

Silke Schaeper

Report on the Library of Jewish Scepticism

Beginnings

The Institute for Jewish Philosophy and Religion at the University of Hamburg was founded in May 2014 with the creation of a Chair in Jewish Philosophy and Religion for Professor Giuseppe Veltri (April 2014). In October 2015, the Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies was founded under the umbrella of the Institute, with generous support from the German Research Foundation. Each of the two institutions has an annual library budget for the joint creation of a Library of Jewish Scepticism, a non-lending reference library that provides the team of staff at both institutions and visiting Fellows at the Centre with source texts, secondary research literature, textbooks, and electronic resources. The library collections are recorded in the online campus catalogue of the University of Hamburg and made available on-site to members of the university and visitors.

Veltri library

During the founding phase of the Institute for Jewish Philosophy and Religion, Professor Giuseppe Veltri decided to make his private research collection in Jewish studies and philosophy available to his team. Shelved in proximity to the Centre's own growing library, the Veltri Library continues to serve as a valuable local source of reference for staff and visiting Fellows at the Centre.

The librarian

Silke Schaeper took up the position of librarian in October 2015. Her role at the Centre is to create and manage the Library of Jewish Scepticism within the budgets of the Institute and the Centre, and to provide bibliographic services to staff and Fellows. She also lends editorial support to the production of the Centre's academic publications.

Silke Schaeper studied Jewish studies, modern history, library science, and the history of the Hebrew book in Berlin and Jerusalem, graduating from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (PgDip 1989, MLS 1995). Before coming to Hamburg, she curated Hebraica, Judaica, and early printed book collections in Israel and the United Kingdom. In her own research, she has focused on library history, Hebrew bibliography, and German-Jewish history.

Since the opening of the Institute and the Centre, student assistants have contributed to the running of the library. We herewith thank our first assistants Ilya Shvartsman, Marlene Heider, and Femke Isermann. Femke has recently returned to the Centre after a year of study in Israel. From August 2016, she will be joined by Lina Kröhnert and Julius Mann.

Setting up

Managed by a part-time librarian, our special collection operates within a complex networked academic environment. The challenge in our first academic year was to set up all the relevant technical and administrative procedures.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the colleagues involved, without mentioning individual names (those we are thanking know who they are!): the team at the Central Library for Philosophy, our colleagues at the Hamburg State and University Library, the excellent IT support team at the Faculty of Humanities, the team from central university IT support, and, last but not least, our wonderful colleagues from the university's Operational Purchasing team. Many other colleagues also held our hands in the first months, providing advice, and technical, administrative, financial, and professional support.

By the end of December 2015, we had succeeded in obtaining the requisite hardware, software, barcode readers, passwords, and permissions necessary for cataloguing and contributing records to the Hamburg University Library System ('Campus-Katalog Hamburg'). Since May 2016, our collections are listed in the Hamburg Library Guide ('Hamburger Bibliotheksführer'). Between September and November 2016, the librarian will attend a series of training sessions for users of the acquisitions and cataloguing modules of the local library management system.

Fellows first

Fellows stay at the Centre for periods of varying length. It can be mutually beneficial if the library prepares in advance for the arrival of a Fellow who intends to work on a particular topic, as some books can prove difficult to obtain. Fellows either register for their own library card at the Hamburg State and University Library or request borrowing and book return services on campus from our student assistants. Interlibrary loans are managed by the librarian.

Library collaboration

Library provision in the fields of Jewish studies and philosophy is excellent in Hamburg, and many literature requests can be satisfied by obtaining copies from the

State and University Library or from other libraries in the university, such as the Central Library for Philosophy, the library of the Asia-Africa Institute, the library of the Department of Protestant Theology, and the library of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures.

One of Germany's leading libraries in the field of Jewish history and culture is found at the Institute for the History of German Jews ('Institut für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden' = IGdJ), which was founded in Hamburg in 1966. The library of the IGdJ today holds around 70,000 titles, including many works relevant to our Centre's focus. Fellows and Research Associates of our Centre frequently use the library of the IGdJ. Since coming to Hamburg in October 2015, the librarian has received valuable technical and practical support from the librarian of the IGdJ, returning these favours by offering Hebraist cataloguing expertise.

Networking

Library managers from the university's Faculty of Humanities have formed a Humanities Faculty Library Committee which meets on a monthly basis in order to take stock and discuss budget and library policy decisions. Our special collection is represented by the manager of the Central Library for Philosophy. Every second month, the circle of the committee is extended to include a member of teaching staff from every department in the Faculty. Since October 2015, the librarian has regularly attended the Extended Humanities Faculty Library Committee meetings on behalf of the Institute for Jewish Philosophy and Religion, in lieu of Professor Giuseppe Veltri.

On 1 December, 2015, the librarian attended a meeting of Judaica librarians at the Centre for Jewish Studies in Berlin ('Zentrum Jüdische Studien Berlin-Brandenburg') in order to learn more about a new web portal for Jewish Studies ('Bibliotheksportal Jüdische Studien') created for the library network of the Berlin-Brandenburg region ('Kooperativer Bibliotheksverbund Berlin Brandenburg' = KOBV).

On 8 September, 2016, the librarian will give a presentation about the library of the Centre at the fortieth annual meeting of the German Association of Jewish Studies Collections ('Arbeitsgemeinschaft Jüdische Sammlungen') in Berlin.

Cataloguing standards

New original cataloguing records are being created according to Resource Description and Access standard (RDA), the latest Anglo-American cataloguing rules for electronic and print resources adopted by the Western library world, including the German National Library. When adding our holdings to records that were catalogued to previous standards (AACR2, RAK-WB), the decision of whether to upgrade a record to RDA is taken *ad hoc*. The cataloguing of books printed in Hebrew characters is undertaken to the standard of the American Library Association and the Library of Con-

gress (Paul E. Maher, *Hebraica cataloging—a guide to ALA/LC romanization and descriptive cataloging*, Washington: Library of Congress, 1987), which became the German standard in 2006 (DIN 31636: Information and Documentation—Transcription of the Hebrew Alphabet).

Electronic resources

The Centre has purchased access to *Ošar ha-Ḥokhmah Online* and the *Bar Ilan Responsa Project*, two electronic full-text databases comprised of more than 75,000 Hebrew editions. Together, these two databases *de facto* represent a very large rabbinical library, giving quick access to important source texts in Hebrew, such as Bible commentaries and supracommentaries, editions of rabbinical law (Mishnah, Talmud) with commentaries and supracommentaries, Responsa literature, and a variety of reference works. Physically assembling such a large library in a short period of time would have been well-nigh impossible.

From October 2016, researchers at the Centre will be able to use two valuable resources that aggregate full-text content from periodicals in Hebrew and Jewish Studies: JSTOR Hebrew Journals and the JSTOR Jewish Studies Collection. These two collections were not previously accessible to members of the University of Hamburg. Users will be able to access this content via a new web portal created by the Subject Information Service Jewish Studies ('Fachinformationsdienst Jüdische Studien = FID'). This service is funded by the German Research Foundation.

Book donations

The library has received two particularly valuable and generous book donations: from Michael Studemund-Halévy (Eduard-Duckesz Fellow, IGdJ, Hamburg) and Giuseppe Veltri (University of Hamburg). We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Karin Hörner (Asia-Africa Institute, University of Hamburg), Jan Wiebers (Central Library for Philosophy, University of Hamburg), Susanne Küther (IGdJ, Hamburg), Barukh Yonin (Schocken Institute for Jewish Research of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Jerusalem), Dorothea Massmann (Massmann Internationale Buchhandlung GmbH, Hamburg), and Giada Coppola (University of Hamburg) for their donations.

Statistics

Institute for Jewish Philosophy and Religion May 2014 to June 2016	Bibliographic units (editions)	433
	Of which: Donations (editions)	240
	Periodicals (larger runs)	4
	Physical volumes	474
	Full-text databases	2
Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies October 2015 to June 2016	Bibliographic units (editions)	143
	Of which: Donations (editions)	2
	Periodicals (larger runs)	–
	Physical volumes	152
	Full-text databases	–

Newsletter

The librarian publishes an occasional newsletter entitled ‘Library News’ containing information about important acquisitions (databases, reference works) and guidance about the library system of the University of Hamburg (retrieval, interlibrary loan, document delivery). The newsletter is distributed by email to Fellows, Research Associates, members of staff, colleagues, and affiliates of the Institute and the Centre.

