Breaking New Ground

Scholars and Scholarship at the
Center for Advanced Judaic Studies
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Both in the lives of individuals and in those of institutions, it is vitally important to take stock, to see from where we have come and to where we are going, and especially to express our joy and gratitude to the many people who have made it possible to ultimately reach our goals. This wonderful publication records the first eleven years of the life of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies of the University of Pennsylvania. It marks a decisive milestone in the history of Judaic Studies at Penn, in the history of humanistic learning at the University, and, I might add, in the history of the academic study of Jewish civilization in this country and worldwide.

Some ten years ago a festive dinner took place in Philadelphia, in the presence of the late Ambassador Walter Annenberg, to celebrate the merger of the Annenberg Research Institute with the University of Pennsylvania. Those in attendance might recall both the euphoria of the moment and the sense of uncertainty regarding the actual joining of two institutions that had never worked closely together. The Annenberg Research Institute, the direct successor to the historic Dropsie College, had been created only five years earlier as an independent institution for post-doctoral research in Judaic studies. What would it mean to the fellows and staff of the Institute to be under the supervision of the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences? How would the precious library and staff function under the new arrangements? How would the Jewish Studies program at Penn interface with this new weighty acquisition situated some thirty blocks from campus? As an outsider visiting Penn for the first time, I could sense uncertainty on all sides—from deans, faculty, staff, and the fellows themselves. Most daunting of all was the financial challenge the University had assumed. Despite the generous initial support of Ambassador Annenberg and the equally generous commitment the University had pledged to this enterprise, no one had the faintest idea what this project would eventually cost, who would raise the money, and whether there were donors who might be interested in supporting the project at all. It was clear from the start that this exciting merger would be a learning experience for staff, fellows, faculty, and Penn’s leadership.

When I arrived permanently in the fall of 1994, the experience of working as director of CAJS was challenging. The Center needed to demonstrate its excellence as an institute for advanced studies while projecting the image of an open and collegial setting where students and faculty of Penn could feel at home. We needed to fine-tune the balance between integration within the larger environment of the University and the intellectual isolation necessary to the productivity and collegiality of the fellows. Students and faculty needed to feel a stake in this institution despite its distance from campus. The administration had to appreciate the value of this Center to the University as a whole. And most importantly, the University had to find a way to raise sufficient funds to insure a future for this institution way beyond the initial years of its existence.

Luckily, I did not have to face these daunting challenges alone. Sheila Allen, my executive assistant, Samuel Cardillo, the Center’s administrator, and Bonnie Blankenship, the administrator of our journal, the Jewish Quarterly Review, had faithfully served the Center from its earliest transformations in name and identity. Their wisdom, their hard work, and their love for and devotion to this institution were crucial to the institutional development that we recognize in this volume. David Goldenberg, editor of the Jewish Quarterly Review, did a masterful job in putting together this celebratory volume. I have always been grateful for his fine work and his commitment to the Center. I hope you will find this volume as interesting and rewarding as I have.
Review and former president of Dropsie College, was Associate Director. I was also inspired by a visionary named Al Wood who had worked tirelessly for years to provide the foundation from which the Center would eventually emerge, and I was partnered from the start by a dedicated group of individuals who gave generously of their time and resources to make the Center a reality. Among the first to offer their unstinting support were Martin Gruss, Herbert and Ellie Meyerhoff Katz, and Ione Strauss.

More than ten years have passed since those uncertain moments and although the Center still presents a work in progress, it is with a deep sense of humility, satisfaction, and gratitude, that I recount the Center’s wonderful accomplishments. Over the years, scholars from countless fields: biblical philology and archeology, ancient, medieval, and modern Jewish history, history of art and music, Jewish-Moslem and Jewish-Christian relations, Midrash, Talmud, and comparative exegesis, kabbalah and philosophy, anthropology and sociology, modern Jewish literature, and political thought, have been part of the Center family. More than 200 scholars have been full-time fellows while many others have served as short-term fellows and as adjuncts. The Center has attracted faculty and students from Penn on a regular basis. Its academic advisory committees in Israel and at Penn have served the Center with remarkable dedication and vision.

The sheer numbers of scholars in North America, Israel, and Europe who have been affected by our program is impressive enough. But if one looks closely at the individual accomplishments of these scholars during their tenure at Penn, if one assesses the impact of the Center on individual careers—especially on those of young scholars—and if one takes into account the impact that the vigorous and sustained discussions at the Center have had on the development of specific fields of Judaic learning, the results are staggering. When one adds to the mix the impact these scholars have made through undergraduate instruction, mentoring of graduate students, and teaching in the community, one begins to appreciate how meaningful the annual shaping of a scholarly community at CAJS has become.

The Center’s accomplishments extend beyond the impressive work and influence of its fellows. Through a new and creative partnership with the University of Pennsylvania Press, the Center has inaugurated a new series of books and a revamped and revitalized Jewish Quarterly Review. We sponsor an expanded program of community lectures and symposia in Philadelphia and in other cities nation-wide, and enjoy a meaningful and synergistic relationship with the faculty and students of Penn’s Jewish Studies program as well as with Penn’s other programs in the Humanities. We house a magnificent library, staffed by gifted librarians and well-equipped with books and electronic aids; and most importantly, we are blessed with a devoted and energetic staff who create the special ambiance that inspires the renewed creativity of the fellows from year to year. All of this has also come about through the work and generosity of a powerful and deeply committed board of overseers and other friends of the Center who have raised a significant endowment for the Center, thereby insuring its longevity for years to come.

In recording the names and academic achievements of the fellows who have worked independently and collaboratively to enhance Jewish knowledge in so many fields and disciplines in the course of the last decade, we thank from the bottom of our hearts all those donors, administrators, faculty members, students, and friends of the Center who have made this institution the foremost incubator of advanced Judaic learning in this continent. I offer a special thanks to the editors of this volume, Drs. Elsie Stern and Natalie Dohrmann. The dazzling accomplishments recorded here, which represent only a small sampling of the ground-breaking scholarship of our fellows, inspire us to look forward to the next decade and to the new challenges and goals we confidently have set for ourselves. May CAJS go from strength to strength!

David B. Ruderman
Joseph Meyerhoff Professor of Modern Jewish History
Director, Center for Advanced Judaic Studies
Writing about the history of academic changes is usually done in long-term perspective, especially when the writing deals with the history of Judaism, one of the oldest of the living cultures, and its trajectories of research. To write an assessment of a research center which is only ten years old is an act of daring, bordering on chutzpah, that one would never undertake unless explicitly asked to do so.

Nevertheless, the leadership of this Center was not content with the common practice of other research centers which are satisfied with short range summaries expressed in lists of research topics, participating fellows, and resulting publications. These lists are supposed not only to speak for themselves, but also to testify to the productivity, dynamism, intellectual vitality and innovation of the institution. In addition to compiling these lists, the leadership of this center explicitly invited analysis and comparison between this center and others. As is fitting for those whose rich collection includes the oldest haggadah from the genizot, they create a new seder and based upon it, they ask mah nishtanah?

The Center for Advanced Judaic Studies is distinguished in its mission and, consequently, in its achievements, by its appreciation of the value of change, its commitment to communal education, and its daring, or rather, its chutzpah, to take steps that apparently have little hope of success.

In their broader historical context, these distinguishing characteristics may appear paradoxical. After all, the center stands on the foundations of the “founding fathers” of modern Jewish studies research: Dropsie College and its rich and unique library, and the journal, JQR. However, as the heir to Dropsie’s legacy, CAJS continues a tradition of change, vitality, and innovation; it forms the newest link in the “tradition” of change that has existed for more than a century in Philadelphia (of all places!). Dropsie College, which was founded in the year 1907, was the first institute in the world to teach advanced Jewish studies and the first to grant doctoral degrees in this field. The Jewish Quarterly Review, which was established some twenty years before the college (1888), is the first and most long-standing Jewish studies journal in the English language. The Jew-
Jewish studies; its location in the heart of the historic quarter of Philadelphia was unprecedented; and its stunning architecture attracted great interest. These were the early days of the growth of Jewish studies in American universities and the Annenberg Institute was one of the first striking signs of this flourishing movement. The Institute gathered researchers from different fields and different countries under one roof to engage a multifaceted theme from several perspectives. While the isolation of the Annenberg Institute, which was expressed both in its location far from the academic center of Philadelphia, and also in its institutional independence, led to collaboration within its walls, it did not lead to synergy with the nearby academic communities. When Walter Annenberg turned 90 he decided to transfer the Institute to the University because, as he said, “they have permanence and I haven’t.” This decision resulted in the development that we commemorate in this report.

Eleven years ago the center was established anew in the form known to us today: The Center for (Advanced) Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. How has it perpetuated the paradox of establishing a tradition of change? An institute which is established on the foundations of both the oldest English language Jewish studies journal and the first college to grant advanced degrees in Jewish studies might rest on the laurels of the past and be satisfied with guarding its tradition and emphasizing the continuity and authenticity of its activities. It could claim a position of privilege by merit of inertia. However, just as the journal and the college were signposts of change in the topography of scholarly research in general, and in Jewish studies in particular, so too are the steps that the Center has taken from the day of its rebirth under the leadership of Prof. David Ruderman, who had previously been Professor of Jewish History at Yale University.

The new relationship between the Center and the University of Pennsylvania, inaugurated in 1994, was seemingly “imposed” upon the two institutions. Such a relationship could have existed solely at the official level, as is the way with advanced research institutes throughout the world. However, it was not to be so here; with the institutional change came a real change in the place of the Center for Judaic Studies in the life of the local academic community. Almost immediately, the gates of the Center opened to the university community at all its levels. The director of the Center was a member of the standing faculty of the university and his academic reputation in the department enhanced both his position as director of the Center and the status of the Center in the eyes of the faculty. The Jewish studies program became linked to the activities of the Center, and the students, scholars, and teachers of Jewish studies were eager to participate in its activities: to use its amazing library and benefit from the services of the excellent, specialized librarians, to take part in the good will showered on visitors, and to relish the feeling, regnant at the Center, that those who participate in Jewish studies deserve VIP treatment. These members of the Jewish studies community were joined by scholars from the general faculty, in particular from the departments of History, Islamic studies and Near Eastern studies, who were drawn by personal invitations into the happenings at the Center. The Center community continued to grow as former fellows and members of the wider Philadelphia academic community returned to participate in the Center’s ongoing activity, as well as in special events such as conferences, workshops and lectures.

As was said above, this new era in the history of the academic center for Jewish studies in Philadelphia was characterized by three things: an appreciation for the value of change; commitment to communal education, and the daring needed to take steps that appeared to have little hope of success. Let us examine each of these principles one by one.

A. Appreciation for the value of change:

The willingness to effect change was apparent from the start. In the first years of CAJS’s existence, academic advisory boards were created. Within a few years, the Center began experimenting with the format of the research groups by inviting two different research groups working on two different subjects in a single year. Graduate students
at the University of Pennsylvania were invited to take advantage of the seminars and to meet in tutorial settings with the fellows, and the model for proposing themes was changed. While the leadership of the Center still played a significant role in determining the yearly topics, scholars were also called upon to initiate and suggest research themes. Also, the Center began to reach out to the non-academic community. Needless to say, not all of the changes effected over the past eleven years have lasted, showing that the process of trial and error, ongoing self-scrutiny, and the willingness to find new frameworks, are guiding principles of CAJS.

The work of the more than twenty-four groups that have convened at the center over the course of the past eleven years also reflects the Center’s willingness to embrace change. Rather than gathering scholars around categories and rubrics conventional to Jewish studies, the majority of themes reflect the interdisciplinary trend current in much contemporary scholarship outside of Jewish studies. In addition, four of the groups introduced subjects that were trans-historical and were not limited by time, place, or text (‘93, ‘94, ‘95, and ‘03). Other groups engaged more than one discipline, with pride of place going to the modern period in the history of Jewish culture (‘96, ‘98, ‘99, ‘00, and ‘02). However, the common denominators to all the research groups, beyond chronology, geography and text, are the multicultural attitude of their participants, the integration of topics neighboring Jewish studies, such as history, Islamic studies, cultural studies and anthropology, and the use of research tools of social science and literature in Jewish studies research. The interdisciplinarity of the groups generated the vast intellectual range that was inherent to these gatherings of scholars from different disciplines, different generations and different academic cultures. The lists of the fellows in their working groups, their subsequent scholarly output and the lasting effects of time spent at the Center (an experience skillfully described in Deborah Dash Moore’s essay in this publication) bear witness to the ways in which the Center functions as a place to stimulate the best minds in Jewish studies and its related fields.

The true evaluation of CAJS’s contribution to the world of knowledge lies not only in its ability to bring together the best of international scholarship in one place, but also in the impact that the fellowship experience has both on the fellows’ subsequent scholarship and on future avenues of research. The rich fruits of the research are cited inside this publication and they testify to the abundance that has been created over the past eleven years at the Center. One interesting feature common to the overwhelming majority of the work (the notable exception here is that of Deborah Dash Moore and S. Ilan Troen) is the persistence of the habit of individual publication. Apparently, collaboration at the Center does not spawn a framework for long term collaboration among scholars. This collaborative form of scholarship, which flourishes in the experimental sciences and in the social sciences, is still rare in the humanities in general and Jewish studies in particular. This fact deserves attention in the future planning of research centers world wide. Another aspect—albeit a long term one which needs more than a ten-year perspective—is the question of the establishment of new fields of research. To what extent does the gathering in the Center in Philadelphia of the finest scholars, many of whom have great influence in their own institutions and worldwide, lead to the establishment of new areas of research, new courses and methods of study, or new trajectories of research? In saying this, I do not intend to detract from the groundbreaking work and individual innovations, but rather to suggest an additional measure by which to examine the achievements of a research center as well as the activities that continue after any given research year.

B. The commitment to communal education. Many research centers throughout the world seek to construct an additional fence around the ivory tower of their visiting scholars in order to insure them respite from communal and social demands, and to protect them from knowledge-seekers from outside the borders of the academic community. The innovation initiated at this Center was the declaration of maximal openness to the community. The
head of the Center and its guests went out to lecture in community centers and synagogues in Philadelphia and beyond. They brought to the wider public the engaging fruits of their research and shared with them the results of their labors. The additional burden that this the communal mission imposed on the fellows was accepted with pleasure and expanded the raison d’etre of the center to wider circles. From these lectures, many people, especially seniors, became involved in courses at the University and other activities at the Center. The conviction that knowledge and its pursuit stand at the center of the work of the Center extends even to the experience of the Center’s board of Overseers. Once a year, the members of the board of overseers come to the Center, not to engage in fiscal and organizational discussions, but rather to engage in intense study. At this yearly retreat, the fellows, the staff, and the donors, participate in sophisticated study based on the innovative work of the year’s fellows.

C. Daring and chutzpah to take steps that seem to have no hope for success. The innovative work of the Center has raised questions for many of those involved in Jewish studies throughout the world. Many of the innovations put in place eleven years ago, along with the simultaneous reduction in fellows’ stipends and the embarkation on an ambitious endowment campaign, were quite risky, and their combination in this transitional period could have been enough to cause a crisis in the young institution. However, the opposite occurred. The message of dynamic change and the willingness to challenge the habits of the past succeeded immediately in penetrating the academic community, the wider educational community, and the community of contributors. These three groups responded to the Center’s challenge, and the Center, in its new-old garments, established a presence in each of the new arenas in which it hoped to participate. The Center’s bravado made it into a leading site in Jewish studies research and a wondrous example within the academic community.

In histories of knowledge in general, and in the history of Judaism and its study in particular, ten years are but a moment (14.4 minutes, or 1/100th of a day, in the divine measure of time according to the calculations of Ps. 90:4). Although the writing of a summary of any institution from such a limited perspective can rightly be considered an act of daring bordering on chutzpah, it can still serve to illuminate the distinctiveness and direction of the enterprise so far, and look forward to its ongoing, innovative success.
I first entered the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies (then called the Center for Judaic Studies) in the fall of 1996. I had just come from five months at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies in England. What a contrast to 420 Walnut Street! There my fellowship had covered room and board in an old Manor House located in the small village of Yarnton on the outskirts of the city of Oxford, home to the famous British university. Graceful English gardens surrounded the Manor House, which stood next door to a venerable parish church. My large and airy room (which meant drafty in the winter) served as both bedroom and study. I shared a kitchen down a long flight of stairs with another Manor House resident, a librarian; but our paths rarely crossed. The setting was solitary, punctured periodically by evening seminar sessions of the dozen scholars cloistered in various apartments on the manor grounds.

Almost everything about the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies was different. Its sleek modern building with up-to-date computer facilities stood facing an urban park a few blocks from Independence Hall—the shrine to the country’s freedom from British rule—in the heart of old Philadelphia. The hallways buzzed with conversation and discussion of topics of common interest. Weekly seminar sessions bubbled over with controversy and debate. Although it was easy to close the door to my comfortable study, with its large window and urban landscape, in order to read, write, and think, the setting was far from solitary. Each day as I walked the dozen blocks from my sublet apartment, I took in the city scene and focused my thoughts on my project. As in England, my fellowship covered my rent and food, but with-
Ambitious and pioneering, CAJS reimagined Dropsie’s aspirations with singular success. My presence at the Center reflected one of its more daring decisions—namely, to choose a theme that focused on American Jewish history. When I proposed the idea to David Ruderman, he worried that there would not be enough scholars to fill the rooms at the Center. Was CAJS risking too much by devoting attention to American Jewish history when the field seemed still so new? Despite my assurances, he hedged his bets, combining the focus on America with one on Israel during the same time period. The results, some of which can be seen in the volume I co-edited with S. Ilan Troen, *Divergent Jewish Cultures: Israel and America*, were provocative. (The volume initially was titled “Divergent Jewish Centers,” which reflected better the tenor of our weekly arguments around the seminar table.) But the decision indicated that the Center was ready to propose topics that other Jewish institutions, in Israel or in Europe, would avoid.

As an American institution, CAJS has clarified its relationship with other institutions of advanced Jewish studies—most of them in Israel—through its choice of themes. The topics chosen often have been either interdisciplinary or comparative, designed deliberately to stimulate conversations across conventional boundaries. This blurring of borders, along with efforts to craft new frameworks, characterizes much recent work in the American academy. Although historical and literary approaches still dominate, Jewish studies as a field has been able to borrow creatively from varied methodologies. Decisions to look at the arts (in 2000-1) or at new approaches to religion (in 2003-4) position CAJS at the forefront of Jewish studies. Obviously, no center can afford to get too far ahead of new research (or David Ruderman’s fear of not having enough people to fill the rooms would come true), but it is exciting when an institution is only half a step behind. Then the discussions reverberate well beyond the year or semester spent at CAJS. Other topics reflect maturation of areas of scholarship and the director’s own broad and eclectic interests.

Time spent at the Center inevitably produces not just excellent scholarship but also nostalgia and longing to return. The long list of scholars involved with CAJS includes several who have made return trips, something I hope to do myself some day. Although American and Israeli scholars predominate, CAJS includes a significant minority of European scholars. And on occasion, CAJS helps identities to change—Americans becoming Israeli, Israelis becoming American. Informal contacts throughout the year produce formal affiliations; recent Ph.D.’s become junior scholars. In the space of a decade CAJS has helped to launch careers as well as consolidate them.

Still, I think the dialogue and time away remain most important. As my experience indicates, one does not need to be cloistered to be productive. An institute of advanced Jewish studies located downtown in a big city can produce the ambience scholars need to think, to write, to reflect. As Jewish studies continue to grow and flourish in the United States, I only hope that CAJS will become a model that other institutions will emulate. I would love to see variations on the CAJS theme emerge as fitting tribute to its pioneering role.
CAJS Fellows (1993-2004)
This year’s seminar marked the transition between the Annenberg Research Institute and the Center for Judaic Studies. The weekly seminars, which had been a feature of the Annenberg Research Institute since its inception, were intimate sessions attended only by the fellows. This year’s seminar brought together historians, linguists, legal scholars, and scholars of text to explore the multivalent relationship between law and spirituality in Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Jewish contexts. This diverse group of fellows brought a wide range of expertise to bear on the questions of how law and spirituality are related to one another in a variety of cultural contexts, how these elements define religious civilizations, and how they determine relationships within and among cultures, religions and...
Tzvi Abusch  
(Ph.D. 1972, Harvard University)  
Rose B. and Joseph Cohen Professor of Assyriology and Ancient Near Eastern Religion at Brandeis University

CAJS Project:  
Babylonian Mythology and Magic: Literary Classics in their Cultural Context

Moshe Assis  
(Ph.D. 1976, Hebrew University)  
Professor in the Department of Talmud at Tel Aviv University

CAJS Project:  
Commentary on Tractate Shekalim (Yerushalmi)

Menahem Ben-Sasson  
(Ph.D. 1983, Hebrew University)  
Professor of the History of the Jewish People in the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:  
Law and Spirituality among Jews of Muslim Lands: The Maimonidean Family

Related Publications:  


Edward Breuer  
Associate Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Theology at Loyola University, Chicago

CAJS Project:  
The Study of the Bible in the Berlin Haskalah

Related Publications:  


Amnon Cohen  
(Ph.D. 1973, Hebrew University)  
Eliahu Elath Professor for the History of the Muslim Peoples in the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:  
Spiritual and Temporal Relations between the Jewish Community of 16th Century Jerusalem and the Muslim Legal Authority

Related Publications:  


Muhammad Dandamayev  
Department of Ancient Oriental Studies at the Oriental Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences

CAJS Project:  
Popular Assemblies in Babylonia in the First Millenium B.C.E.

Related Publications:  


**Menachem Friedman**
Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Bar Ilan University

CAJS Project:
Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews in Contemporary Society

**Menahem Haran**
(Ph.D. 1954, Hebrew University)
Yehezkel Kaufmann Professor of Bible Studies (Emeritus) in the Department of Bible at Hebrew University.

CAJS Project:
New Chapters on *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel*

Related Publications:
*Ha-‘asufah ha-mikra’it : tahalikhe ha-gibush ‘ad sof yeme bayit sheni ve-shinuye ha-tsurah ‘ad motsa’e yeme ha-benayim*. Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1996.


**Deborah Janssens**
CAJS Project:
Rabbinic Views on Dreams and their Interpretation

**Ross Kraemer**
(Ph.D. 1976, Princeton University)
Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Brown University
CAJS Project:
Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman Diaspora

Related Publications:


Martin Oosthuizen

CAJS Project:
Restitution in the Pentateuchal Release Laws on Slavery, Land, and Debt

Raymond P. Scheindlin
(Ph.D. 1971, Columbia University)
Professor of Medieval Hebrew Literature in the Department of Jewish Literature and Director of the Shalom Spiegel Institute at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America

CAJS Project:
Hebrew Liturgical Poetry and its Relationship with Arabic Sufi Poetry; Hebrew Poets of Spain: Translation and Commentary

Related Publications:


Michael Sokoloff
(Ph.D. 1972, Hebrew University)
Professor in the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Languages at Bar Ilan University

CAJS Project:
Lexicography of the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Dialect

Related Publications:


Everett K. Rowson
(Ph.D. 1982, Yale University)
Associate Professor of Islamic Studies in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at New York University

CAJS Project:
Views of Medieval Islamic Law and Society on Homosexuality

Related Publications:


In the decade or so following the appearance of Yosef Yerushalmi’s *Zakhor*, scholars of Jewish history began to investigate more intensively the distinctive properties of, and putative boundary between, traditional memory and modern critical history. And they did so with a new spirit of self-reflection about their own methods. The goal of this year’s group was to take stock of this new research direction and attempt to create a common scholarly language to analyze it. The group included the kind of mix that has become so characteristic of the Center—junior and senior scholars, medievalists and modernists, Israelis and Americans, the light-hearted and the sober. The weekly seminar was an intense, demanding, and stimulating exchange of ideas among fellows, enhanced by the participation of regular guests of the caliber of Judah Goldin (z’l) and Moshe Greenberg. But the real intellectual traffic flowed in and out of the Center’s hallways, detouring in and out of offices and spilling over into lunch and dinner. The combination of erudition and amiability, nurtured by spectacular staff support, made this group a particularly tight-knit and cohesive one. The final products of the year—the Gruss colloquium and the published volume, *The Jewish Past Revisited*, edited by David Myers and David Ruderman, pulled together the diverse strands of individual scholars into a more or less coherent whole. At the same time, as a series of learned meditations upon our scholarly predecessors, the conference and the volume contributed an important chapter to the history of Jewish historiography and scholarly self-reflection.
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>CAJS Project</th>
<th>Related Publications</th>
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| Allen Kerkeslager           | (Ph.D. 1997, University of Pennsylvania)     | Assistant Professor of Religions of the Ancient World in the Department of Theology and in the Ancient Studies Program at Saint Joseph’s University | CAJS Project: Egyptian-Jewish Tensions in First-Century Alexandria: The Influence of Religious Traditions and History on Social Processes | CAJS Project: Egyptian-Jewish Tensions in First-Century Alexandria: The Influence of Religious Traditions and History on Social Processes |
Related Publications:


Berel Lang
(Ph.D. 1961, Columbia University)
Professor of Humanities at Trinity College.

CAJS Project:
Between Memory and History: The Role of Moral Judgment in Understanding and Representing the Holocaust

Related Publications:


Robert Liberles
(Ph.D. 1980, Jewish Theological Seminary)
Professor in the Department of History at Ben Gurion University

CAJS Project:
The Holocaust and the Rewriting of Jewish History

Related Publications:


Gideon Libson
(Ph.D. 1980, Hebrew University)
Professor in the Faculty of Law at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Authority of Custom in Jewish Law: The Role of Historical Memory and Tradition in Jewish Society of Muslim Lands (7-11th) Centuries

Related Publications:


David N. Myers
(Ph.D. 1991, Columbia University)
Professor in the Department of History at the University of California, Los Angeles

CAJS Project:
Beyond History: Anti-Historicism in Modern Jewish Thought

Related Publications:


Elchanan Reiner
(Ph.D. 1988, Hebrew University)
Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University

CAJS Project:
Changing Attitudes toward Knowledge in Eastern European Jewry of the Early Modern Period; Popular Religion and Holy Shrines in the Land of Israel during the Middle Ages

Related Publications:
“The Ashkenazi Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era:


Michael Silber
(Ph.D. 1985, Hebrew University)
Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Inventor of Traditions: Akiva Schlesinger and the Construction of Ultra-Orthodoxy and Zionism

Related Publications:
“‘There are no Yeshivot in our Country for Several Good Reasons’: Between Hasidim and Mitnagdim in Hungary” (Hebrew). In Within Hasidic Circles: Studies in Hasidism in Memory of Mordecai Wilensky edited by E. Etkes et al., 75-108. Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1999.


Haym Soloveitchik
(Ph.D. 1973, Hebrew University)
Merkin Family Professor of Jewish History and Literature in the Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University

CAJS Project:
Yeyn Nesekh: A Study in Accommodation and Steadfastness; Contemporary Orthodoxy and the Transformation of Tradition

Related Publications:


Israel Yuval
(Ph.D. 1985, Hebrew University)
Professor in the Department of Jewish History at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Historiographical Works and Historiosophical Attitudes of Medieval German Jewry

Related Publications:


Yael Zerubavel
(Ph.D. 1980, University of Pennsylvania)
Professor in the Department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

CAJS Project:
Myths and Rituals of National Rebirth: Exodus and the Desert in Modern Israeli Culture

Related Publications:


Learning and Literacy: The Transmission of Tradition and Knowledge from Antiquity to the Present

This seminar originated as an attempt to offer a corrective to the emphasis among twentieth-century scholars of Jewish culture on texts and textual changes—an emphasis which was often unaccompanied by attention to the cultural context of the textual traditions. Over the course of the year, the fellows worked to put texts in context by exploring the relationships between, and interpenetrations of, oral and written culture and transmission in all periods of Jewish history. The seminar presentations covered a kaleidoscopic range of Jewish locales and cultural phenomena, ranging from the relationship of oral and written modalities in the transmission of rabbinic texts to the role of reading in national identity formation in modern Egypt and Israel. The diverse topics were bound together by the recurring themes of the relationship of oral and written modes of cultural transmission, the relative values of these modes in different Jewish cultural moments and locales, and the relationship of authority to orality and literacy. The concentration of projects dealing with these issues in comparative Jewish-Moslem-Greek contexts added yet another valence to the rich discussions (and textual productions!) that unfolded throughout the year. Scholars who were accustomed to working within the boundaries of a single cultural or historical context found their work enriched immeasurably by the broader comparative conversation. As is fitting for a seminar on orality and textuality, much of the work of this year’s seminar was presented (orally) at the annual Gruss colloquium and (textually) in the volume Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality and Cultural Diffusion, edited by Yaakov Elman and Israel Gershoni.
Israel Bartal  
(Ph.D. 1981, Hebrew University)  
Professor at the The Dinur Center for Research in Jewish History at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
The Uses of History: Jewish Orthodoxy and the Transmission of Tradition

Malachi Beit-Arie  
(Ph.D. 1967, Hebrew University)  
Professor in the Graduate School of Library and Archive Studies at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
Medieval Hebrew Codicology: History and Typology of Medieval Manuscripts

Related Publications:  


Yaakov Elman  
(Ph.D. 1986, New York University)  
Associate Professor of Judaic Studies in the Department of Judaic Studies at Yeshiva University  

CAJS Project:  
Orality and Canon in Talmudic Babylonia

Related Publications:  


Tamar El-Or  
(Ph.D. 1990, Bar Ilan University)  
Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
Literacy and Identity among National-Orthodox Women in Israel

Related Publications:  

Daphna Ephrat  
(Ph.D. 1993, Harvard University)  

CAJS Project:  
Change and Continuity in the Process of the Transmission of Islamic Learning from 945-1250

David Fishman  
(Ph.D., Harvard University)  
Professor in the Department of Jewish History at Jewish Theological Seminary  

CAJS Project:  
The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture in Tsarist Russia, 1897-1917

Related Publications:  

Israel Gershoni  
(Ph.D. 1977, Hebrew University)  
Professor of Middle Eastern and African History at Tel Aviv University  

CAJS Project:  
Islamic Tradition in Modern Egypt: The Role of Intellectuals

Related Publications:  


Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion, edited with an introduction by Y.

Jeffrey Grossman
(Ph.D. 1992, University of Texas)
Associate Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Virginia
CAJS Project:
Wissenschaft des Judentums, Literary Transmission and the Structuring of Jewish Memory
Related Publications:


Alfred Ivry
(Ph.D. 1963, Brandeis University; D.Phil. 1971, Oxford University)
Skirball Professor of Jewish Thought in the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University
CAJS Project:
Maimonides' Philosophy and Cultural Transmission: The Isma'ili Connection
Related Publications:


Ruth Katz
(Ph.D. 1963, Columbia University)
Professor in the Department of Musicology at Hebrew University
CAJS Project:
Oral and Written Transmission of Musical Traditions with Special Reference to Eastern Jewish Communities
Related Publications:


Robert Kraft
(Ph.D. 1961, Harvard University)
Professor Emeritus in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Pennsylvania
CAJS Project:
Greek Jewish Scriptures: Vestiges of an Influential Past, Vehicles for Renewed Understanding
Related Publications:
“Philo’s Treatment of the Number Seven in ‘On Creation.’” Online: http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/other/journals/kraftpub/Judaism/Philo%20on%20creation


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Paul Mandel  
(Ph.D. 1997, Hebrew University)  
Lecturer in the Department of Hebrew and  
Comparative Literature at the University of Haifa  
CAJS Project:  
Between Byzantium and Islam: The Transmission of  
Rabbinic Literature in the Post-Classical Period  
Related Publications:  
“Between Byzantium and Islam: The Transmission of a  
Jewish Book in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods.”  
In Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and  
Cultural Diffusion, edited by Y. Elman and I. Gershoni,  
“Midrashic Exegesis and its Precedents in the Dead Sea  
“Tales of the Destruction: Between Babylonia and the  
Land of Israel” (Hebrew). In The Land of Israel in the  
Second Temple, Mishnah and Talmud Periods, edited by  
A, Baumgarten, Y. Gafni and L. Schiffman. Jerusalem:  
Zalman Shazar Center, forthcoming.  

Marc Saperstein  
(Ph.D. 1977, Harvard University)  
Charles E. Smith Professor of History in the Department  
of History and Program in Judaic Studies at George  
Washington University  
CAJS Project:  
The Sermons of Saul Levi Morteira: Transmitting a  
Tradition to Former New Christians in 17th-Century  
Amsterdam  
Related Publications:  
“History as Homiletics: The Use of Historical Memory  
in the Sermons of Saul Levi Morteira” In Jewish History  
and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim  
“The Sermon as Oral Performance.” In Transmitting  
Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural  
“Exile in Amsterdam.” Me’ah she’arim : ‘iyunim be-  
’olamam ha-ruchani shel Yisra’el bi-yeme ha-benayim,  
le-zekher Yitshak Tverski , edited by E. Fleischer et al.  

Ronit Meroz  
(Ph.D. 1988, Hebrew University)  
Department of Jewish Philosophy at Tel Aviv University  
CAJS Project:  
The Transmission of Lurianic Tradition via the School of  
Sarug  

Shalom Paul  
(Ph.D. 1964, University of Pennsylvania)  
Professor in the Department of Bible at Hebrew  
University  
CAJS Project:  
The Transmission of Tradition and Knowledge as  
Reflected in the Prophecies of Second Isaiah  
Related Publications:  
“Emigration’ from the Netherworld in the Ancient  
Near East.” In Immigration and Emigration within the  
Ancient Near East: Festschrift E. Lipinski, edited by K. van  
Lerberghe and A. Schoors, 221-27. Leuven: Peeters,  
1995.  
“Hosea 7:16: Gibberish Jabber.” In Pomegranates and  
Golden Bells; Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern  
Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom,  
edited by D. Wright, D. Freedman, and A. Hurvitz, 707-  

Yochanan David Silman  
(Ph.D. 1973, Hebrew University)  
Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Bar Ilan  
University  
CAJS Project:  
The Concept of Torah and its Means of Transmission in  
Rabbinic Literature  
Related Publications:  
Philosopher and Prophet: Judah Halevi, the Kuzari, and  
the Evolution of His Thought, translated by L. Schramm.  
Kol gadol ve-lo’ yasaf: Torat Yisra’el ben shelemut le-  
This year began as two distinct seminars: one on Israeli culture and society during the early years of Israeli statehood, and the other on American Jewish culture and society in the twentieth century. As the year progressed, these two separate seminars merged into a unified research group that examined the commonalities and divergences of Jewish life in Israel and America in the 20th century. On many levels, the seminars on Israeli and American Jewish culture became a unique experiment in communication. The Israeli scholars were divided ideologically and methodologically. Adding the American mix, with an oft-stated feminist bent, created remarkably lively and even contentious discussions. For the Israeli scholars, the seminar meant exposure to American Jewish history, sociology, and literature—fields generally not part of their education. For the American scholars, the seminars provided the opportunity to delve into the intricacies of Israeli sociology, literature and politics. The result was most exciting, unanticipated, and deeply rewarding—a mini-summit conference extending through an entire year between intellectuals of the two communities, each attempting to understand and communicate with the other. Some of the results of this invaluable human and scholarly encounter are represented in the book, *Divergent Jewish Cultures: Israel and America*, edited by Deborah Dash Moore and S. Ilan Troen.
Gulie Ne’eman Arad  
(Ph.D. 1994, Tel-Aviv University)  
Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at Ben-Gurion University  

CAJS Project:  
The Americanization of Judaic Tradition: Blessings and Afflictions of Modernity  

Related Publications:  


Arnold J. Band  
(Ph.D. 1969, Harvard University)  
Professor Emeritus in the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles.  

CAJS Project:  
The Impact of Statehood on the Hebrew Literary Imagination  

Related Publications:  


Eliezer Don-Yehiya  
(Ph.D. 1978, Hebrew University)  
Professor in the Department of Political Studies at Bar Ilan University  

CAJS Project:  
The Shaping of Political Culture: Ben Gurion’s Mamlachtiyut (“Statism”) and its Opponents
Michael Feige  
(Ph.D. 1996, Hebrew University)  
Lecturer in the Ben-Gurion Research Center at Ben-Gurion University  

CAJS Project:  
The Cultural Politics of Israeli Archaeology during the 1950's and Early 1960's  

Related Publications:  


Nurith Gertz  
Professor in the Department of Literature and Art at the Open University, Israel  

CAJS Project:  
Israeli Political Culture and Holocaust Remembrance, 1940-59.  

Related Publications:  

The Israeli Culture (Cinema, Literature and Television): Facing the Holocaust Memory (Hebrew). Tel Aviv: Am Oved, forthcoming.  

Motti Golani  
(Ph.D. 1993, Haifa University)  
Professor in the Department of Israeli Studies at Haifa University  

CAJS Project:  
The Years of Anxiety: 1949-1956  

Related Publications:  


Tresa Grauer  
(Ph.D. 1995, University of Michigan)  
Lecturer in the Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics at Ben-Gurion University  

CAJS Project:  
Sacred Through Secular: The Authority of the Text in Modern Jewish American Literature  

Related Publications:  


Jenna Weissman Joselit  
(Ph.D. 1981, Columbia University)  
Continuing Visiting Professor of American Studies and Modern Judaic Studies in the Department of History at Princeton University  

CAJS Project:  
Jews and Fashion: Material Culture in American Jewish History  

Related Publications:  

Deborah Dash Moore  
(Ph.D. 1975, Columbia University)  
William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor in the Department of Religion at Vassar College  

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CAJS Project:
Jewish G.I.s and the “Judeo-Christian Tradition”: The Shaping of New Possibilities for Ethnic Self-Expression

Related Publications:


Benny Morris
(Ph.D. 1977, Cambridge University)
Professor in the Department of Middle East Studies at Ben Gurion University

CAJS Project:
The Israeli Press and Israel’s Border Policy, 1949-1956

Related Publications:


Anita Norich
(Ph.D. 1979, Columbia University)
Associate Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature and the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at University of Michigan

CAJS Project:
Jewish Culture in America During the Holocaust

Related Publications:


Yoav Peled
(Ph.D. 1982, University of California, Los Angeles)
Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Tel Aviv University

CAJS Project:
Mamlachtiyut as a Citizenship Discourse

Related Publications:

Ilan Peleg
(Ph.D. 1974, Northwestern University)
Charles A. Dana Professor in the Department of Government and Law at Lafayette College

CAJS Project:
Israeli Political Culture and Holocaust Remembrance in the 1950s.

Related Publications:


“Israel as a Liberal Democracy: Civil Rights in the

Rakhmiel Peltz  
(Ph.D. 1971, University of Pennsylvania; 1988, Columbia University)  
Professor of Sociolinguistics in the Department of Culture and Communication and Director of the Judaic Studies Program at Drexel University

CAJS Project:  
Children of Eastern European Immigrants Interpret Their Legacy, 1920-1955

Related Publications:  

Marc Lee Raphael  
(Ph.D. 1972, University of California, Los Angeles)  
Professor in the Department of Religion at the College of William and Mary

CAJS Project:  
The History of the Synagogue in America During the Twentieth Century

Related Publications:  

Jeffrey Shandler  
(Ph.D. 1995, Columbia University)  
Associate Professor in the Department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

CAJS Project:  

Related Publications:  

S. Ilan Troen  
(Ph.D. 1970, University of Chicago)  
Lopin Professor of Modern History in the Department of History at Ben-Gurion University and Stoll Professor of Israel Studies in the Department of Jewish History at Brandeis University

CAJS Project:  
The Shaping of Jewish Citizens in Israel: Competition and Conflict in Israeli Education

Related Publications:  
Yaron Tsur  
(Ph.D. 1988, Hebrew University)  
Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University

**CAJS Project:**  
Oriental Jews and the Ethnic Problem in Israel, 1948-1959

**Related Publications:**  


Yechiam Weitz  
(Ph.D. 1987, Hebrew University)  
Senior Lecturer in the Department of Land of Israel Studies at the University of Haifa

**CAJS Project:**  
Israel’s Relationship With Germany, 1950-1969

Beth S. Wenger  
(Ph.D. 1992, Yale University)  
Associate Professor of History in the Department of History at University of Pennsylvania

**CAJS Project:**  
American Visions of the Jewish Past: Jewish Historical Consciousness and Collective Memory in America

**Related Publications:**  


Like the other seminars which have used intersecting (and at times, competing) methodologies to explore the relationship between Judaism and its surrounding cultures, this year’s group employed the strategies particular to the literary study of the Bible and to the study of Ancient Near Eastern history and material culture to interrogate the relationship between ancient Israelite culture and the other cultures of the Ancient Near East. At the methodological level, the seminars addressed explicitly the past, present, and proper roles of archaeology, Ancient Near Eastern history and literature, and literary and theological study of the Bible, in scholarly representations of ancient Israelite religion and culture. The concluding colloquium, like many of the seminars over the course of the year, focused on the central questions of Israelite religious belief and practice: the nature of the Israelite God and its relationship to other Ancient Near Eastern deities, the whys and wherefores of worship among Israelites and their neighbors, and the similarities and differences that existed among the various religious systems of the Ancient Near East. While the topics of the seminars were wide-ranging, many of the conversations over the course of the year were united by a common desire to escape the romanticism and apologetics that have influenced the academic study of the Bible and ancient Israelite religion since its inception, and to redescribe the religion and culture of ancient Israel in more accurate and less confessional terms. Much of the scholarship that was developed at the center this year has already become part of the canonical literature of twentieth century biblical studies.
Gary Beckman  
(Ph.D. 1977, Yale University)  
Professor of Hittite and Mesopotamian Studies in the  
Department of Near Eastern Studies at University of  
Michigan  
CAJS Project:  
Hittite Ritual  
Related Publications:  
“Ištar of Nineveh Reconsidered,” *Journal of Cuneiform  
“The Goddess Pirinkir and Her Ritual from Nattuša (CTH  
“Babylonica Hethitica: the ‘pabilli’ Rituals from Boğazköy,  
(CTH 718).” In *Recent Developments in Hittite Archaeology  
and History*, edited by H. Güterbock, H.. Hoffner, Jr., and K.  
Aslihan Yener. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2001  

Herbert and Ellie Katz Distinguished Fellow  
Amnon Ben Tor  
Yigael Yadin Professor of Archaeology and Director of the  
Institute of Archaeology at Hebrew University  
CAJS Project:  
Excavation and Investigation of Tel-Hazor  

Adele Berlin  
(Ph.D. 1976, University of Pennsylvania)  
Robert H. Smith Professor of Bible in the Departments of  
English and Jewish Studies at University of Maryland  
CAJS Project:  
The Absence of God in the Books of Esther and  
Lamentations  
Related Publications:  
*Esther: the Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS  
Translation*, commentary by A. Berlin. Philadelphia: Jewish  
*Lamentations, A Commentary*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster  

Lucius N. Littauer Fellow  
Linda Bregstein  
(Ph.D. 1993, University of Pennsylvania)  
CAJS Project:  
Religious Attitudes in Babylonia under the Persian Empire:  
The Contribution of Signet-seal Studies  

Barry Eichler  
(Ph.D. 1993, University of Pennsylvania)  
Associate Professor of Assyriology in the Department  
of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of  
Pennsylvania  
CAJS Project:  
Inanna: Her Myth, Iconography and Cult  

Erika A. Strauss Teaching Fellow  
Nili S. Fox  
(Ph.D. 1997, University of Pennsylvania)  
Associate Professor of Bible at Hebrew Union College–  
Jewish Institute of Religion  
CAJS Project:  
A Typological Study of Legitimate and Illegitimate Cult  
Objects  
Related Publications:  
*In the Service of the King: Officialdom in Ancient Israel and  

Moses Aaron Dropsie Fellow  
Tikva Frymer-Kensky  
(Ph.D. 1977, Yale University)  
Professor of Hebrew Bible in the Divinity School at  
University of Chicago  
CAJS Project:  
Biblical Religion and Liturgies to the Goddesses of  
Sumer and Babylon  
Related Publications:  
*Reading the Women of the Bible*. New York: Schocken  

Seymour (Sy) Gitin  
(Ph.D. 1980, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of  
Religion, Cincinnati)  
Dorot Director and Professor in the Department of  
Archaeology at W. F. Albright Institute of  
Archaeological Research  
CAJS Project:  
Philistine Cult in the 7th Century BCE  
Related Publications:  
“The Neo-Assyrian Empire and Its Western Periphery:  
The Levant with a Focus on Philistine Ekron.” In *Assyria  
1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of  
the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project*, Helsinki, September  
7-11, 1995, edited by S. Parpola and R. Whiting, 77-104.


Wayne Horowitz
(Ph.D. 1986, University of Birmingham)
Lecturer in the Department of Assyriology at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Cuneiform Writing in Canaan

Related Publications:


Victor Hurowitz
(Ph.D. 1984, Hebrew University)
Professor in the Department of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at Ben Gurion University

CAJS Project:
Biblical Attitudes Towards Idols in their Ancient Near Eastern Context

Related Publications:


Jacob Klein
(Ph.D. 1968, University of Pennsylvania)
Professor in the Departments of Hebrew and Semitic Languages and Bible at Bar Ilan University

CAJS Project:
Mesopotamian and Biblical Royal Hymns: A Comparative Study

Related Publications:


Theodore J. Lewis
(Ph.D. 1986, Harvard University)
CAJS Project:
The Religion of Ancient Israel

Saul M. Olyan
(Ph.D. 1985, Harvard University)
Professor in the Department of Judaic Studies and Religious Studies at Brown University

CAJS Project:
Clean/Unclean and other Binary Oppositions in the Israelite Cult

Related Publications:


Tallay Ornan  
(Ph.D. 1998, Tel Aviv University)  
Rodney E. Soher Curator of Western Asiatic Antiquities at the Israel Museum

CAJS Project:  
Idol versus Symbol: Divine Representations in Mesopotamia

Related Publications:  


Gary A. Rendsburg  
(Ph.D. 1980, New York University)  
Paul and Berthe Hendrix Memorial Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Cornell University

CAJS Project:  
Egypt and Israel: The Story of Exodus 1-15

Related Publications:  


Mark S. Smith  
(Ph.D. 1985, Yale University)  
Skirball Professor of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University

CAJS Project:  
An Examination of Divinity in Akkadian, Ugaritic and Israelite Literature

Related Publications:  


Ziony Zevit  
(Ph.D. 1974, University of California, Berkeley)  
Distinguished Professor of Bible and Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures in the Department of Jewish Studies at University of Judaism

CAJS Project:  
The Practice of Religion from the Iron Age through the Early Hellenistic period

Related Publications:  


Like the 1996-7 seminar year, this year began as two separate seminars: one on Hebrew liturgical and secular poetry in al-Andalus (Spain), Germany and Italy during the medieval and early modern periods; the other on the connections between the Enlightenment and its Jewish counterpart, the Haskalah, as the latter took shape in Germany and Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century. As happened in 1996-7, the two separate seminars gradually merged into one. As a result, scholars of the enlightenment participated in the close analysis of medieval poetry while medievalists showed considerable interest in the texts and philosophical issues of the Haskalah. More importantly, common themes emerged to unite the two groups. Participants noticed that Jewish writers living in Medieval al-Andalus, baroque Italy and Enlightenment Germany, all found themselves in constant dialogue with their forebears. Common to all three periods was the endeavor to interpret the present in light of the past and to preserve a uniquely Jewish voice by anchoring contemporary literary and philosophical models in an age long gone. The two groups were also linked in an obvious way by the Haskalah’s own explicit hearkening back to medieval Sepharad, idealized for its cultural openness and engagement with the non-Jewish world. A sampling of the exciting and fruitful results of this cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary conversation appears in the recent volume, *Renewing the Past, Reconfiguring Jewish Culture: From al-Andalus to the Haskalah*, edited by Ross Brann and Adam Sutcliffe.
Martin Gruss Fellow

Esperanza Alfonso
(Ph.D. 1998, Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
Assistant Professor in the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies at University of Wisconsin, Madison

CAJS Project:
Social Aspects of the Panegyric in al-Andalus

Related Publications:


Allan Arkush
(Ph.D. 1988, Brandeis University)
Associate Professor in the Department of Judaic Studies and History at State University of New York, Binghamton

CAJS Project:
The Enlightenment and the Jews

Related Publications:


Moses Aaron Dropsie Fellow

Angel Saenz-Badillos
(Ph.D. 1972, Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
Professor in the Department of Hebrew and Aramaic Studies at Universidad Complutense de Madrid

CAJS Project:
Centers of Hebrew Poetry in Christian Spain: Girona, Toledo, Saragossa

Related Publications:


“Allan Arkush
(Ph.D. 1988, Brandeis University)
Associate Professor in the Department of Judaic Studies and History at State University of New York, Binghamton

CAJS Project:
The Enlightenment and the Jews

Related Publications:


Maurice Amado Foundation Fellow

Ross Brann
(Ph.D. 1981, New York University)
Milton R. Konvitz Professor of Judeo-Islamic Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Cornell University

CAJS Project:
Textualizing Ambivalence in Islamic Spain: Representations of Muslims and Jews

Related Publications:


Charles W. and Sally Rothfeld Fellow

Dvora Bregman
(Ph.D. 1986, Hebrew University)
Associate Professor in the Department of Hebrew Literature at Ben Gurion University

CAJS Project:
Editing the Dramas of Matityahu Nissim Terni

Related Publications:


Herbert and Ellie Katz Distinguished Fellow
Richard I. Cohen
(Ph.D. 1981, Hebrew University)
Paulette and Claude Kelman Chair in French Jewry Studies in the Department of Jewish History at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Jewish Enlightenment and the Visual Sphere of Creativity: Biography of Naphtali Herz Wesseley

Related Publications:


Martin L. Davies
Reader in the History of the European Enlightenment in the School of Historical Studies at University of Leicester

CAJS Project:
Enlightening Performances: Self-Management in the German-Jewish Enlightenment

Related Publications:


"Klassische Aufklärung: Überlegungen zur Modernisierung der deutsch-jüdischen Kultur am

Alessandro Guetta
(Ph.D. 1993, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris)  
Professor of Jewish Thought in the Department of Jewish and Hebrew Studies at the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilization, Paris

CAJS Project:
Poetry in 17th Century Italian Jewish Society

Related Publications:


Eleazar Gutwirth
Professor in the Department of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University

CAJS Project:
Romance Culture and Jewish History: Contexts of Hebrew Poetry in Late Medieval Spain

Related Publications:

Erika A. Strauss Teaching Fellow

Warren Zev Harvey
(Ph.D. 1973, Columbia University)  
Professor in the Department of Jewish Thought at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:  
Poetry and Philosophy: Solomon ibn Gabirol, Judah Halevi, Moses Mendelssohn

Related Publications:


Elisabeth Hollender
(Ph.D. 1993, Martin Buber Institut für Judaistik, Universität zu Köln)  
Privatdozent at the Institut für Jüdische Studien at Heinrich Heine Universität, Düsseldorf

CAJS Project:
Ashkenazic and French Piyyyut: Commentary as Example for Medieval Hebrew Compilatory Literature

Related Publications:


Lucas N. Littauer Fellow

Arthur Kiron
(Ph.D. 1999, Columbia University)  
Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of History at University of Pennsylvania and Curator of Judaica Collections, University of Pennsylvania Library.

CAJS Project:
Varieties of Haskalah: Anglo-American vs. German Paradigms of Jewish Religious Enlightenment

Related Publications:


Tova Rosen  
(Ph.D. 1973, Oxford University)  
Professor in the Department of Hebrew Literature at Tel Aviv University  
CAJS Project:  
Gender and Genre in Medieval Hebrew Literature  
Related Publications:  

Lucas N. Littauer Fellow  
Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall  
(Ph.D. 1998, Stanford University)  
Assistant Professor in the Department of History at California State University, San Marcos  
CAJS Project:  
Responding to ‘Regeneration’: European Jews and the Abbé Grégoire  
Related Publications:  

Nancy Sinkoff  
(Ph.D. 1996, Columbia University)  
Assistant Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey  
CAJS Project:  
Prayer and Religious Reform in the Early Haskalah in Galicia: The Case of Joseph Perl  
Related Publications:  


Moses Aaron Dropsie Fellow

Judit Targarona Borras
(Ph.D. 1979, Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
Profesora Titular in the Department of Hebrew and Aramaic Studies at Universidad Complutense de Madrid

CAJS Project: Sociological and Literary Aspects of Hebrew Poetry in Christian Spain

Katrin Tenenbaum
(Ph.D. 1981, University of Rome)
Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Rome

CAJS Project: Moses Mendelssohn and the Jewish Paradigms of Enlightenment

Samuel Grunfeld Fellow

Liliane Weissberg
(Ph.D. 1984, Harvard University)
Joseph B. Glossberg Term Professor in the Humanities in the Departments of German and Comparative Literature at University of Pennsylvania

CAJS Project: German-Jewish Autobiography in the Late Eighteenth Century

Related Publications:


Joseph Yahalom
(Ph.D. 1973, Hebrew University)
Professor in the Department of Hebrew Literature at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Poems of Yehuda Halevi; Christian Elegies from 15th Century Spain

Related Publications:
Poetry and Society in Jewish Galilee of Late Antiquity (Hebrew). Tel Aviv: Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, 1999


Mordechai Zalkin
(Ph.D. 1996, Hebrew University)
Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at Ben-Gurion University

CAJS Project:
Development of Early 19th century Russian-Jewish Scientific Thought.

Related Publications:


SHORT-TERM FELLOWS

Rina Drory
Tel-Aviv University

Shmuel Feiner
Bar-Ilan University
The genesis of this year’s colloquium goes back to 1996, when David Ruderman, Moshe Idel, Gedalia Strumsa, and Anthony Grafton began talking about devoting an entire year of study to the subject of Christian Hebraism, especially in early modern Europe. The proposed seminar would provide an opportunity to bring together scholars of Jewish history, literature, and thought, with scholars of the Renaissance, Reformation, and Christian thought, to consider a subject of great significance which had been relatively neglected by modern scholarship. It would also energize a field of great import to Jewish and Christian history and to the interstices between the two. In addition, the theme of the Christian origins of the academic study of Judaism was particularly timely given the recent explosion of interest in Jewish studies on the part of non-Jewish scholars.

The diverse community of scholars who came to Philadelphia in 1999 fully fulfilled the hopes of the organizers. It included scholars in diverse fields from the United States, Israel, and Europe. The balance of scholars in Jewish and Christian fields was quite good; so too was the mixture of Jews and non-Jews, from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines. Most importantly, this was indeed a humanistic enterprise, gathering together a group of positive, open, and generous scholars, young and old, who addressed with enormous commitment the subject at hand. The weekly seminars and the culminating conference were joyous occasions of intellectual stimulation and dialogue based on mutual respect and friendship. Those who participated in this year were genuinely transformed by these ongoing and fructifying interactions. The resulting volume, entitled *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Allison Coudert and Jeffrey Shoulson bears eloquent testimony to the success of this year’s venture.
Charles W. and Sally Rothfeld Fellow

Malachi Beit-Arie
(Ph.D. 1967, Hebrew University)
Professor in the Graduate School of Library and Archive Studies at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Codicological Study of Jewish and Christian Manuscripts and Scribal Collaboration

Related Publications:


Moses Aaron Dropsie Fellow

Allison Coudert
(Ph.D. 1972, Warburg Institute, University of London)
Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Arizona State University

CAJS Project:
Christian Hebraists in the 17th Century

Related Publications:


Samuel Grunfeld Fellow

Silvia Berti
(Ph.D. 1978, University of Rome)
Department of Modern and Contemporary History at the University of Rome.

CAJS Project:
Jews, Christian Hebraists, and the Anti-Christian Enlightenment

Stephen G. Burnett
(Ph.D. 1990, University of Wisconsin, Madison)
Associate Professor in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies and the Department of History at University of Nebraska, Lincoln

CAJS Project:
Professors of Hebrew as Mediators of Jewish Scholarship in Reformation-Era Germany

Related Publications:


Yaacov Deutsch
Doctoral Student in the Department of History at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
“Ethographic” Descriptions of Judaism in the Writings of Western European Christian Scholars

Related Publications:


**Harvey E. Goldberg**  
(Ph.D. 1967, Harvard University)  
Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Hebrew University

**CAJS Project:**  
The Aftermath of Christian Hebraism in the Mid-Twentieth Century: Between Anthropology and the “Judeo-Christian Tradition”

**Related Publications:**  


**Maurice Amado Foundation Fellow**

**Joseph Hacker**  
(Ph.D. 1978, Hebrew University)  
Professor in the Department of Jewish History at Hebrew University

**CAJS Project:**  
Elizabethan Englishmen and Ottoman Jews: an Encounter on Ottoman Soil

**Related Publications:**  


**Lucius N. Littauer Fellow**

**Chaim Hames**  
(Ph.D. 1996, Cambridge University)  
Senior Lecturer in the Department of General History at Ben Gurion University

**CAJS Project:**  
Hebrew Translation of Ramon Llull’s Ars brevis: Jewish-Christian Interaction in 15th Century Italy

**Related Publications:**  


**Charles H. and Sally Rothfeld Fellow**

**Michael Heyd**  
(Ph.D. 1974, Princeton University)  
Professor in the Department of History at Hebrew University

**CAJS Project:**  
Sabbatianism as ‘Enthusiasm’: Christian Responses to Shabbetai Zevi

**Related Publications:**  


Herbert and Ellie Katz Distinguished Fellow

**Moshe Idel**
(Ph.D. 1967, Hebrew University)
Professor in the Department of Jewish Thought at Hebrew University

**CAJS Project:**
Symbolism: From Pythagoreanism, to Christian Kabbalah, to Modern Scholarship

**Related Publications:**


Lucius N. Littauer Fellow

**Fabrizio Lelli**
(Ph.D. 1992, Università degli Studi di Torino)
Lecturer in the Department of History at Università degli Studi di Lecce

**CAJS Project:**
Christian-Jewish Theological Interrelations in the Fifteenth Century

**Related Publications:**


Erika A. Strauss Teaching Fellow

**Ora Limor**
(Ph.D. 1985, Hebrew University)
Professor in the Departments of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies at the Open University, Israel

**CAJS Project:**
Sefer ha-nizzachon of Yom-Tov Lipmann Muhlhausen: A Jewish-Christian Encounter

**Related Publications:**


Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann
(Ph.D. 1974, Bochum)
Professor in the Department of Philosophie at Freie Universität, Berlin

**CAJS Project:**
Judeo-Christian Philosophical Syncretism in the 17th and 18th Centuries
Related Publications:


**Martin Gruss Fellow**

**Jeffrey S. Shoulson**
(Ph.D. 1995, Yale University)
Associate Professor in the Department of English at University of Miami

CAJS Project:
Milton and the Rabbis: Hebraism, Hellenism, and Christianity

Related Publications:
“The Embrace of the Fig Tree: Sexuality and Creativity in Midrash and in Milton,” English Literary History 67.4 (2000): 873-903.


**Herbert and Ellie Katz Distinguished Fellow**

**Guy G. Stroumsa**
(Ph.D. 1978, Harvard University)
Martin Buber Professor of Comparative Religion and Director of the Center for the Study of Christianity in the Department of Comparative Religion at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Christian Hebraists and the Birth of Comparative Religion
Piet van Boxel  
(Ph.D. 1983, University of Tilburg)  
Librarian and Fellow in Early Judaism and Origins of Christianity at Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies at Oxford  

CAJS Project:  
Paulus Fagius’ Latin Translation of Targum Onkelos  

Related Publications:  

Joanna Weinberg  
(Ph.D. 1982, University of London)  
Catherine Lewis Fellow in Rabbinics at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Judaic Studies and James Mew Lecturer in Rabbinic Hebrew at the Oriental Institute at Oxford  

CAJS Project:  
The German Ezra: Sebastian Munster’s Approach to Jews, Jewish Languages and Texts  

Related Publications:  
“Invention and Convention: Jewish and Christian Critique of the Jewish Fixed Calendar,” Jewish History (December 2000).  


Erika A. Strauss Teaching Fellow  
Israel Yuval  
(Ph.D. 1985, Hebrew University)  
Professor in the Department of Jewish History at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
Sepher ha-nizzachon of Yom-Tov Lipmann Muhlhausen: A Jewish-Christian Encounter  

Related Publications:  

SHORT-TERM FELLOW  
Yosef Kaplan  
Hebrew University
This fellowship year originated as an attempt to address two lacunae in two disparate fields: the lack of attention to the arts and artistic production within Jewish Studies, and the lack of interdisciplinary investigation within the study of the arts, a field which is traditionally compartmentalized by medium and genre. The seminar’s organizers, Richard Cohen and Ezra Mendelsohn, hoped to address these gaps by bringing together scholars from a wide range of disciplines to explore the complex relationship between Jews, the arts and Jewish culture.

There ensued a productive interchange between those in Jewish Studies, whose disciplinary emphases are history and textual studies, and those in fields dedicated to the study of the arts, but rarely to Jews. Scholars working on Hebrew and Yiddish theater exchanged ideas with those studying such artists as Mark Antokol’skii, Maury Gottleib, Max Liebermann, Ben Shahn, and R. B. Kitaj. An analysis of the Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the New York World’s Fair, 1939/1940 was enriched by work on the emergence of Tel-Aviv as the first “Hebrew” city. Research on music ranged from the emergence of Mediterranean Israeli Music and new popular music in American Orthodox circles to Yiddish children’s songs in the Soviet Union and Paul Robeson’s renditions of Hasidic song. Fellows were exposed to differences in methodology as a literary scholar analyzed Hotel Terminus, a film by Marcel Ophus, and a theater historian demonstrated how to research the emergence of Yiddish film on the Lower East Side during the first years of the twentieth-century. The group discussed topics rarely considered in Jewish Studies, such as dance, as well as more established subjects, such as the aesthetic theory of Franz Rosenzweig or the fate of Nazi stolen art. The year-long conversation between Jewish Studies scholars and scholars of the arts did much to enrich our perspectives and our fields.
Nancy and Lawrence Glick Teaching Fellow

Zachary Braiterman
(Ph.D. 1995, Stanford University)
Associate Professor in the Department of Religion at Syracuse University

CAJS Project:
Aesthetic Turns in Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig

Related Publications:


Lucius N. Littauer Fellow

Mirosława Bulat
(Ph.D. 2001, Jagiellonian University, Cracow)
Department of Theatre History and Theory at Jagiellonian University, Cracow

CAJS Project:
Cracow’s Jews and the Arts in Theater: 1918-1939

Related Publications:


Moses Aaron Dropsie Fellow

Anat Helman
(Ph.D. 2000, Hebrew University)
Lecturer in the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, the Department of Jewish History, and the Cultural Studies Program at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Film and Pulp Fiction: Consuming Popular Culture in Israel in the Early 1950s

Related Publications:


Ella Darivoff Fellow

Charles Dellheim
(Ph.D. 1980, Yale University)
Professor in the Department of History at Boston University

CAJS Project:
Artful Jews: Culture and Commerce in Modernity

Maurice Amado Foundation Fellow

Amy Horowitz
(Ph.D. 1994, University of Pennsylvania)
Visiting Scholar at the Mershon Center for Public Policy and the Melton Center for Jewish Studies at Ohio State University

CAJS Project:
Israeli Mediterranean Music: Culture Resistance and Reformation in Disputed Territory

Related Publications:


Marion Kant
(Ph.D. 1986, Humboldt University, Berlin)

CAJS Project:
Joseph Lewitan and the Aryanization of German Dance

Related Publications:
Lucius N. Littauer Fellow

Jonathan Karp
(Ph.D. 2000, Columbia University)
Assistant Professor in the Department of Judaic Studies and History at State University of New York, Binghamton.

CAJS Project:
American Music: Black, White, and Jew

Related Publications:
“Performing Black-Jewish Symbiosis: The ‘Hassidic Chant’ of Paul Robeson,” American Jewish History (Spring 2004).


Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett
(Ph.D. 1972, Indiana University)
University Professor and Professor of Performance Studies in the Department of Performance Studies at Tisch School of the Arts

CAJS Project:
Exhibiting Jews: Jewish participation in World Fairs in Europe and the U.S.: 1850-1940

Related Publications:


Erika A. Strauss Teaching Fellow

Mark Kligman
(Ph.D. 1997, New York University)
Associate Professor of Jewish Musicology in the School of Sacred Music at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion

CAJS Project:
Jewish Music in America: 1960s-1990s

Related Publications:

Diana L. Linden
(Ph.D. 1997, City University of New York)
Visiting Assistant Professor in the History of Art Department at University of Michigan

CAJS Project:
The New Deal Mural of Ben Shahn: Jewish Identity and the Culture of Labor

Herbert and Ellie Katz Distinguished Fellow,
Walter and Rose Zifkin Teaching Fellow

Ezra Mendelsohn
(Ph.D. 1966, Columbia University)
Professor Emeritus in the Departments of History at Hebrew University and Boston University

CAJS Project:
Art and Jewish History: Mauryyc Gottlieb Among the Jews, Poles, and Israelis

Related Publications:

Michael R. Steinhardt Fellow

Gideon Ofrat
(Ph.D. 1974, Hebrew University)
Artistic Director, Time for Art: Israeli Art-center, Tel Aviv.

CAJS Project:
Is Israeli Art Jewish?

Related Publications:
The Return to Zion: Beyond the Place Principle. Exhibition and catalogue. Time for Art, Tel Aviv, 2003.


Thou shalt make... (The Resurgence of Judaism in Israeli Art). Exhibition and catalogue, Time for Art, Tel Aviv, 2003.

Charles W. and Sally Rothfeld Fellow

Gershon Shaked
(Ph.D. 1964, Hebrew University)
Professor Emeritus in the Department of Hebrew Literature at Hebrew University
CAJS Project:
Art, Literature and Society in Palestine and Israel

Related Publications:


**Samuel Grunfeld Fellow**

Anna Shternsis

(D.Phil., Oxford, 2000)
Assistant Professor of Yiddish and Yiddish Literature at University of Toronto

CAJS Project:
Jewish Popular Culture in the Soviet Union: 1925-1941

**Susan Rubin Suleiman**

(Ph.D. 1969, Harvard University)
C. Douglas Dillon Professor of the Civilization of France in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures and Professor of Comparative Literature in the Department of Comparative Literature at Harvard University

CAJS Project:
Crises of Memory and the Second World War in France

Related Publications:

**Judith Thissen**

(Ph.D. 2000, Utrecht University)
Faculty in the Institute for Media and Representation at Utrecht University

CAJS Project:
Silent Cinema and Cultural Identity in American Jewish History

Related Publications:
"Judische Einwanderer aus Osteuropa un der fruehe


*Martin Gruss Fellow*

**Nina Warnke**  
(Ph.D. 2001, Columbia University)  
Assistant Professor of Yiddish in the Department of Germanic Studies at University of Texas, Austin

**CAJS Project:**  
Reforming New York Yiddish Theater: Cultural Politics of Immigrant Intellectuals and the Yiddish Press


“Theater as Educational Institution: Jewish Immigrant Intellectuals and Yiddish Theater Reform.” In *Modern Jewry and the Arts* (working title), edited by


*Louis and Bessie Stein Fellow*

**Carol Zemel**  
(Ph.D. 1978, Columbia University)  
Professor of Art History in the Department of Visual Arts at York University

**CAJS Project:**  
Graven Images: Visual Culture and Modern Jewish History

**Related Publications:**  


*SHORT-TERM FELLOW*

**Richard Cohen**  
Hebrew University
The history of religion is in many significant ways the history of interpretation. This fellowship year gathered scholars of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity to examine the various modes of biblical interpretation present in these traditions from their earliest layers to the Renaissance. Through the study of commentaries, art, liturgical performance, and book design, the group worked to see how modes of reading in the three traditions intersected. The fellows came to the table with deep philological knowledge, and the seminar succeeded in pushing each participant beyond texts to contexts, and past the insider discourses of their sources to a conceptual and historical matrix of intersecting and mutually informing reading practices. Over the course of the year, the group kept returning to the historical and methodological challenge of conceptualizing paradigms of contact. If strategies for reading scripture are in some ways markers of religious identity and guardians of tradition, how does one describe the shared elements of interpretive tradition? Can one revisit exegetical trajectories to find the ways they have assimilated or explicitly rejected their textual environment, without resorting to essentializing notions of syncretism and influence? Through the interrogation and deployment of metaphors of contagion, sharing, contact, borrowing, zeitgeist, negotiation and battle, the group explored these questions in many different modes and registers. While the question of influence is especially complicated in exegetical traditions that tend to present themselves as insider-focused, and polemical, the seminar framed the history of interpretation as the site of ongoing, engaged cultural interaction. The results of this framing were showcased at the end of year colloquium and a representative sampling will appear in the forthcoming volume, co-edited by Natalie Dohrmann and David Stern.
Betty and Morris Shuch Fellow

Adele Berlin
(Ph.D. 1976, University of Pennsylvania)

CAJS Project:
Biblical Allusions in the Dead Sea Scrolls

Related Publications:


Maurice Amado Foundation Fellow

Haggai Ben-Shammai
(Ph.D. 1978, Hebrew University)

CAJS Project:
Exegesis in Transition: Between Homiletics and Rationalist Exegesis

Related Publications:


Walter and Rose Zifkin Teaching Fellow

Robert Bonfil
(Ph.D. 1976, Hebrew University)
Professor in the Institute of Jewish Studies at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Biblical Allusions in Joseph Hacohens’ Historical Work

Michael R. Steinhardt Fellow

Mordechai Cohen
(Ph.D. 1994, Yeshiva University)
Associate Professor in the Department of Bible at Yeshiva University

CAJS Project:
Kimhi and Nahmanides on Scripture’s Yeshiva University Moral Sense

Related Publications:


Michael R. Steinhardt Fellow

Natalie B. Dohrmann
(Ph.D. 1999, University of Chicago)
Adjunct Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Jewish Studies at the University of Pennsylvania and Assistant Director for Publications at CAJS

CAJS Project:
The Anxiety of Identity: Analogical Reasoning and the Rabbinic Negotiation of Rome

Related Publications:


Louis and Bessie Stein Fellow

Jacob Elbaum
(Ph.D. 1978, Hebrew University)
Professor in the Department of Hebrew Literature at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:
Biblical Exegesis in Late Midrashic Literature (with special emphasis on Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer)
Related Publications:


Reuven Firestone
(Ph.D. 1988, New York University)
Professor of Medieval Judaism and Islam and Director of the Edgar F. Magnin School of Graduate Studies at Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles

CAJS Project:
Satan, Sin, and the Destiny of Humanity: The Garden Story in the Qur’an

Samuel Grunfeld Fellow

Martin Jacobs
(Ph.D. 1994, Free University of Berlin; 2002, Habilitation Free University of Berlin)
Assistant Professor of Rabbinic Studies in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures at Washington University

CAJS Project:
Biblical Exegesis in Jewish Polemics Against Islam

Related Publications:


Sara Japhet  
(Ph.D. 1973, Hebrew University)  
Yehezkel Kaufmann Professor in the Department of Bible at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
The Song of Songs in Medieval Northern France Peshat Exegesis  

Related Publications:  


Tamar Kadari  
Doctoral Student in the Department of Hebrew Literature at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
Redaction and Polemic: Origen and the Rabbis on the Song of Songs Rabbah  

Related Publications:  
“Within it was Decked with Love’: The Torah as the Bride in Tannaitic Exegesis on Song of Songs” (Hebrew). Tarbiz 71 (2002): 391-404.  


Lucas N. Littauer Fellow  
Deeana Klepper  
(Ph.D. 1995, Northwestern University)  
Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion at Boston University  

CAJS Project:  
From Exegesis to Polemic: Nicholas of Lyra’s Use of Jewish Text and his Anti-Jewish Writing  

Related Publications:  

Israel Knohl  
(Ph.D. 1988, Hebrew University)  
Professor in the Department of Bible at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
Biblical and Post Biblical Hermeneutics  

Related Publications:  


Lucas N. Littauer Fellow  
Naomi Koltun-Fromm  
(Ph.D. 1993, Stanford University)  
Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion at Haverford College  

CAJS Project:  
Aphrahat’s Hermeneutics of Holiness: Body, Sexuality and Religious Identity in the Late Ancient Near East  

Related Publications:  
Erika A. Strauss Teaching Fellow

Tzvi Langermann
(Ph.D. 1979, Harvard University)
Associate Professor in the Department of Arabic at Bar Ilan

CAJS Project:
Exegesis in Maimonides’ Guide for the Perplexed and its Yemeni Commentators

Related Publications:
“The Commentary to Song of Songs by Zekhariah ha-Rofe (Yemen, 15th century).” In Medieval Encounters (in press)

Joseph E. Lowry
(Ph.D. 1999, University of Pennsylvania)
Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at University of Pennsylvania

CAJS Project:
The Qur’an in Early Islamic Law

Related Publications:

Maurice Amado Foundation Fellow

Stefan C. Reif
(Ph.D. 1969, University of London)
Professor in the Genizah Research Unit of the University Library at University of Cambridge

CAJS Project:
Medieval Jewish Commentators on Numbers 13

Related Publications:


Daniel Sheerin
(Ph.D. 1965, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)
Professor in the Department of Classics at University of Notre Dame

CAJS Project:
Biblical Typology in Patristic Literature

Related Publications:

Ella Darivoff Fellow

Michael A. Signer
(Ph.D. 1978, University of Toronto)
Abrams Professor of Jewish Thought and Culture in the Department of Theology at University of Notre Dame

CAJS Project:
Biblical Interpretation and the Search for the Literal Sense by 12th Century Jews and Christians

Related Publications:

Moses Aaron Dropsie Fellow

Peter Stallybrass
Walter H. and Leonore C. Annenberg Professor in the Humanities and Professor of English at University of Pennsylvania

CAJS Project:
Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible

Related Publications:


Ella Darivoff Fellow

Barbara R. von Schlegell
(Ph.D. 1997, University of California, Berkeley)
Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at University of Pennsylvania

CAJS Project:
Hagar, Mother of Islam: Readings of Genesis

Related Publications:


Martin Gruss Fellow

Megan Hale Williams
(Ph.D. 2002, Princeton University)
Assistant Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Studies and fellow in the Michigan Society of Fellows at University of Michigan

CAJS Project:
Rabbinic Exegesis in Jerome’s Commentaries on the Prophets

Related Publications:


Jeremy Cohen
(Ph.D. 1978, Cornell University)
Professor of Jewish History and Director of the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center at Tel Aviv University

CAJS Project:
The role of the Jew in Christian expectations of the end of days: Christianity’s “eschatological Jew.”

Related Publications:


SHORT-TERM FELLOWS

Jeremy Cohen
Tel Aviv University

Moshe Idel
Hebrew University

Shira Wolosky

Moshe Halbertal
Hebrew University
For over three centuries, Eastern Europe was home to the greatest living reservoir of Jewish civilization in the world. From Jewish communities in Galicia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Ukraine, emerged many of the currents that shape Jewish life today, and from their ranks emerged the dominant new “centers” of the twentieth century in Israel and North America. This seminar brought together historians, anthropologists, literary scholars, and political scientists to mine the extraordinarily rich history and culture of East European Jewry. Fellows were animated by the shared sense that the historic Jewish communities that once covered the broad swathe of territory between the Baltic and the Black Seas have now moved to the center of the study of the modern Jewish experience.

Several broad debates structured the collective conversation over the course of the year. Has the motif of “crisis” monopolized the interpretation of East European Jewish history? If so, why—and what might take its place? Did Polish and/or Russian Jewry constitute worlds unto themselves, or might we see in East European Jewish life certain extrapolations of the surrounding Slavic societies? How did the intensely politicized milieu of the early 20th century shape the production and consumption of a modern Jewish culture? In the course of these debates, participants brought into focus unfamiliar dimensions of the biographies of figures such as S. Y. Abramovitch (Mendele Moykher Sforim), Shlomo Rapoport (Ansky), and Isaac Babel. The impact of mass violence on Jewish consciousness was a recurrent theme, as was the problem of nationhood. Finally, by exploring the work of Salo Baron, Emmanuel Ringelblum, Simon Dubnov, and the founders of the YIVO Institute, the seminar gave participants the chance to scrutinize the original fashioners of the East European Jewish past, and thus to reflect on our own enterprise.
Israel Bartal  
(Ph.D. 1971, Hebrew University)  
Professor in the Institute of Jewish Studies at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
From Corporation to Nation: The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881  

Hamutal Bar-Yosef  
(Ph.D. 1985, Hebrew University)  
Professor in the Department of Hebrew literature at Ben-Gurion University  

CAJS Project:  
The Russian Roots of Jewish Neo-Mysticism  

Related Publications:  

Louis and Bessie Stein Fellow  
David Engel  
(Ph.D. 1979, University of California, Los Angeles)  
Greenberg Professor of Holocaust Studies and Professor of History in the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University  

CAJS Project:  
The Twenty Years’ Crisis of East European Jewry: 1919-1939  

Related Publications:  

“A Young Jew from Galicia on the Anti-Jewish Boycott in Congress Poland, 1913: From the Writings of the Young Salo Baron” (Hebrew), Gal-Ed 19 (2004).  


Herbert and Ellie Katz Distinguished Fellow  
Jonathan Frankel  
(Ph.D. 1961, Cambridge University, Cambridge, England)  
Professor in the Department of Russian Studies and Contemporary Jewish Studies at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
Russian-Jewish Life as Refracted through the Writings of Yosef Haim Brenner: 1900-1909  

Primo Levi Fellow  
Zvi Gitelman  
(Ph.D. 1968, Columbia University)  
Preston Tisch Professor of Judaic Studies in the Department of Political Science at University of Michigan  

CAJS Project:  
Analysis of Jewish identities in post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine  

Related Publications:  


François Guesnet  
(Ph.D. 1996, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg im Breisgau)  
Fellow at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture at Leipzig  

CAJS Project:  
The Polish Experience: Political Culture and Jewish Collective Identities, 1840-1881  


Kathryn Hellerstein  
(Ph.D. 1981, Stanford University) 
Ruth Meltzer Senior Lecturer in Yiddish and Jewish Studies in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at University of Pennsylvania

CAJS Project:  
Women Yiddish Poets in Eastern Europe

Hillel J. Kieval  
(Ph.D. 1981, Harvard University)  
Gloria M. Goldstein Professor of Jewish History and Thought in the Department of History at Washington University in St. Louis

CAJS Project:  
Crisis and Everyday Life in East Central Europe: The Modern Ritual Murder Trial

Related Publications:  

Primo Levi Fellow

Samuel Grunfeld Fellow Rose and Henry Zifkin Teaching Fellow

John D. Klier  
(Ph.D. 1976, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign)

CAJS Project:  
Reassessing the Foundation Myths of Russian Jewish History: 1827-1894

Related Publications:  


Maurice Amado Foundation Fellow

Jack Kugelmass  
Irving and Miriam Lowe Professor and Director in the Department of Jewish Studies Program at Arizona State University

CAJS Project:  
Jewish Life in Post-War Poland

Cecile E. Kuznitz  
(Ph.D. 2000, Stanford University)  
Assistant Professor of Jewish History in the Department of History at Bard College

CAJS Project:  
History of the YIVO Institute

Related Publications:  

CAJS Project:
Literature and Counter History: The Memory of Military Conscription in Russian-Jewish Culture

Related Publications:


*Ruth Meltzer Fellow
Rachel Manekin*
(Ph.D. 2001, Hebrew University)
Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at Hebrew University

CAJS Project:

Related Publications:

*Marcus Moseley*
(Ph.D. 1991, Oxford University)
Visiting Professor in the Department of English at Johns Hopkins University

CAJS Project:
From People of the Book to Literary Nation: On the Emergence of Literature in Jewish Eastern Europe

Related Publications:


*Betty and Morris Shuch Fellow
Kenneth B. Moss*
(Ph.D. 2003, Stanford University)
Assistant Professor of Modern European Jewish History in the Department of History at Johns Hopkins University

CAJS Project:
A Time for Tearing Down and a Time for Building Up: Recasting Jewish Culture in Eastern Europe, 1914-1921

Related Publications:

*Ella Darivoff Fellow
Benjamin Nathans*
(Ph.D. 1995, University of California at Berkeley)
Associate Professor in the Department of History at University of Pennsylvania

CAJS Project:
A “Hebrew Drama”: The Individual, the Collective, and the Problem of Crisis in Russian-Jewish History

Related Publications:
“Russko-evreiskaia vstrecha.” *Ab Imperio* (forthcoming)

*Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter With Late Imperial Russia.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.


*Martin Gruss Fellow
Alyssa Quint*
(Ph.D. 2002, Harvard University)
Adjunct Professor in the Department of Judaic Studies at Brooklyn College

CAJS Project:
The Origins of Modern Yiddish Culture; and Theatre and Theatricality in Nineteenth Century Russia

Related Publications:


*Herbert and Ellie Katz Distinguished Fellow
Moshe Rosman*
(Ph.D. 1982, Jewish Theological Seminary)
Professor in the Department of Jewish History at Bar Ilan University

CAJS Project:
Jewish Women in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth
Related Publications:


Lucius N. Littauer Fellow
Gabriella Safran
(Ph.D. 1998, Princeton University)
Associate Professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Stanford

CAJS Project:
The Russian Aesthetics of Jewish Identity: A Literary Biography of S. Ansky

Related Publications:

Martin Gruss Fellow
Joshua Shanes
(Ph.D. 2002, University of Wisconsin)
Associate Lecturer in the Department of History at University of Wisconsin

CAJS Project:
National Regeneration in the Diaspora: Nationalism, Politics and Jewish Identity in Late Habsburg Galicia, 1883-1914

Related Publications:


Michael R. Steinhardt Fellow
Marcos Silber
(Ph.D. 2001, Tel-Aviv University)

Assistant Editor of Gal-Ed: On the History of the Jews of Poland at the Diaspora Research Institute at Tel Aviv University

CAJS Project:
The Struggle for Autonomy: The Jews of Lithuania During World War I

Related Publications:
“It's possible that this bloody war will destroy the walls of the last Gettoes': on the Historian Meir Balaban and his activities in Poland During First World War” (Hebrew). Shvut 11, (forthcoming).

“A Joint Political Program for All the Jews in Poland during the First World War - Success and Failure.” Jewish History (forthcoming).


Nancy and Laurence Glick Teaching Fellow
Adam Teller
(Ph.D. 1997, Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at University of Haifa

CAJS Project:
Social and Cultural History of the Rabbinate in Early Modern Poland-Lithuania

Related Publications:

SHORT-TERM FELLOWS
Ada Rapoport Albert
University College London

Gershon Bacon
Bar Ilan University

Jacob Barnai
University of Haifa

Elchanan Reiner
Tel Aviv University
Prescriptive Tradition and Lived Experience in the Jewish Religion: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives

Like many of the fellowship themes at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, this year's theme challenged the boundaries that have conventionally structured and confined the study of Jews and Judaism: in this case the methodological divide between history and anthropology. In this year's seminar, historians, anthropologists and practitioners of an interdisciplinary approach to religious studies, focused intensely on the evaluation and reconfiguration of history, anthropology, and folklore in Jewish Studies. The forum looked repeatedly at the vast variety of Jewish practice as it has emerged over time and space. Questions of the relationship between prescriptive tradition and lived experience, elite forms and popular expressions, canonical textuality and embodied practice, ethnography and archive, arose repeatedly. While all present agreed on the importance of historical specificity in the analysis of ritual and tradition, there was as well a recurrent curiosity about the value and limits of synchronic and comparative approaches—setting up a productive tension between work that focused on specific historical, local, and even personal contexts and that which drew in persistent trans-historical tropes or practices.

While the conversation around the table was lively, the year was particularly rich outside the seminar room and the honest and warm camaraderie of the group continues to be remarkable. Some of the most energetic and productive work happened in the fellow-initiated reading groups, in the halls, and over dinner. Needless to say, the fruits of this year’s seminar are still works-in-progress but in their final form they are sure to contribute to the ongoing process of methodological refinement within Jewish studies.
Ra’anan (Abusch) Boustan  
Ph.D. 2003, Princeton University  
Assistant Professor in the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies at University of Minnesota  

CAJS Project:  
Anthropological Approaches to the Problem of Heterogeneity in Hekhalot Literature

Charles W. and Sally Rothfeld Fellowship  
Dan Ben-Amos  
Ph.D. 1967, Indiana University  
Professor in the Graduate Program of Folklore and Folk Life at University of Pennsylvania  

CAJS Project:  
Elijah the Prophet: Historic Symbolic Analysis

Herbert and Ellie Katz Distinguished Fellowship  
Menahem Ben-Sasson  
Ph.D. 1982, Hebrew University  
Professor of the History of the Jewish People in the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
Ceremony and Life of Oriental Jewry: 9th–13th Centuries

Maurice Amado Foundation Fellowship  
Yoram Bilu  
Ph.D. 1979, Hebrew University  
Professor in the Department of Psychology at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
Shrine and Pilgrimage in Anthropological and Historical Perspectives: The Cult of Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yohai

Betty and Morris Shuch Term Fellowship  
Jeffrey Chajes  
Ph.D. 1999, Yale University  
Lecturer in the Department of Jewish History at University of Haifa  

CAJS Project:  
The Voice of a Woman: A History of Jewish Women’s Spirituality

Louis and Bessie Stein Term Fellowship  
Tamar El-Or  
Ph.D. 1990, Bar Ilan University  
Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
Reserved Seats: Ushering Mizrahi Women to their Sephardi Location: Gender, Religion and Literacy Among the Mizrahi-Sephardi Community

Dalck and Rose Feith Family Fellowship  
Talya Fishman  
Ph.D. 1986, Harvard University  
Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at University of Pennsylvania  

CAJS Project:  
Custom’s Emergence as a Competitor to Law: Reconstructing a Culture Revolution of Medieval Ashkenaz

Ruth Meltzer Distinguished Fellowship  
Harvey Goldberg  
Ph.D. 1967, Harvard University  
Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Hebrew University  

CAJS Project:  
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Lucette Valensi
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Nathan Wachtel
College of France
From the Library
This Geniza fragment is an unassuming piece of rag paper containing some faded ink in well-nigh illegible Arabic script. The top, bottom, and right side have been torn away, and the back was re-used as writing material in later decades. All this might naturally lead us to discount its significance as a historical object. And yet S. D. Goitein, who first identified the fragment, called it “the most important Geniza document found thus far illustrating the official position of the Jerusalem Gaonate within the Muslim state.” What did he mean?

To understand the significance of the document, we must enlist other medieval sources to help us reimagine the circumstances under which it was written and the story of how it came into being in the world—its biography, if you will. Halper 354v was born in the Jewish community of eleventh-century Egypt and Palestine, and its biographical tale commences amidst a drama of power and politics at the court of the Fatimid caliphs in Cairo. It is not always easy to connect Geniza documents about the internal politics of the Jewish community with the high politics of the age, and that makes Halper 354v all the more exceptional.

When the Fatimid caliph al-Zahir died in 1036, his son and heir, al-Mustansir, was but a boy of seven. Power at court was hotly contested between the dead caliph’s vizier, al-Jarjara’i, and the newly anointed boy-caliph’s mother. Their rivalry is the source of much commentary in the medieval Arabic chronicles, which depict “the mother of al-Mustansir” (as they call her) jealously running government affairs even after the boy came of age. Al-Jarjara’i is one of the more colorful characters of the Islamic Middle Ages: earlier in the century, al-Zahir’s father, the unpredictable caliph al-Hakim (996-1021), had accused al-Jarjara’i of embezzlement and had both his hands and forearms cut off; al-Hakim’s successor al-Zahir (1021-36) nonetheless named the now armless al-Jarjara’i vizier, thereby rendering him only the second Fatimid courtier to hold this title. He served in this capacity—and as a major check on the power of al-Mustansir’s mother—until his death in 1045.

Al-Mustansir’s mother, for her part, had special ties to the Jews of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. She had made her entrance onto the stage of history as a slave in the household of the Karaite Jew Abraham al-Tustari, banker and purveyor of luxury items to the caliph’s court who left his mark in the Arabic chronicles and the Geniza alike. Al-Tustari gave his slave-girl as a gift to al-Zahir; the caliph took her as one of his concubines; and she bore him his first son, the boy who would become caliph. When al-Mustansir ascended the throne, his mother remained loyal to her former master and patron, now one of her closest advisers. Al-Tustari’s presence at court was therefore of some potential advantage to the Jews, as well as to anyone who happened to cultivate alliances with him and his mercantile and banking firm. During his years at court, various Rabbanite and Karaite Jews of the Fatimid realm submitted petitions seeking his aid and intercession, as well as that of his brother Hesed and a third Karaite, David ha-Levi b. Isaac, head of the Fatimid bureau of taxation, and many of these have survived in the Geniza. Here we see that the patron-client relationships that formed...
the social backbone of medieval Near Eastern society operated up to the highest echelons of governmental power—and across denominational divides.

That patron-client system left a decisive stamp on the official character of Jewish self-government in the Middle Ages. Jews, like other religious minorities under Islamic rule, enjoyed collective autonomy and the direct protection of the state in religious and communal affairs. But that protection needed to be reaffirmed at every important juncture: when a new gaon or local judge acceded to office, or when a new caliph ascended the throne. The way to reaffirm official prerogatives was by petitioning the caliph and the chancery for recognition. The petitioners would also thereby implicitly and reciprocally affirm that the caliph was their highest patron and protector. A handful of petitions found their way into the Geniza; other sources jog the historical imagination by conveying the choreography attached to the process of submitting a petition.

Subjects of the realm brought their written entreaties to the palace in Cairo and waited at one of its gates, where a runner collected the petitions of the day and handed them over to palace officials. The caliph considered the request and suggested changes. After the caliph endorsed a petition, it was returned to the party who had submitted it with his ratifying signature (his ‘alama). Submitting a request was therefore a business facilitated by connections at court and the presence of sympathetic bureaucrats and courtiers who could see petitions through the chancery.

Solomon ben Judah had been serving as gaon of the Jerusalem yeshiva for about eleven years when the boy-caliph ascended the throne. He was ideally poised to profit from the presence of high-ranking Karaites at court. Originally from Fez in the far Maghrib, Solomon had worked tirelessly throughout his tenure as gaon to promote unity among Fatimid Jewry, and particularly between the Rabbanites and Karaites of Palestine. In 1029, he prevented an unruly Rabbanite mob from excommunicating the Karaites at a major public pilgrimage ceremony in Jerusalem. He had also exerted close control over his competitors, the Babylonian Rabbanites of Fustat, making a special trip to Egypt in 1029 to excommunicate some members of the Iraqi Jewish community who (in his words) “promulgate[d] false laws ... in order to foment strife among Israel.”

Solomon would have wasted no time in petitioning the new caliph for recognition as head of all the Rabbanites in the Fatimid realm. To that end, he needed the help of his supporters in Egypt, whom he asked to write a letter soliciting a rescript from the chancery—the document you see before you. It is not unlikely that Solomon’s men enlisted one of the courtly Karaites to
expedite the request, and although the rescript itself has not survived, we may assume that his request was granted. In the letter, Solomon’s supporters testify to every prerogative the gaon and his predecessors had ever enjoyed: supreme authority to arbitrate questions in Jewish religion and law, sole right to impose coercive sanctions on the Jews of the realm, especially the ban of excommunication, and sole power to appoint judges and other local communal functionaries throughout the Fatimid empire. They added, just to be clear, that “the Jews are not permitted to disapprove of or to object to his decisions or actions.” Hence Goitein’s statement with which I began: Halper 354v is in fact the clearest evidence we have that the gaon of the rabbinical academy in Jerusalem served as the governmentally recognized leader of all the Rabbanite Jews in the realm. This humble-looking scrap is therefore the most important source we have on how Jewish communal autonomy and self-government functioned in the medieval Islamic world.

But there was one aspect of the document’s “biography” that Goitein did not explore, and that was the possibility that at some point it passed through Karaite hands. The paradox of Karaite courtiers helping a Rabbanite gaon to confirm his power need not detain us for long. The eleventh century was an era of close cooperation between the leaders of the two communities, but more than that, in several instances rabbinic power depended crucially upon Karaite help. Karaites names appear on Geniza lists of donors to the Jerusalem academy from the 1020s. A pretender to the Jerusalem geonate who sought to overthrow Solomon ben Judah in 1038 wrote a number of obsequious letters to various Egyptian Karaite grandees whose support he sought because he knew that he could not attain this high rabbinic rank without it. And one Geniza letter notes that Sherira and Hayya, the geonim of Pumbedita (968-1004 and 1004-1038 respectively), employed the Tustaris as their Egyptian point-men in conveying their responsa westward to Fustat and Qayrawan—a behind-the-scenes glimpse of Babylonian rabbinic logistics that one could hardly imagine on the basis of reading geonic responsa alone.

Goitein can hardly be faulted for explaining only the Rabbanite side of our document’s history, since the letter explicitly restricts the gaon’s jurisdiction to “the party known as the Rabbanite Jews,” to the exclusion of the Karaites. But as it turns out, the alliances Solomon and other rabbinic leaders cultivated with Karaite leaders would transform Jewish self-government in Egypt for centuries to come. By the end of the eleventh century, Rabbanites and Karaites united under the aegis of a single territorial leader, “the head of the Jews.” In 1082, the second incumbent of the office even married a high-born Karaite woman to secure his chances at gaining the position. The communities remained united administratively until the Ottomans abolished the office of head of the Jews in the sixteenth century.

For historians of medieval Jewry, Goitein’s discovery attests to the social history of rabbinic realpolitik, to the precise nature of geonic power and privilege, and to the makings of Jewish self-government in the medieval world. For historians of the Middle East in general, it furnishes rare documentary evidence of the hands-on functioning of caliphal rule.

Footnote

The most important—and useful—piece of information in the Dropsie Haggadah, however, is something far more delectable than another textual or ritual variant. It is also a feature of the Haggadah that, lamentably, has hardly received attention from scholars.

The Dropsie Haggadah by David Stern

We know neither the Haggadah’s scribe nor precisely when the text was written; the most recent scholarly evaluation has dated it to eleventh-century Egypt. The top of the first page of the haggadah records the Haftorah blessings for Passover—a sign indicating that the booklet we now have was originally part of a larger prayer-book, and that the Dropsie Haggadah came into existence at a time before the Passover haggadah had become an independent book in its own right. At some point, however, its owner must have torn the haggadah’s pages out from the larger codex—presumably, one imagines, so that he could use it more easily at a seder. At some still later point, after its owner had stopped using the Haggadah, he “buried” it, as was the wont of Cairo Jews, in the later-to-become-famous genizah of the Ben Ezra synagogue in Fustat, Old Cairo, and from where, in the late 19th century, black-market dealers looted it. Finally, sometime between 1896 and 1901, David Werner Amram (1866-1939), a professor of law at the University of Pennsylvania and a serious bibliophile with a special interest in Hebrew books, bought the haggadah (with 358 other fragments) in Jerusalem from such black-market dealers, and eventually sold it to Dropsie College—the predecessor of CAJS—from which the Haggadah received its name. Personally, I wish it were called the Amram Haggadah. David Werner Amram’s father, Werner David Amram, was the owner of the first matzah bakery in Philadelphia; evidently, the family had Passover in their blood.

For scholars—indeed for anyone interested in the history of the seder or the haggadah—the Dropsie Haggadah is an invaluable document. For one thing, it preserves the ancient Palestinian version of the seder as it still was used in Egypt as late as the eleventh century. The Palestinian seder was eventually superceded by the Babylonian rite, which ultimately became the near-universal standard with which we are all familiar today; but the Palestinian ceremony was much closer to the “original” seder as it first came into existence in the second and third centuries C.E. That early seder was considerably shorter than ours, and more to the point, without many of the duplications that riddle the full haggadah text we use. For example, the Mah Nishtanah in the Palestinian seder had only three questions, not four, and those questions directly addressed the seder’s three main symbolic foods: the Passover sacrifice, the Matzah, and the Marror. So too, the Dropsie Haggadah, in line with the Palestinian

Probably the most famous, and possibly the most valuable, book in the library of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies is a very modest gathering of ten folded sheets of brown wrinkled paper that is known as the Dropsie Haggadah. Written in a loopy but very legible semi-cursive oriental hand, the Dropsie Haggadah is the oldest near-complete text of the Passover haggadah in existence.
version, includes only one of the two “prologues” to the main part of the haggadah’s re-telling of the Exodus story; after all, who needs two prologues if one is enough? Similarly, the Dropsie Haggadah’s version of the famous midrash on Deut. 26, the heart of the recitation, is also much shorter, with midrashic interpretations only for the very beginning and the very end. The Palestinians obviously felt that a little midrash went a long way and, unlike their Babylonian cousins, they didn’t feel the compulsion to comment upon every single phrase and word.

The most important—and useful—piece of information in the Dropsie Haggadah, however, is something far more delectable than another textual or ritual variant. It is also a feature of the Haggadah that, lamentably, has hardly received attention from scholars. The first symbolic food eaten at the seder is known as “karpas” (from the Aramaic word for “celery”); commentators see the meaning of this particular food as relating either to the new greens of spring or (through a pun too complicated to translate) to the burdens of heavy labor under which the Israelites toiled in Egypt. In fact, what we know as karpas—the celery (or parsley) dipped in salt-water—is simply the lonely, dessicated survivor of the full “appetizer” course that was served before the main course in a typical Greco-Roman banquet in antiquity. The Dropsie Haggadah provides us with invaluable information about what this appetizer course was really like, and what eleventh-century Jews in Egypt (like their Palestinian ancestors) actually ate for karpas, their hors d’oeuvres. In contrast to our contemporary haggadot, which record only a single blessing for karpas, the Dropsie Haggadah has four. The first blessing is similar recited over rice mixed with eggs and honey; eggs (seasoned but probably not devilled) were a favorite at Greco-Roman banquets. Finally, the fourth blessing—the most tantalizing of all—praised “the Creator of different types of creatures (nefashot),” namely, animals, and was recited over sweetbreads and skewers of grilled meats and sausages (and probably more eggs).

With these blessings, most of which have fallen out of the standard rabbinic liturgy, the Dropsie Haggadah provides us with the incalculably valuable information, not available anywhere else, that the appetizer course at the original seder was not our sad stem of wilted parsley or a celery stick immersed in over-salted water but a ganze production of crudités, fruit plates and fancy meats. Then as now—as anyone knows who’s been to a Jewish wedding or seen the film Goodbye Columbus—the best course has always been the hors d’oeuvres. This information—the true lesson of the Dropsie Haggadah—should be widely publicized. It shows us how ancient manuscripts provide us not only with truly priceless useful information, but also, more importantly, with truly universal wisdom: It’s all about food.
S

ometime during the early 1950s, Marvin Weiner, a Philadelphia area businessman and collector of early Americana, was browsing “Sam Kleinman’s Schuykill Book Shop,” located at the corner of Lancaster and Belmont in West Philadelphia. He found there a ledger-sized volume filled with clippings by Sabato Morais, a Sephardic Jew, born in Livorno, Italy, and one of the preeminent American Jew-

ish leaders of the nineteenth century. Realizing its significance, Weiner purchased the scrapbook and thus saved one of the most remarkable documentary treasures of American Jewish history. In 1992, during the quincentenary of the discovery of the new world, Mr. Weiner, by then the chairman of the library committee of the Annenberg Research Institute, donated the scrapbook to the library. The rediscovery and donation of the Ledger, whose loss had been reported and lamented as early as 1947, have prompted a number of reevaluations of our understanding of American Jewish history.

The profound significance of this unique treasure is clearly evident, both in terms of its scope and content. Its 831 items of newspaper clippings, pamphlets, circulars and typescripts, spanning the second half of the nineteenth century, cover almost every major public event, political debate and theological controversy of that era. In particular, the Ledger documents the fundamental role Morais played as the principle founder of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City in 1886.

Morais’ copious handwritten annotations to his own (often anonymously published) writings offer a window into his private reflections and views on such matters as the American Civil War, capital punishment, the creation of a uniform, abbreviated American Jewish prayer service, his differences with Isaac Mayer Wise, the leader of the American Jewish Reform movement, as well as his reactions to Christian missionaries, ethnic intolerance, mass migration, and political Zionism. The Scrapbook also contains the only extant fragments, clipped from the short-lived Philadelphia newspaper, the Jewish Index, of Morais’ translations of Italian Jewish literature (the first English translations ever made) for an American audience. In short, the Scrapbook alters the familiar picture of nineteenth-century American Jewry as “German” and Reform in its orientation. It shows how Morais disseminated his traditional Sephardic religious worldview to a national audience through the medium of both the Jewish and non-Jewish press.
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