

Five 20th Century scholar Librarians:
Moritz Steinschneider, Alexander Marx, Umberto Cassutto, Gerschom Scholem, and Chaim Leib Aryeh Vilsker (ztsl)

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Description: We have much to learn today from Scholar largely autodidact librarians Drs: **Moritz Steinschneider, Abraham Berliner, Abraham Freidus, Solomon Schechter, Umberto Cassutto, Alexander Marx, Jacob Dienstag, Rabbi Efraim Oshry, Chaim Leib Aryeh Vilsker, Gerschom Scholem, Haim Maccoby, Stefen Reif, Malachi Beit Arie, and Menachem Schmeltzer- M.S. to MS.**

These scholar librarians should serve as inspiring models to Judaica Librarians for the proper integration and fusion of scholarship with practicing Judaica Librarianship. These extraordinary scholarly librarians' research gave mission, guidance, and purpose to their being great Judaica Librarians. These scholar librarians show us that there is no substitute (especially mechanized automation) for authentic subject knowledge, seeing back-stretched interdisciplinary connections, and wide-reading background and autodidacticism, that allows one to cast a wide cognitive net in familiarization with a broad range of Judaica subjects, disciplines, and methods that benefits the field of Judaica librarianship. Until Judaica Librarianship again `values' the importance of Jewish scholarship as an essential key component working in tandem with serving as a Judaica Librarian, the profession will be less for this myopic lack of vision. The understanding of these scholarly librarians shines as a beacon paradigm for weathering the fashions of ephemeral technological changes that morph into the truncated type of professional librarian specialist technocrats. Because these scholar librarians know the substantial content of books, manuscripts, and journals in their collections etc rather than `getting by' as task master technocrats, proficient in merely "accessing information" *ad captum vulgi*, their examples serve as standards by which Judaica Librarianship should set high the bar.

Librarianship based on Technocracy (the fusion of technology and bureaucracy) favors specialization rather than the ideal of the independent autodidact scholar librarian, who never loses sight of the big picture, or seeing the forest for the trees, possessing visionary scope from the alpha to the omega, the perspective of the mental sunrise from eagle's wings as Rambam the Neshet HaGadol teaches. All of the above extraordinary 20th century Jewish scholar librarians serve as shining examples that Judaica librarianship is a mission, not merely a bourgeois professional career, punching a clock 9 to 5 pm. We learn from these scholarly librarians devoted foremost to the quest for *hokmah-binah-vedaas*, and in this quest for attainment of intellectual virtue, we find the fullest completion (shelemut) for which the human being was created *BiTzelem Elokim*. All of these scholar librarians strived *ad astra for deepening Jewish knowledge*, expanding the palace of Torah, by affirming that the link (keshet) between Hashem and human being is the *sekel ha-poel* (active intellect) which is not only redemptive, but enables the ultimate heavenly rewards, whereby one's merit is directly proportional to the cognitive virtue gained in this world (olam ha-zeh) which accrues [as the language of the Mishna notes] as `interest' in the next world and beyond etc. The example of these scholar librarians are an answer to the question- Why Judaica libraries [which are different and unique from other types of libraries], matter now more than ever? If we do not harken to the clarion call of their perfect harmonization of librarianship with scholarship, Judaica librarianship is at risk.

David B. Levy received a PhD in Jewish studies in 2000, a MLS in 1994 from the UMCP, and a BA cum laude from Haverford College in 1990. David currently serves as the Chief Librarian of TC. Lander College.