

The World of Jewish Cookbooks: Sliced Two Ways

David Hirsch and Anna M. Levia

Description: With the establishment of Food Studies programs at universities in North America and elsewhere over the past several decades, cookbooks are now fully recognized by academic libraries as valuable troves of all kinds of information. Foodways researcher Barbara Wheaton uses cookbooks to document the use of ingredients; kitchen equipment and the workspace; and cooking techniques across time and space.¹ And as NYU professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health Marion Nestle writes in her foreword to *101 Classic Cookbooks*, “food history is inscribed in cookbooks. Recipes are gateways to understanding how people ate and thought about foodways in the past.”²

This presentation will examine the Jewish cookbook collections at UCLA and Stanford University Libraries in two ways. First, David Hirsch will talk about his experiences with cookbook collecting and show examples from UCLA’s holdings. Then Anna Levia will explore the question: Using tools of textual analysis, what can digital humanities researchers discover and learn from Jewish cookbooks? Drawing on congregation and other Jewish community cookbooks from the library holdings of Stanford University and UCLA, Anna will outline the steps of a simple text mining project. She will document process, challenges and possibilities along the way.

¹ Barbara Wheaton, “Finding Real Life In Cookbooks: The Adventures Of A Culinary Historian,” Humanities Research Group, Vol. 7 (1998). Accessed December 11, 2013.

² Marvin J. Taylor and Clark Wolf, eds., *101 Classic Cookbooks: 501 Classic Recipes* (New York: Rizzoli, 2012), p. 8-9.

David G. Hirsch has been the Librarian for Jewish and Middle Eastern Studies at UCLA since 1989. He has a BA in Oriental Studies from the University of Pennsylvania and MA degrees in Middle Eastern Studies and Library Science from the University of Chicago. David has lived, worked, traveled and studied throughout the Middle East and many other parts of the world. He most recently worked as Advisor to the Abu Dhabi National Library from 2009-2011.

Anna M. Levia has worked as Assistant Curator for Judaica and Hebraica at Stanford University Libraries since 2010. She studied Linguistics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Minnesota and earned a Master’s degree in Library and Information Science from San Jose State University. Anna’s professional interests include archival research and cookbooks.