

REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

AJL Judaica Reference Book Award*

Sarah Levy

*Yeshiva University
New York, NY*

I am very pleased to present AJL's inaugural award for an outstanding Judaica reference book. I would like to begin by thanking the members of the Award Committee, Charles Cutter and Bob Singerman, for their tireless efforts.

The committee began its work in October 1984 with a definition of terms. *Judaica* was defined broadly as any work on or about Jewish Studies, in any language; a *reference book* was determined to be a work designed by arrangement and treatment to be consulted for specific items of information, rather than to be read sequentially. We included both primary sources—i.e., original material, as well as secondary sources—material in some way modified. Our emphasis was on bibliographies, encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs and atlases.

In reviewing nominated books, our criteria included the following:

- Authoritativeness of the work
- Timeliness, in terms of both facts and interpretation
- Clarity of purpose and scope
- Arrangement of the work
- Ease of use: searching aids, indices, footnotes, etc.
- Comparison with similar works in the field

We had a number of fine works to review. Louis Feldman's *Josephus and Modern Scholarship, 1937-1980* (de Gruyter, 1984), however, more than satisfied our criteria. This comprehensive bibliography, which is an update and expansion of an earlier work by the author entitled *Scholarship on Philo and Josephus* (Yeshiva University Press, 1963), contains over 3500 entries dealing with Josephus' personality, his work, and its influence. Each entry is accompanied by a summary and a critical evaluation of its contribution to Josephan scholarship. The book is further enhanced by three helpful indi-

ces. Given the comprehensiveness of coverage, the inclusion of many related topics not found in other bibliographies on the subject, and the evaluation accompanying each citation, Dr. Feldman's massive work represents a major contribution to Judaic scholarship, especially in the fields of Josephan scholarship, Hellenistic Judaism, early Christianity, and the period of the Second Jewish Commonwealth.

Dr. Feldman earned both a B.A. and an M.A. from Trinity College, and received his Ph.D. in Classical Philology from Harvard University. He has held teaching positions at many institutions over the past thirty years, among them Trinity College, Bar-Ilan University and Dropsie College. It is an especially pleasant task for me to present this award as I have had the privilege of knowing Dr. Feldman for the many years of our mutual affiliation with Yeshiva University. He has been Professor of Classics at Yeshiva from 1966 to the present. In addition, he has been the recipient of many fellowships and grants from such prestigious organizations as the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Philosophical Society, the Littauer Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Academy for Jewish Research. He has several dozen publications to his credit.

Dr. Feldman is joined tonight by his wife, Miriam, to whom the book is dedicated. Dr. Feldman, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the inaugural Judaica Reference Book Award of the Association of Jewish Libraries.

(Dr. Feldman's acceptance speech on next page)

Sarah Levy, formerly on the staff of Yeshiva University, chaired the AJL Judaica Reference Book Award Committee, on which Dr. Charles Cutter of Brandeis University and Robert Singerman of the University of Florida at Gainesville also served.

Judaica Reference Books Nominated for the Award

Attal, Robert. *Les Juifs de Grèce de L'Expulsion D'Espagne à nos Jours: Bibliographie*. Jerusalem: Institut Ben-Zvi, 1984.

Prepared in the Attal tradition of bibliographic scholarship, this work, like his others, is comprehensive in its coverage of languages and sources. Over two thousand entries are presented for Greece and the islands, including Crete and Rhodes, thus filling a gap for an important center of Jewish life in Europe. The entries are in Ladino, Hebrew, French, Greek and English. Much of the material cited is popular in nature, having appeared in newspapers and obscure magazines, but nevertheless, of value to researchers.

Helpful indexes are provided, with a separate section devoted to Salonika. This work will prove of great value to Sephardic and Balkan studies in general, and to other fields such as Holocaust studies, for which several dozen citations are provided.

Cohen, Gershon. *Hebrew Incunabula: Mendel Gottesman Library of Hebraica-Judaica*, Yeshiva University. New York: Yeshiva University, 1984.

A catalog of the forty Hebrew incunabula that are housed in Yeshiva University's Gottesman Library, this attractive book is enhanced by photoreproductions of pages from these rare books. Each item is described fully, and the unique features of the library's copy are highlighted. A number of helpful indexes complement the text.

While most interested researchers will encounter little difficulty with the Hebrew text, the choice of language will limit its use by the greater bibliographic world. We also note that references to Goff's *Incunabula in*

* Remarks made at the Banquet of the 20th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries held in Cleveland, Ohio, June 25, 1985.

(continued on page 76, column 1)

Sperber, David. *A Dictionary of Greek and Latin Terms in Rabbinic Literature.* Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1984. 230 p. ISBN 9652260509. \$32.50.

A specialized dictionary consisting of almost 200 Greek and Latin legal terms in Rabbinic literature. The author provides the user with the following types of information for each term: definition in English; illustrative texts in translation; parallels; related references; variant readings; comparative material from Hellenistic, Roman and juristic papyrological sources; and full bibliographic references. The work includes a Greek and Latin index. Rabbinic scholars, philologists and students of ancient law will find this dictionary helpful.

Wallach, Jehuda L. *Israeli Military History: a Guide to Sources.* New York: Garland, 1984. 291 p. ISBN 0824090616. \$40.50.

A bibliography of books published largely in the 20th century, in Hebrew or Western languages, pertaining to the military history of the Jewish people from antiquity to the present. Each chapter includes an essay on the historical period under discussion, as well as a description of the major sources in the accompanying detailed bibliography. Relevant archives, libraries, and museums in Israel, as well as selected journals, are listed in an appendix. The work is indexed by author.

Dr. Charles Cutter is Head, Judaic Department, Brandeis University Libraries. Micha F. Oppenheim, is Senior Cataloger, Jewish Theological Seminary of America. They are co-authors of Jewish Reference Sources: A Selective, Annotated Bibliographic Guide. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982).

Judaica Reference Book Nominated (continued from p. 72, column 3)

American Libraries might have been accompanied by corresponding Freimann numbers and more usefully placed with each text as opposed to constituting a separate index. Nonetheless, Gershon Cohen has done a commendable job in the preparation of this catalog, and Yeshiva University can be proud of its fine incunabula holdings. [See related cover story by Menahem Schmelzer in this issue.—Eds.]

(continued in column 2)

Books Nominated (continued)

de Lange, Nicholas. *Atlas of the Jewish World.* New York: Facts on File, 1984.

This beautifully illustrated work, intended to chronicle the history of the Jewish people, is divided into three sections. The first, dealing with the historical background of the Jewish people, is highlighted by maps depicting the distribution of Jewish population. The second focuses on the cultural heritage of the Jews throughout the ages and around the world. The final section is devoted to the Jewish world today, providing a survey of world Jewry by regions and countries.

Appended reference materials include a gazetteer, glossary, bibliography and index. While this lovely book will find its rightful place on most Judaica library shelves, its value is primarily pictorial. Textually, most of the information is cursory at best, and can be found in many other sources.

Zubatsky, David; Berent, Irwin. *Jewish Genealogy: A Sourcebook of Family Histories and Genealogies.* New York: Garland, 1984.

The authors attempt to provide a comprehensive bibliography of "published and unpublished Jewish genealogies, family histories and individual family names." Similar in format to Dan Rottenberg's *Finding Our Fathers* (New York: Random, 1977), this book has been researched more extensively and refers readers to archives as well as articles and monographs.

The body of the work is arranged alphabetically by family name. Entries in the bibliography are cross-referenced. Annotations and/or biographical descriptions are provided to aid the user in identifying the cited family. Locations of cited materials are given, except for journal articles. Coverage is world-wide. The work is enhanced by the authors' use of the genealogical entries in the "Judaica Americana" section of the journal *American Jewish History*, with citations of family histories and their location in the American Jewish Historical Society.

Only a limited number of foreign and domestic repositories were surveyed, and the authors do not provide a clear statement of scope, leaving doubt as to the comprehensiveness of the work. Inconsistent transliterations are an additional weakness of the book.

Nevertheless, until something better replaces it, this will prove a standard bibliographic tool for the genealogic researcher.

Feldman (continued from p. 73)

capital city to Moses out of her love for him; how Cleopatra attempted to seduce the infamous Herod; how a certain Mary devoured her own child during the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans; and, of course, how 960 religious fanatics committed mutual suicide rather than surrender to the Romans at Masada, the original Jonestown. Moreover, Josephus is by far our most important source for our knowledge of that strange, monastic-like sect, so reminiscent of the later Christians, known as the Essenes, who refused to marry to protect themselves against women's wantonness, as Josephus puts it, being persuaded that no woman ever keeps her pledge to one man. He is, in short, one of the most unlovable of men, except that at least three women did marry him.

I shall close with the anecdote which I cite in my introduction from Cicero (*Pro Archia* 10.25), about the worthless poet who had composed an epigram about the Roman dictator Sulla, and who was rewarded by him with a gift of property from proscribed persons, on the condition that he should not write anything thereafter. On the basis of my critical evaluation of the scholarship in the field, perhaps I shall be forgiven for expressing the hope—or prayer—that one of the wealthier and more merciful foundations will establish a fund to give grants on similar conditions, or, at the very least, on the condition that scholars will read what has been written in their field before they embark with pen in hand.

Reference Books in Jewish Studies from Garland

- * *Jewish Genealogy: a Sourcebook of Family Histories and Genealogies*, by Davis S. Zubatsky and Irwin M. Berent. 452 pp. \$33.
- * *Jewish Mysticism: An Annotated Bibliography*, by Sheila A. Spector. 426 pp. \$50.
- * *Josephus: a Supplementary Bibliography*, by Louis H. Feldman. 712 pp. \$90.

Watch for These:

- * *Encyclopedia of Jewish American History and Culture*, edited by Sanford Pinsker and Jack Fischel.
- * *Bibliography of Antisemitism, 1984-85*, edited by Sue Fox, for the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism.

Garland Publishing Inc.
136 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016