

# A Temporary Haven: Jewish World War II Refugee Scholars at the New York Public Library, 1933–1945

*Abstract:* The Humanities Research Library of the New York Public Library (NYPL) served as temporary employer and safe intellectual haven for a number of European refugee scholars fleeing Nazism. The closed-stack public library, dedicated to research and the development and documentation of comprehensive scholarly collections, more closely resembled European academic and library systems than did most, more informal, American colleges and universities. As such, NYPL, in conjunction with the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, provided a welcome point of transition and life-saving and sustaining work and salaries for the newly arrived refugees who were able to secure some continuity with their pre-war intellectual lives within its walls.

*Key Words:* World War II, emigration, refugee scholars, New York Public Library, librarianship

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The emigration of European scholars to the United States as refugees from Nazism was generally made possible by means of two critical factors. First, organizations formed specifically to assist intellectuals fleeing Hitler's mounting threat, most importantly the Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars (hereafter Committee); second, existing personal and professional relationships with American scholars and institutions.<sup>2</sup> Most refugee scholars sought employment in the United States that would allow them to continue working in their areas of expertise. The New York Pub-

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lic Library's Humanities Research Library (hereafter NYPL),<sup>3</sup> the central core of the New York City public library system, became the employer of a select few.<sup>4</sup> Certain aspects of NYPL, namely its closed stacks, development of comprehensive collections, deep investment in research, and even its landmark beaux-arts building, more closely resembled European library and academic systems than did many American colleges and universities, which refugees often found uncomfortably informal.<sup>5</sup> The cultural, intellectual, economic center of metropolitan New York City, long home to diverse groups of refugees and immigrants, held great appeal to cosmopolitan European refugees as well. NYPL became a collegial intellectual haven and a life-saving point of transition for the few newly arrived refugees who were able to secure a small wage and some semblance of continuity with their pre-war lives within its walls.

The Committee was the primary American organization working to rescue European scholars threatened by the rise of Nazism. Formed in 1933 as the Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars, its original concern was for the fate of scholars in Germany who were either being ousted from their positions for religious, racial or political reasons, or resigning of their own accord rather than be associated with increasingly nazified institutions. As one country after another fell to Hitler and Nazism, Committee members recognized the growing magnitude of the problem. In 1938 the organization's name was changed to Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, reflecting its commitment to assisting all displaced and persecuted scholars.<sup>6</sup>

This paper will summarize and contextualize the experiences of eight refugee scholars of Jewish background who, with assistance from the Committee, worked at NYPL between approximately 1933 and 1945.<sup>7</sup> This intellectually diverse group includes librarian Dr. Aron Freimann of Frankfurt am Main, eminent authority on Hebraica and Judaica bibliography and Hebrew printing; Dr. Curt Sachs of Berlin, ethnomusicologist and historian of art, musical instruments and dance; Dr. Franz Rapp of Munich, curator and expert on archaeology, theatre history and iconography; Russian-born Dr. Roman Jakobson,<sup>8</sup> co-founder of the Prague School of Linguistics and expert in Paleo-Siberian and Slavic languages; Dr. A. Leo Oppenheim, Viennese Assyriologist and librarian, expert in Oriental and cuneiform languages; Viennese composer and music theorist Dr. Karl Weigl; musicologist, librarian and bibliographer Dr. Kathe Meyer-Baer of Frankfurt am Main; and Dr. Emil Damask, lawyer from Vienna.<sup>9</sup>

The most significant contribution made by these scholars during their tenures at NYPL was to create printed catalogs and bibliographies. Still important today, prior to the advent of the internet, online catalogs, databases and other electronic and digitized resources, such documents constituted virtually the only way one could learn of a library's holdings. They also provided the only means to "browse" in a

closed-stack library such as NYPL. Scholars with both specialized subject knowledge and bibliographic expertise were vital to the process of producing these essential resources. During the war years such experts had to be willing to work on a temporary, uncertain basis for minimal compensation, factors that dissuaded most Americans. Desperate circumstances, however, forced some refugee scholars to be quite amenable to these less than ideal conditions. In particular, those who often struggled hardest to secure the limited teaching positions available, due either to advanced age, recent arrival to academia, specificity of field, or simple ill timing or bad luck that left them without employment upon their arrival in America.

## The Committee and NYPL

Former President of Cornell University Dr. Livingston Farrand chaired the Committee from its inception until his death in 1939, at which time Dr. Stephen Duggan became Chairman and remained so through 1945. Duggan's tireless drive to rescue scholars was fueled by a lifelong dedication to international education and anti-war activism. A scholar of Latin America, his belief that education was the key to peace led him to found the Institute of International Education (IIE) in 1919. In 1928 he retired from a professorship at City College of New York "to devote himself exclusively to the field of cultivating international good-will."<sup>10</sup> The many international relationships he cultivated throughout his career developed into some of the personal connections so critical to the rescues he facilitated during World War II.<sup>11</sup> Duggan was committed to saving Europe's persecuted scholars and to improving the American educational system. Bringing the best minds of Europe to the United States allowed him to pursue both goals.

Organizations such as the Nathan Hofheimer Foundation and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, along with the New York and Rockefeller Foundations, were among the Committee's earliest supporters.<sup>12</sup> Initial Committee grants were roughly \$2000 per scholar per annum or academic year, but as the years passed and requests swelled rather than abated, the amount progressively diminished, eventually to less than \$1000.<sup>13</sup> These grants were often matched or supplemented by additional funds provided by the Rockefeller Foundation in particular, as well as the Oberlaender Trust, Rosenwald Family Association, and other Jewish and non-Jewish contributors.<sup>14</sup> The majority of grants came directly out of the Committee's general pool of donated funds, which allowed for over one million dollars to be allocated between 1933 and 1945.<sup>15</sup> While generous given the pinched wartime circumstances, funds were always insufficient to meet the enormous demand. In some cases, the Committee was not inclined to support a new or renewal request, either

because it was beyond the scope of their mission or exceeded their funding capacity, yet Committee members still felt strongly about assisting the refugee scholar and/or the requesting American institution. On such occasions the Committee sought out external resources. The close relationship between the Committee and NYPL, strengthened by NYPL Director Harry Miller Lydenberg's unwavering dedication to both, led the Committee to support a number of NYPL's atypical requests through internal as well as specially generated funds. As Duggan handwrote on a memo regarding one such case, "OK as long as they get the money. We *want* to help the library."<sup>16</sup> From the mid-1930s when refugee scholars began arriving until his retirement in 1941, Lydenberg corresponded directly with NYPL trustees and employees, donors, the Committee, as well as the refugee scholars themselves in order to facilitate their placement in and adjustment to and success at NYPL.<sup>17</sup>

The stipend amounts corresponded to the lower end of the average American faculty member's salary of the time. Representing freedom, refuge, and even life, the grants were welcomed and appreciated, but in most cases also signified a notably diminished financial reality. Forced to abandon their homes, family members, friends and colleagues, most had also suffered persecution, fear, humiliation and loss for years as Nazism spread in Europe. Once in the United States, refugees still faced "a bitter struggle for existence",<sup>18</sup> in terms of greatly reduced standard of living and professional status, exacerbated by the difficult adjustment to a new language and culture. Even those who did achieve success in America faced the reality that professors and academics generally could not attain the standing or respect possible in Europe.<sup>19</sup> This traumatic upheaval, coupled with ever-deteriorating news or, even worse, ominous silence from those left behind, exerted great psychological pressure on the refugees. The opportunity to work in their areas of expertise represented the closest connection most could have with their previous lives. Evidence of the comfort and solace that could be gained from achieving professional continuity is found throughout correspondence written both by and about refugee scholars. These documents express ardent longing for peace, quiet, and just enough financial and practical support for the refugee scholars to be able to continue their life's work.<sup>20</sup>

In a 1936 speech to the American Association of Universities, Duggan explained how the Committee (then still focused on Germany) functioned:

"We do not take the initiative in placing the displaced German scholar [...] The initiative must come from the American college or university. The displaced German scholar, whether still abroad or in this country, who turns to us, is informed that he must establish contacts with his colleagues in his field or related fields who must interest universities in him.<sup>21</sup> If this interest [r]ipens into a request for funds from us [it] must fulfill two requirements: (1) the German scholar requested must be an outstanding scholar and (2) the

university making the request must give us the virtual assurance that after one year the university will appoint the professor on its regular permanent staff.”<sup>22</sup>

The economic concerns and prejudices of some Americans fueled these stringent requirements as well as the restrictive immigration policies maintained by the United States during World War II.<sup>23</sup> Scholars, however, could potentially enter as “Non-Quota Immigrants,” defined in Section 4(d) of the Immigration Act of 1924 as an individual:<sup>24</sup>

“[...] who continuously for at least two years immediately preceding the time of his application for admission to the United States has been, and who seeks to enter the United States solely for the purpose of carrying on the vocation of [...] professor of a college, academy, seminary, or university; and his wife, and his unmarried children under 18 years of age, if accompanying or following to join him.”<sup>25</sup>

The Committee’s two requirements can be traced to a number of realities in American academia at the time. The IIE made it clear that due to the “wretched financial condition of our own institutions of higher education” widely and freely hiring refugee scholars “would naturally cause resentment [...] when so many of our own young instructors and assistant professors have been dropped from the rolls and are in dire need themselves.” At NYPL too, “the clouds are so dark and hang so low as to financial assurance.”<sup>26</sup> The gravity of the economic situation was exacerbated by fear of igniting any anti-immigrant or anti-refugee backlash. How to justify offering placement to a foreigner (particularly a German as anti-German sentiment was high and escalating, or a Jew, as anti-Semitism reigned on many campuses as well<sup>27</sup>), if there was an American vying for the same position? These combined tensions led to the inevitable conclusion that “funds necessary to carry out any [rescue] program must be raised from sources outside the universities,”<sup>28</sup> and indeed Committee funds were generated entirely by private donations.

Wartime fiscal constraints disproportionately impacted young, unestablished American scholars looking to enter academia.<sup>29</sup> In an illustrative case, NYPL requested “two competent [refugee] bibliographers for our Jewish division, particularly [...] young and [who] spoke English easily.”<sup>30</sup> Duggan countered, “The preference of our Committee [...] is for the older men and women of academic distinction who will not compete with younger American scholars who have their own way to make.”<sup>31</sup> A refugee had to meet the Committee’s first requirement, be widely published, recognized and respected in his or her field, i.e. an “outstanding scholar.” As refugee and historian Herbert Strauss explained, “Only the best-known among displaced scholars and artists found the doors of universities, institutions, or art organizations open

when they sought to continue their lives' work."<sup>32</sup> A scholar with the requisite credentials was most often at least middle-aged, ensuring that young foreigners were not taking jobs from young Americans. As a result, younger emerging European scholars were in the greatest danger of being left behind. In the worst case this decreased their chances of emigration and therefore of survival. At best it increased the difficulties they encountered in finding employment in their field if they were able to emigrate through other means. Strauss continued, "For the others and for the young, starting at the proverbial bottom of their professions was a characteristic experience."<sup>33</sup> Indeed only eighteen of 277 scholars helped by the Committee were between thirty and forty years old, none were younger.<sup>34</sup> Eighty-five were between forty and forty-nine. The remaining 184 were over fifty and up to eighty-five years old.<sup>35</sup> These numbers highlight the reality that prestige was given priority over potential, protecting the careers of young American scholars but jeopardizing the professional fates and the very lives of young European scholars left in Hitler's path.

The Committee's second requirement, that requesting institutions guarantee permanent placement, was meant to protect Americans from having to financially support refugees who lost their positions subsequent to arrival in the United States. Committee support was intended for new arrivals and could not be indefinite; it was hoped and expected that within a year or two initial placements would be successful and result in full-time, long-term professional appointments funded by the requesting institutions themselves. NYPL's short-term project-based needs appealed to refugees who had not yet been able to achieve such ideal placements. Hiring refugee scholars appealed to NYPL because their highly specialized knowledge could advance catalog and bibliography development, an essential element of NYPL's mission. This symbiotic relationship between refugee scholars and NYPL gave the latter important flexibility in its dealings with the Committee, which were unusual because the impermanence of NYPL positions constitutes a complete contradiction of the Committee's second requirement. In the particular cases under consideration here, the potential contribution to scholarship, the opportunity to position, however briefly, an unplaced refugee desperate to work in his or her own field, and the maintenance of excellent relations with NYPL, appears to have led the Committee to approve NYPL's exceptional requests whenever possible.

In addition, in 1939, the Association of American Universities for Displaced Scholars in the United States planted the seed of an idea to place refugee scholars in "libraries and laboratories" rather than colleges and universities. The refugee scholars could then "devote themselves to a continuation of their scholarly or scientific work and would thus strengthen the life of the community of scholars with which they were associated without in any way interfering with the future of the young men on the staff."<sup>36</sup> This suggestion addressed the previously mentioned concern for young

American scholars, but also raised an issue of status and position. As Dr. Joshua Bloch, Chief of NYPL's Jewish Division worriedly wrote, "libraries are not always considered of equal academic standing as colleges and [...] inadequate knowledge of the standing which the Reference Department in the New York Public Library enjoys on the part of the average layman is apt to influence the judgment of members of the Committee."<sup>37</sup> The plan to place refugee scholars in libraries and laboratories was never widely implemented, but the Committee did prove reliable in recognizing the academic nature of NYPL's projects, approving its requests, and acknowledging the resulting work as scholarly and significant.

The close ties between the Committee, NYPL, and refugee scholars make it difficult to determine the order of events. Did the Committee first suggest specific refugee scholars and their areas of expertise to NYPL, or did NYPL first approach the Committee seeking out particular experts? Did NYPL's special projects already exist, or were some created specifically to meet Committee needs and/or refugee capabilities? Each case appears to have been slightly different, and spontaneous improvisation may have played as much of a role as did advance planning. What the records do make clear is that by formulating specialized academic projects out of its very real research needs, NYPL positioned itself to act in the common interest of all three parties. In 1941 Lydenberg wrote to Duggan, outlining the opportunities available at NYPL:

"May I ask on behalf of the New York Public Library what chance there is for getting help from your Committee in finding European scholars now in this country competent to work in the fields of music, the [sic] drama, manuscripts and archives, or prints, or engravings, Semitic literature, Oriental tongues in general, or Slavonic fields? The Library has opportunities in all these fields, much material at hand well worth the attention of competent scholars. It has more material in fields like this awaiting cultivation, material it is hungry to cultivate, but unable to cultivate because of lack of funds to hire people competent to delve in such special fields."<sup>38</sup>

Following are brief narratives describing how eight refugee scholars came to America and to NYPL, and how the eight almost entirely fulfilled all the needs outlined in Lydenberg's request.

## Dr. Aron Freimann

In March 1933, as a result of his being Jewish, Dr. Aron Freimann was dismissed from the directorship of the *Frankfurt Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek*, an institution he had worked at for thirty-five years.<sup>39</sup> His primary advocate became Vatican Library chief librarian Cardinal Eugène Tisserant, with whom Freimann had cata-

logged Hebraica and Judaica on more than one occasion. Tisserant worked tirelessly to procure entrance to the United States for Freimann and his wife.<sup>40</sup> By the time of their arrival in 1939 Freimann was “well close to three score and ten – the biblical span of life,”<sup>41</sup> an age that suggested retirement rather than beginning an already long and successful career anew. Despite the Committee’s preference for older and established “outstanding scholars”, many were hesitant to invest in an individual Freimann’s age, expressing doubt that “almost any organization will give a grant for anyone already 70 years old.”<sup>42</sup> However, Freimann’s unparalleled reputation and expertise, as well as his adamant desire (and financial need) to continue his lifelong work proved convincing. “The appointment of this eminent bibliographer on the staff of New York’s foremost Library would undoubtedly be of great mutual benefit, and I cannot think of any other position which would be better fitting to his great knowledge and experience.”<sup>43</sup> Dr. Joshua Bloch wanted to hire Freimann directly for NYPL’s Jewish Division but because “such consideration [is] utterly impossible at the present time” because of financial constraints, he turned to the Committee.

“I [...] beg to request that consideration be given to the urgent need of finding employment for him at the earliest possible opportunity. Prof. Freimann is considered one of the greatest living authorities in the field of bibliography... Great and distinguished as Professor Freimann is as a scholar, he is a man of modest demeanor and of modest needs... In order to be able to pursue, without worry, his labors so cruelly and abruptly interrupted in Germany, and to sustain himself and his wife he would require about three thousand dollars per annum. I am wondering whether your Committee could not see its way clear to appropriate that amount of money and thereby make a distinguished contribution to American scholarship as well as to help a very eminent scholar adjust himself to normal life in this country.”<sup>44</sup>

Indeed Freimann’s distinguished qualifications and continued desirability as a productive scholar outweighed any disadvantages owing to his age that some feared would surface. Less than a month after Bloch’s application, the Committee approved a grant of \$1000 in support of Freimann for 1939 to 1940.

Freimann’s first project, a gazetteer of Hebrew printing, was one that the Jewish Division had long planned but never embarked upon.<sup>45</sup> First published in parts from 1942 to 1944 in the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, the completed work contains almost two thousand entries describing the first works published in virtually every geographical center of Hebrew printing from the fifteenth century on. Bloch described it as “an extraordinary piece of research which will furnish a useful instrument for the pursuit of studies in the history and development of printing everywhere.”<sup>46</sup> Lydenberg exclaimed, “the introduction alone represents a masterly survey of the history of Hebrew printing in all lands from the earliest time to the pre-

sent.”<sup>47</sup> In his second renewal request to the Committee, Lydenberg listed Freimann’s other projects:

“Professor Freimann has also compiled a complete bibliographical record of all known extant manuscripts of the writings of Rashi [...] He is now collecting data on Jewish incunabula printed in Roman characters [...] He has become a part of the ‘family’ in the Jewish division, and his usefulness has extended to the entire Library. He is available for consultation at all reasonable hours, and bibliophiles, scholars, book dealers, and others interested in books and book lore do not hesitate to resort to his expert knowledge by consulting him frequently on problems that confront them. If your committee can aid him thus to serve the cause of learning, you will render a real service to scholarship in this country.”<sup>48</sup>

Committee support for Freimann continued although decreased to \$750 annually. This meager amount was buttressed by Freimann’s appointment as professor of Jewish history and literature at Yeshiva College<sup>49</sup> in New York City, as well as by annual grants of \$80 per month promised from 1940 to 1945 by Rabbi Abraham Herschman and the Aaron Mendelsohn Jewish Charities Fund of Detroit.<sup>50</sup> By 1945, as Committee activity ceased with the end of the war, funding for Freimann had extended well beyond the usual two years to five. Committee executive board member Fred Stein then took it upon himself to procure the annual \$750 “from a special trustee fund of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee,”<sup>51</sup> which allowed Freimann to remain working at NYPL until his death in June 1948.

## Dr. Curt Sachs

On December 31, 1933 the *New York Times* announced that noted musicologist Dr. Curt Sachs was in London after leaving his post as professor at Berlin University “on political grounds.”<sup>52</sup> In fact, Sachs was officially dismissed in August 1933 due to his Jewish background.<sup>53</sup> The *Times* article continued, “Professor Sachs is rated in Europe as one of the greatest musical scholars of the century [...] Germany’s loss will be the gain of whichever country Professor Sachs chooses as his home.”<sup>54</sup> After two years in France, that country turned out to be the United States, largely because of the relationship between Sachs and Dr. Carleton Sprague Smith, Chief of the NYPL Music Division.<sup>55</sup> The two first met in Berlin in 1932, at which time they discussed Smith’s goal to build a Library-Museum of the Performing Arts in New York, an institution that would combine the collections and knowledge of NYPL and New York City’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. Sachs showed great enthusiasm for the idea and the two maintained contact as conditions deteriorated for Sachs in Germany.<sup>56</sup>

In December 1936, Smith wrote Sachs with the good news that the Committee and Rockefeller Foundation would each provide \$2000<sup>57</sup> for Sachs to work in a tripartite capacity for the 1937 to 1938 academic year:<sup>58</sup>

“Plan – To have Professor Curt Sachs come to this country in three-fold capacity 1) Professor of Graduate Music at New York University 2) Curator of Crosby Brown Musical Instrument Collection at Metropolitan Museum of Art 3) Chief of the Dance and Phonograph Collections of the New York Public Library.”<sup>59</sup>

These sums were provided with the understanding that NYU, the Met and NYPL would raise funds to take Sachs on permanently as soon as possible. Smith wrote to Professor Philip James of the NYU music department, “While of course present conditions forbid any positive assurance the outlook is so hopeful that we have every right to believe the temporary connection will be continued for many years to come.”<sup>60</sup> Two years later, however, the Committee and Rockefeller Foundation were approached again. In response to their hesitation, (particularly from the latter, which had been funding Sachs at the Musée de l’Homme in Paris from 1934 until his departure for America), NYU Chancellor Dr. Harry Woodburn Chase appealed directly to David Stevens of the Rockefeller Foundation:

“The problem of the retention of the services of Dr. Curt Sachs is as much a concern of the New York Public Library as it is of New York University [...] It is clear that we shall have to let him go if the outside subventions cannot be continued for next year. That sort of quittance is tragic enough in the case of any of these exiled scholars. It would be little short of calamitous in the case of Sachs. He is a genius *sui generis* and indispensable to the development of the type of thing in which our friends of the New York Public Library are interested [...] As much as it means to Professor Sachs, it means more to us that he should be continued here.”<sup>61</sup>

Chase’s plea was heeded and funding continued. In late 1942 a break occurred with the Met,<sup>62</sup> but Sachs continued to teach at NYU and consult at NYPL.<sup>63</sup> As NYPL Consultant, Sachs was primarily involved in public events, and is best remembered for the music lecture series he presented between 1941 and 1951. The topics ranged from “Music of the Orient” to “The Changing Sound of Musical Instruments,” from “Five Hundred Years of Music” to “Music, Dance and Life,” among many others. A 1950 *New York Times* article about upcoming events in New York City described Sachs’ lecture series on “Antiquity” as “virtually a must for students of the dance, since Dr. Sachs is Dr. Sachs.”<sup>64</sup> Smith recalled, “His headquarters were at the Music Division of the New York Public Library and he was adored by all members of the staff connected with the performing and visual arts.”<sup>65</sup> Unfortunately, Sachs never

saw the completed Library-Museum,<sup>66</sup> which had helped bring him to safety in the United States. It was still in the planning stages, with Sachs still involved in its development, when he died in New York City on February 5, 1959.

## Dr. Franz Rapp

Dr. Franz Rapp was raised Protestant and was an Iron Cross decorated World War I veteran, but in 1936 his Jewish background lost him his position as Chief Curator of the *Münchener Theatermuseum* and led to a month-long imprisonment in the Dachau concentration camp. After his release, he and his wife escaped to England, where from 1937 to 1939 he lectured at Cambridge and the recently relocated Warburg Institute. A Yale University fellowship for Rapp to work with Yale's Theatre Collection brought the couple to the United States in December 1939. According to Committee notes, in January 1940 Rapp was already assisting at NYPL, probably a result of the efforts of Rapp's sister, Elisabeth Lotte Franzos of New York, who had been writing the Committee since mid-1938 regarding her brother's plight.<sup>67</sup> After an interview with Rapp, Committee secretary Betty Drury noted, "Such a nice person. Feels he is doing good and *useful* work at N.Y. Public Library. Wants to stay on."<sup>68</sup> From February 1940 to June 1941 Rapp traveled on an academic lecture circuit, speaking at Ohio State, Oberlin, Cornell, Middlebury and Harvard, while still employed at Yale.<sup>69</sup> Yale's \$1000 stipend proved insufficient for Rapp and his wife to live on, particularly because they sent money to Switzerland where their disabled adolescent daughter remained in a sanitarium.

In April 1941 Lydenberg officially requested \$1200 from the Committee in order to employ Rapp "in connection with the cultivation and development of our collection of theatrical iconography [...] We believe the opportunity for constructive work is great in connection with the material now on file here waiting only for proper handling by a competent scholar."<sup>70</sup> Rapp fit the bill perfectly and completed significant work for NYPL beginning in September 1941.<sup>71</sup> NYPL's satisfaction with Rapp led to repeated renewal requests and two more approvals. First in 1942:

"Mr. George Freedley, who is in charge of the Theatre Collection, is so enthusiastic about the work that Dr. Rapp has been able to do that he has asked me to approach the Committee [...] to raise the question whether there is any chance of the contribution for Dr. Rapp's salary being made for another year. Mr. Freedley reports that we are utilizing Dr. Rapp's unique knowledge of theatrical iconography to good advantage. A considerable part of his time has been given to preparing a bibliography of illustrations of theatrical architecture found in non-theatre books. In addition, he has identified, listed and

catalogued the Feldman purchase of ca. 450 items devoted to the Viennese stage; selected, listed and catalogued valuable prints and drawings from the Townsend Walsh Collection; rearranged and checked cataloguing of our Originals file; revised and filed cards transferred from Music, Art and other divisions; arranged exhibitions on Eugene Walter, the National Theatre Conference, Clowns and Harlequins and Otis Skinner; reconstructed an 18<sup>th</sup> century peepshow.<sup>72</sup>

The 1943 renewal request continued to list Rapp's accomplishments.

“Dr. Rapp has done important work for the Theatre Collection in checking, identifying, systematizing, and indexing such material as the Julliard, Ekmer Nagy, and Lee Simonson collections. He has done a considerable amount of bibliographical research for the Theatre Collection and for its readers. He helped in preparing such exhibitions as Old Time Fairs, Louise Rial, Eastman Studies, J. H. Benrimo, European Stage Designs about 1800.”<sup>73</sup>

In 1941 Southern Methodist University in Texas showed great interest in adding Rapp to its faculty, but could not guarantee either to match the Committee grant or permanent employment. In response to their uncommitted stance and as evidence of the Committee's special relationship with NYPL, Duggan and Drury agreed, “We are interested in developing library projects. Moreover, Lydenberg has been very sympathetic to our grantees in the past. If he really wants Rapp and if Rapp wants to be at the Public Library, it seems unwise to start any negotiations about another place.”<sup>74</sup> In 1944 however, the Committee rejected NYPL's third request for continued funding, at which time Duggan personally put unusual effort into attempting to find Rapp permanent placement. Letters and positive recommendations were sent to college and university theatre departments all over the country, to no avail. The last letters in Rapp's Committee file are from August 1944 and indicate that still no position had been obtained for him. A book review by Rapp published in 1951<sup>75</sup> (the year of his death) identifies him as professor of Art History and Appreciation at Howard University in Washington, D.C.<sup>76</sup>

## Dr. Roman Jakobson and Dr. Adolf Leo Oppenheim

The cases of Roman Jakobson and A. Leo Oppenheim exemplify how the Committee exceeded its scope in order to support very particular short-term NYPL projects. Born in 1896 in Moscow to Jewish parents, Jakobson moved to Czechoslovakia in the 1920s. In 1937 he became Professor of Linguistics at Masaryk University in Brno, but only until the Nazi occupation in 1939. He escaped arrest and fled to

Denmark, Norway, then Sweden, where his situation remained precarious. Appeals for his rescue intensified until he arrived in the United States in June 1941.<sup>77</sup> Although his October 1942 appointment to New York City's *Ecole libre des hautes études* at the New School for Social Research is known as his first, in fact, he initially faced a "decidedly cool" reception from American academia. This was a result of American financial anxieties, as previously discussed, and of theoretical differences with American linguists.<sup>78</sup> In fact, prior to securing the New School professorship, Jakobson was employed at NYPL. In June 1941 Lydenberg submitted a request to the Committee, "to help this Library take advantage of an opportunity to profit by an unusual scholar in a very particular field." Lydenberg continued:

"In the field of linguistics I understand that he has specialized in the East Siberian languages and particularly in the relations of the Siberian tongues to those spoken on our own continent. Professor [Franz] Boas has a good deal of Aleutian material collected by some of his students. We here compare favourably with the Bureau of Ethnology in Washington in our holdings of material in the languages of the North American native Indians. The Library has also an unequalled collection of publications in the lesser known languages of the Soviet Union. This, all combined, seems to offer an opportunity to profit by the experience of such a man as Professor Jakobson. We told Professor Boas that there was no chance of our being able to take him on the permanent staff. Consideration of the problem, however, and a more minute scrutiny of our finances make us feel that we could afford to pay Professor Jakobson at the rate of \$50 per month for the remaining five months of the year."<sup>79</sup>

The Committee agreed to match NYPL's pay and in 1944, NYPL presented the Committee with a second request that resulted in the same financial and temporal agreement.

"Professor Jakobson [...] received from the late Professor Boas for description, arrangement, and investigation, two lots of material, one on the Kamchadals and the other on the Asiatic Eskimos [...] this material was given [...] by Professor Boas with the understanding that it could be deposited in an institution only after it was arranged and catalogued by Professor Jakobson."<sup>80</sup>

Avrahm Yarmolinsky, Chief of the NYPL Slavonic Division, the NYPL department housing these linguistic collections, published the results of Jakobson's bibliographic work on this unique and valuable material.<sup>81</sup> Lydenberg's requests seem to imply that it was Boas, with whom Jakobson became acquainted upon his arrival to the United States, who connected the linguist to NYPL, although the record is not clear. Although Jakobson would go on to have a successful academic career at Columbia, then Harvard and MIT, which lasted until his death in 1982 at age eighty-six, these projects demonstrate that his first professional steps on American soil were actually

taken at NYPL. This fact has largely been forgotten or overlooked in the extensive literature that documents his life and work.<sup>82</sup>

In his mid-thirties at the onset of World War II, A. Leo Oppenheim was relatively young in Committee terms, but already highly accomplished and respected in his field. As a Jew in 1930s Austria, however, he had been unable to obtain a university position and so had turned to academic librarianship.<sup>83</sup> His case first came before the Committee in April 1938, in the form of a recommendation:

“Dr. Leo Oppenheim, an Assyriologist and Oriental librarian at the University of Vienna, has been deprived of his post because of his Jewish race following the German annexation of Austria. Dr. Oppenheim is a cuneiform scholar of known merit and ability. The Louvre Museum has offered to put at his disposal texts recently discovered at Mari in Mesopotamia for study and translation. This is an important piece of work, but the Louvre is unfortunately unable to pay him a salary for this work. May I call to the attention of your Committee the case of this able young scholar who should be retained for the valuable work which he is doing and promises to do. The Oriental Institute [...] recommends him very warmly.”<sup>84</sup>

Oppenheim had been dismissed the day after the *Anschluss*, the above letter was written in April, and by May 1938, “His fellow Orientalists abroad, in particular at the Vatican University in Rome, immediately, without waiting to be asked, initiated a search for a job outside Austria and succeeded within a short time in having [Oppenheim] invited as a research associate to the prestigious Collège de France in Paris to work on the Thesaurus of Akkadian.”<sup>85</sup> Separated from his wife, suffering from fear and uncertainty, Oppenheim was interned in France and included in the *311ème Compagnie de Travailleurs Étrangers*. Also known as the *Compagnie des Savants*, this short-lived, uniformed but unarmed “military” company consisted of seventy or so scientists and scholars transferred from French internment camps to work in their fields under a French professor at the University of Montpellier.<sup>86</sup> Continued assistance from international contacts brought the Oppenheims to New York in April 1941.<sup>87</sup> In June 1941, Lydenberg requested \$150 from the Committee for a project for Oppenheim:

“The Library received by bequest from the late Wilberforce Eames his collection of cuneiform tablets. They wait the attention of a competent scholar for cataloguing and arranging. Members of the staff of the Library read them with moderate ease but without the assurance of accuracy and certainty demanded by material of so special a character. We have just heard that Dr. Leo Oppenheim [...] is now available for such work. We estimate the task will call for perhaps three months’ attention.”<sup>88</sup>

Oppenheim learned of this material from Library of Congress linguist Dr. Benjamin Schwartz, who also recommended Oppenheim to catalog it, though whether to NYPL or the Committee is not known.<sup>89</sup> This request generated a brief conflict within the Committee, with attorney and board member Bernard Flexner stating that “this project ‘just isn’t our job’” but offering to find the money elsewhere “If the Library needs this work done badly.”<sup>90</sup> Ultimately the Committee did approve the request although it is not clear if the money came from the general funds or if in fact Flexner secured external funding. Oppenheim’s catalog of the collection was published in 1948. One reviewer praised him for introducing the presentation of ancient materials in the form of a catalog, writing, “the claims of this method to be more widely adopted in the future ought to be seriously considered.”<sup>91</sup> Another described it as “a major and fundamental contribution to Mesopotamian studies in general and to Sumerological research in particular.”<sup>92</sup> Both the format and content of Oppenheim’s catalog are significant because they increased awareness of and therefore access to material that, while undescribed, had been virtually inaccessible, almost invisible, amidst NYPL’s vast holdings.

In the catalog’s introduction, Oppenheim thanked NYPL and the Committee, and included a personal dedication: “To the memory of my parents Alfred and Johanna Oppenheim who died in the German Concentration Camp of Theresienstadt in 1942 and 1943.”<sup>93</sup> His tireless efforts to get them out of Nazi occupied Austria in time had failed.<sup>94</sup> By 1948, when the catalog appeared, Oppenheim was a scholar at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago where he remained until he retired to Berkeley, California with his wife in 1973. He died there the following year at the age of seventy. He is particularly celebrated for his work as editor-in-chief of the *Assyrian Dictionary* and as director of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary Project.

## Dr. Karl Weigl

Composer Karl Weigl converted to Christianity and was baptized in 1926, the year his son was born, an act that offered him no protection under Nazi race laws. Weigl lost all teaching and performing rights and was fortunate to emigrate with his wife, also a musician, and son to the United States with the assistance of Ira Hirschmann, founder of the New Friends of Music Orchestra. Weigl had achieved substantial success and recognition in Austria. Composer Arnold Schoenberg wrote, “I always considered him as one of the best composers of this older generation, one of these who continued the dignified Viennese tradition [...and] truly preserves this old culture of a musical spirit which is one of the best parts of Viennese culture.”<sup>95</sup> In America, however, Weigl was virtually unknown and struggled to find work.<sup>96</sup> He was first

a research assistant in the NYPL Music Division to Smith, whom he had known in Vienna. In early 1943, however, Smith traveled to Brazil, making it, according to Lydenberg's successor Franklin Hopper, "unwise for us to attempt to continue during [his] absence such special work as Dr. Weigl has been doing."<sup>97</sup> An earlier request to enlist Weigl to assist with a special project, similar to those being undertaken by refugee scholars at NYPL, came to the Committee in 1942 from F. H. Price, Librarian at the Free Library of Philadelphia:

"I understand that your Committee has in exceptional cases made grants to libraries and educational institutions which are short of funds in order that outstanding European scholars might continue their research in this country. I am therefore writing to request your Committee to consider giving a grant [...] The present plan calls for Dr. Weigl to do research on Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century orchestral music and to copy such works, both score and parts, in order that they may be added to The Edwin A. Fleisher Music Collection in this Library, and thus be in available form for performance and study by our present day students and musical organizations."<sup>98</sup>

The Committee's rejection of this *non*-NYPL library request may offer further evidence of the exceptional reciprocal relationship that existed specifically between the Committee and NYPL. It is also possible that the Free Library was both requesting too much money and not promising Weigl a permanent position. Additionally, the proposal may not have appealed to Weigl himself, who admitted to being most comfortable within "my own special field (music theory, composition, appreciation, etc.) as I have of course much more continuous experience in these subjects and I really would like to give my best wherever I work."<sup>99</sup>

Weigl did obtain a series of teaching positions, at the New York Philharmonic Training and Scholarship Program, 1939 to 1944; Hartt School of Music, 1941 to 1942; Brooklyn College, 1943 to 1945; New England Conservatory, 1945 to 1948; American Theater Wing, 1946 to 1949; and Philadelphia Musical Academy, 1948 to 1949. He continued composing, performing and teaching until his death at sixty-eight in 1949.<sup>100</sup> In 1954, in cooperation with the Austrian Information Service, Smith curated a concert at NYPL of music by Austrian-born American composers in honor of Weigl's memory.<sup>101</sup>

## Dr. Kathi Meyer-Baer

Kathi Meyer-Baer received her Ph.D. in musicology from the *Universität Leipzig* in 1915. Both Jewish and a woman, she was unable to obtain an academic position and worked as a journalist, independent scholar, and most notably as librarian for the

Musikbibliothek Paul Hirsch, “the last of the great, private music collections in Germany.”<sup>102</sup> She arrived in the United States in March 1940 with her husband and son and in October 1941 was granted Committee support to assist at NYPL. Smith had met Meyer-Baer in Frankfurt am Main in 1926 and was among those who highly recommended her to the Committee for NYPL.<sup>103</sup> She happily acknowledged the news to Duggan, “Through your recommendation I really got the position at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Library! I am so happy to be able to work again in my special field. I thank you sincerely for your help.”<sup>104</sup> He handwrote on her note: “Our grantee at the N.Y. Public Library – an authority on musicology. A delightful and scholarly woman.”<sup>105</sup>

Despite this enthusiastic beginning, Meyer-Baer’s impressive record, and glowing recommendations from American and European experts in her field, NYPL ultimately found her scholarly methods to be lacking. Smith, who had pushed so hard for her to be hired, less than two years later referred to her as “one of the nicest people he has ever met and the most inaccurate person in the world.”<sup>106</sup> In part the problem may have been that Meyer-Baer’s English had not yet reached a professional level, and that she was a proud woman, not entirely comfortable with all her NYPL colleagues, and felt that some tasks assigned her were not befitting her knowledge and abilities.<sup>107</sup> Although NYPL did not request her renewal, she did receive a positive evaluation in a 1945 report from Director Hopper who wrote, “Dr. Kathe Meyer-Baer’s remarkable musical knowledge was a great aid to our Music Division in identifying Chopin first editions and in analyzing 16<sup>th</sup> century music.”<sup>108</sup> Although her tenure at NYPL was brief, she continued to research and publish independently for years to come.<sup>109</sup>

## Dr. Emil Damask

Emil Damask was a Viennese lawyer who served for over fifteen years as the European representative and attorney to the Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation to Foster Jewish Learning. Founded in 1915 by Hungarian-born bibliophile and bibliographer George Alexander Kohut who died in 1933, the Foundation was dedicated to Jewish educational and cultural causes in New York City. George Kohut’s widow, Rebekah Kohut, supported Damask’s emigration to the United States in 1938 as executive secretary of the Foundation. Kohut’s friendship with Lydenberg helped secure Damask the position of special assistant researcher in NYPL’s Jewish Division beginning September 1939, making \$100 per month. The position was funded, it seems, by Kohut herself.<sup>110</sup> In 1940, in ill health, she sought to procure continued financial support for Damask from the New York Foundation.

“I am writing to you during these strenuous times, hoping that you will understand that I do so only because I desperately need your cooperation. I have been able, through the co-operation of Dr. Lydenberg [...] to find a place for a Viennese lawyer, a friend whom I have known for many years and whom Dr. Bloch, the Librarian of the Semitic Division, needs and wants very much.”<sup>111</sup>

Nothing seems to have come of this appeal, so in June 1940 Lydenberg applied to the Committee, writing, Damask “is doing useful work in our Jewish division, having recently arranged several important collections of manuscript papers. He is undoubtedly a welcome addition.”<sup>112</sup> As a lawyer, however, Damask did not meet the Committee’s definition of a scholar and the grant was rejected. Continued generosity, no doubt assured by Kohut, did allow Damask to continue working until he died of a heart attack at his NYPL desk on October 3, 1941.<sup>113</sup>

## Conclusion

The intention of presenting these brief accounts has been to situate the particular experiences of refugee scholars at NYPL within the broader historical contexts of World War II persecution and emigration. Unfortunately, personal details or internal reflections on the experiences remain frustratingly elusive. Hints at what these refugee scholars may have been thinking and feeling at the time can be deduced from a careful reading of select publications they produced during the World War II period.<sup>114</sup>

In October 1938, with his emigration to the United States imminent, a brief article by Aron Freimann was published in the *Journal of Jewish Bibliography*. It discusses the expulsion of Jews from Mainz in the fifteenth century and recounts how some wealthy, accomplished and determined German-Jewish printers brought their presses with them to Northern Italy, where, continuing their work in exile, they helped to establish Hebrew printing in Italy.<sup>115</sup> Clearly Freimann had extensive professional interest in the history of Hebrew printing, but this focus on the printers themselves as targeted Jews and exiled refugees is not evident elsewhere in his writings and may have been inspired by his own persecution as a Jew and impending status as an exiled refugee.

Roman Jakobson’s extremely extensive bibliography, which almost entirely reflects only his very specialized linguistic expertise, includes one out-of-character article quite probably similarly inspired by his own persecution and forced exile. Appearing in 1941, “The City of Learning: The Flourishing Period of the Jewish Culture in Medieval Prague,” does discuss linguistic issues, but within an overall

ardently anti-German, pro-Czech and pro-toleration tone. Jakobson argues that historically, non-Jewish and Jewish Czechs united against the common enemy of Germany, and emphasizes how Czech Jews long remained “unyielding [...] to the linguistic and ritual influence of Germany”. The article can be understood as an homage to his own longtime physical and intellectual home of Prague and to its vital historic Jewish community at the very moment of that community’s dispersion and destruction. It also reads as a ridiculing diatribe against the blind arrogance of Germans who in their attempted Germanization of Czechoslovakia exhibited utter ignorance of its connection to the Slavic countries, languages and peoples, including the Jews, of Central and Eastern Europe, and not to Germany.<sup>116</sup>

Franz Rapp also published a revealing article during this period. In 1944, “Notes on Little Known Materials for the History of the Theatre” appeared, consisting of reproduced illustrations and historical theatre architecture analyses of “lantern slides carried out of Germany in 1939”.<sup>117</sup> Although Rapp does not specify whence they came or if he did the carrying, the note implies that the slides and their unique content were threatened. Since the end of the war, revelations of the destruction, theft and loss of irreplaceable cultural heritage perpetrated by the Nazis show that this was not an unfounded fear. Rapp’s intent, then, in this vividly illustrated article, was simply to bring attention to his precious salvaged selection of little-known sixteenth and seventeenth century, Italian, Austrian and German theatre designs, and to explain their significance to the history of theatre, architecture and design.

In the collected works, bibliographies and tributes regarding the refugee scholars discussed here, their persecution as individuals considered Jewish by the Nazis is scarcely mentioned, much less given the weight it deserves considering the turmoil, displacement and danger it caused.<sup>118</sup> Jakobson, the most well-know of the eight discussed here, has by far the most such texts dedicated to him, although none reviewed here refer to his status as a Jewish refugee scholar forced into exile.<sup>119</sup> This omission is striking considering how Jakobson suffered:

“In spite of all our endeavours, and because of exceedingly unlucky circumstances, we have not succeeded so far in securing for [Jakobson] any salary, grant or fellowship. I may say that the futility of all our efforts seems to have struck this brilliant scholar with a dangerous feeling of depression, bordering upon despondency and, knowing what I know, I almost share that feeling.”<sup>120</sup>

In one essay the contributor refers obliquely to “that tragic moment [...] when the occupation of Czechoslovakia that forced Jakobson to change his entire life was close at hand.”<sup>121</sup> Perhaps precisely because of the varying levels of success and recognition

these refugee scholars achieved in America, the preceding personal and professional upheaval and danger they experienced under Nazism has largely been forgotten or overlooked. The exception is in writings regarding Freimann, the only scholar of the eight discussed here whose Jewishness corresponded directly to his academic specialization, professional reputation, and personal identity.

The stories of the eight refugee scholars briefly recounted here illustrate that there was no single, direct path leading to NYPL, although two common threads do become apparent. First, that pre-existing contacts and relationships were critical to both rescue and placement. Second, that NYPL made the most of the availability of these subject experts in order to improve the organization and documentation of its holdings, work that it lacked the necessary in-house knowledge, staff or funds to accomplish otherwise. Viewed together, most of the work completed by the refugee scholars discussed in this paper takes the form of catalogs and bibliographies. A core goal of Lydenberg's forty-five year tenure at NYPL, one that he successfully realized, was the creation of new catalogs and bibliographies. According to library administrator Keyes Metcalf, "These special bibliographies have increased tremendously the availability of the collections of the Library to the research worker, and do much to make up to him for the disadvantages that come from the closed-access stacks."<sup>122</sup>

First and foremost, Lydenberg's pursuit and support of refugee scholars at NYPL helped to save their lives by providing a source of income and a means of maintaining continuity with professional careers that had been so abruptly terminated by the spread of Nazism in Europe. In addition, these refugee scholars, with their specialized knowledge, language and research capabilities, helped Lydenberg meet his objective to "make available collections which it is impossible to describe adequately or satisfactorily in the regular catalogues of a library."<sup>123</sup> This single accomplishment and the vital contribution of refugee scholars to it constitute a noteworthy and previously unstudied achievement. The level of erudition, academic specialization and expertise that these catalogs and bibliographies reveal provides clear evidence that the "outstanding scholars" placed at NYPL produced academic work whose importance and long-term impact parallels that of refugee scholars who more immediately achieved the expected (and conventional) placements at American colleges and universities. The catalogs and bibliographies created by the refugee scholars increased public awareness of and access to unique and valuable material that would otherwise have remained lost amidst NYPL's vast and diverse holdings. These publications were often pioneering in their fields and revelatory regarding the items they described and organized. They remain useful and informative, constituting a legacy whose value and significance deserves continued recognition and appreciation.

## Notes

- 1 The story of refugee scholars at NYPL has long remained untold, in part because the many constituent pieces are widely scattered in archival collections, personal papers, and the memories of colleagues, students and descendants. My sincere thanks to Jane Aikin, Roz Berman, Julie Brand, Judy Levin Cantor, Phyllis Dain, Ruth Dresner, Rachel Heuberger, Brad Sabin Hill, David Josephson, A.D. Kilmer, John Lundquist, Stephan Massil, Rena Mueller, Abraham Peck, Martha Roth, Menahem Schmelzer, John Spalek, Matthew Stolper, and Wayne Wiegand for the information and suggestions that allowed me to fit some of these small pieces together. Thank you also to the two anonymous readers from OeZG for the questions and comments that helped me to clarify and refine this article.
- 2 For more on World War II refugee scholars to America in general see for example Giuliana Gemelli, *The "Unacceptables": American Foundations and Refugee Scholars between the Two Wars and After*, New York 2000; Claus-Dieter Krohn, *Intellectuals in Exile: Refugee Scholars and the New School for Social Research*, Amherst 1993; Lewis A. Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experiences*, New Haven 1984; Anthony Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America, From the 1930s to the Present*, New York 1983; Laura Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants: The Intellectual Migration from Europe 1930–41*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Chicago 1971; Norman Bentwich, *The Rescue and Achievement of Refugee Scholars*, The Hague 1953; Donald Peterson Kent, *The Refugee Intellectual: The Americanization of the Immigrants of 1933–1941*, New York 1953.
- 3 Located on Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street; it is known today as the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building.
- 4 The Library of Congress, under the leadership of Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish and supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Committee, also employed a number of refugee scholars. During the 1930s and 40s the American Library Association Committee on Refugee Librarians, led by NYPL's Reader Advisor Jennie Flexner, sought to assist European refugee librarians through training and placement. The intention is for this paper to serve as one element of a broader project studying World War II refugees in American libraries comparatively and comprehensively. Available work on this topic includes, Hildegard Müller, *German Librarians in Exile in Turkey, 1933–1945*, in: *Libraries & Culture* 33:3 (Summer 1998), 294–305; Theodore Wiener, *Jewish Refugees at the Library of Congress*, in: *Studies in Judaica, Karaitica and Islamica*, Ramat-Gan, Israel (1982), 263–271.
- 5 A 1972 statement of support signed by twenty-five intellectuals (including a few refugees) described NYPL as having "a well-deserved reputation as one of the half-dozen greatest reference libraries in the world [...] Though called 'New York,' it serves the whole nation as a prime research resource." Hannah Arendt, Ann Bernstein, William F. Buckley et al., *Crisis in the New York Public Library*, in: *New York Review of Books* 18:12 (June 29, 1972).
- 6 Stephen Duggan and Betty Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning: The Story of the Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars*, New York 1948, 7.
- 7 All were considered Jewish by Nazi race laws, though not all self-identified as Jewish. Figures for Jewish immigration to the United States during this period are incomplete as in November 8, 1943 the Immigration and Naturalization Service removed the tracking category "Hebrew." See Maurice R. Davie, *Refugees in America: Report of the Committee for the Study of Recent Immigration from Europe*, New York 1947, 33; Kent, *The Refugee Intellectual*, 17. Kent estimates that up to 80 percent of World War II refugees were Jewish.
- 8 Jakobson's brother Sergius Yakobson was a refugee scholar at the Library of Congress.
- 9 Certainly more refugees worked at NYPL during this period, but it is difficult to trace those whose arrival did not warrant a note in the *New York Times* or who made their own way to and in America. They tended to be younger, attended American library schools, worked in smaller circulating branch libraries, held less prominent positions in technical and public services, and their background as refugees was not necessarily recorded in their employee files.
- 10 Stephen P. Duggan, *Educator*, 79, Dies, in: *New York Times* (19 August 1950).
- 11 Stephen Duggan, *A Rebuttal: A Reply to Mr. Amann's Criticism*, in: *The Journal of Higher Education* 18:6 (June 1947), 319.
- 12 Between 1933 and 1938 "the Jews of America have contributed over \$10,000,000 [...] to the relief of German refugees (this includes Jews and Christians)." Harold Fields, *The Refugee in the United States*, New York/Oxford 1938, 189.

- 13 The average grant of \$1.856,67 in 1933–1934 had been reduced to an average of \$646,43 by 1944–1945. Duggan and Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning*, 196.
- 14 Duggan and Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning*, 1–4; Malcolm Richardson, *Philanthropy and the Internationality of Learning: The Rockefeller Foundation and National Socialist Germany*, in: *Minerva* (London) 28:1 (1990), 21–58.
- 15 Davie, *Refugees in America*, 303; Duggan and Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning*, 196. The exact total amount is unknown.
- 16 Emphasis in original. Betty Drury [Committee Secretary] to Stephen Duggan, 10 July 1941, Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations (Collection referred to herein as NYPL EC).
- 17 Franklin F. Hopper, who had a more distant relationship with the Committee and refugee scholars, succeeded Lydenberg in 1941. Hopper's energies were necessarily more focused on day-to-day maintenance of NYPL once the United States entered the war. Staff members were on active duty and fears of air raids pervaded in New York City.
- 18 Committee to executive board member Nelson Mead, 3 September 1942, NYPL EC.
- 19 Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America*, 3–15; Davie, *Refugees in America*, 84–92.
- 20 Betty Drury, Committee memo, 23 January 1940, NYPL EC; Joshua Bloch to Paul Baerwald, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 25 July 1939, NYPL EC. Depression, early death and suicide were a reality, and some refugee scholars returned to Europe as soon as they were able after the end of the war. Duggan and Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning*, 42–50; Davie, *Refugees in America*, 84–92; Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants*, 7–10.
- 21 The Committee did make lists of displaced scholars available to interested institutions, believing that college and university faculty and leadership were best equipped to judge how the qualifications of the refugees corresponded to their particular needs. See Fields, *The Refugee in the United States*, 140; Stephen Duggan, *Annual Report*, in: *The Committee in aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars: Report as of June 1, 1941*, New York 1941.
- 22 Notes for Duggan's speech, September 1936, NYPL EC.
- 23 The question of whether the United States did all it could to rescue and refuge those targeted and persecuted by Hitler and fascism remains controversial and is beyond the scope of this paper. For more on this debate see for example Steven Bayme, *American Jewish Leadership Confronts the Holocaust: Revisiting Naomi Cohen's Thesis and the American Jewish Committee*, in: *The American Jewish Archives Journal* 61:2 (2009), 163–186; William D. Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis*, London 1997; David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941–1945*, New York 1984; Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1938–1945*, New Brunswick, NJ 1970; David Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938–1941*, Amherst 1968.
- 24 This exception did not guarantee emigration, nor made it quick or easy. Scholars targeted by persecution and often while fleeing from one country to another still had to obtain for themselves and any family member who would accompany them to America an endless, often expensive, and ever-changing list of required forms, certificates, statements, affidavits and visas, including the elusive exit visa authorizing departure from Europe.
- 25 The Immigration Act of 1924, Historical Documents [www.civics-online.org](http://www.civics-online.org) (11.12.2009). The gendered language was typical of the time, though there were female refugee scholars. Out of the total 613 Committee files counted in 1945, 582 were for men and 31 for women; of the eight employed by NYPL discussed here, one is a woman. Duggan and Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning*, 24. In addition, German women only gained access to university education in 1908, further contributing to this gender discrepancy. See Tobe Levin, *Women's Studies in Germany*, in: *Women's Studies Quarterly* 24:1/2 Beijing and Beyond: Toward the Twenty-First Century of Women (Spring – Summer, 1996), 299–316.
- 26 Harry Lydenberg to Stephen Duggan, 11 October 1939, The New York Public Library Archives, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations (Collection referred to herein as NYPL RG7).

- 27 Marjorie Lamberti, *The Reception of Refugee Scholars from Nazi Germany in America: Philanthropy and Social Change in Higher Education*, in: *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* n.s. 12:3 (Spring/Summer 2006), 157–192. No overt anti-Semitic or anti-German incidents appear in the records consulted for this research.
- 28 Institute of International Education, NY to Committee, 27 May 1933, NYPL EC.
- 29 Harry Lydenberg to John Marshall, Rockefeller Foundation, April 1941, NYPL EC.
- 30 Harry Lydenberg to Stephen Duggan, 10 March 1941, NYPL EC.
- 31 Stephen Duggan to Harry Lydenberg, 18 March 1941, NYPL EC.
- 32 Herbert A. Strauss, *Essays on the History, Persecution, and Emigration of German Jews*, New York 1987, 347.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 347.
- 34 Apparently even this low number was unusually high: “although the average age level [...] as of the year of the Committee’s first grant was just below forty years, 5 of the 11 were in their thirties [...] This high valuation placed on the younger scholars of brilliant promise is noteworthy in that it occurred nowhere else to such a marked degree. Although the Committee’s general policy reserved its grants for older [...] relaxation of the rule was possible in such a situation where a scientific or scholarly institution[...] vouched for the competence and scholarly achievement of the men selected.” Duggan and Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning*, 70.
- 35 Duggan and Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning*, 194.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 100.
- 37 Harry Lydenberg to Joshua Bloch, 12 September 1939, NYPL RG 7.
- 38 Harry Lydenberg to Stephen Duggan, 10 March 1941, NYPL EC.
- 39 Salo Wittmayer Baron, Introduction, in: *Union Catalog of Hebrew Manuscripts and Their Location*, vol. 1 Index by Menachem Hayyim Schmelzer, New York 1973, iii. See especially Rachel Heuberger, *Aron Freimann und die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Tübingen 2004, 136–165.
- 40 See Baron, Introduction, iii-v; Heuberger, *Aron Freimann*, 136–165.
- 41 Joshua Bloch to Paul Baerwald, 25 July 1939, NYPL EC.
- 42 E. A. Hiss [Secretary to Betty Drury] to Stephen Duggan, memo, 29 August 1939, NYPL EC.
- 43 Alexander Marx, *Jewish Theological Seminary* to Joshua Bloch, 21 July 1939, NYPL RG 7.
- 44 Joshua Bloch to Committee, 7 September 1939, NYPL EC.
- 45 Joshua Bloch, Foreword, in: *A Gazetteer of Hebrew Printing* by Aron Freimann, New York 1946.
- 46 Joshua Bloch to Committee, 8 June 1940, NYPL EC.
- 47 Harry Lydenberg to Stephen Duggan, 30 April 1941, NYPL EC.
- 48 *Ibid.*
- 49 Now Yeshiva University.
- 50 Paul North Rice, Chief of NYPL Reference Department to Stephen Duggan, 16 September 1942, NYPL EC. Also referred to as Mendelsohn Foundation of Detroit. No trace of this organization has been found though the Mendelsohn family is known to have been philanthropic and active in assisting Jewish refugees during WWII.
- 51 Executive board member Fred Stein to Betty Drury, 14 July 1944, NYPL EC.
- 52 *New York Times* (31 December 1933).
- 53 Material regarding Curt Sachs, NYPL EC.
- 54 *New York Times* (31 December 1933).
- 55 Smith was “instrumental in bringing many distinguished scholars, displaced from Central Europe, to this country and helping them find places in American universities and other institutions.” Philip L. Miller, et al., *How the Music Division of the New York Public Library Grew – A Memoir*, in: *Notes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, 35, no. 3 (March 1979), 542.
- 56 Carleton Sprague Smith, Curt Sachs and the Library-Museum of the Performing Arts, in: *Musica Judaica Journal of the American Society for Jewish Music* 4:1 (5742/1981–2), 8–19.
- 57 This sum is considerably more than other scholars received, but his responsibilities were clearly significant.
- 58 Smith, Curt Sachs and the Library-Museum, 13; NYPL letterhead (no sender or recipient specified), 22 October 1936, NYPL EC.
- 59 NYPL letterhead (no sender or recipient specified), 22 October 1936, NYPL EC.

- 60 Carleton Sprague Smith to Professor Philip James, New York University Department of Music, 13 November 1936, NYPL EC.
- 61 Harry Woodburn Chase, NYU Chancellor to David Stevens, Rockefeller Foundation, 5 March 1939, NYPL EC. Emphasis in original.
- 62 Betty Drury interview with Carleton Sprague Smith, 27 October 1942, NYPL EC. According to the interview the break resulted from “a few candid remarks which [Sachs] made over the radio about the way the Museum is run.” But in his 1981 article about Sachs cited above, Smith indicated that the reasons for the break were both more complex and ambiguous. Smith, Curt Sachs and the Library-Museum, 16.
- 63 Shortly after Sachs’ 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, Smith learned NYPL could no longer fund Sachs and that Sachs had never been on NYPL’s pension plan. Smith sought funding from the Oberlaender Trust, writing, “Dr. Sachs has done as much to further German-American cultural and scholarly relations as anyone who has come here during the past fifteen years and I should hate to see his connection with us severed and the modest income he has been receiving withdrawn.” Carleton Sprague Smith to Hanns Gramm, Oberlaender Trust, 19 November 1951, NYPL RG 7. No response found in the files.
- 64 John Martin, *The Dance: Novelties*, in: *New York Times* (27 January 1950), 82.
- 65 Smith, 17–18.
- 66 Today the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center at Lincoln Center Plaza.
- 67 Elisabeth Lotte Franzos to Stephen Duggan, 26 April 1938, NYPL EC.
- 68 Emphasis in original. Betty Drury, interview with Franz Rapp, 23 January 1940, NYPL EC.
- 69 Franz Rapp Biographical Statement, NYPL EC.
- 70 Harry Lydenberg to Stephen Duggan, 2 April 1941, NYPL EC.
- 71 “The Library of Congress wanted Rapp too. Mr. Jameson was very annoyed because the New York Public Library got him first.” Betty Drury to Stephen Duggan, memo, 19 May 1941, NYPL EC.
- 72 Paul North Rice to Stephen Duggan, 21 April 1942, NYPL EC.
- 73 *Ibid.*, 26 February 1943, NYPL EC.
- 74 Stephen Duggan to Betty Drury, memo, 2 May 1941, NYPL EC.
- 75 Franz Rapp, review of *Baroque and Romantic Stage Design* by János Scholz and *The Bibiena Family* by A. Hyatt Mayor, in: *The Art Bulletin* 33:4 (December 1951), 280–288.
- 76 *Services Today* for Dr. Rapp of Howard U., in: *The Washington Post* (7 March 1951). Scholarship about Jewish refugee scholars at traditionally black American colleges has recently been emerging. See *From Swastika to Jim Crow*, Pacific Street Films, 1999; *Beyond Swastika and Jim Crow: Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges*, Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York, May 1, 2009–February 21, 2010; Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb, *From Swastika to Jim Crow: Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges*, Malabar, FL 1993.
- 77 Max Weinreich, Society of Friends of the Yiddish Scientific Institute, NYC to Edgar H. Fisher, Institute of International Education, NYC, 8 June 1940, NYPL EC.
- 78 Morris Halle, *The Bloomfield-Jakobson Correspondence, 1944–1946*, in: *Language* 64:4 (Dec., 1988), 737–754. Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America*, 251; Ved Mehta, *John is Easy to Please: Encounters with the Written and Spoken Word*, New York 1962, 232.
- 79 Harry Lydenberg to Stephen Duggan, 21 June 1941, NYPL EC.
- 80 Paul North Rice to Stephen Duggan, 31 May 1944, NYPL EC.
- 81 Avraham Yarmolinsky, Aleutian Manuscript Collection, in: *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 48:8 (August 1944), 671–680; Avraham Yarmolinsky, Kamchadal and Asiatic Eskimo Manuscript Collections: A Recent Accession, in: *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 51:11 (November 1947), 659–669.
- 82 For a brief summary of Jakobson’s life and work see B.H., *Roman Jakobson in his 85th Year*, in: *Poetics Today* 2:1a *Roman Jakobson: Language and Poetry* (Autumn, 1980), 9–14.
- 83 Elizabeth Oppenheim, “Emigration history of A. Leo Oppenheim (1904–1974) and Elizabeth Oppenheim (née Munk),” unpublished manuscript, (1978), 1. With thanks to Prof. A. D. Kilmer, executrix of Elizabeth Oppenheim’s estate, for sharing a copy of this manuscript written by A. Leo Oppenheim’s wife Elizabeth.
- 84 John Wilson, Director of The Oriental Institute, Chicago to Committee, 22 April 1938, NYPL EC.

- 85 Oppenheim, "Emigration history," 1.
- 86 See Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants*, 90.
- 87 Oppenheim, "Emigration history," 5–7.
- 88 Harry Lydenberg to Stephan Duggan, 20 June 1941, NYPL EC.
- 89 A. Leo Oppenheim, *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets of the Wilberforce Eames Babylonian Collection in the New York Public Library: Tablets of the Time of the Third Dynasty of Ur*, New Haven, CT 1948, ix.
- 90 Betty Drury to Stephen Duggan, 10 July 1941, NYPL EC.
- 91 C. J. Gadd, review of *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets of the Wilberforce Eames Babylonian Collection in the New York Public Library: Tablets of the Time of the Third Dynasty of Ur* by A. Leo Oppenheim, in: *American Journal of Archaeology* 54:3 (July–September 1950), 273–274;
- 92 Samuel Noah Kramer, review of *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets of the Wilberforce Eames Babylonian Collection in the New York Public Library: Tablets of the Time of the Third Dynasty of Ur* by A. Leo Oppenheim, in: *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series 41:2 (October 1950), 221–224.
- 93 Oppenheim, *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets*, dedication.
- 94 Correspondence documenting Oppenheim's efforts to save his parents can be found in the A. Leo Oppenheim Papers, 1938–1945, Holocaust Center of Northern California.
- 95 Arnold Schoenberg to Rudolf Ganz, 1 June 1938, NYPL EC.
- 96 "Some suffered in the transplantation. One example is [...] the distinguished composer Karl Weigl, who after emigrating here led a precarious existence in New York, giving piano lessons." Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants*, 108.
- 97 Material regarding Weigl, NYPL EC. It is so far unknown what this "special work" was.
- 98 F. H. Price, *The Free Library of Philadelphia* to Stephen Duggan, 21 December 1942, NYPL EC.
- 99 Karl Weigl to Laurens Seelye, Committee, 4 November 1941, NYPL EC.
- 100 Biographical Note, *The Karl Weigl Papers*, MS 73, Irving S. Gilmore Music Library, Yale University.
- 101 12 Giving Concert at Library Today, in: *New York Times* (2 May 1954), 115.
- 102 Richard S. Hill, review of *Katalog der Musikbibliothek Paul Hirsch. Band IV* by Kathi Meyer and Paul Hirsch, in: *Notes*, 2nd Series 5:2 (March 1948), 228–230.
- 103 Carleton Sprague Smith to Betty Drury, 31 January 1941, NYPL EC; Betty Drury to Laurens Seelye, 30 January 1941, NYPL EC. Drury wrote, "I hope you will interview Dr. Meyer-Baer. From all accounts she is an extraordinarily able musicologist [...] and is thought well enough by the Library of Congress to have been mentioned by them in several memoranda about scholars they would like to engage."
- 104 Kathi Meyer-Baer to Stephen Duggan, 30 October 1941, NYPL EC.
- 105 Stephen Duggan, 30 October 1941, NYPL EC.
- 106 Betty Drury interview with Carleton Sprague Smith, 27 October 1942, NYPL EC.
- 107 Personal correspondence with Professor David Josephson of Brown University, 9 April 2007, who is currently writing a book entitled, *Kathi Meyer-Baer: Musicological Matriarch*. See also David Josephson, "Why Then All the Difficulties!": A Life of Kathi Meyer-Baer, in: *Notes* 65:2 (December 2008), 227–67
- 108 Duggan and Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning*, 42.
- 109 See Josephson, "Why Then All the Difficulties!."
- 110 Jewish Division Correspondence A-C, January to June 1943, NYPL RG 7.
- 111 Rebekah Kohut to William Fuerst, New York Foundation, 28 May 1940, NYPL EC.
- 112 Stephen Duggan to Harry Lydenberg, 10 June 1940, NYPL EC.
- 113 Dr. Emil Demask Aide of Kohut Foundation Dies at Desk in Public Library, in: *New York Times* (4 October 1941).
- 114 Insight into the personal often appears in accounts written by refugee scholars themselves which appear in collections such as: John Kosa, ed., *The Home of the Learned Man: A Symposium on the Immigrant Scholar in America*, New Haven 1968; Abraham J. Peck, ed., *The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938–1988: From Bildung to the Bill of Rights*, Detroit 1989; Robert Boyers, ed., *The Legacy of the German Refugee Intellectuals*, New York 1972; Eric E. Hirshler, ed., *Jews from Germany in the United States*, New York 1955; Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930–1960*, Cambridge 1969.

- 115 Aron Freimann, Haben jüdische Flüchtlinge aus Mainz in XV. Jahrhundert den Buchdruck nach Italien gebracht?, in: *Journal of Jewish Bibliography* 1:1 (October 1938), 9–11.
- 116 Roman Jakobson, The City of Learning: The Flourishing Period of the Jewish Culture in Medieval Prague, in: *American Hebrew* 150:4 (December 5, 1941), 6–7, 13, 16–17. Although Jakobson left Czechoslovakia in 1938 and this article was published in 1941, the biographical note still identifies him as Professor of the Masaryk University, Brno, Moravia.
- 117 Franz Rapp, Notes on Little-Known Materials for the History of the Theatre, in: *The Theatre Annual* (1944), 60–78.
- 118 See for example Gustave Reese and Rose Brandel, eds., *The Commonwealth of Music: In Honor of Curt Sachs*, New York 1965; Gertrud Hille, *Franz Rapp (1885–1951) und das Münchner Theatermuseum*, Zürich 1977.
- 119 See for example, B.H., *Roman Jakobson in his 85th Year*; Stephen Rudy, ed., *Roman Jakobson, 1896–1982: A Complete Bibliography of his Writings*, Berlin 1990; *Proceedings of A Tribute to Roman Jakobson, 1896–1982*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, November 12, 1982, Berlin and New York c1983; Richard Brandford, *Roman Jakobson: Life, Language, Art*, New York and London 1994; Charles E. Gribble, ed., *Studies Presented to Professor Roman Jakobson by his Students*, Cambridge 1968; Morris Halle, et al., eds., *For Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*, 11 October 1956, The Hague 1956; *To Honor Roman Jakobson: Essays on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, 11 October 1966, The Hague, Paris, New York 1967.
- 120 Henri Gregoire, *Ecole Libre des Hautes Etudes*, New School for Social Research to Betty Drury, 25 September 1942, NYPL EC.
- 121 Vjačeslav v. Ivanov, *Roman Jakobson: The Future*, in: *A Tribute to Roman Jakobson, 1896–1982*, Berlin 1983, 49.
- 122 Keyes D. Metcalf, *A Builder of Library Research Collections*, in Deoch Fulton, ed., *Bookmen's Holiday: Notes and Studies Written and Gathered in Tribute to Harry Miller Lydenberg*, New York 1943, 402.
- 123 Metcalf, *A Builder*, 402.