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SELECTED LECTURES ON GENEALOGY; AN INTRODUCTION TO SCIENTIFIC TOOLS

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This 200-page book is a collection of introductory scientific tools for genealogists. It is very readable and should be appropriate for self-teaching. Published 13 years ago, it is still a first of its kind, and thus entirely relevant. It can be used as a reference to find scientific methods suitable to genealogical pursuit.

Included in the book are articles by Stephen P. Morse (*Jewish Calendar Demystified; DNA to Genetic Genealogy*), Nachum Dershowitz and Edward M. Reingold (*Jewish Dating Pitfalls and Resources*), Stephen L. Egbert and Karen G.R. Roekard (*Geospatial Genealogy*), Kamila Klauzinska (*A Practical Introduction to Dataset Merging*), John A. Nairn (*Merging in Genealogy Software and Genealogy Research*), Nadav Shnerb, Yosef Maruvka and David Kessler (*Lucky Names: Demography, Surnames and Chance*), Alexander Beider (*Computer-Based Name Searches*), Jean-Pierre Stroweis (*A Methodology for Error Detection and Correction of Jewish Names in Digitized Genealogical Records*), and H. Daniel Wagner (*Structural Imperfections in Family Trees: Quantifying the Ancestor Paradox*).

A few decades ago, the ‘hard’ sciences - mathematics, biology, computer science, and so on - played no significant role in the field of genealogy. Nowadays, genealogy is undergoing a rapid transformation. What used to be mainly an activity similar to stamp-collecting, practiced mainly by the elderly, has become a field of ample information and knowledge. Genealogy - and Jewish genealogy in particular - is in the midst of a major transition.
In the past 50 years we have seen an enormous increase in the number of peer-reviewed articles published in the field of genealogy. Interestingly, the number of publications in the exact sciences has largely outgrown those in the fields more traditionally associated with genealogy. Such a gap is rooted in recent major scientific advances, including DNA testing and, currently, the explosion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools.

The impact of the fast-growing number of intricate scientific facets in this field makes it indispensable that genealogists are offered a basic set of introductory tools in the relevant aspects of the hard sciences. This booklet, the first of its kind I believe, is primarily designed as a sort of introductory guide in the form of a collection of basic articles and can be used as a reference for a science-oriented genealogical pursuit. More topics (AI for example) exist beyond the set of papers presented in this booklet, which may appear in the future.

A few paperback copies of the book are still available and may be obtained for the cost of postage. To order one, ***click here***. PDF versions of each individual article are posted in the *JEWISH GENEALOGY* archives. At the Institute home page, **www.iijg.org**, click on “Archives” to read them.

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References

1. Wagner, H.D., Genealogy as an Academic Discipline, *AVOTAYNU*, Vol XXII, No. 1, Spring 2006, 3–11.
2. Jones, T. W., Post-Secondary Study of Genealogy: Curriculum and its Contexts. Presented at the IIJG *Symposium*. Jerusalem, Israel, 2007.
3. Lamdan, N., The International Institute for Jewish Genealogy: Five Years of Progress. *AVOTAYNU*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2, Summer 2011.