

IDC Jewish Studies on Microfiche: a Critique

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In 1975, the Inter Documentation Company (IDC) of Zug, Switzerland, embarked on an ambitious and highly significant project in the field of Judaica publishing. The *Jewish Studies Microfiche Project*, in the terms of its publisher, "is designed to encourage the distribution and easy use of rare and important books, periodicals and other materials in the broad field of Jewish studies that would otherwise remain largely inaccessible" (IDC, 1983, p. 1). In 1983, the company published its first comprehensive Judaica catalog entitled *Jewish Studies: Research Collections on Microform*. The 107-page catalog lists titles in history, philosophy and religion, languages and literature, bibliography, as well as a large number of periodicals and newspapers.

The material made available through this project, selected in consultation with an international team of scholarly advisors, dates mainly from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and is virtually unobtainable on the antiquarian market. The cost of the odd item that does appear or that is reprinted in book form is usually prohibitive. IDC is thus providing an invaluable service to the scholarly community. Newly-established Jewish studies collections can now obtain an important group of older materials and well-established libraries can replace worn or disintegrating material at a reasonable cost.

While the IDC Jewish Studies project is well conceived and fills an important need, its implementation is both technically and bibliographically wanting. In the course of cataloging the more than two hundred IDC titles acquired by the University of Toronto Library, we have encountered numerous cases of incorrect or misleading bibliographic information in the catalog or on the microfiche headers, as well as many examples of items which were incomplete without explanation. The examples that follow are presented in order to assist Judaica catalogers in processing this material, as well as to call to the attention of IDC and other Judaica publishers the importance of providing accurate information to the community of Judaica scholars.

Omissions

(Page numbers refer to the IDC Catalog of 1983.)

P. 103 [Carlebach, S.] *Festschrift*.

Pages 102–251 of the Hebrew section are missing. (In reply to an inquiry, IDC indicated that it had no immediate plans to correct this omission.)

P. 70 *Tafsir S. Tehillim wa-Sharhuhu bi'l Arabiyah*.

This is a composite of various editions of sections of Saadia Gaon's Judeo-Arabic translation of the Psalms. In the original form, the pamphlets contained the Judeo-Arabic text, a German translation and critical notes by the editor. The Judeo-Arabic text is lacking in the IDC edition, despite the title in the catalog entry.

P. 35 Malkhi, R. M. *Likkutim la-Perush al ha-Torah*. Jerusalem, 1923.
Pt. 1.

Part 2 of this work was published in 1922, and should have been included.

P. 62 Auerbach, B. H. *Ha-Zofeh al Darkhei ha-Mishnah*. Frankfurt a. M., 1861.

Pages 3–14 are lacking. It should have been possible to locate a complete copy.

P. 36 Hanani, Y. *Tenu'at ha-Haskalah be-Erez-Yisra'el ba-Me'ah ha-19*. Jerusalem, 1949.

The title page—the only source of bibliographic data for this thesis—is missing. It was ascertained from Kressel that the author is Yisra'el Hanani, born in 1906, and not the better-known author Yosef Hanani.

P. 42 *Di Sotsialistische literatur af Idish*. Minsk, 1935. v.2.

P. 43 Golitsyn, N. N. *Istoriia*. . . vol. 1.

P. 44 *Materialy dlia istorii*. . . . vol. 1.

No indication is given in the catalog as to whether other volumes were ever published.

When a publisher undertakes to microfilm material and offer it for sale, every attempt should be made to locate the best and most complete copies of the originals before filming. In the case of periodicals and newspapers, full runs should be assembled whenever feasible. Despite IDC's claim that they searched thoroughly for missing issues in an attempt to complete periodical runs, I am left with the impression that in most cases they merely filmed the holdings of the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem and did not look further.

Errors

P. 63 Elijah, Gaon of Vilna. *Haggahot Yerushalmi*. Koenigsberg, 1858.

This item is incorrectly identified and is actually:

Masekhet Kalah 'im perush ha-Ga'on. R. E. mi-Yilna [et al.], 1892/3.

Other items are incorrectly attributed. For example,

P. 70 *Saadia Gaon's translation of Hosea and Joel* (ed. R. Schroeter). (*Merx's Archiv*, v.1 [1867].)

—*Saadia Gaon's translation of Joel and Amos* (ed. D. Klein). Budapest, 1897.

—*Saadia Gaon's translation of Zephariah [sic] Haggai and Zechariah* (ed. A. Heisz). Berlin, 1902.

For none of these is there any evidence for attribution to Saadia Gaon (Malter, 1921, p. 318). In fact, the last item has the title: *Eine anonyme arabische Uebersetzung und Erklärung der Propheten Zephania, Haggai and Zecharja*.

The title of the second item, which is in Hungarian, reads as follows:

Joel és Amosz: próféták könyveinek Arab fordítása / névtelen szerzőtől. . . .

This translates as: "Joel and Amos: an Arabic translation of the books of the Prophets by an anonymous author." In his introduc-

tion, the editor stresses the anonymity of the work and that it is definitely not Saadia's.

A number of items are listed in a manner that makes their identification extremely difficult:

P. 75 Ezobi, J. *Ka'arat ha-Kesef* [last edn. by M. Steinschneider in his *Musar Haskel*. Berlin, 1860].

The description implies that the work was edited by Moritz Steinschneider and that it was included in Steinschneider's work called *Musar Haskel*. The title page of this item in fact reads as follows:

Musar Haskel / ha-meyuhas le-R. Hai Ga'on. *Ve-Shir ha-ke'arah* / le-R. Yehosef ha-Ezovi. —Nidpesu me-hadash . . . 'im he'arot ha-mesader Mosheh Shtainshneider.

"Musar Haskel" is an anonymous medieval ethical poem attributed to either Hai ben Sherira or Hai ben David Gaon (See *EJ*, "Musar Haskel"). What we have here, then, is Steinschneider's edition of this work as well as of Ezobi's *Shir ha-ke'arah* (not *Ka'arat ha-kesef*).

Another example of a peculiar entry is:

P. 76 Polak, G. I. and S. D. Luzzatto. *Hotam Tokhnit*. Amsterdam 1865. (Contains, inter alia, Abraham Bedersi's *Ha-Herev ha-Mithapekhet* with detailed commentary).

The catalog also provides a facsimile of the title page; therefore, the inaccuracies in the catalog entry are all the more glaring. The author of *Hotam tokhnit* is Abraham Bedersi. In addition, there are various poems and letters by Bedersi (including *ha-Herev ha-mithapekhet* edited by S. D. Luzzatto), a poem to Bedersi by Jacob ben Abraham Hagorni (edited by M. Steinschneider), and critical notes in German by Joseph Zvi Hirsch Dünner. The principal editor of the entire work is Gabriel Isaac Polak.

The item should therefore have been entered under Abraham Bedersi, with G. I. Polak mentioned as editor. Luzzatto's part in the whole work is relatively minor and does not deserve mention (cf. the Library of Congress entry for the work in *NUC pre-1956 Imprints*, v. 42, p. 645).

The German section of this work reproduced on fiches 7–8, has a very complicated pagination, which is further complicated by the needless repetition of several pages of various sections.

P. 68 *Teshuvot Geonim ve-Rishonim* (Ed. A. Hildesheimer). (*Yeshurun*, v.12). Also corrigenda by C. L. Ehrenreich (*Ozar ha-Hayyim*.

v.3, Deva 1927). Published separately with Ehrenreich's corrections. Deva, 1927.

The only piece of information that is correct in this entry is the title. The item consists of two microfiches. On the first is the title as indicated, headed by the name of the editor, 'Azriel Hildesheimer. The fiche contains two excerpts from an unnamed journal, one numbered [64]–69, the other [77]–82. The name of the journal is not mentioned, nor is the year of publication. To give as a source the periodical title *Yeshurun* without any other information is not very helpful, since there exist several periodicals by that name (all called *Jeschurun*, since they were published in German). Furthermore, to give the name of the editor as A. Hildesheimer is misleading, since this brings to mind the nineteenth-century rabbi Israel (Azriel) Hildesheimer who died in 1899. A check of Hebrew Union College's Klau Library Catalog, revealed the following analytical entry:

Hildesheimer, Esriel Erich. "Die Komposition der Sammlungen von Responen der Gaonen." In: *Jüdische Studien Josef Wohlgemuth*. . . gewidmet. Frankfurt a. M., J. Kauffmann, 1928.

In this article, the author makes reference to his "Teshuvot ge'onim ve-rishonim" which he had published in *Jeschurun* 13 (not 12, as in IDC's catalog) [Berlin, 1926]. The first part of the puzzle was thus solved.

The second microfiche, rather than containing the corrigenda as promised in the catalog entry, consists of a responsum on the giving of the half-shekel in modern times written by H. Y. E. (presumably Hayyim Yehudah Ehrenreich) and published in the journal *Otsar ha-hayim*. A check of the Klau Library and New York Public Library catalogs revealed that Ehrenreich did publish corrections to a geonic work, but not to the one mentioned in the IDC catalog. Arthur Marmorstein had published a number of geonic responsa in a series of articles in *Otsar ha-hayim*, a journal edited by Ehrenreich. These were collected and reprinted with additions and corrections by Ehrenreich in 1928. (See bibliography of Marmorstein's works in Marmorstein, 1950, p. xxxix). It seems that the second half of IDC's entry refers to this work, and should perhaps have been appended to the entry for *Teshuvot Geonim* which appears at the top of p. 68 of the catalog. In any case, this may explain the entry in IDC's catalog, but it does not account for the responsum reproduced on a separate fiche in conjunction with Hildesheimer's work.

A corrected entry for this item would thus be:

Teshuvot Geonim ve-Rishonim (Ed. Esriel

Erich Hildesheimer). (*Jeschurun* [Berlin] 13 [1926]).

Also a responsum by C. L. Ehrenreich reprinted from *Ozar ha-Hayyim* 3 (1927).

Another misleading entry is the following:

P. 69 *Midrash al Aseret ha-Dibberto*. [sic] (Attributed to Saadia Geon [sic]. (Ed. W. Eisenstaedter). Vienna, 1868.

With Hebrew and German translation.

The catalog neglects to mention that the text is in Judeo-Arabic. Examination of this item fails to yield any trace of the Hebrew title given in the entry; however, one does find titles in Judeo-Arabic—*Tafsir al-'ashar al-Kalimat*—and in German—*Saadja's Arabischer Midrasch zu den Zehn Geboten*. This item is erroneously attributed to Saadia Gaon (Malter, 1921, pp. 406–408), and should not be confused with the medieval Hebrew work *Midrash Aseret ha-Dibberot*.

P. 64 Guttman, M. and S. Klein. *Bibliographie der Schriften Wilhelm Bachers nebst einem Hebraischen Sach-und Ortsnamen Register*. (Blau, L., Ed.) Frankfurt a. M., 1910.

This bibliography was actually compiled by Ludwig Blau; Guttman and Klein compiled the indices appended to the bibliography. Their work is acknowledged in the preface, and they are not even mentioned on the title page. (Cf. the entry for this item under "Blau, Ludwig" in *NUC pre-1956 Imprints*, v. 61, p. 19.)

In many instances, an editor of a volume is incorrectly designated as its author. Some examples are:

P. 76 Luzzatto, S. D. *Betulat Bat Yehudah*. Prague, 1840.

This is actually a selection of poems by Judah ha-Levi, edited by Luzzatto.

P. 76 Luzzatto, S. D. *Tal Orot*. Przemysl, 1881.

This is a collection of medieval poems, edited by Luzzatto.

P. 66 *Geon ha-Geonim*. By S. A. Wertheimer. Jerusalem, 1925.

P. 67 *Kohelet Shelomoh*. By S. A. Wertheimer. Jerusalem, 1899.

Wertheimer is the editor of both of the above works.

P. 76 Neubauer, A. *Melekhet ha-shir*. Frankfurt am Main, 1865. pp. 1–18.

Neubauer is the editor.

P. 44 Rosenthal, J. L. *Toledot Hevrat Marbei Ha-Haskalah be-Yisrael*. St. Petersburg, 1885, 1890.

Rosenthal is the editor of this collection of documents.

More information is needed for some of the more obscure and esoteric items listed by IDC.

For example:

P. 37 Pines, Y. M. *Shimu Harim Rivi*. Jerusalem, 1882.

This item is a two-page broadside published by Pines to defend himself against his detractors. No indication is given in the catalog as to the nature of this item.

P. 37 Schlesinger, A. J. *Kol Nehi mi-Ziyyon*. Jerusalem, 1872.

This item was published anonymously, and no clue to its authorship appears in it. For confirmation, see Malachi, 1971, pp. 287–89; Gat, 1973/4, p. 143. Proof of authorship would have been helpful.

At least one item reprinted by IDC is of questionable value. This is:

P. 69 *Sha'arei Berakhot*. By Samuel ben Hophni (Ed. I. Wiess [i.e., Weiss]). Vienna, 1882.

This item is an extract from the journal *Bet Talmud* 2 (1882): 377–386, a fact which should have been mentioned. The text was later edited and included by B. M. Lewin in his collection *Otsar ha-ge'onim* to Berakhot (Haifa, 1928), pp. 65–77. In his introduction, Lewin refers to Weiss' edition as containing a few corrections and many deficiencies, as well as extraneous material. In light of this assessment, I wonder how valuable Weiss' edition is to scholars, and whether it was worth reprinting.

Finally, there are many typographical errors and errors in transliteration in the catalog, which detract from its usefulness and can cause catalogers problems.

Some examples:

P. 69 *Sefer Rav Amram Gaon* (A. L. Framkin, Ed.)

This should read *Sidur tefilah . . . im Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (Ed. A. L. Framkin).

P. 68 *Re'umah* attributed to Nashhon Gaon.

The name should be Nahshon.

P. 36 Horowitz, H. *Hibbat Ziyyon*. Jerusalem, 1844.

The title actually is *Hibbat Yerushalayim*.

P. 37 *Mishpat l'Elokei Yaakov*.

This should read *Mishpat l'Elokei Yaakov*.

P. 42 Dubnow, S. (Ed.) *Pinkas Medinat Lita*. Berlin, 1928.

The title should read *Pinkas ha-medinah*. The title given is the running title.

P. 66 Loew, L. *Graphische Requisiten und Erzeugnisse bei den Juden*. Leipzig, 1869–1870, 1870–1871, v.1–2.

This item is part of the author's *Beiträge zur Jüdischen Alterthumskunde*, and is usually entered under the latter title. While the entry is not wrong, mention of the main title should have been made, since many libraries would not have an added entry under the above title, and unnecessary duplication may result.

Conclusion

The aforesaid notwithstanding, I would not like to discourage libraries from purchasing material from IDC. IDC is providing an invaluable service to the scholarly community, and most of its publications are in good order. My purpose in this paper is to alert libraries to the problems they may encounter in cataloging some of the items IDC is marketing. I also hope to bring to IDC's attention the concerns of librarians who are involved in purchasing and cataloging these materials. IDC would be well advised to engage the services of a qualified Judaica librarian to help them correct the errors in their catalog and to prevent the occurrence of such errors in the future. Finally, Judaica librarians who come across major errors in IDC's catalog are urged to bring them to the attention of other librarians by publishing their findings in *Judaica Librarianship*.

References

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Hebrew Bibliographic Data

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3. קרסל, גצל. לקסיקון הספרות העברית בדורות האחרונים. מרחביה: ספרית פועלים, 1967-1965. 2 כר'.

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Friedman (continued from p. 9)

have succeeded admirably. This volume is extremely useful for everyone but the serious specialist. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith should be applauded for supporting this project, although the book is not as handsomely produced as earlier ADL bibliographic guides on Jewish history and Judaism.

The above reservations notwithstanding, Professors Hundert and Bacon deserve our thanks for a book that will be useful for many, many years.

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