***A Time to Gather: Archives and the Control of Jewish Culture.* By Jason Lustig. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Index. 288 pp. Hardcover, eBook. $80.00.**

Jason Lustig's book, *A Time to Gather: Archives and the Control of Jewish Culture*, offers a historical account of how the idea of creating centralized and comprehensive repositories of Jewish records—communal and individual alike—shaped the establishment of Jewish archives in Germany, Israel, and the United States throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The title, *A Time to Gather*, is not merely a quote from the preeminent Jewish historian, Cecil Roth, made as he participated in postwar discussions on archiving European Jewish records looted and destroyed during the Holocaust. Exemplifying Lustig's elegant prose, masterful command of his sources—written in German, English, and Hebrew—and sophisticated dialogue with them, the title is the succinct articulation of the very idea at the focus of the narrative. *Mutatis mutandis*, it guided Jewish intellectuals to identify, recover, and assemble records into all-encompassing collections in support of the study of Jewish history. For them, it also meant "to take control over Jewish culture."

Lustig's work is an immersive and educative read. It compels the reader to ponder questions that emerge from the specificities of the Jewish archival experience yet are relevant universally and especially to our day. What are the stakes to control one's cultural heritage and data enclosed in archival documents? How do archival documents contribute to a community's memory and historical consciousness? What political and cultural responsibilities are archives entrusted with, and what tasks do they take on voluntarily when becoming stewards of historical documents? The answers to these questions arising from Lustig's analysis open a window to the modern Jewish experience, reflected in the political attempt at emancipation beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing with the rise of Jewish nationalisms in the late nineteenth century and, to a certain extent, with the struggle for state formation in the twentieth century. Scholars also recognize modernity in the integration of historical thinking into Jewish thought and of Western academic research methods into Jewish learning. Lustig emphasizes that, from the early 1900s, in support of various political discourses about Jewish communal sovereignty, citizenship, and statehood, Jewish archives have aimed to secure access to the past and erect a monument to it. These archives aspired to create historical continuity in the face of historical ruptures, the most horrific of which being the Holocaust.

Lustig's exploration of the significance, power, and mission historians, archivists, politicians, and communities ascribed to Jewish historical collections begins with the establishment of the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden (German Jews' Total [Comprehensive] Archive) in the early twentieth century. Seated in the former Prussian and, from 1871, the unified German capital, Berlin, this archive set the tone for concomitant collecting activities with the scope of establishing comprehensive archives for historical research on all aspects of Jewish history and culture. The Gesamtarchiv mirrored the young German nation-state's vision of national and cultural unity that found disapproval from scholars and communities, who argued for the primary importance of provenance and opposed the removing of documents from municipal or communal archives or whole collections from the locale and congregation that produced them. The Berlin scholars' project also opened continuing discussions about the archival and historical significance of originals versus

copies, that is, the meaning of the historicity and materiality of documents as objects and carriers of content.

The history of the Gesamtarchiv, in operation in Berlin until 1943, continues in chapter 2, reconstructing the efforts of archivists and historians in Jerusalem, most of them German emigres, to establish comprehensive archives documenting the lives of Jews as a people and a nation, before and after the establishment of the State of Israel. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, they saw the nascent state as the sole heir and rightful steward of the exterminated communities' (and all others') records. Like the Gesamtarchiv's national focus on Germany, they claimed all Jewish records across the diaspora.

German Jewish archival practices prior to World War II largely shaped Jewish archives-building efforts in the United States, on both the ideational and professional-practical levels. The work of historian Jacob Rader Marcus (1896–1995), a graduate of the University of Berlin and founder of the American Jewish Archives at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, is the focus of chapter 3. His prime interest in copies as opposed to originals, the preservation of which he thought was time consuming and expensive, emanated from his "dogmatic empiricism" (p. 103)—an approach to historiography based on recorded facts—and dedication to document the "greatness" of America's Jewry (p. 89). He was committed to making Cincinnati "Jerusalem on the Ohio" (p. 85), the center of American Jewish historical study and also of the systematically collected records of those communities in the Atlantic region that presided over the establishment of the first Jewish congregations in the North American British colonies. Furthermore, amassing copies, he established branches of the archives in New York, Los Angeles, and Jerusalem, providing unlimited access on an international level. Lustig also points out the fascinating philological continuities between the archival visions of Jerusalem and Cincinnati; both Marcus's notion of "omniterritoriality" and the phrase "gathering the exiles," which Israeli archivists often reference to describe the scope of their collecting, have Talmudic roots and reinforce the historiographical importance and historical continuity that the archives stands for.

Chapter 4 takes the narrative to the reparations negotiations in postwar Germany. It focuses on the talks conducted about the relocation of communal Jewish records previously not included in the Gesamtarchiv to Jerusalem, some of which had been deposited in non-Jewish archives. Archivists (former colleagues of Israeli scholars) and politicians in Germany, former German citizens, members of the congregations whose records were under discussion living in the United States and Israel, and Israeli scholars debated whether provenance or pertinence, or both, should govern the future custody of these Jewish communal records. Where Berlin failed, Jerusalem succeeded in acquiring, for example, the records of the congregations of Worms and Hamburg. They could build a more comprehensive German-Jewish historical collection in Jerusalem in support of their archival and political vision, occasionally against the will of former members of those communities.

The final, fifth chapter highlights the continuing ambition of establishing comprehensive archives in the digital age. The Center for Jewish History in New York, for example, serves five archives gathered under one roof to "make the entire spectrum of Jewish history accessible in one place," as one of its founders, the German Jewish historian Ismar Schorsch noted (p. 150). Two of the participating archives—the Leo Baeck Institute, formed by

German Jewish intellectuals in 1955, and YIVO, established in Lithuania and, in the late 1930s, moved to New York with a branch created in Buenos Aires—launched individual digital projects in partnerships with third institutions. Like the Israeli archivists extending the Gesamtarchiv and aiming to go beyond the reconstruction of the prewar collection, YIVO continues to broaden its collections, for example, through the digitization of books and documents recovered from Lithuanian state archives. Finally, the Friedberg Geniza Project exemplifies yet another long-standing, transnational archives-building effort. It offers free online access to records described as, but not necessarily stemming from, the Cairo Geniza (a storeroom of discarded texts accumulating since the eleventh century in the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Fustat, a suburb of Cairo, Egypt), today dispersed across archives in Europe and the United States. The Friedberg project also reunites document fragments, taking "gathering" to the next level and, as Lustig stresses in connection with the other archives, creating new items in support of historical reconstruction.

Lustig's work, perceiving collecting as the crucial archival work that primarily aims to enable historical research, likely reads differently for historians and archivists. It rarely references processing and other tasks archivists carry out before (and after) researchers can access documents. It does record that German archival practices continued in Palestine and Israel (p. 49), as well as in Marcus's work. As "historian in chief," Marcus rearranged materials the archives received according "to his own conception of its proper categorization . . . creating . . . his own research repository" (p. 108). Equally accentuated is the Center for Jewish History's online catalog based on a synchronized vocabulary of all five participating archives established in distinct cultural and political contexts further reinforcing the center's service for Jewish historiography.

Told from the perspective of the historian, notwithstanding, Lustig's narrative elucidates the archives' contribution to historical knowledge production. In addition, it offers a fresh look at German Jewish transnational history and liaison with postwar Germany, reinforcing the German paradigm of Jewish modernity. Most important, it is a welcome addition to a recently growing bibliography about Jewish collections (for example, Laura Jockusch's *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*, Joshua Teplitsky's *Prince of the Press: How One Collector Built History's Most Enduring and Remarkable Jewish Library*, or Marat Grinberg's recently published *The Soviet Jewish Bookshelf*). Whether established in the early modern period or in the twentieth century, private and public collections of books and documents reveal the material value and ideological and political roles assigned to Jewish texts at the communal, regional, state, and international levels alike.

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