

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Taube Center for Jewish Studies

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ולחוטרא. דהכה לכלבא
די זוני. חד גדיא חד גדיא

במדבר. תמן ותנין ארבעה צריכין להודות,
מדברות, מן הדא דכתיב תעו במדבר בישומון
ור המדבר דוגמא לכל הדורות. ומי שהיה בבית
שבי חשך וצלמות [אסירי עני וברזל וגו'], כי שיב
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'ו לה' חסדו וגו' ויזבחו זבחי תודה, שזובחים יז

שמע כבר: (ח) וממי את למד.
ר' שמואל בר נחמן וממוקם אחר
את למד מאברהם, וזה נאסר ג"כ
ס רשב"ג אף מאמרו של הקב"ה מן
אלה נתתי את הארץ הזאת: (ט)
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הסו"ט: (יב) תעו במדבר תנן
ופי' שם המ"כ גואלס משמע לה
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של הקב"ה מעשה הוא ואחר ז
א קד: לזרעך נתתי וגו' ר' הוגא
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מט את העובר ממעי הפרה, ואומר
פניו ממכילתא ונאם אהני



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Taube Center for Jewish Studies

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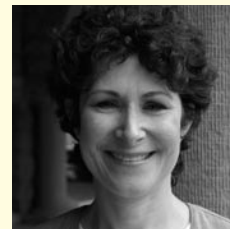
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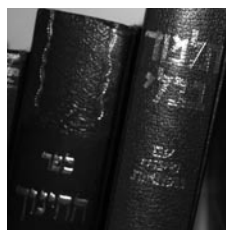
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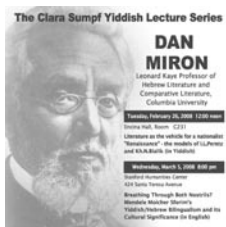
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DIRECTORS' MESSAGE

Jewish Studies at Stanford: Connections

In the last two years, the center expanded the collaboration with a variety of programs across the university as well as other universities and the local community. As a result, we were able to introduce and maintain interest in the study of Jewish culture.

These past two years, the Taube Center for Jewish Studies at Stanford University has gone through a period of transition. We are extremely happy to report that, with the help of the dedicated work of our affiliated faculty and our staff, the Center has continued to grow and to strengthen its presence in the university. Two years ago, we were fortunate enough to take over the directorship of a Jewish Studies program that had established a great reputation nationally and internationally and that had found a great deal of support from our community in the Bay Area. We have striven to continue building on that strong foundation.

The faculty constitutes the backbone of any academic program. Given the current state of the economy, we were lucky to be able to fill the hole that the departure of our well-respected senior colleague Arnold Eisen had left, as he went to take the helm of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. As of this July, Steven P. Weitzman from Indiana University's Jewish Studies program joined Stanford's Department of Religious Studies. Steve's field is Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature, so together with Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert we will have a new concentration in the classical texts and literature of Judaism at Stanford.

Beyond replacing this core position, our further goal has been to expand our affiliated faculty and thus to create more connections across the university campus. Shelley Fisher Fishkin from American Studies and Jonathan Berger from Music have agreed to join us, so we have now assembled a group of scholars from fields that reach far beyond the traditional academic areas of Jewish Studies: history, religion, and literature. This wonderful group of colleagues enables us to expand our collaboration with a variety of programs and departments across the university, and thus — we hope — to introduce and maintain interest in the study of Jewish culture at Stanford University as broadly as possible.

With regard to our most immediate affiliation as a Center, we have significantly strengthened our relationship with the Center of Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE). Not only are our offices located in their building, but CCSRE generously let us have one of their rooms so that now, for the first time, Jewish Studies at Stanford has a room of its own: the Jewish Studies lounge, where the directors can hold their meetings and students can go to hang out and relax or study in chevruta. As one of CCSRE's ethnic studies programs, we are participating in their directors' meetings of affiliated faculty and retreats. In terms of programming, Jewish Studies contributed significantly to the "Race Forward" initiative, launched by the African and African American Studies program (AAAS), supported by the President's Fund. This past year's theme had been Race and Faith, so throughout the year we collaborated with AAAS to generate mutual interest in our respective communities of study.

Our commitment to forming connections and collaboration also led to another significant expansion, namely into the area of arts. Over the past three years, Stanford University has launched a major initiative in the arts, forming a new institute (Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts) and building a new performing arts facility. With the help of our donors, in particular the Shenson Brothers Fund, as well as of our affiliated faculty, and especially due to our collaboration with the Lively Arts Program and its generous director, Jenny Bilfield, we were able to respond to Stanford's challenge to initiate a special project to promote the study of Jewish arts, with a particular focus on music, literature, and film. The project has enabled us to bring a number of exciting musicians and authors to campus, ranging from Israeli fusion music to contemporary American music, from Israeli authors to American authors. Hence, the

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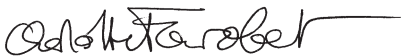
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Stanford community had plenty of opportunity to contemplate complex relationship between Jewish culture and identity and artistic creativity.

Finally, our goal to establish collaborative efforts also took the form of strengthening the relationship among Jewish Studies programs in the Bay Area. Our Text and Culture series launched a series of annual so-called block seminars, co-sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies at the Graduate Theological Union and the Taubman Chair for the Study of Rabbinic Culture. Over the past two years, we have invited major scholars from Israel to come and teach two-week seminars for graduate students from Berkeley and Stanford, one of the rare opportunities for our students to get to know each other better and work together. The goal of the block seminar is to supplement the education that our students receive here on the West Coast with the textual and philological scholarship that is the focus of graduate-student training at Israeli universities, particularly for classical Jewish texts.

These collaborative efforts reflect back on the way our graduate students work. Our graduate-student body has expanded, and we will have one of the largest incoming groups this academic year. Although the graduate students at the Center for Jewish Studies have their primary home in their respective departments, they have come to work together across departmental and disciplinary boundaries, establishing working relationships among themselves as well as with Jewish Studies faculty from other departments. Thus, over the past two years we have started to form much more of an intellectual community. The credit for this goes primarily to the students, as they realize that their professional training requires more of an interdisciplinary scope than had been the case only a few years ago.

All this took a lot of hard work, but we are pleased with the results and grateful for the positive responses from our colleagues, students, and community members. We are also very grateful to the donors who enable us to do this work, in particular the Koret Foundation, David Lobel, and the Shenson Brothers Fund. It is with great pleasure and excitement that we look forward to this next year of study and learning through the wide variety of programs, courses, and lectures that we have been able to plan.



Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert
Co-Director



Vered Karti Shemtov
Co-Director

RESEARCH

King Solomon and the Quest for Impossible Knowledge

BY STEVEN P. WEITZMAN



PROFESSOR STEVEN P. WEITZMAN joined our faculty as of July 1, 2009. We are fortunate that we could lure him away from his position at Indiana University, where he held the Irving M. Glazer Chair in Jewish Studies and served as Director of Jewish Studies. At Stanford, his position is in the Department of Religious Studies.

The focus of Weitzman's research and teaching is the Hebrew Bible and early Jewish culture and literature before 100 C.E., the latter encompassing Jewish Greek texts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writing. In recent work, he has been especially interested in the role of violence in early Jewish culture. Recent publications in this area include *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), a study of how early Jews sustained the Jerusalem Temple and other religious traditions in a world dominated by foreign rulers, along with related essays in the *Journal of Religion*, the *Harvard Theological Review*, the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, and the *Journal of Jewish Studies*. Shifting his focus from how ancient Jews survived violence to why they perpetrated it themselves, he is currently working on a book that will try to deepen our understanding of the relationship between violence and religion in the formation of Jewish culture.

He has also had a long-standing interest in the so-called literary approach to the Bible, an interest reflected in his first book, *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) and in more recent studies of Deuteronomy and the Samson narrative. Currently, he is finishing a book on the biography of King Solomon.

A few years ago my colleague Steve Zipperstein invited me to propose a book for a new series of Jewish biographies that he is co-editing with the Israeli scholar Anita Shapira. Most of the biographies in the series were to focus on modern figures, he explained, but they wanted to include a few ancient figures as well. As

I recall, they had in mind for me the prophet Isaiah, but I could not see how to piece together his manic-depressive prophecies into a coherent life story. I suggested instead a biography of my favorite biblical ruler, King Solomon, not just a great ruler but the paradigmatic sage, the builder of the Temple,

and a prolific writer credited with three biblical books — Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes — along with many other compositions that did not make it into the Jewish canon, ranging from collections of pious prayers and songs to magical manuals to abstruse philosophical treatises. Many of these books were thought to reveal secrets unknown to the world, and this, I promised the editors, is what would make Solomon a particularly interesting subject for a biography. There was only one small complication: a biography of Solomon is not actually possible.

The most insurmountable impediment is the absence of the kinds of sources that biographers use to reconstruct the lives of their subjects. To understand who Solomon *really* was, not just to retell the biblical story but to gain insight into the historical Solomon, would require evidence that simply does not exist. The Bible chronicles his life—his birth, accomplishments, downfall, and death—but it is exceedingly difficult to know what is true and what is false in its account, and its testimony is the only evidence that we have. The king is never mentioned in any other ancient Israelite or Near Eastern source.

We did not always know so little about King Solomon. There was a time when biblical scholarship believed it was possible to understand the real Solomon, or at least his kingdom. In the mid-nineteenth century, scholars realized the potential of archaeology to illumine the biblical past, and in the subsequent century they used it to uncover a number of finds that seemed to corroborate the biblical account. If one read a paper like the *New York Times* throughout this period, one might think that scholars had actually discovered not just the kingdom of Solomon but also the mines from which he extracted his copper, the port from which his fleet of ships would sail, and the land of the Queen of Sheba.

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The decipherment of ancient Near Eastern languages like Egyptian and Phoenician offered the potential for still more discoveries, revealing information about the various peoples with whom Solomon interacted and potentially corroborating the existence of Solomon himself. Abraham and Moses, itinerant nomads who never really settled down or built anything meant to endure, are probably beyond the historian's reach, but Solomon at least seemed real, a historical figure whose existence could be demonstrated on the basis of evidence, without having to appeal to faith or tradition.

That optimism is largely a thing of the past, however. Over the past few decades of biblical scholarship, a kind of reverse detective story has unfolded. Monumental structures uncovered in Israel and once confidently attributed to Solomon—the so-called Solomonic stables discovered in the ancient city of Megiddo, Solomonic palaces and defenses, a Solomonic port not far from Eilat—really belong to later periods or else cannot be dated clearly. Not even Solomon's Temple has been corroborated archaeologically; one attempt to excavate it in 1911–12 proved catastrophic when it sparked rioting that some historians regard as the first Palestinian national uprising. In more recent times, what was once regarded as the only surviving relic of Solomon's Temple, a small thumb-sized ivory ornament inscribed with the words "House of the Lord," has been exposed as a sly forgery. Given how much Solomon was supposed to have done in his life, the buildings he built and the texts he wrote, it is surprising that not a single trace of him or his great kingdom has surfaced in the archaeological record, an absence of evidence that has led many scholars to conclude that the biblical account of his reign is largely fictional.

I am not sure I concur entirely with that conclusion, but it is far from clear that we can rely on the biblical testimony for an under-

standing of the king. The problem is not that we know too little but that we know too much; there are just too many reasons to be dubious of its testimony, not just the lack of corroboration but problems internal to the text—exaggerations, inconsistencies, incongruities. Consider the most famous story told of Solomon, the account of his judgment in 1 Kings 3. The story has inscribed itself into our collective imagination largely because of the many illustrations it has inspired, but if one looks closely at some of these depictions, the story itself is more fluid than one remembers. Here, for example, is how the scene was depicted by the great Renaissance master Raphael:



Most of us remember Solomon's order to cut a baby in two: we can call to mind the two women pleading their case before the king; the sword suspended over the baby; the true's mother's plea to spare the child; and the false mother's "cut it." What most of us do not remember is the gruesome presence of the other child's corpse, the child smothered during the night by one of the women, because that is not part of the story as we know it from 1 Kings 3, and yet there its crumpled body lies. Raphael, along with many other artists who included the dead child in their illustrations of the scene, did not make this detail up. The

version of the Hebrew Bible read by Jews today, the Masoretic Bible, does not refer to the presence of the dead child, but certain manuscripts of the Septuagint do, noting that the king—in the Greek version, apparently even more committed to an equitable solution than the Solomon of the Masoretic text—ordered that half of the living child and half of the dead be given to each woman.

Should this detail be part of the story? And if we delete it, where should we stop with such deletions? There is yet another account of Solomon's life in the biblical books of 1–2 Chronicles, and that version makes no mention of Solomon's Judgment whatsoever—in the chronicler's view, the whole episode does not belong in the king's story. Such discrepancies may seem trivial, but they add up in ways that make the story of Solomon's life far more difficult to pin down than one would think.

Such complications might normally be enough to discourage any would-be biographer of Solomon. What inspired me to make the attempt despite the project's impossibility is precisely that Solomon himself embodies the possibility of achieving impossible knowledge. Solomon as he has been imagined in religious tradition, whether that tradition be Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, knew everything there was to know. There was no riddle he could not answer, no problem he could not solve, and he retained that reputation even in the modern age, where he came to be seen as the paradigmatic scientist, a mind able to reach beyond the limits of directly visible experience into the deepest secrets of existence. This, I realized, was why his story was so fascinating for me personally: *Solomon symbolizes precisely the kind of intellectual certitude, the mastery of mystery, that no longer seems possible in our own hyper-skeptical age.* Even knowing how futile it would be to undertake a biography of Solomon, I could not resist

giving it a try if only as a way to explore the genealogy of my own intellectual desire.

I will not reveal here what I came up with in the end because I want you to read the book itself when it finally comes out, but I will acknowledge that it is not exactly a biography of King Solomon in the conventional under-

like knowledge that completely surpassed the limits of human understanding.

This is one of the reasons Solomon became such an important figure in the history of Western culture: his story legitimized the quest for impossible knowledge—mysticism, science, metaphysics, and other ways of knowing what

Columbus and Isaac Newton (both fascinated with different aspect of Solomon's legacy), and into our own age, where Solomon has found admirers that include scientists, writers, judges, rulers, and reggae singers. Their retellings of the king's life fill in the many gaps in the biblical account and are worth recounting not simply because they are pleasantly fanciful and often psychologically astute but also because they register both our culture's desire for transcendent understanding and its anxiety about that knowledge. My book will be cast as a biography of Solomon, but, if the truth be told, the story it is telling is our own, the story of curiosity chafing against its limits and learning the good and the evil that comes with knowing what God knows.

“Given how much Solomon was supposed to have done in his life, the buildings he built and the texts he wrote, it is surprising that not a single trace of him or his great kingdom has surfaced in the archaeological record, an absence of evidence that has led many scholars to conclude that the biblical account of his reign is largely fictional.”

standing of that genre. To be sure, it has the form of an ordinary biography, beginning with Solomon's birth and upbringing, following his rise to power and the building of the Temple, dwelling on his accomplishments and failings, and ending with his downfall and death, but the story it tells is repeatedly disrupted by our ignorance—questions we cannot answer, interpretive forks in the road that lead down deadends no matter which path we take.

Within the gaps in this narrative, a second story unfolds, however—a story not of the king himself but of the desire for wisdom. We often associate that desire with the sages of ancient Greece—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—but these were pagan philosophers, and for Jews and Christians there was often something suspect about the wisdom that they achieved, deriving as it did from sources other than divine revelation. The Bible offered a kosher counterpart to such figures, a sage whose wisdom seemed far greater than that of any other mortal philosopher because it came from God. Whereas the pagan philosopher Aristotle came to embody the heights that observation and logic could reach, Solomon became the symbol for transcendent understanding, a God-

lies beyond the realm of visible experience. But Solomon's wisdom proved to be problematic. It allowed him to accomplish great things, but it failed to save him in the end, doing nothing to stop him from becoming an idolater. Some interpreters believe it actually triggered his downfall in some way. Thus, in addition to personifying perfect wisdom, Solomon came to embody the danger of such wisdom, becoming the prototype of the evil magician or mad scientist whose search for understanding unleashes tragic consequences. What is registered in the interpretive history of Solomon's story, in other words, is a deeply rooted ambivalence about the pursuit of perfect knowledge, a fear that it may be possible to know too much about the world's mysteries.

As little as we can say of the historical Solomon, we can trace the history of this imagined Solomon because it is amply documented in sources that span more than 2,500 years. The history of how Jews, Christians, and Muslims have remembered Solomon is a fascinating one in its own right, stretching from the Second Temple period, through the rabbis of the Talmud and other late antique readers, through early modern figures like Christopher

That, in any case, is how I justify writing a biography that by all rights ought to be impossible to write. The real Solomon is completely beyond our knowledge, but that has not stopped people from trying to find him or learn the secrets to which he was privy. It is precisely in that pushing to know the unknowable that one can recognize something real in the king's story, something recognizably human that connects him to our experience. This, in my view, is what makes his story worth knowing—even by those who know too much to believe in a figure like Solomon.

RESEARCH

On the Concept of “Futurity”

BY AMIR ESHEL



The following article is an excerpt from a lecture presented by PROFESSOR AMIR ESHEL at a conference at the Jewish Museum in Berlin, Germany, in May 2009. He is Professor of German Studies and Comparative Literature and Director of the Forum on Contemporary Europe. The conference was on the topic of “German Jewish Thinking Between Faith and Power.” Professor Eshel is working on a book on the topic of history and memory, in which he develops the concept of “futurity.” His lecture at the conference presented some of that work while also connecting it to the poet—Paul Celan—whose work was the subject of Eshel’s first book, *Die Zeit der Zäsur: Jüdische Lyriker im Angesicht der Shoah* (1999).

On the dreary fall day of October 16, 1963, in Paris, the 43-year-old poet Paul Celan wrote the first draft of one of the most memorable German poems of the twentieth century, “In den Flüssen” (In the Rivers):

In the rivers north of the future
I cast the net that you
haltingly weight
with stonewrit
shadows.¹

The striking metaphor at the center of this short poem is, unquestionably, that of the rivers “north of the future.” Whereas “rivers” and “north” are spatial nouns, “future” is temporal. How can anything be north of the future? Furthermore, if the future marks the time ahead of us in its entirety, how can we conceive of anything that would follow it—a

time beyond time? Before trying to answer these questions in relation to Celan’s poetry and thought, let us turn to another of his unforgettable poems, “Fadensonnen” (Thread Suns), a poem Celan wrote only a month after drafting “In the Rivers”:

Over the gray-black wasteness.
a tree-
high thought
grasps the light-tone: there are
still songs to be sung on the other side
of mankind.

Like “In the Rivers,” with its shadows and stones, “Thread Suns” depicts a bleak landscape, a dark wasteland. Yet the gloom of the first lines stands in stark contrast to images of what is open, of what may *still* come. Indeed, the image of “the other side of mankind”

suggests a place and a time that are utterly outside our previous experiences of these categories of perception; an era of “songs” that will be different from what human history to date—the time of “gray-black wasteness”—has brought about.

Imagining a place and a time that are outside our given spatial and temporal concepts, these two poems offer us a unique perspective on Celan’s writing and thought. They express what I will call throughout this lecture *futurity*.

Futurity marks the ability of poetry to generate new metaphors and images, to create new ways to view our past and present circumstances. Futurity is the capacity of poetic language not only to represent our conditions but also, and significantly, to produce the very language with which we may reshape them. Today, I wish to show how Celan’s poems do not merely reflect the gray-black realities of the twentieth century, especially the Shoah. Rather, I will discuss Celan’s poetry and thought as it offers us an utterly new way to view those realities and, possibly, to address them through action. As we will see, some of Celan’s most notable poems explore our capacity to have a future in spite of historical events of such magnitude that they seem to exclude the viability of a tomorrow altogether.

By concentrating on this capacity, on futurity, I wish to offer a new approach to Celan’s poetry and thought [. . .] as it relates to philosophical discussions in the era following World War II, specifically to what Hannah Arendt has called *natality*: the capacity of humans to begin anew, to set off, to alter their given circumstances regardless how irreversible they may seem.

In its capacity to change our vocabulary, to point to the other and to set us off in a new direction “north of the future” and beyond “mankind” as we know it, Celan’s poetics bears a striking resemblance to Arendt’s thinking.

“Futurity is the capacity of poetic language not only to represent our conditions but also, and significantly, to produce the very language with which we may reshape them.”

As Celan was writing poems such as “Death Fugue,” Arendt was reflecting on Nazism and Stalinism while working on her magisterial *Origins of Totalitarianism*. Concluding this work, Arendt famously turned to the very recent manmade catastrophes of our time and noted:

*But there remains also the truth that every end in history necessarily contains a new beginning; this beginning is the promise, the only “message” which the end can ever produce. Beginning, before it becomes a historical event, is the supreme capacity of man; politically, it is identical with man’s freedom. . . . This beginning is guaranteed by each new birth; it is indeed every man.*²

The center of gravity in these sentences, as in Arendt’s work as a whole, lies in the gesture “[b]ut there remains”: in the face of such recent *end*-points as Nazi antisemitism—a devastation that, given its scope, seems to undo the very notion of a new beginning—Arendt emphasizes futurity. She speaks of what is *still* there as a promise and as a challenge; she stresses the capacity of humans and the dire need for a “new beginning.” As Celan was working on “Engführung” (Stretto) in the late 1950s and considering the tension between the realities of the “shooting range” and the star that still has light, Arendt was concluding her book *The Human Condition* (1958) and, later, *Between Past and Future* (1961).³ These two works spell out what she

meant by “new beginning” as “the supreme capacity of man.”

Considering the link connecting the realms of yesterday and tomorrow in *Between Past and Future*, Arendt notes that the past “is not, as in nearly all our metaphors[,] a *burden man has to shoulder* and of whose dead weight the living . . . must get rid in their march into the future” (10; my emphasis). Rather, what we think of as the “parallelogram of forces” (11)—composed of past, future, and a present that is pressed between them—is, in fact, a more complex mechanism in which the trajectory of time “from” the past “to” the future is constantly disrupted by the emerging of something new: the birth of human beings.⁴

Birth, the “insertion of man,” Arendt argues, breaks what often appears to be the “continuum” (*BPF*, 10) of time. It is not that time moves straightforwardly from the past to an unknown future and that we humans are traveling “in time.” Rather, the constant “insertion” of humans by birth causes the forces of the past and the future to “deflect, *however lightly* from their original direction” (11; my emphasis). With each and every new birth, a new trajectory, however insignificant, begins: a movement, which, just like the thrust of the past and the open-endedness of the future, is infinite, its conclusion never known (11–12).

Arendt’s notion of the past as not merely a burden, not just a gray-black landscape but also a force, points back to her book *Human Condition*. Here, she elaborates on the idea of “insertion” through the concepts of natality and action. Natality is the fundamental human capacity, inscribed in human birth, to “insert” oneself, “[w]ith word and deed . . . into the human world” (176). Born into the world, every newborn becomes instantaneously part of a network made of other speaking and acting human beings. With words and deeds,

Paul Celan, passport photo in 1938.



every person is capable of changing surrounding circumstances, albeit to varying extents.

While Arendt is focused on the distinctiveness of political action and on the spoken word, she herself alludes to literature as a form of insertion in her choice of motto for her discussion of action: Isak Dinesen's statement, "All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them" (*HC*, 175).⁵ Arendt's motto indicates her understanding of literature both as displaying the conditions with which humans are confronted from birth to death and, significantly, as a "cause." She views artworks as transfiguring our circumstances (168). For example, referring to Rilke's poem "Magic," Arendt argues that art presents "a veritable metamorphosis in which it is as though the course of nature which wills that all fire burn to ashes is reverted *and even dust can burst into flames*" (168).

'Inserted' into our given language, poetry is for Arendt an expression of "human potentiality."⁶ It is capable of changing our notions, our modes of behavior and, potentially, our circumstances. At its finest, literature is not only the product of artistic labor but also a mode of natality. Like the birth of a human being or an individual action, new words, metaphors, and stories are inserted into the realm of those already known. Inserted into our current ways of speaking and relating to the world, literature alters the "parallelogram of forces" into which it has been introduced: like the constant "insertion" of humans by birth that causes the forces of the past and the future to "deflect . . . from their original direction," literature generates a new trajectory that is just as significant as the thrust of the past and the uncertainties of the future.

Arendt's attempt to reconceive the relation between past and future in light of the end-points of the mid-twentieth century is clearly echoed in Celan's poetry. Casting a net in

the rivers north of the future, singing songs beyond mankind as we know it, Celan's poetry inserts a new way to consider our conditions into the realm of our given language. In 1963, he wrote in a quick note that reminds us of Arendt's "even dust can burst into flames": "With every ash, with every real poem, the phoenix is always returned to us."⁷ In the same period, he also noted that "I am not writing for the dead, but rather for the living—for those who know of the dead."⁸ Poems, he reflects elsewhere, "do not change the world, but they do change how we live in the world (In-der-Welt-Sein)."⁹ Hence, Celan's poems testify to the capacity of literature to prompt us to a new beginning. They tirelessly invoke the past and the Shoah as a hardly tolerable burden. Yet, as his poem "Ich habe Bambus geschnitten" (I Have Cut Bamboo) signals, they also revisit this historical caesura as an imperative commanding us to engage what *is*, what is to come. Turning to his son, the incarnation of natality, the lyrical "I" says:

I have cut bamboo:
for you, my son.
I have lived.
This hut, carried off
tomorrow, now
stands.

I did not help build: you've
no idea what sort of
vessels I packed
with the sand around me, years back,
at
beck and command. Yours
comes from free ground—it stays
free.¹⁰

NOTES

1. *For the translation of "In the Rivers" and "Thread Suns" from the original German in the lecture, we drew on the work of another one of our faculty members, John Felstiner, who wrote an acclaimed biography of Paul Celan, under the title Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995).*
2. *Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1979), 478–79. Arendt refers to the "crisis of our time" on p. 478.*
3. *Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Hannah Arendt, Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought (New York: Viking Press, 1961; reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993). Hereafter, these works will be cited parenthetically as HC and BPF, respectively.*
4. *For an insightful discussion of Arendt's interpretation of Kafka's parable, see Peg Birmingham, Hannah Arendt and Human Rights: The Predicament of Common Responsibility (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 17–23.*
5. *Arendt then repeats this reference in her essay "Truth and Politics" in Between Past and Future, 262. On Arendt's reference to Dinesen's remarks, see Lynn R. Wilkinson, "Hannah Arendt on Isak Dinesen: Between Storytelling and Theory," Comparative Literature 56, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 77–98. Wilkinson also discusses in detail Arendt's view on narratives as revealing the meaning of human action (80–81, 90). Referring to Arendt's concept of natality, Seyla Benhabib aptly speaks of "anthropological universalism"; see her "Arendt's Eichmann in Jerusalem," in The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt, ed. Dana Villa (Cambridge, Engl.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 65–85.*
6. *Hannah Arendt, Men in Dark Times (New York: Harvest Books, 1970), 21.*
7. *Celan, "Mikroliithen sinds, Steinchen:" Prosa aus dem Nachlass (Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 2005), 48. Translation by Eschel.*
8. *Ibid., 122. Translation Eschel.*
9. *Ibid., 621. Translation Eschel.*
10. *Translation from Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan, trans. John Felstiner (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).*

REFLECTION

It Is Not for Me to Finish the Text, Yet Neither Am I Free to Desist

BY CHARLOTTE ELISHEVA FONROBERT



CHARLOTTE ELISHEVA FONROBERT, the Co-Director of the Taube Center for Jewish Studies, is associate professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford University, where she teaches rabbinic literature and culture. She is author of the award winning *Menstrual Purity: Rabbinic and Christian Reconstructions of Biblical Gender* (2000), and co-editor of *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (2007). She also edited, together with one of our graduate students, Amir Engel, the forthcoming English version of the collected essays by Jacob Taubes, *From Cult to Culture: Fragments Toward a Critique of Historical Reasoning* (Stanford University Press, 2009).

I remember my first encounter with the Babylonian Talmud as a seminary student. It was during my second semester studying at a Protestant seminary in Berlin, with one semester of biblical Hebrew under my belt. A doctoral student taught a course on pereq heleq, the eleventh chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin that bundles the plenitude of messianic speculations and ideas of the rabbinic cross-generational and transgeographic collective into one long exposition. The didactic purpose of that course had been to explore the Jewish messianic expectations that supposedly produced Jesus of Nazareth, son of David, the anointed one.

At that time, I approached the talmudic text as a believer, not just as someone searching

for historical knowledge, or merely out of cross-cultural curiosity, but as someone who wanted to understand how the tradition I had grown up with (German Congregational Protestantism) could come to believe that this man from the hinterland region of the Galilee was the messiah, even the son of God. Somewhere in those texts had to be a secret that waited to be unlocked.

To this day, I am grappling with understanding the magic attraction that the talmudic text exerted on me in that first encounter. I have long since given up on the Christian myth, but my love of the talmudic text and, to a certain degree, even my naïve passion as a believer remain. And as with any magic—

which is to say irrational or transrational attraction—it cannot be grasped in its totality lest it lose its hold.

But surely two aspects would be these: the willingness of the text to remain incomplete, to forsake authority, to leave the final word unsaid; and the insistence of the text that no one, not Rabbi Akiva nor Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nassi nor Rav Ashi, and certainly no one of us—so many centuries later—will have the final word. And none of them, certainly not in pereq heleq, was granted the aspiration to or satisfaction of a magnum opus that says it all, not a *City of God*, no “life” or “confession.” The truth does not abide with any one person; it is born from the principled discussion between two or more people. It is born from keeping the discussion going, restaging it. And I experience this intuitive perception of the talmudic rhetoric as profoundly liberating. The Talmud gave me disagreement, dispute, and conversation where early Christian theologians gave me dogmatic claims to the truth.

Somewhere in that long eleventh chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin, the talmudic text records (or constructs) the following dispute about redemption between Rav and Shmuel, the earliest Babylonian inheritors (or promoters) of the Mishnah; one is from Sura, the other from Nehardea.

Rav said: All the predestined dates [for redemption] have passed, and the matter [now] depends only on repentance and good deeds. But Samuel maintained: it is sufficient for a mourner to keep his [period of] mourning.

—Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 97b

Here are two statements that express diametrically opposed views of the way of the world. Freely translating the language of redemption, *ge'ulah*, the Talmud remains committed to this philosophy: either it matters what we do (repentance and good deeds), or it does not matter what we do (redemption will

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come about by itself, without human effort). In my first encounter with this passage, as a good Protestant seminary student, the dispute resonated deeply although not yet clearly, and I could easily read it as being born from profound theological sensibilities potentially irreconcilable ones, as we shall see in a minute.

But first, this: the talmudic text, instead of lending authority to either Rav or Shmuel, proceeds to throw its weight behind the legitimacy of the disagreement itself by underwriting it with an earlier, potentially more authoritative dispute, of which we will cite only a part.

A tradition from the time of the Mishnah taught:

Rabbi Eliezer said: “If Israel repent, they will be redeemed, as it is written, ‘Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings’ (Jeremiah 3:22).”

R. Joshua said to him: “But is it not written, ‘you have sold yourselves for

human behavior. He also has the biblical verse to back up his position. The citation of biblical verses adds another dynamic to the dispute: not only do the sages themselves differ, but so does the Tanakh, or at least the biblical prophets, about the significance of human action. Therein is the dispute anchored. Subsequently, the dispute evolves as a contest over biblical verses, with both sages volleying individual verses:

Rabbi Eliezer retorted to Rabbi Joshua: “But is it not written, ‘Return unto me, and I will return unto you’? (Malachi 3:7).”

Rabbi Joshua rejoined: “But is it not written, ‘For I am master over you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion’? (Jeremiah 3:14).”

Rabbi Eliezer replied: “But it is written, ‘In returning and rest shall ye be saved’! (Isaiah 30:15).”

Rabbi Joshua replied: “But is it not written, ‘Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to

“Emerging from this guided path through the never-ending yet principled dispute, a resonance emerges more clearly.”

nothing; and you shall be redeemed without money’? (Isaiah 52:3).” Meaning, you have sold yourselves for nothing, for idolatry; and you shall be redeemed without money—without repentance and good works.

The Talmud offers as proof an earlier tradition in which two sages again dispute whether human effort (as in repentance) will make a difference. For one (Rabbi Eliezer) it absolutely does: redemption is linked to repentance—the state of the world to human behavior—and he cites the biblical verse to prove it: God responds to human action rather than following God’s own design. For the other (Rabbi Joshua) it does not: redemption will come about but it will do so regardless of

him whom man despises, to him whom the nations abhor, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship’? (Isaiah 49:7).”

Rabbi Eliezer countered: “But is it not written, ‘If thou wilt return, O Israel, says the Lord, return unto me’? (Jeremiah 4:1).”

Rabbi Joshua answered, “But it is elsewhere written, ‘And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that lives forever that it shall be for a time, two times and a half, and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished’ (Daniel 12:7).”

At this, Rabbi Eliezer remained silent.



Each month, the journal *Sh'ma* creates a “conversation in print”—that is, it brings together an array of voices that cross the spectrum of Judaism: secular and religious, communal and non-partisan, engaged and dispassionately scholarly. We raise relevant questions thoughtfully and wrestle lovingly with Jewish concerns as we attempt to navigate the intellectual, communal, and spiritual challenges of contemporary Judaism. Our focus is on ideas—their complexity, their range, and their power. Over the past two years, Jewish Studies at Stanford—along with programs at other universities and rabbinical seminaries—have joined with several communal philanthropists to work with *Sh'ma* to create vibrant and intellectually creative arenas for intelligent conversations about Jewish issues. The following essay by Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert appeared as part of an issue in December 2008 (and is reprinted with permission) focusing on writing and talking about Jewish text. For more information about the journal, to subscribe, or to read additional essays from that issue, visit www.shma.com.

This, then, is where we have been led: we enter the fundamental dispute through the conversation between the later Babylonian sages (Rav and Shmuel), and we are guided to the earlier dispute between the Galilean sages Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Eliezer who negotiate the message of the prophetic literature in the

“The truth does not abide with any one person; it is born from the principled discussion between two or more people. It is born from keeping the discussion going, restaging it.”

dispute. The dispute appears to be multilayered in text and chronology, and it seems open-ended in a circular way, since even though Rabbi Eliezer, our proponent of the importance of ethics, loses in the contest over biblical verses, the later Babylonian sages continue to disagree. The text turns us and turns us again as we seek to find everything within it.

Emerging from this guided path through the never-ending yet principled dispute, a resonance emerges more clearly. The debate between these two positions on the question of redemption starts to appear as one between Judaism and Christianity in toto. Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Eliezer echo Paul’s dyad of faith versus works. Is it “faith” and faith alone—in Rabbi Joshua’s terms above, “you shall be redeemed without (good) works”—that will bring about one’s salvation (to use the term more familiar in Christian rhetoric)? Or, is it works, in this context, repentance? Rabbi Joshua appears in disguise as Paul, who argues vigorously and radically on behalf of faith, whereas Rabbi Eliezer upholds one of the deepest sensibilities underlying rabbinic Judaism (and to a certain degree, of course, the

Torah)—namely, the belief in the ultimate significance of good deeds and the moral fabric of the universe.

Cast in this light, the talmudic text appears as the condensation of a dispute that remains open even to this day, which more often than not we enter from a very different angle but which the Talmud anchors in the deep folds of our textual heritage. Turning difference into discussion and debate that is to be carried on ad infinitum is one of the great gifts of the Talmud to our culture. After studying the talmudic exclusionary mechanisms (above all the principled exclusion of women) and its implicit dogmatics in all too many contexts, this profound humility of the Talmud in shaping the production of knowledge, of Torah, and ultimately of wisdom continues to exert its lasting hold on me.

REFLECTION

Technology and Language Teaching in Higher Education: Some Thoughts About the State of the Field

BY VERED KARTI SHEMTOV



Collaborative work in Hebrew classes, Stanford University.

VERED KARTI SHEMTOV is the co-director of the Taube Center for Jewish Studies, Coordinator of the Hebrew program and the Eva Chernov Lokey Senior Lecturer in Hebrew Language and Literature. Her book on Prosody and Ideology in Hebrew Literature will be published this year by Bar Ilan University Press and she is currently working on a book on Jewish and Israeli perspectives of space in contemporary Hebrew literature.

Interfaces and Web pages resemble Talmud folios in interesting ways. Moreover, hot [linear] pages and cool [interactive] pages represent competing notions of communication: the Hellenistic model, in which the world is an information vacuum to be filled by the communicator, and the Talmudic model, in which the world is an information plenum, absolutely full of knowledge and requiring guides and navigators.¹

It is quite common nowadays to compare pages on the Web with those of the Talmud. Some scholars, as in the case of the quote above, even argue that the Web reflects a Jewish way of thinking about information and learning. Jonathan Rosen devoted an entire book to the Talmud and the Internet, stating that, despite the many differences between the two,

[W]hen I look at a page of Talmud and see all those texts tucked intimately and intrusively onto the same page, like immigrant children sharing a single bed, I do think of the Internet. For hundreds of years, responsa, questions on virtually every aspect of Jewish life, winged back and forth between scattered Jews and various centers of Talmudic learning. The Internet is also a world of unbounded curiosity, of argument and information,

where anyone with a modem can wander out of the wilderness for a while, ask a question and receive an answer. I take comfort in thinking that a modern technology medium echoes an ancient one.²

But beyond pointing out these similarities, how can Jewish perspectives of organizing and studying texts influence technology? How can new emerging technologies affect Jewish Studies?

Since joining facilities and research with the Stanford Center for Innovation in Learning four years ago, I have been involved in studying the use of technology in Hebrew classrooms. Hebrew was taught for many years with no high-tech support. As much as we were interested in being up to date with the world around us, it was also important for us not to lose sight of the advantages of traditional teaching methods. We did not want the use of technology to result in a loss of what seemed an important connection between language, identity, and education. What and how we teach, what and how we learn, and what we become as a result of what and how we learn or teach—all of these issues cannot be easily distinguished or dismissed. Moreover, they cannot be seriously addressed if methods used

for Spanish, German, or English are adopted to Hebrew without considering their effect on the relationship between the three aspects mentioned above.³

Recreating our courses to adapt them to the technology-enhanced environment that Stanford offered was an opportunity to rethink our goals and revisit our teaching philosophies. During that time, the Web changed dramatically. In the past few years, we have witnessed a major increase in online social networks, including blogs, wikis, trackback, podcasting, and videoblogs. As Stephen O’Hear notes, this “explosion of new Web services . . . has led many to believe that the Internet is now entering a second phase. It’s finally beginning to resemble a truly interactive learning tool.”⁴ Students can collaborate with peers as well as with people from other places and create new information. The question, as Janice Paulsen writes, is no longer “*whether* to take advantage of these electronic technologies in foreign language education, but *how* to harness them and guide our students in their use. . . . [A]uthentic, meaningful, interactive, student centered, Web-based learning activities can improve student performance in much the same manner as learning a language while studying abroad.”⁵ With Web 2.0, technology became not just a means or a tool for teaching Hebrew but also one of our goals. Feeling comfortable not only to search for information but also to be immersed in the Hebrew Web, be part of online communities, express opinions, and contribute and be exposed to the Web in Hebrew is now part of functioning in the language. Technology is essential as a tool for obtaining knowledge and conducting research; as Robert Godwin-Jones argues, it also offers less immediately evident benefits like identity creation and collaborative learning.⁶

Technology was often regarded as a way to make current methods of teaching Hebrew

more efficient. Workbook drills were placed first on CDs and then online, which enabled immediate responses and self-corrections. Audio tapes used in the language lab were also placed online for easier distribution. Students uploaded files instead of submitting work in class, and the dialogues and photos in the textbook turned into video clips and images online. All of these major steps were directed at managing the material and using technology to improve the existing systems by making them more efficient and increasing exposure to material. But technology is no longer merely a tool; it is the way we communicate, interact, and function in the world. The success of Facebook and YouTube, especially with high school and college students, is now unquestionable. The interest of individuals not only in searching the Web but also in being an active part of it—contributing material, managing relationships, and joining and creating communities—calls for reevaluating what language teachers define as functioning and communicating in the language. The Internet, especially the user-content-generated websites, has changed basic concepts in learning, communication, and communities. The Internet allows us not only to cross geographical boundaries but also to immerse ourselves in cultures and languages. Joining these communities can be as intimidating as finding oneself in a room full of Israelis with no knowledge of the language or the culture. It requires skills that can be practiced, much like any other major communicative function.

On one level, the application of technology can include small but important changes in the curriculum, such as teaching students how to use the keyboard as soon as they are introduced to the alphabet; teaching them to check if their syntax is commonly used in Hebrew by searching how many sites appear in a search that includes a specific combination (for

example, “I go in” versus “I go to”); asking them to follow up on a topic studied in class by searching for new information on the issue and sharing it in class; and asking students to find how Hebrew speakers in different blogs feel about a certain event in the news, rather than having the teacher be the main source of information about the culture and the different communities. All of these activities create in the class the expectation of learning not only from the instructor but also from the diverse Hebrew communities on the Web.



The Hebrew@Stanford website.

On another level, these new concepts question the philosophy of teaching and the ideologies reflected by the textbook, institutions, and specific teachers, whether religious or secular, Zionist or other. Bringing the Internet into the classroom not as a tool controlled by the instructor but gradually as one open for the learners’ navigation means accepting the existence of multiple communities with different perspectives and different uses of the Hebrew language (including common non-grammatical uses) and with different ideologies. This marks for some a return to the text as home. Consider, for example, the following passage from Rosen’s book:

The Talmud offered a virtual home for an uprooted culture and grew out of a Jewish need to pack civilization into words and wander out into the world. ... Jews became the people of the book and not the people of the temple or the land ... the Internet, which we are

continually told binds us all together, nevertheless engenders in me a similar sense of Diaspora, a feeling of being everywhere and nowhere. Where else but in the middle of Diaspora do you *need* a home page?⁷

The Internet can potentially promote the “text” over geographical space. This perspective stands in opposition to the many textbooks and practices of teaching Hebrew in universities. The ideology that associated the revival of Hebrew with the return to the land and Zionism, and the identity formed in the process of learning Hebrew with that of Israelis, are still extremely popular. Any use of the Hebrew Internet will place Israel in the center as the major location in which these sites are created. The sites themselves reflect Israeli life and culture; where else would you find an ad for a guitar teacher in Hebrew, an original sitcom in Hebrew, or Hebrew daily newspapers? But these materials reflect the ideology, collective history, and language of users and of the online community—and not of the teacher, the textbook, or the institution.

Recent research shows that students in Canada learn Hebrew not necessarily because they are planning to visit Israel or to identify with the culture and people. Avital Feuer, Sharon Armon-Lotem and B. Cooperman argue that,

[Although] educators assume that students’ motivations to learn the language relate to an integrative or utilitarian desire to associate with the target community, a semester-long, ethnographic, qualitative study of an advanced undergraduate modern Hebrew language course at a large, urban Canadian university determined these Hebrew heritage language learners with diverse backgrounds held complex notions of the community whose language the professor and I assumed they wished to acquire, maintain or emulate. When initially asked about students’ motivations to study advanced

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Hebrew, Avital, the professor, expressed a vague opinion that students would use Hebrew in future travel to Israel. In fact, the study found that most students enrolled in the course not to improve their linguistic skills to use in future communication in Israel, but rather to strengthen social ties in Jewish community sub-groups in Canada.⁸

In seven years of teaching at Stanford, I can count on two hands the number of beginning Hebrew students who ended up in Israel for more than a short trip. Students join our classes to find a space here, for Hebrew within their Jewish and other communities.

Hebrew found on websites from different geographic locations opens the door to different levels or kinds of affiliations with the target language and culture. Although instructors are not expected to adopt a specific ideology because of technological advances, I believe they should be aware of these conceptual changes, which can be used for evaluating the relationship between the content of the lesson and the process of learning.

With the rapid decline in the number of students traveling to Israel, the Web has become the main space for interactions with Hebrew speakers and for exposure to Jewish and/or Israeli life in Hebrew. Unlike course books (often created in Israel for Ulpan students) or conversation with a Hebrew (in many cases, Israeli) teacher, the Web enables the student to easily switch between identities and languages. The Web serves as a hybrid space not bound to an actual physical location, reflecting a wider variety of what it means to be part of different Jewish/Hebrew-speaking communities than usually exists in a classroom. One can still find sites that follow the model of a book or the traditional class, presenting a step-by-step introduction to the language and the culture from a specific perspective.⁹ But the Web as a whole allows for exposure to a wide range of connections between language, text, space,

and time. Students can explore ancient and contemporary religious texts, cooking classes, news, videos, and blogs by Israelis in and outside Israel, by Jews, and even by non-Jewish Hebrew speakers.

This leads us to another major shift that technology created in our teaching: the transformation from teaching to learning. Through online resources, the student is able to take a much more active role in the process of learning. The teacher is still instrumental, but his/her role changes as the student also has the opportunity to be easily directed to new information by links, to move in an associative manner between topics, and to converse with partners online. In class, the structure of the new technologically enhanced spaces allows students more control over the boards and the electronic texts, and it encourages collaboration in groups or between partners. This, too, marked for us—at least partially—a return to some of the more traditional Jewish methods of learning in groups.

Technology moves fast, innovations are made daily, and the examples that will be provided in this paper might be common practice in classrooms by the time this book reaches the shelves. What might continue to be relevant, though, is the way we think about technology. The process suggested in the following pages goes against a “blind” application of the latest audio recording tool or the most innovative “touch board,” and instead promotes questioning if and how each type of technology can be used to serve the specific goals of the Hebrew learner, how it can help immerse the student in today’s Hebrew-speaking communities, and finally, how each technology changes the relationship among language, education, and ideology.

NOTES

1. Edmond H. Weiss, “From Talmud Folios to Websites: HOT Pages, COOL Pages, and the Information Plenum,” *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication* 41, no. 2 (June 1998).
2. Jonathan Rosen, *The Talmud and the Internet: A Journey Between Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000).
3. *This is the case, for example, in the Rosetta Stone Beginning Hebrew software.*
4. Stephen O’Hear, “Seconds out, round two,” *The Guardian*, Nov. 15, 2005 <http://education.guardian.co.uk/learning/story/0,10577,1642281,00.html>.
5. Janice B. Paulsen, “New Era Trends and Technologies in Foreign Language Learning: An Annotated Bibliography,” *Interactive Multimedia Electronic Journal of Computer-Enhanced Learning* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Wake Forest University, Apr. 5, 2001). See also Uschi Felix, “The Web as a Vehicle for Constructivist Approaches in Language Teaching,” *ReCALL* 14.1 (Cambridge University Press, May 2002), 2–15. Felix’s study leads him to conclude that the Web has the “potential to engage students in creating information gap activities and real experiential learning in the form of meaningful, process-oriented projects in authentic settings.”
6. Robert Godwin-Jones, “Emerging Technologies: Messaging, Gaming, Peer-to-Peer Sharing Language Learning Strategies & Tools for the Millennial Generation,” *Language, Learning & Technology* 9 (2005).
7. Rosen, *The Talmud and the Internet*, 14.
8. Avital Feuer, Sharon Armon-Lotem & B. Cooperman (Eds.), *Issues in the Acquisition and Teaching of Hebrew* (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2009).
9. See, for example, the wonderful BBC online language programs or, for Hebrew, *Hevenu Shalom Aleikhem*, developed by the Pedagogic Center of the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Department for Jewish and Zionist Education, and prepared for the Web by Hebrew classes at Stanford University.

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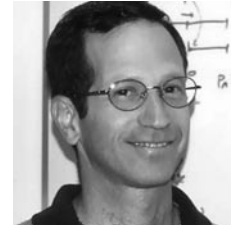
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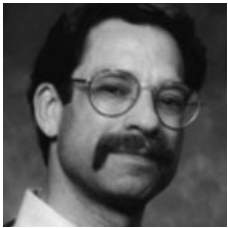
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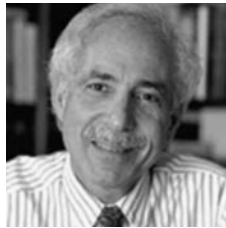
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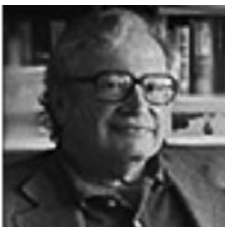
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Jon Levitow

Yiddish Language

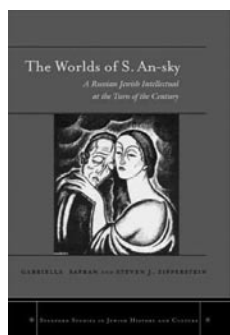
Writer in Residence



Maya Arad

FACULTY

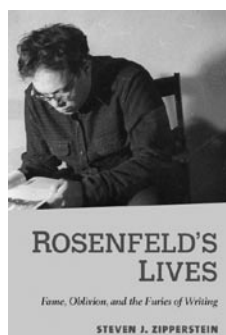
New Books in Jewish Studies by Taube Center Faculty



Congratulations to Professors Safran and Zipperstein!

Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein, co-editors of *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian-Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), were awarded the Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies by the Modern Language Association. This prize is awarded to an outstanding scholarly work in English in the field of Yiddish.

New Books by Maya Arad, Writer in Residence



Steven J. Zipperstein

Rosenfeld's Lives: Fame, Oblivion, and the Furies of Writing

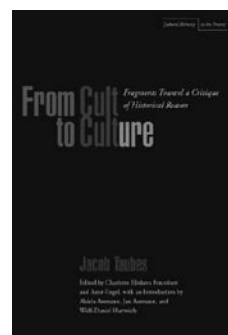
(New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009)

Born in Chicago in 1918, the prodigiously gifted and erudite Isaac Rosenfeld was anointed a “genius” upon the publication of his “luminescent” novel *Passage from Home*, and he was expected to surpass even his closest friend and rival, Saul Bellow. Yet when felled by a heart attack at the age of 38, Rosenfeld had published relatively little, his life reduced to a metaphor for literary failure.

In this deeply contemplative book, Steven J. Zipperstein seeks to reclaim Rosenfeld’s legacy by “opening up” his work. Zipperstein examines for the first time the “small mountain” of unfinished manuscripts the writer left behind as well as his fiercely candid journals and letters. In the process, Zipperstein unearths a turbulent life that was obsessively grounded in a profound commitment to the ideals of the writing life.

Rosenfeld's Lives is a fascinating exploration of literary genius and aspiration and the paradoxical power of literature to elevate and to enslave. It illuminates the cultural and political tensions of post-war America, Jewish intellectual life of the era, and—most poignantly—the struggle at the heart of any writer’s life.

Steven J. Zipperstein is Daniel E. Koshland Professor in Jewish Culture and History, Stanford University. His previous books include *The Jews of Odessa*, which received the Smilen Award, and *Elusive Prophet*, which received the National Jewish Book Award.



Jacob Taubes

From Cult to Culture: Fragments Toward a Critique of Historical Reason

Edited by Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Amir Engel, with a preface by Aleida and Jan Assmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009)

After launching his career with the 1947 publication of his dissertation, *Occidental Eschatology*, Jacob Taubes spent the early years of his career as a fellow and then professor at various American institutions, including Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia. During his American years, he also brought together a number of prominent thinkers at his weekly seminars on Jewish intellectual history. In the mid-1960s, Taubes joined the faculty of the Free University in West Berlin, initially as the city’s first Jewish Studies professor of the postwar period. But his work and interests expanded beyond the boundaries of the field of Jewish Studies to broader philosophical questions, particularly in the philosophy of religion. A charismatic speaker and a great polemicist, Taubes had a phenomenal ability to create interdisciplinary conversations in the humanities, engaging scholars from philosophy, literature, theology, and intellectual history. The essays presented here represent the fruit of conversations, conferences, and workshops that he organized over the course of his career.

One of the great Jewish intellectuals of the twentieth century, Jacob Taubes (1923–87) was a rabbi, philosopher of religion, and scholar of Judaism. Stanford University Press published a translation of his *Political Theology of Paul* in 2004.

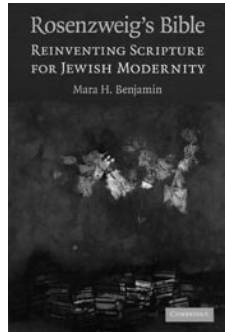
New Books by Taube Center Alumni



Einat Ramon

A New Life: Religion, Motherhood and Supreme Love in the Works of Aharon David Gordon

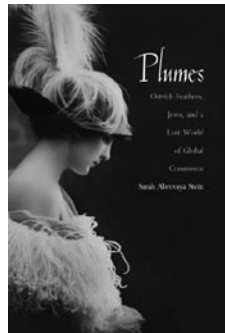
(Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007)



Mara H. Benjamin

Rosenzweig's Bible: Reinventing Scripture for Jewish Modernity

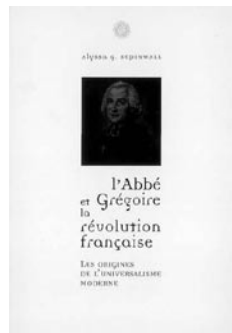
(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009)



Sarah Abrevaya Stein

Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of Global Commerce

(New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008)



Alyssa Sepinwall

L'Abbé Grégoire et la révolution française: Les origines de l'universalisme moderne

(Bécherel: Éditions Les Perséides, 2008)
Originally published in English in 2005.

Other New Books by Taube Center Faculty



Paul R. Gregory and Norman Naimark

The Lost Politburo Transcripts: From Collective Rule to Stalin's Dictatorship (The Yale-Hoover Series on Stalin, Stalinism, and the Cold War)

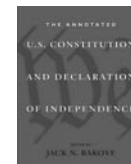
(New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008)



John Felstiner

Can Poetry Save the Earth?: A Field Guide to Nature Poems

(New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009)



Jack N. Rakove

The Annotated U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence

Introduction and notes by Jack N. Rakove
(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009)



Shelley Fisher Fishkin

Feminist Engagements: Forays into American Literature and Culture

(New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

Mark Twain's Book of Animals

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009)

The Mark Twain Anthology

(New York: Library of America, 2010)

GRADUATES

Learning Our Histories: History and Identity at a Jewish Community High School

BY SIVAN ZAKAI

Education Initiative

In July 2008, Sam Wineburg, Professor of Education and of History (by courtesy), submitted a proposal to San Francisco's Jim Joseph Foundation to renew the Stanford School of Education's Ph.D. "Concentration in Jewish Education." The result of a planning grant given to Stanford last year, this effort was a collaboration between Wineburg and Professors Charlotte Fonrobert and Vered Shemtov, with the able assistance of Wendy Rosov, Ph.D., one of the graduates of the original Jewish Education concentration in the mid-1990s. Assisting this team as part of a broader advisory group were Professors Aron Rodrigue (History) and Lee Shulman (Education, emeritus).

Carrying the real heavy lifting of this proposal was graduate research assistant Sivan Zakai, who completed a master's degree in Jewish History at Stanford in 2007 and defended her Ph.D. dissertation in Education in June 2009. Her topic, a true blending of Jewish Studies and Education, addressed how students in a Jewish high school navigate between Jewish history and U.S. history in developing a sense of historical understanding, citizenship, and national and religious identity.

When students at the Naftali Herz Imber Jewish Academy (a pseudonym) enter their history classrooms, they are not just studying times long gone. They are also learning stories about who they are and who they are supposed to be. As a private Jewish high school in the United States, the Naftali Herz Imber Jewish Academy has an explicit agenda to foster both intellect and identity. Its classrooms are, by design, places to learn academic subjects as well as explore what it means to be a Jew in the United States today. Its teachers are hired to cultivate critical thinking as well as affiliation with an American-Jewish collective. Its history courses are intended to teach the discipline of history as well as a sense of pride in a shared past.

How do students and teachers in such a school study history? How do they balance their commitments to critical historical analysis and to cherished narratives of a collective past? How do they make sense of Western notions of history as a quest for truth and Jewish beliefs about the historicity of sacred texts? In sum, in a school that teaches both academics and affiliation, what are the meanings and purposes of the study of history? These are the central questions of my dissertation.

The research project is a single-site case study examining history education at a Jewish community high school. In particular, it focuses on the teaching of U.S. and Israeli history at the school. Both national histories were taught as "our" history (Levstik, L.S. (2000). *Articulating the silences: Teachers' and adolescents' conceptions of historical significance*. In P.N. Stearns, P. Seixas, and S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, teaching, and learning history* (pp. 284-305). New York: New York University Press.), a past to which students and teachers are supposed to feel personally connected. Yet the classes were also very different, and so they provided two opportunities in a single

school for understanding how students and teachers made sense of their history studies. The research combined ethnographic observations, semi-structured interviews with students and teachers, and a "think aloud" study in which students and teachers voiced their thoughts as they read historical documents about U.S. and Israeli history.

Among the findings of the dissertation, perhaps the most surprising is the complex relationship between identity and historical thinking in the two high school history classrooms in this study. I show that a U.S. history class that explicitly focused on the academic goals of history education did not always teach students the deep historical thinking that would prepare them to understand the academic discipline. In fact, the class often taught a mythic narrative about U.S. history. By contrast, an Israeli history class that had a clear agenda to cultivate identity was often able to help students understand that history involves analysis and interpretation. Yet by encouraging students to examine and question history, the class in some ways weakened the very collective bonds that it hoped to foster.

Throughout the dissertation, I argue that history education has multiple meanings and purposes, and history classrooms provide students a forum for thinking both about the past and about themselves. I make a case for a broader conception of history education than exists in the current literature, suggesting that in history classrooms students learn critical historical thinking, study meaningful stories of a collective past, and attempt to make sense of who they are in the present.

GRADUATES

Jewish Studies Graduate Students

Incoming Graduate Students in Jewish Studies (2009–10)

Kira Alvarez is a graduate student in the Department of History. Kira received her bachelor's degree in Religion from Swarthmore College and her master's in Jewish History from Hebrew University. Her research focuses on Sephardi history from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, and Ladino language and culture. In October 2008, she presented a paper at the Midwest Jewish Studies Association Annual Conference based on research conducted in Israel. She spent the summer of 2009 studying at the Middlebury French School.

I. Shimshon Aizenberg graduated from Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School with a master's degree in Judaic Studies. At Stanford he plans to focus on the cultural and intellectual history of East European Jews and is currently looking into how the *Evreiskaia Entsiklopedia*, (Russian Jewish Encyclopedia, published between 1906 and 1912) deals with art. In the summer of 2009, he took Yiddish at NYU-YIVO.

R. Timothy Debold is primarily interested in looking at how Jewish society in Late Antiquity was influenced by the Greco-Roman cultural milieu of the Near East—in particular, what effects this had on Rabbinic literature. Before applying to Stanford, he completed master's degrees in Jewish Studies at Emory University and at Oxford University.

Renana Keidar will start her Ph.D. in the Department of Comparative Literature at Stanford in the fall of 2009. She is interested in studying the representations of the urban experience in modern Hebrew literature. For her dissertation, she is interested in reading the *flânerie* in the political and historical context of the Zionist society in the nation-building era. She is intrigued by the ability of the urban

individual to develop and express self-identity and uniqueness (as a woman, as an immigrant, as an Arab, or as any other “other” to the Zionist context) through the *flânerie*. Applying both Walter Benjamin's approach and Michel De Certeau's distinction between the city as a strategic, institutionalized concept and city-walking as tactics of self identity, Renana is interested in examining the *flânerie* as an act of undermining social hegemony of the Zionist nation-building ethos and the creation of an individual's or minority's self-identity.

Current Graduate Students in Jewish Studies

Mira Balberg started her doctoral studies in the Department of Religious Studies in the fall of 2007 after completing her master's degree in Talmud at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her dissertation topic is the construction of bodily boundaries in order Tohorot (purities) of the Mishna and the intricate connections between materiality and social identity in rabbinic thought.

Amir Engel is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of German Studies where he is writing his dissertation on Gershom Scholem. The objective of the dissertation is to describe Scholem's fusion of the Jewish political project (that is, Zionism) and Jewish religious ideas. This will be undertaken by discussing Scholem's most influential works from a German Jewish perspective.

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

GRADUATES

Stanford University
Taube Center for Jewish Studies

Nir Evron is completing the third year of the graduate program in the Comparative Literature Department and beginning the writing stage of his dissertation, entitled “Chronicles of Social Decline.” His project examines several novels written during the 1920s and 1930s whose theme is the decline and fall of a social world. To that end, he discusses works by S. Y. Agnon, Thomas Mann, Joseph Roth, Virginia Woolf, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Nir also examines more contemporary renditions of this theme by writers such as Yaakov Shabtai. Last year he was awarded a grant from the Jewish Community Endowment Newhouse Fund of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco. During the summer he spent a few weeks in Berlin, researching the German aspects of the project. The rest of the year will be spent in Israel, doing research and writing.

Dan Heller is a third-year graduate student in the Department of History. His research interests include the history of Jews in Eastern Europe, the European Right, Polish-Jewish relations, and modern European youth culture. This past year, he completed his preparations for his comprehensive examinations in the fields of Jewish history, Eastern European history,

and Slavic Literature. During the academic year 2009–10, he will be conducting research in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Warsaw for his dissertation on the history of the Zionist Right in Eastern Europe between the two World Wars.

Emily Kopley is a second-year graduate student in the Department of English. She has two areas of focus: Virginia Woolf and her contemporaries, and Jewish-American literature. In pursuit of the latter, Emily has been learning Yiddish since she came to Stanford, and in 2008–09 she led the Stanford Yiddish reading group (Leyenkreyz). During the summer of 2009 she will study at the Vilnius Yiddish Institute. In December 2008, Emily gave a talk at the conference of the Modern Language Association, and the resulting article, “Arthur A. Cohen’s Debt to Elie Wiesel,” has been accepted for publication by *Studies in American Jewish Literature*.

Andrew Koss is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History. He is currently writing a dissertation on Jewish society in Vilna (Vilnius) during World War I.

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.

Devin Naar is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History. His dissertation focuses on the development of images of Salonica as the “Jerusalem of the Balkans” and how these were utilized to achieve political ends during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. An article he wrote on Jewish emigration from Salonica to the United States recently appeared in *American Jewish History* (Dec. 2007); pieces in *Cahiers de Alberto Benveniste* as well as an entry on Sephardic Jews for the *Encyclopedia of Ethnic Groups in Europe* are both forthcoming. Since 2007, he has delivered conference papers at the Symposium of the Modern Greek Studies Association, the Sorbonne in Paris, Georgetown University, and Rider University as well as lectures at the American Sephardi Federation and the Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum in New York. In the summer of 2009

Newhouse Summer Grant Awards, 2007–09

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.

Mira Balberg (Religious Studies)

Dina Danon (History)

Amir Engel (German Studies)

Nir Evron (Comparative Literature)

Dan Heller (History)

Emily Kopley (English)

Oded Korczyn (Anthropology)

Andrew Koss (History)

John Mandsager (Religious Studies)

Devin Naar (History)

Ekaterina Neklyudova (Slavic Languages and Literatures)

Noam Pines (Comparative Literature)

Shiri Regev-Messalem (Law)

Noam Silverman (Education)

Max Strassfeld (Religious Studies)

Sivan Zakai (Education)

GRADUATES

Stanford University
Taube Center for Jewish Studies

he participated in the Kochmann Workshop for Ph.D. Students in European Jewish History and Culture at Oxford University and presented a paper at the World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem.

Ekaterina Neklyudova, a sixth-year graduate student, is working on her dissertation in the Slavic Department. In April 2009, she gave a presentation at the California Graduate Slavic Colloquium that was hosted by U.C. Berkeley. Her article on memoirs and fiction of former GULAG inmates was recently accepted for publication in the journal *Transcultural Studies*.

Noam Pines's primary area of interest is marginal modernist Hebrew and German poetry. He and Prof. Vered Shemtov plan to initiate a Hebrew poetry reading group next year with some Hebrew-speaking professors and graduate students. Two years ago, he received the Zvi Pozis Scholarship for a paper he wrote on Futurism.

Jessica Rosenberg is an ABD doctoral candidate in Modern Jewish Thought. Her dissertation will focus on gender and contemporary Jewish law, with special emphasis on Jewish identity formation through law. She lives in San Francisco, where she is active in the Mission Minyan.

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.

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. Max will have an article published in an upcoming anthology entitled *Balancing on the Mechitza*.

Sivan Zakai is completing her doctorate in the School of Education's Curriculum Studies and Teacher Education program. Her dissertation, "Learning Our Histories: History and Identity at a Jewish Community High School," is a mixed method study of two history classrooms—a U.S. history class and an Israeli history class—at a Jewish high school. The study was awarded the Network for Research in Jewish Education Young Scholars Award for work advancing research and methodology in Jewish education.

Congratulations to Amir Engel, Recipient of the Leo Baeck Fellowship 2009–10



This year Amir Engel was awarded the Leo Baeck Fellowship, a program in collaboration with the German National Academic Foundation and the Leo Baeck Institute. The program awards doctoral candidates researching the history of German-speaking Jewry in central Europe. Amir's dissertation project, provisionally titled "Gershom Scholem: In Search of the Mystical Origin of Politics," describes Scholem's fusion of the Jewish political project (that is, Zionism) and Jewish religious ideas. This will be undertaken by discussing Scholem's most influential works from a German Jewish perspective.

UNDERGRADUATES

Awards



From left: William Lowenberg, Zachary Baker, Charlotte E. Fonrobert, Donald Kennedy, Nathan Hayflick, Robin Kennedy, Gabriella Safran at the Stanford Kennedy Luncheon.

Kennedy Awards (2007–08)

Annie Schiff – Classics – 2008

“Afterlives of the Greek Bible: Reception of the Septuagint in Jerome and Rabbinic Midrash”

Advisor: Professor Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert

Annie graduated from Stanford in June 2008 with a bachelor’s degree in Classics. While at Stanford, she studied Latin literature, late antiquity Judaism, and early Christianity in the classical world. She not only graduated with honors from the Classics Department but also, in addition to the Kennedy Award, received the Golden Award, a university-wide prize for exceptional honors theses. Annie is planning to attend rabbinical school at Hebrew Union College. In the meantime, she is working in Jewish education, having received a prestigious fellowship from the Schusterman Foundation.

Michael Petrin – Philosophy and Classics – 2009

“Adonai echad? An Essay on Unity and Plurality in Medieval Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah”

Advisor: Professor David Malkiel

Michael graduated in 2009 with a double major in Religious Studies and Philosophy. His academic interests include early Christianity, the mystical experience in Judaism and Christianity, and the philosophy of religion. He wrote his honors thesis in the Religious Studies Department, with Prof. Charlotte Fonrobert, on an early Christian mystical theologian. In the fall, he will attend Notre Dame University to do his master’s in Theological Studies.

Kennedy Awards (2008–09)

Jonathan H. Canel – History – 2010

“By the Rivers of Iberia: Exile and Homeland in Andalusian Jewish Poetry”

Advisor: Professor Kathryn Miller

Jonathan’s essay explores the topic of Diaspora in the poetry of Judaism’s Golden Age in Spain. These “exile poems” predicate the individual’s attainment of spiritual actualization on the restoration of the collective Jewish community to Zion, and in so doing illustrate how Iberia’s Jews persisted in understanding themselves at some profound, spiritual level, as strangers in Spain.

Nathan Hayflick – Slavic Studies – 2010

“Babel and Brodsky: Celestial Navigators of Russian-Jewish Identity”

Advisor: Professor Gabriella Safran

Nathan’s essay explores issues of personal identity in both Isaac Babel’s *Red Cavalry* and Joseph Brodsky’s *Nativity Poems* through the multifaceted symbol of the star. An image constantly fluctuating in meaning, the star reveals both violent conflicts and moments of surprising unity between Jewish, Christian, Soviet, and American identities.

From Nathan Hayflick, “Babel and Brodsky: Celestial Navigators of Russian-Jewish Identity”

“Travelers and nomads possess a special connection with the celestial sphere. The stars can serve as both a tool to locate the wanderer on earth and an occasion to meditate on space and distance, for the great paradox of the stars is that they are simultaneously familiar and unknowable to the human mind. They are instantly recognizable anywhere on earth and lend to a sensation of spatial unity between the viewer’s present experience and all past glimpses of the night sky. Yet the stars also baffle the mind’s concept of distance and reduce the observer to the point where he or she feels insignificant in comparison to the vastness of the sky. The feeling of being both at home and disoriented reflects the very experience of travel.

It comes as no surprise that both Joseph Brodsky and Isaac Babel frequently referred to the stars in their writing, for they shared the experience of wanderers making their way through foreign lands.”

UNDERGRADUATES

Stanford University
Taube Center for Jewish Studies

Dr. Bernard Kaufman Undergraduate Research Award in Jewish Studies (2007–08)

Rebecca Jacobs – History – 2008

“Russian Jewish Immigrants in San Francisco, 1970–2007”

Advisor: Professor Amir Weiner

Rebecca’s study may have implications on how the processes of assimilation and acculturation are perceived. The case study will test oral history as methodology and validate the accuracy of previously published narratives.

Shelly Ronen – Psychology – 2009

“Contemporary Jewish Women and the Balance Between Career and Family”

Advisor: Professor Paula England

Shelly’s research looks at students’ romantic experiences and attitudes concerning relationships in college.

(2008–09)

Amy Ginette Kurzweil – English – 2009

“Flying Couch: A Graphic Memoir”

Advisor: Professor Valerie Miner

Amy’s project is a graphic memoir that uses words and visuals to relay and reflect on the historical, emotional, and psychological narrative of her family’s female lineage. She not only shares the story of her maternal grandparents’ survival in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust but also investigates the shadow of this trauma as it filters through her grandmother’s and mother’s lives, settling finally in her own psyche.

Koret Award for Best Essay Written in Hebrew (2007–08)

Beth Ashley Nowadnick – Graduate Student –
Physics

“Israel’s Music”

Advisor: Professor Vered Karti Shemtov

(2008–09)



Sarah Rose Ruben – Cultural and Social
Anthropology – 2009

*“Language in the Coming-of-Age Novel:
A Gateway to Growing Up”*

Advisor: Professor Vered Karti Shemtov

We would like to thank Zach Baker, Jonathan Berger, Charlotte Fonrobert, Maya Arad, and Gabriella Safran for serving as readers for the Taube Center’s awards.

How I Came to Major/Minor in Jewish Studies

Jarrod Marks – I am excited to be majoring in Jewish Studies here at Stanford University. As a Jewish Studies major, I will have the opportunity to take a wide variety of classes that focus on different aspects of Judaism throughout history. By being a part of the Jewish Studies program, I will gain a deeper understanding of Jewish religion and culture, and I will grow in my own understanding of what it means to be Jewish in today’s world.

I will have the opportunity to conduct research and take additional courses in specific areas of Jewish Studies that interest me, such as Talmud and Bible, and will be able to work closely with the esteemed faculty affiliated with the program. I am confident that the undergraduate program in Jewish Studies will arm me with essential thinking and learning skills that will help me in further graduate studies.

Katelyn Baldwin – I initially decided to minor in Jewish Studies to learn more about the history of Judaism and the experiences of my maternal ancestors, who perished in the Holocaust. I was also drawn to the Taube Center for Jewish Studies at Stanford due to its wide programmatic offerings and initiatives. In particular, I was interested in learning Hebrew, given my participation in a Birthright trip to Israel through the Stanford Hillel in December 2008 and my desire to spend some time in Israel after graduation. In the past four years, I have learned an incredible amount and been consistently impressed with the offerings of the Taube Center.

In the past two years, I have been a 2008 Truman Scholarship Finalist, and I was selected as a Robert Levinson Jr. Leadership Development Fellow through Stanford Hillel for the 2008–2009 academic year.

UNDERGRADUATES

Courses

Kabbalah Comes to Stanford

During the academic year 2008–09, the Taube Center had the great privilege of hosting a number of internationally renowned scholars whose research is dedicated to Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah), among them Prof. Moshe Idel from Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Prof. Pinchas Giller from the American Jewish University in Los Angeles, and Dr. Daniel Matt, whose acclaimed translation of and commentary on the Zohar has been published by Stanford University Press. We had chosen “Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism” as the theme for the fall quarter, in order to introduce a topic to the Stanford community that is not often taught here. Rather than inviting just one of the top scholars in the field for one lecture, we sought a framework that would provide larger visibility and more presence on campus.

The original centerpiece of the series was the funding by David Lobel, one of the Center’s generous supporters. Mr. Lobel sought to bring a visiting scholar to campus who would provide more opportunities to familiarize the Stanford community with classical Jewish texts. Hence, Moshe Idel served as the first David Lobel Visiting Scholar. He spent a few days meeting with undergraduate and graduate students, and he presented a public lecture on “Eros and Kabbalah” at the beautiful new Koret Pavilion on October 24. The lecture was a great success, with over a hundred people—students, faculty, and the public—in the audience, and this during the lunch hour on a Friday.

Subsequently, we built an entire undergraduate course around Idel’s visit, also to honor the first David Lobel professorship. The class was coordinated by our local, beloved instructor Dr. Ariella Radwin, who had the difficult task of providing a didactic framework for the visiting scholars. But rather



than having independent lectures, we decided to make the series of lectures part of the class. This presented an excellent opportunity to the undergraduate students, who were exposed to the greatest scholars of the field from around the country and from Jerusalem—and not just their scholarship but also their different styles of thought and study. Our most regular visitor was Prof. Rabbi Pinchas Giller, who taught four of the ten sessions, and he traveled from Los Angeles for each of them. He and his co-instructor, Dr. Radwin, found an eager crowd among the Stanford students, at least half of whom were not Jewish or came with very little Jewish background. This is the case often in our classes and is a sign of the strength of the program. All of the students delved into the mystical texts, albeit in English translation.

Dr. Matt was then gracious enough to take time out of his work on translating the entire Zoharic corpus, a life-time project. His lecture on “How the Zohar Reimagines God” on Nov. 6 was jam-packed with a riveted audience, again a mix of students and the public.

Finally, we had two visitors whose work draws on the scholarship of Kabbalah: Prof. Alan Segal from Barnard College came to present a public lecture on “Life After Death in Judaism” (Nov. 13) that again found a significant audience. And Prof. Eric Jacobson from the University of Roehampton came to

present findings from his work on Gershom Scholem, the father of the academic study of Jewish mysticism, and incidentally one of the co-founders of Hebrew University; his lecture was called “Gershom Scholem and the Dialectic of Enlightenment” (Oct. 6).

Although this project was built around the undergraduate course, our goal was to provide plenty of opportunity for our graduate students as well. Our visitors were extremely generous in spending time with the graduate students and speaking with them about their projects, which range from work on Gershom Scholem in the Comparative Literature Department (Amir Engel) to work on rabbinic thought in the Religious Studies Department (Mira Balberg, John Mandsager, Max Strassfeld) and on the esoteric intellectual tradition in Europe (Joshua Gertzke, also in Religious Studies).

That fall quarter clearly demonstrated the prominence of mystical undercurrents in traditional Jewish culture and thought in general as well as in current American Judaism. Hence, one session of the class provided an opportunity for the students to consider the popularity of certain forms of Jewish mysticism in American pop-culture, especially in Los Angeles, and the effect that this phenomenon has on American Jewish culture.

Kabbalah does not (yet!) have a permanent abode at the Taube Center, but it certainly made a grand appearance on campus for ten weeks in late 2008.

This special course was made possible by generous funds supported by the David Lobel Visiting Scholar in Jewish Studies Fund and the Aaron Roland Jewish Studies Fund. Prof. Moshe Idel was the 2008-09 David S. Lobel Visiting Scholar in Jewish Studies.

UNDERGRADUATES

Stanford University
Taube Center for Jewish Studies

African and Middle Eastern Program

Presidential Politics: Race, Class, Faith, and Gender in the 2008 Election. 2008–09 (Elam, M.; Snipp, C.)

African and Middle Eastern Program: Hebrew Literature

Reflection on the Other: The Jew in Arabic Literature, the Arab in Hebrew Literature. 2007–08 (Barhoum, K.; Shemtov, V.)
Politics and Poetics in Israeli Literature: David Grossman and Other Contemporary Hebrew Writers. 2008–09 (Shemtov, V.)
Introduction to Ladino: Language, Literature, and Culture. 2008–09 (Papo, E.)
Middle Eastern Cities in Literature and Film. 2008–09 (Barhoum, K.; Shemtov, V.)

African and Middle Eastern Program: Jewish Languages

Reading Hebrew. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Shemtov, V.)
Beginning Hebrew. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Shemtov, V.; Greif, E.; Porat, G.)
Intermediate Hebrew. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Porat, G.)
Advanced Hebrew. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Porat, G.)
Beginning Yiddish. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Levitow, J.)
Biblical Hebrew. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Porat, G.)

Comparative Literature

Sholem Aleichem and Jewish Minority Discourse. 2007–08 (Miron, D.)
The Modern Jewish Literary Complex. 2007–08 (Miron, D.)
Memory, History, and the Contemporary Novel. 2008–09 (Eshel, A.; White, H.)

Drama

Drama of the Holocaust. 2007–08 (Arad, M.)

Economics

Economic History and Modernization of the Islamic Middle East. 2008–09 (Etkes, H.)

English

Creative Resistance and the Holocaust. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Felstiner, J.)
The Bible and Literature. 2007–08 (Parker, P.)

Feminist Studies

Rereading Judaism in Light of Feminism. 2008–09 (Karlin-Neumann, P.)

French and Italian

Texts in History: Enlightenment to the Present. 2007–08 (Edelstein, D.)

German

Resistance Writings in Nazi Germany. 2007–08 (Bernhardt, E.)
Insights and Outlooks: Confronting the Nazi Past Through Literature. 2007–08 (Tempel, S.)
Hannah Arendt. 2008–09 (Engel, A.)

History

The Holocaust. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Felstiner, M.)
Poles and Jews. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Jolluck, K.)
History of the Israeli-Arab Land Conflict. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Holtzman-Gazit, Y.)
Jews Among Muslims. 2007–08 (Rodrigue, A.)
Coexistence and Conflict: Jews in Pre-modern Christian and Muslim Lands. 2007–08 (Malkiel, D.)
Graduate Research Seminar in Jewish History. 2007–08 (Rodrigue, A.)
Jews, Christians, and Muslims in a Mediterranean Port City: Salonika, 1821–1945. 2008–09 (Naar, D.)
Poverty and Charity in Medieval Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. 2008–09 (Miller, K.)

Land of Three Religions: Medieval Spain. 2008–09 (Miller, K.)
History of Modern Anti-Semitism: 19th–20th Centuries. 2008–09 (Uran, S.)
Making of Jewish Identities in the 19th and 20th Centuries. 2008–09 (Uran, S.)
Europeans, Jews, and Muslims in Colonial French Algeria, 1830–1962. 2008–09 (Uran, S.)

International Relations

The Arab-Palestinian Minority in Israeli Society. 2008–09 (Holzman-Gazit, Y.)
Counter Terrorism. 2008–09 (Ganor, B.)
Tribe, State, and Society in the Modern Middle East. 2008–09 (Teitelbaum, J.)

Religious Studies

Introduction to Judaism. 2007–08, 2008–09 (Radwin, A.)
Three Sacred Stories of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. 2007–08 (Gregg, R.)
The Roots of Right and Wrong in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. 2007–08 (Sadeghi, B.)
Millennium, Messiahs, and Mayhem. 2007–08 (Levinsky, D.)
Philosophy and Kabbalah in Jewish Society: Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. 2007–08 (Malkiel, D.)
Jewish and Christian Rome, 1st to 6th Centuries. 2007–08 (Gregg, R.; Fonrobert, C.)
The Talmud. 2007–08 (Fonrobert, C.)
Kabbalah: The Mystical Teachings of Judaism. 2008–09 (Fonrobert, C.; Radwin, A.)
Politics of Memory. 2008–09 (Fonrobert, C.)
Jewish and Muslim Berlin. 2008–09 (Fonrobert, C.)

Slavic Languages and Literatures

Russian Jewish Literature. 2008–09 (Safran, G.)

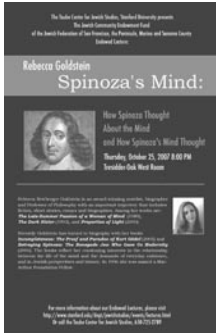
Spanish Literature

The Iberian Inquisition on Trial. 2008–09 (Bulies, R.)

EVENTS

Endowed Lectures, Conferences and Symposia

ENDOWED LECTURES
2007-08



OCTOBER 25, 2007

The Jewish Community Endowment Lecture Fund

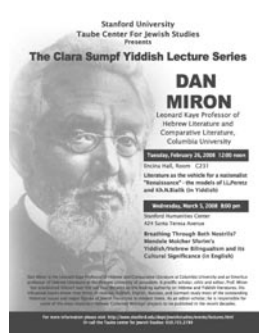
Rebecca Goldstein, Author: "Spinoza's Mind: How Spinoza Thought About the Mind and How Spinoza's Mind Thought"



DECEMBER 3, 2007

The Aaron-Roland Lecture in Jewish Studies

Galit Hasan-Rokem, Professor of Folklore, Hebrew University of Jerusalem: "The Wandering Jew of Modernity: The Route Between East and West, Back and Forth"

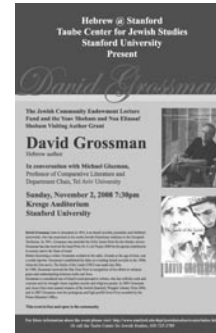


FEBRUARY 26 AND MARCH 5, 2008

The Clara Sumpf Yiddish Lecture Series

Dan Miron, Leonard Kaye Professor of Hebrew Literature and Comparative Literature, Columbia University: "Literature as the Vehicle for a Nationalist 'Renaissance': The Models of I. L. Peretz and Kh. N. Bialik" (Yiddish); "Breathing Through Both Nostrils? Mendele Moicher Sforim's Yiddish/Hebrew Bilingualism and Its Cultural Significance" (English)

ENDOWED LECTURES
2008-09



NOVEMBER 2, 2008

The Jewish Community Endowment Lecture Fund

David Grossman, Hebrew author, in conversation with Michael Gluzman, Professor of Comparative Literature, Tel Aviv University



FEBRUARY 24-25, 2009

The Clara Sumpf Yiddish Lecture Series

Samuel Kassow, Charles H. Northam Professor of History, Trinity College: "The Image of Vilna in Modern Jewish History" (Yiddish); "Culture, History, and Catastrophe: Emanuel Ringelblum in the Warsaw Ghetto" (English)

EVENTS

Stanford University
Taube Center for Jewish Studies

CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

2007-08



SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2007

International Conference, Stanford University/
Ben Gurion University

Sami Michael and Jewish Iraqi Literature

The program included five sessions, a keynote speaker, and concluding remarks by Sami Michael. Organized by Professor Vered Shemtov, the list of speakers included:

Robert Alter, UC Berkeley
Naama Azulay-Levintal, Bar Ilan University
Nitza Ben-Dov, Haifa University
Nancy Berg, Washington University
Edna Amir Coffin, University of Michigan
Amir Eshel, Stanford University
Charlotte E. Fonrobert, Stanford University
Nili Gold, Penn University
Salem Jubran, Author
Lital Levy, Harvard University
Yigal Schwartz, Ben Gurion University
Batya Shimony, Ben Gurion University
Ella Shohat, New York University
Sasson Somekh, Tel Aviv University
Najeem Wali, Author



NOVEMBER 22-24, 2007

International Conference, La Sorbonne, Paris

Sephardi Trajectories: Complexity and Diversity of Identities

Organized by Esther Benbassa, Director of EPHE and Centre Alberto Benveniste, Sorbonne, Paris, and Professor Aron Rodrigue, Stanford University.

Co-sponsored by the Mediterranean Studies Forum, Stanford University, and the Centre Alberto Benveniste, Sorbonne, Paris

CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

2008-09



APRIL 23, 2009

The Shoshana and Martin Gerstel Conference Fund Symposium

"The First Hebrew City"

Early Tel Aviv Through the Eyes of the Eliasaf Robinson Collection

Co-sponsored with the Shenson Fund

Opening Remarks:

Vered K. Shemtov, Stanford University
Zachary M. Baker, Stanford University

Speakers:

Maoz Azaryahu, Haifa University
Anat Helman, Hebrew University
Barbara Mann, Jewish Theological Seminary

See Zachary Baker's contribution, page 42.

EVENTS

Guest Speakers

SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

Hermann Simon and **Deborah Simon**,
Centrum Judaicum (co-sponsored with the
Forum on Contemporary Europe at Stanford
and German Consulate of San Francisco):
“Jewish Life in Berlin and Germany Today”



OCTOBER 16, 2007

Peter Cole, author and translator (co-sponsored
with the English Department, Creative Writing
Program, Sephardic Project, Stanford): “The
Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry From
Muslim and Christian Spain, 950–1492”

NOVEMBER 15, 2007

Bernard Henri Levy, author, philosopher, and
journalist (co-sponsored with the Hillel at
Stanford, Office for Religious Life, Music at
Stanford): “A Philosopher’s View of the Post
9/11 Era”

NOVEMBER 27, 2007

Saul Friedlander, Professor of History, University
of California, Los Angeles (co-sponsored with
the Center for European Studies at Stanford):
“Nazi Germany and the Jews”

DECEMBER 4, 2007

Julia Cohen, Ph.D. candidate, Department of
History, Stanford: “Fashioning Imperial
Citizens: Sephardi Jews and the Ottoman State,
1856–1912”

DECEMBER 10, 2007

Olga Borovaya, Senior Researcher, Russian
State University for the Humanities
(co-sponsored with the Mediterranean Forum
at Stanford): “The Dynamics of Ladino
Literature from the 16th to 20th Centuries”

JANUARY 22, 2008

Mark Gelber, Professor of German and
Comparative Literature, Ben-Gurion University,
Beer-Sheva (co-sponsored with the German
Department at Stanford): “Reading Kafka:
Zionist Contextualizations”

JANUARY 21, 2008

Rolf Schütte, German Consul General,
San Francisco (co-sponsored with the Forum
on Contemporary Europe at Stanford):
“German-Jewish Relations Today”

FEBRUARY 5, 2008

Shaul Magid, Associate Professor of Religious
Studies, Chair of Jewish Studies in Modern
Judaism, Indiana University: “Charisma
Speaking: Uniqueness, Incarnation, and Sacred
Language (Lashon Ha-Kodesh) in Nahman of
Bratslav’s Self-Fashioning”

FEBRUARY 6, 2008

Steven Weitzman, Professor of Religious Studies,
Chair of Jewish Studies Program, Indiana
University: “Counterfeit Judaism: Mimic Jews
and Jewish Mimics in Antiquity”

FEBRUARY 6, 2008

Yifaat Weiss, Professor of History of the Jewish
People, Hebrew University (co-sponsored
with the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and
Languages and the Forum on Contemporary
Europe at Stanford): “Persians and Indians and
Blacks: Leah Goldberg and the Orientalism
Seminar in Bonn in the 30s”

FEBRUARY 11, 2008

David Biale, Professor of Jewish History,
University of California, Davis: “Not in the
Heavens: The Pre-Modern Roots of Jewish
Secularism”

FEBRUARY 21, 2008

Darius Staliunas, Professor of History,
Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius: “Jewish-
Lithuanian Relations in the Interwar Era”

FEBRUARY 22, 2008

Adriane Leveen, Professor of Jewish Bible,
Hebrew Union College: “Memory and
Tradition in the Book of Numbers”

MARCH 11, 2008

Mitchell Cohen, Professor of Political Theory,
City University of New York: “Israel and the
American Left”

APRIL 1–2, 2008

Daphne Barak-Erez, Professor of Law, Tel
Aviv University: “Terrorism Law Between the
Executive Model and the Legislative Model”
and “Outlawed Pigs: Law, Religion, and
Culture in Israel”

EVENTS

Stanford University
Taube Center for Jewish Studies

APRIL 8, 2008

Galit Rand, Visiting Scholar, Stanford: “From Wine to Wine’s Field: The Israeli Wine Arena as a New Cultural Field”

MAY 6, 2008

Omer Bartov, John P. Birkelund Distinguished Professor of European History, Brown University: “Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine”

MAY 7, 2008

Robert (Reuven) Bonfil, Professor of History of the Jewish People, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem: “Jews, Christians, and Sex in Renaissance Italy: A Problem of Historiography”

MAY 13, 2008

Lilach Lachman, poet and translator: “The Poetry of Avot Yeshurun”

OCTOBER 24, 2008

Moshe Idel, Max Cooper Professor of Jewish Thought, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the David Lobel Visiting Scholar, Stanford: “Eros and Kabbalah”

OCTOBER 27, 2008

Renée Poznanski, Yaacov and Poria Avnon Professor of Holocaust Studies, Politics, and Government, Ben Gurion University of the Negev: “Propaganda and Persecutions: The French Resistance and the Jewish Problem”

NOVEMBER 13, 2008

Alan F. Segal, Ingeborg Rennert Professor of Jewish Studies and Religion, Barnard College: “Life After Death in Judaism”

JANUARY 6, 2009

Philip Davis, Professor of English, University of Liverpool (co-hosted by the English Department at Stanford): “Awkward Malamud”

JANUARY 15, 2009

Olivia Cohen-Cutler, Senior Vice President, ABC News Network, Chair of MorningStar Commission: “Women and Ethnicity in the Media, Jewish Women on Network Television”

JANUARY 23, 2009

Aviad Kleinberg, Professor of History, Tel Aviv University (co-sponsored with Religious Studies Department at Stanford): “Beyond Guilt: Trespassing the Christian and the Jewish Way”

FEBRUARY 12, 2009

Elana Gomel, Professor of English and American Studies, Tel Aviv University: “Israel in Science Fiction/Science Fiction in Israel”



(credit: Sven Paustian)

APRIL 2, 2009

Aris Fioretos, writer (co-sponsored with the Forum on Contemporary Europe at Stanford): “On ‘Rediscovering’ Nelly Sachs”

APRIL 7, 2009

Dr. David A. Wesley, author: “State Practices and Zionist Images: Shaping Economic Development in Arab Towns in Israel”

APRIL 13, 2009

Aivars Stranga, Professor of History, Latvian University, Riga (co-sponsored with the Forum on Contemporary Europe at Stanford): “Holocaust in Nazi-Occupied Latvia: New Trends in Scholarship”

APRIL 24, 2009

A symposium with **Jose Casanova**, **Friedrich Graf**, **John Bowen**, **Tim Byrnes**, **Benjamin Kaplan**, and **John Efron**: “Religion and Secularization in Europe, Question Mark”

JUNE 5, 2009

Uri Cohen, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Literature, Columbia University: “In Love and War: Fragments from the Discourse of Hebrew Warfare and Sentimentality (A Look at Israel’s First Wars)”

EVENTS

Text and Culture Speaker Series

CHARLOTTE ELISHEVA FONROBERT, DIRECTOR

Our Annual Block Seminar Series in Text and Culture

In the spring quarter of 2008–09, we held our second block seminar in the Text and Culture series. This year’s instructor was Professor Joshua Levinson, who teaches midrashic literature in the Department of Hebrew Literature at Hebrew University, Jerusalem. The previous year, the instructor had been Prof. Aharon Shemesh, who teaches the history of halakhah from Qumran through the Talmud at Bar Ilan University and the Hartment Institute.

The block seminar is one of our new exciting initiatives: beyond graduate education, it seeks to further the collaboration between Jewish programs around the bay. It has been co-sponsored by the Taubman Chair in Talmudic Culture at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Center for Jewish Studies of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. Graduate students from all three programs participated in the four sessions of the two-week seminar; one week it is held at Stanford, another week in Berkeley. Thus, they had the opportunity to study with one of the foremost scholars of midrashic literature in the world as well as to learn from one other on each other’s home campuses.

The purpose of the seminar is to bring scholars of different textual traditions to teach and present the status of the study of their respective texts. Their task is to do so not in generic ways but by way of teaching texts and of tools for taking apart, analyzing, and interpreting their texts.

For instance, why is it that Midrash is taught in the Department of Hebrew Literature, whereas Talmud has its own department? What does it mean to read midrashic texts as literary texts? Should midrashic texts read first and foremost in their presumed historical context (of the later Roman Empire, for



instance), or can they be read in the context of other literatures? Which, indeed, are the most important and interesting research questions that guide the academic study of midrashic literature, and which are the pertinent texts to try and answer these questions? How does one go about selecting texts from the vast ocean of midrashic literature?

These were the questions that engaged students in this year’s seminar and beyond the classroom. The purpose is also to afford our students the opportunity to meet with the visiting scholar individually and to discuss their own research work. So the two weeks of the block seminar are a veritable feast of learning and study.

In a more general way, the goal of this initiative is also to build and strengthen existing institutional relationships between our Northern Californian Jewish Studies programs and the relevant programs and institutions in Israel, so that we can nurture a lively exchange between our respective academic cultures. In this regard, too, the first two block seminars were a great success.

The Text and Culture Speaker series were made possible by generous funds supported by the Aaron Roland Annual Lecture Fund.

OCTOBER 23, 2007

Richard Kalmin, Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics, Jewish Theological Seminary: “The Babylonian Talmud in Its Persian Context”

NOVEMBER 15, 2007

James Kugel, Professor of Bible, Bar Ilan University: “How to Read the Bible”

JANUARY 18, 2008

Yair Lipshitz, Ph.D. student, Tel Aviv University: “Drag and Diaspora: Performing the Embodiment of Scripture in ‘Angels in America’”

JANUARY 28, 2008

Moshe Halbertal, Professor of Jewish Thought and Philosophy, Hebrew University, Jerusalem: “‘If It Weren’t Written in Scripture, It Could Not Have Been Said’: Interpretative Daring in Midrash”

FEBRUARY 4 AND 6, 2008

Stanford/Berkeley Block Seminar (Bavli)
Aharon Shemesh, Professor of Talmud, Bar-Ilan University: “Study of the Bavli”

OCTOBER 6, 2008

Dr. Eric Jacobson, Roehampton University, London: “Gershom Scholem and the Dialectic of Enlightenment”

NOVEMBER 6, 2008

Daniel C. Matt, author of the annotated English translation of the Zohar: “How the Zohar Reimagines God”

NOVEMBER 20, 2008

Pinchas Giller, Professor of Jewish Thought, University of Judaism: “Kabbalah and Mysticism”

APRIL 27 AND 29, 2009

Stanford/Berkeley Block Seminar in Jewish Religion and Culture
Joshua Levinson, Professor of Hebrew Literature, Hebrew University of Jerusalem: “Study of the Midrash”

MAY 26, 2009

Steven M. Wasserstrom, Professor of Judaic Studies, Reed College: “Joachim Wach’s ‘The Meaning and Task of the History of Religions’ (1935)”

EVENTS

The Sephardi Studies Project

ARON RODRIGUE, DIRECTOR



In conjunction with the Mediterranean Studies Forum, the Taube Center for Jewish Studies, also a part of the division of International and Comparative Studies, oversees the Sephardi Studies Project. This is a new venue to explore the history and culture of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries. Apart from organizing lectures, conferences, and sponsoring courses, it has developed a website that will include representative samples of writings in various Judeo languages of the Sephardim over the ages, starting with Ladino. Directed by Aron Rodrigue. http://www.stanford.edu/group/mediterranean/seph_project.



ARON RODRIGUE, Eva Chernov Lokey Professor in Jewish Studies and Professor of History, finished a three-year term as Chair of the History Department and was appointed Director of the Stanford Humanities Center in September 2009. He is also Director of the Mediterranean Studies Forum. He continues to co-edit, with Steven J. Zipperstein, the Stanford Series in Jewish History and Culture at Stanford University Press. He is currently working on a book on the transformation and destruction of Sephardi Jewries in the Levant in the first half of the 20th century through a study of history of the Jewish community of the island of Rhodes in the last decade of Ottoman rule and under Italian colonialism, until its annihilation during the Holocaust (1900–1944).

Digitized Ladino Library

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

LIST OF TEXTS

1. *Kanunnâme de Penas* is the Ladino translation by Judge Yehezkel Gabbay of the first Ottoman Legal Code adopted in 1860, in the aftermath of the Hatt-i Hümayun (Ottoman reform decree) promulgated in 1839.
2. *Poezias Ebraïkas de Rosh ha-Shana i Yom Kippur* is a popular compilation in Ladino by Rabbi Reuven Eliyahu Yisrael of *piyyutim* chanted during the High Holidays.
3. *From Ottoman Turkish to Ladino* features a unique Ladino pamphlet on morality by the same Judge Yehezkel Gabbay, known up to now only as the founder of the *Djurnal Yisraelit*. In this project of translation, Judge Gabbay was inspired by his illustrious colleague, the former Ottoman Ambassador to Austria, Mehmet Sâdik Rif'at Pasha, whose *Risâle-i Ablâk* or “Pamphlet on Morality” represented, the first departure from the traditional Muslim custom of discussing morality on the twin foundations of the Qur'ân and the Hadith exclusively.
4. *The Seliboth of the Sepharadim*, originally self-published by Joseph Alschech in Vienna in 1865, is, the first bilingual, Hebrew-Ladino Sephardic *Seliboth* book produced by Eastern Sepharadim.
5. *The Song of Songs in the Targumic Tradition* was intended as a textbook for the study of the Aramaic Targum of the Song of Songs. This is the Ladino version of this Targum in Roman characters, entitled *Paraphrasis Caldaica*, Amsterdam 1664, along with Avraham Asa's, Constantinople 1744 Romanized Ladino version, as well as Isaac Jerusalmi's 1992 modern Ladino version.

EVENTS

Hebrew Language, Literature, and Culture at Stanford

VERED KARTI SHEMTOV, DIRECTOR

Israeli Literature and Culture Events

OCTOBER 10, 2007

A Class Seminar: A Conversation with **Michal Govrin**, author, poet, and theater director

NOVEMBER 3, 2007

Meir Shalev, author: "A Pigeon and a Boy: Lecture and Storytelling"

NOVEMBER 15, 2007

James Kugel, Professor of Bible, Bar Ilan University: "How to Read the Bible"

NOVEMBER 28, 2007

Freddie Rokem, Professor of Drama and Theatre Arts, Tel Aviv University: "Art and Occupation: Images from the Border Landscapes Between Israel and Palestine"

JANUARY 17, 2008

A conversation with **Sayed Kashua**, author, and **Gil Hochberg**, Professor, University of California, Los Angeles

FEBRUARY 7, 2008

A conversation with **Agi Mishol**, poet and author, and **Dan Miron**, Leonard Kaye Professor of Hebrew Literature and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

OCTOBER 15, 2008

Anat Weisman, Rosen Family Chair in Judaic Studies, Ben Gurion University of the Negev: "Contemporary Hebrew Poetry" (in Hebrew)

OCTOBER 16, 2008

Ilana Pardes, Professor of Comparative Literature, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem: "The Song of Songs in Israeli Culture: Agnon's Sommambulist Lovers"

NOVEMBER 15, 2008

A film screening with **Yehudit Katzir**, Hebrew author (co-sponsored with Israel Connection of ALSJCC in Palo Alto and the Israel Center)

In the past few years, with the generous support from the Koret Foundation, the Taube Center for Jewish Studies launched the Israeli Culture Project. This initiative was devoted to promoting the study and research of Hebrew Language, Literature, and Culture at Stanford University.

At the core of the project is the Hebrew program. In-depth academic work on issues related to Israel requires direct access to texts in Hebrew and the study of the strong ties between language and culture. To this end, our program developed an innovative approach to teaching the language in context. Hebrew@Stanford, arguably one of the best programs nationally, plays a leading role in paving the way for the new multimedia phase in language teaching. Universities and individuals throughout the world are using material developed by the program.

Our third-year Hebrew students join the Israeli Literature and Culture courses. These classes are devoted to the study of major figures in Israeli culture from Bialik and Agnon to the more contemporary works by Meir Shalev and Etgar Keret. The classes are enriched with lectures by visiting scholars from Israel as well as by guest authors. An example of the impact that these enrichment classes have on Israel education on campus can be found in a thank-you letter from Molly Colleen Tokaz, a student majoring in literature with no previous knowledge of Israel. After reading Michal Govrin's book *Snapshots*, the students met the author and learned about the role the Holocaust plays in Israeli identity and its literature, on writing as a woman in Israel, and on defining the self and the other through literature. Tokaz wrote:

While I found her book provocative in its own right, I only began to truly appreciate and understand the novel after her visit. Her presence in the room

lent a vivacity to the work that left me completely enthralled. I cannot express what a great effect getting to discuss a work with the author has; in this rare instance, I was able to be not just a reader but a participant in the discourse. ... The potential to learn from these speaker experiences are boundless. Stanford has many things to offer, but the opportunity to learn straight from the source and to engage an author on his/her work is one that I hold to be truly invaluable. I can honestly say I will never forget Michal Govrin's reading her book.

Stanford's Hebrew project is a major international center, outside of Israel, for the exchange of ideas and scholarship in the field. Through workshops, publications, and collaborative projects with Tel Aviv University, Ben Gurion University, the JTS, and other universities, Stanford contributed to the scholarly work on modernism in Israeli culture, Jewish Iraqi literature in Israel, Hebrew poetry in cultural context, Ashkenazi pronunciation and its effects on Hebrew culture in Eastern Europe and Israel, Israeli practices and perceptions of space, and much more. The book collections purchased recently by Stanford Libraries, with the help of Koret and other funds, helped support the research and attracted high-caliber scholars to Stanford. We are now working on a large-scale study of the cultural history of Tel Aviv. Four professors from Israel and New York, together with Zachary Baker from Stanford, are putting together an exhibition and book that will reflect the importance of the collection to scholarship. After seeing the plans for this project, Stanford's Library decided to make digitization of the material a priority and to cover all expenses related to the exhibit. (See also the essay "A 'Virtual Hebrew City'" by Zachary Baker elsewhere in this newsletter.)

EVENTS

Guest Author Program



“For me a writer is someone who feels claustrophobic in words that other people used or abused.”

David Grossman in conversation with Michael Gluzman, Stanford University (November 2, 2008)

This program brings 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.

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. Our guest author for 2007–08 was the writer A. B. Yehoshua, and in 2008–09 we had the honor of hosting David Grossman. This endeavor was made possible by the generous support of Yoav Shoham and Noa Eliasaf Shoham.

These extremely successful visits created unprecedented visibility for Hebrew culture on campus. They brought from 400 to 800 people from the local community to hear an author speak about Israeli literature and history, and it engaged students and faculty from many departments in smaller seminar discussions as well.

Reflection on Sixty Years of Israeli Literature and Culture

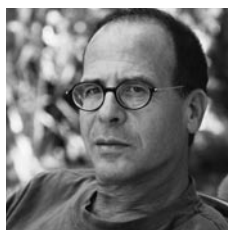
A.B. YEHOSHUA in an interview with Professor Vered Karti Shemtov, Jewish Studies, Stanford University, April 27, 2008

Professor Karti Shemtov: You belong to what scholars and critics call the “statehood generation” of writers. What does it mean to you to be part of this generation?

Mr. Yehoshua: [We can divide] the generations of the Hebrew literature starting from the beginning of the renaissance of Hebrew literature. The first generation called upon the name of Bialik, and this was the generation that included the great masters like Agnon and Belkovich and many other writers.

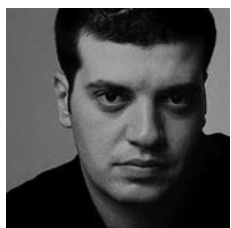
Unfortunately Agnon has overshadowed most of them. This is one of the problems: one writer became so important that he erased the majority of the writers who were around him. This is a phenomenon that has to be discussed on a literary level and on a sociological level: why one writer became so important and why he has continued to be so important in Israel while the others disappeared.

(continued on next page)



In 2007–09 the following authors visited the Hebrew Program at Stanford *(pictured left to right)*

*Sami Michael
Meir Shalev
Michal Govrin
Sayed Kashua,
Agi Mishol
Yehudit Katzir*



Lectures on Hebrew Literature Were Given By:

*Anat Weisman
Lilach Lachman
Ilana Pardes
Elana Gomel*



There is the part of Brenner, who has a special place, not especially because of his novels but because of his ideology and because of his personality.

Then there was the generation that we call the generation of Eretz Yisra'el; mainly poets who were coming in the '30s, and for them, their experience of Eretz Yisra'el was the major experience in their writing. Mainly, it was poets who could absorb this experience through poetry and also prose.

Then there was the generation of the War of Independence—a special generation. Most of these writers are still alive. I won't name all these writers, but for them the major experience was that they transferred from Eretz Yisra'el to the establishing of the state and the collective and special experience of this very small community (a very small community of about 400,000) who had done it, especially after the Holocaust, or during the Holocaust, who could succeed to make this state, and the enormous efforts and casualties. One percent of the population was killed during the War of Independence. It was really dangerous and we were on the verge of losing this state, and nobody would care about it, including the American Jews. (I say that in brackets.) The state, there in the Middle East, fought for its life, and then we succeeded in establishing it.

Then came the main figures of this generation of poets: Yeshurun with his special writing. I think he is the most important writer of the last fifty years. Then there is, of course, Megged



*A.B. Yehoshua
(left), and
Prof. Vered
Karti Shemtov.*

and Shaham and Shamir and Bartov and others. Some of them are still alive and functioning.

Then we came—the generation of the state, for which the state was already in effect, so there was not the struggling for something. The state: not only the question of the territory but the state—the state meaning a state with borders. We knew exactly what Israel is. For nineteen years, we knew exactly what Israel is, meaning knowing what is the frontier of Israel. I say it, because for the last forty years, children in Israel do not know what Israel is. They don't know what the border of Israel is. They don't know the fundamental thing that every man, every child, knows in the world. A Frenchman knows what the map of France is, a German knows what the map of Germany is, and of course an American knows. But for forty years, and I think it will continue, the Israelis will not know what their state is—what is the border of their state. And this is the reason why there is something that is lacking. There is a hole in their identity. So these nineteen years were very important for us and very important for establishing what I would call the Israeli identity—not citizenship, but identity.

Vered Karti Shemtov: Who were, for you, the most important and interesting figures in Israeli culture or in Israel life of the last sixty years?

Yehoshua: I would say, and this is ridiculous to say, first of all, Ben-Gurion, as an intellectual. In the last book of essays, I even brought in an

amazing [quotation] of his after the Holocaust, as the prime minister. I say that we had the chance [good fortune] to have such a prime minister with a clear mind, also with a clear political ability, to do what he has done. It is amazing to see today. Ben-Gurion was forgotten and Sharet was forgotten. Of course, Eshkol was forgotten. And you will see referenced again in articles in the newspapers, when journalists are thinking about such and such a problem, they say, “We will refer to Ben-Gurion to see how clearly he saw things and how penetrating he was in his vision.” Imagine if you asked an American writer, “Who is for you the great personality?” and he would mention, “I don't know, Roosevelt,” or he would mention Truman. This would be ridiculous because you don't expect that a writer would mention a prime minister as an intellectual figure that has influenced him. But I still have on my table his picture. You know, he was doing Feldenkrais gymnastics and he was standing on his head near a swimming pool, and I see it just on my table; there is a picture under the glass of Ben-Gurion standing on his head. The fact that he was going to Oxford.... When he was visiting England, he went to Oxford to Blackwell's to buy books, et cetera.

You can't imagine Orlev or Bartov doing such things. [Laughter] It's totally another category.

But I will give you, of course, two other names. I will not stay with Ben-Gurion. I think one figure would of course be Gershom Scholem, who was the great, great scholar of Judaism. I quote him especially when he was saying that Zionism was the return of the Jews to history. The Jews during two thousand years did not work with history; they were out of history.

This was amazing. In what sense were the Jews out of history? In the sense that the Jews were working with mythology.

EVENTS

Stanford University
Taube Center for Jewish Studies

Jewish identity was based upon mythology and not upon historical memory and historical conception. The Jew could be anywhere with the story of the exodus from Egypt, the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, the story of the destruction of the temple, and things like that. These were basic mythological stories that were not related to time and place. With this mythology, the Jews kept their identity. You can see it very well, for example, with Tisha B' Av. Tisha B' Av is the commemoration of the destruction of the temple, but which temple? It is the combination of the first temple and the second temple. The first temple was destroyed in 580 before Jesus Christ; the second was destroyed 600 years later. It's as though you would commemorate ... Americans have such a short history, but let's say the Civil War of the nineteenth century with the Second World War or the war in Vietnam ... you would have one day on which you would commemorate the two events that have nothing in common. But this is mythological thinking. You don't refer to what was happening, or what was the reason of a certain destruction of a temple, or what was the reason for the other destruction. You combine them together, you make it a mess, and then you speak about destruction, and here is the mythology working.

Scholem was saying: You are returning to history — history means to know facts, to know dates, to know the history of other people around you, to know immediately all the contexts, to put your history in relative comparison with other history. This is a historical knowledge, a historical identity. I always admire the French, as they preserve their history. When I was working on *The Journey to the End of the Millennium* and I tried to find out what was happening in Paris in the beginning of the second millennium after the first millennium, I saw a wonderful documentary about Paris: which buildings

there are and which buildings no longer exist, so they preserve their history. Now, returning to Israel, Zionism was [central] for Scholem, and this is the way in which he explained it. This was extremely important for me when I started to do my historical novels.

The third one I would like just to mention is, of course, Yeshayahu Leibowitz. Leibowitz was one of the most brave intellectuals. He was really one of the smartest intellectuals combining so many subjects.... An intellectual, for me, is a person who can do combinations. A person can be here at Stanford and be a very important professor, a great specialist, but he may not be an intellectual. We have to understand that an intellectual is someone who is trying to integrate between many forms and disciplines and tries to do this combination through a new integration. I don't say that integration is right or wrong, but the ability or the will to do integration ... this means that this is an intellectual. And you can find intellectuals even in a store or in a place you don't expect. Okay, a professor at Princeton or at my university can be a great specialist about a certain subject, but not be an intellectual. Leibowitz was not only an intellectual; he was brave as such, and he was a man who could speak his mind. He gave to all of us, especially in the time when we had to fight against the politics of Israel. He gave us a lot of legitimacy by his personality to speak our minds, to say what we think, without doing accounts (if it pleases the public or it doesn't please the public). This was, for me, one of the biggest examples [of great Israeli figures] in the last sixty years.



From left: Maya Arad, Sharon Haitovsky, Prof. Vered Karti Shemtov at the A.B. Yehoshua Guest Author event.

Jewish Art Initiative

“[The] connection between history and daily life is something I tried quite consciously to apply to operatic performances, but also to abstract music—symphonic music, piano music, or chamber music—this awareness that something that was written two hundred years ago has great relevance today. This sense of Jewish history playing an active part in contemporary life helped me to realize that every great piece of music has two facets—one relating to its own period and another to eternity. And it is from this second aspect that our interest in music that was composed two or three centuries ago comes.”

Daniel Barenboim, *A Life in Music* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003), 23

Following Stanford's engagement in the Arts and in Creativity, the Taube Center for Jewish Studies launched this year a special project to promote the study of Jewish arts with a focus on music, literature, and film. The project became possible with a generous grant from the Shenson Brothers Fund. We thank Patricia Boesch for her help and support.

Jewish Music became part of the Stanford campus with the collaboration of Stanford Lively Arts. The widely acclaimed Idan Raichel Project filled Memorial Hall with a mix of traditional Hebrew texts and Middle Eastern and Ethiopian music. The Israeli singer and songwriter and his band held an enthralled audience of 1,700 with its distinctive electronic fusion.

On a different occasion, students, faculty, and community members joined us for a performance of the Messiaen Centenary: Messiaen Remix, a concert with Matt Haimovitz (cello) and David Krakauer (clarinet).

Donors and faculty enjoyed a more intimate performance, with explanations and comments, and students had an opportunity to meet the artists in an event at Hillel.

Plans for future collaborations with Lively Arts are already in place. In November, Jamie Bernstein, the eldest daughter of composer

Leonard Bernstein, will celebrate her father's musical legacy in an evening of song and storytelling with pianist and conductor Michael Barrett and vocalists from the New York Festival of Song. Bernstein's narration combines frank and funny anecdotes with plot synopses, musical insights, and a glimpse of the creative process behind some of Bernstein's signature works. In a different event, Bernstein will speak about “Leonard Bernstein and the Bible.”

In January 2010, Steve Reich, winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for music, will visit the campus for a screening and discussion of his theater piece *The Cave*. The piece explores the biblical story of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac.

Professor Berger joined Jewish Studies as an affiliated faculty in the academic year 2007–08. He is the Billie Bennett Achilles Professor in Music, Co-Director of Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts (SiCa), Co-Director of Stanford's Art Initiative, and an American composer. We are looking forward to collaborating with him on future programs.

Next year, Professor Avi Tchamni will join us as a visiting faculty and will teach two courses in the Department of Music. The first course is “Jewish Music in the Lands of Islam” and the second “Music of Modern

Israel.” His visit is cosponsored with the Sephardi Project.

Israeli music was celebrated at Stanford this year as part of the events for the new Tel Aviv archive and Tel Aviv's centennial. Donny Inbar compiled, translated, and directed “Tel Aviv from Sand to Rock,” a musical journey of the Hebrew city's first 100 years. In front of an audience of more than 400 people, Lee Ganor, Yoram Zarfati, YaRock Band, Ofir Zwebner, and Rom Eliaz performed songs about Tel Aviv. Vered Karti Shemtov opened the event with an introduction to Stanford's Tel Aviv project.

Several guests brought Jewish literature and film to campus. Jewish Studies helped support the visit of David Mamet, author, playwright, screenwriter, and film director. The event was organized by Hillel at Stanford. Yehudit Katzir, a Hebrew author, spoke in front of over 200 people after the screening of her film *Family Secret*. And leading Israeli author David Grossman visited classes, gave a seminar for faculty and students, and presented a very well received public lecture.

In order to promote creativity in Hebrew classes, Gallia Porat invited the improvisation group Theater Works. It worked with students on creating short skits, mime, and dialogue in the Hebrew language.

Last but not least, the Hebrew author Maya Arad was nominated as the TCJS Writer in Residence for 2007–10. Maya took an active role in events related to the Art Initiative and offered creative writing workshops in Hebrew.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Race Forward

BY CHERYL RICHARDSON



The Program in African & African American Studies (AAAS) at the Center for Comparative Studies in Race & Ethnicity launched a new, campus-wide initiative called “Race Forward” in the fall of 2008. “Race Forward” is a three-year, interdisciplinary project that involves scholarly fields of research and teaching that have not extensively engaged critical race studies or where scholars or students of color have been underrepresented. Co-sponsored by many departments and programs, and generously supported by the President’s Fund, “Race Forward” creates innovative alliances among departments, centers, faculty, and students in order to engage—on a rigorous, scholarly level—issues too often set aside as politically untouchable. Ultimately, our goal is to incorporate scholarly approaches to race into curricula and research that, historically, have been considered unrelated to the study of race. “Race Forward” alliances work with faculty diversity initiatives to develop, attract, and retain faculty and students of color; they are also, just as importantly, meant to educate non-minority students and colleagues and to extend critical discussions of race into new fields of study.

“Race Forward” offers three thematic foci across three years, each of which will link various talks, dinners, courses, consortia, symposia, and other collaborations: 2008–09 focuses on Race and Faith; 2009–10 examines Race and the Environment; and in 2010–11

we turn our attention to Race and Human Health. The last two years relate closely to two of Stanford’s Challenge Initiatives, and all three years respond to the university’s call for multidisciplinary research, teaching, and learning that will prepare citizens for the twenty-first century.

Last year, in collaboration with CCSRE, Religious Studies, the Taube Center for Jewish Studies, the Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies, the Center for South Asian Studies, and the Center for African Studies, AAAS explored the intersection of race and faith. “Race Forward” gathered together an exciting range of undergraduate courses, including a distinguished lecture series. We offered faculty-focused discussions through Race & Faith Salons, which enabled lively conversations among diverse faculty. We also supported several student-initiated efforts, including the production of a play and an art-exhibit on *Jews of Color*.

“Race Forward” Events

OCTOBER 24, 2008

Intellectual Roundtable with **Professor Eddie Glaude, Jr.**: “How Do Race, Faith, and Politics Intersect?”

NOVEMBER 19, 2008

Race & Faith Faculty Salon with **Dean Rabbi Patricia Karlin-Neumann**: “Race and Faith in the Once-Naked Public Square”

FEBRUARY 23, 2009

Race & Faith Faculty Salon with **Professor Prudence Carter**: “Is It Possible That the Multi-racial Church Can Lead Us into a Post-Racial Era?”

APRIL 1 – JUNE 5, 2009

Photographic Exhibit: “*Jews of Color: In Color!*”

This exhibit was put together by the organization *Scattered Among the Nations* and introduced us to the faces and places of Jewish Communities located in Ghana and Zimbabwe as well as Mexico and India. It was a fascinating exploration of Jewish Communities in places most people would neither expect nor know about. For more information about the exhibit, visit www.scatteredamongthenations.org. This program was brought to Stanford by Hillel and the Jewish Student Association and supported by “Race Forward.”

MAY 6, 2009

Lecture Series with **Professor John L. Jackson, Jr.**: “Yah Power: Black Hebrewism, Afrocentrism, and the Silences of African-American Studies”

JUNE 4, 2009

Race & Faith Faculty Salon with **Professors Subhasree Chakravarty and Linda Hess**: “The Intolerant Secular”

Visiting Faculty and Scholars

David Malkiel

Reconstructing Ashkenaz: The Human Face of Franco-German Jewry, 1000–1250
(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009)

Reconstructing Ashkenaz shows that, contrary to traditional accounts, the Jews of Western Europe in the High Middle Ages were not a society of saints and martyrs. Malkiel offers provocative revisions of commonly held interpretations of Jewish martyrdom in the First Crusade massacres, the level of obedience to rabbinic authority, and relations with apostates and with Christians. In the process, he also reexamines and radically revises the view that Ashkenazic Jewry was more pious than its Sephardic counterpart.

2007–08



Mary Felstiner is Professor Emerita of History at San Francisco State University. (Visiting Faculty for two years, 2007–09)

Yifat Holzman-Gazit is an Associate Professor at the College of Management Law School in Rishon Le'zion, Israel. (Visiting Faculty for two years, 2007–09)

David J. Malkiel is an Associate Professor in the Department of Jewish History at Bar-Ilan University, specializing in Jewish culture in medieval and early modern Europe.

Dan Miron 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 is an Associate Professor at the Department of Talmud, Bar-Ilan University, and Senior Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute.

2008–09

Haggay Ertes is a Lecturer in the Department of Economics at Stanford University.

Boaz Ganor is the Deputy Dean of the Lauder School of Government and Diplomacy at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya. He is also the founder and the Executive Director of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism.

Rabbi Pinchas Giller is a professor of Jewish thought and mysticism at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles.

Moshe Idel is the Max Cooper Professor of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Joshua Levinson is a Professor of Hebrew Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Eliezer Papo is a Lecturer in the Hebrew Literature Department at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and is Vice-President of the Moshe David Gaon Center for Ladino Culture.

Ariella Radwin completed her Ph.D. in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA.

Steven Uran is a Senior Researcher at Le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (the French National Center for Scientific Research).

THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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 Tel Aviv Collection Conference and Website

BY ZACHARY BAKER

ZACHARY BAKER is Reinhard Family Curator of Judaica and Hebraica Collections at the Stanford University Libraries

In 2006, I reported on an exciting acquisition by the Stanford University Libraries: the Eliasaf Robinson Collection on Tel Aviv. Over a period of nearly four decades, Robinson, who is one of Israel's leading antiquarian booksellers, collected close to 500 books and thousands of archival documents, photographs, postcards, ephemera, posters, maps, architectural plans, building permits, and even sewer diagrams, dating from the formative decades of Tel Aviv. Taken as a whole, this collection is an extraordinary resource on the economic, social, and cultural history of "the first Hebrew city."

On April 23, 2009—almost a century to the day since the founding of Ahuzat Bayit, the garden suburb that formed the nucleus of the future metropolis—the Taube Center for Jewish Studies presented an academic symposium to celebrate the opening of an exhibit of the Tel Aviv Collection, "The First Hebrew City: Early Tel Aviv Through the Eyes of the Eliasaf Robinson Collection." The symposium was supported by the Shoshana and Martin Gerstel Conference Fund and the Shenson Fund. The exhibit, on view in Green Library from April through August 2009, was curated by me and designed by Becky Fischbach (Stanford University Libraries).



A view of Herzl Street, leading into the Herzliab Gymnasium. Undated, 1920s or 1930s.

At the symposium, following brief introductory remarks by Vered Shemtov (co-director of the Taube Center) and myself, three noted specialists, drawing upon materials in the Tel Aviv Collection, gave presentations on aspects of Tel Aviv's history and culture. Maoz Azaryahu (University of Haifa; author of *Tel Aviv: Mythography of a City* [Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University press; illustrated edition, 2006]) gave a paper on "Tel Aviv's Silver Jubilee, 1934." He was followed by Anat Helman (Hebrew University of Jerusalem; author of *Urban Culture in 1920's and 1930's Tel Aviv* [Haifa: Haifa University Press, 2007, in Hebrew]), who spoke about "Sport, the New Jew, and the First Hebrew City." The symposium concluded with a presentation by Barbara E. Mann (Jewish Theological Seminary of America; author of *A Place in History: Modernism, Tel Aviv, and the Creation of Jewish Urban Space* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005]), on "What We Write About When We Write About Tel Aviv."

The symposium also marked the official launch of the library's Tel Aviv website: <http://lib.stanford.edu/telaviv>. The home page for this website provides links to the online inventory for the archival segment of the collection, to documents, images, and books in the collection,

and to an online version of the exhibit. Researchers everywhere now have ready access to much of the Tel Aviv Collection's contents. In addition, the collection website marks the following "firsts" for the library's Digital Library Systems and Services:

- It is the first collection of works in the Hebrew alphabet to be digitized at Stanford.
- It is one of the first collections of twentieth-century archival files in Hebrew to be digitized anywhere.
- It is the first time that such a heterogeneous body of materials is being made available at Stanford from a single launching page.

The Eliasaf Robinson Collection on Tel Aviv has generated an extraordinary level on interest and enthusiasm, both on the Stanford campus and well beyond. A small group of Second Life devotees eagerly spent evenings and weekends setting up a version of the exhibit on the Stanford University Libraries' "island" in that virtual world. And within hours after the website was launched, the library received a request from an Israeli publisher for permission to reproduce one of the collection's vintage cinema posters. The Tel Aviv Collection promises to be one of the most sought-after resources in the Stanford University Libraries.



Prof. Charlotte E. Fonrobert and Zachary Baker at the symposium on "The First Hebrew City"

Donors and Gifts

We are pleased to receive a generous grant from the **Koret Foundation** in the amount of \$200,000. The fund will be used to support the Hebrew program and other programmatic needs during the next three years. We are very thankful for the continuous support of the **Koret Foundation**.

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- Koret Foundation Grant for the Israeli Culture Project
- Drs. Ben and A. Jess Shenson Fund

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Dr. Bernard Kaufman, Jr., a native San Franciscan, was a proud father, longtime physician, and someone committed to enriching the local and global Jewish community. He established the Dr. Bernard Kaufman Undergraduate Research Award, given annually at Stanford University to a student who is engaged in research on Jews in modernity with a preference for research focusing on contemporary Jewish life. Friends described him as engaged and engaging, gracious and charming, scholarly and curious, warm and loving. He died July 9, 2008, of pancreatic cancer at age 93.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture

STEVEN J. ZIPPERSTEIN AND ARON RODRIGUE, EDITORS
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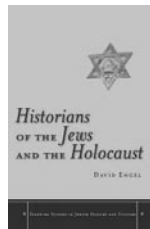
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Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society

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Special issue on Sephardi Identities.
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Borovaya, Olga, “Jews of Three Colors: The Path to Modernity in the Ladino Press at the Turn of the Twentieth Century”

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EDITED BY DEREK PENSLAR AND STEVEN J. ZIPPERSTEIN:

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במדבר. תמן ותנין ארבעה צריכין להודות, מדברות, מן הדא דכתיב תעו במדבר בשימוין וזר המדבר דוגמא לכל הדורות. ומי שהיה בבית שבי חשך וצלמות [אסירי עני וברזל וגו'], כי שיג. ומי שחלה ונתרפא, מן הדא אוילים מדרך פ' י' לה' חסדו וגו' ויזבחו זבחי תודה, שזובחים יז

די זוזי. חד גדיא חד גדיא דשחט לתורא. לחוטר אדהכה לכלבא. די זוזי. חד גדיא חד גדיא

שמע כפר: (ח) ומני את למד. ר' שמואל בר נחמן וממוקם אחר את למד מאברהם, וזה נאמר ג"כ. רשב"ג אף מאמרו של הקב"ה מן אלף נתתי את הארץ הזאת: (ט) בפסוק וישע ה' ביום ההוא כלפור ה' שהוא שומט את העובר ממעי ה' (ל"ד), שאין ת"ל גוי מקרב גוי, ויזייל אתכם מכור הברזל וגו' (שם שם) הזהב מן הכור, כך הוי"ה הקב"ה, וכמכילתא שם מוצא המאמר שתמזר שלפנינו מומדרש תהלים מוצא בנותינו. כ"ה גם בכ"ו ו', ובכ"ו ה' לישראל. הוספתי כמו שהיא בכ"ו ה' השו"ס: (יב) תעו במדבר תנן ופי' שם המ"כ גואלס משמע לו לפני זה א"ר הוגא בשם רבי של הקב"ה מעשה הוא ואחר זה א"ר כד: לזרעך נתתי וגו' ר' הוגא נתתי, אהן את הארץ הזאת אהן. נוצע ממכילתא בשלה מסכת ה' שם יכבד ידו מעט הוא ה' אלהים לבא לקחת לו גוי מקרב מעט את העובר ממעי הפרה, ואומר



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