



The Partington Award committee for 2022 consisted of the following members:

- Roberta L. Dougherty (MELA Past President, Chair)
- Dr. Virginia Danielson (MESA)
- David G. Hirsch (MELA)
- Dr. András Riedlmayer (MELA)

The committee's deliberations were held entirely by e-mail this year. After due consideration, the committee unanimously agreed to give this year's award to Dr. Rachel Simon, Princeton University Library, in recognition of [her sterling record of research and publications](#) and her contributions to the field of Middle East studies in general and Middle East librarianship in particular. The award is also made in recognition of her 24 years of service as the book-review editor of *MELA Notes*.

The committee received the following letters of support from Rachel's current and former colleagues:

James Weinberger (Curator of Near East Collections, Retired, Princeton University Library):

Although Rachel and I were colleagues at Princeton for almost thirty years, we met considerably before either of us came to Princeton University Library. We first encountered one another at the American Research Institute in Turkey in Istanbul when I was there to do research at the Sulaymaniyah Library. It was my first trip to Istanbul, and Rachel went out of her way to orient me to the city which she knew quite well. Over a decade later, Princeton had the good fortune to hire her away from the University of Washington where she had been laboring for Fawzi Khouri, the Near East Librarian there. Fawzi's loss was definitely Princeton's gain, for she brought with her a command of Turkish, Arabic, and Hebrew as well as considerable experience cataloguing in these languages. But Rachel's luster is far greater than her command of languages. She was and is a widely recognized scholar of Near Eastern studies and does research on Jews in the modern Middle East and North Africa, with special reference to Libya, the Ottoman Empire, women, and education. Of her many publications, one may mention especially [\*Libya Between Ottomanism and Nationalism: The Ottoman Involvement in Libya During the War with Italy \(1911-1919\)\*](#) (1987) and *Change within Tradition among Jewish*

*Women in Libya* (1992). But more than all this, Rachel is a good friend and colleague and could always be counted on to give good, sage advice and counsel. I can think of no one more deserving of the Partington Award.

Joyce Bell (Cataloger, Princeton University Library):

Rachel Simon embodies the ideal of the “scholar-librarian.” Beyond her impressive list of publications, Rachel is a highly productive cataloger producing quality data and an effective leader of the Middle Eastern Approvals Section. While her contributions as book-review editor are well-known to MELA members, they might not be aware of the extent of her involvement with the Association of Jewish Libraries where she has served on various committees over many years.

Marlis Saleh (Bibliographer for Middle Eastern Studies, U. of Chicago Library):

Rachel Simon had already been serving as the book-review editor for *MELA Notes* for a good many years before I even started my (long) tenure as *MELA Notes* editor in 2008. In all the years we worked together on the journal, Rachel managed the flow of books from publisher/books to reviewers/reviews back to her/reviews on to me smoothly and seemingly effortlessly. We all remember her stern admonishment to would-be reviewers not to accept a book for review that you can’t turn around in six months, or publishers would not send us books anymore. And she even found time to contribute book reviews and an article herself!

I am glad to hear that Rachel has been awarded this well-deserved honor.

Jonathan Rodgers (Head of the Near East Division, retired, Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library, U. of Michigan):

Rachel Simon, Hebraica Cataloguer at Princeton University Library since 1990 and the book-review editor of *MELA Notes*, the official journal of the Middle East Librarians’ Association, for twenty-five years, is the obvious choice to be honored by receiving the 2022 David H. Partington Award for recognition of service to Middle East librarianship and research and scholarly accomplishments in Middle East Studies. Throughout her long and distinguished career in librarianship and Middle East and Jewish Studies, Rachel Simon has been a true scholar-librarian, a frequently cited ideal aspect of librarianship.

As editor of *MELA Notes*, I had the pleasure of working with Rachel. Her work as book-review editor was indispensable and accomplished with efficiency and persistence.

Having been on the receiving end of her reminders to submit reviews on time, I might note that she was friendly and effective. She always managed to assemble a good collection of reviews for the journal.

Besides her work as Judaica cataloguer at Princeton, Rachel realized an impressive scholarly output of books, journal articles, and contributions to encyclopedias and reference works in Jewish Studies and more specifically Sephardic Studies. Additionally, she served as editor of *Mideast File* (1982-1986), co-editor of *National Union Catalog of Middle East Microfilms* (1990), network editor on Judaism in the modern Middle East and North Africa for the *Religious Studies Review*, and chaired the Association of Jewish Libraries' Research, Academic, and Special Libraries' Cataloging Committee (1995-1999). Among her numerous publications in English and Hebrew are: [Libya Between Ottomanism and Nationalism: The Ottoman Involvement in Libya During the War with Italy \(1911-1919\)](#) (1987), *Change Within Tradition Among Jewish Women in Libya* (1992), "[Reference Sources for Sephardic Studies](#)" (in [Judaica Librarianship](#), 9/1-2, Spring 1994-Winter 1995: pp. 144-151) and "The Impact of the Alliance Israélite Universelle on Jewish Education in the Mediterranean: Libya as a Case Study" in *Jewish Education in Southeastern Europe (Mid 19th–Mid 20th Century)* (2021).

Her training and qualifications are notable: she received her M.L.S. from the University of Washington, Seattle, and both M.A. and Ph.D. (in the History of Muslim Countries) from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. She is one of a cohort of librarians who are trained professionally as librarians and who also earned scholarly credentials with doctoral training. Her career has been accordingly distinguished and productive.

The David H. Partington Award Committee, on behalf of the Executive Board of the Middle East Librarians Association and its members, hereby commend you, Dr. Rachel Simon, and bestow upon you an honor you well deserve, the 2022 Partington Award. Congratulations!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Dougherty", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Roberta L. Dougherty  
Chair, David H. Partington Award Committee 2022