

המכון הבינלאומי לגנאלוגיה יהודית ומרכז פאול יעקבי, ירושלים



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH GENEALOGY AND PAUL JACOBI CENTER

AT THE JEWISH NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, JERUSALEM

“Tools and Technology” Proposal

Indexing the Jacobi Genealogical Collection

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Background

Dr. Paul Jacobi (1911-1997) was born in Koenigsberg in Germany and emigrated to Palestine/Eretz-Yisrael in 1929. After finishing his law studies in England, he served as the Head Legal Adviser of the Jewish National Fund for more than fifty years.

His passion was for Jewish Genealogy done in a scholarly and scientific manner. He was active in the “Israeli Genealogical Society”, from its inception in 1937 as the “Palestine Jewish Genealogical Society”. In the last several decades of his life, he devoted most of his time to genealogical research into Ashkenazi Jewry from very early times.

Ultimately, he bequeathed his unique genealogical library and his extraordinarily valuable collection of genealogical studies and papers to the “Jacobi International Center for Research on Jewish Genealogy”, which was set up in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem shortly after his death. In 2004, his library and papers devolved to the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy and Paul Jacobi Center, with the full consent of Jacobi’s executors.

In all, Jacobi conducted some 400 ramified genealogical studies, mainly into leading rabbinical families in Europe, some going back several centuries.

- 100 of the studies were developed by Dr. Jacobi himself into family “monographs”. They are type-written and are contained in 114 loosely bound work-books, which have been largely, but not fully, indexed.
- About 300 of the studies remain in their original research form in Jacobi’s handwriting (which was notoriously bad) and on work-sheets (A3 size, and often larger) in poor condition. They have been inventoried by the Genealogical Institute (at <http://www.iihg.org/ToolsAndTechnologies/JacobiIndex/HandwrittenMaterial.aspx>).

Proposal

The present project focuses on this latter group of studies, in the first instance. The aim is to provide Jewish genealogists and social scientists in general with a computerized tool that will allow them to search and explore, for the first time, the wealth of material on the numerous Ashkenazi families researched in meticulous detail by Jacobi. To that end, the project seeks to produce and post on the Internet a scientific, annotated name-index for the hand-written studies, accompanied by extensive cross-references and notes on the sources, both primary and secondary, employed by Jacobi.

At a later stage, the typed monographs could be re-visited and also provided with a full annotated name-index.

Before the hand-written studies can be indexed, however, they require to be digitalized (in colour) for various reasons:

- To allow the enlargement of the script and improve its resolution;
- To permit the indexers to work independently from copies (and not the originals);
- To enable their posting of the digitalized copies on the Net in due course.

Only after digitalization, the transcription team can proceed with the decyphering of the studies and databasing the data extracted on to searchable exl. sheets. This will be painstaking work and it is estimated that a 2-3 person team will take at least two years to complete it. Thus the following budget estimate is assumes, perhaps optimistically, 2 years work, in the knowledge that in practice more time will be required.
