

## **A Time to Gather: Archives and the Control of Jewish Culture**

**By Jason Lustig. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. 288. Hardcover £47.99. ISBN: 978-0197563526.**

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Jason Lustig's monograph provides a fascinating study of Jewish archives and archival practices in the twentieth century and beyond, which Lustig, quoting Cecil Roth, argues is a "time to gather" (1). Lustig's work is an especially timely contribution because it situates its investigation of specific archives and archivists in the context of the archival turn, "a set of critical approaches marked by intense interdisciplinary reappraisal of archives" (15). Indeed, although Lustig explains that his focus is on "actually existing archive repositories and institutions, as opposed to 'the Archive' as a construct of theory" (3), he shows the symbolic significance and function of these archives, how they operate as "engines driving powerful metanarratives" (11), and thereby engages with and develops our understanding of a more theoretically conceived "Archive." Crucially, Lustig is concerned to show how the drive to collect documents of Jewish history relates to struggles for control over the past, present, and future of Jewish life, culture, and identity.

An introduction, which sets out how the study relates to a longer history of Jewish archives and archiving, to theoretical approaches to archives, and to developments in archival science, is followed by three chapters, each dedicated to a twentieth-century Jewish archive. Chapter 1 focuses on the Gesamtarchiv der deutschen Juden in Berlin, which, founded in 1903, represents the "first professionally managed archive of Jewish history" (12). The Gesamtarchiv is pivotal to Lustig's argument that, while the Holocaust "set the stage for a heightened debate about archives" (12), the significance of the twentieth century as a "time to gather" can be seen before this catastrophic period of history. Moreover, in its programmatic aspiration to be a total and centralized archive, the Gesamtarchiv becomes a model for the two institutions that emerge later. The importance of the Berlin institution is seen in both the "genealogy" of archivists it produces (85) and the structural and ideological principles it develops. Chapter 2 discusses the Jewish Historical General Archives in Jerusalem, which opened to the public in 1947 and became known as the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in 1969. Lustig describes the efforts to bring dispersed European archives to Jerusalem following the Second World War, efforts that, dubbed the "ingathering of exiles," deliberately echoed the "contemporary language of mass immigration" (52). Bringing material, including documents from the dispersed Gesamtarchiv, to Jerusalem was key to establishing Israel as a successor to Europe for Jewish people and culture. Chapter 3 turns to the American Jewish Archives established by Jacob Rader Marcus in Cincinnati, also in 1947. This "Jerusalem on the Ohio," Lustig explains, represents Marcus's belief in the power and influence of America's Jewry as well as his doubts about the future of the state of Israel. Marcus was averse to centralization, espousing instead a principle of "omniterritoriality" (91) that also sought to respond to the threat of nuclear war, but his intense use of photocopying nevertheless allowed him to collect as much material as possible for his archive.

Lustig's discussion of this "trio of monumental repositories" (2) demonstrates how the desire for a "total archive," discussions about provenance vs. pertinence, and tensions between state power and communities can be traced through the archive in different times and places. Indeed, a key insight of the study is the way these "community-based"

archives, which seem to have been created as a means of locating the histories excluded from state repositories, are in fact inextricably connected to the state – the Gesamtarchiv to “German patriotism,” Jewish Historical General Archives to “rising nationalism” in Israel, and the American Jewish Archives to “American hemispheric hegemony” (176). Indeed, focusing on community-based archives that are in fact tied to state structures, Lustig pursues the question: to whom do these archives belong? This became of crucial importance in the postwar years, as chapter 5 shows. Here, Lustig focuses on Germany to consider the implications of restitution and the opposing impulses to retain archives in order to sustain the possibility of Jewish life and culture after the Holocaust and to remove documents to Israel in a gesture that symbolized precisely the end of this (“Making the Past into History,” 116). A final chapter turns to more recent, digital archival projects – the Center for Jewish History in New York, YIVO’s Vilna Collections, and the Friedberg Genizah Project – to show how “the time to gather” extends to the twenty-first century, and with it, the tensions around totalization, centralization, and the reconstruction of existing collections vs. the production of new “epistemic things” (Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things: Synthesizing Proteins in the Test Tube*, 1997).

Lustig’s lucidly written study provides rich information about different archives while drawing out important connections between them. It highlights the significance of this intense period of collecting for narratives of Jewish history, culture, and identity and shows how the questions raised by and through the three institutions have continued relevance today. As such, *A Time to Gather* is an important contribution both to Jewish Studies and to archival studies.

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## The Austro-Hungarian Army and the First World War

**By Graydon A. Tunstall. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. x + 466. Paperback \$34.99. ISBN: 978-0521181242.**

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Graydon Tunstall certainly means well. He writes about the Austro-Hungarian army and the challenges it faced with a certain amount of empathy but not without criticism. This book is a competent summary of conventional wisdom, including all the pitfalls to be expected from conventional wisdom. It will certainly be useful for Anglo-Saxon readers who do not want to wade through the eight volumes of *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*, the official history published during the interwar years.

But Tunstall’s comments on political developments fall little short of clichés, such as Charles I’s “Canossa” at Spa in 1918 that was supposedly “fateful” – even though the author realizes that “nothing concrete emerged from it” (337). Or the complaint about the emperor’s lacklustre government that failed to solve the nationality problem. One of the main projects cutting across domestic and foreign policy, the never-ending debate about the “Austro-Polish solution” is only mentioned once, in half a paragraph wedged between two phases of a minor Italian offensive (343). Jozef Pilsudski and his Polish Legion fighting for the Central Powers are completely ignored. There is a rambling chronology of the