



Celebration of

THE KLAU LIBRARY
and
THE JEWISH FOUNDATION OF CINCINNATI
LIBRARY PAVILION

November 1, 2009 14 Heshvan 5770

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, Ohio

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**of blessed memory*

We are grateful to Macy’s, Inc. and Thomas G. Cody, Vice Chair, Macy’s, Inc., for their support of these ceremonies and this commemorative publication.

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**of blessed memory*

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as of November 2009

Founded in 1875, HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION is the nation's oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center of Reform Judaism. HUC-JIR educates men and women for service to American and world Jewry as rabbis, cantors, educators, and communal service professionals, and offers graduate and post-graduate programs to scholars of all faiths. With centers of learning in Cincinnati, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and New York, HUC-JIR's scholarly resources comprise renowned library and museum collections, the American Jewish Archives, biblical archaeology excavations, research institutes and centers, and academic publications. HUC-JIR invites the community to an array of cultural and educational programs which illuminate Jewish history, identity, and contemporary creativity and which foster interfaith and multiethnic understanding.

THE KLAU LIBRARY at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is one of the most comprehensive Jewish libraries in the world. With nearly half a million volumes, the Library has the largest collection of printed Judaica in North America. The Library's mission is to collect, preserve, and provide access to the total record of Jewish thought and experience. Its Rare Book holdings include important collections of incunabula and 16th century Hebrew imprints, and archival and literary manuscripts, including the unique Chinese-Hebrew collection. It has preeminent collections of Jewish music, early Jewish Americana, Spinozana, and Christian Hebraica. Over 200 Judaica databases and 10,000 digitized images of works from its collections can be accessed using its internal computer network. It also houses the American Jewish Periodical Center, which preserves on microfilm some 900 newspaper, journal, and synagogue bulletin titles. It is one of the three repositories in the world for the original negatives of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The online catalogs are accessible to a world-wide community of users at the website (<http://www.huc.edu/libraries>), which also provides links to timely topics, online exhibitions, subject research guides, online databases, and local resources.

www.huc.edu



Dear Dedication Guestss:

On June 3, 1961, at the original dedication of the Klau Library, then Secretary of Labor Arthur J. Goldberg, the Dedication Speaker, observed of the Klau, “This building will be a splendid repository of the learning of the past – a treasure-house of the truths of a great religion and the convictions of a people. Within it will be a record of man’s success and failure in grappling with his own nature, with reality, and with his own purpose and condition. History is filled with blind waste and magnificent triumph, with angry triumph and dazzling discovery. In hours of trial a library offers us the opportunity to judge the results of past decisions. Continuity with the past is a necessity, not a duty.”

It is especially appropriate that we recall Justice Goldberg’s words as we offer greetings on this magnificent occasion. Indeed, the Klau Library resides at the very heart of our enterprise as the academic, spiritual, and professional leadership development center for Reform Judaism and *Klal Yisrael* (the entire Jewish People). The Library offers tangible testimony to the absolute commitment we at HUC-JIR have as a liberal Jewish institution of higher learning to sustaining and advancing academic study, research, publication, and teaching for the benefit of the Jewish people and all humanity.

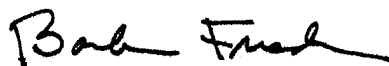
This Library contains books and manuscripts that, in some cases, cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Each one of the nearly half a million volumes in our collections represents a journey through time and Jewish experience, and serves as a powerful witness to the vicissitudes and triumphs of the Jewish People. These volumes are the repository of Jewish memory, human history, and the imperative for survival. They are imbued with centuries of scholarship, profound creativity, knowledge, and wisdom that must be transmitted to future generations. This Library makes continuity with the past possible even as it leaves us free to shape a future that we ourselves will make.

The renovation and expansion of the Klau Library in such close proximity to the American Jewish Archives positions Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion to fulfill its sacred responsibility: to sustain and preserve the literary heritage of the Jewish People, and to expand its accessibility to students and scholars as well as the larger public. We are grateful to so many of you for sharing our vision about the central importance of this structure for the College-Institute and the larger world, and thank you for your support and attendance on this momentous and celebratory occasion.

In deepest appreciation,



Rabbi David Ellenson, *President*



Barbara Friedman, *Chair, Board of Governors*

“The Soul of the College”

DR. MICHAEL A. MEYER
Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History

“When a Jew sits down to read a book,” wrote the modern Hebrew writer Moshe Leib Lilienblum, “his material world disappears from view and he enters a realm that is wholly of the spirit, a higher, ennobled world.” Indeed, the books he or she reads are made of paper or perhaps of parchment, bound into volumes or rolled into scrolls. But ink and paper are only the physical artifacts that unlock the vistas books contain. And libraries are not mere storehouses of books. They are sources of the spirit.

The granddaddy of all libraries was the remarkable structure built in Alexandria, Egypt during the reign of the Hellenistic monarch Ptolemy Philadelphus in the third century B.C.E. The Apocryphal Letter of Aristeas re-



Bernheim Library, Clifton Campus, 1912.

lates that the king gave vast sums of money for the purpose of collecting the books of all the world. On one occasion he asked his librarian, “How many thousand books are there in the library?” And he replied, “More than two hundred thousand, O king, and I shall make endeavor in the immediate future to gather together the remainder also. . . . I am told that the laws of the Jews are worth transcribing and deserve a place in your library.” According to later legend, seventy (or seventy-two) elders from the Land of Israel, each working independently in a separate cubicle, thereupon produced an identical translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, the version we still call the Septuagint. Thus, if perhaps not exactly in this way, did our Book of Books enter

Reading Room, HUC Library, Sixth Street Building, c. 1905.



Reading Room, Bernheim Library, Clifton Campus, 1912.





HUC Library, Clifton Campus, 1931.

into the greatest library of the ancient world.

When, more than two thousand years later, our library began here in Cincinnati, it was – by way of understatement – a far more modest affair. Lodged in the basement of a downtown congregation, it contained scarcely over a hundred volumes, mostly begged or borrowed from Midwestern Jews. In the absence of proper supervision, books began to disappear as each student considered himself their best guardian. Still, in the words of Hebrew Union College’s founder, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, this humble project was “one of the wonders of the West.”

In succeeding years the collection did begin to grow, and when the whiskey baron Isaac W. Bernheim of Louisville generously

Rare Book Room, HUC Library, Clifton Campus, 1931.



Klau Library, Clifton Campus, 1961.

contributed \$50,000, the Hebrew Union College in 1912 could dedicate as its library the building which is today the basis for the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives. Remarkably, in all of Jewish history and all the Jewish world it was the first building devoted entirely to a Jewish library.

By that time the Hebrew Union College had acquired a most remarkable head librarian, Adolph S. Oko. According to his friend Hannah Arendt, Oko’s “benevolence was matched only by his intelligence.” Like Arendt, he was a leading Jewish intellectual of his time, “the last of the great Spinoza scholars,” but, again in Arendt’s eulogizing words: “His oeuvre is the Library of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.”

Dalshemer Rare Book Room and Building, Klau Library, Clifton Campus, 1961.





Adolph S. Oko

Under Oko, a consummate acquisitionist who served from 1906 to 1932, the library expanded immensely. Let me mention only three of his prize purchases. The Aaron Freimann Collection of some 7000 volumes, purchased in Europe after World War One, contains 33 Hebrew incunabula (books printed before 1500) and more than half of the Hebrew books published in the sixteenth century. With this acquisition, Hebrew Union College rose from the status of a college owning a professional library serving the needs of rabbinical students to the rank of an institution that possessed one of the greatest Jewish research libraries in the world.

Oko also succeeded in bringing the Eduard Birnbaum Music Collection to Cincinnati.

Consisting of nearly 3000 manuscripts, many printed volumes of sacred and secular music, and portraits of hazanim, it had been assembled by the cantor of the Jewish community of Königsberg in Prussia. Not without justification, Oko bragged that this collection was “the most important and greatest of its kind in the world.”

The third major collection that Oko obtained was the most exotic: it consisted of the bulk of the library of the seventeenth-century community of Chinese Jews in Kaifeng. Here are hymnals, prayer books, and sections of the Torah written on thin Chinese paper, some resembling fans or accordions. The most interesting document in the collection is the membership list of its community containing the name of each man and woman written in both Hebrew and Chinese.

Oko’s most significant material accomplishment was the construction of HUC’s second library. Dedicated in 1931 and placed next to its predecessor, it was much larger and more elaborate. It boasted an elegant rare book room fashioned of Allegheny metal and brass, a decorative vault in which to harbor the College’s most valued treasures.

I would have liked to end this fruitful chapter in the development of our library by recounting a happy retirement party for its esteemed librarian. But we historians must be honest: truth be told, Adolph Oko brought an

*Chinese-Hebrew
Memorial Book,
HUC Ms. 926,
17th century;
Klau Library,
Cincinnati*



ignominious end to a brilliant career when he ran off with the wife of a member of HUC's Board of Governors.

After a succession of librarians who served only briefly, Hebrew Union College was fortunate to acquire the services of Herbert C. Zafren, who headed the library from 1950 to 1991. Among his significant accomplishments was the further expansion of the collection, now including books that had once graced the library shelves of Jewish communities that perished in the Holocaust. Zafren was among the pioneers in the computerization of Jewish libraries. And he was a productive scholar of early Hebrew printing who recognized that books are also physical artifacts of their time and age. In numerous articles, Herb Zafren displayed extraordinary knowledge of bindings, fonts, inks, paper, and woodcuts. It was during his tenure that the great Klau Library was constructed and dedicated in 1961, the building that forms the largest portion of the present structure.

A year before that dedication I had come to the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion as a student and begun a connection with HUC-JIR that has lasted almost fifty years, mostly in Cincinnati and much of it spent within that library. From a faculty study located only a few yards away from the books I was seeking I often wandered among the stacks. Searching for one book, I would sometimes discover a second or a third that returned with me to my office. Over the years I have visited many libraries around the world. None competes with this library for its combination of strength of holdings together with ease of accessibility. Herb Zafren said more than once that there were two kinds of librarians: those who thought their job was to ensure that the books were there *for* people and those who thought their job was to protect the books *from* people. He clearly belonged to the former category.

Zafren's staff in his time – and David Gil-



Avodat Yisrael, Birnbaum Music Collection, Ms. 39 (2), 19th century; Klau Library, Cincinnati



Talmud Shevu'ot, Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1520/21; Klau Library, Cincinnati



Professor Herbert C. Zafren

ner's staff today – was and is extraordinary. From my early days I recall its unusual variety. Men and women were hired for their skills without regard for any other considerations. It didn't matter whether you were an Orthodox or a Reform Jew – or whether you were Jewish at all; whether you were black or white, or the nature of your sexual orientation. It only mattered whether you were a good librarian. In my first years here many of the librarians were Holocaust survivors, including an unforgettable tiny Hungarian man named Leibu



The depot of Jewish books and archival materials confiscated by the Nazis and liberated by the Allies.

Herskovici, who dwelt in the basement where he engaged in his beloved labor of binding books, among them the theses of our rabbinical and graduate students.

One of the most important members of the library staff for those of us who work in fields that require books found only in a few general research libraries, is the College-Institute's interlibrary loan librarian who procures these volumes from far and wide for faculty and students. But most of her work is filling requests sent to us from other libraries. As many as 1500 requests a year reach us from scholars around the world. For this important service we charge nothing – except, that is, for Harvard. That institution demands \$50 for every volume it sends outside its sacred precincts. But since we send far more books to them than they to us, we've made a little money.

In 1969, during the HUC-JIR presidency of the archaeologist Nelson Glueck, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Library became for more than twenty years the secret storehouse for a security copy of the Dead Sea Scrolls housed in Jerusalem. In the wake of the Six Day War, Hebrew University President Avraham Harman had decided that the unstable situation in the Middle East de-



Archaeologist Yigael Yadin (left) and HUC-JIR President Nelson Glueck with a page of the Dead Sea Scrolls Security Copy.



Illuminated Esther Scroll, III, 9, 18th century; Klau Library, Cincinnati

mandated that the contents of these important documents be protected from any possible disaster. Our library served that purpose.

The HUC-JIR Library exists on multiple levels. Like the library of every institution of higher learning, it serves the academic needs of its students. Here our rabbinical and graduate students find the books and periodicals

they require for term papers, theses, and dissertations.

On another level it is a library that makes possible an enhancement of our teaching. Each year in my survey course on medieval and modern Jewish history I devote a lecture to the Court Jews, those remarkable individuals who in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provided the courts of Central Europe with supplies for their armies and jewelry for their wives and mistresses. On the day of that lecture I enter the classroom with a huge case balanced precariously between my head and shoulder. At the end of the session, I open it up, revealing a Letter of Privilege written to a Court Jew named Lazar Simon, personally signed by none other than the ruling Austrian monarch Maria Theresa and adorned with the great wax seal of the Austrian Empire. After each student has come up close to examine this impressive document, I speedily return it to the restricted stacks of our library.

Another level of our library's activity is to reach out beyond our students and faculty as



The Apple II+ computer that enabled the Klau Library to be the first American library to process bilingual Hebrew-English cataloging in 1983.

we host scholars from around the world who come to Cincinnati in order to find books and manuscripts they cannot find elsewhere. In the opening pages of hundreds of their published books they have gratefully acknowledged our library's contribution to their work. A library has been described as "a nest that hatches scholars." Ours is just that, for our own advanced students and for those who visit us.

Above these levels of service is one other, which is harder to define. Let me illustrate. Today's library possesses close to half a million books, comparable only to the National Library of Israel. In Hebrew incunabula it is second or third in the world; its collection of Samaritan manuscripts is among the largest in the United States; it possesses by far the greatest collection of Judaica Americana in the

world. And yet the numbers tell only part of the story. Those of you who have not only read, but loved books will understand that, as I said at the start, they are, in a sense, no mere passive objects. They have a life of their own.

Our library contains some extraordinarily beautiful haggadot for the celebration of the Passover seder. The rarest of them reside in our rare book room. But there are many hundreds of others in our regular stacks, some Sephardi and some Ashkenazi, some European and some American, some as old as four hundred years and some as young as a few months. It has been my custom at Pesach time to check out a variety of them so that each participant at our seder holds in his or her hand a different piece of Jewish history. We compare the versions, and should a drop



Dr. David J. Gilner



First Cincinnati Haggadah,
HUC Ms. 444, 1480–90;
Klau Library, Cincinnati



Interior, The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Pavilion, Klau Library

of wine fall upon a very old haggadah, can it not be said that that very drop has brought a worn haggadah new life? It has joined once more in celebrating the occasion that its pages recount.

When in 1880 Isaac Mayer Wise reported to the Board of Governors on the College's tiny library, he told them: "Five years more in the same ratio [of acquisitions] will give you the largest and best appointed Jewish library in the country; and the library is the soul of the College." In the magnificent new Library of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion that we dedicate today we do indeed have the "largest and best appointed Jewish library in the country." And – most important – along with its smaller sister libraries in New York, Los Angeles, and Jerusalem, it continues to be the soul of the College.



Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise

DEDICATION CEREMONY

The S.H. and Helen R. Scheuer Chapel

WELCOME

Rabbi David Ellenson, *President*

GREETINGS

Barbara Friedman, *Chair, Board of Governors*

Mark Mallory, *Mayor, City of Cincinnati*

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Michael A. Meyer, *Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History*

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

Cantor Yvon F. Shore, *Director of Liturgical Arts*

DEDICATION REMARKS

Rabbi David Ellenson

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Sanford R. Cardin, *Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation*

The Klau Family

AFFIXING OF THE MEZZUZAH

The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Library Pavilion

Rabbi David Ellenson and Dr. David J. Gilner, *Director of Libraries*

TOURS

Klau Library

The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Library Pavilion



CELEBRATORY PROGRAM AND DESSERT RECEPTION

*The Manuel D. & Rhoda Mayerson JCC
on The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Campus*

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Gregory H. Williams, *President, University of Cincinnati*

THE LIBRARIANS OF HUC AND HUC-JIR

Between 1875 and 1885, the Library was under the supervision of the Janitor and soon also a Janitor's Assistant. After that and until 1896, a student took the place of the Janitor's Assistant, and members of the faculty took an interest in supervising the Library. Jacob Ezekiel, who served as Secretary of the Board and gave the Library an important collection of books in the early 1880s, is listed as a librarian in the HUC Annual Jubilee Volume 1875–1925.

Rev. Sigmund Mannheimer, 1896–1903

Rabbi Judah L. Magnes, 1903–1904

Dr. Max Schloessinger, 1904–1906

Adolph S. Oko, 1906–1932

Rabbi Walter Rothman, 1932–1944

Moses Marx, 1944–1945

Rabbi Irvin M. Levey 1945–1948

Isaac Goldberg, 1948–1950

Professor Herbert C. Zafren, 1950–1991

(Director of Libraries, HUC-JIR, 1968–1995)

Dr. David J. Gilner, 1991 to the present

(Director of Libraries HUC-JIR, 1996 to the present)



Illuminated Esther Scroll, V, 5, 17th century;
Klau Library, Cincinnati

Library Administration and Staff 2009–2010

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