

## Digital Heritage Archive of Egyptian Jewry

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The project aimed at building a comprehensive, open-access digital archive dedicated to the heritage of the Jews of Egypt, one of the oldest Jewish communities in the diaspora. The history of Egyptian Jews in modern times has gained academic interest in the last two decades. The scarcity of resources has forced researchers to gather a limited amount of testimonies on their own, and usually these have not become accessible to the rest of the scholarly community. The new archive will feature numerous documentary materials of varied types in order to portray a wider and more accurate image of the Egyptian Jewish community, thus allowing studies that have not been possible before.

The work began with setting the archive's goals and scope and continued with defining the information organization and cataloging strategy. The current phase involves locating relevant collections, digitizing them, uploading them to the library's CMS and presenting them online. Photographs, documents, audio-recordings and footage are being collected from members of this community and their offspring. The family stories of the donors are documented in personal interviews, and the information regarding each item is recorded. The items are then digitized according to professional archival standards, cataloged and incorporated in the library's collection within the Digital Media Center. In addition, steps are taken to collaborate with other institutes that hold relevant items. It is recommended that a special website will be built for this archive, that will include family trees and a rich thesaurus. Allowing the entire archive to be downloaded as a dataset for Big Data studies is also advised.

Building the archive is my first experience in creating a database from scratch. As the daughter of an Egyptian Jew, it has also been a moving project for me. The library benefits from the archive as it adds to the scientific resources it offers to researchers. It complements two other centers at Haifa University dedicated to Egyptian Jewry: The Joseph & Racheline Barda Chair for the Study and Research of Jewish Heritage in Egypt and The Center for Interdisciplinary Research of the Cairo Genizah. Building a digital archive is a process pertaining to data collection, knowledge preservation, digitization, information organization and accessibility. This project can serve as a model for other projects of digital preservation of cultural heritage.