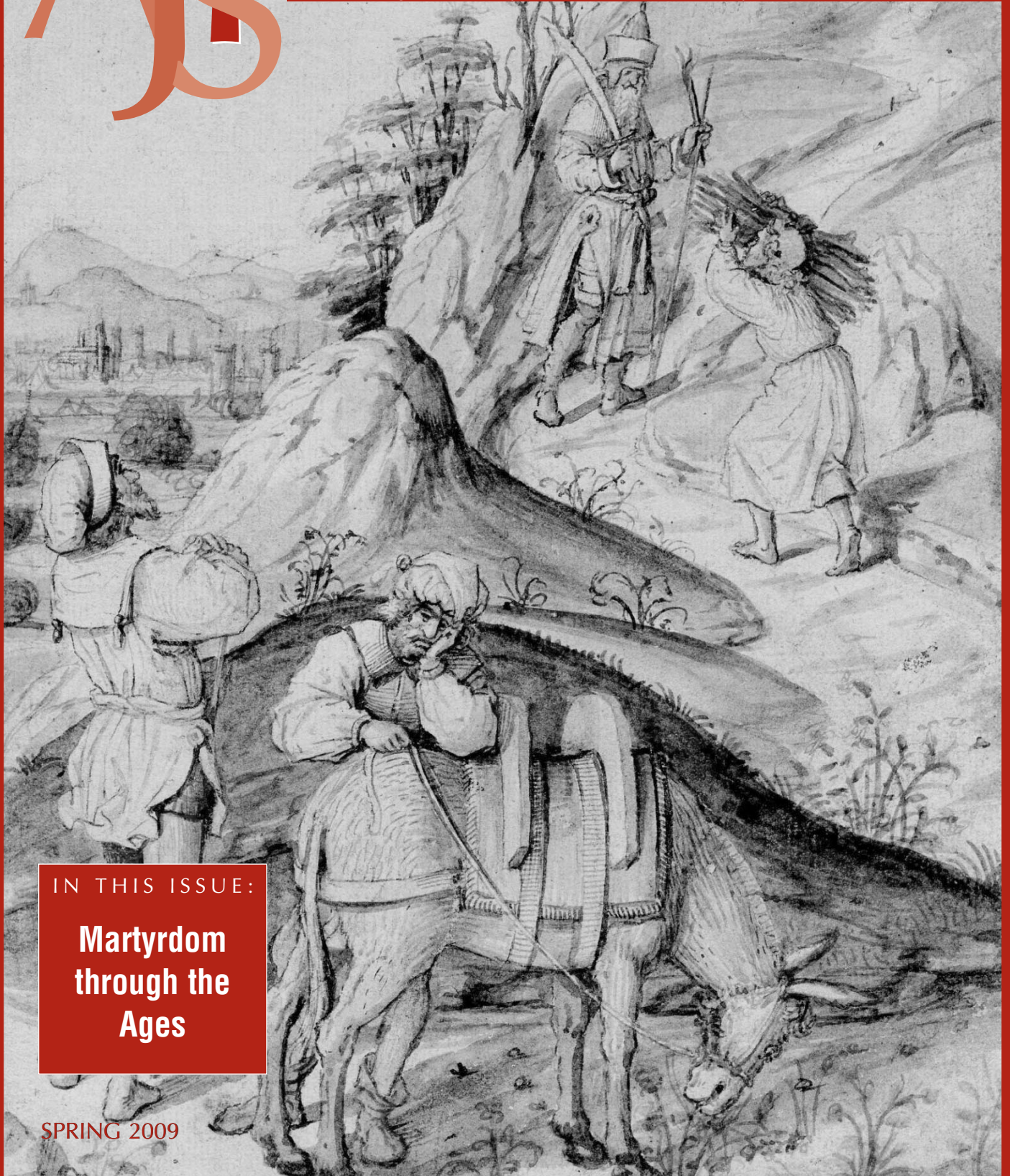


# ASP PERSPECTIVES

*The Magazine of the Association for Jewish Studies*



IN THIS ISSUE:

**Martyrdom  
through the  
Ages**

SPRING 2009

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# FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Colleagues,

I am going to keep my column very short this time, and leave it to the guest editor, Shmuel Shepkaru, to introduce the articles that he has assembled on the history of Jewish martyrdom. All I will note here is that this issue's main section is followed by two pieces about technology. Heidi Lerner's regular column this time does not parallel our main topic but explores some of the newest developments in Web technologies and policies and the resulting implications for Jewish studies. In something of the same vein, Frances Malino and Jason Guberman-Pfeffer describe some amazing new ways in which the Internet is being harnessed to study Mizrahi heritage. Our issue concludes, sorrowfully, with the obituaries of three recently departed colleagues.

Allan Arkush  
Binghamton University

*The Association for Jewish Studies wishes to thank the Center for Jewish History and its constituent organizations—the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Sephardi Federation, the Leo Baeck Institute, the Yeshiva University Museum, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research—for providing the AJS with office space at the Center for Jewish History.*

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

Lately I have been thinking a great deal about the theory and practice of academic freedom. Faced with events on my own and other university campuses in North America, I observe with alarm the clash between the crucial principles of academic freedom and the slow but steady growth of the movement to boycott Israeli academics and academic institutions. This movement, which first began in Great Britain with the University and College Union's proposed boycott of Israel academics and institutions and has spread recently to Canada and the United States, is an affront to the principles of academic freedom that define our profession. As one academic organization puts it, academic freedom is "the lifeblood" of the university. The right to express the full spectrum of views and to subject ideas to interrogation and discussion from many perspectives is at the heart of the work we do in the academy. To borrow from the slogan of an old television advertisement for rye bread, you don't have to be in Jewish studies to oppose an academic boycott of Israel.

In Canada, where I teach, the movement to boycott Israeli academic institutions and those who teach and research under their aegis has found a proving ground. I use the term in two senses: both as testing and as proofing and refining rhetoric and strategies. In recent weeks, the Ontario branch of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), a large union that includes adjunct university faculty; graduate students; office and maintenance staff; as well as transit, healthcare,

library, and other government employees, has put forth an academic boycott initiative. In three successive drafts of the resolution, revised in response to widespread criticism from inside and outside the academy, CUPE called first for a ban on Israeli professors on Canadian campuses unless they pass an ideological litmus test; next, for a ban "on Israeli academic institutions, not individuals"; and finally, for a ban on Israeli academic institutions that support "either directly or indirectly, military research or the Israeli state military," encouraging a more general, if vaguely defined, "academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions." Elsewhere, CUPE elaborates: a boycott would include refusal "to participate in academic cooperation, collaboration or joint projects with Israeli universities . . . conferences in Israel," and so forth.

Fortunately, this movement has faced resistance from diverse corners of the campus. The Canadian Centre for German and European Studies (CCGES), a research center at York University in Toronto, recently released a public statement affirming the right to free inquiry and condemning academic boycotts. While it does not mention Israel in particular, the CCGES statement was written and released in pointed response to the CUPE boycott initiative. Its opposition to such boycotts rests on both historically based sensitivity to exclusionary practices at universities and commitment to the value of academic freedom. Explaining that CCGES's "thematic focus makes it particularly aware of and sensitive to the pernicious effect of the subversion and curtailment of academic freedom and exclusion of researchers and teachers on the basis of their 'nationality' and/or ethnic origins," CCGES "declares its rejection of any ban or boycott . . . of researchers and other public figures based on their nationality." Placing itself in alliance with "other academic

units that cherish academic freedom," CCGES asserted its intention to "continue to invite outstanding academics from around the world, to participate in, and contribute to, its academic activities."

The CCGES statement can serve as a general affirmation of the freedom of inquiry so fundamental to the work of the academy. While countries have developed slightly different parameters for the idea of academic freedom and its application to the rights and obligations of professors, students, and universities themselves, the underlying principle is, in the words of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), that "Freedom of thought and expression is essential to any institution of higher learning. Universities and colleges . . . interpret, explore, and expand that knowledge by testing the old and proposing the new. This mission . . . often inspires vigorous debate on those social, economic, and political issues that arouse the strongest passions. In the process, views will be expressed that may seem to many wrong, distasteful, or offensive. Such is the nature of freedom to sift and winnow ideas." While speech on campus is governed by the law of the land, subject to legal restrictions on hate speech, defamation and libel, the university is construed as a special place that stretches the acceptable parameters. The AAUP notes, "On a campus that is free and open, no idea can be banned or forbidden. No viewpoint or message may be deemed so hateful or disturbing that it may not be expressed." Its Canadian correlative, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), expresses similar principles: "Robust democracies require no less."

Still, the selective application of the principles of academic freedom has me concerned. Today I learned from a speaker invited to my campus to make the case for an academic boycott of Israel that there are "some

things that are more important than academic freedom.” Some of my colleagues have argued that speaking out against an academic boycott is innately undemocratic. Responding to a call for other academic units to endorse the CCGES statement or to draft their own affirmation of academic freedom and free inquiry, several heads declined, stating that they feared, as one put it, that such a statement did not “acknowledge the importance of extending freedom of expression to everyone” because it might be understood as dissenting from the call to a particular academic boycott.

The debate about boycott among professors and graduate students is the backdrop for the so-called “Israel Apartheid Week” (IAW), an annual event on several North American campuses, which has increasingly featured anti-Semitic speech and imagery, violent rhetoric, and physical intimidation. Ironically, many of those refusing to endorse the rights of academic freedom for Israeli professors and institutions defend in absolute terms the right to stage IAW free of any restrictions whatsoever. In a discussion that has become increasingly Orwellian, affirming the

openness of campuses to all views and all nationalities is viewed as a potential chill on academic freedom.

Let me be clear. I am not making an argument in these pages about Middle East politics. I am making an argument against the dangerously inconsistent defense of academic freedom right here in North America. Universities are the place for impassioned debate, and people cannot always be expected to be polite. Academic freedom is often an exercise in discipline and courage—discipline because one must sometimes countenance a view one finds personally abhorrent, and courage because one sometimes must articulate a view not popular within one’s community or among one’s peers. At its best, this freedom holds ideas up to scrutiny. We might convince others to give up ideas that yield to reason, argument, and evidence, or we ourselves might be convinced to change. But when the shape and tenor of the discourse works to intimidate, to block out divergent views, to reify new orthodoxies, or to affirm only selective rights of expression, then the concept of academic freedom becomes meaningless.

As a learned society with an international membership that includes Israeli professors and graduate students targeted by such an academic boycott, and hundreds of scholars who collaborate with Israeli colleagues and educational, archival, and cultural institutions, the Association for Jewish Studies strongly opposes boycott movements that threaten the professional status and integrity of its members, and their ability to conduct their academic work in all its facets unimpeded. In past years, AJS has joined with the American Academy for Jewish Research and other learned societies in forcefully opposing resolutions to boycott Israeli academics and their institutions, and will continue to do so. AJS’s role as a learned society must be to work on behalf of the academic freedom of its membership and to forge cooperative projects with other learned societies that promote genuine, equitable, and meaningful academic exchange on our campuses.

**Sara R. Horowitz**  
*York University*

## **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

### **CAHNMAN PUBLICATION SUBVENTION GRANTS**

The Association for Jewish Studies is now accepting applications for the Cahnman Publication Subvention Grants, a program underwritten by a grant from The Cahnman Foundation of New York. Cahnman Publication Subventions will help subsidize costs associated with the preparation of first books for publication. In keeping with the Cahnman Foundation's mission, scholarly manuscripts that explore Diaspora Jewish life and culture in regions once home to sizable Jewish communities (e.g., Europe, North Africa) will be eligible for consideration. Applicants must be AJS members, have completed their Ph.D. degrees within eight years of the deadline, and have a commitment for publication in English from an academic or university press. **Submission deadline: June 26, 2009.**

**Please visit the AJS website at [www.ajsnet.org/ajsawards.html](http://www.ajsnet.org/ajsawards.html) for further information.**

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

That the current economic crisis is having a severe impact on colleges and universities will not be news to anyone reading this column. Perhaps less obvious are the myriad ways in which learned societies such as AJS are caught up in the challenges facing higher educational institutions in these unprecedented times. The mission, programs, and members of learned societies are rooted in the faculty, departments, and presses of higher educational institutions; what affects these entities directly affects the associations that represent them. Discussion among executive directors of societies large and small have focused on a number of common concerns: job security, salaries, and employment benefits of its members; the job market facing new PhDs; the status of adjunct faculty; the ratio of faculty to students; and the availability of research support.

Likewise, learned societies must plan for a trickle-down effect from declines in college and university endowments, institutional giving, and, in the case of public schools, state support. The core revenue streams of learned societies that support programming and activities throughout the year tend to be fairly uniform across associations: membership dues, conference registration fees, publication sales, position listings, advertising and exhibit fees, and contributed support (both by foundations and individuals). When higher

educational institutions freeze or cut departmental budgets—including lines for new positions, travel subsidies, and discretionary funds—learned societies face fewer positions listings, advertisements in their publications, and conference registrations. As a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* noted (“Bottom Lines Cause Unease at Societies of Scholars,” December 19, 2008), societies expect to know the full impact of the economic crisis in mid to late 2009 and 2010, when a new cycle of membership renewals and conference registrations takes place. Until then, it is time for planning.

As for AJS, while we do not have an endowment, we do have solid reserves that have been built over the past several years through cautious spending and conservative investing. Our goal has been to create a financial cushion for emergencies and, in the long term, to let the earnings from this fund grow into a resource for programs. This continues to be the reserves’ guiding principal, but as is the case for other learned societies, much depends on the health of membership renewals and conference registrations in the coming year. It cannot be emphasized enough that individual members’ commitment to AJS, represented by their annual dues and conference registration, is central to the strength of the organization and our ability to support Jewish studies teaching and research throughout the year. Likewise, Jewish studies programs’ and departments’ commitment to AJS, as represented by their institutional membership, is essential to AJS’s work supporting program development and graduate student training, and conducting research on the field. AJS publications, the annual conference, and the website could not function without a broad-based membership; nor could AJS offer the directory of Jewish studies programs, research on

endowed chairs, graduate student travel grants, or the most comprehensive position listing in the field without the support of more than 1,700 individual members and 42 institutional members.

AJS’s conference, publications, website resources, and grants are central to our mission, and all fiscal planning revolves around upholding the excellent standards of these programs. Furthermore, at a time when every dollar counts for members, AJS is committed not only to preserving current benefits but expanding its services. This includes seeking new grants to support members’ research and conference participation; upgrading the AJS website to support an online membership system, with a member directory and individual member pages; and expanded resources on pedagogy and Jewish studies.

AJS has also taken several steps to reduce members’ travel expenses to the 41st Annual Conference, December 20–22, 2009 in Los Angeles. These steps include:

- Special arrangements with the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Los Angeles, a four-star, luxury hotel and spa, for reduced rates of \$119/night (\$109/night for students). In addition, those who stay three nights will get the fourth night at 50 percent off.
- Additional benefits for AJS members staying at the Century Plaza: a 15 percent discount at all in-house restaurants and food outlets; 15 percent discount for services at the Equinox Spa (located on the grounds of the hotel); \$10 special daily pass to the Equinox Gym; and special reduced in-room Internet service of \$4.99/day.
- Special reduced roundtrip fare of \$24 on Super Shuttle

between LAX airport and the Century Plaza.

- Discounted tickets at local cultural institutions, including the Los Angeles County Museum and Skirball Cultural Center.
- An AJS Conference Travel Blog (<http://ajstravel.wordpress.com/>), with news about special airline fares to Los Angeles. In addition, AJS will send e-mail blasts to members about fare specials.
- An expanded conference travel grant program, with more resources to support untenured faculty and graduate student

participation in the annual meeting.

AJS is also organizing special panels and presentations at the meeting in Los Angeles to help members navigate professional challenges and personal finances in the current economy. For the second time, we will host a panel on careers outside of academia, with representatives of various professions speaking about opportunities for Jewish studies PhDs. AJS also plans to bring in representatives from TIAA-CREF (to discuss retirement planning); Vanguard (to discuss saving for college); and a financial planner who specializes in working with academics.

Please let me know other ways that AJS can better serve members. The association takes very seriously our role as both a learned society and professional organization, and remains committed to supporting the intellectual and professional lives of members. We are eager to know about the state of Jewish studies on campuses, the nature and area of budget cuts facing graduate students and faculty, and the ways in which AJS can help individual and institutional members navigate through, and continue to thrive in, these challenging times.

**Rona Sheramy**  
*Association for Jewish Studies*

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Special reduced room rates at the Century Plaza (\$119.00 single and double occupancy; \$109.00 student rate) available through November 16, 2009. Contact 1-800-233-1234 for reservations. Be sure to ask for the Association for Jewish Studies rate.

Deadline for reduced advance conference registration rates (\$105.00 regular/associate members; \$55 student members; \$150 non-members) is November 16, 2009. See AJS website for registration information.

# MARTYRDOM THROUGH THE AGES

*Shmuel Shepkaru*

The following section on Jewish martyrdom reflects important new developments in a changing scholarly scene. For a long time, a number of early studies in the history of Christianity, which viewed Christian martyrdom as an expansion of a Jewish ideal, and the lachrymose approach to Jewish history itself, jointly perpetuated the notion that martyrdom has always been an integral part of Judaism, the natural result of the Jews' religious conflicts with foreign powers. In recent years, however, a growing number of works have demonstrated that Jewish martyrdom (or *kiddush ha-Shem*) is a much more multifaceted and mysterious phenomenon than anyone previously imagined. Defying Albert Camus' assertion in *The Fall* that martyrs can never be understood, scholars have attempted to explain why some Jews opted for death over life, while others did not. They have raised similar questions with regard to entire Jewish communities. On a larger scale yet, they have inquired into the phenomenal and conceptual developments of martyrdom. When did the idea of martyrdom enter Judaism and why? When and why did the idea of abandoning life voluntarily become an ideal, and how did it develop into an ideology?

Other studies have addressed the

process of reutilization and memorialization. Their authors have sought to explain the transformation of martyrological reports into martyrologies, some of which are still part of the liturgy today. Without denying the historical value of these martyrologies, scholars have critically scrutinized their objectivity and objectives. Still other researchers have investigated the employment of the martyrological notion in an assortment of sources: folkloric, mystical, historical, legal, and fictional, to mention a few. All of this has made it possible for representatives of diverse disciplines within Jewish studies to come together to investigate the topic of martyrdom in an interdisciplinary fashion.

In this issue of *AJS Perspectives*, we present a small sample of recent developments in this field of scholarship. The essays follow a historiographical lane from the late antique Near East, through medieval Europe, to the present State of Israel. Daniel Schwartz's essay compares two Jewish works of the Hellenistic period, which uphold different types of resistance to Greek rule. While one idealizes militant confrontation, the other endorses the voluntary death of the noncombatant. The comparison illustrates how local needs determine the idealization of Jewish

behavior. Joseph Dan's essay addresses the transition from martyrdom to martyrology in early mystical-rabbinic works. This transition appears to have very little to do with any external threat and seems to be connected with the emergence within Jewish society of a mystical-rabbinic circle. Self-sacrifice in these works constitutes the mystics' expression of love for the divine. Also "sacrificed" in these works are the authoritative Talmudic stories for the sake of a more fictionalized depiction of the sages' executions. These mystical-fantastic narratives were among a set of stories (biblical, apocryphal, and Talmudic) that later on captured the imagination of medieval Jews. Yet in numerous instances medieval martyrs are reported to have surpassed the early examples of martyrs being killed by their oppressors. In the Middle Ages, some Jewish martyrs are reported to have taken their own lives and even the lives of loved ones.

The Middle Ages can therefore be regarded as a period of what Robert Chazan here characterizes as "radical" *kiddush ha-Shem*. Certainly, the violent efforts to convert Jews to Christianity shaped the radical martyrological reaction. But the radicalization of *kiddush ha-Shem* also reflects the exposure of medieval Jews to the cultural and religious ideals of the Christian



society in the midst of which they lived. Eva Haverkamp's essay shows how Jews incorporated Christian symbols and even Christian sacred spaces into their narratives to prove the paradoxical point that they were worlds apart.

Such symbolic embellishment may stand in the way of the search for historical truth. Miriam Bodian's essay on the case of a crypto-Jewish martyr makes this point and demonstrates the need to utilize a variety of texts, if they are available,

in order to remedy this drawback. In the case she describes, the records of the Inquisition tribunals reveal a surprising twist to the story. Martyrdom and myth in modern Hebrew literature is the concern of the final essay, by Yael Feldman. Feldman describes how history and religion converged in Zionist poetry to assist in the creation of a new national Israeli mythology. At least symbolically—the essays presented here barely scratch the surface of our vast topic—we have thus come full circle. The choice in late

antiquity between a militant or martyrological model surfaces anew in modern-time Israeli literature. But as the essays here show, martyrdom was never just a matter of choice.

*Shmuel Shepkaru is Associate Professor of Jewish History at the University of Oklahoma. He is the author of Jewish Martyrs in the Pagan and Christian Worlds (Cambridge University Press, 2006).*

## JORDAN SCHNITZER BOOK AWARDS

The AJS is pleased to announce the 2009 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award Program, the Association for Jewish Studies' annual book award program, made possible by funding from the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation of Portland, Oregon. These awards recognize and promote outstanding scholarship in the field of Jewish studies and honor scholars whose work embodies the best in the field: rigorous research, theoretical sophistication, innovative methodology, and excellent writing.

Each year, the AJS awards two \$5,000 Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards. The two submission categories for 2009 are:

- **Biblical Studies, Rabbinics, and Archaeology**
- **Jews and the Arts (visual, performance, music)**

Only AJS members may submit their books for consideration or be nominated for consideration by a third party (publisher, etc.). Any book published in English from 2005 through 2009 is eligible for consideration. A book may be submitted up to two times within a four-year cycle. Scholars at all stages of their careers are eligible to apply.

Recipients of the Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards will be recognized at the AJS's 41st Annual Conference, December 20–22, 2009 at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza in Los Angeles, CA. The award will also be announced in AJS publications and other professional and national media.

**Deadline for Submissions: June 26, 2009.**

Please visit the AJS website at [www.ajsnet.org/ajsawards.html](http://www.ajsnet.org/ajsawards.html) for further information.

# FOILS OR HEROES? ON MARTYRDOM IN FIRST AND SECOND MACCABEES

*Daniel R. Schwartz*

**T**he First and Second Books of Maccabees tell the story of Judaeans who rebelled against Greek rule and established a sovereign Jewish state in its stead. The authors of these two works, however, came from very different historical contexts: 1 Maccabees reflects the partisan viewpoint of a mouthpiece of the native dynasty that led the rebellion and came to rule the state, while 2 Maccabees is the work of a diasporan Jew accustomed to living under Greek rulers. Accordingly, anyone who compares these two Jewish works of the second century BCE to one another will easily notice manifold differences.

For example, 1 Maccabees naturally portrayed Greek kings as typically evil, summarizing one-hundred-fifty years of Hellenistic kings—from Alexander the Great until Antiochus Epiphanes—with the observation that “they caused many evils on the earth” (1:9). Indeed, Gentiles in general are evil: the frequent attempts of “the Gentiles roundabout” to attack the Jews and wipe them out are underlined with relish (5:1, 10; 12:53), for they serve quite well to justify the need for independent rule.

In contrast, the author of 2 Maccabees frequently stresses that Gentile kings were usually benevolent to the Jews, laying special emphasis on the fact that they showed great respect for the Temple of Jerusalem (3:2–3; 5:16) and thus indicating that Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who persecuted the Jews and defiled the Temple, was merely an unfortunate

exception to the general rule. Similarly, Gentiles, especially Greeks, were by and large full of respect for the Jews, which is of course only to be expected, since we are all “men” (4:35). Indeed, even Antiochus himself wasn’t so bad: chapter 4 depicts him as enraged at the murder

## FOR 2 MACCABEES, SIN IS THE PROBLEM AND MARTYRDOM IS THE SOLUTION.

of a Jew and punishing the perpetrator quite demonstratively (4:37–38), just as it explains that Antiochus would have punished another such villain too were it not for the influence exercised by a corrupt courtier (4:45–46). Accordingly, if chapter 5 has Antiochus attacking Jerusalem and robbing the Temple, it also assures us that this happened only as the result of a misunderstanding (5:5–11).

Among other things, 1 and 2 Maccabees also differ with regard to martyrdom, although neither this difference nor its correlation with the two books’ disparate origins are immediately apparent. In 2 Maccabees, the role of martyrs is clear: they are the very pivot of the story. The book has a simple structure: after the first three introductory chapters the story goes downhill quickly, with sinful Hellenization in chapter 4 entailing divine punishment (4:16–17), which takes its form in Antiochus’s attack on Jerusalem and the Temple in chapter 5 and his decrees against Judaism in the first verses of chapter 6. But that is followed in the rest of chapter 6 and all of chapter 7 by lengthy and graphic accounts of martyrdom (of the old Eleazar, and

of a woman later known as Hannah in Jewish tradition, and her seven sons). Accordingly, if the story turns around at the beginning of chapter 8, that is because God hears the blood calling out to Him from the ground (8:3) and, in response, His wrath turns into mercy (8:5). It is, in other words, the martyrdoms of chapters 6–7 that allow for Judas Maccabaeus’s victories, which begin in chapter 8 and continue until the end of the book. Thus, for 2 Maccabees, sin is the problem and martyrdom is the solution. As the seventh son puts it in 7:38, his suffering and that of his brothers stayed the Almighty’s anger, which had justly been loosed against the nation.

In 1 Maccabees, in contrast, sin is not the problem. Non-Jews are the problem. As summarized above, Gentile kings are wicked, Gentiles are wicked (unless, as the Romans, they are not our neighbors and are far enough away not to bother us, chapter 8), and Jews who “yoke themselves” together with Gentiles (1 Macc. 1:15, echoing Num. 25:3, 5, the Phineas story; see below) are wicked. Therefore, what is needed is not atonement but, rather, heroic opposition and that is where the Hasmoneans come in. The author, writing on behalf of the Hasmonean dynasty, is careful to portray the founder of the dynasty, Mattathias, as a latter-day Phineas, who too “was zealous” (2:24), “zealous for the law, as had been Phineas” (2:26). He consequently killed a Jew who was about to sacrifice as the king required, killed the royal official enforcing the decree as well, and raised the first call to rebellion. That the biblical parallel also explains why Mattathias’s descendants, as Phineas (Num. 25:10–13), are entitled to the high priesthood, is not merely a coincidence. The list of “whereas” clauses in chapter 14, documenting all the Hasmoneans’ accomplishments in their wars over the next decades, completes the same picture and

justifies the proclamation, preserved in that chapter, that they are to remain the nation's rulers forever.

Martyrs have no place in this story, except insofar as they show how bad the Gentiles are. Accordingly, martyrs figure in 1 Maccabees on only three occasions, briefly and solely for that purpose and, thus, as foils for the real heroes. First, at the very end of chapter 1 a few verses (vv. 60–63) record the execution of those who persisted in circumcising their children and refrained from eating forbidden foods; that passage is followed by chapter 2, which opens elsewhere, and with no causal nexus, à la “Meanwhile, on the other side of town,” by introducing Mattathias and his five sons and then recounting the way they began the rebellion. That is, chapter 1 portrays the problem and chapter 2 introduces the solution, a far cry from the move from 2 Maccabees 6–7 to 2 Maccabees 8, where the martyrdoms *are* the solution. In 1 Maccabees, in the move from chapter 1 to chapter 2, martyrdoms function only to show that the Hasmonean solution, which is the opposite of martyrdom, is what is needed instead.

Similarly, in 1 Maccabees 2:29–38, we read of pious Jews who refuse to defend themselves on the Sabbath; as a result, all one thousand of them are easily killed by royal troops. This leads the wiser Mattathias and his men to decide to defend themselves if they are ever attacked on the Sabbath (1 Macc. 2:39–41), a policy indeed followed at 9:43–47. Thus, here too pious and well-meaning martyrs serve only as foils for those who see things the way they really are and draw the requisite practical conclusions.

Finally, in chapter 7 we read of a Syrian governor, Bacchides, sent to Judaea together with a villainous Jewish priest, Alcimus. When

Bacchides sent a treacherous peace-feeler to Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, they saw through it and prudently kept their distance, but “a congregation of scribes,” some sixty “pious people,” convinced that “a priest of the seed of Aaron” would not hurt them, accepted the treacherous overtures and were



Silver Tetradrachm of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, 164 BCE. Courtesy of the Center for Online Judaic Studies, [www.cojs.org](http://www.cojs.org).

promptly arrested and executed (1 Macc. 7:10–17). If, in the first two cases of martyrdom in chapters 1–2, we saw open-eyed people choosing to pay the ultimate price rather than disobey the Torah, here the author takes off his gloves and presents those foils as pious fools, who make the Hasmoneans' wisdom, and the rightness of their way, stand out all the more. For the dynastic historian, the author of 1 Maccabees, this was the point of the story.

A minimalist analysis of this comparison of the two books would restrict itself to noting that Jews of the Diaspora possess, *qua* Jews, no army. Having at their disposal no other route to a “noble death” than martyrdom, they make martyrs the heroes of 2 Maccabees. In contrast, the Jews of Judaea in the Hasmonean

period (as today), had the option of being soldiers in their own army, and accordingly make valiant soldiers, including those who died nobly—the heroes of 1 Maccabees. Each book naturally lionizes the role models of its community. A broader, deeper, and more unsettling conclusion would add that those who view martyrs positively relativize the value of life in this world, and, as in 2 Maccabees, place more of an emphasis on life after death, and, consequently, on the distinction between the body (which stays in the grave) and the soul. In contrast, those, like the author of 1 Maccabees, who view martyrs as pious fools, lambs, led uselessly to slaughter, limit their view to this world: what you see is what you get. Insofar as religion has something fundamental to do with what there is beyond this world and beyond what we see, and insofar as Judaism is a religion, it becomes easy to understand why the term “Judaism” appears (for the first time in extant literature) and is showcased in 2 Maccabees (2:21; 8:1; and 14:38), and harder to understand how Judaism might play a significant role in a Jewish state. This, in turn, goes some of the way toward explaining why exponents of Judaism, such as Pharisees and Qumran sectarians, found themselves in opposition to the Hasmonean state, and may also contribute to the understanding of similar situations in Israel today.

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# ORIGINS OF RABBINIC MARTYROLOGY: RABBI AKIBAH, THE SONG OF SONGS, AND HEKHALOT MYSTICISM

Joseph Dan

Three ancient narratives sustained and encouraged Jewish martyrs in the Middle Ages. One was the Binding of Isaac, a biblical story that many believed did not occur exactly as told in Genesis: instead they believe that Isaac was really sacrificed by his father on the altar, and only later came back to life from the ashes. The second was the story of the “Woman and Her Seven Sons,” originally told in the Book of Maccabees, and later told in rabbinic literature as “Hannah and Her Seven Sons.” The heroine is a mother who witnessed each of her sons executed by the Hellenistic king Antiochus after she encouraged them to refuse to worship idols. Yet the most potent and prevailing ancient narrative, most often quoted in martyrological contexts and raised as an example of devotion to the God of Israel, was that of the martyrdom of Rabbi Akibah and his colleagues, the great *Tanaim* of the early second century, as told in several Talmudic tales and best remembered as the “Story of the Ten Martyrs.” This narrative was adopted into a hymn, a *piyyut*, entitled *Eleh Ezkera* (These I Remember), and recited in the synagogue, ensuring that the memory of the tortures and sacrifices of Rabbi Akibah and his

fellow martyrs endure forever in Jewish collective memory.

There is no doubt that the martyrdom of Rabbi Akibah and several other great teachers of the



Depiction of Rabbi Akibah in the Mantua Haggadah, 1560. Reprinted from *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (Funk and Wagnalls, 1925), s.v. “Akiba ben Joseph.”

Mishnah was a historical event that occurred in the 30s of the second century and was connected with the persecution of the Jews by Emperor Hadrian in the context of the Bar Kochbah rebellion. The Talmudic

narratives—describing in vivid details the tortures that these sages, especially Rabbi Akibah, Rabbi Ishmael, and Rabbi Hanina ben Tradion, endured before finally being killed—are well-known to anyone who has read some of the Talmudic *aggadot*. Yet it is significant that the text that became the cornerstone of Jewish martyrological literature is actually not a Talmudic one. It is an independent narrative, entitled *Aseret Harugey Malkhut* (Ten Who Were Martyred by the Empire), a text that derived material from the Talmudic stories but added several figures not found there and developed the stories in ways that have no basis in the Talmudic tradition. In several cases, the stories in this narrative even contradict those of the Talmud. The list of ten martyrs in the narrative is historically impossible: the sages included in it could not have lived and died at the same time, and the stories often contradict Talmudic chronology. Several scholars tried but failed to amend the list and construct one that could be regarded as reflecting true events. One can only conclude that *Aseret Harugey Malkhut* is actually a work of fiction. This raises an intriguing question: Why did Jewish tradition forsake the authoritative stories presented in the Talmud, and cherish the fictional narrative that in many respects differed from and contradicted that tradition?

The problem becomes even more perplexing when the sources of the

narrative are investigated. The earliest version of the narrative of the “Ten Martyrs” is incorporated within another text, *Hekhalot Rabbati* (The Greater Book of Celestial Palaces), an esoteric work that is the most detailed and profound expression of the experiences of the ancient Jewish mystics, the “Descenders to the Chariot.” The core of this ancient treatise (probably written in the third or fourth century CE), is a detailed description of the ascension of Rabbi Ishmael (described here as a “High Priest the son of a High Priest,” which was an impossibility because Rabbi Ishmael was born about the time that the second Temple was destroyed) to the divine realms, the seven palaces that are located within the seventh, highest firmament. Rabbi Ishmael was sent upon this mission by his teacher, Rabbi Nehunia ben ha-Kanah, when it was reported that the emperor of Rome decided to execute ten of the leading sages of the people of Israel. He was sent to inquire in the celestial realms whether the order of execution was a decision by the emperor himself—in which cases these great sages could nullify it without much trouble—or whether it was a divine decree, to which they had to succumb. Important as this question is, the treatise, *Hekhalot Rabbati*, is much more interested in the details of Rabbi Ishmael’s ascent, how he overcame the dangerous guardians of the gates of the palaces, and what magical means he used to go from one palace to another, than in the earthly fate of the great sages about to be martyred. *Hekhalot Rabbati* is clearly a text of mystical speculation

rather than a guide to proper behavior during the experience of martyrdom. How did a narrative that served as a literary framework for a work describing a mystical experience become the basis of the classical Jewish narrative about martyrdom?

In the Talmud, the martyrdom of Rabbi Akibah and Rabbi Ishmael is presented as the story of the cruel death of two of the greatest halakhic authorities of that time. In *Hekhalot Rabbati*, the martyrdom of these two sages is presented as the death of two great mystics, who knew the hidden secrets of the divine world and experienced a mystical meeting with the Lord

IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE TEXT THAT BECAME THE CORNERSTONE OF JEWISH MARTYROLOGICAL LITERATURE IS ACTUALLY NOT A TALMUDIC ONE. . . . WHY DID JEWISH TRADITION FORSAKE THE AUTHORITATIVE STORIES PRESENTED IN THE TALMUD, AND CHERISH THE FICTIONAL NARRATIVE THAT IN MANY RESPECTS DIFFERED FROM AND CONTRADICTED THAT TRADITION?

God sitting on his throne of glory. The “Story of the Ten Martyrs” developed by additions and embellishments of the *Hekhalot* text, and not the Talmudic one. Why did Jewish tradition prefer the portrait of supreme martyr who is a mystic to one of a halakhic sage?

There is another matter that has to be considered with regard to the image of the prototypical martyr, Rabbi Akibah. This concerns the role of King Solomon’s Song of Songs in Rabbi Akibah’s (and to some extent Rabbi Ishmael’s) life, thought, and death. Another ancient mystical treatise that is attributed to these two sages is the

*Shiur Komah* (The Measurement of the Height), in which the physical measurements of the “Creator of Genesis” are listed in huge, astronomical numbers. This anthropomorphic treatise, an embarrassment to many medieval Jewish thinkers, contains a promise, guaranteed by Rabbi Akibah and Rabbi Ishmael, that anyone who studies it will “inherit this world and the world to come.” At the basis of this mystical work are the verses in the Song of Songs (5:10–16) that describe the beauty of the body of the beloved male figure. The *Shiur Komah* identified this figure as that of the Creator himself. It should be remembered that it was Rabbi Akibah who made

the radical statement that “all scriptures are holy, and the Song of Songs is the holy of holies” (Mishnah Yadayim). It was also Rabbi Akibah who stated that the Song of Songs was “given” to Israel on Mount Sinai by its real author, “the king who owns peace” (*melekh she-ha-*

*shalom shelo*) rather than *Shlomo*, Solomon, son of David. Some scholars understood this regard for the Song of Songs to be the result of the belief that it includes a self-portrait of God, presented in the *Shiur Komah* text.

Another meaningful connection between the sage who became a martyr and the Song of Songs is evident in the well-known narrative, “The Four Sages Who Entered the Pardes,” about a group led by Rabbi Akibah, who was the only one who successfully completed that mysterious, possibly mystical, journey. The text of this narrative, first presented in the Tosefta to

Hagiga chapter 2, includes a biblical verse that is attached to each of the four sages. The one describing Rabbi Akibah's experience employs a Song of Songs verse (1:4): "Draw me, we will run after thee, the king has brought me into his chambers." This may be the earliest example in rabbinic literature of the king in the Song of Songs being identified with God. Thus we find Rabbi Akibah's spiritual life closely associated with the verses of the Song of Songs, a text which he attributed to God himself and believed that the people of Israel had received in the theophany of Mount Sinai.

Is there a connection between Rabbi Akibah's radical reinterpretation of the Song of Songs, the traditions that associate him with mystical experiences and mystical texts, and his fate as a martyr? It seems that we have to give a positive answer to this question. In the *Mekhilta*, the

section *Shirah* (relating to the Song of the Sea, sung when the people of Israel crossed safely the Red Sea after escaping from Egypt), there is a commentary in the name of Rabbi Akibah to the third verse in the first chapter of the Song of Songs (just before the verse concerning the entrance to the *Pardes*): "therefore the virgins love thee." The Hebrew term is *alamot*, young girls. Rabbi Akibah reads this word in a different way: *al mot*, as two words, meaning: "because of death." That means: we love you [God] because you make us die for you. This became one of the most frequently quoted verses, expressing the deepest feelings of the martyrs who sacrifice their lives because of their love of God, the martyrs who love him not only despite, but because, he demands this ultimate sacrifice of them.

Do all these elements come together? I am not sure. Yet when

trying to understand the emergence of one of the most potent Jewish expressions of adherence to martyrdom, one should remain alert to the surprising fact that we have here an attachment to fiction rather than history, a close relationship to a classical mystical text, a unique adherence to a sacred text, the Song of Songs, reinterpreted as expressing the love of God, and an identification of this love with the experience of the death of the martyr.

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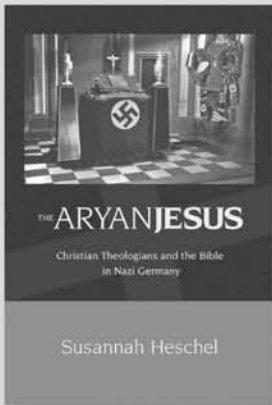


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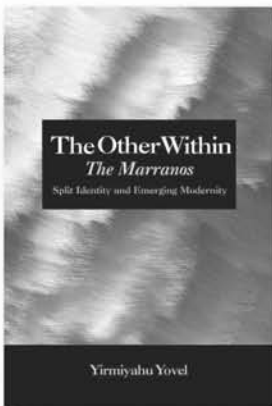
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# RADICAL JEWISH MARTYRDOM

Robert Chazan

The Hebrew term *kiddush ha-Shem* (Sanctifying the Divine Name) is generally translated as martyrdom, the willingness to die in a manner that bears witness to God. This term, in fact, extends well beyond the sacrifice of life on behalf of the deity and his covenantal demands to cover a wide range of behaviors that signify human testimony to God in multiple ways, some of them rather mundane. However, since the most dramatic and hence the most striking form of *kiddush ha-Shem* is the sacrifice of life itself on behalf of God, there is a tendency to regard *kiddush ha-Shem* as synonymous with martyrdom.

Martyrdom, to be sure, is hardly a salient theme in the Hebrew Bible corpus, and during long stretches of Jewish history it did not play a significant role in Jewish thinking and behavior. Normative rabbinic law did identify three major transgressions that if forced upon Jews had to be resisted even at the cost of life. A number of important historic figures, including Daniel and his companions, who purportedly lived under Persian rule, and key rabbinic leaders living

under Roman domination during the second century, were prepared to give up their lives rather than transgress the prohibition of worshipping idols. The willingness of the former to die and the actual deaths of the latter were remembered, memorialized, and valorized by subsequent Jewish tradition. Indeed, the martyrs of the second century were inserted into the very heart of the Yom Kippur liturgy, an indication of profound veneration for their heroism. Still,



*Daniel in the Lions' Den*, design for stained glass, by Lucas van Leyden, 1509-1533.  
© Trustees of the British Museum.

from late antiquity to the Middle Ages, the idea of martyrdom by no means dominated Jewish thinking.

Jews living in societies in which martyrdom emerged as a core religious value absorbed this value and made it a central Jewish

concern as well. Sometimes they took recourse to extreme forms of sacrifice of life, extending far beyond the rabbinic demand for acquiescence to death under certain limited circumstances. On some occasions, Jews did not wait for their persecutors to inflict death; in these unusual instances, Jews took their own lives and even the lives of loved ones. One of the best known of these cases of radical Jewish martyrdom took place at Masada, the last stronghold of the rebellion against Rome that began in the year 66. It seems that the ideals that animated the rebels in this last

stronghold were largely Roman values of heroism and honor, the desire to die in a dignified manner and to avoid cruel and humiliating death at the hands of the Roman legionnaires.

A second, well-known instance of radical Jewish martyrdom took place in the Rhineland Jewish communities, where assaults occurred in spring 1096 as a result of a distortion of the call to the First Crusade issued by Pope Urban II toward the end of 1095. While most crusaders headed eastward to do battle against the Muslim foe without introducing Jews into their thinking or their campaign, some northern-French popular bands undertook a crusade against the Jewish infidels closer to home. The large and unruly popular band that coalesced around the charismatic figure of Peter the Hermit seems to have engaged in the financial exploitation of its Jewish enemy. The German popular bands, galvanized into action by the

preaching of Peter and his associates, expanded their anti-Jewish message into a more extreme call either to kill or to convert Jewish communities in their entirety.

While the sources for the extreme Jewish behavior can hardly be deemed copious, there are enough independent testimonies, largely Jewish, but including some Christian narratives as well, to establish the reality of radical Jewish martyrdom that went far beyond the rabbinic requirement that Jews acquiesce to death at the hands of their persecutors. The Rhineland Jews, confronted with the demand for conversion or death, took their own lives and the lives of their children in massive displays of what they perceived to be utter fidelity to the demands of their covenant with the God of Israel. Since these Jews were intensely proud of their commitment to the halakhic norms and the rich *aggadic* legacy of rabbinic Judaism, their behavior has proven something of a puzzle to modern scholars.

The narratives bequeathed to us by the Jewish survivors of the 1096 persecution are lavish in their praise of the radical martyrs of that year. Interestingly, these sources make no effort to justify the radical behaviors in terms of the norms of Jewish law. In their reconstructions of the utterances of the radical martyrs of 1096 and in their third-person observations on these martyrs, the Jewish narrators make no mention of halakhic norms, either in defense of, or as a challenge to, the behaviors they record. There is recurrent mention of historic precedents, but these references are highly problematic. The martyrs themselves and their chroniclers regularly cite the biblical figures from the book of Daniel and the rabbinic sages who fell victim to Roman persecution. As noted, however, the behaviors of Daniel and his companions and the

WHILE THE SOURCES FOR THE EXTREME JEWISH BEHAVIOR CAN HARDLY BE DEEMED COPIOUS, THERE ARE ENOUGH INDEPENDENT TESTIMONIES, LARGELY JEWISH, BUT INCLUDING SOME CHRISTIAN NARRATIVES AS WELL, TO ESTABLISH THE REALITY OF RADICAL JEWISH MARTYRDOM THAT WENT FAR BEYOND THE RABBINIC REQUIREMENT THAT JEWS ACQUIESCE TO DEATH AT THE HANDS OF THEIR PERSECUTORS.

rabbinic sages of the second century did not presage the radical suicides and killings carried out by the Rhineland Jews; rather, these earlier behaviors fit the standard mold envisioned by the rabbinic norms—acquiescence to death at the hands of non-Jewish persecutors. The powerful precedent more regularly invoked was the patriarch Abraham, who is portrayed in the biblical narrative as having been fully prepared to offer up his beloved son Isaac in response to divine demand. The problem with this imagery is, of course, the fact that the divine demand was rescinded, and Isaac was spared. While the Rhineland Jews used this discrepancy to extol their own virtues projecting themselves as achieving greatness beyond that of their forebear Abraham, the divine decision to test Abraham by demanding the sacrifice of Isaac and then rescinding the demand raised more questions than it answered. Subsequent Ashkenazic rabbinic authorities could not produce halakhic or *aggadic* justification for the radical acts of 1096, although this failure by no means led them to censure these behaviors. To the contrary, these rabbinic authorities by and large insisted on the rectitude of the martyrs' conduct, despite their failure to provide requisite justification.

Haym Soloveitchik, who has studied these episodes of radical martyrdom

carefully, has concluded that there is in fact no halakhic justification for these unusual behaviors. He suggests that these instances of Jews taking their own lives and the lives of loved ones constitute deviations from standard Jewish legal norms. Soloveitchik, sensitive to social factors as well as halakhic norms, suggests that momentous considerations must have led the Rhineland Jews of 1096 to depart so strikingly from the legal norms to which they were so intensely devoted (*AJS Review* 12:2 and *Jewish Quarterly Review* 94:1 and 2).

Some time ago, I suggested that the radical Jewish behaviors of 1096 must be understood against the backdrop of the remarkable religious fervor unleashed by the papal call to the Crusade. While it is highly unlikely that Pope Urban II intended to elicit this explosive popular enthusiasm, in fact his call struck a powerful nerve in rapidly developing western Christendom. While some of the warriors who set out on the mission were motivated by cooler visions of the enterprise, many were moved by imagery of radical, religiously inspired self-sacrifice. Among the popular German bands, this readiness for self-sacrifice was especially prominent. To the extent that willingness to serve God through extreme self-sacrifice became the hallmark of late-eleventh-century

religiosity, Jews caught up in the spirit of the age absorbed this willingness for self-sacrifice and expressed their dedication with an anti-Christian competitive edge through their unusual martyrological behaviors (see my book, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, University of California Press, 1987).

More recently I have proposed yet another possible factor to explain the radical Jewish martyrdoms of 1096. Close reexamination of the Hebrew narratives has revealed Jewish perceptions of millenarian convictions among the popular

crusading bands responsible for the Rhineland attacks. Again, there is no evidence that Pope Urban II introduced millenarian elements in his call to the crusade. Once more, however, the popular response went well beyond the papal call. The millenarian excitement seemingly spawned a parallel enthusiasm among the Jewish minority. For both Christian attackers and Jewish victims, the onset of a new era meant the suspension of normal constraints, which allowed—indeed encouraged—the attackers to contravene traditional Christian safeguards established for Jewish safety and security and moved the

Jewish victims to break with the traditional Jewish norms of martyrdom (*Speculum* 84:2). The traditional moderation of Christian policy towards Judaism and Jews and the Jewish position on the taking of human life were subverted by the destabilizing impact of millenarian expectations.

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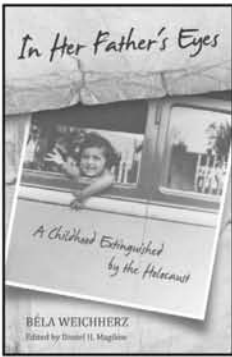
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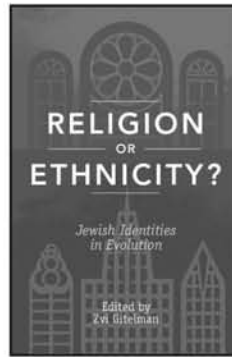
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# MARTYRS OF 1096 "ON SITE"

Eva Haverkamp

From April to July 1096, groups of crusaders and city dwellers attacked Jewish communities along the Rhine, Moselle, and Danube rivers. Driven by the same motives that drew them as crusaders to the Holy Land to fight the perceived enemies of Christianity and to "free" Jerusalem, they gave European Jews a gruesome choice: to be baptized or killed. Four decades later, Shlomo bar Shimshon described the scene in the village of Xanten as follows:

This pious, faithful man, the priest that is highest among his brethren, said to the congregation seated around the table: "Let us recite the grace to the living God, our father in heaven. For the table substitutes now for the altar. Now, because the enemy is coming upon us, let us rise up and ascend to the house of the Lord and do immediately the will of our Creator to slaughter on the Sabbath sons, daughters, and brothers, so that He bequeath upon us this day a blessing. Let no man spare himself or his friend. And the last one to remain shall slaughter himself by the throat with a knife, or thrust his sword into his stomach . . .

The pious and faithful Jews were preparing for self-sacrifice as an act of *kiddush ha-Shem*, translated as "Sanctifying the Divine Name." Besides the willingness to let oneself be killed to avert baptism, these cases of *kiddush ha-Shem* were acts of suicide or the killing of fellow

Jews motivated by the belief that death was far better than apostasy. Individual Jews and entire communities understood these deeds as active resistance against their Christian persecutors.

According to Shlomo's account of the events in Cologne, these Jews were part of a larger group that survived the persecution in Cologne thanks to Christians who hid them in their houses. In an attempt to protect this whole group from further persecution, the Archbishop intervened and distributed them among seven surrounding villages with fortifications, one of which was

Xanten. In separate reports, Shlomo bar Shimshon and Eliezer bar Nathan both tell about the fate of the Jews in each of these refuges.

At first glance, neither Shlomo's nor Eliezer's report about Xanten provides location-specific information. Shlomo's account highlights a Friday evening gathering to celebrate the beginning of the Sabbath, one that could have occurred at any other place. Shlomo, however, adds the detail that "shorn" ones came to one of the Cologne refugees, Natronia bar Isaak, to convince him to accept baptism.



Photo of St. Victor's Cathedral, Xanten, Germany. Courtesy of Tourist Information Xanten, [www.xanten.de](http://www.xanten.de).

Shlomo describes a group of Jews who “just as the Sabbath was setting in . . . were sitting down to eat bread, having sanctified the Sabbath” by reciting prayers and the blessing over the bread. Aware of

reflects the content of text Phi (except for a story about a scholar from France which is probably Eliezer’s addition). A comparison between the parallel texts of Shlomo’s and Eliezer’s accounts

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PARALLEL TEXTS OF SHLOMO’S AND ELIEZER’S ACCOUNTS MAKES APPARENT THE EXTENT TO WHICH SHLOMO EDITED, ADDED, AND PRODUCED A TEXT THAT IS VERY LITERARY AND CAN INDEED BE CHARACTERIZED AS “HIGHLY IMAGINATIVE” . . . MOST IMPORTANTLY, SHLOMO HAS INTEGRATED INTO HIS XANTEN ACCOUNT THE CORE ELEMENTS OF A THEOLOGICAL PROGRAM THAT DEFINES AND LEGITIMATES THE ACT OF *KIDDUSH HA-SHEM*.

the imminent danger, a prominent member of the group, Moses haCohen, called on God for their rescue, without success. Turning to the community, Moses then encouraged them to take their lives in martyrdom, describing the prospects of eternal life in paradise, and the group agreed to commit *kiddush ha-Shem* “with one mouth and one heart.” According to Shlomo, all members of the group performed *kiddush ha-Shem*; their bodies were buried, but we do not learn who actually buried them.

The first step in interpreting Shlomo’s account of Xanten is to look at the genesis of his report. Shlomo and Eliezer have used a common source for their chronicles, a text that I call Phi. This text is lost but can be reconstructed insofar as it contained at least those texts that both chronicles have in common. In the case of the report on Xanten, Eliezer is very concise, giving only the bare facts of the event. We find almost all of his text again in Shlomo’s account. Therefore, we can assume that Eliezer’s report

makes apparent the extent to which Shlomo edited, added, and produced a text that is very literary and can indeed be characterized as “highly imaginative” (words that Ivan Marcus applies to his entire chronicle). Part of Shlomo’s imaginative work went into the many citations of and associations with texts of the Bible, the Midrash, and the Talmud. These allusions provide the subtext of the Xanten account and demand a second layer of interpretation. Most importantly, Shlomo has integrated into his Xanten account the core elements of a theological program that defines and legitimates the act of *kiddush ha-Shem*. These elements are:

1. The sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham; the Aqedat Yitzchak or “Binding of Isaac” is the general model for martyrdom and self-sacrifice.
2. God will not yield to the prayers and pleading of the Jews, for he had come “to test this generation [that they may] demonstrate their love for Him.”

3. The pious sacrificing of life is compared to the sacrifices that were offered to God at the temple in Jerusalem before its destruction by the Romans.
4. Reward for the sacrifice will be paradise, where the martyrs will sit in the company of the righteous and see God.
5. Finally, Shlomo puts into Moses’s mouth a call on God to take revenge for “Thy servants’ blood that is spilt and that will yet be spilt . . .”

Shlomo’s narrative about Xanten stands out as the most theological among all the accounts about Cologne and the surrounding refuges. It contains the longest speech of the entire chronicle, several comments by the author himself, and an extensive epilogue. Nowhere else in the chronicle do we find the theological elements of the *kiddush ha-Shem* ideology grouped together with such density and interwoven with many additional associations. When considering the entire chronicle—which also includes accounts about Worms, Mainz, Speyer, Trier, Metz, Regensburg, and Prague—the report about Xanten turns out to be Shlomo’s most programmatic text.

But why did Shlomo choose to use his narrative about the events at Xanten for his most theologically developed statement? As Eliezer’s rendering demonstrates, Shlomo’s account could have been a great deal shorter. We may also learn something from Shlomo’s narrative about the perceptions Jews had of the place assigned as their refuge: he reports on “shorn” ones who were “acquainted with” the Cologne Jew Natronai bar Isaac and “had come to him throughout the entire previous day attempting to persuade him ‘to defile himself in their evil waters’”—i.e., to be baptized. These “shorn” ones must

have been the canons from the chapter of St. Victor.

St. Victor was a community of canons well known beyond Xanten. Victor had been venerated since the fifth century as one of the leaders of the Thebean legion. According to widely circulating martyr legends, this legion of Christian soldiers from the Orient had been sent to regions north of the Alps by Emperor Maximilian at the end of the third century with orders to combat the enemies of the Roman Empire. The legion had already been divided into several cohorts, and each cohort was on its way to a different military camp when the Roman emperor demanded the soldiers bring sacrifices to the pagan Gods, or perhaps even persecute local Christians. The soldiers refused to obey and were consequently killed. A tale of woe or passion from around the year 1000 reports—and I paraphrase—how the foolhardy and bloodthirsty pagan soldiers murdered the courageous Victor, Christ’s soldier, together with his 330 companions in Xanten and let their “holy” bodies sink into the marsh. This tale has several parallels with Shlomo’s story about the events in 1096 in Xanten.

Did Shlomo’s decision to write a detailed and programmatic account of Xanten have anything to do with the Christian legend attached to this particular spot? Since the Early Middle Ages, numerous places have been venerated as locations where different cohorts and their leaders allegedly suffered martyrdom; among the earliest cultic places north of the Alps are Cologne with Gereon as the stalwart leader figure and, significantly for our story, Xanten, with Victor playing the same role. The cult dominated the locale in the form of the St. Victor community and made Xanten a famous pilgrimage site.

In Cologne, the largest and most significant town in German-speaking lands and the home of the refugee Jews, the church of St. Gereon was, after the cathedral, the most remarkable building. Probably because of its golden mosaics, the people of Cologne called St. Gereon the Church of the Golden Saints or just Ad Sanctos [To the Saints]. The building had to be expanded in the second half of the eleventh century to cope with the crowds of pilgrims—a sign of the growing popularity of St. Gereon far beyond Cologne. Remarkably, from the ninth century, Xanten had also been

**XANTEN HAD OBVIOUSLY BECOME THE SITE OF A JEWISH MARTYR CULT. IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE NEW MARTYRS SHOULD REST SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH THEIR PREDECESSORS. THE JEWISH MARTYRS WERE INDEED FACING THEIR CHRISTIAN COUNTERPARTS “ON SITE.”**

called Ad Sanctos, from which the name Xantum [Xanten] derived. The Jewish community seems to have accepted this name and its connection with the Thebaen martyrs’ cult; Shlomo and Eliezer write in perfect transliteration שַׁנְטוֹן (Santos) or שַׁנְטָא (Santa!).

On the basis of many more references not mentioned in this brief précis, one may reasonably conclude that the Jews of Cologne in general, and Shlomo bar Shimshon in particular, had a relatively detailed knowledge of the traditions and symbolism of St. Victor’s and the Thebeans’ veneration in Xanten and Cologne. In this situation, it is not surprising that the idea of emphasizing the martyrdom of the Jews in Xanten and highlighting its theological significance suggested itself. Confronted with the Thebean martyrs, Shlomo bar Shimshon gave the Jews their own way to connect

with this site of martyrdom and to create a new meaning for it. He expressed a rivalry between Judaism and Christianity that had ancient roots but acquired new forms during, and in the wake of, the 1096 persecution.

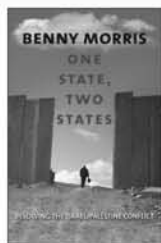
On a literary level, Shlomo wanted the Christian and Jewish martyrs to face each other “on site.” Another source from the end of the twelfth century suggests even more: In 1197, Jewish martyrs, killed by Christians in Neuss, were transported all the way to Xanten in order to bury them “at the graves

of the righteous who were buried there during the persecutions of Tatnu (1096).” Xanten had obviously become the site of a Jewish martyr cult. It was understood that the new martyrs should rest side-by-side with their predecessors. The Jewish martyrs were indeed facing their Christian counterparts “on site.” Writing around 1140, Shlomo might have expressed a perception and practice that was already in place.

*Eva Haverkamp is Professor of Medieval Jewish History at the Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich. She is the author of Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während des Ersten Kreuzzugs (Hannover: Habnische Buchhandlung, 2005).*



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# WHAT DOES MARTYRDOM LORE TELL US?

Miriam Bodian

Oscar Wilde once memorably noted that “a thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it.”

It’s a curiously pungent statement. Wilde was saying something about martyrdom that experience tells us is obvious. Yet we also know that the willing sacrifice of life, a sacrifice most people aren’t capable of making or are not asked to make, has the mysterious effect of strengthening commitment to the belief or cause for which the martyr died. That mysterious effect is what gives Wilde’s remark its pith. The power of martyrdom has everything to do with reinforcing the *perception* of truth, but nothing to do with *establishing* truth.

Because a martyr’s death is such a valuable communal asset, it is preserved for future generations in the form of oral narratives, chronicles, and elegies. Of course, it is human nature to embellish and emend these accounts. People may even invent martyrdom accounts, depicting in a highly condensed and personalized way the drawn-out struggles of a group against an oppressor. The body of lore around the death of martyrs is worked and reworked, with new episodes introduced using

familiar rhetoric and literary conventions.

What is the scholar to do with such material? More

particularly, what is the Jewish history scholar to do with a body of lore that stretches back to Hellenistic times?

A key task among scholars studying Jewish martyrdom has been to try to establish “what really happened,” to use a quaint nineteenth-century formulation. This has meant examining texts through the lens of context, bringing evidence from non-Jewish sources, comparing different versions of the same story, and so on. Much of the work that has been done has been highly

traditional lore can really tell us about historical events.

Without drawing conclusions about the First Crusade chronicles or any other episode outside my field of research, I’d like to discuss briefly how, in the course of my work, Inquisition documents have served to corroborate or confute stories of crypto-Jewish martyrdom that circulated in the Portuguese-Jewish diaspora.

Some of the Portuguese-Jewish lore does not even attempt to tell a real story in particular; examples include the contrived commemorative poetry of Daniel Levi de Barrios, Antonio Enrique Gomez, and others. But there are some thumbnail sketches of crypto-Jewish martyrs recorded by Isaac Cardoso



“Different Manners in which the Office of the Inquisition Asked the Question,” from Picart, Bernard, and Jean Frédéric Bernard, *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* (Prud’homme, 1807).

illuminating. Yet the controversies still hovering about some of the classic texts most conspicuously, perhaps, about the First Crusades chronicles, leave doubts about what

and Menasseh ben Israel that are of a different nature. They, too, are highly idealized, but unlike the poetic tributes, they offer the reader specifics and aim for verisimilitude.

A good example is Cardoso's description of a sixteenth-century case, which I will quote in full:

[A] singular event occurred in Coimbra a hundred years ago. They arrested as a Jew one Diogo Lopes Pinhancos, in a place near the town of Guarda in Portugal, in the Serra da Estrela, and, from the time he was taken, he began to announce that he was a Jew, and wished to live and die in the Law of Moses. He was brought before the Inquisition, and although they brought in theologians to convince him, he always remained firm in his resolve. They sentenced him to be burned alive. When he was placed upon the stake, tied with chains of iron, and raised high, the fire began to touch him. But then a great portent took place, for the chains fell into the fire, and he disappeared and was no longer to be seen. All of which caused consternation among the multitudes of people who were present, and they said that the demons had such a craving and desire for him that they snatched him away body and soul, and in this way they eased their suspense and astonishment. To this day, in

particularly the specifics of time, name, and place. Moreover, Cardoso had grown up in this central region of Portugal, and may himself have heard elderly Old

the body away, interpreting it as a psychological defense on the part of frightened onlookers. But this did not prevent him from accepting the fundamental facticity of the story.)

## THE POWER OF MARTYRDOM HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH REINFORCING THE PERCEPTION OF TRUTH, BUT NOTHING TO DO WITH ESTABLISHING TRUTH.

Christians (that is, persons with no Jewish or Muslim ancestry) telling the story. In any case, he had apparently seen the painting in the Coimbra convent depicting Pinhancos and labeled with the latter's full name, a painting some of his readers may also have seen.

But then there is the "great portent": the disappearing body. Cardoso did not dismiss this remarkable occurrence out of hand. In fact, it served a purpose in making his narrative convincing: it explained what made the story memorable to elderly Old Christians, who otherwise would presumably have had no particular interest in the death of a Judaizer. Did the body disappear? Of course not; but perhaps, we might

There is, though, another puzzling element in the account, an element that is striking because it appears in other thumbnail sketches of crypto-Jewish martyrs. Had the Inquisition actually called in theologians to try to convert a defiant Judaizer? Would this not have been overkill, given the extensive theological training of the inquisitors, and the meager religious traditions of crypto-Jews? Surely, even a highly educated crypto-Jew, of the type Cardoso had once been, could not easily have defended his beliefs under the punishing conditions of controlled interrogation. In any case, even if such theological disputations occurred, who would have known about them, since the audiences were conducted in strict secrecy and the victims had been burned at the stake?

Luckily, in the case of the famous crypto-Jewish martyrs (in contrast to virtually every other episode of premodern martyrdom), we possess an astonishingly rich record of events and interrogations set down in detail by unsympathetic but disciplined scribes, the notaries of the Inquisition tribunals. This brief essay is not the place to revisit the old issue of the authenticity and reliability of such records. Let me just emphatically affirm that for the most part these documents offer detailed, unfalsified (yes), and unvarnished accounts of what transpired in prison cells and audience chambers.

## A KEY TASK AMONG SCHOLARS STUDYING JEWISH MARTYRDOM HAS BEEN TO TRY TO ESTABLISH "WHAT REALLY HAPPENED."

the Convento de la Cruz in Coimbra, he is painted, among others being burned, with two demons at his shoulders, and with the name of Diogo Lopes de Pinhancos. And elderly Old Christians used to relate that they themselves had seen him, and had been present at the event.

There are elements of this story that give it the "ring of truth,"

rationalize, the body's "disappearance" was a distortion of something unusual that *did* happen—the accidental collapse of the stake, for example, which may have led astonished onlookers to lose sight of the body. In any case, this fantastic detail does not preclude the possibility that the basic facts of the story are accurate. (Cardoso himself rejected the notion that demons had snatched

Not all of these records have survived, but as luck would have it, an Inquisition dossier does exist that allows us to test Cardoso's story. It was one of those thrilling moments in the humdrum life of a historian when I found it at the National Archives in Lisbon—a dossier for a person named Diogo Lopes Pinhancos. That was the good news. The bad news was that it was in quite fragmentary and otherwise poor condition. It did, at least, confirm that a man named Diogo Lopes Pinhancos existed, and that he was tried for Judaizing and burned alive at the stake. Moreover, it revealed that efforts were indeed made by theologians, including two Jesuit priests, to try to convert the defendant. But the incomplete dossier revealed little about the verbal exchanges between Pinhancos and the theologians.

Still, by extrapolation from other cases, one could conclude that a lively exchange *might* have taken place. The Inquisition did take enormous pains to convert defiant Judaizers, and such Judaizers, it turns out, possessed the means not only to defend their positions but to go on the offensive. I have explored this in my book *Dying in the Law of Moses*, and will not repeat myself here. What I want to stress is this: that a claim made in the martyrdom lore in this case—a claim about the polemical skills of the martyrs, one that could well have been dismissed by responsible scholars as being far-

fetched and polemically motivated—proved, after a study of the records of the prisoners' trials, to be accurate. (I should add that evidence from other sources reveals some of the channels by which *conversos* were able to obtain information about the trials.)

But to return to the specific case of the Diogo Lopes Pinhancos. Once I had found the dossier, I had firm grounds to believe that the fundamental outlines of Cardoso's story were correct, as I had suspected from the start. It came as a sobering challenge to my assumptions to discover, upon a careful study of the dossier fragments, that while Pinhancos did die at the stake, he did not, apparently, die as a crypto-Jew. It is true that during the first part of his trial he seems to have held firmly to crypto-Jewish beliefs. But at some point during his imprisonment he underwent a crisis of belief. From October 1570 to April 1571, not long before his execution, he repeated, with variations, his conviction that he no longer believed there was a God, that he regretted having adopted the Judaism he was taught by his family, and that he had absolutely no intention of embracing Catholicism. He

died, it would seem, a martyr to atheism.

A word by way of conclusion: "Reading between the lines" of martyrological literature to establish historical facts, however intelligently, is a verifiably risky business. As some scholars have stressed, and as my own research has underscored, martyrological literature may tell us more about the survivors' experiences than about the motivations, experiences, and trajectories of thinking of the martyrs themselves. We will continue to want to know "what really happened." But to borrow awkwardly from Oscar Wilde, a story of martyrdom is not necessarily accurate because its protagonist can be shown to have chosen a martyr's death.

*Miriam Bodian is professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author of Dying in the Law of Moses: Crypto-Jewish Martyrdom in the Iberian World (Indiana University Press, 2007).*

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# “THE FINAL BATTLE” OR “A BURNT OFFERING”?: LAMDAN’S MASADA REVISITED

Yael S. Feldman

The career of the Masada myth in twentieth-century Hebrew imagination is well known. Recent scholarship has amply recorded its ups and downs from the heyday of the 1920s Zionist thirst for heroic ancestors; through the distraught 1940s, when it became the ambivalent emblem of both victimage and heroic yet desperate martyrdom; to the revisionist 1970s, when “The Masada Complex” came under fire, and the valence of its legacy was altogether questioned and often rejected.

Within this modern history two Hebrew texts seem to be linked,

holding together a privileged position: Josephus’s *Jewish Wars*, retranslated anew from the Greek (Simhoni 1923), and the epic-dramatic poem, *Masada* (Lamdan 1926), which catapulted its author to fame and reputation that lasted for several decades. Given the proximity of their publication dates, recent historiography has coupled these texts as major contributors to the creation of the Israeli “Myth of Metzada,” more often than not assuming that Simhoni’s Hebrew Josephus had inspired Lamdan’s poem.

I beg to differ. First, Lamdan had been working on his poem prior to the appearance of the translation, publishing segments of it as early as

1924 (Lipsker 2001). Second, by naming his poem *Masada* rather than “Metzada,” as established by Simhoni, Lamdan may have followed the “modern” Russian translation of *The Jewish*

*Wars*, published by Ya. L. Chertok in 1900 (Lapidus). Third, by extricating Lamdan’s *Masada* from the clutches of Simhoni/Josephus’s “historical” Metzada we may undo a long-attested confusion about the poem’s multifocal, paradoxical take on the knotty issue of national martyrdom.

*Masada*’s ostensibly paradoxical vision has been noted for some time and has been described in detail in several recent studies. The general agreement is that the poem is torn between two contradictory moods or ideologies: desperate pessimism and optimistic activism. On the side of despondency we may count its detailed imagery of arid rocks and merciless sun, of doubt and fear, of tears, bereavement, gallows, and despair unto death. Yet

the poem was mostly remembered, especially in 1943 Warsaw and its environs, for the bravado of its opening canto: “Against the hostile Fate of generations / A stubborn breast is there bared with a roar: / Enough! / You or I! / Here will the battle decide the final judgment!” (Yudkin 1971, trans.). If we add the sonorous cadences and trancelike rhythms of nightly dancing around the bonfires, straddling Hasidic and secular horas perfected by the pioneers, and the fervent invocation qua pledge, “Arise, the chain of dance / Never



Aerial View of the Masada Fortress above the Dead Sea. Photo by Mosher Milner, 1993. Courtesy of the State of Israel Government Press Office.

shall Masada fall again!,” it is not difficult to imagine the uplifting role of *Masada* through the trials and tribulations of the 1930s and 1940s in both Palestine and Europe.

That this self-boosting retelling has, in fact, nothing to do with the story as told by Josephus seemed to have concerned nobody. Nor was anyone bothered by the fact that the poem is rife with sacrificial imagery that is also nowhere to be seen in Josephus. I therefore suggest that the long-accepted yoking together of Lamdan and Simhoni’s Josephus is misleading and has not contributed to an understanding of the poem. To clear up this confusion I propose an additional source of inspiration: the tenth-century *Book of Yosippon*. This anonymous version of Josephus’s history, translated and rewritten in beautiful Hebrew from early medieval Latin texts, may indeed be the source that taught Lamdan to fuse the imagery of ritual sacrifice (qua martyrdom) with Greco-Roman military noble death, a conflation that perfectly suited his ambivalent yet fully sympathetic vision. This vision is totally missing in Josephus but was fashioned with great dexterity by the author of *Yosippon*.

To begin with, writing in Italy in the tenth century, the author of *Yosippon* seems to have anticipated those contemporary readers who find the collective suicide described in *The Jewish Wars* hard to accept. So, instead of having the Jews of “Metzada” (NB: not the *Sicarii* of “Masada”!) fall on their swords (or worse, *kill* each other), as they do in both Josephus’s history and in *Yosippon*’s Latin source, the Pseudo-Hegesippus, the anonymous Hebrew author has El’azar send them off “to fight the enemy and die like heroes” (*Sefer Yosippon*, ed. Flusser, 1978). *Yosippon*’s closing statement neatly summarizes this innovation, echoed in the idea of

“the last stand” or “fighting to the last man” associated in the Israeli mind with “Metzada”: “After these things, the men left the city and challenged the Romans to fight, killing too many of them to count. The Jews thus had fought until they all expired in the battle, dying for God and his Temple” (430). (A second, apparently later version according to David Flusser,

historiography. Here however I would like to focus only on the curious persistence of *Yosippon*’s “Metzada” in the Israeli mind, despite the almost unanimous “suppression” of the book itself in twentieth-century scholarship.

The unacknowledged source responsible for this feat of memory, was, I suggest, precisely Lamdan’s

THERE IS NO DOUBT THEN THAT THE RITUAL-SACRAL TONE OF MASADA IS MUCH CLOSER TO THE MOOD OF YOSIPPON’S METZADA THAN TO THE MASADA SCENE IN *THE JEWISH WARS*. LIKE THE FORMER, IT MELTS “NATIONAL AND SACRAL ELEMENTS” (FLUSSER, *YOSIPPON II*, 180), THUS SETTING THE TONE AND PERHAPS THE NORM FOR THE NATIONAL MARTYROLOGICAL DISCOURSES THAT WERE TO FOLLOW.

intensifies the description of the heroic death, while erasing the religious overtones [431].)

As Yael Zerubavel has already observed, “Jossipon’s [*sic*] later modified version of Masada fits the activist conception of heroism in secular national Hebrew culture much better than Josephus’s original version.” Zerubavel further suggests that it is “most curious” that “the activist commemorative narrative derives its legitimation from Josephus’s historical account,” while “Jossipon’s version has been largely ignored in the modern Hebrew commemoration of Masada.” I could not agree more. Yet this “curious” act of omission was not limited to the Israeli commemoration of Masada. As Steven Bowman has suggested, the ascendancy of Josephus’s history at the expense of *Yosippon* may attest to biases, conscious or not, running deep in modern Hebrew and Jewish

poetic creation, *Masada*. Could not his celebrated line, “Here will the battle decide the final judgment!” have been inspired by the Jewish “noble death” in a “final battle” invented by the author of *Yosippon* for his Metzada heroes? Certainly much more than Masada à la Josephus! But there is more. *Yosippon* begins the closure of the dramatic event with the words “After these things . . .” So what is the famed opening of Genesis 22, the *aqedah*, doing here?

I suggest that by referring to the events of the day before with this phrase, the author cleverly links the slaughter of the families with the offering demanded of Abraham “after these things.” This is in fact *Yosippon*’s second innovation in this episode. El’azar has to negotiate with his men the dreadful act of putting their loved ones to death so that they would not suffer at the hands of the Romans. To do so he

not only presents this deed, just like El'azar in Josephus's version, as an act of compassion; he also promises the men that this "mercy killing" "will be considered as a sacrificial burnt offering that will please God (*gorban olah leratzon la'adonay*; p. 429). This addition, which helps turn the objects of murder into "sacrificial victims" and hence sanctified martyrs, is also absent in either Josephus or *Yosippon's* Latin source. It follows logically however from the opening of El'azar's speech, where a list of historical precedence begins with "Do remember your Father Abraham who took his only son to offer him to God . . ." (emphasis is mine).

This is not the place to engage *Yosippon's* difficult negotiation with the prefigural Christian overtones of Isaac in his Latin source. I propose however that his rhetorical move was borrowed by Lamdan to great effect. See for instance the section named "A Tender Offering" (*Olah rakkah*; *Masada*, 28), where an "only son" ascends Masada

"joyously, his head full of dew drops," confident that his gift (of life? of death?) "will be pleasing [accepted]" (*teratzeh*, derived from the same root and meaning as the verb used in *Yosippon*, "*leratzon*"). Lamdan comes even closer to the language of the medieval text when he describes the despair of being abandoned by an absent God as the lack of authority that would approve or accept as pleasing (*yeratzeh*) "the offering of our life and the sacrifice of our youth and love . . ." ("Weeping," 63).

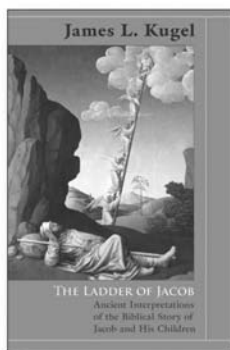
Finally, replacing Josephus with *Yosippon* may explain still another general feature of *Masada*, its overall religious vocabulary. As the poetry of an ostensibly secular pioneer, Lamdan's work is surprisingly preoccupied with the presence or absence of God. His images of "national martyrdom" are rooted much more than those of his peers in the language of *sacral* ritual. In a section named "The First-Fruit Caravan" (*Orhat bikkurim*, 32), for instance, he puts

in the mouth of the climbers to the unyielding rock of Masada startling images of gift-bearing. The first-person-plural subjects of this canto carry the "grain of our lives" and "our joyous blood" as a sacred (!) offering (*minhab*

*veqodesh!*) for the impending final battle; they moreover offer a selfless donation of "the springs of our youth" and the "first fruit of our lives," not to mention "handful of hearts," "gold of dreams," and "baskets of love."

There is no doubt then that the ritual-sacral tone of *Masada* is much closer to the mood of *Yosippon's* Metzada than to the Masada scene in *The Jewish Wars*. Like the former, it melds "national and sacral elements" (Flusser, *Yosippon* II, 180), thus setting the tone and perhaps the norm for the national martyrological discourses that were to follow. Should we then be surprised that the distinctive sacrificial image of *bikkurim*, rather than the more common *aqedah* ("first fruit offering, a spring carnival climaxing in human sacrifice") resurfaced recently in David Grossman's much celebrated novel *Isha borahat mibesora* (A Woman Fleeing from Tidings, 2008), the latest link in Israel's fierce contest over its national martyrology?

*Yael S. Feldman is the Abraham I. Katsh Professor of Hebrew Culture and Education in the Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies and affiliated professor in the Department of Comparative Literature at New York University. This article is based on her forthcoming study, Glory and Agony: Rewriting Isaac/Sacrifice in Tel Aviv (Stanford University Press).*



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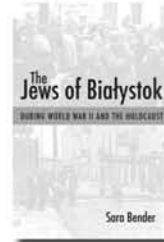
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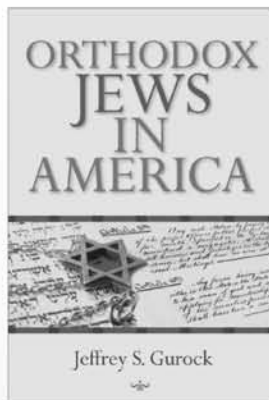
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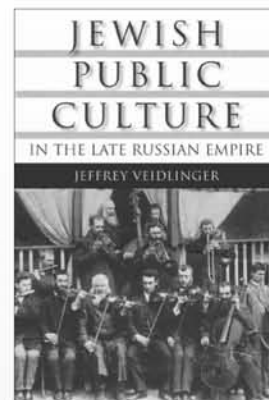
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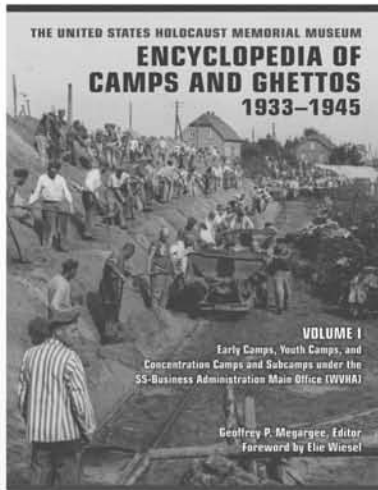
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*Heidi Lerner*

### Introduction

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- On May 11, 2005, the Cornell University Faculty Senate endorsed a resolution

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challenge and response to the rising costs of many traditional scholarly publication venues, and advocated for open access publication of academic and scholarly output and research. In essence this resolution encourages tenured faculty to stop working with journals and their publishers who engage in out-of-sight pricing models and also to resign from editorial boards if changes to pricing structures are not made.

- In January 2008, the academic world witnessed the passing of the National Institute of Health (NIH) public access law (<http://publicaccess.nih.gov/policy.htm>), which stipulates that all NIH funded research articles must be deposited in PubMed Central (PMC) upon publication.
- In February 2008, Harvard University's Faculty of Arts and

Sciences (FAS) required Harvard researchers to deposit their scholarly articles in an open access (OA) repository to be managed within the library and to be made freely available to anyone via the Internet ([www.fas.harvard.edu/home/news-and-notice/news/](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/home/news-and-notice/news/)

[press-releases/researcharchive/releases-2008/scholarly-02122008.shtml](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/home/news-and-notice/news/press-releases/researcharchive/releases-2008/scholarly-02122008.shtml)). The mandate further stipulates that faculty can only submit their articles to journals that allow articles to be posted online immediately after they are accepted for publication. This move has many implications, not the least of which is its impact on the author-publisher relationship, forcing authors to negotiate with their publishers on a case-by-base basis.

- In April 2008, one thousand professors from more than three hundred colleges and universities released a statement affirming their preference for high-quality, affordable textbooks, including open access textbooks, over expensive commercial textbooks

([www.maketextbooksaffordable.org/statement.asp?id=37614](http://www.maketextbooksaffordable.org/statement.asp?id=37614)).

- In autumn 2008 the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), in association with Ithaka Strategic Services, released a report “Current Models of Digital Scholarly Communication” ([www.arl.org/bm~doc/current-models-report.pdf](http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/current-models-report.pdf)) designed to “look squarely at new forms of scholarship and scholarly works and consider them in their own lights.” This report described an array of innovative digital scholarly resources that are in use today. Among these are e-only journals; reviews, preprints, and working papers; encyclopedias; dictionaries and annotated content; blogs and discussion forums; and professional and scholarly hubs.
- In the e-book world we recently witnessed the settlement agreement between Google, the Authors Guild, and the Association of American Publishers concerning Google’s scanning of copyrighted works (<http://books.google.com/googlebooks/agreement>).
- On January 19, 2009, the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC), an informal group of almost 150 library consortia from around the world issued a statement on the current worldwide economic crisis ([www.library.yale.edu/consortia/icolc-econcrisis-0109.htm](http://www.library.yale.edu/consortia/icolc-econcrisis-0109.htm)). The group called for publishers and vendors of electronic content to work together and look at some creative strategies to cope with the present situation.

## Open Access and Institutional Repositories

Slowly and steadily humanities and social science scholars are showing support for open access publishing. Scholars individually can make their work freely available via their own

## THE RECENT STATEMENT FROM ICOLC REFLECTS THE FINANCIAL IMPACT THAT THE E-BOOK MARKET HAS HAD ON UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

individual websites, or in institutional and discipline-based repositories. Another option is to publish in journals freely available to all on the Web. Some journal publishers are experimenting with this model by giving authors the option of paying for open access to their articles. Other journal publishers provide an option whereby articles become freely available after a certain period of time.

There are several open access, peer-reviewed, and currently active journals that are of interest to Jewish studies scholars. These include, among others, *Azure: Ideas for the Jewish Nation*; *Eras*; *Jewish*

*Studies*, an *Internet Journal*; *Min-A: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*; *Studia Judaica*; *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*; *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*; *Women in Judaism*; and *Quntres*. These last two journals are published using

Open Journal Systems from the Public Knowledge Project, open source journal publishing and management software (<http://pkp.sfu.ca/?q=ojs>).

Nonmandated institutional and discipline-based repositories have been around for some time. In addition to making scholarly output previously published in traditional venues accessible, these repositories can bring visibility to materials that historically have been hard to access since they have not been published or indexed, such as preprints, conference and working papers, student scholarship, and scholarship in non-text formats. The University of California and the California



Screenshot of the Open University of Israel's Pe'er website, <http://ocw.openu.ac.il/>.

Digital Library's eScholarship Repository and University of Pennsylvania's ScholarlyCommons@Penn offer similar paradigms of open access publishing of research carried out within these institutions for many types of scholarly content, including preprints, postprints, peer-reviewed articles, datasets, edited volumes, and peer-reviewed journals.

Historically there have been variations between disciplines with respect to the ways in which digital scholarship has been shared and disseminated. Scientists and social scientists rely to a much larger degree on professional and disciplinary repositories such as the Social Science Research Network and arXiv.org. Scholars in the humanities have relied more on listservs and discussion forums, which for Jewish studies scholars include the Jewish Studies Network (JSN), H-Judaic, H-Antisemitism, H-Holocaust, Jewish Languages, Mendele Yiddish Literature and Yiddish Language, and Sephardi Mizrahi Studies Caucus Discussion List. Participants, however, usually use these vehicles of communication for limited purposes: to post research questions, announce recent publications, issue calls for papers, provide notification of conferences and fellowship opportunities, and post book reviews. They generally do not include ongoing discussions or conversations. To this end, new forums of scholarly communication are emerging, enabling faster dissemination of ideas and more community dialogue.

### **Blogs**

Blogs offer an alternative to the traditional approach of writing articles that is offered by peer-reviewed journals, which can be notoriously slow. In the blogosphere, responses to new scholarship can be posted in a matter of minutes or hours by readers of the blog who may

respond to a thought, idea, question, or review, in order to amplify or criticize it. In turn, others may respond to those postings, leading to ongoing discourse that can move within and across other blogs.

Several blogs have come on the scene that offer a counterpoint to traditional scholarly discourse bringing together postings, commentaries, reviews, and musings related to new and old rabbinica, bibliography, and historical oddities from tenured faculty, junior scholars, graduate students, and others stationed outside the academy who possess knowledge and erudition in these areas. Hagahot (<http://manuscriptboy.blogspot.com>) issued by Pinchas Roth, who identifies himself as Manuscriptboy; Michtavim (<http://michtavim.blogspot.com>), written by Menachem Butler; and Tradition Seforim (<http://seforim.traditiononline.org>), edited by Menachem Butler and Dan Rabinowitz, are three blogs that have established themselves as important forces in Jewish studies, providing an intersection of academic Jewish studies, Orthodox Judaism, and scholarly rabbinica and bibliography.

Two disadvantages that blogging suffers from in comparison to traditional venues of scholarly publications such as journals and monographs, however, are accessibility and permanence. Traditional publications benefit from the careful indexing systems that have long been in place and the preservation capabilities that libraries have been able to develop and maintain. Although it may be easy to Google something and find it in the blogosphere, a blog discussion trail can be difficult to navigate over a period of time because it may have shut down, links may be broken, or servers may be closed. Just as the Internet is

emerging as a new publishing medium, so too are new forums for Web page preservation being developed. For instance, the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine ([www.archive.org/web/web.php](http://www.archive.org/web/web.php)) allows searchers to look for Web pages that are no longer online. A check on the home page for Menachem Butler's first blog, AJHistory, which has been discontinued, finds archived pages from January 1, 1995–July 13, 2006.

### **Open Access Textbooks**

The soaring price of academic textbooks is no secret. Open access textbooks are complete, peer-reviewed textbooks written by academics that can be used online for free and printed for a small cost. What sets them apart from conventional textbooks is their open license that allows readers flexibility to use, customize, and print the textbook. Open textbooks are already used at some of the nation's most prestigious institutions including Harvard, Caltech, and Yale, and at some of the nation's largest institutions such as the California community colleges, Arizona State University system, and Ohio State University.

Several open access textbook initiatives are in place including content from the Open University of Israel, which in 2008 launched the Pe'er project which makes freely available to the public electronic versions of dozens of academic textbooks (<http://ocw.openu.ac.il/>). The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) was the first to start making course materials freely available with its MIT OpenCourseWare Program (<http://ocw.mit.edu/>), but the Open University's project was the first to place entire textbooks online.

### **E-Books**

Almost everyone in the academic world has heard about the settlement

of the class action lawsuit that the Authors Guild, the Association of American Publishers, and individual authors and publishers filed against Google for its Book Search program, which has been digitizing millions of books from libraries. The Google Book Settlement is complex and the settlement must still be confirmed by the court (the Association of American Publishers has issued an FAQ that can be found at <http://publishers.org/main/Copyright/Google/Faq.htm>). Google has long made clear its intention to digitize all of the books in major U.S. libraries and has now expanded its program to include some of the major libraries in Europe, Japan, and India. Up until now, Google has not embarked on any collaborative scanning venture of Hebrew books with Israeli libraries, but a nonprofit organization within Israel has embarked on a project to create a library of scanned books on Israel and Jewish culture, most of which are under copyright. The Center for Educational Technology (CET) has signed contracts with a number of major Israeli nonfiction book publishers to make their works

available online to the public (<http://www3.cet.ac.il/>). These are mostly recent titles; the project offers a number of features that make e-books attractive such as navigation tools, searching via one search engine, morphological searching, and social networking capabilities.

The recent statement from ICOLC reflects the financial impact that the e-book market has had on universities and institutions of higher education. At present there are various pricing options offered by publishers and aggregators, who provide access to large collections of titles from many publishers via a single interface. Universities and consortia can negotiate rates for access to these collections through individual agreements made without public disclosure. Libraries can acquire e-books on a title-by-title basis. They can also subscribe to or lease e-book collections. The various models all have advantages and disadvantages, with pricing structures usually based on the number of users in the institution or the resources that are acquired through restricted

simultaneous user licensing agreements.

### Conclusion

Jewish studies scholars and researchers have the ability to meet the challenges of the changing landscape of scholarly communication. As more options and opportunities become available they need to think about how their research and teaching will be affected. They must look at their own roles as creators, disseminators, and users of intellectual content and engage with their institutional administrators, librarians and information technologists, university presses, and professional societies in developing more awareness and innovation in new paths of scholarly communication.

*Heidi Lerner is the Hebraica/Judaica cataloguer at Stanford University Libraries.*

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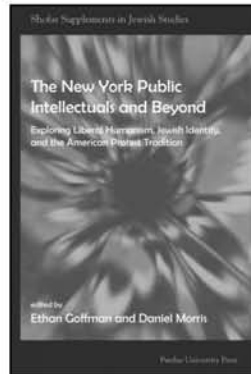
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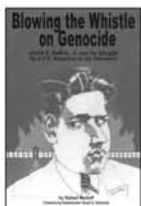
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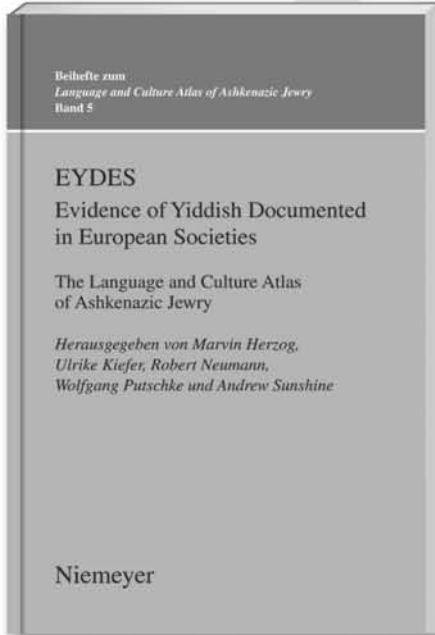
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## EYDES

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# DIARNA: DIGITALLY MAPPING MIZRAHI HERITAGE

*Frances Malino and Jason Guberman-Pfeffer* Jewish communities that once

**O**n a dusty side street in Tunis, above a solitary locked doorway, one can still see a faded Hebrew plaque. This plaque is all that remains of the tomb of Chief Rabbi Messaoud Raphael el Fassi. According to tradition, el Fassi set off on a caravan bound for Jerusalem from his native city of Fez. He made it as far as Tunis, where he died in 1775.

In December 2008, Ali Kaba, a West African-Muslim undergraduate, located this plaque on a research expedition for Diarna (“Our homes” in Judeo-

Arabic), a new initiative dedicated to mapping Mizrahi heritage. A collaboration among scholars, social entrepreneurs, Google Earth developers, and Middle Eastern researchers, Diarna underlines the importance of physical location to understanding the past. By locating hundreds of sites, collecting old and new photographs of these sites, interviewing current and former community residents, and assembling a multimedia layer in Google Earth, we are able both to virtually preserve Mizrahi heritage and to make it accessible in a myriad of popular educational formats.

Mizrahi communities from Saharan outposts in southern Morocco to Kurdish villages in Iran are rapidly disappearing. The synagogues,

cemeteries, schools, clubs, and traditional tombs of biblical figures stand as testament to the vibrant

spanned the entire region.

While the majority of these communities ceased to exist only within the past few decades, it remains difficult to visit and often impossible to preserve their communal sites. As these sites decay and those with knowledge of them pass on, future generations are losing tangible connections to communities that once contributed significantly both to Jewish and world culture.

## A COLLABORATION AMONG SCHOLARS, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS, GOOGLE EARTH DEVELOPERS, AND MIDDLE EASTERN RESEARCHERS, DIARNA UNDERLINES THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL LOCATION TO UNDERSTANDING THE PAST.

Mizrahim have recently launched Web forums where visitors post old photographs and memories of their hometowns. These websites are being discovered by a new generation growing up in cities devoid of their former Jewish communities. Some of these young Muslims have begun posting contemporary photos of Jewish communal sites, at times even meeting requests from their former Jewish neighbors to photograph family graves and other nostalgic locales. This interaction yields valuable data on the past and present status of Jewish communal sites.

For a number of young Arabs, Berbers, Kurds, and Persians, the hidden history of their region’s Jewish heritage is a source of

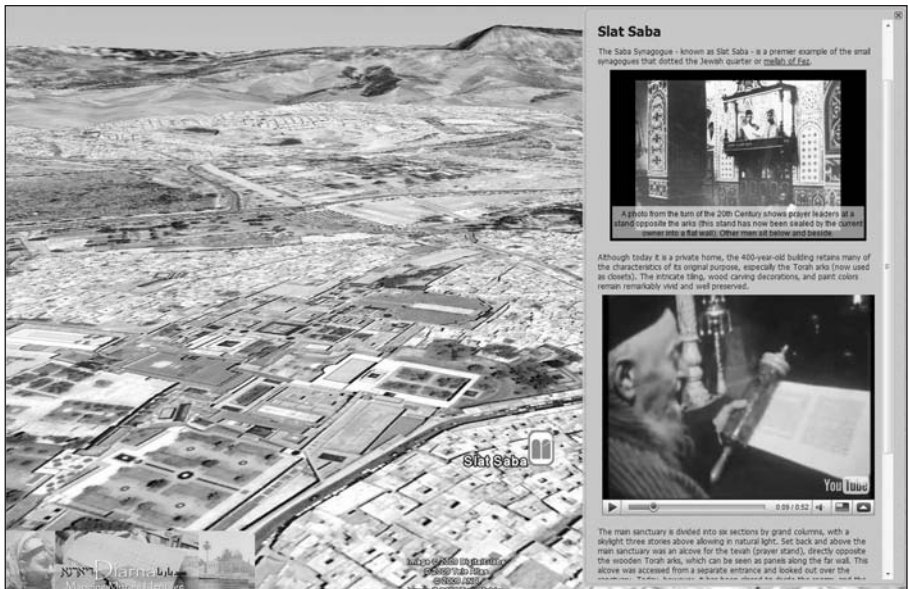
fascination. As Shaymaa Salama, a young Egyptian-Muslim researcher for Diarna, commented: “We never learned about this. Discovering dozens of Jewish sites in Cairo and even in small villages in the Nile Delta is eye-opening.” For others, that Jews once lived among them seems unfathomable. As one young Sudanese commented on a Diarna YouTube video, which features footage of Khartoum’s abandoned Jewish cemetery: “I have never heard that Jews were living in Sudan . . . and died there as well! Come on, be real, man. This is not Sudan.”

While we are in a race against time to identify and document Mizrahi sites, powerful new assets are now at our disposal: user-driven Web 2.0

technology. Google Earth, a free program providing interactive satellite imagery of the entire globe to an audience of 500 million users, allows anyone with an Internet

connection to travel like a bird across the Middle East, unencumbered by political and security restrictions. All sorts of Jewish sites are clearly visible and “visitable” in a previously unimaginable way. Google Earth offers zoomable perspective, tiltable views, 360-degree rotation, and even three-dimensional modeling of buildings.

Diarna is assembling an interactive map, stored in an online database format and plotted directly onto Google Earth. For each site there will be a multimedia place-marker featuring a brief summary of its importance as well as archival and contemporary photos, video testimony, and embedded links to books, articles, and media. Additionally, some sites will be



Screenshot of the upcoming Diarna website.

“rebuilt” as 3D models, thus enabling the virtual reconstruction of outstanding Mizrahi sites.

Diarna’s multinational and interfaith coalition is composed of experts on the Mizrahim, coders and designers of the Diarna infrastructure, photographers and researchers who travel in the region collecting material, and Middle Eastern youth eager to map virtual common ground. From an academic standpoint, Diarna offers a cutting-

Earth layer, and a website. The result will be a model for digital preservation applicable to communities, however defined, around the world.

Demanding a fusion of academic, technological, and entrepreneurial skills, Diarna is a joint initiative between the start-up nonprofit Digital Heritage Mapping and Wellesley College’s Jewish studies program. Research institutions, including Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, as

## AS THESE SITES DECAY AND THOSE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THEM PASS ON, FUTURE GENERATIONS ARE LOSING TANGIBLE CONNECTIONS TO COMMUNITIES THAT ONCE CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY BOTH TO JEWISH AND WORLD CULTURE.

edge addition to historiography and pedagogy by injecting geo-spatial positioning coupled with multimedia to document communities now recognizable only by remnants of abandoned property. From a technical perspective, the project is producing an open-source package linking a research database, multimedia archives, a Google

well as leading international photographers, have agreed to share materials.

Highlights of the hundreds of sites already identified include:

- Aleppo’s Great Synagogue, which for centuries housed the legendary Codex

- Baghdad’s only remaining Jewish cemetery, adjacent to Sadr City
- The abandoned synagogue in Ghardaya, a remote outpost in the Algerian Sahara
- The ancient Jewish fortresses of the Khaybar oasis in Saudi Arabia
- The tomb of the Baba Sali’s father, the Abir Yaakov, in Damanhur, Egypt
- Foum Deflah, a Vichy “discipline camp” in the desert outside Figuig, Morocco
- Jewish cave-dwellers’ homes in Gharyan, Libya
- The Hasmonean fortress of Machaerus, and accompanying First Revolt–era Roman siege camps, in Jordan
- The Alliance Israélite Universelle “Hafsia” boys school in Tunis, Tunisia
- Jewish cemeteries in Kuwait, Oman, and Sudan
- The Frank Iny School and Ezra Menachem Daniel Sports Club in Baghdad
- The traditional tomb of Esther and Mordechai near Imam Khomeini square in Hamadan, Iran
- The synagogue where Maimonides was initially buried in Cairo’s Harat el-Yahud

Examining sites in Google Earth’s three-dimensional form can be awe-inspiring as well as informative. For example, until 1950, on the holiday of Shavuot, hundreds of Kurdish Jews would visit the traditional “Tomb of Nachum,” and then make a morning ascent up the hill,

FROM AN ACADEMIC STANDPOINT, DIARNA OFFERS A CUTTING-EDGE ADDITION TO HISTORIOGRAPHY AND PEDAGOGY BY INJECTING GEO-SPATIAL POSITIONING COUPLED WITH MULTIMEDIA TO DOCUMENT COMMUNITIES NOW RECOGNIZABLE ONLY BY REMNANTS OF ABANDONED PROPERTY.

which they called “Mount Sinai.” After a ceremony at the summit, they would descend in a jubilant procession, banging drums and even brandishing swords in a dramatic “pre-enactment” of the battle of Armageddon. When viewed with Diarna’s Google Earth layer, the hagiography of Nachum’s tomb, located at the foot of this spectacular hill in the Iraqi Kurdish village of al-Qosh, is greatly enhanced.

Diarna is currently in start-up mode, with technical designers and

researchers still assembling essential materials for a public launch. Over the next year, we intend to complete mapping of at least five hundred sites, amass a photo collection in a searchable database with at least two thousand photographs, and create twenty model sites complete with three-dimensional models and translated site write-ups in Arabic, Hebrew, Farsi, and French. A key milestone will be the release of a public Google Earth layer, which will anchor additional public educational materials such as virtual guided tours and interactive exhibits.

We anticipate that experts who have studied individual communities will contribute to our effort. Researchers who did field work, for example, in Morocco in the 1960s or Iran in the 1970s may have valuable information on communal sites. Diarna’s model, of course, can also be applied to mapping Jewish heritage around the world. Omer Bartov’s recent *Erased: Vanishing Traces of Jewish Galicia in Present-Day Ukraine* (Princeton University Press, 2007) offers a timely reminder that digital heritage mapping may be the only way to preserve some Jewish sites.

*Frances Malino is the Sophia Moses Robison Professor of Jewish Studies and History at Wellesley College. Jason Guberman-Pfeffer is the executive director of Digital Heritage Mapping and project coordinator of Diarna. To learn more about their project, including how to contribute research results, e-mail info@heritagemapping.org.*

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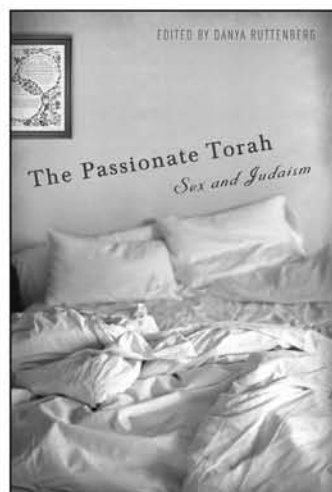
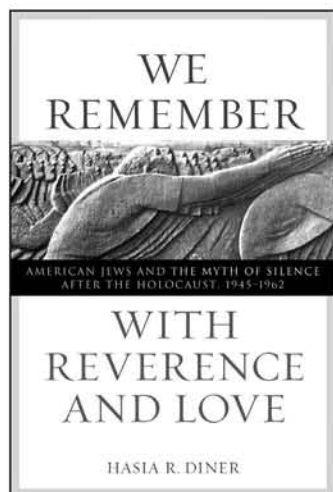
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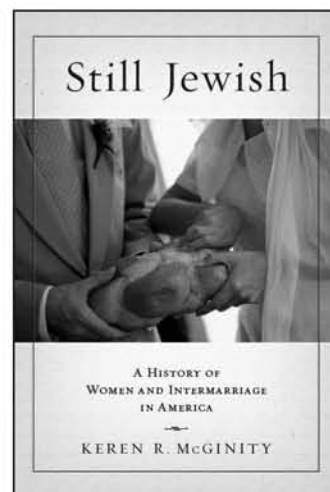
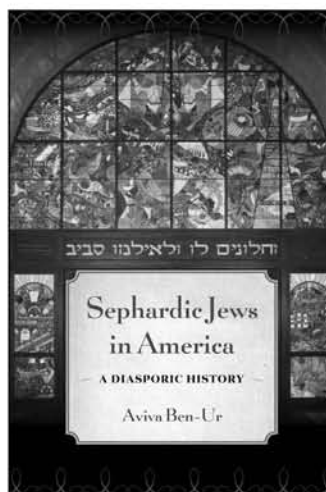
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*Moshe Bernstein*

The first time that I heard Joseph M. Baumgarten lecture, about thirty years ago, he punctuated his discussion of some legal material in the Temple Scroll from Qumran with a reference to something “we learned in *dafyomi* a couple of weeks ago. . . .” I remember how pleased I was to hear a scholar who could casually mention in the course of his presentation to a learned academic group that he was an active participant in the traditional, but not-yet-wildly-popular, cycle of Talmudic study. In the course of our increasingly close acquaintance over the ensuing three decades, I was to learn that this was quite characteristic of Joe. His two ostensibly disparate personae—Orthodox congregational rabbi and college professor and researcher into Qumran halakhah—were not hermetically sealed off from one another. It may not have always been obvious to some of his congregants and colleagues in the academy who observed him in only one context that he had “another side,” but the two professions were thoroughly integrated within him. Those of us who knew both sides of him appreciated the whole man.

Born in Vienna in 1928, Joseph Baumgarten received his classical rabbinic education at Mesivta Torah Vodaas in Brooklyn and was ordained in 1950. He then went to Baltimore intending to do graduate work in mathematics at Johns Hopkins University, while living and learning at the Ner Israel Yeshiva. Had it not been for a chance encounter with the great biblical scholar and Semitist William Foxwell Albright, he might have become a rabbi cum mathematician, but



Photo reprinted by permission from *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Second Meeting of the IOQS, Cambridge 1995. Published in Honor of Joseph M. Baumgarten* (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 23; Brill, 1997).

once having been drawn to the academic study of Judaism and the then-recently-discovered Dead Sea Scrolls, there was no turning back. He was one of the very first American scholars to concentrate on the Scrolls, and he continued to write about them for more than a half century. During this long period of time he did pioneering work on the legal texts found at Qumran, creating and shaping the academic field of Qumran halakhah.

It was his profound knowledge of rabbinic literature in the classical mode that enabled Joe to be the trailblazer that he was in the study of postbiblical legal material, antecedent to that of the rabbis. He published article after article on specific points in the Qumran legal corpus, all the while developing and refining the methodology requisite to the analysis of such texts and formulating an approach now accepted and practiced virtually universally in the field. In what may be considered his chef d’oeuvre, he applied his mature talents to the editing of the Cave 4 fragments of the Damascus document, *Qumran Cave 4. XIII: The Damascus Document (4Q266-273)* (Clarendon, 1996), in the official publication series of the *Scrolls, Discoveries in the Judean Desert*. Joe served as professor of rabbinic

literature at Baltimore Hebrew College (later University) and held fellowships at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University (twice) and the Annenberg Research Institute (now the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Pennsylvania). He was a visiting professor at several institutions. While he never assumed a permanent professorship at a major American or Israeli research university where he could have devoted more time to scholarship, this did not perturb him. The life of a congregational rabbi who had the time to publish a good deal of scholarship “on the side” was a source of great contentment to him.

The high regard in which his peers in Qumran studies held Joe can be seen from their decision to publish in his honor the proceedings of the second meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies (IOQS), held in Cambridge, England in 1995. *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge 1995. Published in Honor of Joseph M. Baumgarten* (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 23; Brill, 1997) contains twenty-four fine scholarly essays, as well as a remarkable appreciation of Joe written by Professor Daniel R. Schwartz of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem to honor his teacher both as a person and as a scholar.

Joseph Baumgarten was a *rara avis* in the Orthodox rabbinate in America: a congregational rabbi who was also a leading scholar in academic Jewish studies. His passing deprives us not only of a good friend and an outstanding scholar but of a model whom we could hold up to our students as genuinely worthy of emulation.

*Moshe J. Bernstein is professor of Bible at Yeshiva University. He is the co-editor of the Festschrift in honor of Professor Baumgarten.*

# SARAH BLACHER COHEN

(1936 – 2008)

*Elaine Safer*

Sarah Blacher Cohen, professor of Jewish literature for thirty-three years at the State University of New York at Albany, playwright, comic, scholar, and dear friend, died on November 14, 2008, at age 72 of a degenerative neurological disease: Charcot-Marie-Tooth. Her husband of forty-two years, Gary, was with her when she expired. Sarah was the most courageous person I have known. She came close to death at least twice before her final demise, but always managed to beat it. Somehow, she drew upon an inner strength that yearned to live. So many of us thought that Sarah would pull through this last time as well.

I met Sarah in 1964 when she was a graduate student in the English department at Northwestern University, and I was a predoctoral instructor there. So began a friendship that lasted for more than forty-four years. After Sarah obtained a position in the English department at the University of Illinois, Chicago, and I got a position in the English department at the University of Delaware, we kept in touch by visiting each other's homes, meeting at conferences, and traveling to plays together. I recall that we both attended Cynthia Ozick's production of *Blue Light* when it was performed at the Bay Street Theatre in Sag Harbor, Long Island; after the show, Sarah, her friend Cynthia, and I had a little ice-cream celebration.

When Sarah came to Philadelphia to produce her own plays and those written with her longtime collaborator Joanne B. Koch, I introduced her to my little theater group of friends, who loved the performances: among them *The Ladies' Locker Room*; *Molly Picon*; and *Sophie, Totie and Belle*. This also was true when Sarah produced performances at the University of Delaware: among them *Henrietta Szold* and *Molly Picon*. And because Sarah was such a social person, who loved to introduce people to one another, we often went backstage to chat with the actors, and then out to dinner. The performances of Sarah's plays in Albany gave us another chance to be together. I recall reading *The Ladies' Locker Room* in manuscript. What a treat it was to speak with Sarah about her ideas and how to turn them into drama.

Sarah had a wonderful sense of humor and joy in living. We would discuss experiences until the serious nature would give way to the humorous—causing us to rock with laughter. Sarah helped me to see the comic aspects of our daily lives. Sarah had amazing energy and was at the center of our Jewish American literary group, which essentially became a *mishpocha*: an extended family. Sarah introduced many of us and other people to publishers, including those at the presses at which she was an editor. She was first the editor of a series at Wayne State University Press and later general editor of the Modern Jewish American Literature and Culture Series at SUNY Press. At the latter, in particular, she helped countless people by reading their manuscripts and encouraging them to publish their books in her series.

Sarah once told me that putting together a collection of essays on a specific subject was like getting people together for a dinner party. The joy she took in setting up these “parties” is reflected in the titles of her books: *Comic Relief: Humor in*



*Contemporary American Literature*; *Jewish Wry: Essays on Jewish Humor*; and *Making a Scene: The Contemporary Drama of Jewish-American Women*. Her pleasure in the comic sense of life is also reflected in talks she gave, such as “The Unkosher Comediennes: From Sophie Tucker to Joan Rivers,” talks in which Sarah enjoyed impersonating the Jewish entertainers. Sarah's work on humor, especially her books on Saul Bellow and Cynthia Ozick, are classics in the field: *Saul Bellow's Enigmatic Laughter* (University of Illinois Press, 1974), and *Cynthia Ozick's Comic Art: From Levity to Liturgy* (Indiana University Press, 1994).

Sarah had been working on a book that she tentatively called *A Memoir of a Junk Dealer's Daughter*. The title is revealing in that just as a dealer may turn his collection of rags into profitable form for others, so Sarah turned her disability into positive form: in a course she developed called “Drama of Disability,” in which she treated *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Miracle Worker*, and *Children of a Lesser God*; in her own plays, including *The Ladies' Locker Room*; and in working for the rights of disabled persons. Indeed, Sarah was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Muscular Dystrophy Society.

Among Sarah's other honors are a Distinguished Fulbright to Yugoslavia and her roles as media consultant to the National Endowment for the Humanities and humor consultant for the Library of Congress. Sara wrote and edited eleven plays and musicals (often with her longtime writing partner Joanne B. Koch). Sarah is survived by her husband Gary, her sister Bess Rosen Lichterman of Milwaukee, and nine nieces and nephews, including her great-niece Rabbi Julie Pelc of Venice, California, who recounts that Sarah told her she "was like the daughter she never had." "And, in many ways," Julie explains, "I was her progeny. . . . Sarah and I shared more in common than anyone else in our family; our relationship was profound and sacred. . . . My Aunt Sarah was feisty, rebellious, outrageous, brilliant, and creative. . . . My Aunt Sarah didn't just choose life, she took a lasso and wrung it around life and dragged life toward her. . . . In her death Sarah remains my greatest teacher about life." Another person who devoted herself to Sarah is Marla Frazer, longtime assistant, friend, and helper particularly in the last phase of Sarah's life. Marla promised Sarah and Gary that she would be a caregiver for them throughout their illnesses.

Sarah was memorialized at a service at Levine Memorial Chapel in Albany on Friday November 11, 2008, and buried at the Independent Cemetery in Guilderland. Sarah's sheer joy in living, her excitement in engaging in dialogue over all matters, and her sense of humor: these are the things I remember and these are the things that bring Sarah back to life for me.

*Elaine B. Safer is professor of English at the University of Delaware. She is author of Mocking the Age: The Later Novels of Philip Roth (SUNY Press, 2006).*

# BENNY KRAUT

## (1947 – 2008)

*Eugene Korn*

Professor Benny Kraut passed away at age 60 on September 26, 2008, after a week-long coma caused by sudden cardiac arrest. He enriched the lives of all who met him, and his untimely death left both the academic and Jewish worlds significantly diminished.

Benny studied Jewish and general philosophy at Yeshiva College, where we first met and nurtured a close friendship that endured through the decades. He earned MA and PhD degrees in Jewish history from the Department of Near East and Jewish Studies at Brandeis University in 1970 and 1975, respectively. After teaching briefly at Vassar, Benny built the Jewish studies department at the University of Cincinnati, where he was department director from 1976 to 1998. Later in 1998 he moved to Queens College, CUNY to become professor of history and director of its Jewish studies program, as well as the director of the Center for Jewish Studies. He remained the Center's director until spring 2006, while continuing to teach in the department until his death. He augmented the center, revitalized its public Jewish Lecture Series, and created the Jewish Music and Theater Performance Series as well as a Cinema on Sundays Film/Dialogue Series. Under his academic leadership, Queens' Jewish studies program expanded and diversified, and earned national recognition for its quality and innovative programs. As Queens College president James Muyskens stated, "Benny injected the Center and the Program with new energy and ideas, turning them into first class institutions." At both Cincinnati and Queens, Benny won university awards for teaching excellence.

Benny was no detached scholar consumed by esoteric concerns but a passionate advocate for, and explorer of, Jewish identity, ideas, and the experiences of his people in modernity. His personality seemed to merge with his scholarship and he instinctively embraced the dilemmas of contemporary Jewish existence. More often than not, he intertwined his academic interests with his Jewish communal involvement in both Cincinnati and Queens.

Benny focused his academic work primarily in two areas: antisemitism and the Holocaust; and the American Jewish experience. His first book, *From Reform Judaism to Ethical Culture: The Religious Revolution of Felix Adler* (Hebrew Union College, 1979), was also the subject of his doctoral dissertation. He published two other books on Jews and the founding of America and on German Jewish Orthodoxy in America, and more than forty scholarly articles. A voracious reader with a fine critical eye, Benny was book review editor for *American Jewish History* and a member of the editorial board of *Shofar*. Over the course of his career he managed to pen a remarkable 170 reviews for a variety of scholarly journals and popular publications. He also published essays in Jewish-Christian and Jewish-black relations and participated in a number of academic activities in these areas.

Biography underlay Benny's résumé and his unusual conjunction of interests. He was the son of two Holocaust survivors. His father, Pinchas Zvi Kraut of Novo Sandz and Prezemysl, Poland, spent the entire war in flight one step ahead of the SS and imminent death. Wounded and ill with typhus in 1943, he was saved by a Christian woman who hid him for almost a year until the Russian liberation. The SS killed his wife and young daughter, and when the war ended Pinchas emerged as the only survivor of a family that had numbered more than thirty prior to





the war. Benny's mother, Mania Trachman of Brzozow, Poland, also spent the war in hiding as a young woman. For two years she lived in an underground bunker, hidden and fed by a local woman. Benny was named for Mania's father, Ben Zion Trachman, a devotee of Bobover Hasidim with a beautiful cantorial voice, who was shot by the Nazis while leading Rosh Hashanah services in September 1939. After the war, Mania linked up with her cousin Pinchas Zvi Kraut, and they were married in Krakow. They proceeded to a DP camp in Linz, Austria, futilely attempting to find family survivors. From there they moved to Munich, where Benny was born in 1947. Unable to obtain a visa to America,

they received a Canadian visa in 1951 and arrived in Montreal in 1952, where Benny was raised.

This tragic European history weighed heavily on Benny, giving his personality an unmistakable angst and existential weight. As Benny's son, Yehuda, himself a budding biblical scholar, poignantly noted in the eulogy for his father, "My father was not Job, but he was the son of Job." But Benny did not succumb to any permanent pessimism or nihilism to which living with the Shoah can so easily lead. He also had a charming boyish exuberance born of the spirit of the new world. He was intensely fascinated by the American and Canadian experiment, with its optimistic promise of acceptance, equality, and even success for Jews. Could the new society indeed be different for Jews, or would it prove but the beginning of another German "enlightenment"? Is it possible for Jews to escape antisemitism here? If so, at what cost to Jewish tradition and historic Jewish identity? If not, are discrimination and suffering essential to Jewish metaphysical and religious identity?

Hence Benny's academic and existential interests in the philosophic issues of suffering, Jewish history, the Holocaust, Judaism in America, and

Modern Orthodoxy, i.e., the experiment of synthesizing Orthodox commitment with modern values and social reality. He spent his last years researching and writing the history of Yavneh, the (Modern Orthodox) Religious Students Organization of America, of which he was an early member.

Ultimately it was the dialectic of these two opposing personality orientations that combined with his extraordinary analytic power, idealistic passion, and acute sense of responsibility made Benny Kraut an energetic life force. He was a beloved teacher, friend, and Jewish model to his students and to all of us engaged in plumbing the meaning of Jewish identity in modern culture.

Benny is survived by his wife, Penny, his three children, Rachel Hackel, Yehuda, and Sefi, his son-in-law Mordy Hackel, and three grandchildren. May his memory be a blessing.

*Eugene Korn is the American director of the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation in Efrat, and editor of Meorot: A Journal of Modern Orthodox Discourse. He teaches medieval Jewish thought at Me'ah.*

## Contribute to the Syllabi Directory on the AJS Website

AJS has expanded the Resources section of its website to include a directory of syllabi in all fields of Jewish studies. This directory helps early career scholars develop new courses; introduces scholars at all stages of their careers to new readings; and gives institutions that are developing Jewish studies an overall sense of the field.

**AJS invites members to submit their syllabi in MS-Word or PDF format via the AJS website at [www.ajsnet.org/syllabi\\_add.php](http://www.ajsnet.org/syllabi_add.php).**



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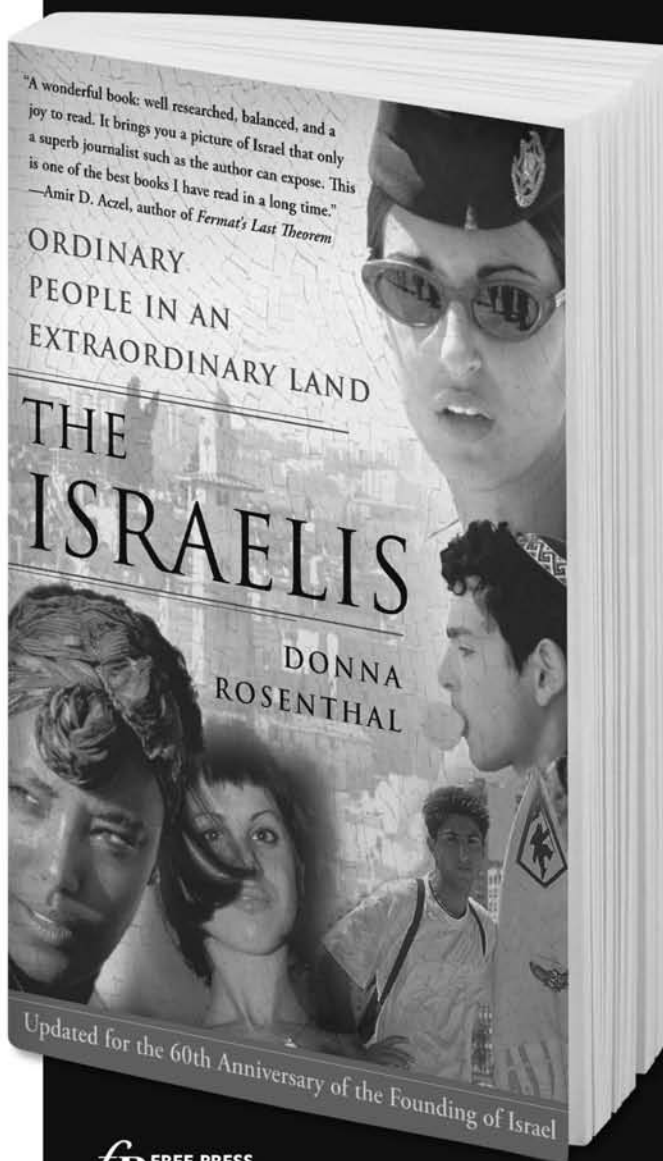
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Aerial View of the Masada Fortress above the Dead Sea.  
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*Sacrifice of Isaac*, artist unknown, attributed to Jean Poyet, late fifteenth  
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