

CJS NEWS



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ILENE PERLMAN

WHAT IS THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES?

The Center for Jewish Studies serves as an umbrella organization that encompasses and coordinates academic and extracurricular activities in Jewish studies at Harvard University. Faculty, courses, and other academic programs at the University are located in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Harvard Divinity School, and the Harvard Law School. The Center supports student and faculty research, teaching, and visiting research scholars from around the world. We also sponsor and co-sponsor conferences, lectures, and seminars, and we work closely with departments and centers across the Harvard campus. Some of these centers include the Mahindra Center for the Humanities, the Center for European Studies, the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and the Julis-Rabinowitz Program on Jewish and Israeli Law in Harvard Law School. The Judaica Division of Widener Library boasts one of the greatest Judaica collections in the world. Taken together, Harvard offers students and scholars of Jewish studies unique resources in an intellectually vibrant environment.

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Derek Penslar

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Peter J. Solomon, Outgoing Chair
Dr. Stacy S. Dick, Incoming Chair

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PHOTOGRAPHY: By Ilene Perlman, CJS staff and students, also as submitted from featured individuals.

DESIGN: Nick Edlund — Edlund-Design.com

ON THE COVER: Photo of Ran Bechor's modern Hebrew class with guest, Israeli composer, singer, pianist and arranger **Yoni Rechter** (second row, fifth from the left.)



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am writing this message at a difficult and frightening time. Israel is at war, and Jews throughout the world live under a shadow of antisemitic threats and attacks. Harvard's Center for Jewish Studies remains committed to its mission to teach new generations of students about the breadth and depth of Jewish civilization. The current crisis will not deter us — quite the opposite; we are more committed than ever to illuminating the heritage, diversity, and vitality of one of the world's great civilizations.

Over the past year, Harvard regained its pre-pandemic energy, and as this newsletter shows, the Center for Jewish Studies has been a beehive of activity. The Center contributes to Harvard's intellectual community and to Jewish studies throughout the world in two distinct yet inter-related ways: first, there is the teaching and research carried out by our faculty, and second, there are our many visitors — lecturers, students, post-doctoral fellows, researchers, and professors. Taken together, the two groups make Harvard a global hub for the production and dissemination of scholarship, in Jewish studies as in all fields. As we move towards the Center's fiftieth anniversary in 2028, we look back on its achievements with pride, and we commit ourselves to meet the challenges of the moment in order to assure the Center's future. With recent additions to our administrative staff and faculty Executive Committee, expanded Jewish studies course offerings, and a bevy of public programs that are sponsored or co-sponsored by the Center, we have much to celebrate. But we also face challenges, and we hope in the years ahead to enhance our language programs in Hebrew and Yiddish and build on exciting initiatives like the recent introduction of Ladino into our curriculum.

The best advertisements for our Center are our students — their liveliness and creativity, their outstanding work, and the interpersonal bonds they form here that will endure throughout their lives. It is an honor and pleasure to direct this center towards its fiftieth anniversary and to raise it from its already enviable position to even higher ground.

Derek J. Penslar

DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY
WILLIAM LEE FROST PROFESSOR OF JEWISH HISTORY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

TRANSITIONS

A NEW CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES DIRECTOR



WELCOME, DEREK J. PENSLAR

By David Stern

It is my great pleasure to welcome Derek Penslar, William Lee Frost Professor of Jewish History, as the new director of the Center for Jewish Studies. Derek began in this role on July 1, 2023, when I concluded my seven-year term as Director.

Derek will be the Center's eighth director since its founding in 1978. He has taught at Harvard since 2016 and is the first professor of modern Jewish history on our faculty. His scholarship ranges widely throughout the modern Jewish historical experience and explores Jewish political and economic life in modern Europe as well as the relationship between modern Israel and diaspora Jewish societies, global nationalist movements, European colonialism, and post-colonial states.

Derek led similar centers for Jewish studies at the University of Toronto and the University of Oxford. He also served as President of the American Academy for Jewish Research, the leading scholarly organization for Jewish studies in America. He has taught at Indiana University, Bloomington; the University of Toronto; and the University of Oxford, where he served as the inaugural Stanley Lewis Professor of Modern Israel Studies. He is also a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and an honorary fellow of St. Anne's College, Oxford.

Derek's most recent books are [*Zionism: An Emotional State*](#) and [*Unacknowledged Kinships: Postcolonial Theory and the Historiography of Zionism*](#) (co-edited with Stephen Voght and Arie Saposnik), both published this past year. His other books include [*Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1918*](#) (1991); [*In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria, 1918–1933*](#) (1998, co-edited with Michael Brenner); [*Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe*](#) (2001); [*Orientalism and the Jews*](#) (co-edited with Ivan Kalmar, 2004); [*Israel in History: The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective*](#) (2006); [*The Origins of the State of Israel 1882–1948: A Documentary History*](#) (with Eran Kaplan, 2011); [*Jews and the Military: A History*](#) (2013); and [*Theodor Herzl: The Charismatic Leader*](#) (2020, German ed. 2022).

All of us at the Center look forward to working with Derek over the coming years. We could not be happier with his appointment. ■



THANK YOU, DAVID STERN

By Derek J. Penslar

It is an honor and privilege to thank David Stern, the Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature, for his outstanding leadership of Harvard's Center for Jewish Studies.

After a long and distinguished career at the University of Pennsylvania, David joined our faculty in 2015, with appointments in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and the Department of Comparative Literature. David's scholarship covers the entirety of Jewish civilization, with an emphasis on the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic and medieval Jewish literature. David is one of the world's leading experts on book history—that is, the study of books as material objects. (His book [*The Jewish Bible: A Material History*](#) won the 2018 Jordan Schnitzer Award from the Association for Jewish Studies.) David's teaching in both NELC and Comparative Literature has reflected his interests in foundational Jewish texts, Hebrew literature, and book history.

David assumed the directorship of CJS in 2016. Under his leadership over the past seven years, the Center has grown significantly, and its connections with other units throughout the University have broadened and deepened. The CJS Executive Committee now includes faculty from fourteen departments and committees within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as well as faculty from the Law and Divinity Schools. Building on the established practice of bringing visiting professors of Jewish studies to NELC, David has brought visiting professors to the Departments of History, Government, Sociology, and Anthropology. CJS enhanced or introduced lecture series and co-sponsorships with the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, the Mahindra Center for the Humanities, the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, the Center for European Studies, and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. Under David's watch the Starr Fellowships, which bring a cohort of scholars to Harvard for collaborative engagement, have incorporated a wide variety of fields, including Jewish thought, the arts, and modern history. In an increasingly challenging funding environment, David has insisted upon the essentiality of instruction in Jewish languages—Hebrew, Yiddish, and, most recently, Ladino.

David's concerns for students led to the addition of J-term

funding for undergraduate and graduate research, awarding prizes for outstanding student essays, and sponsorship of student-run workshops. CJS supported the renovation of the Jewish Studies Reading Room in Widener Library, which is a gathering place for our students and holds an invaluable Judaica reference library.

None of this growth could have been possible without expanding and upgrading the CJS staff. Here, too, David has been a tireless advocate for the Center.

All of us, faculty and staff alike, are grateful to David for his dedication, sound judgment, warmth, and good humor. ■

STACY DICK SUCCEEDS PETER SOLOMON AS CHAIR OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

David Stern

THIS FALL MARKS A WATERSHED MOMENT OF TRANSITION IN THE HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS OF THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES. After serving for decades as Chair of the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies, Peter J. Solomon, A.B. '60, M.B.A. '63 is stepping down. Stacy S. Dick, A.B. '78 and Ph.D. '83, is succeeding Peter Solomon as Chair of the Friends of the CJS.

For much of the 1960s and 1970s, Peter Solomon worked for Lehman Brothers, and became a director of the firm. In 1978, he entered government, serving as New York City Mayor Ed Koch's Deputy Mayor for Economic Policy and Development and Chairman of the New York City Health and Hospital Corporation. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter appointed him Counselor to the Secretary of the Treasury. In 1981, Solomon returned to Lehman Brothers, eventually becoming Vice Chairman of the firm and Chair of its merchant banking division. In 1989, he founded the PJ Solomon boutique financial advisory firm that was one of the first private investment banks in America. In 2013, he returned to public service as Co-Chairman of Governor Andrew Cuomo's Tax Reform and Fairness Commission and served on the governor's Spending and Government Efficiency Commission.

Peter Solomon's role in the history of Jewish studies at Harvard began with a seemingly unlikely experience. After having been wait-listed (!) by Harvard admissions, he was forced to live off-campus during his freshman year. He rented a room in a



STACY S. DICK

JOHN DEPUTY

house where Harry Austryn Wolfson also lived. Prof. Wolfson was the first Nathan Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy at Harvard, which was the first full-time professorship in Judaica in the United States. An unexpected friendship developed between Wolfson, probably the greatest scholar of Jewish studies of his period, and the young Peter Solomon. (*For more on their friendship, see our [2019 Spring Review](#).*)

Upon graduation, Prof. Wolfson's advice that he "could do more in life if he earned a lot of money and then used it effectively as opposed to a career in public service" guided Solomon's next steps. Wolfson later placed Solomon on the Visiting Committee for the now-named Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and thereby introduced him to the world of Jewish studies. Later, Harvard alumnus Harry Starr invited Peter to join the Lucius Littauer Foundation, which worked to promote Jewish studies and support professorships in the field.

In the 1970s, Peter Solomon and a group of other Harvard alumni, together with prominent educational and communal leaders from throughout the United States, formed a national committee to explore the possibility of establishing a center devoted exclusively to furthering research and teaching Jewish studies at Harvard. Their efforts led to the founding of the Center for Jewish Studies in 1978, with a goal of fostering an interdepartmental and interdisciplinary program that could deepen and integrate the study of the languages, literature, history, philosophy and religion of the Jewish people. They established several endowed professorships, as well as student fellowships, lectures, and research and teaching funds to ensure the place of Jewish studies at Harvard in perpetuity.

Since its founding, the Center and its activities have grown tremendously, while retaining its original conception of Jewish studies that applies the methods of academic disciplines, such as history and literary study, to the entirety of the Jewish tradition.



PETER J. SOLOMON

"Over the years, Peter has dedicated his support to many different areas of the University, including, of course, the Center for Jewish Studies and, most recently, the Houghton Library. Countless members of our community and beyond have been inspired by Peter's generous spirit. He continues to leave his mark throughout the University—and to make Harvard better."

—Lawrence S. Bacow,
President Emeritus of Harvard University

This academically rigorous approach has moved Harvard to the forefront of teaching and research in Jewish studies and has made our program one of the strongest in the world.

Forty-five years ago, Peter Solomon also established the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies and has served as its Chair ever since, remaining an active, guiding force at the Center.

After over a half-century of dedicated leadership, Peter Solomon now believes it is time for a succession in leadership. He has found a highly capable successor in Stacy S. Dick. Dr. Dick is president and chief financial Officer of Camino Partners Management LLC. He served on the management committee of Jonathan Robertson Holdings, led the private equity investment activities of Rothschild investment banking group, and was a senior executive at Tenneco, Inc. He also served on the boards of the Charles H. Revson Foundation and the Shalom Hartman Institute. He also taught at New York University and has been a loyal Friend of Harvard's Center for Jewish Studies.

Our gratitude to Peter Solomon is beyond words; he has been an essential part of our establishment and growth. I've deeply enjoyed our interactions over the seven years I've served as Director of the Center, and I'm personally grateful to Peter for his constant guidance, advice, and wisdom, not to mention our many conversations about rare books and other topics of mutual interest. He's been a regular visitor to my undergraduate seminar on the History of the Book where he thrilled students with stories of his adventures as a book collector. It has been a real honor to know and work with Peter. And through Peter, I have also enjoyed getting to know Stacy Dick. I wish to thank Stacy as well for his continued support of the Center. I'm personally thrilled that he has agreed to take the reins as Chair of the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies. As I step down as Director, I know the Center is in the best possible hands. ■

STAFF NEWS



WELCOME MAURA GOULD, NEW EVENTS COORDINATOR

We are thrilled to announce that in January 2023, **Maura Kohl Gould** joined the Center for Jewish Studies staff in a new role as our Events Coordinator. She came to us with years of experience at Harvard, as well as the Cambridge Public Library. Maura's expertise in event planning and her local knowledge have already proven to be great assets to the Center as we continue to expand our activities. Please join the staff and faculty of the Center in welcoming Maura! ■



CONGRATULATIONS, RACHEL ROCKENMACHER

Rachel's position has been upgraded to **Executive Director**. This new title more accurately reflects the growth in breadth and complexity of Rachel's responsibilities, as well as her unmatched understanding of the Center for Jewish Studies' structure and operation. Please join the CJS staff and faculty in extending Rachel our heartfelt *mazel tov*! We are so fortunate to have her working with us! ■

FACULTY NEWS



LUIS GIRÓN NEGRÓN



SHAYE COHEN

FROM THE DESK OF LUIS GIRÓN NEGRÓN

William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Comparative Literature
and of Romance Languages and Literatures

■ Articles & Publications

“Allí se puso este Libro de la Ley: Breve reflexión sobre una glosa exegética al Deuteronomio 31 en la Biblia romanceada de Moshe Arragel.” [*Magnificat Cultura i Literatura Medievals*](#), 9 (2022): 213–219.

“Notes on a Lexicographic Gloss in *General estoria*,” *Romance Philology* 76 (2022): 110–112.

“La Biblia de Arragel (siglo xv): nuevos datos a la luz de la edición crítica” (with Andrés Enrique-Arias and Francisco Javier Pueyo Mena), *Ut amicitiam omnibus rebus humanis anteponat*. *Miscelánea de estudios en homenaje a Gemma Avenzoza Vera*, eds. Francisco M. Gimeno Blay and J. Antoni Iglesias-Fonseca (València: Universitat de València, 2023) 151–168.

“Traducción y exégesis en las Biblias romanceadas”:
Forthcoming in the *Anuario de estudios medievales* (2023).

“Paradoxes of Desire in St. John of the Cross and Solomon ibn Gabirol: Thinking with Poetry in Comparative Theology”:
Forthcoming in [*The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Comparative Theology: A Collection in Honor of Francis X. Clooney*](#). Alex Marc Oaks Takács and Joseph Kimmel (eds.). Hoboken NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2023.

■ Lectures

“Américo Castro y la Biblia de Arragel: primicias de una lectura sobre el judaísmo español.” Plenary Lecture at the International Congress *Formas vitales y construcciones históricas: la obra de Américo Castro en el cincuentenario de su muerte*, Universidad de Salamanca, December 2, 2022.

FROM THE DESK OF SHAYE J. D. COHEN

Nathan Littauer Professor of Hebrew
Literature and Philosophy

Shaye J. D. Cohen, Nathan Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, was recently the subject of an article in the [*Harvard Gazette*](#). The article focused on the recently published three volume collection by the Oxford University Press, [*The Oxford Annotated Mishnah*](#).



ANNETTE
YOSHIKO REED

FROM THE DESK OF ANNETTE YOSHIKO REED

Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity and Professor
of New Testament and Early Christianity



■ Publications

Ariel Hessayon, Annette Yoshiko Reed, and Gabriele Boccaccini, eds., *Rediscovering Enoch? The Antediluvian Past from the Fifteenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (SVTP 27; Leiden: Brill, 2023).

Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Fallen Angels and the Afterlives of Enochic Traditions in Early Islam," in G. Dye (ed.), *Early Islam: The Sectarian Milieu of Late Antiquity?* (Bruxelles, Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2023).

■ Lectures

2023 Rufus Monroe and Sofie Hougaard Paine Lecture in Religion and Public Life: "Demonology from the Dead Sea Scrolls to QAnon," University of Missouri, 14 March 2023.

2023 Etta and Milton Leve Scholar-in-Residence Series, UCLA, 1–5 May 2023:

["Lost Books: The Forgetfulness of Writing and the Forgetting of Jewish Pasts,"](#)

["Ancient Judaism between Christian Memory and Jewish Forgetting."](#)

THANK YOU, OSNAT AHARONI

Thank you to **Osnat Aharoni** for her thirteen years of inspired teaching in the modern Hebrew language program. She and Irit Aharoni (no relation) were able to offer four levels of language instruction. They were a fabulous team and created an innovative and comprehensive language program that shared the vibrancy, complexity and diversity of Israeli culture and Hebrew language with their loyal and much beloved students. Osnat was responsible for digitizing the curriculum and taught some of the more advanced language classes. She also came up with creative ideas for language-learning activities, such as an escape room exercise, where students at each level had a role.

Though we'll miss her teaching, we are thrilled to have her on the CJS staff as our **Communications Coordinator**, where she has helped us modernize, improve and expand our growing communications needs. We invite you to look at the beautiful and informative Website she created at www.cjs.fas.harvard.edu and to follow our social media accounts, which she manages.





DAVID STERN

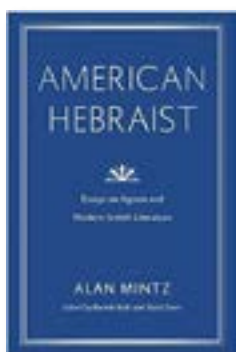


DEREK PENSLAR

ILENE PERLMAN

FROM THE DESK OF DAVID STERN

Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature



I co-edited (with Beverly Bailis) a volume of essays by Alan Mintz entitled *American Hebraist: Essays on Agnon and Modern Jewish Literature* (College Part, Penn State University Press, 2022), and wrote the introduction, “American Hebraist: An Introduction.”

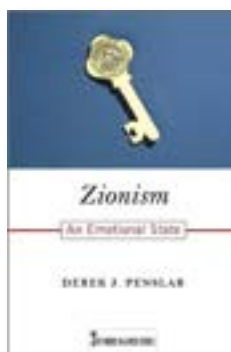
I also published “The Publication and Early Transmission of the Mishnah,” in *The Mishnah: The State of the Question*, ed. Shaye Cohen (Cambridge: Center

for Jewish Studies, Harvard University, and Julis-Rabinowitz Program on Jewish and Israeli Law, Harvard Law School, 2022); and delivered a lecture, “The Material Transmission of the Talmud: From the Genizah to Steinsaltz and Schottenstein,” at a conference in May–June 2023, “What is the Talmud?” sponsored by the CJS and the Julis-Rabinowitz Program.

My HarvardX course, “The Jewish Bible: Its History as a Physical Artifact,” went live during the spring, and can be accessed through HarvardX at www.harvardonline.harvard.edu/course/jewish-bible-its-history-physical-artifact. ■

FROM THE DESK OF DEREK PENSLAR

William Lee Frost Professor of Jewish History; Director of the Center for Jewish Studies



Derek Penslar spent the fall semester of 2022 at Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich, where he was the Inaugural Brodt Foundation Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies. In the spring he was a Plumer Fellow at St. Anne's College, Oxford. His book *Zionism: An Emotional State* was published by Rutgers University Press in June of 2023, and his co-edited volume (with Stefan Vogt and Arie

Saposnik), *Unacknowledged Kinships: Post-Colonial Theory and the Historiography of Zionism* was published by Brandeis University Press in July. Penslar gave talks on his book on Zionism and emotion at Oxford, the University of Chicago, the University of Leiden, the Technical University of Berlin, and Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich. He spoke on the German edition of his 2020 biography of Theodor Herzl at the Berlin Jewish Museum, the Basel Jewish Museum, and the German-American Institute in Heidelberg. Penslar also gave talks on his current research project, a global history of the 1948 Palestine war, at the University of Leiden, the Landeszentrale für politische Bildung in Berlin, the University of Haifa, Tel Aviv University, and the Ben-Gurion Research Institute in Israel. ■



JON D. LEVENSON



PETER GORDON

JÜRGEN-BAUER

FROM THE DESK OF JON D. LEVENSON

Albert A. List Professor of Jewish Studies

■ Articles

“[The Shema and the Commandment to Love God in its Ancient Near Eastern Contexts](#),” [TheTorah.co.il](#), August 8, 2022, a Hebrew translation of an [article](#) published in English in [TheTorah.com](#), August 17, 2016.

■ Book Reviews

“[When Did Judaism Begin?](#)” A review of Yonatan Adler, *The Origins of Judaism: An Archaeological-Historical Reappraisal*, in *Mosaic*, November 28, 2022.

Nathan J. Chambers, *Reconsidering Creation Ex Nihilo in Genesis 1*, in *Review of Biblical Literature*, September 2022.

■ Presentations

“The Love of God in Deuteronomy,” a lecture at St. Scholastica’s Priory and St. Mary’s Monastery, Petersham, MA, December 4, 2022.

“The Love of God in Deuteronomy,” lecture by videoconferencing to the Sunday Night Club (a discussion group of members of the Church of the Latter Day Saints organized by a graduate student at the University of St. Andrews), St. Andrews Scotland, September 18, 2022.

■ Podcasts and Videos

“[Deuteronomy 6 and 10 \(The Love of God\)](#),” in *The Two Testaments: A Guided Journey through Scripture*, December 7, 2022.

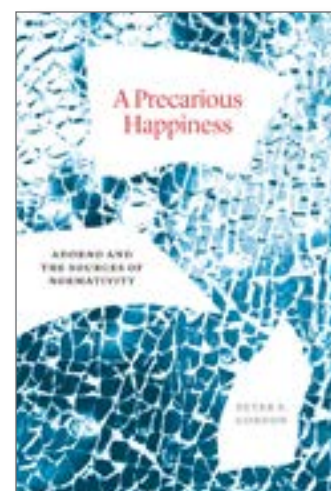
[Conversations with Pastor Cliff](#) (Pholoso Ministries, South Africa): *Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews* (with Kevin J. Madigan), August 8, 2022.

The Tikvah Podcast, “[Jon Levenson on the Moral Force of the Book of Ruth](#),” June 3, 2022.

FROM THE DESK OF PETER E. GORDON

Amabel B. James
Professor of History

Professor Gordon has been working on his new book, [A Precarious Happiness: Adorno and the Sources of Normativity](#). It will be published by next fall simultaneously by University of Chicago Press and (in a German translation) by Suhrkamp Verlag.



FROM THE DESK OF JULIA RHYDER

Assistant Professor of Near Eastern
Languages and Civilizations

Julia Rhyder's co-edited volume *Authorship and the Hebrew Bible* was published with Mohr Siebeck in October 2022. She is currently completing a co-edited volume entitled *Collective Violence and Memory in the Ancient Mediterranean*, due out with Brill in November 2023. Julia was pleased to co-organize (together with Rotem Avneri Meir) a two-day symposium in April 2023 entitled *Antiochus III's Edicts to Jerusalem: Between Imperial Stress and Local Agency*, which was sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University.

■ Articles & Publications

With Sonja Ammann and Katharina Pyschny, ed. *Authorship and the Hebrew Bible*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022.

[“The Jewish Pig Prohibition from Leviticus to the Maccabees.”](#) *Journal of Biblical Literature* 141, no 2 (2023): 221–41.

[“Politics and Theology in Second Maccabees: Rethinking the Epiphanies, Prayers, and Deaths of Martyrs.”](#) Pages 257–71 in *Political Theologies in the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Mark Brett and Rachelle Gilmour. Paderborn: Brill, 2023.

[“Gates and Entrances in Ezekiel 40–48: The Social Utopia of the Temple Vision.”](#) *Vetus Testamentum* (2022): 1–14.

“Le porc et les interactions d’Antiochos IV avec les Juifs : une comparaison nouvelle des sources,” *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 154 (2022): 383–49.

“Divine Authorship: Diverse Images of Yhwh as Legislative Author in the Pentateuch and Beyond.” Pages 155–73 in *Authorship and the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Sonja Ammann, Katharina Pyschny and Julia Rhyder. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022.

[“Creating a Commentary.”](#) *Ancient Jew Review*. August 9, 2022.

■ Presentations

“Purity, Cult, and Empire: Antiochus III’s Proclamation Concerning the Temple and City in Jerusalem.” *Antiochus III’s Edicts to Jerusalem: Between Imperial Stress and Local Agency*. Harvard University. April 2023.



JULIA RHYDER

“Between Diet and Sacrifice: The Origins of the Jewish Pig Prohibition Reconsidered.” Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany. April 2023.

“Transgressive Consumption during the Battle of Michmash (1 Sam 14:31–35).” *Meals in the HB/OT and Its World*. Society of Biblical Literature, November 2022.

“Standardization and Priestly Power in the Priestly Traditions of the Pentateuch.” *Pentateuch/Literature and History of the Persian Period*. Society of Biblical Literature. November 2022.

“The ‘Theophany’ Inscription at Kuntillet ‘Ajrud (KA 4.2) and Biblical Poetry: Evidence of Yhwh’s Southern Origins?” *Ancient Inscriptions*. ASOR Annual Meeting. November 2022.

Panelist: “Reimagining Biblical Studies Beyond the Hebrew Bible/Second Temple Judaism Divide.” Columbia Hebrew Bible Seminar, USA. October 2022.



ELIZABETH VERNON



IT HAS BEEN AN HONOR TO HAVE IRIT AHARONY TEACHING MODERN HEBREW AT HARVARD FOR MORE THAN 26 YEARS.

Dr. Aharony came to us with a Ph.D. in Hebrew literature and a wealth of teaching experience. During her years in Harvard's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC), she rose from Teaching Assistant (1996–2000) to Preceptor (2000–2013) to Senior Preceptor (2013–2023). She has built a vibrant and innovative language program with four levels of instruction, and has taught generations of Harvard students the intricacies of Israeli culture.

Irit has inspired students' career paths in academic fields such as Semitic philology and Middle Eastern history. To say her students adore her seems to be an understatement. Colleagues and students traveled from many corners of the earth—even from Qatar—to join her recent retirement celebration.

FROM DAVID STERN, FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

Irit Aharony has built a remarkable modern Hebrew program here at Harvard. She is a masterful and beloved teacher, who brings our students both great language skills for conversation and translation, and a nuanced understanding of the richness and complexity of Israeli culture. Irit has been winning teaching awards consistently since she arrived at Harvard. She and Osnat Aharoni (who joined us as a Teaching Assistant in 2010) have created an impressive Web-based curriculum that has served as a model for other language programs—and which helped them adapt to the remote world of COVID with greater ease. She has brought a wide variety of speakers to the class: artists and writers—including author Etgar Keret, who came to speak with students before he was famous. She has connected students with these speakers in meaningful ways, whether for private meetings, summer internships or, in one student's case, introduction to an Israeli dance troupe he later joined. She is absolutely beloved by students, who feel her enthusiasm for the subject and even more so for them as individuals.

The modern Hebrew class is the main entry point for many students into the field of Jewish studies, and we couldn't have asked for a better ambassador than Irit to welcome them. ■

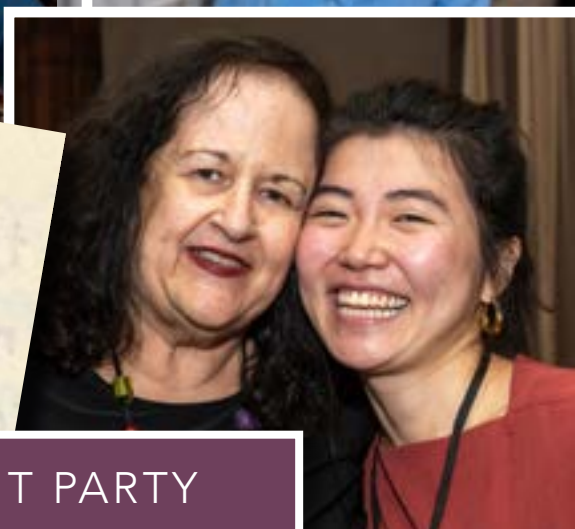
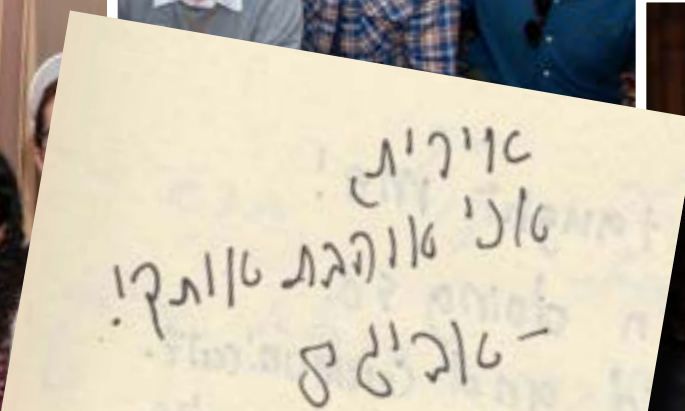
FROM PROF. KHALED EL-ROUAYHEB, CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS

Irit is not just one member of the Harvard faculty; she is an institution. For around twenty years, she has run an immensely successful Hebrew language program here. When I became chair of NELC a few years ago, I had to review the student evaluations of the faculty in our department. In Irit's case, I read—again and again—phrases such as “fantastic teacher,” “fantastic instructor,” often with more detailed praise of her course design, promptness in returning assignments, and generally her care for her students. I quickly came to anticipate such glowing evaluations for Irit, and these anticipations were invariably met.

It is always with a tinge of sadness that we thank colleagues at retirement parties. In saying farewell to Irit, we are saying *lehitraot* to a wonderful colleague and remarkable teacher. Our department will not be the same without you! ■

“Irit, you’ve been an inspiration to me... Your innovative methods for teaching Hebrew have encouraged me to modernize the teaching of Western Armenian. Thank you for generously sharing your work... you’ll be missed!”

—Lisa Gulesserian,
Preceptor in Armenian



IRIT AHARONY'S RETIREMENT PARTY

NOVEMBER 30, 2022

"Ever sensitive... you pulled me aside at the end of one class to inquire about my assignments... I was surprised when —after you informed me that I needed to submit my homework ASAP to pass the class—you told me: It doesn't really matter that you learn Hebrew, what's most important is that you're sleeping, and healthy, and happy....Please know that the fact that you cared made all the difference."

—Corey Gold, '19

ALL PHOTOS: ILENE PERLMAN



SAM RUBIN, AARON RUBIN, NANCY KO, OSNAT AHARONI, IRIT AHARONY, CARRIE MOUNTAIN

A portrait of Ran Bechor, a man with dark hair and a light beard, smiling. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a yellow chair and a wall with some papers.

WELCOME, RAN BECHOR PRECEPTOR IN MODERN HEBREW

ALON TOLEDO

We are thrilled to welcome **Ran Bechor** as our new Preceptor in Modern Hebrew. He joined us last spring semester as Teaching Assistant in Modern Hebrew and taught Beginning and Intermediate Hebrew. This year, he will be offering Advanced Hebrew, as well. Ran has been able to bring engaging visiting speakers to his classes, such as renowned musician **Yoni Rechter**, and has attracted a diverse and engaged group of students.

Ran Bechor is an educator, Hebrew playwright, and theater director. Before coming to Harvard, he was the principal of a school for the gifted in Jerusalem for two years. Bechor had previously initiated and managed a school that taught Arabic language through theater. He is a former fellow of the Mandel School for Educational Leadership. At Tel Aviv University, he earned a graduate degree in philosophy and theater and a master's degree in anthropology, and was later appointed as a lecturer in the Department of Social Studies. In addition to his deep knowledge of Hebrew culture, Bechor has a wealth of experience in teaching and innovating pedagogical strategies.



FELLOW
ISABEL FREY
UNIVERSITY OF MUSIC AND
PERFORMING ARTS



ASSOCIATE
DOTAN GREENVALD



VISITING SCHOLAR
SARA RONIS
ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY, TX



VISITING SCHOLAR
SHIRA WOŁOSKY
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

VISITOR NEWS



2022–2023 ACADEMIC VISITORS

THE CJS ANNUALLY HOSTS outstanding scholars, fellows, visiting professors/lecturers, and exchange students in Jewish studies.

Harry Starr Fellows in Judaica

Theme: Jewish Studies and the Arts

Paula Ansaldo (spring) University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Samantha Cooper (academic year) New York University, NY

Rivka Elitzur-Leiman (academic year) New York University,
NY / Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italy

Sivan Gottlieb (academic year) Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Jules Riegel (academic year) Hollins University, VA

Victor Couto Tiribás (academic year)
Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy

Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellow

Rabbi Jeffrey Sultar (spring), Congregation B'nai Jacob,
Phoenixville, PA

Visiting Professors

Miriam Goldstein (academic year), The Hebrew University
of Jerusalem, Israel, Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor of
Jewish Studies, Department of Near Eastern Languages and
Civilizations

Josh Lambert (spring), Wellesley College, MA,
Gerard Weinstock Visiting Associate Professor of Jewish Studies,
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Ruth Mandel (spring), University College London, UK,
Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor of Anthropology,
Department of Anthropology

Yehudah Mirsky (spring), Brandeis University, MA,
Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies,
Committee on the Study of Religion

Scott Ury (academic year), Tel Aviv University, Israel, (fall)
Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor in Jewish Studies,
Department of History, (spring) George Rohr Visiting Associate
Professor of History, Department of History

Visiting Scholars

Sara Ronis (academic year), St. Mary's University, TX

Deborah Tatar (spring–fall), Virginia Tech, VA

Shira Wolosky (spring), The Hebrew University of Jerusalem,
Israel

Gideon Libson, (academic year), The Hebrew University of
Jerusalem, Israel

Fellows

Isabel Frey (spring), University of Music and Performing Arts,
Vienna, Austria

Rebekah Haigh (academic year), Princeton University, NJ

Post Doctoral Fellow

Anna Sierka (academic year), independent scholar

Associates

Dotan Greenvald (academic year), independent scholar

Susanne Klingenstein (academic year), independent scholar

Yehudah Mirsky (fall), Brandeis University, MA

Aviram Shahal (academic year), independent scholar



MIRIAM B. GOLDSTEIN

ILENE PERLMAN



JOSH LAMBERT

LISA ABITBOL



YEHUDAH MIRSKY

VISITING PROFESSORS

THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES IS GRATEFUL FOR OUR VISITING PROFESSORSHIPS, which enable us to bring faculty from other universities to supplement our regular course offerings. The George Rohr Visiting Professorship was founded to bring visiting faculty to teach courses specifically on topics relating to modern Israel studies. The Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professorship in Jewish Studies was established with a generous gift from Gerard Weinstock to bring visiting faculty in any area of Jewish studies. We thank the Weinstock and Rohr families for their generosity which made these funds possible.

MIRIAM B. GOLDSTEIN

GERARD WEINSTOCK VISITING PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES
AND CIVILIZATIONS

*The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Department
of Arabic Language and Literature*

I was thrilled to be part of the community at the CJS and at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, as Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor. My fall semester course, **The Cairo Genizot and their Literatures**, introduced two important manuscript troves of medieval Jewish history: the thousands of fragments commonly known as the “Cairo Genizah,” and documents found in the [Firkovich collection](#) in St. Petersburg, Russia. In the spring, I taught **Interreligious Encounters: Jews, Muslims and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Medieval Period**, exploring the intertwined Arabic-speaking societies of the medieval period in the Near East and North Africa.

My book, *A Judeo-Arabic Parody of the Life of Jesus: The Toledot Yeshu Helene Narrative* (Tübingen, 2023) was published. I continued to work on a translation of the commentary on Genesis by tenth-century Baghdadi Karaite scholar Ya’qub al-Qirqisani and I gave talks and seminars in New England and New York. ■

JOSH LAMBERT

GERARD WEINSTOCK VISITING
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND
CIVILIZATIONS

*Sophia Moses Robison Associate Professor of Jewish
Studies and English; Director of the Jewish Studies Program,
Wellesley College*

In spring 2023, I had the pleasure of teaching a new course called **21st-Century U.S. Jewish Culture**, exploring Jewish expression in major cultural media with a fascinating, enthusiastic mix of undergraduates, Divinity School students, and auditors.

Recent publications include an essay “Jewish Literature and Jews and Literature” in [The Routledge Handbook of Judaism in the 21st Century](#), and my book [The Literary Mafia: Jews, Publishing, and Postwar American Literature](#) which came out from Yale University Press (2022).

I am serving at several new organizations: as faculty for the Cultural Leadership Program of the Mandel Institute for Nonprofit Leadership, and as an advisory board member of the Archive of the American Jewish Life in the Digital Age, which is being created at New York University. ■



RUTH MANDEL

GERARD WEINSTOCK VISITING PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Professor, University College London

As Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor in Anthropology, I have had the good fortune of being able to take advantage of the rich academic offerings and human resources of both the Anthropology Department and the Center for Jewish Studies. I taught a course called **Contestations: an Ethnographic Inquiry into Memorials and Countermemorials**, highlighted by a guest anthropologist and graphic comics artist (graphic ethnographer) who shared her work on genocides through a lecture and a hands-on drawing workshop. I also enjoyed mentoring several post-docs in the Anthropology Department.

I was thrilled to present my own on-going research on the Stolperstein (stumbling stones) project, counter-memorial in areas of former Nazi-occupied Europe, and to connect with Witness Stones, a spin-off project in nearby Connecticut which places memorial stones for enslaved people at sites where they lived or worked.

I presented my research at a conference at Yale and recently learned that I have been awarded a fellowship at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in Washington, D.C. ■

YEHUDAH MIRSKY

GERARD WEINSTOCK VISITING PROFESSOR
COMMITTEE ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION

*Professor of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies,
Brandeis University*

I enjoyed the opportunity to return to Harvard, where I earned my Ph.D., to teach during the spring semester. I taught a seminar entitled **Renaissance and Revolution:**



Zionism, Judaism and Israel, which explored from different angles the various entanglements of religion, nationalism, political ideology and questions of Jewish identity from the mid-19th century to present-day Israel.

My second course was **Between Ecstasy and Community: Hasidism in Jewish Thought and History**. In

the course we explored the rise and vicissitudes of Hasidism from the mid-18th to early 20th century. Using Hasidism as a prism we were able to look at a range of issues, early modern history, history of the book and printing, comparative religion, theories of modernity and more. ■

SCOTT URY

GERARD WEINSTOCK VISITING PROFESSOR
AND GEORGE ROHR VISITING PROFESSOR,
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

*Associate Professor and Director of the Eva and Marc Besen
Institute for the Study of Historical Consciousness,
Tel Aviv University*

As Rohr/Weinstock Visiting Professor of History at Harvard's Center for Jewish Studies I taught two undergraduate courses in the History Department.

The Jews of Eastern Europe explored key aspects of modern Jewish history and helped lay the foundations for the spring seminar, **Modern Jewish Politics**, which examined Jewish political thinking and activity in modern Europe, North America and the Middle East.

While at Harvard, I also benefited greatly from the vibrant community of scholars and students at the Center for Jewish Studies and the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies.

Progress on my own research included the following publications:

[*"Was There a Jerusalem School of Modern Jewish Politics?"*](#)
Jewish Quarterly Review 113(1), 2023, 160–190.

Co-edited volume, [*Promised Lands: Jews, Poland and the Land of Israel*](#). Polin: *Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 35 (Littman, 2023).

Co-edited volume on *Antisemitism and the Politics of History* (Brandeis University Press, 2024, forthcoming).

I also co-organized a "Summer Institute for the Study of Antisemitism," at York University, Toronto. ■



RABBI JEFF SULTAR

"The Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellowship provided me with the opportunity to finally explore how the ancient legend of the golem can offer crucial insight into some of the most pressing issues of our day."

—Rabbi Jeff Sultar

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER FELLOW

IT WAS A PLEASURE TO HOST RABBI JEFF SULTAR OF CONGREGATION B'NAI JACOB IN PHOENIXVILLE, PA AS OUR TWENTY-EIGHTH DANIEL JEREMY SILVER FELLOW. The Silver family generously established this fellowship in memory of Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver '48 to enable an "active congregational rabbi who has demonstrated exceptional intellectual and academic interest, originality and energy" to engage in full-time research at Harvard for a semester.

JEFF SULTAR

Rabbi, Congregation B'nai Jacob, Phoenixville, PA

I am so grateful for the privilege and opportunity to take a break from the non-stop life of a congregational rabbi, slow down and take a deep dive into a subject I've been passionate about for nearly 30 years. Throughout that time, I've explored the legend of the golem (an artificial person created using mystical/magical means). I would often teach about how the golem legend evolved — from a single biblical mention in Psalms, through a succession of references in later sacred texts, and up through a huge proliferation of stories in the 20th and 21st centuries. I enjoyed uncovering many different 'recipes' for creating a golem and tracing the evolution of the golem as a metaphor to reflect people's visions and concerns about how our technological creations contained both positive and dangerous potentials.

At the end of each teaching, I'd mention that, while a golem had never actually existed, many rabbis believed that it had, and therefore they generated halachic (Jewish legal) teachings about it. Moreover, now, in the present day, these halachic rulings are becoming relevant, because for the first time ever, we are actually on the verge of building golems, only out of silicon chips rather than clay. While I would say that the ancient legend of the golem had contemporary halachic and legal implications — for such areas as artificial intelligence (AI), genetic and biological engineering, and even for the legal category of regarding

corporations as "artificial persons" — I never had the time to develop what those contemporary implications might be.

The Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellowship provided me with the opportunity to finally explore how the ancient legend of the golem can offer crucial insight into some of the most pressing issues of our day. This couldn't be more timely, as throughout the spring semester, my research was constantly 'interrupted' on a near-daily basis by exciting and dizzying reports on the most recent development in AI (even including a front-page *New York Times* reference to the golem legend as a forerunner to modern-day concerns).

While such research is inherently a solitary pursuit, the fellowship was also greatly enhanced by the weekly seminars and less formal gatherings with the Starr Fellows. I'm so appreciative of the leadership and insights from CJS Director David Stern and the other professors who regularly attended the seminars. Sandy Cantave Vil, Rachel Rockenmacher, and the entire CJS staff were so welcoming and generous in their support. Thank you. ■

2022–23 HARRY STARR FELLOWS IN JUDAICA

THE HARRY STARR FELLOWSHIP IN JUDAICA

supports a group of scholars from around the world to gather at Harvard to engage in full-time research in Jewish studies. This research fellowship was founded with a generous bequest from the estate of Harry Starr (class of 1921), former president of the Lucius Littauer Foundation.

The Starr Fellowship is open to scholars at different stages of their academic careers. From a record number of applicants,

we selected six Harry Starr Fellows in Judaica for 2022–23. We invited a group of Post-Doctoral Fellows whose work relates to Jewish studies and the Arts. Starr Fellows presented their works in progress at the weekly seminars during the spring semester. These presentations often elicited lively discussions between the Starr Fellows, other visiting scholars, and faculty and students from Harvard and other area universities.

STARR SEMINARS 2023

Jewish Studies and the Arts

Faculty Hosts: Joseph Koerner, Kay Shelemay and David Stern

JANUARY 25

Kay Shelemay, G. Gordon Watts Professor of Music and Professor of African and African American Studies, Harvard University, MA

"Connecting Musical Worlds: Crossroads in Jewish and African Studies" (Orientation Meeting)

FEBRUARY 1

David Stern, Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature; Director of the Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University, MA

"On Tiny Jewish Characters"

FEBRUARY 8

Sivan Gottlieb, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

"Visualizing Hebrew Knowledge: Shape and Text in Scientific Manuscripts: The Diagram of the Soul as a Case Study"

FEBRUARY 15

Jules Riegel, Hollins University, VA

"Saving a Lost Generation: Children and Music in the Warsaw Ghetto"

FEBRUARY 22

Samantha Cooper, New York University, NY

"Undesirables in the Diamond Horseshoe"

MARCH 1

Rivka Elitzur-Leiman, New York University, NY/
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italy

"'Two Pieces, One Amulet' — Visuality and Practice in Late Antique Jewish Amulets"

MARCH 8

Victor Couto Tiribás, Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy

"The Rabbi and the Painter: Menasseh ben Israel, Rembrandt van Rijn, and The Glorious Stone"

MARCH 22

Paula Ansaldo, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

"Jewish Theatre in South America and its Impact on the Local Theatre Scene"

MARCH 29

Rabbi Jeffrey Sultar, Congregation B'nai Jacob, Phoenixville, PA

"The Golem in Our Lives Today: Contemporary Implications of an Ancient Legend"

APRIL 19

Isabel Frey, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, Austria

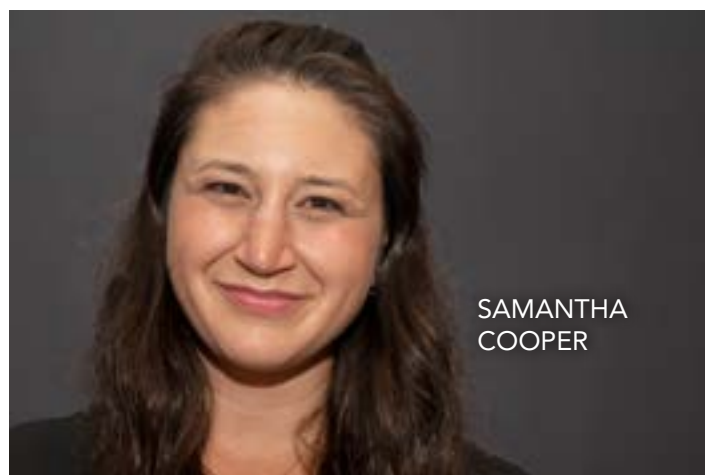
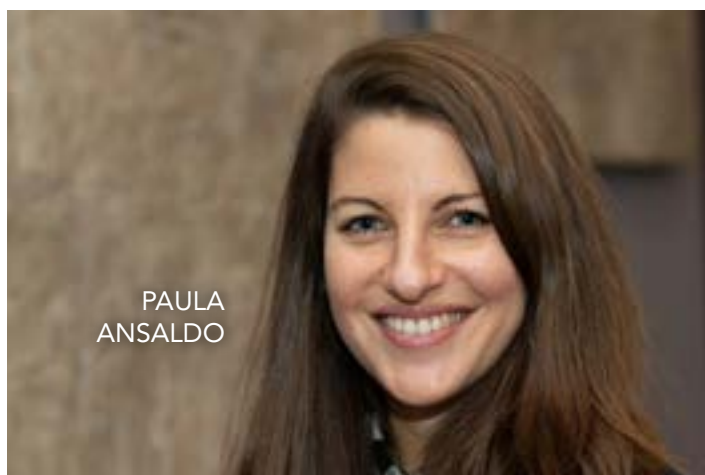
"Learning to Listen to Yiddish Folk Songs"

APRIL 26

Guest Speaker: Scott Ury, George Rohr Visiting Associate Professor of History, Harvard University; Associate Professor, Department of Jewish History, Tel Aviv University, Israel

"The Fine Art of Researching Antisemitism in the Twenty-First Century"

NOTES FROM THE 2022–23 STARR FELLOWS



PAULA ANSALDO

University of Buenos Aires

My stay at the Center for Jewish Studies as a Harry Starr Fellow in Judaica allowed me to make significant progress on my research project, “Jewish Theatre in South America (1930–1960): Transnational Networks and Artistic Exchanges.” In my doctoral dissertation, I explored the development of Buenos Aires’s Jewish theatre. At Harvard, I wanted to extend my investigation to a wider region to include other Latin American cities with large Jewish populations that also developed a Jewish theatre scene, such as Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago de Chile, and Montevideo.

During the spring semester, I completed an article that presented an overview of the history of Jewish theatre in South America and the significant influence that Jewish artists had on the larger South American theatre scene. The draft was deeply improved by the feedback that I received from my Starr Fellow colleagues and senior scholars at Harvard. The weekly Starr Seminar meetings provided a stimulating interdisciplinary environment that not only enriched my writing process but also illuminated new aspects of my work and new methodological approaches to consider.

“...I completed an article that presented an overview of the history of Jewish theatre in South America and the significant influence that Jewish artists had on the larger South American theatre scene.”

—Paula Ansaldo

My project also benefited greatly from access to the Harvard Judaica Collection, which holds a large Yiddish theatre collection. This includes the archives of some of the most important artists that performed in South America during the period that I study: the Joseph Buloff Jewish Theater Archive and the Pesach’ke Burstein and Lillian Lux Yiddish Theater Archive. In these different artists’ collections, I was able to find theatre programs, publicity, and reviews of their presentations in South America that helped me answer some of my main research questions. Moreover, I was able to take advantage of the incredible Harvard Library bibliographic resources in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and I had the opportunity to audit a class at the Comparative Literature Department that was extremely valuable for my investigation.

One of the highlights of my experience at Harvard was the warm camaraderie among the cohort of Starr and Silver Fellows, with whom we met weekly and shared ideas over coffee. Our collaborative efforts resulted in a public event, “The Art of Jewish Studies” symposium, a celebratory round table where we were able to discuss the connections between our research projects. Lastly, I want to extend special thanks to the faculty and staff of the CJS whose constant and generous support made us all feel at home. ■

SAMANTHA M. COOPER

New York University

My year as a Harry Starr Postdoctoral Fellow in Judaica has been enormously productive. At the beginning of the year, I set out to make progress on my first book project, *American Jews and the Making of the New York Opera Industry, 1880–1940*. Therein, I argue that Jewish engagement with opera played a vital role in shaping

both the New York opera industry and the American Jewish experience between 1880 and 1940. In this sixty-year period, bookended by the establishment and democratization of the first Metropolitan Opera House (the Met), numerous Jewish men and women advanced the genre's professional and amateur management, performance, and reception in the nation's opera capital. Yet, they also navigated an exclusionary, and at times antisemitic, atmosphere. While at Harvard, I undertook archival research in the Special Collections of the Baker Business Library and Houghton Library's Theatre Collection, where I uncovered many sources that I look forward to incorporating into my book, which has been accepted for publication at my first-choice academic press.

During the fall semester, I launched a new public humanities project called *The Sounding Jewish Podcast*, which features my conversations with global musicologists, ethnomusicologists and sound studies scholars who specialize in the music and sound of Jewish experience. The trailer and seven episodes in Season 1 include interviews with fellow Starr Fellow Jules Riegel and Starr Fellow faculty advisor Kay Kaufman Shelemay.

I also had the great pleasure of auditing Professor Saul Noam Zaritt's provocative "Jew Theory" course, giving a presentation for lecturer Lucy Caplan's History and Literature class "Sound and Color: Music, Race, and U.S. Cultural Politics", and offering a handful of online guest lectures for Hebrew Union College's "Jewish Music Research" seminar for cantorial students.

The weekly Starr Seminars were a major highlight of the spring semester. They provided a structured space for intellectual exchange, and for planning the next steps of our research and writing. Other exciting opportunities in the spring included presenting papers for the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and Carnegie Hall's Women in Music Series about "American Jewish Women and New York Opera Culture, 1880–1940," and for Harvard's graduate student Jewish Studies Workshop. Throughout the year, I enjoyed attending Yiddish music concerts organized by Yiddish Preceptor Sara Feldman, as well as numerous lectures, seminars, and events in Harvard's Music Department and Center for Jewish Studies. The final Starr Symposium, "The Art of Jewish Studies" (with an apt title suggested by Silver Fellow, Rabbi Jeff Sultar), offered a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the many connections between our work.

"...I launched a new public humanities project called *The Sounding Jewish Podcast*, which features my conversations with global musicologists, ethnomusicologists and sound studies scholars who specialize in the music and sound of Jewish experience."

—Samantha Cooper



Working with the Starr Fellowship cohort on the theme of "Jewish Studies and the Arts" was an incredibly rewarding experience. I am especially grateful for the mentorship and intellectual generosity of faculty advisor Dr. Kay Kaufman Shelemay. I would also like to thank the Center for Jewish Studies, its staff, and its supporters for creating this special opportunity for early career academics. ■

SIVAN GOTTLIEB

Bar-Ilan University

It has been an honor to be a Starr Fellow at the Center for Jewish Studies, and a part of the 2022–2023 cohort. The weekly seminars, as well as other countless meetings at the office, Harvard Divinity School, and Broadsheet coffee shop have made this year very productive and meaningful. I have gained valuable friendships and learned a great deal from each member of the group.

I had the privilege to continue my project "Visualizing Hebrew Knowledge: Shape and Text in Scientific and Philosophical Manuscripts." This study investigates the transmission of diagrams and provides insights into the learning process. It highlights the cooperation, integration, and differentiation between Jews and other cultures. Additionally, it explores ways in which visual language functions within Jewish society.

Access to Harvard's vast resources, including the museums and library collections, was invaluable to my research. Visiting the original manuscripts at Harvard's Houghton Library and attending events hosted by the Center for Jewish Studies and other groups such as the Committee on Medieval Studies enriched my experience. I was thrilled to be able to attend Professor Jeffrey F. Hamburger's course, "Diagram Paradigm: Diagrams in Medieval Art and Beyond," and to study Latin in the fall and spring.

During the Starr Seminars in the spring semester, I very much



enjoyed getting to know my colleagues, hearing about their work and receiving constructive feedback on my research. I am grateful for the invaluable insights shared by hosts, Professors David Stern, Joseph Koerner, and Kay Kaufman Shelemay. I submitted three articles for publication and have written two other articles, one of which is in Hebrew, on another set of diagrams that I studied this year. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to share my research again at the end-of-year Starr Symposium, “The Art of Jewish Studies,” where I presented a diagram that I am currently investigating from Harvard’s collection.

Finally, I want to express my sincerest appreciation to Sandy Cantave Vil, Rachel Rockenmacher, Maura Gould, and the entire CJS staff. Their kindness, generosity, and care have made us feel welcome and supported. ■

RIVKA ELITZUR-LEIMAN

New York University/Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia

It has been an incredible honor and privilege to spend a year as a Harry Starr Fellow in Judaica. My time at Harvard University has been truly eye-opening, providing me with access to a wealth of resources, engaging courses, inspiring lectures, excellent facilities, and extensive libraries. Moreover, I had the wonderful opportunity to connect with fascinating professors and scholars who have greatly enriched my experience.

Thanks to the generous fellowship, I was able to dedicate valuable time to working on my forthcoming book on Jewish amulets from Late Antiquity, as well as my ongoing project on the visuality of ancient Jewish amulets. Being situated at the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East was particularly advantageous, as it granted me convenient access to the collection of Sassanian incantation bowls, which are highly relevant to my research.

I greatly benefited from attending Professor Stephen Mitchell’s

course, “History of Witchcraft and Charm Magic,” and Professor Noah Feldman’s reading group, “Advanced Topics in Jewish Law: The Law of Magic” — both delved into ancient magic from different perspectives and across various cultures, providing a truly enriching experience.

One of the highlights of my time in the program was the weekly Starr Seminars, where I had the opportunity to collaborate with the other Starr Fellows, learning about their perspectives, and presenting my own research. Working alongside the Center’s Director, Professor David Stern, as well as hosts Professors Kay Shelemay and Joseph Koerner, has been a special privilege. The invaluable feedback and advice I received from the faculty and my cohort during these interactions have been immensely helpful. Currently, I am in the final stages of completing an article based on my project and presentation at the seminar.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Sandy Cantave Vil, Rachel Rockenmacher, and the entire CJS staff for their generous assistance throughout my time at Harvard. Their unwavering support and tireless efforts to create a welcoming environment have been instrumental in making this experience truly memorable. I am immensely grateful to the Harry Starr Fellowship program for this exceptional opportunity. It has provided me with invaluable knowledge, connections, and inspiration that will undoubtedly shape my academic journey going forward. ■

JULES RIEGEL

Hollins University

It was a great privilege to participate as a Starr Fellow during the 2022–2023 academic year. During this time I made significant progress on my first book project, *In the Season of Hunger and Plague: Musical Life in the Warsaw Ghetto*, which demonstrates how Jews in the ghetto used music to combat antisemitism and assert Jewish belonging within Europe’s

cultural canon. I completed an article on beggars' music in the Warsaw Ghetto, which was recently accepted for publication in the journal *Jewish Social Studies*. Harvard's excellent libraries provided me with invaluable resources for both. I presented on my research at several national conferences, as well as in the Harvard Davis Center Seminar on Russian and Eurasian Jewry. Additionally, I started work on an article examining Yiddish-language depictions of Ludwig van Beethoven. I am focusing on a group of Yiddish children's books on Beethoven from the early twentieth century. Thanks to the Harvard libraries, I was able to access many of these rare texts.

I had wonderful opportunities to visit Dr. Sara Feldman's Yiddish classes and Preceptor Iryna Kovalchuk's Polish classes to discuss my work and experiences with archival research. In the spring semester, I worked with Yiddish students in one of Dr. Feldman's classes, sharing music from the Warsaw Ghetto that I uncovered in Polish archives. At the end of the semester, Yiddish student Rebecca Mac performed one of these songs as part of a class recital; this was likely the first time in nearly eighty years that this song was publicly performed.

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to our faculty hosts, Professors David Stern, Kay Kaufman Shelemay, and Joseph Koerner, for fostering an environment that was both rigorous and richly collaborative. I would also like to thank the other Starr (and Silver) Fellows, who became not just wonderful colleagues but also supportive friends. The participants in the Starr Seminar offered invaluable feedback on my research. Finally, I am especially grateful to Rachel Rockenmacher, Sandy Cantave Vil, and all the CJS staff for all their kindness, hospitality, and generous assistance during my time at Harvard. ■

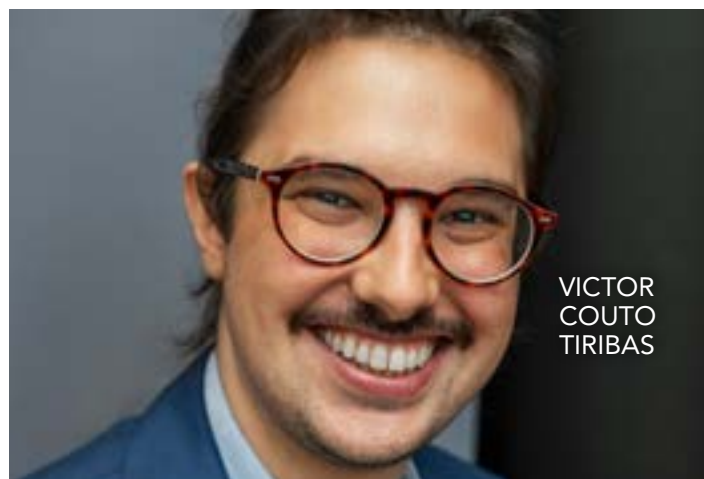
VICTOR COUTO TIRIBAS

Scuola Normale Superiore

I was honored and delighted to have been a Starr Fellow during the academic year of 2022–2023. I am so grateful to Sandy Cantave Vil and Rachel Rockenmacher in the Center for Jewish Studies office for all their support. I completed the first draft of my critical edition of *The Glorious Stone* (1655), a messianic treatise inked by Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel and illustrated by Rembrandt van Rijn. This book represents a very rare example, especially for the seventeenth century, of a Christian artist deploying his skills in the expression of Jewish ideas.

"I made significant progress on my first book project... which demonstrates how Jews in the ghetto used music to combat antisemitism and assert Jewish belonging within Europe's cultural canon."

—Jules Riegel



VICTOR
COUTO
TIRIBAS

ILENE PERLMAN

"I completed the first draft of my critical edition of *The Glorious Stone* (1655), a messianic treatise inked by Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel and illustrated by Rembrandt van Rijn."

—Victor Couto Tiribas

During my stay at Harvard University, I first translated and annotated the text of *The Glorious Stone* to make it accessible for a wider public. I then researched and wrote the introduction to the volume, which reconstructs Menasseh ben Israel's collaboration with Rembrandt step-by-step for the first time.

The close exchange with faculty and visiting professors proved to be invaluable. I am most indebted to Joseph Koerner, with whom I discussed my work in depth on various occasions. With his invitation, I presented my research at the Harvard Art Museums, where we analyzed Rembrandt's etchings with Stephen Greenblatt, whose insightful questions contributed immensely to my project as well. I also had illuminating conversations with Kay Shelemay and Eric Nelson, who warmly welcomed me. In our Starr Seminars, comments by David Stern, Miriam Goldstein, Scott Ury, and Susanne Klingenstein helped improve my work more than I can express.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the fellowship was the bond created with the other Starr Fellows, whose research offered a constant stimulus for my own intellectual work. I will treasure my memories of the times we met for coffee to discuss the advancement of our projects and career plans as scholars.

In the academic year of 2023–2024, I will be joining the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston as a Research Fellow while remaining affiliated with the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University. My critical edition of *The Glorious Stone* is set to be published by Brill in late 2024. ■

LECTURES & EVENTS



NOBEL PRIZE LAUREATE LOUISE GLÜCK IN PAINE HALL, NOVEMBER 15, 2022

ILENE PERLMAN

FALL SEMESTER 2022

SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

*I was Not Black, I Became Black Here:
Formation of Blackness in Israel*

A 'Black and Jewish Talk Series' Event with:

SHULA MOLA

Civil and Human Rights Activist and Educator; Postdoctoral Fellow, Schusterman Center for Israel Studies & Hadassah-Brandeis Institute at Brandeis University

MODERATOR: SARA FELDMAN

Preceptor in Yiddish, Harvard University

A [RECORDING OF THIS EVENT](#) IS
AVAILABLE ON THE CJS WEBSITE

William Landau Lecture and Publication Fund with The
Hutchins Center for African and African American Research



ILENE PERLMAN

SHULA MOLA

SEPTEMBER 19, 2022

Annual Stacy Dick Lecture

The Life of a Jewish Book

DAVID STERN

Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature; Director of the Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University

Center for Jewish Studies Fund

SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

ANNUAL CJS FALL RECEPTION

[See photos on pages 32–33](#)

NOVEMBER 15, 2022

Louise Glück: A Reading and Conversation

LOUISE GLÜCK

2020 Nobel Prize laureate in Literature

INTRODUCTION: STEPHEN GREENBLATT

John Cogan University Professor of the Humanities, Harvard University

A [RECORDING OF THIS EVENT](#) IS AVAILABLE ON THE CJS WEBSITE

Alan and Elisabeth Doft Lecture and Publication Fund

NOVEMBER 30, 2022

IRIT AHARONY RETIREMENT EVENT

[See photos and article on pages 10–11](#)

Josephine and Martin Gang Memorial Fund

DECEMBER 19, 2022

AJS CONFERENCE RECEPTION

Judith and David Lobel Fund for the Center for Jewish Studies

SPRING SEMESTER 2023

JANUARY 19, 2023

A conference

THE LEGACY OF ISADORE TWERSKY: TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER HIS PASSING

[See program details and photos on page 26](#)

Alan M. and Katherine W. Stroock Fund for Innovative Research in Judaica and Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund

JANUARY 30, 2023

KLEZMER CONCERT AT HARVARD!

BY AND FOR YIDDISH AND POLISH LANGUAGE STUDENTS

Abraham and Rachel Bornstein Fund with the Yiddish language program (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) and the Polish language program (Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures), Harvard University

FEBRUARY 7, 2023

CJS SPRING RECEPTION

[See photos on pages 32–33](#)

FEBRUARY 15, 2023

Seeing The Kabbalah Through Its Trees: New Perspectives of The Kabbalistic Tree

YOSSI CHAJES

Wolfson Professor of Jewish Religious Thought, University of Haifa

Isaac-Melech, Icla, and Zelman Rykles Memorial Fund with the Early Modern Workshop and the Mahindra Humanities Center Seminars in the History of the Book and Diagrams Across Disciplines, Harvard University

WORKSHOPS 2022–2023

JEWISH STUDIES WORKSHOP MEETING DATES:

FALL 2022: SEPTEMBER 20, NOVEMBER 2, NOVEMBER 19,
SPRING 2023: MARCH 2, MARCH 20, APRIL 25, MAY 4

HEBREW BIBLE WORKSHOP MEETING DATES:

FALL 2022: SEPTEMBER 22, OCTOBER 6, NOVEMBER 3,
NOVEMBER 10, DECEMBER 1
SPRING 2023: FEBRUARY 9, MARCH 2, MARCH 23,
MARCH 30, APRIL 27



KLEZMER CONCERT AT HARVARD



YOSSI CHAJES



ADRIENNE
WILLIAMS BOYARIN



HANOCH PIVEN

TONI RICART

FEBRUARY 27, 2023

Christian Beginnings and Jewish Time

BARBARA MEYER

Professor of Religious Studies, Tel Aviv University

Isaac-Melech, Icla, and Zelman Rykles Memorial Fund with the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School

MARCH 8, 2023

On Editing a Jewish Magazine in the 21st Century and discussion with students in 21st-Century U.S. Jewish Culture course

ARIELLE ANGEL

Editor-in-Chief of Jewish Currents

Abraham and Rachel Bornstein Fund

MARCH 8, 2023

Jewish Women in Medieval England: New Tools for New Biographies

ADRIENNE WILLIAMS BOYARIN

Professor of English, University of Victoria

Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund with the Committee on Medieval Studies, Harvard University

MARCH 24, 2023

A talk for modern Hebrew students

The Collage Way

HANOCH PIVEN

Israeli mixed media artist best known for his celebrity caricatures

Nathan and Geraldine Snyder Fund for Jewish Studies

MARCH 28, 2023

An Evening with Tony Kushner

TONY KUSHNER

Pulitzer Prize-winning Playwright, Screenwriter and Activist

WITH STEPHEN GREENBLATT

John Cogan University Professor of the Humanities, Department of English, Harvard University

[See photos on page 30](#)

A [RECORDING OF THIS EVENT](#) IS AVAILABLE ON THE CJS WEBSITE

Alan and Elisabeth Doft Lecture and Publication Fund with additional support from the Martin D. and Helen B. Schwartz Lecture Fund and the Judith and David Lobel Fund for the Center for Jewish Studies

MARCH 29, 2023

TONY KUSHNER

MEETING WITH STUDENTS

[See photos on page 31](#)

Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies

APRIL 19, 2023

Marketing Jewish Food in the 21st Century and Cooking Demonstration with students in 21st-Century U.S. Jewish Culture course

CHELSEA KANTOR

Pastry chef

RACHEL SUNDET

Pastry chef and owner, Mamaleh Delicatessen

Judith and David Lobel Fund for the Center for Jewish Studies



RUTH MANDEL



YONI RECHTER



SARA RONIS

APRIL 20–21, 2023

A symposium

ANTIOCHUS III'S EDICTS TO JERUSALEM: BETWEEN IMPERIAL STRESS AND LOCAL AGENCY

JULIA RHYDER, ROTEM AVNERI MEIR,
CO-ORGANIZERS

[See program details and photos on page 27](#)

Alan M. and Katherine W. Stroock Fund for Innovative
Research in Judaica with Ancient Studies at Harvard

APRIL 26, 2023

Fetal Positions: The Talmudic Construction of Personhood

SARA RONIS

Associate Professor of Theology, St. Mary's University, Texas

Martin D. and Helen B. Schwartz Lecture Fund with the
Women's Studies in Religion Program, Harvard Divinity School and
Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Harvard University

APRIL 28, 2023

Music & Conversation with Yoni Rechter

YONI RECHTER

Israeli musician, composer, pianist, arranger, and singer

Nathan and Geraldine Snyder Fund for Jewish Studies

MAY 1, 2023

Locketts and Landscapes: Materiality and Holocaust Memory Practices

RUTH MANDEL

Professor of Anthropology, University College London; Gerard
Weinstock Visiting Professor of Anthropology, Harvard University

Jeanette and Ludwig Goldschmidt Bequest for the
Benefit of the Center for Jewish Studies with the
Department of Anthropology, Harvard University

MAY 2, 2023

END-OF-YEAR RECEPTION

[See photos on pages 32–33](#)

MAY 2–16, 2023

A conference

WHAT IS THE TALMUD?

[See program details on page 34](#)

Robert and Florence Dreben Lecture and Publication
Fund with the Julis-Rabinowitz Program on Jewish and
Israeli Law, Harvard Law School and The Littauer Chair in
Hebrew Literature and Philosophy, Harvard University

MAY 3, 2023

YIDDISH LANGUAGE STUDENTS' RECITAL AND END OF YEAR EVENT

Harry Elson Lecture and Publication Fund

MAY 3, 2023

The Art of Jewish Studies: A Symposium

2022–2023 HARRY STARR FELLOWS IN JUDAICA:

Paula Ansaldo, Samantha Cooper, Rivka Elitzur-
Leiman, Sivan Gottlieb, Jules Riegel, Victor Tiribás

Harry Starr Fellows in Judaica Fund



YONI RECHTER

JAY HARRIS, MOSHE HALBERTAL, TAMARA MORSEL-EISENBERG, ZEV HARVEY,
BERNARD SEPTIMUS, TALYA FISHMAN, AND PAUL FRANKS



JANUARY 19, 2023

CONFERENCE THE LEGACY OF ISADORE TWERSKY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER HIS PASSING

PROGRAM

- **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
 - DAVID STERN, *Harvard University*
- **The Unity of Maimonides: Philosophy and/versus Halakhah**
 - CHAIR: DAVID STERN, *Harvard University*
 - ZEV HARVEY, *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*
 - PAUL FRANKS, *Yale University*
- **The Dynamics of Jewish History: Change and Internal/External Influences of Causality**
 - CHAIR: SHAYE COHEN, *Harvard University*
 - TALYA FISHMAN, *University of Pennsylvania*
 - JAY HARRIS, *Harvard University*
- **Halakhah and Meta-Halakhah**
 - CHAIR: BERNARD SEPTIMUS, *Harvard University*
 - TAMARA MORSEL-EISENBERG, *New York University*
 - MOSHE HALBERTAL, *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*
- **Closing Remarks**
 - BERNARD SEPTIMUS, *Harvard University*

A [RECORDING OF THIS CONFERENCE](#) IS AVAILABLE ON THE CJS WEBSITE.



HALBERTAL, MORSEL-EISENBERG
AND SEPTIMUS



I. STILLMAN (GUEST) WITH SPEAKERS
HARVEY, SEPTIMUS AND HARRIS



PAUL
FRANKS

PHOTOS: ILENE PERLMAN

APRIL 20–21, 2023

SYMPOSIUM ANTIOCHUS III's EDICTS TO JERUSALEM

**BETWEEN IMPERIAL STRESS
AND LOCAL AGENCY**

Julia Rhyder and Rotem Avneri Meir,
co-organizers

THURSDAY, APRIL 20

CHAIR: SHAYE COHEN, *Harvard University*

- Welcome and Introduction
- The *Gerousia* of Jerusalem: Who Were the Judean Elites in Early Hellenistic Times?
– SYLVIE HONIGMAN, *Tel Aviv University*

CHAIR: DAVID STERN, *Harvard University*

- The 'Charter for Jerusalem' and the Seleucid Conquest of the Southern Levant: Problems of Authenticity and Exemplarity
– BENEDIKT ECKHARDT, *University of Edinburgh*
- Antiochus III and Jerusalem — A Seleucid Paradigm?
– PAUL KOSMIN, *Harvard University*

FRIDAY, APRIL 21

CHAIR: ANGELA KIM HARKINS, *Boston College*

- Purity, Cult, and Empire: The Proclamation of Antiochus III Concerning the Temple and the City of Jerusalem
– JULIA RHYDER, *Harvard University*

CHAIR: ANNETTE YOSHIKO REED,
Harvard University

- The Afterlife of Antiochus' Edict in Hasmonean Ideology
– ROTEM AVNERI MEIR, *University of Helsinki/ Harvard University*
- Between Resistance and Collaboration: Architecture, Archive, and the Politics of Memory
– ANATHEA PORTIER-YOUNG, *Duke Divinity School*



PHOTOS: ILENE PERLMAN

Lectures and Events section continues on page 30

GIVING TO THE FRIENDS OF THE CJS



STUDENTS WITH IRIT AHARONY

ILENE PERLMAN

BECOME A FRIEND OF THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

In December 1984, Peter Solomon (A.B. '60, M.B.A. '63) announced the establishment of the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies. The Friends of the CJS fund provides an ongoing base of support for the Center and enables it to expand its present areas of activity. Annual support from the Friends helps shape the future of Jewish studies and sustains the Center as an influential, multifaceted enterprise at Harvard.

Projects supported by The Friends include:

- Student research and supplemental study fellowships
- Modern Hebrew language instruction
- Research-related expenses for visiting scholars
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- Doctoral dissertation advising by specialized scholars from outside Harvard
- Graduate student workshop groups
- Undergraduate publications



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Receive priority invitations to selected events and publications



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Receive priority invitations to selected events and copies of all CJS publications



BENEFACTOR

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Receive all tier benefits plus invitations to additional events

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GIFTS BY CHECK MAY BE MAILED TO

Center for Jewish Studies
Harvard University
6 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Make checks payable to "The President and Fellows of Harvard College" and include a note in the memo line that this is "for the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies" (or the name of another fund of your choice).

NAMED FUNDS

Those pursuing Jewish studies at Harvard University may benefit from a number of funds established over the years. New funds are formed continuously; the following funds are currently supporting students and scholars in their pursuit for greater knowledge and achievement in this field. These also may support publications and events at the Center for Jewish Studies. For further information on establishing a named fund, or contributing to one, please contact our office at cjs@fas.harvard.edu.

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Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund
Suzanne and Dr. Lawrence Fishman Fellowship Fund
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Goldhirsh-Yellin Foundation Fund for Undergraduate and Graduate Travel to Israel
Hertog Undergraduate Study Abroad Fund
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Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund
Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund for Jewish Studies
Nathan and Geraldine Snyder Fund for Jewish Studies
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Alan M. and Katherine W. Stroock Family Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica Studies
Isadore Twersky Fellowship

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Isaac-Melech, Icla, and Zelman Rykles Memorial Fund
Edwin Lichtig, Jr. Research and Teaching Fund
Esther Miller Endowed Fund for Yiddish Studies
George Rohr Visiting Professorship in Modern Israel Studies
Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellowship
Harry Starr Fellows in Judaica Fund
Harry Starr Teaching and Research Fund
Alan M. Stroock Fund for Advanced Research in Judaica

Alan M. and Katherine W. Stroock Fund for Innovative Research in Judaica
Selma and Lewis H. Weinstein Fund for Jewish Studies
Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professorship

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William Landau Lecture and Publication Fund
Leon I. Mirell Lecture Fund
Charles H. Revson Foundation Lecture Fund
Estelle and Howard Rubin Fund
Martin D. and Helen B. Schwartz Lecture Fund
Harry A. Wolfson Publication Fund
Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund

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Jeanette and Ludwig Goldschmidt Bequest for the Benefit of the Center for Jewish Studies
Judith and David Lobel Fund for the Center for Jewish Studies

ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIPS IN JEWISH STUDIES

Dorot Professor of Archaeology of Israel
Lee M Friedman Bibliographer in Judaica in the Harvard College Library
William Lee Frost Professor of Jewish History
Hancock Professor of Hebrew and Other Oriental Languages
Albert A. List Professor of Jewish Studies
Nathan Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy
Jacob E. Safra Professor of Jewish History and Sephardic Civilization
Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature
Harry Austryn Wolfson Professor of Jewish Studies

ILENE PERLMAN

AN EVENING WITH PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING PLAYWRIGHT TONY KUSHNER



MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE ALAN AND ELISABETH DOFT LECTURE AND PUBLICATION FUND



KUSHNER AND GREENBLATT
ON THE SANDERS STAGE

MARCH 28, 2023

An evening with

TONY KUSHNER

PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING PLAYWRIGHT,
SCREENWRITER AND ACTIVIST

Mr. Kushner joined fellow Pulitzer Prize honoree **Stephen Greenblatt** of Harvard University for a memorable conversation on the Sanders Theatre stage.



SAZI BONGWE '26, POSING
A QUESTION TO MR. KUSHNER



MADE POSSIBLE BY THE ALAN AND ELISABETH
DOFT LECTURE AND PUBLICATION FUND



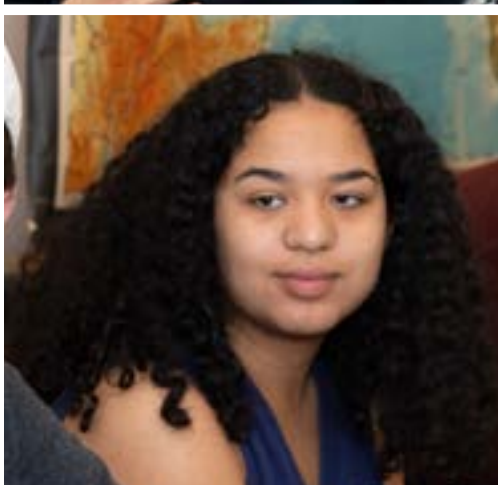
BACKSTAGE WITH
KUSHNER, STERN, AND GREENBLATT

KUSHNER PORTRAIT: JOAN MARCUS

PHOTOS: ILENE PERLMAN



TONY KUSHNER
MEETING WITH STUDENTS
MARCH 29, 2023



PHOTOS: ILENE PERLMAN



URI SCHRETER, ROY GINSBERG, REBECCA ARATEN, TZIPPORAH KLAPPER, DEBORAH THOMPSON, RYAN MICHAEL JORDAN, AND THEODORE MOTZKIN

RECEPTIONS

SEPTEMBER 12, 2022

FEBRUARY 7, 2023

MAY 7, 2023

PHOTOS: ILENE PERLMAN



DAVID STERN



ALEKSANDRA
KREMER



VICTOR COUTO TIRIBAS
AND LUIS GIRÓN NEGRÓN



SUSANNE
KLINGENSTEIN



SARA
FELDMAN



VARDIT SAMUELS
AND SAUL ZARITT



SANDY CANTAVE VIL AND SARA RONIS



DEAN SHEREE OHEN
AND TYMISH HOLOWINSKY



REBEKAH HAIGH, AVIRAM SHAHAL,
AND DOTAN GREENVALD



ROTEM AVNERI MEIR AND JULIA RHYDER



2022-2023 ACADEMIC
VISITORS WITH CJS
DIRECTOR
DAVID STERN



Julis-Rabinowitz Program
on Jewish and Israeli Law
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

WHAT IS THE TALMUD? A CONFERENCE

CONSIDERING THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD
AND HOW IT IS UNDERSTOOD TODAY

ROBERT AND FLORENCE DREBEN LECTURE AND PUBLICATION FUND WITH THE JULIS-RABINOWITZ PROGRAM ON JEWISH AND ISRAELI LAW AND THE LITTAUER CHAIR IN HEBREW LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

MAY 2 TO JUNE 1, 2023

TUESDAY, MAY 2

- **Opening Remarks**
 - CHRISTINE HAYES
 - NOAH FELDMAN

PANEL 1

- **The Babylonian Talmud: Text and Context**
 - JONATHAN MILGRAM
 - ALYSSA GRAY
 - YAIR FURSTENBERG
 - BARAK S. COHEN
 - ISAIAH GAFNI
 - GEOFFREY HERMAN

THURSDAY, MAY 4

PANEL 2

- **The World of the Babylonian Talmud**
 - MOSHE LAVEE
 - CHARLOTTE FONROBERT
 - AVIGAIL MANEKIN
 - TZVI NOVICK

TUESDAY, MAY 9

PANEL 3

- **The Bavli and Empire Studies**
 - Yael WILFAND and REUVEN KIPERWASSER
 - SIMCHA GROSS
 - MICHAL BAR-ASHER SIEGAL
 - SHAI SECUNDA

THURSDAY, MAY 11

PANEL 4

- **Talmudic Discourse I**
 - AYELET HOFFMAN LIBSON
 - WILLEM SMELIK
 - SHIRA SHMIDMAN
 - BARRY WIMPFHEIMER

TUESDAY, MAY 16

PANEL 5

- **Talmudic Discourse II**
 - RICHARD HIDARY
 - MIRA WASSERMAN
 - ELIEZER SEGAL
 - YISHAI KIEL

THURSDAY, MAY 18

PANEL 6

- **New Directions in Talmud Study**
 - SARIT KATTAN GRIBETZ AND LYNN KAYE
 - M. ADRYAEL TONG
 - BETH BERKOWITZ
 - JULIA WATTS BELSER
 - MAX STRASSFELD

TUESDAY, MAY 23

PANEL 7

- **The Talmud: Reception and Study I**
 - ROBERT BRODY
 - EPHRAIM KANARFOGEL
 - TALYA FISHMAN

TUESDAY, MAY 30

PANEL 8

- **The Talmud: Reception and Study II**
 - YAKOV Z. MAYER
 - JAY HARRIS
 - DAVID STERN

THURSDAY, JUNE 1

PANEL 9

- **Contexts of Contemporary Talmud Study and Closing Remarks**
 - SHLOMO ZUCKIER
 - TAL ILAN
 - RUTH CALDERON
 - DANIEL BOYARIN

FOR MORE CONFERENCE DETAILS, PLEASE VISIT

www.cjs.fas.harvard.edu/calendar_event/conference-what-is-the-talmud

ACADEMICS

STUDENTS DANCING TO KLEZMER MUSIC (VIOLIN: REBECCA MACINNES, PIANO: URI SCHRETER)

YIDDISH LANGUAGE NEWS

DR. SARA FELDMAN, PRECEPTOR IN YIDDISH

Last year, the Harvard community was especially rich with Yiddish culture and activity. CJS visitors, students and others shared their Yiddish scholarship and interests. In the classroom, returning students welcomed Yiddish beginners into our vibrant Yiddish network. Guest speakers enriched the classroom experience. CJS Fellow, **Isabel Frey**, renowned Austrian Yiddish singer and activist, taught Yiddish songs in class, worked individually with students and performed with them in a public concert. CJS Starr Fellow, **Jules Riegel**, an historian of Warsaw Ghetto music, shared their research on the *Oyneg Shabes* (Joy of Sabbath) archive in Poland. Students were so intrigued by this presentation that some of them elected to do projects with this music. Dr. Riegel met individually with students who were then able to transcribe *Oyneg Shabes* recordings and set lyrics to music using the digital format now available on the web.

Kostya Shapiro-Tchourine spoke with our students in Yiddish on the history of conflict in Crimea. **Yehuda Fasten** shared Belze Hasidic Yiddish language and culture with beginner and intermediate students. Harvard alum and Stanford Ph.D. candidate, **Eric Kim**, joined students for a Hasidic Yiddish version of Monopoly.

Students in our Intermediate Yiddish class conducted research, translation, and investigations on topics of Hasidic Yiddish. Advanced students spent the semester learning about Yiddish poetry with a focus on women's voices, then set several of these poems to music.

Our Yiddish classes visited the Haggadot exhibit at Loeb Music

Library, where Rebecca Araten '23, one of four student curators, selected and translated parts of Yiddish Haggadot. A group of students presented their class project, *Undzer Mishpokhe* (Our Family) at the Association for Jewish Studies Conference, held this year in Boston. A few days later, several of our students studied, performed, and taught at the Yiddish New York Festival. Ph.D. candidates Uri Schreter and Roy Ginsberg gave virtual lectures on Yiddish culture at YIVO (Yiddish Institute for Jewish Research) to a global audience.

Music was a major theme in the Harvard Yiddish program this year, highlighted by two well-attended and interactive Yiddish concerts that included dancing, Eastern European food and celebration. In January, the klezmer band "Pearl of Warsaw" performed with Isabel Frey, Uri Schreter and klezmer educator, Rebecca MacInnes (of the band Mamaliga). Co-organized with Polish Preceptor Iryna Kovalchuk and cosponsored with the Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures, Yiddish and Polish language students joined many others in calling for Peace in Ukraine. Bringing this spirit home and throughout Harvard, students shared their Yiddish songs at their Passover seders and as activists on campus.

We finished the year with a wonderful celebratory concert featuring songs that our students set to music as part of their Advanced Yiddish projects. Led by graduating seniors Rebecca Araten (vocals) and Ezra Lebovitz (guitar), and accompanied by Isabel Frey and Rebecca MacInnes, the academic year literally ended on a high note. Mazel tov to our graduating students. Harvard will not be the same without you! ■



RAN BECHOR (CENTER) WITH STUDENTS

MODERN HEBREW LANGUAGE NEWS

RAN BECHOR, PRECEPTOR IN MODERN HEBREW

I began teaching Modern Hebrew at Harvard at the start of the spring semester of 2023 as a Teaching Assistant, and am thrilled to be able to continue this year as Preceptor. This program provides an exceptional opportunity to explore and engage with the rich tapestry of modern Hebrew language and culture. Modern Hebrew has evolved and thrived for over two centuries, while drawing strength from its ancient roots. In the words of writer Meir Shalev (who passed away in April):

"I am very happy that Hebrew is my native tongue, and the language in which I write. If at this moment King David and Jesus would walk through the door, I could speak with both of them and they with me, and I could give them a copy of my book. They would not understand words like 'tractor' or 'agvaniyah' (tomato) but would understand all that has to do with love, memory, longing, and revenge. And this is life, and this is literature..."

I would like to express deep gratitude to my many colleagues, especially Irit Aharoni and Osnat Aharoni for their generosity and mentorship, as well as the leadership and staff of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and

the Center for Jewish Studies. Thank you to the **Nathan and Geraldine Snyder Fund for Jewish Studies** and the **Lissner Jewish Research, Language and History Fund** whose support enables us to uphold and advance modern Hebrew language and culture instruction at Harvard. ■

"Ran is an excellent [instructor] who cares deeply about the language and culture. He truly wants students to learn and hear about these topics and facilitates this through activities that engage the students, such as songs, poems, news articles, presentations, and theater. This format not only challenges students to learn more, but it also gave us the time to practice speaking, reading, and writing in different ways."

—Former student

HAGGADOT FLASH CURATION EXHIBITION: "AND YOU SHALL TELL YOUR CHILDREN." HARVARD'S STUDENTS CONNECT WITH THE PASSOVER HAGGADAH

OSNAT AHARONI, MODERN HEBREW INSTRUCTOR, 2010–2023

The spring semester's Advanced Modern Hebrew course focused on the topic of Jewish immigration waves to Israel — *aliyot*. Through texts, songs, and films, students gained insights into the experiences of Jews immigrating to their ancestral homeland from various places and at different times. These transitions, marked by challenges and hardships, continue to shape Israeli society today.

This year, my class had the privilege of visiting the [Harvard Haggadot exhibition](#), a flash-curated display of unique resources from the Harvard Judaica Collection. The students met with two curators, Rebecca Araten '23 and Zane Jones '23, as well as course leaders, librarians Christina Linklater from the Loeb Music Library and Vardit Samuels from the Judaica Division. They explored the diverse range of Haggadot on display, ranging from a facsimile of the exquisite Barcelona Haggadah from medieval Europe to Haggadot designed for children with interactive illustrations and games. Each Haggadah tells the Passover story in its own unique way, resonating with those gathered around the seder table.

"Over the centuries and in different communities, Haggadot offer diverse ways to tell the stories and sing the songs of the Passover holiday," says Vardit.

For Rebecca, working on the Harvard Haggadot exhibit provided a great opportunity to apply her knowledge of Jewish history, rituals, and languages. She particularly enjoyed translating satirical songs from a Yiddish Haggadah published in 1944, which reflected the context of World War II. "Whether in Hebrew, English, Spanish, Russian, or Yiddish, these Haggadot told the story of a core religious ritual that prevailed through centuries," she says.

Inspired by the exhibition, the Modern Hebrew students dedicated their class presentations to Haggadot that held personal significance for them. It was a delight to share the rich traditions



brought into the Pesach holiday by different families and to recognize how the theme of immigration and freedom is uniquely personified in each family's story. These individual stories contribute to the collective tapestry of the Jewish people, which endures to this very day.

Reflecting on my own time as a Harvard modern Hebrew instructor, I am proud of the innovative teaching methods and technological tools we developed, aiming to effectively engage with each individual student. At the same time, I recognize that the essence of successful teaching is unchanged: It remains the challenging art of connecting meaningfully with our students, as encapsulated in the Haggadah's story of the four sons and the timeless *mitzvah*, "And you shall tell your children." ■

"You kindly told me to include my grandmother's stories, and when I interviewed her the words came flowing. The project was an incredible journey into a language, a culture, and a history."

—S (Advanced Modern Hebrew student)*

"It is a real privilege to live to see my grandson taking Hebrew in Harvard and sharing my family history as part of this class. At S's suggestion, based on this interview, he and I will create our family Haggadah, which will supplement our family Seders and hopefully keep our family history alive."

—G (S's grandmother)*

*Full names are not disclosed per the request of the student and grandmother.



LADINO NEWS

ADAM MAHLER, TEACHING FELLOW

LADINO CLASS IN THE JEWISH STUDIES READING ROOM IN WIDENER LIBRARY

ELIZABETH VERNON

FIRST LADINO COURSE AT HARVARD



ILENE PERLMAN

ADAM MAHLER

Spring 2023 marked a major moment for Jewish language instruction at Harvard, our first-ever Ladino course. Ph.D. candidate **Adam Mahler** taught LADINO 16: *Beginning Judeo-Spanish*, in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, with support from the Center for Jewish Studies, Professor David Stern, and Professor Luis Girón Negrón. Though a handful of universities offer courses in Ladino across the United States, LADINO 16's chief innovation lay in the unique blend of historical, sociolinguistic, and literary materials it utilized throughout the semester.

"I believe that a successful campaign to revitalize any endangered Jewish language ought to expose students to that language's long historical arc, its most distinguished cultural artifacts, its storied past and uncertain future," Mahler said.

An intensive course designed to support undergraduate and graduate students' continued study of the language beyond the classroom, LADINO 16 drew on a wide range of texts from 17th-century

"I have taken away so much. I feel I have a basis for moving forward with my Ladino reading and can explore more difficult texts."

— Student evaluation

"I learned so much about Sephardic culture and heritage, Judaism and the Jewish diaspora. This course has made me more attuned to Sephardic cultural and literary contributions and makes me want to deepen my study of these texts and this history."

— Student evaluation

Ladino-language prayer books printed in the Netherlands to 20th-century Ladino-language periodicals and satires that circulated in New York and Istanbul. Each session blended a seminar-style discussion of literary texts with conventional coursework in language learning. Students also had the opportunity to develop basic conversational skills and conduct creative end-of-term projects, including a collection of Ladino-language recipes, a translation of Ladino periodicals' accounts of the end of WWII, and an arcane will composed in Judeo-Portuguese and undersigned by a member of the Monsanto family.

"The course's greatest strength was, unsurprisingly, the students themselves," Mahler said. "With healthy enrollment and numerous auditors, LADINO 16 brought together students with deep expertise in other Jewish languages, liturgy, and linguistics. Their diverse array of skills and interests greatly enriched course discussions."

Course highlights included a screening and conversation with Somerville-based filmmaker Brooke Saias, whose documentary work on the Sephardic diaspora has been featured at the Seattle Jewish Film Festival. A research visit to Harvard University Library's Judaica Collection, organized by Mahler and librarians Vardit Samuels and Elizabeth Vernon, also yielded countless insights into the rich Judeo-Spanish archives housed at Harvard, underscoring the editorial work and research that remains to be done.

An accredited Harvard Ladino summer course for 2024 is currently in planning, and Mahler intends to offer LADINO 16 in future semesters. ■

COURSES IN JEWISH STUDIES

FALL 2022

FRESHMAN SEMINARS

- Freshman Seminar 49G.** The Holocaust in History, Literature, and Film
Freshman Seminar 62U. Zombies and Spirits, Ghosts and Ghouls: Interactions between the Living and the Dead
Freshman Seminar 64T. Immigrant Memoirs: Women's Lives from Eastern Europe to America

BIBLICAL AND ANCIENT

- Ancient Near East 197.** Bible and Empire
Ancient Near East 202. Mesopotamian Textual Traditions and the Hebrew Bible
Ancient Near East 222. Hebrew Bible Studies: Past and Future Trajectories
Hebrew 257. The Book of Proverbs: Seminar
Religion 1134. Genesis: Narrative Artistry and Theological Meanings
Religion 1300. Judaism and the Making of Christianity

CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL JEWISH LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

- Comparative Literature 119X.** History of the Book: Using Harvard's Treasures to Study the Material Text
Comparative Literature 157. From Type to Self in the Middle Ages
Hebrew 165. Philosophy and Law: Readings in Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*
Jewish Studies 129. Josephus
Jewish Studies 156. The Cairo Genizot and their Literature

MODERN JEWISH LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

- Comparative Literature 107.** The Politics of Yiddish
Comparative Literature 224. Jew Theory
History 1075. The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1700–1939
Modern Hebrew 241R. Advanced Seminar in Modern Hebrew: Israeli Culture: Cinema & Literature

HEBREW (CLASSICAL AND MODERN), AND YIDDISH LANGUAGE

- Classical Hebrew AA.** Elementary Classical Hebrew I
Classical Hebrew 120A. Intermediate Classical Hebrew I
Classical Hebrew 130AR. Rapid Reading Classical Hebrew I
Modern Hebrew BA. Elementary Modern Hebrew I
Modern Hebrew 120A. Intermediate Modern Hebrew I
Modern Hebrew 130A. Advanced Modern Hebrew I
Yiddish AA. Elementary Yiddish I
Yiddish BA. Intermediate Yiddish I
Yiddish CA. Advanced Yiddish I

JEWISH LAW (HARVARD LAW SCHOOL)

- HLS 2437.** Advanced Topics in Jewish Law: The Law of Literature
HLS 3195. Change in Jewish Law
HLS 3196. (Jewish) Law and Story

ADDITIONAL COURSES RELEVANT TO JEWISH STUDIES

- Government 940F.** Law and Politics in Multicultural Democracies
History 15D. Benjamin's Paris
Slavic 171. The Holocaust in Polish Memory and Culture

SPRING 2023

GENERAL EDUCATION

- General Education 1090.** What Is a Book? From the Clay Tablet to the Kindle

BIBLICAL AND ANCIENT

- Ancient Near East 140.** Sex, Death, and the Bible
Hebrew 239. Exodus 2 in Three Contexts: Seminar
Hebrew 246. Hebrew Bible Exegesis: The Book of Leviticus
Religion 1213. Ancient Judaism and the Jesus Movement

CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL JEWISH LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

- Hebrew 166.** The Laws of a Jewish State: Maimonides' Theological-Political Treatise
Jewish History 161. Interreligious Encounters: Jews, Muslims and Christians from Late Antiquity to the Medieval Period
Ladino 16. Beginning Ladino
Religion 1250. Judaism: Text and Tradition
Semitic Philology 152. Introduction to Ugaritic

MODERN JEWISH LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

- History 15N.** Modern Jewish Politics: Between Power and Powerlessness
Jewish History 158. 21st-Century U.S. Jewish Culture
Religion 1249. Between Ecstasy and Community: Hasidism in Jewish Thought and History

HEBREW (CLASSICAL AND MODERN), AND YIDDISH LANGUAGE

- Classical Hebrew AB.** Elementary Classical Hebrew II
Classical Hebrew 120B. Intermediate Classical Hebrew II
Classical Hebrew 130BR. Rapid Reading Classical Hebrew II
Modern Hebrew BB. Elementary Modern Hebrew II
Modern Hebrew 120B. Intermediate Modern Hebrew II
Modern Hebrew 130B. Advanced Modern Hebrew II
Yiddish AB. Elementary Yiddish II
Yiddish BB. Intermediate Yiddish II
Yiddish CB. Advanced Yiddish II

JEWISH LAW (HARVARD LAW SCHOOL)

- HLS 2437.** Advanced Topics in Jewish Law: The Law of Magic
HLS 3197. Neder: Vows, Promises, Oaths in Jewish Law

ADDITIONAL COURSES RELEVANT TO JEWISH STUDIES

- Ancient Near East 227.** Critical Readings on Ancient History
Anthropology 1613. Contestations: An Ethnographic Inquiry into Memorials and Counter-Memorials
Comparative Literature 193. What's Love Got to Do With It: Love Poetry of the Middle Ages and Early Modernity

STUDENT NEWS

2023 HARRY AND CECILE STARR PRIZES IN JEWISH STUDIES

The Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2023 Harry and Cecile Starr Prizes in Jewish Studies. These prizes, established by Harry Starr, Harvard College class of 1921, LL.B. 1924, are eligible through nomination by a faculty member only. Prizes are awarded for two categories: the best doctoral dissertation in Jewish and Hebrew studies and the best dissertation in the field of Jewish and Hebrew studies prepared by an undergraduate.

BEST DISSERTATION IN THE FIELD OF JEWISH AND HEBREW STUDIES PREPARED BY AN UNDERGRADUATE



FIRST PLACE **CALEB KIMBALL KING, '23**

"What Sounding Alike Sounded Like"

Nominated by **Professor Julia Rhyder**, Caleb is a Kirkland House senior with a concentration in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (Hebrew Bible).



FIRST PLACE **EZRA LEBOVITZ, '23**

"An Aesthetics of Refusal: Polyvocality, absence, and the resistant text in *Nightwood* and *Opgang*"

Nominated by **Professor Saul Zaritt**, Ezra is a Leverett House senior with a concentration in Comparative Literature.



SECOND PLACE **SABRINA PARIS GOLDFISCHER '23**

"The Death of Discourse: Antisemitism at Harvard College"

Nominated by **Professor David Stern**, Sabrina is a Pforzheimer House senior with a concentration in Government and a secondary in Jewish studies.



2023 SELMA AND LEWIS WEINSTEIN PRIZE IN JEWISH STUDIES

The Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2023 Selma and Lewis Weinstein Prize in Jewish Studies. The Weinstein Prize, which is given to the Harvard University student(s) who submit(s) the best undergraduate essay in Jewish studies, was established by Lewis H. Weinstein, Harvard College class of 1927, LL.B. 1930.

BEST UNDERGRADUATE ESSAY IN JEWISH STUDIES



FIRST PLACE
ARI SAMUEL
HILIBRAND '24

"The Medicine of Moses Maimonides: Protocol, Pragmatism, and Prophylactic Care"

Ari is a Lowell House junior with a concentration in Molecular and Cellular Biology and a secondary in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.



FIRST PLACE
MADISON
STEIN '24

"A Distinct Diaspora: Examining the Development of Baghdadi Jewish Identity Across a Transnational Network"

Madison is a Quincy House junior with a concentration in History and a secondary in Global Health and Health Policy.



SECOND PLACE
RYAN MICHAEL
JORDAN '24

"Squeezed between the Yamato and Aryan Races: Understanding how Japanese Policies towards the Jews in China (and in Shanghai specifically) were Reflective of the Limitations Present within the Alliance between Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany"

Ryan is a Dunster House junior with a concentration in History.



SECOND PLACE
REBECCA SUSAN
ARATEN '23

"Singing Sexuality: How Jewish Wedding Bards Shaped Communal Values in 19th Century Imperial Russia"

Rebecca is a Mather House senior with a joint concentration in History and Literature and Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality.



THIRD PLACE
ISAAC RIFKINN
MANSELL '26

"Jacob's Ladder: How Jewish Books Bridged the Gaps in my Family"

Isaac is a Kirkland House freshman with a prospective concentration in Economics and Linguistics.



ILENE PERLMAN

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM– HARVARD UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENT EXCHANGE

The Center for Jewish Studies and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Hebrew U.) are pleased to host an exchange program through which graduate students from one school may spend a semester at the other to further their study and research. During the 2022–23 academic year, we were pleased to support two doctoral candidates for a semester at Hebrew U., Roy Ginsberg (Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures) and Dalia Wolfson (Department of Comparative Literature). Both received fellowships from the **Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund**.



ILENE PERLMAN

ROY GINSBERG

*Ph.D. candidate,
Department of Slavic
Languages and Literatures*

I spent the fall 2022 semester studying in Jerusalem as part of the Harvard-Hebrew University of Jerusalem Exchange Program. At The Hebrew University, I

had the opportunity to take a variety of courses that helped bolster my knowledge of topics in Jewish studies, old and new. My coursework included seminars on classical Jewish texts from medieval times to modernity, human perfection in Jewish philosophy, Israeli politics and media, and modern Israeli society. Additionally, I was able to join a graduate student seminar for scholars pursuing a Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures at The Hebrew University's Department of Russian and Slavic Studies, where I gave a talk presenting my ongoing dissertation research.

Aside from this engaging coursework, my time in Jerusalem provided a great opportunity for me to continue work on my dissertation, which examines the roles of Yiddish modernist writers and artists in contributing to and forming the industrial utopian ideology of the Soviet Union. The National Library of Israel and Hebrew University library system contain an array of unique and useful resources, and I was able to meet and discuss my ideas and research with a great group of professors and scholars at Hebrew University. During my time in Jerusalem, I was as productive a writer as I have ever been and was able to complete drafts of two chapters, while still making time to explore all the wonderful sites around Israel. ■

DALIA WOLFSON

*Ph.D. candidate,
Department of
Comparative Literature*

I had a really wonderful experience at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

It was a delight to take higher-level classes in Hebrew and to supplement my background knowledge both of primary sources (works of Hebrew literature that I had not yet studied) and secondary sources (through a graduate seminar that focused on analyzing and responding to scholarly literature). The opportunity to spend the semester at Hebrew U. also strengthened both my conversational and academic Hebrew, for which I am very grateful. Besides that, I had ample time to access some archival materials I had been excited to see, as well as meet with professors in Yiddish and Jewish Studies (especially members of the editorial board on which I serve at *In geveb* (a digital academic Yiddish magazine) and to make academic connections at Hebrew U. and Tel Aviv U. as well. ■



ILENE PERLMAN

"...my time in Jerusalem provided a great opportunity for me to continue work on my dissertation, which examines the roles of Yiddish modernist writers and artists in contributing to and forming the industrial utopian ideology of the Soviet Union."

—Roy Ginsberg



THEODORE MOTZKIN PRESENTS AT A JEWISH STUDIES WORKSHOP

The Center for Jewish Studies, with generous support from the **Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies**, supports two student workshop groups, which provide (mostly graduate) students opportunity to present, provide and receive feedback on their research.

THE JEWISH STUDIES WORKSHOP

Our group of Harvard students who work in Jewish studies organizes and facilitates about four to five workshops per semester. Here, graduate students and scholars in the field of Jewish studies (loosely and generously defined) come together to exchange ideas, give constructive feedback, schmooze, and consume delicious morsels of food. We have found these sessions to be an important opportunity for graduate students to improve their work through discussion and feedback from their peers. JSW allows us to enrich our academic experience through exposure to our colleagues' work, and to participate in the discussion of Jewish studies topics at the very highest level.

This past academic year, we held seven sessions of graduate student speakers (from Harvard and other universities) on a kaleidoscope of topics from aspects of biblical Hebrew to Jewish book history and scribal culture, from American Jewish opera to post-WWII theologies, from the economics of Mandatory Jerusalem to explorations of historical figures such as Albert Memmi and Christian David Ginsburg. Workshops for 2022–2023 were organized by the co-symposiarchs, **J.J. Kimche** and **Deborah B. Thompson**. For the upcoming academic year, workshops will be spearheaded by co-symposiarchs Deborah B. Thompson and **Theodore Motzkin**. Join us for our next round of workshops by emailing jsw@fas.harvard.edu! ■

HEBREW BIBLE WORKSHOP

By Jessica Patey, Student Co-coordinator

This year's workshop was a great mixture of current doctoral students and international guests. Presentations included compositional queries in Exodus, divine voicing in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and gendering prophecy in Josephus. The meetings provided a fertile atmosphere for new and different discussions in the field of Hebrew Bible. We hope to continue this success in the coming year with more new and exciting research. ■

Harvard University

Hebrew Bible Workshop

FALL 2022 SCHEDULE

- SEPTEMBER 22 - CHRISTOPHE NIHAN
UNIVERSITY OF MÜNSTER
- OCTOBER 6 - JULIA RHYDER
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
- NOVEMBER 3 - DAVID HANNAN
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
- NOVEMBER 10 - ROTEM AVNERI MEIR
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI
- DECEMBER 1 - HERVÉ GONZALEZ
COLLÈGE DE FRANCE

Harvard University

Bible Workshop

SPRING 2023 SCHEDULE

- FEBRUARY 9 - JOE CURRIE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
- MARCH 2 - OANA CAPATINA
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
- MARCH 23 - MOLLY ZAHN
YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL
- MARCH 30 - THEODORE MOTZKIN
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
- APRIL 27 - IGNACIO CARBAJOSA
SAN DAMASO UNIVERSITY

5:30 PM, HMANE 201

jsw@fas.harvard.edu

5:30 PM, HMANE 201

jsw@fas.harvard.edu

PROFILES



JESSICA PATEY

Ph.D. candidate, Committee on the Study of Religion

Jessica Patey grew up in Pincher Creek, Alberta, Canada, a “very isolated” farming community that was “far from cities and museums.” After graduating from high school, she studied painting and textiles at an art school in Calgary, then left to travel extensively in Greece and Italy, where she became “fascinated with the ancient.” This led Jessica to the University of Lethbridge, a liberal arts university in Alberta, where she developed her interest in archaeology, religious studies and art. She focused on ancient Mediterranean studies and was determined to “learn all I could about ancient Greece without a Classics Department at the school.” Though this small university did not offer a broad curriculum, Jessica was able to gather interested students to convince a professor to “scrape up” a course. She particularly enjoyed working with Prof. Kevin McGeough and studying ancient history and several ancient languages: Latin, Greek, Middle Egyptian, Akkadian and Hebrew. Jessica thrived in this supportive environment with its close-knit group of students and faculty.

After college, Jessica applied to a small graduate school in Canada, as well as to Harvard, and was “shocked and excited” to actually be accepted in the M.T.S. (Masters in Theological Studies) program at Harvard Divinity School with a full scholarship. She spent three days on the train from Montana to Boston — where she was allowed to carry up to 400 pounds of luggage.

Jessica is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard in the Committee on the Study of Religion, studying for general exams in October. Her proposed dissertation topic combines her loves of languages, ancient cultures and art. Here she examines textiles as material objects described in the text of the Hebrew Bible. Jessica enjoys working closely with Profs. Julia Rhyder and Kimberley Patton and combining the lenses of discourse analysis and materiality in her research.

“I am obsessed with the Tabernacle,” she smiles. “The amount of detail in the text may read to us as boring, but it means so much to them.” Jessica is interested in learning why so much detail was given about these textiles and what sorts of details were recorded; for example, the specific description of a high priest’s robe embroidered with pomegranates in blue and green. Jessica hopes to examine the details of these textiles as a way to find new meaning in Hebrew Bible texts.

An exploration of the gendered context of textile work is an important aspect of Jessica’s project. She explains that weaving and working with textiles were traditionally women’s work; in ancient and modern times women were the main textile producers. She notes Biblical references such as Proverbs 31, which idealize women in the textile industry. 2 Kings 23 discusses women weaving, and the Tabernacle stories include women who bring textiles to craftsmen who work with them. Furthermore, most textile finds are domestic, and the work of weaving and spinning mostly takes place in the home. In the Temple context, however, Jessica finds weaving at the altar. Why was weaving placed in this holy context?

At Harvard, Jessica has been grateful for resources both at Harvard Divinity School and the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. She thanks Professors Andrew Teeter and Jon Levenson in particular, as well as the community of students she has found, particularly through the Hebrew Bible workshop, and seminars on ancient studies and ancient Mediterranean studies. “I appreciate that the program [at the Committee on the Study of Religion] is so flexible, you can take courses at both schools” (Harvard Divinity School and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences) and “do your own thing.” On an archaeological dig at Tel Beth Shemesh (Israel) one summer, she found a pot handle with the seal of a king, perhaps Hezekiah. Through this experience, “Hebrew became real” in ways that it never had before; understanding grammatical structure helped clarify the piece’s origin.

Jessica treasures the libraries at Harvard as both an unparalleled collection of resources and a quiet space for study, away from distractions, where she can be productive. The greenery

on campus, from trees in the Yard to living walls at the Science Center, give Jessica a sense of peace in the bustling campus. She enjoys the “many niche communities” at Harvard, such as a plant-swapping group, and a campus-wide knitting group.

Jessica is also thankful for many work opportunities at Harvard. She co-organizes the Hebrew Bible Workshop which, although demanding a lot of time and effort, helps her get to know other scholars in her field. She “loves teaching,” and has worked as a Teaching Fellow. A seminar on motherhood with Prof. Patton drew students from all over the university: undergraduates, a midwife, students of religion, medicine and more. She also taught Rapid Reading, a Biblical Hebrew language class, where she worked very closely with just two students.

It was a particular pleasure for Jessica to work at the front desk of the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East (formerly named the Harvard Semitic Museum). “There is something about explaining what you’re doing to members of the general public and getting them excited!” Growing up with few museums nearby, she especially appreciates its free admission. In the future, she hopes to pursue a career in teaching and research at a university or to work for a museum. She enjoys hearing about very different pursuits at home from her husband, a molecular biologist conducting research on muscular dystrophy. Jessica aspires to find a good work-life balance and “a hobby that isn’t this [research].” ■

URI SCHRETER

Ph.D. candidate in Music

Uri Schreter was born and grew up in Tel Aviv. His first language is Hebrew, and he was raised bilingually with English, thanks to his Canadian father. With an early interest in music, Uri attended a Tel Aviv school for the arts beginning in third grade, where he learned several instruments and developed an interest in jazz. “Eventually, I became more interested in music than in video games,” he laughs. At Thelma Yellin, a national high school for the arts for outstanding students, Uri pursued his interests in jazz piano, composition, and arranging. Later, at Tel Aviv University, he earned his B.A. in classical composition and musicology, then joined a program for interdisciplinary studies and later pursued a master’s degree in modern European history.

While studying French history in an exchange program at the Paris Institute of Political Studies (“Sciences Po”), Uri became intrigued by the history of early jazz in Paris in the 1920s. He



ILENE PERLMAN

explains, “after World War I, many African-American soldiers stayed in Paris, where they were able to find opportunities that were not available to them in the United States at the time due to racial barriers.” Among them were many jazz musicians, whose innovative performances inspired a group of Parisian composers who were interested in breaking down social barriers in French music, particularly class, ethnic and racial divides.

Uri completed his M.A. thesis on French music and jazz at Tel Aviv University. It was the warm welcome he received from the Music Department — and the city of Cambridge — that drew him to Harvard, intending to study modernist French music. “Jewish music was not really on my radar as an academic topic, even though, growing up as a musician in Israel, I often performed and arranged Jewish and Israeli music.”

It was at Harvard that Uri developed an interest in Ashkenazi Jewish music. This genre had been virtually inaccessible to him in Israel. He had not considered going into the primarily Hasidic communities to find it: “[my] cultural, religious, and political biases were simply too strong.” In Professor Kay Shelemay’s introduction to ethnomusicology class, she suggested he choose a project that would allow him to explore topics in Jewish music. “I came across an article on klezmer by Joel Rubin and couldn’t tear myself away.” He found himself taking copious notes and learning to appreciate the history and culture surrounding klezmer, though still had little interest in the music itself.

Uri vividly recalls his “conversion moment” to klezmer music, while listening to Brave Old World, a band mentioned in

the article, as he biked along Mass Ave. He was immediately drawn to the jazzy piano introduction joined by the vocals in Yiddish. “It was an intense moment of realization: how wrong I was [about klezmer] and how beautiful it is ... I felt practically ashamed that I was so closed to it before. I had such a false notion of what Yiddish music is, and what it could be!” Uri reflected deeply on his biases after this. Such dogmatic views about music went against the ways he hoped to conduct himself as a musician and as a scholar.

This question is a component of Uri’s dissertation, which examines the aesthetics and politics of Jewish music during the early postwar period. Working closely with Profs. Kay Shelemay, Carol Oja, Saul Zaritt, and Derek Penslar, he explores relationships between three musical repertoires: (1) Israeli folk song, (2) Yiddish music and klezmer, and (3) American popular music. “Israeli folk songs and dances became an important way for Jews to express their Jewish identity in postwar America.” Uri finds that many North American and Israeli Jews at that time rejected older Ashkenazi forms, which they associated with the Holocaust and a traumatic past. “Many American Jews wanted to blend into the American mainstream, but still maintain their ethnic and religious Jewish identity.” They gravitated toward Hebrew folk songs, which represented the strength of a romanticized and agricultural Israel and preferred these symbols of pride and progress over the associations of klezmer with a difficult past. Uri examines ways in which music performed at postwar American Jewish weddings illustrated this political, aesthetic, and cultural shift.

At Harvard, Uri is grateful for the “amazing classes” and appreciates opportunities to bounce ideas off his colleagues in a warm, welcoming environment. For a year, he ran the Jewish Studies Workshop, in which graduate students from various disciplines who work on Jewish studies share their research with and receive feedback from each other. Two classes helped Uri solidify the focus of his research: Prof. Saul Zaritt’s “Politics of Yiddish” and an independent study with Prof. Derek Penslar on modern Jewish history. Last year’s Starr Seminars on the theme of “Jewish Studies and the Arts” provided a valuable community for academic discussion and collaboration, particularly with Samantha Cooper (a Harry Starr Fellow in Judaica) and Isabel Frey (a Fellow at the Center, and Yiddish singer and scholar).

Yiddish language classes have been another high point of Uri’s studies here. “The ability to read and speak Yiddish opened up many doors in Yiddishland, within academia but also well beyond, in artistic and communal contexts.” In addition to studying Yiddish with Dr. Sara Feldman, and an intensive summer program at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Uri collaborated in international Yiddish musical and theatrical productions, including a filmed Zoom production of *The Dybbuk* in Yiddish with participants from around the world.

Currently, Uri is conducting interviews for his dissertation with wedding musicians from the 1950s, and with people who got married during that period. Some of these interviews have been in Yiddish, with many made possible through contacts in the Yiddish world. Uri still sees himself as an active musician, now integrating his background in composition and performance with his research interests. He remains involved in concerts and cultural festivals around Jewish music, such as KlezKanada and Yiddish New York. Last summer, he participated in festivals where he delivered lectures about his dissertation and performed concerts of klezmer and Yiddish music. “Though it sometimes feels like a ‘double life,’ it really comes together.”

Uri continues to collaborate as a musician and filmmaker with artists in the international Yiddish scene, including Judy Bressler, Mike Burstyn, and Isabel Frey. He is currently working as a composer and arranger on the “Scottsboro Trials Song Cycle,” a musical setting of Yiddish poetry about anti-Black racism in America, in collaboration with musicians Anthony Russell and Heather Klein and scholar Amelia Glaser.

After graduating, Uri’s “dream plan” is to combine a career in academia with cultural and artistic pursuits. He hopes to be able to continue teaching and researching at an academic institution while remaining active as an artist, musician, and filmmaker. *Zol zayn mit mazl un gezunt!* (May you be lucky and healthy!) ■

JULIA TELLIDES

Harvard College ‘24

Julia Tellides grew up in New Haven, CT in a large family with a Greek father and a Jewish mother. She recalls gatherings with her many relatives nearby with “the best food and loud conversations.”

Julia attended the Hopkins School in New Haven. She enjoyed participating in Debate Club, where she learned how to take a position, quickly come up with a compelling argument, and then strategically argue her case. Her favorite class was Advanced Placement U.S. History. “The more I learned about U.S. history, the more I was forced to question our country’s turbulent past ... and the better I understand political and cultural situations of today.”

Julia arrived at Harvard College in the fall of 2020. She joined the Ethics Society, where she enjoys in-depth discussions of ethical dilemmas with other students and forming her own personal ethical foundations. Julia also plays several intramural sports, which has been a fun way to meet and bond with friends. She also enjoys the social aspect of her job as a barista at Cafe Gato Rojo in Lehman Hall. Her favorite places to study are at the Leverett House dining hall overlooking the Charles

River, and Ticknor Lounge in Boylston Hall. Ticknor is near many of her classes in the Classics Department and has “the most comfortable couches at Harvard.”

Julia came to college with plans to follow a pre-med program. However, she found herself gravitating away from the sciences and toward the humanities and social sciences. She was most drawn to modern European history, Greece in particular. “I started studying [modern] Greek to speak to my family there. That led me to Greek history.” When she discovered that her Greek language classes counted toward a Classics degree, she chose a joint concentration in History and Classics, and appreciates the smaller, more intimate atmosphere of the Classics Department.

In a Harvard study abroad program in Greece, Julia took a seminar about migration in the eastern Mediterranean that sparked her interest in Jewish history. “I had never heard about a large Jewish presence existing in Greece until I took that seminar, and, mostly through a curiosity about my own identity, I decided to do more research on the Jewish history of Greece.”

Julia’s senior thesis on the Jewish urban history in Thessaloniki in the early 1900’s combines her love of history with her Greek and Jewish heritage. She explains that when Greece took over Thessaloniki in 1912 from the Ottoman Empire, the city was known as the “Jerusalem of the Balkans” and most of its residents were Jewish. In her thesis, she aims to examine the urban history of the Jewish community in Thessaloniki, and to explore its relationship with the newly-established Greek government. She is particularly interested in studying this Jewish community after the Great Fire of 1917, which destroyed around three-fourths of the city and left the Jewish population among the worst affected.

After deciding on her thesis topic, Julia took Scott Ury’s course **“Modern Jewish Politics: Between Power and Powerlessness,”** as she had never taken a course on Jewish history and thought it would provide important background for her senior thesis. She loved the course, especially its emphasis on class discussion and its deep-dives each week into the assigned readings. They explored topics in Jewish thought, the history of different diasporic communities, and the rise of antisemitism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. “Learning about the similar political tensions and historical circumstances within diasporic Jewish communities around the world helped me contextualize my own research about what was happening in Greece.”

Julia feels very grateful for the faculty members who have helped guide her thesis. She enjoyed **“What is Military History”** with Professor Derek Penslar, whose expert advice in Jewish history and experiences with archival research have been particularly helpful for her research and writing process. She is also thrilled to have Professor Paul Kosmin as her Classics



thesis advisor. While taking a course he co-taught called **“Regional Study: Macedonia,”** Julia was fascinated by the relationship between ancient Greek history and modern Greek identity. “I really enjoyed how, even though our class was about ancient Macedonian history, Professor Kosmin encouraged us to make connections between the narratives created about ancient Greece and their effect on modern Greece as a nation.”

Julia has studied the Greek language at Harvard in the classroom, with a tutor, and during summer breaks in Greece. She hopes to return to Athens after she graduates in May 2024. “Athens is such a lively city with such incredible history, outdoor cafes, a great food scene and, of course, beautiful beaches nearby. I would love to find a way to work there for a year or two.”

Reflecting on her time at Harvard, Julia is amazed by and appreciative of the many opportunities and resources Harvard allowed her. “Establishing relationships with professors and other academics who have been studying topics a lot longer than I have — and are so knowledgeable — is a real gift. I’ve really enjoyed my studies here, and I am incredibly grateful for all the opportunities to travel and conduct research that I’ve had at Harvard.” ■

מזל טוב!

CONGRATULATIONS 2023 GRADUATES!

HARVARD COLLEGE

Rebecca Araten

*Joint Concentration: Committee on
Degrees in History and Literature;
Committee on Degrees in Studies of
Women, Gender, and Sexuality*

Tzofiya Bookstein

Committee on Degrees in Social Studies

Daniel Brickman

*Joint Concentration: Departments of
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and Physics*

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*Department of Government, Secondary
in the Department of Near Eastern
Languages and Civilizations—Jewish
Studies*

Caleb King

*Department of Near Eastern Languages
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Harvard Divinity School



ELIZABETH VERNON

THE JEWISH STUDIES READING ROOM IN WIDENER LIBRARY

The Center for Jewish Studies extends our sincere thanks to **J.J. Kimche**, Ph.D. candidate in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, for his very valuable assistance overseeing the Jewish Studies Reading Room in Widener Library. For the past two years, J.J. has monitored this important study space for our students, keeping track of books and resources located in the room, posting notices for classes that meet there, making sure the space is in order, and apprising us of any needed upkeep or concerns. We will miss seeing J.J. around this year when he relocates with his wife as he works on his dissertation. We are most grateful to graduate students **Deborah Thompson** and **Julia Motzkin** for taking the reins this year.

The Center for Jewish Studies supports the Jewish Studies Reading Room in Widener 745 as a study and socializing place for students and Harvard affiliates working in any area of Jewish studies. The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations administers this room. The Reading Room contains a small library of basic works in Jewish studies in multiple disciplines and periods, as well as media equipment. For access to the Jewish Studies Reading Room please contact the cjs@fas.harvard.edu. ■

STUDENT FUNDING 2022-23



GRADUATE ACADEMIC YEAR FUNDING

Sarah Corrigan (Department of Comparative Literature),
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Joe Currie (Committee on the Study of Religion),
Aaron and Clara Rabinowitz Trust Fellowship

Roy Ginsberg (Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures),
Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund

Rachelle Grossman (Department of Comparative Literature),
Raphael and Deborah Melamed Fellowship in Jewish Studies

Raphael Halff (Department of Comparative Literature),
Leo Flax Fellowship

Allison Hurst (Committee on the Study of Religion), *Alan M. Stroock Fund for Advanced Research in Judaica*

J.J. Kimche (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations), *Sosland Family Fellowship*

Tzipporah Klapper (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations), *Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund and Isadore Twersky Fellowship*

Theodore Motzkin (Committee on the Study of Religion), *Center for Jewish Studies Fund*

Raphael Stern (Department of History), *Raphael and Deborah Melamed Fellowship in Jewish Studies*

Deborah Thompson (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations), *Sidney L. Solomon Fellowship*

Dalia Wolfson (Department of Comparative Literature),
Leo Flax Fellowship

J-TERM GRADUATE

Jan Burzlaff (Department of History), *Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund*

Terry Iles (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations), *Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund*

Alexander "Shabbos" Kestenbaum (Harvard Divinity School),
Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund

J.J. Kimche (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations), *Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund*

Theodore Motzkin (Committee on the Study of Religion),
Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund

J-TERM UNDERGRADUATE

Tzofiya Bookstein '23, *Barney and Essie Cantor Scholarship Fund*

SUMMER GRADUATE

Jan Burzlaff (Department of History), *Raphael and Deborah Melamed Fellowship in Jewish Studies*

Oana Capatina (Committee on the Study of Religion),
Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund

Leora Eisenberg (Department of History), *Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund*

Roy Ginsberg (Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures), *Edward H. Kavinsky Fellowship*

Andrew Hile (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations), *Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund*

J.J. Kimche (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations), *Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund*

Terry Iles (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations), *Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund*

Tsiona Lida (Department of History), *Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund*

Uri Schreter (Department of Music), *Edward H. Kavinsky Fellowship*

Sai Shanthanand Sarathy Rajagopal (Harvard Medical School), *Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies*

SUMMER UNDERGRADUATE

Ryan Jordan '24, *Barney and Essie Cantor Scholarship Fund, Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund for Jewish Studies*

Julia Tellides '24, *Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies; Lissner Jewish Research, Language and History Fund*

FROM THE CJS MAILBOX

OPPORTUNITIES MADE POSSIBLE BY NAMED FUNDS AND THE FRIENDS OF THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES



"Thanks to the generosity of the Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund, I had the opportunity to travel to Naples this past summer to present at the Nangeroni Enoch Seminar."

— Oana Capatina

Thanks to the generosity of the **Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund**, I had the opportunity to travel to Naples this past summer to present at the Nangeroni Enoch Seminar. The Seminar's focus this year was on the *Sibylline Oracles*, a pseudepigraphic collection of ancient Jewish and Christian prophetic texts that have historically been overlooked by scholars of ancient Judaism.

I was thrilled to give a paper on the early Christian transmission of Jewish texts from the Sibylline collection, incorporating insights from material philology to explore how second-century Christian writers grappled with the *Oracles'* Jewish authorship and the Sibyl's gender and positionality as a prophetess. I highlighted the surviving material evidence for the *Oracles*, especially papyri from Hellenistic and Roman-era Egypt, and I was fortunate to receive such thoughtful feedback from experts in the field on these recent discoveries. I also visited the archaeological site at Cumae to see the Cave of the Sibyl, where she was thought to have prophesied.

It was exciting to be part of an international community of presenters, and to discuss future trajectories in the study of the *Oracles* and ancient Jewish-Christian relations with so many impressive scholars working across disciplines like Classics, Egyptology, and Biblical Studies.

I am incredibly grateful to the Center for Jewish Studies for supporting me and allowing me to enrich my professional network and develop my research interests.

— *Oana Capatina*

*Ph.D. candidate, Committee on
the Study of Religion*



Thanks to the generous support from the **Edward H. Kavinsky Fellowship** from the Harvard Center for Jewish Studies, I was able to spend this summer performing research at the YIVO archives in New York City. Having the ability to spend time in the archives has been an invaluable resource as I continue work on my dissertation “Building the *Ratn-Farband*: Monumentalizing the Soviet Utopian Project through Yiddish Art and Literature,” which examines how Soviet Yiddish writers and artists actively contributed to the development of new universal cultural identities and the establishment of an industrialized workers’ utopia.

The research that I performed over the summer focused primarily on the sculptor Iosif Chaikov, who helped build the Soviet pavilions at the 1937 and 1939 World’s Fairs. I argue that for Chaikov, a fully assimilated Soviet Jew, the pavilions represent a new temple consecrated under the hammer and sickle of the Soviet Union. In my chapter, I examine the conflation of traditional and modernist techniques employed by Chaikov and the implications of his monumentalizing the ostensibly realized utopian dreams of the USSR. I would once again like to thank the Harvard CJS and the Edward H. Kavinsky Fellowship for making this work possible.

— Roy Ginsberg

*Ph.D. candidate, Department of
Slavic Languages and Literatures*



With the gracious support of CJS, by means of the **Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund**, I was able to participate at the annual conference of the European Association of Biblical Studies, hosted this July in Siracusa, Italy. In addition to collaborating with the European community of biblical studies, I presented my paper, “Recursive Cursing: A Comparative-Poetics Analysis of SAA 2 6:414-465 and Deuteronomy 28:15-69.” My project explored the poetic form of concurrency and recursivity, organized into tri-partite units, that is operative in the composition of certain ancient Semitic curse texts. It demonstrated the utilization of this form across both SAA 2 6, a Neo-Assyrian loyalty oath, and the curse section of Deuteronomy 28. This study provided further evidence that the comparative task can illuminate not only the constraints, but also the possibilities for text production in the ancient Near East—and, in turn, early Jewish text production. As this area of research does not currently have a North American counterpart, CJS’s funding allowed me an invaluable opportunity to cultivate the base—intellectually, methodologically, and socially—from which my upcoming dissertation will grow. Additionally, it offered a chance to explore the rich and unfolding Jewish history of Siracusa, and Sicily, more broadly.

— Andrew Hile

*Ph.D. candidate, Department of Near
Eastern Languages and Civilizations*



I am deeply grateful for the **Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund** that allowed me to spend the J-Term 2023 revising my dissertation. As the William A. Ackman Fellow for Holocaust Studies, I am currently completing my dissertation, a comparative and interdisciplinary transnational history of Jews' survival during the Holocaust (1939-1945). My dissertation rethinks the history of ordinary Jews across Nazi-occupied Europe through the idea of surviving, a social process that involved spontaneous choices, painful decisions, and day-to-day experiences.

Thanks to this funding, I completed one chapter on a crucial but understudied question: What does violence do to us? I developed a concept at the intersection of psychology, history, and Jewish studies: the "Holocaust personality." The term is meant to capture a central Jewish Holocaust experience outside of political boundaries and subjectivities; something not defined by heroic efforts to uphold Jewish identities or wartime conversions. War changed everyone, and we should not discriminate between victims and survivors. The Holocaust offers solid arguments for a systematic case study to capture these psychological and intimate transformations, which have remained largely absent from histories of World War II. Many heartfelt thanks for the steady support.

— Jan Burzlauff

Ph.D. candidate, Department of History



Thanks to funding through the Center for Jewish Studies, I was able to spend January and the summer working on my dissertation. With support from the **Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund**, I spent January 2023 in Cambridge, UK working at Tyndale House – a research library dedicated exclusively to biblical studies. There, I finalized two chapters of my dissertation, conducted research on a third chapter, and revised an article for publication.

Thanks to the **Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund**, I was able to work full-time on my dissertation this past summer, completing a chapter on Isaiah 15-18 and a large portion of the introductory chapter.

My dissertation, "The Compositional Poetics of the Book of Isaiah's Nations Collection," is concerned with a fascinating phenomenon within the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible, the so-called "oracles against the nations." The oracles are presented as addresses to foreign nations, and collections of them are found in every major prophetic book of the Hebrew Bible. In my dissertation, I analyze the principles by which these oracles have been collected and arranged within the book of Isaiah (chapters 13-27). This project is important for learning to appreciate the prophetic books on their own terms as ancient Jewish literature and for understanding how they envision the relationship between Judah and foreigners.

I am deeply grateful to the CJS for supporting my research.

— Terry Iles

Ph.D. candidate, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations



NICOLE LOEB

This summer, I received generous support from the **Edward H. Kavinsky Fellowship** to fund research for my dissertation about post-war American Jewish music. My dissertation explores the relationship between Yiddish music, Israeli folk songs, and American popular music in New York during the early postwar period (1945-1960). Thanks to the Fellowship, I was able to spend two months in New York City, where I conducted research at the archives of the Center for Jewish History. For instance, I consulted the archival collections of Vladimir Heifetz (1893-1970), a Russian-American Jewish composer, pianist, and choral conductor, and was able to compare his compositions and arrangements of Yiddish and Israeli folk songs, Jewish liturgical music, and jazz-inspired pieces. I also conducted oral history interviews with individuals who were involved in Jewish music and culture during the 1950s. Among my interlocutors was Moshe Yassur (born 1934), a Romanian-born Jewish actor and director whose theatrical career spans seven decades and includes productions in Hebrew, Yiddish, English, and Romanian, that were staged in Israel, the United States, and across Europe. I am grateful to the Center for Jewish Studies for the support which allowed me to conduct this vital research.

— *Uri Schreter*

*Ph.D. candidate,
Department of Music*



"My apartment was a 2-minute walk from the only Jewish restaurant in Tashkent, where I enjoyed cholent some 4,000 miles away from home."

— *Leora Eisenberg*

With the generous support of the **Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund**, I was able to spend the summer in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to conduct pre-dissertation research on the Soviet-era development of their national music and dance – and, specifically, Jewish involvement. While my original plan was to work mostly in the archives and national libraries, I ended up doing much more. I interviewed one of Uzbekistan's first ballerinas (who had vivid memories of the king of Soviet Yiddish, actor Solomon Mikhoels, strolling the streets of Tashkent in the 1940s), as well as members of Central Asia's most famous pop group, Yalla (which repurposed Haim Moshe's "Toda" in the years when the USSR and Israel had no diplomatic relations). I worked in the personal archives of the Bukharan Jewish composer of Uzbekistan's national anthem. My apartment was a two-minute walk from the only Jewish restaurant in Tashkent, where I enjoyed cholent some 4,000 miles away from home. I am very grateful for this opportunity to uncover the Soviet Central Asian Jewish cultural ecosystem – and, just as importantly, build connections with some of its most outstanding actors, who I hope will continue to tell me their stories for years to come.

— *Leora Eisenberg*

Ph.D. candidate, Department of History



Thanks to support from the **Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies**, last summer, I spent time with members of the South Indian Jewish community in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Most South Indian Jews lived in the constituent towns and suburbs of Kochi (formerly known as Cochin), Kerala. Over the last 75 years, many South Indian Jews made *aliyah* to Israel or moved abroad to the Anglophone world; now only a handful of families continue to live in Kochi.

I started by meeting some of the elder community members in Jerusalem, who spoke Judeo-Malayalam, the historic language of South Indian Jewry. The language is facing severe decline and possible language death – most of the community members' children no longer speak it, choosing to speak Hebrew or English instead. Unlike modern standard Malayalam, Judeo-Malayalam features Hebrew loan words and uses some archaic Dravidian grammar forms. While I can understand most of what is spoken, Judeo-Malayalam sounds like an old Malayalam period film – much closer to what my grandmother would speak rather than what is spoken in Kochi today. During my interviews, I would frequently pause to ask for direct word-for-word translations of Hebrew loanwords and figures-of-speech, which I would stop and notate.

There's also another exciting discovery—I met with researcher Eli Joseph, who has been cataloguing the ancestries of South Indian Jews. While Wikipedia would tell you there are only 8,000, Eli Joseph has already catalogued 25,000 – and expects to find many more in the US, Canada, and the UK. Preserving the linguistic cultural heritage of this understudied community will be of paramount importance before the older generation, with continuous ties to India, passes away.

– *Sai Shanthanand Rajagopal*

M.D. candidate, Harvard Medical School



Thanks to generous support from the Center for Jewish Studies and the **Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund**, I was able to advance my German language proficiency and my dissertation research over the summer. I completed two intensive German language courses at the Goethe Institute in Berlin and conducted research in Jerusalem at the National Library of Israel (NLI).

My tentative dissertation title is “‘A Higher Measure of Justice:’ An Affective History of Jewish Sovereignty, 1901-1967.” It explores the rationales at play in the conceptual history of justice, entitlement, and belonging in twentieth-century Jewish history, focusing on the ethical, legal and territorial claims in both the Zionist and German contexts. At the NLI, I read correspondences, articles and legislation penned by legal thinkers such as Norman Bentwich and Nathan Feinberg, who were at the intersection of the Zionist movement and British colonial authority, as well as first responders to the unfolding dispossession and devastation Jews faced in Europe in the 1930s and 40s. I studied petitions and appeals brought to the courts of Mandate Palestine over land settlement in the 1930s and legal documents securing restitution claims from Germany in the 1950s. This allowed me to better understand and analyze discussions justifying property and territorial legislation in the making of Jewish sovereignty. It was especially timely to be in Jerusalem investigating historical questions of justice while witnessing the current events unfolding in the Israeli judiciary system.

– *Tsiona Lida*

Ph.D. candidate, Department of History



"In Vienna and Berlin I was able to delve into the story of how Esperanto, a constructed language created by a Polish Jew, Dr. Ludwik Zamenhof, came to be entwined with Jewish identity, and to examine how these ideas came to fruition and eventual catastrophe under the Third Reich."

— Ryan Jordan

I am again incredibly grateful to the Center for Jewish Studies for their generous funding, through the **Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund for Jewish Studies** and the **Barney and Essie Cantor Scholarship Fund**, in support of my research examining the role of Esperanto as a Jewish language. With their support, I was able to travel to Vienna, Berlin, and Jerusalem. In Vienna and Berlin I was able to delve into the story of how Esperanto, a constructed language created by a Polish Jew, Dr. Ludwik Zamenhof, came to be entwined with Jewish identity, and I examined how these ideas came to fruition and eventual catastrophe under the Third Reich.

At the Hebrew University in Jerusalem I explored the story of the Esperanto movement as a source of cooperation between Jewish and Arab Esperantists in pre-state Mandatory Palestine. More broadly, I was able to expand my connection to Israeli history and culture by visiting monuments, museums, and so much more. By chance, I was in Jerusalem during the height of the protest movement over the summer, and was able to travel to Hasidic neighborhoods, East Jerusalem, and the Knesset, to witness and discuss the historic events. I cannot thank the Center for Jewish Studies enough for making my research and travels possible.

— Ryan Jordan

Harvard College '24



I'm grateful to the **Lissner Jewish Research, Language and History Fund** and the **Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies** for supporting my summer archival research for my senior undergraduate thesis. This research examines the relationship between the Greek government and the Jewish community in Thessaloniki, Greece during the early 20th century.

In Athens, I spent a month at the Gennadius Library studying Greek literature and taking an advanced Greek language course at the local university. Next, I traveled to Thessaloniki for two weeks where I accessed exclusive collections at the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, engaged with local Jewish scholars, and walked through the very buildings and spaces that formed the core of my paper.

In London, I had the chance to delve into the collection of the Board of Deputies of British Jews at the Metropolitan London Archive. There I accessed sources on the emergence of antisemitism in Greece during the interwar period – a finding that has heavily shaped the focus of my thesis. Additionally, I investigated early 1900s government reports from Thessaloniki at the British National Archives in Kew.

I am deeply appreciative to the Center for Jewish Studies for this opportunity to engage in invaluable archival research abroad for my thesis.

— Julia Tellides

Harvard College '24



While much has been written concerning Auschwitz-Birkenau, Oświęcim, the city where the camp was located, is seldom discussed in the historical narrative, overshadowed by its unwilling participation as the epicenter of the largest genocide in human history. With a population of more than 40,000 today, the city provides a crucial framework for historians and sociologists to better understand Poland's contemporary attitudes and memories concerning its Jewish past.

Prior to the Holocaust, more than half of the population of Oświęcim was Jewish. In fact, Oshpitzin (its Yiddish nickname) was home to essential hallmarks of Jewish life: the Bobover Talmud Torah, the Haberfeld Kosher Liquor factory, and the Great Synagogue.

Through the generous support of the Center for Jewish Studies and the **Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund**, I spent this past J-term conducting research in Oświęcim, to learn how elderly residents there relate to their former Jewish neighbors, and why they decided to continue living there after the war. Through meeting local survivors and investigating primary sources at the Oshpitzin Jewish Center & Museum, I was able to begin the process of understanding and documenting this fascinating town.

This research will culminate in a final master's thesis, complete with recorded survivor testimony.

— *Alexander "Shabbos" Kestenbaum*

M.T.S. candidate, Harvard Divinity School



The generous support through the **Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund** enabled me to travel to Israel this past winter to begin an investigative project on the emergence of new documentarian approaches to the Pentateuch within the North American field of Hebrew Bible. In Israel, I met with Prof. Baruch Schwartz, professor of Hebrew Bible at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a pioneer of the so-called "Neo-Documentarian" school. We discussed a seminar he taught at Harvard in the early 2000s that proved to be a watershed in the field and influenced several future Neo-Documentarian scholars. I've since continued to correspond with Prof. Schwartz, and hope to further this project by interviewing other participants in the seminar.

— *Theodore Motzkin*

*Ph.D. candidat, Committee on
the Study of Religion*

"With a population of more than 40,000 today, [Oświęcim] provides a crucial framework for historians and sociologists to better understand Poland's contemporary attitudes and memories concerning its Jewish past."

— *Shabbos Kestenbaum*



"This summer, I pursued my research in some of the finest libraries in England, I principally focused upon the life and works of the fascinating and phenomenally productive Victorian scholar of Judaism, Christian David Ginsburg (1821–1914), whose spiritual and intellectual biography stands at the centre of my doctoral dissertation."

— J.J. Kimche

In 2023, I was privileged to receive two awards from the **Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund** to travel to Israel and England to further my research on Jewish and Christian intellectual currents during the nineteenth century.

In January, I reviewed microfilm of rare and unpublished texts from the past two centuries at the splendid National Library of Israel, especially the personal writings of some key Jewish intellectuals. Among the many treasures I discovered was an unpublished philosophical treatise by the famous Enlightenment philosopher, Salomon Maimon (1753–1800). In the wonderful Gershom Scholem reading room, I found a massive collection of works on Kabbalah and religious mysticism, coming largely from the personal library of the great scholar of Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem (1897–1982). In this room, I had the honour of meeting many new colleagues and teachers, with whom I hope to continue to study.

This summer, I pursued my research in some of the finest libraries in England. I principally focused upon the life and works of the fascinating and phenomenally productive Victorian scholar of Judaism, Christian David Ginsburg (1821–1914), whose spiritual and intellectual biography stands at the centre of my doctoral dissertation.

Ginsburg's personal effects are spread over various libraries. The British Library contains many primary documents related to his work, including the infamous 'Shapira affair' of 1883, and correspondence with his close friend British Prime Minister William Gladstone. At the Cam-

bridge University Library, I found Ginsburg's epistolary correspondence with notable figures such as the social reformer Anthony Ashley-Cooper (the Earl of Shaftesbury) and German-Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz. Such letters afford great insight into Ginsburg's life, and into the ideational discourse within Jewish and Christian intellectuals in Britain. Finally, the magnificent Wren Library at Trinity College, Cambridge, houses many of Ginsburg's unpublished writings, including a truly extraordinary side-by-side analysis of the discrepancies between the Hebrew Bible and its earliest Greek translation, the Septuagint.

Perusing all of these sources was a most illuminating and exhilarating endeavour. I never fail to be surprised at the extraordinary intellectual breadth and heft of these great Jewish thinkers. Studying them has greatly enriched my understanding of their era of scholarship.

I am immensely grateful to Harvard's Center for Jewish Studies and associated academics for this opportunity. The wonderful staff at the CJS do so much splendid work in facilitating Jewish scholarship in every imaginable arena. I would also like to thank the generous donors associated with the CJS, whose commitment to Jewish scholarship has made an extraordinarily positive impact on the progress of my own intellectual journey, as well as the journeys of so many other scholars of Judaism in every stage of their careers.

— J.J. Kimche

Ph.D. candidate, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations



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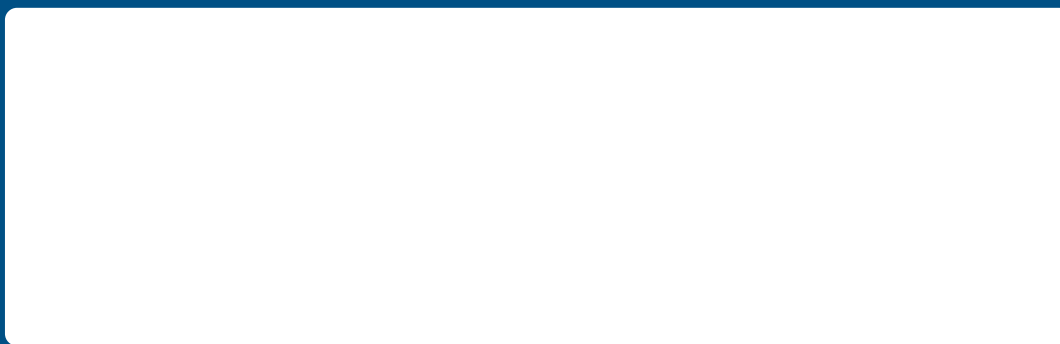
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FALL 2023

