

Isabella Gartner: Menorah. Jüdisches Familienblatt für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur (1923–1932). Materialien zur Geschichte einer Wiener zionistischen Zeitschrift. Königshausen & Neumann: Würzburg 2009. 356 S., 48 €.

This study by Isabella Gartner begins the difficult task of reconstructing the publication history of *Menorah*, a Zionist literary and cultural magazine published in several stages from 1923 and 1932. *Menorah* was one of over 150 German-language Jewish periodicals to appear during the interwar period. The magazine's first subtitle, *Illustrierte Monatschrift für die jüdische Familie / Illustrated Monthly for the Jewish Home* (original title in both German and English) and minimal inclusion of Hebrew and English hint at an initial attempt by its Viennese publishers to reach a foreign readership in the United States, Great Britain, and Palestine, among other countries. In 1926, the format of *Menorah* shifted to more closely resemble highbrow intellectual journals. Its fashion pages and puzzle section disappeared, and multiple columns of text were condensed into a single column. Though its circulation probably never exceeded 5.000 copies, the magazine was also published in Frankfurt am Main and Berlin at different points during its ten years in existence.¹¹

The field of Jewish Press Studies has generated increasing interest in the last few years, with the publication of multiple volumes of essays on European Jewish periodicals, as well as several monographs on individual journals.¹² Isa-

11 See circulation data in *Sperlings Zeitschriften- u. Zeitungs-Adreßbuch. Die wichtigsten deutschen Zeitschriften und politischen Zeitungen Deutschlands, Österreichs und des Auslandes*, 52. Ausgabe (Leipzig: Verlag des Börsenvereins der Deutschen Buchhändler zu Leipzig, 1926), 313.

12 See, for example: Susanne Marten-Finnis and Markus Winkler, eds., *Die jüdische Presse im europäischen Kontext, 1686-1990* (Bremen: edition lumière bremen, 2006); and Eleonore Lappin and Michael Nagel, eds., *Deutsch-jüdische Presse und jüdische Geschichte. Dokumente, Darstellungen, Wechselbeziehungen*, (Bremen: edition lumière bremen, 2008), 2 vols.

bella Gartner's contribution on *Menorab* falls into the latter category, alongside studies of early twentieth-century German-language Jewish periodicals such as David A. Brenner's analysis of the cultural magazine *Ost und West*, Eleonore Lappin's exploration of Martin Buber's literary journal *Der Jude*, and Hans Otto Horch's study of literary texts in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*.¹³ The book's stated goals are simply to present materials for further research, and to contextualize *Menorab* vis-à-vis other Austrian periodicals of the 1920s. To this end, Gartner provides a close but fragmentary look into the magazine's publication history and reception (Chapters 3, 4, and 10), and a systematic and detailed examination of some of its content and contributors (Chapters 6 and 7). In addition, she presents a brief discussion of its Revisionist Zionist ideological context and a rather unsatisfying chapter on its treatment of anti-Semitism (Chapters 8 and 9).

In her inquiry into the magazine's founders, editors, and the circumstances surrounding *Menorab's* development, Gartner presents the results of carefully conducted archival research and interviews. We learn that although editor Paul Josef Diamant helped found and determine the objectives for *Menorab* in 1923, he quickly transferred his responsibilities to Viennese attorney Norbert Hoffmann. Moreover, *Menorab's* editorial board later included Hoffmann's wife Josefine, prominent writer and Yiddishist Nathan Birnbaum, and Robert Emil Weiss, among others. At one point, Hoffmann briefly considered adding writer Eugen Hoeflich (Moshe Ya'akov Ben-Gavriel) to this roster.

Though Gartner's tendency to reprint entire encyclopedia entries for miscellaneous periodicals and writers makes for somewhat tedious reading, her full-text reproductions of archival materials may prove useful to scholars of Jewish literature and press history. In particular, several letters from Norbert Hoffmann to Vladimir Jabotinsky and others shed light on *Menorab's* role in supporting Jabotinsky and the newly founded Revisionist Zionist party (p. 155-59). Two 1928 letters make reference to a suggestion by Hoffmann that *Menorab* could be established as a Jewish political review, though this idea seems to have been abandoned (p. 178-79). Correspondence dated 1928 to 1930 between Josefine Hoffmann and contributing writer Nadia Stein illuminates

13 David A. Brenner, *Marketing Identities: The Invention of Jewish Ethnicity in Ost und West* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998); Eleonore Lappin, *Der Jude. 1916-1928. Jüdische Moderne zwischen Universalismus und Partikularismus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); Hans Otto Horch, *Auf der Suche nach der jüdischen Erzählliteratur. Die Literaturkritik der "Allgemeinen Zeitung des Judentums" (1837-1922)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985).

Josefine's significant role in determining the content of *Menorah* during its later years of publication (p. 56-84). These letters also reveal the value editors assigned to contributions by prominent figures such as Vladimir Jabotinsky, Joseph Roth, and Marc Chagall. These and other passages offer insight into why *Menorah* editors selected texts for publication, including a few by non-Jewish writers such as Armin T. Wegner.

To the book's detriment, Gartner does not consider in depth the relationship between the texts published in *Menorah* and contemporaneous literary, cultural, or artistic trends. Notwithstanding Gartner's strong evidence for the disproportionate publication of texts by East European Jewish authors including Sholem Asch, Dovid Bergelson, and Joseph Opatoshu, only Viennese author Arthur Schnitzler's literary contributions are discussed at any length (Chapter 11; as it happens, Norbert Hoffmann served as Schnitzler's attorney during this period). Nowhere does Gartner mention that it was relatively common for German-Jewish periodicals of the 1920s to publish Yiddish literature in translation. In fact, the *Israelitisches Familienblatt*, *Das Jüdische Echo*, and *Ost und West* regularly serialized literary works by Asch, Opatoshu, and other East European writers. And although *Menorah* was also published in Frankfurt and Berlin, Gartner's contextualization of the magazine vis-à-vis other publications is essentially limited to the Austrian Jewish press and isolated references to periodicals such as the Berlin Zionist newspaper *Jüdische Rundschau*. Gartner also presents material from the final issue of the satirical magazine, *Schlemiel. Jüdische Blätter für Humor und Kunst*, which was published as a supplement to *Menorah* in December 1924 (p. 99-106). Yet she neglects to cite the probable reason for the unlikely collaboration between these two politically divergent publications, namely that *Menorah* editor Nathan Birnbaum's son Menachem Birnbaum served as art editor for the interwar edition of *Schlemiel*.

As Gartner states in her Foreword – and as evidenced by the book's outdated bibliography – she has made few revisions to her 1997 dissertation, which served as the basis for this 2009 book. Consequently, the book lacks references to relevant recent scholarship. For example, Gartner offers a brief biographical portrait of Anitta Müller-Cohen without acknowledging Dieter Hecht's 2008 biography of the journalist (p. 139-40).¹⁴ References to important studies on Jewish culture, the Jewish press, and regular *Menorah* contributors

¹⁴ Dieter J. Hecht, *Zwischen Feminismus und Zionismus. Die Biografie einer Wiener Jüdin Anitta Müller-Cohen (1890–1962)* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2008).

such as Bertha Badt-Strauss are also conspicuously missing.¹⁵ Oddly, even Jacob Toury's seminal work from 1983 on the Jewish press in the Austrian Empire receives no mention.¹⁶ The book's online supplement (<<http://menorah.literature.at>>), a version of which is also included in the book (p. 235-310), provides search tools that compensate to some degree for its limited bibliography. Compact Memory (<<http://www.compactmemory.de>>), an impressively rich database of German-Jewish periodicals, includes more easily searchable versions of *Menorah* and over 100 other digitized Jewish periodicals published in Germany and Austria.

Although Gartner's work falls short by not engaging most of the recent scholarship on Jewish periodicals, the book succeeds in locating and reproducing several previously unknown sources. With her work, Gartner opens the door for further research on *Menorah* and the interwar German-language Jewish press. By identifying archival documents and performing a substantial amount of indexical legwork, Gartner presents research materials that will aid scholars in search of information about specific Jewish cultural figures.

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15 On Jewish culture during the interwar period, see Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); and Deborah Holmes and Lisa Silverman, eds., *Interwar Vienna: Culture Between Tradition and Modernity* (Rochester: Camden House, 2009). On Badt-Strauss, see Martina Steer, *Bertha Badt-Strauss (1885-1970). Eine jüdische Publizistin* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005).

16 Jacob Toury, *Die jüdische Presse im Österreichischen Kaiserreich. Ein Beitrag zur Problematik der Akkulturation 1802-1918* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983).