

***The Judaica-Division of the Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek  
Frankfurt am Main  
By Rachel Heuberger***

The Judaica-Division of the Frankfurt Municipal and University-Library comprises the largest collection of literature on Judaism and Israel in the Federal Republic of Germany. It consists of 2 Special Collections - Webis Sammelschwerpunkte –

1. **Wissenschaft des Judentums** – Science of Judaism – Jewish Studies
2. **Israel** – the modern state of Israel

Since 1949 both Special Collections (Webis – Sammelschwerpunkte / SSG ) are financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, in the beginning as one Special Collection - named Jewish Studies, since 1964 divided into two different (SSG) Special Collections - Jewish Studies and Israel.

All relevant national and international publications on all aspects of postbiblical Judaism - on one hand and all publications on the modern state of Israel – on the other hand – are acquired in a most comprehensive manner. It is supposed to serve the needs of students and scholars all over Germany.

## **1. History**

The origins of this Collection go back to the old Hebraica and Judaica Collection which was founded at the end of the 19th century by donations of Frankfurt Jews. At the beginning of the 20th century it was growing steadily due to the generous support of well-to-do Frankfurt Jewish families, like the Rothschilds, to name only one, but certainly the most famous of these Frankfurt Jewish patriotic benefactors. These families financed the acquisition of large Jewish collections of books and manuscripts of Rabbis and scholars from Frankfurt and abroad. When the last Frankfurt Rothschild, Baron Wilhelm Carl von Rothschild died in 1901, his widow donated his private collection to the library.

**Aron Freimann** was in charge of the collection for 35 years, from 1898 till 1933, and made it the largest and most significant Judaica-Collection of the European continent. Thus he created the basis for the collection of today. Freimann was an outstanding personality, named „Master of Jewish Bibliography“ and characterized as „the greatest living authority in the fields of Jewish

Bibliography“ in the 20 century. After being dismissed in April 1933, he succeeded to emigrate to the States in 1939, where he continued to work at the New York Public Library. Being 68 years old, he became the oldest Foreign Scholar on the list of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Scholars to receive financial aid.

In 1933, after Freimanns dismissal, the collection contained about 40.000 volumes, half of it Hebraica - id est Hebrew books. During the Second World War most of the Hebrew Books were destroyed, with only a few special valuable Hebrew units remaining. The Judaica Old Stocks, containing about 20.000 volumes were rescued, as was the old catalogue compiled by Aron Freimann.

## 2. Collection of today

Some Hebrew old stocks have been saved and are part of the Collection:

The most important are:

Hebrew manuscripts comprising 339 Hebrew manuscripts, the most known is the Ms. of Glückl of Hameln, (1645-1724) the Jewish merchant woman from Hamburg. There exists a special printed catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts. [Hebrew incunabula](#) – books printed before 1501 comprising 65 Hebrew early prints – listed by Aron Freimann in 1920 and in the general Incunabula catalogue of the Library Collection of German Jewish Prints Books in Yiddish and German-Yiddish – all in Hebrew letters – containing about 1000 volumes, from 1562 (the oldest ) until the early 2th century – mostly books for Jewish women.

Catalogue

This collection is one of the digitization-projects. Starting in 1949 on the basis of these Hebraica units and the 20.000 Judaica books, today the collection has more than 120.000 units, the modern literature being an integral part of the general collection.

The collections includes over 2500 titles of **periodicals** in numerous languages, 460 foreign - including Israeli- and 40 German Jewish periodicals are current subscriptions. The collection includes complete runs of most of the German-Jewish periodicals dating from the 19th century.

New monographs, periodicals, microfilm-collections, scientific-reports, cd-roms and theses on request are added continuously by acquisitions world wide. Hebrew publications are acquired extensively.

### **3. Collection principle**

The acquisition criteria for the two collections are different:

#### **Jewish Studies:**

In the Special Collection Wissenschaft des Judentums – Jewish studies – all publications on all aspects of post-biblical Judaism are collected without territorial or language restrictions - meaning all fields of study of Judaism in all countries and languages since the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The following subject areas are covered:

Bible - Old Testament and Jewish commentaries.

Talmud and Rabbinics texts and commentaries on Rabbinic Literature

Modern Jewish religion in its different streams

Jewish philosophy

Old and modern Hebrew language and literature

Jewish languages and literature as Yiddish and Ladino

Jewish history, including history of the humanities, social history and economic history

Persecution of the Jews, including antisemitism and Holocaust

Politics, constitution and administration of the Jewish communities

Publications of Jewish political movements

Pedagogy and education

Jewish Law (The Halacha)

Jewish music, theatre and the arts

Medicine, natural sciences and technology within the context of Judaism

Jewish Women's Studies.

## Israel

The Special Collection Israel covers the region of the modern state of Israel as well as historic Palestine – comprising all subject areas concerning Israel with the exception of modern law, medicine and natural sciences. Thus the entire literary production of modern Israel is collected, as well as :

official publications

maps and atlases

inventory and catalogues of museums and archives

The areas covered include:

Hebrew language and literature

history including social history and economic history

politics, especially foreign politics and the middle east conflict, constitution, administration

publications on political parties, unions and similar organisations

anthropo-geography and geography

prehistoric and early history

pedagogy and further education

academic institutions

information, book and librarianship, publishing

film, radio and television

religion and philosophy

art, music, theatre and dance

ethnic minorities in the state of Israel, especially Palastinians and their interests

## **Collection-development:**

The Annual growth amounts to an average of 5.000 units per year, varying strongly. Last year, 1999, about 8.500 (8.591) volumes were acquired and nearly 300.000DM spent (293.305), but this was exceptional and included the acquisition of many Yiddish books from the Medem-library in Paris.

In 1998 about 3.500 units were added, amounting to ca 200.000 DM, the same the year before with about 4.300 units and about 210.000 DM.

## **4. Catalogues**

The holdings of both collections – monographs as well as periodicals - are recorded in the general library catalogues. Records of material cataloged after 1986 are available on-line through PICA, the on-line public access catalog of the Library. Older publications are in the card catalogue, which has already been digitized and is also accessible per internet. Periodicals are also listed completely in the Zeitschriftendatenbank (ZDB) – the central German periodical catalogue. Hebrew and Yiddish titles are transliterated.

Both collections are accessible in the internet through the web-page of the library : [www.stub.uni-frankfurt.de](http://www.stub.uni-frankfurt.de) and through webis : [webis.sub-uni-hamburg.de](http://webis.sub-uni-hamburg.de)

### **Subject catalogues:**

All material that is catalogued alphabetically, in the author/title catalogue - is also catalogued systematically.

1. - according to the Eppelsheimer Classification system of the library and
2. - according to the rules of the German standard RSWK of the Deutsche Bibliothek

Information Services

Users can compile their own **lists of new acquisitions** on the computer.

Judaica Reading Room

The Reference Collection in the Judaica –Reading Room contains a complete collection of core classic Judaic texts and standard works, commentaries, discourse, encyclopedias, concordances, dictionaries, atlases, indexes, festchriften, and an extensive section of bibliographies in all fields of Judaica. Electronic databases and CD-ROM are also available

in the Judaica-Reading-Room.

The following CD-ROM are available in the library, partly through internet and partly (if underlined) only in the Judaica-Reading Room:

Bar Ilan's Judaic Library

Bibliography of the Hebrew Book (1473-1960)

Book of Legends

The CD-ROM Bible [hebräisch - englisch]

Database for Jewish Studies

Encyclopedia Judaica

Encyclopedia of Judaism & Dictionary of Jewish Biography

Henrietta Szold Institute Bibliography

Index to Jewish Periodicals

Jerusalem Post 1989ff.

Judaic Classics: Igros Moshe

Judaic Classics: Mishnah Berurah

Sammlung Wagenseil

Soncino Classics Collection

Talmudic Encyclopedia

University of Haifa Periodicals Index

## 5. Digital projects

The Judaica Division is currently involved in two projects of digitalization, which are both financed by the DFG and which both belong to the realm of German Resources.

### 1. The project of digitization of the old collection of German-Jewish / Yiddish prints

#### **Content:**

The collection consists of about 1000 extremely rare and precious Yiddish and German-Jewish books printed in Hebrew letters. Most of the books were written for the daily use of Jewish women and are womens-bibles (Zeenra-reena), - that means they contain the biblical narratives in a Yiddish translation for the understanding of Jewish women, who did not learn to understand Hebrew. You find liturgical books for women - with prayers for the special religious duties of Jewish women like keeping the dietary laws, lighting the Sabbath-candles and preparing the house for Passover – as well as practical guides for the education of girls and medical treatment. Some of the books are Yiddish translations of wellknown general legends like Thousand and one night and others are historical descriptions of traditional Jewish communal life before emancipation. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century there are mostly Yiddish fiction of the famous east-european Yiddish writers as Isaak Leib Perez, Scholem Alejchem and Schalom Asch.

The oldest books of the collection date from 1560 from Cremona/Italy and from 1583 from Basle (Basel). Most of the books of the 17. and 18. century were printed in Central Europe, especially in Germany – you find places like Amsterdam and Prag, Fürth, Wilhermsdorf, Dyhernfurt, Offenbach, Frankfurt/Main, Sulzbach. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the main printing locations were in East Europe, in Wilna, Warschau and other other Polish and Russian towns.

Thus these books are a most important source for the study of Jewish history and literature.

The books are in bad condition, because intended for daily life, they were in constant use from the beginning. In the last years the use of the books had to be very restricted. The only possibility to make the content of the books available to the steadily growing number of students studying Yiddish language and literature is by way of digitalization.

#### **Technical Information:**

The books are being filmed and then digitally scanned at a resolution equivalent to 600 dpi. They are digitized as images, not as fulltext, because the Hebrew letters – and we have a variety

of scripts - can't still be converted automatically in a reliable manner. This way it is easy to read the text – in some cases even better than in the original – and at the same time the characteristics of the original are kept. The computer enables an easy access to this difficult material - one can enlarge the pages, clean dirty places and receive a better image than in the book.

A sample of the project can already be seen under : <http://www.semantics.de/WJD/>

In 2-3 month the whole project will be accessible on the net.

## **2. The digitization of Jewish periodicals in the German language area.**

This project differs in content as well as in technical practice.

The project is carried out by the Frankfurt library in cooperation with the Institute for German Studies at the University in Aachen (Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule Aachen) under Prof. Hans-Otto Horch and his assistants and the Bibliothek Germania Judaica in Cologne.

### **Content:**

Jewish periodicals represent an invaluable source for the research of Judaism from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century onward and are constantly referred to by scholars and students of Jewish studies. A common problem for all scholars is the difficult accessibility of the majority of these periodicals due to heavy losses during national socialism. Complete volumes are to be found in few libraries only.

In the first stage of the project 8 Jewish periodicals, which differ thematically, have been chosen, for pragmatic reasons all of them are German language periodicals. At a later stage these are to be followed by publications in Hebrew and Yiddish.

### **The periodicals are:**

1. Die Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums – 1837-1922, the longest published Jewish periodical in Germany, (Reform-oriented)

4 Zionist-oriented periodicals:

2. Die Welt (1897-1914, weekly, Zionist organisation)

3. Ost und West (1901-1923, monthly, cultural)

4. Altneuland (1904-1906, monthly, cultural)

5. Palästina ( 1902-1912/ 1927-1938, bimonthly)

6. Der Jude – 1916-1924/29- one of the most famous Jewish periodicals, edited by Martin Buber

and 2 scientific periodicals :

7. Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur (1898-1931/ 1936-1938)

8. Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der Deutschen Juden (1908-1914/ 15, 1926) ed. by Eugen Täubler

**Technical Information:**

The texts of the periodicals are filmed and digitally scanned as fulltext. All essays will be catalogized, authors, titles, subject headings will appear in corresponding indexes, that will enable students to look directly for specific themes and items. The database will be Tamino, all documents will be digitalized in XML-Format (Extensible Markup language) and accessible via Internet.

Both projects will answer the needs of students and scholars in the field of Jewish and German studies, which are growing constantly in Germany today.