Yiddish Tanakh Ram Septuagint targum

Benjamin Kafka Hebrew Tsene Rene

Frishman Melitz Yosher English

Transformative

Author Arthur

Translations

in Jewish History

and Culture

sifrut

Pardes Korah Torah Babel Fish Tevye Zohar

reader Zionism

Moroccan Cemeteries

PaRDeS

TRANSFORMATIVE TRANSLATIONS IN JEWISH HISTORY AND CULTURE

ZIONISM

AUTHOR

TRANSFORMATIVE

BABEL FISH

TRANSLATIONS

KAFKA

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Editors' Preface

Translations are a topic that elicits many and strong responses among readers and writers, especially among scholars who provide, critique, revise, analyze, and use them in research and teaching. As we all rely, in one way or another, on translations in our work, it may not be surprising that we received a large number of submissions for the current issue of *PaRDeS,* the journal of the German Association for Jewish Studies (Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien, VJS). We want to thank all colleagues who sent us their proposals and ask for the understanding of those whose articles we could not include in this issue.

All the articles we did include were further improved by the comments and suggestions of the anonymous peer reviewers. Many of them engaged with the texts very deeply, spending much of their precious time and expertise on them. On behalf of the authors, we thank them for their commitment to advancing scholarship in this sometimes thankless role. We are grateful to be able to rely on these colleagues to ensure the high standard of scholarship that *PaRDeS* aspires to uphold.

Much the same goes for our book reviewers. We appreciate the time they took to assess recent publications in our field of Jewish studies, providing a service to the scholarly community. As always, we welcome suggestions for works to be reviewed in future issues. Speaking of reviews: We thank the *Jewish Review of Books,* edited by Abraham Socher, for permission to re-print a review by Eitan P. Fishbane of Daniel Matt's translation of the Zohar into English.

Given our reliance on translations – their availability and quality – for teaching and research, we address the practical side of the topic in an informal survey. We are pleased with the many suggestions we received regarding which works in the field of Jewish studies should urgently be (re-)translated, into which language(s), and why.

Last but not least, special thanks go to those who made the actual production of *PaRDeS* possible: Dr. Frank Schlöffel, our typesetter, dealt with complex tasks stemming from the very topic of this issue, which includes more Hebrew than in other issues. Dr. Anne Popiel, our indefatigable copy editor, saved us from embarrassing mistakes that non-native speakers are prone to make. Our

Markus Krah, Mirjam Thulin, Bianca Pick

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Benjamin, Rosenzweig, and the Babel Fish: The Transformative Impact of Translations in Jewish History and Culture

by Markus Krah and Mirjam Thulin

I.

Translations are everywhere, from a venerable or even sacred text to a mundane manual for a technical device, occurring between as well as within linguistic communities. As George Steiner stated, "translation is formally and pragmatically implicit in *every* act of communication."[1]

Even a narrower concept of translation than Steiner's points to the omnipresence and importance not just of translations, but also of the problems, potentials, and questions raised by attempts to render a text (or meaning) into a language different from its source. The recent "translational turn" and its expansion of the concept of translation adds even more questions.[2] These highlight the ambivalent or polyvalent nature of translations and their role within larger cultural and philosophical horizons. Translations can solve practical problems, but may also cause new ones. They may change an "original text" in problematic ways and question the idea of the "original" as they create texts that claim a degree of independence and convey new and different meanings, messages, and associations. The very existence of translations can both add to cultural richness and threaten our ability to appreciate it, as they reduce the incentives to learn foreign languages. On a functional level, they can be put into the service of universal as well as particular causes, with their actual impact often being unpredictable.

These issues take on special significance in the context of texts deemed "holy" or held sacred by communities who define themselves in relation to

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[1]   George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992; orig. publ. 1975), xii, emphasis in original.

[2]   Cf. Doris Bachmann-Medick, "The Translational Turn," *Translation Studies* 2, no. 1 (2009): 2–16.

such texts. Translation questions can be metaphysical questions. Not coincidentally, the biblical story of the confusion of languages in Babylon, as described in the book of Genesis (11:1–9), provides the most widely used metaphor for the problems (and the cultural richness) associated with the diversity of languages. Steiner called his magisterial work on the philosophy of language and translation *After Babel.* Many other thinkers use such biblical terms and categories to explore the religious dimensions of translations, their potential to transform not just texts, but the course of history as well, and the utopian vision of the restored understanding of mankind and its eschatological redemption.

Given what is at stake, it may be as fitting as it seems irreverent to open this volume of PaRDeS by juxtaposing two extremely different translators, who have anniversaries this year and who cast very different and distinct perspectives on the utopian and religious dimensions of translations: Franz Rosenzweig and the "Babel fish." Rosenzweig died on December 10, 1929, at the tragically young age of 42, depriving the world of ideas and texts in which he likely would have continued to engage with questions of translation. The Babel fish, a universal translator, saw the light of the, or rather, a universe in 1979, when Douglas Adams' sci-fi novel *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was published.

More than Rosenzweig, the Babel fish may require an introduction: It is "small, yellow and leech-like, and probably the oddest thing in the Universe." It feeds on brain waves and, put in users' ears, allows them to understand any form of language uttered around them, even across the divisions between different species. "The speech patterns you actually hear decode the brainwave matrix which has been fed into your mind by the Babel fish," the *Guide* informs us.[3]

As different as they are otherwise, obviously, both Rosenzweig and the Babel fish point us to the religious dimensions of translations. To begin with the latter, the *Hitchhiker's Guide* explains that it "is such a bizarrely improbable coincidence that anything so mindbogglingly useful could have evolved purely by chance that some thinkers have chosen to see it as final and clinching proof of the *non*-existence of God."

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[3]   Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (London: Pan Books, 2017), 34.

"The argument goes something like this: 'I refuse to prove that I exist,' says God, 'for proof denies faith, and without faith I am nothing.'

'But,' says Man, 'the Babel fish is a dead giveaway, isn't it? It could not have evolved by chance. It proves you exist, and so therefore, by your own arguments, you don't. QED.'

'Oh dear,' says God, 'I hadn't thought of that,' and promptly vanishes in a puff of logic.

'Oh, that was easy,' says Man, and for an encore goes on to prove that black is white and gets himself killed on the next zebra crossing."[4]

It seems doubtful that Rosenzweig would have appreciated such facetious playing with questions that he took seriously. The religious dimension of his translation work is well known, from the translation of Yehuda Halevy's (1075–1141) medieval poetry from Hebrew into German, published in 1926, to the monumental translation of the Hebrew Bible into German, which he began with Martin Buber but did not live to see completed.[5]

The example of this Bible translation leads to questions about the significance of translations specific to Judaism and Jewish life. Any Bible translation reminds us how the importance of texts, their transmission, and the multilingualism of Jewish life give translations an outsized importance across time and space. Translations are rooted in diaspora cultures in different ways. They can be read as cultural practices and performances by Jewish and non-Jewish translators for Jewish or non-Jewish audiences, serving different functions, restaurative and innovative being just two of many.

II.

The Buber-Rosenzweig translation of the Bible raises many questions in this regard that inform this volume on "transformative translations in Jewish history and culture." They range from pragmatic linguistic matters to the roles and functions of languages in Jewish religious life and in the cultural or political constitution of Jewish communities, and from traditional translations

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[4] Adams, *Hitchhiker's Guide,* 35.
[5] Franz Rosenzweig, *Jehuda Halevi: Zweiundneunzig Hymnen und Gedichte, deutsch* (Berlin: Lambert Schneider, 1926); *Die Schrift. Zu verdeutschen unternommen von Martin Buber gemeinsam mit Franz Rosenzweig* (Berlin: Lambert Schneider, 1926–31, from vol. 12: Berlin: Schocken, 1932–38; the translation process concluded in 1961, after Buber revised the previous texts once more.

to the transformations of texts in new material, cultural, social, and political environments. Translations have affected the relationship of Jewish communities and cultures vis-à-vis others, their boundaries, and the notion of an essence defining Judaism and Jewish distinctiveness over time and in the face of adversity and persecution, as well as assimilation and acculturation.

Buber and Rosenzweig hoped to re-familiarize German-speaking Jews with the Bible by de-familiarizing them with existing renderings. They tried to achieve this with a translation emulating the Hebrew original in syntax, vocabulary, sound, and orality. This project was supposed to be the key to a renewed, positive sense of Jewishness in the face of assimilation and persecution. Rosenzweig and Buber faced an audience whose knowledge of the original Hebrew was very limited, hence the need for a translation.[6] In this and other religious contexts, knowledge of the original language of texts is often an ideal based on the perception of losses incurred in the translation process, and/or on the notion of a religious essence woven into the fabric of a language. Rosenzweig made the ideal of Jewish knowledge of Hebrew explicit in his renderings of Yehuda Halevy's poetry.[7]

Focusing on the limitations inherent in any process of translation, when taken to the extreme, questions the translatability of texts into other languages. When such ideas of untranslatability are applied to sacred or other texts that are claimed as constitutive of a group's religious, national, or cultural distinctiveness, thorny questions of essentialism or constructedness are not far away. The intellectual setting of the Buber-Rosenzweig translation was a romantic Jewish nationalism in the medium of the German language. In the process, they transformed and expanded the language by foreignizing it through neologisms derived from the Hebrew. Romantic Jewish nationalism, however, can work in both directions: Translating texts from "non-Jewish" into "Jewish languages" in a narrow sense, such as Hebrew and Yiddish, was the Jewish instance of a larger pattern of linguistic national projects observed by George

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[6] Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung*. Berlin, 1936. For the context, cf. Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Jewish Cultural and Spiritual Life," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times: Renewal and Destruction* [vol. 4], ed. Avraham Barkai and Paul Mendes-Flohr; general eds. Michael Meyer and Michael Brenner (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 143–148, 151–156; Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 103–111.

[7] Rosenzweig, *Jehuda Halevi*, 153.

Steiner.[8] One specific example of this pattern is analyzed in the essay by Danielle Drori in her article on David Frishman's translations. Depending on the ideology behind such projects, language can be seen as the repository of a Jewish essence or as a medium that, skillfully used in translations, allows for transcending divisions that are linguistic rather than essential.

The historical roles of different languages used by Jews militates against stark dichotomies. While Hebrew has been the sacred Jewish language, medium of divine revelation and religious practice, Yiddish has been hailed as containing a Jewish essence, and Jewish religious life (unless very narrowly defined) has taken place in other Jewish vernaculars and other languages, too, often functionally differentiated from Hebrew and pragmatically relying on translations.

In the case of Jewish religious life and the experiences of individuals and communities, the significance of language and translations is negotiated in contrasting ways in order to experience, understand, and express Judaism. Romantic notions of the ineffable are one such way, different from linguistically mediated insights and interpretations of texts. This internally Jewish interplay between different approaches is one dialectic that has shaped Jewish culture over time. Translations have been crucial to it, as in the case of the *Zohar,* a central text of the Kabbalah. Its translation from Aramaic into English, reviewed in this issue by Eitan P. Fishbane, is an instance of this larger dialectic.

Another dialectic that permeates this issue devoted to translations takes place in the relations between Jews and others, Jewish and other cultures. Translations from "Jewish languages" into others have paved ways for greater Jewish interaction with other cultures, which in turn have shaped and enriched Jewish culture. Likewise, translations into languages such as Hebrew and Yiddish have contributed not only to the modernization of these languages, but to an expansion of their users' epistemological horizons. This insight forms the background of the research report by Caroline Gruenbaum. Translation, broadly understood, is a form of cultural mediation: transformative not just for the text, but also for the "receiving" culture (and echoing back to the source).

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[8] Steiner, *After Babel,* 341. The topic of "Jewish languages" has sparked a wealth of scholarly studies. A good entryway into this growing field is provided by The Jewish Language Research Website: http://www.jewish-languages.org.

In short, translations play a crucial role in the historical development of Jewish cultures and for fundamental questions facing Jews and Judaism especially in modern times. With their inherently innovative and transformative potential, translations can both stabilize and destabilize boundaries, between Jews and others, between the sacred and profane, but also between different expressions of Judaism and its cultural traditions, various social strata of Jewish communities, as well as between Israel and the diaspora. Translations are everywhere.

III.

The cover and frontispice of this issue are associative hybrids of a Wordle, tag cloud, crossword puzzle, and Scrabble board; they illustrate some of these insights and the range of associations between translations and Jewish Studies. Traditionally understood, translations are attempts to give new form to existing content, thus like in a crossword puzzle, they have to work within the formal requirements of the target language, its vocabulary, syntax, rhythm, and sound, but also the associational space it opens up are associative hybrids. More recent understandings of translations as independent works push against the limitations implied in relations of accuracy and pay greater attention to the different trajectories of sources and translations. As words in different languages come in contact with one another their overlap can be punctual, as they run in otherwise different directions like the horizontal and vertical columns of a crossword puzzle or a Scrabble board.

Just as in that game, a translator gives great value to finding the *mot juste* out of the material she has. Ridding yourself of ten tiles by placing the word "Septuagint" on the board may be as exhilarating as finding a German equivalent for the Yiddish term *fartaytshn,* as the article by MARIA COORS on translations of Sholem Aleichem's Tevye stories from Yiddish into German illustrates. Imagine playing Scrabble with words in different languages permitted, music from *Fiddler on the Roof* in the background, and with a Babel fish in your ear – a support many actual translators may wish for (or not, given the limitations of artificial intelligence in translating complex or even poetic texts).

For the topic of translations in Jewish history and culture, the Babel fish's ability to translate across species divisions would be less relevant than the skills to deal with vastly different religious, political, social, and cultural

contexts that change over time. While the articles in this volume do not follow one common theory of translation, they are united in their approach of contextualizing the translations they engage with beyond the texts and practices themselves.

The topics, adumbrated on the cover, range from the 17th to the 21st centuries and therefore address a spectrum of different contexts and functions of translations. They involve not just Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian, German, French, and English, but also "Israeli:" a language wholly distinct from biblical Hebrew, as Gitit Holzman and Ghil'ad Zuckermann argue. Their assessment of the translation of the Bible into Israeli challenges conventional and politically important assertions of unbroken links between biblical Hebrew and the language spoken in the Tel Aviv Central Bus Station in 2019. The ethnographic article by Cory Driver goes beyond linguistic dimensions, as he analyzes the ritual translations performed by Muslim keepers of Jewish graves in Morocco.

The articles in this volume offer fresh perspectives on old texts and their old-new translations. Morris Faierstein's article tells us about readers of semi-scholarly Yiddish religious literature in the 17th century by analyzing the *Melitz Yosher,* a work by Rabbi Jacob ben Isaac Rabbino of Yanova, the author of the *Tsene-rene.* (This is a good place to point out the gendered nature of translation projects, as exemplified by Bertha Pappenheim's (1859–1936) translation of this "women's bible" into German, published in 1930.[9]) The *Tsene-rene* is the starting point also for Netta Schramm's article, which traces various presentations of the biblical Korah story into the 21st century. Her concept of translation as "transvaluation" breaks with established notions of translations being in some way faithful to an "original."

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9   Yaakov ben Yitzhak Ashkenazi, *Zeehnah u-Reenah Frauenbibel,* transl. by Bertha Pappenheim (Frankfurt a. M.: J. Kauffmann, 1930). Pappenheim also translated the memoirs of Glückel of Hameln (first published privately in Vienna in 1910) and parts of the "Ma'asse Book," also known as the "women's Talmud" (*Allerlei Geschichten. Maasse-Buch. Buch der Sagen und Legenden aus Talmud und Midrasch nebst Volkserzählungen in jüdisch-deutscher Sprache. Nach der Ausgabe des Ma'ase-Buches Amsterdam 1723 bearbeitet von Bertha Pappenheim.* Mit einem Geleitwort von Ismar Elbogen (Frankfurt a. M.: J. Kauffmann, 1929).

IV.

The relationship between an "original" and its translation(s) is, of course, at the core of practical as well as theoretical discussions about translations, as are questions of form and content, husk and kernel. Walter Benjamin's (1892–1940) classic essay "The Translator's Task" (1923), read and re-read, interpreted and quoted over almost a century, offers perspectives that seem particularly relevant to the topics addressed in this volume of PaRDeS.[10] At the more pragmatic level of his theory, Benjamin, who was influenced by Rosenzweig in other regards, argued for foreignizing and transforming the target language by means of a word-for-word translation that focuses on form and dethrones the information or message conveyed by the original, as well as ideals of accuracy or equivalence.[11] A translation shines a new light on the original as it contributes to the latter's unfolding over time:

> "[A] translation proceeds from the original. Indeed, not so much from its life as from its 'afterlife' or 'survival.' If [a] translation is indeed later than the original, it nonetheless indicates that important works [...] have reached the stage of their continuing life."

Such works of art gain in relevance as reception, interpretation, and translation liberate their full potential:

> "The history of great works of art records their descent from their sources, their shaping in the age of the artist, and the periods of their basically eternal continuing life in later generations. Where it appears, the latter is called fame. Translations that are more than transmissions of a message are produced when a work, in its continuing life, has reached the age of fame. Hence they do not so much serve the work's fame (as bad translators customarily claim) as they owe their existence to it. In them the original's life achieves its constantly renewed, latest and most comprehensive development."[12]

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[10]   Walter Benjamin, "The Translator's Task," transl. by Steven Rendall, in *The Translation Studies Reader,* ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2012; orig. published 1923), 75–83.

[11]   Cf. Stéphane Moses, "Walter Benjamin und Franz Rosenzweig," *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 56, no. 4 (December 1982): 622–640; Caspar Battegay, "The Infinite Citation. Walter Benjamin and Franz Rosenzweig," *Barmidbar: Journal for Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 2 (2012): 52–74.

[12]   Benjamin, "Translator's Task," 76–77.

Translations, then, are transformative, and not only of their source and of the language of the translation. Could Benjamin's theory be read as an optimistic description of the successful, living transmission of texts, ideas, and values in the Jewish tradition, beginning with the Bible and its various translations, but also including many other texts (and practices) that, collectively and organically, bring about "the constantly renewed [and ever more] comprehensive development" of this tradition?

For Benjamin, the messianic Marxist, translations have an eschatological vanishing point. Translations express "the most intimate relationships among languages" which "are not alien to one another, but *a priori,* and irrespective of all historical connections, related to each other in what they want to say."[13] Translations point to a "pure language" and liberate it by rewriting the works that imprison it. In this process, the situation *after Babel* is ultimately overcome in a utopia of linguistic harmony.

Once again, religious imagery and religious texts, first and foremost the Bible, play a key role in this vision of the salvific and transformative potential of translations as they usher the development of languages toward their destination:

> "[If] languages grow in this way until they reach the messianic end of their history, then it is translation that is ignited by the eternal continuing life of the works and the endless revival of languages in order to constantly test this sacred growth of languages, to determine how distant what is hidden within them is from revelation, how present it might become in the knowledge of this distance."[14]

Religion has a role in the progress toward the ultimate dissolution of the foreignness of languages to each other, which cannot be brought about by human translators; but, indirectly, "the growth of religion ripens the seed hidden in languages into a higher language." It is in Holy Scripture, where text and truth are so immediately related as to obviate mediation through "sense," meaning, or message, that the translation already inherent in the original can be produced in the same immediate proximity to the original: "For to some degree all great writings, but above all Holy Scripture, contain their virtual

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[13]   Benjamin, "Translator's Task," 77.
[14]   Benjamin, "Translator's Task," 78.

translation between the lines. The interlinear version of the Holy Scripture is the prototype or ideal of all translation."[15]

Later theorists, philosophers, and practitioners of language may disagree, strongly and fundamentally, with this assessment. But it marks what has been seen to be at stake in the seemingly mundane labor of looking for the felicitous phrase, the right tone, and best equivalent in a new language for something written in a different language and time. With Rosenzweig and Benjamin as presiding angels, a Babel fish in the ear (and tongue in cheek), the texts in this issue of PaRDeS are offered to be read in this spirit.

V.

If and when Benjamin's vision becomes reality, translations will be a matter of the past. In the meantime, as translations are everywhere, their transformative role in Jewish history and culture makes them all the more relevant and interesting. That may be true even more so in the field of Jewish Studies, which PaRDeS strives to serve, in the daily practices of teaching and researching. This practical dimension of our topic is reflected in the survey of scholars who responded to the question of which text in the field of Jewish Studies should urgently be (re-)translated, into which language, and why.

The responses illustrate not only the breadth of topics that Jewish studies aim to cover, from a 10th-century source on Karaite practice and belief to the 17th-century *converso* Uriel da Costa, to an early study of Holocaust survivors written in English. They point to inaccessible works that call for translations from Hebrew, Russian, Arabic, Polish, and German. The suggestions presented here alone show how many works in various languages wait to be (re-)translated into various other languages.

Translations may be everywhere already, but there is still work to do. Lest anyone despair of the magnitude, the over-quoted yet timeless wisdom of *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers, Mishnah section *Seder Nezikin,* 2:21) puts the task into perspective: "You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

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[15]　　Benjamin, "Translator's Task," 83.

ARTICLES

The *Melits Yosher* and the Audience for Early Modern Yiddish Literature

by Morris M. Faierstein

Abstract

Rabbi Jacob ben Isaac of Yanova (d. 1623) is best known as the author of the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah*; the *Melits Yosher* ("Intercessor before God") is one of his lesser known works. It was first published in Lublin in 1622 and reprinted once in Amsterdam in 1688. Like the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah*, it was a Torah commentary, but composed for men who had some yeshivah education, but who could not continue their studies. The commentary on the *Song of Songs* by Isaac Sulkes is another Yiddish work that addresses the same audience as the *Melits Yosher*. The purpose of this article is to bring to scholarly attention an audience that has not been noticed or studied in the previous scholarship on early modern Yiddish literature.

1. Introduction

Interest in early modern European Jewry has increased in recent years, but an aspect that has lagged in interest in popular culture as expressed in the Yiddish literature addressed to this segment of Jewish society. This study of the *Melits Yosher* is part of a larger work that seeks to establish a foundation for the study of the basic corpus of early modern Yiddish literature: translations, paraphrases, and other works associated with the Bible.[1] The methodologies utilized in this study is the research on the history of the book and gender studies, a historical and philological analysis, and the description of the texts. One purpose of this study is to refute the conventional assumption

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[1] The present study is a revised version of a chapter from my recently completed monograph: Morris M. Faierstein, *The Early Modern Yiddish Bible: From the Mirkevet ha-Mishneh to Blitz and Witzenhausen (1534–1686),* presently being considered for publication.

that early modern Yiddish literature is for "women and men who are like women"[2] that is found not only in contemporary literature but also in much recent scholarship.

Rabbi Jacob ben Isaac Rabbino of Yanova (d. 1623) was the author of the most popular and widely reprinted Yiddish work, *Ze'enah u-Re'enah* (from Song of Songs 3:11: "Go forth and see"), a commentary on the *Humash* (Pentateuch), *Haftarot* (readings from the Prophets), and *Megillot* (Scrolls).[3] It was published in the first decade of the 17th century and went through four editions before the author's death in 1623.[4] Despite or perhaps because of the popularity of this work, Rabbi Jacob felt the need to write another work on the Bible, which he entitled *Melits Yosher* ("Intercessor before God"). This work was written in a different style and for a different audience than the *Ze'enah u-Re'enah*. The phrase "Melits Yosher" has additional nuances in Jewish literature and liturgy. It can mean defense attorney, intermediary or intercessor before God. These additional meanings most likely found a resonance in the readers who saw this term and in Rabbi Jacob ben Isaac's choice of title for his book. Where the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* was aimed at a popular audience of men, women, and young people, the audience for the *Melits Yosher* was a more sophisticated group of men who had studied beyond the elementary education of the *Heder* (Jewish traditional elementary school) but had to leave their studies in order to earn a living. This is an audience that has not been noticed in most of the previous scholarship on early modern Yiddish literature.[5]

The "conventional wisdom" that one finds about early modern Yiddish literature, and especially Yiddish religious literature, is that Yiddish literature was for women and ignorant men who had no significant Jewish education, while Hebrew literature was for men who had spent years in *Yeshivahs*

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[2]   The phrase is first found in the introduction of Moshe Henochs Altschul, *Sefer Brantshpigl* (Basel, 1602), n. p.

[3]   Morris M. Faierstein, *Ze'enah U-Re'enah: A Critical Translation into English*, ed. and trans. Morris M. Faierstein. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), 2 vols. All translations of primary texts in this article are my own. Since my edition of the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* worked with a different transliteration of Hebrew and Yiddish, the transliteration in this article differs from the PaRDeS style sheet. For example, I cite *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* and not *Tsene-rene*.

[4]   The first three editions of the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* have not survived. They are only known from a reference to them in the earliest surviving edition, published in Basel-Hanau in 1622.

[5]   Jean Baumgarten, *Introduction to Old Yiddish Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 114, mentions the *Melits Yosher* and its audience in passing, but does not explore the implications.

(Talmud academies) and mastered the intricacies of rabbinic literature.[6] A recent expression of this perspective is the comment by Shlomo Berger:

> "Indeed, it is now generally accepted that, in addition to writing intentionally for women, addressing them was also a smokescreen authors and publishers used to justify writing in Yiddish. Hebrew was considered the language in which men read, Yiddish the women's vernacular."[7]

Originally, this characterization was meant as a way to denigrate and ignore this literature. Where and when did this negative stereotype begin and who propagated it? Israel Tsinberg (1873–1939), the great historian of Jewish literature and a defender of Yiddish literature, suggested in his history that the culprits were the 19th-century *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholars who reflected the modern German-Jewish negativity to Yiddish literature and culture. Tsinberg writes:

> "The German Jewish scholars of the nineteenth century, such as [Moritz] Güdemann, [Maier] Grünbaum, [Joseph] Perles, [Moritz] Steinschneider and others, always speak of Old Yiddish literature as a special 'women's literature.' This, however, is incorrect. The following detail is worth noting. We have collected the texts of some seventy-nine title pages of Old Yiddish editions and among them are only nine that address themselves exclusively to 'pious women, young women, and maidens.' The other seventy write, 'not for women and maidens', but also 'for both young men and householders,' 'for men and women, boys and girls.' Some address themselves to the 'dear brothers,' to 'common people, men and women,' to 'ordinary cantors and teachers' to 'dear people, men and women, boys and girls.' Others again are addressed simply to *ben Adam*, to 'either the scholar or the ordinary man, householders or women,' or to 'every Jew [...] whoever he is [...] whether man or woman, whoever can read.'"[8]

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6   For a recent analysis of this assumption and why it is not accurate see, Faierstein, *Ze'enah U-Re'enah*, 14–17; Miriam Borden, "Di vaybershe Bibel:" The Myth and Mythopoetics of the 'Women's Bible' (M. A. thesis, University of Toronto, 2018), has dealt with this issue in greater detail. Borden notes that she found no references to the term "women's Bible" prior to the 19th century.

7   Shlomo Berger, "An Invitation to Buy and Read: Paratexts of Yiddish Books in Amsterdam, 1650–1800," *Book History* 7 (2004): 31–61, here 38.

8   Israel Tsinberg, *History of Jewish Literature*, trans. Bernard Martin (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1975), 12 vols., here vol. 7, 124–125. The list of title pages that Tsinberg mentions are not found in the English translation of his work but can be found in the Yiddish version of Tsinberg's history, cf. Israel Tsinberg, *Di geshichte fun der litertaur bei Yidn* ("A History of

Another group that Tsinberg does not mention, but who must also share some of the responsibility for this perception of the role that Yiddish literature played are the East European *Maskilim* (enlighteners) who wrote in Hebrew and held Yiddish in low esteem. An interesting example is the story mentioned by Yehudah Leib Katzenelson (1846–1917), better known by his pen name Buki ben Yogli. He was the author of one of the more popular *maskilic* autobiographies. He mentions that in his childhood he would read the *Kav ha-Yashar* ("The Just Measure"), a popular ethical work by Tsvi Hirsch Koidanover (d. 1712), with great delight, which was published in a bi-lingual edition, Hebrew on the top half of the page and Yiddish on the bottom.[9] Initially, he read the Yiddish text, which was much easier for him to understand:

> "But when one of my uncles explained to me that it was unbecoming for a male to read books in Yiddish, which were intended only for women, I began with great effort to climb up from below the margin."[10]

Two other modern groups played a role perpetuating the myth of this literature as being only for women. Long before the ascent of feminism in the post-World War II era, were first secular Yiddishists (secular and linguistic movement), Bundists (secular Jewish socialists), and Communists, who had antireligious ideologies and attaching the "women's label" as a way of denigrating religious Yiddish literature. With the rise of feminism, the narrative changed. Yiddish religious literature was now the source of a separate "women's religion." The literature on Yiddish prayers, the *tehinnot*, is a prime example. There are *tehinnot* written by and for women.[11] However, there are many *tehinnot* that are written for men or for a general audience that includes all ages and genders, as is true of all genres of this literature. Only a selective reading of early modern Yiddish religious literature would lead to the conclusion that the primary audience of this literature was women.

Jewish Literature"; Alveltlicher Yidisher Kultur Kongress (Buenos Aires: Argentiner Opteil, 1964–1968), 8 vols., here vol. 6, appendix 4, 330–332 (Yiddish).

[9]   It was first published in Frankfurt am Main in 1705, and frequently reprinted, including many editions that were bilingual in Hebrew-Yiddish.

[10] Cited in Max Weinreich, *History of the Yiddish Language*, ed. Paul Glasser (New Haven: YIVO/ Yale University Press, 2008), 2 vols., here vol. 2: A263.

[11] A classic exposition of this feminist ideology is Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).

2. The *Melits Yosher* and Its Audience

The idea that there might be a middle ground of men and some women who were familiar with rabbinic ideas and teachings has not been adequately discussed in the scholarly literature.[12] The tendency in the scholarly literature to divide Hebrew from Yiddish and learned from ignorant, has produced a duality that is not found when the literature is examined without prior assumptions. Instead of a duality there is a gradation in the literature from works only understandable by a small elite of rabbinic scholars through Hebrew works written in a more popular style, Yiddish works that presuppose knowledge of rabbinic concepts and vocabulary with Yiddish works written for young people or men and women with no more than the most basic education on the other end. The audience that Rabbi Jacob had in mind when he composed the *Melits Yosher* was that middle group who might be able to follow a learned lecture or sermon, even if they could not read a rabbinic text in the original Hebrew or Aramaic. The introduction explains several important aspects of his work, why he wrote in Yiddish, why he was careful to cite his sources, and who was his target audience:

"Therefore, a person should study Torah, so that the evil inclination will remove itself. This has awakened me to make books in Yiddish to benefit the public, so that the people should not say: we do not have books, since we do not understand Hebrew. Therefore, I have selected from important books and have translated it into Yiddish. I did not want to boast, so my interpretations are few. Nonetheless, I have benefited the public. Concerning this, the prophet Isaiah said, '*Seek the Lord*

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[12] There are a number of women who have come to light whose writings and activities clearly indicate a significant knowledge of the rabbinic tradition. The three women cited here are not an exhaustive list but signify that the old stereotypes cannot be sustained, and more research is needed. Reizel Fiszels, purchased a manuscript of a Yiddish Psalms translation from Moshe Stendal in Hannover in 1586. She brought the manuscript to Cracow and arranged for its publication by Isaac Prostitz (d. 1612), who was the most important printer of Yiddish books in late 16th-century Cracow, cf. Chone Shmeruk, "Appendix: Bibliography of Yiddish Books printed to the Middle of the 17th Century," in Chone Shmeruk, *Yiddish Literature in Poland: Historical Studies and Perspectives* (Magnes: Jerusalem, 1981), 75 – 116, here 87, no. 20 (Hebrew). We also have two books written by women: Rivkah Tiktiner's *Meneket Rivkah*, was published in Prague in 1609, cf. Frauke von Rohden, *Meneket Rivkah: A Manual of Wisdom and Piety for Jewish Women* (Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia, 2009). The *Memoirs* of Glikel of Hameln is perhaps the best known early modern work written by a woman, cf. Glikel of Hameln, *Glikel Memoirs 1691–1719,* ed. and trans. Chava Turniansky (Jerusalem: Merkaz Shazar, 2006) (Hebrew/Yiddish).

while He can be found, call to Him while He is near' [Isa 55.6]. Seek God when he can be found, call to Him when He is near. One can ask here. Why does it say 'seek' twice, since it means seek, and call to him means call? This is all one. Put aside one of them. Write '*seek Him*' and put aside, call him. One can further ask, write '*when He can be found,*' when He can be found, and put aside, '*when He is near.*' They all mean the same thing.

The explanation is that the prophet shows us that when someone gets up to preach divine things, that is to say, the Torah, he wants to preach it as it is found. That is to say, he found the same sermon in books, and he gets up to preach. The sermon is not to be praised. Why, "*call to Him when He is near.*" That is to say, each person will be able to read it when he will come close to it, in the book from which he took it. Furthermore, "*Seek the Lord while He can be found.*" When somebody wants to preach what he found, that is to say, he found this in books, and he gets up to preach. "*Call to Him while He is near.*" He should call the sermon and give it a name of who is close to it. That is to say, he should say in which book he found it, in the name of the one who said it. Thus, the sermon is not so bad. Furthermore, where He can be found; one wants to preach as he found it in the books. "*Call to Him while He is near.*" He should see that the sermon at least has a purpose. Everyone can read it, if they only come close to it. This the meaning of, "*Call to Him while He is near.*" Whoever comes to it should be able to read it. This is when someone makes something in a language that everyone can understand. In these generations, in the majority of lands this is the language of Ashkenaz. Therefore, it is just to make everything in Yiddish.

I have seen that the book, *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* in particular, is written in Yiddish and everyone desires to learn from it. Therefore, it has been printed many times more than other important books, because it is in Yiddish. There is very little study, because of our sins, since not everybody understands difficult terms. When one already wants to study, he can't because of difficulties earning a living, particularly those who were yeshivah students before they married. When they take a wife, they throw away the Torah and become an ignoramus. When he gets old, he has regret. As soon as he sees a religious book in Yiddish, he buys it and reminds himself, let me also study Torah. He knows well that Torah study is the priority."[13]

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[13]   Rabbi Jacob ben Isaac of Yanova, *Melits Yosher*, (Amsterdam, 1688), Introduction, 1b. A full translation of the introduction to the Melits Yosher can be found in the appendix of this article.

Later in the introduction, Rabbi Jacob explains that the *Melits Yosher* was intended for an audience that was already familiar with the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* and wanted something more sophisticated and equally important. Rabbi Jacob wanted a work of this style that would cover the whole Bible, and not merely the *Humash*, *Haftarot* and *Megillot* that were the basic study texts for the less educated members of the Jewish community.

Another indicator that this work was intended for a more sophisticated audience than that of the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* is the list of authors he mentions in his introduction as indicative of the type of author the reader should expect to encounter. The commentaries on which the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* is built are the classic rabbinic texts and medieval commentaries. In contrast, the commentaries mentioned in the introduction of the *Melits Yosher*, with the exception of Isaac ben Moses Arama (1420–1494), were all active in the 16th century, and their works could all be considered recent works that reflected the latest intellectual trends, including the emerging influence of Kabbalah. They are also much more sophisticated commentaries, with kabbalistic and philosophical inflections, originally written for an elite audience. Some of the authors cited by Rabbi Jacob are among the first to popularize kabbalistic teachings and concepts in their commentaries. A topic needing further research is whether Rabbi Jacob incorporated kabbalistic concepts in this work and in this way served as a conduit for the dissemination of these ideas.[14]

> "Since I have seen that many people desire to study, and they have informed me that they would gladly have a commentary on the *Twenty-four* [books of the Bible] in Yiddish, with midrashim, like the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* is on the *Humash*. Thus, I have collected more midrashim and sermons for each Sabbath, from *Keli Hemdah*,[15] *Divrei Shalom*,[16] *Akedah*,[17] *Keli Yakar*,[18] *Alsheikh*,[19] and *Ma'asei Adonai*,[20] all of them briefly translated. I do not want to boast with the commentaries that others have made, since mine are very few. Thus, I am only an interpreter and want to *benefit*

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[14] The *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* has only four references to the book *Zohar* (Splendor) and one each from Moses Cordovero's *Pardes Rimmonim* (Orchard of Pomegranates) and Elijah de Vidas' *Reshit Hokhmah* (Beginning of Wisdom), cf. Faierstein, *Ze'enah U-Re'enah*, vol. 2,1253.

[15] Written by R. Samuel Laniado, Venice, 1594–1596.

[16] Written by R. Isaac Adarbi, Salonika, 1580.

[17] Published as R. Isaac Arama, *Akedat Yizhak*, Salonika, 1522.

[18] Written by R. Ephraim Lunshits, Lublin, 1602.

[19] Published as R. Moses Alshekh, *Torat Moshe*, Venice, 1600.

[20] Written by R. Eliezer Ashkenazi, Venice, 1583.

the people, as God, Blessed be He, has helped me with the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah*, and I have benefited men and women, so should I continue to further be a faithful interpreter between the people and the Holy One, of His Torah. Therefore, this book should be called *Melits Yosher* ["Intercessor before God"]. I make known before everyone that I am only a faithful interpreter of these books. Very few of the interpretations are mine, but I have examined and collected these books together expecting to benefit the people, since to engage in arrogance is a bad attribute, if I would not cite from whom the comments are derived."[21]

At the end of his introduction, Rabbi Jacob alludes to his role as interpreter between the readers and the authors in helping them understand the new ideas and interpretations found in works that are not readily accessible to many readers. He also suggests that this was a book to be studied at leisure or discussed with a friend. It is also different in this respect from the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* that was more of a digest of traditional commentaries and interpretations of the text of the liturgical Bible, the parts that were included in the synagogue services.

"We have been instructed that through the Torah the person comes to be *humble* and to have *reverence* for the Holy One. Therefore, one should study Torah, in particular this book, which is composed in brief easy Yiddish, from books that are not easily available, are difficult, and written in lengthy language. He will find complete sermons inside that the person might read. They are on many Psalms in the Book of Psalms, and other preachers, which are well translated. *To benefit the people.* The people hear sermons in the synagogue and do not understand the sermon. It is given too quickly in the synagogue. In this book, he can read it slowly alone, in order to understand it. When he does not understand, he can talk with his friend about it. Therefore, I want to begin with the help of the Holy One, and the verse, '*give truth to Jacob*' [Mic 7.20], will be fulfilled by me, that I should not come to an error, but to encounter the truth as the books meant it. It should be fulfilled, '*no harm is in sight for Jacob*' [Num 23.21], with the help of the Holy One, as the verse says, '*command salvation for Jacob*' [Psalms, 44:5]. Therefore, I have called this book, MELITS YOSHER, because I am an interpreter between the people and the Holy One, to help them understand the holy Torah that he Holy One had given is completely just. It

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21   Rabbi Jacob ben Isaac of Yanova, *Melits Yosher*, Introduction, 2c.

is called a *Torah of Truth*, and whoever studies the words of the Torah, is an interpreter for the person in the next world."[22]

The *Melits Yosher* was only printed twice. The first edition was printed in Lublin in 1622 and reprinted in Amsterdam in 1688.[23] No copies of the Lublin edition survived, and our only knowledge of this edition is from the reference to it in the approbation by the rabbi of the Ashkenazi community of Amsterdam.

There is no reason to assume that the second edition is not an accurate reprint of the Lublin edition. Rabbi Jacob was still mentioned as if he was still alive at the end of the introduction. This would indicate that it was reprinted as found, without deletions or additions.

Another unusual aspect of the original edition was that it was given an approbation by six of the most important rabbis in Poland in the first half of the 17th century.[24] The norm was that Yiddish books were published without approbation, in contrast to Hebrew works that were more highly esteemed by the rabbinic elite. At the semiannual fair held in Lublin in the spring of 1623, an approbation was issued for the new book being published by Rabbi Jacob. It states:

"Since we have seen the great usefulness that comes from the book[25] that was authored by the esteemed noble Rabbi Jacob son of Rabbi Isaac of Yanova, the author of *Sefer Ze'enah U-Re'enah*. He has now called the book that he has authored, *Sefer ha-Maggid*, and in it explained and commented on all twenty-four [books of the Bible] in Yiddish, through the methods of *hibbur* and *drash*.[26] He has explained many new interpretations that will illumine and enrich the eyes of all who see them."[27]

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[22] Rabbi Jacob ben Isaac of Yanova, *Melits Yosher*, Introduction, 2d.

[23] For bibliographical information on the *Melits Yosher*, cf. Lajb Fuks and Renata G. Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew Typography in the Northern Netherlands 1585–1815: Historical Evaluation and Descriptive Bibliography*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1984–1987), here vol. 2, 390, no. 501.

[24] The second Amsterdam (1688) edition received approbations by four contemporary rabbis, including the Sephardic rabbi of Amsterdam.

[25] My assumption is that this refers to the *Melits Yosher*, published the year before.

[26] *Hibbur* is the style of translation found in the *Teitsch Humash*, the traditional Yiddish translation that interspersed short comments from Rashi's commentary into the translations. *Drash* is the homiletical style of biblical interpretation.

[27] The text of the approbation is in Israel Halperin, *The Records of the Council of the Four Lands*, ed. Israel Bartal (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1990), 40–41, no. 108.

The rest of the approbation follows standard language which is essentially a copyright for the author and publisher forbidding the publication of the book by anyone else to protect their rights and interests.

What is most interesting is the list of six rabbis who signed the approbation. The list included many of the most important rabbis of the period: Samuel Eleazar, known as the *Maharsha* and son of Rabbi Judah ha-Levi, author of a major Talmudic commentary that is found in standard editions of the Talmud; secondly, Joel son of Rabbi Samuel, known as the *BaKh*, author of *Bayit Khadash* ("New Building"), a major Talmudic commentary that is found in standard editions of the Talmud; thirdly, Samuel son of Rabbi Meshulem Feibush, Rabbi of Przemysl; furthermore, Samson the son of Rabbi Isaac and head of the yeshivah in Lemberg; fifthly, Aaron Benjamin son of Hayyim Morawczyk, the Rabbi of Poznan, and, finally, Menahem Monish son of Rabbi Isaac Chajes, Rabbi of Vilna.

Rabbi Jacob mentions in his introduction to the *Melits Yosher* that he planned to write a commentary on the whole Bible. The *Melits Yosher* was the volume only on the *Humash*. What about the rest of the Bible? It has been generally assumed that the *Sefer ha-Maggid*, a commentary on the Prophets and Writings, first published in three volumes in Lublin between 1623 and 1627,[28] was the continuation of the *Melits Yosher* promised in the introduction. The language of the approbation clearly indicates that the *Sefer ha-Maggid* was expected to follow the style and method of the *Melits Yosher*. However, even a cursory comparison of the *Melits Yosher* and the *Sefer ha-Maggid* shows the dramatic differences between the two works. Where the *Melits Yosher* is a homiletical commentary on selected biblical verses, the *Sefer ha-Maggid* contains the Hebrew text, a Yiddish translation of the text with interspersed comments and the commentary of Rashi in Hebrew.

Chaim Lieberman found the answer to this conundrum in the publisher's introduction to the first volume of the *Sefer ha-Maggid* and an apologia at the end of the third volume. Rabbi Jacob died before he could complete the third volume. Lieberman suggests that he died shortly after the approbation was given, and before the first volume of the *Sefer ha-Maggid* was published. This is clear from the eulogistic comments by the publisher in the Hebrew Introduction to the first volume. There is also an apologia at the end of the

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28   The three volumes consisted of respectively Early Prophets (Joshua to Kings), Later Prophets, and Writings.

third volume that describes what happened. The publishers decided to scrap Rabbi Jacob's work and found an anonymous author who completely recast the work and created a work that had no relation to the work of Rabbi Jacob. Lieberman suggests that the publishers still put Rabbi Jacob's name on the title page and added the approbation hoping to sell the book on the strength of his fame as the author of the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah*.[29]

3. Isaac Sulkes and His Commentary on the Song of Songs

Forty years before Rabbi Jacob published the *Melits Yosher*, Isaac Sulkes published his commentary on the Song of Songs. In many respects, his work anticipated the perspective of the *Melits Yosher*. Nothing is known about Sulkes' dates or place of residence. A few comments in the introduction to his work give us some sense of his education and social status. The book was sufficiently popular that it was reprinted two more times.[30]

Sulkes presents himself as a simple Jew who has no pretensions to be a great scholar. He mentions that he is writing in Yiddish what he learned from his teachers. In other words, he is likely one of those people who once studied in a Yeshivah, but the demands of family or the need to earn a living caused him to leave his studies. The evidence of his work shows that he had a good command of the rabbinic texts and commentaries on the Song of Songs that were only available in Hebrew. In other words, he was probably the type of person who Rabbi Jacob foresaw as the target audience for his work. Sulkes writes about himself:

> "Because the world runs this way, one finds many people who are mistaken. One gets
> up in the synagogue to lead the services because he thinks that he has a fine voice. He
> shouts like someone else does while plowing. Then there is another one who wants
> to think that he is the nicest and handsomest, and nobody can compare to him. He
> laughs very hard in a coarse way. Then there is the third one, who thinks that he is the
> smartest one in the world. The people know that he hurries very much. I might also
> be one of these three, because I took into my mind to walk among the lions and the

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[29] Rabbi Chaim Lieberman, "Concerning the *Sefer ha-Maggid* and its Author," in *Yidishe Shprakh* 26, no. 2 (1966): 33–38 (Yiddish); Rabbi Chaim Lieberman, "More on *Sefer ha-Maggid* and its Author," in *Yidishe Shprakh* 29, no. 1–3 (1969/1970): 73–76 (Yiddish).

[30] Isaac Sulkes, *Shir ha-Shirim* (Cracow, 1579). The work was reprinted in Cracow in 1589 and 1599. For full bibliographical information see Shmeruk, "Appendix: Bibliography of Yiddish Books", 83–84, no. 12; 88, no. 22; 99, no. 40.

large wild animals, who run with great speed on all fours, and tear to pieces the large rams who come against them to gore them with their horns. They cannot withstand their great power. How much more so I, since I am but a very small kid and my horns have not yet grown. How should I find the courage: I am faint hearted to go into the dwelling of the lions, that I should take some of their food or nourishment so that it does not harm me. Further, I should be ashamed. Perhaps it might not be good for me. So, I took some of the food from the lions. However, I remembered this, and it is certain that no harm is caused to the great lions and the wild animals, when one collects what they throw away and do not want. They do not worry about it when someone takes it. So too are the Yiddish books. They don't think at all about whoever writes them or makes them. The rabbis and important leaders are occupied with their casuistry and sharp-wittedness.[31] Therefore, they certainly would not consider it insolence for someone who writes in Yiddish what they had once learned from their teacher. I also believe that it is pleasing to the Almighty God to write such books in Yiddish that are useful and Godly. However, not Dietrich of Bern and Hildebrand and all the others; there are so many I cannot name them.[32] Those who spend time with them are certainly sinning. Therefore, someone who wants to be entertained, and also know about God's creation, should earnestly take hold of this book, since you will find in it many kinds of stories and parables. He will also know how to diligently translate this holy book, Song of Songs, along with its *hibbur*. Therefore, dear gentlemen, have some patience with me, and do not assign any blame to me. Every rabbi or *haver* who has the ability to study the Talmud or the *commentaries* on Song of Songs has a *hibbur*. However, what should the ordinary people do? They spend their time providing sustenance and could not study when they wanted to. Particularly now, when because of our many sins, money is very expensive, and the people must have much of it for taxes and other expenses. He can barely praise God with proper intention,

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[31] The terms in Hebrew are *Pilpulim* and *Harifut*. These are modes of Talmud study popular at that time.

[32] Dietrich of Bern and Hildebrand were the heroes of Christian chivalric romances that were popular in Germany. Concerning this genre of literature and its relation to Yiddish literature see Baumgarten, *Introduction to Old Yiddish Literature*, 128–162. Paulus Fagius, in the introduction to his Yiddish *Humash*, published in Konstanz in 1544, n.p., mentions Dietrich of Bern and Hildebrand as works read by Jews instead of religious books: "This book is likewise good for wives and young women who all know well how to read Yiddish, but who pass their time by reading worthless books such as Dietrich von Bern, Hildebrand and others like them which are nothing but lies and invented things. These wives and young women could read this *Humash* which is nothing but pure truth." Very similar comments mentioning Dietrich of Bern and Hildebrand in the same context can be found in a number of 16th-century Yiddish religious works.

not to mention that he does not have the time to sit over the Song of Songs, or that he should study other books. Therefore, I took this upon myself, so that one might come to the Yiddish Song of Songs and will not need much exertion for it and could read it through with ease. He will quickly understand it all properly and informatively, including boys or girls, woman, or man, as long as they can read Yiddish. I wrote this and made it for the sake of heaven. I ask You, God, do not let me be despised in the eyes of people, since someone must know very much before one can properly do this. How much more so, I who am lowly, and does not know much, and because of the many sins, much time is demanded from my study. Therefore, whoever will judge me, should do so positively and not destroy my book. You should be worthy to enter the Holy Land, together with your wife and children. This is desired by the one who would gladly be without shame and without sin. Thus, you will sincerely buy the book, the Song of Songs. God willing, I will also publish the book of Job in Yiddish."[33]

Sulkes writes in his introduction that he has taken the liberty to write his book because the great scholars are too busy with their own work to be concerned with the spiritual needs of ordinary people. Though he may not be qualified, he has tried to fill the need for works aimed at a more popular audience.

At the same time, Sulkes includes a nice parable about a small shopkeeper and the nobility who occasionally venture into the small shop and might find something of value. His point, which is also found in the writings of other authors of early modern Yiddish works, is that even scholars and important people can find something of spiritual value in Yiddish works.[34] He writes:

"Dear gentlemen, I see that some are upset with me and have subdued my nonsense, because I have stepped into their office. The great masters are full of Torah and sit over their books day and night. However, I the pauper can only go over it occasionally. They can make books through which many can fulfill their obligations [*yotze*]. However, I barely know enough to make the blessing over bread [*ha-motzi*].[35] Therefore, I should be ashamed, to undertake such things. However, you should certainly believe me that the world must have such things. Not everybody can run into an expensive shop to buy gold, silver, velvet and silk. One must

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33 Sulkes, *Shir ha-Shirim*, introduction, n. p. There is no evidence that the book on Job was ever published.
34 This is a theme found in the introductions of a number of early modern Yiddish works relating to the Bible. My monograph on these works that is nearing completion has examples and more details.
35 This is a pun and the two terms rhyme.

have many other things in the house. There are many more peasants than noble-men, so I can make my thing, [and write my book]. Therefore, one must also have small shopkeepers who can sell things for the money that ordinary people have. The small shopkeepers have all the things that they ask for. All the shopkeepers can testify about this and sell everyone what they want to have. When a nobleman does come to buy a mirror for his wife or a whistle for his child, he can also freely find it in his shop. The ordinary man cannot do this. When he comes to the rich merchant, he cannot buy anything that he would like from him with the money he has. It is all too expensive for him and above his means. However, at the small shopkeeper he finds everything he needs. Therefore, I have also dared and set up a small shop for the ordinary people and for the women. Let them come to the shop and look around. They will find many things that are found in our sacred books. I have patched it all together in the Song of Songs**.** I ask every pious person, if they will come across a mistake, where I made a mistake or wrote something wrong, he should not be upset with me, as I did not intend it. He should correct it and explain it**.** Thus, he will be worthy to see the Messiah, who is the son of Peretz.[36] He should speedily lead us to the land of Israel, our inheritance. Isaac Sulkes of Cracow asks and desires this."[37]

4.　　Conclusion

The evidence of the *Melits Yosher* and Isaac Sulkes' *Shir ha-Shirim* raises se-rious questions about the "conventional wisdom" regarding the early mod-ern audience for Yiddish literature and their lack of Jewish knowledge. It is self-evident to anyone who is familiar with talmudic, midrashic and other Jewish religious texts and ideas that early modern Yiddish texts are full of references and allusions to Jewish religious ideas and teachings.

For whom did the authors fill their works with these materials? It must be assumed that they believed that their audience would have at least had some familiarity with these ideas and stories. Isaac Sulkes' suggestion that these works could appeal to a variety of audiences must be seriously considered. The study of the religious dimension of early modern Yiddish literature has been neglected by much of the previous scholarship. This study is a chapter in an ongoing project devoted to this subject.

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[36]　Peretz was the son of Judah, who was the ancestor of David, who was the ancestor of the Messiah.
[37]　Sulkes, *Shir ha-Shirim*, Introduction.

Appendix: Introduction to the *"Sefer Melits Yosher"*

Translator's note:
The translation is my own. The first page is the title page; the introduction begins on the second page.

SEFER MELITS YOSHER
These things were taken from many precious books and they are, *Akedah*, *Alsheikh*, *Keli Hemdah*, *Kely Yakar*, *Divrey Shalom*, *Tseror ha-Mor*, *Ma'sey Adonai*, and were translated into the language of Ashkenas, by the author of the *Ze'enah U- Re'enah*, by the true scholar, the pious, our teacher, Rabbi Jacob, son of Rabbi Isaac, of the Rabbino family, who was worthy, and benefited the public.

Now has been added to them, pleasant and sweet interpretations, things that reconcile the heart, from the book *Siftey Cohen* on the Torah, and from *Sefer Ma'sey Adonai*, in the portion of *ve-Zot ha-Berakhah*, that was not found in the earlier authorities. The merit of the many depends on them, and "*many of the people of the land professed to be Jews*" [Esth 8.17], since there are found in this work, explanations and teachings that expand the heart of the person and arouses him to study it.

This has been brought into print again, in order to benefit the public, by the printer and by Rabbi Jacob, son of Rabbi Jacob Segal of the Wimpfe family.

IN AMSTERDAM In the year "my heart was BLAMELESS ... when I did this" [Gen 20.5], in the small counting.[38] In the house and command of the generous Moses Kosman, son of the wealthy dignitary, Rabbi Elijah, may he live long, Emrich.

Introduction.
This introduction will speak about how important the person is through the Torah. One may read them, since there are many teachings with intentions inside. THE TEACHINGS OF THE LORD IS PERFECT, RENEWING LIFE [Ps 19.8.]. It is not anything else in the world that brings the soul to its first

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[38]   The gematria of the highlighted word equals 488 which is the year 1688.

state, but the Torah that brings the person under the Throne of Glory. It is the evil inclination that brings the person to all transgressions, so that he cannot come to the world to Come. Therefore, the Torah was given, which counteracts the evil inclination.

This has awakened me to make books in Yiddish to benefit the public, so that the people should not say: we do not have books, since we do not understand Hebrew. Therefore, I have selected from important books and have translated it into Yiddish. I did not want to boast, so my interpretations are few. Nonetheless, I have benefited the public. Concerning this, the prophet Isaiah said, "*Seek the Lord while He can be found, call to Him while He is near*" [Isa 55.6]. Seek God when he can be found, call to Him when He is near. One can ask here. Why does it say "seek" twice, since it means seek, and call to him means call? This is all one. Put aside one of them. Write "*seek Him*" and put aside, call him. One can further ask, write "*when He can be found,*" when He can be found, and put aside, "*when He is near.*" They all mean the same thing.

The explanation is that the prophet shows us that when someone gets up to preach divine things, that is to say, the Torah, he wants to preach it as it is found. That is to say, he found the same sermon in books, and he gets up to preach. The sermon is not to be praised. Why, "*call to Him when He is near.*" That is to say, each person will be able to read it when he will come close to it, in the book from which he took it. Furthermore, "*Seek the Lord while He can be found.*" When somebody wants to preach what he found, that is to say, he found this in books and he gets up to preach. "*Call to Him while He is near.*" He should call the sermon and give it a name of who is close to it. That is to say, he should say in which book he found it, in the name of the one who said it. Thus, the sermon is not so bad. Furthermore, where He can be found; one wants to preach as he found it in the books. "*Call to Him while He is near.*" He should see that the sermon at least has a purpose. Everyone can read it, if they only come close to it. This the meaning of, "*Call to Him while He is near.*" Whoever comes to it should be able to read it.

This is when someone makes something in a language that everyone can understand. In these generations, in the majority of lands this is the language of Ashkenas. Therefore, it is just to make everything in Yiddish. In particular, since I have seen the book, *Ze'enah U-Re'enah*, that is in Yiddish and everyone desires to learn from it. Therefore, it has been printed many times more

than other important books, because it is in Yiddish. There is very little study, because of our sins, since not everybody understands difficult terms. When one already wants to study, he can't because of difficulties earning a living, in particular, those who were yeshivah students before they married. When they take a wife, they throw away the Torah and become an ignoramus. When he gets old, he has regret. As soon as he sees a religious book in Yiddish, he buys it and reminds himself, let me also study Torah. He knows well that Torah study is the priority.

The *Sefer Ikkarim* asks a question in the third treatise [*ma'mar*]. Why is it not written, "*and it was good*" when the person was created? It is written, "*and it was good*" regarding wild and domestic animals and all creatures when they were created. The explanation is that as soon as the animals were created, their creation was completed and the purpose for which they were created, and nothing concerned them. Therefore, it is written, it was good concerning the animals, because their creation was completed. However, with regard to the person, when he was created, his creation was not completed. His creation is completed when he studies Torah. This is the purpose of the person, for which the Holy One created him, that he should study Torah.

This Torah is the purpose. It causes that the person will complete the creation of his body and also his soul, as the verse says, "*The teachings of the Lord is perfect, renewing life*" [Ps 19.8]. The Torah is whole, it refreshes the soul, and the body. Since the person has three parts, first the body, second is the soul, and the third is the body together with the soul, and they were joined and stay together, therefore the Torah is also in three parts, as the verse says, "*He issued His commands to Jacob, His statements and rules to Israel*" [Ps 147.19]. –

Therefore, "it was good" was not said when the person was created, because the person was not yet completely created, but when he studies Torah, he is completely created. Therefore, the Torah is called good, as the verse says, "*For I have given you good instruction; do not forsake my teaching*" [Prov 4.2]. That is to say, when the person studies Torah, his creation is completed. Thus, it is just to say good, because his creation is complete. Therefore, the person should study Torah and have thoughts to study. Concerning this, King David, of blessed memory, said in Psalms, and began the Book of Psalms with this. "*Rather the Torah of the Lord is his delight*" [Ps 1.2]. But his desire is in the Torah of the Lord.

That is to say, when the desire to study in his heart is for the sake of heaven, then God will give him that he will be worthy that, "*he* recites[39] *the Torah day and night*" [Ps 1.2]. That he will have time to study day and night. ...

Therefore, when the person studies Torah, the Holy One rests near him, as the sage said, the Holy One rests in the four ells where Torah is studied.[40] Therefore, as soon as the soul sees the *Shekhinah* in the four ells of the person, it remains at peace within the body. Therefore, one should study Torah. Thus, his soul has rest in this world and brings the person after his death to heaven, as the verse says, "*the Torah of the Lord is perfect, renewing the soul*" [Ps 19.8]. This causes that his soul has an eternal existence above. Therefore, the Torah is called *good*. That is to say, the creation of [the soul] is separate from the person and happens first. Afterwards, it is called, *because it is good*, but at the initial creation of Adam it was not said, *because it is good*. […]

Therefore, David said: since the commandments that we should not do are many more than the commandments that one should do, and should one not receive a reward for the commandments that one should not do, the essential principle of the Torah would be abrogated, heaven forbid. However, it is certain that one receives a reward when one sits still for the sake of heaven, that he will not commit any transgressions. It is heard when a person begins to fulfill a commandment or has a thought to fulfill a commandment or begins to study, even when he has not completed it, he receives a reward as if he has completed the commandment. Therefore, the person should see to think about studying Torah, particularly on the Sabbath when he does not work, he should study then.

Since I have seen that many people desire to study and have desired from me that they would gladly have a commentary on the *Twenty-four* [books of the Bible] in Yiddish, with midrashim, like the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah* is on the Humash. Thus, I have collected more midrashim and sermons for each Sabbath,

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[39] The term "*yehege*" is translated normally as studies. However, as the note on this word in the New Jewish Publication Society of America Tanakh translation indicates, the literal meaning of this term can mean utter or recite. The author of the *Melits Yosher* sometimes uses the term with that literal meaning. Thus, I have translated it in this manner.

[40] A conflation of two statements in the Babylonian Talmud, *Berakhot*, 8a.

from *Kely Hemdah*,[41] *Divrey Shalom*,[42] *Akedah*,[43] *Kely Yakar*,[44] *Alsheikh*,[45] and *Ma'sey Adonai*,[46] all of them briefly translated. I do not want to boast with the commentaries that others have made, since mine are very few. Thus, I am only an interpreter and want to *benefit* the people, as God, Blessed be He, has helped me with the *Ze'enah U-Re'enah*, and I have benefited men and women, so should I continue to further be a faithful interpreter between the people and the Holy One, of His Torah. Therefore, this book should be called *Melits Yosher* [Faithful Interpreter]. I make known before everyone that I am only a faithful interpreter of these books. Very few of the interpretations are mine, but I have examined and collected these books together expecting to benefit the people, since to engage in arrogance is a bad attribute, if I would not cite from whom the comments are derived. *Humility*, to be humble is the best attribute, and with the attribute of humility one who studies Torah is worthy, as the sages say, "it clothes him with humility and reverence."[47] That is to say, the one who studies Torah is worthy to be humble and reverent.

Concerning this the sages said that the Torah clothes him in humility and reverence, because the one who studies Torah for the sake of heaven, the Holy One joins Himself to him. Therefore, he is humble and lowly. Therefore, it is written concerning Moses, "*Moses was a very humble man*" [Num 12.3]. Moses held himself to be very humble until he separated from his wife, because the *Shekhinah* was joined to him. Moses did not have relations with his wife, because no person in the world has relations with his wife when any other creature in the world is present. *How much more so*, in the presence of the *Shekhinah* that was joined to Moses. Therefore, he was humble because the *Shekhinah* was with him. The *reverence* [*Yirah*] also came upon him because he studied Torah and saw in it the *Account of Creation* [*Ma'sey Bereshit*], and miracles and wonders. Then he became awestruck before the Holy One, and when he was joined to the Holy One, awe came upon him even more.[…]

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41 R. Samuel Laniado, *Kely Hemdah*, Venice, 1594–1596.
42 R. Isaac Adarbi, *Divrey Shalom* , Salonika, 1580.
43 R. Isaac Arama, *Akedat Yitskhak*, Salonika, 1522.
44 R. Ephraim Lunshits, *Kely Yakar*, Lublin,1602.
45 R. Moses Alshekh, *Torat Moshe*, Venice, 1600.
46 R. Eliezer Ashkenazi, *Ma'sey Adonai*, Venice, 1583.
47 Babylonian Talmud, M. *Avot*, 6.1.

We have been instructed that through the Torah the person comes to be *humble* and to have *reverence* for the Holy One. Therefore, one should study Torah, in particular this book, which is composed in brief easy Yiddish, from books that are not easily available, are difficult, and written in lengthy language. He will find complete sermons inside that the person might read. They are on many Psalms in the Book of Psalms, and other preachers, which are well translated. *To benefit the people.* The people hear sermons in the synagogue and do not understand the sermon. It is given too quickly in the synagogue. In this book, he can read it slowly alone, in order to understand it. When he does not understand, he can talk with his friend about it. Therefore, I want to begin with the help of the Holy One, and the verse, "*give truth to Jacob*" [Mic 7.20], will be fulfilled by me, that I should not come to an error, but to encounter the truth as the books meant it. It should be fulfilled, "*no harm is in sight for Jacob*" [Num 23.21], with the help of the Holy One, as the verse says, "*command salvation for Jacob*" [Ps 44.5]. Therefore, I have called this book, *MELITS YOSHER*, because I am an interpreter between the people and the Holy One, to help them understand the holy Torah that the Holy One had given is completely just. It is called a *Torah of Truth*, and whoever studies the words of the Torah, it is an interpreter for the person in the next world.

"*LET THE NAME OF THE LORD BE BLESSED NOW AND FOREVER*" [Ps 113.2].

"*HE GIVES STRENGTH TO THE WEARY, FRESH VIGOR TO THE SPENT*" [Isa 40.29].

SO PETITIONS, THE HUMBLE, JACOB, SON OF MY MASTER AND FATHER, RABBI ISAAC, OF BLESSED MEMORY, RABBINO, OF THE HOLY COMMUNITY OF YANOVA.

A Translator against Translation:
David Frishman and the Centrality of
Translation in Early 20th-Century Hebrew
Literature and Jewish National Politics

by Danielle Drori

Abstract

This article explores an instructive case of translation critique against the background of the rise of Zionism in Europe at the turn of the previous century. It seeks to answer the question: Why did David Frishman, one of the most prolific Hebrew writers and translators of the late 1890s and early 1900s, criticize Vladimir Jabotinsky's Russian translation of Hayim Nahman Bialik's Hebrew poems? Both Bialik and Jabotinsky were major figures in the field of Hebrew culture and Zionist politics in the early 1900s, while Frishman generally shunned partisan activism and consistently presented himself as devoted solely to literature. Frishman perceived literature, nevertheless, as a political arena, viewing translation, in particular, as a locus of ideological debate. Writing from the viewpoint of a political minority at a time in which the Hebrew translation industry in Europe gained momentum, Frishman deemed translation a tool for cementing cultural hierarchies. He anticipated later analyses of the act and products of translation as reflective of intercultural tensions. The article suggests, more specifically, that it was Frishman's view of the Hebrew Bible that informed his "avant-garde" stance on translation.

1.   Introduction

David Frishman left an indelible mark on early 20th-century Hebrew literature and Zionist culture. A writer, editor, poet and translator, he became a prominent voice in the growing field of Hebrew *belles lettres* at a critical moment of transformation. Shortly after his death in 1922, the journalist and Zionist lobbyist Nahum Sokolov wrote of Frishman that he was a unique figure in Eastern European Jewish thought. Frishman came of age, as Sokolov noted,

during the final years of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment movement, and took an active part in the literary movement of the *tehiya*, the "renaissance" of Hebrew literature in Europe at the turn of the 20th century. Sokolov also praised Frishman, specifically, for his unparalleled contribution to the enterprise of Hebrew translation in his time. He defined Frishman as one of the most prolific Hebrew translators of his generation, lauding his productivity as well as his taste:

> "A fountainhead and ever-flowing river, he [Frishman] translated Bernstein, Lippert and tens of excellent stories. He gave us Nietzsche's Zarathustra, the most precious pearl in the necklace of his translations [. . .]"[1]

While Sokolov emphasized Frishman's German-to-Hebrew translations of non-fictional works, the list of Frishman's Hebrew translations was significantly longer and more diversified. Frishman translated poetry, plays and novels, by William Shakespeare, George Eliot, Lord Byron, Oscar Wilde, Alexander Pushkin, and Charles Baudelaire (to name a few). More critically, Frishman wrote extensively *about* translation, grappling often with the ties between ideology and cultural transfer.

As most of his contemporary literary intellectuals, Frishman attributed to translation the power to revolutionize Hebrew culture and Jewish national politics. He treated translation as a prism through which both literary and political questions could be examined, discussing the act and products of translation – in essays, letters and reviews – as a locus in which intellectuals shaped or, rather, revealed their aesthetic and ideological visions.

Valuing translation as an arena of intellectual probing, Frishman criticized, throughout his career, a number of specific translations that served, from his viewpoint, the "wrong" goals. Tellingly, Frishman's first lengthy review in the Hebrew press focused on a translated work: the first (and to date, the only) Hebrew translation of Benjamin Disraeli's 1847 novel *Tancred*. A dramatization, in part, of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity through the story of a young Englishman who travels to the Holy Land, *Tancred* was hailed by its Hebrew translator, Judah Leib Levin (a proponent of the Haskalah), as a work of great importance.[2] Frishman found Levin's translation

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[1]   Nahum Sokolov, "David Frishman," Ben Yehuda Project, accessed August 2018, https://benyehuda.org/sokolov/037.html. My translation.
[2]   Benjamin Disraeli, *Tancred*, trans. Judah Leib Levin (Warsaw: Alexander Ginz, 1883, Hebrew).

and his introduction to the work to be politically tone-deaf. In addition to accusing Levin of making poor idiomatic choices, Frishman chastised him for turning *Tancred* into a "Zionist" work by cutting parts of the novel that did not take place in the Land of Israel.

Frishman disapproved of the very act of publishing a partial translation without explicitly announcing it. He also questioned Levin's knowledge of English, hypothesizing that Levin had in fact translated *Tancred* from its German translation. This was not an uncommon practice at the time of the Hebrew Haskalah, yet Frishman dubbed it inappropriate.[3] The more meaningful aspects of Frishman's critique of Levin's translation related, however, not to Levin's use of a "mediating" language or to the scale of his translation. Rather, Frishman criticized Levin's brand of Zionism and his favorable representation of Disraeli's ties to Judaism. Levin claimed, in his introduction, that *Tancred* was a novel that attested to Disraeli's connection to the Land of Israel. He even believed that it validated the connection between Judaism and the land. From Frishman's perspective, this description not only hinged on a misreading of Disraeli's biography, but also reflected a despicable trend of using literature to spread a superficial form of Zionist ideology.

As scholars of Frishman's work have shown, Frishman aspired to separate Hebrew literature and Zionist politics. He often denigrated, accordingly, authors of both the Haskalah and the *tehiya* movements who overtly sought to disseminate Zionist ideas through literary means. Still, Frishman's relationship with Zionism – both in its nascent form as the 19th-century movement of *Hibat Tsiyon (Fondness of Zion)* and in its later diplomatic and territorialist forms of the second and third decades of the 20th century – may be best described as ambivalent.[4]

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[3] Frishman's review of Levin's work attested to a change in the perception of Hebrew translation norms, which Frishman helped advance. For a discussion of this change see: Svetlana Natkovich, "Elisha Ben Abuya, the Hebrew Faust: on the First Hebrew Translation of Faust within the Setting of the Maskilic Change in Self-Perception," *Naharaim* 8.1 (2014): 48–73; Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012).

[4] Menuha Gilboa, *Between Realism and Romanticism: David Frishman's Way as A Critic* (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me'uhad, 1975, Hebrew); Shalom Kramer, *Frishman the Critic: A Monograph* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1984, Hebrew); Iris Parush, *Literary Canon and National Ideology: David Frishman's Literary Criticism Compared to Klausner's and Brenner's* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1992, Hebrew).

In multiple essays and reviews, Frishman expressed blatant anti-Zionist sentiments, conceiving of the Jewish national collective as cosmopolitan. He emphasized openness to world cultures as a principle that Jews should have always upheld, interpreting the rise of Jewish nationalism in his time as an aesthetic rather than a political revolution. At the same time, as Menuha Gilboa and Shalom Kramer have pointed out, many of Frishman's poetic works favorably toyed with the same Zionist ideas that Frishman rejected in his essays. There was palpable tension, for example, between Frishman's antagonistic approach to *Hibat Tsiyon* and the instances in which he himself described the yearning for Zion as the permanent position of the Jewish people. Similarly, Frishman's translations were often preceded, as David Fishelov has suggested, by prefaces that challenged the assumption that Frishman was an anti-Zionist writer.[5]

Out of the major scholars of Frishman's work, only Iris Parush has seen the refusal to deploy literature as an ideological tool as key evidence of Frishman's overarching anti-Zionism. Viewing the ideological contradictions in Frishman's poetic and essayistic corpus as negligible, Parush has stressed Frishman's insistence on creating non-didactic literature at a time in which Zionist ideology and the production of Hebrew literature seemed inseparable.[6] As the following analysis shows, Frishman was often more didactic than he had hoped to be. In his writings about translation, in particular, he tended to preach against the very act of preaching, demonstrating that it may be impossible to detach literature from politics and vice versa.

2.   A Zionist Russian Translation

By the time Levin published the second installment of his translation of Disraeli's *Tancred*, he had read Frishman's acerbic review. Reacting to it in his preface, Levin insisted that Disraeli's Jewish origins, coupled with his stature, infused his literary work with sufficient relevance to the Hebrew readership

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5   Examining, specifically, Frishman's translation of Lord Byron's dramatic poem *Cain*, Fishelov has maintained that Frishman used this translation to lament the "wandering" of the Jewish people at large. See David Fishelov, "Frishman's Translation of *Cain* and Its Meanings", *Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature* (2011): 125–142 (Hebrew).

6   Iris Parush, "Melekhet Makhshevet: Tehiyat Ha-Uma," *David Frishman: An Anthology of Articles about His Work*, ed. Menuha Gilboa (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me'uhad, 1988), 211–247 (Hebrew).

of 1880s Europe. Levin ignored, in other words, Frishman's foundational assumption in his early essay: that every translation inevitably reflects a set of power relations between religious or ethnic groups, and that it should be read and published as such. Throughout his career as a critic, Frishman continued exploring the manifestations of this assumption, which has since become a common conviction in the field of translation studies.[7]

In a particularly instructive case of critiquing the cultural and political consequences of a specific work of translation, Frishman attacked the prominent Russian-Jewish journalist and Zionist activist Vladimir Jabotinsky. The latter had published, in 1911, a volume of forty poems, translated into Russian, by the well known and much admired Hebrew poet, Hayim Nahman Bialik. Jabotinsky had added to his translation a preface in which he introduced Bialik to Russian readers. This introduction was indeed cited in the Russian press, in a number of reviews.

As Frishman confessed in his own review of Jabotinsky's translation – published in 1912 under the title "Bialik's Poems in Russian Translation" – it was one of the negative Russian reviews of Bialik's poems that prompted him to react to Jabotinsky's translation.[8] Frishman objected, as he had done in his review of Levin's translation of *Tancred*, to Jabotinsky's very choice of a literary work for translation. He posed the same question he had asked about Levin's work: For whom was the translation intended, and what political purposes did it serve?

As Jabotinsky noted in the preface to his translation, his motives combined literary veneration and the distinct political goal of disseminating new and forceful Zionist ideas. An avid reader of Russian, French, Italian, and English literatures, Jabotinsky considered Bialik's poems remarkable within the landscape of modern Hebrew literature. He regarded them as artistically

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[7]   As the translation scholar Michaela Wolf has recently pointed out, translation studies is a discipline that has "gone social" in the past few years, with growing scholarship about the ways in which the act and products of translation reflect and reinforce social, cultural and political hierarchies. See Michaela Wolf, *The Habsburg Monarchy's Many-Languaged Soul: Translating and Interpreting, 1848–1918* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015). A more specific discussion of the issue of translation and socio-political power relations can be found in an anthology edited by the translation scholars Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler *Translation and Power* (Amherst and Boston, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).

[8]   David Frishman, "Bialik's Poems in Russian Translation", *David Frishman: Writings* Vol. 8 (Warsaw: Shtibel, 1924), 187–191 (Hebrew). All translations from Frishman's essays are mine.

ingenious, as well as ideal for understanding the collective emotional and political transformations that Jews in Russia were undergoing in his time.

Prior to translating a significant number of Bialik's poems, Jabotinsky had translated Bialik's narrative poem "Massa Nemirov" (known in English as "In the City of Slaughter") in which Bialik famously protested against Jewish passivity. "In the City of Slaughter" was Bialik's response to a series of anti-Jewish riots in the Russian town of Kishinev in 1903 that resulted in the murder of more than forty Jews.[9] The narrative poem has often been interpreted as a call for Jewish political action, and as an artistic representation of the fundamental principles of some versions of Zionism; notably, the idea that Jewish communities, living as minorities across the world, should find a way to control their own fate by developing a strong and belligerent national consciousness.

As Svetlana Natkovich has shown, Jabotinsky's translation of "In the City of Slaughter" reflected Jabotinsky's interpretation of Bialik's narrative poem as a lyrical crystallization of Zionist activism.[10] The translation targeted an audience of Russian-Jewish readers who could not read Hebrew and whom Jabotinsky, as a Zionist politician in the making, hoped to "recruit." The audience of Jabotinsky's later translation of Bialik's poems was presumably the same, as were Jabotinsky's political goals. In the preface to the later translation, Jabotinsky indeed presented Bialik as the voice of a generation of Jewish men who could no longer keep silent about Jewish suffering across Europe.[11] These men once found their intellectual and political home, as Jabotinsky maintained, in the movement of *Hibat Tsiyon*, yet the movement became outdated, according to Jabotinsky, due to its limited political horizons.

Writing in 1911, Jabotinsky provided his audience of Russian readers a brief summary of the rise of Zionism in the final decades of the 19th century; of the temporary decline of the movement in the early 1900s; and of its newly gained energy at the time of the translation's publication. Interweaving

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9   In the wake of the pogrom, Bialik was sent to Kishinev by an association of Jewish writers to collect notes for the Hebrew press. The notes became the basis of Bialik's long, widely read poem "Massa Nemirov," mostly known by its later title "In the City of Slaughter" ("Be'ir Ha-Harega").

10 Svetlana Natkovich, *Amongst Radiant Clouds: The Literature of Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky in a Social Context* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2015, Hebrew).

11 Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky, "Preface to Bialik's Poems", trans. Moshe Ettinger, Ben Yehuda Project (Hebrew), accessed October 2018, https://benyehuda.org/zhabotinsky/bialik_bio_ater.html.

literary and political statements, Jabotinsky did not hide his view of his translation as an act that merged aesthetic appreciation with Zionist activism. He depicted Bialik explicitly as the poet who expressed most persuasively a discursive turn in Jewish national thought: From a universalist hope to be integrated, passively, into European societies, to a particularist, collective understanding that Jews ought to actively determine their destiny as a nation. While this interpretation of Bialik and his poetry was not unusual, it was one of the main reasons behind Frishman's rejection of Jabotinsky's translation.

Frishman recognized that Jabotinsky's translation was a labor of literary love as much as it was a conscious attempt to issue a call for political action. He also agreed with Jabotinsky, as his earlier writings show, that *Hibat Tsiyon* offered very little to Jews by way of redefining the ties among them in national terms. Frishman was alarmed, nevertheless, by the scale of the audience that the translation ultimately reached, and did not agree with Jabotinsky's militant interpretation of Zionism. According to Frishman, it should have been clear to Jabotinsky that not only like-minded Jews would read his translation of Bialik. Inevitably, Jabotinsky made Bialik's poems available for non-Jewish Russian readers, exposing Bialik to anti-Semitic critique.

Frishman overlooked the fact that some eminent Russian writers, such as Maxim Gorky, reacted positively to the "universal" aspects of Bialik's work.[12] He himself did not see Bialik's poetry as "universal," but rather as expressing an untranslatable experience of Jewish suffering. He began his diatribe against Jabotinsky, accordingly, by citing a negative review of Bialik's poetry in the Russian newspaper *Novoe Vremya*. Penned by a Russian critic named Viktor Burenin, this review unfolded, as Frishman recounted, a misreading of Bialik's poems, provoking anger in Jewish intellectual circles. While Frishman belonged to those circles, he mocked the Jewish intellectuals who reacted to Burenin's review, purportedly, as if it were a "pogrom." Vacillating between irony and pain, Frishman insisted that Burenin was not the one to blame for tarnishing the reputation of Bialik and, by extension, of modern Hebrew

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[12]   Gorky shared his positive impression of Bialik's poems with readers of a Zionist weekly in Russian around 1912. In a brief essay, he stated that even in Russian Bialik's poems conveyed a sense of beautiful rage and marked themselves as "universal." Maxim Gorky, "'On H.N. Bialik," trans. Zorah Anpolsky, Ben Yehuda Project (Hebrew), accessed August 2018, https://benyehuda.org/bialik/ru_xlat_fore.html.

poetry as a whole. It was Jabotinsky who provided anti-Jewish writers with an opportunity to humiliate Jews.

Frishman revisited Jabotinsky's early translation of Bialik's "In the City of Slaughter" in an attempt to explain why Russian readers should have never gained access to Bialik's poetry:

> "We take the greatest and utmost lament that has ever been written for us, 'Massa Nemirov,' and deliver it to the people responsible for the story of Nemirov? And we expect them to feel what Nemirov was. Vanity of vanities! These people do not need a second hand poetic description of the pogrom, its evils, and atrocities. For they know it first hand. They are the principal authors of the pogrom, the real rather than the imaginative authors; who have written this poetry not with pen and ink, like Bialik, but with axe and blood. Should we deliver 'Massa Nemirov' to them, so they could take pleasure in its beauty? I can imagine how appropriate it would have been if one translated Jeremiah's Book of Lamentations into the Roman language and gave it to Titus and his friends, so they would take pleasure in its splendor."[13]

Using the first person plural to speak, ostensibly, in the name of all Jews, Frishman accused Jabotinsky of normalizing the relationship between Jews and non-Jews in Russia through his translation. He thereby described language as shaped by, and reflective of, historical and political circumstances, suggesting that the encounter between Russian and Hebrew manifested a set of power relations that corresponded with the power relations between Russians and Jews.

Frishman reduced Russian to representing a public that persecuted Jews, while portraying Hebrew as an exclusively Jewish language whose history harked back to the days of Jeremiah and Lamentations. Evoking these interlinked biblical books (*Lamentations* is a series of sermons traditionally ascribed to the prophet Jeremiah), Frishman created an analogy between the contexts in which they had been authored and the context in which Bialik wrote "In the City of Slaughter." It would have been harrowing, he claimed, to see Jeremiah and Lamentations translated for Titus, the Roman Emperor who demolished the Second Temple (some five centuries after Jeremiah's time). It was equally disturbing, for Frishman, to read Bialik's poems in Russian.

[13]   Frishman, "Bialik's Poems in Russian Translation," 188.

3. "A poet that is nearly untranslatable"

Frishman cited more than one reason for the analogy between Jabotinsky's translation of Bialik's poems (and its effect on different Russian readers) and the hypothetical translation of Jeremiah and Lamentations for Titus. First, he insisted that Bialik's poems lost their allure in Jabotinsky's Russian rendering:

> "If I read the Hebrew: "שמים, בקשו רחמים עלי" ['Heaven, beg mercy for me'], I recall at once, the moment I was sitting in my room [or my *heder*] and the shadows of twilight began to rise and I heard this call for the first time, and my heart started palpitating with tenderness and compassion, and tears came to my eyes. Even now, these words alone bestir me, preparing me for what is yet to come. But if I read the Russian: 'Небеса, молитесь хоть вы' ['Heaven, at least you pray for me'], the call is naught but very weak, making no impression on me whatsoever."[14]

Recounting his first encounter with Bialik's poem "*Al Ha-shehita*," Frishman suggested that Bialik's poetry was too ingrained in both Hebrew language and Jewish experience to be translated successfully. He ascribed to Bialik's poetry the power "to prepare" him for future events, implying that the text addressed – either mainly or exclusively – people like him: Hebrew readers of Jewish origin. Frishman argued, in other words, for a Hebrew cultural ownership of Bialik's poetry.

At the heart of Frishman's diatribe stood his proclamation that Bialik could never be successfully translated:

> "Bialik cannot be translated even by the greatest of artists. A poet whose poetic force has reached such rarified heights, who, through words and composition and through the art of verse, can evoke within us varieties of images and emotional associations and childhood memories, and do whatever he wishes to us – such a poet may be nearly untranslatable."[15]

In the beginning of "Bialik's Poems in Russian Translation," Frishman stated that Bialik's poetry should never have been translated into Russian because of the power imbalances between Jews and non-Jews in Russia at the turn of the 20th century. As his essay unfolded, he depicted Bialik's poems themselves

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14   Frishman, "Bialik's Poems in Russian Translation," 188.
15   Frishman, "Bialik's Poems in Russian Translation," 189.

as impossible to translate. The reason for Jabotinsky's alleged failure was, therefore, not only political, but also metaphysical. Hebrew, for Frishman, possessed a quality that was "nearly untranslatable," at best, and completely untranslatable, at worst.

The analogy between Bialik's poems and the biblical books of Jeremiah and Lamentations sheds light on Frishman's metaphysical claim about the untranslatability of Bialik's Hebrew poems. Frishman was not the first (nor was he to become the last) to equate Bialik's poetry with the genre of biblical prophecy. Bialik himself turned, intentionally and repeatedly, to biblical books such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel to suffuse his poetry with historical and spiritual drama.[16] Ironically, both Jabotinsky and Frishman accepted the notion of Bialik as a modern-day prophet despite their opposing views of the translatability of his poetry. For Jabotinsky, Bialik's poetry *had* to appear in translation *because* it was prophetic. To Frishman, translating Bialik seemed as impossible as any historical attempt to translate the Hebrew Bible itself.

On the issue of translating the Hebrew Bible, Frishman had an unambiguous stance. In one of his most celebrated works of literary criticism, the anthology *Letters on Literature*, Frishman endorsed the famous response of the Hebrew writer Perets Smolenskin to the first Hebrew translation (from the 1870s) of William Shakespeare's *Othello*:[17] "Victory, victory! We avenged the Britons today! They had taken our Holy Scriptures and spread them in thousands among the nations, and we shall take their Shakespeare!"[18]

Repeating Smolenskin's statement with unconcealed enthusiasm, Frishman expressed his agreement with the perception of the Hebrew Bible as Jewish property.[19] The endorsement attested, once again, to Frishman's understanding of translation as an arena of cultural battles, as well as to his view of the Hebrew Bible as an exclusively Jewish asset.

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[16]   Dan Miron has situated this "prophetic mode" of Bialik's poetry in the broader context of the history of modern Hebrew poetics and the influences it absorbed at the turn of the 20th century. See Dan Miron, *H.N. Bialik and the Prophetic Mode in Modern Hebrew Poetry* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

[17]   David Frishman, "Letters on Literature", *David Frishman: Writings* Vol. 3 (Warsaw: Shtibel, 1924, Hebrew).

[18]   Quoted in Frishman, "Letters on Literature."

[19]   Like his relationship with the Zionist movement at large, Frishman's relationship with Smolenskin's work was ambivalent. In the beginning of his career as a critic, Frishman criticized Smolenskin harshly, yet he came to see it as a mistake later. See Frishman, *Writings* Vol. 4 (Warsaw: Shtibel, 1924), 7–33; Kramer.

By extension, Frishman saw Hebrew itself as a Jewish asset and as a language whose sacred sources should not be overlooked. Nowhere was this view clearer than in Frishman's statements about the multiple initiatives to vernacularize Hebrew in his time. In a 1910 essay about Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the Hebrew lexicographer who would come to be known as "the reviver of Hebrew language," Frishman criticized the enterprise of Hebrew vernacularization vehemently. He compared the so-called "revival" of Hebrew to an act of "sacrifice in the name of a sanctified ideology," donning a prophet's mantle himself.[20] Frishman pondered whether Ben-Yehuda fully understood the stakes of his work, accusing him of an offense of divine proportions:

> "It is possible that at times of solitude, [...] he himself [Ben Yehuda] will feel [...] how big is the responsibility that weighs on the person who transports a sacred reliquary from the temple [*mikdash*] to the marketplace. It is possible that as long as it [the reliquary of Hebrew] stayed put in its inner sanctums [*kodshey ha-kodashim shela*], it was the one thing that sustained the soul of a whole nation; and now that it has been profaned [*na'asta hulin*], who knows if it will not do more harm than good."[21]

This passage underpins Frishman's repeated attempts to distance Hebrew from the realms of the mundane and the secular.

As Parush has observed, Frishman dubbed Hebrew an "aristocratic" language, capable of supreme poetic expression.[22] This definition informed his objection to Hebrew vernacularization initiatives in his time, as well as his perception of translation and inter-lingual relations. Frishman distinguished between Hebrew and other languages both due to the allegedly inherent, elevated status of Hebrew and as a way to demarcate the borders of Hebrew culture and "protect" it from its purported "others." The Hebrew Bible and the so-called sanctity of Hebrew became for Frishman a weapon in a symbolic fight against the "others" of Hebrew culture: Russian speaking Zionists, conservative British converts, or openly anti-Semitic Russian critics.

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[20] Frishman, *Writings*, Vol. 2, 64.
[21] Frishman, *Writings*, Vol. 2, 64.
[22] Parush, *Literary Canon and National Ideology*, 95–96.

4.   Untranslatability and the Language of the Bible

In his book *Thou Shalt Not Speak My Language*, the contemporary writer Abdelfattah Kilito shows how claims of untranslatability often function as a strategic tool for guarding the borders of one's culture.[23] It is not uncommon, according to Kilito, to find violent rhetoric in disputes around translation, especially when biblical languages are involved. As Kilito's translator Waïl S. Hassan has suggested, one could look into the etymology of the Arabic word for translation to understand Kilito's idea.[24] The Arabic *tarjama*, just like the Hebrew *targum*, is a word that originates in the Aramaic *turjeman*. The latter term presents, in itself, a variation on the Acadian word for shouting, *ragam*. While the Arabic *tarjama* sometimes designates "life" or "biography," its violent echoes are never lost. Prompted, in part, by this etymological network, Kilito has often tackled the ethics of translation in his scholarship.

One instance of resistance to translation that Kilito has examined resonates clearly with Frishman's history of criticizing specific acts of translation. Kilito has discussed and quoted the Arabic poet Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz who declared, in the 8th century, that Arabic verse could not be translated. "The gift of poetry is restricted to the Arabs," al-Jahiz wrote, "and to those who speak their language."[25] Al-Jahiz's goal, as Kilito has hypothesized, was twofold: He sought to define Arab identity as rooted in the Arabic language, and to draw a clear distinction between Arabs and non-Arabs (chiefly Persians). Al-Jahiz's statement was not unique, but rather reflective of a common use of resistance to translation as a rhetorical device of cultural demarcation.

In a lecture that expounded on the central ideas of *Thou Shalt Not Speak My Language*, Kilito has cited additional Arabic writers who resisted translation:

"In another domain, *Thou Shalt Not Speak My Language* could mean: *Thou Shalt Not Read My Literature*. I refuse to be read. I refuse to be translated. I do not desire others to find their way into my intellectual treasures, especially the texts I consider to hold great significance in our culture. I object to transferring these texts into other languages outside of the group to which I belong. Why hold this position on translation? Because I fear that translation would weaken the text, or by contrast, I

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23   Abdelfattah Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not Speak My Language*, trans. Waïl S. Hassan (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008).
24   Kilito and Hassan, *Thou Shalt Not Speak*, ix.
25   Quoted in Kilito and Hassan, *Thou Shalt Not Speak*, 27.

fear that it would make it look more alluring and concrete. And the painful result in this case is that the original language would lose its substantial character and unique advantage."[26]

Kilito identifies two possible types of fear: (1) that the translation of a given text would "weaken" it (namely, it would overlook nuance); (2) that the translation of a given text would overly concretize or overly explain the text. Together, these seemingly contrasting fears represent an attempt to fight cultural appropriation, misrepresentation or misunderstanding, betraying a sense of linguistic and cultural exceptionalism, which, in turn, rejects notions of linguistic and cultural equivalence.

Like al-Jahiz's stance on Arabic, Frishman's view of Hebrew shaped his double standard as a translator and writer. While he disparaged specific translations both from and into Hebrew, he portrayed some of his own translations from various languages into Hebrew as "restoring the splendor" of the works they transposed. In a letter to a friend from 1911, Frishman took pride in the ease with which he translated Friedrich Nietzsche's references to the Hebrew Bible in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.[27] With Nietzsche, as he explained, he faced the same feeling he had encountered when he translated Lord Byron's dramatic retelling of the biblical story of Cain and Abel in 1900; not as if he were creating a Hebrew version of the work, but as if he was "restoring" the work's "splendor" and placing it back in its "appropriate" place.[28]

5.   Conclusion

On the surface, it is hard to reconcile Frishman's proclamation about Byron and Nietzsche with the ideas he unfolded in his reviews of Levin's and Jabotinsky's translations. The proclamation about Byron and Nietzsche suggests that acts of translation bear the positive potential to revive a literary work in a new cultural context. By contrast, Frishman's main claims in his reviews of Levin's and Jabotinsky's translations assume that works that position themselves in a specific cultural-political context cannot be readily

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[26]   Abdelfattah Kilito, "Thou Shalt Not Translate Me," trans. Nasser Albreeky, *Arabic Literature in English*, accessed January 2016, http://arablit.org/2016/01/18/abdelfattah-kilitos-thou-shalt-not-translate-me-translated/.

[27]   Quoted in Gilboa, *Between Realism and Romanticism*, 155.

[28]   Frishman used the Hebrew phrase *Hashavat 'Atara Le-Yoshna.*

re-contextualized. In both cases, however, Frishman writes from the view-point of Hebrew language and culture, displaying an exclusivist approach to each. It was Hebrew language that had an unparalleled power, for Frishman, to restore literary works inspired by the biblical text; and it was a specific, historically conditioned brand of Hebrew "weakness" that allegedly barred works such as *Tancred* or Bialik's poems, from being adequately translated into or from Hebrew.

Frishman's idea that Byron's dramatic poem and Nietzsche's poetic philosophy were "put back in their place" when he translated them into Hebrew reflected his overarching exclusivist stance on translation. Any work that alluded heavily to the Hebrew Bible made use, according to Frishman, of a text that belonged to Hebrew-reading Jews. This view of the Hebrew Bible informed Frishman's writing on translation and vice-versa. The Hebrew Bible was "nearly untranslatable," for Frishman, as was Bialik's poetry. The fact that these texts *have been* translated (in the case of the Bible – time and again) merely pointed to their translators' willingness to sacrifice literature on some political altar.

Ironically, Frishman himself unmasked his politics of Jewish particularism and Hebrew exclusivism in his writing about translation. While he had an ambivalent relationship with the Zionist movement, he inevitably advanced some version of it by writing in Hebrew and by "protecting" Hebrew as a Jewish national asset. Frishman's writings about translation, which always addressed the alleged uniqueness of Hebrew as an emblem of an "untranslatable" Jewish culture, manifested lucidly his ambivalence toward Zionism. They exposed their author's politicized understanding of translation, as well as his view of the Jewish nation as a cohesive group in the midst of a cultural revolution. Frishman's implicit theory of translation serves, therefore, as an example of the built-in power of translated texts not only to represent but also to participate in political disputes. As a translation theorist, Frishman both understood and deployed the tendency of translation to be weaponized in culture wars, producing a corpus of translation critique whose full content is yet to be studied.

Tewje in Deutschland:
Zu Übersetzungspraktiken von Werken eines jiddischen Autors im Kontext der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts

von Maria Coors

Abstract

Drawing on the example of Sholem Aleichem's *Tevye the Dairyman*, this article covers the history of Yiddish translation and publication in Germany in the 20th century. Following the paradigm of translation as a cultural practice, I demonstrate how the translation reflects aspects of Jewish-German cultural history, focussing on a mainly inner-Jewish identity discourse before the Shoah and a remembrance context after it. Whereas decisive differences and changes characterize 20th-century history in diachronic as well as synchronic respect, the article reflects also on continuities and parallels.

1. Einleitung

In ihrem Abriss der Geschichte deutscher Übersetzungen aus dem Jiddischen fasst die Historikerin Aya Elyada die Hauptcharakteristika für die Übersetzungen der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts zusammen als:

> „[...] die Empfindung von Verlust und Krise, die auf den Holocaust zurückgehen, das Bewusstsein von Übersetzern und der potentiellen Leserschaft, dass diese Literatur ein Denkmal einer einst blühenden Kultur darstellt; und das Verspüren einer Notwendigkeit, dieses Denkmal zu bewahren."[1]

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[1]   Aya Elyada, „Deutsche Übersetzungen jiddischer Literatur: Fünf Jahrhunderte interkultureller Austausch und Kontakt", in *Leket: Yidishe Shtudyes Haynt – Jiddistik Heute – Yiddish Studies Today* hg. Marion Aptroot, Efrat Gal-Ed, Roland Gruschka und Simon Neuberg (Düsseldorf: Düsseldorf University Press, 2012), 603–617, hier 604.

So überzeugend diese Einschätzung im Hinblick auf Einstellung und Praxis sowohl der Übersetzenden als auch der Leserschaft für die Nachkriegszeit klingt, ist doch erstaunlich, dass für den deutschen Raum bislang nur Einzelstudien zur Übersetzungs- und Publikationspraxis aus dem Jiddischen für die Zeit nach 1945 vorliegen.[2] Auch Elyada beschränkt den Untersuchungszeitraum ihrer Studie, in der sie die 500 Jahre deutscher Übersetzungen aus dem Jiddischen überzeugend in drei Phasen unterteilt, auf die Zeit bis 1938.

Ohne Zweifel stellt die Shoah in der Geschichte des Jiddischen im 20. Jahrhundert die größte Zäsur dar. Für das Jiddische nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg prägte Jeffrey Shandler den Begriff des „Postvernakularen". Kennzeichnend hierfür ist die signifikante Abnahme des aktiven Gebrauchs einer Sprache bei gleichzeitiger Zunahme anderer Formen der Benutzung und Auseinandersetzung mit der Sprache, vor allem im künstlerischen und im akademischen Bereich. Die symbolischen Funktionen von Sprache überwiegen dabei gegenüber den kommunikativen.[3] Diese Diagnose gilt auch für Deutschland, bei freilich erheblichen Unterschieden zum US-amerikanischen Kontext. Der kommunikative Gebrauch des Jiddischen in beiden deutschen Staaten war seit den 1960er Jahren fast gänzlich marginal; auch die symbolische Funktion war fortan völlig anders ausgefüllt.

Im Folgenden möchte ich die deutsche Übersetzungspraxis aus dem Jiddischen im 20. Jahrhundert exemplarisch am Werk eines Autors in den Blick nehmen.[4] Scholem Rabinowitsch (1859–1916) alias Scholem Alejchem ist einer der bekanntesten jiddischen Schriftsteller. Vor allem die Erzählungen von „Tewje, der Milchmann" wurden weltweit übersetzt und gelesen. Das Thema des Aufsatzes und die Auswahl fußen auf zwei Überlegungen: Obwohl auch für die jiddischsprachige jüdische Moderne die Shoah die einschneidende Zäsur

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[2]   Für die Nachkriegszeit liegt indes eine umfassende Untersuchung für den englischsprachigen Raum vor: Jeffrey Shandler, *Adventures in Yiddishland, Postvernacular Language and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). Daneben existieren Einzelstudien für den deutschen Raum, bspw. Leslie C. Morris, „The Translation of Issac Bashevis Singer's Gimpel der Narr appears in the Federal Republic of Germany", in *A History of Jewish Writing in Germany, hg.* Sander Gilman und Jack Zipes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 742–748; Caroline Puaud (Sorbonne Universités, Paris) arbeitet gegenwärtig an einem Forschungsprojekt zur Übersetzung jiddischer Lyrik.

[3]   Shandler, *Adventures in Yiddishland*, 22.

[4]   Diese Analyse konzentriert sich auf den Raum der zwei deutschen Staaten nach 1945 und auf das vereinigte Deutschland nach 1990. Gelegentlich wird jedoch auf den weiteren deutschen Sprachraum Bezug genommen.

darstellt, ist diese Literaturepoche 1945 nicht beendet. Dafür spricht nicht zuletzt die Erfolgsgeschichte des Musicals „Fiddler on the Roof", das erstmals 1964 den Tewje-Stoff für die Bühne adaptierte und die Vergabe des Literaturnobelpreises an Isaak Bashevis Singer (1902–1992) im Jahr 1978. Weiterhin ermöglicht erst eine zeitlich weitere Perspektive, Transformationen, Kontinuitäten und Konvergenzen in den Blick zu nehmen und die relevanten Aspekte dieser translationskulturellen Analyse herauszuarbeiten. Die Wahl des Autors ist der Tatsache geschuldet, dass Scholem Alejchem unter den Autoren der jiddischen Moderne zu einem der wichtigsten, vor allem aber bekanntesten zählt.

Übersetzung wird im Folgenden als kulturelle Praxis verstanden, die neben der sprachlichen Übertragung zugleich einen Prozess der „Domestizierung" der übersetzten Texte in den kulturellen Kontext der Zielsprache meint, wie Lawrence Venuti darlegte.[5] In diesem Sinne verstehen die Herausgeberinnen und Herausgeber eines Sammelbandes zu Übersetzungen Scholem Alejchems das so oft wiederholte Postulat seiner Unübersetzbarkeit, wenn sie bei dieser Frage auf das Verhältnis zwischen Ausgangs- und Zielsprache sowie -kultur verweisen und mit Aspekten wie „Geschichte", „Politik" und „Kunst" im Untertitel den Rahmen des Bandes setzen.[6] Folglich sind nicht nur Tätigkeit und Ergebnis der sprachlichen Übertragung als Übersetzung zu verstehen. Vielmehr wird damit die kulturelle Praxis in ihrem breiteren Kontext in den Blick genommen.

Die immanente Spannung der Übersetzungskultur eines jiddischen Autors ins Deutsche wird nur vor ihrem historisch situierten Hintergrund verständlich. Dies lässt sich bereits am jiddischen Wort *fartaytshn* illustrieren. Als eines von mehreren jiddischen Wörtern, mit denen der Prozess der Übersetzung ausgedrückt werden kann, bezeichnet *fartaytshn* im Speziellen die Übertragung in die gesprochene Sprache, und zwar konkret in das als *daytsh* bezeichnete Jiddisch, ursprünglich verwendet für Übertragungen aus dem biblischen Hebräisch.[7] Dieser Aspekt des „Verständlich-Machens" oder

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[5]   Vgl. Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation, Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London / New York: Routledge, 1998), 67.

[6]   Gennady Estraikh, Jordan Finkin, Kerstin Hoge und Mikhail Krutikov, „Introduction", in *Translating Sholem Aleichem: History, Politics and Art,* hg. Gennady Estraikh, Jordan Finkin, Kerstin Hoge und Mikhail Krutikov (London: Routledge, 2012), 1–5, hier 2.

[7]   Anita Norich, *Writing in Tongues: Translating Yiddish in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press 2014), 9.

des „Ins-Vertraute-Überführens" scheint bei jiddisch-deutschen Übersetzungen einerseits aufgrund der auch an diesem Wort deutlich erkennbaren linguistischen Nähe der beiden Sprachen als Katalysator der Übersetzungspraxis zu wirken. Beispiele besonders aus der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts stützen diese Annahme.[8] Ebenso wie sich das jiddische *fartaytshn* eben nicht auf die Übersetzung ins Deutsche beziehen lässt, ist die Verkennung der Andersheit des Jiddischen gegenüber dem Deutschen besonders häufig Gegenstand von Kritik an Übersetzungen ins Deutsche. Die sprachliche Nähe der beiden Kulturen verliert nach der Shoah kulturell schlechterdings jede Resonanz. Aus dieser Spannung ergibt sich die Struktur der Darstellung, die zunächst diachrone Entwicklungen aufzeigt, aus denen auch synchrone Prozesse sichtbar werden. So lassen sich nach der ersten Übersetzungsperiode von Scholem Alejchems „Tewje" zwischen 1900 und 1938 zwei weitere Phasen ausmachen, die allerdings weniger trennscharf erkennbar sind als die erste.

2.　Deutsch-Jüdische Identitätsdiskurse

Fast parallel zur Popularisierung der modernen jiddischen Literatur, zu der Scholem Alejchem sowohl mit seinem literarischen Schaffen als auch vor allem als Herausgeber der Zeitschrift *Jüdische Volksbibliothek* beitrug, begann die Übersetzungsgeschichte seiner Werke in andere Sprachen.[9] Im deutschsprachigen Raum erschien die erste Übersetzung 1902 mit der Veröffentlichung der Erzählung von „Das Messerchen" von Albert Katz (1858–1923) in der *Allgemeinen Zeitung des Judentums*.[10] Wie für das jiddische Original dienten zunächst vorrangig jüdische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften als Publikationsorgane für zumeist kürzere Erzählungen und Fortsetzungsromane. Das Interesse an jiddischer Literatur muss dabei im Kontext des deutsch-jüdischen

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[8]　Als eines der bekanntesten Beispiele ist die Nachdichtung der Verse von Jizchak Katzenelson durch den Liedermacher Wolf Biermann zu nennen. Dies ist die Übersetzung eines Textes aus einer Sprache, die Biermann weder lernte noch aktiv verwendete, dennoch wird ein Verstehen angenommen, vgl. Jizchak Katzenelson, *Dos lid vunem ojsgehargten jidischn volk: Großer Gesang vom ausgerotteten jüdischen Volk*, hg. Wolf Biermann (Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1994).

[9]　*Di yidishe folks-bibliotek: A bukh fir literatur, kritik, un vissenshaft (Die jüdische Volksbibliothek: Zeitschrift für Literatur, Kritik und Wissenschaft)* erschien nur in zwei Ausgaben in den Jahren 1888 und 1889, war aber die am weitesten verbreitete und einflussreichste jiddische Literaturzeitung vor dem 20. Jahrhundert.

[10]　Scholem Alechem, „Das Messerchen: Frei aus dem Jüdisch-Deutschen von Albert Katz", *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* 66 , Januar 31 / Februar 7 / Februar 14, 1902, 57–59, 71–73, 82–84.

Blicks auf die sogenannten „Ostjuden" gesehen werden, der durch die Begegnungen und Erfahrungen deutscher Juden als Soldaten im Ersten Weltkrieg katalysiert und verstärkt wurde.[11]

Vor diesem Hintergrund muss der zeitgenössische ideologische Streit an der Übersetzungspraxis verstanden werden. Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) formulierte in einem Artikel in der *Jüdischen Rundschau* im Januar 1917 unter der Überschrift „Zum Problem der Übersetzung aus dem Jiddischen" seine scharfe Kritik an den Übersetzungen Alexander Eliasbergs (1887–1924).[12] Nach Scholems Auffassung war Jiddisch „eine Abbildung des hebräischen Sprachgeistes im Deutschen" und deshalb schwierig ins Deutsche übersetzbar.[13] Eliasberg, so Scholem, würde diesem Sprachgeist und damit letztlich dem jüdischen Geist in seiner Übersetzung nicht gerecht, wenn er etwa hebräisch-stämmige Wörter in profanes Deutsch übersetze. Der Angegriffene reagierte mit einer ärgerlichen Antwort in der *Jüdischen Rundschau*, in der er neben der Richtigstellung einiger fehlerhafter Angaben Scholems argumentierte, es sei ihm, anders als Scholem, nicht darum gegangen, dem osteuropäischen Judentum eine Stimme zu geben, sondern darum, die Werke der jiddischen Autoren einer deutschen und nicht nur jüdischen Leserschaft zugänglich zu machen.[14] Scholem und Eliasberg verhandelten also implizit auch, was eine deutsch-jüdische Übersetzung legitimierweise überhaupt zu leisten habe. Eliasbergs Position und Praxis lässt sich mit Lawrence Venuti lesen, als aktiven Versuch der „Domestizierung" dieser Literatur in der deutschen Mehrheitsgesellschaft. Obwohl die Bücher teilweise in bedeutenden Verlagsanstalten erschienen und Eliasberg seit 1918 als Leiter des *Jüdischen Verlags* in Berlin tätig war, ist indes zweifelhaft, wie erfolgreich er mit seinem Ansinnen letztlich war.[15]

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[11] Vgl. dazu Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1982); Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, „Fin de Siècle Orientalism, the Ostjuden, and the Aesthetics of Jewish Self-Affirmation", *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 1 (1984): 96–139.

[12] Vgl. Gershom Scholem, „Zum Problem der Übersetzung aus dem Jiddischen", *Jüdische Rundschau* 22 Nr. 2 (1917), 16–17. Zur Position Sholems vgl. auch David Groiser, „Aber wie soll ich denn aus dem Jiddischen übersetzen?" Gershom Scholem and the Problem of Translating Yiddish," *Naharaim – Zeitschrift für deutsch-jüdische Literatur und Kulturgeschichte* 1 Nr. 2 (2007), 260–297.

[13] Das Zitat vgl. Gershom Scholem, „Zum Problem der Übersetzung aus dem Jiddischen", 16.

[14] Alexander Eliasberg, „Zum Problem der Übersetzung aus dem Jiddischen, Erwiderung" in, *Jüdische Rundschau* 22 Nr. 4 (1917), 35–36.

[15] Zur Bibliografie und Biografie Eliasbergs vgl. „Eliasberg, Alexander", *Lexikon deutsch-jüdischer Autoren*, hg. Renate Heuer (München/London/New York/Paris: de Gruyter Saur 1998), Bd. 6, 310–324.

Jeffrey Grossman setzt die Auseinandersetzung, zu der sich neben Eliasberg und Scholem noch andere jüdische Protagonisten äußerten, überzeugend in den Kontext des zeitgenössischen deutsch-jüdischen Identitätsdiskurses.[16] Die so unterschiedlich formulierten Motivationen für Übersetzungen – das Zugänglichmachen von Scholem Alejchem und seinem Werk für eine deutschsprachige jüdische wie nichtjüdische Leserschaft einerseits und die Aufmerksamkeit für die Lebensbedingungen der Juden in Osteuropa andererseits – sind dabei Ausdruck verschiedener Standpunkte innerhalb des jüdischen Identitätsdiskurses: Während es Gershom Scholem im Sinne einer „Jüdischen Renaissance" um die Betonung der Eigenständigkeit und Besonderheit des Jüdischen ging und er dafür, wie viele seiner Zeitgenossen, die Identitätssuche auf das als ursprünglich und unverfälscht imaginierte polnische und russische Judentum projizierte, war Alexander Eliasberg daran interessiert, das literarische Werk Scholem Alejchems einem deutschen Publikum – ganz buchstäblich – verständlich zu machen. Diese Leserschaft sollte Scholem Alejchem als selbstverständlichen Teil des Kanons der modernen Literatur und nicht nur als jüdische Literatur kennenlernen.

Ähnliche Positionen wie Scholem vertraten einige Übersetzer wie etwa Nathan Birnbaum (1864–1937), der unter dem Pseudonym Mathias Acher unter anderem 1914 Scholem Alejchems Erzählband „Die verlorene Schlacht" herausbrachte und übersetzte. Birnbaum, in seiner zionistischen Zeit als Advokat für die jiddische Sprache aktiv, postulierte an anderer Stelle ebenfalls einen „jüdischen Geist", der sich in der Sprache, sogar in dem von Juden gesprochenen Deutsch, manifestierte.[17]

Interessanterweise waren es gerade Personen wie Scholem und Birnbaum aus dem bürgerlich-assimilierten Milieu, die sich für die Bewahrung der Differenz und Eigenheit des Jiddischen aussprachen. Der kritisierte Alexander Eliasberg dagegen war wie andere Übersetzer aus dem Jiddischen, etwa Fega Frisch (1887–1964) oder Stefania Goldenring (1873–1920), im Russischen

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[16]   Jeffery A. Grossman, „Sholem Aleichem and the Politics of German Jewish Identity: Translations and Transformations", *Studia Rosenthaliana: Journal of the History, Culture and Heritage of the Jews in the Netherlands* 41, Nr. 1 (2009): 81–110.

[17]   Nathan Birnbaum, „Das westjüdische Kulturproblem", *Ost und West* 4, Februar, 1904, 73–88, hier 76.

Reich geboren und übersetzte auch Klassiker und moderne Werke der russischen Literatur ins Deutsche.[18]

3. Zwei Deutschlands: Zwei Übersetzungstraditionen?

Die Nachkriegsgeschichte deutschsprachiger Übersetzungen jiddischer Werke lässt sich als zwar geteilte jedoch nicht getrennte Kulturgeschichte beschreiben. Die große Zäsur in der Geschichte der Übersetzungen durch die Shoah verursachte eine 22-jährige Pause zwischen 1938 und 1960. In dieser Zeit wurden nur zwei deutsche Übersetzungen von Scholem Alejchems Werken veröffentlicht. Diese beiden Publikationen markieren jedoch bereits wesentliche Aspekte des nun geteilten kulturellen deutschen Kontextes. Mitten im Krieg brachte der *Staatsverlag der Nationalen Minderheiten der UdSSR* eine Übersetzung von Scholem Alejchems autobiografischem Spätwerk „Funem Jarid" unter dem Titel „Vom Jahrmarkt" heraus.[19] 1955 publizierte der DDR-Verlag *Volk und Welt* eine Neuauflage der Geschichten von „Tewje, der Milchmann" in der Übersetzung von Eliasberg. Erst fünf Jahre später legte der bundesdeutsche *Inselverlag* in Wiesbaden dieselbe Übersetzung wieder auf.

Während für Westeuropa und die USA das Musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, das 1964 in den USA und 1968 in der Bundesrepublik uraufgeführt wurde, entscheidend für die Wirkungs- und somit Übersetzungsgeschichte des Autors werden sollte, trifft dies für die DDR nicht zu.[20] Hier feierte das Musical in der

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[18] Zur Bibliografie und Biografie Fega Frischs siehe auch „Frisch, Fe(i)ga", *Lexikon deutsch-jüdischer Autoren*, hg. Renate Heuer (München / London / New York / Paris: de Gruyter Saur 1995) Bd. 3, 183–186. Über die Übersetzerin Stefania Goldenring gibt es keinen Eintrag in den einschlägigen Lexika.

[19] Scholem Alejchem, *Vom Jahrmarkt, übersetzt ins Deutsche von Lena Klementowskaja*, (Kiew: Staatsverlag der Nationalen Minderheiten der UdSSR, 1941). Die Recherche der genauen Umstände dieser Publikation steht bislang aus. Naheliegend scheint ein Zusammenhang mit der fast namensgleichen *Kommunistischen Universität der nationalen Minderheiten des Westens*, vgl. dazu: Julia Köstenberger: „Die Geschichte der ‚Kommunistischen Universität der nationalen Minderheiten des Westens' (KUNMZ) in Moskau 1921–1936", in *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung 2000/2001* (2001): 248–303. Allerdings wurde dieses frühsowjetische Projekt bereits 1936 aufgelöst. Die letzte Rektorin Maria Frumkina (1880–1943), die als Masha Lifshitz politisch im *Allgemeinen Jüdischen Arbeiterbund* sozialisiert war, führte noch bis 1937 ein Fremdsprachenzentrum im selben Haus, wurde aber wie viele andere ehemalige Lehrende und Studierende 1937 entlassen und 1938 verhaftet.

[20] Jan Schwarz, „Speaking Tevye der Milkhiker in Translation", in Estraikh et al., *Translating Sholem Aleichem*, 199–214, hier 201. Zur Geschichte des *Fiddler*-Musicals: Alisa Solomon, *Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of „Fiddler on the Roof"* (New York: Henry Holt, 2013).

Inszenierung Walter Felsensteins (1901–1975) große Publikumserfolge und wurde an der *Komischen Oper* in Ost-Berlin durchgehend bis 1988 gespielt. Allerdings fand die Erstaufführung erst 1971 statt. Für das DDR-Publikum war der Stoff zu dieser Zeit jedoch keine Neuheit. Vielmehr konnte das Musical hier stärker an Lese- und auch Theatererfahrungen der 1960er Jahre anknüpfen.[21] 1965 publizierte wiederum der Verlag *Volk und Welt* die erste Neuübersetzung des Scholem Alejchem-Romans „Der Sohn des Kantors", übersetzt von Max Reich, 1967 noch einmal „Tewje, der Milchmann" im *Verlag der Kunst* in Dresden und 1969 „Der behexte Schneider", ebenfalls bei *Volk und Welt*.

In der Bundesrepublik wurden neue Auflagen alter Übersetzungen sowie Neuübersetzungen zeitversetzt veröffentlicht. So erschien etwa kurz nach der DDR-Publikation im *Inselverlag* „Mottl, der Kantorssohn" in der Übersetzung von der in Prag geborenen Pädagogin, Schriftstellerin und Überlebenden Grete Fischer (1893–1977). Der *Inselverlag* war in der Bundesrepublik zunächst auch der einzige große Verlag, der Übersetzungen Scholem Alejchems veröffentlichte. Dies war den Druckrechten geschuldet, die der *Inselverlag* in den 1960er Jahren vom *Schocken-Verlag* Berlin bzw. *Schocken Books* New York erhalten hatte.[22] Daneben waren es meist kleine Verlage und engagierte Einzelpersonen, nicht selten Überlebende, die Publikationen aus Scholem Alejchems Werk verantworteten.[23] So erschien 1963 eine Neuauflage von „Ostjüdische Erzähler" von Eliasberg im *Ner Tamid* Verlag in München. Der Verlag war 1957 von dem aus dem amerikanischen Exil zurückgekehrten Hans Lamm (1913–1985) gegründet worden und veröffentlichte schon früh

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[21]	Vgl. bspw. den Bericht Max Reichs über das Scholem-Alejchem-Jahr 1966: Max Reich, „Mit einem lachenden und einem weinenden Auge: Eine Betrachtung zum Abschluß des Scholem-Alejchem-Jahres", *Berliner Zeitung* 22, Dezember 30, 1966, 6.

[22]	Vgl. etwa die rechtliche Anmerkung in Scholem Alejchem, *Eine Hochzeit ohne Musikanten: Erzählungen* (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1961), 160. Zur Geschichte des Schocken-Verlags vgl. Saskia Schreuder, Claude Weber, Hgg., *Der Schocken Verlag, Berlin. Jüdische Selbstbehauptung in Deutschland 1931–1938. Essayband zur Ausstellung „Dem suchenden Leser unserer Tage" der Nationalbibliothek Luxemburg* (Berlin: Akademieverlag, 1994).

[23]	Dazu können gerechnet werden: *Jiddische Erzählungen: In der Übersetzung von Alexander Eliasberg mit einer Einleitung von Rudolf Neumann* (Bremen: Carl Schünemann Verlag, 1962). Bei diesem Band ist erstaunlich, dass zwar der jüdische Widerstandkämpfer Rudolf Neumann (1908–1999) das Vorwort verfasste, jedoch der völkisch-nationalistische und bekennend antisemitische Sprachforscher Lutz Mackensen (1901–1992) als Mitherausgeber fungierte; weiterhin: *Ostjüdische Erzähler: Ausgewählt und aus dem Jiddischen übersetzt von Alexander Eliasberg* (München: Ner Tamid, 1963*); Jiddische Geschichten aus aller Welt* (Tübingen/Basel: Horst Erdmann Verlag, 1967) und Scholem Alejchem, *Geschichten aus Anatevka* (München: Langen Müller, 1972).

Bücher zur Geschichte der Shoah.[24] Dieser Publikationskontext passt zum eingangs zitierten Urteil Aya Elyadas über die Nachkriegsübersetzungen. Es ist jedoch auffällig, dass dieser Erinnerungs- und Gedenkkontext selten explizit wird. In den oft durch Vor- oder Nachworte gerahmten Publikationen der 1960er und 1970er Jahre wird zwar zumeist das jeweilige Werk sowie sein Autor eingeführt und kulturell kontextualisiert, es finden sich aber kaum Hinweise auf die jüngere Vergangenheit und die Zerstörung der europäisch-jüdischen Lebenswelten durch die Shoah.

Eine ähnliche Leerstelle lässt sich auch für die Rezeption der Werke feststellen. Die Publikationen erfreuten sich nie eines großen Publikums. Der Künstler und Schriftsteller Jürgen Rennert (*1943) war seit 1964 als Werberedakteur im Verlag *Volk und Welt* beschäftigt und an den ersten Neuübersetzungen beteiligt sowie später selbst als Übersetzer jiddischer Autoren tätig.[25] Er erinnert sich, dass der Verlag *Volk und Welt* etwa mit der Publikation des „Behexten Schneiders" nicht einmal den Mindestabsatz erreichte und die Bücher schließlich verschenkte.[26]

Ebenso marginal wie bis in die 1960er Jahre hinein die historische Holocaustforschung und der Begriff „Holocaust" blieb auch das Werk Scholem Alejchems. Dass Scholem Alejchem bereits 1916 starb, war Teil der Rezeptionsgeschichte nach 1945. Er konnte übersetzt, publiziert und aufgeführt werden, ohne dass die Akteure gezwungen waren, zur unmittelbaren deutschen Vergangenheit Stellung zu nehmen. Anders verhielt es sich mit jiddischen Schriftstellern, die die Shoah überlebt hatten. So verweigerte etwa der Dichter Itzig Manger (1901–1969) Zeit seines Lebens die Einwilligung für die Übersetzung und Publikation seiner Werke ins Deutsche. Lediglich einer Veröffentlichung des „Buch vom Paradies" in der Übertragung von Salcia Landmann (1911–2002) im Jahr 1963 stimmte er zu, allerdings beim Schweizer Verlagshaus *Kossodo*. Die einzige deutsche Übersetzung zu Mangers Lebzeiten erschien im Leipziger *Reclam-Verlag* als Anthologie „Der Fiedler vom

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[24] Andrea Sinn, *„Und ich lebe an der Isar": Exil und Rückkehr des Münchener Juden Hans Lamm* (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2008), 122–123.

[25] Die Autorin führte insgesamt drei Zeitzeugeninterviews, die in die Analyse einbezogen wurden. Die Interviews mit Jürgen Rennert (29. Oktober 2018) in Krumbeck und Gernot Jonas (9. November 2018) in Namedy waren mehrstündige narrativ-biografische Interviews. Mit Andrej Jendrusch (6. Dezember 2018) wurde telefonisch ein sehr viel kürzeres Experteninterview geführt.

[26] Interview der Autorin mit Jürgen Rennert am 29. Oktober 2019.

Getto. Jiddische Dichtung aus Polen" in der Übersetzung von Hubert Witt (1936–2016).[27] Itzig Manger kritisierte die Neuübersetzung und Publikation von klassischen jiddischen Autoren wie Mendele Moicher Sforim (1835–1917), Jitskhok Leib Perets (1852–1915) sowie Scholem Alejchem ins Deutsche angesichts der Shoah als paradox und traurig.

Wie schon das Beispiel der ersten deutschen Übersetzung nach bzw. während der Shoah zeigt, ist der zeitliche Vorsprung der DDR bei der Publikation von jiddischen Übersetzungen vor der Bundesrepublik hauptsächlich dem kulturellen Austausch der DDR mit den Staaten des Ostblocks, insbesondere mit der Sowjetunion, geschuldet. Durch diesen Austausch erhielten die Akteure in der DDR sowohl Zugang zu den jiddischen Werken als auch zur jiddischen Sprache. Jürgen Rennert verwies im Hinblick auf die Publikation der ersten Nachkriegsübersetzung von Erzählungen Jitskhok Leib Perets' auf Jutta Janke.[28] Sie war im Verlag *Volk und Welt* für die Betreuung der polnischen Autoren zuständig und pflegte deshalb regelmäßige und intensive Kontakte zur polnischen Literatur- und Verlagsszene. Das Werk des jiddischen Autors lernte sie in Polen und in polnischer Übersetzung kennen und initiierte daraufhin die Übersetzung und Publikation in der DDR.[29] In beiden deutschen Staaten waren Nicht-Muttersprachler beim Erlernen des Jiddischen vor allem auf autodidaktische Bemühungen angewiesen. Sowohl Jürgen Rennert als auch der Romanist und Übersetzer Andrej Jendrusch (*1958) benennen die monatliche Lektüre der in der DDR aus Moskau beziehbaren jiddischen Zeitung *Sovetish Heymland* („Sowjetisches Vaterland") als eine dabei für sie entscheidende Ressource.[30]

Dass Scholem Alejchems Tod den Zugriff auf sein Werk erleichterte, kann weiterhin für den sowjetischen Kontext geltend gemacht werden. Die junge

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[27]   Hubert Witt, *Der Fiedler vom Getto: Jiddische Dichtung aus Polen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1966). Efrat Gal-Ed konnte anschaulich darstellen, dass dieser Umstand eher Mangers Gesundheitszustand und einer verzögerten postalischen Korrespondenz – also mangelnder Möglichkeit des Einspruchs vonseiten des Autors – als einer veränderten Einstellung zuzuschreiben ist, vgl. Efrat Gal-Ed, *Niemandssprache, Itzik Manger – ein europäischer Dichter* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2016), 673–674, 696.

[28]   Die Lebensdaten von Jutta Janke ließen sich nicht ermitteln.

[29]   Interview der Autorin mit Jürgen Rennert am 29. Oktober 2019. Jutta Janke war auch selbst an Übersetzungen aus dem Jiddischen beteiligt, so etwa: Jutta Janke, *Von armen Schnorrern und weisen Rabbis: Witze, Anekdoten und Sprüche* (Berlin: Volk und Welt 1975).

[30]   Interview der Autorin mit Jürgen Rennert am 29. Oktober 2019 sowie Interview mit Andrej Jendrusch am 6. Dezember 2018.

Sowjetunion unternahm es schon früh, den 1916 in den USA verstorbenen Autor als jüdisch-russischen Arbeiterpatron zu stilisieren. Sein Bemühen, die jüdischen Massen zu erreichen sowie seine zu Teilen kritische Amerika-Darstellung boten dafür die Projektionsfläche. In den Rezensionen der ersten DDR-Publikationen schien die sowjetische Einordnung des Dichters in den russisch-revolutionären Kanon mit Bezug auf Maxim Gorki (1868–1936) immer wieder durch.[31] Die Tatsache, dass er nicht mehr die Möglichkeit hatte, sich zur Russischen Revolution und zur Sowjetunion zu äußern, erleichterte die Vereinnahmung.[32] Dazu kam, dass Scholem Alejchem sowohl nach der Shoah als auch nach dem Stalinistischen Terror eine große Leserschaft fand. Auf die kulturelle Verbindung in der Rezeptionsgeschichte in der DDR und in der Sowjetunion verweist schließlich die Tatsache, dass viele Publikationen Scholem Alejchems in der DDR mit Zeichnungen des russisch-jüdischen Künstlers Anatoli Kaplan (1902–1980) publiziert wurden, der einen Großteil seines Schaffens jüdischen Themen widmete und zu verschiedenen Werken Scholem Alejchems eigene Bildzyklen schuf. Obwohl Kaplan auch im westlichen Ausland und in der Bundesrepublik ausstellte, wurden seine Zeichnungen für die Scholem Alejchem-Werke dort nicht gezeigt.

Während die staatsideologischen Vorzeichen sowie die transnationalen Bezüge der beiden deutschen Staaten nach 1945 sehr verschieden waren und sich in der Publikationspraxis von Scholem Alejchems Werken spiegeln, bestanden deutliche Gemeinsamkeiten und parallele Entwicklungen. So zeigt etwa ein Blick auf die Übersetzungs- und Publikationsakteure, dass die DDR zwar eine für diese Publikationen bessere staatliche Verlagslandschaft bot.

Gleichzeitig waren es aber auch hier Einzelne, die sich für die Buchprojekte einsetzten. An den Akteuren lässt sich daher eine parallele, wenngleich zeitlich verschobene Entwicklung aufzeigen. Während die erste Nachkriegsphase im Wesentlichen von Neuauflagen der Übersetzungen aus der

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[31] Vgl. etwa Erwin Reiche, „Licht selbst im Leid: Der Sohn des Kantors von Scholem Aleichem", *Neue Zeit* 20, August 1, 1965, 6; M.T. [?], „Viel Hiob und ein bißchen Schwejk: Die klassische Figur des Tewje – ins Bild gebannt von Anatoli L. Kaplan", *Neue Zeit* 24, Juni 1, 1968, 4.

[32] Zur Neuinterpretation und Vereinnahmung des Autors im sowjetischen Kontext vgl. drei Artikel des Bandes Estraikh et al., *Translating Sholem Aleichem*: Gennady Estraikh, „Soviet Sholem Aleichem", 62–82; Roland Gruschka, „,Du host zikh a denkmol af eybik geshtelt': The Sovietization and Heroization of Sholem Aleichem in the 1939 Jubilee Poems", 83–97, und Mikhail Krutikov, „A Writer for All Seasons: Translating Sholem Aleichem into Soviet Ideological Idiom", 98–112.

Vorkriegszeit – sowie, in der Bundesrepublik, dem hohen Engagement jüdischer Überlebender – gekennzeichnet war, waren die seit den 1980er Jahren um die jiddischen Publikationen Bemühten in Ost und West oft aus einem protestantisch-kirchlichen Milieu und im Bereich der Erinnerungs- und Gedenkarbeit und im jüdisch-christlichen Dialog aktiv. Die Bezüge zur Shoah wurden im Kontext der jiddischen Übersetzungen expliziter, was auf den zeitgeschichtlichen Kontext verweist. Die 1980er Jahre waren in Ost- und Westdeutschland von je spezifischen und dabei doch teilweise parallelen zivilgesellschaftlichen wie wissenschaftlichen Erinnerungsdebatten geprägt.[33] In einem Nachwort zur Neuauflage von „Tewje, der Milchmann" 1984 im *Reclam-Verlag* in Leipzig bemerkte der Verlagsleiter und Herausgeber Hans Marquardt (1920–2004):

> „Durch seine [Scholem Alejchems] Werke […] erhält die mit der blutigen faschistischen ‚Neuordnung Europas' untergegangene ostjüdische Welt Gestalt und Gesicht, rückt den Menschen unserer Zeit wieder näher, erinnert die ältere Generation, die Zeugen der ‚schlimmen Jahre', auch an ihr Versagen vor der Geschichte."[34]

Jürgen Rennert wurde in den 1980er Jahren selbst als Übersetzer und Herausgeber jiddischer Werke tätig.[35] Zeitgleich wirkte der im kirchlichen Kontext sozialisierte Künstler und Schriftsteller maßgeblich an Gedenkprojekten mit, wie etwa der Gestaltung einer Gedenkplakette, die die mittelalterliche Darstellung einer „Judensau" an der Stadtkirche von Lutherstadt Wittenberg mit der Shoah in Beziehung setzte. In den späten 1980er Jahren initiierte er zusammen mit der Sängerin und Schauspielerin Jalda Rebling (*1951) und dem Religionswissenschaftler Stefan Schreiner (*1947) die „Tage der Jiddischen Kultur" in Berlin. Das von ihm übersetzte Buch „Schir-ha-Schirim" („Lied der Lieder"), 1981 beim Leipziger Verlag *Der Morgen* erschienen, wurde vier Jahre später vom bundesrepublikanischen *Suhrkamp*-Verlag wieder aufgelegt.

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[33] Zu nennen ist für die Bundesrepublik etwa der so genannte Historikerstreit. In beiden deutschen Staaten katalysierte der 50-jährige Jahrestag der Novemberpogrome 1988 gesellschaftliche Diskurse, vgl. zur DDR etwa: Detlef Joseph, *Die DDR und die Juden: Eine kritische Untersuchung. Mit einer Bibliografie von Renate Kirchner* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 2010), 160–203.

[34] Hans Marquardt, „Nachwort", in Scholem Alejchem, *Tewje, der Milchmann* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1984), 175–179, hier 176.

[35] Scholem Alejchem, *Schir-ha-Schirim: Lied der Lieder. Roman einer Jugend* (Leipzig: Der Morgen 1981); Scholem Alejchem, *Der Fortschritt in Kasrilewke und andere alte Geschichten aus neuerer Zeit, ausgewählt von Jürgen Rennert, aus dem Jiddischen von Andrej Jendrusch* (Berlin: Der Morgen, 1990).

Diese Verbindungen illustrieren, dass es neben den Unterschieden auch Parallelitäten und Konvergenzen der jiddischen Übersetzungskultur in den beiden deutschen Staaten gab.

4.　Vereinigtes Ankommen im Post-Vernakularen

Die Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede der Übersetzung und Rezeption von Scholem Alejchems „Tewje" änderten sich im vereinigten Deutschland in den 1990er Jahren nicht, vielmehr wurden die Tendenzen der 1980er Jahre noch deutlicher. Die jeweils kleinen Kreise in Ost und West, die die jiddische Kultur im Allgemeinen und Scholem Alejchem im Speziellen förderten, trafen direkt aufeinander. Andrej Jendrusch aus dem Akteurskreis der „Tage der Jiddischen Kultur" veröffentlichte 1990 eine Neuübersetzung der „Erzählungen aus Kasrilewke" im Verlag *Der Morgen.* Jendrusch gründete 1998 den Verlag *Edition Dodo* und verlegte in der Folge eigene und fremde Übersetzungen aus dem Jiddischen, darunter auch die Übersetzungen des evangelischen Pfarrers Gernot Jonas (*1940). Dieser war erstmals 1999 mit einer Übersetzung der Scholem Alejchem-Erzählung „Tepl" hervorgetreten und konnte eine Erstübersetzung der „Eisenbahngeschichten" 1995 im *Jüdischen Verlag* bei *Suhrkamp* unterbringen.[36] Obwohl dieses Buch von der fachlichen wie belletristischen Kritik gelobt wurde und zwei Neuauflagen erfuhr, gelang es Jonas in der Folge nicht mehr, weitere Übersetzungen Scholem Alejchems bei *Suhrkamp* zu verlegen.[37] Sein Angebot wurde mit dem Hinweis auf wahrscheinlich zu geringe Absatzzahlen abgelehnt.[38] Hierbei zeigt sich einmal mehr die für die 1980er Jahre bereits für den DDR-Kontext aufgezeigte Verbindung der Übersetzungs- mit der Erinnerungskultur sowie – an der Person von Jonas – die Verbindung zu einem engagierten protestantischen Milieu.[39] Im Nachwort zu den „Eisenbahngeschichten" schrieb der Übersetzer:

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[36]　Gernot Jonas, „Den ‚Unübersetzbaren' übersetzen, Scholem-Alejchems ‚Tepl' – Ein Versuch" in *Jiddische Philologie: Festschrift für Erika Timm,* hg. Walter Röll, Simon Neuberg (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag 1999), 243–256; die Übersetzung vgl. Scholem Alejchem, *Eisenbahngeschichten* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995).

[37]　Vgl. etwa Sabine Koller, „On (Un)translateability: Sholem Aleichem's Ayznban-geshikhtes (Railroad Stories)", in Estraikh et al., *Translating Sholem Aleichem,* hg., 34–149, hier 144; Walter Hinck, „Heuchler dritter Klasse", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 162, Juli 15, 1996, 28..

[38]　Interview der Autorin mit Gernot Jonas am 9. November 2018.

[39]　Die Zeitschrift *Kirche und Israel* berichtet über und rezensiert häufig jiddische Übersetzungen.

„Es ist richtig, dass den Hintergrund seiner Werke und auch unserer *Eisenbahnge-*
schichten[40] die katastrophale Lage im zaristischen Russland vor und nach der Jahr-
hundertwende bildet. In einer neuen deutschen Übersetzung soll aber auch daran
erinnert werden, dass es Deutsche waren, die Osteuropas Schtetl unwiederbring-
lich vernichtet und die Menschen dort verfolgt, vertrieben und in unfassbarer Zahl
ermordet haben. Die meisten der Opfer sprachen Jiddisch. So haben mich bei der
Übersetzung, trotz aller Freude an der Schönheit der jiddischen Sprache, der Wär-
me und dem Humor Scholem Alejchems, Trauer und Scham nicht verlassen."[41]

Darüber hinaus trat ein für Deutschland bis dahin neuer Kontext hinzu, der
für die jiddischen Übersetzungen wesentlich werden sollte: Die zunehmende
Akademisierung der Übersetzungspraxis. Im Jahr 1990 wurde die Germanis-
tin Erika Timm (*1934) auf den ersten Lehrstuhl für Jiddistik in Deutschland
an der Universität Trier berufen; 1996 folgte die Einrichtung eines Jiddistik-
Lehrstuhls an der Universität Düsseldorf. Pfarrer Gernot Jonas absolvierte in
Trier ein philologisches Studium der Jiddistik, das zur Grundlage seiner Über-
setzungstätigkeit wurde. Ein Aspekt des von Jeffrey Shandler beschriebenen
post-vernakularen Gebrauchs des Jiddischen war somit seit den 1990er Jahren
auch im vereinten Deutschland angekommen.

5.   Schluss

Die Analyse des Werks Scholem Alejchems in deutscher Sprache veranschau-
licht die jiddisch-deutsche Übersetzungspraxis im 20. Jahrhundert. Während
die moderne jiddische Literatur Anfang des Jahrhunderts für den innerjüdi-
schen Identitätsdiskurs zum Zankapfel wurde, wurde sie von weiten Teilen
der zeitgenössischen nicht-jüdischen deutschen Gesellschaft kaum wahrge-
nommen. Obwohl nach 1945 in beiden deutschen Staaten zuweilen der Unter-
haltungswert von Scholem Alejchems Geschichten betont wurde, geschah das
Lesen und Übersetzen des jiddischen Autors auf beiden Seiten der Mauer in
einem in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren latenten, in den 1980er Jahren zuneh-
mend expliziten erinnerungspolitischen Zusammenhang. Die Übersetzung
und Rezeption in der DDR begann früher und strahlte auch auf die Bundes-
republik aus. Wichtige Impulse für die jiddisch-deutsche Übersetzungspraxis

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[40]   Hervorhebung im Original.
[41]   Aleichem, *Eisenbahngeschichten*, 273.

kamen in der DDR aus der Sowjetunion und Polen, für die Bundesrepublik aus den USA. Mit dem Ende der DDR-Verlage wurde deutlich, dass der Rezipientenkreis dieser Literatur in Deutschland so klein war, dass sich Übersetzungen und Publikationen wirtschaftlich nicht lohnten.[42] Das hatte zur Folge, dass die Publikation von Übersetzungen nunmehr fast ausschließlich mit einem hohen Engagement Einzelner verbunden waren. Der Jiddist und Übersetzer Armin Eidherr (*1963) umriss die Situation wie folgt:

> „[...] die [Übersetzungs-]Arbeit [wird] von Amateuren geleistet, von Jiddischliebhabern, die das Übersetzen als Hobby bzw. als Freizeitbeschäftigung betrachten – und sogar dafür bezahlen, die Ergebnisse ihrer Bemühungen zu publizieren."[43]

Eidherr sah hingegen die Zukunft der Übersetzungen aus dem Jiddischen im akademischen Kontext, wenn er konstatierte: „Heutzutage lassen sich Übersetzungen von Scholem Alejchem meiner Meinung nach eigentlich nur mehr im Rahmen jiddistischer Philologie realisieren."[44] Folgerichtig ist er selbst als Übersetzer und Herausgeber jiddischer Werke tätig.[45]

Indes zeigt der Umstand, dass zeitgenössische Übersetzungen aus dem Jiddischen ins Deutsche nur durch den hohen Einsatz einzelner engagierter Laien oder Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler überhaupt realisierbar sind und lediglich einen kleinen Leserkreis erreichen, einen weitgehenden Abbruch direkter deutsch-jiddischer Kulturkontakte. Nach der Vernichtung des Großteils der Leserschaft sowie der Menschen, die Scholem Alejchem vorrangig porträtierte und adressierte, ist es darum eine fast ironische Wendung der Geschichte deutsch-jiddischer Übersetzungskultur, dass Alexander Eliasberg sein Ziel erreichte, die jiddischen Werke in den Kanon der modernen Weltliteratur zumindest kurzzeitig einzugliedern. Obwohl Eliasbergs Übersetzungen von Scholem Alejchems Anfang des Jahrhunderts als „unjüdisch" kritisiert und ebenso im neuen Jahrtausend erneut Gegenstand von Kritik wurden, waren es eben jene Übersetzungen, die durch die Jahrzehnte

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[42] Vgl. auch Christoph Links, *Das Schicksal der DDR-Verlage: Die Privatisierung und ihre Konsequenzen* (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2009).

[43] Armin Eidherr, „Einiges zur Übersetzung jiddischer literarischer Texte. Geschichte, Realität, Ideal – und das Beispiel Scholem Alejchem", *Chilufim: Zeitschrift für Jüdische Kulturgeschichte* 15, Nr. 2 (2013): 37–66, hier 54–55.

[44] Eidherr, *Einiges zur Übersetzung*, 59.

[45] Eidherr fungiert neben der eigenen Übersetzungstätigkeit auch als Herausgeber der Jiddischen Bibliothek des Otto Müller Verlags.

immer wieder neue Auflagen erfuhren.[46] Allerdings stand, wie eingangs von Aya Elyada konstatiert und hier aufgezeigt, diese Verankerung im deutschen Kanon meist im Kontext der Erinnerung an die Shoah. Doch diese besondere Stellung in der Gedenkkultur büßte die jiddisch-deutsche Übersetzungspraxis im Allgemeinen und die Übersetzungen von Scholem Alejchems Werk im Besonderen mit der Wende zum neuen Jahrtausend weitgehend ein.

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[46] Die Slavistin Sabine Koller wirft Eliasberg eine Verflachung bzw. Aufgabe der diffizilen Sprachspiele des Originals, diesmal in Bezug auf das Russische, vor. vgl. Koller, *On (Un)translatablility*, 139–141.

Radical Translation as Transvaluation:
From *Tsene-Rene* to *The Jews Are Coming:*
Three Readings of Korah's Rebellion

by Netta Schramm

Abstract

Scholars of modern Jewish thought explore the hermeneutics of "translation" to describe the transference of concepts between discourses. I suggest a more radical approach – translation as transvaluation – is required. Eschewing modern tests of truth such as "the author would have accepted it" and "the author should have accepted it," this radical form of translation is intentionally unfaithful to original meanings. However, it is not a reductionist reading or a liberating text. Instead, it is a persistent squabble depending on both source and translation for sustenance. Exploring this paradigm entails a review of three expositions of the Korah biblical narrative; three readings dedicated to keeping an eye on current events: (1) *Tsene-rene* (Prague, 1622), biblical prose; (2) *Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh*, (Tel Aviv, 1973), a secular Zionist reworking of *Tsene-rene*; and (3) *The Jews are Coming* (Israel, 2014–2017) a satirical television show.

1.   Introduction

Language, suggests philosopher Michael Oakeshott, as in the "language of poetry" or the "language of chemistry" is a world, a way of thinking and a substrate for a literary corpus. A literature corpus corresponding to the "language of chemistry" contains items such as chemistry textbooks, journal articles, and laboratory safety sheets.[1] Hence, production of literature by and for those speaking a foreign language or for the bilingual is an act of translation as adaptation. Translation in this sense is the subject matter of hermeneutics as philosopher of education Michael Rosenak pointed out:

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[1]   Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Liberty Found: Indianapolis, 1991), 193.

"Thus, any translation is an attempt, usually by an expert, to render a concept locat-
ed in a mode of discourse that is incomprehensible to particular hearers, because
they don't know it or don't take it seriously, into an idiom that does make sense to
them and evokes interest in them, so that they are enabled to learn something from
the (original) concept."[2]

The term translation, as an idiom for the negotiation of conflicting languages,
was adopted and expanded in scholarly works on modern religious thought
and education. The collocation "language and literature" together with trans-
lation as interpretation stands at the core of Rosenak and his disciples' theory
of modern Jewish education. Jewish education is facing a secularized moder-
nity which deems the language of the Jewish canon obsolete, with its values,
legal code, and worldview not axiomatically true and binding. In writings
on modern Jewish education translation became a lens and a standard.[3] As a
lens, it informs scholarly readings of Jewish works of contemporary literature,
and as a standard, it gauges authentic continuity of works of literature with
canonical sources.

The following discussion is guided by notions of translation as adaptation
coupled with an idiom of language as a substrate for a culture's texts. I exam-
ine renderings of the biblical episode of the Korah rebellion in three works:
(1) the pre-modern *Tsene-rene*; (2) *Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh*, a secular Zionist re-
working of *Tsene-rene*; and (3) *The Jews are Coming*, a satirical Israeli televi-
sion show. Numbers 16 tells of Korah, discontented kin to Moses, who incites
an unsuccessful rebellion aimed at revoking unjust priestly privileges: "You
[Moses and Aaron] have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of
them, and the Lord is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above
the Lord's congregation?"[4] The biblical narrative begs for additions for it con-
tains two inconsistent storylines regarding the identity of the rebelling coali-
tion and the subsequent miraculous punishment. This literary perceptiveness

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[2]   Michael Rosenak, *Roads to the Palace: Jewish Texts and Teaching*, Faith and Culture in Contem-
        porary Education; v. 1 (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995), 99.

[3]   Terms developed in the "language and literature" argot expand language to mean discourse
        and resonate with 20th-century translation studies. Gideon Toury saw translation as a
        norm-governed activity which involves "at least two languages and two cultural traditions,
        i.e., at least two sets of norm-systems on each level." Gideon Toury, "The Nature and Role of
        Norms in Translation," in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London; New
        York: Routledge, 2004), 200.

[4]   Num. 16.3 (JPS).

has been the basis for many creative midrashic works.[5] Many sources depict Korah as an antihero, trickster, and a cunning rabbinic scholar.[6] Furthermore, this biblical passage has been and still is a favorite with preachers; there is even a festive opening phrase for sermonizing on the Korah rebellion: "This section is beautifully expounded."[7] Korah is a favorite with preachers due to the ease with which a local twist may be read into the ancient source.[8] My selections are adaptation-translations of the Korah rebellion who target not the scholar but the layperson, and are links in an exegetical chain. *The Jews are Coming* was created by screenwriters, not bible specialists. They are graduates of the Israeli secular school system, and their knowledge of scripture draws on that curriculum. *Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh* is of the milieu which created the secular Israeli bible curricula and was modeled after the *Tsene-rene*.[9] The *Tsene-rene* came to be thought of as the "women's bible" targeting young children and unlearned adults. The three works are therefore suitable tracers for Jewish practices of translation and their trajectories of change.

2.   Hermeneutics of Translation and the Jewish Canon

As noted above, translation is a prevailing paradigm in the field of Jewish thought and Jewish education. Of course, Jewish exegesis is nothing new; the communal reading of the Torah every Shabbat created, early on, a need to translate the Hebrew scriptures into the vernacular Aramaic.[10] However, the function of the expositor-preacher quickly expanded such that a skilled expositor would link the biblical text with current events to offer guidance on

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5   Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 233–235.

6   David Biale, "Korah in the Midrash: The Hairless Heretic as Hero," *Jewish History* 30, no. 1–2 (2016): 15–28.

7   Based on Rashi Num. 16.1.

8   Early Reform thinkers reclaimed Korah to frame a debate with Orthodoxy. Biale, "Korah in the Midrash," 27–28.

9   David Cohen, author of the book, was exposed as a child both to *Ein Yaakov*, a compilation of *aggadot* found in the Talmud, and to *Tsene-rene*. The first was taught by his father in the *beit midrash*, the second recounted by his mother at home. When Cohen wrote *derashot* for his secular Israeli audience, he chose the accessible *Tsene-rene* format. Furthermore, works like *Midrash Raba* were not even taught at Yeshivat Volozhin where he studied. David Cohen, *Asher Shamati Vesiparti* (Ein Harod: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me'euchad, 1947), 5–6 (Hebrew).

10   The origins of Jewish preaching are unclear. Zunz and Bettan dated it back to the Second Temple, Heineman dated it to Hellenistic times.

contemporary issues.[11] This exegetical activity is guided by a theory of hier-
archies between the expositor, the Divine author, and works of earlier sages,
which shape hermeneutical practices he or she employs.[12] Shaun Gallagher
in *Hermeneutics and Education* offers us a good, albeit simplified, distinction
between four different approaches to hermeneutics termed conservative,
moderate, critical and radical.[13] Conservative hermeneutics may be mistak-
enly understood as limited to a literalist "word-for-word" approach. However,
conservative hermeneutics includes "sense-for-sense" interpretations when
coupled with an ethos of fidelity to the author's intent.[14] In Jewish hermeneu-
tical traditions, Midrash is conservative in orientation yet far from literalist
in scope. It is conservative due to the expounders' self-perceived mission: not
creating but exposing latent meanings. Pre-Enlightenment Jewish thought
defined grounded exegesis as the application of the "proper hermeneutical
key".[15] Talmudic texts are exemplary in their playful introduction of extraor-
dinary ideas into the biblical verses. The Talmudic trope: "If it were not a
written verse it could not be said" expresses this conservative orientation and,
funnily enough, is evoked in cases of extreme non-literal readings.[16] Hence
introducing daring theology is possible when perceived as textually ground-
ed. However, modernity called for a reassessment of the hermeneutical tool
kit, with one response being moderate hermeneutics. Philosopher Ronald
Dworkin claimed moderate hermeneutics to be an active dialogue between
author and reader.[17] Dworkin offered a test of truth which he believed to be
subjective yet universal:

[11]   Joseph Heinemann, *Sermons in the Talmudic period.* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1982), 7–10
       (Hebrew).
[12]   Philosopher Yohanan Silman advanced a model in which religious Jewish expositors harbor
       several philosophies of Torah and its transmission. If the Torah was perfectly transmitted, a
       disciple is forever inferior to sages of earlier generations. David Yochanan Silman, *The Voice
       Heard on Sinai: Once or Ongoing?* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999, Hebrew).
[13]   Shaun Gallagher, *Hermeneutics and Education* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 9–11.
[14]   See sources in: Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications.* 4th
       ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 30. Moshe Halbertal claims this freedom was achieved by the
       process of canonization. Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book Canon, Meaning, and Authority*
       (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 32–40.
[15]   Halbertal, *People of the Book,* 37.
[16]   List of appearances in: Moshe Halbertal, "If It Were Not a Written Verse It Could Not Be Said,"
       Tarbiz 68, no. 1 (1998): 39–59, note 1 (Hebrew).
[17]   Ronald Dworkin, *Law's Empire* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1986), 59.

"The interpreter's judgment of what an author would have accepted will be guided by his sense of what the author should have accepted, that is, his sense of which readings would make the work better and which would make it worse."[18]

Dworkin believed texts could be transformed by new idioms and concepts yet retain a meaningful connection with the source. If one took too much interpretive freedom, the result is a new work, rather than an interpretation of the original.[19] Rosenak developed the concepts of "partial translation" for a moderate hermeneutic, and its counterpart, a reductionist "full translation."[20] Modern works of Jewish thought such as *The Lonely Man of Faith*, *The Prophets,* and *The way of Man,* are partial translations.[21] Critical hermeneutics includes a program for liberation from disparaged value and belief systems. Unlike the conservative interpreter, the critical one subjugates a canon to the framework of some critical theory.[22] In Jonathan Cohen's formulation, this entails a hermeneutic of suspicion in which the reader assumes a privileged position, which the author is denied.[23]

It is radical hermeneutics that sings a different song: "Interpretation requires playing with the words of the text rather than using them to find truth in or beyond the text."[24] An act of rebellion characterizes radical hermeneutics; it is not a value-free hermeneutic, yet any values it shares are hidden under layers of play and irony.[25] Unlike the truth-bearing critical hermeneutics,

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[18] Dworkin, *Law's Empire*, 57.

[19] Dworkin, *Law's Empire*, 67.

[20] Rosenak's "full translation" is similar to Gallaghar's "critical hermeneutics." Michael Rosenak, *Commandments and Concerns: Jewish Religious Education in Secular Society* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1987), 196, 206.

[21] Joseph B Soloveitchik, "The Lonely Man of Faith," *Tradition* 7, no. 2 (1965): 5–67; Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1955); Martin Buber, *The Way of Man* (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1950).

[22] Post-Colonial theories of translation as cannibalism flip the hierarchy between source and translation via a destructive act of consumption. De Compos' use of translation as cannibalism pre-dates Post-Colonial sensibilities. It also transcends a single critical theory because it is a multifaceted literary trope. In his later cannibalistic metaphor, the translator ingests a text, and destroys its unitary identity. But the text becomes part of the cannibals' subsequent texts and regains a Walter Benjamin-like "afterlife."

[23] Cohen's example is Freud's reading of Exodus. Jonathan Cohen, "Suspicion, Dialogue and Reverence Leo Strauss Confronts Freud and Buber on Exodus," in *Languages and Literatures in Jewish Education*, vol. 11, Studies in Jewish Education (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2006), 261–288.

[24] Gallagher, *Hermeneutics and Education*, 10.

[25] Kafka on Abraham's journey with his son is an example of a ludic reading of scripture; Abraham is afraid of morphing into Don Quixote. Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family and Editors*, transls. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Schocken, 1977), 285.

a radical translation can therefore never replace the original for it provides no definitive answers. Additionally, radical hermeneutics deems the attempt to reach the author's intent futile. Even if it were possible to reach the author's intent, it would be an unsophisticated philological pursuit. Radical hermeneutics thus reverses Dworkin's test, yielding a translator who admits that the author would not accept the translation, even more so, *should* not accept it. This paper wishes to describe a radical position termed here translation as transvaluation.[26]

My use of the Nietzschean term "transvaluation" does not mean adherence to any particular interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy.[27] The term is nevertheless linked, by way of literature professor Dov Sadan on Micha Yosef Berdyczewski (the "Hebrew Nietzche"), to a theology of Jewish secularization: "Just as Nietzsche called for a re-assessment of the values of European culture, Berdyczewski, following him, called for a transvaluation of Jewish culture."[28] However, claims Sadan, while Nietzsche favored Paganism over Christianity, Berdyczewski, embraced dualities and contradictions in modern Jewish existence rather than discarding inherited culture.[29]

3.   Conservative Hermeneutics: *Tsene-Rene*

Tsene-rene, the most popular Yiddish work of Torah exegesis, was first published in 1622. The author, Rabbi Jacob ben Isaac of Yanov (died 1623), was an esteemed Polish rabbi from the city Yanov near Lublin.[30] His text assumes readers are familiar with the *peshat*, the plain meaning of the text; a typical

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[26]   Compare with de Compmos' "transcreation": "in the limits of any translation that proposes to be a radical operation of 'transcreation,' something sparkles […] the mirage of converting, at least for an instant, the original into the translation of the translation." (Haroldo de Campos, "Mephistofaustian Transluciferation (Contribution to the Semiotics of Poetic Translation)," *Dispositio* 7, no. 19/21 (1982):181–187, here 182.)".

[27]   The subtitle of Nietzsche's book *The Will to Power* is "An Attempted Transvaluation of All Values."

[28]   Dov Sadan, *Orchot Ushvilim*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1977), 87 (Hebrew).

[29]   Berdyczewski was called the Hebrew Nietzsche by proponents and opponents of his philosophy. Avner Holzman, *Ha-Sefer vehachayim: Masot al Micha Yosef Berdyczewski* (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2003), 200–223 (Hebrew).

[30]   A common alternate to "of Yanov" is "Ashkenazi;" not all biographical details are clear. See Morris Faierstein, "A Guide to the Ze'enah U-Re'enah: Correcting Some Misconceptions," *In Geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*, Febuary 2019, https://ingeveb.org/articles/a-guide-to-the-zeenah-u-reenah, accessed May 1, 2019; Morris M. Faierstein, *Ze'enah u-Re'enah: A Critical Translation into English*, vol. 1 (Berlin ; Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 10.

section begins with two words out of a Hebrew verse and then expounds on it in Yiddish. The author merged multiple sources into a narrative and illuminated the inner life of the biblical characters.[31] Except in the apothegms, the author drew entirely on earlier sources to compose his work.

The Korah rebellion in the *Tsene-rene* covers many available midrashic sources. Of course, Rabbi Jacob ben Isaac enjoyed the freedom to choose how much weight to give available themes.[32] We can detect these conservative hermeneutics in the narrative of Moses' reactions and thoughts:[33]

> "'He fell on his face' [16:4]. Moses fell on his face. He thought that prayer was not good or appropriate. This was the fourth sin. For the first, the Golden Calf, he prayed and by the complainers, who spoke evil against God, he prayed. By the spies, he also prayed. However, with Korah, he was very frightened. He thought to himself. How long should I exert myself to forgive their sins?"

Opening with the biblical verse, then paraphrasing Rashi, the *Tsene-rene* tells of a pained, righteous leader troubled by a possible credibility crisis with God, not with Man. The discussion then distinguishes between the two leaders-brothers: "why did Moses fall alone and not Aaron? The explanation is that Aaron did not want to get involved in the conflict."[34] Aaron's shunning away from politics goes only to enhance his holy stature, again strengthening a theocentric voice.

4.   Moderate Hermeneutics*: Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh*

Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh is a small and forgotten volume of biblical homilies authored by David Cohen (1894–1976). Cohen was a key figure in *HaNoar HaOved*, the youth organization affiliated with *Mapai*, the Israel Worker's Party. The work was first published locally in kibbutz Alonim as a weekly column. Dov Sadan, an old friend of Cohen's, then edited and published the book. This work of homilies is striking both in content and form; Cohen's works are primarily compilations of Hasidic legends with a Zionist and

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[31]   Faierstein, *Ze'enah u-Re'enah*, 19.
[32]   Korah's wife is mentioned but her role is not emphasized whereas in other cases the work elaborates on the role of wives. Hananel Mack, "Male and Female in the Aggada on Korah and his Company," *Jewish Studies* 40 (2000): 131–143.
[33]   Faierstein, *Ze'enah u-Re'enah*, 767.
[34]   Faierstein, *Ze'enah u-Re'enah*, 768.

socialist orientation. The decision to produce a work of biblical commentary suits some of Cohen's generation who embraced a zionist selective use of the Bible.[35] However, *Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh* conforms to the rhythm of the weekly Torah portion, which for most secularist was lost together with the Shabbat communal reading. Cohen also diverged from his peers by privileging the Torah over the rest of the biblical canon and fashioning it after the traditional Yiddish *Tsene-rene.* Cohen loved the language of his Eastern European Jewish upbringing. The homilies were his attempt to transmit adapted content in a received form.[36]

Tsene-rene, read by generations every Shabbat, shaped and enforced cultural norms, values, and practices. Cohen remembered sitting on his mother's lap while she, a *Zogerke*, entertained and educated the women of the community.[37] However, the new society of the kibbutz, secularized with a vengeance, produced radically different narratives and didactic intentions. The good, the honorable, the pious, and more, were transformed by the secular socialist milieu in which Cohen lived and wrote. Still, the biblical homilies composed in the kibbutz, which broke with longstanding interpretive traditions, were, from Cohen's perspective, an authentic reading of scripture.

While Korah is first mentioned only in Numbers 16, Cohen weaved Korah into the narrative of Numbers 1 where, among other things, Levites are exempt from military service. Cohen comments:[38]

> "And when Korah the son of Yitzhar met Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliav, they spoke among themselves about the census taken by Moses and Aaron, and that the tribe of Levi was not enumerated along with the other tribes of Israel and not included in the military duties. Korah said: 'This must not be!' We will stir up all the tribes of Israel and demand the same law for all of us, and there will be no advantage for Moses and Aaron and the sons of Levi. And that was the start of the rebellion by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

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[35]　Anita Shapira, *The Bible and Israeli identity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005), 1–33.

[36]　Cohen adapts the decree not to be a hastener or forcer of the End *(Dohek Ha-Kets)*, not by nulling the dictum and all its theological backdrop, but by reframing Zionism as a mission to draw the End near *(Mekarev Ha-Kets)*. David Cohen, *Shomrim LaBoker* (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me'uchad, 1963), 105–118.

[37]　Eliezer Yerushalmi, *Pinkas Navaredok* (Tel Aviv: Ahdut, 1963), 205 (Yiddish and Hebrew).

[38]　Cohen, *Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh*, 63. I would like to thank my father Lenn J. Schramm for all original translations cited in this work.

Cohen skillfully presented an issue of Israeli reality– compulsory military service for all – in terms of the Levite exemption to endorse Korah's position. [39] This imitates midrashic procedures and creates a storyline with unprecedented agendas.[40] Notice however that in Cohen's reading, the Levite exemption is the doing of men, who are themselves Levites, not of God. Cohen could not replace the biblical text – he would not "uproot the mountain".[41] Instead, he revisited the Korah rebellion and drew upon a well-known Midrash which also appears in the *Tsene-rene*. Korah of the Midrash bluntly lies to mock Moses, whereas Cohen's Korah is a socialist voicing his due criticism:[42]

> "And in fact, men of the tribes came to them and told about the ploys used by several priests. And one widow came and said: I had only one ewe. When my daughter fell ill the priest-physician told me to feed her lamb. The priest came and slaughtered the lamb, and took the choicest pieces of meat for himself, leaving only the bones for me and my daughter."

Even though the wrongdoings are ascribed to "several priests" and not to Moses and Aaron in person, the homily is critical, diachronic, and divergent.[43] Still, Cohen had some fidelity to scripture, so he realigned his second homily with the known outcome. This time he abandoned the critical reading and returned to a traditional theme which rules Korah envious and therefore insincere in his demands. Now the function of the draft exemption homily becomes clear – it is a link back to a midrashic tradition:[44]

> "Is it not enough for you, sons of Levi, that you serve in the Tabernacle and are exempt from military duty, that you also demand the priesthood? [...] And it was transmitted from generation to generation: envy, lust, and honor are lethal for a man."[45]

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[39] To the best of my knowledge, no other source associates the Levites' exemption from army duty with Korah's appeal.

[40] Cohen's generation imitated midrashic procedures. Uriel Simon, "The Place of the Bible in Israeli Society: From National Midrashic to Existential Peshat," *Modern Judaism* 19, no. 3 (October 1, 1999): 217–239.

[41] Babylonian Talmud, Horayot, 14a.

[42] Cohen, *Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh*, 66.

[43] In the desert the only priests are Aaron and his sons.

[44] Cohen, *Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh*, 66–67.

[45] Quoted from Mishna Avot 4, 21. Korah is envious in many sources, such as the popular Mishnah commentary, the Bartenura.

Cohen's use of the biblical narrative was bilingual. In the first homily, he expressed his set of socialist Zionist beliefs, but in the second he adopted the traditional critique against conflicts "not in the name of heaven."[46] Notice that while reckoning with the traditional teachings, he also tenuously expanded heaven to incorporate socialism. The new didactic message he created claimed a sincere socialist, just like the pious Jews, must acknowledge his fallibilities and take heed not to succumb to lust, honor, and envy in the name of ideology.

Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh holds a liberating socialist ideology but is not a critical translation; the criticism of the priestly politics is a skillful non-reductionist homily. Cohen produced a sermon of moderate hermeneutics – a work of partial translation – informed by a selective loyalty to core values in Jewish tradition.

5.   Radical Hermeneutics: *The Jews Are Coming*

The Jews are Coming by screenwriters Asaf Beisar and Natalie Marcus, was produced for Israel's Channel 1 and screened between the years 2014–2017. The show featured themes from Jewish history from biblical times to recent events. It was not an educational text however the producers discovered teachers in Israel incorporate skits in their curriculum.[47] The Israeli public broadcast network first banned the screening of the show for its alleged political leftist views. When they finally aired the show, after agreeing to produce a counter right-wing comedy, it was an immediate controversy and prize winner. The same network executives then renewed the show for two more seasons.

The book *Bible Now* (Hebrew), authored by Meir Shalev and published in 1985, is a link between Cohen's work and the televised skits.[48] Shalev freely read into the text contemporary issues with a critical anti-theistic tune. He often made remarks on the character traits of biblical heroes and the God

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[46]   Mishnah Avot 5, 17.
[47]   *Bar Siach #36 Natalie Marcus talks about The Jews are Coming* (Tel Aviv), accessed October 22, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=io2uIhGm2Uw, (Hebrew); Itay Stern, "Creators of Jews Are Coming connect Tanakh to Current Satire," *Ha-Aretz*, February 18, 2016: 8.
[48]   Meir Shalev, *Tanach Achshav* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1985, Hebrew). Shalev, unlike Cohen, didn't present his writings in a traditional parashah by parashah setup, nor did he focus on Mikrah.

of Israel which he found to be lacking. In this work a vision of Korah in the Knesset is conjured:[49]

"The Knesset debated a no-confidence motion. [...] 'Mr. Speaker, honorable Knesset, I ask all of you to move away from the Opposition benches so that you won't be harmed!' [...] There is great commotion, as Knesset members leap in every direction."

After the comic relief, the biblical narrative is reviewed and denounced:

"For the first time, a democratic note sounds in the radical theocracy imposed by Moses and his family. Did the government relate to the Opposition on the basis of the facts? No! Moses preferred to take hold of the tried and true weapon, the weapon of miracles."

Shalev's critical tone is not replicated in *The Jews are Coming*, for the comical televised genre never ends in an apothegm-like editorial. When talking about the series, creators Asaf Beisar and Natalie Marcus mentioned three key motivations: (1) "reclaiming biblical texts," (2) comedy with social critique, and (3) history as therapy.[50] Their first aim was to rescue the text from contemporary Orthodox readers who believe secularists cannot access the texts. The second role they took on themselves is that of the Jesters. Fittingly, the screenwriters did include a few silly sketches with no critical aims but did not include sketches with a sharp message but no entertainment value. The familiarity of the viewers with biblical realia and their conflicting emotions towards the bible nurtured the show's comical and critical ends. Marcus even coined the name "*muakaton*" for sketches which aim at being simultaneously disturbing and hilarious.[51]

Televising biblical sources was not motivated only by theatrical considerations, it was conceived of as a therapeutic endeavour. Marcus coupled this pathos-loaded argument with ambivalent and ironic hyperbole: "it's like going to a psychologist to talk about how our parents ruined our life." The

49   Shalev, *Tanach Achshav*, 119.
50   Joshua David Holo, "Natalie Marcus and Asaf Beiser: Humor Across the Divide," mp3, accessed April 29, 2019, https://collegecommons.huc.edu/bully_pulpit/natalie-marcus-asaf-beiser.
51   "*Muakaton*" is a blend word formed from *Muaka* "distress" and *Maarchon* "skit."

patriarchs, being "collective parents" are charged with "messing up" the Jewish people, and the show gives vent to these emotions.[52]

These three contradictory motivations pose a hermeneutical conundrum. "reclaiming" is moderate in orientation. "The jester" corresponds with radical hermeneutics for his love of play and hidden value claims. Finally, "therapy" conforms with critical hermeneutics with its recipe for redemption. Careful consideration reveals playful critique to be more dominant than the other two motivations.[53] No single contesting ideology such as feminism, democracy, or humanism, takes over the interpretive game, even though these are all values the screenwriters hold. I would add that while the screenwriters referred to themselves as jesters, *leitsanim,* the televised work functions perhaps more like the traditional *Badhan*.[54]

The Korah rebellion demythologizes the scriptures, but unlike Shalev's reading mere profanation of the sacred does not exhaust the message. In this skit, which is worth quoting extensively, Moses, an exhausted leader, is also carrying the burden of the middle manager suffering from a capricious super-manager – a God – no one but Moses can hear:

> "[Moses] What now?[55]
>
> [Korah] No, we're resting now.
>
> [Moses] Yes, but I'm the leader and want to keep going, so let's keep going, okay?
>
> [Korah] Who decided that you're the leader?
>
> [Moses] God decided that I'm the leader.
>
> [Korah] Maybe God will decide that I'm the leader?
>
> [Moses] If you speak with God and that's what he decides … That's fine, I totally accept it.
>
> [Korah] How can I speak with him?

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52   Marcus discusses *The Jews are Coming*, interview by Netta Schramm, phone, October 23, 2018.

53   Reconstructing translation norms from extra-textual sources is tricky. The translated texts are more telling of applies translation norms. Toury, "Norms in Translation," 206–7.

54   Historical records show that the *Badhan*'s function included merry-making with moralist aspects. Therefore, "only people with some learning took to the calling of *badkhn"* E. Lifschutz, "Merrymakers and Jesters Among Jews," *Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science* 7 (January 1952): 43–83, here 49. See also Tsafi Sebba-Elran, "The Intertextual Jewish Joke at the Turn of the Twentieth Century and the Poetics of a National Renewal," *HUMOR* 31, no. 4 (September 25, 2018): 603–621.

55   Yoav Gross, "The Jews are Coming" (Israel: IBA Channel 1, March 4, 2016), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9D1eztTwk8.

[Moses] You can't speak with him.

[Korah] So only you can speak with him—what a great job you found yourself, Moses!"

Aaron is the opportunist, who just as in the sin of golden calf chooses again to side with the people and not with God.[56] The people of Israel he sides with, are an infantile mob.

"[Aaron] What's this, fellows? Have you gone totally out of your minds? Let me remind you, this man has been leading us in the wilderness for 20 years now. So what? Just because a young and charismatic leader arrived here, wearing an immaculate robe,[57] someone who could be a better leader than him, now you want to replace him?

[Mob] Yes! Yes!!

[...]

[Aaron] So you [addressing Korah] need to be very sure that everyone here, yes, all the people are standing behind you. You're all with him, aren't you?

[Mob] Yes! Yes! Yes!

[Aaron] Fine – the people have spoken."

Korah is the young populist leader promising easy promises with no real knowledge of what governance takes.

"[Mob] Korah! Korah! Korah!

Speech! Speech! Speech! Speech! Speech! Speech!

[Korah] Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you.

Friends, we have come a long way. And the truth is that I have a few ideas for the rest of our trek through the wilderness. But, in two words: 'Casual Monday.'"[58]

This reading of the biblical texts plays with Sartre's existentialist logic: "Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn."[59] Korah with his carefree vanity is the existentialist creating his code of fluff while Moses, bearer of a theistic logic, is a tragic and forlorn figure. For God exists, and is the sovereign, but is also capricious:

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56   Ex 32.21.
57   Hebrew: *Tallit sh'kula tehelet*, a colloquial expression with midrashic origin. Numbers Rabbah 18.3.
58   "Speech" and "Casual Monday" were spoken in English in the original.
59   Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism* (London: Methuen, 1948), 34. Marcus acknowledged a Sartre allusion in the Abraham skits. *Bar Siach #36 Natalie Marcus talks.*

"[Korah] Ask God – that's the idea.

[Moses] You still haven't noticed this recurring mechanism, that every time I ask God about something 3,000 people die? Haven't you noticed that?

[Mob] Ask God! Ask God!

[Moses] I won't ask him, I won't ask him, I don't want to ask him.

[Korah] He won't ask him. Suddenly he's become a coward. What happened, are you chicken?

[Moses] No problem.

[Announcer] 'And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses and all the people that were with Korah …'

[Aaron] I really liked the idea of Casual Monday—I'm just saying …"

Moses breaks down and no longer protects the people who continuously nag him. In the next scene, a narrator reads out the biblical verse and shows Moses and Aaron throwing dead bodies into a pit. Korah is not the bearer of democracy; he has no values to campaign for. God is not Justice, and Moses breaks down and succumbs to the mob, knowing his choice to be vindictive. This zero-sum game rejects both moderate and critical readings; it breaks with Dworkin's author's intent and presents no ideological counter system. The screenwriters do not think their reading *could* be the right reading nor that it *should* be.

The Korah reading in *The Jews are Coming* is an ephemeral *derashah;* a dramatic sermon. It re-values or transvalues the philosophical substrates of the present by diachronically imposing them onto the past. The show submits to a position of literary and cultural inferiority vis-à-vis the canon. This reduces power struggles between source and adaptation and allows for a sassy portrayal of biblical heroes and dramas. Most importantly, it is a playful translation, never to be taken, even by the creators themselves, too seriously.

6.   Conclusion

Comparing different readings of the Korah rebellion exposes the shift in hermeneutical attitudes in reading canonical texts. Even today the canon yields to new hermeneutical agendas and the next pages in the midrashic tradition are being written – or filmed. If a translation only paraphrases in the technical sense, the claim that *Yaldei Yisrael Kodesh* and *The Jews are Coming* are translations is problematic. However, new hermeneutical toolkits allow any

reading to qualify as a work of translation, or as the act of *darshanut* if it (1) negotiates with canonical sources and is (2) steeped in contemporary agendas. Critical hermeneutics is found lacking, for negotiation is supplanted by the subordination of canon to a critical theory. Translation in the radical form of *The Jews are Coming* playfully traverses the past and present value systems and only inadvertently conveys an ephemeral alternative to contemporary audiences.

Translating Jewish Cemeteries in Morocco

by Cory Driver

Abstract

This paper addresses issues of translating both words and rituals as Muslim cemetery keepers care for Jewish graves and recite traditional prayers for the dead in Morocco. Several issues of translation must be dealt with while considering these rare and disappearing practices. The first issue to be discussed is the translation of Hebrew inscriptions into French by cemetery keepers. One cemetery keeper in Meknes has tried to compile an exhaustive index of the names and dates represented on the gravestones under her care. The Muslim guard of the Jewish cemetery in Sefrou, on the other hand, has somewhat famously told visitors differing stories about his ability and willingness to pray the *Kaddish* over the graves of emigrated relatives who cannot return to mark an anniversary death. These practices provide the context for considering how the act of Muslims caring for Jewish graves creates linguistic and ritual translations of traditional Jewish ancestor care.

1.   Introduction

This paper seeks to provide thick descriptions of translation practices conducted by Muslim guards at Jewish cemeteries in Morocco with an eye toward describing their reasons for and outcomes of such practices.[1] In Morocco, Muslim keepers of Jewish cemeteries seek to preserve the country's religious and multi-ethnic history by means of recarving Hebrew language inscriptions on Jewish graves. Because of the wear on tombstones as well as the differing levels of familiarity among the cemetery custodians with Hebrew names and block script, this task is not always straight-forward. Moreover, as cemetery keepers occasionally pray Jewish prayers in Hebrew that they do not fully

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[1]   This article springs and adapts from interviews and research that underly Cory Driver, *Muslim Custodians of Jewish Spaces in Morocco: Drinking the Milk of Trust* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

understand at the graves of their charges, questions about efficacy of translation of language and practice become pertinent.

I conducted this research in cemeteries because they are a material space where mourners and caretakers address issues of nostalgia, friendship, loss, ritual responsibility, authenticity, and authority. Even though the translation acts and motives of translators are my main concerns, the materiality of the graveyards remians vitally important to the translation, which enables and elicits the translations at all.

The Muslims translating Jewish words and rituals in Moroccan Jewish cemeteries are a vital link between now-vanished Jewish life in almost completely abandoned centers of Jewish settlement in Morocco, and the Moroccan Jewish diaspora in Europe, Israel and North America. The Muslim cemetery keepers stood out from their communities because of their unique abilities to perform Jewish languages and Jewish prayers.[2] The re-engraving of Hebrew inscriptions on graves and the recitation of Jewish prayers by Muslims are not uncomplicated and require both translations across languages and across cultural-religious boundaries. This work addresses that flow of language and ritual across religious boundaries by focusing on Muslim cemetery keepers' abilities to preserve the physical and linguistic remnants of Jewish religious communities at a place where the margins of religious language and practice are porous.

2.   Cemetery Importance and Saint Veneration in Morocco

While it is important to note that Jewish saintly figures and their tombs are and have been venerated across the world,[3] the intensity and formality of devotion to saints and expectation that the deceased would actively intervene in human affairs in Morocco has long been a special focus of Moroccan

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[2]   For more on unusual persons shaping their communities in Morocco, cf. Vincent Crapanzano, *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[3]   Erica T. Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Heath Lowry, *In the Footsteps of the Ottomans: A Search for Sacred Spaces and Architectural Monuments in Northern Greece* (Istanbul: Bahcesehir University Press, 2009); Josef W. Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Warren Miller, *Jewish Cemeteries, Synagogues and Monuments in Slovenia* (Washington, D.C.: United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, 2005).

Jewish scholarship.[4] For his book *Saint Veneration Among the Jews in Morocco*, Issachar Ben-Ami interviewed Moroccan Israelis about the saints they continued to venerate after emigrating, and about the saints whose tombs they had visited before their emigration.[5] Yoram Bilu documented the Moroccan-Israeli devotees of Moroccan holy men who witness manifestations of the saints through visions and dreams.[6] Both of these studies were conducted in Israel with Moroccan Israelis, rather than with the few Jews still living in Morocco, or with Moroccan Muslims.

Moroccan Jews who demonstrated spiritual power (*baraka*) to heal disease or teleport across vast distances instantly, were recognized as saints, usually after their death. On the yearly anniversary of the saint's death, a *hillulah* (pilgrimage) to his or her – Ben-Ami identified over twenty female saints, and I have documented others – tomb is undertaken. The saint is frequently beseeched to intervene with God for the devotees all year. The *hillulah* is the most effective and auspicious time to ask for help. This time of spiritual potency contains the highest likelihood that requests carried to God by a particular saint will be granted. Many saints were recognized prior to their deaths. Living saints were treasured because it was their power to miraculously protect the Jewish community from murderous raids or pogroms. Most *mellahs*

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[4]   For just a few of the many works on Jewish Moroccan Sainthood, cf. Oren Kosansky, "The Real Morocco Itself: Jewish Saint Pilgrimage, Hybridity, and the Idea of the Moroccan Nation," in *Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa*, eds. Emily Gottreich and Daniel Schroeter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 341–360; Michael Laskier, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century: The Jews of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); André Levy, "To Morocco and Back: Tourism and Pilgrimage among Moroccan-Born Israelis," in *Grasping Land: Space and Place in Contemporary Israeli Discourse and Experience*, eds. Eyal Ben-Ari and Yoram Bilu (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); Aomar Boum, *Memories of Absence: How Muslims Remember Jews in Morocco* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); Henry Munson Jr., "Muslim and Jew in Morocco: Reflections on the Distinction between Belief and Behavior," in *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner. Poznan Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities*, eds. John A. Hall and Ian Jarive (Leiden: Brill,1996), 357–379; Norman Stillman, "Saddiq and Marabout in Morocco," in *Jews among Muslims: Communities in the Precolonial Middle East*, eds. Shlomo Deshen and Walter Zenner (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 121–130; Sharon Vance, *The Martyrdom of a Moroccan Jewish Saint* (Boston: Brill, 2011).

[5]   Issachar Ben-Ami, *Saint Veneration Among the Jews of Morocco* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998).

[6]   Yoram Bilu, *The Saints' Impresarios: Dreamers, Healers, and Holy Men in Israel's Urban Periphery* (Brighton, Mass.: Academic Studies Press, 2010).

(Jewish quarters) in Morocco had a patron saint who earned the position by saving the residents from destruction by a plague or a rioting Muslim crowd.

Muslims' interactions with Jewish saints were not always to be on the receiving end of their wrath. Ben-Ami helpfully points out that at least one hundred twenty-six Jewish saints were venerated by Muslims in addition to their Jewish devotees.[7] This is due to the saint's healing powers that do not seem to be constrained by ethno-religious boundaries. In Morocco efficacy in providing spiritual blessing is simply more important than whether one is Muslim or Jewish.[8] Muslims venerating saints is well attested to across the Islamic world.[9] It is only relatively recently that fundamentalist pushback against saint veneration in Islam has gained any traction.[10] What seems to be novel and unique to Morocco is Muslim devotion at the tombs of Jewish saints. Living saints may have been patronized by anyone in need of help, but in my research in Egypt, Israel, Uzbekistan, Turkey and India, I have yet to hear of Muslims frequenting the tombs of Jewish saints. However, this "borrowing" of other religions' saints only occurs one way. Muslims request blessings from Jewish saints, but the tiny Moroccan Jewish community would never seek blessings from a Muslim saint.[11]

[7]   Ben-Ami, *Saint Veneration*, 131. This number dates back to 1998.
[8]   For an interesting example of Muslim, Christian and Hindu women seeking blessings and healings from a living Muslim Sufi saint, cf. Joyce Flueckiger, *In Amma's Healing Room: Gender and Vernacular Islam in South India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).
[9]   Cf. Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Gerald Elmore, *Islamic Sainthood in the Fullness of Time: Ibn al-Arabi's Book of the Fabulous Gryphon* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Valerie Hoffman, "Muslim Women, Sainthood and the Legend of Sayyida Nafisa," in *Women Saints in World Religions*, ed. John Stratton Hawley (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 127–143; John Renard, *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment and Servanthood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Christopher Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyara and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt* (Boston: Brill, 1999).
[10] David Commins, "From Wahhabi to Salafi," in *Saudi Arabia in Transition: Insights on Social, Political, Economic and Religious Change,* eds. Bernard Haykel, Thomas Hegghammer, and Stéphanie Lacroix (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2015), 151–166, here 153; John Iskander, "Saint," in *Encyclopedia of Islam,* ed. Juan Eduardo Campo (New York: Facts of File, 2009), 598–600, here 599.
[11] I am conscious of the assertion that Jews venerated Muslim saints, cf. Louis Voinot, *Pèlerinages judéo-musulmans du Maroc* (Paris: Larose, 1948). Moroccan Jews have venerated Muslim saints in the past, but I have found no evidence of this in my contemporary research. On the contrary, I heard ubiquitous assertions from Moroccan Jews that such a thing would never happen.

Muslim intimacy with the tombs of Jewish saints has shaped the material reality as well as ritual practice, especially since the mass-emigration of the Moroccan Jewish community. Ben-Ami's interviewees described the humble tombs of Jewish saints and the large, ornate tombs of their Muslim counterparts.[12] This distinction has largely disappeared in the years since Ben-Ami's interlocutors emigrated. Jewish heritage tours and pilgrimages necessitate larger facilities to host the massive number of visitors during the *hillulah*. The massive crowds (in some instances for the most popular saints) are a stark contrast to pre-emigration trickle of a few people from surrounding villages visiting only sporadically during the year. Moreover, the small, remaining Jewish communities in Morocco regularly pay for aggrandizement of family tombs.

In addition, building small hotels near the graves, Moroccan cemetery guards also enlarge the saints' tomb on their own accord and at their own cost, albeit with permission of the responsible Jewish communities. A caretaker told me that she wanted pilgrims to have something wonderful to behold, so that they will return and bring more pilgrims (and more money). To that end, she built not only walls and a roof around the saint's grave to protect it from the elements, but she also received permission from the Jewish authority of Marrakech for the protection of graves in her region to construct an adjoining prayer hall with ark, bimah, and stained glass.

Muslims guards do not just change the physical settings in Jewish cemeteries, but they also translate ritual practices into the local ritual vernacular. Ben-Ami pointed out that Muslims use colored candles at the *moussems* (pilgrimages) to their saints[13] but devotees of Jewish saints always used white candles to mark their devotion. I have observed this to be true, generally. At the *hillulah* of Rabbi Isaac Abu Hatsera (murdered in 1912), uncle of Rabbi Israel Abu Hatsera (1889–1984), the Baba Sali (lit. the "Praying Father"), however, visiting Israelis were buying white *and* colored candles sold by the Muslim guards. The Moroccan Jews only used the white candles. The Israeli pilgrims were sufficiently deracinated from their ancestors' traditions that they purchased either kind of candle, not the knowing the historical difference. The Muslim

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[12] Ben-Ami, *Saint Veneration* 147–170.
[13] Ben-Ami, *Saint Veneration* 163, 170.

guards simply sold the visiting Jewish pilgrims all the candles that they had left over, both from previous *hillulahs* and *moussems*.

The translations of language and tradition of saint veneration rituals have flowed back and forth between Muslim and Jewish Moroccans for centuries. Similar trends of westward travel from Southwest Asia led to the establishment of saint veneration in both traditions. While Sufi saints spread interpretive principles of Islamic law from eastward to Morocco, 16th-century rabbis traveled from Safed to collect funds for the support of Jews living in the Land, spreading Kabbalah.[14] Several Muslim and Jewish travelers to Morocco demonstrated miraculous powers and upon their deaths during their sojourns, they were recognized as saints. These Muslim and Jewish saints helped link religious thought and practices in Morocco with their respective centers farther east in the Muslim and Jewish world. This shared veneration continued through the rise of the Alaouite dynasty in the 17th century, the colonial period and post-colonial national self-definition until today. Muslims and Jews have been collaborating and influencing the other's funerary practices for centuries, and this pattern continues. The radical change comes from the mass-emigration of Jews such that Jewish cemeteries and saints' tombs are now under the direct supervision and daily control of Muslims rather than Jews. Muslims now shape and control the language and ritual of Jewish cemeteries and saint veneration without direct input from Jews for long stretches of time.

3.   Reading and Writing Hebrew Inscriptions in Meknes

While entering the *New Cemetery* of Meknes, Leila, the cemetery keeper, met me at the gate.[15] We greeted each other in the normal manner of strangers, but she seemed curious to know who I was, slightly dubious of my intentions. When I told her that I would guiding students in my class on a field trip to the cemetery the next day, and I wanted to refresh my memory of the notable graves and make sure that it was permissible to visit, she noticeably relaxed.

Leila plunged into a small building which serves as her domicile as well as a commercial kitchen from which she serves tea and snacks to large tour

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[14]   Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1998); Harvey Goldberg, "The Zohar in Southern Morocco: A Study in the Ethnography of Texts," in *History of Religions* 29, no. 3 (2000): 233–258.

[15]   I have changed the names and identifying details of all people represented in this work to give them some measure of privacy.

groups. When she emerged, she was carrying a large graph paper notebook. She proudly boasted, "I am the best cemetery keeper in all of Morocco. See how I have numbered all the graves and written down all the names, so that when Jews visit, I can show them exactly where their relatives' graves are?"

Her notebook was divided into two sections: one section featured pages of detailed cemetery maps; the other resembled a phonebook with alphabetical names, written in French. Many of the graves have inscriptions in Hebrew and French, but for several Leila has transliterated the Hebrew-only inscription into French for her notebook. She had indexed the graves both by name, as well as by location. She added, "I learned Hebrew while I worked (as a domestic helper, C.D.) in the home of a Jewish couple. When they were about to leave for Israel (to emigrate, C.D.), they asked me to come take care of the graves. I've been here for sixteen years now." In further conversation I learned that her selection had been on behalf of not just the couple for whom she worked, but that the remaining Jewish community in Meknes had agreed that she should be taught sufficient Hebrew to recognize the names on the graves and give orders to craftspeople when the inscriptions needed to be recurved due to erosion or vandalism.

I thanked Leila for her dedication to preserving the material remnant of the Jewish community, and, curious, I asked if we could take a walking tour of the cemetery in order to learn what she knew about the graveyard. She was delighted by the opportunity to showcase her knowledge of Hebrew.

As we walked, she asked if I wanted her to teach me how Jews pray for their dead. Wanting to know what she would say, I agreed, but then I pulled my kippah out of my back pocket she saw my head covering, she said in Moroccan Dialectal Arabic, "*Baqi ʿarifti* (oh), you already (or still) know." I pressed her to teach me what she knew anyway. She recited the opening lines of the mourners *Kaddish*, traditionally said by mourners at the grave of their beloved departed. I then asked if she would feel comfortable teaching a few words of *Kaddish* to students the next day as well. Leila paused for a moment and then she asked if the students were *ajnib* (foreigners) or Moroccans. I told her that the class was a mix of both. She happily exclaimed that the next day would be a big day (*nhar kbir*) when she could demonstrate to both Moroccans and foreigners that she, as a Moroccan Muslim woman, could preserve the carvings *and* ritual prayers.

As we continued to walk Leila stopped by an overgrown section of the cemetery and pealed back some dried brush to reveal a barely legible carving on the side of a grave. She asked if I could read the inscription to her. Despite the ravages of time, I read the name and some of the formulaic elements. She seemed impressed and then asked me to read the inscription on the grave that was behind the one I had just read. As I stepped gingerly around the graves as well as thorny plants that had grown up around the graves, Leila took out her notebook and flipped to the page that was corresponding to the location where we stood on her hand-drawn map. The carving was too worn for me to read the full name, but I told her what I thought it said. She turned the notebook to me and showed me as she placed a tick mark next to one of three possible permutations of the family name that she had already recorded. She explained that though she could read most inscriptions and had prayers memorized, she still relied on cemetery visitors who could read Hebrew to help her decipher the names of the graves in the sections of the cemetery that were older, more eroded, and which received fewer visitors who would identify the deceased as family.

Leila told that there is tremendous pressure from the government to clean up and reengrave all the gravestones to make everything look perfect for tourists and pilgrims. She has resisted this pressure because she does not want to have the wrong name carved on a tomb. Other cemetery keepers have much more readily succumbed to the pressure, and cemetery "restoration" efforts, especially in Marrakech, have resulted in the desecration of graves and complete removal of any trace of identifying inscriptions on graves by workmen whose chief aim, it seems, was to provide uniformly flat surfaces which were then painted over with whitewash. Leila was horrified by pictures I showed her of the cemetery "preservation" projects I visited in other cities. She said that only when the vast majority of visitors agreed on what an inscription should say did she order it to be re-engraved.

The authority of cemetery guards to literally change or preserve what names are on graves is stunning. Facility in Hebrew varies by Muslim cemetery keeper. At most, there are a couple hundred Moroccan Muslims with some knowledge of Hebrew, which vary from only recognizing a few letters to being able to read and speak fluently. Leila is a benevolent presence in the Meknes cemetery and resists pressure to make the graves uniformly anonymous. Not all cemetery keepers go to such lengths to preserve unique Hebrew inscriptions over aesthetic uniformity.

4.   Translating Language and Ritual in Sefrou

Sefrou holds a special place in the hearts of anthropologists.[16] Cognizant of the decades of anthropological and sociological research conducted in Sefrou, I was concerned about the reception I would find in Sefrou, which has been the subject of anthropological research more frequently than many Sefriwis appreciated. As Paul Hymen's image of a man emphatically motioning that he did not wish to be the subject of a photo (on the cover of Rabinow's 1977 book) makes abundantly clear, anthropologists have frequently neglected the desires of their subjects. Unlike my research elsewhere, many doors, and mouths, shut when my foreignness was noticed.

One telling episode occurred while I was walking around the *mellah* of Sefrou, and saw an elderly woman using a small axe to remove a carving from the lintel above her door. The intricately carved door frame featured two stars of David with an ornate border around them. The exquisite piece was fitted together without nails. Horrified at her actions, I asked the woman why she was destroying something so beautiful. She told me that she was getting rid of "old, Jewish things" so that her house could be "Muslim."[17] I asked her if I could remove and take the piece that she wished removed. (Her hacking away at the carving with an axe was obviously severely taxing her elderly body.) Without turning to see my blue eyes that mark me as a foreigner, she agreed, seizing the opportunity to be rid of the mark of Jewish former residence, and more importantly, to have someone else finish her difficult physical labor.

At that moment, however, a neighbor approached and, assuming that I did not speak Darija, said, "This is one of those foreigners who comes to write about us, and you are going to give him that wood? You should charge him a lot of money!" The old woman looked at me, noticing that I was a foreigner.

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[16]   Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed, Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Paul Rabinow, *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Lawrence Rosen, *The Anthropology of Justice: Law as Culture in Islamic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Susan Slyomovics, "Introduction to Clifford Geertz in Morocco: 'Why Sefrou? Why Anthropology? Why me?'," in *The Journal of North African Studies* 14, no. 3–4 (2009): 317–325, here 317–318; Clifford Geertz, Hildred Geertz, and Lawrence Rosen, *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society: Three Essays in Cultural Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 8.

[17]   The six-pointed star has a long tradition of use by both Muslims and Jews in Morocco, to the extent that historic Moroccan coinage bore it, and it is found in traditional tilework in mosques and madrasahs at least back to the Merenid period. In this instance, however, the old woman was reacting against a symbol of Judaism, not against a Moroccan design.

She said that she would sell me the piece for 20,000 riyals. I did not have the 130 USD that it would have taken to buy the ornate door carving at that time. I watched sadly as she continued hacking it to splinters destined for the oven rather than let a foreign anthropologist complete her difficult task for free.

Twin factors of wanting to translate the house from a Jewish place to a Muslim place and disdain for foreigners who have taken advantage of the people of Sefrou for generations led to the destruction of a beautiful piece of Judaica. It is worth repeating that somehow, removing six-pointed stars would be sufficient to translate space. Non-linguistic symbols of Jewish presence needed to be removed from the old woman's home for its transformation into an authentically Muslim space. Even more important than speedy removal, however, was not missing an opportunity to show a foreigner that the people of Sefrou would not be exploited without remuneration.

5.   Translating and Praying Others' Prayers

After my sad experience in the *mellah*, I walked to the cemetery and to the tomb of Abba El Baz (1851–1938), the former chief Rabbi of Sefrou. Just as I was approaching the grave to say a few words to my beloved colleagues' ancestor, a voice called out: "*Ash kat-dir hena* (What are you [singular] doing here?)" The cemetery keeper, Hamid, is a big, older man who speaks gruffly. He invited me into the main building of the cemetery, which, like the one in Meknes, acts as a prayer place for Jewish visitors in addition to acting as the place for the keeper to take naps and drink tea out of the sun. In the hot summer Hamid spent his days in the prayer-place, except when he was chasing away vandals or guiding visitors. His most frequent task by far is calling out to embarrass men who climbed through a hole in the cemetery wall to use the graveyard as a toilet.

Hamid treated me to an interesting, albeit inaccurate, retelling of the history of the Sefrou Jewish community. He told me that the refugees from the Spanish expulsion arrived in Sefrou around 1800 CE. I interrupted to point out that the Spanish exiles arrived much earlier than two hundred years prior. He gave me an indifferent shrug and volunteered that maybe there were Jews present earlier, due to the sugar trade. He then discussed Sabbath practices, such as not smoking, and he emphasized the importance of ritually washing hands after leaving the cemetery. He then winked and noted that *mahia* (a

local liquor) drinking was a frequent pleasure of the Jews of Sefrou, and many of their Muslim friends. Hamid pointed out that in the mid-1960s, just before the Six-Day War, Sefrou was home to fifteen thousand Jews and two thousand Moroccans. Those numbers are wildly inaccurate, but there was an especially large Jewish community.[18] Hamid spoke of Jews and Moroccans, instead of Jews and Muslims who lived in Morocco.

Hamid then took me on a tour of the graveyard. The oldest grave that he had known of was from 1018 CE; he said *Miladi* (years) since the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. On these old graves, the inscriptions were quite worn. Hamid said that he was slowly re-carving and repainting the grave markers in Hebrew.

Hamid started to read lengthy grave inscriptions in Hebrew. He later told me that he reads the grave inscriptions and other Hebrew writing around town (though they are rapidly disappearing, like the door carving above), to maintain his reading skills. He said that he also had worked for a Jewish family – the Tobarys – at a gas station in town and they had taught him to read Hebrew when he was not pumping gas. When the last Jewish families were preparing to emigrate from Sefrou, they asked him to guard the cemetery, specifically because he knew how to read Hebrew. He could read the inscriptions and knew who was buried in which grave. Moreover, he could say *Kaddish* over the graves. This last statement, quite frankly, stunned me. For a small amount of money, Hamid was willing to say prayers himself in Hebrew over the graves of deceased Moroccan Jews, even though he himself is Muslim. Unlike Leila, who knew the prayer and was willing to help Jews say it, Hamid said the prayer himself.

6.   Translating Prayer and the Efficacy of Agents

From a Jewish Halakhic perspective, a Muslim reciting the *Kaddish* begs several questions about the ritual efficacy of prayers and identity of prayers.

In terms of Jewish law (*halakhah*), there is much wrong with Hamid saying *Kaddish*. Hamid is not Jewish. Hamid prays the prayer without a *minyan*. The *Kaddish* blesses God during suffering and seeks life and peace for all Israel. This prayer is a central feature of Jewish liturgy if a *minyan* is present, but

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18   Norman Stillman, *The Language and Culture of the Jews of Sefrou, Morocco: An Ethnolinguistic Study* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1988), 12–13.

in my admittedly atypical experience of conducting research in cemeteries, it is connected most often with rituals surrounding the experiences of death, burial and mourning.[19]

Hamid removed a sheet of paper from his utility vest and read the Hebrew prayer over the grave of his "friend," Abba El Baz. His pronunciation of the Hebrew was very Moroccan. He confessed that he did not understand all of what he was saying, but he knew he was saying an important Jewish prayer. He said that he was praying to accrue *baraka* (spiritual) power and/or blessing to help the Jews in the graves because their families did not come to say the prayers themselves.

For Hamid, the *Kaddish* was not a part of an extended liturgy. He told me, on the first occasion that we talked, that he prayed *Kaddish* often. On subsequent visits, he mentioned that he only prays a few times a year. The last time I spoke with him years after our first meeting, he acknowledged that he has only prayed it a few times. The differing responses over time notwithstanding, Hamid still has said *Kaddish*, albeit in a stand-alone non-*halakhically* correct way. It should be remembered though that reciting and meditating on the *Kaddish* outside of normative strictures of *halakhah* has long been a spiritually and emotionally effective act.[20]

Hamid's few clients rely on his pronunciation of *Kaddish* to fulfill their cultural obligations to offer prayers at the graves of their family members. Hamid's prayers place him, according to his clients, in the well-established role of a *shaliach* (agent), for doing a righteous act. According to *halakhah*, many *mitzvot* can be performed by a *shaliach*, even if the agent is not Jewish. Indeed, the first *shaliach* in the Bible is Abraham's servant. A *shaliach* may not fulfill a *mitzvah* for a patron if in so doing, other *halakhic* injunctions are violated, however. Thus, a lone non-Jew saying a prayer that requires a *minyan* at the grave of an unrelated Jew would not normally be considered efficacious in fulfilling the demands for filial piety.

I must return to the prayers that I have observed, however. Hamid demonstrated his skills in reading Hebrew. It seemed to me during our conversations that he truly cared about the people whose mortal remains he guarded. He

[19] Maurice Lamm, *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning* (New York: Jonathan David Publishers, 2000).

[20] Allen Ginsberg, "Kaddish," in *Kaddish and Other Poems* (New York: City Lights Publishers, 2001); Leon Wieseltier, *Kaddish* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

told me stories about the residents of some of the graves as we toured the cemetery, while using his finger to trace their names as he read the inscription that he had re-carved over the years. He rested his hand on their graves as he told me what the person had been like as a young woman, or how the person had fought with his brothers, or how another grave resident had been a cranky old lady.

Most importantly, the original printed and laminated *Kaddish* that he has since lost, stands out. The piece of paper did prove that someone had made some effort to send it to him in order to recite at an ancestor's grave. Hamid found the *Kaddish* online, word processed it and printed it out is incredibly unlikely. A Jewish visitor to the cemetery leaving it for him to find seems equally unlikely. The prayer was on a piece of paper, not part of a prayer book. It existed alone, deracinated from its normal liturgical context. It was perfectly suited for a stand–alone act of Jewish piety.

Like a prayer isolated from a prayer book, Hamid's act of praying was separate from its liturgical context, recited by a Muslim who offered prayers over his deceased friends and clients. On the other hand, the context of his *Kaddish* remains profoundly Jewish and communal. While Hamid fulfilled a true act of spiritual kindness (*hesed shel emet*) for the deceased on behalf of their relatives, he also performs acts of caring for his friends in his Jewish holy site. He stands at the literal center of Jewish life, death, and traditions in Morocco.

I have heard Hamid say *Kaddish* only twice over a period of several years. The first time he said it was at the grave of Abba El Baz. I had met him only a half hour earlier. The prayer was certainly occasioned by my visit of the cemetery. As I was coming to grips with Hamid's assertion that he prayed in Hebrew over the graves, we came to the grave of his friend and he started praying. The term "friend" must be understood loosely, as Abba El Baz died in 1938. Hamid was no older than 70 when I met him would never have met the Rabbi El Baz, whose grave is the closest to where Hamid takes his naps. The physical intimacy of their resting places, rather than lived friendship, has allowed for the "friendship" to develop. Hamid frequently patted the tomb as he passed it or even rested his arms and head on it, and sometimes held a one-sided conversation with Rabbi El Baz's tomb.

Hamid's praying was a performance for me to see at first. On subsequent trips, I have witnessed him pause during his cleaning to take a sheet out of his utility vest to silently mouth a few words, which are presumably a prayer of some sort.

The words on the paper have changed over the years. The writing was Hebrew at first, but I have also seen Arabic orthography that was transliterated Hebrew, as well as something transliterated into Latin characters that I did not recognize.

That Hamid does not completely understand the prayers that he says is important to him. The indeterminacy of what he prays allows him to view these prayers as spiritually beneficial to the deceased Jews for whom he is responsible without requiring him to confess or believe something that he, as a Muslim, cannot do in good conscience. In this, he is comfortably situated in a long line of Moroccans, both Muslims and Jews, for whom *baraka* transmission and venerating honored and beloved dead are more important than ethno-religious categories.

Praying transliterated Jewish prayers that he does not translate completely does not challenge Hamid's religious sensibility or change his religious identity. He draws a clear line separating himself from the community of his Jewish friends. But he is a crucial bridge for translations of language and ritual between communities. His social identity is thoroughly interwoven with his work in carving Hebrew characters and saying Hebrew-language prayers over Jewish graves. Hamid has defined his life by doing quasi-Jewish acts for Jews.

7.   Conclusions

Hebrew is not dead in Moroccan graveyards. It is not exactly alive either. Muslim Moroccans who were consciously selected and trained to be able to perform enough Hebrew to accomplish their tasks have adapted their skills to efforts not necessarily envisioned by their language instructors. Leila carefully transliterates and translates the inscriptions on graves into her notebook-index of the cemetery, but her Hebrew skills are insufficient to record the carvings of several of the graves. Hamid says prayers that he does not fully understand in order to fulfill others' felt obligations to their deceased relatives, as well as to show devotion to his "friends."

The goal shared between Muslims and Jews, it seems, is to honor the dead. But the limits of language and comprehensibility are useful to Hamid, who can plausibly deny understanding all of what he says while at the same time he markets his ability to say prayers for clients. The words of the prayers themselves, when pronounced, but untranslated are efficacious to pronounce blessings in Moroccan Jewish cemeteries.

Special Articles:
Translating the Bible and the Zohar

Tanakh Ram:
Translating the Hebrew Bible into Israeli

by Gitit Holzman and Ghil'ad Zuckermann

Abstract

The Ram Bible (Tanakh Ram) is a recently-published Bible edition printed in two columns: the right-hand column features the original biblical Hebrew text and the left-hand column features the translation of the Bible into a high-register literary Israeli (Reclaimed Hebrew). The Ram Bible edition has gained impressive academic and popular attention. This paper looks at differences between academics, teachers, students, media personalities and senior officials in the education system, regarding their attitude to the Ram Bible. Our study reveals that Bible teachers and students who make frequent use of this edition understand its contribution to comprehending the biblical language, stories, and ideas. Opponents of Ram Bible are typically administrators and theoretician scholars who advocate the importance of teaching the Bible but do not actually teach it themselves. We argue that the fundamental difference between biblical Hebrew and Israeli makes the Hebrew Bible incomprehensible to native Israeli speakers. We explain the advantages of employing tools such as the Ram Bible.

> Rabbah said: Even if one's parents have left him a Sefer Torah,
> yet it is proper that he should write one of his own.
> (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin Folio 21a)

1. Introduction

A unique Bible edition entitled Tanakh Ram was published in Israel in 2010. This edition is printed in two columns. The right-hand column (see the example below, featuring Genesis 1:1–3) features the Hebrew Bible in its original Masoretic text, and the left-hand column features the translation of the Bible into a high-register form of literary Reclaimed Hebrew (henceforth, Israeli)

by Abraham Ahuviya, an educator and Bible scholar who served as a senior official at the Israeli Education Ministry.[1] So far the Torah (Pentateuch) and some of the books of Prophets were published, while publication of the other books of Prophets as well *Ketuvim* (Scriptures) is due in the future.

Genesis 1:1–3	
Tanakh Ram	*Tanakh*
בְּתְחִלַּת הַבְּרִיאָה, כְּשֶׁבָּרָא אֱלוֹהִים אֶת הָעוֹלָם, וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה שׁוֹמֵמָה וְרֵיקָה, וְהָיָה חֹשֶׁךְ מֵעַל מֵי הַתְּהוֹם שֶׁכִּסוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ, וְרוּחַ אֱלוֹהִים הָיְתָה מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵיהֶם, אָמַר אֱלוֹהִים: "יִהְיֶה אוֹר!" וְהָיָה אוֹר.	בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ. וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם; וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי-אוֹר.

Ahuviya had explained the reasons for creating this translation in the preface to his edition, saying that as the biblical language is incomprehensible for Israeli speakers they cannot understand its meaning, thus a translation of biblical Hebrew into Israeli (our term) is required.[2] Ahuviya emphasized he had never intended to replace the Bible, but rather hoped to provide the readers with a useful tool that could enable them to understand its content and arouse their ambition to read the original text.[3]

2. Tanakh Ram: Students, Parents, Teachers, and the Israeli Ministry of Education

Tanakh Ram has received considerable public attention in Israel by the media, as well as by scholars and laypeople. By and large, the interested parties belong to two main groups:

1. teachers and students who make frequent use of this edition and thus acquire unmediated insight of its useful qualities, and

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[1]   Avraham Ahuvia, תנ״ך רם : הטקסט המקראי בעברית בת ימינו, כל פסוק ותרגומו מולו *Tanakh Ram: The Biblical Text in Modern Hebrew*, vol 1: Tora, edited by Rafi Moses. (Herzelia: Ram; Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot-Sifrey Hemed) 2010 (Israeli).

[2]   In keeping with this logic, we indicate the original language of numerous works quoted in the footnotes as "Israeli" rather than "Hebrew."

[3]   Ahuviya, *Tanakh Ram*, 9.

2. scholars, theoreticians, intellectuals, and government officials who discuss Tanakh Ram in order to express their doctrine that an Israeli version of the Bible is not necessary.

Members of the first group respond positively to Tanakh Ram, expressing authentic experiences, saying that using this edition turns the study of the Bible into an enjoyable and rewarding task. School teachers, pupils and parents express these views in the media and social networks. The fact that Tanakh Ram is a bestseller proves they literally put their money where their mouth is.

Tanakh Ram's widespread distribution is also apparent in the fact that officials at the Israeli Ministry of Education had to address numerous queries by teachers and pupils, asking formal approval to use this edition. The official response by the Ministry of Education was published on June 16, 2010 by Drora Halevi, who was at the time the supervisor of Bible instruction.[4] Halevi proclaimed that teachers could not expect pupils to purchase Tanakh Ram and added they were not allowed to use these books at school. The fact that the Ministry of Education had to form an official opinion regarding Tanakh Ram proves that it was gaining popularity, filling a troubling gap in Bible study. In February 2011, Zvi Zameret, the pedagogical secretariat chairman at the Ministry of Education, stated that "the Bible teaching situation is deteriorating alarmingly."[5] He described the situation as "an elimination of the Bible and the Bible teachers."[6] Zameret put the blame on major cuts of hours allocated to Bible study, as well as on the fact that pupils prefer to use Tanakh Ram, despite what he referred to as "an unequivocal order [to schools] not to use those books."[7] Zameret further cited Shimshon Shoshani, then Ministry of Education director-general, and stated that Shoshani had said (rhetorically): "Bring me principals [whose schools use Tanakh Ram] and we shall hang them in the city square."[8] It is quite alarming that three high-ranking officials at the Ministry of Education used a scapegoat, launching an attack on Abraham

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[4] Yairah Amit, *The Rise and Fall of the Bible's Empire in Israeli Education* (Kadima: Reches, 2010), 161 (Israeli).

[5] Or Kashti, "Ministry official calls Bible studies' decline a 'disaster of biblical proportions,'" *Haaretz*, February 24, 2011, accessed April 17, 2019, https://www.haaretz.com/1.5127158.

[6] Kashti, *Haaretz*.

[7] Kashti, *Haaretz*.

[8] Kashti, *Haaretz*.

Ahuviya's book, blaming this retired teacher's enterprise for the ongoing failure of Bible studies in Israel.

3.   Tanakh Ram - Academia Reaction

Tanakh Ram was discussed in the Israeli media, as well as at various academic conferences.[9] These discussions hosted leading academics and intellectuals, such as Yairah Amit, Professor of Biblical Studies and former coordinator of the training program for Bible teachers at Tel Aviv University, Fania Oz-Salzberger professor of History at the University of Haifa, Uzzi Ornan, Israeli linguist, a member of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, Yochi Brandes, acclaimed author and scholar, Ghil'ad Zuckermann as well as Zvi Zameret. All the speakers addressed the precarious state of Bible study in Israel. They agreed that the Bible could not be regarded as any other school subject as it is the cultural infrastructure of the Jewish people, as well as of large parts of the world's population. Most speakers considered Tanakh Ram as an obstacle, discouraging pupils from reading the original biblical language. However, Zuckermann argued that the usage of Tanakh Ram could actually help overcoming the prevalent alienation from the study of the Hebrew Bible, typical of Israeli pupils. What is the cause of the conflict between these views?

Tanakh Ram is a translation of the Bible into what Zuckermann calls a high-register Israeli. Its opponents regard such a translation as unnecessary, maintaining that biblical Hebrew is accessible to every Israeli child. This view has repeatedly been expressed by scholars and intellectuals: Aviezer Ravitzky, a prominent scholar of Jewish philosophy, compared the relation between biblical Hebrew and what we call Israeli to the relation between Classical Greek and Modern Greek. Ravitzky argued that whereas Greek was characterized by an unbridgeable gap between these two languages, Hebrew users do not face such a chasm. He wrote the following: "Modern Greek, for example, boasts many similarities to its ancestor, yet a speaker of the current language must

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[9]   Some of these conferences were (1) May 19, 2009: Bar-Ilan University, a symposium dedicated to Tanakh Ram and other translations of classical literature. (2) November 28, 2010: Oranim Academic College, a conference dedicated to Tanakh Ram and Bible teaching at Israeli schools. (3) November 30, 2011: Sderot Conference for Society at Sapir Academic College - session entitled "Bible Studies in Israel." (4) December 18, 2011: Zikhron Yaakov Public Library – a symposium dedicated to Tanakh Ram and cultural meaning of translations.

struggle to read ancient texts. The Modern Hebrew speaker, however, moves smoothly through the Bible."[10]

A similar view was expressed by Asa Kasher in a linguistic discussion:

"If you give an Israeli child a piece of Hebrew-engraved pottery thousands of years old, he would probably read the engraved writing without difficulty and would understand its content to some extent. This remarkable fact is held by many as conclusive evidence testifying to the unique qualities of Hebrew and to the difference between Hebrew and other languages."[11]

4. Linguists, biblical Hebrew, and Israeli

Scholars referring to biblical Hebrew and Israeli (Hebrew) as one language are often not linguists, as linguists are well aware of the considerable gap between the two. Chaim Rabin, former professor of Hebrew language at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, stated that the prevailing perception of the connection between the contemporary language and the language of the Bible was just an illusion.[12] Haiim B. Rosén, who won the Israel Prize for linguistics, argued already in 1956 that there was not a single Israeli child who would not feel total alienation towards the biblical language.[13] But these authoritative linguists did not share their insights with the general public. Rabin noted that he was afraid of the emotional damage the Israeli people might suffer once they realize that they do not actually speak the biblical language. He explained that in his opinion Israelis wanted to believe that they still were using the original ancient language. Rabin openly admitted that he had feared that the bond between the people and their tongue would grow weaker once they realized that they were not using the original biblical language.[14]

Rosén did not express this concern, but, similarly, explained the motives of those who did not admit that the biblical language is different from Israeli:

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[10]   Aviezer Ravitzky, *Religious and Secular Jews in Israel: A Kulturkampf?* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2000), 13–14.

[11]   Asa Kasher et al., "Ancient Hebrew and Contemporary Hebrew: The Same Language?: Discussion between Linguists." *Leshonenu* La'am 31, no. 4 (1980): 105–136, here 106 (Israeli).

[12]   Chaim Rabin, "What was the Revival of Hebrew Language," *Linguistic Studies. Collected Papers in Hebrew and Semitic Languages* (Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 1999), 359–76, here 376 (Israeli).

[13]   Haiim B. Rosén, *Our Hebrew: Its Nature from the point of view of Linguistic Methods* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1956) 123. (Israeli).

[14]   Rabin, *Revival*, 376.

"They fear that acknowledging the existence of Israeli Hebrew [...] will turn biblical vocabulary and modes to a subject that requires study, and will make access to biblical contents an issue that necessitates prior linguistic training."[15]

Rosén argued against ignoring that problem. He claimed that the bond to the Bible must be cultivated while overcoming a "holy lie,"[16] the lie that Israelis make daily use of biblical Hebrew. With time, many keen Israelis realized that the biblical Isaiah would have not been able to understand them and vice versa. However, it is common to hear an Israeli telling his/her foreign friends that s/he speaks Hebrew, the language of the Hebrew Bible.

Rosén's important point was put in writing more than sixty years ago. Yet, Israeli children are persistently told that the Hebrew Bible was written in their mother tongue. In other words, in Israeli primary schools, Hebrew and their Israeli mother tongue are axiomatically the very same. Therefore, one cannot expect that Israelis would easily embrace the notion that these two languages might be intrinsically different. We argue, however, that accepting this concept is an essential step for upgrading the Bible teaching in Israel.

5.   The Israeli Language

The mother tongue of most Israelis is not Hebrew, but rather a new language that ought to be called "Israeli." Israeli, somewhat misleadingly known as "Modern Hebrew," is a fascinating and multifaceted, fin-de-siècle 133 year-old Semito-European hybrid.[17] Its grammar is based simultaneously on "Sleeping Beauty" Hebrew and *máme loshn* Yiddish, the revivalists' mother tongue, as well as on a plethora of other languages spoken by the founders of Israeli, e. g. Polish, Russian, German, Arabic, and Judeo-Spanish ("Ladino").[18] Hebrew persisted as an important literary, cultural, and liturgical language over the centuries and greatly influenced Israeli. Israeli morphological forms and its basic vocabulary are mainly – albeit not exclusively – Semitic. On the other hand, the patterns of the language (phonetics, phonology, syntax, modes of discourse, semantics, associations, connotations) – not to say (as it is

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[15]   Rosén, *Hebrew*, 123.
[16]   Rosén, *Hebrew*, 124.
[17]   We consider Itamar Ben-Avi (1882–1943), Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's son, to be symbolically the first speaker of Israeli. Given that he began to speak at age of 4, in 1886, the Israeli language is 133 years old.
[18]   Zuckermann, *Israeli – A Beautiful Language* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2008), 46–47 (Israeli).

unquantifiable, unmeasurable) its genius, spirit, mindset, *Weltanschauung* – of the Israeli language are mostly European.[19] Thus, Israeli is a phoenix (Hebrew rising from the ashes) - cuckoo (Yiddish laying its eggs in another nest) cross, both Semitic and Indo-European. Both Hebrew and Yiddish act as its primary contributors, accompanied by an array of secondary contributors. Israeli is not only multi-layered and multi-registered, but also multi-sourced (draws from many different languages). The Zionist enterprise has consciously re-claimed an ancient language that fell asleep as a mother tongue in the 2nd cen-tury CE. 1750 years later it was brought back to life by charismatic political activists, such as Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858–1922), who resurrected it while using – often inadvertently, subconsciously – their own mother tongues.

In his 1957 book, *Hebrew – The Eternal Language*, Hebrew grammarian William Chomsky argued: "It may be safely assumed that there were always somewhere in the world, especially in Eretz Yisrael, individuals or even groups, who could and did employ the Hebrew language effectively in oral usage."[20]

But Chomsky – just like Haramati[21] – is misleading. It is true that, through-out its *literary* history, Hebrew was used as an occasional *lingua franca* in the Jewish diaspora. However, between the second and nineteenth centuries it was no one's mother tongue. William's son Noam Chomsky implies, the de-velopment of a literary language is very different from that of a fully-fledged native language.[22]

But there are many linguists who, though rejecting the "eternal spoken Hebrew mythology," still explain every linguistic feature in Israeli as if He-brew never died. For example, Goldenberg suggests that Israeli pronunciation originates from internal convergence and divergence within Hebrew.[23]

We wonder, however, how a literary "Sleeping Beauty" (i. e. as dead as a dodo as a spoken mother tongue) can be subject to the same *phonetic* and

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[19] Zuckermann, *Israeli,* 84–119.

[20] William Chomsky, *The Eternal Language* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1957), 218.

[21] Shlomo Haramati, *Living Hebrew throughout the Generations* (Rishon LeZion: Masada, 1992, Israeli). Shlomo Haramati, *Hebrew – A Spoken Language* (Tel Aviv: Misrad HaBitahon, 2000, Israeli).

[22] Ghilʿad Zuckermann, *Revivalistics, Cross-Fertilization and Wellbeing: Awakening Hebrew and Other Sleeping Beauty Languages* (New York: Oxford University Press, in print).

[23] Gideon Goldenberg, "Hebrew as a Living Semitic Language," in *Evolution and Renewal: Trends in the Development of the Hebrew Language*, ed. Joshua Blau (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1996), 148–190, here 151–158 (Israeli).

phonological processes (rather than analyses) as a mother tongue? We argue, rather, that the Israeli sound system continues the (strikingly similar) phonetics and phonology of Yiddish, the native language of almost all the fin-de-siècle revivalists. These revivalists very much wished to speak Hebrew, with Semitic grammar and pronunciation, like Arabs. However, they could not avoid the Ashkenazic sociolinguistic mindset – and consonants – arising from their European background.

The formation of Israeli was *not* the result of language contact between Hebrew and a prestigious, powerful superstratum – such as English in the case of Arabic, or Kurdish in the case of Neo-Aramaic. Rather, *ab initio*, Israeli had two primary contributors: Yiddish and Hebrew. Whereas Kurdish is a *superstratum* of Neo-Aramaic, Yiddish is a *primary contributor* to Israeli. The two cases are, therefore, not parallel.

It is intriguing, therefore, that too many Hebrew linguists force such a parallelism in their ipsedixitisms, turning a scholarly blind eye to the distinct language histories, failing to distinguish between the fundamental realms of linguistic typology and linguistic genetics.

Those considering Hebrew and Israeli as one and the same language often relate to Hebrew revival as a miraculous phenomenon. Shlomo Carmi studied this issue and reached the following conclusion: "An in-depth review of the research literature reveals that many refer to a miracle – a metaphysical and meta-historical category – a central significance in the process of resuscitating Hebrew."[24]

Evidently, this is due to the fact that no rational analysis can ever explain a process in which a dead language is revived, and the revived language is identical to the dead one. However, all who espouse these views fully understand that the settlement of the land of Israel by Jews throughout the 19th–20th centuries was a historical process, prolonged and complex, caused by multifold reasons, factors, and motivations. The same analysis is valid as to characterizing the way in which the Israeli language was formed.

As aforementioned, the Israeli public is misled to believe that fluency in Israeli enables one to understand biblical Hebrew. Yet, Israeli speakers are

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[24]   Shlomo Karmi, *One People One Language: The Revival of the Hebrew Language in an in an Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Ra'anana: Misrad Ha-Bitahon, 1997), 268 (Our translation from Israeli to English).

well aware of the fact that the biblical language includes obscure vocabulary. However, most Israeli Bible readers do not fathom that many common Israeli lexical items originating in the Bible bear entirely different meaning in biblical Hebrew.

Chaim Cohen, professor of Hebrew Language and Bible at the Ben Gurion University and a devoted disciple of Moshe Held (1924–1984), addressed this phenomenon. He explained that certain words in the Hebrew Bible are used in Israeli in a way that reflects a complete misinterpretation. Indeed, modern usage of biblical vocabulary is often based on a frequent, yet erroneous, interpretation of biblical Hebrew.[25] Cohen authored several studies confirming this point.[26] His careful analysis of the biblical vocabulary illustrated the extent to which the language of the Bible is incomprehensible to modern Israelis.[27] It seems that, by and large, Israelis believe that they understand the Bible, whereas actually their interpretation derives from their Israeli mother tongue, and thus is inadequate, invalid, and flawed. Eliezer Rubinstein wrote in this respect:

> "It is true that we are familiar with most biblical words. However, there is a huge difference in the way they are used. Frequently, speakers feel the difference and consult reference books in order to understand the text. But often we do not notice that there is a difference, and attribute to Biblical words that which is not in them, according to the way they are understood nowadays."[28]

Tanakh Ram is most useful in dealing with this problem. As it presents the biblical Hebrew text and its translation into Israeli side by side, the readers get the Israeli version of every Hebrew word, including those words that they would normally assume did not require explanation, as they are often used in Israeli.

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[25] Chaim Cohen, "More 'faux ami amis:' Meanings of Common Modern Hebrew Words that Originated by Mistake." *Mech'karim Belashon [Linguistic studies]* 11–12 (2008), 173–197, here 173 (Israeli).

[26] Cf. Cohen, "More 'faux ami amis,'" 195–196.

[27] Cf. Ghil'ad Zuckermann and Gitit Holzman, "Let my People Know!: Towards a Revolution in the Teaching of the Hebrew Bible," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 226 (2014) (special issue Jewish Language Contact) 57–82, here 70–73.

[28] Kasher et al., *Ancient Hebrew*, 119–120 (Our translation from Israeli to English).

Tanakh Ram is not flawless, as its critics meticulously observe.[29] Indeed, any cultural project conducted by a single person cannot fully meet the expectations of a wide and varied public. Nevertheless, as it transmits the biblical language to the linguistic sphere prevailing in 21st-century Israel, it provides Israelis with a significant key for unsealing their ancient treasures.

6.   Bible Teaching in Israel in the 21st Century

As noted above, linguists are well aware of the essential gap between Hebrew and Israeli, whilst many who are not professional linguists continue to ignore it. We explained that the public response to Tanakh Ram consists of two main categories:

A. Comments expressed by people who make frequent use of the book and therefore reflect a reliable and direct impression of its characteristics;
B. Opinions voiced by people who do not use the book regularly, but discuss it in order to express a fundamental position against any modern translation of the Bible.

We shall now further particularize this distinction, focusing on Bible teaching in Israel in the 21st century. People expressing the first view, mainly Bible teachers and pupils, realize Tanakh Ram's considerable contribution to understanding the language of the Bible, its themes and concepts. By and large, opponents to the endorsement of Tanakh Ram are those advocating the importance of teaching the Hebrew Bible but do not actually teach it themselves.

Yairah Amit, professor of Biblical Studies and former teacher and coordinator of the training program for teachers of the Bible at the School of Education at Tel Aviv University, examined why Israeli pupils showed no interest in studying Bible and indeed had hardly any knowledge of the Bible.[30] Amit criticized the thesis presented in our previous study, namely that the Bible is written in language that ought to be considered foreign to native Israeli speakers, and that fact must be taken into consideration when teaching the Hebrew Bible to Israelis.[31]

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[29]   Lea Mazor, "On translating Bible to Contemporary Hebrew," *Beit Mikra, Journal for the Study of the Bible and Its World* 54, no. 1 (2009) 126–166.
[30]   Yairah Amit, "Fun Bible," *Gilui-Daat* 2 (2012): 171–176 (Israeli).
[31]   Zuckermann and Holzman, "Let my People Know," 66–74.

That said, Amit did not ignore the linguistic difficulty inherent in Israelis reading the Bible. Nevertheless, in her opinion the linguistic gap between biblical Hebrew and Israeli should not be openly discussed with school children. She maintained that as pupils tend to avoid studying foreign languages, once told that the Bible was written in a foreign language, they would refrain from studying it altogether.[32]

Amit offered another tactic to address this difficulty: teaching biblical Hebrew at kindergarten, "at the age at which languages are more easily assimilated."[33] In other words, Amit actually acknowledged that the biblical language is foreign but preferred to conceal this significant factor from Israeli students. She relied on the pretext that labeling of the language as foreign would intimidate students. Regardless, however, native Israeli speakers do feel that the biblical language is incomprehensible. They are reluctant to study the Bible once they realize that they are required to accomplish a task they were never equipped for.

As mentioned, Amit proposed transferring the study of the biblical language to a young age, thus adopting a well-known linguistic insight, according to which languages are acquired intuitively and optimally at these ages. In her words lies a revolutionary proposal: the transformation of biblical Hebrew, which is a foreign language for Israeli speakers, into another mother tongue for Israeli children. But the very same method was already tested by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and the other Hebrew language revivalists. And the outcome of their efforts was Israeli, a stratified and multi-parental language. Just like any other revival language, Israeli is a hybrid *ab initio*.[34]

Amit discussed several problems causing Bible to be "a difficult and complex profession for teaching."[35] One of these problems is the biblical language:

> "The language of the Bible has become a foreign language for learners. The different syntax and vocabulary, some of which are not in use today, create alienation and distance [...] Tanakh Ram was published recently [...] intending to serve as a mediator between Modern Hebrew and Biblical Hebrew. The very fact of its publication

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[32]   Amit, "Fun Bible," 172 (Our translation from Israeli to English).

[33]   Amit, "Fun Bible," 172.

[34]   Cf. Ghilʿad Zuckermann, "Hybridity versus Revivability: Multiple Causation, Forms and Patterns," *Journal of Language Contact Varia* 2 (2009) 40–67.

[35]   Amit, *Rise and Fall,* 11 (Our translation from Israeli to English).

serves as a clear proof of the growing distance from Biblical language and the ne-
cessity of a mediation."[36]

Amit stated that "Bible teaching in Israeli school is a complete failure."[37] She
is undoubtedly right, hence acknowledging the fact that biblical language is a
foreign language for Israeli speakers is a necessary condition to start coping
with this issue.

Scholars Asher Shkedi and Iris Yaniv conducted lengthy and in-depth in-
terviews with Bible teachers in Israel. Shkedi listed several difficulties report-
ed by teachers and concluded that teachers believed that the biblical language
was the greatest difficulty facing their students.[38] Yaniv's dissertation dis-
cussed the crisis in Bible teaching in Israel.[39] She enumerated various reasons
causing this crisis, pointing among others at the obscure biblical language.
School teachers quoted in this dissertation explain that the difficulties met by
pupils stem from the fact the Bible is actually written in a foreign language,
whereas the pupils are told that it was written in their mother tongue. Thus,
the students become extremely frustrated, not being able to understand what
they read.[40]

7.   Myth and Reality: Teaching Bible in Israel
in the 20th Century

The catastrophic condition of Bible studies in Israel is common knowledge.
Many depict an idealistic, nostalgic era in which Israeli youth explored the
land embracing the books of the Bible, reading it delightfully, pursuing its
ideas, and fully understanding its language. Contemporary intellectuals re-
buke Israeli teenagers, whose reluctance to study the Bible seems to reflect
negligence, linguistic incompetence, and aversion towards humanities. How-
ever, it should be pointed out that Bible teaching was problematical *ab initio*,
for decades. In 1953, Bible teacher Meir Bloch wrote:

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[36]   Amit, *Rise and Fall,* 12.
[37]   Amit, "Fun Bible," 173.
[38]   Asher Shkedi, "The Teacher as Mediator in Jewish Text Teaching", *Proceedings of the World
        Congress of Jewish Studies* 12 (1997): 201–210, here 207.
[39]   Iris Yaniv, "From Alienation to Dialogue: Teaching Bible in Non-Religious Jewish Israeli Sec-
        ondary Education" (Ph.D. diss., University of Haifa, 2010, Israeli).
[40]   Yaniv, "From Alienation to Dialogue," 87–95.

"The Bible is not appreciated by Israeli youth. They never study it or read it for their own pleasure. At most, they deal with it in order to pass the matriculation examinations. This state of affairs requires deliberation: What is the origin of that crisis? And what might be the way to remedy the situation?"[41]

Bloch raised several more questions that can and indeed should be discussed at any gathering of present-day Bible teachers: "Which ideas and principles form the foundation of biblical teaching so far? What might be the reasons for that failure? What is the state of the profession today? [...] Which way shall we turn?"[42]

These honest and painful questions attest that Bible studies have been in a state of continuous crisis for decades. The Ministry of Education has recently warned of further deterioration in Bible teaching due to budget cuts. Yet, there has never been a golden age for Bible studies at Israeli schools. From the fin-de-siècle days of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's son Itamar Ben-Avi until the 21st century, the mother tongue of Israeli children has been Israeli, not Hebrew. Consequently, Israeli children lack the skills required to understand the Bible smoothly. It is essential to take full measures to help them do so.

The respectable Israeli version of the Bible prepared by Abraham Ahuviya was created in order to provide a solution to an acute problem of Bible teaching, and it does seem to meet the needs of students, teachers and the general Israeli public. Reading Tanakh Ram could arouse affection for the Bible, as well as ambition to study its original language too.

8. The Benefits of Tanakh Ram

The biblical tradition played a significant role in the spiritual and practical life of the Jewish people throughout the ages, and continues to do so within the Zionist movement, being employed and referred to by Israeli Prime Ministers from David Ben-Gurion until the current administration. That is why a precise understanding of biblical Hebrew is important. We believe that Israelis *should* be able to understand the Bible, and therefore support the meticulous study of the biblical language.

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[41]   Anita Shapira, *The Hebrew Bible and Israeli Identity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005), 114 (Israeli).

[42]   Shapira, *Hebrew Bible*, 114.

Following this train of thought, Tanakh Ram is a useful tool for this very reason. Consider Genesis 1:1, where God creates שמים וארץ (pronounced in Israeli as *shamáim vaárets*), known as "the heavens and the earth" (King James Version). In fact, this is a *merism* whose reference is *not* "sky and earth" but rather "the entire universe." Tanakh Ram appropriately translates it as העולם (*haolám)*, which an Israeli speaker would understand as "the world."

Merism is a linguistic phenomenon characteristic of biblical Hebrew in which a combination of two *contrasting parts* of the whole refers to the whole.[43] Other famous examples of biblical merisms are Genesis 1:5, where "evening" and "morning" refer to "one day;" and Psalm 139, where the psalmist declares that God knows "my downsitting and my uprising," i.e. God knows *all* the psalmist's actions.

As here, Tanakh Ram often provides good translations into Israeli. Consider the following examples:

Genesis 1:2

Whilst an Israeli speaker understands תהו ובהו (*tóu vavóu*) as "mess, chaos, *balagán*," it actually means almost the opposite: "emptiness, nothing" (note that in order to create mess, one has to have some things). The translation of Tanakh Ram is שוממה וריקה (*shomemá vereyká)*, which an Israeli speaker would understand, appropriately, as "empty."

Proverbs 7:7

Tanakh Ram	Tanakh
וְרָאִיתִי אֶת הַפְּתָאִים, הִתְבּוֹנַנְתִּי בַּבָּנִים, בְּנַעַר חֲסַר תְּבוּנָה.	וָאֵרֶא בַפְּתָאיִם אָבִינָה בַבָּנִים נַעַר חֲסַר-לֵב.

Whilst an Israeli speaker understands חֲסַר-לֵב (*hasár lev*) as "cruel," it actually means "stupid," since in Hebrew the heart is where thoughts are placed, not feelings. The translation of Tanakh Ram is חסר תבונה (*hasár tvuná)*, which an Israeli speaker would understand, appropriately, as "stupid."

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43 Cf. Alexander M. Honeyman, "Merismus in Biblical Hebrew," *Journal of Biblical Literature,* 71, no. 1 (1952): 11–18.

Isaiah 11:9	

Tanakh Ram	*Tanakh*
בְּכָל הַר קָדְשִׁי – בְּכָל אַרְצִי – לֹא יַשְׁחִיתוּ, לֹא יַעֲשׂוּ שׁוּם רַע .כִּי יְדִיעַת ה' תְּמַלֵּא אֶת הָאָרֶץ, כְּמוֹ הַמַּיִם הַמְכַסִּים אֶת הַיָּם.	לֹא־יָרֵעוּ וְלֹא־יַשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל־הַר קָדְשִׁי כִּי־מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ דֵּעָה אֶת־יְהֹוָה כַּמַּיִם לַיָּם מְכַסִּים:

Whilst an Israeli speaker understands דֵעָה (*deá*) as "opinion," i.e. "*subjective* knowledge," its actual biblical meaning is "*objective* knowledge." The translation of Tanakh Ram is ידיעה *(yediá)*, which an Israeli speaker would understand, appropriately, as "objective knowledge."

Judges 7:13	

Tanakh Ram	*Tanakh*
וְגִדְעוֹן בָּא אֶל הָעֶמְדָה, וְהִנֵּה אִישׁ מְסַפֵּר לַחֲבֵרוֹ חֲלוֹם וְאוֹמֵר: "חָלַמְתִּי חֲלוֹם, שֶׁלֶּחֶם שְׂעוֹרִים צָלוּי עַל גֶּחָלִים מִתְהַפֵּךְ-מִתְגַּלְגֵּל בְּמַחֲנֵה מִדְיָן, מַגִּיעַ עַד לָאֹהֶל, מִתְנַגֵּשׁ בּוֹ וְנוֹפֵל; וְהָאֹהֶל הִתְהַפֵּךְ וְנָפַל."	וַיָּבֹא גִדְעוֹן וְהִנֵּה־אִישׁ, מְסַפֵּר לְרֵעֵהוּ חֲלוֹם; וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה חֲלוֹם חָלַמְתִּי, וְהִנֵּה צְלִיל לֶחֶם שְׂעוֹרִים מִתְהַפֵּךְ בְּמַחֲנֵה מִדְיָן, וַיָּבֹא עַד־הָאֹהֶל וַיַּכֵּהוּ וַיִּפֹּל וַיַּהַפְכֵהוּ לְמַעְלָה, וְנָפַל הָאֹהֶל.

Whilst an Israeli speaker understands צְלִיל (*tslil*) as "sound," its actual biblical meaning is "bread". The translation of Tanakh Ram is appropriate, as following.

Exodus 29:18	

Tanakh Ram	*Tanakh*
וְתִשְׂרֹף אֶת כָּל הָאַיִל עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ; הוּא קָרְבָּן עוֹלָה לַה'; הוּא רֵיחַ נִיחוֹחַ, רֵיחַ נָעִים, קָרְבָּן הָעוֹלֶה בָּאֵשׁ לַה'.	וְהִקְטַרְתָּ אֶת-כָּל-הָאַיִל הַמִּזְבֵּחָה, עֹלָה הוּא לַיהֹוָה; רֵיחַ נִיחוֹחַ, אִשֶּׁה לַיהֹוָה הוּא.

Whilst an Israeli speaker understands נִיחוֹחַ (*nihóakh)* as "good smell," its actual biblical meaning is "giving pleasure." The translation of Tanakh Ram, נעים *(naím)*, is appropriate, as it is understood by the Israeli speaker as "pleasant".

NUMBERS 1:3

Tanakh Ram	Tanakh
כָּל הַגְּבָרִים מִגִּיל עֶשְׂרִים וָמַעְלָה – הוּא הַגִּיל	מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וָמַעְלָה, כָּל יֹצֵא
שֶׁל כָּל חַיָּב גִּיּוּס בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל – אַתָּה וְאַהֲרֹן תִּסְפְּרוּ	צָבָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל תִּפְקְדוּ אֹתָם לְצִבְאֹתָם,
אוֹתָם לְפִי הִשְׁתַּיְּכוּתָם לַצְּבָאוֹת שֶׁל שִׁבְטֵיהֶם.	אַתָּה וְאַהֲרֹן.

Whilst an Israeli speaker understands יוֹצֵא צָבָא (*yotsé tsavá*) as "former sol-
dier," its actual biblical meaning is the opposite: "someone who is about to
join the army." The translation of Tanakh Ram, חייב גיוס (*khayáv giús*) is
appropriate, as it is understood by the Israeli speaker as "people required
to join the army."

9.   Improvements Needed for Tanakh Ram

Sometimes, Tanakh Ram fails to provide a proper translation. Consider the
following:

GENESIS 43:11

Tanakh Ram	Tanakh
בַּסּוֹף אָמַר לָהֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבִיהֶם: אִם כֵּן,	וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבִיהֶם, אִם-כֵּן
זֹאת עֲשׂוּ: קְחוּ אִתְּכֶם מִיבוּל הָאָרֶץ, וְהָבִיאוּ	אֵפוֹא זֹאת עֲשׂוּ – קְחוּ מִזִּמְרַת הָאָרֶץ
לָאִישׁ מַתָּנָה: מְעַט צֳרִי וּמְעַט דְּבַשׁ,	בִּכְלֵיכֶם, וְהוֹרִידוּ לָאִישׁ מִנְחָה: מְעַט צֳרִי,
וּשְׁקֵדִים. נְכֹאת וָלֹט, בָּטְנִים	וּמְעַט דְּבַשׁ, נְכֹאת וָלֹט, בָּטְנִים וּשְׁקֵדִים.

Whilst an Israeli speaker understands בָּטְנִים (*botním*) as "peanuts," it actu-
ally refers to a type of fruit, but not to peanuts. The translation of Tanakh
Ram is flawed as it leaves it as *botním*.

LEVITICUS 13:49

The biblical Hebrew lexical item יְרַקְרַק (*yerakrák*) is not "weak green" but
rather "strong green." Here, Tanakh Ram fails as it repeats ירקרק rather
than translating it into מאוד ירוק (*yarók meód*) "very green."

Judges 16:29	

Tanakh Ram	*Tanakh*
וְשִׁמְשׁוֹן אָחַז בְּכוֹחַ אֶת שְׁנֵי הָעַמּוּדִים הָאֶמְצָעִיִּים שֶׁהַבַּיִת עוֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם, וְנִשְׁעַן עֲלֵיהֶם, עַמּוּד אֶחָד בִּימִינוֹ וְאֶחָד בִּשְׂמֹאלוֹ	וַיִּלְפֹּת שִׁמְשׁוֹן אֶת-שְׁנֵי עַמּוּדֵי הַתָּוֶךְ, אֲשֶׁר הַבַּיִת נָכוֹן עֲלֵיהֶם, וַיִּסָּמֵךְ, עֲלֵיהֶם-- אֶחָד בִּימִינוֹ, וְאֶחָד בִּשְׂמֹאלוֹ.

The Hebrew lexical item לָפַת (*lafát*) (see e. g. וַיִּלְפֹּת [*vayil'pot*] in Judges 15:29) is "touch gently" (see Cohen above) rather than "grope strongly" as Tanakh Ram, Israeli speakers, and even the leading biblical scholar Professor Yair Zakovitch (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) misunderstand it.

10. Concluding Remarks: Bible Teaching and Negation of the Diaspora

Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg, known by his pen name Ahad Ha-Am (1856–1927), was one of the foremost pre-state Zionist thinkers. In 1911 he travelled to *Eretz Israel* and made a visit to the Herzliya Gymnasium, the first Hebrew high school founded in Jaffa in 1905. In 1912 Ginsberg published in London an essay summarizing his thoughts following this visit.[44] Ginsberg made some important comments regarding his impressions of several Bible classes he had attended. He paid tribute to the committed teachers but did not fail to notice major difficulties encountered by the students. Ginsberg was under the impression that the students were confused, did not really understand the biblical language, and were indoctrinated to believe that they were immediate descendants of major biblical figures.

Ginsberg explained that Zionist passionate teachers were eager to let their students connect with the ancient eras of the sovereign Israeli kingdom. They accentuated the possible linkages between the glorious past and the challenging present, encouraging the students to believe that they would overcome difficulties just as David, Solomon, and other heroic figures have done. Ginsberg, a dominant spokesperson of diaspora Jewry, felt that teachers imposed a fabricated narrative on naive students. Being enthusiastic Zionists, the Gymnasium pedagogues were keen to ignore 2000 years of tortuous,

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44   Asher Z. Ginsberg, "Jaffa Hebrew Gymnasium", Ahad Ha'am Collected Studies (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1956), 649–659.

complex diasporic Jewish continuation. In fact, however, 20ᵗʰ-century Jewish youth were successors of complex, fascinating multifaceted Jewish traditions in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Therefore, they could have never naturally jumped into biblical figures' shoes, as they were expected to do by their enthusiastic teachers.

Ginsberg was not a linguist and he did not elaborate on the linguistic difficulties. That said, his poignant remarks ought to be taken into consideration in the linguistic context, too: the main problem in Bible teaching in Israel during the 20ᵗʰ and 21ˢᵗ centuries lies in *shlilat hagolah*, the negation of the Diaspora. This negation is manifested both in the forced overpassing of 2,000 years of history in the search of biblical ancientness, and in turning a blind eye to the fact that the biblical language is very different from the Israeli tongue, which was shaped by the *diasporic* Yiddish language.

Ignoring the fact that Israeli is a fascinating and multifaceted, fin-de-siècle 133 year-old Semito-European hybrid language – distinct in a plethora of respects from biblical Hebrew – presents insurmountable obstacles to Israeli pupils, and indeed to the entire Israeli public.

We believe that Israelis *ought* to fathom the biblical narrative – for cultural, historical reasons. They won't succeed in doing so unless the Israeli establishment ceases to be self-righteous and starts teaching the Hebrew Bible using the most advanced, modern techniques of foreign language learning. Tanakh Ram is one of the tools that should be embraced.

The Book of Radiance

by Eitan P. Fishbane

Review of *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, translation and commentary by Daniel C. Matt (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press), vols. 1–8, $ 60, vol. 9, $ 80.[1]

I.

Daniel Matt's magisterial translation of the Zohar begins:

> "Rabbi Hizkiyah opened: '*Like a rose among thorns, so is my beloved among the maidens*' (Song of Songs 2:2). Who is *a rose*? Assembly of Israel. For there is a rose, and then there is a rose! Just as a rose among thorns is colored red and white, so Assembly of Israel includes judgment and compassion. Just as a rose has thirteen petals, so Assembly of Israel has thirteen qualities of compassion surrounding Her on every side. Similarly, from the moment *Elohim* (God), is mentioned, it generates thirteen words to surround Assembly of Israel and protect Her; then it is mentioned again. Why again? To produce five sturdy leaves surrounding the rose. These five are called Salvation; they are five gates. Concerning this mystery it is written: *I raise the cup of salvation* (Psalms 116:13). This is the cup of blessing, which should rest on five fingers – and no more – like the rose, sitting on five sturdy leaves, paradigm of five fingers. This rose is the cup of blessing."

I will return to the meaning of this deep and dizzying passage: What is the "Assembly of Israel" and what does it have to do with the lover and beloved of the Song of Songs? Are roses both red and white? And so on. But first let us ask a more general question: What is a great translation?

In his classic essay "The Task of the Translator," Walter Benjamin distinguishes between a translation that successfully transfers information from one language to another and the far more profound kind of translation that

arises from the organic life and afterlife of a great work of art. Such translation is part, in fact a necessary part, of the cultural unfolding and flowering of the original work:

> "The history of the great works of art tells us about their antecedents, their realization in the age of the artist, their potentially eternal afterlife in succeeding generations. Where this last manifests itself, it is called fame. Translations that are more than transmissions of subject matter come into being when in the course of its survival a work has reached the age of its fame [...] [S]uch translations do not so much serve the work as owe their existence to it. The life of the originals attains in them to its ever-renewed latest and most abundant flowering."

The lifeblood of the original work – that which motivates the act of translation in the first place – spreads through the arteries of a living cultural organism, wherein the past is made present again and again. The great translation of a classic work depends not only on its ability to accurately capture the meanings of words for the reader unable to access the text in the original but also on its ability to render what Benjamin called "the unfathomable, the mysterious, the 'poetic,' something that a translator can reproduce only if he is also a poet."

The *Zohar* is not only the central classic of the Kabbalah, it is one of the most extraordinary productions of human creativity in the history of the world. But it was not until our own time – some seven hundred years after its original composition – that this work found its great translator in Daniel Matt, who has succeeded masterfully in recapturing and conveying the unfathomable, mysterious, and, especially, poetic aspects of this "book of radiance" (the literal meaning of *Sefer ha-Zohar*). In fact, Matt's first translations from the *Zohar*, published some 35 years ago in the Paulist Press Classics of Western Spirituality series, were in verse. Thus, he translated the beginning of the *Zohar*'s commentary on Genesis 1 as:

> "When the King conceived ordaining
> He engraved engravings in the luster on high.
> A blinding spark flashed
> within the Concealed of the Concealed
> from the mystery of the Infinite."

The *Zohar* itself was not composed in verse, but in Matt's early effort he was already working to capture a deep truth about this transcendent text, with its

unique, sparkling language, symbolic imagery, and poetic cadence. (His equally brilliant prose translation of these lines is: "At the head of potency of the King, He engraved engravings in luster on high. A spark of impenetrable darkness flashed within the concealed of the concealed, from the head of Infinity.")

II.

Arriving on the heels of a century of kabbalistic creativity in southern France and northern Spain, the *Zohar* is the crowning achievement of medieval Jewish mysticism and perhaps the single most important body of literature – it isn't a book in the conventional sense – in the entire history of Jewish spirituality. While nearly all other kabbalistic works of the period were written in Hebrew and generally claimed by their authors, the *Zohar* was pseudepigraphic and written in Aramaic: It represented itself as the product of the 2nd-century Galilean sage Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. The earliest references that we have to the text describe it as "*midrasho shel Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai*," a mystical midrash that had arisen in medieval Castile after centuries of concealment.

The text of this work was new-old – at once infused with the language and texture of ancient tradition and a radically original mode of imagination and expression. The choice of an inventive Aramaic was not only an attempt to reproduce or channel the voices of ancient sages, it was also part of the authors' efforts to cast a veil of mystification and wonder upon its audience – to invite the reader to bask in the mists of spiritual consciousness. Indeed, the *Zohar* is itself a fascinating attempt to translate and express the poetry and mystery bequeathed to it by a distant world.

In the *Zohar*, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his disciples read the Bible as a coded, symbolic document in which every element of earthly reality alludes to a hidden mystery within the divine world. These interpretations are interwoven with an episodic tale in which the disciples wander about the ancient Galilee in quest of mystical wisdom. Given that it was written by Castilian kabbalists of the 13th and 14th centuries, what we have in the *Zohar* is thus a deeply imaginative *fictional* creation – an invented world of holy men and spiritual adventures wrought in the fires of stunningly innovative medieval minds.

Let us now return to the opening passage of the *Zohar*. Rabbi Hizkiyah's explication of the famous verse comparing the poet's beloved to a rose among thorns presupposes not only that the Song of Songs is an allegory of divine

love, as the classic rabbinic tradition taught, but that this love is, as it were, *within* God. That is, it is a relationship between certain *sefirot*, which are the 10 divine emanations or potencies, through which the mystery of the infinite is projected into the world. Thus, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's disciple is reflecting on the inner dynamics of the divine self. The rose, he is telling us, represents the tenth *sefirah*, the *Shekhina*, referred to here as the Assembly of Israel (*Keneset Yisrael*), which is identified with the Jewish people and understood to be female. "Just as a rose among thorns is colored red and white," we are told, "so Assembly of Israel includes judgment and compassion" – that is to say, she receives and filters the divine forces that flow downward from the *sefirot Chesed* and *Gevurah*.

Rabbi Hizkiyah also ruminates on the symbolic allusiveness of the natural world, comments on the mystical meaning of familiar ritual ("This is the cup of blessing, which should rest on five fingers – and no more"), and takes the reader into the transcendent mythology of the *sefirot* – all while weaving together verses from Song of Songs, Genesis, and Psalms. Matt's translation opens up the meaning of the *Zohar*'s original Aramaic while retaining both its spiritual mystique and its lightness of touch. Of special note is his running commentary in the footnotes, which cites rabbinic antecedents and kabbalistic parallels while lucidly explaining the text and often illuminating its broader historical and literary context. Thus he notes that while the "rose" (in Hebrew, *shoshana*) of the verse is probably actually a lily or a lotus, "Rabbi Hizkiyah has in mind a rose," and then goes on to explain what he means by describing it as both red and white:

> "**colored red and white**   As is *Rosa gallica versicolor* (also known as *Rosa mundi*), one of the oldest of the striped roses, whose flowers are crimson splashed on a white background. The striping varies and occasionally flowers revert to the solid pink of their parent, *Rosa gallica*. The parent was introduced to Europe in the twelfth or thirteenth century by Crusaders returning from Palestine. Both parent and sport were famous for their aromatic and medicinal qualities. Elsewhere (2:20a–b) the *Zohar* alludes to the process of distilling oil from the petals of the flower to produce rose water, a popular remedy. During this process the color gradually changes from red to white."

The notes that follow explicate the dense web of kabbalistic symbolism embedded in such phrases as "thirteen petals […] thirteen qualities of compassion"

and so on. "A rose blossom," he informs us, "can have thirteen petals in its second tier. [...] God's thirteen attributes of compassion are derived from Exodus 34:6–7. [...] According to Kabbalah, these qualities originate in *Keter*, the highest *sefirah*, the realm of total compassion untainted by judgment."

In important ways, Matt's project is heir to the tradition of *Zohar* scholarship from its earliest days. One of the great exemplars of early translation of the text into Hebrew is a turn of the 14th-century kabbalist named Rabbi David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, who was the subject of Matt's doctoral dissertation at Brandeis. Among the many other partial translations over the centuries are those made into Latin by or for early modern Christian kabbalists such as Pietro di Galatino and Guillaume Postel through 20th-century productions such as the dry and relatively unusable English Soncino translation (available online) and Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag's *Peirush ha-sulam*. Ashlag, who translated the text into a lucid Hebrew with an embedded commentary, was influenced by the 16th-century Kabbalah of Rabbi Isaac Luria, and his edition was an attempt to disseminate esoteric knowledge to a world that he believed could no longer survive without it. Another precursor to Matt's translation, and for many decades the most significant scholarly translation project devoted to the *Zohar*, was Isaiah Tishby's *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, translated into English by David Goldstein as *The Wisdom of the Zohar*. Tishby translated a wide array of passages, accompanied by informative introductions and extensive annotations. Despite the importance of *Mishnat ha-Zohar* for generations of scholars and students, however, the anthologized texts were ultimately only excerpts from a dramatically larger textual stream. Thus, Matt both continues a long tradition of translation and charts new territory.

When the philanthropist Margot Pritzker (an heir to the Hyatt Hotel fortune) enabled Matt to retire from the Graduate Theological Union and devote two decades of his life to translating the entire Zohar, it wasn't just to fill a scholarly desideratum. It was to continue what Benjamin called the "potentially eternal afterlife" of an undeniably great work.

III.

For much of the 20th century, Gershom Scholem's conclusion that the *Zohar* was largely the work of a mystic named Rabbi Moses de León in late 13th-century Castile held sway over scholarly opinion. Scholem's theory was

compelling and far from unfounded. As Matt notes in the very first footnote to the opening passage just discussed, there is a parallel passage in de León's *Sefer ha-rimmon*, and Scholem and others have noted many parallels of language and doctrine between the *Zohar* and de León's works. In testimony quoted in a late 15th-century text, the kabbalist Isaac of Akko is represented as saying that de León's widow told him that the work was entirely from her husband's hand. The 19th-century Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz, who was opposed to mysticism of all kinds, described the *Zohar* as a forgery. Scholem set out to disprove Graetz but concluded that he was correct in spite of his rationalist prejudices, though Scholem understood well that pseudepigraphy was not forgery but a phenomenon of premodern religious creativity, the spiritual identification of a later author with a revered figure from times of old.

This consensus has been shattered in recent decades. First came Yehuda Liebes's path-breaking theory that a group of Castilian kabbalists including de León, not unlike the imagined circle of disciples around Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, were responsible for the composition of the *Zohar*. More recently scholars have argued that there were likely several groups of authors in successive decades and even generations, each of whom edited and added to what we now know as the *Zohar* (among them, that early translator Rabbi David ben Yehudah he-Hasid). This evolution in the theory of authorship has gone hand in hand with a greater appreciation for the relationship and tension between the existing manuscripts of the *Zohar* and the text as it was first printed in 16th-century Italy.

As the research of Daniel Abrams, Boaz Huss, and Ronit Meroz has shown, prior to the 16th century, there were a range of disparate, overlapping, and incomplete zoharic manuscripts that were weaved together into a new whole by the editors of the Mantua and Cremona printings in the late 1550s. There was no single manuscript still in existence (if there ever was one) that preserved everything we now regard as being a part of the *Zohar*. So what text did Matt translate?

The manuscripts were all incomplete or problematic in different ways. Therefore, it would not do to use one of these as a "diplomatic" text, supplemented by notes indicating manuscript variances, as has become common practice in the production of critical editions. Matt instead chose to use the established printed edition (which was essentially the Mantua printing combined with variants from the Cremona printing) as a starting point,

substituting superior readings from a host of different older manuscripts where he saw fit to do so. Matt has characterized this work as a "scraping away" of accumulated "scribal accretions and glosses" to try to get as close as possible to the elusive original (or, perhaps, *originals*), and he has noted these changes in an online Aramaic edition on the website of Stanford University Press, which itself is a major contribution to scholarship.

Not everyone agrees with this "eclectic critical method," since it must be admitted that the base text established by Matt is one that quite likely never existed in this exact form before. In my own opinion, given the choices that Matt had before him, this was the right way to go, since it offers what he regards as the best possible textual reading in each case. When the full textual apparatus is eventually published online, researchers will be able to follow and debate his choices.

IV.

The Zohar: Pritzker Edition itself spans 12 thick and handsomely produced volumes, the first nine of which were composed by Matt and the remaining three by Nathan Wolski and Joel Hecker, under Matt's editorship. (Wolski translated and annotated volume 10, Hecker did the same for volume 11, and the two collaborated on volume 12.) Of particular note in Wolski's work is his elegant translation and learned annotation of *Midrash ha-ne'elam*, thought to be the earliest stratum of the *Zohar*; an especially notable section of Hecker's translation is his richly poetic rendition of the Matnitin and Tosefta sections. In this essay, however, I have chosen to reflect on the accomplishments of Matt in the first nine volumes, which comprise the material often referred to as *guf ha-Zohar* (the body of the *Zohar*), along with several other classic sections. Let us turn now to another famously resonant passage, in which Matt's zoharic English virtually reincarnates the text, emerging organically from the living organism of its source:

> "When Israel enacts the unification of the mystery of *Shema Yisrael, Hear O Israel!* (Deuteronomy 6:4) with perfect intention, one radiance issues from secrecy of the upper world, and that radiance strikes a spark of darkness and scatters into seventy lights, and those seventy flash into seventy branches of the Tree of Life. Then that Tree wafts fragrances and aromas, and all the trees of the Garden of Eden waft fragrances and praise their Lord, for then *Matronita* is adorned to enter the canopy

with Her Husband. All those supernal limbs unite in one desire, in one aspiration, to be one with no separation. Then Her Husband is arrayed for Her, to bring Her to the canopy in single union, to unite with *Matronita*. Therefore, we arouse Her, saying *Shema Yisrael, Hear O Israel!* (Deuteronomy 6:4) – Adorn Yourself! Behold, Your Husband is near You in His array, ready to meet You. *YHVH our God, YHVH is one* (ibid.) – in one unification, in one aspiration, without separation; for all those limbs become one, entering into one desire. As soon as Israel says *one*, arousing six aspects, all those six become one. This mystery is *vav*, one extension alone, with no other attachment, expanded by all, one. At that moment, *Matronita* prepares and adorns Herself, and Her attendants escort Her to Her Husband in hushed whisper, saying 'Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!' This is whispered, for so must She be brought to Her Husband. Happy are the people who know this and compose the supernal arrangement of faith!"

The striking poetry of zoharic myth is captured in this description of the divine mystery behind the central Jewish affirmation of faith. Divine emanation is described here as the mysterious emergence of light from the depths of cosmic hiddenness – the striking of that primordial, paradoxical "spark of darkness," a moment of wondrous divine blacksmithing. This image of the cosmic spark of darkness (*butzina de-kardinuta*) appears in several passages as a kind of flashing brilliance in the transcendent universe above, as well as in the deepest recesses of the human contemplative mind.

But here it is the inner-divine Tree of Life that flashes into revealed form as the metaphysical expansion and embodiment of the splintered sparks of supernal darkness. It is a divine sparkling, and then an aromatic overflow, that results from the human act of reciting the *Shema* "with perfect intention." This is theurgic ritual – human actions that provoke reactions in the divine world – at its most dramatic and sensory, at once visual and olfactory. The Jewish people call forth the emanation of luminous divine energies from the upper *sefirot*, and it is the power of their prayerful intention that causes the eruption of an explosive brilliance within God. They ignite the divine Tree of Life, an erotic union of male and female within the dynamic divine self.

Matt's own poetic craft is visible in his translation choices here: "*itpaleig le-shiv'in nehorin*" becomes "scatters into seventy lights"; "*inun shiv'in lahatei be-shiv'in anafin*" is translated as "those seventy flash into seventy branches";

and "*ha-hu ilana seleik reichin u-busmin*" is rendered as "that Tree wafts fragrances and aromas." Deep knowledge of the resonance of each Aramaic word is at play here, but so too is the artistry of achieving the cadence, nuance, and crispness of zoharic mythopoesis in English. As with the first example we considered, Matt's richly learned commentary in his notes fills out the picture, citing rabbinic sources and zoharic parallels, and unpacking the bold mythic eroticism of the text: the sacred union between the *sefirot Tiferet* and *Shekhina* that lies at the heart of the *Zohar*. Like his translation, Matt's notes are heir to the grand tradition of *Zohar* scholarship, from Rabbi Moses Cordovero's massive commentary *Or yakar* to the handwritten notes in Gershom Scholem's annotated *Zohar* and the notes to Charles Mopsik's great French translation, *Le Zohar*. Indeed, Matt's commentary may be the most significant and comprehensive line-by-line exegesis of the *Zohar* to ever appear, given its fusion of wisdom gained from the older religious commentaries and the fruits of modern critical scholarship.

V.

Part of the power of the *Zohar*'s myth is the way in which it both explains and infuses religious practice with metaphysical meaning. Thus, for instance, the Zohar emphasizes the deep significance of the requirement that only the Torah reader's voice be heard during the public reading of the Torah in the synagogue. For the Zohar, this ritual stipulation is understood to be a reflection of the inner divine harmony and unity of the *sefirot*: "With the Torah scroll, one voice and one utterance should be heard." After detailing the "arrangement to be prepared by the Holy People on this day and all other days for the Torah scroll," including "a throne (*kursayya*) called 'a reader's desk' (*de-ikri teivah*)," taking out the Torah and laying it on the reader's desk are depicted as directly comparable to the revelation at Mount Sinai:

> "When the Torah scroll is lifted onto there, the whole people should arrange themselves in awe and fear, trembling and quaking, all below, intending in their hearts as if they were now standing at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. They should listen and incline their ears. None of the people, nor anyone else, is permitted to open his mouth with a word of Torah, and certainly not with any other word. Rather, all of them in awe, as if they had no mouth, as has been established, for it is written: *As*

he opened it, all the people stood up (Nehemiah 8:5); *and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Torah scroll* (ibid., 3)."

In Matt's skilled and artful hands, the English formulation conveys the original *Zohar*'s atmosphere of mystical experience – where the routine ritual of the synagogue is infused with the hush of revelation, the fear of receiving the divine word. The Aramaic phrases *le-sadra garmaihu be-eimata*, *be-dechilu*, *be-retet*, *be-zeiʻa* are transformed into "should arrange themselves in awe and fear, trembling and quaking."

Once again, Matt's commentary on these pages adds a great deal. Notably, Matt offers a historical textual revision, commenting on a segment of text that is one of the most famous passages in the *Zohar*, known as the "*Berikh shemeih de-marei alma*" (Blessed is the name of the Lord of the universe) because of its prominent place in the Sabbath morning liturgy before the reading of the Torah. Matt argues that this passage is actually a much later addition by manuscript copyists and quite likely not part of the original composition. I will quote the note to give a glimpse of the depth of textual scholarship in his commentary.

> "Remarkably, the prayer (together with the preceding paragraph: 'Rabbi Shim'on said […]') is a later addition to the *Zohar*, as indicated already by Cordovero (*Or Yaqar*) and as evidenced by the fact that it appears in none of the following manuscripts: C9, M5, M9, Ms24, N10, N41, O17, P2, R1, T1, V5, V7, V18, nor in the text accompanying *Or Yaqar*. In O2 a bit of it is inserted by a later copyist, while in the Cremona edition it appears in a smaller, different font. The passage appears in full in the Mantua edition and in nearly all subsequent editions (those that are based on Mantua). In a fifteenth-century kabbalistic manuscript containing various compositions (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, heb. MS 835, 114b), this prayer is attributed to Nahmanides. Nevertheless, because of the prayer's historical, cultural, and religious significance – and because it is so widely known – I have included it here, placing the entire passage in brackets."

Following this bracketed translation of the "*Berikh shemeih*" passage, Matt renders the continuation of the *Zohar*'s portrait of the Torah reading in which one person should be heard chanting and the rest of the congregation should listen in rapt silence "as if they were receiving it at that moment from Mount Sinai." Only afterward they should hear the voice of its public translation, an old rabbinic custom.

"Another should stand next to the one reading and be silent, so that only one ut-
terance exists, not two. The holy tongue is one – one and not two; if there are two
with the Torah scroll, the mystery of faith is diminished, along with the glory of
Torah. One translator, and this mystery is shell and kernel: mystery of this world
and mystery of the world that is coming."

The singularity of each voice has metaphysical implications for the *Zohar*.
Confusion below leads to diminishment above in the realm of the *sefirot*,
which the *Zohar* often refers to as "the mystery of faith" (*raza demeheimanu-
ta*). Here, the interplay between holy tongue and translation – between Torah
reader and public translator – is framed in distinctively mystical terms: The
Hebrew original of the Torah is likened to the inner kernel, while the transla-
tion corresponds to the outer shell. While the holy tongue represents the hid-
den dimension of the heavenly world to come (*alma de-atei*), the translation
channels the revealed dimension of this lower world.

Translation is actually necessary, then, to protect the vulnerable inner core,
the fragile essence of divine reality, but it is also only by way of that outer
shell of translation that the deepest spiritual truth can be accessed in this
world. As Matt puts it in his commentary: "Just as the divine kernel is protect-
ed by a shell in order to be manifested in this world, so the Torah is accompa-
nied by translation in order to be understood by all."

The work of the translator is a creative act in which the otherwise hidden
language is filtered and revealed through the prism of a new poetic revelation.
The translation draws its sustenance from the life force of the original, and yet
it is only through the exegetical bridge of that translation that the untouch-
able spirit of the first text can enter into the world. It is not too much to say
that Daniel Matt's work discloses the mysteries of the *Zohar* in this same way:
with a fresh light – an organic, new-old speech of secrets.

Research Report

King Arthur's Jewish Knights:
The Many Faces of Medieval Hebrew Literature

by Caroline Gruenbaum

In late medieval England, France, and northern Italy, far removed from the bustling multicultural cosmopolitan cities of the Mediterranean basin, several Hebrew authors embarked on ambitious literary projects, translating existing stories and crafting new ones to entertain and teach Jewish audiences. The most amusing incidents that move the plot along in these stories include knights who spout Hebrew phrases, magical curative plants, and mysterious portals to hell. As exciting as these texts are, they remain largely unknown, even within medieval Jewish studies scholarship. Taken in conjunction with better-known contemporaneous texts, such as rabbinic commentaries, pietistic manuals, martyrological poetry, and historical chronicles, these non-rabbinic literary works expand our understanding of medieval Hebrew literature in northern European communities.

This research project, which comprises a dissertation and a subsequent book, focuses on the under-studied corpus of non-rabbinic Hebrew literature in medieval Northern Europe, consisting of translations, folktales, and stories. These texts, while purporting to teach Jewish ethics, often borrow from non-Jewish literature to form the content of their tales. My dissertation analyzed several paradigmatic texts of this type that all emerged between the late 12th century and the late 13th century: Berechiah ha-Nakdan's *Mishle Shuʿalim* ("Fox Fables", northern France), a modified translation of Marie de France's *Ysopet*; the story collection *Sefer Ha-Ma'asim* ("Book of Tales," Champagne), which draws on a variety of existing Jewish folktales in combination with new French stories; and the anonymous *Melekh Artus* ("King Arthur," northern Italy), a translation of several King Arthur stories.[1]

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[1]   *Mishle Shuʿalim* exists in twelve manuscripts and early printed versions, with the earliest dated to the 13th century. *Melekh Artus* only survives in a single seven-folio fragment, MS Vatican

This project defines all of these non-rabbinic texts as "literature," deserving of literary analysis to uncover the author's intent and the text's function. Israeli and European scholars including Eli Yassif, Joseph Dan, Tovi Bibring, Tamás Visi, and Rella Kushelevsky, among others, have highlighted the literary aspects of some of these texts, and this project intends to continue their work by applying their theories to a wider corpus.[2] This project presents medieval Hebrew literature as diverse, rejecting attempts to analyze all texts with the same framework. From liturgical and ceremonial to entertainment, this corpus of literature boasts a variety of functions and reflects different authorial aims. Each text must be considered not only as a product of a Jewish community but as a product of a unique author in a unique literary sphere.

My research is the first to analyze these texts together as reflective of a new–though short-lived–Hebrew narrative awakening in medieval northern Europe. I divide them into two categories: folktales and translations. The folktales emphasize traditional pious values and practices, such as observing the Sabbath or monogamy, using biblical and rabbinic texts to influence the community's behavior. They assist in our understanding of the function of literary texts as vehicles for behavioral changes. Differing from the folktales in tone, content, and style, the translations promote universal ethical and moral values, rather than piety. Their claim to a Jewish identity rests in the language they appear, as Hebrew literature was only accessible by Jews. The text uses biblical language, a mainstay of medieval Hebrew in general, but is not dependent on scripture.

Urbinati ebr. 48. *Sefer Ha-Maʿasim* appears in one manuscript, Ox. Bodl. Or 135, but some of its stories appear in later Yiddish folktale collections. Berechiah ben Natronai Ha-Nakdan, *Mishlei Shualim*, ed. A. M. Habermann (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: Schocken, 1946); Rella Kushelevsky, *Tales in Context: Sefer Ha-Maʾasim in Medieval Northern France* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017); Curt Leviant, *King Artus: A Hebrew Arthurian Romance of 1279* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

2   Joseph Dan, *Ha-Sipur Ha-ʿIvri Bi-Yeme-Ha-Benayim : ʿIyunim Be-Toldotav (The Hebrew Story in the Middle Ages* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974, Hebrew); Kirsten Anne Fudeman, "'They Have Ears, but Do Not Hear' : Gendered Access to Hebrew and the Medieval Hebrew-French Wedding Song," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, no. 4 (2006): 542–67; Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning* (Indiana University Press, 2009); Susan Einbinder, "Signs of Romance: Hebrew Prose and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance," in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Michael A. Signer and John Van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 221–33; Tovi Bibring, "'Would That My Words Were Inscribed': Berechiah Ha-Naqdan's 'Mišlei Šuʾalim' and European Fable Traditions," in *Latin-into-Hebrew*, ed. Resianne Fontaine and Gad Freudenthal (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 309–29; Kushelevsky, *Tales in Context*.

There are three main texts that form the core of the discussions: *Mishle Shuʿalim, Sefer Ha-Maʿasim,* and *Melekh Artus.* These texts, as far as we know, all emerged for the first time in medieval northern Europe. They represent varying aspects of transculturation, with unique combinations of vernacular source material with Jewish tradition and are literary in tone.

The earliest text is Berechiah ha-Nakdan's collection of over one hundred animal fables in rhymed prose, *Mishle Shuʿalim* (Fox Fables).[3] Berechiah ben Natronai ha-Nakdan (Berechiah son of Natronai, the Punctator) practiced in Normandy in the late 12th century or first quarter of the 13th century, likely in Rouen.[4] Although previous scholarship placed Berechiah in England, newer research suggests that he only traveled there, and worked in Normandy, Provence, and England.[5] This research bases its theory on the likely dedication of Berechiah's *Musar haskel* to Meshullam ben Jacob of Lunel and its composition in Provence as well.[6] His *Mishle Shuʿalim* contains some works only known in Provence but also emerges from a northern cultural background, placing Berechiah at a crossroads between interlapping literary spheres.[7]

He produced several works, including a translation-paraphrase of Adelard of Bath's *Quaestiones naturales,* a commentary on Job, and a scientific and theological-philosophical work called *Sefer Ha-Hibbur* or *Sefer Musar Haskel,* and an ethical treatise.[8] Scholars have associated a lapidary with him

3   Berechiah ben Natronai Ha-Nakdan, *Mishlei Shualim,* ed. A.M. Habermann (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: Schocken, 1946); Berechiah ben Natronai Ha-Nakdan, *Fables of a Jewish Aesop: Translated from the Fox Fables of Berechiah Ha-Nakdan,* trans. Moses Hadas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967). Haim Schwarzbaum produced a summary of the fables and a detailed analysis of each one's origins. He emphasizes the importance of universal folktale motifs and oral retellings that informed the Hebrew author. Haim Schwarzbaum, *The Mishle Shuʾalim (Fox Fables) of Rabbi Berechiah Ha-Nakdan* (Jerusalem: Institute for Jewish and Arab Folklore Research, 1979).

4   Albert C. Friend, "The Tale of the Captive Bird and the Traveler: Nequam, Berechiah, and Chaucer's Squire's Tale," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 1 (1970): 57–65, here 64.

5   Tamás Visi, "Berechiah Ben Naṭronai Ha-Naqdan's *Dodi ve-Neḵdi* and the Transfer of Scientific Knowledge from Latin to Hebrew in the Twelfth Century," *Aleph* 14, no. 2 (July 2014): 9–73, here 14.

6   Visi, 16–20.

7   Golb, *The Jews in Medieval Normandy,* 339–342.

8   Some editions and translations of these texts exist. Berechiah ben Natronai Ha-Nakdan, *Dodi Ve-Nechdi,* ed. and trans. Hermann Gollancz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920); Berechiah ben Natronai Ha-Nakdan, *The Ethical Treatises of Berachya Son of Rabbi Natronai Ha-Nakdan, Being the Compendium and the Masref,* ed. and trans. Hermann Gollancz (London: D. Nutt, 1902); Berechiah ben Natronai Ha-Nakdan, *A Commentary on the Book of Job: From a*

as well.[9] But his *magnum opus* may be the *Mishle Shu'alim.* In rabbinic language, "fox fables" refer not only to fables featuring foxes but simply animal fables in general. Broadly speaking, these fables follow the Aesopic tradition of animals whose disputes and comportment mirror those of humans. Each of Berechiah's fables ends with a short summary (epimythium) that bridges the gap between the animal world and the human world, often completed by a biblical, philosophizing or Talmudic citation.

The 13th-century folktale collection *Sefer Ha-Ma'asim* (Book of Tales) contains several folktales of interest.[10] The collection appears in the manuscript Oxford, Bodl. Or. 135 alongside collections of rabbinic legends, medieval stories, and medieval philosophical works. The manuscript dates to the middle of the 13th century in Champagne. In *Sefer Ha-Ma'asim,* two stories deserve special attention in the context of this dissertation: "The Poor Bachelor and his Rich Maiden Cousin" and "The Gate to Hell." Other stories will be described as they are introduced. Out of all the stories in the folktale collection, these two are among the most "secular," as they engage least with rabbinic or biblical material. They appear for the first time in this manuscript.

The third story discussed as part of this genre is *Melekh Artus* (King Arthur). It is a Hebrew translation of Arthurian stories with a completion date of 1279. *Melekh Artus* text appears at the end of Vatican Urbinati 48, a manuscript that contains calendrical treatises and a commentary on a Talmudic tractate. Only seven folios and written in two different hands from the rest of the manuscript, the *Melekh Artus* text (fol.75r-77r) breaks off mid-folio, mid-sentence. The text was first edited by A. Berliner in 1885 and translated by Moses Gaster in 1909.[11] Not until 1979 was a modernized, more accurate edition and translation available in English.[12] A handful of articles and references have pointed to the uniqueness of the *Melekh Artus* text, with many referring to

Hebrew Manuscript in the University Library, Cambridge, trans. S. A. Hirsch (London: Williams & Norgate, 1905).

9   Gad Freudenthal and Jean-Marc Mandosio, "Old French into Hebrew in Twelfth-Century Tsarfat: Medieval Hebrew Versions of Marbode's Lapidary," *Aleph* 14, no. 1 (January 2014): 11–187.

10   Kushelevsky, *Tales in Context.*

11   Moses Gaster, "The History of the Destruction of the Round Table as Told in Hebrew in the Year 1279," *Folk Lore* xx (1909): 272–94.

12   Leviant, *King Artus.*

it as a romance, or as a translation from the Christian world placed inside a Jewish context.[13]

The first story translated by the scribe begins with Arthur's conception through Merlin's machinations.[14] Merlin disguises King Uter Pendragon so that he can lie with the unsuspecting Izerna, married to the Duke of Titormel. The story then describes a separate episode featuring Lancelot de Lac and King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table. After the Quest for the Holy Grail, many of Arthur's knights have died. Arthur arranges a tournament for all the young knights to prove themselves worthy of joining the Round Table. One of these knights is Lancelot, who is embroiled in a love affair with Arthur's queen Guinevere. Lancelot disguises himself as an independent knight for the tournament. In the middle of his courageous efforts on the field, the manuscript cuts off.

While early scholars associated *Melekh Artus* with Italian versions of the King Arthur stories, I propose that the Hebrew author, even if he lived in northern Italy, was drawing exclusively on Old French versions.[15] A new reading of the transliterated vernacular words reveals that they reflect a French or Franco-Italian spelling evocative of the Francophone culture of northern Italy. The scribe translates from two sections from the popular five-part medieval collection the Lancelot-Grail cycle: the *prose Merlin* for his first part and the *mort Artu* for the second.[16] At times, he engages in close literal translation and at times rewrites the episodes. The medieval Jewish communities of France

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[13]   M. Schüler, "Die hebräische Version der Sage von Arthur und Lanzelot aus den Jahre 1279," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* cxxii (1909): 51–63; Howard Needler, "Refiguring the Middle Ages: Reflections on Hebrew Romances," *New Literary History* 8, no. 2 (1977): 238–42; Paul R. Rovang, "Hebraizing Arthurian Romance: The Originality of Melech Artus," *Arthuriana* 19, no. 2 (2009): 3–9; Tamar S. Drukker, "A Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Tale in Hebrew: A Unique Literary Exchange," *Medieval Encounters* 15, no. 1 (March 2009): 114–29.

[14]   I use the terms "scribe," "author," and "translator" interchangeably in this paper, as we have no other versions of this story in Hebrew. Without any evidence to the contrary, we can treat *Melekh Artus* as a unique literary production by a single author.

[15]   Moritz Steinschneider, *Die hebraeischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher. Ein Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte des Mittelalters, meist nach handschriftlichen Quellen* (Berlin, Kommissionsverlag des Bibliographischen bureaus, 1893), 968; Schüler, "Die hebräische Version," 51–63; Gaster, "The Destruction of the Round Table," 274–76.

[16]   The Lancelot-Grail cycle, also known as the Vulgate Cycle, contains five major sections drawn from sources ranging between 1210 and the mid-1230s. These sections include: 1) *The History of the Grail*; 2) *Merlin*; 3) *Lancelot*; 4) *The Quest for the Holy Grail*; and 5) *The Death of Arthur*. For an overview of the Lancelot cycle and *Prose Merlin* French tradition, see the Introduction in John Conlee, ed., *Prose Merlin* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998).

spoke Old French as their vernacular and used Hebrew exclusively for writing and liturgical use. Jewish studies scholarship has been reluctant to acknowledge the extent to which medieval Jews read the vernacular, but texts like *Melekh Artus* and its translation of sections of the Lancelot-Grail cycle suggest the scribe was using a textual source.

Translations are exceedingly unusual among medieval northern European Hebrew texts, with only two or three extant. Created in a diglossic society, with Jews speaking French but writing and reading in Hebrew, the translations from Old French to Hebrew reveal a complex relationship between language and text. In *Melekh Artus,* the author puts Hebrew in the mouths of knights and refers to biblical passages to prove a satirical or moralistic example. Otherwise, however, he refrains from "Judaizing" the material. A similar phenomenon appears in Berechiah ha-Nakdan's *Mishle Shuʿalim,* a reworking of French Aesopic tales, in which his animal fables lack any practical applications to Jewish values or religious practice.

This project puts those translations into the foreground to concretize our understanding of language and literary practices among French-speaking, Hebrew-writing Jews of medieval Northern Europe. While Jewish Studies scholarship has traditionally ascribed medieval Jewish knowledge of French stories to oral retellings, this project proves direct engagement with Old French texts. In several cases, I have shown probable transmission patterns of Old French texts to the Hebrew versions.

My research also reveals a hidden arena for Hebrew *belles-lettres* in medieval northern Europe. The only belletristic literature produced by medieval Jewish communities in northern Europe, England, Germany, or northern Italy appears in translation from non-Jewish sources, or via authors whose Judaism is challenged. We see this in the possibly Jewish identity of 13th-century poets Susskind of Trimberg (Germany), Challot le Juif (northern France) and Mathieu le Juif (Arras), the 12th-century autobiographer Herman the Jew (Cologne) and the 12th-century composer Obadiah the Proselyte (born in Italy and active in the Middle East). Some of these authors converted to Judaism, while others converted to Christianity; in all cases, their status as questionably, formerly, or newly Jewish allows them to access belletristic traditions outside the scope of traditional Hebrew literature. Through their conversion, the new Christians learned how to read Latin and write in languages other than the Hebrew alphabet – the above-named authors wrote in Latin, German, and

French in the Latin alphabet, a linguistic feat not otherwise attempted by Jewish authors. Though the literature suggests a halfhearted welcome from the Christian community, the proselytes ostensibly had access to an entirely new literary sphere from which to draw for their own creative endeavors.

I plan to continue this research in a wider medieval framework through an analysis of comparative material between medieval Jewish literary borrowing and medieval Christian literary borrowing, emphasizing the ways in which both communities drew from cultures unlike their own. Much medieval Christian literature, such as Marie de France's *Ysopet* from which Berechiah ha-Nakdan translated, itself borrows and translates from Latinate texts. While some themes become Christological in medieval French versions, some of the pagan elements remain. This tension is confronted in works such as 12th- and 13th-century Ovidian commentaries and the contemporaneous mythologized stories of the Trojan War rewritten devoid of pagan piety.[17] A comparison between the Judaization of medieval Hebrew texts and the Christological processes in contemporaneous Christian texts would allow my book to do a more far-reaching analysis of medieval literary borrowing. My dissertation as a whole, and my book project even more so, reminds us that medieval communities did not live disparately but interacted, at least on a literary level, with texts from outside their religious or cultural sphere.

By highlighting the form and function of the medieval narratives, I address the texts as unique pieces of literature rather than as dependent on traditional rabbinic or biblical literature. In doing so, I analyze the texts in light of literary scholarship on medieval literature more generally, drawing on theories of secular-sacred distinctions, as in Barbara Newman's *The Medieval Crossover,* of exegesis in literature as expressed by Rita Copeland, and literary theories of cultural borrowing.[18]

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[17]   James G. Clark, Frank T. Coulson, and Kathryn L. McKinley, eds., *Ovid in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Ronald E. Pepin, ed., *The Vatican Mythographers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

[18]   Barbara Newman, *Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular Against the Sacred* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013); Angel Rama, *Writing across Cultures: Narrative Transculturation in Latin America,* trans. David L Frye, 2nd ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem," *Poetics Today* 11, no. 1 (1990): 45–51.

While even non-medievalists are familiar with the names of the most popular narratives and authors in medieval Europe (*Beowulf, Chanson de Roland,* Dante, Boccaccio, Chaucer), medieval Hebrew texts do not permeate into greater medieval studies scholarship. At its core, this is probably a linguistic issue: general medievalists lack the requisite Hebrew skills to study medieval Hebrew literature and, as a result, Hebrew texts do not feature in medievalist scholarship to any meaningful extent. Through this research project, I hope to introduce medievalists to the rich corpus of medieval Hebrew folktales and stories. But this literature has not garnered the scholarly attention it deserves within Jewish studies scholarship either. I intend to bring more of these didactic texts to a wider scholarly audience through careful examination of their place within the wider Jewish and non-Jewish cultural milieus.

Many literary themes that appear in the Hebrew texts will look familiar to a medievalist, including romance, courtly love, moralizing exempla, and picaresque episodes. This dissertation introduces medievalists to this rich trove of stories and anticipates a new emphasis on global literature in the field of Medieval studies. Drawing on comparative literature techniques, scholars can utilize the recent translations of Hebrew works (including *Sefer ha-Maʿasim*[19]) into modern English to complement their own non-Hebrew textual studies.

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[19]   Kushelevsky, *Tales in Context.*

Survey

Which Works in Jewish Studies Should Urgently Be (Re-)Translated?

Scholars, in particular those working in the humanities, all face issues of the availability, quality, and ideology of translations as we teach and research. The lack of accessible and reliable translations of important texts can be a serious obstacle. A Jewish studies journal devoted to the topic of translations should take account of this situation. We therefore asked our readers and colleagues to think of works that should be urgently translated or re-translated, into which language, and why. PaRDeS received quite a number of different responses, which came to us through various communication channels; they are listed below. We hope that these entries will alert colleagues, translators, and publishers to the need of translations.

M. K. / M. T.

Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah ("The Second Law," c. 1170–1180)*: from Hebrew to Italian.

There is no current Italian translation of this monumental work of Maimonides. This text is of paramount importance for providing a rational systematization of the Jewish Law. So far there are only two very old Italian translations (a first one in 1580 and a second one in 1870!).

Federico Dal Bo, Autonomous University of Barcelona

Viktor E. Kelner, *Missioner istorii: Žizn' i trudy Semena Markoviča Dubnovna* ("History Missionary: Life and Woks of Simon Markovich Dubnow," St. Petersburg: MIR, 2008): from Russian to English.

Beside Robert Seltzer's 1970 doctoral dissertation, published in revised form as *Simon Dubnow's "New Judaism:" Diaspora Nationalism and the World History of the Jews* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), there is no current, comprehensive, and critical English-language biography of the great historian, political philosopher, and ideologist of the Jewish people. While the memoir-biography of his

daughter, Sophie Dubnov-Erlich, *The Life and Work of S.M. Dubnov* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), is an important source, Kelner's work remains essential: a comprehensive biography based on documents difficult to access. So far there is only a German translation by Martin Arndt, *Simon Dubnow: Eine Biografie* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2010).

Markus Krah, University of Potsdam/Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN

Jacob al-Qirqisani, *Kitab al-anwar wal-maraqib ("Book of Lights and Watchtowers," c. 937 CE)*: from Arabic into a European language.

Published in Arabic in 937, this major encyclopedic work is an important source on Karaite practice and belief. It uses Karaite, Rabbinic, Christian, and Muslim sources to focus on law, but also treats biblical exegesis, theology, philosophy, liturgy, Jewish sects, religious polemic, and other subjects. The extensive heresiography is a unique source for Jewish sectarianism in the poorly-known early Middle Ages. The book stands as major testimony to the intersection of the three monotheistic religions with philosophy (especially Muʿtazilite *kalam*) and Jewish participation in the explosion of Arabic literary production that followed the introduction of paper. The current edition by Leon Nemoy (1939–1943) is handwritten in Arabic characters. Only a few sections have been translated, demanding a fully annotated translation into a European language.

Fred Astren, San Francisco State University

H. Leivick [Leivick Halpern], *Mit der Sheyres ha-Pleyteh* (New York: H. Leivick yubiley-fund durkhn Tsiko-farlag, 1947): from Yiddish to English.

H. Leivick's *Mit der Sheyres ha-Pleyteh* is one of the first studies of Holocaust survivors. Leivick visited displaced persons camps in Germany in 1946 and interviewed survivors in the languages of their choice. The testimonies are fresh and raw, untampered by time and outside commentary, other than the author's own. That Leivick is known primarily as a playwright and poet renders the book a standout in his body of work. Much of his writing is translated; adding this text to his translated repertory expands his legacy and our understanding of the Holocaust.

Rachel Jablon, University of Maryland

Leopold Löw, *Die Lebensalter in der jüdischen Literatur: vom physiologischen, rechts-, sitten- und religionsgeschichtlichen Standpunkte betrachtet* (Szegedin: Burger, 1875; reprint, Westmead: Gregg International, 1969): from German to English (or Hebrew).

"[This book] deals with the periodization of life; with embryology and gynecology, with the legal ramifications of and rituals related to all major stages of life (except dying and death), and with much more, from naming a child to dancing, walking, and smoking. [...] A seminal work of 19th-century Jewish scholarship, this book anticipated to some extent the so-called 'corporeal' or 'materialistic' (anthropocentric or vitalistic) turn in Jewish studies in recent decades." However, the book is only available in German. Its translation into English (or Hebrew) would continue to inspire scholarship in cultural history and folklore.

Peter Radvanszki, Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies, Budapest, Hungary, quoting Tamás Turán, "Leopold Löw and the Study of Rabbinic Judaism – A Bicentennial Appraisal," in *Jewish Studies* 48 (2012), 66–67.

Zvi Asaria (Helfgott), *Hipus le-Derakhim khadashot be-Filosofiah: Fritz H. Heinemann (The Search for new Ways in Philosophy: Fritz H. Heinemann)* (Tel Aviv: Ha-Makhon leheker ha-Psikhologiah shel ha'Am ha-Yehudi, 1990): from Hebrew to German.

This work is profound, bold, and eclectic. This book by Zvi Asaria-Helfgott, a neglected but crucial figure of 20th-century Jewish history himself, is so far the most comprehensive account of the life and philosophy of Fritz H. Heinemann, the first chronicler of existentialism, who was forced to leave Germany in 1933 and spent decades teaching at the University of Oxford. Not only an intellectual biography of Heinemann, but also a tour de force through Jewish thought and history, Asaria-Helfgott weaves together his own fate with Heinemann's, and explores the philosophical and theological implications of the Shoah.

Sebastian Musch, University of Osnabrück

Majer Balaban, *Dzieje Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu, 1304–1868 [A History of the Jews in Kraków and Kazimierz, 1304–1868]*, 2 vols. (Kraków: Nadzieja, 1931–1936): from Polish to English.

Widely recognized as the father of Polish-Jewish historiography, Majer Balaban's monumental two-volume study of the history of the Jews of Krakow and Kazimierz has never been translated into English. Despite the innovative and growing field of Polish-Jewish Studies, Balaban's work remains a methodologically unique model for rigorously synthesizing Jewish communal records, responsa literature, and Polish archival materials. A Hebrew edition of Balaban's massive historical study was edited by the late Jakub Goldberg, *Toldot ha-Yehudim be-Krakov u-ve-Kazimyez, 1304–1868* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2002), and a Polish reprint has appeared recently (Krakow: Austeria, 2013). At present, however, this important source is still largely inaccessible to many scholars.

Jonathan Zisook, City University of New York

Abraham Cahan, *Bleter Fun Mein Leben* (New York: Forverts Association, 1926–1931), 5 vols.: from Yiddish to English.

There is no complete translation of Abraham Cahan's crucial work. The Jewish Publication Society of America published a single-volume condensed English version of the first two volumes by Leon Stein, Abraham P. Conan, and Lynn Davison, entitled *The Education of Abraham Cahan* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969). A full-length biography, *The Rise of Abraham Cahan*, by Seth Lipsky (New York: Schocken Books, 2013), relies heavily on the memoir. The original remains largely inaccessible, though it is rich in detail of Jewish social history, political history of the Left, the immigrant Jewish labor sector, and is an important narrative of an extraordinary life.

Eli Lederhendler, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry

Ahron Marcus, *Der Chassidismus,* **(Pleschen: a. k. a Verus, in Verlag des Yeshurun, 1901): from German to English.**

Der Chassidismus, published in 1901 by Ahron Marcus, is the first scholarly work on Hasidism. Marcus has been called "the Pioneer of Hasidic Literature" and his work has been treated and built upon by other important scholars of Hasidut, including Gershom Scholem and Moshe Idel. The volume was translated into Hebrew by Moshe Shenfeld, in a 1980 volume, entitled *Ha-Hasidut*, but the translation suffers from multiple cases of censorship that served to blunt Markus's critique of certain Hasidic courts. Both the problematic nature of the Hebrew translation and the lack of an English translation militate for a rigorous, uncensored English translation from the German original.

Shlomo Zuckier, Yale University

Carl Gebhardt, ed., *Die Schriften des Uriel da Costa, mit Einleitung und Übersetzung* **(Heidelberg: Winter Verlag, 1922): from German to English.**

There is no up-to-date English translation of the works by Carl Gebhardt, the pioneer researcher on da Costa, including the eminent autobiography of Uriel Da Costa (ca. 1585–1640). Da Costa's ancestors were New Christians in Portugal, who emigrated to Hamburg at the beginning of the 17th century where they and he returned to Judaism and later moved to Amsterdam. Acosta became a skeptic who questioned the religious institutions both Catholic and Rabbinic of his time. The autobiography tells the story of his tragic life and intellectual development, and ultimately his experience as a victim of intolerance from Jewish and non-Jewish society. His "Thesis against Tradition" and his essay "On Mortality of the Soul" provide more context to Da Costa's ideas and struggle.

Carsten Schapkow, University of Oklahoma

Israel Jacob Yuval, *The Religious Leadership of German Jewry in the Late Middle Ages* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988): from Hebrew to English or German.

This milestone study has contributed greatly to the details provided in Germania Judaica III on rabbinic scholars in late medieval Germany. However, the qualities of Yuval's socio-historical analysis were lost when the information was reduced to brief biographies in the *Germania Judaica* series.

Christoph Cluse, University of Trier

Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Sources. Recueil* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1984); from French to English.

These five texts from 1958 to 1971 date back to the most mature phase of the thought of Vladimir Jankélévitch. Through them, the author develops his most articulated and profound reflection on Jewishness. The Jew is presented as the philosophical figure of the Other par excellence, whose identity becomes salient in cultural, religious, political terms. The volume addresses also the question of antisemitism, the issue of loyalty to Israel, the meaning of messianism and hope, not without an explicit connection with Jankélévitch's moral philosophy. These writings have not yet been translated into neither English nor German.

Francesco Ferrari, University Jena

Kurt Guggenheim, *Alles in Allem* (Zürich: Th. Gut Verlag, 2018): from German to English.

Zurich is the most Jewish city in continental Europe. Switzerland was largely spared from the Holocaust. This gives the Jewish community in Zurich a special continuity and authenticity. Jewish daily life is omnipresent in the district of Wiedikon, but also in other parts of the city. The Jewish author Kurt Guggenheim dedicated a declaration of love to Zurich in 1958 with his novel *Alles in Allem*. Guggenheim was born in Zurich in 1896 as son of a Jewish merchant. In more than 1100 pages, the author succeeds in painting a portrait of manners. "I look at everything I've written so far as a precursor to a large, modern Swiss structure and generation novel," Guggenheim used to say.

Raphael Rauch, University of Zurich

Avigdor Hameiri, *Ha-Shiga'on ha-Gadol: Reshimot shel Katsin Ivri ba-Milkhama ha-Gedolah* (The Great Madness: Notes of a Hebrew Officer in the Great War) (Jerusalem: Mitspe, 1929): from Hebrew to German.

The autobiographical novel about the adventures of a Jewish-Austrian officer during WWI is considered to be the first best seller of Modern Hebrew literature and has often been compared to E. M. Remarque's seminal *All Quiet on the Western Front*. With biting mockery, Avigdor Hameiri (born A. Feuerstein, 1890–1970) deconstructs the "madness" of the war by focusing on the specific experience of being a Jewish soldier. There are two very different English translations of the text (J. Freedman, 1952, and Y. Lotan, 1984) and a few chapters were published in installments in a German-speaking Jewish newspaper in the 1930s. A complete German edition of *The Great Madness* would constitute a valuable supplement to the canonic texts about WWI, and, at the same time, serve as an introduction to an important Jewish literary voice, virtually unknown outside of Israel.

Sebastian Schirrmeister, University of Hamburg

Max Czollek, *Desintegriert Euch* (Berlin: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2018): from German to English.

This recently published book speaks of the actuality of German-Jewish relations in the context of the rise of chauvinist nationalism in Germany. It critically analyzes the German representation of its Jewish minority and how this representation has helped to maintain the illusion of contemporary German identity as non-anti-Semitic and non-racist. Written by a young German-Jewish poet, scholar, and stage performer, this book has initiated an important public debate, which will be of interest beyond the German-speaking milieu. Its analysis is indebted to thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Maxim Biller, and to the concept of *Gedächnistheater* (theater of memory), introduced by sociologist Y. Michal Bodemann.

Peter Banki, University of Queensland

Christian Poetini, *Weiterüberleben. Jean Améry und Imre Kertész* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2014); from German to English.

There is no other literary study which examines the essayistic and fictional writing of Jean Améry (1912–1978) and Imre Kertész (1929–2016) in the context of suicide. Hereby, the focus lies on the connection between the discourse about Holocaust survivors and the discourse about suicide. The title, a neologism, is an expression for the life after the Holocaust from the perspective of the victim. Poetini reflects the subjective perspectives, testimonial narratives, and literary strategies of Améry and Kertész. Through the description of their literature as a special kind of writing – the "Literatur des Weiterüberlebens" (literally "literature of surviving on") – is an appropriate but not yet translated term for analyzing writings of the Holocaust survivors.

Bianca P. Pick, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz

David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); from English to German.

This introduction to the history of the Jews in the early modern period shows how the historical and cultural characteristics of the European Jewish communities evolved in the non-Jewish society of the time. Ruderman identifies five features which unified the Jewish communities in the early modern era: a great mobility, an increasing experience of the communal cohesion of the Jewish settlements, an explosion of (Jewish) knowledge, the crisis of rabbinic authority, and the blurring of religious identities. There is no comparable overview on the early modern era in Jewish history. Ruderman's book aims at a broad reading public, is easy to read, and, therefore, should be made accessible linguistically through a translation into German.

Mirjam Thulin, Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz/Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN

Ignác Goldziher, *Az iszlám. Tanulmányok a mohamedán vallás története köréből ("Islamic Studies on the History of the Mohammedan Religion")* **(Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1881; reprint Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1980): from Hungarian into English or any Western language.**

There are always books which got lost in the academic literary canons for reasons unclear. It certainly cannot be due to its low quality that Ignác Goldziher's massive Hungarian volume "Az iszlám" was never translated into a Western language. Despite of an outdated title, the chapters, inter alia on the veneration of saints in Islam, on Muslim architecture interpreted in the context of relevant Islamic concepts, and on the integration of Muslim universities into social life, are topics which testify of Goldziher's original view of the Islam.

Ottfried Fraisse, Seminar für Judaistik/Jüdische Studien, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

Book Reviews

Birgit M. Körner, Hebräische Avantgarde: Else Lasker-Schülers Poetologie im Kontext des Kulturzionismus (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2017), 356 S., 50 €.

Nach Jahrzehnten einer eher beschränkten, in den Worten des israelischen Literaturwissenschaftlers Jakob Hessing regelrecht „mythisierenden Rezeption" (so der Untertitel von Hessings Monografie *Die Heimkehr einer jüdischen Emigrantin* von 1993) hat sich das literarische Werk von Else Lasker-Schüler seit dem Ende der 1990er Jahre als ein überaus produktiver Gegenstand für vielfältige, theoretisch diverse literaturwissenschaftliche Lektüren erwiesen, die der poetischen Komplexität und dem referentiellen „Überangebot" der Texte auf unterschiedliche Weise Rechnung tragen. Auch die jüdischen Dimensionen der Texte wurden inzwischen eingehend untersucht.[1] Angesichts der Vielzahl bereits vorhandener Monografien und Aufsätze einen bislang nicht berücksichtigten Zusammenhang oder nicht erprobten Blickwinkel zu entdecken, erweist sich zunehmend als schwierig. Birgit M. Körners Dissertation (Universität Gießen 2015), die hier in leicht überarbeiteter Form vorliegt, stellt sich dieser Herausforderung. In deutlicher Abgrenzung zu biografischen Lesarten ebenso wie notorischen Identitätsfragen, rückt die Studie eine historisch verankerte, intertextuelle Konstellation in den Mittelpunkt ihrer Untersuchung von Else Lasker-Schülers literarischem Schaffen. Körners erklärtes Ziel ist es, „Lasker-Schülers konzeptionell auf unhintergehbare Differenz beharrende, dabei aber durchaus zu poetischen Allianzen fähige und auf diesen basierende, sowohl poetologisch als auch politisch reflektierte Positionierung in der vom deutschsprachigen Kulturzionismus maßgeblich bestimmten jüdischen Erneuerungsbewegung zu rekonstruieren" (33). Damit greift Körner eine Fragestellung auf, die in früheren Arbeiten zwar angedeutet, aber noch nicht ausführlich erforscht wurde.

Um nun Lasker-Schülers ambivalente „Allianz" mit Vertretern, Texten und Topoi des deutschsprachigen Kulturzionismus untersuchen zu können, wird diese spezielle Gruppierung innerhalb der zionistischen Bewegung in einem eigenen, an Einleitung und Forschungsstand (Kapitel I) anschließenden Kapitel II zunächst umfassend konturiert. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit gilt dabei

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[1]   Vgl. z.B. Alfred Bodenheimer, *Die auferlegte Heimat: Else Lasker-Schülers Emigration in Palästina* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995) oder Andrea Henneke-Weischer, *Poetisches Judentum: Die Bibel im Werk Else Lasker-Schülers* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 2003).

der Affinität des Kulturzionismus zu Positionen und Verfahren der künstlerischen Avantgarde und dem sich daraus ergebenden poetologischem Potenzial. Martin Bubers Aufsatz *Jüdische Renaissance* von 1901 wird in diesem Kontext als regelrechtes Manifest einer sich selbst als „Avantgarde des Zionismus" (Berthold Feiwel) verstehenden, in deutscher (!) Sprache stattfindenden Strömung im Umfeld von Kaffeehauskultur, Bohème und Lebensreformbewegung gelesen.

Das hierauf folgende Kapitel III widmet sich Lasker-Schülers Frühwerk und zeigt ein „starkes Resonanzverhältnis zum kulturzionistischen Projekt" (117). Hierfür werden unter anderem die Einbandgestaltung sowie einzelne Texte ihres zweiten Gedichtbandes *Der siebente Tag* (1905) eingehend analysiert. Hervorzuheben ist hier insbesondere die minutiöse Lektüre des bislang von der Forschung nicht behandelten Gedichts *Täubchen, das in seinem eigenen Blute schwimmt* (154–172), das auf der Mikroebene erstaunliche Korrespondenzen mit kulturzionistischen Topoi und Denkfiguren aufweist. Dass sich die festgestellten Resonanzen auch auf Lasker-Schülers frühe Prosaarbeiten erstrecken, zeigt Körner am *Peter Hille-Buch* (1906), das sie als Ausdruck dichterischer Emanzipation im Kontext des Kulturzionismus deutet. Dabei bilde der Kulturzionismus für Lasker-Schülers frühe Texte zwar ein wichtiges, jedoch kein ausschließlich affirmatives Referenzsystem. Vielmehr werde – u. a. durch eine dezidiert weibliche bzw. die für Lasker-Schülers Texte typische, geschlechtlich ambigue Perspektive – „das kulturzionistische Modell indirekt kritisiert, unterlaufen und erweitert" (213).

Kapitel IV nimmt spätere Texte Lasker-Schülers in den Blick, die „in der markierten Nachfolge von Heinrich Heine rabbinische Schreib- und Diskursverfahren für eine avantgardistische jüdische Literatur fruchtbar machen" (215). In diesem Sinne werden Lasker-Schülers *Hebräische Balladen* (1912/13) als eine Art Midrasch gelesen, der unter Rückgriff auf biblische Figuren (v. a. Esther und Jakob) einen schöpferischen Künstlermythos entwirft. Die Lektüre von *Der Wunderrabbi von Barcelona* (1921) wartet mit überraschenden, bisher nicht untersuchten intertextuellen Bezügen zu den Pogrom-Gedichten von Chaim Nachman Bialik auf. Zuletzt wird *Das Hebräerland* (1937) nicht nur als Lasker-Schülers vielleicht intensivste Auseinandersetzung mit dem kulturzionistischen Diskurs, die sich u. a. in den verschiedenen Fassungen des Textes zeigt, sondern auch als Versuch gelesen, eine Sprache dichterischer Offenbarung zu finden.

Die im Titel und verschiedenen Teilen der Arbeit wiederkehrende Bezeichnung „Hebräisch" verweist zum einen auf die kulturzionistischen Debatten um die „richtige" Sprache des erneuerten Judentums. Zum anderen ist es ein aktualisierender Verweis auf Heines (ebenfalls auf Deutsch verfasste) *Hebräische Melodien* und löst sich damit von der reinen Sprachfrage. Nach Körners im Schlusskapitel V formulierter Lesart bezeichnet „Hebräisch" bei Lasker-Schüler „eine genuin avantgardistische, kämpferische, ‚urjüdische' und gleichzeitig zwischenmenschlich liebende, ethische, versöhnende, schöpferisch an JHWH zurückgebundene Haltung" (326). Wie sich in dieser attributreichen Skizzierung andeutet, mündet die Studie – angesichts des Gegenstandes wenig überraschend – keinesfalls in ein definitives, kohärentes Modell. Stattdessen unterscheidet Körner grob zwei Phasen in Lasker-Schülers Auseinandersetzung mit den Ideen des Kulturzionismus vor und nach 1912, die sich als Positionierung als jüdische*r Dichter*in und Fortschreiben der rabbinischen Tradition (vgl. 325–326) umreißen lassen.

Neben den sehr genauen Textlektüren, die einige „Neuentdeckungen" hervorbringen, zeichnet sich die Studie durch eine sorgfältige und kritische Auseinandersetzung mit der vorhandenen Forschungsliteratur aus. Besonders intensiv rezipiert werden die Arbeiten von Hallensleben (2000), Bischoff (2002), Hammer (2004) und Di Rosa (2006).[2] Allerdings findet ein Großteil dieser Argumentationen im Fußnotenapparat statt, der aufgrund dieser und anderer, ergänzend-erklärender „Exkurse" auf manchen Seiten den eigentlichen Text der Arbeit an den Rand drängt. Ein etwas intensiveres Lektorat wäre an manchen Stellen wünschenswert gewesen. Dies betrifft nicht nur den Umfang der Fußnoten, sondern auch die sehr kleinteilige Strukturierung der Arbeit und gewisse Redundanzen (wiederholte Verweise, Formulierungen und Zitate sowie die typischen Ausblicke und Rekapitulationen des Vorgehens einer Qualifikationsschrift), die aber nur ins Gewicht fallen, wenn die Studie „am Stück" gelesen wird.

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[2]   Markus Hallensleben, *Else Lasker-Schüler: Avantgardismus und Kunstinszenierung* (Tübingen, Basel: Francke, 2000); Doerte Bischoff, *Ausgesetzte Schöpfung. Figuren der Souveränität und Ethik der Differenz in der Prosa Else Lasker-Schülers* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002); Almuth Hammer, *Erwählung erinnern. Literatur als Medium jüdischen Selbstverständnisses* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); Valentina Di Rosa, *„Begraben sind die Bibeljahre längst". Diaspora und Identitätssuche im poetischen Entwurf Else Lasker-Schülers* (Paderborn: Mentis, 2006).

Angesichts der intertextuellen Überdeterminierung und teils hermetischen Poetisierung im Schreiben von Lasker-Schüler, die auch Körner wiederholt anmerkt, erweist sich die in *Hebräische Avantgarde* konsequent durchgehaltene fokussierte Fragestellung als Mittel der Wahl. Der auf diese Weise beleuchtete Ausschnitt fügt sich ein in die Erforschung der unendlich scheinenden Facetten der Lasker-Schülerschen Texte. Für diese gilt sinngemäß das Wort aus der Mischna: „Wende sie hin und wende sie her, denn alles ist darin enthalten."

Sebastian Schirrmeister, Hamburg

Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Philosophie morale,* ed. Françoise Schwab (Paris: Flammarion, 2019), 1184 S., 32 €

The reception of Vladimir Jankélévitch (1903–1985) in the English- and German-speaking scene has only recently begun. It happened almost exclusively with regard to the question of forgiveness, first and foremost stimulated by Jankélévitch's role as a key interlocutor in Jacques Derrida's *Pardonner* (2004). A glimpse at the secondary literature shows this evidence. Aaron Looney's monograph *Vladimir Jankélévitch. The Time of Forgiveness* (2015) stands out in the English-speaking world, together with the collection of essays *Vladimir Jankélévitch and the Question of Forgiveness* (2013), edited by Alan Udoff. Jankélévitch's German-speaking reception is similar, with references in Wiard Raveling's autobiographical recollection *Ist Versöhnung möglich?* (2014) and Verena Lemcke's monograph *Der Begriff Verzeihen bei Vladimir Jankélévitch* (2008). While more than ten of Jankélévitch's books have been translated into German, English-speaking editions can be counted on one hand. Apart from the translation of *Le music et l'ineffable* (*Music and the Ineffable*, 2003) and *Henri Bergson* (*Henri Bergson*, 2015), they all share the aforementioned focus on forgiveness, as we can see through the English-speaking edition of *Pardonner* (*Should We Pardon Them?*, 1996), *Le pardon* (*Forgiveness*, 2005) and *La mauvaise conscience* (*The Bad Conscience*, 2015).

The fact that many of Jankélévitch's writings have become inaccessible over time, even the original French editions, provides a further explanation of such a partial and late reception. Hence, the reprint of the collection *Philosophie morale* (PM), first published in 1998, must be greeted with enthusiasm. It brings together seven monographs written by Jankélévitch

over three decades. The volume opens with a general foreword by the editor Françoise Schwab, and hereafter every text is introduced with a concise and clear preface. Finally, the volume ends with a bibliography of Jankélévitch's works. *Philosophie morale* offers essays ranging from 1933 – when, at the age of thirty, Jankélévitch published his thesis on the *Mauvaise conscience* – through 1951 – the year when he was appointed professor of moral philosophy at the Sorbonne University – until the publication of *Le pardon* in 1967 – when he distinctly raised his voice in the French debate on the imprescriptability of war crimes, with particular reference to the Holocaust. These three moments correspond with three essential theses of Jankélévitch's moral philosophy that are articulated throughout the volume: the irrevocability of Evil, the fugacity of Good, and the unsurmountable struggle between love and death.

La mauvaise conscience (1933, PM 31–202) sets up an argument of capital importance for the entire moral philosophy of Jankélévitch: within irreversible time, human beings are free to the extent that they can do and undo what they have done, but they cannot undo the fact-of-having-done. Evil deeds, once committed, are recognized as irrevocable for the moral life to come, and no repentance, no compensation, no expiation can extinguish them. If the human being is determined by the French philosopher as essentially free, bad conscience is the moral scenario stemming from the two fundamental feelings of remorse and regret, which are analyzed in detail throughout these pages. *Du mensogne* (1942, PM 203–288) and *Le mal* (1947, PM 289–372) date back to Jankélévitch's years of resistance against Nazism in occupied France. Evil deeds and mendacity are both linked to a misuse of freedom. Their possibility, Jankélévitch warns us, is given with consciousness as such. Whereas freedom can always choose between Good and Evil (the author clearly diverges from the legacy of Socratic-Christian ethical intellectualism), consciousness can similarly choose between truthfulness and mendacity. At the same time, no evil deed can be integrated into a pre-established Leibnizian-Hegelian harmony: in its irrevocable character, it remains something irreconcilable.

While the Evil is acknowledged as irrevocable and is set therefore as perpetual, *L'austerité et la vie morale* (1956, PM 373–582) explains how the Good, on the other side, is tragically transitory. According to Jankélévitch, it is impossible to stay in a virtuous state: this state must be constantly regained through the event of the instant. Hence, vigilance becomes the fundamental

condition of a moral life, which requires bringing the vital fullness of the instant into the plot of interval-time. Nevertheless, the risk of complacency toward one's good deed should not be underestimated. Between being moral and its consciousness lies a conflict, and it seems to be insoluble. This thesis finds more articulated expression in *Le pur et l'impur* (1960, PM 583–814). Entirely immersed in the stream of time as irreversible becoming, given its character of constant alteration, human beings cannot achieve purity. Therefore, they cannot assert themselves or their deeds as "pure." On the contrary, every situation needs intransigence to discern Good from Evil, and innocence, that is, self-forgetfulness, is finally individuated by Jankélévitch as the sole criterion of purity for the moral action. In the same time period, *L'aventure, l'ennui, le sérieux* (1963, PM 815–990) reflects on three fundamental forms of living in the present time, and comes to similar conclusions. In the adventure (first form), the tension towards the future is constantly exposed to the risk of degenerating into a search for intensity as such. Along this way, the adventure turns itself fatally in the stagnation of boredom (second form). Seriousness (third form), that is existential commitment to the here and now in the protracted time of interval, finally represents Jankélévitch's antidote to the excesses of adventure and boredom. As such, seriousness encompasses vigilance and intransigence towards the fugacity of the Good, recognizing them as key virtues for the flourishing of moral life.

According to *Le pardon* (1967, PM 991–1150), facing irrevocable evil deeds requires the force of forgiveness. Yet, genuine forgiveness is something rare. Instead of providing a comprehensive definition of forgiveness, Jankélévitch phenomenologically individuates its three main features and their corresponding forms of simili-forgiveness, which are currently circulating, and are mostly (and wrongly!) understood as forgiveness. The instantaneous forgiving event is confused with the long process of temporal decay; the extra-legal, graceful gift of for-giveness is confused with an intellectual excuse, which elaborates reasons to forgive; the personal relation, that engages the victim and his/her perpetrator is replaced by a self-help oriented liquidation of the past. *Le pardon* constitutes Jankélévitch's final answer to the moral enigmas he raised in *La mauvaise conscience*. Indeed, the struggle between the irrevocability of Evil, expressed by assassinating, and the fugacity of Good, expressed by the loving force of forgiveness, constitute an unsolvable dyad, which substantiates his entire moral philosophy. This is well-condensed in the

biblical sentence "love is as strong as death" (Song of Solomon 8:6, PM 1148), on which Jankélévitch comments in the final pages of *Le pardon*, which also closes the volume *Philosophie morale*.

Thanks to this collection, Jankélévitch's philosophical reflection on forgiveness can now be understood in its articulated complexity, enormously benefitting from being inserted into the broader frame of his moral reflection.

Francesco Ferrari, Jena

Martin Goodman, A History of Judaism (London: Allen Lane, 2017), 656 S., $ 25.

Der vorliegende Band ist eine Geschichte der jüdischen Religion, nicht der Juden. Die politische und kulturelle Geschichte kommt einleitend zu den einzelnen Abschnitten nur soweit zur Sprache, als sie der notwendige geschichtliche Rahmen ist und auf religiöse Ideen und Praktiken abfärbt.

Im ersten Teil, *Origins (c. 2000 BCE–70 CE)*, versucht Goodman nicht, das Judentum in biblischer Zeit und in der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels zu rekonstruieren, sondern geht von Josephus und seiner Nacherzählung der Bibel aus, auch wenn diese sich nicht von der Geschichte selbst trennen lässt, für die Goodman eine gemäßigt konservative Rekonstruktion bietet; das Judentum sei auf jeden Fall im historischen Gedächtnis verwurzelt, „real or imagined" (25). Die Entstehung der Bibel verortet er in diversen kulturellen Einflüssen, für die Spätzeit besonders das griechische Denken. Die Bibel sieht er im 3. Jh. v.d.Z. in etwa der heutigen Form; bei Josephus sieht man ihre religiöse Wertung und Autorität trotz der Vielfalt religiöser Anschauungen, die in ihr zu finden sind.

Im Abschnitt *Interpreting the Torah (200 BCE–70 CE)* schildert Goodman die drei Religionsparteien, wie sie Josephus zeichnet, und betont v.a. die Pharisäer, die er nahe zu Jesus und dann den Rabbinen sieht, auch wenn er vorsichtig ist, Übereinstimmungen nicht als Identität zu werten. Sehr kritisch ist er gegenüber der negativen Darstellung der Sadduzäer, dem von Josephus gezeichneten biblischen Fundamentalismus oder auch zur üblichen Zuordnung zu den Priestern. Für Essener (und noch mehr die Therapeuten) betont Goodman deren Idealisierung in den Quellen. Die „vierte Philosophie" möchte er nicht als Theokratie verstehen, auch nicht als kontinuierlich einheitliche Strömung der Zeloten. Insgesamt hebt der Autor die Vielfalt im Judentum der

Zeit hervor – die Vorläufer der Rabbinen sieht er schon vor 70, betont auch
die Allegoristen (nicht nur um Philo) und v. a. Jesus und Paulus innerhalb
des Judentums, wobei er die Quellen recht positiv wertet. Knapp skizziert
Goodman die religiösen Praktiken, die weithin allen gemeinsam waren, und
auch Vorstellungen wie Eschatologie, Messiaserwartung und Hoffnung auf
ein Leben nach dem Tode. Seine Darstellung lockert Goodman immer wie-
der – auch in den folgenden Abschnitten – durch ausführliche Zitate aus den
Originalquellen auf.

Der nächste Teil gilt der Entstehung des rabbinischen Judentums [*Rabbinic
Judaism (70–1500 CE)*]. Die Vielfalt des Judentums hört nicht mit der Zerstö-
rung des Tempels auf, auch wenn es dazu keine Belege mehr gibt. Es wird nun
ein Judentum ohne Tempel, mit Betonung der Synagoge, ihrer Liturgie, Kunst,
und der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Christentum, auf dessen Einflüsse wie
auch die des Islam er kurz hinweist. Ein Kapitel, *Rabbis in the East (70–1000
CE)*, skizziert knapp die Entwicklung des Rabbinats bis hin zur Ausweitung
nach Spanien und ins übrige Europa, die Entstehung der rabbinischen Lite-
ratur, aber auch außerrabbinische Phänomene wie Sefer Yetsira (das „Buch
der Schöpfung" aus rabbinischer Zeit, als einer der Grundtexte der jüdischen
„Mystik" ab dem 10. Jh. oft kommentiert), Astrologie und Zauberschalen (aus
der Spätantike, zahlreich im Nordosten des heutigen Irak gefunden, einge-
graben im Fundament von Häusern zur Dämonenabwehr, viele davon He-
bräisch oder Aramäisch beschrieben). Gleichen Raum widmet Goodman zu
Recht dem *Judaism beyond the Rabbis*, dem Judentum der griechischen Welt,
der Frage des Einflusses des Patriarchen in der Diaspora ab dem 4./5. Jh. und
dem Vordringen des Hebräischen, wie es v. a. in Venosa (Süditalien) durch die
Inschriften der jüdischen Katakomben (5.–9. Jh.) belegt ist, und der langsamen
Verdrängung des griechischen Judentums rabbinischer Prägung. Fraglich ist
in diesem Zusammenhang, ob man in Justinians Novelle 146 aus dem Jahr
553, die in die jüdische Liturgie eingreift und darin die *deuterosis* verbietet,
„zweite", d. h. die außerbiblische Tradition, so direkt mit Mishnah wiedergeben
darf. Ein Versehen ist die Aussage Goodmans (300), dass die Vorfahren des
Ahimaats b. Paltiel in Capua „had been brought as captives to Jerusalem by
Titus" statt richtig „from Jerusalem". Sehr differenziert geht Goodman auf die
Entstehung der Karäer ein, deren weitere Geschichte bis heute er ebenfalls
skizziert. Unter dem Titel *Rabbis in the West (1000–1500 CE)* befasst sich Good-
man mit dem Judentum im (vornehmlich europäischen) Mittelalter, v. a. mit

Maimonides und der Kontroverse um sein Werk bis zur Disputation von Paris 1240, damit verbunden auch mit dem Aufstieg der Kabbalah. Deren Vertreter kämpften in Spanien besonders scharf gegen das Denken des Maimonides.

Der Teil *Authority and Reaction (1500–1800)* gilt der europäischen Renaissance und den jüdischen Wanderungen der Zeit im Gefolge der Vertreibung aus Spanien und Portugal bis hin nach Amerika, dem Einfluss des Buchdrucks auf eine gewisse Normierung von Halakhah (Schulhan Arukh), Liturgie und Talmudstudium. Die Entwicklung der Kabbalah v. a. durch Isaak Luria (1534–1572), den Vertreter einer stark gnostisch geprägten Kabbalah in Safed und seinen Kreis, die Herausforderung durch den „Pseudo-Messias" Sabbatai Zwi (1626–1676), der auch in deutschen jüdischen Gemeinden zahlreiche Anhänger fand, und dann das Aufkommen des Hasidismus werden knapp und sachkundig geschildert.

Das gilt auch für den letzten großen Teil, *The Challenge of the Modern World (1750–present)*. Hier steht die Emanzipation, verbunden mit Säkularisierung, der Wissenschaft des Judentums, und das Aufkommen des Zionismus bis hin zur Shoa mit den jeweiligen Auswirkungen auf religiöse Vorstellungen und Liturgie im Mittelpunkt. Ebenso zentral sind die Reformbewegung in ihren verschiedenen Ausprägungen in Europa und den USA, und als Gegenbewegung die moderne Orthodoxie, das Konservative Judentum, aber auch die totale Ablehnung jeglicher Neuerung durch die Haredim verschiedener Richtung. Ein wichtiger Ausblick gilt Formen religiöser Erneuerung einschließlich der Auswirkungen von Feminismus, Haltungen zu sexueller Diversität oder auch einem humanistischen Judentum ohne Gott. Mit einem Abschnitt, *Waiting for the Messiah*, endet das Buch, das noch kurz auf die von den meisten genannten Entwicklungen kaum berührten jüdischen Gemeinden Nordafrikas und des Nahen Ostens, Beta Israel, African Hebrew Israelites und messianische Juden eingeht. Goodman schließt seine Ausführungen mit einigen Worten zu Versuchen, einen Dritten Tempel zu errichten und den Sanhedrin, die (historisch allerdings problematische) oberste religiöse Instanz des Judentums aus rabbinischer Zeit, zu erneuern.

Dieser knappe Überblick über ein umfangreiches Werk, das versucht, die Vielfalt jüdischer Religionsgeschichte nachzuzeichnen, kann diesem natürlich nicht gerecht werden. Das Buch, das mit Landkarten zu den einzelnen Teilen und Bildmaterial gut ergänzt wird, ist ausgezeichnet geschrieben und sehr gut lesbar. Durch die Zusammenfassung größerer Zeiträume, als meist üblich,

gelingt es Goodman, große Entwicklungslinien aufzuzeigen. Der kulturgeschichtliche Rahmen einschließlich der Querverbindungen zur klassischen Antike, zu Christentum und Islam, im Rahmen der Reform auch zur Philosophie des 19./20. Jh. ist stets im Blick. Auch die Wechselbeziehungen konträrer Entwicklungen innerhalb des Judentums werden gut aufgezeigt.

Goodman ist eigentlich Spezialist für das (spät-)antike Judentum, zeichnet aber auch äußerst kenntnisreich die Entwicklungen bis in die Gegenwart nach und kann immer wieder mit unerwarteten Einblicken überraschen. Die Darstellung ist stets ausgewogen, *sine studio et ira* verfasst und kann auch von der Hauptlinie abweichenden, gerne als „Häresie", „Aberglaube" oder ähnlich abgewerteten Phänomenen positive Seiten abgewinnen. Insgesamt ist Goodman eine ausgezeichnete Darstellung gelungen, für Leser geeignet, die von der Sache wenig wissen. Sie bietet aber auch dem Kenner zumindest einzelner Phasen jüdischer Geschichte viel Neues. Ich halte es für die beste derzeit zu findende Darstellung der jüdischen Religionsgeschichte und habe viel daraus gelernt. Martin Goodman ist zu seiner Leistung nur aufrichtig zu gratulieren.

Günter Stemberger, Wien

Stefanie Fischer, Ökonomisches Vertrauen und antisemitische Gewalt. Jüdische Viehhändler in Mittelfranken 1919–1939 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), 368 S., 34,90 €.

Cornelia Aust, The Jewish Economic Elite. Making Modern Europe (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 272 S., $ 30 (Paperback), $ 80 (Hardcover).

Die Rolle von Vertrauen, welches stabile Handelsbeziehungen über unterschiedlich weite Distanzen erst ermöglicht, ist spätestens seit Francesca Trivellatos Buch über die Beziehungen eines sephardischen Handelshauses in Livorno[3] und eines internationalen Sammelbandes zum Verhältnis von Handel und Religion[4] ein zentrales Thema auch der jüdischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Hieran knüpfen die beiden vorzustellenden Dissertationen an.

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[3] Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers. The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2009).

[4] Francesca Trivellato, Leor Halevi und Cátia Antunes, Hgg., *Religion and Trade. Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Stefanie Fischer beschäftigt sich mit den jüdischen Viehhändlern Mittelfrankens aus kultur- und wirtschaftshistorischer Perspektive zwischen dem Ende des Ersten und dem Beginn des Zweiten Weltkriegs. Sie betont dabei die Rolle von Vertrauen zwischen den jüdischen Händlern und ihrer überwiegend christlichen Kundschaft. Cornelia Aust greift das Thema Vertrauen in ihrem Buch zur jüdischen Wirtschaftselite in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts und im beginnenden 19. Jahrhundert ebenfalls auf und erweitert das Konzept des sozialen und kulturellen Kapitals um den Aspekt der familiären und religiösen Zusammengehörigkeit aschkenasischer Juden, die erst zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts brüchig zu werden begann.

Bei Fischer stehen jüdische Viehhändlerfamilien in einer spezifischen Region (Mittelfranken) in der Weimarer Republik und im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland bis zum Ausbruch des Zweiten Weltkriegs im Zentrum. Aust hingegen untersucht anhand einzelner Familien und ihrer verwandtschaftlichen und geschäftlichen Netzwerke personelle Verflechtungen und Migrationsverhalten in einem größeren geographischen Raum. Das wirtschaftliche Betätigungsfeld der von ihr untersuchten Händler dehnte sich von Amsterdam im Laufe der Zeit immer weiter ostwärts aus: zunächst nach Frankfurt an der Oder, dann in die Grenzregionen der im Zuge der Teilungen Polens von Preußen annektierten Gebiete, anschließend nach Praga, einer kleinen Stadt an der Vistula, und schließlich auf die andere Seite des Flusses, in die polnische Hauptstadt Warschau.

Die Migration dieser jüdischen Elite nach Osten spiegelt sich bereits in der Gliederung der Arbeit *The Jewish Economic Elite. Making Modern Europe* wider. Kapitel 1 beschäftigt sich am Beispiel der aschkenasischen Familie Symons mit Amsterdam als Zentrum des Kreditmarktes für Mittel- und Osteuropa. Kapitel 2 analysiert die Rolle der Juden als Mittelsmänner zwischen dem Heiligen Römischen Reich und Polen-Litauen in Frankfurt an der Oder, wo sich die Familie Schlesinger etablieren konnte. Kapitel 3 befasst sich mit den Grenzregionen zwischen Preußen und Polen und den dort herrschenden gesetzlichen Beschränkungen anhand des Lebenslaufs von Itzig Jakob. Dieser stieg vom jüdischen Subunternehmer zum Armeelieferanten und Bankier auf, während er seinen Wohnsitz immer weiter nach Osten verlegte und den sich daraus ergebenden Standortvorteil nutzte, um gleichzeitig verschiedene Armeen zu beliefern. Mit der Ansiedelung in dem heute zu Warschau gehörenden Praga, das Gegenstand von Kapitel 4 ist, konnten sich jüdische Familien

in der Nähe der Hauptstadt Polens etablieren und dort als Mittler fungieren. Sie nutzten das Feudalsystem des polnisch-litauischen Ständestaats zu ihren Gunsten und gingen unternehmerische Risiken ein. Um 1800 eröffnete sich für die jüdische Elite die Möglichkeit zur Niederlassung in Warschau. Kapitel 5 zeigt, wie es ihr gelang, neue Positionen in der Gesellschaft zu erlangen und sich Geschäftsfelder, insbesondere im Bankensektor und in der Pacht von Monopolen, zu erschließen.

Die Heiratsverbindungen, welche die Basis von Vertrauensbeziehungen bildeten, folgten sorgfältigen finanziellen und persönlichen Erwägungen. Sie dienten neben der ökonomischen auch der rechtlichen Absicherung (in Form des Schutzstatus) und ermöglichten die Migration einzelner Familienmitglieder, durch deren Neolokalität neue Märkte erschlossen werden konnten.

Religiöse Aspekte beeinflussten diese Allianzen an der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert jedoch in zunehmendem Maße. Einzelne Protagonisten schlossen sich der Haskalah an, andere hingegen fühlten sich eher zu den Hassidim zugehörig, während wiederum andere konvertierten. Diese divergierenden Entscheidungen konnten mitunter innerhalb ein und derselben Familie getroffen werden und diese dadurch in religiöser Hinsicht spalten. Interessant ist hier neben den religiösen Aspekten auch ein ökonomischer, denn die Konversion zum Christentum führte in diesem Fall nicht zum Ausschluss vom Erbe (156–168).

Für jüdische Armeelieferanten, Monopolisten für Salz und Alkohol sowie Textilhändler war die Kooperation mit der christlichen Mehrheitsgesellschaft von zentraler Bedeutung. Sie unterhielten Geschäftsbeziehungen mit dieser und nutzten die gleichen Wege, um Geld und Waren zu transferieren. Allerdings konnte Aust keine christlich-jüdischen Partnerschaften oder gemeinsamen Unternehmen ausmachen (XXII). Da es diese im Alten Reich – insbesondere im Bereich des Armeelieferungsgeschäfts – durchaus gab, stellt sich die Frage, ob die politischen Rahmenbedingungen in Preußen und Polen-Litauen diesen Zusammenschlüssen entgegenstanden oder ob die hier untersuchten Familien es sich leisten konnten, darauf zu verzichten. Ob der Aufstieg der Juden als Armeelieferanten in der hier untersuchten Region erst mit dem Siebenjährigen Krieg einsetzte und nicht bereits in früheren militärischen Konflikten, bedürfte einer weiteren Untersuchung.

Fischers Studie *Ökonomisches Vertrauen und antisemitische Gewalt. Jüdische Viehhändler in Mittelfranken 1919–1939* nimmt mit den Viehhändlern

eine traditionelle jüdische Berufsgruppe in den Blick. Die Mehrzahl von ihnen lässt sich als mittelständische Unternehmer charakterisieren, und einige können sogar als Großhändler gelten. Sie ermöglichten den christlichen Bauern durch das Einstellen von Vieh dessen Nutzung, kauften und verkauften Tiere, belieferten Metzger in Stadt und Land und versorgten ihre Kunden mit Informationen, aber auch mit Krediten innerhalb einer Region.

Mittelfranken als Untersuchungsgebiet auszuwählen, war eine konsequente Entscheidung. Die strukturschwache Agrarregion mit meist kleinbäuerlichen Höfen und einer überwiegend protestantischen Bevölkerung sowie einer seit Jahrhunderten ansässigen jüdischen Bevölkerung zeigte unter dem späteren NSDAP-„Gauleiter" für Mittelfranken, Julius Streicher, schon frühzeitig eine hohe Affinität zum Nationalsozialismus. Allerdings konnten auch die Nationalsozialisten in dieser Region erst nach Ausbruch der Weltwirtschaftskrise auf breiter Basis Fuß fassen. Doch bereits Ende der 1920er Jahre konnte die NSDAP hohe Wahlergebnisse verzeichnen, und schon zu dieser Zeit fanden antijüdische Hetzjagden statt. In Gunzenhausen verbuchte die Partei beispielsweise 1933 über 67 Prozent der Stimmen für sich – ein Ergebnis, das 20 Prozent über dem Reichsdurchschnitt lag.[5] 1930 veröffentlichte der „Stürmer" einen Artikel über die „Kipperjuden", die die Bauern betrügen und christliche Frauen angeblich vergewaltigten. Namentlich genannt wurde hier u. a. Falk Stern, der Großvater des 1923 geborenen späteren amerikanischen Außenministers Henry Kissinger (189). Die Gewaltaktionen der Nationalsozialisten im evangelischen Franken fielen besonders vehement aus, so dass die ländliche jüdische Bevölkerung zwischen 1933 und 1939 um 95,2 Prozent zurückging, was weit über dem bayerischen Durchschnitt von 41 Prozent lag (287). Warum die Zuspitzung antisemitischer Gewalt ausgerechnet in einer Region stattfand, in der jahrhundertelang Christen und Juden auf engstem Raum zusammengelebt hatten, ist eine Frage, auf welche die vorliegende Arbeit letztlich keine Antwort geben kann.

Der erste Teil der Studie behandelt den sozio-ökonomischen Hintergrund des Viehhandels. Fischer dekonstruiert hier den Mythos des Viehhändlers als

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[5] Vgl. hierzu exemplarisch Gunnar Och, Hartmut Bobzin, Hgg., *Jüdisches Leben in Franken. Aneignung – Abgrenzung – Gegenentwürfe* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2002); Thomas Medicus, hg., *Verhängnisvoller Wandel. Ansichten aus der Provinz 1933–1949* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2016); Wolfgang Mück, *NS-Hochburg in Mittelfranken. Das völkische Erwachen in Neustadt an der Aisch 1922–1933* (Neustadt an der Aisch: Schmidt, 2014).

typisch jüdischen Beruf, da Juden nur 37 Prozent der Händler in der Zeit der Weltwirtschaftskrise stellten (33). Sie behandelt die Lebensumstände der jüdischen Familien und ihre Interaktionen mit der christlichen Mehrheitsgesellschaft. In den kleineren Landgemeinden und in Kleinstädten hatten Juden eine dominierende Marktposition inne, obwohl sie nur etwas mehr als ein Drittel der Viehhändler stellten. Die Mehrheit dieser Gruppe war in der Mittelschicht angekommen und führte ein bürgerliches Leben, das auch eine entsprechende schulische und berufliche Ausbildung des Nachwuchses beinhaltete.

Im zweiten Teil analysiert Fischer das Vertrauen als Grundlage wirtschaftlichen Erfolgs. Die alltäglichen Begegnungen in der Dorfgemeinschaft, die verlässliche Bezahlung von Leistungen und das Besiegeln der Geschäfte durch gemeinsame Wirtshausbesuche bildeten hierfür die Basis. Dabei grenzten sich die Viehhändler durchaus optisch ab, indem sie sich durch Kleidung, Gesten und Symbole als solche zu erkennen gaben. Dass die ökonomische Funktion der jüdischen Viehhändler eine andere war als diejenige ihrer christlichen Konkurrenten, hätte man noch deutlicher herausarbeiten können. Die Ausgrenzung dieser Gruppe hatte bereits in der Frühen Neuzeit zu gravierenden Versorgungsproblemen geführt, so dass man angesichts wirtschaftlicher Engpässe schnell wieder zum Status quo zurückgekehrt war. Ein Blick auf die *longue durée* dieser christlich-jüdischen Geschäftsbeziehungen hätte die zentrale Bedeutung des jüdischen Viehhandels für die bäuerliche Gesellschaft noch deutlicher werden lassen.

Der dritte Teil zeichnet das Schicksal dieser Händler während der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus und den Verlust des gegenseitigen Vertrauens infolge antisemitischer Propaganda nach. Trotz wachsenden Drucks auf die jüdischen Händler konnten die staatlichen Stellen zunächst nicht auf sie verzichten, wenn sie einen funktionierenden Viehmarkt gewährleisten wollten, denn es fehlten adäquate „arische" Handelsstrukturen, die die von den Nationalsozialisten präferierten Viehverwertungsgenossenschaften nicht ausfüllen konnten. Um das System zu destabilisieren, ging man zuerst nicht gegen den jüdischen Viehhandel insgesamt vor, sondern marginalisierte einzelne Personen (202–204), indem man ihnen die Konzessionen entzog oder sie anderweitig schikanierte und ihnen damit die ökonomische Basis raubte. In katholischen Gebieten fanden rassische Argumente deutlich weniger Resonanz, was wiederholt zu Beschwerden der nationalsozialistischen Behörden führte (262–263, 266–267). So orientierten sich zahlreiche Händler auf diese

katholischen Gebiete um. Sie griffen dabei auf ein jahrhundertelang praktiziertes Muster zurück, indem sie Verfolgung durch kleinräumige Migration zu entkommen und gleichzeitig ihre Geschäftsverbindungen aufrechtzuerhalten suchten. Diese tradierte Praxis erwies sich in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus allerdings als kontraproduktiv, da die Händler schlicht zu lange ausharrten. Vier Monate vor der Reichspogromnacht wurde der jüdische Viehhandel schließlich ganz verboten. Die verbliebenen jüdischen Viehhändler ließen sich nun verstärkt in den großen Städten nieder oder wanderten – falls es noch möglich war – aus.

Beide Arbeiten zeichnen sich durch akribische Quellenarbeit aus. Stefanie Fischer wertet behördliches Schriftgut, insbesondere Steuer-, Verwaltungs-, Spruchkammer- und Entschädigungsakten, ferner programmatische Schriften sowie Selbstzeugnisse aus und führte zahlreiche Gespräche mit Zeitzeugen. Cornelia Aust greift auf obrigkeitliches und notarielles Schriftgut aus zahlreichen polnischen, deutschen und niederländischen Archiven sowie den *Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People* in Jerusalem und der *Maimonides Library in Tel Aviv* zurück. Individuelle Einblicke ermöglichen die erhaltenen Familienpapiere der Familie Schlesinger aus Frankfurt an der Oder.

Beide Arbeiten suchen Antworten auf die Frage, was jüdisches Wirtschaften in Mitteleuropa auszeichnete und wie politische Rahmenbedingungen jüdisches Leben beeinflussten. Aust geht der Frage nach, warum es Juden im 19. Jahrhundert möglich war, im Bankwesen Zentral- und Osteuropas eine prominente Rolle einzunehmen. Wo lag der Ursprung dieser Entwicklung, der den Übergang vom frühneuzeitlichen Hofjudentum zu einer neuen Handels- und Bankenelite markierte? Während in Austs Untersuchung Migration den sozialen Aufstieg ermöglichte, war diese im Fall Fischers lebensrettend. Viele jüdische Familien gingen ins Ausland und etablierten sich vor allem im Raum New York. Für diejenigen, die die seit Jahrhunderten praktizierte kleinräumige Migration in der Region als vorübergehenden Ausweg sozialer Ausgrenzung ansahen, war es oft zu spät, das nationalsozialistische Deutschland noch rechtzeitig zu verlassen.

Beide Autorinnen haben sich zentralen Themen jüdischer Wirtschaftsgeschichte zugewandt. Austs Arbeit ist dabei typisch für englischsprachige Monographien und ihre Fokussierung auf griffige Thesen. Daher kommen bei ihr für den deutschen Leser mitunter die Fallbeispiele sowie die Einordnung in größere historische Kontexte zu kurz. Das Buch ist anregend geschrieben

und vermittelt eine neue Perspektive auf jüdische Geschäftsleute in der sogenannten Sattelzeit. Mit ihrer transnational und transregional ausgerichteten Untersuchung zur Übergangsphase zwischen Merkantilismus und beginnendem Kapitalismus gelingt Aust eine Pionierstudie der modernen jüdischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte.

Fischers gleichfalls spannende und lesenswerte Untersuchung leistet einen wichtigen Beitrag zum Verständnis des christlich-jüdischen Mit- und Gegeneinanders vor der Shoah. Ihr gelingt es, die Rolle der Viehhändler in einer seit Jahrhunderten von Juden besiedelten ländlichen Region über zwanzig entscheidende Jahre hinweg plastisch darzustellen und die Inklusions- und Exklusionsmechanismen klar herauszuarbeiten. Die exemplarisch dargestellten persönlichen Schicksale der Familien, ihre gesellschaftliche Ausgrenzung und ihr Überlebenswille spiegeln die ganze Bannbreite jüdischer Existenz in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus wider. Ein Ausblick auf die weiteren Lebenswege derjenigen Individuen und Familien, denen die Flucht gelang, rundet das Buch ab.

Michaela Schmölz-Häberlein, Bamberg

Shachar M. Pinsker, A Rich Brew: How Cafés Created Modern Jewish Culture (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 384 S., $ 35.

In seiner 2011 erschienenen Monographie *Literary Passports: The Making of Modernist Hebrew Fiction in Europe* widmete sich Shachar Pinsker der modernen hebräischen Literatur sowie Entstehungszeit und -raum derselben. Dabei spielten Themen wie Migration, aber auch die Mehrsprachigkeit vieler Schriftsteller sowie die engen Verflechtungen zwischen hebräischer und jiddischer Literatur bereits eine Rolle. In seinem nun bei New York University Press erschienenen Buch befasst er sich mit einem noch weiter gefassten Thema: der Herausbildung einer modernen jüdischen Kultur, aber aus einer ganz bestimmten Perspektive heraus betrachtet – durch das Café oder Kaffeehaus.

In sechs Kapiteln diskutiert Pinsker die unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen und Aufgaben des Kaffeehauses als jüdischem Raum in Odessa (Kapitel 1), Warschau (Kapitel 2), Wien (Kapitel 3), Berlin (Kapitel 4), New York (Kapitel 5) und Tel Aviv (Kapitel 6): „These coffeehouses, way stations for Jewish intellectuals on the move across Europe and beyond, were central to modern Jewish creativity" (2), so der Autor. Dass es sich bei den meisten der als Beispiele

herangezogenen Protagonisten nicht nur um Intellektuelle, sondern um Literaten und Kulturschaffende handelt, wird schnell deutlich. Denn auch wenn es um „modern Jewish culture" im Allgemeinen geht, kommt der Literatur in der Analyse ein besonderer Stellenwert zu. Die herangezogenen Quellen sind literarische und beispielsweise auch feuilletonistische Texte, die in hebräischer oder jiddischer, aber auch in russischer, deutscher etc. Sprache verfasst worden sind.

Die verschiedenen Cafés in den oben genannten Metropolen, in die die Leserin und der Leser durch die zahlreichen Bilder auch einen visuellen Einblick erhält, bilden hierbei Knoten in einem weit verzweigten Netzwerk. In der Entwicklung dieses Netzwerks ist sowohl geographisch-räumlich als auch chronologisch-zeitlich eine Richtung zu erkennen, die durch die von Pinsker gewählte Metapher der Seidenstraße in ihrer Räumlichkeit erfasst werden soll: „I invoke the silk road here as a spatial metaphor to describe a network of mobility, of interconnected urban cafeés that were central to modern Jewish creativity and exchange in a time of migration and urbanization" (5). Die gewählten Analysebegriffe weisen darauf hin, dass sich sowohl die einzelnen Kulturschaffenden konstant bewegten als auch das gesamte Netzwerk einer ständigen Veränderung unterlag. Diese Bewegung, die also einzelne Personen betrifft, aber auch die Verlagerung des gesamten kulturellen und literarischen Netzwerks meint, beschreibt der Forscher für hebräische Literatur und Kultur als „hallmark of Jewish modernity" (11).

In den mit Migration verbundenen Veränderungen und dem Gefühl der Fremdheit, bot das Café einen neuen Ort der Versammlung, da traditionelle Räume der Zusammenkunft wie Talmudschulen und Synagogen nicht mehr den ursprünglichen Halt bieten konnten und sollten. Wie Pinsker anschaulich beschreibt, gab es dabei vor allem in Warschau durchaus einen Unterschied zwischen Cafés im jüdischen Distrikt und polnischen Cafés, sodass entsprechende Grenzüberschreitungen auch innerhalb einer Stadt möglich waren. Im Kontext von Warschau ist vor allem das Café Kotik, geführt von seinem gleichnamigen Besitzer, interessant (65). Kotik verortete sich und sein Café bewusst in der modernen jüdischen Gemeinschaft und wurde damit soziale Anlaufstelle, die unter anderem als Hilfestellung für Neuankömmlinge sehr bedeutend war. Cafés boten hiermit eine – wenn auch oft zeitlich begrenzte – Zuflucht und Heimat („spaces of refuge for people who could not find home elsewhere", 306) sowie einen Ort, an dem Mehrsprachigkeit in einer Zeit des

zunehmenden Nationalismus (306) gelebt wurde. Diese beiden Aspekte sind
dabei derart essentiell für die Bedeutung des Cafés im Rahmen der Entstehung
moderner jüdischer Kultur, dass diese Relevanz gleichsam versiegt, sobald das
migratorische Element wegfällt: „This network of Jewish cafés existed as long
as large-scale Jewish migration was taking place, and the connection between
various cities of significant Jewish migration was profound and meaningful"
(305).

Dass der zeitliche Rahmen, der über die sogenannte goldene Zeit des Cafés
in Europa, die Pinsker im Zeitraum von 1848 bis 1939 datiert, hinausgeht (9),
ist vor allem seinem Blick nach New York und Tel Aviv zu verdanken; zwei
Städte, die bis in die 1960er (New York) und 1970er (Tel Aviv) Jahre, eben-
falls Kreuzungspunkte des modernen aschkenasischen Judentums waren und
über eine vielfältige Sprachkultur verfügten (12–13). Tel Aviv in ein Netzwerk
urbaner Modernität der Diaspora einzubinden, kann durchaus kritisch disku-
tiert werden, zumal sich der Staat Israel bis in die 1970er Jahre zunehmend
etablierte und von der Diaspora distanzierte. Doch gelingt es Pinsker dar-
zulegen, dass auch die Kaffehauskultur Tel Avivs und der dort stattfindende
Diskurs um moderne jüdische Kultur in den Jahrzehnten vor und nach der
Staatsgründung vor dem Erfahrungshorizont von Migration und Mehrspra-
chigkeit blühte.

Am Beispiel von Odessa wird darüber hinaus deutlich, dass die Entstehung
der modernen jüdischen Literatur nicht nur im Kontext des Cafés und einer
sich zunehmend säkularisierenden jüdischen Gemeinschaft steht. Vor dem
Hintergrund politischer Bewegungen wie dem jüdischen Nationalismus und
dem (Proto-)Zionismus (25) sowie dem konstanten Austausch mit der nicht-
jüdischen Umgebung, die ebenfalls Umbrüche durchlebte, wird die Komplexi-
tät moderner jüdischer Kultur weiter verdeutlicht. Als Beispiel seien hier die
Unruhen im Rahmen der Revolution in Odessa genannt. Daher ist es Pinsker
ebenso wichtig, auf die teilweise ambivalente Rolle des Raumes Café hinzu-
weisen, in dem nicht ausschließlich kulturelle und literarische Ideen ausge-
tauscht und diskutiert werden: „The café, in other words, has been an essen-
tial facet of the modern Jewish experience and has been critical to its complex
mixture of history and fiction, reality and imagination, longing and belonging,
consumption and sociability, idleness and productivity" (5).

A Rich Brew. How Cafés Created Modern Jewish Culture zieht dabei das Café
nicht nur als Schlüssel zum Verständnis moderner jüdischer Kultur heran.

Diese Studie ist auch für jene interessant, die sich mit der europäischen Kaffeehauskultur im Allgemeinen sowie dem Zusammenspiel von jüdischen und nicht-jüdischen Sprachen im kulturellen und literarischen Schaffen jener Zeit im Besonderen beschäftigen wollen. Dieses Zusammenspiel der Sprachen wird im deutschen Sprachraum allzu oft vernachlässigt, wenn literaturwissenschaftliche Diskurse entlang sprachlicher Grenzen geführt werden. Für Diskurse um jüdisches Schreiben in Europa und darüber hinaus erscheint das umso problematischer, weil jene Literaturen stark durch die Mehrsprachigkeit ihrer Autoren und deren Interaktion in mehreren Sprachräumen geprägt wurden. Shachar Pinskers Monographie sei daher für ein vertiefendes Studium der Jüdischen Literaturen und die damit verbundene Weiterentwicklung des Faches empfohlen.

Judith Müller, Basel/Beer Sheva

Inka Le-Huu, Die sociale Emanzipation. Jüdisch-christliche Begegnungen im Hamburger Bürgertum 1830–1871. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2017), 451 S., 42 €.

Mit dem hier rezensierten Band wird ein interessanter Beitrag zur Geschichte jüdisch-christlicher Debatten und Praktiken im Vereinsleben des Hamburger Bürgertums des 19. Jahrhunderts geleistet. Die Verfasserin ist Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte und promovierte zum Thema der vorliegenden Studie 2014 an der Universität Hamburg.

Das Ziel der Studie ist es, „die Teilhabe von Juden am Bürgertum […] qualitativ [zu] untersuchen und auf[zu]zeigen, welche Bedeutung jüdisch-christliche Begegnungen sowohl für die jüdische als auch für christliche Bürger hatten" (9). Dabei will die Verfasserin sowohl die christliche als auch die jüdische Perspektive berücksichtigen und nicht etwa die bürgerliche Lebensführung von Juden, sondern vielmehr deren „Vergemeinschaftungen mit christlichen Bürgern" fokussieren (31). Der Hauptbegriff der Studie – „Begegnungen" – wird zwar an keiner Stelle erklärt, er lässt sich aber im Gesamtkontext als aktive Stellungnahme hinsichtlich des Zusammenlebens zwischen den Bekennenden beider Religionen wahrnehmen. An den heutigen Sprachgebrauch angepasst könnte man etwas überspitzt vom christlich-jüdischen Dialog sprechen. Mit Blick auf das Ziel, das die Studie verfolgt, nutzt die Verfasserin das Konzept des „bürgerlichen Wertehimmels" von Manfred Hettling und Stefan-Ludwig

Hoffmann.[6] Demnach konstituiert sich die soziokulturelle Formation des Bürgertums vornehmlich durch gemeinsame Werte und Prinzipien.

Strukturell und inhaltlich gelingt es der Verfasserin, Wechselbeziehungen zwischen der Ideenwelt und der Welt sozialer Praktiken auf überzeugende Weise zu belegen. Nach dem einführenden Kapitel stellt sie im zweiten Abschnitt den soziokulturellen Hintergrund des zu untersuchten Gegenstands dar; dabei werden sowohl jüdische als auch christliche Reformbemühungen im Religions- und Schulwesen mitberücksichtigt.

In Kapitel 3 und 4 werden Werte und Normen für die gewünschte künftige bürgerliche Gesellschaft auf Basis von literarischen, philosophischen und publizistischen Texten rekonstruiert. Obwohl nicht ausdrücklich genannt, lassen sich zwei Auswahlkriterien für die in diesen Abschnitten besprochenen literarischen bzw. philosophischen Werke (*Rebekka und Amalia* von Johanna Goldschmidt und *Wanderungen eines Zeitgenossen auf dem Gebiet der Ethik* von Anton Rée) und Presseerzeugnisse (*Die Unparteiische Universal-Kirchenzeitung* und *Der Jude in Deutschlands Gegenwart*) erkennen. Als erstes Kriterium ist das Interesse der dargestellten Akteure an dem Dialog zwischen Christen und Juden zu nennen. Die Möglichkeit, die diesen Akteuren gewährt wurde, ihre Werte und Normen praktisch im Vereinsleben umzusetzen, stellt das zweite Auswahlkriterium dar.

Im Mittelpunkt der Studie steht Kapitel 5, das diese Umsetzung am Beispiel von fünf jüdisch-christlichen Projekten fokussiert: die säkularisierungsorientierten „Philalethen-Initiative" (gegr. 1830) und die „Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Gewissensfreiheit" (gegr. 1859), der am Dialog zwischen Religionen interessierte „Friedens-Verein" (gegr. 1842), der „Sociale Frauenverein zur Ausgleichung confessioneller Unterschiede" (gegr. 1848) sowie die emanzipationsfördernde „Gesellschaft für sociale und politische Interessen der Juden" (gegr. 1846). Anschließend werden an drei weiteren Beispielen – der Zulassung und Rechte von Juden in einem Dienstmädchen-, einem Branntwein- und einem Lehrerverein – Grenzen jüdischer Teilnahme am bürgerlichen Leben ausgeführt. Ein Anhang mit Kurzbiogramen ausgewählter Akteure und ein Personenregister runden die Studie ab.

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[6] Manfred Hettling, Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, „Der bürgerliche Wertehimmel. Zum Problem individueller Lebensführung im 19. Jahrhundert", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 23 (1997): 333–359; Manfred Hettling, Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, Hgg., *Der bürgerliche Wertehimmel. Innenansichten des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

Die vorliegende Arbeit liefert eine Vielfalt von Beispielen literarischer, publizistischer, pädagogischer und vereinsinterner Aktivitäten von Juden und Christen, die an Begegnungen interessiert waren. Dieser Stoff lässt erkennen, dass Juden sich aktiv bei der Aushandlung von gemeinsamen Werten und Normen für das künftige Zusammenleben von Bürgern unterschiedlicher Konfessionen beteiligten. Zahlreiche Ideen und Projekte gewannen Unterstützung auch seitens nichtjüdischer Bürger. Dennoch waren diese Begegnungen in den allermeisten Fällen nur in einer säkularen Öffentlichkeit vorstellbar, wo Juden und Christen nicht als Bekenner ihrer Religionen, sondern als gleichberechtigte Bürger hätten agieren sollen bzw. können (377). Die Gestaltung des Säkularisierungsgedanken könne in diesem Kontext vornehmlich als ein jüdischer Beitrag zum bürgerlichen Wertehimmel in Hamburg angesehen werden (138).

Ein Nachteil dieser Studie ist das fehlende Kontextualisieren eigener Erkenntnisse im größeren Rahmen der deutsch-jüdischen Bürgertumsforschung oder der allgemeinen Debatte über die sogenannte Judenfrage. So verwundert es, dass obwohl der Begriff „christlicher Staat" mehrmals erwähnt wird, nicht einmal der zu dieser Zeit publizistisch aktive Vertreter dieser Idee, Friedrich Julius Stahl, genannt wird. In Bezug auf die Bürgertumsforschung betont die Verfasserin mehrmals, diese Studie sei „qualitativ". Die damit verknüpfte Meidung des sozialhistorischen Kontextualisierens der dargestellten Akteure erschwert es aber, einigen Erkenntnissen entsprechendes Gewicht zu verleihen. Es wird zum Beispiel kurz die soziale Struktur christlicher Reformer dargestellt (54), aber an keiner Stelle wird versucht, eine entsprechende Struktur jüdischer Reformer darzulegen. Erst in den Schlussbetrachtungen wird deutlich, dass an den hier dargestellten Begegnungen lediglich Vertreter des liberalen Neuen Israelitischen Tempelvereins teilnahmen, der etwa fünf Prozent Hamburger Juden umfasste (377). Da hier aber nie von Kaufleuten oder kleinbürgerlichen Handwerkern die Rede ist, sondern lediglich von intellektuellen Eliten, wie Schriftstellern, Journalisten, Geistlichen, Predigern, Lehrern, Professoren oder Juristen, lässt sich feststellen, dass diese Studie Begegnungen jüdischer und christlicher Bildungsbürger untersucht, die Interesse an einer intellektuellen Debatte über das Zusammenleben Bekenner verschiedener Religionen äußerten. Diese Tatsache muss keineswegs per se als ein Nachteil betrachtet werden; die fehlende Reflexion darüber ist jedoch als Mangel zu bewerten. Vielleicht hätte die in der rezensierten Studie mehrmals kritisierte

Doktorarbeit von Till van Rahden (24–27, 381) als Vorlage dienen können, wie sich der eigene Untersuchungsgegenstand kontextualisieren lässt.[7]

Die genannten Kritikpunkte ändern nichts an der Tatsache, dass mit dem rezensierten Band eine wichtige Studie zur Aushandlung gemeinsamer Normen und Werte von jüdischen und christlichen Bürgern geliefert wird. Die Hamburger Erkenntnisse lassen sich künftig im Vergleich mit anderen Zentren jüdischen Lebens vergleichen und tragen somit zum Verständnis von Begegnungsprozessen zwischen Juden und Christen im ganzen deutschen Kulturraum bei. Darüber hinaus wird die hier angebotene Struktur, die Diskussionen auf mehreren Ebenen – literarische wie philosophische Werke, Publizistik und zuletzt das Vereinswesen – zu betrachten, neuen Studien zu einer ähnlichen Thematik hoffentlich als Vorlage dienen.

Michael K. Schulz, Potsdam

Grażyna Jurewicz, Moses Mendelssohn über die Bestimmung des Menschen. Eine deutsch-jüdische Begriffsgeschichte (Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2018), 244 S., 29,50 €.

Dass in den letzten Jahren gestiegene allgemeine Interesse an Moses Mendelssohn hat sich erfreulicherweise auch auf die wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit dem jüdischen Denker ausgewirkt. Die Biographie Dominique Bourels, die Studien von Gideon Freudenthal, Michah Gottlieb, Anne Pollok und Grit Schorch, sowie die Aufarbeitung der ebenso innovativen wie umstrittenen Analysen von Leo Strauss haben, neben einer immer genaueren Kenntnis von Mendelssohn Rolle außerhalb und innerhalb der Haskalah, zu einem komplexen Bild geführt, so dass, mit aller Vorsicht, von einer geglückten Kanonisierung des vormaligen „Popularphilosophen" gesprochen werden kann.

Grażyna Jurewicz' Buch *Moses Mendelssohn über die Bestimmung des Menschen*, die gemäß ihrem Untertitel als eine *deutsch-jüdische Begriffsgeschichte* angelegt ist, hat ein klar artikuliertes Erkenntnisinteresse: „Eine von der Bestimmung jüdischen Denkens als Identitätsdiskurs ausgehende, begriffsgeschichtlich interessierte Analyse von Mendelssohns Philosophie, wie sie hier

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[7]   Till van Rahden, *Juden und andere Breslauer. Die Beziehungen zwischen Juden, Protestanten und Katholiken in einer deutschen Großstadt von 1860 bis 1925* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

vorgenommen wird, zielt darauf, die Reflexion über das Judentum als einen entscheidenden Teil eines übergreifenden philosophischen Projektes auszuweisen." Und mehr noch: „Der universelle Aspekt des Mendelssohn'schen Gesamtprojekts erscheint als Ideal eines wahren, schönen und Lebens" (21), das auf Sokrates übertragen werde.

Damit hat Jurewicz die Messlatte für ihre Arbeit sehr hoch gelegt. Wie versucht sie, den Anspruch einzulösen? Methodologisch werden neben der schon klassischen Begriffsgeschichte Reinhart Kosellecks, Dieter Henrichs „Konstellationsanalyse" und, als ergänzendes Korrektiv, Kurt Flaschs „Philosophiehistorie" herangezogen. Während Henrichs Vorgehen sich vor allem in der Erforschung des deutschen Idealismus bewährt hat, fehlt – sieht man von Flaschs Studie zu Hans Blumenberg einmal ab – eine Probe des im Übrigen nur unvollständig ausgearbeiteten Programmes bislang. Insofern ist Jurewicz' Monographie auch in dieser Hinsicht neuartig und experimentell.

Nach diesen „Präliminarien", dem ersten Kapitel, wird die Auseinandersetzung mit der paraphrasierenden Übertragung von Rousseaus *Zweitem Diskurs* – sie erscheint 1756 und wird trotz gelegentlicher anderer Versuche erst 1984 durch die Edition Heinrich Meiers endgültig abgelöst werden – geführt. Sehr konzise weist Jurewicz die doppelte Struktur des von Rousseau zunächst übernommenen Begriffs der „perfectibilité" bei Mendelssohn nach, wenn sie von dessen – transformierten – „zwei Bedeutungssträngen innerhalb des semantischen Feldes dieses Terminus" spricht, nämlich der „anthropologisch-moralischen" und der „geschichtsphilosophisch-kulturtheoretischen" Dimension (51), so die zentrale Aussage des zweiten Kapitels.

Es gehört zu den Verdiensten dieser aufgeräumt und souverän formulierten Arbeit, dass sie umsetzt, was angekündigt wurde und die jeweiligen selbstgestellten Fragen akribisch beantwortet. So wird der „Raum" ausgeschritten und gefüllt, der mit der Mendelssohnschen Fassung der „perfectibilité" eröffnet wurde. Das geschieht im dritten Kapitel, wo die Schnittstelle der drei Zeugen für die Herangehensweise der Autorin sich zu bewähren hat: die Begriffsgeschichte der „Bestimmung des Menschen" ist nämlich nur über die abgegoltenen, vor allem aber unabgegoltenen Argumente systematisch auszuwerten, wenn man Konstellationen aufsucht, in denen die „Wahrheitskämpfe" ausgefochten werden, die das „Subjekt" (Flasch) als Kreuzungsphänomen von Leben und Werk ausmacht. Wir werden also Zeuge eines Ringens um die „Bestimmung des Menschen", die nach Jurewicz als „Bestimmungsmetaphysik"

(95) zu verstehen ist. Jene „Bestimmungsmetaphysik" ist nichts anderes als der aus kritisch philosophisch-theologischen Auseinandersetzungen mit Johann Joachim Spalding und Thomas Abbt gewonnene Boden, von dem aus Mendelssohn in der Folge die Dimension des Politischen zu bewältigen sucht. Jenes Politische wird sowohl sein, als auch das Judentum herausfordern – es ist die Aufforderung zur Konversion.

Die Stabilisierung und die Erweiterung der „Bestimmungsmetaphysik" werden dann im Streit mit Johann Kaspar Lavater betrieben, der nicht nur Spaldings offenes Konzept der „Bestimmung des Menschen" christlich okkupiert, sondern in eins damit Mendelssohn erpresst: Wer über Aufklärung nachdenkt, der muss übertreten.

Wesentlich ist an all dem in Jurewicz' Anordnung, dass und wie Mendelssohn in diesen Zusammenhängen agiert. Die aktive Gestaltung jenes bisher nachgezeichneten Denk- und Lebensweges in ein, so die Autorin, „deutsch-jüdisches Aufklärungsparadigma" (121), ist der wesentliche Zugewinn der Arbeit. Das zeigt sich in der Interpretation von Mendelssohns „jüdischen Schriften", wie eine Abteilung der maßgeblichen „Jubiläumsausgabe" der Schriften ja heißt. Die „Halakhah" wird hier zur Öffnung auf die allgemeine „Kultur" hin, die, angewiesen auf das Zusammenspiel von Universellem und Partikularem – das haben dann später die Marburger Neukantianer Hermann Cohen und Ernst Cassirer besser verstanden als jene „jungen Stürmer" der Generation Gershom Scholems und Leo Strauss' und andere, die nie den Dualismus von ideell und existenziell zu akzeptieren bereit waren – sich am „Ideal" des Judentums einen Maßstab geben ließ. Dieses idealisierte Judentum beglaubigt, so Mendelssohn auch in der Rekonstruktion Jurewicz', historisch und theologisch-philosophisch ein Menschenbild, welches einer so charakterisierten „Kultur" zuarbeitet. Jenes Menschenbild ist kein statisches, vielmehr, und hier muss der in der Aufklärung vieldeutige Begriff der Bildung fallen, eines der Menschwerdung. Mendelssohns kulturideelle Anthropologie eines aufgeklärten Judentums, das seine Offenheit aus der Halakhah gewinnt, wird ihm, so Jurewicz, zum Anker. Doch dabei bleibe Mendelssohn nicht stehen, denn in der Tat könnte ein „modernisierter" Maimonides ähnlich gelesen werden. Das Surplus wird von der Autorin genauer und zugleich vorsichtig bestimmt: „Der Mensch existiere ausschließlich durch die kulturelle Differenz, die eine der unendlich vielen Erscheinungsweisen der universellen Vernunft sei. Das Nebeneinander intersubjektiver Unterschiede erweist sich demzufolge als der oberste der Schöpfung, womit dem Partikularen

ein legitimer Ort in der rationalistisch-universalistischen Gesamtarchitektur des aufklärerischen Denkens zugewiesen wird" (180).

Bleibt noch die Selbstaufklärung Mendelssohns, die klassischerweise in der Auseinandersetzung mit den Geschichtskonzepten der Zeit stattfindet. Nach dem Gesagten sind die Absagen an teleologische oder sich systematischen Erfordernissen unterwerfende Konstruktionen der Historie keine Überraschung. Vielmehr passt Mendelssohns Primat der Freiheit als Friedensgarant mit Kants Verständnis „weltbürgerlicher Absichten" zusammen. Der Eintrag des Differenzgedankens bei Mendelssohn markiert hier naturgemäß den Unterschied zum Königsberger ums Ganze. Doch muss auch festgehalten werden, in Ergänzung zu Jurewicz' wichtiger Studie, dass die Attraktivität der den jüdischen Aufklärer umgebenden Entwürfe der „Sattelzeit" (Koselleck) für Mendelssohns Nachfolger groß war. In ihnen konnte sich jüdischer Eigensinn entfalten, ohne nochmals die Entwicklung Mendelssohn durchlaufen zu müssen.

Dies sei als Hinweis gedacht, ein Hinweis, der weder den Wert der Arbeit einschränkt noch über sie hinaus will. Vielmehr geht er auf das Buch selbst zurück. Grażyna Jurewicz' Dissertation ist schon jetzt ein wesentlicher Bestandteil einer Neuverortung des jüdischen Philosophen Moses Mendelssohn.

Thomas Meyer, Berlin

Abraham Teitelbaum, Warschauer Innenhöfe. Jüdisches Leben um 1900 – Erinnerungen. Aus dem Jiddischen von Daniel Wartenberg, hg. Frank Berg (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2017), 235 S., 24,90 €.

> „Du hast sie nicht mehr, die jüdischen Schtetl in Polen / in Hrubieszów, Karczew, Brody, Falenica / suchst du vergeblich im Fenster die brennenden Kerzen / und lauschst dem Gesang aus dem hölzernen Bethaus. / Die letzten Reste sind verweht, jüdische Lumpen, das Blut mit Sand verschüttet, die Spuren ausgelöscht und die Wände mit blassblauem Kalk getüncht wie nach einer Seuche oder einem großen Fest […],"

schrieb im Jahr 1947 der polnische Autor Antoni Słonimski in der im Exil verfassten *Elegie auf die jüdischen Schtetl*.[8] Im gleichen Jahr veröffentlichte

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[8] Antoni Słonimski, *Elegia miasteczek żydowskich,* in: Antoni Słonimski, ed., *Poezje wybrane,* Warszawa 1970, 495. Deutsche Übersetzung *Elegie auf die jüdischen Schtetl* v. Urszula

Abraham Teitelbaum (1889–1947) in Buenos Aires seine Erinnerungen an dieses nicht mehr existierende, vergangene jüdische Leben in Warschau. Sie erschienen mit dem Titel *Varshever heyf* auf Jiddisch – und wurden erst vor Kurzem und nur stellenweise ins Polnische übersetzt. Im Jahr 2017 brachte der Wallstein Verlag die deutsche Version dieses Buches auf den Markt: *Warschauer Innenhöfe. Jüdisches Leben um 1900 – Erinnerungen* wurde von Daniel Wartenberg aus dem Jiddischen übersetzt und von Frank Beer herausgegeben. Mit einer Verzögerung von fünfzig Jahren bringen sie dem deutschen Lesepublikum ein Stück der Welt zurück, deren Untergang Antoni Słonimski in seinem Klagelied beweinte. Sowohl die gute Übersetzung ins Deutsche als auch die Kommentare zum Text sind ausdrücklich zu loben.

Teitelbaums Text gliedert sich in zehn Kapitel, die jeweils einer anderen Straße – bzw. einem anderen Innenhof – in Warschau um 1900 gewidmet sind. Die Topographie strukturiert die Erinnerungen und gibt ihnen auch einen bestimmten Rhythmus: Die Innenhöfe wechseln wie historische Postkarten in einem Album. Jeder Innenhof ist ein Epizentrum für sich, mit seiner inneren Kohärenz, Logik und Dynamik. Der Erzähler gibt den Lokalkolorit und die Detailfülle des damaligen Lebens, das arm aber sehr vital war, wieder. Die Wichtigsten sind für ihn dabei die Menschen, die in den Innenhöfen gearbeitet und gelebt haben. Es waren einfache Handwerker, Verkäufer, Marktfrauen, Seidenbandweber etc., die den Charakter des beschriebenen Viertels ausmachten. An sie wird erinnert und so erhält der Leser Einblicke in die Lebenseinstellung, Werte und religiösen Rituale der jüdischen Gemeinde, die in einer eigenen Welt nach eigenen Regeln lebte. Anhand von Einzelbeispielen werden ideologische Positionen (von Zionismus bis zum Sozialismus) und menschliche Vorlieben gezeigt.

Zwischen den Menschen und den Innenhöfen besteht in der Erzählung ein enger Zusammenhang, oder, wie man im ersten Kapitel *Muranowski-Platz 19* lesen kann, „[d]er Hof war wie ein Spiegel seiner Bewohner. Stand in ihrem Leben alles zum Guten [...] war der Hof lebendig [...]. Hatte aber jemand etwas Schweres durchgemacht [...]so war der Hof menschenleer, sorgenvoll und düster" (13). Die Hervorhebung der Rolle der Innenhöfe kommt in vielen

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Usakowska-Wolff u. Manfred Wolff, zit. nach Katarzyna Weintraub, „Es war einmal ein Städtchen oder ... oder Die Aneignung der Erinnerung", in *Jahrbuch Polen* 18 (2007): 116–133, hier 122.

Texten über Warschau vor: Besonders aus der Sicht der Kinder waren (und sind) die Innenhöfe die Räume der Freiheit. Sie bilden ein System von sich durchkreuzenden Linien und Wegen, mit diversen Querverbindungen und Richtungsänderungen. Teitelbaum verwendet diesen Topos, um seine Erinnerungen zu ordnen und zeigt die Warschauer Innenhöfe in ihrer einen gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhang sinnstiftenden Funktion.

Aus meiner Sicht sind an diesem Buch zwei Aspekte besonders interessant: Erst einmal der narrative Modus des Textes. Teitelbaum schließt mit dem Publikum einen autobiographischen Pakt und schreibt über eigene Erlebnisse in einer Stadt, in der er die ersten achtzehn Jahre seines Lebens, bevor er in die USA ausgewandert ist, verbracht hat. Gleichzeitig verwandelt sich seine Erzählung in eine kollektive Biographie von „einfachen, herzlichen und liebenswerten jüdischen Menschen" (7), „alltäglichen, unheroischen Juden" (8). Ihnen und ihren täglichen Sorgen gerecht zu werden und sie vor der Vergessenheit zu retten, sind das Hauptanliegen des Textes. Die deutsche Ausgabe verstärkt den Authentizitätsanspruch des Autors: Dem Buch werden in der Mitte historische Fotografien hinzugefügt, die verschiedene Szenen aus dem Leben im jüdischen Warschau am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts zeigen, wie z. B. „jüdische Schuster in der Stawki-Straße" (95) oder einen Wochenmarkt. Dadurch bekommen die Erinnerungen einen weiteren, medialen Referenzrahmen.

Der zweite Punkt, den ich hervorheben möchte, resultiert direkt aus der Erzählart des Autors. Es geht darum, was nicht erinnert und erzählt wird: Um die Lücken und Leerstellen des Textes. Teitelbaum schreibt in einem nostalgischen, stellenweise beinahe idyllischen Ton. Der Antisemitismus und die polnisch-jüdischen Beziehungen der Jahrhundertwende finden kaum Eingang in seine Erinnerungen. Wie in den meisten autobiographischen Texten über die Kindheit und Jugend, wird auch hier die Vergangenheit primär positiv dargestellt, auch wenn ab und zu auf die Brüchigkeit des damaligen Glücks der „Hofkinder" (16) hingewiesen wird. Der positive Ton ist nicht zuletzt eine Konsequenz der historischen Gegebenheiten: Der Autor schreibt seine Erzählung aus der Perspektive nach der Shoah. Das Wissen über die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden ist ein wichtiger Hintergrund des Textes, der diejenigen, die es nicht mehr gibt, vergegenwärtigen soll. Das Schreiben nach der Shoah entwickelt sich dadurch zu einem Schreiben gegen die Shoah. Mit Teitelbaums Buch soll nicht die Katastrophe, sondern die Hochphase des jüdischen Kulturlebens porträtiert werden.

Dies gelingt unausgesprochen gut. *Warschauer Innenhöfe*, obwohl von einem Schauspieler und keinem professionellen Schriftsteller geschrieben, überzeugen sowohl inhaltlich als auch ästhetisch.

Vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg gab es in Polen ein reges jüdisches Leben. Zehn Prozent der polnischen Bevölkerung waren damals Juden. Die Spuren der jüdischen Lebenswelten sind zugleich sichtbar und unsichtbar. Es lassen sich Zeichen, Hinweise und Überreste in der Topographie und in der Architektur in vielen, heute polnischen und früher multiethnischen Orten finden. Die Literatur – und dazu zähle ich Teitelbaums Erinnerungen – leistet einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Aufbewahrung und Speicherung des Vergangenen. Auch wenn es in der Zukunft ein jüdisches Warschau wieder geben sollte: Die Nalewki-Straße 13, die sich um 1900 wie „eine ganze Reihe von Innenhöfen" hinzog und in der sich „große und kleine Fabriken, Geschäfte, kleine Läden, eine Synagoge und ein Lehrhaus" (173) befanden, wird es so nicht mehr geben. Teiltelbaums Erzählung über Nalewki stellt übrigens eine interessante Referenz zu Bernard Singers *Moje Nalewki* (*Meine Nalewki*, 1959) her. In beiden Erinnerungen wird ein Bild von der Nalewki-Straße gezeichnet, das in einem Kontrast zu der heutigen, phantomatischen Aura dieses Ortes steht. Solche Bilder helfen, diese Straße nicht ausschließlich als Teil des 1940 errichteten Ghettos wahrzunehmen.

Abraham Teitelbaum ist es gelungen, seine Gedächtnisbilder in eine gute, dynamische Erzählung über das jüdische Leben in Warschau um 1900 umzuwandeln. Wir erfahren hier viel über ihren Alltag, den täglichen Broterwerb, die Kindererziehung und den Kampf mit den Schicksaalschlägen. Das Buch *Warschauer Innenhöfe* ist lesenswert, weil es diese Erfahrung als eine jüdische und gleichzeitig als eine europäische Geschichte zeigt. Aus diesem Grund ist es definitiv wünschenswert, wenn es Eingang in die zeitgenössische Erinnerungskultur findet.

Anna Artwińska, Leipzig

Katharina Hoba, Generation im Übergang. Beheimatungsprozesse deutscher Juden in Israel (Köln: Böhlau, 2017), 508 S., 70 €.

Am Ende seiner 1962 veröffentlichten Autobiographie stellte Kurt Blumenfeld in Rückblick auf seinen persönlichen und politischen Werdegang fest, dass zwar alle „Probleme des Lebens" weiter existierten, die Realität des Staates

Israel jedoch eines verändert habe: „[D]ie erträumte Unbefangenheit, die Voraussetzung zur Entwicklung der freien Persönlichkeit, kann hier, und *nur* hier, für einen Juden erreicht werden."[9]

Mit dieser Feststellung und mit seiner gesamten Biographie stand Blumenfeld kaum mehr am Rande jener Bewegung deutschsprachiger Einwanderer, die ab 1933 im Rahmen der Fünften Aliyah größtenteils ohne zionistische Sozialisation ins britische Mandatsgebiet Palästina kamen und deren „Lebenswelt [...] von einer Reihe von Gegensätzen geprägt" blieb.[10] Wurden die sogenannten Jeckes in der Forschung lange schablonenhaft beleuchtet, zeichnen jüngere Arbeiten differenziertere Bilder deren Integration in den Yishuv und der Tradierung individueller und auch gemeinschaftlicher Selbstverständnisse bis in die Gegenwart.[11]

Katharina Hobas vorliegendes Werk entstand als Dissertation an der Universität Potsdam und gründet teils auf ihren Arbeiten zur von 2006 bis 2008 in Berlin, Bonn und Leipzig präsentierten Ausstellung „Heimat und Exil: Emigration der deutschen Juden nach 1933" (vgl. 23). Einleitend formuliert sie den Anspruch, auf Grundlage „von 77 in qualitativen Interviews erhobenen Lebensgeschichten deutschsprachiger Personen, die in den 1930er-Jahren aus Zentraleuropa nach Palästina geflüchtet sind [...] der Frage nach[zugehen], welche Rolle der Prozess der Beheimatung in ihren lebensgeschichtlichen Zusammenhängen spielt" (14–15).

Im einleitenden Kapitel reißt Hoba zunächst den methodischen Rahmen ihrer Arbeit ab. Dabei weist sie gleich zu Beginn auf die Unmöglichkeit der Erfassung einer „homogene[n] Gemeinschaft" hin, wiewohl „sich in den Biografien Gemeinsamkeiten und Überschneidungen [der] kollektiven Zugehörigkeiten" (16) fänden. Hobas Interviewpartnerinnen und -partner gehören der ersten und der zweiten Generation deutschsprachiger Einwanderer an, wobei Hoba aufgrund der „gemischten Altersstruktur" für die im Titel der Arbeit verwandte Bezeichnung „Generation im Übergang" oder die synonyme Bezeichnung

9   Kurt Blumenfeld, *Erlebte Judenfrage. Ein Vierteljahrhundert deutscher Zionismus* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1962), 207.

10   José Brunner, Editorial, in *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 41 (2013): 7–14, hier 7.

11   Vgl. u. a. Brunner, Editorial; Adam Rubin, „'Turning goyim into Jews': Aliyah and the Politics of Cultural Anxiety in the Zionist Movement 1933–1939", in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 101, no. 1 (2011): 71–96; Rakefet Sela-Sheffy, „'Europeans in the Levant' Revisited – German Jewish Immigrants in 1930s Palestine and the Question of Culture Retention", in *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 41 (2013): 40–59.

„Zwischengeneration" (21) plädiert. Ausdrücklich weist sie auf Lücken der bestehenden Forschung hin, insofern als dass „der Aspekt der transnationalen Dimension im Zusammenhang mit den Erfahrungen aus Deutschland für die erfolgreiche Integration […] weitestgehend unberücksichtigt" (31) bleibe. Ihre eigene Arbeit skizziert Hoba in diesem Kontext als Untersuchung der „Entwicklung individueller Zugehörigkeiten meiner Interviewpartner" (38). Wohltuend erklärt sie an gleicher Stelle den Verzicht auf die Verwendung des wenigstens in forschungstechnischer Hinsicht überkommenen Identitätsbegriffs.

Kapitel 2 bietet, eingebettet in ereignisgeschichtliche Abrisse bis 1948, eine stark geraffte Analyse von Heimatbegriffen und -verständnissen deutschsprachiger Juden ab Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts. Da Hoba hier auf bestehende Forschungen zurückgreift, hätten gerade grundlegende historische Ereignisse und Entwicklungen nicht unbedingt im Einzelnen an- und ausgeführt werden müssen, außer bei Kontextualisierung des Untersuchungsgegenstands (vgl. 63, 65–66, 83–84).

In den Kapiteln 3 und 4 gelingt Hoba die gewinnbringende und dabei gut leserliche Einarbeitung der von ihr geführten Interviews: In Nachzeichnung verschiedenster Prozesse der Integration der deutschsprachigen Einwanderer in den Yishuv einerseits und der Tradierung jeckischer Selbstverständnisse andererseits. Dabei behandelt sie so unterschiedliche Themen wie die Einstellung zur kulinarischen Landschaft Palästinas und später Israels (187–196), die Etablierung der Werbephotographie im Yishuv (233–239) oder den Dienst in der britischen Armee und in den protomilitärischen jüdischen Organisationen im Mandatsgebiet (239–254). Besondere Erwähnung verdient die Auseinandersetzung mit dem von ihr so bezeichneten „Spannungsbereich der Musik" (299–341). Nur an wenigen Stellen kommt eine technische und teils psychologisierende Distanz Hobas zu ihren Gesprächspartnern zum Vorschein (vgl. 89, 140–141, 171–173, 275).

Anderweitige Kritikpunkte betreffen Details am Rande des Untersuchungskontexts. So wurde die erweiterte Jewish Agency 1929 nicht als „Vertretung der palästinensischen Juden bei der britischen Mandatsregierung vor dem Völkerbund" (76) gebildet, sondern zur institutionellen – und vor allem finanziellen – Einbindung nichtzionistischer Unterstützer des Palästinaaufbaus. Die Feststellung, dass namentlich die Haganah zwischen 1936 und 1939 „zunehmend militante Positionen" vertreten und „Vergeltungsanschläg[e]" (240) verübt habe, unterschlägt die Komplexität der Formen und des Anspruchs jüdischer Wehrhaftigkeit in Palästina und im gesetzten Zeitraum die schnelle

Herausbildung des Prinzips der Havlagah. Der von Evelyn Adunka gegen Hoba erhobene Vorwurf der „stillschweigende[n] Inklusion von Personen aus Österreich"[12] überrascht indes, da Hoba ihre entsprechende methodische Entscheidung in der Einleitung erläutert (16).

Über die Detailkritik hinaus muss darauf hingewiesen werden, dass Hobas kurze Darstellung der politischen Steh- und Gehversuche ehemaliger Führungsakteure des deutschen Zionismus in der politischen Öffentlichkeit vor der Staatsgründung (113, 115–119) deutlich zu kurz greift. Exemplarisch dafür die kaum haltbare Pauschalisierung, wonach „[d]eutsche Zionisten […] die Ziele der jüdischen Nationalbewegung genauso wie die der arabischen Nationalisten" verurteilt hätten, „weshalb sie weder von der einen noch von der anderen Seite Unterstützung erhielten" (118).

Im fünften und abschließenden Kapitel führt Hoba ihre Untersuchungsfäden und ihre methodischen Ausgangsüberlegungen nachvollziehbar zusammen. Obzwar beispielsweise die Feststellung, „dass Heimat ein Konstrukt ist" (346) kaum erkenntnisbringend ist, fokussiert sich Hoba zu Recht auf die Zentralität der „sozialpsychologische[n] Frage nach Gewinn von Zugehörigkeiten sowie deren Verlust durch alle Interviews hindurch" (346). Ihre Arbeit eröffnet dieser Zentralität entsprechend eine neue Perspektive auf die in der Forschung zunehmend berücksichtigte Heterogenität der deutschsprachigen Einwanderungsbewegung ins spätere Israel und akzentuiert die Vielfalt und die Komplexität jeckischer Selbstverständnisse: „In den Antworten meiner Gesprächspartner überlagern sich verschiedene Stimmen und Zugehörigkeiten, einheitliche Antworten lassen sich nicht finden" (352).

Auf die geschlossene Untersuchung folgt noch eine Sammlung sehr anschaulich verfasster Kurzbiographien fast aller Interviewpartnerinnen und -partner (360–441).

Simon Walter, Düsseldorf

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[12]   Evelyn Adunka, Rez. zu Hoba, *Generation im Übergang,* bibliothek.univie.ac.at/fb-judaistik/ files/Hoba_Adunka.rtf (zuletzt 10.05.2018), 2.

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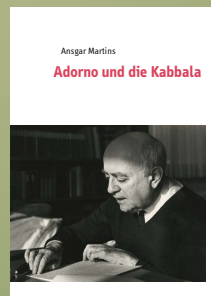Rebekka Denz
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Anne Weberling
Zionistische Debatten im Kontext des Ersten Weltkriegs am Beispiel der Herzl-Bund-Blätter 1914–1918

Ansgar Martins
Adorno und die Kabbala

Contributors

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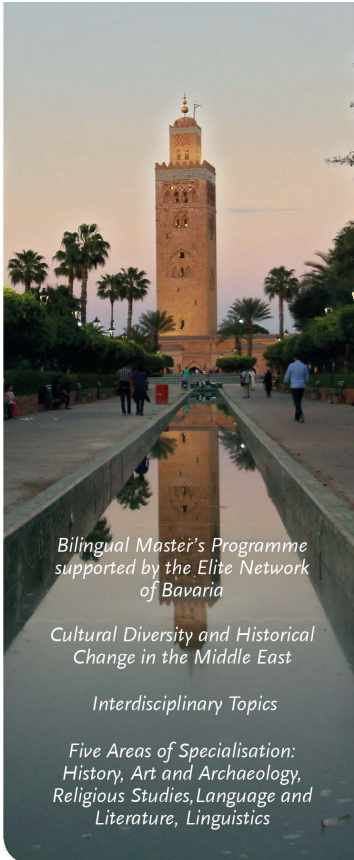
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