

Summary of Main Points Raised at the Meeting of the Readers Association Vaad
Members with Professor Haggai Ben-Shammai

13 December 2009

The following vaad members were present: Chairperson Yosef Salmon, Nadia Zeldes, Dena Ordan, Yisrael Eph'al, Miriam Goldstein, and Avi Aronsky

We received an update regarding processes related to the development of plans for the new library

1. Oren Weinberg of the University of Haifa library has been appointed acting director of the library. He will be at the library four days a week and will focus on the professional and budgetary aspects of the process.
2. The drawing up of the detailed master plan for the library will be implemented by an outside agency--Hevrat Aviv. The possibility was raised that our representatives could meet with members of the group involved in developing the master plan.
3. We also raised the issue of the division of authority between the general and the academic directors. Professor Ben-Shammai views his main task as covering the areas of content and acquisitions (books, collections, digital cooperation, and manuscripts). Professor Ben-Shammai is also exploring the possibility of integrating research institutes currently housed in the library in the new building. According to the master plan whose development is nearing completion under the aegis of the Rothschild Fund, the Archive of the Jewish People will be part of the new library. Another

possible future project is promotion of the integration of research fellows by the library in these institutes.

4. We also inquired as to the proposed design of the reading rooms in the new building. We are in agreement with Professor Ben-Shammai that, even if the new library has one central reading room, the division between the core subjects should be maintained. We were informed that the number of books on the open shelves will be doubled in the new building, from 200,000 to 400,000 volumes.
5. The first stage in the actual construction of the new library will probably be the construction of a remote storage facility. This will enable storage of books in preparation for the move to the new building.
6. We raised the issue of periodicals. Professor Ben-Shammai is working to have the displays set up in the reading rooms. We support his suggestion that the new library building have a central periodicals reading room. We also raised the question of the problematic accessibility of electronic resources and will be making suggestions as to how this process can be facilitated.
7. There is a possibility that the Judaica Reading Room will be enlarged by breaking down the wall behind the public computers.
8. We also discussed the projected plans for cultural activities at the future library. Professor Ben-Shammai made it clear that there will be no attempt to turn the library into a community center; there will, however, be attempts to bring new sectors of the public to the library, including high

school students. The main issue is a question of degree. We intend to keep track of how this will be implemented in order to make certain that cultural activities and outreach do not interfere with the library's function as a research facility.

9. Professor Eph'al raised the issue of the importance of study of the ancient Near East and the lacunas in the library's collection in this sphere. Professor Eph'al was invited to submit a list of the books in this field not found in the library.