Salo Baron’s impact on Judaic scholarship in the twentieth century is hardly unknown. Moreover, his leadership of the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Project, which dealt with the thorny problem of Nazi-looted books and Judaica after World War II, solidly places him in the annals of the history of bibliography as well. Less well known, however, is the outsized impact Baron had on the collections at his home institution. This chapter will discuss how Baron’s connections to and scholarship within the Judaica library collections at Columbia University ensured the library’s place as one of the most important Judaica collections in the United States.

When Linda Miller approached Nicholas Murray Butler regarding an endowed chair of Jewish history at Columbia, Butler crunched the numbers and decided that $200,000 was a reasonable amount to allow for a salary of $9,000–$10,000 per year. However, he went a step further before offering his recommendation to Mrs. Miller. As described in Robert Liberles’s opus on Salo Baron’s life, “in order to make available additional funds for the library and for research assistance, Butler requested a total endowment of $250,000.” From its inception, the Miller Chair was indicated to provide some support for acquiring Jewish studies collections—after all, how could one endow a chair in a new subject at a university without ensuring adequate resources for research? Butler’s expectations were fully realized.
With the chair’s first incumbent came a library champion who built a collection that would be used extensively by himself, his students, and the broader world of Jewish scholarship.

BEGINNINGS: HEBRAICA AND JUDAICA AT COLUMBIA

Even before Baron’s tenure, Columbia had been collecting Judaica in some form or another for almost two centuries. Its founder, Samuel Johnson, taught Hebrew at the fledgling Kings’ College from its inception in 1754, and Hebrew studies remained important throughout the eighteenth century. Even though the American Revolutionary War was waging during its production, the monumental Kennicott Bible of 1774–76 lists three New York subscribers: Kings College (the only American colonial institution on the subscription list) and two fellows of the college (Rev. Mr. Inglis and Rev. Dr. Ogilvie; fig. 7.1). Throughout the nineteenth century, Columbia’s was among the largest collections of Hebraica in the United States. In 1859, when William J. Rhees published his Manual of Public Libraries, the list of top libraries for Hebraica collections placed Columbia third (with one hundred items). First place went to Union Theological Seminary (with two hundred fifty items), whose collection was incorporated into Columbia’s in 2004.

The first major donation of Judaica to Columbia, by Temple Emanu-El in 1892, has been well documented. The temple established a chair in rabbinic literature at Columbia University in 1887, which was filled by Richard James Horatio Gottheil, son of Temple Emanu-El’s rabbi, Gustav Gottheil. Within a few years of Gottheil’s hire, donors began stepping forward with Judaica donations for the university. Notable donors included Oscar Straus, who was instrumental in acquiring one hundred thirty-five manuscripts from Ephraim Deinard by 1890. In May 1892, the Temple Emanu-El Trustees gifted “the library of the Temple to Columbia College of this City.” This collection consisted of twenty-five hundred printed books and forty-five manuscripts, which the temple had purchased in 1872. Additional important donations came to Columbia over the course of the following decade, including a collection of forty-seven manuscripts from Mr. J. N. Hazard, Mr. Benjamin Stern, and Mr. Charles A. Dunn. In 1900, Stephen S. Wise donated about “six or seven hundred volumes,” mostly printed books but also some significant manuscripts, from his father, Aaron’s, library.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscribers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hodge, Rev. Dr</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houghton, Sir Henry, Bart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holdsworth, Arthur, Esq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home, Rt Honble and Rev. The Earl of</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoywood, Prifer, Esq.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard, John, Esq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hughes, Rev. Mr, Vice-President of Queen's College, Cambridge</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt, Rev. Dr, Canon of Christ Church, and Regius Professor of Hebrew</td>
<td>C P E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt, Henry, Esq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter, Dr William, F. R. &amp; A. S. Physician Extraordinary to Her Majesty</td>
<td>C P E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hutchinson, Rt Rev. The Lord Bishop of Killala</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hutchinson, Francis, Esq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson, Cyril, Esq.</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane, Rev. Mr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jebb, Rev. Mr, Cambridge</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffreys, Rev. Dr, Canon of Christ Church</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenkins, Rt Honourable Charles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennings, Charles, Esq</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennings, Rev. Dr, London</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus College, Oxford</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus College, Cambridge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inglis, Rev. Mr, Fellow of King's College, New York</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inns, John, Esq.</td>
<td>C P B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John's St College, Cambridge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnston, Rt Rev. The Lord Bishop of Worcester</td>
<td>C P E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones, Mrs Mary, Oxford</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones, Thomas, Esq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jernynger, Joshua, Esq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jubb, Rev. Dr</td>
<td>C P E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaye, Rev. Dr, F. R. &amp; A. S. Sub-Almoner to His Majesty</td>
<td>C P E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kearney, Rev. Dr, Professor History, Trinity College, Dublin</td>
<td>P E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kearney, Rev. Mr, Affiulnt to King's Prof. Greek, Trin. Coll. Dublin</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keene, Rt Rev. The Lord Bishop of Ely</td>
<td>C P E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King, Rev. Dr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's College, Cambridge</td>
<td>C P E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's College, Aberdeen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's College, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinmont, Rt Honble Earl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kippis, Rev. Dr</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krauter, Rev. Dr, Bath</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kynaston, Thomas, Esq.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambe, James, Esq.</td>
<td>= C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lane, John, Esq. Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughter, Rev. Mr</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawton, Rev. Mr</td>
<td>C P E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee, Matthew, Esq. Elsford</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee, Thomas Hackel, Esq. Exeter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeds, His Grace, The Duke of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legge, Rt Honble Henry Bifon</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The early twentieth century included a flurry of activity around the building of Judaica collections in the United States, especially in the New York area. Philanthropists such as Jacob Schiff and Mayer Sulzberger were working closely with institutions in New York and other areas to build substantial collections in the United States, and they donated collections to various Jewish and non-Jewish institutions, especially the Jewish Theological Seminary and the New York Public Library. After Schiff acquired the library of Dr. Mortiz Steinschneider in 1898, he corresponded with Sulzberger about the most appropriate recipient for this important collection, and Columbia was included, along with Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the New York Public Library, on his shortlist.

SALO BARON AT THE LIBRARY

By the time Baron arrived at the university, there was thus a strong foundation of Judaica collecting for him to build on—and it was expected that he would build the collection. President Butler’s letter offering Baron the position, on December 14, 1930, included, if not a mandate, an expectation: “We should hope that you would guide the University in building up its collection of books and other research material in the field.” Baron took this recommendation seriously. Within a few years of his arrival at Columbia, he had clearly established a strong relationship with the library. The following statement in the 1933 Report of the Librarian shows Baron’s commitment to building its collections:

Since the establishment of the Chair for Jewish History, Literature, and Institutions on the Miller Foundation in 1930, the Library has considerably increased its collections in the field of Jewish studies, including Hebraica as well as Judaica. Professor Baron has spent a great deal of time and thought in deciding on questions of scope and policy. His aim has been a double one: to increase the existing Hebrew collections so as to accumulate a good working library for research students, and to develop the facilities of the Library for scholars doing research work in specific fields through the acquisition of manuscripts and rare prints.

Baron was completely dedicated to creating a world-class Judaica collection—building on the foundation that Gottheil and others had laid—to
ensure that both “research students” and “scholars” could actively and successfully do their work. Various correspondence between Baron and university administrators consistently show the allocation of excess funds from the Miller endowment “for the purchase of Hebrew books for the library” and “to be used by the University libraries for the acquisition of books and journals of Jewish interest.”15 (Interestingly, Baron would use the phrase “Jewish interest,” which was interpreted by the university administration as “Hebrew.”16) In later years, as expenses against the Miller fund increased, and with limited funds for library acquisitions, Baron explicitly requested “the Trustees to allot to the Library $300 from general University funds.”17

Baron actively worked with bookdealers and collectors to build strong and up-to-date collections. The same librarian’s report from 1933 describing Baron’s plans for the collections also cites an acquisition of more than three thousand Jewish studies books, including rare imprints from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

It is clear that the library respected and sought Baron’s opinions and advice relating to the collections. Roger Howson (university librarian, 1926–40) reached out to Baron about duplicate books and how to dispose of them,18 and Baron sent regular messages to Howson indicating that sums from the Miller fund could be used to purchase books that Baron would select for the collections. When Columbia built a new library on the South Lawn of its campus, Baron reached out to Howson, expressing his hope that the Hebraica and Judaica would remain in Low Library with the other special and distinctive collections. Howson had anticipated the request, having written to Director of Libraries Charles Williamson a few days earlier to confirm the same thing. He swiftly reassured Baron that the collections would remain in Low Library.19 Baron also secured a “cubicle” at the newly built South Hall (which would be renamed Butler Library in 1946), and both he and his wife, Jeannette, used it extensively.20

Howson’s successors in the library continued to correspond with Baron regarding acquisitions in Jewish studies for the libraries throughout the years of his tenure at Columbia.21 Among the important decisions deferred to Baron was the question of microfilming Hebrew manuscripts from the collections, along with approvals for acquisition requests from other users to the library.22 Additionally, Baron took full advantage of his connections with the library to secure access for some of his colleagues, such as Aron Freimann and Shalom Spiegel.23
Baron was well aware that the acquisition of materials was not very useful if the items acquired were not processed and cataloged so they could be found by researchers. A mere two years after his hire, the relatively new professor thus reached out to Howson and suggested that the library hire a young student who was looking for work, Isaac Mendelsohn. Backing up his words with funding, Baron offered to pay half of Mendelsohn’s salary out of the Miller chair if the library would cover the other half. The library accepted the offer. It would prove increasingly valuable the following year, when Baron would make the deal of a lifetime, firmly establishing Columbia University’s library as a leading player among Judaica collections.

According to Baron’s own account many years later, upon his arrival, Columbia’s Judaica collection was “valuable from an antiquarian standpoint, but could hardly be of any use to a class of predominantly unprepared students.” Baron thus set out to establish a teaching and research collection for his new home institution. In his words, “because all this took place during the Great Depression, when prices generally were going down, I was confident that the amount set aside out of the Miller fund would suffice for a presentable Jewish collection.”

In early 1933, Baron met with Viennese bookdealer David Fraenkel to discuss possible acquisitions for the library. In February, Fraenkel sent a letter to Baron with a list of various options, including a “big collection of 600 manuscripts on different subjects” and “more than 80” relating to “the Study of Jewish History of Greece.” After much negotiation, the initial asking price of $15,000 was reduced to $7,500, and the deal was made. On May 1, 1933, University Secretary Frank D. Fackenthal wrote to Baron to congratulate him—the trustees had approved $2,000 from the Miller fund for the initial purchase of manuscripts. The librarian’s letter came four days later with a note congratulating Baron on a fine bargaining job. A few months later, the Committee on Finance approved a “sum of $5500, chargeable to the accumulated income of the Miller (Nathan J.) Fund, [to] be made available for the purchase for the library of a collection of important Hebrew manuscripts and rare prints.” This was likely a second payment for the collection from Fraenkel.
The acquisition was celebrated in the Report of the Librarian for that year:

A large collection of Hebrew manuscripts has been recently purchased from Rabbi David Fraenkel of Vienna. In addition to 650 manuscripts in Hebrew characters, over twenty manuscripts written in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Spanish, Italian, and Greek furnish information, hitherto unavailable, as to various phases of Jewish history and literature. . . . One special part of the Miller collection that has its own interest is a section that covers Jewish communal life in Greece from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. The printed catalogue of this section lists eighty manuscripts and forty printed volumes.31

Notwithstanding the huge importance of the collection, there was no notice of the acquisition within the Columbia press. The timing definitely played a part, as the world was transfixed by events in Europe. Indeed, there was a mention of Hebrew books in May 1933 in the Columbia Spectator, but for a very different story: the Jewish student adviser had tried to donate to the library copies of books that were burned by the Nazis as a “symbolic and significant answer to the Hitler demonstration.” Howson turned down the offer, claiming that the Nazis were just burning Marxist materials and that they would be shown to be fools for acting like “a spoiled child” and should be ignored.32

The following year, however, the acquisition was duly noted in the the New York Times, indicating a collection of “650 manuscripts in Hebrew characters, more than twenty manuscripts in Arabic, Perisian, Turkish, Spanish, Italian and Greek . . . from Babylon, Baghdad, Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey and Yemen.”33

Hiring Mendelsohn in 1932 turned out to be a prescient plan. The archives show that his contract was continually renewed, and updates to his work are scattered throughout library correspondence and reports. By the late 1940s, Mendelsohn had produced the two-volume Descriptive Catalogue of Semitic Manuscripts (mostly Hebrew) in the Libraries of Columbia University, which described about 650 of the codex manuscripts (fig. 7.2). Volume One was typescript, but Volume Two remained handwritten. Both volumes were mimeographed, but only a few copies were made.34
FIGURE 7.2. Isaac Mendelsohn's Descriptive Catalogue of Semitic Manuscripts (mostly Hebrew) in the Libraries of Columbia University (circa 1940s).
Image Courtesy Columbia University Libraries.
Once the manuscripts arrived, Baron wasted no time in delving into their contents. As early as 1937, he published an article in the festschrift for Samuel Kraus dealing with a dispute between the Sephardi and Ashkenazi congregations in Verona.36 The dispute was documented in manuscript by Rabbi Ḥizkiyahu Mordekhai Basan, who was asked to adjudicate between the aggrieved parties. The disagreement began when the Sephardic community opened a new synagogue in 1653, in opposition to the legislation of the community from 1630 not to do so. Baron’s carefully researched article uses the Columbia manuscript37 as a starting point, but it also cites sources from collections around the world, including the Kauffman collection in Budapest, the Oppenheim collection in Oxford, and the collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary (whose librarian, Alexander Marx, was a familiar correspondent and friend of Baron). Baron’s first footnote on the article proudly identifies the new manuscript as “from the collection of manuscripts that were acquired from Rabbi David Fraenkel in the year 1932.”38

Baron’s writings show that his interest was not just in the collection that he brought to the Columbia libraries but in all Judaica found in the collection. In 1940, he reviewed a book by Ralph L. Rusk, Letters to Emma Lazarus in the Columbia University Library for Jewish Social Studies.39 The review took a distinctly Jewish angle, as would be appropriate for the journal, and described, as Baron put it, the “unique position of Emma Lazarus in the history of American-Jewish letters.”

The most prolific area of Baron’s scholarship from Columbia’s collections focused on the books and documents relating to the Jews of Greece. The Greek manuscripts were described separately in Howson’s librarian’s report cited earlier, noted for both their uniqueness and scholarly value. Baron published a series of articles describing various aspects of the Greek communities, especially that of Corfu (e.g., fig. 7.3). The year 1942 saw a piece40 on pidyon shevuyim, the purchase (and thus redemption) of Jewish captives by the Jews of Corfu, as part of a larger discussion of various communal activities detailed in a community record book41 that was included in the collection that he had acquired for Columbia. In the body of this article, Baron noted that “a few years ago I had the opportunity to acquire a collection of rare manuscripts for this [Columbia’s] library, from
David Fraenkel, who has a reputation for acquiring unique rare Judaica." Additional articles followed in 1944 and 1953, which focused on the communal disputes between the dwindling native Greek Jewish population and the Italian emigre community in Corfu (fig. 7.4).
Baron’s larger monographs also show that he worked extensively with the Columbia collections for his broader research. A passing line in The Jewish Community: Its History and Structure to the American Revolution refers to the sale of a fourteenth-century manuscript (“now in the Columbia University Library”) for twenty-six gold ducats as part of a discussion on the cost of manuscripts in the medieval period. It is noteworthy that this particular manuscript, an important collection of pre-Lurianic kabbalah, had also been explicitly mentioned in the librarian’s report of the Fraenkel acquisition back in 1933: “For example, a large manuscript on vellum containing a collection of Kabbalistic works was written, according to two colophons, which appear to be authentic, by one Moses Barzilai in the years 5085–5105 (1325–45). Curiously, it contains at the end a contract, dated 5165 (1405) which states that this volume was sold by one Jacob Alkbakar for twenty-six gold ducats.”

Another important aspect of this manuscript is the light it sheds on the history of scribal practices. Malachi Beit-Arié was the first to note that the earlier of two colophons in the manuscript, from 1325, was copied...
exactly from a manuscript at the Biblioteca Laurenziana\textsuperscript{49} in (as the second colophon indicates) 1405 (fig. 7.5). Beit-Arié has also identified additional works by the same fifteenth century scribe.\textsuperscript{50}

In 1953, Baron published an article on the thought of Shemu‘el David Luzzatto (known as Shadal), a prominent Paduan rabbi and scholar, using
a manuscript of Shadal’s lectures as part of a discussion on Shadal’s perspective on the Revolution of 1848.

There are many more instances in which Baron might have consulted Columbia’s Judaica collections and did not cite them explicitly, especially in his magnum opus, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*. The bibliography for this monumental work intersperses early printed works from the fifteenth or sixteenth century with recent publications from his time. Were the early prints the ones that he acquired for the Columbia Library, or those from his extensive personal collections? Many reminiscences of Baron center him in Butler Library, and he certainly remained involved in its activities throughout his tenure there. To cite one of many examples, Baron was asked to serve on the committee in 1951 to “work out plans” for an “Archive of Russian and East European History and Culture.” The resulting Bakhmeteff Archive is now the largest collection of Russian émigré materials outside of Russia.

Baron’s work for the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction project likely influenced the decision for Columbia to receive more than two thousand items when those heirless books were distributed in the late 1940s. Perhaps ironically, considering Baron’s involvement in JCR, the library “insisted that they could not accept the policy of returning books to JCR because the cost of making books available to readers prevented their simply giving back volumes.” Unfortunately, the JCR books received by Columbia cannot be identified today because they were not marked with the iconic bookplate as mandated by the restitution organization, but several have been identified as coming from Nazi-occupied Europe.

**BARON’S SUCCESSORS AND THE COLUMBIA COLLECTIONS**

Baron’s students followed their teacher in using Columbia manuscripts in their research. Abraham Berger’s chapter in a festschrift to Baron cites an important manuscript of Abraham Abulafia that describes the unity of mankind in the messianic era. Gerson D. Cohen received his doctorate under Arthur Jeffrey in the Semitics Department but no doubt was influenced by Baron as well. Cohen was appointed associate professor of Jewish history on Baron’s retirement, and the year he was promoted to full professor, he published an article on Abraham
Maimuni, which would cite a fragment held at Columbia that was part of Maimuni’s *Kifdyat al-Abidin*, much of which is lost today (fig. 7.6). The portion at Columbia described by Cohen contains a portion from part II of this work, including “a section on the obligation to procreate children.”
Baron’s retirement in 1963 by no means indicated a cessation of work—either scholarly or pedagogical. A 1976 dissertation by Morris B. Margolis focusing on the life, thought, and oeuvre of Shemu’el David Luzzatto (Shadal), citing no less than five Columbia manuscripts, “acknowledges his debt to his teacher, Professor Salo W. Baron, who encouraged this project from its inception and who supplied many constructive suggestions which have proved most helpful to the work.” Decades later, another student, and Baron’s successor at Columbia, Yosef Yerushalmi, would also engage deeply with the manuscripts. In 1981, Yerushalmi produced an exhibition called Perspectives on Jewish Messianism. Additionally, the Judaic collections were featured prominently in a pamphlet for a fundraising campaign for the Center for Jewish Studies in 1976, which included the following statement: “Of particular importance are manuscripts in the collection on history and sociology. For example, in a mid-16th Century petition to a Venetian doge, Christian councilors ask for repeal of a decree ordering expulsion of Jews. Another relates a plague in the Ghetto of Padua in 1630. Another relates Robespierre’s attitude to the Jewish religion. The collection also contains six responsa and a ban promulgated by rabbis of Hamburg in the 1920’s against use of any language but Hebrew in religious services and against organ playing in synagogues.”

It is notable that the same pamphlet, which requests support for various aspects of the center, such as funded chairs and fellowships, includes a recommended $550,000 for an endowment for library collections. A sizable library endowment would not come until 2008, when the Norman E. Alexander Foundation donated $4 million to support collections and a dedicated librarian for Judaica.

CONCLUSION

In 1998, Robert Singerman wrote a history of Judaica collections in the United States from the mid-eighteenth century to the present. The title of his article, “Books Weeping for Someone to Visit and Admire Them,” referred to the Temple Emanu-El collection before it was donated to Columbia in 1892. The history of Judaica collections in the United States in the twentieth century has yet to be fully written, but when it does, Salo Baron will feature prominently within it. Over the course of more than thirty years as a professor at Columbia, Baron was actively involved in
building library collections for research and scholarship in the field that he shaped in America, that of Jewish history. His deep commitment to Judaica collections continued well into his retirement—a 1973 proposal for a survey of Judaica collections in American archives and research libraries listed Dr. Salo W. Baron foremost on the “Panel of Experts,” specifically “to serve as an expert on scholarly needs in the archival and library field.”72 And unlike the collection that preceded him, the books that he acquired for the collection had no chance to “weep.” On the contrary, they were used extensively in research and scholarship by Baron, his students, and his successors, both at Columbia and in the broader field of Jewish studies.

NOTES

Writing an archives-based paper during a global pandemic, when a critical collection is across the country, can be incredibly difficult. This paper could not have been written without the generous assistance of Eitan Kensky and Anna Levia at the Stanford University, and the Department of Special Collections at Stanford University Libraries, who helped me to access the necessary documents in a timely manner. I am grateful to the Baron Estate for providing me permission to publish documents from the Salo Baron Papers. Many thanks as well to Jocelyn Wilk, Columbia University Archivist, who patiently answered many questions and provided sources I would otherwise never have seen. Jane Siegel has been sending me citations about Columbia’s Judaica collection for a decade now, and this work would be severely lacking without her generous and kind assistance.


6. For more information on the establishment of the chair and Temple Emanu-El’s motivation for it, see the Minutes of Temple Emanu-el, “Special Meeting of the Board held March 15, 1887,” 312, at the Temple Emanu-El Archives, New York, NY.

7. See Ephraim Deinard, Devir Ephraim (St. Louis, MO: Moinester Printing Co., 1926), 1. Note that Deinard claims this happened in 1888, whereas the Columbia trustee minutes list the donation was made in 1890. It is possible that the final donation did not take place until the later date. A list of twenty-eight manuscripts is included in the Columbia College Library Report, list of additions (sixteen), May 1890, 16–17.

8. Columbia University Archives, trustee minutes, June 5, 1892, 173.

9. The collection was put up for sale in Amsterdam by Frederick Muller in 1868 and included parts of the libraries of Giuseppe Almanzi, Jacob Emden, and S. D. Lewenstein. The entire collection is described in Meijer Roest, Bet Ha-Sefer: Catalog der Reichhaltigen Sammlungen Hebraischer und Judischer Bucher, Handschriften, Kupferstiche, Portraits etc. . . Giuseppe Almanzi . . . (Amsterdam: F. Müller, 1868).


12. Schmelzer, “Building a Great Judaica Library,” 686, 711n36. It might not be a coincidence that the collection was ultimately granted to JTS in 1907, shortly after Schiff wrote a strongly worded letter to Butler decrying the genteel anti-Semitism at Columbia that prevented the university from appointing a Jewish trustee, something that Schiff had been decrying since the late 1890s. See Columbia University Archives, Central Files, Jacob H. Schiff file, 1891–1917, box 338, folder 18.


15. In Columbia University Archives, Central Files, Salo Wittmayer Baron file, box 407, folder 20, see, e.g., Frank Fackenthal to Baron, October 7, 1940 ($300); income statement for 1948–49 ($600) and 1949–50 ($300); Baron to Grayson Kirk, November 28, 1950 ($300); and W. Emerson Gentzler to Baron, May 9, 1951 (request for $300 deferred to the following year). See also Stanford University Libraries, Ms580, Baron Papers, box 55, folder 13, and correspondence between Baron and Library director Richard Logsdon regarding funding for the collections.
16. In Columbia University Archives, Central Files, box 22, Ba 1938–39, see, e.g., Baron to Fackenthal, September 30, 1938; and Fackenthal’s handwritten note of “Hebrew?” next to Baron’s text indicating “Jewish interest,” and the subsequent response from Fackenthal on October 3 indicating $1,000 from the Miller fund “for the purchase of Hebrew books for the Library.”

17. Columbia University Archives, Central Files, box 25, Ba 1946–47, Baron to Fackenthal, March 16, 1947. Baron’s letter notes that “we began with an allocation of $2,000 annually . . . reduced to $300 . . . in recent years.”

18. Stanford University Libraries, M0580, Baron Papers, box 9, folder 1, March 13, 1933 (Baron to Howson). Shockingly, perhaps, to today’s sensibilities, the duplicates the library was looking to discard were incunabula.


20. Stanford University Libraries, M0580, Baron Papers, box 26, folder 7, Baron to Williamson regarding “Study 732,” February 12, 1941; box 38, folder 2, Baron to Williamson, February 8, 1938; and others.

21. See, e.g., Baron to library director Logsdon regarding funding for Jewish studies collections in Stanford University Libraries, M0580, Baron Papers, “Center for Israel Studies, Library, 1954,” box 215, folder 4. The same file also includes fairly detailed correspondence with Williamson regarding specific acquisitions in Jewish studies from around the world.

22. “Center for Israel Studies, Library, 1954”; Williamson to Baron, October 27, 1955, regarding acquisition of microfilm of a Latin (!) manuscript for a user, and Longsdon to Baron, June 7, 1955 regarding the Gitelson project to microfilm important Hebrew manuscripts at Columbia and other institutions.

23. Stanford University Libraries, M0580, Baron Papers, box 26, folder 7, Baron to Williamson, June 30, 1939 and December 26 1939, as well as box 38, folder 2, Baron to Williamson (multiple dates).

24. Columbia University Archives, Central Files, box 351, Howson to Fackenthal, December 16, 1932. Note that A. S. Halkin had done some previous work cataloging “Semitic” manuscripts under a grant secured by Richard Gottheil. Mendelsohn was also a student of Gottheil’s, and Gottheil had recommended him earlier for cataloging. It appears that the decision was made to hire Mendelsohn only after Baron offered additional funding for the job.


26. Baron knew Fraenkel from Vienna, and Fraenkel reached out to him for assistance in many areas, including selling additional books to others. More important, perhaps, was Baron’s assistance to Fraenkel in helping him with emigration to the United States prior to World War II. For more on Baron’s assistance of Fraenkel and others, see Evelyn Adunka, “Salo W. Baron’s Efforts to Rescue Austrian Colleagues and Students,” in The Enduring Legacy of Salo Baron, ed. Hava Tirosh-Samuelson and Edward Dabrowa (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2017), 311.

27. Stanford University Libraries, M0580, Baron Papers, box 9, folder 1, February 17, 1933, David Fraenkel to Salo Baron, two letters in both Hebrew and English. Interestingly, the Hebrew letter asks Baron to check his English and make sure it is
accurate. It seems that Baron had asked Fraenkel for a description of the collection in English to bring to the library as a proposal for purchase.

28. In Fraenkel's previously cited letter, he hoped "that you will kindly take into consideration the opportunity of purchasing such rare and most valuable collections for such incomparable low quotations" and cited the "present economic conditions" as a factor.


34. The Descriptive Catalogue is now freely available online, via the Internet Archive, at https://archive.org/details/ldpd_12138657_001.

35. Portions of this section were published in the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies magazine, fall 2020. This section is indebted to Jeanette M. Baron’s “A Bibliography of the Printed Writings of Salo Wittmayer Baron,” Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1974), English Section, I:1–38. As noted in the introduction to the bibliography, Baron had “none other than his wife who has been his principal research assistant throughout the years.”

36. Salo Baron, Salo Sakhsukh kehilot be-verona ap’y teshuvat R. Mordekhai Bashan be-sof ha-me’ah ha-sheva’ esreh” in Sefer ha-yovel le-profesor Shemu’el Kroys (Jerusalem, 1937), 217–54.


38. Columbia MS X893.19 B29, 247n1; my translation.


41. Columbia MS X893.19 P653, leaf 3 for pidyon shevuyim.

42. Salo Baron, “Le-toledot ha-halukah u-fidyon ha-shevuyim be-me’ah ha-17,” 167; my translation. Note here how Baron continuously supported Fraenkel’s business—even in published articles!


45. Cited in these articles were Columbia MS X893 Z8 03, no. 06; Columbia MS X893.19 D35; and Columbia MS X893.19 P653.


47. Columbia MS X893 G363.
49. [Kabbalistic Miscellany], 1325. Biblioteca Laurenziana Plut. II. 41. A full list of the items in the miscellany can be found on KTIV: The International Collection of Digitized Hebrew Manuscripts: https://web.nli.org.il/sites/nlis/en/manuscript/pages/results.aspx#query=lsr01,contains,all&query=any,contains,Biblioteca %20Laurenziana%20Plut.II.41
51. Columbia MS X893 L9767. For more on Shadal manuscripts at Columbia, see “The Luzzatto Family at Columbia,” Jewish Studies at CUL (blog), October 12, 202, https://blogs.cul.columbia.edu/jewishstudiesatcul/2020/10/12/the-luzzatto-family-at-columbia/. For an important dissertation on Shadal and his works by a student of Baron, see notes 64–65.
53. Baron’s vast personal library collection was acquired by Stanford University in 1985. See Langenberg, Of Many Generations.
55. It is not clear whether Baron was involved in the acquisition of the Oko-Gebhardt Spinoza collection (1947), but he was on the guest list for the reception honoring the gift. He declined, possibly because he was deeply involved with work for the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction at that time.
56. Columbia University Archives, Central Files, Baron file, box 407, folder 20–21, Grayson Kirk (vice president and provost) to Baron, May 2, 1951.
58. Herman, Hashavat Avedah, 239.
59. Abraham Berger, “The Messianic Self-Consciousness of Abraham Abulafia: A Tentative Evaluation,” in Essays in Jewish Life and Thought Presented in Honor of Salo W. Baron, ed. Joseph L. Blau, Philip Friedman, Arthur Hertzberg, and Isaac Mendelsohn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 55–61. The call number of the manuscript cited is Columbia MS X893 Ab92 (footnote 19). Note that this manuscript was not part of the Fraenkel/Baron acquisition; it had been at Columbia since at least 1922.


65. Perspectives on Jewish Messianism. An Exhibition of Rare Books and Manuscripts from the Judaica Collections of the Columbia University Libraries, April 13–24, 1981. The catalogue was produced under the auspices of the Center for Jewish Studies.

66. Columbia MS X893.19 C684.

67. Columbia MS X893 Ab8.

68. Columbia MS X893 H62.

69. The manuscript is Columbia MS X893 C26. The quote cited here is from Columbia University Archives, Columbia University Library Office Files, box 405, Center for Israel and Jewish Studies, “The Professionalization of Judaica: Columbia and Jewish Studies,” draft, 10, 1976. The draft was sent to the libraries for review.

