



Preservation Newsletter—August, 2019

## **CONSERVATION RECORD LINKING: Preserving the Story of our Collections**

Serving as advocates for the preservation of cultural property, the Werner J. and Gisella Levi Cahnman Preservation Laboratory strives to attain the highest possible standards in all aspects of conservation, including digital preservation. Our work in preventive conservation, examination, documentation, treatment, research, and education are guided by the principles set out in the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice, which specifically states that we “shall document examination, scientific investigation, and treatment by creating permanent records and reports.”

One of the missions of the preservation lab is to enhance record keeping among our Partners who act as the custodians of Jewish cultural property and heritage. Our goal is to work with everyone on mainstreaming the link between the conservation data and bibliographical, archival, and/or museum records. Linking digital conservation records to the library and archival records will provide ready access to the future professionals of our institutions, allowing them to make informed decisions about the management of their physical collections.

Although this can be challenging due to the many standalone databases existing among partnering institutions, there are several ways one can begin. One of the simplest ways to jumpstart this process is to include the Aleph or Emu numbers, when applicable, with the treatment item before it enters the preservation lab. The corresponding bibliographical or museum record numbers will allow the lab to link the treatment completed on the item to its record. It will streamline the process for the future, making it more efficient for the partners in the long run.



The preservation lab will also aid in the input of conservation information to databases by standardizing the language for the partners. We provide treatment reports in our conservation database or, for more involved treatments, as a linked document in our One Drive. Partners can cut and paste from the database or the existence of records/reports can merely be noted in the system for ease of access. Each partner can choose to make conservation records available to as wide of a community of stakeholders as they choose, or to keep the records restricted to employees only. This systematic record-keeping will encourage sharing and linking of documentation with Aleph, Emu, and eventually ArchiveSpace. The preservation lab will work with IT to ensure the reports are kept as part of the Center’s Institutional Archives for future access, including visual documentation.

This project will encourage everyone to work collaboratively to attain a common goal of safeguarding Jewish cultural heritage.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions about this on-going project!

**Further Reading:**

- Conservation Documentation in Research Libraries: Making the Link with MARC Data.  
By Laura McCann, a Conservation Librarian, New York University Libraries;  
<https://journals.ala.org/index.php/lrts/article/view/5220/6340>
- AIC Code of Ethics: <https://www.culturalheritage.org/about-conservation/code-of-ethics>

---

*The Werner J. and Gisella Levi Cahnman Preservation Laboratory*