

## **Works in Progress Group in Modern Jewish Studies**

### ***Session***

Many of us in the field of modern Jewish studies have felt the need for an active working group interested in discussing our various projects, papers, and books, particularly as we develop into more mature scholars. Even more, we want to engage other committed scholars and respond to their new projects, concerns, and methodological approaches to the study of modern Jews and Judaism, broadly construed in terms of period and place. To this end, since 2001, we have convened a "Works in Progress Group in Modern Jewish Studies" that meets yearly in connection with the Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference on the Saturday night preceding the conference. The purpose of this group is to gather interested scholars together and review works in progress authored by members of the group and distributed and read prior to the AJS meeting. 2006 will be the sixth year of a formal meeting within which we have exchanged ideas and shared our work with peers in a casual, constructive environment. This Works in Progress Group is open to all scholars working in any discipline within the field of modern Jewish studies. We are a diverse group of scholars committed to engaging others and their works in order to further our own projects, those of our colleagues, and the critical growth of modern Jewish studies. Papers will be distributed in November. To participate in the Works in Progress Group, please contact: Todd Hasak-Lowy, email: [thasak@aall.ufl.edu](mailto:thasak@aall.ufl.edu) or Adam Shear, email: [ashear@pitt.edu](mailto:ashear@pitt.edu)

**Co-Chairs: Todd S. Hasak-Lowy (University of Florida)**

**Adam B. Shear (University of Pittsburgh)**

## **Abstracts for Session 1**

**Sunday, December, 17, 2006 09:30 AM-11:00 AM**

### ***Session Number: 1.1***

***Session***      **Pedagogy and Politics: Teaching Israel at North American Universities Today**

### ***Session***

Israel Studies is an emerging field at North American universities and in Jewish adult education; however, Israel is frequently taught by faculty with backgrounds in Jewish Studies and related disciplines. This proposed interdisciplinary roundtable discussion focuses upon the pedagogical and political challenges as well as the curricular, geographical and institutional problems of teaching Israel at a range of North American institutions. The discussants of this roundtable teach courses on Israel in a variety of institutional settings. The discussants participated in the intense coursework of the Brandeis Summer Institutes on Israel Studies (2004, 2005 and 2006), supplemented by an additional week of study in Israel; this was facilitated by Professor S. Ilan Troen (Stoll Family Chair in Israel Studies at Brandeis

University). The professors in this group are planning to address the goals and outcomes of bringing Israel to Jews and Non-Jews in a pedagogical framework. Topics to be presented and discussed include, but are not limited to: Tracing the history that current academics have with Israel (time they spent there early in their lives, ongoing connections, how their relationship with Israel changed over time, intellectual connections); Teaching Israel in the Bible Belt: An Experimental Course in the Rural South; Teaching Jewish and Palestinian literature (and film) side by side; What is the Agenda for Advanced Adult Education? Teaching the Political Sociology of Israel in a Liberal Arts Setting; Israel: The Challenge to a Talmudist at a Liberal Arts College. Feminist Approaches to Israel; Teaching the Other, the Arab Israelis and/or Palestinians; Teaching Israel as Part of Jewish Identity-formation. The roundtable proposes to address the teaching of Israel in the general curriculum of the university and in other settings; pedagogical strategies, such as the use of new media and engaging teaching as well as innovative approaches to the study of Israel will be explored.

**Chair, Rivka B. Kern-Ulmer (Bucknell University)**

**Donna R. Divine (Smith College)**

**Jonathan Goldstein (University of West Georgia)**

**Shirah Hecht (JESNA)**

**Theodore Sasson (Brandeis University/Middlebury College)**

**David B. Starr (Hebrew College)**

### ***Session Number: 1.2***

**Session      Social Science and Teaching about American Jewry**

#### ***Session***

Courses on American Jewry are being taught in increasing numbers of social-science departments throughout the United States, but few, if any, occasions exist for those teaching such courses--and those thinking of doing so--to discuss how best to teach them. This roundtable will provide such an occasion. Among the topics to be discussed will be: the balance in such courses between approaches drawn from the social sciences and approaches drawn from traditional Jewish Studies scholarship; the degree of emphasis on organizational, demographic, and social-psychological approaches to Jewish life in the U.S.; the extent to which such courses take a problem-oriented approach to Jewish life as opposed to a more social-scientific approach; the amount of attention devoted to particular groups and organizations; the place of such courses in multicultural curricula; and issues involved in presenting material about Jews to diverse groups of students. Other concerns will be addressed as well.

**Chair, Paul Burstein (University of Washington)**

**Claude Fischer (University of California, Berkeley)**

**Shaul Kelner (Vanderbilt University)**

**Shelly Tenenbaum (Clark University)**

***Session Number: 1.3***

**Session      What Does Jewish Philosophy Contribute? The Cases of  
Levinas and Strauss**

***Session***

Most recent work in modern Jewish philosophy has worked within a canon organized by thinkers who are seen as saints -- not only can their work revivify or reorient Judaism, but they can also either mend the rift between Judaism and modernity or get us past the need to have that rift mended. The assumption in such inquiries is that the potential of Jewish philosophy is apparently limitless, or even messianic. But what if there are human problems to which nothing, not even philosophy, can give a definitive answer? What if philosophy does not have in itself the ability to direct social and political life? The juxtaposition of Levinas and Strauss provides a unique opportunity to approach such questions that lie at the base of the subdiscipline of Jewish philosophy. For it is Levinas who argues broadly for a strong intimacy between religion and philosophy, and specifically that Husserlian and post-Husserlian phenomenology can return Western life to its religious basis, articulated by the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud. And it is Strauss who argues for a radical separation between religion and philosophy, setting up the possibility in which philosophy, aware of its own limits, must recognize the possibility of revelation (understood as having its own territory) to guide social and political life. The panelists – a scholar of Levinas, a scholar of Strauss, and a scholar of liberal Jewish thought – will test not only the specific claims about the relationship between Judaism and philosophy in the two thinkers in order to answer the question of what Jewish philosophy can contribute, but also the portraits of Judaism that they give (an inner orientation vs. outer forms of social life). A scholar who has recently written a book comparing Levinas and Strauss will serve as respondent.

**Chair, Sarah Hammerschlag (Williams College)**

**Martin Kavka (Florida State University)**

**Kenneth R. Seeskin (Northwestern University)**

**Eugene Sheppard (Brandeis University)**

**Respondent, Leora F. Batnitzky (Princeton University)**

***Session Number: 1.4***

**Session      Assessing the Characteristics of Synagogue Transformation**

***Session***

During the 1990s Jews in the synagogues throughout North America began talking about synagogue transformation and renewal. Behind this movement was the recognition that synagogues had the potential to be the most

significant gateway to full participation in Jewish life, but that this potential was, in many cases, not being realized. Over the course of a decade, federations and foundations poured several million dollars into a variety of synagogue transformation initiatives. As early as 1995, researchers from the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education identified 41 projects devoted to synagogue change. Some of these were national in scope, others local. Some were rooted in theories of change and involved elaborate change processes; others were based on the theory of “if you build it, they will come,” and focused on the introduction of new programs. While some of these projects were more successful than others in their totality, there were also big differences in the levels of success between congregations within the same project. Aron, Cohen, and Kelman, along with Rabbi Larry Hoffman, have been involved in the first systematic examination of the experiences of these past ten years of synagogue transformation and renewal. The AJS conference offers an ideal format to share and reflect on some initial findings. The research has yielded important information about the processes and characteristics of synagogue transformation, and the opportunity to reflect these findings with other scholars will prove invaluable to the project. Professor Aron will reflect on social scientific analyses of organizations and apply them to synagogues. Professor Cohen will frame the research findings in terms of broader analytic categories, and Dr. Kelman will reflect on the ethnographic research yielded during his fieldwork at the eight fieldwork sites. Our respondent, Dr. Kaufman, will provide a richly informed historical dimension to the discussion and open the panel up to what will be a most productive and fruitful discussion of our research findings and their significance.

**Chair, Jack Wertheimer (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Ari Y. Kelman (University of Pennsylvania/National Museum of American Jewish History)**

### **Stories from Shul**

Synagogue transformation is difficult to trace and impossible to quantify. When did the congregation start to change and is it ever done changing? How does a congregation know that it is changing for the better? Or, is a “good” synagogue simply willing to take risks inherent to change? More to the point: Is the quality of a synagogue inherent or can it be transformed? What does such a transformation entail? This paper will establish some of the narrative and ethnographic terrain of synagogue transformation. Focusing on three ethnographic sites, I will trace both the processes and characteristics of the institutional, communal, and cultural change that synagogues experience as they try to consciously improve their members’ experiences of Jewish life. Although each of the synagogue stories is unique, their narratives intersect at relatively discreet institutional and cultural commonalities, which reveal aspects of the broader landscape of synagogue life in America

**Steven Martin Cohen (HUC-JIR)**

**Successful Interventions in Synagogue Change: Finding the**

Drawing upon our qualitative study of eight synagogues that have undergone directed efforts at producing systemic change, this paper seeks to identify commonalities in the change processes. It asks three questions: 1) What pre-existing characteristics promote “successful” change efforts? 2) What constitutes successful processes of change? 3) What characterizes successful consequences of change efforts? Pre-existing characteristics include: Secure, reflective leadership (both professional and lay), richness of resources (human and financial), and a dissatisfaction with the status quo. The qualities of successful change are tied closely to the ability of the congregation to strengthen and capitalize on interpersonal relationships both among the leadership and between leadership and membership. Successful change is characterized by a more engaged worship service, more comprehensive educational offerings, a more effective organizational structure, and stronger relationships among all those involved. Running through all these changes is a commitment to an overall vision of the congregation that integrates and frames specific programs.

**Isa Aron (HUC-JIR)**

### **Framing Synagogue Transformation**

This paper will utilize two analytic frameworks drawn from the social scientific literature on organizations to generate hypotheses as to why some congregations have been more successful than others in making change. The first framework, derived from Richard Beckhard and Reuben T. Harris, suggests that efforts at organizational change only succeed when the perceived cost of change is outweighed by the product of a number of different factors: a dissatisfaction with the present state; a vision of the future; the belief that change is possible; and a series of practical first steps. The second analytic tool, from Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal’s *Reframing Organizations*, identifies four frames through which an organization can be viewed: Structural, human resource, political, and cultural. This paper will both reflect on the applicability of those frameworks to synagogue structures and explore the possibilities of creating an analytical framework unique to synagogues.

**Session Number: 1.5**

**Session        Halakhic Evolutions**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Andrea Lieber (Dickinson College)**

**Norma Baumel Joseph (Concordia University)**

**“Equality Lost”: Rabbi Yehuda Henkin and His Responsa/Response to Gender Equity and Modernity**

Orthodoxy has been shaped and directed by a European based and trained Ashkenazi rabbinate. World War II eliminated that training ground but the effect of their positions and decisions still dominates Orthodoxy today.

However, perspectives developed in Israel and North America are slowly infiltrating the self definition of Orthodox communities. Rabbi Yehuda Henkin, educated in America in a modern day school was greatly influenced by his renowned European grandfather. Remarkably, he chose to mark his territory as a decisor in Israel. Given the intersection of diverse influences in the formation of his orthodoxy, it is intriguing to examine his decisions as they affect and inscribe a “modern” orthodoxy. He has woven classical halakhic standards with new understandings of modern life and created a popular format for communicating these ideas. Thus, he writes serious legal decisions in his Hebrew responsa collection, BNEI BANIM, and then publishes popular books in English summarizing his position and addressing those seeking a modern solution to some of the conundrums of Orthodox life. Notably, Rabbi Henkin’s decisions on women’s participation and ritual praxis form a key element to this contemporary approach. He fully accepts women’s textual education supporting schools for women in Israel and the training of learned women as halakhic advisors (YOATSOT). Significantly, he has paved the way for greater ritual participation and organizations such as JOFA and EDAH relied on his ZIMMUN formulation. Conceiving women as independent, he disagrees with decisions of R. Ovadiah Yosef and Rabbi M. Fesinstein who maintain that a woman must follow her husband customs. Finally, in terms of this paper, he promoted and strengthened his grandfather’s early decision allowing women to recite the kaddish memorial prayer. In all these discreet decisions there is an underlying presence of notions of equity, equality and modernity. Yet he is not a proponent of feminism nor does he accept many current modern orthodox practices that appeal to feminist or equality notions. The topography of Rabbi Yehudah Henkin’s Orthodoxy as located in his decisions about women’s participation is the topic of this research.

**Zvi Arie Steinfeld (Bar-Ilan University)**

**A New Rationale for the Ordering of Halakhot in Mishnah Horayot**

**Rationale for the Ordering of Halakhot in Mishnah Horayot**

**Eliyahu Stern (University of California, Berkeley)**

**From Code to Commentary: Unlocking Rabbi Elijah of Vilna's Halakhic Hermeneutic**

Hayyim Soloveitchik in his essay “Rupture and Reconstruction” details the mid twentieth-century shift in Orthodox Jewish life from a mimetic halakhic culture to a new kind of text-based halakhic practice. According to Soloveitchik, this turning point in Jewish life and learning is exemplified in Orthodoxy's newfound employment of Rabbi Elijah of Vilna's (1720-1797) halakhic work the Biur ha-GRA (first published in 1803). Though Rabbi Elijah's (known as GRA, Gaon Rabbi Aliyahu) mode of study had a swift and highly pronounced impact on Lithuanian learning circles, his halakhic writings were hardly if ever cited in halakhic literature until the publication of Rabbi Yisrael Kagen's Mishna Berurah in the twentieth-century. There is a great irony in Kagen's redemption of GRA's halakhic magnum opus. The Mishnah Berurah's project was to update Rabbi Joseph Karo's code of law, the Shulchan Aruch, and create a clear and definable legal guide for the masses. His approach to halakhic

adjudication was rooted in an absolute reliance on precedent. For Kagen, GRA was but another authoritative source to bolster his legal arguments. Rabbi Elijah, on the other hand, wrote for a select few, if even that many. His purpose was anything but to create legal rulings that could be easily accessed and popularly employed. He jettisoned legal precedent in a way never seen before in rabbinic literature. But most importantly, his approach was not directed at strengthening the idea of a code, but to challenge it epistemically.

My paper will explore the modern historical significance and unique nature of GRA's halakhic writings by focusing on his commentary to Yoreh Deah. I will explain how GRA's halakhic work has come to occupy such a prominent position in Jewish life today and in what way it hermeneutically differs from halakhic writings produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century. Most importantly, I will show how he revolutionized the study of rabbinic literature and paved the way for a text-based modern rabbinic culture.

### ***Session Number: 1.6***

#### **Session        Israeli Women Writers and the World of Politics**

##### ***Session***

AJS 2006 Division 5: Modern Hebrew Literature Session proposal: "Israeli Women Writers and The World of Politics" By Zafrira Lidovsky Cohen  
Participants: 1. Zafrira Lidovsky Cohen, Stern College for Women of Yeshiva University. Co-Organizer and Chair. 2. Rachel Feldhay Brenner, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Co-Organizer and Presenter: "Ideological Incorrectness of Responses to the Holocaust: Three Women Writers' Diverging Voices." 3. Esther Fuchs, University of Arizona-Tucson, Presenter: "Feminist Hebrew Literary Criticism: The Political Unconscious." 4. Shiri Goren, New York University and Yale, Presenter: "Women's Reaction to Political Crises: Contemporary Modes of Engagement." 5. Nehama Aschkenasy, University of Connecticut, Respondent. Session abstract: The national narrative of modern Israel, beginning with the Zionist revolution, has been constructed in Nordau's term as "Judaism with muscles." Seeking to amend the feeble image of the galutic Jew, a healthy male – body and mind -- has become the archetype of Israel's collectivist ideology and its gendered, political system, consequently dominating, if not defining, many fictional works of predominately male Hebrew writers of the modern era. The outburst of Israeli women's fiction since the 1980's first appeared as a new literary category ("women's writing") -- separate and apart from the mainstream national one (which continued to be dominated by Zionists as well as Post-Zionist male writers) – with a strong focus on the private rather than the public domain. And yet, as the three presenters in our panel will argue, each from their own unique perspective, Israel's "muscular politics" has been front and center of women's writing from the beginning. Seeking to outline the historical and conceptual evolution of women's writings in modern Hebrew, Esther Fuchs' argument is that women authors have been motivated by a political unconscious and that their works have been mainly a project of a political revision. Focusing on

literary responses to the Holocaust, Rachel Brenner argues that women's writings are designed to contradict and present alternative political attitudes toward the most traumatic Jewish experience in modern times. Examining the current "situation" (hamatsav) in Israel, Shiri Goren's contention is that the personal story found in many women's writings of the 1990s should be looked at as a national allegory that seeks to offer a new form of engagement with the political crises of contemporary Israel.

**Chair, Zafira Lidovsky Cohen (Stern College)**

**Esther Fuchs (University of Arizona)**

**Feminist Hebrew Literary Criticism: The Political Unconscious**

Feminist Hebrew Literary Criticism: The Political Unconscious This paper charts the basic outlines of my forthcoming reader on the historical and conceptual evolution of feminist Hebrew Literary Criticism in the last two decades. In this paper I argue that Hebrew feminist criticism, and to a large extent, writing by Hebrew women authors reveal a "political unconscious" both in the limited sense of the word, referring to national politics, and in the broader sense of micro-power relations in the private sphere (personal politics). As I argued in my work on Amalia Kahana-Carmon (Israeli Mythogynies: Women in Contemporary Hebrew Fiction, 1987), fiction focused on the subjectivity of a homebound heroine challenges and subverts widely disseminated "mythogynies" about women and stereotyping representations as private and embodied beings. Women authors reversed and challenged such representations common in Israeli culture at large (see Hanna Herzog, Susan Sered, Orly Lubin). The focus on the politics of the family often decries what is done in its name in the national public sphere (Hanan Hever). By inverting and displacing personal and political locations and spaces, Hebrew women authors and feminist critics decode the more specific, personal and day to day manifestations of mainstream national politics, thus artistically and critically exemplifying how the political is personal and vice versa. The exclusion of Israeli women from national history and discourse is challenged by gynocritic readings of women's writing (e.g. Yaffah Berlowitz, Orly Lubin, Hannah Naveh). Yet, in this paper I will argue as well for the re-introduction of critical examinations of mainstream literary and cultural representations, of the kind that was generated already in the late 1980s (e.g. my discourse critique and the typological reconstructions of Nehamah Aschkenasy). In this paper then I argue that both the critical and interpretive (gynocritic) methods are necessary for the feminist revision of Israeli gendered literature. My goal is to highlight the political (in both the conventional and the feminist sense) of both approaches to the gendered literary regime, the critique of masculine discourse and the more recent focus on ecriture feminine and the female

**Rachel Feldhay Brenner (University of Wisconsin-Madison)**

**"Ideological Incorrectness" of Responses to the Holocaust: Three Women Writers' Diverging Voices**



Rachel Feldhay Brenner University of Wisconsin-Madison Abstract  
"Ideological Incorrectness" of Responses to the Holocaust Three Women  
Writers' Diverging Voices To a large extent, the patterns of Israeli Holocaust  
literature were determined by the shifts of the dogmas: "the negation of the  
Diaspora" and "the new Jew." This literature reflected the transmutations of the  
Zionist Weltanschauung, first, by adhering to the negation of the Diaspora,  
then by recognizing the Diaspora, finally by acknowledging the wrongness of  
the negation. This paper discusses the divergences of three women writers  
from these patterns: Leah Goldberg's play *The Lady of the Castle* (1954),  
Ruth Almog's novel *Exile* (1971), and Shulamith Hareven's short stories,  
"Great-Aunts" (1966), "The Witness," "Twilight" (1980), and "Mahogany"  
(1997). The authors placed their responses to the Holocaust in the context of  
the Zionist ideology. However, their attitudes contradicted the prescriptions of  
the canon. I examine these "misplaced" attitudes in terms of their "ideological  
incorrectness," and consider their gender signature. Written at the height of  
the negation of the Diaspora, Goldberg's play questions Israel as a safe  
haven, and focuses on the severance from the European traditions. In the  
post 1967 period, suffused both with existential precariousness and messianic  
certitude, Almog' novel rejects the notion of Israel as a loving home; rather, it  
seeks to mend the family story, severed by the Holocaust. In contrast with the  
post-1973 rejection of the "the negation of the Diaspora" and of the "new Jew,"  
Hareven's stories seek to reaffirm Israel as home. It would be imprudent to  
claim these responses as feminist, especially in view of the three writers'  
opposition to the perception of their works as feminist. But following Kristeva, it  
could be argued that these writers offer an alternative to the ideological  
approach of exclusion. In contrast with the Zionist modus of the negation of the  
past, these writers seek to accommodate, even struggle with the notion of the  
past in the present. In this sense, their work represents the gender  
differentiation, which acknowledges the silenced and marginalized approaches  
to the Holocaust story at the time of writing.

**Shiri Goren (New York University/Yale University (just yale on  
nametag, both in progr bk))**

### **Women's Reactions to Political Crises: Contemporary Modes of**

**Engagement**  
The recurrent suicide bombings in civil areas, the constant low intensity  
conflict with the Palestinians, and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and  
Gaza, appear in different forms and variations in a significant number of  
novels published in Israel during the last decade. Though political writing has  
always been an inherent component of Hebrew literature, this paper will argue  
that recent prose fiction by women offers a unique mode of engagement with  
Israeli societal and political crises. This new form of engagement does not  
necessarily align itself with a specific political ideology or party, but rather  
centers on the harsh consequences that brutality in the public sphere inflicts  
upon personal spaces such as one's home, family and intimate relations. My  
presentation is designed to discuss these themes in three novels: Ronit  
Matalon's *Bliss* [Sarah Sarah, 2000]; Gabriela Avigur-Rotem's *Heat Wave* and

Crazy Birds [Hamsin veziporim Meshugaot, 2001]; and Orly Castel-Bloom's Human Parts [Halakim Enoshiyim, 2002]. Coming from diverse backgrounds, these three major female authors, whose texts achieved both public visibility and scholarly acclaim, can be viewed as representative of Israeli secular society. Nevertheless there is yet to be an attempt to critically examine either the interrelations among these authors' novels or the intellectual trajectory they offer to Israeli literature. My paper will demonstrate that while these Israeli novels lend themselves to what Fredric Jameson describes as "national allegory," they in fact use their creative endeavor as a tool to deconstruct the hegemonic national discourse. Indeed, the picture of Israeli society presented in the novels includes individuals negotiating their identities, disoriented families, and devastating violence that cuts across both domestic and public spheres. Through the personal narratives, Matalon, Avigur-Rotem and Castel-BooIm, are determined to underscore the brutal consequences of the Israeli "war at home" as well as the ongoing occupation. Analyzed in relation to one another, their novels offer a unique mode of engagement with the political crises in contemporary Israel.

**Respondent, Nehama Aschkenasy (University of Connecticut at**

***Session Number: 1.7***

**Session      Modernity and German Jews: New Approaches**

***Session***

Modernity and German Jews: New Approaches Between 1800 and 1933, Germany underwent a massive transformation into a modern industrial, mass society. Yet, for decades, scholarship on German Jews in this time period conceived of modernity very narrowly in terms of religious and intellectual history. Recent scholarship, by contrast, has been greatly broadened by the influence of social, cultural, and gender history. This panel builds upon and expands the newer research methods. Focusing, respectively, on gender/family history, demography, and political culture, each paper utilizes new kinds of sources to rethink the issue of the modernization of Jewish life in Germany. Ben Baader's analysis of diaries and letters from Jewish families in the early part of the nineteenth century gives insight into the fabric of Jewish life in this period of tremendous change, and shows how women and men - in often surprising ways - strove for integration into German middle-class society while they continued to practice Judaism and maintain Jewishness. Steve Lowenstein likewise explores patterns of Jewish distinctiveness, as he inquires into the causes and consequences of the demographic modernity of German Jewry. He uses a rich yet hitherto neglected body of German statistical data to show that at least demographically, Jews were modern Germans earlier than their non-Jewish contemporaries. Ann Goldberg pioneers in an investigation of defamation court cases in Imperial Germany, which allows her to present an entirely new interpretation of how German Jews simultaneously laid claim to Germanness and asserted Jewish difference. The concept of honor that pervaded German culture, she claims, was fundamental to German Jews' self-image and instrumental in defining the boundaries of the Jewish community.

This panel on the topics of individual and communal responses to antisemitism; decisions Jews made about marriage age and family size; and Jewish women's and men's strategies of upward mobility, contributes to a reevaluation of Jewish modernity in Germany. When scheduling this session, please note that the chair for this panel (Marion Kaplan) will also be chairing another panel (Images of Eastern European Jews, submitted by Josh Karlip), and please avoid scheduling these panels parallel to each other!

**Chair, Marion Kaplan (New York University)**

**Benjamin Maria Baader (University of Manitoba)**

**Modernizing Jewish Life Worlds in the First Half of the Nineteenth**

In this paper, I am setting out to reframe our understanding of the social and cultural embourgeoisement of German Jewry in the first half of the nineteenth century, as I investigate how Jewish women and men in the families of leading modernizers pursued upward mobility, became Germans, and forged modern ways of being Jewish. A close reading of family correspondence, diaries, and other archival documents from the extended families of teachers at Jewish Free schools, WISSENSCHAFT scholars, and the first generations of Reform rabbis forms the basis of my research for this presentation. In the letters and diaries that I analyze, Jewish men and women articulated their enthusiasm for the bourgeois culture of BILDUNG (harmonious formation of the heart and the intellect). Long before they had reached middle-class income levels, German Jews practiced forms of bourgeois respectability and cultivated middle-class sensitivities by engaging in letter-writing and diary-keeping in High German. The gendered division of private and public realms formed a cornerstone of the bourgeois value system they embraced. Yet, in these families, women were active in family businesses and also engaged in independent commercial activities. Spouses commonly held whatever property they had, separately (no EHELICHE GÜTERGEMEINSCHAFT) and pursued each individually as well as together the economic and cultural improvement of their families. All family members expressed great devotion and tenderness towards each other in the letters and diaries they composed, and fathers, brothers, and sons were as caring as mothers, sisters, and daughters. In fact, fathers tended to be particularly affectionate and seemed at times preoccupied with the physical well-being and the health of their offspring. Mothers, on the other hand, could be the confidants of their sons and guide them through the emotional labyrinth of adolescence. By means of advice and example, both parents sought to encourage loyalty to the Jewish community, the practice of a Judaism that conformed to contemporary tastes, a German middle-class lifestyle, and most of all economic upward mobility. These letters and diaries are carefully and purposefully crafted texts that not only give insight into the fabric of Jewish family life, but they were also tools in the nineteenth-century project of modernizing German Jewish life worlds.

**Ann Goldberg (University of California, Riverside)**

## **Honor, Politics, Law, and the Confrontation with Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany, 1871-1918**

This paper investigates Jewish political culture in Germany at a time when mass politics was both intensifying antisemitism and opening up new avenues of protest and organization for disaffected and marginal groups. Based on archival and published defamation court cases, it is about the modernization of both German Jewish experiences of antisemitism and the tactics Jews used to combat discrimination and hate speech. The multiple responses of Jews to the rise of political antisemitism, from conversion and assimilation to Zionism, has been explored at length in the scholarship. What has not been recognized is the central role of honor in the thinking and tactics of Jewish defense organizations (e.g. the C.V. ) and of innumerable individual Jews in their daily encounters with antisemitism. For both, fighting antisemitism meant, above all, defending one's honor. In the Empire and far into the 20th century, one did this, primarily, with the defamation lawsuit. Employing a language of honor and rights, Jews used the courts to at once silence antisemitic speech and to publicly challenge the legitimacy of that speech. In so doing, they were appropriating and modernizing an old corporatist language of honor in order to make democratic claims for the rights and equality of citizenship. This hybrid culture of honor and rights, my paper argues, formed an important lense through which Jews experienced antisemitism; it also shaped the tactics of Jews as they forged organizational and personal responses to antisemitism in the courts and in associational life. Finally, the focus on honor and defamation suits provides a new avenue to explore the complex relationship between German Jews and the wider society of Imperial Germany, itself suffused by a culture of honor that was obsessively litigated in the courts.

## **Steven M. Lowenstein (University of Judaism)**

### **Causes and Results of the Early Modernization of German Jewish Family Patterns, 1850-1933**

The extremely meticulous and detailed statistical data available about German Jewry, makes it possible to ascertain that German Jews generally were a full generation ahead of the rest of the German population in the transition from a pre-modern to "modern" demographic pattern. Most contemporary societies in industrialized countries today are marked by late marriage, low birth rates, low death rates, lengthy life spans, high average age, and stagnating or falling total population sizes. Infant mortality is much lower than it was 100 or 150 years ago. All of these traits became typical of German Jewry by the twentieth century. Some patterns such as late marriage and (relatively) low infant mortality were already common in the early nineteenth century. Others, such as birth control and increased average age, developed as German Jewish patterns in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century. To analyze the reasons and results for these great changes is much more difficult than just to describe them. This paper is a very preliminary attempt at sorting out the various threads of the argument. Some explanations of German Jewish demographic patterns have related them to

tradition (e.g. ritual hand washing and low infant mortality), legal restrictions (late marriage), social control (low rates of illegitimacy) and bourgeois social class (birth control and low death rates). Others have tried to connect them with certain modern attitudes, said to have been typical of German Jews (rationalism, individualism, overprotection of children, planning for the economic welfare of children, nervousness). Sometimes it is hard to see what was a cause and what an effect of the changes. Was the earlier use of birth control by German Jews a result of their relative prosperity or a cause of it? Were Jewish parents “overly” solicitous” of their children because they had small families or were small families planned because of their concerns? In the early twentieth century Jewish (and other) analysts of the German Jewish patterns were very critical of the egoism and lack of communal spirit implicit in the new family patterns. Today we know they are typical of modernity in the industrialized world.

**Respondent, Atina Grossmann (Cooper Union)**

***Session Number: 1.8***

**Session American Jewish Places**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Ava F. Kahn (California Studies Center)**

**Judith F. Rosen (CUNY Graduate Center)**

**Forest Hills, New York: A Jewish Golden Land**

One hundred years ago, in 1905, the Long Island Railroad extended its train routes to Queens. Taking immediate advantage of this in 1906, the developer, Cord Meyer broke ground for a new housing subdivision in Whitepot adjacent to the railroad line. Renaming the bucolic area Forest Hills, his advertisements were designed to allure buyers to leave their over crowded city apartments and move to the suburbs.\* Three years later (1909) the Russell Sage Foundation purchased from Cord Meyer 142 acres to be known as Forest Hills Gardens adjacent to the Forest Hills section. Established in the years when newly arrived immigrants flooded the neighborhoods of Manhattan the newly founded neighborhoods in Forest Hills were a ticket to escape the teeming streets of New York and to improve living conditions. In order to protect the civility and integrity of the Forest Hills and Forest Hills Gardens communities each set up deed restrictions which through a “gentleman’s agreement” prevented Jews from buying homes in these locations. Although Jews were initially restricted and discouraged from settling in Forest Hills, they began arriving in the 1920’s and continued to do so as more apartment buildings were built. They began to thrive and organize. The first religious institution to be established in the area was the Forest Hills Jewish Center founded in 1931. The Jewish community grew larger and stronger over the decades, particularly after the war years. By 1957 the majority of the children and teachers in PS 206 and other local elementary schools were Jewish. By the 1960’s the Forest Hills Jewish community was perhaps the most dynamic

Jewish community in the country. It boasted multi-Jewish denominational institutions and organizations. It supported kosher butchers, restaurants, take-outs, delicatessens, bagel stores, Jewish-style bakeries, appetizing stores, a Jewish book store and Barton's candy stores. As the community grew in stature its leaders began to play important roles in New York city-wide and national Jewish organization and in local and national government, art, education, law and industry. Changes in New York City approaches to education and housing integration and new Jewish immigration waves challenged the equilibrium of Forest Hills over the decades. Yet, Jewish Forest Hills continues to thrive. This paper will present the fascinating story of the growth and evolution of the dynamic, heterogeneous Jewish Community of Forest Hills \* Susan Klaus, *A Modern Arcadia*, Boston, 2002, 44.

**Joellyn Zollman (San Diego State University)**

### **The Gifts of the Jews: Ideology and Material Culture in the American Synagogue Gift Shop**

The Gifts of the Jews: Ideology and Material Culture in the American Synagogue Gift Shop “For Jewish occasions, let there be Jewish gifts,” declared sisterhood member Althea Silverman in the pages of *WOMEN'S LEAGUE OUTLOOK* magazine in 1936. What constituted a Jewish gift in 1936? Silverman suggested an engraved kiddush cup for the Bar Mitzvah boy, a silver mezuzah for a housewarming, and a “Palestinian olive wood matzoh holder” for the “Master of the House” to “proudly use and cherish as he conducts the seder service for his children and grandchildren.” Silverman’s suggestions are notable in that they contain a series of messages regarding American Jewish culture during this period. Her specification that the mezuzah should be silver and the kiddush cup engraved mark the gifts as decidedly middle class, and thus appealing to the upwardly mobile American Jewish community. Her inclusion of an object from Palestine suggests a commitment to the Yishuv. And, finally, the link that she makes between the gifting of the matzoh holder and the continued practice of Judaism over the next two generations conveys the equation on which she and countless other pioneering gift shop gurus based their program of synagogue shopping: namely, attractive, middle class Jewish ritual item in the form of “gift” plus educated Jewish recipient equals increased Jewish practice in the home. Increased Jewish practice in the home leads to more committed Jews, which in turn, support the healthy future of American Jewish life. This paper considers synagogue shops in their formative years, between 1945 and 1965, as religious landscapes ripe with visual culture that embodies aspects of postwar American Jewish ideology and culture. Just as Silverman’s gifts can be read as texts of the interwar Jewish community, so too can the objects for sale in the shops serve as legitimate, articulate sources for understanding features of American Jewish life. Specifically, this paper examines the gifts as sources for understanding American Jewish denominationalism, the intersection between American consumerism and an emerging American Jewish aesthetic, and the evolving relationship between American Jews and the state of Israel. In the American synagogue gift shop, kiddush cups, mezuzzot, and matzoh

holders from “Palestine,” came packed with potential not just for decoration but for education, cultural connection, and continuity.

**Laurence D. Roth (Susquehanna University)**

### **The Bookstore as a Space of Modern Jewish Literature**

In her introduction to *WHAT IS JEWISH LITERATURE?*, Hana Wirth-Nesher surveys various definitions of that puzzling subject, highlighting biography, thematics, linguistics, religiosity, assimilationism, and tradition, but not the book itself. In what ways might books as objects, as well as the spaces in which those objects are kept, affect definitions of a modern Jewish literature? This paper offers a provisional answer to that question by providing a quick summary of Jewish bookselling in America in light of the larger history of American publishing and bookselling, and then analyzing the space of J. Roth/Bookseller of Fine and Scholarly Judaica, my father’s bookstore in Los Angeles which he operated between 1966 and 1994. My motive in this paper is to theorize a different kind of relationship between memory and modern Jewish literature, one that takes into account the material and commercial aspects of that literature, both of which are amply on display in the public space of a bookstore. A bookstore is both a retail business and a “living library,” Walter Benjamin’s term for a book collection from “Unpacking My Library.” Benjamin’s essay reminds us that though what is in stock in a bookstore gives memory its texture, equally important is the physical ownership and transmissibility of a store’s collection. As a space that enables a certain kind of cultural and self-possession, Jewish bookstores offer customers an opportunity to define and be defined by their own Jewish collections. Thus Jewish literature ought to be understood as constituted not only by authors and texts, but also through commerce and within social space.

Bookstores, however, also evidence the limits of transmissibility, the insolvency of memory. Physical space is finite; literary canons must fit the shelves. And bookstores, along with their memory collections and definitions of a literature, go out of business. J. Roth/Bookseller, which retailed a wide definition of Jewish literature, failed after the resurgence of Orthodox Judaism and the rise of the corporate chain-bookstore during the late Eighties and early Nineties, while Eichler’s Judaica Superstore, which retails a narrower definition, thrives today serving the more stringent tastes of its Boro Park

### ***Session Number: 1.9***

**Session**            **Redefining the State of the Nation: American Jewish Political Thought, 1905-2005**

### ***Session***

Modern Jewish historiography has generally focused on the United States as a singularly open, liberal society in which religious tolerance and political liberalism eliminated the need for the kind of Jewish nationalist politics that developed in Europe over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet this conventional wisdom obscures the way in which modern

American Jewish thinkers have actively engaged with ideas of nationalism, national identity, and liberal politics in the twentieth century. This panel seeks to probe these issues by answering the following questions: How have different American Jewish thinkers attempted to integrate Jews as a collective entity into the political landscape of the United States? How does the distinctive combination of American ethnic diversity and political liberalism force reevaluations of European models of Jewish religious and national identity? How have Jewish thinkers attempted to articulate novel conceptions of the relationship between national minorities and the modern state? This panel offers three chronological case studies that together suggest new ways for understanding the history of American Jewish political thought. James Loeffler examines the transatlantic transmission of ideas of Jewish nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century. He argues that in translating the nationalist vision of East European thinker Simon Dubnow into the American context, many Jewish intellectuals redefined the nature of Jewish politics to focus on ethnic solidarity, international philanthropy, and global Jewish political advocacy in place of more conventional political and cultural nationalism. Lila Corwin Berman examines the post-World War II American context in which Jews appropriated and created social scientific vocabulary to explain minority identity. She argues that many rabbis ceded other vocabulary modes (especially spiritual ones) to the efficacy and functionalism of social scientific language, in the process redefining the relationship of Jews to the American state. Noam Pianko explores the role of contemporary Jewish intellectuals in constructing the theoretical groundwork for multiculturalism. He argues that Jewish intellectuals turn to the scholarly realm of political thought as a strategy to construct universal theories that legitimate the preservation of particularist identities.

**Chair, David N. Myers (UCLA)**

**Noam F. Pianko (University of Washington)**

**Jewish Intellectuals and the Promise of Multicultural Citizenship**

Should democracies value the preservation of particular cultural, religious, or ethnic minority identities? If so, how should they adjudicate between preserving collective identities and ensuring universal individual rights? Debates exploring these questions regarding the limits of liberal citizenship have exploded over the last decade. Contemporary scholars and public intellectuals have formulated theories of multicultural citizenship that are more sensitive to the collective claims of minority communities and support varying levels of linguistic, cultural, religious, and ethnic recognition. Jews, however, have been virtually absent from this discourse. At the same time, Jewish and Israeli intellectuals such as Michael Walzer, Yael Tamir, Jeffrey Spinner, Amitai Etzioni, Avishai Margalit, Amy Guttmann, Joseph Raz, and Chaim Gans have played leading roles in constructing the groundwork for theories of liberalism and nationalism that promote the status and rights of minority cultures. This paper explores this ostensible paradox between Jewish thinkers' disproportionate involvement in the discourse of multicultural citizenship and



the Jewish communities' absence from wider conversations about poly-ethnic and minority rights. I argue that Jewish intellectuals turn to the scholarly realm of political thought as part of a strategy to construct universal theories that legitimate the preservation of particular cultural, religious, and national identities. Writing primarily as scholars, not Jews, provides a more effective platform for subverting the homogenizing demands of cultural conformity that often accompanies liberal theories emphasis on securing individual rights. These intellectuals often downplay any explicit connection to Jewish or Israeli concerns in their scholarship; nevertheless, repeated references to Jews, Judaism, and Israel legitimates an analysis of the significance that the Jewish experience plays in their writings. Toward this end, I analyze these intellectuals' scholarly publications, ruminations addressed to the Jewish community, and personal roles in Israeli or American Jewish life. The paper contextualizes their writings as part of a larger trend among twentieth-century Jewish intellectuals who challenge the terms of Jewish integration as scholars and political theorists. I conclude by briefly addressing why Jews are so frequently left out of the discourse that Jewish scholars have had, and continue to have, such an important role in shaping and popularizing.

**James Loeffler (University of Virginia)**

**Dubnow's Disciples? Israel Friedlander, Oscar Janowsky, and the Doctrine of Diaspora Nationalism in American Jewish Politics, 1905-1948**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Russian Jewish thinker Simon Dubnow formulated an influential theory of Jewish diaspora nationalism that asserted the possibility of Jewish national autonomy without political sovereignty. While Dubnow's attempts to apply his nationalist vision to the reality of modern Jewish politics fared poorly in Eastern Europe, he found a receptive audience among a small but influential group of American Jewish intellectuals and political activists in the first half of the twentieth century. Yet in the journey across the ocean, Dubnow's ideas underwent a dramatic transformation as they entered the American political context. In this paper I will examine the transatlantic transmission of Dubnow's diaspora nationalism through two second-generation Jewish intellectuals who played leading roles in shaping Jewish communal life in the United States. Israel Friedlander (1876-1920), a scholar, communal leader, and co-founder of several organizations including the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, championed Dubnow's ideas as translator and popularizer of his historical scholarship. Oscar Janowsky (1900-1993) played an influential role in the interwar years as both the leading scholar of Jewish diaspora nationalism and a public advocate of Jewish national autonomy and minority rights in Europe. He did so through a trio of influential 1930s academic publications and an active involvement in international politics, including a stint as advisor on refugee affairs to the League of Nations. Both Friedlander and Janowsky emphasized the continued relevance of Dubnow's theory of nationalism while at the same time reshaping it to fit the communal priorities and political realities of Jewish life in American society. In

particular, they revised his notion of Jewish national autonomy to focus on umbrella communal organizations that would work in partnership with the American government and other new international organizations to extend political representation and philanthropic relief to world Jewry. In doing so, they replaced the European notion of Jewish national-cultural autonomy with more pragmatic visions of communal and civic organizational life based on global

**Lila Berman (Pennsylvania State University)**

### **American Jews and Their Social Scientific Turn**

By the middle of the twentieth century, social scientific language had revolutionized the way Jews in the United States talked about being Jewish and being American. This paper argues that social scientific explanations of group identity and meaning rested at the crux of postwar American Judaism. In the hands of some of the most prominent mid-century rabbis, Jewishness was defined by its social utility and by the collective behaviors and patterns of Jews. Drawing in particular on sociological models, rabbis placed their faith in a vocabulary that saw Jewishness as a social phenomenon, something that happened in groups and was not bound by precepts about God, belief, or duty. Yet far from simply attempting to fit Jews into pre-existing social models, rabbis attempted to rework these models and mold them according to Jewish ideals. They reformulated theories of minority and ethnic identity to explain—and legitimize—ongoing Jewish particularism and distinctiveness. Perhaps because of their constant efforts to use putatively universal vocabulary to anchor Jewish distinctiveness, these rabbis were often blamed for anesthetizing religion. Intellectuals at the time and historians since have depicted postwar Judaism as vapid and watered down, sensing the limitations of the social scientific turn without naming or examining it. I conclude the paper by discussing the seeds of a backlash against the social scientific turn. Some rabbis who had once been exponents of a sociological conception of Jewishness became disenchanted with its tendency to put the social before the sacred. They also worried about what Jewishness would become if Jews' social patterns increasingly marked them as similar—and not distinct from—other Americans. Yet decry as they might the social scientific categories of Jewishness, few found it possible to resist the sheer efficacy of a language that corresponded to what people did and not what they should be doing or believing.

***Session Number: 1.10***

**Session      Early Modern Jews and Christians: Conflict and Interaction**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Robert Chazan (New York University)**

**Rebekka Voss (University of Duesseldorf)**

**Beyond the Art of Polemics: Jewish Messianism and Christian Apocalypticism in Reformation Germany**

Jewish-Christian debate over the messiah is polemical in the sense of Arthur

Schopenhauer's theory of "the art of disputing in such a way as to hold one's own, whether one is in the right or the wrong." But the relationship of Jewish messianism and Christian apocalypticism goes beyond the art of polemics; the two phenomena are dialectical on various levels. They interact on both an ideological and a social level. The paper will explore the highly interactive, Jewish-Christian eschatological discourse in sixteenth-century Germany. While the German lands were a hotbed of Radical-Reformation millenarianism, they have, incorrectly, long been regarded as almost irrelevant to the study of Jewish messianism. In fact, however, the 1520s witnessed a close connection between Jewish and Christian expectations of the dawning end. Two largely unknown cases exemplify the dynamics of this dialectical relationship. The first example is the chiliastic theory of the restitution of Israel to the Holy Land, which was posited in the 1520s as a prerequisite for the Last Judgement. This strange Christian eschatological scenario seems to have been a theological explanation for contemporary political events; it accounts for the support the Jewish ambassador from the Lost Tribes, David Reuveni, initially received from Christian rulers for his plan to recapture Israel. The second episode highlights the dramatic outcome the meeting of Christian millenarism and Jewish messianism could have. After the Swabian authorities discovered contacts between Jews and a group of Anabaptists, which gathered around a prophet expecting the imminent Second Coming, the region's cities decided to take measures against the revolutionary explosive force inherent in the events. In 1530, they arrested the Anabaptist leaders and prepared for the Jews' expulsion. Josel of Rosheim successfully intervened on the Jews' behalf, but two years later he understandably begged Reuveni and his companion Salomon Molkho not to appear before the Emperor because he knew of the dangers active messianic movements bore for Jewish society. Focusing on these two case studies, the paper will demonstrate the dialectical interaction of Jewish and Christian eschatology in Reformation Germany and the ideological and practical implications of that interaction.

### **Hanna Węgrzynek (Jewish Historical Institute)**

#### **Jews and Agriculture in Poland, Sixteenth through the Eighteenth**

The historiography of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe focuses mainly on commercial and craft activities, and tends to disregard agriculture. Recent research suggests the need to introduce some changes in this domain. Jews were engaged in agriculture already in the middle ages. As recently demonstrated by J. Heyde, in the 14th century, when Jewish settlement developed on Red Ruthenia, newly conquered by Poland, Jews were prominent within the group of colonists who set up new hamlets (*zasady*). Jewish town dwellers were also familiar with agricultural activities. Medieval and early modern towns possessed grazing lands and gardens where necessary foodstuffs were produced. Suburban gardens and farms, such as in Przemyśl (platea infra San), Bochnia (Solna Góra) and Oświęcim were at disposal of local Jews. The 16th century was the turning point in the formation of the Jewish occupational structure. Vast Ruthenian territories, Podole and Kiev

region, were now attached to the Crown of Poland, intensifying the settlement in this part of country. Jews were involved in this process and collaborated with noblemen. They leased vast landed properties belonging to nobility. Such Jews were involved in the sale of agricultural and forest products. In this period the number of Jewish innkeepers was growing. The proportion of inns run by Jews is estimated at 25 %. Most of those leased inns (arendas) possessed fields. Innkeepers had to be self-sufficient and produce foodstuffs for their family and the inn. From mid-17th century, the right to produce alcohol was often leased together with the inn. This right concerned beer and vodka sold in the inn, which were produced from the cereals and hops cultivated by innkeepers. I have discovered numerous contracts proving that the arrendators (leaseholders) were given land to be cultivated, and had at their disposal Christian serfs who worked there and produced drinks in brasseries and distilleries. During the second half of the 17th century, urban economic activity collapsed due to the state's severe economic problems. This was accompanied by the agrarianization of towns, especially small ones. Reports by foreign travelers show that 18th century Polish towns were more like country villages and had lost their urban character. Most of their population in the Southeastern part of the country was Jewish. These changes influenced the occupational structure of Jews living on these territories. Agriculture was not their main source of income, but was a common endeavor. This situation lasted until the 19th century, when these territories were

***Session Number: 1.11***

**Session Sephardi/Mizrahi Literature and Culture**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Ori Kritz (University of Oklahoma)**

**Julie Strongson (University of Maryland)**

**Negotiating a Comfortable Space in the Works of Myriam Ben and H el ene Cixous**

Well-known Tunisian-born Jewish writer Albert Memmi, in his first novel *La statue de sel* (1955), describes himself as “a native in a colonized country, a Jew in an anti-Semitic universe, an African in a world in which Europe triumphs.” This notion of what he calls a “painful trichotomy” of identity perfectly characterizes the complex position occupied by many North African Jews in Memmi’s situation. Their experience of a “triple alienation”-- cultural, ethnic, and social, as Memmi puts it — is explored in much of their writing, which reflects years of attempting to define where they truly belong. Working off of Memmi’s concept of a “trichotomy” of identity, I look at Algerian writer Myriam Ben’s childhood memoir entitled *Quand les cartes sont truqu ees* (1999), and Algerian-born critic and author H el ene Cixous’s autobiographical short story entitled “*Pieds nus*” (1999). The history of Jews in Algeria is a complex and multi-layered one. Much of this can be attributed to a decree in 1870 that declared Algerian Jews French citizens, in contrast to their Muslim

neighbors, and thus access to social, economic, and political privilege denied other Algerians. Both Ben and Cixous therefore tell of their experiences in this “privileged” position, as well as the subsequent repeal of this decree during World War Two and the implications of this repeal. Throughout their narratives, Ben and Cixous’s narrators are forced to question their identity when their being Jewish becomes a source of ridicule, discrimination, and hatred among their peers. Placed in a simultaneously inferior and superior positioning, both of them must eventually come to terms with the guilt, shame and betrayal they feel in their interactions with their Muslim neighbors, and spend much of the narrative trying to negotiate a comfortable space for themselves within this contentious identity.

**Johann Sadock (MIT)**

**The Invisibility of Contemporary Francophone Sephardic Literature**

I propose to explore the causes of the invisibility of contemporary Sephardic Francophone literature in France as well as in the academic field of Francophone Studies. In today’s “société du spectacle,” contemporary Sephardic Francophone writers of fiction and memoirs do not seem to be as visible as Sephardic actors, directors, playwrights, and journalists. It is as though the challenge of conveying some of the verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating—a certain liveliness often tied up with an “accent” and/or certain gestures—cannot be overcome on the page. In the United States, this relative invisibility of Sephardic Francophone writers is compounded by very few translations of their works. Without ignoring or dwelling on the very different styles of influential writers such as Albert Cohen, Albert Memmi and Edmond Jabès, I first intend to outline the main characteristics of contemporary Sephardic Francophone literature. In the writings of the eighties, Sephardic Francophone writers’ representations of their countries of origin and adoption are often repetitive in their expression of nostalgia. Since then, this literature has not yet completely engaged with society at large and seems limited (at the levels both of production and reception) by comparisons with the literature of the holocaust on one hand and the literatures of more marginalized immigrant populations on the other hand. I will therefore examine the various factors that can explain the invisibility of this literature from the narrowness and repetitiveness of its themes to the status and condition of Sephardic Jews in France today. Precisely because the diverse accomplishments of Sephardic Jews in various fields (artistic and non artistic) are striking, one has to wonder what could be hampering a lucid and uncompromising exploration of oneself and one’s group -- a precondition for

***Session Number: 1.12***

**Session            Personal Narratives of the Holocaust: Recent Challenges,  
New Possibilities**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Simone Schweber (University of Wisconsin-Madison)**

**Henry Abramson (Touro College South)**

**Entering the Mind of the Rebbe: New Research Based on Manuscript Emendations in the Warsaw Ghetto Writings of the Piaseczno Rebbe**

Esh Kodesh is one of the most unusual documents to emerge from the devastated Warsaw Ghetto: the record of nearly 100 sermons delivered between 1939 and 1943 by one of the most prominent Hasidic leaders of the time, Rabbi Kalonymus Kalmish Shapiro, before his deportation and eventual murder by the Nazis in November 1943. Discovered by a construction worker clearing the rubble of the ghetto and eventually published in the early 60s, the print version has been studied by a number of scholars. Unfortunately, the version published by the followers of the Rebbe was not a critical edition, reflecting the thousands of emendations made by the Rebbe. A closer look at the original manuscript reveals an entirely new dimension of the text: repeated strikeouts, later additions, and even the handwriting of multiple scribes speak volumes regarding the author's mindset during the increasingly oppressive conditions of the Nazi occupation. This paper will examine these manuscript changes and discuss their implications from historical, literary and theological perspectives.

**Judith Gerson (Rutgers University)**

**Between Immigration and the Shoah: Comparative Writing in the Memoirs of German Jewish Refugees**

Evidence for this paper comes from a larger, ongoing project on German Jewish refugees who fled Germany between 1933 and 1941, and resettled in New York City before the war's end. The people who are the subjects of my inquiry escaped Europe before the Nazis began the mass deportations and implemented the Final Solution. Although many public domain definitions of "Holocaust survivor" include these refugees under their rubric, often they refuse the term "survivor" and prefer instead to think of themselves as immigrants. I analyze 164 largely unpublished memoirs archived at the Leo Baeck Institute/CJH and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and read the relevant entries for two essay contests—one sponsored by YIVO, the other by Harvard. These narratives emphasize themes of diaspora, exile and resettlement juxtaposed with Holocaust memory. I focus on when and how memoir writers compare their experiences and when they refuse comparison when narrating their exile, resettlement and the Holocaust. Cognizant and respectful of the ongoing and vexed debates about the appropriateness and consequences of comparing the Holocaust with other genocides, instead I argue for an empirical approach that interprets if and how memoir writers rely on notions of comparison when describing their experiences of the Holocaust and diaspora, and conversely when they avoid comparison or alternately assert the uniqueness of their knowledge. Using ideas of comparison as an analytic tool to read these narratives enables insight into the topics the writers assert with certainty and those they erase, repress or avoid. Drawing on my findings, I conclude with a discussion of my research for collective memory patterns of the Shoah and this wave of immigration and resettlement specifically, and its implications for studying genocide and diaspora more

**Diane Wolf (University of California, Davis)**  
**Children's Memories and Family Memory: Hidden Children and Postwar Families**

This paper will focus on the use of former hidden children's memories about family life and what such memories can and cannot tell us about the past. Although historians have critically questioned the use of adult survivor testimony, hidden children's memories of the Shoah have been discounted by their parents, the society in which they lived, other survivors, and to a great extent, academia as well. I would like to critically analyze what we can gain from such memories about family life and what we miss from such accounts, based on my research with 70 former hidden children in the Netherlands. I will use an interdisciplinary approach to the study of childhood in order to examine what these testimonies of hidden children can contribute to the field and how the field of childhood studies might inform research on the Shoah.

**Leah Wolfson (Emory University)**

**Opening the Wound: Resistance as National Narrative in France and**

In reference to the history and memory of World War II in France, historian Henry Rousso speaks of the danger of writing "history with an agenda." He says: "One does not write history with the goal of defending a particular set of values. The writing of history, a free and critical writing that restores the breadth and complexity of the past, is a value in itself and merits defending." Thus, one cannot create a history to fulfill an already established image; rather, history helps to shape (and at times, break) that very national narrative. This paper endeavors to analyze the formation of such monumental narratives of two somewhat unlikely but surprisingly similar bedfellows: France and Israel. Both countries utilized two very different facets of resistance as a foundation for their post-war identity. In the case of France, this occurs in the form of resistance as a means of denial on multiple levels. Through the selective memory and outright falsehood of all French men and women as resistance fighters, French national history managed to at best minimize, at worst completely deny their role as a collaborator in numerous Nazi actions against the Jews. This identity was punctured by a confrontation with the historiography of the 1970s: a narrative that revives Emile Zola's famous "j'accuse" for a new, more violent time. For Israel, a country that only found complete independence post-war, it is Jewish resistance that takes on near mythic importance. Those who were not a part of the relatively small number of partisan or ghetto fighters initially had little place in the national narrative of the "new Jew." It will take the unique legal event of the Eichmann trial to open up, for the first time, the possibility for the "mere survivor" to speak. Thus, when viewed side-by-side, these two nations' uses of resistance reveals not only the pitfalls of creating one all-encompassing national story. They also force us to confront the ways in which this history defies easy categorization. In the end, the extremity of the Holocaust challenges the very possibility of a simple narrative of heroism or redemption.

**Respondent, Caryn Aviv (University of Denver)**

## **Abstracts for Session 2**

### **Sunday, December, 17, 2006 11:15 AM-01:00 PM**

#### ***Session Number: 2.1***

#### ***Session*      **The Future of Jewish Philosophy: Challenges and****

#### ***Session***

Session will include a discussion by prominent members of the field of Jewish Philosophy on the contemporary state of the field. Discussions will include favored methods and suggestions for further work.

**Chair, Zachary J. Braiterman (Syracuse University)**

**Steven D. Kepnes (Colgate University)**

**Hava Tirosh Samuelson (Arizona State University)**

In the beginning of the 21st century Jewish philosophy finds itself at a new cross-road as several post-World II initiatives have either reached a certain maturation or even exhausted themselves: post-holocaust theology, feminist theology, Jewish political theory, and Jewish-Christian dialogue. If Jewish philosophy is to grow both as an academic inquiry and as an existential reflection, it must enlarge its scope and pose new questions. As an inquiry into the history of Jewish thought, the discipline of Jewish philosophy should direct its attention once again to the Hellenistic world and to its revival in the early modern periods. A new examination of the connection between Wisdom literature and apocalyptic literature could bring into the fold of Jewish philosophy material that has been studied by and inspired the history of Christian philosophy. Similarly Jewish philosophy from the 14th to the 17th centuries invites new studies in light of the accumulated research into the revival of various Hellenistic philosophical schools in the Renaissance, especially Stoicism. As a thematic inquiry, Jewish philosophy could become more relevant if it engages contemporary discourses in which the Jews have been rather marginal: environmental philosophy, ethics in light of the life sciences and the cognitive sciences, and the dialogue of science and religion.

For the past three decades these discourses have developed their canonic literature, distinct analytic tools, and thematic concerns, but the Jewish voice has been largely missing from these conversations. The future of Jewish philosophy could be brighter if Jewish philosophers engage these fields on the basis of the Jewish tradition, both philosophical and non-philosophical. The paper will map out these issues with the intention of charting a new path for the discipline of Jewish philosophy.

**David Novak (University of Toronto)**

#### ***Session Number: 2.2***

#### ***Session*      **New Strains, New Directions: The Politics of Israel among American Jews****

#### ***Session***

Since the collapse of the Oslo process at Camp David, political disputes among American Jews over Israel's policies toward Palestinians and on issues



of religion and state have largely slipped from public view. But make no mistake about it: American Jews remain deeply divided in their attitudes over specific Israeli policies. Moreover, Israel has become increasingly controversial in a number of institutional settings -- including most prominently on university campuses -- and claims leveled against the "Israel lobby" for harming the American national interest have penetrated the mainstream. What are the implications of persistent policy disagreements and an increasingly tumultuous external environment for how American Jews relate to Israel? This panel consists of a number of papers examining the changing

**Chair, Leonard Saxe (Brandeis University)**

**Charles Kadushin (Brandeis University)**

**Israel and United States Jews: Recent Quantitative Analyses**

[Co-authors: Ben Phillips, Graham Wright, Len Saxe]

In the United States we have the expression "My country, right or wrong, my country." Many supporters of Israel had adopted this view and supported the State of Israel even when they were uncomfortable about its policies. This seems to be especially true for Boston Jews. Specifically, attitudes regarding the future of West Bank settlements are unrelated to identification with Israel. Support for settlements is related to general political conservatism and to identification with Orthodoxy as a denomination. While Orthodox Jews and those who are more ritually observant also tend to identify with Israel, general political liberalism or conservatism is not related to identification with Israel. Travel to Israel and having social and personal connections with Israel is associated with identification with Israel, but connections are not related to support for the West Bank. In short, identification with Israel and support for Israel government West Bank policies are two different matters and have different bases in the Boston Jewish community.

1. As commonly used. Originally, a toast by Stephen Decatur (1719-1820) in 1816: "Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be right, but our country, right or wrong!" [(The Oxford dictionary of quotations 1979), p. 173]

**Bethamie Horowitz (Mandel Foundation)**

**The Teaching of Israel in American Jewish Schools**

In this paper I examine how the teaching of Israel is conceptualized in American Jewish schools. Based on key informant interviews (by phone and by email) with principals and senior educators in liberal Jewish day and supplemental schools in the United States, I have learned that many schools are rethinking the goals they have for teaching about Israel. I investigate how Israel has been taught in the past and the reasons why changes are now being made. Recently, many observers have begun to posit a paradigm shift in Israel-Diaspora relations -- from a "support Israel irrespective of and under all circumstances" to a more "transnational citizenship model" where consensus about Israel isn't expected to be lock-step and uniform. By examining how schools -- institutions grounded with a decidedly local context-- decide to teach about Israel to their children, this paper will provide a window into how American Jews frame their hopes, commitments, worries and concerns about

Israel in relation to their own children.

**Theodore Sasson (Brandeis University/Middlebury College)**  
**From “Mobilization” to “Transnational Citizenship”:** Narrating Masada  
to American Jewish Young Adults

[Co-author: Shaul Kelner]

For generations of Israeli and American Jews, Masada has signified the imperative of global Jewish solidarity in the face of enemies who might seek to destroy the Jewish state. The battle cry from the summit has long been, “Masada Shall Not Fall Twice!” Field research conducted on a dozen birthright israel tours during the Summer of 2005, however, suggests that a new narrative has taken its place alongside – and sometimes in place of – the heroic account. According to this version, the defenders of Masada were in fact Jewish extremists who sparked a hopeless war against Rome, assassinated fellow Jews, and brought destruction upon themselves and the Jewish state. The contemporary moral of the story is as obvious as the one it seeks to replace: The greatest danger facing the Jewish state comes not from its external enemies but from its own extremist and radical elements. Masada has thus become polysemic – an icon with multiple potential meanings. The paper argues that the case of Masada reflects a broader diversification of Jewish narratives about Israel, a process opening new pathways of connection for American Jews.

***Session Number: 2.3***

***Session***      **Contested Loyalties: Jewish Citizens and the East Central European State**

***Session***

The questioning of Jewish loyalties by the modern European state runs like a red thread through the history of European Jewry, examples of which span from the Dreyfus Affair to accusations of dual loyalties following the establishment of the state of Israel. This panel frames loyalty as an innovative mode of transnational inquiry particularly well-suited to the study of Jewish history. Examining the challenges of Jewish relations to the modern European state through the lens of loyalty helps us to find the thematic continuity among a variety of seemingly disparate cases that facilitates comparative study. It opens up an effective means of usefully contributing to both Jewish and general historiography. This panel places the loyalty issue in the context of east central Europe, considering it from the perspective of the Jewish populations of the Kingdom of Hungary, post-World War One Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. Each paper seeks to examine the intersection between Jewish citizenship and the negotiation of the relationship of the Jewish population to the state. In all cases, the challenges faced by the Jewish population stemmed from rapid and significant demographic change central to the development of the state: especially mass immigration and the integration of disparate territories. Our panel is chaired by Jeffrey Veidlinger and consists of four papers. In her paper, Kati Vörös discusses the reactions of Hungarian Jews to the Tiszaeszlár blood libel affair (1882-1883), which they saw as a

contestation of Hungarian Jewish political equality and social position. Emil Kerenji explores the uses of Zionist rhetoric by a group of Croatian Zionists in the process of forging of a "Yugoslav" Jewry out of the Jewish populations of former Ottoman and Habsburg provinces. Rebekah Klein-Pejšová asserts that the Jews of Slovakia, suspect as potential accomplices to the irredentist ambitions of the Interwar Hungarian regime, used Jewish national politics as a means of demonstrating separation from the Magyars. And Dmitry Tartakovsky explores the confrontation between Jewish leaders and the Romanian secret police over the contested status of the Jews in Bessarabia, who were suspected of anti-Romanian activities and collaboration with Soviet-inspired and directed communism.

**Chair, Jeffrey Veidlinger (Indiana University)**

**Kati Voros (University of Chicago)**

**Blood Libel and Jewish Politics: Hungarian Jews at the Time of the Tiszaeszlár "Ritual Murder" Affair, 1880-1886**

The paper discusses the politics of Hungarian Jewry vis-à-vis the Hungarian state at the time of the Tiszaeszlár "ritual murder" affair. The paper contends that the Tiszaeszlár blood libel affair (1882-83) was a transforming event not only in the development of the Hungarian liberal state, but in the history of Hungarian Jewry as well. The paper situates the affair in a wider temporal framework in order to reveal its causes and demonstrate its consequences for Hungarian Jews. The affair occurred at a time that can be described as the first Hungarian Kulturkampf, when the liberal state attempted to complete its political modernization program, which coincided with the appearance of modern political antisemitism. The affair was not only an almost two-year long investigation and trial but a major political controversy and a modern media event as well. It induced a passionate public debate about the "Jewish question" and culminated in recurring street violence against Jews. In a way, the first major crisis of the post-Ausgleich Hungarian state was played out through a blood libel affair. The focus of the paper is not so much on the liberal state and antisemitism, but on the reactions of Hungarian Jews to what they saw as a major challenge to their political equality and social position in Hungary. The paper discusses the views and actions of the Jewish defendants, Jewish politicians and Jewish organizations facing the accusations and living through the affair. The sources for the paper are the Jewish and non-Jewish press, pamphlets, the fragmented surviving documents of the Pest Jewish community and the Neolog and Orthodox national organizations, the speeches of individual Jewish politicians in the Hungarian parliament and governmental documents pertaining to the trial. The paper has two major—interrelated—contentions. 1. The Tiszaeszlár ritual murder affair was a formative event in the life of Hungarian Jews that changed the course of Hungarian Jewish politics. 2. The received wisdom about Hungarian Jewry as unconditionally identifying with the Magyar state and nation and the most assimilationist in Central Europe needs to be revised.

**Rebekah Klein-Pejsova (Columbia University)**

**"Abandon Your Role as Exponents of the Magyars": Jewish Nationality**

## **and the Jews in Interwar Slovakia**

Czechoslovakia stood in marked contrast to its East Central European neighbors for its renunciation of anti-Semitism, its support of Zionism and Jewish national rights. Nevertheless, significant challenges to Jewish/State relations existed within Czechoslovakia as well. This was particularly true in Slovakia, where Jews were suspect as potential accomplices to the irredentist ambitions of the Interwar Hungarian regime due their history of alignment with the Magyar government. According to Vavro Šrobár, the governmental minister in charge of the administration of Slovakia, the Jews in Slovakia had been willing tools of the Magyar government in carrying out its policy of magyarization before the war, they had been informants and spies during the war, and they had worked as Magyar agitators against the newly founded Czechoslovak Republic after the war. President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk himself urged the Jews in Slovakia to "return to the world-view of [their] forefathers, be Jews, and abandon [their] role as exponents of the Magyars." This paper examines Jewish nationality, a new category of national affiliation created after the First World War, as a significant means by which the Jewish population of Slovakia attempted to negotiate their contested loyalty to the Czechoslovak state. Jewish nationality was directly tied to larger conceptions of nationality and nationhood in Czechoslovakia. The most important of these was an innovative definition of nationality that introduced "internal conviction" as its basis rather than language. Jewish nationality, understood as an authentic anti-assimilationist expression of Jewish national belonging that offered statistical benefits to the dominant 'Czechoslovak' nation, looked like a good way to demonstrate separation from alignment with the Magyars. The majority of Jews in Slovakia welcomed the opportunity to pursue their own national politics whether they spoke Magyar, German, Yiddish, Czech, Slovak, or any combination of these. This, combined with a generally comfortable standard of living, contributed to the opinion that life was better for them in Czechoslovakia than it was in post-Trianon Hungary. They publicly expressed their loyalty to the state on the basis of its democratic political system, their ability to thrive in it as Jews, and their high regard for Masaryk.

## **Dmitry Tartakovsky (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) Bessarabian Jews in Greater Romania: Soviet Sympathizers and Enemies of the Romanian Nation?**

Following the occupation and incorporation of Bessarabia into the territory of Greater Romania in 1918, Bucharest administrators faced the difficulty of establishing Romanian bureaucratic control and government legitimacy over a province that was economically and politically different from the Old Kingdom, and where the educated, urban classes were ethnically non-Moldovan and significantly Russified. As viewed from Bucharest, if the province's residents would become loyal Romanian citizens they would need to be "Romanianized." Most Romanian political leaders saw resistance to this cultural and political program as disloyalty in all the newly acquired territories, including in Bessarabia, where Russian cultural influence remained strong (and suspect), and Soviet efforts to undermine Romanian rule only intensified into the 1920s

and 30s. Bessarabian Jews, who for numerous reasons had an ambiguous relationship with Bucharest's Romanianizing project, were most suspect by Bucharest leaders as Soviet collaborators and perceived as being determined to undermine the Romanian nation. The trope of Jew as communist became a notable addition to traditional Romanian Judeo-phobia, and was used as an important political justification to de facto undermine Jewish civic equality in interwar Romania that had been guaranteed to all minorities by the Versailles Treaty. Jewish political and cultural organizations in Bessarabia, even when Zionist or religious Orthodox in character, were suspected of anti-Romanian activities and of collaborating with Soviet-inspired and directed communism. This paper will delve in the battles over Jewish culture between Jewish leaders and organizations and the Romanian secret police, the Siguran?a, which most clearly embodied the enforcement of Romanian ethno-unitary cultural policies that for many Bessarabian Jews was the core of their experience with a modern nation-state. It will look at treatment of the primary Yiddishist organization in interwar Bessarabia, the Jewish Cultural League, as well as at Jewish participation in the communist movement. The project goal will be to examine how such geo-political interests, as well as preconceived ideas about Jews, poisoned the possibility of understanding and co-existence in the interwar period.

**Emil Kerenji (University of Michigan)**

**Forging (Yugoslav) Jewish Unity: South Slav Zionism, the Ashkenazi/Sephardi Split, and the Question of Yugoslavia, 1896-1941**

This paper traces the process of the forging of the Yugoslav Jewry in the period from the late nineteenth century until World War II. A collection of disparate Jewish populations from the various Ottoman and Habsburg Balkan provinces for most of the nineteenth century, the Jews of the Slavic Balkan areas were imagined by a group of Vienna-educated Zionists from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to constitute a single political community with significant Zionist potential. In the process of forging the community, the Zionists faced and addressed major problems on the ground: cultural and political hostility of Sephardi organizations to Ashkenazi bourgeois Zionism; the question of language; and the heated and widely debated issues of Serbo-Croatian politics. Pursuing their own interests, the Zionists situated their political project in a wider political arena. This paper locates some key debates and political developments that had influenced the outlook of the newly-forged Yugoslav Jewish community on the eve of World War II. In order to do so, the paper examines the first Jewish academic societies in Vienna founded by students from the Balkans; the new phenomenon of Zionist press in Serbo-Croatian, both before and after World War I; the so-called "Sarajevo dispute," which expanded into a major confrontation between Croatian Zionists and Bosnian Sephardists; and the importance of the rhetoric about Hebrew culture and the colonization of Palestine in the process of forging a Yugoslav Jewish community. The context of forming of a multinational Yugoslav state in 1918—with years of debates and political deliberations both preceding and following the actual event—is an excellent point of departure for addressing

the wider questions of Jewish politics in the region and the ambiguities of Jewish citizenship.

**Session Number: 2.4**

**Session Yiddish Fiction and Poetry**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Zachary M. Baker (Stanford University)**

**Itay B Zutra (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**"Der zaytiker kuk": The Poetry of In zikh in the 1930s**

This paper is a study of three books of modernist American Yiddish poetry, published in the latter half of the 1930's: Jacob Glatstein, *Yidishtaytshn* (1937), A. Leyeles, *Fabius Lind* (1937), and Y.L Teller, *Lider fun der tsayt* (1940). They are among the crowning achievements of Yiddish poetry in America. In them, each poet reached artistic maturity that allowed him not only to present the highest mode of modernist poetic diction but also to explore the limits of this modernism. In the 1920's, the heyday of their modernist revolt, Leyeles and Glatstein, chief members of *Inzikh*, avoided writing political poetry for the sake of a thorough self-examination. Even though the official poetics of *In zikh* allowed them the freedom to write about political subjects, in practice they avoided writing such poetry. *Inzikh* objected to writing proletarian poetry but also to writing impressionist lyricism, like *Di Yunge*. In the second half of the 1930's, due to the rise of totalitarianism, the major poets of *Inzikh* became increasingly interested in addressing the political arena. They lead battles against Stalinism and anti-Semitism. They wrote numerous essays for various publications, which in turn broadened the horizons of their poetry. In their poetry, however, this process did not result in declarative verse about Jewish topics, but rather in a deep examination of the self coping with the invasion of a violent reality. Each poet developed a different strategy to address the political reality: Glatstein deconstructed the power structures of contemporary Yiddish public speech (for example in "*Mir di vort proletaryer*"; Teller expanded the limits of his compressed imagist style in order to make room for Jewish political polemic (in "*Psikhoanaliz*"), and Leyeles created the persona of Fabius Lind, who examines the world with an ironic marginalized gaze (in "*Februar 21*"). From this decentralized position, they were able to remove their poetic mask as modern poets and reconnect to their repressed Jewish self. Paradoxically, this became possible precisely because of the poetics of introspection they had developed in the 1920's.

**Yechiel Szeintuch (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**The Representation of the Jewish Underworld in Yiddish Literature:**

**The Case of Urke Nachalnik**

One of the subjects in East European Jewish life until 1939 which is dealt with in Jewish literature and in modern Yiddish literature in particular, in the last 100 years of East European Jewish life is the existence of a Jewish underworld with its various branches and characters and geographical locations. This aspect of Jewish life is reflected in the literary writings from Nakhum Meir

Shaykevitsh (Shomer) born in the middle of the 19th century, and up to the writings of Urke Nachalnik who died a hero's death as a partisan fighting against the Nazis in 1942. Among others who wrote in Yiddish about the Jewish underworld are Mendele-Moykher-Sforim, Mordechai Spektor, Perets Hirshbeyn, Sholem Aleykhem, Mordechai Alperon, Dovid Einhorn, Sholem Ash, Yosef Opatoshu, Yitschak Bashevis, Fishl Bimko, Yosef Tunkel (Der Tunkeler), Leyb Malakh, Berl Greenberg, Chaim Grade, Arye Ekshteyn, Avraham Karpinovitsh, Yeshaya Shpigl, Mordechai Strigler, and Katzetnik. It was also reflected in the literature in other languages for example Alexander Kuprin, Benjamin Kaverin and Isaac Babel in Russian, and Mirta Shalom-Tulchinski in Spanish, and Yehuda Burla and Yitschak Shami in Hebrew. Urke Nachalnik (Yitschak Farbarovitsh), born in the shtetl Vizna in the Lomzhe district differs from the other authors mentioned in that before he became a writer he was an infamous thief and underworld figure. In my lecture about this bilingual writer who wrote in Polish and Yiddish – I will summarize the state of research on his writings, his contribution to Yiddish literature, and the way in which the Jewish underworld in the first half of the 20th century is represented in his writings.

**Lyudmila Sholokhova (YIVO Institute for Jewish Research)**

### **Elements of Nature in Yiddish Folk Ballads**

Elements of nature (flora and fauna) represent a very important component in the poetics of Yiddish folksongs and ballads. It should be said, though, that compared to Ukrainian, Russian, or other East European folk songs, the vocabulary of nature in Yiddish songs is quite limited and colorful landscapes are extremely rare. The reason is that the Yiddish song was the song of the shtetl, and life outside the shtetl was another, little-known world. This particular feature of Yiddish folk songs might easily be taken for a failure, but for a patient researcher it turns out to be an essential means of dramatic action, which plays a specifically important role in ballads. Elements of nature occupy a significant place in the beginning, development and conclusion of the songs, but their functions there may vary: Beginning: The ballad often opens with a short, simple, but expressive landscape; it serves as a setting for the songs, directly corresponds to their content, and even predicts their dramatic finale (in the ballads about a black wedding canopy [shvartse khupe], a drowned man, etc.); Middle (development): A change of scenery (change of weather, change of time of day) might happen; this change is usually a brief introduction to the tragedy to take place in the next lines; one of the heroes might appeal to nature, as to a person, in a moment of despair (a ballad about a lawyer); Conclusions: Elements of nature play the most significant role here - metaphors using these elements are widely used to describe the current state of the character; parallelisms unrelated to the issues of the songs extend the final conclusion and make it more meaningful. Metaphors and comparisons are very simple and laconic; nevertheless, they leave a deep impression. Special attention will be paid to canonic, traditional symbols in the songs – a bird bringing news; a golden peacock (goldene pave) flying all over the world; a tree, etc. The essential vocabulary of nature elements in Yiddish

folk ballads will be enumerated to correspond to the situations in which they

**Session Number: 2.5**

**Session Jewish Identity and the Culture of Celebrity**

**Session**

In the past decade, the culture of celebrity has become a significant area of inquiry for academic scholarship in fields such as history, literature, and sociology. Critics such Leo Braudy, David Marshall, and Joshua Gamson

have considered how individuals go about crafting public personas, the media's role in generating celebrity status, and the relationship between celebrities and their audiences. At the same time, the field of Jewish Studies has become increasingly receptive to the analysis of mass cultural phenomena. This panel makes the status of celebrities within American Jewish culture a central focus of interrogation. The three papers consider the importance of Jewish celebrities to the self-conceptions of American Jews. Together they address the questions: Why have Jews been so preoccupied with the success of other Jews? What kind of

investments do American Jews have in their celebrities? How have celebrities viewed their relationship to Jewishness? What role does the visual play in the production of celebrity status?

While discussions of celebrity and Jewish culture seem to lend themselves to contemporary analyses, this panel considers how the contours of Jewish celebrity have changed over time. Two of the papers focus on the first half of the twentieth century when both mass culture and America's Jewish population grew to new proportions.

Eddy Portnoy will consider caricature as a form of celebrity recognition in the Yiddish press. Focusing on Fannie Hurst, an early-twentieth century writer famous for her distinctive appearance, Alisa Braun will explore the relationship between Hurst's fashion and the question of her Jewish identity. Ted Merwin considers the changing relationship between Jewish celebrities and their fans in light of an increased openness on the part of the former about their Jewishness. All three papers extend current investigations on the nature of celebrity by making Jewish difference a primary focus and drawing on evidence from underexamined sources and recently-published material. By focusing on the theme of celebrity, this panel brings a new dimension to Jewish studies, offering a new prism through which to observe the construction of Jewish identity in

**Chair, Shelly Tenenbaum (Clark University)**

**Edward Portnoy (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Invisible Fame: Celebrity and Cartoons in the Yiddish Press**

The Yiddish press is not well known for its graphic arts. Nonetheless, as with any popular press, graphics eventually came to play an important role. Among



the visual phenomena that became prevalent during the burgeoning of the Yiddish press in Russian-ruled Poland in the wake of the failed revolution of 1905 were numerous cartoons. For a press in which the printing of photographs was expensive and relatively infrequent, cartoons appear to have taken the place of photographs when it came to portraying figures of import. It is, in fact, somewhat remarkable that many of the first images marking the celebrity of a number of those active within the cultural and political spheres of public Jewry appeared first in cartoon form. While it is clear that cartoon and caricature is a form of back-handed compliment and one that relies on the fame of its target, it is not typical that caricatures should first be the dominant form in which images of an important figure appear in a popular press. However, prior to the interwar period, there are instances in which more cartoon images exist of certain cultural figures than photographs. This type of satirical celebrity recognition became a common feature of the Yiddish press. Many events occurred within Jewish communities that were briefly important but which failed to interest historians because they were not deemed important enough for inclusion in the historical record. These events are, however, traceable via cartoons, which can be an unusual, yet particularly rich resource for the study of Jewish history. As historians approach the life of urban Jewry, they will find that some of their histories are visually accessible only through this comic medium. In this paper I will present a number of events that were major stories in the Yiddish press, yet have been roundly ignored by historians, exploring the effect the cartoon form had on how the people and events represented were interpreted. It is additionally of note that more cartoons appeared than photographs, an element which will also be explored. This paper relies on scans from microfilms that will be presented via Powerpoint. As a result, a computer projector will be necessary.

**Alisa Braun (University of California, Davis)**

### **The Clothes Make the Woman: Fannie Hurst's Sense of Fashion**

This paper explores the career of the best-selling writer and social activist, Fannie Hurst (1889-1968), a figure whose status as a “celebrity Jew” was complicated by her ostensible lack of Jewish self-interest. Hurst’s Jewish-themed short stories were the source of her early fame, but Hurst quickly became a fixture in newspapers and on the radio, voicing opinions on a host of progressive social issues. Yet although Hurst was outspoken on many topics, she was reluctant to frame her own Jewish identity in explicit terms, racial, religious or otherwise and was regarded with disappointment by American Jewish leaders for her refusal to use her mass appeal to draw attention to specifically Jewish concerns. Comments made by Zora Neale Hurston about Hurst’s desire to associate with African-Americans as a way of appearing “more white” furthered suspicions about Hurst’s commitment to Jewishness and have left Hurst vulnerable to charges of Jewish shame or self-hatred. In this paper I seek to offer a more nuanced understanding of Hurst’s relationship to her Jewish identity by examining a central feature of Hurst’s well-knownness—her distinctive style of dress. In contrast to her reticence about her Jewish origins, Hurst always made a very “loud” fashion statement.

Through an analysis of Hurst's observations about her fashion choices, along with a consideration of the various (and contradictory) responses the public had to her appearance, I argue that Hurst's use of dress reveals someone deeply engaged in a critical examination of the processes of identity formation.

Hurst's experiments with color and style foreground the link between fashion and self-fashioning, challenging conceptions of identity that rely on the visible as a guarantee of difference. By making herself hyper-visible, Hurst paradoxically mobilizes multiple readings of her identity simultaneously in a way that exposes the instability of categories like "white" and "Jewish."

**Ted Merwin (Dickinson College)**

### **Jews and Celebrity in American Culture**

The acculturation process of American Jews has been advanced, expedited and in some respects perhaps even enabled by the presence of Jewish celebrities in our society. Jews often take vicarious pleasure in the success of other Jews, both because it often seems to undermine pernicious stereotypes and because it seems to validate their own Jewish identity. Yet many observers have begun to question if a "celebrity driven" Judaism ultimately helps to preserve Jewish religion and culture, or if it reinforces assimilative tendencies by evacuating the substance of Jewish tradition, creating "false gods" as it were. This paper will investigate how some Jewish celebrities, especially in recent years, have become increasingly open about their Jewishness. What kind of fantasized relationship to celebrities is promoted by the entertainment media, and how might this reinforce Jewish identity for their fans? Among the sources to be discussed are Aviva Kempner's documentary, "The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg," the recent VH1 special, "So Jewtastic" about openly Jewish actors and athletes (which was sent to Jewish communal professionals throughout the United States to assist them in combating assimilation) and Abigail Pogrebin's interview book "Stars of David: Prominent Jews Talk About Being Jewish." Because this paper's thesis is built around an analysis of film and television clips, a TV/VCR will be required.

**Maya Balakirsky-Katz (Touro College)**

### **Celebrity Hogs: Zola, Putrid Literature, and the Foetor Judaica**

The trajectory of Zola's career began with his rise to fame as an art critic, which was partially eclipsed by his fame as a novelist, which was, in turn, eclipsed by his fame as the author of "J'Accuse," an article defending the Jewish Army captain Alfred Dreyfus. Zola's visual history reflects specific ways in which the nineteenth century created and promoted its heroes and how the cult of celebrity was experienced by one individual. Zola went from being a junior clerk at the publishing house of Hachettes to becoming the most caricatured man in France. The process that led to his fame and notoriety can be traced through the images published by the petite journal. These caricatures were directed against Zola's Naturalist literature, but were often personal, attacking Zola's private life, tastes, and habits. The steady stream of anti-Naturalist caricatures was then joined by an enormous outpouring of political images from both the Dreyfusard and anti-Dreyfusard press.

Scholars often identify pig images of Émile Zola during the Dreyfus Affair as an overt anti-Jewish motif meant to discredit the Dreyfusard cause. I will trace how Zola as a literary celebrity was identified as a Jewish cultural infiltrator throughout his controversial literary career and not only in the aftermath of J'Accuse. Medieval symbols of antisemitism, specifically those related to the motif of the Jew-Pig, were recruited into the service of anti-Naturalism as early as 1868, and three decades later these same symbols were merely re-appropriated to represent Zola's Dreyfusism. When Zola was implicated as a foreigner, a traitor, and a Jew for his Dreyfusard "caca internationale," it was an evolution of similar epithets directed against the avant-garde author. I will consider the medieval, antisemitic pictorial sources that are drawn upon for the massive caricatural degradation of Zola, first as Naturalist author of novelistic obscenities in the 1880s and then as a treacherous Christian supporter of Alfred Dreyfus.

**Session Number: 2.6**

**Session Cavell and Judaism**

**Session**

For over forty years, Stanley Cavell has been one of the most creative and unique voices in American philosophy. From his work on ordinary language philosophy, Austin, and Wittgenstein to his writings on film, from his reflections on skepticism to his remarkable readings of Shakespearean plays, together with his distinctive appropriation of Thoreau, Emerson, Heidegger, and a host of other writers and philosophers, Cavell has given shape to important understandings of the self, community, and the human enterprise in all their everyday richness and complexity. This panel will draw upon Cavell's writings to reflect on the way in which they shed light on the Jewish experience and Jewish thought today. By calling attention to his readings of Thoreau and Emerson which focus on the activities of the everyday, Emily Budick compares the results with the Jewish attention to the practical and the details of daily life. Paul Franks explores the ways in which Cavell's understanding of modernism and his readings of Thoreau and Kierkegaard might suggest how to understand responses to modernity in Jewish philosophy, for example in the work of Rosenzweig. Michael Morgan poses a central problem about how to read Emil Fackenheim's views about the uniqueness of the Holocaust and calls on Cavell's treatment of "the moral of skepticism" to help us understand the point of Fackenheim's commitment. Cavell's writings are rich in philosophical and literary resources for those engaged with Jewish thought and philosophy. But these resources are rarely utilized for this purpose. The panel is an attempt to open to view for Jewish philosophy the possibilities for future work.

**Chair, Benjamin Pollock (Michigan State University)**

**Michael L. Morgan (Indiana University)**

**Cavell, Fackenheim, Levinas: Rethinking the Uniqueness of the**

In his response to those who classify the Holocaust together with other horrific and genocidal acts and to theological attempts to explain its evil, Emil

Fackenheim argued that the Holocaust is a unique episode of radical evil. It is a claim that is poorly understood. In this paper I call upon Stanley Cavell's account of the "truth or moral of skepticism" in order to clarify my interpretation of Fackenheim's response to the Nazi atrocities and the death camps. I argue that Fackenheim understands the "scandal of the particularity of Auschwitz" in a very special way. His claim in fact aims to reorient our relationship to the victims of Auschwitz and its evil and to articulate what, in Cavell's terms, is the tension between acknowledgment and avoidance that governs our responses to that event. By drawing on Cavell to read Fackenheim, moreover, I argue that we can better understand Levinas's reading of Fackenheim as someone who warns against the "temptations of theodicy." This approach to Fackenheim is best seen in *To Mend the World*, a book that Levinas never read but which calls for "acknowledgment" in the form of resistance and ultimately a *tikkun olam*, a fragmentary mending of a fractured world.

**Emily Budick (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**  
**Halakhic Judaism, Stanley Cavell, and the American Religion of Emerson and Thoreau**

Nowhere is the Judaic note of Stanley Cavell's philosophical writings more loudly struck than in his essays on Emerson and Thoreau. Cavell's transcendentalists are not quite new American Israelites like Sacvan Bercovitch's Puritans. Nonetheless, the Emerson and Thoreau who emerge from Cavell's reading of them bear an uncanny resemblance to halachic Jews. As a religion, Judaism is generally less concerned than Christianity with issues of faith than with matters of practice, as codified in major Jewish texts such as the Talmud and the Shulchan Aruch. Theological disputation does of course exist within the Jewish tradition. But it is often subordinated to the exposition of how one is to live one's life in the ordinary and everyday world, and, just as importantly, to the debate concerning those practices. These practices also have to do as much with the relationship between human beings as between human beings as God. Halachic Jewish existence is governed by the performance the mitzvot, which are not (as common usage of this term often suggests) good deeds but rather commandments. Self-reliant individualism, such as Emerson and Thoreau advocate, emerges in Cavell's reading of them as just such a set of practices or commandments whereby the individual takes responsibility within the conduct or performance of his or her own life for the principles, values, and goals that define the community as a whole. In my paper I will explore the affinities between self-reliant individualism and halachic Judaism and the way in which these Judaic affiliations are at the center not only of Cavell's reading of Emerson and Thoreau but of his own practice or performance of philosophy.

**Paul W. Franks (University of Toronto)**  
**Cavell, Modernism, and Late Modern Judaism**

Stanley Cavell understands late modernity as a moment when neither convention nor innovation can guarantee the reproduction of some value, and modernist art as reflexive experimentation with tradition that either constitutes

high art or else fails to be art altogether. This conception is developed through readings of Kierkegaard and Thoreau as figures confronting the possibility of teaching on the basis of revelation, and of writing scripture, in late modernity. Reflections on Judaism lie beneath the surface, but Cavell addresses only texts in the Christian tradition, and moves quickly to aesthetics.

I will examine the fruitfulness of his conception of modernism for modern Jewish thought. Is it possible to locate a moment of late modernity for Judaism? What would count as a modernist response? Could Rosenzweig's

**Session Number: 2.7**

**Session Mothers and Their Daughters/Daughters and Their Mothers: Narratives on Being Jewish**

**Session**

The papers presented in this panel are guided by both methodological and feminist considerations. Together they examine the historical, sociological and cultural complexities of the Jewish daughter/mother relationship, not as normatively understood but as women may have and actually do experience it.

In this sense, it is a panel about women's lives as mothers, as daughters and sometimes as both simultaneously. In these papers stereotypical understandings about mothers and their daughters are re-conceptualized yielding, at times, counter intuitive perceptions and findings about the force, resilience and complexity of the mother/daughter bond. Dozens of scholarly and popular books have been written about the importance of the mother/daughter relationship. Combining social science and medical data, perhaps one of the most popular medical writers on the topic is Christiane Northrup (2005). She argues that all of the deeply ingrained beliefs we have about ourselves as women come from our mothers. However, popular medical and social science models are often overly simplified understandings of the more complicated reality of the mother/daughter relationship. Based on the experiences of white, middle-class women, such works, often neglect the ways in which ethnic, racial, socio-historic moment, and most importantly, religious variations temper, if not, re-conceptualize this dyadic pair. Jewish women, despite their minority status, have often been at the forefront of the revolutionary changes that have characterized women's lives over the past century (see, Joyce Antler, 1997; Sylvia Fishman, 1992). The papers for this panel do not reduce the mother/daughter pair to its most simple interpersonal connection. Rather, they offer insights about how ethnic, religious and minority status affect the ways in which mothers and daughters come to think about themselves as women, as marriage partners and as Jews.

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**Chair, Deborah Hertz (University of California, San Diego)**

**Joyce Antler (Brandeis University)**

**"Will You Leave Me ... Alone! I Love You!" The Ambivalent Relationship of Jewish Daughters and Mothers in American Pop Culture**

Of all the representations our culture makes of mothers, that of the “Jewish mother” seems most static. Whether drawn as self-sacrificing or manipulative and demanding, she appears as a colossal figure, her negative imprint all over the lives of her children. In fiction, films, television, memoirs, joke and advice books, she is an unchanging stock character who calls forth our laughter and our blame. More than most others, she has attracted to her person the extraordinary malevolence of our culture’s case against mothers. The comic trope of the Jewish mother was given wide currency throughout the culture as its creators—mostly male—imaginatively tapped into their own ambivalence, opening a vein of mother-bashing humor that ran deep. But daughters have also harbored resentments against the mother’s power, although the rebellion of women against matriarchal figures is complicated by the deep attachments that both psychology and literature have revealed is commonplace in women’s relationships. The contradictory aspects of Jewish daughters’ relationships with their mothers—rebellion and return; conflict and connection-- are revealed in the striking representations of Jewish mothers and daughters in popular culture. In fiction, films, radio, television, theater, performance art, and stand-up comedy, the changing relationship of Jewish mothers and daughters emerges as taut but generative, and truly distinct from that between mothers and sons (though the latter has attracted the greatest scholarly and public attention). The paper will provide historical context by introducing this ambivalent relationship as reflected in the work of such immigrant authors/auteurs as Fannie Hurst, Anzia Yezierska, and Gertrude Berg, briefly tracing its rise in later, key cultural texts, including feminist writings by Robin Morgan, E.M. Broner, and Adrienne Rich which emphasize daughters’ and mothers’ struggles to replace matrophobia with intimacy. Its primary focus is the contemporary cultural representations of Jewish daughters and mothers in theater, film, memoirs, and especially, stand-up comedy, which showcase ambivalence by both invoking, yet challenging, stereotypic, iconic images.

**Debra Renee Kaufman (Northeastern University)**

### **My Mother’s Daughter, My Daughter’s Mother: Adult Jewish Mothers and Daughters in Dialogue**

An examination of midlife, Jewish mothers and their adult daughters is especially timely. The historically unprecedented lengthening of the life span has transformed the decades of the 50’s and 60’s in a woman’s life from the onset of old age to, for most, a period of great vigor and assertiveness. Similarly, the extended life span, together with important changes in educational, social and economic structures has transformed the period of a young woman’s thirties and forties from the onset of middle age to an extension of youth. Jewish women have typically been in the forefront of changes in gender roles and in work/ family patterns (Waite, 200). Although the mother-daughter relationship is recognized as lifelong, the age period covered by these dialogues remains a neglected area for research. In this paper, I explore the insights from fifteen mother/daughter pairs (five from each of three denominational stances in Judaism: Orthodox/Very Traditional, Conservative/Reconstructionist and Reform/Unaffiliated). In addition to these

interviews (collected as part of a larger study of mother/daughter relationships with co-researcher Gail Melson), data from my earlier work on newly orthodox Jewish women and their mothers will be added to the mother/daughter dialogues (Kaufman, 1993). The narratives reported by these women and their daughters reflect the attitudes, behaviors and feelings each has about the ways in which they understand their Jewish identities to have affected their life choices. Given their respective generational location, the expressed similarities and contradictions in life choices between mothers and daughters appear, at times, counterintuitive.

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Family

### **Keren R. McGinity (Brown University)** **"Over My Dead Body!" Jewish Daughters, Mothers, and Intermarriage**

Throughout much of the twentieth century in America, the words and actions of Jewish mothers have been interwoven into the history of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage. In some cases, mothers expressed the sternest reactions to their daughters' intentions to wed outside of the Jewish faith. In others, mothers defied the advice of a rabbi by refusing to act as if their intermarried daughter was dead. Jewish mothers influenced the timing of some women's intermarriages and their subsequent religious journeys. Moreover the choices of the mothers in regards to their own marriages, whether they divorced and remarried co-religionists or non-Jews, were also factors in Jewish daughter's views about intermarriage. Marrying a Gentile combined with motherhood raised most women's consciousness about Jewish identity and about Judaism. Lastly, women who intermarried and experienced a renewal of their Jewish identities often expressed apprehension about whether their decisions would influence their daughters and if so, whether their grandchildren would be raised as Jews. Next to the fate of the State of Israel, continuity is the number one concern in the organized American Jewish community, and has been for at least the past two decades. The crucial issue for people interested in Jewish continuity regarding intermarriage is not only how the individuals involved identified, rather how their children were raised and what that would mean for the future of the Jewish people. American Jews who care about continuity, many of whom now have adult children, want an answer to the question "Will my grandchildren be Jewish?" I would respond to this question with two other questions: "Is your intermarried child a daughter?" "And what year did she intermarry?" This paper will explore the meaning of intermarriage based on 42 interviews I conducted in thirteen towns and cities in the Boston area with women of mostly Ashkenazi descent and assorted generations whose intermarriages occurred in seven twentieth-century decades. Weaving together oral histories and a wide range of literary sources to situate women's experiences within the larger discursive contexts, my paper will argue that Jewish motherhood was socially constructed to be responsible for endogamy and if the daughter intermarried in the late twentieth century, she raised children to identify as Jews more frequently than those daughters who

**Respondent, Vanessa Ochs (University of Virginia)**

**Session Number: 2.8**

**Session**      **Orthodoxy and the Internet**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Shaul Kelner (Vanderbilt University)**

**Andrea Lieber (Dickinson College)**

**Domesticity and the Home Page: Blogging and the Blurring of Public/Private Space for Orthodox Jewish Women**

What if Glückel of Hameln, the seventeenth-century memoirist who wrote her life experiences as a legacy for her twelve children, had blogged instead? The emergence of the “blogosphere” as a new medium for self-expression raises critical questions about the way the public and private realms are positioned in cyberspace. While conventional memoirs and diaries represent private life writing that, like Glückel’s, might become public through publication, blogs are journals that at once combine the intimacy of personal reflection in the diary format with the globally accessible (and commercialized) public arena of the World Wide Web. In this paper, I will examine the phenomenon of Jewish women bloggers in the American Orthodox community, looking specifically at the ways in which this particular medium has provided women with a public voice to discuss matters that, traditionally, belong to the private sphere, thus subverting the public/private dichotomy that is at the heart of traditional Jewish culture. My work will be contextualized in a discussion of the use of blogging by women more broadly as a means of politicizing conventionally “private” issues. In addition, I will consider the value and significance of reading blogs for those who are not active writers in the genre, again comparing this phenomenon to the case of Glückel, whose widely read memoir is a staple of courses on Jewish women’s history.

**Sarah Bunin Benor (HUC-JIR)**

**Frumster.com and the Modern to Ultra-Orthodox Continuum**

Scholars studying Orthodox communities often distinguish between Modern Orthodox Jews and Ultra-Orthodox or Haredi Jews. These categories differ according to attitudes toward tradition and modernity and details of halachic observance. Do they send their children to secular universities or only yeshivas? Do they drink any milk or only cholov yisroel (milk prepared only by Jews)? These worldviews and religious behaviors are important, but as I have shown elsewhere, cultural symbols like dress, head coverings, and language also serve to distinguish Modern Orthodox from Ultra-Orthodox Jews. Based on an analysis of singles’ postings to Frumster.com, this paper shows how many of these dimensions of Orthodox religious and cultural practice are important in how people understand the categories. The website, used by over 10,000 singles, requires Orthodox registrants to select one of seven categories: Modern Orthodox Liberal, Modern Orthodox Machmir, Yeshivish Modern, Yeshivish Black Hat, Hassidish, Carlebachian, and a catch-all



category, Shomer Mitzvot. The analysis shows that these categories generally – but not completely – correlate with individuals' reported visual practices (kipah type, skirt/pants, women's plans to cover their hair), frequency of Torah study and tefilah, secular and Jewish education, languages spoken, and political beliefs. In addition to this statistical portrait based on a sample of 1600 pages, I present an analysis of individuals' answers to the website's prompt: "What [Yeshivish Modern/Carlebachian/etc.] means to me." Their descriptions include stipulations about participation in secular education, careers, and culture (movies, TV); frequency of prayer and study; commitment to God, Torah, and the Jewish people; following a rabbinic leader; visual symbols like skirts and hats; and – for Modern Orthodox Liberal and Machmir and Yeshivish Modern – combining Orthodox and secular life (as one single put it, "Being frum and worldly"). I conclude that these Orthodox categories are somewhat defined but not self-contained. Rather, they exist on a continuum. Incorporating data from my past fieldwork in Modern Orthodox, Yeshivish Black Hat, and Lubavitch Hassidish communities, I show how people use symbolic practices like language, food, and dress, to perform their desired location on the continuum and to read others'.

**Steven Lapidus (Concordia University)**

### **Creating Community through Isolation: Haredim Log Off the Internet**

Orthodox Judaism is a reaction to modernity. It traces its origins to those who, unwilling to unite with the non-Orthodox, chose secession over communal cooperation. While separation became the hallmark of Orthodox religious institutions, with very few exceptions, this division remained at the official, institutional level, and rarely was manifest in daily individual interaction. And in many communities, even such official separation, outside of explicitly halakhic areas of concern, such as kashrut or synagogue services, was not only uncommon, it was even prohibited, by such figures as the Netziv. Among the effects of the Holocaust was a rigidification of Orthodox separatism. In North America, postwar Haredi communities established much stronger and less permeable social boundaries. Social segregation, little known in prewar American Jewish communities, was not only introduced by the newer Haredi arrivals, it surpassed the separatism regnant in prewar Europe. Social interaction across religious lines was severely discouraged and subsequently curtailed. In fact, separatism has gained such independent importance as a marker of religious behaviour, that it has in many ways become a source of identity. Haredi communities can easily be defined by whom they exclude. Since fighting external contamination through social isolation has become the SINE QUA NON of contemporary Haredi Jewry in North America, the impact of the Internet is not surprisingly a central element of this fight. Several Haredi communities have come out with global prohibitions on Internet use, such as Lakewood and several Hasidic sects, while many others are struggling with this issue. The Internet is perceived to be dangerous, not simply because of exposure to unholy material, time taken away from Torah study, etc., but also because it represents uncontrolled social interaction. It is private, interactive, and anonymous — a complex permutation not presented by other

contemporary media. It therefore threatens the entire structure of identity in novel ways which in turn explains why it is viewed as a crisis. After establishing how social isolation has become an important form of identity in Haredi communities, I will look specifically at recent concerns over Internet use to demonstrate the perceived danger of uncontrolled and anonymous socialization.

**Session Number: 2.9**

**Session           Nineteenth-Century Jewish Women Writers: Re-envisioning Anglo-Jewish Literary History**

**Session**

This session examines the texts of six Anglo-Jewish women who published poetry, fiction, and essays in nineteenth-century England. All three papers explore how these women negotiated their double traditions of English and Jewish literature. The purpose of this panel is twofold: to circulate knowledge about writers (Emma Lyon, Katie Magnus, Alice Lucas, Nina Davis Salaman, Mathilde Blind, Amy Levy) who have received limited attention in both Jewish and English studies; to analyze the formal and thematic elements in their work that translate, revise, or challenge religious and cultural literary traditions for their diverse audiences. This session as a whole raises larger questions. How have Jewish women transmitted their ideas about Judaism in specific historical and national contexts? To what extent has the field of Jewish Studies incorporated Anglo-Jewish literature by women into its construction of Jewish literary history? How do Jewish and English literary genres intersect at certain historical moments? Karen Weisman's paper focuses on how Emma Lyon, one of the first Jewish women to publish poetry in England, deploys the pastoral elegy to articulate the particularly fraught conditions of her divided Anglo-Jewishness. Lyon's poetry and the poetry of many Anglo-Jewish writers of the nineteenth century, showcase a struggle over, and finally a mourning for, the very expressive resources that centrally define them. Cynthia Scheinberg argues that an active tradition of Jewish women poets in England is evident from the ways Magnus, Lucas, and Salaman remodel classical Jewish texts for their nineteenth-century readers. Susan Bernstein's paper turns to narrative form, and the role of return in closures of stories about Anglo-Jewish lives. Her paper considers the resistance of three Anglo-Jewish women writers (Katie Magnus, Mathilde Blind, and Amy Levy) to the Zionist vision that concludes George Eliot's DANIEL DERONDA, as well as the problem of closure in Levy's REUBEN SACHS, a novel of Anglo-Jewish London. In effect, all three panelists maintain that these Jewish women writers reimagine lyric and narrative forms of English literature. As the author of THE ORIGIN OF THE MODERN JEWISH WOMAN WRITER, Michael Galchinsky is ideally suited to chair this session on the contributions of women writers to Anglo-Jewish literary history.

**Chair, Michael Galchinsky (Georgia State University)**

**Susan David Bernstein (University of Wisconsin-Madison)**

**Exile, Exodus, and Narrative Closure in Anglo-Jewish Women's Writing**

The idea of "return" figures prominently in English and in Anglo-Jewish

literature, as it does in Jewish scripture. For Victorian Anglo-Jewish women writers gender mediates the terms of exile, exodus, and return, whether to a Jewish homeland or, more broadly, to traditional Jewish observance in the context of modern diasporic identity. First, this paper explore how Katie Magnus, Mathilde Blind, and Amy Levy responded to George Eliot's proto-Zionist vision in DANIEL DERONDA, an ending typically embraced by their male co-religionists, such as Joseph Jacobs. Second, I analyze formal elements of closure and narrative teleology in Levy's novel REUBEN SACHS to show the vexed condition of modern Jewish women, suspended between an impossible return to traditional Jewish practice or full conversion to assimilated culture. While Magnus, Blind, and Levy reject the biblical return to a Jewish homeland in their response to DANIEL DERONDA, Levy's writing exposes the narrative foreclosures of return and mobility in her representations of Anglo-Jewish femininity. By charting this suspended closure, Levy plots a different narrative design that looks toward a twentieth-century gendered Jewishness.

### **Cynthia Scheinberg (Mills College)**

#### **"Judah's [Other] Bards": Anglo-Jewish Women Poets, 1880-1925**

Lady Katie Magnus (1844-1924), Alice Lucas (1852-1935), Nina Davis Salaman (1877-1925) were three Anglo-Jewish poets writing and publishing in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Though generally overlooked in both Jewish and British literary history, their work supports the idea that there was an active tradition of Jewish women writers in England. This paper explores the ways these women's poetry intersects with both English and Jewish literary traditions, and explores how Magnus, Lucas and Salaman collectively sought to transmit and translate classical Jewish texts to contemporary audiences through their (English) poetry. Read in context with each other, these later nineteenth century poets offer a fascinating window into the changing relationships Anglo-Jewish poets created between Jewish and English literary traditions, as well as demonstrating the variety of ways Jewish women displayed their religious learning, their spirituality, and their vital roles in Jewish literary and cultural history.

### **Karen Weisman (University of Toronto)**

#### **Elegy, Alienation, and the Expressive Resources of Anglo/Jewish Poetry: The Case of Emma Lyon**

Emma Lyon published her first and only volume of poetry in England in 1812 at the age of twenty-three. An observant Jew and daughter of a renowned Hebrew teacher, Lyon was one of the very first Jewish women to publish poetry in England. Dedicated to Princess Charlotte, the daughter of the Prince Regent, Lyon's remarkable volume represents a moving testament to the subtle balancing acts required of Jewish women poets of the early nineteenth century: she would instantiate her subjectivity as poet within the parameters of the received norms of British formalism, even as she recognizes the self-alienation that such dependence entails. Insofar as the pastoral elegy is rooted in the putatively stable structures of native land, it lays bare the problematics of choosing to inherit an aesthetic inextricably tied to nationalist

sentiment. Within the larger context of Jewish elegiac writing in nineteenth-century England, I suggest that it is in the Anglo-Jewish elegy that the tensions inherent in Jewish poetry find their sharpest outlines. For Lyon, I read elegy as turning back upon itself; this turn produces not so much a resistance to elegy as it does a mourning for the expressive resources available to the poet.

As such, Lyon's poet engages the rhetorical repertoire of pastoral elegy to signal an alienation from her own expressive resources. The burden of this negotiation is inflected further by Lyon's singular engagement with the ethics of writing, a fully self-reflexive meditation that all the same turns outward into the very world that will only partly receive her under the conditions of a highly nuanced exclusion.

**Session Number: 2.10**

**Session Evolution of Law Over Time: From Talmud to Middle Ages**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Yaakov Elman (Yeshiva University)**

**Ohr Margalit (Center Jewish Studies, Harvard)**

**Sacred Land and Private Ownership: Shifting Rabbinic Views of Non-Jewish Land Ownership in Israel**

"And the Land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the Land is Mine" (Leviticus 25:23) After the destruction of the temple, the Land's divine ownership could hardly be expressed by 'national' redistribution of its fields as required by the Torah. Faced with political reality, the rabbis developed alternative means of giving expression to the concept of the holiness of the Land, through private actions taken by ordinary Jews. As one interpretation in the Babylonian Talmud of the above verse states, when the Torah says "the Land is Mine", it is talking about the tithes of the crops (Gittin 47a). Yaakov Zussman has shown how according to the rabbinic tradition in the Land of Israel, any Jewish acquisition of a field – another private action - could set the borders of the holy Land forever. This paper analyzes the rabbinic sources dealing with private non-Jewish ownership of plots within the borders of the Land. Although both the Talmuds record a disagreement as to whether crops from such a plot must be tithed, there is reason to believe the view generally held in Babylonia was that they had to be tithed, while that held in amoraic Israel was that they did not. Moreover, while the Talmud of the Land of Israel presents this disagreement as going back to the tannaim, analysis of the tannaitic sources shows that in this period there was probably widespread agreement that such crops had to be tithed. As I conclude, the three different opinions on this issue parallel the shifting balance between society's financial needs and the need for the stability of the holy. While the tannaim preferred to ignore non-Jewish ownership of the Land in order to maintain the ideal of its holiness, the financial constraints of the third century, combined with the rabbis' growing responsibility for the community at large, may have impacted on the decision of the amoraim of Israel to exempt crops from non Jewish-owned fields from tithes. The amoraim of Babylonia could zealously guard the holiness of the

Land from afar without having to witness daily reality and without having to carry the financial burden of the tithes.

**Jonathan S. Milgram (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Talmudic Textual Ambiguities and Their Impact on the Production of Medieval Halakhah**

Scholars of medieval halakhah have placed emphasis on the impact of factors external to Talmudic texts which have contributed to the historical development of Jewish law in the medieval period. Guided by the seminal studies of scholars such as Jacob Katz and his students the field of medieval Jewish law has seen significant works analyzing the socio-economic situation of medieval Jewry and its impact on the development of Jewish law in light of and even in spite of the law fixed in the Talmud and Geonic codes. Studies such as those on the role of the non-Jew on the Sabbath and the commercial use of non-Jewish wine have fleshed out to what degree social and economic conditions not only influence medieval halakhah but transform it. This paper will present an additional model by which to analyze the development of medieval halakhah; namely, the development of medieval law based on internal factors alone, textual ambiguities in the Talmudic texts which allow for the derivation of multiple halakhic positions. Talmud scholarship in the last generation has shown to what degree Talmudic texts are made up of texts from different historical periods and distinct literary genres which have been fused together through redaction. Tannaitic and amoraic texts are woven together in Talmudic discussions connected by interspersed argumentation authored by later authorities. The final product, the Talmudic text before us, reveals the process of combining which preceded the final text. For, these texts do not always read smoothly. Indeed, these texts do not read smoothly because of ambiguities created during the process of redaction. These ambiguities become the springboard for the rich and creative interpretations of the medieval authorities. These interpretations create medieval halakhah. Through Talmud criticism we can unravel the process of redaction and understand how the sources came together. This process also sheds light on the production of medieval halakhah. Once the component parts of the Talmudic argumentation are separated and understood independently of the Talmudic argument one can reveal the source of the ambiguities created and understand the interpretative possibilities before the medieval authorities. Subsequently, interpretative tendencies among the medieval authorities and methods in halakhic ruling may in the future be discernable.

***Session Number: 2.11***

***Session***        **Aspects of Women in Rabbinic Literature: Body, Space, and Name**

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Judith Hauptman (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Sarra Lev (Reconstructionist Rabbinical College)**

**How the 'Aylonit Got Her Sex**

Out of the four dozen or so tannaitic texts concerning the *seris ?ammah* (the natural eunuch) or the *'aylonit* (the congenitally infertile woman) there is only one text which describes the characteristics by which they are identified. In this text there are several characteristics which might lead us to understand that the rabbis considered these two categories to be gender crossovers – viewing the *'aylonit* as “man-like” and the *seris ?ammah* as “woman-like.” The *seris ?ammah*, for example, is considered to have a high voice, while the *'aylonit* has a low one. In the case of the *seris ?ammah*, many of these traits can be understood in the context of common assumptions about eunuchs and gender prevalent in both Roman and Christian culture. The description of the *'aylonit*, however, is more elusive. Nowhere does the figure of the *'aylonit* appear in the literature of the surrounding cultures, nor do the combination of descriptive elements converge to form a description of any single medical condition common today. In addition, nowhere in the tannaitic halachic literature do the *seris ?ammah* or the *'aylonit* appear to be considered as a gender crossover. Except in relation to matters which consider the procreative power of these categories, the *seris ?ammah* is treated as a “normal” man, while the *'aylonit* is considered a “normal” woman. In light of this discrepancy, this paper will examine these enigmatic descriptions, and the relationship between the descriptions of the *seris ?ammah* and the *'aylonit*, asking the question: Does the relationship between the categories themselves inform their description as gender crossovers?

### **Gail Labovitz (University of Judaism)**

#### **Follow the Money: Bride Price, Dowry, and the Rabbinic Ketubbah**

The rabbinic marriage contract, the *ketubbah*, promises a sum of money to the wife should the husband divorce or predecease her; it also contains details of property brought into the marriage by the wife and the husband's obligations to return these items or their value. The development of the *ketubbah* has thus sometimes been proffered as evidence that rabbinic culture demonstrates a development in Jewish thinking about the marital transaction, away from biblical bride price (“*mohar*”) or a purchase “up-front,” towards a contractual arrangement between husband and wife. This paper will reexamine this premise. On the one hand, the *ketubbah* stands as evidence that although “acquired” in marriage (mKid. 1:1), a woman retains important rights in that relationship. When one recognizes, however, that it is *kinyan* rather than the *ketubbah* which is legally constitutive of marriage, that a woman does not receive a *ketubbah* until such time as she has been “acquired” in marriage, and that it is the woman who is in need of the “protections” written into the *ketubbah*, it becomes clear that the *ketubbah* at best ameliorates, but does not vitiate, the ownership model of marriage. What is more, the few Jewish marital contracts known to us from this period tend to resemble Greco-Roman contracts in which dowry, rather than bride price, is the dominant financial exchange between family units. Thus, the small but significant sample of rabbinic texts which attempt to associate the monetary sums discussed in the *ketubbah* with the biblical *mohar* – rather than dowry – are highly suggestive

that the model of marriage as "purchase" is not countered by the ketubbah, but in fact subtly encoded into it.

**Cynthia M. Baker (Santa Clara University)**

### **The Queen, the Apostate, and the Women Between: (Dis)Placement of Women in Tosefta Sukkah**

Tosefta Sukkah begins and ends with intriguing anecdotes about women: one an outstanding benefactor of the Temple, the other a member of the priestly caste; one a mother of seven righteous sons, the other an angry, alienated daughter; one a queen, the other an apostate. Place and displacement are also significant aspects of these two "frame" stories. A third account, which falls between these two in the tractate is also preoccupied with placing and displacing women, as a group, within the space of the Temple. Such repeated coincidences of "place" and "women" call for close examination as they likely hint at early rabbinic anxieties concerning the place of women \* and that of the sages, themselves \* in the ritual lives and spaces of emerging Judaism.

**Yael Feldman (New York University)**

### **On the Cusp of Christianity: Virgin Sacrifice in "Pseudo-Philo" and**

When the Latin manuscripts of "Pseudo-Philo" (an originally Late Antiquity Hebrew text, long lost) were rediscovered in the late 19th century, it was quickly established that Seila, as Jephthah's daughter is named there, was probably a corruption of the Hebrew She'ila [Cohn 1898, followed by Gaster, Ginzberg, and Berdyczewski]. Only a decade ago, after a full century of study, it was suggested that the original Hebrew name must have been She'ula, not She'ila [Jacobson 1996]. My paper will unpack the significance of this late development for our understanding of both the new concept of human sacrifice emerging in this text, and Israel's long-standing wrestling with the trope of the aqedah. Analyzing the biblical intertext of the name She'ula, and suggesting that Amos Oz was unknowingly influenced by it in an early "aqedah story" [1966!], I will argue that behind the century-long "blind spot" of the scholarship concerning Pseudo-Philo's naming of Jephthah's daughter [from Cohn 1898 to Fisk 2000] looms a difficulty of coming to terms with a liminal text, an early midrash formed in the undifferentiated no-man's land before Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity embarked on their own separate ways [cf. Boyarin 1999]. At the center of this liminality is the text's nascent theology of sacrifice. Whether viewed as "proto-Christian" [Brown 1992] or as a later addition by the Greek or Latin translator, this theology had clearly established itself as a norm for human sacrifice at large for the next two millennia. And it is precisely with this norm that Oz and his Israeli contemporaries still struggle to this very day. My paper will therefore raise the following questions: Why was She'ula named so by "Pseudo Philo," and how could his or her readers have interpreted this name then? How and why did Oz use this name some four decades ago [anticipating Pseudo-Philo scholarship by 3 decades!], and how did his use differ from that of his first-century predecessor? And most importantly, why should we care? NB: My paper is based on some rather surprising findings, documented in full in a chapter of my forthcoming study on

sacrificial narratives in modern Israel. However, I prefer to present it at a Late Antiquity session [rather than in Hebrew lit sessions], because I would greatly benefit from any feedback from specialists in this field [which is new to me, although I have researched the scholarship on this text at length].

**Session Number: 2.12**

**Session**            **Historicity, Science, and a Critique of Wonder:  
Perspectives from Judah ha-Levi, Maimonides, and Spinoza**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, James Diamond (University of Waterloo)**

**Hannah Kasher (Bar-Ilan University)**

**The Polemics against Christianity and "Israel in the Flesh": The Case of R. Judah ha-Levi and R. Isaac Arama**

Judah ha-Levi in his "Kuzary" and Isaac Arama in his "Aqedat Isaac" each contest in different ways the Christian claim that the people of Israel, who had been "Israel in the Flesh", were replaced by "Israel in Spirit", i. e.: by the church. Judah ha-Levi explicitly attributes claim to the Christian scholar who appears in the prolog of his book, who also claims that the twelve Apostles replaced the twelve tribes. This may account for ha-Levi emphasizing the genetic basis of Israel and his designating the twelve sons of Jacob to be the founders of Israel as the chosen nation. Isaac Arama, who engaged in a number of debates with Christians of his time, praises Jacob's children as having "Holy flesh". As opposed to ha'Levi, however, Arama asserts that the holiness of the flesh is acquired by the fulfillment of commandments such as circumcision and by the avoidance of forbidden food. These are two examples from the Middle Ages of how the polemic against the Christians led Jewish scholars to stress the fixed character of the election of Israel. We have additional sources which emphasize the predetermined nature of Israel's selection, such as essays of the Sages or in the modern period, the of the Maharal in Prague. It would seem that many of them could be viewed reactions to the Christian claim to be "Verus Israel".

**Avraham Shveka (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**What Exactly was Maimonides Trying to Hide? Rethinking the Place of Aristotelian Science in Maimonides' Thought**

In several places in his GUIDE OF THE PERPLEXED Maimonides expresses serious doubts concerning the validity of Aristotelian physics in the above-lunar world, sometimes going as far as doubting in principle human ability to reach any knowledge about the true configuration of the heavens. Since the early work of Shlomo Pines it is widely held that by doing so Maimonides was not presenting plainly his true opinions on the matter, but rather exaggerating it for tactical reasons; that is, he was trying to reduce the authority of Aristotelian science in order to diminish its potential to undermine the foundations of religion. The aim of this paper is to refute this opinion. In expressing such views Maimonides was by no means exceptional among contemporary astronomers and thinkers. More importantly, the entire



conception upon which this opinion is based – namely, that Maimonides saw religion on one hand, and the Aristotelian science on the other, as confronting each other – is invalid. This is proven by the fact that right in the opening of his MISHNEH TORAH Maimonides presents – completely unexpectedly, and yet, fully and broadly – the fundamentals of the Aristotelian cosmology, including a detailed picture of the heavenly spheres. The reason for which such an erroneous conception is widespread is that the general topic of Maimonides' attitude to Aristotelian science was completely overshadowed by the question of the eternity versus creation of the world, an issue that have drawn most attention of scholars and which is held to be the pivotal problem of the GUIDE. Actually, as will be shown, in any aspect apart from this one, Maimonides had seen no confrontation at all between the Aristotelian science and religion; quite the opposite. It is precisely the Aristotelian cosmology that had provided Maimonides with his ultimate proof of the existence of God. It is thus not the Aristotelian science but contrarily, the doubts and fissures inherent to this enterprise that Maimonides saw as problematic for the innocent believers. And that is why he had silenced them completely in MISHNEH TORAH, revealing them only to those exceptional individuals to

**Michael Rosenthal (University of Washington)**

### **Spinoza's Critique of Wonder and the Predicament of the Modern**

Spinoza opposes two of the traditional uses of wonder. First, in the Ethics he claims that, contrary to the tradition going back to Aristotle, wonder is not the origin of philosophy but rather an obstacle to it. Second, in the Theological-Political Treatise, he argues that the sense of wonder does not justify a belief in miracles – that is, in events that contravene the laws of nature – and that as a consequence the awe and veneration such miracles are supposed to provoke in the subject for the lawgiver, whether divine or human, is unjustified.

In this paper I shall explain the development of each critique – i.e., that of wonder as the origin of philosophy and that of wonder as the justification of miracles and of veneration of the lawgiver – and show how they relate to Spinoza's larger projects of reforming philosophical knowledge and also political life. I shall argue that Spinoza's critique of wonder is part of a transformation of intellectual and political life in the early modern period, in which a new kind of subject is being produced. Although the philosophical subject and the political subject are distinct in Spinoza's work, the critique of wonder exposes a common thread in both: namely, that the path to joy, whether expressed in the philosophical concept of beatitude or the political concept of self-interest, requires the individual to refuse to be fixated on and enchanted by the singular and to search for the place of the singular event in a larger, determined system of causes. I shall claim, however, that the mechanism of this critique of wonder exposes a tension in the new ideal of philosopher and political subject that is supposed to be produced through it. If it is the case that the critique of wonder frees the individual from subjection to the false metaphysical God or tyrannical political ruler, the result is now that the individual only has value as part of a systematic whole. This, I suggest, helps define the predicament of the subject in Spinoza's conception of

modernity. On the one hand, free of subjection to an irrational ruler, the individual gains autonomy. On the other hand, that autonomy is exercised in a faceless, systematic whole, in which no one individual thing has unique value. Hence, even in this newfound freedom the temptation of wonder and the subjugation of oneself to a reenchanting world or divine ruler is always present.

**Benjamin Wurgaft (University of California, Berkeley)**

**Sincerity and Authenticity in Weimar: Leo Strauss, Julius Guttmann and the Appropriation of the Medieval**

This paper reads the early writings of Leo Strauss in the context of Weimar medievalism and classicism, asking how Strauss's disputes with the neo-Kantian medievalist, Julius Guttmann, affected his developing theory of "esoteric reading." Considering not only Strauss's early writings from the mid 1920s through the early 1930s, but also Guttmann's seldom-studied responses, it inquires into the philosophical and political stakes in Strauss and Guttmann's respective portrayals of medieval thinkers such as Maimonides. Radically different thinkers politically, religiously and philosophically, Strauss and Guttmann began as colleagues but ultimately feuded over the proper reading of medieval Jewish thought. Strauss's conservatism offended the liberal Guttmann; Strauss objected to Guttmann's "domesticating" approach to Judaism, which seemed to continue the work of Hermann Cohen into the 1920s. Strauss and Guttmann's exchange about the substance of Maimonides's thought turned medieval scholarship into a field upon which contemporary concerns could be played out: the crisis of historicism, the failures of liberalism and neo-Kantianism for Jewish political and intellectual life, and the dilemmas faced by the Orthodox and Reform movements. In this paper, part of an ongoing dissertation in which Strauss is a major figure, I hope to engage with a number of recent scholarly projects on the young Leo Strauss: Zachary Braiterman's writing on Strauss as a figure of the radical difference between religion and philosophy, Samuel Moyn's work on Strauss's response to the crisis of "experientialist theology," David Myers' study on Strauss and anti-historicism, and Mari Rethelyi's essay on Guttmann's posthumously published response to Strauss.

**Session Number: 2.13**

**Session Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century Sephardic and Ashkenazic Culture**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Steven Uran (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)**

**Michal Friedman (Columbia University)**

**Jewish History as "Historia Patria": The Place of the Sephardic Past in Nineteenth-Century Spanish Historiography**

In August 1854, Ludwig Philipson, a prominent leader of German Jewry and editor of the distinguished *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, presented a petition to the recently re-assembled Spanish Constituent Cortes. The petition, tendered in the name of Germany Jewry, demanded that Spain

institute freedom of religious worship and that it repeal the decree of expulsion of 1492. While Philipson recalled Spain's Jewish past in order to illuminate Spain's presumed indebtedness to the Jews, as well as exemplary precedents of religious tolerance, he did not draw upon the works of Jewish or foreign writers in his re-construction of this historical narrative; rather, he cited an "entirely impartial" work, entitled *Estudios históricos, políticos y literarios sobre los judíos de España*. The author of this work, however, Catholic Spanish historian and literary scholar, José Amador de los Ríos, did not wait long to challenge Philipson's efforts and particularly his appropriation of Spanish history for his cause. While historians of the Jews have illustrated compellingly the appeal of the modern historical enterprise for Jews engaged in the struggle for political emancipation and particularly how the Iberian-Sephardic past loomed large in this pursuit, this paper will expand on this topic by using the Philipson episode and its reverberations to illustrate how Spain's Jewish past came to be an object of debate in nineteenth-century Spain, as Spanish scholars and politicians placed historiography at the service of rival political causes. Within in this context, I will consider José Amador de los Ríos' pioneering attempts to "recover" Spain's Jewish past and demonstrate how in this process Sephardic history became part of Spain's "Historia Patria." Moreover, I hope to illustrate the importance of modern Spain and modern Spanish historiography in elaborating, as well as in de-mystifying, what historian Ismar Schorsch called the "Sephardic Mystique" and to illuminate some of the ways the nineteenth-century Jewish and Spanish historians built on each other's work and came into conflict, particularly in the context of debates over the so called "Jewish Question" in Spain and elsewhere. Lastly, I hope to contribute to a broader understanding of the ways and contexts in which Jewish history has been appropriated and reconfigured by non-Jews.

**Julie Lieber (University of Pennsylvania)**

### **Transforming Judaism in Nineteenth-Century Vienna: The Rabbinic Restructuring of Jewish Family Life**

Jews had been living in Vienna since the Middle Ages. Yet, it was only in 1867, with the triumph of liberal politics and the Austro-Hungarian *Ausgleich*, that the Viennese Jewish community was officially recognized and Austrian Jews were emancipated. The effects of this new status on Viennese Jewish life had vast consequences that extended far beyond legal rights and communal recognition. The Jewish family was now to occupy a central role in paving the long road from legal emancipation to social integration within greater Viennese society. While within Viennese bourgeois society women's responsibilities resided in the domestic sphere, which included the religious edification of her children, Jewish tradition and halakha designated Jewish males as the sole religious educators. Now, however, the Jewish family was being called upon to recreate itself and Viennese Jewish women in particular were encouraged to transform themselves into the primary guardians of religious life within the Jewish community. This paper examines the process through which Viennese Rabbis, contending with the competing realities of traditional Jewish precedent and contemporary social practice, recast contemporary bourgeois gender

roles as not only religiously acceptable but as Jewish in origin and divinely ordained. In the decades surrounding emancipation, through creatively reinterpreting ancient Jewish sources - in their synagogue sermons, prayer books, children's lesson books and halakhic journals – the Viennese Rabbis, presented contemporary bourgeois gender notions as innately Jewish, while never overtly acknowledging that this was in fact a radically non-traditional expansion of women's roles and a limitation on customary male religious hegemony. In examining these rabbinic sources this paper demonstrates that as early as the mid-19th century the Rabbis of the Viennese community were actively engaging in the discourse on gender and producing radical notions of Jewish men's and women's roles. Furthermore, I argue that these Viennese Rabbis were instrumental in the transformation of traditional Jewish notions of gender through presenting a "domesticized" and "genderized" Judaism, which not only expanded the role of women within religious life, but also revolutionized Judaism itself.

**Carsten Schapkow (University of Oklahoma)**

### **Ludwig Philippson as a Modern Jewish Intercessor and the Case of Iberian-Sephardic History**

During the course of the nineteenth-century German-speaking Jews turned to Iberian-Sephardic culture as a model for integration into a non-Jewish majority society. Starting with the Science of Judaism the perception of Jewish participation in Spanish culture as equal partners during the Middle Ages became the most salient and distinctive feature in the elaboration of this "golden" past. By the mid-nineteenth century, topics on Iberian-Sephardic history had begun to attract a much wider audience. Explorations were no longer confined to periodicals and monographs intended for a small educated Jewish reading public related to the Science of Judaism. In particular the Jewish press played an important role in distributing wider knowledge on Iberian-Sephardic culture. Most significant for that purpose was the General Journal of Judaism (*Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*) edited by Ludwig Philippson (1811-1889). One goal of the Journal was to create a living awareness of contemporary Jewish history when dealing with popular topics for a broad audience. Besides, it was the main objective to comment on the emancipation of the Jews in different countries. I shall focus on Ludwig Philippson's initiative concerning the resettlement of the Jews to Spain in 1854 and 1855. Furthermore, I will discuss the reaction in the German-Jewish press towards it. Philippson saw the Sephardic Jews as the oldest nation on Spanish soil whom had been granted citizenship by the Romans; and under Christians monarchs they were tolerated which was for Philippson the basis argument for the integration in the state. This understanding enabled him to plead the liberal Spanish government for the introduction of religious freedom and the abolition of the expulsion edict from 1492. His intervention shows Philippson as a modern intercessor of German Jewry which was still far away from becoming emancipated in the German-speaking lands. However, Philippson's self-consciousness as a German Jew made it possible for him to ask Spain for the resettlement of the Jews – not only for those Jews who had

been expelled in 1492.

**Session Number: 2.14**

**Session The Jews in Central and East Europe after World War II**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Steven B. Bowman (University of Cincinnati)**

**Peter Bergmann (University of Florida)**

**The Jewish D.P. in the Postwar Drama of German Defeat**

The paper focuses on the pseudo-normalization or temporary integration of Jewish DPs in postwar West German society in 1946 and 1947. The Anglo-American occupiers sought to steer the survivors through an administrative limbo. Germans and Jewish survivors assumed a mutual disdain, but also engaged in economic barter and everyday contact. The arrival of expellees aroused rivalry and resentment between wartime and postwar victims of ethnic cleansing, but together they helped define displacement as a key attribute of the experience of defeat in the immediate postwar years. This paper will draw upon the documents of American administrators of DP camps, including the private papers of US army personnel and aid organization workers, but also contemporary public German discussion of DPs, expellees, and the nature of German defeat. The paper will seek to assess whether the memory of the survivors in their midst was repressed by the German public and/or blended into a generalized definition of defeat as a form of displacement.

**Adam Kopciowski (Maria Curie Skłodowska University)**

**Transitory Revival: Jewish Life in Poland in the Early Postwar Period, 1944-1946**

The two first years after the end of the war constituted the most important period in the postwar history of the Jewish population in Poland. This time was marked by the re-establishment of political, social and cultural life of that community. The Jews were granted almost unlimited organizational independence, which was something unusual under the communist regime. The Central Committee of Jews in Poland - the main Jewish institution in postwar Poland - was established in Lublin as early as November 1944. The Committee presided over an extensive network of local and provincial Jewish committees and created and supervised a large number of social welfare, educational, and cultural institutions: Jewish schools, kindergartens, orphanages, youth centers, public kitchens, outpatient's clinics, shelters for sick and old people, loan banks, etc. Jewish political life was also renewed. It was represented by eleven political parties, of which eight operated legally. Since 1945 the Jewish religious life was controlled by the Union of Religious Communities, comprising some 30 branches in the cities and towns where a significant number of Jews resided. The Union met the most important religious needs of the Jewish community, establishing prayer-houses, providing mazoth for Passover, supplying kosher meat and running kosher public kitchens. All the Jewish institutions supported the development of the Jewish cultural life. By 1946 two Yiddish theaters, the Jewish Historical

Institute, the Society for Art and Culture, and the Yiddish Pen Club were founded. Considering all those facts, the rapid development of independent Jewish life in the years 1944-1946 was an extraordinary phenomenon in the Polish postwar history as such, even though it lasted for a short time and soon came to an end. It is also noteworthy that the number of the Jews in Poland in those years was relatively small (about 250,000 people in 1946, compared with 3,500,000 in 1939). The time of prosperity was stunted after the Kielce pogrom in July 1946, when most Jews left Poland. The main task of my presentation will be to answer the following questions: What were the factors that made that time so productive and unique? The relatively liberal attitude of the authorities or specific features of the Polish Jewish community? I will present a synthetic picture of the Jewish population in the years 1944-1946

**Alice Freifeld (University of Florida)**

#### **Privatizing Hungarian Jewish Identity after 1945**

In the 1990s the Hungarian Supreme Court blocked the publication of lists of those deported to Auschwitz in the name of privacy. The rationale was that religion was a private matter and might cause embarrassment. Under this logic, American citizens are currently blocked access to mid-century archival material, because U.S. privacy laws are not commensurate with Hungarian statutes. This paper will examine the origins of this privatization of Hungarian Jewish identity in the immediate post-war years. The tension within and toward the largest surviving Jewish community in Central Europe has resurfaced since the end of Communism in 1989. Last year Parliament passed a privacy protection and archive law which limits U.S. citizen's scholarly access. This paper will also update and alert the members of AJS to the negotiations going on for the past year between the Hungarian ministries and our Department of State, some Senators, and professional organizations. 1945-1948 was a period of flux, with a coalition government. The surviving Budapest Jews were joined by returnees from forced labor, concentration camps, and from the borderlands of neighboring countries. The debate about the place of Hungary's Jews in Hungary was public and lively, appearing in the newspapers, scholarly journals, and political diatribes. Some of this story was laid bare in the testimony of survivors at the public war crimes trials of "small fry" Arrow Cross men. The job application essays to the Jewish organizations and the Jewish hospital reveal many more desperate stories. This paper could be placed together with Catherine Portugese at the University of Massachusetts, doing Jewish film in Hungary

**Andras Kovacs (Central European University)**

#### **Jews and Jewish Politics in Communist Hungary, 1949-1989**

The presentation intends to deal with the activities of those politicians in postwar Hungary who identified themselves publicly as Jews and openly represented Jewish causes as community leaders, Jewish activists or Jewish politicians. How did these politicians, who viewed Jews as a collectivity and who sought to defend the Jews' collective interests, operate under the circumstances of Communist rule? How did the Communist authorities react to different forms of "Jewish politics" in the four postwar decade? Where were the

borders between collaboration and compromise for the sake of survival in these difficult years? These are the basic questions that the presentation will discuss on the basis of unpublished documents from the newly opened Communist archives. The analysis will prove that there was a definitive demand for autonomous Jewish politics among Hungarian Jews in the post-Shoah period. However, after the Communist take-over, this demand was stifled by the Stalinist policies. A benchmark for the evaluation of Jewish politics in these period may be the extent to which it was able to preserve the earlier institutional structures, to keep alive the relationship between Jewish institutions and Jewish society, to protect Jews from repression, and to maintain the possibility of co-operation with the widest possible range of other political, religious and social victims of such repression. Summing up the findings of the inquiry, we may state that Jewish politics failed to produce the minimum results that would have been sufficient to prevent the distance and distrust between Jews living in the country and the Jewish organisations from becoming greater than ever before.

### **Abstracts for Session 3**

**Sunday, December, 17, 2006 02:00 PM-04:00 PM**

#### ***Session Number: 3.1***

**Session Holocaust Trials in the Courtroom, the Public Square, and the Academy**

#### ***Session***

This session proposes to discuss the use and abuse of the Holocaust through the examination of a variety of courtroom cases since Nuremberg through the present. They vary from trials of Nazi leaders by the allies and the State of Israel to those who have denied or minimized the Holocaust. The focus will be on how different courts in different circumstances have treated the events of the Holocaust in law and as history. Of equal importance is how what has transpired in the courtroom impacted on or has been viewed by the world outside, particularly among intellectuals. Presenters: Professor Deborah Lipstadt, Emory University Professor Elhanan Yakira, Hebrew University Professor Hannah Yablonka, Ben-Gurion University/Rutgers University Respondent: To be determined Chair: Professor Ilan Troen, Brandeis University The session is appropriate to Israel Studies and Holocaust

**Chair, S. Ilan Troen (Brandeis University)**

**Deborah E. Lipstadt (Emory University)**

**The Impact of Holocaust Denial Trials: Canada v. Zundel, Irving v. Penguin/Lipstadt, Austria v. Irving**

In the last 15 years there have been a number of trials which have concerned Holocaust denial. Three of the most prominent were Canada's suit against Ernst Zundel in which charges were brought against Zundel under a form of Canada's hate speech laws. The first Zundel trial ended in a hung jury and the second in a conviction. Ultimately Zundel's conviction was voided by Canada's Supreme Court when the law under which he was prosecuted was

declared unconstitutional. In 2006 Austria brought charges against David Irving for Holocaust denial. Irving was sentenced to three years in jail, which he is now serving. Irving v. Penguin/Lipstadt is in a different category from these two -- and all other Holocaust denial trials -- in that the denier was not the defendant but the plaintiff. How have these three trials, all of which garnered substantial international media attention, impacted Holocaust deniers and denial? Did deniers benefit from the unprecedented media coverage or suffer from their loss in the courtroom? How has the history of the Holocaust fared in the courtroom? Is the courtroom the most efficacious place to fight the Holocaust denial movement? This paper will address these questions as well as the larger question of the use of law to adjudicate a legal issue. Particular attention will be paid to the role of the historian in the courtroom.

**Elhanan Yakira (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

### **The Holocaust as an Argument in a Comprehensive Ideological Negation of Israel and of Zionism**

That there are numerous uses and abuses of the Holocaust is notorious. Usually it is attributed to all kinds of moral, political and financial blackmailing imposed by the Jewish establishment or the State of Israel on the rest of the world for a priori or post factum license to ignore the suffering of the Palestinian people and of justifying the occupation of Arab lands. All this is certainly true to some degree. Not less true is that the Holocaust is very often, and quite immediately, brought up as an argument, image, or metaphor in discourse denouncing Israeli actions or Zionist claims. When this is done within the context of the Jewish and/or Israeli discussion (and to some extent outside it), this is both unavoidable and, in the last analysis, harmless. At the most, it is a manifestation of bad taste and poor means of expression. Within this Holocaust saturated context, however, there is one phenomenon with irreducible specificity: the use of the Holocaust in a systematic and theoretic way as an argument designed to undermine the very legitimacy of the Zionist idea as a program of creating the concrete – i.e. political – means of expressing a specific Jewish point of view. This is a worldwide phenomenon, but it exists also, and in a rather non-marginal way, within the Jewish world and in Israel. The purpose of this presentation is to discuss this phenomenon within the Israeli context. My claim, among other things, is that in order to understand its real and radical nature, it has to be seen against the background of two paradigmatic phenomena, apparently worlds apart, and yet close enough on one issue – the right of Jews to have their own, specific Jewish, point of view, on the Holocaust: on the one hand Hannah Arendt's views as expressed in her book on the Eichmann's trial; and, on the other hand, the rather little known Holocaust denial of some groups of the radical

**Respondent, Gulie Ne'eman Arad (Ben-Gurion University of the**

**Session Number: 3.2**

**Session        Marshall Sklare Memorial Lecture**

**Session**

The Marshall Sklare Award is given annually by the Association for the Social



Scientific Study of Jewry (ASSJ) to a scholar who has made a significant scholarly contribution to the social scientific study of Jewry, primarily through the publication of a body of research in books and articles. The Sklare Memorial Lecture is delivered by our honoree of the year at the Sklare Memorial Lecture session. This year, Deborah Dash Moore has been selected to receive the Marshall Sklare Award. Currently the Frederick G.L. Huetwell Professor of History at University of Michigan, Moore is known for her seminal work on American Jews after World War II, her collaboration on an historical encyclopedia of Jewish Women in America, her focus on Jewish life in American cities, through 8 books and numerous articles and presentations. Methodologically, her work offers a powerful combination of classical historical methods with the new approaches of feminist historiography. Her presentation is entitled "On City Streets" (abstract submitted separately). Her lecture will be followed by comments from Judith Goldstein of Vassar College, and Laura Levitt of Temple University. The session will also honor and present the student awardees of the ASSJ travel grants, and will honor any members who passed away during 2006.

**Chair, Harriet Hartman (Rowan University)**

**Deborah Dash Moore (University of Michigan)**

### **On City Streets**

Y. L. Gordon's oft-cited advice to Jews on how to live in the modern world—"Be a man in the street, and a Jew at home"—has found expression in complex ways in cities throughout the modern world. Jews have publicly embraced cities, announcing their presence through both subtle and obvious manners of walking, talking, doing business, and enjoying leisure activities. City streets have served as Jewish "homes" as well as public places that required following non-ethnic codes of civic behavior. Streets have provided sites for seeing and being seen, encountering the familiar and the 'other,' performing Jewishness and passing unnoticed. Jews have also relished observing cities as fascinating places for performance, disguise, solidarity, and conflict. Walking city streets, Jews have imagined communities and celebrated anonymity. Contemplating cities, such diverse Jewish figures as Georg Simmel, Louis Wirth, Walter Benjamin, and more recently, Svetlana Boym, Richard Sennett, Jane Jacobs, Marshall Berman, and Max Kozloff have used them as sources for theorizing modernity. Marshall Sklare, too, wrote incisively on what he called the Jewish love affair with the city, though it was not at the center of his scholarship. This paper will look at one famous Jewish city, New York, during one of its heydays, the 1950s. It will examine visions of the city produced by Jews who roamed its streets, rode its subways, explored its poverty, observed its children, and watched its daily parades of power and prestige, glamour and grit. Aware of the historical significance of these postwar years, as well as of what would become a major exodus of Jews from cities to suburbs, the paper will try to draw some connections between prewar theorists of urban modernity and postwar writers. In this way it will seek to connect visual evidence of photographs with social scientific interpretations of urbanism. Images of the city will serve as critical texts that have introduced a new idiom of modernity—a

New York City Jewish dialectic of interrogation—that will subsequently engage social scientists thinking about the rise of world cities in a post-industrial, post-modern era. It is hoped that by focusing on an historical moment of transition and positioning it between two very different Jewish urban worlds, the paper will illuminate a convergence of social theorizing and visual observation. As an historian I will aim to move from the unique and contingent to the general and repetitive since I am convinced that historians and social scientists still have much to learn from each other.

**Respondent, Judith L. Goldstein (Vassar College)**

**Respondent, Laura S. Levitt (Temple University)**

**Respondent, Beth S. Wenger (University of Pennsylvania)**

***Session Number: 3.3***

**Session Translation as Theme, Theory, and Practice in Modern Jewish Literature**

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Anne Golomb Hoffman (Fordham University)**

**Naomi Seidman (Graduate Theological Union)**

**Toward a Psychoanalytic of Jewish Translation**

This paper will argue for the importance of Freudian psychoanalysis in (post)modernist and translation theory and more particularly in the translation from Jewish into non-Jewish languages. Freud often uses variations of the term “translation” (in German, *Übersetzung*) in describing how unconscious impulses, desires and thoughts express themselves in dreams, symptoms, jokes, parapraxes, literary works, etc. My project in this paper is to reverse the metaphorical valence of Freud’s work, using Freud’s psychoanalytic theories to position him as a translation theorist rather than using translation theory to understand Freud. Such a project begins by noticing that what Freud calls “translation” (and closely relates to such operations as condensation, displacement, deformation and secondary revision) corresponds not to the normative, mainstream view of translation as the production of a linguistic equivalent but rather to a view of translation that has variously been seen as Jewish, as modernist, and as postmodern or postcolonial, that is, translation as transformation, or as the negotiation of difference. In particular, Freud’s view of *Übersetzung* is built very heavily on the operations of censorship and repression in shaping or misshaping the translation. Critics have explored the sociocultural context for Freud’s theories of censorship, demonstrating the ways in which psychoanalysis psychologizes and universalizes the Jewish experience of bourgeois socialization; Cuddihy’s analysis of Freud’s translation of Jewish (and Yiddish) jokes into less obviously Jewish forms can serve as a model for recognizing the operations of censorship on Jewish literary translation. Nevertheless, such a model would need to be revised from two related perspectives: First, Cuddihy too readily accepts the German-European perspective of the Yiddish-speaking Jew (the Yid as Id) as “vulgar” and in

need of “civilizing.” Second, the notion of an external and secondary censorship bearing down on a primary “unrepressed” literary expression can no longer be upheld. What emerges from these revisions is a model for exploring the translation of modern Jewish literature through a set of psychic and cultural mediations that reflect and express the Jewish experience of modernity. I will attempt to demonstrate its application of by a reading of translations from the work of Yankev Glatshteyn and Yehudah Amichai.

**Michaela Mudure (Babes-Bolyai University)**

**Norman Manea: Language and Identity**

This paper focuses on Norman Manea, a contemporary Jewish-American who was born in a family of Romanian-Jewish intellectuals in 1936. As a child, he was deported with his family between 1941-1945. In the 1980's Norman Manea immigrated to Western Europe, first, and then to the USA. Once in the US, Norman Manea had difficulties finding his own voice in the new language, in the new reality. Forever “marked” by his East European background, he had to “form-deform-reform” several potential egos. Finally, his writing in Romanian and the necessity to have his work translated into English have become a performance of “the double”, according to his own phrase. Norman Manea constructs his recent book, *The Return of the Hooligan* (the book of the Romanian Holocaust, as it has been called by critics) upon the metaphor of the hooligan (the trouble maker), a figure of speech with several political and identity connotations in the Romanian public discourse. The first return of the Jewish hooligan is from the deportation to Transdnistria, the second from his exile after the collapse of the Communist regime. Suceava, Bucharest, Cluj, and, finally, New York are the geographical, the social, and the sentimental mapping of his Jewish identity. Last but not least, his hotel room in an elegant hotel in downtown Bucharest becomes a symbol of his inner exile, a complex site for the transformation of his identity mediating between several cultures. Both the loss of his notebook upon his return to the USA (an implicit postmodern irony to the well-known literary pretext of the found manuscript) and his dependence on the translator in his new homeland are symbolic for his inner linguistically flayed self. Living in between cultures and languages, Norman Manea's writing and personality is relevant for the trans-formations of Jewish literary identities in the transnational and globalizing contemporary age. His scars and suffering have turned into authentic literature.

**Amy Blau (Whitman College)**

**Baym rand fun a lid: German-Yiddish Translation and the Continuation of a Multilingual Czernowitz Literary Community**

In attributing her literary inspiration in part to her origins in Czernowitz, poet Rose Ausländer describes the city of four languages as the home of many artists and writers, with specific mention of German and Yiddish poets. Ausländer's familiarity with the Yiddish as well as the German creative sphere in Czernowitz, apparent in her German-language poems about Yiddish literary figures and in her own translations of their works from Yiddish, offers one example of the ties between German and Yiddish literary production in Czernowitz beginning in the interwar period and extending beyond the Second

World War and beyond the borders of the Bukovina. The 1981 Yiddish translation of Ausländer's poetry by Freed Weininger, himself a Yiddish poet and translator in Czernowitz during the interwar period, raises another aspect of literary ties among Czernowitz writers. Weininger had originally intended to publish an anthology of Yiddish translations of poetry in German by a number of Bukovina writers. While in the end his anthology contained only poetry by Ausländer, its publication in Tel Aviv in 1981 closely followed the 1980 publication of a commemorative volume of Kubi Wohl's poetry (Yiddish translations from his German poetry and his own Yiddish poems). Both works were preceded by Leibu Levin's Yiddish translation of Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger's poetry in 1978; her poems were first published in German by Hersch Segal, her teacher from the Czernowitz Yiddish school, in 1976. In these publications, the authors and translators, as well as the illustrators and cover artists, all had connections to Czernowitz. Only several Yiddish translations of Paul Celan's poetry stand outside of this close Czernowitz network. In the presentation and analysis of translations between German and Yiddish in Czernowitz of the interwar period and by Czernowitz writers in Israel and elsewhere after the Second World War, I argue that the post-Holocaust translations of German-language Czernowitz poets into Yiddish contributed to the continuation of a multi-lingual literary community that made the memory of its geographic origin in Czernowitz a central part of its literary landscape.

**Gerda Elata-Alster (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)**

### **Identity Constructed by Appellation: Laconic Writing as Defense in Dutch Second Generation Holocaust Writers**

2nd Generation Holocaust writers of autobiographies meet the particular problem of having to re-present a past, they can only remember as an absence, a black void seething beneath what for 'others' is solid ground. Their parents' whisperings in the night; secrets, which they did not tell the children; telling might open the void. "My father used to have sudden outbursts of rage" writes Jessica Durlacher (1961) in the collection of essays and short stories *THE ELEPHANT AND THE JEWISH PROBLEM* (1994, Dutch). Like for Durlacher, for many others, being Jewish was "inseparable from the war". When, at the beginning of the nineties, Durlacher, invited twelve 2nd generation authors, to write a story or essay about their background, or about its effect on their vision of the present," she had done so out of "personal curiosity, of course,...about the meaning of the Jewish heritage for others." As some of the others, Durlacher is a 'Father Jewess': "I am not even Jewish. My father is Jewish." It was my being appalled by the casualty of Durlacher's self-interrogation that sparked the project I'm presently engaged in: *SUBJECTS OF NAZI APPELLATION: LACONIC WRITING IN SECOND GENERATION JEWISH AUTHORS*. My initial shock gave way to an illumination as I found this style to recur in many of the contributions. Could I assign a function to it? Lucien Althusser writes on "appellation" – 'hey YOU!' – as that which establishes the subject. Identity 'recognized' from the exterior, producing shame, the need of defense. Durlacher's invitation functioned as an 'appellation,' constructing these writers as subjects of Holocaust parentage.

Laconic writing creates distance from the self and her/his place, from the subject matter at hand. It signals that one is not really THERE. In the meantime, I am discovering that such rhetorical distancing, be it less pronounced, can be found in other works by these authors. Vicarious subjects of the 'appellation' - 'hey YOU, Jude' - of the Nazi's, they needed to write from

**Session Number: 3.4**

**Session        In the Arena, on the Stage, and at the Fair: American Jews in the World of Popular Performance**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Ellen Eisenberg (Willamette University)**

**Arieh Sclar (Stony Brook University, SUNY)**

**The "Rise and Fall" of a Basketball Culture: Gambling, Professionalism, and Commercialism at Jewish Institutions in the 1920s and 1930s**

From the 1920s to the 1940s, young American Jewish men emerged from urban neighborhoods to achieve prominence in college and professional basketball. The predominance of Jewish players in the highest echelons of basketball caused Jews and non-Jews alike to describe basketball as a 'Jewish game' and while this term overstated the Jewish role in basketball, it accurately reflected the development of a basketball culture within Jewish neighborhoods and at Jewish institutions. Almost as quickly as Jews achieved national prominence in basketball, however, their presence rapidly declined and by mid-century, relatively few Jewish players participated in college and professional basketball. Historians have generally attributed this decline to the social and economic mobility of American Jewry and the formation of the NBA that moved the game away from the intimate communal ties that had stimulated Jewish participation. While I do not deny these important developments, I will argue that beginning in the mid-1920s and continuing for over a decade, Jewish proponents of sport questioned the excessive attention given basketball at Jewish institutions. Concerned that 'evils' such as gambling, professionalism, and commercialism had invaded 'Jewish Center sports,' institutional leaders sought a more balanced athletic program and a majority of Jewish institutions gradually de-emphasized competitive basketball, which contributed to the decline of Jewish players. It is my theory that this development had more of an impact on the decline of Jewish prominence in college and professional basketball than has been recognized. Historians have generally focused on Jewish participation in sport as a reflection of Jewish acceptance within American society, which has limited the conceptual framework within this growing field. Thus, few studies have examined how the 'normalization' project that led to sport's rise among American Jews had unintended consequences in the interwar period. I propose that the decline of Jewish players involved more than socio-economic mobility, but rather contained a tension that restricted American Jews' use of basketball beyond certain boundaries. Examining this tension will help illustrate how American Jews conformed to societal standards regarding activities involved in the

**Harold Troper (University of Toronto)**

**Mainstreaming the Image of Canadian Jews: The 1959 Bicentenary of Canadian Jewry and Expo '67**

In a national bicentenary celebration of the Canadian Jewish community in 1959 and in constructing of a Pavilion of Judaism at Expo '67 in Montreal, the organized Jewish community in Canada hoped to positively influence public attitudes toward Judaism and the place of Jews in Canada. While the Canadian Jewish community was then still a largely-immigrant community and its leadership taken up with a struggle against socially—and, in some areas, legally—tolerated antisemitism, community leaders intended the 1959 and 1967 celebrations to mainstream the Canadian Jewish image, to portray Jews as quintessential Canadian citizens deeply rooted in the Canadian historical narrative. As this paper will argue, these two separate celebrations had only some minor impact on the image of Canadian Jews, and tell us more about the self-image of the Jewish community. Changing Canadian attitudes towards the Jews in this third decade after the Second World War developed as a result of several factors: the impact of the Quiet Revolution that erupted in the wake of Quebec Premier MD's death in 1959; the redefinition of Canadian citizenship represented in the lead up to the 1967 Canadian Centennial; the impact of the Six Day War in 1967; and the election of Trudeau as Canadian prime minister in 1968.

**Joel E. Rubin (University of Virginia, McIntire Dept. of Music)**

**"Way beyond Zappa's league": The Naftule Brandwein and Dave Tarras Canon and the Formation of New Mythologies in the Contemporary Klezmer Movement**

This paper will examine the canonization process of the clarinetists Naftule Brandwein (1884-1963) and Dave Tarras (1895-1989) by the contemporary klezmer movement. The two leading performers in New York during the first half of the 20th century, it is the repertoire, style and personalities of these two musicians which have formed the humus on which the klezmer movement has grown. Brandwein and Tarras represent two opposing and coexisting aspects of the immigrant musical experience in negotiating the transition process from being Eastern European to being American. While sharing a common background in Eastern Europe, they responded to the challenge of America in differing ways. Brandwein adopted the external trappings of "Jazz Age" success, dressing like a dandy, wearing electric "Uncle Sam" suits, and fraternizing with the Jewish underworld. Yet his playing remained old-fashioned, perhaps archaic. Tarras was sober and disciplined on the outside, yet musically a modernizer. Evolving a unique, personal style, he revolutionized Yiddish dance and theater music in America. The personas of the two musicians -- in particular of Brandwein -- have been mythologized by the klezmer movement since the mid-1970s. Here it is he who is viewed as the revolutionary, "way beyond Zappa's league", as one musician puts it. A closer examination of these phenomena will enable us a deeper understanding of the processes of spiritual and cultural transformation and renewal taking place among the postwar generations of Jews in America. The negotiation

processes observed among the generation of immigrant musicians such as Brandwein and Tarras -- as they broke with the "Old World" and its traditional Judaism, cycle of poverty and pogroms in order to become Americans -- continue to reverberate today among the postwar generations as they come to terms with the rupture of the destruction of Yiddish-speaking, Eastern European Jewry, the crisis in American Judaism in the face of diminishing tribal connections, as well as the apparent failure of Jewish assimilation.

**Respondent, Hasia R. Diner (New York University)**

***Session Number: 3.5***

***Session (Re)Visions of Soviet Jewry***

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Jeffrey A. Shandler (Rutgers University)**

**David Shneer (University of Denver)**

**Visions of Zion: Semyon Fridlyand and Georgy Zelma's Photography of Birobidzhan**

In the Soviet Union, Jews gave birth to the field of photojournalism. And some of these Soviet Jewish photographers turned their lenses on the "new Soviet Jew." Their photographs are not ethnographic photographs of "dying" Jewish communities like those of the well-known Jewish photographers Roman Vishniac and Alter Kacizne. Soviet Jewish photojournalists were documenting the building of Soviet society, not the waning of the "old" society. In this paper, I examine two photoessays about 1930s Birobidzhan, the Jewish autonomous region that was indeed to create a landed territory for the Soviet Jewish nation, and show how photography illuminates the social history of Soviet Jewry as well as the aesthetic battles, in which Jewish photographers were engaged. Georgy Zelma, born in Rostov in 1907, was a young photojournalist who had made a name for himself as a documentor of Central Asia. In 1932, he was commissioned by Ogonek the Soviet Union's most important photographic magazine, to capture the building of the Jewish region with his camera. He traveled through the area in 1932, although Ogonek did not publish the short two-page, photo-essay until June 1934, immediately after the Council of People's Soviets officially declared "Birobidzhan" to be the Jewish Autonomous Region. Semyon Fridlyand was born in Kiev in 1905, the year of the first Russian Revolution. At 20, he moved to Moscow to become a staff photographer for Ogonek. In the early 1930s, Fridlyand photographed for Pravda, and in 1934, the magazine Our Achievements sent Fridlyand to photograph Birobidzhan. Our Achievements published a celebratory article, accompanied by nine Fridlyand images, each a Socialist Realist celebration of the new Soviet Jew. These visions of a Soviet Zion show how Jews took advantage of the social mobility offered to them by the Soviet state, both as agricultural migrants to the Far East, but more often as professionals, journalists, and even photographers moving to Moscow. The Jews on both sides of the lens tell two sides of the Soviet Jewish story, urbanization and

assimilation alongside remaking Jews as Jews through Jewish territory and the Yiddish language.

**Anna Shternshis (University of Toronto)**

### **White Concert Piano from the Shtetl: Material Culture and Ethnic Identity of Post-Soviet Jewish Community**

After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the Jewish Community went through the process of radical cultural transformation. First, it dramatically reduced in numbers as over a million of Soviet Jews left between 1986 and 2005. Second, with the help of numerous American and Israeli funding agencies, Russian Jewish activists were able to establish new cultural centers, synagogues and Jewish schools. The activity of these organizations often included Jewish education for children and adults. Their models of Jewish ethnic identity were based on Western, especially North American concepts, such as establishing the primary role of Judaism and observance of Jewish traditions and rituals in defining Jewish ethnicity. Most post-Soviet Jews, however, grew up with completely different notion of what it means to be a Jew. Most did not connect Jews with any religion, especially with Judaism, which many considered mundane and insufficiently spiritual. At the same time, in the atmosphere of religious and economic freedom, some Jews began to be interested in other possibilities of expression of their ethnic sentiments – via going to Jewish restaurants, celebrating Jewish holidays, enjoying movies with some Jewish content, and reading books with openly Jewish content. Many travel to Israel and United States, and visit sites of Jewish interest. At the same time, most post-Soviet Jews still received Soviet education, therefore, for them, to be Jewish means to be educated, good-natured and well-rounded individual (and not an observant Jew). This paper will examine the manifestation of new post-Soviet Jewish culture as expressed in material and visual culture. It will study the menus and décor of Moscow Jewish restaurants, analyze the Jewish identity on Russian-language internet, exhibitions of Jewish paintings, Jewish images in post-Soviet cinema, and most popular destinations among Russian Jewish tourists. These sources, I hope, will help to deconstruct the post-Soviet Jewish ethnic identity, and analyze its evolution from the Soviet times into the 21st century.

**Olga Gershenson (University of Massachusetts-Amherst)**

### **Post-Soviet Cinema Screens the "Jewish Question"**

The so-called "Jewish question" has been a source of major ethnic and religious tensions in the region, and remains the subject of controversy. What is the position of Jews in Russian society and culture today? I approach the topic through local cultural production. The representation of Jews in Soviet national cinema (when and where it was allowed) has long been a kind of a litmus test for Russian attitudes to minorities. Jews have been paradigmatic internal others, who can simultaneously symbolize backwardness (as shtetl inhabitants) and learnedness (as "people of the book"). They can stand for weakness (as victims of pogroms and genocide) and spiritual leadership (as rabbis or commissars). Such representations are inevitably gendered. And so their representation shows how Russian society sees its internal others, and



also how it sees itself. In this paper, which is a part of a larger project examining Jewish characters on the Soviet-Russian screen, I will focus on post-Soviet cinema. I will compare two films, "Love" (1991) and "Daddy" (2004), and analyze changes and continuities in their Jewish representations. I first compare characters in terms of their national and cultural identities as well as gender relations; then I contextualize the representational trends in the circumstances of production and reception in the local media. Both films were publicly funded and well received, which means that they potentially reflect the official policy towards the Jews, and resonate with the popular imagination. My analysis demonstrates significant shifts in Jewish representation between the early and later post-Soviet films. In the earlier film, Jews are forced out of the country by the anti-Semitic Russians. Here the Jews are victims and the Russians are villains. In the later film, Jews fully share in the fate of the Russian people, assuming leadership positions and representing the best of Russian culture. Here the Jews are heroes. Yet, my analysis also demonstrates a certain continuity in Jewish representation, including a "thin" definition of Jewishness involving genealogy and "mercurian" occupations. Thus these two films may reflect the changes and continuities in the ambivalent Russian attitudes to Jews, vacillating between the new openness and the old stereotypes.

**Anna Katsnelson (Harvard University)**

**A Soviet Man In Israeli Cinema: Belated Belonging, Ultimate Alterity**

"Probably the least successful has been the absorption of film directors," noted Zvi Gitelman in his study of the integration of Soviet immigrants from the 1970s in Israeli society, articulating the phenomenon that informs the socio-historical background of my paper. Mikhail Kalik, one of the first Soviet Jewish filmmakers to arrive in Israel was probably the most famous and established - his art house films from the 1960s helped define the "poetic" Soviet cinema of the Khrushchevian Thaw. Immigration, rather than offering a new beginning, effectively ended Kalik's career, and in the decades that followed his repatriation he shot only a single feature film. The following inquiry stems from the director's abrupt cessation of artistic output. Seeking to comprehend Kalik's failed professional klita I revisit his Israeli work, an ambitious and didactic allegorical melodrama set on the eve of the Yom Kippur War that was met with bilious and scathing critical response. By unpacking Kalik's film, its reception and the personal trajectory of the director, I intend to comment on immigration, on art produced under the pressing imperative of cultural translation and the possibilities of artistic absorption in an essentially foreign society. Why did the film elicit so negative a reception from the Israeli public and its critical apparatus? What cultural conventions did Kalik offend? Conversely, why did this reception, as icy as it was, cause a seasoned filmmaker, used to criticism, to withdraw? Venturing into a little-studied liminal area of immigrant cinematography, I argue that Kalik's was a story of misdirected migratory expectations. Reframing the historical moment of Kalik's repatriation I suggest that his motivation, a uniquely 1970s Soviet Jewish identity construct that hinged upon discursive belatedness - an ideological

conviction no longer in sync with the Israeli society - was also his undoing. Ultimately, I aim to tease out some of the complexities and difficulties associated with the formation of an Israeli identity and an Israeli life amongst Soviet olim in the 1970s.

**Respondent, Carol Zemel (York University)**

**Session Number: 3.6**

**Session Ideologies and Boundaries of Modern Sephardi and Arab Jewish Communities**

**Session**

This panel will explore responses of four modern Sephardi and Arab Jewish communities to the challenges and possibilities of modernity and modern ideologies. Underlying these studies is the common thread of integration into civil society, a process that began in the mid-to-late-nineteenth and continued well into the mid-twentieth century. This process prompted each community to redraw the boundaries of its affiliation, whether with the Ottoman Empire (and its military), the Zionist movement, other world Jewish communities, or the emerging Arab collective – a process of collective self-redefinition that often transpired through debate in the local Jewish press. The panel discusses how boundaries of identity and affiliation were not only drawn from within but also imposed from without, as the process of integration into civil society tested the limits of acceptance. The first paper, “Medicine and Jewish Boundaries in late Ottoman Salonica” examines the establishment of the Hirsch Hospital in 1908 and the careers of Salonican Jewish doctors to elucidate the role of scientific medicine in fostering modern forms and expressions of Jewish identity in late Ottoman Salonica. The second paper, “Mobilizing Jews: Ottoman Sephardi Responses to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877,” explores how Ottoman Sephardim blended traditional, religious forms of identification with modern, civic patriotism as they rallied to the support of the Empire. Their position was cogently symbolized by a flag that bore the SHEMA prayer in Hebrew on one side and the sultan’s prolix signature in Arabic on the other. “Arab Jewish Identity: Views from the MASHRIQI Jewish Press, 1920-1948” considers the Arabic-language Jewish press in the Levant, focusing on how Jewish communities in Baghdad, Beirut, and Cairo formed a regional, language-based “Arab Jewish” cultural identity in response to the rise of Arab identity and the emerging Ashkenazi hegemony over Jewish culture. The final paper, “In Order to Awaken The Youth: Argentine Sephardim and the Zionist Project,” analyzes the relationship between the Argentine Zionist Federation and the Sephardic communities in Argentina in the 1940s, concentrating on how participation in the Zionist project enabled Sephardim of disparate origins to forge a common

**Chair, Sarah Abrevaya Stein (University of Washington)**

**Julia Cohen (Stanford University)**

**Mobilizing Jews: Ottoman Sephardi Responses to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877**

When the Ottoman Empire went to war with Russia in 1877, the empire’s Sephardim organized public prayers. Invoking biblical scenes of captivity in

Egypt, the chief rabbi explained that Russia hoped not only to weaken the Ottomans but to renew the persecutions of Israel. He called on the Jews to do everything they could to combat the dangers looming in their midst, not solely by the traditional means of prayer and donation but also through military inscription (an option only recently introduced to non-Muslim Ottoman subjects). Two weeks later, an Izmir-based Ladino paper noted that a “large number” of young Jewish men in that city were already prepared to fight for their empire, and that a special flag – bearing the Hebrew prayer of the SHEMA on one side and the sultan’s Arabic signature on the other – had been designed for their company. My paper explores the responses of Ottoman Sephardim to the moment using reports from the Ladino newspapers EL TIYEMPO of Istanbul, LA BUENA ESPERANSA of Izmir and LA EPOKAH of Salonika. It suggests that these communities managed to blend traditional, religious approaches with modern, civic forms of patriotic identification at this critical juncture in the life of the empire. At this moment, I argue, Ottoman Jews were searching for ways to act as the faithful subjects they had long been while also becoming the active and involved citizens they had only recently begun learning how to be. I thus treat the war of 1877 as a mid-way point between traditional Sephardi patriotism and the development among Sephardim of the ideology and imperial nationalism of “Ottomanism.” Additionally, I understand these public declarations of affiliation with the Ottoman state as conscious performances: the presence of a drawing of the prayer services which is preserved in the sources, for example, indicates that the Jews participating in the event were well aware that their actions were being noted by various spectators and that – as a result – they had to carefully craft the message they sent to the world, and not only to God, as they prayed for the well-being and long life of their empire.

**Paula Daccarett (Brandeis University)**

### **Modern Medicine and Jewish Boundaries in Late Ottoman Salonica**

The 1908 opening of the Hirsch Hospital in Salonica brought to fruition years of tenacious Jewish communal work, in particular by Jewish doctors. This paper draws attention to “modern/scientific” medicine as a contributing element in broader processes of Sephardi modernization by examining the establishment of the Hirsch Hospital together with the careers of three eminent Salonican Jewish doctors. The Hirsch Hospital will be discussed as an institutional affirmation of Jewish collective identity in an era and in a city in which hospitals served as expressions of ethno-religious solidarity. Concomitantly, the dedication of the Ottoman military surgeon Jacques Nissim Pasha and FRANCO doctors Enrico Ferrera and Moise Mizrahi to Jewish as well as Ottoman and Italian medical endeavors demonstrates how “modern medicine” also constituted a medium that reflected and created spaces for cultural affiliation and intellectual life across sectarian boundaries. The Hirsch Hospital provided the Jewish population with contemporary medical care while observing Jewish cultural and religious needs (such as KASHRUT). It also validated the Jewish communal image in Salonica, where hospitals under ethno-religious auspices, such as Turkish/Ottoman, Greek and Italian, had

preceded their Jewish counterpart, whose absence had elicited critical remarks from both Jewish and outside circles. Vital advocacy and fundraising efforts on behalf of the Hirsch Hospital and other Jewish medical pursuits by these doctors will be contextualized among their medical training, achievements and accolades garnered in Ottoman and Italian spheres. In particular, this discussion will relate the activism and esteemed stature of these doctors in internal Jewish affairs to the professional training and opportunities afforded by their allegiance to two external forces that impacted Sephardi Jewry in the modern period, Ottomanism and abiding FRANCO attachments to Italy. The careers of Ferrera, Mizrahi and Nissim underscore the emergence of “modern doctors” as a secular authority in Jewish life and attest to historian Meropi Anastassiadou’s observations regarding the predisposition of doctors to assume leadership positions in Ottoman MILLETS. In sum, this paper explores how the universal applicability of “medical knowledge” fostered Salonican Jewish in-group identification as well as mobility across ethno-religious lines and abatement of modern national and civic identities.

**Lital Levy (Harvard University)**

**Arab Jewish Identity: Views from the Mashriqi Jewish Press, 1920-1948**

My talk takes up the formation of a modern Arab Jewish identity through the Arabic-language Jewish press. During the last three decades of Jewish life in the MASHRIQ (Arab East), Jewish newspapers in standard literary Arabic (FUSHA) became a forum for members of different communities (e.g., Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut, Jaffa, Cairo, Alexandria) to share their views and imagine a broader community of Jewish Arabic-speakers bound by regional, cultural, and linguistic affiliations. While this phenomenon parallels those of the Ladino and Yiddish presses, I argue that for Arabic-speaking Jews, the idea of a LANGUAGE-based Jewish cultural identity (as opposed to a communal religious identity) was belated and did not prefigure these newspapers so much as emerge from them. The editors’ and contributors’ urge to reinvent themselves as a linguistic community with a distinct historic legacy can be read against two ideological factors: the creation of “Arab” identity via the NAHDA, or cultural renaissance, of the late nineteenth century, and the rising Ashkenazi hegemony over “Jewish” cultural identity as a result of the European HASKALAH and settlement in Palestine. My paper will begin with an overview of the Arabic-language Jewish press beginning with two short-lived prototypes, AL-TAHDHIB (Cairo, 1901-1903) and SAWT AL-‘UTHMANIYYA (Jaffa, 1914), followed by a spate of newspapers that appeared in Baghdad, Beirut, and Cairo beginning in the 1920s. Jews from throughout the region contributed letters, stories, and features to all these newspapers, developing and promoting a shared identity as YAHUD AL-SHARQ or YAHUD AL-‘ARAB (Eastern or Arab Jews), as distinct from the worldwide Jewish community, the Ashkenazim, or the (Ladino-speaking) Sephardim. Regular features on important Arab Jewish personalities through the ages, on Jewish contributions to Arabic literature, etc. created a “usable past” for this new ETHNIE. Concurrently, the ideological and political orientations of these various MASHRIQI communities was hotly contested in the press, as per the

repeated calls in the Cairene Jewish newspaper AL-CHAMS (THE SUN, 1934-1948) for "TAMSIR AL-YAHUD" (the "Egyptification" of the Jewish community). I conclude with a close look at the debates around Arab Jewish identity expressed in AL-CHAMS, particularly in the 1945 Passover edition.

**Adriana Brodsky (St. Mary's College of Maryland)**

### **In Order to Awaken the Sephardic Youth: Argentine Sephardim and the Zionist Project**

This paper seeks to analyze the relationship between the Argentine Zionist Federation (Federación Sionista Argentina) and the Sephardic communities in Argentina. Although it is clear from the evidence that Sephardim supported the creation of the State of Israel, and that they began organizing their efforts from early on, they were sometimes reluctant to participate in the activities of a Zionist Federation they considered was not always attentive to the needs of this 'ethnic' minority. Risking to be labeled as 'anti-Zionists,' Sephardim used their interactions with the Federation as a way to claim the need to be treated as equals by an Ashkenazic majority that controlled the Federation and the Jewish community institutions in Argentina as a whole. They insisted on the use of the Spanish language in correspondence and meetings, and on the clear acknowledgement of Sephardic contributions to fundraising campaigns. The Federation, however, did not always accept the demands of these groups.

On an international level, as well, Sephardim were being courted by both the World Zionist Organization and the newly created World Union of Sephardic Jews. In particular, this paper will focus on how their participation in the Zionist Project allowed the Sephardim from various origins (Morocco, present-day Turkey, Aleppo, Damascus and Palestine) to forge a common identity. The presentation will begin with a description of the early attempts of Sephardim to create a "Centro Sefaradí Sionista," the attempts made by both Sephardim and Ashkenazim to co-opt the Sephardic communities Zionist efforts, and the successful creation of a Center in the 1940's. By discussing the work of the Sephardic Youth in particular, I will discuss the development of this common identity, and the uses it was put to. By analyzing Zionist magazines published by the Sephardic Youth groups and the minute books of their meetings, I will show how participation in the creation of the State of Israel, then, became a contested terrain in which the very meanings of what it was to be a Jew, to be a Sephardi, and to be an Argentine Jew were fought over and defined.

### ***Session Number: 3.7***

#### **Session      Dead Sea Scrolls**

##### ***Session***

Although the Dead Sea Scrolls are often thought about in conjunction with one or another aspect of Jewish Studies, such as Bible, law, Second Temple History or Hebrew language, they actually are the focus of a variety of approaches to Jewish Studies, frequently interdisciplinary ones. This session, although, located formally in Bible, brings together papers on several aspects of the Scrolls which serve to highlight the interdisciplinary nature of Dead Sea

**Chair, Lawrence H. Schiffman (New York University)**

**Steven P. Weitzman (Indiana University)**

**The "Fear Factor" in Early Jewish Warfare**

Military strategists have long recognized that psychology is an important, indeed sometimes the most important, tactical factor on the battlefield. Confidence and enthusiasm can offset an enemy's larger force size or superior position, just as panic or low spirits can undermine superb training and weaponry. Jews in the Greco-Roman period also recognized the importance of battlefield psychology and developed their own ways of manipulating it, strategems that mirrored those of the Greek and Roman enemies against whom they fought. Strong evidence for this claim comes from the War Scroll from Qumran, but that only reflects one theory of how to use emotion in battle. Josephus' writings reflect another drawn from Roman military theory. This paper will contrast the War Scroll and Josephus, both to identify the difference between these two strategems and to reconstruct what happened when they were deployed against one another in the Jewish Revolt.

**Alex Jassen (University of Minnesota)**

**Prophets and Prophecy in the Qumran Community**

Scholarship on prophecy in ancient Israel has generally argued that the post-biblical period witnessed a decline in active prophecy. Recent approaches to this question, however, have begun to identify texts that seem to point to active prophecy in some segments of late Second Temple Judaism. Scholarship on post-biblical prophecy, on the other hand, has tended to overlook the evidence provided by the Dead Sea Scrolls. In general, scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls rarely reflects an interest in the possibility of prophecy in the Qumran community. In this paper, I shall examine the evidence for active prophecy in the Qumran community. No Qumran text employs explicit biblical prophetic language (i.e., NABI', NEBU'AH) in reference to individuals or phenomena in the Qumran community. At the same time, several texts composed by the Qumran community indicate that they believed that prophecy was active within their own ranks. For the Qumran community, the nature of prophecy had changed to such an extent that it was no longer appropriate to identify it by standard biblical prophetic terminology. I will examine these texts more closely and attempt to identify the newly perceived character of prophecy and the nature of its application at Qumran. A significant aspect of this issue involves the question of whether the Teacher of Righteousness should be identified as a prophet. This study concludes that the Qumran community deliberately refrained from using prophetic terminology since it viewed its own modes of divine mediation as significantly different from those of Israel's biblical prophetic heritage. At the same time, the community saw itself as the heirs to the ancient prophets and thus considered their own mediating activity as equivalent to ancient prophecy. In particular, the Teacher of Righteousness conceived of himself as a prophet and was perceived as such by others within the community. In conclusion we shall explore the implications of this study for wider questions of ongoing prophecy in other segments of Second Temple Judaism and rabbinic Judaism.

**Sarianna Metso (University of Toronto)**  
**Contributions from the Dead Sea Scrolls for The Oxford Hebrew Bible Edition of Leviticus**

**Sarianna Metso (University of Toronto)**  
**Contributions from the Dead Sea Scrolls for The Oxford Hebrew Bible Edition of Leviticus**

**Eugene Ulrich (University of Notre Dame)**

**Eugene Ulrich (University of Notre Dame)**  
**Methodological Reflections on Determining Scriptural Status in First-Century Judaism**

***Session Number: 3.8***

***Session***        **Media, Memory, and the Sacred: Public and Private Memorializations of the Holocaust**

***Session***

The recent controversy over the holdings of the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen, Germany highlights a key tension in Holocaust scholarship: the competing demands to maintain victims' privacy but at the same time mourn and understand their suffering in a broader public setting. The papers on this panel investigate the boundaries between the public and private in various discourses of mourning and memorialization. The intimate confessions of diarists and mourners become the public property of scholars and civic leaders entrusted to preserve the memory of the destroyed. Keeping in mind the aesthetic and political issues that surround this public/private dynamic, this panel asks: how do different representational forms balance these needs for personal privacy and human respect with the imperative to remember and mourn for a broader audience. How do encounters with a broader public transform texts initially created for limited audiences? And how in turn do public practices of teaching and remembering condition private understandings of the past? This panel considers such issues and their ramifications for contemporary audiences through readings of mourning and teaching practices, monuments, yizkor bikher, journals, hypertext, and other initiatives intended to make the Holocaust comprehensible. This panel's participants, from the fields of art history, education, linguistics, and literature, examine these issues within a multi-disciplinary framework. Daniel Magilow examines the ideological malleability of the term "Holocaust representation" by examining how the meaning of an unpublished family album changes when it is donated to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Through a diachronic reading of different editions of the Piotrków Trybunalski yizkor book, Rosemary Horowitz explores how the forms, functions and audiences of these memorial compendia change when they become publicly accessible on the internet. Miriam Isaacs examines how Holocaust survivors in the DP camps expanded the scope of the "Jewish public" in their memorial practices. By adapting religious forms to suit secular Jews, they sought to recreate a sense of community and return to normalcy. Finally, Simone Schweber analyzes how

the Holocaust is taught to increasingly younger audiences in an effort to balance the imperative to teach future generations about the Holocaust with fears over trivialization of a sanitized Holocaust memory.

**Chair, Avinoam Patt (Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, USHMM)  
Daniel Magilow (University of Tennessee-Knoxville)**

**Text, Photograph, and Memory in the Diary of Kitty Weichherz**

Kitty Weichherz was a Slovak girl born in Bratislava in 1929 to a highly acculturated, German-speaking middle-class Jewish family. From literally before her birth, Kitty became the object of her father Béla's scrapbooking obsession. Béla Weichherz meticulously documented his daughter's until the family's deportation to Auschwitz in mid-1942. This unpublished journal, now housed in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's archives, consists of Béla's obsessive, banal, but loving remarks and anecdotes juxtaposed with roughly 250 private snapshots glued directly onto the journal pages. Yet text and image do not always tell the same story: Kitty smiles in photographs as text on the same page describes a childhood disease or temper tantrum. As the complex interplay of text and image show, Béla Weichherz creates a self-serving and even contradictory narrative. The Weichherz family's tragic fate, the text's uncanny similarities to the Diary of Anne Frank, and its location in the archives of a Holocaust museum imply its significance for Holocaust memory. Yet the life it documents remains fundamentally unexceptional. Only the few final of the journal concern the Holocaust directly. Consequently, the Diary of Kitty Weichherz poses a challenging case study through which to examine the questions that arise when a private text drawn from the broad (and often banal) fabric of daily life becomes part of the Holocaust's broader public history. As a "multimedia" document produced before and during the Holocaust itself, this diary asks how scholarship should weigh the different demands and challenges of specific component media within a larger text. How do its anecdotes and photographs alternately situate Kitty Weichherz's life within the broader fabric of Jewish history or dislocate her from it? And most significantly: What are the unspoken protocols, both within and beyond a text, that (dis)qualify a representation as a "Holocaust representation"? What are the consequences of such labels for the collecting practices of archives and, more generally, for the broader commercialization of memory, and do they—or should they—change when a representation was composed by and intended for a limited, private audience?

**Miriam Isaacs (University of Maryland)**

**Sacred Ground: The Printed Page and Cultural Continuity in the Displaced Persons Camps of Germany**

Jewish Holocaust survivors faced a dilemma with respect to normalcy after the war. Internal divisions and variation in Jewish identification also made the idea of normalcy problematic. The DP camp press provided a format for public mourning by advertising gatherings and by creating a place for grieving on the page. Personal mourning could be solitary and nonverbal but memorialization had to rely on common terms and symbols in ways that were culturally significant for Jews with a range of beliefs and practices. Jewish memorial



events combined solemnity with assertion of continuity as organizers built upon the feelings of loss and displacement to shape the future in which place of origin was important in recreating community. This paper focuses on communal practices that meld traditional ritual and alternative forms of Judaism in the particular circumstances of the DP camps of Germany. The theoretical context is the relationship between territory and language in paradigms of identity formation. I will draw from both oral and written forum to explore rhetorical expression in the context of memorial services, using literature, graphic art and journalism as means of memorialization. I draw from the press of the DP camps to examine how “troyer akademyes” served as an adaptation of religious forms to suit secular Jews, who wished to recreate community and to adapt specifically Jewish forms in cultural terms. How to honor the dead appropriately was a pressing problem in the context of Jewish tradition, which requires a Burial Society, consecrated ground, bodies intact, cleansed, a week of mourning, visits of consolation, a quorum for prayers to be recited regularly and annually on the anniversary of the loved one’s death. The cruel circumstances of the murders of the millions prevented all this and forced adaptation, especially for the many non-religious and anti-religious Jews who still needed the familiar symbols but no longer trusted religious authority. For all, there was significance in the symbols provided by Hebraic terms associated with mourning. Such terms, seen prominently in the newspapers, include Kaddish, the prayer recited for the dead, “Yizkor” the ceremony memorializing loved ones, “Al Kidush haShem” sanctification of the “Holy Name”. The Hebrew component of Yiddish provides the language with most of the words associated with death; grave is keyver, the cemetery is beys oylem, the tombstone is metseyve. These words are associated with sanctity, so that even where there were no Hebrew fonts, such words were often typed in or written by hand in the alef bet. Writers at times adapted these terms

**Rosemary Horowitz (Appalachian State University)**

### **Change and Continuity in the Piotrkow Trybunalski Yizker Books**

In 1945, survivors of the Holocaust started to publish books commemorating the life and death of their Eastern European Jewry. These memorial books were written primarily in Hebrew and Yiddish by groups of people from the same hometown under the sponsorship of landmanshaftn, their mutual aid associations. Over time, it became evident that Israeli-born descendants of survivors could read the Hebrew sections of the books, but not necessarily the Yiddish ones; whereas the American-born could not usually read either. As a remedy, a number of individuals and organizations financed English translations of the original volumes. Along with language, the scarcity of books emerged as another problem. To address that, individuals and organizations turned to new technologies for solutions. The electronic database of yizker books created by the Jewish Genealogical Society and the virtual library of yizker books created by the New York City Public Library and the National Yiddish Book Center are examples of new media solutions. What is clear is that from their initial uses as gravestones, chronicles, and heirlooms to their current uses as artifacts and source documents, and from Yiddish and Hebrew

to English and from paper to electronic, yizker books have undergone significant changes in form and function. This presentation argues that an understanding of the books needs to take these changes into account. Using the notions of intertextuality and hypertextuality as a conceptual basis to focus on the books dedicated to the city of Piotrkow Trybunalski, Poland, in this presentation, I will evaluate the continuity and change in the genre. This will highlight the ways in which the readings of the books, and by extension, the meanings of the books, are media specific.

**Simone Schweber (University of Wisconsin-Madison)**

### **The Downward Spiral of the Holocaust Curriculum**

The popularization of the Holocaust has been well-documented, regardless of whether it's considered the inevitable product of 'Americanization,' (Flanzbaum, 1999; Ozick, 1996; Rosenfeld, 1995; Rothberg, 2000) or Europeanization. As Imré Kertesz (2001) put it, "For the Holocaust to become with time a real part of European (or at least western European) public consciousness, the price inevitably extracted in exchange for public notoriety had to be paid." That 'price' is often understood as some combination of or trade-off between trivialization and sacralization. What allowed for the Holocaust to become popularized in the first place, however, also encouraged its teaching in a broad range of classrooms, grades and contexts. Whether Holocaust education has spread in the last few decades as the result of Jewish elites pushing that agenda (Novick, 1999; Sheramy, 2000), popular cultural representations percolating into societal consciousness (Mintz, 2001), a grassroots campaign among mostly non-Jewish American educators to teach the subject (Fallace, 2004), or some constellation thereof, the results are unequivocal. Having been widely accepted as morally crucial and educative in and of itself (Schweber, 2004), the Holocaust has seeped downward into lower and lower grades, a trend that deserves a term: 'curricular creep.' Whereas once the Holocaust was taught about only in high schools (if taught at all), it is now frequently taught about in middle schools and upper elementary grades, even occasionally appearing as a topic in the very early elementary years. This paper will report on a public school teacher who taught about the Holocaust in great detail to his third grade students. In addition to portraying what was taught, I will discuss how students reacted to this learning, what psychological impact the unit carried, and what students' parents thought about its age-appropriateness. The case thus addresses long-standing philosophical debates over whether young children should be exposed to the Holocaust as part of the formal school curriculum. Interestingly enough, those who support the sacralization of the Holocaust tend also to romanticize childhood, leading them to argue against coverage in the early grades on the grounds of the Holocaust's inevitable trivialization therein. (See, for example, Totten, 1999.) By contrast, those who decry Holocaust sacralization tend also to argue against the glorification of childhood and thus argue for "gentle" coverage in the early grades. (See, for example, Seppinwall, 1999.) Analyzed through the lens of educational criticism (Eisner, 1992) and using the methods of discourse analysis, this case provides a preliminary (and importantly, an

empirically-based) answer to the question, “How old is old enough to learn

**Session Number: 3.9**

**Session Issues in Secular Jewish Studies**

**Session**

This panel presents four key self-consciously secularizing interventions in modern Jewish culture. Two papers look to nineteenth-century Germany, and two explore aspects of early twentieth-century Zionist culture. Erik Rose’s contribution casts light on how the first practitioners of secular academic Jewish studies (WISSENSCHAFT DES JUDENTUMS) entertained the fantasy that their pursuit of pure rational “science” afforded them entry into an idealized rational State, understood according to Hegel’s political theory. The early corpus of WISSENSCHAFT DES JUDENTUMS consists chiefly of a programmatic meta-praxis through which its proponents—both in their rhetorical strategies and in how they understood the institutional trappings of their bold new enterprise—sought entry into a would-be universal state, even as, in its more palpable manifestation, the Prussian state excluded them in crucial ways. David Biale’s paper looks at how Moses Hess scripted a secularizing narrative of Jewish history and identity by inventing a particular version of the Jewish mother and family, on the one hand, and by framing a certain image of Spinoza, on the other. Biale touches, furthermore, on how Hess himself has been retroactively inserted, at times problematically, into meta-narratives of the evolution of Zionist thought. Ofer Nur situates the “tragic” world view of Hashomer Hatzair as it developed from the end of the First World War into the mid 1920’s within the widespread cult of tragic destiny and death that so profoundly marked culture of youth movements of the era. He pays particular attention to Hashomer Hatzair’s reception of Nietzsche’s concepts of tragedy and the death of god. Azzan Yadin discusses how Zionists and modernist Hebarists confronted the problem of appropriating biblical and rabbinic words, so saturated with religious meaning, in their effort to forge modern Hebrew as the secular national language of the Jewish population in Palestine. Yadin shows how modern Hebrew innovators emphatically and at times violently re-assigned traditional words secular meanings.

**Chair, Miriam Beth Peskowitz (Temple University)**

**Sven-Erik Rose (Miami University)**

**Eduard Gans and the Subject of Jewish History**

This paper examines how early practitioners of WISSENSCHAFT DES JUDENTUMS theorized its institutional MISE-EN-SCÈNE. I argue that the VEREIN FÜR KULTUR UND WISSENSCHAFT DER JUDEN wanted to see itself as a quasi-state agency for Jewish affairs consonant with Hegel’s theory of the state. The inventors of secular Jewish studies’ Hegelian overvaluation of the power of knowledge in general, and historiographical discourse in particular, led them to equate contributing to an idealized institution of WISSENSCHAFT not only with participation in such similarly abstract entities as the historical process, the ZEITGEIST, the human spirit, and Europe; but even with membership in more recalcitrant concrete manifestations of the rational principle such as Germany and the State. Early WISSENSCHAFT DES

JUDENTUMS uses terms such as “the State,” “Europe,” and “humanity” almost interchangeably, as though willing the realities of Restoration Prussia to harmonize with the cosmopolitan ideal the young scholars championed, and saw exemplified above all in the practice of pure science itself. In his first presidential address to the VEREIN of 28 October, 1821 Eduard Gans makes distinctly Hegelian linkages between the VEREIN’s pursuit of WISSENSCHAFT, its character as a quasi-family and ethical community, and its mediatory function vis-à-vis the State. Moreover, in his second, 1822 address, Gans remains confident of the VEREIN’s position in the vanguard of the triumphalist march of Hegelian reason. With considerable bravado, Gans hews closely to Hegel’s famous dictum that “what is rational is actual; what is actual is rational” and eagerly assumes responsibility for eventual failure (for world history is by definition always right). By the occasion of Gans’s third and final presidential address, however, the VEREIN’s “improbable” failure has become manifest. Whereas Gans had earlier aligned himself and his colleagues with the supra-subjective agency of world history, now a rift between Gans’s much more problematic ‘I’ and the grand logic of historical Reason threatens to impose itself. If in the preface to his epochal “On Rabbinic Literature” of 1818 Leopold Zunz had sought to retreat into the pure objectivity of WISSENSCHAFT, Gans finds himself in 1823 in the more difficult predicament of trying to coincide with the ineluctable necessity of rational historical process while somehow still rendering an account of the VEREIN’s historical failure. I examine the convoluted but ingenious enunciatory strategies Gans deploys as he tries, however tenuously, to sustain the appearance that the VEREIN’s mission has not “really” been compromised and that its ideal of secular WISSENSCHAFT will still find its analogue in a political universalism that would have a place for **David J. Biale (University of California, Davis)**

#### **Moses Hess and the Gender Politics of an Ambivalent Jewish**

Moses Hess was a marginal figure in his own time and was only recuperated in the twentieth century as a precursor to political Zionism. Rejecting both the orthodoxy and reform of his own day, he searched for a new Jewish identity constructed significantly on the maternal role of women. From this non-religious identity based on the family, Hess moved to a quasi-racial definition of the Jews that anticipated certain trends in twentieth-century nationalist and anti-nationalist Jewish thought. And, finally, this definition led him to a radical reinterpretation of Baruch Spinoza, whom he identified as the founder of a modern, secular Jewish identity.

#### **Ofer Nur (UCLA/The Hebrew University of Jerusalem University)**

#### **The Death of God, Aesthetics of Anarchism, and the Tragic Vision of the World in the Early Hashomer Hatzair Youth Movement**

In my paper I elaborate on the various meanings that make up the TRAGIC MAN of Hashomer Hatzair immediately after world War I and in the early 1920s. The first characteristic of the tragic condition is an acute sense of being alone in the world, forsaken by a god who is no longer there, or who no longer

cares. In its early years, the movement adopted Friedrich Nietzsche's teachings and imagined radical implications. The movement's members were particularly impressed by Nietzsche's book BIRTH OF TRAGEDY as well as with the seductive proclamation that God was dead. Coming out of the crisis of World War I, the movement's members adopted a fantasy of human existence which incorporated the absence of God and the human condition of having been abandoned and forsaken. In my paper I discuss the wider intellectual orbit and the language in which this approach to life was expressed.

**Azzan Yadin (Rutgers University)**

### **Semantic Transvaluation and Secularization in Israeli Hebrew**

Under the force of Zionist and modernist Hebraist ideologies, a concerted effort was made to establish Hebrew as the national language of the Jewish population in Palestine, and one of the tools used in this enterprise was the secularization of pre-modern (usually biblical or rabbinic) Hebrew words. And while the phenomenon of semantic secularization is well known, one aspect that has not been properly addressed is the tension inherent in the return to an ancient language--especially one so closely associated with religious study and liturgy--and the explicitly modern and secularist ideological commitments of the appropriators. The presentation argues that this tension finds expression in a series of words whose new meaning is not only secular, but entails a rejection or transvaluation of the traditional religious meaning. For example, the mishnaic /belorit/ refers to a coiffure that marks idolaters and is prohibited to Jews; in modern Hebrew it is the outstanding mark of the "mythical" Sabra. Other examples are /semel/, which is an idolatrous statue in the Bible, but (in part due to its phonetic similarity) becomes the Romantic "symbol"; /tahtonim/, a theological term referring to the immanent presence of the divinity in the lower regions of the world, becomes "underpants." These and other examples demonstrate the need of some modern Hebrew innovators to at once adopt classical Hebrew terms, while distancing themselves--sometimes violently--from the religious or traditional meanings they once bore.

### **Session Number: 3.10**

#### **Session Editorial Activism and the Shaping of Rabbinic Traditions**

#### **Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Jonathan Schofer (Harvard Divinity School)**

**Yaakov Elman (Yeshiva University)**

#### **A Tale of Two Cities: Mahoza and Pumbedita--Cosmopolitanism, Heresy, and Urban Halakhah**

A Tale of Two Cities: Mahoza and Pumbedita, Cosmopolitanism, Heresy and Urban Halakha Yaakov Elman Yeshiva University Mahoza, located directly across the Tigris from Ctesiphon, the Persian capital, was the home of a Jewish community thoroughly at home with its cosmopolitan environment, with Zoroastrians, Manichaeans, various sects of Christians, and even Buddhists and Hindus--all coexisting but competing and debating. Elsewhere I have

shown some of the theological consequences of this environment. Here I wish to trace some of the halakhic consequences in the word of several generations of Mahozans and Pumbeditan amoraim, in particular Rava, R. Nahman and R. Papa on the one side, and Rabbah, R. Yosef, Abaye on the other. Two or three (depending on time constraints) issues will be discussed. One is the Mahozan tendency to analyze some halakhic disputes as relating to the issue of the extent of rabbinic authority vis-à-vis that of biblical legislation.

R. Nahman seems to have introduced the concept that when the rabbinic made ordinances, they gave them a force as great, or greater than, that of biblical legislation (see B.M. 55b); this seems to be the halakhic analogue of Rava's theological statement regarding the greater severity attendant upon violating *divrei Soferim* than *divrei Torah* (Eruv 21b). Another instance concerns the differing attitudes to non-rabbis and non-Jews as reflected in the differing reactions by Abaye and Rava to a problem presented in Eruv 63b-64a, along with an inner-Pumbeditan discussion in Eruv 68a, which indicates the more insular lifestyle of Pumbeditan rabbis. Finally, as an illustration of the more nuanced view of the Mahozans to those deviating from rabbinically ordained lifestyles in regard to the validity of the testimony of a *mumar le-hakh'is*. On the basis of these, and many other examples, it seems that Mahozan rabbis were far more open to non-rabbis than their Pumbeditan counterparts, who were faced with a more severe "town versus gown" problem.

**Aaron Amit (Bar-Ilan University)**

### **The Staged Redaction of Palestinian Material in Bavli Sanhedrin 26a: Historical and Philological Implications**

In this lecture, I will demonstrate how the Bavli took an assortment of Palestinian traditions and in the process of transmission created a coherent, but problematic, story about Reish Lakish. The editors of the Bavli addressed the problems in the inherited tradition by means of interpretation, rather than correction. Since one of the main questions raised in the Bavli is the order in which the events recorded took place, this is an ideal case for examining the underlying tension between editorial reverence and editorial activism. In this case, the editors showed remarkable respect for the received tradition, refusing to make a simple change in the order in which the material is presented. The historical and philological repercussions of this phenomenon

**W. David Nelson (Texas Christian University)**

### **Mnemonics and Signification in Midrashic Proof-texting**

Recent decades have seen considerable scholarly attention focused on the mutual influence and interconnectedness of a wide range of issues pertaining to both the function and nature of rabbinic literature, including: rabbinic textuality; the relationship between the written and spoken word in the formation and transmission of rabbinic tradition; methods of rabbinic learning; and, the embodiment of learned tradition in the realm of early rabbinic discipleship. In light of these recent scholarly advances, many traditional conceptualizations and understandings of the literary forms, structures and characteristics of rabbinic literature are being reconsidered. A reexamination of the role and function of the proof-text in early rabbinic biblical interpretation

is now required, in order to understand better and anew both its multi-faceted dynamic as a literary device and the complexities and range of its hermeneutical function within the oral-performative culture of early rabbinic tradition. This paper will introduce and survey both the value and potential that a reexamination such as this holds, by exploring the dual mnemonic role played by the proof-text in the ongoing transmission and reformation of early rabbinic biblical interpretation. Through a survey of the reutilization, reapplication and recontextualization of biblical verses as proof-texts in various strata of midrashic texts, this paper will argue that proof-text employment provided an overarching mnemonic structure necessary for the oral-performative engagement of midrashic tradition. Additionally, this paper will explore the mnemonic function of the proof-text as both a signifier and latent repository of unarticulated and associative midrashic meaning.

**Herbert Basser (Queen's University)**

### **The Mechanics of Messia Leih (i.e., Support) in Both Talmuds**

Danny Boyarin and myself debated the function of midrashic proof texts in JQR 1991. I claimed the literal reading of the proof-text provided confirmation of what an involved exegesis had creatively posited albeit with no explicit authority, to explain the base verse at hand. Boyarin saw the proof-scripture as creatively related, interactive and responsible in whole or part for the mutual exegesis of the base and proof verses. Similar issues arise for talmudic MESSIA LEIH. On the one hand, the interactive view is highly suggestive. Pnei Moshe comments yBer 2:3 "MESSIA LERAV" that Rav learned his position from our Mishna (Ber 2:2). A related SUGYA (bBer. 14b) reads "RAV... SEVIRA LEIH (maintains the law) is like [mBer. 2:2]. In other words, MESSIA signals an authoritative, existing text which is exposed as the source responsible for an Amora's brief statement of law. The source and the Amora's (almost always palestinian in both Talmuds) dictum seem to be unified through the mechanics of MESSIA. On the other hand, we find MESSIA in contexts that seem to merely confirm an Amora's words both by Scripture and Mishna, suggesting that the Amora for whatever reason said what he said. Both Scripture and Mishna favor his statement of law although neither is likely his source. It can be shown that Rashi and his school framed the usage of MESSIA in this light. Sometimes BAVLI shows that a Mishna can bear some interpretation other than the one that would support the Amora's law and in this case it is claimed the usage of MESSIA is unwarranted. Thus, although the Mishna could still have served as his source, since it can not unequivocally confirm his law, MESSIA is discarded as an option. MESSIA seems then to be confirmative and not generative. The paper will illustrate the key issues concerning MESSIA (over 200 in BAVLI and over 140 in YERUSHALMI with virtually no overlap) and attempt to solve them by considering the example of bKetubot 54b.

**Session Number: 3.11**

**Session        The Settlers Community and the Disengagement Plan**

**Session**

In August 2005, Israel evacuated the Jewish settlements in Gaza Strip - mainly

in Gush Katif - as well as four settlements in northern Samaria. This action, known as the "Disengagement," constituted a profound crisis for a significant section of the Israeli population most closely identified with religious Zionism and with the settlement movement in the Territories. The crisis was not only on the national level, as the state dismantled communities that it had established and nurtured for decades, but also on the communal level, as thousands of people were evacuated and their homes destroyed. The Disengagement also stirred a religious crisis, testing the very foundation of the beliefs that had guided the political and religious behavior of this section of the population. The disengagement plan accelerated the tension between State and Religion. The fast and almost smooth way that the plan was implemented had shown to all that further withdrawals could be done. And indeed, a proposal to evacuate further settlements is being proposed by the winning party of the Israeli elections- Kadima headed by Ehud Olmert. Therefore, the settlement movement Gush Emunim is facing one of its crucial moments. This panel shall address several aspects concerning the settlers' reaction to the disengagement, and suggest a framework for understanding some of the processes the Israeli society is currently going through.

**Chair, Samuel M. Edelman (University of Judaism)**

**Motti Inbari (University of Florida, Gainesville)**

**The Attitude of the Rabbinical Leadership of Gush Emunim toward the Disengagement**

The disengagement plan, as a result of which Israel demolished Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria, created a dramatic and profound religious dilemma. After the Six Day War (1967), an increasing number of religious Zionists saw the realization of Zionism as a manifestation of God's desire to redeem His people. This perception led thousands of religious Israelis to join the Gush Emunim settlement movement in the territories occupied in the war. However, the Israeli governments failed to act as expected and instead decided to return territory to Palestinian control, which was perceived as a violation of God's order. The peak of this process came with the disengagement. This process raised a difficult theological question regarding the proper approach toward a Jewish state that relinquishes territory and destroys settlements: What supreme religious significance could be attributed to these events? Was the State of Israel no longer to be considered a Divine tool for the redemption of the Jewish people?

In my lecture, I shall examine the internal mechanism applied by a group of religious Zionist rabbis in response to their profound disillusionment with the behavior of the state, reflected in an increase in religious radicalization due to the need to cope with the feelings of religious and messianic failure.

**Elisheva Rosman (Bar-Ilan University)**

**Empowering People? The Gaza Disengagement as a Test Case for the Mediating Function in the Gari'nim Program of Women's Midrashot**

Despite various religious prohibitions cited by those opposing compulsory military service for women, approximately 30 percent of female religious high-school graduates serve in IDF ranks, both as recruits and as officers.



Approximately 70 graduates per year choose to defer their service, spend a year in an institution of religious study (midrasha), after which they enlist together as a group called a 'garin' (nucleus). Before the actual implementation of the disengagement from Gaza, the media and public discourse focused on the pre-army programs for men; speculating whether these soldiers would disobey orders en masse or participate in the evacuation of settlements. No one considered that students from the women's programs would be charged with the task of bodily carrying protesters to buses. Surprisingly, it was female garin members -- more than male hesder, shiluv or mekhina students -- who found themselves faced with this dilemma. As a rule, female students did not disobey orders and were supported in most cases by the staff of their study program. The study programs also attempted to assist their students in a more concrete way, holding preparatory seminars before the disengagement and debriefing them after it. Interviews conducted immediately after the Gaza redeployment with female participants, clarified that most students felt their study programs helped them cope with a difficult situation. This did not necessarily influence the students' decision to ultimately obey orders. They all stressed that they made their own decision and that the midrasha's input was not the only factor they considered. But knowing their teachers' opinions did reassure them once they made their decision to obey orders. Interviewees also said they were aware that their teachers did not necessarily agree with the disengagement politically, but nevertheless attempted to support their students to the best of their ability. This paper will describe how generally the study program attempted to assist and support students during the disengagement and how students behaved during the occurrences of August 2005. It will also discuss how students viewed the situation and how they related to their respective midrashot in light of the

**Michael Feige (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)**

### **The Disengagement and the National Religious Camp: A Sociological Perspective**

Most of the active opposition to the disengagement plan came from the National Religious camp. Mobilizing all its resources, this camp regarded the plan as a key event in its relationship with the Israeli society in general. While it is doubtful whether the evacuation will register as a major Israeli trauma, it is signaled as a defining moment in the complex history of nationalism and religion in Israel. This paper examines the events of August 2005 from a sociological viewpoint, using a comparison to the April 1982 events - namely the evacuation of the Yamit region -- to reach insights on the social and political processes involved. Such a perspective reveals a change in the Greater Israeli discourse and national symbolism, the rise of new social forces, and the deployment of new strategies vis-à-vis the government and the army. Years of settling in the occupied territories created new groups and interests, all highlighted in the struggle over Gush Katif. With the destruction of the settlement region, the encounter moves to the realm of memory wars: the way in which the events will be constructed in Israeli memory will influence, maybe determine, how the National Religious camp will position itself with and against

the rest of Israeli society.

**Rebecca Stein (Duke University)**

**Souvenirs of Conquest: The Israeli Occupation as Tourist Event**

Missing from most historical accounts of the 1967 war are the ways it functioned as a tourist event. The gradual easing or dissolution of borders between Israel and its newly occupied territories in 1967 generated numerous new possibilities for travel between territories that had been divided by militarized borders since 1948. This meant the sudden availability of the newly occupied territories as tourist sites, landscapes, and/or markets for Israeli Jews and Palestinians. To take 1967 seriously as a tourist event is not merely to interrogate the relationship between Israeliness and tourism, but to complicate the ways we understand this crucial moment in Israeli history – that is, the immediate aftermath of the war that established Israel as an occupying power in the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai and Golan Heights. To do so, I turn away from the issues that have traditionally animated historians of the war (notably, issues of postwar diplomacy, and the Israeli government debate over the future of the occupied territories) and turn towards another set of issues regarding the popular, quotidian practice of Israelis (particularly Israeli Jews) as they encountered and explored the occupied territories and peoples in the days immediately following the cessation of violence in June, 1967. My suggestion is that this encounter took shape in and through tourism in crucial ways; more pointedly, that tourism was a (if not the) primary register by which Israeli civilians experienced and found value in the occupation -- its territories, peoples, vistas, and markets. Such a line of questioning helps us reanimate the traditional historical questions about occupation, territorialism, settler expansion, et al. I will argue that the mass tourist phenomenon of 1967 was crucial in laying the groundwork for the subsequent state investment in the occupation. Using the tools of postcolonial discourse analysis, this paper is based on a close reading of the Hebrew press from the weeks after the cessation of violence in 1967. As such, it is also a meditation on the utility, and the limits, of postcolonial theory for making sense of Israeli colonial-

***Session Number: 3.12***

***Session***        **The Transformation of Jewish Life in Nineteenth-Century Europe**

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Hava Tirosh Samuelson (Arizona State University)**

**Daniel B. Schwartz (Columbia University)**

**Rethinking the Haskalah: Spinoza as a Middleman between Jewish Enlightenment and Jewish Mysticism**

The Kabbalah is conventionally depicted as a favorite whipping boy of the Haskalah. Heinrich Graetz, the renowned nineteenth-century historian, helped fuel this perception with his unremitting vitriol toward the Zohar and anything smacking of mystical enthusiasm in the Jewish past. Gershom Scholem and his acolytes—for all their sweeping revision of Graetz’s approach to Jewish

mysticism—nevertheless echoed him in regarding the Jewish Enlightenment as near unanimous in its opposition to the Kabbalah. A more positive appraisal of the Kabbalah in secular Jewish culture was held to have emerged only around the fin-de-siècle, as part of an ideological revolt against the Haskalah inspired by Zionism and Neo-Romanticism. In this paper, I argue that the rehabilitation of Spinoza in the Jewish Enlightenment provides striking evidence, until now mostly overlooked, of greater nuance and variety in Haskalah attitudes to Jewish mysticism. As part of their effort to “kasher” Spinoza as a distinctively Jewish thinker, maskilim like Solomon Rubin (1823-1910), among others, tried to show that his pantheism derived from kabbalistic sources. This argument was hardly new to the Haskalah—claims that Spinoza’s metaphysics had a kabbalistic provenance dated back to his early reception—yet the reverberation of this thesis in the Jewish Enlightenment was significant, not least as a measure of maskilic self-image and historical consciousness. By situating Spinoza in a chain of tradition composed largely of mystical and esoteric literature, the maskilim not only signaled a change in Jewish attitudes toward the notorious heretic; they also indirectly evinced a more affirmative view of the Kabbalah. The Jewish mystical tradition—rather than serving as a simple foil to rational enlightenment—functioned in this appropriation as a “usable past,” an alternative path to Haskalah and Jewish modernity via Spinoza as middleman. The reception of Spinoza, in other words, may point toward a new model for understanding the history of the reception of the Kabbalah in modern Jewish culture.

**Marcin Wodzinski (Wroclaw University)**

### **The Socio-Economic Profile of Hasidism Reconsidered**

Since the beginning of the historiography of Hasidism the issue of the social profile of the movement belonged to the central and most debated problems. For traditional historians starting with Simon Dubnow, Benzion Dinur and Raphael Mahler, the social background was to explain both the doctrinal shape and the attractiveness of the movement. By implication, it was to answer the single most central question of the historiography of the movement: What made Hasidism so successful, which mechanism allowed for such a successful conquest of East European Jewry? However, recent research has undermined the old thesis about Hasidism as a folk movement of oppressed masses. Notions of relatively wide support for Hasidism among wealthy merchants and emerging bourgeoisies indicate that Hasidism might have been attractive to a wide range of social groups. This, reasonably, casts doubt on the direct and necessary connection between social profile and religious teaching of the movement. As a result, in recent years the problem of the social profile ceased to be one of the central subjects in the studies of Hasidism. In my paper I will show potential of revisiting this issue with new sources and new methodologies. I will confront well known anecdotal materials, mainly of maskilic origin, with much broader archival sources from the Congress Poland in the first half of the nineteenth century. These are both rich sources of anecdotal character (anti-Hasidic denunciations by the kahal elders, official reports on the Hasidic conflicts in the communities, etc.) and, most importantly,

the prosopographic materials, which allowed for the analysis of four Jewish communities in central Poland: Wloclawek, Czestochowa, Aleksandrow (Alexander), and Plock. The quantitative analysis of various tax lists paid in the communities by both Hasidim and non-Hasidim provides a unique picture of the professional and financial profile of the Hasidic groups in these localities (as confronted with the picture of the entire community) and, by implication of the whole Hasidic movement in the nineteenth-century Poland.

**Eliyana R. Adler (University of Maryland)**

### **Making Russian Jews: The Surprising Story of Jewish Students in Russian Gymnasia**

Late Imperial Russia witnessed an enormous upsurge in the number of Jews attending Russian schools. This was concrete evidence of the success of efforts toward greater Jewish acculturation on the part of both the government and certain progressive forces within Russian Jewish society. It also presented a host of new challenges. Foremost among these was religious education. In the Russian educational system, religion and nationality were intimately linked and the study of religion was mandatory. How then to deal with the influx of Jewish students? How could they be encouraged to adopt Russian nationality without the trappings of Russian Orthodoxy? How could the Jewish religion be adapted to serve similar purposes? Russian schools and Jewish educators dealt with these crucial issues of identity, nationality, and religion in a largely ad hoc manner. No ruling or law appeared to guide their actions. Instead, Russian high schools introduced Jewish religion classes and Jewish educators struggled to create appropriate textbooks and curricula.

Although the phenomenon of Jewish attendance at Russian schools is well documented, the challenges presented by religious education have never been explored. This paper will look to document the spread of Jewish religion classes in Russian high schools as well as to examine its more qualitative aspects. It is part of a larger project and draws upon faculty listings and fee scales from Russian high schools, memoirs, and textbooks. Recent scholarship on Russian Jewry, especially that of Benjamin Nathans and Eugene Avrutin, has shown that the level of acculturation of Russian Jews was significantly higher than previously thought. Russian Jews did not exist in isolation but took part in Russian culture and society. Education made this growing integration possible and this paper seeks to contribute to the wider conversation about the position of Jews in Russian society as well as about Jewish education in the modern world.

**David E. Fishman (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

### **The Attitude of the Bund in Russia toward the Jewish Religion: A Reconsideration**

Conventional wisdom has it that the Russian Bund (1897-1917) was virulently anti-religious. This paper will attempt to bring nuance and complexity to this generalization. The Bund did not engage in direct anti-religious propaganda. It believed that making Jewish workers politically and economically conscious was its primary objective, and that Jewish workers would eventually leave religion behind voluntarily, without direct propaganda,

once they became class-conscious. The Bund struggled against the rabbis' political and social views, but not against their religious functions per se. In fact, Bundists often accepted the religious realities of East European Jewish life and accommodated them, even in their own personal lives. As Bundists became more involved in Jewish cultural and educational affairs, after 1905, they were faced with the conundrum of discriminating between Jewish national culture (which they wished to perpetuate) and the Jewish religion (which they did not). Some Bundists considered the Sabbath and festivals to be Jewish national holidays, and saw the legends in the Bible and Agadah as part of the Jewish literary legacy, which should be taught in modern Yiddish schools. All of these issues converged in 1910, when the Bund fought against passage of a law in the Russian Duma requiring commercial rest on Sundays. The Bund argued that Saturday was the Jewish national day of rest, and that equality for the Jewish national minority demanded that commercial enterprises be allowed to choose whether to close on Fridays, Saturdays or Sundays. In sum, the anti-religiosity of the Bund in Russia was actually much less intense than that of Jewish radicals in other contexts, such as anarchists in late 19th century America, and the Yevseksia in the Soviet Union.

**Session Number: 3.13**

**Session Jewish Identity in Latin America: The Role of Literature, Ritual, and Anti-Semitism**

**Session**

Jewish identity in Latin America is structured by issues as diverse as anti-Semitism, traditional rituals, mysticism, and Spanish heritage along with the particular influences of the larger society. The panel explores this diversity of issues about Jewish identity and being the Other in Latin America. Each of the factors addressed have been traditionally important in Jewish communities in a Spanish setting. Anti-Semitism is known because of the Inquisition, and in part Jews responded to this negative pressure by emphasizing the mystical qualities of Jewish experience in ritual, literature, and music, as shown in the following cases. Nora Strejilevich analyzes how anti-Semitism in Argentina affects Jews and shapes Jewish identity with special attention to the events of the Dirty War in the last dictatorship. She looks at features of the local community and how it dealt with the problem. Javier Pelacoff also looks at the Jewish community in Argentina, focusing on the observance of Yom Kippur in Buenos Aires and how it serves as an identity marker. He analyzes the sense of shame, acts of contrition, and appeals to identity as rituals of re-confirming identity. He proposes that the manner of observation is an indication of social change, the "citification" of the person as opposed to "traditionalism". Ariana Huberman addresses the strange and the supernatural in Judaism as it is expressed in the work of Alexandro Jodorowsky, a Chilean author of Jewish descent. She suggests that his work thrives at the intersection of national, religious, and historical interests that look at difference in a new light. Vanessa Paloma explores the role of the Sephardic Romancero and Jewish identity in Latin America. The Sephardic Romancero is found in the Muslim world and

Europe, and remnants of it are found in the texts, melodies, and titles of the contemporary Latin American Romancero. She explores this evidence of Sephardic influence, which may be the only remnant of early Jewish heritage in Latin America.

**Chair, Ron Duncan-Hart (Institute for Tolerance Studies)**

**Nora Strejilevich (San Diego State University)**

**Anti-Semitism and Jewish Identity in Argentina**

Anti-Semitism is not a transparent problem, and thus, it cannot be studied as a simple and univocal confrontation against Jews. Rather, in discussing it, we must address Jewish identity. Israel has become a country of many cultures, and we must, therefore, recognize that there are several Jewish identities. Just as one clear-cut Jewish identity does not exist, neither does clear-cut anti-Semitism. This paper deals with Argentinean Jewish identity and anti-Semitism. We will identify groups and features within the Jewish spectrum which interact and even conflate, and ways in which anti-Semitism manifests itself not only against Jews but also shaping Jewish identity. We will focus on the period of the last dictatorship (1976-1983) and the issue of the disappeared, questioning the ways in which the problem was dealt with by the local community vis a vis the criteria that American Jewry was ready to apply in order for Jews to escape persecution.

**Javier Pelacoff (Universidad de Buenos Aires)**

**Ritual and Collective Identity in the Jewish Community of Buenos Aires**

This paper will define observations about the ways of belonging to the Jewish community based on ethnographic observations made during Yom Kippur in various synagogues in Buenos Aires. Even though the High Holidays take on a festive atmosphere, both religious and secular, because of being a holiday from work, school, and other social obligations, it an important identity marker for Jews in the following terms: a) The established sense. Provoking a sense of shame through acts of contrition, both private (fasting, homage to those who have died, denying unnecessary luxuries, and sexual abstinence) and public (not working, no buying, selling or recreation). b) Appeals to identity. This leads to collective performances, both liturgical and non-liturgical, to a sense of belonging to the group. These two questions lead to: c) Putting aside the dispute about the nature of the collective between the different sectors of the community in favor of share traditional definitions. d) Point out the tensions and paradoxes that undermine to some degree the connections between the various factions in the community. Based on this information, it will be possible to discuss the issues of behavioral transformation of the community between "citification" and "traditionalism".

**Ariana Huberman (Alfred University)**

**That's Really Strange: Jewish Mysticism in Alejandro Jodorowsky's**

This paper addresses the complexities that tie the strange and the familiar in the context of the theoretical debates around identity construction. One of the most intriguing aspects of Alejandro Jodorowsky's work is how naturally he weaves the strange and the familiar in his writing, public performances and films. Jodorowsky's work is particularly invested in the strange and the

supernatural in connection to Judaism. Jewish mysticism, Cabala and Jewish popular beliefs are some of the most predominant sources of the supernatural in his work. But his fascination with the strange and the supernatural in Judaism is controversial because his body of work is very popular among non-Jews. Since Jewish tradition has been historically perceived as Other, Jodorowsky's approach raises concern. Alejandro Jodorowsky is a Chilean author of Jewish descent who lives in France and has never really been part of a Jewish community. So, is he falling on the trappings of an outsider looking in? In light of that question I will address Jodorowsky's treatment of the strange and the supernatural in Judaism vis à vis the concept of exoticism. Exoticism is a loaded term because it has historically established unequal hierarchies between the observer and the observed and yet, it also addresses a celebration of difference. So, does the fact that Jewish mysticism appears next to Mexican witchcraft and chamanism, Tarot and popular Christian beliefs represent an "exotic" rendering of this aspect of Judaism in his work? What is the nature of this exotic perspective? The strange and the supernatural in Jodorowsky's work thrive at the border of national, religious and historical boundaries and brings new light to the question of difference.

**Vanessa Paloma (Flor de Serena)**

### **Kantos Sefaradís: A Sephardic Imprint on the Contemporary Romancero in Latin America**

Spanish Romances that tell tales from Medieval European history are well known to have traveled as far as Turkey and Greece with the Expulsion of 1492. They have also appeared in the Americas as part of an oral culture that traveled with explorers and conquistadores. What I propose to explore in this paper is the connection between the Sephardic Romancero that has survived throughout the Spanish Diaspora in Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria and Morocco and the Latin American Romancero. Many of the explorers and pioneers that came to the "Nuevo Mundo" were of Spanish Jewish descent, some came as Crypto-Jews directly from Spain. Others came as Portuguese and Dutch, many were actually Jews from Spain who had come to these other countries after the Expulsion. There are examples of Romances that are found in the Sephardic Romancero and in the Romancero from countries such as Cuba, Chile and Colombia that are the same. Gerineldo, La Esposa fiel, and Don Gato are some examples of Romances found in both traditions. In some cases only the texts are similar, some melodies and texts are shared and in other cases only the title or general topic remained similar to the original. I am interested in exploring the significance of these Romances that are shared between the Mediterranean Sephardic tradition and the Americas. This could prove to be a type of cultural continuity that connected Crypto-Jewish communities to their heritage. As well as possibly being the only contemporary remains of a Jewish heritage after the total acculturation of five centuries.

**Session Number: 3.14**

**Session      What is Mishnah?**

**Session**

In the past few years there have been a significant number of new dissertations and books that deal with the Mishnah, or significant parts thereof, from new perspectives, as follows: Elizabeth Alexander, *TRANSMITTING MISHNAH: THE SHAPING INFLUENCE OF ORAL TRADITION* (forthcoming Cambridge University Press). Beth Berkowitz, *EXECUTION AND INVENTION: DEATH PENALTY DISCOURSE IN ANCIENT RABBINIC AND CHRISTIAN CULTURES* (Oxford University Press, 2006). Chaya Halberstam, "Rabbinic Responsibility for Evil: Evidence and Uncertainty" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2004). Judith Hauptman, *REREADING THE MISHNAH: A NEW APPROACH TO ANCIENT JEWISH TEXTS* (Mohr Siebeck, 2005). Ishay Rosen-Zvi, "The Ritual of the Suspected Adulteress (Sotah) in Tannaitic Literature: Textual and Theoretical Perspectives" (Ph.D. dissertation, Tel-Aviv University, 2004). Moshe Simon-Shoshan, "Halachah Lema`aseh: Narrative and Legal Discourse in the Mishnah" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2005). Avraham Walfish, "The Literary Method of Redaction in the Mishnah Based on Tractate Rosh Hashanah" (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 2001). A panel of three of these authors (Berkowitz, Halberstam, and Hauptman) will discuss one another's works in relation to the larger set of recent Mishnah studies, with particular attention to the methodologies employed in the critical study of the Mishnah, how these studies effect our understanding of the literary nature and rhetorical function of the Mishnah, its place within the broader corpus of rabbinic literature, and its contribution to our understanding of the history of ancient Judaism and Jewish law. Christine Hayes will chair the session and Steven Fraade will serve as respondent, before opening to broader discussion among the panelists and with the audience.

**Chair, Christine E. Hayes (Yale University)**

**Judith Hauptman (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Chaya Halberstam (Indiana University)**

**Beth A. Berkowitz (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Respondent, Steven D. Fraade (Yale University)**

***Session Number: 3.15***

***Session*      **Researching Jewish History and Culture: Roundtable****

***Session***

The task of "Researching Jewish History and Culture" requires knowledge of numerous languages, alphabets and national histories. In its rich and varied totality, the diaspora experience encompasses aspects that are often hard to combine in one research trip. The possibility of cross-referencing history has become much greater since the establishment of the Center for Jewish History.

The partner organizations at the Center for Jewish History - American Jewish Historical Society, American Sephardi Federation, Leo Baeck Institute, YIVO and Yeshiva University Museum - have installed a joint information management system to make available in one unified catalog all the books, documents, art works, photos, memoirs and three-dimensional objects in their



collections. For the first time, researchers are able to pursue distinct areas of Jewish studies in one reading room or on one website. Until now, these collections were scattered among different locations and the materials were organized in ways that offered no interorganizational compatibility. Now, new opportunities to investigate migration and cross-cultural influences between Eastern and Central Europe and the United States arise within one reference system, which also includes the attachment of digital objects such as images, texts and audio-visual materials. Representatives of the three major partner organizations, AJHS (American Jewish history), LBI (Central-European German-speaking history) and YIVO (Eastern European Yiddish-speaking history) will present and discuss the new prospects for researchers and their fields of study.

**Chair, Frank Mecklenburg (Leo Baeck Institute)**

**Ari Y. Kelman (University of Pennsylvania/National Museum of American Jewish History)**

**Carl J. Rheins (YIVO Institute for Jewish Research)**

## **Abstracts for Session 4**

**Sunday, December, 17, 2006 04:15 PM-06:15 PM**

### ***Session Number: 4.1***

#### **Session Jewish Denominations in a Post-denominational World**

##### ***Session***

Scholars of religion in the United States have argued that a major shift has occurred in the religious landscape: the declining salience of denominations. The “mainstream” denominations that were the most “popular” at the dawn of the post war period have lost adherents, and loyalty to traditional denominations has fallen off as more Americans switch their denominations during the course of their lives. ? New formulations of religious life are often trans-denominational or exist apart from traditional denominational structures like seminaries and large institutional frameworks.? Cognizant of this important analysis, this roundtable explores the nature and consequences of denominational Judaism in the 21st Century. What is the cultural and religious work being done by denominations that differs from other Jewish social formations? Does theology emerge from denominations in a way that it does not in trans-denominationalism? Do social justice work and other political positions look different in denomination? Does identity, commitment, or practice – the “lived religion” of American Jews -- look different across these forms of religious life? What is the difference between congregational ?life in denominational and non-denominational ways of organizing ?religious life?

How do we relate denominational identification to other social processes at work in the larger society? How have shifts within American Judaism-- growth in Reform, vitality in Orthodoxy, and the loss of membership in Conservative Judaism--reflected these changes? How are Jewish patterns different from and parallel to Protestant and Catholic patterns? How do the critical components of American Judaism that have typically included identity, family,

and cultural uniqueness shape these changes in the landscape of American Judaism?? The participants will also speculate on the ways these issues might well unfold in the 21st century. We see the discussion as an opportunity to reflect as scholars, and for some of our participants as leaders, on the meaning of denominationalism in American Jewish life.

**Chair, Isa Aron (HUC-JIR)**

**Steven Martin Cohen (HUC-JIR)**

**Arnold M. Eisen (Stanford University)**

**David H. Ellenson (HUC-JIR)**

**Donald Miller (University of Southern California)**

**Riv-Ellen Prell (University of Minnesota)**

**Jack Wertheimer (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

***Session Number: 4.2***

***Session*      **Materializing Memory****

***Session***

Focusing on four material sites-- Bergen-Belsen Chevra Kadisha Book, Eisenman's Holocaust memorial in Berlin, "Holocaust Torahs" in American synagogues, and a Lower East Side synagogue building--this panel explores the materialization of memory. The Bergen-Belsen Chevra Kadisha Book, created in 1945 and unknown beyond the Bobover community for sixty years, is the only extant list to link names to the mass graves in Bergen-Belsen. How has its discovery in the last two years opened an unclaimed space between witnessing, ritualizing, and recording, and returned the possibility of the memorial experience to the name in a context (Bergen-Belsen) where all that remains are the mass graves themselves. In contrast, the Eisenman memorial, the first national monument to the Holocaust in Germany, is neither on a site of murder nor on a site of genocidal power, while very much anchored in the historical center of Berlin. What are the consequences, both intended and unintended, of a memorial that is, by design, high on affect, but low on information, and focused on the present rather than the past? Like the Bergen-Belsen Chevra Kadisha Book, rescued Torah scrolls are material witnesses to the genocide. Such objects come to have the qualities of persons, whether by virtue of naming them and locating their remains or as proxies for them. What kinds of objects are they and what kinds of protocols are required for them? Like the book and the scroll, which outlasted those they have come to commemorate, a Lower East Side synagogue building houses a new congregation, virtually none of them descendants of the original membership. They now constitute "Anschei Brzezan;" that is, they have become fictive Berzhaner LANDSLAYT. How did the building itself become the container of a sort of APPELLATION D'ORIGINE NON CONTROLÉE, and how do the new members draw on "their" Berzhaner heritage in trying to achieve, in the shadow of memory lost, a provisional collective identity of their own? As a whole, this panel explores the role of materialized memory in the present. In

light of a tradition of Jewish ethnography that has been characterized as “mournful nostalgia,” what is the role of such materializations, whether directly connected to the Holocaust or operating in the long shadow cast by it, in the life of established as well as emergent communities?

**Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (New York University)**

**Chair, Jeffrey Feldman (The City College of New York, CUNY)**

**Henri Lustiger Thaler (The Bergen-Belsen Memorial Museum)**

**Witnessing, Ritualizing, and Recording: The Bergen-Belsen Chevra Kadisha Book**

As the British Army approached the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp on the morning April 15th 1945, the SS was destroying evidence and records. Documents on the death marches and transports to Bergen-Belsen that were found in camps after Liberation were of limited value in reconstructing victim lists because countless Bergen-Belsen inmates perished whilst on marches and during rail transit. Right after the war, the British compiled the first verifiable list of Displaced Persons. After the war, a local German farmer gathered 2,000 names of former inmates. This list came to the Bergen-Belsen Memorial in 1965, after his death. In 1990, the Bergen-Belsen Memorial initiated a “names project.” By 2005, the Memorial had gathered 45,000 names (an estimated 80,000 inmates either passed through or perished at Bergen-Belsen). This incomplete record mirrors the quiescence of the Camp’s physical landscape. The Camp’s former grounds are known only through aerial photographs. No identifiable buildings are left. The site is strewn with mass graves. This paper focuses on the recent discovery of the Bergen-Belsen Chevra Kadisha Book, the only extant list to link names to mass graves. For 60 years, it has served as a Memorial Book for the Bobov community, with no outside knowledge of its existence. This unique document was created by Chanina W. a Hasid from Bobov, Poland. On April 26th 1945, he gathered together twelve DPs to form a Chevra Kadisha and bury the Jews of Bergen-Belsen. They also buried non-Jews. Chanina W. recorded the religion, country of origin, birth date, date of death, age and mass grave number for each of 1600 inmates, marking the Jewish ones with a Magen David. Chanina W. left the DP Camp in 1947, taking the Book with him to Borough Park, Brooklyn. The removal of the Book, and its recent reappearance, opens an unclaimed space between witnessing, ritualizing and recording. It reasserts the place of the witness, in that the physicality of absence that permeates Bergen-Belsen has been separated from the experience of the event. The Bergen-Belsen Chevra Kadisha Book exemplifies what Jacques Derrida called the “logic of the supplement” in that it returns the possibility of the memorial experience to the name.

**Brigitte Sion (New York University)**

**Affective Memory, Ineffective Functionality: Experiencing Berlin’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe**

The MEMORIAL TO THE MURDERED JEWS OF EUROPE, unveiled in the center of Berlin in May 2005, is the first national monument to the Holocaust erected in Germany with the political and financial support of the Federal

State. A gigantic field of 8,711 rectangular stelae of different heights, the memorial is designed as a grid. Entering it, visitors wander, get lost, and experience a sense of uneasiness and oppression. The memorial is about feeling, not thinking; about today, not yesterday. As architect Peter Eisenman argues, "We can only know the past through its manifestation in the present." The novelty of this memorial resides in part in its location: it is neither on a site of murder nor on a site of genocidal power, while very much anchored in the historical center of Berlin. Its abstract but symbolic design challenges such Holocaust paradigms as the difficulty of remembering in the absence of remains, the limits of representation, the imperative to record and transmit the precise history of the genocide, and the tension between remembering Jewish victims versus remembering all the victims. The success of this memorial depends on engaging visitors in an experience of habitual traumatic memory through the mediation of their full active body. Felt memory in this case occurs through movement, sound, smell, temperature, touch and breath, rather than through sight and cognition. At the same time, this memorial as a public and social place invites various performances and caters to multiple audiences, but also opens it up to unauthorized and inappropriate activities that are at odds with its central purpose of Holocaust remembrance. This paper examines the performance of affective memory in relation to these and other issues, including site-specificity, architectural expressions of absence, and embodied memorial practices. Particular attention will be given to the phenomena of secular, religious and spontaneous rituals, celebrity architecture, and thanotourism. I will argue that by trying to do too many things, but without making its protocols clear, this memorial fails to perform memory as effectively as it might.

**Vanessa Ochs (University of Virginia)**

### **The Enshrined, Restituted Holocaust Torah in American Synagogues: Sacred Object or Relic?**

Nearly every faith has rituals of purification or reconsecration that restore holiness to sacred objects that have been desecrated or compromised. This paper analyzes a contemporary American Jewish congregational practice of this kind. Some synagogues are "rescuing" or "adopting" Torah scrolls pillaged from communities annihilated in the Holocaust and constructing a mode of display (often a glass display box) that is intended to honor this object. While many of these scrolls are beyond repair and therefore cannot be used in the ritual Torah reading, they are subject to ritualized rescue and ceremonies of rededication through which they are endowed with a distinctive holy status and designated "Holocaust Torahs." Though inanimate, these objects possess the quality of persons and become proxies for those who perished. Synagogues that house these Torahs become distinctly local Holocaust memorial on a small scale; they recall the destruction of European Jewry and commit their congregations to remember. New rituals and ritual objects raise various concerns, first and foremost, what happens to a sacred object when it is torn from its original context and put to new uses. In this paper I will explore the ritualized reclaiming of Holocaust Torahs in American in light of Oren Baruch

Stier's observation that displacing an object linked to the Holocaust raises distinct ethical issues related to property, propriety, fetishization, mystification, and mythologization. How does the enshrined, rescued Torah function in the "religion" of Holocaust? When it is transformed into a tangible monument that sustains memory, is it still a Torah? What will be the sacred status of the Holocaust Torah once those who so passionately championed its "rescue" are no longer there?

**Jonathan Boyarin (University of Kansas)**

**"Don't Be Strange": Becoming Fictive Berzhaner, or, How the Building Makes the Landsman**

Much of Jewish ethnography over the last few decades depicts stubbornly persistent remnant communities. Barbara Myerhoff pioneered such work in *NUMBER OUR DAYS*. Jack Kugelmass continued and enriched this vein of research with *THE MIRACLE OF INTERVALE AVENUE*, his study of a synagogue in the devastated South Bronx. My own contribution to this subgenre of Jewish ethnography is *POLISH JEWS IN PARIS*. Bunzl, who criticized this kind of work (in *SYMPTOMS OF MODERNITY*) as "thoroughly dominated by the paradigm of mournful nostalgia," proposes a reorientation of Jewish ethnography toward the regeneration and reproduction of Jewish community in the risky conditions of late modernity, a reorientation that is no doubt timely and also pragmatic. Yet it would be wrong to erase the spectral figuration of the lost, since much of the Jewish work of post-immigrant and post-Holocaust generations centers on the difficult work of a "postal" restitution that can never be adequate or complete. This paper draws on my own earlier work on *LANDSMANSHAFTN*, East European Jewish immigrant societies; on Kugelmass's study of the anamnestic role a synagogue building may itself perform; and on Bunzl's call for an ethnography of emergent forms of Jewish community to draw a sketch of recent and dramatic changes in the membership of Chevra Bnai Joseph Anschei Brzezan, titleholder to a tenement synagogue on the Lower East Side's Stanton Street. That the building remained a functioning synagogue at all is largely due to the stubborn and unpaid efforts of one elderly, *HEYMISHER* rabbi. That it now has a newer and younger congregation is largely due to the dramatic resistance to the efforts of that rabbi's family to sell the synagogue building. After the ensuing legal battles, a new congregation, virtually none of them descendants of the original membership, constitute "Anschei Brzezan;" that is, they have become fictive Berzhaner *LANDSLAYT*. This paper will explore how the building itself became the container of a sort of *APPELLATION D'ORIGINE NON CONTROLÉE*, and how the new members draw on "their" Berzhaner heritage in trying to achieve, in the shadow of memory lost, a provisional collective identity of their own.

**Respondent, Oren Baruch Stier (Florida International University)**

***Session Number: 4.3***

***Session*      **New Approaches to Black Jewish Studies****

***Session***

Contemporary examinations of the relationship between African Americans and Jewish Americans demand the emergence of more critical studies of Black and Jewish symbioses in the American context. Our panel, "New Approaches to Black Jewish Studies," was developed in response to this need. For the panel, Walter Isaac, Janice Fernheimer and Andre Key will each present papers. Historian Jonathan Schorsch will be the respondent. Walter Isaac's paper will argue that the semiotics of race in previous approaches to Black Jewish studies identified "authentic" Jewish narratives with European ones, and he will explain how this authentication ossified post-bellum American Judaism's racial stratification. Janice Fernheimer's paper will be a case study examining the rhetorics of identity construction in Black Jewish life. Analyzing a speech by the leader of Hatzad Harishon, an organization designed to promote Black Jewish identification with mainstream Judaism, Ms. Fernheimer will invoke the challenges that Black Jewish rhetoric and experience pose to Kenneth Burke's theory of identification. Andre Key will present preliminary ethnographic research among Philadelphia's Black Jewish community. Given that Philadelphia has over fifteen different Black Jewish congregations and very little is known about them, Mr. Key will use multiple interviews and congregational visits to examine the social world of race in one of America's more prominent Jewish communities. In accordance with the recent emphasis on racial construction in Jewish cultural research, the "New Approaches to Black Jewish Studies" panel intends to examine the ways American Jewry has located itself within the fluid parameters of white racial assignment by not only sanctioning a European cultural genealogy, but also by erasing and/or obscuring the presence of various contemporary Judaisms found within African America.

**Chair, David H. Watt (Temple University)**

**Walter Isaac (Temple University)**

### **The Semiotics of Race in Black Jewish Studies**

The 20th century emergence of Black Jewish Studies remains a thorn in the side of scholarship that presents American Judaism as a racially integrated religious phenomenon. The fact that independent Black Jewish congregations, much like their Christian counterparts, continue to exist without the acknowledgement and/or support of dominant Jewish institutions suggests a complex and difficult historical context lay rooted in their establishment. For example, Black Hebrew communities provide us with one site of inquiry that pushes the discussion of race and Jewish identity to its margins. This is because the Black Hebrews not only believe they are Jews, but that White "Jewish" people who disparage them are not. How, one may ask, can this be? The present paper will seek to answer this question in two ways. First, it will survey the chief concepts of Jewish raciality that underlay studies of Black Jewish communities throughout the past century. It will show how previous approaches to Black Jewish Studies distinguished "acceptable" from "unacceptable" forms of Judaism by masking the social and historical context that made African American Judaism "unacceptable" in the first place. By making explicit how early studies of Black Jews identified "acceptable" Judaism

with “White” Judaism, the paper will exemplify the discursive formations of race in American Jewish encounters with Blackness. Second, the paper will use these discursive formations to describe the social world of race in present-day American Judaism. Although one could argue that Black Jews continue to be the victims of blatant racial discrimination, this paper contends that such a perspective is too generous. The truth is that since its inception, the Black Jewish Studies project all too consistently denied African American Judaism’s mere existence, and so any racial disparities encountered today are probably sustained less from interpersonal acts of discrimination and more from the ossification of racial segregation in American Jewish religious life. All of these dynamics reveal a great deal about the semiotics of race in both Black Jewish Studies and American Judaism at large. This paper will analyze these dynamics with a critical eye for more fruitful approaches to understanding

**Andre Key (Temple University)**

### **An Ethnographic Sketch of Philadelphia’s Black Jewish Community**

A young African American Jew visits the Museum of American Jewish History. Wearing a yarmulke, he calmly walks into the front door, but is abruptly greeted by museum personnel. “May I help you,” one woman asks. “Yes,” he responds. “I would like to see the museum.” “But this is a JEWISH museum,” she says in a dismissive fashion. “Everything in here is about Jews.” “Uhhh, I was aware of that,” he responds. Such experiences as our young man’s illustrate the everyday existence of America’s Black Jewish community. Rather than being presumed to be a part of a longstanding, multi-ethnic, multi-racial people’s history, Black Jews constantly encounter doubts and suspicions about their Jewishness and/or interest in Judaism. In an effort to understand the racial dynamics of this phenomenon better, the present paper will analyze preliminary ethnographic findings of research that stretch across the spectrum of Philadelphia’s Black Jewish community. Currently, there exist no less than fifteen Black Jewish congregations in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, and these communities of faith have rarely been tapped for any significant information about the racial polity of American Judaism. The goal of this paper will be twofold. First, it will examine the impact of race on the self-understandings of various Black Jewish persons and groups in Philadelphia. Second, on the basis of these understandings, it will attempt to describe the social world of race within Philadelphia’s Jewish community. The earlier segments of the paper will document recurrent themes and ideas encountered during the initial accumulation of data. Some themes discussed will include “Israelite” identity as opposed to “Jewish” identity, Israelite family lineages and Black Jewish encounters with anti-Semitism. Methodologically, the paper will draw its primary data from individual interviews and participant observation in Black Jewish liturgical contexts. The author hopes to demonstrate that by closely examining the lived reality of race in Philadelphia’s Black Jewish community, scholars may cultivate a greater understanding of the significant role that race still plays in 21st century American Judaism.

**Janice Fernheimer (University of Texas)**

### **You’re Jewish? Black Jewish Identity as a Challenge to Burkean Theory**

Hatzaad Harishon (H.H.) literally means “the first step” in Hebrew, and both its black Jewish and white Jewish members saw their organization’s existence and purpose as a first step toward developing a more inclusive, heterodox Jewish community based on the traditional Jewish concept of “Klal Yisrael,” or the unity of the Jewish people. Founded in 1964 by white, liberal Jews to improve interactions and relations among New York Jews of all colors, H.H. emphasized both “klal Yisrael” and identification with the modern nation-state of Israel to facilitate improved relations between the races. Their black Jewish leadership faced challenges from black communities for their Jewishness and from Jewish communities for their blackness. This paper will analyze an undelivered speech by James Benjamin, H.H.’s black Jewish executive director from 1970-1972, to illustrate the tensions and rhetorical challenges his subject position presented for the multiple audiences he addressed: mainstream (and mostly white) Jews, black Jews, and the greater African-American community. This paper employs Kenneth Burke’s theory of identification and consubstantiality to interpret Benjamin’s identity claims. Burke argues that identification, as part of the New Rhetoric, can ameliorate troubled group relations. One way to achieve “identification” is through what Burke calls consubstantiality—the process whereby two individuals or groups of people “join interests” or act in consonance because they share “common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, or attitudes” or at least perceive that they do (21). When consubstantiality works, individuals or groups are both “joined and separate,” forming a collective group, yet maintaining individual difference. Implicit in Burke’s claims are the assumptions that identification and consubstantiality are attainable, that once established they increase “unity” by facilitating interaction between subjects with different group identifications, and that theoretically they can be used to expand conceptions of individual and group identity. Yet Hatzaad Harishon’s short-lived success seems to belie these claims. This paper will illustrate how Black Jewish identities challenge not only Kenneth Burke’s claims but also conventional understandings of race, religion, and ethnicity in America and Israel.

**Respondent, Jonathan Schorsch (Columbia University)**

***Session Number: 4.4***

***Session***      **Is Ladino Dead Yet?**

***Session***

Deeply affected by the loss of most of its speakers during the Shoah, Ladino, or vernacular Judeo-Spanish, has been living its death sentence for quite a number of years. Recently, even without the organic community where it flourished as a living daily language, Ladino has been the language of choice for a series of literary works appearing in different parts of the world: in Latin America, US and Israel, to name a few, there are novels, poetry books and musical recordings all coming out in Ladino. This panel discusses some of this literature written in Judeo-Spanish or Ladino, with an eye to literary devices and intertextual dialogues. We pay special attention to contemporary poetic and literary production in Ladino, hoping not only to acknowledge the



renewed interest in the language but also to place the discussion of Ladino out of a context of Sephardic nostalgia. The panel includes Manuela Cimeli, who discusses the early 20th century Ladino novel, exploring its connections with European culture, in the process of modernization and Westernization of the Sephardic world; Rachel Amado Bortnick, who provides an overview of the state of Ladino today, with its new creative upsurge; Monique R. Balbuena, who focuses on two poets whose Ladino writings are conceived in the shadow of the Shoah, Franco-Serbian Clarisse Nicoïdski and Israeli Margalit Matitiahu; and Gloria Ascher, who delves into the multifaceted and prolific work of Israeli author Matilda Koén- Sarano. In their diversity of genres and breadth of scope, the four papers present multiple aspects of a literature and a language that have not yet been fully appreciated in scholarly venues, especially in the US.

**Chair, Norman A. Stillman (University of Oklahoma)**

**Monique R. Balbuena (University of Oregon)**

**The Mother Tongue in the Shadow of Destruction: A View of Two Poets**

After several books in Hebrew, Israeli poet Margalit Matitiahu starts writing in Ladino, a move prompted by a trip to Salonica, her parents' hometown, whose vibrant Jewish community was destroyed in the Shoah. Clarisse Nicoïdski, who writes novels in French and poems in Ladino, is also moved, in her poetry, by memories of her mother and of the war. In this paper I read some poems from Matitiahu's Kurtijo Kemado and Alegrika, and from Clarisse Nicoïdski's Lus Ojus, Las Manus, La Boca. I discuss the sexualized perceptions of Jewish languages, analyzing the gendering of languages within Jewish diglossia or multilingualism and its correlation with the shaping of Zionist nationalist discourse, which also relies on a gendering of Jewish history. If the case of Yiddish has been previously treated (Niger, Weinreich, Seidman), I offer the first analysis of Ladino/Djudezmo within this framework, integrating the Sephardic experience into the discussion of language choice and the construction of national identity. I also observe the connection between gender and genre, as many traditional Sephardic genres become identified with women, and, as a stretch, with the "mother," as the socio-linguistic conditions of the communities are gradually transformed. In addition, I discuss how the poets move across languages, negotiating their vernacular Jewish languages with their national languages, and how their conscious choices of languages and texts amount to calling into question a homogenized national identity.

**Manuela Cimeli (University of Basel, Switzerland)**

**The New Life "a la franca": Some Remarks about the Ladino Novel of the Early Twentieth Century**

During the first decades of the 20th century, the European influence became omnipresent in the Ladino literature. The intellectual Sephardi class, having been educated in the schools of the foreign European states, represented the modern generation. They spoke French and their behavior reflected entirely the Western culture. Many of them were involved with journalism and thus were responsible for the distribution of the Ladino novels which were firstly

published in the press. The novel established a direct connection to the modern European world. The texts reflect the sociological aspect of modernization and explain the significance of this concept for the Sephardi Jews of the early 20th century. It meant not only external distinguishing marks such as the French jacket or the use of the 'otomobil' –the changes were much more profound and influenced the entire social structure by raising topics such as the role of women, mixed marriages, or the problematic dilemmas connected with assimilation or integration in a non-Jewish environment. Using some original texts from the second decade of the 20th century, I would like to illustrate some characteristic examples of the trivial, entertaining and yet 'modern' Sephardi novel.

**Gloria J. Ascher (Tufts University)**

#### **A New Classical Literature in Ladino: The Works of Matilda Koén-**

An important aspect of the current intensified activity in the field of Judeo-Spanish (Ladino), the language and its various forms of cultural expression, has been the burst of literary production. In recent years, new poems, stories, plays, and at least one novel in Ladino have come from writers living in many parts of the Ladino-speaking world. Among these writers is the prominent Judeo-Spanish activist, storyteller, scholar – and poet, Matilda Koén-Sarano, who lives in Jerusalem. Impressive is the variety of Matilda Koén-Sarano's literary work. She is the author of five musical comedies (music mainly by Haim Tsur). Her collection *Ritmo Antiko: Poezías i kantigas kon Notas* (2005), includes, as the title suggests, not only a representative selection of her poems, but musical notations they inspired, thus becoming popular contemporary Judeo-Spanish songs. Her 478-page volume of personal stories, *Por el plazer de kontar – kuentos de mi vida*, is about to appear. Matilda Koén-Sarano excels in all of these genres: a poet of great sensitivity, perception, and style, she demonstrates fine dramatic talent, and is a master of the art of storytelling. Infused with the Judeo-Spanish tradition that is her heritage, her works often reflect and explore key aspects of that heritage and experience. But they are also products of our time – one poem is explicitly sent by fax. Most important: their significance transcends the confines of any specific cultural tradition. Like all great literature, the works of Matilda Koén-Sarano provide insight into essential aspects of the human experience, exemplifying what may be termed a new, contemporary classical literature in Ladino.

**Rachel Bortnick (Brookhaven College)**

#### **Ladino Today**

The demise of Ladino (also known as Judeo-Spanish) has been predicted and declared for at least fifty years. Yet today, the last generation of native Ladino speakers from around the world are actively engaged in using, teaching, researching, and promoting the language in an effort to keep it alive.

As a result, the last twenty years have witnessed an upsurge in literary and musical creativity, as well as in journalistic and book publication in Ladino. The Internet and the widespread use of the computer has aided in this grass-roots revitalization. Additionally, Sephardic studies programs in academic

institutions have increased, and these have brought to light many old Ladino texts written in the Hebrew scripts traditionally used in Ladino writing and publication. While musicologists continue to collect old Ladino songs, increasing numbers of musical artists record and perform these as well as newly created ones. My presentation will give an overview of the state of Ladino today, focusing on activities around the world which are revitalizing the language and spreading its knowledge.

**Session Number: 4.5**

**Session Teach Your Children Well: Assessing Pedagogy of Holocaust and Israel Studies**

**Session**

In his book *The Holocaust in American Life*, Peter Novick argues that the Holocaust has provided American Jewry with a vicarious identity of martyrdom and a continuing sense of insecurity through its identification with Israel. Though he deals a much with institutionalized forms Holocaust remembrance and Israel advocacy, he says little about the variety of "lessons" derived from the Holocaust that have been transmitted to American Jews in less formal ways. The papers presented for this panel will analyze three such sources that have shaped the perceptions of the Holocaust held by American Jews. Michael Berenbaum will examine the role of American survivors as moral teachers and mediators between the Holocaust and American Jews. Peter and Lee Haas will evaluate what American Jewish children's literature assigned in Jewish day schools teaches about the Holocaust. Finally, Lawrence Baron will explore the narrative devices employed in feature films about the grandchildren of Holocaust survivors which enable their protagonists to vicariously experience the ordeal their grandparents or great aunts and uncles endured.

**Chair, Alan L. Berger (Florida Atlantic University)**

**Peter J. Haas (Case Western Reserve University)**

**Thou Shalt Teach It to Thy Children: What American Jewish Children's Literature Teaches about the Holocaust**

By the time they reach high school, most American Jewish children know about the Holocaust primarily from children's book, whether fiction or non-fiction. In fact most Jewish religious and supplementary schools teach the Holocaust as part of the fifth grade curriculum. In this paper we examine the development of the genre of children's holocaust books from the 1980's when this literature first appeared. Our interest is to adduce what lessons and images about the Holocaust these books convey. We note two trends. The first is that over the last two decades such books are being written for younger and younger children, with some now aimed at the kindergarten level. The second is that while some of these texts teach about the Holocaust per se, others use the Holocaust as background to convey other Jewish values.

**Caryn Aviv (University of Denver)**

**Metaphorical, Virtual, and Real Borders: What Happens after Summer Conflict Resolution Programs for Youth End but the Occupation**

This paper explores the changing perspectives of young Israeli and Palestinian women who have participated in a feminist conflict resolution program based in the United States. Inspired in 1993 by the Oslo Peace Accords, the program brings adolescent girls together in the Rocky Mountains each summer to discuss competing historical and contemporary claims about land, nation-building, and peace-making. After the program, these young women return to their home communities with an explicitly feminist analysis of the conflict and communication tools for peace-making in their own communities. Participants pledge to maintain a connection to each other and the program itself. But how they manage to maintain (or not) relationships across virtual and real borders once the program ends is a difficult challenge. Upon their return home, some participants are accused of 'betraying the nation' by their peers for wanting to cross virtual and real borders. And in order to continue their friendships, they face the realities of occupation: difficult if not impossible border crossings, unequal access to resources and technologies, and the tensions of loyalty to one another versus loyalties to the nation. Using interview data and analysis of participants' online blogs, this paper explores three questions: (a) how do participants describe their experiences of the program and what they learned from it? (b) how do participants negotiate and maintain their newly established relationships with other participants online and in person, across national, religious, and political borders? (c) what kind of impact it has the program had on participants in terms of subsequent participation in feminist and peace organizations and movements, if any? I argue that this particular feminist conflict resolution uses the language of post-nationalism to encourage young women's political leadership and potentially destabilizes entrenched notions of national loyalty, providing a space for young women to envision their own potential in coalition building across borders. However, what participants do with that language and political framework varies depending on their backgrounds and the challenges they face to cross borders once they return home.

**Michael G. Berenbaum (University of Judaism)**

### **American Survivors as Moral Teachers: The Latent Content of Holocaust Education**

One of the unique aspects of the American experience of the Holocaust, and especially of Holocaust education in the United States has been the role of the Holocaust survivor as teacher. This paper will examine the role of the survivor as educator and mediator in the encounter between students and the Holocaust. It will borrow from the statements of major memorials and museums regarding the role of survivors in their educational work and explore the transformation of the survivors in their role as educators as evidenced in oral histories and personal observations. It also will evaluate the impact of survivors on American Jews and American Judaism.

***Session Number: 4.6***

***Session***      **Ritual Murder Accusations in East Central Europe**

***Session***

The aim of this panel is to discuss the ritual murder accusations in East-Central Europe. The charges that the Jews use Christian blood for ritual purposes first occurred in Western Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries – the first documented trial being commonly held that of William of Norwich, who died in 1144. The rumours about the ritual murder did not reach Eastern Europe until the late 15th century. At the moment the accusation seems to have disappeared from western Europe for good, the belief had a new lease of life in the eastern part of the continent. This panel will offer a comparative perspective on the phenomenon. By juxtaposing Jewish and Christian accounts of blood libels, the proposed papers will offer a nuanced view of one of the most painful and most controversial issues in Jewish history.

**Chair, Gershon D. Hundert (McGill University)**

**Magdalena O. Teter (Wesleyan University)**

**From Accidents and Infanticides to Anti-Jewish Accusations: Ritual Murder in Context**

Though accusations of ritual murder of Christian children by Jews date back to the late twelfth century, few records have been preserved until the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In Poland, a sudden death of a child did not become a subject of anti-Jewish trials until almost mid-sixteenth century, when in western Europe these trials were slowly coming to an end. Because of the late entrance of these accusations into Poland, many records of these trials were preserved, along with other court and notarial documents, allowing thus a detailed examination of social, political, and economic dynamics that accompanied these outbreaks of religious violence. The paper will seek to discern conditions under which a death of a child, usually accidental, sometimes a deliberate infanticide, became an anti-Jewish libel. After all finding of bodies of dead children did not always lead to trials against Jews, even if certain elements within Christian society were striving to achieve, as was the case in 1663 in a Lithuanian town of Wojnia, where a body of a drowned child was found and the mother, put on trial for allegedly killing the boy, was urged by some town dwellers to accuse Jews in order to save her own life. She died without accusing Jews, while the Jews mounted a campaign to stop a potential case against them. Political and economic forces were at play there both in pushing for the persecution of the Jews and in its successful prevention, but what do both successful and unsuccessful cases tell us about Jewish-Christian relations in early modern Poland? The paper will also raise methodological questions and highlight difficulties of using crime records in studying history, especially in cases involving libels.

**Pawel Maciejko (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Ritual Murder Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Poland-Lithuania**

This paper will analyse ritual murder discourse in 18th-century Poland. In Poland, the blood libel developed in inverse ratio to Western Europe: very few cases occurred during the time the phenomenon reached its apogee in England, France, and the German lands, while in the 18th century, when the trials virtually came to an end in the West, they became common in Poland-Lithuania. The most important consequence of one-hundred years long time

lag between the two parts of the continent was that the blood libel discourse in Eastern Europe did not develop independently during the trials, but was absorbed in the process of cultural transmission. Accordingly, the accusations in Poland were linked with the development of anti-Jewish literature more closely than it was the case in Western Europe, where the blood libel discourse was associated mainly with practical attacks on Judaism, not with theological polemic. The issue did not appear during the most infamous medieval Jewish-Christian disputations. Those who advocated blood libel seldom attacked the Talmud or theological tenets of Judaism. The elite theological discourse directed against the Talmud, and the popular discourse advocating blood libel seldom, if ever, overlapped. In contrast, 18th-century Polish literature attests to the perfect fit between the upper-level demonology and the folk belief in black magic.

### **Israel Bartal (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

#### **Blood Libels and Shtadlanut: The Case of Elyakim Zelig of Jampol**

One of the ways used by Polish Jews to defend communities and individuals accused of ritual murder in the 18th century was SHTADLANUT (intervention). For that purpose, a network of Jewish Communal leaders, court Jews, rabbis and wealthy merchants had been used. Those key figures had used their contacts with high ranking officials, church people and other influential persons to minimize the damage inflicted by the relatively frequent accusations of ritual murders. My paper focuses on one case, the 1756 blood libel of Jampol (western Ukraine). That case, which has been studied by some of the leading historians of Polish Jewry, such as M. Balaban and I. Halpern, involved an international intervention project of Jewish communal organizations, from England and the Netherlands to The Council of the Four Lands of Poland (VA'AD ARBA ARATSOT). An emissary had been sent over from Poland to Rome, to appeal to the Holy See on behalf of the accused Jews. That emissary, R. Elyakim Zelig of Jampol, had spent several years abroad, trying to establish contacts with the papal court in Rome. Some of the letters he wrote to several communities, as well as to VA'AD ARABA ARATSOT, survived. An unknown Hebrew letter, depicting in detail his SHTADLANUT activity in Rome has been recently acquired by the National Library in Jerusalem. The letter sheds new light on the tactics used by Jewish SHTADLANIM trying to refute the accusation that Jews were using Christian blood for baking the Passover MATSA. It connects for the first time the Jampol blood libel to the Frankist movement, active in the second half of the 18th century in south eastern Poland.

### **Hillel J. Kieval (Washington University)**

#### **Jewish "Ritual Murder" and the Language of Science: Observations from the Modern Trials**

At the Tiszaeszlár (Hungary) trial of 1883—arguably the first occasion in which the resources and prestige of a modern, bureaucratic state were mobilized in the prosecution of a case of Jewish “ritual murder”—both the state’s attorney and the defense presented evidence to the court derived from forensic medical examinations that had been conducted on the body of a woman whose

corpse had floated to the surface of the Tisza river in June of the previous year. Much lay at stake in the contesting scientific presentations, including the identity of the victim, the circumstances of her death, the likelihood that a killing for ritual purposes had been committed, and even the qualities of Jewish identity itself. Scientific knowledge and testimony played an equally central role in the so-called Hilsner Affair, the Polná (Bohemia) "ritual murder" trials of 1899 and 1900. Excerpts from the report of two examining physicians were incorporated directly into the indictment against Leopold Hilsner, as were their responses to pointed questions from the state's attorney. At the same time, a successful challenge to the original verdict was mounted by Tomáš Masaryk and members of the Czech Medical Faculty in Prague, who demanded that they be allowed to conduct their own autopsy on the body of the victim, Anžka Hrůzová. Each of the major cases of Jewish "ritual murder" accusation and trial in East Central Europe at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (there were six major trials between 1882 and 1914) rested in fact on the crucial intervention and support of scientific knowledge. This paper will look at the ways in which the scientific fields of medicine, criminology, and psychiatry functioned to both bolster and, ultimately, undermine the modern discourse of Jewish "ritual murder" in Europe.

**Session Number: 4.7**

**Session Female Minds and Bodies in the Hebrew Bible**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Chaya Halberstam (Indiana University)**

**Charlotte Katzoff (Bar-Ilan University)**

**Matriarchal Knowledge in the Saga of the Patriarchs**

In the story of Israel's beginnings as recounted in the book of Genesis, the patriarchs are the focal point of power and agency and they are the conduits of God's blessing. It is through their actions that God's plan is implemented and the role they play in realizing His designs invests their deeds with significance. The women are on the whole secondary actors in the drama, making their mark mainly by virtue of their influencing or manipulating the conduct of the men. The status of the patriarchs is secured by their unique relationship with God, manifested in His personally addressing them – in the commandments He issues to them and the promises He makes to them. It is they whom he repeatedly takes into his confidence, to whom he reveals his plans. Remarkably, however, although the patriarchs have many direct encounters with the divine word, and the matriarchs have almost no direct communication with God, at critical junctures in the unfolding of the narrative it is the mothers who "get it right". It is they who are invested with epistemic authority, and it is the fathers who show themselves to be "in the dark," – on the wrong track. In its critique of "mainstream" theory of knowledge, feminist epistemology has proposed new ways of conceptualizing knowledge, new criteria for evaluating beliefs and new distinctions between forms of knowledge. I propose to apply these insights to the kinds of knowledge

exemplified in the Genesis narratives. How is the knowledge ascribed to women different from that ascribed to men? What kind of epistemic priority is given to Sarah over Abraham or to Rebecca over Isaac? How firm is the division between women's knowledge and men's? The answers to these questions, I propose, will also shed light on the epistemic status of other women in the Genesis narrative. In addition, they will suggest a new perspective on the link drawn in these stories between divine revelation and

**Richard E. Friedman (University of Georgia)**

### **Jeremiah's Wish that He Had Never Been Born**

Surprisingly, the only explicit reference to abortion in the Bible is almost never cited in contemporary debates on that subject. And, also surprisingly, it occurs in a book of a prophet, not in a text of law. In Jeremiah 20, the prophet, in anguish, WISHES he had been aborted. He curses the person who brought the news of his birth, and he says that that person should suffer "because he didn't kill me from the womb, so my mother would become my tomb!" John Bright, wrote in the Anchor Bible Jeremiah, "One can neither exaggerate the agony of spirit revealed here, nor improve upon the words which Jeremiah found to express it. There is, indeed, little in all of literature that compares with this piece..." The passage is extreme hyperbole, and it is poetry, so one would be well-advised to use caution in factoring it into any contemporary position on abortion, but it has significant implications nonetheless. The purpose of this paper will be to examine this passage in its context in biblical prophecy and wisdom, and to consider these implications. In terms of prophetic context, the paper will treat the cases of Moses, Elijah, and Jonah. All express a wish for death. Jeremiah goes a step beyond them all, wishing he had been aborted as a fetus. The paper will discuss the impact of the respective genres of these texts — the Moses, Elijah, and Jonah texts are prose; Jeremiah's anguish is expressed in poetry — and how this affects our understanding of them. In the wisdom literature, the paper will discuss the well-known parallel passages in Job (3:1-16) and Ecclesiastes (4:1-3; 7:1-4; 6:3). Interestingly, a passage that IS cited in the abortion argument is also from Jeremiah. In God's first words to Jeremiah (Jer 1:5), God says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you." Abortion opponents take this to mean that one exists as a soul, as a person, already in the womb. This passage is rendered more nuanced when we regard it in the light of that later passage in Jeremiah 20 in which the prophet says that he wishes he had died in that womb. The paper will address the need for caution in forming defined positions based on poetry.

**Robert Kawashima (University of Florida)**

### **Could a Woman Say "No" in Biblical Israel? On the Legal Status of Women in Biblical Law and Literature**

Legal competence is generally granted, by modern convention, to all adults, male and female, who by virtue of their age and mental capacity have attained majority. Majors have, in effect, the legally binding authority to say "yes" or "no." Conversely, minors cannot enter into any legally binding contract or activity whose ramifications are deemed sufficiently grave. And thanks to the



ideal of "universal human rights," they are specifically protected from exploitation through various special protections that effectively say "no" on their behalf — e.g., laws dealing with child labor and statutory rape. The male-centered, tribe-based legal system of biblical Israel, however, granted legal competence according to radically different conventions. As various Priestly and Deuteronomic laws attest — inheritance and property rights (Num 27, 36), vows (Num 30), and sexual crimes (Deut 22:22-29) — a girl lived under the legal guardianship of her father (bêt 'ab) until she was betrothed and eventually married, at which point she entered the guardianship of her husband (bêt 'ish). In other words, a girl, unlike a boy, could never attain majority, unless she were widowed or possibly divorced, that is, independent of both father and husband. What is particularly shocking is that the absence of a female's sexual consent did not automatically signify "no." Various laws as well as narratives (such as Gen 34 and 2 Sam 13) suggest that neither a girl nor a woman could effectively refuse a sexual advance. This is not to say that they could not and did not sometimes resist. However, since they weren't fully endowed legal subjects, their refusal did not carry legally binding force. Although this study focuses on biblical law, comparative evidence suggests that the same held true for Mesopotamian societies as well.

**David T. Stewart (Southwestern University)**

### **Stories as Shades: (Bat-)Yiftah as Specter for the Outrage at Gibeah**

When Robert Alter observes that the "indeterminacy of reading" biblical narratives requires their contextualization with parallel stories near and far, he foments a search for those stories that hover as specters over one another. The outrage of Gibeah (Judges 19-21), as the capstone (or appendix) of the book of Judges, might invite comparisons with a juxtaposed text such as the Danite Cycle (Judg 17-18) with which it shares the motif of wandering Bethlehemites. Or it might direct us to stories with parallel details as markers of allusion: the (attempted) gang-rapes of strangers (Gen 19 with Judg 19), or the defeat and later victory of the Israelite army by similar stratagems at Ai (Josh 7-8) and Gibeah (Judg 20). The Outrage Cycle finds ties with the beginning of Judges itself, knitting first and last stories together. If Adoni-bezek, who loses thumbs and big toes (Judg 1:6-7), foreshadows the mutilation of the pilegish's body cut into twelve pieces (Judg 19:29), so also does the war-prize Achsah (Judg 1:12-15) foreshadow the permitted bride-thefts by the surviving Benjamites (Judg 21:15-18). While the mutilation of the pilegish's body trumps its parallel in intensity, the bride-thefts by defeated Israelites invert the inaugural bride-gift to the victorious kinsman. This final dismemberment of the nation has forerunners in the precipitant stories of Jephthah, his daughter, and the Ephraimite war (Judg 11-12). Jephthah, son of a pilegish, sends an unheeded ultimatum to Ammon. To insure victory he vows the death of the first who will exit his house. Not only do Jephthah's words precipitate his daughter's death, but the words of the unvaliant Ephraimites, who had not come to war, witness against them at the fords of Jordan. When the Levite of Ephraim sends his message by the pilegish's body, Israel heeds it. Benjamin takes the place of Ammon in the equation of defeat. Jabesh-

Gilead, which does not come to war, takes the place of Ephraim. Jephthah's oath of sacrifice now has its inverse echo in the oath-of no-daughters-to-the-survivors taken at Mizpah. Thus the tales of the Outrage Cycle rework Jephthah material by a series of inversions and displacements.

**Session Number: 4.8**

**Session The Power of Diplomacy in the U.S., Britain, and Germany**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, S. Ilan Troen (Brandeis University)**

**David Tal (Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism)**

**The Making of an Ally: How Did Israeli Diplomacy Make the U.S. Israel's Major Ally?**

Relations between the United States and Israel have been dealt with extensively over the years by historians and political scientists. These studies have two main features in common: first, they view the relationship from an American-centred point of view, that is, they concentrate on the US decision-making process as the main driving force, and Washington as the place where the pace, nature and structure of relations were determined. Second, they focus heavily on the military-diplomatic aspects of these relations. The proposed paper will challenge the established approach by including two additional points of view: first, it will suggest that Israel played a significant role in the development of its relations with the United States, and was an active participant in decision-making in Washington. Second, that not only military and diplomatic issues were involved, but economic and cultural affairs as well. That will be done by the introduction of the way the Israeli- American relationships were developed from the mid 1940s', with the Jewish leadership decision to rely on the United States to advance Zionist goals, through the 1950s up to the Johnson administration, when the nature of the relationship between the two states was established and sealed.

**Natan Aridan (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)**

**The Origins of the Post-independence Israeli Lobby in the English-Speaking Diaspora**

Dr. Natan Aridan History Department, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Beer Sheva, Israel aridan@bgu.ac.il **ABSTRACT** The paper aims to fill the void in historical research on the origins of the Israeli lobby in the English-speaking Jewish Diaspora. Introducing hitherto unpublished primary sources and oral testimonies, the paper provides the historical context and analysis of the Israeli lobby. The paper accounts for and examines the attitudes, policies, perceived roles, and dilemmas of Israeli diplomats and Diaspora Jewry which served as 'transnational actors' in furthering Israel's cause in helping to establish both an official and unofficial Israeli lobby. It is hoped that the historical perspective and conclusions derived from this study will add to a deeper understanding of current events regarding the Israeli lobby. Dr. Natan Aridan, April 2006

**Shlomit Keren (University of Calgary)**

**Chaplain with a Star of David: Rabbi Falk in the Jewish Legions**

Chaplain with a Star of David: Rabbi Falk in the Jewish Legions This paper focuses on the fascinating role played by Rabbi Yehuda Arye Falk, the chaplain assigned to the Jewish Legions in the British army during WW I, and his contribution to the construction of a modern Hebrew military culture. Based on Falk's formerly undisclosed private papers, I demonstrate how he developed the role of the first chaplain of an all Jewish unit and how the ways in which he performed his duties, as well as his sermons and writings, provided a set of Jewish-national military symbols and values, which became the base of a unique military identity. Rabbi Falk performed all the duties prescribed by the British Royal Chaplains Department, taking care of the spiritual and material well being of the individual soldier. But he also worked for what he regarded a higher cause: the revival of a Jewish military organization and spirit. He took an active part in the soldiers' training, endowing them with historical consciousness. In the training camp in Plymouth, he wrote, the new Hebrew soldier's identity was shaped in line with the biblical prophets' vision. Such notions involved however moral dilemmas I analyze, for example, how to reconcile the preaching of the prophets with practices such as the use of bayonets. I also show how at times of frustration, when the legions were stationed in Palestine toward the end of the war, Falk used Jewish symbolism to dissipate the stress by defining the soldiering experience as a journey to the Promised Land that has not been reached yet. The paper surveys rituals and ceremonies Falk developed to strengthen the link between the soldiers' experience and their national-religious identity, such as having a Sergeant Major carry Torah scrolls during military marches. This paper then follows Falk's thoughts and practices in an attempt to explore the process of infusing national content into the experience of the Jewish legions in the British army and highlights the way in which this infusion has become a cornerstone of modern Jewish military culture.

**Session Number: 4.9**

**Session Dahlia Ravikovitch [1936-2005], In Memoriam**

**Session**

A beloved lyrical poet since her early twenties, a master of the Hebrew language and its multi-layered echo-chamber, an imaginative creative artist in verse and prose, and a forceful social critic, Dahlia Ravikovitch's premature death last year left her readers craving more than ever before for her lush style and enigmatic other worlds, as well as for the pain and anguish, personal and collective, she struggled to express and sublimate at one and the same time. This special session in her memory covers several cardinal aspects of her legacy: her distinctively rich and inventive poetics, her uniquely personal politics, her specially gendered position within the historical poetics of Hebrew poetry, and the deep wounds of her own life that have ultimately functioned as the hidden mover of much of her creative genius. Each of the four papers presented straddles two or three of these aspects, altogether moving us from Ravikovitch's youthful delight and pain, sensuality and the early experience of death, to her mature critique of social realities and literary feuds.

**Chair, Yael Feldman (New York University)**  
**Nili R.S. Gold (University of Pennsylvania)**  
**Dahlia Ravikovitch's Delight**

Dahlia Ravikovitch published her first collection entitled *Ahavat Tapu'ach Hazahav* ("Love of an Orange") in 1959. The dominant trend in poetry at the time was the understated, restrained poetic language written mostly in free verse. Poets like Yehuda Amichai and Natan Zach, who belonged to what was later dubbed "The Generation of the State" set this tone. Ravikovitch's high diction was different from anything else published. Her language was archaic; her verse, structured, rhymed and far from being restrained. Despite those unique qualities, she was received with warmth and recognition rarely given to a twenty-three year old beginning poet. Although she continued publishing, first in a style similar to the debut collection, and later with lower, somewhat freer language, there was never an attrition in the status of "Love of an Orange." Its poems to this day never seem to open up to analysis and remain a constant challenge to critics. The poem "Hemda," which has been translated as "Delight," appeared in that early collection. Although the colorful images in "Hemda", those of water lilies, treetops, pouring light and whirlpools in a river, would continue to appear in the poet's later books, "Hemda" remains enigmatic and its beauty continues to confound its readers. The musical interpretation of "Hemda" only added to its allure. Partially because of those images, the poem is often read as a description of sensual, sexual ecstasy against the backdrop of an almost tropical landscape. My reading of "Hemda", however, attempts to discover new levels of meaning. It reveals the poem's early childhood sources, touching upon concrete moments from childhood memories. This analysis confronts the quasi-metaphorical natural landscape as well as the poem's textual and intra-textual materials. I will draw on the poem "Hemda", on its relations to other texts by Ravikovitch – poems as well as stories – and on an extended conversation with the poet in 2001. With the poet's death in 2005, unfortunately, we can speak of her entire corpus. It seems to me that this reading will not only illuminate this magical text, but will also allow the interpretation of other texts by Ravikovitch in its light.

**Chana Kronfeld (University of California, Berkeley)**

### **The Verbal Art of Ravikovitch's Political Poem**

Contrary to common scholarly opinion, I think Ravikovitch's poetry has always been political inasmuch as it has always been concerned with the devastating consequences of unequal power relations for the individual and for society. The difference between the early and the late poetry is in the stylistic articulations of the political. In the first four books Ravikovitch develops the politically coded parable into a system of modes of indirection, where archaic style, place and time act as distancing devices. The later poetry – from the late 70s on -- though it expresses the new urgency in Israeli poetics to be politically outspoken, nevertheless retains the layered, nuanced intertextual dialogue with the traditional Jewish echo chamber of bible, midrash and liturgy that constitutes her poetic signature. In this paper I compare the changing relationship between stylistics and politics in Ravikovitch's early and later work

by focusing on two poems about the city as a sexualized site of disintegration and decay. In the 1969 "How Hong Kong Was Destroyed," the rotting flesh of exploited prostitutes parallels the disintegration of the modern metropolis, but it all happens far far away, in an orientalized, and by the poet's own account - a fictionalized, surreal Hong Kong, which is "like a colored lantern hanging on a hook at the edge of the world." The 1992 "Lying Upon the Waters" deals, by contrast, with her despised yet beloved Tel Aviv, the city of Ravikovitch's here and now. But Ravikovitch articulates her cultural critique not only through a poetics of direct statement, as is often assumed about her late poetry, but via a critical dialogue with the biblical topos of the City as Woman, and through it - with the tradition of ambivalent love between poet and place. In a radical reversal of the biblical metaphor, the female poet takes the place of the male biblical prophet, and a modern consumerist Tel Aviv replaces Jerusalem as the whoring Zion, "lowing like a cow in heat/ her walls Italian marble and crumbling sand."

**Ilana Szobel (New York University)**

**"Days of mourning, years without end": Orphanhood in the Work of Dahlia Ravikovitch**

"Days of mourning, years without end,/ whenever we call to him,/ whenever the grief overwhelms us,/ he'll surely have to come" writes Dahlia Ravikovitch in her first book of poetry (1959). This statement, which embodies her personal experiences and her poetic commitments, appears to be a prophetic definition of her entire oeuvre. The traumatic event of her father's death is a fundamental experience in Ravikovitch's writing, and it establishes her poetic-self. In this paper I wish to examine this state of orphanhood as a state of doom, which destines the speaker to feelings of injustice, longing, need, deprivation, and helplessness. One of the most outstanding elements of the poems is that they entwine the abandonment with the impossibility of experiencing the certitude of death. By using Abraham and Torok's psychoanalytic work I will argue that the emotional experience of the father's death, and especially the simultaneity of the death's presence and its concealment, serves as the psychological basis for Ravikovitch's poetic expression, not only for the 'orphanhood' poems, but also for the much larger body of work. The unique traumatic experience is expressed through specific poetic language and structure. I will examine the connection between Ravikovitch's poetic preferences and the particular nature of her traumatic event, as expressed in her writing, by suggesting a reading of her poetic through the lens of Kristeva's distinction between the symbolic order and the semiotic, and Žižek's notion of the "missing link." The course of retelling the disruption (the wound of orphanhood) again and again, which works simultaneously with the illusion of reformation, is the underlying basis for the relationship between the symbolic order and the semiotic in Ravikovitch's

**Allison Schachter (Vanderbilt University)**

**"A Yellow Lily Among the Bullfrogs": Leah Goldberg in Dahlia Ravikovitch's Poetic Corpus**

Dahlia Ravikovitch and Leah Goldberg are perhaps the two best-known

Hebrew women poets in Israel. Both of them wrote poetry that was popularly admired by their Israeli audiences and both do not quite fit into the literary historical categories of Hebrew poetry. Though Leah Goldberg is considered part of the Moderna, alongside Avraham Shlonsky and Nathan Alterman, her poetry differed radically from their impersonal modernist poetics. Dahlia Ravikovitch is thought of as a key member of the "Statehood Generation" with Yehuda Amichai and Nathan Zach, but as Miki Gluzman has shown, she refrained from their oedipal struggle against the Moderna, and instead mediated between these two literary tendencies. In this paper, I will examine how Dahlia Ravikovitch attempts to resist these male-dominated poetic lines turning to Leah Goldberg as an important figure for shaping a new feminist poetic aesthetic. Ravikovitch's poem "Ha-karpodim [Bullfrogs]," dedicated to Goldberg, is her most direct invocation of Goldberg as an important poetic figure. Ravikovitch alludes to Bialik's well-known poem "Ha-Brekha [The Pool]," imagining "bi-vrekha ktana, be-tokh kehal karpodim/ yeshna shoshana tsehuba nisteret [In a small pool, in a crowd of bullfrogs/there's a yellow lily alone and apart]" (trans. Chana Kronfeld and Chana Bloch). In these lines, Ravikovitch deflates Bialik's romantic natural imagery, transforming his pool into a pond of bullfrogs, a figure for Hebrew poetry in the Yishuv. She imagines Goldberg at the center of the male-dominated Moderna, a struggling yellow lily, and later in the poem as a female Prometheus. Goldberg appears elsewhere in Ravikovitch's poetic corpus, alluded to, for example, in the epigraph to "She'elunu shoveynu divrey shir [Our Captors Demanded from Us a Song]." Even in her most personal poems, Ravikovitch subtly invokes Goldberg, as an important poetic precursor, for example in "Ha-chalon [The Window]." While many have read this poem as simply autobiographical, Ravikovitch's metaphor of the window is a direct reference to both Leah Goldberg and Emily Dickinson. Indeed, Ravikovitch's confessional style is an attempt not only to express an individual subjectivity but also to shape a new literary aesthetic, through recourse to female poetic precursors.

**Session Number: 4.10**

**Session        Reconsidering Hannah Arendt at 100**

**Session**

2006 marks the 100th birthday of Hannah Arendt, one of the leading German-Jewish writers and philosophers of the mid 20th century. In the last 15 years Arendt's thought has been the subject of deepening examination within the academy, and she continues to be a controversial pariah within the Jewish world. This panel will present a number of views concerning Arendt's legacy to Jewish thought. Among the questions to be addressed are: Why do Arendt's views continue to arouse interest and passion, both pro and con? When does a critic shift from being the "loyal opposition" to a "self-hating Jew," and who defines the "red line" that has been crossed? Of what value to Jewish historiography is her attempt to integrate the history of Jews into European history, especially as an explanation of modern antisemitism? Does her critique of statist Zionism have any echoes for understanding Israel and Zionism today? This session is timed to take place with the publication a new

collection of Arendt's Jewish writings.

**Chair, David J. Biale (University of California, Davis)**

**Ron H. Feldman (University of San Francisco)**

### **Hannah Arendt's Early Jewish Writings**

The new collection of Hannah Arendt's JEWISH WRITINGS (which I am co-editing) will include not only essays previously gathered in the out-of print JEW AS PARIAS, but additional essays from the 1930's-1960's. In particular, they include essays Arendt wrote in German as a columnist for the AUFBAU during the mid 1940s and a manuscript from the 1930's on Antisemitism. Taken together it is clear that the views she expressed in both THE ORIGINS OF TOTALITARIANISM and EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM are of a piece with the very beginnings of her political awakening as a Jew. From the 1930's on, even as Arendt made her livelihood by working for Jewish organizations it is clear that she never was content to be an apologist, but rather expressed her own idiosyncratic, critical perspective on Jewish political concerns of her time. For example, in 1942 she strongly advocated the establishment of a Jewish army; and criticized the Jewish and Zionist establishment, including plutocrats, philanthropists and rabbinic "leaders" for not more strongly advocating this position to the Allies and rallying the Jewish people to action. She saw the issue as a practical one: close to a third of world Jewry was on the verge of extermination, and a Jewish army could "at least attempt to replace the rules of extermination and the rules of flight with the rules of battle." Long term, she felt that without an army the Jews would not have a place at the peace table; fighting the war as Jews was a way to legitimate the Jewish demands for freedom, including the right to a homeland in Palestine. Here can be seen early versions of the kind of critical positions Arendt later takes vis a vis Jewish actions during the Holocaust and concerning the establishment and preservation of the Jewish State of Israel. Regardless of the particularities of her position, it is clear that she sees her identity and fate as a Jew, and her argument is consistently based on that answering the question at the heart of Jewish politics: What is "good" for the Jews?

**Bruce Thompson (University of California, Santa Cruz)**

### **Arendt on Anti-Semitism**

A quarter of a century ago Leon Wieseltier presented a powerful critique of Hannah Arendt's writings about antisemitism in The New Republic (7 & 14 October 1981). Wieseltier argued that Arendt based her view of European Jewry to a considerable extent on the unreliable polemics of Bernard Lazare, and that there is an alarming link between the theory of antisemitism she posited in The Origins of Totalitarianism and the controversial interpretation of the behavior of the Judenräte she proposed in Eichmann in Jerusalem. This paper will re-examine Wieseltier's critique of Arendt's writings about European Jewry and about Zionism by examining them in the light of an earlier manuscript, written during the 1930s and recently re-discovered by Jerome Kohn and his colleagues, as well as her last work, The Life of the Mind, where she offered a more general interpretation of the Jewish tradition, contrasting it with that of the ancient Greeks (an updating of Matthew Arnold's comparison

of "Hebraism" and "Hellenism"). Was Arendt's interpretation of antisemitism as misguided and perverse as Wieseltier and others have insisted? Had that interpretation already crystallized even before she encountered the writings of Lazare? And did she modify her views at all in response to the hurricane of criticism she endured after the publication of Eichmann? And, finally, to what extent are Arendt's views about antisemitism still worth serious consideration, given the mountain of scholarship on the subject that has accumulated since the 1960s?

**Session Number: 4.11**

**Session            Studies in Sixteenth-Century Jewish Mysticism:  
                          Kabbalistic Sainthood, Kabbalistic Iconography**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Eitan P. Fishbane (The Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Perceptions of Greatness: The Holy Man in Kabbalistic Literature**

This paper will explore the criteria with which medieval and early modern Jewish mystics perceived the greatness and sainted character of their master kabbalists. What traits were associated with such exalted personalities, and what are the contours and foundations of this reverence? What did it mean, in the eyes of the disciples, for a particular person to be characterized through paradigmatic terms of praise (i.e. Tzaddiq, Hasid, etc.)? I will seek to assess the manner in which the image of the holy man was constructed through hagiographical life-narratives and the related literature of self-formation. This inquiry will aim to shed light on the assumed criteria for the ideal, well-lived life, and will explore the ways such narratives of greatness and holiness enter into the fabric of communal memory in a religious culture. For the literature of hagiography, however dubious a source for the historical reconstruction of a person, is highly illuminating with respect to the ways in which a master was remembered and revered. It is precisely in the tropes of hyperbole that the ultimate ideals of the religious life are revealed, insofar as a core cluster of virtues and attributes are clothed in the exaggerated language of moral, spiritual, and intellectual achievement—as well as that of highly unusual innate characteristics and abilities. Singular access to direct revelation—whether in the form of divine prophecy or tutelage from a celestial source (e.g. visitations from the prophet Elijah)—will be a central trope to be explored, as will the following other recurring characteristics of individual greatness: extraordinary erudition of an almost unbelievable level; clairvoyance and the ability to heal through special knowledge of kabbalistic techniques; extreme attainments of religious purification and moral cultivation. Other criteria will be explored as well. In presenting these matters, this paper will give close attention to Shivhei ha-Ari (a classic of Jewish mystical hagiography), with accompanying consideration of paradigms and antecedents from earlier times—particularly in the narratives of the Zohar. In framing the question and my method of analysis, I shall also seek to draw on the immense scholarly literature on this topic in the broader study of religion.



**Matt Goldish (Ohio State University)**

**Mystical Sainthood and the Relics of Solomon Molkho**

In 1532, the messianists Solomon Molkho and David ha-Reubeni went on a mission to Emperor Charles V at the imperial diet at Regensburg. Charles had Reubeni sent to prison in Spain, while Molkho was burnt at the stake in Mantua. The flag, mantle, and tallit of Molkho were taken from Regensburg to the Pinkas synagogue in Prague, which was being rebuilt at precisely this time by Aaron Meshullam Horowitz, an early member of this illustrious dynasty of mystical scholars. In this paper I will discuss the symbolic significance of preserving and displaying Molkho's relics at this particular time and place, and the relevance this has to the development of ideas about mystical sainthood later in the sixteenth century. I will also touch on the political situation in the Prague Jewish community and the significance of Molkho's relics in that

**Marla Segol (Skidmore College)**

**Not the Shekhina: Actual Women in the Sefer Hezyonot of Hayyim Vital**

The Sefer Hezyonot is a fascinating document because it shows in great detail the process of generating new cultural symbols in dialogue with existing systems of symbols, with existing discourses such as historical narrative and kabbalistic theology, and with people. More interestingly, Vital shows us quite clearly the process of transforming the givens of these public, communal symbols into private ones, as he records his dreams, and then into public ones again as he interprets his dreams as prophecy, draws on textual traditions and his community to authorize them, and recodes his private symbols as prescriptive for mystical praxis. In this process he authorizes his visions through various means, and women figure into it in two ways. First, they are presented not only as historical persons, but also as part of a system of private symbols. Particularly interesting are representations of Vital's mother. Second, women's testimonies are used to authorize Vital's visions. Women, therefore, help to provide the raw material for Vital's generation of private symbols, and also work to represent public discourse as they authorize the transformation of private symbols into public ones. This paper will look closely at Vital's use of "actual" women in his Sefer Hezyonot.

**Menachem Emanuel Kallus (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Maps of Divinity: Graphic Representation in Lurianic Kabbalah**

The focus of this lecture is the image of the Kabbalistic Cosmic Tree - ha'llan haKadosh. The Cosmic Tree emerged as a graphic representation of the Divine Attributes and their interactions in Kabbalah, beginning in the 13th century. Its constituents may be phenomenologically compared to the symbolism of the Divine Cosmic Image in primordial and created forms, as these may appear in Mandalas or other forms of religious cosmological graphic representation. It developed elaborate patterns in the wake of Lurianic Kabbalah, where such illustrations anthropomorphically depict the various stages of Kabbalistic cosmogony, and may have served as visual guides to train practitioners in contemplative prayer. Pre-Lurianic Kabbalistic depictions of the Cosmic Tree often sufficed with one diagram. The Lurianic Cosmic Tree always exhibits numerous diagrams, of far greater complexity and variety than

the earlier exemplars. Strong textual evidence suggesting that the first Lurianic Tree-Illustration was actually produced by R. Hayim Vital, the chief disciple of R. Isaac Luria, will be presented from the writings of R. Meir Poppers, the final redactor of the Lurianic Corpus. Other Lurianic Trees however, relied on the cosmology of R. Israel Sarug, who also claimed tutelage under R.I. Luria, but differed from Vital in many significant details, as to the earliest cosmogonic stages. Indeed, Poppers composed an Ilan that contained elements deriving from both Vital and Sarug, and incorporated various aspects of pre-Lurianic Kabbalah. Upon investigating over seventy manuscripts and microfilms, I have isolated thirteen distinct exemplars [each containing non-derivative elements] of Lurianic Tree illustration: including one that may have originated in the circle of R. Israel Baal Shem Tov [Besht]; one containing elements deriving from the theology of the Sabbatean movement; two deriving from the writings of R. Joseph Solomon del Medigo – none of which exist in any of the other mss. surveyed; as well as some Trees utilizing disparate elements, derived only from the writings of RH Vital. I will then analyze the 'Besht' Ilan, from philological and phenomenological perspectives [with graphic slide projections[?]], and compare it to 'Standard' and Sabbatean Trees. I will then present four hypothetical dates for its composition, and explain why at this point, no conclusion can be reached in this regard. [?] ---- or some means to project 'jpg' images from cd rom ...

#### **Session Number: 4.12**

#### **Session Rabbinic Judaism and Byzantine Culture**

#### **Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Alexei M. Sivertsev (De Paul University)**

#### **A Byzantine Judaism**

The panel will address the nature of Judaism that developed in Byzantine cultural and religious contexts in the course of late fifth through ninth centuries. Over the past several decades scholars have emphasized a number of unique characteristics that distinguished this form of Judaism from that of an earlier period. These characteristics include the rise of new ideals of religious piety (such as priestly piety, martyrdom, mysticism, and apocalyptic messianism) and the development of new pietistic and "sacramental" trends in the interpretation of halakhic regulations. Even literary genres were changing with religious poetry (piyut), accounts of mystical experiences, and narrative literature becoming increasingly more important. Such differences between Byzantine and "classical" rabbinic Judaism of the third – fifth centuries have prompted many scholars to wonder if using the term "rabbinic" to describe Byzantine Judaism is indeed appropriate. For example Peter Schäfer has suggested the term "post-rabbinic" to characterize mystical Hekhalot texts. Others emphasized the role of priests and mystics in shaping post-fifth century Jewish traditions and religious values.

#### **Ra'anana Boustany (UCLA)**

**The Foundation of Rome in Jewish Apocalyptic and Rabbinic**

## **Literature: Rome, Constantinople, and the Shifting Geography of Empire**

This paper analyzes a series of related rabbinic sources that explore the circumstances surrounding the founding of the city of Rome. These sources combine elements of Greek and Latin historiography and mythography with longstanding Jewish historiographic traditions, including earlier models of Jewish history from the apocalyptic literature. The rabbinic tradition thus appropriates such native Roman motifs as the rescue of the twins Romulus and Remus, their role as founding figures, and even the twin huts that reflect the dual nature of the future Roman state. At the same time, perhaps unsurprisingly, the rabbinic tradition situates these motifs within the chronological framework of the biblical narrative, drawing a direct, causal relationship between the dynamics of sin and punishment in Jewish history and Rome's divinely-sanctioned rise to power. I will argue that these sources draw variously on two regnant models for conceptualizing Israel's relationship to Rome: (1) the foreign kingdom model, such as the four kingdoms of Daniel and (2) the genealogical-familial model that equates Rome with Esau. These paradigms present the relationship between Israel and Rome in profoundly different ways and their juxtaposition produces interesting and important anomalies in rabbinic discourse about Rome. Yet, in addition to formal analysis, these sources must also be interpreted in light of contemporaneous political developments in the late Roman period. I will argue that the shifting nomenclature applied to the city of Rome in these sources reflects significant changes in the political geography of the Roman Empire, as the new "Christian" city of Constantinople gradually eclipsed Rome as the primary locus for the production of imperial ideology. These relatively late rabbinic sources, composed more than half a millennium after the myth of Romulus and Remus had crystallized (probably in the late fourth century BCE), effectively sever the myth of the founding of Rome from its proper geographic referent, and thereby transform Rome into a transposable literary trope. The figure of Rome in these sources thus provides important insight into the evolution of Jewish attitude toward Roman imperial rule during the period that saw the transition to the new Byzantine-Christian dispensation.

**Rachel Neis (Harvard University)**

## **The Rise of Pilgrimage Fantasies and the Rabbinization of the Byzantine Landscape**

This paper traces the parallel developments in amoraic sources of ever more elaborate visions of the spectacles seen by festival pilgrims in the halcyon days of the temple and of the rabbinic institution of sight-triggered utterances and practices focused on the contemporary landscape. It does so, in part, by situating these developments in the context of Christian investment in Palestine and the rise of Holy Land pilgrimage, noting the ways in which the rabbinic accounts parallel evidence of contemporaneous pilgrimage practices. The paper presents these developments as a rabbinic attempt to master Palestine by inscribing a biblical and rabbinic past and present onto the landscape via a perspective that is resolutely blind to that which it does not wish to see, and which, by a combination of appropriation and negation of

contemporary Christian practice, erases and produces a rabbinized Palestine.

**Steven Fine (Yeshiva University)**

**The Menorah of the Second Temple in Byzantium: Between History and Ideology**

In an oft-quoted Hebrew essay, "The Fate of the Sacred Appurtenances After the Destruction of the Second Temple" (Qedem, 1944, rpt. in Olamot Nifgashim [Studies in Jewish Hellenism], 1960), Yochanan (Hans) Lewy analyzed Patristic and some late Rabbinic sources that mention the fate of the Temple vessels during the Byzantine period, especially the menorah.

Astonishingly, Lewy conjectures that some of the the Temple appurtenances might have been buried by the Byzantines in Jerusalem, perhaps beneath Justinian's (now excavated) Nea Church-- and might still be there to this day.

In this lecture I will reevaluate the primary sources adduced by Lewy, contextualizing them in terms of the literary and historical contexts in which they were composed. I will then set Lewy's essay within the contexts of Jewish historiography, Zionist thought, and popular literature of the 1930's and 40's. Lewy's approach is strikingly similar, for example, to historical fiction written by Stefan Zweig (*Der begrabene Leuchter*, 1936) and Robert Graves (*Count Belisarius*, 1938) and raises significant issues about the boundaries between the historian's craft and the literary imagination. this paper is intended for Alexei Sivertsev's session

**Rachel Sharon Havrelock (University of Illinois at Chicago)**

**Testing the Waters: Jews, Christians, and Jordan Immersion**

The distinction between healthy and ill bodies serves as a technique of group identification in Christian and Jewish exegetical works of late antiquity. Since the shared corpus is the text of the Old Testament/ Torah, the body debates function as a means of displaying the correct and incorrect uses of this "body,"

that is the correct and incorrect ways of interpreting shared scripture. This essay returns to an earlier and since refuted observation by Daniel Boyarin that what divides Jews and Christians is the discourse of the body. This thesis is supported not by an assessment of sexual practices, but through the rhetoric of health that in both cases equates particular ailing and thriving bodies with the communities defined by ritual practices. Depending upon the exegete, the body is either healed by baptism and corroded by refraining from immersion or infected by baptism and cured by adherence to Jewish law. The question of whether 'to baptize or not to baptize' is answered by both groups through the interpretation of the biblical story of Naaman in II Kings 5. At stake in the different interpretations are the establishment of baptism as the primary identity marker of a Christian, rabbinic opposition to the ritual and the assertion of Jewish law as an alternate path to purity. While much has been written on the 'historical' connection between Jewish ablutionary practices and the emergence of Christian baptism, the story of Naaman's Jordan immersion in II Kings 5 has not surfaced as a factor. This paper traces the beginnings of baptism and comparable Jewish practices to alternate and often overlapping understandings of II Kings 5.

## **Session Number: 4.13**

### **Session Medieval and Modern Halakhah and Rabbinic Culture**

#### **Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, David Berger (Brooklyn College, CUNY)**

**Shmuel Shilo (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

#### **How Much Medieval European Law in Jewish Law?**

In my presentation I will discuss the question: to what extent has medieval European law influenced the Jewish legal system? I will not discuss the application of the principle that "the law of the state is law" (*dina demalkhuta dina*). In my talk I propose to discuss and explain to what extent have various non-Jewish legal rules and practices found their way into the Jewish legal system without resorting to the *dina demalkhuta* maxim. On the one hand the impression is that Jewish law is an integral part of an insular religion and therefore there should be minimal outside influence on Jewish law. On the other hand the Jews were an integral part of European civilization and it is very problematical to accept the notion that Jewish society was so inbred that outside legal influences were deflected. My conclusions will be the following: It seems that if secular law appeared to be fair and equitable it could become binding without resorting to the *dina demalkhuta* principle. This was so in the realm of civil law. However there are not many examples of such acceptance. It appears that the only branch of the law that was directly and substantially influenced by Gentile medieval law was the criminal law. This phenomenon will be explained and examples will be given. In addition, quasi-criminal law was also imported into the Jewish legal system. In both of these latter cases it seems that the Gentile influence was usually not long-standing and after a certain period of time, with the change of mores and outlooks, what was incorporated into Jewish law was later rejected. There were no compunctions about ultimately rejecting these foreign implants. How and why all this occurred will be explained and illustrated by specific examples. Further conclusions will be that the Jewish legal system was probably influenced more by medieval legal and political philosophy than by medieval law itself. I will demonstrate that on the whole Jewish law remained insular and self-sufficient; outside influences during the Middle Ages were relatively minor and in most cases almost nil.

**Ephraim Kanarfogel (Yeshiva University)**

#### **Dreams as a Determinant of Jewish Law and Practice in Medieval**

Despite the putative rabbinic restriction against deciding matters of Jewish law on the basis of dreams, a series of leading German and Italian halakhists during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries referred to various kinds of dream experiences in the course of their rulings. Among these rabbinic figures are R. Eliezer b. Nathan (Raban) of Mainz, R. Ephraim of Regensburg, R. Isaiah di Trani (who studied in Germany with R. Simhah of Speyer), R. Zedekiah b. Abraham ha-Rofe of Rome (who considered himself to be a student of R. Isaiah through his writings) and R. Meir of Rothenburg. A critical review of these passages will clarify both the nature and the limitations of these dream

experiences, as well as the extent to which the Ashkenazic decisors relied upon them. Comparison with R. Jacob of Marvege's (better-known) SHE'ELOT U-TESHUVOT MIN HA-SHAMAYIM on the one hand, and with contemporary visionary experiences in Christian society on the other, provides additional means for contextualizing and evaluating the Ashkenazic rabbinic material. The role of dreams in Ashkenaz as a vehicle for the transmission of liturgical and other texts, and as a means of communicating with departed souls, also sheds light on the use of dreams in the realm of Jewish law and practice. The foregoing analysis leads to a clearer understanding of several seemingly problematic Tosafot passages (that were composed in northern France) about the possible effects of a bat kol on the halakhic process. Briefly, and in conclusion, the findings that emerge will be located within the broader context of rabbinic culture in medieval Ashkenaz.

**Evyatar Marienberg (University of Notre Dame)**

### **The Use of Warm Water in Jewish Ritual Baths, Twelfth to Twentieth Centuries**

The water in modern Jewish ritual baths is warm. What was the situation in the past? Until the early-modern period (and except in some hassidic circles, also after), ritual baths were mostly used by women, who had to "purify" themselves after each menstrual cycle. If women did not accomplish this ritual bath, they, and their husbands, were not allowed, if they were to follow the halakhah, to have sexual relations. What implication had the water's temperature on bathing practices? If water was cold in the local bath, did women avoid it? In such a case, what did men, both rabbis and lay, do to solve the problem? In my paper I will discuss various sources, mostly from the 12th to the 20th century, which deal generally with local discussions (and often, confrontations), regarding this boiling question. I will show that the issue was an extremely complicated one, and that the ways it was dealt with were varied, and often even surprising. Among other things, exploring this topic will enable us to understand better relations between women and rabbis, the status of women in various communities, and the sensitivity of various rabbis to issues of pain, suffering, illness, and sexuality.

**David Katz (University of Maryland)**

### **Confidence and Conflictedness in the Responsa of Ezekiel Landau**

For the most part, the published responsa of R. Ezekiel Landau of Prague (1713-93) reflect a vigorously self-confident person, a man sure of himself who relished the opportunity to engage in the cut-and-thrust of halakhic and pilpulistic debate. Occasionally, however, a responsum betrays unease and uncertainty. These responsa, some of which he himself published, reflect conflicting sensibilities he felt concerning the nature of correct Jewish spirituality. Two of these responsa are examined here. In one, Landau is asked about a case of adultery. A yeshiva student living with a distinguished family had carried on an affair with the married lady of the house over a period of years, in the course of which he had married the lady's daughter. Eventually he confessed to the local communal rabbi who was unsure how to react. Confessions are halachikally inadmissible. Was the lady's husband to

be informed, as the law normally requires, or did the scandal and the resulting damage to the family's reputation outweigh the obligation to inform the husband? The adulterer also asked for a penance. The local rabbi asked Landau for advice. Landau's response is straightforward and unambiguous with regard to the strictly legal question about informing the husband. By contrast, when Landau deals with the question of penance, he is clearly conflicted. On the one hand, he has internalized the rationalist, eighteenth-century sensibility that dismissed penance as external and therefore foreign to the interiority of true repentance. But Landau is also deeply rooted in the medieval Ashkenazic tradition which accorded a place of honor to the ascetic teaching of the Hasidei Ashkenaz.. In a second responsum, Landau is asked a theological question about "the exile of the Shechinah." Though he eschews all involvement with kabbalah, Landau offers a rationalist interpretation based on the Guide for the Perplexed, but explicates it in kabbalistic terms, leaving his readers with the impression that the interpretation is that of Maimonides, not the Kitvei ha-Ari. This uncharacteristic deception reflects Landau's conflicted attitude towards the dissemination of kabbalah. Himself a leading anti-Sabbatean who objected to popularization of kabbala, he was also deeply committed to kabbalah, not rationalism, as the correct base for Jewish theology. Close study of responsa offers more than information about realia; it reveals the dynamic

***Session Number: 4.14***

***Session       Anti-Semitism and Philo-Semitism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries***

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Richard Menkis (University of British Columbia)**

**Steven Uran (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)**

**Algerian Jews between Emancipation and Anti-Semitism: Popular Culture, Stereotypes and the Mobilization of Pied Noir Hatred**

The powerful, violent colonial anti-Semitism which swept French Algeria in the late nineteenth century was a broad-based popular movement with profound roots in pied noir political culture and identity. Moreover, it was ideologically overwhelmingly on the republican and socialist left. Anti-Semitism was thus an integral and central feature of their definition of the people. This paper examines the popular cultural underpinnings and the crystallization of the representations and hostile stereotypes of Algerian Jews which proved so potent in this mobilization of hatred. The Crémieux decree which conferred French citizenship upon the Jews of Algeria in 1870 was a measure rapidly and hotly contested in the fledgling civilian settler democracy. Formally the Jews of Algeria had shed their erstwhile "native" status, joining the community of equal French citizens. In situ, however, they were a native minority which had crossed the colonial boundary into the colonial polity of the dominant but heterogeneous settler minority in which, to boot, they constituted a swing electoral vote. Electoral conflict, the Jews' uneven acculturation, and the

collision of professed egalitarian republican ideals with the hierarchical colonial order provided fertile terrain for violent passions, prejudices and stereotypes. These fed anti-Jewish social ostracism and political mobilization. A prolific, virulent pamphlet literature and press was spawned which are among the broad range of sources analysed, as are theatre, advertisements and archival sources. Rather than offer a static compendium, the paper seeks to trace contextually the articulation and evolution of this literature and its principal motifs. These representations and the ideology in which they are embedded are in effect matrices of contentious social reality. Thus, particular attention will be paid to the continuities and discontinuities between anti-Jewish and anti-Arab stereotypes and their implications. Similarly, in representations of Jews the shift from images of contempt and cowardliness to those of unrelieved evil, and the recourse to bacteriological imagery traces the radicalization of the anti-Semitic movement at its apogee. A conceptual framework will be suggested for the logic of these representations.

**Sharon Gordon (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

### **The Other Side of Coin: The Economic Philo-Semitism of Theodor Mommsen and Lujo Brentano**

The image of the Jew as the essential "homo-economicus", mostly connected to "money", was intensified and deepened during the modernization process of the 19th century. The Jew has turned, in many ways, into the paradigm of modernity, mostly on the creation of modern money. This image appears in the historical research mostly in the context of anti-Semitism. Lately, there has been a wider interest with German philo-Semitism, but very little, if at all, has been said about the economic within. This lecture intends to deal with economic philo-Semitism during two significant intersections of anti-Semitism: the rise of political anti-Semitism in the 1880's, and the conceptualization and "scientification" of anti-Semitism at the beginning of the 20th century until the First World War. Theodor Mommsen, the great German historian of the Roman Empire, was a confessed philosemite with an economic agenda. The lecture will focus on his opinions presented in his letters at the famous Berliner Antisemitismusstreit in 1879-1880. Lujo Brentano, economist and a devoted liberal of a catholic descent, was a rector of the University of Munich. Although not known today, he was very famous and influential in his lifetime. Brentano participated in the debate regarding the nature and origins of modern capitalism with Max Weber and Werner Sombart. In this debate Brentano presented philo-Semitic position (opposing Sombarts' anti-Semitic perceptions), while claiming, unlike Weber, that the Jews were significant in the rise of capitalism. Focusing on "money" Through this analysis, I wish to enrich our understanding of the economic image of the Jew, and its role as a symbol and code for modernization and its tensions.

**Robert L. Cohn (Lafayette College)**

### **Kielce and the Postwar Future of Jewish Life in Poland**

From the perspective of Polish Jews who had lived through the antisemitism of the interwar years and survived the Holocaust, it was not clear that Jewish life could not resume in a new Poland liberated from the Nazi yoke. On the



contrary, the rapid reorganization of Jewish economic, cultural, and religious life after the war with the sanction of a communist-dominated government in which some people of Jewish origin played leading roles testifies to the hopefulness and positive expectations of many Jewish survivors. As late as June, 1946 the Central Committee of Polish Jews declared itself fundamentally opposed to emigration to Palestine or western countries, because it believed that its efforts were bearing fruit. Its journal, DAS NAYE LEBEN, announced, "The wave of Jews leaving the country is drying up." One week later the Kielce pogrom erupted, and hope took a nosedive. The rapid flow of emigration thereafter, despite efforts to staunch it, contributed to a post-Kielce Jewish conviction that the collapse of Polish Jewry was inevitable. In this presentation I will examine memoirs of survivors of the massacre (e.g., Raphael Blumenthal, Yitshak Zuckerman, SEFER KYELTS) and reports of travelers to Poland in 1946 (e.g., S.L. Shneiderman, Joseph Tenenbaum, Shimon Samet) in order to compare perspectives of insiders and outsiders on the significance of Kielce and the future of Jewish life in Poland.

**Joshua Zimmerman (Yeshiva University)**

### **The Polish Home Army (AK) and the Jews during the Second World War**

The Polish Home Army (Armia Krajowa) was the largest underground military resistance organization in Nazi-occupied Poland. The clandestine organization (which, until 1942, was called the Union for Armed Struggle) constituted the official military wing of the occupied homeland's underground civilian administration, or Delegatura. The head of the Delegatura, who was chosen by the Polish government-in-exile in London and known as the Government Delegate, acted as the chief link between the occupied homeland and abroad.

Through this chain of command, the London Polish government theoretically directed military actions inside occupied Poland. The AK's commander was subordinate to the Polish Armed Forces' commander-in-chief in exile, a member of the London government's cabinet. Particularly after July 1943, with the death of the London government's prime minister and commander-in-chief, Władysław Sikorski, the AK began to act on its own. With the tacit approval of the new commander-in-chief in London, General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, the AK increasingly operated independently of the new prime minister, Stanisław Mikołajczyk. Inside occupied Poland, the Delegatura was dominated by the four main prewar Polish political parties: the centrist Peasant Party, the right-wing National Party, the left-wing Polish Socialist Party, and the Christian democratic Labor Party. With over 300,000 men and women by the beginning of 1944, the Home Army was also broadly representative of Polish society with a membership that came from all social classes and the main political parties. When the German occupying authorities launched the Final Solution to the Jewish Question in the spring and summer of 1942, the organizational initiative for responding to the genocide fell almost entirely upon the Polish Underground and its military wing. The response of the Home Army to the systematic annihilation of Polish Jewry is both complex and controversial. I propose to give a talk on this topic and reveal my current research findings on the attitude and policies of the Polish Underground to the destruction of

European Jewry on Polish soil.

**Barry A. Kosmin (Trinity College)**

**Towards a Typology of Public Policy Responses to Anti-Semitism and Judeophobia, 1876-2006**

The documenting of the nature, content and tropes of prejudice and discrimination against Jews has been the major focus of most studies of antisemitism. Focusing on how and why people are nasty to Jews or wish to remove or eliminate them has taken center stage in academic as well as popular literature. In contrast surprisingly little attention has been paid to analysing how sympathetic public authorities and Jewish communal agencies have tried to combat the various manifestations of antisemitism in society and remedy the negative situation. This paper will take an international perspective and attempt to model the various ways, strategies and approaches that public and Jewish organizations have adopted to eradicate this problem. What is the relationship between problem definition and policy response? How far has the diagnosis of the underlying cause of the problem influenced the policy solution? These modes of response have varied according to historical circumstances and political and sociological realities. Counter action has tended to bifurcate between integrationist and segregationist approaches and specific and general legislation. This has been true across most realms of political and social life in most countries irrespective of whether the response is led by communal agencies or by public authorities.

**Abstracts for Session 5**

**Monday, December, 18, 2006 08:30 AM-10:30 AM**

***Session Number: 5.1***

**Session        The Danish Cartoons and the Holocaust Analogy**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Jack Kugelmass (University of Florida)**

**Judith L. Goldstein (Vassar College)**

**The Danish Cartoons and the Holocaust Analogy: The Case of Iran**

The panel-“The Danish Cartoons and the Holocaust Analogy”-proposes to archive and to analyze the widely varying responses unleashed in reaction to what have become known in the press as the Danish Cartoons. The response to the Danish cartoons demands an examination of them as a way into understanding what has been constructed, and then criticized and deconstructed, as a “clash of civilizations.” This panel engages in particular the widespread deployment of the Holocaust in discussions of the Danish Cartoons. Among the more striking consequences of the controversy over the “Danish” cartoons was the call for a graphic “counter-offensive”: a contest by a large-circulation Iranian newspaper for cartoons mocking the Holocaust. The contest is related to the recent Iranian claims (and announcement of an international conference to prove) that the Holocaust is a fiction. This paper

will explore how the Iranian contest might be understood as an internal strategy with contemporary national rationales against the background of the history and culture of the Iranian Revolution. The paper's main focus will be on Iranian religious imagery of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What can we learn about the response to the Danish cartoons from the perspective of contemporary Iranian religious visual culture?

**Jeffrey A. Shandler (Rutgers University)**

### **The Holocaust: An Analogy and Its Discontents**

Jeffrey Shandler, Rutgers University AJS 2006 Conference Paper Abstract  
The Holocaust: An Analogy and Its Discontents In contemporary American public culture, the phenomenologization of the Holocaust has prompted numerous comparisons, including other genocides both after (Cambodia, Yugoslavia, Rwanda) and before (Armenia, American Indians) the Nazi era, as well as an array of large-scale social crises, (the nuclear arms race, abortion, AIDS, global warming, African-American slavery). The wide range of phenomena claiming to be "another Holocaust" suggests that it is the Holocaust's enormity and notoriety that inspire comparison more than particular circumstances. Holocaust analogies pose particular challenges for those American Jews who regard it both as of universal importance and as a nonpareil. While they often welcome public invocations of the Holocaust as a moral model for social action (most recently in responses to reports of genocide in Darfur), they do not always consider these comparisons apt and dismiss some (e.g., Palestinians' characterizing their treatment by Israelis as "another Holocaust") as pernicious. In the 1990s, American public culture has become a strategic proving ground for making Holocaust analogies. Television broadcasts pointed up the limitations of these undertakings, notably news analysis of ethnic cleansing operations in the Balkans and the fallout surrounding the documentary film "Liberators," which linked the Holocaust with the civil rights struggles of African Americans. An exhibition on American detention camps for Japanese Americans during World War II provoked similar controversy simply by being titled "America's Concentration Camps." My paper will examine the American discussion of the "Danish" cartoons and the counter-offensive of Iranian cartoons mocking the Holocaust in light of this larger issue. Debating the Holocaust's symbolic value via cartoons has special implications, engaging a longer history of addressing the Holocaust and its remembrance through forms of "low" culture and through humor. Thus, even as they seek to repudiate the Holocaust and its symbolic force in Western culture, the Iranian cartoons draw their creators, if unintentionally, into Western discourses on propriety of representation and proprietary rights to representation that have informed Holocaust mediation since its inception over six decades ago.

**Session Number: 5.2**

**Session Jewish Cultural Studies: Subfield or New Frontier?**

**Session**

Inspired by the growth of cultural studies broadly conceptualized by the "Birmingham School" as "interrogations" of power relationships and mediations

enacted through culture, a number of scholars since the 1990s have explored the applicability of cultural studies to Jewish issues. Widely scattered across disciplines and countries, many leading scholars of Jewish studies such as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Matti Bunzl have often voiced in publications and presentations the view that the circumstances of the Jewish subject demand a new integrative field, one that is distinct from “cultural studies” and traditional disciplines. A landmark in this movement is the creation of the “Jewish Cultural Studies” series, edited by Simon Bronner and published by the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. It is the first series specifically devoted to Jewish cultural studies and features an editorial board covering several continents and disciplines (e.g., anthropology, sociology, comparative literature, folklore, history, religion). The goal of the series is to bring together scholars working in Jewish cultural studies across the globe and explore the ways that Jewish identity has been constructed, perceived, expressed through culture—both by Jews and non-Jews. With this impetus, a roundtable discussing the implications of a Jewish cultural studies movement will address the overarching questions suggested by Jewish cultural studies. What are the goals, theories, and methods of a Jewish cultural studies? How is Jewish cultural studies distinct from cultural studies and Jewish studies and is it counter or interdisciplinary? Is there a religious-secular dichotomy in Jewish cultural studies and are there especially compelling topics within the field/frontier? Is it a contemporary or historical pursuit? What is its future? The roundtable has representatives of several countries and disciplines, including at least one from the “Birmingham School” in England, one from Israel working in comparative literature, one from America in anthropology and queer studies, another from performance studies, and one from folklore and history.

**Chair, Simon Bronner (Pennsylvania State University)**

**Matti Bunzl (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)**

**Sander Gilman (Emory University)**

**Galit Hasan-Rokem (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (New York University)**

***Session Number: 5.3***

***Session***        **Jewish Political Theology: Hermann Cohen, Alexander Altmann, Hugo Bergman, Martin Buber, and Jacob Taubes**

***Session***

The members of this panel will examine some of the principal theories and figures associated with German-Jewish political theology. Political theology, much discussed in 1930s Germany, was an attempt to reconsider statehood from the perspective of Christian and Jewish theology. We hope to extend the boundaries of political theology to encompass far more than the cultural crises it initially addressed in both contexts, treating it as a more positive and rebellious discourse. From the perspective of intellectual history, Jewish political theology has escaped most of the institutional discourses of the mid-twentieth century by forming alliances with its intellectual enemies and drawing

the most radical conclusions. All four papers focus on individual founders of German-Jewish political theology: Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber, Hugo Bergman, Alexander Altmann, and the controversial Jacob Taubes. All of the authors demonstrate that the concept of political theology developed as an attempt to resolve the problematic dialogue between Judaism and the outside world. However, in contrast to past historiography, all of the authors trace an open-minded and ambiguous dialogue between the two sides: as Jacob Taubes liked to say, political theology was constructed with the help of its opponents. Leora Batnitzky notes similarities between the legal positivism of Hans Kelsen and the legal philosophy of Hermann Cohen. She shows that Cohen and Kelsen's effort to make law the center of their theory was rooted in Cohen's claim that Kant suffered from a "Pauline prejudice." Thomas Meyer focuses on the earlier career of Alexander Altmann, showing that in this period his writing already showed a deep fascination with Jewish political theology. Exploiting unpublished materials, Meyer connects those earlier texts to such controversial thinkers as Martin Heidegger and the Protestant theologian Karl Barth, among others. Nitzan Lebovic will explore the long relationship among Hugo Bergman, Jacob Taubes, and the right-wing extremist Geulah Cohen. Lebovic intends to show how German-Jewish political theology connected three very different people: a humanist professor from Prague, a controversial critic from Zürich and Berlin, and a nationalist activist in Jerusalem. Finally, Martin Trembl assesses the baffling personality and writings of Jacob Taubes, a figure who has recently received attention in English-speaking countries as the author of *The Political Theology of Paul*. Trembl's argument will develop from an open exchange between Taubes and Martin Buber, to the more esoteric exchange between Taubes and the Nazi "crown jurist," Carl Schmitt.

**Chair, Eugene Sheppard (Brandeis University)**

**Nitzan Lebovic (UCLA)**

**German-Jewish Political Theology: Humanism (Bergman), Critique (Taubes), and "Heartless Politics" (G. Cohen)**

In 1972 Hugo Bergman broke his ties with Geulah Cohen. For two decades the first rector of Israel's Hebrew University had alternated between battles and truces with his student, the radical right-wing activist who, more than any other figure, inspired the settler movement. In the letter Bergman wrote to convey his irreconcilable differences to Cohen, he did not criticize her political actions as much as her philosophy—specifically, her take on Jewish political theology and the concept of *Malchut* (a Hebrew word meaning kingdom, both earthly and heavenly). Bergman compared Cohen's nationalism to the Italian Fascists' ideas about the state—but without denouncing either the fascists or Cohen. Rather, he insisted that Cohen's frame of thought operated within a "heartless" realm where Jewish ideals were abandoned. Against Cohen's emphasis on *Malchut*, Bergman emphasized the Talmudic *Kiddush haShem*. The relationship between Hugo Bergman, humanist philosopher, and Geulah Cohen, radical activist, began early in the 1950s. At that early date, their conversations already involved talk of Jewish political theology. And there was

a third party to the debate, Jacob Taubes, a brilliant but “unpleasant” scholar who came to Jerusalem from Switzerland. At Bergman’s recommendation, Taubes had sought Cohen out to discuss Malchut and how it operated in her political theology. This was thirty years before Taubes’s Political Theology of Paul, but the correspondence already incorporated most of its fundamental principles. Bergman’s interest in such unlikely and unsympathetic figures as Cohen and Taubes grew out of his determination to apply Jewish political theology to philosophical critique and to his version of “religious Zionism.” In my study of this fraught triangular relationship I will rely on many documents that have never before been cited, and that demonstrate the importance of the relationship to all three parties.

**Martin Trembl (Center for Literary Research, Berlin)**

**Political Theology as a Jewish-Christian Predicament: The Case of Jacob Taubes**

Jacob Taubes (1923-1987) baffled scholars for a long time. Best known as a professor of philosophy at the Free University in Berlin, he was first trained as an ordained rabbi at a traditional Yeshiva in Zurich. During the 1980s, upon his arrival to the then-divided Berlin, Taubes was able to form an extensive intellectual and cultural center, and to bestow an aura of cosmopolitan life to the divided city. But his extensive erudition and intellectual skills—drawing from both traditional Jewish sources and modern philosophy-- came at the expense of a great controversy which nicknamed him the “arch-Jew.” It is only typical that Taubes himself made the name. An explicit critic of norms, he held Carl Schmitt—the “crown Jurist of the Third Reich”-- to be “a legitimate Catholic anti-Semite”, as well as one of his most important partners in a politico-philosophical exchange. This puzzling relationship, much like Taubes’s own views, adds to the seemingly contradictory elements of his own biography; Taubes, the self-designated “left extremist,” had indeed developed a life-long interest in thinkers of the extreme political right. The same troubling components of his vitae can be applied to Taubes’s rhetoric and style: What he himself called “les extrêmes se touchent” cannot be taken en face. A closer look would reveal such sardonic statements to be more delusive than revealing, and to cover over Taubes’ very focused notion of political theology. In the present paper I seek a different path of interpretation, than the one used by past historians and thinkers. It is my meaning to place Taubes’s work between the work of Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss and Martin Buber—the paradigmatic Nazi legal code and modern Jewish “prophecy”-- using a correspondence that was ignored up to now. It is my aim to present Taubes’s thinking in the context of a strongly distorted Jewish-Christian attitude, after the Holocaust. Moreover, in order to restore political theory back to its previously firm theological basis, Taubes had to find the path back to the prophetic or the messianic rhetoric. I will conclude by drawing attention to the growing relevance of such discourses to the recent discussion of a new and a universal Islamic radicalism.

**Leora F. Batnitzky (Princeton University)**

**Hermann Cohen and Hans Kelsen**

This paper considers the conceptual relation between one of the first proponents of legal positivism Hans Kelsen (1881-1973) and the neo-Kantian Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen (1842-1918). While there has been some work on some of the technical aspects of the relations between Kelsen's thought and Cohen's Marburg neo-Kantianism, this study explores the ways in which Cohen's effort to make law the center of his ethical theory is rooted in his claim that Kant had a "Pauline prejudice" in his construction of law. Cohen believes he is offering a "Jewish" corrective to this Pauline prejudice, which involves showing that law is not, as most Protestant readings of Paul, including Kant, would have it, intrinsically coercive. This paper examines some of the ways in which Kelsen's theory of law in general and his theory of international law in particular may be conceptually related if not indebted to Cohen's Jewish theological corrective of Kant. While the respective philosophies of Cohen and Kelsen are not usually considered under the rubric "political theology," this paper concludes that perhaps they should be since a concept of law without coercion developed by both can only be made intelligible in light of historical debates about Paul.

**Thomas Meyer (University of Munich)**

**Alexander Altmann: The Portrait of an Intellectual as a Young Man**

Alexander Altmann's early essays can be read as an answer to what Karl Jaspers called once "The Spiritual Situation of the Time". In his "Metaphysics and Religion: The problem of absolute transcendence" (1930), Altmann interpreted the works of Karl Barth, Ernst Cassirer, Friedrich Gogarten, Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl, and Max Scheler. For him, the new philosophical and theological theories of the time presented the opportunity to reformulate a "Jewish theology". A fundamental idea of this new theology was that "religion and reality will not be experienced so much as two opposite areas of Being but as two potencies in a state of dynamic tension." Still, Altmann's later articles--after 1933-- were expressing more than mere theology; behind all intellectual debates stood a form of life, offered as a possible solution for the Jewish people, struggling to survive the turmoil of the time. From this perspective, Altmann wrote a *Motivgeschichte* shaped as an amalgamation of methodological innovations drawn from Heidegger's "Being and Time" (1927) and "What is Metaphysics?" (1929), as well as from Julius Guttmann's "Philosophies in [not 'of'] Judaism," in an attempt to find a path leading to a comprehensive matrix of intellectual efficacy ("Wirkungszusammenhang") of the present. Altmann used different discourses since his first writings: the discussions about "dialectical theology" (Barth) and "political theology" (Leo Strauss, Gogarten), the question about "Jewish theology" and "Jewish identity", the role of orthodoxy in contrast to liberal or conservative Judaism, and most cohesively, the ongoing debate about the relationship between philosophy and theology. The early essays form much more than a quick exercise. They display Altmann's erudition and deep scholarly respiration not only within Jewish studies, but as a prominent historian of ideas. They prove to have been consciously stylized and exhibit Altmann's intellectual boldness, incisiveness, and veracity. Following Altmann's first anniversary (born 16th

April 1906) I would like to emphasize the brave stand Altmann took during the 1930s, a claim I intend to demonstrate and support by the use of unpublished

**Session Number: 5.4**

**Session Public Faces, Public Places**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Ezra Cappell (University of Texas at El Paso)**

**Donald Weber (Mount Holyoke College)**

**The Claims of Memory in Contemporary British and American Drama**

In its largest concerns my proposed paper for AJS explores a familiar literary-cultural theme: the unmoored, unsettled Jewish self in search of a site of stability, a zone of balance, in an alien--and alienating--world. What I hope will be original in this paper is the juxtaposition of contemporary US and UK dramatists who at first glance might not be imagined as fruitfully situated together. I'm thinking of David Mamet and his explorations of Jewish identity in *The Old Neighborhood*, his famous mid-1990s trilogy, part kitchen drama, part memory play, about (in part) the lacerations of Jewish American experience. Along with Mamet, I'm thinking of the British playwright Patrick Marber's (of *Closer* fame) *Howard Katz* (2001), a mourning play about a middle-aged mogul haunted by grief (the protagonist begins his psychic journey with an act of transgression, wiping his sweaty face with a yarmulke). Finally, I'm thinking of the filmmaker Mike Leigh's recent *Two Thousand Years* (2005), about a culturally-assimilated family of North London liberal Jews thrown into upheaval by the "return" of the prized (grand)son to orthodoxy. In one key vignette, we witness the troubled Josh wrapping his arm. Is he shooting up heroin? No, he's laying tefillin in secret. The deeper dramatic genealogy for figures like Mamet and Leigh includes Arthur Miller, Arnold Wesker (especially his "kitchen sink" dramas of the 1950s, in turn inspired by *Odets*, about Jewish British political life), and Harold Pinter. To thicken the matrix of influence and inspiration I'm sketching, Pinter directed Mamet's *Oleanna* at the National; and Marber directed the British premiere of *The Old Neighborhood* in 1998 at the Royal Court. Beyond these fascinating vectors of relation, I want to explore how Jewish memory troubles Mamet, Marber, and Leigh; in the process, I want to show how this complex cultural troubling issues in powerful dramas sounding the costs of alienation and acculturation, the pull of nostalgia, above all the claims of Jewish memory. Viewed together, the paper argues for some striking correspondences and connections among an important group of contemporary playwrights engaged by the vexing issue of

**Vivian B. Mann (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Berend Lehmann, J. P. Morgan, and the "Met"**

Behrend Lehmann, J. Pierpont Morgan, and the "Met"

Vivian B. Mann The Jewish Museum and The Graduate School of JTS  
Until 1986, the house of Behrend Lehmann (1661-1730)--SCHUTZJUDE to Friedrich I of Prussia, and later Court Jew and Polish Resident to Augustus the Strong--stood in Halberstadt. Nothing is known of its original furnishings, and



nothing but photographs and one painting survive of the architecture and art Lehmann commissioned for Jewish communities: the Halberstadt klaus established in 1703, the city's synagogue dedicated in 1712, or the Torah scrolls and Torah ornaments, and ark curtains given to synagogues in Halberstadt and other communities. Until now, Lehmann's artistic legacy could be experienced firsthand only in the new edition of the Talmud begun in 1696 at the press of Michael Gottschalk in Frankfurt on the Oder, and in the ceremonial cup presented by the Jewish community of Halberstadt, to Friedrich I in 1703, the WELTALLSCHALE. This presentation followed Friedrich's permission to establish the klaus, and Lehmann's success in persuading the ruler to allow the recitation of the Aleinu prayer, which had been forbidden elsewhere. This paper will discuss another ceremonial cup associated with Behrend Lehmann, one that is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the gift of J. Pierpont Morgan in 1919, and will demonstrate that it was created for Lehmann in 1723. Two registers of decoration cover the cup--reliefs of the twelve sons of Jacob accompanied by their names engraved in Hebrew, and signs of the zodiac. This iconographic scheme is a simplified reflection of that of the WELTALLSCHALE, presented by the Halberstadt community to Friedrich I earlier. The order of Jacob's sons does not follow any biblical source, but the placement of three of the figures and their names suggest the reason for the apparent randomness of the arrangement. Reading from right to left are Yissakhar, Jehuda, and Levi. The Judeo-German spelling of Jehuda is in marked contrast to the biblical spelling of all the other names and, together with the names flanking it, spells Yissakhar [ben] Jehuda [ha]Levi who was known as Behrend Lehman. On trips to Europe, J. P. Morgan bought numerous art works that he later donated to museums. It is ironic that Morgan, known to have been an antisemite, was the donor of one the Metropolitan Museum's dozen or so pieces of Judaica.

#### **Donny Inbar (Graduate Theological Union)**

**My Yiddishe Mammy: Ethnic Masks in The Jazz Singer and The Human** Eight decades ago, Samson Raphaelson's short story "Day of Atonement," about a cantor's son who betrayed his father's legacy in favor of American show business, but who took off his "blackface" mask and returned home to atone and sing Kol Nidrei on Yom Kippur services, was adapted into a successful Broadway play, and later turned into the sensational "first talking and singing motion picture" THE JAZZ SINGER. THE JAZZ SINGER, as well as the life story of its star Al Jolson (himself a cantor's son), have been continually remade in Hollywood, while the motif of the cantor, or cantor's son, who crosses the lines and chooses the profane at the expense of the sacred, became a powerful embodiment of secularization and conscience conflicts, and nurtured numerous works of prose, dramas and films in Yiddish and English. The issue of the "blackface" as a mask that constitutes a crucial phase in the Jewish rite of initiation into the "white" world has also been studied (e.g., by Michael Rogin in BLACKFACE, WHITE NOISE: JEWISH IMMIGRANTS IN THE HOLLYWOOD MELTING POT or Ellen Schiff in FROM STEREOTYPE TO METAPHOR: THE JEW IN CONTEMPORARY DRAMA). Did

the dark makeup, known as “blackface,” indeed do its magic? Did the Jewish comedians wear it in order to turn white once they took it off? Doesn't Coleman Silk, the closeted African American protagonist of Philip Roth's THE HUMAN STAIN, choose in fact a fairly parallel path? Doesn't the black scholar wear a “Jewish mask” in order to become white? I will argue that silk strives to gain his “whiteness” through a process not dissimilar to that of THE JAZZ SINGER. The proposed paper will give a new reading to Roth's controversial novel (and its film adaptation, starring Anthony Hopkins in “blackface”), as a sophisticated “remake” of THE JAZZ SINGER. Is this, once again, the same story, only inverted? Does it end tragically because the inversion is impossible, or due to the changing times? How are we to compare the paths of Jew->black->white and black->Jew->white? If, indeed, there were such equivalents, where would Colman Silk find his redemption? Donny Inbar is a doctoral student at GTU in Berkeley, specializing in Yiddish Theater. A veteran Israeli editor, theater professional and the former Israeli Cultural Attaché to the Pacific North West, Inbar translated into Hebrew several plays and works of verse and prose, among them THE HUMAN STAIN.

**Session Number: 5.5**

**Session Commentaries, Supercommentaries, and Unfriendly Commentaries**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Naomi Grunhaus (Stern College)**

**Martin I. Lockshin (York University)**

**Rashbam and Rashi: Who is Expanding on Whom?**

One of the most vexing issues in Rashbam studies is the problem of “Rashi” material that apparently reappears in Rashbam's Torah commentary virtually verbatim. If, as seems likely, Rashbam assumes that his readers know Rashi's commentary and if, as also seems likely, Rashbam is building upon and arguing with Rashi at almost every step of the way, why does it appear to be the case that Rashbam inconsistently copies out large chunks of Rashi's commentary and includes it in his own? Touitou has advanced a radical theory that suggests that much of the doubled material—that appears in both commentaries—may actually have originated in Rashbam's work and was added to Rashi's by copyists. The problem of doubled material in biblical commentaries goes well beyond Rashbam and Rashi. This paper will include a few general comments about the nature of the problem of doubled commentaries and some specific remarks about what one can learn about the relationship of Rashi and Rashbam from a careful study of their exegetical works.

**Eric J. Lawee (York University)**

**Sins of the Fauna: A Midrashic Idea and Its Interlocutors**

Though produced in France, Rashi's Commentary on the Torah traveled far and wide in the Jewish world. Among the responses that it elicited, the supercommentary literature that came to surround Rashi's work stands out.

Sefardic writers created most of this literature's medieval stratum. My paper highlights a "hispanizing" trend in the Rashi supercommentary genre as its center of gravity shifted from late medieval Iberia to early modern northern and eastern Europe by following the fate of a single midrashic gloss of Rashi in the early modern Ashkenazic supercommentaries on his work. According to the gloss, Adam mated with "every [species of] beast and animal" prior to Eve's creation. Almost to a one, Rashi's medieval Ashkenazic successors understood his gloss on Adam and the animals literally. Spanish supercommentators devised a reading of it according to which Adam's acts of intercourse with beasts were cognitive, not carnal. The paper illustrates both widespread acceptance of the Sefardic approach to Rashi's midrashic gloss by early modern Ashkenazic supercommentators and stiff resistance to this approach in some corners of the Ashkenazic domain. It thereby serves as a case study in cross-cultural interactivity as it has at times played out the neglected supercommentary literature on Rashi's classic of biblical interpretation.

**Daniel J. Lasker (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)**

#### **Karaite Interpretations of Classical Rabbinic Texts**

From its inception, Karaism has responded to Rabbinic texts and fashioned its own identity in opposition to those texts. Gradually, however, Karaites co-opted much of Rabbinic Judaism, including its authoritative works. Whereas Karaites in the first centuries of Karaism generally cited only those Rabbinic works which they wished to oppose, later Karaites employed their opponents' classical writings in an attempt to expand their own religious breadth. By the early modern period, Karaites were almost as likely to cite Rabbinic texts as they were to cite their own traditions. Two examples can be adduced. The late sixteenth-century Isaac of Troki, in his anti-Christian polemic *Hizzuq Emunah*, cites such Rabbanite luminaries as Abraham ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Isaac Abravanel, Abraham ibn Daud, Joseph Albo, Isaac Arama, and others; yet, he mentions not one Karaite source in the whole book. Only when he turned to anti-Rabbanite polemics in a separate composition, did he cite specifically Karaite sources. Simhah Isaac Lutski (1716-1760) was a very prolific writer who was enamored with Kabbalah. His writings are full of Rabbinic sources, both Kabbalistic and others, which he accepted as part and parcel of a joint Jewish tradition. An examination of Karaite use and interpretation of Rabbanite compositions will indicate the extent to which these texts were used, on the one hand, as foils for Karaism, and, on the other hand, as sources for Karaite inspiration. An analysis will be made of the extent to which Karaite interpretation is tendentious or represents an honest effort to understand classical Rabbinic texts.

**Ofra Tirosh-Becker (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

#### **Characteristics of the Embedded Rabbinic Material in the Treatises of the Karaite Scholar Yeshu'a ben Yehuda**

Yeshu'a ben Yehuda, also known as Abu al-Faraj Furkan ibn Asad, was a Karaite scholar of great stature. This savant, who lived in Jerusalem in the eleventh century, was one of the prominent leaders of the Karaite community.

Like other leading Karaite scholars in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Yeshu'a cited from Rabbinic sources in his important writings. However, his willingness to adduce from Rabbinic works significantly surpassed that of other Karaites. The breadth of his citations from such sources clearly testifies to his comprehensive knowledge of Rabbinic literature. In this paper we will discuss the unique characteristics of the citations embedded in Yeshu'a's treatises, which were adduced from an extremely broad range of Tannaitic and Amoraic sources, including the Mishnah, Tosefta, various Halakhic Midrashim, Babylonian and Palestinian Talmudim, and Aggadic Midrashim. He cited later sources as well. His mastery of Rabbinic literature is attested by the numerous Rabbinic passages he quoted, including lengthy ones. It is noteworthy that several Halakhic Midrashim were cited only by Yeshu'a. Furthermore, in his works one finds passages from a lost Midrash, and early evidence for passages that reached us only in later Rabbinic sources. Yeshu'a's writings were mostly preserved in high quality manuscripts, written in either Hebrew or Arabic script, and include Arabic transcriptions of numerous citations. Many of the Rabbinic quotations found in Yeshu'a's writings are punctuated, and some even exhibit a unique combination of Tiberian, Babylonian and Arabic punctuation signs. Moreover, Rabbinic quotations accompanied by accent marks were found exclusively in manuscripts of Yeshu'a's treatises. The accent system employed in most of these manuscripts is the 'Standard Tiberian Accent System', also known from Rabbinic sources. The citations embedded in Yeshu'a's treatises reflect linguistic features, found in the best Rabbinic manuscripts and oral reading traditions of the Mishnah. The quality of the Rabbinic material cited, together with the aforementioned characteristics, suggests that Yeshu'a may have had access to high quality Rabbinic manuscripts. Indeed it is known that Yeshu'a maintained close relations with the Jerusalem Rabbinic community of his time.

### ***Session Number: 5.6***

#### **Session        The Meaning of Place: Case Studies in American Jewish Identity**

##### ***Session***

This panel session will present three different urban case studies of American Jewish experience. Each paper will explore one period in the life of a particular Jewish community with an eye to deepening our understanding of how distinctive local histories come together to shape a shared American Jewish experience. In the process, these papers on Cincinnati, San Francisco, and Atlanta will take up a number of the specific questions identified as being of particular interest in this year's call for papers in the area of Modern Jewish history in the Americas. Stuart Rockoff's paper on Atlanta considers the startling development of that community in the postwar era – pondering whether "Southern" Jewish identity can carry any particular meaning within the context of a homogenizing cosmopolitan urban environment. Mary Ann Irwin's study of WWII-era and postwar San Francisco considers how pressure on the Jewish community to provide services that crossed religious, racial, and ethnic lines and thus extend the services of Jewish-run benevolent, educational, and

recreational programs to all, ultimately undermined Jewish communal goals. She particularly explores the ideas and methods behind Jewish community services to local youth and how these efforts to create inter-group cooperation sometimes had unintended, arguably disastrous, consequences. Karla Goldman's study of Jewish identity in nineteenth-century Cincinnati looks at how some of the earliest and central institutions of American Reform Judaism developed in part as a way to position Cincinnati's Jews within the complex social, religious, and racial culture context of their particular urban community.

Taken together, these papers will offer important perspectives on the extent to which American Jewish experience has been defined by the communities in which it has been lived. Did the institutions, trajectories, and accomplishments of Jews in Cincinnati, Atlanta, and San Francisco in these different time spans reflect a generalized Jewish ethnic experience or were they shaped by the particular urban environments in which they emerged. These three case studies will illuminate both the particular texture and the broader patterns of American Jewish history.

**Chair, Eric L. Goldstein (Emory University)**

**Stuart A. Rockoff (Institute of Southern Jewish Life)**

**Looking Away from Dixie: Southern Jewish Identity in Sunbelt Atlanta**

Historians have long debated the regional distinctiveness of the South, and scholars of southern Jewish history are now engaging in a similar discussion. Are southern Jews more like their gentile neighbors or their co-religionists in other parts of the country? How much of the "southern Jewish experience" is actually the small-town Jewish experience? How has the South changed in the "sunbelt era," and what effect has this had on the region's Jewish population? A strong sense of place has long been a cornerstone of American southern culture. Historically, Jews who settled in the South integrated themselves into the local economy and society, and embraced their identity as southerners. Atlanta's short-lived Yiddish newspaper, the *Southern Vegvayzer*, included the Confederate flag on its masthead in the early 1900s. Southern Jewish identity has been shaken by the demographic changes in the Jewish South since World War II. At a time when the Jewish population of the United States has stagnated, and by some accounts, even declined, the Jewish population of the South, even excluding Florida, has doubled since 1960. Nowhere is this growth more evident than in Atlanta, Georgia, which had 16,500 Jews in 1968, and over 100,000 in 2005. Some of this growth is attributable to the movement of small town southern Jews to the booming capital of the "sunbelt" South, but mostly it reflects the recent arrival of northern Jews. Few Jewish children raised in Atlanta today speak in a southern accent, once a universal signifier of southern identity. A 1996 survey by the Atlanta Jewish Federation found that only 26% of Atlanta Jews had been born in the area. In a region where attachment to place has been central to identity, what are the implications of a Jewish community in which the majority is from outside the region? Is Atlanta still a "southern Jewish" community? My paper will examine the changing Jewish community of Atlanta as a way to explore the nature and persistence of southern Jewish identity.

**Karla A. Goldman (Jewish Women's Archive)**

**Public Faith and Private Virtue: Cincinnati's American Israelites**

At the intersection of east and west, north and south, nineteenth-century Cincinnati served as an early incubator of American Jewish life and identity. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, prosperous Cincinnati Jews strove to establish patterns and institutions that would define a universal American Judaism. Led by the indefatigable Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, they ultimately created the first long-lasting federation of American synagogues and the first successful American institution for rabbinical education. Wise's nationally distributed weekly newspapers, in English (*The American Israelite*) and German, likewise facilitated the creation of a shared national Jewish conversation and culture. Through these efforts Cincinnati Jews significantly influenced the shape of Judaism and Jewish identity throughout the United States. This paper will examine the ways in which Cincinnati's urban environment may have contributed to this impact. Perhaps Cincinnati's institutional activism should simply be ascribed to the generative leadership of Isaac Mayer Wise. Yet Wise could not have succeeded without the unparalleled civic and financial commitment of Cincinnati's lay leadership to the creation of national Jewish institutions. Their efforts reflected their belief that the establishment of a well-respected public faith was the best way to secure the general community's respect for their own individual and collective private virtue. The sense that impressive leaders and institutions could garner respect from non-Jews was not of course unique to the Queen City. In Cincinnati, however, Wise and others moved quickly beyond gratitude for acceptance to insistence that a proud Jewish presence was fundamental to the liberality and pluralistic vibrancy that made Cincinnati an embodiment of enlightened civilization. The hyperbolic rhetoric that accompanied the creation of Cincinnati's impressive Jewish institutions drew upon familiar cultural tropes of citizenship, manhood, race, and civilization. This paper will carefully explore the meaning of the language of whiteness and civilization as deployed by Jews in this liminal urban space between north and south. It will consider what it was about this particular cultural space that may have facilitated the creation of these national institutions and whether the existence of these entities continued to shape a distinctive future for Cincinnati's Jewish community.

**Mary Ann Irwin (Independent Scholar)**

**Jewish San Francisco and the Inter-Group Relations Movement, 1940-**

"Place" was a key factor in the efforts of Jewish men and women to create community in San Francisco. Through the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, San Francisco was one of, if not the most, important American city west of the Mississippi River, as well as a flash point for many of the great economic, political, and social revolutions of modern American life. In the nineteenth century, the Gold Rush brought German Jewish immigrants west and enabled many to become civic leaders. Accepted into the city's social, political, and economic structure, and guided by the Reform ideals of Americanism and assimilation, Jewish leaders demonstrated their citizenship

through inter-group, inter-faith cooperation, especially in the area of community service, for example by founding a Jewish hospital that accepted Gentile patients, or by working with Christian neighbors to organize kindergartens, oversee the local charity organization society, and create California's Juvenile Court system. This paper considers the continuing importance of location in the period 1940-1960, when community life in San Francisco was transformed by World War II, changing racial demographics, new patterns in women's education and employment, and the growing influence of non-conformist ideologies, including those of civil rights leaders, Beats, and hippies. Jewish San Franciscans responded by broadening and expanding the practices and programs of existing institutions. For example, during the war years, Jewish organizations staged recreational events that brought together Jewish and non-Jewish servicemen, war workers, and community members. Ironically, however, efforts to maintain the tradition of inter-group cooperation seemed to undermine Jewish presence as a distinctive local community. Looking again at the war years, when inter-group socializing resulted in romance and inter-marriage, as sometimes happened, Jewish San Francisco's insistence on cross-cultural cooperation seemed to undermine Jewish identification and group loyalty. This paper examines how post-war social, political, and demographic changes pressured local Jewish leaders to expand services across religious, racial, and ethnic lines. I look particularly at programs geared toward local youth to show how Jewish efforts to create inter-group cooperation could have unintended, arguably disastrous, consequences. I need an LCD projector to display graphic illustrations of San Francisco's changing demography, as well as images of Jewish recreational, educational, and social activities for youth, student demonstrations, and San

***Session Number: 5.7***

***Session            Gendering Jewish Musics: Liturgy and Performance -  
Performing "Jewish Music": Gender, Tradition, and***

***Session***

In Judaism, religious music traditionally follows the dictates of HALAKHAH, allocating liturgical repertoires and Hebrew texts to male musical practice, paraliturgical repertoires and vernacular texts to female practice, and prohibiting men against listening to female voices (KOL ISHA). However, these widely acknowledged gender divides should be assessed in view of the fluidity of traditional observance and its confrontation with modernity. The study of traditional religious Jewish music presents us with several instances in which male and female roles are intertwined, either through the passing of texts and melodies from women's repertoires to the men's, and vice-versa, or by the implicit synergy of men and women in the realization of liturgical and other musical events. While confronting gender divides, however, study in this area also confirms their persistence and adaptability to modernity. The advent of the Reform Movement in Europe since the late 18th century gradually challenged traditional gender roles in Jewish liturgy. Women's voices eventually found an independent space within the synagogue, in choirs, as soloists, instrumentalists and composers. It is only in North America, however,

that women's liturgical responsibilities became sanctioned with the ordination of female Cantors by the Reform and Conservative movements. Outside the liturgical sphere, the public presentation of "Jewish music" by traditional performers and contemporary artists offers a high degree of fluidity in the description of age-old gender barriers. Male and female repertoires are often performed across traditional divides, as acts of artistic creativity and/or as actions of sexual politics, aimed at confronting, re-affirming, challenging or changing tradition. The double panel on Gendering Jewish Musics: Liturgy and Performance explores the complex issue of gender relations in Jewish music, considering repertoires, texts, languages, venues and performance practices in the Americas, Europe, Israel and India. In Session B, Performing "Jewish Music": Gender, Tradition and Innovation, the interaction between gender divides and musical performance is taken to the next step. Amy Horowitz examines the dimensions of gender and sexual identity in Israeli MIZRAHI music. Natasha Zaretsky explores gender issues in the uses of music as memorial practice by the "Gebirtig Chorus" in Buenos Aires. Finally, Judah Cohen offers an overview of the role of female performers in the "new" Jewish cultural scene.

**Chair, Francesco Spagnolo (American Sephardi Federation)**

**Amy Horowitz (Ohio State University)**

**Gendered Voices in the Mizrahi Music Mix**

Studies of Mizrahi music – a genre called by many names and configured by ever shifting aesthetic, commercial, and social boundaries – have focused on ethnic, political, economic, socio-musical, and geographic forces. Issues of gender and sexual identity have received far less attention. This paper explores the recent collaboration between Yehudit Ravitz and Ahuva Ozeri as an entry port for a much-needed critical analysis of how women voice and re-voice the contours of this popular Israeli soundscape.

**Natasha Zaretsky (Princeton University)**

**Performing Memory: Gender and Social Change in the Buenos Aires Gebirtig Chorus**

This paper examines the intersections of memory, gender and social change in the performances of the Mordechai Gebirtig Chorus of Buenos Aires, a Yiddish chorus that formed in the wake of the 1994 bombing of the AMIA (the Argentine Jewish Mutual Aid Society). The attack killed eighty-five people, wounded hundreds, and destroyed one of the main centers for Jewish life and history in Argentina, forcing Jewish Argentines to question the meaning of their citizenship and the possibilities of continuing Jewish life and practice in the country. Protest movements formed to fight for justice and the memory of the victims, while other community groups turned to cultural practices as a way to respond to the violence and the crisis of belonging that ensued. The Gebirtig Chorus was one such group that turned to the community's European Jewish past to address the destruction and loss of the attacks. Founded and composed largely by women, the 150-members Chorus sings Yiddish songs of resistance from the ghettos of Eastern Europe as a source of inspiration for moving forward. Its performances in public spaces invite us to expand our



notions of social change and resistance, and consider the transformation of traditional genres for new uses. Presenting ethnographic research and life history interviews with choir members, this paper analyzes the performances and weekly rehearsals of the Gebirtig Chorus as key sites for exploring the role of gender in the memorial practices arising after violence, the mobilization of those memories for social change through performance, and the negotiation of their place in the Argentine nation and within the Jewish community.

**Judith Pinnolis (Brandeis University)**

**Kol Isha: The Lost Voices of Jewish Women Singers**

In the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, Jewish women musicians found themselves relegated to the sidelines within Jewish worship despite Emancipation and the emergence of Reform Judaism. Not finding venues for the creative talents of singers, many turned outside the synagogue and Jewish community to classical music and Western culture. Long before women like Fanny Mendelssohn focused their musical lives within the confines of 'private' salons, Harriet Abrams (1758-1822) sang publicly in London with Haydn accompanying her at the piano. This paper will examine the musical roles of European and American Jewesses, and focus on several singers, one of whom, Julie Rosewald (1847-1906), became the first woman to become a cantorial soloist within Jewish worship services in an established synagogue in America in the late nineteenth century. Later, in the first part of the twentieth century, Jewish women musicians expanded their horizons and sang for all America, such as Estelle Liebling (1880-1970), who toured with John Philip Sousa's band and became a teacher of a generation of Metropolitan Opera stars; Rosa Raisa (1893-1963), who sang in the Chicago opera; Lina Abarbanell (1880-1963) from Berlin, who dazzled New York; Anna Shomer Rothenberg (1885-1960), who collected Yiddish songs and devoted herself to Zionist causes; and Hulda Lashanska (1890-1974), who enjoyed a recital career devoted largely to charitable work. Although these Jewish women singers did perform in the public arena, many names have faded into obscurity or are largely unknown to today's generation. In their own day, these women enjoyed all the pleasures of fame and the considerable freedom of the concert stage.

**Respondent, Mark Kligman (HUC-JIR)**

***Session Number: 5.8***

***Session*      *Jewish Presence, American Art***

***Session***

Upcoming

**Matthew Baigell (Rutgers University)**

**Jewish Artists and the Garment Trades: Then and Now**

This paper surveys images made by Jewish artists of garment works from ca. 1900 to the present. These include sweatshop scenes and strikes in the earlier part of the 20th-century and images of the ways such scenes later in the century have been remembered and have become part of the individual artist's identification and Jewish memory within his or her family. Artists include

a few nameless cartoonists early in the 20th century, Man Ray (who rejected his family's connection to the garment trades), William Gropper, Ken Aptekar, and Carol Hamoy. This paper will locate the artists and their images in their historical moment and draw appropriate conclusions concerning their relationships to this trade that was so closely associated with Jewish

**Susan Chevlowe (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Working Space, Sacred Space: Workers Reading Room and Discussing the Torah, Two Paintings by Max Weber**

The American painter Max Weber (1881-1961) is best known as a pioneering cubist artist. He was born in Bialystok and settled with his family in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in 1891. By the end of the second decade of the 20th century he returned to figurative painting and also began to explore Jewish subject matter. In 1939 Weber was simultaneously engaged in painting both themes of workers and of rabbis and Talmud students at study. This paper seeks to bridge the seeming divide between these secular and religious subjects. Weber's DISCUSSING THE TORAH (1939) had been preceded by his seminal 1934 painting THE TALMUDISTS. As he wrote, "I was prompted to paint this picture after a pilgrimage to one of the oldest synagogues of New York's East Side. I find a living spiritual beauty emanates from, and hovers over and about a group of patriarchal types when they congregate in search of wisdom in the teaching of the great Talmudists of the past." The link between the workers reading and the patriarchs studying Torah has its origins in the artist's childhood as mediated through the then contemporary Lower East Side as a site of nostalgia for the European Jewish past as well as a response to current events in Europe. Like R.B. Kitaj, who posed the rhetorical question: "Can anyone doubt that we are fatally rooted in the first part of our life?" Weber's own "Diasporist painting...is enacted under peculiar historical and personal freedoms, stresses, dislocation, rupture and momentum" (FIRST DIASPORIST MANIFESTO). Weber's Uncle's house in Bialystok—where he lived as a child—was converted from a woodworking shop into a synagogue on Friday afternoons. Thus workers who studied Torah were not a fiction but were one in the same for the artist although they could later no longer occupy the same space. Similar in size and color, and with nuanced but important architectural differences in their settings, WORKERS READING ROOM and DISCUSSING THE TORAH are secular and religious pendants expressing Weber's conception of Jewishness, and its relationship to the material and spiritual realms to which he was drawn in the 1930s. While these were not mutually exclusive their visualization remained separate.

Susan Chevlowe Adjunct Assistant Professor Jewish Art and Visual Culture, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York {LCD Projector required because the images are only available in digital form and this is an art history proposal. Many thanks.)

**Samantha Baskind (Cleveland State University)**

**Imaging the Book: Jewish Artists and the Bible in Twentieth-Century America**

Jews constitute an immigrant group that has wielded an enormous impact on

twentieth-century American art. While largely integrated into the American canon with work that fits the traditional narrative, many Jewish artists also created imagery that contradicts their typical work and adds a new perspective to both the canon as well as the artists' individual oeuvres. This paper looks at several well-known Jewish American artists' exploration of a distinctive theme that may surprise viewers: biblical imagery. Indeed, Jewish artists such as Leonard Baskin, Jack Levine, Philip Pearlstein, Larry Rivers, and Nancy Spero pictured biblical stories during a period that dismissed representational content as *retardaire*; at a time when Jews faced keen pressure to efface references to their ethnicity in their art; and in a country without a sustained legacy of biblical art. The output of Jewish artists on religious themes is so great that of the initial American works purchased by the Vatican in 1973 for the new Gallery of Modern Religious Art, nearly half were by Jews (even though they comprise less than three percent of America's population). This paper considers why a group of Jews in the process of assimilating into American culture – whether as immigrants or as children of recently immigrated parents – displayed an interest in this subject.

Although many other Jewish artists privileged the Bible at some point in their careers, such as the sculptors William Zorach and George Segal, and the painters Raphael Soyer and Ben-Zion, time constraints will only permit a representative sample to be examined. Accordingly, my goal is to expand and complicate the canon of American art by pursuing the following questions: Why did these artists exhibit a propensity toward biblical subjects? What does this work have to do with the American art historical narrative? How does this work critique life in the Diaspora and the Jewish American assimilation experience, and what do these subjects tell us about twentieth-century American art and society? By reconfiguring Judaism to make it meaningful in modern America, these Jewish artists tie the past to the present while exploring the customs of their heritage.

**Andrea Pappas (Santa Clara University)**

### **Invisible Points of Departure: Mark Rothko's Christological Imagery and Jewish Identity**

Jewish identity increasingly figures in recent histories of modernism, the discourses surrounding American art, and abstract expressionism. Mark Rothko's *ANTIGONE* of 1940 remains one of his most familiar paintings from the formative years of abstract expressionism: one of a handful of works canonized from his early production; a painting emblematic of his interest in myth and tragedy that prefigures his surrealist works of the mid-1940s. The product of a sudden shift in subject and style, *ANTIGONE* holds an originary status in Rothko's *OEUVRE*, repeatedly drawing the attention of scholars; its traces of Jewishness have nevertheless gone essentially unnoticed. Several studies on paper exist for this painting. The differences between the studies and the finished canvas offer new insights into Rothko's working process and the significance of imagery he considered and rejected, yet they too remain unexamined. In this paper I argue that these changes intersect with the complex negotiations of Jewish identity in diaspora that shaped the formation

of abstract expressionism. Examining the painting in light of the studies preceding it reveals that the figures in the studies engage a potentially “Jewish” iconography, revealing a more strongly Jewish-identified artist than do the classicizing figures that replaced them. This replacement forestalled unwanted interpretations of both the works and the artist’s position in the public world. Attention to Rothko’s creative process shows it to be marked more by refusal, rejection, and displacement than by an exploration of a mythic literature revered for its “timeless” significance. The painting and its related studies reveal that Rothko’s unique process of abstraction through substitution allowed him to develop very early—much earlier than previously thought—a new vocabulary, one he refined throughout the 1940s and which made possible the large abstract paintings of the 1950s that constitute his signature style. This process, developed very rapidly between 1940 and 1943, co-evolved with changes in Rothko’s self-fashioning as a modern artist, specifically with reference to his Jewishness. Jewishness, it turns out, had much to do with Rothko’s turn towards abstraction. LCD projector: images are the primary object of analysis; 2 slide projectors & 2 screens as alternative.

**Session Number: 5.9**

**Session Defining the National Identity through Literature and**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Esther Fuchs (University of Arizona)**

**David C. Jacobson (Brown University)**

**Writing and Rewriting the National Jewish Narrative during the Arab Revolt of 1936-39**

The Arab Revolt of 1936-39 and the First and Second Intifadas of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries were among the most intense periods of violent struggle over Eretz Israel/Palestine between Jews and Arabs. Unlike the periods of the major Israeli-Arab wars, during both periods, the fighting was primarily between Jews and Arabs who were residents of the disputed land. Both sides of the conflict were motivated by the desire to fulfill a national destiny through control of all or part of the land. From the Zionist/Israeli perspective, these periods were generally seen as raising a series of crucial questions about the nature of Jewish national identity in the land, including: present and future security, the physical boundaries of Jewish sovereignty, and a whole range of moral issues related to the exercise of force against the Palestinian enemy. In this paper I will compare how during these two eras the Jews of Eretz Israel constructed and reconstructed the narratives that defined national identity in response to violent conflict with the Arabs of Palestine. One can discern this process of writing and rewriting the national narrative in a variety of sources that comprised cultural production by Jews, including poems, plays, works of fiction, political essays and speeches, editorials and newspaper columns, and public ceremonies. I will present selected examples from both periods that illustrate the ways that the Jews of Eretz Israel have formulated the self-understanding of their national

identity by means of the national narratives they told themselves in order to make sense of their life and death struggle with the Arabs of Palestine. Examples of such sources include: kibbutz Passover haggadot of the 1930s; a commemorative book published by the Labor Zionist daily Davar during the first year of the Arab revolt; the poetry of such writers as Uri Zvi Greenberg, Natan Alterman and Shin Shalom; belletristic works and essays by such writers as S. Yizhar, Yehuda Amichai, Hanokh Levin, A.B. Yehoshua, Amos Oz, Shulamith Hareven, and Etgar Kerrett; political speeches and Israelis by leaders of the yishuv and by prominent Israeli political leaders; and editorials and columns in the daily press.

### **Gideon Nevo (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)**

#### **The Diasporic Other in Natan Alterman's "The Seventh Column"**

The Diasporic Other in Natan Alterman's "The Seventh Column" Gideon Nevo "The Seventh Column" is Natan Alterman's main body of journalistic verse. It was published regularly in the widespread daily Davar from 1943 to 1967, and was avidly read and received. Dealing with all things public, big or small, written with brilliant though totally lucid poetic diction, it earned Alterman unprecedented popularity and prestige among the Jewish population in pre-state Palestine and in the early decades of the Israeli state Alterman's stance vis-a-vis the diasporic Jew in "The Seventh Column" is both representative and singular within the context of labor-Zionism in which he was deeply entrenched and of which he became the main poetical voice. This stance found its expression in two discernible thematic clusters – one dealing with American Jewry and more specifically with American Zionism; the other with the Judenrat. The two clusters are in a way diametrically opposed. Whilst the poems directed at American Jewry, imbued with irony and sarcasm, externalize the deep-seated Zionist animosity and grudge towards the diasporic character of Jewish existence (mirroring the Zionist ideology of 'the negation of exile'), the poems dealing with the Judenrat, marked by intent pathos rising at times to the prophetic sublime, throb with feelings of empathy and understanding. To the down-trodden, desecrated leaders of the Judenrat – who in accepted Zionist thought came to represent the most abhorrent and deplorable aspects of Jewish exilic existence – Alterman offers a warm hand, a gentle embrace. It is the object of the proposed paper to trace the line that connects these two seemingly opposed and irreconcilable positions. This will amount to delineating the unique moral and spiritual portrait of a writer whose ardent Zionism, his peans to the epic struggles, challenges, sacrifices and victories taken on by the new Jew, never blinded him from seeing the tragedy, the suffering and the heroism of the old one.

### **Todd S. Hasak-Lowy (University of Florida)**

#### **Self and Other in Hebrew Literature of the Second Intifada**

Like other watershed moments in Israeli history, Hebrew literature quickly responded to the profound dislocations caused by the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000. By 2002 Orly Castel-Bloom published her novel HUMAN PARTS, which was followed two years later A.B. Yehoshua's THE MISSION OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE MAN and Sayid Kashua's LET IT BE

MORNING. While all three novels revolve around the type of violence that came to characterize this intifada—Palestinian suicide bombing and Israeli military repression of Palestinian and even Israeli-Arabs—each writer also focuses on the shifting terms of Israeli national identity during this period. In particular, all three approach Israeli identity, and even the basic construction of his or her novel as a whole, by addressing the pronounced self/other binarism that came to inform national identity during the first few years of this intifada. The central position of this binarism should come as little surprise when considering the acute polarization of Jewish and Arab identities that followed in the immediate wake of this uprising. Yet when it comes to filling in the details of these abstract categories, each novelist position entirely different individuals in the role of self and other. Castel-Bloom's novel imagines the Israeli body politic as exclusively Jewish, thus relegating not only Palestinians but also Israeli-Arabs to the position of the national other. Both Yehoshua and Kashua challenge such a model of Israeli identity, though each in his own way. Yehoshua, while using a suicide bombing as his point of departure, places a non-Jewish foreign worker at the center of his novel. Kashua, an Israeli-Arab writing in Hebrew, turns the entire binarism on its head, by setting his novel in an Israeli-Arab village and choosing as its narrator an Israeli-Arab alienated from both the Jewish and Arab Israelis communities. In addition to tracing the details of each novel's treatment of Israeli identity during the Second Intifada, I will address the way these writers alternately reflect, reinforce, and resist the new political and social consensus that emerged in Israeli society during this period.

**Adam Rubin (HUC-JIR)**

### **The People of the Book or a People Constructed by Books? The Mobilization of Classical Jewish Texts for Nation-Building in Mandatory Palestine**

There is little doubt that both popular and high culture are largely absent from Zionist historiography, apart from a focus on Ahad Ha'am during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, any history of the Yishuv that ignores the attempt to create a unified national culture during the period of the British Mandate provides an incomplete picture of that society. While the conflict with the indigenous Arab population, social and economic development, and ideological disputes among Zionist leaders were all undoubtedly important, my paper will argue that an exclusive focus on them neglects the no less significant effort to inculcate newly arriving immigrants with of a sense of national solidarity and collective belonging. Zionist "consciousness" was not a given, part of the baggage olim brought with their belongings from Europe, but a project whose contours and content were largely determined by political and cultural leaders of the Yishuv. During the 1930s, these leaders sought to mobilize books grounded in 'aron ha-sefarim,' the classical texts of the Jewish tradition, to achieve *halahah* ('nationalization'), that is, cultural and ideological homogeneity. As I will demonstrate, the publication of the types of books the leadership of the Yishuv had in mind received the enthusiastic support, financial and otherwise, of several of the

most important Zionist institutions in Palestine, including the Jewish national fund, the Jewish agency, and the Palestine Society for History and Ethnography. Indeed, several important Hebraists almost succeeded in founding a third “national fund,” alongside the Jewish National Fund and Keren Ha-Yesod, which was intended to pursue the same goal. My paper explores the dynamics of this project by drawing upon the Italian political philosopher Antonio Gramsci’s notion that the elites of nationalist movements share a common impulse: the desire to establish the monolithic, or in his famous formulation, “hegemonic,” grip of national solidarity and collective belonging over the minds of the masses. Borrowing from Gramsci, I suggest that political and cultural leadership of the Yishuv viewed the publication and dissemination of particular types of Hebrew books as a means of establishing the hegemonic status of a Labor-Zionist national identity among the Jews immigrants in Palestine. The cultural form they used to give shape to their political enterprise was the Torah itself, that is, the sacred texts and traditions

***Session Number: 5.10***

**Session AJS/AAJR Session: Getting the First Book Published**

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Sara R. Horowitz (York University)**

**Phyllis D. Deutsch (University Press of New England)**

**Glenn Dynner (Sarah Lawrence College)**

**Melissa Klapper (Rowan University)**

**Janet Rabinowitch (Indiana University Press)**

***Session Number: 5.11***

**Session Scribes before and after 587 BCE**

***Session***

Recent examinations of literacy and religion in ancient Israel have brought to light the shifting role of scribes in a number of settings. This session will examine the hermeneutical methods, political interests, linguistic style and religious objectives of Israelite scribes in the context of the late pre-exilic period, the Babylonian exile, and the Achaemenid empire. Special attention will be given to evidence for different scribal groups bound to Levitical and Zadokite circles and their presentation of each other in the texts they

**Chair, Marc Zvi Brettler (Brandeis University)**

**Mark Leuchter (Hebrew College)**

**Zadokites, Deuteronomists, and the Exilic Debate over Scribal Authority**

The conditions of exile presented both the Zadokites and Deuteronomists with dramatic challenges to their respective politics and theologies, not the least of which was convincing their exilic audience that either agenda was still a viable vehicle for sustaining the national religion and communal identity. The present study will examine the manner of argumentation deployed by Zadokite and

Deuteronomistic writers and redactors in a variety of texts that are best seen as emerging during the exile, with special consideration given to the compositional subtleties that reveal a deeply hostile relationship that emerged between these two circles of thought. The polemical culture that obtained between the Zadokites and Deuteronomists is most strongly attested in the development of the major prophetic traditions during the exile associated with each group, namely, the book of Jeremiah and the book of Ezekiel, as the shapers of each traditions attempted to lay exclusive claim to scribal authority and compete for the attention of the same audience.

**Jacob Wright (Heidelberg University)**

**Writing the Restoration: Compositional Agenda and the Role of Ezra in** In IMPERIALISM AND JEWISH SOCIETY: 200 BCE TO 640 CE (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001), Seth Schwarz points out that “the centrality of Temple and Torah in ancient Jewish self-definition requires argumentation because it is not a priori an eternal truth of Jewish identity, uncontingent on changing social and political conditions. Rather, it was the result of a long and obscure series of historical processes” (pp. 50-51). In my paper I examine some of these processes by focusing on the role of the scribe in the book of Ezra-Neh. According to my thesis, the final form of this work reflects an incipient tension between Temple and Torah and between the high-priesthood and scribal institutions. Taking its point of departure from Nehemiah’s criticism of the High Priest Eliashib, the authors of the book composed Neh 8 in which the celebration of the seventh month is depicted without reference to the Temple, altar and sacrifices. Apparently because Eliashib had disqualified himself through his contacts with Judah’s enemies, he forfeits his central role to the scribe Ezra. I discuss various problems posed by this portrayal with regard both to its literary and social setting, and then discuss its relevance for our understanding of scribal polemics and agendas in the late Persian and early Hellenistic period.

**Jeffrey Geoghegan (Boston College)**

**The Levites and the Literature of the Late Seventh Century**

the redaction of the pre-exilic Deuteronomistic History is characterized by very specific recurring terminology at regular intervals. These intervals also coincide with details regarding Levites and, specifically, northern Levites. A combined linguistic, geographical, rhetorical and redactional analysis strongly favors the likelihood that the redactor of the DH was himself a Levite of northern heritage. The present paper will discuss the ramifications of viewing not only the Deuteronomist as a Levite, but also the redactor of the Tetrateuch, which possesses similar redactional and linguistic features. Current models of the relationship between the DH and the Primary History will then be re-evaluated, with dramatic implications for the history of Israel’s priesthood and the presentation of kingship in the late 7th century.

**Lauren Monroe (University of Minnesota)**

**A Pre-Exilic "Holiness" Stratum in the Deuteronomistic Account of Josiah's Reform**

The account of the religious reforms of the Judean King Josiah, in II Kings 22-



23, reflects a range of voices and a richly layered textual history. II Kings 23:4-20, which detail the reform measures themselves, are often identified as an independent unit; a "reform report" that either pre-dates the Deuteronomistic account or was added to it secondarily. In this paper I shall identify certain linguistic, thematic and ideological affinities between II Kings 23:4-20 and Leviticus 17-26 that have gone largely unrecognized, and shall posit that underlying the Deuteronomistic text is an account of Josiah's reform that was generated by the so-called Holiness School. This early, 'Holiness' account was appropriated and transformed by an exilic Deuteronomistic Historian who wove it into a history that cast Josiah as the hero of Israel's monarchic history. Priestly elements in 2 Kings 23:4-20 are too fundamental to the structure of the account and efficacy of the reform to be dismissed as secondary accretions. The conclusions reached here regarding the literary-historical development of 2 Kings 23 have an impact on at least three major issues that are central biblical criticism. These are: 1) the identification of Josiah's lost book of the law with some early version of the book of Deuteronomy, and the consequent identification of his reign as terminus ad quem for the introduction of Deuteronomic law in the southern kingdom of Judah; 2) the assertion of a Josianic redaction of the book of Kings; and 3) the temporal, social and institutional relationships between the Bible's H and D sources, and the effect of these on shaping the biblical traditions we have inherited.

***Session Number: 5.12***

***Session        Mixing Theology with Politics***

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Leslie Morris (University of Minnesota)**

**Arye Naor (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)**

**Menachem Begin and Religion: Theology, Policy, and Politics' Rhetoric**

Public policy conducted by Menachem Begin's governments (1977-1983) made a real difference in various fields, among them religion and its place in decision-making and in public discourse. From ordering the observance of Shabbat by El-Al and major industrial workplaces to the general exemption from military service of yeshiva students; from having ultra-Orthodox parties participating in government and in the allocation of public resources through the budgetary process to changing general education values and contents in public schools, the nation underwent a change of historical venue. God was no alien during Begin's term in office, and the premier frequently used the Bible as the ultimate source for Israel's policies vis-a-vis its Arab neighbors. Begin did it in secret communication with foreign leaders as well as in open Knesset speeches and press interviews, making theology the basis for his settlement policy in the disputed Judea and Samaria territories. He also advocated exclusivity of the Orthodox way of conversion to Judaism but withdrew a motion to the Knesset because of American Jewish pressure. This presentation sums up and analyzes these and other developments on the grounds of Begin's

WELTANSCHAUUNG, as developed along his 50 years of public activity and leadership. The main argument is that he developed a system of political theology as a source for legitimacy of his politics in opposition and his policies while in power. He distinguished between public and private spheres in the opposite direction of the Enlightenment period ("Be a Jew at home and a man outside"), moving the Jewish symbols and patterns of behavior outside to the public sphere and using the holy as an instrument of legitimizing the political. As a son of a traditional Jewish family and a student in Polish high school and the Warsaw University he could easily unite religion and nationalism, using faith to promote national goals.

**Stuart Cohen (Bar-Ilan University)**

### **Military Service and the Awareness of "Segmented Identity": National-Religious Conscripts in the Israel Defense Force**

Officially, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) remains committed to its traditional image as a "people's army". Of late, however, Israel's military has begun to make increasing concessions to the diversity of its intake. It generally does so by framing separate personnel policies for different sub-categories of servicemen and women – a spectrum that encompasses mizrachiyim from under-privileged communities, national-religious troops, new immigrants and non-Jewish minorities. Hitherto, studies of that development have addressed its influence on the military's own corporate character. Thus, Levy, Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari analyze the IDF's shift from the embodiment of "a people in uniform" to an agglomeration that provides "different uniforms for different people". By contrast, the present paper examines the impact of IDF personnel policies on the self-identities of the sub-groups themselves. It argues that the military setting, far from acting as a "melting pot", in fact tends to foster what are here termed "segmented identities". The paper focuses on the self-identities of conscript graduates of national-religious high schools in Israel. Members of this group not only enlist in disproportionately high numbers in IDF combat units. Almost half of national-religious conscripts (women as well as men) do so via segregated frameworks that the IDF both sanctions and actively encourages. There now exist over a dozen MEKHINOT TORANIYOT KEDAM TZEVAIYOT (whose students can defer their enlistment for a year of Torah study) and over thirty YESHIVOT HESDER (whose program offers a shortened conscript term interspersed with Torah study). One of the distinguishing characters of national-religious conscripts is the degree to which their special needs and backgrounds have generated a unique genre of literature. Before and during service the student-soldiers (again, women and men alike) frequently communicate publicly, both electronically and by regular mail, with their rabbis in the yeshivot and/or mekhinot. The body of the paper will be devoted to an examination of these materials, whose importance as a source for the analysis of the inner world of national-religious troops has hitherto been overlooked.

**Aaron Hahn Tapper (University of California, Santa Barbara)**

### **From Gaza to the Golan: Religious Nonviolence and the Politics of Interpretation**

“Jews hate Muslims. Muslims hate Jews.” It’s an understatement to call generalizations such as these stereotypes, as they are rampant throughout the world, especially in the Middle East. In Palestine and Israel communities have inflicted violence against one another for decades, often justifying their actions using religiously charged rhetoric. Citing ayat from the Quran or pesuqim from the Torah zealots continue to murder 'others' in the name of God. Jewish Israeli and Muslim Palestinian religious leaders have issued teshuvot and fataawa, respectively, to defend the violence. Yet there are other rabbis and sheikhs who have distributed religious responsa supporting an entirely different theological means to achieve a similar end, one that is extremist in its own right. These leaders endorse nonviolent action as a means of political gain -- nonviolence carried out in the name of God. Rooting their ideologies in passages from the Torah and the Quran they are using religious tenets to raze the walls of perceived political injustice, fighting a battle often construed as political using theology. The hermeneutics of this process is clearly intertwined with politics; the line separating the political and theological character of these beliefs appears nebulous. This study analyzes the boundary that ostensibly separates the political and theological ‘essence’ of nonviolent, explicating the process that encapsulates how distinct interpretations of the same text can – and do -- lead to polar opposite behaviors.

**Michael Galchinsky (Georgia State University)**

### **Israeli, Jewish, Human: Stratification in Israel’s Human Rights**

This paper analyzes the inner dynamics of the emerging Israeli human rights movement in the context of the first INTIFADA. Based on archival documents of Israeli human rights organizations, interviews with some of the principals, and the political science literature on the emergence of domestic human rights movements, it profiles some of the 15 organizations that were established in the late 1980s and examines their varying styles of public justification (e.g., citation of international human rights, halakhah, or Israeli law), their specializations (e.g., the rights of Palestinians in the territories, the rights of Israeli minorities), and their tactics (legal petitions, policy initiation, grassroots campaigns). This paper will analyze the conflict and coordination among (and within) the groups that resulted from their internal stratification. The Israeli government adopted many of the early human rights treaties drafted by the United Nations after 1948, including the major Covenants. Yet, for two decades after the Six-Day War, Israeli civil society did not produce a home-grown human rights movement. The first INTIFADA succeeded in calling attention to the everyday suffering of Palestinians, in reaction to which Israeli Jews formed three different types of monitoring and advocacy groups. Some, like B'tselem, focused on importing and applying international norms to the Israeli practices in the occupied territories. Others, like the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, (one of the only NGOs which pre-existed the INTIFADA) confined themselves to threats to pluralism inside the Green Line, using the secular-liberal language of Israeli law to monitor the civil rights of the state's minorities. Still others, like Rabbis for Human Rights, relegated both

international and national-secular norms to a secondary status, favoring a "Torah of human rights" developed from Jewish tradition to aid activists both inside and outside the Green Line. This division of labor resulted in the establishment of a human rights movement which, in effect, exploited all of the political and ideological potentials available to it: Jewish, Israeli, human.

**Session Number: 5.13**

**Session Ancient Artifacts and Sites in Late Antiquity**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Jed Wyrick (California State University, Chico)**

**Ranon Katzoff (Bar-Ilan University)**

**Rabbinic Law and the Papyri: P.Yadin 21**

There is a growing trend in Jewish historical study of late antiquity to claim that in the second century of this era rabbis and rabbinic tradition, if there was any, had no substantial influence on the lives of Jews outside of the rabbis' own small coterie. One of the arguments used to support this claim is the apparent absence of any reference to rabbinic law in the legal documents found in the Judaean Desert. A specific instance of this trend is the denial of any connection of Rabbi Akiva to the Bar Kokhba revolt, and here too the Judaean Desert documents serve as a supporting argument. Though several scholars have pointed to the continuities between the documents and rabbinic juristic literature, it has been possible to counter that these continuities should not be seen as influence of rabbinic law on Jewish practice but rather as evidence that rabbis adopted popular practice into their law. P.Yadin 21, and its mirror image P.Yadin 22, document a transaction dated 130 CE, in which a Jewish woman, Babatha, sells the crop of her late husband's palm orchards. The price is stated as part of that self-same crop. This odd transaction, not paralleled in Greek papyri, has caused some perplexity among scholars. It is here proposed that P.Yadin 21 is designed as a simulated transaction, a dodge (Daube's Type I), allowing a widow to apply self-help in exercising her rights vis-à-vis her late husband's estate. These rights are those which would have been recognized in tannaitic law at the time of the transaction, particularly in the Halakha stated by Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yehudah, whose views are reflected in other documents of the same find. It is significant that the dodge would make sense in neither Roman nor Greek law. This, then, is a case in which rabbinic jurisprudence affected Jewish practice, not the reverse. Rabbinic law of that period provides a satisfactory interpretative tool for understanding the artifact P.Yadin 21. These documents, then, CANNOT be used to argue that the society reflected in the Judaean Desert documents was far removed from any rabbinic authority.

**Yehudah Cohn (Oxford University)**

**The Qumran Tefillin Reconsidered**

The Qumran tefillin provide a rare window into a second-temple era practice that, it transpires, diverged in significant measure from later rabbinic dicta. Nevertheless, from the earliest days of research into the Judaean desert

tefillin, scholars have tended to view these through the prism of rabbinic literature. The tendency began with the earliest tefillin publications, in the 1950's and 1960's, and has continued unabated. Yadin, in particular, attempted to harmonize the evidence of the tefillin he published with rabbinic tradition. The approach has moved scholarship away from attempting to understand the variety exhibited by the findings. Most recently an article by Nakman, in 2004, went so far as to argue for excluding one of the Qumran tefillin from the corpus, simply because the author was unable to reconcile the contents of this exemplar with his hypothetical reconstruction of early Halakhah. Taking an entirely different approach, the paper will attempt to view the archaeological findings on their own terms. Questions to be addressed include the following: 1) Is there evidence for a proto-Halakhah of tefillin at Qumran? 2) Are some of the Qumran tefillin to be considered sectarian, as Tov has suggested? 3) On what grounds did archaeologists identify certain finds as mezuzot, and is it possible that these were in fact tefillin? 4) Are there other Qumran findings that ought to be considered for inclusion in the tefillin corpus? 5) Can a pattern be detected to the omissions that were observed in the scriptural text of the Qumran tefillin? 6) How is the finding of Deuteronomy 32, in one of the tefillin texts, to be explained?

The answers to these inter-related questions will be used to develop a hypothesis that will attempt to explain how the ritual developed from scripture in the form that it did, and what it meant to Jews who observed it. This hypothesis will be correlated with the evidence for inscribed amulets in Hellenistic society, and for the reception history of the biblical verses that came to be interpreted as calling for tefillin

**Richard A. Freund (University of Hartford)**

### **Incense: From the Tabernacle to the Synagogue? Evidence from Text and Archaeology**

Abstract: Incense was a well known part of rituals in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean. In the myths of the Greeks, Romans, Egyptian Pyramid texts, Phoenicia, Ugarit and Assyria, as well as the Hebrew Bible, incense was a part of the spheres of medicine, religion, politics, economics, and the cultural and social milieu of the ancient world. Incense was apparently used in private homes, in burial (processions?), in public religious ceremonies and although its purposes are well-described in ancient near eastern and even in rabbinic literature, little is known about the Jewish use of incense in the late Roman and early Byzantine periods, especially in synagogue life. Although an incense service was an integral part of the Tabernacle and then later in the Temple service in Jerusalem and a well-formulated series of incense pronouncements appear in rabbinically sanctioned liturgy, it is generally assumed that no official incense service (which included the use of incense) actually continued in the synagogue in the Roman and Byzantine periods. This paper will explore through an analysis of rabbinic literature and archaeological reports about sites (and especially synagogues) dating from the late Roman through the Islamic periods in Israel and the Diaspora, the possibility that a use of incense may have continued in the synagogue through the Geonic period.

**Aharon Oppenheimer (Tel-Aviv University)**

## **Babylon: The Site and Jewish Settlement in Talmudic Times**

Babylon: the site and Jewish settlement in Talmudic times Aharon Oppenheimer Babylon, sited on the east bank of the Euphrates 87 kilometers south of Baghdad, served as the capital of various empires throughout the second and first millennia BCE. Its walls and hanging gardens had been among the Seven Wonders of the ancient World but it was mostly in ruins by Talmudic times. However there was a Jewish settlement in Babylon in Talmudic times. In several places in the city excavations have uncovered Jewish incantation bowls from the Parthian and Sassanian periods. Jewish merchants from other places clearly came to the Babylon market, in itself evidence both of the importance of the Jewish market and the significance of Jewish settlement in Babylon. Talmudic sources mention various remains which impressed contemporary Jews: the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace; the Bridge of Babylon; BE TSANITA DEBAVEL (a variety of ancient palm trees popularly attributed to the time of Adam); the Lions' Den and Fiery Furnace from the book of Daniel, and a synagogue attributed to Daniel. Jews in other parts of the Diaspora and in Eretz Israel did not have such a feeling for 'archaeology:' this was peculiar to the Jews of Babylonia, which sought to present the continuous nature of Jewish settlement in Babylonia from the time of the First Temple. They also believed that the foundations of the SHAF VEYATEV synagogue in Nehardea had been built with stones from the ruins of the First Temple, and that the Exilarchate, which claimed descent from the House of David, had existed continuously in Babylonia from the end of the First Temple period. In other words, the two most important centres of life in Eretz Israel – Temple and Monarchy – had moved to Babylonia. Arab geographers give evidence of Jewish pilgrimages on festivals to Daniel's Lions' den in Babylon; and Benjamin of Tudela says he saw Daniel's synagogue, as well as other sites in the ruins of Babylon, recording 3,000 Jews in his contemporary Babylon. Rav had a special connection with Babylon: halakhah was determined in the district of Babylon (not Sura) according to Rav, and in the district of Nehardea according to Shemuel.

**Michael L. Satlow (Brown University)**

### **Charity and Piety among Jews in Late Antiquity**

In his book *Between Athens and Jerusalem*, John J. Collins notes that several Greek Jewish writings promote a "common ethic" that bypasses the "distinctive laws of Judaism" in favor of a universal morality. One of the stock features of this common ethic, as Collins and many other scholars have noted, was an emphasis on charity. Jewish writers in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, according to the conventional scholarly account, routinely link charity and piety. Whether or not this conventional scholarly account is accurate – a reevaluation of which is beyond the scope of this paper – many Jews of late antiquity did appear to regard charity as a form of piety. Benefaction and votive inscriptions most clearly and unsurprisingly point to the "religious" value that Jews assigned to charitable giving, in these cases especially to communal institutions. Yet less noted is the strength of this "common ethic" in precisely the place that one might expect it to be minimized in favor of "distinctive laws",

the rabbinic literature of late antiquity. My point of departure in this paper is a passage in the amoraic midrash Leviticus Rabbah (25.1-5). This passage appears to accept that most Jews would become scholars, but would instead merit divine approval from their charitable acts, especially toward Torah scholars. Despite the clear self-interest of this passage, it nevertheless suggests that at least in rabbinic eyes many Jews linked charitable giving to piety. A full account of this phenomenon must draw upon rabbinic literature and other Jewish and non-Jewish archaeological and literary works; it would try to embed the particular charitable understandings and practices of the Jews of late antiquity in their social and historical contexts, and to be sensitive to the ways in which the Rabbis both reflected and transformed them to their own ends. The goal of this paper is more modest. Confining myself mostly to rabbinic texts, I will seek to reconstruct the rabbinic understanding of charity and its relationship to piety.

***Session Number: 5.14***

**Session        Modern Hebrew Literature - In Memory of David Patterson**

***Session***

Founder of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, David Patterson had a monumental impact on the development of the study of Hebrew Literature in Europe and throughout the world. This panel pays tribute to his memory by offering papers on the subjects to which his own scholarship made such an important contribution. These include the writing of Uri Zvi Greenberg, the re-emergence of the narrative in Haskalah literature and the reception of the Haskalah in nineteenth-century Europe. The papers will be followed by a discussion of the life and works of David Patterson.

**Chair, Rachel S. Harris (University at Albany, SUNY)**

**Moshe Pelli (University of Central Florida)**

**The Reception of Early German Haskalah in the Nineteenth-Century Haskalah**

One of the most intriguing topics in the study of Haskalah literature, of which the late Prof. David Patterson was a major scholar, is the 'reception' of the early German Haskalah throughout the continued developing Haskalah in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and in Russia, Lithuania, and Poland. We know that at the end of the 19th century, the Berlin Haskalah was severely criticized. However, what is less known is the process that led to this critical position. This paper will examine the attitude of the Maskilim in the Galician period in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, especially by the editors and writers of *Bikurei Ha'itim* (1820-1831), which on the whole was a positive one, expressing an appreciation and admiration for the 'Founding Fathers' of Haskalah. This attitude has begun to change in the 1860s with the emergence of the 'new school' of criticism by Avraham Uri Kovner and Avraham Yaakov Paperna, whose attitude toward the Berlin Haskalah was somewhat ambivalent. The actual change occurred in the writing of Peretz Smolenskin in the 1870s and his vehement criticism of Moses Mendelssohn and consequently of his early followers, the writers who contributed to the first Hebrew journal *Hame'asef*

(1783–1811). At the end of the century, with the changes that took place in Hebrew letters, a full onslaught on Haskalah was manifested in Mordechai Ehrenpreis' writings.

### **Arnold J. Band (UCLA)**

#### **The Expansion of Narrative Potential in the Haskalah**

Since this session is dedicated to memorializing the career of our late colleague David Paterson of Oxford University, we shall concentrate on the area of his greatest scholarly contribution: the expansion of narrative potential in Hebrew literature in the 19th century, especially in the prose of Abraham Mapu. To situate the problem historically, we shall first describe the eclipse of sustained narrative works in late antiquity and their replacement by shorter genres, i.e. midrashim, or interpretive commentaries. Nothing like the epic sweep of the early biblical narrative, or of the Deuteronomistic historians, or even Chronicles is found in post Biblical literature. Indeed, it is only in the 18th century that we begin to find attempts to produce longer narrations. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the two most formidable and seminal works are Wessely's *Shirei tiferet* and Mapu's *Ahavat Tzion* each of which became the model for narrative literary creativity in Hebrew in the 50 or so years after their publications. Though Wessely's work is a massive poem and Mapu's book is a novel, two seemingly disparate genres, the two books together are milestones in the development of Hebrew narrativity in the modern period and should be examined together. By doing so, we shall be more able to identify and analyze such features as the works' provenances and their implications, the logic of plot structure, the development of rounded characters. All these features and others like them are characteristic of modern narrative composition, but singularly absent from any Hebrew writing for many centuries prior to them. Patterson clearly sensed the innovation of these techniques in Mapu, but since he limited his research to prose fiction, he did not go back as far as Wessely's poem which Mapu certainly knew. We believe that joining these two works together in one study will further corroborate the arguments of Patterson's book on Abraham Mapu.

### **Glenda Abramson (University of Oxford)**

#### **Uri Zevi Greenberg's Miraculous Leap**

Even before the Holocaust Eastern Europe was being characterised by Jewish writers as the place of hope abandoned. Riven by the First World War and intent on the renewed post-war persecution of the Jews, Eastern Europe had already begun the long process of their elimination which was to culminate in the Holocaust. There were few more evocative commentators on the dark nature of Europe, and the deep chasm between the yishuv and Europe than the Hebrew poet Uri Zevi Greenberg. Greenberg emigrated to Palestine in 1923, finally leaving Europe, "the kingdom of the cross", after having served in the trenches of the First World War. The poet, who saw himself as a traditional prophetic voice at the same time as a pipe-smoking modern sophisticate in Berlin, says an ambivalent farewell to Europe and the European Jews. As part of his army service Greenberg travelled through Serbia and Albania and made a point of stopping in Dulcingo, a solitary village in Albania



where Shabbetai Zevi was buried. He identifies strongly with Shabbetai Zevi and composes his own epitaph to him. In this paper I discuss Greenberg's identification with both Jesus and Shabbetai Zevi. While he expresses his bitter disappointment in Shabbetai Zevi's capitulation to Islam and the failure of his "unmiraculous" messianic vision, he nonetheless admires him. Through a reading of some of Greenberg's early Hebrew poetry, including a section of the dialectical Kefitzat haderekh, I explore Greenberg's identification with Shabbetai Zevi both as an outcast and as a non-European Jew, in contrast to Jesus who paradoxically represents and symbolises the oppressed European Jew, the Christian oppressor and sometimes the poet himself.

**Anne Golomb Hoffman (Fordham University)**

**Formative Encounters: Patterson, Agnon, and the Spread of Hebrew Literary Studies**

This paper reflects on the impact of David Patterson's travels in the development of Hebrew literary studies at universities in the United States and elsewhere over the course of several decades. The author's own encounters with Patterson, first as an undergraduate and then in the early years of her academic career, serve to illustrate some of the serendipitous

**Respondent, Ezra Spicehandler (HUC-JIR)**

**Abstracts for Session 6**

**Monday, December, 18, 2006 10:45 AM-12:30 PM**

***Session Number: 6.1***

***Session*      **Women in the Haskalah: Giving Voice to the Silenced****

***Session***

Until recently, both Jewish historiography and literary research considered the haskalah movement to have been an exclusive male preserve. The place of women in this social-cultural-literary movement was conventionally limited to appearances as imaginary figures (some demonized, others idealized) depicted in literature written by men. The historiography of the movement silenced whichever women considered themselves to be part of it. Only during the past decade has historical and literary research begun to reveal the personalities and writings, in both Hebrew and non-Jewish languages, of women who sought to be included in the haskalah movement. Particularly attention has been focused on those who wrote in German at the end of the 18th century and in Hebrew as from the mid-19th century. Contemporary maskilim generally regarded them as curiosities rather than as a group who deserved to be taken seriously as a community of readers and as colleagues in a new revolutionary development. Contemporary historical-literary research into this field has discovered the writings of dozens of hitherto unknown maskilot. These women did not restrict their roles to that of passive readers of haskalah texts. Rather, they intruded into the public sphere of authorship, which was then generally considered to be a male domain. The proposed panel will focus on several of these maskilot and their writings, and analyze

their contribution to the *haskalah* movement as a whole. Natalie Goldberg will discuss the Jewish women in Prussia who at the turn of the 19th century and her lecture will focus on one of the most fruitful women of letters among them: Esther Gad, born in Breslau in the late 1760s. Special attention will be directed towards two of her diverse works, which include original books, articles and poems, as well as several translations. 19th century Hebrew *maskilot* will be the subject of the lectures by Shmuel Feiner and Tova Cohen' who have recently published an anthology (entitled: *Kol Alma Ivriyah*), which includes the Hebrew writings of some thirty *maskilot*. Tova Cohen will ask who was the "Hebrew *maskilah*"? Is it possible to compose a typical biography with whose help we might understand both the causes for the emergence of the phenomenon and the reasons for its neglect in the historiography of the period? Shmuel Feiner will focus on one particularly interesting Hebrew *maskilah*, Toybe Segal, who attempted, in a forgotten article (1879), to

**Chair, Paula E. Hyman (Yale University)**

**Natalie Goldberg (Bar-Ilan University)**

**From the Emancipation of Jews to Women's Emancipation: The Literary Activity of Esther Gad**

The expansion of women's presence in print culture during the eighteenth century is a highly significant development in modern western history. At the turn of the century, a group of Prussian Jewish women joined this trend and engaged in literary activity, securing a place in the European public sphere. This lecture will focus on one of the most fruitful women of letters among them: Esther Gad, born in Breslau in the late 1760s. From amongst her diverse works, which include original books, articles and poems, as well as several translations, two will draw our attention. A German poem dedicated to the inauguration of Breslau's modern Jewish school, established in 1791 under the auspices of the Prussian government, constitutes one of the earliest expressions of public identification by a Jewish woman with *maskilic* ideals and goals. Taking sides with the modernizing faction in the communal quarrel surrounding the establishment of the new institution, Gad urged her coreligionists to acknowledge the historical moment they were living and strive toward their emancipation, employing the new school to become better human beings and useful citizens of the state. By welcoming state intervention in Jewish education and by stressing the need for moral improvement among Jews, Gad was asserting *maskilic* claims, decades before any other Jewish woman openly supported the *Haskalah*. For reasons that may only be surmised, her involvement with this movement was short-lived. As shown in the second publication to be discussed, Gad soon took up the cause of another group to which she belonged: women. In an article from 1798 ("Remarks on Mr. Campe's statements regarding women's erudition"), Gad outspokenly defended women's intellectual and literary capabilities, against claims by the famous and influential German pedagogue Campe and other enlightened thinkers. Fully aware she was joining a European-wide public debate, she used enlightened arguments herself to reject the bourgeois gender ideology that insisted on a dichotomy between men's public and women's private

spheres and denied women any serious intellectual aspiration. Through these and many other works, Gad endeavored to make her preaching true, paving her way in the public sphere as a worthy representative of her sex.

**Shmuel Feiner (Bar-Ilan University)**

### **Toybe Segal and the Forgotten Vindication of the Rights of Jewish Women (1879)**

Women were almost totally excluded from the Haskalah movement, and they were not represented in any of the cultural struggles that excited the Jewish public sphere in 18th Century Europe. Only in the 19th Century women began to seek a place for themselves in the East European Haskalah. The lecture will focus on one of them, who attempted, in a forgotten article, to fight the war of Jewish women's rights, and who may perhaps be regarded as the Jewish Mary Wollenscroft. In 1879, the periodical, *Halvri*, printed an article by Toybe Segal, a young woman of about twenty from Vilna. Entitled "The Question of Women," it was the first feminist article in Hebrew, and it declared a "women's war" against attempts to block women's entry into the heart of the Haskalah movement. There is nothing to expect, the writer said, from the "old generation," who traditionally maintain women's inferiority, but are the maskilim of the "new generation" any better? In their Enlightenment slogans and rhetoric they do advocate the lofty values of freedom, equality and humanism, and yet their attitude towards women is discriminatory and patronizing, and they continue to regard the Haskalah as the sole province of men. Is it possible that "in these times of freedom, the daughters of Jacob will not enjoy independence or breathe the air of liberty, although they also possess the desire and ability to engage in every art and science?" Why have the maskilim not made the education of women a major objective in their Enlightenment project? "Are we but monkeys lacking in human intelligence, so that men will be amazed to find in us some excellence?" Salvation, in Toybe Segal's view, would not come from the maskilim, and so she thought it her duty to infuse women with a fighting spirit: If only women would acquire a proper education and awareness of their power, and if they themselves would understand they must obtain their independence through professional study, then they too will be able to play a role in the Haskalah and to gain emancipation.

**Tova Cohen (Bar-Ilan University)**

### **The Portrait of the Maskilah as a Young Woman**

Until about a decade ago, the 19th century Hebrew Haskalah was considered to be a "male" area, in terms of its authors, its readership and of the subjects that constituted its focus. This assumption lay behind analyses of both Haskalah writings (which rested on a traditional male familiarity with the canonical Jewish texts) and of the sociology and psychology of those who wrote them (see, for instance, such studies as Yisrael Bartal, "'Potency' and 'Impotence': Between Tradition and Haskalah", and David Biale, *Eros and the Jews* [1992]). Hence, it is hardly surprising that biographies of maskilim typically depicted males (S. Verses, "The Maskil as a Young Man"). Recent years, however, have witnessed the emergence of two new research approaches, which modify the unqualified masculinity of this field. One such

new approach is represented by Iris Parush's, *Reading Women: The Benefit of Marginality* (2001). This work depicts the emergence of a "non-Hebrew Female Haskalah", whose marginality allowed it an unusual degree of liberty. The second approach was pioneered by Shemuel Finer in his path-breaking article, "The Modern Jewish Woman: A Test-Case in the Relationship between Haskalah and Modernity" (1993), which contained the very first description of women Hebrew maskilot. Finer and I have further developed this approach in our joint study, entitled "The Voice of a Hebrew Woman (in press), which reproduces writings in Hebrew by over thirty women during the Haskalah period. A study of these writings make it possible to undertake a preliminary sketch of a specifically female Hebrew Haskalah, encompassing the characteristics of both the women writers and their writings. My lecture seeks to provide initial answers to two questions: 1. Who was the "Hebrew maskilah"? Is it possible to compose a typical biography with whose help we might understand both the causes for the emergence of the phenomenon and the reasons for its neglect in the historiography of the period. 2. To what extent does the information that we now possess concerning Hebrew maskilot change the conventional historiography of the period?

***Session Number: 6.2***

***Session***        **New Readings of the Talmudic Writings of Emmanuel Levinas: A Roundtable Discussion with Judith Butler and**

***Session***

The Section for the Study of Modern Jewish Thought and Theology and the Section for Gender Studies are pleased to welcome Judith Butler to the Association of Jewish Studies in a joint session with Daniel Boyarin. Professor Butler is Maxine Elliot Professor in the Departments of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley, and the author of groundbreaking works in the fields of gender and critical theory --including *Gender Trouble* (1990) and most recently *Giving and Account of Oneself* (2005). Among areas of current scholarly interest of concern to her is the critique of state violence as it appears in pre-Zionist, modern Jewish thought. In this panel discussion, Professors Butler and Boyarin will present papers in which they present new perspectives on talmudic writings by French phenomenologist and Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. The panel discussion promises to open out and to illuminate the knotty terrain that is the intersection between Talmud and continental theory in contemporary Jewish thought and Jewish gender studies. As both scholars and activists, Professors Butler and Boyarin have worked hard at the problematization of fixed identity and the blurring of boundaries and borders, particularly in their political and ethical dimensions. Facilitating the panel will be Professor Martin Kavka as respondent, and Professor Claire Katz as chair. Professors Kavka and Katz are themselves established scholars in the work of Levinas and the fields of continental philosophy and gender. The order of participants should be: Judith Butler/Daniel Boyarin/Martin Kavka (respondant).

**Zachary J. Braiterman (Syracuse University)**

**Chair, Claire Katz (Texas A&M University)**

**Judith Butler (University of California, Berkeley)**

**Daniel Boyarin (University of California, Berkeley)**

**Respondent, Martin Kavka (Florida State University)**

***Session Number: 6.3***

***Session*        **Rabbinic Liturgy and Liturgical Figures: Meaning and Social Reality****

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Gail Labovitz (University of Judaism)**

**Yehuda Septimus (Yale University)**

**Address to the Community in Synagogue Berakhot: A Case Study in the Retrieval of Early Rabbinic Liturgical Practice**

The berakhah template and the rules for the formulation of synagogue berakhot were relatively fixed by the end of the Talmudic period. What methods are available to scholars trying to access real liturgical practices – like the way synagogue berakhot were recited – that predate the period of relative liturgical fixity? Recent scholarship has questioned the usefulness of rabbinic literature in the reconstruction of history. This paper focuses on one case of early rabbinic convention which differed significantly from what would later become normative. The paper shows one important way critical study of rabbinic texts can aid in the reconstruction of early rabbinic liturgical practice. In his classic *Prayer in the Period of the Tannaim and the Amoraim*, Joseph Heinemann argues that synagogue liturgy is always directed and formulated toward God; so much so that he completely dismisses a few seeming exceptions to this rule. Heinemann notes with amazement the convert's use of "the God of your fathers" (mBiqurim 1:4), calling the formulation "something absurd, not replicated in any other prayers." Is Heinemann's statement true of the earlier rabbinic liturgy? This paper shows that address to the community in synagogue berakhot was once not as rare and as absurd as it appeared to Heinemann. After citing a few counter-examples to Heinemann's claim, the paper examines a specific blessing that appears to have escaped the eye of liturgical historians heretofore. It further demonstrates the way the subsequent history of that blessing – the way the earlier version of the berakhah was both interpreted and adapted in later rabbinic sources – masks the initial communal orientation of the blessing. The paper argues that other such cases existed but left little trace of their original communal orientation. Beside the liturgical implications of such a convention (a liturgy which addresses the community differs fundamentally from one which addresses God!), the paper demonstrates the usefulness of rabbinic literature in reconstructing how real people once prayed.

**Binyamin Katzoff (Bar-Ilan University)**

**"God of our Fathers": An Investigation into Rabbinic Liturgy**

The expression "God of our fathers" appears in tannaitic literature, although it

is questionable whether these readings are authentic. The expression appears twenty-two times in PT, but not in BT, suggesting that its use became widespread during the amoraic period in Palestine. External evidence is provided by the inclusion of this expression in a Christian prayer, based on the Jewish birkat hamazon, only from the fourth century. We conjecture that such development might stem from the conflict between the talmudic rabbis and gentile Christians who settled in Palestine in the fourth century, who claimed that the chosen people were no longer "Israel in the flesh" but "Israel in spirit." By using the expression the rabbis may have wished to stress that Israel remained the chosen people, hence the genealogical reference.

**Reuven R. Kimelman (Brandeis University)**

### **The Meaning of the Divine Epithets in the First Blessing of the Amidah**

The Meaning of the Divine Epithets in the First Blessing of the Amidah The number and variety of divine epithets in the first blessing of the Amidah is exceptional. The Amidah usually refers to God as God is referred to in blessings or in terms of the subject of the blessing. The question then is what is the subject of this blessing that demands such a plethora of epithets. Moreover, the so-called Babylonian and Palestinian versions differ in some of the epithets. What follows is the Babylonian version with its suggested biblical sources. 1. Blessed are You, Adonai our G-d 2. God of our fathers (Deut. 26:7; Ezra 7:27; 2 Chron. 20:6), 3. God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob (Ex. 3:6,15), 4. the God (called) great, mighty, and awesome (Deut. 10:17, Neh. 9:32), 5. God Most High (Gen. 14:19-20, Ps. 78:35), 7. is creator of all (alludes to Gen. 14:19), 6. who repays good deeds (alludes to Isa. 63:7) 8. And mindful of the good deeds of the patriarchs (based on Lev. 26:45/Ps 106:45), 9. brings a redeemer to their children's children in love 10. for the sake of His name (alludes to Isa. 63:16/Ezek. 20:9). 11. King (Isa. 33:22), Helper (Ps. 30:11/54:6), Savior (Jer. 14:8), and Shield (Deut. 33:29). 12. Blessed are You, O L-rd, 13. Shield of Abraham (Gen. 15:1). It is doubtful whether any single theory can account for all this data. It is not even clear what the subject is nor why this blessing is the opener of the Amidah. The blessing is clearly an amalgamation of themes. This paper will argue that the two elements that have the most explanatory power are the subject of redemption and God's supremacy. God is thus called "The God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" alluding to Exodus 3 where He announces to Moses the imminent redemption of Israel. Many of the other epithets such as supreme god, creator of all/heaven and earth, and king are current terms in the theologies of the Roman Empire to affirm the supremacy of a specific god and are accordingly applied to the God of Israel. Together the point of the blessing is to present the God of Israel as redeemer and supreme. These two motifs reverberate throughout the Amidah.

**Kristen H. Lindbeck (Florida Atlantic University)**

### **The Rabbinic Elijah and Elijah in Later Folklore**

NOTE: If you do not want this paper or have no room for it, please forward it to the coordinator for #17, Social Science, Anthropology, and Folklore - thanks!

I will examine the relationship between the legendary Elijah narratives in the

Babylonian Talmud and those in later Jewish folklore. Many scholars have remarked on how Talmudic Elijah stories resemble folklore. Nah-um Ish Gamzu's journey to Rome, for example, shows how an apparently naive hero triumphs with supernatural help over those who attempt to deceive him. The plot, in fact, clearly follows the narrative structure discovered by Propp in *MORPHOLOGY OF THE FOLKTALE*, strengthening the possibility that it was modeled on the folktales of its time. Dan Ben-Amos, in his *NARRATIVE FORMS IN THE HAGGADAH*, defines Rabbinic legends of the supernatural as stories that describe the temporary abolition of the boundary between the everyday world and supernatural reality. "The supernatural" is broadly defined as the existing realm of God, angels, and miracles on the one hand, and demons and curses on the other. Many Elijah stories, both in the Rabbinic texts and later, fit into two of Ben-Amos's categories for such legends: one in which the supernatural intrudes into natural reality through a mediator; and another in which a "natural" fact or person intrudes into supernatural reality through a mediator. Each intrusion usually addresses an initial lack or an acute or ongoing crisis. I will use Ben-Amos's categories of legends as a framework to compare and contrast these categories of Elijah tales in Rabbinic literature with those in later Jewish folklore, especially as attested in literary/religious texts but also, space allowing, in 19th and 20th century transcription from oral sources. Which categories are more or less common in different eras? Who is the major "mediator," Elijah himself, or those who call on him? What kinds of lack or crises appear? Why is Elijah in particular the chosen protagonist? Naturally, the earlier Rabbinic tales are more likely to deal with religious issues and much more likely to have rabbis as protagonists. Nevertheless, many later Elijah tales have strong religious or moral content, and some Rabbinic stories showcase Elijah as material benefactor. In comparing Rabbinic Elijah legends to later folktales of Elijah one sees both development and clear underlying continuity.

#### **Session Number: 6.4**

#### **Session Yiddish Song and Poetry**

#### **Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Kathryn A. Hellerstein (University of Pennsylvania)**

**Zelda K. Newman (Lehman College, CUNY)**

#### **What the Women Won't Say: An Old Yiddish Purim Poem**

A 4-page Yiddish poem printed anonymously in 1650, entitled "Ayn Sheyn Nay Lid fun Dray Vayber" ("A Fine new Poem of Three Wives"), has no overt Jewish markers. Its language does not give away its cultural identity and its connection to Jewish life is nowhere made explicit. We (Zelda Kahan Newman and Noga Rubin) will present a translation, different in some respects from that suggested by Prof. J. Frakes. We try to show that this poem about three women who go drinking in a tavern (by themselves!) is meant for Purim, and ought to be understood in the light of the Purim desideratum: "Ve-nahafokh hu"- and all is turned upside down. This supposition is strengthened when

the connection of this poem is made to the relevant verse of Megilat Esther. Once this link to the megila is made explicit, this poem will be seen as a story that wonderfully fills in a lacuna of the traditional Purim text. (This paper is co-authored by Zelda Kahan Newman of Lehman College, CUNY, and Noga Rubin, graduate student at Hebrew University.)

**Jan Schwarz (University of Chicago)**

**"Warsaw, 1912": An Analysis of a Holocaust Poem by Aaron Zeitlin**

"Warsaw, 1912": An Analysis of a Holocaust Poem by Aaron Zeitlin Aaron Zeitlin reads his poem "Varshe, 1912" on Abraham Tabatshnik's recordings of the 1955 anthology *The Voice of the Yiddish Poet*. Zeitlin's reading sounds out the intonations of Warsaw Yiddish, Yiddish-taytsh, and the popular song *A brivele der mamen*. Zeitlin's performance of the poem stresses its polyphonic character; it presents a tapestry of voices weaving a collective way of life. The reading is an audio testimonial to a world that is no more.<sup>(1)</sup> Zeitlin escaped Poland in 1939, and witnessed the destruction of European Jewry from the safe distance of New York. His Yiddish Holocaust poetry is modeled on Peretz's artistic credo and rarely uses scriptural prooftexts. Zeitlin viewed his Holocaust poetry as scattered fragments that were inferior to the testimonies of the writers in the camps, in the ghettos, and in the forests. In this paper, I analyze the poem "Warsaw, 1912" which the poet dated December 1945, as a typical example of Zeitlin's Yiddish Holocaust poetry from his collection, *Lider fun khurbn un lider fun gvure* (Poems of Destruction and Heroism, 1967). This section from my book-in-progress (working title: *Yiddish Literature After the Holocaust*) will examine the thematic and stylistic centrality of Y.L. Peretz in "Warsaw, 1912"; the poem's commemoration of his father Hillel Zeitlin, who was killed in the Warsaw ghetto in October 1942; the poem's meta-poetic reflections; the way Zeitlin's New York exile is figured; and the poet's reading of the poem for Tabatshnik's anthology as an example of performance art in Yiddish culture. 1. See my article, "The Voice of the Yiddish Poet: Avrom Ber Tabatshnik's Interview With Yankev Glatshney in New York, 1955," *Yiddish After the Holocaust* (Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, 2004):74-91

**Ester-Basya Vaisman (Harvard University)**

**Yiddish Songs in the Lives of Hasidic Women**

In traditional Jewish communities where the law of *Kol Isha* is strictly observed, women are unable to record or publicly perform songs, so very little is known about what women sing and the context in which they sing. Such Yiddish-speaking religious communities exist in several large cities in the US, Europe and Israel; for this work, the interviews were conducted in Williamsburg and Boro Park in New York and in Mea Shearim in Jerusalem. The interviews with women from Satmar, Ger, Bobov, and Tolner Hasidic communities provide rich insights into the role that songs and singing play in a Hasidic woman's life. They help to understand how the prohibition against singing affects the way women sing, the environment in which they sing, and the content of their songs. The differences and mutual influences between men's songs and women's songs and between Hasidic Yiddish songs and secular Yiddish songs



are also explored. Analysis of outside influences on the songs is used to examine the interactions of different groups of Hasidic women with the outside world. Discussed in this work are several interesting issues that have arisen during the interviews: the correlation between Hasidic group and the woman's perception of secular Yiddish songs, gender differences and the context for singing, and the content of the songs. Women from different Hasidic groups often react in very different ways to discussions of secular Yiddish songs: from complete denial (Satmar) to collecting CDs and records of secular Yiddish music (Ger and Tolner). This difference reflects attitudes toward the outside world of Satmar and other women. The Yiddish songs collected during the interviews fall into three main categories: school songs, camp songs, and songs learned at home. Most of the singing takes place in school and camp, while singing in the home is less frequent. Most of the songs have some level of religious content. There are songs about Jewish holidays, faith, and the role of G-d in the life of the Hasidim. There are also some historical songs, mostly about the Holocaust, as well as lullabies and songs with stories from the Torah.

**Linda (Leye) Lipsky (York University)**

**Nusakh Beyle: Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman's Poetic Mode**

NUSAKH BEYLE: BEYLE SCHAECHTER-GOTTESMAN'S POETIC MODE  
Yiddish poet, songwriter, writer of children's literature and graphic artist, Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman's acclaimed volume of songs, *Zumerteg*, is a *vade mecum* for lovers of Yiddish who find in that language something to sing about.

It is to her poetic oeuvre, however, that I turn my attention in this paper. I contend that her body of work shows an abiding interest in how, as a sentient being, she knows and records the world. Her lists and enumerative catalogues showcase her dogged stock-taking of the phenomenal world. As elaborated through three volumes --- *Steshkes tsvishn moyern* (1972), *Sharey* (1980) and *Perpl shlenglt zikh der veg: Lider* (2002) --- her poetry registers her phenomenological encounter with, her version of, the perceived world. She issues a career-long challenge to her reader: "Who, then, will understand my nusakh?" ("Fun fremder nakht arayn" *Perpl* 127). In this paper I attempt to identify this poetic mode whose voice is by turns enchanted, restless, skeptical, playful and darkly existential. Her mode of artistic expression is at once "folkstimlekh" and belletristic, drawing on an aggregate of folk custom and high modernist precedent. Her poetry is read most fruitfully in the light of her interest in the graphic arts. *Perpl* contains a cycle of ekphrastic poems which describe the paintings' textures, lines, spaces, aspects of representation and abstraction. She is an adept verslibrist whose personal aesthetic includes an autotelic concern with the poem's own devices (see "Eynvortik lid" and "Bergelsonishe struktur" [*Sharey* 12]). This positions her squarely in the varied tradition of Yiddish modernism. Her sense that the world exists insofar as it is "perceived introspectively" is as much an article in the Introspectivist credo as it is a signpost of phenomenological epistemology. While she shuns literary agendas, she enforces many of the axioms in the *In Zikh* manifesto, "Introspektivizm": the private sensual notations which figure a unique

correspondence of word to world; the synaesthetic transference of sense modalities; the kaleidoscopic rush of city images. While Schaechter-Gottesman calls herself "post-Inzikhist" (personal correspondence), she resists their sustained solipsistic perspective, as she does their tortured lyric assertions. She derives her own poetic meaning from the "velt plonter" [tangle of the world] which the manifesto addresses. Beyle Schaechter Gottesman's muse, by her own admission, is exacting, irascible, "blood-sapping" and relentless ("Mayn muze" Steshkes 21). This muse also affords her reader great access to her poetic nusakh and its hitherto unimagined metaphors. Please note that this paper was accepted last year. Unfortunately there was a medical and surgical emergency---my daughter was in the hospital with a bout of septic arthritis--- just before the conference, so I had to withdraw at the last minute. I corresponded with Sara Horowitz and Anita Norich at the time. This new proposal is for the same paper that was accepted last year; I did change the title just a bit, and shortened the abstract.

**Paula Eisenstein Baker (University of St. Thomas, Houston)**

**Jacob Sandler's Eyli, Eyli as adapted by Moshe Shalyt and Leo Zeitlin**  
EYLI, EYLI, LOMO ASAWTONU (My God, my God, why have you forsaken us?) was written by Jacob K. Sandler for the play BROKHE, OR THE JEWISH KING OF POLAND FOR ONE NIGHT, by M. Hurvitch (186?-1931), which was produced in the New York Yiddish theater in 1896. The song's provenance is established by Chana Mlotek and by Irene Heskes, who provides a description of the legal battle that established its authorship. But after its composition and initial appearance, the song was often labeled as a folk song. This talk discusses two examples of the adoption and use of EYLI, EYLI. The first is an arrangement of the song by Moshe Abramovich Shalyt (1875-19??), of the Society for Jewish Folk Music in St. Petersburg, which published his piano/vocal setting EYLI, EYLI, LOMO ASAWTONU in 1910 and reprinted it in 1917. The second consists of two different versions of the song, both of which employ Shalyt's arrangement. The two are by composer Leo Zeitlin (1884-1930), also a member of the society. One version, which will be heard on tape, is an arrangement for voice and string quartet entitled simply EYLI, EYLI that probably premiered in Ekaterinoslav on May 18, 1918. Zeitlin left no score and only manuscript string parts (in five flats) for this arrangement, so in the publication of this work by A-R Editions, Inc., the vocal line is drawn from the Shalyt published piano/vocal score. The other Zeitlin arrangement is for voice and piano with violin and viola obbligato. The obbligato parts appear in two small hand-sewn booklets of half-sheets of manuscript paper comprising five parts for violin and viola. The parts labeled "Eyli, eyli" have the same key signature as Shalyt's published work (two sharps), so we have assumed that they were intended to enhance the piano/vocal version. The arrangement for voice, piano, and obligatos was probably premiered on a concert in Vilna, October 14, 1922, on which bass-baritone Moshe Rudinow (1890-1953) and his wife, mezzo-soprano Ruth Leviash (1890-1990), performed. The viola obbligato was played, no doubt, by Zeitlin.

**Session Number: 6.5**

## **Session Jewish Studies and the Making of Encyclopedias**

### **Session**

This session will address the issues involved in representing Judaism and aspects of the Jewish experience in encyclopedia form. The chair (Schwartz) will foreground the discussion with some brief introductory remarks on encyclopedia making and Judaism in the North America, particularly in relation and reaction to the JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA of 1901-1906. Two of the panelists (Seltzer and Swartz) will discuss their experiences in editing entries on Judaism for the first and second editions of the monumental ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION, originally conceived by Mircea Eliade. Seltzer will reflect on the seriousness with which Judaism and Jewish tradition was taken in this work in relation to the welcoming of Judaism into the college curriculum, the rapid growth of the AJS, and the legitimating of American religious pluralism in general. Swartz will relate the challenges that faced the editors of the 2nd edition of this work in light of the dramatic changes in the study of religion, anthropology, women's and gender studies, post-colonial studies, and hermeneutics that had taken place between the 1980s and the twenty-first century. The third panelist (Baskin) will explore the issues involved in bringing entries reflecting the lives of women and the insights gained by using gender as a category for analyzing Judaism and the Jewish experience into the 2nd edition of the ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA. Steven M. Wasserstrom will respond to the panelist's remarks.

**Chair, Shuly Rubin Schwartz (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Robert M. Seltzer (Hunter College, CUNY)**

### **Judaica in the First Edition of the Eliade Encyclopedia of Religion**

The first edition of the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION, which appeared in 1987, signaled a breakthrough in the treatment of Judaism in comprehensive American reference works on religion. Unprecedented attention was devoted to Judaism in all its phases. Based on my experience as a member of the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION editorial board I will begin by expatiating on the construction of this work in relation to the welcoming of Judaism into the college curriculum, the rapid growth of the AJS, and the legitimating of American religious pluralism in general. I will explain briefly why I was asked to be on the editorial board of the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION less than a decade after I got my PhD in history on one of the most determinedly non-religious figures in modern Jewish thought (Simon Dubnow). In my presentation I will also discuss how we tried to slice the cake of the Jewish religious tradition in various ways, from synoptic overviews of Judaism diachronically and synchronically to detailed descriptions of literary works, rites, and issues. We were especially concerned with aspects of Judaism that we felt had not been adequately treated in works in general encyclopedias (rabbinics, mysticism, and modern denominations), in addition to the Hebrew Bible and medieval Jewish philosophy. Biographical articles include not only the predicable names but talmudic sages, sectarian figures, and modern Orthodox authorities that had been largely ignored in works of this kind. Besides articles replete with information, we solicited "think pieces" that were

intended to synthesize themes in the religious traditions or across them. I wrote the article on the concept of Jewish peoplehood as it emerged and was transformed in the course of Jewish history. Although some of the scholars we wished to have as contributors could not participate, the list of those who wrote articles on Judaica constitutes a substantial percentage of the AJS

**Michael D. Swartz (Ohio State University)**

### **Judaica in the Second Edition of the Encyclopedia of Religion**

In 2005, a second edition of Mircea Eliade's monumental ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION appeared. The second edition, edited by Lindsay Jones, was not merely an updating of the original, but a substantial reworking. The new edition retained the intellectual approach, the basic structure, and much of the text of the original. At the same time, however, it reflected the dramatic changes in the study of religion, anthropology, post-colonial studies, and hermeneutics that had taken place between the 1980s and the twenty-first century. Whole areas, such as gender studies and ecology, that did not appear in the first edition earned important places in the second edition. I was appointed editor for Judaica in the second edition of the ENCYCLOPEDIA.

As coordinator of that field I was able to build on Robert Seltzer's historic achievement in structuring and editing Judaica in the first edition. At the same time, I wished to take account of how Jewish studies has grown and developed over the last twenty years. The years between the 1970s and the present have seen a burgeoning of positions in Jewish studies and, even more significantly, have seen Jewish studies integrated into departments of religious studies, history, comparative literature, and other disciplines. This paper will be an account of how the new edition reflects these changes. It will also be an account of the particular challenges faced for this edition due to the changing status of academic Jewish studies in the academy and community as well as the changes in the corporate culture of publishing in the past two decades. Particular attention will also be paid to the role of religious studies, anthropology, and related disciplines in Jewish studies and how that role has changed since the late 1970s and early 1980s.

**Judith R. Baskin (University of Oregon)**

### **Adding Women and Gender Studies to the New Encyclopedia Judaica**

The ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA was first published in 1971-1972 by Keter Publishing House in Jerusalem and by the Macmillan Company in New York. In 2003, Thomson Gale announced that it acquired the rights to publish a second edition of the ENCYCLOPAEDIA JUDAICA, together with Keter. Thomson Gale declared its intent to update entire sections of the ENCYCLOPAEDIA JUDAICA for the new edition, including the entries on the Holocaust, American Jewry, Israel, and others. Among the "other" areas in which new entries were deemed essential were topics connected with women and gender. A large number of entries in the present EJ were biographies; overwhelmingly, those individuals discussed were male. Similarly, many of the subject matter entries dealt with topics relevant to Jewish woman. On the whole, however, the authors of these entries gave no consideration to women, their lives or their contributions in their discussions. In addition, references to

sexuality and sexual behavior were avoided throughout the encyclopedia. Moreover, in the forty years since work had begun on the 1st edition of the EJ, the roles and impact of women on Judaism and Jewish life had undergone radical changes. Between January 2004 and December 2006 I served as Associate Editor for the 2nd edition of the ENCYCLOPEDIA JUDAICA. My mandate was to focus on identifying articles in the 1st edition that needed to be updated to reflect developments in "gender issues"; to assist the editor in the definition of new articles; and to recommend contributors who might expand older articles and/or prepare new ones. In the end, I commissioned and edited over 500 new, revised, or supplemental entries. In my presentation I will focus on three aspects of this undertaking. The first is the process of determining which entries needed to be revised or expanded in response to the new approaches and insights that the use of gender as a category of analysis has brought to Jewish Studies in the past quarter century. The second topic is the criteria I established for inclusion of new entries, both topical and biographical, and the resources that assisted me in making these decisions. Finally, I will discuss the larger issues of differing ideologies and resistance that emerged in the process of attempting to imprint the impact of gender studies on Jewish studies scholarship in a widely used reference work.

**Respondent, Steven M. Wasserstrom (Reed College)**

***Session Number: 6.6***

***Session*      **Jewish Bytes: Virtual Space and the Digital Medium****

***Session***

What is it about virtual space and digital media that can activate new and different types of thinking about Jewish culture? Given our predisposition to museum space and exhibition venues, how can the virtual space overturn expectations about notions of place? Is there a specificity that we can call "Jewish" virtual space that differs from "real" space? What can we theorize about such a notion? Indeed, can we?

**Chair, Reesa Greenberg (Concordia University)**

**Shelley Hornstein (York University)**

**Splash and Flash! The Man Who Swam into History**

What is a diasporic experience? How can the internet enable a better understanding of peregrinations and bring to the table an articulation of diasporic experience after-the-fact? Can an interactive virtual experience provide a the new consideration of the boundaries of time and place -- by challenging notions of space? The Man Who Swam Into History, by Robert Rosenstone, is a ficto-memoir recounting the family tales of three generations, through a variety of voices. Rosenstone's story is personal but belongs to many of us. As he puts it: The origins of this work lie in a single sentence...that entered my mind one morning...There is a man who comes swimming into history. That man, my father's father, had died thirty years before my own birth. All I knew about him was that single fact...My grandfather had swum the roaring...Pruth River to get to Romania and escape the military

draft in Russia. Only later did I learn that almost every grandfather of every Jewish Romanian claimed the same athletic feat. This web-work is a complement to Rosenstone's book, but it is also a stand-alone project. In it, the wanderings of the picaresque, Chaim Baer and others, in the novel are explored. Imagined, designed and realized for [www.mosaica.ca](http://www.mosaica.ca), this project attempts to tell history through juxtaposed and intersecting spatial and temporal frames. Unlike a "film after the book", here the web-user as the player or hero/heroine can activate new formulations of the experience of stories and places. New narratives and architectures of place are created that are irresolute, erratic and part of a journey of spontaneity on the part of the user. Ultimately, this project, conceived within the specificities of the internet and its episodic possibilities, presents the possibility to negotiate architectonic considerations of virtual space and expand the spatio-temporal dimensions of a would-be diaspora. NB: Powerpoint projector with internet connection

**Jeffrey Feldman (The City College of New York, CUNY)**

**Jewish, Virtual, and Public: New Museums and Netroots**

With an eye towards theorizing the concept of 'virtual' in relation to Jews and Judaism, in this paper I consider a variety of Jewish cultural practices that incorporate new technology, media simulation and the internet. My primary focus will be the Jewish Museum of Bologna, which opened to the public in 1998 as Italy's first virtual Jewish museum. Absent of a traditionally conceived museum collection, the Bologna museum modeled itself after a variety of museums that use multi-media sound and imaging, historic site recreation, and technological art installations. The result is a conception of the 'virtual' that claims responsibility for a particular conception of Jewish cultural production in a European context ill-at-ease with its Jewish past and present. By way of comparison to the definitions of virtuality emergent in new museum projects, I also consider the concept of 'virtuality' as expressed in two internet forums incorporating Jewish culture. The 'Spiritual Progressives Online Conference' sponsored by the Rockridge Institute (May 2005) and the 'Street Prophets' website ([www.streetprophets.com](http://www.streetprophets.com)) have each attempted to construct a virtual space for discussion and social engagement on religion in contemporary society, including Jews and Judaism. Attempting to move beyond analysis of internet narrative interaction, I consider the rules and habits that structure these virtual 'spaces,' including how they emerged, how they operate, and the forms of Jewishness they constitute. Overall, I will argue that virtual Jewish museums and internet projects alike constitute a possibility for creativity and continuity of Judaism, while at the same time re-enacting traditional or non-virtual social relations between Jews and non-Jews. Accordingly, my discussion will conclude with a consideration of Michael Lehrer's new political theology and Marshall McLuhan's principles of media and society. NB: Powerpoint projector and internet connection essential for presentation

**Barbara Rose Haum (New York University)**

**54 Weeks: Text and Time**

54 Weeks: Text and Time, a digital on-line project, will follow the Jewish Calendar for one yearly cycle through its tradition of reading, studying, and

responding to weekly biblical text portions. An exploration of ancient texts in new media, *54 Weeks: Text and Time*, takes the form of an online artistic response in the spirit of midrash. Working with by Internet 1 and Internet 2, multiple artists from diverse global/cultural locations and religious traditions offer contemporary responses to the same text and to one another. Building upon the tradition of Jewish commentary, *54 Weeks: Text and Time* encourages a wide range of artistic interpretations in diverse media and encourages reflection on the role of these texts--and the memories sedimented in them--within the present. NB: Powerpoint projector and internet

**Respondent, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (New York University)**

***Session Number: 6.7***

***Session***        **Gendering Jewish Musics: Liturgy and Performance**  
**Liturgical and Paraliturgical Music: Gender Intertwinings**

***Session***

In Judaism, religious music traditionally follows the dictates of HALAKHAH, allocating liturgical repertoires and Hebrew texts to male musical practice, paraliturgical repertoires and vernacular texts to female practice, and prohibiting men against listening to female voices (KOL ISHA). However, these widely acknowledged gender divides should be assessed in view of the fluidity of traditional observance and its confrontation with modernity. The study of traditional religious Jewish music presents us with several instances in which male and female roles are intertwined, either through the passing of texts and melodies from women's repertoires to the men's, and vice-versa, or by the implicit synergy of men and women in the realization of liturgical and other musical events. While confronting gender divides, however, study in this area also confirms their persistence and adaptability to modernity. The advent of the Reform Movement in Europe since the late 18th century gradually challenged traditional gender roles in Jewish liturgy. Women's voices eventually found an independent space within the synagogue, in choirs, as soloists, instrumentalists and composers. It is only in North America, however, that women's liturgical responsibilities became sanctioned with the ordination of female Cantors by the Reform and Conservative movements. Outside the liturgical sphere, the public presentation of "Jewish music" by traditional performers and contemporary artists offers a high degree of fluidity in the description of age-old gender barriers. Male and female repertoires are often performed across traditional divides, as acts of artistic creativity and/or as actions of sexual politics, aimed at confronting, re-affirming, challenging or changing tradition. The double panel on Gendering Jewish Musics: Liturgy and Performance explores the complex issue of gender relations in Jewish music, considering repertoires, texts, languages, venues and performance practices in the Americas, Europe, Israel and India. In Session A, Liturgical and Paraliturgical Music: Gender Intertwinings and Divides, the traditional roles determined by HALAKHAH are challenged in several areas. In studying the musical world of the Kerala Jews, Barbara Johnson investigates the intertwining of male and female participation in the synagogue and in the

performance of devotional songs. By considering the pivotal time of the Emancipation, Francesco Spagnolo offers new sources on the role of women in Italian liturgical music. Finally, Mark Kligman analyzes how the Orthodox communities construct masculinity while negotiating HALAKHIK gender divides in public musical performances.

**Chair, Chava Weissler (Lehigh University)**

**Francesco Spagnolo (American Sephardi Federation)**

**Doubly Emancipated, Doubly Forgotten: Women in Italian Jewish Music**

This paper investigates the increasing presence of Jewish Women in Italian synagogue rituals at the time of the Emancipation (mid- to late-19th century). Musical and literary sources from this time document the institution of Bat Mitzvah ceremonies since the early 1840's, the activity of women's choirs in several synagogues in the peninsula, the involvement of women as composers and instrumentalists of synagogue music, and a fascinating rabbinical debate on the possibility for women to recite the Kaddish in the synagogue and to be counted in the Minyan. These events took place in a setting that always defined itself "Orthodox." This uncharted documentation is completely ignored or forgotten today by Italian Jews, although ethnographic evidence shows its traces in today's liturgical customs.

**Barbara C. Johnson (Ithaca College)**

**Mother Said "Sing Loudly!": Gender and Song Performance by "Cochin" Jewish Women in India and Israel**

Before migration to Israel, the musical life of Jews in Kerala, South India manifested a complex intertwining of female and male expertise and involvement in the performance of both vernacular and Hebrew songs. In contrast to many other traditional Jewish cultures, women and men sang Hebrew PIYYUTIM together at home and at public festive occasions, and men listened respectfully while women performed Malayalam-language Jewish songs. In the synagogue many women followed the liturgy and Torah readings with knowledge and interest. Though seated separately, they joined the men in singing with full voice. Based on ethnohistorical data and fieldwork, this paper explores musical and cultural elements contributing to such a degree of gender integration/separation in Kerala. It also addresses elements of continuity and change in the gender patterns of musical performance by contemporary "Cochinim" responding to ethnic and religious challenges in Israel.

**Mark Kligman (HUC-JIR)**

**Constructions of Masculinity in the Music of Orthodox Jews**

The featured performers of music in the Orthodox community are men and boys, due to kol isha, women's performances are for women only. Men's performances are for everyone. Noted performers are featured in big ticket venues such as Lincoln Center, Nassau Coliseum, Radio City Music Hall, Metropolitan Opera House and in 2004 a special performance with Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus. A contrasting musical style, to substitute for female voices, is that of Boys Choirs. Performers typically sing in formal



attire with suits and ties (some with a kapote [long black coat]) and black hats. The record album covers and performances project an image of the idealized religious Jew. The music itself typically expresses male experiences and religious male behavior. This is a new medium where negotiating boundaries and appropriateness is a constant dialectic. Various trends and styles specifically depict how masculinity is constructed. Through visual images of recordings and videos, this presentation focuses on the engendering of male religious behavior in performances of new music in the Orthodox community.

### **Session Number: 6.8**

#### **Session      **Visuality and/of the Holocaust****

##### **Session**

AJS 2006 Panel Proposal: *Visuality and/of the Holocaust*   The essays in the panel “Visuality and/of the Holocaust” investigate the intersection of the visual and the traumatic through viewing both Holocaust art and art that was produced by or examines the perpetrators. In “Returning to the United States Holocaust Museum and Memorial: The Tower of Faces Ten Years Later,” Laura Levitt uses Yaffa Eliach’s powerful photographic memorial as a site to examine how the USHMM has changed in the ten years since its inauguration. Levitt engages in dialogue with many scholars who began thinking about the museum when it first opened its doors and examines how our view not only of the USHMM but also of the Holocaust has changed. In “A View from Above: The Hidden and the Revealed in Holocaust Visuality,” Oren Baruch Stier analyzes the “swastika forest”—a series of trees planted in the shape of a swastika by an avid Nazi—and Arie Galles’s 14 Stations—drawings based on aerial views of Nazi killing sites. In both cases a “view from above” allows Stier to engage in a series of reflections about the profound meaning of the forest for Germans and Jews and the tension between erasure and visibility that marks the process of memorialization of genocide. In “Collier Schorr, Susan Hiller, and Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory,” Brett Ashley Kaplan uses the work of two contemporary artists to explore the intersection of landscape and memory in the context of the Holocaust. These three essays work well in concert to frame a discussion of visuality and the Holocaust in diverse artistic projects. James Young will be the respondent and David Shneer will chair the panel.

**Chair, David Shneer (University of Denver)**

**Brett A. Kaplan (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)**

**Collier Schorr, Susan Hiller, and Landscapes of Holocaust Post-**

“The landscape is filled with relics and memories. So many things are buried in the landscape in Germany.” Thus the contemporary Jewish American artist Collier Schorr describes the thickly embedded palimpsest of the current German landscape. As if to excavate some of the buried relics of World War II and the Holocaust, Schorr posed young German men in Nazi uniforms and photographed them framed by this memory-drenched landscape. Her “Forests and Fields” series produces fascinating results, forcing the viewer to confront his or her own position vis-à-vis the enduring presence of the past within the

present; for the images appear as though, in Schorr's words, a "soldier rose up [from the landscape] with that helmet," as though the past were still visibly with us. Schorr's provocative portraits can be fruitfully compared with "J Street Project 2002-2005," the work of a contemporary British artist, Susan Hiller, who traveled around Germany compiling photographs and taking videos of 303 street signs announcing "Judenstrasse"—Jews' Street(s). The harrowing result of capturing the lingering presence of signs where the referents for those signs, the German Jews, are almost universally absent, resonates with Schorr's project of drawing out an implicitly buried aspect of the landscape, as Hiller forces us to reckon with the ghosts palpable within the city and townscapes of Germany now. Thus both artists, whose work I read in the context of my current book project, *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory*, explore traumatic landscapes and encourage us to reflect not only on what happened in places associated with the Nazi regime and its atrocities, but also to reflect on the space between the past and the present, the beautiful and the political.

**Laura S. Levitt (Temple University)**

### **Returning to the United States Holocaust Museum and Memorial: The Tower of Faces Ten Years Later**

Returning to the United States Holocaust Museum and Memorial: The Tower of Faces Ten Years Later Laura Levitt, Temple University After leaving Yaffa Eliach's "Tower of Faces" for the second and last time in the permanent exhibit of the United States Holocaust Museum and Memorial (USHMM), visitors leave the floor devoted to the Final Solution. They are then ushered down to the second floor where they find artist Sol Lewitt's abstract painting "Consequences" painted directly onto the wall in the entryway into the second floor exhibit devoted to what comes next, the aftermath. Lewitt's painting consists of a series of rectangles framed and reframed. The painting's colors echo those used by the museum in this floor plan also on display in this entry space. These two grids—the painting and the museum map—their identical colors and seemingly different messages in fact ask similar questions: Where are we as visitors having gone through the first two floors of the permanent exhibit and where are we in relation to the Holocaust these many years later? For me, the Lewitt suggests a more careful consideration of the various frameworks that have shaped not only what we have just seen but our understanding of the Holocaust more generally. In many ways these questions which became vivid to me on a recent return visit to the museum are, in many ways, at the heart of this brief paper. Instead of thinking about these issues of framing and curatorial logics from within the museum, however, I want to extend these considerations to ask what it means to revisit this particular museum memorial now over ten years after its opening. How do our engagements change over time or through reiteration? How do multiple encounters with the permanent exhibit interact with each other and what kinds of expectations and indeed, meanings do they produce over time? What are we to make of the changes in our own perceptions or experiences of this particular space over time and through repeated engagements with it both

**Oren Baruch Stier (Florida International University)**

**A View from Above: The Hidden and the Revealed in Holocaust Visuality**

A View from Above: The Hidden and the Revealed in Holocaust Visuality Oren Baruch Stier The Holocaust has been represented and imagined in a wide variety of media. In recent years, a number of scholarly monographs and essay collections (by Barbie Zelizer, Dora Apel, Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz, and others) have addressed specifically the manner and modes in which the Holocaust has been represented visually. As research progresses in this area, some tensions have emerged, some of the same ones that concern scholars working in other fields like history and literature, such as the distinction between victim and perpetrator representations, different levels of aestheticization and memorialization, and issues of voyeurism and subjectivity. One issue of particular interest to me is the degree to which a specific visual representation reveals its own story, its own genesis—something that points to a deeper tension between what is hidden and what is revealed not only in the work itself, but also in Holocaust representation in general. In this paper, I wish to highlight these tensions by comparing two projects. The first, the “swastika forest” in Brandenburg state discovered in the 1990s after German unification and finally cut down in 2000, was a 20 square meter grove of larch trees planted in the shape of a swastika, presumably by a Nazi party supporter in the 1930s. It was visible only from the air and only in autumn, when its reddish-brown leaves stood out against the evergreen background of the surrounding trees. The second, Arie Galles’s 14 Stations, is a series of large-scale charcoal drawings based on tracings of aerial photographs of various Nazi killing sites, whose execution involved writing and erasing text from the Kaddish and smudging beyond recognition the traced photographs themselves, only to painstakingly re-draw them. Both projects are linked by a “view from above,” and discussing each one will allow me to connect other related themes, such as the meaning of the forest for Jews and Germans, the significance of the swastika symbol, the motifs of erasure and visibility, religion and memorialization, and artistic practice. Building on James Young’s important work on counter-monuments, I ask how such a “view” can further inform our scholarly reflections.

**Respondent, James E. Young (University of Massachusetts-Amherst)**

***Session Number: 6.9***

***Session*      **Rediscoveries in American Hebrew Literature****

***Session***

American Hebrew literature, which has languished in obscurity for many decades, is now becoming the object of renewed critical attention. The phenomenon is of interest to students of Hebrew literature working in the United States because it provides a kind of native prehistory for the engagement with Hebrew on these shores; in Israel, the work of the American Hebraists becomes important to the attempt to broaden Hebrew literary history to include the “margins” that were directly part of the Zionist narrative of the rebirth of Hebrew literature in the Land of Israel. This session proposes to

explore the works of four writers who deserve to be better known. Tamar Hess's paper on Hillel Bavli will compare his work to pastoral motifs in the poetry of Shaul Tchernichovsky; Wendy Zierler will examine the appropriation of African-American sermons, which are themselves appropriations of the Hebrew bible, in the work of the New Orleans-based poet E. Lisitzky; Michael Weingrad will discuss the fiction of Harry Sackler, whose Hebrew immigrant novel deserves to join better-known examples of the genre in English; finally, Alan Mintz will introduce the lyric poetry of Eisig Silberschlag, a poet and translator whose personal verse featured an erotic liveliness missing from much of American Hebrew poetry.

**Chair, Yaron Peleg (George Washington University)**

**Alan L. Mintz (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**The Persistence of Eros in the Lyric Poetry of Eisig Silberschlag**

Silberschlag was best known for his role as the head of the Boston Hebrew Teachers College in the second half of the twentieth century and as the Hebrew translator of Aristophanes. Yet his lyric poetry, which he wrote continuously from his youth into his very old age, deserves examination. Unlike other American Hebrew poets, S's exposure to European literature, acquired during his sojourn in Austria and France on his way to America, gave him access to alternative poetic models. Whereas most of the other Hebrew poets in America displayed a conspicuous reticence concerning the carnal dimension of man's yearning for love, S was uniquely in touch with this confessional mode and managed to find adequate poetic forms for its expression. The paper will introduce his work and bring examples of his lyric

**Tamar S. Hess (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**"Be'erezt lo li": The Sense of Home and Poetic Legacy in Hillel Bavli's Poems**

Hillel Bavli's works present a strong affinity to Shaul Tchernichovsky's works. Among the explicit expressions of this intimacy one might note an essay devoted to his works in 1925, and the 1943 poem in his memory. This paper will explore Tchernichovsky's presence in Bavli's oeuvre, and focus on two narrative poems: "Mrs. Woods" (1924) and "Sergeiev mi-Kfar Tavor" (1928). Both are monologues of earthy figures, farmers, who introduce their worldview to the urban visitor. In a comparative reading of these poems, along side Tchernichovsky's idylls, and specifically "Levivot", I would like to explore Bavli's concepts of "nativeness" and of home, of America and of the Jewish settlement project in Palestine, and of Jewish self and non-Jewish others. Using Tchernichovsky's model as a backdrop, I would like to ask how did Bavli's poems, as exemplified in these works and in many others (such as the Negivot Eretz visit to Palestine poems of 1926), articulate his experience of a dual home, in the US and in Israel.

**Michael Weingrad (Portland State University)**

**Searching for America: Harry Sackler's Immigrant Novel Between Languages, Between Genres, Between Heaven and Earth**

A suspect but undeniably talented presence among American Hebraists and Yiddishists alike, Harry Sackler found literary success in three languages (he

published in English as well). Tellingly, he began writing his immigrant epic in English, drawing from his own Yiddish prose, and finally published the sprawling five-part novel in Hebrew as *Ben erets veshamayim* (1964). This talk will consider this novel: 1) in the context of Sackler's own unique position among the various Jewish linguistic-ideological camps in America; 2) in comparison with other American Jewish immigrant novels, including the Hebrew novels of Lisitzky, Halkin, and Wallenrod; and 3) as a belated work whose pursuit of America is caught between the genres of immigrant novel, communal chronicle, and personal memoir.

**Wendy Ilene Zierler (HUC-JIR)**

**"On Account of the Cushite Woman that Moses Took": Race and Gender in Ephraim Lisitzky's *Vatidaber Miriam***

Ephraim Lisitzky's *B'ohalei Kush* (1953), a series of poetic re-dramatizations of the biblical stories of Exodus and Numbers from the point of view of blacks in the American South, represents an extended poetic effort on the part of an American Hebrew poet to infuse Hebrew poetry with a distinctly American idiom as well as to take on issues of pressing social concern. This paper will focus on one long poem in this collection, "*Vatidaber Miriam*," which retells the story of Numbers 12 as a Southern American drama of race and class. In Lisitzky's retelling of Miriam's complaint against Moses, the Cushite woman is a black domestic servant who is banished from Moses' household by Zippora when it becomes apparent that Moses' higher born, white-skinned son has begun to show a love interest in her. Upon Zippora's death, Moses rehires the Cushite woman, whereupon Miriam and her female cohorts set out to lynch her on the grounds that once again she is sullyng Moses' pure household with her presence. If at the beginning of the poem, Moses appears to be a forlorn widower who is largely oblivious of racism, by the end of the poem he emerges a Civil Rights Visionary, with God intervening on behalf of him and the Cushite woman and fittingly punishing Miriam's racism with leprosy. Lisitzky's willingness to take on the controversial subject of Southern racism is a fact to be praised; his decision to place the burden of racist guilt solely on the backs of the women in this story shows how Lisitzky's desire to revision the relations between blacks and whites blinds him to the gender issues at stake both in the biblical account and in contemporary American life. A comparison of Lisitzky's poetic rendering of Numbers 12 with poems on this same subject by Yokheved Bat-Miriam (a contemporary of Lisitzky) and Rivka Miriam will show how women poets have adopted different approaches with respect to these race and gender issues. Effort will also be made to place Lisitzky's reading in the context of treatments of race and gender in African American literature by Lisitzky's contemporaries.

***Session Number: 6.10***

**Session      World War II and Its North American Jewish Aftermaths**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Arlene Lazarowitz (California State University, Long Beach)**

**Richard Menkis (University of British Columbia)**  
**Jewish Preparations for "Civvy Street": Teaching Judaism to Canadian Soldiers in Liberated Netherlands, 1944-1946**

With the division of Allied military responsibilities, Canadian armed forces played a prominent role in the liberation of the Netherlands. In the time that Canadians fought in the area and were stationed there, the sad fate of Dutch Jewry—and the rest of European Jewry—became all-too-clear. Canadian Jewish chaplains and other soldiers became aware of the many Jews in small and large Dutch towns who were surfacing from their time “underwater.” Further awareness of the story of Dutch Jewry came with the liberation of Westerbork by Canadian forces on April 12, 1945. Moreover, the stories of the deported Jews found their way back to the Netherlands, sometimes from the mouths of survivors, as well as from the reports and photojournalism from Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald. Many soldiers also saw destroyed buildings where once synagogues had stood, or synagogues that had been desecrated to become Nazi offices, or even stables for horses. In other presentations, I have examined the role of the chaplains as relief workers and information brokers for the survivors, and I have also studied the attempts that the chaplains made to muster support for their activities from the Canadian Jewish community. In this paper, I focus on the attempts by the chaplains to explain the significance of these events to Canadian Jewish soldiers, and more generally to prepare Canadian Jewish soldiers for Jewish life after the war. I will thus examine the themes of the sermons delivered by Canadian Jewish chaplains between the Fall of 1944 and the beginning of 1946, as well as the remarks in newsletters for Jewish soldiers issued by the chaplains. Most of the paper, however, will focus on short “Introduction to Judaism” courses offered by the chaplains in the Fall of 1945. In addition to an examination of the curriculum, I will discuss the impact of the courses on Canadian Jewish soldiers. The soldiers’ impressions are preserved in approximately one hundred “course evaluations” completed by them at the end of the course. In this paper I hope to contribute to our understanding of how Jewish leaders looked to re-present Judaism after the Second World War, as well as the reception of one group of Jews to that early re-presentation. I also intend to offer some insight into the experiences of Jewish soldiers, a topic that has been receiving increasing attention.

**Daniel M. Bronstein (Jewish Theological Seminary)**  
**From Prophets to Patriots: Rabbis, the "Cult of Synthesis," and the Second World War**

From Prophets to Patriots: Rabbis, the "Cult of Synthesis" and the Second World War American Jewry's accommodation of Jewish tradition to American culture is a well-known theme of American Jewish history. But more than simply accommodating Judaism to American majority culture, American Jews and the American rabbinate have long endeavored to establish and reinforce what Jonathan Sarna has termed the "Cult of Synthesis;" the equation of Jewish tradition with that of the rhetoric of "Americanism." Americanism can refer to traits, principles and customs particular to the United States, and

likewise, a preference or devotion to the US and its institutions. Perhaps especially during WW II, the patriotic rhetoric of Americanism permeated every aspect of American culture, whether popular or commercial, and likewise impacted the religious culture of wartime America. American Jewry's claim upon the principles of Americanism often found expression in the rhetoric employed by rabbis serving as chaplains in the armed forces of the United States. This paper will demonstrate how cultural synthesis was particularly important for rabbis serving as chaplains in the US military. Moreover, even beyond equating the ethics and ideals of Jewish tradition with those of the United States, the rabbi-chaplains also argued that the basic principles of Americanism, such as freedom of the individual, civic responsibility and basic human rights, were philosophically rooted in Judaism itself. Cultural synthesis was reflected in sermonic material and in the chaplains' educational and public relations efforts. But arguably the most interesting examples of the wartime Cult of Synthesis are the special liturgies created by the rabbi-chaplains for the observance of Jewish holidays including Passover and Chanukah. In addition to bolstering American Jewry's patriotic image through the rhetoric of synthesis, the chaplains also asserted that Judaism was a precursor of American democracy, and thus portrayed American Jews as the ultimate patriots. On a practical level, the Cult of Synthesis further enabled Jewish practice under wartime conditions and served an ecumenical purpose by educating non-Jews about Judaism. Thus, in furthering cultural synthesis the rabbi-chaplains of the second world war demonstrated the patriotism of American Jewry while also facilitating the observance of Judaism for Jews serving in the military.

**Haim Genizi (Bar-Ilan University)**

### **The American Jewish Committee and Admission of Nazi Collaborators into the United States, 1948-1950**

The American Jewish Committee and the Admission Of Nazi Collaborators into the United States, 1948-1950 Haim Genizi Bar Ilan University The purpose of this paper is to investigate the reasons for the change of the AJC's policy from a passive role as far as the immigration legislation is concerned during the Holocaust – to active lobbying for the enactment of the DP Acts of 1948 and 1950. Furthermore, the paper will discuss the question what the AJC did to prevent the admission of Nazi collaborators among Christian DPs. The American Jewish Committee (AJC) focused its attention during the Holocaust on the growing antisemitism in America and ways of combating it. The AJC objected during the 1930s to any changes in immigration legislation and strongly opposed mass demonstrations, preferring behind-the-scene activities.

After the war the lesson of the mute approach and the divisiveness of the Jewish community during the Holocaust was learned. Therefore, the AJC initiated and was lobbying openly for the enactment of the Displaced Person Acts of 1948 and 1950, which would allow the admission of DPs into America. While the AJC was obviously interested in the admission of 100,000 Jewish Displaced Persons, it was also eager to enhance nonsectarian cooperation with Christian church groups. This basic goal of the AJC, to encourage

interfaith cooperation, weakened its position in negotiations with Catholics and Lutherans concerning the entrance of Nazi collaborators and Volksdeutsche. So, for the sake of interfaith cooperation-- not necessarily related to the DP cause--the AJC withdrew its opposition to the admission of German expellees and even agreed to double their number, despite the knowledge that many of them were indeed Nazi collaborators. This was the case, partially because interfaith cooperation, particularly with the Catholics, was more important for the leaders of the AJC than the admission of collaborators. This paper is based on primary archival sources. I am professor Emeritus of American History at Bar Ilan University, focusing on the attitudes of Church organizations in America and Canada to the Holocaust and its refugees. I am the author of several books, including *American Apathy* (1983); *America's Fair Share* (1993); and *The Holocaust, Israel and Canadian Protestant Churches* (2002).

**Michael Beizer (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**"I Don't Know Whom to Thank" or "Take Your Rags Back": Secret Aid by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to Postwar Soviet Jewry**

In 1938, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC), the largest

Jewish charitable organization in the world, was forced to discontinue its activities in the Soviet Union. During the last years of Stalin's rule, Soviet propaganda labeled the AJJDC "an espionage organization" and until 1989 - the

year of JDC's official return to Moscow – acknowledged aid to Soviet Jewry was rendered virtually impossible.

It is a little known fact however, that throughout the whole period of the ban from aiding Soviet Jewry, JDC actually continued to deliver covert aid to through its package service, which was a part of a wider program for the Eastern

Bloc countries with a code name "Relief-in-Transit (RIT). Using 'front' organizations and different mailing companies, the JDC, in cooperation with the

Israeli government, dispatched hundreds of thousands of parcels with clothing

and religious articles to East European post-Holocaust Jewry. Whereas "the Russian slice of the pie" began initially on a modest scale - with only a small segment of the Soviet Jewry benefitting from the RIT Program - it gradually expanded, encompassing many tens of thousands of families, including: those in

financial hardship, observant Orthodox Jews, former prisoners of Zion, and Aliyah activists. AJJDC packages became a major factor in preserving and reviving Jewish identity and served as a material basis for the struggle of the Soviet Jewry.

The paper focuses on the Soviet area of the RIT package program and offers



detailed analysis of its dynamic dimensions. It explores the financial sources of the program, discusses distribution policy, and its impact on Soviet Jewry. Responses by Soviet authorities are also discussed.

- Why was the RIT Program destined to function for decades?
- How were the addresses of needy Soviet Jews collected - and how did this impact on the actual distribution of the aid?
- What was the outreach of the program, and who were the primary beneficiaries?
- How did the sender ensure the delivery of the packages and maximize their material use?
- What did it mean for a Soviet family to receive a parcel, materially and psychologically?

**Session Number: 6.11**

**Session Jewish-Christian Encounters in Reformation-Era Europe**

**Session**

The Reformation Era split the unity of European Christendom, creating new Christian confessional traditions and reopening a plethora of religious questions, not the least of which was the terms under which Jews and Judaism could be tolerated within Christian society and the terms of such toleration. Each of the three presenters in this session considers a different kind of “encounter” between Jews and Christians within this new and sometime dangerous environment. Bell contrasts how Christians used the “abstract” Jews of popular and theological imagination (such as the Kornjude) to explain environmental change and unsettling consequences with the interpretations that Jews gave such phenomena. While the mixture of environmental history and Jewish history is not a common one for the study of early modern Europe, the reality of the “little ice age” and its well-documented consequences for early modern European politics and society is a promising point of contact for Jewish-Christian encounters in this period as well. Burnett discusses the process by which a Jewish author was able arrange for the printing of a book at least mildly and obliquely critical of the Christian faith through the process of publication in a Calvinist-ruled princely city that bordered on both the Catholic Archbishopric of Mainz and the confessionally Lutheran imperial city of Frankfurt/Main. Yet the book survived its encounter with both Christian and Jewish authorities with its text essentially intact although it was printed in Yiddish rather than German type as the author had planned. Siegmund’s paper explores the literary affinities of catechisms written by two Italian Jewish authors (one of them a convert) with Italian Catholic catechetical literature. In both of these works a classic Christian genre was adapted for Jewish readers by Jewish authors. Siegmund’s paper explores the potentialities of religious literary dialogues for persuasion and indoctrination of Jewish (or Jewish convert) readers. All three of our presentations include the encounters of Jewish readers with Reformation thought, Protestant or Catholic, through

texts. While some of the issues considered by the Jewish authors in all three papers were old familiar ones (the author of *Yiddisher Theriak* for example responded to ritual murder allegations), the Reformation era with its new opportunities and challenges allowed for new kinds of encounters between Jew and Christian, including those made possible by printing.

**Chair, Adam B. Shear (University of Pittsburgh)**

**Stephen G. Burnett (University of Nebraska at Lincoln)**

**Solomon Hirsch's *Yudischer Theriak* (Hanau, 1615): Censorship, Printing, and the Limits of Jewish Expression in Reformation-Era**

Jewish literary expression within the limits of Christian censorship has long been a topic of interest among Jewish historians. Study of the actual production of such books, however, has focused upon the evidence provided by the books themselves in their colophons, title pages, *Haskamot* (rabbinical approbations) and from occasional introductory matter written by the author or printer. Yet German Jewish books were also artifacts produced with the agreement of Christian authorities under a system of legal oversight. The production of Jewish books had to be approved by both Jewish and Christian authorities and so represented a locus where Jewish-Christian encounters might occur. Solomon Hirsch's *Yudischer Theriak* was a book that challenged the limits of Jewish expression within the Holy Roman Empire. It was written in response to an attack on Judaism penned by Samuel Brenz, a recent Jewish convert to Christianity. While Hirsch's book has long been known and quoted by scholars, the story of its production has not been fully told. In my paper I will examine how Hirsch gained the permission of Jewish authorities to print the book, his efforts to convince the Hanau Christian authorities to let him print it, his production agreement with the printers, and finally the lawsuit he filed against them after production ended. The legal dossier submitted by Hirsch for his lawsuit together with other newly discovered archival records from the Hessian State Archive in Marburg, add new details and insights to the story of this unusual book. This case study of early modern Jewish printing will contribute to our understanding both of the production process of Jewish books in early modern Germany and the production of books as a business arrangement between an author and a printer. It will also shed new light on the effectiveness of the system of rabbinical oversight of Jewish authors and presses and the associated encounters between Jews and Christians in early modern Germany before the Thirty Years War.

**Dean Phillip Bell (Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies)**

**The Little Ice Age and the Jews: Environmental History and the Mercurial Nature of Jewish-Christian Encounters in Early Modern**

Over the past two decades there has been a growing interest in environmental history and a proliferation of studies examining the complexities of early modern German Jewish-Christian relations. Though these two areas of research rarely overlap, a rich source base and the possibility of a broad contextualization makes the linking of these two themes a potentially valuable undertaking. The intense climatic changes that occurred throughout much of Europe between 1570 and 1630 (collectively known as "the little ice age") had

a severe and measurable impact on daily subsistence and even regional and global economies. They also affected a variety of social and religious developments and orientations and must be considered within the context of intense early modern apocalyptic speculation and the reassessment of the traditional “economy of sin” model that helped medieval people to explain natural catastrophes. In this paper, I examine the intersection of the little ice age and Jewish-Christian encounters in two ways. First, I assess Christian literary and visual representation that placed Jews within the context of important early modern environmental changes, noting the broader political and religious climate in which such representations can be understood. The “Kornjude,” for example, became a widely-circulated theme in the early seventeenth-century illustrated broadsheets. Given that this was precisely a time of grave food shortages across Europe and when other images, such as corn falling from the sky almost as biblical manna were also circulating, the image raises important questions about how Jews were represented. My second area of investigation is contemporary Jewish descriptions of severe weather. While the number of sources is limited, there are some intriguing examples, such as the memoirs of Asher Levy of Reichshofen and David Gans’ *Zemah David*. To what extent do Jewish descriptions of the severe climate changes described in these texts resonate with, or even borrow from, Christian representations and to what extent do they reflect specifically personal or Jewish concerns and perspectives? Taking these two streams of investigation together, I ask whether there may be new ways of understanding Jewish-Christian encounters in early modern Germany.

***Session Number: 6.12***

**Session      Space and Identity: The Desert in Jewish Imagination**

***Session***

The desert as wilderness plays a major role in the Jewish literary imagination. The birth of the nation took place in this non-place, establishing early on a complex relation between national identity and memory, territory and wandering. The four papers in this panel seek to trace these relations by providing the biblical context for Israelite beginnings in the wilderness followed by an examination of wilderness in modern Jewish writings in the Diaspora, Israeli culture and post Zionist Israeli literature. Adriane Leveen’s paper, “Desert Bound: Biblical Transformations of Wilderness,” focuses on one of the key biblical texts that introduces the concept of desert in Jewish thought. In Numbers “wilderness,” initially a backdrop to the journey of the Israelites, is transformed by journey’s end into the realm of the dead. It is a site the new generation must forcibly reject before entering the land of the living, the Promised Land. Thus blessing and curse have been juxtaposed and located in place. This ancient biblical wilderness forms a template for the subsequent papers. Ranen Omer -Sherman’s paper discusses “Diasporic Deserts of Heretics and Strangers.” A significant number of Jewish writers in the European and North American Diaspora use the universal tropes and renderings of “exile.” Free from the anguished burden of immediate political realities, diasporic Jewish writers explore the identity of all writers as somehow

exilic. They share a symbolic frame of reference in which to forsake the desert would mean to abandon the deepest engagement with the questions of truth and justice that constitute Judaism's ancient understanding of responsibility, hospitality, and justice. In "The 'Desert' and the 'Island': Space Metaphors in Modern Israeli Culture," Yael Zerubavel explores the complex Israeli attitude toward space through the use of the desert and island as metaphors. The Zionist ethos constructs the settlement as an island within the desert landscape. Yet at the same time, modern Israeli culture develops a romantic attitude toward the desert. Wilderness landscape represents nature and eternity while defying the pressures of history and modern civilization. Personal and literary narratives describe those who flee to the desert to escape society, or to experience spiritual and mystical experiences there. The desert emerges as a metaphoric island where one finds temporary or durable refuge from oppressive urban life. Zerubavel will also draw on ethnographic data based on fieldwork. The panel concludes with Vered Shemtov's paper "Space, Text and Identity in Contemporary Hebrew Literature" which focuses on attempts to revisit biblical and Zionist desert narratives to define new relations between text and place, wandering and

**Chair, Vered Shemtov (Stanford University)**

#### **Space, Text, and Identity in Contemporary Hebrew Literature**

The panel concludes with Vered Shemtov's paper "Space, Text and Identity in Contemporary Hebrew Literature" which focuses on attempts to revisit biblical and Zionist desert narratives to define new relations between text and place, wandering and settling, and between national and individual identities.

#### **Yael H. Zerubavel (Rutgers University)**

##### **The "Desert" and the "Island": Space Metaphors in Modern Israeli**

The "desert" and the "island" provide powerful metaphors that articulated the Yishuv's preoccupation with the agenda of rebuilding Jewish national life in Eretz Yisrael. The Zionist mission of making the desert bloom was often seen as introducing Western culture into the desert. Its success was thus described as the creation of small islands of "civilized space" within the untamed landscape. Hebrew settlement narratives and visitors' accounts emphasized the contrast between the small, green Jewish settlements and the vast desert that surrounds them. The Zionist settlement was hailed, in the words of a Hebrew geography book (1918), as "a European oasis in an Asian desert." The escalation of the conflict between Arabs and Jews further enhanced the containment of the settlement within a bounded territory that must defend itself against the menacing presence of the desert forces threatening to penetrate it. The analysis of the theme of the Jewish settlement as an island within the desert landscape draws on Hebrew literature, personal narratives and educational material. Yet along with the settlement ethos, modern Israeli culture has developed a romantic attitude toward the desert that turned it into a symbolic landscape that represents nature and eternity and defying the pressures of history and modern civilization. Personal and literary narratives describe those who flee to the desert to escape society, or those who experience spiritual and mystical experiences in it. In this context, then, it is

the desert that emerges as a metaphoric island where one finds temporary or durable refuge from the oppressive urban life and the pressures of society. Tourist marketing draws on this romantic ethos in order to attract visitors from the populated center to experience the impact of a stay in this counter-social space. New ecologically oriented settlement initiatives that have sprouted in the desert attempt to mediate between these the settlement and the romantic trends. The discussion draws on ethnographic data based on fieldwork in the desert as well as the analysis of literary texts.

**Ranen Omer-Sherman (University of Miami)**

### **Diasporic Deserts of Heretics and Strangers**

Whereas modern Hebrew writers often make strident political uses of the desert in ways that resonate in the Israeli national scene, a significant number of Jewish writers in the European and North American Diaspora have discovered the luxury of moving in the more universal tropes and renderings of "exile." Without having to shoulder the anguished burden of answering to immediate political realities, diasporic Jewish writers continue to explore the identity of all writers as somehow exilic. Though the two writers I address here come from markedly different backgrounds, cultural histories, and even aesthetics, both reveal striking commonalities in their questioning of the essence of Jewish identity, national belonging, and a genuine confrontation with the burdensome liberty of Exodus. In Simone Zelitch's and Edmund Jabès' representations of desert ethics, the desert is not a literal landscape from which the Jew makes a clean break, but rather poses the metaphoric identity of a terrifying and obsessive questioning, an origin that also provides the essential parameters of future diasporas. They share a symbolic frame of reference in which to forsake the desert would mean to abandon the deepest engagement with the questions of truth and justice that constitute Judaism's ancient understanding of responsibility, hospitality, and justice.

**Adriane Leveen (Stanford University)**

### **Desert Bound: Transformations of Wilderness in the Book of Numbers**

Adriane Leveen's paper, "Desert Bound: Biblical Transformations of Wilderness," focuses on one of the key biblical texts that introduces the concept of desert in Jewish thought. In Numbers "wilderness," initially a backdrop to the journey of the Israelites, is transformed by journey's end into the realm of the dead. It is a site the new generation must forcibly reject before entering the land of the living, the Promised Land. Thus blessing and curse have been juxtaposed and located in place.

***Session Number: 6.13***

***Session*      **Venice, the Jews, and Italian Culture****

***Session***

Venetian Jews played a central role in the development of Jewish printing; they elaborated a vital Jewish culture as they were responding to Venetian opportunities and restrictions. While the Jews were restricted to the ghetto -- the very word comes from the place in which they were sequestered -- they

also interacted with their Venetian and Italian neighbors in complex ways that in part defined their Jewish possibilities. This interdisciplinary panel will focus on several aspects of that interaction, focusing on the built environment and the cultural productions. Professor Shaul Bassi of the University of Venice, email: shaul@unive.it, is interested in participating and presenting a talk "Reinscribing the Ghetto in Contemporary Literature" -- he is currently travelling and unable to access the AJS website.

**Chair, Murray Baumgarten (University of California, Santa Cruz)**

**Dana Katz (Reed College)**

### **Defining Jewish Identity in the Venetian Ghetto**

**Defining Community in the Venetian Ghetto** This paper investigates the political ideologies embedded within the walls of the Venetian Ghetto to explore how Jews in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Venice negotiated their position as social, cultural, and religious outsiders in a city dominated by Christians but dependent on Jewish credit and trade. I will study details of construction and design to deconstruct, for example, how the Ghetto's irregular fenestration patterns, uneven building heights, and distinguishing synagogues relate to contemporary notions of space, boundaries, community, and tolerance. By analyzing the architectural form of the Jews' vernacular buildings, I will discern how the Ghetto simultaneously reinforced and undermined the sociopolitical order of early modern Venice.

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**Paul Hamburg (University of California, Berkeley)**

### **Jewish Publishing and Christian Publishers**

Venetian Jewish publishing came about under the auspices of Christian publishers. The interaction of the Jewish writers, proofreaders, and printers and their Christian employers, notably Daniel Bomberg among others, is an example of the cooperative relation of Christians and Jews in Venice and their crucial role in the development of Jewish publishing. The First complete Talmud was printed by Bomberg; the first critical Masoretic edition of the Tanakh, which has been followed ever since.

**Ariella Lang (Columbia University)**

## **Simone Luzzatto's 'Discorsi': The Politics of Jewish Identity in Seventeenth-Century Venice**

Simone Luzzatto's 'Discourses on the State of the Jews,' published in 1638, provide one of the earliest discussions of the role of Jews in a larger European community. On the one hand, Luzzatto's work is one of apologetics, in which he gives numerous reasons why the Jewish community is profitable for the greater city of Venice. On the other hand, the work is introspective in the sense that it criticizes the Jewish community for its overly insular ways and its disinterest in secular learning. Luzzatto's views reflect his religious and secular education; he draws on the Bible and the humanistic sciences, and his views are clearly a product of Renaissance ideals. In this paper I will explore how Luzzatto was received by the Jewish and Venetian communities, and whether his writings cohered with views held more generally in his day. Finally, I will examine how this leading Venetian rabbi synthesized traditional, religious Jewish ideals with secular ideals that were circulating at the time.

### ***Session Number: 6.14***

#### **Session      Greek-Jewish Literature**

#### **Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Ra'anana Boustan (UCLA)**

**Jed Wyrick (California State University, Chico)**

#### **Fiction or Exegesis? Artapanus and Moses' Conquest of Ethiopia**

Artapanus, a Hellenistic-Jewish writer from Alexandria (ca. 220-100 BCE), is often depicted as a composer of romance or novel whose material was almost entirely derived from his imaginative fantasy. However, as I will argue, his account is anchored in biblical exegesis and was not meant to be read as fiction. Moreover, his attempt to use the Jewish tradition as a space from which to combat the views of the Hellenistic world about Alexandrian Jews (a view consistent with the widely held belief that Artapanus represents the kind of "competitive historiography" exemplified by Berossos and Manetho) needs to be modified in light of the fact that his account derives from a midrashic analysis of scriptural sources rather than an allegedly free and extemporaneous approach to the biblical text. The writings of Artapanus anticipate a tradition of midrashic exegesis of the Exodus narrative and the life of Moses stretching from the Antiquities of Josephus to the medieval Chronicles of Moses and Sefer Hayashar. The examples of exegesis performed by Artapanus were more fully developed in these later writers by broadening the process of bringing biblical parallels to bear on the skeletal account elaborated by Artapanus. In particular, I will argue that his account of Moses' conquest of Ethiopia derives from an exegesis of the encounter between Pharaoh and his counselors described in Exodus, combined with references to Ethiopia in the book of Isaiah and an interpretation of the ibis as a bird mentioned in the prohibited birds in Deuteronomy. I will connect these themes as developed in Artapanus with later versions of the legend that elaborate on his contest with the Egyptian wizards (subsequently identified with

Balaam and his sons) and his marriage to an Ethiopian woman (mentioned in Numbers 12:1 but absent in Artapanus' version). As I will show, Artapanus read and commented on the Masoretic Text rather than the Septuagint. Finally, Artapanus' veneration of the original text necessitates a re-evaluation of the claim that Artapanus was engaged in a syncretistic project designed to combine elements of Egyptian religion with Judaism.

**Louis H. Feldman (Yeshiva University)**

### **Philo's Influence in Antiquity**

In view of the importance and, to some degree, of the originality of his philosophic thought it is surprising that Philo had so little influence on his Jewish contemporaries in the first century and, in fact, until the sixteenth century. Philo is not mentioned at all in the vast rabbinic literature, perhaps because the rabbis felt so strongly about the dangers of philosophizing, as seen in their attitude toward the four, especially Elisha ben Avuyah, who entered Pardes and especially Philo's notion of an intermediary divine Logos between G-d and the world. The rabbis may also have objected to his negative attitude toward the body, perhaps as seen in their later attitude toward the Septuagint and the way Philo's biblical exegesis was exploited in the third and fourth centuries by prominent Christian thinkers such as Clement, Origen, and Eusebius. Philo's elaborate praise of the monastic-like Therapeutae in his *De Vita Contemplativa* may have struck main-stream Jews negatively. Philo is, moreover, ignored by extant pagan writers until the fourth century novelist Heliodorus. Very few papyri of his works have been found. As to possible influence on early Christianity, it would seem significant that Paul, despite his tremendous efforts to seek converts throughout the Mediterranean world, apparently never chose to come to the city that had by far the largest concentration of Jews in the Diaspora, Alexandria. According to the Book of Acts (18:24-28), a Jewish native of Alexandria named Apollos came to Ephesus, where he powerfully refuted the Jews in public. The fact that he went to Ephesus, we may conjecture, may have been due to efforts by the Jewish community of Alexandria, which was well organized, to stop his missionary activities. Indeed, on the contrary, the fact that the Jewish community invited non-Jews, as well as Jews, to the annual celebration of the completion of the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek was an opportunity, according to Philo, to point out to non-Jews the greatness of the Torah and, presumably, to win converts to Judaism.

**Arkady Kovelman (Moscow State University)**

### **Human Body in Hellenistic Jewish Exegesis**

Rabbinic Judaism is widely acknowledged for its "radical amazement" (in the words of Abraham Heschel) which is the understanding of daily life and a human body as a miracle. Hellenistic Judaism, on the other hand, is believed to be strongly "spiritual," built on the opposition of body and soul. In reality, however, the idea of a human body as a miracle appeared in the framework of Alexandrian Jewish Exegesis. This idea was expressed by a rhetorical construction similar to rabbinic Petirah. It conflated the verses of the Psalms with the verses the Pentateuch. Conflating the Psalms with the Pentateuch,



characteristic of Hellenistic Judaism, produced a perception of human bodily existence as a miracle. Yet unlike Petirah this construction spiritualized the Pentateuch instead of historicizing the Psalm. Hellenistic authors immersed the Psalms into the sacral history. Human body glorified in the Psalms as a miracle became a part of historicized spiritual discourse. In Hellenistic exegesis the body was presented as pierced, cut, and made perfect. In other words, the body was totally alienated and hypostasized. The alienation of the body occurred via the ear. The Hellenistic Jewish authors considered the ear to be the organ that connected the body to God. God planted an ear, which meant that He created the body. The ear could make the body sacral or it could make it profane. Cutting the ear made it profane, and boring of the ear made it sacral. This applied to both the body of an individual and of the entire Israeli nation. The existence of the body was more important than the body itself. The valiance of bodily existence was achieved through alienation of the body and its appropriation by God. God appropriated a body by turning it into a sacrifice, a priest, a temple, and a slave. The roots of both Christian and Rabbinic perception of the human body might be found in Alexandrian Jewish exegesis. Moreover, what might appear as the quintessence of Jewishness (the “radical amazement”) was to a certain extent a commonplace of Early Stoicism.

***Session Number: 6.15***

**Session            Poster Session**

***Session***

Poster

**Anne Oravetz Albert (University of Pennsylvania)**

**Political Subjects: Law, Nation, and Government According to  
Seventeenth-Century Dutch Sephardim**

I propose to present a selection of my current dissertation research, examining how the Sephardi community of seventeenth-century Amsterdam related to both Jewish tradition and contemporary Europe in discussing their own political and legal characteristics. It is well known from previous research that members of this community had a strong association with Iberian culture, as well as an intense relationship (whether troubled or wholehearted) with Jewish tradition. My research puts a point on this confluence of associations by asking how they understood themselves politically. Steeped in the Iberian emphasis on status, monarchy, and a strong Church, they tried to understand the paradox of being noble yet lacking sovereignty, and struggled to define authority within their Jewish world. In protestant Holland, which was newly independent from the Spanish crown and flowing with pride in republicanism, they worked to establish a unified community with functional regulations, and productive relations with the Dutch government. Through careful reading of a broad range of works by rabbis and other intellectuals over the course of the century, my dissertation shows that politics, law, and government were a central part of their mental landscape. My presentation would give an overview of this research, showing the evolution of attitudes over time, and

focus on one or two texts to show the richness of the material. For example, whereas Menasseh ben Israel had negotiated with heads of state and speculatively longed for the political restoration of Israel, Spinoza followed his own political musings to the extreme, and determined that the time of validity of Jewish law had long since passed. The following decade, disappointed by the Sabbatian failure, Abraham Pereyra pleaded with lay members of the community to form a more perfect republic, harmonious and obedient to the law, and reject what he called Machiavellian separation between government and religion. Orobio de Castro wrote an extended discussion of the prophecy of the scepter of Judah, making fine legal distinctions, drawing on contemporary theory of monarchical rights, and responding to Christian Hebraists such as Buxtorf. These texts, seen together or individually, present a unique image of pre-enlightenment Jewish politics.

**Rachel Ben Dor (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Devorah and Shlomtzion as Paradigms: Women Leaders in Sifrut Chazal ( with Rochelle Millen)**

This paper will explore the comments of various rabbinic sources regarding the public leadership roles both of the biblical figure, Devorah and the Second Temple queen, Shlomtzion. Its objective is to compare and contrast differing attitudes of Chazal towards the cultural anomaly of female leadership. Why is Devorah's leadership mostly devalued while that of Shlomtzion is acclaimed? Based on this comparison, can one generalize about rabbinic attitudes towards women whose devotion to the nation as public leaders results in a breakdown of the usual gender roles? The literature articulates an ambiguity, hovering between acceptance and censorship. The hiatus between the cultural reality in which Chazal were writing and the fact of women whose leadership challenged that reality leaves space for reading these texts from a contemporary perspective. While Midrash Bereishit Rabbah (40:4), as well as T.B. Megillah (14b) and Pesachim (66b) tend to devalue Devorah's leadership, the Sifri (42:14), Sifra (chapter A), Vayikra Rabbah (35:10), and T.B. Taanit (23a) praise Shlomtzion as ruler. These are the sources that will be analyzed in response to the overall issue of rabbinic literature and women as public leaders.

**Marcy Brink-Danan (Brown University)**

**The Sephardi Kaleidoscope: Ethnographic Fragments from Jewish**

Taking popular discourses of Sephardi Jews in Turkey as an example, this poster explores the semiotic principles around which ideologies of religious, national and cosmopolitan citizenship are formed. Drawing upon two years of ethnographic and archival research (2002-4), this presentation maps the logic of Turkish-Jewish culture as it surfaces in speech, architecture and other symbolic domains. Through ethnographic description and textual analysis, this account analyzes stories and images from the lives of Jews in Istanbul at the beginning of the 21st century. These kaleidoscopic fragments, when assembled together as ethnography, reveal a collective whose survival relies on an ability to function within and between various frames of reference (Judaism, Islam, secular humanism, etc.) arranged through relations of

intimacy and power. My interest in these materials lies in the examination of how we create ideologies of belonging and exclusion and how these ideologies frame the imaginary relationship of individuals to their religious community, to their government and to the world.

**David Brodsky (Reconstructionist Rabbinical College)**

**“In Three Places the Law Overrides the Bible”: What Must Give When Text, Law, and Hermeneutics Conflict**

This paper looks at rabbinic ways of dealing with conflicts between received legal traditions and rabbinic textual hermeneutics. In other words, what do the rabbis do when custom/law and the text agree, but when the rabbinic hermeneutic of how to read the text conflicts? While we might expect the rabbis to have altered the hermeneutic so as to conform to the legal tradition which itself matched the text, in at least certain cases, the rabbis did not make use of this obvious resolution. Instead, in one particularly interesting example found in the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds, the rabbis went so far as to state that the law overturns the Bible, rather than change the hermeneutic and admit that the law and the Bible are actually congruous. Regarding this specific example, this paper attempts to explore what was at stake for the rabbis in such instances that drove them to prefer overturning the Bible to altering their hermeneutic. In other instances, the rabbis overturn the law so as to maintain the authority of text and hermeneutic, while in yet other cases, the rabbis leave the passage in uncertainty. In all of these cases, this paper attempts to explore how different rabbis from different periods deal with situations in which the text, the law and their ever-developing hermeneutics conflict.

**Flora Cassen (New York University)**

**The Jewish Badge in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italy: The Iconic O, the Yellow Hat, and the Paradoxes of Distinctive Sign Legislation**

In 1215 Pope Innocent III first ordered the Jews to wear distinguishing clothing. Secular legislation enforcing this was adopted in England, Hungary and France by the end of the 13th century, and in Italy, Spain and Germany during the 14th and 15th centuries. The marks imposed were diverse and changed over time but in Italy the sign did not vary, nor did its description in the legislative documents. Through the fifteenth century the Jews were forced to wear a yellow circular badge on their chest, invariably represented by the icon “O” in the documents. While the O was a well established and known sign used to symbolize the Jews across Italy, its fixed size was small and Jews would often hide it. Perhaps in an attempt to remedy this situation, a yellow hat was chosen to replace the O, though only century later. Given the pattern of endemic war and conflict between the Italian city-states, both the pervasiveness of those two signs across the region as the belated but synchronized switch to the hat are unexpected and suggest that their symbolic power could override political disagreement. I will argue that this was not only because the Jews were depreciated and shamed by the O-badge and hat, but also because these signs’ descriptions and the rhetoric in the rulings imposing them represented the authorities’ wish for an ordered society. Indeed, as

social unruliness rendered their objectives unachievable, the authorities turned to distinctive sign legislation to express their dismay and articulate their hopes.

Using original documents preserved in the archives of Milan, Turin and Genoa, edited sources for Florence and Umbria, collections of papal bulls and briefs, as well as art displaying the different Jewish badges and hats, this poster will explain the symbolic meanings of these two marks and the negative impact they had on perceptions of the Jews. Moreover, through a visual analysis of the written documents focused on how the badge and hat were described and signified in these texts, it will offer a framework for understanding the motivations of the authorities and the paradoxes of distinctive sign legislation

**Shlomo Chertok (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)**

**Measures of Piety and Halakha in Prayer: A Case of Interaction between Halakha and Aggada in Berachot 32b-33a**

Rabbinic literature divides into two distinct categories: halakah and aggada. Halakha pertains to the realms of obligation and exemption, that which is forbidden and permitted. Ideological, philosophic and ethical material is labeled aggada. Each of these categories is read and studied according to its own hermeneutical, literary and methodological conventions. While they are generally considered independent, and are presented as such, edited comprehensively in their respective corpuses, they often appear in the Talmud side by side, and at times are intertwined in one discussion. This paper attempts to unravel one such discussion to discover the dynamic of the discourse between halakha and aggada. The first mishna of the fifth chapter of Berachot demonstrates an intricately woven mesh of both of these literary genre. The mishna addresses the prerequisite frame of mind for prayer and suggests a means by which this state of mind might be attained: "One may not pray if he has not attained a solemn frame of mind. The first pious men were known to tarry a while (an hour) and then pray in order to direct their hearts to their father in heaven. Even if the king addresses him he should not respond, and even if a snake were coiled round his heel he should not interrupt." The opening statement of the tanna is presented in terms that are unequivocally halakhic. However, the "first pious men," whose custom is related in the second statement, were known to hold themselves to a higher religious standard than that which was required of the general populace, therefore their custom is not to be taken as halakha. Moreover, the merely suggestive tone of this testimony is further implication of the tanna's venture into the realm of aggada. The tanna's closing statement is ambiguous. While phrased clearly in halakhic terms, it may equally stem from the tanna's aggadic testimony as from his opening statement, inasmuch as it presents a unique blend of pious standard and halakhic requirement. I will demonstrate how the amoraic discussion in this chapter is coined on the structure of this mishna, suggesting that the halakhic standard for prayer is consistently raised to match that of the pious. I will also argue the significance of this dynamic within the context of prayer.

**Naftali Cohn (University of Pennsylvania)**

## **To Enter the Temple: Ritual Narrative in the Mishnah**

A series of texts in the Mishnah narrate past rituals said to have taken place primarily in or in relation to the Jerusalem Temple. In this paper, I argue that what the rabbis choose to remember about past ritual and how they choose to remember it in these narratives are part of a larger claim for rabbinic authority that appears throughout the Mishnah. In narrativizing Temple ritual in a particular way, the rabbis persuasively present themselves as ritual experts who bear the tradition of the past. They draw on the religious icon of the temple, with its enduring cultural significance, and shape its story based on their own interests, in order to further their claim against the claims of competing groups. The basis of the analysis will be the Passover sacrifice ritual narrated in Mishnah PESAH?IM 5:5-10, which will be considered in light of other examples of the genre. The paper begins by describing this ritual narrative's conventional features, including vivid descriptive detail, the theme of sectarian conflict over Temple ritual, the occurrence of attributed rabbinic comments at regular intervals, and the plot framework. Comparison to descriptions of the Passover sacrifice in Jubilees, the Temple Scroll, and the works of Josephus demonstrates the choices made by the composers or redactors of the Mishnah. The background for exploring WHY the rabbis make their narrative choices and why they claim authority over ritual is provided by the work of Shaye Cohen, Seth Schwartz, Catherine Hezser, and others on the Jewish history of Roman Palestine in late antiquity—particularly on the (relatively insignificant) place of the rabbis within larger Jewish society, the nature of the rabbinic group in the tannaitic period, and the role of Temple memory in post-destruction times. The paper entertains three plausible explanations: one, the rabbis' claim to authority is meant to counter a contemporary priestly claim to power; two, the narratives' rhetoric is aimed at inculcating ideology in the rabbis' students; three, memory of past ritual in the temple is bound up with rabbinic foundation narratives, fundamentally struggling with the tension between continuity and discontinuity with the past.

**Evelyn Dean (Indiana University)**

## **Syrian Jewish Identity and Memory in Contemporary Mexico City**

Mexico City was an important destination for Syrian Jewish migrants in the first half of the twentieth century. Three or more generations later, the Syrian communities maintain a vibrant presence among Mexico's other major Jewish subgroups, the Ashkenazim and the Balkan Sephardim. Each subgroup maintains separate organizations based on ancestral place of origin, and the Syrians further distinguish themselves as either Aleppan or Damascene. While many Syrian Jews are technically also "Sephardi" – that is, descended from Iberian forebears - the latter term refers exclusively to descendants of Balkan immigrants in the Mexican context. Such nomenclature, which draws on selective invocations of both history and geography, exemplifies the discursive construction of communal boundaries I investigate in this paper. My research addresses the performative mechanisms of Syrian Jewish identity in the Mexican context: How do Syrian and other Jewish communities perpetuate

distinctive identities based on place of ancestral origin, and which elements of the contemporary Mexican context might facilitate this? The ways in which people understand and represent their history is central to this inquiry. How is the Syrian Jewish past represented in oral history narrative, everyday storytelling and conversation, and in formal community events? How do individuals situate themselves in relation to this history? Which broader discourses – from communal to transnational - are invoked in articulating such representations? Using the tools of performance ethnography and discourse analysis as developed by Richard Bauman, Michael Silverstein, and other linguistic anthropologists, I analyze original data collected during fieldwork in Mexico City in May-June of 2006. With my analysis, I explore not only the parameters of Syrian Jewish identity in Mexico, but also the role of history and memory in constituting modern Jewish identities more generally.

**Jodi Eichler-Levine (Columbia University)**

### **Memories of Exodus in Jewish, African American, and Mormon Children's Literature**

This paper examines American Jewish children's literature of exodus in dialogue with cognate genres from African American and Mormon communities. It argues that all three groups use the tropes of exodus, exile, and Zion to make sense of past traumas and to negotiate the terms of their "American-ness." Although methods and histories vary from group to group, collective memories of travel inform the children's canons of all three communities; these canons, in turn, are constitutive aspects of young people's ethno-religious identity. In Barbara Cohen's 1983 classic *MOLLY'S PILGRIM*, for example, Molly comes to understand American identity through school celebrations of Thanksgiving. She learns to read her own Jewish heritage as a particularly AMERICAN heritage by fitting her Russian mother into the category of "Pilgrim." Similarly, in Burt E. Schuman's *CHANUKAH ON THE PRAIRIE*, Jewish immigrants take part in the American pioneer genre, imitating the Christian protagonists of books like *LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE* and belying the stereotype that Jews were only urban immigrants. I first consider these and other Jewish storybooks on immigration to New York and journeys westward towards the frontier. They are then put into conversation with Mormon stories of the trek west to Salt Lake City and African American books on the Underground Railroad. In addition, Jews and African Americans share the discourse of exodus in their portrayals of the Civil Rights era. Martin Luther King, Jr., for example, is often conflated with the figure of Moses, as he is in Walter Dean Myers' *I HAVE SEEN THE PROMISED LAND: THE LIFE OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.* In all three cases, I will demonstrate that the groups graft Puritan notions of America as "the promised land" onto their own experiences of displacement, thereby "becoming Americans" by reading their own suffering through both biblical interpretations and through American origin stories, which themselves draw upon biblical tropes. This recursive move allows Jews, Mormons, and African Americans to simultaneously broadcast their differences from other Americans while emphasizing their engagement with classic American ideals, particularly

**Lucia Finotto (Brandeis University)**

**Medieval Inquisitions and the Jews: The Case of Sicily**

The Inquisition which operated in Southern Italy and the main Italian Islands from the fourteenth century onwards, is considered as a mere derivative of the Royal Spanish Inquisition created by the Catholic Kings and authorized by pope Sixtus IV in 1478. As its Spanish counterpart, it is associated with torture, cruelty and oppression and seen by some historians as the forerunner of the secret police of modern dictatorships or even of twentieth-century anti-semitic theories, when considering its treatment of Jews and crypto-Jews. In this paper I analyze the accuracy of this picture and place the southern Italian Inquisition and the Sicilian one, in their correct historical context. To this aim I shall first describe the conditions of Jewish existence in Sicily at the time and then point out in which context the Spanish Inquisition operated, and what was the impact on Jewish communities and on society in general. Finally, I will examine the ways in which the Inquisition of Sicily can be viewed as different from other inquisitorial experiences. Notwithstanding a certain tolerance established as a tradition on the island since the time of Frederick II, who contributed to create an environment receptive to religious diversity, the superiority of Christianity and the Catholic Church was undisputed. A certain degree of autonomy was nevertheless granted to the Jews. Very little is known of the inquisitorial activity in Sicily between 1487 and 1500 when an edict announced the appointment of two new inquisitors. The latter published a decree proclaiming the beginning of Inquisition in Sicily and diffused it throughout the island. Until then only the Papal inquisition had been active in Sicily, in an extremely mild form. Although the problem of sources had not been solved until relatively recently, with the opening to the public of additional inquisitorial documents, the Sicilian case has not drawn the attention of Inquisition specialists as a subject to be analyzed separately. A few Italian historians have conferred to this specific field of study a definite character of micro-historical research, whose significance does not trespass the Sicilian or the Italian context. This paper tries to open a broader perspective, taking into account the larger European and Mediterranean context, without forgetting the unique local peculiarities.

**Dana Fishkin (New York University)**

**In the Shadow of Christendom: Views from Immanuel of Rome's**

Immanuel ben Solomon of Rome (1265-1331) was a Jewish scholar whose cultural production ranged from Biblical exegesis to poetry. As a Jew in Rome, Immanuel's intimate familiarity with Christianity and Christians echoes strongly from his poetic style as well as his words. One of Immanuel's poems, MAHBRET TOPHET V'EDEN, spatializes the concepts of hell and heaven based on internal Jewish sources and influence from the external Christian culture. Traditionally, scholars have associated Tophet V' Eden with THE DIVINE COMEDY of Dante Alighieri. The suggestion that the two poets knew each other is interesting but difficult to substantiate, and one presumes that Immanuel modeled his poem on Dante's. A closer examination of Immanuel's poem, however, suggests that Immanuel's attitude toward Christianity was not

solely one of admiration and regard. This paper seeks to evaluate Immanuel's conflicted relationship with Christianity, as it emerges from his poetry, the MAHBEROT IMMANUEL. To this end, I closely examine Immanuel's fictional encounter with an anonymous sinner in hell, a character who, I believe, represents Jesus of Nazareth. Immanuel's use of iconographic visual elements in his description along with intertextual Talmudic references to Jesus' sin renders this anonymous man extremely identifiable. The majority of this sinner's sins can only be described as crass, lewd sexual allegations and the degrading way in which this figure is punished indicate a negative if not abusive treatment of Christianity. This attitude will be contextualized in terms of previous forms of Jewish polemics as well as its structural place within the poem. However, the attitude of congeniality and admiration displayed by Immanuel in other poetic references to Christianity leaves one surprised by the representation of Jesus in such a degrading manner. This tension is further heightened by the fact that Immanuel's afterlife journey poem and other poetic forms, such as the sonnet, are borrowed from that same Christian context. Thus, this paper will highlight the nexus of Jewish and Christian literary creativity in medieval Italy. It will also flesh out the tensions inherent in that cultural exchange and the ramifications thereof. Lastly, it will posit that the special position of the Jewish community in medieval Italy, and especially Rome, vis-à-vis Christians contributed heavily to this ambivalent attitude present in Immanuel's poetry.

**Susan Glazer (Brandeis University)**

### **From Running the Company to Being Run Out: The Effect of Axis Anti-Jewish Policy on European Insurance Companies and Jewish Policyholders during the Holocaust**

In pre-war Europe, insurance policies were a popular means of saving and investing and were considered the "poor man's Swiss bank account." European citizens purchased policies to insure against injury, loss of life, or destruction of property. Jewish families bought approximately 2.5 billion dollars worth of insurance policies before World War II. Beginning in the nineteenth century, several large European insurers were established by Jewish businessmen, and Jewish individuals dominated the European insurance industry until World War II. Hitler's anti-Jewish policy, adopted by all countries under Axis rule, destroyed one hundred years of Jewish involvement in the European insurance industry. The fate of many Jewish pre-World War II insurance policies is unknown. Countless policies were confiscated by the Nazi regime during the war, and after the war, policies were canceled and the money pocketed by the companies because the policyholder or their heirs did not come forth to claim payment. By the late 1930s, European Jews were denied their basic civil rights in Axis-occupied Europe. Aryanization of all businesses was compulsory and companies were forced, by law, to hand all Jewish assets over to the proper authorities. Companies failing to cooperate were penalized. However, many companies lessened the effect of the anti-Jewish laws on their operations by using political connections. Collusion with the Axis regimes was, initially, financially beneficial, but fascist racial policy



became increasingly burdensome. This paper will illustrate the Jewish roots of European insurance and demonstrate how Nazi and Fascist economic and social policies affected insurance companies and their policyholders. I will describe the effect of Nazi and Fascist racial policy on insurance operations and will discuss the successful aryanization of the German insurance industry and compare it to the less successful aryanization of the Italian insurance sector. I will attempt to answer the question as to why a few Jewish individuals were able to remain in leadership positions in Italian companies. By describing the story of two individuals, Adolf Stern and Jack Weiss, who filed lawsuits in U.S. courts recently regarding unpaid insurance policies, I will illustrate the fate of many pre-World War II insurance policies held by Jewish individuals.

**Anat Gueta (Multyeda)**

### **The Multi-faceted Image of Women in the Kabbalistic Diaries of Sixteenth-Century Tsefat**

Situated up in the Galilee, the town of Zefat became in the 16th century, after the deportation of Spain, a dynamic centre for the Jewish Settlement in Palestine. Using its natural resources it became an industrial area for wool production and a regional market. As such, it attracted hundreds of Jewish families to come and settle. Since the beginning of the third decade of the 16th century, Jewish scholars began arriving to the city, holding the belief that they would be blessed and live to see the Messiah. Most of these scholars were well known figures in their countries of origin and when they settled in Zefat they opened schools and academies, established courts of Jewish law and wrote and published 250 literary products on various subjects. Some of these writings are still relevant nowadays, such as the Shulhan Aruch. Those activities turned Zefat into the center of Jewish thought in the 16th century. In between those scholars there were many Cabbalists who started a new wave of mystical innovations. Old and new ideas were expanded and combined with ecstatic and mystical practices and experiences. Those ideas were spread by preachers and writers, aided by the growing Hebrew printing industry. Many of these scholars kept what we would call today personal diaries. These books, besides serving as a platform for their intellectual works and documentation of their mystical experience, also contained more private information about their personal experiences, thoughts and feelings. This lecture is intended to demonstrate multi-faceted image of 16th century Jewish women, as presented in four of these diaries: "The Book of Visions" by Haim Vital, "Magid Meisharim" by Yosef Karo, "Sefer Gerushin" (The Book of Divorce) by Moshe Kordovero, and the secret diary of Elazar Azcari.

**Hannah Hashkes (Siegal College of Judaic Studies)**

### **Pragmatist Epistemology and Halakhah**

This paper suggests that Pragmatist epistemology can be used in order to discuss some key concepts in the development of Halakhah. The paper argues that it is fruitful to draw an analogy between the way American Pragmatists have explicated language and meaning formation and the development of Halakhah. The first step is to present a view of American Pragmatist Philosophy from the perspective of philosophical epistemology.

Accordingly Pragmatism is defined as a philosophical movement that describes human language and conceptual systems as tools of creating functionally practical meanings. This view of Pragmatism is presented through Charles S. Peirce's semiotics and John Dewey's instrumentalist logic. Peirce developed a logic according to which all knowledge is propositional and grows through a process of interpreting signs. Things appear to our minds in the form of mental images that function as signs. In order to make sense of the signs we enter a process of interpretation, which is a process of creating meanings. These interpretations have meaning only insofar as they have a practical function in our lives. Dewey suggests that, as sentient beings we encounter problematic situations that form our environment. In order to react to the environment fruitfully, we need to make sense of these situations and redeem them from their indistinguishable fuzziness. The process of making sense of problematic situations is a process of creating distinctions, naming objects and creating habits of conduct. The second step is to draw an analogy between Meta-Halakhic questions and some key concepts of the process of language and meaning creation described by American Pragmatists. This analogy suggests that the way Pragmatist philosophers deal with epistemological questions can contribute to the understanding of Halakhah. Questions of the status of truth and reality in language and meaning formation, and the processes of interpretation and objectification, can translate themselves into questions about philosophical meta-Halakhic discourse. Debates of Jewish thinkers of Halakhah about authority, mechanisms of change and adaptation, origin and purpose of law codes can be fruitfully discussed in view of the epistemological models suggested by American Pragmatist.

**Ronit Irshai (Bar-Ilan University)**

### **Fertility, Gender, and Halakha**

The axis of this lecture revolves about what I term the "alternative analysis of the halakhic narrative." My aim is to ascertain whether the hegemonic halakhic trends represented by present-day halakhic decisions related to fertility derive directly and inevitably from analysis of the halakhic literature, or whether they reflect the ascendancy of one exegetical school of thought over others pushed to the sidelines by gender bias. I want to focus especially on alternative analysis of the issue of abortion. The prevailing present-day halakhic trend is strict, viewing the prohibition against abortion as *de-oraita*. Accordingly, abortion is permitted only in cases of danger to health, and in the more stringent approaches only in danger to life. I argue that the sweeping conclusion that abortion is *de-oraita* is not an inevitable outcome of analysis of the early sources, and that the current halakhic anti-abortion tendency is the result of a conscious choice. The minority opinion that the prohibition is *de-rabanan* is, in my opinion, more consonant with the sources. Profound analysis of this school of halakhic decisions concerning women reveals a hidden agenda grounded in a reduction of women and femininity to "biological creatures" whose humanity overlaps their (biological) femininity, and is equated with fertility. Inherent in an approach that permits abortion only in instances of endangerment of life (but not of limbs, for example) is a strong

underlying notion of women as fertile entities alone. Analysis of philosophical-liberal-feminist positions reveals an entire framework of considerations entirely absent from the halakhic decisions. In feminist literature the question of the fetus' "humanity" is not detached from that of the ramifications of unwanted pregnancies on the life, welfare, personal and professional development of women, and feminists show that the resolution of this question does not lie solely in determination of whether or not the fetus is a "person." On the other hand, nowhere in any stratum of the halakhic literature do the implications of unwanted pregnancies on women's lives find explicit expression, even though halakhic options in the early sources speak overtly of the disfigurement and degradation of women as factors when considering abortion.

**Gideon Katz (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)**

**The Discussions on Secularism in the State of Israel**

The Discussions on Secularism in the State of Israel The tension between secular Jews and religious Jews – including the various subgroups within the two camps – is among the fundamental social rifts in Israeli society. Both sides are often described as facing an impending Kulturkampf or even as already being engaged in one. This paper will use Israeli anti-utopian texts to illustrate this point (Goldfluss's Israel in the Year 2000, Hedi Ben-Amar's For Heavens' Sake, and The Fourth Dream by David Melamed), and will show how they reflect the perilous limitations of secular culture, and its relation to Judaism.

**Ariela Keysar (Trinity College)**

**Secular Jews and Other Secular Americans: What Do They Have in Common?**

Secularism is more common among Jews than among Americans in general, but is growing rapidly in both populations. In the adult core Jewish population, those who reported having no religion but Jewish parentage (JNR) rose from 19% in 1990 to 28% in 2001, according to the American Jewish Identity Survey (AJIS) 2001. Among all Americans, those who professed no religion rose from 8% in 1990 to 14% in 2001, according to the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) 2001. A secular Jew has one foot in each of two camps: that of Jews and that of secular Americans. This paper will examine the relative strength of those two affiliations. Both secularizing trends among American Jews and the increase in interfaith marriages contribute to the growth in the number of Jews of "no religion." The continued high rate of intermarriage will further increase this group as children in mixed families are more likely to be raised in no religion than in Judaism. Secular Jews are more educated and have higher incomes than secular Americans overall, which is consistent with the pattern for Jews in general. Secular Jews are older and less likely to be male and single than secular Americans overall. Geographical patterns are similar, with both secular Jews and secular Americans overall most likely to live in the western United States. Secular Jews are more likely to be Democrats than are secular Americans overall. However, they are less likely to be Democrats than Jews by religion. Using statistical regressions and other analytical techniques, this paper will attempt to explain what makes secular Jews similar to other secular Americans and how they resemble religious Jews.

This paper is co-authored by Barry A. Kosmin from Trinity College.

**Matthew LaGrone (University of Toronto)**

**The Anglican Roots of Conservative Judaism: Solomon Schechter and Matthew Arnold on Religious Unity**

Solomon Schechter's years in England (1882-1902) were decisive in shaping his vision of Judaism and the Jewish people. During these twenty years, Schechter published the essays that would form the core of his scholarly work, especially *Studies in Judaism and Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*. Some of the central features of Conservative Judaism were nurtured in the course of his residence in England. This paper will argue that Schechter's understanding of Jewish unity, particularly as it pertains to the model of Catholic Israel, was deeply informed by similar trends in Broad Church Anglican thought. And the expression of Anglican unity—known by the term,

“comprehensiveness”—found its fullest expression in the religious writings of Matthew Arnold. This paper is an outline of one concept of a larger comparative project relating to Conservative Judaism and Broad Church Anglicanism. Scholars such as Jonathan Sarna, Norman Bentwich, and Abraham Karp and theologians such as Robert Gordis have remarked, usually in passing, upon the affinities between Anglicanism and Conservative Judaism. The following ideas chart some of their fundamental resemblances: a tendency to refuse systematic thinking; to appeal to the authority of history rather than direct divine revelation or individual conscience; to be conservative in ritual life and liberal in theological speculation and moral reasoning; and, most important for our consideration, to seek unity even at the price of forgoing ideological purity. As leader of the nascent Conservative community in America, Schechter insisted, “the ultimate goal is union and peace in American Israel” (Bentwich 302). Therefore, the schisms that had rent post-Emancipation Jewish communities in Europe must be healed in America by a Judaism that adheres to its ancient practices while at the same time claiming its full civil rights to political, social and economic participation in the wider culture. This unified Judaism would emerge, Schechter believed, from Catholic Israel. (His biographer claimed that contemporary Anglican religious thought shaped Schechter's idea of Catholic Israel [Bentwich 285-86]). From the Anglican side, Matthew Arnold stressed that the Anglican Church “was meant...to satisfy the whole English people...to include both Catholic and Protestants in a compromise between old and new...”(Arnold 95). Unity was to

**Susan Landau-Chark (Concordia University)**

**Identity, Community, and Religious Leadership as Expressed through the Role of the Rabbi's Wife**

My doctoral research explores the role of the Canadian rabbi's wife – more specifically, the woman married to a pulpit rabbi who can be hired and fired. How does she see herself in relation to his position in the congregation, and what expectations does she have of herself in that role? Until recently, the secondary sources available in both the United States and Canada did not support a broader understanding of the role of the clergyman's wife. This void in Canadian Jewish history became the impetus for my research. In 2006,

Professor Shuly Schwartz published the first extensive discussion of this role, albeit from an American perspective. Professor Schwartz noted that the wives of rabbis serving liberal communities no longer have the interest or desire to commit themselves to a congregation on a full-time basis (Schwartz, 2006:215). While most of the women I have interviewed to-date have their own careers, they considered themselves involved with their husband's career.

In a preliminary sampling of my interview data, several points have emerged that demonstrate that in Canada at least, the REBBETZIN 1) continues to be held to a similar standard of involvement as her husband, the paid rabbi, and 2) that the Canadian REBBETZIN feels she has the freedom to create a niche for herself within the congregation. Since March of 2004 I have been interviewing wives of rabbis across Canada in order to highlight the role of the Canadian rabbi's wife – more specifically, the woman who is married to a pulpit rabbi who can be hired and fired. My research is cross-denominational.

Drawing on my research to-date my paper will touch generally on two aspects of her "fit" with the congregation: private versus public boundaries, congregational activities and relationships, and will address more specifically issues of control and self-development. My preliminary research contests the experience of rabbi's wives in the United States. Canadian congregations tend to be more traditional than their American counterparts and this is reflected in the expectations attached to the role of the rabbi's wife.

**Monica Osborne (Purdue University)**

**"So That Speaking Might Not Stop at the Word": Representing the Holocaust through Silence in the Work of Ozick, Doctorow, and**

While human suffering in any form challenges the possibility of the written word to convey the magnitude of personal affliction, perhaps no example of collective human suffering has questioned the limits of this issue more than the Holocaust. Torn between the admonishment that we should never forget and the insistence that such atrocities belong to the realm of the ineffable, many writers continue to negotiate the space between these seeming polarities.

While both philosophy and theology have failed in their attempts to respond to human suffering and weakness, literature remains a likely space to forge an appropriate response to the Holocaust, and yet the ultimate failure of words is inescapable, for in their utterance is both representation and replacement.

An entirely new method of thinking and writing is required if we wish to adequately – though still never fully – discover a means to articulate what Maurice Blanchot calls the "experience of the disaster." Specifically inherent in Blanchot's understanding of the role of language in representation of atrocity is an attack on notions of representation in general, which he finds to be critical yet fundamentally flawed, and necessarily so, for in the wake of an insistent impulse to conceptualize "disaster" is its one arguable feature: it "impoverishes" all experience and robs it of authenticity. Between the imperative to "know what has happened" and the understanding that "never will you know" exists a silence that is, in its purposeful not-saying, capable of articulating more authentically the transitory experiences of victims of the Holocaust. Similarly, within everything said exists also what is unsaid,

incapable of being articulated. Drawing from the most recent work of established fiction writers – Elie Wiesel, E.L Doctorow, Cynthia Ozick– as well as the work of newer writers – David Grossman, and Dara Horn– this paper explores the nuances of silence in the context of the Holocaust and the ways we can potentially locate within the paradox of written words a sufficient space for adequate reflection of human suffering. This paper also negotiates the point at which the written word becomes an affront to affliction. Finally, this paper explores the possibility that perhaps the most authentic way to write about the Holocaust is to refrain from writing directly about it – that is, through fiction that does not deal directly with it, but allows its shadow to loom largely

**Robert Sagerman (New York University)**

### **The Sistine Chapel Ceiling and Renaissance Christian Kabbalah**

The Sistine Chapel Ceiling reflects Renaissance Christian immersion in kabbalah by replicating, in its nine central Genesis histories and its lunettes and pendentives beneath, the kabbalistic matrix of nine supernal sefirot and one terrestrial sefira. A number of art historians in recent years have posited the Christian kabbalist and papal advisor Egidio da Viterbo as the designer of the Ceiling program, but none have brought to bear a familiarity with Egidio's kabbalistic writings to questions of the Ceiling's many peculiar modes of representation and deviations from Genesis. An understanding of the Ceiling as undergirded by the sefirotic matrix obviates all of these anomalies. Egidio's known belief that Christian propagation of kabbalah would hasten the arrival of the messianic kingdom provides the motivation for his conception of this Ceiling program, and is evidenced specifically in the imagery itself, which focuses upon an association of Christ with the supernal sefira Binah as the nexus of such expectations. Beyond merely replicating the kabbalistic cosmology, the Ceiling demonstrates contemporary kabbalistic engagement, both Jewish and Christian, with notions of the imagination's role in mystical practice. The Ceiling embodies the ambivalence of the Renaissance syncretic Christian world to the Jewish tradition, reflected in the twin practice of absorption and radical recasting. As well, it serves as a reflection of at least one side in the contemporary internal Jewish debate regarding the piety of accepting Christian patronage in exchange for the transmission of Jewish esotericism. The fact that both Egidio and Michelangelo spent significant periods in the Medici Court in Florence helps to fix this center as crucial to these controversial developments. Egidio, in an address delivered during the planning stages of the Ceiling program, already suggests some of the main kabbalistic themes that would find their way into the finished scheme. The Ceiling program suggests a theurgical relationship, on the part of the devotee, to the sefirot, as well as an interconnectedness between this theurgical posture and conceptions of Christian prayer and the role of the Catholic liturgy.

**Chad Spigel (Duke University)**

### **Quantifying the Use of Ancient Synagogue Space: The Case of en-**

This year marks the scheduled publication of the final excavation report for the ancient synagogue at en-Nabratein. In honor of this event my presentation will address an aspect of the ancient synagogue that has yet to be explored in

detail: how occupancy capacity sheds light on the use of the synagogue building. The synagogue at en-Nabratein is a perfect case-study for this type of research for many reasons. First of all, according to the excavators it is one of the earliest examples of a post-70 CE Palestinian synagogue building. Second, the synagogue shows evidence of significant growth, expanding its floor space by 48% during the second phase of the building. Third, there are a number of architectural features, such as benches and BEMOT, which help clarify the physical use of the floor space for liturgical purposes. And finally, population numbers for the village of en-Nabratein have been estimated for the Roman period, providing a useful context for the synagogue building. In my presentation I will begin by introducing a methodology for determining occupancy capacities for the liturgical use of ancient synagogue buildings. This will be accomplished using archaeological evidence, ancient literary sources, and modern techniques for determining occupancy capacities. In the next part of the presentation I will apply the methodology to the first two phases of the synagogue building at en-Nabratein. With the results in hand, I will move on to the third part of the study, which will discuss how the new data affects our understanding of the synagogue building and the Jewish community of en-Nabratein. Could the building have been used by the entire community for liturgical purposes? Or, was it used only by a subgroup of the en-Nabratein community? How many additional people could the building hold after it was enlarged? Were there other synagogues nearby? These are all questions that can be addressed more completely with occupancy capacity data, and the answers will significantly increase our understanding of the relationship between the ancient community of en-Nabratein and the synagogue building that has been uncovered by archaeologists.

**Randy Linda Sturman (University of Georgia)**

### **A Table in the Presence of My Enemies: Jewish Palestinian Dialogue**

This is an anthropological study of Jewish-Palestinian dialogue. Individuals from two distinct cultures, despite the hostility between their people, engage in dialogue for the stated purpose of developing a vision of a better Israeli-Palestinian future, but the experience and results of dialogue are mixed. This research is focused in part on the individuals who participate in such dialogue and in part on the cultures of the two groups. Regarding the individuals, I first examine who joins the dialogue — their backgrounds, beliefs, connections to the Middle East and their feelings about the issues. Next, I examine the motivations for joining the dialogue. I look at both conscious, stated reasons and unconscious motivations for participating in the group. Regarding the group cultures, I examine the differences between the Jewish and Palestinian members of the group in terms of how their divergent histories and cultural understandings affect their views of the conflict. This includes an examination of the use of humor as an expression of underlying feelings that are not overtly revealed by the participants. My aim in this research is to apply this analysis of the face-to-face interaction between these two cultures in such a way as to contribute to an understanding of the complexity of their relationship. The interim conclusion is that the benefit of dialogue is not in

changing minds, but in changing hearts; in allowing the participants to humanize one another and to put aside the hatred that has been created by individuals and can only be overcome by individuals.

**Mervin F. Verbit (Touro College/Brooklyn College (emeritus))**

### **How the Young Differ: Generational Patterns in American Jewry's Religious Movements**

Most intergenerational studies of American Jewry examine changes in the community as a whole, showing, for example, that younger Jews tend to place more emphasis on individual religiosity at the cost of communal links and responsibilities. Patterns of change, however, may not be uniform across the various groupings in Jewish life. Using data from the National Jewish Population Study of 2000-1, this paper compares generational differences within the major "denominational" divisions in the American Jewish community.

It considers several dimensions of Jewish life and finds that the degree of change, and sometimes even the direction of change, from generation to generation is not the same in the various sub-divisions within American Jewry.

The differences among the religious movements help us to understand not only the movements, but also the dynamics of American Jewry as a whole.

**Stefan Vogt (University of Amsterdam)**

### **German Zionism's Confrontation with German Radical Nationalism, 1910-1920**

The radicalization of German Zionism in the years around the First World War has often been described as a generation conflict and as the result of a dispute inside the Zionist movement. In fact, those years featured severe battles within the ZIONISTISCHE VEREINIGUNG FÜR DEUTSCHLAND, in which the young radicals, such as Kurt Blumenfeld, eventually prevailed over the older generation of activists. The question remains, however, if internal developments sufficiently explain this radicalization. The German Zionist movement operated in a setting that was extremely loaded with nationalist and anti-Semitic ideology. This setting, as well as the political ruptures produced by the War, its approach and its aftermath, had considerable impact on the development of the movement. In my paper I will discuss the implications of German nationalist ideology and politics on the development of German Zionism in this period. I will investigate how German Zionists perceived and reacted to radical nationalism in Germany. The years preceding the First World War saw an increasingly intense agitation of nationalist organizations in Germany, which also influenced the politics of the KAISERREICH before and during the War. Germany's defeat and the establishment of the Weimar Republic further radicalized this nationalism and enhanced its reputation in the society. Radical nationalism almost always included anti-Semitism. At the same time, it had developed from an intellectual tradition from which German Zionism drew as well. Radical nationalism, therefore, could not be ignored, but had to be confronted by the Zionists. In this paper I will argue that the encounter with radical nationalism had significant influence on the radicalization of German Zionism between 1910 and 1920. I will show that the Zionists' perception of German radical nationalism was not always



characterized by rejection. Patterns of reception and even fascination can be found, too. This encounter at the same time confirmed German Zionism's own national ideology and raised doubts about it. The confrontation with radical nationalism thus provides important insight into the changing self-image of German Zionism and its efforts on building a Jewish national identity.

**Linda L. Yellin (California State University at Northridge)**

**Role Transition, Identity, and the Ba'al Teshuvah: Implications for**

This paper focuses on the transition in social identity experienced by non-Orthodox Jews who choose to become BA'ALEI TSHUVA (literally, "returnees" or "penitents"). The process of taking on the role of BA'AL TSHUVA is similar to the acquisition process involved in a wide range of social identities. In this paper, the process model of role acquisition developed and tested by Yellin (1999) is applied to the case of the BA'AL TSHUVA. The model, based on empirical study of 420 separate role acquisitions, delineates four stages: (1) ambivalence; (2) absorption; (3) commitment; and (4) confidence. This model is utilized to examine mechanisms that structure the way actors begin enacting the role, identify factors that influence the course of role transition, and explore the influence of role partners (particularly "evangelizers," mentors, and teachers). Implications for targeted "outreach" efforts and forms of communal support at the four stages are discussed.

**Abstracts for Session 7**

**Monday, December, 18, 2006 01:30 PM-03:30 PM**

***Session Number: 7.1***

**Session "Texts" in Jewish Studies**

***Session***

Until recently there was a widespread consensus in Jewish Studies as to what was a Jewish text. A Jewish text was a written document that contributed to Judaism and Jewish culture. Produced by a learned elite, Jewish texts included Bible commentaries, the Talmud, midrash, rabbinic responsa, philosophy, literature, liturgy, and Jewish communal records. In postmodern interpretation, however, the "text" was expanded to include visual and aural documentation, material culture, and even historical events themselves. This session aims to raise questions about the types of texts that now serve as the sources for our scholarly understanding of Jewish history and culture.

**Chair, Todd M. Endelman (University of Michigan)**

**Kay K. Shelemay (Harvard University)**

**Songs That Speak: Text, Tune, and Testimony as Sources for Jewish Studies**

Musical performances, ubiquitous in a wide range of contexts within Jewish religious and cultural life, constitute sources that transmit through their texts and tunes a wide range of data. By exploring musical performances, testimony about them, and their traces in various media and notations, one opens windows on many aspects of Jewish thought and practice.

**Hasia R. Diner (New York University)**

**Ephemera as Historical Sources**

Ephemera are texts that are meant to be discarded. When we have access to them, however, their messages and the ways they are used demonstrate their importance as sources of historical knowledge.

**Chava Weissler (Lehigh University)**

**Reading Art in Jewish Renewal**

To understand how members of the Jewish Renewal Movement are constructing a distinctive variety of American Judaism, the scholar needs to go far beyond traditional conceptions of text. Because artistic expression is an important component of Renewal Judaism, the works of visual and fabric artists cast light on Renewal notions of spirituality and theology.

***Session Number: 7.2***

**Session Jewish Modernism in Different Voices**

***Session***

Whether functioning as creators, patrons, editors, propagandists, emblems of heroism, or targets of opprobrium, Jews seem to be inextricably linked to the development of literary modernism. Indeed there are numerous affinities between the prominent motifs of modernism and modern Jewish life -- such as exile, homelessness, social alienation, and the radical reinvention of tradition. But how specifically do Jewish writers fit into this quintessentially international cultural dispensation? And to what extent is it possible to speak in terms of a distinctly JEWISH modernism, especially when one considers literary production across multiple linguistic traditions? This panel provides an opportunity to address these questions by considering Jewish literary modernism from a comparative, multilingual perspective. Among the topics these papers address are the relationship between modernist texts written in Jewish and non-Jewish languages; the role of intertextuality, allusion, and parody in Jewish modernism; the ways Jewish writers absorb and recast iconic modernist authors; and the politics of Jewish modernism. Our goal will be to revise and complicate a common view of modern Jewish literature that has prevailed ever since the critic Baal-Makhshoves' pronouncement that Jewish writers have created "one literature in two languages" (i.e. Hebrew and Yiddish). By exploring how Jewish modernists have drawn upon and participated in multiple linguistic traditions, we will be in a position to move beyond this monolithic focus (i.e. "One literature") and to track the dynamic dialogue carried on by Jewish writers with multiple cultural traditions. (Note: An alternate configuration of this panel could include three of the four papers and a respondent. Professor Anita Norich from the University of Michigan would be the respondent. Should this configuration be of greater interest, the excluded paper might be included on a different panel at the conference.)

**Chair, Julian A. Levinson (University of Michigan)**

**Marc Caplan (Harvard University)**

**Between Self and Other: Displacement, Dislocation, and Deferral in Dovid Bergelson's Mides ha-din and Alfred Döblin's Reise in Polen**

This talk compares two significant narratives, each focusing on Jewish life in Eastern Europe, and each written in Berlin during the 1920s. Dovid Bergelson's *Mides ha-din* (1929) is the first noteworthy Yiddish novel set in the Pale of Settlement following the Bolshevik revolution; Alfred Döblin's *Reise in Polen* (1925) is one of the most extensive expositions in interwar German-Jewish literature on the encounter of German Jews with Ashkenazic culture. Although the linguistic and formal differences between a Yiddish novel and a German travelogue complicate a comparative analysis of these works, the underlying historical and structural paradoxes that animate these narratives serve to illustrate the difficulties of identifying a common culture between German and Eastern Jews, as well as the general consequences of rapid modernization, war, and revolution on European culture in general and Jewish culture in particular. This comparison attempts to identify the means by which Bergelson and Döblin represent in the Jewish context a cultural dilemma that is characteristic of European High Modernism. The most remarkable feature of Bergelson's novel is his choice, arguably unique among major works of Yiddish literature, of a non-Jewish protagonist. This decision underscores Bergelson's insecurity toward depicting his transformed homeland from the distance of Berlin, as well as the formal principle of indirection and objectification that forms a crucial part of his emerging Marxist aesthetics. Döblin shares Bergelson's frustrated yearnings for identification with Ashkenazic culture: though raised in a thoroughly German-speaking culture, and eventually leaving Judaism for Roman Catholicism, Döblin was nonetheless the child of two Yiddish-speaking Polish Jews. Much of the drama in his travelogue thus emerges from his frustration at encountering a culture that should form his birthright, yet appears inscrutable and impenetrable to him. This talk's comparison of Döblin's idiosyncratic use of the travelogue with Bergelson's innovations in the Yiddish novel will demonstrate that both writers create a literary and psychological space between self and other. This new, unstable landscape has significant implications for our understanding of these authors as modernists and as Jews.

**Jonathan S. Skolnik (German Historical Institute)**

**A Song in the Desert? Else Lasker-Schüler and Jewish Modernism in**

Else Lasker-Schüler's German poetry, replete with Jewish themes, has usually been interpreted in one of two ways. Typical of the reception of women writers, her poetry is often read in view of her biography, her attempt to construct an identity at once feminine, German and Jewish. An alternate approach, initiated by her well-intentioned champion Karl Kraus, views her modernist language experiments as quintessentially feminine, a capricious, innovative, but ultimately private and hermetic mythology and self-stylization. Both lines of criticism fail to recognize the profound and perceptive ways Lasker-Schüler engaged with the Hebrew and Yiddish avant-garde in 1920s Berlin and her contribution to their struggles to craft a Jewish modernist idiom. My paper will examine Lasker-Schüler's writings from the 1920s against the background of Uri-Zvi Grinberg and Avram Nochem Stenzl, two modernist poets working in Jewish languages in Berlin in the early 1920s with whom Lasker-Schüler was

intimately acquainted. Rather than an idiosyncratic writer working with a “private” language, Lasker-Schüler was one of the rare German-Jewish authors who engaged with the literary questions facing Jewish writers in Hebrew and Yiddish.

**Naomi Brenner (University of California, Berkeley)**

**The Sign of the Times: Modernism and Zionism in Rachel’s Poetry**

In a 1921 letter to her sister, the Hebrew poet Rachel [Bluvstein] describes a lecture she gave to her fellow kibbutz members on the Futurist movement in Europe. “They listened with great interest,” she reports, “but it was obvious that poor Futurism ran up against an iron wall of spiritual health and they savaged it without mercy.” Though her audience rejects Futurism as irrelevant to their Zionist convictions, Rachel provokes a fascinating scene: the members of Degania devoting one of their legendary debates to the merits of the modernist avant-garde. Rachel’s lecture on Futurism represents both her familiarity with European modernist trends and her efforts to create a modernist poetics suited to the ethos of labor Zionism. Best known for her short, expressive lyric poems, Rachel is rarely read as a modernist; her poetry is either lauded or dismissed by critics for its sincerity and sentimentality. But as Michael Gluzman has demonstrated, many of the characteristics identified as Rachel’s limited literary talent in fact comprise a principled modernist poetics that runs counter to prevailing trends in Hebrew literature of the time. While one of Rachel’s best known poems, “Only About Myself Did I Know How to Tell,” is typically viewed as an anthem to feminine, confessional poetry, upon closer reading it engages critical questions about the place of the artist in the modern world and the woman in the Zionist enterprise. This metapoetic dimension is elucidated in her manifesto “On the Sign of the Times,” as she selects a paradigmatically modernist genre to situate her poetics of simplicity in the context of contemporaneous Russian and French literature. At the same time that Avraham Shlonsky introduces a combative, flamboyant modernist poetics in Hebrew that provokes intense controversy, Rachel develops an overlooked modernist, minimalist alternative in her poetry and prose. In this paper, I trace Rachel’s careful orchestration of complex and often contradictory literary affiliations in her construction of a new woman poet and a different Hebrew modernism. Drawing on French, Russian and Yiddish literature, Rachel blends the Zionist ideology of the Yishuv with aspects of international modernism.

**Session Number: 7.3**

**Session        Constituents’ Perspectives on Synagogues and Schools**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Melissa Klapper (Rowan University)**

**Patricia Munro (University of California, Berkeley)**

**Divisions in Community: Bar and Bat Mitzvah and the Synagogue**

Despite its many critics, the American synagogue still helps sustain American Judaism, both by providing common spaces for Jews to gather and by

educating Jewish children. Yet, congregations, like any organization, must deal with the tension between community and individual interests. Congregational life must encompass shared practices, beliefs, and meanings, while congregants bring their individual attitudes toward Judaism and often competing values and commitments. This paper examines the nature of the individual-community tension: How can it be observed and described? What choices of both congregation and individual increase or decrease the tension?

I examine these issues through a study of the role of Bar and Bat Mitzvah in the synagogue. Precisely by connecting individual and community, Bar and Bat Mitzvah clarify how the congregation's need for cohesiveness and unity conflicts with the individual and sub-group desires. The event allows both child and family to declare symbolic allegiance to the Jewish community. However, both the preparation and the service itself draw on significant resources of congregation, as well as of the family, and so structure both family life and congregational activities. Families must commit to religious school and Hebrew study, as well as synagogue membership for a number of years. For the congregation, Bar and Bat Mitzvah change the nature of regular synagogue services, the content of educational programs, and the relations of professional leadership to congregants. I use interviews and observation of three different groups of members within one Reform congregation—the lay and professional leaders, the Bar and Bat Mitzvah families, and other congregants—in order to understand the way each group perceives Bar and Bat Mitzvah, congregational life, and their particular place within the congregation. I find that, in this particular case, Bar and Bat Mitzvah act to separate the different constituencies from each other, and that the ritual has very different meanings for and effects on these different congregational constituencies.

**Randal F. Schnoor (York University)**

### **“School as Shul”: New Perspectives on the Relationships of Parents to Their Children’s Schools**

Working with two colleagues (Alex Pomson of Hebrew University and Dafna Ross of York University) over the last three years, I have been involved in developing an ethnography of a Jewish Day School that has become ever more focused on understanding the relationships between parents and the school. Using the case study of Toronto’s Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School (DJDS), a private, religiously-pluralistic Jewish elementary school in downtown Toronto, the paper takes up the themes surfaced by our extended inquiry in the school to develop a previously unarticulated thesis about the ways in which Jewish day schools can exhibit the functions previously performed by the synagogue as BET KENESSET, BET MIDRASH and BET TEPHILAH. Organized around a series of ethnographic portraits this paper make explicit how the behaviors and outcomes identified in our earlier work can be directly attributed to the school serving for parents as a house of meeting, study and spiritual inspiration. In these respects, it seems, the day school restores an etymological connection between the synagogue and the school. The term "shul" comes from the Yiddish word for "schools", reflecting

the origins of Diaspora synagogues as schools, or "shuls", where people gathered to study Torah and where, since they were already gathered, they also prayed together (Heilman, 1976). Our work breaks new ground by exploring in significant ethnographic detail how one institution can serve as a public arena for "privatized" adult Jewish involvement. We argue that the outcomes and relationships we identify have profound consequences for how to conceive of the role of schools in societies, and more particularly for how to imagine the cultivation of Jewish community in a post-modern context. The Jewish day school, we suggest, may serve as a gateway to engaged Jewish life

**Sharon Feiman-Nemser (Brandeis University)**

### **Identity Interplay: The Relationship between Personal and Professional Identities among Teachers Working in Jewish, Catholic, and Urban Public Schools**

Identity Interplay: The relationship between Personal and Professional identities among teachers working in Jewish, Catholic and Urban Public Schools. by Bethamie Horowitz and Sharon Feiman-Nemser Our paper will examine findings from an exploratory study about the evolving identities of new teachers working in Jewish, Catholic, or urban public schools. This project is noteworthy because it allows us to make two analytic advances. First, it has the virtue of drawing comparative samples of new teachers from three different kinds of schools --Jewish day schools, Catholic schools and urban public schools. Second, we are conducting this study in order to consider "identity formation" in a broader context -- by considering personal/ethno-religious values commitments in the context of people's evolving professional commitments. Our key analytic questions are: 1. How do new Catholic School, Jewish School, and public school teachers describe their decisions to teach, and how do personal, professional and contextual aspects of their lives influence these decisions? 2. What is the relationship between new teachers' evolving identities as teachers and as individuals? In particular, we are interested in their personal religious, ethno-cultural, or ideological identities and commitments as these relate to their developing selves as teachers. Through this study, we investigate new teachers' decisions to teach, their decisions to become trained in particular programs, and their decisions to teach in particular schools. Past research and experience tells us that pre-service and the early years of teaching involve the establishment of professional identity, which is influenced by multiple factors, including teacher education and the contexts in which new teachers teach. Our study adds a third important factor, their personal biographies. Here we focus the salience of religious, ethno-cultural or ideological identities and commitments in new teachers' decisions to teach, in their teaching practice, and in the shaping and establishment of their professional selves. Method: We are carrying out in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 30-36 aspiring and new teachers from these three religiously-grounded or civic-mission driven teacher training programs: one that trains Jewish day school teachers, another that trains teachers for Catholic schools, and third that trains teachers for urban public schools. We plan to present several cases and some emergent findings

from this collaborative, qualitative open-ended interview study. We will also elaborate on particular methodological issues and limitations relevant to the field and to colleagues pursuing or interested in related work. This paper is co-authored by Bethamie Horowitz.

**Respondent, Rela Mintz Geffen (Baltimore Hebrew University)**

**Session Number: 7.4**

**Session Ethnicity, Gender, and Nation in Israel Cinema**

**Session**

In recent years, Israeli films have not only attracted increasing popular and scholarly attention, but have also become a main pedagogical tool in a wide range of courses, including classes that explore Jewish and Israeli histories, cultures, communities, literatures, and more. Following the publication of Ella Shohat's 1989 study of Israeli cinema, *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation*, scholars have examined Israeli cinema as the articulation of a hegemonic national narrative, characterized as Jewish Ashkenazi, masculine and heterosexual. At the same time, scholars such as Yosefa Loshitzky in *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen* (2001), Miri Talmon in *Israeli Graffiti* (2001), Irma Klein in *Amos Gitai* (2003) and Raz Yosef in *Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema* (2004) have all noted a tension between individual identities—whether defined by nationality, ethnicity or gender -- and this Israeli hegemonic, homogenous narrative, supposedly articulated in films. Indeed, these scholars have argued that, until the mid- 1980s, the hegemonic national narrative has curtailed, not to say undermined, the ability of films to portray alternative identities as positive models of identification, identities that do not fit the archetypes and stereotypes demanded by national ideology, but better represent the complex social reality in Israel. Such an approach to Israeli cinema, however, is wanting on at least two counts. First, delineating the history of Israeli cinema, it posits a change of paradigms—from the earlier cinema as an expression of hegemonic ideology to a cinema that articulates the plural fields of identities that challenge this hegemonic identity; yet, it fails to explain how the later paradigm is related to the earlier one and how it emerges from it. More seriously, it remains largely blind to the complexity of films made before the mid-1980s. The papers in this panel seek to tackle these two questions by exploring both the nature of the change between the two paradigms and by challenging the reductive reading of earlier films as homogeneously expressing hegemonic ideology to the exclusion of other identities and politics. Together they suggest that we have to rethink the

**Chair, Shai Ginsburg (Duke University)**

**Uri Cohen (Columbia University)**

**State as Trauma**

Drawing on the extensive literature concerning testimony in the context of the Shoah, this paper examines the culture of 48 as a site of trauma. Though usually read in the normative frame of narrative justification, a belated reflection on the cultural artifacts of the war of 48 reveals a side to them that

can be described in terms of trauma. Ranging from prose, poetry and theatre produced immediately after the war to films produced almost two decades later, the works examined, some of which form the heart of the canon, reveal an ambivalent view of the state crossing political differences. The visual aspect of this trauma is further explored through the cinema and the way it treats death and the state formation in films as different as Hill 24; The House on Shlush Street; A Hole in the Moon; Salah Shabati and others. From Yizhar to Kishon this reading locates the state as trauma, allowing to view it's coming into existence as a question of meaning once easily solved by the repression of trauma. Seen as such the works that engage the state reveal a country and a society that resemble Ground Zero, more than a celebrating victorious unity.

**Eran Kaplan (University of Cincinnati)**

### **Capturing the Real: Dover Koshashvili and the Politics of Identity in Israeli Cinema**

If until the late 1980s Israeli culture was dominated by the "official voice of Israel" of secular, Ashkenazi males, in the 1990s Israel has witnessed the emergence of many alternative voices that have rendered the Israeli cultural landscape multi-cultural. These transitions were reflected by Israeli cinema, which moved from a national narrative that drew a clear line between the hegemonic and the subaltern to the movies of the 1990s that brought alternative identities to the forefront. This was especially evident in the representation of Mizrahim in Israeli cinema-as Israeli cinema moved away from the Bourekas ethnic comedies, which offered stereotypical images of Mizrahim as uncivilized simpletons, towards a more complex representation of non-Ashkenazi Jews imbued with postmodern sensitivities. Several films such as Shuli's Fiancé, Love Sick in C Neighborhood and Sh'hur captured these new sensitivities. These films, especially the latter, fall into what Pascale Casanova has described as the essential characteristics of an "ethnic-culture": postmodern stylistic hybridity (high and low culture), the reliance on pre-modern narratives (morality tales) and the reliance on magical-realist elements as a means to overcome trauma or family dysfunction. But as the 90s came to an end so did the almost naïve belief that politics amounted to the establishment of local identities; the second Intefada shattered the optimism of the 1990s and brought back the 'real' into Israeli politics and culture. My paper examines this cultural transition by focusing on the films of Dover Koshashvili (Late Marriage, Gift from Heaven), which offer a highly realistic and unsentimental look at the Georgian community in Israel, while exposing the violent nature by which ethnic and cultural identities are asserted and preserved in the modern world. My paper contrasts these sensitivities with those of the "multi-cultural" films of the 90s and tries to place them within broader political and cultural processes, dubbed succinctly by Žižek as the re-emergence of the "Desert of the Real."

**Yaron Peleg (George Washington University)**

### **Toward a New Understanding of Mizrahi Images in Israeli Cinema**

The paper looks at the evolution of Mizrahi images in Israeli cinema in order to reevaluate the representation of Mizrahim in it. Beginning with early



representations of Mizrahi Jews, the paper looks at the seminal 1964 film *Sallah Shabbati*, it continues with the *Bourekas* genre with films like *Salamoniko* (1970) and *Kazablan* (1974), and finally considers more recent films from the 1990s, like *Shuroo* (1991) and *Sh'chur* (1994). The paper reconsiders Mizrahi images in these films and challenges some of the prevalent perceptions of them as negative and denigrated. The paper's thesis is based on three related propositions that deal with the perceived inferiority of Mizrahim in Israeli film and culture. The first proposition is that early Israeli films attempt to verify Mizrahim as Jews. The second is that, once their Jewish identity is validated, Mizrahim are then made part of the Jewish-Israeli family through marriage. The third proposition is that, once inside the family, many films attempt to bolster the masculine credentials of Mizrahi men as part of this [national] family and at times even as leaders of it. Based on these propositions the paper illustrates the evolution of Mizrahi images in Israeli cinema since *Sallah Shabati* and shows how by the 1990s Mizrahim are seldom denigrated or marginalized. More often they epitomize the very idea of Israeliness.

### ***Session Number: 7.5***

#### ***Session***      **Memory of the Holocaust in Poland: From 1945 to the** ***Session***

Judith L. Goldstein, Vassar College AJS 2006 Panel Proposal: The Danish Cartoons and the Holocaust Analogy Section: Holocaust Participants: Judith L. Goldstein (organizer, presenter), Jeffrey Shandler (presenter), Jack Kugelmass (discussant) This panel—"The Danish Cartoons and the Holocaust Analogy"—proposes to archive and to analyze the widely varying responses unleashed in reaction to what have become known in the press as the Danish Cartoons. The response to the Danish cartoons demands an examination of them as a way into understanding what has been constructed, and then criticized and deconstructed, as a "clash of civilizations." This panel engages in particular the widespread deployment of the Holocaust in discussions of the Danish Cartoons. Among the more striking consequences of the controversy over the "Danish" cartoons was the call for a graphic "counter-offensive": a contest by Iran's largest-selling newspaper for cartoons mocking the Holocaust. This contest is related to recent Iranian claims that the Holocaust is a fiction. This panel examines the complex response to the Holocaust's paradigmatic stature, both as an atrocity and as emblematic of Western civilization, in light of the history of making and debating Holocaust analogies.

Judith L. Goldstein and Jeffrey Shandler will examine how Iran's targeting of the Holocaust for both denial and ridicule engages the Holocaust's symbolic significance on several counts: as a crucial episode in the histories of modern Jewry and political Zionism; as a defining event of modern European history, and as a moral paradigm in the discourse of modern Western civilization. Judith L. Goldstein will explore how Iran's counter-offensive, understood also as an internal strategy with contemporary national rationales, can be related to contemporary Iranian religious imagery, while Jeffrey Shandler will discuss how, even as each Holocaust analogy has its own

motivations and consequences, it is informed by its relation to a growing inventory of phenomena considered “another Holocaust.”

**Chair, Joanna B. Michlic (Richard Stockton College)**

### **The Future of Memory of the Holocaust in Poland**

Between 2000 and 2002, the publication of Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors* triggered Poland's most profound public debate on the Holocaust. The debate showed the memory of the Holocaust was highly divisive in public discourse, history writings and collective memory. Yet the debate was also evidence of post-Communist Poland's genuine and serious engagement with the repressed and forgotten Jewish past and the memory of the Holocaust. This presentation will discuss coming to terms with the Holocaust in contemporary post-Jedwabne Poland. It will focus on the extent to which Polish public intellectuals have deconstructed past anti-Jewish tropes in Polish culture and to what extent these anti-Jewish ideas still play a role in historical writings and in the treatment of Christian Polish rescuers of Jews. It will also briefly discuss the impact of the renewal of the Holocaust memory in Poland on the Holocaust survivors in Poland and abroad, and on Polish-Jewish relations.

**Helene Sinnreich (Youngstown State University)**

### **From Moses to Radegast Monument: The Evolution of Holocaust Memorials in Lodz, Poland**

This paper will trace post-communist memorialization of the Holocaust in Lodz, Poland from the erection of a statue of Moses holding the ten commandments on the site of a destroyed synagogue to the most recent large scale monument formed from the site of deportation from the Lodz Ghetto.

Comparisons will be drawn between memorials created by Jews, non-Jews, members of the local population and larger organizations within and outside of Poland. It will discuss the politics and funding behind the formation of monuments to survivors of the Lodz Ghetto. It will also compare the creation of sculptures when all traces of the ghetto have been obliterated (as in the case of Warsaw) and the sculpture is needed to mark that a ghetto ever existed to the sculptures created in Auschwitz where the majority of the camp remains as part of the monument to those created in Lodz where a large portions of the ghetto remains but is largely in use as homes once again.

**Annamaria Orla-Bukowska (Jagiellonian University)**

### **Teaching the Holocaust Where It Happened to the Grandchildren of Perpetrators, Bystanders, and Victims**

Regardless of how Poles have felt about this, the state's post-World War II borders encompassed the overwhelming portion of the Shoah landscape. However, under the socialist system of the Polish People's Republic, access to its primary sites – the death camps, mass graves, ghetto sites, etc. – were extremely limited. Polish schoolchildren were regularly taken on fieldtrips to visit Auschwitz I (above all, as a monument to the fight against fascism), but rare was the visitor from abroad. The year Poland transformed into a democracy – 1989 – she opened her borders to mostly visa-less travel and to European Union candidacy (member as of May 2004). The fluid frontiers

meant not only many casual travelers placing Auschwitz on their itinerary, but the rising number of topic-specific tours, by Jews as well as non-Jews, whose principal destinations have been precisely those associated with the Holocaust. Alongside this flow has been a surge of exchange students and scholars – initially mostly from within the EU, but now also including individuals from Japan and Korea, from Australia and Argentina, from the USA and the former USSR. A consequence has been an urgent call for academics in Poland to provide one-time lectures for guides or groups, as well as semester or year-long courses for university students. For the past several years, this scholar has been conducting English-language lectures for specific visitors, as well as teaching full-scale courses on the Shoah in Warsaw and Kraków. The listeners sometimes constitute a fairly homogenous group, but oftentimes not. How does one teach the Holocaust to a group of students among whom are Germans (from the former East as well as West Germany), Lithuanians, Czechs, Italians, Poles, Austrians, Japanese, and Australians? What are the challenges for teaching in the 21st century presented by diverse levels of previous information on the Shoah, by often shifting and complex circumstances in home countries during World War II, and by the current state of democracy in various states and regions?

**Jack Kugelmass (University of Florida)**

### **Shtetls Without Jews: Early Accounts of Post War Poland by Emigre Travelers**

Not long after the end of World War II when civilian travel was once again possible, numerous emigre Polish-Jewish journalists and cultural workers visited their land of birth, determined to see for themselves what and who remained there and to ascertain what the prospects were for a revival of Jewish life within the new Poland. The resulting literature constitutes an important and very early accounting of the Shoah and its aftermath since contained within these ostensive travelogues are recounted testimonies from the survivors these writers encountered. Although today we are long familiar with much of this kind of information, it is worthwhile considering the impact this narrative had some sixty years ago--both upon those transcribing what they heard and what we can only assume, upon their readership. Since many of the writers had some experience with small town Jewish life, and certainly many of their readers were born and raised in such towns and were eager for information about them, accounts of visits to shteytlakh constitute an important component of this literature. The paper examines some representative examples of these accounts by various authors then considers the rhetorical modes and emplotments employed, arguing that they range from the horror/apocalyptic to the heroic/monumental at one set of extremes, to the farcical and pastoral romance at another. Indeed, the small town and the country are particularly suitable for the latter two, the city, perhaps more appropriate for the former two.

**Session Number: 7.6**

**Session            Cities of Silver and Gold: Is Urban Jewish Life in the Western U.S. a Harbinger of the Future of American**

**Jewry? A Session in Memory of Vivian Klaff z"l (co-sponsored by the Mandell L. Berman Institute - North**

**Session**

This session is a groundbreaking one in that it brings together three principal investigators who have conducted Jewish community studies in dozens of metropolitan areas in the United States. The focus of this session will be on several growing Western Jewish communities: Las Vegas, San Francisco, San Diego and Phoenix. The distinctive methods of each will be reviewed along with the major findings. These papers will be complemented by one drawing on data from NJPS 2000-01 and offering comparisons of Western Jews to those living in other regions. Note: An LCD projector is necessary so as to best present the findings through power point presentations.

**Chair, Arnold Dashefsky (University of Connecticut at Storrs)  
Ira Sheskin (University of Miami)**

**Gambling on a Jewish Future: The Jews of Las Vegas**

Las Vegas has been known as one of the fastest-growing Jewish communities in the country. To examine this community, 1,197 20 minute interviews were completed with a random sample of Las Vegas Jewish households in November and December 2005. The survey covered numerous topics, including population size, migration, demographics, religiosity, membership, Jewish education of adults and children, social service needs, Israel, anti-Semitism, and philanthropic behavior. The major findings and policy

**Bruce A. Phillips (HUC-JIR)**

**From Margin to Mainstream: The Seismic Shift Among Jews in the San Francisco Metro Area**

Using the surveys from the 1950s through 2004, the movement of San Francisco Jewry from a highly assimilated to a more mainstream Jewish community is charted using Los Angeles as a reference point.

**Ron Miller (North American Jewish Data Bank)**

**A Tale of Two "Jewish?" Cities: San Diego and Phoenix**

A comparison of two western "Jewish?" communities: San Diego and Phoenix, based on Jewish Community/Population Studies completed for the Jewish federations in each city by Ukeles Associates in 2002-2003. Quantitative data analysis focuses on basic demographics, Jewish connections and disconnections, intermarriage, Jewish values in raising children, and philanthropy. Data from the two studies are compared to other western regional Jewish population studies completed previously and to NJPS 2000-01

**Laurence Kotler-Berkowitz (United Jewish Communities)**

**Has the West Been Won or Lost? Cohesion Among Western Jews in Comparison to Jews Elsewhere**

This paper will use data from the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01 to examine structural and cultural bases of cohesion among western U.S. Jews and compare them to the same bases of cohesion among Jews in the northeast, midwest and south (all regions as defined by U.S. Census Bureau).

Structural bases of cohesion refer to two separate factors: 1) disproportionate concentration in the socio-economic and political structure as measured by education, occupation, income and partisanship; and 2) interactions with other Jews in friendship and family networks. Cultural bases of cohesion refer broadly to participation in Jewish activities, as measured by attendance and memberships in synagogues and other Jewish organizations, Jewish home-based rituals and ceremonies, and engagement in secular components of Jewishness. This paper will use data from the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01 to examine structural and cultural bases of cohesion among western U.S. Jews and compare them to the same bases of cohesion among Jews in the northeast, midwest and south (all regions as defined by U.S. Census Bureau). Structural bases of cohesion refer to two separate factors: 1) disproportionate concentration in the socio-economic and political structure as measured by education, occupation, income and partisanship (Goldscheider and Zuckerman 1984); and 2) interactions with other Jews in friendship and family networks. Cultural bases of cohesion refer broadly to participation in Jewish activities, as measured by attendance and memberships in synagogues and other Jewish organizations, Jewish home-based rituals and ceremonies, and engagement in secular components of Jewishness. This paper will use data from the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01 to examine structural and cultural bases of cohesion among western U.S. Jews and compare them to the same bases of cohesion among Jews in the northeast, midwest and south (all regions as defined by U.S. Census Bureau). Structural bases of cohesion refer to two separate factors: 1) disproportionate concentration in the socio-economic and political structure as measured by education, occupation, income and partisanship (Goldscheider and Zuckerman 1984) and 2) interactions with other Jews in friendship and family networks. Cultural bases of cohesion refer broadly to participation in Jewish activities, as measured by attendance and memberships in synagogues and other Jewish organizations, Jewish home-based rituals and ceremonies, and engagement in secular components of Jewishness. The paper will conclude with suggestions about the future direction of western Jewry with respect to its levels of structural and cultural cohesion.

***Session Number: 7.7***

**Session**        **“Experience the Disaster”: Literature, Art, Music, Film**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Lynn Rapaport (Pomona College)**

**Amy Wlodarski (Dickinson College)**

**Decoding Musical Documentary: Subject Roles in Steve Reich's  
"Different Trains"**

In 1988, Steve Reich composed Different Trains, a musical composition for string quartet and recorded voices intended to depict Jewish life between 1939 and 1942. The concept grew out of Reich's childhood memories of

riding American trains during the war and his realization that European Jews had traveled “different trains” bound to concentration camps. As Reich recounted, “I wanted to make a piece that would accurately reflect the whole situation” and used recorded testimonies to create “a documentary [of] musical reality” akin to a “new kind of documentary music video.” Because the work contains no visual elements, Reich argued that the drama would take place in “the theater of the [audience’s] mind” where they would imagine the interplay between *Trains*’s sonic and linguistic elements. Reich’s references to documentary open up the possibility for reading *Trains* as a sono-cinematic creation that adheres to certain filmic conventions. His assertion that he chose sound clips only for their “sound and contour” deflects questions of subjectivity and intent and calls for a reconsideration of *Trains* with regard to its two “unseen subjects”: Reich as “narrator” and the audience as “listener.” This paper explores the impact of these “unseen characters” (narrator and listener) on the work’s memorial power, aesthetic importance, and public reception. Borrowing terminology from film studies, I examine how Reich’s selection, manipulation, and ordering of *Trains*’s sound clips (which create an “imagined narrative” that blends the stories of American Jews and Holocaust survivors into one master narrative) parallel techniques of cinematic editing and “suture” in order to appeal to the audience’s need for jouissance. Specifically, Reich’s decisions seem calculated to foster the direct involvement of the audience in a memorial act, and consequently the listener plays a pivotal role in the work’s conclusion and Reich’s memory work.

**Lawrence Baron (San Diego State University)**

### **Shoah déjà vu in American Feature Films about Third Generation Jews**

Feature films about the children of survivors usually revolve around how the psychological impact of the Holocaust on the parents' personalities affects their relationship with the offspring. This study will analyse a more recent trend in movies which focus on Jewish Americans born two generations after the end of World War Two. Such films employ time travel, visits to the sites where Holocaust ancestors were slain or sheltered, or fantasy sequences that enable their protagonists to "re-live" the order of their relatives. Through these transpositions the Jewish identities of these characters is strengthened in a variety of ways. Movies that will be considered are *I LOVE, I LOVE YOU NOT* (1966), *THE DEVIL'S ARITHMETIC* (1999), and *EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED*

**Catherine Portuges (University of Massachusetts-Amherst)**

### **Cinematic Representations of Hungarian Jewry after the Holocaust**

Post-Holocaust generations have witnessed the return of the history of Central European Jews to the center of the cinematic stage through historical studies, family narratives, retrospective autobiographies, and the visual arts. By focusing on intergenerational cinematic representations of Jewish identity, primarily films produced by younger filmmakers in the years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, this presentation intends to extend the opening of new spaces of dialogue between historians, literary scholars and film scholars, while simultaneously interrogating and articulating unresolved questions of Jewish identity in the region. As evidenced in many twentieth-century literary, poetic,

and theoretical works, the Hungarian past is never far from the present, and the often conflicting desires to remember, describe, and reconcile the present with the past are expressed with palpable urgency. A number of the works under investigation here focalize narrative structures through the point-of-view of a historically located, specific individual voice, rather than an omniscient camera-narrator, thereby promoting and enhancing the spectator's identificatory empathy. The contested meanings of Jewish identity are also addressed with regard to film esthetics, spaces of public discourse such as film festivals and screenings, and historical sources related to cluster of larger themes, all the more pertinent sixty years later. Incorporating the important work of film scholars such as Hanno Loewy, Stuart Liebman, Michael Renov and Marianne Hirsch, and informed by the research of historians including Randolph Braham, István Deák, I argue that both are forms of witnessing and testimony, variously capable of addressing voyeurism, violence, comedy, and propaganda, as well as historical research which has traditionally assigned a privileged status to the truth claims of documentary films. This investigation inevitably raises perplexing questions about the silences and repression, the identification, shame and guilt that continue to haunt the victims, survivors, and successor generations. For if the filmmakers' fantasy engages with history, so, too, does the external world intrude, often tragically, into the artistic work. It is, after all, primarily through interpretative cinematic strategies, which depend on such rhetorical devices as editing, narrative structure, camera work and the ultimately subjective decisions made behind the lens, that filmmakers invite spectators to participate in the expressive and communicative possibilities of the cinematic experience.

### ***Session Number: 7.8***

#### **Session Walls and Halls: Building Jewish Space**

##### ***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Shelley Hornstein (York University)**

**René Bloch (University of Bern)**

##### **Augustus and Herod the Great: A Roman Model for Jewish Space**

The question of why Herod the Great decided to build a new temple in Jerusalem has opened up a plethora of different suggestions often focusing only on Judea. This paper situates Herod's arguably most important architectural undertaking within the larger context of the politics and literature of his time. The paper argues that the (re)construction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem is best understood in the context of Augustan thought: Similar to Augustus himself (*Res Gestae* 19-20) as well as several Augustan poets who emphasize how the new Roman emperor duly rebuilt the temples of neglected gods (e.g. Horace, *Odes* 3.6: *di neglecti*), Herod, too, presents the god of the Jews as a neglected god, a *deus neglectus*. It was mainly to restore the dignity of this neglected god that the temple of Jerusalem had to be rebuilt. The Jewish-Roman historian Flavius Josephus reflects Herod's approach by having him deliver a speech which centers on the problem of religious neglect

(Jewish Antiquities 15.382-387). Understood as an “Augustan” construction, Herod’s new temple is part of a broadly conceived policy of imitating important ideas of the Roman emperor: Herod, to some extent, played the role of Augustus in the kingdom of Judea. Reflecting on parallels in the architecture between the Herodium and Augustus’ Mausoleum, and the importance given to Herod’s piety (eusebeia) in epigraphy (e.g. *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae* 427) and literature (Josephus, *Jewish War* 1.462), the paper examines further important analogies between the actions of these two men. Herod shares Augustus’ cautious blend of cultural renewal and the reestablishment of traditional ideas. Augustus’ new forms of politics and architecture are balanced by, e.g., his conservative marriage and divorce laws. In a similar way, Herod the Great tries to equal out his progressive politics (e.g. the construction of theaters) with the building of monuments for the Hebrew patriarchs and matriarchs. This Augustan balance is shown most explicitly in, again, Herod’s new temple building in Jerusalem, where ancient and modern styles coerge – very much like in Augustus’ most personal temple building, the Apollo temple on the Palatine.

**Jennifer Cousineau (University of California, Berkeley)**

### **The Eruv as Wall: Material, Ritual, and Halakhic Implications**

Using the controversial construction of the Northwest London eruv in England, between 1988 and 1993 as a case study, this paper explores the idea of the contemporary eruv as a house and its boundary as a wall. The first part of my paper will be devoted to the theory of the wall. I will discuss the approaches of halakhic experts to the eruv boundary in terms of porousness, solidity, structure, size, materials, urban context, and aesthetics. I will also examine the processes through which the boundary of the London eruv was actually built. The construction of this boundary was distinguished by the highly politicized nature of the debate surrounding the eruv planning application. The debate revealed the existence of several different interpretations of the eruv boundary. Sympathizers emphasized its ability to liberate house-bound Jews on Shabbat, while objectors focused on what they perceived as the twin threats of enclosure and of the "invasion" of the neighborhood by Orthodox Jews. The second part of my paper will explore the social and ritual effects of the eruv boundary. Unlike the walls of houses, which conceal behavior, the boundaries of eruvim expose a set of acts associated with the observance of Shabbat within a private domain – carrying, pushing, strolling, walking. The construction of eruv boundaries also exposes new populations to view in urban space. In London, women with young children, young children themselves, the elderly, and the handicapped were most disadvantaged by the lack of an eruv. They were limited to their homes or yards on Shabbat while able-bodied men in the same community enjoyed relatively uninhibited movement. The construction of the London eruv created not only an expanded capacity to navigate urban space for many Jews, but also a different kind of visibility for halakhic Judaism in London. Using an anthropological approach, I will examine the gestural vocabulary of eruv users and the ways in which the emergence of eruv users into the urban landscape altered the scenographic quality of space



inside the eruv walls.

**Susan Goodman (The Jewish Museum)**

**Icons of Separation: Artistic Responses to the Barrier in Israel**

The local issue of separation between the Israelis and Palestinians has long ago entered the realm of international discourse. Israel's barrier has become an architectural icon – not merely a geopolitical statement - and is now subject to scrutiny by the whole world. Thus political implications become part of the architectural agenda and the message of this new marker has become part of contemporary urban culture. Walls and fences are not merely architecture; rather, they are made in response to events. In its ability to embody the idea of separation, and in its implication that you can reshape a society with design, it is no wonder that foreign artists, as well as Israelis would be drawn to the image of the barrier. The enormity of the walls have undeniably great visual impact. In this presentation I will show work by the artists Miki Kratsman, Shai Kremer, Simon Norfolk, and Kai Wiedenhoffer, who have photographed similar locations in Jerusalem in an attempt to imagine the landscape on the far side of that wall, as if it were possible to detect forms through concrete. Unlike previous artists in Israel who only alluded to the political situation, today a number of artists believe that it is imperative to employ their art to call attention to the activities being carried on in this country. Palestinian photographer Noel Jabbour demonstrates that the Abu Dis Wall has consequences for both sides. Her artistic response to the separation barrier is a photographic triptych with views from both the inside and outside of the wall as it appears at Abu Dis. But as the British artist Catherine Yass noted, while researching her film about the wall, it is not easy to know which side you are on. Her film reflects this, where it shows the wall winding to such a degree that you lose track of which side the camera is filming from. And the filmmaker Simone Bitton, in her documentary "Wall," has confronted many of the thorny issues raised by construction of the barrier.

**Respondent, Berel Lang (Wesleyan University)**

**Session Number: 7.9**

**Session Interpenetration of Halakhah and Aggadah**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Robert Brody (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Shamma Friedman (Jewish Theological Seminary/Bar-Ilan University)**

**How Much Anthropomorphism? Allowing the Aggadah to Speak for Itself**

Maimonides was criticized (by Abarbanel and others) for including adherence to articles of faith within the scope of his codification of halakha, Mishne Torah.

These beliefs include theological stances derived from philosophic contemplation, requiring radical reinterpretation of biblical passages and rabbinic aggadic passages, a task which Maimonides undertook in his Guide to the Perplexed. Central among these was his denial of a place in the World to Come for those who subscribe to divine anthropomorphism, immediately challenged by Raavad, with the claim that sages greater than Rambam

believed that God has a form or shape. This well-known animadversion was received with a surprising amount of sympathy by later scholars, testifying to the popularity of the traditional anthropomorphic texts, which could not be legislated out of their simple meaning.

Never the less, that is exactly what the success of the Maimonidean revolution accomplished. His intellectual stature projected his approach upon modern Jewish Studies, where 'sophistication' outweighed the tenets of philological interpretation for anthropomorphic rabbinic passages, whose true meanings have been 'rediscovered' only in recent decades.

Loyal in this case to the simple meaning of scripture, rabbinic Judaism as recorded in the talmudic-midrashic corpus presented God anthropomorphically, in visual terms. In this paper I discuss a rabbinic passage which should be interpreted as an unrecognized visual presentation of the divine image, indistinguishable from certain human likenesses in both physique and physiognomy, with Jacob being the outstanding representative of this paradigm. This is indeed the original meaning of the legend that Jacob's icon was engraved upon the Divine throne.

R. Hiyya Rabbah and R. Yannai: one said, ascending and descending on the ladder, and the other said ascending and descending on Jacob! The one who said ascending and descending the ladder is easily understood. But the one who said ascending and descending on Jacob [what does this mean?]. . . "Israel in whom I glory" (Isaiah 49:3). You are the one whose image (Hebrew: ekonin) is engraved on high. They ascend and see his image; descend and see him asleep. This can be compared to a king who was sitting in judgment in the colonnade. They go up to the basilica and find him asleep; go down to the colonnade and find him sitting in judgment. (par. 68).

Having raised the question of the stark anthropomorphic interpretation of this passage in an earlier study ("Graven Images", *Graven Images, A Journal of Culture, Law, and the Sacred*, I, [1994] pp. 233-238) I now undertake clinching the argument, in the course of which relevant themes in the New Testament and Hekhalot literature are brought to bear.

**Jane Kanarek (University of Chicago)**

### **He Took the Knife: Biblical Narrative Becomes Rabbinic Law**

Classical rabbinic literature presents us with a textual world of law and narrative, a weaving of one genre into the other, and a use of one genre in the service of the other. Despite this literary evidence, scholarship has, until recently, tended to focus either on law, HALAKHAH, or on narrative, AGGADAH. Such a dichotomy prevents us from a full understanding of the rabbinic cultural world and, in particular, the ways in which the ancient rabbis formed their legal nomos. My paper will attempt to further our understanding of the connections between law and narrative and the creation of rabbinic law by examining another under-explored area: the use of Biblical narrative for

rabbinic law. While rabbinic sources debate the readings of particular verses and larger Scriptural narratives, they do not question the use of Scriptural narrative as a basis for deriving law. This area of the use of non-legal Scriptural texts for rabbinic law remains underappreciated and needs closer examination. My analysis will utilize Genesis 22, the Akedah, as a paradigm for exploring this issue. I will focus on two key texts, B. Hullin 16a and Genesis Rabbah 56:6. Both utilize Genesis 22:10 as a source for law concerning ritual slaughter. These two overlooked texts provide both an example of local rabbinic norm creation from Biblical narrative as well as an opportunity to pursue the wider links between the rabbinic narrative and legal frameworks. While the use of the Akedah for laws concerning ritual slaughter may appear audacious, I will argue that when this legal interpretation is read in the context of Genesis 22's more extensive aggadic interpretation, its use is consonant with that aggadic tradition. Furthermore, the comparison of a Babylonian and a Palestinian text will allow us to look at the uses of law and narrative in two different cultural spheres. A close examination of the transformation of this one Biblical narrative into rabbinic law will enable my proposal of a model of how ancient narrative is transformed into rabbinic law and how, in the process, law and narrative join together in the creation of a nomos.

**Jeffrey L. Rubenstein (New York University)**

#### **The Shaming of Abdan (Bavli Yevamot 105b)**

This paper presents an analysis of the story of Abdan's shaming found at Bavli Yevamot 105b. I begin with a literary analysis, proceed to a discussion of the sources and building blocks used by the storytellers, and conclude with an analysis of the halakhic context and parallel sugya of the Yerushalmi. This story is a parade example of a late narrative about the post-Amoraic or Stammaitic academy. It contains almost all of the typical elements of such narratives: a well-populated academy, dialectical argumentation, verbal violence, and shame together with its repercussions. Detailed examination of sources supports the late dating, as the storytellers created the story by combining and reworking a great many traditions found elsewhere in the Bavli. Study of the parallel Yerushalmi sugya sheds light on the compositional process of the Bavli story. For the Bavli redactors seem to have composed elements of the story on the basis of the characters and dialogue of the halakhic SUGYA of the Yerushalmi sugya. They combined these elements with important narrative motifs about the academic concerns of Stammaitic times to fashion a colorful new narrative. Finally, I consider how the halakhic function of the narrative--its impact on the adjudication of law (PESAQ HALAKHA) in relations to the Amoraic statements in the SUGYA.

**Gad Freudenthal (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique/Center for Advanced Judaic Studies)**

#### **Samuel ibn Tibbon's Theory of the Eternal Recreation of the World: Physics, Metaphysics, and Theology**

R. Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Ma'amar Yiqqawu ha-mayim is not really an esoteric text. Yet the fact that it harbors an audacious physically-grounded theory of an eternal coming-to-be and passing-away of the world seems to have gone

unnoticed. While scholars have pointed out that Samuel Ibn Tibbon describes creation as a naturalistic process of coming-to-be, they have overlooked that into his account of the physical dynamics of the cosmos he integrated a factor bringing about its eventual passing away, followed by a new coming-to-be. (To this effect, he gave the entrenched theory of the four elements a slight twist.) This naturalistic theory of cyclically repeated creations and corruptions is an ingenious synthesis of the traditionalist belief that the world has a beginning and the philosophical stance that it is eternal: while each particular world (including our own) is “newly created,” the “world” in the global sense (i.e. material existence as such, the succession of particular transient worlds) is eternal.

***Session Number: 7.10***

**Session           The Red Divide: Communism, Anti-Communism, and Anti-Semitism on the American Shore**

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Israel Bartal (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Tony E. Michels (University of Wisconsin-Madison)**

**The Making of a Jewish Communist: The Case of Moyshe Olgin**

From its inception in 1919 to its collapse as a political force in 1956, the Communist movement attracted a large number of Jews, both immigrant and American-born. Indeed, at the dawn of the movement, the Communist Party leadership viewed Jewish workers as the key to establishing the party as the vanguard of the American working class. Yet, for a host of reasons, historians of both American Jews and American Communism have paid scant attention to Jewish Communists (as a group as distinct from individual Jewish Communists). This paper will examine Communism’s attraction, as well as the dilemmas Communism posed to Jews in the 1920s. Why did Jews join the Communist movement and how did they reconcile their goals with the often-conflicting policies of the Communist Party? As a way of addressing those questions, this paper will focus on Moyshe Olgin, the leading Jewish Communist in the 1920s and 1930s. Olgin, originally a staunch opponent of the Soviet Union, became a Communist sympathizer by 1921 and a full-fledged Communist by 1924. A staunch advocate of Yiddish culture, Olgin was a founding editor of the party’s Yiddish daily newspaper and monthly Yiddish magazine, as well as a popular lecturer, political leader, scholar, and journalist in the English-speaking press. Yet Olgin came into conflict with the party over its policies favoring linguistic and cultural assimilation. Whereas Olgin (and many other Jewish Communists) wanted to create semi-autonomous, Yiddish-speaking Communist organizations, the party leadership wanted to subordinate them to party control, if not dissolve them altogether. Through constant political and ideological maneuvering, and compromise of his own principles, Olgin proved able to establish himself as the foremost leader of Yiddish-speaking Jews within the Communist movement. Using the Communist Party’s internal records and the Yiddish press, this paper examines how Olgin articulated the rationale for a distinctly Jewish brand of Communism, even as

his efforts were often circumscribed or frustrated. By tracing Olgin's trajectory from an opponent of Communism to the leading Yiddish voice of American Communism, this paper intends to illuminate the central dilemmas faced by Jewish Communists in the 1920s.

**Jonathan Karp (Binghamton University, SUNY)**

### **Anti-Communist Critiques of the Black-Jewish Alliance**

Communism bears a strange relationship to the Black-Jewish alliance. Communist policies provided numerous opportunities for Black-Jewish collaboration. Yet these were rarely defined ethnically, and Party members of Jewish background infrequently identified as Jews. While the Party did supply a part of the framework for "Black-Jewish Alliance," it did so mostly through an ideology of class solidarity, not ethnic particularism. It appears doubly odd that the 1960s critique of the alliance was often framed in anti-communist terms. This was certainly true of the "Neoconservative" movement surrounding figures like Irving Kristol. The Neocons excoriated leftist Jews for naiveté regarding Moscow, but also for misdirecting blacks into fruitlessly anticapitalist channels and for pandering to a black radicalism they believed harmed Jewish interests. This critique was embittered by the fact that several founding Neocons were former Marxist and Trotskyites, if not ex-Communists. By indicting the self-betrayal of Communist Jews, Neocons struck at two related phenomena that were formerly close to their hearts: Jews' intense relationships with blacks and their deep involvement with the Left. This Neocon critique was paralleled by a Black Nationalist one. Former Communists like Harold Cruse depicted the Depression-era activities of the Party as a tragedy for Blacks. Gullible blacks had been duped into surrendering their national interests to the Party's cynical aims. Cruse argued that the CPUSA allowed Jews to advance their own ethnic group agenda (economic, political and covertly nationalist) by undermining the African American one. I will analyze the curious parallel between the Jewish Neocon and Black Nationalist critiques. My goal is to debunk neither for its frequent mischaracterizations of the activities of black and Jewish leftists. Rather, I will demonstrate how Marxist categories continued to inform both analyses, albeit largely unconsciously. It was Marxism, as much as the critique of Marxism, which led both Neocons and Nationalists to misunderstand the history of the alliance. Blinded by anti-communism and Marxist categories, they missed the peculiar socio-economic quality of class complementarity that actually accounts for the rise and demise of the black-Jewish alliance. Consequently, Neocons and Black Nationalists became unwitting players in the drama of black-Jewish relations rather than true diagnosticians of its nature.

**Nancy Sinkoff (Rutgers University)**

### **The Pursuit of Secular Heresy: Neoconservatism's Campaign against Jewish Communism**

The vengeance of the American campaign against Communism, most notably the work of Senator Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee, has often been compared to the Salem witch trials (i.e. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*). The points of contact between these dissimilar

historical moments are both the tactics of the prosecution and the innocence of some of those who were accused. Another similarity rests in what can be called communal boundary-drawing. This paper will examine the post-World War II Neoconservative campaign against Communism and its explicit effort to convince American Jews that Communism “was bad for the Jews.” The evocation and use of anti-Semitism was important to Neoconservatives who argued that Jewish Communists overstated the existence of American anti-Semitism and ignored the primary force of anti-Semitism in modern times, the Soviet Union. Sources for the paper will include the archival holdings of prominent Neoconservatives -- many of whom were active members of the organized American Jewish community -- as well as their published editorials, polemics, and magazine articles in the American and American-Jewish press. I will argue that an analysis of this ideological campaign, which was explicitly argued in Jewish terms, can be compared typologically to earlier moments in communal boundary-drawing within the Jewish community. Comparisons to the Rabinite struggle with Karaism and to the Rabbinic-Sabbatean conflict in the eighteenth century will be drawn. Post-World War II Jewish Neoconservatives sought to redefine the political culture of American Jews and to define what position on various issues (i.e. the campaign for Soviet Jewry, support for the state of Israel, criticism of affirmative action and quotas on university campuses) the Jewish community should take. Those in the American Jewish community who held different opinions were seen not as legitimate dissenters but as modern apostates, Jews who were now defined as being on the wrong side of Jewish interests. The paper will raise – and suggest further lines of research about – a host of complex issues regarding the continuities of the categories of “heresy” and “apostasy” in the modern world and of the relationship of American Jews to the politics of the American state.

**Matthew B. Hoffman (Franklin and Marshall College)**

### **Moscow in America: Yiddish Culture in Conflict**

Beginning in the 1920s there was an ever increasing number of heated conflicts between socialist and communist factions of the Yiddish cultural scene in the U.S. Though it was one among many intensely partisan ideological disputes among Yiddish-speaking intellectuals in America, the socialist-communist rift came to be one of the ugliest ideological conflicts in American Yiddish culture. In this paper I will examine the increasing severity of this conflict in the years of 1937 to 1942 by focusing on two of the main camps at the heart of this conflict: the Forverts circle, chief among them, Abe Cahan and Chaim Lieberman; and Chaim Zhitlovsky and the yiddisher kultur farband (YKUF), a cultural organ affiliated with the Communist Popular Front. With the convening of the World Yiddish Cultural Congress in Paris in 1937, to call for a united Yiddish “kultur front” (loosely affiliated with the Communist party), the anti-communist Forverts camp kicked into action. They organized a campaign against participating in what it called the “Communist maneuver to take over Jewish souls,” publishing an anti-kultur front statement by 26 Yiddish writers from the Forverts and other Yiddish papers. Chaim Lieberman also weighed in with a polemical work, Sheydim in Moskve “Devils in Moscow

(1937), in which he stridently assailed the Communist regime in Moscow and its Jewish supporters in the U.S., especially those associated with the newly established YKUF. On the other side, Chaim Zhitlovsky and other Yiddish intellectuals, mostly communists or “fellow travelers” became reinvigorated with this renewed fusion of Yiddish culture and communism, which often entailed strong support for the Soviet Union, even after the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939. By examining the writings of parties on both sides of this cultural clash, especially those of the chief protagonists such as Lieberman and Zhitlovsky, I hope to shed some light on this bitter ideological chasm in the Yiddish cultural scene. Furthermore, this research fits into a larger study of what I’m calling “Yiddish culture in conflict” that looks at a series of acrimonious debates within Yiddish culture in the first half of the 20th century to see what they reveal about the essential nature of secular Yiddish culture itself.

**Session Number: 7.11**

**Session Priestly Politics**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Rachel Sharon Havrelock (University of Illinois at Chicago)**

**William H. Propp (University of California, San Diego)**

**The Political Symbolism of the Priestly Source**

Those who consider the Priestly Source an official document of the pre-exilic official cult of Jerusalem must reckon with the source's subtle but pervasive critique of monarchy and its symbolism. This is evident from its approach to Cherubim, the Ark, the Tabernacle, the Army and the role of the High Priest. The implication may be that P is exilic or post-exilic, or else a pre-exilic anti-Temple polemic. This paper discusses the political stance of the P source as evident in its evocative imagery and symbolic lexicon.

**Bruce Rosenstock (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)**

**Dionysiac Play in Exodus 32**

The verbal root *tzachek* (and its biform *sachek*) has a variety of meanings, from "laugh" to "mock," "dance," and "play"(including sexual play). In at least two of the narrative contexts of its occurrences, in 2 Sam 6 (David's dance "before the LORD" during the procession leading the ark to Jerusalem) and Ex 32 (the Israelite "play" on the "festival of the LORD"), there is a clearly ritual or cultic association to the verbal action. I propose to use comparative material from Greek religious practices associated with the cults of Demeter and Dionysus involving dance, laughter, mockery, and ritual genital self-exposure to clarify not only the semantic valence of the verb but also to offer an analysis of the biblical representation of the ritual action in 2 Sam 6 and

**Gershon Hepner (Independent Scholar)**

**Ritual and Symbolic Exile: New Readings via Ancient Greece**

Sara Forsdyke (*Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy: The Politics of Expulsion in Ancient Greece*, 2005), shows how the scapegoat ritual functioned in ancient Greece as symbolic exile. Just as real exile was used to control land and its inhabitants, so the once-yearly scapegoat ritual enabled the annual

purification of the polis. I suggest that a similar shift from actual to symbolic exile occurs in the Bible. First, Lev. 16 ritualizes exile through the expulsion of the scapegoat. The goral, lot, the mechanism for selecting the scapegoat (Lev. 16:6, 8 [2], 10), is conceptually similar to the ostrakon, the mechanism for determining the scapegoat in ancient Athens. The expulsion of the scapegoat on the tenth day of the seventh month (Lev. 23:27) parallels the ten year limit on the exile of political opponents through ostracism in ancient Greece. For the Priestly legislator, the scapegoat ritual was a symbolic exile of people who had offended God and polluted the sanctuary, enabling them to remain within the community. This parallels the ancient Greek use of ostracism to correct the pollution of the land. Second, Genesis offers accounts of individuals whose personal exiles function symbolically to purify the land and its inhabitants. The expulsion of Lot from Abraham's community is a ritual exile that anticipates the return of his descendants. Lot's name means "cursed" in both Aramaic and Greek, where ?????????, "accursed," was written on several ostraca. His expulsion from Abraham's community purifies it and prevents God from harming it, as the expulsion of citizens by ostracism purified the polis and prevented the gods from harming it. The expulsion of Athenians lasted only for a fixed time and the exile of Lot's descendants ended when Boaz married Ruth, a Moabite descendant of Lot (Ruth 4:22).

**Asher Ragen (Harvard University)**

### **Purity of Lineage in Ezra and Neo-Babylonian Temples**

The Book of Ezra includes numerous innovations in the construction of social boundaries for the Jewish community of the Second Temple period. Among these innovations we find the extensive reliance on genealogical lists, as well as a prohibition on intermarriage and the exclusion of children born to foreign women from the community. All of these changes assume the significance of biological kinship as an immutable category rendering people "pure" or "impure". Thus Ezra refuses to absorb foreign women and their children into the community because these children have "impure blood". This innovation of the period of Ezra had far reaching implications for the construction of community and self in Second Temple Judaism and beyond. To date scholars have discussed these developments as an internal Jewish affair, originating perhaps in Priestly notions of purity of lineage. In this talk I would like to present evidence from the Neo-Babylonian temples that provide us with striking parallels to the developments in Ezra. Like the Second Temple community, the Neo-Babylonian temples formed largely autonomous political units within the Neo-Babylonian and Persian empires. They were governed by a temple assembly comprised of members of the Babylonian urban upper class. Documents from temple archives of the fifth and sixth centuries show an increasing concern within these assemblies for matters of personal descent. Prospective members of temple assemblies are examined with regard to the "purity" of their mothers, and require documents of lineage which prove their right to membership. This represents a shift for Mesopotamian society, which traditionally employed a variety of legal fictions, such as adoption, to absorb outsiders. In the 6th and 5th centuries BCE this was no longer the case;



temple society was defined by rigid genealogical boundaries that effectively protected the privileges of temple elites from encroachment by outsiders. The two communities have structural similarities as well as possible historical ties. They are both temple communities dominated by local elites in an increasingly imperial Near East. Both seek to buttress their privileges through the ascription of cultic importance to biological kinship, thus preventing outsiders from gaining membership in the community. This talk aims to provide a wider Near Eastern context for the discussion of the social innovations of the Second Temple period.

**Session Number: 7.12**

**Session Past and Present in Israeli Politics, Religion, and Society**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Nitza Druyan (Hofstra University)**

**Orit Avishai (University of California, Berkeley)**

**Bridal Counselors, Halachic Counselors, and Purity Assessors:**

**Negotiating the Face and Future of the Orthodox Community in Israel**

This paper approaches the Israeli orthodox community's negotiations between "tradition" and "modernity" by examining recent transformations in the social organization of NIDDAH in Israel. Although NIDDAH is one of the three central tenets of Orthodox Judaism, in the past decade NIDDAH has spawned a cultural industry that includes workshops, manuals, courses, and a new class of ritual experts: BRIDAL COUNSELORS, who teach brides the laws of NIDDAH, and discuss with them a host of issues pertaining to marriage, sexuality, and "the Jewish home" in several one-one-one sessions; HALACHIC NIDDAH counselors, who render halachic advice to women in lieu of Rabbis; and PURITY ASSESSORS, who perform vaginal examinations for the specific purpose of ascertaining a symptomatic woman's NIDDAH status. This paper focuses on the emergence and social significance of these new professionals among orthodox women. Research on Israel's orthodox community in recent years points to the challenges mounted by reformist orthodox women associated with projects such as KOLECH, the orthodox women's forum, against established practices, beliefs, traditions, and theologies. This scholarship often tells a story of progress hampered by fundamentalist backlash, effectively pitting progressive renegades against unenlightened traditionalists. My analysis complicates this picture. While the emergent professions of bridal counselors and purity assessors are products of institutes associated with traditionalist voices within the orthodox community, and HALACHIC counselors reflect pro-change—even renegade—voices, this paper challenges this neat dichotomy of reformist versus traditionalists. My analysis demonstrates that changes motivated by traditionalist impulses potentially introduce progressive transformations to the field of NIDDAH, while changes wrought about by pro-change orthodox women bear the potential to both preserve and challenge traditional authority structures. Thus, rather than pitting "progressives" and "traditionalists", my analysis points to a community-

wide DIALOGUE about traditional authority structures and gendered division of labor in the face of contemporary challenges to traditional visions of orthodoxy. Specifically, my analysis demonstrates how these negotiations transform NIDDAH from a traditional, oral ritual domain to a distinctively institutionalized, standardized and professionalized ritual domain that relies on modern therapeutic discourses and expert division of labor.

**Adina B. Newberg (Reconstructionist Rabbinical College)**  
**Tefilot Hadashot Kan V'akhshav; or “ani hiloni light”:** **Creating Community and Reconnecting to Judaism and Israel through Prayer among Nonobservant Israelis**

The last few years have witnessed a development of a new phenomenon among the so called “secular” Israelis who previously felt alienated from Judaism. Political and security crises culminating with Rabin’s assassination brought many “secular” to an existential crisis that resulted in Israelis feeling the need to bridge the gap of knowledge and connection between two aspects of their existence that were not connected for them till that point: Judaism, which they recognized as the basis and source of the State of Israel, but with which they had very little contact, and their Western and modern sensitivities. This paper will describe a particular attempt at integration. While traditional Jewish prayer seemed distant and alienating to secular Israelis, communal ceremonies during solemn moments are familiar to most. Commemorations of Yom Hazikaron, graduations from high schools and army the public singing, even the lighting of candles at the site of Rabin’s assassination are examples of familiarity and comfort with ritual to express deep emotions and important moments. Through poetry and singing and ,these ceremonies provide a sense of transcendence and ironically a visceral but not yet acknowledged understanding of the value of prayer and ritual. These two elements, combined with an increasing familiarity of Israelis with expressions of liberal Judaism in North and South America opened the door for the establishment of prayer groups that celebrate Shabbat. Combining singing and poetry and experimentation with traditional prayer connects these groups to Judaism without necessarily accepting the halakhah as a framework for action. The paper, which is a result of participant observations, participation in a conference devoted to this subject, and in- depth interviews with leaders and participants carried out over the last two years, will describe how these groups create their Shabbat celebrations. It will discuss how they conduct the prayers, construct their siddurim and how through these communities search for meaning by connecting to Jewish sources and tradition. Celebrations include learning, year and life cycle celebrations; social action commitments are being created, forging alternative paths of living as modern Israelis and the possibility for a new way of defining and identifying themselves.

**Moshe Naor (University of Toronto)**

**The 1948 War Effort and the Demand for Equality in Sacrifice**

The 1948 War had territorial and demographic ramifications as well as social effects that reflected the interaction between war and society. The wide-scale ongoing harm done to the population, in addition to the social and economic

mobilization of the Jewish community in Palestine for the war effort, brought to the forefront the demand for an equal share of the burden and for social and national solidarity. A society's ability to cope with the physical, emotional and economic burdens of war was perceived as suggesting certain ideological concepts and moral principals. However, most prominently it constituted a significant element in invigorating the war effort and in the war's successful outcome. Phenomena such as avoiding recruitment to the military and work service and objecting to participation in the popular fundraising activities towards financing the war were all perceived as endangering the war effort.

This paper will discuss how the Israeli society's mobilization for the war effort emphasized the need to achieve solidarity during wartime and the demand for equality in sacrifice. In the political and public discussion, oft-repeated was the call for equality of sacrifice and collective carrying of the war burden - emotional, physical and economic. The paper will also describe the ways in which the war effort raised and explored political and social tensions by focusing on the public campaign for limiting the scope of truancy both in manpower and fundraising, and on the issue of economic deterioration in the families of enlisted soldiers. In addition, this paper will explain why the social and national demand for solidarity during war reflected the societal and economic mobilization processes, as well as the shift in rule from Yishuv to state and also the change in the course of the war. The demand for equality of sacrifice also emphasized the backdrop of unprecedented loss, destruction and bereavement and the war's demographic implications, all of which reflected the Jewish society's experience during the 1948 War of

**Margalit Shilo (Bar-Ilan University)**

### **The First Jewish Settlements in Ottoman Palestine Through Women's Eyes (1878/82-1903)**

The First Jewish Settlements in Ottoman Palestine Through Women's Eyes (1878/82 - 1903) The Eretz Israel pioneer enterprise is seen in historiography as a male initiative. Actually, pioneer life like Zionism are understood as a procedure of reforming the Jewish Diaspora identity (conceived as feminine) into a healthy manly identity. These concepts coupled with the almost complete absence of female testimonies of the first stage of the Jewish settlement in Ottoman Palestine (1878/82 – 1903) produced a one sided historiography where women were almost completely missing. Yet, recent and not so recent research has uncovered a significant number of unknown women's writings, some published, some in manuscript. These women's voices enable us not only to see the first settlements through women's eyes, but also enable us to recreate women's presence in the pioneer enterprise. These manuscripts also unfold women's view of their story of the rebirth of the Jewish nation. Instead of depicting the victorious story of the first male settlers they give voice to the numerous tragedies, to the deaths of children and young people and to the hard life that befell the women. And, foremost, through women's writings we are finally understanding the evolvement of the identity of the New Hebrew Woman. My paper will explore a number of topics: Women's immigration experience and commitment to the country in

comparison with their spouses; Women's involvement in agriculture and the myth that they refrained from farm work; Women's sacrifices for the welfare of the colonies and their attitude towards the rebuilding of the Holy Land; Women as modernizers of the settlements in the fields of education, hygiene and above all family relationships. Even though most of the first settlers were observant Jews new modern concepts like romantic love as a basis for marriage and courtship between male and female were introduced in the colonies at their very early stages. All these topics that are unfolded at length in women's manuscripts will enable me to shed new light on the evolution of the identity of the New Hebrew Woman and the formation of the revolution in gender relations in the new Hebrew communities.

**Session Number: 7.13**

**Session Issues in Jewish Linguistics**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Benjamin H. Hary (Emory University)**

**Paul D. Glasser (YIVO Institute for Jewish Research)**

**A Short Linguistic History of Ukrainian Yiddish**

The dialect known to linguists as Southeastern Yiddish and popularly as Ukrainian Yiddish is historically spoken in present-day western and central Ukraine (except for the Lviv and Zakarpatska regions), Moldova, and eastern Rumania. It is thought that before the Khmelnitski massacres, Jews in the region spoke Northeastern (Lithuanian) Yiddish, and that present-day Ukrainian Yiddish came into being after survivors of the Khmelnitski massacres returned to the region. This dialect is characterized by the pronunciations /tug/ 'day' (Standard Yiddish /tog/), /kimen/ 'to come' (Standard Yiddish /kumen/) and /fleysh/ 'meat' (Standard Yiddish /fleysh/). In the literature, however, the cardinal points on the Yiddish dialect map have generally been Vilna (Northeastern Yiddish) and Warsaw (Central, or Polish, Yiddish), and because Ukraine was repopulated by Jews from these latter regions, Southeastern Yiddish is considered to be a derived dialect. I will attempt to demonstrate, however, that this dialect has its own history and is not merely a mixture of other dialects. It might, in fact, be useful to divide Southeastern Yiddish into (at least) two subdialects, a northern and a southern, and trace a specific history for each. The phonological and grammatical features of northern Ukrainian Yiddish appear to be the result of a merger of Northeastern Yiddish and "core" Southeastern Yiddish; I will attempt to explain both this merger and the nature of the core dialect. I will rely on my own research, as well as on Max Weinreich, "On the Dynamics of Yiddish Dialect Formation" (1965) and Marvin Herzog, "The Yiddish Language in Northern Poland" (1965) and "Yiddish in the Ukraine" (1969).

**Brenda Malkiel (University of Haifa/Bar-Ilan University)**

**The Translation of Loanwords: A Dilemma for the English-Hebrew**

In 1957, Blanc (400) commented on "the ease with which 'international' terms are constantly being introduced" into Hebrew; three decades later Levenston

(1990) remarked on the “wealth of English loan words in Hebrew” (38). Indeed, even a cursory glance through a Hebrew-English dictionary illustrates how many modern Hebrew words are based on an English or international root. These include everyday words as well as much of Hebrew academic and scientific vocabulary. Many loanwords have equivalents or near-equivalents with Hebrew roots. Loanwords are generally thought to confer a certain prestige value to a text (Baker 1992), raising the register and adding an element of sophistication; witness the use of Latin and French words in English. This phenomenon is certainly true of Hebrew, where an author might choose to use a loanword in order to convey the impression that s/he is educated and worldly. At the same time, however, the prescriptivist establishment in Israel – and in particular the Academy of the Hebrew Language – frowns upon the use of loanwords, especially where a “real Hebrew” synonym is available. English-Hebrew translation is the ideal forum to examine the rather schizophrenic attitude of Hebrew and Hebrew speakers towards loanwords. When the translator working from English encounters a word in the source text which can be translated using a loanword or a “real Hebrew” word, s/he is faced with a dilemma: to choose the Hebrew word with the international root or that with the Hebrew root. In other words, there is a natural trade-off between the prestige of using international vocabulary and the prestige of using vocabulary which is considered to be proper Hebrew. Israel has two full-fledged English-Hebrew translation programs, one at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat-Gan and the other at Beit Berl College in Kfar Sava. This paper reports on an empirical study of translation students working from English into Hebrew, and specifically on how they rendered those English words which can be translated using a loanword or an equivalent with a Hebrew root. The findings shed light on the translation students’ attitude to language, to the language establishment, and to translation. Baker, Mona. In *Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. London: Routledge, 1992. Blanc, Haim. “Hebrew in Israel: Trends and Problems.” *Middle East Journal* 11 (1957): 397-409. Levenston, Edward. “Comparing Vocabulary.” In *The Contrastive Analysis of English and Hebrew: A Reader for Schools Studying the “Translation Skills” Syllabus*, 24-48. Jerusalem: Division of Curriculum Development, Ministry of Education & Culture, 1990.

**Aliza Sacknovitz (Georgetown University)**

### **Lexical Variation as Indicator of Jewish Denominational Ethnic Identity**

The variable use of loan words deriving from Textual Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish, and Modern Hebrew is the most salient and most studied feature of Orthodox Jewish English (Gold 1985; Weiser 1995; Benor 2000). For example, Benor (2004a) finds that Orthodox Jews, particularly males, use loan words more frequently than both Orthodox women and Jews of other denominations, while Benor (2004b) argues that speakers’ variable pronunciation of loan words – Modern Hebrew or Ashkenazi Hebrew – linguistically indexes their denominational affiliation as Modern Orthodox or Ultra-Orthodox respectively. Although often overlooked within general variation studies, Benor (2004a), Childs and Mallinson (2004) and others contend that

studying the use of culturally-indexed loan words is imperative for examining ethnic dialects. This paper, part of a larger study, focuses on lexical variation, specifically frequency of loan words, Ashkenazi vs. Modern Hebrew pronunciation (i.e., [s]~[t]) and the use of religious rather than secular terms (i.e., shul~synagogue and Hashem~God), present in sociolinguistic interviews I conducted with twenty-six members of two Orthodox synagogues that differ in denominational affiliation, i.e., Modern Orthodox and Ultra-/Strictly Orthodox. Supplemental data from the synagogues' official emailings dated February through December 2005 is also included and analyzed. Quantitative analysis of both sets of data suggest that members of the Ultra-/Strictly Orthodox synagogue use more loan words, favor Ashkenazi Hebrew pronunciation, and prefer religious rather than secular terms more so than members of the Modern Orthodox synagogue. I argue that speakers' variable use of loan words serves as a means whereby they linguistically index not just their general religious affiliation as Orthodox Jews, but also the identity they wish to index within Orthodox Judaism, i.e., their denominational affiliation relative to the spectrum of Modern to Ultra- Orthodoxy. My research integrates concepts from Variation Analysis, Corpus Linguistics, and Jewish Studies to provide an understanding of the ways in which speakers' manipulation of linguistic features positions them along the Orthodox Jewish spectrum. In so doing, the construction of Jewish identity is explored and areas of future research, such as tracking speakers shifting denominational identities linguistically, are

**Rifka Cook (Northwestern University)**

### **Direct Object Marker in Spanish**

Abstract In Spain, during the Golden Age the Hebrew and the Spanish languages lived together and somehow certainly have been some mutual influence between these two languages. For a period of almost five centuries the Spanish Jews pursued the study of the Hebrew language and its literature with enthusiasm and a love rarely equaled. Furthermore, they were constantly seeking, with unlimited interest to investigate the language and to coin new words and expressions in order to increase its effectiveness as a medium of Jewish self-expression even in the field of scientific research. In the other hand, the Hebrew enriched the Spanish language also with a number of new words as well as syntactic and morphological aspects, and has become an integral part of their new language for them that was born and developed: Spanish. These aspects (lexical, syntactic and morphologic) are now taken for granted as legitimate and indispensable members of the Spanish language. This paper will explore one of a grammatical aspect that does not appear in Latin, Greek or Arabic, languages that have a lot of influence on the Spanish language, but absolutely exists in Hebrew: The Direct Object Marker (DOM). What calls my attention is that some language researchers affirm -as Martínez Amador (1953:15)- that the DOM "a" in Spanish DOES NOT HAVE PRECEDENTS NOR RECOGNIZES RESEMBLANCE IN OTHER LANGUAGES THAT, LIKE OURS[refers to Spanish], DO NOT HAVE DECLINATION EITHER; FOR EXAMPLE: "J'AI VU MON PÈRE", "hO VISTO MIO PADRE", "I HAVE SEEN MY FATHER", etc. As we can see there is not any marker which introduces us

the Direct Object (mon père, mio padre, my father); but certainly, as many of us know, in Hebrew we have the DOM “??” (to) for example: “????? ?? ???” [raiti et avi]. The work of such different authors as Luzzato (1853), Gesenius’ (1910), Martínez Amador (1953), W. Chomsky (1957), Marsá (1984), Nahir (1989) and Glinert (1999) will be the data I will use to analyze why and how I can justify that the DOM came somehow from Hebrew to Spanish.

**Norman A. Stillman (University of Oklahoma)**  
**Functions of Hebrew in Moroccan Judeo-Arabic**  
TBA

**Session Number: 7.14**

**Session Reading for Gender in Modern Jewish Thought**

**Session**

Although feminist and gender analysis has flourished within many fields of Jewish studies, the traditional “canon” of modern Jewish thought has remained largely untouched by the insights or methods of gender studies. The two apparent limitations have been seen as, first, the field lacks a vibrant discourse BY women within modern Jewish philosophy, and second, by the absence of a rigorous discourse ABOUT gender as a central topic. This panel has as its goal the bringing to light of an alternative method of implementing consciousness of gender for scholars in the field: “reading for gender.” “Reading for gender,” as Susan Shapiro has proposed, involves the attending to the poetics of gender in philosophical texts. This practice reveals an otherwise-invisible logic of the text in question, thus shifting our understanding not only of these particular texts but the ways in which philosophical texts achieve their goals. The panel’s papers provide demonstrations of and meditations on this method. Shapiro’s paper argues that Moses Mendelssohn’s discussion of marriage and divorce in his text, *Jerusalem*, calls for a reconsideration of commonly held views of the treatment of women and gender in classical social contract theory. Zachary Braiterman’s and Mara Benjamin’s papers explore the neglected issue of gender in Rosenzweig: Braiterman investigates male-male eros in Franz Rosenzweig’s *STAR OF REDEMPTION* to show how heteronormativity blocks our understanding of the true locus of collective Jewish life in that text. Mara Benjamin’s paper on the gendered construction of obligation, custom, and commandment in Rosenzweig’s “The Builders” dovetails with Braiterman’s paper by revealing the absence of real women in Rosenzweig’s understanding of Jewish activity. The panel’s participants seek to demonstrate, through the examples of their papers, the advantage of “reading for gender” in modern Jewish thought and invites other scholars to follow suit.

**Chair, Laura S. Levitt (Temple University)**

**Susan Shapiro (University of Massachusetts-Amherst)**  
**Reading for Gender in Moses Mendelssohn's Jerusalem**

This paper will pay close attention to two moments in Mendelssohn's *JERUSALEM*--his understanding of how people move from a state of nature to civil society and his defense of "a Viennese Jewess" in a notorious

contemporary divorce case. By following out Mendelssohn's argument in both of these instances which focus on marriage and divorce, it will show how his treatment of issues of gender puts in question the widely accepted claim that all classical social contract theory treats women as secondary, at best. It also will put in question current arguments that social contract theory necessarily emphasizes the individual at the expense of the family. Finally, it will consider why Mendelssohn seems to be an exception to the patriarchal rule in classical social theory.

**Mara Hillary Benjamin (Yale University)**

### **Rosenzweig's Mitzvah and the Absent Female**

In this paper, I examine gender as a critical category in Franz Rosenzweig's understanding of law, obligation, and tradition. In "The Builders," his clearest and best-known statement on his understanding of mitzvah (commandment), Rosenzweig makes his case for viewing the legal practices of Judaism as a culture to be preserved, rather than a heteronomous burden to be borne, with examples drawn from both narrative and customary traditions. For examples of the latter, Rosenzweig offers up traditional gender roles in Jewish practice: the exclusion of women from the sphere of public/ legal obligation is, in his view, the necessary condition that produced their "sovereignty" in the domestic sphere. This aside indicates a much broader topic in need of investigation, to which my paper aims to contribute: where are the women in Rosenzweig's concept of mitzvah, law, and the social structure of Judaism? I will draw on "The Builders," *THE STAR OF REDEMPTION*, and other works to show that Rosenzweig's concept of "the feminine," where it does appear, has little to do with women, who are effaced from the life of Jewish obligation that Rosenzweig envisions.

**Zachary J. Braiterman (Syracuse University)**

### **The Shulamite and the Male-Male Eros of Franz Rosenzweig**

In this paper, I will examine the fraught place of men and women in Rosenzweig's life and thought. I will argue that, for Rosenzweig, a woman's presence remains fundamentally invisible, not just in *THE STAR OF REDEMPTION* but also in the recently published letters sent by Rosenzweig to his lover Margarit (Gritli) Rosenstock-Huessy and to her husband, Rosenzweig's beloved friend Eugen Rosenstock. The real tensions occur, not between men and women, but between men. What Rosenzweig came to call "my Judaism" was a homoerotic compact marked by four features that are basic to fin de siècle homoeroticism: intensive homosocial circles, overwhelming male authority, open erotic discourse, and self-conscious devotion to beauty. That *THE STAR OF REDEMPTION* is itself such a male compact from which women are effectively excluded is only strengthened by the appearance of the Shulamite. In Rosenzweig's reading of the Song of Songs in the discourse on revelation, she is the figure from the "grammar of eros" who declares herself to God. An extra-ordinary female figure, she assumes a major place, mid-point in the entire book. A centrally located persona, she masks the author's own presence. The Shulamite is not Gritli, to whom he ostensibly dedicated part II of *The Star of Redemption*. The



Shulamite is Rosenzweig himself, a female avatar of his own eros, his passion for male authority, passive receptivity, his own desire to be a woman with the force of her own character. Eros in Rosenzweig is bisexual, caught between wife and home, on the one hand, and the community of men, on the other. Although erotic life between husband and wife perpetuate the species, a fully formed, richly developed collective life, in all its forms, political and religious, depends on the erotic attachment formed between men with each

**Session Number: 7.15**

**Session        How Much Christianity in Rabbinic Judaism?**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Michael D. Swartz (Ohio State University)**

**Charlotte Fonrobert (Stanford University)**

**History, Theory, and Text: On the Christianization of the Rabbis**

Surely, the last few years have seen a radical reconsideration as to the impact of Christianity on Rabbinic Judaism. During the middle of the last century Saul Lieberman famously wrote of the curiously loud silence about Christianity in rabbinic literature. At the beginning of this century Seth Schwartz (*Imperialism and Jewish Society*, 2001) and Daniel Boyarin (*Border Lines*, 2004) among others have prominently called for a radical overturning of our understanding of the relationship between Christianity and rabbinic Judaism in their contemporaneous emergence as two distinct religions. This does not just concern the famous question of the parting of the ways, but even more the very way we understand the shaping of rabbinic religion and piety. Where formerly there were two distinct cultural spheres – extrapolated from texts – of Christian theological battles and rabbinic midrashic and halakhic exercises, both are now to be regarded as entwined and sharing a common late antique culture or a common discursive universe. Where there was formerly very little or no Christianity, Christianity is now everywhere among the rabbis. Indeed, as Schwartz has articulated, what is distinctive about Jewish culture may even be considered “repackaged Christianity.” This paper presents a critical assessment of what is considered by some “the linguistic turn” (Elizabeth Clark) and by others “the cultural turn” (Dale B. Martin) in late ancient studies and its importance for the study of rabbinic Judaism. Since much of the reassessment of Christianity in rabbinic Judaism is based on aggadic and midrashic texts, particular attention will be devoted to its impact on our understanding of the halakhic project of the rabbis.

**Robert G. Goldenberg (Stony Brook University, SUNY)**

**Was There a Rabbinic Response to Christianity in Late Antiquity?**

The interconnectedness between Judaism and Christianity in late antiquity has become an important theme of scholarly discussion. Some have endeavored to deny that Jews might have been influenced by the newer religion in any way. Others have taken the opposite tack and tried to present late-antique rabbinic Judaism as virtually an organized response to an increasingly triumphant Christianity. This paper, following the thought of Daniel Boyarin

and others, will try to suggest a less polarized method for approaching this question, namely the assumption that both religions (and it must be kept in mind that each was diverse and not yet sharply defined) participated in a broader cultural environment in which their mutual relations were not necessarily the most important question. This discussion will be grounded in my opinion, already published elsewhere, that rabbinic Judaism overall did not consider (gentile) Christianity to require a substantially different response than the one already worked out for the other gentile religions of the Roman world.

The paper will focus on two cases of great similarity between rabbinic and Christian texts--the broad assertion that the principle of salvation preexisted the world (Torah at Gen. R. 1:1, the incarnate Logos at John 1:1), and the more specific story of the child cured of illness at the very moment a holy man prayed for him (Hanina b. Dosa at B. Ber. 34b, Jesus at John 4:46-53)--and will consider various approaches to the similarity. It is unlikely that either the Hanina story or the Jesus story was invented as a "me-too" response to the other; both more likely represent instances of a more general type of boastful/reverent story that groups preserved about those they revered. The more abstract question of pre-existence can be considered in the light of this more concrete example. In defense of the claim that all these phenomena were widespread in late antiquity, and that no direct responsiveness or imitation need be found here, other examples of similar materials, neither Jewish nor Christian in origin, will be considered as well.

**Galit Hasan-Rokem (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Divinely Born: Shared Narratives and Divided Imaginations of Jews, Christians, and Philosophers**

The question "How much Christianity in Rabbinic Judaism" will in this paper be discussed with reference to one main topic, namely the cultural, theological and esthetic perception of birth in Talmudic-Midrashic discourse. My point of departure is Chapter 14 of Leviticus Rabbah, elaborating on the verse "ISHA KI TAZRIA". The chapter displays a multi-vocal and versatile perception of birth accounting for various social, gender and belief positions in an intricately orchestrated composition. One is strongly reminded of the literary characterization of this specific rabbinic text by Joseph Heinemann. The two major analytical concepts that will be applied are "myth" and "experience" each with their theoretical and methodological baggage for which I shall try to account. I shall try to trace the mechanisms of mythologization on one hand, especially with reference to the "creation of the androgyne" appearing in the first paragraph. On the other hand I shall claim the possibility to retrieve a feminine experience based voice especially in the descriptions of the fetus and the stages of pregnancy. The work of Boyarin, Fonrobert, Levinson, Stein and others will be addressed in various modes of dialogue. The aspect of the paper most clearly communicating with the theme of the panel is the discussion of the correlation of the myth and the experience as presented in this text from one of the major texts of Palestinian Rabbinic culture with classical philosophy (the androgyne of Plato's Symposium) and with the dogmas of Immaculate Conception and Virgin Birth in early Christianity. I shall

claim that characterizing the position of the Rabbis as either “influenced” or “polemical” are both equally narrow. Rather a more complex culturally informed approach is needed. Finally: I read Leviticus Rabbah, a major work of Palestinian Rabbinic culture, as a complex negotiation with its socio-cultural environment, especially with early Christianity. This negotiation takes various literary forms that bear witness to the shared narrative traditions of Jews and Christians of the period in the Galilee and its surroundings.

**Respondent, Andrew Jacobs (University of California, Riverside)**

## **Abstracts for Session 8**

**Monday, December, 18, 2006 04:15 PM-06:15 PM**

### ***Session Number: 8.1***

**Session           New Research on the Jewish Family: A panel sponsored by the Steinhardt Institute Seminar on the Jewish Family**

#### ***Session***

Researchers recognize that the quality of American Jewish life is profoundly influenced by the family in all its diversity. Accordingly, sociological research on the American Jewish community is increasingly focusing on the family unit. The Steinhardt Institute Seminar on the Jewish Family has as its mission bringing together researchers doing cutting edge research on various areas connected to family formation, experience and values. This panel presents new research by several of those researchers: Leonard Saxe, Benjamin Phillips and Fern Chertok - "It's Jewish Engagement! Promoting Jewish Family Life Through Identity Development"; Sylvia Barack Fishman - "Jews by Choice and Jews by Chance: Converts and their Spouses talk about Jewish connections"; Moshe Hartman and Harriet Hartman - "Dual Career Jewish Families"; Sergio DellaPergola - "Intended, Appropriate and Actual Family Size in Israel: Policy Implications of Stability and Change"

**Chair, Tobin Belzer (University of Southern California)**

**Leonard Saxe (Brandeis University)**

#### **It's Jewish Engagement! Promoting Jewish Family Life through Identity Development**

Notwithstanding controversy over prescriptions to resolve the potential demographic crisis in American Jewry as a result of intermarriage, we need to develop better understandings of the underlying mechanisms that are changing the face of American Jewish families. The hypothesis explored in the present study is that intermarriage, and subsequent decisions to raise or not raise children Jewishly, is predicted by the nature of Jewish and non-Jewish spouses' engagement with their religious and ethnic identity. Various datasets, including NJPS 2000-01 and studies of young adults, are used to develop predictive models on the likelihood of intermarriage and family behavior as functions of childhood education, ritual observance, and social, as well as other measures of Jewish identity. The analysis suggests that gaps in Jewish behavior between intermarried and non-intermarried families are

substantially reduced when background factors are controlled. A model is developed of Jewish identity through the lifespan that identifies key decision and choice points. The paper discusses implications of the model, specifically in terms of the need to focus on engagement in Jewish identity throughout the lifecycle rather than on proscribing intermarriage.

**Sylvia Barack Fishman (Brandeis University)**

**"Jews by Choice and Jews by Chance": Converts and Their Spouses  
Talk about Jewish Connections**

Observers have sometimes erroneously imagined that all converts into Judaism who are married to Jews are similar, and have proposed homogeneous evaluations of the levels of Jewish engagement that are characteristic of Jews by choice. Sylvia Barack Fishman's recently completed study, based on 103 interviews, shows that converts are diverse, falling roughly into three groups: Activist Converts, who are highly engaged by Jewishness not only as a religion but also as an ethnicity; Accommodating Converts, who follow the levels of Jewishness represented by their Jewish spouses and their families; and Ambivalent Converts, who are not deeply or broadly engaged by Jewishness and have mixed feelings about their decisions to convert. However, the Jewish character of the conversionary household is not determined by the type of convert alone. It is also very much influenced by the presence or absence of Jewish ethnic capital of the born-Jewish spouse. This paper explores the interview data of converts in all three categories and their spouses, and looks at the complex negotiations between them that determine the Jewish character—or lack of it—within their households.

**Moshe Hartman (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)**

**Dual Career Jewish Families**

Since both American Jewish men and women are highly educated and have high labor force participation rates, it is only to be expected that many Jewish couples are dual career. This paper will explore the patterns of such dual career couples, using data from the most recent National Jewish Population Survey of 2000/01. The analysis will consider the educational and occupational homogeneity/heterogeneity of the spouses, as well as prestige differences and similarities between the spouses. Family characteristics, such as number and age composition of children and household income, will be considered. These patterns will be compared to the wider American population using Census and Bureau of Labor Statistics data. The paper will also consider whether there are denominational differences in the patterns of the Jewish dual career couples. Finally, the 2000/01 patterns will be compared to those found among American Jewish couples using the 1990 NJPS data.

**Sergio DellaPergola (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Intended, Appropriate, and Actual Family Size in Israel: Policy  
Implications of Stability and Change**

Over recent decades, the development of Israel society has relied on a unique combination of demographic factors: a persisting - if variable - positive balance between immigration and emigration, and a family size considerably

higher than among other societies of comparable socioeconomic development. Both Arab and Jewish fertility in Israel – with Total Fertility Rates at 4.4 and 2.7 in 2004, respectively – stand significantly above the levels found not only in all European and North American countries, but also in some Middle Eastern countries. In turn, demographic trends in Israel are significantly intertwined with political developments in the Middle East and with changing relationships between Israel and world Jewry. This study focuses on trends in family formation among Israel's Jewish population, based on a national survey of married couples at reproductive ages conducted in 2005. Actual and intended numbers of children are analyzed in comparison with perceptions of appropriate family size given the respondents' own socioeconomic status. In Israel a significant, stable and diffuse gap has developed between these different indicators, with ideal perceptions (3-4 children on the average) significantly higher than actual achievements (2-3 children). Studying the variation of both such levels and gaps across different social groups and personal characteristics provides clues about the background and determinants of family size preferences and the likely future stability and change of the prevailing trends. An understanding of incentives and constraints as perceived by young adults concerning family planning provides important information toward developing a systematic approach to social policies on family growth in Israel. The study indicates the predominance of private over public motives for Jewish family growth, and the need for better services aimed at early childcare and working women. The emerging complex interplay of cultural and economic motives indicates that the still prevailing focus of Israeli economic policies on transfer payments to families does not adequately meet a persisting demand for more children grounded on child

***Session Number: 8.2***

***Session Traditions From the West in Babylonia***

***Session***

The Babylonian Talmud is a rich repository of traditions, both Jewish and non-Jewish, from the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, especially but not confined to Palestine. This session examines some of these traditions in an effort to address several questions, such as: (1) to what extent was Jewish Babylonia part of the Mediterranean culture that first produced these traditions; (2) how did Babylonian rabbis change this material and what do these changes reveal about Babylonian Jewish culture; and (3) how, when and why was this material incorporated into the Bavli, such that it is often better documented there than in contemporary Palestinian

rabbinic

compilations. Hopefully this session will stimulate additional study of the place of Jewish Babylonia within its larger cultural context, as well as the recognition of the importance of Babylonian

**Chair, Judith Hauptman (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Isaiah M. Gafni (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Knowledge, Imagination, and Ignorance of Roman Palestine in the Babylonian Talmud**

This paper examines the imagery of Roman Palestine in Babylonian sources, the

conduits for receiving this information, and the creative imagination that produced some of the Bavli's references to places and events in Roman

**Richard L. Kalmin (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**The Scholion to Megillat Ta'anit in Babylonia**

In earlier work, I argued that during the fourth century CE, traditions and modes of behavior amply

documented in pre-fourth-century Palestine and in surrounding eastern Roman

provinces are

attributed to and commented upon by Babylonian rabbis, often for the first time. This paper

examines the scholion to Megillat Ta'anit and attempts to show that it, too, arrives in Babylonia or

at least first achieves literary expression in the Bavli during the fourth century. At issue is the

extent to which, and the period during which, Babylonia became more a part of

the Mediterranean

world, without thereby losing its Persian character. I will attempt to explain why this change in

Babylonian rabbinic culture took place at this time, and to place this phenomenon in the context of

contemporary developments in other Mesopotamian provinces. I will also attempt

to explain why

quotations from the scholion, as well as from other traditions deriving from

**Respondent, Daniel Boyarin (University of California, Berkeley)**

**Respondent, David M. Goodblatt (University of California, San Diego)**

***Session Number: 8.3***

***Session*      **New Approaches to Understanding Tannaitic Literature****

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, David Brodsky (Reconstructionist Rabbinical College)**

**Robert Brody (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

## **Redactional Strategies in Mishnah and Tosefta**

**REDACTIONAL STRATEGIES IN MISHNA AND TOSEFTA** Robert Brody This presentation is based primarily on a close synoptic reading of Mishna and Tosefta Ketubbot, and connects in various ways with the "revisionist" approach(es) championed in recent years by Judith Hauptman and Shamma Friedman with regard to the redaction of the Mishna and Tosefta and the relationship between these two collections. My first point concerns an important difference between the redactional strategies governing the two texts: It is rather obvious that the Mishna includes numerous instances in which a pre-existing, incorporated source is interrupted by the insertion of shorter or longer passages which may include responses to this source (e.g. explanatory glosses or other opinions) or independent but thematically related materials (e.g. entire mishnayot such as Ketubbot 1:10). It is less obvious, but I believe can be demonstrated, that there are also cases in which the redactors of the Mishna have "spliced" sections derived from different sources in order to create a single mishna which at first glance appears to be an integral unit; such cases are often betrayed by inconcinnities which the redactors have not eliminated. These strategies seem to play little if any role in the Tosefta – although this collection too clearly combines sources of disparate provenance, they are presented serially and not interwoven. I will also describe ways in which the redactors of the Tosefta seem to have shaped their material in order to create a collection which functions as a response to (our?) Mishna, especially in terms of the order in which this material is presented and of what appear to be selective omissions and abridgements occasioned by the presence of certain materials in the Mishna. Finally, I will discuss the other side of the coin: the extent to which the order of the material in Tosefta Ketubbot differs from that of the corresponding Mishna, and the rare and enigmatic instances in which the two collections share material on which neither elaborates.

### **Mikhal Bar-Asher Siegal (Yale University)**

#### **The Mekhilta Deuteronomy of R. Ishmael on Tithes (Deut 14:22-29)**

D.Z. Hoffman was one of the first scholars to recognize the 13th century Yemenite Midrash, MIDRASH HA-GADOL, as a major source for lost MIDRESHEI HALACHA. As part of his monumental life work, he composed, what came to be known as, MIDRASH TANNAIM out of apparently tannaitic sections of MIDRASH HA-GADOL on the book of Deuteronomy. A few fragments found in the Cairo Genizah have helped assure that MIDRASH HA-GADOL, indeed, used the lost tannaitic Mechilta of R. Ishmael on the book of Deuteronomy as one of its sources. Based on a suggested methodology, it can be shown that at least in one section of Hoffmann's composition, a discussion of the second tithe and the tithe of the poor (Deut. 14:22-29), many paragraphs were not part of the original tannaitic midrash, but rather consisted of later reworked material, mostly rephrasing of Maimonides' MISHNE TORAH. However, after removing this reworked material, we are left with close to three quarters of this section representing an unparalleled tannaitic midrash, bearing distinct features of the school of R. Ishmael. This

paper will examine this reconstructed midrash on the verses on tithes in the Book of Deuteronomy and will show the importance of studying such a lesser known midrash. By a close study of the midrash, I will demonstrate its relation to the known legal midrash of the school of R. Akiva, the SIFREI of Deuteronomy, as well as to other rabbinic parallels and Second Temple sources. Some new parallels to laws found in Second Temple sources will be uncovered, as well as a legal perspective different from that expressed in the SIFREI and the Talmuds. The study will display differences in terminology, exegetical methods and named rabbinical sages, in addition to differences in law, between the two main midrashic works on the book of Deuteronomy. Therefore this paper will suggest that after careful scrutiny of the text proposed in Hoffmann's edition of MIDRASH TANNAIM, we are still in possession of a valuable and unique tannaitic midrash on the Book of Deuteronomy from the school of R. Ishmael.

**Jonathan Schofer (Harvard Divinity School)**

### **The Ages of a Rabbinic Sage: 'Avot 5:21 as a Selective and Synthetic Compilation**

The detailed mapping of a human life-span in terms of age, whether descriptively or prescriptively, is a widespread cultural practice. This paper examines conceptions of age and character development in classical rabbinic materials, focusing on the numerical list of Avot 5:21. This rabbinic "ages of man" text links the construct of age with the traditional education, vocation, and virtues of a rabbinic student, and it has been immensely influential in Medieval and later Jewish reflections upon these topics. Scholars have long noted that this passage is likely a late addition to Avot, and perhaps even a Medieval composition, but they have not thoroughly considered the relation between this list and the diverse understandings of age in other rabbinic texts.

This paper examines rabbinic and proximate late ancient sources concerning four topics: the general notion of a life having distinct phases, ways of specifying stages of childhood development and education, symbolic significances of older ages, and the numbers seven and ten as organizing a life plan. Given this broad picture, I show how the canonized list in Avot 5:21 represents a selection from and synthesis of midrashic and talmudic sources to create a distinct portrait of an ideal life-span. The list gathers together, concretizes, and makes normative certain elements among the diverse positions found in earlier sources. At the same time, this literary construction is distinct and perhaps contentious. Several important rabbinic concerns, which are articulated in other materials, are excluded from Avot 5:21, such as the consideration of female life stages along with male, and the possibility that a student can begin study of Torah at a late age and still become a great sage. Anachronistically reading Avot 5:21 as the key text for understanding age in late ancient rabbinic culture leads one to miss the complex ways that age and gender condition each other, to gloss over several traditions that highlight great sages who start their study late in life, to ignore ways that rabbis frame a life-span without a specific connection to Torah study, and more generally to overestimate the role of age-gradation in rabbinic sources.



## **Session Number: 8.4**

### **Session Politics and Art: The World is Always with Us**

#### **Session**

ajs panel abstract: Burdened as we Jews always have been with the weight of history, many of our works of art nevertheless confront political issues of their own time. As Jane Tompkins has observed, works of art can clarify for us issues that may be obscure because we live in the midst of them. Some works that rise out of the intersection between baffled human beings and complex issues may reflect the artist's need for catharsis, or the desire to inform (i.e. Marie Syrkin). Some works may articulate the trauma of becoming aware (i.e. Judd Ne'eman). Some may express outrage at social injustice (i.e. Edna Ferber), or the difficulty of self-realization in the resistant medium of an imperfect world (i.e. Wendy Wasserstein). Because this panel considers works that emerge from the interface of politics and art, papers are preoccupied with issues of power. Because the artists who are subjects of these papers are all Jews, their works are preoccupied with the gap between the world they know and the world they envision.

**Chair, Elaine B. Safer (University of Delaware)**

**Janet Burstein (Drew University)**

#### **Voice and Vision from within the Death Mask: The Work of Judd**

Voice and Vision from within the Death Mask: Judd Ne'eman's Writings and Films From the earliest documentaries that celebrated the labor of young Jews in Palestine, Israeli cinema has been embedded within the social and political contexts of the culture it articulates. Cinematic images of laughing pioneers: dancing circle dances, turning up the earth, digging wells, playing violins, bringing a new culture to an old land and working together to make it fruitful—these images are hard to separate from the political ferment that propelled the first waves of immigrants from Europe to the promised land. Filmmakers captured in the 20's and 30's both the idealistic hopes of the Zionist movement and the dedication of young pioneers to overcoming the difficulties of settlement. After 1948, Israeli film historians argue, the cinema of the new state changes as European films and filmmakers arrive. And as Israelis begin to confront the social and political issues raised by statehood, by war, by the tensions of communal life, and by the disaffection of an indigenous Arab population. Judd Ne'eman, whose grandparents were part of the first wave of immigrants to the new land, is among those whose films and writings take on the critical work of clarifying these issues. This paper will argue that his 1999 essay "The Death Mask of the Moderns" explores issues that his earlier films portray—and that many of his other essays on Israeli cinema develop in greater depth. He suggests in "Death Mask" that Israeli cinema of the 70's and 80's offered to the public protagonists who had been traumatized by their childhood experience of war, and violent death, and loss, and who assumed on their own faces the death masks made from the faces of beloved, heroic fathers and brothers who had fallen in the wars. Impelled to imitate the heroic self sacrifice of these men on the battlefield, they saved their

own lives by assuming the death mask. This paper will examine Ne'eman's own protagonists in films of the 70's and 80's to consider the social and political ramifications of this hypothesis: to question the nature of the trauma, to analyze its consequences, and to look at its development in Ne'eman's other studies of Israeli cinema. Janet Burstein Profess emerita, Drew University  
Drew University 390 Riverside Drive, NY NY 10025 212 316 1386  
jburstei@drew.edu #DS671324537062

**Carole S. Kessner (Stony Brook University, SUNY)**

### **Poetry and Polemics**

Though less remembered today, Marie Syrkin's name once was very familiar to many for her contribution to Jewish life and letters. Then she was best known as a polemicist for Israel, as a commentator of events in Europe, as the close friend and biographer of Golda Meir, as a lecturer, as a journalist and editor of the Labor Zionist publication Jewish Frontier, and as a contributor to such political journals as The New Republic, Midstream, Commentary, and Dissent. Few, however, were aware of Marie Syrkin as a practicing poet, despite the fact that her poems and translations were included in major anthologies including the New York Times Anthology of the best verse it had printed. In her eightieth year Syrkin published a volume of poetry called Gleanings: A Diary in Verse. Marie Syrkin's early life, however, showed nothing to suggest that she would later become the doyenne of Labor Zionism. What seemed far more likely was that she would become a woman of belles lettres.; and over the objections of her father, the famous socialist Zionist theoretician Nachman Syrkin who thought she was frittering away her time reading romantic novels and poems, she dreamed of becoming a poet. As early as her twentieth year she began to publish some translations of poetry as well as a few of her own poems. Yet the trajectory of Syrkin's life proved to be an example par excellence of the psychoanalyst Erik Erikson's use of the term "moratorium" in his description of identity development. He argues that there is a period before the age of thirty when the individual seems to be stuck on a low plateau, accomplishing very little if anything, and often not even knowing what his/her goals are. But, he argues, this period is actually a preparation period for the unrealized vocation to come. In Syrkin's case, her active career as a polemical journalist did not begin in earnest until her early thirties. This, however, did not mean that she ceased to write her poetry. She claimed that throughout her life she wrote her poems only under great impulse— both personal and public. Her volume of poetry, Gleanings, brings together the private life, the intimate emotions, even as these spill over and give life to poems of political significance and public issues. Her commitment to Israel the State and the people was as much a poetic muse as her own private struggles. Carole Kessner Emerita SUNY Stonybrook 185 West End Ave. NY NY 10023  
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**Ann R. Shapiro (Farmingdale State University, SUNY)**

**Edna Ferber's Giant and McCarthy's Senate Committee on Government Operations**

Edna Ferber's Giant and McCarthy's Senate Committee on Government

Operations Ann R. Shapiro A few years ago, undoubtedly inspired by Edna Ferber's regional novels, Laura Bush invited scholars to the White House to discuss important American women writers including Edna Ferber. Delighted that someone in the White House was actually reading books, I sent Mrs. Bush an article that I had written about Edna Ferber as a Jewish American feminist.

To my horror, I did not receive a response to my thoughts on Ferber but rather a personal note from Laura thanking me for my "kind words of support and encouragement [which] sustain President Bush and me." If nothing else, I realized at that moment that I share with Ferber the frustration of writing for readers who can't or won't interpret a text. But, more important, the renewed interest of the President's wife suggests that Ferber was now being viewed as a patriotic exponent of American values. Initially Ferber fared much better than I with an American president.. Teddy Roosevelt was a fan, who wrote to Ferber intermittently between 1915 and 1918, praising the Emma McChesney stories and Fanny Herself, and in one letter mentions the "hours of conversation" he and his wife enjoyed with her. But the benign politics of an earlier era gave way to the politics of hatred by 1957, when Ferber was vilified in an unsigned typed manuscript that I found in her papers in Wisconsin. There she is described as "a 72 year old Jewess who as a playwright and author has bent her spleen and hate upon the established traditions of our country with a concentrated venom almost beyond belief. Her latest effort is 'Giant' [sic]...a malicious distortion of life in Texas written for the purpose of holding up to ridicule Texas, Texans, their traditions {sic}, their pride in their heritage." The writer concludes that Giant was "Communist propaganda" and cites the testimony before McCarthy's Permanent Investigating Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, where the book was called "anti-American." Specifically, this paper will offer an interpretation of Giant in the context of the testimony before McCarthy's committee and the anti-Semitic charges provoked by the novel.

**Ellen F. Schiff (Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts)**

**Uncommon Women and Their Mothers: The Wendy Chronicles**

UNCOMMON WOMEN AND THEIR MOTHERS: THE WENDY CHRONICLES

"When we're forty we can be pretty amazing," declares Rita, a Mt. Holyoke alumna to four classmates at a get-together six years after graduation. "When we're... forty-five, we can be pretty fucking amazing." Those are the curtain lines of Wendy Wasserstein's Uncommon Women and Others, her first play, which she wrote six years after her own graduation from Mt. Holyoke. By the time she was forty, Wasserstein had won a Pulitzer prize and become one of America's most popular dramatists. By the time she was fifty, she had put some pretty amazing women on stage. They include two college professors, two corporate captains, a radio talk show host, a dancing grandmother, two physicians, one a nominee for attorney general of the United States—and a number of creative women who continue to search for their places. Most of the latter are Jewish. Wasserstein is not the only playwright whose characters reflect the arc of women's lives in the past sixty years, nor is she the first. Her work plows ground that was explored in the 1940's by another American

Jewish playwright, Rose Franken. My presentation will address Wasserstein's debt to Franken's *Doctors Disagree* (1943) and *Soldier's Wife* (1944). It can hardly be accidental that both playwrights dramatize the impact on conventional gender opportunities and expectations created by the social and political turmoil churned up by war. Reflecting on the lives of women during World War II, the eponym of Franken's 1944 play predicts, "There's going to be a lot of money and success and independence in women that's never been there before." In order to not to distract from her subject, Wasserstein excised from *Uncommon Women and Others* references to the 1969 Cambodian strike and campus protests of the Vietnam War. But, she pointed out in an interview, it was in that climate that Amherst opened its doors to women for the first time, throwing into new perspective its sister college's commitment to rigorous curriculum, independent thought—and *Gracious Living*. Despite important differences in their education, both Franken and Wasserstein faced similar life choices about which they made starkly divergent decisions.

***Session Number: 8.5***

***Session***        **Modern Hebrew Writing: Placing the Text**

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Tamar S. Hess (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Chair, Tamar S. Hess (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**Nehama Aschkenasy (University of Connecticut at Stamford)**

**Reading Agnon through Bakhtinian Lenses: The Carnavalesque in *Vehaya He'akov Iemishor***

Reading Agnon's novella within the framework of the Bakhtinian theory of carnival and the dialogic imagination illuminates the subversive elements in this Hebrew masterpiece, integrates the grotesque visions strewn in the narrative into the fabric of the tale's multiple discourses, and centralizes the scene of the drunken Bacchanal at the fair as a focal cultural and semiotic sign that mocks and overturns the system of values which has defined the protagonist, Menashe Hayim, to that point. Such a reading highlights the profuse presence of the carnivalesque in this tale beyond its more apparent locus, the circus-like, boisterous bazaar which the protagonist visits before he returns home. The Bakhtinian perspective uncovers the carnivalesque spirit underlying the total narrative, displayed in comic and bizarre situations, fantastic folk tales, grotesque images which parody the "high" culture (in this case, the established, pious community), vulgar scenes of greed and buffoonery, and other low-comedic visions of a topsy-turvy reality. At the same time, such a reading reveals Agnon's much darker perspective on the carnival's "liberating" force than implied in Bakhtin's utopian theory. For Agnon, the tumult and reveling in the big public market does not lead to a collective spiritual triumph, or relief from terror, or to psycho-social healing, as in Bakhtin's theory, but to the further victimization and disintegration of the individual. Recognizing that, in moral-religious terms, the freedom of the

carnival is corrupting and dehumanizing, Agnon blends the carnival with “vanity fair,” thus giving a tragic and humanistic perspective to Bakhtinian carnivalesque.

**Rachel Albeck-Gidron (Bar-Ilan University)**

**Textual Locality in Hoffmann's Writings**

This paper attempts to answer the question whether Yoel Hoffman, who writes a distinctive poetic narrative in contemporary Israel, is a Hebrew writer. Hoffman's works seem to defy the traditional definitions of communal affiliation because although they are written in Hebrew and deal with infrastructural Israeli experiences, drawing on the constitutive collective memories of the near past, they are not perceived by the reader as an unmistakably Hebrew or Israeli writing. Thus the question of Hoffman's communal affiliation requires us to abandon the conventional ascriptive definitions of literary texts in general and search for a more adequate definition. The one that is proposed in this paper concerns intertextuality. It establishes group affiliation in reference to the intertextual relations between a given work and others with which it corresponds through profound cultural affinities. This definition of a writer's communal affiliation follows Elaine Showalter's and Henry Louis Gates's formulations of the collective identity of a group whose unity transcends geopolitical boundaries and whose memories as a national community are fluid

**Session Number: 8.7**

**Session**        **“Geven a Sheyres Hapleyte”:** Culture, Politics, and Memory among the Surviving Remnant

**Session**

For scholars confronting the post-war period in general, and the Jewish Displaced Persons in particular, there is no shortage of documentation on the subject. Jewish DPs constituted a particularly active community that generated copious historical, sociological, cultural, visual and literary records of their experience. Far from constituting a monolithic whole, as would seem to derive from the shared identity implied in the term She'erit Hapletah, the DPs were composed of diverse groups with vastly differing pre-war and wartime experiences, political and religious backgrounds, and visions of their individual futures. Still, in a remarkably short time after the war, while living in a transitional time and place, the Jewish DPs presented a unified image of themselves as the She'erit Hapletah through shared culture (music, theater, press, literature, and film), shared politics (Zionism), and a shared memory of the past. The papers on this panel investigate the creation of this identity by the survivors, as well as its implications in cultural and political representation of the Jewish DPs. Shirli Gilbert will present on the rich musical culture created in the DP camps, which she suggests, offers a useful means to examine how DPs understood their past and imagined their future. Beth Cohen focuses on how survivors from diverse backgrounds and wartime experiences came together after the war to create communities of support, and how survivors' networks became springboards for memorialization and a shared understanding of the war. Avinoam Patt examines the function of

Zionism for Jewish DPs and the consequences of an ardent Zionist enthusiasm in the DP camps through a focus on the conscription campaign of spring 1948, as young survivors were called upon by the Yishuv and the DP leadership to defend the shared "homeland" they had never seen. Finally, Michael Berkowitz analyzes how Jewish DPs engaged the perception of "Jews as criminals" in the postwar period and how this image ultimately found its way into literary and filmic depictions of the survivors after the war.

**Chair, Miriam Isaacs (University of Maryland)**

**Avinoam Patt (Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, USHMM)**

**"The Fatherland Calls": Jewish DP Zionism in Germany and Israel's War of Independence**

Although some historians have argued that Zionists in the Yishuv cynically manipulated Holocaust survivors for their own goals, Jewish Displaced Persons did not simply observe developments in Palestine as passive third parties. Within months after the Allies liberated the concentration camps in Germany, the Jewish DPs came to play a central role in post-war diplomatic negotiations over the future of Palestine. International observers from the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry and the United Nations deemed the question of DP Zionist enthusiasm central to the resolution of the political conflict over the land of Palestine. And indeed, such enthusiasm existed. The Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria openly trumpeted its ardent "Palestine passion" and called on Jews to "return to our homeland in the Land of Israel." Such attitudes had significant implications for Jewish survivors after the Holocaust, regardless of whether they actually desired final settlement in Israel. This paper will explore the consequences of this Zionist position as experienced by Jewish DP youth. I will examine two controversial episodes: the July 1947 Exodus Affair and the conscription of Jewish youth for fighting in Palestine in the Spring of 1948. As the DP press discussed preparations to defend the "homeland" against Arab enemies in the wake of the November 1947 partition decision, plans were already underfoot to integrate Jewish DPs between the ages of 17-35 to defend the emergent Jewish state. Beginning in the summer of 1945 and in the years that followed, the youth who populated the kibbutzim and hakhsharot of the Zionist youth movements, made a statement as to their membership in the Zionist movement. Zionism empowered these young survivors by offering a solution to their stateless condition. It provided them with membership in a nation before they actually arrived in Palestine, making them feel like part of a larger national community. It was this membership that would eventually bring with it the responsibilities of conscription for some 8000 Jewish DPs from Germany. But was the cost paid by the DPs greater than the one they had anticipated? And was that goal the province of the entire DP population, its leadership, or merely the younger segment of it?

**Michael Berkowitz (University College, London)**

**DPs (Displaced Persons) and the Stigma of "Jewish Criminality" in Literature and Film**

It is not surprising that there is limited scholarly reflection on the remnant of

post-Holocaust Jewry in Europe, of the immediate postwar period, in areas such as film and literature. There is now a growing body of historical analyses of DPs, such as the excellent studies by Ze'ev Mankowitz, Atina Grossmann, and Hagit Lavsky, and recent books on Jews in larger scope of postwar Germany by Jay Geller and Anthony Kauders, which provide the groundwork for analyses of less conventional sources regarding the experience of Jewish DPs. In some respects, "literature" is ahead of "history" in dealing with the subject. Primo Levi explored the complexity of the situation in his second volume, *The Truce*--which has been given only a fraction of the attention of his *Survival at Auschwitz*. Israeli author Aharon Appelfeld has repeatedly engaged this subject in his novels. Both Appelfeld and Levi deal extensively with the association of Jews and criminality in the wake of the Holocaust. In the world of film there are at least two major categories to consider: Hollywood features and newsreel documentaries. The most notable film concerning the postwar period is possibly "The Third Man" based on the novel by Graham Greene. The novel is striking, from the perspective of post-war Jewish history, because it "de-judaizes" a notorious incident--involving phony medicine--in which Jews were involved. Newsreel footage on DPs stressed the "illegal" emigration to Palestine--which was framed quite differently in the United States as opposed to England. My tentative hypothesis is that Jews, on several levels, were open in engaging the perception of 'Jews and criminals' which persisted into the postwar period. The Allies were sensitive to stereotypes as well as fearful of bringing too much attention to the fact that the Jews were primary victims of the Nazis. Patterns of portrayals of Jews--and the deliberate avoidance of certain images--maybe be seen as tied to continuing discourses of Jews and criminality. To no small extent, the environment in which the Jewish DPs found themselves, especially in Germany, was one in which they were suspected of being a dangerous, criminal element.

**Beth Cohen (California State University, Northridge)**

**The Myth of Silence: Survivors Tell A Different Story**

In the 1980s, America saw a proliferation of Holocaust oral history projects, memorials and museums driven, in part, by survivors' urging and participation. This signaled a major shift in survivors' confrontation with their past. Unable to bear their traumatic Holocaust experiences in its aftermath, survivors repressed the memories and threw themselves into rebuilding their new lives. Years later, in the quietude of retirement and the awareness of impending old age, they finally were able to face their Holocaust years. Or so, observers have explained this phenomenon. My research points to an altogether different story. In the process of studying several hundred case files written by Jewish refugee agency in the early postwar years as well as conducting and scrutinizing hundreds of oral histories, I found that many newcomers were eager and willing to speak. But there is close to universal agreement among them that no one; neither their American relatives, the Jewish refugee agency workers, nor the outside world wanted to hear about the Holocaust. As one survivor recalled in 1995, "...when I came to the United States, even my aunt who loved me, who helped me, my cousins that were dear to me, they always

said, you suffered enough, don't talk about it." While they were urged, at every turn, to abandon their past and look to the future, the refugees found that moving forward was possible but ignoring the past less so. Forgetting was difficult. They could not nor did they want to. And since their attempts to speak to Americans fell on deaf ears, they looked to their own. "So who did we talk to about it?" explained one woman, "Survivors to each other!" It was largely amongst themselves that they found the persistent desire to recall, a common language of mutual grief, and sympathetic ears. Around the United States, wherever survivors settled they formed their own groups. Some were official such as the "1939 Club" founded in Los Angeles in 1952. Others were informal get-togethers. One group in Providence RI met bi-weekly in individual's homes. Another in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn drew teenagers together regularly. Some were offshoots of landsmanschaftn, hometown social clubs formed at the turn of the 20th century, now infused with new European members. And, as survivors repeatedly state, from their first years in America, the topic of conversation, invariably, inevitably turned to the Holocaust.

The desire to be together and talk about their past clearly motivated the formation of their first groups, but many quickly came to address the pressing and complex need to remember. "I promised my father that if I survived I would never forget," emphasized Bernard Sayonne of Denver. Indeed, this promise often became an answer to the question: why did I alone survive? I survived to remember and to tell. As my paper will show, these early survivor groups soon became the springboards for the first Holocaust commemorations in America, the first efforts to remember and to tell.

**Shirli Gilbert (University of Michigan)**

### **"Ikh Benk Zikh Nokh Aheym" (I long for a home): Songs and Survival amongst Jewish DPs**

While much has been written about the extraordinary renewal of Jewish life in the DP camps of occupied Germany—the marriages, the baby boom, the vibrant and autonomous political and cultural life—as yet little has been written about the remarkably heterogeneous musical activities that flourished in these transitional spaces. Songs from the prewar period and from the wartime ghettos and camps were widely sung. Visiting performances were given by renowned artists including Emma Schaver, Yehudi Menuhin, Leonard Bernstein, and Molly Picon. Zionist songs featured prominently in children's education as well as in communal events. In addition, a good deal of new music was created by the DPs themselves: home-grown ensembles were established that toured to other DP camps, and many songs were created recounting the horrors of the war years, chronicling mourning and loss, relating illegal immigration to Palestine and the failures of the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), and myriad other contemporary responses. My aims in this paper are twofold. First, I will offer a sketch of the lively and diverse musical life that flourished in the DP camps. Second, I propose that this musical life provides a valuable lens through which to explore an issue of wider historical significance: how surviving victims negotiated their understanding of what had happened (and was happening) to



them, their sense of self, and their relationship to the individual and collective future. The abundant musical sources that survive offer insight into both the DPs' perceptions of this process, as well as the powerful pressures and attitudes that were brought to bear on them from the outside, in particular from America and Palestine. Much work remains to be done on the social history of Jewish DPs; as such, the implications of this study extend beyond a specialized music-historical interest, offering to deepen our understanding more broadly of how Jewish identity and memory was negotiated at this crucial, transitional juncture in Jewish history.

### **Session Number: 8.8**

#### **Session Jewish Urban Life in Eastern Europe in the Twentieth**

##### **Session**

The goals of the panel are to analyze Jewish urban life in Eastern Europe in the 20th century on the basis of the newly discovered archival materials, to reveal new approaches to urban Jewish history, to show new facts and details of that history. The panel will examine various aspects of Jewish urban life in Eastern Europe, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union in the 20th century. The paper "Jewish Domestic Workers in Late Imperial Russian Cities" by Natan Meir (University of Southampton) will focus on the life of Jewish women - domestic workers and the dynamics of the employer-servant relationship; The paper "Scholars, Activists and Narodniks: The Jewish People's Party in Petrograd, 1917" by Simon Rabinovitch (Brandeis University) will discuss involvement of Jews in political life and the activity the Jewish People's Party (Folkspartey). The paper "Kiev as the Center of the Soviet Yiddish Culture" by Victoria Khiterer (University of Central Arkansas) will describe the Yiddish scholarly, educational and cultural institutions that work in Kiev in the 1920s - first half of the 1930s: Institute of the Jewish Proletarian Culture, Yiddish schools, theaters, and libraries; and analyze the works of Yiddish scholars, authors and artists. The last paper "Architectural Residues and Atavistic Memories: Conceptions and Constructions of Jewish Space in Modern Warsaw" by David Snyder (Washington University) examines the spatial, material, and cultural geographies of Jewish life in modern Warsaw and explores how the notions of Jewishness and Jewish space evolved over time to become critical theoretical concerns in the construction of the modern urban environment. Professor Samuel Kassow (Trinity College) will be Chair of the panel and respondent to the papers.

**Chair, Samuel D. Kassow (Trinity College)**

**Natan M. Meir (University of Southampton)**

##### **Jewish Domestic Workers in Late Imperial Russian Cities**

In the crowded Jewish employment market of late imperial Russia, domestic service held the promise of a good job with a steady income under decent conditions. These were not to be taken for granted at a time of growing Jewish impoverishment and shrinking educational opportunities. This paper explores the as yet unexamined world of Jewish domestic workers, including their role in the urban Jewish economy, the dynamics of the employer-servant relationship, and class relations within Russian Jewry. Because almost all

domestic workers were women, the paper also uses domestic service to examine gender roles and relations in the Jewish world; for example, why did some Jewish women choose domestic service over the other “standard” female Jewish field, the garment industry? Evidence points to level of education as a major determining factor in the career aspirations of young women, but there may have been other factors as well. It is also important to ask whether domestic service was always seen as a period of temporary employment before marriage, or whether some women intended to make a career out of service. Moreover, how were different types of servant – maid, cook, laundress – seen and was their work valued differently? In many cases, domestic servants were migrants from small towns to larger towns and cities, and thus this case study allows us to attain a better grasp of migration patterns among Russian Jewry, a subject that is still not fully understood. Another angle the paper investigates is a comparison with Christian domestic workers in Jewish households, who were fewer numerically than their Jewish counterparts but provide an excellent foil with which to compare the primary group being studied. This paper, and the larger research project on Russian Jewish women of which it forms a part, contribute to our understanding not only of the lives, labor, and aspirations of women, but also of the makeup and evolution of the Jewish family in modern Russia, changing gender roles among Russian Jews, and the tensions and dynamics of economic and social modernization in European Jewry as a whole.

**Simon Rabinovitch (Brandeis University)**

### **Scholars, Activists, and Narodniks: The Jewish People’s Party in Petrograd, 1917**

Petrograd in 1917 was a city wracked by war, revolution and a state of instability which verged on anarchy. The fate of the Russian empire was being decided in its capital city as competing revolutionary forces battled for control of the government, while at the same time, Jewish political groups were similarly, albeit less violently, struggling with one another to represent the interests of the empire’s Jews. As the Provisional Government organized for elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly, Jewish political parties organized elections for a new secular Jewish communal authority in Petrograd, and for an All-Russian Jewish Congress which would meet to decide the framework for Jewish relations with the state. This paper examines Jewish political life in revolutionary Petrograd, and looks more specifically at the political activities of the so-called “folkists,” a group of Jewish scholars, civic activists and self-styled narodniks whose contribution to the “new Jewish politics” has been largely overlooked. The Jewish People’s Party (Evreiskaia Narodnaia Partiiia, or, Yiddishe Folkspartey) was founded in December 1906, principally by the historian Simon Dubnov and the Jewish communal activist Meir Kreinin. Dubnov’s autonomist political philosophy, which was the party’s ideological basis, sought non-territorial autonomy for the Jews of Russian empire, in the realm of education, linguistic rights and communal organization (principles which entered the Jewish political mainstream during the revolutionary period of 1905-1907). Ideologically, the Petrograd Folkspartey in

1917 drew together the elite of Jewish historical and cultural studies – populists and liberals who shared a common belief in the need for Jewish national autonomy in the Diaspora, and disdain for the Bundist obsession with class warfare. Nonetheless, in a time of severe crisis, less eclectic ideologies provided clearer alternatives, and therefore in the Constituent Assembly elections it was actually the Zionist parties who won the plurality of votes for Jewish parties (though the voting turned out to be meaningless). This paper, in sum, seeks to explain the potential and limits of Jewish autonomy in revolutionary Petrograd, the influence of the folkists on other Jewish political groups, and the failure of these intellectuals to win over the masses.

**Victoria Khiterer (University of Central Arkansas)**

### **Kiev as the Center of the Soviet Yiddish Culture**

In the 1920s - 1930s Kiev was one of two largest centers of Soviet Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union (the other was in Minsk). I am going to analyze the reasons for the blossoming of Soviet Jewish Culture in Kiev in the 1920s-1930s and describe the main Jewish organizations and institutions, Jewish artists, writers, poets and scholars that worked in Kiev at that time. Kiev had one of the largest Jewish urban populations in the Soviet Union. In 1926 the Kiev Jewish population was 140,256 out of a total of 513,637 (27%); in 1939 about 175,000 Jews lived in Kiev, which comprised 20% of the total population. Many Jewish organizations and institutions were established on private initiative in 1917 through the early 1920s. After the Soviets consolidated their power in Kiev, the authorities took control of all these Jewish institutions. They closed several of them and allowed others to continue under Soviet censorship. However, during the late 1920s, all private and religious Jewish organizations and institutions were closed by the Soviets. They were “replaced” by the Institute of Jewish Proletarian Culture of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. Many famous Yiddish writers and poets (e.g. David Hofstein, Itsik Fefer, Perets Markish, David Bergelson) lived in Kiev. Jewish theaters and clubs, Yiddish schools and Jewish colleges, Jewish departments in institutions of higher education, Jewish printing houses and press worked in the city until the second half of the 1930s. Then the Soviet national policy toward the Jewish population, as well as other national minorities, suddenly changed and the vast majority of Jewish organizations and institutions were closed in Kiev and all over the Soviet Union. The administration and members of these organizations were accused of bourgeois nationalism and many of them were executed or imprisoned as the enemies of people. Soviet Jewish culture never recovered from this blow and the state policy of the Soviet Union soon thereafter acquired its clear anti-Semitic character.

**David Snyder (Washington University)**

### **Architectural Residues and Atavistic Memories: Conceptions and Constructions of Jewish Space in Modern Warsaw**

Often overlooked and arguably undervalued by modern Jewish historiography, this paper examines the spatial, material, and cultural geographies of Jewish life in the modern metropolis. More precisely, it explores how the notions of Jewishness and Jewish space evolved over time to become critical theoretical

concerns in the construction of the modern urban environment. Curiously, apart from overly sentimental figurations of the shtetl, we seem to know little about the Jewish contribution to the material and spatial contours of the places they called home in Poland despite their critical role in Polish urban history. In the capital city of Warsaw, for example, home to the largest concentration of Jews in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, conceptions of Jewish space figured prominently in its transformation into a modern metropolis. Surfacing in the theoretical debates of architects and planners and in popular responses to the evolving physical and socio-cultural contours of the modern city, Jewishness and Jewish space not only belonged to a set of guiding principles that informed the way modern space was constructed and popularly perceived but also reflected the processes by which a particularly modern Jewish identity was constructed in Warsaw. Seen through the prism of the postwar reconstruction plan and its ambitious claim of restoring Warsaw as the material historical emblem and symbolic center of the Polish nation, the Ghetto Uprising monument seamlessly consolidates more than 500 years of Jewish life in Warsaw in a single, highly circumscribed iteration of Jewishness. While its function as a site of commemoration is indisputable, I argue that the monument must also be understood along two additional trajectories: as both a reflection and consequence of the contested status of the Jews in prewar definitions of the modern nation that continued to exert their influence in the postwar era and as a signpost for the unresolved position of Jewish space within the discursive landscape of modern architecture in Poland. Exploring the instrumentality that conceptions of Jewish space and Jewishness had within the larger processes of urban and social modernization, this paper suggests new approaches for examining the material dimensions of modern Jewish experience.

***Session Number: 8.9***

***Session "Traffic in Meaning": Early Modern Travels and Travelogues***

***Session***

Early modern Jewish travelers crossed and re-crossed the Mediterranean – from ‘West’ to ‘East’ and vice versa. They traveled as pilgrims, merchants and shlihim, as observers, readers and writers. This panel juxtaposes Jewish, Christian and Muslim travelogues, Yiddish and Hebrew compositions, travels from Prague to Eretz Israel and from Eretz Israel to Paris. It aims to examine how the meanings of Jewish places, concepts and practices shifted when they were explored in new contexts and in a comparative perspective, and it pays particular attention to the multilingual and multi-directional character of such religious and cultural investigations. Elliott Horowitz will turn to Ibn Battuta, Felix Fabri and Ovadiah Bertinoro in order to ask how the interrelated concepts of cleanliness, purity and modesty were defined in neighboring religious communities and how they gained stability and precision in transcultural inquiries about their meaning. Shlomo Berger will explore the opposite tendency in two Yiddish ‘ethical travelogues’. He will follow two itineraries to Eretz Israel that in the end never lead away from Ashkenaz: Gershon Segal’s and Moshe Porges’s descriptions of locations, rituals and

costums re-enforce the Ashkenazic meanings of the Holy Land, while only rarely reflecting the realities of Eretz Israel. Yaacob Dweck will turn to Hayim Yosef David Azulai's travel diaries and encounters with Jewish as well as non-Jewish Western society, and he will examine the role of Hebrew books and libraries as vehicles for transcultural contacts and cultural self-assertion. Andrea Schatz will focus on Samuel Romanelli's account of his travels in Morocco and inquire into cultural cross-dressing and translation as strategies that facilitate and complicate transcultural negotiations on the meanings of difference in the diaspora. The contributions to this panel address the 'traffic in meaning' (M. L. Pratt) that can be found in descriptions of bathhouses and mikva'ot, of sacred places and Hebrew books, of displaced and replaced clothes and words. They ask how travelogues negotiate internal and external boundaries and how exile and diaspora inflect these negotiations, reflections and translations. Thus, the panel aims to sharpen the analysis of individual travelogues, and it wishes to contribute to a more systematic approach regarding Jewish travel writing in the earlier and later modern period.

**Chair, Jonathan Schorsch (Columbia University)**

**Elliott S. Horowitz (Bar-Ilan University)**

#### **Travelers and the Geography of Modesty**

"As you change countries," wrote Gustave Flaubert to his mother from Alexandria, "you find that modesty changes its location." In my paper I propose to examine two related sites, the mikveh and the bathhouse, through the eyes of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim travelers of the later middle ages and early modern era. Each of these cultures had different (albeit far from monolithic) notions concerning the importance, indeed the very definition, of cleanliness, purity, and modesty – whether for men or women. And these are often made most clear through the reactions of outsiders, who did not necessarily share such notions and definitions. Through the accounts of such travelers as Ibn Battuta, Felix Fabri, and Ovadiah Bertinoro I hope to address the question of how the pursuit of cleanliness and the protection of modesty were simultaneously maintained among both the Jews and their neighbors.

**Yaacob Dweck (University of Pennsylvania)**

#### **A Jew from the East Meets Books from the West**

This paper will explore two intersecting trajectories in Hayim Yosef David Azulai's diaries: Jewish travels and Jewish books. An emissary of the Palestinian Jewish community, Azulai toured western and central Europe on two journeys in the late eighteenth century. In two separate travel diaries, published collectively under the title *Ma'agal Tov* in the early twentieth century, Azulai records a wealth of information about Hebrew books from individual collections as well as state libraries. In this paper I will use Azulai's descriptions of Hebrew books in Europe as a lens to examine his encounter with other Jewish communities and the West: What is the role of Hebrew books in Azulai's often complex and problematic contacts with the Ashkenazi communities of Europe? Did Azulai's study of the Hebrew books in the Bibliothèque du Roi in Paris differ from his encounter with the Hebrew books of the Jewish community in Amsterdam? In addition, what was the impact of his own travels on the

composition of his published works? This paper suggests that Hebrew books had numerous functions in Azulai's travels and travel diaries. Within the Jewish diaspora, Hebrew books served Azulai both as a cultural bridge and as markers of difference. In his experience of eighteenth-century Europe, they served as sources of wonder as well as objects of research.

**Shlomo Berger (University of Amsterdam)**

### **Diasporic Views of the Ancestral Homeland: Gelilot Eretz Israel and Darkhei Tzion**

When, in the seventeenth century, two Yiddish speaking Jews composed their accounts of their visits to the Holy Land, they did not only include descriptions of their homeland, charting geographical boundaries, describing the landscape, enumerating buildings and their architectural peculiarities, unearthing old and neglected treasures and discovering new or unknown ones. Gershon ben Eli'ezer Segal (author of *Gelilot Eretz Israel*) and Moshe ben Israel Naftali Hirsh Porges (author of *Darkhei Tzion*) were consciously aware of and unconsciously guided by the fact that they composed their narratives for a diasporic reading public in the vernacular and, thus, catered to the specific needs and demands of their addressees. The authors were members of exilic Ashkenazi communities and the stories of their pilgrimages reflect the priorities of an Ashkenazi vision of religion and Jewish culture. *Eretz Israel* was no longer a real destination, but a site of memory, ritual and custom as defined and practiced in their Ashkenazi lands of residence. While some descriptions show a certain degree of attention to the realities of the land of Israel in the seventeenth century, many others reflect an Ashkenazi vision of its ideal contours. Descriptions of locations transcend the historical characteristics of the land and include detailed narratives of Jewish sites in Mesopotamia. Yet more significantly they also transcend the literary characteristics of the travelogue. Both books may be subsumed under the most important genre of early Yiddish literature, the genre of ethical literature, or *Muser Sforim*. Thus these two tales are not mere travelogues or tourist guides. They are handbooks on matters of personal ethics and morals; the narratives function as instruction to Jews all over the Ashkenazi diaspora who may never be able to set a foot in the Holy Land. The Yiddish reader should experience vicariously what happened to the traveler and aim to improve his own grasp of Judaism and to strengthen his belief in the Almighty.

**Andrea Schatz (Princeton University)**

### **Cultural Cross-Dressing and Translation: Travels in the "Jewish**

Around 1800 the 'Orient' emerged as a highly significant and rather paradoxical concept in European Jewish discourse. It was evoked in debates on political emancipation and cultural self-representation, but its various and contradictory aspects –the 'Orient' as a Christian and a Jewish site, as a place of the past and the present, as an imagined sphere of origins and a real place within the Jewish diaspora – were most visibly negotiated in fictitious and non-fictitious travelogues. Here I will focus on Samuel Romanelli's *Masa ba'ra'v* ('Travail in an Arab Land'), an account of his travels in Morocco between 1786 and 1790, printed in Berlin in 1792 and reprinted several times during the

nineteenth century. Romanelli takes up strategies of traversing and interpreting the 'Orient' that could be found in previous Jewish as well as non-Jewish travel writing: cultural cross-dressing and translation. I will ask how Romanelli describes and interprets these strategies of changing one's clothes and one's words: How does he use them in order to inscribe cultural boundaries and hierarchies, in which ways does he transform them when questioning conventional delineations and evaluations of cultural difference, and how does he transcend them in his attempt to experiment with other transcultural practices? Eventually, I will argue that when Romanelli writes about Morocco, both the 'Orient' and Ashkenaz become rather unstable signifiers, and I will address some of the implications of his work within the broader context of Jewish conceptualizations of the 'Orient'.

**Session Number: 8.10**

**Session Moshe Rosman's Founder of Hasidism: A Decade Later**

**Session**

Moshe Rosman's biography of the Besht, Founder of Hasidism, was revolutionary in that it finally and decisively overturned the dubious conception of the Besht as folk hero and social revolutionary by grounding the enigmatic leader in his historical milieu. Rosman was the first scholar of Hasidism to exploit the newly accessible Polish archives. Yet his attempt to clearly differentiate between more and less reliable sources led him to privilege contemporaneous documentary sources in Hebrew and Polish, and to effectively dismiss both homiletic teachings attributed to the Besht, as well as the collection of hagiographical tales in Hebrew known as Shivhei Ha-Besht. The latter had been the mainstay of Besht biographies. The resulting criticism of Rosman's book has revealed a considerable divide between scholars who focus on the inner, spiritual appeal of Hasidism by drawing exclusively upon Hebrew sources, and those who, like Rosman, have begun to contextualize Hasidism through recourse to sources in non-Jewish languages. This panel consists of papers representing both perspectives. Our common objective is to evaluate the impact of Rosman's monograph on the historiography of Hasidism and its methodological implications. Rosman himself will serve as a respondent, and Gershon Hundert will chair the session. We would like to request a two-hour time slot.

**Chair, Gershon D. Hundert (McGill University)**

**Glenn Dynner (Sarah Lawrence College)**

**Hagiography Reappraised: Lessons to Be Drawn from the Rosman-Etkes Controversy**

Moshe Rosman's biography of the Besht is the first major work on the Besht to draw upon sources in non-Jewish languages and to clearly differentiate between more and less reliable sources. Rosman argues that tales in Shivhei Ha-Besht were subject to the corruption inherent in oral transmission over the span of many decades, including alterations through selective emphasis that enabled accounts to speak to evolving contemporary anxieties, and that the collection is deeply compromised by the pious agendas of its printer and

compiler. In response, Immanuel Etkes has attempted to defend the use of Shivhei Ha-Besht in constructing the historical "image" of the Besht. In light of this debate, how should the historian of Hasidism approach hagiographical sources? This paper argues for the superiority of Rosman's methodology, not the least because Jewish life is no longer presented as if it occurred in a vacuum. Nevertheless, I argue that it is possible to give preference to contemporaneous documentary sources without dismissing hagiography to the degree that Rosman does, nor being as uncritically accepting as Etkes. Hagiography represents perspectives that are unavailable in documentary sources. It can be sifted for elements that appear extraneous to the goal of edifying the Zaddik—transmission chains, dates, specified actors, mundane or embarrassing details, etc. The wary reader can navigate around didactic, polemical, and miraculous elements and salvage non-polemical elements, and sometimes find external corroboration.

**Nehemia Polen (Hebrew College)**

### **Jacob Joseph of Polonne's Homiletic Works as a Repository of the Besht's Teachings**

In *Founder of Hasidism*, Moshe Rosman portrays the Ba'al Shem Tov as a mystical adept whose ability to communicate directly with the divine realm offered "the promise of collective security for the entire House of Israel" (p. 181), a religious model and guide in prayer and mystical techniques for divine communion. His charisma was due to his "Kabbalistic initiation, healing techniques, quick mind, and radiant confidence." (p. 180) This picture is remarkably consistent with the one that emerges from the published discourses of Jacob Joseph of Polonne. The close correspondence calls into question Rosman's near-total skepticism of those works as a historical source.

We shall examine this question anew, focusing on teachings where the Ba'al Shem Tov overtly or tacitly reflects on himself, his personality and mission. The results will challenge Rosman's assertion that "the possibility of connecting with the Besht the sayings cited in the Besht's name in Jacob Joseph of Polonne's books is very small." (p. 140)

**Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern (Northwestern University)**

### **Hasidei de-ara' and Hasidei de-yarkha: Two Trends in Modern Hasidic Historiography**

The publication of Moshe Rosman's *Founder of Hasidism* changed methodological approaches to Hasidism. It questioned the historicity of such sources as Shivhei ha-Besht, advanced a new reading of the contemporary sources on the Besht, and pointed to the significance of the social and cultural context of Hasidism. Hardly any other book on East European Jewish History has triggered such a long-lasting debate. Recent debate between Rosman and Pedaya and multiple arguments against Rosman advanced by Etkes demonstrate that Rosman's methodology has been and will be discussed in the field of Jewish studies for years to come. Rosman's approach shaped the context-based research of such scholars as Teller, Gries, Wodzinski, Dynner, and myself. For these scholars the reconstruction of the grass-roots realities of the 18th century Polish private town became a must for the study of



Hasidism. Conversely, homiletic and hagiographic literature lost its primordial historical significance. The research of these scholars allows to call them Hasidei de-ara, the Hasidim of Earth. They firmly place Hasidism on its socio-historical ground and disassociate 18th century Hasidism from later cultural impact with which it came to be associated. The rise of Hasidei de-ara triggered criticism of a group of scholars who realized that their received wisdom have been questioned, if not dismissed. Elijah, Green, Etkes and Pedaya claimed that Rosman wrongly dismissed hagiography, the very basis for the study of Hasidism, that he “destroyed” the Besht, and that his ultra-positivism eliminated the spirituality of Hasidism. These scholars always used homiletic sources and hagiographies to create their own historical narratives. They have consistently argued for the inclusion of Hasidism into the study of Jewish Thought. For them, Hasidism represented a spiritual, philosophical, and intellectual pursuit. I call these scholars Hasidei de-yarkha, Hasidim of the Moon, underscoring their concern with the spiritual and their opposition to the study of Hasidism through methods of social history. Analyzing various methodologies of Hasidei de-yarkha and Hasidei de-ara, my presentation focuses on the approach of both schools to Hasidic hagiography. It demonstrates cons and pros of both schools, analyses possible rapprochement between them, and argues for a more nuanced approach to the history of Hasidism. It discusses possible applications of Rosman’s methodology to the study of a broader field of Jewish cultural history.

**Allan L. Nadler (Drew University)**

#### **The Etkes-Rosman Dispute over Hasidic Sources**

The publication of "Founder of Hasidism" shook the ground under the feet of many Israeli scholars, not least those of Rosman's teacher and friend Immanuel Etkes. Rosman methodological daring, most famously his use of Polish archives to document the "historical Besht," was matched only by his conservatism with regard to the classical Hebrew hasidic sources on which Israeli experts on Hasidism, most with little if any knowledge of Slavic languages, depended for their knowledge about the Besht and later Hasidic masters. While paying tribute to his student's groundbreaking use of Polish source material, Etkes took Rosman on with regard to his perceived dismissal of the value of hasidic sources, most importantly, Shivhei ha-Besht. This paper will evaluate the Rosman-Etkes dispute retrospectively, including the reaction of other scholars in the field, and conclude with an argument in support of the greater methodological sophistication of Etkes' approach to hasidic source material. At the same time the paper will point to the inherent weakness of much research into Hasidism, especially the social history of the movement, by other students of Etkes who lack the Slavic language skills that Rosman dramatically showed to be vital for a fuller understanding of the Besht and his heirs.

**Respondent, Moshe Rosman (Bar-Ilan University)**

***Session Number: 8.11***

**Session        Studies in Early Kabbalah**

## **Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Orna Triguboff (University of Sydney)**

**Yechiel Shalom Goldberg (California State University, Long Beach)**

### **“Wisdom Preserves the Life of the One Who Possesses It:” Towards a Taxonomy of Kabbalah**

Wisdom and the wise man are pivotal elements in kabbalistic discourse. In much of the kabbalistic discourse of Southern France and Spain in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, Wisdom is treated as a body of knowledge open to reception, investigation, and transmission and also as one of the ten SEFIROT that comprise the godhead, specifically representing that dimension of divine personhood that is involved in thought and creativity. In this same discourse, the wise man represents the human subject or subjects who engage Wisdom as both a body of knowledge and a dimension of divinity. The pivotal function of Wisdom and the wise man in much of kabbalistic discourse arises from the fact that each is constructed as liminal, marking the boundary and orchestrating or performing the relationship between revelation and concealment. The pivotal function of Wisdom in kabbalistic discourse suggests that Wisdom deserves an important place in any analysis of the taxonomy of Kabbalah. Indeed, some scholars have suggested that Kabbalah itself ought to be categorized as “esoteric wisdom”. However, even if Kabbalah is categorized as Jewish mysticism, the importance of Wisdom should not be overlooked as Wisdom plays a pivotal role in the phenomenology of mystical union in kabbalistic sources. Whereas most taxonomies of Kabbalah begin with either mysticism or esotericism, this paper will open by suggesting that Kabbalah can be understood as a medieval variant and even extension of biblical and rabbinic wisdom traditions. A brief review of previous scholarship will put this suggestion into perspective. This suggestion will then be supported by examining seminal examples of kabbalistic interpretations of biblical and rabbinic statements regarding wisdom and the wise person, and then considering other seminal characteristics of the kabbalistic treatment of Wisdom and wise persons. Finally, continuities and discontinuities between Kabbalah and antecedent wisdom traditions will be discussed. The remainder of the paper will consider some theoretical implications of this taxonomy by exploring some ways in which the mystical and esoteric dimensions of Kabbalistic discourse fit into a taxonomy of Kabbalah that privileges Wisdom and the wise person as pivotal elements of kabbalistic discourse without privileging either mysticism or esotericism.

**Francis Landy (University of Alberta)**

### **Poetics and Imagination in R. Isaac the Blind's Commentary on Sefer Yetsirah**

Poetics and Imagination in Rabbi Isaac the Blind's Commentary on Sefer Yetsirah Gershom Scholem remarks of Rabbi Isaac the Blind that “his ipsissima verba ... are mysteriously formulated and exceedingly difficult to understand”, and few of his successors would disagree. In this paper I intend to examine Isaac's only extant complete work, the Commentary on the Sefer

Yetsirah, with two objectives. The first is to suggest that the difficulty arises from tension between the poetic impulse and the desire for system in emergent Kabbalah. R. Isaac's writing is full of similes, word plays, interpretive glosses, and lyrical digressions, and, like all Kabbalah, is a reflection on language, particularly on its creative and destructive aspect. Hence it requires very close reading, just as it suggests techniques for close reading. At the same time, it attempts to organize and rationalize the sefirot, in dialogue both with Neoplatonic philosophy and the esoteric schemes of the Franco-German schools. Secondly, I will argue that R. Isaac is fascinated by differentiation, in particular the differentiation of consciousness from the pure flow of the Intellect, and also by the erasure of difference. Hence his work distinguishes between attributes, such as hokhmah, mahshavah, and haskel, and establishes equivalences between them. They flow in and out of each other, enclosing and enclosed, and are both absorbed in and emanate from the Ein Sof, R. Isaac's coinage for the intersection of noun and verb, of infinite deferral and absolute fulfillment. R. Isaac insists on boundaries and their traversal. Similarly, contemplation of language, especially of prayer, results in its dissolution in the unsayable divine name, as Haviva Pedaya points out. There are two methodological horizons to this proposal. The first concerns the cultural context. How did the emergence of Kabbalah contribute to the self-construction of the Provençal Jewish elite, and to its practices of interpretation? The second, rather more intangible, is the experience and desire of R. Isaac. What makes a person, embedded in that cultural world, wish to impart all he knows about its structure and truth? This brings us to the interface between the intellect and the imagination. For the Neoplatonist God can only be apprehended through the imagination. Hence the profusion of metaphors as agents both of the construction of a poetic universe and of its

**Jonathan Dauber (Yeshiva University)**

### **“The Enlightened Will Understand”: What was Esoteric in Thirteenth-Century Kabbalah?**

The dissemination of some of the first kabbalistic texts in the early thirteenth century by a circle of Kabbalists that included Asher b. David, Ezra and Azriel of Gerona, and Jacob ben Sheshet marks, at least in part, a transition from a carefully guarded esoteric oral tradition to a written tradition available to a wider audience. These Kabbalists, however, did not fully abandon earlier codes of esotericism. On the contrary, in various places in their writings they adopted an esoteric style of writing in which certain passages, often marked off by such phrases as HA-MASKIL YAVIN (the enlightened will understand), were intentionally written in an obscure fashion so as to be unclear to the uninitiated. Yet the very fact that certain passages were marked off as particularly esoteric while others were not indicates that these Kabbalists carefully distinguished between material that was meant for a broader audience and material that was meant only for the select few. While prior research has dealt with esotericism in thirteenth-century Kabbalah in general terms, there has been no attempt to delineate the nature of the particular teachings that these Kabbalists regarded as most esoteric. In my paper I will

provide a general sketch of the content of these esoteric teachings, which can be ascertained through careful cross-referencing within the writings of these Kabbalists and through the examination of later kabbalistic writings that preserve earlier teachings in less esoteric terms. Furthermore, I will discuss the relationship of these teachings to kabbalistic teachings that are presented more openly with the broader goal of determining the criteria according to which particular teachings were deemed appropriate or inappropriate for wider consumption. In general, while the role of these Kabbalists as transmitters of traditions is well known, there has been little scholarly attempt to understand their role as editors of a literary tradition. In addition, therefore, to illuminating the complex interrelationship between esotericism and exotericism in some of the earliest kabbalistic texts, my paper will offer a window into the careful thinking and precise editorial hand that helped shape Kabbalah as it was crafted into a literary tradition.

**Ellen Haskell (Franklin and Marshall College)**

**The Image of God as a Suckling Mother in Sefer Ha-Zohar**

This presentation will address a form of divine representation within Sefer Ha-Zohar that serves as a powerful tool for constructing kabbalistic concepts of God and self: the image of God as a suckling mother. In the Zoharic text, this maternal image serves as a complement both to normative masculine images of God and to feminine images that overtly sexualize divinity. Thus, the image of God as a suckling mother serves a unique theological purpose within the Zohar's vast repertoire of divine images. It does so by metaphysically relocating humanity with reference to divinity in order to establish a relationship of profound intimacy, nurture and reliance. This image, due to its unique ability to foreground issues of relation and mediation, as well as its ability to highlight affective spiritual experience, is capable of providing a deep and coherent model for understanding the role of the human being within the kabbalistic cosmology. By looking at the process through which images such as this one construct kabbalistic self-understanding, it is possible to gain greater insight into the interior transformation of man into mystic. The presentation will begin with a series of texts from Sefer Ha-Zohar that employ the image of God as a suckling mother, opening a discussion of the connotations that surround this image, as well as its role within the larger body of kabbalistic theology. It will then turn to a discussion of the image's ability to construct a transformative understanding of the relationship between God and kabbalist, demonstrating how this relationship complements and enhances other kabbalistic models of human and divine interaction. The presentation will end by looking briefly at how the Zohar's image of God as a suckling mother emerges from the literature of Isaac the Blind and Ezra of Gerona, demonstrating the image's continuity with earlier kabbalistic theology. As a whole, this presentation will show how the Zoharic authorship draws on a trend in kabbalistic thought in order to assert a particular message about the relationship between God and man.

***Session Number: 8.12***

**Session      Gender, Jews, and American Sports**

## **Session**

This roundtable on Gender, Jews, and American Sport examines the historical significance of Jewish women in American sport in the documentary film **SETTLEMENT HOUSES TO OLYMPIC STADIUMS: JEWISH WOMEN IN AMERICAN SPORT**. This first documentary made on the topic, developed by historian Linda Borish, filmmaker Shuli Eshel, and Maccabi USA/Sports for Israel, analyzes how Jewish women as athletes, activists, and administrators challenged gender and ethnic constraints in American society. Discussants-Professors Jeffrey Gurock, Rebecca Alpert, Linda Borish, and Chair Shulamit Reinharz- will view and comment on this 30 minute film exploring, how does gender and ethnicity shape the experiences of Jews in American sport? The historical reality of Jews in sport adds to the understanding of gender and American Jewish history. The film begins in the 1880s when Jewish immigrant women coming to the U.S. first learn about American sport in physical education and Americanization classes at various settlement houses. Women faced limited access to athletic facilities because most institutions catered to Jewish men. The desire of Jewish women to participate in sport influenced such leaders as Senda Berenson in basketball, Bella Unterberg, founder of New York City's Young Women's Hebrew Association (1902), Charlotte Epstein in swimming, and others, to advance women's right to compete in sport. Jewish women eventually became Olympians like Lillian Copeland, 1932 Gold medalist in track and field. Copeland, Sybil (Syd) Koff, Janice Lifson and Doris Beshunsky (now in their 80's) competed in the Maccabiah Games in 1935. At times Jewish women confronted anti-Semitism at country clubs where the tennis courts and golf courses were restricted. Outstanding champion amateur golfer Elaine Rosenthal Reinhardt gained widespread acclaim for her victories, but faced discrimination in some competitions. In 1936, after serving on three United States Women's Olympic Swimming Teams, Charlotte Epstein withdrew from the Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany to protest Nazi policies. Linda Borish shares her extensive research on the subject; Hasia Diner, expert in American Jewish women's history, discusses the context of Jewish immigrant women coming to America and their experiences; Steven Riess, leading historian in American sport history, provides expertise on sports for Jewish men. The film concludes with contemporary Jewish women athletes inducted into the Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, 2003. Using images, archival footage, and interviews, the film documents the politics of participation of Jewish women in American sport. This film project and roundtable contribute to gender studies, Jewish history, and sport history.

**Chair, Shulamit Reinharz (Brandeis University)**

**Rebecca Alpert (Temple University)**

**Linda Borish (Western Michigan University)**

**Jeffrey S. Gurock (Yeshiva University)**

**Session Number: 8.13**

**Session        Places of Modern Jewish Literature**

## **Session**

From Douala to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to Berlin, this panel explores the Jewish literary relationship to place. Each of the four papers considers representations of particular types of place – a city, a café, a street, a country – and their relationship to literary characters in texts by Israeli-, Russian-, and German-Jewish authors. There are four participants: Karen Grumberg, from the University of Texas at Austin, will present “Between Text and Image: Ronit Matalon’s Alternate Spatiality”; Rachel Harris, from the State University of New York, will present “There Is No Privacy in the Anonymity of Tel Aviv: Poetic Representations of the City”; Daniela Loewenthal, from Brandeis University, will present “Perceptions of Berlin in Early 20th Century German-Jewish Literature”; and Anna Ronell, from Wellesley College, will present “Jerusalem as a Sacred Space in Dina Rubina’s Fiction.” The session examines the ways that place informs the identity and self perception of Jewish characters from such widely varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Several questions tie these papers together: to what extent, if any, does place play a role in the construction of identity? Do certain places or spaces have the power to create or destroy identity? Among the issues that this panel examines is the role of place in the construction of “insiders” or “natives,” on the one hand, and “outsiders,” strangers, or “others,” on the other hand. These papers discuss texts in which place emerges as a component more significant than mere setting or background; place is an active participant in these novels and poems, shaping the characters and propelling their actions. This panel brings together disparate representations of place, demonstrating, ultimately, the way locale and environment inform Jewish identity and the commonalities that are integrally related to the experience of Jewishness. The session is thus concerned with the encounter of Jewishness with various places and spaces and the keen awareness of “otherness” that this often entails, whether in Israel, Germany, Africa, or beyond.

**Chair, Barbara Mann (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Karen Grumberg (University of Texas at Austin)**

**Between Text and Image: Ronit Matalon’s Alternate Spatiality**

The photographs that Ronit Matalon incorporates into her novels *The One Facing Us* (1995) and, indirectly, in *Bliss* (2000) reflect her keen awareness of the resonance of the visual. Critically, the photographs have been discussed as the conduit of memory, the key to a confusing jumble of identities, the seemingly objective signifier. Matalon, one of the most self-aware writers in Israel today, illuminates the subjectivity of this medium and of memory itself. However, she arrives at the intersection between the textual and the filmic not only through her integration of photographs into the literary text, but also through the cinematic poetics of her text itself. I argue that the intersection of the textual and the visual in Matalon’s writing creates a new cultural and literary space for Israelis and Palestinians. This space is, of course, detached from the conventional spaces associated with the Zionist narrative. I propose a notion of “negative” and “positive” space, to correspond to Nurit Gertz’s notion of the “optimistic geography” of early Israeli films about the Holocaust:

“positive” space is associated with the hegemonic force and is widely accepted as the desirable space of Israeliness. It encompasses those spaces that are associated with Zionism and the maintenance of national identity, the same spaces scrutinized and represented (sometimes positively and sometimes critically) by the authors of the State Generation, including the kibbutz, the desert, and the nation as a whole. “Negative” space, then, represents the flip-side – locations beyond or outside these dominant experiences of space. The State Generation not only engaged particular representations of place, of land, of rootedness, but also made use of literary conventions that are clearly derived from or influenced by the Western literary tradition (including Hebrew and non-Hebrew European literature). Blending the visual and the textual, Matalon espouses a different notion of spatiality; consequently, she represents this spatiality using another set of literary tools that evoke the stylistic contortions of Anton Shammas’s Arabesques, for example, more than the distinctly European modernist tendencies of many of her literary predecessors. Matalon thus constructs an alternate spatiality that defies the nationalist understanding of identity.

**Rachel S. Harris (University at Albany, SUNY)**

**There is No Privacy in the Anonymity of Tel Aviv: Poetic Representations of the City**

Decadence and corruption have become bywords in representing Tel Aviv café society. Sexual promiscuity, isolation and portrayals of the flâneur, characteristics of the modernist literary genre, are promulgated throughout depictions of this city. Locations such as the café, the bus and the street are used to demonstrate both the universality of the late twentieth-century Israeli experience on the one hand and its unique identity on the other. These images cross the usual divisions between writers; of social background, age and time period. In this paper I intend to examine a selection of poems by Hebrew authors writing in the past fifty years in order to explore the depiction of public spaces and the anonymity portrayed in these traditionally sociable

**Daniela Loewenthal (Brandeis University)**

**Perceptions of Berlin in Early Twentieth-Century German-Jewish**

As one of the centers of the Jewish Diaspora during the Wilhelminian era and the Weimar Republic, Berlin played a major role as the city of reference for many Jewish writers. For German-Jewish author Georg Hermann, Berlin is the true home of assimilated German Jews which he juxtaposes to the Eastern provinces. For others, Berlin is the ultimate exile and can only be seen in contrast to Jerusalem, as the title of Gershom Scholem’s memoir “From Berlin to Jerusalem” so aptly states. The obsession with the orient that is so fashionable at that time, as expressed strongly by Else Lasker-Schueler among others, adds yet another dimension to the literary perceptions of Berlin – Berlin, which so clearly represents the occident. In this presentation I will examine different visualizations of Berlin as expressions of the Jewish identity they convey. Focusing on Georg Hermann, I will argue that his idealized nostalgic depictions illuminate his aspiration to show how undeniably German his Jewish protagonists are or strive to be. This analysis will specifically look at

the self-perception of Jews at the time and analyze the question of cultural insider vs. outsider. I will also include images of early 20th century Berlin such as photographs of the oriental style Oranienburger Strasse synagogue to support my arguments. My goal is to compare different textual depictions and perceptions of Berlin which I will support with images of the actual city architecture to gain greater insight into early 20th century German Jewish identity.

**Anna P. Ronell (Wellesley College)**

**Jerusalem as a Sacred Space in Dina Rubina's Fiction**

The presentation will discuss complex perceptions of sacred space in Dina Rubina's *Here Comes the Messiah* and *What Should I Do with Myself?* It will focus on the function of Jerusalem as a city sacred for three world religions as reflected through the lens of Russian immigrant experience. The presentation will address such issues as cultural hybridity, literary fusion, and linguistic experimentation, as well as cultural gaps that exist between various populations in Jerusalem. The presentation will also provide an overview of Rubina's portrayals of various ways in which competing religious traditions from Israel and the Diaspora interact in Jerusalem's sacred space.

**Session Number: 8.14**

**Session Secrecy and Creativity: Anusim in New Spain**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Matt Goldish (Ohio State University)**

**Samuel Temkin (Rutgers University)**

**Luis de Carvajal, the Governor**

In this talk we discuss events in the life of Luis de Carvajal, the head of the well-known Carvajal family. This man was Portuguese by birth and had Jewish ancestors, meaning that, at least legally, he was not allowed to go to the Spanish New World. Nevertheless, in 1579 he was appointed by Phillip II as the governor of el Nuevo Reino de León, a large territory in New Spain that included most of present-day Northeast Mexico as well as portions of the American Southwest. He was granted a royal permit releasing the colonists he recruited from producing a *Limpieza de Sangre* certificate (that proved they were Old Christians). In this lecture we review his personal background, the reasons behind the appointment, and whether he intentionally brought to Crypto-Jews to the New World. On the basis of recently-found contemporary documents we argue, contrary to what some authors state, that Jewish money was not the reason behind the appointment; that Luis de Carvajal was, as he maintained, a sincere Christian; was not aware that any of those individuals practiced Judaism; and that he had no intention of making the Nuevo Reino de León a religious haven.

**Marie-Theresa Hernandez (University of Houston)**

**The Virgin of Guadalupe as Anusim**

The focus of this project is the Virgin of Guadalupe and narratives about her history in Spain and México. Guadalupe, whose Spanish sanctuary in



Guadalupe, Estramadura, established in the fourteenth century, is known as "Reina de España." At her sixteenth century sanctuary in México she appeared as a different image. There she is known as the "Patroness of the Americas." In an early nineteenth century text on Guadalupe written in Mexico, a Padre Montañes writes of ten virgins who migrate from Palestine to Spain. They appear to the faithful in a number of locations and then move on to the Americas. These migrating virgins present a metaphor connecting the history of their apparitions on two continents, linking the Jewish with the Christian. In this paper, I discuss textual and oral narratives about (what are believed to be) Guadalupe's "western origins," seeking to elucidate connections to Jewish theology. The Order of Jeronimos were entrusted by the Spanish king to care for the sanctuary. The order was known for having a large number of conversos among its membership. On several occasions monks at the monastery were charged by the Inquisition for practicing Judaic rites. In addition, there are circulating narratives proposing that the medieval village of Guadalupe was a Jewish enclave. While México's Virgin of Guadalupe seemingly has no obvious connections to the conversos of Spain, this possibility is mentioned by Jacques Lafaye in the 2002 edition of his canonical book, *Queztacoatl y Guadalupe*. Serge Gruzinski also mentions a connection with a surge in Guadalupe's popularity (and publications on her apparitions) with the Mexican Inquisition's largest auto-da-fe in colonial history. The first text published on Guadalupe appeared in 1648 (Miguel Sanchez, *Imagenes de la Virgen de Guadalupe*). The auto-da-fe occurred the same year. A number of archival texts from México's colonial period substantiate Lafaye and Gruzinski's assertions. The virgin appeared in 1531, but first book on her apparition was published a century later. In Sanchez's book and others, there is an abundance of discussion relating to the Torah, with minimal reference to the Christian gospel. It is my argument that the apparitions of Guadalupe were popularized by the Mexican clergy as a way of avoiding persecution by the Inquisition, because they were either practicing Jews, or were afraid they would be accused of practicing Judaic rites.

**Rashid Kaplanov ("Sefer," the Moscow Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization)**

### **The Ambiguity of New Christian (Marrano) Weltanschauung**

Some quite fascinating XVIII century figures from the Marrano world are often eclipsed by XVI and XVII centuries giants. One of those was an important person - Dr. Antonio Sanches (1699-1783). His religious views are unclear. After he fled Portugal in 1726, escaping the Inquisition, he was briefly a member of the Jewish Community of London. But in 1728 he left both London and the Jewish fold, spending most of his life in Holland, Russia and France. He was a prolific writer on extremely varied subjects, an indefatigable correspondent and diarist, who stayed in touch with some of the most conspicuous Enlightenment thinkers all over Europe. His previously unknown manuscripts were discovered by me and my Portuguese colleague Dr. Joao Miranda. Sanches was expelled from Russia as "a secret Jew", an accusation which he denied, declaring himself a son of the Catholic Church.

He hardly was a real Catholic, nor was he committed to any other religion. He was seldom sincere even in his diary. Some of his professions of Catholicism seem tongue-in-cheek. He quotes the Tuscan Professor G.A.Soria as the person who persuaded him to return to Catholicism. This sounds unlikely, because Soria was a convinced Deist. In Sanches' 1780s letters to Portugal (intercepted and preserved in the official archives) he is vitriolic about the Catholic Church foreseeing its speedy demise at the hands of enlightened monarchs. In Sanches' political texts the bigotry of Spain and Portugal are contrasted with the spirit of tolerance which is supposedly characteristic of non-Catholic countries of Europe, including Russia. Another Portuguese Jewish thinker D.Fonseca who also lived in Paris and was equally close to the Enlightenment milieu, thought that even Turkey was more tolerant than the Catholic countries. Last but not least, was Sanches a Jew? In the religious sense probably not. But we have reason to believe that he was committed to

**Schulamith C. Halevy (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)**

**The Rabbi, the Priests, and Modern Anti-Semitism in Northern Mexico**

The first rabbi arrived in Monterrey, Mexico during WWII. By his testimony, he was confronted with severe anti-Semitism, on the one hand, and with thousands of descendents of anusim seeking to return to their ancestral faith, on the other. He informed those anusim that he does not do conversions. During the past several years, I made it a point to interview numerous priests in Northern Mexico. The results are astounding: some were anti-Semites; some were philo-Semitic; many were aware of their "Jewish blood"; others were unaware. What is clear, is that the myth that the Church does not know who of its member are of Jewish origin is entirely false, although it continues to be maintained. In last year's World Congress of Jewish Studies, I reported on the outing of the secret Jews of the region and the manner in which they dealt with their identity vis-à-vis the public. Here, I will address the deeper level of religious identifications that actually existed, the ones admitted, the ones denied, the ones exploited by the Church, and the ones that seeped into it. I will address the surviving and constantly fluctuating fear, so difficult for the modern man and woman to understand from the context of the reality present in Nuevo Leon.

***Session Number: 8.15***

***Session*        **Directors of Jewish Studies****

***Session***

A session devoted to an exploration of key questions and answers facing directors of Jewish Studies at both smaller and larger programs, located at private and public colleges and universities.

**Chair, Arnold Dashefsky (University of Connecticut at Storrs)**

**Judith R. Baskin (University of Oregon)**

**Deborah Hertz (University of California, San Diego)**

**David Shneer (University of Denver)**

**Abstracts for Session 9**

**Tuesday, December, 19, 2006 08:30 AM-10:30 AM**

**Session Number: 9.1**

**Session Medieval Jews and Christians: Conflict and Interaction**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Jonathan Decter (Brandeis University)**

**David Malkiel (Bar-Ilan University)**

**Three New Readings of the Gezerot Tatnu Narratives**

Three Hebrew prose narratives, published in 1892, are the principal sources about gezerot Tatnu, the persecution of Rhineland Jewry in 1096. Modern histories of this catastrophe basically paraphrase the medieval texts in modern language. However, in 1982 Ivan Marcus argued that the texts could profitably be studied as literature, but not as records of actual events. Similarly, in 1994 Jeremy Cohen posited that the documents could only be read as repositories of symbols and values from the world of twelfth-century Ashkenaz. All the while, Robert Chazan championed the “facticity” of the First Crusade narratives. To advance the methodological discussion, I will present a “thick description” of three tales from the Hebrew sources, probing their historical and literary meaning against the backdrop of the literalist-nonliteralist debate: 1. The Jews of Mainz give their money to Archbishop Ruthard. This tale is best understood in light of the perspective of the narrator and his twelfth-century audience, rather than as a record of the events of gezerot Tatnu. It reflects awareness of the 1098 scandal, when Henry IV held Ruthard responsible for the disappearance of the Jews’ money. 2. The assailants strip the slain. This is a classic instance of the intersection of the literalist and nonliteralist approaches. The stripping of the victims echoes the stripping of King Saul, who in rabbinic literature embodied the legitimacy of self-inflicted martyrdom. It is, however, uncertain whether this element in the narratives is true or fictitious. 3. Wailing is heard from the Mainz synagogue shortly before the attack. This story immediately follows that of the goose, which “miraculously” knew the way to the Holy Land. The juxtaposition of these tales reflects a way of thinking common to Jews and Christians, for in both the witnesses interpreted what they saw as a signal from God about the course of history. Close readings such as these broaden and deepen our understanding of the Hebrew narratives of 1096, affording entry into the perspective of their authors and audience, and to a lesser extent into the reported events as well.

**Shmuel Shepkaru (University of Oklahoma)**

**From Joseph to Jesus: The Story of the Ten Martyrs and Its Function in Medieval Jewish-Christian Polemics**

From Joseph to Jesus: The Story of the Ten Martyrs and Its Use in Medieval Jewish-Christian Polemics The story of the Ten Martyrs is told in a number of versions and it plays an important roll in medieval martyrology and Ashkenazic liturgy. S. Zeitlin was among the first to expose the story’s legendary nature, which led him to conclude that the legend’s contribution to our knowledge of

the events it describes is inconsequential. Zeitlin's conclusions are still valid. However, although legends may not provide enough information to help us reconstruct the events they describe, they do provide significant insights into the different historical realities that produced them and the mentality of their authors. One reality that the legend reflects is the development of Jewish-Christian polemics in medieval Europe. The legend was used to counter the Christian accusation of the "Jewish" betrayal of Jesus. The accusation of the collective selling of Jesus provided a fundamental Christian explanation for the harsh reality (and hopeless future) that was often experienced by medieval Jews. The Jewish legend provided an alternative exposition: the misfortunes that were experienced by each generation were the predetermined punishments for the historical selling of the biblical Joseph by his brothers. The goal of my presentation is to show some of the different versions of the legend and to explain their transformations in the context of Jewish-Christian polemics. More specifically, my intention is to explain how the knowledge of each other's arguments in the 12th and 13th centuries (which is reflected in polemical works and in the Hebrew narratives of the First Crusade) caused the Jewish authors to limit the use of the legend and even ignore it.

**Yechiel Schur (Yale University)**

### **Postmortem Circumcision, Baptism, and Jewish-Christian Polemics**

Twelfth and thirteenth-century Hebrew texts describe a seemingly obscure custom: When a male Jewish infant died before he reached his eighth day and before the corpse was buried, the dead infant was circumcised at the open gravesite. Postmortem circumcision became a common custom throughout the high Middle Ages, as discussions of the custom in various Hebrew books of law and practice reveal. While there are some cursory scholarly discussions about the origin and significance of the custom, no study has been devoted to exploring fully the role and the function of postmortem circumcision or has investigated its widespread acceptance in medieval Jewish culture. I posit that the popularity of the custom responded to contemporary medieval concerns about the fate of infants in the afterlife. The circumcision of stillborn infants reflected the Jewish belief in the redemptive efficacy of circumcision. Jews contrasted—particularly in the context of Jewish-Christian polemics—the redemptive merits of circumcision with the shortcomings of baptism: While postmortem circumcision enabled marking dead infants as legitimate members of the Jewish community, baptism could only be effective when performed before the infant died. Jewish perceptions of the superiority of postmortem circumcision over baptism contributed as well to the appeal of the custom. Exploring the significance and appeal of postmortem circumcision, the paper will first trace the roots of the custom. The custom is mentioned for the first time in a text written by one of the Gaonim of Babylonia (early Middle Ages), that is to say in a non-Christian environment. However, Jewish authorities living throughout Christian Europe in the high Middle Ages reframed the custom's rationale, associating it with intercession for the dead and the afterlife. The paper will investigate contemporary medieval Jewish and Christian discussions concerning the redemption of stillborn infants,

demonstrating how each religion underplayed the redemptive efficacy of the other religion: Christians rejected the physical mark in the flesh obtained by the removal of the foreskin, whereas Jews emphasized time and again the ability of circumcision to benefit Jewish infants in the afterlife. It is against this background of polemical treatment of the initiatory rites of Judaism and Christianity that the significance of postmortem circumcision must be understood.

**Hartley W. Lachter (Muhlenberg College)**

### **Kabbalah and Conflict: Thirteenth-Century Spanish Kabbalah and Jewish-Christian Polemics**

In this paper I will address the complex relationship between the proliferation of Kabbalah in the latter part of the 13th century and the prevailing attempt on the part of the Franciscan and Dominican orders to convert Jews to Christianity. Such proselytizing often involved philosophical argumentation designed to demonstrate the objective truth of Christianity, claims that the Rabbinic tradition is replete with gross anthropomorphism and absurd depictions of God, and assertions that Jewish physical performance of the commandments implies a crude theology. By examining some of the works of Yoseph Gikatilla, Moses de Leon, Baruch Togarmi, Shemayahu be Yitzhak ha-Levi, as well as the Zohar, I will argue these authors understood their work as a direct response to these challenges. Kabbalah from the latter part of the 13th century can thus be seen as an alternative articulation of Judaism, based more on traditions of poetic theosophy and ecstatic mystical experience, intended to head off a direct political and theological challenge from the Church.

**Session Number: 9.2**

**Session Approaches to Rabbinic Hermeneutics**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Charlotte Fonrobert (Stanford University)**

**Chair, Charlotte Fonrobert (Stanford University)**

**Rivka B. Kern-Ulmer (Bucknell University)**

### **Methodological Considerations in Respect to Egyptian Cultural Icons in Rabbinic Literature: Cleopatra**

Cultural icons are easily recognizable as belonging to a specific culture. Midrashic and other Rabbinic texts contain many identifiable Egyptian cultural icons. Although those rabbis that utilized Egyptian cultural icons might have followed the high prestige that anything Egyptian enjoyed in late antiquity, there are several very specific intersections with Egyptian culture that require us to examine Egyptian references in Rabbinic texts in addition to the elements from Greco-Roman, Samaritan and Sassanian Babylonian cultures. One challenge in isolating and interpreting these Egyptian elements is the temporal distance between the dates of some of the Egyptian cultural icons that are originate in Pharaonic, Ptolemaic, Roman or Coptic Egypt, and the dates and locales of some Rabbinic texts. However, one may note that there were

multiple connections between Egypt and the Land of Israel (Roman Palestine), which was the geographic and intellectual environment that produced most of the initial Rabbinic texts, and many coherent statements in regard to Egypt. These textual passages and statements were integrated and further developed into later Rabbinic documents. Rome, the ruling power in the Land of Israel in late antiquity, was fascinated to a great extent in positive and negative ways with Egypt and the last Egyptian ruler, Queen Cleopatra VII. Rabbinic Judaism created its own, albeit less significant, Cleopatra, who was viewed as witnesses for an ancient and exotic culture. The Rabbinic discussions textualize Egyptian icons in their polemical or dialectical engagement with foreign cults and beliefs. Roman culture had pictorial depictions in addition to numerous textual renditions; this was also the case in Roman Palestine, but Rabbinic texts offer only textual reflections of images and ideas. Although Talmudic and midrashic texts strategize their arguments in different ways as well as in different genres and documents, the underlying engagement with the propositions resulting from Egyptian icons is the same throughout the texts: a response to non-Jewish icons. I propose to focus upon the following topics in Rabbinic literature: “Cleopatra and the Garments of the Afterlife” and “Cleopatra and Roman Politics.”

**Samuel Secunda (Yeshiva University)**

### **Old Concerns, New Meanings: On the Development of Two Talmudic Narratives (b. San. 37a and b. Nid. 20b) Concerning the Laws of Menstruation**

As Yaakov Elman has patiently reminded us, the Bavli is the legacy of rabbis living in Sasanian Mesopotamia who took part in a dynamic, multi-ethnic culture. Accordingly, the Bavli contains elements of ancient Babylonian medicine and magic, aristocratic Persian mores, Indo-European myths, and ritual and theological concepts of the state religion – Zoroastrianism. However at the same time, the Bavli is predominantly a compilation of earlier sources which sometimes reflect rabbinic concerns as they originated in Roman Palestine, hundreds of years before its completion. This paper will attempt to address this dichotomy by studying two Bavli narratives that portray encounters between rabbis and Zoroastrians on the subject of menstrual purity. In one anecdote, Rav Kahana and a Zoroastrian debate the expediency of the *dašt?nist?n*, or menstrual hut (b. San. 37a), and in another, the Sasanian queen-mother, Ifra Hormiz, sends Rava samples of blood to determine whether or not she is a menstruant (b. Nid. 20b). Both stories contain older concerns about rabbinic leniency which are already present in earlier strata of the literature. Yet interestingly, in both cases the Bavli “externalizes” these concerns by re-imagining them as taking place not within the confines of the rabbinic academy, but between rabbis and Zoroastrians. As Christine Hayes demonstrates in regard to non-contextual modes of rabbinic exegesis, when the rabbis are unable to voice their own anxieties, they “displace” them in the mouths of Others. Regarding both menstrual huts and bloodstains, Zoroastrian law generally rules stringently and rabbinic halakha rules leniently. Thus, we can advance Hayes’ proposal a step further

and suggest that the very encounter between rabbis and Zoroastrians in the realm of menstrual purity intensified an already present, uncomfortable self-perception of rabbinic leniency. The conclusion of this paper will argue that these narratives reinforce research conducted by Yaakov Elman and I that demonstrates how the development of the Babylonian rabbinic menstrual laws displays important similarities with the Zoroastrian system. More generally, this paper will suggest that the task of imagining how older rabbinic material contained within the Bavli resonates in its new, Sasanian content is one of the key challenges for Irano-Talmudic research in the coming years. A more complete account of the interplay between old and new sources, and the ways in which the rabbis received and transmitted their legal and narrative traditions in the context of Sasanian Mesopotamia, will significantly alter our

**Serguei Dolgopolski (University of Kansas, Lawrence)**

### **Hermeneutics of Anonymity**

Taking heart in the recent achievements in isolating and analyzing an anonymous layer of the redaction of the Talmud, this project charts and analyses other shapes, forms, and configurations of anonymity in rabbinic and Christian orthodoxies (and heresies) in Late Antiquity. My methodological approach is at the same time hermeneutical and anthropological. It stems from an understanding that, in Late Antique and Medieval periods, classical Aristotelian tradition of philosophical hermeneutics of intellect becomes intertwined with a new hermeneutical project. Concentrated no longer on independent dialectical reasoning or rhetorical persuasion, hermeneutical practice is now directing itself to the Wholly Writings and thus becomes an exegetical enterprise. Through the issue of anonymity, I examine what that transformation of interpretation into exegesis means both for classical hermeneutics and for textual interpretation to which it "transforms." I focus on hermeneutical analysis of authorship, authority and anonymity in Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* juxtaposed to *Mishnah Megillah*, and other configurations of anonymity in Late Antique Exegesis - in so called stammatitic (anonymous) texts from the Talmud, anonymous texts from Pseudoepigrapha, and in the homiletical midrashic genre of *Petichta*. In doing this work, I connect intellectual perspectives that in studying exegesis have been often considered non-connected. Taking an inspiration in Aristotle's *Of Interpretation*, where the theory of human being (anthropology) and the theory of interpretation (hermeneutics) intrinsically connect to each other, I heuristically submit that just as classical philosophical hermeneutics had an intrinsic anthropological element, so also Late Antique exegesis in the mode of anonymity should have a no less strong anthropological aspect, which I seek to isolate and describe. Through broadening the perspective on anonymity in other genres of Late Antique literature, my work establishes a new theoretical framework for thinking about the anonymous layer of the Babylonian Talmud as well.

***Session Number: 9.3***

***Session***        ***Jonas, Freud, and Other Germans***

***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Nitzan Lebovic (UCLA)**

**James Diamond (University of Waterloo)**

**Nahmanides on the "Captive Woman": Prefiguring Freud and Feminism in Medieval Jewish Thought**

Deuteronomy 21:10-14 posits a law which regulates rape and enslavement on the ancient Near Eastern Israelite battlefield. Regardless of different exegetical moves, some medieval Jewish commentators, both of philosophical or midrashic schools, anticipated contemporary notions of rape as a violent assertion of power and domination rather than one of sexuality or eroticism. Studies have substantiated the principle that rape is "not an aggressive expression of sexuality, but a sexual expression of aggression." For the medieval rabbi, then, the inherent danger posed by the "captive woman" in war is not that one might succumb to sexual desire but that, flush with military victory, rape is the gross physical articulation of a self-aggrandizement which attributes victory to oneself rather than to God. Rape then is tantamount to assuming a divine posture vis-à-vis another human being. For the purposes of this paper I will focus on Nahmanides' approach which, I argue, appreciates the theological dangers posed by the captive woman temptation because it is attuned to rape as domination. But one example is Nahmanides' halakhic exposition of the biblical requirement to release the captive woman if the post-coitus cooling off period leaves the soldier with "no delight in her", where he draws an important analogy to Amnon's rape of his sister Tamar. The disdain for the pretty woman subsequent to intercourse reflects on its original motivation which could not have been driven solely by sexual or emotional attachment, but by something which dissipates along with orgasm- power and conquest. Nahmanides' rationale for the expulsion of a soldier who has had a nocturnal emission from the military camp is instructive since for him, ejaculation amounts to a more benign form of rape, but similarly theologically offensive in its manifesting of power and dominance. Here Nahmanides may have also anticipated Freud's theory of arousal-dreams as open fulfillments of repressed wishes. For Nahmanides, phallic arousal during sleep is a consequence of overpowering desire that in turn reflects the soldier's state of religious consciousness- a climactic surge to BECOME God rather than IMITATE Him- which must be pre-empted by ostracizing the offending party.

**Christian Wiese (University of Erfurt)**

**Sanctity of Life in a Secular World: Theological Speculation and Ethical Reflection in Hans Jonas's Post-Holocaust Philosophy**

In his last lecture held in Italy in 1993, few days before his death, Hans Jonas, émigré-scholar at the New School for Social Research in New York, recalled that in the twentieth century a "hellish revelation" took place "in one of the heartlands of our lauded culture" – a revelation that more than anything before it "put into question man's title as the image of God." Jonas had risked the journey despite his advanced age because it brought him back to the place where, as a soldier, he had learned about the destruction of European Jewry. The importance Jonas gave to his last journey is symbolic of the fact



that up until the end of his life he was haunted by the Holocaust and recognized in it the fundamental ethical challenge to mobilize all the forces of moral education “against this hardly ever sleeping beast” of inhumanity. It seems characteristic for Jonas that in his lecture he emphasized the strong link he felt between the memory of the Nazi contempt for humanity with what he perceived as the current and future threat to life on earth by humanity’s technological hubris: the Holocaust, as the fundamental historical event of the past century, he suggested, was a first culmination of the same indifference to the value of life inherent in the destructive relationship of contemporary humankind to the menace of an irreversible destruction of natural life on earth.

The memory of the Holocaust and the awareness of the need to act responsibly toward the natural world were the two most important themes of Jonas’s biography and his post-Holocaust thinking in the USA, both inspiring his attempt to formulate an ethics whose leitmotifs are the dignity of life and man’s responsibility for its survival in the face of unprecedented moral challenges. Comparing Jonas with other German born scholars like Ernst Bloch or Gershom Scholem, the paper is devoted to analyzing the link between his personal theological speculation about a concept of God after Auschwitz, and his attempt to lay the philosophical foundations for an ethics of responsibility in the realm of ecology and bioethics.

**Yotam Hotam (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem/University of Haifa)  
Gnosis and Modernity: Post-1945 German-Jewish Intellectual Debate  
on Secularization, Religion, and "Overcoming" the Past**

The paper elaborates on the compound character of an intellectual discussion that raged between a group of German scholars of Jewish origins, in the 1950s and 1960s concerning the connection between modernity, secularization and theology. The main figures here are the philosophers Hans Blumenberg, Hans Jonas and Karl Löwith and the scholar of Jewish mysticism Gershom Scholem. Another member of that group is the political-Philosopher Eric Voegelin, who echoes a pact of the ‘others’ – Jews and Catholics – who reacted to German modernity, which was considered (within the German intellectual heritage) to be of Protestant origins. These scholars were intimately connected together through personal relations, intensive correspondence, and intellectual interest in the same large themes following their emigration to the United State and to Israel. Yet, they have not been studied historically together and their significance for the understanding of the modern German intellectual heritage, the unique role of German-Jewish thought within this heritage and the emigration of German Jewish thought was overlooked. The paper argues that Blumenberg, Jonas, Scholem and Voegelin were united in their shared wish to challenge rather than adopt the thesis put forward by Löwith in his book "Meaning and History" 1949, in which he defined Modernity as secularized Christian theology. More concretely, they all challenged Löwith’s thesis by returning surprisingly to late antiquity and reintroducing the obscure Gnostic theology. The paper shows that by connecting Gnosis and modernity, these scholars interwove the intellectual debates of the early twentieth century – central to which was the reference to

the relations between theology and modernity – into an acute post-1945 moral crisis. This led them to refer to Gnosis with the aim of forming an intellectual “tribunal” that questioned the mere legitimacy of modernity, following the catastrophic events of WWII and the Holocaust. Within this context, these intellectuals evoked Gnostic theology in order to make a case in favor of modernity (as in the diverse arguments of Blumenberg, Jonas and Scholem) or against it (as in Voegelin’s argument). Entailing these features, their intellectual debate provides an insight to the intellectual and ethical problem that troubled German and German-Jewish intellectuals 'after Germany', meaning after their emigration from Germany to the United States and Israel.

**Eliza Slavet (University of California, San Diego)**

### **Mired in Materiality: Psychoanalysis and Freud’s Racial Theory of Jewishness**

In his final book, *MOSES AND MONOTHEISM*, Freud proposed a theory of Jewishness—what it is, how it is transmitted, and how it continues to survive. Specifically, he argued that Jewishness is constituted by the inheritance of an archaic memory which one is inexorably compelled to transmit to future generations, whether consciously or unconsciously. While there are many aspects of Freud’s final book which are difficult to swallow, the inheritance of memory has been especially problematic not least because it sounds dangerously close to Jung’s “collective unconscious” and the concepts of “archaic memory” championed by racist ideologues. I argue that by insisting on the actuality of inherited memories, Freud simultaneously asserts the fixity of the past and an openness to the future, for the individual must interpret and re-animate this past to make it “active.” Thus, Freud’s insistence on the “racial” permanence of Jewishness allows for a malleability and openness to interpretation which exceeds racist typology. In this paper, I explore the parallels between Freud’s visions of the future of Jewishness and of Psychoanalysis. The extensive and anxious response to Freud’s insistence on the literal inheritance of memories of real events—by Jungians, Freudian psychoanalysts and scholars of Jewish studies-- can be understood along the lines of the Pauline critique of Judaic hermeneutics as mired in the materiality of text and flesh. I argue that the critique of Freudian psychoanalysis as “overly literal” can be illuminated by comparing it to the early Christian critique of Rabbinic Judaism, contrasting the universal spirituality of Christianity with the particular carnality of Judaism. Freud’s implicit acknowledgement that neither Judaism nor Psychoanalysis could ever be universally embraced ironically suggests that their particularity may be their most critical strength, distinguishing them both from their “opposites”— Judaism from Christianity, and psychoanalysis from Jungian psychotherapy. The interpretation of the individual’s “archaic” memories-- both individually experienced and inherited-- is not the end, but rather the beginning of the psychoanalytic exploration. So too, Freud suggests that the inheritance of Jewishness is not the end, but the beginning of understanding what it means to be Jewish.

**Sarah Hammerschlag (Williams College)**

### **"Nous sommes tous des Juifs allemands": Levinas and the Political**

## **Stakes of Identifying with the Jews**

In *The Imaginary Jew*, Alain Finkielkraut describes his reaction upon hearing the student protestors in May 1968 chant the slogan, "Nous Sommes tous des Juifs allemands." While grateful that the Jews had become an object of idealization, Finkielkraut felt violated by the ease with which the students had claimed the position of victim, a position to which he felt entitled as the child of Holocaust survivors. In reflecting self-critically upon his own reactions, Finkielkraut arrives in the book at the realization that he, like the students, had wrongly envisioned Judaism as an easily assumable identity, and had himself felt unjustly entitled to wear it as a badge of honor. In reformulating his understanding of the tradition, Finkielkraut calls on the thought of Emmanuel Levinas, and suggests that Levinas's philosophy provides a model for approaching Judaism as a tradition that would shatter the idolatry implied by both the students' and his own identification with the Jew. For Finkielkraut this realization calls for a deepened engagement with Judaism, with its history and traditions. In this paper, I contrast Finkielkraut's May '68 response to Maurice Blanchot's. Blanchot interpreted the moment when the students took up their slogan as one of great moral and political importance, a moment, he said of "messianic dimensions." Interestingly enough, it is his reading of Levinas that founds his interpretation. Blanchot emphasizes the resources in Levinas for conceptualizing "Being-Jewish" as a modality of subjectivity that could be universally applicable, without ever being assumable. For Blanchot, Levinas's thought leads to a questioning of the value of belonging of any sort, to nation, ethnicity, or religion. It is exactly the students' failed effort at identification with the Jews that makes their action powerful. This moment demonstrates for Blanchot the political exigency of deracination. In this paper, I trace out how two such different readings of May '68 could arise out of the depictions of Judaism in Levinas's philosophical and confessional essays. In the process I indicate more broadly how each of these responses calls on conflicting depictions in Levinas's writings of the relationship of Judaism to politics.

### ***Session Number: 9.4***

#### **Session      Gendered Readings in Women's Writing**

##### ***Session***

Upcoming

**Chair, Judith M. Lewin (Union College)**

**Helene Meyers (Southwestern University)**

##### ***Beyond the Diaspora/Homeland Divide: Rebecca Goldstein's Mazel***

A critical examination of diaspora as theoretical concept and historical experience necessitates an interrogation of the notion of homeland. At its simplest, "homeland" is originary territory from which diasporic "scatterings" commence. However, origins have become tricky theoretical business, and the contours of originary territory are defined not only by the drawing of geographic and political lines but also by investing in particular narratives. For U.S. Jewry in particular, the question of a Jewish homeland is vexed. Does "homeland" refer to Zion, a Biblical promise arguably actualized in the nation-

state of Israel? Or is the world of Eastern Europe, of Yiddishkeit, the Jewish homeland for U.S. Ashkenazi Jews? If so, then the Shoah shattered forever the hope of return. To what extent does the U.S. Jewish experience, especially given the current renaissance in both Jewish life and letters, challenge the traditional opposition between the lack associated with diasporic existence and the plenitude associated with the homeland? While Hillel Halkin and his ideological counterweights, Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin and George Steiner, suggest that the diaspora/Jewish homeland question is one of either/or, Philip Roth in *Operation Shylock* might be said to represent a "neither/nor" scenario. As an alternative to this theoretical/literary wasteland of opposition and negation, Rebecca Goldstein's *Mazel* (published in 1995 and winner of the National Jewish Book Award) productively shifts our attention from a singular, authentic Jewish homeland to the processes of Jewish home-making. Indeed, Goldstein represents the vitality of diasporic homes without idealizing them and without seeing them as antithetical to the Zionist project. Ultimately, I will argue here that Goldstein's emphasis on home-making not only prioritizes the feminist politics of home but also offers an alternative to theoretical and cultural narratives that can only imagine the relationship between diaspora and homeland as one of opposition and hierarchy.

**Aviva Taubenfeld (Purchase College, SUNY)**

**"To Be an American Woman at the Head of an American Home":  
Theodore Roosevelt, Elizabeth Stern, and Construction of Jewish  
American Womanhood in the Pages of the Ladies' Home Journal**

In October 1916, an anonymous article entitled "My Mother and I: The Story of How I Became an American Woman" appeared in the *Ladies' Home Journal*. As one of very few stories published in the popular magazine written from the perspective of an ethnic woman, this first-person narrative about the Americanization of an East European Jewish immigrant girl was noteworthy in itself. But even more remarkable was the laudatory preface by former President Theodore Roosevelt "most cordially commend[ing] this story." One year later, when Macmillan published an expanded book edition of the piece, naming E. G. Stern as its author and reprinting Roosevelt's introduction, the reviewer for the *Nation* posed the pressing question: "how does one get a 'pull' with Mr. Roosevelt?" How did this young, obscure writer get a former President to write the introduction to her work? This issue has remained unresolved, and in fact virtually unexplored, by either Stern or Roosevelt scholars. In answering this question, this paper sheds new light on the production, strategies, and meanings of Stern's work while simultaneously revealing the extensive mechanisms through which Roosevelt disseminated his gender and nationalist ideologies and put ethnic writing to political work. It further explores the ways in which Roosevelt's patronage and the medium of the *Ladies' Home Journal* impacted Stern's writing and led her to negotiate her place within the middle-class white American women's magazine only to first subtly and then explicitly to call the whole enterprise of bourgeois American home and gender construction into question.

**Justin Jaron Lewis (Queen's University)**

## **A Love Match in Leviticus**

Sylvia Townsend Warner's critically acclaimed 1966 short story, "A Love Match", depicts the sedate life of a brother and sister living in common-law marriage. Warner's characters, nominal Christians, must live with their own uncomfortable sense of being sinners. Indeed, brother-sister incest is Biblically condemned in Leviticus 18:9 and 20:17. Yet, the anomalous use of the word HESED in the latter verse has led several Jewish commentators to create scenarios with remarkable affinities with Warner's short story. While the likely meaning of HESED in this context is "disgrace", some interpreters suggest that it retains its usual sense of loyalty or kindness. These commentators, including Rashi, Judah the Pious, medieval Kabbalists, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century traditionalist thinkers, envision brother-sister marriages motivated by human kindness, permitted to the ancestors of the Jewish people by divine kindness, and reflecting love and kindness within the divine realm. This paper juxtaposes Leviticus 20:17, as read by these interpreters, with "A Love Match", to shed light on both through an intertextual reading. In contrast with stories of sibling incest from Amnon and Tamar to modern pornography, both the verse as interpreted in this tradition and Warner's short story lack overt eroticism or passion. Both envision an incestuous relationship arising from siblings' concern for one another. Both challenge readers' moral assumptions, and both imagine a world in which love could flourish without moral limitations, though acknowledging that we do not live in such a world now. Going further, scholarship on Warner's story sheds light on underlying dynamics in the commentaries. Critics have shown that Warner's story of incest is a "cross-writing" of her own experience as part of a long-term closeted lesbian couple, and have drawn attention to the way that the trauma of war frames and contextualizes "A Love Match". Applying these insights to interpretations of Leviticus, this paper will ask what is being "cross-written" by their imagining of brother-sister "HESED" and to what recurrent trauma of Jewish life they are responding. Conversely, reading "A Love Match" in the light of these interpretations of Leviticus reveals, in an apparently secular work of fiction, a guiding theological argument.

### ***Session Number: 9.5***

#### **Session Images of East European Jewry**

##### ***Session***

Images of East European Jewry The Doctoral Fellows at the Center for Jewish History from 2005-2006 will comprise the panel of this session. Each of these fellows will present fresh insights into images of East European Jewry in literature, photography, and historiography. Given that women remain an understudied group in East European Jewish Studies, it is appropriate that two of the papers will address this topic. In her paper, "Imagining the "Polish" Jewess: The Eastern-European Jewish Heroine in Bourgeois German-Jewish Literature," Sarah B. Felsen will examine the surprisingly progressive image of Polish Jewish women in German-Jewish fiction from the mid-nineteenth century, thereby re-examining German-Jewish perceptions of East European Jewish women. Elissa Bemporad, in her paper, "Redefining Gender on the

Jewish Street: The Evsekstii and the New Soviet Jewish Woman,” will offer a social history of the role of Jewish women in the 1920s in Minsk as “agents of the Revolution.” She also will discuss the conflicting image of the Soviet Jewish woman as both an agent of cultural revolution and counter-revolution in the Yiddish press from the time. Joshua Karlip, in his “Martyrology and Historiography in the Works of Elias Tcherikower,” will explore the nexus between martyrology and historiography in the formation of a secular Yiddishist, Diaspora nationalist Jewish identity in inter-war Eastern Europe. As tragedy engulfed East European Jewry during the First World War and the Russian Civil War, secularists such as Tcherikower turned to the documentation of pogroms as a means to forge a meta-historical connection to Jewish martyrdom throughout the ages. Maya Benton’s paper, “Constructing a Vanished World: Roman Vishniac’s Photographic Commission by the Joint Distribution Committee and its Effect on Jewish Collective Memory,” will reveal the fact that despite Vishniac’s claim of self-motivation, his photographs actually emerged as the product of a JDC commission to photograph the poorest and most pious East European Jews in order to raise philanthropic awareness. This paper also will illuminate how Vishniac’s mission has led to a romanticized, selective collective memory of East European Jewry.

**Chair, Marion Kaplan (New York University)**

**Sarah B. Felsen (University of California, Berkeley)**

**Imagining the "Polish" Jewess: The Eastern European Jewish Heroine in Bourgeois German-Jewish Literature**

Imagining the “Polish” Jewess: The Eastern-European Jewish Heroine in Bourgeois German-Jewish Literature Recent histories of bourgeois German-Jewish women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demonstrate how they maintained Jewish traditions at home, even as they and their families acculturated to German social values in the public sphere. Their level of acculturation was evident in their reading material: bourgeois German-Jewish women were avid readers of “lighter” genres including journals and novellas. But the vision of womanhood offered in Jewish popular fiction often took what one might at first assume to be a very unpopular form—that of the Eastern European Jewess. The same women who worked hard to distance themselves from stereotypically shabby Ostjuden were provided with a surprisingly progressive image of the “Polish” Jewish woman in print. In German ghetto stories from the 1840’s to 1870’s, the Eastern European Jewess is frequently portrayed as being in the vanguard of acculturation—with roles like interpreter of the non-Jewish world, re-interpreter of Jewish tradition, and even as apostate. These female characters live out fictional existences that must have been at once validating and dangerous to their audience. Given the enforced distance between the female German-Jewish audience and Ostjuden, it is interesting to consider what motivations writers had for such portrayals. Feeling contemporary cultural pressure to contribute narratives which portrayed the “East” as threatening German values (i.e. Fontane’s *Effi Briest*), while at the same time prone to ethnic solidarity with the Ostjuden who were increasingly part of their German-Jewish lives, these authors found an outlet

for their ambivalent cultural affinities in the “Polish” Jewess. Since she is exempt from religious study, the Jewess became acculturated; at the same time, her life in the ghetto forges a close relationship to Jewish traditional ways of life. This paper examines “Polish” Jewess figures against a backdrop that includes German and German-Jewish literary sources, arguing that, contrary to analyses of ghetto stories which conclude that they are either the product of Jewish nostalgia or expressions of German cultural supremacy, the German-Jewish portrayal of the “Polish” Jewess allowed authors to encourage German-Jewish solidarity with Ostjuden in a German environment increasingly sensitive to “threats from the East.”

**Elissa Bemporad (Stanford University)**

### **Redefining Gender on the Jewish Street: The Evsekstia and the New Soviet Jewish Woman**

Redefining Gender on the Jewish Street: The Evsekstia and the New Soviet Jewish Woman The ways in which Jewish women confronted the Soviet experiment remain largely unknown to historians of East European Jewry. This under-studied topic finds no reference in the collection of essays edited by Judith Baskin, *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, nor does it appear in the most recent volume of Polin, devoted to Jewish women in Eastern Europe. By focusing on the city of Minsk, this paper represents a first attempt to recreate the composite picture of Jewish women’s lives under the Soviets, from the early 1920s to the late 1930s. The first section of the paper examines the evolution of the role played by women qua members of the Jewish national minority group. The establishment of the Bolshevik regime changed the lives of Jewish women, allegedly liberating them from the perception of gender typical of the Jewish tradition. The archival data shows that Jewish women played an important role in implementing the Revolution: the Minsk Women’s section of the Communist Party acted almost as a Jewish institution, voicing specifically Jewish concerns throughout the 1920s. Considering women as “agents of Revolution,” this section will ask the following questions: How did Jewish women adapt to the new system and relate to the Party? What was the impact of the Revolution on their relationship to Judaism? Did the Revolution produce a new Soviet Jewish woman? The second section of the paper deals with the different ways in which Jewish political activists - both male and female evsekes - viewed the new Soviet Jewish woman. The images of women that emerge from the pages of the Soviet Yiddish press and literature are often conflicting. On the one hand, women are identified as a counterrevolutionary force, and are accused of corrupting their husbands and children by forcing them into accepting anti-Soviet Jewish rituals, such as circumcisions or religious weddings. On the other hand, they are depicted as the pioneers of the Cultural Revolution on the Jewish street. By studying Soviet Jewish women both as agents and “imagined subjects,” this paper incorporates them, for the first time, into the narrative of the East European Jewish past.

**Joshua M. Karlip (Baltimore Hebrew University)**

### **Martyrology and Historiography in the Works of Elias Tcherikower**

In the inter-war period, Elias Tcherikower both produced historiography in

Yiddish and served as the head of the historical section of YIVO. Despite his numerous scholarly achievements, Tcherikower became most famous for his historical documentation of the pogroms that devastated Ukrainian Jewry during the years of the Russian Civil War. Despite Tcherikower's importance as a pioneer of Yiddish-language historiography, no studies have analyzed the intriguing connection between his interest in martyrology and historiography. In this paper, I will trace this dual interest to the First World War, when, from the distance of New York, Tcherikower wrote popular articles that interpreted Jewish suffering in Eastern Europe as part of the larger meta-historical drama of Jewish martyrology. At the same time, Tcherikower called for the documentation of pogroms for the political purpose of building the case for Jewish national rights in Eastern Europe following the end of the war. In Kiev at the time of the Russian Civil War, Tcherikower reacted to the murderous pogroms that engulfed Ukrainian Jewry in 1919 by forming "the Editorial Board for Gathering and Researching Materials regarding the Pogroms in the Ukraine." In a matter of months, Tcherikower had assembled an impressive archive of documents, eyewitness accounts and photographs. At first, Tcherikower hoped to publish works about the pogroms in European languages, to inform the world of the atrocities. However, when the pogroms ended in 1920, this immediate political goal lost its relevancy. Instead, Tcherikower published studies in Yiddish aiming at internal Jewish commemoration rather than external documentation. By studying the nexus between martyrology and historiography in the works of Tcherikower, I hope to illuminate the role of collective memory and historical scholarship in the shaping of Yiddishist, Diaspora nationalist identity in Eastern Europe. I also will understand Tcherikower's work as an example of how martyrology came to predominate the quest for historical documentation of the East European Jewish experience, which began in the 1890s with Dubnow's call to collect historical artifacts and ended during the Holocaust with Emanuel Ringleblum's creation of the Oyneg Shabes archives.

**Maya Benton (Courtauld Institute of Art)**

### **Constructing a Vanished World: Roman Vishniac's Photographic Commission by the Joint Distribution Committee and Its Effect on Jewish Collective Memory**

Throughout his life, Roman Vishniac claimed that his iconic photographs of East European Jewish life, taken from 1935 to 1939, were the product of a 'self-imposed' assignment to 'preserve the faces' of Eastern Jewry. This paper presents evidence that Vishniac's photographs were, in fact, the product of a photographic assignment commissioned by the Berlin office of the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) for the purpose of raising awareness and funds to ease the plight of Eastern Jews. By examining the political motivations and intended audience that shaped Vishniac's visual record, this paper will challenge romanticized notions of a shared past and explore the ways in which his photographs have been used to mythologize the world of the East European Jew. Vishniac's images require singular attention, as they are the most widely recognized and reproduced photographic images of the 'vanished



world' of East European Jewry, and have seminally shaped contemporary Jewish perceptions of our own history. While Vishniac's photographs constitute an elegiac, final pictorial record of that world, most of his images have not been published, nor has significant research been conducted regarding his life and work. During his life (and to his death in 1990), Vishniac denied that the JDC was ever involved in his photographic project. Debunking Vishniac's own claims that his photographs were the product of 'self-motivated, strangely dedicated wanderings,' this paper demonstrates that Vishniac's images were made, on commission, to document the most destitute, observant and traditional Jews in order to raise funds, and were guided by earlier trends among assimilated Western Jews to distinguish themselves from Eastern Jews. Finally, this paper will address the ways in which Vishniac's photographs, intended to document the exigent plight of the interwar Ostjuden, pioneered a new type of representation. He successfully adapted the earlier artistic language of veneration, romanticization and longing for a more traditional, spiritual existence, to the format of commissioned social documentary photography. It will also explore how incursions of modernity enter the field of Vishniac's vision and how the selective portrayal and reading of these images as 'authentic' have shaped modern conceptions of shtetl life

**Session Number: 9.6**

**Session Cultural Studies Methodologies and Modern German Jewish History**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Paul Lerner (University of Southern California)**

**Leora Auslander (University of Chicago)**

**The Boundaries of Jewishness or When is a Cultural Practice Jewish?**

One of the fundamental challenges facing scholars in the field of Jewish Studies is determining when a cultural practice should be defined as Jewish. Are all activities engaged in by Jews, Jewish? Are there, therefore, Jewish modes of shopping, talking, working, writing, painting and raising children? How should we understand the disproportionate representation of Jews in certain domains—e.g. modernism or socialism—that appear to have nothing to do with Judaism? This definitional and analytic challenge is particularly acute when the Jews in question do not self-identify as Jews (or do so very faintly) or have experienced Judaism only as a source of persecution. I would like to suggest that approaching these questions with the tools of both Jewish Studies and other fields would both produce more powerful explanations and enrich all the disciplines concerned. This paper will demonstrate the productivity of this melding by a re-examination of the old problem of the relationship between German Jews and modernism in the interwar period. I will argue, building on the work of the philosopher Catherine Chaliel, that Jewish Berliners had a Jewish sensibility, that is a distinctive Jewish relation to the senses, that derived from Judaism as a religious practice. This sensibility produced a particular relation to time, to history, to the home, and to the material world.

This sensibility was acquired by some Jews in interwar Berlin directly through religious practice, the Jewish Renaissance of the 1920s, contact with the much larger Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, and Jewish education dispensed at school. It was indirectly acquired by those and by others through parents and grandparents who had themselves been raised within the tradition, and through continued patterns of sociability and networking among Jews. I will suggest that inhabiting this Jewish sensibility in the context of a minority, diasporic culture rendered certain forms of modernism particularly attractive. An adequate explanation of the relationship of Jews and modernism, therefore, requires both the kind of knowledge of Judaism acquired through Jewish Studies, and the kind of knowledge of aesthetics, of European history, and of identity formation acquired through work in other fields.

**Darcy Buerkle (Smith College)**

### **Affect in History: Weimar, Jews, and Spectatorship**

The role that trauma and, more generally, affective circumstance, has played in the reconstruction of the modern period by German historians is extremely limited. This is a particularly dramatic absence given what Paul Betts and Greg Eghigian in their survey of “postwar positions” regarding the “politics of memory” regard as a “highly emotional relationship to the past.” Public discourse from the post-war period on has engaged in a strong proliferation of affective rhetoric in relationship to German and particularly Holocaust history; Adorno’s *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and Mitscherlich’s charge of the German “inability to mourn” make this point rather poignantly. But German historians have not participated in the simultaneity between an Americanist and, to some extent French and British, post-war attention to emotion in history and the related emergence of trauma literature. Even though sociological interventions and studies in which pain and grief in history marked a distinctively German mode of inquiry, such a move was absent in German historical literature as a methodological problematic. A corrective to this missing link in German history is recent and is most pronounced in directions that elide the historical question of Jewish identity. In 2002, American medievalist Barbara Rosenwein revived historical interest in emotion when she proposed the fluidity of “emotional community” as an operative category for historians. In an effort to incite a conversation regarding German Jewish identity as itself a reconstructable affective community in Weimar Germany, I will explore the solicitation of what I will call an “anticipatory anxiety” in the spectator of two Weimar films—*Die Stadt ohne Juden* (1924) and *Das alte Gesetz* (1923). I will claim that the risk-taking behavior of the central Jewish characters provides the crucial pivot in each film. What was the status of the Weimar spectator’s affective circumstance and what was the role of anxiety in relationship to these films? What were its components and to what degree was it thematized in the reception of both films? Is it possible to theorize an emotional community that was specifically Jewish in relationship to these Weimar films that will more thoroughly enable historical methodologies relevant to affect?

**Lisa D. Silverman (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)**

### **Visual Culture and "Jewish" Portrait Photography in Berlin: Lotte**

The life and work of Lotte Jacobi (1896-1990), whose career as a popular portrait photographer spanned the period from Weimar Berlin to post-war America, reveal complex issues Jewish photographers faced both in front of and behind the camera. Regardless of their level of Jewish self-understanding, Jewish photographers in Germany stood outside the perceived dominant social class. As an acculturated Jewish woman, Jacobi's photographs thus not only provide a record of the world in which she lived, but also, regardless of subject matter, can be read as relevant expressions of the modern Jewish experience. Recent German Jewish history often discusses acculturated German-speaking Jews and their innovative cultural creativity but typically downplays Jewish participation in the visual arts. On the other hand, studies that do devote attention to visual culture tend to focus on religious Jewish book illustrations, synagogue architecture, or ceremonial objects. This rather narrow definition of Jewish visual culture thus precludes study of the cultural products such as photographs taken by Jews who may not have contributed to active, collective senses of Jewish self-understanding. Accessible to a wide public, portrait photographs were thought to reproduce nature and thus preserve a historical record. However, it is rather their subjective, ideological distortions that can help us better understand Jewish participation in the medium - and complicated and often contradictory nature of 'Jewish culture' in general. This presentation will examine how cultural studies methodologies can help us analyze the processes through which Jacobi, as an acculturated German Jewish woman, constantly redefined her position as part of - yet separate from - German society even as she photographed it. It will ask how photography both reflected and transformed Jewish self-understandings, as well as how cultural studies' particular focus on the processes of their construction can illuminate photography's relevance to German Jewish history. It will also discuss the extent to which more general cultural histories of photography by authors such as Laura Wexler, Susan Sontag, and Roland Barthes can provide helpful frameworks for the history of 'Jewish' photography.

### **Na'ama Rokem (Stanford University)**

#### **Heine's Monument and the Poetics of Space**

Heine's Monument and the Poetics of Space Heinrich Heine was intensely interested in history, and its presence in space. Hence, it is of particular interest to note that he was at the center of a series of discussions concerning the institutionalization of memory in public space. From Germany of the 1890s to Israel of the 1990s, the attempt to commemorate the poet by dedicating a place to his memory has furnished occasion for discussions, in which Heine's multiple identities and allegiances have been made to speak to contemporary debates. Time and again, Heine's "Denkmalwürdigkeit" is questioned, be it by German nationalists offended by his Jewish origins, or by Jewish nationalists offended by his conversion to Christianity. This paper deals with the resonance of these controversies in the reception of Heine's work. Writers as different as the Hebrew poet Haim Nahman Bialik and the Marxist critic Georg Lukacs position the unbuilt monument centrally in their commentary on Heine. In his seminal essay "The Hebrew Book" Bialik calls for

a translation of the German Jewish poet into Hebrew, but states that the poet's tombstone is destined to wander eternally, whereas Lukacs closes his essay on Heine with the suggestion that the Nazi disdain for the poet is "the most fitting monument possible, until such a time as the victorious German Revolution is able to express its gratitude to him in adequate fashion." I focus in particular on the Heine-monument debate in Vienna of the 1890s, which pitted liberal journalists against Antisemitic politicians, and fans of the empress Elizabeth against satirists such as Karl Kraus. One vocal participant in these debates was Theodor Herzl. Situating his forgotten feuilleton on the Heine monument in a rich web of intertextual dialogue with Heine's work from his early comedies to his Zionist novel *Altneuland*, I show that his engagement with Heine was a key element in the forging of his understanding of public space, the presence of history in space, and the engagement with space and history in literary texts.

***Session Number: 9.7***

***Session*      **Between Remembering and Rebuilding: Post-World War II Jewish Reconstruction in Europe****

***Session***

This panel examines the ways Jews reconstructed their lives and their past following the Holocaust. Through the analysis of previously unexamined archival material, memoirs, and interviews, the panelists explore the functioning of post-war Jewry and how its actions in this period set a precedent for future initiatives--both public and private. Indeed, although these papers cross geographical and methodological boundaries, they collectively assert that the post-war period should not simply be seen in the context of the aftermath of the Holocaust. Doron and Auerbach move beyond the popular focus on Jewish communal institutions, instead concentrating on the Jewish family. Doron demonstrates how Jewish health-care workers used orphanages established in France after the Holocaust as venues to debate how best to deal with the trauma suffered by Jewish victims without jeopardizing the future health of the community. Auerbach presents a case study of several Jewish families in Warsaw between 1950 and 1989 in order to assess the levels of assimilation, Polonization, and integration in a Communist country while evaluating the ruptures and continuities that existed between pre- and post-war Jewish life. Herman and Jockusch discuss lay and academic Jewish initiatives of documenting the past and of saving European Jewry's cultural heritage. Herman focuses on Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., an organization responsible for the collection and redistribution of heirless cultural property found in the American zone of Germany. Using 1947 as her starting point, Herman looks back to argue that the overlapping efforts of leading Jewish organizations (e.g., World Jewish Congress and the Hebrew University) adversely affected the rescue of cultural treasures. Jockusch evaluates the transitional nature of historical commissions within survivor communities in France, Poland, Germany, and Austria. She underscores how they used historical writing to document their past, and more importantly, to rebuild their lives and secure a Jewish future. To conclude, this panel asserts the

importance of post-war events for understanding 20th century Jewish history. These topics are not simply a revisiting of familiar themes. In fact, these issues have only received cursory treatment in past historical writings.

**Chair, Deborah Dash Moore (University of Michigan)**

**Dana M. Herman (McGill University)**

**Too Little, Too Late? The Emergence of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc., 1945-1947**

Until a Jewish trusteeship under the name of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. [JCR, Inc.] was formed in April 1947 and was formally recognized by the American government, there were competing Jewish and non-Jewish forces at work salvaging Jewish cultural property in Europe. Most discussions of the work of JCR, Inc., including Michael Kurtz's recently published book, *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband* (Cambridge, 2006), highlight JCR's predecessor, the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction headed by Professors Salo Baron and Jerome Michael, but do not detail the overlapping and often counter-productive efforts of various Jewish organizations in the immediate post-war period. It is this issue as well as the larger question of how this in-fighting adversely affected the rescue of Jewish cultural treasures which my paper will address. A brief account of the various war-time proposals made by scholars and lay leaders within the Jewish world for the salvaging of cultural property will be provided, with special emphasis on the work of Baron's Commission and the publication of its tentative lists in order properly to contextualize the conditions in Europe. Next, based on previously unexamined primary source material, the various independent actions taken by Jewish organizations including the World Jewish Congress, the Hebrew University, and of Baron's Commission between the crucial years of 1945 to 1947 will be outlined. The inability of these organizations to agree on who, in fact, represented world Jewry, where this Jewish cultural property should go, and, most importantly, the formulation of a unifying memorandum to the United States government, in the end, severely hampered Jewish efforts at rescuing more material. Although each organization realized the gravity of the situation and agreed that these cultural items needed to be saved—to the point that they even shared information-- they continued their work independently. It is my contention that it was, in the end, the rock-solid scholarly basis of Salo Baron and Jerome Michael's Commission that finally brought about the establishment of Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. and of a unified plan to salvage what was left of European Jewry's cultural heritage.

**Laura Jockusch (New York University)**

**History Writing as Reconstruction: Jewish Historical Commissions and the Beginnings of Holocaust Research in Europe, 1945-1950**

After the Liberation and in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Jews in fourteen European countries founded historical commissions, documentation centers, and documentation projects for the systematic documentation of the destruction of European Jews. These initiatives—predominantly the Jewish historical commissions—became a central element of the cultural lives of the survivors in the early postwar years:

These commissions compiled extensive collections of Nazi documents, survivor testimonies, Jewish folklore, photograph and film material among other. Their collections served as evidence in the principal war crime trials in the late 1940s and laid the basis for the major Holocaust archives, museums, and research institutions in Europe and Israel. They developed a methodology for studying the Holocaust from a Jewish perspective which proved groundbreaking for the field of Holocaust Studies. Despite their initial abundance, these commissions were a transitional phenomenon. By the early 1950s they had either disbanded and transferred their archives to Yad Vashem or had transformed themselves into permanent research institutions in Europe. The purpose of this lecture is to show that these commissions propagated historical writing on the recent past not merely as a necessary precondition for rebuilding Jewish life after the catastrophe, but rather as a vehicle for Jewish reconstruction in itself: Narrating the tragedy would enable the survivors to work through their traumatic experiences, commemorate the dead, and assure that the events were recorded for future generations, and furthermore, the accumulation of historical evidence would play a pivotal role in the prosecution of the perpetrators, claims of restitution, and the fight for Jewish rights in the present and the future. This lecture will take a comparative approach—discussing the commissions in France, Poland, Germany and Austria—and focus on three aspects of their work: Firstly, it will discuss the commissions' multifaceted objectives and motivations. Secondly, it will analyze the methodology they developed and examine the extent to which they recurred on prewar traditions of Jewish history writing as a response to catastrophe. Thirdly, it will assess their larger impact on the process of Jewish cultural reconstruction in the countries in question in the years 1945-1950.

**Daniella Doron (New York University)**

### **Les Maisons de l'Espoir: Visions of Childhood, Identity, and Hope among French Jews, 1944-1954**

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Jewish community established networks of homes throughout France intended for the many Jewish children orphaned by the Holocaust. Concerned about the impact of the Holocaust upon youth, French-Jewish educators and psychologists debated the best psychological therapy and social conditions under which to raise children scarred by genocide. Far from bowing to *laïque* (secular) notions of neutral public identity, French Jewish community leaders and social workers asserted the specific nature of Jewish suffering in wartime France through welfare institutions, psychological therapy, and pedagogical tools constructed with the goal of addressing the particular kinds of trauma suffered by Jewish victims. At risk in treating Jewish children lay not just the happiness of individuals and children, but the future of French Jewry. Utilizing Jewish pedagogical and psychological literature, social work archive and conference papers, and memoirs, this paper examines approaches towards childhood trauma within postwar French-Jewish orphanages. Postwar Jewish psychologists and social workers worried that the pragmatically necessary setting of a collective orphanage would be ill suited in nurturing a child's individualism, emotional

development and recovery from trauma. In experimenting and debating how best to structure an orphanage--- in particular, a familial versus a collective milieu---social workers, psychologists and pedagogues hoped to raise future psychologically stable adults who would likewise be committed Jewish communal members. By focusing on such psychological studies and social work debates, this paper examines how concerns regarding individual psychological stability became entwined with ideas about social and communal health. Thus an examination of the uses and purposes of collectivities within in "Jewish homes of hope," as Jewish orphanages were routinely called, reflects the means by which French Jews brigaded children into the effort to reconstruct and articulate a future identity and life for French Jewry.

**Karen Auerbach (Brandeis University)**

**A View from Ujazdowskie Avenue: Jewish Family Life and Social Networks among Residents of a Warsaw Apartment Bloc after the**

The reconstruction of Jewish life in Poland after the Second World War was shaped both by the shattering impact of the Holocaust, and by the influence of the Communist regime on postwar society. This paper analyzes Jewish family life and social networks in Poland after the Second World War through a case study of families of Jewish background living in the same apartment building in Warsaw between 1950 and 1989. The histories of these families reflect the process of integration and assimilation in post-Holocaust Poland. In particular, this study will analyze the intersecting social circles among Jewish families; generational differences in the Jewish identities of survivors and their children; and the impact of the postwar emigration waves from Poland. This study aims at understanding the ruptures as well as the continuities in Jewish integration into Polish society before and after the Second World War. On one hand, the paper will consider the impact of the Communist regime on the postwar integration process. The residents of this building were associated with the Communist Party publishing house, which owned the building. On the other hand, most of these families began to integrate into Polish society before the Second World War. Their postwar experiences were therefore in some aspects a continuation of their prewar histories. An essential area of analysis is the impact of specifically Jewish experiences of wartime survival despite the predominance of Polonized Jews among survivors remaining in Poland. This study is based on interviews with family members and their social circles; family papers; the publishing houses' archives; and other archival research. The extent to which Jewish families integrated into postwar Poland is essential for understanding the fate of survivors in the country. The social-history approach seeks to account for the fact that most Jews remaining in Poland did not take part in organized Jewish communal life. The family histories at the center of this study also underscore the accelerated nature of Polonization among Jews in interwar Poland, an understudied thread of Jewish history which is the background of these families' postwar li

**Session Number: 9.8**

**Session Israeli Literature: Palmahniks**

## **Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Todd S. Hasak-Lowy (University of Florida)**

**Nitsa Kann (Dickinson College)**

### **The Acrophile King: Yoram Kaniuk as the Other Palmahnik**

The anthem of the Palmach ends with the words: "We are we are the Palmach." The emphasis is on "we are," a collective identification of a group that exists in a particular condition. The notion of togetherness and mutual guaranty is the cornerstone of the Palmach. However, the PALMACH writers seem to maintain the "we" notion, and at the same time to rebel against it. They express the notion of togetherness but also question and criticize it. The most recurrent topic among the PALMACHNIKS is the individual identity with relation to the common Palmach identity. Yoram Kaniuk's writings express to an extreme the notion of "the other" within the collective. The native-born Israeli, SABRA, published his first novel, *The Acrophile* (1961), in English although it was originally written in Hebrew. The exceptional decision to publish the book in English relates to Kaniuk's sense of "otherness," and to the state of being torn from his roots. The novel describes the life in the Diaspora of New York City, using an experimental jazzy literary form. And yet, the repeating "Jazz" theme is the protagonist's experience as a PALMACHNIK, who, like the author, was injured during the War of Independence. The American experience is authentic, but at the same time it functions as a disguise for unsolvable issues. Kaniuk's second novel, *Himmo, King of Jerusalem* (1966), became one of the core novels of the Palmach literary generation. The physically and emotionally injured PALMACHNIK character reappears in the novel *The Queen and I* (2001). Apparently, the most penetrating criticism of the disputable characteristics of the Palmach is expressed in Kaniuk's last novel, *HA-NE'EDERET MI-NACHAL TZIN* (2005). Like the artist who is hidden within the collective, Kaniuk's characters are constantly concealed behind various masks. Unlike the PALMACHNIKS' code of behavior, they prefer to confide in strangers. If, to quote the queen: "Sometime I think that in trains and boats strangers are telling their fellow travelers things that they cannot tell their closest friends. Concealment is a rare closeness." Thus, the new "we" are the narrator and the readers that are united in a temporary togetherness.

**Stephen Katz (Indiana University)**

### **The Peripatetic Palmahnik: Yoram Kaniuk's American Fiction**

Proposal: *The Peripatetic Palmahnik: Yoram Kaniuk's American Fiction*  
What is Yoram Kaniuk's Palmahnik doing in New York? Throughout his long literary career, Kaniuk repeatedly returns to his Palmah-generation protagonist who wrestles with the haunting memories of past battles while leading a dubious existence in America. The recurring juxtaposition of his dual identity as Palmah veteran and as resident in America raises questions about the image of the protagonist and his future. These stories and novels are best understood when considering the protagonist's past as affecting his contemporary behavior. His journey away from Israel is metonymic of the inward journey that plays out against the backdrop of American landscape as



he dwells on prospects of return home, a set of alternatives the author weighs when considering his hero's present and future identity. My presentation probes the vicissitudes of the Israeli in the New World in stories that bear the hallmarks of the picaresque as they unravel the heroic image of the Palmahnic. Focused as he is on the image of the narrator as artist, Kaniuk unveils a protagonist whose escape from the threats of physical annihilation in Israel meets with threat to his artistic, spiritual and cultural existence in the U.S.A. The hero who exchanges the artist's paintbrush and palette for the pen seeks refuge in New York's community of Black artists, encountering a host of the avant-garde, name-dropping as a route to identify himself and lingering on the lives of the rich and famous as he is ceaselessly tossed from one failure to another in "making it" in America. Having produced the largest oeuvre of any Israeli about the American experience, Kaniuk is deserving of special attention as his representation of the Palmah-generation hero's experiences in the author's over four-decades of representing the U.S.A. in his fiction. The fact that he repeatedly represents his Israeli protagonist as a Palmahnic survivor of the 1948 war places him in company with those—among them Amichai, Shamir and Tammuz—who also depict a hero torn between past trauma and a mundane present.

**Philip A. Hollander (Tulane University)**

### **Maternity in the Middle: Rereading Shamir's *He Walked in the Fields***

Past criticism of Shamir's 1947 novel "He Walked in the Fields" concentrated on its protagonist Uri. Viewing him as "the prototype of the idealistic, self-sacrificing Sabra," critics have interpreted the novel as a vehicle for transmission of a new model of Jewish identity. In contradistinction to earlier critics, this paper will argue that the novel challenges the popular image of the Palestinian Jew as radically different from his/her Diaspora ancestors. In arguing this position, this paper will shift attention away from Uri and concentrate on the role played by Uri's girlfriend Mika. The novel's title draws on Alterman's poem "Haem hashlishit" and introduces the theme of maternity, central to a proper understanding of the novel. The second of three mothers to speak in the poem tells of sewing her son a shirt. Despite a bullet in his heart, indicative of his death, the mother imagines her son "walking in the fields" making his way back to her. Symptomatic of contemporary Alterman poems even death does not separate the living from their loved ones. Shamir's conversion of this line to the past tense hints at his belief in death's finality and the enduring price paid by family members, especially mothers, whose dedication to collective efforts frequently forces them to allow harm to come to loved ones. Mikah, unlike Uri, undergoes a process of maturation throughout the novel. By embracing her maternal role, despite the challenges and the potential pain involved, Mika, like Uri's mother Rutkeh, helps insure a Palestinian Jewish future. When she arrives in Palestine, refugee Mikah is distrustful of others and distant from Zionism. Nonetheless, after becoming pregnant by Uri, she begins identifying with the Kibbutz women who give of themselves for the creation of the state. This growing bond manifests itself when Mika, suffering from morning sickness, finds community with other

kibbutz women travelling to establish a new kibbutz. With her decision to keep her baby, even after Uri's death at novel's end, Mika fully embraces her femininity. Committing herself to life, not death, she represents a positive model drawing on the struggles of Diaspora Jewish women.

### **Session Number: 9.9**

#### **Session Medieval Texts and Contexts**

##### **Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Ephraim Kanarfogel (Yeshiva University)**

**Ilana Wartenberg (Tel-Aviv University, Université Paris 7)**

#### **The Epistle of the Number by Isaac ben Shlomo ben al-Ahdab (Sicily, Fourteenth century): A Hebrew Arithmetical Tract Containing Algebra**

In my talk I shall present my doctoral research on the mathematical treatise THE EPISTLE OF THE NUMBER (Iggeret ha-Mispar), which was composed in Syracuse, Sicily, by the Jewish scholar Isaac ben Salomon ben al-Ahdab, at the end of the 14th Century. THE EPISTLE OF THE NUMBER is the first known mathematical treatise to contain an extensive presentation of algebraic theories and procedures within the medieval Hebrew mathematical corpus. It also reveals numerous algebraic terms which are novel in the medieval Hebrew mathematical language. Hence, THE EPISTLE OF THE NUMBER provided the opportunity to trace the first significant algebraic imprints in Hebrew and study its mathematical, linguistic and historical aspects. Isaac ben Shlomo ben al-Ahdab left his homeland, Castile, possibly after the 1391 persecutions, and spent some time in a Muslim country, where he studied Ibn al-Bannā's book TALKH?S A'M?L AL-HIS?B (A Compendium of Arithmetical Operations) with other Arab scholars. When Isaac later arrived in Syracuse, the Jewish community there asked him to compose a book on the Science of the Number. To respond to their wish, Isaac decided to translate into Hebrew the mentioned TALKH?S A'M?L AL-HIS?B and add to it lengthy commentaries, problems of practical nature and numerical examples of various sources. His composition resulted in the manuscript of THE EPISTLE OF THE NUMBER. This tract contains two books. The first one includes the presentation of the place-value decimal system and the five basic arithmetic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, addition and extraction of the square root) applied on integers, fractions, rational and irrational numbers. The second book includes methods to "find the unknown from the given known" by the RULE OF THREE, the DOUBLE FALSE POSITION and algebra. THE EPISTLE OF THE NUMBER is a manifold testimony for the transmission of mathematical knowledge from the Arabic tradition into Jewish circles in Syracuse at the end of the 14th century and it mirrors the scientific activity of the Jews there, of which so little is known. My talk aims to expose an overview of the mathematical contents of the Epistle and in particular, discuss several passages in the book on algebra which evoked mathematical or lexicographic interest such as the particles of addition and subtraction and the "horse problems" (linear problems with several variables).

**David Horwitz (Yeshiva University)**

**Gersonides' Ethics: Surprising Features of an Idiosyncratic Medieval Biblical Commentary**

Gersonides' lists of ethical lessons derived from the biblical text are noteworthy for the scope of assertive activities included. His consistent praise of the trait of *haritzut*, the diligent zeal with which various biblical figures strive to achieve their ends, is particularly striking. One must understand this feature in light of the complete Gersonidean worldview. In a universe where astral influences determine most human behaviors and even God does not know particular contingents, the only way for man to escape an indifferent fate and achieve immortality, understood as eternity of the acquired intellect, is to strive *ba-haritzut* to create the conditions that can allow for intellectual attainments. Building upon a medieval philosophic view that sees pursuit of self-interest as an ethical category, Gersonidean exegesis often interprets actions taken by biblical figures ostensibly in disregard of or even at the expense of others as necessary preparations for the acquisition of *intelligibilia*. Strikingly, Gersonides' relentless advocacy of individual self-interest also expresses itself with respect to mundane matters such as preservation of possessions. Both the extent of such remarks and its opposition to those of other Jewish medieval exegetes point to the need for some further explanation of this exegetical feature. Lawrence Berman's suggestion connecting the recovery of the Aristotelian corpus and the "lay spirit" in medieval Latin society may be germane. Samuel ben Judah of Marseilles' Hebrew translation of Averroes' Middle Commentary upon Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, a book that Gersonides possessed, underscores an argument that sees the "lay spirit" as a factor in Gersonides' orientation as well. To the extent that the lay spirit entailed the desire to assert man's control over his activities, it could easily fit with a system of ethics and politics that was already predisposed to minimize considerations of divine intervention and to hand over to man the ability to act decisively upon rational assumptions. Consequently, although Gersonides advocates the philosophic notion that the *telos* of man's prosaic endeavors must be the acquisition of *intelligibilia*, his positive evaluation of such behavior may also reflect the culture that viewed such behavior positively *per se*.

***Session Number: 9.10***

**Session      Biblical Texts and Rituals in the Making**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Mark Leuchter (Hebrew College)**

**Zadokites, Deuteronomists, and the Exilic Debate over Scribal Authority**

The conditions of exile presented both the Zadokites and Deuteronomists with dramatic challenges to their respective politics and theologies, not the least of which was convincing their exilic audience that either agenda was still a viable vehicle for sustaining the national religion and communal identity. The present study will examine the manner of argumentation deployed by Zadokite and Deuteronomistic writers and redactors in a variety of texts that are best seen

as emerging during the exile, with special consideration given to the compositional subtleties that reveal a deeply hostile relationship that emerged between these two circles of thought. The polemical culture that obtained between the Zadokites and Deuteronomists is most strongly attested in the development of the major prophetic traditions during the exile associated with each group, namely, the book of Jeremiah and the book of Ezekiel, as the shapers of each traditions attempted to lay exclusive claim to scribal authority and compete for the attention of the same audience.

### **Tzemah Yoreh (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)**

#### **Elohim the God of Israel**

AJS Lecture proposal, Tzemah Yoreh Elohim the God of Israel In a 1911 criticism of Eerdman's commentary on Genesis, Holzinger points out that at first glance it strikes him as improbable that a source which prefers Yhwh as God's name (i.e. J) would be the originator of the highly anthropomorphic account of the struggle between Elohim and Jacob which resulted in Jacob's name changing to Isra-el (Gen 32:23ff) since the theophoric element of the name "el" (short for "Elohim" the exclusive god-name in this account) is clearly non - Yahwistic. Holzinger goes on to dismiss this line of thought yet his argument remains a strong point in favor of the assignment of this passage to E. Wellhausen, however, attributes this passage to J as do most scholars, and some of the only dissenting voices are Dillmann, and today H. C. Schmitt. Wellhausen's main argument in favour of attributing Gen.32:23-33 to J is the highly anthropomorphic nature of this revelation, which does not fit with Wellhausen's contention that E's god "Elohim" appears only in dreams, a higher and therefore later form of revelation. Unfortunately, as Dillman points out the evidence does not conform to the model. The anthropomorphic Mahanayim episode (Gen. 32:2-3) is widely attributed to E (as are other revelations in which the subject receiving the revelation is awake). In my opinion - following Dillman - the obvious evidence (Elohim as God's name) is to be accepted, and the passage should be attributed to E. If this is true, the widely held belief, that J uses "Israel" and E uses "Jacob" throughout the Joseph cycle seems untenable. In fact exactly the opposite should be true! A cursory review of ch. 37-50 shows that Israel is used together with Elohim throughout Gen. 48, Gen. 46: 1-5, and in other Elohistic verses, but never appears together with Yahwh. Moreover Wellhausen, Eissfeldt, and H. C. Schmitt have noted, that "Israel" as a group name appears only in E material. These instances alone negate J's exclusive use of Israel, and strongly suggest that a thorough re-examination of all the evidence is needed.

#### **Jason Kalman (HUC-JIR)**

#### **Return to Sender: The Influence of Rabbinic Epistolography on the Transmission of the Text of the Hebrew Bible**

This paper examines the implications of rabbinic letter writing for the scholarly understanding of the transmission of the text of the Hebrew Bible in the period from the second to the sixth century. The two Talmudim devote a significant amount of space to delineating the rules for the formal copying of Torah

scrolls and sacred documents including mezuzot and tefillin. These rules should have made possible an accurate transmission of the text of Scripture and, for the most part, they did. Yet, the rabbis themselves were aware of variants in their texts and the medievals were certainly aware of variations found in the biblical citations in the classical rabbinic catena. How, then, should these variants be explained? While Maori and others have noted that the rabbis may certainly have had biblical texts containing variants, this fact cannot explain all the variations found in rabbinic citations. This paper proposes an additional explanation. The Babylonian Talmud, Gittin 6b and the Palestinian Talmud, Megillah 3:2 contain discussions of the rules for writing letters when the authors include biblical citations. The presentations of these rules differ on how many words from Scripture constitute a citation. What is clear is that two or three words cited in sequence would require that the letter writer incise lines on parchment, as if preparing a mezuzah or Torah scroll, in order to compose the letter. This process would have made letter composition time consuming and expensive. I suggest that in order to circumvent the rules, the sages sometimes paraphrased, conflated verses, or rearranged words in citations. Talmudic material suggests that, in certain cases, rabbinic letters served as the basis for rulings preserved therein. Could these paraphrases and the like explain the variants in rabbinic texts? Likewise, might this circumvention of the rules explain why they were overturned by Rabbenu Tam in the early middle ages and why there is no evidence of adherence to them in extant responsa manuscripts? Alongside previous scholarly proposals that clearly explain why some rabbinic texts contain biblical citations that differ from the Masoretic tradition, it is necessary to consider the careless and perhaps deliberate miscitation of Scripture by the rabbis in their letters. This is a case where the rules may have done more damage to the text than if the sages had left the issue alone.

**Yitzhak Berger (Hunter College, CUNY)**

#### **Radak as Pentateuchal Commentator**

The vast majority of scholarship on Radak as biblical exegete focuses on his commentaries to the Prophets and Writings, the works for which he is known best and which comprise the greatest share of his output. One Master's Thesis, written a generation ago, evaluates Radak's commentary to Genesis, his only work on the Pentateuch; but more recent treatments consider this commentary only in the context of more general assessments of his exegetical program and methods. The relatively recent publication of Radak on Genesis in widely used Rabbinic Bibles has provided this classical work with the exposure that it deserves, and it is appropriate to revisit the question of the place of Radak in the history and development of Pentateuchal exegesis. Radak's application of his standard exegetical methods to the interpretation of the Pentateuch in and of itself yielded a product unlike those before it: a relatively comprehensive exposition of the text, in which he generally resists the type of midrashic explanations commonly found in Rashi, and—with his typical emphasis on matters such as characters' motives—transcends the philologically-oriented approach of Ibn Ezra. Careful analysis reveals that the

Genesis commentary also exhibits subtle differences from Radak's others: while scholars have argued recently that Radak's preferred interpretations occasionally display midrashic influence, persuasive examples of this (that are not limited to special categories such as halakhah) concentrate overwhelmingly in the Genesis commentary itself. This is an apparent result of two related considerations: Radak perceived the Pentateuchal text to be uniquely capable of producing less straightforward layers of meaning, and leaned in the direction of Pentateuchal "omnisignificance," if inconsistently.

**Annette Boeckler (College of Jewish Studies, Heidelberg)**

### **Miriam the Prophetess in the Passover Seder: A Liturgical Reflection of a New Custom**

The traditional Passover Haggadah doesn't mention the participation of women in the Exodus. Some Haggadot therefore added texts about them. It was the Reconstructionist Haggadah (The New American Haggadah, 1999, resp. A Night of Questions, 2000), that inserted also a Kos Miryam "Miriam's Cup", a custom which originated in Rosh Hodesh groups: A cup of spring water is placed prominently in the center of the table as the Seder begins. The water serves as a reminder of Miriam's well, which – according to the midrash – followed the Israelites through the desert. The US Reform Haggada, The Open Door (2002), let the Seder begin with Kos Miryam, even before reciting the order of the Seder. In modern Sedarim Miriam's cup is used before the first cup or when washing the hands for the first time or after the reciting of the ten plagues before Dayenu. Her cup of water can also be inserted after the second cup of wine. Songs about Miriam are sung after the completion of Hallel. Sometimes Miriam's cup is placed next to that of Elijah. Some Haggadot even use Miriam's cup at more than one point in the Seder. This creative development provokes liturgical considerations as Kos Miryam is more than just another additional text. It's a new element of the Seder. While Miriam's cup seems to be gaining more and more popularity, it doesn't seem to be clear where exactly Miriam's place in the Seder is. The Seder ("order"!) however is basically a specific fixed structure of 15 steps illustrating past, present and future. Where would the best place be to insert Kos Miryam and how could this be done? As Moses is not mentioned at all in the Haggadah, should Miryam be mentioned and why? My paper will offer some reflections about this recent innovation in Jewish liturgy in order to initiate a discussion about this popular new custom.

**Session Number: 9.11**

**Session Issues in Jewish Romance Languages**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Sarah Bunin Benor (HUC-JIR)**

**George Jochowitz (College of Staten Island)**

**The Absence of Northern Italian Features in the Judeo-Italian of Lombardy versus Their Presence in Piedmont**

The Italian component of Judeo-Italian, needless to say, is the largest

component of the language. Yet in any given location, the Judeo-Italian dialect seems to reflect the speech of some other part of Italy—a part that can never quite be located. In northern Italy, local dialects have the front rounded vowels Ü AND Ö, as well as a syntactic feature of pronominal iteration or subject clitics. Most northern Judeo-Italian dialects do not have either of these features. The dialects of Lombardy, according to Vittore Colorni, preserved archaic features: “[T]anto i due suoni lombardi quanto la detta perculiarità morfologica non esistessero e siano penetrati in epoca posteriore alla segregazione degli ebrei in un quartiere separato.” Thus, the Jews were able to preserve archaisms within the walls of the ghetto. Piedmont is quite different. The Judeo-Italian dialects there agree with the surrounding dialects, possessing both front rounded vowels and pronominal iteration. Front rounded vowels occur in words of both Hebrew and Italian derivation. Thus, the Judeo-Piedmontese analog of the Yiddish KHAZERAY is pronounced [hazirüd]. Piedmont was the destination of some of the Jews who were expelled from southern France. Although Provençal has front rounded vowels, it does not have pronominal iteration. Judeo-Piedmontese could not possibly have acquired this grammatical feature from Jews who fled there in 1501. However, since the refugees could speak neither Piedmontese, Judeo-Piedmontese, nor Italian, they were ready to learn the local form of speech. Their own Shuadit could not help them. A mixed population could easily lead to language shift based on the language of the surrounding communities. We must add, however, that the Judeo-Piedmontese dialects never quite corresponded to the dialect geography of Piedmontese. B. Terracini points out that Piedmontese unstressed E is realized as A in Judeo-Torinese and suggests that it reflects the dialect of the province of Emilia, but grants that other explanations, including a Judeo-Provençal substratum, are possible.

**Massimo Mandolini (Saddleback College)**

### **Under the Eyes of the Holy See: Struggle and Hope in Judeo-Roman Proverbs**

One of the most ancient Jewish settlements in the Diaspora, the Community of Rome lived in relative harmony with the local population for centuries. After the Protestant Reformation, things changed drastically, and the Jews of Rome became the prisoners of the Pope (Papa Re). The Ghetto culture that emerged thereafter is vividly recorded in the Judeo-Roman proverbs. Although the dialect is not spoken any longer, it still survives in the Sonnets of Crescenzo Del Monte (early XX century) and in two rare collections compiled by Rav Yehuda Nello Pavoncello z”l about twenty years ago. The present study focuses primarily on this latter document. A detailed linguistic analysis is set in the broader context of a semiotic evaluation of the proverbs as crystallized icons of the unique character of the Roman Jews. More specifically, their sincere religiosity was tempered by a keen (and caustic, at times) sense of humor: a faith and hope deeply rooted in a disenchanting view of reality. This ambivalence can be epitomized in the phrase “Lescion accodèsce” (the tongue of holiness), which referred to their own giudaico-romanesco speech, hardly a “holy” language. Pavoncello, Nello Mmodi dii direed espressioni

dialettali degli Ebrei di Roma I – II (Rome, 1986—88), Del Monte Crescenzo Nuovi sonetti giudaico-romaneschi. Con note esplicative ed alcune osservazioni preliminari sulle peculiarità e sulla presumibile derivazione del dialetto romano giudaico Roma, Paolo Cremonese Editore, 1933-XI. --- Sonetti giudaico-romaneschi. Con note esplicative e un discorso preliminare sul dialetto giudaico-romanesco e sulle sue origini Firenze, Casa Editrice "Israel", 1927-5687. --- Sonetti postumi giudaico-romaneschi e romaneschi. Con l'aggiunta di versioni nel dialetto giudaico-romanesco dalla commedia "Le stravaganze d'amore" di Cristoforo Castelletti e dei canti I e XXXIII dell'Inferno dantesco e con un glossario del dialetto giudaico-romanesco. In Appendice: Glossario dei vocaboli e delle espressioni di origine ebraica nel dialetto giudaico-romanesco di Attilio Milano. Prefazione di Benvenuto Terracini Roma, Casa Editrice "Israel", 1955-5716.

**Kirsten Fudeman (University of Pittsburgh)**

### **Spelling Conventions in Hebraico-French Texts: What are They, and Where Do They Come From?**

Scholars have described in detail the use of the Hebrew script for representing languages such as Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Spanish, and Yiddish. However, a systematic study of correspondences between phonemes and graphemes in Hebraico-French texts is still lacking, despite initial forays into the subject by Raphael Levy and Menahem Banitt. In this study I examine correspondences between phonemes and graphemes, which include Hebrew letters and diacritics, in twelve Hebraico-French texts dating from the mid-11th to the late-13th century. The texts in the sample vary in geographical provenance and represent several genres—religious and worldly poetry, scientific works, magical formulae, and biblical glosses. I argue first that widespread conventions regarding the set of Hebrew symbols used for writing Old French did exist. For example, the Hebrew script has two letters that could be used to represent /s/, shin and samekh, but authors of Hebraico-French texts consistently use only shin. Second, I show that many of the grapheme-phoneme correspondences characteristic of Hebraico-French texts exist for other Jewish written languages, as well. While some are due to a shared inheritance of Talmudic orthographical conventions, others are not, and instead indicate borrowing from one Jewish written language into another. Third, I provide supporting evidence for Banitt's claim that the orthography of Hebraico-French texts was influenced by Old French texts written in the Latin alphabet. Finally, I consider evidence that spelling conventions in Hebraico-French texts evolved over time and explore the possible reasons for this evolution.

**Session Number: 9.12**

**Session**        **"My Daughter, My Ducats":  
Rethinking/Reinterpreting/Reappropriating Shylock and  
His Daughter**

**Session**

The Merchant of Venice is a play that was first produced in a world that had



few if any Jews. whatever Shakespeare's intentions, the first audiences saw Shylock in the light cast by centuries of Christian antisemitism. Since the 19th century, following in the wake of Jewish "emancipation" in western Europe, productions have made the title character more sympathetic and have tried to expose the antisemitism that lurks with the Venetian Christian society that constitutes the world of the play. Last year at AJS, a panel on the play examined these tendencies by focusing on a number of important productions in Germany and Israel, as well as on a significant Yiddish adaptation performed in New York shortly after World War II. Discussion following the papers and respondents was vigorous, much of it focusing on the figures of Jessica, Shylock's daughter. The proposed panel for the next AJS would continue the discussion of the struggle to make the play more acceptable to modern audiences by focusing on Victorian burlesque versions, on more British recent productions and adaptations, such as Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant*, and on the exoticization of Jessica in the tradition of "La Belle Juive." [I will email Lisa to find out more precisely what she will do,]

**Chair, Edna Nahshon (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

**Michael Shapiro (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)**

### **Victorian Burlesques of *The Merchant of Venice***

During the 19th century, a series of great actors—Kean, Macready, Booth, and Irving, among others, transformed the role of Shylock in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. Starting around 1815, playgoers in the English-speaking world more often than not saw Shylocks who were less comic and less terrifying, more sympathetic and more dignified, a trend which coincided with the gradual "emancipation" of Jews in England. Outside of the legitimate stage, in say popular fiction and burlesque, new stereotyped images of Jews appeared, most notably the foreign-accented peddler of old clothes and his near relation, the receiver of stolen goods, of which the obvious example is Dickens's Fagin of *Oliver Twist*. The Shylock of the few extant Victorian burlesque versions of the play thus conforms to this new stereotype, a stereotype which refers to the growing number of poor Jewish immigrants coming to England from Central Europe. The Shylock of burlesque often peddles "ol' clo's," uses Faginesque speech mannerisms (e.g. "ma tear" for "my dear"), and conforms to the popular visual image of the Jewish street vendor who carries a sack, and wears a long black coat and a stack of three or four hats. As Victorian burlesques of Shakespeare parodied establishment Shakespeare, these "ol' clo's" Shylocks differed from the oriental patriarchs or dignified tragic victims of "legitimate" productions, but the anti-semitic tone is undercut by the presentation of the Venetian Christians as a raffish and unsavory crowd, equally distant from the romanticized heroes and heroines of conventional productions. The effect is to create a theatrical world not unlike that of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, where a farcically vicious underdog Jew is pitted against the hypocrisy and venality of those in power, but a world that is made rather jolly by ingenious and relentless punning, topical allusions, songs sung to familiar airs and arias, and patently absurd happy endings.

**Lisa R. Lampert (University of California, San Diego)**

**Daughter to His Blood: Jessica, Conversion, and the Myth of a Jewish**

This paper will focus on the figure of Jessica in Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice," using the play's anxiety about Jessica's conversion to highlight sixteenth-century English concerns about Jewish, Christian and English identities and the ways in which the figure of the Jewish woman seems to threaten social and religious order in the play. The paper will conclude with a discussion of the impact that the character of Jessica has had on the figure of the "schoene Juedin" or "belle juive" and the role of this feminine "type" in subsequent racialized and racist stereotypes of Jews.

**Maria Jones (University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom)**

**"He will haunt me, that man": Shylock's Last Act in Modern British Productions of The Merchant of Venice**

This paper explores issues of representation, identity and ethics raised by Shylock's absence from Act 5 in productions of The Merchant of Venice. Sociologists and anthropologists have studied the issue of disposal, which may mean how we dispose of waste and rubbish (anything unwanted), but also 'the ways in which people manage absence within social relations' (Hetherington 2004:157). Modern performances of The Merchant of Venice counter the spectre of anti-Semitism in the trial scene by augmenting Shylock's role beyond his exit from the play. Increasingly, his absent 'presence' has come to haunt comic resolution in Act 5. In British productions the 'coda' is noticeable in recent years, suggesting a difficulty with the play, perhaps some sort of post-Holocaust apology that now appears almost obligatory. James C. Bulman reminds us that Henry Irving restored Act 5 in the nineteenth century, a part of the play 'traditionally dropped by actor-managers intent on ending the play with Shylock's downfall' (Bulman 1991: 50). Modern productions that keep Act 5 may undercut romantic closure by emphasising Jessica's mixed feelings about her conversion. In an interview with Christopher McCullough, Antony Sher speculated on the anticipated release of Michael Radford's film of The Merchant of Venice (2004), and the cinematic potential for dealing with the 'problem' of the final act of the play: 'you could keep cutting back to Shylock perhaps, with this sentence that is looming over him. That would create an interesting silent commentary on the whole Belmont business of Act 5' (McCullough 2005: 53-54). In the event, Michael Radford inserts shots of a defeated Shylock (Al Pacino) for the closing minutes of his new film with a final cut to Jessica (Zuleikha Robinson). In the last act of Arnold Wesker's play, Shylock, Antonio comments on the 'old Jew who disturbed my dull complacency' and observes to Portia, "He will haunt me, that man", a prescient comment on the performance history of the play in contemporary cultural memory (Wesker 1990: 260). Bulman, James C. (1991) Shakespeare in Performance: The Merchant of Venice, Manchester: Manchester University. Hetherington, Kevin (2004) 'Secondhandedness: consumption, disposal and absent presence', Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 22: 157-173. McCullough, Christopher (2005) The Shakespeare Handbooks: The Merchant of Venice, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Wesker,

Arnold (1990) *The Journalists, The Wedding Feast, Shylock*, vol. 4, London:

**Respondent, Harley Erdman (University of Massachusetts-Amherst)**

## **Abstracts for Session 10**

**Tuesday, December, 19, 2006 10:45 AM-12:45 PM**

***Session Number: 10.1***

**Session        **The Impact of the Holocaust on American Life: Sponsored  
by the USC Casden Institute for the Study of the Jewish  
Role in American Life****

***Session***

“A Citadel Fitly Constructed: Philo-Semitism and the Making of an American Holocaust Conference” In the mid-1960’s, a number of Christian clergy, scholars and theologians were disturbed by the seeming inability of the Church to learn a basic lesson from the Shoah, namely, that no one should stand idly by—let alone, actively participate—while others are systematically degraded. The precipitating event for these Catholic and Protestant leaders was the Arab assault on the State of Israel on the eve of the 1967 Six-Day War. Two Protestant clergymen-professors, Franklin H. Littell and Hubert G. Locke, in particular, desired to address a basic Christian issue made particular prominent in a post-Holocaust world. They were convinced that many traditional American Christians, because they uncritically harbored teachings of alienation and hatred towards the Jews, needed to be inspired by the developments of the Vatican Council II and the movement toward inter-faith dialogue by member denominations of the World Council of Churches in order to address the collective failure of Christians to act in emulation of Christ during the Nazi murder of the Jews. They therefore convened a Scholars’ Conference (on the Holocaust and Church Struggle) in March, 1970 at Wayne State University in Detroit under the rubric, “What Can America Learn?” My presentation will assess the success (and flaws) of this first in America annual Holocaust conference (since 1970) in the context of ecumenical dialogue. The discussion will focus on denominational and interdisciplinary trends devoted to remembering, learning and teaching the lessons of the Shoah to the current generation in America. Also, I plan to consider what progress has been made in Jewish-Christian dialogue and what yet remains to be considered and to be done.

**Chair, Marc A. Krell (University of California, Riverside)**

**Zev Garber (Los Angeles Valley College)**

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Israel on the eve of the 1967 Six-Day War. Two Protestant clergymen-professors, Franklin H. Littell and Hubert G. Locke, in particular, desired to address a basic Christian issue made particular prominent in a post-Holocaust world. They were convinced that many traditional American Christians, because they uncritically harbored teachings of alienation and hatred towards the Jews, needed to be inspired by the developments of the Vatican Council II and the movement toward inter-faith dialogue by member denominations of the World Council of Churches in order to address the collective failure of Christians to act in emulation of Christ during the Nazi murder of the Jews. They therefore convened a Scholars' Conference (on the Holocaust and Church Struggle) in March, 1970 at Wayne State University in Detroit under the rubric, "What Can America Learn?" My presentation will assess the success (and flaws) of this first in America annual Holocaust conference (since 1970) in the context of ecumenical dialogue. The discussion will focus on denominational and interdisciplinary trends devoted to remembering, learning and teaching the lessons of the Shoah to the current generation in America. I also plan to consider what progress has been made in Jewish-Christian dialogue and what yet remains to be considered and to be done.

**Steven L. Jacobs (University of Alabama)**

#### **The Impact of the Holocaust on American Jewish-Christian Relations**

There is no question that the Holocaust/Shoah is a watershed event in Western Civilization. One special aspect of the American experience of the Holocaust has been the flowering of Jewish-Christian dialogical efforts, in both religious and academic contexts. Particularly pioneering has been the growing realization of the impact of the Holocaust/Shoah in and both Catholic and Protestant thought in America, especially in terms of bringing into American Christian thinking Jewish religious ideas that, before the Holocaust, were not usually part of the theological equation. My presentation will examine concretely how the Holocaust/Shoah has manifested itself specifically in these dialogical contexts. I will not only consider the works of American Christian thinkers, but will also include a series of interviews with working Christian clergy—from fundamentalist to moderate to liberal—as they relate their own work "in the trenches" to the realities of the Holocaust in a Post-Shoah world. The intent will be to address a basic issue in modern, religious America: How has Christian thought been altered by the impact of the Shoah?

**Marvin A. Sweeney (School of Theology at Claremont)**

#### **Post-Shoah Theology and Jewish Biblical Interpretation in America**

This paper will examine the impact that post-Shoah theology has had on Jewish biblical interpretation in America. It will begin with a brief survey of contemporary efforts to grapple with the problem of the Shoah in Jewish thought by figures such as Emil Fackenheim, Richard Rubenstein, and Eliezer Berkowitz. It will then turn to efforts by American Jewish scholars, such as Jon Levenson, Tamar Kamionkowski, and the author, to define issues and to apply the questions of post-Shoah theology to the interpretation of biblical literature.

The first two sections will provide the context for the third section. The third section will provide examples as to how the questions posed by post-Shoah

theology will influence the reading of selected biblical texts. Examples will include Moses' confrontation with G-d in the aftermath of the Golden Calf episode in the Torah (Exodus 32-34) and Ezekiel's depiction of the destruction of Jerusalem as an adaptation of the Yom Kippur scapegoat ritual (Ezekiel 8-11; cf. Leviticus 16). The examples will point specifically to the issue of divine culpability in evil as an aspect of discussion of the Shoah in American Jewish thought.

**Session Number: 10.2**

**Session        Napoleon, the Jews, and the Sanhedrin: Bicentennial Reflections**

**Session**

Napoleon, the Jews and the Sanhedrin: Bicentennial Reflections

Nearly two hundred years after his death, Napoleon's impact on Jewish history remains a subject of lively debate. One strain of scholarship considers him the world's first Zionist for reportedly seeking to restore Jews to the Holy Land in 1799 (even though many other scholars consider the evidence supporting this idea to be forged). Napoleon's image as a great friend of the Jews has been reinforced by the engravings he commissioned of himself as Moses bringing law and justice to the Jews, and by his recreation of the ancient Sanhedrin. Most recent studies, however, have emphasized the nefarious aspects of Napoleon's treatment of the Jews. His Infamous Decree put restrictions on Jewish emancipation; moreover, he often disparaged Jews, calling them "a vile people."

On the occasion of the Bicentennials of Napoleon's Assembly of Jewish Notables and Sanhedrin, the participants in this round table will revisit Napoleon's legacy, while posing questions about the Napoleonic era that transcend a "good for the Jews/bad for the Jews" dialectic. Coming from diverse theoretical frameworks and disciplines, we will offer new ways of thinking about Napoleon's actions and legacy, as well as the reactions to them by Jewish men and women of his time and of the next generation. Though the Sanhedrin members have often been accused of blind assimilationism for not contesting Napoleon's actions more vigorously, participants will speak of the agency of French Jews of the early nineteenth century, and their efforts to create a meaningful French Jewishness in the midst of multiple constraints.

We have selected a roundtable format because of our eagerness to open our discussion to the audience and to have a lively exchange among a broad range of AJS attendees. While the panelists are specialists in matters French, we anticipate that scholars of other European countries (especially Germany, Italy and the Netherlands) will be eager to assess the impact of the Napoleonic era in their regions.

Our common questions will include: How can we best understand Napoleon's

actions with regard to the Jews, and those of the members of the Sanhedrin? How did contemporary Jews perceive the changes of the Napoleonic era, and to what extent did this change over the course of the nineteenth century?

Individual perspectives:

FRANCES MALINO (Wellesley College), our chair, will make opening remarks drawing upon her scholarship on Sephardic Jewry in France, and relating to the insights she gained on the Napoleonic era through her work on Zalkind Hourwitz.

PAULA HYMAN (Yale University), the leading social historian of nineteenth-century Franco-Jewry, will focus on the eastern region of France, and on the long-term effect of Napoleon there [\*NOTE: description is an approximation and subject to change, as Prof. Hyman is currently out of the country].

ALYSSA SEPINWALL (Cal State Univ. – San Marcos), whose area of scholarship includes French political culture and colonial studies as well as Franco-Jewish history, will examine Napoleon's actions from multiple perspectives. Where many studies have treated his policy toward the Jews as a function of his personality, she will locate it amongst the discourses in France on Jews which had existed since the mid-18th Century. She will also contextualize Bonaparte's approach to the Jews by comparing it with his treatment of Catholics, Protestants, and slaves in the French colonies. Time permitting, she may discuss a woman she recently discovered who was the first Jew to respond to an 1806 anti-Jewish pamphlet.

MAURICE SAMUELS (Yale University\*), a specialist in French literature and a first-time participant in the AJS, will depart from the realm of politics to discuss the origins of Franco-Jewish fiction in the post-Napoleonic generation. He will focus on the case of Eugenie Foa (the daughter of Grand Sanhedrin member Isaac Rodrigues Henriques), who was likely the first Jew to write fiction in French. He will ask: How did narrative fiction provide a space for Jews to think through the effects of the Grand Sanhedrin's rulings? What kinds of identities were imagined for post-Napoleonic French Jews through the novel?

[\*PLEASE NOTE affiliation change since original panel submission; Prof. Samuels is leaving his position at the University of Pennsylvania and has been appointed Professor of French at Yale University]

JEFFREY HAUS (Kalamazoo College), a social and cultural historian of

**Chair, Frances Malino (Wellesley College)**

**Jeffrey Haus (Kalamazoo College)**

**Paula E. Hyman (Yale University)**

**Maurice Samuels (University of Pennsylvania)**

**Alyssa G. Sepinwall (California State University, San Marcos)**

**Session Number: 10.3**

**Session Judeo-Arabic Language, Literature, and Culture**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Zion Zohar (Florida International University)**

**Marc S. Bernstein (Michigan State University)**

**“Qissat Sayyidna Musa”: A Judeo-Arabic Folk Narrative**

The Story of Our Master Moses is a Judeo-Arabic folk narrative extant in many manuscript and printed versions (mostly from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) that draws heavily on the classical midrashic texts surrounding the biblical figure of Moses. The author of the present paper has just completed a study of the Joseph story in Jewish and Islamic tradition (Stories of Our Master Joseph: Narrative Migrations between Judaism and Islam, Wayne State University Press, 2006) based on a nineteenth-century Judeo-Arabic manuscript from Cairo. In that work I demonstrate the remarkable creative interplay between Jewish and Muslim (as well as Hellenistic and Persian) expansions of the core biblical and quranic texts evidenced in the folk narrative. At the same time I seek to focus attention on the ideological limits to such borrowing. In the case of The Story of Our Master Moses we have before us a similar example of folk religious literature; indeed, the actual manuscript version studied is conjoined with the Joseph tale within a single codex housed at the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, California. What is perhaps most striking in the case of this text, however, is the almost complete lack of influence of Muslim tradition, this despite the generic similarities with other such examples of Judeo-Arabic literature and despite the existence of a rich hagiographic tradition surrounding Moses in the Muslim “Stories of the Prophets” literature. In this paper I interrogate the reasons that may lie behind this seeming anomaly and explore the dynamics of such cross-cultural exchange, arguing that the two Judeo-Arabic traditions surrounding these two core protagonists define the two poles of a continuum of complex intertextual relationships.

**Merav Rosenfeld (Cambridge University)**

**From Sa'adya Gaon to Rabbi 'Ovadyah Yosef: One Thousand Years of the Paraliturgical Song of the Arab Jews**

Jews who lived in Arab lands had an ancient religious practice by which a Hebrew poem of religious content was adapted to the existing melody of an Arabic popular love song. Both the poem and the melody were steeped in Arabic-Islamic influence and together they created the paraliturgical song which was sung mainly during communal celebrations and private occasions of religious significance. After 1948, many of the Jews left the Arab lands and

emigrated to Israel or to other Western countries. Nevertheless, this genre continued to be written and practiced. New poems were written by the new generation of poets, who were born mainly in Israel. They keep the main characteristics of this genre which due to significant socio – cultural developments that took place in the mid 80's in Israel, became a symbol of the renewed identity of these people as Arab Jews. The entire history of the paraliturgical song is bounded by two important spiritual leaders. They both encouraged the creation and practice of the paraliturgical song and have made it what it is. Sa'adia Gaon, tenth century Baghdad, was the first important spiritual leader to allow Arabic-Islamic culture to enter the realm of Jewish thinking and writing. The latest, Rabbi 'Ovadyah Yosef, at present in Israel, follows in his footsteps and promotes the creation and practice of this genre. In this study I shall present the various ways in which the modern paraliturgical genre preserves the traditional characteristics of the ancient one. In this way I wish to highlight the fact that this ancient genre, steeped as it is in Arabic-Islamic influence, still retains this influence within its modern versions. This is so in spite of the fact that the Arab Jews no longer live in the territorial domain of Arabic culture. I shall also describe the religious support that this genre received through these two highest rabbinical authorities in their different times. The impact from these two aspects will together explain how this extraordinary genre which, in fact, tells the story of the Arabic-Islamic cultural influence on the Arab Jews for the last thousand years, continues to serve these people at present, fifty years after their departure from their former cultural environment, as a way of renewing and reviving their original identity as Arab Jews.

**Fred Astren (San Francisco State University)**

### **On the Misuse of Arabic Sources in Jewish Historiography of the Early Islamic Period**

Due to the thinness of historical sources for early Islam, scholars have used a small number of references in Muslim traditional and historical literature to construct narratives of Jewish history. For the seventh and eighth centuries, a broadly conceived and widely accepted narrative is based upon outdated interpretive models and has been mobilized to support contemporary romantic, ideological and political discourses. Jewish historiography of this period has yet to take into account current research in Islamic studies. As radically presented by Crone and Cook (HAGARISM), but subsequently methodologized more sophisticatedly by Robinson (EMPIRE AND ELITES AFTER THE MUSLIM CONQUEST) and others, a revised view of early Islamic historiography requires reading Arabic sources with a hermeneutic of great suspicion. The gap in time separating the dates of the earliest sources and their subject matter—one to two centuries—permitted content to be reshaped for later theological and political purposes. Accordingly, Arabic sources that mention Jews in connection with the Muslim conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries present literary and historiographical problems that disallow their value as authentic historical narratives. For example, in the accounts of the Tabuk campaign of the prophet Muhammad in northwestern Arabia in



630-31, several treaties were made with local communities that included Jews. These treaties feature regularized legal instrumentalities for defining the relationship between non-Muslims and Muslim authority. However, they are based upon principles which were only articulated centuries later as reflections of 'Abbasid-era administration and religio-legal thought. Another example is found in the conquest narratives of Caesarea and Córdoba, in which Jews play key roles, but which repeat a literary topos found in conquest narratives of many other cities, including Damascus, Alexandria, and Tustar. These stories reveal more about ninth and tenth-century Muslim legal concerns than seventh and eighth-century events. Significantly, the naïve reading of these sources has been used in support of such ideological projects as the twentieth-century search for a recoverable Jewish past, Zionism, Sephardic/Mizrahi identity, and orientalist/postcolonial challenges to Euro-centric history. Both historical methodology and current misuses of the past demand reconsideration of the history of the Jews of early Islam.

**Judith Romney Wegner (Brown University)**

### **"Walk before Me wholeheartedly!" Genesis 17:1 as a Likely Source of the Qur'anic Technical Term "Islam"**

Early Muslim exegetes and modern western scholars alike have expended time and energy in the attempt to track down the source of the qur'anic terms *aslama* and *Islam* within the Arabic lexicon. But their efforts were doomed to ultimate failure because both groups were operating with one hand tied behind their backs, due to doctrinal unwillingness or technical inability to consult (or failure to perceive the relevance of) the Hebrew biblical text and more particularly its standard Aramaic translation, the Targum Onqelos..

The Qur'an first introduces the noun *Islam* (sura 5:3), usually translated as "submission" or "surrender" [to God], in Sura 3:67 in the form of the verb *aslama* ("to submit oneself [to God]") This verb first appears in the qur'anic story of Abraham, whom the text explicitly identifies as the first Muslim. The connection with Abraham is crucial, as it affords a clue to the possible, even probable, source of Islam's new and technical use of the pre-existing Arabic root *s-l-m*. In Genesis 17:1, God enjoins Abraham to "Walk before Me and be *tamim* (= perfect, complete)" - which Targum Onqelos renders as "Walk before me and be *shelim* (= complete, perfect)." While some medieval Muslim scholars could undoubtedly read Hebrew, the Targum would probably have been even more accessible to those native to Iraq (formerly Babylonia). for whom Aramaic had been the mother tongue long before the Muslim conquest of Iraq in 637 CE and indeed would remain so for the next three or four centuries. This paper presents an outline of existing research on the problem, plus strong circumstantial evidence pointing to the biblical origins of the noun *Islam* and the verb *aslama* (to which the Qur'an assigns a new, technical meaning in Muslim theology). It is ironic that doctrinal considerations and/or unfamiliarity with Hebrew and Aramaic texts precluded Muslim exegetes and modern scholars alike from reaching a truly satisfactory solution when a study of Targum Onqelos could have provided the most plausible answer to the question. Please note that this paper may not strictly

belong to this division; we would like it to be in a session on Judaism and Islam with Frad Astren's paper, "On the Misuse of Arabic Sources in Jewish Historiography of the Early Islamic Period" (submitted to the Medieval and Early Modern division as an individual paper) and Aaron Tapper's paper, "From Gaza to the Golan: Religious Nonviolence and the Politics of Interpretation" (submitted to the Israel Studies division). Shari Lowin has agreed to be a respondent for this session.

**Session Number: 10.4**

**Session Studies in Hasidism and Kabbalistic Echoes in Modern Jewish Writing**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Matt Goldish (Ohio State University)**

**Aryeh J. Wineman (Independent Scholar)**

**Hasidic Re-wirings of Biblical Narrative in Ma'Or Va-Shemesh**

Hasidic Re-wirings of Biblical Narrative in MA'OR VA-SHEMESH MA'OR VA-SMEMESH, which includes the homilies of Kolonymus Kalman Epstein of Cracow (d. Breslau, 1842) on the Torah, is basically homiletical in character, but its structure is that of a commentary often following the entire sequence of a toraitic passage, lending itself to the master's retelling the narrative itself.

When this occurs, though the master preserves the narrative character of his toraitic source, his commentary often essentially rewires those same narratives. In some instances, even without altering the narrative details, it radically alters the motivations and intent involved in the episode, bypassing the understanding that is clearly stated or understood in the Torah itself and casting a completely different thematic character to the narrative. The key to such re-creation of toraitic narrative, one might suggest, is located in master's sense of relevance and irrelevance. Kolonymus Kalman Epstein's rewiring of toraitic narratives reveals to the reader what is significant to the master's mind and what, though found in the toraitic passage itself, does not warrant significance to his mind. The same is true of his interpretation of aggadic traditions which he sometimes included in his commentary. The preacher sometimes re-wired the toraitic narrative in a way to convey very different sensitivities from those found in the Torah-text itself. In his re-rewiring of the account of the triumph over the Egyptians at the YAM SUF, ("For the Seventh Day of PESAH") for example, the master might be viewed as reaching toward a different conception of the Divine and its workings, substituting the impact of Divine Presence for the power of Divine force and might. Locating an implicit connection between the master's retelling of the toraitic episode and his discourse on the narrative, the reader might define the real theme of his retelling of that episode as a maturation from an orientation of fear to one of love. The re-wiring of both such biblical narratives and rabbinic aggadic traditions should be viewed as a particular and unmistakable type, among other types, of the hasidic story.

**David Siff (Jewish Theological Seminary)**

## **Reading Rebbe Nahman: Likutey Moharan as Literature**

In the field of Jewish Mysticism, we study books. What does it mean to acknowledge this fact? I will argue for adopting a literary approach in the study of Jewish Mysticism. Although we often study kabbalistic works as ‘mysticism’, these books have hermeneutic and stylistic features which can be worthy of study on their own part. I suggest that we need to ask basic literary questions, including questions of genre and style, as well as how these features relate to the content. I will argue that in Likutey Moharan, Rebbe Nahman develops a genre of writing unique to the Torah of Atzilut, the highest spiritual teaching. Rebbe Nahman constructs webs of spiritually equivalent ‘behinot’, which form an intellectual language and are difficult to decode into a physical referent. This style of writing trains the reader to view the world in what could be called an ‘intellectual’ way. If the world is an embodiment and concealment of divine speech, then Likutey Moharan is a book which attempts to see beyond the physical guises of the world, and present this divine speech. Mysticism in Likutey Moharan is not limited to moments of unity or particular experiences, but is embodied by its overall kabbalistic hermeneutic. This mystical approach comes through not only in the content, but also in the style of the book. I will suggest that, given the variations and difficulties in the style of Kabbalistic books, we need to develop theories of reading particular works in concert with studying their content. These theories of reading need to be influenced by the content of the work as we understand it, but can revise our understanding of that content. We need to study not just the content of these works, but also their style and structure. We need to ask, in a fundamental way, how to read.

### **Jonathan Ivory (University of Wisconsin-Whitewater)**

#### **From Aleph to “A”: Kabbalistic Echoes in the Poetics of Louis Zukofsky**

With the 2006 Library of America publication of his Selected Poems, Louis Zukofsky (1904-1978) appears finally to be receiving the recognition he missed during his lifetime. A second-generation Modernist, Zukofsky took Ezra Pound’s collage-inspired compositional technique and adapted it to the concerns of a New York immigrant Jew. Like many of his generation, Zukofsky chose English over his native Yiddish as his language of composition, leaving behind his culture of origin to enter into the vexed mainstream (i.e. “goyish”) culture. As he wrote in “Poem Beginning ‘The’”: “Assimilation is not hard, / And once the faith’s askew / I might as well look Shagetz just as much as Jew.” There is heavy irony and self-mockery in these lines. But while readers debate the extent to which Zukofsky identified as Jewish, in this paper I want to explore a largely overlooked affiliation, namely, the echoes between Zukofsky’s poetics and Kabbalistic conceptions of language. The connection may at first appear unlikely. Zukofsky is decidedly rationalist, whose “Objectivist” poetics were inspired by the precision of calculus. He quotes regularly from Spinoza’s Ethics, not the Zohar. Yet at the core of Zukofsky’s poetics is a quasi-mystical conception of language. Words do not “translate” the objective world. Instead, like mathematics, language is one symbolic system in a world wholly constituted by signs. The poet’s task is to “see” the points at which these symbolic systems overlap. Moreover, rather than

viewing language instrumentally, Zukofsky's poems argue for a more fluid dynamic between the world of utterance and the world as utterance. For him, as for the Kabbalist, letters and words float off the page only to reappear, like literal puns, in the world itself. The poet, like the musician, exists through the medium that he speaks, articulating through language a continual creative presence, rather than an expressive or descriptive intent. Zukofsky names his epic poem "A," echoing the foundational Aleph in Kabbalah. Both Aleph and "A" serve as the letter through which the world itself is revealed, a mystical beginning that contains language, subjectivity, and being.

**David Alan Patterson (University of Memphis)**

**A Chasidic Anti-theodicy in the Time of the Shoah: Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira's "Esh Kodesh"**

This paper examines Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira's Esh Kodesh, a response to the catastrophe written from the depths of the Warsaw Ghetto (September 1939 – July 1942), with the aim of better understanding a religious Jewish response to the Nazi assault on the Jewish religion.. Of particular interest is Rabbi Shapira's reflection on the withdrawal of the divine in the contexts of an assault on the divine. Arguing that many post-Holocaust Jewish responses to the evil of the Shoah have been ill-defined, the paper will show how Rabbi Shapira opens up new possibilities for an understanding of radical evil. First the paper explains Chasidic views of evil as the formation of kelipot or "shells" that hide the divine spark within creation. It shows that these kelipot are predominantly characterized by the ego and ego-based thought, such as the ontological, totalizing thought that belongs the Nazi Weltanschauung. Next the paper explains Rabbi Shapira's account of evil in terms of Chasidic theology. Here Rabbi Shapira draws upon ancient sources to show that the radical evil of the Nazis lies in an attempt to destroy the God of Abraham—that is, the divine spark that constitutes the human image—by annihilating the Chosen of God. Drawing on talmudic and mystical teaching, the paper then shows that evil during and after the Holocaust lies in a retreat of the Divine in the face of (1) an assault upon His witnesses and (2) a post-Holocaust turning away from that assault on the part of many scholars, thinkers, intellectuals, and other leaders. Finally, the paper elaborates on how this Chasidic "theodicy" actually undermines theodicy by placing the power of evil in human hands, not in divine providence.

**Session Number: 10.5**

**Session       Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century American Judaism**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Gary P. Zola (HUC-JIR)**

**Sonja Mekel (University of Wisconsin-Madison)**

**"Racial Judaism is Our Misfortune!": The Question of Inter-marriage in a Nineteenth-Century American-Jewish Newspaper**

This paper proposes to discuss the debate on intermarriage as it unfolded on the pages of "Der Zeitgeist," a German-language Jewish newspaper that was

published in Milwaukee between 1880 and 1882. Appearing every fourteen days, the "Zeitgeist" counted among its contributors Reform luminaries like Kaufman Kohler and Bernhard Felsenthal, prominent scholars like Hermann Cohen and Heinrich Graetz, but also featured such curious figures as Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, who provided a number of stories. Though grappling with the various problems of American Jewry, the "Zeitgeist" was in many ways not fully at home in America; the great amount of space given to European and especially German events is only the most obvious sign of the publishers' cultural sensibilities. After giving an overview of the different arguments that were raised by opponents and proponents of mixed marriage to justify their views, my paper tries to clarify how personal and theological conflicts within the American Reform movement were brought to a boil by that sensitive issue, even though intermarriage was more than just a foil for rabbinical rivalries. Though the participants agreed that America was different from Europe, questions of the legitimacy and desirability of merging with Christian Americans remained to be solved. The Reform slogan of a "universal Jewish mission" clashed with notions of when and how this mission was to be achieved: while some regarded intermarriage as a necessary step, others saw the retention of Jewish "national" characteristics as a vital prerequisite. Perhaps most importantly, the conditions for and implications of intermarriage in the United States highlight the confusion about Jewish identity that beset educated German-American Jews at a crossroads of their history: at the same time that their self-perception as Germans was crumbling due to the wave of anti-Semitism in Germany and the increasing Americanization of immigrant and second-generation US-Jews, the onset of mass immigration from Eastern Europe confronted them with fellow Jews whom the "Zeitgeist" termed "semi-barbarians." Doubts about the reconcilability of cultural, ethnic and religious identity of Jews and gentiles alternated with, and often circumvented, the same doubts concerning intra-Jewish identification.

**Ester Reiter (York University)**

### **Yiddishkeit, Socialism, Internationalism, and Jewish Identity**

The internationalist ideology of the pro Bolshevik Jewish left in Canada led to significant interracial and interethnic positions and alliances, that were quite unusual for the time, the 1920s - 1950s. These were expressed in formal ways through the curriculum of the children's Yiddish shules, cultural activities, how holidays were celebrated, summer camp programs, and labour activism. On a personal level, Ukrainians, Finns and Jews played in each others mandolin orchestras, sang in each other's choirs. visited each other's summer camps, and sometimes intermarried. This part of the Jewish community was seriously weakened during the Cold War years. One of the significant events in its onset in Canada was the notorious Padlock Law in Quebec which declared that any house, or institution containing what the authorities considered "subversive material" could be padlocked without charges, evidence, or even a clear definition of what constitutes subversive material. The Ukrainian community centre and the Winchevsky Centre in Montreal were two of the targets in Quebec. This paper will explore the

nature of the cross race and interethnic alliances of the Canadian Jewish left, in the 1920s to 1950s. It will explore how people dealt with the tensions between their identity as Jews, and internationalist sympathies that resist privileging one group over others. It will look at how these internationalist concerns challenged the Canadian Government, and the Canadian Jewish Congress eventually leading to the expulsion of this community from the Canadian Jewish Congress during the cold war period. By looking at a community where ethnic, class, and political commitments interweave at an ideological and personal level, this paper will deepen our knowledge of a relatively unexplored part Canadian Jewish history, and raise questions about the complex nature of ethnic identity.

**Michal Galas (Jagiellonian University)**

**Reforming American Judaism: Marcus Jastrow - Isaac M. Wise**

Dr. Michal Galas Department of Jewish Studies Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland uwgalas@if.uj.edu.pl Reforming American Judaism: Marcus Jastrow Isaac M. Wise Controversy Rabbi Marcus Jastrow's (1829-1903) life and activities were connected with many aspects of Jewish life in Poland and the United States. His activities in Poland as a preacher of a progressive synagogue in Warsaw and his engagement in patriotic actions against Russian occupation are mentioned in many articles. But unfortunately we can observe that in the contemporary research on history of Jews and Judaism in the United States his name is almost absent, what can be explained by a lack of studies dedicated to him, his literary and scholarly output. Most of short studies dedicated to M. Jastrow were written and published during his life or just after his death, with the exception of Eric Friedland's study on Jastrow's prayer book. After coming to the U.S. in 1866 Rabbi Marcus Jastrow became a rabbi of Rodeph Shalom Congregation in Philadelphia. He also took part in almost all the most important discursions concerning the character and limits of American Judaism. Later he became one of the leading figures creating Reform as well as Conservative movements. In my paper I would like to concentrate on one of the most important and vivid Jastrow's discursion and controversy that was directed personally to Isaac M. Wise and took place in 1867. Two main problems will be discussed in the paper; one is a discussion over a question regarding a character and limits of reforms of Judaism which were presented by Jastrow and Wise; the second is a personal Jastrow - Wise controversy regarding a leadership in a progressive camp in America of that time. My paper will be based on three Jastrow's pamphlets published in German on this occasion in Philadelphia of 1867, as well as in articles published by Jastrow and Wise in Jewish American newspapers and journals: "Hebrew Leader", "Deborah", "Occident" and others.

**Ira Robinson (Concordia University)**

**The Correspondence of Cyrus Adler and Racie Friedenwald Adler: New Perspectives on the Development of American Jewry in the Twentieth Century**

Co-Author: Dr. Maxine Jacobson Cyrus Adler contributed to many areas of American Jewish life; he was a scholar, an administrator, and a leader in many

Jewish causes and institutions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was Assistant Secretary at the Smithsonian Institution, associate editor of the Jewish Encyclopedia, president of the Jewish Theological Society and Dropsie College, and a major leader in the American Jewish Committee, Jewish Publication Society, Jewish Welfare Board, and the Joint Distribution Committee. This presentation presents a new perspective on Cyrus Adler utilizing his correspondence with his wife, Racie Friedenwald Adler, which spanned a period of nearly fifty years. There were many long absences from his home due to his work and he considered the letters to Racie his “nightly chat”, and an avenue to vent his feelings. He rehashed the day’s events with Racie as his sounding board. He would write, “I must chat with you on paper.” Racie’s letters expose the dynamics of the couple, which further help us understand Cyrus Adler, and Racie Adler’s important role in his life. This personal correspondence has a character of its own. The accounts of Cyrus’ days were often detailed, and peppered with unguarded comments and personal opinions which were shared with Racie. As Adler noted, “although we may be talking to each other in between, the written word remains.” These letters expose the thoughts and personal side of this man, who had a first hand view of historic events as they unfolded, and the personal lives of key public personalities who played a role in shaping American Jewry and Judaism in the first half of the twentieth century. These letters shed light on many important concerns of American Jewry from 1900 to 1940, such as anti-Semitism in America and the world, Jewish education, and Zionism. Adler’s activities give us glimpses into the developing role of American Jewry on the national and world stage, the relationship of Conservative Judaism with Orthodox and Reform Judaism, and the friction between the German Jewish community and the Eastern European Jewish community in the United States.

***Session Number: 10.6***

**Session Cultural Clashes and Israeli Social Policy**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Avi Picard (University of Maryland)**

**The Imagined Metamorphosis of the North African Jew**

One of the goals of the Zionist movement in the fifties was to transform the commonly held image of the North African Jewish peddler into an image of a proud, independent, Israeli farmer. In classical Zionist thought, the Jew of the Diaspora suffered from negative stereotypes. One contributing factor was his way of earning his living. As a peddler, he resorted to the use of flattery and pleading. In addition, despite the special place given to the imaginary vision of the Orient, the Zionist had a different view of Oriental people as a part of Europe’s colonial heritage. In this context, the images of the North African peddler suffered from a double inferiority. They were Diaspora Jews (merchants, dependents, groveling) and they were Oriental Jews. During the fifties, when “Aliya” from North Africa was beginning, emissaries and

fundraisers saw in these Jews potential candidates for transformation. They would become farmers living on nationally-owned land and working as a part of a collective – the ultimate Zionist model. The emissaries describe the present situation of the North African peasant and add that they believe that those Jews can become modern Israeli agriculturists. This attitude was prevalent in many movies produced by the Jewish Agency in the fifties. (One of those movies will be screened during the lecture, if possible). Those movies were designed for raising money for the absorption of North African Jews into Israeli villages (Moshavim). They presented images that integrated the present with the future, reality with expectation, actual situation with desired outcome.

**Aviva Halamish (The Open University of Israel)**

### **Demography, Geography, and Catastrophe in Shaping Zionist Policy between the World Wars**

The basic claims of the paper are that the foremost goal of the Zionist policy between the world wars was to increase the Jewish population of Palestine in order to attain a Jewish majority, which was considered to be a prerequisite for establishing a Jewish state; and that until the end of the 1930s Zionist immigration policy was motivated more by Palestinian demographic considerations than by the plight of European Jews. The paper contends that for the sake of achieving a Jewish majority, the Zionist Organization sought any loophole that would offer an opportunity to bring as many Jews as possible into Palestine, and it proves that when it came to the categories not under its control - namely those of persons of independent means (Capitalists) and relatives (Dependents) - the ZO attempted to convince the government to ease the requirements, and consciously sought to bring to Palestine people who did not necessarily possess the means considered essential for successful absorption. With the German crisis of 1933 and the drastic increase of both immigrants and capital flow to Palestine the goal of attaining a Jewish majority seemed to be in reach. But the economic recession felt at the end of 1935 curtailed the immigration volume even before the outbreak of the Arab revolt. The paper argues that one of the reasons for accepting the idea (though not the specific plan) of partition raised by the Peel Commission was the desire to change the sequence of realizing the Zionist goal: instead of attaining a Jewish majority in order to achieve sovereignty over the entire Palestine, establishing a Jewish state over part of Palestine which would be able to conduct its own immigration policy. The paper will follow the increasing role of the need to give an answer to the plight of European Jewry in conducting Zionist policy in general and the Zionist immigration policy in particular until the outbreak of WWII, proposing that the conceptual change came at the end of the 1930s, pointing to Kristallnacht, coinciding with the abandonment of the partition plan by the British as the turning point.

**Avi Bareli (Ben-Gurion University of Jerusalem)**

### **Distributive Justice and an Upcoming Middle Class: Conflict between MAPAI and Academic Professionals prior to the 1955 General Elections in Israel**

Note: This proposal is based on a research that I conduct with my colleague,



Dr. Uri Cohen from Tel Aviv University, and I would like that his name will be mentioned in the conference's program. The issue we examine in this paper is the relative status of academicians in the Israeli job market of the 1950s and their developing conflict with the ruling social-democratic party MAPAI as a conflict within the absorbing group – academicians on the one side and the heads of MAPAI on the other. The academicians called for differential wages in the public sector; if their demands were met, the new immigrants would have found themselves in a highly stratified occupation market. Our aim in this paper is to focus on MAPAI's rule at a time when it was relatively vulnerable. This vulnerability was composed of upcoming elections, a double blow dealt to the party by the middle classes in the 1950 municipal elections and the 1951 general elections, and with public support for Prime Minister Sharett being less than that received by his predecessor in office, Ben-Gurion. It seems that even when it was politically vulnerable, MAPAI's rule blocked demands by academicians to differentiate themselves from other workers, thus restraining their growing tendency to create a class distinction between themselves and the others. This is evidence of commitment to a social-democratic policy of relative economic equality in the public sector, and of striving to avoid the development of an extremely stratified wage structure as would have resulted from the discrepancy in power between the forming middle class and the unskilled and uneducated workers, many of whom were Mizrahi immigrants. This paper addresses part of the absorbers, those of professional academic professions, who were an important factor in the forming middle classes during the first years of Israeli statehood. They set themselves on a collision course with the ruling MAPAI. In the mid 1950s, MAPAI and its control of government and Histadrut, at least in the realm of wages, was an obstacle on the middle class's road to acquire the dominant status they thought they deserved within Israeli society.

***Session Number: 10.7***

**Session        Varieties of Identity in Modern Jewish Literature**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Chair, Alisa Braun (University of California, Davis)**

**Dominic Williams (University of Leeds)**

**Squatting on the Margins: Jewishness and Modernism in John Rodker's *Memoirs of Other Fronts***

Studies of the antisemitism of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot have generally either ignored or cited in their defence their Jewish friends and acquaintances. Very few have given detailed consideration to how these friends understood their own Jewishness. This paper addresses the ways in which Jewish identity and the modernism intersect and clash in *MEMOIRS OF OTHER FRONTS* (1932), an anonymous, autobiographical novel by John Rodker, who had been a member of the Pound circle throughout the 1920s. I begin by considering the problems he had in publishing the book as an example of the dilemmas of modernist publication, but also as part of the difficulties Rodker had in

articulating any sense of identity, Jewish or otherwise. The difficulty is thematised in the novel itself, in which the protagonist's alienation is characterised as a vague sense of 'foreignness'. I examine how this theme of foreignness operates in his refusal to fight in the Great War, tracing the oblique references to a youth spent among Jewish socialist and anarchist groups in the East End as a motivating factor in his conscientious objection. I show how the language of the book is marked at significant points by a non-English syntax, which is associated with the idea of foreignness, and disrupts the conventional flow of narrative time. The novel therefore circles round Rodker's imprisonment as a conscientious objector and hunger strike, which Rodker characterises as a kind of 'squatting'. Squatting here is, I argue, a reference back to T. S. Eliot's poem 'Gerontion', and is therefore part of a reworking of modernist images of Jews into a universalised condition of alienation and resistance. Referring to the psychoanalytic context in which Rodker was beginning to operate, I also show that he was making use of concepts of the anal-sadistic stage and trauma both to describe the whole period, and to describe himself. The idea of trauma gave him certain indirect means to talk about his Jewishness, when social, cultural and psychological factors meant that he was otherwise unable to do so.

**Viktoria Mochalova ("Sefer," the Moscow Center for University Teaching of**

**Unrequited Love: A Polish Jewish Poet's Identity Problems**

The Polish poet of Jewish origin Julian Tuwim (1894–1953) was born into an assimilated family, and his attitude to Jewishness can be considered ambivalent. It underwent during his lifetime a considerable evolution. Though some of his early works were devoted to Jewish subjects and grievances he never allowed them to be republished, since he invented himself as a purely Polish poet. These less known texts, as well as his memoirs describing his childhood in a multicultural industrial city are extremely interesting in the context of a Diaspora poet self-identification. In the interwar period he was subjected to attacks from the Polish Nationalist right-wing circles. It didn't prevent him from writing "shmontses", a typically Jewish cabaret sketches. Leib Yaffe in the 1930-ies witnessed Tuwim's "pangs of alienation and assimilation, which failed". Under the influence of the Holocaust and the birth of the State of Israel, which became a radical turning point in Tuwim's self-identification process, he wrote the famous manifesto "We, Polish Jews". The Tuwim literary texts from different periods are used to analyze this process.

**Patricia Nuriel (Arizona State University)**

**Jewish Identity in the Latin American Novel: A Critical Approach to Moacyr Scliar's Narrative**

O ciclo das águas (Cycle of Water) is a novel first published in 1977 by the Jewish Brazilian writer Moacyr Scliar. The novel tells the story of Esther Markowitz, a Jewish Polish woman, who is forced into prostitution, in the 1920s, by the Zwi Migdal, a Jewish criminal society dedicated to white slave trade in Argentina and Brazil. Working as a prostitute in Porto Alegre, Brazil, Esther

becomes a single mother. She devotes herself to her son's future, providing him an education according to Jewish tradition, for which she develops her business skills by managing her own brothel. The business is Esther's bulwark: a closed space where the character finds protection from social marginalization and provides her with financial independence. The paper examines the character's struggle to rebuild her sense of self as a woman, Jew, immigrant, single mother and prostitute--in other words, the interstices between the character's present in Brazil and past in Poland, between her non-assimilation into Brazilian society and her rejection by the Jewish Brazilian community, between Jewish ethics and illegality, between the role of a Jewish mother and a prostitute. Next, the paper questions why the subject of Jewish identity in Brazil is considered through a borderline character who does not fit the Jewish stereotype, and a story that does not show a very positive facet of the Jewish experience. Finally, the paper investigates the definition of the Latin American Jewish novel, questioning its constitutive elements, and examining how Sciar's narrative helps configure this literary category.

**Emily L. Silverman (Graduate Theological Union)**

### **Crossing Over: The Queering of the Religious Identities of Two German Jewish Women, Edith Stein, a Jewish Nun, and Regina Jonas, a Rabbi during the Holocaust**

This paper examines how Regina Jonas as a woman Rabbi and Edith Stein a Jewish Nun cross over boundaries of gender and religion to express their religious identities, leadership and resistance during the Weimar and Nazi periods in Germany. I retrieve the voices of these women through their writings. Jonas wrote an ordination thesis in 1930 at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin. Her Halachic ordination thesis, titled "Why Women Can Be Rabbis," offered a vision of the modern rabbinate as well as the argument from gender. She received a private *smicha* in 1935. Stein was the first woman to receive a Ph.D. in philosophy (1917) in Germany, studying with Edmund Husserl. Unable to obtain a job in academia, Stein converted to Catholicism in 1922 and entered the Carmel at Cologne in 1933. While in the convent, she wrote an autobiographical book, *LIFE IN THE JEWISH FAMILY*. By using Jonas sermons given in Berlin and Theresienstadt and drawing from Stein's letters, autobiography, and philosophical and spiritual writings, I show how they resisted the Shoah. Both felt they were serving the Jewish community, Stein as a contemplative and Jonas as a rabbi. Both women died in Auschwitz. These women's spiritual pursuits lead them to cross over from one world into another world, but they refuse to make the rupture complete—a move that disrupts the normative cultural boundaries. In this way they create a new form of mixed identities and reveal a multiplicity of communities of belonging. I use the word "queering" as a verb meaning "crossing." I borrow the concept of crossing from queer theorist Elsbeth Probyn and Eve Sedgwick. I understand Stein and Jonas as crossing over a space of culturally constructed boundaries of religion and gender into another space, creating a new way of being in the world. They rupture the boundaries of a singular identity by demanding to be in both spaces.

simultaneously. Queering means “crossing over” The outcome of Stein and Jonas’ queering is hybridization: a whole new form of presenting oneself in the world that demonstrates one allegiance to multiple communities

**Session Number: 10.8**

**Session Buber in Conversation**

**Session**

This panel seeks to further current work on Martin Buber by placing him in conversation with political, philosophical, and religious thinkers and questions.

Panelists will address the various and unique aspects of Buber’s work on Israel, philosophical anthropology, Biblical hermeneutics, as well as the connections between his dialogical philosophy and his critique of religion. Though the papers identify similar trends and tendencies in Buber’s works, this panel will not offer up four renditions of the same. In other words, for example, Buber’s work on Zionism shares a great deal with his motivation and approach in philosophical anthropology, but the specifics are often glossed. This panel, then, seeks to work through the particulars of Buber’s various enterprises with an eye and ear toward the nuanced conversations in which he is engaged. Scholarship on Buber will be advanced by offering closer readings of his work, and placing it in the various contexts in and from which it emerges. In this manner, papers will explore Buber’s connections to Aristotle, Hegel, Rosenzweig, Heidegger, and Levinas, among others. Buber’s unique dialogical philosophy plays out in interesting ways when he applies it to questions in different disciplinary endeavors. Examining Buber’s work in this broad selection of papers will further the understanding of the many strands of his dialogical philosophy.

**Chair, Steven M. Glazer (George Washington University)**

**Randy L. Friedman (Binghamton University, SUNY)**

**Prophetic Faith and Philosophical Eschatology**

I suspect that the connection between the philosophies of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas are much ‘closer’ than Levinas, for his part, ever allowed. Schools of thought have now formed which defend one from the other, without emphasizing the proximity of their philosophies. I do not maintain that these two thinkers share a common approach or philosophical methodology. But it may be helpful to scholars of both to recast Buber and Levinas as thinkers with complimentary approaches to certain problems. This is nowhere more evident than in their respective phenomenologies and philosophies of religion. In this paper, I will compare what Levinas calls “philosophical eschatology” (in *Totality and Infinity*) with Buber’s presentation of “prophetic faith” in various texts and his subtle criticisms of religion in *I and Thou*. Both Buber and Levinas offer recastings of religious ideas in explicitly and deeply non-supernatural, philosophical language. Levinas and Buber attack Western philosophy and certain traditional categories (and practices) of religion in a strikingly similar manner -- for example, their shared concern with and for a sense of presence which does not reduce the ‘other’ to a mere experience or reflection of the subject works as a critique of the totalizing discourse of Western thought, and, in Buber, the emergence of a type of faith which

reduces the 'eternal you' to an object of adoration or assertion. By focusing on the possible interrelationships of their thought through a close reading of a selection of texts, I hope to illuminate Buber and Levinas unique philosophies of religion.

**Gilya Gerda Schmidt (University of Tennessee—Knoxville)**

### **The Concept of "Israel" in Martin Buber's Mind and Life**

In 1910 Martin Buber gave a speech concerning the land of Israel in which he acknowledged that "this particular land with its hills and valleys, with its lakes and rivers, with the salt deposits in its interior, with its dew and rain, with its flora and fauna, with the clouds and stars peculiar to this land," had created "the greatness of the Urzeit" and again had the capacity to rejuvenate the Jewish soul in the modern period. Martin Buber was seriously involved with the Zionist movement from 1898 on, yet he did not consider moving to Eretz Israel at that time, even though he strongly advocated others to do so. He only made aliyah in 1938 when friends encouraged him to do so. The dissonance between Buber's powerful and convincing words and the lack of follow through in his actions has perplexed and vexed students of his teaching and his life. A founding member of Brit Shalom in 1923, Buber lent his name and his moral support to those who were trying to find ways for Arabs and Jews to coexist. While these discussions were of a mostly theoretical nature, Buber was convinced that the land was central to a Jewish renaissance. He insisted at the same time, however, that there had to be a way for Arabs and Jews to coexist. Since this particular problem has not been solved to this day, we are still looking to Buber's writing for hints on how to succeed in this endeavor. Buber's achievements towards peaceful coexistence in the Middle East were primarily of a literary nature. His practical decisions regarding life in Israel were much less sound than his ideas. The late Edward Said was perhaps his most outspoken critic. This paper will explore Buber's position in some of the seminal texts on the issue of Israel such as "The Land of the Jews" (1910), the Brit Shalom charter of 1925, and the Yichud charter of 1942, of which he also was a founding member, and juxtapose these to his actions and some of the criticism thereof.

**William Plevan (Princeton University)**

### **Why Philosophical Anthropology?**

In 1938, Martin Buber delivered a series of lectures at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1938, published under the title "The Problem of Man," dedicated to the subject of philosophical anthropology. Having recently fled Nazi Germany and taken a chair in social philosophy at the Hebrew University, these inaugural lectures were his opportunity to introduce his distinct philosophical approach to the university. Buber's central claim in these lectures is that the basic reality of human existence is our reciprocal relations with other beings. The lectures consist of Buber's account of the failure in the Western philosophical tradition – from Aristotle, to Hegel, to Heidegger - to take seriously the concrete reality of human life and its reciprocal character. In his closing remarks to the lectures, Buber delineates an ontological category of human existence that he had introduced in I and Thou, what he

calls “the between”: “The fundamental fact of human existence is man with man. What is peculiarly characteristic of the human world is above all that something takes place between one being and another the like of which can be found nowhere in nature.” Any true encounter of a person with another person, whether in conversation, intimacy or contestation, inhabits a realm that is neither reducible to the sum of two individuals added together nor to some collective group identity to which both belong. Instead, a person and his other inhabit a distinct realm of existence that envelops them both and all the meaning that is entailed in the encounter. Aside from a helpful essay by Philip Wainwright from 1967 and Laurence Silberstein’s excellent book on Buber’s thought, which briefly discusses philosophical anthropology, little has been written on Buber’s philosophical anthropology in general. My dissertation is intended to address this gap by exploring Buber’s philosophical claims about human existence and explaining the significance of Buber’s philosophical anthropology for his writings on Judaism, Zionism and socialism. In this paper, I will explore Buber’s conception of philosophical anthropology as a mode of philosophical inquiry and consider why he chose to address this topic at the time he did. I will focus on how Buber contrasts philosophical anthropology as a way of understanding the human being with both the bio- psychological and socio-historical sciences which consider the human being as either a biological entity determined by natural conditions or as part of a social group determined by historical conditions. I will also consider his claim that a sense of alienation from the cosmos and society is necessary for a philosopher to properly address the anthropological question and how this claim might relate to Buber’s own personal sense of homelessness at the time of his inaugural lectures at the Hebrew University. Having just arrived in the land of Israel, Buber was given a chair outside the Jewish studies department and the philosophy department because neither saw him as an appropriate scholar for their field. I will argue that in defining the field of philosophical anthropology, Buber was both trying to define his own intellectual approach as well as promoting the value of a sense of homelessness for the intellectual life of the Jewish people even in their “homeland.”

**Claire Sufirin (Stanford University)**

### **Martin Buber’s Early Biblical Hermeneutics**

This paper addresses Martin Buber’s earliest biblical hermeneutics, focusing on his well-known essays from 1909-19, which are collected in the volume *Reden über das Judentum* and known in English as his *Early Addresses in Judaism*. Scholarly discussions of Buber’s approach to the Bible rarely begin in this period, nearly a full decade before he began the work of translating the Bible into German with his friend and colleague Franz Rosenzweig and nearly two decades before he wrote *Königtum Gottes*, his first book of biblical commentary. Scholars generally view this time as an incubatory period for his most famous work, *I and Thou*, and assume that Buber’s interest in the Bible began later. In contrast, I argue that Buber’s speeches and essays of the 1910’s are the site of his first significant engagement with biblical text, and where we must begin if we are to understand the development of his biblical

hermeneutics. Examining how he reads the Bible at this point in his career, I argue that he understands the Bible as both history and myth and views acts of biblical interpretation as acts of religiosity. I also discuss his claim that the biblical text can shape the lives of contemporary Jews. To underline the importance of looking at this early stage in Buber's hermeneutics, I conclude the talk by contrasting the loose method of citation that appears here and the careful method of reading he develops later in the context of his work as a translator and commentator.

**Session Number: 10.9**

**Session Art and Scholarship in the Renaissance and Early Modern Times**

**Session**

Upcoming

**Harris Lenowitz (University of Utah)**

**Two Manifestations of Hebrew Script in the Work of Urs Graf and Their Implications**

Two Manifestations of Hebrew Scripts in the Work of Urs Graf and Their Implications Harris Lenowitz, University of Utah Hebrew letters and words begin to appear in western (non-Jewish) art about the time of the Norman conquest (pace Sarfati). They stand in for Jews and Judaism, appearing in art in times and places where the latter are absent in life, and as such are to be associated for the most part with Christian Hebraism. This paper will begin with a quick survey of all such appearances in the work of one Swiss artist, Urs Graf (1485-before 1529), and will then focus on two works in detail, one in which the absence of Jews in the locale (Basel) is at the heart of things; and another, in which Christian Hebraism reveals a startling visage. The first is Graf's earliest rendition of the final scene of the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe; the second, a work showing Christ dispatching his disciples. A third woodcut and the Hebrew-inscribed writing-board in its center will serve as an entry into these; the woodcut is inset in the history of Eger on a page of S. Münster's *Cosmographia*. The Hebrew scribe cannot be identified though the message of the Hebrew word can. I will propose that the Hebrew scribes of the other two works can be identified: a matzeva-kratzer with the first and a converted Jew of Spanish descent with the second. The "message" that is conveyed by the Hebrew in the *Pyramus and Thisbe* I is unclear but may be an expression of Graf's sardonic wit. I will relate the gravestone on which the Hebrew appears to those of the Jewish cemetery of Basel. The message of the Hebrew in the *Dispatching* has to do with the much besought "Hebrew Gospel of Matthew." The words on the banderole wrapping the figure of the angel can be identified with both a certain Matthaëus Adrianus and the opening (and text) of the first edition of Münster's presentation of the Hebrew Matthew. I will be showing about a dozen images and can use an overhead projector.

**Chair, Alfred Bodenheimer (University of Basel, Switzerland)**

**Chair, Alfred Bodenheimer (University of Basel, Switzerland)**

**Arthur M. Lesley (Baltimore Hebrew University)**

**Inventing Hebrew Autobiography in Florence, 1491**

Between 1488 and 1491, in Florence, Yohanan Alemanno wrote a Hebrew autobiography, in addition to the extensive Hebrew biography of King Solomon that introduced his commentary on the Song of Songs. The two Hebrew lives exemplify a distinct Jewish paideia for the northern Italian, mainly Ashkenazi, elite of physicians and loan-bankers at the end of the fifteenth century. Both books are lives of writers, described as ascents through levels of existence, at which they attain the appropriate goods, virtues and degrees of knowledge, on the way to immortality. Both lives present man as a microcosm, without reducing individuality to the sum of natural and cosmic forces that operate on and through individuals. Just as the life of Solomon compares the events in first Kings with doctrines of the Song of Songs, Proverbs and Kohelet, Alemanno's life draws on medical literature, readings of a physiognomist and astrology, as well as the author's memories, to construct a contemporary ideal life.

**Deena Aranoff (Graduate Theological Union)**

**Elijah Levita: A Jewish Hebraist**

Elijah Levita (c.1469-1558) was one of the most authoritative Hebrew grammarians of the sixteenth century. Although Levita's study of Hebrew was part of the longtime Jewish preoccupation with the language of Scripture, much of his scholarship was at odds with prior Jewish notions of Biblical language and the transmission of the Biblical text. In his scholarship, Levita presents a highly critical approach to the historical development of Hebrew, Aramaic and the masoretic scribal traditions. This presentation will examine the relationship between Levita's critical approach to language and Biblical transmission and the philological studies of Christian scholars in his day. In particular, this presentation will argue that the historical peculiarity of Christian interest in Hebrew created an alternative context within which Levita could produce scholarship that challenged prior Jewish discourse on the subject of language. Like many Jewish scholars, Levita was immersed in the study of Hebrew. However, for the first time in Jewish history, a sophisticated and extensive discourse on the Hebrew language developed outside of Judaism. This Christian context was not incidental to Levita's scholarship, but had a great impact upon the development of his career. As a result of Christian interest in Hebrew, the viability of Levita's ideas, their publication and dissemination, no longer depended exclusively upon their reception among Jews. Levita was no longer bound to the norms of Jewish discourse on language or the Bible in order to survive as a scholar. Levita's Christian context therefore granted him a peculiar, almost anachronistic intellectual freedom. Although he wrote two centuries before the development of the modern "neutral society" that would allow Jewish thinkers to state ideas without having to reconcile them with Jewish communal sensibilities, Levita was able to issue highly critical ideas without engaging in the dialectic of inward acculturation that characterized much of Jewish thought before the modern period. In fact, as we shall see, in the last stages of his career, Levita was, for all intents and purposes, a



Hebraist.

**Dror Eydar (Bar-Ilan University)**

**the Story of R. Akiva and Rachel in Fourteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Manuscripts: An Artistry of a Jewish-Persian Story**

The story of R. Akiva and Rachel, daughter of ben Kalba Savua has ignited the imaginations many Jewish writers, since its publication in the first centuries CE to this very day. In the same era in which the two known versions from the Babylonian Talmud were composed, two other, lesser known versions were also published; these are included in the Israelite composition Avot deRabbi Natan, representing an almost totally different narrative. The significant dichotomy between the tale's two branches did not escape of the eyes of many authors since the 11th century. These authors attempted to combine the different versions of the tale into one super-version, as homogenous as possible, of the complete biography of R. Akiva. Although they offered some solutions to the narrative contradictions, these unified versions on the whole did not succeed in establishing a complete and coherent one. However one of the versions originating in the Middle Ages to interweave the two branches of the tale is MS Jerusalem 1970 80 (14th century). The remaining stories in this volume are identical in their content and their order to those of MS Manchester-Gaster 82. This latter served as the basis for the storybook *The Exempla of the Rabbis*, published by Moshe Gaster at the end of the 19th century. Both of these Jewish-Persian version present a narrative more cohesive in terms of its literariness and more complex compositionally, than its predecessors. This cohesion deals relatively successfully with a great amount of the difficulties inherent in reducing the disparate versions down to one, difficulties that other versions coming out of the Middle Ages and even later were not able to work out. This impressive achievement, never again duplicated down to modern times, reveals a complex literary composition, wrought by a hand of advanced editorial skills to rival even to modern tastes. The present paper will focus on investigating this version as well as a similar, though later, Persian-Jewish version, in light of their primary sources in the Talmud and the Midrash. The versions will also be compared to parallel manuscripts from the Middle Ages. To end off, the two similar manuscripts will be compared, and a fundamental difference between the two will be put forward of significant historical value.

***Session Number: 10.10***

**Session      Jewish Schools and Jewish Survival**

***Session***

Since the onset of modernity Jewish communal leaders have recognized the challenge of insuring Jewish continuity in the face of the challenges presented by the breakdown of the traditional kehillah. One of the greatest difficulties to arise was defining or re-defining Jewishness or Judaism in ways that would foster ongoing commitment to Jewish life (broadly defined) and enable Jewish survival. Not surprisingly, educational institutions and curricula have been viewed as key elements to overcoming these challenges. But differences in

historical context across time and space have resulted in unique problems faced and solutions devised with respect to this challenge. Furthermore these varied circumstances often shaped communal leaderships with specific goals regarding a vision of Jewish identity. These perspectives guided the creation of educational frameworks geared to promote specific patterns of Jewish life and Jewish consciousness deemed most appropriate for ensuring Jewish continuity. The different educational agendas of four distinct Jewish communities in the modern era are represented in this panel, giving a sample of the variegated approaches to Jewish schooling and indoctrinating visions of Jewish life as tools for Jewish survival. The infrequently told story of Italian Jewry's self-definition in the modern era can be viewed as the result of creating a specific Italian Jewish identity in response to that community's unique circumstances, particularly how the image of the Jew helped shape Italian-Jewish consciousness. The schools of Jewish Palestine also sought to define Jewishness for their community, often in direct response to missionary activity of church representatives in the land of Israel. In early 20th century New York, Jewish educators envisioned and created a Central Jewish Institute, as a model Talmud Torah, to resolve the dilemma of the modern Jew trying to survive in two civilizations. Finally educating the young Jews who survived the devastation of World War II and the Holocaust posed unique pedagogical challenges and Jewish schools were created in the DP camps to respond to their needs. In each of these cases specific curricula were devised for the Jewish children of modernity to foster a vision of Jewishness that would enable Jewish survival.

**Chair, Riv-Ellen Prell (University of Minnesota)**

**Arieh Bruce Saposnik (University of Florida)**

**Neither Swords nor Spears, but Schools and Hospitals: Zionist Education and Missionary Schools in Palestine before the First World**

In the final years of Ottoman rule in Palestine, Zionist educators and cultural activists began to take unprecedented note of the inroads that missionary schools had made among segments of the Jewish population in the country. The drive to eradicate missionary influence, which had been a motivating factor in the establishment of modern Jewish schools and hospitals decades earlier, was now adopted by Zionist educators and activists as part of an ongoing struggle for Hebrew education. The "war against the mission" as its proponents began calling it around 1910, involved, however, little confrontation with the missionary institutions themselves, which enjoyed the powerful backing of European consulates. It was instead an internal battle, whose champions advocated not only the fortification of Hebrew educational institutions, but such tactics as public naming of parents whose children were being sent to missionary schools, and attempts to organize communal boycotts against them. It was a struggle for Jewish Palestine's educational, material, and human resources, and ultimately for cultural hegemony in the Yishuv. Its battlefields were the substance and character of Palestine's Jewry, the image of the "new Jew", and the fluid boundaries between the religious and the national and between Jew and non-Jew. The rhetoric of the struggle, which

permeated Zionist activity and the Zionist press for at least three formative years, presented it as an eschatological battle for the soul of the nation, waged between a national education—cast, in its goal of creating new “Hebrews”, in the role of true prophecy—against the “avoda zara” of missionary schools. At its height, the campaign infused the Yishuv’s public space and national liturgy, becoming an integral part of the symbolism that animated its celebrations and emerging rituals. Although eventually overshadowed by the “language war” and by the world war that came on its heels, the “war against the mission” was, for a while in any case, a commanding focal point for Jewish Palestine’s cultural evolution. This paper seeks to examine its influence on the emerging national culture, and its seminal place in Zionist activity at the time, which has been almost entirely

**Jonathan Krasner (HUC-JIR)**

### **Jewish Peoplehood in the “Center”: The Central Jewish Institute and the Making of Interwar American Jewish Identity**

This paper will explore the efforts of the Central Jewish Institute (CJI) to shape the American Jewish identities of a generation of children and youth between 1916 and 1944. Conceptualized as an educational center targeting the entire family unit, CJI housed the premier modern Talmud Torah Center in interwar Manhattan and reached youth and adults through a variety of formal and informal educational programming, cultural activities and recreational facilities. Programmatically conceived and directed by Isaac Berkson and Albert Schoolman, two protégés of Bureau of Jewish Education director Samson Benderly, CJI became a laboratory for the Bureau’s progressive, Zionist approach to Jewish education. Taking a cue from the work of educational historian Larry Cuban, I will use a variety of surviving documentary sources including photographs, curricula, newspaper articles and board of trustees’ minutes to ascertain both the content and pedagogies employed in CJI’s Talmud Torah and extension education programs. While previous scholars have largely relied on the prescriptive vision of CJI presented in Berkson’s doctoral dissertation, “Theories of Americanization,” the sources suggest that a variety of telling modifications to the program were made in the early years of its implementation. From the outset, CJI was plagued with a number of problems that blunted its ability to realize its mission, some of which were endemic to Talmud Torahs during the interwar period, most notably shifting Jewish demographics away from first and second areas of settlement towards more suburban neighborhoods, both inside and outside of the city limits. CJI also struggled with a set of peculiar problems associated with its mission and program. Its director and trustees were repeatedly frustrated by communal resistance, emanating from both parents and the neighborhood’s Orthodox rabbis, to the school’s modern Hebraic curriculum. The school’s effort to distinguish itself as a communal institution, traditional in orientation yet heavily influenced by the ideas of Mordecai Kaplan also rankled Orthodox lay leaders, many of whom had helped to build the facility with an understanding that it would be associated with the Orthodox congregation next door to CJI, Kehillath Jeshurun.

**Brian D. Amkraut (Siegal College of Judaic Studies)**

**Indoctrinating Survivor Youth: Curricula of Jewish Schools in DP Camps**

In the aftermath of World War II, among the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees found in Europe were tens of thousands of children. Though often surviving indescribable difficulties and horrors, these youngsters, were generally unprepared to face the post-war reality. Their schools had been the ghetto, the forest, and the concentration camp. Jewish organizations in Europe, the United States, and Palestine, accepting the mantle of guardianship, sought to provide education and training for the children to live “normal” lives. This paper examines and compares the specific Judaic component of the curricula used to educate these young refugees in the various Displaced Person’s camps of Europe. It asks to what extent Judaism and Jewish education were utilized to indoctrinate these young Jews with a particular world view. Zionist leaders in Palestine viewed this pedagogical opportunity as a means of introducing these young survivors to Jewish nationalist aspirations. But was there unanimity within the Zionist establishment and among those dispatched to carry out this task? Did this approach come into conflict with institutions or organizations presenting specific religious perspectives on Jewishness? This paper also addresses the specific pedagogical approaches applied to these young Jews given the unique circumstances of both their recent experiences during the Holocaust and the post-war environment. Were the educational goals as determined by the concerned groups and individuals shaped at all by the plight of these refugees? And what approaches seemed to have been most successful in trying to put these orphaned children on the path to normalcy? This investigation helps shed light on some larger sociological and anthropological issues with respect to contemporary Judaism, specifically whether Jewish identity and culture has evolved in response to the challenges of recent events, or whether those changes are shaped by particular forces. In the context of this paper the question is whether Judaism, traditionally a religious identification, was utilized to indoctrinate individuals towards specific political and ideological agendas. If this is true, what groups or individuals took an active role through contributing funds or personnel, and to what extent were

***Session Number: 10.11***

***Session***        **Culture and Identity in Latin American Jewish  
Communities: Anthropological Perspectives**

***Session***

Is there such an entity as Latin American Jewry? The research conducted since Elkin posed that question a quarter of a century ago has found common themes as well as national and regional distinctions. Latin American Jewry is characterized by a mosaic of experiences, and the papers in this session explore issues of Jewish identity in four differing cultural contexts: Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia, the three largest and one of the smaller Jewish communities in Latin America. Each of the papers focuses on research conducted in the urban centers where Jews concentrate in these cultural milieus. While setting their specific questions within larger cultural contexts,

these papers address identities through examining the specific symbolic and behavioral markers through which they are expressed, ranging from keeping kosher and affiliation with Jewish institutions to Holocaust remembrances and support of Israel. Shari Jacobson and Misha Klein explore issues of kashrut and Jewish identity. In Jacobson's paper she explores gender differences in maintaining the laws of kashrut as an identity marker for the haredim community in Buenos Aires. While maintaining kosher for men means providing a spiritual basis for learning, for women it is a matter of discipline and abiding the law. Misha Klein points out that in Brazil keeping kosher and engaging in other obligations within the community are not economically feasible for poorer Jews, leading to their marginalization and in some cases complete alienation from the community. Ron Duncan-Hart and Deby Roitman explore social and cultural markers within the community that shape identity. Duncan-Hart compares the importance of social identifiers (synagogue attendance, Jewish club membership, etc) according to the size of the Jewish community in Colombia and concludes that the smaller the community, the greater the involvement in Jewish social events and institutions, especially the synagogue. Deby Roitman identifies five cultural domains: religion, tradition, peoplehood, Israel and the Holocaust that serve as primary identifiers for Jewish people in Mexico. She explores how each of these cultural domains is manifest by the people in their collective identity, as well as the acts and processes of affiliation to the Jewish community.

**Chair, Nora Strejilevich (San Diego State University)**

**Shari Jacobson (Susquehanna University)**

**The Question of Identity and the Identity in Question: Reflections on Kosher Dietary Observance in Buenos Aires**

Adherence to the laws of kashrut has frequently been theorized as a way for Jews to maintain a distinct Jewish identity vis-à-vis a non-Jewish majority. This paper calls into question two key premises on which such analyses rest: First, that compliance with the kosher dietary laws arises from a subjective desire to "have" an "identity," and second, that among the kinds of identities one can have, there is an autochthonic Jewish one—distinct and distinguishable from the context in which it operates—that the laws of kashrut bulwark. I base my critique on an analysis of kosher dietary practices among haredim in Buenos Aires. Within this community, compliance with the kosher dietary laws is explicitly represented as a means to develop a pious, knowing, and adept self. However, this does not apply in uniform ways to men and women. For men, consuming kosher food is understood to develop in them particular capacities for religious self-development. In contrast, because women are not expected to devote themselves to the study of holy texts, the importance of their capacity to "learn" is an open question, and much emphasis is placed instead on how preparing kosher food trains them to be disciplined and law-abiding. Significantly, to the middle-classes of Argentina's port capital, practices recognized as disciplined and law-abiding are not coded as Jewish but rather as modern and European/North American. In short, Argentine haredim do not understand kosher compliance as a means to establish or maintain "identity,"

and Argentines in general do not read the essential issue of complying with a corpus of laws as Jewish.

**Ron Duncan-Hart (Institute for Tolerance Studies)**

### **Rituals of Identity in Colombian Jewish Communities: A Comparison of Community Size and Social Cohesion**

In Colombia, the importance of rituals of identity and social cohesion in Jewish communities is related to the size of the community. The rituals of identity, which are the markers of social cohesion in the community, include membership in the Jewish institutions, especially the synagogue, Jewish social clubs and schools, and participation in Jewish social events. This paper will compare the impact of community size on the acting out of these social rituals between Bogotá, where most Colombia Jews live, and the smaller, but historically important Jewish community in Barranquilla. In Colombia, Jews have a high profile, public identity as commercial leaders, but the internal social and cultural organization of the Jewish communities is largely private, maintained by these rituals of identity. By Latin American standards the Colombian Jewish community is small with only four thousand people in the entire country, and the centripetal forces to maintain social cohesion are important, becoming even more so as the community becomes smaller. As the national capital and financial center of the country, Bogotá is the largest city in Colombia (seven million people) with a Jewish population of approximately 2,500 people, which is diverse and largely secular. Social cohesion in Bogotá is based less on religious identity, and there are small regular attendance rates in synagogue. Social markers of Jewish identity are more important, such as membership in the Club Carmel (depending on economic status), going to school at the Colegio Hebraico, and participation in social activities, which range from the country-wide Maccabean Games to weekly family gatherings. In contrast, Barranquilla, a port city (one million people) on the Caribbean, has been historically been the conduit for Jewish immigration into the country. The Jewish community in Barranquilla numbers approximately five hundred, and is somewhat more homogeneous with a clearly visible Sephardic influence. In this smaller city, there is greater social pressure to participate in the synagogue and in community-wide social events, suggesting more social control to maintain the community.