

Rabbis & References

The "Source" of Winter 1999 Workshop

by Hallie Cantor

Acquisitions, Yeshiva University

Rabbi Meir Rothemberg, the 13th century German Talmudic decisor and legal scholar, shared the spotlight with other Jewish luminaries at the Winter 1999 Reference Workshop, held last January at Stern College for Women. The workshop attracted a sizeable group for its topic, locating rabbinic sources.

There, in the bright and spacious Hedi Steinberg Library, the first speaker, Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel -- E. Billi Ivry Professor of Jewish History and Chair, Rebecca Ivry Department of Jewish Studies -- used Rabbi Rothemberg (known as the Maharam) as an example for his presentation on tracing rabbinic texts. The Maharam became, literally, a footnote in history as Dr. Kanarfogel explained how a certain responsa was used as reference for later codifiers, in whose own responsa the Maharam frequently appears. The footnotes, Dr. Kanarfogel explained, enable students in their textual analysis, by contrasting the streams of thought and identifying the sources of scholarly arguments.

The second speaker was Yisrael Dubitsky, public services librarian at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Discussing the major Jewish biographical sources that are available, he provided the attendees with a substantial list of JTSA's holdings. The bibliography is arranged chronologically, beginning with Biblical and Midrashic personalities, and proceeding to the present, with names of prominent Jews in all fields. Mr. Dubitsky displayed some of the books included on the list, adding his own comments.

The workshop closed with a virtual Jewish Hall of Fame. Attendees could walk away feeling not only more awed, but, perhaps, a bit more empowered, having greater access to our gallery of giants. ☆

From the (New) President

I take this opportunity to introduce myself. I have been involved with AJL-NYMA since 1987, when I first started working at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTSA), having served on the AJL-NYMA board as newsletter editor, membership list coordinator, and Vice-President/President-Elect. This fall I have taken over from Rita Lifton, our immediate past president.

Let's all thank Rita for two wonderful and productive years of leadership in this group. Her precision and eye for every detail, her thoughtfulness and care, have helped set an extremely high standard for this presidency. Rita is a tough act to follow, and I look forward to her continuous support.

As you can see by our newsletter, we at NYMA look forward to a very rich program for the 1999-2000 season. We opened with a packed-house Fall Conference at the New York Public Library, and we are continuing our activities with cataloging, reference, and school workshops. Lastly, we will finish off our season with a Spring Conference. NYMA activities are all run by a group of dedicated volunteers, who spend many hours planning and organizing meetings, creating and mailing invitations, writing up press releases, putting together two newsletters a year, and keeping track of the finances. There are many other duties which I'm not mentioning here.

I wish to extend a hearty welcome to our new board members: Yisrael Dubitsky (JTSA) as reference coordinator; Zalman Alpert (Yeshiva University) as reference co-coordinator; Julia Bock (Museum of Jewish Heritage) as treasurer; and Mary Moskowitz as membership and mailing list coordinator.

If you have any ideas or suggestions, our eyes and ears are open. Especially, please feel free to contact me.

Best wishes,

*Naomi M. Steinberger,
Chapter President*

NEW! Louis Posner Memorial Fund

On Oct. 2nd, 1999, AJL-NYMA received a wonderful, though poignant, surprise. Marcia Posner, director and librarian of the Holocaust Memorial and Educational Center of Nassau County, has donated an annual sum of \$1,000 in memory of her beloved husband, Louis Posner. The money will be used for honoraria, special events, and scholarships to attend the AJL Annual Convention.

We warmly thank Marcia for her thoughtful and generous gift, which will honor Louis's memory and contribute invaluablely to our endeavors.

“What Wonders Can We Expect From Libraries?” A Look at Fall 1999 Conference

by Elizabeth F. Stabler
Librarian, Temple Emanu-El

Curious about what the future holds for Judaica librarians and libraries? NYMA members had the opportunity to hear librarians and scholars discuss “The Digital Future of the Jewish Past: Works in Progress,” a conference held October 28, 1999, at the New York Public Library. This day-long event, sponsored by the NYPL’s Dorot Jewish division together with AJL-NYMA, served as our Fall Conference.

Michael Terry, Chief Librarian of the Dorot Jewish Division, introduced the opening speaker, Aaron Lansky, founder of the National Yiddish Book Center. Dr. Lansky described how all of Yiddish literature is currently being scanned, making it the first literature to be totally preserved in machine-readable format. This technology makes possible the reproduction of books on demand, for about \$25 per copy. Meanwhile, the hunt still goes on for lost treasures of Yiddish.

The next speaker, Caraid O’Brien, Irish-born and living in Boston, became a passionate discoverer and devotee of Yiddish after having read Isaac Bashevis Singer at her parochial school. Currently Ms. O’Brien is head researcher at the Yiddish Theater Digital Archive, at New York University’s Center for Advanced Technology. She presented a slide show of their web site about the Second Avenue theater project. The web site, to be launched this winter, will include a 3-D tour of Second Avenue sites, interviews with actors, photos, and video and sound clips. Ms. O’Brien’s translation of Ansky’s *God of Vengeance* is currently playing Off-Broadway.

Malachi Beit-Arie, professor of codicology and paleography at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, opened the afternoon session with his “Sfardata,” a database for quantifying and recording manuscript features. Database technology allows scholars to record details about manuscripts, which will help them with dating, regional differences, and attribution.

Violet Gilboa, librarian at Harvard College’s Judaica Division, described how Harvard had scanned and preserved its Israeli poster collection. The project has resulted in over 200 CD-ROMs of these graphics. Before this project was started, no one knew just exactly how many items were involved, which ranged from buttons to billboards. The graphic and

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WELCOME, our new NYMA officers!

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Treasurer: Julia Bock
212-968-1800, ext. 162
E-mail: jbock@mjhny.org

NOTICES

The YIVO Institute has moved and is now sharing space with the American Jewish Historical Society. It is the new Center for Jewish History. Address: 15 W. 16th Street, New York, NY 10011. They can be reached through a central operator, at 212-246-6080.

Robert Miller, librarian at Rutgers University, has taken over the post of book review editor for the national *AJL Newsletter*. Book reviews should now be sent to rbmiller@amenti.rutgers.edu

MAZEL TOV!

To Marion Stein, on the birth of her grandson,
Ephraim Meir Najman.
To Leah Adler, on the birth of her granddaughter, Shira.
To Marlene Schiffman, on the birth of her
granddaughter Amalia.
To Sharon Hammer, on the birth of her daughter, Baila.

UPCOMING EVENTS

35th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Librarians, June 18-21, 2000, Washington D.C.
NYMA Winter Reference Workshop.
NYMA Spring Cataloging Workshop, February 2, 2000, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.
Judaica Technology Conference and Vendor Fair, Jan. 16-17, 2000, at Touro College, 33 West 23rd Street, NY.
For online information and registration visit:
<http://www.bjeny.org/jtc2000.htm>. For additional information or registration contact Stacey Frank: 212-245-8200, ext. 388, or sfranki@bjeny.org.
NYMA Day School Workshop
NYMA Spring Conference

New/Old Look at Alef-Beis

Hebrew Type Styles the Topic at NYPL Lecture

by Hallie Cantor

Acquisitions, Yeshiva University & Typographer

Typefaces (called *fonts*) contain an artistry of their own. Since the invention of European printing, in the 15th century, they have attained an astonishing array and complexity.

It may be no surprise that Germany, home of the printing press, became a large center for the development of Roman typefaces. But it might be a surprise to learn that numerous Hebrew typefaces were also developed and disseminated there as well.

These typefaces are now being preserved, thanks to Dr. Ittai Joseph Tamari, professor at Germany's University of Cologne. At a lecture held at the New York Public Library, and hosted by Michael Terry, Chief Librarian of the Dorothea Division, Dr. Tamari discussed an ambitious project dedicated to helping scholars research, document, classify, and, ultimately, digitize Hebrew typefaces. The soft-spoken, Israeli-born professor introduced the audience to his interdisciplinary database, which "places the history of the printed Hebrew letter at the disposal of bibliographers, art historians, and scholars of Jewish and Germanic culture."

The goal of the research, Dr. Tamari explained, is to "provide us with a better understanding of such topics as the spread of the printed Hebrew letter in Europe" and the "development of various styles and type amount of different typefaces in use, all of which have not, until now, been sufficiently accounted for."

Dr. Tamari gave an overview of the database, which will soon be available in four languages – German, English, Hebrew, and French – and relies on a Java-based, Oracle script. The database is accessible through Netscape at <http://www.gm.th-koeln.de/hebtyp/>. Dr. Tamari gave the audience a small tour of the website, which listed and categorized typefaces from original manuscripts.

Pages from Hebrew, Yiddish, and Aramaic texts are stored onto files, in which are broken down not only individual letters, but vowels, cantillation marks, and even ornate graphic borders. Photographs of these letters have been reproduced digitally, to represent as accurately as possible the master printer's craft. Close-ups reveal the nuances of the shapes and strokes of Hebrew letters, some of which had smooth bases, others were sharply angled, while others leaned toward blunt, rounded, sans-serifs.

Dr. Tamari explained how choice of type styles and formats differed according to the books being printed. Various typefaces were favored for Talmudic texts, for

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(Fall 1999 Conference, cont'd)

chronological organization of material has efficiently permitted the library to use spare meta-data, as opposed to the MARC format, which would have taken much longer.

Jean Bowen, director of the Humanities and Social Sciences Library, closed the conference with her comments on how rapidly evolving technologies affect our roles as librarians and the pressure they have placed on libraries to keep up. Conferences like this one enable librarians to keep abreast of all the technological changes. Congratulations to Michael Terry, for providing NYMA with the opportunity to be part of such a conference. ☆

CHAIRS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

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Committee chairs are not elected officers.

We welcome volunteers for committees.

Please contact the committee chairs.

FOCUS ON LIBRARIES

Profile of a Work in Progress

Ramaz Middle School Library looks to the future

by Noreen Wachs Librarian, Ramaz Middle School

This article is the seventh in an ongoing series about libraries in the NYMA area.

In 1997 the Ramaz school embarked upon a large-scale project: the creation of a new Middle School to house grades 5-8, which up until this point had been part of the Lower and Upper Schools. One challenge within this project was the creation of a new, Middle School, library.

A planning committee was set up to initiate this creation. It was while participating in this committee that I was caught up in the excitement of bringing a new library into being. Eventually I began my professional move from the Upper School to the Middle School.

A number of issues were discussed, from the aesthetic – where to place furniture and computer terminals – to the technical – the size and content of the core collection, the job description of the librarian, who would have to impart library skills to the “tweens,” and the selection of age-appropriate periodicals. In particular, the committee aimed for a library program that would be integrated into the curriculum and at the same time would encourage collaborative learning.

The nucleus of the collection of the Middle School Library began with books from the Lower School Library considered

suitable for 5th and 6th graders, and, likewise, books from the Upper School Library for 7th and 8th graders. Bids were solicited from several Judaica vendors for a new Judaica collection, which arrived during the summer. Many new general studies reference books were purchased in the spring as well.

The choice of library automation was another issue. It was part of a project that was planned separately and for more than a year, as all three Ramaz libraries would go online together. After reviewing various software options, the librarians of the Upper and Lower schools decided on Athena, for its user-friendly interface and appeal to grades K-12, and its ability to accommodate several networked collections.

“It was while participating in this committee that I was caught in the excitement of bringing a new library into being.”

At last, the new library of Ramaz Middle School is a reality. Walk into the sunny room and the reference desk greets you, faced by a row of popular young adult novels. The state-of-the art, flattop computers in the adjacent room lends a high-tech air. Two

large areas invite the young patron with lounge chairs. At the far wall, desks are arranged for those who want to read or study.

Many challenges remain, however, in this work in progress. The library is still enlarging the collection to suit the needs of faculty and students. Ultimately, the goal is a core collection of about 6,000 books. The online catalog and circulation system is on the verge of being up and running. The task remains of instructing the faculty as well as students in library and online use, in order to become a truly collaborative learning venture.

However, in terms of progress, the library is its own yardstick. Everyone, from the most venerable administrator to the youngest 5th grader, has been highly pleased and enthusiastic about the new facility. Thus, as both an embryonic and a finished work, the development of the Ramaz Middle School Library is a highly exciting challenge. ☆

**Comments? Ideas? Suggestions?
Or professional news about yourself?
Please write to:
AJL/NYMA NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE
c/o Marion Stein,
28 Douglass St.,
Brooklyn, NY 11231
E-mail: marions@panix.com
FAX: 718-428-3617**

CURRENT JOB LISTINGS

Columbia University Libraries Catalog Librarian for Middle East Languages Original & Special Materials Cataloging

Catalog librarian with strong background in Arabic. MLS or graduate degree in Middle East Studies or related field; working knowledge of Arabic and standard bibliographic and reference tools relating to Middle East studies.

Send letter of application, resume, and names, addresses and phone numbers of 3 references, to: Jane Hunt, Human Resources Office, Box 18 Butler Library, Columbia University, 535 West 114th Street, New York, NY 10027. Cover letter must specify Job #UL70100005; please include email address in cover letter. Screening of applications will begin March 1, 2000.

Librarian, 92nd Street Y

Responsible, detail-oriented professional with library experience, including children's services & Judaica. Excellent written & oral communications skills a must. MLS preferred.

Forward resumes with salary history and requirements to: SS, Human Resources Dept., 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10128. (FAX) 212-427-6119.

Archivist (Temporary)

Organize and update existing photo archives as well as miscellaneous papers pertaining to the organization. Hours and stipend to be arranged.

Contact: Patricia Israel or Noemi Abrahami, AMIT Magazine, 817 Broadway, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10003, 212-477-4720, (FAX) 212-353-2312.

Part-Time Librarian

Position available in a New Jersey High School for Girls, 4 afternoons a week. Librarian will help build the library and guide students and faculty in Judaic and secular research skills and resources in print and on the computer.

Please contact: Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School, 1650 Plaisade Ave., Teaneck, NJ 07666, 201-833-4307. FAX: 201-833-0816.

Hebraica Cataloger Kestenbaum & Company, New York

Auctioneers of rare books & fine art has opening for full-time cataloguer & administrative assistant. Must have strong education in Jewish literature, history, bibliography and booklore; experience working with rare books & manuscripts; fluency in Hebrew. Proficiency in Yiddish, as well as Russian, German or other European languages preferred. Applicants must have solid organizational skills, sales experience, familiarity with Power Macintosh computers, and ability to pick up computer programs. All applicants must be willing and able to lift a box up to 30 lbs. in weight.

Please send resume & cover letter to: Daniel E. Kestenbaum, Chairman, Kestenbaum & Company, 20 E. 20th St., Suite 603, New York, NY 10011, FAX: 212-366-1368.

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Acquisitions/Catalog Librarian

Professional cataloging librarian to perform original cataloging in multiple formats and languages; manage ongoing retrospective conversion project; train and supervise support staff; and write workflow procedures.

Required: ALA-MLS-accredited or equivalent experience; knowledge of MARC formats, AACR2R, LC subject headings and LC classification scheme; written and oral communication skills; ability to work independently as well as participate actively in team projects. Desired: 2 years of library experience, including original cataloging using the RLIN system; experience with cataloging non-book materials such as sound recordings; reading fluency in Yiddish and/or Hebrew; knowledge of European languages.

Please submit resume along with cover letter listing 3 references to: Michael Winter, Human Resources Department, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011, FAX: 212-292-1892.

World History/Jewish Studies Librarian New Brunswick (Rutgers University) Libraries

Reports to the Director of the New Brunswick Libraries. Selects materials concerned with Western and Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East & all aspects of Jewish studies. Works closely with history & Jewish studies faculties. Provides reference service; participates in the New Brunswick overall user education program and in the development & maintenance of relevant WWW pages.

ALA-accredited MLS degree required; additional advanced degree(s) in appropriate discipline preferred. Three years' experience in materials selection & information services for world history or Jewish studies; knowledge of one European language; knowledge of Hebrew desirable; oral & written communication skills; ability to work independently & in team-based environment; experience with electronic resources; commitment to user services; experience in teaching or training.

TO APPLY: Resumes received no later than February 21, 2000, will receive first consideration. Submit resume, cover letter, and names of 3 references to: Sandra Troy (APP. 138), Libraries Personnel Officer, Rutgers University Libraries, 169 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1163. email: stroy@rci.rutgers.edu FAX: 732-932-7637.

Public Services Librarian Jewish Theological Seminary of America

Sunday thru Thursday. MLS, experienced, competent in Jewish Studies; excellent communications & interpersonal skills. Knowledge of Hebrew & working with Internet necessary. Excellent salary & benefits.

Please fax, mail or email resume with salary history to: Director of Human Resources, The Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027. Fax: 212-678-8833; email: hrdept@jtsa.edu.

TRAVEL SUBSIDIES AVAILABLE FOR 2000 AJL CONVENTION

Two kinds of travel subsidies are available to those who wish to attend the AJL National Convention, June 18-21, 2000:

1. If you are a new member of AJL and need help defraying expenses, we can help you. Please submit your application postmarked no later than February 1, 2000, to Sally Brown, 351 South Merkle Road, Columbus, OH 43209.

Application: Write a letter of 500 words or fewer telling us why you would like to attend the 2000 convention. State how long you have been employed in a Judaica library, what part of the cost your institution will pay, your educational background, whether or not there is an AJL chapter in your area, and whether or not you participate.

2. For long-standing members active in AJL and newer members who would like to participate more fully, current paid-up members should send letters to Harvey P. Horowitz, Frances-Henry Library, Hebrew Union College-JIR, 3077 University Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90007-3976. Letters of application should include the following information: name, address, telephone number, email address, and the name and address of your library; length of AJL membership and number of conventions previously attended; the amount and source of support you will receive from local funds.

3. If you are currently active (local or national officer, committee member, convention program presenter or moderator),

describe your participation and its benefits to AJL. If you have not yet become active, describe your plans for future participation. Examples might include work on education, membership, publicity, or book award committees; writing articles, book reviews, or soliciting ads for the *AJL Newsletter* or *Judaica Librarianship*.

4. The deadline for applications is March 1. You will be notified of the committee's decision by March 31. Members in the Washington D.C. area and first-year members are not eligible (see above for new members). For more information, contact Harvey P. Horowitz, hhorowit@mizar.usc.edu; phone (213) 749-3424 or fax (213) 747-6128.

(Alef-Beis, cont'd)

example, while other fonts were used specifically for Yiddish texts. Interestingly, a number of these books were printed by Christian publishers. And, in spite of the prevailing Ashkenazic culture, Sephardic-style lettering was frequently integrated. Eventually the Italian model dominated.

Already over 100 typefaces have been cataloged in this database, and Dr. Tamari hopes to have a total of 140 entered. Certainly it is high time that these typefaces, along with the printers who created them, were recognized. Subtly they contributed to the cultural history of north European Jewry. With a little help from Dr. Tamari and the University of Cologne, they will now be immortalized.☆

Naomi Steinberger
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