

# **Max Leopold Margolis Collection**

**ARC MS 6**

**Finding aid prepared by Arthur Kiron, Manuscripts Curator and Assistant Archivist..**

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Last updated on April 18, 2016.

University of Pennsylvania, Library at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies

January 1993

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Library at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies
<b>Creator</b>	Margolis, Max Léopold, 1866-1932
<b>Title</b>	Max Leopold Margolis Collection
<b>Call number</b>	ARC MS 6
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	1894-1932
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1891-1932
<b>Extent</b>	23 linear feet (14 document boxes)
<b>Language</b>	Multiple languages

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## Biography/History

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Max Leopold Margolis was born Mordechai Yom Tov Margolis in the village of Merez in the Russian province of Vilna (now Lithuania) on October 15, 1866. Mordechai Yom Tov was named after the famous rabbi Yom Tov Lippman Heller, from whom he descended on his father Isaac Margolis' side. His mother's name was Hinde Bernstein. He had one brother named Elias, and four sisters: Anna, Lena, Bertha and Ida. Anna eventually married a man named Ginsberg. After her death, Ginsberg re-married Anna's sister Lena. Bertha married into the Barnett family; Ida Margolis never married. Margolis received his early Jewish education from his father who was a rabbi. Margolis began studying secular subjects such as mathematics with his self-taught father and also received additional training in Russian and other subjects from a local priest in Merez. Margolis' thirst for knowledge of all kinds was not easily exhausted. According to information told to Alexander Marx by Margolis' brother Elias,

Margolis tried unsuccessfully to run away from his small village in search of wider horizons. Realizing the intellectual limitations the confines of Merez imposed on his son, Margolis' father sent him to live at the home of his maternal grandfather David Bernstein in Berlin sometime after his thirteenth birthday. In Berlin, Margolis studied at the Leibniz Gymnasium, where he received a thorough grounding in Greek and Latin. Margolis was consistently the top student in Greek and graduated with distinction in 1885. While in Berlin, Margolis' family emigrated to America. Margolis did not re-join them, however, until 1889, two years after the death of Margolis' father, who had found work as the rabbi of the Kalvarier Schul in New York.

Margolis began his graduate studies at Columbia College in New York in 1889, received his M.A degree in 1890, and only one year later in 1891 successfully completed his Ph.D., the first to be awarded in the Oriental Department. Writing in Latin, which apparently was stronger than his English at the time, Margolis submitted a text-critical study of Rashi's commentary on tractate Eruvin of the Talmud, under the supervision of Richard Gottheil.

Following his graduation, Margolis remained at Columbia for one year as a University Fellow in Semitic Languages. Shortly thereafter, Margolis lectured at the Glenmore School for Culture and Sciences, in Keene, New Hampshire and also lectured at the summer school run by Felix Adler, the founder of the Ethical Culture Society, at Plymouth, Massachusetts. From 1893 until 1898, Margolis taught Hebrew and Semitic languages at the Hebrew Union College, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Margolis was hired by Isaac Mayer Wise, the founder and president of the college (the center of reform Judaism in America at that time), and enjoyed a warm relationship with him. Perhaps attracted by the possibilities of a broader university environment, Margolis departed HUC in 1899 for the University of California in Berkeley where he assumed the position of assistant professor of Semitics. One year later, Margolis was awarded an associate professorship.

It was during his stay in California, that Margolis met his future wife, Evelyn Kate Aronson, of San Francisco. They were married on June 20, 1906. Evelyn Aronson was a gifted, cultured woman who came from a prominent family. Among her descendants on her mother's side was Barry Goldwater. They had three children, Catherine, and the twins, Philip, and Max, Jr. Max, Jr. died of a stomach ailment during the family's visit to Palestine in 1924 where Margolis had come as the Annual Professor at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. Margolis' grief was profound; after returning to the United States he was said to have visited his son's grave every Shabbat for the rest of life, even in intemperate weather.

Margolis had left Berkeley shortly before his marriage to return to Cincinnati where he had been recruited by HUC's new president, Kaufmann Kohler. From September 1905 to March 1907, Margolis held the position of Professor of Hebrew Exegesis at the Hebrew Union College. Unfortunately, the return to Cincinnati did not prove felicitous. Margolis left HUC within two years due to personality conflicts with the new president. They also differed substantively on a number of important issues such as the nature of the curriculum, Margolis' desire for an unfettered teaching hand, and his political outlook. After leaving HUC, Margolis spent one year abroad in Europe from 1907 into 1908, visiting Berlin, Belgium and Holland and several of Europe's famous libraries. During his stay, Margolis attended a Zionist Congress at The Hague. Margolis was an ardent supporter of the Zionist cause, and his outspoken stance appears to have been among the factors that contributed to his turbulent departure from HUC.

Margolis returned to the United States in 1908 to accept the position of secretary of the editorial board for the Jewish Publication Society's proposed new translation of the Hebrew Bible into English. Margolis eventually became editor-in-chief of this complex undertaking, which was finally published in 1917. On March 28, 1909, Margolis was unanimously elected by the Board of Governors of the newly created Dropsie College in Philadelphia to the position of Professor of Biblical Philology. Margolis remained on the faculty of Dropsie College until his death in 1932.

Margolis' years at Dropsie were marked by intense activity. In addition to his regular teaching load, his various administrative responsibilities as Secretary of the Faculty, his outside endeavors such as the Bible

translation, and his numerous popularly and scholarly publications, Margolis devoted himself to the task of reconstructing an authentic textual witness to the Greek translation of the Book of Joshua. The work represented Margolis' crowning scholarly achievement and a major contribution to the emerging field of textual criticism of the Septuagint and its relation to the original Hebrew text.

Margolis actively participated in several other spheres of public life. He played a prominent role in the developing field of Semitic studies in America. From 1914 to 1921, Margolis served as the editor of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* and was elected president of the Society of Biblical Literature for the year 1923. Margolis also was one of the editors of the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* from 1922 until 1932. Margolis was one of the pioneering figures in the history of critical Jewish Biblical Studies in North America; at the time of his death, he was memorialized as "the foremost authority on the Hebrew biblical literature in America" and called "the dean of Hebrew scholars."

Margolis also sought to promote Jewish education among all segments of the Jewish population. He wrote dozens of popular articles discussing various issues of his day as well as several book-length studies designed for the general public. He collaborated with his friend Alexander Marx to write a concise history of the Jewish people, published by the Jewish Publication Society and authored several works about the Hebrew Bible also intended for a popular audience.

Margolis was a curious figure in the history of religious reform in America. He advocated the introduction of dogmatic principles in to Jewish life in America as a way of invigorating Jewish religious existence not defined by allegiance to rabbinic tradition. He was said to have lived in a kosher home and attended synagogue every Shabbat, though he was also known to have taken the train to get there. Margolis is not easily classified among the miscellany of expressions of Jewish identity in America in the beginning of the twentieth century. If Margolis felt real affiliation with the doctrines and tendencies of any one movement, nonetheless, it was probably with the possibilities he imagined in political Zionism. Margolis was committed first to the Jewish people, their history and life, guided by the principles of reason. He was outspoken and circumspect, an enlightened, cautious man who held strong views after much reflection. Margolis died of a cerebral hemorrhage in Philadelphia at 3:00 p.m., Saturday April 2, 1932 at the age of 65. Services were held in the Dropsie College building. A future president of Dropsie College, Rabbi Abraham Neuman of the Mikveh Israel congregation, presided. He was buried in the Mt. Sinai cemetery.

#### Institutional Affiliations

American Academy for Jewish Research (fellow)

American Philosophical Society (member)

American Jewish Historical Society (council, member)

American Oriental Society (member)

American School of Oriental Research (Annual Professor, 1924-25)

Associated Talmud Torahs (member of the board of directors)

Columbia University (Ph.D., University Fellow)

Dropsie College (Professor of Biblical Philology, Secretary of the Faculty)

Hebrew High School [established 1923] (chairman)

Hebrew Union College (Assistant Professor of Hebrew and Biblical Exegesis;

Hebrew University of Jerusalem (visiting lecturer, 1924-25)

Jewish Publication Society (editor-in-chief of the 1917 Bible Translation; member of the publication committee).

*Journal of the American Oriental Society* (editor)

*Journal of Biblical Literature* (editor)

Oriental Club of Philadelphia (member)

Palestine Oriental Society (President, 1925)

"Pharisees" [a club?] (member)

Russian-American Hebrew Association (secretary)

Society of Biblical Literature (President)

University of California, Berkeley (assistant professor of Semitic Languages and Literatures, acting head of department of Semitics)

#### Biographical/Historical Note

A comprehensive, revised and annotated bibliography of Margolis' writings can be found in Leonard Greenspoon's *Max Margolis: A Scholar's Scholar* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1987), pp. 135-178.

The vast majority of the biographical information about Margolis used in the writing of this finding aid is based on Greenspoon's work. Greenspoon closely examined parts of this collection (and related material in the Adler collection) before it was processed.

Several standard reference sources were consulted (in addition to Greenspoon's work, Margolis' own writings, and of course the materials forming the current collection): the *Encyclopedia Judaica*; *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*; *Dictionary of American Biography*, and the additional sources cited there.

## Scope and Contents

The Margolis collection spans the years 1891-1932, with the bulk of the collection dating from after 1894. The vast majority of the collection relates to Margolis' various professional activities. Virtually no private papers (i.e., papers of a strictly personal nature) are to be found, although there are various clippings about him collected at the time of his death and what may be a photograph of his wife Evelyn. The collection does provide a convenient guide to Margolis' many literary efforts, including handwritten as well as typescript drafts of his articles, clippings or photostats of virtually all of his popular publications, and reprints of some of his published scholarly writings. There is correspondence relating to Margolis' involvement with the Society for Biblical Literature and thus Semitic studies in the United States and his role in the publication of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Margolis received letters from many of the prominent figures of this discipline, such as Richard Gottheil, Paul Haupt, Morris Jastrow, James Montgomery, and Charles Torrey.

A large part of this collection is composed of Margolis' many scholarly notes, recorded on index cards, and his drafts and notes for his most important scholarly writings: his reconstruction of the Greek translation of the book of Joshua and his efforts as editor-in-chief of the Jewish Publication Society's new translation of the entire Hebrew Bible into English in 1917; the five volume bound typescript of his history of the Jewish people written in collaboration with Alexander Marx; Margolis' important unpublished study in typescript of Andreas Masius' commentary on the Greek book of Joshua, many additional fragmentary manuscripts, and reprints of publications. A bound scrapbook, including a copy of Margolis' dissertation and other writings and correspondence pasted on or inserted between the pages of the volume, is also found in the collection.

#### List of Correspondents

Cyrus Adler, Nathan Adler, Herman Bernstein, Leo M. Brown, Emily Solis Cohen, Walter Blumenthal, Albert T. Clay, Wiollaim H. Cobb, George Dobsevege, A.M. Dockery, Winfred Nichols Donovan, W. Drugulin, Immanuel Due, James P. Duncan, Jacob Edelstein, Harry Ettelson, Gustav Foch, Jacob Freudenheim, Edward Goodspeed, Richard Gottheil, Frederck G. Grant, Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, F. C. Harding, Paul Haupt, H. Hyvernat, Henry Hurwitz, M. Hyamson, Morris Jastrow, L.A. Kalbach, Charles Foster Kent, G. Kreysing, Joseph Kyle, Frank Lewis, John Meighan, Simon Miller, Hinckley G. Mitchell, James Montgomery, George F. Moore, Warren Moulton, Lewis Bayles Paton, John P. Peters, Waldo S. Pratt, A. Rahlfs, Samuel H. Ranck, Lois A. Reed, George L. Robinson, William G. Rockwell, James

Hardy Ropes, Henry A. Sanders, George Schick, Nathaniel Schmidt, William G. Seiple, Charles Fremont Sitterly, Louise Pettibone Smith, Wallace N. Stearne, Louis Sulzbach, Charles Torrey, Tuttle and Co., J. Walsh, William Hays Ward, Leroy Waterman, Edward Arthur Wicher, G. G. Wilder, George Frederick Wright, W. Carleton Wood

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## Scope and Contents

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The Margolis collection was processed in stages, as the project Archivist, Judith Robins, identified and segregated fragments of the Margolis collection found scattered throughout the Institution's archives. Most of the papers, even sixty years after his death, and even as they were found scattered, still bore some of the organizing principles of their creator.

The majority of the processing occurred during the preliminary stages. For example, many of Margolis' drafts and notes were typed on or taped to onion paper, which over the years had become creased and/or curled. Each leaf of this kind was flattened as possible and groups of these pages as they were identified and processed were placed in acid-free containers. Of some tedium was the re-location and physical processing of Margolis' voluminous index/note cards. Hazardous materials (metal clips, etc.) were removed, and colored, index-card sized dividers were inserted to represent the divisions the clips had formerly marked. Nearly 8 LF were re-located for temporary storage. An extremely tentative arrangement was created for the cards, essentially following the order of the boxes in which they were found. To consult the cards, staff assistance should be requested.

An important discovery was made in the collection prior to its processing by a scholar of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint), Emanuel Tov of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Dr. Tov recently identified a negative photostatic copy of the never published fifth fascicle of Margolis' published edition of *The Book of Joshua in Greek* which had been presumed lost. Dr. Tov, in conjunction with the Annenberg Research Institute, has since published this volume (Monograph Series, Annenberg Research Institute, 1992). The (original) photostatic copy is currently found in this collection's **Literary Productions** series. Details pertaining to the history and discovery of the fifth part are found in Tov's preface to the recently published volume.

### Separated Materials

The original 3 volume bound typescript (and one three volume duplicate) of Margolis' collaborative history of the Jewish people, written with Alexander Marx, can be found in the Archives, shelved with this collection. Alongside these volumes is a typescript of Margolis' "Hebrew Accents" written for the *Jewish Encyclopedia* and one bound volume of the typescript of Margolis' "The Theological Aspect of Reformed Judaism."

Clippings and photostats of Margolis' published articles have been re-located to over-sized storage in the archives room.

Index/note cards (see above, processing) have been housed, for the time being, in an unused catalog card cabinet in the basement of the building (B-2, Room A).

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## Administrative Information

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University of Pennsylvania, Library at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies

January 1993

Finding aid prepared by Arthur Kiron, Manuscripts Curator and Assistant Archivist..

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Collections**

Cyrus Adler Collection; Sabato Morais Papers.

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **CORPORATE NAME(S)**

- Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning..
- Jewish Publication Society of America.

### **FORM/GENRE(S)**

- Correspondence
- Manuscripts (documents)
- Notebooks
- Publications (documents)
- Scrapbooks

### **SUBJECT(S)**

- Jews--Study and teaching



## Collection Inventory

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### SERIES I. CORRESPONDENCE.

#### A. DROPSIE COLLEGE.

##### Scope and Contents note

A. Dropsie College (DC): miscellaneous correspondence received by Margolis while teaching at Dropsie College, relating to his work at DC, the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, and the Jewish Publication Society.

	Box	Folder
Finding Aid.	1	1
Dropsie College (miscellaneous).	1	2
Jewish Publication Society (miscellaneous).	1	3

#### B. SOCIETY FOR BIBLICAL LITERATURE/JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE (SBL/JBL).

##### Scope and Contents note

B. Society for Biblical Literature/Journal of Biblical Literature (SBL/JBL): includes correspondence, mostly dealing with Margolis' role as president of the SBL or in relation to his work as editor of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Arranged alphabetically, with miscellaneous notices and annotated galley proofs of articles submitted for publication at the end.

	Box	Folder
SBL/JBL (A-F).	1	4
SBL/JBL (G-L).	1	5

SBL/JBL (M).	1	6
SBL/JBL (N-S).	1	7
SBL/JBL (T).	1	8
SBL/JBL (U-Z).	1	9
SBL/JBL (printed notices).	1	10

## **SERIES II. LITERARY PRODUCTIONS.**

### **Series Description**

Series II. Literary Productions: includes drafts and notes relating to Margolis' life's work to identify the different recensions and to reconstruct the most reliable textual version of the Greek translation of the Hebrew book of Joshua; bound volumes of facsimiles of different manuscripts and selected printed additions of the book of Joshua in Greek; various unpublished writings and notes pertaining to the publication of the 1917 Jewish Publication Society translation of the Hebrew Bible into English, including a two-volume bound typescript of Margolis' notes on the translation, which was privately distributed; drafts of many of Margolis' unpublished and published writings, including typescripts dealing with Aramaic Grammar; the bound typescript of his unpublished work on Andreas Masius, his notebooks and dissertation, and reprints of some of his published writings; approximately 8 LF of index cards composed entirely of Margolis' copious, meticulously organized research notes on various topics of interest as well as notes on ancient Greek (vocabulary, concordance-like references, definitions, grammatical notes). This group may include index cards not belonging to Margolis. Such cards, apparently written in a different hand, are found in the last few drawers where this series is housed.

	Box	Folder
Greek Joshua.	2	1
Greek Joshua.	2	2

Greek Joshua.	2	3
Greek Joshua.	2	4
Greek Joshua.	2	5
Greek Joshua.	2	6
Greek Joshua.	2	7
Greek Joshua.	2	8
Greek Joshua.	3	1
Greek Joshua.	3	2
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	3
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	4
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	5
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	6
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	7
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	8
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	9
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	10
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	11
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	12
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	13

Greek Joshua (notes).	3	14
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	15
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	16
Greek Joshua (notes).	3	17
Greek Joshua (one large, bound volume, with a black cover, of notes and writings of the Greek book of Joshua in Margolis' hand; five additional legal-sized bound volumes).	4	1
Greek Joshua (notes).	5	1
Greek Joshua (copy of Margolis' fifth fascicle of the Greek Book of Joshua in published by the Monograph Series of the Annenberg Research Institute, 1992, with preface of Emanuel Tov (see description above)).	5	2
Greek Joshua (photostat-negative of Margolis' Greek Joshua).	5	3
Greek Joshua (photostat-negative of Margolis' Greek Joshua).	5	4
Greek Joshua (photostat-negative of Margolis' Greek Joshua).	5	5
Greek Joshua (Margolis' photostatic copies of manuscript leaves of the Greek Book of Joshua).	5	6
<b>Greek Joshua (Margolis' photostatic copies of manuscript leaves of the Greek Book of Joshua).</b>	5	7
<b>Existence and Location of Copies note</b>		
An additional 30 bound volumes of photostatic copies of printed works and manuscripts of the Greek Book of Joshua from various libraries around the world acquired by Margolis are also shelved with the rest of this collection.		
JPS Bible Translation (notes).	6	1

JPS Bible Translation (notes).	6	2
JPS Bible Translation (notes).	6	3
JPS Bible Translation (notes).	6	4
JPS Bible Translation (notes).	6	5
JPS Bible Translation (notes).	6	6
JPS Bible Translation (notes).	6	7
JPS Bible Translation (notes).	6	8
Miscellaneous notes on the Bible.	6	9
Two bound volumes of Margolis' privately distributed typescript of notes for the Jewish Publication Society's 1917 translation of the Hebrew Bible into English.		7
Typescript, "On the Composition of the Book of Jeremiah".	8	1
Typescript, "On the Composition of the Book of Jeremiah".	8	2
Typescript, "The Targum".	8	3
Manuscript, "Babylonian Aramaic Grammar (folder 1 of 3)".	8	4
Manuscript, "Babylonian Aramaic Grammar (folder 2 of 3)".	8	5
Manuscript, "Babylonian Aramaic Grammar (folder 3 of 3)".	8	6
One bound volume of Margolis' unpublished typescript on Andreas Masius' commentary on the Greek Book of Joshua and one folder of related correspondence.		9
<b>Various bound notebooks and writings of Margolis.</b>		<b>10</b>
<b>Scope and Contents note</b>		

10 small notebooks: including Margolis' various copy books of inscriptions in Akkadian, transcriptions of Coptic; Hebrew Biblical quotations.

1 Bound volume of pasted quotations from the Hebrew Bible with commentary, apparently copied from *Die Urgeschichte der Menschheit an der Anfang der Weltgeschichte*.

1 bound scrapbook which includes a copy of Margolis' dissertation submitted to Columbia College in 1891, dedicated to his father; several loose letters inserted between the pages, as well as other letters pasted on to the pages; various reprints of published works and reviews by Margolis, also pasted on to the pages of the volume.

2 bound scrapbooks of notes and quotations from the Talmud.

Manuscript, "Theological Aspect of Reformed Judaism", including newsclippings (reviews) and letters of response to Margolis for sent copies. (The bound typescript is located on the shelf).	11	1
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Manuscript, Historical lecture.	11	2
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Manuscript, Lecture on the Sabbath.	11	3
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Manuscript, "Ad kadmon le-nusah ha-tanakh" me'at Mordecai Yom Tov Margoliot (Margolis).	11	4
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Manuscript, "Social message of the Hebrew Prophets" with notes and related correspondence.	11	5
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Miscellaneous manuscripts of lectures, articles.	11	6
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Typescript: "Essenes".	11	7
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Typescripts of miscellaneous articles.	11	8
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Typescripts of miscellaneous articles.	11	9
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Typescripts of miscellaneous articles.	11	10
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Miscellaneous reprints.	11	11
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Miscellaneous reprints.	11	12
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Miscellaneous reprints.

11

13

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### **SERIES III. MISCELLANEOUS.**

#### **Series Description**

Series III. Miscellaneous: Includes three bound notebooks from Margolis' days at the Hebrew Union College, containing the examinations (1894-1896) of various students in different subjects (Bible, Syriac, grammar, etc.); two bound manuscripts on the Biblical books of Jeremiah and Proverbs; miscellaneous writings, clippings and memoria, various pages of notes, fragments, and fragmentary writings of Margolis, including a translation into English from Greek of approximately half of the "Letter of Aristeas" and a fragment of a text of the Talmud copied in Margolis' hand.

	Box	Folder
One fragmentary, annotated galley and related notes for the 1917 JPS Bible translation.	12	1
"Notes on Jeremiah" by Max Margolis, 1896.	12	2
"Notes on Proverbs" by Max Margolis, 1896.	12	3
Fragmentary notes and notecards dealing with the Greek Bible.	12	4
Notes on the Greek Bible (Genesis) [58 pages].	12	5
Annotated galley of George Barton's "Higher Archeology and the Verdict of Criticism" for publication in the <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> .	12	6
Miscellaneous fragmentary typescripts dealing with the Bible, Rashi, etc.	12	7
Clippings on the occasion of Max Margolis' death; clipping (obituary) for Evelyn Margolis; photo (Evelyn Margolis?).	12	8

Miscellaneous clippings.	12	9
Clippings arranged in scrapbook form, apparently by Margolis.	12	10
Miscellaneous printed materials and clippings kept by Margolis, by or about him.	12	11
Miscellaneous typescripts and notes (fragmentary).	12	12
Translation into English from Greek of approximately half of the "Letter of Aristeas".	12	13
Copy of a (unidentified) Talmudic text in Margolis' hand.	12	14
Margolis' "Tables of Hebrew Grammar" (printed).	12	15
3 bound, legal-sized notebooks containing the examinations of various students of Margolis at Hebrew Union College, 1894-1896.		13
One loose-leaf notebook subdivided by various topics (apparently belonging to Margolis); the binder of the loose-leaf notebook; one bound collection of occasional sermons/notes (not in the hand of Margolis?) which appears to have been composed by a rabbi.		14