

ISRAEL

JEWISH NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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ANNUAL REPORT TO CDNL 2003 – 2004

RECREATING THE LIBRARY

Last year's report highlighted the setting up of the Committee for Changing the Status of the National Library. With the completion of its work, the Committee's final report was submitted to the President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on 5th February 2004. After almost two years of intensive discussion and collection of data, the recommendation was formulated to transfer the Jewish National and University Library from its existing status as a department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to that of an independent body, the new National Library of Israel. It was recognized that the JNUL can no longer fulfil its function as a national library charged with the collection, preservation and documentation of the national heritage, without a significant improvement in its funding, internal organization and use of modern technology. The Library will be expected to take a more active role in the educational and cultural life of the country, by enabling widespread public access to its treasures. At the same time it will continue to serve as the main research library in the Humanities of the Hebrew University, which will still carry some 25% of the library's funding and will be heavily represented on the Board of Directors.

The transitional stage will be brought into effect by the end of 2004, when the Library becomes a subsidiary company of the Hebrew University, for a period of two to three years. During this time, an 11-member Board of Directors comprising public figures from various academic and economic fields will be appointed, and organizational and budgetary changes implemented. If all the conditions are met during this period the Library will be made an independent corporation whose ultimate budget will be shared between the University (25%), the Government of Israel (50%) and funding raised from other academic institutions and public sources (25%). During this period, a Division for promoting educational outreach work, including curriculum support, will be established. Legislation according the JNUL status as a national institution will be introduced.

DIGITIZATION

Two major projects were launched during 2003. The first: Ancient Maps of Jerusalem contains some 250 maps digitized from the priceless Eran Laor Collection of the JNUL and was prepared in cooperation with the Hebrew University's Geography Department. The maps are searchable by date and name of cartographer and have a navigation capability within each one. In May the Einstein Archives Online site was launched, this being a joint project of the Einstein Archives at the JNUL and the Einstein Papers Project at the California Institute of Technology, making available access to thousands of scanned manuscripts, scientific and non-scientific documents, as well as non-textual material.

The National Sound Archives provided additional original recordings to its digitization project. All the above, and others, may be accessed from the JNUL's site www.jnul.huji.ac.il

THE NATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY “KIRIAT SEFER”

After 80 years, the final issue in printed format appeared in October 2003. It will be available from now on in electronic format only, and aspires to achieve wider and more timely coverage than was previously possible, by including electronic and audio-visual resources as well as new publications in Arabic.

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