

SPRING 2020



INSTITUTE FOR ISRAEL AND JEWISH STUDIES
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

שְׁהִיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֹכְלֵי
בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ
שׁוֹם מָה עַל שׁוֹם שְׁפָסָה
לְבַתֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם
וְאִמְרַתֶּם זִבַּח פֶּסַח וְזוֹא
פֶּסַח עַל בְּתֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת
וַיִּקְדוּ הָעַם וַיִּשְׂחֻוּ :



צְדָה לֹא עָשׂוּ לָהֶם

Dear Friends,

I write these lines with a heavy heart during these difficult times, and in the hope that this finds you and your loved ones in good health. The immense human toll of the virus, and its long term repercussions on global and local economic and cultural activity are still unknown. Our campus is barren of its vital heart, our students, faculty, administrators, and staff. Yet I have never been prouder to be part of this community of scholars. Everyone has worked heroically to look after the welfare of students whose lives were suddenly disrupted.

Plagues have been part of the human experience since the beginning of time. Despite the capability and tools at our disposal, it has been extremely challenging to adapt suddenly to new circumstances. That is precisely what we have been doing at the Institute. While public events have been cancelled, classes continue remotely and our commitment to our students' well being and academic pursuits is unyielding. We salute our faculty who have been teaching and meeting students despite sometimes cramped quarters, children, and other family members at home, technology and equipment outdated, and other hardships. Michelle Chesner, our indefatigable Norman E. Alexander Librarian for Jewish Studies has been working non-stop to help our students access the sources and scholarship they need to continue their research projects.

Prior to the disruption we had been in the midst of a banner academic year of programming. Highlights include:

- Programming for our Undergraduate Israel Fellows, including opportunities to meet with journalism professor Gershom Gorenberg on covering Israel in the press, acclaimed Israeli filmmaker Joseph Cedar, and others.
- Tours of the Norman E. Alexander Jewish Studies Library Rare Books Collection.
- A new course introducing academic Jewish Studies for M.A. and Ph.D. students led by Dr. Isabelle Levy.
- A new Holocaust Study fellowship led by Professor Jeremy Dauber.

At the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, our students are the heart of our work. We are continuing to develop our programs for undergraduates; at the same time, we never lose sight of providing the best training for our graduate students, the next generation's leaders in the academic field.

As we continue to support our students at a time of displacement and anxiety for all, we reach out to you for your continued support. We invite you to continue to read about our faculty and students, and our work for the benefit of the larger community. We hope to welcome you back to the Institute, in person, to gather, learn, and grow together.

Wishing you a season of health and renewal,

Elisheva Carlebach

Director, Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies

Salo Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture and Society

Cover from top: 4th century Jewish gravestone. Photos of students taking part in Medieval Jewish Cultures class at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Norman E. Alexander Library for Jewish Studies. Students and members of the public taking part in a lecture at the Institute.

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PLAGUE, PASSOVER, AND PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL DISTANCING

Joshua Teplitzky, Stony Brook University



Images courtesy of Columbia University Rare Book Manuscript Library. Libro della Peste che fu in Padova nel an[no] 5391 (Padua, Italy, 17 c.). Olam Hafukh (Padua, Italy, 17 c.)

As the global pandemic gains momentum and the human toll rises, many religious communities around the world are striving to balance physical health with spiritual, religious, and cultural fulfillment. In Rome, Pope Francis will undertake the liturgical celebrations of the Catholic Holy Week preceding Easter Sunday without the presence of the faithful. Saudi Arabia has asked Muslims to forestall their travel plans to the pilgrimage site of Mecca for the Hajj festival (this year in late July). And Jewish rabbinical organizations in the United States, Europe, Israel, and beyond have issued guidelines that limit gatherings such as the quorum of ten demanded by religious law for communal prayer and, distressingly for many, the conviviality of the seder table at Passover, a hallmark of the Jewish holiday cycle.

These actions feel unprecedented. Yet they echo more distant historical moments when religious ritual had to be accommodated to the needs of the hour during times of disease. Chroniclers of Jewish life in the seventeenth century, which saw the recurrence of plague, offer salient, striking, and timely examples.

In 1630-1631, plague ravaged Italy. During this epidemic, religious and state authorities often clashed as official boards of health sought to limit social contact and religious leaders, especially Catholic bishops, openly resisted encroachment on their prerogatives and sacred responsibilities.¹ The impact of the epidemic on Jews in the city of Padua was captured in the Hebrew account of Abraham Catalano titled *Olam hafukh* ("The World Overturned"), a manuscript of which is held by Columbia University Libraries.²

Catalano was one of a four-man commission tasked with overseeing the health and welfare of the Jewish community of Padua during this crisis. His account is rich with detail about the events of that fateful year, both in Jewish attempts to maintain normalcy and efforts to adapt to their circumstances. When the month of Adar arrived and the Passover holiday drew near, the commission

delivered flour to a rabbi Jacob Lendanara to prepare matza for the community for the coming holiday. When it came to communal prayer, on the other hand, Catalano and his colleagues instituted distancing measures, decreeing that:

every unmarried [male, who attended prayer services] was to stand outside of the synagogue of the Ashkenazim, in the courtyard of the synagogue, and the Italians [should stand] in the women's section [of their synagogue], to allow space between the people at prayer, and we instructed to pray on Shabbat at the break of dawn, before the heat of the day.³

Catalano's health board sought to spread people out from each other, commandeering the women's section of the Italian synagogue on the Piazza delle Legne to give more space to the men at prayer, and relegating unmarried men of the Ashkenazic synagogue on the Contrada San Canziano to the outer courtyard for a similar reason. We can observe the not-so-subtle social hierarchies at work here as priority was given to married men and heads of households, then unmarried men as auxiliary; finally, women's presence in the synagogue was treated as dispensable.⁴

Early modern European Jews understood the necessity of social distancing even at moments when normative law and customary practice would have otherwise demanded solidarity and communality. The pain of this decision emerges acutely in the writings of another early modern Jew in a different part of Europe, the memoirist Glikl of Hameln, who lived in the northern German port city of Hamburg-Altona. In the 1660s, Glikl's four-year-old daughter, Tzipor, displayed symptoms of plague during the family's visit to Hannover for the festival of Sukkot. Left with no choice but isolation, they sent their daughter (along with a trusted caretaker who bore the task of tending and the risk of exposure to the sick) to a village on the outskirts of town for the duration of the holiday. Glikl recorded that when her husband traveled with a small cohort to deliver festival food to his quarantined daughter and her escort, the young girl

was filled with joy and wanted to run to her father, as any child would. Reb Lipman, my brother-in-law, shouted out to them to hold the girl, that the old man should come get the food. They had to restrain my husband too, as with a rope, to keep him from approaching the dear child. Now both he and the little girl were wailing, because my husband, of blessed memory, could see that she was safe and sound, thank God, but he was not permitted to go to her.⁵

Glikl's heart-wrenching scene evinces the pain of distancing and isolation at times usually reserved for coming together, like religious festivals. Yet the needs of the moment call for such drastic measures to ensure that the most vulnerable among us can remain "safe and sound." As Jews prepare for a seder night that will be palpably different from so many other seder nights, we may take small comfort in knowing that others before us have weathered similar storms, and that, with precaution and care, lives can be saved by these difficult decisions.

*Joshua Teplitsky is Assistant Professor in the Department of History and the Program in Judaic Studies at Stony Brook University. He is a founding member of Footprints, a Judaica digital humanities project run out of Columbia University Library. He specializes in the history of the Jews of Europe in the early modern period, 1600-1800. He earned his PhD from New York University's Departments of Hebrew & Judaic Studies and History and has held fellowships at the Oxford Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies of the University of Oxford, the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, the National Library of Israel, and Harvard University. His first book, *Prince of the Press: How One Collector Built History's Most Enduring and Remarkable Jewish Library*, was published by Yale University Press in 2019. He is currently writing a book about Jews and plague in early modern Europe.*

¹ Carlo M. Cipolla, *Faith, Reason, and the Plague in Seventeenth-Century Tuscany* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1979).

² A relatively under-studied text, the work was published by Cecil Roth in 1946 *Kovetz al yad* 4 (14). (Jerusalem 1946): 67-101. A partial translation into English, Alan D. Crown, "The World Overturned: The Plague Diary of Abraham Catalano," *Midstream* (January 1973): 65-76, should be used with some caution. Catalano's chronicle has been treated most recently in Susan L. Einbinder, "Poetry, Prose and Pestilence: Joseph Concio and Jewish Responses to the 1630 Italian Plague," in *Shirat Dvora: Essays in Honor of Professor Dvora Bregman*, ed. Haviva Ishay (Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2019), esp. pp. 76-80.

³ Abraham Catalano, *Olam hafukh*, Cecil Roth, ed. *Kovetz al yad* 4 (14) (1946): 78. The rendering into English is my own.

⁴ The Ashkenazic synagogue appears to have had a women's section as well, although not all early modern synagogues did. On the synagogues of Padua, see Stefano Zaggia, "Die Deutsche Synagoge in Padua 1603-1779," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 46, no. 1 (1994): 44-58.

⁵ Chava Turniansky, *Glikl: Memoirs 1691-1719*, trans. Sara Friedman (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2019), 112.

UNDERGRADUATE FOCUS

The Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies works with undergraduates in all Columbia schools.

From our Undergraduate Israel Fellowship to Jewish Studies special concentration and events, our goal is to reach undergraduate where they are, be it summer internships, their courses, or lunchtime lectures.



GETTING TO KNOW... JOSHUA LEFKOW

GS '20, Political Science

01 | *What did you do prior to attending Columbia?*

After graduating high school, I served for four years as an artilleryman in the United States Marine Corps, deploying in that time to both Southeast Asia and Afghanistan. While I was usually the only Jewish person in any of my units, the military could be surprisingly accommodating at times. For Yom Kippur in 2012, I was actually flown on a helicopter to Guam a few days before the ship I was on was supposed to dock there, in order to make sure I could attend services with Guam's (very small!) Jewish community. After getting out of the military, I attended community college in Los Angeles for two years before transferring to Columbia.

02 | *How did you get involved with Israel and Jewish Studies?*

I originally got involved with Israel and Jewish Studies when taking Hebrew in order to complete my language requirement. After taking a few more courses through IIJS, I decided to commit to the Jewish Studies concentration.



03

How has Israel and Jewish Studies impacted your college career?

Above all else, Israel and Jewish Studies has provided me with the opportunity to diversify my academic experience at Columbia. I transferred here with two years of community college under my belt, and as a result had limited flexibility between completing both the core and my major requirements. The classes I've taken through IIJS have allowed me to break out of that pattern, exposing me to a variety of disciplines united by a common theme.

04

Can you share a highlight from your classes/ fellowships with IIJS?

I particularly loved Modern Hebrew Literature, which I took in Spring 2019 with Professor Roni Henig. Largely focused on the Haskalah through the early 20th century, the course explored a host of different themes and perspectives, ranging from Dvora Baron's European shtetls to Yosef Haim Brenner's Mandatory Palestine. Integrating the literature we read with conversations about the historical context in which these works were being created made for a memorable and powerful class. If the course had been one of the first I had taken in college, it's likely that I would have pursued a Comparative Literature major instead.

05

What are your post-college plans?

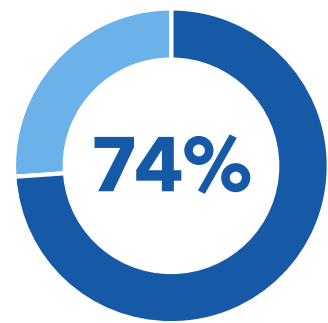
I plan on attending law school following my graduation in Spring 2020, and hope to pursue a career in public interest law.

UNDERGRADUATE ISRAEL FELLOWSHIP

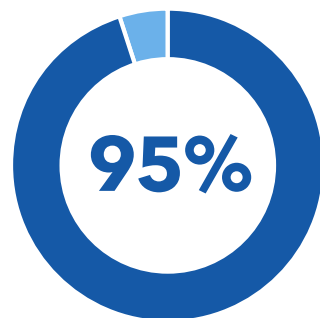
In the Summer of 2019, 23 students participated in the IJS Undergraduate Israel Fellowship. As part of the Fellowship, students take part in pre-professional and academic programs in Israel. Both before and after the summer, fellows attend on-campus workshops coordinated by the Institute. These informal learning opportunities range from conversations with renowned scholars and tastemakers to film screenings and more. This fellowship gives students a foundation in Israeli history and culture, while creating a community of learners engaged in Israel Studies.



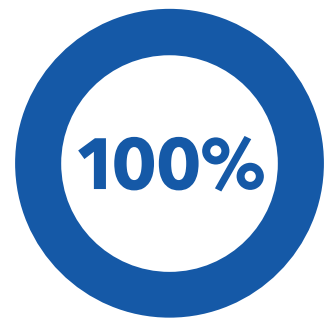
As a result of the fellowship...



74% of 2019 Fellows plan to attend a cultural event related to Israel and Jewish Studies.



95% of 2019 Fellows have an increased knowledge of Israeli culture, history, and society.



100% of 2019 participants would recommend the fellowship to a friend

Photo: Natan Sachs, Brookings Institution Fellow, meets with Undergraduate Israel Fellows to discuss the Israeli elections.



Fellow *Experiences*

I took classes at the Rothberg International School at Hebrew University for the month of July. During August I worked on a farm in the desert pruning pomegranate trees and picking grapes. I learned not only a lot about Israeli history and Jewish thought from my courses, but also the more practical skills of farming.

[M]y internship was working for the Israel Ministry of Health doing HIV research. More specifically, I worked on a project independently that involved conducting resistance testing for mutations of HIV+ foreigners living in Israel. This was the most positive work experience I have ever had, as I was the only person working on this project and I learned so much throughout the months I was working for the MOH (e.g. useful lab techniques, biology behind HIV, understanding the life of foreigners living in Israel who are not covered by the national health care system, life for LGBTQ+ folks living with HIV or at risk for HIV, etc.).

Internship with Pink of View, a breast cancer tech startup in Tel Aviv.

This summer I interned at an Insure-tech startup called Skywatch. This company deals with On-Demand insurance for drones.

I participated in the Arabic Immersion Program at Hebrew University. I had the opportunity to learn Arabic intensively while engaging with the Arab speaking community in Israel. Some highlights included: cooking traditional Palestinian dishes, visiting Islamic architecture sites and engaging with Arab student community at Hebrew University. Based in Jerusalem, I really had the chance to explore and learn about the budding artist communities working hard to

bring art and beauty to every corner of the city. I also had the opportunity to observe the different traditions, and religious communities and neighborhood across the city intersect with one another in surprising ways.

My internship was research at the Tami Steinmetz Peace Center at Tel Aviv University where I helped do research for a study about US-Israel relations. I looked into the United States' perspective on Israel and the role of UN Resolution 242 from 1967-1998. I really enjoyed getting to know lots of Columbia students from attending IJS events. I feel like I have a stronger network back on campus now. Also, it was really fascinating to be researching Israeli politics at my internship and then also learning about them in a different way from living in Israel and going to IJS events. I feel like I gained so many different perspectives about Israel in so many different ways all in one summer.

"[I w]as on the software development team for the venture capital firm named iAngels.

I did a month-long Ulpan at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Internship for the Robin Hood Israel Foundation, I was considered a legal intern and shadowed a lawyer, attended events and meetings in various law firms in Israel. I received a great outlook on the law system and NGOs in Israel.

I was super inspired by the urban farming workshop and I'm currently making my own urban garden in my apartment and looking to be more involved with similar organizations around NYC.

Fellowship Workshops **included:**

- Urban Rooftop Farming in Tel Aviv
- A Conversation with Gershom Gorenberg on Israeli settlements
- Joseph & Rebecca Bau House
- *Let's Dance 1919-2019* - A Play on Jaffa's History
- Screening of *The Right to Shout* with Producer Uri Rosenwaks





GETTING TO KNOW... RUPAL GUPTA

Undergraduate Israel Fellow 2019

Columbia College, Class of 2021

01

What are you currently studying?

Economics and Computer Science

02

What did you do during your fellowship in Israel?

I interned at a Venture Capital firm, conducting research and learning about the startup ecosystem. I also travelled a lot, visiting different parts of the country such as Jerusalem, Nazareth, Eilat, etc. Moreover, I experienced Israeli culture through its food, theater, beaches and traditions.

03

What was the most interesting part of being an Israel Fellow?

The most interesting part, for me, was that the fellowship enabled me to meet a diverse set of people, with different identities, and diverse narratives. Through the fellowship, I was able to hear the story of a Holocaust survivor narrated by the granddaughter of the survivor. At the same time, I heard from Palestinian researchers and people residing in predominantly Muslim regions. I was able to learn about Ethiopian Jews and their distinct traditions, as well as catch a glimpse of the Druze faith and the beliefs of Druze people. I heard from entrepreneurs to political leaders, from social activists to IDF soldiers, and hearing a diversity of voices from all across the board was a deeply holistic and satisfying experience. This learning satisfied my intellectual inquiry.

04

If you could give advice to future fellows what would it be?

I would suggest that future fellows see the unbounded opportunities of discovery and learning a summer in Israel can bring, especially if it is your first time in the country. In Israel, there are many ways in which you can engage with the country. If you're interested in business and entrepreneurship, you can visit one of the many free, open events at the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. If you're interested in arts, you can visit many art museums and art districts. If you're interested in adventure sports, you could head over to Eilat for some sky-diving or scuba-diving. Make your summer immersive!

If you're unfamiliar with the country and especially its political context, I would suggest doing some research/reading before coming.

FALL 2019 COURSE HIGHLIGHTS

- **MEMORY AND TRAUMA IN YIDDISH LITERATURE**
- **JEWISH TALES FROM FOUR CITIES: THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE**
IN NEW YORK, BUENOS AIRES, PARIS AND LONDON
- **HISTORY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL, 1948-PRESENT**
- **JEWISH CULTURE IN TRANSLATION IN MEDIEVAL IBERIA**
- **RULES AND REASONS: ISRAELI LAW VS. JEWISH LAW**
- **THEORIES OF THE UNCONSCIOUS AND JEWISH THOUGHT**



Public Program Highlights

THE NAOMI PRAWER KADAR ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE WITH JONATHAN D. SARNA

Last April, the Institute welcomed Jonathan D. Sarna to share his latest research on Cora Wilburn, the first Jewish novelist in America. The sold-out event included students, faculty, and members of the public. The lecture was presented in partnership with the Naomi Foundation, whose work is to advance the teaching and learning of Yiddish, particularly in academic settings.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE AMERICAS CONFERENCE

In May, the Institute hosted a conference to explore the history of anti-Semitism in the Americas. Panelists examined a range of topics, from the AMIA bombing in Buenos Aires to the Dillingham Commission sessions that preceded the United States immigration quota system in the early 20th century. The conference concluded with a keynote by Federico Finchelstein on *Anti-Semitism, Populism, and Migration in Latin American History*. The conference was cosponsored by Barnard College's Forum on Migration, Columbia University's Institute for Latin American Studies, Columbia University's Hispanic Institute for Latin American and Iberian Cultures, the Latin American Jewish Studies Association, and The New School for Social Research.

Photos: The Kadar Family with past undergraduate Naomi Fellows in Yiddish Studies. Rebecca Kobrin presenting panelists as part of the *Anti-Semitism in Americas* Conference.





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HISTORY AND MEMORY: THE LEGACY OF YOSEF H. YERUSHALMI

On Sunday, December 1, 2019, the Institute welcomed over 350 individuals to History and Memory: The Legacy of Yosef H. Yerushalmi, a conference created to mark the 10th anniversary of Prof. Yerushalmi's passing. Prof. Yerushalmi taught at Columbia University for nearly three decades, and wrote numerous books including *Zakhor*, a meditation on the relationship between history and memory.

Among the presenters and participants were his former students, current leaders in the field of Jewish Studies. The opening remarks were made by Pierre Birnbaum and a keynote was delivered by Sir Simon Schama. The day was filled with reminiscing on personal memories of the man, while expounding upon his profound legacy and indelible mark on the way Jewish History is studied.

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Photos: Prof. Yosef Yerushalmi alongside his parents at his Columbia University graduation. Sir Simon Schama presenting his keynote at the Yerushalmi Conference.



GETTING TO KNOW... ISABELLE LEVY

Isabelle Levy (B.A. Columbia; Ph.D. Harvard) was Fellow at the Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America (2018) and the Stanley A. and Barbara B. Rabin Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Institute for Israel & Jewish Studies (2016-2017), both at Columbia. Her research specializes in the relationships among Hebrew, Arabic and Romance literature of the medieval Mediterranean, with particular emphasis on how medieval Jewish literature is both a mediator and innovator across these varied traditions. She has articles in *A Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula*, vol. 2; *La corónica* and *Digital Dante*.

01

How did you get involved with Jewish Studies?

I've always had an interest in Judeo-languages, particularly the Judeo-Spanish spoken among some of my family members, and I was very fortunate to spend the year after college learning more about the Judeo-Spanish ballad tradition at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Higher Council for Scientific Research - CSIC) in Madrid. Even though my dissertation gave equal attention to the various literary traditions of the medieval Mediterranean, I always found myself returning to Jewish topics throughout graduate school, from my continued interest in Ladino balladry to my involvement in coordinating a Jewish language seminar series that brought experts to campus to speak about a breathtaking array of Judeo-languages. As I moved deeper into the world of medieval Comparative Literature, I began to realize that I was most passionate about the secular Jewish literature of the medieval Mediterranean and how it was influenced by and/or how it diverged from the other literary traditions in the same geographic region and timeframe. This was a pretty subtle shift, since it would be difficult to study the Jewish literature of the medieval Mediterranean without considering neighboring literary movements, just as it would be truly unfortunate to skip the Jewish literature and examine just the Arabic and Romance angles. My year as a Rabin Postdoctoral Fellow at the IJSS in 2016-2017 further motivated my move towards Jewish Studies and gave me the opportunity to research and teach these innovative and exciting medieval Jewish literary traditions in context.

02

You taught a class this Fall called Jewish Culture in Translation in Medieval Iberia. Is there a fact or something surprising that people may not know about this topic?

During part of the semester, we looked at groups of frame tale narratives, otherwise known as “a story within a story,” that circulated across languages of the medieval Mediterranean. It’s exciting to be able to trace the same storylines across texts in Arabic, Hebrew, Latin, Castilian, and Italian; and it is genuinely rewarding to realize that people coming from diverse linguistic and religious backgrounds all liked to be entertained with the same kinds of stories—especially if those stories had bawdy slapstick tendencies and talking animals.

03

What are you currently researching?

I’m currently researching wonderful and strange uses of metaphors in secular medieval Jewish poetry and prose and comparing these to uses of metaphors in Arabic and Romance-language compositions.

04

What are you most looking forward to teaching in your Spring course?

I am really looking forward to giving Jewish Studies students the chance to reflect on what Jewish Studies is, exactly, how it interacts with other disciplines and what the state of the field means for their particular research projects.

05

You’re hosting a dinner party – who would you invite from any point in history?

I would invite Sappho, Immanuel of Rome (a Jewish contemporary of Dante), Cervantes, Virginia Woolf, Primo Levi, Clarice Lispector and my great aunt Stella, and I would serve some really ancient grains with chopped almonds and dates, roasted veggies sprinkled with lots of biblical herbs and pomegranate seeds, rosewater cookies and tea with honey.

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

SANDRA CHIRITESCU

Sandra Chiritescu is a sixth year Ph.D. candidate in Yiddish Studies where she is also pursuing certificates in Comparative Literature and Gender Studies. When she isn't teaching Yiddish or processing archival materials at Columbia's Rare Books and Manuscript Library, she works on translation and public humanities projects, such as interviewing writer and activist Irena Klepfisz for the Yiddish feminist podcast *Vaybertaytsh*. She is also a research assistant for the YIVO Bruce and Francesca Cernia Slovin Online Museum and an editorial board member of *In Geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*.

Sandra's dissertation project—tentatively titled *Yiddish Traces in American Jewish Feminism? English and Yiddish Life-Writing 1970-present*—explores Jewish women's writing during second- and third-wave feminism with a focus on gendered modes of personal writing, such as memoirs and essays, in American literature in Yiddish and English. Her dissertation combines readings of marginal Yiddish authors with more canonical works of second-wave feminism thus challenging monolithic and monolingual understandings of American-Jewish feminist literature.

ZOHAR ELMAKIAS

Zohar Elmakias is a fourth year doctoral student in the Department of Anthropology. She focuses on sites which have been home to theologically and militarily charged events, and pays special attention to their visual transformations over the past century and a half. Through them, she examines the interrelated meanings in the national, the theological, and the military realms in Israel. With the support of IJJS, over the past summer Elmakias has advanced her dissertation both theoretically and practically. In June 2019, she participated in Prof. Achille Mbembe's seminar on borders as part of the New School's Institute of Critical Social Inquiry (ICSI). Later in the summer, she conducted local fieldwork in the United States around religious tourism, and began a year-long fieldwork in Israel with a focus on a Golan Heights historical Custom House, and the Third Temple movement in Jerusalem's Old City.

EREZ DEGOLAN

Erez DeGolan is a fourth year Ph.D. candidate in Religion, with a concentration in classical rabbinic literature and late antique Mediterranean history. DeGolan's dissertation project explores cultural and historical aspects of positive emotions in ancient/late ancient Judaism. In Spring 2019, Erez joined the Program Committee of the Association for Jewish Studies as its Graduate Student Representative. In January 2020, Erez's article, "The Constriction of Female Leadership: Tracing a Trend in the Early Reception of Miriam and Mary Magdalene," which he co-authored with Miriam-Simma Walfish (Harvard), will be featured in a book entitled *Rediscovering the Marys: Maria, Mariamne, Miriam*. Erez presented his work at several conferences throughout 2019, thanks to support from the IJJS.

ISHAI MISHORY

Ishai Mishory is a third year Ph.D. candidate continuing to study, teach and conduct research into early Hebrew printing within the Department of Religion. He has published an article about Rachel Wischnitzer and Franziska Baruch's collaboration on Hebrew letter design in online peer-reviewed Yiddish culture journal *In Geveb* and spoken at the Association for Jewish Studies' 51st Annual Conference. He has received the Irene C. Fromer Fellowship in Jewish Studies, and over the summer has spoken about his research at École normale supérieure (Paris) and Sefer Jewish Studies Conference (Moscow).

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

EVAN PARKS

Evan Parks is a sixth year doctoral candidate in the department of Germanic Languages. His research treats the interplay between German and Jewish intellectual traditions, and his dissertation examines the reception of Romanian-Jewish German-language postwar poet Paul Celan by three of the 20th century's most prominent thinkers, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Theodor W. Adorno, and Jacques Derrida. In 2019 Evan was a faculty member on the Bronfman Fellowship, a pluralistic Jewish studies seminar for advanced high school students, where he taught German-Jewish literature and philosophy. Support from IIJS has enabled Evan to travel for archival research in Germany and Israel and to study in a Hebrew Language Intensive at Middlebury College.

LYNTON LEES

Lynton Lees is a third year Ph.D. student in the History department. In her dissertation, she traces how educators in Britain and its empire responded to the challenge of totalitarian youth mobilizations in the interwar period by asserting their own political claims upon children. Far from being the reserve of Nazi or Soviet regimes, liberal democratic states like Britain also tried to inculcate political ideas in children, expanding state educational provision and introduced newly political forms of pedagogy and educational theory. With support from IIJS, Lynton spent the summer asking what this meant for the education of Jewish refugee children in Britain. Time spent in the archives in London and the Lake District allowed her to grasp how Anglo-Jewish Zionist groups attempted to mold children into democratic citizens as a rebuttal to totalitarian educational models, seeking to transform refugees into citizens of a future Jewish nation-state.

NOA TSAUSHU

Noa Tsushu is a third year Ph.D. student in Yiddish Studies in the Department of Germanic Languages. She has been working on the institutional history behind the Jewish art scene in post-revolutionary Kiev, focusing on Kultur-Lige's Art Studio in Kiev during the years 1918-1920. Thanks to the generous support of the IIJS, she was able to spend time in the YIVO archive, where she closely read the Kultur-Lige's official bulletins and zoomed in on the infrastructure that supported one of the most prolific Jewish art scenes in Eastern Europe. Among her accomplishments, she was able to outline the financial resources that enabled the Art Studio, mapped out the Studio's departments, and put together, for the first time, its comprehensive timeline. The meticulous work currently serves as the basis for a future peer-reviewed article and the formulation of her research topic as she moves forward.

Anna Shternshis, AI and Malka Green Professor of Yiddish studies at University of Toronto, leads a Graduate Student Workshop.





GETTING TO KNOW... ANRUO BAO

Anruo Bao came to Columbia University in 2015. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Yiddish Studies and Comparative Literature of the Department of Germanic Languages, and is also affiliated with the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society. Anruo studied at Beijing Normal University and got her B.A. in Chinese literature and English and her first M.A. in comparative literature. She went on to study at the Department of Jewish, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at Washington University in St. Louis and got her second M.A. in Jewish Studies. Her academic interests include modern Yiddish fiction and theater, modern Hebrew fiction and theater, pre-modern messianic movements and heretic experience in Jewish literature, American Jewish literature and comparative studies between Chinese and Jewish literatures and cultures. Anruo has published two articles on Sh. Ansky's *Der Dybbuk* and I. L. Peretz's short stories in Chinese. Four of her articles about Yiddish literature and culture have already been accepted and will be published in the United States and China. She is currently working on her dissertation about the literary image of Sabbatai Zevi in modern Yiddish, Hebrew, and American Jewish literatures.

01

How did you get involved with Jewish Studies?

When I was studying in China, I majored in Chinese literature and English. In one of my English classes, one of the reading assignments was Isaac Bashevis Singer's "Gimpel the Fool". Although the text I read was Saul Bellow's translation, after reading it, I was totally moved by Gimpel's story and decided to do more research on Bashevis Singer. While doing this research, I learned Bashevis Singer actually wrote in Yiddish, and that was the first time I heard of Yiddish and Yiddish literature. The more research I did, the more I loved Bashevis Singer and Yiddish literature. In the end, I wrote my undergraduate and masters' theses on Bashevis Singer and also decided to study Yiddish literature in the future. Since there were no Yiddish programs or professors in China and there was no Hebrew program in my university, I began to study Yiddish literature from learning Biblical Hebrew with an Austrian professor, who worked in China and was also a Catholic missionary. Although the difference between Yiddish and Biblical Hebrew was huge, it was the only way I could find to approach Yiddish at that time. After studying Biblical Hebrew for a good time, I applied for graduate programs in the United States and was admitted into Washington University in St. Louis. In the summer before I went to Wash U, the university gave me a summer

grant to study at the summer ulpan held by the Hebrew University. From then on, I began to study modern Hebrew. The next summer, I went to YIVO's summer program in New York City to study Yiddish. After I graduated from Wash U, I spent a year at Hebrew University in order to improve my Hebrew and Yiddish. Luckily enough, I was admitted by Columbia's Yiddish program and have spent four wonderful years here. As a Chinese student who is studying Yiddish literature and culture, I am now trying my best to introduce Yiddish literature and culture through publications in China, and, of course, I will continue doing it in the future.

02

What are you currently researching?

Currently, I am working on my dissertation about the literary image of Sabbatai Zevi in modern Yiddish, Hebrew, and American Jewish literatures. Through a comparative perspective, my dissertation focuses on the literary works centering on Sabbatai Zevi to explore his meaning and explain modern Jewish writers' collective interest in him. At the crosspoint of psychoanalysis and modern Jewish literature, Sabbatai Zevi became a symbol of the melancholic Jewish nostalgia.

03

What books are you reading now?

Since I am writing the first chapter of my dissertation, which is about the relationships among Sabbatai Zevi, Saturn the planet, melancholic nostalgia and post-Haskalah literature, most of the books I am reading now are within these four fields, such as Gershom Scholem's works about Sabbatai Zevi, the works about the life experience and academic research of Scholem, the history of the Haskalah, the works of the academic research on nostalgia and melancholia and Moshe Idel's historical works on the relationship between Sabbatai Zevi and Saturn.

04

What are you most looking forward to this Spring?

First, I hope to finish writing the first draft of my dissertation's main body. Second, my abstract about the image of China in Yiddish feuilletons [supplement sections of newspapers] in the early 20th century was admitted to the 2020 American Comparative Literature Association annual conference, and I am quite looking forward to presenting my paper at the conference. Third, I hope to finish writing three articles from my writing plan by the end of the spring and submit them for publication. Fourth, I am looking forward to the lectures held by IJS. The more Yiddish scholars the better!

05

You're hosting a dinner party—who would you invite from any point in history? And what would you serve?

I am very interested in the literary presentation of the false messianic movements in the pre-modern period. If I were hosting a dinner party, I would invite Sabbatai Zevi, Nathan of Gaza, Abraham Cardozo, Barukhya Russo, and Jacob Frank. Besides these messiahs and prophets, I would also invite Bashevis Singer and Olga Tokarczuk, both of whom wrote about false messiahs and the movements surrounding them, and both won the Nobel Prize in Literature. At this dinner, I would observe these messiahs' and prophets' behaviors that were not recorded in the historical sources; and I would listen to the two authors' opinion on the messiahs' missions in the modern period. Bashevis Singer, Olga Tokarczuk, and Sabbatai Zevi can speak English, and Olga can translate Jacob Frank's Polish, so I'm not too worried about the language problem. Moreover, since Bashevis Singer was a vegetarian, I would not serve meat but probably serve tsimes and blintzes. Also, considering Barukhya Russo and Jacob Frank were famous for their orgiastic rituals, I would not serve any alcoholic drinks but would serve coffee to keep everyone sober and tell me what I want to know.

FROM THE STACKS

By *Michelle Chesner*



In presenting the rare Judaica to students and other visitors to the libraries, I have learned that sometimes basic terms can be confused. As I often point out that Columbia's Judaica manuscript collection is the largest of a secular research institution in the country, it is important to me that my visitors understand the definition of "manuscript." For instance, many people think that a "manuscript" is simply a really old book, rather than a hand (manu) written (script) document.

The distinction between printed books and manuscript was, in fact, quite fluid during the pre-modern centuries. Many examples in the Norman E. Alexander Library for Jewish Studies at Columbia combine print and manuscript, often in interesting and unexpected ways.

The most common example of a print/manuscript book occurs when a book is missing leaves. A copy in Columbia's collection of Rabbi Joseph Trani's *Teshuvot* printed in Constantinople between 1641-1656 is missing leaves 100-102. Its owner was Rabbi Tsevi Hirsch ben Jacob Ashkenazi (also known as the Hakham Tsevi), a rabbi in Amsterdam whose books are part of our collection. The Hakham Tsevi filled in the missing text with his quill and ink. If you look closely, you can see the facing (printed) page on the left side of the picture, in the darker, black ink.

Another example of combining print and manuscript comes from the need for paper—not just as the surface on which to write a text, but also as part of the binding. This copy of Midrash Tanhuma, produced in Yemen in 1491, was rebound at least half a century after it was produced. For the pastedown, i.e. the page glued to the boards as part of the binding, the binder used a leaf from an edition of Daniel Bomberg's Rabbinic Bible, printed in Venice in 1547 (right).

Title pages became standard among printed books in the 16th century. While manuscripts were still being created, scribes chose to mimic the style of the new technology and started creating title pages for their books. Most manuscripts had handwritten title pages, but some included printed ones—even though the texts they described were written by hand. A Kabbalistic work created in the 17th century used an opening page—with its Latin and Arabic (!!) text flipped upside down—for its title page (below, right). A manuscript copy of a work by Hayim Vital included a more traditional title page (below, left)—with the Moses and Aaron motif common to many printed books of the period.

There are many examples of books that combine print and manuscript throughout the early modern era. Even though the advent of print in the 16th century brought significant changes to the ease and access of the book, there were many bookmakers who chose to blend the two as a kind of transition into the era of print. So perhaps the word "manuscript" has more fluidity after all!

Michelle Chesner is the Norman E. Alexander Librarian for Jewish Studies.



Image courtesy of Columbia University Rare Book Manuscript Library. Rabbi Joseph Trani's *Teshuvot* (Constantinople, 1641-1656), *Midrash Tanhuma* (Yemen, 1491), *Derekh ʻets Hayim* (Central Europe, 18th century), *Maʻayan Ha-hokhma*, (location unknown, 18th century)

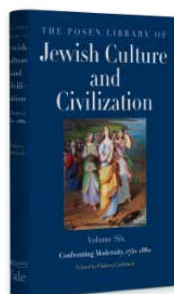
FACULTY NEWS

BETH BERKOWITZ

Beth Berkowitz appeared on two panels at the the Association for Jewish Studies conference. She spoke at a Bible luncheon workshop in November that featured graduate students and faculty from Union Theological Seminary and Jewish Theological Seminary. In addition, she gave a paper at the Society for Jewish Ethics Conference in January in New York. Berkowitz recently published a piece on “Animals and Ancient Judaism” in *Currents in Biblical Research*. In addition, her article “The Slipperiness of Animal Suffering: Revisiting the Talmud’s Classic Treatment” was featured in *Jewish Veganism and Vegetarianism*, a collection of articles that uses a multidisciplinary approach to the study of veganism, vegetarianism, and meat avoidance among Jews, both historical and contemporary.

ELISHEVA CARLEBACH

Elisheva Carlebach’s book, *Confronting Modernity, 1750-1880*, Vol. 6 of the *Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization*, just appeared with Yale University Press. The book presents in English translation memoirs, fiction, poetry, science, and religious writings, alongside material and visual culture that characterize this period in Jewish history. She has contributed a Foreword to a new translation of Heinrich Heine’s *Hebrew Melodies*, illustrated by Mark Podwal, from Penn State University Press. Her review of *The Jewish Political Tradition* appeared in the recent *Jewish Review of Books*.



REBECCA KOBRIN

Rebecca Kobrin was the Joseph Engel Visiting Professor of American Jewish Studies at Harvard University in Fall 2019. There she taught classes on Jewish urban history and global Jewish migration. She gave a public lecture at Harvard titled “Russian Jewish Immigrant ‘Bankers’ Who Transformed American Finance: The Case of Saul Singer and the Bank of United States.” She recently edited a special issue of *American Jewish History* that seeks to broaden and deepen discussion about Jews and the economic history of the United States. This spring, she will be working with Barnard College’s Forum on Migration to welcome leading scholars in the field of Jewish migration to speak to her graduate student colloquium, Global Perspectives on Jewish migration and the State.

Jeremy Dauber, right, with Eddy Portnoy, 2018 featured Kadar Memorial Lecturer, and Dr. Avraham Kadar, President of the Naomi Foundation; Prof. Elisheva Carlebach teaching a course at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.





GETTING TO KNOW... CLÉMENCE BOULOUCQUE

Clémence Boulouque received her Ph.D. in Jewish Studies and History from New York University in 2014 and took postdoctoral training at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania. Her interests include Jewish thought and mysticism, interreligious encounters, intellectual history and networks with a focus on the modern Mediterranean and Sefardi worlds, as well as the intersection between religion and the arts, and the study of the unconscious.

A graduate of the Institute of Political Sciences in Paris, she holds a B.A. in art history and a post M.A. degree in comparative literature, and she was a Fulbright Scholar at Columbia University in the master's program of the School of International Affairs with a concentration on the Middle East. Prior to resuming her studies at NYU, Clémence Boulouque was a literary and movie critic in Paris. She is a published novelist and essayist in her native France. Her upcoming book *Another Modernity: Elia Benamozegh's Jewish Universalism* will be published in August 2020.

01

How did you get involved with Jewish Studies?

It was not a straight line and I am happy it wasn't. I studied international affairs and public service in France and I first came to Columbia in 2001-02 to do a Master's of International Affairs at the School of International and Public Affairs—with a focus on Middle Eastern Studies. I took a course in spring of 2002 with Professor Yerushalmi—*Job and Other Arguments with the Lord*—and it was a revelation. I considered applying for PhD programs but since I had come on a Fulbright Scholarship, I couldn't. The scholarship requires its recipient to go back to their home country for at least two years. So I went back and ended up spending six years in Paris. I had a lovely career as a writer and a critic but I knew I had to come back. In the interviews I conducted, the people whose research really fascinated me were scholars of religion or artists who engaged with it. So I took the plunge and shifted careers. I started a Ph.D. in the dual program in Jewish Studies and History at New York University in 2008, finished in 2014, and I was hired by Columbia as Carl and Bernice Witten Assistant Professor in Jewish and Israel Studies in 2015. I am extremely grateful and moved to find myself right where everything started for me in so many ways.

02

What are you currently researching?

My new project deals with the intersection of Jewish thought and pre-Freudian theories of the unconscious—the term actually appeared in the work of the German philosopher Schelling in 1800, exactly a century before its first mention in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. I look at the ways in which Jewish scholars in Western Europe availed themselves of this nascent concept of the unconscious and showed how Judaism (especially Kabbalah) had actually anticipated it. Around the same time, Hasidism and the Musar tradition also came up with notions that resemble the unconscious and my book seeks to probe the significance of such concepts or proto-concepts in Jewish theology and self-understanding.

03

What books are you reading now?

I always read many books at the same time. The new project involves lots of psychoanalysis, history of the sciences of the mind, neuroscience, etc... But I also need novels in my life - it is part of my metabolism. Among some of the recent reads, I'll mention Edna O'Brien's *Girl* as well as Patrick Modiano's latest book *Encre Sympathique* in French. Until Modiano got the Nobel Prize in 2014, he was barely translated into English so I am glad he did, if only because I can recommend his books to non-French speakers. Modiano can be compared to Sebald, another favorite of mine—I return to them a lot. Both are obsessed with traces and memory, and haunted by World War II. I have started the 1943 novel *Madonna in a Fur Coat* by Sabbahatin Ali, who reminds me of another favorite of mine, Stefan Zweig.

Lastly, prison education is something I am passionate about. I have just finished teaching a month-long course on *Antigone* at the Metropolitan Detention Center and I read extensively about that play and Sophocles, including a Latin epic called *The Thebaid* that has now fallen into obscurity.

04

You were recently on sabbatical. Can you share some highlights of your year?

My colleagues had warned me and indeed, time flew by but I did finish my monograph, *Another Modernity: Elia Benamozegh's Jewish Universalism* about a nineteenth century Italian polymath, complex idiosyncratic figure, and advocate of religious dialogue. Stanford approved it for publication and it will come out in the fall.

05

What are you most looking forward to this Spring?

It is the centennial of the death of the painter Amedeo Modigliani and I have been invited by the city of Livorno, his birthplace, to give a talk about his Sephardic background and the role of mysticism in his work. Modigliani studied for his bar-mitzvah under Benamozegh. I am excited to go back to Livorno, where I spent time in the archives. The conference papers will be included in the first Modigliani Catalogue Raisonné. I am also interested in the intersection between religion and the arts in general. At Columbia, I will be offering a course called *Religion and the Movies* in which we cover quite some ground from auteurs to blockbusters.

06

You're hosting a dinner party—who would you invite from any point in history? And what would you serve?

Maimonides, Marcel Proust, Walter Rathenau, Leon Blum, Stefan Zweig, Golda Meir, and the Marx Brothers. And also Philip Roth—although I still refuse to think that he's gone. It would be a Moroccan/Middle-Eastern feast: we would have quite some territory to cover so we would need lots of mezzes to go through the night.

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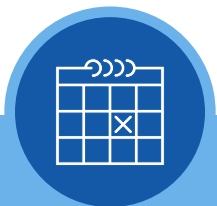
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