



NEWS 2022

INSTITUTE FOR ISRAEL AND JEWISH STUDIES
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORS' LETTER

Dear Friends,

THIS FALL, we returned to Columbia to greet our students and to guide them through the highways and byways of Jewish history, culture and literature. Spacious white tents were scattered around Columbia's campus. Typically, one can admire the symmetry of the grounds from the steps of Low Library all the way to Butler, with tents arriving to celebrate graduation season. These days, the tents are full of students who take their lunch breaks and form study groups with their peers in the open air. While Columbia's iconic landscape has changed, it radiates energy and excitement as we continue into year three of confronting this pandemic.



Tents represent wandering and adaptation. Tents are a reminder that we are resilient and that we must endure the elements wherever we are. We find ourselves in a time of learning and changing, reconfiguring the old rules, and thinking about new ways to keep the best of what we can do under constantly shifting conditions.

In the following pages, you will read about some of these great adaptations. These include graduate students seeking primary sources in a time when libraries were closed, creating new fellowship opportunities, welcoming our newest faculty member, Prof. Ofer Dynes (see more about Professor Dynes inside), producing public programs that bring global scholars to our virtual campus, and so much more.

Our students are always at the heart of what we do. We are so grateful that we have been able to create a space for them to learn, question, and adapt. We appreciate our faculty for their dedication and creativity. Our devoted staff enables everyone to work as efficiently as possible. Our supporters give us hope and encouragement. We hope that soon we can welcome you into our intellectual community, in person, when it is safe to do so again. In the interim, please join our virtual events and stay connected.

Wishing you our very best,

Elisheva Carlebach

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Co-Director, Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies

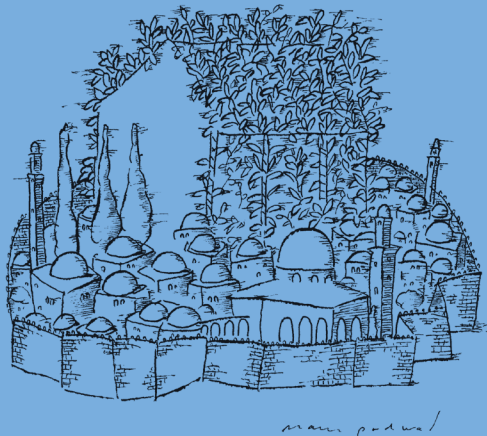
Salo Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture and Society

Rebecca Kobrin

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Co-Director, Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies

Russell and Bettina Knapp Associate Professor of American Jewish History



Cover image: *Universita' Italiana della Sinagoga Corfiota Aborigine contro Universita' della Sinagoga Corfiota Greca*, Corfu.

Inside Cover artwork: *Sukkah* from *A Book of Jewish Days* by Mark Podwal, Farrar Straus Giroux.

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NEWS IN YIDDISH STUDIES

Irene Kronhill Pletka YIVO Research Fellowship

YIVO INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH RESEARCH and Yiddish Studies at Columbia have partnered on projects for decades. These collaborations include public lectures, joint preservation initiatives, and programs for students of Yiddish, including a past iteration of the Uriel Weinreich Yiddish Summer Program. Since 2018, this partnership has included the Irene Kronhill Pletka YIVO Research Fellowship.

We are thrilled to share that the Kronhill Pletka Foundation has recently pledged five-year support for this research fellowship. The Fellowship is intended for students who have taken at least two semesters of Yiddish at Columbia. The Kronhill Pletka Fellows conduct forty-five hours of research at YIVO while acquiring archival research skills under the guidance of YIVO archivists. Fellows' time is driven by the needs of YIVO and their own research and interests.

This renewed partnership between Columbia and YIVO through the Irene Kronhill Pletka YIVO Research Fellowship has been a fruitful and inspirational collaboration. Columbia and Barnard's Yiddish students have had the opportunity to apply their Yiddish skills in real life while exploring the archives and working on various digitization projects that will help the global community gain access to YIVO treasures. In exchange, YIVO archivists get passionate, Yiddish-knowledgeable interns, who, after an exciting educational experience at YIVO, often choose to reapply for the Kronhill Pletka Fellowship. An additional positive outcome is that several of the Fellows have decided to follow Yiddish in their career paths by majoring in Yiddish and applying to graduate programs in the United States and abroad.

"As a Fellow, I not only learned about the history of the Jewish people, but also sharpened my Yiddish language skills, as I continue on my journey to Yiddish fluency. I am thankful to YIVO, Columbia, and Irene Kronhill Pletka for this unforgettable experience."

JULIA ROTHKOFF, B.A. Barnard '20, M.A. Jewish Studies CU '22

"It was exciting to be able to use my Yiddish education in a real-world context, to see physical documents written in the language I study."

ELLA WEINER, Barnard '23

"The Fellowship felt like the ultimate win-win: I helped YIVO advance its collection information, and in turn, honed my archival and Yiddish skills through access to the most treasured of historical artifacts and documents."

PAMELA BRENNER, B.A. Barnard '20, M.St. in Yiddish Studies, Oxford '21



“As a Jewish historian and aspiring Yiddishist, there are few places as exciting as YIVO. ... Overall, participating in the Irene Kronhill Pletka YIVO Research Fellowship exposed me to unrivaled archival materials, strengthened my Yiddish language and interpretive skills, and enabled me to gain a more in-depth understanding of the inner workings of Jewish archival work. I am excited that my transliteration and cataloguing work, in small part, will help future researchers and Yiddish enthusiasts access these valuable sources of information.”

ADAM GELMAN, M.A. Jewish Studies CU '21

“I felt like I was entering a whole new world filled with art, academics, and culture. All the documents I went through as I labeled folders in archival boxes, from the mundane to the beautiful or shocking, gave me an incredibly strong sense of the past. ... I feel so humbled to have been even a tiny part of this eternal project to keep such a rich and varied culture alive.”

RUBY LANDAU-PINCUS, CU '23

Above: Yiddish students meeting with Irene Kronhill Pletka, fourth from right.

The Naomi Fellowship

THIS YEAR MARKED FIVE YEARS of the Naomi Fellowship, an opportunity for students to take part in an immersive exploration of Yiddish language and culture. Due to Covid-19, the 2021 fellowship was entirely virtual. Fellows participated in a one-week course, *Exploring Yiddishland*, followed by the Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program at Tel Aviv University.

The *Exploring Yiddishland* class was led by **Dr. Agnieszka Legutko**, who traveled to Poland to be the Fellows' "virtual eyes" in sightseeing and exploring the cities of Yiddishland, such as Krakow and Warsaw. The Fellows visited Jewish neighborhoods and historic sites. The Zoom format allowed the Fellows to meet experts in Yiddish Studies scattered across contemporary Yiddishland as well as artists and leaders preserving *Yiddishkayt* in Poland while creating a new community around the language.

Highlights of the *Exploring Yiddishland* course included:

- A workshop on *Labzik the Racist Dog* led by Prof. Miriam Udel (Emory University)

- A talk about Jewish motherhood in film with Prof. Zehavit Stern (Hebrew University)
- A discussion on Bundist women by Dr. Magdalena Kozłowska (Warsaw University)
- A conversation with artist Gabi von Seltmann, who recently carried out the Great Synagogue Project, a video projection of the destroyed Great Synagogue of Warsaw on a skyscraper erected on its site
- A lecture on Yiddish folk songs with Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

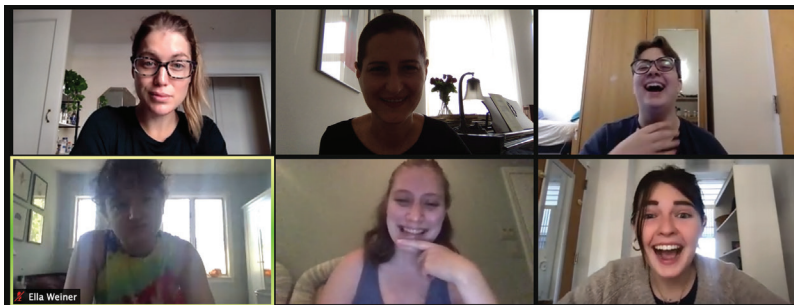
Following the *Exploring Yiddishland* course, Fellows participated in Tel Aviv University's Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program, an intensive language program taught exclusively in Yiddish.

Students who participate in the Naomi Fellowship partake in three semesters of Yiddish Language Studies at Columbia and receive this wonderful opportunity thanks to the support of the Naomi Foundation.

"I attended lessons and lectures, walked through synagogues, and watched multimedia art shows projected onto the side of a skyscraper, all from my home in New York. Researchers in Poland, artists in Germany, and scholars in Israel gathered on my screen and, from their various perspectives (geographical and intellectual) built for me a composite picture of a Yiddishland that never quite existed and yet, has never ceased to exist.

Thinking about—and in—Yiddish in the wake of a global tragedy that has claimed many lives, I can't help but find joy in the connectivity of our modern Yiddishland, even (or perhaps, especially?) in its unique virtual iteration. Maybe Yiddishland never had and never will have stable borders, but I think those tendencies toward inclusivity and adaptability—that inherent intersectionality—is what makes Yiddish an exemplary language of perseverance."

ELAINE WILSON, Ph.D. Candidate in Slavic Languages



“As our wonderful week in Yiddishland comes to an end, I leave with a profound and renewed sense of appreciation for Poland and the beautifully crafted week that Dr. Agi Legutko put together for our cohort. Despite the virtual nature of the week-long program, Dr. Legutko was able to create an engaging, creative, and exciting week of programming that not only kept my attention but intellectually challenged me. From wonderful tours of cities to engaging lectures with Yiddish experts in their respective fields, it has been a week of exploration that reminds me of my love for Yiddish and Yiddish Studies.

I feel so thankful to have been given the opportunity to participate in the Naomi Praver Kadar Fellowship, to connect and learn from so many intellectual and cultural figures contributing to the ongoing flourishing of Yiddishland, and to leave with a renewed sense of cultural enrichment.”

DANI GOODMAN RABNER, Barnard College '22

Starting with the upper left image: Songbook for *A Brivele dem Taten*, from Columbia's Yiddish Theatre Collection; Naomi Fellows taking part in the *Exploring Yiddishland* course on Zoom; Cover page for the Jubilee volume marking 15 years of the Vilna Troupe, from Columbia's Yiddish Theatre Collection; Courtyard in Jewish Quarter of Krakow.

HOLOCAUST STUDIES FELLOWSHIP A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

The Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies launched a Holocaust Study Fellowship, led by Prof. Jeremy Dauber. IIJS Fellows in Holocaust Study had the opportunity to receive funds to study, conduct independent research, or plan student initiated programming related to the history, culture, and literature of the Holocaust. The IIJS Holocaust Fellows participated in a number of invitation-only events related to Holocaust politics, culture, and history. Below is one student's perspective.

By Ingrid Romero

IN JANUARY 2019, I came across a video where multiple individuals on the street were asked if they knew about the Holocaust: What group of people did the Nazis target? What is Auschwitz? How many Jews were killed during the Holocaust? To my surprise, only one person had a vague idea about the Holocaust, the rest answered that Auschwitz was a country, or confused the Holocaust with the word hologram (yes, a three-dimensional image formed by the interference of light beams from a laser or other coherent light source). At the time I knew that if I was asked those questions I would've been just as ignorant and embarrassed as those who participated in that interview.

Since I was curious, I decided to Google the Holocaust and to be honest the result of my search was depressing, too deep to understand, and quite overwhelming. Once I saw the images I had to stop. There was so much that I



could not comprehend. Why did this happen? Why didn't any other country help? And many other questions.

To give a little personal background I was born in Colombia and moved to the States at 19. To say the least, nobody ever talks about the Holocaust or genocide in my country. World Wars I and II were never taught in History class and we lived in a convenient state of willful ignorance. I recently decided to complete my undergraduate education in Architecture at Columbia's School of General Studies. When I heard that the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies was offering a class on Holocaust Literature, I knew immediately this was my opportunity to learn about the Holocaust

we as a society and in my case, as a future architect, must ensure they will not happen ever again.

My research led me to learn that Jewish prisoners, both men and women, had different tasks in the building process. Nonetheless they experienced extreme physical trauma, which resulted in the premature death of the vast majority. According to survivors, the last year of the war (1945) was spent on an endless construction cycle. The construction period between April 1943 and May 1944 is often omitted by scholars.

Architects have the responsibility to envision and create spaces that improve the quality of life of society: spaces for working, education, hous-

This class taught me through the lens of literature, music, and poems more than I could ever grasp from independent research

through a list of curated texts, novels, poems, and songs. We were fortunate to be guided by Prof. Jeremy Dauber, a true scholar in Jewish Literature. The class of 15 students from various backgrounds spent the whole hour and 50 minutes engaged in honest and interesting discussion about the readings.

This class taught me through the lens of literature, music, and poems more than I could ever grasp from independent research. Prof. Dauber offered an opportunity to ask very difficult questions that I would have never been able to explore without his guidance.

As a student studying architecture, I am haunted by the vision of forced labor and human sacrifice to achieve Nazi architectural goals, using oppression and genocide of the European Jewish population. The main goal of my final research paper was to analyze survivors' testimony and data through the means of architectural digital retracing of construction, to better understand the horrors of the Holocaust through the lens of architecture, forced labor, and genocide. These events and ideas are so far-fetched and agonizing that

ing, and leisure. Incongruently, the architecture of the Holocaust had the opposite intention, its goal was to use the forced labor of Jewish prisoners while carrying out their mass murder. My research about architecture during the Holocaust has served to show me the detrimental effects that a vocation or a field of study can have on humanity if used for evil...many years of hard study, schooling, careful planning, and design gone awry.

This class was offered thanks to the generosity of a private donor. From the bottom of my heart I would like to thank this person for the invaluable opportunity to learn about the Holocaust and become more aware. It is imperative that we educate our younger generations. By understanding our history, we can make sure never to repeat the atrocities done to the Jewish people in Europe or anywhere else. Learning about the Holocaust and the resilience of survivors gives me hope that no matter how hard your circumstances are, it is up to you to be a survivor.

Ingrid Romero is a fourth-year architecture student at the School of General Studies.

COURSE HIGHLIGHTS



Fall 2021

- CONVERSION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
- HISTORY OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL, 1948-PRESENT
- HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE IN AMERICAN CULTURE
- JEWISH MUSIC OF NEW YORK
- JEWS IN THE LATER ROMAN EMPIRE, 300-600 CE
- YIDDISH LIFE WRITING: AUTOBIOGRAPHY, MEMOIR OR FICTION [IN ENGLISH]

Spring 2022

- JEWS IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE: SPINOZA TO SABBATAI
- JEWS AND JUDAISM IN ANTIQUITY
- JEWISH CULTURE IN TRANSLATION IN MEDIEVAL IBERIA
- TALMUDIC NARRATIVE
- RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE
- TOPICS IN ISRAELI CINEMA
- WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS: A HISTORY OF THE NIGHT IN EASTERN EUROPE

This page: Student taking photos of stage set designs from the library collection as part of the *Jewish Music in New York* course. Opposite page, from left: Stuart Weinstock, Institute Film Programmer, in conversation with film director Talya Lavie; Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett; Dr. Jeremiah Lockwood.

PUBLIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The Annual Naomi Praver Kadar Memorial Lecture

In October 2021, the Institute welcomed **Prof. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett**, University Professor Emerita and Professor Emerita of Performance Studies at New York University, and Ronald S. Lauder Chief Curator of the Core Exhibition at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. In a lecture titled *Mameloshn! The Story of Yiddish as Told at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews*, Prof. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett gave a tour through hundreds of years of Yiddish in Poland which begins in the Middle Ages and spans to the present. Thank you to the Naomi Foundation for their continued support of Yiddish at Columbia and for the opportunity to memorialize and continue the legacy of Naomi Praver Kadar.

Partnerships on Campus and Beyond

A silver lining of pandemic life has been the increased ability to partner on public events with Columbia affiliates and other organizations.

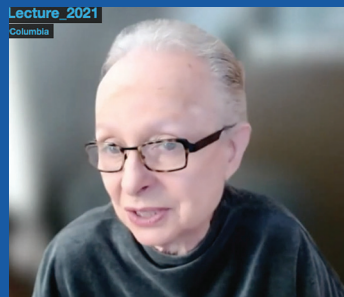
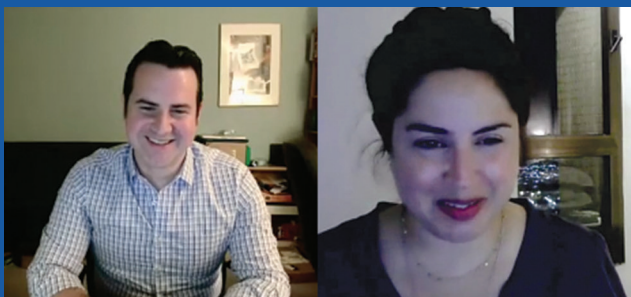
On Tuesday, November 30, the Institute partnered with Columbia University's European Institute and the Department of History for a conversation with the editors of *Jews, Liberalism, Antisemitism: A Global History*, **Prof. Abigail Greene** (University of Oxford), and **Prof. Simon Levis Sullam** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice). The conversation included Columbia University's **Prof. Ira Katznelson**, **Prof. Rebecca Kobrin**, and was moderated by **Prof. Adam Tooze**.

Salo Baron New Voices in Jewish Studies

A partnership between the Institute and Fordham University's Center for Jewish Studies, presents groundbreaking scholarship from young scholars at the beginning of their professional academic journeys. In spring 2021, we welcomed **Roy Holler** on *Multiple Identity Politics: The Passing Narratives of Dahn Ben-Amotz* and **Pratima Gopalakrishnan** on *What is Maintenance, and Why Does it Matter?* In fall 2021, we welcomed **Jeremiah Lockwood** on *Golden Ages: Chassidic Singers and Cantorial Revival in The Digital Era*. This program is generously supported by the Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Foundation.

IN NOVEMBER 2021, the Institute partnered with Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center for a book talk on *The Genius of Yosef Yerushalmi* with **Prof. Sylvie Anne Goldberg** in conversation with Columbia's **Prof. Elisheva Carlebach** and **Prof. Alexander Kaye** (Brandeis University). Initially published in French, the book was translated into English with the support of the Institute.

Another benefit of Zoom events is that many are continuously available to you on our website. We hope you will visit iij.s.columbia.edu and enjoy the lectures at your convenience.



FROM THE STACKS...

EXPLORING THE SEPHARDIC WORLD IN AMSTERDAM

Wherever Sephardic Jews traveled, they brought their culture—and languages—with them to their new homelands. Spanish and Portuguese persisted in Sephardic communities around the world, and these communities built synagogues based on (and often named for) their old communities in Spain. One of the most famous Sephardic communities is that of Amsterdam.



COLUMBIA'S JUDAICA COLLECTION includes many materials relating to the Jews of the Netherlands. The backbone of the Judaica collection, donated to Columbia in 1892, originated in Amsterdam, and contains important documents about that community.

Sephardic Jews had arrived in the Netherlands as early as the 15th century. There were close connections between Spain and the Netherlands, and King Philip II of Spain controlled the Netherlands from the mid-16th century. However, by the time of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, most of the northern Netherlands had achieved independence as the United Provinces. The United Provinces' joint history with Spain, combined with its break from Catholicism, meant that these lands were familiar to Iberian Jews and yet much more tolerant of non-Catholics. Different cities had different policies regarding Jewish practices, and Amsterdam was well known for its relatively tolerant policies (note that it was not all rosy, though—while Jews were allowed to settle there, they were excluded from many trades). Another critical aspect of Dutch policy by the mid-17th century was that its Jews be recognized as citizens even while abroad, and thus restrictions on Dutch Jews in other lands (including Spain, from which many had fled to revert from Christianity to Judaism!) were necessarily limited.

Crypto-Jewish migration to Amsterdam from the Iberian Peninsula would continue over the next two centuries.

Entretimiento primero.

Reformado.

Con todo lo mucho y bueno que avemos deseado, poco estada
nuestro negociado, con todo por lo que ami maestro, digo, que
mucho de lo que creia bueno, lo creia malo, y mucho de lo que cre-
ia malo, lo tenia bueno y bueno.

Catholico

Con todo, Heresij y Infidelidad no se que hablar, son proprias
de las conversaciones, Confesio que me ha durado las lanas que
agui le fizo, los Capos lo hean Colar, para que sus hijos heren-
tes no infirieran ni que Catholico ni Infidelidad.

Turco

Para con los Espiritos, ni de las cosas de la ley, los Populos, ni de
nuestro Evangelio, como algunas conversiones en Reino las fiores,
yo alaboye lo he convertido en miel, en nuestras conversaciones
tambien mucho buena ha agrandado, y esto deseado.

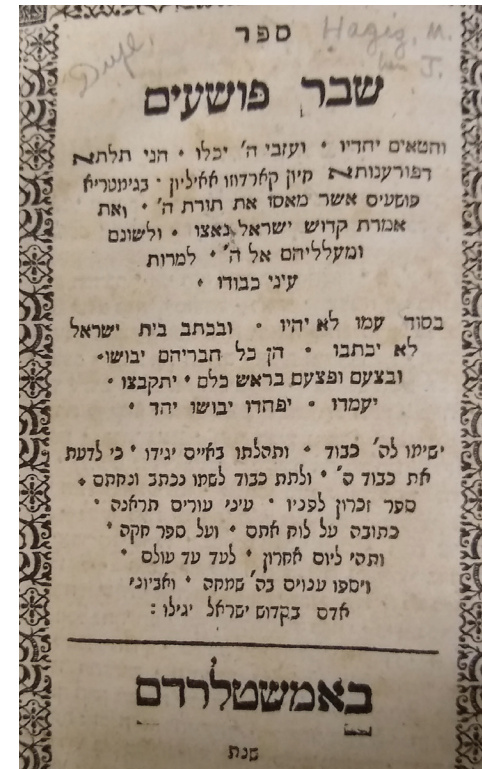
Judio

En Confesio, ninguno puede desearnos, ni predicar, ni ser
Catholico despana habiyo, como que cada de el, preocupacion
adaban entendimiento.

Reformado

Cada uno de nos otros deseamos, y desear que lo deseen
los hombres, y lo guarden, hasta es lo deo, mundo.

agom



Left to right: Abraham Gómez Silveira, *Entretimientos gustozos, o Dialogos burlescos entre un Judio, Turco, Reformado y Catolico*, c.1737; Saul Levi Mortiera, *Providencia de Dios con Israel verdad Y heterinidad de la lei de moseh compuesto*; Moshe Hagiz, *Shever Posh'im*, Amsterdam, 1719. Opposite page: Image of Sabbetai Zevi, from *Ydele verwachtinge der Joden getoont in den persoon van Sabethai Zevi*: door Thomas Coenen.

Those Jews who had converted publicly to Christianity to survive in Spain realized that travel to Amsterdam meant that they could return to their Jewish practices and communities. This caused some confusion, however, as these Jews often mixed up Christian and Jewish practices and beliefs. Saul Levi Mortiera was an important rabbi and teacher of Judaism, and his book *Tratado de la verdad de la ley de Moseh y providencia de Dios con su pueblo* was a critical text in teaching the distinct differences between Judaism and Christianity, as well as correct Jewish practice (above, center). An image of him, teaching in the still-extant Ets Haim yeshiva, is from one of our three manuscript copies of the work, and is the only known contemporary drawing of the rabbi in existence today. The same volume includes a self-portrait of this book's scribe: another Amsterdam rabbi, Abraham Idana.

The arrival of many conversos to Amsterdam led to the creation of a number of polemical works (often in manuscript, because Jews printing anti-Christian texts—even in tolerant Amsterdam—would have been a bit too much for their hosts). These "Burlesque Dialogues" (above, left) between a Reformado (a Protestant), a Catholico, a Turco (that is, a follower of Islam), and a Jew was probably written in Amsterdam by a Sephardic Jew. The four dialoguers discuss the merits of their varied faiths until ultimately the Jew is shown to follow the true faith.

The Amsterdam communities, both Sephardim and Ashkenazim, were significantly impacted by the rise of the false Messiah Sabbetai Tsevi—to the point that non-Jewish works were published to describe the incredible movement that had arisen around this charismatic figure. His conversion to Islam in 1666 did not stop the Sabbatean movement, which persisted long after his death as well. When Nehemia Hiya Hayon came to Amsterdam in 1713 with his Sabbatean works, an enormous controversy erupted that enflamed Ashkenazim (most of whom, led by Tsevi Hirsch Ashkenazi, opposed him) and Sephardim—notably David Nieto, Moshe Hagiz, and Joseph Ergas—who wrote and printed a number of tracts against Nehemia Hiyya Hayun. These four, in both Hebrew and in Spanish, in manuscript and in print, are all bound together, presumably for use by someone very interested in the case, possibly as it was unfolding (above right).

This is only a sampling of the extensive collections at Columbia Libraries relating to the Sephardic Jewish community in Amsterdam. We continue to collect manuscripts about the Jews in Amsterdam, and a recent acquisition included letters from the early days of the Sephardic community there. More details about the collection can be found in CLIO, Columbia's library catalog, or at the Jewish Studies@CUL blog.

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

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

ANRUO BAO

Anruo Bao is a seventh year Ph.D. candidate of Yiddish Studies and comparative literature in the Department of Germanic Languages. She received the Irene C. Fromer Fellowship in Jewish Studies at Columbia University for the 2021-22 academic year. Over the fellowship period, Anruo finished chapter three of her dissertation, which is about the representation of Sabbatai Zevi, the 17th-century Jewish messiah, in modern Yiddish literature. In addition, she finished revising her article, "Enemy or Friend: The Image of China in Yiddish Newspapers during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)." This article was published in the volume *China and Ashkenazic Jewry: Transcultural Encounters* (edited by Kathryn Hellerstein and Song Lihong) by De Gruyter Press in 2021.

EREZ DEGOLAN

Erez DeGolan is a sixth year doctoral candidate in Religion, focusing on classical rabbinic literature and late antique Mediterranean history. In May 2021, Erez was awarded the Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship for his work on his dissertation, "Affect in Power: Public Joy in Roman Palestine and the Lived Experience of the Rabbis (70-~350 CE)." In spring 2021, Erez taught *Introduction to Talmud I* at The Jewish Theological Seminary as an adjunct professor and in December 2021, he participated in a panel entitled *The Talmud's Leaky Pipeline: A Roundtable on Gender Equity in the Field of Rabbis* at the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference. Erez is grateful for the ongoing support of IIJS which was crucial for balancing research, teaching, and family life. Erez is also grateful for the creative ways by which IIJS's staff sustained a sense of community among the Institute's affiliates and for the ongoing mentorship of IIJS faculty, either directly related to his area of study or not.

YAKOV ELLENBOGEN

Yakov Ellenbogen is a fourth year Ph.D. student in Columbia's History Department, whose research focuses on disability in late medieval Jewish communities. Yakov used the summer funding he received from IIJS to research *Klalei HaMilah*, a circumcision manual which includes narratives of botched circumcision as a site of disability. He presented some of his findings at the 2021 Association for Jewish Studies conference in Chicago.

ALEKSANDRA JAKUBCZAK

Aleksandra Jakubczak is a fifth year Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History. In the 2020-21 academic year, Aleksandra published an article "'Protecting the Jewish Daughters': Mass Migration, Trafficking, and the Crisis of Traditional Jewish Society, 1880s-1914" in the *Gal-Ed Journal: On the History and Culture of Polish Jewry*. In 2021, she taught three courses of her design about East European Jewry at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Aleksandra's book published in Polish in 2020 has been nominated for a prestigious award for the best book in Polish Jewish Studies given by the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Currently she is a Visiting Research Scholar at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

NOA TSAUSHU

Noa Tsaushu is a fifth year Ph.D. student in Yiddish Studies in the Department of Germanics. During the 2020-21 academic year Noa began her dissertation project titled *Soviet-Yiddish Avant-Garde: A New Mode of Jewish Production*. She will present her work in an upcoming conference dedicated to the avant-garde in Yiddish culture that will take place in Israel in summer 2022. Noa is the recipient of the IJS Excellence Award and alongside her academic work she served as a Lead Teaching Fellow in the Department of Germanics and as rapporteur for the Jewish Studies University Seminar.

LELIA STADLER

Lelia Stadler is a third year Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History. Since starting her Ph.D. at Columbia University, Lelia completed two research trips to the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem. Based on one of the archive collections, her study was published under the title "In Search of Wandering Husbands: Jewish Migration, Desertion, and Divorce between Poland and Argentina, 1919-39" (Brill, 2020). A second contribution, entitled "What was Jewish-Argentine Bigamy? Between the Argentine State and Ethnic Community, 1930-1939," is forthcoming. Last summer, Lelia presented her current project at the Working Group in Russian and East European Jewish Cultures at the University of Illinois at Chicago and Urbana-Champaign.

CHARLES STEINMAN

Charles Steinman is a second year Ph.D. candidate in the Department of History. IJS funding has allowed Charlie to study with Professor Ephraim Kanarfogel at Yeshiva University in a class entitled *Mysticism, Magic, and Liturgy in Medieval Ashkenaz*, through which Charlie has been able to pursue his research interest in the relationship between practical magic and institutions of justice in medieval Europe.



Dr. Isabelle Levy (L) meeting Graduate students at the Institute's Welcome Back Reception.



GETTING TO KNOW... ISHAI MISHORY

Ishai Mishory is a fifth year doctoral student in the Department of Religion. He is currently researching his dissertation on books printed by 15th-century Italian-Jewish printer Gershom Soncino.

01

How did you get involved with Jewish Studies?

In an earlier phase of my life, I was a book illustrator, and I have always been fascinated with the history of letter design and of early printing. My interest in early modern book culture led to the discovery that European Jewish people were in fact 'early adopters' of the disruptive technology of their time—the printing press. Besides being so beautiful and worldly, I discovered these early books were produced in workshops that were a fraught, and often productive, meeting place of Jews and non-Jews. The lives of Italian Jews during the Renaissance—so alien to my experience and, at the same time in some ways, similar—have exerted a dark pull on me, making me obsessed with early modern Jewish history.

02

What are you currently researching?

I'm writing a chapter of my dissertation dedicated to the 16th century phenomenon of Christian Hebraism—a sudden and short-lived burst of interest by Christian scholars in mastering the Hebrew language and the 'secrets' of Judaism—in its historical relation to the construction of the Venice Ghetto, the world's first, in 1516. A question regarding a book printed in the Adriatic Italian town of Ortona two years later, claiming to expose the 'perfidy' of the Jewish faith, has troubled me: why would a self-described devout Jewish printer choose to edit and print such a book of virulently anti-Jewish invective? I have uncovered some materials that I hope can begin to answer that question, but as usual any answers just bring up more questions.

03

What books are you reading now?

Embarrassingly, mostly work stuff (and I can't really recommend bibliographical lists of early Hebraica at the Biblioteca Palatina to others—even though I personally find them endlessly engrossing). Two excellent books I have read recently were Carlo Ginzburg's book about Italian early Renaissance artist Piero della Francesca, which applies a stunning level of historical scholarship to some of the most beautiful images ever produced in the West, and Paul B. Preciado's *Testo Junkie*. He, too, brings a keen understanding of recent developments in the social sciences to bear on questions of trans identity and desire in what he calls "the pharmacopornographic era" we are living in. Do podcasts count as 'reading'? If so, I've been very diligent indeed.

04

What was your most innovative way of conducting research during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Since part of my research is about the inherent difference between a 'real' artifact (a printed book) and its mediated representation—in the 19th and 20th centuries, bibliographical lists, prints, card catalogues, and in the 21st century pdfs, e-books and jpegs—the pandemic has had an actual effect on my research. Simultaneously a virtual denizen of the world's leading libraries of rare materials, I hadn't set foot in a real one for upwards of a year. Finally holding a copy of Immanuel of Rome's *Sefer ha-maḥbarot* in my very own hands at Columbia's Rare Book and Manuscript Library pretty much made me cry.

05

What are you most looking forward to this Spring?

Travel, definitely. I am looking forward to be able to do research in Italy, and though the prospect of that eventuality seemed clearer a few weeks or months ago—the rise in cases following the Delta variant, I believe, means we will be living under the shadow of Covid for some time to come—I still cherish at least the possibility of mobility. Mobility, and its restriction, have taught me valuable lessons about the life of an itinerant 16th century printer, highlighting questions of when is mobility allowed and when not, by whom and for what reasons.

06

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

The easiest question on this list—immediately and without a doubt Hannah Arendt and *turshi* (Iraqi style pickles, especially the cauliflowers). Arendt because, while she is enjoying a remarkable comeback against the rise of fascist extremism and, in the United States specifically, Christian nationalism and white supremacy (and is so often, and so spectacularly, misquoted), several of my friends still have some pressing questions. I have been dutifully rereading but really—especially with her—nothing beats live conversation. Others have baked through quarantine; I pickled. I'd want to show off my accomplishments. I've nailed a half-decent hummus recipe, and to be honest I would just love to see the expression on her face while eating Middle Eastern food.

ALUMNI NEWS



CÉCILE GUIGUI
M.A. Jewish Studies '20

Studying Jewish Studies at Columbia was a great and enriching experience. What I really liked about the M.A. was the range of classes offered within Jewish Studies, as well as the possibility of participating in other classes at the university. This allowed me to find my own intellectual path that combines my passion for Jewish History and Art History.

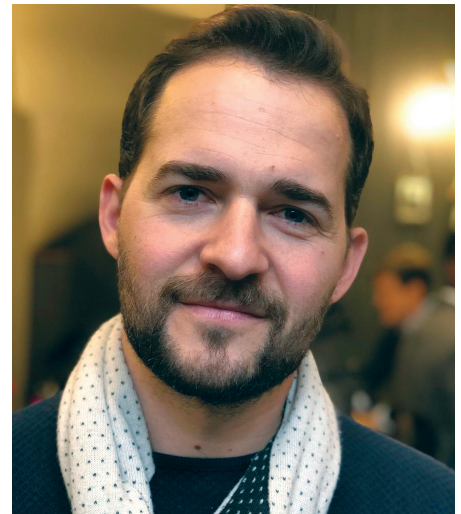
After graduating from Columbia, I first studied Art History at UCL, and I have now started a Ph.D. in History at Queen Mary University of London. My doctoral project explores the different practices of photography among Algerian Jews, focusing on the role and place of Jewish Algerian women during the French Colonial Period.

If you are an alum of the Institute, please update us on your latest accomplishments by emailing iijs@columbia.edu.



DR. RONI HENIG
M.A. '13 and Ph.D. in Hebrew and Comparative Literature '18

After graduating, I was awarded a research fellowship at Columbia University Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris, where I spent 2019-20. The following year I started a position as Assistant Professor of Modern Hebrew literature at NYU, where I currently teach classes on modern Jewish culture, comparative literature, and critical theory. I was recently awarded the Salo and Jeanette Baron Dissertation Prize by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University. These days I am completing a book manuscript titled *Life of The Non-Living: The Narrative of Language Revival in Modern Hebrew Literature*.



DR. DANIEL M. HERSKOWITZ
2018-2019 Rabin-Shvidler Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Since I've left Columbia, I published my first book, *Heidegger and His Jewish Reception*, with Cambridge University Press (2021), which won the inaugural Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Young Scholars Award for Scholarly Excellence. An article I wrote during my time at Columbia, "Between Exclusion and Intersection: Heidegger's Philosophy and Jewish Volkism," won the 2020 Leo Baeck Institute Year Book Essay Prize.

Since being the Rabin-Shvidler Post-doctoral Research Fellow at Columbia, I was the Stipendiary Career Research Fellow in Jewish Studies at Wolfson College, University of Oxford, and I am currently the British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the Faculty of Theology and Religion in the University of Oxford. I have no doubt that none of this would have been possible without my year at Columbia, where I was given valuable time,

academic and personal support, and important feedback about my research that helped me develop as a scholar and as a person.



DR. JORDAN KATZ

B.A. CU '13 and Ph.D. in History and Philosophy of Science and Technology '19

In 2020–2021, I served as the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Postdoctoral Associate in the Program in Judaic Studies at Yale University. In September 2021, I began a position as Assistant Professor in the Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. My article, “Jewish Midwives, Wise Women, and the Construction of Medical-Halakhic Expertise in the Eighteenth Century,” was published in *Jewish Social Studies* in 2021.

DR. TAMAR MENASHE

Ph.D. in History '21

After receiving my Ph.D. under the guidance of Prof. Elisheva Carlebach and Prof. Adam J. Kosto, I joined the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania as a Ruth Meltzer Fellow. I am part of a group working on the topic “Rethinking Premodern Jewish Legal Cultures.” In addition to revising my dissertation for publication as a book, I presented work at the Katz Center seminars and will be a panelist at the end-of-year Katz Center colloquium. In addition, I was invited to give a lecture at Harvard Law School, where I presented the talk “Between Rabbis and Lawyers: Jewish Litigants and Halakha at Germany’s Imperial Supreme Court.” I also presented research on medieval Ashkenazi legal creativity at the Tel Aviv University Faculty of Law, and my work on early modern modes of German Jewish citizenship at the Hebrew University. This spring I will give a public lecture at the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute Seminars at Brandeis University on *Portuguese Women between Two Courts: Germany’s Imperial Supreme Court and the Inquisition*. In addition, my dissertation is the 2022 winner of the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize for the best dissertation completed in 2021 at a North American university on a topic in German history. In the fall, I will join Emory University as an assistant professor of History and Jewish Studies.

FACULTY NEWS

BETH BERKOWITZ

Beth Berkowitz published a number of articles, including:

- “Birds as Dads, Babysitters, and Hats: An ‘Indistinction’ Approach to the Modern Bird Mitzvah in Deuteronomy 22:6-7” in *World-views: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*
- “Mishnah Tractate Sanhedrin” in the *Oxford Annotated Mishnah*
- “Response” in *Animals and the Law in Antiquity*
- “Bio-Power, Sabbath Burdens, and the Badly Behaved Donkey in Babylonian Talmud Tractate Shabbat” in *Studies in Rabbinic Narratives, Volume 1*.

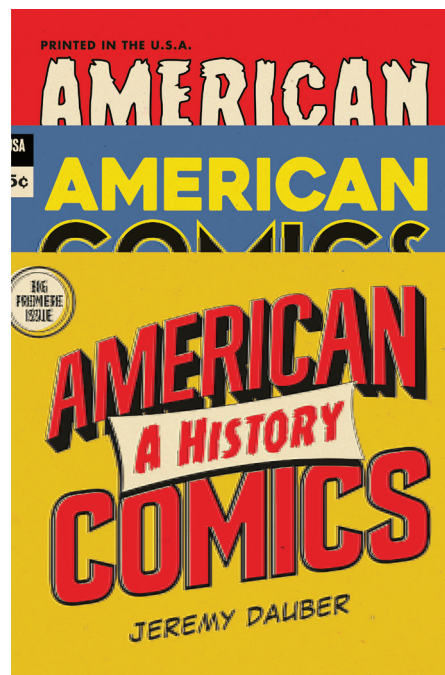
In summer 2021, Berkowitz spoke at the Hebrew University Jewish Law Workshop on her book project in a talk called *The Animal Family Laws of the Torah*. She also spoke at the Society for Biblical Literature conference in November about critical animal studies in a discussion called *Posthumanist Possibilities*. In addition, Berkowitz spoke at the December 2021 Association of Jewish Studies conference and helped organize a panel called *The Talmud’s Leaky Pipeline: A Roundtable on Gender Equity in the Field of Rabbinics*. Berkowitz is currently working on a book manuscript called *What Animals Teach Us About Families: A Study of Four Biblical Laws and Their Afterlives*.

CLEMENCE BOULOUQUE

Clemence Boulouque’s book *Another Modernity: Elia Benamozegh’s Jewish Universalism* was translated and published in French as *Une autre modernité. L’universalisme juif d’Elia Benamozegh*.

ELISHEVA CARLEBACH

Elisheva Carlebach (with Debra Kaplan of Bar Ilan University) wrote “Jewish Women in Early Modern Central Europe,” in *Jewish Women’s History from Antiquity to the Present* edited by Federica Francesconi and Rebecca Winer. She published reviews in *Speculum* and *Journal of Modern History*. Among her podcasts and webinars were a talk on “Glikl” for the Yiddish Book Center; “On Kabbalah (the journal) and its Antecedents” for National Library of Israel; and “Jewish Communal Identity” for the University of Vienna. She served as a panelist for a roundtable on “Women’s History around the Globe,” for the History Department’s *In Conversation with Historians* series. She is working on a book about Jewish scribal culture in early modern Europe.



JEREMY DAUBER

Jeremy Dauber’s latest book *American Comics: A History*, was published by W.W. Norton & Company. The book received praise in *The New York Times*, *Publisher’s Weekly*, *The New Republic*, and more.

REBECCA KOBRIN

Rebecca Kobrin, along with principal investigators Mae Ngai, Laura Kurgan, Gergely Baics, Leah Misterlein, and staff members Wright Kennedy and Dan Miller have been awarded a major grant from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation to create an online, interactive atlas of historic New York City spanning the years 1820 to 1940. The project is a collaboration of Columbia’s History Department and the Center for Spatial Research in

the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP). In addition, *Salo Baron: The Past and Future of Jewish Studies in America*, edited by Kobrin, was published by Columbia University Press.

AGNIESZKA LEGUTKO

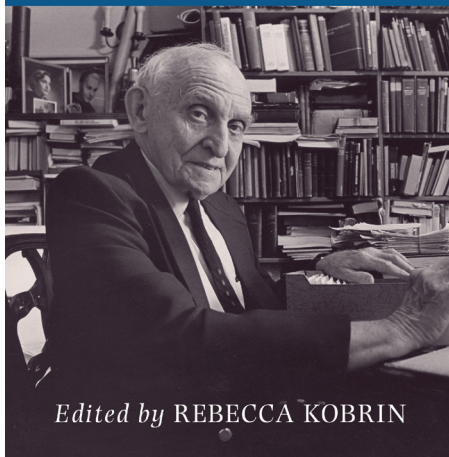
Agnieszka Legutko secured five years of support for the Kronhill Pletka YIVO Research Fellowship for Columbia. Please see page three to learn more.

SETH SCHWARTZ

Seth Schwartz was the Leon Levy Foundation Professor of Jewish Material Culture at the Bard Graduate Center in New York in spring 2021. He presented six talks on the Jews in Roman Asia Minor (roughly equivalent to Turkey), whom we know about mainly through archaeology. This will result in a book focusing, first, on the problematics of constructing historical narratives from material remains, and second, on providing a revisionist—meaning, relatively pessimistic—account of Jewish life in the Roman imperial diaspora. He published several preliminary studies for this book, including “Jews in Asia Minor before the Roman Empire,” *Jerusalem and Eretz-Israel* 12/13 (2020) 29–54. Two additional papers are forthcoming, including: “Did First-Century Asian Jews Live in ‘Communities’?” (Festschrift for Martin Goodman); and “The Impact of the Jewish Revolts on the Jews of Asia Minor” (Festschrift

SALO BARON

The Past and Future of Jewish Studies in America



for Richard Kalmin); “The Jews and the Christian Persecutions, 250–311” (Festschrift for David Stern). Finally, in mid-March, he will be giving a paper called “The Two Late Antiquities of the Asian Jews” to complete the chronological sequence.

GETTING TO KNOW... OFER DYNES



Ofer Dynes is Leonard Kaye Assistant Professor of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. He received his Ph.D. in Jewish Studies at Harvard University (September 2016) and held a postdoctoral fellowship at McGill University (2016-2018). Before coming to Columbia, he was an Assistant Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he taught classes in eastern European Jewish literature and history and served as the head of the Program in Yiddish Studies.

Prof. Dynes specializes in the literature and cultural history of Eastern European Jewry from the 18th to 21st centuries.

He has a particular interest in the nexus of literature and political thought. He is currently completing a book manuscript entitled *The Fiction of the State: The Polish Partitions and the Beginning of Modern Jewish Literature (1772-1848)*. He has also recently co-edited a special volume of *Prooftexts*, entitled *The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Literature in Europe*, with Naomi Seidman (University of Toronto). Dynes is a co-founder and organizer of the Hebrew Lab Faculty Seminar, a New York based workgroup for scholars in Hebrew Literature.

01

This is your first year at Columbia. Is there anything that is particularly interesting about Columbia and the campus?

This is my first year at Columbia as a Professor. I did spend three years at Columbia as a visiting scholar during graduate school. In fact, I wrote the majority of my dissertation here, in Butler. For this reason, I know the location of most vending machines across campus and the opening hours of all libraries. The most interesting thing, to me, is what happens on campus after 8PM.

This is a magical time. The library is crammed with students reading, writing, and debating their ideas. I have always found this incredibly inspiring for my own creativity. This year I have an office. Nevertheless, when it's getting late, and I need to get something done, I prefer working at the library.

02

How did you get involved with Jewish Studies?

In a sense, these are two separate questions: What inspired me to take classes in Jewish Studies, and how did I get involved with Jewish Studies professionally.

My initial interest in pursuing Jewish Studies is a result of what I conceived as a paradoxical gap in my upbringing. In my household, Jewishness was considered highly important, while Judaism, Jewish religion, was held in low regard. Both my parents were born and raised in post-war Eastern Europe. My father was a Marxist and a Kibbutznik. My grandparents, to whom I was very close, were Communists. Now I can articulate this historically specific Jewish identity to which I

was exposed growing up, with all its tensions and contradictions. At the time I just felt that something was sorely missing. A gap I chose to fill in by taking classes in Biblical Studies and Talmudic Studies, and later also in Jewish History and Hebrew and Yiddish Literatures.

Jewish Studies was revealed to me as an incredibly sophisticated and dynamic field. I had no idea you could write on the Talmud, on *tkhines*, on Jewish politics using this language, asking these questions. This is the reason why I chose Jewish Studies as my specialization. I wanted to be part of this world. And now I am.

03

What are you currently researching?

I am currently researching the transmission of the legend of Saul Wahl, a historical figure who was imagined to be the king of Poland for one night. My idea is to take the story and the political insights it offers very seriously. My sense is that groups which are excluded from political systems often have the most profound insights about these systems, since, for them, this is a matter of survival. The legend of Saul Wahl, to my mind, is one of many cases in which supposedly naïve traditional Jewish texts reveal an exceptionally sophisticated understanding of state politics.

04

What books are you reading now?

I am currently reading Florence Dupont, *The Invention of Literature, From Greek Intoxication to the Latin Book*. Dupont is interested in the idea of the “invention of literature” not in terms of the advent of literature as an institution. Rather, she uncovers how classical Greek and Latin texts were imagined retrospectively as literature, as texts that correspond to literary norms. I am reading this and asking myself the same question about Hebrew literature. When, I wonder, did scholars start imagining Hebrew texts as literature. What do we gain and what do we lose when we take a traditional Hebrew text and present it as fiction?

05

What are you most looking forward to this Spring?

This Spring I am teaching my first seminar at Columbia, *What We Do in the Shadows: A History of the Night in Eastern Europe*, which investigates how Jews and other Eastern European populations experienced the night in the Early Modern and Modern Period. My hope is to write a cultural history of the night in Eastern Europe at some point in the future. Teaching this topic to Columbia students as a manner of preparation is a huge privilege.

As an avid biker, I am excited about the opportunity to do some cycling. I already did some biking trips in Louisiana, Vermont, Oregon, and Quebec. This spring, I would like to do some cycling in Massachusetts.

06

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

I am going to be very honest. I would really like to have dinner with my father, who passed away when I was 15. I would like to know him from my perspective as an adult. I am now also curious about his life in postwar Romania. For example, he attended a Yiddish *heder* after the war. What was the curriculum? Who was the teacher? What was it like to go to a traditional Jewish institution in Communist Romania? Also, he used to sing me this lullaby in Yiddish about a man who was constantly fighting with his wife. I only remember the tune. I would really like to know the lyrics so I can pass it on.

IN APPRECIATION OF OUR DONORS

The Institute is very fortunate to have alumni and donors who continue to build on existing programs and whose generosity creates strong foundations for the future. Below we highlight three supporters whose gifts to the Institute are providing funds for a bright future and the ability to expand our current offerings to students, faculty, and members of the public. Their gifts, and those of all our friends, mean the world to us.

Ellen Berland Gibbs, a graduate of Barnard College, received an M.A. and Ph.D. degree in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University. Initially interested in pursuing an academic career, she chose instead to pursue a career in finance. She worked as a sell-side analyst for a number of years, last at Goldman Sachs, and then formed a fund of her own, CRI Media Partners, dedicated to investing in media and communications stocks, her longtime specialty as an analyst. Ellen is a lifelong learner who pursues her passion for art, literature, history, and Jewish Studies by attending classes on campus. Ellen's gift to the Institute and her wise counsel will help ensure the Institute's continuity and fuel the work of future students and faculty.

"I support the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies because it is a way for me of giving back to Columbia but more importantly of supporting Jewish Studies at Columbia. I believe a first-rate academic institution like Columbia should have a first-rate Jewish Studies program. I am proud to be a part of that effort."



2022 Undergraduate Israel Fellows at their orientation.

Warren and Susan Stern are Columbia alumnae. Susan received her B.A. from Barnard in 1974, and Warren received his B.A. from Columbia College in the same year. They went on to earn law degrees and practice law in New York City. Both participate in and support various Jewish communal affairs and Jewish studies. Their generosity is matched only by their commitment to lifelong learning and growth. Thanks to Warren and Susan, the Institute will inaugurate the Warren and Susan Stern Postdoctoral Fellowship in Jewish Thought in fall 2022. Through this Fellowship, the Institute will offer young scholars the opportunity to expand their research and teaching repertoire and give our current students additional advanced course options in Jewish Studies.

“We want to help continue Jewish and Israel studies in a multi-disciplinary, academic setting that will assure that Jewish history and ideas will flourish for years to come. We feel that there is no better way to do this than by supporting the work of young scholars who will carry on the great tradition of Salo Baron, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, and their colleagues and successors in a field that has been so important to human intellectual and cultural development. We also believe that Columbia provides an ideal arena for scholars, students, and the public to share perspectives on the issues that confront Israel and the Jewish community, both here and abroad.”

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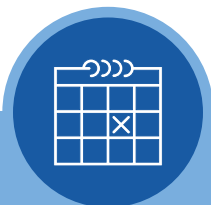
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JANUARY

24 MONDAY @ 6:00 PM
Yerushalmi Lecture on History and Narrative
**THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH COMMUNITY
OF COLOGNE: HISTORY MEMORY
ARCHEOLOGY**
EPHRAIM SHOHAM-STEINER

FEBRUARY

10 THURSDAY @ 12:00 PM
**IT COULD LEAD TO DANCING: MIXED-SEX
DANCING AND JEWISH MODERNITY**
SONIA GOLLANCE

19 WEDNESDAY @ 12:00 PM
THE ART OF LEAVING
AYELET TSABARI

23 WEDNESDAY @ 12:00 PM
**COMMUNISM, ZIONISM, AND ARABISM,
A COLD WAR TRIANGLE IN A COUNTER
CULTURAL REGISTER: MEIR KAHANE ON
SOVIET JEWRY**
SHAUL MAGID

MARCH

01 TUESDAY @ 12:00 PM
FILM@IIJS: AVI NESHER RETROSPECTIVE

09 WEDNESDAY @ 12:00 PM
Baron New Voices in Jewish Studies
**CREATING JEWISH IDENTITY IN TWENTIETH-
CENTURY IRAN: NATIONAL BELONGING,
EDUCATION, AND INTEGRATION**
DANIELLA FARAH

In partnership with Fordham University's Center for Jewish Studies

22 TUESDAY @ 1:00 PM
FILM@IIJS: CINEMA SABAYA
Q&A with writer/director **Orit Fouks Rotem**

24 THURSDAY @ 6:00 PM
**THE MEDIA, THE ENIGMATIC MINORITY
AND THE MIDTERM ELECTION: IS THERE
A "JEWISH VOTE"? HOW WE DO COVER
IDENTITY POLITICS IN 2022?**
Conversation with **Jim Gerstein, Ron Kampeas,
Sabrina Siddiqui, Joel Siegel** and moderated by
Jane Eisner
In partnership with Columbia University's School of Journalism

30 WEDNESDAY @ 12:00 PM
Miron Lecture on Jewish Literature
**THE AUTHENTIC PAGANISM OF
SHAUL TCHERNIKHOVSKY**
ROBERT ALTER

APRIL

05 TUESDAY @ 6:15 PM
AMERICAN COMICS: A HISTORY
Jeremy Dauber in conversation with **Marianne
Hirsch, Victor D. Lavalle, Tahneer Oksman**
moderated by **Rachel Adams**
*In partnership with Columbia University's Heyman Center for
the Humanities*

MAY

03 TUESDAY @ 12:00 PM
FILM@IIJS: THE RAFT
Q&A with director **Oded Raz**

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