

The Travel Issue

SPRING 2022

AJS

PERSPECTIVES

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR JEWISH STUDIES





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*Ken Goldman. Jacob's Ladder Triptych, 2015. Chromaluxe
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AJS Perspectives: The Magazine of the Association for Jewish Studies

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AJS Perspectives is published
bi-annually by the Association
for Jewish Studies.

© 2022 Association for
Jewish Studies ISSN 1529-6423

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Triptych, 2015. Chromaluxe print
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* As of April 29, 2022

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- Welcome Party on Sunday, December 18
- Evening receptions sponsored by Jewish Studies programs and research institutions
- Jewish Studies and Digital Humanities workshop (featuring the latest digital research projects and teaching tools)
- Professional development sessions, mentoring opportunities, and more!

Special reduced room rates: The AJS is pleased to announce that the Sheraton Boston, located at 39 Dalton Street, Boston, MA 02199, US, has extended the AJS a rate of \$165 per room, single and double occupancy, not including taxes, with a limited number of rooms for students at \$145.

For best rates register before November 14, 2022. See the AJS website for registration information.

For information on exhibiting, advertising, or sponsoring at the 54th Annual Conference, please email advertise@associationforjewishstudies.org.

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University of Virginia,
Department of Religious Studies

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MOLLY THEODORA ORINGER

UCLA,
Department of Anthropology

"Spatial Relations: Post-War Rehabilitation and the Afterlives of Jewish Terrains in Lebanon"

STEVEN WEISS SAMOLS

University of Southern California,
Department of History

"Capturing Difference, Making History: The Photobook as a Jewish Artifact"

REBEKAH VAN SANT-CLARK

University of Oxford,
Department of Theology and Religion

"Re-presenting Dislocation: The Poetics of Exile and Wilderness in Ancient Jewish Texts"

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PATRICK ANGIOLILLO

New York University,
Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies

"Praying By the Name: Divine Epithets in Ancient Jewish Prayer"

Finalists

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Cornell University,
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"'The Law Is Not in Heaven': Authority and Covenant in Jewish Political Thought"

PHILIP KEISMAN

CUNY Graduate Center,
Department of Modern European History

"'If in a Town With a Post Office, Go to the Local Post Office': A German-Jewish Mission to Civilize in the Central European Borderlands"

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The Association for Jewish Studies is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2022 Jordan Schnitzer First Book Publication Awards. This program has been made possible by Jordan Schnitzer through the Harold & Arlene Schnitzer Family Fund of the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation.

AJ Berkovitz

A Life of Psalms in Jewish Late Antiquity

Ayelet Brinn

"Even Women": Gender, Mass Culture, and the Rise of the American Yiddish Press

Sarah Cramsey

Uprooting the Diaspora: Jewish Belonging and the "Ethnic Revolution" in Poland and Czechoslovakia, 1936-1946

Gordon Dale

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The Association for Jewish Studies congratulates the recipients of the 2022 - 2023 AJS Arts and Culture Community Grants:

**Public Program: Shakespeare and Sacred Texts:
A Midsummer Retreat**

Lead Applicant: Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Professor of English, University of California, Irvine*

Co-sponsors: Rabbi Marcia Tilchin and the Jewish Collaborative of Orange County; Academy for Judaic, Christian, and Islamic Studies

Public Program: *On the Road to Zion* by Sholem Asch: A World Premiere Radio Drama and Roundtable Discussion on Polish Jewry

Lead Applicant: Lisa Newman, *Director of Public Programs, Yiddish Book Center*

Co-sponsors: Congress for Jewish Culture and The Faux Real Theatre Company

The AJS thanks The Robert & Toni Bader Charitable Foundation for supporting the 2022 - 2023 AJS Arts and Culture Community Grant program.

The AJS also recognizes the recipients of the 2020 - 2021 AJS Arts and Culture Community Grants (due to delays caused by the pandemic, these public programs took place during the 2021 - 2022 academic year):

Public Program: *Indecent*

Lead Applicant: Joel Berkowitz, *Professor of Foreign Languages & Literature and Director, Center for Jewish Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

Co-sponsors: Jewish Museum Milwaukee, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Tapestry Program of the Harry and Rose Samson Jewish Community Center, UWM LGBT Studies Program, and Yiddish Book Center

Public Program: Medieval Afternoon

Lead Applicant: Miriamne Krummel, *Professor of English, University of Dayton*

Co-sponsors: Dayton Metro Library, Jewish Federation of Greater Dayton, and Beth Abraham Synagogue

**Public Program: Global Day of Jewish Learning:
Jewish Women Breaking Boundaries**

Lead Applicant: Matthew Kraus, *Associate Professor of Judaic Studies and Director, Hebrew Program, University of Cincinnati*

Co-sponsors: Mayerson Jewish Community Center and Women Writing for a Change





The financial support from this [travel] grant enabled me to present at the AJS Annual Conference for the first time. Without it, presenting at the conference would have been extremely difficult for me, given my financial situation as a graduate student. Speaking at the AJS Annual Conference helped me forge connections between my research and other developments in the field, which will considerably strengthen my own work and foster my career.

–Hannah Zaves-Green, *doctoral candidate, New York University*



At this stage in my career, the AJS gives me the chance to discover young, talented scholars and the newest frontiers of research. I also have the privilege of paying it forward both figuratively and literally, by mentoring others as well as by contributing financially to help ensure the AJS's future.

– Shuly Rubin Schwartz,
Chancellor and Irving Lehrman Research Associate Professor of American Jewish History, the Jewish Theological Seminary

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Did you know that membership dues only account for 20% of the AJS annual budget?

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- 2) **Give a gift in honor or memory** of someone special in your life.
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Dance and Disability in Israeli and Jewish Contexts

July 28, 2022, 2 PM ET

Gili Hammer, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, *chair*

Yael (Yali) Nativ, The Academic College for Arts and Society & Levinsky College of Education,
"Aging Professional Dancers in Israel - New Traditions, New Bodies"

Dina Roginsky, Yale University,
"Performances of the Body: From Ideal to Impaired in Israeli National Dancing"

Nili Broyer, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem,
"Hiding Her Face: To Face the Crip Body in Lehrer's Self-Portraits"

Mourning and Shame in Prayers and Verse

August 22, 2022, 7 PM ET

Maeera Shreiber, University of Utah,
"Shame, Louis Zukofsky, and the Sorrows of Yiddish"

Reuven Kimelman, Brandeis University,
"The Function of the Kaddish in the Light of Its Origin"

New Perspectives on Jewish Gender in Antiquity and Today

September 19, 2022, 9 AM ET

Beth Berkowitz, Barnard College, *chair*

Joe Sakurai, Teikyo University of Science in Tokyo,
"Circumcising 'Patrilineal' Descent: Rethinking Circumcision as Shaping the Convert's Patrilineal Descent"

Moria Ran Ben Hai, Pelech High School in Tel Aviv,
"A School Rabbanit or Female Judaic Leader (*Movilat Yahadut*)? The Developments of Schools' Religious Women's Leadership in Israel in the Twenty-First Century"

Assessing the Political Pen of Polish-Yiddish Journalist S. L. Schneiderman

October 24, 2022, 12 PM ET

Samuel Kassow, Trinity College, *chair*

Karolina Szymaniak, University of Wrocław,
"The Poetics of Engaged *Reportazh*"

Nancy Sinkoff, Rutgers University,
"S. L. Shneiderman: The Politics of *Reportazh*"

Magdalena Kozłowska, University of Warsaw,
"Assessing the Political Pen of Polish-Yiddish Journalist S. L. Shneiderman"

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From the Editors

Mira Sucharov & Chaya Halberstam



When we conceived of the theme for this issue—travel—the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic seemed to be waning. For many of us, a resumption of travel seemed to be on the horizon. Then the Omicron variant appeared, throwing many plans into disarray. And now, as we write this, there is hope for a gradual return to sort-of normal. Will travel take on new significance for us now, when it has been denied to us for so long? Did the way we think about travel change when we were all ordered to stay at home, indefinitely? We bring to these pages thought on the topic of travel—whether conceived as hopeful or ironic or somewhere in between.

In this issue, our authors conceive of travel both personally—as researchers and teachers—and through the eyes of the subjects we study. In sections on pedagogy and the profession, writers reflect on their own travel experiences. These include sharing the challenges and opportunities posed by research fieldwork, the experience of scholar-as-tour-guide, and the task of leading study-abroad courses in moments unaffected by the pandemic. Others discuss how they had to redesign their study-abroad course for the virtual requirements of the pandemic, and how the lens of travel as depicted in film and television can highlight other Jewish Studies themes for students.

What we deliberately excluded from this issue was the theme of migration. The act of migration—both voluntary and forced—is, of course, central to so much of Jewish history, and it was well covered in the Fall 2017 issue of *Perspectives*. Because migration was excluded, contributors were invited to focus on travel as sojourn. The temporary nature of travel outside of the mode of migration suggests experiences ranging from the excitement of

discovery and exploration through trips to major events like the world’s fair, to the taxing toil of itinerant peddling; from traveling as a volunteer military conscript out of a sense of duty to the more pleasurable activity of summer vacationing; and from the politics of protest tourism or disaster tourism to the identity-building activity of heritage tourism. Some modern travel can be experienced from home, too. Before there was virtual reality there were travelogues, which allowed readers to view real places through an author’s ideologically tinted lenses. Several contributors also invite us to consider travel in the premodern world, from mundane journeys for marriage or trade to exciting tales of shipwrecks and pirates to magical formulas that protect a traveler from danger. Finally, objects can travel, too, and the movement of material items allows some of our authors to trace intersecting and complex familial and communal networks.

The types of travel explored in these pages reveal that many of the mixed experiences we ourselves confront with travel may have always been the case: travel was exhilarating but could be dangerous; it provided opportunities for leisure but was often required for business; it could both exceed and fall short of the religious or personal impact it was supposed to have; it provided the thrill of the new but also a longing for home. We hope you will enjoy reading the Travel Issue whether from the comfort of your favorite armchair or whether you’ve just pulled it from your carry-on on your flight to somewhere you can’t wait to explore.

Chaya Halberstam
King’s University College

Mira Sucharov
Carleton University

From the President

Robin Judd



Over the past few years, it has felt as if a significant portion of my conversations have revolved around movement and mobility. COVID-19 forced many of us to imagine alternatives to travel and to take into consideration new precautions and restrictions when it came to movement. What once seemed fixed disappeared, and many of us quickly discovered new vectors of interconnectedness among places, people, movement, and things. We all have learned new ways of being, doing, and traveling.

As COVID-19, climate change, and war have disrupted our relationships to travel and place, many of us have asked, what does travel look like? If travel has long helped us reimagine one another and ourselves, we have pondered what happens when our relationships to movement become unsettled.

The contributions to this exciting issue of *AJS Perspectives* push us to think critically and deeply about the many meanings, experiences, and implications of travel, as well as its multiple actors. As Joshua Shelly points out in his analysis of Arnold Zweig's *The New Canaan*, a 1925 "travelogue" of Palestine, texts can take readers and writers on imaginative journeys. For the past few years, editors Chaya Halberstam and Mira Sucharov have taken us on multiple imaginative journeys. Whether in their first issue as editors when they brought together diverse authors to tackle the patriarchy or in their most recent issue when they introduced the vital possibilities of Jewish artistic culture, the two have addressed rich and varied themes. In this issue, the editors have curated a dizzying array of contributors whose diverse voices explore the movement of humans and nonhumans, documents, texts, and physical devices. Using the lens of travel, the artists,

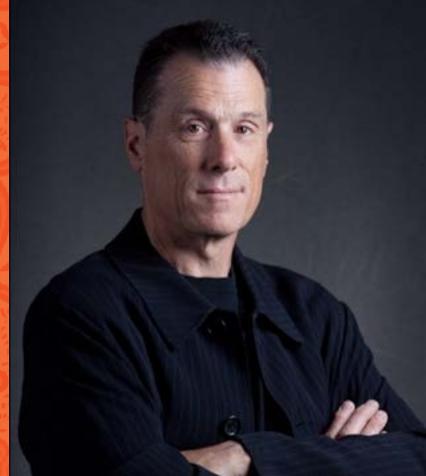
poets, and writers included here touch on the intersection of mobility with identities, relationships, consumptions, the body, gender, memory, history, and language.

As I read this issue, I kept revisiting our recent board conversations concerning what movement, travel, and access mean for our different AJS communities. AJS staff and leadership continue to think seriously about how our members' understandings and experiences of travel can factor into our planning and programming. This summer, we begin the first phase of our strategic planning process. For us to create an intentional roadmap for the future of the AJS, I hope you will let us know what matters to you, how your experiences of movement and travel might inform our organization's planning, and how the AJS might support your work as you embark on your future journeys.

Robin Judd
The Ohio State University

From the Art Editor

Douglas Rosenberg



The Performance of Travel (The Performance of Mobility)

Walking shares with making and working that crucial element of engagement of the body and the mind with the world, of knowing the world through the body and the body through the world. ... Our very sense of self-worth seems predicated more and more on our suffering through the inconveniences and psychic destabilizations of ungrounded transience, of not being at home (or not having a home), of always traveling through elsewhere.

— Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*

This is the Travel Issue. For artists working in the postmodern era, mobility and nomadism are a particular kind of currency. To be nomadic (by choice), to have the privilege and possibility of travel, both enables an artist to become a part of the global art world and accords the citizenship that goes along with it, and a well-stamped passport is less a symbol of a bourgeois lifestyle than a notational mark of the contemporary, socially engaged artist. As we know, Jews have been, at various times in history, people of the Diaspora, “traveled” against their will, or been peripatetic as a consequence of their will; they have been forced to cover ground to destinations not of their choosing and have deliberately traversed great distances to arrive at new lands. We can think about travel, particularly in relation to Jewishness, in many ways. This collection of artwork in the Travel Issue revolves around the way that artists think about the question of travel and perhaps more broadly about mobility itself in the twenty-first century. The artwork included here is not about travel as a metaphor, but rather travel as

a performance of mobility, the actual movement across space and time. It is perhaps, a bit at odds with the “idea” of travel in the era of Zoom and VR, but bodies in space do things that virtual bodies cannot. Footprints on the moon or footprints created in the sand of a vast desert over forty years of wandering are impressions of human interaction, however ephemeral. For Jewish artists historically, I would suggest, travel, walking, witnessing, being in public, making artwork that is, in fact, both Jewish and public, is a hedge against erasure. Travel tourism or travel by train to a destination not of one’s own choosing is still travel, however, the significance of each is consequential when thinking about how embodied histories contribute to artistic and creative expression.

How to make art about the emotional resonance of Jewish identity while employing contemporary tools with a nuanced eye toward Jewish-ness? A project of mid-century postwar Jewish artists was to make art that did not look Jewish in the way that art of the same period did not look Christian, or perhaps more specifically ethnic in the way that Old World Jewishness portrayed itself. To be modern after the war was to transcend such visually referential tropes. Postwar abstraction is about nothing as much as transcendence through ritual, through the negation of the figure, and through the conscious essentializing of art generally. For many artists of that era (many who were Jews), the creation of objects, images, gestures, and spaces of contemplation were often mined from the generational trauma of the twentieth century itself.

This territory is something I have explored in my own artwork as far back as the 1980s when I found myself drawn to the creative energy of Berlin’s art

scene. Prior to traveling to Germany, I had no expectations about the emotional weight of that trip (this was also well before the wall came down). Upon spending time in Berlin and surrounding cities, I found myself both emotional and even angry in ways that I did not expect or understand. While I did not travel to Germany to visit Holocaust sites (I went instead to show my own artwork in various art spaces), my impulse to mark that space



Douglas Rosenberg. Untitled Performance (Home), Krefeld, Germany, 1982..

with my own outrage resulted in several guerrilla-style installations and performances on the streets of Krefeld and elsewhere. My own embodied experience of Jewishness has indeed marked the way I have made artwork subsequently and the way I think and write about the work of artists grappling with similar embodied experience.

There are familiar tropes of wandering throughout the literature of Jewish life, most of which are quite familiar. There are also numerous literary tropes of the flaneur, of peripatetic scholars and thinkers, and of travel as a kind of romantic aspiration. Writers such as Walter Benjamin and the aforementioned Rebecca Solnit have presented us with much to flesh out our ideas about travel in the context of aesthetic fulfillment. For the artists in this curation, travel is inseparable from the creation of their artwork itself. It locates both the artist and the subject of the work in the place it needs to be. It does so in order to fully function as a gesture of social consciousness or religious questioning, or *tikkun 'olam*. For some, "travel" is part of a more personal or spiritual questioning, but all of this work is arguably set within the context of the global village we have come to live in. Travel is often a part of the broader project of mapping and/or cartography, which produces documents that ostensibly locate us in the world. However, documents such as maps are temporary and contingent on the moment that they are introduced; beyond that moment they tend quite quickly to become irrelevant, an archive of a landscape that has since been reconfigured by one means or another. For artists, mapping often takes the form of tracking experience, the personal performance of visibility, or a kind of interpretive objectified manifesto made solid and permanent. The work in this context is situational, it is about the space it inhabits, though in some cases, that may be an imaginary or aspirational space. In her book, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, the author Miwon Kwon notes, "While site-specific art once defied commodification by insisting on immobility, it now seems to espouse fluid mobility and nomadism for the same purpose." Such is the landscape of postmodernism generally: fluid, often highly intentional and subject to slippages and the quickly changing politics of representation. In writing about the artists of the Spertus Museum exhibition *The New Authentics: Artists of the Post-Jewish Generation* in 2007,



Karey Kessler. A Portable Homeland, 2018. Watercolor on paper. 120 in. by 36 in. Photo by Art & Soul Photo, Seattle

curator Staci Boris deploys such terms as, “instability,” “multiplicity,” “openness,” and “fluidity” to explain the conditions of artwork that addresses Jewish identity in the twenty-first century. The work featured in the Travel Issue navigates all of the above, doing so within a fluid understanding of both Jewish identity and of art practice. Interdisciplinarity, diversity, and intersectionality are all topics of the cultural moment and also part of the dialogue taking place within the generational shift among Jewish-identifying artists to a more inclusive and polyvocal vision that at times may seem unfamiliar. In the contemporary Jewish experience, within the arts writ large, we see both a search for new narratives and a return to ritual often within the same works of art.

In her project, *A Portable Homeland*, the artist Karey Kessler “plays on the idea of the Torah as a portable homeland,” albeit one that she can physically carry with her. Perhaps echoing the observations of German poet Heinrich Heine, the paintings read like maps, as the artist explains, to “explore what it means to be connected to a specific place—the geology of the land, the water, the buildings; yet, at the same time connected to a spiritual realm that is beyond the boundaries of physical space and time.” The project challenges the more traditional notion of homeland as a particular place and instead depicts it as a boundaryless place of space and time.

Ken Goldman’s work deeply engages primary religious sources that merge with his concern for issues of faith, gender, community, otherness, and mortality. Working from Kibbutz Shluhot in Israel, Goldman’s work is clearly framed by both the landscape and materiality that surrounds his home. His choice of material seems often based on the nature of the story he is telling, and he freely roams through both style and application, at times using the stone that is indigenous to Israel, his own body, performance, and an



Ken Goldman. I'lo Reshut - Eruv Walk, 2015. Digital archival print, performance record. Photo by Gideon Cohen



Ken Goldman. All Who Walk, 2021. Carved Local Stone. 11.8 in. by 11.8 in. by 7.9 in. (each piece). Photo by Gideon Cohen

index of both two- and three-dimensional techniques. In the performance piece *Lelo Reshut—Without Domain*, Goldman “explores and reacts to the drastic changes in ideology and lifestyle rocking the foundations of his *kibbutz* home.” Goldman’s project here alludes to the work of feminist artist Janine Antoni’s piece *Touch* (2002) and thus aligns him within a history of the feminist exhortation to make the personal political.

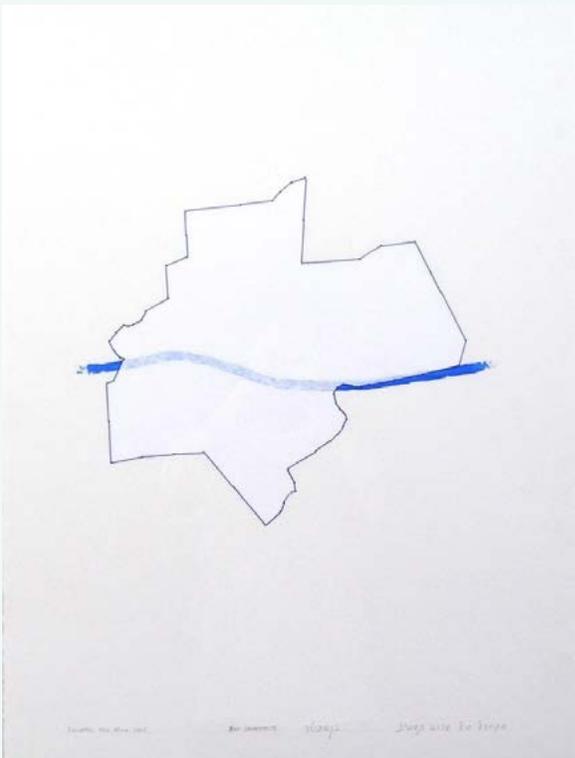
In the single photograph, we see Goldman in the process of navigating a slackline or tightrope, which he describes as an *eruv* (a symbolic rabbinic device used to unite individual domains into one shared domain). Goldman describes the piece as “a symbolic attempt at the reunification of his community and its members after they voted to no longer preserve the classic collective *kibbutz* lifestyle it had maintained for nearly 70 years.” For this performance piece and subsequent photo, the



Alona Bach. *A digitale rayze / A Digital Journey* (Shidlovtse Yizker-bukh), 2021. *Digital*.

artist attached a red line three meters above ground at the height of the existing *eruv* and walked a section of the *eruv* opposite his home. The photo, while certainly a documentation of a work addressing a very local community, traverses the world as a symbol of resistance. Such is the peripatetic nature of images in the digital realm; as the artist travels the length of the rope/*eruv*, its documentation travels, as well, across and throughout the *global village*. His project, *Four Cubits (Four Amot Walk)*, refers, in Jewish tradition, to a person’s private space—a concept that resonates with contemporary meaning in the moment of a global pandemic. Goldman hand-carved the stone footwear, deliberately creating an impediment to his ability to travel freely, thus amplifying the burden of others for whom travel is not possible or presents extreme distress. Here, traveling the distance of four cubits becomes a monumental task.

Alona Bach and Ben Schachter both address mapping. While Bach’s *A digitale rayze / A Digital Journey* (Shidlovtse Yizker-bukh) reads more like a graphic novel or an illustration one might find in a children’s book, Schachter’s images of *eruvim* read as branded outlines of familiar states such as Wisconsin, California, or Texas. However, *eruvim* are local, and upscaling the shape and footprint of this sort of mapping confounds contemporary ideas about territory and statehood, or even nationalism.



Ben Schachter. *Squirrel Hill Eruv*, 2007. *Acrylic and thread on paper. 22 in. by 30 in. Photo by the artist. Collection of the artist.*

Bach's map contains references and visual cues to its digital origins; it is the product of an Internet search, perhaps, or a virtual signifier of the possibilities (or lack thereof), of travel for those citizens who are observant or speak and or read Yiddish. Either way, *A digitale rayze / A Digital Journey (Shidlovitse Yizker-bukh)*, visualizes and imagines a closed system, even as the Internet makes it globally accessible.

Schachter's drawings suggest the boundaries of *eruvim*, though are rendered in the way that we are used to seeing drawings generally, with titles, dates, and signatures at the bottom. They seem like conceptual renderings of random spaces, yet the titles (Squirrel Hill, Venice) convey that they are indeed controlled religious spaces. The visual culture of the two representations of mapping (Bach's and Schachter's) land differently for the viewer, each denoting a similar experience of travel, yet in ways that steer us, the viewers, in quite different directions.

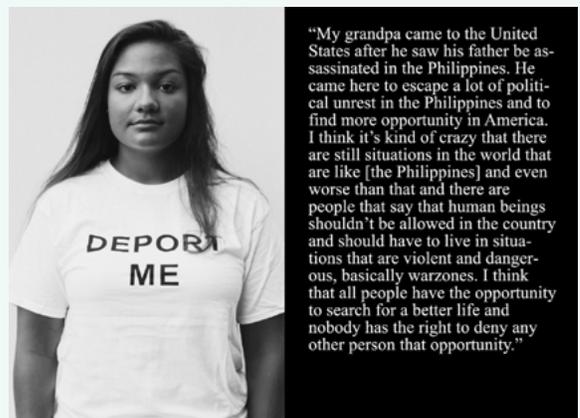
Hannah Schwadron is a choreographer and filmmaker. For Schwadron, embodiment is at the core of representation. *Klasse* is a dance film shot in a historical classroom at the Israelitische Tochterschule with students from the Ida Ehre Schule in Hamburg, Germany, in May 2015. Israelitische Tochterschule existed from 1884 to 1942 and after the creation of the Nuremberg Laws, the school accepted students who were expelled from other schools because of their Jewish beliefs. Schwadron worked closely with a mixed cast of German middle-school students and professional dancers to "bring to life" shards of letters written between young classmates as they left Germany on the Kindertransport. This is not a documentary but a work made for the camera, meant to convey the emotional resonance of such an experience. What we see here are stills from the film, tightly framed compositions that could be, by themselves, photographs set within an old school classroom kept just as it was during the war. Schwadron notes that, in fact, "the chairs, the desks, the chalkboards

and the solid walls [left as they were] are reminders of the haunting fixity of place against the visceral trace of memories left as records of a tortuous time." By performing this project in real time and space, Schwadron releases its energy into a socially conscious work of art that is both illuminating and illuminated via the film itself.

Jacob Li Rosenberg makes artwork that is overtly concerned with issues of social justice. He is a Chinese American Jewish artist whose family tree includes Jewish immigrants from Russia and Poland and Chinese immigrants from the village of Taishan, both of whom were driven from their respective



Hannah Schwadron (Choreography), Malia Bruker (Cinematography) with dancers Amanda Waal, Luka Kiwus, Susanne Nazarigovar, Selin Yasar, Samuel Aldenhoff, Athena Fahimi Vahid. *Klasse*, 2015. Film still.



Jacob Li Rosenberg. *Deport Me* (Delaney), 2018. Dimensions variable.

countries under similar yet particular circumstances. In speaking about his *Deport Me Project*, he recalls the following by Martin Niemöller:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

Rosenberg asks participants to be photographed wearing a T-shirt printed with the words “DEPORT ME” in order to echo the gesture that free people have often enacted when the rights of others are in jeopardy, a gesture of solidarity that confuses those that would prey on the undocumented, the “outsiders” and the “others.” Not dissimilar from the gesture made by non-Jews of placing a menorah in the window as an act of solidarity, *The Deport Me Project* asks viewers to consider, in the anti-immigration frenzy, how we know who among us is a citizen, who has the right to be among us, and who decides? It is an activist art project that is intended to raise awareness of the unjust and inhumane practice of family separation, mass deportation, and denial of due process to asylum

seekers. Deportation often reverses the long and arduous travel that has brought individuals to this country; it effectively returns them to the cycle of endless diaspora that dehumanizes and exhausts both people and institutions that would try to unravel such practices. The first trio of images is seen alongside text panels capturing the individual’s family history of travel and displacement. The second group of photos are individual portraits of New Yorkers, most of whom have traveled to the city by choice. They stand on lower Second Ave. with the background of midtown and the Upper West Side in the distance, attainable but seemingly quite a journey away. Rosenberg, whose own ability to travel freely is unimpaired, despite his familial immigrant origins, gathers groups of people in cities across the country, asking them to stand in solidarity with their community members by posing with the emphatic prompt across their chests. Why not Deport ME? Take me instead.

The artist Laurie Beth Clark attended yeshiva before studying art in college. An inveterate traveler, she makes artwork that is deeply rooted in community, social justice, and often in ritual in cities around the world. Clark is represented here by two projects. The first, *Versteckte Kinder*, is a series of one hundred “dollhouses,” each one marked by a mezuzah (the ritual indicator of a Jewish home), a tiny book, and a small loaf of bread. The houses are hidden along the path of a forest in Darmstadt, Germany, and on the adjoining trails. Clark traveled to Germany to participate in a show curated by Ute Rischel in 2012 and was moved to honor a relative who was one of the children hiding in the woods in Poland during the war. Clark’s gesture toward healing is left in the forest to be found by walkers and travelers for whom the small houses will be a surprise. Clark notes that she “does not expect that spectators find all of the houses. Rather, it is my hope that each person glimpse one or two of the houses in the course of walking the trail or during other routine uses of the forest and be reminded of other ways the forest has been used in recent German history.”

In 2008, Clark undertook a series of performative actions called *Masked Walks*, years before the current pandemic of COVID-19. In speaking with Clark, she noted that she



Laurie Beth Clark.
Versteckte Kinder,
2002, 2012, ongoing.
Installation. Photo by
Michael Peterson.

“began working with the fabric face masks after a trip to Vietnam, where the masks are widely worn to protect cycle motorists and pedestrians against environmental contaminants (fumes and dust) in urban spaces.” She stated, “I was initially struck by both their creativity (the masks are made from a wide range of fabrics) and their futility (as fabric masks may provide comfort but do not filter out the worst respiratory threats).” The walking project was devised in a period when Clark began to travel extensively in Africa, Asia, and South America. She chose to have a set of masks made from camouflage fabric as a way to contemplate her own increasingly conspicuous outsider status.

The performances went on unannounced, with no communication about them in parts of the world where Clark’s racial difference from dominant populations was blatant. Clark generally performed a single walk per country visited, and performed a second if she visited a region where there was or had recently been an “identity-based” independence movement—from Quebec to Rapa Nui—or where there was ongoing “apartheid.” In South Africa, for example, walks were done in both townships and gated white enclaves. However, when she continued the work in Europe (especially in Austria, Poland, and Germany, where her research took her to concentration camps, Jewish history museums, and other Holocaust commemorative sites), she notes that her sense of her own ethnic identity was elevated. She states that her “marginal status as a Jew is not ‘marked’ or visible in the same way as [her] whiteness is in Asia or Africa.”

I have spoken with Clark at length about the question of how and in what context Jews are perceived as white and the extent to which white privilege has dominated discourse surrounding Jewishness in recent times. Both of us were brought up in the 1950s and 1960s with an explicit understanding about how one could pass for white (with nose jobs and name changes being common), especially in the Jewish coming-to-



Laurie Beth Clark. अंगरेजी (India), 2008. Performance. Photo by Michael Peterson.

American tropes played out in Hollywood films. While Clark’s work does not “look Jewish” (and I say that with some irony intended), like all of the work included in this curation, it performs a version of Jewish empathy and *mitzvot*. It is social practice and or social justice embodied within a visual culture of contemporary art.

Ultimately, one photograph from each of Clark’s walks is printed “life size,” meaning that the size of her own body in the print duplicates her own body measurements. The prints are then installed in the gallery to match the eye level of the viewer. Thus each gazes at the other, perhaps metaphorically wondering whose gaze is “on trial,” whose gaze is suspect, and whose gaze is the gaze of a free person in the world: who gets to look, and who gets to be looked at?

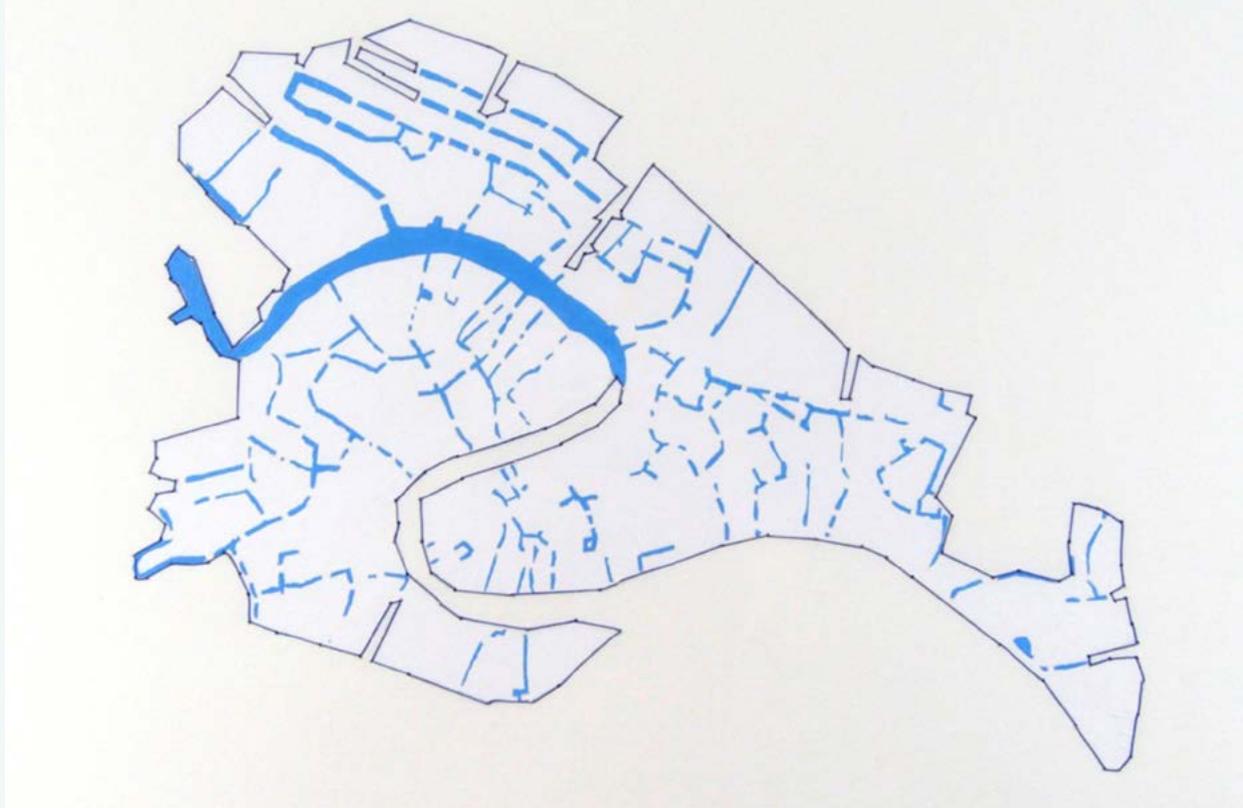
Douglas Rosenberg
University of Wisconsin—Madison

N.B. As this is my first project as art editor for *AJS Perspectives*, I want to express my admiration and gratitude to Samantha Baskind who preceded me in this position. Professor Baskind’s writing has elevated the discussion of Jewishness in art to a space of equity in contemporary art history. I am grateful to have encountered her work at a time when I was wrestling with my own ideas about how Jewishness fit into the larger discourses of art writ large. Her work with *AJS Perspectives* has set a high bar for us all.

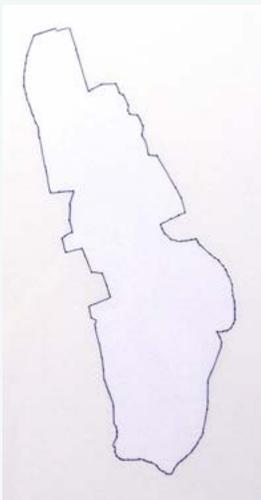


Alona Bach. A digitale rayze / A Digital Journey (Shidlovtse Yizker-bukh), 2021. Digital.

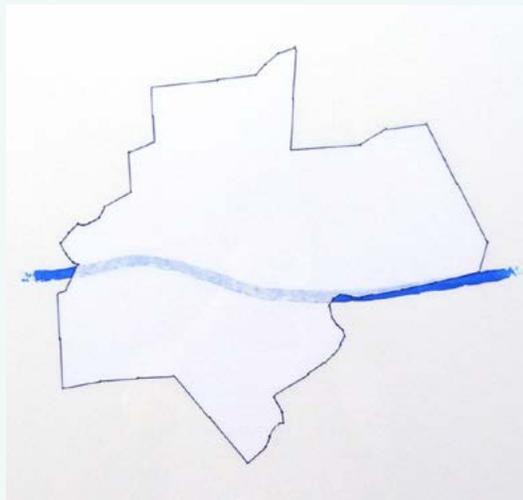
ALONA BACH is a PhD student in MIT's Program in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, and Society (HASTS). Her research focuses on the interwar intersections of electricity and Yiddish life.



Ben Schachter. Venice Eruv, 2007. Acrylic and thread on paper. 22 in. x 30 in. Photo by the artist. Collection of the artist.



Ben Schachter. Riverdale Eruv, 2008. Acrylic and thread on paper. 22 in. by 30 in. Photo by the artist. Collection of the artist.



Ben Schachter. Squirrel Hill Eruv, 2007. Acrylic and thread on paper. 22 in. x 30 in. Photo by the artist. Collection of the artist.



Ben Schachter. Sharon MA Eruv, 2008. Acrylic and thread on paper. 22 in. by 30 in. Photo by the artist. Collection of the artist.

BEN SCHACHTER is professor of visual art and founder of the Digital Art and Media Program at Saint Vincent College. Recently, he received the Emma Lazarus Art Award in honor of his design to fight Anti-Semitism and published his first comic book, *Akhnai Pizza*, in 2020. Portfolio: www.behance.net/benschachter1000/projects



Hannah Schwadron (Choreography), Malia Bruker (Cinematography) with dancers Amanda Waal, Luka Kiwus, Susanne Nazarigovar, Selin Yasar, Samuel Aldenhoff, Athena Fahimi Vahid. Klasse, 2015. Film still.



Hannah Schwadron (Choreography), Malia Bruker (Cinematography) with dancers Samuel Aldenhoff, Cydney Watson, Susanne Nazarigovar, and Selin Yasar. Klasse, 2015. Film still.



Hannah Schwadron (Choreography), Malia Bruker (Cinematography) with dancers Luka Kiwus, Samuel Aldenhoff, Cydney Watson, Helena Fahimi Vahid. Klasse, 2015. Film still.



Hannah Schwadron (Choreography), Malia Bruker (Cinematography) with dancer Susanne Nazarigovar. Klasse, 2015. Film still.

HANNAH SCHWADRON is associate professor of Dance at Florida State University where she teaches critical studies and performance. Making the dance film *Klasse* was an important part of Schwadron's ten years of creative

research in Germany, where she is recovering Holocaust histories of her grandmother's family and drawing connections to contemporary exile into the country today. Website: www.hannahschwadrondance.com/klasse



Jacob Li Rosenberg.
Deport Me (Virginia), 2018.
Dimensions variable

“Both my parents were born in Vietnam... [and] never received an education past middle school. They lived as merchants on the streets in Vietnam. They came here, to the United States, around their twenties to get a better life, to have more opportunities. When it comes to immigration, because my family is all immigrants, I’m in full support of it. I think no one really wants to immigrate, it’s because of bad circumstances—war, violence, or poverty—that people have no other choice but to come to a new country and be exposed to a new culture. I think that this world needs more people who are understanding and compassionate towards immigrants”



Jacob Li Rosenberg.
Deport Me (Delaney), 2018.
Dimensions variable

“My grandpa came to the United States after he saw his father be assassinated in the Philippines. He came here to escape a lot of political unrest in the Philippines and to find more opportunity in America. I think it’s kind of crazy that there are still situations in the world that are like [the Philippines] and even worse than that and there are people that say that human beings shouldn’t be allowed in the country and should have to live in situations that are violent and dangerous, basically warzones. I think that all people have the opportunity to search for a better life and nobody has the right to deny any other person that opportunity.”



Jacob Li Rosenberg.
Deport Me (Orlan), 2018.
Dimensions variable

“Immigration right now is a big issue, but a lot of people don’t think about it because if it’s not something you went through, it’s not something you see, exactly. It’s something that my family has had to go through and even though I was born here, I still feel a lot of the struggles with it. It’s really upsetting to see now there’s more being added to it. I’ve been pretty lucky, I’ve always been with my family. It’s incredible to think that if I had done that now rather than years ago, I might not have been able to stay with them. I’m afraid to see where it might go in the future.”



Jacob Li Rosenberg. Deport Me (NYC), 2018. Dimensions variable. Left to right (top row): Michael Eckblad, Lauren Kravitz, Maurice Dowell, Mariel Harris. Left to right (bottom row): Dwayne Brown, Gwendolyn Gussman, Evan Copeland, Sean Curran.

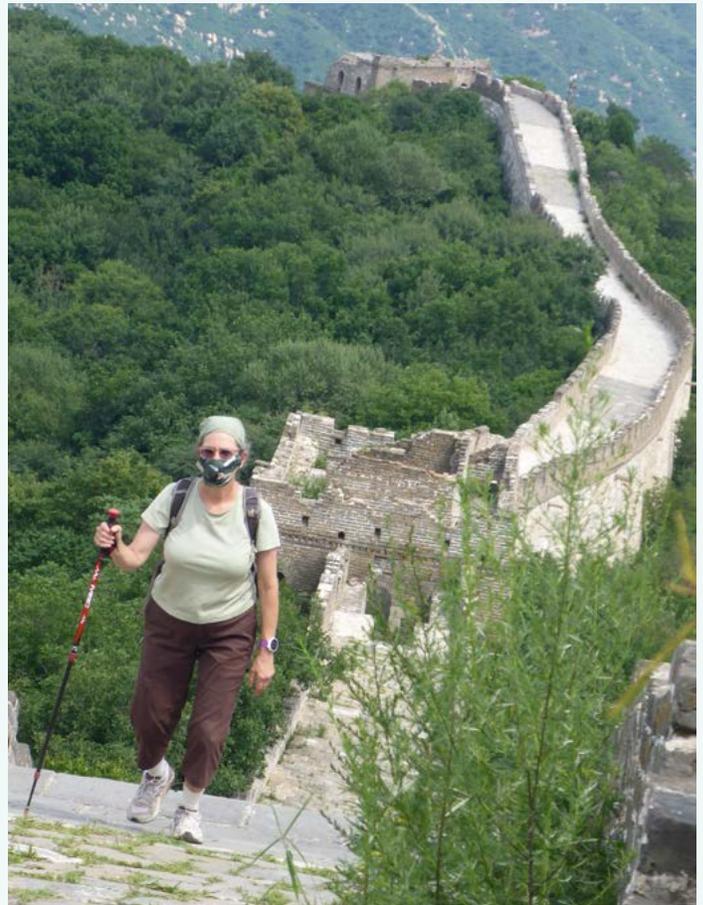
JACOB LI DAI LOONG ROSENBERG (he/they) is a Chinese and Jewish artist from Madison, Wisconsin. He currently studies Art Practice and Sociology at UC Berkeley, investigating themes of power, marginalization, and collectivity. Website: jacoblirosenberg.com
Social media: @roseytheartist



Laurie Beth Clark. *Иностранец* (Russia), 2019. Performance. Photo by Michael Peterson.



Detail from Laurie Beth Clark. अंग्रेजी (India), 2008. Performance. Photo by Michael Peterson.



Laurie Beth Clark. 老外 (China), 2014. Performance. Photo by Michael Peterson.



Left: Laurie Beth Clark. Versteckte Kinder, 2002, 2012, ongoing. Installation. Photo by Michael Peterson.

LAURIE BETH CLARK is an artist, a scholar, and a professor who works both independently and as part of the collaborative Spatula&Barcode. Website: www.lauriebethclark.art

The Travel Issue

Imagining the Haifa Bay from the Schlachtensee: Arnold Zweig and Hermann Struck's *New Canaan*

Joshua Shelly

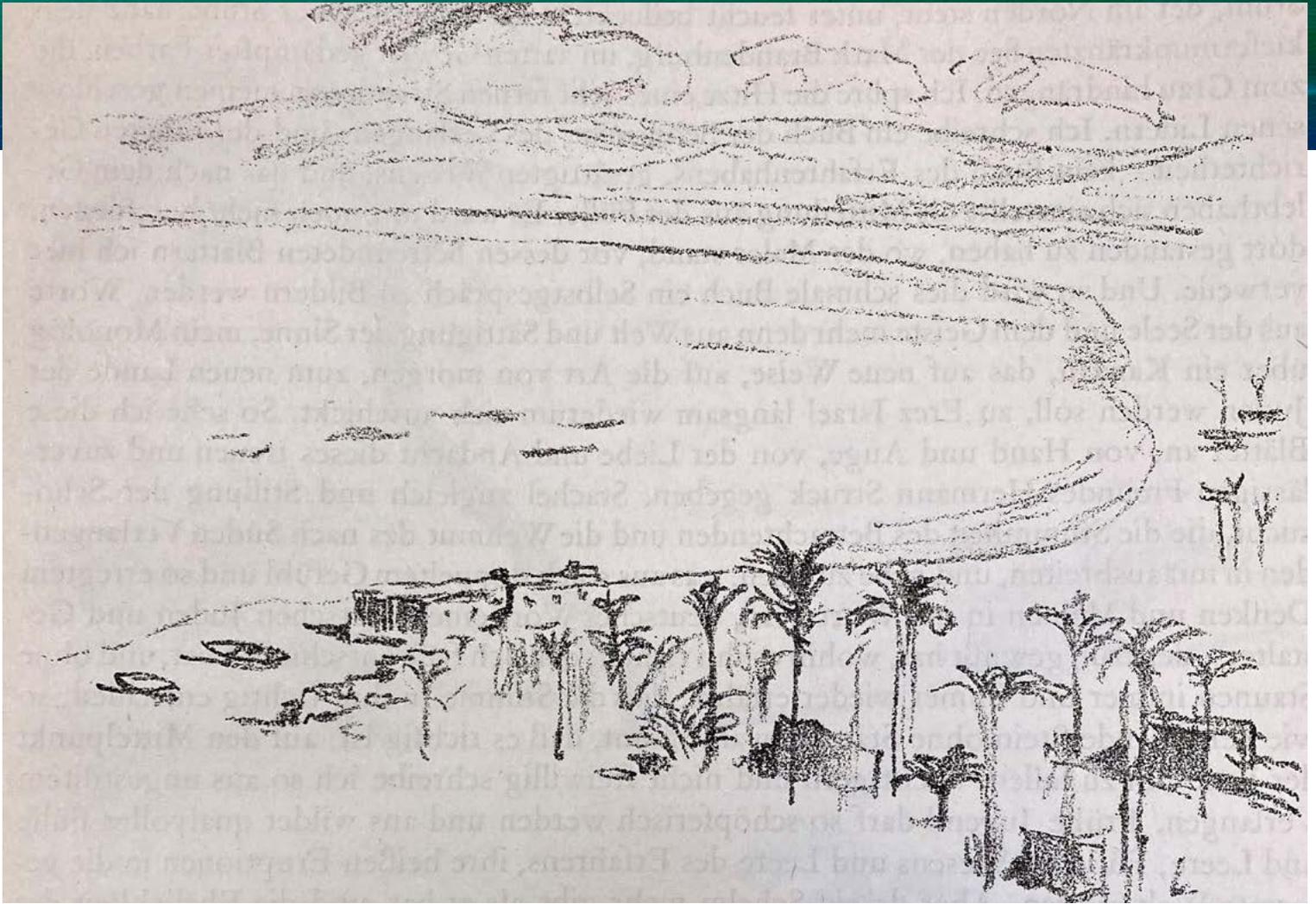
In March 2020, as borders closed and travel was arrested by the spreading coronavirus, the *New York Times* published a piece by writer Jordan Kisner. In it, Kisner recalled her childhood love for books because they “mimicked travel.” “In a book,” she went on to write, “I could go anywhere and be anyone.” While admitting, “I haven’t read with that primary motivation in a long time,” she allowed that in a time of pandemic, this mode of reading felt “especially attractive again.” As a scholar working on German Jewish literature in the age of early Zionism, Kisner’s words resonate with me and call to mind a work from nearly a century earlier, entitled *The New Canaan*.

The New Canaan is a thin, oversized volume, first released in 1925, a travelogue of sorts through Palestine. The famous artist Hermann Struck, perhaps best known for his portrait of Theodor Herzl, contributed fifteen lithographs to the project, mostly images of the landscape of Palestine, including Haifa, where he was then living. The author Arnold Zweig, however, who wrote the accompanying essay, was far from the shores of the Mediterranean. As he readily admits in the book’s first pages, he is near the Schlachtensee, just outside Berlin, “eyes closed, reclining in a stool,” beholding Palestine’s landscape “in its vastness.” Indeed, up until that point, Zweig had never stepped foot in Palestine.

Zweig’s afterward thus explicates the very work his essays perform: the use of imaginative faculties to access a far-off place in some future temporality...

Thus, to categorize *The New Canaan* as simply a travelogue is to miss something critical that the text performs: for, in this case, not only the reader, but also the writer, is on an imaginative journey. Several years later, Zweig would rerelease *The New Canaan*, together with his earlier collaboration with Struck, *The Eastern European Jewish Countenance*. This time, the original images were omitted. The collection, newly entitled *Origin and Future*, included an afterward, in which Zweig reflected on the two works. About the absence of Struck’s images, he wrote: “They served me as an impulse, to say what was within me ... [but] perhaps no one will miss these illustrations, but let himself be transported by his own imagination hence, where the description wishes to take him.” On contemporary Palestine, he then added that, unfortunately, “its actualization has only come a little bit closer in the four years that have passed since I completed this writing.” Zweig’s afterward thus explicates the very work his essays perform: the use of imaginative faculties to access a far-off place in some future temporality, just as the new title suggests. Here, physical distance is not the only impediment Zweig seeks to overcome in his writing. Since Palestine has not yet reached its ideal state, prose is no substitute for “real” travel. No, it is the *only* way to reach one’s destination.

Understood on its own terms, *The New Canaan* begins to bear a striking resemblance to another, better-known



Hermann Struck's depiction of the Haifa Bay and the opening lithograph of The New Canaan, 1925.

work of early Zionism: Theodor Herzl's utopian novel *Old-New Land*. Given the utopian genre's kinship with travel narratives—Thomas More's *Utopia* is connected to Amerigo Vespucci's voyages through the "New World"—this relationship is no surprise. Moreover, if we read *The New Canaan* together with the earlier Zweig-Struck collaboration about *Ostjuden*, we discover a similar narrative arc to Herzl's: one that embraces the old—"origin"—and heralds the new—"future."

Critics often dismiss the literary value of Herzl's utopian novel, and it may be tempting to write off the Struck-Zweig project as some flight of fancy, too. But by dismissing these literary projects, we miss the powerful role they played in the early decades of the Zionist movement. In a time when more Jews called Berlin home than Tel Aviv and Jerusalem combined, books were often

the means by which many experienced this future Jewish state; on the sturdy ships of prose, readers set sail for Palestine. Works like Herzl's and Zweig's connected European and American Jewish readers to the Zionist project and fired their imaginations, even if they could never attend a Zionist congress or board a train for distant lands. Through their use of fantasy, books became the means for authors to help readers—and themselves—imagine a far-off Palestine, not as it was, but as it *could* be in the near future.

JOSHUA SHELLY is a graduate student in the Carolina-Duke Graduate Program in German Studies. He is currently completing a dissertation on the role of German-language Jewish literature, especially utopian works, in early Zionism.

Passports for Palestine: Citizenship, Forged Identity Papers, and American Travel to Israel during the 1948 War

Amy Weiss

In March 1948, Larry Hoffman, an American Jewish undergraduate studying at City College in Manhattan, submitted a seemingly benign passport application to travel to France. State Department officials, however, flagged the paperwork later that spring when they learned that Israel, and not France, would be Hoffman's actual destination. They questioned whether this omission served as an attempt to conceal his desire to volunteer with the nascent Israel Defense Forces (IDF), especially since the American legal code had made participation in a foreign military illegal. Hoffman signed an affidavit certifying that a change in business opportunities, and not the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, had necessitated the switch to his itinerary. Yet, by the fall of that year, Hoffman had indeed enlisted in the IDF. The use—and abuse—of travel documents enabled Americans like Hoffman to circumvent federal regulations and ultimately facilitated their transportation to Palestine, and later Israel, to serve as volunteers in its War of Independence. Their ability to legally return to the United States, however, depended on the very same government officials they tried to evade. Hoffman's travel hiccups revealed the precarity of one's citizenship, especially in a post-World War II and early Cold War era where American Jews experienced charges of dual loyalty.

An estimated 1,100 Americans temporarily volunteered as soldiers, health professionals, or support staff during Israel's War of Independence. This group overwhelmingly consisted of men from the United States, with about 90 percent identifying as Jews. They held roles in all areas of the armed forces. Women did not serve in combat positions, but those like American Jews Freida Drillick and Zipporah Porath worked as medics or in intelligence units. Together, these Americans belonged to Maḥal, the Hebrew acronym for the IDF administrative unit supervising the approximately 3,500 to 4,500 total overseas volunteers from across the globe who assisted Israel during the 1948 War. American World War II veterans enlisted to apply their military expertise to another war. Jewish communal belonging, humanitarian

He likely lied about his service to avoid potential prosecution for joining a foreign military.

interests, and a thrill for adventure served as additional motivations for volunteering. American *maḥalnikim* represented a sliver of the total United States Jewish population, in part reflecting the anxiety associated with potentially losing their citizenship if they served in a foreign military, as outlined in the Nationality Act of 1940. Not all the American volunteers used forged identity papers to travel to Israel, but those who did considered the fabrication of identities or travel documents a risk worth taking.

The details of Larry Hoffman's clandestine travel itinerary remained uncertain, given conflicting personal and governmental accounts. Records from the Department of State's Division of Security and Investigation revealed that officials confiscated Hoffman's passport in June 1948 when he attempted to sail from New York to Israel. He later recalled successfully using forged Panamanian papers to arrive in Haifa that fall. Canadian immigration authorities then caught Hoffman using a fake British passport under the name of Montague Ritterband upon his attempted return, entering Canada in March 1949 with the goal of then crossing into the United States using his American birth certificate. During his brief detainment in St. John, New Brunswick, while officials confirmed his American citizenship, Hoffman signed an affidavit explaining the reason for his initial passport application deception the previous year. According to the statement, a middle-aged Jewish man had approached him in early 1948 to ask whether he would be interested in assisting the Haganah, the forerunner to the IDF. "I told him I was not interested in the Army as I did not want to lose my citizenship," Hoffman stated.ⁱ

Still others recalled being placed on travel “watch lists” at airports.

Percy Katz, a fellow passenger aboard the ship that docked in Canada, confirmed Hoffman’s alibi that *he* had only worked in Israel as a civilian, but he (Katz) had served in the Maḥal unit.

These statements about Hoffman’s participation in the IDF contradicted other evidence suggesting that he indeed volunteered as a Maḥal member. Examples include Hoffman’s position as a former president of the American Veterans of Israel organization, his response to a 1990s-questionnaire asking about *maḥalnikim’s* recollections of their volunteer experiences, and his inclusion in the World Maḥal database. The subtext of Hoffman’s 1949 affidavit further offers clues about his activities during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Before Hoffman could be released from Canadian immigration custody, the American consulate in St. John requested proof of his United States citizenship status. Hoffman’s written testimony, expressly stating that he avoided volunteering in the IDF so as not to lose his citizenship, accompanied this application. He likely lied about his service to avoid potential prosecution for joining a foreign military. Hoffman ultimately retained his American citizenship, but the Department of State temporarily revoked his passport privileges. Ruth B. Shipley, the acting chief of the Passport Division, notified Hoffman that “in the event that you should have occasion to proceed abroad, it is suggested that you so inform the Department which will then give consideration to the return of your passport to you.”ⁱⁱ Hoffman’s short-term affiliation with Maḥal directly affected his future ability to travel.

An analysis of the extralegal framework used by American *maḥalnikim* like Larry Hoffman to serve in the IDF reveals the significance travel—and travel documents—played in these volunteers’ wartime experiences. While most *maḥalnikim* avoided prosecution and only one, Charlie Winters, received an eighteen-month prison sentence for smuggling airplanes into Israel, others paid fines or had their passports revoked. Still others recalled being placed on travel “watch lists” at airports. American

volunteers, especially in the immediate years after Israel’s establishment, often understated their service in the IDF to avoid citizenship challenges or other legal issues. While the American government opposed participation in an overseas war, its consular officials often recognized the legal limbo of Maḥal members who entered or exited Israel without the proper travel documentation or under assumed names. Not long after Hoffman’s detainment in March 1949, the consulate coincidentally informed the IDF they would help any American volunteer obtain a valid passport to legally reenter the United States.

The lack of overall prosecution for volunteers who traveled to Israel demonstrates the tenuousness of the early US-Israel relationship, where a more friendly and diplomatic approach often guided questions about citizenship, yet the revocation of one’s civil rights or imprisonment could not be ruled out. The more complete inclusion of Jews in American society in the mid-twentieth century, along with later Supreme Court cases challenging the legality of an involuntary loss of citizenship, facilitated the legal and cultural recognition of contemporary American “lone soldiers” who continue to volunteer in the IDF today.

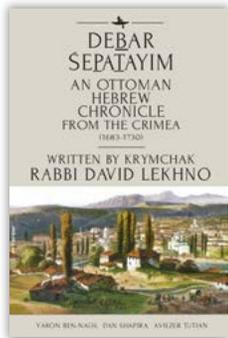
AMY WEISS is assistant professor of Judaic Studies and History at the University of Hartford, where she also holds the Maurice Greenberg Chair of Judaic Studies. Her research on American *Machalnikim* has been published in *Israel Studies* and the edited volume, *Armed Jews in the Americas* (Brill, 2021). She is currently writing a book on American Jewish-Protestant relations and Israel.

i “Opinion of Officer Taking Affidavit,” undated. American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS), Center for Jewish History (CJH), I-501, box 12, folder 10. See also: “Affidavit by Native American to Explain Protracted Foreign Residence,” March 4, 1949. AJHS, CJH, I-501, box 12, folder 10.

ii Letter from R. B. Shipley to Elmer L. Hoffman, August 24, 1949, AJHS, CJH, I-501, box 12, folder 10.



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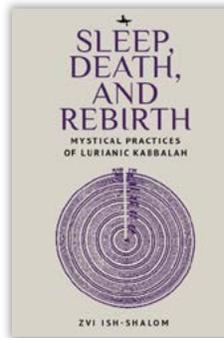
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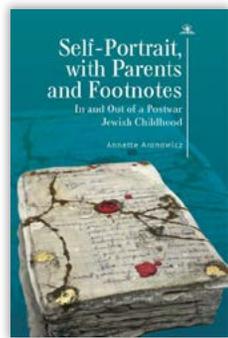
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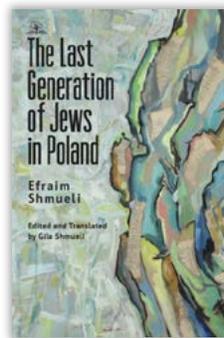
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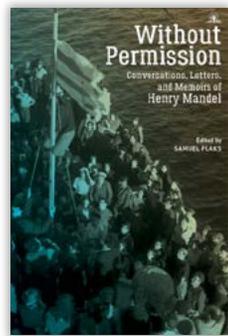
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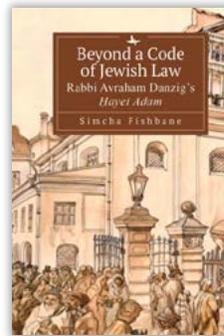
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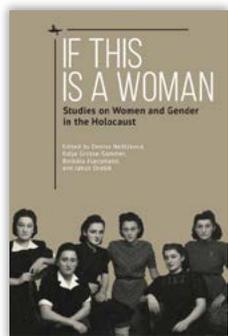
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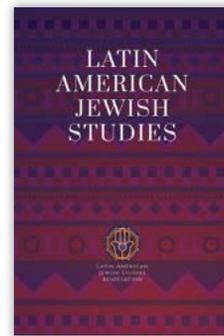
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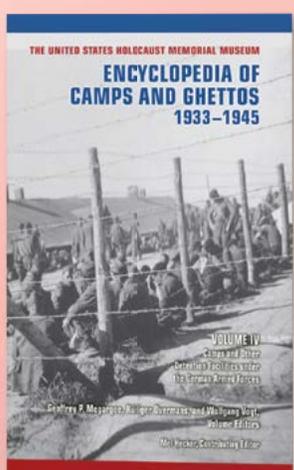
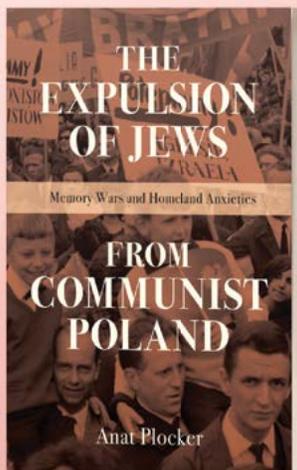
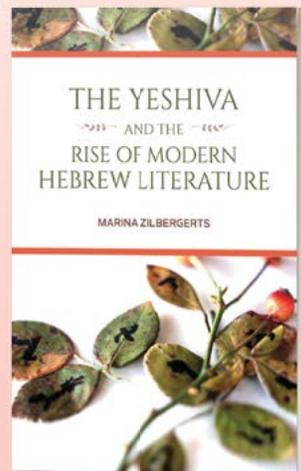
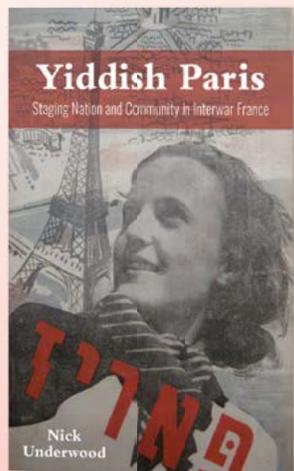
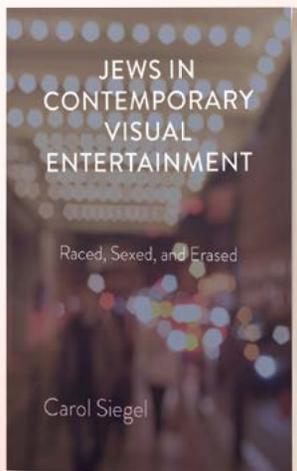
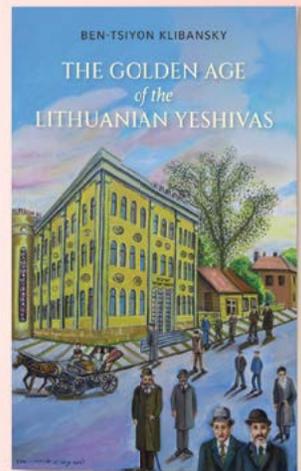
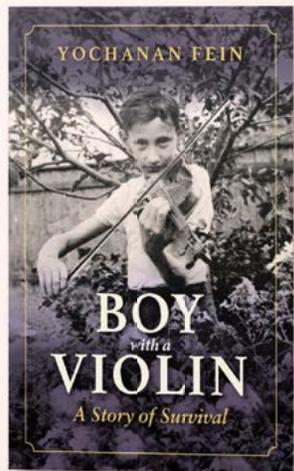
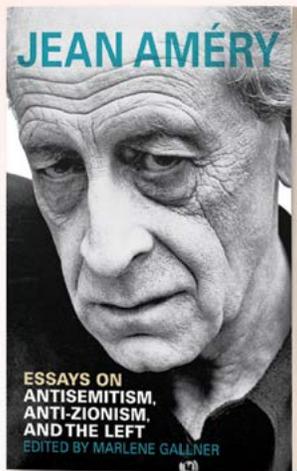
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Editor-in-Chief: DARRELL B. LOCKHART

Published bi-annually beginning Spring 2021
ISSN 2644-9598 (Print) ISSN 2644-961X (Online)

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Jacob Youchah's Ottoman Birth Certificate. ST001132, Sephardic Studies Digital Collection, University of Washington. Courtesy of Elayna J. Youchah.

Travel, Immigration, and the Sephardic Past

Oscar Aguirre-Mandujano and Kerem Tinaz

"Tracing the twentieth-century history of a Jewish family inevitably means facing counterfactuals. What if ... would they have ... if only. What losses could have been avoided if a letter had been answered, a visa signed, a ship allowed to make landfall," writes Hannah Pressman in a piece reflecting on the many paths that led her family to the United States (in *Sephardic Trajectories* [Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2021]). Pressman's Ottoman Sephardic great-grandmother, Estrella Leon, was born in Rhodes in 1892, and her great-grandfather, Haim Galante, was an Ottoman Sephardi from Bodrum in southwestern Anatolia. Estrella and Haim got married in South Africa, where they had traveled in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and their descendants live in the United States today. In her work-in-process titled "Galante's Daughter: A Sephardic Family Journey," Hannah strives to merge traces of her family's trajectories through "grassroots sources." Her sources are located in different geographies with varying political, cultural, and social dynamics. This is a challenging history to narrate, exceptional yet similar to many other trajectories followed by Ottoman Sephardic Jews. The members of Pressman's family are only two of many thousands of Ottoman Sephardim who left their homeland at the turn of the century to build new lives in distant lands. The trajectories that Ottoman Sephardic Jews followed to reach their final destinations left behind numerous traces in their personal belongings, traces that can help us better understand their experiences, emotions, dreams, hopes, hardships, crises, and disappointments as they traveled and moved around the globe.

These objects had traveled together with their original owners across the world ...

As the co-editors of *Sephardic Trajectories*, we started thinking over the trajectories of Ottoman Sephardim in 2014–2015, when we were both junior research fellows at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, Koç University (ANAMED). At the time, as a part of a research assistantship at the University of Washington, Oscar was working together with Devin Naar on the diary of Leon Behar, an Ottoman Sephardi who immigrated to Seattle in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Written in both Ottoman Turkish and Ladino, the diary's content and story led Oscar to wonder about the stories behind the many objects in the collection, many of which had traveled from Istanbul, Izmir, and Thrace to Seattle. Kerem, on the other hand, was working on his DPhil project examining the intellectual trajectories of three late Ottoman intellectuals who were Ottomanists in the late Ottoman Empire and turned into nationalists in the post-Ottoman period, and whose travels across the empire and beyond were important to their ideas about Ottomanism, education, language, and later, nationalism. One of the intellectuals Kerem worked on was Abraham Galante, a prolific and prominent historian of the Jewish people in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. As a part of his research, Kerem was interested in questions concerning how to study the trajectories of people who lived through times when political boundaries, orders, and identities were shifting. Some of these trajectories included travel, migration, and exile. At the time, we became inspired by the many objects hosted in the Sephardic Studies Collection at the University of Washington and wanted to know more about them and their stories. These objects had traveled together with their original owners across the world, they had moved into the houses of their descendants, and now were moving again, this time into a university collection and a digital archive. As we uncovered the stories behind some of these objects, we reflected on how to engage with the many layers of stories that might be told in relation to multiple trajectories of Ottoman Sephardim through the objects they left behind.

In *Sephardic Trajectories* we were able to publish some histories and reflections about movement, travel, and immigration, and their entanglements with objects. But the UW Sephardic Studies collection is full of stories yet to be told. To highlight the many possibilities for future research that *Sephardic Trajectories* hopes to inspire, we want to focus here on one example in the collection that is not included in the book: the Youchah family's identity documents, donated to the UWSSC. The story of these

documents provides us with a good start to examine the traces of the transnational migrations of Ottoman Sephardim. The Youchah family did not have any connection to Seattle. They settled and lived in New York. Despite this, Elayna Youchah, an attorney in Las Vegas, chose to donate the Youchah family documents to the collection in accordance with the wishes of her late father, Michael Youchah, who discovered that the Sephardic Studies Program at the University of Washington was developing a Sephardic archive shortly before he passed away.

Michael's parents were Ottoman-born Sephardic Jews. His father, Jacob Isaac Youchah, was born in 1885 in Monastir (Ott., Manastir; modern-day Bitola, Macedonia) as an Ottoman citizen. He was the son of Isaac Youchah, a grain merchant. Jacob had eight siblings, four of whom immigrated to the United States. Michael's mother, Gentile ("Jennie") née Covo, was born to a prominent family of journalists in Salonica in 1899. On her maternal side, she was a great-granddaughter of Saadi a-Levi Ashkenazi, the founder of the first Ladino newspaper in Salonica, *La Epoka* (1875–1911). Salonica was a port city with extensive international networks, a center of commerce in the region, a center of banking, and one of the engines of manufacturing in the empire at the turn of the century. More importantly, the Jewish community not only constituted the majority of the population, it was also the dominant actor in the economic life of the city. Jacob and Jennie married in the United States in 1919.

Although Jacob and Jennie built their own family in the United States, they never cut their ties with their homes in the former Ottoman domains. Amid shifting political borders and a new global political order following the First World War, Jacob Youchah obtained a passport from the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and an identity card from Greece. Jennie Youchah held a Greek identity card until she lost her citizenship following Jacob's receipt of US citizenship in 1930.¹ Both traveled back to visit their homes in former Ottoman lands on several occasions. While Jacob aimed to visit Monastir in 1919 (then part of the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which later became Yugoslavia) to find his mother, Jennie went back to Salonica (then part of Greece) to visit her sick father before he passed away. The change in their legal identities was a manifestation of sociopolitical transformations in their former homelands that continued to shape their political and legal status. More importantly, the documents left behind by the Youchahs and donated to the UWSSC provide scholars and community members with a chance to trace back the

As people moved from Ottoman lands, their ideas, emotions, customs, daily routines, and hopes traveled with them.

stories, travels, and history of their families, their friends, and their communities from the last days of the Ottoman Empire to the present.

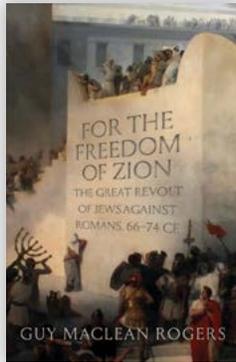
As people moved from Ottoman lands, their ideas, emotions, customs, daily routines, and hopes traveled with them. While today most of the early immigrants are not alive, the objects they left to us continue to tell their story. This history includes the movement of objects and family heirlooms from Ottoman lands to the United States and their more recent transformation from household objects into a collection of historical objects. In other words, these objects, too, have traveled, and their trajectories form a history of Ottoman Sephardic material culture beyond the territorial and periodical delimitations of the Ottoman Empire.

KEREM TINAZ is assistant professor of History at Koç University, where he teaches courses on the history of Ottoman Empire and Turkey. His research focuses on the intellectual and cultural history of the late Ottoman Empire with a particular interest in identity, ideology, and networks.

OSCAR AGUIRRE-MANDUJANO is assistant professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania. His research focuses on the intellectual and cultural history of the early modern Ottoman Empire. He is currently working on his first monograph, on the relationship between literary composition, Sufi doctrine, and political thought in the early modern Islamic world.

¹ According to the UWSSC's catalogue, Jennie Youchah's affidavit of identity and nationality document were to be used in lieu of a passport. Jennie is listed as a housewife living in 1263 Grant Avenue, Bronx, NY. She was born in Salonica on March 7, 1899. According to the information we have at hand, Jenni wanted to visit her sick father in Salonica, hoping to leave New York on July 3, 1937. But she had lost her nationality when her husband became a US citizen on July 17, 1930. See materials related to the Youchah family in the UWSSC, items 1124–1143. We are thankful to Devin Naar and Ty Alhadeff for sharing with us the preliminary catalogue of the collection while working on this piece.

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Women and the Religion of Ancient Israel

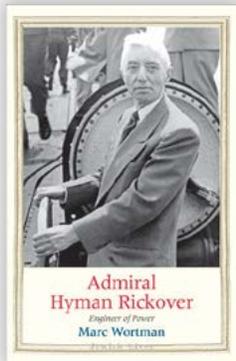
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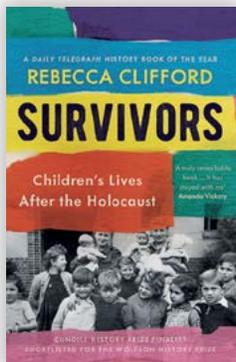
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The World of Itinerant Jewish Booksellers

Elli Fischer

Between the late eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, several thousand Jewish books were published with lists of presubscribers (or *prenumeranten*), in a practice similar to today's crowdfunding campaigns. Though the lists are generally organized alphabetically, either by name or by place, sometimes the order is geographical. By plotting such lists on a map, it is possible to reconstruct the journeys that authors or their agents took as they sold subscriptions to their books. A look at three examples will shed light on different aspects of this intersection between the world of travel and the world of books.

The Failed Magnum Opus

Rabbi Shalom Lukianovsky had ambitious plans when he began writing *Yad shalom*, a running commentary on *Shulḥan 'arukh*, around 1890. Though situated in the tiny southern Ukrainian village of Flora, he garnered approbations from a dozen leading rabbis—Ashkenazic and Sephardic, Hasidic and Mitnagdic—from across the Pale of Settlement, from Kovno to the Crimea, and even one from Galicia. Alas, when, in 1910, he published the first sixty-odd pages of his magnum opus, which he estimated to be over 6,000 pages, it failed to resonate among readers.

וואראוויין ר' שמועון סענדער גאטעסקאווא, צו סזי יעניי ר' לזי היילפרין,
סוואליווע סרע העלואסיג ווייסע סלוס גיב, ר' אזרעס אליעזר סרע,
ר' סלום יוסף ווערמילסטיין, ר' לזי סירש גאלדענבערג, ר' אזרעס ווערמילסטיין
וועיבווא, ר' סלום ליב וואיר, ר' יוסף אריי ענגיל וואליפאטע, ר' יוסף ר' **רוסינע** ר'
חיים שמואל לזי קגיל, צו סזי יעקב קגיל, ר' חיים פיערשטיין,
בערעזניא ר' וואס אסרן, ר' אלעיר פנחס ענגעללעכער, ר' וואיר
רוזנאן, ר' סענדער רוזנאן, ר' יוסף שטיין וואונקאטע, **ברעצקו** ר' עקיבא
ווייס, ר' וואיר צו סרע דבורה, **קושניצע** ר' יהודה ארי צו רבקה, ר'
אזיק סרע צו נעכי, ר' זאב צו סרע וואונקאטע, **ראדא** סרע ווייס אסר
זעליב צו סלוס, ר' זאב וויינארעין, ר' אסרן קערשענצוויס,
דישע פארנע ר' ווארדי צו סרע, ר' שמועון צו חיי אסר,
ווייריאן ר' סלוס צו נעט יהודה, ר' יוסרן צו סר יהודה קגיל,
כאסאני גרוד ר' יעקב וויינבערגער, ר' וואיר יוסף קליין, ר' סרע
לידינצוויס, **ראראוויין** ר' שמואל זייטויל סרע, ר' שמואל זלמן ווייס, ר'
וואיר יהודה צו ווייס, ר' יוסף אילקאוויטש, **בידנא** סרע העלואסיג

Partial page of subscribers to *Shoresh Yishai* from Subcarpathian Ruthenia, in today's Ukraine. Courtesy of the author.

Undeterred, two years later he published *Mefa 'aneh ne 'elamim*, a work that had broader appeal, with the hopes that income from the second book would fund the publication of his voluminous masterwork. By mapping the list of presubscribers we see that he undertook at least six different trips, visiting about eighty towns in Bessarabia (roughly today's Moldova) and southern Ukraine. We also identified his method: Starting from Chubivka Station, near his home, he would take the train to a new locale and travel around to nearby Jewish communities.

Despite his massive efforts, *Yad shalom* never caught on. The one printed volume has been all but forgotten by students of Halakhah, and no trace of the massive manuscript remains.

The Book of Compassion

The biblical book of Ruth is known for its account of incredible acts of kindness and mercy. Its tale of the redemption of a foreign-born widow sets the stage for the flourishing of the Kingdom of Israel under David and his line.

In the late 1800s, a young man named David Shmuel Katz of Felsőneresznicze, Hungary (today's Novoselytsya, Ukraine), decided to reissue *Shoresh Yishai*, a commentary on Ruth by Rabbi Shlomo Alkabez, first published in Constantinople in 1561. Katz's edition was published in Sighet (Sighetu Marmației, Romania) in 1891, with an astounding thirty pages of presubscribers. What accounts for the improbable success of this edition?

It turns out that David Shmuel Katz tragically passed away while putting the finishing touches on his edition, leaving his wife, Nisl Gitel, a widow, and four young children orphans.

Nisl Gitel's brother, Zvi Elimelekh Naiman, undertook to complete the edition and then to sell the book, with the proceeds going to support his sister and her children.

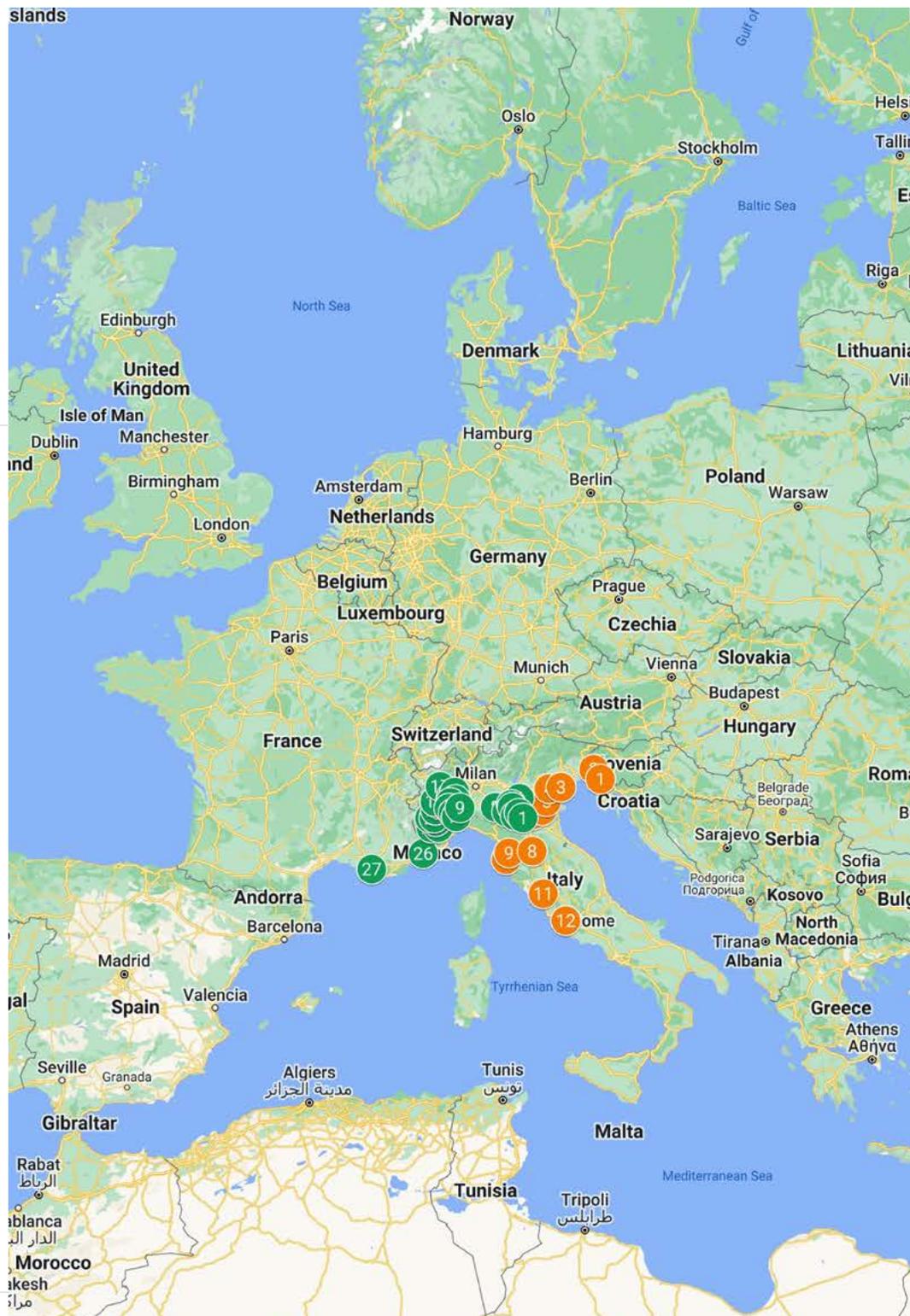
Sefer Zikaron - Livorno 1845

Trip A

- 1 Trieste
- 2 Province of Gorizia
- 3 Venice
- 4 Padua
- 5 Rovigo
- 6 Ferrara
- 7 Cento
- 8 Florence
- 9 Pisa
- 10 Livorno
- 11 Pitigliano
- 12 Rome

Trip B

- 1 Modena
- 2 Correggio
- 3 Reggio Emilia
- 4 Viadana
- 5 Sabbioneta
- 6 Mantua
- 7 Parma
- 8 Fiorenzuola d'Arda
- 9 Alessandria
- 10 Acqui Terme
- 11 Nizza Monferrato
- 12 Asti
- 13 Moncalvo
- 14 Casale Monferrato
- 15 Vercelli
- 16 Trino
- 17 Ivrea
- 18 Turin
- 19 Chieri
- 20 Carmagnola
- 21 Savigliano
- 22 Saluzzo
- 23 Fossano
- 24 Mondovi
- 25 Cuneo
- 26 Nice
- 27 Marseille



Map generated using data from the Prenumeranten Project and HaMapah. Courtesy of the author.

In all, he visited close to five hundred different places in what was then northeastern Hungary (Unterland), today in Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, and Ukraine. He undertook seven or eight different journeys, visiting large towns as well as villages that now lie beneath reservoirs created by Soviet-era damming projects. The people responded by turning this edition into a bestseller.

This intersection of a particular book, a series of journeys, and the response of an audience whose compassion was aroused provides a worthy coda to the book that set this process in motion, the book of Ruth.

Cultural Bridging and Wanderlust

Eliezer Ashkenazi was born in Poland in the early nineteenth century, but in 1845, his home was Tunis, and he was on his way back to Europe, to publish a manuscript he found in North Africa. He had become a collector, dealer, copyist, and publisher of such manuscripts, and he returned to Europe several times, and by several different routes, writing on one occasion of his travels to Gibraltar by way of Morocco, and on another occasion of his return to North Africa from the port of Marseille.

As can be seen from Ashkenazi's introduction to the first work he published, *Sefer zikaron* (Livorno, 1845), by an early sixteenth-century Spanish refugee rabbi who found his way to Tunis, Ashkenazi viewed himself as a cultural bridge between the different lands of his travels.

For the past ten years, it has been my delightful lot to help the elect of the human race, to be a deliverer and courier of all kinds of books, old and new, from Sepharad to Ashkenaz and from Ashkenaz to Sepharad. No distance was too great for me. The dry heat of Africa did not stop me, and the ice of Ashkenaz did not deter me. ...

I witnessed the wisdom of Ashkenaz rejoicing in the courtyards of Sepharad, and the sagacity of Sepharad raising her voice in the streets of Ashkenaz—and it was from me. I brought it about. Though I ate bread in misery, this legacy is more beautiful to me than the legacy of traders in gold and jewels. ...

Sweeter to my palate was dry bread dipped in stagnant water in the bowels of a ship and bread, dates, and water from a skin on a dune in the Arabian desert than every delicacy of kings and princes.

These interactions, and perhaps a bit of luck, determine whether a book ... remains unpublished or becomes an unexpected bestseller.

Ashkenazi complains of the difficulty of traveling, but there is no doubt that travel was part of the attraction of his chosen lifestyle. Indeed, between 1845 and 1855, he published three volumes of treatises, letters, liturgical compositions, and commentaries, each in a different European city: one in Metz, one in Frankfurt, and one in Livorno. Each work has a list of subscribers, but, incredibly, he never visited the same place twice! One journey took him to forty Jewish communities in (mainly northern) Italy. Another began in Paris but brought him to almost one hundred communities in Alsace and Lorraine.

Conclusion

During the modern era, thousands of individual Jews took to the road to sell their books, and it is rare that we are able to glimpse their thoughts and motives as they traveled from place to place. In the handful of examples discussed here, we see travelers spurred by compassion for family, the desire to absorb and cross-pollinate different regional Jewish cultures, and the conviction that they have penned a significant halakhic work that must be published. We have also seen how travel intersects and interacts with others aspects of Jewish culture: book culture, intellectual culture, and the culture of charity. These interactions, and perhaps a bit of luck, determine whether a book, even one born of great ambition, remains unpublished or becomes an unexpected bestseller.

ELLI FISCHER is a researcher with the *Prenumeranten Project* and *HaMapah* (hamapah.org), affiliated with *Haifa University* and the *University of Wrocław*.

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*A tour group stands beside the wall with their Palestinian guide in Bethlehem.
Courtesy of the author*

Sites of Transformation: Jewish Journeys beyond the Separation Wall

Emily Schneider

The Security Fence to some, the Apartheid Wall to others—it is this physical barrier that often changes how Jewish travelers to the West Bank see the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I remember the trepidation that I felt when I first journeyed from the Israeli to the Palestinian side of the wall on a tour to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I had imagined iron-clad securitization along the wall's entire route. I had imagined angry Palestinians, desperate for an opportunity to break through the wall and enact revenge on those of us living on the other side. What I witnessed that day dismantled both of these assumptions. I was greeted with kindness by everyone I met and I saw for myself the barrier's gaps and contradictions.

Five years later, I began organizing tours for Jewish travelers to the West Bank. Having gone from once ardently defending the State of Israel to now standing in solidarity with Palestinians, I was determined to give others this same opportunity to see the situation differently. My partners and I targeted those who were skeptical of Palestinian narratives. We advertised to study-abroad students, Birthright groups, and other mainstream Zionist programs, hoping to bring some of Israel's strongest supporters face-to-face with the occupation.

*... the wall does not simply
operate as a divider between
Israelis and Palestinians.*

While leading these trips, I also began conducting research for my PhD on these tours' effects. During an interview with a tour guide named Amy, she tells me:

We used to take them to this specific spot in Bethlehem where there's a giant gap in the wall ... it doesn't matter if you showed it to them, explained to them how many people climb over it.... They're going to say no, the wall is keeping us safe.

Her words resonated with me. After years of bringing Jewish travelers to the territories, I had become frustrated with the number of people who remained ideologically unmoved by the experience. I found that even though the people who attended our tours were typically more critical of Israel than their peers, they still clung to many of the core justifications for the occupation. Participants continued to insist on Israel's exclusive right to violence, they argued for the need to maintain a Jewish demographic majority at all costs, and they blamed the occupation on extremist settlers rather than the Israeli government. Nonetheless, I also saw many travelers experience profound moments of transformation. More than at any other part of the tour, these transformations occurred at the wall.

The wall is unsettling for Jewish travelers to Palestine for many reasons. It challenges the foundational belief among many of Israel's supporters that the occupation is driven by security. Tourists see the wall's porousness, its punitive features, and its strategic placement to maximize territorial acquisition. The wall also brings socioeconomic and rights-based disparities between Israelis and Palestinians into stark contrast. Finally, it symbolically and directly draws undeniable parallels between the Palestinian people and other oppressed groups.

A Jewish tourist from the United States named Ileen tells me how she realizes she was wrong before, and she now sees that the wall "has nothing to do with security." For travelers like Ileen, the wall unravels the idea that the repression of Palestinians is an unavoidable byproduct

of necessary security measures. They see how its grey concrete slabs snake against Palestinian neighborhoods to maximize the land and minimize the number of Palestinians on the Israeli side. They see how the wall cuts Palestinians off from their farmlands, families, and livelihoods, as well as how Israelis pass freely through its openings while Palestinians are humiliated at checkpoints. Such imagery sparks criticism of Israel among Jewish travelers, such as Tal, who concludes from his tour, "The wall was an active effort not just to separate the space, but to drive Palestinians away by making their lives miserable."

Suleiman, a Palestinian guide from Bethlehem, asks his tour group why they consider the Palestinians on this side of the wall to be dangerous while not those who live in Jerusalem. By asking questions like these and by showing how Palestinians can penetrate the wall, tour guides demonstrate how the wall does not simply operate as a divider between Israelis and Palestinians. Instead, the wall perpetuates oppression by usurping resources and providing the infrastructure for surveillance, punishment, and social sorting. Contrary to the argument that the drop in suicide bombings around the time of the wall's construction can be traced to full separation between Israelis and Palestinians, tour guides show how the wall is a much more complex apparatus designed to dispossess Palestinians of their land, maintain a racialized system of permits and residency, and facilitate continued Israeli settlement of the region.

With the glue of the security justification broken, many tourists now begin to see the inequality between Palestinians and Israelis as a matter of intentional dispossession. Gazing upon the wall from a hilltop in Jerusalem, Madi comments on the contrast of the paved sidewalks and beautiful homes in the Israeli settlement behind us with the burning trash and dilapidated buildings across the barrier. While walls separate, they also create collision. The separation barrier facilitates a juxtapositional proximity between an Israeli world of relative economic prosperity and civil rights, next to Palestinians' world of

occupation and economic strangulation. Yet now, rather than frame such contrasts as unfortunate circumstances, many Jewish travelers see them as injustices.

With injustice, there is an oppressor and the oppressed, and the wall forces travelers to name them in Israel/Palestine. In 2012, activists created a mural of Trayvon Martin on the wall. In 2020, they painted the face of George Floyd. These graphics push Jewish tourists to incorporate their newfound awareness of Palestinian dispossession into their broader commitments to social justice. In my interviews with travelers, many even uncomfortably confided in me that they could not help but think about the Nazi ghettos in Europe while standing beneath the wall. Both these implicit and explicit parallels make it difficult to compartmentalize Palestinian suffering, so that Jewish travelers can no longer separate the occupation from their wider moral conscience.

We are told that walls bring security, that they hide realities, and that they disconnect us from each other. For many travelers to Palestine, witnessing the wall reverses these tropes. A supposed beacon of Israeli security, the wall becomes a window into the shakiness of such narratives. Travelers soon realize that Palestinians and Israelis move across and live on both sides of the wall, and that full separation does not actually exist. As the wall reveals these flows, it simultaneously situates Israeli privilege directly next to Palestinian oppression. Contrasts that were once hidden now come directly into view. Finally, in protest of the divisions and disconnection that the wall attempts, activists repurpose it to communicate

... what was intended to be a mechanism of blockage and division becomes a pathway to openness and solidarity.

messages of solidarity, linking the Palestinian struggle to current and historical incidents of persecution. Though it was designed to be a mechanism of control, theft, and subjugation, Palestinian tour guides are managing to turn the wall's infrastructure against itself. Through this activism, what was intended to be a mechanism of blockage and division becomes a pathway to openness and solidarity.

EMILY SCHNEIDER is assistant professor in the department of criminology and criminal justice at Northern Arizona University. Dr. Schneider's research has been published in peer-reviewed journals, such as *Sociological Focus* and *the International Journal of Tourism Cities*, and it has received funding from a variety of sources including the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. She is currently working on a book manuscript that examines American Jews' changing relationship to Israel/Palestine through the framework of alternative tourism to the West Bank.





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This theme year at the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies recognizes historical precedents even as it builds upon and departs from them.

In the 19th century Jews commissioned and collected art; patronized art and institutions that collected art; served as benefactors of archaeological missions and excavations; and dealt commercially in art of different cultures. Individual, universalist, and integrationist orientations drove Jews' engagement with art. But Jewish art, in all its manifestations, seldom drew their interest and they had little knowledge of what constituted the Jewish visual world prior to the 19th century. Oblivious to what had been produced for centuries in the realm of monuments, manuscripts, synagogue architecture, ephemera, ceremonial art (Judaica), printed books, drawings, and fabrics, they and others remained aloof from how visual culture occupied a significant place in Jewish historical development.

By the 21st century, these attitudes and assumptions had changed radically.

The Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies seeks to explore many facets of Jewish visual imagination. How did Jewish experiences with and attitudes toward the visual intersect with those of the majority populations, and with minority populations in Israel? How did Jewish visibility challenge or coexist with the hallmark of Jewish culture – the literary text? How does visual culture broaden the Jewish narrative? The Frankel Institute theme year on Jewish visual cultures will address these and other questions. The Institute invites applications from senior and junior scholars from a wide range of disciplines, as well as artists and curators, to investigate and explicate Jewish visual cultures from the medieval period to the present.

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The Meandering Jew: Joseph Tunkel's Endless Journey

Nikki Halpern

Der Moment, a Yiddish daily newspaper, was published in Warsaw from 1910 until 1939, when the Germans bombed the building. Writing as *Der Tunkeler* (the Dark One), Joseph Tunkel (1881-1949) was a frequent contributor. From April 1 to October 16, 1931, the paper ran installments of his trip from Warsaw to British Mandate Palestine. This reportage, augmented with photographs and drawings, subsequently appeared in a single volume, *Fort a yid keyn erets-yisroel: a reyze bashreybung* (1932; *A Jew Journeys to the Land of Israel: A Travelogue*).

Erets-Yisroel refers here to British Mandate Palestine (1923-1948). The denomination also evokes an entity that is neither Palestine nor Israel as a geographic and historical reality. This is the Land of Israel, a biblical locus; it is (also) the biblical and the Zionist Promised Land. The land-that-was and the land-to-come. In this sense, the *Yid*—the workaday Jew of sociohistoric reality as well as the *Yid* of popular Yiddish culture—is a time traveler, but the epochs coalesce.

For Tunkel's tourist, the Baedeker, the classic travel guide for the European cities of the Grand Tour, is the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible. The signifying force of the figures peopling the Bible is a touchstone of Jewish collective identity (in a sense, all Jews are fellow travelers), a symbolic system responding to existential questions. The result is a convergence of these registers, a symbolically mediated world, itself a concatenation of the perceived, the real, and the social imaginary.

When you travel across *Erets-Yisroel* you are not just on a trip through a country, you're traveling through Bible verses, you're climbing aggadot [the Talmud's nonhalakhic content], you're treading on midrashim [halakhic or aggadic interpretation], you're guided by the Yiddish-language Chumash [Torah]. (64)

Der Tunkeler introduces a tourist into the concretization, the realization of the metaphoric and mystical view of our existence in this world and the World-to-Come. The

quixotic interrogation is no longer which is which, but how to negotiate the conflation. In this relation of the imaginary, and of the antique, over and against the real, the present-day, each and neither is authentic. The real bursts onto the scene of the imaginary. The sacred is colored if not contaminated by the real.

This brings us, if not the author, to Jerusalem. *Der Tunkeler* addresses at some length and more than once his decision not to start his visit in *Erets-Yisroel* "directly" with Jerusalem, disappointing while comforting any such expectation, and confirming the centrality of Jerusalem, site of the Temple (an image of Jerusalem's Old City features prominently on the book version's title page). It is about midway through the trip when we find our traveler on *der veg keyn yerushalayim* ("The Road to Jerusalem"). The text elaborates and enacts the geographic and conventional ascent that is this road. While pilgrimage to the Temple was prescribed three times a year (at a minimum), the author's reflections here also translate Jerusalem as an object of desire, an impossible, mystical desire in which encounter may well be both culmination and prolongation.

The travelogue charts a course through Europe by train, to Constantinople by ship, and only then to an exploration of the Land of Israel, crossing paths with an array of people and events—variously Jewish, Arab, Bedouin, Muslim, and Christian.

Erets-Yisroel is the eternal and promised homeland, and interrogations of the notion of home underpin the entire enterprise. The last stop on *Der Tunkeler's* trip "to *Erets-Yisroel*" conjures an eternal return. This episode, called *Af tsurikvegs* ("On the Way Back" or "Returning"), features both Cairo and the Pyramids. The story ceases, but without ending, because it cannot end there. The traveler is going back in Jewish history as well as heading back to Europe via Egypt: an ambiguous if not ambivalent choice.

"I'm going back home to *goles* [the Diaspora]" it opens (255). And again, "Now I'm heading home." In a characteristic textual move, this recurrence brings a supplement. "Now I'm heading home. I'm going to Egypt" (258).

This is a purposeful confusion, both for comic effect and from intimate conviction. Tunkel also echoes, if faintly, the Hebrews' lament in the desert. You'll recall their reproaching Moses for their condition, bewailing their home, Egypt, to which they wanted to return (see, e.g., Numbers 11; Numbers 14).



“People of the Book” from Tunkel, Joseph (*Der Tunkeler*). Fort a yid keyn erets-yisroel: a rayze bashreibung (*A Jew Journeys to Eretz Yisrael: A Travelogue*). Warsaw: A. Nomberga, 1932.

Why does the narrator go to Egypt? Because, he says, he retains “some stake” in the country, given his

four hundred years of back-breaking labor. [I’m traveling to Egypt] in order to see what has become of my Pithom and Ramses, and to pay a visit to all the pharaohs who have been dug up, and see how they’re feeling after all the plagues. (260)

Every year at Passover, participants in the seder are enjoined to retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt (which starts with Hebrew enslavement there) as if it had happened to each and every one, to relive it. Der Tunkeler strips this idea of its ritual framework and imagines a tourist with the same posture, or goes even further, because the stated intention, in syntax and tenor, might almost be credibly imputed to Moses. If Egypt is the place of slavery for *bnei Yisra’el*, this was a crucial stage on the way not just to freedom but also to the Covenant, Torah, Jewish identity, history, obligations, and practices. The writer has taken diverse facets of Jewish collective and individual identity, levels of accreted social meanings, shaken them all up, and produced an impossible chain of connections. He has reconnected the dots (or pixels) for a picture that is perhaps more cubist, or a

bricolage. Highlighting some key aspects informing Jewish identity, he endows it anew with creative energy: a generative reading of past and current events.

The mystical view of our existence in this world and the World-to-Come, as Der Tunkeler plays it out in this travelogue, is an imbrication of lived (mundane experience) and learned (Written and Oral Law, received Jewish tradition). Rather than a juxtaposition of opposites, of delimited, nonsynchronous states, ideas of the one infuse the realities of the other in a dynamic relationship. That somehow the *Eretz-Yisroel* lodged in the imaginary retains its aura is a compelling argument for the power of the ineffable, the unknown, what escapes us while perhaps elevating us through our search for it. This suggests the impulse of travel writing, travel as writing, writing as travel, as it speaks to the essence of the wondering Jew.

NIKKI HALPERN is an independent researcher and translator. This essay is drawn from a larger work in progress, “*Jewish Geography: Joseph Tunkel’s Discursive Iconography of the Land of Israel.*”

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CONGRATULATIONS

Salo Baron Prize Winner

The American Academy for Jewish Research is pleased to announce the winner of its annual Salo Baron Prize for the best first book in Jewish studies published in calendar year 2021. The prize honors:

Andrew Kornbluth, *The August Trials: The Holocaust and Postwar Justice in Poland* (Harvard University Press)

In *The August Trials*, Andrew Kornbluth examines a series of trials of Polish Nazi collaborators held in Poland during the decade or so following the end of World War II. Kornbluth demonstrates that far from being a tool in the hands of the Soviet authorities, these trials began as a genuine attempt to come to terms with the violence and murder committed by Poles under German occupation. With the passage of time, however, the trials became a site for creating a usable past for Poland, downplaying or even erasing Polish responsibility for the ethnic cleansing of Polish Jewry. *The August Trials* is a major contribution to the study of Polish-Jewish relations during and after the Holocaust, the search for justice in post-Holocaust Europe, and the nexus between history, memory, and politics in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Honorable Mention is awarded to **Jason Lustig of the University of Texas, Austin for *A Time to Gather: Archives and the Control of Jewish Culture* (Oxford University Press)**. This is an innovative study of the establishment in the 20th century of Jewish archival institutions in Europe, Israel, and the United States. The author demonstrates how the creation of these archives involved a struggle not just to acquire the materials themselves but also to construct interpretations of both the Jewish past and present.

The American Academy for Jewish Research (www.aajr.org) is the oldest professional organization of Judaica scholars in North America. Its membership consists of senior scholars whose work has made a major impact on their field.

The Baron Prize honors the memory of the distinguished historian Salo W. Baron, a long-time president of the AAJR, who taught at Columbia University for many decades. It is one of the signal honors that can be bestowed on a young scholar in Jewish Studies and a sign of the excellence, vitality, and creativity of the field.

Recipes for Safe Passage: The Magical Travel Chest of Itinerant *Ba'alei Shem*: A Commentary

Andrea Gondos

Collections of handwritten recipe books, written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, offer us a rare glimpse into the world of early modern magical travel. Traveling tirelessly, often without either a well-paying position or social prestige, *ba'alei shem* (lit., masters of the name), were wonder-working healers who were tasked not only with healing individuals but also with improving communal welfare at times of calamities, such as plagues and fires. Frequently applying their skills in geographically remote areas that lacked proper access to pharmacies and university-trained doctors, *ba'alei shem* led an itinerant lifestyle, moving frequently from one remote community to the next. Their travel chests consisted of not much more than their prized recipe books, which functioned as a mobile apothecary dispensing both natural cures, *materia medica*, and supernatural remedies, *materia magica*, at the same time.

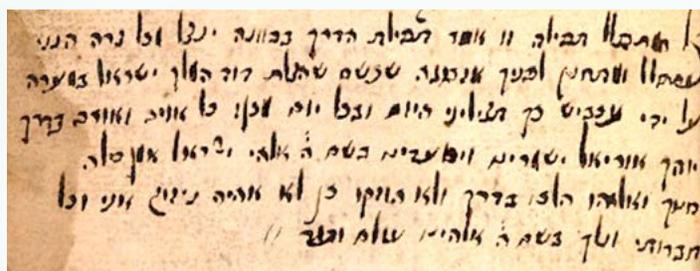
The travels of *ba'alei shem* can be conceptualized as an act of connecting not only horizontally, linking geographically distant communities, but also vertically, between different parts of the macro- and microcosm. As material objects, amulets established important correspondences between heaven and earth, Jews and non-Jews, artisanal practices and the natural world.

The wide spectrum of materials used in magical formulas draw on both particularistic and universal elements. Inside the magical travel chest, the classic textual corpora and liturgical traditions of Judaism—the Hebrew Bible, Jewish prayer, rabbinic midrash, as well as the mystical-magical teachings of Kabbalah, the *hekhalot* and *merkavah* literature—are comfortably embedded in lists of simple and common ingredients found in the domain of the household, in nature, and on the road. In a world without instant modes of communication, to be

successful *ba'alei shem* entailed not only creatively combining and recombining what they carried in their travel chests, but also reaching their destination quickly without unnecessary delay.

Five distinct kinds of magical amulets found in these handbooks were directed to safeguard travel, because it was so central to the livelihood of this unique group of healers. The examples I comment on below were expected to provide: general protection on the road; safe passage over sea; path jumping; protection against robbers; and invisibility.

1.



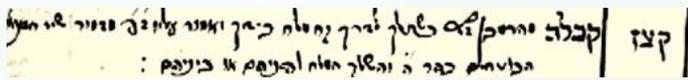
MS. British Library Oriental 10568, fol. 25r.
© British Library Board

Each person who recites this prayer for the road with intention [*kavvanah*] will be saved from all adversity: “Behold I pray before you and entreat you, in the [divine] name that saved David, the King of Israel, in the cave with the help of a spider. Thus, may you save me today, and every day, from the hand of the enemy. Uriel, guard me and aid me in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, amen sela. Enoch and Elijah went on the way and were not harmed. Thus, I will also not be harmed—I and my companions and we will go in the name of the Lord, our God, forever.”

Prayer intentions or *kavvanot* attained renewed religious significance and popularity following the circulation of esoteric teachings ascribed to Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534–1572), the preeminent sixteenth-century mystic. The centrality of *kavvanot* in Lurianic Kabbalah refocused attention on the interior dimensions of Jewish worship and placed human psychology and consciousness at its heart. The alignment of diverse parts of the self—the body

as well as mental concentration—promoted greater efficacy for one’s prayer. Supplication and the adjuration of the angel, Uriel, are further activated by the practitioner’s mindfulness.ⁱ The magical operation is framed by the midrashic story of David’s miraculous escape from his pursuers—King Saul’s soldiers—and his ultimate rescue by a spider that God sent to weave a web over the cave he sought to hide in.ⁱⁱ The biblical figures, Enoch and Elijah, are presented as paradigmatic personalities associated with journeys between earth and heaven, and as such, intermediaries between these two realms. Their safe passage between seemingly contrary worlds while enjoying divine protection from the wrath of angels on their heavenly ascent could help ensure the same for the travels of *ba’alei shem*.

2.



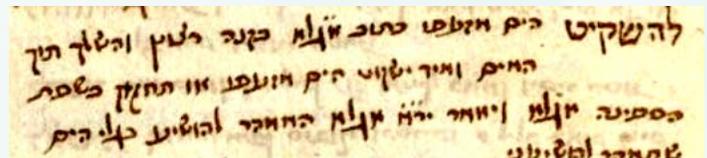
Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg:
Cod. Hebr. 135, fol. 10r. Courtesy of the
Hamburg Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek

A received tradition from Nahmanides, may his memory be blessed, [to be used] when you set out on a journey: “Take some salt in your hand, and repeat the verse seven times over it [the salt], ‘A song of Ascents, Those who trust in God are like Mount Zion that cannot be moved, enduring forever’ [Psalm 125:1]. Then cast the salt in front of them or between them [the robbers].”

This amulet is ascribed to Nahmanides (1194–1270), the prominent medieval commentator, rabbinic leader, and kabbalist. Recipes attributed to his name recur regularly in diverse magical formulas, lending authority to their deployment and efficacy. The use of salt has been well documented in Jewish folk remedies as an effective substance against the malevolent influence of demons. The insertion of psalmic verses further activates the recipe’s efficacy and fits into the rich tradition dating back to late antiquity of using verses or entire sections of the biblical book of Psalms for diverse magical functions and frequently for producing amulets. The rules governing the use and combination of psalmic units to

produce powerful angelic or divine names that could be conjured for a specific practical purpose extended to all aspects of daily life, from the protective-healing acts of childbirth, bodily aches, and exorcism, to more destructive and morbid operations of aggressive magic intended to harm, subjugate, and destroy demons or human enemies. The travel chest that managed to blend a natural substance—salt, with its primary nature to arrest expansion and growth, in this case, the malicious intention of robbers—with the apotropaic use of sacred writing—Psalm 125, with its emphasis on endurance, permanence, and protection—offered security to its owner against the countless dangers that lurked on the road.

3.

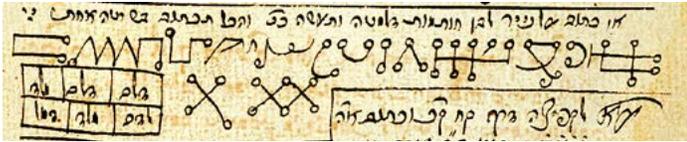


Universitätsbibliothek Johann Christian
Senckenberg Frankfurt am Main, Heb. Oct. 131, fol.
72r. Courtesy of Universitätsbibliothek Johann
Christian Senckenberg Frankfurt am Main

To quiet a raging sea, write the name, “אגלא,” in a continuous line and throw it into the sea and the waters will be calmed at once. Alternatively, you can etch the name, “אגלא” into the side of the ship saying, ירא אגלא, who races to save in the waves of the sea, should hasten to save me.

The recipe for a journey by sea highlights the diverse modes of travel at the disposal of *ba’alei shem*. The divine name אגלא is an acronym formed by the initial letters of the second of the Eighteen Benedictions (*Shemoneh ‘Esreh*), or Amidah prayer, the high point of the daily liturgical cycle: ‘*Ata gibor le-‘olam Adonai*, “You are forever mighty, Lord.” This name is frequently deployed in magical recipes especially for controlling natural elements such as fire, and in this case, to calm the waters of the sea. The apotropaic effect of the amulet is realized through the dissolution of the divine name into the surrounding waters.

4.

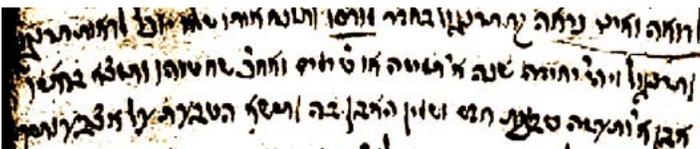


William Gross Collection, EE 011.039, Fol. 127v.
Courtesy of William Gross

Write the seals below, as indicated, on white paper, and write it in a single line.

Angels seem to have their own language and alphabet, which frequently appear in magical compilations or on amulets as strangely configured magical signs called *charaktêres*. In this example, the angels are summoned to facilitate “path jumping” (*kefizat ha-derekh*), which allowed *ba’alei shem* to cover vast distances in a short time. Each of these secret alphabets is associated with a particular angel, such as Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Metatron, and others.ⁱⁱⁱ A number of how-to books I have examined contain extensive lists of alphabets, their angelic correspondence, and the Hebrew equivalent of the angelic signs so the practitioner could translate a specific command into angel language and conjure the right supernatural entity for the designated task. This amulet has another noteworthy visual element. In the left lower corner we find a 3 x 2 magical square with the permutation of the Hebrew letters, דלמ, which presumably corresponds to the angelic entity the *charaktêres* are meant to adjure and command.

5.



The National Library of Israel, MS Heb. 8 2986, 10r.
Courtesy of the National Library of Israel

To see without being seen:

Take a chicken to the threshing room and lay it down so it could not see [anything]. It should remain [there] in isolation for a full year, or for nine days, after which he should slaughter it and take a stone from its head. He should then prepare a new ring and conceal the stone inside it and then place the ring on his finger.

Invisibility—a highly prized state when traveling on the road—is attained through a magical operation ...

The final recipe dispenses with the authority of the Jewish sacred textual canon and instead builds on universal elements of sympathetic magic. Invisibility—a highly prized state when traveling on the road—is attained through a magical operation that creates parallel dimensions of sequestered existence: the stone within the chicken and the chicken within the room, on the one hand, and the stone in the ring, and the wearer within its environment, on the other hand. Ancient Jewish magical texts, such as *Sefer ha-razim*, evince the use of magic rings for protection on the road, bearing the engraving of a lion and a man. Similarly, the same *Sefer ha-razim* prescribes the use of a dog’s head to cause sleeplessness and mental disturbance in the victim^{iv}. Animal heads, therefore, seem to be potent mediums for inducing sensory states in human subjects, in the above recipe producing the desired effect of compromised visual abilities guaranteeing the adjurer complete invisibility.

ANDREA GONDOS is a postdoctoral associate in the Emmy Noether Research Group, “Patterns of Knowledge Circulation: The Transmission and Reception of Jewish Esoteric Knowledge in Early Modern East-Central Europe,” funded by the DFG (German Research Council), at the Institute of Jewish Studies, Free University in Berlin. She is the author of *Kabbalah in Print: The Study and Popularization of Jewish Mysticism in Early Modernity* (SUNY Press, 2020).

i Agata Paluch, “Intentionality and Kabbalistic Practices in Early Modern East-Central Europe,” *Aries* 19 (2019): 83–111.

ii Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1909), 4:4:23.

iii Gideon Bohak, “The Charaktêres in Ancient and Medieval Jewish Magic,” *Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis* 47 (2011): 25–44.

iv For both examples see Gideon Bohak, “The Use of Engraved Gems and Rings in Ancient Jewish Magic,” in *Magical Gems in Their Contexts*, ed. Kata Endreffy, Árpád M. Nagy, and Jeffrey Spier (Budapest: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 2019), 41–43.

Movers and Stayers in Ancient Israel

Elisa Uusimäki

While COVID-19 has forced many of us to reconsider our access and relation to travel, the world today continues to be filled with a range of mobilities. Yet we are far from the first movers—or stayers—as people, objects, and ideas have always been on the move, though not with equal prospects. Ancient Israel is not an exception in this regard, even if the remaining evidence for mobility in that context remains limited and leaves many questions unanswered.

The idea of the Hebrews as a wandering people is central to the social memory of Judaism: the patriarchs and their families move from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt, and the Exodus sets in motion a long journey to the land promised by the God of Israel to his people. The Babylonian exile narrates a forced migration away from that land. In addition, people move in biblical texts because of slavery, trade, warfare, famines, family life, festivals, and education. These movers are often men but also include a surprising number of women whose journeys are both voluntary and involuntary, enabled by privileges or forced by inequalities. These stories deserve to be heard, not least because of the ways in which they can both illuminate and challenge contemporary notions of travel.¹

The question of who actually moves in the Hebrew Bible is a crucial one. After all, elite men produced the texts, and only a small portion of the named figures are women. Furthermore, travel requires both material and social resources, and many forms of mobility are tied to one's position in society. It is thus necessary to have a careful look at the profiles of travelers as well as the motives behind the travelers' trips, that is, the complex social realities that prompted, enabled, or forced their movement.

A great deal of long-distance mobility in antiquity revolved around military service, trade, and political journeys. The evidence for female activity in these spheres of life is limited, which suggests that many movers in ancient Israel were men. Yet these mobilities

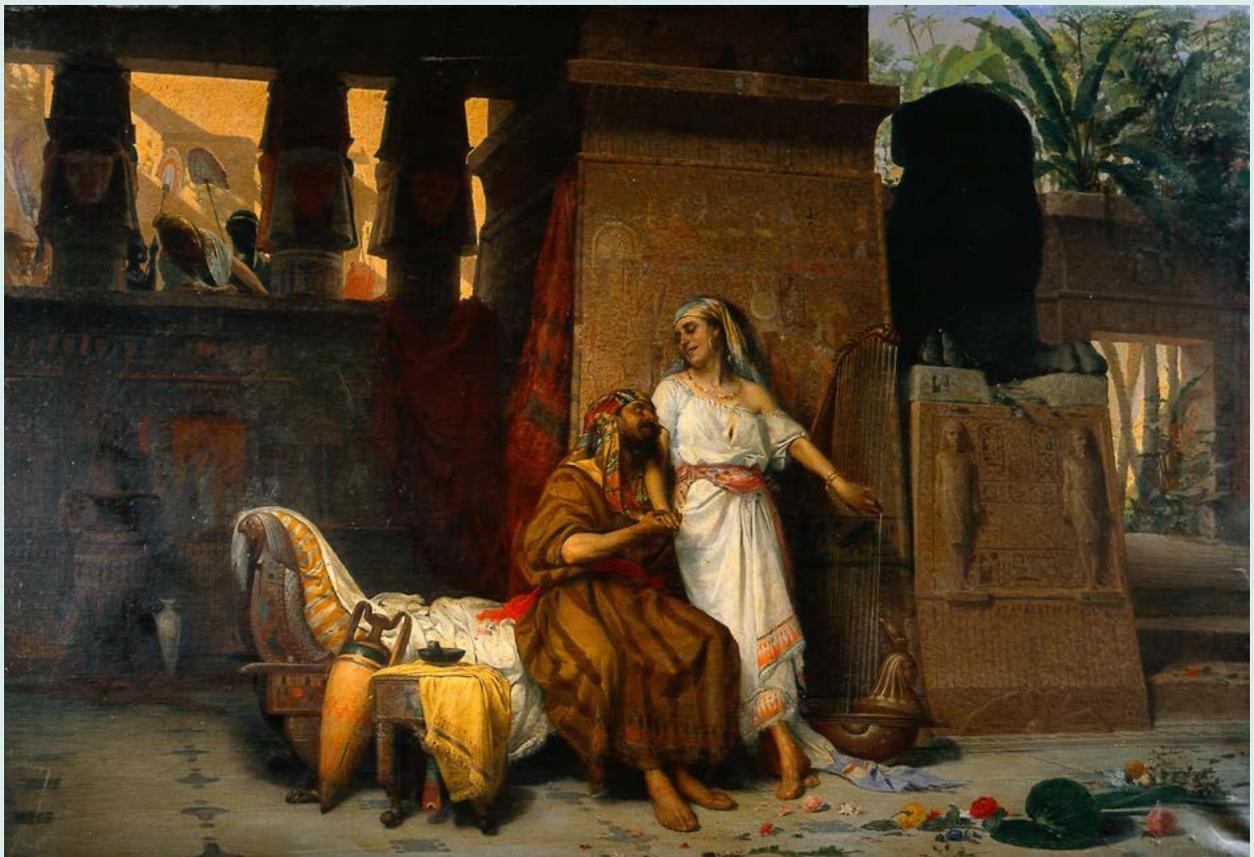


*The Queen of Sheba, as depicted in Konrad Kyeser von Eichstadt's *Bellifortis*, c.1405. Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen, 2 Cod. Ms. Philos. 63, Cim., fol. 122r.*

also affected women. First, warfare involved forced displacement of female captives as sexual property and symbols of conquest (Deut. 21). Second, women contributed to the economic system as producers of exports and moved for business reasons, at least locally (Tob. 2). Third, the story about the Queen of Sheba (1 Kgs 10) highlights the prospects of influential women in the management of foreign relations.



Benjamin West. Rebecca Receiving the Bracelet at the Well, 1775. Oil on canvas. 48.75 in. by 63.2 in. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection



Muzzioli Giovanni. Abraham and Sarah at the Pharaoh's Court, 1875. Oil on canvas. 45.4 in. by 65.7 in. Pugnaghi/Museo Civico di Modena

Though many of those who undertook military, business, or political trips were men, it should be stressed that long-distance travel was also rare to the majority of men. But movement is not just about major journeys. The lack of long-distance travel does not mean that ancient lives would have been immobile. Regional and local trips, too, may shape travelers and those related to them. They may affect, for example, one's familial status, socioeconomic position, or identification with a group.

In fact, I argue that the gendered aspect of travel in ancient Israel looks quite different if one looks beyond military, trade-related, and political mobility—all forms of travel that are relevant to traditional history writing but leave out much of human experience in the past. A close reading of biblical texts indicates a range of reasons why women moved or had to move.

Forms of slavery, to begin with, caused forced or otherwise undesirable movement. I have already mentioned the displacement of captives (Deut. 21). Biblical narratives also mention the sex trafficking of young girls (Esth. 2) and draw attention to the vulnerability of female slaves. Hagar is portrayed as a wayfaring alien who is dependent on her masters' goodwill and experiences both escape and expulsion (Gen. 16; 21). The Levite's concubine (Judg. 19) takes initiative to move between the house of her master and her childhood home but encounters a tragic end when the habits of hospitality protect her master at her expense.

Free women hail from diverse contexts that both enable and force movement. Given that travel requires resources, one might expect that unenslaved female travelers belong to the elite. Yet privileged positions are not overrepresented in the biblical accounts, and the majority of women's journeys concern members of the middle strata of ancient Israelite society.

Marriage arrangements are a common reason for female mobility. Brides have to relocate because of their reproductive capital, that is, to continue the desired lineage. While women such as Rebekah are depicted as willing to move (Gen. 24), men strike deals concerning their future. Rebekah also moves with her maids, which alleviates her pain but may be undesirable to those moving with her. In addition, the stories about traveling brides and wives stress the value of farewell: a departure should not be abrupt but accompanied by music and kisses (Gen. 31) or blessings and instruction (Tob. 10).

Both women and men move as pilgrims and economic migrants. First, social and religious concerns intersect in pilgrimage. It seems voluntary but was probably driven by social expectations, which makes it difficult to estimate the extent to which it was voluntary. In any event, pilgrimage is depicted as a relatively universal practice, though the biblical laws are ambiguous regarding the wife's obligations (Deut. 16). Furthermore, women of reproductive age are associated with visits to sacred places in the hope of pregnancy (1 Sam. 1), or to offer sacrifices after giving birth (Lev. 12). Some women probably brought sacrifices to the Temple because of their Nazirite vows (Num. 6).

Second, environmental reasons prompt economic migration. In Genesis, the patriarchs move around because of famines, including but not limited to the story about Sarai and Abram in Egypt, in which Sarai is exposed to a type of sex work in the Pharaoh's court (Gen. 12). In the book of Ruth, the Moabite protagonist follows her mother-in-law to Bethlehem, adopts Naomi's *elohim*, and ends up working in Boaz's fields as a foreign laborer exposed to gendered sexual violence. Both Sarai and Ruth are told to commit sexual deeds with foreign men to gain economic security.

In sum, forms of travel in ancient Israel were as complex as the society in general. Some people could move because of privileges, but many found themselves on the road because of social disadvantages and lack of power. Class matters but does not explain everything, as a number of factors—one's position in the patriarchal family, religious laws, oppressive ideologies, and interpersonal interactions—influence the movers' agency and experiences, for better or worse.

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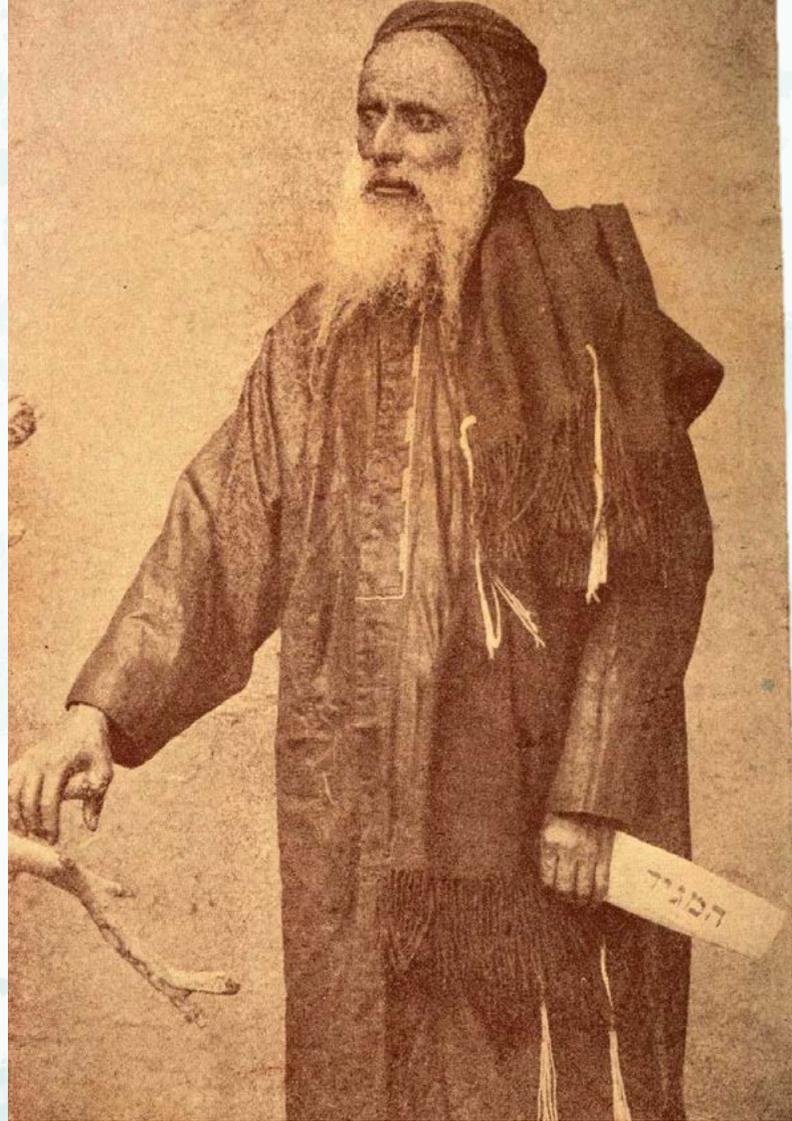
ⁱ To be sure, a great deal of the biblical material on human mobility is fictive and imaginary, i.e., not traditional archival sources used in history. While the material does not provide us with access to specific events or figures in the past, it contains valuable documents of cultural history. Given that the authors drew on their own experiences and knowledge of the world in composing them, the sources echo aspects of social life in antiquity and may provide more personal insights into history.

Foreigners and Locals in Nineteenth-Century Yemen: The Travelogue of Ḥayim Ḥabshush

Alan Verskin

In 1869, the Jews of Sanaa warmly welcomed Joseph Halévy to Yemen, a man whom they believed to be Jerusalem's latest emissary to their lands. Part preachers, part schnorrers, such envoys had become familiar visitors to Jewish lands in both the East and the West. Yet Halévy almost immediately began to raise eyebrows. Although none disputed his deep Jewish learning, his offers to pay for copies of pre-Islamic inscriptions made some suspect that the welfare of the Jerusalemite community was not his most fundamental concern. Ḥayim Ḥabshush, a Yemenite coppersmith, was intrigued. He was already a collector of ancient inscriptions, which he used to make magical amulets. He was also interested in tracking down the ten lost tribes, who were rumored to be living hidden away in the Arabian deserts. Realizing that this rabbi was not who he seemed, and thinking him to be a mystic and magician, he hoped to become his disciple and gain knowledge of occult secrets. Ḥabshush was quickly hired by the mysterious rabbi, but, once in his service, he discovered that the rabbi possessed an entirely different kind of knowledge.

Joseph Halévy was not from Jerusalem, but he was indeed a learned rabbi who, aided by a photographic memory, had mastered Talmudic literature and was able to hold his own in traditional Jewish society. Ḥabshush, however, discovered that he had been wrong to see Halévy as a magician. On the contrary, Halévy prized rationalism and rejected Judaism's traditions of mysticism and magic. He had been previously employed by a Jewish organization, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, that sought to better the condition of oppressed and impoverished Jews by uniting them in a shared commitment to modernity. To this end, he had served as a teacher and administrator in schools in the Ottoman Empire and Europe and had also undertaken a mission to Abyssinia to save its Jews from both poverty and conversion to Christianity. But Halévy had come to



Portrait of Ḥayyim Habshush with a European Hebrew-language newspaper. Courtesy of the author

Yemen with a different agenda. He had been sent there by the French academy to locate and transcribe pre-Islamic inscriptions, not to save its Jews. Despite the secular nature of his mission, Halévy had been chosen by the French thanks in part to his rabbinic training. Yemeni historians frequently refer to the nineteenth century as "a time of corruption." Famine and disease decimated a population already wracked by continual conflicts between warring tribes. A foreigner's only hope of avoiding such violence was to attach himself to Yemenis who played no part in intertribal struggles. As clients of Yemeni tribes, Jews were not directly involved in such conflicts and their geographic dispersion across Yemen made them well-placed hosts for a foreign would-be explorer. Indeed, over the centuries, several Jerusalemite rabbis had taken advantage of precisely this system to facilitate their travel in Yemen. A Jerusalemite rabbi, the French academy reasoned, had the best chance of safe

travels in Yemen, and Halévy, who enjoyed a reputation as an Ottoman Jewish sage, was judged to be an ideal candidate to assume that guise.

Ḥabshush soon overcame his disappointment that Halévy was not a magician and became enthusiastic about the academic world Halévy embodied. Nonetheless, he did not view Halévy uncritically. Impressed as he was with Halévy's secular wisdom, he also thought that Halévy's obsession with ancient artifacts had blinded him to the needs of contemporary Yemeni people and to the beauty of Yemeni Jewish culture. Ḥabshush fretted that Halévy's scholarly reports would not capture the land and people to which he was so deeply attached. He praised Halévy as the source of his enlightenment but made no secret of his distaste for Halévy's aloofness, even publishing an open letter in Eliezer Ben Yehuda's newspaper *Ha-'or*, in which he publicly criticized him. Receiving no response from Halévy, he decided to write a rival account of their journey. It was designed to serve as a guide for Ashkenazim to Yemen's diverse Jewish communities and as an invitation for them to engage with their "Eastern" brethren. He called his book *A Vision of Yemen*.

Throughout his work, Ḥabshush dwells on the moral duties of travelers. He is profoundly sensitive to the fact that the mere presence of a traveler in a land seldom visited by foreigners can change it forever. It was because Halévy shared his poor opinion of the Zohar with locals, Ḥabshush claims, that a vituperative conflict over the status of the Kabbalah erupted among Yemeni Jews and permanently divided their community. Ḥabshush's searches for inscriptions led some to believe that he was a malicious magician or a treasure hunter, bringing suspicion on his unsuspecting Jewish hosts and disrupting relations between Jewish communities and their Muslim neighbors. He also talks about his impact on individuals. For example, he reproaches himself for inadvertently bankrupting one of his hosts, who parted with all he had to accommodate his guests, so highly did he prize the virtue of hospitality. Ḥabshush was a humanist who believed in the potential for travel to unite people and promote understanding, yet, perhaps more than most travelers of this period, he was aware of the risk of negatively affecting the people he encountered.

Ḥabshush is particularly sensitive to the question: Ought travelers intervene to correct the injustices that they see or are they instead bound to avoid imperialistically imposing their values on others? Ḥabshush does not limit these discussions to non-Yemenites. In rural regions

As lone travelers surrounded by weapon-carrying Jews with very different mores from their own, they are at a loss as to if and how they should intervene.

remote from his hometown of Sanaa, he too feels himself to be a foreigner, grappling with values and customs very different from his own. The questions surface time and again, and most tragically when he and Halévy stumble upon a Bedouin Jewish family, bound by codes of tribal honor, who are about to kill their daughter for becoming pregnant before marriage. As lone travelers surrounded by weapon-carrying Jews with very different mores from their own, they are at a loss as to whether and how they should intervene. Ḥabshush considers offering to perform an abortion to save the woman. Then he considers how he might save her by marrying her and taking her away from the only family and community that she has known. And could it be, Ḥabshush wonders, that his deep attraction to this beautiful woman is skewing his judgment? Does it matter that the "help" he has to offer is also self-serving?

Ḥabshush's travelogue was written at a moment when travel had become faster, aided in part by the rise of European and Ottoman imperialism, and Jews were becoming aware of the diverse practices of world Jewry. Ḥabshush's position as a "native guide" to a European traveler, and as a traveler himself to unfamiliar parts of his own land, placed him in a unique position to reflect on the ramifications of this exciting and fraught new era. His reflections serve as a remarkably prescient, nuanced, and deeply humane attempt to critique and celebrate the opportunities of discovery and self-discovery offered by such explorations.

ALAN VERSKIN is associate professor of Jewish and Islamic History at the University of Rhode Island. His most recent book is *A Vision of Yemen: The Travels of a European Orientalist and His Native Guide* (Stanford University Press, 2019). His forthcoming book is *Diary of a Black Jewish Messiah: The Sixteenth-Century Journey of David Reubeni through the Middle East, Africa, and Europe* (Stanford University Press, 2023).

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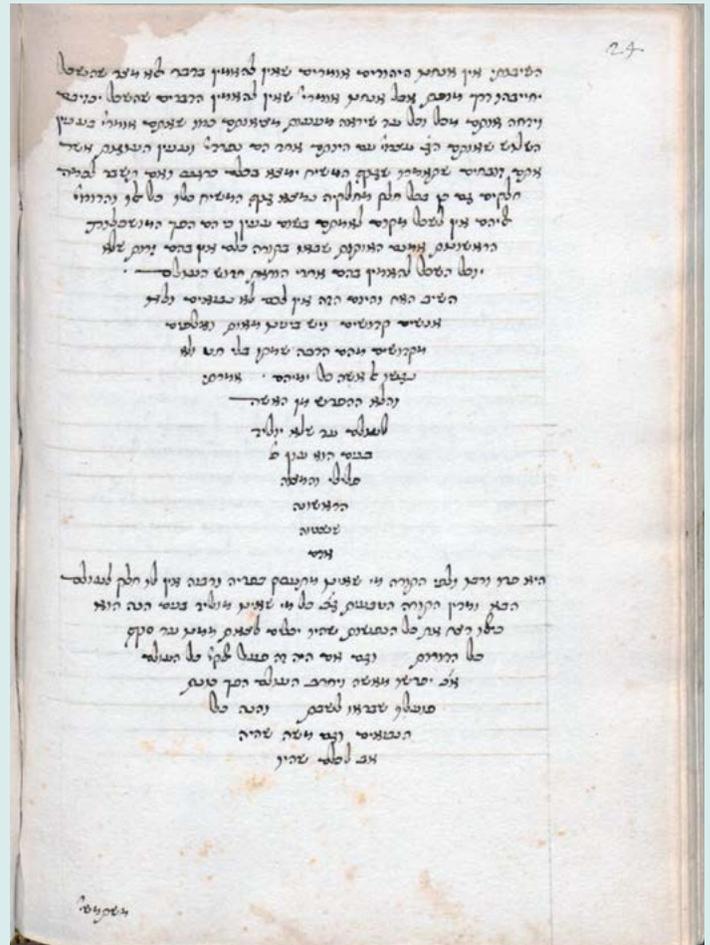
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The Holy and the Beautiful: Traveling to Jerusalem at the End of the Middle Ages

Samuela Marconcini

Some Jews were in search of diamonds, some Jews were in search of God—they all went to Jerusalem. They came from different parts of the Italian peninsula and faced a long journey by sea and by land, using the best travel agency available at the end of the Middle Ages: the city of Venice and its amazing galleys. Surrounded by Christian pilgrims, they left diaries and wrote letters to their relatives in Italy, explaining their unusual experiences.

Meshullam da Volterra was one of them. A wealthy merchant, a boon companion of Lorenzo the Magnificent—the famous lord who ran the show in Florence and really loved Jewish culture—Meshullam left his native Volterra in 1481 for Jerusalem in order to fulfill an unspecified vow. Charged with sexual violence against a Christian woman and for owning “some blasphemous books” denying the virginity of the Holy Mary some twenty years before, Meshullam never fully explains why he decided to go to Jerusalem. Or maybe he did, but the first part of his diary has been lost, and the manuscript containing his text—still kept in the magnificent Medicea Laurenziana Library designed by Michelangelo in Florence—starts in the middle of a sea battle along the shores of Rhodes, in the eastern Mediterranean sea. Meshullam is on board a Genoese ship, when suddenly two boats approach it, with a threatening display and no flag: Are they Catalan corsairs, known to be totally indifferent to the law of the sea? Oh no, they are Venetians, and well-armed. But they are not able to overcome the brave Genoese, so the Venetians turn to a sneaky compromise when they find out that there are some Jews on board with their unseized prey. “Give them and their goods to us,” they tell the Genoese ship commander, “and we will leave you alone.” The answer of the Genoese *patron* is clear: “I won’t give you even a twisted shoe of them, as they are under my protection. I gave my word and I won’t sacrifice one of them to save us.” Back home, the Venetian *patron*, Federigo Giustiniani, will lose his position and pay a fine of 10,000 ducats, an incredible sum of money that the

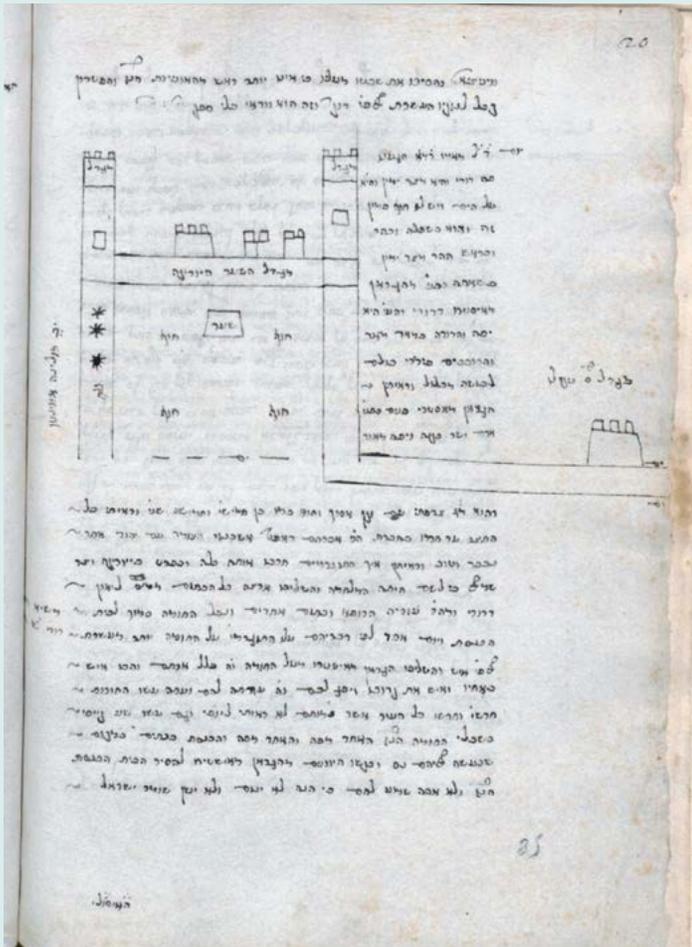


Page from Meshullam da Volterra. An Exposition of a Coastal Route in the Mediterranean and Adriatic from Naples to Jerusalem, with the return to Venice. *Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut.44.11, 31v.*

Genoese counterpart will receive as payment for damages.

Far from indicating a generally positive attitude towards the Jews, this episode rather shows the high esteem Meshullam holds. A few days later, when a sailor of the ship pronounced some offensive words against Meshullam during a forced stop, the sailor was denounced to the *patron*, who personally looked for the offender, tied him to the mast of the ship, and beat him in plain view of the people on board. Among the onlookers was Ovadiah of Bertinoro, an Italian Jewish rabbi and banker, commonly known as Bartenura for his famous commentary on the Mishnah. He was traveling to Alexandria, in Egypt, aiming to reach Jerusalem and make Aliyah, and when he saw what happened to the poor sailor he thought that it was a disproportionate reaction to a verbal offense; it also marked a negative shift in the attitude the sailors had towards the Jews on

Instead of trying to rehabilitate his soul, Meshullam was much more interested in purchasing gems and precious stones.



Page with drawing representing the port of Rhodes in Meshullam da Volterra. An Exposition of a Coastal Route in the Mediterranean and Adriatic from Naples to Jerusalem, with the return to Venice. *Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut.44.11, 35r.*

board. Meshullam probably thought that this was perfectly in line with the respect he deserved, but also that it might be better to lie low for a while. He took a different ship as soon as it was possible.

Meshullam did not at all share the religious views of the Italian Jewish pilgrims to 'Erez Yisra'el in the same period, who were prompted by rumors about the imminent coming of the messiah to leave home and settle in Jerusalem forever. When they finally reached Jerusalem, they wept with joy, and started to collect data about the ten lost tribes, which were also deemed to be about to return "home" and fight for the redemption of the Jewish people. Not a sign of this messianic atmosphere appears in Meshullam's diary. Reading his diary, one has the feeling that Egypt, and thus Cairo, with its incredible markets, or Damascus, with four bazaars and a spa, silk, spices, fruits, and colors all over, were the highlights of his journey, and not Jerusalem. Instead of

trying to rehabilitate his soul, Meshullam was much more interested in purchasing gems and precious stones. When he finally arrives in Jerusalem, Meshullam dedicates only a few words to the holy city: "This is the land of milk and honey," and that's it. He despises the Oriental tradition of the Jews in the Middle East, considering them too "Islamic" to his taste: when they enter a synagogue, they take off their shoes and sit on the floor. Meshullam considers himself an honorable merchant and fully aligned with the Italian Christian mentality and its sense of respectability. Although written in Hebrew, his diary is so full of Italian terms transliterated in Hebrew letters and uses "honor" so frequently that many scholars believe that Meshullam was primarily writing for a non-Jewish audience. For him, going East does not mean looking for redemption. He feels perfectly integrated at home in Tuscany with his Jewish and Christian friends, and feels the same sense of Otherness Christian pilgrims felt when traveling to the Holy Land.

Meshullam is the last witness of the Golden Age of the Jews in the little town of Volterra. By the end of the fifteenth century, when Meshullam was still alive, the Jews of Volterra were no longer permitted to run lending banks in town, and in a few years, the situation for the Jews got so bad that many of Meshullam's relatives, including all his children, converted to Christianity. Meshullam was one of the last to travel for pleasure and return.

SAMUELA MARCONCINI is an independent researcher in Milan who writes scientific articles with a special focus on the history of the Jews in Italy. Her book, *Per amor del cielo. Farsi cristiani a Firenze tra Seicento e Settecento* (Firenze University Press, 2016; *For Heaven's Sake. Becoming Christian in Florence between the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*), received the Sangalli Prize for Religious History.

Yiddish Goes to Expo

Beth Dwoskin

In 1967, my parents took me and my sisters across the Canadian border in downtown Detroit and drove us to Montreal to see the International and Universal Exposition—Expo 67. The theme of Expo 67 was “Man and His World,” inspired by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s book, *Terre des hommes*. Every country was invited to contribute a pavilion and sixty-two accepted, Israel among them.

Montreal’s Rabbi Wilfred Shuchat wanted to have a small synagogue included in the Israel Pavilion. In a decisive reply that is guaranteed to break the hearts of twenty-first-century Jews, the pavilion designers refused Rabbi Shuchat’s request on the grounds that Israel was “a modern, democratic and secular Jewish state”ⁱ that was “holy to three world religions.”ⁱⁱ

Rabbi Shuchat then decided to make the synagogue freestanding, but when he turned to his wealthy congregant Sam Steinberg for funding, Steinberg insisted that the synagogue had to be part of a Pavilion of Judaism, a counterpart to the Christian Pavilion of Unity, and he got his wish. The Pavilion of Judaism, designed by Montreal architect Harry Stilman, was a graceful, understated structure. It was capped by a dome in a nod to Moorish synagogue architecture. Curved rectangular white walls, meant to evoke pages from a book or an open scroll, were affixed to the four sides of the building’s exterior. They displayed quotations in Hebrew characters, which were elegantly carved from Douglas fir, and thus it happened that Yiddish came to the Expo. One of the quotes was based on the words of Y. L. Peretz:

Courtesy of the author.



A rough translation of these lines might be:

The goal is humanity
All people strive for it
Each people on its own path
The path to humanity
And we Jews strive for humanity
On the Jewish path.

This universalist sentiment is actually a misleading expansion of one line that Peretz wrote as a plea to educated, secular Jews to turn their backs on assimilation and return to their people. It's rephrased from "Home-Coming," the second section of his piece, "Advice to the Estranged." Solomon Liptzin translated it as: "All roads lead to the ideal man, but each people has its own specific road."ⁱⁱⁱ Peretz was over and done with the maskilic emulation of non-Jews, and that's what he was writing about.

In the midst of all the negotiation and deliberation about the Jewish Pavilion, someone took the line from Peretz and adapted it to address the theme of "Man and His World" while avoiding any conflict between Israel and the Diaspora. Peretz himself was probably inspired by the prophet Micah: "Though all the peoples walk / Each in the names of its gods, / We will walk / In the name of the Lord our God / Forever and ever" (Micah 4:5). The story of these lines sums up the classic Jewish paradox that was at play at the Jewish pavilion.

In 1967, Yiddish culture still existed in North American Jewish centers like Montreal and New York, but then as now, it was siloed in its own corner of Jewish society, and unlike now, it was less important to the younger generation, though Yiddish schools still operated in places like Montreal and Winnipeg. Montreal's Jewish leaders were grappling with the substantial antisemitism that accompanied the Quebec separatist movement and they were anxious to demonstrate their loyalty as Canadians of the Mosaic faith. They were removed from the *heykish* world of Yiddish and, like most Expo attendees, they probably had no idea what they were seeing when they looked at the Hebrew letters. My parents, who were both children of native Yiddish speakers, could not read the Yiddish, even though my father took this picture of the wall. This wall faced a central plaza in the pavilion's section of Expo, which might indicate that the pavilion's designers believed in the universal theme of the Yiddish words and wanted them to be prominent as part of Expo's theme. But that belief was lost on visitors like my Jewish parents.

This rich personal connection to Montreal was completely unknown to my family when we made our sojourn to Expo 67.

In the twenty-first century, thanks to genealogical research, I'm even more personally aware of this paradox. It appears that my great-great-grandfather was the first cantor of the Rumanisher Shul in Montreal, which no longer exists. Later, he ran a Judaica bookstore on Cadieux Street, which also no longer exists, and he and my great-great-grandmother are buried in Montreal's historic Baron de Hirsch Cemetery. This rich personal connection to Montreal was completely unknown to my family when we made our sojourn to Expo 67. Nor was I aware of the Yiddish words at Expo until I digitized a box of slides that I found among the earthly possessions of my late parents. Even then, I might have ignored it had I not undertaken the study of Yiddish in my old age.

Expo took place during the summer of Israel's seminal victory in the 1967 Six-Day War, and that triumph came to define the North American Jewish experience. Whatever awareness North American Jews had of themselves as the descendants of Yiddish-speaking immigrants was overwhelmed by the Hebrew narrative of the modern Israeli triumph.

At the international exhibition on "Man and His World," Jews celebrated their religion and their country, but not their peoplehood or their distinctive language. Most Jewish visitors, especially from America, were probably unaware that the Yiddish words on the wall of the Jewish pavilion reflected the universal theme of Expo 67. Along with their non-Jewish fellow fairgoers, most of them could not even read it.

BETH DWOSKIN is a retired librarian and Yiddish singer who holds a master's degree in Judaic Studies from the University of Michigan Frankel Center. She was a 2020 fellow at the Yiddish Book Center.

i H. Troper, "A Tale of Two Pavilions: Jewish Participation in Expo 67," *Canadian Jewish Studies / Etudes Juives Canadiennes* 26 (2018): 162.

ii Ibid.

iii Isaac Leib Peretz, *Peretz*, trans. and ed. Sol Liptzin (New York: YIVO, 1947), 42–43.

Shtetl Routes: The Local Contexts of Jewish Heritage Tourism in the Borderland of Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus

Emil Majuk

The eastern border of the European Union runs through land that for over four hundred years, from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, was the most important center of Jewish culture in the world. The blooming of this culture began when the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania created a dual state called the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, from which contemporary Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine came into existence. The events of World War II and the Holocaust destroyed this world, yet Jewish cultural heritage has been permanently imprinted upon the cultural landscape of this part of Europe. Jewish heritage travel here is inherently ambivalent. While survivors often notice what is missing from their childhood landscapes—the absence, subsequent generations sometimes focus on what does remain. At the same time, for local communities, traces of Jewish history can be an important element of their own identity.

Shtetl Routes is a heritage interpretation platform and a cultural tourism trail in the footsteps of Jewish cultural heritage in smaller towns in central and eastern Europe. The idea arose from the documentary, artistic, and educational work connected to the Jewish heritage of Lublin as part of the work of the Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre Centre, a Lublin-based municipal cultural institution created in the early 1990s. The Shtetl Routes project began to operate in 2013 in the framework of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine funded by the European Union.

While organizing the project, we considered the following questions: How should the multicultural heritage of a borderland area be discussed? Can the current residents, mostly non-Jewish, relate to local Jewish history as their common heritage? How should Jewish heritage be presented as part of cultural tourism?

We devoted particular attention to a cultural phenomenon that was unique to central and eastern Europe, and which strongly influenced the local cultural landscape: the shtetl (Yiddish for a small town). There are over fifteen hundred towns in central and eastern Europe that could be called a shtetl. After conducting an initial inventory of Jewish cultural heritage resources and assessing their accessibility, we chose sixty towns (twenty from each country, Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine), for which tourism development tools were designed—guidebook, map, website, traveling exhibition, training tours for tour guides. In 2019, Shtetl Routes joined the European Routes of Jewish Heritage, one of the Council of Europe's certified Cultural Routes.

What motivates people to take a journey through former shtetls? One of the most important reasons for tourists, both individuals and groups, is education. Most visitors at the Jewish heritage sites do not have personal ties to Judaism. There are many study groups interested in either Jewish heritage or the history of the Holocaust, usually both. A relatively small, but emotionally involved group of travelers visit places connected with their family's past. A large group of Jews, usually members of ultra-Orthodox Hasidic communities, travel to Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus to visit graves of tzaddikim. A special group

There are over fifteen hundred towns in central and eastern Europe that could be called a shtetl.

What happens when a tourist's gaze is focused on a former shtetl?

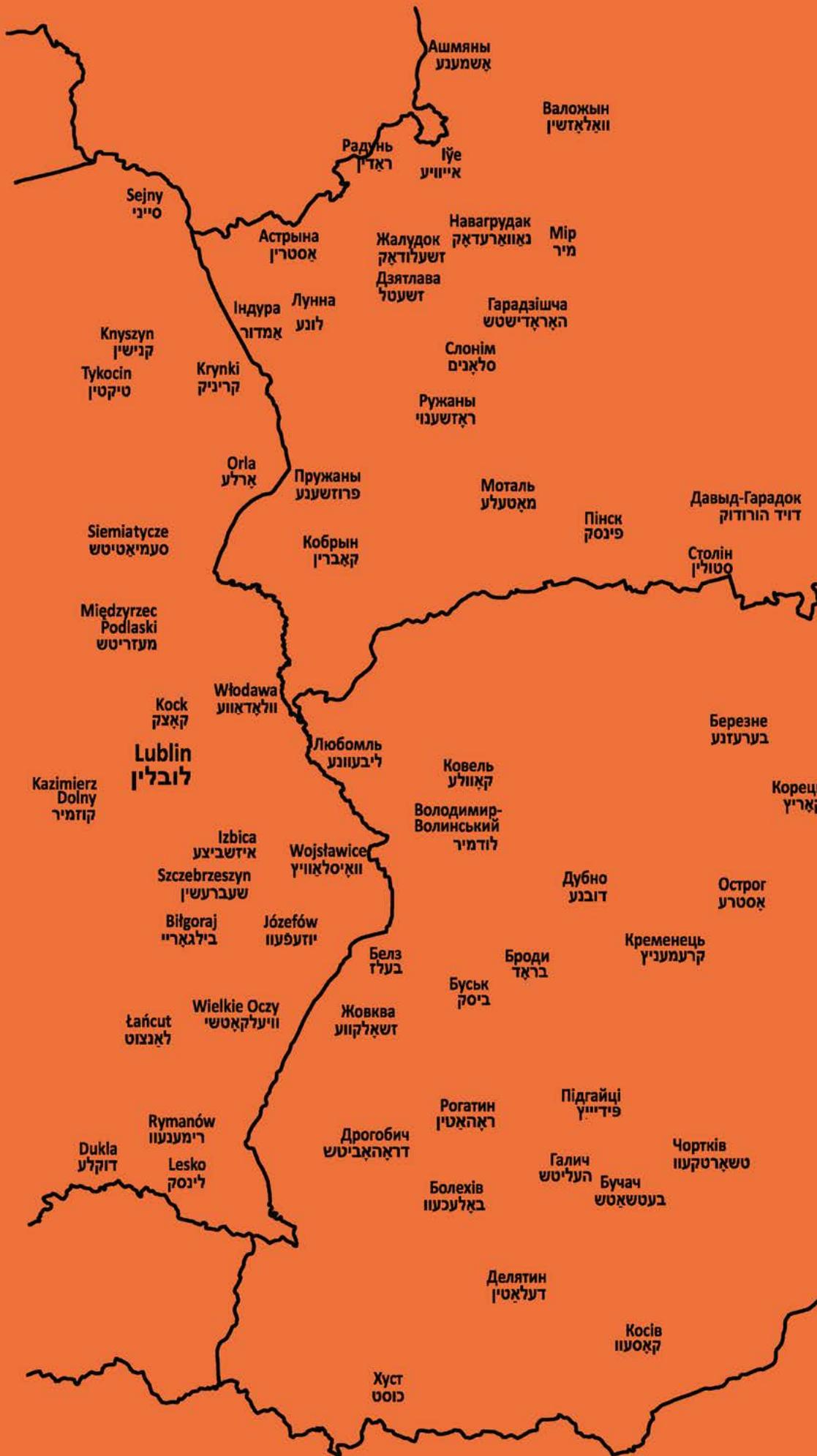
of visitors is youth from Israel who participate in compulsory high school trips to Holocaust sites. Current citizens also visit Jewish heritage sites as part of their local cultural landscape. Finally, some mainstream tourists learn about Jewish culture as part of the culture and traditions of a certain region.

What happens when a tourist's gaze is focused on a former shtetl? Away from the metropolises, a traveler can see important sites and artifacts of Jewish cultural heritage, such as synagogues, yeshivas, cemeteries, various secular places (e.g., buildings related to schools, libraries, athletic organizations, theatres, and political parties), the houses

where prominent people grew up (e.g., the home of the first president of Israel, Chaim Weizman, in Motol, Belarus, or Shai Agnon's family home in Buchach, Ukraine). Tourist attractions also include synagogue museums (e.g., in Tykocin and Włodawa in Poland), theme museums like the Jewish Resistance Museum in Navahrudak (Belarus), or open-air ethnographic museums within the "shtetl" sector (Sanok and Lublin in Poland). Small collections of Jewish ceremonial art or material culture artifacts are often included in local museum exhibitions. Most of the former synagogues are now used for a wide variety of nonreligious functions, as cultural centers, libraries, or concert halls;

Tourists in the Łańcut synagogue (Poland), 2015. Photo by Monika Tarajko. Courtesy of the Shtetl Routes, www.shtetlroutes.eu





Opposite page:

Detail from back cover of Emil Majuk, ed. Shtetl Routes: Travels through the Forgotten Continent. (Lublin: Ośrodek "Brama Grodzka - Teatr NN," 2018)

Presenting the diverse contexts in which Jewish cultural heritage functions can be the basis of valuable tourism ...

commemorative plaques highlight the historical significance of a building. Occasionally, these serve as sites for Jewish commemorative events. Apart from the tangible heritage, this region is filled with rich intangible cultural heritage, too, since the Jewish borderland communities cultivated celebrated authors, thinkers, and artists.

Inevitably, the trail of old shtetls is a journey through places affected by genocide: ruins, devastated cemeteries, mass murder sites. This is also part of the local history, and the traveler can learn how day-to-day coexistence can be destroyed by hatred and prejudice. Presenting the diverse contexts in which Jewish cultural heritage functions can be the basis of valuable tourism-related activities—such as Leora Tec’s “Bridge to Poland” program.

Jewish heritage tourism is a part of the development of new forms of tourism focusing on cultural heritage, but on the other hand, it also stems from local communities’ appreciation of multicultural heritage in the process of building their local identities. Both kinds of shtetl experiences—the centuries of life living in cultural diversity as well as the destruction caused by hatred for the Other—are highly important for European identity. Although creating a tourist product based on such a painful and complicated history requires a lot of knowledge, moral sensitivity, attention to context, as well as awareness of the various backgrounds of potential visitors, properly conducted tourism of Jewish heritage holds great potential for civic education and counteracting xenophobia. It is especially important on a local level.

As for the answer to “how to tell the story?,” the key element seems to be the creation of a “community of shared heritage,” bringing together local government and activists, Jewish social and religious organizations, descendants of former Jewish residents, as well as experts to create synergies and build positive social capital around the cultural, touristic, and educational aspects of Jewish heritage, as well as around the need to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.

Internet resources:

Shtetl Routes: www.shtetlroutes.eu

Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre Centre: www.teatrnn.pl/en

European Routes of Jewish Heritage: jewishheritage.org

Bridge to Poland: www.bridgetopoland.com

We carried out the Shtetl Routes project in a seemingly stable and peaceful situation, before the outbreak of the pandemic, before the tightening of repression in Belarus by the Lukashenko regime and, above all, before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation.

Unfortunately, writing about cultural tourism in a situation of war is just a theoretical intellectual exercise. The network created by Shtetl Routes is now used to transfer humanitarian aid and medical supplies to our Ukrainian friends. However, I very much hope that the aggressors and tyrants will be defeated and we will be able to return to common travels in the footsteps of the Jewish cultural heritage of the borderlands of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine.

EMIL MAJUK is a political scientist and cultural expert specializing in the interpretation of cultural heritage. He coordinates the projects “Shtetl Routes. Jewish cultural heritage in cross-border tourism of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine” and “Jewish History Tours,” for the “Grodzka Gate - NN Theater” Centre in Lublin (Poland) and is president of the Panorama of Cultures Association, which aims to popularize interesting cultural phenomena from Central and Eastern Europe. He is coauthor, with Monika Tarajko, of *Leżajsk. In the Footsteps of Tzaddik Elimelekh and Jewish Cultural Heritage (Leżajsk, 2021)* and editor of *Shtetl Routes: Travels Through the Forgotten Continent (Lublin, 2018)*.

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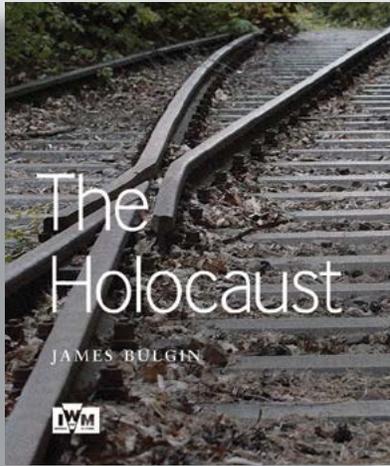


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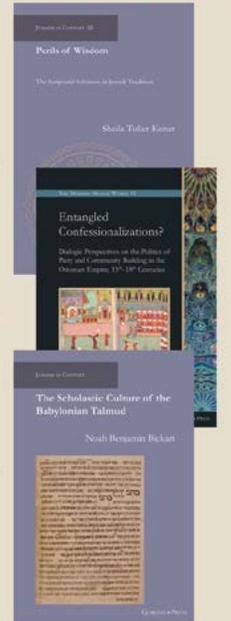
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Women Doing Jewish Abroad

Melissa R. Klapper

In 1909, fourteen-year-old Alice Pentlarge's family spent several spring and summer months in Europe on their version of the Grand Tour. Every place they went—London, Frankfurt, Prague, Amsterdam, Berlin, Rome—Alice's mother took her to visit synagogues and Jewish quarters. Similarly, Clara Lowenburg Moses attended synagogue on Yom Kippur in Belfast during a 1912 trip, and Rebecca Hourwich Reyher headed to Rosh Hashanah services within hours of landing in Cape Town in 1924. None of these women made a habit of going to synagogues as part of their regular routines at home, even on the high holidays, but, like so many other Jewish travelers, while they were abroad they sought out more connection with the international Jewish community. Such activities could fall into the realm of a sort of cultural imperialism, an inspection of Jewish life in other lands, but they were also a natural expression of religious affiliation, though not necessarily observance, for tourists who were interested in visiting Jewish spaces even if they did not do so as part of their everyday lives.

Overtly religious or ethnic spaces abroad, whether synagogues or historically Jewish neighborhoods, provided travelers a point of connection to a larger—in these cases, international—sense of Jewish community. What we might now refer to as “doing Jewish” while abroad will seem familiar to the many modern Jewish travelers who engage in similar activities today. Its long history is evident in the diaries, letters, memoirs, scrapbooks, and photographs I am exploring as part of the research for my current book project on American Jewish women travelers during the decades between the Civil War and World War II.

Starting in the late 1800s, travel abroad became more accessible due to a new commercialization of tourism that targeted the middle class as well as the wealthy. An entirely new industry sprang up to serve adventurous but not necessarily well-to-do travelers, a mass of people who depended on affordable accommodations, transportation, guidebooks, maps, and markers to ease their journeys along increasingly well-trodden paths of

sightseeing. These developments meant that a greater number of Americans visited foreign countries and interacted with people in other places. In an era of migration, travel as another form of international movement played a role in processes of modernization that helped shape American society and culture. Exploring the travel experiences of American Jewish women illustrates these broader trends while also attending to the particular transnational identity that led Jewish women to identify with each other across national boundaries.

While such travel was still beyond the means of most working-class people, the experience of going abroad became quite common for American Jewish girls and women during the late 1800s and early 1900s, and not only those from the most privileged backgrounds. They went to school overseas; visited relatives and hometowns; worked abroad; attended international meetings of various activist groups; and took sightseeing trips alone, with family members or friends, or with organized tour groups. Most went to Europe, but some visited Latin America, Asia, and Africa as well. Unsurprisingly, considerations of Jewish identity and affiliation were particularly salient for those who visited mandatory Palestine.

Travel endowed American Jewish women with a sophistication that enhanced their status within the Jewish community as well as within a larger community of women. Since domesticity was traditionally central to them as both women and Jews, especially if they were middle or upper class, the question arose of what happened when they left their traditional bailiwicks of home. While travel often challenged women's conventional gender roles by expanding their agency and autonomy once they were freed from routine domestic duties, for Jewish women travel generally strengthened rather than diminished Jewish identity. Even those who rejected ritual observance or resisted social, cultural, and economic limitations rooted in their Jewishness discovered that once abroad, they identified as Jews as never before. They found themselves not only attending synagogue services but also marking Jewish holidays, socializing with other Jews, and visiting Jewish homelands, memorials, and cemeteries. Upon their return, they often gave new thought as to how to create homes that could offer a synthesis of domesticity, cosmopolitanism, and American Jewish identity. Constructions of gender were thus fundamental elements of their travel experiences.

PLACES VISITED
DATE ¹⁹¹⁰ Apr 20 21/10 PLACE Constantinople
REMARKS Tomb of Selim I 1526. mosque of Ahmed 1614. 1001 columns of Constantine. Serpent Column built by Greeks after battle 479 B.C. of Plataea to support golden tripod, carried away by Phocian chiefs in time of Phillip of Macedon. Column was brought to Constanti- nople by Constantine. Heads are off. One is in museum. Obelisk from Heliopolis 16 th cen. B.C. Museum of Janissaries - root figures. Janissaries exterminated 1826 by Mahmud II Visited bazaars. Apr. 21. Thurs. a.m. Imperial Ottoman Museum. Important Sassanid cophagi of 3 rd + 4 th cen. B.C. most from Sidon. "Alexander" + "The keepers" best, of 4 th cen. Silvan inscription about excavation (Greek) Jerusalem Stele from Solomon's Temple (Hebrew). Home rest of the day. a.m. Chimeli Kiosk

PLACES VISITED
DATE ¹⁹¹⁰ Apr. 22, 23/10 Sat + Sun. PLACE Constantinople.
REMARKS Museum too. It is a Turkish Museum constructed 1466 A.D. Apr. 22 Fri. a.m. drove through the grounds of palace of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (Mohammed V). went into some of the buildings + his mosque the Hamidiyah mosque. Stood in line for c. 1/4 of an hour to see present Sultan who failed to ap- pear on account of illness. p.m. went to see whirling dervishes. Roved up The Golden Horn to Sweet Waters of Europe, drove back. Apr. 23 Sat. Saturday Passover service at Synagogue - Spanish Jews. Seder with Mr. David Levy in Stamboul.

Pages from Ella Davis's 1910 travel diary mentioning both sightseeing and a Passover seder. Davis and Isaacs Family Papers, P-936, at the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at New England Historic Genealogical Society.

So, too, were unsettling encounters with antisemitism, another factor in American Jewish women travelers' decisions to spend some of their time abroad in Jewish spaces. During her long 1924 voyage to South Africa, Rebecca Hourwich Reyher heard multiple antisemitic remarks from both crew members and fellow passengers, none of whom realized she was Jewish. After enduring more than a week of such comments, Rebecca finally took great pleasure in informing her shipmates that she herself was Jewish, leaving them stammering in embarrassment. This was the context for her decision to attend Rosh Hashanah services when she arrived in Cape Town, something she had not done since early childhood. Experiencing antisemitism in such a personal way while traveling ultimately had the effect of heightening her sense of Jewish identity. American Jewish women travelers like Rebecca were well placed to take note of—and report on once home—the endemic antisemitism they found in many places and the contrast it presented with their lives in the United States. They became

conduits for information about the status and treatment of Jews in other parts of the world.

For several generations of American Jewish women, travel experiences sparked novel ways of thinking about themselves as Americans, women, and as Jews, as well as new ideas about Jewish community rooted in religion, ethnicity, and heritage. Travel could both destabilize and reaffirm their religious, cultural, ethnic, national, and gender identities in ways that bear further exploration and speak to contemporary notions of intersectionality.

MELISSA R. KLAPPER is professor of History and director of Women's & Gender Studies at Rowan University. Her two most recent books are *Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women's Activism, 1890-1940* (New York University Press, 2013), which won the National Jewish Book Award in Women's Studies, and *Ballet Class: An American History* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Mediterranean Dreaming

Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah

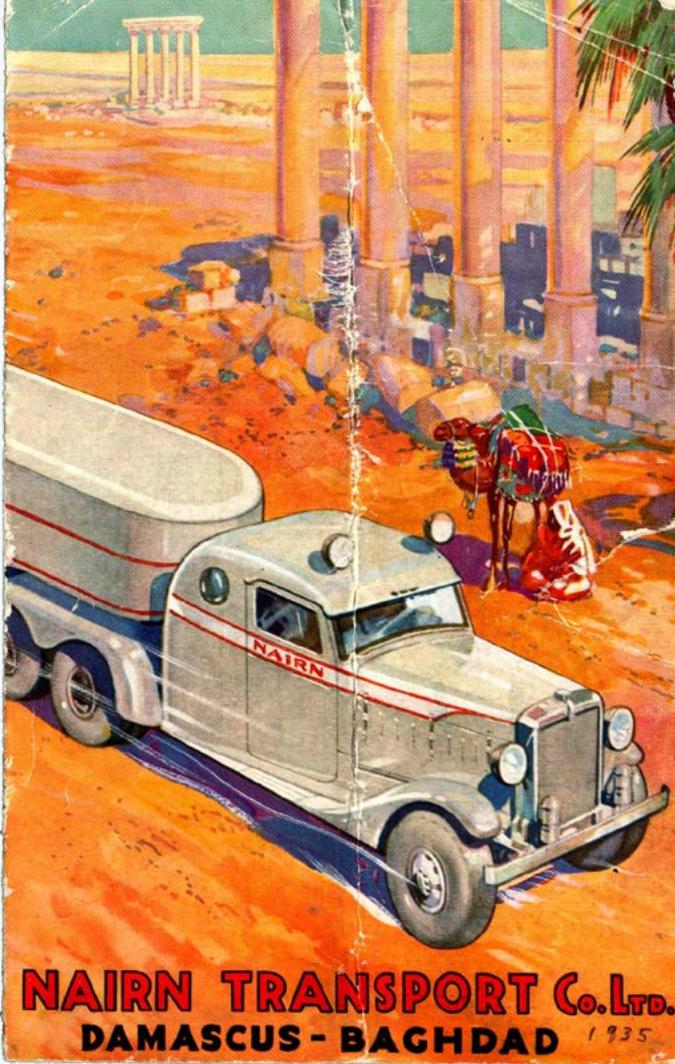
Like any proper resident of the Netherlands, sometime in late July I pack my bags, load the car, and drive with my family to the South of France for a few weeks of Mediterranean sun and relaxation. We usually make stops in between, exploring a random French village I found online and staying at a charming country inn. Amazingly, this annual summer pilgrimage to the beach parallels the summer plans of many Jews in the Middle East in the first half of the twentieth century. The only difference is that instead of heading to the South of France to enjoy the Mediterranean, Middle Eastern Jews would travel to the seaside and mountain resorts of Lebanon, Mandate Palestine, and Egypt, often casually crossing borders in a way almost unthinkable to us in the twenty-first century. While today it would be, to say the least, unlikely for a resident of Baghdad to hop in a car and drive to Tel Aviv for a beach holiday, this was quite normal throughout the 1920s and 1930s, especially for members of Baghdad's vibrant Jewish community. In fact, according to Google Maps, the drive from Baghdad to Tel Aviv, at 1032 km, is about 300 km shorter than my traditional summer trek from the Hague to Nice.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the urban Jewish communities of the Middle East included a flourishing middle class with both the time and the means for regional tourism. Encouraged by safe and affordable public and private transport options, in addition to a thriving tourism industry, the Mediterranean coast was, in more ways than one, a hot spot of summer leisure for urban Jewish communities looking to unwind. For Jews in Cairo, Alexandria and the Egyptian beach resorts around the Nile Delta were the most popular summer destinations. Families would either drive or take the fast train to reach seaside residences that ranged from rental apartments and hotels to a mattress in a cousin's home. Inevitably these lodgings were never far from a kosher butcher or pop-up synagogue catering to Jewish holidaymakers. Families would frequently pair up to rent villas on the beach, nearly a century before Airbnb came into existence. Memoirs from the interwar period speak of long days at the beach, tea dances, and endless rounds of cards. Travel between the two cities was so



easy that many men would spend the week attending to business in Cairo and then travel to Alexandria to join their family for the weekend.

The Jews of Baghdad had to travel a bit further to reach the Mediterranean, with Lebanon and Palestine being their main summer destinations, and at times also jumping-off points for more exotic travel. With no train connecting Baghdad to Beirut, the bus was the most popular form of transport. Run by the New Zealand-born Nairn brothers, who served in the Middle East during World War I and never left the region, the Nairn Transport Company ran a bus route (which also acted as a postal delivery service) originating in Baghdad, with stops in Damascus, Beirut, and Haifa, after which it was possible to board a taxi, train, or boat to reach one's final destination. The Nairn buses were so popular that already in 1925 Rachel Ezra, a Baghdadi Jewish socialite from Calcutta, recounted the ease of travel during her Grand Tour of the Middle East, producing a piece for the *Iraq Times* titled "From Damascus to Baghdad: A trip across the Syrian Desert." Like their Baghdadi brethren,



*Nairn Transport Co. Ltd. brochure, c. 1935.
Northwestern University Transportation Library*

Jews in Mandate Palestine also headed to the cool mountains of Lebanon to relax under its famous cedar trees, an antidote to the stifling humidity of summer in Tel Aviv. In fact, the *Palestine Post* issue of August 29, 1934, ran an article with a title we would be prone to initially misconstrue today, though its subtitle makes its meaning clear: "Palestinians Invade the Lebanon: Jews Are Majority among Holiday Makers," stating that Beirut reported all-time record highs of Jewish tourism, possibly due to publicity campaigns in neighboring countries. The article also mentions an increase in Lebanon's traffic caused by the influx of tourists, which also sounds like my experiences in the South of France in summer!

Although private correspondence and memoirs point to Lebanon as the preferred holiday destination of Levantine Jews due to its cool climate, Mandate Palestine was also a popular destination. Palestine had the added advantage of the option to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and other holy sites, and potentially practice one's Modern Hebrew if so inclined. Naturally, leisure

tourism was not the only motivation for the Jews of the Middle East to explore their region. The archives are replete with examples of medical tourism to consult specialists, salesmen embarking on long trips to expand their commercial networks, and, of course, visits to family and friends who had moved abroad driven by economic opportunity or marriage. As I read these travel logs, I am reminded how geographically small the region is and how easy travel once was.

These travel anecdotes are a reminder of the high level of Jewish participation in Middle Eastern leisure society and the permeability of borders prior to the creation of the State of Israel. Jewish travelers were a specific, and often recognizable demographic, as attested by the aforementioned newspaper headline. Furthermore, from the perspective of leisure, both members of historic Jewish communities in the region and newer European arrivals to Palestine were grouped into the same demographic. Interestingly, these leisure travel patterns persisted in parallel to mounting political tensions surrounding Jewish political aspirations in Palestine. For example, in the late 1930s, amid the Arab revolt in Palestine and heightened political tension in Iraq, it was completely plausible for Jews from Baghdad and members of the new Yishuv to find themselves together at a summer resort in Lebanon. Just as many continue to travel for leisure during the current pandemic, Jews continued to travel throughout the Middle East even as political tension grew.

So, as I sit here at my desk, dreaming of summer holidays in the South of France, I not-so-very-secretly hope that one day I can be like the Jews of the Middle East that I study, who could pack their suitcases and travel from Baghdad or Cairo to Alexandria or Tel Aviv for a few weeks of holiday without thinking twice. In this long pandemic period in which travel seems to be becoming more complicated, and the Arab world more polarized, I remain optimistic that perhaps one day I will be able to organize my own Middle East road trip. Beirut to Alexandria is only 1300 km by car, the same distance as the Hague to Nice. Just think of all of the great stops that could be made during such a journey!

SASHA GOLDSTEIN-SABBAH is assistant professor at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, specializing in the modern history of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa. She is the author of *Baghdadi Jewish Networks in the Age of Nationalism* (Brill, 2021).

Taking a New Vantage Point in Search of New Meanings

Tomasz Cebulski

What happens if we change the vantage point on Jewish heritage sites?

Do they communicate a more complete story? Does the historical narrative change by offering a broader site context?

Let's take a bird's-eye view over the visible and invisible sites in Poland in search of new meanings and interpretations.

Working with Sky Heritage Pictures, I devoted the last two years to revisiting hundreds of Jewish heritage sites in search of new visualizations and a better understanding of Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust.

The haunting solitude of the sites is juxtaposed with abundant nature, which slowly eradicats the traces of sites of memory and nonmemory.



Kazimierz - the one and almost only surviving medieval Jewish district in the world, with the fifteenth-century Old Synagogue in the foreground. Kazimierz ironically and miraculously survived in the city of Krakow, which was doomed by the German Nazis to become their new model *judenrein* settlement in the colonized east.



The Treblinka monument, which from this perspective offers a map of the nonexistent Warsaw. Warsaw was the second largest Jewish city in the world, in terms of percentage of the population, before 1939. The civilization of Jewish Warsaw is buried under the concrete slabs of the Treblinka monument erected in the 1960s.

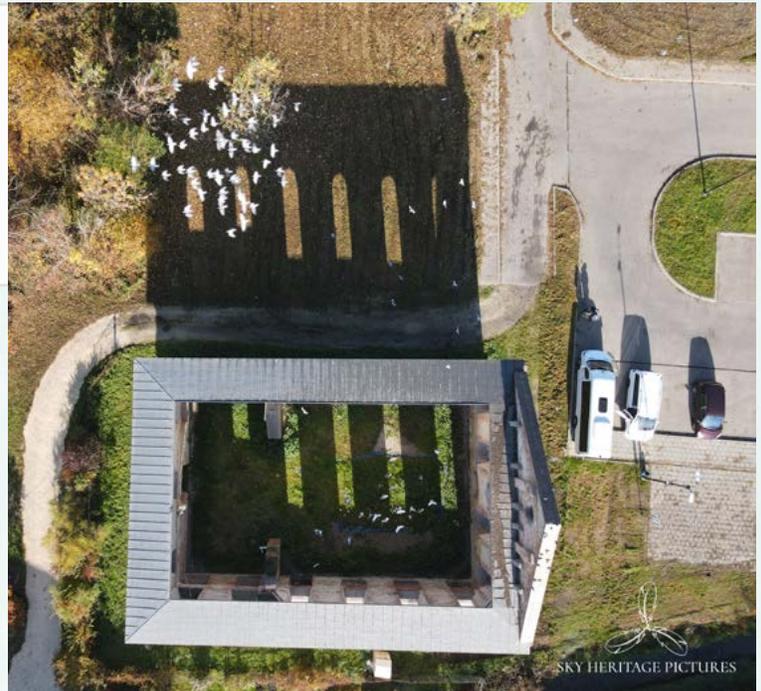


Sobibór - every genocide finishes with denial by the perpetrators and silence of the global bystanders. Then it takes decades to break the silence and to build memory of the nonexistent sites. The historical location of the gas chambers in Sobibór was scientifically established only in the twenty-first century. In 2020 a new museum and memorial were unveiled.

Białystok - the gateway to the Litvak civilization up north. The Jewish cemetery is almost the only physical remnant of a once-thriving Jewish population of 54,000. Jews made up 42 percent of the city's population in 1939.



Działoszyce - this Galicia/Russia borderland shtetl amalgamated the Jewish virtues of life and religion into a unique communal experience organized around the mystical past and destined towards a shared future, a future violently destroyed by the German Nazis.



Brzesko - how to make a cemetery alive? Through constructing memory and the mitzvah of perpetual care. After 1945, Brzesko Jewish cemetery had a caretaker, Szymon Platner, whose work has continued and was developed into education by the Brzesko Memory and Dialogue Association.



TOMASZ CEBULSKI founded and directs *Polin Travel* (www.jewish-guide.pl), a Jewish genealogy and tour company; *Sky Heritage Pictures*, a visual project presenting historical sites from drone vantage point for use by museums, educational institutions; and *Teen Flying University*, a program promoting history education among Polish youth. Dr. Cebulski is the author of *Auschwitz after Auschwitz: History, Memory, Politics* (2016), among other publications.

POETRY: "Sedona, in Gold and Rust" by Eitan Fishbane

1.

Dreams of the past.

Into solitude, beyond room and study,
words of the Concord sage
inscribed in me at the beginning of my way:

*uplifted into infinite space
a perfect exhilaration
currents of the Universal Being circulate through me.*



Courtesy of the author.

2.

And the dancing mystic howling into the night –
far from the marketplace and the crossroads,
toward the Nothing at the soul of All.

Then in the day when the trees and fields
are gathered up like kindling into his prayer,
melodies singular and symphonic,
notes to the score of wonder.

Or the woodlands are reshaped
into an otherworldly instrument –
soloist playing in slow undulating dance before
his darkened audience;

then a quartet, then a symphony of sound –
music-vessels of the hand
seen only in the prophet's eye,
heard only in the chambers of his mind

resonating like two thick strings
of a caramel and amber violin –
reaching forward to the breaking open of souls.

Piercing and crying of E, folded into A,
bent in the shape of minor lament
exploding into organ fugue
before it is sorrowful klezmer once again.
A lifetime of sadness collapsed
into three lines of score,
released into visionary mind
infant born of the soothed and clarified heart.
Melody and solitude.

The river flowing from the Upland
and down to the Black Sea basin –
into a forest of oak, maple, and elm he withdraws;
cry of the rebbe
resounding across the surface of deep time.

3.

And here, now, in this sublime American southwest
I find myself a world away:

Into the north country I pass,
the desert highlands beyond the valley of the sun –

mountain air of this enchanted earth
where memory lasts in the millions of years
recalling how once there was an ancient sea,
volcanic rupture and the slow loving kiss
of lapping waters

iron-bleed sandstone, vibrant rust –
layers of history marked in the salt lines.

Red Rock Secret Mountain Wilderness
guarding the whispered prayers of all who have crossed
her trails:

Anasazi, Hohokam, Sinagua;
Yavapai, Apache, Navajo –
their words a jumbled mystery
and yet inscribed in the stone
and in the memory of the earth and plant life.

The heart of her brimming vitality –
gentle current of Oak Creek,
life restored in the juniper wood
burning in the medicine man's fire –
fragrant smoke clearing energy and air.

Chaparral, interior, leaves powdered or tea-steeped
healing the pilgrim, wanderer lost.

Cottonwood, sycamore, velvet ash –
desert ironwood and catclaw acacia;
banana yucca, speargrass
redberry juniper, Arizona walnut –
four-wing saltbrush, shrubby buckwheat, and agave.

Plenitude of formation primordial,
breath and speech of the land murmuring softly,
exhale of a living creature
sweeping over the sunlit face of the hiker
crossing borders into wilderness sanctified:
Yerba, pinyon, ponderosa.

4.

Solitary kaddish
whispered
wrapped in the pure white tallis
from a day long ago

the psalms sung low and slow
as meditation

The work of His hands spoken by the heavens.

Memory in this place is endless,
like *Ein Sof* overflowing into Mind
emptied of color –
all potential, of what will be,
but still the fullness of what was
in the time before time when all there was
was time.

5.

Pilgrim's journey to the cathedral on high
towering over red plateaus
meditators lying supine on the rocks,
absorbing her gentle and soothing breath,
brisk sun flowing into the crevices of untold pain
in a thousand passers-through,
each an ache unique –

and she, force of the cathedral,
mystery of the one-seed juniper,
bathes and rinses the weight of hearts,
even if first she lifts that fiercely burning sorrow
from the dark well of inward hiding,
raising it to the searing presence of
feeling and knowing.

Only then can the climb break you open,
fragile and vulnerable like the Mountain Bluebird
to the Black Hawk
plunging from the sky with talons raised
at two hundred miles an hour.



Courtesy of the author

6.

He steps out of the rain
into the shops at Tlaquepaque –
loft overflowing
with the intricate vision of a carpet weaver:
this one nearly all silk,
smooth and cool to the touch;

And in The Inner Eye
the wood carvings
and small hand-painted boxes
designed to hold secrets, promises, regrets.

What secret will your box hold?

The lover's letter to the one who is like scar tissue
over the wound of memory;

or perhaps the spices of another time
unearthed for separating holy from profane
at the moment of soul-crossing.

The lamplights emerge with the coming of night,
and their glow reflects
on the rainswept cobblestone path
that weaves between visions and artists.

In the gallery
cobalt blue with shades of azure,
egg and bowl-shaped
glistening and drawing the meditative gaze –
strewn with sand-hued speckle
and draped with curtain-like layers
of willemite, crystalline glaze on porcelain.

7.

In this wilderness
beyond the well-worn pathways of trail
he knows the creatures, predator and prey,
crouch in hiding and rush through
the beargrass, the mesquite, and the hackberry;
coyote, mule deer, and javelina –
ringtail cat, black-tailed jackrabbit, Arizona tarantula,
and the rattlers: western diamondback,
mohave, black tailed.

In the trees and fields and streams of this
Pinyon-juniper woodland
the black chinned hummingbird sings its song,
the blue heron spreads its majestic wings and fishes for
dinner,
and the ladder-backed woodpecker cackles and chirps
as it rises in the quiet daytime heat.

Not far is the sweet flow of Oak Creek,

and here – in the Rimrock Verde Valley,
surrounded by ancient red butte and the sea-lines
of primordial waters –
all the rich varieties of life are
reminded of their oneness;

Where the hiker breathes in his exhilaration,
leaning on his stick like a wandering monk
from long ago:
smiling at the slow sublime ascent of God's face
in the golden rust of late afternoon.

EITAN FISHBANE is associate professor of Jewish Thought
at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and is the author,
most recently, of *Embers of Pilgrimage: Poems* (Panui
Publications, 2021) and *The Art of Mystical Narrative:
A Poetics of the Zohar* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

This poem is reprinted from Eitan Fishbane, *Embers of Pilgrimage:
Poems* (Panui Publications, 2021).



EYES LIKE LAMPS

Selections from the Mohammed B. Alwan Collection of 19th-Century Middle-Eastern Photography: A 5000-Image Archive Documenting Culture, Religion, Commerce and Daily Life in the Islamic Near East, from Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Turkey to Persia, Arabia, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. Lemonds, Debra; Eric Kline (eds). Introduction by Stephen Sheehi. 2016, Los Angeles. 60 signed copies. Silk slipcase. Gilt edges. Extensive visual survey with 374 images by distinguished European and native photographers arranged thematically in 22 chapters. Includes antiquities, education, professions, government, transportation and altered images. A powerful view of diverse cultures and geography. Elegantly printed to accurately reproduce the original albumen prints, glass slides, color photochroms and a ferrotype. Translucent photographic flyleaf. 23-inch panorama. (40478) \$1,500.

Nubian woman. Sebah #320 (cropped)

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Named for historian George L. Mosse, and offered through the Mosse Program in History, the Graduate Exchange Program allows graduate students from a variety of fields in the humanities and social sciences at UW–Madison and the Hebrew University to spend an academic year at the respective partner university in order to advance their studies and to broaden their intellectual and international horizons.

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Conney Project on Jews and the Arts

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Greenfield Summer Institute

Made possible by the generosity of Larry and Ros Greenfield, this annual conference promotes lifelong learning in Jewish studies by showcasing research from scholars around the country.

Mayrent Institute for Yiddish Culture

Provides programming and supports scholarly inquiry into Yiddish language, literature, history, and arts. The program is named for Sherry Mayrent, an avid supporter of Yiddish culture.

The Profession

The Past Is Not a Foreign Country

Shaul Kelner

I decided not to knock. This, after an hour on Moscow Bus 144 to Universitetskiy Prospekt; after slipping into Dmitiri Ulyanova 4/3 behind some resident with the key to the complex. Hundreds of Americans had been inside apartment 322. But that was back in the 1970s when Alexander Lerner—cyberneticist, Jewish emigration activist—had lived there. He had run weekly seminars in the living room for unemployed refusenik scientists, taking foreign guests to the park across the street to talk privately. But Lerner was long gone, in Israel since 1988, dead since 2004. What was the point of knocking? “Hello, *zdravstvuyte*, I didn’t use to live here, but I study people who visited someone who did? Can I look around?”

In my research on the campaign to free Soviet Jews, I’ve been examining Western tourists’ “aid visits” to refuseniks. How activists started the pipeline. How they briefed and debriefed. How travelers made sense of Soviet domestic and religious spaces. How they used spy novel genre conventions to retell their experiences. I’ve interviewed briefers and tourists. I built a database to get a statistical overview of the more than 2,000 travelogues at the American Jewish Historical Society—who, when, how long, where, arrests, expulsions. I’ve coded hundreds of travelogues for thematic analysis. Used the database sort feature to read every trip report from the 1970s in chronological order. I’ve even curated the photographs and hand-drawn maps for an artistic collaboration. The work has taken me to the Netherlands, Sweden, and France for conferences on Cold War tourism and on religion and travel writing.

But I had never traveled to Russia.

I landed at Domodedovo in December 2017. I’d have three days in Moscow, tacked on after the Swedish conference. I brought vintage Soviet Jewry movement address lists, copied from briefing kits and trip reports.

But I did end up learning things I had not known, or not known that I had known, or known in my head but not in my heart.

First stop, the Arkhipova Street synagogue. Directions came from the American Jewish Conference’s 1972 *How to Find and Meet Russian Jews*. (The title anticipated American clothing retailer Banana Republic’s June 1986 *Soviet Safari* catalog, the one that placed a story about visiting refuseniks next to ads for pith helmets.) “Walk alongside the facade of the GUM department store, which faces the Lenin Mausoleum. At the corner of Ulitsa Kuybysheva turn left.” It would have been easier had Moscow kept the Soviet-era street names.

The building was still functioning as a synagogue. No other addresses in the lists existed in that way. Apartments were no longer hives of activism where Jews from California and France met over vodka poured by Russian Jewish hosts. The refuseniks had moved out. The tourists had moved on. So what was I hoping to see? I am a sociologist of tourism. I know you can get crowds to stare at a rock if you slap a sign and a good story on it. Who was I kidding? I’d get to Lerner’s apartment and see a flat like any other. Any meaning I made of it would be in my head. And for that, I didn’t need to go. Or having gone, I didn’t need to enter to see how the tenth most recent occupant had renovated the kitchen.

What can students of historical travel learn by taking to the road? How can retracing routes in the present help us understand travel in the past? Which gaps in knowledge can travel help overcome? Which must remain as gaps? And how can we know the difference?

I told myself I was not going to see the places as much as “understand the geography.” Or “understand something of what it might have been like to try to navigate to the apartments.” Lots of hedging. But I did end up learning things I had not known, or not known that I had known, or known in my head but not in my heart.

**How to Find
and Meet
Russian Jews**



**BRIEFING KIT
FOR TRAVELERS
TO THE U.S.S.R.**

Reprinted from How to Find and Meet Russian Jews (American Jewish Congress, 1971). Courtesy of the publisher.

Many trips started with a visit to Vladimir and Maria Slepak. I had known that their Gorky Street apartment functioned as the Soviet Jewry movement's Grand Central Station Tourist Information Center. Walking there from the Hotel National taught me why. From Red Square to the Slepaks was a straight shot, fifteen minutes on the main boulevard. In New York terms, it's like they lived on Broadway fifteen blocks north of Times Square. I understood then, viscerally, how lucky the movement was to have had such prime real estate. Of course, had the Slepaks not been so hospitable ...

Schlepping farther out taught other lessons. Apartments were way off the beaten path, scattered all over town. Getting there took work. Thanks to the Soviet Jewry movement, I had a pocketful of help from 1979's most famous émigré, Sergey Brin. Ironically, his tech surveilled me more than the KGB surveilled Soviet-era tourists. But having my GPS security blanket helped me realize how nerve-wracking it must have been for already jittery non-Russian-speakers to navigate multiple bus transfers

This learning was not just intellectual, but emotional. I experienced it as respect.

in Moscow's residential outer rings with no printed maps. This learning was not just intellectual, but emotional. I experienced it as respect.

That cell phone? A deliberate choice. Did I say I was "retracing the tourists' steps"? Deep down, I longed to reenact. To experience what they experienced. I knew it was chimerical, but doesn't tourism involve an element of play? I had the address, just off the Arbat, where I had once mailed letters to Leonid Barras, a refusenik boy who I symbolically shared my bar mitzvah with back in 1982. I could have headed over any time, yet I chose to wait until 1:00 a.m. to track down the apartment. Just like the Soviet Jewry movement tourists whose visits lasted into the wee hours. (By just like, I mean not at all.)

Against this temptation, Google Maps kept me honest. What self-respecting historical reenactor would ever use that? Would you believe me if I said I also stayed honest by ending my walk to the Slepaks' by gift shopping at the Ekaterina Smolina boutique then occupying the ground floor of their former apartment complex? (Skirt and blouse for my daughter, turtleneck for my wife.) But there was the proof. Cell phone and shopping bags in hand, I could have no illusion that a trip from Trump's America to Putin's Russia would let me experience anything close to a Cold War crossing. I'll finish the research still never having visited the Soviet Union.

Who said the past is a foreign country? I wish! I'd have booked a tour.

SHAUL KELNER teaches the sociology of tourism as associate professor at Vanderbilt University. His longest work on Jewish travel is *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism* (2010). His two most recent, are "Foreign Tourists, Domestic Encounters: Human Rights Travel to Soviet Jewish Homes," in *Tourism and Travel during the Cold War*, edited by Bechmann-Pedersen and Noack (2020), and "À la rencontre des juifs de l'autre côté du rideau de fer: Récits de voyage de juifs américains et représentation du judaïsme en Union soviétique," in *Frontières et altérité religieuse*, edited by Nijenhuis-Bescher, et al., (2019).

Jewish Journeys: Professional and Personal

Roundtables Editor: Jason Schulman

Contributors: Francine Friedman,
Nancy Saporta Sternbach,
Yudit Kornberg Greenberg,
Marysia Galbraith

Introduction

Jason Schulman: For Jewish Studies scholars, especially those who study global Jewry (past and present), travel to foreign lands is a vital part of the scholarly endeavor. Such professional travel, like academic research in general, is objective and dispassionate. Unlike, say, personal or family trips, which are emotional and even spiritual.

Or so we might think.

In fact, for scholars of Jewish Studies, the line between academic and personal is so thin as to all but disappear. In this roundtable, four scholars reflect on their Fulbright journeys, and how Jewishness—as a research subject, and as a personal identity—mattered in their travel.

For some, the initial Fulbright trip had nothing to do with Jewishness, but in due time, it became a key research area, while for others the Fulbright journey was the culmination of a search for Jewishness.

A commonality among all these scholars—who traveled as part of the prestigious travel abroad program founded in 1946 and named for Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas—was the opportunity to encounter the variety of global Jewish life. The reality of these Jews in these “exotic” locales upends our usual, mostly American, perception of Jewishness, especially its Ashkenormativity. Moreover, these scholars’ travel to places where there used to be large (or at least, larger) Jewish populations offers

a bridge between the present and the past (and in some cases, even a bridge to the future).

What is clear from these scholars’ journeys—and why we tell students to study abroad—is that travel is *immersive*: travelers encounter local Jewish communities (and other religious communities) and engage in their language, food, prayer services, and holiday celebrations. By taking us out of our comfort zone and into unknown land—that feels, as one scholar puts it, “uncannily familiar”—travel, which blends the academic and the personal for Jewish Studies scholars, really is a spiritual endeavor, taking us out of the everyday and into the transcendent.

Jewish Travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Francine Friedman: Jewish travelers may find that their religion does *not* affect their travel. This unexpectedly turned out not to be the case when I traveled to southeastern Europe in 1997 after the Bosnian War. I had been invited to present research about the Bosnian Muslims from my book, *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation* (1996), and frankly had no plan of engaging in research about the Bosnian Jewish community. However, I paid a courtesy call at the Jewish Community Center and Synagogue and found a surprisingly vibrant Jewish community, given the fact that the horrific siege of Sarajevo had ended only a few years earlier and that the community’s numbers were, as a result of the war, sadly depleted. Becoming intrigued by many stories of wartime Bosnian Jewish activism on behalf of their beleaguered Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian neighbors, I began what became a multidecade search for information about the community, which eventually included a Fulbright year of study in 2012–2013. This research ultimately led me to travel to Israel for a decade of winter breaks, as well as to Serbia to consult Jewish archives. It became obvious to me that my research about the Bosnian Jewish community could not be confined to one locale. I had to travel in order to more fully comprehend the historical, cultural, and socioeconomic contributions that Bosnian Jews had made to their milieu, because elements of their story resided in many locations.

I did not originally travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina as a Jew for Jewish reasons, but I ended up returning for many summers to immerse myself in a Jewish experience. Being born into an Ashkenazic family, I had little knowledge about Sephardic practices. It took me only a few years to become familiar with the Sephardi-dominated community, their food, their customs, and their ways of perceiving the world. This knowledge informed my research and broadened my perspective of the Jewish world. The Bosnian Jewish community generously welcomed me and enthusiastically assisted me in my research.

I believe that I can safely attest that my presence in the Sarajevo Jewish community for so many years had an impact on the Bosnian Jewish community. Their acceptance, even celebration, of my presence as an Ashkenazic American who showed interest in a largely Sephardic community might have served as a bridge between the Jewish communities. Sharing incidents from daily life with each other underlined the fact that people (Jews particularly?) have much in common that dividing oceans cannot erase. Indeed, the Bosnian Jewish community might have come to a new understanding of, and sympathy for, American Jews, given that one was willing to immerse herself in their communal celebrations, as well as their concerns. I know that my understanding and appreciation of this “exotic” Jewish community became a highlight of my professional and personal life.

Searching for Sefarad

Nancy Saporta Sternbach: From my earliest travel to Spain as a teenager, I now understand, I was searching for Sefarad, though I did not yet possess this vocabulary. Instead, I followed my dream of becoming a fluent speaker of Spanish, the word we used for the language my ancestors had brought with them from Spain, via four hundred years in Turkey. It would not be until much later that I even *heard* the word “Ladino.” Making a career as a Spanish professor and exploring the Spanish-speaking world became my passion, with my Sephardic heritage always embedded in these journeys.

Then, in 2014, I received a Fulbright grant to Istanbul for a Sephardic project. A few years earlier, my Sefarad-leaning inclinations had taken me to my grandparents’



The classic song in Ladino, ‘Adio, Kerida,’ sung here by a group in Plovdiv, Bulgaria on Israel Day at the Jewish Community Center. Courtesy of Nancy Saporta Sternbach

town in southwestern Turkey, Bergama, where I was privileged to hear their dear and familiar accent spoken by one the town’s last Jews—a relative, it turns out. That did it: Turkey became my passion. I had to discover everything about it and uncover our family history, a history whose few documents either burned in the epic fires of the early twentieth century or were written in languages I never would speak.

“You got a Fulbright to write a cookbook?” friends and colleagues asked in amazement. Yet, what better vehicle to study a culture than through its cuisine, in its local context, adjusted to cultural and religious norms? I had grown up with a love for the Sephardic culinary tradition channeled into the persona of my grandmother, Nellie Corkidi Saporta. Once in Istanbul, unlike my native New York, I found the Sephardi-Ashkenazi divide reversed. Here, “Jewish” meant Sephardic. Suddenly I was not a strange minority. Suddenly the customs that were so “exotic” in New York were familiar to me.

I visited Jewish nursing homes where the lingua franca was Ladino. There, ancient women confined to wheelchairs with gnarled arthritic fingers folded paper napkins

into pastries as they explained to me in Ladino how to shape a borekita, a bulema, a boyo. I entered Jewish cultural centers and visited “Jewish sites”: ancient synagogues, some in states of such disrepair as to break your heart. I dubbed myself a “heritage tourist,” delving into whatever leads I could find, first in Istanbul and then further afield. In the cemeteries of Istanbul and Izmir and the Jewish Museum of Salonica, I found my maternal family name, Saporta, perhaps my own ancestors, survivors or victims of many migrations, or Nazi exterminations. The Ladino inscriptions on the tombstones at these cemeteries were legible to anyone who spoke Spanish.

Emboldened by the vastness of these discoveries, I traveled to Central Asia, where I visited the Mountain Jews of Azerbaijan, the Jews of Bukhara, Uzbekistan, the Iraqi Jews of Bombay, and the Jews of Georgia and India. My childhood feeling of being excluded from or misunderstood by the Ashkenazim of suburban New York dissolved as I stepped into the synagogue of Bukhara or the Jewish cultural center of Kutaisi, welcomed as a fellow Jew. Born into a dark-skinned, “Spanish-speaking” family, these discoveries helped me to see Jewish history in its richly diverse context, whether in Asia or Latin America. I was part of a global family vaster than Sephardim and Ashkenazim. Some of these had been thriving communities, even if there were only a handful of people left who called them home.

Meanwhile, during all this time, I returned with regularity to Spain, where since 2015, I was now eligible to become a citizen as a descendant of my exiled Sephardic ancestors. Its uniform Catholicism notwithstanding, Spain began to uncover Jewish sites everywhere Jews had lived all over the peninsula. As a result of the law of return, Jews, conversos, and formerly crypto-Jews from everywhere were beginning to repopulate Spanish cities. In August 2021, one hundred years after and perhaps a mile away from the location where my grandmother Nellie first set foot into the United States, I collected my newly minted Spanish passport. My search for Sefarad had led me to understand that rather than just a geography, Sefarad was also a place within myself where I could cherish and reclaim my heritage and ancestors.

My Spiritual Encounters in India

Yudit Kornberg Greenberg: I first visited India in 1993, after a colleague who was teaching our department’s course on Asian religions took an unexpected leave and requested that I take over teaching it. As I reacquainted myself with classics such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, I prepared for my imminent visit to India. Since my first journey to India in May 1993, I have taken numerous trips, led field study courses, and have engaged in interreligious and comparative study of Judaism and Hinduism. During my first Fulbright-Nehru Award in 2015, I was based in Delhi, where our Sikh friends lived only a couple of miles from our apartment. This meant experiencing the comfort of family, sharing our daily adventures, and enjoying delicious homemade meals at least three to four times a week. One of the highlights of that five-month stay was our visit with our Indian family to the spectacular Golden Temple in Amritsar, the holy site in Sikhism. Accompanying our friends on this pilgrimage and beholding their joy and gratitude amplified my own sense of awe of the exquisite gold structure surrounded by a lake, and the thousands of devotees who respectfully waited to see the holy text of the Guru Granth Sahib in the inner sanctum of the temple as the echoes of the mantras and the wafting sandalwood incense enveloped us. The culmination of this visit was savoring the *langar*—the emblematic gesture of Sikh hospitality embodied in the delicious vegetarian meal served to us and thousands of others in the adjacent hall.

During my 2019 Fulbright-Nehru award, I was affiliated with the University of Mumbai, where I taught a graduate course on religion and gender. In Mumbai, we chose to live walking distance from the Baghdadi synagogue, Knesset Eliyahu, established by the well-known Sassoon family in 1884, and frequented today mostly by the Bene Israel community and Western visitors. A highlight of our interactions with Bene Israel was being invited to a “Malida” ceremony celebrating a recent marriage. This ceremony is reminiscent of a Hindu puja, consisting of a food offering to the prophet Elijah accompanied by Hebrew recitations. During that semester, I had several



Yudit Kornberg Greenberg observing Sufi chanting at Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi, India, March 23, 2017. Courtesy of Yudit Kornberg Greenberg

opportunities to travel for lectures within the subcontinent and as far as Uzbekistan. A memorable experience was a lecture I gave at a University in Bhubaneswar in the State of Odisha, also known as Orissa, on the topic of my research project, in which I compared notions and metaphors of love and desire in the biblical Song of Songs and the twelfth-century Sanskrit poem, the Gita Govinda. Following the lecture, I visited the town of Puri, about forty miles south, where the Jagannath Temple, an important Vaishnava Hindu site, stands, and where the Gita Govinda is still sung daily. Not able to enter the temple as I am not a Hindu, I still enjoyed celebrating the rich legacy of the Gita Govinda in Puri. I visited museums and galleries featuring artistic creations representing the love between Lord Krishna and Goddess Radha inspired by the lyrics of this song, which has also served as a foundational text for followers of Bhakti Hindu path (the path emphasizing intense devotion to a personal god). Such visits during my stay in India not only illustrate my passion for global travel but also my commitment to continued engagement with other religions and cultures.

Back in Place and Time: Jewish Heritage Tourism in Poland

Marysia Galbraith: In his book *Losing Culture*, anthropologist David Berliner interrogates nostalgia for the past amid the accelerated pace of life in the present. Unmoored by the constant assault of new media, material goods, and meanings, people search for connection to places they associate with their ancestors. The long shadow of the Holocaust complicates travel to Poland for Jewish heritage tourists. Nevertheless, in recent years, institutions, heritage workers, and descendants of Polish Jews have tried to connect with the centuries when Jewish life thrived in the Polish lands, before the trauma of the war years. These efforts take many forms, from the award-winning POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw to the activities of a small but flourishing Jewish community in Krakow. As a Fulbright scholar in 2014–2015 and in the ensuing years, I have witnessed public commemorations involving descendants of Jewish Poland and local volunteers and

officials, all committed to bringing Jewish history and culture back into the public sphere in Polish communities where only scattered fragments remain of formerly vibrant Jewish populations. What is remarkable about these projects is the amount of hope they engender even as they acknowledge some of the worst atrocities ever perpetrated and experienced. They are grounded in the belief that silence perpetuates trauma and that only facing difficult history head-on makes reconciliation possible. Poland is *both* the place where most of Europe's Jews were murdered in the early 1940s and the place where Jewish life thrived for a thousand years. Heritage tourists feel a sense of obligation to witness the places where their ancestors died and also feel curious about how their ancestors lived.

Why does heritage matter? For many, it provides an anchor for their identity: by knowing where—and who—they come from, they gain a stronger sense of who they are. Heritage tourists often experience the places and people they visit as uncannily familiar, even though they have never been there before. When I wander Warsaw's streets or drive through the remote countryside, the past overlays the present—I see it as my mother or grandmother would have and simultaneously how it looks today. Tourists also play an integral part in the rebirth of Jewish communities in Poland. They model Jewish life for local residents, including many who have discovered or rediscovered their own Jewish roots that lay hidden for a generation or more. They also act as allies for the tiny Jewish communities that practiced their faith in private throughout the Communist era and beyond.

Nostalgia tends to transform the past into an ideal that is considered precious because it can never return. In fact, the past is often transformed to resemble what people long for more than whatever really existed. As such, nostalgia can be transformative. Jewish heritage tourism does more than just reimagine the past. It also builds a bridge to a future where the rigid boundaries that have separated Jewish and non-Jewish communities in Poland become less guarded through shared public acts of remembrance that acknowledge the complex and intertwined history of the region.

FRANCINE FRIEDMAN is professor emerita of Political Science at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. She is the author of three books about Bosnia and Herzegovina: *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation* (1996), *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Polity on the Brink* (2004), and *Like Salt for Bread: The Jews of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2022). She also has published numerous articles and book chapters about ethnic relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

NANCY SAPORTA STERNBACH is professor emerita of Spanish at Smith College, where she taught Latinx culture, Spanish, Latin American literature, and food in the Spanish-speaking world. Her current projects are a family memoir, *Bellydancing in the Bronx*, and a Sephardic cookbook.

YUDIT KORNBERG GREENBERG is the George D. and Harriet W. Cornell Endowed Chair of Religion, and Founding Director of the Jewish Studies Program at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. Dr. Greenberg is the author and editor of books and articles in modern and contemporary Jewish thought, comparative religion, women and religion, and cross-cultural views of love and the body, including *Dharma and Halacha: Comparative Studies in Hindu-Jewish Philosophy and Religion* (2018).

MARYSIA GALBRAITH is professor in the New College Program and Department of Anthropology and at the University of Alabama. She is the author of *Being and Becoming European in Poland: European Integration and Self-Identity* (2014). Her current research project on Jewish heritage in Poland was funded by a 2014–2015 Fulbright Fellowship at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland, and she has published articles in both English and Polish addressing commemorative projects in small towns, Jewish genealogical research, nationalist marches on Polish Independence Day, and national folk art movements.

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Journeys into the Culinary Landscapes of Israel and Palestine: The Virtues of Coteaching on Conflict

Nevine Abraham and Michal R. Friedman

How do food cultures allow us to approach cultural intersections and conflict? And what is the value of *coteaching* on a fraught region marked by asymmetrical power relations such as Israel/Palestine? We explored some of these questions after our College at Carnegie Mellon University approached us in the spring of 2019 about taking a group of students on a cuisine-focused trip to Israel and the West Bank the following year. The purpose of the trip, to be guided by Palestinian and Israeli food connoisseurs, was for students to learn about the entangled and conflictive food cultures of Israel and Palestine, through exchanges with culinary experts, visits to markets and home kitchens, and projects that would document their encounters with local cuisine. When the pandemic hit, we resolved to transform our thwarted travel plans into a perceptual learning journey in the form of a freshman seminar on Israeli and Palestinian food cultures.

Coteaching, a long-sought pedagogical aspiration of ours, lends the course a measure of cultural depth, integrity, and innovation we were unlikely to offer students had we taught the class separately. Yet the dearth of *coteaching* on this topic in the US university setting did not provide models to which we could turn. As faculty members with expertise in Jewish history and Arabic cultural studies, of Israeli and Egyptian backgrounds respectively, there was another journey embedded in the experience we sought for our students, despite the absence of a Palestinian voice: one into each other's inner cultures, given our diverse backgrounds, a possible paradigm for inquiry and exchange across cultural boundaries. In this essay, we share our experience of coteaching this course, first virtually in the spring of 2021, and then in-person in the

fall of 2021, and the insights we have gained into the ways we might transform students'—sometimes stereotypical—knowledge of Israel and Palestine, even when unable to accomplish this through physical travel. Students were able to research, sample, and cook dishes, and find comfort in an experimental culinary journey during the uncertainties of the pandemic.

We therefore took our students on a voyage that challenges preconceptions, allowing them to explore cultural intersections and divergences between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, without eliding the asymmetry of regional power relations. Our integrated approach highlighted the longer history of Jews and Arabs, Jewish immigrants and Israeli nation-building, culinary appropriation and the expropriation of lands and resources. Students navigated the entwined histories and politics of local foodways, taking into account the diversity of Palestinian and Israeli Jewish identities, histories of migration, exile, displacement, colonialism, and nationalism. Their virtual tour comprised the landscapes and kitchens of Jerusalem, Nablus, Sebastia, Gaza, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv; memoirs; and documentary films. They engaged in intercultural exchanges with prominent chefs and food writers in the Palestinian and Israeli culinary world—a chef from Bethlehem, a food journalist for *Haaretz*, and a professor and founder of Conflict Kitchen (a restaurant in Pittsburgh that served cuisine from countries with which the United States is in conflict and sought to expand the engagement the public has with the culture, politics, and issues at stake within the focus region). These speakers enriched students' learning about the issues of foraging, culinary provenance, and the effects of military occupation and the separation barrier wall on agriculture and travel restrictions. In our selection of a novel, we settled on Palestinian American novelist Hala Alyan's *Salt Houses* (2017), which traces the story of the displacement of a Palestinian family across several generations. Though Palestinian food is not a central theme in the novel, it figures in the characters' search for belonging and their memories of home (e.g., maqlouba, koussa, and kanafeh). As the novel did not include Israeli Jewish voices, we assigned several short pieces addressing food by contemporary Israeli authors Moshe Sakal (e.g., kibbeh), Ayelet Tsabari (e.g., hawayij and Yemeni soup), and Yahil Zaban (e.g., gefilte fish), and excerpts of Ariel Sabar's *My Father's Paradise* (e.g., kubeh and matzoh).



Students interacting with guest speaker, Palestinian chef Fadi Kattan (on screen) joining our class from Bethlehem, the West Bank, fall 2021.



Michal and Nevine serving food to their students. Photos courtesy of the authors

To provide ourselves with a framework of the success of the course in complicating students' understanding of Israel and Palestine, we polled them through two anonymous surveys on the first (69 respondents) and last (49 respondents) days of classes. We sought to assess students' conceptual associations with Israel, Palestine, ethnic and national identity, and food consumed by Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. The concluding survey included additional questions on words they associate with Palestinian and Israeli cuisines, the distinction between "Jewish" and "Israeli," their knowledge of the diverse ethnic identities in the region, and the proportional weight given to Palestinian and Israeli cultures. We will only share a selection of the terms from responses to two of these questions.

While in the first survey 58 percent of participants viewed Israel through a colonial, nationalist lens ("conflict, war/s, colonial state, wall, oppression, Zionism"), in the last survey, 86 percent focused on the contribution of Jewish ethnic diversity and of Palestinians to cultural developments in Israeli history, in addition to the occupation ("rootedness, diaspora, Zionism, new Jew, sabich, appropriation, de-Arabization/re-Arabization, colonization"). Similarly, 93 percent viewed Palestine in the first survey as a space of political tensions ("conflict, tension, war-torn, not a country on the map, wall, oppression"), violence, and religion ("terrorism, anger, Muslim"). In the last survey, 63 percent employed more tangible, culturally and politically specific terms ("nafas," the "elusive gift that makes food taste better" (Kassis); "Jaffa oranges; maklouba; preserving culinary knowledge, appropriated, colonized, displaced, rootedness, diverse"). This denotes a broadening of the students' knowledge of the topic, from a set of preconceived ideas to a deeper understanding of complex cultural processes through history.

Students' journey into the culinary landscapes of Israel and Palestine in this course allowed them to travel beyond stereotypes and simplistic associations of violence and religion, into spaces, such as Gaza and the Aida and Burj El Barajneh refugee camps, that only a virtual trip would permit. Course materials and guest speakers strengthened students' grasp of the different views on the ongoing, heated debate about Israeli culinary appropriation of Palestinian food and of the cultural intersections of local and regional foodways. They encountered both cuisines through on-campus events, researched food items (e.g., zaatar, akoub, malabi) in their final projects, and discerned the importance of heritage and connectedness to the land as an essential source for flavors, uniqueness, and diversity. Our pedagogical journey through this unusual topic has been rewarding, and we look forward to another iteration of the course in the upcoming academic year, and a prospective trip to Israel and the West Bank.

Selected course readings and films: <https://bit.ly/ajs-coteach>

NEVINE ABRAHAM is assistant teaching professor of *Arabic Studies* in the Department of Modern Languages at Carnegie Mellon University. She recently published "*Patriarchy, Subordination, and Rise of the Individual in Hisham Matar's In the Country of Men*" in *Arab Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (2021), and co-authored "*An Oral History of Mouloukhiya from Egypt, Palestine, Tunisia, and Japan*" in *The Markaz Review* (2022).

MICHAL R. FRIEDMAN is assistant teaching professor and the Jack Buncher Endowed Chair in Jewish Studies in the Department of History at Carnegie Mellon University. She recently served as guest editor of *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 18 (December 2021), titled "*Genealogies of Sepharad (Jewish Spain)*."



Detail from *Paradise* movie poster. Abra Filmhouse

Paradise

(2020, dir. Asaf Saban, Israel, 32 min.)

Olga Gershenson

After years of living in Berlin, Ali (Ala Dakka), a young Palestinian, lands in Israel for a home visit. It does not start well. Israeli authorities detain him at the airport only because he has an Arabic name. His traditional family does not welcome him either—they disapprove of his cosmopolitan lifestyle. Tired of navigating this difficult terrain, Ali escapes for a short vacation at a Sinai beach. But instead of finding peace and quiet, he runs into a group of Israeli Jewish tourists who mistake him for one of their own. At first, Ali goes with the flow, and passes for “Eli.” But when his real identity is revealed, the Israelis react with fear and prejudice. Ali fits neither with Israelis nor with Palestinians.

Paradise, cowritten by a Palestinian, Nayef Hammoud, and an Israeli, Asaf Saban, creates a nuanced portrayal of the Palestinian position in Israel. The story forces Ali (and us) to reflect on his identity that is always in between and is never fully accepted. The film explores these difficult ideas through compelling characters and an engaging narrative that feels authentic. Its short running time makes it ideal for classroom use in courses dealing with Israeli society and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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Transparent series poster. Amazon Studios

Transparent

(2017, season 4, episodes 6–10, created by Joey Soloway)

Mira Sucharov

Intriguingly Jewish, with flawed, nuanced characters, high emotional stakes, and well-placed comic relief, *Transparent* is a gold mine for teachable moments on American Jewish identity. In season 4, we voyage with the Pfeffermans as they embark on a family trip to Israel. Followers of the show might know that due to BDS (boycott, divestment, and sanctions) concerns, the producers used B-roll footage for the Israeli scenes and shot the actual action on Los Angeles sound stages instead. Accordingly, the season ends up digging deep into the contemporary politics of Israel-Palestine, providing a brief primer on boycotts, West Bank settlement dynamics, Palestinian daily life, and progressive American solidarity, as well as unexpected spiritual journeys and Diaspora Jewish masculinity and gun culture, all to a driving *Jesus Christ Superstar* soundtrack.

Instructors may want to problematize certain depictions, such as the Bedouin tourist experience—is Soloway critiquing the Orientalism many would say is baked into these tourist excursions, or upholding it? Students will likely also welcome the opportunity to interpret the deliberately ambiguous revelation about the Palestinian goat farm: Was the place ransacked by Israeli forces? Or was the sensuous farm-to-table meal and attractive company a figment of Ali’s imagination and thus a fetishized creation of a well-meaning Diaspora Jew? With the politics of Israel-Palestine frequently a polarizing topic, this season has something for everyone: clear-headed messaging about the injustices of Palestinian daily lives combined with a well-placed, affectionate nod to the Israeli snack food Bamba.

Transparent is available to stream on Amazon Prime Video.



The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel publicity photo. Amazon Studios

The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel

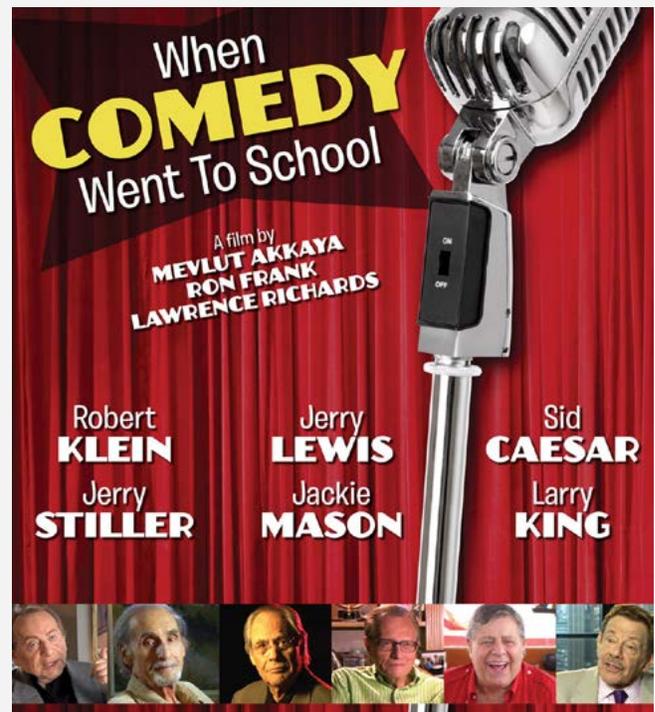
(2018, season 2, episode 4, "We're Going to the Catskills!," dir. Daniel Palladino, USA, 53 min.)

When Comedy Went to School

(2013, dir. Mevlut Akkaya, Ron Frank, and Lawrence Richards, USA, 77 min.)

Olga Gershenson

A pilgrimage to New York's Catskill Mountains, a.k.a. the Borscht Belt, is at the center of an episode of the acclaimed series *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and the documentary *When Comedy Went to School*. In the *Maisel* episode, Midge (Rachel Brosnahan), a budding comedian, arrives with her family for their annual vacation at a fictional resort, modeled on real-life iconic hotels such as Grossinger's and Kutsher's. These resorts were popular destinations for New York City Jews in the 1920s-1960s, where they found not only reprieve from the summer heat, but also entertainment in their own language, a vibrant social scene, and copious amounts of food. The Catskills had a profound influence on American Jewish culture, especially as a cradle of stand-up comedy, which originated from the nightly shows at the resorts. This is the story told in the documentary *When Comedy Went to School*. The Borscht Belt entertainment circuit helped launch the careers of many famous comedians, including Jerry Lewis, Sid Caesar, Jackie Mason, Mort Sahl, and Jerry Stiller, all of whom



Detail from *When Comedy Went to School* poster. First Run Features

appear in the film, sharing hilarious personal experiences. It was a short trip from the city to the Catskills, but a giant cultural departure.

The series and the documentary can be used separately or together, in full or as film clips, in classes dealing with American Jewish experience and/or Jewish humor.

The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel is available for streaming on Amazon Prime Video. *When Comedy Went to School* is available on DVD on Amazon.

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Mosaic map of sixth century Jerusalem found under the floor of St George's Church in Madaba, Jordan. Photo by David Bjorgen, via Wikimedia Commons

Travel as Pedagogy and Pedagogy as Travel

Matthew Kraus

Lexical Note: Pedagogy, deriving from the Greek meaning “lead/bring along a child,” naturally correlates with travel because both involve movement. Travel derives from the French *travail* “work, labor, arduous journey,” from the Latin *tripaliare*, “to torture.” Along with the Hebrew *n-s-’* “travel by stations,” the Latin and French trajectory of the term suggest dimensions of the travel-study course.

Since resources abound on the pedagogical value of travel and the detailed processes required for preparing and conducting a travel-study course, I offer here some reflections on guiding principles for a couple of travel-study courses that might be of interest. Designed for undergraduates, “Antiquity and Modernity in Israel and Jordan,” consisted of a 3.5-week journey through Israel and Jordan. “Healing in Antiquity” was a semester course punctuated by a ten-day spring-break trip to Greece. While such courses involve a number of administrative minutiae which can overwhelm their pedagogical value, I followed principles that integrated both academic content and travel practices: **utilize travel as a tool for thinking about subjects differently; provide an overarching frame of reference for processing daily experiences; teach students how to travel on their own; respect the stories that dwell in these places; differentiate between travel and tourism.**

It was quite a journey to bring a group of students outside the Memorial Church of Moses to discuss rabbinic midrash on Moses’s death in dialogue with Rachel Bluwstein’s poem “Mi-neged” on Mt. Nebo in Madaba, Jordan, with its panoramic view of the

Jordan Valley (“in every expectation there is a Mt. Nebo”). The journey began with a colleague in Philosophy describing an undergraduate travel-study course that consisted of analyzing writings of various philosophers at sites scattered throughout Greece. The colleague acknowledged that the technique bordered on cheesiness, but it effectively stimulated student engagement and generated enduring understandings. This encounter germinated ideas for the two travel-study courses that were the most rewarding and labor-intensive teaching experiences that I have had. In addition to heeding the common advice about such courses—the need for advance preparation and institutional support both financially and administratively (UC International was fantastic and 100% necessary)—intentional principles maximized the educational value of these courses.

Utilize travel as a tool for thinking about subjects differently. Beyond the revelatory impact of encountering the Other and Otherness, the Israel-Jordan trip required students, like the Nabateans or inhabitants of the Decapolis, to think about the area horizontally rather than vertically through a west/east instead of the typical north/south orientation. Visiting ancient healing centers dedicated to Asclepius at Epidaurus and Kos initiated conversations about the impact of the location, space, and design of contemporary medical institutions and their environs on the healing process. **Providing an overarching frame of reference for processing daily experiences actualizes this principle.** Students in both

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courses took turns blogging daily about how they experienced the interaction between antiquity and modernity. This included connecting the international orientation of the Nabateans to the variety of foreign tourists at Petra or reflecting on a visit to the Garden of Hippocrates, where director Julie Zafeiratou combined Hippocretan and Galenic healing traditions with Greek mythology, feminism, environmentalism, and refugee relief.

The frame of reference, however, functions as a map, not an itinerary, thereby supporting a primary goal of the courses, **teaching students how to travel**. Hence the recommendation to **differentiate between travel and tourism**. This means balancing visiting major tourist sites with places that students would be less likely to visit on their own, such as stopping at Wahat-al-Salaam/Neve Shalom and Netanya Academic College or pausing at the Holocaust Memorial next to the Kerameikon, the ancient cemetery of Athens. Once, time constraints required us to choose between touring the National Archaeological Museum and the anarchist neighborhood of Exarchia adjacent to the museum. Following our guide's recommendation, a PhD in Bronze Age archaeology and resident of the neighborhood, we traveled the less-toured path and encountered the stories and richly graffitied urban landscape of Exarchia. Our guide reasoned that this would have a far more transformative impact and the students would go to the museum when next in Athens.

Moreover, since we had already encountered numerous archaeological sites and artifacts, we needed a balanced embodiment of the principle that **travel should involve respecting and honoring stories that dwell in these places**. Besides listening to these stories, we told them as well. For the Greece trip, students had to present at a site on a relevant ancient topic generally not related to healing, such as the features of a Greek theater (Epidaurus), Socrates (Athenian Agora), Demeter (Eleusis), or ancient ships (Kos). Prior familiarity prepared

beforehand enhances independent and respectful travel. In fact, even mundane administrative procedures can be opportunities **for training students to travel on their own**: interviews of prospective participants offer the chance to impress the importance of flexibility and students learn about additional required pretrip preparations related to passports, securing transportation and lodging, and mastering a few common phrases in local languages. I also gradually introduce opportunities for students to individualize their experiences and create their own stories as they become more comfortable acting independently.

Reflecting on the likelihood of travel-study courses at this moment uneasily reminds me of what one student blogged: "Mt. Nebo—seeing the promised, better future spread before you, but knowing you will not be able to have it." Yet the profound pedagogical value of travel points to its possibility through a productive metaphor of **pedagogy as travel**. After all, thinking differently, frames of reference, maps=syllabi=stations, and teaching how to learn are staples of quality instruction. Working primarily in antiquity, I find that students, as if visiting a new place with a new language, either think about the subject differently from their immersed instructor, or, more commonly, are thinking about it for the first time. Even with a syllabus as a map, the ancient is awkward and bewildering. I suspect this would be true for any number of fields. For this reason, the principles for travel study apply to teaching in general, especially **training to travel on one's own**. Students independently revisiting a subject, absorbing related yet unexplored content by themselves, and applying the experiences from their curricular travels when they visit new subjects and materials would be a true measure of pedagogical success. We continue to have, and always have had, the opportunity to guide students on journeys.

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The Tour Guide

Natan M. Meir

I lower myself to the steps leading up to the brick barracks building. The concrete is hard but my feet are thankful for the relief. My group has just entered the building with the exhibits that display piles of eyeglasses, mountains of human hair. You know. That one. The bone-chilling one. I've decided not to go in with them. I told them, I've been through this building before quite a few times, just can't do it again. They nod understandingly; they're mensches, they get it. But I can't help feeling that I'm abandoning them. When you're a tour leader, the participants are your charges. They look to me for enlightenment, for wisdom. Now and then they look around to make sure that I'm with them. Maybe it's a historical question about the whys and wherefores of a particular location, maybe it's whether I know when we're stopping for lunch or where the bathroom is. Either way, they need me. So yes, I'm much more than just a historian ("scholar-in-residence," the brochure states proudly) on these Jewish heritage trips through east-central Europe, though I certainly am that—God knows I'm up till midnight some nights preparing my 7 a.m. lecture that bleary-eyed participants sit through as they sip gratefully on their coffee from the hotel buffet. I'm a guide, a confidante, a translator, sometimes mourner-in-chief, and even *shaliah zibur* (prayer leader).

Planning a tour itinerary in central and eastern Europe can sometimes seem like a bad Holocaust joke. 9 a.m., tour Auschwitz I; noon, lunch in the Auschwitz cafeteria (yes, there is such a thing and, believe it or not, the food's not half bad); 2 p.m., memorial service next to the Birkenau gas chambers. But all ghastly humor aside, it's not dissimilar from constructing a syllabus, though in this case one based not on chronology or theme but on geography. On the long travel day between Vilnius and Warsaw, can we squeeze in a tiny provincial museum on the Polish-Lithuanian border dedicated to maintaining the memory of the Jews who used to live in the region? From my perspective, we can't afford to miss it. But if we stop to visit the museum, we'll have to drop Treblinka

I do everything I can to make sure that this is not a Holocaust tour. Though in the end, it always is anyway.

from the itinerary. Someone might get upset about that omission (and, as it turns out, someone does). I'll take the risk: this is part of the calculus I manage to empower folks to peer—if only for a moment—through the scrim that the Holocaust drapes over every single event that came before it to catch a glimpse of Jewish lives lived without the specter of destruction. In other words, I do everything I can to make sure that this is not a Holocaust tour. Though in the end, it always is anyway.

To that end, I arrange a lecture by a scholar friend of mine in Krakow who is an expert on Jewish life in Poland after World War II. Not surprisingly, some of the tour participants are more interested in whether the scholar herself is Jewish. After her talk, one man shakes her hand with great emotion for several long seconds, tears in his eyes, and tries to hand her a few high-value greenbacks. It's an awkward, embarrassing moment, and one that throws into relief the multiple inequities in that interaction: an older, prosperous, male American financier, a tourist on vacation offering money to a younger, middle-class, female Polish scholar, a local. She is objectified as that rare and exotic item: an authentic, living Polish Jew. And, of course, this is Poland, so she must be hard up. It's hard for American Jews—especially those raised during the Cold War, as most of the participants in my tours are—not to perceive eastern and central European Jews as "backward" in some way, frozen in time, a relic of a vanished civilization. And I must face my own perceptions of this narrative as well.

And that's why the meetings with real people are such a crucial part of the itineraries. Granted, as a historian, I might struggle for a bit if you pressed me to tell you whether the places or the people are more important for my tours. After all, there's tremendous power in encountering historical events, people, and narratives not on the page but in situ, and to explain, like the tour guide in Amichai's "Tourists," that there, over the shoulder of that woman coming back from the market, that balcony is where Chaim Rumkowski, chairman of the



*On the street in Kazimierz, the historic Jewish quarter of Kraków.
Courtesy of the author*

No wonder my tourists were more interested in my Krakow colleague herself than in the history she was relating.

Łódź Judenrat, gave his infamous “Give Me Your Children” speech. But what about that woman? Sometimes we have opportunities to meet with real, live people: the members of the Beit Warszawa Progressive synagogue who discovered their Jewish identity only in adulthood from a grandmother on her deathbed; the no-nonsense, chain-smoking woman who serves as president of the Vilnius Jewish community; the sweet, big-hearted non-Jewish Pole who, in his role as education director, welcomes us to Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre, a nonprofit that uses theater and interactive museum exhibits to educate the public about Lublin’s vanished Polish Jewish history. Interactions like those can be, and often are, the highlight of the day, for they bring to life abstractions—Poland, Jewish identity, the contemporary Jewish

“revival”—that I can attempt to explain in my lectures but that only a living person can embody. No wonder my tourists were more interested in my Krakow colleague herself than in the history she was relating.

In Yehuda Amichai’s poem “Tourists,” redemption will come only when the guide tells his group that what’s not important is the Roman arch but rather the man who has bought fruit and vegetables for his family. As for me, I am too much a historian to dismiss the arch. But I try to remember how important the people are. And not only the locals; my people, my tourists are just as important, as they wander through this foreign land, mouths agape, eyes wet with tears, seeking some fragment of themselves.

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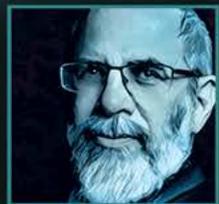
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