed during my career of a little over 15 years so far include the demise of the RLG network, the transition from AACR2 to RDA cataloging codes, and the introduction of linked data in libraries. To my knowledge, OCLC has done a good job of absorbing most RLG features and functions. It will be interesting to observe how RDA continues to change in response to evolving bibliographic models and how linked data will integrate with the extant MARC infrastructure to meet users' needs.

#### **14. AVROM E. SHUCHATOWITZ, YESHIVA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

After graduating from Touro College majoring in liberal arts, I attended Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY, where I obtained my MLS degree in 1975. My interest was in Judaica cataloging as I have always had an interest in Jewish religious literature. After applying all over the United

States, I could not find any open positions, as every institution wanted somebody with experience. About a year later I heard about a position for a cataloger at Jews' College in London (now London School of Jewish Studies), England. I was hesitant about going to England or any foreign country, for that matter. I would rather have been in America, where I would be more comfortable.

I had no choice but to take the London offering. I worked at that library from September 1976 to June 1981. I cataloged Judaica books in both Hebrew and English, including some rare books. I used the Elazar system for classification because it is so similar to the Dewey system which was then widely used in England. Everything was done by hand with no computers or access to any databases like OCLC. I was also involved in putting together bibliographies and collecting books for exhibit the college wanted to feature. One was about Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, and another was about Jewish life in Palestine from the 1800s until 1948. It was an interesting position which did give me some experience, but it was not compatible with modern contemporary librarianship.

In 1981, I heard about an opening for a cataloger at the Hebrew Theological College in Skokie, Illinois. This, too, did not satisfy my interests because the classification system was their own and there was no computer involved nor access to LC or OCLC. After six months I left Skokie.

My present position is at Yeshiva University in New York, where I have been working as a Judaica cataloger since the beginning of 1982. I catalog mostly Hebrew, mainly religious literature. While it is mostly books, I catalog occasionally electronic resources, sound recordings (cassettes and CDs) and audiovisual materials (DVDs and VHS). I also catalog rare books. I have been involved in cataloging YU's extensive Ladino collection. With the help of a Ladino expert, I cataloged a few hundred Ladino books, religious literature, novels, and poetry. This present is really keeping me in tune with the current trends in librarianship. Here is where I learned all about AACR2, RDA, OCLC, Romanization and all the computer applications. It was here that I had access to AJL and felt in tune with the modern world. I believe it is very important to have a working knowledge of Hebrew to do justice to recording bibliographical data. Knowledge of the rabbinic sources is also vital in order to understand the content of the book being cataloged.

I am a member of AJL and attend annual conferences. I gave two presentations: one was about the Ladino collection at the Yeshiva University Library (New York, 2017), and the other was "Early Bible Printings in the Yeshiva University Library" (Woodland Hills, CA, 2019).

## **15. RACHEL SIMON, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

Rachel Simon has a B.A. from Tel Aviv University (1967), a MA (1972) and a PhD from the Hebrew University (1983), and a MLSL from the University of Washington (1990). She was the book review editor, *MELA Notes* (1995–2021), member of the AJL education committee

(2005–2015), member (2006–2012) and chair (2016–2018) of AJL’s reference and bibliography awards committee, member of the AJL cataloging committee (2008–2012) and Ex officio (2016–2018), section editor of the *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, Online and second edition (2011–2015), and vice president of the Research, Archives and Special Libraries Division of the AJL (2016–2018).

I started as a Hebrew and Turkish cataloger 31 years ago. After a year or so I was asked to give a presentation at the AJL annual conference on our Hebrew NACO experience, and this was also published later in *Judaica Librarianship*. While preparing for our approval to contribute rabbinic names, I prepared a list of the Romanization of abbreviations, and when Joan Biella heard about it, she asked to see it, and eventually this was published in *Judaica Librarianship* and on the web. With Joan I created another website on chapters in the Talmud, and myself on right and wrong Romanizations. Now I do more Turkish cataloging, because there are so much more member copies of Hebrew titles on OCLC, and hardly any of Turkish.

I would like to add that I still do some Hebrew cataloging—usually the more difficult ones that do not have member copy after several months, most often Rabbinics. Also, I produce all our Hebrew Personal Name Authority Records (NARs).<sup>28</sup>

#### **16. WENDIE SITTENFELD, HEAD LIBRARIAN, LIBRARY OF THE JACK M. BARRACK HEBREW ACADEMY BALA-CYNWYD, PENNSYLVANIA**

My library uses OPALS library software from Media Flex Inc. This operating system was originally part of a grant from the Avi Chai bookshelf program for high schools,<sup>29</sup> for which I was a library consultant (January 2002–June 2009). It was selected due to the ability to catalog materials in non-Roman script. All of the recipients of the grant were members of the Avi Chai Jewish high school librarians group.

Students who are comfortable in Hebrew will search our OPAC in Hebrew. If not, they may conduct an author or subject search in English. I was working and raising small children while pursuing my master of science degree in information studies from Drexel University (1992–1995). I gave birth to my third child during my third year of studies.

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28. Rachel Simon has published widely. For her cataloging-related publications, see “Printing and Printers,” *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, vol. 4: 100–112, Leiden: Brill, 2010; “Contributing Hebrew Name Authorities to NACO: A Participant’s View,” *Judaica Librarianship* 8 (1–2): 61–68 (1994), <https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1232>; “‘Hayah Noten Ba-Hem simanim’: Hebrew Abbreviations, Chiefly Rabbinic, and Their ALA/LC Romanization,” *Judaica Librarianship* 9 (1–2): 75–82 (1995), <https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1186> (co-authored with Joan Biella); “Reference Sources for Sephardic Studies,” *Judaica Librarianship* 9 (1–2): 144–50, 160 (1995), <https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1198>; “The Contribution of Hebrew Printing Houses and Printers in Istanbul to Ladino Culture and Scholarship,” *Judaica Librarianship* 16: 125–35 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.14263/2330-2976.1008>.

29. <https://avichai.org/program-listings/avi-chai-bookshelf-for-high-schools/>.

My achievements in the field of professional librarianship are greatly due to the mentorship and encouragement of Mr. Eliezer Wise, MLS who was my supervisor at the Gratz College Library (September 1981 to June 1985) and at the Reconstructionist College Library (September to June 1998).

### 17. DORA STEINGLASS (1905–1993)<sup>30</sup>

Dora Steinglass was born September 5, 1905 in New York, the oldest of five children of immigrant parents, both born in Warsaw, Poland. She lived all her life in Brooklyn, NY, except her later years when she lived in Manhattan. She never married. According to the 1940 census, she had completed college and was working forty hours a week as a librarian, but where is not indicated in this source, most likely already the New York Public Library (NYPL).

Steinglass has been described as the “personal secretary”<sup>31</sup> of Rabbi Joshua Bloch (Lithuania, 1890–1957), the head of NYPL’s Jewish Division from 1923 to 1956; Steinglass contributed the bibliography of Bloch’s writings in the Joshua Bloch Memorial Volume (1960). She continued to serve as chief Hebraica cataloger under his successor, Abraham Berger (1903–1989), as Leonard (Aryeh) Gold remembers: “before I became chief, when Abraham Berger was still in charge, the chief Hebraica cataloger was Dora Steinglass. Miss Steinglass later served as chief of the division for a couple of years between Mr. Berger’s retirement and my appointment.” Indeed, when Abraham Berger retired in 1967,<sup>32</sup> Steinglass was briefly the division chief (August 1967 to December 1969).

Steinglass short appointment as chief of the Jewish Division at NYPL is important for two reasons. She was a pioneer, the first Hebraica cataloger who became later in their career a Jewish bibliographer, a phenomenon more common now. The second reason is no less important: in the 1960s, it was not common for a woman to lead a division at a public or academic library in the United States. It probably helped her to secure this appointment that she was already a senior employee, close to retirement age; she also had close relationships with key managers at NYPL, such as Hannah Friedman, the head of Acquisitions for the research libraries and the sister of Abraham Berger. All division chiefs of the Jewish Division until the twenty-first century were men.

She died on February 27, 1993, at age 87, also in New York.

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30. Sources: personal communication with Dr. Lyudmila Sholokhova, September 14, 2021; interview, Dr. Leonard A. (Aryeh) Gold, October 10, 2021; 1940 Federal Census, accessed through Ancestry.com by Gary Johnson, November 12, 2021.

31. “Perhaps the most interesting article in this volume is the bibliography of Bloch’s writings by Dora Steinglass who served as his personal secretary.” Hyman B. Grinstein, “Reviewed Work: The Joshua Bloch Memorial Volume. Studies in Booklore and History by Abraham Berger, Lawrence Marwick, Isidore S. Meyer.” *Jewish Social Studies* 25, no 3 (July 1963), 232. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4466038>.

32. “Abraham Berger: Librarian, 86.” *New York Times*, March 18, 1989: 10.