

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Taube Center for Jewish Studies

במדבר. וְתָן וְתֵינן אֲבֵעָה צְרִיכִין לַהֲדוּת,
מְדַבְּרוֹת, מִן הַדָּא דְכְתִיב תַּעֲו בַמְדַבֵּר בִּישׁוּמוֹן
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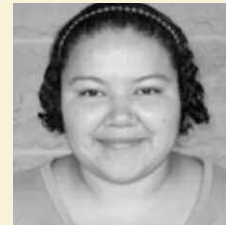
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DIRECTORS' MESSAGE

Jewish Studies at Stanford: New Directions

“Jews have articulated and acted out their identities in myriad ways, depending on geocultural context. In recent years, Jewish Studies as a field has become much more attuned to the task of studying this variety, allowing formerly marginal identities and Jewish cultures to emerge.”

For over 15 years, Stanford's Taube Center for Jewish Studies has earned a leading role in the field by training graduate students who are now major scholars at premier institutions of higher education, and by being home to some of the most appreciated and respected Jewish Studies faculty in the United States. In addition to conferences, seminars, and classes, the Center also publishes the journal *Jewish Social Studies* and a major book series through Stanford University Press. We have aimed for the highest standards of academic work with our publications and contributions to the field; with a conscious decision to place quality over quantity and focus on graduate education; with providing the best resources and guidance to a small and select group of students; and with concentrating on modern Jewish thought, history, and literature. In these endeavors we have been generously supported by our community.

This work will continue to be a major strength and focus of the Center, but it is also time to think about developing new directions and providing new avenues for the study of Jewish culture.

In the coming year we will be expanding our reach to undergraduate students, promoting an individually designed major and minor in the field. Thanks to the generous contribution of Stanford alumnus David Lobel, we will be able to bring visiting scholars in Jewish Studies to campus. The David S. Lobel Visiting Scholar in Jewish Studies Fund will sponsor scholars whose academic foci includes the study of the Bible, Jewish mysticism, and/or Jewish philosophy and theology in the ancient, medieval, and modern periods. Along with other activities, scholars will teach undergraduate students who are interested in deepening their understanding of Judaism. The first Lobel Visiting Scholar will join us in 2008–09.

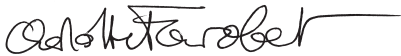
The Lobel Fund will also support our growing interest in pre-modern Jewish Studies. One of the Center's main goals is to provide the entire student community—particularly all graduate students, including those working on the modern period—ample exposure to a larger range of studies and texts. We announced a search for a senior faculty in pre-modern Judaism and are hoping to hire a major scholar in Jewish Studies in the upcoming year. For the first time, our program has four students working on Talmud and late antiquity, collaborating with graduate students from Berkeley and other universities, and adding to the lively and intriguing educational environment on campus. A series of leading scholars—including James Kugel, Richard Kalmin, Moshe Halbertal, and Aharon Shemesh—will visit the campus for study sessions, seminars, and/or block courses. In addition, in 2007–08 we are lucky to host David Malkiel from Bar Ilan University, who is offering classes on the Middle Ages both in History and in Religious Studies.

Building on Stanford's International Initiative, in the coming years we plan to collaborate with universities in Europe and the Middle East as well as to strengthen our intellectual and academic ties with our colleagues at the Center for International and Area Studies and at the Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity. At American universities, including Stanford, the wide spectrum of Jewish Studies derives from the fact that Jewish identity has always been suspended somewhere between ethnic and cultural/religious poles. It would be more accurate to speak in terms of Jewish identities rather than a singular Jewish identity. Historically, Jews have articulated and acted out their identities in myriad ways, depending on geocultural context. In recent years, Jewish Studies as a field has become much more attuned to the task of studying this variety, allowing formerly marginal identities and Jewish cultures to emerge. The field has ventured further to complicate the ways in which we think about the construction of Jewish identities.

At Stanford, Jewish Studies has come to interact in exciting ways with ethnic studies and other critical discourses and methodologies, such as gender studies and cultural anthropology. The Center coordinates a number of new programs that promote and explore these trends, such as the Sami Michael and Jewish Iraqi Literature Conference, which was the opening event in our growing Hebrew@Stanford and the Israel Project. In addition, an ongoing program in Sephardi Studies is devoted to the study of the history and culture of Sephardi Jewish minorities as well as of Jewish literature from the former Ottoman empires and its Diaspora; this program is designed to highlight what has formerly been marginalized in Jewish Studies. In collaboration with the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages and Forum on Contemporary Europe, Jewish Studies will present a series of lectures and a one-day workshop on German Jewish culture. And finally, the Center is working on coordinating a major conference on the theme of Diaspora, Transnationality, and Notions of Home in Jewish Culture, which is intended to foreground the complicated and productive relationship of ethnic identity and territoriality.

Above all, we are committed to supporting the faculty and students who are part of Jewish Studies, promoting as much as we can what they envision as the future of their specific fields and of the Center, and continuing the outstanding work that Steven J. Zipperstein and Aron Rodrigue did in their dedicated and successful leadership of the program.

We have a diverse program with many new courses and exciting events for the coming year, and we are looking forward to collaborations within the Center as well as with our local community and with other departments and centers, both on campus and at other universities.



Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert
Co-Director



Vered Karti Shemtov
Co-Director

RESEARCH

Patterning a New Life: American Jewish Literature in 1929

BY GABRIELLA SAFRAN



On Michael Gold's *Jews Without Money*, Charles Reznikoff's *By the Waters of Manhattan*, and the English translation of Isaac Babel's *Red Cavalry Stories*.¹

GABRIELLA SAFRAN is Taube Center for Jewish Studies Faculty, Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, and Director of the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. This is an excerpt from a volume entitled *1929: Mapping the Jewish World*, edited by Gennady Estraiikh and forthcoming from New York University Press in 2009.

These [three] texts are similar in that they are all semi-autobiographical and they all feature a male Jewish protagonist in difficult, often violent confrontation with the non-Jewish world and with modernity. Gold's hero, Mike, is the child of immigrants from Hungary and Romania, growing up in the Lower East Side. Over the course of the novel, he becomes deadened and hopeless under the pressure of poverty, crime, and tragedy, before he is awakened at the end to the revolutionary cause. Reznikoff's miscellany contains some biblical poetry and two long stories: the autobiography of his mother, Sarah Yetta, a girl who grows up in southern Russia but, frustrated by poverty and the lack of educational opportunities for girls, immigrates to America; and a novella about a young man, Joel, who grows up on the East Side, founds a bookshop, and has an affair with a blonde but, in spite of seemingly having attained what he desired, is not happy. Babel's stories follow the movements of Liutov, a Jew who has been attached to a unit of pro-Bolshevik Cossacks in 1920 on the

Russo-Polish front. Much of the drama centers on Liutov's attempts to fit in among the Cossacks. Although these authors are disparate geographically, stylistically, and ideologically, they are united, I will argue, by the ways in which they all fundamentally challenge the generic limitations of the bildungsroman or novel of education—the notion that, in spite of difficulties and regrets, a person's life can and does move along a path from one self to another. . . .

Outside the literary sphere, the year 1929 was a watershed for Jews as well as for non-Jews: it saw the founding of the Jewish Agency in July, the Hebron riots in Palestine in August, and of course the American stock market crash on October 24. For the texts at issue, another event seems even more significant: on July 1, 1929, the Immigration Act of 1924 went into effect, instituting a quota system for immigrants to the United States that severely limited the number of East European Jews. When it became more difficult for Jewish immigrants to enter the United States, it also became more difficult

for them to leave the area of Eastern Europe where many of them were living—the Soviet Union. Thus 1929 was not only the beginning of a time of increasing poverty and the shifting of ideological boundaries around Zionism but also a moment when the international borders that had been permeable for decades became more solid, almost impassable. For the Jews already in the United States, this was the beginning of a shift in population patterns that would lead to linguistic and cultural shifts. As the population of Yiddish-speaking immigrants failed to be replenished, the Jews of the United States grew more English-speaking. Thus, the potential audience for and supply of producers of Jewish-American literature or culture in English increased.

The books I have selected shed light on and enact some of these large changes that are connected with the ways in which the past and the present are related. One might theorize that for Gold and Reznikoff, as for Babel's American interpreters, the writers' distance from the Old World, the fact that they grew up in the United States, made possible the introduction of a nostalgia about Europe that was not available to earlier generations of American Jewish writers. As Svetlana Boym asserts, nostalgia is a historically constructed phenomenon that arose among some groups of writers in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in response to literary Romanticism, the beginnings of mass culture, and the sense that a certain unmediated relationship to the past and the natural world was no longer available.² In the Jewish context, of course, nostalgia has its own genealogy, connected to the vision of a return to Zion that lies at the heart of religious practice. It seems, though, that it is precisely in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries that a kind of secular and diasporic Jewish nostalgia (one focused on a location other than Zion) becomes possible.

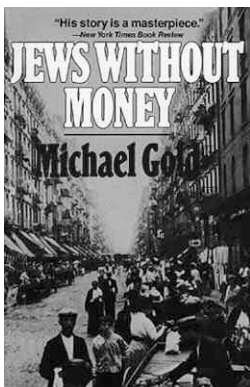
This shift is exemplified by the differences between two of the depictions of “bad fathers” in classic works of American Jewish fiction that were *not* written in 1929: Anzia Yeziarska’s *The Bread Givers* (1925) and Henry Roth’s *Call It Sleep* (1934). Yeziarska’s hostility to the ways of life and the ideals of the traditional Jews of Eastern Europe is embodied in the horrific father figure in that novel, who unashamedly exploits his daughters and ruins their lives. It is clear throughout the novel that, if the father only had been brought up differently, everyone’s lives would be better. For Roth, in contrast, the father of his hero is psychologically troubled, and Jewish traditions are in no way to blame for his destructive behavior. Indeed, the New World and the urban environment of New York seem to have exacerbated his problems: he only seems calm when he remembers how he used to work on a farm, tending the cows. In Yeziarska’s novel, the depiction of the father fits into a neat set of binaries in which most of what is associated with the Old World is dangerous, ugly, and bad, whereas much of what is associated with the New World—at least the part of the New World that lies beyond the borders of the Jewish East Side—is attractive and healthy: the task of the hero (or heroine) is to traverse the space from Old to New successfully. Even when that journey does not

lead to perfect happiness, the necessity of the journey itself remains unquestioned. Roth’s novel offers no such efficient dichotomies. The Old World figures as confused but often beautiful memories, the New as dangerous, ugly reality, and the father, like his son, has difficulty understanding how to negotiate the differences.

As Hana Wirth-Nesher observes in a recent study, Jewish American writers, from the earliest generations until the most recent ones, have thematized language and multilingualism in their fiction and produced a fantastic variety of meditations on accent, dialect, and English style.³ In keeping with her findings, the transition from the father figure in Yeziarska in the mid-1920s to the father figure in Roth in the mid-1930s is mirrored in the ways in which the immigrant parents that these two writers depict use language. When Yeziarska’s parent characters speak Yiddish, it is represented as slightly incorrect English (“And the landlady is tearing from me my flesh, hollering for the rent”) with a few admixtures of actual Yiddish words (“‘Gazlin! Bandit!’ her cry broke through the house” [7]). When Roth’s parent characters speak Yiddish, their language is slightly archaic (“‘And no kiss?’ She caught him by the shoulders, kissed him. ‘There! Savory, thrifty lips! Don’t be late!’” [173]), whereas the children’s English is represented as a distorted

dialect (“But mine fodder made it” [21]). This linguistic shift, which reflects the tastes of the reading public,⁴ also suggests that by the mid-1930s it had become possible for an American Jewish writer to advertise linguistic nostalgia by representing the Yiddish language of the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe as beautifully archaic, far more attractive than the American dialect of their children (though one must also note that Roth’s novel, unlike Yeziarska’s works, was not a commercial success when first published). Whereas the heroes of Yeziarska (like those of Abraham Cahan in another landmark American Jewish novel, *The Rise of David Levinsky* [1917]) have moments of regret about the ways in which their lives have turned out in America, they do not venture into the kind of dramatic reevaluation of values that would allow them to see Europe’s oldness as pregnant with the possibility of Romantic newness, as a potential Eden.

Given this picture of change over time, the 1929 texts are situated interestingly in the middle. Gold focuses on the horrors of life on the Lower East Side, to the exclusion of almost anything else. His characters know they could never go home to the Europe of persecution and pogroms: “The East Side never forgot Europe. We children heard endless tales of the pogroms. . . . We were obsessed by wild stories



Michael Gold’s *Jews Without Money*, the English translation of Isaac Babel’s *Red Cavalry Stories*, and Charles Reznikoff’s *By the Waters of Manhattan*.

of how the Christians loved to kidnap Jewish children, to burn a cross on each cheek with a red-hot poker” (164). Yet Gold’s adult characters long for the pastoral ideal of their European memories, and his narrator even asserts nostalgically that there were no Jewish criminals in Europe—America, it seems, had perverted an innocent people. Gold’s positive assessment of Europe is reflected in the representation of the Yiddish speech of the parent characters, which is closer to standard English than in Yezierska though not as elegant as the language of the parents in Roth. Gold’s mother announces: “Let others be proud! I am a work horse” (157); “‘Your food is Dreck, it is fit only for pigs,’ she told the manager bluntly” (247). The case of Reznikoff is a bit more complex. In the 1929 edition of *By the Waters of Manhattan*, the experiences of Sarah Yetta in Europe and emigration, and the experiences of her son Joel, are divided into separate texts. Neither conforms to the model of *The Bread Givers*. Rather, the European and American experiences of Sarah Yetta are in many ways similar, and Joel’s American life does not take on meaning through its difference from a European life.

The shift from condemning the horrors of Jewish life in Europe to reevaluating Europe as a place of fresh potential emerges most obviously in the American Jewish reception of Babel. In 1921, soon after the 1917 Russian revolutions, Gold had hailed Soviet art as “the resurrection” and as an art that grows out of “the deep need of the masses for the old primitive group life,” out of “tranquility and humane strength” and “out of the soil of life, freely and without thought.”⁵ His language is Romantic, more precisely Rousseauian, figuring the Soviet Union as a new Eden, an ideal state of nature, as perceived by the artistic genius. He made no mention in that essay of the specifically Jewish experience in the Soviet Union

or of any Soviet Jewish writers. Eventually, Babel himself came to be seen as an exemplar of the new possibilities for Jews in Soviet Union. Writing in *The Menorah Journal* in 1928, Alexander Kaun asked, “Is not the present-day relative prominence of Jewish writers in Russian letters due to the acquisition on their part, since the fall of the monarchy, of a sense of serenity and equality in the land that had previously treated them as hateful stepchildren? In the writings of Isaak Babel are to be observed some of the important changes that have taken place in Russian literature.”⁶ Whereas the pogroms of 1919–20 at the time inspired American Yiddish writers to produce threnodies and angry screeds—such as Moyshe-Leyb Halpern’s “A nakht” (Night [1916–19]) and Lamed Shapiro’s “Vayse khale (White Challah [1919])—by 1928 Kaun could find in Babel’s representation of the massacres of Jews that accompanied the Russian civil war evidence of improvement in the lives of Russian Jews. Kaun’s review of Babel uses language similar to that in Gold’s 1921 essay, insisting that Soviet art is above all “youthful,” “heroic,” with life moving at an “intensified tempo.”⁷ Kaun concludes his essay on Red Cavalry with a description of the “overwhelming innocence hovering over these valleys of tears and blood, the innocence of children of chaos, harnessed to elemental forces and performing their terrible work with the ease of a sinless conscience.”⁸

The accumulation of evidence from Gold, Reznikoff, and the review of Babel indicates that the works of 1929 represent shifts in the understandings of the United States and Russia that were available to the American public. Now that the borders were closed, it had become more possible to be nostalgic about Russia and enthusiastic about the Soviet experiment, and to imagine Europe not only as a place one left behind but potentially as a place to which one might want to return.

NOTES

1. *Charles Reznikoff, By the Waters of Manhattan: An Annual* (New York: n.p., 1929); *Charles Reznikoff, By the Waters of Manhattan* (New York: Charles Boni, 1930); *Michael Gold, Jews Without Money* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1996); *I. Babel, Red Cavalry*, trans. Nadia Helstein (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929). Page numbers cited in the text refer to these editions. See also Barry Gross, “Michael Gold (1893–1967),” http://college.hmco.com/english/lauter/beatb/4e/students/author_pages/modern/gold_mi.html.
2. *Svetlana Boym, The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).
3. *Hana Wirth-Nesher, Call It English: The Languages of Jewish American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006). For another study that places Jewish American literature in a broader immigrant literature context and that notes the ways in which various immigrant authors engage with and question paradigms of assimilation, see Thomas J. Ferraro, *Ethnic Passages: Literary Immigrants in Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993).
4. *Yezierska herself first cultivated a very literary “high English” style, but her readers preferred this dialect-like style.* See *Jewish American Literature: A Norton Anthology*, ed. Jules Chametsky, John Felstiner, Hilene Flanzbaum, and Kathryn Hellerstein (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2001), 121.
5. *Michael Gold, “Towards Proletarian Art,” in Mike Gold: A Literary Anthology*, ed. Michael Folsom (New York: International Publishers, 1972), 66, 69, 70.
6. *Alexander Kaun, “Babel: Voice of New Russia,” Menorah Journal* (Nov. 1928): 400.
7. *Ibid.*, 400, 401.
8. *Isaak Babel, “Gedali,” trans. Alexander Kaun, Menorah Journal* (Nov. 1928).

RESEARCH

From *The Lives of Isaac Rosenfeld*

BY STEVEN J. ZIPPERSTEIN



STEVEN J. ZIPPERSTEIN is the Daniel E. Koshland Professor in Jewish Culture and History at Stanford University, and he stepped down last year as Director of the Taube Center for Jewish Studies. Currently, he is on leave at Harvard, where he is Gerald Weinstock Visiting Professor of Jewish History. This is an excerpt from the introduction to his forthcoming book, *The Lives of Isaac Rosenfeld: Fame, Oblivion, and the Vicissitudes of Writing*, which will be published in late 2008 by Yale University Press.

“To know, to know, to know . . . knowledge and love combined into one ecstasy, the highest good of mind and body.”

Isaac Rosenfeld, *journal entry*

In the only recording I have of Rosenfeld’s voice, it sounds clipped and formal, like the sound of someone reared too meticulously. He was cultivated to be a cloistered, bookish boy. He grew into an edgy, infectiously charming man, an erudite, ambitious intellectual who wrote novels, essays, poetry, and hundreds of book reviews, who started (soon before his death) books on the Russian classics and on his hometown Chicago. Time and again, Rosenfeld wrote with insight and candor about what it was that made reading and writing essential, and what it cost to be caught in their grip. He wrote brilliantly about the capacity of books to deepen and diminish life, to enrich it but also to render it abstract, fleshless. His only published novel, *Passage From Home*, was about just this wager. Beginning in his early teens, he wrote and rewrote, more or less, the

same story. He never quite got it right, but he came close. My book examines his pained, insistent quest.

Born in Chicago on March 10, 1918, dead on Bastille Day, 1956, he published his novel, *Passage From Home*, in 1946. By then, he was a frequent reviewer for *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, *Commentary*, and *The New Leader*. He served as an assistant editor of *The New Republic* and as literary editor of *The New Leader*. He taught at New York University, Black Mountain College, the University of Minnesota, and, at the time of his death, at an evening school humanities program of the University of Chicago, where he had received his master’s degree in Philosophy and where he had finished his B.A. He wrote poetry (some eulogies listed him first as a poet) as well as fiction and essays. A collection of his stories, *Alpha and Omega*, and a volume of his essays, *An Age of Enormity*, were published posthumously. “He swayed his friends with an unknown power,” writes Saul Bellow in his obituary in *Partisan Review*. “We called it ‘charm,’ ‘wisdom,’ ‘genius.’ In the end, with a variety of intonations, we could find nothing to call it but ‘Isaac.’”¹

His literary history is an episodic one, filled with gaps, holes, with the leaden disappointments of unfinished manuscripts. He tends to be recalled, if at all, as a writer of great promise who faltered, as someone of astonishing potential who once seemed even more promising than his closest friend and lifelong rival, Bellow, and who then fell far behind. Often the two childhood friends from Chicago are placed side by side, one with the biggest prize of all, the other buried young and little-known—an all-too-obvious metaphor for the cruelties and unpredictability of a writer’s life.

The early excitement surrounding Rosenfeld’s work (he was anointed by influential critics—Diana Trilling, Irving Howe, Delmore Schwartz—and already in his early twenties as a “golden boy”) morphed into a gray, dour reputation with Rosenfeld as the quintessence of writer’s block. His one published novel, released by the still-small Dial Press, was dwarfed by the drum beat of Bellow’s achievements. Bellow wrote the most widely cited obituary for Rosenfeld, and often he injected Rosenfeld as a lightly fictionalized character in his work. This, too, seemed to highlight all the more pronouncedly Rosenfeld’s own imperfect and sparse output.²

Rosenfeld has survived, on the whole, in the memoirs of friends—Howe, Alfred Kazin, Norman Podhoretz, and others. They lived far longer, wrote far more, and described him as a man of infectious, even unrivaled warmth, of immense erudition, and of talent gone astray. In these works—memoirs that are the mainstay of the huge body of literature that has grown around the New York intellectuals of the 1940s and 1950s—he is depicted, with rare exception, as an exceedingly bookish, boyish man gone bohemian but unable to enjoy the abandon of an unfettered life. He is described as an unlikely ideologue of hopeless causes (above all, the mechanistic, increasingly spooky

“Once [Marco Polo] was back in Venice, they called him Il Milione, the guy who told a million fibs. But he never budged. His famous line is, ‘I have not told half of what I saw.’ He said that on his deathbed.”

Joan Silber, *Ideas of Heaven* (New York, 2004)

teachings of Wilhelm Reich), as a writer of fierce ambition and barely sequestered jealousies (especially of Bellow), and as a genius who could not manage to sit long enough at any one book to make it great. Especially after he died young—of a heart attack at 38—his life came to assume the mantle of a cautionary tale: all the promise, the sincere expectation engulfing him (all the more striking in a circle known for anything but selflessness) tended to be pushed aside. What remained was a story of waste.

Time and again, it has been related in much the same terms: directionless charm, genius unachieved. (“Charm and Death” is what Bellow entitled his unpublished novel about Rosenfeld.) “Wunderkind grown into tubby sage. . . . [H]e died of lonely sloth,” wrote Howe. Some now spoke of him with uncommon cruelty: “Even the [Greenwich] Village desperados noticed, Isaac was a ‘failure.’ Precocious in everything, and understandably worn out, he died at thirty-eight. Even his dying would be a kind of failure,” stated Kazin. In a novel about the day of Rosenfeld’s funeral, *To an Early Grave* (the movie *Bye, Bye Braverman* was based on it), Wallace Markfield describes him: “He had a habit of helping himself to whatever was in [his wife’s] purse. He begrudged her an old razor blade to shave her legs. No library would issue him books, so he took cards out in her name and in the name of her

Bessarabian grandmother. He peed in sinks. He would go to movies in the afternoon. He would demand all kinds of crazy dishes. He sat in the toilet for three hours at a time. He held on to no jobs. He farted away golden opportunities. He met no deadlines. He could be your best friend and, overnight, disappear like Job’s boils.”³

These were among Rosenfeld’s closest friends, and a good many of them had praised his work when it first appeared. Howe stated that it was reading *Passage From Home* that persuaded him to become a writer. “A son to Sholem Aleichem, Franz Kafka’s brother,” enthused Eliezer Greenberg, a then influential Yiddish poet. Trilling, a fiercely acerbic judge of fiction (she hated Bellow’s first novel), likened the author of *Passage From Home* to Henry James.⁴

Literary biography is designed, characteristically, to provide signposts to achievement: on the whole, it begins and ends best with the texts it seeks to open up, expand, or deepen, at least to better understand with the help of life experiences that the biographer knows about better than the literary critic. There is literature essentially impervious to such efforts, and other work that feels less resistant to the presumption that one can learn something otherwise unknown from those intersections between experience and interiority. Failure, of course, is an almost unavoidable fellow traveler of most accounts of a life lived with literature. Literary biography is replete with tales of bleak, relentless struggle, reputations made and unmade and, sometimes, remade. The life and work of Herman Melville (Rosenfeld claimed that it was reading *Moby Dick* that persuaded him to abandon philosophy for fiction) stands as the totemic mountain of such tales, a grim but stunningly hopeful beacon with its interplay between initial promise, eventual oblivion, and posthumous redemption

in the form of something far more than mere fame. Still, with Melville no less so than with others, the best biographical work begins and ends with texts and with interest in him tied, always, to an interest in Redburn or Ahab.⁵

My book, too, seeks to open up Rosenfeld’s work, to explore how he sought to produce a luminescent fiction that melded philosophy with the most concrete, fleshly stirrings of life. True, this book leads the reader back to now-forgotten Moby Dick, but so much of what is most familiar in a life spent with literature is precisely the uneasy recognition, often despite immense effort, that aspiration cannot match achievement. Few have examined quite how this feels, day after day, with the depth or candor mustered by Rosenfeld.

This story has been a struggle to write. It has taken too long, it has been interrupted by too much else, but once I finally sat down to finish it the basic contour was clear. I wrote several hundred pages of it as a literary biography, but I came to see that it was more an extended reflection on an important writer’s sense of what it meant to be immersed in, and also deeply suspicious of, a life given over to books. That Rosenfeld never resolved this tension is, no doubt, of far less significance than that he faced it, head on, and that he wrote about it with the willingness to be ridiculed, with grace, and beauty, and genius.

NOTES

1. Saul Bellow’s obituary in *Partisan Review* (quotation).
2. Bellow’s use of *R.* in his works.
3. Wallace Markfield, *To an Early Grave* (quotation).
4. Diana Trilling.
5. Rosenfeld and Moby Dick.

RESEARCH

On Writing “Regulating the Human Body: Rabbinic Legal Discourse and the Making of Jewish Gender”

BY CHARLOTTE FONROBERT



CHARLOTTE FONROBERT is an Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Co-Director of the Taube Center for Jewish Studies.

In June 2007, the *Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* was finally published, the product of several years of shared labor between my former teacher and *chevruta* (study-partner) Martin Jaffee and myself. Aside from co-editing the volume, I contributed the chapter on gender in rabbinic literature to the *Companion*, entitled “Regulating the Human Body: Rabbinic Legal Discourse and the Making of Jewish Gender.” I ended up devoting a significant amount of attention to material in the rabbinic corpus that discusses the legal or halakhic difficulties when encountering dually or non-sexed people (in Hebrew: *androgynos* and *tumtum*). To some readers this may at first sight appear a somewhat curious choice. But I have been interested in the talmudic discussions of these figures for a few years now, especially since they are fairly widespread in the rabbinic corpus, beginning with the Mishnah. These figures are not discussed once, or twice, but throughout the legal corpus. To name but one example, the Mishnah deliberates the case of a circumcision coinciding with the Sabbath. It rules that anything having to do with the medical needs of the baby can be done on the Sabbath, even though such actions may usually be prohibited then. But what if the baby is a dually sexed baby and not an unambiguously male baby?

This is one of many similar case scenarios that the early rabbinic texts deliberate and that the Talmud discusses in great detail.

Initially, my main question had been *why* the rabbinic sages of talmudic times were so interested in these figures, in addition to other gender-ambiguous people for whom they created legal categories, such as the eunuch (Hebr. *saris*) and the “masculine woman” (Hebr. *aylonit*). In the *Companion*, I suggest that there are three possible answers to this question. First, the rabbinic sages dealt with empirical evidence in their world. Sometimes, babies *are* born with a dual set of genitalia, and the rabbis knew that. I learned a great deal from the work of the biologist Anne-Fausto Sterling at Brown University, who is an advocate for what is now called intersex people and who is an outspoken opponent to surgical disambiguation of babies who are born with ambiguous genitalia. The second answer is one of a more historical nature—namely, the Romans talked frequently about what they called hermaphrodites and androgynous people. There are numerous sculptures of hermaphrodites throughout the Roman world that the rabbis might have seen. And Roman lawyers were interested in the legal problems arising from sexual ambiguity, especially in the context of inheritance laws. Finally, my third answer

is more theoretical: rabbinic legal thinking, which provides much of the structural framework of subsequent Jewish culture, aims first and foremost at instituting a rather pronounced “dual gender grid.” Most of the individual laws of rabbinic halakhah apply to either men or women. Differently put, *in rabbinic legal thinking it almost always matters whether one is a man or a woman*. Therefore, the rabbis felt compelled to discuss the case scenarios of what happens when this is not the case. The categories of dually and non-sexed people served as test cases for their own legal system. In this context, I am indebted to the work of the former dean of the law school of Columbia University, Katherine M. Franke, who deals with these questions in the context of current American law.

In the rabbinic case, I believe, all three answers are important, and each has to play a role in our attempt to analyze the way Jewish law deals with gender issues. I have been interested primarily in the implications that these texts have for rethinking gender issues in Jewish law in general. I was also profoundly affected by teaching this rabbinic material in a class on Jewish Law and Gender at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley in the spring of 2007, which included a number of students from San Francisco’s outspoken and active Jewish transgender community. To students from the transgender community, these texts play a far more existentially important role than they might for other people, if only because they provide a history for sexually and gender ambiguous people—and a Jewish history at that. I believe, however, that all of us stand to learn just as much from this literature. It compels us to think very carefully about the ways that law and culture shape not only our gender roles but our very sexual identities.

RESEARCH

Excerpt from the Epilogue of Sami Michael's *Victoria*

BY VERED SHEMTOV AND YIGAL SCHWARTZ



VERED SHEMTOV is Taube Center Faculty, Hebrew Language and Literature, Stanford University. YIGAL SCHWARTZ is a Hebrew Literature Professor, Ben Gurion University of the Negev.

In a journalistic essay on the courage to forget and forgive, Michael wrote:

In terrible pain and torturous longing I deserted a magical Baghdadi home, an abundant river, and endless groves that our forefathers worked diligently to cultivate and nourish for more than 2,000 years so they could enjoy their produce. The claim that another flag and other orchards attracted me more is false. I took a small, humble bundle of belongings and fled... My love for life directed my steps. I didn't become less Jewish or less proud because I gave up a certain piece of land.¹

Michael became associated not only with Baghdad but also with Haifa—indeed, one can take a guided tour in the streets of Haifa following Michael's stories. "There is something special about this city," he wrote in "An Ode to Haifa":

Maybe it is the enchanting view of verdant mountains and blue sea. Maybe it is the three

countries one can see from its peaks. And maybe it is the lack of historical pretensions that has enabled the city to foster a rare brand of coexistence between different population groups.²

Michael's story is very different from the homecoming of a wandering Jew. Iraq was home for him, a place in which Judaism was shaped and in which, arguably, the most important post-biblical texts were written. Jews, though a minority, felt to some extent more native to the place than most of the other residents. Michael left a place of deep Jewish roots and immigrated to a city that did not have many "historical pretensions." His story provides an alternative Zionist direction to the East European narrative by redefining the opposition between home and Diaspora as one that places life—both individual life and collective Jewish life—before land.

Early Hebrew literature in Israel focused primarily on the experience of Jews who

originated from European countries ("Ashkenazim"). Michael enriched Hebrew literature and culture by being one of the first major voices for Jews that immigrated from Arab and predominantly Muslim lands ("Mizrahim"). But Michael's contribution to the culture goes beyond expanding the collective narrative to include life in Iraq and the life of Iraqi Jews in Israel. Throughout his career, Michael has skillfully portrayed some of the most complex relationships between hybrid selves and others in literature. In his early works, he wrote about Muslim Iraqis, Christian Iraqis, and Jewish Iraqis from different social classes and political affiliations. The novel *Refuge* describes political and personal connections between Jews and Arabs in Israel. In *A Trumpet in the Wadi*, Michael's male protagonist is a Russian Jewish immigrant who falls in love with an Arab Israeli woman in Haifa. And in his most recent book, *Pigeons at Trafalgar Square*, he presents a character who embodies the tragic history of Jews and Palestinians through a successful Israeli man and son of Holocaust survivors who discovers that he is adopted and that his birth parents are Palestinian refugees who escaped Haifa in 1948. In all of Michael's works, identity is presented and defined by the protagonist's past while continuing to be both revealed and shaped by circumstances and exposure to new languages, cultures, and homes.

Despite his success in bringing new voices into Hebrew literature and creating through his stories what seems in reality impossible dialogue between people, between past and present, and between literary traditions, his later works do not present a euphoric view of the social and political situation,³ nor do they reflect the past in a nostalgic way. As Nancy Berg argued in an article on *Victoria*, Michael was the first to create a shift in Hebrew Iraqi literature and "show the less

glorious side of Babylonian Jewry. His personal memories challenge the collective memory of Baghdadi Jewry.”⁴ . . .

In *Victoria*, Michael succeeded in creating an alternative model, abandoning the combative reshaping of the pioneer-settlement story in favor of a new and innovative kind of storytelling. The circular plot of *Victoria* moves away from the focus on land, rebuilding, and unity. The events that take place in Israel do not dominate the story. Rather, it is the victory of the woman on the bridge, the individual who is pushed by the force of thousands of faces of the human stream trying to cross the bridge in the middle of a major flooding, that dominates. . . .

Although *Victoria* ends in Israel and leaves no room for returning to the land of origin, it is a courageous and ingenious work that succeeds in presenting an alternative to the traditional linear Zionist story. This new model is not adopting, reshaping, or dismantling the old models and myths. Rather, it adds another option to the collective narrative and, as such, reflects Michael’s perspective not only on the Jewish past but also on the future. In “Going Separate Ways,” he writes:

The shaping of the “new Jew” demanded the construction of just one model, which would be appropriate for the inhabitant

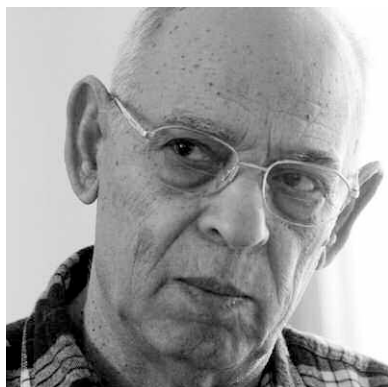
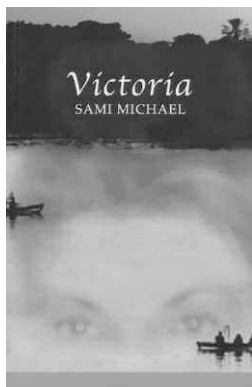
of the shtetl in Eastern Europe, for the member of the sophisticated German culture, and for the Yemenite and Iraqi cultures as well. Manifestly, this was not a viable mission. . . . To this day, the original creators of the melting pot are waging a desperate battle to preserve and reconstruct the fragments from which the dream was built so artificially from the outset.

But, he continues, it is time to accept that there was nothing wrong with a diasporic model of dispersions and difference:

*I believe that the nation is returning to the old model, which proved its efficiency for more than 2000 years. . . . Any attempt to tip the spontaneous development of culture into a narrow channel reflects shortsightedness and is doomed to failure. The vibrancy of life makes for constant surprises, both at the individual level and in the history of the nations.*⁵

NOTES

1. Sami Michael, “On this I will not compromise,” Ha’aretz, September 23, 2004.
2. Sami Michael, “An Ode to Haifa,” Ha’aretz, November 12, 1998.
3. Pigeons at Trafalgar Square, for example, is a dialogue with the Palestinian author Ghassan Kanafani’s novella “Returning to Haifa.” However, it ends with a tragic event in Trafalgar Square.
4. Nancy Berg, “Victoria’s Triumph: Answering the Ethic Question,” *Israel Affairs* 3, no. 2 (Winter 1996): 129.
5. Sami Michael, “Going Separate Ways,” Ha’aretz, November 5, 2005.



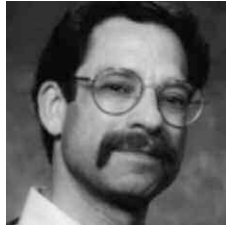
Victoria is a special edition in honor of the Sami Michael and Jewish Iraqi Literature Conference, held at Stanford University, Sept. 5–7, 2007.

For more information on the conference, please visit the conference’s website: http://www.stanford.edu/dept/jewishstudies/events/sami_michael_conf/

FACULTY

Affiliated Faculty

The Taube Center for Jewish Studies at Stanford has seventeen affiliated faculty members, three with endowed chairs. We will conduct an international search to fill our fourth endowed chair during this academic year. Our affiliated faculty members teach courses on the full expanse of Jewish history, literature, language, religion, education and politics.



Joel Beinin
*Middle Eastern Politics,
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*Rabbinics and
Late Antique Religion*



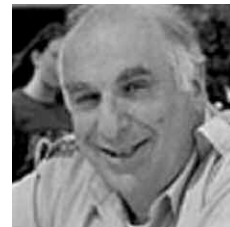
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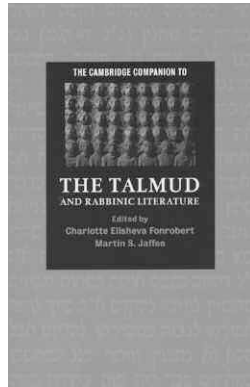


Jon Levitow

Yiddish Language

FACULTY

New Books by Taube Center Faculty



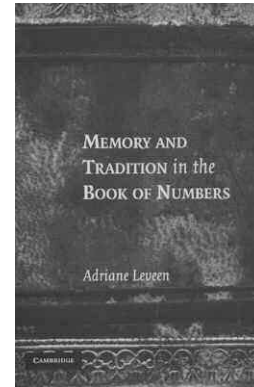
The following are some of the books published by the Taube Center's faculty.

Charlotte E. Fonrobert

The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature

Edited by Charlotte E. Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee
(Cambridge, Engl.: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

This volume guides beginning students of rabbinic literature to the range of historical-interpretive and culture-critical issues that contemporary scholars use when studying the rabbinic texts of late antiquity. The editors, themselves well-known interpreters of rabbinic literature, have gathered an international collection of scholars to support students' initial steps in confronting the enormous and complex rabbinic corpus. Unlike other introductions to rabbinic writings, this volume includes approaches shaped by anthropology, gender studies, oral-traditional studies, classics, and folklore studies.



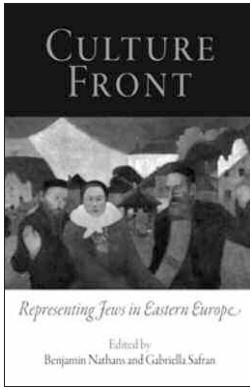
Adriane Leveen

Memory and Tradition in the Book of Numbers

(Cambridge, Engl.: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

This book examines the ways in which the editors of Numbers created a narrative of the 40-year journey through the wilderness to control understanding of the past and influence attitudes in the future. The book explores politics, collective memory, and the strategies used by its priestly editors to convince the children of Israel to accept priestly rule. The book also focuses on the tragic dimension of the long journey and the transmission of tradition, memory, and values that occurs in such an atmosphere of crisis.

Adriane Leveen was a Senior Lecturer of Bible at Stanford University and a member of the Taube Center for Jewish Studies until September 2007. She is now teaching at Hebrew Union College, New York.

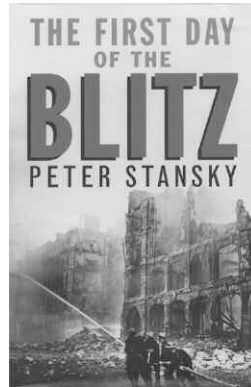


Gabriella Safran

Culture Front: Representing Jews in Eastern Europe

Edited by Benjamin Nathans and Gabriella Safran
(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007)

This volume brings together contributions by both historians and literary scholars to take readers on a journey across the cultural history of East European Jewry from the mid-seventeenth century to the present. The articles collected here explore how Jews and their Slavic neighbors produced and consumed imaginative representations of Jewish life in chronicles, plays, novels, poetry, memoirs, museums, and more. *Culture Front* puts culture at the forefront of analysis, treating verbal artistry itself as a kind of frontier through which Jews and Slavs imagined, experienced, and negotiated with themselves and each other. The book's four sections investigate the distinctive themes of that frontier: violence and civility, popular culture, politics and aesthetics, and memory. The result is a fresh exploration of ideas and movements that helped change the landscape of modern Jewish history.



Peter Stansky

The First Day of the Blitz: September 7, 1940
(New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2007)

On September 7, 1940, the long-feared and anticipated attack by the German Luftwaffe plunged London into a cauldron of fire and devastation. This compelling book recreates that day in all its horror, using rich archival sources and first-hand accounts, many never before published. Eminent historian Peter Stansky weaves together the stories of people who recorded their experiences of the opening hours of the Blitz. Then, exploring more deeply, the author examines what that critical day meant to the nation at the time, and what it came to mean in following years.

Much of the future of Britain was determined in the first 12 hours of bombing, Stansky contends. The Blitz set in motion a range of responses that contributed to ultimate victory over Germany and to a transformation of British society. The wave of terror, though designed to quash morale, instead inspired stoicism, courage, and a new camaraderie. The tragic London bombing can reveal much of relevance to our own violent times, Stansky concludes: both the effectiveness of modern terror and its ultimate failure are made powerfully clear by the events of September 7, 1940.

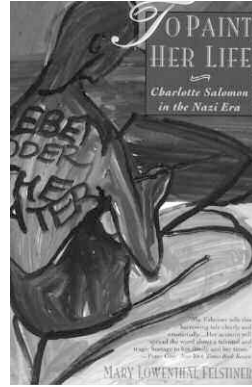
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FEDERAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR HISTORY EDUCATION

The Taube Center congratulates Jewish Studies professor Sam Wineburg, chair of the history education group at Stanford's School of Education, who received \$7 million for a history-education clearinghouse. The funding was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education in September 2007 to establish a virtual "Federal Clearinghouse for History Education" to help teachers become more effective educators and teach K-12 students why history is relevant to their daily lives. The project focuses on key topics in post-Civil War U.S. history and is designed to teach students how to read primary sources critically and how to critique and construct historical narratives. Topics covered include the Spanish-American War, the Scopes Trial of 1925, Social Security and the New Deal, and Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

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Visiting Faculty and Scholars



Detail – Cover of Mary L. Felstiner's book *To Paint Her Life: Charlotte Salomon in the Nazi Era* published by University of California Press, 1997.

Visiting Faculty 2006–07

Rachel Albeck-Gidron is Associate Professor of Hebrew Literature at Bar Ilan University.

Nathaniel Deutsch is Associate Professor at Swarthmore and chair of the college's humanities division and the interpretation theory program.

Mary Felstiner is Professor Emerita of History at San Francisco University. 2006–08

Michael K. Silber is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Nathan Wachtel is Professor of Latin American History and Anthropology at the Collège de France.

Visiting Scholars 2006–07

Avidov Lipsker is a Professor at Bar-Ilan University in the Faculty of Jewish Studies.

Jess Olson began his appointment as Assistant Professor of Jewish History at Yeshiva University in New York in the fall of 2007.

Visiting Faculty 2007–08

Yifat Holzman-Gazit (Hebrew@Stanford Visiting Faculty) is Associate Professor at the College of Management Law School in Rishon Le'zion, Israel. At Stanford Law School, she is a visiting professor on a grant from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.

David J. Malkiel is Associate Professor in the Department of Jewish History at Bar-Ilan University.

Dan Miron (Hebrew@Stanford Visiting Faculty) is the Leonard Kaye Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and an Emeritus Professor of Hebrew Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Aharon Shemesh (Text and Culture Visiting Faculty) is Associate Professor at the Department of Talmud, Bar-Ilan University, and senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute.

Visiting Scholars 2007–08

Olga Borovaya obtained a Ph.D. in Cultural Studies at Russian State University for the Humanities. 2006–08

Elana Gomel is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English at Tel-Aviv University.

Galit Rand completed her Ph.D. in Tel Aviv University. She is currently working on a book about the wine industry in Israel.

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE

Undergraduate Awards



Donald and Robin Kennedy Undergraduate Award

The award honors the best essay written on a Jewish theme by a Stanford undergraduate. It is made possible by the generous gifts of William J. Lowenberg and Barbara and Ken Oshman.

This award was given in 2007 to **Danielle Levine**, a senior in American Studies, for her honors thesis written under the instruction of Steven J. Zipperstein. She describes her work in the following terms: “Hello, Gorgeous”: Hollywood, Barbra Streisand, Beauty, and the Jewish Woman explores the way in which Barbra Streisand represents the popular integration of the Jewish woman and a new kind of beauty. By examining the articles and reviews that accompanied the first decade of her career, the thesis attempts to track how and when changes began to unfold surrounding the eventual incorporation of Streisand as a beautiful Jewish woman within popular American standards. In effect, this shift represents a change in the core values held within American society. Streisand’s journey from being deemed ugly to being championed as beautiful reflects, on a broader scale, the ways in which ideals of assimilation and homogeneity gave way to a new spirit of ethnic pluralism in American society.



The Dr. Bernard Kaufman Undergraduate Research Award in Jewish Studies

This year’s winner of the Kaufman Award is **Sean Weisberg**, a double major in German Studies and International Relations. Sean wrote his honors thesis “Constructing the New Multicultural: The Politics of Identity in Maxim Biller’s *Die Tochter*” under the supervision of Amir Eshel. He states: “The research that I engaged in focused on the politics of identity of the contemporary Jewish community in Germany. Through the study of the novel *Die Tochter* by Maxim Biller, I demonstrate how assimilationist models of identity are rejected in favor of a more encompassing multiculturalism. I also argue that Jews in Germany challenge archetypal notions of identity to promulgate a mainstream recognition of the diversity of perspectives that reside within minority communities.”



The Koret Award for Best Essay Written in Hebrew

This new gift will support the study of Hebrew Language and Literature and Israeli Culture at Stanford.

Shira Beery, a double major in African & Middle East Language/Literature and International Relations, won the first Koret Award for her essay in Hebrew, written for a directed reading course with Professor Vered Shemtov. She sees her work as “a reflection on modern-day responses to past justifications of Zionism found in today’s Hebrew literature. I looked at several authors—including Amos Oz, David Grossman, Etgar Keret, and Shulamit Lapid—in the process, highlighting their own struggles with past and present justifications for a Jewish State in Erets Israel as well as the questions I share with them. From today’s perspective, some policies seem discriminatory, but from the point-of-view of a poor socialist Jew, the same policy strives for ideological goals of nonexploitation and independence. With the help of Vered Shemtov, my Hebrew teacher, I was able to explore my own connections to Zionist history through its greatest conduit: literature. Although many of my questions went unanswered, I feel better knowing that even Israeli authors are dealing with internal conflicts about the connection between past and present criticisms of Zionism, as I am.”

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE

Courses



The Robert M. Golden Medal for Excellence in the Humanities and Creative Arts

Lola Feiger was awarded the prestigious Golden Medal in 2007. She was an Urban Studies major and wrote her honors thesis, “The Memorialization of Urban Concentration Camps: Reading the Scale and Infrastructural Complexity of Sachsenhausen for an Understanding of the Holocaust,” under the supervision of Charlotte Fonrobert in Religious Studies.

“In my thesis, my intent was to explore the various ways in which the Sachsenhausen concentration camp site and, by extension, most other former concentration camps in urban locations had been systematically reduced in size from the time of liberation to the memorial sites of today, and to posit some possible explanations for this occurrence. I stumbled into this particular line of inquiry when I traveled to Germany and Poland early in the research process. While visiting former camps and their host towns, I was struck by the degree to which most memorial sites today bear little physical resemblance to the camps during their operation, as well as by the lack of transparency as to how this happened. I have always been intrigued by challenges to the practice of architecture and urban design that arise as a result of charged space. By this I mean the challenge to confront often irreconcilable, unspeakable, or contested histories layered within the same site. It appeared even in the earliest stages of my research that former concentration camps located in urban areas represent an unprecedented example of charged space and an unparalleled challenge to urban design.”

African and Middle Eastern Program: Hebrew Literature

The Bible in Modern Hebrew Literature
(Shemtov, V.)

Politics and Poetics in Israeli Literature:
Amos Oz and Contemporary Israeli
Authors (Shemtov, V.)

East West East in Israeli Literature:
The Novels of Yoel Hoffman
(Albeck-Gidron, R.)

African and Middle Eastern Program: Jewish Languages

Beginning Hebrew (Porat, G.; Greif, E.;
Shemtov, V.)

Intermediate Hebrew (Porat, G.; Engel, A.)

Advanced Hebrew (Shemtov, V.)

Beginning Yiddish (Levitow, J.)

Biblical Hebrew (Wang, T.; Porat, G.)

Comparative Literature

Literature and History in the Israeli Novel
(Eshel, A.)

Drama

Israeli Film and Theater, 1948–2006
(Arad, M.)

English

Imagining the Holocaust (Felstiner, J.)

Feminist Studies

Rereading Judaism in Light of Feminism
(Karlin-Neumann, P.)

German Literature

Present Pasts: History and Memory in
Culture and Politics (Eshel, A.)

Resistance Writings in Nazi Germany
(Bernhardt, E.)

History

The Jews of Islam in Modern Times
(Danon, D.)

The Holocaust (Felstiner, M.)

Jews in the Modern World (Zipperstein, S.)

Poles and Jews (Jolluck, K.)

Marranos, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in
Latin America, 16th–20th Centuries
(Wachtel, N.)

Tradition in Crisis: Orthodox Judaism in
Modern Times (Silber, M.)

The Transformation of Central European
Jewry: Germany and Austria-Hungary,
1700–1880 (Silber, M.)

Core Colloquium in Jewish History, 17th–19th
Centuries (Rodrigue, A.)

Core Colloquium in Jewish History, 20th
Century (Zipperstein, S.)

Graduate Research Seminar in Jewish History
(Zipperstein, S.)

Religious Studies

The Creation of Woman (Fonrobert, C.)

Handmaids and Harlots: Biblical Women in
Jewish and Christian Traditions
(Leveen, A.; Pitkin, B.)

Prophetic Voices of Social Critique (Leveen, A.)

The Talmud (Fonrobert, C.)

Martin Buber: Philosopher, Theologian,
Revolutionary (Sufrin, C.)

Judaism and the Body (Fonrobert, C.)

Hasidism and Modernity (Deutsch, N.)

King David in the Bible and Beyond
(Leveen, A.)

Slavic Languages and Literatures

Yiddish Story (Safran, G.)

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE

Graduate Student News

George Bloom is a graduate student in the Department of Comparative Literature. His research focuses on the novella in Europe and the United States during the nineteenth century. In the summer of 2007 he received a Newhouse grant to study Spinoza at the School of Criticism and Theory.

Julia Phillips Cohen is currently completing her dissertation, “Imperial Citizens: The Shaping of Late Ottoman Jewish Identity, 1856–1912,” in the Department of History. This past year she taught two courses at the University of California, Davis, presented papers at the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA), American Historical Association (AHA), and Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) conferences as well as participating in a workshop held at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. She has forthcoming articles on Ladino newspapers and journalists to be published in a Brill Encyclopedia on Jews of Islamic lands.

Dina Danon is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History. Her main area of interest is modern Sephardi Jewry. In the fall of 2006, she taught a Sources and Methods

Seminar in the Department of History entitled “The Jews of Islam in Modern Times.” In academic year 2007–08, she plans to begin dissertation research on poverty and charity in the eastern Sephardi diaspora.

Amir Engel is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of German Studies where he is starting his dissertation on post-Holocaust Jewish-German thought and literature. The dissertation will study the attempts to grapple with the two-centuries-old dream of Jews in Germany to live in a “*Bildung*” society of poets and philosophers after its catastrophic demise and the surprising realization of much younger dream—that of the State of Israel.

Andrew Koss is a graduate student in the Department of History. He is currently researching Jewish society in Poland and Russia during World War I.

Dan Kupfert-Heller is a second-year graduate student in the Department of History. In the academic year 2006–07, he served as the director of Stanford’s “Ieyenkrayz” (Yiddish Reading Group), which drew students and

Our graduate students were supported again by a generous gift from the Jewish Community Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties, by the William J. and Fern E. Lowenberg Graduate Fellowship in Holocaust Studies, the Partnership Endowed Graduate Fellowship Fund, Frances K. and Theodore H. Geballe Fellowship Fund, the Reinhard Graduate Fellowship Fund and the Taube Fellowship.

Graduate Awards: Newhouse Summer Grant Awards 2007

The following graduate students received summer research support in the form of grants from the Jewish Community Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties. These study grants are available each year to graduate students in Jewish Studies and provide a monetary amount toward travel and research expenses over the summer quarter. They also provide a limited number of summer dissertation-writing fellowships. The grant application deadline is mid-April; awards are made in mid-May.

George Bloom (Comparative Literature)
Julia Cohen (History)
Dina Danon (History)
Dan Heller (History)

Emily Levine (History)
David Levinsky (Religious Studies)
Devin Naar (History)
Joshua Peskin (Religious Studies)

Anat Plocker (History)
Noam Silverman (Education)
Claire Sufrin (Religious Studies)



Professor Charlotte E. Fonrobert with graduate student Max Strassfeld.

faculty from Stanford as well as members of Palo Alto's Jewish community. In the summer of 2007, he conducted research at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research on a Jewish socialist elementary school network in interwar Poland. He looks forward to continuing his research on Jewish youth culture in twentieth-century Eastern Europe.

Akiba Lerner has recently completed his dissertation, "Rorty, Buber, and the Revival of Social Hope." He looks forward to turning his dissertation into a book and to organizing a conference in conjunction with the Aurora Forum entitled "The Future of Social Hope," to be held at Stanford in May 2008.

Emily J. Levine is a Ph.D. candidate in History and the Humanities. She is currently finishing her dissertation, which is a biography of Ernst Cassirer, Erwin Panofsky, and Aby Warburg in Hamburg between 1919 and 1933. In the academic year 2005–06, she was awarded a Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst Fellowship to conduct archival research in Hamburg. Recently honored as a Distinguished Departmental Scholar for the academic year 2007–08, she will also be a Stanford Mellon Foundation Fellow and a Fellow at the Center for Jewish History in New York City.

David Levinsky, a sixth-year student in the Department of Religious Studies, will spend the year finishing his dissertation. The project analyzes how cultural contact affected religious practice among Jews and Christians in late antiquity. Representations of nazirite vows found in the writings of Josephus, Philo, the rabbis, the Book of Acts, Eusebius, Aphrahat, and Jacob of Serug are the object of his study. He also will teach a course at Stanford entitled "Millennium, Messiahs, and Mayhem" on Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts from

antiquity to the present. He is currently the rabbi at Keddem congregation in Palo Alto.

Devin E. Naar is a graduate student in the Department of History. His research focuses on Sephardi Jewry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He presented a paper at the Congress of the European Association of Jewish Studies and a lecture at the Center for Jewish History on the Jewish community of Salonika, based on research he conducted as a Fulbright Fellow to Greece.

Ekaterina Neklyudova is working on her dissertation prospectus in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. In September 2006, she gave presentations at two conferences: the Health, Illness, and Representation Conference at King's College, London, and the Perspectives on Slavistics Conference in Regensburg, Germany. She will participate in a conference hosted by Radboud University of Nijmegen, where she will present a talk on the memoirs and diaries of the survivors of GULAG.

Joshua Peskin is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Religious Studies. His dissertation will examine the religious elements of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, paying particular attention to the theme of rationalist messianism. He focused on his French and continued to work on his dissertation through the summer of 2007.

Anat Plocker is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History and is the recipient of the William and Fern Lowenberg Graduate Fellowship in Holocaust Studies. During the past year, she has been writing her dissertation on the anti-Jewish campaign in Poland in 1967–68. In the dissertation, the first English-language study of the subject, she traces the

development, causes, consequences, and abrupt end of the campaign that led to the emigration of thousands of Jews from communist Poland.

Na'ama Rokem completed her dissertation, "Prosaic Conditions: Writing in the Modern Mode from Hegel to Bialik," as a Geballe Dissertation Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center in the spring of 2007. In the fall, she will be teaching at the Department of Comparative Literature at Yale University. For the spring of 2008, she has received the Kreitman Postdoctoral Fellowship at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, where she will teach in the Department of Foreign Literatures.

Jessica Rosenberg is a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Religious Studies. Her field is Modern Jewish Thought, and she works on the philosophy of Jewish law in the contemporary period. She spent the past year studying Jewish legal theory and gender, and being a sometime-participant in the Stanford Beit Midrash. Her recent "paper in the field" concerned Orthodox identity formation through religious concepts. In her downtime, she serves as the organizer of Minyan HaMeorot.

Noam Silverman is a graduate student in the School of Education. His research focuses on different conceptual approaches in creating educational methodologies and sustaining learning communities committed to religious and cultural pluralism. A recipient of the Wexner Graduate Fellowship, he completed his undergraduate studies at Yeshiva University and earned a master's degree in Religious Studies from Stanford in 2005.

Miriam Heller Stern recently defended her doctoral dissertation, "Your Children—Will They Be Yours? Educational Strategies for

Jewish Survival, the Central Jewish Institute, 1916–1944." She received her master's degree in History from Stanford in 2002 and her Ph.D. from the School of Education in the summer of 2007. She is a lecturer in Education at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles and also teaches Jewish History at Shalhevet High School.

Claire Sufrin is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Religious Studies. During the fall of 2006 she taught a seminar entitled "Martin Buber: Philosopher, Theologian, Rebel." She delivered a paper on the importance of the Hebrew Bible in Buber's early addresses on Judaism at the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference in December 2006. She also completed a major portion of her dissertation on Buber's biblical hermeneutics. In academic year 2007–08, she will be a Visiting Lecturer at Northeastern University in Boston.

Sivan Zakai is a graduate student in the School of Education's Curriculum and Teacher Education program and a graduate of the master's program in Modern Jewish History. Her current research is on the relationship between history education and Jewish identity for students attending Jewish high schools.

We Welcome the Following New Students to the Taube Center

Mira Balberg started her graduate studies in the Department of Religious Studies in the fall of 2007. She intends to focus on talmudic literature in the Graeco-Roman cultural context, and her main interest is the construction of the body, particularly health and pathology, in rabbinic texts. She has a master's degree in Talmud from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

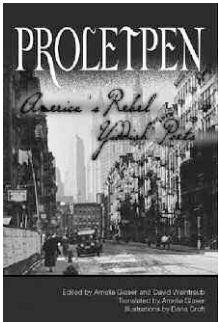
Emily Kopley is a graduate student in the Department of English. Her area of interest is the interplay between religion and literature during the twentieth century. She has recently published an article on Virginia Woolf and Christianity, and she is currently researching Arthur A. Cohen, the postwar American theologian and novelist.

John Mandsager entered the doctoral program in Religious Studies at Stanford in the fall of 2007. His most recent research focuses on issues of travel and the physical world as found in the Talmud. He holds master's degrees from the Jewish Studies program at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and from the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford.

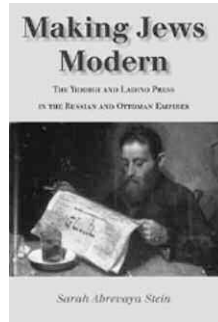
Max Strassfeld is a doctoral student in Religious Studies and is currently researching the way intersex categories function in Talmud. Max completed an undergraduate degree in Comparative Literature at Brown University.

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE

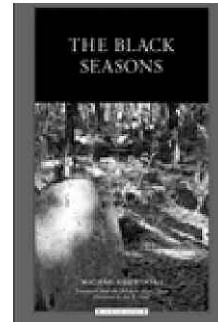
Recent Publications by Taube Center Alumni



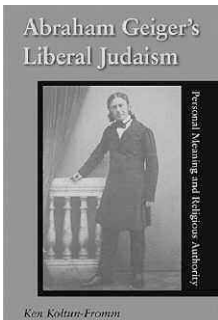
Amelia Glaser and David Weintraub, eds.
Proletpen: America's Rebel-Yiddish Poets
(Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005)



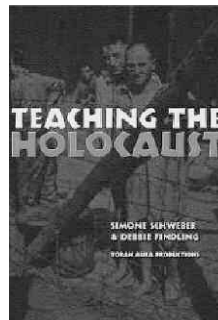
Sarah Abrevaya Stein
Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires
(Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press 2004; paperback, 2006)



Michal Glowinski,
The Black Seasons, trans. **Marci Shore**
(Evanston: University of Illinois Press, 2005)



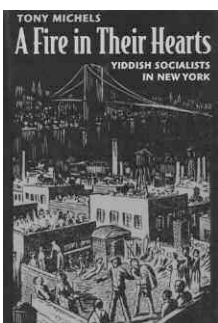
Ken Koltun-Fromm
Abraham Geiger's Liberal Judaism: Personal Meaning and Religious Authority
(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006)



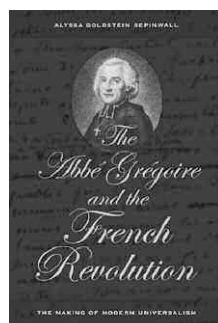
Debbie Findling and **Simone Schweber**
Teaching the Holocaust
(Los Angeles, Calif.: Torah Aura, 2007)



Marci Shore
Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968
(New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2006)



Tony Michels
A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York
(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005)



Alyssa Sepinwall
The Abbé Grégoire and the French Revolution: The Making of Modern Universalism
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005)



Rabbi Einat Ramon
God, Motherhood, and the Critique of Domination in the Thought of A. D. Gordon
(Tel Aviv, forthcoming)

EVENTS

2006–07 Endowed Lectures and Conferences



LECTURES

January 22, 2007

The Jewish Community Endowment Fund Lecture

Amos Oz: “Israel: Between Love and Darkness”

February 27, 2007

The Aaron-Roland Lecture in Jewish Studies

Nathan Wachtel, Professor of Latin American History and Anthropology, Collège de France: “Faith and Memory: Crypto-Judaism, Iberian Inquisitions, and the Emergence of Totalitarianism”

May 17–18, 2007

The Clara Sumpf Yiddish Lecture Series

Michael C. Steinlauf, Associate Professor of History, Gratz College: “Hope and Fear: Y. L. Peretz in 1905” (in English); “Building the Warsaw Museum of the History of Polish Jews” (in Yiddish)

The Taube Center for Jewish Studies
Stanford University

**CLARA SUMPF
Yiddish Lecture Series**
May 17-18, 2007

Michael Steinlauf, Associate Professor of History
Gratz College, Pennsylvania.
Author of “Sontage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory
of the Holocaust” (Oxford: University Press, 1997)

Thursday, May 17	Friday, May 18
12:00pm	11:45am
8:00pm	
Topic: “Building the Warsaw Museum of the History of Polish Jews” (in English)	Topic: “Hope and Fear: Y. L. Peretz in 1905” (in Yiddish)

CONFERENCES

May 6–7, 2007

The Shoshana and Martin Gerstel Conference Fund Symposium: Jewish Culture and Modern Cities

A conference on the convergence of urban space, Jewish culture, and modernity, marking Steven J. Zipperstein’s 15-year leadership as Director of the Taube Center for Jewish Studies.

Steven J. Zipperstein delivered a reading drawn from his forthcoming book, “I Have Not Told Half of What I Saw”: On Reading Isaac Rosenfeld.” (See excerpt from the introduction in this Report.)

Sarah Abrevaya Stein, University of Washington, Seattle, on “London”; response by Aron Rodrigue, Stanford University.

Barbara Mann, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, on “Tel Aviv”; response by Gabriella Safran, Stanford University.

Deborah Dash Moore, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, on “New York”; response by Seth Lerer, Stanford University.

Joachim Schloer, University of Southampton, U.K., on “Berlin”; response by Charlotte Fonrobert, Stanford University.

Tony Michels, University of Wisconsin, Madison, on “New York”; response by Steven J. Zipperstein, Stanford University.

Charlotte Fonrobert and Vered Shemtov, Stanford University, concluding remarks.

EVENTS

2006–07 Guest Speakers



Eli Reinhard, Lenore Hennen and Steve Zipperstein at the conference on Jewish Culture and Modern Cities.

October 17, 2006

Mitchell Cohen, Professor of Political Science, Baruch College: “Wagner and Anti-Semitism”

October 24, 2006

A roundtable discussion with **Samuel Kassow**, **Janusz Makuch**, **Eleonora Bergman**, and **Zachary Baker**; moderated by **Gabriella Safran**: “Remembering and Renewing Jewish Culture in Post-Holocaust, Post-Communist Poland”

October 26, 2006

Richard Schotter, Professor of English, Queens College, CUNY, and author: “Re-Imagining Babel: Adapting ‘Tales of Odessa’ for the Stage”

November 9, 2006

Martin Dean, Applied Research Scholar, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. (co-sponsored with CREEES): “Encounters Between Perpetrators and Victims During the Holocaust in the East”

November 14, 2006

A documentary film by **Duki Dror** (co-sponsored with Asian American Studies): “The Journey of Vaan Nguyen”—the story of an Israeli-born Vietnamese and his journey in search of both home and identity

December 4, 2006

Ziony Zevit, Professor of Bible and Semitic Languages, University of Judaism: “The Garden of Eden Story”

January 11, 2007

Heidi Lerner, *Hebraica/Judaica* Cataloger, Stanford University Libraries: “Jewish Biography and Autobiography on the Internet”

January 18, 2007

Jess Olson, Visiting Scholar, Taube Center for

Jewish Studies, Stanford University: “Nathan Birnbaum: Forms of Jewish Renaissance”

February 26, 2007

Shachar Pinsker, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Literature and Culture, University of Michigan: “To Write in a Silent Language: Yiddish as a Double Agent in Israeli Literature and Culture”

February 26, 2007

Steven Beller, (co-sponsored with the History Department, Stanford University): “Island of the Blessed/Island of the Damned: Jews and Austrians in Modern History”

April 16, 2007

Malachi Hacoheh, Associate Professor, History, Political Science, and Religion, Duke University (co-sponsored with the Department of History, Stanford University): “Jacob and Esau in the Emancipation Era: The Central European Jewish Intelligentsia and the Dilemmas of the European Nation State”

April 19, 2007

Orit Yafeh, Visiting Scholar, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, U.C. Berkeley: “Cultural Construction of Childhood and Gender in Early Ultra-Orthodox Education”

May 10, 2007

Shana Penn, Visiting Scholar at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, and Director of the Jewish Heritage Initiative in Poland (a philanthropic program of the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture): “Solidarity’s Secret: Women’s Leadership in the Polish Revolution”

For additional lists of guest speakers, see the Text and Culture Speaker Series and Hebrew@Stanford elsewhere in this Report.

EVENTS

Text and Culture Speaker Series

CHARLOTTE ELISHEVA FONROBERT, SERIES COORDINATOR



2006–07 was supported by a grant from the **Shenson Fund**.

2007–08 was supported by the **Aaron Roland** Endowed Lecture Fund and by a grant from **Stuart R. Epstein**.

“The ‘textual’ fabric, the interpretative practices in Judaism are ontologically and historically at the heart of Jewish identity.”

George Steiner, *Our Homeland, the Text* (1985)

Text and the study of texts have traditionally been the *raison d'être* of Judaism and the academic study of Judaism. The textual and literary traditions of Judaism still define the boundaries of subdisciplines within the field of Jewish Studies—Bible, Rabbinics, Kabbalah, modern Hebrew Literature, and so forth—even as the boundaries and nature of Jewish identity and therefore Jewish culture have been much debated and expanded. As in other areas in the humanities, a broad variety of approaches are subsumed under the umbrella of Jewish Studies, such as film studies, ethnographic studies of various Jewish cultures, and Jewish music. Nonetheless, scholarly knowledge of Judaism still does (and should) draw on the knowledge of various textual traditions. But it is in part due to the traditional dominance of textual studies that more-or-less visible fault-lines crisscross the study of Judaism in its subdisciplines. One position emphasizes rigorous philological knowl-

edge and textual analysis as well as a certain degree of self-referentiality of Jewish texts over and above cultural context. The other position advocates reading Jewish texts as responding to and participating in their respective cultural milieu, however broadly conceived, whether that be the Roman or Persian empires, medieval Christian or Muslim Europe, and so forth.

This series, entitled as broadly as possible, is to provide a framework for bringing scholars to Stanford campus who are working and thinking about the connection between Jewish text and culture, between text and context, and to articulate the interpretive and analytic means by which such linkages are established. This includes, of course, questioning the very nature of text and culture. Just as culture is by no means a self-evident term anymore, if it ever has been, so it is with text, and even more so with Jewish text. Our goal is not only to introduce the Stanford community to the rich tapestry of Jewish textual traditions but also to enrich our ongoing conversations about the significance of studying Jewish literatures in the context of the humanities.

In 2006–07, the series was sponsored by a special grant from the Shenson Fund. The 2007–08 lectures will be co-sponsored by Stuart Epstein for his twenty-fifth class reunion.

2006–07 Lectures

October 4, 2006

Ilana Pardes, Professor of Comparative Literature, Hebrew University, Jerusalem: “Melville’s Inconsolable Rachel and the Rise of Women’s Bibles”

November 2, 2006

Naomi Seidman, Professor of Jewish Culture, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley: “Faithful Renderings: Jewish-Christian Difference and the Politics of Translation”

February 6, 2007

Aharon Shemesh, Professor at Talmud Bar-Ilan University: “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Beginning of Midrash”

February 6, 2007

A performance by **Andrea Hodos** (co-sponsored with Hillel at Stanford, the Harold and Libby Ziff Center for Jewish Life, and the Department of Drama): “Cutting My Hair in Jerusalem”

March 15, 2007

Gil Klein, Ph.D. candidate, Cambridge University: “Consecrating the City: Late Antique Sepphoris and the Constitution of Rabbinic Urban Topography”

May 15, 2007

Steven Weitzman, Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University: “Apocalypse Then: Eschatology and Violence in Jewish Antiquity”

A PREVIEW OF TEXT AND CULTURE EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2007–08

Richard Kalmin, Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics, Jewish Theological Seminary

James Kugel, Professor of Bible, Bar Ilan University: “Some Thoughts on ‘How to Read the Bible’”

Moshe Halbertal, Professor of Jewish thought and philosophy, Hebrew University: “If it weren’t written in scripture it could not have been said”

EVENTS

The Sephardi Studies Project

ARON RODRIGUE, DIRECTOR



In conjunction with the Taube Center for Jewish Studies, the Mediterranean Studies Forum has launched a new initiative, the Sephardi Studies Project: a new venue to explore the history and culture of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries. It will also develop a website that will include representative samples of writings in various Judeo languages of the Sephardim over the ages, starting with Ladino. The Sephardi Studies Project held its first international symposium in March 2007, entitled “Sephardi Identities on the Margins of Europe” (*see details below*).

Digitized Ladino Library

By **Isaac Jerusalemi**, Professor of Bible and Semitic Languages, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio, and author of *The Song of Songs in the Targumic Tradition* (1993).

At the request of Aron Rodrigue, I am pleased to write this introduction to the Digitized Ladino Library project initiated by Stanford University. As natives of Istanbul, he and I share the same Eastern Sephardic background of Ladino speakers whose number has been on a steady decline since the end of World War II. The suffering and destruction inflicted on the Jewish people spared no one. Particularly harsh was the situation of East Mediterranean Jewry, whose cultural heritage was severely damaged, with Salonika almost

wiped off the map and its rabbinical academies and libraries decimated.

The purpose of this Digitized Ladino Library is to place on the Internet a corpus of Ladino printed books, and even a few manuscripts, for easy access by scholars as well as students of Ladino throughout the world. I had already worked on a number of Ladino books in the past and was delighted when Professor Rodrigue wished to include these books in this new series.

For the complete essay describing the Digitized Ladino Library and to view the texts, visit the Sephardi Project website: http://www.stanford.edu/group/mediterranean/seph_project.

Sephardi Studies Conferences

March 11–12, 2007

Sephardi Identities on the Margins of Europe

Stanford University

Participants:

Miriam Bodian
Olga Borovaya
Harvey Goldberg
Matt Goldish
David Graizbord
Matthias Lehmann
Frances Malino
Jonathan Ray
Aron Rodrigue
Daniel Schroter
Sarah Abrevaya Stein

November 2007

Sephardi Trajectories: Complexity and Diversity of Identities

La Sorbonne, Paris

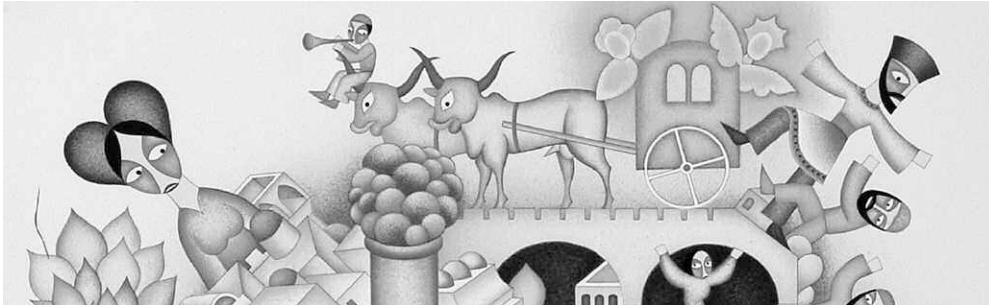
Participants:

Jean Christophe Attias
Rifat Bali
Esther Benbassa
Marcy Brink Danan
Julia Cohen
Sylvie Courtine-Denamy
Dina Danon
Glenda Gambus
Hélène Guillon
Angela Guidi
Tirtsah Levie-Bernfeld
Devin Naar
Béatrice Perez-Dequeker
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Eva Touboul Tardieu
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Jacques Magen
Nicolas Schwaller
Vincent Vilmain

EVENTS

Hebrew@Stanford and the Israel Project

VERED SHEMTOV, COORDINATOR



Detail – Image: S-210 David Sharir, “City of David,” Lithograph, 1985. Ed: 1/400. Published by Safrai Gallery, Jerusalem, Israel, www.safrai.com.

With the very generous support of a three-year grant from the Koret Foundation, the Taube Center for Jewish Studies has launched the Israel/Hebrew Project in order to promote the study of issues related to the teaching of Hebrew language and literature and of Israel.

The project concentrates, broadly speaking, on the diverse culture of Israel—its literature, film, language, drama, music, and art. The project enhances the already growing minor track in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures and the Major and Minor in Jewish Studies. It enriches the teaching with guest lectures, public events, conferences, and workshops, and it engages the Stanford community in an intellectual dialogue about Israeli culture in relation to other fields.

We are working closely with many organizations and programs, such as the Hoover Institution, the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages (and the specific units within that division), the Mediterranean Studies Forum, and the European Forum, to create thought-provoking intellectual dialogues and to make the study of Israeli culture an integral part of academic life at Stanford. Our goal is to build on the success of our Hebrew program, now recognized as groundbreaking in its field, and to create a leading venue for the teaching and research of Israel at Stanford.

The goals and strategic planning for the project were discussed in the first advisory meeting, which included faculty members from different departments: Gili Drori (International Relations), Amir Eshel (Comparative Literature, German, and Director of the Forum for the Study of Europe), Charlotte Fonrobert (Religious Studies and Co-Director of Jewish Studies), Norman Naimark (History and Director of the Stanford Overseas Program), Amos Nur (Geology), Yoav Shoham (Computer Science), Vered Shemtov (Middle Eastern Languages and Literatures and Co-Director of Jewish Studies), and Steven J. Zipperstein (History and former Director of Jewish Studies). Initial discussion also included Arnold Eisen (Religious Studies). The project is already working with many additional affiliated scholars in the Hebrew program and the Drama Department.

Israel Studies Visiting Faculty

The Israel Project Visiting Faculty Program brings to Stanford major scholars in a variety

of fields and enables students to be exposed to areas and questions that are not regularly studied on campus. The Israel Project visiting faculty also helps our scholars and students develop connections with other institutions that might lead to further collaborations between Stanford and universities in Israel as well as around the world. As part of his or her residency at Stanford, the visiting scholar gives a public lecture.

In 2006–07, we hosted **Rachel Albeck-Gidron** from Bar Ilan University.

In 2007–08, we will be hosting **Dan Miron** from Columbia University and emeritus of Hebrew University of Jerusalem, **Yifat Holzman-Gazit** is Associate Professor at the College of Management Law School in Rishon Le’zion, Israel.

The Israel Studies Speaker Series

This speaker series promotes a culture of reading Israeli literature at Stanford and in the local community by holding lectures and discussions for students, the Stanford community, the Israeli community, and the general public. Guest authors and faculty lead these forums, which usually include a short lecture followed by an open discussion. These are extremely popular events that have attracted large crowds. The list of speakers for 2006–07 is below. For 2007–08, we have coordinated with the Israel Center in San Francisco a special program entitled “Israeli Pages” that brings to the Bay Area Israeli authors for a series of lectures.

October 18, 2006

Hagit Halperin, Professor of Hebrew Literature, Tel Aviv University: “A Pigeon and a Boy: From Bialik to Shalev” (in Hebrew)

Stanford University
Taube Center for Jewish Studies

Conferences

March 28–29, 2007
**International Conference on
Hebrew Poetry in Cultural Context**

Stanford University

Participants:

Rachel Albeck-Gidron
Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi
Amir Eshel
Michal Gluzman
Hannan Hever
Chana Kronfeld
Avidov Lipsker
Barbara Mann
Na'ama Rokem
Vered Shemtov
Hamutal Tsamir
Anat Weissman

September 5–7, 2007

Sami Michael and Jewish Iraqi Literature

Stanford University in collaboration with
Heksherim Institute Ben Gurion University
of the Negev

Hebrew@Stanford and the Israel Project
coordinated this conference with the
Heksherim Institute in Israel. (*See, in this
Report, the excerpt from the book published for
the occasion of the conference.*)

Participants:

Robert Alter
Nancy Berg
Nitza Ben-Dov
Edna Amir-Coffin
Uri S. Cohen
Nili Gold
Salem Jurban
Lital Levy
Naama Levintal
Sami Michael
Vered Shemtov
Batya Shimoni
Sasson Somekh
Aliza Shenhar
Ella Shohat
Yigal Schwartz
Najem Wali

Special screening: *Between Two Notes*
(sponsored by **Marian and Abe Sofaer**)

November 3, 2006

A conversation (in Hebrew) with the Israeli
author **Amir Gutfreund** (co-sponsored with the
Consulate General of Israel in San Francisco,
Jewish Community Relations Council, and
Stanford Hillel): “Our Holocaust”

December 7, 2006

Glenda Abramson, Professor of Hebrew and
Jewish Studies, University of Oxford: “Hebrew
Literature of the First World War”

January 24, 2007

Yael S. Feldman, Abraham I. Katsh Professor
of Hebrew Culture and Education, New York
University (co-sponsored with the Text
and Culture Speaker Series): “On the Cusp of
Christianity: Virgin Sacrifice from Pseudo
Philo to Amos Oz”

February 15, 2007

Author **Maya Arad** in conversation about
her new book: “Seven Moral Failings (Sheva
Midot Raot)”

March 14, 2007

Yigal Schwartz, Professor of Hebrew Literature,
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev: “On
Continuing Revolutions and Other Places:
Poetics and Politics in Israeli Literature”

April 11, 2007

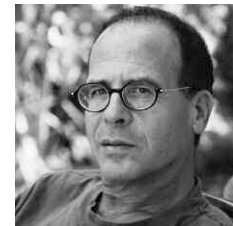
A conversation and film excerpts with the
Israeli author and screenwriter **Etgar Keret** (co-
sponsored with the Israeli Consulate and the
Jewish Community Center of San Francisco):
“On Talking Fish and Hairy Soccer Loving
Girlfriends”

Israeli Pages Speakers Series

In collaboration with the San Francisco Israel
Center and the JCCSF, we present a special
lecture series featuring Israel’s finest literary
voices. The authors, whose works were
translated to English, represent a wide array of
Israeli society and culture. At Stanford, the
authors will participate in panels with scholars
in the field to discuss different aspects of their
work. The series will bridge between writing,
reading and research through a variety of
activities in classes, public lectures and different
venues across the bay. “Book Club in a Box”
will provide local book clubs (both in English
and in Hebrew) with copies of books by the
featured authors, background information,
interviews, reviews and additional material for
creating engaging discussions. Co-sponsored
with the Israeli Consulate.

Visiting authors during the academic year
of 2007–08 are:

Sami Michael
Meir Shalev
Michal Govrin
Sayed Kashua
Agi Mishol
A.B. Yehoshua
Guest Author 2008: David Grossman



*Meir Shalev, Israeli
Pages Speaker Series.*



created unprecedented visibility of Hebrew culture on campus. It brought together over 800 people from the local community to hear Oz speak about Israeli literature and history, and it engaged students and faculty from many departments in a two-week discussion of the many issues at the center of Oz's work. Oz held special seminars devoted to issues such as fanaticism, writing literature in Israel, and growing up in the 1940s and 1950s in Jerusalem. These sessions were attended by many Stanford professors and scholars from different departments and by many students. Students and faculty who attended these events and wanted to continue their conversation with Oz were able to attend his open-office hours. In preparation for his visit, two courses about Oz's work were offered (in Hebrew and in English). In addition, we invited two scholars (Yael Feldman, New York University, and Yigal Schwartz, Ben Gurion University of the Negev) to present lunch-seminars that discuss Oz's work in the context of Israeli literature and thought.

“I write in Hebrew, I dream in Hebrew, I cry and laugh in Hebrew. That’s my musical instrument. I may not be a terrible chauvinist for my country, but I am a hopeful chauvinist for Hebrew.”

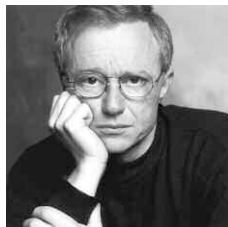
Amos Oz, NPR interview

Guest Author Program

This program puts renowned writers in direct contact with students, the Stanford community, and the local community at large. An author's visit strengthens the connections between teaching, the practice of literature, and Israeli culture.

The 2006–07 Guest Author Program was made possible by the generous support of **Yoav Shoham** and **Noa Eliasaf Shoham**.

To inaugurate the program, our guest author in 2006–07 was the distinguished Israeli novelist **Amos Oz**. His visit was co-sponsored with Stanford's Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages' Writer in Residence program. This extremely successful visit



Guest Authors in the Future

*In 2007–08, the program will be hosting **A. B. Yehoshua** (left).*

*In 2008–09, **David Grossman** will join us as the Taube Center for Jewish Studies guest author (middle).*

***Agi Mishol**, Israeli Pages Speaker Series (right).*

Hebraica and Judaica Collections

ZACHARY BAKER, CURATOR

HEIDI G. LERNER, CATALOGER

ANNA M. LEVIA, LIBRARY SPECIALIST

The Judaica and Hebraica Collections in the Stanford University Libraries support research and instruction in all aspects of Jewish Studies: history; literature; linguistics; cultural studies; and contemporary social, political, and cultural developments in the United States, in Israel, and throughout the world. Following are descriptions of several of our collections.

The Taube-Baron Collection of Jewish History and Culture

Salo W. Baron, of Columbia University, held the first Jewish History Chair established in the United States (1930–63). His 20,000-volume collection includes Hebrew editions of the Bible dating from the fifteenth century, rare volumes of Jewish literature and history from Eastern Europe and around the world, works on Jewish Americana, Jewish anthropology, and sociology, and thousands of pamphlets and journals. The Baron collection was acquired with the generous support of the **Jewish Community Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, and Marin and Sonoma Counties**, and the family of **Tad Taube**. In recognition of Mr. Taube's appreciation of the need for a major collection of Judaica and Hebraica at Stanford University, the collection has been designated the Taube-Baron Collection of Jewish History and Culture.

The Samson/Copenhagen Judaica Collection

This collection includes close to 2,000 works printed in over 115 locations from 1517 to 1939. These books cover a wide range of topics, including Bible and Talmud texts and commentaries, Jewish law and ritual, Jewish liturgy, rabbinical responsa, treatises on Jewish law (halakhah), scientific works in Hebrew, kabbalah, apologetics, bibliography, the sciences, ephemeral publications relating to the Jewish communities of Denmark and other northern European countries, and even poetry. About half of the books were printed before 1800 in places as far flung as Amsterdam and Calcutta. Enhancing their value for research, many of the volumes contain handwritten, marginal notations by rabbis and other scholars. The books in the Samson Collection belonged to the Jewish Community of Copenhagen, Denmark,

until the early 1980s, when they were purchased by Herman R. Samson, a native of Copenhagen. Their acquisition by Stanford in 2003 was made possible by a lead grant from the **Koret Foundation**, with funding assistance from the **Jewish Community Endowment Fund** and private donors.

Other Major Collections

The Jo and Rabbi Jacob Milgrom Collection. Rabbi Milgrom was Professor of Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. This collection contains over 5,000 monographs and serial titles in Hebrew and English, and it is particularly strong in biblical and rabbinical literature.

The collection of the late Rabbi William G. Braude (1907–88), containing over 6,000 volumes, is strong in its holdings of early biblical and rabbinical exegesis and homiletics. It was purchased through the generosity of the Ron and Anita Wornick Family Foundation and is therefore known as the **Wornick/Braude Collection**.

The Ezra Lahad Collection, containing over 2,000 titles in Hebrew and Yiddish, constitutes a major resource on the Yiddish and Hebrew theaters. Ezra Lahad (1918–95) immigrated to Palestine in 1935 and collected extensively on the Yiddish theater. Smaller collections have also helped us to enrich our holdings in specific areas. The Barbara and Ken Oshman Fund and the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation have provided support for the processing and preservation of these materials.

For more information, check our website: <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/jewishstudies/research/libraries.html>

THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Building On Our Strengths: Collecting on Israel and Hebrew Culture

BY ZACHARY M. BAKER, REINHARD FAMILY CURATOR OF JUDAICA AND HEBRAICA

One of the hallmarks of the Stanford Library's holdings of Judaica and Hebraica is that they have been built up quickly, through the absorption of a succession of substantial scholarly collections. In 1986, Stanford acquired the first of these: the personal library of the eminent Jewish historian Salo W. Baron (1895–1989), now known as the **Taube-Baron Collection**. Then, in the space of little over a decade, our holdings in this domain grew by leaps and bounds through the strategic acquisition of collections that filled in major gaps in the Library's holdings on Hebrew Bible Studies, rabbinica, and Hebrew and Yiddish literature.

One of my first assignments after arriving at Stanford in 1999 was to put together a small exhibit of items from one of these collections, that of the Israeli editor and literary scholar **Israel Cohen** (1905–86). The Cohen Collection is particularly strong on Hebrew publications issued in the Jewish *Yishuv* of Palestine before 1948, which document both the revival of the Hebrew language and the development of the nascent Jewish polity that became the State of Israel. For me, working with these materials was something of a revelation, especially given my prior experience working at the YIVO Institute in New York—an emphatically “Diasporist” organization. Since then, whenever possible, I have sought to augment Stanford's holdings of interesting and unusual Israeli materials.

For example, since 2001 we have acquired hundreds of contemporary **art exhibition and auction catalogues** published in Israel. These are produced by such major art venues as the Israel Museum and the Tel Aviv Museum as well as by small, specialized galleries including the Marcel Janco Dada Museum in En Hod, the Open Museum at the Tefen Industrial Park in the Galilee, and the Umm-El-Fahim Art Gallery in an Arab town near Hadera. The visual arts play a major role in Israeli culture, and, taken as a whole, Stanford's sizable and growing collection of exhibition catalogues represents a unique documentary resource.

From time to time we are offered fascinating and unique archival collections. I will mention four that we have acquired in recent years. The first of these is the **Simcha Blass Hydrology of Israel Collection** (M1438), acquired in 2004. Water resources are of critical interest to the State of Israel and its inhabitants, from both a practical and a political standpoint. Simcha Blass (1897–1982) was an engineer who also served as the head of the Water Department in Israel's Agriculture Ministry during the early period of statehood. This small collection of documents, which Blass assembled, ties in to scholarly interest in Middle Eastern Studies and to other collections at Stanford that deal with hydrology.

The **Eisig Silberschlag Papers** (M1479), acquired in 2005, contain manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, clippings, photocopies, writings by others, and ephemera collected over a period of six decades by the noted American Hebrew educator, translator, poet, and scholar Eisig Silberschlag (1903–88). These papers, which are currently being processed, contain a wealth of correspondence with dozens of important Hebrew authors in America, Israel, and Europe. The collection is particularly significant for its documentation of the circle of American Hebraists connected

with the prestigious journal *Hadoar*. (See the letter to Silberschlag from David Vogel, on the following page.)

The **Haim Perl Collection on Bene Berak** (M1576), acquired in 2005, is a small collection of documents, correspondence, and handbills dealing with the early history of the town of Bene Berak, near Tel Aviv. These materials were originally collected by Haim Perl (1890–1954), a religious Zionist who was one of the town's founders. Perl's great-grandson was the late journalist Daniel Pearl (1963–2002)—a Stanford graduate (Class of '85) who was murdered in Pakistan while on assignment for *The Wall Street Journal*.

In February 2005, after attending the Jerusalem International Book Fair, the Israeli bookseller Eliasaf Robinson invited me to visit his home and look over his extensive personal collection of books, pamphlets, journals, documents, photographs, postcards, posters, maps, architectural plans, and ephemera relating to the early history of Tel Aviv. Later that year, I returned to Mr. Robinson's flat to supervise the packing and shipping of this marvelous collection, which Stanford was able to acquire with support from Koret Foundation Funds and the Jewish Community Endowment Fund. Anna Levia, my Curatorial Assistant, has painstakingly arranged the archival component of the **Eliasaf Robinson Tel Aviv Collection** (M1522). In 2009, Stanford will mark the hundredth anniversary of the “First Hebrew City” with an exhibition that will showcase this important collection. Plans are also under way to digitize major components of it and thereby make its contents accessible far beyond the confines of the university.

Donors and Gifts



Above from left: Janusz Reiter, Ambassador to the United States for the Republic of Poland, Dianne Taube, Tad Taube, Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland, Paulina Kapuscinska, Consul General for the Republic of Poland and George Slawek, US-Polish Trade Council.

Tad Taube Named Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland

Jewish Studies faculty and students congratulate Tad Taube for his nomination as Honorary Consul for the Republic of Poland. He joins a select group of 15 consuls general and 6 honorary consuls. Taube's mission is to serve as a source of information and connection for

business and cultural relationships between Poland and the South Bay. The appointment is an extension of his ongoing work with Poland to preserve Jewish cultural heritage and renew Jewish life. For the complete article, go to *Palo Alto Daily*, <http://www.paloaltdailynews.com/article/2007-10-14-taube-honorary-consul>.



The David S. Lobel Visiting Scholar in Jewish Studies Fund

We are pleased to announce a new Endowed Fund in Jewish Studies. David S. Lobel has generously pledged to donate \$200,000. The gift qualified for matching funds from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for a total funding of \$400,000. The fund will sponsor scholars whose academic focus is Jewish Studies, including but not limited to study of the Bible, Jewish mysticism, and/or

Jewish philosophy and theology in the ancient, medieval, and modern periods. Although the primary focus of the scholar's teaching will be undergraduate students who are interested in deepening their understanding of Judaism, the scholar's activities need not be limited to teaching undergraduates. We thank Mr. Lobel for his important contribution, and we are excited about the opportunity to offer new courses and expose more students to Jewish thought.

Thank You to Our Generous Donors: Gifts for Academic Year 2006-07

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Vered Shemtov with Eva Chernov Lokey.

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- Taube Fellowship
- L. Jay and Gretchen Tenenbaum Fund

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- The Jewish Community Endowment
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- Koret Foundation Grant for the Israeli Culture Project
- Shenson Foundation

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Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture

STEVEN J. ZIPPERSTEIN AND ARON RODRIGUE, EDITORS

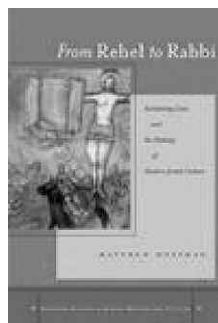
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Mordechai Nadav

The Jews of Pinsk, 1506–1880

Edited by Mark Mirsky and Moshe Rosman (2007)



Matthew Hoffman

From Rebel to Rabbi: Reclaiming Jesus and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture

(2007)

Pierre Birnbaum

Geography of Hope: Exile, the Enlightenment, Disassimilation

translated by Charlotte Mandell

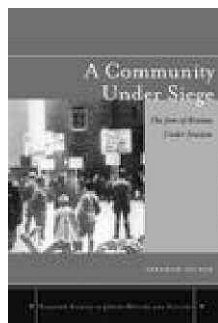
(available in early 2008)



Zachary Braiterman

The Shape of Revelation: Aesthetics and Modern Jewish Thought

(2007)



Abraham Ascher

A Community under Siege: The Jews of Breslau under Nazism

(2007)

Other Jewish Studies Publications from Stanford Press

Gil Anidjar,

Semites: Race, Religion, Literature (2007)

Joel Beinin and Rebecca L. Stein, eds.,

The Struggle for Sovereignty: Palestine and Israel, 1993–2005 (2006)

Sara Guyer,

Romanticism After Auschwitz (2007)

Benjamin Harshav,

Explorations in Poetics (2007)

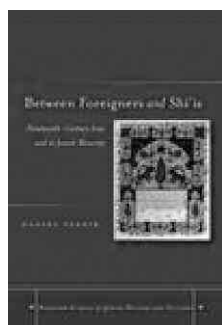
Benjamin Harshav,

The Polyphony of Jewish Culture (2007)

Dana Hollander,

Exemplarity and Chosenness: Rosenzweig and Derrida on the Nation of Philosophy (2007)

The Zohar 4: Pritzker Edition, Volume Four, translation and commentary by Daniel C. Matt (2007)



Daniel Tsadik

Between Foreigners and Shi'is: Nineteenth-Century Iran and Its Jewish Minority

(2007)



Anita Norich

Discovering Exile: Yiddish and Jewish American Culture During the Holocaust

(available in 2008)

Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society (*new series*)

EDITED BY DEREK PENSLAR, ARON RODRIGUE, AND STEVEN J. ZIPPERSTEIN

This journal is published three times a year (fall, winter, and spring/summer) by Indiana University Press. It is a project of the Conference on Jewish Social Studies and is funded, in part, by grants from the **Koret Foundation** and the **Lucius N. Littauer Foundation**.

Volume 13, Number 1 (Fall 2006)

Jonathan Krasner, “The Interwar Family and American Jewish Identity in Clifford Odets’s *Awake and Sing!*”

Yaron Peleg, “Heroic Conduct: Homoeroticism and the Creation of Modern, Jewish Masculinities”

Dan A. Porat, “The Nation Revised: Teaching the Jewish Past in the Zionist Present, 1890–1913”

Brian Horowitz, “Russian-Zionist Cultural Cooperation, 1916–18: Leib Jaffe and the Russian Intelligentsia”

Maya Balakirsky-Katz, “Émile Zola, the Cochonnerie of Naturalist Literature, and the *Jüdensau*”

Amos Morris-Reich, “Project, Method, and the Racial Characteristics of Jews: A Comparison of Franz Boas and Hans F. K. Günther”

Daniel J. Schroeter and Joseph Chetrit, “Emancipation and Its Discontents: Jews at the Formative Period of Colonial Rule in Morocco”

Volume 13, Number 2 (Winter 2007)

Sarah Abrevaya Stein, “Mediterranean Jewries and Global Commerce in the Modern Period: On the Trail of the Jewish Feather Trade”

Samantha Baskind, “Bernard Picart’s Etchings of Amsterdam’s Jews”

Lois C. Dubin, “Jewish Women, Marriage Law, and Emancipation: A Civil Divorce in Late-Eighteenth-Century Trieste”

Michael Clark, “Jewish Identity in British Politics: The Case of the First Jewish MPs, 1858–87”

Mara Benjamin, “Building a Zion in German(y): Franz Rosenzweig on Yehudah Halevi”

Nurit Stadler, “Playing with Sacred/Corporeal Identities: Yeshivah Students’ Fantasies of Military Participation”

Stephen Sharot, “The Kaifeng Jews: A Reconsideration of Acculturation and Assimilation in a Comparative Perspective”

Volume 13, Number 3 (Spring/Summer 2007)

Matthias B. Lehmann, “*Levantinos* and Other Jews: Reading H. Y. D. Azulai’s Travel Diary”

Julie Kalman, “Sensuality, Depravity, and Ritual Murder: The Damascus Blood Libel and Jews in France”

Zvi Jonathan Kaplan, “The Thorny Area of Marriage: Rabbinic Efforts to Harmonize Jewish and French Law in Nineteenth-Century France”

Sven-Erik Rose, “Lazarus Bendavid’s and J. G. Fichte’s Kantian Fantasies of Jewish Decapitation in 1793”

Maura Hametz, “Zionism, Emigration, and Antisemitism in Trieste: Central Europe’s ‘Gateway to Zion,’ 1896–1943”

Joanna Michlic, “The Soviet Occupation of Poland, 1939–41, and the Stereotype of the Anti-Polish and Pro-Soviet Jew”

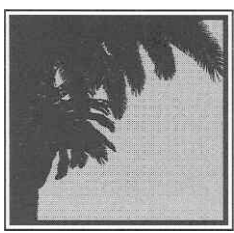
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זר המדבר דוגמא לכל הדורות. ומי שהיה בבית
שבי השך וצלמות [אסירי עני וברזל וגו'], כי שיע
. ומי שחלה ונתרפא, מן הדא אוילים מדרך פ
ז לה' חסדו וגו' ויזכרו זרמי תודה. שיזכרות

זווי. חד גדיא חד גדיא
ט לשוחט. דשחט לתור
לחוטרא. דהפה לכלב
רי זווי. חד גדיא חד גדיא

הוא מהנהגים, וזה נמשך
בשם רש"י קף מהמרו של הקב"ה
ק, אלא נתתי את הארץ הזאת:
ו' בפסוק וישע ה' ציוס הוא כל
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ה' ויזיח אתכם מכור הברזל וגו' (שם)
וטל הזהב מן הכור, כך הוליא ה
זל, ובמכילתא שם מוצא המאמר ה
מאמר שלפנינו ממדרש תהלים מוצא
ה רבותינו. כ"ה גס בכ"ו ו', ובכ"ו
ה לישראל. הוספתי כמו שהוא בכ"ו
שם השו"ס: (יב) תעו במדבר ת
, ופי' שם המ"כ נואלס משמע
וסף לפני זה א"ר הונא בשם ר
גרו של הקב"ה מעשה הוא ואחר
איתא כך: לזרעך נתתי וגו' ר' הו
עך נתתי, אתן את הארץ הזאת
ה נתון. נוצט ממכילתא בשלח מס
אדם שאם יכזוש ידו משט הוא
הגסה אלהים לבא לקחת לו גוי מנ
שומט את העובר ממעי הפרה, ואל
נשמוט ממכילתא וכשם שהזכיר הז
ים, שנאמר ואתכם לקח ויזיח א
ה, איז ספק שנשמוט משגיגה ה



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במדבר. ותן ונתן או בעה צויבין להודות,
מדברות. מן הדא דכתיב תעו במדבר בישומון

לחוטרא. דהפה לכלב