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AJS Perspectives: *The Magazine of the Association for Jewish Studies*

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Page 6, left: Nachal Alexander (Yad Hana), 2012
Page 6, right: Untitled (Mevo Beitar), 2010
Page 7, top: Untitled (from The Combination of Limits, French Hill), 2012
Page 7, bottom: Untitled (Mt. Hermon Model), 2012

Daniel Bauer's work from Israel exposes fissures and rifts in the multiple strains of modernism that have been imported, developed, or mutated in the contemporary Levant. Often focusing on architectural additions and subtractions, Bauer seeks out the spatial, temporal, and conceptual topos between the personal and the collective, each a reflection of the other seen askew. The dormant histories emerge slowly from the built and rebuilt surfaces—latent images that document a decisive absence.

Daniel Bauer received his BFA from the Photography Department at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem and his MFA from Columbia University, New York. He has had two solo shows at the Andrea Meislin Gallery in New York, and has worked with architects and historians on exhibitions and projects in Kunst Werke, Berlin and the Israeli Pavilion at the Venice Biennale of Architecture. His work is in the collection of Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

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From the Editors

Dear Colleagues,

The love affair with homeland is the central drama of the *Tanakh*. Pursuing it requires the blind devotion of Abraham, fulfilling it takes the turbo-virility of Joshua, and mourning it taxes the shrill voices of the prophets. Acquisition and loss of the land contribute to the people's collective neurosis. In the absence of its soil, covenant, temple, and redemption are impossible. Seemingly, there can be no people of Israel without the land of Israel, no Judeans without the place of Judah. Yet the destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrian Empire does not undo Israel as a people; Babylonian exile prompts the collation of traditions as Scripture; and the Temple's final destruction by Rome transforms Judeans into wandering Jews. Most of Jewish culture—characterized in different ways by reflection on this history—transpires outside of a homeland. Land becomes image, reference, and memory, without need of coordinates.

Of all the changes introduced by early Zionism, the relationship to land was perhaps the most dramatic. Prominent Zionist thinkers recast the sacred place that oriented Jewish prayer as national territory and interpreted *Tanakh* as an authorizing charter. In the absence of a tradition of Jewish cartography, biblical itineraries were projected on the landscape until, in 1921, the British imperial map set the limits of the Jewish conception of the modern land of Israel. The map became fully realized as national ground and occupied territory in 1967.

American sponsored Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Israeli settler land grabs, and Palestinian protest contribute to the renewed urgency surrounding the question of Jewish territoriality. Answering the question with depth requires a look back at classical Hebrew writings and Jewish homes in lands not construed as homeland, as well as a look forward to future solutions such as two states, one state, federation, or regionalism. In this day and age, most answers meet with immediate opposition in a polarized field of discourse. Although not as yet evident, Jewish culture with its fierce dialectical tradition should be particularly able to accommodate such charged discussions.

In order to locate this discussion squarely in a Jewish context, this issue juxtaposes traditional texts and contemporary controversies.

Nationalist and religious commitments to land are further bound up with economic factors. For example, Jewish settlers in the West Bank have been encroaching upon and seizing water springs. These localized actions cohere with the broader state agenda of controlling the significant water resources of the Mountain Aquifer, which runs through the West Bank. Along with the redistribution of resources, the occupation and conflict have driven up real estate prices throughout the contested land. How land functions as commodity and real estate is never far from its symbolic valuation.

Often lost in the overlay of national, religious, and economic claims, territory is also earth, necessary to sustain human life. At current rates of exploitation, scientists wonder how much longer the land can support human health and sustenance. An apocalyptic rhetoric sometimes accompanies the call for change. Like the prophets before them, ecologists envision extinction and transformation happening at the same place. They stress the basic and most vital features of the land as a source of food and stability and suggest that this perspective can connect people across national, religious, and even real estate borders. If the residents of a region recognize themselves as exercising collective power, then they might be able to preserve local control of resources and halt rapid privatization or militarization of their land. Treating the land as material rather than symbolic may have the power to realign national borders and challenge the increasing multinational corporate possession of land.

Matti Bunzl

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From the President

Dear Colleagues,

I am honored to serve as the eighteenth president of the Association for Jewish Studies.

At the annual meeting, in December, I spoke of three major goals for the years ahead: (1) to collect data on the state of Jewish Studies in North America; (2) to improve our financial condition through an endowment; and (3) to work with the Jewish Book Council to improve the state of scholarly publishing in our field. We have made progress on all three fronts since then. Since the first will require cooperation from all of our members, let me explain its significance.

As the professional organization in the field of Jewish Studies, we receive numerous inquiries concerning the state of the field and its future course. Some of them are easy to answer: as of this writing, for example, we have 1,950 individual members and 61 institutional members. We know of some 230 programs in Jewish Studies across North America. But when we are asked about what courses in Jewish Studies attract the most students, or what areas of the field are most popular, or where young scholars are being trained, or about current publishing trends, and especially when we are asked how many new and replacement positions in Jewish Studies can be expected in the years ahead, we have little hard data and need to speak more from anecdote. Those who contact us are invariably disappointed.

Back in 1966, Arnold J. Band, later the third president of AJS, published in the *American Jewish Year Book* an illuminating study of “Jewish Studies in American Liberal-Arts Colleges and Universities” (available online at www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1966_3_SpecialArticles.pdf). The study, based on an extensive questionnaire, listed all known departments offering Judaic Studies courses in some form or other as well as the field’s full-time faculty. It showed an increase in Jewish Studies positions from twelve in 1945 to over sixty full-time positions in 1965, all of them held by men, and estimated that perhaps as many as ten thousand students were enrolled in Jewish Studies classes—almost all of them Jews. Looking ahead, Band concluded, albeit tentatively, that “we are on the threshold of a new and promising period in Jewish scholarship in America which merits careful attention and cautious, continual reassessment.” His survey, which was extensively cited, actually helped to make that prophecy come true.

Almost twenty-five years later, in an article published in *Sh'ma* in 1989, Band looked back at the state of the field, and noted three critical changes: “the total of 60 positions . . . would have to be multiplied by about 10 today,” “the obvious absence of women in 1966 has been happily rectified,” and doubts concerning the field’s future had dissipated. “Jewish Studies,” he concluded, “are now firmly established and seen as part of the establishment.”

Three years after that, in 1992, AJS published a full-scale catalogue, edited by Elizabeth Vernon, of *Jewish Studies Courses at*

American and Canadian Universities (this is now a rare book; you can procure a copy at Amazon.com for \$216). It found 104 endowed academic positions in the field, 410 institutions where Jewish Studies courses were taught (excluding those offered by seminaries), and over 4,000 courses being offered.

Since then, a full-scale history of Jewish Studies in the United States has appeared: Paul Ritterband and Harold S. Wechsler’s *Jewish Learning in American Universities: The First Century* (1994). In addition, selected surveys of AJS members have periodically been conducted, most recently, “The 2008 Association for Jewish Studies Membership Survey,” by Steven M. Cohen and Judith Veinstein for the Jewish Policy Archive (available at www.bjpa.org/Publications/downloadFile.cfm?FileID=5402), completed just before the economic downturn. Many critical questions nevertheless remain unanswered, particularly those pertaining to enrollments, future vacancies, the state of the field in the wake of the economic downturn, and the general shift away from the humanities. Almost half a century after Arnold Band’s survey, we actually know a lot less about the field of Jewish Studies overall than we knew back in 1966.

To remedy this, AJS plans to conduct a comprehensive survey of our members in the late summer. The American Academy for Jewish Research has generously provided funds to help defray the costs of this survey and Steven M. Cohen has graciously agreed to conduct the survey on a pro bono basis. Deborah Dash Moore is chairing a committee that includes Judith Baskin, Harold Wechsler, Jack Wertheimer, Rona Sheramy, and myself to help plan, oversee, interpret, and disseminate the survey instrument. If all goes well, we will report our findings at the December annual meeting.

For our survey to succeed, *all* of our members will need to take time to fill it in. Ours will be as much a census as a survey: the goal is to produce a thorough portrait of Jewish Studies in North America, and a snapshot of Jewish Studies in Europe and Israel, where we also have a small but meaningful membership base. We want that portrait to be as complete and accurate as possible. To be sure, “survey fatigue” plagues many sectors of our community these days, and for understandable reasons. Nevertheless, we ask you to make the AJS survey a high priority. The results should redound to our collective benefit, revealing where the field of Jewish Studies stands, how far we have come, and what we need to do to move forward.

Many thanks in advance for your help!

Jonathan D. Sarna
Brandeis University

From the Executive Director

Dear Colleagues,

Not too long ago, I received a call from a long-time member. She had been on our website and noticed a slight change to AJS's mission statement (www.ajsnet.org/mission.htm). The change, she observed, was not radical, but significant nonetheless. Whereas our former mission statement read

AJS's primary mission is to promote, facilitate, and improve teaching and research in Jewish Studies at colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning,

the revised mission statement, approved by AJS's Board of Directors at its meeting this past December, added a new dimension:

AJS's mission is to advance research and teaching in Jewish Studies at colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning, and to foster greater understanding of Jewish Studies scholarship among the wider public.

AJS, officially, now concerned itself with “the wider public,” and this member was concerned that “public” was code for the Jewish community, a not too uncommon assumption whenever AJS uses the language of “wider audience” or “community.” Did this change to the mission statement represent AJS turning inward, rather than broadening its scope?

I was very glad this member called. It reminded me that the optics of an organization's actions or language can be seen very differently by those not involved in the lengthy discussions around them, unless such actions and language are explained clearly and immediately. And so, for this member and the rest of the AJS membership, I'd like to offer some background regarding the subtle but no less significant change to our mission statement.

As I've written about in an earlier column, AJS completed a strategic planning process in June of 2013. Among its many parts, this project involved analysis of AJS's mission statement to make sure it still reflected current needs in the world of higher education and in the professional lives of our members. Indeed, there are some organizations that simply outgrow their mission—think of the March of Dimes, which was set up to cure polio! After conducting numerous interviews and focus groups, our planning consultant and committee concurred: the need still existed for AJS to serve the field of Jewish Studies and “serious scholars” working inside and outside of academia, in North America and abroad. We did not have to radically redefine who we are and what we do, although given dramatic changes in the world of higher education and the academic job market, we did need to rethink how we serve our members and the field.

Where there was less consensus was on AJS's role in the Jewish community and among the general public, a topic that came up frequently in the planning process. AJS's relationship to the Jewish community has always been a complicated one, with members holding widely divergent views on how this relationship should be navigated.

On the one hand, the Jewish community has been a critical supporter of innumerable Jewish Studies programs and endowed chairs, and Jewish students have been a natural and important constituency for Jewish Studies courses. On the other hand, AJS and the field of Jewish Studies are academic entities, with scholarly—not communal—standards, objectives, and criteria to uphold.

The question of AJS's relationship to the general public has been less fraught, although not simple. Would trying to bring Jewish Studies to wider audiences somehow dilute the seriousness of AJS's work, and thereby its value to the community of scholars? And yet, AJS's ventures into the public arena over the past few years had been widely praised, both by the communities they reached and the scholars involved. AJS's Legacy Heritage Jewish Studies Project, supported by the Legacy Heritage Foundation and now in its last year, has connected the work of Jewish Studies professors to nonacademic audiences in small to mid-sized cities, places that lacked the major Jewish cultural institutions of a New York, Los Angeles, or Boston. This program has been wildly successful by all accounts, giving interested and engaged audiences the chance to learn about Jewish Studies scholarship, and scholars the chance to broaden the reach of their work and programs. AJS's Distinguished Lectureship Program, now in its second year, has also helped to make the work of our members more accessible, sending accomplished scholars to assorted venues to share their research. Scholars, in general, want people to hear about their work and find it meaningful and enriching. Was this something, then, that AJS should more strategically and explicitly support?

To help answer this question, we turned to the mission statements of other learned societies. Among those we sampled—major societies representing the fields of Literature, History, Religion, Biblical Studies, and Anthropology—virtually all had a public dimension. Somehow, each was trying to connect the work of its members to broader audiences, and encourage the general public—of all backgrounds—to understand the value of its field.

It was from this research, and hours and hours of discussion, that the Strategic Planning Committee put forth a revised mission statement, including a public dimension. The committee concluded that adding the public in no way diluted AJS's focus on serious scholarship, but rather would promote the wider appreciation and relevance of such scholarship at a time when the humanities, social sciences, arts and every discipline except science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), seem to be under attack. The committee then shared its recommendation with the AJS Board, which debated and tweaked the statement over two meetings in 2013. The board approved the new language on December 17, 2013.

What do you think about our new mission statement? How do you engage audiences outside the university's walls? And how can AJS continue to support your work? Please let us know.

Rona Sheramy
Association for Jewish Studies





AJS 2013 Conference Plenary Session

PLENARY LECTURE:

From *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to Jewish Scholarship Today: The Issues We Have Faced and Those That Lie before Us

Michael A. Meyer

Forty-five years ago, crowded into a small room at Brandeis University, a group of forty-seven scholars gathered to talk about the state of Jewish Studies. All but one were men—Lucy Dawidowicz being the sole exception. All but one were American—the sole exception being Nathan Rotenstreich of the Hebrew University. Most of those present have passed on to the great *yeshivah shel ma'alah*. And I alone—well, not really alone—“have survived to tell the tale.”

This is what I recall. From the start, differences appeared among us, fundamental conflicts of objective that have remained through the years. Gershon Cohen, ז"ל, then still at Columbia, argued forcefully that the Jewish scholar's responsibility was to his discipline and not to the Jewish needs of his students. Yitz Greenberg, however, virulently took the opposite view: the Judaica scholar, he argued, does have an obligation to the Jewish community. And Nathan Rotenstreich angrily insisted that Jewish scholarship in America could flourish only peripherally, reflecting the shining center in Jerusalem. But the most significant statement was made by Joseph Blau of Columbia when he turned this colloquium, organized by the late Leon Jick of Brandeis, into the founding meeting for an unprecedented national association by proposing the establishment of the Association for Jewish Studies.

We realized, of course, that there was already a society of Judaica scholars in the United States; it was called the American Academy for Jewish Research. Among its carefully selected fellows were the most prominent scholars, deeply learned in the textual disciplines of Judaism and the history of the Jews. But we felt that this elite organization was not only unwilling, but by its nature incapable of dealing with the rapidly growing expansion of Jewish Studies in the United States. The time had come for an association that was broadly inclusive both in subject matter and in membership and one that would integrate Jewish Studies within American academia.

We began very small, holding our annual conferences in the Harvard Faculty Club. Later we moved on to the Copley Plaza Hotel until 1997—*davka* the Copley because it had once been a hotel that excluded Jews. Graciously, the management removed the Christmas tree from the lobby before we arrived, rapidly returning it to its place upon our departure. With one exception, until relatively recently we always met in Boston—regardless of snow. Initially there was only one session in each time slot. That had a certain advantage, we thought, since it meant scholars from various disciplines and dealing with different periods would learn of the work of their colleagues in other areas. The interaction could even help us in defining our field. But what exactly was our field? An argument arose early over whether we should call ourselves the Association for Jewish Studies or would it be better to say: Judaic Studies. The proponents of “Jewish” won out, having insisted that the field could not be limited to the religious or literary dimension. Nothing related to Jews, ancient or modern, was to be beyond our purview.

We were very conscious of standing on the shoulders of the founders of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. We paid due obeisance to Leopold Zunz, Moritz Steinschneider, and the other pioneering giants of the critical enterprise we were seeking to carry forward. We appreciated Zunz's insistence that serious scholarship in the Jewish field could flourish only in conjunction with scholarship in general. But significantly, unlike our scholarly ancestors, we insisted on stressing diversity: not *jüdische Wissenschaft* (a singular) but Jewish Studies (a plural). We recognized already at that point that we were not all engaged in a single discipline, but in numerous disciplines, and that what bound us together was rather a field in which many flowers blossomed. It was a common but internally multicultural landscape in which we stood. And it was by no means isolated from the outside. Its borders were porous, allowing for interaction inward and out. But while recognizing that the Jewish experience had always been open to absorbing, adapting, and sometimes rejecting external influence, we also saw that there was a vertical dimension—“diachronic” we would say today—that provided an internal dynamic linking the variety of Jewish experience through the centuries.

During those early years we were in the process of achieving what Zunz and his compatriots could only dream of: the integration of Jewish Studies into the university. In 1968 that process was far from complete. There continued to be academics who regarded our field as a specious one. “Was there really a Jewish history between 70 C.E. and 1948?” a professor of History at UCLA once asked me dubiously. Some outsiders thought that perhaps our entry into the university was driven by impure motives. Were we ideologically propelled like the early movement for the inclusion of Black Studies? We were determined to show that we were different, that we did not possess ulterior motives. One of our principal thrusts in the early years, therefore, was to establish our professional legitimacy. And that meant drawing lines not only between ourselves and ethnically motivated advocates of Black Studies, but also between ourselves and the rabbis who taught part-time at various colleges and universities. We didn't merely need to establish the subject, Jewish Studies, as legitimate and respectable, but likewise the person, the Jewish Studies scholar. We created an associate category of membership which, as I recall, did not carry voting rights. Dilettantism was our bugaboo. Our goal, eventually achieved, was to shelter under the umbrella of the American Council of Learned Societies.

Within our relatively small circle there was not only a strong sense of common purpose, but also of camaraderie. Not only did we meet at the Harvard Faculty Club, we were ourselves rather clubby. For a time we were also unabashed about displaying Jewishness at our meetings. For over a decade banquets ended with a *birkat mazon*, read from the *benchers* graciously furnished by KTAV Publishing and engraved with the name of AJS and the date

of the conference. A Hanukkah menorah was publicly lit when the conference coincided with the holiday. But as we grew, the bonds grew looser. One no longer knew practically everyone at the conferences personally. Our gatherings became less intimate, more closely resembling the conferences of other academic societies.

Although it changed the character of AJS, growth was certainly to be welcomed. We saw it as our responsibility both to spread Jewish Studies across the American academic landscape and to provide a measure of quality control through giving academic advice. AJS undertook no less than sixteen regional conferences on a variety of topics to spread awareness of our field throughout the United States and Canada. They featured such leading scholars as Shlomo Dov Goitein and Jacob Katz. Although our growth was not steady, it continued without hiatus as university after university introduced Jewish Studies in one form or another. In retrospect we can point to some of the causes: the popularity of courses on the Holocaust, the Israel interest after the Six-Day War, the willingness of an increasingly wealthy Jewish elite to fund chairs in Jewish Studies at their alma mater. And so we have grown to the remarkable association that we are today, with over 1,800 members and a conference with as many as eighteen simultaneous sessions. We have a sophisticated website, two publications, and a dedicated staff. Truly, Leopold Zunz could not have imagined our achievements in his most extravagant dreams. No one can doubt that organizationally we have been an amazing success.

But where are we today, not in size or utility, but in terms of our thinking about our field? Let me turn here from recounting our tale to reflecting on certain questions that lie before us and to suggesting some personal positions with regard to them.

We have achieved a high level of sophistication in our research and writing. Over these forty-five years we have avoided insularity by applying the most recent and potent tools of analysis. We scatter about the terms and categories of our day. We write: discursive, subversive, hybridity, hegemony, invention of tradition, postcolonial, cultural capital, *mentalités*, *longue durée*, and *lieux de mémoire*—to mention only a few. We are especially careful to avoid such traps as essentialism, ideology, and teleology even as we recognize the illusions of positivism. We are more cognizant than ever that there are multiple Judaisme and multiple cultures of the Jews. Like the very first modern Jew to write a major history of the Jews, Isaac Marcus Jost, we focus on how Jewish life differed in various historical contexts. Yet, partly in reaction to Jost, Heinrich Graetz shifted the focus to the unity of Jewish experience, elaborating a centripetal history of the Jews. Where do we stand between Jost and Graetz? Perhaps, without losing our sense of the remarkable variety contained in the Jewish experience, we might consider a turn back to looking more intensively at what has created continuity within Jewish history and literary creativity both over time and within any particular period of time.

We have been, rightly, dubious of master narratives since they tend to obscure what does not readily fit into their stories. We have poked sharp analytic needles into such accounts. But our work is an ongoing dialectic of analysis and synthesis. Perhaps the time has come to focus a bit more on the latter, which—incidentally—forces us to employ our artistic as well as our intellectual talents. The tales we have to tell need not be monolithic or exclusionary. We are learning to incorporate into our scholarship the stories of women, Mizrahim, and other neglected groups, even as currents of Jewish thought, such as Kabbalah, once on the periphery, have likewise moved to within the circle. We are blurring what once seemed

clearly defined boundaries, geographically and conceptually, and among disciplines, especially between history and literature.

And within the realm of synthesis it becomes possible to give greater weight to an understanding of the persons whose biographies, thought, and creativity we examine. As important as our tools of analysis are, they must not be allowed to distort the multifaceted reality or to destroy the vitality of the object to which they are applied. Every lens sharpens one focus, but dims others. Serious historiography, Collingwood rightly held, involves penetrating to the inner life of the individuals we study, reenacting their thought in our own minds—and, contra Collingwood, I believe, also their emotions. Perhaps influenced by the German historian Wilhelm Dilthey, one of the great figures in the history of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Ismar Elbogen, argued that the task of the scholar was not merely to look into the bookshelf of those he was studying, that is, figuring out who and what influenced them, but, in Elbogen's words: "also into their mind and soul, determining their use of language, and entering sympathetically into their thoughts and intentions." He called that task *Nachempfinden*—to feel again what they felt in their time.

Finally, the question—the tension—that I mentioned as coming out in that first meeting forty-five years ago is still with us, and it remains explosive. At its heart it is a question of loyalty and obligation. Does the Judaica scholar in the university owe her or his allegiance solely to the university and its ideals of dispassionate scholarship or is there in some sense also an obligation to the Jewish community, which represents the living extension of the subjects studied? I teach in a seminary where being *engagé* with my subject, without distorting its historical significance, is more or less the norm. But what about within the secular university? And what of the non-Jew working in the field of Jewish Studies? During the last few decades the nature of the American rabbinate, especially in its progressive branches, has changed fundamentally. The scholarly role has diminished, the pastoral taken precedence. Today scholarship does not rank high on the desiderata list of congregational search committees. This trend, it seems to me, places a weightier responsibility upon university scholars of Judaism and Jewish history, whether Jewish or Christian. The Jewish tradition—or, if you like, Jewish traditions, in the plural—will not survive without the efforts of those who are dedicated to studying and teaching them on the highest level, not alone as episodes of an earlier time but also as a heritage obtained from the past and stretching into the future. The rabbis will care for the immediate needs of the Jewish community, striving to come to grips with the implications of the Pew Research Center Survey, for example; upon the scholars lies a longer-term responsibility: creating a profound understanding of what Judaism has been and therefore what it might yet become.

Once we were rightly concerned about establishing our academic respectability. After forty-five years we have achieved that magnificently. It may now be time to ask ourselves occasionally whether we do not conceive our task as scholars differently from the young Leopold Zunz, who in 1818 regarded the work of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as not more than demanding an accounting from a religious culture whose vitality was inevitably seeping away. We may wish to consider how our work can inspire a variegated Judaism which, like AJS itself, may continue to flourish.

Michael A. Meyer is Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History Emeritus at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati.

RESPONSE:

The Place of Jewish Studies: Discipline, Interdiscipline, and Identity Studies

Rachel Havrelock

Where Professor Michael Meyer speaks to you as one of the founders of the Association for Jewish Studies and a past president of the organization, I have no claims to the origins of Jewish Studies. Unlike Wisdom in Proverbs 8, I cannot claim to have been there when the work of creation began. I speak as someone who has inherited this creation by training and teaching in Jewish Studies. Receiving a doctorate from a Jewish Studies program meant that I was affiliated both with Near Eastern Studies at Berkeley and the Graduate Theological Union, that I was associated with the Program in Folklore in the Department of Anthropology, and that I took courses in Comparative Literature. It also meant that I taught in the Rhetoric Department and Program in Religious Studies at Berkeley, was often dropped from official student rosters, and even on occasion denied access to the library. Life as a Jewish Studies professor has involved positions in departments of Religion, Classics, Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, Gender and Women's Studies, and English. For me, Jewish Studies has involved a series of migrations across discipline and field.

This type of movement means that I often need to account for my academic identity and answer questions such as: Are you primarily a Bible scholar? What are you doing in an English Department? Are your methods historical? So you really work on Israel? Why is your latest book only in the Middle East Studies section? Yet I do not see myself or my work as marginal. In fact, at least in my own estimation, I am doing Jewish Studies. Marginal is a key word for Jewish Studies. Over the years, I have heard participants in every unit or subdiscipline at AJS describe themselves as marginal. I have yet to hear someone declare herself as holding the center, so I have concluded that marginality constitutes the central definition of our endeavor. I see this as the strength of Jewish Studies, as well as a quality with particular relevance to the current state of academe. Admittedly, it is not so productive when feelings of rejection or anger accompany the sense of marginality, but a field compromised of margins means that there are many sites of encounter and opportunities to absorb different methods in order to produce creative scholarship. It means that scholars from a range of disciplines can turn to Jewish Studies in order to find cutting-edge work that innovates. Perhaps we should stop looking for or longing for a center, recognize the power of our marginal positions, and broadcast the flexibility that characterizes Jewish Studies to other programs and departments struggling with their identity in the modern university, where a coverage model can rarely be realized. Jewish Studies transpires at colleges whether there are two or three faculty members; professors from across departments with secondary affiliations; or a department with positions in Bible, Rabbinics, Medieval and Modern History, Israel, Germany, North Africa, America, and so on.

Where the adaptations and creativity of Jewish Studies can demonstrate to other departments and programs how to survive the era of academic downsizing, we are failing in some important areas. Although I was not there when Jewish Studies and Black Studies were in formation, I am not sure that the desire to distinguish them was as logical or necessary as Professor Meyer contends. The introduction of identity studies into the university, whatever the particular identity

in question, was always about expanding the canon, demanding inclusion, and creating a place among educated elites. On this note, I would say, African American and Jewish Studies were similarly “ideologically propelled” and “ethnically motivated.” Establishing academic units requires tremendous focus and dedication, so I do not think we need worry about any “impure” or “ulterior motives” that may have driven either project. I do not dispute Professor Meyer’s assessment that lines were drawn between Jewish Studies and Black Studies, and later between Jewish Studies and other kinds of ethnic studies, but I think that such lines have become a disservice to all. The dogged quest for legitimacy and respectability has, in many cases, alienated Jewish Studies from its natural allies. Intellectual cross-pollination among faculty in Jewish Studies, African and African American Studies, Asian Studies, Latin American, and Latino Studies has the potential to expand discussions of historical and contemporary issues of globalization, race, minority rights, class, gender, and political power. In the climate of academic budget cuts, such intellectual connections can also sustain cosponsorship of lectures and conferences, shared administrative staff, and training of students to study and work in a world where, for example, Black and Asian Studies can help to characterize modern Tel Aviv and Jewish Studies can offer a lens into the dynamics of growing diasporas.

Sometimes the perceived conservatism of Jewish Studies prevents colleagues from other identity studies programs from pursuing connections. This brings me to the second way in which Jewish Studies is failing the contemporary university. Like Professor Meyer, I celebrate the remarkable successes of Jewish Studies in growing academic programs across the world and establishing an incredible learned society in AJS. At the same time that we must protect these programs and attend to student enrollment and the application of Jewish Studies to employment opportunities, we have a duty to the wider academic context. The most contentious issue within the wider academic context and the one most likely to disrupt hiring across the university is Israel. The research of scholars on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, their political statements, and their personal opinions can suspend appointments, promotions, and lectures. When it comes to Israel, figures from well outside the university tend to hold forth on its processes. Often, when scandals erupt, Jewish Studies professors are too busy arguing among themselves to offer guidance to the university community. While I would certainly never recommend that Jewish Studies assume a singular position on Israel or suggest that everyone in Jewish Studies needs to have a position on Israel, I do think that we should develop a model for addressing the controversies that arise on campuses. Jewish Studies programs should model how to handle such controversies through a process of examining, discussing, and mediating disputes over hiring and Israel programming when they arise. Informed by academic methods and able to accommodate the views of participants from across the university, such a model would be perhaps the greatest thing that Jewish Studies could give to academe. We could begin by figuring out how to have productive conversations about Israel within our own programs.

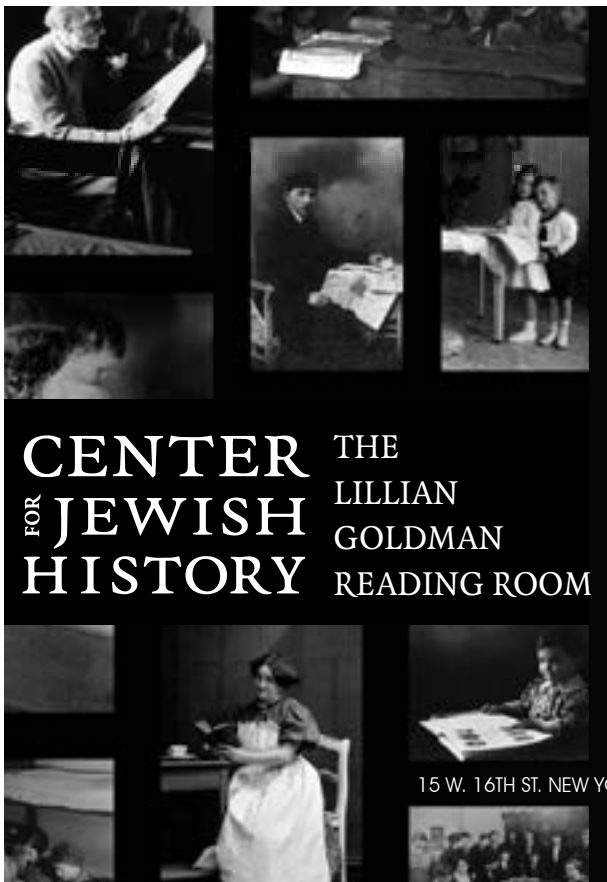
Blackballing, boycotts, censorship, and silence around the issue of Israel on campuses suggest the deficiency of academic discourse. The more that we as academics take charge of the conversation, the less such controversies can be inflamed by outside players.

My third, and final, recommendation for the future of Jewish Studies also concerns outside players. Professor Meyer correctly cites “the willingness of an increasingly wealthy Jewish elite to fund chairs in Jewish Studies” as contributing to the expansion of the field. Such generosity on the part of community members has likewise enabled lecture series, faculty and student awards, and research support. I like to think that such support has benefitted everyone involved and will help us to maintain high academic standards of inquiry and argument as public funding for education continues to decline. The largess of the Jewish community has inspired other ethnic and religious groups to make contributions to universities and colleges. Of late, many contributions do not seek to support the academic enterprise as such, but rather to advance a particular agenda or identity narrative. I remember some of the dilemmas faced by students in Islamic Studies at Berkeley when fellowships funded by Saudi royals became available. At my own university, I have seen the Chicago Greek community oppose the tenure of the first appointed chair in Modern Greek Studies that they established and I have served on a search committee for a chair in Catholic Studies in which half of the committee members were appointed by the Chicago Archdiocese. A

bit closer to home, we are all either implicitly aware or directly told of which candidates for a visiting professor of Israel Studies would not be acceptable to the funders. Although I would hope that all scholarship undertaken responsibly and subjected to peer review could find favor in the eyes of donors to academic programs, I am not sure if this is indeed the case. As a faculty member at an urban, public university, I am well aware that we need all of the support we are offered, but perhaps Jewish Studies with its well-established relationship with supporters in the community can lead some of the pushback on the attempt of donors to influence outcomes in the university. Perhaps we are in a position to place our commitment to unfettered academic inquiry above increased revenue. Perhaps we can develop a set of criteria for when contributions are and are not acceptable that could guide the decisions of faculty and administrators at large.

In closing, I must say how much I love coming to the AJS Annual Meeting and how deeply I feel at home here. I am particularly honored to be in conversation with Professor Meyer tonight. He and his colleagues have been remarkably successful in creating the field of Jewish Studies from which so many of us are benefitting. From this position of strength, we can expand our role and our place in the university.

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The Land Issue

The Land vs. the land

Julie E. Cooper

There is no such thing as politics without sovereignty. This claim, advanced most forcefully by Thomas Hobbes, has become axiomatic within dominant strands of Western political theory. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes denies that humans can achieve peaceful coexistence in the absence of a state. “For if we could suppose a great Multitude of men to consent in the observation of Justice, and other Lawes of Nature, without a common Power to keep them all in awe; we might as well suppose all Man-kind to do the same; and then there neither would be, nor need to be any Civill Government, or Common-wealth at all; because there would be Peace without subjection.” When Hobbes predicates peace on subjection, he makes a particular structure of rule—namely a “common Power to keep them all in awe”—a political imperative. For a community to count as a polity or “commonwealth,” Hobbes insists, it must submit to rule by an absolute sovereign. With the claim that absolute sovereignty is a condition of possibility for political community, Hobbes also makes territorial contiguity one of the commonwealth’s defining traits. For Hobbes, a world government is a ludicrous supposition, a contradiction in terms. Because peace requires subjection, the world must be divided up into discrete, territorially bounded states. Moreover, these states exist in a state of war, because, on Hobbes’s view, there is no law that transcends state borders (other than the impotent and unenforceable law of nature). In the tradition that Hobbes founds, the possibility of political community beneath, between, and beyond territorially bounded states is almost inconceivable.

In the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, Hobbes’s contemporary, Baruch Spinoza, famously draws out implications of Hobbes’s definition of politics for modern Jews. If sovereignty is a sine qua non of politics—and, by extension, the territorially bounded state is the only recognized form of political community—then diasporic Jews do not count as a political community. (Nor do



Portrait of Baruch Spinoza published in *Plaatsjes-album vaderlandsche historie 2* (1926), via Wikimedia Commons.

individual diasporic communities count as bona fide polities.) Significantly, Spinoza reaches this conclusion by telling a story about Hebrew political history, a story that reduces biblical religion to an instrument of statecraft. When Spinoza relates the history of the ancient Hebrew state, he depicts Moses as a savvy political leader who instituted what he calls “ceremonial observances” (e.g., kashrut, Shabbat, and holidays) to secure obedience. With this resolutely political interpretation of Hebrew religion, Spinoza releases modern Jews from halakhic obligation. The laws of the ancient Hebrew state mandated ceremonial observance, but, as that state no longer exists, observance cannot be obligatory for modern Jews. Spinoza concludes, “after the destruction of the city God demanded no special service of the Jews and sought nothing of them thereafter except the natural law by which all men are bound.”

When Spinoza lifts the yoke of halakhic obligation, he effectively discredits what one might call “Jewish”—as opposed to Hebrew, Israeli, or liberal—politics. By the

term “Jewish politics,” I mean traditions that retain a political conception of Jewish peoplehood while denying that a Jewish polity must take the form of a nation-state. In Spinoza’s framework, the social and legal activity of the *kahal*, whose vibrancy is documented in Michael Walzer’s *Jewish Political Tradition* anthologies, remains below the threshold of the political. Indeed, for Spinoza, what I am calling “Jewish politics” is an incoherent anachronism. On Spinoza’s view, the rabbinic claim that Jews are bound by Halakhah—that is, by laws other than those of their states of residence—betrays a failure of political understanding.

Having denied that diasporic Jewish communities count as political communities, Spinoza insists that there are only two viable political options for modern Jews: citizenship in a Jewish nation-state or neutral citizenship in a democratic republic. Spinoza explores the first option in a passage beloved by early Zionists. Comparing the Jews to the Chinese, who eventually regained political independence, Spinoza allows that, “were it not that the fundamental principles of their religion discourage manliness, I would not hesitate to believe that they [the Jews] will one day, given the opportunity—such is the malleability of human affairs—establish once more their independent state, and that God will again choose them.” Spinoza defends the second option throughout the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, which hails democracy as “the most natural form of state.” In a democratic republic that grants citizens freedom of thought and expression, individuals are free to practice Judaism, but, as Stephen Smith has argued, Judaism becomes a private identity (rather than a political membership or a binding legal obligation).

Reading the *Theologico-Political Treatise* today, we may marvel at Spinoza’s prescience—for the majority of contemporary Jews live under one of Spinoza’s preferred political options. Yet if Spinoza appears prescient, the ascendance of his theoretical framework has not been without cost for Jewish political thought and practice. When

Spinoza reiterates the Hobbesian dictum that there is no such thing as politics without sovereignty, he narrows the possibilities for Jewish self-understanding, withdrawing theoretical resources requisite for affirming what I have called “Jewish politics.” After a tumultuous period that witnessed a proliferation of Jewish political movements and ideologies, we are arguably back where Spinoza began, at a moment when Jews appear to have only two political options: Liberalism or Zionism. Jewish political thought remains captive to an interpretive frame that makes these ideologies seem like the default, given modern Jewish history. Revisiting the *Theologico-Political Treatise* reminds us that these alternatives only seem obvious to us today because we interpret modern Jewish history through a particular (Spinozist) lens. Developed for polemical purposes, this lens originated with the rise of the nation-state system, and it made a particular kind of territorial sovereignty a political requirement.

What does Spinoza’s attack on rabbinic authority have to do with The Land? I have invoked the *Theologico-Political Treatise* to recall a different set of connotations that “the land” bears within Western political theory and Jewish political thought. Today, when we debate the political valence of The Land, we usually mean the Land of Israel. In these debates, the burning questions surround the nature and legitimacy of Jewish attachment to the ancestral homeland: Does the Land of Israel possess inherent sanctity? Is settling the Land of Israel a religious imperative? Must a Jewish state be located in Palestine, or can it be located in Uganda? Is the desire to feel “at home” politically redeeming, or politically suspect? Questions like these have a venerable lineage within Jewish political thought—and they remain urgent today. I would argue, however, that Jewish political thinkers need to move beyond a narrow preoccupation with The Land and think more broadly about the relationship of land to political community. In other words, we need to revisit assumptions about territorial sovereignty inherited from Hobbes and Spinoza.

Although the parties to the Palestine/Uganda debate adopt different stances with respect to the Land of Israel, they agree that “land”—that is, a territorially bounded state—is a political imperative. In our preoccupation with the status of The Land, we are liable to ignore a more fundamental theoretical question about land, a question

made urgent by Jewish political history: Is political agency possible in dispersion? Given the Jews’ history of dispersion, rethinking the relationship of land to political community is as critical a project as rethinking the centrality of the Land of Israel.

Tackling the question of “the land” is a particularly pressing project, I would argue, for scholars who lament the hegemony of a state-centered Zionist ideology. Too often, self-styled diasporic thinkers devote their scholarly energies to loosening the hold of The Land on Jewish political imagination. For these critics of Israeli policy, the key task is to moderate Jewish attachments, sentimental or otherwise, to the Land of Israel. Thus, diasporic thinkers have celebrated homelessness and wandering; they have nurtured attachments to alternative homelands (e.g., Miami Beach); they have located the Jews’ home in The Book; and they have deferred the desire for return onto a messianic future. Without denying the force

of these projects, I would nevertheless argue that they neglect more fundamental questions about the relationship between sovereignty, territory, and political community. Political Zionism’s appeal derives less from the rhetoric of return than from the claim that a territorially bounded state is a necessary counter to anti-Semitism and a necessary condition for self-determination. To contest these claims, and expand Jewish political horizons beyond the two options that Spinoza identified, we must undertake a more searching exploration of the possibilities that Jewish political history affords for theorizing political agency in dispersion. In other words, we must resist the assumption that political community is defined solely or primarily in geographical terms.

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Title page of Baruch Spinoza’s *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1693). Gallica, Bibliotheque nationale de France, gallica.bnf.fr.

The Land Within and Without: The Cycle of Israel's Life

Nili Wazana

The first eleven chapters of Genesis, describing the creation of the world and of humanity, set the historical stage on which the central hero in the Hebrew Bible, the people of Israel, emerges. According to the historian Johan Huizinga, "History is the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself of its past." Thus, it is noteworthy that Abraham, Israel's forefather, enters world history virtually *ex nihilo*. The spotlight only shines on Abraham when he receives the divine command: "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). His birth, childhood, and "occupation" before he began his journey lie buried in obscurity. Abraham's first appearance as an independent actor is bound up with the destiny of the land, pointing to the land as the other, no less important, protagonist of the book.

The central issue around which the Pentateuch and the Former and Latter Prophets revolve is the triadic relationship between God, the People, and the Promised Land. Biblical Israel is not identified with the land; the two were separate entities. In the majority of biblical texts they do not even share a common name. The people of *Israel* enter into and take possession of the land of *Canaan*, named after its former occupants (Numbers 34:2). This is contrary to many other national narratives, which depict their people as dwelling in their land since time immemorial. Some traditions even claim that their people originally sprouted, plant-like, out of the earth. In contrast, the right of Israel to their land is not a "natural" right; their history in the land is not based in primeval times. Their existence as a people in the land is set in historic, not mythic time. Accordingly, their right to the land hangs on a divine promise, itself conditional.

Whether emanating from the story of the individual Abraham coming from his native

Ur in Mesopotamia or from the story of the people Israel coming from Egypt according to the Exodus tradition, the unequivocal image of Israel's beginnings is that of nonindigenous people, outsiders to their land. After the exile to Babylon, the return to Zion in the restoration period is depicted



Assyrian relief of first Israelites going into exile, 733 BCE. © Trustees of the British Museum.

as another Exodus (see Isaiah 51:9-11). This pattern even affected modern portrayals of the Zionist movement. The history of the relationship of the people of Israel and its land is thus one of cyclic exoduses, settlements in the land and, regrettably, of exiles.

This self-depiction of external origins extended also to the site where Israel received its divine laws. The laws were not delivered in any of the holy sites in the land. Israel received its laws in totality in the Sinai desert, outside the boundaries of the Promised Land. The agent was Moses, himself prohibited from entering the Promised Land and buried outside of its boundaries (Deuteronomy 34:4-5). This notion was so strongly embedded within Israelite lore that revisions of the law codes and later editions

had to be ascribed to Moses, declared lost and forgotten, only to be accidentally "found" in the temple during renovations, as in the days of Josiah (2 Kings 22-23). The law was thus also separated from the land of Canaan.

According to some traditions, God himself was not "born" in the perimeters of the land. His original abode was in the south: "God is coming from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran" (Habakuk 3:3). The land belongs to God, the first and foremost factor in the triad God-People-Land. He decides whether the people shall dwell in the land or not, based on their deeds. Since inheritance of the land is determined by the degree of fidelity of the people to God, the foundational period of the realization and fulfillment of the promise is depicted throughout the book of Joshua as a period of an ideal relationship between Israel and God. The behavior of the people during the period of conquest and settlement is unparalleled in that it lacks any act of forbidden worship.

The one sinner in this golden period, the antihero Achan, is not involved in idolatry, but violates the divine decree of the ban (*herem*, Joshua 7). The message, loud and clear, is that only when Israel abides by God's rules wholeheartedly can they be extremely successful, and settle in the land that God gives them. Only then "everything was fulfilled" (Joshua 21:43; 23:14). Israel's beginning in the land thus determines its end. When Israel is unfaithful to God, history is reversed. Israel loses the land and is taken into exile, even back to Egypt (Deuteronomy 28:63-68).

There is an important outcome to this dominant self-conception of the people of Israel as outsiders in their land. Despite the major role the land plays in the history of the people of Israel and despite the fact that the Promise of the Land unifies the traditions of the forefathers, dwelling in the land is not a prerequisite to Israel's national existence. This conception served as a powerful tool for a people bereft of its land, temple, and monarchy as were the Judean deportees

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after 586 BCE. It allowed them to retain their national identity in exile against all odds.

Some scholars have even suggested that this was the period when the external conception was invented, painting Israel's beginning in the colors of the Persian period. According to this view, Abraham was "planted" in Ur of the Chaldeans (or Haran) in Mesopotamia to provide a role model for the Babylonian returnees (see Isaiah 51:2-3). Yet, as noted by Peter Machinist, many of the texts reflecting the concept of Israel as outsiders are older. While this concept proved a valuable tool for life outside the land, its strength lay in the fact that it preexisted and was not invented in times of distress.

Israel's national existence depended foremost on adhering to the set of rules, the Torah, which was delivered to the people outside the land, so it too could be kept everywhere. True, many of the laws deal with life in the land, beginning with the

condition: "When you enter the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a heritage . . ." (Deuteronomy 26:1). Dwelling in the land is accordingly the ideal, the destiny of Israel. Yet even those laws were perceived as delivered to Israel outside its land. Thus Israel received a full "instruction kit" supplying them with everything necessary for living as God's people in the land or for living elsewhere. This too was a pre-exilic concept that became the perfect tool for national existence based on the relationship of the people to God. Living outside the land did not abolish the concept of the Land altogether, but it did demote its status from that of an equal member of the triad to a somewhat secondary position. The exile gave birth to the first full-fledged book-based religion. Later book-based religions, which successfully adopted this concept, were initially free of all national identity. While Christianity and Islam definitely relate to holy sites in their

traditions, they do not harbor an equal concept of a promised land. For Israel, however, the concept of the Promised Land turned into a still important, yet no longer crucial member of the triad. It remained within the realm of promise for centuries, even millennia, while the people existed outside it, dreaming and praying for a return to the land and for the renewal of its past position as promised by God. Just as in the days of the forefathers prior to the crossing of the Jordan River, for two millennia the Promised Land was an ideal for the future, to be realized one day again, when once more "everything will be fulfilled."

Nili Wazana is senior lecturer in Bible at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is the author of All the Boundaries of the Land: The Promised Land in Biblical Thought in Light of the Ancient Near East (Eisenbrauns, 2013).



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Gil Klein

To rediscover the world means to rediscover the childhood mysteriously snuggled up inside the Place, to open up to the light of great landscapes . . . to feel the unity created by the bridge that links the two river banks and by the architecture of buildings . . . This then, is the eternal seductiveness of paganism, beyond the infantilism of idolatry, which long ago was surpassed. *The Sacred filtering into the world*—Judaism is perhaps no more than the negation of all that . . . Judaism has always been free with regard to place.

(Emmanuel Levinas, "Heidegger, Gagarin and Us," in *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990], 231-233)

Although Levinas's attack on Place is a sophisticated and pertinent critique of Heidegger's ontology and its Teutonic mystification of nature, as well as of Eliade's notion of sacred space, Judaism has *not* always been free with regard to place. For Levinas, space (and more specifically outer-space) and technology wrench us out of pagan and Christian "superstitions surrounding Place" and their inevitable outcome—the "splitting of humanity into natives and strangers." This idea was not new when Levinas articulated it (think, for example, about the myth of the "wandering Jew") and it did not disappear with the move away from Jewish essentialism. We still hear about Judaism as rooted in text, law, or time, as opposed to image, matter, or space. In recent decades, however, this very opposition has collapsed, not least thanks to the growing understanding that "space," this abstract volumetric entity that no one has ever seen with their bare eyes, is much less useful for the understanding of culture than "place." Place is more than the mysterious link to the "spirit" of one's home, hometown, or homeland; it is, rather, a fundamental spatial framework through which we create meaning and establish relationships. Imagined or real,

place is what we produce when we interact with the world around us, but it is also the precondition for any such production. In this sense, everybody does it, including Jews.

A few of the most striking examples of Jewish place-making are evident in the work

so as to symbolically merge the various households into a single domain is a ritual, and not an act of urban planning, it cannot be understood without the notion of place. The rabbis meticulously mapped the structure of residential quarters and prescribed the active construction of beams and partitions in order to give the neighborhood a distinct architectural boundary. Architecture, in this regard, was not a mode of expression better left to others, it was engaged by Jews in their attempt to take place in the world and to give it meaning.

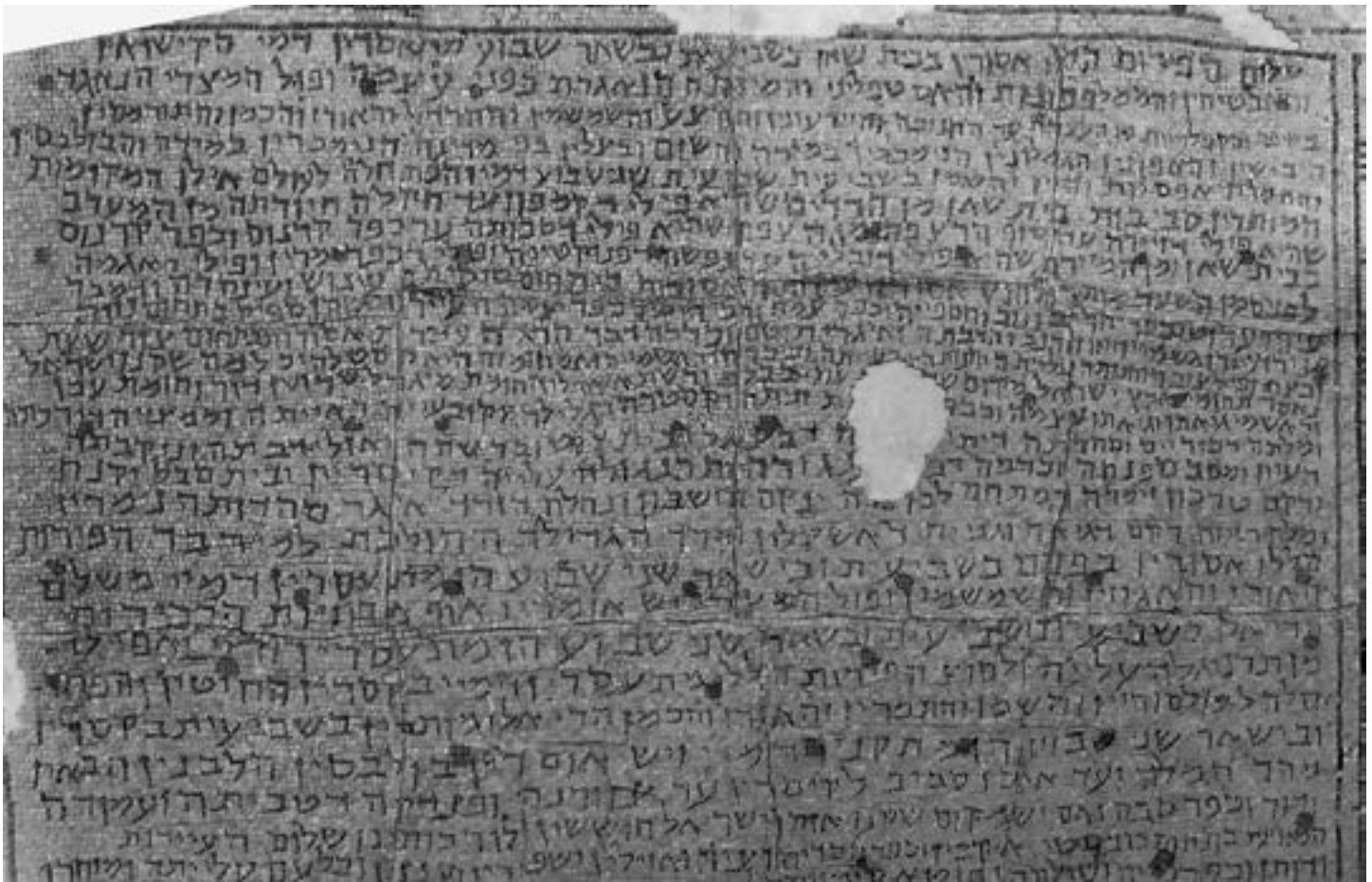
Admittedly, the rabbinic concern with the city and its social and spatial relations falls well within Levinas's perception of Judaism as emphasizing human relations over the mystery of nature. In the essay cited above Levinas writes: "Socrates preferred the town, in which one meets people, to the countryside and trees. Judaism is the brother of the Socratic message." However, the rabbis by no means ignored nature in their establishment of place. For example, they regulated and defined the "Land of Israel" in the context

of tractate Shevi'it (the seventh year, when the land is to be left fallow), determining everything from the procedures of harvesting to territorial boundaries. These rabbinically instituted boundaries, which point to another connection between time and space through the sabbatical principle, were recorded in a famous mosaic inscription at the Rehov synagogue (fig. 1). The inscription (c. 5th century CE), whose placement in a synagogue is itself an attestation to the land's religious dimensions, speaks about Rehov's immediate environment not in broad geographical terms but rather on the intimate level of specific fields, city gates, and tombs. Hence, "the sacred filtering into the world," which Levinas sees as a non-Jewish idea, is clearly visible in the sages' endeavor to redefine the landscape from the perspective of divine law. It is not a coincidence, therefore, that the rabbis dedicate an entire mishnaic order (Zera'im) to questions of land and agriculture, in addition to explicitly speaking about this land as sacred and pure in numerous aggadic accounts.



A city and its Sabbath Boundary, the Vilna edition of the Babylonian Talmud.

of the late antique rabbis, with which Levinas has frequently corresponded in his writing. In many of these examples, the rabbis' attempt to infuse place with sanctity is explicit. Consider, for instance, the rabbinic system of *eruv hazerot* (the merging of courtyards), which Charlotte Fonrobert has so wonderfully illuminated. The establishment of spatial and legal definitions of the private and public domains in this system, for the purpose of facilitating the carrying of objects from one domain to the other on the Sabbath, is underlined by the holiness of the Seventh Day. Its reconstitution of the neighborhood's social order through the biblical prohibition on working during this day may be seen as a project that allows the sanctity of the Sabbath to be manifested spatially. While the rabbinic requirement to position a shared food item in the courtyards and alleyways



Jewish legal inscription, a synagogue mosaic floor, Rehov, Beth Shean Valley, 6th century CE, IAA. Collection of Israel Antiquities Authority. Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Elie Posner.

Moreover, in rabbinic literature the countryside did not escape the spatial hold of the Sabbath. Tractate Eruvin institutes the halakhic system of *tehum shabbat* (the Sabbath boundary), which overlaps, but is not identical with the system of *eruv hazerot* mentioned above. The Sabbath boundary is not concerned with the question of carrying; it revolves around the biblical prohibition of leaving one's *makom*—place—on the Seventh Day (Exodus 16:29). What, then, is one's "place"? For the rabbis, if one is within a house or a city, for instance, these broader structures constitute the limits of place. Beyond the house or the city, one is allowed to walk a distance of two thousand cubits, a measurement that seems to be derived from the pastureland allotted by divine decree to the Levitical cities (fig. 2). In this regard, the rabbis use biblical spatial principles as building blocks for their construction of the Sabbath place.

Even more interesting for our consideration of place is the case in which one is

on the road or in the field when the Sabbath starts. What is one's place when there is no visible spatial marker, no building or settlement to delimit the boundary? For the rabbis, the minimum dimension of such an outdoor place is the area taken up by an individual human body, when it is, supposedly, laying on the ground: "The full extent of his height and [the span between] his stretched arms, lo, an area of four cubits" (T. Eruvin 3:11). Hence, in the absence of clear spatial boundaries, it is the proportion of the body and its imprint on the ground that establishes place and give it meaning. The place of the Sabbath is, nevertheless, not only corporeal but also mental. According to the Mishnah (Eruvin 4:7), our Sabbatical traveler may establish residency at a familiar site, which is located at a distance, by declaring it his or her Sabbath place. In order to do so, however, the traveler must be able to recall in his or her mind a specific point of reference such as the root of a particular tree or the base of a fence. This mental self-projection onto the landscape is articu-

lated in legal and temporal terms, and is certainly different from the kind of mystification of place and nature that Levinas criticizes. However, it is not very different from the Heideggerian spatial understanding of human existence, against which Levinas primarily writes. In his famous essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," Heidegger says: "I am never here only, as this encapsulated body; rather, I am there, that is, I already pervade the room, and only thus can I go through it."

Gil P. Klein is assistant professor in the Department of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University. His most recent publication is "Squaring the City: Between Roman and Rabbinic Urban Geometry," in Phenomenologies of the City: Studies in the History and Philosophy of Architecture, ed. Henriette Steiner and Maximilian Sternberg (Ashgate, Studies in Architecture Series, 2014).

(Home)land: Reflections on Andalusí Jewish Attachment to Place

Ross Brann

“Sefarad is my land, the Land of Israel my destination.” *Tahkemoni* (*Maqāma* 49), Judah al-Ḥarizi

How were Arabized Jews’ attachments to land mediated through different discourses of place? During the classical period of Islam the idea of *waṭan* (Arabic for “homeland,” “native place,” or “hometown”) turned on the dialectical relationship between the Jews’ concrete, living attachment to their place of residence and their devotional yearning for an imagined eschatological homecoming to the biblical land of Israel. The latter was reinforced in daily recitation of canonical rabbinic prayer; it was also voiced with religious urgency in numerous liturgical compositions (Heb. *ge’ulot*), authored from the tenth through the thirteenth centuries, bemoaning the travails of their Jewish community or of Israel in general. The former is attested in documentary material from the Cairo Genizah and evident as literary expression in various Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic texts. These incongruous sensibilities regarding homeland existed in tension with one another, the one informed by Jewish tradition and memory as well as the uncertainties of existence as a minority religious community, the other by life as it is lived within a particular community rooted in a specific place.

In his magisterial study of the Cairo Genizah S.D. Goitein noted that in practice “homeland” signified the place where one’s parents were buried as well as where people and customs were familiar. Accordingly, it is not possible to think of place, town, or land apart from the natural bonds the individual enjoyed with countrymen. The Jews’ natural human attachment to what is comfortable on account of its familiarity was compounded by their wariness, distrust, or even aversion to what was foreign, unfamiliar, or strange (Ar. *al-gharib*; the foreigner). The Andalusí Hebrew poet Moses ibn ‘Ezra could thus playfully refer to Judah Halevi, his supremely gifted younger contemporary hailing from the border between the Christian kingdom of Castile and al-Andalus, as having “shined forth from Seir [i.e. the East-Christendom].”



Letter of Judah Ha-Levi in Toledo to Halfon ben Nathanel al-Dimyati in Spain, Toledo, 1125. Courtesy of The Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary.

So too, Arabic-style Hebrew verse absorbed the classical Arabic motifs of love of homeland and longing for one’s homeland (*ḥubb al-waṭan / al-ḥanin i ilā l-awṭān*). Moses ibn ‘Ezra, exiled from al-Andalus to the Christian kingdoms of northern Iberia apparently on account of personal intrigue and political turmoil, found these motifs and their associated imagery perfect literary vehicles for expressing his deep and enduring attachment to Granada as a home of Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew culture. Indeed, his lyrical complaints on this theme give vent to the intellectually minded poet’s alienation from the “unlearned” Jews he encountered in Castile and Navarre. To put it another way, fondness for homeland informed the Jews’ sense of local and regional identity.

Travel for reasons of trade, scholarship, or piety was prevalent in some classes of Arabic-speaking Jewish society. In a mobile world where merchants, scholars, devotees, and refugees frequently moved from their family’s indigenous place to another adopted town, the attachment to *waṭan* and the identity it conferred were portable. Moses Maimonides’s self-representation provides the best-known illustration. Long after he had left al-Andalus and the Maghrib for Egypt, Maimonides nurtured a historical-cultural belonging to his Iberian homeland and its rabbinic, philosophical, and scientific traditions. That attachment served as a foundational marker of

Maimonides’s identity: he continued to think of himself as “the man from Sefarad” or “the Andalusí” in Hebrew and Arabic respectively.

As we have observed, the most salient literary and occasional textual examples come from Sefarad when its socio-cultural border was congruent with the socio-political borders of al-Andalus. Unlike their Muslim counterparts, who were conscious of Islamic sovereignty and developed an extensive geographical literature incorporating rich representations of territory and realm, Jewish literary and religious intellectuals imagined and produced metaphorical landscapes, but generally eschewed addressing the notion of territoriality; they primarily thought of place and land through the nexus of people, community, and tradition. Ḥasdai ibn Shaprūt and Samuel the Nagid, two exceptional Jewish figures of the tenth and eleventh centuries invested with political authority, are among the very few to engage in territorial representation of any sort.

Ibn Shaprūt’s secretary famously authored a Hebrew letter to the king of the Khazars in which he reports the Jews of al-Andalus, “the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sefarad” (citing a biblical verse from Ovadiah and implicitly its traditional reading), are “dwelling peacefully in the land,” a land that “is rich, abounding in rivers, springs, and aqueducts; a land of corn, oil, and wine, of fruits and all manner of delicacies; it has pleasure-gardens and orchards, fruitful trees of every kind. . . .”

Samuel the Nagid’s idiosyncratic “war” poems bring together biblical language and imagery with Arabic poetic tradition to depict the poet’s inner life amidst various historical or imagined encampments and battle scenes arrayed in the countryside between the army of Granada and its Andalusí enemies. His literary and historical persona remains grounded in the Andalusí scene and setting at every turn.

A twelfth-century communal lament by Abraham ibn Ezra represents a very different manifestation of the discourse of place in Hebrew verse. Incorporating stylistic and thematic elements of the genre of “city elegies,” the poet takes the reader on an

unsettling tour of towns and cities with major Jewish communities devastated by socio-religious upheaval, from Lucena, Cordoba, and Seville in al-Andalus to Sijilmassa, Fez, and Der'ca in North Africa. The lyric's final stanza departs from that emotionally wrought land-based tour to the psychological and spiritual realm in which the key biblical expression, *u-me-'arzah mehoz hefzi*, variously understood as "longed-for lands" or "chosen territory," can simultaneously signify both the poet's homeland from which he and his community have been exiled *and* the biblical Land of Israel. Its very ambiguity suggests a Sefarad/Israel binary.

For Andalusī Jewish religious and literary intellectuals one of the two aforementioned attachments might predominate over the other at a given moment or within a specific text in accordance with its genre and conventions. For example, Judah Halevi is portrayed in a Genizah letter dated 1130 as "the heart and soul of our land [al-Andalus]" while in his own words he refers to himself as

"one whose homeland is Sefarad but whose destination is Jerusalem." Halevi's most celebrated poetic cycle engages that interior figurative journey and its interface with his actual voyage from al-Andalus to Egypt to Palestine, turning the Arabic themes of love/longing for one's homeland into lyric vehicles for exploring the Jewish pilgrim's territorial desire as well as his conflicted feelings about the Egyptian landscape and scene. Here it is worth mentioning the contrast between the metaphysical significance Halevi attributed to the Land of Israel with Maimonides's assertion that the Land possessed no special qualities save for permitting the complete observance of the Torah in its entirety.

Halevi's prose formulation struck a chord with Judah al-Ḥarizi, the late twelfth-century author and native of Arabophone Toledo in Castile, who left home and traveled to the Muslim East in search of patronage, a cultural home, and status as a Hebrew and Arabic literary intellectual. In *Tahkemoni*, al-Ḥarizi's collection of Hebrew-rhymed prose rhetorical

and picaresque anecdotes, the narrator figure Heman ha-Ezraḥi responds to a query about his place of origin by rephrasing Halevi: "Sefarad is my land, the Land of Israel my destination." The post-Crusader condition of Jerusalem and its internally compromised Jewish community is depicted in another anecdote. Yet *Tahkemoni*, like the other Jewish literary texts with the potential to develop a discourse of place, relates precious little regarding the physical environment the author encountered in eastern Mediterranean lands but much about the character of its Jewish communities and some of their leading figures. This meta-political people, it seems, was attached to the idea of place as much if not more than to place or land itself.

Ross Brann is the Milton R. Konvitz Professor of Judeo-Islamic Studies at Cornell University. He is currently working on Andalusī Moorings: Sefarad and Al-Andalus as Tropes of Jewish and Islamic Culture [in progress].

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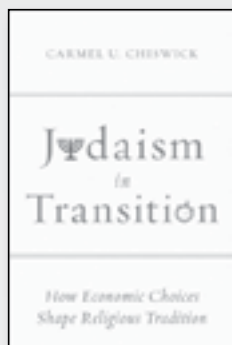
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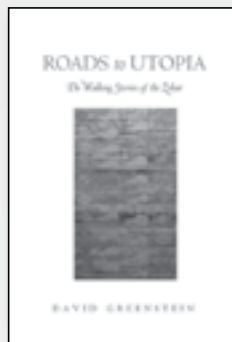
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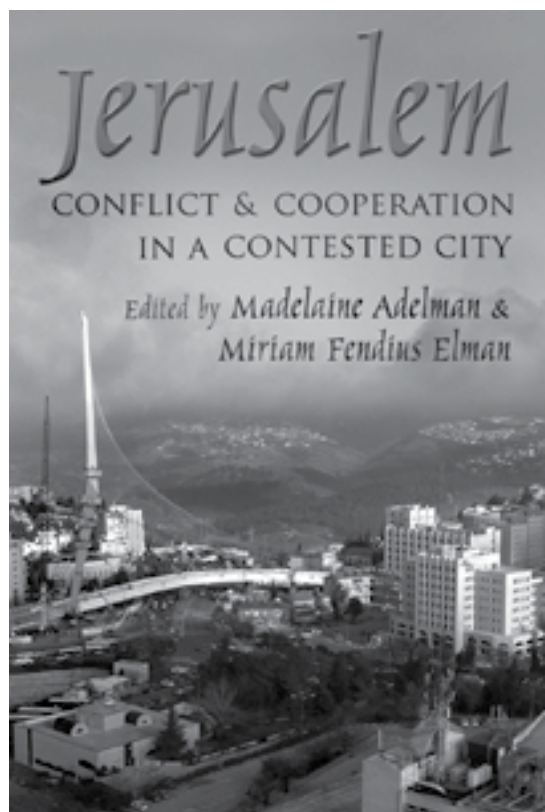
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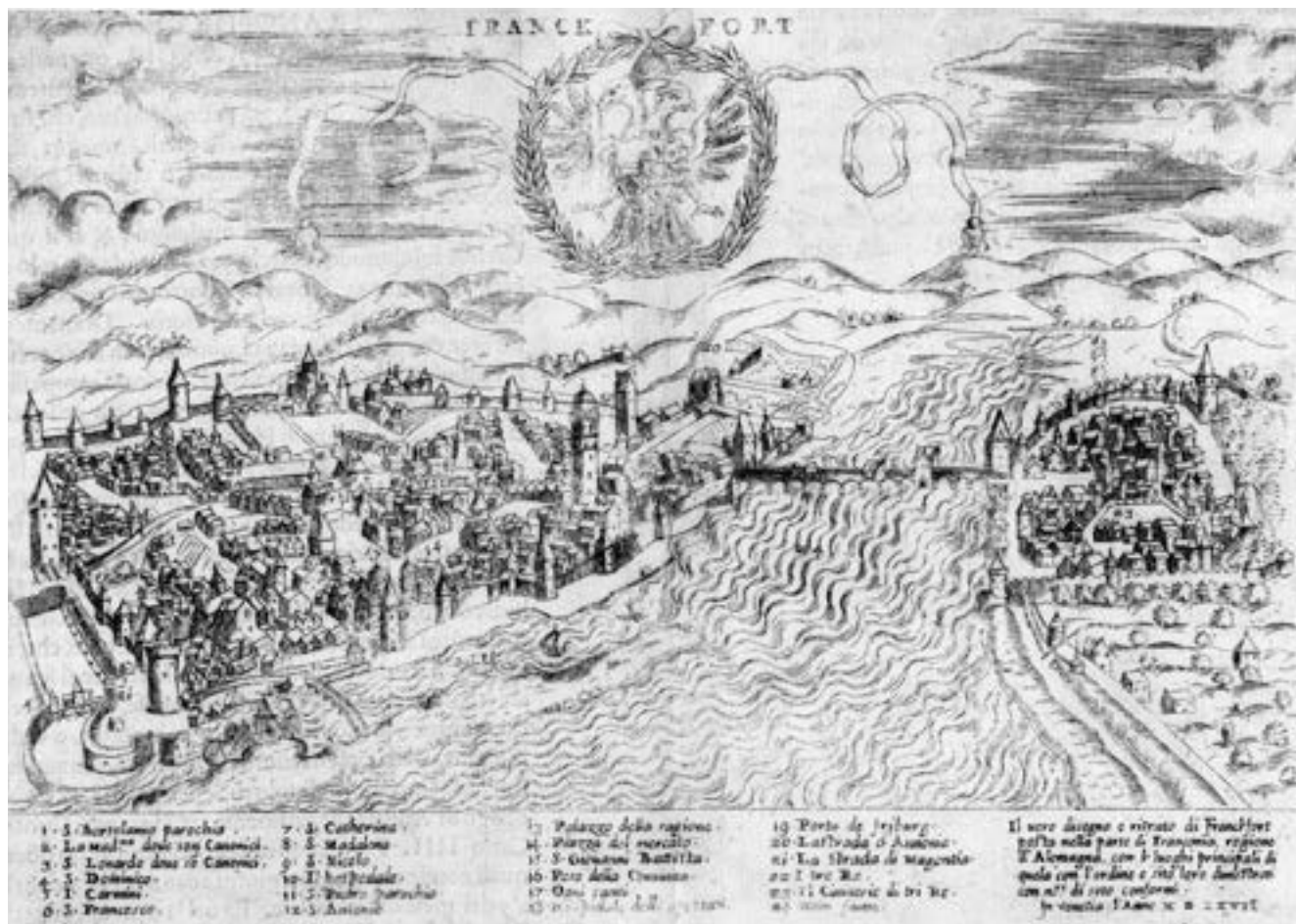
The processes of secularization and sacralization are key to inquiries into the changes within Judaism and in the ways in which Jews interacted with non-Jews. These shifts and relations are not limited to the modern period. Asking questions about the sacred and the secular in Judaism needs to involve the places where and ways in which personal faith, communal relations, and daily life practices coincided, and the ways in which spiritual and worldly have been interwoven. The Frankel Institute deliberately focuses on the processes of secularization and sacralization rather than the static dichotomy of the sacred and secular, or presumed states of holiness and secularity, and rejects assumptions that these processes are identical in different times and places, or lead to a common and determined endpoint. The Frankel Institute invites applications from diverse scholars for a theme year that will help prepare the ground for thinking differently about these processes as well as our study of them.

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Jews and the Land in Early Modern Germany: Responses to Crisis and Natural Disaster

Dean Bell



Frankfurt. Ballino-Zalti, 1567. From the Muriel Yale Collection of Rare and Antique Maps of the Holy Land and Ottoman Empire of the Asher Library, Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership.

Jews have lived “on the land” throughout history and in a variety of locations. That was certainly true in early modern Germany, where large numbers of Jews inhabited villages and small towns in an impressive swath across southwest Germany well into the twentieth century. But whether Jews worked the land, traded in agricultural products, or simply depended on the land for provisions like everyone else, the effects of nature on the land were central to early modern German Jews. Changes in climate, the spread of disease, and damaging floods, droughts, famines, and infestations could

affect travel, trade, communal systems, and livelihood in significant ways. How Jews understood and responded to such crises can tell us a great deal about Jewish worldviews—social, religious, cultural, economic, scientific, etc. It can also allow us remarkable opportunities to peer into daily Jewish life and reconsider how Jews interacted with the non-Jews around them at times of catastrophe as well as during times of more “normal” conditions.

As we know far too well from recent events, natural disasters lay bare latent social tensions and can lead to violence and

scapegoating. Catastrophes, such as the plague, could lead to anti-Jewish sentiment and violence. Of course, persecution of Jews depended on numerous and often localized variables. Consider the expulsions of Jews during the Black Death in the middle of the fourteenth century. In many cases, as the German historian Alfred Haverkamp has demonstrated, the actions against Jews may have been precipitated by news of spreading disease, but the actual expulsions of or attacks against Jews often occurred in advance of the plague reaching a particular town. Indeed, many such actions against

Jews were premeditated and coincided with the Jewish or Christian Sabbath or Christian holidays, occurred during periods of increased religious tension or sentiment, and were instigated to address broader economic or political concerns. At the same time the sources describing natural disasters indicate the opportunity for constructive engagement and cooperation between people of different religious faiths and social backgrounds, even when such positive interaction did not fundamentally alter extant social structures in the long run.

The topic of responses to natural disasters encourages the analysis of a wide range of sources—Jewish and Christian—including chronicles, memoirs, memory books, civic legislation, sermons, biblical commentaries, scientific treatises, and illustrations. It also allows for the integration of diverse scholarly methodologies, including most notably the work of environmental history. In fact, Jewish Studies and environmental history share a number of characteristics that make them intriguing to consider in tandem. They both developed in significant ways in the 1960s in response to unprecedented social, religious, and political conditions. They have both been shaped and informed by interdisciplinary research, especially that which grapples with modernization theories and postmodern concerns. They have both encouraged broad comparative histories and have lavished increased attention on marginalized groups.

For both early modern Jews and Christians natural disasters were often seen as divine punishment for human sin. This could lead to calls for stricter religious observance and penitence. But this “economy of sin” might also provide the opportunity for confessional polemics. While Jews were rarely blamed directly for natural disasters—Jews did not wield such power—they could be seen as catalysts for suffering, for example through allegations of hoarding of goods and resources at times of dearth. On the other hand, Jewish writers themselves might use narratives of natural disasters to critique Christian society and they often made note when large numbers of Christians, as opposed to small numbers of Jews, were killed by floods or earthquakes, suggesting God’s punishment for Christian guilt and a higher moral standard for the Jews.

On a fundamental level, natural disasters impacted access to and prices of

food and resources. As the seventeenth-century Alsatian Jewish writer Asher Levy of Reichshofen noted in his memoirs, God controlled the weather, and the effects on agriculture could be significant. For the summer of 1626, for example, Asher wrote that it was extremely rainy and damp, with the sun appearing only a few days. He noted that it was a time of emergency, but that in the end God was merciful. After detailing the extensive crop of fruit and the price of grain, Asher narrated a fall in price, concluding that “. . . we hope that it will become still cheaper, if it is the will of God.”

Or consider the flood narrative appended to the community customs book of Juspa, the Shammash of Worms, which detailed a series of floods in the middle of the seventeenth century. At times, Juspa focused on the impact of flooding on the Jewish community specifically, noting the damage done to houses and wine cellars. However, Juspa also described the effects on the broader population and he frequently extended his comments beyond the borders of the Jewish quarter. (Similar balancing characterized the many Jewish accounts of the great flooding of the Rhine in 1784, for which we have a good deal of information from Christian as well as Jewish sources.) In his account of various floods, Juspa detailed the obstacles to travel, death of animals, destruction of grains and vines, as well as man-made edifices such as wooden bridges, mills, and houses. Juspa noted that the confluence of multiple floods in one year was a great and powerful miracle for everyone to see and hear, and he pleaded that the mighty waters not bring any further trouble. Like other early modern German chroniclers, Juspa recorded local events to serve almost as an archive of local history, and his account clearly made Jewish experiences part and parcel of broader local and regional historical events.

The more detailed flood narratives of the later eighteenth century provide examples of cooperation between Jews and Christians—in rescue operations that involved people in boats pulling survivors from rooftops, as well as in the distribution of foodstuffs and the provision of temporary housing to Jews and Christians forced to flee the rising waters. As one Christian eyewitness in 1784 recalled, “Here sit together Christians and Jews, Roman Catholics and Protestants, oppressed by the same dread, filled by a purpose and they pray in brotherhood to one God to

save and spare them.” The same writer, of course, concluded that, “Only a few give a lasting impression of a true improvement of life. Only a few pay the Lord their vows by discarding what displeases Him.”

Narratives of natural disaster also reveal essential differences between Jews and Christians, pointing out, for example, the foreign-sounding nature of Hebrew prayers and the necessity in some cases for squads of police to be stationed to protect Jewish quarters from being looted. Indeed, even when not blamed for calamities such as epidemics, Jewish security and legal standing appeared rather tenuous in some early modern catastrophe narratives, such as an episode of the plague detailed by Asher Levy of Reichshofen in the early seventeenth century, when local Jewish houses were vandalized. Still, many early modern Jewish accounts make no mention of negative consequences for the Jews; they often portray episodes of assistance between Jews and Christians; and they suggest that Jews and Christians were familiar with their neighbors and their neighbors’ religious practices. Some early modern Jewish accounts even allow us to peer into daily interactions between Jews and Christians and they provide hard-to-come-by details about internal Jewish life—social tensions, communal organization, and settlement patterns in various German cities, towns, and villages.

Drawing from diverse sources and a broad range of methodologies (including exciting work in integrated history, emotion history, the study of daily life and local knowledge, as well as environmental history), the experiences of Jewish life on the land and the responses of Jews to natural disasters will complicate the standard metanarratives of Jewish history. Jews were in many ways simultaneously separate from and integrated into the larger early modern societies in which they lived. Discussions of crisis and natural disaster hold the opportunity to challenge (and confirm) traditional historical sensibilities as well as to unearth many aspects of Jewish life and Jewish-Christian interactions that can provide a more nuanced picture of the Jewish past.

Dean Phillip Bell is dean, chief academic officer, and professor of Jewish History at the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership. He is the editor of The Bloomsbury Companion to Jewish Studies (London, 2013).

A Land Flowing with Milk and Honey: Birobidzhan and Jewish National Cosmopolitanism

David Shneer



Semyon Fridlyand, “Apiaries,” 1934. Courtesy of the Semyon Fridlyand Collection in the Dalbey Digital Archive at the University of Denver. Through the generous support of the Dalbey Family.

In 2007, on the outskirts of Moscow, I entered the world-famous All-Russian Bazaar of Honey, one of Moscow’s premieres for the rich, the poor, and everyone in between, and was overwhelmed by choice. The festival highlights the joys and medicinal uses of honey from every part of the vast, diverse country. More importantly, it trains the palate to appreciate the differences between honey pollinated from every kind of flower and plant. I tasted brown, gold, yellow, even purple honey, snacked on honeycombs, and played with beeswax and other bee-related products from hundreds of booths representing Krasnodar, Bashkiria, Bashkortostan, Altai, and almost every other officially designated geographic region in the country.

The best honey, found in aisle three on the left, came from the Jewish Autonomous Region, often abbreviated as the JAR and less often known as a land flowing with milk and honey. I tasted every product the beekeeper from the regional

farm of Valdheim offered up, purchased small jars of JAR honey to bring home as gifts, became dizzy from the sugar rush, and decided I had eaten enough.

Beekeepers have been making Russia’s best honey in the JAR since its establishment. Explored in the 1920s and formally named a political entity of the Soviet Union in 1934, the Jewish Autonomous Region, often called Birobidzhan for the two rivers that run through the area, was Communism’s answer to divinely ordained Jewish rootlessness. Jewish religious tradition asserts a messianic age in which Jews, both dead and alive, would be returned to the Holy Land. Soviet Jewish ideologues, not unlike their Zionist counterparts, proposed a secular eschatology in which Jews’ historic exceptionalism would be overcome by settling on and developing a land “flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 33:3). What Exodus didn’t mention was that although milk and honey are naturally occurring animal products,



Semyon Fridlyand, “Children of Birobidzhan,” 1934. Courtesy of the Semyon Fridlyand Collection in the Dalbey Digital Archive at the University of Denver. Through the generous support of the Dalbey Family.

to make the land *flow* with them would require a bit of human intervention.

Media campaigns trumpeted the opportunities that awaited the Jewish migrant, who braved the days-long (well, often weeks-long) trip from Moscow to Tikhonkaya, later known as Birobidzhan, to build the Jews’ land.



Photos by Semyon Fridlyand, 1934. Courtesy of the Semyon Fridlyand Collection in the Dalbey Digital Archive at the University of Denver. Through the generous support of the Dalbey Family.

A migrant would arrive to find a fantastical wonderland of happy children frolicking in the outdoors, Jewish farmers communing with nature, beekeepers and their apiaries, and strapping men and women building new cities. The foreign media was no less excited about the messianic possibilities. Socialist Jews and even some non-Jews around the world raised money to develop the JAR, a campaign that included significant donations from important non-Jewish American politicians, convinced, during the Depression, that this was a project worthy of support.

Photographers, nearly all of whom were Jewish, travelled there to make arresting photographs that would captivate readers



Semyon Fridlyand, "Woman Milking Cow on IKOR Collective Farm," 1934. Courtesy of the Semyon Fridlyand Collection in the Dalbey Digital Archive at the University of Denver. Through the generous support of the Dalbey Family.

on the homefront and abroad with pictures documenting how Jews were turning the taiga into a land literally flowing with milk and honey. In 1936-1937, at the peak of messianic fervor surrounding the JAR, publications from Moscow to New York referred to the JAR as the Jews' national home with Yiddish, not Hebrew, as its national language.

The stunning images of Birobidzhan taken by some of the Soviet Union's most important photographers like Georgy Zelma and Semyon Fridlyand beckoned the reader, even teasing her with fantasies of creating a new world ex nihilo. Of course, like Palestine, there were in fact people already living there, but at least as the media portrayed interethnic relations in the JAR, Jewish migrants learned from local Koreans how not to starve to death in Birobidzhan's challenging agricultural conditions. In the wildly popular 1936 film, *Seekers of Happiness*, about foreign Jews coming "back home" to build Birobidzhan, which played to packed houses from Moscow to New York, Jews even have intimate relations with non-Jews, and the story ends happily ever after.

The JAR turned out to be a false Zion, not unlike the land of Israel in the vision of past figures like Sabbatai Zvi. If Zvi's messianic mission encouraged many to prepare for the end of the world, few people in the 1930s packed their belongings and headed to the Soviet Far East to take part in the end of history. Jews in the western parts of the Soviet Union preferred the fruits of urban life in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev to the harsh climates of the Soviet Far East. In fact, the JAR was more popular abroad than it was at home.

So if the JAR was a false Zion, like so many that preceded it, why does it still exist on a contemporary map of Russia? What was this beekeeper doing at the Honey

Bazaar proudly representing the JAR? Her last name did not suggest she was Jewish, and yet, she was proudly representing the Jewish Autonomous Region.

Some of Zvi's followers, a group of people called the Dönme, created new forms of collective identity that blurred the boundaries between Jew and Muslim. Perhaps the so-called failure of Birobidzhan to "solve" the Jewish problem by rooting Jews in an imaginary political fantasy created, like Zvi's failed messianism, something radically new.

While it did not create a homeland for Jews, it fostered a Jewish national cosmopolitanism. To be sure, there are Jews in the JAR today led by fearless Chabad rabbis, who follow the spark of Jewishness wherever it may be found. Their presence in Birobidzhan, however, is no different than in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, or Cheyenne, Wyoming. This radical experiment in Jewish nationalism, the JAR became a place where in the 1930s, Korean rice farmers learned Yiddish to communicate with regional administrators and Russian Cossacks married the few Jews who moved there. Today, the JAR is the only place in the world where Chinese businessmen pull into the region's main train station and are greeted with enormous modernist Yiddish letters trumpeting their arrival in *BIROBIDZHAN* and a Russian beekeeper could proudly tell me that honey from the Jewish Autonomous Region, well at least *her* honey, was the best in all of Russia.

David Shneer is the Louis P. Singer Chair in Jewish History at the University of Colorado Boulder and author of the award-winning Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War, and the Holocaust (Rutgers University Press, 2010).



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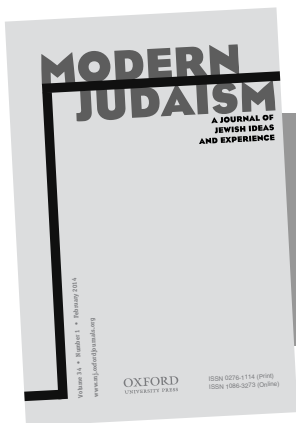
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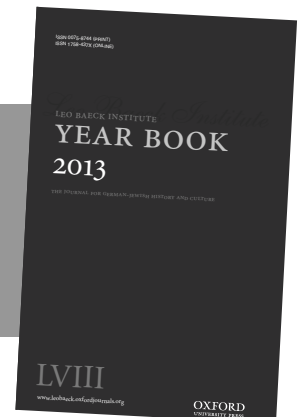
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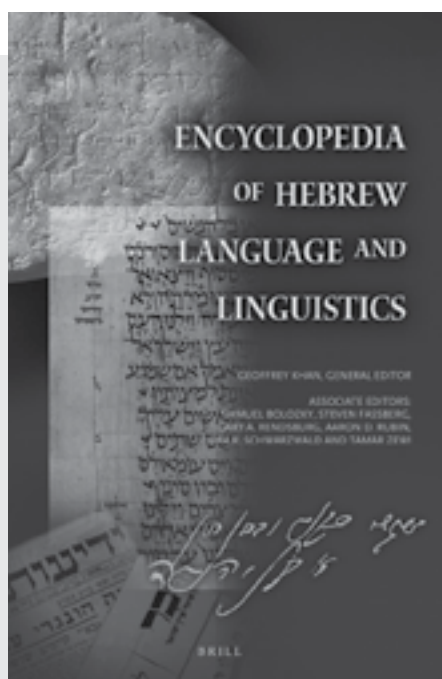
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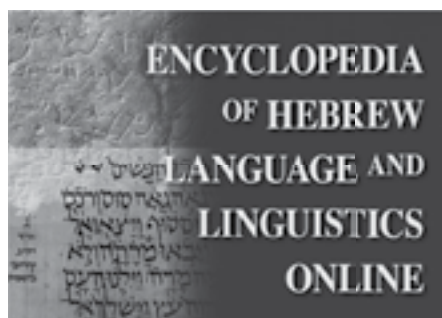
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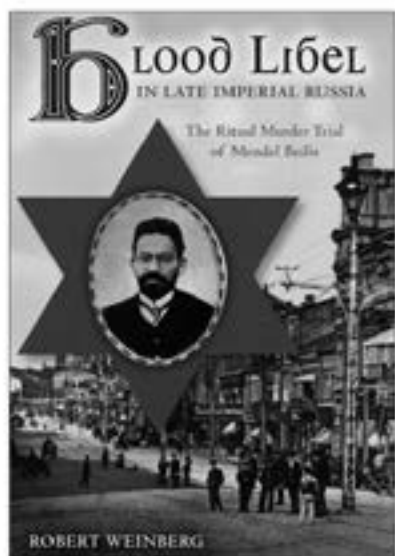
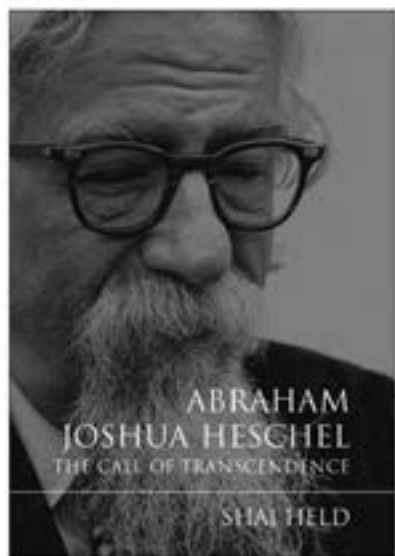
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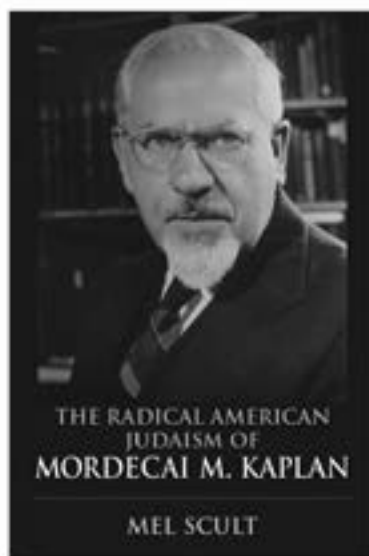


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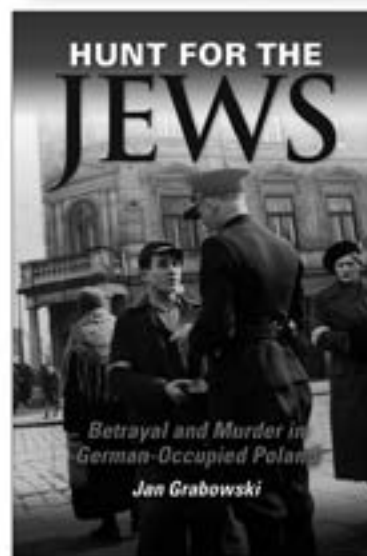
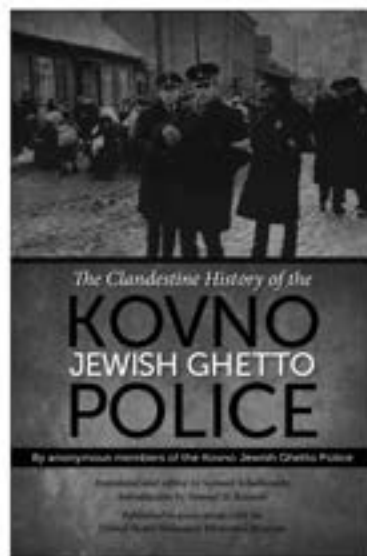


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Jews and the Geography of Contest in the American Frontier West

David Koffman

When Francis Scott Key twinned “land” and “free” together in the lyrics of “The Star-Spangled Banner” in 1814—in the wake of the War of 1812, a war of territorial expansion, not one of political sovereignty, as was the War of Independence—he captured something of the essentially conjoined status of the ideas of freedom and land that had been and would continue to be central to the American imagination. The political fantasy that the continent was empty of property-bearing people played a key role in the very formation of the Republic, and acquiring and settling land was the foundational motivation for millions of immigrants and hundreds of millions of their descendants who currently comprise all but 0.9% of the American population. Indeed, land and its natural resources lay at the heart of the juggernaut of America’s expansion, from its eighteenth-century wars of territorial enlargement, including those with Indians and those with other colonial powers, to its extensions to new territories by homesteaders and the military in the early nineteenth, and onto the continuing succession of waves of frontier encounter well into the twentieth century.

The frontier was a physical place, a geography of contest, onto which the federal government invited and enabled a massive wave of European immigrants, alongside Chinese, Mexican, and African American laborers, to settle newly acquired lands. Though great tracts of this land had been acquired as spoils from America’s war with Mexico from 1846 to 1848, or purchased—from France in 1803 (Louisiana), from the United Kingdom in 1846 (Oregon), from Mexico in 1853 (portions of New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona), and from Russia in 1867 (Alaska)—most of it became available to settlers through the state’s efforts to contain and then assimilate American Aborigines, and to extinguish their title to the land by treaty signings or force.

The frontier was also a process, and Jewish immigrants played an active part in it as peddlers, traders, prospectors, speculators, and entrepreneurs. Jews too linked “land” and “free,” and they too participated in the great



Ute Chief Ouray and Otto Mears, between 1860 and 1880 / Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of American Ethnology, photographer. Allen Tupper True and True family papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

struggle against native peoples for American land, albeit with their own uniquely Jewish articulations. To the frontier of the second half of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, they unwittingly brought medieval and early modern European expectations and limitations of what their relationships with

land could be. There they vied with native people, and encountered a range of competing conceptualizations of soil, landscape, territory, space, and earth. Thousands cast their lots among the German, Irish, Scandinavian, and American-born migrants who rushed west to seize their opportunity for land. Jewish

peddlers traversed the in-between places along the shifting frontier, in and on the borders of native territories and government-created Indian reserves, helping connect spaces into larger economic zones.

Land provided a site of longing and resolution for American Jews, and they most certainly wanted to belong to it, to be *of* it if not from it, to imagine a deep connection to it that implied an end to exile, a rootedness. They wrote about land in poems and novels, diaries, letters, and memoirs, in newspapers, local histories, and travelogues in English, German, and Yiddish, often eloquently articulating wishes and realities of its landscape, its power, its newness, its salvific potential.

Along with the economic opportunities promised by the West, those Jews who migrated to America's frontiers *desired* land. For them, land ownership offered some critical entitlements: an avenue for social and economic mobility, a sense of belonging in the project of establishing the nation, a place for civic inclusion and religious latitude, the experience of motility unrestricted by a powerful state, and a reversal of the predicament of landlessness Jews faced in Europe. The battle against Native Americans for supremacy over the land doubled as a battle for "ownership" of America itself, for advancing civilization and establishing the American national project; Jews took pride in their active role in this central drama of American life and fate.

Their interest in western American lands blended the fantastical and the concrete, but almost always spoke to underlying modern Jewish anxieties. Some took on-the-ground measures to own, settle, or work the land. Large-scale fantasies or attempts to expand Jewish life on American land provided an (unrealized) answer to the modern Jewish Problem. Take, for example, the Scottish Baronet Sir Alexander Cuming's suggestion to the British Crown in the 1730s that 300,000 Jews be relocated onto Cherokee lands, paid for by the Jews' own expense, as a strategy to relieve the British national debt—the Jews could essentially buy nationhood in British colonial territory. Or take the eighteenth-century Gratz family, who purchased 321,000 acres west of the Ohio River on land ceded by the Six Nations. The Gratz's aspired to own the entire "virgin" Ohio Valley to the Mississippi River and apparently envisioned a veritable empire of villages, towns, and cities in the "Indian no-man's-land whose warring

Shawnee and Delaware and Miami would be subdued and their forests cleared," according to one historian of the Jewish frontier.

There's Mordecai Manuel Noah's famous attempt to build a semi-sovereign Jewish national home on Grand Island, New York in 1825, a site to which all of the Israelites living in *galut*—including Native Americans—would be ingathered. Or Julius Stern's 1843 proposal, nearly a decade before the settlement of Nebraska, that a colony of Jews be established in an area west of the Mississippi River. In the very first issue of Isaac Leeser's influential newspaper, *The Occident*, Stern suggested that if 70,000 Jews could settle a large tract of land in one of the western territories, "where Congress disposes of the land at \$1.25 per acre," they would be eligible to apply for statehood. Take the Posen-born Solomon Barth, who would become known as "the Father of Apache County," on account of his purchase from the Apache and one-time exclusive ownership of a huge swath of what is now Utah and Arizona, including the Grand Canyon.

It had even been suggested that an Alaskan Jewish fur trader named Jack Goldstone, in cahoots with the San Franciscan business giant Louis Schloss—one of the chief investors who bought out the Russian American Company, which was renamed the Alaska Commercial Company—deserved credit for convincing the United States to acquire Russian America. Or, finally, Otto Mears, the developer, "founding father," "civilizer," and "path-breaker," "breaker of the Navajo resistance" of Colorado, who convinced Chief Ouray and his Ute Indians to cede millions of acres of land for commercial settlement. Mears's effort to secure Colorado lands from the Ute, despite a bribery charge for which the federal government eventually exonerated him, was understood as a valuable contribution to closing the frontier and forging the nation. (Mears was later involved in the removal of the Ute to the present site of Uinta reservation in Utah, and the establishment of a new Indian agency there.)

These large-scale cases of individual Jews owning enormous swathes of American land share something in common with the great communal efforts of the early twentieth-century agricultural colonization schemes, which attempted to place eastern European and Russian Jews on farmlands in America's heartland (and in the Canadian prairies). The movement embraced a vision of harmony between Jewishness and Americanization as much as it did the harmony between Jew and

land, though it largely failed to transform these Jews into paragons of by then outdated Jacksonian virtue or embodiments of the Yeoman farmer ideal with his Protestant thrift and manly sweat. It was not only a scheme to circumvent restrictive immigration policy and save Jewish lives; it was a deep expression of Jewish anxiety about Jewish productivity.

All of these briefly articulated exploits on American land capture something of the widely shared idea of the great majority of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Jews living in the American West, namely, of the land not merely an asset, but as a redemptive force, a potential panacea to a series of uniquely modern Jewish problems. Most pressingly for relatively poor immigrant Jews, this meant the need to gain economic traction. But profit motive merged with other deep-seated desires, namely, the enfranchisement and sense of home it brought in America, a counter to stereotypes of Jewish *luftmenschen* by grounding them as *landmenschen*, as it were, and a corrective to the myth that Jewish men lacked the brawn for the physicality of working the land.

While *owning* land was not the driving force behind Jewish westward migrants' material ambitions—peddling, merchandizing, and exploiting the commercial opportunities that accompanied mining, homesteading, gold-rushing, and railway building dominated Western American Jews' economic activities—the *sense of ownership* over the idea of American land provided a flexible screen onto which Jews could project an idea of home for themselves. This Jewish desire for American western land answered some of the most elemental anxieties of modern Jewry. Being connected to the land showed Jews' muscular ruggedness, their fitness for the expansion enterprise. In wrestling the West from native people, Jews experienced the reversal of their recent experience in Europe and Russia, where they had suffered as the colonized. Western American Jews earned for themselves a sense of home among an emerging nation, the end of exile, and an almost aboriginal sense of belonging in America.

David S. Koffman is assistant professor in the Department of History at York University in Toronto. He is the author of "Jews, American Indian Curios, and the Westward Expansion of Capitalism," in Chosen Capital: The Jewish Encounter with American Capitalism, ed. Rebecca Kobrin (Rutgers University Press, 2012).

Lower East Side Landings

Jonathan Boyarin and Elissa Sampson

Both of us have lived far longer on the Lower East Side than anywhere else we might call home. Much of our work has focused on continuities and ruptures of its community, built environment, and collective memory in the decades from World War II to the present. *Today's rapidly gentrifying neighborhood is a space that continues to grow less visibly Jewish.* That sentence evokes a long-recognized trope whose timeline we extend as documenters of the neighborhood's transformation. Its continuing erosion as a place of living community has been the subject of discussion for over a century. Here, we draw attention to the links between memory, community, and interpretation as changes in its built environment accelerate. In 2013, the neighborhood attracts Jewish heritage tourism while the place is progressively hollowed out.

We have participated in the Lower East Side's (still!) living Jewish community, and enjoyed its intimate, mundane pleasures, from the aroma of potatonik warming on a shul's radiator to a neighbor muttering "*ale mayne sonim...*" in ominous greeting. One recent unexpected pleasure was creating a sukkah on unused public land to aid in converting it into a community garden. We have resisted the general urge to see the Lower East Side as a place where Jews *used* to live even as we point out the footsteps of those who once built this neighborhood into the world's largest Jewish city. We fight with allies what seems a rearguard effort to maintain a semblance of the built environment that evokes the richness of Jewish life here, even as we worry about the sapping of local



Photos by Elissa Sampson.



Jewish institutional vitality. Yet much of this seems like an effort to hold on to fragments of living community. From a visitor's perspective, any pilgrimage to the Lower East Side traverses land where visible Jewish life (and that of other ethnic enclaves) may seem most notable for its relative absence.

Beyond mourning and nostalgic evocations of past plenitude (better: of past desperate overcrowding and naturalized intimacy), what do we notice that helps capture the increasing disassociation of the physical Lower East Side from the collective memories or origin myths associated with that space? What contemporary interventions take place between visitors, those who interpret the space for them, and current residents, that interrupt the process of evacuation of spatial memory? How, if at all, do crossings of the space still known as the Lower East Side permit connections to an environment once seen as paradigmatically Jewish?

For us, these questions are not only academic and theoretical. Our studies of Jewish history and culture, and our immersion in critical theory, inform the ways we physically and virtually inhabit our land, the Lower East Side. We number ourselves among the interpreters whose practice we turn to briefly now. Most would now call our area the East Village, but we still call it the Lower East Side, sustaining a consciousness of older and more capacious boundaries which we crisscross daily. Space permits us to detail only a few of the techniques we use and observe in a context increasingly shaped by destination culture and gentrification.



We are fortunate to live in a building created in the late 1920s for the alrightniks of the Lower East Side, and we fill it with neighborhood memorabilia. When guests come, we show off our collection of seltzer bottles, our Hebrew Publishing Company volume announcing in Yiddish that the company has *gemuft*, a Yiddish novel by the left-wing early twentieth-century writer Chaver Paver (Gershon Einbinder) that takes its name from nearby Clinton Street. We point out to them from our window the great statue of Lenin that stands guard at the roof of the ironically-named Red Square, a harbinger building of the neighborhood's gentrification that points back to its immigrant past. As they leave, we make sure they notice the "Deco-Semitic" imagery that festoons the building's lobby and exterior.

We fancy those guests are likely to step out into the night of Avenue A, jostled by crowds of twenty-something bar-hoppers, somehow more conscious of the *neshomes* that walk these streets as well. We may well have told them about the annual chalking of sidewalk memorials at the local addresses of those who perished in the Triangle Fire. We show them the painted-over mezuzahs on our building's apartment doors, another mark of past Jewish presence. A *segulah* of sorts, they continue to ward off the erasure of memory, but only if actively seen.

Interventions drawing on such material traces of daily life are intended to stem the dissolution of an urban *Erdeskunde*, of the sensibility in which knowing each piece of the Lower East Side is knowing another part of Jewish history and its accumulated body of shared references. Such knowledge of Jewish land has been studied mostly in association with Zionism (and more recently, by Sam Kassow, in the context of Polish-Jewish *Landkentenish*). But consider for just





a moment the scales of land-reference and land-experience on the Jewish Lower East Side. Jewishly, different parts of the neighborhood were once somewhat discrete miniworlds of Russian, Lithuanian, Romanian, Galitzianer, Hungarian, Greek, and Levantine residents. Until a year ago, our building had two elderly residents who had only lived within a six-block radius, and one thought the other to be provincial since she didn't make it to Second Avenue. Recreating such past mental maps is a form of claiming space in the present; walking those spaces reclaims past knowledge.

Similarly, tour guides are well advised to arm themselves with memory prosthetics to aid narratives rather than relying solely on pointing to a building, corner, or streetscape to evoke its history. These prosthetics can include historical photographs, handouts, or song sheets. Elissa, for example, often brings along a copy of Allen Ginsberg's "Kaddish" and, at an appropriate point, has a member of the tour group read the passage about the view of Second Avenue looking downtown. Such interventions are not "living history" simulacra, even though they must use artifice to tap collective memory.

Similarly, the Museum at Eldridge Street's claim that it remains an active synagogue speaks to its interpreters' desire to present it as a living Jewish space. While its walking tours are popular, the neighborhood's changes are mirrored in its website interactive maps, affording a virtual navigation of the neighborhood's past as seen mainly through clustered sites of iconic buildings, color coded according to ethnicity. The *Forward's* former building—now a landmarked expensive condo replete with restored busts of Marx, Engels, and company—is one such icon, shown on tours that walk the land as well as those that troll it virtually. No entry is allowed, though words printed in the *Forward* long ago can be read aloud across the street. While visitors to the Tenement Museum can experience the power of stories told in place, those visitors cannot inhabit the *Forward* Building, even for the space of a few minutes. Since the irony of the once-socialist *Forward's* upscale condo fate is readily apparent, one touring strategy is to allow it to open up the question of the neighborhood's manifold changes.

Another strategy is to read streetscapes allegorically as though they were the place we would have liked to visit a century ago. Thus visitors may visually jump through time by reading Fujianese blocks as the bustling, abundant physical analogue to a past Jewish immigrant tenement streetscape. People experience the past in the present, an obvious formulation but one which can challenge guides to articulate the tangible stakes of substituting visions of the past for the present streetscape. Guides can also nudge visitors' attention back toward the present, reversing a gentrified repackaging of history by pointing to the politics of nostalgia and real estate. It doesn't take a PhD in Cultural Studies to see that tropes of "bringing the Lower East Side back to life" ignore that it never died.

The authenticity of the interpreter—her own performance of belonging to this space and its material culture—is her stock-in-trade. Here, memory merges with an affective storytelling that uses buildings and streetscapes as deeply respected props to be knowledgably and intimately interpreted. Jewish heritage tourism is an item on the menu of destination culture



in a city where the authentic visit is the priceless cultural snag. The lure of authenticity encourages visits to a Lower East Side that is both diminished and hip. Experienced tour guides serve as salvage anthropologists of the built environment, engaged in a constant trade between past use and present value to sustain something between representation and memory.

And finally, we underscore the tension between claiming the Lower East Side as a Jewish place—yesterday, today, and tomorrow—and recognizing its astonishing class inequities and ethnic dynamism. To be sure, the Lower East Side has a relatively

lower population than a century ago, when it was the most crowded place on the face of the earth. But (somewhat like Palestine when the first Zionists arrived, though we can hardly begin to guess at the implications of this analogy), the Lower East Side has never been “empty.” The challenge for us on this land remains: keeping the distinctiveness of Jewish life going, even as the scope of that life persistently diminishes, and even as we recognize that here, especially in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center and of Hurricane Sandy, Jewish life is with (many other kinds of) people.

Jonathan Boyarin is the Mann Professor of Modern Jewish Studies, Professor of Anthropology and Near Eastern Studies, Cornell University. He is the author of Mornings at the Stanton Street Shul: A Lower East Side Summer (Fordham University Press, 2011).

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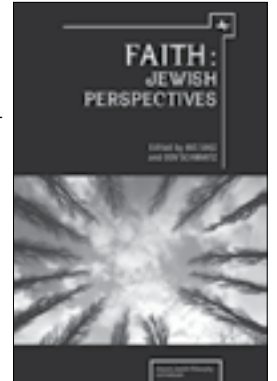
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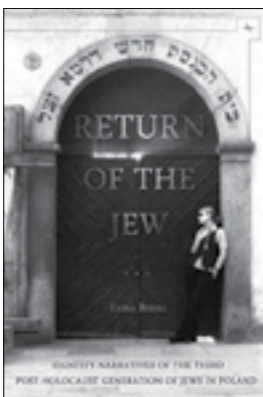
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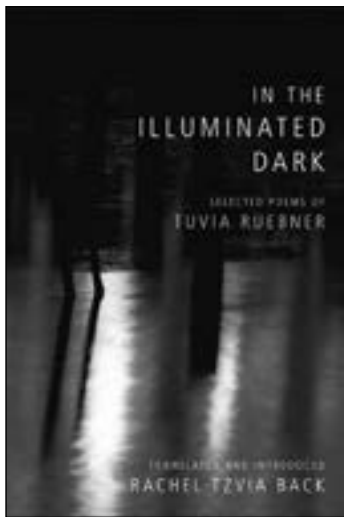
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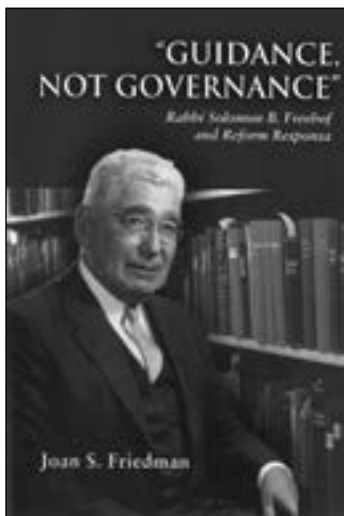


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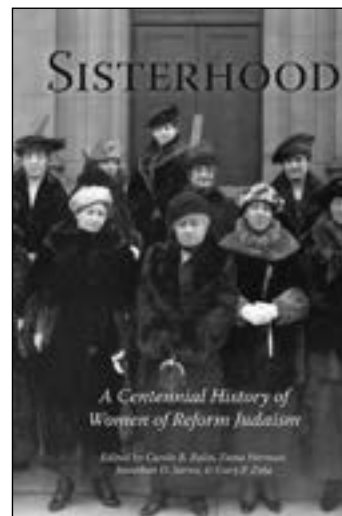


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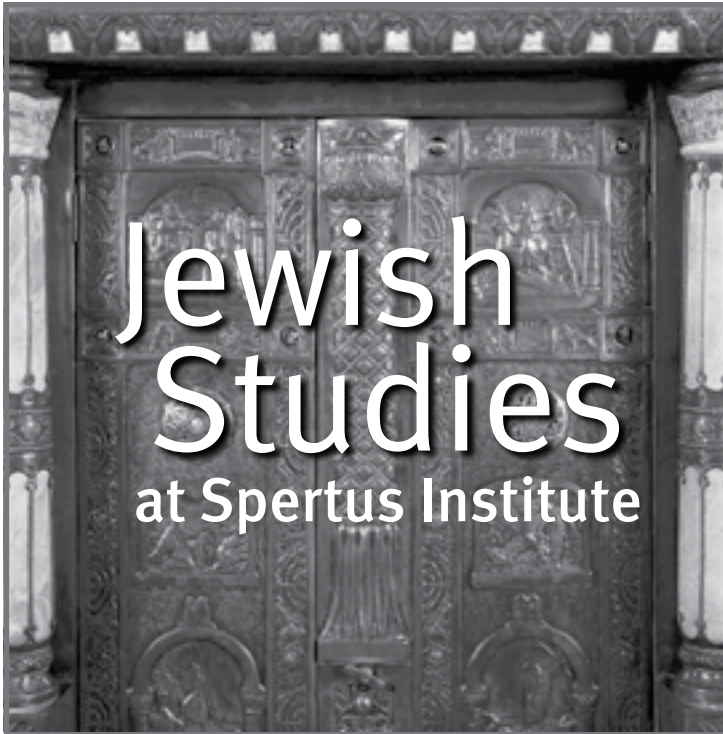


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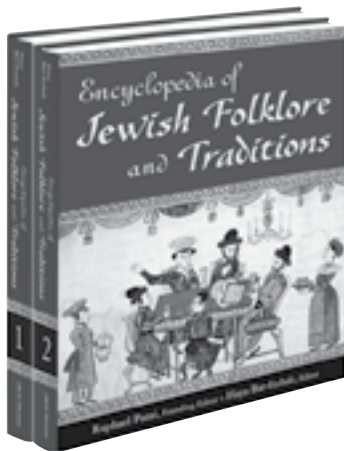
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Hallowed Ground: National and Otherwise

Oren Kosansky

Is it yet possible to consider the land issue in Jewish Studies without acknowledging, whether in naive implementation or adamant refusal, the totalizing compass of nationalism? Can we think “land” without accounting for the regularized myths of ethno-geographic origin, the telos of the nation-state, the exclusionary practices of citizenship, and the militarization of borders? In our world of maps, geolocation, passports, diplomacy, and warfare can we escape the accretion of national geographies in our consideration of the issue? Would it be enough to catalog all of the various relationships, modern and premodern, that have pertained between Jews and their lands in order to appreciate non-national ways of experiencing, interpreting, and identifying Jewish place? Can we, in

the end, decenter the land issue or dispense with it entirely, replacing it with textual notions of a mobile Torah, utopian visions of nonracialized genealogy, or postmodern constellations of identity in which place is one of any number of affective vectors of Jewish identity? Would we want to?

All of these questions have been answered in the affirmative with dynamic and instructive results. If the more ancient cases help us to disentangle land and nation in their modern articulation, there are plenty of more recent examples of Jewish attachment to land that are not entirely constrained by the brute politics of nationalism. An inquiry into Jewish relationships with the land in the present might, for instance, begin with the most local experiences of Jews as they

engage with sand, dirt, stone, and water. The biblical overtones of such encounters may not be lost on those involved, even if left unspoken, and it is more than plausible that a genealogy of canonical significance can be traced especially in places deemed sacred. In Morocco, a country rife with sacred Jewish places associated with the hundreds of Jewish communities that once dotted the landscape, encounters of this sort remain common.

Pilgrimages to the shrines of holy men and women, which have sustained my own interest for some time, form one of the most conspicuous channels of travel, narrative, and ritual that bind Jews to their the ancestral towns, villages, and cities. The fact that these holy places are marked by boulders, trees, caves, and rivulets was once taken as



Shrine of R. Amram Ben Diwan (Asjen, Morocco). During pilgrimages, the olive tree within the courtyard withstands towering flames from pyres of candles underneath. Courtesy of the author.

evidence of the pagan origins of North African saint veneration. Even a cursory glance at the Torah and the Talmud suggests, more efficiently, an indigenous Jewish source. At the shrine of the revered Rebbi Amram Ben Diwan, there is even the famous tree whose branches continue each year to be engulfed by the flames of hundreds upon hundreds of votive candles without being consumed.

Kabbalistic accents accrue to Moul Djebel El-Kebir, whose grave in the Jewish cemetery of Sefrou sits in the shadow of the Middle Atlas Mountains, where the saint is said to have found refuge from malevolent pursuers. As noted by those who told me this version of the story, the strategy hearkens to the life of Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai who similarly escaped his Roman antagonists and whose veneration is at the center of pilgrimage traditions in Morocco.

Saint veneration, in short, has provided a vital context through which Jews have experienced the Moroccan landscape as sacred, both through rituals of pilgrimage encounter and narratives of hagiographic miracles. Broader Moroccan idioms of place have also played their part. For one, the homologies between Jewish and Muslim pilgrimage practices and hagiographic tropes are extensive enough to have made the idea of Judeo-Muslim pilgrimage congeal as a fact to observers, commentators, and researchers over the past century. Whatever the problems with this hyphenated nomenclature, there are certain relationships to land that pertain in both cases. For example, there is no mistaking a Muslim shrine, with its characteristic domed roof and Islamic inscriptions, for a Jewish one, often housed within a clearly identified Jewish cemetery and associated with a synagogue. In both cases, however, the pilgrim's goal is often to reach a certain patch of land in which the saint was buried and so find oneself in proximity with his palpable presence, concentrated at the grave and dissipating throughout its physical surroundings. At that singular place, the saint's presence penetrates the living bodies who touch the gravestone, see the light from candles placed upon it, and drink the wine that has been brought into the sacred precincts. Celebrating the anniversary of a saint's death—the *hillulah*—can be accomplished anywhere, but for pious devotees nowhere is the encounter so intense or the benefits so abundant as at the land in which the saint's body rests. For the faithful, the very land of Morocco is experienced as hallowed ground by virtue

of the sanctified bodies that seed its soil.

Pilgrimages provide opportunities for participants to experience their relationship with Moroccan places in other ways as well. Pilgrims who long ago moved to Morocco's major cities (where the few thousand Jews remaining in the country live) or return from France, Canada, or Israel (where most Jews of Moroccan origin newly reside) take the opportunity to visit the settlements in the shrine vicinity, guiding their children through the streets and alleys, forests and fields, hills and homesteads of their ancestors. I have witnessed warmhearted conversations between elderly Jewish pilgrims speaking with local Muslim residents about common memories, shared friends, and altered neighborhoods. During one pilgrimage to the shrine of Rabbi David u-Moshe in the south of Morocco, a woman I knew invited her young grandson to accompany her to the small hamlet in which she grew up. After touring the few lanes that constituted the place, she paused by a source that emerged from the ground to form a small creek. Dipping her cupped hands in the stream, she spoke about the prophylactic properties of the water and insisted that the boy drink as she had in her own youth. Reflecting the logic of pilgrimage, in which sanctity can be ingested in liquid form, the land itself was encountered as a material source of good fortune.

All this is common in the Moroccan context, mediated by a series of Arabic words with which Jews were, and in large measure remain, familiar: *'ayn* for water source, *bled* for ancestral land, *baraka* for blessed bounty. Indeed, the saint-shrine-pilgrimage complex has emerged as a focal point for imagining the relationship between Jews and the Moroccan landscape, with as many permutations as there are historically situated and politically interested actors. One way of experiencing the hagiographic universe has been, in fact, to defer any singular relationship between saints, pilgrims, and place. Saints buried in one location often trace their biographical or genealogical roots to another. *Saddiqim* buried in Casablanca hail from saintly lineages from the deep South of Morocco, where ancestral shrines continue to thrive. Other saints are situated in family trees that extend back via the Spanish expulsion to Sefarad. Yet another hagiographic trope involves the rabbinic emissary who arrives in Morocco to collect funds for his yeshiva in the Holy Land. Devotees themselves reenact

this saintly proclivity to move through the act of pilgrimage, coming from elsewhere in Morocco, Europe, and Israel to land only briefly at a given shrine before moving on. Pilgrimage defines, in this sense, less a singular attachment to place than a mobile relationship between temporary destinations.

But does Jewish pilgrimage in Morocco hover, evade, or extend effortlessly across the defining limits of a world made of nation-states and inhabited by modern citizens? Of course not. Insofar as shrines are located in a place called "Morocco" (with its full complement of national narratives, symbols, and institutions) and pilgrims arrive from within its borders or carrying the passports of other countries, there is no escaping national framings of the events.

The pilgrimage tours to Morocco organized by travel agencies in Israel over the past several decades concentrate this experience of mobility into packages that include multiple stops at shrines throughout the country. Into the twenty-first century, pilgrimage transnationalism follows the circuits of capital, which have never respected national boundaries.

Within Morocco, Jewish pilgrimages have been nationalized in multiple ways, including their organization within a state-recognized bureaucracy that authorizes, publicizes, coordinates, and manages the events. Government officials attend to pilgrimages as delegates of an inclusive and tolerant state, protective of all citizens within its boundaries. Representatives of the organized Jewish community of Morocco hearken to the primordial installation of Jews in Morocco, their millennial presence in the land, and their enduring attachment to its landscape, made sacred by the eternal resting places of its saintly forefathers. In this imaginary, the relationship between holy land and nation is established in Morocco, challenging the uniqueness of Israel as a sacred Jewish homeland. Land might not only be a national issue, but it is still difficult to imagine a case where it is not a national issue at all.

Oren Kosansky is associate professor of Anthropology at Lewis & Clark College and director of The Rabat Genizah Project (<http://library.lclark.edu/rabatgenizahproject>). He is co-editor of the book Jewish Studies at the Crossroads of Anthropology and History (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

Ben-Yehudah—the Belorussian Hero: Jewish Heritage and the New Belorussian National Identity Project

Magdalena Waligórska

The vestiges of Jewish material heritage are impossible to overlook in the Belorussian landscape. Picturesque old Jewish cemeteries and synagogues, even if derelict, or converted to profane use, testify to the vitality of Jewish life in Belarus, where, at the turn of the twentieth century, Jews made up half of the population in major urban centers. At the same time, the losses Belorussian Jewry suffered in the Holocaust, during the Stalinist “black years,” and through massive emigration, made them into the invisible “other” for a long time. The Jewish past is still rarely acknowledged in the public spaces of the country deemed the last dictatorship of Europe, yet, recently, Belorussians have begun to factor their history of multiethnicity into a new vision of national identity through small grassroots initiatives.

In September 2012, the town of Glubokoe [Belorussian: Hlybokae], in the north of Belarus, staged the annual Day of Literary Production and Printing. This official festival, organized in a different town every year, brings with it both prestige for the organizing municipality and special funding from the Ministry of Culture. The 2012 festival in Glubokoe reverberated not only locally, but also internationally. On the initiative of the local executive committee, the statue of Lenin was removed from the central square of the town and replaced with an interethnic “Walk of Fame,” featuring busts of eight illustrious citizens of Glubokoe, including Józef Korsak (1590-1643), Polish governor of Glubokoe, Vaclau Lastouski (1883-1938), historian and prime minister of the Belorussian People’s Republic murdered by the Bolsheviks, as well as the father of modern Hebrew, Eliezer Ben-Yehudah (1858-1922).

The story of how Ben-Yehudah replaced Lenin in Glubokoe goes back to 2008, when Gennadij Plavinski, a retired engineer and amateur historian, launched a campaign to commemorate the Hebraist who lived and studied in Glubokoe in the 1870s. Before the Second World War, nearly 60% of 12,000 inhabitants of Glubokoe were Jews. After the war, only the old Jewish cemetery and a modest monument to the victims of the local ghetto reminded the inhabitants about

centuries of Jewish presence in the town. For Gennadij Plavinski, who has Polish roots and is Catholic, the monuments of Jewish death were not enough in a town that once had so much Jewish life. Going from door to door, he started gathering signatures for a petition to the local



Lenin’s statue in the main square of Glubokoe, 2010. Courtesy of the author.

authorities; publishing articles about the life of Ben-Yehudah in the local oppositional press; and distributing flyers documenting Ben-Yehudah’s childhood and youth in Belarus. Four years later, and rather unexpectedly for Gennadij, the local authorities decided to include Ben-Yehudah in the local pantheon. Gennadij was never formally acknowledged for his involvement, but he is grateful to the authorities for their unorthodox decision and considers it no less than a miracle that the monument supplanted Lenin himself.

The disappearance of the statue of Lenin, which on the occasion was removed “for conservation,” is as telling as the choice of the distinguished men who took his place: a veteran of the Polish campaign against Moscow, a Belorussian nationalist, and a Zionist. The Glubokoe “Walk of

Fame” not only symbolically rehabilitated the hitherto forgotten and “politically incorrect” protagonists of Belorussian history, but it also replaced the Soviet narrative of Communist unity with a vision of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity.

Projects that include Jews in the narrative of Belorussian history have also taken place on the initiative of Jewish institutions. The Jewish Museum in Minsk, for example, has in the last few years prepared a number of exhibitions and publications about Jews in the Belorussian antifascist resistance units. The anti-Lukashenko opposition has made similar gestures. The Belarus Free Theatre Publishing House, associated with the internationally renowned underground theatre company of the same name, published in 2009 *One of Us*, a biographical dictionary of prominent Belorussians. Out of twenty-six entries, ten are biographies of Jews, including Isaac Asimov, Marc Chagall, Kirk Douglas, Shimon Peres, Menachem Begin, and Eliezer Ben-Yehudah. The dictionary likewise lists a number of ethnic Poles, such as the heroine of the 1830 anti-Russian uprising, Emilia Plater, or the geologist Ignacy Domeyko. In the introduction the editors state their intention to establish a Belorussian national pantheon. By listing famous artists, writers, politicians, and scientists who came from Belarus, they hope to foster national pride and articulate a political message. “A country that has given the world so many geniuses, can and indeed should transform into a civilized, modern and sensible state.” The multiethnic heritage is thus interpreted as a legacy of modernization and enlightenment that should inspire political change in Belarus.

Ben-Yehudah’s entry into the Belorussian pantheon has one more dimension. As a result of intensive Soviet Russification campaigns and current language politics, only 23.4% of Belorussians speak Belorussian fluently and less than 4% use it constantly in their daily life. The reviver of Hebrew thus appears to many as a role model. When the governor of Vitebsk opened the Glubokoe “Walk of Fame,” delivering his speech entirely in Belorussian, he sent a clear message about how much the new memorial was part of a nationalist



The monument of Ben-Yehuda in the main square of Glubokoe, 2013. Courtesy of the author.

project. During a conference devoted to the work of Ben-Yehudah, organized 2013 in his birthplace, Luzhki, author Pavel Kastiukievich went so far as to state that the situation of today's Belorussian is comparable with the state of Hebrew in the late nineteenth century. In the same vein, the journalist of the oppositional monthly *Bat'kaushchina* (Fatherland), Zmicer Lupach, wrote that "Eliezer Ben-Yehudah and his biography could serve us all as an example." Clearly, part of the new local fascination with Ben-Yehudah has to do with the inspirational potential that his project of reviving Hebrew has for those campaigning for a rebirth of Belorussian today.

The tradition of multilingualism and the linguistic diversity of Belorussian cultural and intellectual life before the Second World War today inspires both the activists dedicated to preserving Jewish heritage in Belarus and the anti-Lukashenko oppositionists, who resent the dominance of Russian in the public domain. Although the grassroots projects commemorating the Jewish past devote certain attention to Jewish languages, Jewish memory projects in Belarus have the revival of Belorussian language high on the agenda.

The grassroots projects devoted to Jewish heritage in places like Glubokoe reveal a wider interface between the new interest in the Jewish past and the highly politicized Belorussian national identity project. Public historians championing the

importance of Jewish history in Belarus today not only frame Jewish history as an integral part of the Belorussian past, but also define Belorussianness itself via the federalist, multiethnic and multireligious heritage of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. This vision resonates with the anti-Lukashenko opposition which places Belarus in the realm of European cultural influence and cherishes the myth of the harmonious coexistence of various ethnic groups within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Paradoxically enough, the narrative of Belarus's multiethnic heritage also strikes a chord with the official authorities who see the foundational myth of Belarus in the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic and gesture towards its early ideals of ethnic equality.

The current initiative to create a central Holocaust memorial space in Trostenets, just outside of Minsk, exemplifies the attempt of the Belorussian authorities to acknowledge the singularity of the Jewish suffering in the Second World War. The high profile of this project, realized with significant financial support from Germany and Austria, suggests that commemorating Jews in today's Belarus has important implications for the country's international relations and its image abroad. As the head of the Minsk municipal administration, Sergej Chilman, recently put it, "[the Trostenets monument] has a great meaning for Belarus's cooperation with

Germany and Austria and the development of friendly relations between our states." The commemoration initiative in Trostenets, supported personally by the German president, Joachim Gauck, has a chance of becoming a flagship memorial project, which can help the Lukashenko regime to present itself as pursuing progressive memory politics and being open for international cooperation.

It remains to be seen if the small grassroots initiatives and the foreign-funded projects can inspire Belorussians to fill in the gaps in their historiography concerning the dark chapters of Belorussian-Jewish relations and help them address the problems of contemporary Belorussian Jews. Even though the authorities have undertaken some steps to counteract anti-Semitism, prosecuting neo-Nazis and closing down an anti-Semitic publishing house, there is no state support for Jewish culture and education and the burning question of the restitution of Jewish real estate has not yet been addressed. If Ben-Yehudah is to be the patron of this Belorussian change, let us hope that starting small can be the harbinger of bigger things to come.

Magdalena Waligórska is assistant professor of East-European History and Culture at the University of Bremen, Germany. She is the author of Klezmer's Afterlife: An Ethnography of the Jewish Music Revival in Poland and Germany (Oxford University Press, 2013).



Gennadij Plavinski with a Ben-Yehuda flyer, Glubokoe, 2013. Courtesy of the author.

A Tree Grows in Berlin

Leslie Morris

In a vacant lot on the former militarized wall zone separating East and West Berlin, a Star of David made out of two traffic yield signs is partially visible through the overgrown grasses and weeds. These sixty-two vacant lots on five blocks of urban real estate are currently in the hands of corporate speculation. From 2006 until last year, it had become provisional exhibition space for a series of experimental public art projects, including the 2007 Star of David installation by Miklós Mécs.

Known as the Sculpture Park, the piece of land, lying on the fault line between east and west, is replete with excesses of meaning and historical layers. It borders the Weimarer-era Jewish-owned Ullstein, Schocken, and Mosse publishing houses as well as the former Herrnfeld Theater, the only permanent Yiddish theater company from 1906-1916, used until 1939 by Kurt Singer as a theater and concert space for his Jüdischer Kulturbund. A few blocks away is the Lindenstrasse synagogue memorial, designed by Zvi Hecker and Eyal Weizman, in the courtyard of what is



Star of David positioned on property owned by a Jewish reclamation company. Summer, 2007. Artist: Miklós Mécs. Courtesy of the author.

now an insurance company, and across the street is the government building that now issues passports. It is a site of industrial ruin in an age of real estate speculation: peripheral, provisional, not legible even in the context of public art in Berlin that is often found in industrial sites of decay. A no-man's-land of a nostalgically evoked GDR and, before that, prewar Jewish Berlin, the Sculpture Park is there only if you know

where to push in the shaky mesh fence that delineates the space and if you choose to see the place as both urban and Jewish ruin.

Like the simultaneously visible and invisible, legible and illegible lines that demarcate the *eruv* currently planned for Berlin, the shaky mesh fence of the Sculpture Park signals the multidirectionality and the polysemy between Jewish and non-Jewish spaces in Berlin. It is impossible to think about the question of space in Germany without recalling the tenaciousness and the ambiguities of the concepts of *Heimat* and “land” (*Blut und Boden*, or “blood and soil”) both to German nationalist discourse and to German Jewish identity. From Heine, who conceptualized the book as the portable *Heimat*, to Paul Celan’s meditations on the uneasy finger hovering over the map—forever shifting—of the Bukowina, “the land” has been fraught with meaning for German-Jewish culture.

Critical work on the encounter between German and Jew in Berlin today has largely focused on the elegiac memory projects in



Aktion Restgrün, 2006. Transplantation of five wild growing trees at the roof of the destroyed Palace of the Republic on 4th of April, 2006. 5 trees. Height 150–250 cm. Courtesy Ulrike Mohr. © 2014 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn / Ulrike Mohr. Photographer: Petra Spielhagen.



Neue Nachbarn, 2008. Installation view of the 5th Berlin biennial for contemporary art at Neue Nationalgalerie. Documentation, various materials. Dimensions variable. All works courtesy Ulrike Mohr. © Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art, Uwe Walter, 2008.

public spaces of the city. Significantly, in much of this recent work the state-sponsored structures of historical and cultural memory are more prominent than the shakier edifices that constitute the encounters and mis-encounters of German-Jewish history and memory. While contemporary public art projects in Berlin attempt to create a radical interruption of new narrative into history and public spaces of memory, they often monumentalize, reify, and hypostatize the meaning of “place” and, in particular, of Jewish spaces in Berlin today.

In appropriating the vacant lots of the wasteland and creating art installations on the margins, the artist collective that formed the Sculpture Park created a space that counteracts this surfeit of memorialization and commodification of Jewish memory in Berlin today. In addition to the Star of David installation, another striking contribution to the genre of Land Art was Ulrike Mohr’s

series of installations *Restgrün* and *Neue Nachbarn*, which were part of the Fifth Berlin Biennial in the Sculpture Park’s 2008 exhibit *Spekulationen*. In the first of this series of projects, Mohr transplanted trees that had been found growing on the roof of the Palace of the Republic as it was awaiting demolition. The Palace of the Republic, built in the mid-1970s to house the parliament of the German Democratic Republic as well as art galleries, theaters, restaurants, a bowling alley, and a discotheque, stood on the site of the former Stadtschloss (City Palace), damaged in the war. The trees found on the rooftop were spontaneous vegetation created by a mix of bitumen, polystyrene, and concrete. Within a short period of time, moss, lichen, various grasses, and trees germinated. On April 4, 2006 demolition work on the Palace was stopped for one day and the roof’s scrubby, self-seeded trees were identified botanically, labeled, and dug out, at the precise moment at which the

Palace of the Republic was demolished, and replanted in the Sculpture Park in exactly the same position as on the roof of the Palace. Mohr marked the trees transplanted to the Sculpture Park with Palace of the Republic medallions and small plastic botanical classifications pushed into the ground. Otherwise, “the trees quietly and symbiotically blended in with their new neighbors, wild trees and vegetation, who similarly sprouted from cracks after the fall of the Wall.”

Mohr’s next project was to transplant the five trees to the roof of the Neue Nationalgalerie, built by Mies van der Rohe in former West Berlin, with the constellation and placement of the trees corresponding to the corner points of Mies van der Rohe’s main hall, thus establishing a new link between east and west. The Prussian Cultural Ministry forbade it, yet Mohr was able to create a documentary exhibit of the trees in the main hall of the museum. Mohr had planned to

keep the trees permanently in the Sculpture Park, but because of new building regulations she had to uproot the trees after the Biennale in the fall of 2008; they were transplanted in the “Depot” of the Baumschule Späth in Berlin.

Finally, Mohr proposed an installation, *Exile*, in which the self-seeded, uprooted and transplanted trees, now conceptualized as “Palace Tree Refugees,” (*Palastbaumflüchtlinge*) would be transported to the Villa Aurora, the former home of German Jewish émigré writer Leon Feuchtwanger, in Pacific Palisades, California. Funding and other practical considerations forced her to abandon this project. A Los Angeles exile for the “Palace Tree Refugees,” which would be brought not only to Los Angeles but more specifically, to the former home of Feuchtwanger, evokes the trees as exilic German Jews, truly “rootless cosmopolitans.” For Mohr, Los Angeles is a site of German Jewish refugee history, but also a city that is in flux between nature and culture; city and desert; a place of Land Art and site specificity, a place

of rampant and fast growth, a city with a scarcity of water resources that has the most stringent regulations for importing living plants. Into this landscape of deprivation, immigration, urban entanglement, and German Jewish history Mohr wanted to place the “Palace Tree Refugees.”

What does this project say about the ongoing debates about the notion of space and *Heimat* in German-Jewish culture today? Mohr’s installations and (failed) proposals, in which vegetation erupts in the entanglement between Jewish and German spaces, suggest the rhizomatic spread, or germination, of Jewish to German to Jewish, and insists that the German is always already Jewish. Seeking to transport the “Palace Tree Refugees” from East Berlin to the heavily marked Jewish spaces of the former wall zone, with a stop at the modernist mecca of the Mies van der Rohe museum (occupying another border zone between east and west) and then to Feuchtwanger’s exile residence in Los Angeles, Mohr uproots dominant

ways of thinking about Jewish spaces and public art in a city that is replete with debate about Jews and the public sphere.

Most importantly, Mohr’s project forces us to contemplate Jewishness in a major metropolis that is in a complex dialogue with New York, Tel Aviv, and Los Angeles, and that plays a vital role in the shaping of new Jewish life in cities to the east of Berlin: Krakow, Vienna, Budapest, and Vilna, as these cities have been emerging from their own complex historical and cultural ruin. Mohr’s “refugee trees,” rootless cosmopolitans in their own right, are not attempting to re-root any notion of authentic Jewishness, whatever that would mean, in the ruins of German-Jewish history. Rather, Mohr’s project is a way of thinking about contemporary German-Jewish urban space and historical spaces of memory as part of the complex ordering of the private, public, and sanctified spaces of urban Jewish culture.

Leslie Morris is associate professor of German at the University of Minnesota.



Fence of Berlin’s Sculpture Park. July, 2009. Courtesy of the author.



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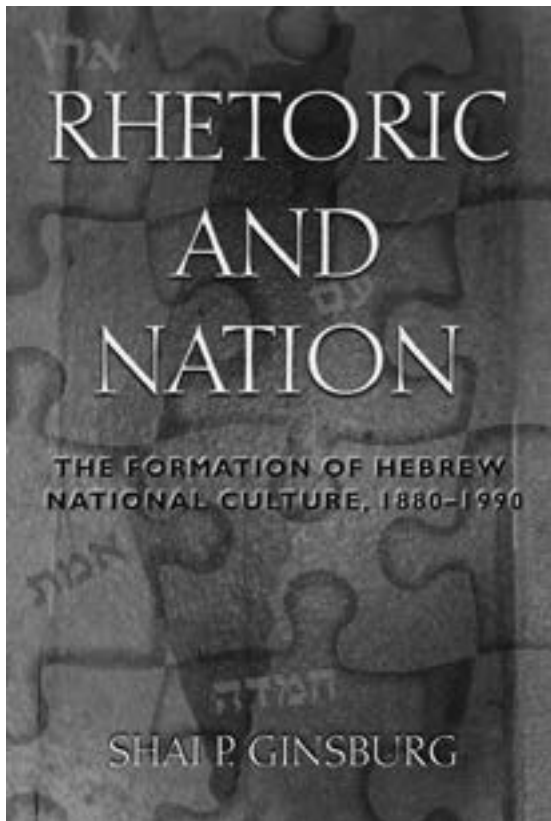
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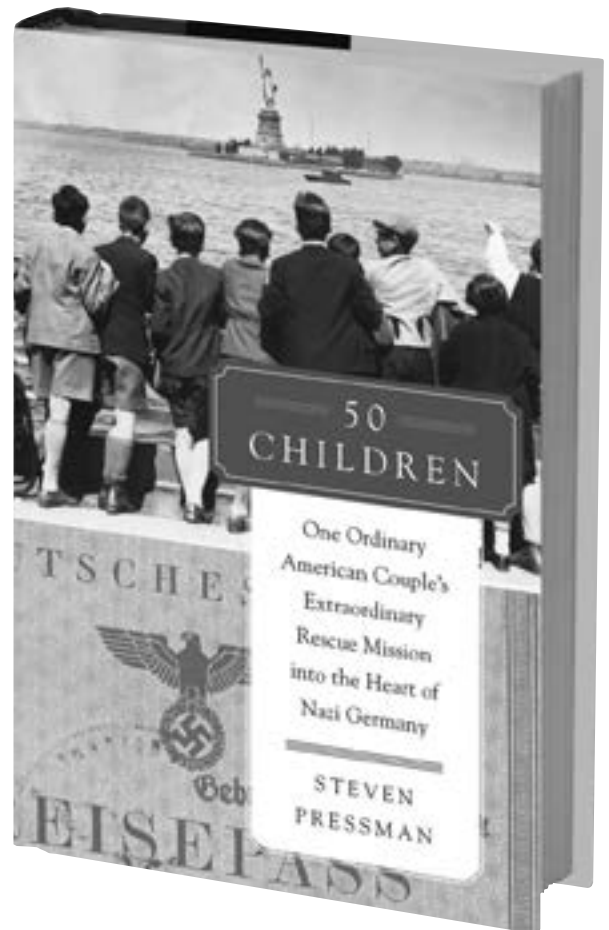
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Land: Holy Land, Homeland, Holy Land

Anita Shapira

The last words of Yosef Trumpeldor, the hero who was killed in 1920 protecting the Zionist outpost in Tel Hai, were reputed to be: “It is good to die for our land.” This was the Hebrew version of the Latin saying “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.” The Hebrew word *’arzenu* (our land, our country) reflects the Jewish habit of referring to the Land of Israel simply as *’Erez*—the land; this was enough, and there was no need to mention the name of the country. But by speaking of “our land,” Trumpeldor emphasized the proprietary aspect, which Yiddish-speaking Jews who yearned for *’Erez* did not feel the need to do. The term “our land” was a Zionist creation, which hid the growing realization that there was another claimant to that land. A popular song spoke about building “our land,” because this land is ours. The poet Tchernichovsky says in his lullaby “This land will be ours,” and in his poem “I Believe” he speaks of “a [native] generation in the land”—again, no need to mention the full title. Non-Jews called it “Palestine,” the name given it by the Romans after the suppression of the Bar Kokhva uprising, but for Jews it was simply *’Erez*.

In Jewish tradition, this was the holy land, a place shrouded in dreams and legends, a faraway country, where the Jews would be eventually brought by the Messiah in the end of days, as part of the process of redemption. In the meantime, some Jews went to live and be buried in that country, but the masses never thought about it as a real place. It was the country to which one ascends and from which one descends, value-loaded terms derived from the religious sphere. The Talmud says: He who lives outside the Land is like a godless person. But this was one of the commandments that were never observed. Jews were scared of that place, of having their great expectations from that land disappointed: Rabbi Naḥman of Bratslav went there but returned immediately to Russia. The writer Yosef Ḥayim Brenner postponed his immigration to Palestine a number of times, for the same reason. From the middle of the nineteenth century the Holy Land started to become real: Hebrew literature—beginning with Avraham Mapu’s novel *The Love of Zion*, portrayed a flesh-and-blood country; the literal reading of the Bible turned Jerusalem into a real place; the steady



Yosef Ḥayim Brenner, 1910. Central Zionist Archives.



Yosef Trumpeldor. Reprinted from *Tagebücher und Briefe* by Yosef Trumpeldor (1925).

flow of reports about the country in the budding Hebrew press and the increasing numbers of Russian pilgrims coming to Jerusalem, with the opening of the holy land to Europeans as a result of the Great Powers’ pressure on the Ottoman Empire, all implied: this country exists. The growing impact of

modern anti-Semitism and nationalism turned the land of dreams into a safe haven, where Jews could control their fate.

The process of removing the Land from the religious sphere and transplanting it to the national sphere occurred slowly, and was embraced only by Zionist adherents. Most Orthodox Jews viewed this process as an attempt to force the issue, a blasphemy, and objected fiercely to it. The adoption of religious terms such as redemption and the Return of Zion, and the use of the Hebrew language in non-religious functions were all rejected and savagely criticized by Orthodox circles.

It was through this process that the Holy Land became “our land,” and soon it would be called “homeland,” *moledet* in Hebrew. This was the modern Hebrew adoption of a biblical term that had signified one’s place of birth: “Go forth from your land and your birthplace [*moladetkha*], and your father’s home, to the land I will show you” (Genesis 12:1, Robert Alter’s translation). The new meaning was taken from the Russian *rodina* which means the country of one’s birth. Zionists who came from Russia used terms they had learned back home. Hence, the Hebrew translation of the standard Russian term for “Jew,” *yevrei*, was translated into Hebrew as *’ivri*, and was used profusely, supplying endless opportunities for scholars to dwell on the so-called Zionist attempt to disengage from the Diaspora by using the term *’ivri* instead of *yehudi*. In fact, however, both terms were used interchangeably, and only later scholars read deep meaning into it. *Moledet* was interchangeable with “our *’erez*,” and both were Zionist secular terms for the land. The popular songs reflected the growing tendency of the youngsters growing up in Palestine to call it *moledet*, the country of their birth: “Let’s build our land, our homeland”; “We love you, homeland.” The image of the land as mother also appeared—“We sing to you, homeland and mother.” During the 1937 controversy about partition, one youngster wrote: “one cannot carve up the body of a mother.”

The fervor for the land had hardly anything to do with its holy sites. The four holy cities (Old Jerusalem, Zefat, Tiberias, Hebron) did not attract the pioneers in particular or immigrants in general. The

fast growth of Tel Aviv reflected the trend to avoid the historical holy places in favor of the modern city, and the settlement in the Jezreel Valley and along the River Jordan created the modern holy sites of pioneering Palestine.

The generation of the immigrants yearned for the Land, were ready to devote their lives to backbreaking work in order to settle it, but their love was somewhat detached from the geography of the country. It was the native-born sons and daughters who covered the country on foot. But they too avoided the holy sites: The Tomb of the Patriarchs, the Wailing Wall, and even the Tomb of Rachel were not considered attractive destinations for young people's hikes. They went on trips to the Tombs of the Maccabees, to Masada, sites that symbolize Jewish heroism, and which had no importance in century-old Jewish traditions. New sites of pilgrimage appeared, for instance the tomb of Trumpeldor in Tel Hai, with the statue of the roaring lion, which was a site of veneration for youth movements on both the left and the right.

Jewish settlement went to areas where there were tracts of land for sale and which were sparsely populated by Arabs. These

were mostly along the Mediterranean, and in the valleys and Upper Galilee. As a result, the historic homeland of the First Temple, the places where the epos of the emerging people took place, were actually outside of the boundaries of Jewish settlement and eventually outside of the borders of the state of Israel during its first nineteen years. Apart from the extreme right, no one was disturbed by this. When Geula Cohen, a right-wing activist, interviewed Ben-Gurion on the eve of Israel's nineteenth anniversary and asked him whether he would teach his grandson to yearn for East Jerusalem, he replied: If he likes—he can yearn, I won't tell him to. The state was busy with the economy, the army, and immigration, and was considered big enough to accommodate the needs of the Jews who wished to immigrate to it. It was only after the Six-Day War that the country was suddenly swept by messianic fervor. The land of the patriarchs, the cradle of the Jewish nation, the Temple Mount, spoke to many, out of historical and national sentiments. A small core of religious zealots assigned a divine meaning to the events. While the general public lost its taste for the Occupied Territories soon after the Yom Kippur War, the religious

core slowly became the leading element in settling the West Bank. After the 1977 change of government and the rise of the right, they received government support, which leads us to the present-day predicament.

The reappropriation of the Land by the religious took place under the combined banner of religion and nationalism, using all the symbols of secular Zionism but loading them with a new religiosity that was absent from the original. In a way, this is reminiscent of the Islamic notion of combining temporal rule and religious zealotry. It is time to go back to Ben-Gurion, who insisted that borders were always the result of exigency, that the history of Jewish sovereignty did not sanctify specific areas of the Land, and that we should act according to state wisdom and leave religious considerations to the coming of the Messiah.

Anita Shapira is professor emerita in Jewish History at Tel Aviv University. She is the author of Israel: A History. (Brandeis University Press, 2012), a biography of the writer Yosef Hayim Brenner (Stanford University Press), and a biography of Ben-Gurion (Yale University Press).

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God on Earth: Rav Kook, 'Erez Yisra'el, and the Re-Enchantment of Political Zionism

Yehudah Mirsky

'Erez Yisra'el is no extraneous thing, an extrinsic property of the nation, some means toward general unity and the maintenance of its physical or even spiritual existence. 'Erez Yisra'el is a thing in itself, bound in a living tie with the nation, embracing its very existence by its unique internal grace. And so, one cannot grasp the substance of the unique sanctity of 'Erez Yisra'el, nor actualize its depth of affection—only by the divine spirit that is upon the nation as a whole, in the natural spiritual impress that is in the soul of Israel.

Rarely has a bit of theological reflection—in a spiritual diary no less—had such concrete and far-reaching political effects in modern times as these lines, written in late 1915 by Rabbi Avraham Yizhak Ha-Cohen Kook, in his wartime exile in Switzerland.

In July 1914, after an intense decade in Palestine as chief rabbi of Jaffa and the surrounding colonies (in other words, of the New *Yishuv*) he and his wife Rivka had traveled to Europe, he to speak at an Agudat Yisra'el conference (hoping to at least ameliorate some of organized ultra-Orthodoxy's implacable hostility to secular Zionism), and she for medical treatments and to take the waters. The outbreak of war caught them by surprise, in Germany, where they narrowly escaped interment as foreign (Russian) enemy nationals and found refuge in Switzerland. This forced isolation gave Rav Kook time to write and reflect, including on just how electrifying his encounter with the Land of Israel had been.

Interestingly, in his many writings predating his Aliyah in 1904, the Land of Israel scarcely figures, certainly not as a category of theological analysis and lens through which to view other concepts and contemporary movements (this, in contrast to the Jewish people who so figured for him from the beginning).

This changed with his migration; not only did halakhic questions arising from settling the land begin to take up his attention—most famously in his controversial support



Rav Kook on his way to visiting the White House, April 15, 1924. Library of Congress.

for the sale of the land to non-Jews during the *shemittah* year, in order to preserve and support the burgeoning enterprise of agricultural settlement, but in his theology as well. This meant not simply reckoning with the theological import of the Land, but weaving it into his emergent vision of secular Zionism's paradoxical role in the long-awaited redemption, not only of the Jewish people, but of Judaism itself and the natural world.

Thus, writing in his spiritual diary circa 1913, he says:

The holiness within nature is the holiness of the Land of Israel, and Shekhinah that went down into exile with Israel (after BT Megillah 29a) is the ability to preserve holiness in opposition to nature. But the holiness that combats nature is not complete holiness, it must be absorbed in its higher essence to the higher holiness, which is the holiness in nature itself, which is the foundation of the restoration and repair of the world entire (tikkun olam) and its utter fragranting. And the holiness in exile will be joined to the holiness of the land, and the *synagogues and batei midrash of Bavel will be reestablished in the Land of Israel* (citing BT, *ibid.*)

Elsewhere he writes that the unique quality of the Land of Israel is “the sanctification of every mundane thing in the world.”

Rav Kook here was reinterpreting a rich skein of kabbalistic thought, in which the divine presence, the Shekhinah, as the Oral Torah, is *Knesset Yisra'el*, the sacred community of Israel, and thus the Land, are all ultimately as one, constituting, as *Sefirat Malkhut*, the very meeting point of God and the world, and themselves the stuff of revelation.

As Yosef Gikatilla writes in his thirteenth-century classic, *Sha'arei 'Orah*

Know that the first Name which is closest to all creatures and through it they enter into the presence of the Blessed King, and there is no other way in the world to see the face of the Blessed King other than by this Name is the Name called “Adonai” . . . and sometimes this dimension is called “Shekhinah” [Indwelling/Presence] . . . and . . . “*Malkhut*” . . . Always reflect on how this dimension is always known as “*Torah she-be-'al Peh*” . . . And . . . in every place that you find the Rabbis of blessed memory referring to “*Knesset Yisra'el*” [the ecclesia/gathering of Israel] it is this dimension called “Adonai” and called “Shekhinah” . . . and in this manner she is called “*Erez Yisra'el*” [the Land of Israel] . . .

In this densely allusive network of ideas, Israel's exile from the land was part of the alienation of the eternal, unchanging written law from the vibrant, responsive oral law. These alienations—of people, land, and Torah—all in turn reflect the divine presence's fundamental homelessness in the world—to be cured, in Rav Kook's audacious dialectical vision, by none other than the revolutionary dislocations of secular modernity.

Rav Kook was far from the only supporter of Zionism talking about redemption. Shmuel Almog has shown that as far back as 1876, the soon-to-be founders of Petah Tikvah characterized the purposes of their newly founded enterprise as “working the soil and redeeming the land.” Those religious settlers were certainly aware of the biblical use of “redemption” as the restoration of land to its rightful heirs, as were later activists like Yeḥi'el Mikha'el Pines and Eliezer Ben-Yehudah. The

same can be said for more radical thinkers and pioneers like Aharon David Gordon. “What have we come to do in *’Erez Yisra’el*?” he wrote a correspondent in 1912: “To redeem the land . . . and resurrect the people. But these are not distinct tasks, but two sides of the same one.” In 1918, Berl Katznelson wrote that the Jewish National Fund was nothing less than “the revelation of the Shekhinah of the nation.” Henry Near has argued for a subtle but important shift in Labor Zionist language in the interwar period from “redemption” to a different, more prosaic, biblical terms, *ḥaluziyut*. (Both Almog and Near’s studies are in Ruth Kark ed., *Ge’ulat Ha-karak’a be-’Erez Yisra’el* [Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1990]).

Boaz Neumann, in his extraordinary book *Land and Desire in Early Zionism* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2011), has shown the incredible erotic pathos with which those *ḥaluzim* infused their encounter with the land. The residual sacred meanings met with a new ethos of self-expression and fulfillment fusing the individual and national subject—a fusion that Rav Kook, on the other side of the tracks, saw as a step towards the paradoxical fulfillment of God’s own longing.

Labor Zionists, for their part, by draining the traditional religious terms of their transcendent reference, were able to harness the rhetorical and spiritual power of religious language to their enterprise, and in so doing to argue—often persuasively—that while it was in many ways breaking with Judaism, it was in other ways powerfully reinterpreting it and thus laying a claim to be both the tradition’s opponent, in the name of national liberation, and its rightful heir.

That use of religious language rested on the traditional backgrounds of the Labor Zionists, and on religious traditionalists having abandoned the field of large scale political programs, leaving Labor Zionism to remake and set the terms of the new language of Zionist politics. But neither of those conditions lasted for long. Labor Zionists, precisely because of their revolutionary commitments, educated their children out of engagement with traditional Jewish sources. At the same time, Religious Zionists eventually came to see themselves

as capable of pursuing large-scale programs within the framework of Zionist politics, thanks not least to the conceptual tools provided them by Rabbi Kook. Moreover, the passages from his journals cited earlier, and many others like them were edited, published and effectively canonized by his son Rav Zvi Yehudah, in volumes like *’Orot*. After the Holocaust Zvi Yehudah came to conclude that the only possible divine reason for that slaughter was the sheer imperative of redeeming *’Erez Yisra’el*.



Gush Emunim leader Hanan Porat is carried on the shoulders of his followers as they celebrate the agreement which allows the settlers to stay in Samaria, August 12, 1975. Photo credit: Moshe Milner. Government Press Office, Israel.

And so when in the 1970s and the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War of October 1973 Religious Zionists decided to capture the flag and lay hold, not only of the hilltops of Judea and Samaria but of the Zionist movement as a whole, they were taking the religious language that Labor Zionism had made into a functional tool for a political program and reinfusing it with its classical religious meaning. “Redemption of the land” would now mean land purchases, or seizures, and prosaic acts of settlement building under the auspices of the secular Israeli state (and those prosaic purchases, and building efforts) would themselves be the messianic redemption dreamed of for generations. Not only were they re-enchanting the enterprise—but precisely because of the phase of disenchantment, the re-enchantment now had special power, the recharging of the language part of an electrical recharging of the Zionist project, and indeed of all human history. Heaven and earth would be reunited, with heaven having come into new power, precisely for its overcoming the earlier divorce.

While the State of Israel has pursued its settlement policies for a variety of reasons and in an odd mix of assertiveness and uncertainty, the settler movement inspired by Zvi Yehudah’s interpretation of his father’s teaching has stood at the vanguard, pushing ahead through thick and thin (its resolve only hardened by Palestinian rejectionism and terror). To be sure, there have been other interpretations of Rav Kook from within the Religious Zionist camp, most notably that of my own teacher, Rav Yehudah Amital, who argued, contra Zvi Yehudah, that the Jewish people and the Torah properly precede *’Erez Yisra’el* in a religious scale of values, and that it is Rav Kook’s ethical teachings which are to provide the hermeneutic key to his vast corpus of teachings. But that has been a decidedly minority view.

In the present, commitment to continued Jewish peoplehood as an embodied people, the majority of which currently lives on the soil of the historic Land of Israel, necessarily entails a serious reckoning of the meaning of that embodiment and that landedness. Those of us who do not share

the settlement movement’s politics are challenged to develop a dis/re-enchantment of our own, one which understands the salience and necessity of embodiment and the charismatic power of the Land while constraining the ethical deformations towards which it can lead us when uncoupled with concern for flesh and blood people, and the imperatives of moral law.

In a letter from 1918, Gordon wrote that only in the Land of Israel do the Jewish people come to feel the true pain of their existence, and hence begin to heal. Since he wrote those lines Jews were made to feel far worse pains in the lands of their exile. One can only hope that we will have the wisdom to use the memory of those pains, and the pains of the Land, to goad us into the work of healing.

Yehudah Mirsky is associate professor in the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies of Brandeis University. His book Rav Kook: Mystic in a Time of Revolution has just been published by Yale University Press.

Yedi'at Ha-'arez Reclaimed: Classic Zionist Ideology in the Advance of West Bank Settlement

Eric Fleisch



Photo credit: Women in Green.

A central goal of Zionist education in the *Yishuv* and early Israel was to engender *Yedi'at Ha-'arez*—a deep spiritual and physical attachment to the land of Israel—among Hebrew youth. *Yedi'at Ha-'arez* developed through physically working the land. For decades, land cultivation was considered one of the noblest Zionist pursuits—simultaneously helping build society and conferring deep spiritual benefits as well. While this outlook fit gracefully in an agrarian-centered society, it fit less well as Israel developed into a modern, industrialized society, and the classic meaning of *Yedi'at Ha-'arez* faded.

One group hoping to reverse this decline is Women in Green (WIG). Founded in 1993 to protest the Oslo Accords, WIG expanded its activities after the 2005 Gaza withdrawal. Like others in the settlement movement, WIG sees a crisis in a settlement enterprise that, for many, is as much about convenience as about ideology. WIG tries to

reintroduce *Yedi'at Ha-'arez* as a living Zionist principle by bringing Israelis together with their land—a project that began for practical reasons, but which has developed into an ideological underpinning of their work.

WIG's practical concern is an area known as Netzer—an uninhabited, two-kilometer stretch between Elazar and Alon Shvut in the Gush Etzion bloc. Nearly all of Netzer is classified by Israel as “state land.” According to WIG, the residents of Alon Shvut and Elazar assumed that Israel would eventually designate the “state land” in Netzer as part of their communities, thereby allowing expansion to accommodate their growing populations.

In late 2009, however, WIG learned that Palestinian farmers had, for several years, been engaged in a campaign of legal seizure of the state land that threatened to block any future Jewish expansion in Netzer. Employing a strangely extant article from the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 granting

ownership of land to anyone who farmed it for ten consecutive years, Palestinian farmers had been quietly working to gain ownership of much of the land in Netzer. By the time WIG learned what was happening, some Palestinians had been at the task long enough to obtain legal ownership, and others were well on their way. WIG leaders—many of whom are residents of Gush Etzion—were startled to discover this process, occurring unchecked in their own backyard, could dramatically alter their hopes for the region. WIG believed it a baseline responsibility for Zionists to prevent Jewish land from losing Jewish ownership. Yet, the settlers' failure to recognize Palestinian encroachment into Netzer, in WIG's opinion, put the fate of Netzer, and by extension, the future growth of Gush Etzion and of all settlement, into danger. It not only hindered development plans for a natural corridor for Jewish growth, but it gave Palestinians a blueprint to exploit Jewish apathy to create “facts on

the ground” that could undermine settlement expansion anywhere in the West Bank.

When WIG learned of the situation, it investigated and found that most of Netzer’s vacant land was, at that point, still state land, so a Palestinian takeover of the strip could, theoretically, be blocked. It also realized, however, that to counter the process of Palestinian land seizures, WIG would have to use the same land code provision and farm the land itself. WIG would plant on state land in Netzer with the intention of planting every open space as soon as possible. In doing this, WIG hoped for one of two equally favorable outcomes: If it farmed land for long enough, the land would eventually be declared private Jewish land or, if WIG activists came into direct conflict with Palestinians over usage rights to a specific plot of land, the army would likely get involved and order that the contested plot be off-limits to all. In which case, its status would remain as state land.

As soon as WIG began its campaign, its volunteers recognized that, to succeed, they would have to devote themselves wholeheartedly to working the land—plowing, planting, and irrigating, day and night. Most volunteers worked regular day jobs, and got calls late at night to start planting a piece of land or to guard a new planting before having to return to

work the next morning. As one volunteer explained, the planting work has “changed our lives completely.” The work bears close resemblance to *homah u-migdal*, the grassroots Zionist work of the *Yishuv* era, in which activists advanced Jewish dominion over pockets of land under the cover of night, and by day guarded their newly created “facts on the ground.” But rather than marking new territory with fences or guard towers, this strategy is all about agriculture. New conquests are a field plowed or grapevines planted in darkness. As the group’s work has run into direct conflict with Palestinian farmers using the identical strategy, WIG’s Netzer activity can best be described as plot-by-plot trench warfare, with each side trying to plant faster than the other.

The following recounting of one week in the summer of 2010 is, according to WIG leadership, a typical illustration of the group’s work in Netzer:

On Monday night, a WIG activist noticed that a recently laid pipe had been burned. Assuming Palestinian vandalism, WIG retaliated by expanding their planting into an adjacent plot of still-vacant land. They worked all night, planting hundreds of grapevines. When activists returned the next morning to check

the vines, they encountered a group of Palestinians uprooting them. The WIG group confronted the Palestinians, who insisted the plot legally belonged to them. WIG called in the army to mediate. When the soldiers arrived, they notified everyone that the disputed plot was state land, ordering both groups to stop their activities. With the plot’s status frozen, WIG considered the matter closed, assuming that it had effectively achieved victory.

The following day, WIG discovered that Palestinians had returned and completely uprooted the grapevines, presumably in preparation for their own planting. WIG decided that if the Palestinians would not abide by the army’s decision, neither would it. So, early Thursday morning, WIG volunteers returned with several large trees they intended to plant on the contested plot. However, the police, aware of the plan, were waiting in Netzer to block the group and confiscate the trees. WIG quickly diverted the trucks, temporarily hiding the trees at a nearby kibbutz.

Two nights later, on Saturday, with the matter presumably cooled, WIG returned to plant the trees. Sunday morning, they discovered



Photo credit: Women in Green.

that Palestinians had uprooted them all. So that night, they returned and planted the trees—deeper this time. Volunteers guarded the trees around the clock for the next three days.

On Thursday morning, the volunteers left. Within an hour, WIG learned that several Palestinians had returned with power saws. WIG called the army, which again declared the spot frozen. After that, the Palestinians did not return, and the battle moved on to another plot.

While WIG works tirelessly to stop loss of state land in Netzer, its larger goal is to counter what it considers the root cause of the Netzer problem—namely, the lost commitment to *Yedi'at Ha-'arev*, which WIG considers critical to maintaining a strong and healthy Zionism. WIG believes there is a critical gap between an *intellectual* and an *actual* appreciation of the land that must be bridged for the prosettlement community to have any chance of eventual victory over the land-for-peace camp. From WIG's perspective, this is best achieved through promoting physical re-engagement with the land. They

want Jews planting—feeling dirt with their hands and sweat on their faces, believing this will reawaken people's moribund Zionist impulses, as has happened with their own volunteers.

To this end, WIG engages in outreach and education to encourage Jews to experience planting in Netzer. Though WIG has achieved “victory” over plots of land, it considers its greater success bringing Jews back into communion with the land. For example, WIG has helped less ideologically inclined residents of Elazar and Alon Shvut recognize the importance of land issues, freeing them from what WIG considers an “enclave mentality.” As one leader said, residents “used to not look at those hills [in Netzer] at all. . . . We basically taught the people to look beyond their living room . . . to walk the hills, and show their ownership over the land.” Additionally, WIG's well-attended summer camp attracts youth from across Israel. WIG admits that it is hard to “take those kids away from . . . Facebook, from everything, and actually make them touch the land, and feel the land and connect to the land.” But many have gotten involved, and WIG believes it has engendered passion

for the principle of maintaining Jewish sovereignty over all the Land of Israel. WIG also hosts busloads of Israelis who participate in planting. To WIG, this type of reimmersion in land and labor is necessary to revitalize a love of and commitment to the land, which is necessary for the settlement project to survive long term.

WIG sees the settlement project as endangered, principally because Jews have strayed from the *Yedi'at Ha-'arev* that tied them to the land and helped them succeed in its redemption generations earlier. While it recognizes the practical benefits of working the land, WIG more importantly believes it is only through a reinvigorated *Yedi'at Ha-'arev* amongst Israelis that the settlement project, and indeed the Zionist dream itself, can be saved.

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Hiking in Israel: Why Are These Trails Different?

Shay Rabineau

Israel is known for its culture of hiking. Ten thousand kilometers of marked and mapped hiking trails crisscross pre-1967 Israel, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank. Chains of backpacking stores cover Israeli territory from Kiryat Shmona in the north to Eilat in the south. In secular and national-religious schools, extended long-distance hikes are part of the yearly curriculum. Some schools organize their annual hikes along the border-to-border Israel National Trail so that by the time their students graduate, they will have walked the entire length and breadth of the country.

However, Israel's robust culture of hiking is almost completely unknown to non-Hebrew speakers, including the millions of foreign tourists who visit the country every year. In countries like Germany and Switzerland, where modern hiking became popular during the late nineteenth century, maps and guidebooks have long been translated into English and other languages, and hiking has become a major source of tourism revenue. Maps and guidebooks to Israel's trails, on the other hand, are still published almost exclusively in Hebrew, and no serious efforts have ever been made

to integrate Israel's trail system into the country's larger tourist infrastructure.

Israeli hiking is deeply indebted to the European hiking tradition, yet took a different course. From the moment European-style hiking arrived in Palestine during the early twentieth century, it assumed a character all its own. Jewish hikers described their journeys across the country in Hebrew, using words that brought old ideas of pilgrimage to life. The land across which they journeyed was not just any land, but *the* land—the mythic Land of Israel. Hiking represented more than just walking outdoors; it was an act that connected Zionist youth with their ancient Jewish forebears, and which became burdened with existential, and even salvific, import.

“Each word which is not newly created, but is taken from the good old treasures, is ready to burst,” Gershom Scholem wrote regarding the resurrection of the Hebrew language in a 1926 letter to Franz Rosenzweig. While secular Zionists believed they could decouple ancient Hebrew words from their religious meanings and use such words to describe mundane objects and tasks in the present, Scholem feared that everyday

life in *'Erez Yisra'el* would instead become dangerously infused with mythic significance. He compared the Land to a volcano that appeared stable on the surface, but was ready to erupt. “May it not come to pass,” Scholem concluded, “that the imprudence which has led us on this apocalyptic road ends in ruin.”

More than two decades before Scholem wrote his famous letter, Zionist educators had already begun using the Hebrew language to bind the act of walking in Palestine to mythic ideas. The first European-style hikes in Palestine were organized during the late First Aliyah period by the same teachers who promoted the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language. Influenced by European pedagogical methods, they used outdoor excursions as inexpensive tools for geography education, and they gave hiking a whole vocabulary drawn from “the good old treasures.” Under their watch, the word *tiyul*, which is used in the Talmud to describe the movements of the righteous in Paradise, became the modern Hebrew word for “hike.” Similarly, words for different types of walking routes—*shvil*, *netiv*, *derekh*—were all drawn from the Bible, in which such terms had been used literally,



Hiker-fighters of the Palmach on a *masa*, or long-distance trek, across the Judean Desert in the 1940s. Courtesy of the Palmach Photo Gallery.

but had also been used as metaphors for right conduct, and for the actions of God and man.

Early on, the idea of taking a walk outdoors in *'Erez Yisra'el* became linked through the Hebrew language to spiritual and eternal themes. It was difficult to formulate any concept of Jewish walking without considering the first words spoken by God to Abraham—the striking *Lech Lecha* that spurred the patriarch to leave his home and journey to the Promised Land (Genesis 12:1). Those who dared to travel through the expanses of the Judean and Negev Deserts could hardly do so without reflecting on the wanderings of the children of Israel during the Exodus. It was practically impossible to walk toward Jerusalem without thinking of *'aliyah le-regel*, the thrice-annual pilgrimage to the holy city mandated in the Torah.

When the Labor Zionist immigrants of the Second Aliyah began arriving in Palestine from eastern Europe in 1904, they brought with them an outlook on the Land of Israel that further burdened the act of walking with existential significance. The *haluzim*, or “pioneers,” were deeply committed to speaking Hebrew whenever possible, and also to working and walking the Land of Israel. In keeping with the writings of Labor Zionist thinkers like Martin Buber and A.D. Gordon, the pioneers believed that the Jewish people could actualize their existence by reuniting with the Jewish homeland. Through hiking, they pursued a “knowledge of homeland” that was similar to the German *Heimatkunde*, but whose translation into Hebrew effected powerful transformations. To “know the Land” through *yedi'at ha-'arez* was to know it in the biblical sense, as Adam knew Eve, and to become one with it.

The influence of the Hebrew language on hiking in the *Yishuv* eventually became overshadowed by other influences. In the wake of the country-wide violence associated with the Arab Revolt in the late 1930s, the Jewish Haganah militia assumed an offensive posture and began creating specially trained strike forces. By the time the Palmach was formally established in 1941, its ranks were filled with elite hikers from the kibbutz and youth movements. Hiking served as a useful cover for training and reconnaissance activities, which were illegal in British Mandate Palestine. The Palmach scout came to embody the “new Jewish identity”—the person of action who knew every corner of the Land and was willing to fight for it. After the War of Independence, when Israel's

boundaries still were not secure, and control over outlying areas was still contested, the intrepid hiker exploring the country's frontiers remained a Zionist culture hero.

Israeli hikers and guides continued to look back to ancient texts for inspiration. In his 1950 book entitled *The Hike and Its Educational Value*, Ze'ev Vilnai sought to trace the Jewish emphasis on walking the Land of Israel back to its foundations. Starting in the Bible, Vilnai describes a continuous historical thread that passes through a wide range of Jewish sources. He quotes the talmudic dictum that anyone who walks three or four cubits through *'Erez Yisra'el* merits a place in the World to Come (Ketubot 111a), and describes the itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela. Other texts are more arcane, such as Rabbi Ishtori ha-Parhi's *Kaftor va-ferah*, which describes the Land's physical character; and Rabbi Moshe ben Ya'akov Cordovero's *Sefer gerushin*, which describes mystical journeys through the mountains near Safed. Vilnai also cites Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav's admonitions to journey to *'Erez Yisra'el*. “It's like God said to Abraham our father,” he sums up, “*Lech—lech davka!*”

Vilnai was not the only person making such connections. The veteran Palmach scout Menashe Harel wrote a guidebook during the 1960s entitled *These Are the Journeys in the Land*. Although the book is thoroughly secular, its title comes from the Torah's description of the stages of the Israelites' journeys through the desert (Numbers 33:1). Harel's rationale for hiking in Israel is similar to Vilnai's: through walking, Jewish Israelis can literally follow in the footsteps of the Land's ancient Jewish inhabitants. As much as Harel himself embodied the ideal of the Israeli hiker, he did not make his case in pragmatic or utilitarian terms. For him and many others, the act of walking the Land went much deeper than asserting Israeli presence on far-flung frontiers. It was an existential act, a way of realizing one's true self.

Over the decades, the glamour of hiking in Israeli popular culture has waxed and waned. In the late 1960s, many Israeli youth lost interest in exploring their country and instead began traveling in South America and the Far East. Even though the size of Israel's trail network and the number of Israelis using it grew every year, the image of the overseas backpacker supplanted that of the desert hiker, and remained dominant through the 1980s. Israeli hiking only began regaining its mystique in the 1990s with the opening of the Israel National Trail, which was inspired

by the Appalachian Trail in the United States. Today, the border-to-border route is famous as a rite of passage for young men and women completing high school or military service, and it appears frequently in Israeli media, from newspaper articles to best-selling novels.

Unlike its American counterpart, though, and despite being a world-class route in terms of scenery and difficulty, the Israel National Trail has never become popular on the international level—largely because many Israelis still have difficulty imagining that non-Jews from overseas would have any interest in exploring the Land of Israel on foot. Modern hiking in Palestine, after all, began within the framework of the Zionist movement, and was conceived from the beginning as a means of articulating the relationship between the Jewish people and the Jewish homeland. Even after hiking in Israel lost many of its overt nationalist emblems, the underlying reasons for walking the Land continued to be expressed in terms of ancient ideas that were brought to life through the Hebrew language. *Lech Lecha*, the Exodus, and pilgrimage to Jerusalem are all tropes that still resonate with the act of walking the Land of Israel.

Today, all of the official maps for Israel's trails are printed exclusively in Hebrew, as are most guidebooks to Israeli hiking. Some hiking guidebooks have been published in other languages, including English, in an effort to render Israeli hiking accessible to foreigners. Some of these guidebooks even quote some of the same texts that early Zionist hikers quoted as they sought to establish roots in the ancient Jewish homeland. Translated out of Hebrew, however, such texts lose their vitality and immediacy. Translated out of Hebrew, and with Scholem's “apocalyptic thorn” removed, the very encounter with the Land loses its existential power. Walking the Land of Israel simply becomes hiking, and the Land simply becomes land. Perhaps for this very reason, Israel's culture of hiking marches on predominantly in Hebrew—the language within which *'Erez Yisra'el* remains volcanic and mysterious and unstable, and within which the experience of being in the Land of Israel can be fully felt.

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LandWork: Israel, Nakba, Memory

Rebecca Stein

The dispossession of the Palestinians in 1948 and its aftermath, including the razing of Palestinian villages, depended on pedagogical Israeli state efforts to expunge Palestinian history from dominant national imaginations (processes that numerous scholars have charted). These efforts required, in part, the reformulation of the national landscape—that is, a shift in hegemonic Israeli conceptions of national land, landscape, and territory alike. And this pedagogical project has proven remarkably successful in the decades since 1948, having transformed the abundant physical traces of Palestinian living in and on the land into a national story of ruins and ruination, one with seemingly no relationship to either Palestinian histories or possible Israeli futures. These narrative snapshots, drawn from ethnographic fieldwork, highlight moments in which such counterhegemonic landscapes and historical traces came into rare and renegade visibility.

Territory and Memory

While conducting research about the history of northern Israel, an Israeli friend of mine stumbled across the story of a mosque whose remains were situated on the grounds of her father's childhood kibbutz, a mosque that had served local Palestinian communities in the region during the pre-1948 period. She learned that the mosque's structure had remained relatively intact long after its Palestinian client population had fled or been expelled during the course of the 1948-1949 war, while its lands had been folded into the territory of the nascent Israeli state and subsequently redistributed for the expansion of Israel's rural Jewish communities. She called her father at his Tel Aviv home to confirm the discovery. Did he remember the mosque, she asked. No, he responded, he did not. She pressed him a bit. I have its coordinates, she insisted, and its remains are located on kibbutz land. But he was certain, reminding her that he knew every inch of kibbutz territory, having spent his childhood hiking its environs in accordance with prevailing Zionist pedagogy. His denial was categorical and there the conversation ended.

A few days later, he called her back with a set of belated memories. It seemed

that in discussion with his sisters who had also grown up on this kibbutz, a forgotten landscape had slowly come into view. Yes, the mosque was there, he confirmed. Indeed, he recalled watching Palestinians harvesting fruit from its adjacent fields when he was a young boy, a memory he presumed to be a 1949 postwar scene from the moment when Palestinian families recently exiled from Israel returned to harvest their crops and inspect their property. This memory process disturbed him. How could such an intimate knowledge of one's homeland simply vanish only to come suddenly and vividly back into view?

Landscapes and Ghosts

In the spring of 2007, I joined Zochrot (meaning "remembering" in Hebrew) on one of their frequent walking tours of formerly Palestinian places conquered during the course of the 1948 War. Founded by a group of radical Israelis in 2002, the group has aimed to educate their Jewish conationals about the history of the Palestinian dispossession. Their means and projects are varied: guided tours through formerly Palestinian places (both village remains and urban spaces); ceremonies commemorating wartime atrocities; educational lectures and films on the history of the dispossession; displays of contemporary Israeli political art that foregrounds the theme of Palestinian exile and Israeli state violence; theatrical protests in Israeli urban spaces that dramatize forgotten Palestinian histories; erecting signage in Israeli places (e.g. "this land belongs to the uprooted people of Miske") to rectify the erasure of Palestinians from the Israeli landscape. While Zochrot's core constituency is relatively small, their visibility in the Israeli mainstream media has been relatively high in the last decade, often in the form of political attacks. They can be read as a barometer of the shifting political sensibilities of the Israeli left—a left which once traced the emergence of Israeli militarism to the onset of the 1967 occupation and which, by and large, viewed critical re-evaluation of 1948 as tantamount to blasphemy in its deauthorization of the Israeli national project.

This tour, which catered to a group of young Jewish Israeli educators, focused on the ruins of Lifta, located on the outskirts

of West Jerusalem. These ruins are highly unusual, as Lifta was one of a mere handful of Palestinian villages whose primary structures were neither wholly razed by the Israeli army during or after the war, nor renovated and repopulated by Jewish Israelis. In the sites of most former villages uprooted in 1948, Palestinian history is only visibly in evidence after diligent investigative work—like the gathering of shards and unearthing of overgrown remains. But Lifta's physical landscape is quite different. When walking through its grounds, even the most passive viewer is presented with a set of remarkably intact stone houses and walkways, by a central well surrounded by thriving almond, fig, and cherry trees that testify to the place's rich agricultural history. Over the course of the last two decades, Lifta's seemingly abandoned structures and scenic spaces have become a playground for Israel's socially marginal, primarily Hasidic squatters and Israeli drug dealers, and is now a favored destination among springtime hikers. Its stone exteriors are now overwritten with Hebrew graffiti, and its interiors strewn with the remains that squatters or picnickers have left behind.

My guide through Lifta, Zochrot's founder, illustrated the village's history with the help of a map that delineated both current Israeli towns and sites of former Palestinian dwelling. He pointed to the adjacent Palestinian villages of Beit Mazmi, Dayr Yassin, Ein Karem, Saffa—a small portion of those in the Jerusalem area that were thriving prior to 1948. Some of these villages are no longer standing, their material structures no longer intact. Others, like Ein Karem, were renovated and reinhabited by Jewish Israelis, for whom Arab architecture signifies largely an aesthetic rather than historical marker. Participants on the tour, a group of self-described leftists, were surprised by the map's coordinates, disarmed by the proximity of these formerly Palestinian places, places whose prior histories, although often visible in the landscape, have been all but removed from public memory. "I knew there were Palestinian villages in the area," one young man noted. "But so many?"

As our walking tour descended into the heart of the village, I elicited the testimonial of a young rabbi who joined this tour as

part of his graduate education. He described a rural Israeli childhood spent playing in orchards, among decaying stone walls, and in the shelter of numerous ruins. "All of these were signs," he told me, "of the people that used to live here, signs we saw with our own eyes. But no one ever told us who lived there, nor did we inquire." Only at a much later age, when he was nearly 30, did the Palestinian provenance of these ruins and neglected fruit trees become clear. "It shocked me," he confessed. "You've lived in this area your whole life, and with all these things, but nobody told us, nor did we ask. You live among these signs, but their past is erased."

For one familiar with Israel, this story is not unusual. Indeed, during my years in residence there, I heard many variants—that is, stories about the discovery that

the seemingly Israeli landscapes of one's childhood had a vibrant Palestinian past. Most of these stories were enunciated with surprise, a surprise particularly acute within a nation-state that prides itself on thorough, tactile knowledge of the homeland. How, many wondered, could their knowledge of the national landscape be so dramatically wrong? And why, many mullied, was their re-education so belated? There is often an audible urgency to such questions, a sense that the questioner is recalibrating not merely a national geography but also a personal one; that is, that this rethinking of the national landscape also necessitates a rethinking of Israeli identity itself.

After the tour concluded, our guide offered a similar testimonial, one that drew on the same narrative form, the

same structure of memory. He grew up on a kibbutz, close to the remains of a decaying fortress. We all thought it was a crusader fortress, he said. Only five years ago, long after army service, did he resuscitate its Palestinian history. "Of course," he said, "there were people on the kibbutz who knew, people from an older generation. But this history just wasn't a part of the discourse."

"But this history is present," he says, "like a ghost."

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Ottolenghi: A Love Story

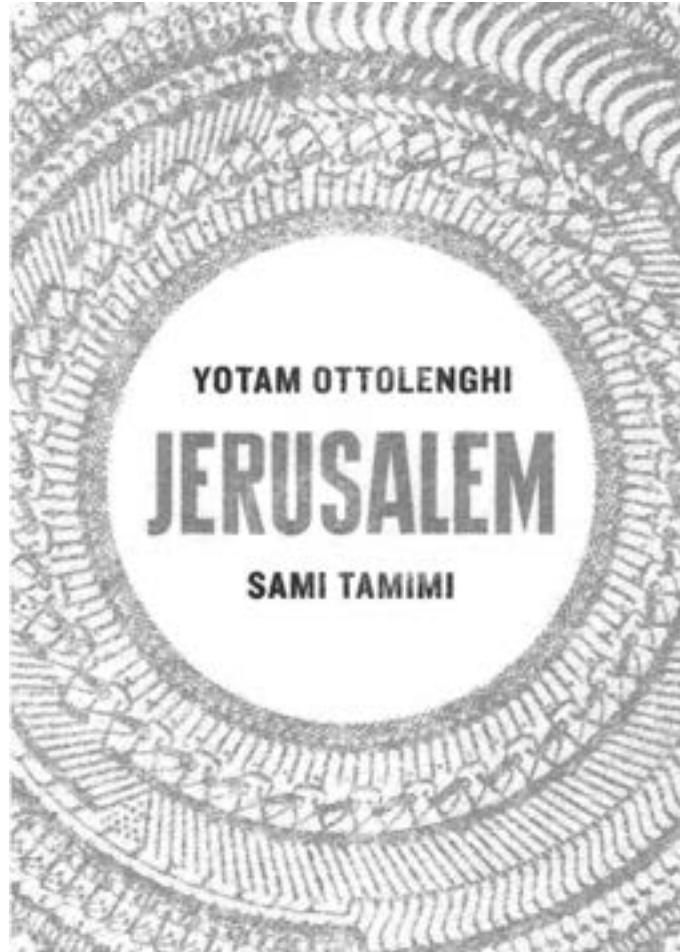
Ari Ariel

Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi met in 1997. Tamimi was then the chef at Baker & Spice, a bakery and retail food shop in London. Ottolenghi, an aspiring pastry chef, walked in looking for a job and they quickly became close friends. They have been working together ever since. When Ottolenghi opened his eponymous deli/gourmet store five years later, Tamimi joined him as a partner. Together they have opened four shops and a restaurant, and have written two books, *Ottolenghi* and *Jerusalem*. (Ottolenghi has also written another book, *Plenty*, on his own.) “It’s like a love story,” Ottolenghi joked on KCRW’s radio show *Good Food*. The two are not, in fact, lovers. They’re more like brothers, maybe even twins. They were both born in Jerusalem in 1968. Both then moved to Tel Aviv, in part to escape Jerusalem’s conservatism, and both immigrated to England in the same year.

Because one is Jewish and the other Palestinian-Muslim, there has been an irresistible desire on the part of observers, journalists, and foodies alike to see the two as poster boys for peace. But the two men resist this move. According to Ottolenghi, “we did resist it for a very long time and I think the problem that Sami and I always felt is that, especially since *Jerusalem* came out, people wanted to use our example as a sign that something is possible in the Middle East ... It’s almost intimidating to feel that you kind of carry this on your shoulders, that we are the example of coexistence, because we know how untrue that is deep inside.”

The two embrace being a bit rebellious. “Sami is not a typical Palestinian, I am not a typical Jew,” says Ottolenghi. The first recipe in their first book includes pork and they initially wanted the book cover for *Jerusalem* to be to a photograph of a shrimp dish. *Ottolenghi* is not a Middle Eastern cookbook, and the authors do not call their food New

Israeli Cuisine. Yes, they use lots of tahini and pomegranates, but there are also recipes in the book that could be described as Asian, Italian, and even American (Roasted Sweet Potato with Pecan and Maple) There is also nothing overtly Jewish about this food.



Cover of *Jerusalem* (Ebury Publishing, RRP £27). Reprinted by permission.

Their cookery is focused on bold, sensual flavors above all else. You will find no foams or spherification here, just good, simple cooking using lots of garlic, lemon, and spices. Their mission is to bring the pleasure of their food to as many people as possible.

Until recently Ottolenghi and Tamimi had largely avoided the politics of Israel/Palestine. Their latest book, *Jerusalem*, however, is another matter. It is political, almost against their wills. It is not intended as an exhaustive study of the city’s food but is instead a nostalgic recounting of their food

experiences and memories. They themselves call it self-indulgent. Nostalgia, of course, is a form of remembering and forgetting; as such, it cannot be apolitical. The authors are clearly aware of this. In their first book they wrote, “Looking back now, we realize how extremely different our childhood experiences were and yet how often they converged—physically, when venturing out to the ‘other side,’ and spiritually, sharing sensation of a place and time.” But one questions if they really shared a place and time at all? In *Jerusalem* they astutely note that the city has been “at the heart of the struggle between these two fierce nationalistic movements,” each of which has constructed its own historical narrative. Of the 1948 War they say, “for the Jews it is the War of Independence, an assertive act of bravery after the trauma of the holocaust; for Arabs, however, it is called a nakba, ‘the catastrophe.’” They say little, however, about the 1967 War, an event that must have had an even greater impact on their lives. Again, the collective memories of the Jewish and Palestinian communities are quite divergent. For Israeli Jews this was a miraculous victory, for Palestinians a traumatic loss. According to Dana Herbergs: “The interplay between one nation’s victory and another’s loss shapes Jerusalemites’ personal narratives about their childhood past, although the local dimension and the tendency to view childhood as a positive time

complicate the dualistic perspectives that the national narratives seem to suggest.” Indeed, both Ottolenghi and Tamimi express a fond nostalgia for the city of their youth, but their experiences, and those of their families and communities, must have been quite different.

For Israeli Jews, the reunification of Jerusalem meant access to the Old City and the reconstruction of the Jewish Quarter; for Palestinians it meant the demolition of the Moroccan Quarter and a series of land expropriations. Overnight, Arabs in East Jerusalem became a “minority” community

in a country established on the basis of Jewish hegemony. “Venturing out to the ‘other side’” for an Arab and a Jew could not have been the same. For the Arab side, the experience was colonial. In fact, it is hard not to see Jewish culinary tourism in East Jerusalem as a paradigmatic case of Heldke’s “cultural food colonialism.” Even when eating out is a well-intentioned and respectful attempt to learn more about another culture, it is at the same time “motivated by a deep desire to have contact with, and to somehow own an experience of, an Exotic Other.” Food colonialism also involves the appropriation of culinary practices by those in power.

Food ownership is a hot button issue in Israel/Palestine. Ottolenghi and Tamimi address this issue head on, though in ambivalent ways. They resist ownership and authenticity on the grounds that it is impossible to determine who invented a dish. Instead they focus on Jerusalem as a site of culinary interaction and overlap. This is perhaps natural since many of the “Jewish” recipes in their book are Middle Eastern or Sephardic. These often bear quite a resemblance to Palestinian foods. At the same time, their mejadra recipe could easily appear

in Poopa Dweck’s book on Syrian Jewish cuisine. On the other hand, they point out that the herb za’atar is a Palestinian ingredient that the Israeli government has declared an endangered species and has banned collecting in the wild. This occurred without any dialogue with the Palestinian population.

More recently, in a conversation with the authors of *The Gaza Kitchen*, Ottolenghi said that if he were to rewrite *Jerusalem*, he would take the question of appropriation and ownership more seriously. “I probably would have made the point that it’s very hard to say who is the originator of each dish, but it’s also overwhelmingly true that some of those dishes are the symbols of the Palestinian culture, and as such they just cannot become everybody’s sign of culture or identity. That the sign of an identity is a bit more crucial than just getting the history right of a certain dish.”

It is, of course, impossible to write a book on the food of Jerusalem without being political. Something as seemingly mundane as the name of an ingredient can be a contentious landmine—*maftoul*, Israeli couscous, *ptitim*, *moghrabieh* and even *fregola* are all remarkably similar.

But a name is never just a name. Culinary terminology, like the renaming of villages or immigrant name changing, is about power.

Ottolenghi and Tamimi maneuver this treacherous field as well as can be expected. They are not politicians and claim to represent no one but themselves. They are far too sophisticated to believe that their partnership is a model for national reconciliation. They are asked repeatedly if food can help bring peace to the Middle East. Their answers are highly nuanced. They are not naive—food is not a magic bullet. On the other hand, real interaction between Jews and Arabs in Israel/Palestine is rare. Food markets and restaurants provide unique spaces of contact. Likewise, ingredients and dishes move from one community to another. So maybe food can be a first step. It might be our only hope. “Food probably could be a vehicle to bring people closer together,” Ottolenghi says, “the next step will have to transcend food.”

Ari Ariel is lecturer in Middle Eastern History at Bryn Mawr College and is the author of Jewish-Muslim Relations and Migration from Yemen to Palestine in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Brill, 2014).

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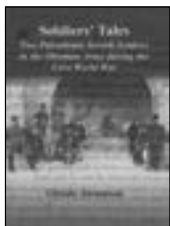
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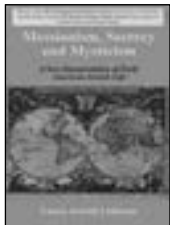
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Emily Jacir: The Place Beyond

Carol Zemel

Perspectives' Land Issue indeed lives up to the magazine's name. How might the work of Palestinian artist Emily Jacir be seen by scholars of Jewish Studies? Jacir, who divides her time between Ramallah and Rome, is an internationally acclaimed art star: she is a prizewinner in important exhibition venues like the Whitney Biennial in New York (2004), the Venice Biennale (2009), Kassel's *documenta 13* (2012), and there is a considerable literature about her work. Her video, photo-text, and multimedia installations address modern Palestinian history and human rights; her perspective is consistently geographic: place, migration, and exile.

I've written elsewhere about the diasporic map as a ragged palimpsest, with multiple, enduring centers that mark the experience of diasporic movement and community. Jacir's work is an important instantiation. Her video juxtaposition of Palestinian hair salons, travel offices, and grocery stores in *Ramallah/New York* (2004) or *stazione* (2009), an installation of Arabic names for the vaporetto stops on Venice's Grand Canal are relatively benign—though stirring—acts of comparison or intrusion. I think about these

markers as I read the tram stops in my own multicultural Toronto neighborhood. Such gestures reinforce the porosity of diasporic boundaries, as distinctive cultures meet in mutual recognition. More often, however, Jacir's perspective is trenchantly exilic, focused on locations where uprootedness, closed borders, and never-at-home-ness shape consciousness and daily life. At the same time, her subjects are never exoticized, nor do they provoke an anthropological or pitying gaze. Without softening the injustice of the conditions they represent, their appeal is empathic and at times even humorous. How can one not be amused by personal ads in New York's *Village Voice*—again a diasporic setting—posted by a Palestinian *SEXY SEMITE* (2000-02) seeking an Israeli partner?

Jacir came to international attention with the *Memorial to 418 Disappeared Palestinian Villages Destroyed, Depopulated and Occupied by Israel in 1948* (2001): a simple canvas refugee tent was embroidered with the names of destroyed Arab villages. (The subject of disappeared Arab villages also appears in work by Israeli artists Micha Ullmann, Joshua Neustein, and photographer Miki Kratsman. Ein Hod, the well-known Israeli artists' village



AP 3852 from *ex libris* by Emily Jacir. Translation and painted mural. 25 x 50 ft. Alexander and Bonin, New York, 2014. Photo: Joerg Lohse. © Emily Jacir, Courtesy Alexander and Bonin, New York.

founded in 1953, replaced the Arab village of Ein Hawd.) As a symbol of displacement and not-home, Jacir's community-based art project was provocative and poignant, but like many monuments in museological space, it seemed disconcertingly untouched and pristine.

In contrast to this kind of gallery presentation, Jacir's more performative works in film and video take viewers on shared journeys of discovery that are ridden with obstacles. The video *Crossing Surda* (a record of going to and from work) (2002) documents the artist's travel to her teaching position at Birzeit University near Ramallah, an experience shared with other Palestinian workers crossing through an Israeli checkpoint. Filmed covertly through a hole in her bag, the images show obedient fellow walkers and armed Israeli guards. The land seems peculiarly no-place—a barren roadway barely punctuated by a distant apartment block or electrical tower. But the fortuitous framing, tilted perspectives, and lurching rhythm also record the clandestine haste and danger.

Such restriction heightens the criticality of her art. In a visit to Israel, Jacir did manage to produce *Where We Come From*, (2002), a series of partnered image-text panels recording the artist's invitation to Palestinians-in-exile suggesting a task that she will complete



SEXY SEMITE 2000-02 by Emily Jacir. Documentation of an intervention. Personal ads placed in the newspaper *The Village Voice*. The artist asked 60 Palestinians to place personal ads seeking Jewish mates in order to return home utilizing Israel's "Law of Return." © Emily Jacir, Courtesy Alexander and Bonin, New York.

in their stead. “Go to my mother’s grave in Jerusalem on her birthday and put flowers there and pray,” (Munir); “Go on a date with a Palestinian girl from East Jerusalem that I have only spoken to on the phone,” (Rami); “Go to Haifa and play soccer with the first Palestinian boy you see on the street,” (Hana). The text appears in short English and Arabic paragraphs, with different fonts for the requesting voice and identifying data:

-Munir
Born in Jerusalem. Living in Bethlehem.
Palestinian Passport and West Bank I.D.
Father and Mother from Jerusalem.
(Both exiled in 1948.)

A large color photograph documents the completed task. Each component in this image-text chorus has its own affective voice, but the pictures—like tourist snapshots—deliver a sense of possibility. The tasks are simple, but each becomes a ceremony that stores the bitterness of exile.

Exile also takes shape in *ex libris* (2010-12), a small volume of photographs of some of the thirty thousand Arabic books taken from the homes and institutions of Palestinians exiled in 1948. Housed in the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem, they are catalogued and numbered; many are designated “AP”—Abandoned Property. Jacir’s cellphone close-ups highlight the visceral quality of her encounter. Who does not pause and wonder at a previous owner’s name in a book? Jacir’s *ex libris* display of flyleaf inscriptions rather than printed title pages hands us the evidence of personal and cultural history as well as loss and raises questions about restitution.

In an exhibition of her work in Israel, Jacir installed *Untitled (servees)* (2008), at the Damascus Gate in Old City Jerusalem. The portal is closest to East Jerusalem, and leads directly to the Arab residential section and *shuk*. The exhibition was part of an annual *Jerusalem* show organized by the Ma’mal Foundation and curator Jack Persekian as “covert resistance to the forced hegemony of one creed and one people on the city.” Jacir’s audio piece answers this rhetoric with a sound of her childhood: the cries of Arab taxi drivers (the *servees*) calling the names of their destinations to potential customers. Such street music, like local smells, is a distinctive character of place, and with potential (but also prohibited) destinations listed nearby—“Amman, Beiruth, Kueit”—a powerful call to memory.



Stills from *Crossing Surda* (a record of going to and from work) 2002 by Emily Jacir. Two-channel video installation. Dimensions variable. Photos courtesy of the artist. © Emily Jacir, Courtesy Alexander and Bonin, New York.



Where We Come From 2001-2003 detail (Munir) by Emily Jacir. American passport, 30 texts, 32 c-prints and 1 video. Photo: Bill Orcutt. © Emily Jacir, Courtesy Alexander and Bonin, New York.

When I visited Palestine, I heard the cabbies call as I moved with a friend through the Jerusalem-Bethlehem checkpoint, my Canadian passport unexamined and unmarked. I travelled with Jacir’s work in my thoughts, mindful of my distance from her—or any Palestinian’s—experience. I was certainly a stranger, but not quite a gawking tourist, and I struggled to find a meaningful way to be. What, in this troubled place, did I expect to see?

For this diasporic Jewish visitor, Emily Jacir’s art speaks to and complicates my

dilemma. Charged as it is, the work seems to push past indignation, substituting a shared sense of loss. I am left with no easy answers and my own view seems simultaneously fractured and multiple. Looking at her work, the perspectives shift, the events widen, and so does history.

Carol Zemel is professor of Art History and Visual Culture at York University, Toronto. Her book, Looking Jewish: Visual Culture and Modern Diaspora is forthcoming this fall from University of Indiana Press.

Places vs. Spaces for Palestinians and Jews

Ian S. Lustick

During the height of the Algerian revolution against French rule, Albert Camus, the celebrated writer, philosopher, humanist, and tenacious foe of fascism, was asked why he did not forcefully condemn the atrocities committed by OAS ultras and French military torturers against Algerian Muslims. Camus was a *pied noir* —born and raised among the European settler community in Algeria. “I love justice,” he answered, “but I love my mother more.”

Camus’s response shocked his admirers on the left, who felt their hero had failed them. Politically their disappointment is understandable, but Camus was making a profoundly important point. There is a difference in kind between attachments to principles, images, doctrines, or large, and necessarily abstract, groups—however passionate—and attachments to particular things or particular people.

If I lose my mother, the pain of that loss is not assuaged by the availability of another woman of her approximate age. The attachment that has been broken is not substitutable. It was an attachment, not to “motherliness,” but to a particular person who was my mother. On the other hand, the pain of injustice “there and then” can be lessened by justice “here and now” because the abstract attachment to the principle of equity entails a wide set of equivalent attachments spread over time and space. Camus did not so much love his mother more than justice, as much as he stood in relation to the two in fundamentally different ways.

Deep understanding of the dynamics, polemics, and frustration of the prolonged conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine can begin where it seldom does—with this same distinction between abstract and particular attachments.

In his seminal work, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ernest Gellner showed most effectively how the age of large agrarian literate empires—think the Roman, Mughal, Chinese, Persian, Austro-Hungarian, Tsarist, and Ottoman empires—gave way to a historically strange world of monarchical and then largely national states. Until the early modern era, the vast majority of human beings lived and died within the domains of these empires, even as the vast majority of that

vast majority—peasants in villages or isolated valleys and inhabitants of small hamlets or towns—lived separated by great geographical, social, and cultural distances from ornate and completely alien imperial centers. Ordinary people knew nothing of imperial politics, spoke only local unwritten vernaculars, and loved, or hated, only the scores or hundreds of human beings inhabiting the same particular place that was their world.

The particularity of a peasant’s attachments to places in his world—to the gnarled oak tree, the ancestral burial ground, the cave where haunted whistling sounds could be heard in the winter, the mountain whose silhouette shadowed all below it, and the stream with familiar tendencies to flood at particular times—was the foundation of the amazing stability of these enormous, hierarchical, and supremely exploitative political systems. It was this vast mosaic of particularities that enabled the imperial center to implement systematic “divide and rule” strategies leveraging the connections they had to regional strongmen, and through them local chiefs, priests, and elders. The simple folk obeyed those with whom they had direct contact; who were familiar in their particular world. None felt themselves linked to wider, non-encountered, orders, classes, “nations,” or territories. None “imagined” larger political communities. None honored a “map image” of a territorial space attached to hundreds of thousands or millions of other human beings to whom they could feel a constructed kindredness. None experienced, to use the hoary phrase of Rupert Emerson, a “terminal community” of people for which they were willing to sacrifice their lives larger than the small group of people they knew personally.

In short, for nationalism and national states to exist, people had to learn to identify abstractly and to take those abstract attachments—to groups of people they did not know and spaces they did not visit—so seriously that they would be willing to sacrifice for them, as the saying goes, their “lives, their fortune, and their sacred honor.” Gellner saw this as an immensely difficult task, but one absolutely crucial if the potential for technological advance, industrialization, and the intricate division of labor required by industrial society could

be realized. States with borders large enough to encompass sufficiently large markets for the regularized circulation of labor, capital, and commerce, meant that single languages had to supplement if not replace local vernaculars. That required state schools for imparting simple discipline and simple reading and arithmetic skills. This immensely expensive mass educational apparatus, along with the rest of the public infrastructure of an industrial state and society, had to be paid for and protected by armies of soldiers and taxpayers ready to comply with state directives because they identified with the “nation” that state claimed to represent.

For masses in both Europe and the third world, the disorienting processes of “social mobilization” that replaced what Gellner calls “agrarian” with “industrial” was a long, jagged, and painful process. Jews, and in particular European Jews, also experienced these processes, including the wars associated with them, as destructive of an old medieval order that had both sheltered and oppressed them for centuries. But in one particular respect, Jews, regardless of the strength of their attachment to traditional rabbinic authority, were more prepared for this “modern” world of abstract political loyalties than were non-Jews. Their place in Christian society was one of alienation and exclusion. As both Marc Chagall and early Zionists pictured the situation, Jews were *luftmenschen*, floating in the world, unattached to gentile institutions or the fundamentally foreign places over which they hovered. The Jewish strategy of constant migration—moving from erstwhile refuge to possible shelter—was directly related to this sociological and psychological condition. All this meant Jews did not experience as intensely an attachment to specific places that ordinary folk around them naturally felt. More than that, their own cultural celebration of a not-actually-known-or-remembered land—the Land of Israel—gave them centuries of practice in the cultivation of an abstract attachment, not to a “place” of irreplaceable individual meaning, but to a “space” of collective, abstract, empathic focus.

Zionism, as a nationalist movement seeking to mobilize a dispersed population and move it to a land inhabited and controlled by others, faced more challenges than most.

But a typical problem for national movements of self-determination that it did not face was overcoming the highly parochial attachments traditional peasant and village society bred deeply into its laboring masses. Although huge tasks of assimilation faced a society determined to absorb Jews from very different countries and classes, and speaking different languages, Zionism faced one unique problem. It needed to make the new country, so different, so alien, so unknown for most of its Jewish inhabitants, feel familiar. This meant great emphasis on mapping the terrain of the “Land of Israel,” marking and hiking trails, and exploring as much as possible about its springs, mountains, caves, small rivers, wadis, flora and fauna, and changing thousands of place names to invented Hebrew designations. All this activity can be understood as a strong effort to establish some sense of “place” to complement the ideological attachment to the emergently defined “space” of the country.

How different was the challenge facing Arabs in Palestine seeking to rouse their countrymen as members of the “Palestinian nation” to defend, not the villages and locales that were the intimate framework of their lives, but a “space” called Palestine carved out of the Levant by the outcome of battles between European and Ottoman imperialists. This was a more typical assignment for a nationalist movement; one that in Europe and elsewhere took generations if not centuries to accomplish. As Eugen Weber as shown, in *Peasants into Frenchmen*, “France” was still a congeries of separate provinces ruled from a quasi-colonialist Parisian center until the early twentieth century. When the *Nakba* destroyed the settled life of the 950,000 or so Arabs living in what became Israel in 1948, hundreds of thousands of refugees huddled in forests, fields, and makeshift camps. Whether in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, or Jordan, they did not yearn to return to the “space” of Palestine, but to the “place” of their village, their farm, their fields, and their homes. The keys they treasured were to the doors of their actual houses, not talismans of a space promised and celebrated but unremembered. Unlike Zionist immigrants, these refugees needed no maps of where they lived or how to get there. Indeed one reason why tens of thousands of refugees were able to surreptitiously return and remain in Israel is because they knew the back roads and trails so well. Maps are for unfamiliar spaces, not for homey places.

Although the “two state solution” may well never be achieved, its emergence as a plausible target for a negotiated settlement entailed a difficult struggle among Palestinian nationalists to transfer attachment to place to attachment to space. This required considerable finesse, along with a good deal of deception and disingenuousness. On the one hand, Palestinian leaders evoked the heartbreaking stories of refugees expelled from their homes and the homes of their ancestors, and then refused permission to return. On the other hand, those committed to the “Palestinian state” option set about transforming the Palestinian pathos into a nationalist ethos focused on “Palestine” as a space, with indistinct borders encompassing parts but not all of the country. That meant using the phrase “right of return” ambiguously, to mean—perhaps, but only perhaps, and only for a very tiny number—return to specific homes, fields, and villages, and yet also to mean return from spaces that were not in Palestine to locations in a “space” by that name that would not be those “places” of actual, original, attachment.

This is a difficult political task for any nationalist movement, and particularly difficult for the Palestinians, where the spaces involved are so small, and therefore where the distances to specific yearned-for places, so near and yet so inaccessible, are so tantalizingly short. From the Israeli point of view, the continued evocation by Palestinians of the “places” they were forced to abandon signals either their adversary’s inability to be satisfied with a Palestinian “space” as a basis for resolving the conflict, or their dishonesty in pretending to accept partition when really expecting that to be a stage toward eventual liberation of all the “places” in historical Palestine.

Indeed we may use this analysis to gain a fine appreciation of one of the most difficult points in the seemingly endless and almost certainly fruitless negotiations that have been going on between Israelis and Palestinians. When Palestinians accepted the “two state solution” they did not explicitly accept it as corresponding to two peoples—Jewish and Palestinian. In their eyes that would have been equivalent to recognizing the right of the Zionist movement to have dispossessed Palestinians from their homes and their country. Instead, a Palestinian Arab state would live, side by side, with an

Israeli state, containing an “Israeli people” comprised of both Jewish and Arab citizens. This position has been softened to the extent that Palestinians have offered Jewish settlers in the West Bank the opportunity to remain as law-abiding citizens of Palestine.

Meanwhile, however, Israel has escalated its demand. Originally no Israeli leader asked for or ever expected to receive Palestinian or Arab recognition of Israel’s “right to exist as a Jewish state.” But beginning with Ariel Sharon’s premiership, this became a constantly repeated demand. It is now often identified by top Israeli officials as the single most important requirement before Israel can make its own “painful compromises” for peace. In their categorical refusal to accept this formulation, Palestinian leaders and negotiators have objected to the opening that acceptance might give to Israeli policies of persecution or even expulsion of Arab citizens, and to the injustice and emotional impossibility of Palestinians, as victims, granting approval to their own historical victimization. But another obstacle to Palestinian acceptance of this demand also looms large. To name Israel as a “space” that is “Jewish,” would categorically foreclose the dream of re-establishing Palestinian refugee attachments to places in that space by confining Palestinian political ambitions, now and forever, to the “space” of the pieces of whatever mini-state of Palestine emerges from the agreement.

Because of the different trajectories that brought both national movements into collision, most Israelis cannot imagine the pain of giving up attachments to places as part of building an attachment to a space. At the same time, most Palestinians can only understand the Israeli demand that such attachments be explicitly abandoned as reflecting the brutality and inhumanity they have come to associate with Jewish power in the space of Palestine.

Ian S. Lustick is the Bess W. Heyman Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza (Cornell University Press, 1993) and Trapped in the War on Terror (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

The Questionnaire

What would you like *Perspectives* to be?

Mara H. Benjamin

Assistant Professor of Religion,
St. Olaf College

AJS Perspectives, in its present incarnation, is pretty close to ideal. With every issue, I look forward to learning a bit about what my colleagues in far-flung fields are working on. I like how the short essays are paired with an engaging image, and I like the formal and aesthetically pleasing pages. I suggest the following addition to make an already rich publication even more appealing and useful: a digital component linked to *AJS Perspectives* that would be devoted to explicitly addressing broader trends in the Jewish Studies as a whole. This section would be comparable in content to what appears in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, but with a focus on Jewish Studies. I'd like to see *AJS* members have a place to discuss the rise of MOOCs; diversity and the ever-changing composition of Jewish Studies faculty and the students in our courses; recent moves toward academic boycotts; new possibilities for digital humanities in Jewish studies; the changing role of public and private funding for Jewish Studies programs; trends in financing higher education; and so on. It seems to me that each issue of *AJS Perspectives* could include a section that would focus on one such issue. A digital component, updated regularly, would include a broader range of perspectives on that same issue, with links to relevant other articles. This digital forum would host news and online conversation about how the featured topic affects our work as researchers and teachers.

Naomi Brenner

Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Languages
and Cultures, The Ohio State University

I vaguely remember *AJS Perspectives* arriving in the mail in the past, often with a cover intriguing enough to earn it a spot on my “to-read” pile. But the pile kept growing, and *Perspectives* kept sinking lower and lower. Somehow, I never did more than flip through a few pages. Spurred by the invitation to comment in this issue, I finally perused several

issues from recent years and was pleasantly surprised to see a variety of topics and voices that made for thought-provoking reading. I particularly appreciate the readable articles from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.

Since I have resolved to actually pay attention to future issues of *Perspectives*, I would like to focus my own suggestions primarily on form. There are many print publications related to Jewish Studies in one way or another, as my “to-read” pile can attest. But even as digital access to print publications grows, I am not familiar with a forum for Jewish Studies that really takes advantage of digital media in a sustained way. I can imagine a digital *Perspectives* that would gradually become an interactive resource for research and teaching. What if *Perspectives* launched moderated conversations related to issue themes and/or individual articles? Invited members to post short blog posts or reflections in between issues? Spearheaded projects using Google Maps and other collaborative platforms? Developed translations and annotations of primary sources or excerpts from key texts? Or simply integrated audio, visual, and audiovisual resources online? Cultivating an online presence takes skill, resources, and time. But in an academic field still dominated by print production, I would be excited to see a new, dynamic, and experimental digital presence in Jewish Studies.

Erica Lehrer

Assistant Professor of History,
Concordia University

With *AJS Perspectives* going online, a much broader discussion could be opened that links academic Jewish Studies practitioners with a range of Jewish culture workers, knowledge producers, and interested members of various publics who would make productive interlocutors around subjects of shared concern.

The periodical could grow into a lively venue for Jewish-related “public scholarship,” whence ideas incubated in the academy may more easily infuse public debates, and provide

Jewish community members and broader audiences new tools for thinking. Further, in accordance with democratizing trends in knowledge production among practitioners of publicly engaged academic work (e.g. through various forms of collaboration), *Perspectives* could also form an interface for *bi-directional* learning: a site where nonacademics who often think about and do creative work in domains shared by academics can engage with us.

With web 2.0, the editors could invite nonacademics invested in Jewish issues to pose questions or themes to which scholars could respond; they might also organize forums where scholars, artists, and community practitioners could debate a rich or pressing topic. This would provide a much-needed venue for wide-ranging public debate of critical social and cultural issues, when such space seems to be contracting in the Jewish communal world. Those who work in the Jewish communal sphere—as well as journalists, artists, and other culture workers—can offer “on the ground” views of, or creative approaches to, emergent phenomena, and benefit from academic specialists’ contributions of new data, historical depth, comparative contexts, and new frameworks for thinking.

The web will also allow media-rich presentations of research-in-progress, and scholars could be fruitfully stretched in their own practice through invitations to contribute in nontextual ways. *Perspectives* could maintain an ongoing online gallery of scholars’ forays into the production of exhibitions, films, sound recordings, websites, and other media.

Laura S. Levitt

Professor of Religion, Temple University

I would like to see this beautiful publication continue to become what it is becoming—a venue for new thinking, overlooked topics, and a range of critical perspectives. What I want is to continue to be amazed by topics, scholars, critical approaches, research, and writing about issues I might know little about or topics I care about deeply but have

rarely seen addressed in Jewish Studies. I want to see issues that take the next step. I want to imagine the queer issue or the post-postfeminist issue. I want to see *Perspectives* offer a forum to discuss Jews of color, especially Black Jews, in ways we have yet to do. I want to imagine issues on methods: the ethnography issue, the archive issue, or an issue devoted to sound or dance as Jewish Studies discourses. Closer to my own work I would love to think with colleagues in Jewish Studies more directly about how to talk about transmission as a multivalent thing, memory and disease, tradition and transvaluation. I want more visual culture and more engagement in the world. There are so many topics inspired by what *Perspectives* has already accomplished, and here are a few ideas for future topics: water; food; pilgrimages; Jewish photographs; theologies otherwise. It might also be great to do a “generations” issue or simply a millennial issue on millennial Jewish Studies and millennial scholars that is about the actors and the work they do, including what the job market portends.

Ranen Omer-Sherman

*Professor of English and Jewish Studies,
University of Miami*

I have long suspected that a significant number of those of us who consider much of our teaching and scholarship to fall at least to some degree within the astonishingly expansive realm known as Jewish Studies are often troubled by the gaps in our own education. And if any of us are ever in a position to retire we will probably seize on the opportunity to sit in on our colleagues' courses and fill those gaps. Some of us who have never been given the opportunity (or felt prepared) to teach an “Introduction to Jewish Studies” course of our own often spend time fantasizing about just what a course would entail. How would we create connections between the multifarious disciplines that make up our field, not to mention its extraordinary range of temporalities and spatialities? So many questions and opportunities would likely ensue! Hence it seems to me that the future incarnations of *Perspectives* will serve its community well by opening up spaces for dialogue on such questions as: What are the current scholarly arguments/conversations/controversies guiding Jewish Studies scholars who work within Anthropology, Archeology, Art

History, Folklore, Geography, History, Literary Studies, Rabbinics, Sociology, etc.? How has Jewish identity evolved in changing cultural contexts? What about the boundaries between the Jewish and the non-Jewish over time and space? What do scholars working in such areas most want their colleagues in Jewish Studies to know about their work? What useful paradigms of Jewish life and culture enlivening our research and/or classrooms do we wish our colleagues to know more about? What are the open questions that still challenge us? How better might we ensure that Jewish Studies thrive as a truly integrated (rather than fragmented) community of scholars eager to learn from one another and import and transmit forms of knowledge to one another in ways that transcend our separate niches? And, to paraphrase David Biale in his magisterial inquiry *Cultures of the Jews*, how might we strive to affirm commonalities between the Jewish past and the Jewish present while still respecting all that is richly different, singular, and strange in those disparate continuums? And returning to that question which has nagged me for some time: what are the ideal Jewish texts to include in a truly interdisciplinary “Introduction to Jewish Studies” course? Finally, in our shared quest to learn from one another (and perhaps find some common ground), *Perspectives* should reflect the lively debates that stimulate the creative inquiries we conduct within separate disciplines, those that may not yet be fully understood by our colleagues but may one day serve as terrific catalysts for their own work in the classroom and beyond.

Riv-Ellen Prell

*Professor of American Studies and
Director of the Center for Jewish Studies,
University of Minnesota*

I would like *Perspectives* to continue its focus on emerging issues in the field of Jewish Studies, and to learn from colleagues whose research creates and shapes those questions. At the same time, Jewish Studies is being thrust inexorably into a different type of engagement as the university is, once again, an arena in which political and academic issues are linked, interwoven, and contested. There is no reason to assume that all colleagues affiliated with Jewish Studies view these issues similarly, and there may be variations among us. However, *Perspectives* is in a position to open conversations about academic boycotts,

how Jewish Studies intersects with Israel Studies, and how to engage these issues as they emerge. Many of our colleagues are confident about precisely how to respond. But many other colleagues also feel unable to find a language that emphasizes complexity in the face of jagged polarizations. This timely and powerful publication might be just the space to begin complicated and exceptionally important conversations. These issues will inspire not only campus activism, but scholarship and teaching. These pages, digital or print, should be part of our own work to address this moment and those that lie ahead.

Adam Shear

*Associate Professor of Religious Studies,
University of Pittsburgh*

In a somewhat traditional sense, I see a continued role of *AJS Perspectives* as a reflection of the professional organization that represents our interests and serves our professional needs as scholars of Jewish Studies. I would like *AJS Perspectives* to be a vehicle for keeping up with developments across the breadth of Jewish Studies, especially for keeping up with developments in subfields other than my own, and for wider issues that connect with the work we do as scholars. That doesn't mean *Perspectives* needs to be a newsletter as such. Facebook, H-Net, blogs, and websites are enough for up-to-date (even up-to-the-minute) news and announcements of funding opportunities, new academic programs, job listings, calls for papers, and so forth. At the other end of the spectrum from fast-breaking to “slow-cooked”: *AJS Review* and a host of other journals deliver excellent peer-reviewed original scholarship in the broad field of Jewish Studies, as well as book reviews and review essays. Ideally, *Perspectives* finds its niche somewhere in the middle, with articles falling into several (somewhat overlapping) categories:

(1) Reports on new and emerging subfields or scholarly conversations, pointing the interested reader to new resources and new conversation partners. Such reports would combine elements of review essays but need not limit themselves to already published material.

(2) Reports on new academic initiatives and projects. These reports can go beyond press release language toward more in-depth discussion and situate new projects within the broader scholarly landscape.

(3) Digests of new scholarship, especially abstracts of articles appearing in disciplinary journals or journals “outside” of Jewish Studies.

(4) Articles reporting on trends in academia, K-12 Jewish or general education, Jewish adult education, or rabbinical/professional/communal education that affect (or could affect) the way we do our work as scholars and teachers of Jewish Studies.

(5) Articles reporting on “best practices” in Jewish Studies programs, department management, graduate or undergraduate education, or scholarly praxis.

Barry Trachtenberg

Associate Professor of History and Director of the Judaic Studies Program, University at Albany

Perspectives will face interesting challenges as it moves to an online format. As we saw by the small number of Twitter posts related to the 2013 conference, many AJS members (including myself) haven’t yet embraced many of the new forms of information technology. While the online version of *Perspectives* might not fully replace the paper magazine, a major task is to create a website that will be of continual interest to readers, as opposed to simply a place where members can read the issue when it released twice a year.

I’d be interested in seeing *Perspectives* become a hub for discussions, information, and resources related to Jewish Studies more broadly and not restricted to AJS members only. This might mean taking some of the

content that is currently on the AJS website and moving it to *Perspectives* online. For example, the online version could have job postings, fellowship and grant information, and research opportunities. It might also include moderated forums that would allow members to have genuine conversations with one another about the published articles in *Perspectives* as well as other topics within Jewish Studies. Perhaps discussions that began at the annual conference could be continued in the online forums. There could be conversations about recent books, articles, films, music, and exhibitions, as well as on career development, graduate programs, politics, teaching strategies, and so on.

Perspectives online could contain links to H-Net reviews and feature invited blogs. It could provide links to news stories related to Jewish Studies from around the web.

Such features would make the online site a place to visit *Perspectives* more than twice a year when the new edition of the magazine appears, and would highlight the continuing relevance of our field.

Steven Zipperstein

Daniel E. Koshland Professor in Jewish Culture and History, Stanford University

More and more I think about the changing contour of the North American university and how my generation—which earned its doctorates in the early 1980s—has enjoyed privileges, work rhythms, institutional frameworks (e.g. bookstores, newspaper book

review sections featuring academic titles, the promise of tenure) now either in flux, or in some instances already relics. What does it mean for those of us who train PhD students to do what it is that we do and properly prepare them for the future when what this future looks like is—more than ever—a moving target?

Of course, there was a considerable chasm between the world our academic mentors lived in for the bulk of their careers and the one that we entered, at just the moment when Jewish Studies as a field came of age, situating itself in nearly every major university, establishing beachheads at so many of the university presses, etc. (I recall my Jewish History mentor Amos Funkenstein telling me that when interviewed for his position at UCLA in the 1970s he was never brought for a campus interview and asked only about his views on Freud and Jung; for years, before a job interview I found myself reaching for a volume of Freud the night before.) Still, today’s uncertainties regarding matters so basic as the viability of the academic monograph and its role in tenure and promotion, the challenge of distance learning, the future of the classroom lecture, the shrinkage of tenure prospects cut to the bone; they make one uneasy about what it means to mentor today for tomorrow.

Perspectives would be well to highlight these looming dilemmas, to air them not because what we’re likely to face in the future is imminent decline but rather change at a pace more rapid than most of us have ever encountered.



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Jews Beyond Reason: Exploring Emotion, the Unconscious, and Other Dimensions of Jews' Inner Lives

Postdoctoral Fellowship 2015–2016

Application Deadline: **November 9, 2014**



Herbert D. Katz Center
for Advanced Judaic Studies
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

The mind, as the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria recognized two thousand years ago, is not guided by rationality alone; it is also driven by appetite and by the passions, and from his age until our own, Jewish thinkers and producers of culture have recognized something nonrational at the core of being human. Ancient rabbinic sources speak of the *yetser*, an inclination or impulse, as a driver of human behavior, and source of creativity and destructiveness. The medieval philosopher Maimonides subordinated imagination to philosophy, and yet without imagination, he also realized, there would be no prophesy. And the world owes the discovery of the unconscious to the Jewish physician Sigmund Freud. Jewish thought, history, and culture offer many opportunities to explore those aspects of the mind that lie beneath reason, that go beyond it, that resist it.

During its 2015–2016 fellowship year, the Katz Center will focus on those aspects of internal life that lie beyond reason—emotions and feelings, the unconscious, sensation, imagination, impulse, intuition, and the nonrational dimensions of reason itself. The topic can be explored through various disciplinary perspectives such as history, literary criticism, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, art, and musicology.

Relevant fellowship proposals might address any of the following topics:

- *Emotions and feelings.* Though rooted in neurological and physical responses, scholars recognize that emotions—like love, anger, anxiety, joy, fear, empathy, sympathy, sadness, desire, pain, and pleasure—are shaped by culture. What is there to be learned about emotions in Jewish cultural contexts?
- *Sensation.* Another area of research that engages fields such as art history, film studies, ethnomusicology, ethics, and literature is sensation, a topic that includes sight, sound, touch, or scent within Jewish cultural or artistic contexts.
- *The unconscious.* Interest in psychoanalysis continues to thrive, as does the deployment of psychoanalytic approaches to analyze literature and understand behavior. The Center welcomes proposals that bridge Jewish studies and the study of psychoanalysis and its history.
- *Mental illness.* The idea of “madness” or mental illness in Jewish contexts approached from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.
- *Imagination.* What is the history of imagination in Jewish culture? How is the imagination understood within specific periods of history or by particular thinkers, and how does that history relate to the broader history of imagination? Also potentially relevant are studies of Jewish artists and their engagement with movements that emphasize the non-rational (Romanticism, Expressionism, etc.).
- *The nonrational within rationality itself.* One of the projects associated with post-modernism is a critique of rationality, the exposure of its metaphysical foundations and blind spots. The year is open to research that explores nonrational dimensions of Jewish philosophy or other modes of rationality, including that which draws on new methods or theories to challenge the distinction between reason and nonrational dimensions of subjectivity/cognition.

The Katz Center invites applications from scholars in the humanities, social sciences, and the arts at all levels, as well as outstanding graduate students in the final stages of writing their dissertations. Stipend amounts are based on academic standing and financial need with a maximum of \$50,000 for the academic year. Fellowship recipients will be notified by February 6, 2015.

Applications are available on our website: katz.sas.upenn.edu

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