

# ISRAEL

**JEWISH NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

**PROFESSOR YORAM TSAFRIR — CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

## **ANNUAL REPORT TO CDNL 2002 – 2003**

The year 2002 was a period of planning for organizational changes within the Library, including transferral of the national bibliography "Kiryat Sefer" from printed to electronic format and for the establishment of a digital copying service. These and other changes are expected to take place in 2003.

### **PRESENT AND FUTURE STATUS**

The Jewish National and University Library came into being in 1892, long before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Its creation was based on the conception that the written legacy of the Jewish people needed to be gathered from every corner of the dispersion and preserved in its ancestral homeland. This primary goal continued to define the Library also after it was adopted as the main Library of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, founded in 1925. Recognition of this national definition was reflected in the Legal Deposit Law, first passed by the British Mandatory authorities in 1933, and then by the Government of Israel in 1953. However, to date no National Library Law exists and since the JNUL is a unit of the Hebrew University, government funding is received through the Council of Higher Education. The Library has throughout its history steadfastly performed its national mission in the most adverse circumstances.

The idea to further the JNUL's status as a National Library was raised some years ago, and during 2002 significant progress was made towards its realisation. A steering committee consisting of a number of public figures, representatives of the Hebrew University, the Yad Hanadiv Foundation and Israeli academia was set up as well as a number of sub-committees to deal with matters of content, budgetary and legal aspects, and relations with the Hebrew University. If the recommendations are met with approval, the JNUL will shortly become a public body, independent from the University.

### **DIGITIZATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

In 2002 the Talmudic Manuscripts digitization project, in conjunction with the Hebrew University's Talmud Department was launched. This includes manuscripts from several leading institutions such as the British Library and the Vatican. In addition, the ongoing Ketubbot (Marriage contracts) project has been enriched by contributions from various private collections and libraries. The National Sound Archives Digitization project augmented its selection of festival songs from Jewish communities around the world. In addition many physically endangered recordings were migrated to digital format. Work continued on Historic Hebrew Newspapers, and on the Maps of Jerusalem site, which has since been launched, in February 2003. All these may be accessed from the JNUL's site: <http://jnul.huji.ac.il>.

Intensive preparation has been underway for the digitization of the Albert Einstein Archives at the JNUL in conjunction with the Einstein Papers Project at the California Institute of

Technology. This has involved the integration of databases and the digitization of some 900 manuscripts and documents. The site is to be launched in May 2003.

Practical plans were laid, made possible by the purchase of a high-quality book scanner, to provide readers requiring access to the Rare Printed Book collection with a web-based digital copy service. The process is being tested in all its stages, and will provide the basis for the National Digital Library.

### **MICROFILMING PROJECTS**

These include the filming of Israeli local newspapers, in conjunction with the Judaica Division of Harvard College Library, and of Ladino newspapers in cooperation with the Yitzhak Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem. The joint project with Harvard for microfilming past publications of the various kibbutz movements came to an end in 2002.

### **RETROACTIVE CONVERSION OF THE CATALOGUE**

Current cataloging on computer was begun in 1983. A special donation made it possible to begin systematic retroactive conversion of the card catalogue only recently. In 2002 the conversion of the Yiddish card catalog was converted to the Aleph system, thereby completing the conversion of the entire Hebrew character catalog. The Arabic, Cyrillic and Latin character catalogues are still in progress, using in-house facilities, but this is expected to take several more years. The catalogue of the Library's Institute of Microfilmed Manuscripts is also now accessible on computer.

### **E-JOURNALS AND DATABASES**

Membership of MALMAD, the Israel Center for Digital Informations Services makes thousands of e-journals and databases available to patrons of the Library.

In addition access to e-journals subscribed to by the JNUL was enhanced by the addition of links and other necessary data in the main catalogue.

### **CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

Several concerts, based on music and song performed from scores held in the National Sound Archives were held throughout the year, as were a number of lecture evenings.

In-house exhibitions are listed as follows:

"Visas for life" – Carl Lutz and the Rescue of 62,000 Jews of Budapest, 11-28 February 2002.

The Cultural Heritage of Georgia, 11-30 March 2002.

Days of Ziklag: from the S.Yizhar Archives in the Jewish National & University Library, June 2002.

Jews at the University of Heidelberg, 6 November 2002-31 January 2003.

Ukiyoe from the Jewish National & University Library Collection, 24 November 2002-16 February 2003.

Manuscript of Maimonides, 23-16 September, 2002.

213 items were lent for display in 8 exhibitions in Israel and abroad.

**ADDRESS:**

P.O.B. 34165  
Jerusalem 91341  
ISRAEL

Tel: + 972 2 658 4651  
Fax: + 972 2 651 1771

URL: <http://jnul.huji.ac.il>