

*Report of the Oxford
Centre for Hebrew and
Jewish Studies
2012–2013*



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OXFORD CENTRE FOR
HEBREW AND JEWISH STUDIES

A Recognized Independent Centre of the University of Oxford



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Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies

Main Office

Yarnton Manor, Yarnton
Oxford OX5 1PY, England
Telephone: Oxford +44 (0)1865 377946
Fax: Oxford +44 (0)1865 375079
Email: enquiries@ochjs.ac.uk
Website: www.ochjs.ac.uk

Hebrew and Jewish Studies Unit

Oriental Institute, University of Oxford
Pusey Lane, Oxford OX1 2LE, England
Telephone: Oxford +44 (0)1865 278200
Fax: Oxford +44 (0)1865 278190

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Message from the Acting President

The decision of the Governors announced in November 2013 to relocate the Centre's activities to central Oxford from September 2014 has been widely welcomed as a reflection of the Centre's integration into the intellectual life of the University and a boost to the Centre's ability to reach out to the wider public.

The move will mark a major development in the history of the Centre. There will inevitably be much to plan during the current academic year for our future in the city centre. In the meantime, our final year in Yarnton will be exceptionally full. The Centre will be hosting two Oxford Seminars for Advanced Jewish Studies and a full range of lectures, conferences and other teaching. In the meantime, we shall be putting into place the final arrangements for the Oxford Seminar for 2014–2015, which will be our first in our new premises, and preparing for the Seminar in 2015–2016.

It is a pleasure to welcome from the start of this academic year Dr Adriana Jacobs as the Centre's new Fellow in Modern Hebrew Literature and Dr Sara Hirschhorn as the Sidney Brichto Fellow in Israel Studies.

Dr Hirschhorn, who has been most recently at Brandeis as a postdoctoral fellow following her doctorate at the University of Chicago, strengthens a burgeoning Israel Studies programme in Oxford led by Derek Penslar, the Stanley Lewis Professor of Israel Studies. Professor Penslar, who took up his post in the University in October 2012, has also been appointed to a Fellowship at the Centre from November 2013.

Dr Jacobs comes to us from a postdoctoral fellowship in Yale. Her fellowship at the Centre is held in conjunction with the Cowley Lecturership in Postbiblical Hebrew, a post long filled with distinction by David Patterson. He would be very proud to see how the Centre he founded has evolved.

Martin Goodman

November 2013

President's Message

This is my final President's message for the *Annual Report*. By the time you receive this, I will be on sabbatical in anticipation of my retirement on 30 June 2014.

It has been a wonderful and challenging five years as President of the leading institution for Jewish Studies in Europe and the provider of Jewish Studies at the University of Oxford. Three new Fellows have joined the academic staff, including two appointed to newly created posts in Eastern European Jewish Civilization and Israel Studies. We have institutionalized the Visiting Fellows programme of Oxford Seminars in Advanced Jewish Studies, in which teams of scholars are invited to work collaboratively around a research topic that draws on Oxford's unique resources. We have continued to make a major contribution to the fields of Hebrew and Jewish studies through our Fellows' teaching and research. The Centre has also been a home to visiting scholars on research sabbaticals, a conference centre for European Jewish leaders, and a meeting place for many of the leading Jewish studies scholars from around the world.

My parting message is this: From the perspective of Jewish civilization, the Centre is one of the most important institutions in the world. People are often surprised to learn that Oxford has the world's longest continuous history of teaching Hebrew (since 1546) and that the Bodleian Library holds the world's most important collection of medieval Hebrew and Jewish manuscripts. Hebrew was introduced at Oxford to support Protestant Reformers who wanted to study the Hebrew Bible in its original language in order better to understand the roots of their own Christianity. The Christian Hebraist return to the sources also led the Bodleian Library curators to amass thousands of Hebrew and Jewish manuscripts – almost the entire canon of Jewish literature.

Ironies abound. Many of the Oxford Christian Hebraists who perpetuated the study of Hebrew and acquired the Hebrew manuscripts did so at a time before Jews were legally allowed to live in England. And even after they were readmitted in 1656, Christian Hebraist fascination with Judaism did not translate into affection for Jews or respect for the Jewish religion. But, with profound historical implications, they did preserve the European and Mediterranean Jewish literary legacy more fully than anywhere else.

The Nazis annihilated six million Jewish lives, obliterated thousands of Jewish communities, and destroyed more than 100 million Jewish books. Ironically – and due in great measure to British resistance to the planned Nazi invasion – the European Jewish legacy was conserved at Oxford and rescued from destruction. We have a profound historical responsibility towards these remnants of what would otherwise have been a lost civilization.

The Centre's founding vision was to rebuild academic Jewish studies in Europe in the aftermath of the Holocaust. To this we must add that our mission is to reconstruct the narratives of Jewish civilization by researching the Hebrew manuscript collections at Oxford and publishing the findings both for scholars and the general public. We have treasures in the Bodleian that provide more accurate readings of Talmudic literature before Christian censors' and printers' errors crept in. We have Maimonides's own handwritten manuscripts that allow us to understand how he formulated and reformulated his views. We have manuscripts that demonstrate the collaboration of Jewish scribes and Christian artists in the production of Hebrew prayer books. We have documents in Judeo-Arabic that help us reconstruct Jewish life under medieval Islam. If we wish truly to understand Jewish civilization and the complex relationships between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, we will have to develop a strategy to support, promote and direct research into the Bodleian's Hebrew and Jewish collections. And as we continue to mine this great collection, we will be able to systematically reconstruct our knowledge of Jewish civilization and its interaction with other civilizations, and to communicate this knowledge to the scholarly world and, eventually, to the wider public.

But, in tribute to the destroyed European Jewish communities, we must also devote resources to strengthening European Jewish life today. By drawing on the incredible resources of the University, the Centre should generate social scientific research that can benefit policy-makers and practitioners and prepare Jewish communal leaders. Finally, because Oxford is midway between North America and Israel, it can serve as a convenient meeting point and a neutral venue for strengthening the relationship between North American and Israeli Jews while incorporating a third pillar – European Jewry – into the vital conversation.

The Centre has an incredible legacy on which it has built a magical present. Now is the time to set course for an even greater destiny in the years ahead.

David Ariel



Highlights of the 2012-13 Academic Year



Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies

The first Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies took place at Yarnton from January to June 2013, on the theme of ‘Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: Exploring Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs’. The Seminar was led by Dr Adam Ferziger, of Bar-Ilan University, together with Dr Miri Freud-Kandel, the Centre’s Fellow in Modern Judaism. It opened with a lecture by Professor David Weiss Halivni (Bar-Ilan University) entitled ‘Is the Critical Method Compatible with Orthodoxy?’ followed by a two-day residential symposium on ‘Orthodox Judaism and Theology in the Twenty-first Century’.

The Seminar examined the state of contemporary Orthodox Judaism in general, and addressed specific issues such as the place of rational debate in contemporary Judaism, changing approaches to interpretations of revelation, the impact of gender issues and the viability of concepts such as inclusivism, pluralism and openness in Orthodox Judaism.

Many of the topics under discussion reflected questions raised in the theological writings of Louis Jacobs. The research seminar provided an opportunity to bring together scholars to examine the principles and texts on which Jacobs built his theology. Also under consideration was the extent to which Orthodoxy has attempted to answer the questions Jacobs posed for it over fifty years ago. In addition to twice-weekly seminars in Oxford throughout Hilary and Trinity terms, several lectures and panel discussions were arranged in London in conjunction with the Friends of Louis Jacobs, and a Yom Limmud weekend took place at Yarnton in early May.

The opportunity for experts to come together in such a Seminar setting for an extended period of time, freed from teaching and administrative responsibilities, facilitated the production, publication and dissemination of considered and scholarly contributions to understanding the possible future directions for Orthodox Judaism and the role of theology and theological debate in contemporary Judaism. (Some preliminary findings of the seminar appear on pages 26–140 of this *Report*.)

The Purim-shpil and Beyond: A Seminar on Jewish Theatre



In Michaelmas 2012 Dr Zehavit Stern organized a series of seminars that examined modern Jewish theatre in the broader context of European culture and the (real or alleged) heritage of Yiddish and Hebrew culture. Dr Stern opened the series, which took place at the Oriental Institute, with a talk entitled: 'How to Begin the Story of Yiddish Theatre? The Quest for Origins and the Rediscovery of the *Purim-shpil*'.

Other seminar participants covered aspects of theatre in Jewish Palestine, Israeli theatre and Eastern and Central European Jewish theatre. Speakers included Professor Glenda Abramson (Oxford), Dr Dorit Yerushalmi (Haifa) and Dr Brigitte Dalinger (Vienna) among others. The series was brought to a close with a special performance by the Sala-manca group, which used experimental technology to revisit modern Yiddish poetry and pay homage to its revolutionary spirit.

Arts and Humanities Research Council Workshops on the Jewish Reception of Josephus in the Eighteenth and Nine- teenth Centuries in Western Europe

A research project with the aim of investigating the reception of Josephus in Jewish culture from the eighteenth century to the present began in January 2013. It focused on the ways Jews since the middle of the eighteenth century built on earlier uses of Josephus's writings for their own purposes, examining the reasons for fluctuations of interest over time and in different places, and seeking to understand how such preferences were influenced by contemporary issues and how they in turn affected them. The project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and supported by the Centre (which hosted the workshops).

The project also looked at the impact of non-Jewish scholarship on Jewish interpretations of Josephus, and the extent to which Jewish attitudes to Josephus were affected by the view that he was a controversial participant in complex political events and a moral agent.

The specific focus of the first workshop was the reception of Josephus by Jews and Christians from Late Antiquity to c. 1750. This took place at



Yarnton on 7–8 January. The second workshop, in which participants were invited to turn to a range of cultural contexts, including the Yiddish Enlightenment, the Haskalah and the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, ran on 17–18 June. A further two workshops have been planned for the following academic year, by the project's principal investigator Professor Martin Goodman, and co-investigators Professor Tessa Rajak and Dr Andrea Schatz.

Conference on 'The Place of European Jewry in the Global Jewish Community'

A conference on 'The Place of European Jewry in the Global Jewish Community' was held at Yarnton Manor on 19–20 November 2012. Dr David Ariel, President of the Centre, and Dr Keith Kahn-Harris served as conference leaders.

Given the concentration of the world Jewish population in two major centres – North America and Israel – European Jewry is sometimes seen as much less significant globally. Further, the legacy of the Holocaust, together with the contemporary persistence (and it is often argued, upsurge) of anti-Semitism, can give the impression that European Jewry is beleaguered and imperilled.

It is certainly true that the Jewish populations of most European countries are modest and that ensuring their security against external threats is a major preoccupation. At the same time, there has been a significant renewal – even a renaissance – of Jewish life in many European countries. While demographic trends (outside the Haredi population) still point to a decline in the European Jewish population, there is considerable evidence to suggest that European Jewry is ever more innovative and creative in developing new forms of Jewish engagement.

These complex and contradictory trends take place against the backdrop of a Europe undergoing rapid social, political, economic and demographic change, and a global Jewish population similarly in flux. Against this backdrop, the conference investigated how to understand the political, economic and social contexts of European Jewry; how to make sense of the available demographic and sociological data; and how to understand the extent to which Jewish life in Europe is threatened and/or is experiencing a renaissance. The conference focused in particular on the four Jewish communities in Europe that comprise 80 per cent of European Jews – France, Germany, Hungary and the United Kingdom.

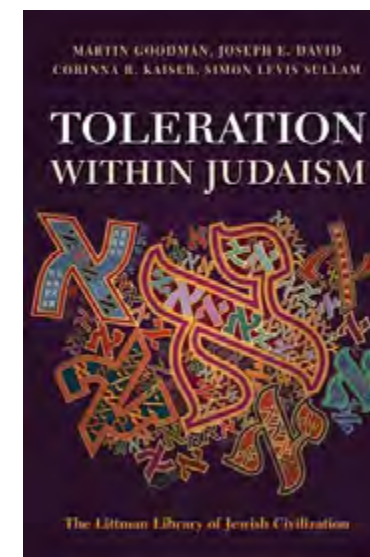
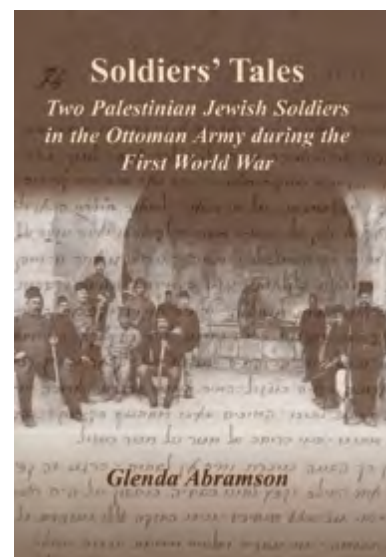
New Publications

Professor Glenda Abramson

Glenda Abramson's latest book – *Soldiers Tales: Two Palestinian Jewish Soldiers in the Ottoman Army during the First World War*, published in March 2013 by Vallentine Mitchell – uses the diaries of two middle-class Jews from Jerusalem who were conscripted and then transported to Western Anatolia with the labour battalions, to provide insight into the Ottoman army in the Middle East during the Great War. The diaries were discovered only recently and their contents appear here for the first time in English translation. The book also incorporates information from the unpublished letters of Yehuda Burla, another Palestinian Jewish conscript, who later became a well-known Hebrew author. In her detailed introduction, Professor Abramson describes life in the Jewish community in Palestine under the autocratic rule of Governor Jemal Pasha.

Professor Martin Goodman

Toleration within Judaism, a new book co-written by Martin Goodman, Joseph E. David, Corinna R. Kaiser and Simon Levis Sullam, was published on 30 May 2013 by the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. It sheds light on an important and overlooked aspect of the history of Judaism, by investigating how and why differences within Judaism have been tolerated from ancient times to the present in various parts of the world. The authors consider why Jews sometimes attempt to impose constraints on other Jews, or relate to them as if they were not Jews at all, while at other times recognizing differences of practice and belief and

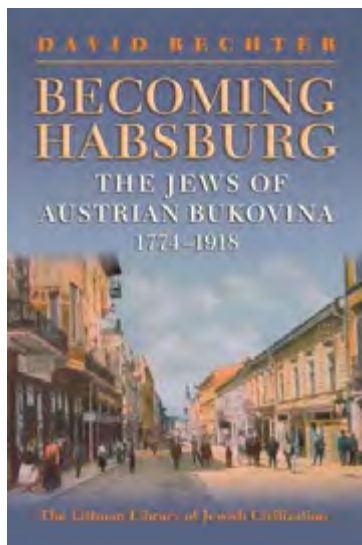


developing ways of accommodating them. They thereby provide an insight into a history of Judaism as a complex web of interactions between groups of Jews, despite grounds for mutual antagonism.

The introductory chapters of the book comprise a survey of cases of toleration within Judaism over the past 2000 years, and suggest a possible structural reason for them. Each of the eight chapters that follow documents and describes a specific case, attempting to explain it in light of the models outlined in the Introduction. These cases are presented in chronological order and have been selected to reflect a spectrum of responses, from grudging acceptance to enthusiastic welcome of difference. The concluding chapter provides an overview of the patterns of tolerance that have emerged, and discusses the implications for writing the history of Judaism as a narrative more complex than a linear progression from the Bible to the present, with variations presented as deviations, or as a model of overlapping 'Judaisms'.

Dr David Rechter

Dr David Rechter's new book, *Becoming Habsburg. The Jews of Austrian Bukovina, 1774–1918*, was published in June 2013, also by the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.



The Jews of Bukovina were integral to local society and at home in it. The book is an accessible guide to the special nature of Bukovina Jewry, while positioning it in a number of larger intellectual frameworks of relevance to European Jewish history, as well as to the history of Austria and of central Europe.

Habsburg Bukovina no longer exists, except in the realms of historiography, nostalgia and collective memory, but is remembered for its remarkable multinational, multi-faith character. Bukovina and its capital city Czernowitz have long been presented as exemplars of inter-ethnic cooperation, political moderation and cultural dynamism,

with Jews regarded as indispensable to the region's character and vitality.

This important new history conveys the special nature of Bukovina Jewry, while embedding it in the broader historical frameworks of Galician, imperial Austrian and east central European Jewish societies. The author carefully traces the evolution of the tangled relationship of state and society with the Jews, from the Josephinian Enlightenment through absolutism to emancipation, bringing to light the untold tale of the Jewish minority in the monarchy's easternmost province, often a byword for economic backwardness and cultural provincialism. Here, at the edge of the Habsburg monarchy, Jews forged a new society from familiar elements, a unique hybrid of eastern and western European Jewries. Bukovina Jewry was both and neither: its history can help us understand the crucial east/west fault line within European Jewry in the modern era, a previously untold story, successfully made relevant to a wider audience by this new book.

Louis Jacobs Online Exhibition

In conjunction with the Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies, the Leopold Muller Memorial Library launched a digital version of the exhibition

We Have Reason to Inquire: The Life and Works of Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs. The exhibition illustrates Rabbi Dr Jacobs's life and thought by means of documents, letters, newspaper clippings, manuscripts, typescripts and photos. It duplicates and supplements the physical exhibition at the Leopold Muller Memorial Library which was open for viewing between May and October 2013.

The Exhibition was curated by Dr César Merchán-Hamann, with co-curators Milena Zeidler (digital exhibition designer), Jane Barlow and Dr Zsófia Buda.



New York Symposium on the 'Crossing Borders' Exhibition

The Bodleian Library's 'Crossing Borders' exhibition, co-curated by Dr Piet van Boxel and Sabine Arndt, proved a great success at the Jewish Museum in New York, where it was on show until 3 February 2013. It was the subject of a symposium entitled *The Medieval Hebrew Manuscript Today*, held on Sunday 13 January at the Jewish Museum, where it was co-sponsored by the Centre and the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

The symposium was designed to assess the impact of Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations on the production, distribution and reception of Jewish manuscripts in the Middle Ages. Also investigated were the roles played by Jewish patrons and producers of manuscripts, and the influence on them of surrounding cultures. At the heart of the 'Crossing Borders' exhibition lay the concept that Hebrew, Arabic and Latin manuscripts served as a meeting-place



of cultures. The symposium approached this subject from three angles – the production of Hebrew manuscripts, their interpretation today and their future.

Three presenters, in addition to the Centre's President, Dr David Ariel, came especially from Oxford. Sabine Arndt spoke on 'Science and Scientists at Cultural Crossroads: The *Midrash ha-Hokhmah* of Judah ben Solomon ha-Cohen'; Dr Zsófia Buda gave a lecture entitled 'The Donkey that Travelled through Borders', and Dr César Merchán-Hamann talked about 'Translating Indian

Stories for Muslims, Jews and Christians'. The symposium was a great success, and was attended by large numbers of scholars as well as members of the public. There was animated discussion about the future of the study of medieval Hebrew manuscripts, in which widely differing views were represented. Participants agreed that the subject has gone from strength to strength with the help of new technologies, and that the large attendance at the symposium was evidence of the success of the exhibition.

New Centre Governors

The Centre appointed five new Governors in December 2012:

Dr Sondra Hausner is University Lecturer in the Study of Religion at Oxford. Her primary teaching interests are social and cultural theories of religion, and her research focuses on religion in diaspora, ritual dynamics, pilgrimage and religious practice and experience. She has also worked in public policy, particularly on issues of migration and gender in Himalayan South Asia. She is

affiliated with Oxford's Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), and is Fellow and Tutor in the Study of Religion at St Peter's College.

Dr Laurent Mignon is University Lecturer in Turkish at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of St Antony's College. Before coming to Oxford in 2011 he was Assistant Professor in the Department of Turkish Literature at the University of Bilkent in Ankara (Turkey), having completed his BA and his PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. His research interests include nineteenth- and twentieth-century Turkish literature, minority literature, socialist literature, biblical themes in modern Turkish literature and modern Jewish intellectual history.

Dr Deborah Sandler has been director of the visiting student programme at Wadham College, Oxford, since 2005. Prior to that she was a Senior Research Fellow at St Catherine's College and a member of the Oxford Law Faculty, specializing in public international law. She consults on a range of international environmental and human-rights projects, with focus on the Middle East water crisis. Dr Sandler has a BA from George Washington University, a JD (law) from the University of California, and a DPhil from the University of Oxford (Wolfson College). She is a member of the California and the Israeli bar associations, and is a citizen of Britain, Israel and the United States.

Michael Ullmann is Chairman of Prodigy Finance and has been involved in more than 40 different entrepreneurial businesses in various capacities. He has been an affiliate professor in entrepreneurship at INSEAD, the European graduate business school, where he helped the Entrepreneurship Department. He has an MA from St Catherine's College, Oxford, and an MBA from INSEAD. He has been a Fellow of St Catherine's and is active in Israel affairs and the Israel Diaspora Trust.

Anne Webber is Co-Chair of the Commission for Looted Art in Europe, which she co-founded in 1999, and Director of the Central Registry on Looted Cultural Property 1933–1945. She is a member of the UK government delegation to the International Commission which governs the International Tracing Service (ITS) and chairs the UK ITS Stakeholder Group. She is President of the Jewish Book Council and of Jewish Book Week and a member of the Centre's Library Committee and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. She is a former BBC Television documentary producer and director.



Left to right: Professor Malachi Beit-Arié, Margaret Vermes and Professor Emanuel Tov at the award-giving.

Honorary Fellowship Awards for Malachi Beit-Arié, Emanuel Tov and Geza Vermes

Three long-time associates of the Centre were recently awarded Honorary Fellowships: Professor Malachi Beit-Arié in June 2010, and Professor Emanuel Tov and Professor Geza Vermes in July 2012. These awards were celebrated belatedly at a Reception at Yarnton on 30 May 2013, at a time when the two Honorary Fellows from Israel were due to be in the UK. It was an occasion tinged with sadness, however, because of the death on 8 May of Professor Vermes. Geza's widow, Margaret Vermes, graciously attended the Reception and accepted the certificate.

New Cowley Lecturer in Modern Hebrew Literature

Dr Adriana X. Jacobs has been appointed as the University of Oxford's Cowley Lecturer and the Centre's Fellow in Modern Hebrew Literature.

Dr Jacobs's fields of interest include Modern Hebrew and Israeli poetry, Latin American Jewish fiction and poetry, and Translation Theory and History.

She was previously a Postdoctoral Fellow and American Council for Learned Societies New Faculty Fellow in the Department of Comparative Literature and Program in Judaic Studies at Yale University, having earlier taught at Princeton, Yale and the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Dr Jacobs took up her post in September when she, her husband and young child relocated to Oxford.



New Fellow in Israel Studies

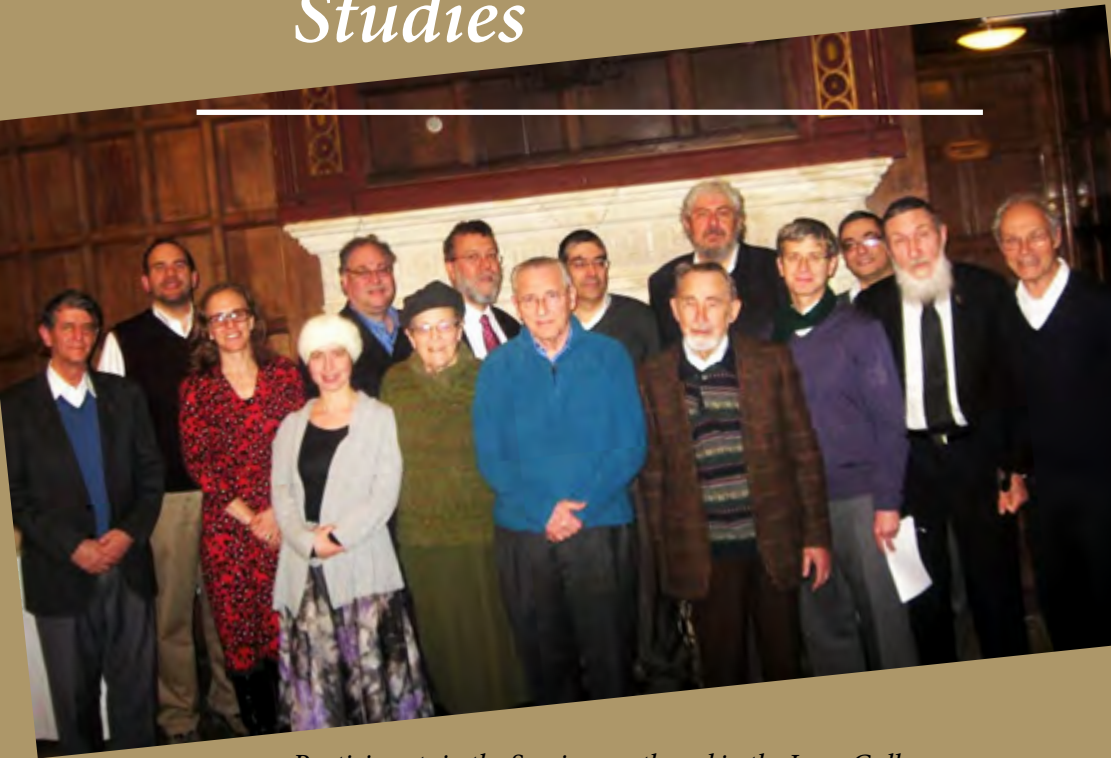
Dr Sara Hirschhorn has been appointed the Sidney Brichto Fellow in Israel Studies at the Centre, and University Research Lecturer in Israel Studies at the University of Oxford.

Dr Hirschhorn, whose PhD dissertation, 'City on a Hilltop: The Participation of Jewish-American Immigrants Within the Israeli Settler Movement, 1967–1987', provides a new perspective on the settler movement, was previously a postdoctoral fellow at the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University, researching the Israeli settler movement, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the US-Israel relationship. She is a contributor to the leading Israeli newspaper, *Haaretz*, and a frequent blogger on Israel affairs.

Dr Hirschhorn also took up her post in September.



Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies



Participants in the Seminar gathered in the Long Gallery at Yarnton Manor. Left-to right: Professor James Kugel, Dr Adam Ferziger, Dr Miri Freud-Kandel, Dr Nechama Hadari, Professor Alan Brill, Professor Tamar Ross, Dr Joshua Berman, Professor Samuel Heilman, Professor Arye Edrei, Professor David Weiss Halivni, Professor Paul Morris, Dr Judah Galinsky, Dr Michael Avioz, Professor Daniel Sperber, Professor Chaim Waxman

Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs

Orthodoxy, Theology and Louis Jacobs

Dr Miri Freud-Kandel
University of Oxford

What happens when you bring a group of academics to Oxford to study Orthodoxy and Theology in modern and contemporary Judaism? There were certainly more men seen walking around Yarnton Manor and the Oriental Institute wearing kippot (yarmulkes) than usual. Rather more kosher wine was drunk and considerable quantities of supervised bagels and smoked salmon (or *lox*, as some insisted on calling it) were regularly brought up from London to be consumed. Also, loudly sung Shabbat services cannot often have been heard in the Manor. Yet it wasn't all about Jewish behaviour. This was a group that came rather to take advantage of a rare opportunity, mostly freed from the duties of home institutions, to focus minds and be open to learning both with and from one another, and thereby to seek to move scholarship forward in understanding Orthodox Judaism.

The group brought together participants from a diverse range of backgrounds, in disciplinary, geographic and personal terms. The fifteen visiting fellows formally appointed as participants in the project, distinct from a number of other prominent academics brought in to present individual papers, ranged in seniority from among the most respected scholars in Jewish Studies, the recipients of numerous awards, to emerging stars. Everyone was there to

pursue their own personal projects, but also to meet regularly as a group to share work in progress in a genuinely constructive, collaborative setting.

The official title of the research seminar was 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. Perhaps unsurprisingly this came to be shortened informally, so we tended to refer to ourselves as a group working on 'Orthodoxy and Theology'. I had the privilege of convening the seminar alongside Dr Adam Ferziger of Bar-Ilan University, a social and intellectual historian who was a wonderful partner throughout the planning and execution of our project and to whom I am immensely grateful. In our opening symposium he acknowledged that he had not previously been inclined to devote much thought to Jewish theology. In this way he highlighted one of the underlying, recurrent issues that emerged throughout the seminar: what is the role of theology in Orthodox Judaism?

It is clear that theological considerations often have little overt or explicit impact either on the formal processes of halakhic decision-making or on the everyday lives of contemporary Orthodox Jews. My own research includes a consideration of whether Louis Jacobs's willingness to try to construct a theology of Judaism to address some of the questions posed by modernity and modern scholarship itself demonstrated a certain lack of Orthodoxy. The benefits or otherwise of bifurcation – of separating theological questions from the practical observance of Orthodox Judaism – became an issue to which our group frequently returned as we discussed the wondrously diverse range of topics under our central theme. An indication of this diversity can be gained by reading the summaries that follow. What emerged at a most basic level was an understanding of how much can be lost when theology is marginalized or ignored.

Alongside the weekly internal group meetings at which such questions were considered, a series of weekly seminars open to members of the University was planned across the two terms of the project. These sessions, convened at the Oriental Institute, provided an opportunity to bring in important scholars who had been unable to free themselves for a more extended stay. They also ensured that the work of the Seminar reached wider audiences. The papers presented stimulated lively discussion encompassing legal theory, philosophy, theology, social and intellectual history, Israel studies, sociology, gender and rabbinics. Another forum in which leading scholars were invited to join us for a shorter visit was the previously mentioned symposium and subsequent weekend programme which inaugurated the research seminar in January. The symposium was designed to identify some of the central topics for consideration

over the subsequent two terms. A palpable sense of opportunity for important research was generated at this event, and an understanding that the Oxford setting facilitated a much appreciated freedom from religious politics and pressure, fostering a sense of real fellowship. As the project developed there was an intellectual excitement around the group as members became conscious of how their own work contributed to the broader common project.

Two public lectures by former winners of the Israel Prize were organized in association with the opening symposium, one by Professor David Weiss Halivni in Oxford, the other by Professor Daniel Sperber in London. Each addressed in different ways the question of the scope for halakhic development within a Judaism retaining fidelity, one way or another, to the established texts of Orthodoxy. The numbers who braved the snow in Oxford to attend were beyond all expectations, as were those who came to the event in London. In view of the relevance of the group's research to contemporary Jewish debates, these opening lectures were part of an extensive public programme of subsequent events organized to run alongside the academic programme. This series ran under the title of 'Arguments for Heaven's Sake: Orthodoxy and Theology', and provided a rare forum for leading scholars to share their findings with a wider British public. The considerable audiences attending the varied events appeared to indicate a thirst for engagement outside the academy with the issues addressed in the research seminar. The different sessions offered included a study day in Oxford – a Yom Limmud – offering focused presentations by a number of different fellows and a panel discussion on the relationship between academic scholarship and Orthodox practice and observance. There were also a heavily oversubscribed Jewish Book Week session considering exactly how Modern Orthodox Judaism should be understood, and a number of open public lectures by our visiting fellows, held at a range of venues across London, covering topics encompassing the impact of feminism and biblical criticism on Orthodoxy, approaches to conversion, how to understand Freud on religion, contemporary popular understandings of revelation, and a special Lecture by Professor Michael Fishbane on the nature of God. Further details of these events are listed in the Academic events section in this volume.

It was David Weiss Halivni who famously commented that he could not talk with the people with whom he prayed but equally could not pray with those to whom he was comfortable talking. A frequently noted feature of the research seminar, experienced from the opening Shabbaton that formed part of the January symposium, was how such barriers had to a certain extent been broken down. The number of kippot did signal that many participants were

Orthodox of one stripe or another. Yet the religious backgrounds of participants differed and the group was welcoming to all. Both prayer and research discussions offered a space in which participants could assess critical issues of contemporary Orthodoxy with an academic rigour combined with sensitivity and consciousness of the immediate relevance of the topics being considered.

The kippot did also reflect a male bias in the makeup of the group, despite efforts to make the seminar more evenly balanced in gender terms. While women are steadily carving out more of a role in Jewish Studies, it is notable how male the world of the academic study of Judaism continues to be. Also striking was how gender came up as an abiding theme of the seminar, as an issue of fundamental importance in determining the future direction and shape of any type of Orthodox Judaism seeking in some way to be understood as 'Modern'. This has been demonstrated in debates over efforts to introduce certain types of Orthodox ordination of women and the often negative responses to so-called Partnership Minyanim, which attempt to conform to halakhic practice while seeking to include women in prayer as much as possible, calling them up to the reading of the Torah and giving them certain roles in leading prayer services. Daniel Sperber's assessment of these developments presented to the seminar argued for the influence of social mores over halakhah and theology in determining approaches to such gender issues, as in a number of other areas of conflict between Orthodoxy and issues arising in the modern world. However only one of the fellows was undertaking research that contained a clear gender angle – and even that was within a broader study.

My own research project during the seminar conformed to this profile, since I am in the midst of working on a monograph on the theology of Louis Jacobs, from which the idea for the research seminar had originally burgeoned. The questions of contemporary Orthodox Judaism and the reluctance to pursue theological debate have changed little in the fifty or so years since Louis Jacobs came to prominence in British Jewry, and the issues he raised are by no means faced by British Jewry alone.

One of the research papers I prepared during the seminar involved an examination of the impact of the Holocaust on Jacobs's theology. As someone renowned for trying to popularize theology and address topical issues of significance to contemporary Jewry, it seems notable that although Jacobs, like so many others, identified both the experience of the Holocaust and the creation of a Jewish State as the two most significant events of twentieth-century Judaism, they are treated only marginally in his voluminous writings. In trying to account for this lacuna I examined Jacobs's work on some of the

themes that are prominent in Holocaust theologies, including the problem of evil, concepts of reward and punishment, and of belief in the Hereafter and Divine Providence. While these topics do all feature in a variety of his publications, and their relevance to the Holocaust is at times acknowledged, there is a marked lack of progression into any more detailed consideration of Jewish theology and faith in light of the Holocaust. Of note in Jacobs's presentation of his understanding of each of these teachings was the consistent traditionalism of his position. The influence of Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, with whom he had studied at Gateshead Kollel, was also manifest. What becomes apparent was how Jacobs struggled to address the crisis of faith faced by many when considering the evil of the Holocaust and the suffering of God's chosen people. There were a number of reasons why he felt it was beyond him to try to offer his own formal account of a Holocaust theology. He suggested that it was inappropriate to try to offer any explanation of such evil and suffering. He was also conscious that he had personally been spared the horrors of the Holocaust, so felt limited in the sort of responses he could offer. To the extent that he suggested any position could be adopted, he argued that traditional accounts of suffering offered pre-existing paths for addressing this issue. This stance pointed both to his traditionalism and to his sense that no innovative theology was required here. More than that, though, it seems that Jacobs's personal crisis of faith lay elsewhere. Since he seems to have felt that he had little to contribute to Holocaust theology, and the nagging questions that bothered him concerned other doctrinal problems, no matter how significant he was willing to acknowledge the Holocaust to have been in contemporary consciousness, it was understandings of divine revelation that became his focus and represented what he felt was an issue of pivotal significance.

The question of how to construct an approach to revelation that could both maintain and conform to tradition, while allowing for acknowledgement of modern scholarship's critique of traditional understandings of the origins of Torah, was a central concern of Jacobs's theology, and the one which had transformed him into something of a cause célèbre. In the context of the research seminar as a whole, if the place of theology in Orthodoxy was an underlying issue, its manifestation in approaches to revelation exercised several fellows in the group. The focus of my research during the seminar was an analysis of Jacobs's theology of revelation and an effort to understand how this had come to be constructed. Once broken down, it becomes evident how particular Jacobs's theology was to him and the specific experiences and learning environments on which he drew.

Jacobs forcefully rejected the type of bifurcation he felt was required if traditional accounts of *Torah min Hashamayim*, 'Torah from heaven', were to be maintained. Bifurcation in this context involves ignoring the conflict between the findings of scholarship on the one hand and Jewish life and practice on the other hand, and not necessarily even identifying the differences between the two approaches to Judaism. Jacobs was inclined to characterize such posturing as 'compartmentalization', and his oft-cited and oft-sought solution to the question of how to construct and practise a synthesis of what seem to be two seemingly incompatible approaches to revelation revolved around an effort to reinterpret the 'from' in concepts of 'Torah from Heaven'. For Jacobs, belief in God's divine revelation to Moses at Sinai could be understood in more flexible terms than Orthodox Judaism had so far countenanced.

While Moses Maimonides's eighth principle on revelation has become established as Orthodox doctrine, Jacobs was at pains to demonstrate the variety of views that could be found within the rabbinic tradition on this issue. In this way he hoped to demonstrate the scope that existed within Orthodoxy to accommodate contemporary approaches to the Torah. Jacobs nonetheless had to acknowledge that the questions raised by modern scholarship differed somewhat from the rabbinic discussions about the origins and development of the biblical text. Biblical scholarship examines matters like the composite nature of the Bible, its multiple authors, the social and cultural influences that can be identified, and the extended historical period of its development. Traditional debate focused on issues such as whether it was Moses who received the entire Torah or whether sections could be attributed to Joshua or possibly Ezra. It contains discussion concerning whether Moses could have composed part of the Torah himself rather than having relied entirely on some process of divine dictation. Analysis of the form of divine dictation also occurred, in recognition of the difficulties of communication between a transcendent God and human beings.

Although Jacobs spent a good portion of his career arguing that his theology could in many respects be viewed as Orthodox, depending on how Orthodoxy was being defined, he did later identify his position with Conservative Judaism. It is not entirely clear that his theology fits this characterization. Regardless of whether this was the case or not, within British Jewry, once Jacobs was defined as outside the confines of Orthodoxy, a clear boundary marker was nonetheless set. As time has moved on from the 'Jacobs Affair', and as a number of the scholars involved in the research seminar demonstrated through their own work, increasing engagement with the issue of revelation can be identified in contemporary Israeli and American Orthodoxy. Within Orthodox Judaism in

Britain the scope to do so continues to appear somewhat limited, seemingly still influenced by the scars of the earlier conflict. Many types of 'Modern Orthodoxy', understood in terms of an engaged Orthodox Judaism, perceive an importance in defining boundaries so as clearly to distinguish them from alternative forms of integrated Judaism. Religious observance can achieve this in certain respects, and the role of theology in determining how and why Jews act and perform certain rituals is often marginal or unclear. Jacobs acknowledged that many Jews neither have a comprehensible theology of revelation nor seek one. Approaches to revelation have, though, often formed a central component of the beliefs that define a Jew as either inside or outside any given sect, and this is by no means merely a feature of modern Judaism. Beyond the shores of Britain it is possible to identify at least the beginnings of a more developed debate on this doctrine within the parameters of Orthodoxy. In an American context, it may be that among other factors this is a consequence of theological shifts that can be identified in a Conservative Judaism that is increasingly focused on more topical questions such as sexuality and intermarriage. In recent months there has been a dramatic growth in often informed internet debates on the issue of revelation. The launch of TheTorah.com website with the express intention of addressing the question of modern scholarship's critique of traditional accounts of revelation, followed by a predictable backlash from those opposing the site's goals, has contributed to the growing engagement with this issue. A question to consider is whether the use of the internet could lead to a globalisation of sorts of this debate which could enable British reticence to engage with this topic to be overcome in certain respects.

The revised interpretation of *Torah min Hashamayim* that Jacobs constructed fitted within a theological approach that he characterized as 'liberal supernaturalism'. This term reflected Jacobs's attempt to blend the traditional beliefs he imbibed in the world of the yeshivah, with the more modernist, reason-driven approach he later appeared to adopt following his encounter with modern scholarship at university. As Jacobs and others noted, this liberal supernaturalism can be seen to represent an effort to have it both ways. Jacobs's engagement with academic scholarship, which he discovered at university following years in yeshivah that left him unprepared for the ideas he would have to confront, left him enthralled to the values of reason. He would try to introduce rationalism to his Judaism, but his starting point was a trusting faith in both God and divine teachings. This prevented him from genuinely questioning the supernatural beliefs in a personal God that functioned as the bedrock of his theology. He had lived with the teachings of the yeshivah since

the age of thirteen, and these had shaped him through his formative years.

However, Jacobs experienced a type of bifurcation from his earliest days at the yeshivah. His family background was traditional rather than strictly Orthodox, and his success in the yeshivah world was a product of his immense intellectual abilities rather than of familial expectations. While in the yeshivah he was conscious that his identification with Litvak practices (Yiddish for ‘Lithuanian’ and indicating an intellectual orientation) was not built on an experience of Lithuanian yeshivot. When he moved to Gateshead Kollel he was the only native-born member. He was in certain respects always slightly separate from those with whom he mixed; this sense of dissonance did not leave him when he entered the mainstream Orthodoxy of British Jewry.

Jacobs sought to construct a theology of revelation that could bring together the two worlds he inhabited. He did not accept, or even particularly acknowledge, the postmodern critique of the type of modernism that underpinned his liberal supernaturalism, though this could offer a strategy for defending the authority of revelation by viewing it in relativized terms. Jacobs instead retained an attachment to the idea that there is an objectively rational means of assessing the text of Scripture and uncovering the divinity that lies at its heart. Hence in his retrospective *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* he could still write of the importance of uncovering ‘the reasonable conclusions that result from “scientific” investigation into the origins of the Bible and of Judaism itself’. (25)

In his writings Jacobs recognized how his revised account of revelation diminished in certain ways the grandeur of the traditional image of *Torah min Hashamayim*. He suggested that a certain ‘spiritual sensitivity’ was required in order to ensure that mitzvot retain their commandedness. In his *A Jewish Theology* he explained how ‘The whole point of the Jewish emphasis on Torah and mitzvot is that there is a splendour in the idea of submission to the will of God ... Either one sees power in the idea of submission to God’s will or one does not see it.’ (224) Clearly Jacobs was endowed with such sensitivity. My research during the seminar sought to demonstrate how this empowered Jacobs to construct the theology of revelation that he propounded, although its use as a means of avoiding bifurcation is questionable. Jacobs constructed theories to underpin his overall theology of liberal supernaturalism, but his acceptance of supernatural elements in his belief system was deeply influenced by personal inclination and experience. This position represents something more than Orthopraxy. It points to a conflict in his theology. So while Jacobs sought to avoid bifurcation, a degree of dissonance nonetheless appears to be present in the application of his theology.

Orthodox Judaism and Theology in the Twentieth Century: Two Projects

Dr Adam Ferziger
Bar-Ilan University

While in Oxford I worked on two book-length studies, each of which is outlined here.

Beyond Sectarianism: The Realignment of American Orthodoxy

Until the mid-twentieth century, most researchers of American Jewry regarded the Orthodox segment as no more than a dwindling and insignificant remnant of traditional Eastern European Jewish life. The future of American Judaism was believed to lie in the liberal streams that were attracting the majority of those who sought to join a synagogue. As prominent sociologist Marshal Sklare remarked, regarding the Orthodox in 1955, ‘the history of their movement can be written in terms of a case study of institutional decay’.¹ The year 1965 marked a turning point. A study was published that not only undermined the prevailing approach, but spawned a new sub-discipline that has since garnered considerable scholarly and popular interest. In a groundbreaking investigation entitled ‘Orthodoxy in American Jewish Life’, a young social scientist named Charles S. Liebman declared boldly that ‘The only remaining vestige of Jewish passion in America resides in the Orthodox community [...] the only group which today contains within it a strength and will to live that may yet nourish all the Jewish world’.² Liebman, who went on to an award-winning career as one of the keenest interpreters of contemporary Jewry, provided a mass of data to support his argument and established definitions and foundational distinctions that set the agenda for

1. Marshal Sklare, *Conservative Judaism* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955) 43.

2. Charles S. Liebman, ‘Orthodoxy in American Jewish Life’, *American Jewish Year Book* 66 (1965) 21–97.

the burgeoning investigation of American Orthodoxy over the next four decades.³

The period around the turn of the twenty-first century, however, demonstrated a resurgence of 'Jewish passion' and creativity among liberal denominations that was unforeseen by Liebman. Fresh religious energies sprouted through the increased involvement of women, and via nondenominational frameworks including 'Jewish Renewal' and various 'New Age' approaches. To be sure, the numbers of unaffiliated and the rates of intermarriage among non-Orthodox Jews also reached unprecedented portions.⁴ American Orthodoxy, in parallel, continues to grow in geographical, institutional and political strength, and a generation of outstanding academics has deepened understanding of this stream dramatically. Yet Liebman's once 'revolutionary' appreciation of American Orthodoxy's vitality remains the accepted view of the ongoing trajectory of this Jewish stream. To a degree, my own work pursues a similar path by presenting fresh materials that build on and lend support to Liebman's original observations. My central contention, however, is that one of his principal understandings needs to be reassessed in light of events and new initiatives that arose particularly from the 1990s.

Based on the classic dichotomy between 'church' and 'sect' first articulated by Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch,⁵ Liebman proposed that the 'committed Orthodox' – observant rather than nominally affiliated – could be divided into two main streams: 'church' or Modern Orthodoxy and 'sectarian' or right-wing Orthodoxy. The church-like inclusive behaviour of the Modern Orthodox was reflected most in their efforts to emphasize what they shared with the non-Orthodox rather than what divided them. The sectarian Orthodox, in opposition, were vigilant in maintaining their distance from the majority

3. On Liebman's rise to prominence see, for example: Lawrence Grossman, 'Charles S. Liebman, the Scholar and the Man', *American Jewish History* 80, 4 (Summer 1991) 465; Chaim I. Waxman, 'An Ambivalent American Jewish Sociologist: The Perspectives of Charles S. Liebman', *American Jewish History* 80, 4 (Summer 1991) 494–5.

4. Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) 272–355. See the provocative study of Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, 'American Jewish Secularism: Jewish Life Beyond the Synagogue', *American Jewish Year Book 2012* (2013) 3–54.

5. For a general appreciation of the development of this theory, see William H. Swatos, Jr, 'Weber and Troeltsch?: Methodology, Syndrome, and the Development of Church-Sect Theory', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 15:2 (June, 1976) 129–44.

of American Jews – their leaders and educational institutions catered nearly exclusively to the needs of their cohesive collective.⁶

Notwithstanding this fundamental division, Liebman noted a steady increase in religious fervour and punctiliousness among some within the more acculturated Modern Orthodox that was bringing them closer to their sectarian counterparts. The so-called 'shift to the right' of the Modern Orthodox has received a great deal of attention from prominent researchers in recent decades. My work supports and offers fresh nuances to this perception, but it stands out in highlighting ways that significant elements within the sectarian or haredi camp have simultaneously abandoned certain strict and seemingly uncontested norms. Both sides, then, have contributed toward a narrowing of the former gap between them, and in so doing engendered a realignment of American Orthodox Judaism.

Cremation and the Twentieth-century Jew

Mechanized cremation emerged in late-nineteenth-century Europe and has since posed acute challenges for religions with longstanding earth-burial traditions. While some of its early proponents focused on hygienic benefits, others depicted cremation as an enlightened rejection of irrational concepts such as the world to come and resurrection of the dead. In 1886 the Catholic Church unilaterally forbade cremation, denying ecclesiastical burial to those who made this choice (rescinded in 1963) and the Eastern Orthodox Churches have remained steadfast in their opposition. The Protestant denominations also initially came out vociferously against it, although in practice they were more flexible. Indeed, cremation in Western societies has of late attracted considerable interest among scholars, with Christian reactions being one of the principal focal points.

This current study is the first expansive project dedicated to Jewish responses to the subject. Notwithstanding certain commonalities with the attitudes of other religions, Judaism's distinct engagement with cremation illuminates the vicissitudes of Jewish life since the end of the nineteenth century in unique and powerful ways. This research endeavour is intended to demonstrate the profound manner through which Judaism's ongoing interaction with cremation elucidates crucial transitions in discourse over Jewish identity in the course of the twentieth century. As part of this process it will shed new light on major themes during this period: secularization, responses to non-observance

6. Liebman, 'Orthodoxy in American Jewish Life' (see n. 2) 42–7.

and religious deviance, the role of death and death rituals, the evolution of Jewish law, the Holocaust and changes in Israeli society

The cemetery, which according to traditional law is to be fully owned by the community, is one of the few entirely Jewish 'spaces' in the Diaspora and a key to sustaining both a connection to the past and group cohesion. This was especially so from the late nineteenth century, both due to the removal of residence limitations on Jews in most areas of Central and Western Europe, and to the steady decline of participation in synagogue life. Under these conditions the desire to be buried in the local Jewish cemetery could be seen as a more significant assertion of identification with Judaism than it was in the past. In parallel, denial of burial rights was one of the few tools still at the disposal of religious authorities for defining the parameters of inclusion within or exclusion from the Jewish collective.

Ironically, cremation ashes found at concentration camp sites actually became symbolic of the tragic common destiny of the victims and even attained a mark of sanctity as lasting remnants of those who perished. This Holocaust association, in turn, reframed the religious discussion. In the late 1940s a campaign was mounted by Orthodox rabbis to transport the ashes of concentration camp victims to Israel for honourable burial. Those who supported re-interment in Israel adopted lenient approaches to the religio-legal status of cremation ashes, that would support the requirement of burial similar to that of an intact body. This stood in contrast to the overwhelming rabbinic opinion during the early twentieth century that did not obligate burial of ashes. In parallel, some Liberal Jewish authorities who previously acquiesced to voluntary cremation, argued that 'after Auschwitz' cremation should be avoided since it was a desecration of the memories of the martyrs.

Toward the twenty-first century the trajectory of cremation within Jewish life took additional turns. Among Anglo and North American Jews, its popularity rose due primarily to economic and ecological considerations. In Israel, many Russian speaking immigrants from regions in which cremation was common practice arrived with the ashes of their relatives and requested burial. In parallel, Israel's first commercial crematorium was established by a private organization dedicated to providing civil burial and disposal options for secular Israeli Jews who sought an alternative to state-sponsored religious burial-society services and for those not considered Jewish according to halakhah. This initiative met with vehement reactions from certain religious sectors. Their spokesmen expressed their anguish by comparing this crematorium with those of the Nazis. Other activists took the more radical step of setting the facility on fire.

Death and burial rituals have long reflected unique characteristics of Jewish religious communities. But the steep decline of other forms of common Jewish religious observance during the period under discussion elevated the significance of deviances from traditional practices related to death. Tracing Jewish engagement with cremation makes it necessary to inquire academically into the dominant processes and competing factors in establishing core criteria and consensus regarding boundaries for Jewish identity over the course of the twentieth century. Indeed, Jewish interaction with cremation brings together a number of seminal topics of modern Judaism: secularization and religious responses to it, the appearance of ethnic alternatives to religious identity, and the profound influence of powerful symbols that emerged from the Holocaust on subsequent Jewish life. In addition, investigating Jewish responses to the advent and expansion of cremation during the twentieth century offers new perspectives on the evolution of Jewish law in modern times in general, and specifically law and technology, the impact of migration on Jewish societal norms, and the delicate religion/state dynamic that has arisen in the sovereign State of Israel.

The aim of this research project is to write a history of the modern Jewish encounter with cremation. The research is expected to reveal the distinctive ways this topic illuminates understanding of the evolution of Jewish life and ideals in the course of the twentieth century, and most specifically attitudes toward death and end-of-life rituals. Moreover, I seek to demonstrate the means by which responses to cremation express crucial transitions in the Jewish reaction toward deviance from religious practice and norms in the modern period. Thus it will serve as a major contribution to scholarship on the evolution of Jewish identity in modern times. The study will portray internal debates over cremation between fellow members of the same Jewish movements and denominations that are expected to illustrate the pluralistic aspects of these frameworks. In parallel the comparisons between the reactions of representatives of competing religious ideologies to cremation are geared to bringing to light previously unrecognized commonalities.

The book will trace the development of Jewish responses to cremation during a century dominated by the decline of longstanding centres of Jewish life and the rise of new ones. As such, it is constructed to utilize changing responses to cremation as a vehicle for offering novel perspectives on the relative influence of seminal events and phenomena on the nature of Jewish collective identity. The Holocaust, as elaborated above, is a turning point after which cremation and crematoria became linked with systematic mass murder and genocide.

Yet other significant transitions such as large-scale Jewish migrations and the establishment and development of Israel as a sovereign state have given rise to fresh articulations regarding cremation. Finally, this study will introduce an account of unique elements within the Jewish realm and relate them to wider academic discourse on the history of cremation and its role in society that has emerged over the past two decades.

What is 'Modern' in Modern Orthodoxy?

Professor Alan Brill
Seton Hall University, New Jersey

In my current book-project, on the 'Varieties of Modern Orthodoxy', I explore the differences between Orthodox groups entering modernity and the wide variety of interactions between modernity and traditional religion. My research at Yarnnton Manor focused on what the word 'Modern' might mean in the expression 'Modern Orthodoxy'. The term was first used in the United States in the early 1960s to refer to 'a small alienated minority' of 'no more than several score intellectuals'. But by the late 1970s the term was associated with a sociological group of tens of thousands of adherents.

My first question within the larger one of what is 'Modern' about Modern Orthodoxy is: when did modernity start for observant Jews?

Doreen Rosman begins her book, *The Evolution of the English Churches: 1500–2000*, with a bold explanation for why she commences her survey in early modern Europe: 'People's passage from this life to the next and their entry to heaven were [...] matters of major concern', and since most believers did not expect to enter heaven without working for their eternal reward, they joined religious lay organizations such as confraternities, as a context in which they would appeal to saints for admission to the beyond, engage in magical rites, and practise esoteric wisdom. Modernity as a movement changed that major preoccupation of early modern forms of religion, and initiated what we now regard as modern discussions about religion.¹

For Jews, modern religion began with the generations following the Enlightenment, occurring around the 1770s in England, France, Italy, Prague, Surinam and elsewhere. One could start the discussion of the transformation of traditional religion with figures such as David Levi, who in England produced translations of the Hebrew rites. But many in this transitional era still mixed the late Baroque with their own modernity, such as the Baal Shem of London,

1. Doreen Rosman, *The Evolution of the English Churches, 1500–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Samuel Jacob Hayyim Falk, who combined his Baroque kabbalistic magic and role as a faith healer with modern freemasonry and mesmerism.²

For a more clear and emotive example of the change, one may look to Shmuel David Luzzatto (also known as *Shadal*, 1800–65), the scholar, poet and biblical exegete who adhered to the school of thought in which Judaism should be explored through the scientific method. A child of the Enlightenment, he negated the early modern world and therefore abandoned the Kabbalah of his forefathers. Shadal's biographer recounts the moment when he turned his back on his father's type of orthodoxy:

In Nissan 1814 [...] his mother lay fatally ill with pleurisy (inflammation of the chest membrane). His father, a believer in Kabbalah, prayed in the appropriate kabbalistic manner; however, he saw that his prayers were to no avail. He then thought that if his son, a pure lad, were to pray in the kabbalistic manner, this would be of greater help. Therefore he instructed his son in the appropriate manner of prayer, to raise the soul through various Worlds, then to the Sefirot, and eventually to the Creator himself. Shadal, however, refused to pray in such a way – even though this was a request from his father concerning a life-threatening condition of his mother.³

Shadal explained how he 'no longer believed in this creed and therefore could not pray in the manner [that his father wished]'. He and his contemporaries offer the clearest definition of the 'modern' in 'Modern Orthodoxy' at the end of early modern Europe – no more focus on death, the world to come, esotericism or ritual. From the early nineteenth century, an acceptance of modern scientific cosmology became a major criterion for entry into modern society. People worried less about the journey of their souls into the next world than about this world.

I must reiterate that my question is not about the origins of the modern Jew, of which there are many fine historical explorations, or about the beginnings of modern reforms in the Jewish religion, but about the foundation of modern forms of the traditional religion. In other words, when and how did traditionalist religion engage with modernity?

2. David B. Ruderman, *Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

3. Shmuel David Luzzatto, 'Autobiografia di S.D. Luzzatto (Autobiography of Samuel David Luzzatto), Translation into English by Sabato Morais', *The Jewish Record*, Philadelphia (3–10 August 1877).

A second question my work seeks to answer is, if we say that by the early nineteenth century in Italy, for example, Jews such as Shadal had the characteristics of Modern Orthodoxy, why is it often claimed that the movement started 150 years later in New York in the 1960s? Further, why did the term come to be applied to other groups such as the British United Synagogue, Religious Zionists and Hirschian Neo-Orthodoxy?

In order to resolve this confusion it will help to break Modernity down into distinct phases or aspects, using the British sociologist Anthony Giddens's three stages of modernity: Enlightenment, Modernism and Late Modernity. Briefly, Enlightenment refers to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century turn to reason, science and autonomy, and the fight against the old regime and traditionalism. Modernism is the enthusiastic embrace in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of urbanization, easy transportation, individuality and the new understandings attained through the social sciences. Late Modernity is the late-twentieth-century practice of risk management in the face of fragility and complexity reflected in globalization, consumerism and the spectre of genocide, combined with a return to more traditional, Evangelical forms of religion.⁴

Enlightenment

Anthony Giddens notes that the Enlightenment stretches roughly from the mid-seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries and is characterized by dramatic revolutions in Western thought and culture, particularly in the areas of science, philosophy, society and politics. Kant defines 'enlightenment' as humankind's release from its self-inflicted immaturity by using its autonomous reason rather than relying on authority, tradition and a belief in miracles. Moses Mendelssohn defines Enlightenment as 'modifications of social life, the effects of the industry and efforts of men to better their social condition'.

Although the Enlightenment is often represented as opposed to religion, it can more accurately be seen as critically directed against various (arguably contingent) features of religion, such as superstition, enthusiasm, fanaticism and supernaturalism. The effort to advocate a religion purified of such features – a 'rational' or 'natural' religion – is more typical of the Enlightenment than a convinced opposition to religion as such. Modern Orthodox thinkers similarly argue that superstitions are contingent rather than essential parts of Jewish

4. Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (London: Polity Press, 1991).

teaching. Jewish followers of the Enlightenment also advocated the study of modern sciences, culture and languages.⁵

Modernity

The second of Giddens's three epochs, 'Modernism', is applied to the period beginning somewhere between 1870 and 1910 and continuing into the 1960s. This era therefore includes the emergence of the social sciences and anthropology, Romanticism, early Existentialism, naturalist approaches to art and literature, politics, social sciences and evolutionary thinking in geology and biology. It also includes the beginnings of modern psychology and the sense of growing disenfranchisement of religion from the established institutions.

The culture of this era witnessed the rise of individualism and therefore alienation. In different ways, classical social thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries thought that religion would either disappear or weaken with the expansion of modern institutions, resulting in a 'secularization thesis' captured in the title of Freud's work, *The Future of an Illusion*.

Modern Orthodoxy, as a movement, flourished from around 1940 until 1975 (or perhaps until 1990) and was based on the response of a specific group to this high modernity, and can be defined as a philosophical phase arising from the integration of modernity and Orthodoxy, similar to the way in which Modernism in art or literature was a phase in the history of art and literature. Modern Orthodoxy emulated and wanted to adapt this moment of high Modernism. Its members sought to face the intellectual challenges of the day by commenting on and integrating the modernist masterpieces of literature and philosophy into a form of Orthodoxy that they cast as a champion of democracy, liberalism and individualism. Among those who took on this lofty aspiration were Rabbis Eliezer Berkovits, Walter Wurzbarger, Norman Lamm, Michael Wyschogrod, Emmanuel Rackman and Irving Greenberg. They were the first generation of American leaders of Eastern European descent who used the term Modern Orthodox to differentiate themselves from non-intellectual immigrant Orthodox Jews.⁶

In the late 1970s many began to consider that the ideology of Modern Orthodoxy was no longer designed for a 'tiny articulate minority' (Rabbi Walter

5. Ulrich L. Lehner and Michael Printy (eds) *Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe* (Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2010); Ulrich L. Lehner, 'What is Catholic Enlightenment?', *History Compass* 8 (2010) 166–78.

6. Alan Brill, 'The Thought of Rabbi Walter Wurzbarger', *Tradition* 41:2 (2008) 1–35.

Wurzbarger's phrase), but central to the community's ideal of integrating modernity into a full observance of Orthodoxy. Teachers in Modern Orthodox high schools envisaged the full integration of secular and religious studies.

So was Modern Orthodoxy as modern as Modern Orthodox ideologies thought? Bruno Latour argues that many people continued living their lives without a self-conscious sense of change, and that those who defended traditional religion made preservation their concern, irrespective of any engagement with modernity. Talal Asad argues that secularization is an independent ideology which makes possible science, tolerance and liberalism. But instead of a binary structure of tradition versus secular, many people experience percentages of both, meaning that secularization may not be the opposite of religion. Individuals may wear a secular hat in public or professional affairs and a religious one in the family and community settings, allowing them to combine different modes of life.⁷

The term 'modern' was retrospectively applied to other Orthodox groups and movements for two opposite reasons. The first was that many of the classics of twentieth-century social science conflated the changes of the eighteenth century with those of the twentieth century. The other was that laymen and even rabbis knew little of the Modernist forms of Orthodoxy in other countries.

Late Modernity

Finally, one must ask if the Modern Orthodox of the past twenty years who do not engage with Modernist issues ought to be called modern?

Anthony Giddens argues that we are living in the world of Late Modernity that 'has the feeling of riding a juggernaut' or 'erratic runaway'. Things are now so fragile and precarious that we must strive, in the words of the sociologist Ulrich Beck, to manage the risk and uncertainty as best we can. One means of doing so is to return to the absolutes of religion as a personal choice.

Many social observers have noted how late modernity with its quest for security has been kind to Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, Mormons, Orthodox Jews and most other forms of highly committed religion. The Engaged Evangelicals, who select a limited modernism combined with a more literal faith, are the fastest-growing Protestant group in the world, seemingly offering an answer to contemporary needs. Evangelicalism is a thriving religious perspective that embraces modernity, while accepting few of the

7. Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

harmonizations with high culture offered by more modernist approaches to religion.⁸

At the onset of the 1990s, American Modern Orthodoxy moved towards the halakhic concerns and talmudic study of Centrist Orthodoxy. It flourished in enclaves of college-educated professionals who were not part of the modernist world in the narrow sense, since attending college or a professional school no longer meant accepting mid-twentieth-century liberal Modern values rather than Orthodoxy.

People continued to call themselves Modern Orthodox and attended both college and professional school, but this more recent form of Modern Orthodoxy left out of the discussion the commitment of 1960s modern Orthodoxy to synthesize the challenges of modern philosophy, science and democracy. They could function as doctors and lawyers without needing to engage with high modernism. Many members of the new Centrist Orthodoxy call themselves modern in the sense of Late Modernism: modern without high modernism.

Scholarship, Hirsch and Jacob Katz

A complete answer to what is modern about Modern Orthodoxy requires a re-examination of much of the earlier scholarship. To give an example:

Jacob Katz (1904–98), who sought to understand Judaism through social history, regarded Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch as neither traditional nor conservative, in view of his: 1) deviation from traditional precedent; 2) cultural adaptation to Western dress, language and style of ritual; 3) rejection of mystical ideas for nineteenth-century rationalism; and 4) new symbolic mode of biblical explanation based on a closed and complete system of modern concepts.⁹

Katz adds a fifth criterion to these. Following the modernist sociologist Karl Mannheim, he claims that in order to be modern, one must feel that one is undergoing a transformation from the traditional to the modern. Without this self-consciousness one has not truly entered modernity. In this, Jacob Katz blurred the individualist modernism of the twentieth century with that of the Enlightenment nineteenth century. Sadly, because of his criterion of self-consciousness, he excluded non-self-conscious communities such as British

8. Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

9. Yosef Salmon, 'Jacob Katz's Approach to Orthodoxy – The Eastern European Case', *Modern Judaism* 32:2 (2012) 129–54.

and Italian Jewry. Clearly, much scholarship on Orthodoxy needs to be re-scrutinized.¹⁰

Conclusion

My research reframes the question of how to define the modern, by identifying multiple modernities. Modern, in a broad sense, encompasses every group that has shifted from an other-worldly focus. But in the narrow sense it should be limited to the concern with High Modernity in the mid-twentieth century. Jews who are both modern and Orthodox have been around since the 1770s. But, modern Orthodox Judaism in the narrow sense was a mid- to late-twentieth-century phenomenon, even though we continue to use the term for twenty-first-century communities whose Orthodoxy is somewhat different. It remains to delineate the multiple – at least fifteen – different types of Jewish ideologies who regard themselves as both modern and Orthodox in the broad sense.

10. David Kettler and Volker Meja, 'Karl Mannheim's Jewish Question', *Religions* 3:2 (2012) 228–50.

Halakhah and Aggadah: *The Modern Conversion Controversy in Light of Louis Jacobs's Philosophy*

Professor Arye Edrei
 University of Tel-Aviv

Louis Jacobs's main concern in his monumental work, *A Tree of Life*, was *halakhah*, 'Jewish law', in a changing reality. This lay at the heart of his concerns throughout his life, in his literary, philosophical and theological writings, as well as in his public activity and debates. The subtitle of that book, *Diversity, Flexibility and Creativity in Jewish Law*, reveals the direction that the author wished to take, and the principle that he viewed as an overarching tenet of *halakhah*. Jacobs dealt expansively with this idea in his introduction, entitled '*Halakhah and Aggadah*', in which he presented the *aggadah* as the theoretical foundation of the *halakhah*. Jacobs used the term *aggadah* in its broad sense to represent the world of values and ideas that underpin Judaism, and which the Jewish normative system – *halakhah* – is designed to put into practice. The *halakhah* must therefore be developed and interpreted in its light. In the second edition of the book (published in 2000), Jacobs expanded this idea significantly, presenting the fundamental ideological foundation that underpins his literary activity and philosophical worldview. It gives a basis to his arguments regarding the development of the *halakhah*, and the relationships between *halakhah* and society, *halakhah* and reality, and between the normative world of Judaism and its underlying moral, philosophical and theological worlds.

During my stay in Oxford I studied and explored the Jewish laws of conversion – the process of becoming a Jew – in modern times, from the French Revolution to the current heated debates in Israel and the Diaspora. Conversion is one of the most important issues in the Jewish world today, and has created a storm of controversy. This is because of what Jacobs identified as a primary catalyst for halakhic change and development, the connection between *halakhah* and *aggadah* – i.e. the ties and affinity between the halakhic position of a certain authority and his ideological positions and policies regarding the nature and future of the Jewish community. In exploring the discourse on conversion, it is

very difficult to distinguish the relationship between the halakhic positions of the ruling authority from his ideological world and values. Indeed, one of my main interests in looking at the history of halakhic discussions on conversion in modern times is to identify and characterize the 'aggadic' concerns of the ruling authorities, and to illuminate how these penetrate and shape the halakhic discussions and decisions. My work shows that the various polemics on conversion in modern times are not formalistic halakhic debates devoid of dogma, but rather halakhic controversies that flow from policy considerations designed to shape the character of Jewish society in the critical transitional period from the traditional community to the fragmented society of modern times. I therefore propose a reading of the halakhic sources that harmonizes the associated ideological discourse with contemporary historical and sociological events. All are essential parts of the halakhic debate.

What is unique about the contemporary debate over conversion? From about the middle of the eighteenth century, Jewish communities in Central and Western Europe experienced far-reaching changes in status, compared to the situation in the Middle Ages. External political processes exposed Jews to previously unattainable opportunities for residence, higher education, culture, employment and more. Through the Enlightenment Movement and other internal processes, Jews discovered the modern world – its values, beliefs and the scientific approach it embraced. This brought about a blurring of the previously sharp boundaries between the Jewish community and its surrounding society, and the creation of a new Jewish society that was much less unified than before. This was a complex process that unfolded in a different manner and at a different pace in diverse communities. In the final analysis, the European Jewish community became much less homogeneous than it had been previously, and it now included a broad range of types that differed vis-à-vis their concepts of Jewish identity and their dedication to halakhic observance. It also led to the rise of intellectual and religious movements that consciously sought to implement changes to the Jewish religious tradition and the *halakhah*. The blurring of the physical separateness of Jews reduced the cultural gap and the sense of estrangement between Jews and non-Jews, and led to personal interactions that ultimately resulted in intermarriage. The decline of the status of religion and the separation of church and state contributed to this phenomenon, as the responsibility for administering marriages was transferred from the religious realm to the civil authority. Usually, intermarriage led to a break with the Jewish community. Nevertheless, the halakhic literature of the period documents situations in which an intermarried couple wished for

a variety of reasons to attach their family to the Jewish community, even after years of marriage and, towards that end, to request the conversion of the non-Jewish spouse. This reality engendered a fascinating halakhic discourse on the subject of conversion that lies at the heart of my research. A formalistic reading of the talmudic sources would lead to the conclusion that such conversions are prohibited because they are not 'for the sake of Heaven', but rather for the sake of marriage. Furthermore, in the Middle Ages it was clear that a convert to Judaism was joining a structured and homogeneous community that naturally demanded the acceptance of a halakhic normative lifestyle. This was not the case in the modern period, following the split up of the community and the variety of existing lifestyle options that it offered. As such, it could no longer be assumed that conversion would lead to the adoption of a halakhically observant lifestyle within a traditional Orthodox community. On the other hand, the impact of not accepting the convert would be the loss to the Jewish community of the Jewish party in the intermarried family. Thus, the discourse on the laws of conversion cannot be separated from the debate over the ideological question of how to relate to the new Jewish community.

Let us demonstrate this halakhic and ideological controversy through two responsa that I analysed in depth as part of my work, and which serve as the foundation stones of the subsequent discussion. Rabbi Shlomo Kluger (1785–1869) of Brody in Eastern Galicia was asked the following question at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

There was an episode in which a person's son was a soldier and intermingled with non-Jews, and he fell in love with a gentile woman and had relations with her several times and then returned with her to his father's house, and her intent is to convert. They asked him [the rabbi] what to do.

In his response, Rabbi Kluger raised several innovative arguments. The first is that in terms of modern reality one cannot say that a person converts for the 'sake of marriage' in the talmudic sense, since he already has a marital relationship with her. The second argument is that in this context, we can view the very desire to convert as sufficient positive motivation:

For if he wanted to, he could convert from Judaism and remain in the locale of the gentile woman. Who forced him to come to his father's house? ... But since, even though he could convert, he wants only to be a Jew, and for her to convert, this proves that their intent is for the sake of Heaven.

The third argument is: 'And one should not be stringent in such a situation, when there is a concern that he will fall into evil ways'.

Rabbi Kluger argues that since intermarriage is legal within civil law, we cannot identify any added value that is inherently gained by conversion. Therefore, we cannot view this conversion as one motivated by ulterior motives, and it must be viewed as 'for the sake of Heaven'. In a reality in which every person has the option to choose which community he wishes to belong to, the very choice to become part of the Jewish community in itself defines the conversion *ipso facto* as a conversion 'for the sake of Heaven'. Rabbi Kluger distinguished between the realities in his own and in talmudic times, arguing that the talmudic concept of conversion for the sake of marriage implies that the conversion is desired because without it, the convert could not live with his/her Jewish partner. In the modern reality, however, the opposite is true – conversion after the couple is already married is paradoxically the decisive proof that the conversion is genuinely motivated. Nevertheless, it seems that this is not Rabbi Kluger's primary innovation. He knew that the Jewish partner was already living with a gentile, and that the alternative facing his family and the community was conversion to Christianity. He clearly realized that the issues of faith and the choice of a halakhically observant lifestyle were not motivating the couple. He therefore suggested that we view their initial impetus and desire to become part of the Jewish community as the essence. Furthermore, instead of viewing the threat of conversion to Christianity as a proof of the insincerity of the conversion, Rabbi Kluger chose to use it as a consideration for leniency – in order to save the Jewish partner from conversion to Christianity.

A completely different approach was adopted by Rabbi Yitzhak Shmelkes, one of the most important halakhic authorities of that generation. In 1876 he dealt with a similar case, and concluded that:

If he converts, but in his heart he does not intend to keep the commandments ... then he is not a convert at all, and it is not relevant to say that thoughts of the heart are not substantive. ... Such a person is not a convert, even though she said that she accepted everything, as they taught her to lie.

Rabbi Shmelkes chose to emphasize the fact that the candidate for conversion would not fulfill the mitzvot, in contrast to Rabbi Kluger's focus on her free choice to become part of the Jewish community. The argument of Rabbi Shmelkes was that in the past, one who converted and attached himself to the Jewish community, even if motivated initially by ulterior motives, would ultimately adopt the behavioural norms of the community, because there was no Jewish existence outside of the context of the traditional community. This is not the case in the modern reality, and there is therefore no credibility to the

convert's declaration that she accepts the commandments, since they taught her to lie. In contrast, Rabbi Kluger's argument is based on the fact that in the past one had to convert in order to marry a Jew, which is not the case in the modern reality. These two halakhic authorities did not argue about the modern reality. Rather, they argued about which part of that reality would be the determining factor in the halakhic discourse. The choice of each of these authorities to grasp a different element of the reality led them to diametrically opposite rulings. The important question is why each authority chose the path that he did.

I believe that the particular choice of each authority did not flow from a pure study of the halakhic sources, but rather from a consciously adopted halakhic policy that was part of a larger strategy for dealing with the crises and complex processes that the community experienced in the transition to the modern period.

Rabbi Kluger was aware of the winds of change and the weakening of religious discipline, but did not feel that this could lead to the dissolution or fragmentation of the community. He therefore strove to maintain the wholeness of the community. Toward that end he accepted this candidate for conversion in order to keep the Jewish spouse within the Jewish community. In contrast, Rabbi Shmelkes preferred the classical Orthodox reaction, which can countenance the dissolution of the community as long as it serves to preserve a smaller pure community that is faithful and traditional. Rabbi Shmelkes saw the dire face of the new reality, and was not prepared to accept an intermarried family, knowing full well that they would not join the Torah-observant sector, and was prepared to pay the price of losing the Jewish spouse in the process.

The controversy between Rabbi Kluger and Rabbi Shmelkes was a fundamental ideological one that engulfed the generation as a whole. The main issue was how to relate to Jews who have cast off the yoke of *halakhah*. As is well known, the Hatam Sofer, who was active in Hungary at the same time, gave up hope for the wholeness of the community, and struggled to separate and isolate. The concern that 'he will fall into evil ways', a classical halakhic concern that mandates battling for each and every Jewish soul, lost its validity in the eyes of the Hatam Sofer. In his opinion, a Jew who married a gentile had already 'fallen into evil ways', so there is no longer a reason to struggle on his behalf. Moreover, in his eyes, the damage caused by a halakhic concession on behalf of such a person is much greater than its benefit. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch for similar reasons wanted to separate Orthodox from non-Orthodox communities in Germany. Many others opposed this approach, however, and sought an umbrella organization for the community as a whole. The controversy over conversion is

merely a reflection of this larger ideological conflict. The ruling of each halakhic authority on conversion was associated with the fundamental worldview of a specific camp regarding the character of the contemporary Jewish community – the groups being divided over *de facto* recognition of Jewish identity as attachment to the community versus recognition of Jewish identity based solely on Torah observance, or over fortification and seclusion on one side versus an attempt at inclusiveness and the preservation of communal wholeness on the other. It was thus the ideological reaction to Reform Judaism and modernity that ultimately determined the halakhic position of these rabbis on the issue of conversion, although it should be added that some of the halakhic authorities hid their ideological considerations behind formalistic halakhic arguments and interpretations.

Another part of my work deals with the halakhic challenge regarding conversion posed by the rise of nationalism in general and Jewish nationalism in particular, and even more specifically, by the establishment of the State of Israel. The conversion debate in the State of Israel has sharpened the concepts of religion and nationalism, and the distinction between them, and has acutely raised the question of whether the basis of conversion is religious or national. It seems likely that the rulings of the halakhic authorities on conversion in the State of Israel reflect a similar connection between *halakhah* and ideology – in other words that their rulings are directly connected to their positions regarding Jewish nationalism and the Zionist movement – and are another layer in the controversy of the previous century. The essential question is the same, but it is now presented much more sharply, as the Zionist idea offers a nationalist alternative to religious Jewish identity. In the nineteenth century the halakhic authorities asked themselves if one could view a desire to attach oneself to the community out of free choice as an acceptance of the yoke of Judaism. In Israel during the past few decades, the halakhic authorities have asked themselves if one can view immigration to Israel as a conscious and willing desire to connect to the Jewish people and the Jewish state and to identify with them. As in the nineteenth-century debate, the arguments of the halakhic authorities line up in accordance with their ideological stances vis-à-vis support for the Zionist idea and the State of Israel.

Biblical Criticism and Late-Modern Orthodoxy in Israel

Dr Ari Engelberg
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Rabbi Louis Jacobs famously attempted in his *We Have Reason to Believe* to show that not all academic biblical research need be labelled heretical by Orthodox religious authorities, but his stand on this issue led eventually to his being ousted from Orthodox institutions. The goal of my present research is to decipher the role played by academic research on the Bible in the identity-formation processes of young Israeli men and women who are either on the liberal edge of, or have left, Orthodoxy. It was presumed that these populations would be more likely than others to have been influenced one way or the other by this literature.

Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with people who responded to advertisements posted on the Hebrew University campuses, as well as with a few others solicited directly by the author. The interviews focused on the religious beliefs and practices of the interviewees, as well as on their attitudes towards academic biblical research, in order to contextualize opinions regarding the issue, and to place them within the religious life-worlds of the interviewees.

A detailed discussion of the challenges posed by academic biblical research for Orthodox theology is not possible here,¹ although it is worth recalling that the mainstream traditional view, elevated to the status of a principle of faith, is that the Torah (the Pentateuch) was dictated by God to Moses (except for the last few verses which, according to one opinion in the Talmud, were inscribed by Joshua) and is therefore eternally valid. Academic research, however, identifies multiple authors and non-Israelite cultural influence, and dates the composition of the Pentateuch to a later period, an idea deemed heretical by

1. But see, for example, Baruch J. Schwartz, 'The Pentateuch as Scripture and the Challenge of Biblical Criticism: Responses Among Modern Jewish Thinkers and Scholars', in B. D. Summer (ed.) *Jewish Concepts of Scripture: A Comparative Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

current Orthodox rabbis. Attempts by some religious academics and rabbis to resolve the conflicts between traditional views and biblical research continue today, especially in the USA.² But to judge by online responses, Orthodox readers remain deeply troubled by this issue.

In Israeli as well as non-Israeli ultra-Orthodox or Haredi society, academic biblical research is ignored or vilified, as are other branches of historical research that challenge sacred beliefs. In the other central branch of Orthodoxy in Israel, Religious Zionism, from which most of the interviewees come, the last decade has seen numerous debates regarding the correct way to study Bible and the extent to which academic findings can be integrated into Yeshivah study. But a survey of online rabbinical responsa conducted for this research suggests that the public rabbinical consensus is still that higher biblical criticism is taboo.

Most interviewees were socialized in Religious Zionist families and educational institutions, some remaining Religious and others not. A thematic analysis of the interview materials yielded various themes that cut across this socially salient divide. I claim that these themes reflect late-modern cultural currents. I will next discuss the themes that emerged from the research materials.

Spiritual Seeking

Robert Wuthnow, the sociologist of religion, claims that one process currently affecting American Christians is a move from spiritual dwelling to spiritual seeking.³ Cohen and Eisen found this to be the case also with the non-Orthodox affiliated American Jews they interviewed,⁴ so it is unsurprising to find it among my interviewees. Most went through some religious transformation after high school, but for many this was only the first of many changes as they continued to seek meaning.

Pluralism

A recurring theme among interviewees was that Judaism is *a* truth among other religions, an untraditional stand shared both by those who are no longer religious and those who are located on the liberal edge, rather than the strictly Orthodox. The examples they provided for alternative, non-Jewish, 'truths'

2. See for example the website: www.thetorah.com.

3. Robert Wuthnow, *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community* (New York: Free Press, 1994).

4. Steven Cohen and Arnold Eisen, *The Jew Within* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2000).

were usually drawn from Eastern religions, such as Buddhism, which have fewer negative connotations for Israelis than Christianity and Islam. Ayelet grew up secular, became deeply religious, but after around a decade became socially *hilonit* (-secular), while describing herself as *religiozit* – which may be translated here as ‘spiritual’. Using kabbalistic terminology she said she believed ‘that there is a truth which is singular, but in this world, which is a world of divisions [*alma dpeiruda*], we view various reflections of this truth. There is the Muslim reflection, the Buddhist reflection, etc.’

Egalitarianism

Egalitarianism was a central value for many interviewees. Rami became irreligious only in his late thirties but, unlike Ayelet, does not describe himself as ‘spiritual’. One of his main reasons for abandoning religious practice and faith was Judaism’s lack of egalitarianism. His family is of Near Eastern origin and he was raised in a community located on the geographic and social periphery of Israel. Through his own efforts he worked his way up into the Israeli middle class, which may help explain his sensitivity to this issue. As he told me in the interview: ‘If I was God and I was to invent a religion, I would look for a religion that is universal. That is one of the things that really bothered me, Judaism is pretty racist. It really bothered me. Why would God come and choose one specific nation? I have a hard time with the divide between Jews and gentiles, and within Judaism the different classes – Priests and Levites [...] I feel that people should have equal opportunities.’

A Relational God

Sarah, a therapist in her thirties, was one of the more stringently Orthodox interviewees. Like many other Religious Zionists – as well as traditional and secular Israelis – she is attracted to certain aspects of Breslov Hassidism. She practises *hitbodedut* – retreating to a secluded area where she speaks openly with God. Wuthnow describes the growing popularity in American revivalist churches of the analogous ‘God as a buddy’ paradigm, as opposed to God as judge or king.⁵ Less pious interviewees also reported engaging in discussions with God. Daniella is on the liberal fringes of religious society and cohabitated with male roommates, which is highly unusual in Orthodox society. She said of God: ‘I mainly don’t know if he exists or not; I mainly talk to him a lot [laughs]. It’s this feeling that there is something large taking care of me. It’s good for me

5. Wuthnow (see n. 1).

to believe in that – is what I tell myself a lot of the time. Even when I don’t feel that it exists I tell myself that it is good for me.’

Among the interviewees there was a clear gender distinction here, more women than men describing having a relationship with God. This confirms research that has shown that women prefer relational aspects of religion.⁶

Post-scientism

Jean-François Lyotard, one of the founders of postmodern social theory, claimed that there is currently a disappointment with the modern ‘grand narrative’ of progressivism that championed science as a vehicle for human improvement.⁷ Lyotard’s critics countered that the processes he described originated in modern times, so do not indicate that a new historical period has begun.⁸ But all seem to agree that scepticism regarding the ability of science to improve human lives is more common today than it was in the mid-twentieth century, the heyday of positivism.

Most interviewees were not concerned about the historical reality of events described in the Pentateuch. The following statement by Dotan, a moderately religious academic in his late twenties, is typical:

Dotan: The question is not whether Sinai happened or not but rather what Sinai is for me, what Sinai do I have in my life? Avia Hachohen says that even if the Torah was not received from the sky, generations of Jews studied it and were killed because of it. This is an important text. I would say that the Koran and even Jelal a Din Rumi are important texts, but this is *my* important text, my native land.

Interviewer: And you don’t ask yourself why I should be doing these things if they were not commanded by God? If the Torah is a human product?

Dotan: This seems to me the sort of question that high-school kids are troubled by. I have a world that is my homeland, I have a language and a territory, so now if somebody tells you that my house is yellow and not blue you’ll demolish it? A home is a place to be.

6. Elizabeth W. Ozorak, ‘The Power But not the Glory: How Women Empower Themselves through Religion’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35:1 (1996) 17–29.

7. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Post Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester UK: Manchester University Press, 1979).

8. Paul Heelas, ‘De-traditionalisation of Religion and Self: The New Age and Postmodernity’, in Kieran Flanagan and Peter C. Jupp (eds) *Postmodernity, Sociology and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1999) 65–82.

Several of the themes discussed above come together in Dotan's answer: there is a recognition of the existence of multiple narratives along with an emphasis on the importance of belonging and identity. These together render questions regarding the historical reality of events described in the Bible superfluous. Of course such a position may be easier to accept if you do not have direct and ongoing contact with biblical scholarship. Yosef, a yeshivah graduate and academic Bible scholar, also in his late twenties, asks himself precisely the sort of question that Dotan presumed only high-school students ask – why observe Halakhah if it is not God-given? Interestingly, he too, like some other interviewees (but not Dotan) believes in a personal relational God with whom he has frequent discussions. In the end, despite his questions, he does observe Halakhah and remains deeply religious. None of his religious university classmates became irreligious as a result of their encounter with academic biblical scholarship, although one student who had already left religion was led by his study to distance himself further from observance.

Conclusion

Paul Heelas identifies two wide-ranging cultural currents that gained prominence in Western culture during the latter half of the twentieth century: (1) the ongoing process of individualization that leads to personal expressivism; and (2) the liberal ethic, that others have called 'the human-rights discourse', that encourages egalitarianism, pluralism and relativism.⁹ Taylor views these elements as interconnected. Respect for others leads to the moral position that their beliefs ought not to be challenged, making relativism an offshoot of individualism.¹⁰

The themes that emerge from the interview materials express all these elements. Expressivist tendencies are evident in the interviewees' ongoing search for spirituality and meaning and in adopting neo-Hassidic practices and anthropomorphic God images (the effects of psychotherapeutic relationship discourse is evident here as well).¹¹

The sensitivity of most interviewees to issues of equal rights, and their view of Judaism as only another truth-narrative, are prominent features.

9. Ibid.

10. Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992).

11. For more on psychotherapy and culture see Eva Illouz, *Saving the Modern Soul: Therapy Emotions and the Culture of Self Help* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

Regarding the question of personal religious identity and beliefs, the elements listed above have a greater effect on interviewees' religious identity than the question of whether Moses could indeed have received the Torah at Sinai, based on scientific research of the Bible. This does not mean that the question lacks importance for those who are exposed to it. It is clearly important for the more strictly Orthodox who maintain an objectivist truth discourse, but for the most part this population avoids exposure to such scientific materials. Most interviewees belonged to the liberal fringes, or had left Religious Zionist society, leading to greater exposure to what might be described as the current cultural Zeitgeist. This is why biblical research or any kind of scientific challenge to Orthodox Judaism did not play a role in their narratives. Yosef, the academic who chose to be in constant contact with Bible study materials, is the exception that proves the rule. In the end he too prioritized identity, meaning and emotional experience when forming his religious identity.

The question of the extent to which this is an Israeli phenomenon, related to the way Judaism is a public and national way of life, remains open for now. What can be said is that most interviewees are joining other secular and traditional Israeli Jews in forming a new centre-ground, located between religious and secular societies.¹² The meaning of Jewish identity in this middle space is something that this project has begun to touch on.

12. For more on this new religious middle-ground see Yair Sheleg, *The Jewish Renaissance in Israeli Society: The Emergence of a New Jew* (Jerusalem: The Israeli Democracy Institute [Hebrew], 2010).

***‘Happy is He Who Loathes it,
For it is Like a Dream That Flies Away’:
A Chapter in the Theology of
a Medieval French Rabbi***

Dr Judah Galinsky
Bar-Ilan University

Little is known about the life of Isaac of Corbeil, a French scholar active in the thirteenth century, although he is famous for having composed a popular handbook of Jewish law entitled *Amudei Golah* (i.e. ‘Pillars of Exile’), better known as *Sefer Misvot Katan* (i.e. ‘Short Book of Commandments’), that was very influential in late-medieval Ashkenazi society. Despite its popularity, Isaac’s work has not received the scholarly attention it deserves,¹ in particular with regard to the author’s religious world-view or theology. Ephraim Kanarfogel, for one, has noted certain similarities between his religious thought and that of the German pietists (*Hasidei Ashkenaz*) mainly in reference to prayer, repentance and martyrdom, but there is still much to be addressed.

Isaac’s piety, therefore, reflected in his treatment of the last of the Ten Commandments, is the subject of the present study, which will introduce Isaac’s unique theological approach to the last prohibition: ‘You shall not covet your neighbour’s house... his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or

1. Although I note the important contribution of M. Gudemann, E. E. Urbach and more recently Ephraim Kanarfogel, Simcha Emanuel and Sarit Shalev-Eini. M. Gudemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der abendländischen Juden während des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit* (Vienna, 1880) 80–91; E. E. Urbach, *The Tosaphists: Their History, Writings and Methods* (Hebrew; 4th ed. Jerusalem, 1980) 571–4 and E. Kanarfogel, ‘German Pietism in Northern France: The Case of R. Isaac of Corbeil’, in Yaakov Elman and Jeffrey S. Gurock (eds) *Hazon Nahum; Studies in Jewish Law, Thought, and History Presented to Dr. Norman Lamm* (Hoboken, NJ, 1997) 207–27; S. Emanuel, *Fragments of the Tablets: Lost Books of the Tosaphists* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 2006) 198–207; Sarit Shalev-Eyni, *Jews Among Christians: Hebrew Book Illumination from Lake Constance* (London, 2010) 14–16.

anything that belongs to your neighbour’ (Exodus 20:14). It is interesting in particular to compare it with the different view taken by his Northern French predecessors.

The writings of French scholars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries suggest that the definition of the prohibition against coveting the property of one’s neighbour did not refer so much to ‘yearning-craving-desiring to possess’, as to planning to take possession of the desired object and actually doing so. Eliezer of Metz, in his *Sefer ha-Yir’im* (i.e. ‘Book of God-Fearing’), chapter 115, emphasized the danger of implementing one’s desire: ‘A coveter is he who covets something belonging to his friend and he seizes it against his will and gives him money for it or utilizes trickery in an unlawful manner’. Similarly, Moses of Coucy, writing in his *Sefer ha-Misvot* (i.e. ‘Book of Commandments’), Negative Commandment 158, agreed that mere thoughts or even well-laid plans that fall short of implementation were not considered a transgression of the biblical prohibition. Judging from these Northern French approaches, the prohibition referred not merely to desiring that which belongs to another, but to taking possession of it. This position was clearly in some way influenced by the *Mekhilta de-Rabi Yishmael*, Tractate Bahodesh (Chapter VIII), which states:

‘You shall not covet’. You might say: ‘Even with words’. Therefore the verse states: ‘You shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, and take it to you’ [Deuteronomy 7:25]. Just as there, only the carrying out of one’s desire in practice is forbidden, so also here it is forbidden only to carry out the desire in practice [*ad she-ya’aseh ma’aseh*].

In general it appears therefore that both Eliezer of Metz and Moses of Coucy’s treatment of the prohibition of coveting is scholastic in nature. Their interest focuses on the definition of the prohibition, whether it applies even when the victim is immediately compensated, and on clarifying whether there are two prohibitions involved, namely ‘to covet’ and ‘to desire’, or only one. With this background information we can now turn to Isaac of Corbeil’s approach to ‘You shall not covet’, in *Amudei Golah*, chapter 19.

I shall first outline the overall structure and major themes and then explore the details of Isaac’s approach. Isaac of Corbeil’s extensive treatment of the prohibition against coveting can be divided into three parts. The first is roughly parallel to that of his predecessors, with one major difference: his emphasis on the internal aspect of the commandment. The second part is a collection of aggadic-sermonic materials from the Talmud that reinforce the seriousness

of the prohibition, but more importantly broaden its scope, going beyond the merely monetary aspect of the law based on the juridic realm of Jewish civil law, *dine mammonot*, to one that encompasses daily religious life. The final part is culled from even more ‘popular’ sources, including wisdom sayings and fable literature such as Berachya’s fox fables, whose purpose is to not only to popularize the message, as Güdemann had already noted,² but to assist Isaac in formulating his pietistic ideals. It is this radical expansion of the prohibition ‘to covet’ that distances Isaac from his French predecessors so dramatically.

We will now take a more detailed look at Isaac’s exposition. The first part, which begins with his interpretation of the commandment, opens, like those of his predecessors, with the *Mekhilta*, which puts the emphasis on acquiring the coveted object. He added a line that at first glance modifies matters only slightly:

nevertheless it seems that even [coveting] in the heart is forbidden (*assur*), but it is not complete, rendering one liable (*hayav*) for it, unless one performs an act.

This distinction between what is forbidden and what is punishable (whether by an earthly or a heavenly court) may seem trivial, but, as we shall see, it allowed Isaac to explore the prohibition in a broader fashion than previous French scholars. The newfound emphasis on the ‘heart’, rather than on the ‘act’, actually moves away from the talmudic tradition, based on the *Mekhilta*.

I would suggest that Isaac was influenced in his approach to the prohibition by the simple biblical meaning of the verse in Exodus, and perhaps more so by its close parallel in Deuteronomy 5:18. Maimonides wrote: ‘For the Scripture [in Deuteronomy] says, thou shalt not desire, and desire is a matter of the heart only’. Isaac, as a French scholar, could not accept Maimonides’s innovation to count ‘you shall not desire’ as an independent prohibition in addition to ‘not to covet’,³ and included it in a more complex understanding of the Tenth Commandment ‘not to covet’.

The second part of Isaac’s discussion opens with the following quotation: ‘And the Sages said [*Babylonian Talmud*, Sotah 9]: Whoever sets his eyes on that which is not his [is not only denied what he seeks]; even what he possesses is

2. See n. 1 above.

3. This was a strong French tradition, beginning with Rashi’s commentary on the Pentateuch and followed by Eliezer of Metz, Moses of Coucy and Isaac himself who wrote ‘And it seems that “You shall not covet” and “You shall not desire” (Deuteronomy 5:18), are equivalent, and are synonyms’.

taken from him’. This continues the line of thought initiated in the first section, i.e. the heart’s desire was considered forbidden, and not only the successfully implemented action. As this opening sentence indicates, the source material is derived from the aggadic section of the talmudic tractate Sotah. It is worth noting that all the examples mentioned in that section relate to cases where the parties not only desired, but actually planned and then acted to attain their objective. The narratives include the primeval snake, Cain, Korah, Haman and the adulterous woman. Clearly, however, most did not accomplish what they set out to do, so did not technically violate the prohibition of ‘You shall not covet’ according to the classic French tradition, which limits the prohibition actually to acquiring a neighbour’s possessions.

One can now see how vital is Isaac’s distinction between being ‘liable’ and being ‘forbidden’. Once he included an element of the heart, of the ‘desire to possess’, in the definition, the prohibition was no longer tied to action and actual possession only. In doing so, Isaac was able to extend the prohibition beyond its limited monetary context, to include the area of *middot*, character development. This modification enabled him to proceed with a sermon on the dangers of ‘whoever sets his eyes on that which is not his’. Moreover, the shift in understanding allows him to conclude this part of his treatment with the following rabbinic aphorism: ‘And the Ten Commandments close with “And you shall not covet” to tell you that one who covets transgresses them all’.⁴ Such a statement would have been out of place had Isaac followed the understanding of the French scholars that preceded him.

The final development in Isaac’s treatment of the prohibition to covet is the most intriguing and revealing. In this section he moves from the words of talmudic sages to the advice of ‘wisdom’, not a manoeuvre we usually find among Northern French rabbinic scholars. Isaac signals this turn in his discourse with the help of an adage of his own making, combining the words of the wise king of Ecclesiastes with the advice of the sage in Mishnah Avot (‘The Ethics of the Fathers’). He writes: ‘Also woe to the coveter, all of whose days are filled with sorrow and he rejoices not [Ecclesiastes 2:23]; whereas one who rejoices in his lot is always happy [Mishnah Avot 4:1]’.

Isaac begins this section with three parables: the raven who removes feathers from other birds to beautify itself; the jealous person who asks to be blinded in one eye so the covetous person will be blinded in both eyes; and the fat dog who fasts in order to enter the orchard with delicious fruit, but must then fast

4. See *Pesikta Rabbati* (Ish-Shalom edition) pesikta 21, ‘The Ten Commandments’.

again in order to leave it. The link between the first two parables and ‘And you shall not covet’ is quite obvious, but not in the case of the third. In order to understand its relevance it is worth citing the parable in its entirety:

They also offered a parable likening this world to a beautiful orchard. A fat dog saw it and desired to eat of its goodness, but it was unable to enter it, because there was only one small hole. It fasted for three days so that it should be able to enter through the hole. It entered and ate and enjoyed the fruit of the orchard. It heard that the owner of the orchard would be visiting his orchard shortly. The dog said: ‘I must leave lest the owner of the orchard come and kill me’. It fasted three days so that it could leave. After leaving, it looked at the orchard and said: ‘How beautiful is your fruit! However, as one enters, so one leaves’, and so too [it is written] ‘naked I entered and naked I return’ (Job 1:21).

The relevance of this parable to the prohibition against coveting is clear, but only in a superficial way. – the dog seeks out fruit from an orchard belonging to another. The lesson of the tale then is to teach the futility of coveting, as the poor dog had to fast both before and after he had feasted on the fruit. However it seems more plausible that Isaac is here broadening his treatment of the prohibition. The opening and the ending of this parable suggests that the lesson focuses more on the proper attitude towards the pleasures of this world than on coveting that which belongs to a neighbour. The dog’s lesson after exiting the garden – ‘as one enters, so one leaves’ and the author’s ‘I entered naked, and I return naked’ – teaches the futility of this-worldly pleasure.

This reading is strengthened by the three wisdom teachings that follow the parable. The first seems somewhat cryptic, but is easily decipherable in light of the following two. Isaac begins with a saying attributed to the wise: ‘When you come to the essence [*tamtsit*] of the world, you will find the enemy wearing the clothing of a friend’. In other words, the pleasures of the world appear to be positive (a good friend) but are in reality dangerous (as an enemy). He then moves to another dog parable: ‘They also likened those who derive pleasure from it [i.e. the world] to a dog that chews a bone [so hard that] blood issues from its gums, and it thinks that the blood is coming from the bone and it sucks it’. The pleasure derived from the world is at best an illusion, and at worst leads to self-harm, like chewing on a bone that causes a wound. Isaac closes with a proverb about the pleasures of the world: ‘Happy is he who loathes it, for it is like a dream that flies away’.

In sum, Isaac of Corbeil’s well-structured exposition, or moral sermon,

based on the biblical prohibition ‘you shall not covet’, begins with a legal definition, following his French predecessors, but modifies it to add an internal component, that of the heart, lacking in previous more scholastic treatments. This seemingly minor change has broad ramifications: while previous treatments limited the prohibition to acquiring possessions belonging to a neighbour, Isaac’s encompasses the realm of moral behaviour and character development.

This shift in emphasis allows Isaac to include in his treatment aggadic sources and parables from wisdom literature that do not relate to the legalistic rabbinic understanding of the biblical prohibition, but rather to the theme of gazing on what is not yours. This broader perspective enables Isaac to introduce into his discussion an ascetic ideal towards the pleasures of the world.

It is not surprising that Isaac was known by his students as the *hassid*, ‘the pious one’.⁵ Strikingly, Isaac includes this pietistic ideal, relating to the pleasures of this world, within a work meant for a broad reading audience. Perhaps this attitude was so fundamental to his religious world-view that he felt driven to ground it in the learned tradition. He found within the context of the negative commandment of ‘you shall not covet’, the last of the Ten Commandments, a vehicle to promote the ideal of asceticism.

5. See n. 1 above, pp. 221–7.

Real-time Themes for Reconstructing Holocaust Theology

Professor Gershon Greenberg
American University, Washington

My four premises are as follows: First, as Nahman Krokhmal would have it, Israel's history is grounded in the absolute spirit imparted by God. Israel's religious thinkers drew from that spirit and contributed to it, and the historian of Jewish religious thought is responsible for finding and studying them, and the continuous chain of development thereof, linking each thinker to predecessor and successor.

Second, insofar as the Holocaust as an historical event was unique, real-time thinkers, who were together subject (onlooker) and object (participant in the catastrophe), directly and indirectly, should be regarded as unique.

Third, as real-time religious thought is unique, it is not to be measured by earlier or later theological constructions. While there are ultimate parameters within which all Jewish thought is located and which justify comparison, present values, as outside 'planet Auschwitz', are inapplicable to Auschwitz.

Fourth, the term 'post-Holocaust' is empty of meaning for four reasons. The first of these is that 'post' is a temporal term, while reflections of war-time Haredim were not grounded in chronological time but in sequential shifts of being – e.g., catastrophe vs. redemption. The second is that Holocaust theology could not have been written after the Holocaust, because whatever religious thought came thereafter was composed through, and mediated by, the lens of reality following the event.¹ The third is that 'post-Holocaust' theologians unknowingly presumed that real-time religious thought could not and did not exist, an assumption perhaps traceable to their ongoing shock, modifying the role of their reflections for the history of Jewish thought.² And the fourth and last is that it would be impossible to pinpoint when such post-Holocaust

1. This insight comes from Eliezer Schweid, Jerusalem, 4 August 2009.

2. Emil Fackenheim, 'The Commanding Voice of Auschwitz', in Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History* (New York 1970) 70–1. Arthur A. Cohen, *Thinking the Tremendum: Some Implications of the Death Camps* (New York 1974) 4–5. Elie

reflection began, as Haredi thinkers wrote continuously from 1938 through the war and its aftermath.

Overarching Characteristics

Within the uniqueness, each individual thinker was unique. As the responses written in the midst of crisis and addressed in the face of death to oneself, one's community and God, they touched the responder's innermost core. Shelomoh Zalman Ehrenreich addressed his congregants in Simleul Silvaniei as they were about to be marched into the Cehul Silvaniei ghetto; Yehezkel Sarna addressed the Hevron yeshivah in Jerusalem on a day of mass mourning; Shelomoh Zalman Unsorfer preached in his synagogue in Bratislava as Jews were being taken to Patronka for deportation to Auschwitz; and Elisha Rozenfeld took to writing in Ungvar in the face of mass slaughter in Kamenetz-Podolsk in summer 1941. The responses were written from varied geographical perspectives – some from the centre of the catastrophe, others from Palestine and the United States, and from particular temporal perspectives, some while events unfolded before them and others after events occurred.³

But there were also overarching characteristics. First, nearly all writers were Orthodox (or *Haredi*) – associated with Agudat Yisrael (Torah-centred), Mizrahi (religious nationalism), Hasidic courts, the Musar (moralistic) movement, or the kabbalistic tradition. Notable exceptions were the German Liberal (in America, Reform) Jewish thinkers Ignaz Maybaum and Leo Baeck.⁴ The

Wiesel, 'On Jewish Atheists', *The Jewish Advocate* (15 April 1965) 8–17. Tsevi Bakhrakh, 'Ha'adam, ha'hashgahah, oyshvits', *Zemanim* 6 (Spring 1981) 94. The situation was largely the same in the Haredi community. An exception was Yoel Shvarts, *Zakhor* (Jerusalem 1993).

3. On Ehrenreich see Gershon Greenberg, 'The Religious Response of Shelomoh Zalman Ehrenreich (Simleul-Silvaniei, Transylvania) to the Holocaust, 1940–1943', *Studia Judaica* 9 (2000) 65–93. Greenberg, 'Shelomoh Zalman Unsorfer, Disciple of the Hatam Sofer: With God, Through the Holocaust', *Yad Vashem Studies* 31 (2003) 61–94. Elisha Rozenfeld, *Shomer Emunim*. Greenberg, 'A Musar Response to the Holocaust: Yehezkel Sarna's Liteshuvah uli'tekumah of December 1944', *Journal of Jewish Thought* 7 (1997) 101–38.

4. Baeck held that the biblical prophet mediated between God's eternity and the historical people of Israel. On an ongoing basis, Israel moved between integrating into other cultures and isolating itself, contributing to the world and returning to itself. The Emancipation (including assimilation) was a successful movement to counter Israel's particularistic character, and yielded new creativity within. The Holocaust was a *caesura* in human progress towards messianic redemption. But it was also another episode of the suffering which marked Israel's forays into the larger world. The Jewish soul inevitably faced the choice between political-earthly realities

absence of other responses from the Reform camp may be attributed to the investment it made in the universal principle of morality as a metaphysical reality, and Nazism shattered it. Historical (in America, Conservative) Judaism held that the collective lives of Jews bore witness to Judaism's ideals – such that the living, organic tradition of the people was the source of religious meaning. Nazism made this ideology impotent. Orthodox Judaism, however, derived meaning and sustenance from sources outside of history. It did not share the historicism, or *Wissenschaftlich* rationalism and universalism which came with Emancipation. Rather, it looked to non-rational, revealed and timeless expressions of revelation in myth or metahistory. For example, Elhanan Wasserman of Baranowicz condemned Isaac Hirsch Halevi's historical approach to the rabbinic sages and Heinrich Graetz's history; Chief Rabbi Mosheh Avigdor Amiel in Tel Aviv condemned Moses Mendelssohn and the Berlin *Haskalah* (Enlightenment) and Avraham Weinfeld in Monsey, New York, blamed those engaged in outside literature for evoking God's punitive action, i.e., the Holocaust.⁵

Second, while Orthodox thinkers regarded the Holocaust as unprecedented in magnitude, racism and attacking morality, they considered it preceded on the level of metanarrative. For some it was the third *Hurban*, following the first and second destructions of the Temples in Jerusalem. Others identified it as an expression of the Akedah, Isaac's ritual sacrifice become realized. In October 1940 in the Warsaw ghetto, Kalonymous Kalman Shapira stated

and divine, eternal presence, and this involved suffering as well as sanctification of God's name in death. Eliezer Schweid, 'From the Essence of Judaism to This People Israel: Leo Baeck's Theological Confrontation With the Period of Nazism and the Holocaust', in *Wrestling Until Day-Break: Searching for Meaning in the Thinking on the Holocaust* (Lanham 1994) 3–84. Ignaz Maybaum, *The Face of God After Auschwitz* (Amsterdam 1965).

5. See Greenberg, 'The Religious Thought of Elhanan Wasserman, 1921–1940', in Benjamin Brown (ed.) *The Gedoylim: Festschrift for Mordekhai Friedman* (Jerusalem 2014). Greenberg, 'Rabbi Mosheh Avigdor Amiel's Religious Response to the Holocaust', *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem 1994) 2:93–100. Avraham Weinfeld, 'Ma'amar be'inyan hovot hahit' bolelut bemashma'ut hurban yahadut ayropah', in Yosef Jabez, *Or ha'hayim* (Monsey 1953). Weinfeld's sources included Yosef ben Hayim Jabez, *Or ha'hayim* (Lublin 1912) 4; Yair Hayim Bacharach, 'Siman 219', *Shu"t havat ya'ir* (Ramat Gan 1997) 2:623; Eleazar Loew, 'Derush reviv', in *Shev shema'atata: Derush sha'arei yirah* as cited in Akivah Yehosef ben Yehiel, *Lev ha'ivra* (Jerusalem 1990) 2:29–30; Barukh Dov Laybovitch, 'Siman 27', in *Birkat shemuel* (New York 1947) vol 1; Tsevi Elimelekh Shapira of Dynow, 'Mayan ganim', in *Or ha'hayim* (Lemberg 1874) 2; and Yisrael Meir Ha'kohen (the Hafets Hayim), *Beit yisrael* (New York 1934) 39–40.

that 'The Akedah was just the beginning. The expression of intent and desire, while the murder of a Jew is the conclusion of the act. Thus the Akedah and all murders of Jews since are components of one event.'⁶ According to Efrayim Sokolover of Ra'anana, each of the hundreds of thousands of Jews murdered in the Holocaust was a Rabbi Akiva or Rabbi Ishmael, burned to death by the Romans for their study of Torah; and the Hasidim and their *Admo"rim* of Poland were one with them.⁷

Third, they viewed the catastrophe as the temporal expression of a trans-temporal, cosmic sequence of exile, *Teshuvah* (penitent return) and redemption – which had already taken place. Insofar as the sequential shift was a non-temporal matter of shifting plates of reality (e.g., as per Yehezkel Sarna, to be discussed below), Mordekhai Atiyah of Jerusalem and Mexico City could speak of a second Holocaust, should pious Jews of the world not ascend to the Land of Israel.⁸

Theme One: Metahistory, Silence and Mystical Quest

Religious thought during the Holocaust, which was outside the post-Emancipation rationalist tradition, where reason correlated with revelation and faith and historical events became touchstones for the reconstruction of religious systems,⁹ was grounded in metahistorical narrative and mystical quest. Inability to comprehend it historically, intellectually and even in terms of metahistory, led to silence. Silence circumscribed history and metahistory, and opened the mind to transcending realities.

The covenantal framework (of metahistory) left irreconcilable contradictions: God was free, transcendent and omnipotent, but when the people of Israel sinned, God necessarily reacted with punishment. If people atoned there

6. Kalonymous Kalman Shapiro, *Sacred Fire: Torah From the Years of Fury, 1939–1942*, trans. J. H. Worch (Northvale, NJ, 2000) 140.

7. Efraim Sokolover, *Penei efrayim* (Tel Aviv 1966) 255–6, 278.

8. Greenberg, 'A Musar Response to the Holocaust: Yehezkel Sarna's *Li'teshuvah uli'tekumah* of December 1944'. Greenberg, 'Mordekhai Yehoshua Atiyah's Kabbalistic Response to the Holocaust', *Iggud* (2009) 137–56. See also Benny Brown, 'Ha'rav Shakh: Ha'aratsat ha'ruah, bikoret hale'umiut vеха'hakhraot ha'politiyot bi'medinat yisrael', in Neri Horowitz (ed.) *Dat ule'umiyut be'yisrael uve'mizrah ha'tikhon* (Tel Aviv 2002) 278–342. David Sorotzkin, 'Binyan erets yisrael shel matah ve'hurban erets shel ma'alah: Ha'rabi mi'satmar', in Aviezer Ravitsky, *Erets yisrael be'hagut ha'yehudit ba'meah ha'esrim* (Jerusalem 1993) 133–67.

9. See Greenberg, *Modern Jewish Thinkers: From Mendelssohn to Rosenzweig* (Brighton, Mass. 2011) 13–23.

would be relief of the troubles, but the magnitude of suffering was such that relief in historical terms was inconceivable – leaving it to redemption. The Nazis were absolutely evil and sought to pre-empt God's role in the world, but God, who was all good, still used them to carry out His punishment and induce *Teshuvah*. The punishment of God was a response to violating Torah, but the overwhelming number of victims were Torah observant. Finally, the all-powerful God lost control once He let the descendants of Esau carry out the punishment. These insoluble covenantal dilemmas led to silence. In 1938 Wasserman wrote that if he tried to understand events through Kristallnacht in terms tied to the intellect, he would go insane.¹⁰ In 1942 Unsdorfer, unable to come to terms with the slaughter of the pious, and of infants 'who did not ever taste sin', was driven to challenge God: 'What would be achieved by our blood, should You slaughter us?' – and then to silence.¹¹

Wartime

During the war, the move from the cognitive to metanarrative, where contradiction brought religious thinkers to silence and silence led to higher sources, followed the dominant schools of Orthodox thought. The religious nationalist (Mizrahi) ideologue, Amiel, identified the people of Israel as the spiritual centre of history, destined to be filled with living Torah in the Land of Israel. When the people engaged in *Haskalah* and the secular nationalism of the Gentiles following the Emancipation, God entered history to divide them and thereby restore equilibrium between His people and the rest of the world. By separating Israel from others, the 'cold war' (my term) tension between Esau and Jacob would be restored. This was the Holocaust. But Amiel did not speak of its result in historical or metahistorical terms (i.e., *status quo ante*), rather of transcending redemption.¹² The Musar leader Yehezkel Sarna framed his deliberations in silence (of word and tear), broken when he sensed the tearful presence of God. He described a metahistorical triad according to which *Hurban* brought *Teshuvah* and the divine command of *Teshuvah* implied *Geulah* (redemption). The potential for *Teshuvah* was set in place with the destruction of the first Temple, and *Teshuvah* bridged Israel's past with future *Geulah*. The Holocaust culminated destruction, and *Geulah* awaited Israel's *Teshuvah*. He then went

10. Greenberg, 'The Religious Thought of Elhanan Wasserman'.

11. See Greenberg, 'Shelomoh Zalman Unsdorfer, Disciple of the Hatam Sofer: With God Through the Holocaust', *Yad Vashem Studies* 31 (2003) 61–94.

12. See Greenberg, 'Rabbi Mosheh Avigdor Amiel's Religious Response to the Holocaust'.

beyond the triad to speak of it as a single, transcendental point present to God.¹³ Representing the right wing of Agudat Yisrael, Wasserman held that since Torah ordered the universe, its removal left chaos. Chaos was incarnated as Nazism. It served as a messenger sent from above, to mediate Israel's return to Torah. He then went beyond this covenantal dynamic, to speak of Torah as the ultimate ground of being enveloping all Nazi chaos, the dialogical anti-thesis, or outer projection of internal disorder, being no more than an intermediate stage.¹⁴ In Bratislava, the tension between commitment to covenant-centred metahistory and the suffering of the righteous left Unsdorfer in doubt and despair. The tension forced him into silence – human beings, whose days were as passing shadows, he explained, could never understand the ways of God who is, was and will be. Having circumscribed the dilemma of God's presence in current events with silence, Unsdorfer turned within, toward a God set apart from history, in whom he trusted absolutely. He rooted himself in Abraham's leap of faith, where he surrendered his will to God, for God's will to become his own. Now, in the presence of God, Unsdorfer became aware of the descent-ascend dynamic which reverberated in the universe.¹⁵

Others went straight into mystical territory. Polish Hasidic thought centred on the principle that the reality of the world belonged to a process where darkness inevitably yielded to the light of divine presence (*Shekhinah*) and of redemption – which were implicit to darkness and suffering. Each Jew possessed an inner spark of faith, which belonged to this cosmic process (which was reflected in history) and influenced its movement. Centred in divine light, the vital inner spark both participated in and affected the higher movement towards illumination. Wartime Hasidic thinkers were confident about the objective passage, and about the impact of inner, subjective light which shared in divine illumination.¹⁶ In Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Yehudah Ashlag, convinced that redemption had begun, held that it would be manifest completely when all the people of Israel reached a spiritual-theoretical understanding of the inner secrets of Torah as available in the kabbalistic key-text, the *Zohar* – for salvation came with full access to revelation. Once redemption took hold, history's sufferings would recede and history itself would become spiritualized. Ashlag devoted himself to making the *Zohar* available to readers of Hebrew, enabling

13. Greenberg, 'A Musar Response to the Holocaust'.

14. Greenberg, 'The Religious Thought of Elhanan Wasserman'.

15. Greenberg, 'Shelomoh Zalman Unsdorfer'.

16. See Greenberg, 'Hasidic Thought and the Holocaust, 1933–1947: Optimism and Activism', *Jewish History* 27 (forthcoming 2013).

access to the true content of revelation. With revelation, the suffering would recede, and with it disturbing questions about God and His presence generated by the catastrophe.¹⁷

Aftermath

After the war some thought exclusively in metahistorical terms. In 1948 in the American Zone in Germany, Shelomoh Nutter of Agudat Yisrael described a cycle of catastrophe and religious rebirth. Jews were murdered and tortured with indescribable brutality in the Chmielnicki massacres, 1648–9. The Torah was assaulted, the scrolls used for shoes, the holy arks desecrated. But the remnants remained strictly religious and united, as they did following attacks of Cossack Ivan Gonta in 1768. Indeed, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed a revival in Lithuania under the Vilna Gaon and in Poland and Russia under the Baal Shem Tov, which spread to the diaspora and the Land of Israel. Not even after Hitler did the people lose hope. As always, the higher reality of Israel's eternity (*Netsah yisrael*) provided the breath of life.¹⁸ From the religious nationalist side, Hayim Yisrael Tsimerman in Tel Aviv wrote in 1947 that the failure of pious Jews to come to the Land in the interwar period, when restoration signalled the coming of redemption, proved to be disastrous: 'On account of this trespass alone, namely not ascending to the Land of Israel, the people of Israel have suffered ... the calamitous loss of a third of their number'. As Abraham Ibn Ezra explained in the Middle Ages, God let the people of Israel die in the desert because, having grown up in slavery they were unable to fight the Canaanites to take the Land. A new generation was required (Exodus 14:13). Now too, Tsimerman concluded, the failure to restore the Land resulted in mass death.¹⁹

Others moved from the metahistorical to the mystical. In 1946 in Shanghai, Simhah Elberg's covenantal boundaries left him in terrible confusion. The Holocaust was the ultimate battle between satan and holiness, while Israel was expected to sacrifice itself in atonement for sins. God promised not to put an end to His people, yet He let six million die. He was cast into silence. Then, he spoke of the massive Akedah of Treblinka as the culmination to all the Akedot of Jewish

17. See Eliezer Schweid, *Bein hurban li'yeshua: Teguvot shel hagut hareidit la'shoah bi'zemanah* (Tel Aviv 1994).

18. Shelomoh Nutter, 'Di 300-yorike tekufah 1648–1948', *Kol yisrael ba'golah* 23 (27 May 1948) 3.

19. Hayim Yisrael Tsimerman, *Tamim po'alo: She'elot u'teshuvot bi'davar ha'hashmadah ha'iyumah shel shishah milyon ha'yehudim* (Tel Aviv 1947). Citation from p. 25.

history, the ultimate, purest binding and sacrifice of all time. It sanctified all of Israel's existence, leaving the rest of the universe, with its history, irretrievably polluted, to plunge into oblivion. Israel remained linked to God transcendently, by Akedah.²⁰ In 1947 in London, Yehiel Meir Morgenshtern initially held that the Holocaust could not be accidental, and had to come from God and was punishment for sin. God responded measure-for-measure, justly, as shadow to light, using human instruments. But Morgenshtern remained unsettled, and sought refuge in silence – citing Aaron's silence on the inexplicable death of his sons Nadav and Abihu when they took their censers and put fire to the sacrificial altar (Leviticus 10:1–3) as his experiential source.²¹

There was also a direct leap into the apocalyptic. During the war, religious thinkers portrayed the evil perpetrator as an instrument of God, in covenantal terms. Thus, Wasserman wrote that the very nationalism and socialism which seduced so many Jews became projected outwardly in the form of German national socialism.²² Unsdorfer preached that Jews were forced to remain indoors during Christmas because they had joined in Christmas celebrations, violating Torah.²³ Ehrenreich explained that Amalek could serve God because he was not absolutely evil – his inevitable defeat would show the nations of the world that God controlled history, which was something good.²⁴ After the war, by contrast, Amalek was removed from history. The kabbalist Ya'akov Moshe Harlap explained that imminent redemption meant Amalek's death; thereupon, Amalek convulsively destroyed everything around him. By destroying Israel, however, his sole source of nourishment was gone – leaving him to descend into oblivion, taking history with him.²⁵ In Benei Berak, the Sochaczewer Hasid Yehoshua Moshe Aharonson held that history had to be cleared from the universe, for redemption to begin. Thus, he had cheered Hitler's victories during the war – for they indicated the climax of evil, and this would enable redemption.²⁶

20. See Greenberg, 'Holiness and Catastrophe in Simhah Elberg's Religious Thought', *Tradition* 25 no. 5 (1991) 39–64.

21. Yehiel Meir Morgenshtern, 'Hakdamah ... kol elohim', in *Bikurei avi"v: Al seder parshiyot ha'torah* (London 1947) 572.

22. Greenberg, 'The Religious Thought of Elhanan Wasserman'.

23. See Greenberg, 'Shelomoh Zalman Unsdorfer'.

24. Greenberg, 'The Religious Response of Shelomoh Zalman Ehrenreich'.

25. Greenberg, 'The Holocaust Apocalypse of Ya'akov Moshe Harlap', *Jewish Studies* 41 (2002) 57–66.

26. Greenberg, 'Hasidic Thought Through the Holocaust, 1933–1947: Optimism and Activism', *Jewish History* 27 (2013, forthcoming).

The Theme

First, Jewish thought during the Holocaust removed itself from the track of post-Emancipation historicism and rationalism. This mandates the historian of Jewish thought to widen the path of thinking so as to accommodate the track which kept religious reflective consciousness alive through the war era; to create a way between the likes of Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig before, and Mordecai Kaplan, Emanuel Levinas and Joseph Dov-ber Soloveichik thereafter. Secondly, wartime thought (during and after) left a legacy of synthesis between metahistorical narrative, and the transcendental realities associated with the mystical quest of the apocalyptic. During this period, the former led to silence, silence circumscribed the history-metahistory nexus and delineated space for transcendental touchstones – messianic redemption, trans-temporal points of departure, sharing the divine will, surviving history's descent into oblivion. The synthesizing of the different dimensions may be unprecedented; in any case it provides the grounding for determining the place of theology after the Holocaust in the history of Jewish thought.

Theme Two: Re-creation of the Sacrament

Following the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich, I understand sacraments as bridges over the mysterious line between the sacred and the profane, as vessels which participate in both realms without enveloping either.²⁷ They involve dual input by God and by man. Organic traditions, synthesizing permanence (eternity) and change (time), provide reinforcement of the bridging experience, as well as mediation between the finite individual and larger human history. A thread of sacramental activity endured through the Holocaust: Seders in the Warsaw ghetto, prayer at the death pits, Kashrut in the concentration camps, and *Seudah shelishit* (festive third meal of the Sabbath) in the Lodz ghetto. But as an inclusive, permeating category of Jewish life, the sacrament was shattered.

The experience of Yitshak Messer, whose kabbalistic writings in Siberia, February 1941 – August 1942 survived miraculously, is illustrative of the wartime loss. Messer described his relentless efforts to perform good deeds, *Teshuvah*. In particular, to recite the blessing over food in order to liberate *Nitsotsot* (sparks) from their *Kelippot* (dark shells) below – and thereby bring release to *Shefa* (divine outflow) from the *Sefirot* (God's attributes) above and with it peace, nourishment and life itself. He strove each day to find enough

27. Paul Tillich, 'Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God', *Christian Scholar* 38 no. 3 (September 1955) 189–97.

food over which to recite the blessing. Adam's sin, he explained, took the form of fruit lodged in the gullet. Only the blessing could free it – and for it, food was necessary. By the seventeenth month of wandering from one labour camp to the other, there was no more food. He could no longer recite the blessing, so there would be no outflow to nourish him. Sacramental blessing was at its end, leaving the sacred to remove itself into oblivion.²⁸

After liberation, the sacramental vessels were recreated. As Agudat Yisrael representatives in Romania declared in 1946:

The war brought a terrible Shoah to the Haredi Jewish camp in Romania... When a person falls he can take stock of what happened. Woe to anyone who falls and turns to ashes which is burned entirely; who is unable ever again to succeed. Happy is the one who descends into ashes but heals himself; who plants again and produces fruit. When Judaism in Romania fell, there were only ashes. But they were not entirely burned; Judaism was not destroyed to its very foundation. Beneath the ashes there were living roots, prolific energies. Out of them the Haredi Jewish movement grew once again... It was able to support yeshivah students and rabbis; to establish a soup kitchen and arrange kosher food for Passover; to set up schools, ritual baths, and Haredi congregations.²⁹

In Poland, Polish Chief Rabbi David Kahanah observed that everything of Torah was cast onto the street like garbage, satan having declared that the Torah and Jewish people were lies. But by autumn 1945 Jews were reconstructing their religious communities – and seeking outside help: 'Do not let such an important part of the Jewish nation as Polish Jewry arise out of Hitler's slavery without faith and God in their hearts'.³⁰

For the first weeks after their arrival in the DP camps, the survivors' overwhelming concerns were life itself and food. Anyone who spoke about renewing religion was ridiculed and considered insane.³¹ 'Any Jew who dared

28. Yitshak Messer, *Kunteras umi'midbar matanah: Ketav yad kabali she'nikhtav be'aravot sibir bi'yedei yitshak messer*, ed. with introduction by Moshe Halamish.

29. Yuda Rezmivish and Yuda Rayner, 'Mavoh: Sekiarah ketanah mi'peilot agudat yisrael be'romanyah', in *Din ve'heshbon: Al pe'iliyot ha'merkaz shel agudat yisrael be'romanyah, shanah ahronoh* 5706 (Arad 1946) 3–7.

30. David Kahanah, 'Mavo', in *Aharei ha'mabul: Nisayon le'hahayot et ha'kehilot ha'datiyot be'polin shele'ahar milhemet ha'olam ha'sheniyah (1944–1949)* (Jerusalem 1981) 92–3. Idem, 'Poland Today. The Jewish Religious Position', *Di vohntsaying* 9 no. 490 (7 September 1945) 3.

31. Alexander Rosenberg, 'The Growth of the Religious Life Among the Jews in the American Zone in Germany' [8 March 1946]. JDC Archives II 406.

to speak about religious feelings was thought to be crazy and a fool' – and it was unthinkable to dream of restoring vibrant religious life, let alone establish a yeshivah.³² There were Jews in Bergen Belsen who were convinced that they had to submit to the murderous rulers and avoid muting them at all costs – their 'Jewish spinal cord' having been severed by misery.³³ But soon after the call went out for religious articles (*Tefillin* [phylacteries], prayer books, Sabbath candles, kosher food). Rabbis attended to issues of *Agunah*. They railed against intermarriage, in an attempt to re-secure ethnic identity. There were holiday celebrations; the Passover *Haggadah* narrative was integrated with material about the catastrophic rupture – correlating continuity with present change dialectically.³⁴

Theme

Sacramental activity which locked in the collective presence of the sacred was shattered. There was the thread of ritual activity through the war, which in some deep way preserved the sacrament through the collective shattering under persecution. While the sacred was not 'there' as before, it was not yet not-there at all. In the belief that there was a sacred source, and that it could be tapped, survivors initiated activity to ground the sacred, as if one could volunteer the sacred, which was beyond human reach, into one's presence. By restoring tradition, they believed, the shattering could be undone or mended, for example by investing respective festival narratives with Holocaust meaning, while drawing meaning for the catastrophe from the festival. Ritual activity retroactively affirmed the sacred reality, as the reality became a mandate for the ritual. There was now dual input, such that explicit enactment from below generated the expression of what was implicitly above. The survivor could barely 'breathe'. But with the first 'breath', he knew that God never let him stop 'breathing', and let him 'breathe' more easily.³⁵

32. Yitshak Yosef Kohen, 'Yeshivat 'she'erit ha'peleitat' be poecking', *Kol yisrael ba'golah* 10 (25 July 1947) 2.

33. Yehudah Layb Gersht, 'Mikhtav mi'emek ha'bakhah', *Diglenu* 2 (February-March 1947) 5, 10.

34. See Greenberg, 'German Displaced Persons Camps (1945–1948): Orthodox Jewish Responses to the Holocaust', *Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques* 39 no. 2 (2013) 71–95.

35. When the Czech philosopher Milan Machovec asked Johann Baptist Metz, whether after Auschwitz there were still prayers for Christians, Metz responded 'Wir können nach Auschwitz beten, weil auch in Auschwitz gebeten wurde'. Johann Baptist Metz, *Jenseits bürgerlichen Religion: Reden über die Zukunft des Christentums* (Munich 1980) 31.

Theme Three: Absolute Suffering

Religious thinkers through the Holocaust considered suffering to be something positive, on both individual and collective levels. In Jerusalem, Ya'akov Mosheh Harlap spoke of each victim as an Akedah sacrifice, where the body shattered as the soul broke forth in love for God to ascend and share the light of Mashiah ben Yosef.³⁶ Drawing from the experience of Nadav and Abihu, Hayim Elazary (Canton, Ohio) held that it was because each one was so close to holiness that the smallest imperfection was so explosive.³⁷ Eliyahu Meir Blokh in Cleveland held that suffering expressed God's *Hesed* (faithful kindness). By shattering the material, physical agony widened the channel for the soul to ascend to God.³⁸ Avraham Grodzensky in Kovno-Slobodka wrote that in His *Hesed*, God brought suffering to induce return to the *Shekhinah* made accessible at Sinai.³⁹ In a DP camp in Germany, Mordekhai Shlopobersky wrote that by removing the rigidity of selfhood, suffering created a sense of vulnerability which turned the individual to the God who awaited.⁴⁰

As to collective suffering: Following Kristallnacht, Yeshayahu Volfsberg and Shelomoh Zalman Shragai identified Israel with Isaiah's Suffering Servant, absorbing the suffering of the world for sin, lest the suffering become so great as to destroy the world.⁴¹ In Brooklyn, Yosef Yitshak Schneersohn held that exilic suffering was intended to force a divinely set choice between *Teshuvah* and further agony – which came to a head with the choice during the Holocaust between *Teshuvah* and death.⁴² In Petah Tikvah, Reuven Katz identified the Holocaust as a collective atonement sacrifice, whose ashes would evoke divine mercy for building a Jewish state.⁴³ Elberg spoke of Treblinka as a collective,

36. Greenberg, 'The Holocaust Apocalypse of Ya'akov Mosheh Harlap'.

37. Hayim Elazary, 'Havivim yesurim: Parashat netsavim', in *Shevilei hayim* (Canton, Ohio 1946) 303–6.

38. Eliyahu Meir Bloch, 'Yesurim shel ahavah: Parashat ve'ethanan', in *Shiurei da'at* (Jerusalem 1972) 121–7.

39. See Greenberg, 'God and Man in Slobodka Musar Theology: Avraham Grodzensky and Yitshak Ayzik Sher', in Lara Lempert (ed.) *Central and East European Jewry at the Crossroads of Modernity* (Vilnius 2006) 232–65.

40. Mordekhai Shlopobersky, 'Aykhah-Ayekhah', *Yidishe shtime* 1 no. 31 (25 July 1947) 1, 6.

41. Yeshayahu Volfsberg, 'Penei ha'dor: Eved hashem', *Ha'tsofeh* 3 no. 342 (10 February 1939) 6. Shelomoh Zalman Shragai, 'Yesurei yisrael', *Ha'tsofeh* 3 no. 360 (3 March 1939) 6–7.

42. Greenberg, 'Redemption After Holocaust According to Mahaneh Yisrael-Lubavitch 1940–1945', *Modern Judaism* 12 (1992) 61–84.

43. Reuven Katz, 'Sevel yisrael u'geulato', in *Duda'ei reuven* (Jerusalem 1954) 2:72–8.

climactic sacrifice inherent to the eternal essence of the people of Israel.⁴⁴ Aharonson identified the victims as *Korbanot olah* (sacrifices in which the entire animal was burned), where bodies were transformed into white smoke and served to mend the entire world.⁴⁵ Finally, Harlap wrote that the command to love God with all one's heart and soul, even if God were to take the soul (*Berakhot* 54a) was now to be carried out both individually and collectively. Even should the souls of the entire nation be taken, God's infinite love would not be exhausted. The legacy of Isaac's *Mesirut nefesh* (transmission of the soul to God) would then become the *Mesirut nefesh* of the entire nation.⁴⁶

Theme

Jewish religious thought has a long tradition of viewing suffering positively.⁴⁷ Here, not only is collective suffering viewed positively, but so is collective death – even of the entire nation.

Conclusion

The history of Jewish thought is a continuum; it cannot leap over two decades and start *de novo*. Real-time religious thought of the Holocaust, despite – or because of – the fact that it returned to pre-emancipation layers of meaning, belongs to the history of the twentieth century. The line between prewar and postwar deliberation needs to be widened to accommodate metahistorical and trans-historical arenas of deliberation. Specifically, the synthesis of metahistory, silence and transcendental realities as a basis for evaluating later thought, the idea that sacramental life on the collective level can be created from below; and that suffering could theoretically include the collective sacrifice of all Israel.

44. Greenberg, 'Holiness and Catastrophe in Simhah Elberg's Religious Thought'.

45. Aharonson, 'Azkarah li'kedoshei ha'shoah be'kenes yotsa'ei gostinin', in *Alei mererot* (Benei Berak 1996) 258.

46. Harlap, *Mei merom*, vol. 6, *Mi'enei ha'yeshua* (Jerusalem 1982) 205.

47. In an exceptional manner Natan Tsevi Finkel, founder of Slobodka Musar, rejected the suffering-*Teshuvah* correlation: *Teshuvah* was not achieved by understanding the meaning of God's punishment and suffering, but by understanding the meaning of God's benevolent love. 'The path of *Teshuvah* by means of suffering is for fools and gentiles. Suffering was not the way to bring Israel to *Teshuvah*. That path was through Torah which reveals the benevolent love and goodness of the Blessed One.' Natan Tsevi Finkel, *Or ha'tsafun: Ma'amrei musar be'ikvot sihotav shel ha'gaon ha'tsadik, maran natan tsevi finkel ha'saba mi'slobodka* (Jerusalem 1978) 2:31.

Theology and Conversion, Converts and Theology – The Picture in Britain

Dr Nechama Hadari

The seminar in which we worked at the Centre has worked in the shadow of two questions that have often remained unspoken: first, can Louis Jacobs himself be called Orthodox? And second, can 'theological debate' itself be considered to fall within the parameters of Orthodoxy? The answer(s) may be linked: if Louis Jacobs cannot be considered Orthodox (or must be considered a heretic within Orthodoxy), this is not necessarily because of what he said or wrote, but because he engaged in theological debate at all. In other words, to conflate the questions: is it possible to be an Orthodox Jewish theologian, or is this an oxymoron?

I approach these questions obliquely: I am centrally concerned neither with Louis Jacobs nor with the parameters of Orthodoxy, and I deal with what seems to be a relatively tangential corner of Jewish theology – the understanding and nature of conversion. But the premise of my research has been that a close focus on *giyur* (conversion to Judaism) can offer us a unique insight not only into contemporary understandings of Judaism, but into the contested status of theology within Jewish Orthodoxy. I embarked on my research in the partial hope of identifying core tenets of Orthodox Jewish belief and/or beliefs about what Jewishness is, through exploring what is taught to candidates for conversion. My assumption was that if certain core beliefs are regarded as essential for those considered 'Orthodox' (such as belief in revelation of the Torah at Sinai) they would be communicated to Orthodox conversion candidates during their years of study. 'Jewish beliefs' such as revelation, as well as 'beliefs about Jewishness' such as the meaning of 'chosenness', do form part of the curriculum for candidates for *giyur* within the *Rabbanut* system in Israel. Such beliefs, besides others about the nature of halakhah, 'Jewish law', and its relation to 'ethics', would combine to form what I would term 'Jewish theology'.

Strikingly, however, not one of the converts who participated in my British research – which involved interviews with people from a wide range of backgrounds who converted to Judaism through the London Beth

Din¹ – mentioned having been taught, or required to profess, any theological belief at all. They related being taught details of halakhah – correct Shabbat observance or the blessings to recite over food – but not the reason(s) for doing so. Although one female convert did relate having had a theological conversation with a *dayan* of the London Beth Din, her conversion had been performed in Israel rather than by that Beth Din. Moreover, she had been inspired to convert after studying Judaism at university and rabbinic texts on her own initiative.² In other words, the theological conversation between the woman I shall call ‘A’ and Dayan ‘Y’ did not arise out of the London Beth Din process.

It appears possible to draw two conclusions from such a lack of explicit focus on theology. First, it may suggest that in Britain (if not elsewhere) the notion of *Orthodoxy* is, as has sometimes been suggested, a misnomer which should be rejected in favour of an understanding of normativity based on *Orthopraxis*. That is to say: it does not matter what you believe, so long as what you *do* conforms to traditional Jewish norms. Second, it may imply that the London Beth Din operates on the assumption that *Orthopraxis* – the ‘uncompromising commitment to a halakhic lifestyle’, as they phrased it to one prospective convert – is in itself adequate evidence of *Orthodoxy*. That is to say, no rational person would volunteer to regulate every aspect of their life by reference to an intricate set of minutiae unless they believed that the system was commanded by a good God who would reward its observance.

I wish to argue that neither of these offers a complete and convincing explanation of the London Beth Din’s position – although both possess elements of truth. If no normative beliefs were required for Orthodox Judaism, there would have been no ‘Jacobs affair’ or rabbinic invective against ‘problematic’ books; and prospective candidates for conversion would have no hesitation in sharing their theological doubts with *dayanim*. But I have yet to speak with a convert who would be sanguine about the prospects of acceptance for anyone who did so. It is clearly possible to observe halakhot meticulously enough to conform to communal norms without having strong religious convictions. But the Beth Din itself seems on occasion to distrust ‘mere’ halakhic observance by a potential convert, especially if it is not convinced of her motivation in seeking conversion.

I use feminine pronouns when referring to the typical convert partly because

1. The wider context of my research compares the experiences and reflections of these British-converted *gerim* with those of a comparable group who completed the process in Israel.

2. ‘A’ was by no means the only interviewee who came to Judaism through this ‘academic’ route.

significantly more women convert to Judaism than men. But also, and more importantly, one of the central problems I explore is the conflict of expectations and understandings concerning *giyur* – the process, significance and results – between what I understand to be the three ‘participants’ in the *giyur* process: the convert herself, the community into which she converts and the *bet din*. This conflict of understandings is much more intense for women than for men, particularly when (like ‘A’ described above) the woman’s decision to convert is based on theological conviction after a period of independent study and spiritual searching. Such a narrative of conversion arises out of a typically Western liberal notion of self and identity, wherein a man or woman makes an independent, autonomous and informed choice about their religious identity and personal lifestyle, and is able freely to pursue a chosen path. Such a person is a rational ‘agent’, perceiving themselves to be, to a large extent, in control of them-‘selves’ and their life path. (Choosing to be bound by a set of heteronomous norms, it should be noted, can be entirely consistent with the expression of such rational agency, so long as the decision has been autonomously taken.)

Such a narrative of self-definition through conversion, though quint-essentially ‘modern’, is not entirely at odds with the pre-modern narratives of *giyur* available in rabbinic literature. I believe such a narrative to be implicit, for instance, in the classic responsum of Maimonides to Rabbi Ovadya ha-Ger who praises the (male) convert for a journey he defines as that of a spiritual-rational being in pursuit of wisdom, truth and connection to the Divine. Informed by this search in the non-Jewish world, the ideal convert comes to appreciate the greatness of the Torah, willingly accepts the Yoke of Mitzvot and thus becomes an ‘autonomous’ (and learned) Jew.

What Maimonides describes in his responsum is a person defined in the earliest halakhic sources as a *ger tsedek* (a righteous convert) who embraces Judaism *l’shem shamayim* (‘for the sake of Heaven’, meaning for religious reasons). The interviews I have conducted support the view that the *ger tsedek* so defined is indeed the ‘gold standard’ whom the London Beth Din is eager to support. The problem is, however, that that *ger tsedek* is, from a traditional point of view, deeply gendered. A significant number of female prospective converts may fit the paradigm, but *dayanim* find it hard to reconcile them with traditional (pre-modern) constructions of female gender. The female context, I argue, heightens the already problematic nature of an encounter between the Western liberal narrative of individual selfhood and the importance of choice in forming one’s own identity, and the rather less individualist philosophical outlook incorporated in observant Judaism. This ‘conflict of narratives’, I suggest, is one

cause of a considerable amount of tension and dissatisfaction on both sides of the convert/*bet din* divide.

The archetypal female narrative of conversion (in contrast with Maimonides's ideal autonomous *ger*) is that of the biblical heroine, Ruth. She expresses no particularly spiritual or religious aspirations and her motivation for 'conversion' is clearly relational.³ So although there is a formal halakhic preference that conversion be motivated by theological factors (whatever the gender of the convert), and a widespread sense that conversions for the sake of marriage are discouraged or at best tolerated,⁴ my research suggests that the *bet din* has achieved a certain comfort level in dealing with women converts who approach them for the sake of marriage, but not when the prospective convert is motivated by theological conviction. No female convert I spoke to described being given an unalloyed welcome by the *bet din*, and all female interviewees experienced a degree of trauma from the process. But those who converted for the sake of marriage described reaching a point where they were accepted into the process and, from that point, progressed steadily through learning, increased observance and examination. Those who converted out of a 'love for Judaism', on the other hand, typically found themselves subjected to a much greater level of distrust, scrutiny and prevarication.⁵

There are entirely valid reasons for the Beth Din's difficulty in expanding the *ger tsedek* archetype to include female converts. The most practical may be that while the rich texture of religious life for the Jewish *man* renders the male convert's decision to embrace Judaism for its spiritual potential eminently

3. Although it is explicitly not romantic. Midrashic writers, perhaps aware that her seduction of Boaz might render her problematically 'predatory', desexualized her and suggested that Boaz was attracted by her zealous modesty and that their son was conceived through a unique and unrepeated act of coition. Celebration of non-sexuality in women is highly unusual in talmudic literature, alerting us to a level of discomfort with Ruth's foreignness.

4. According to Rabbi Nehemia, cited in the talmudic source, Babylonian Talmud *Yevamot* 24b, a *giyur* is valid if motivated *l'shem shamayim*, but not by ulterior motives, most notably marriage. The Gemara discusses whether a convert who is later found to have had such a motive is considered Jewish or not, but not whether such candidates should be refused, and 'theological' ones welcomed. This is echoed in medieval commentaries and the *Shulchan Arukh*, and only in the eighteenth century is the question raised whether a convert should be accepted if (s)he is already married to, or intends marriage with, a Jewish partner. Many post-Enlightenment responsa and rabbinic opinions argue for leniency towards converts in a relationship with Jewish partners, but none prefer a theological motive.

5. Including an insistence that there must be a man 'in the picture'.

plausible and intelligible, such overtly spiritual aspects of the Jewish religion (for instance, the ritual donning of phylacteries and prayer shawl, thrice-daily prayer, intensive text study, the singing of haunting melodies around the *Shabbat* table) are not traditionally incumbent on or available to adult Jewish women. Thus the 'theologically motivated' potential convert (typically a single, university-educated professional in her twenties or early thirties) may be viewed as seeking an experience which is fundamentally (and problematically) at odds with that of the typical observant Jewish woman of her age.

Such a contrast has been highlighted for me by listening to converts' descriptions of the time they were expected to spend living with an observant family. All interviewees who had been through this experience testified not only to the trial it represented, but to their retrospective feeling that it was a wasted opportunity. They had often liked the woman of the house, but as all the women I spoke with had been working during the time of their conversion process (this was necessary, as the process is expensive, requiring one to employ tutors, pay the host-family rent, invest in appropriate clothes and so on), they felt they missed out on what could have been the primary purpose of their living-in: namely, learning by 'apprenticeship' how to keep a kosher home, cook *heimische* food, prepare for *Shabbat* and balance personal and spiritual needs with the demands of a young family. They were simply not in the house while their female role model was doing these things.⁶

Finally, there may simply be an inability on the part of *dayanim*, who perhaps have particular expectations of gender-appropriate behaviours and aspirations, to understand the strikingly different behaviours and aspirations evidenced and expressed by theologically motivated prospective converts. Women who approach the Beth Din because they are seeking marriage with a Jewish partner tend to foreground desires such as establishing a Jewish family, minimizing conflict between the Jewish partner and his parents, providing an unchallengeable Jewish identity for their children (a contributing factor in the

6. The fact that some converts (like *ba'alei teshuvah*) are attracted to traditional Judaism precisely by the opportunity to express femininity in a more traditional manner also brings problems in the 'living with a host family' requirement. One woman, 'C' (who was motivated by a relationship with a Jewish partner), described how painful it was to be surrounded by precisely the kind of warm Jewish family life she craved for herself, while being aware that she was older than the mother of her host family, and that each day delayed her chance to become a wife and mother. It is not only the dichotomy between lifestyles that can make the stay less productive than it might be; ironically, the convert may suffer precisely because she *does* accept the gender norms of the Orthodox world.

decision to seek an *Orthodox* conversion for more than one interviewee) and so are voicing concerns and motivations which conform to traditional gender expectations. Those who embark on a religious ‘quest’,⁷ by contrast, may inadvertently thwart those expectations and challenge (one aspect of) the very theology they seek to embrace.

The role of gender is, I argue, a central one in exploring the experience and meaning of *giyur* and has been largely ignored by those writing in the wake of the ‘conversion crises’ in Britain and Israel on either the halakhah or theology of conversion. However, as I noted earlier, the disinclination of the London Beth Din to communicate a theology through the conversion process extends also to male conversion candidates. One might argue that the self-conscious religiousness of prospective female converts (who ironically, at the outset at least, often try to stress the religious nature of their conviction and so differentiate themselves from candidates for the sake of marriage) may make gender a factor which emphasizes rather than creates the challenge that all ‘theological converts’ pose. I suggest that one facet of this challenge may consist in the fact that the very act of thinking about religious belief presupposes the ability to step outside its confines or parameters and subject it to some kind of critique. In other words, ‘theology’ presupposes the legitimacy of the activity of weighing and evaluating beliefs. One could theoretically arrive at a theology which holds ‘everything’ in the Jewish tradition to be true – i.e. an entirely Orthodox theology – but one would still have, in order to reach that point, to evaluate those truths in order to come to such a judgement.

When a person (male or female) decides to convert to Judaism for theological reasons, they must, of necessity, have had sufficient confidence in their rational faculty to have judged and rejected a previous belief system (whether religious or not) and *judged* Judaism to have been ‘better’ – indeed, ‘true’ or at least ‘morally enriching’. The early rabbinic sources I quoted as lauding the theological convert arose in times and places where there was (willingly or perforce) extensive religious debate between Jews and non-Jews, and where persecution of Jewish communities was on account of their theological difference. In such a milieu, a person able to defend and argue Jewish theology rationally may well have been viewed as an asset (or at least a trophy) for the Jewish community. I wonder, though, what is communicated about our confidence (or lack thereof) in the integrity and defensibility of the traditional Jewish belief system when we evince a lack of willingness to expound and discuss our theology – even with those who are inclined to accept and love it?

7. The quest narrative is, of course, one which implies a (male) ‘hero’.

Back to Zechariah Frankel and Louis Jacobs? On Integrating Academic Talmudic Scholarship into Israeli Religious Zionist Yeshivot and the Spectre of the Historical Development of the Halakhah

Professor Lawrence Kaplan
McGill University, Montreal

Jonathan Garb recently took note of the revival in contemporary Israeli Haredi society of spiritualist practice and doctrine. While further research is required, there appear to be parallel signs of searching and creativity in the contemporary Israeli Religious Zionist community. One important manifestation of this spiritual and intellectual search and creativity is the development over the past two decades of new methods of teaching Talmud in Israeli Religious Zionist yeshivot. As my title indicates, I wish to focus on those Religious Zionist *Rashei Yeshivah* (yeshivah deans) and *Ramim* (talmudic lecturers) who have sought to integrate academic talmudic scholarship into their *shi'urim* (talmudic lectures) and *Batei Midrash* (study houses), and the theological issues raised by this integration. But first some words of background.

All the new methods of teaching Talmud have developed against the backdrop of the hitherto and perhaps still dominant approach to teaching Talmud in Religious Zionist yeshivot, namely, the classical conceptual approach known informally as *lomdus*, or as the ‘Brisker’ approach after its founder, Rav Hayyim Soloveitchik of Brisk (1853–1918), whose leading contemporary ideological exponent, advocate and practitioner is Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivah Har Etzion and generally viewed as the leading figure on today’s Religious Zionist/Modern Orthodox scene.

This method is known for its ahistorical, highly abstract and formalistic nature, focusing on the conceptual foundations of talmudic law and eschewing the search for religious significance. Regarding the method’s abstract nature,

Rav Lichtenstein writes: 'The conceptual approach to learning ... is overwhelmingly tilted towards fundamentals – above all, the most basic of intellectual chores: definition. Armed with sets of categories, the conceptualist strives ... to grasp the essential character of a particular element and hence to classify it.' Regarding its formalistic nature, Rabbi Moshe Lichtenstein, a son of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, writes that the Brisker method 'effected a shift from the "why" to the "what", and from the final cause to the efficient cause. No longer is it the task of the learner to ascertain why a certain Halakhah is as it is. ... Rather ... the goal of the analysis of the concrete phenomenon at hand is to understand what it is and how it works.' As Rabbi Lichtenstein *filis* notes, in 'the Brisker approach ... [it is] the practical implications (*nafka minas*) that become the standard by which opinions (*sevarot*) can be examined, for positions are now held accountable for their halakhic manifestations in actual practice'.

What needs to be emphasized is that for the classical Brisker, once one has carried out the basic intellectual chore of definition through, say, exploring the competing definitions of the 'what' of a particular law – for example, the commandment to eat in a Sukkah on the first night of the festival – and has further examined the practical implication resulting from the different conceptual understandings of that commandment's 'what', one's task is over. No further inquiry is needed to ascertain how the conceptual debate regarding the 'what' of the commandment to eat in a Sukkah might illuminate its religious significance. Here the formalistic nature of the Brisker method comes to the fore.

Against this backdrop, three new methods of Talmud study have emerged, all responding to the Religious Zionist spiritual quest referred to above: 1) a modified Brisker approach; 2) the *Torat Erets Yisrael* ('Torah of the Land of Israel') approach; and 3) what I would call the *shiluv* ('combined') approach, a term that implies forming a new and harmonious whole. What these three approaches have in common is the desire to retain the conceptual analysis of the Brisker approach, but to abandon its strict formalism and combine it with the search for religious meaning and significance (*mashma'ut*).

The modified Brisker approach, set forth both by Rabbi Moshe Lichtenstein and Rabbi Michael Rosenzweig, one of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein's most outstanding disciples, stresses the need to move from the traditional Brisker emphasis on the 'what', i.e., formalism, to raising the question of 'why', and to – I am citing here Rabbi Rosenzweig – 'distil the values and themes that issue forth from the nuances of halakhic conceptual analysis into a broad religious outlook'. That is, to cite Rabbi Avi Walfish, one 'translates halakhic concepts from the formalistic language prevalent in classic Talmudic discourse into

language of value accessible and more relevant to ... students'. The *Torat Erets Yisrael* approach, represented most prominently by Rav Yehoshua Weitzman, the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivat Ma'alot, similarly seeks to combine traditional *lomdus* with the search for *mashma'ut*, which it finds in the esoteric soul of the Torah that undergirds and gives life to the exoteric aspect. That is, unlike the modified Brisker approach, where *mashma'ut* is understood to refer to rationally comprehensible, personal-existentialist themes and values, in the *Torat Erets Yisrael* approach, *mashma'ut* is perceived in highly spiritual, indeed kabbalistic terms, and the relationship between the exoteric legal content of the talmudic text and its esoteric spiritual or kabbalistic significance often seems, at least to a non-initiate like myself, very tenuous indeed. Perhaps almost as important as what the modified Brisker and *Torat Erets Yisrael* approaches share in the positive sense – namely, the attempt to combine *lomdus* with the search for *mashma'ut*, however differently that *mashma'ut* may be understood – is what they share in the negative sense, namely, the deliberate avoidance of critical-historical lines of inquiry for the study of rabbinic literature, in particular any idea of the historical development of the halakhah.

In contrast to the modified Brisker and *Torat Erets Yisrael* approaches, the *shiluv* approach, whose most thoughtful and articulate representative was the late Rav Shagar (Shimon Gershon Rosenberg), has as its goal, to cite Rav Shagar, 'the cleaving [to the divine] which reveals itself in the uncovering of the existential significance and meaning [*mashma'ut*] of the *sugya* [unit of talmudic discourse], and the method it adopts is that of uncovering this meaning through joining together [*shiluv*] the tools of traditional conceptual analysis, *lomdus*, and those of [historical-critical] scholarship [*keilim lamdaniyyim ve-mehkarriyim*]'.

This integration of academic historical-critical scholarship into the world of the yeshivah is especially exemplified in the adoption of a diachronic approach to the halakhah. Thus, to take a particularly striking example, both Rabbis David Bigman and Yaakov Nagen, two eminent exponents of the *shiluv* approach, in their talmudic *shi'urim* on *sugyot* dealing with tort law, have sought to show how a diachronic examination of the chronological layers of the relevant rabbinic literature reveals that the rabbis' legal approach to the issues in question underwent over the course of time – and here both Rabbis Bigman and Nagen independently used the same phrase – 'a complete revolution' (*mahapakh gamur*).

However, as the above examples show, the *shiluv* approach of integrating academic historical-critical scholarship with its diachronic approach into Israeli

Religious Zionist Yeshivot raises the spectre of the historical development of the halakhah, challenging its authority as a divinely revealed system of Law. To be sure, the issue of halakhic development and the theological challenges it raises go back to Zechariah Frankel and were taken up more recently by Louis Jacobs, but these have now expanded beyond the world of the university or modern rabbinical seminary to the traditional yeshivah.

Perhaps the key theological challenge is that the diachronic approach is liable to undercut the continuity of rabbinic literature. There are three ways this undercutting can take place, although I will focus on the third.

First, the diachronic approach reveals that the meaning that a later layer of rabbinic literature, say, the *stama de-Talmuda*, the latest anonymous stratum of the Babylonian Talmud, ascribes to an earlier layer of rabbinic literature, say to a statement of a Babylonian Amora, often does not correspond to its original meaning. Here the *shiluv* approach, while conceding, indeed stressing this point, would view, to use our example, the author of the *stam* as a creative expositor of the view of the earlier Amora, deliberately reshaping and developing that view in accordance with his own understanding of the relevant issues. This approach is set against the critical approach of the noted talmudic scholar, Professor David Weiss Halivni, who argues that the shift in meaning from an earlier layer of rabbinic literature to a later one often results from the later layer's failure to understand the intent of the earlier one. Rav Shagar explicitly rules out Professor Weiss Halivni's approach as 'shattering the continuity of the tradition'.

Second, much modern historical scholarship maintains that the medieval rabbinic authorities (*Rishonim*), under the pressure of changed social and historical conditions, simply ignored or misread or twisted the relevant talmudic *sugyot* in order to arrive at a satisfactory solution to the practical problems confronting them. As opposed to this view, Rav Shagar argues that the very pressure of changed conditions led the *Rishonim* to discover genuine interpretive possibilities in the relevant *sugyot* that allowed them, without any distortion or misreading, to solve problems raised by the new conditions. Rabbi Elisha Anselovits, another eminent exponent of the *shiluv* approach, takes a different tack. He suggests that while the *Rishonim* did, in fact, often change the form of the law, 'it was in order to best apply all the *original concerns* [of the law] under the changed circumstances'.

Third, the threat the diachronic approach poses to the continuity of rabbinic literature is especially aggravated by its being combined with the search for significance advocated by the *shiluv* approach, for precisely this combination

seems to imply that the development of rabbinic law was fuelled by shifts or even revolutions in values among rabbinic Sages. But can Orthodox *Rashei Yeshivah* admit that shifts in values occurred among the Sages; and if these did occur, how to account for it?

Rav Shagar indeed admits that such shifts occurred. For example, he argues that a diachronic approach to the halakhic literature dealing with marriage indicates a shift from viewing marriage as *kinyan* ('acquisition') to interpreting it as *kiddushin* ('sanctification'). In response to the objection that such an approach undermines the authority of halakhah as a divinely revealed system of Law, Rav Shagar, drawing on the teachings of Rav Kook, and even at one point referring to Hegel, maintains that this very evolution of values is part of an on-going process of divine revelation, or, as he states elsewhere, represents the absolute divine will as it manifests itself in the unfolding of both the history and the Torah of the Jewish people.

Most representatives of the *shiluv* approach, however, for example Rabbis Anselovits, Walfish and Meir Lichtenstein (another son of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein), reject Rav Shagar's approach either explicitly or tacitly, first, on theological grounds, believing it to be too close for comfort to the positive-historical approach of Rabbis Frankel and Jacobs; second, on pedagogical grounds, believing it will not inspire students in their spiritual search; and third, on scholarly grounds, believing it does not do justice to the complexity of the rabbinic texts themselves. Rabbi Anselovits, as we saw, maintains that while there may be changes in the *form* of the law, 'it [is] in order to best apply all the *original concerns* [of the law] under the changed circumstances'. Rabbi Walfish argues that a close examination of the halakhic literature dealing with marriage indicates that Rav Shagar's diachronic view must be rejected on scholarly grounds. Rather the strata of the halakhic literature dealing with marriage need to be read synchronically, and in *all* of them marriage is viewed *both* as *kinyan* and as *kiddushin*, though the balance between these views is constantly being recalibrated in the light of changing historical conditions. Finally, Rabbi Meir Lichtenstein, in a similar vein, argues that at the heart of the halakhic discussion of any particular issue are the challenges and dilemmas that that issue poses. These challenges and dilemmas require for their solution that the halakhah balance competing values or concerns. Though the details of the original halakhic solution may change over time, such changes reflect not a shift in the rabbis' fundamental values and concerns, but, again, their rebalancing and recalibration. A thorough examination of this important *internal* dimension of the *shiluv* debate must await, however, the more extended study that I am now preparing.

'Modern' Orthodoxy in Antiquity and the Present Day

Professor James Kugel
Bar-Ilan University

Modern Orthodoxy¹ has been defined and redefined so many times in recent years, and by so many distinguished practitioners, that there seems hardly any point in adding to the glut of paper and megabytes already devoted to pinning down its core beliefs. Indeed, the very profusion of position papers,² present-day assessments,³ historical reviews,⁴ predictions of future

1. Hereafter referred to as, simply, Orthodoxy. Names are very important, and as others have long acknowledged, 'Modern Orthodoxy' seems by now to be inappropriate on several counts. See N. Lamm, 'Some Comments on Centrist Orthodoxy', *Tradition* 22 (1986) 1–12. Of course, 'Orthodoxy' itself was not a unanimous way of referring to the unbroken Jewish tradition. See J. C. Blutinger's brief history, "'So-called Orthodoxy": The History of an Unwanted Label', *Modern Judaism* 27 (2007) 310–28.

2. The best short description I know of is still that of Saul Berman, 'The Ideology of Modern Orthodoxy', printed as part of a symposium 'The Future of American Orthodoxy' in *Sh'ma, a Journal of Jewish Ideas* (1 February 2001) and available at <http://shma.com/category/issues/modern-orthodoxy/>. Central to my subject here is Norman Lamm's *Torah Umadda: The Encounter of Religious Learning and Worldly Knowledge in the Jewish Tradition* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1990); cf. Avraham Weiss, 'Open Orthodoxy! A Modern Orthodox Rabbi's Creed', *Judaism* 46 (1997) 409–21.

3. Chaim I. Waxman, 'Dilemmas of Modern Orthodoxy: Sociological and Philosophical', *Judaism* 42 (1993) 59–70; Haym Soloveitchik, 'Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of Contemporary Orthodoxy', *Tradition* 28 (1994) 64–130; Charles S. Liebman, 'Modern Orthodoxy in Israel', *Judaism* 47 (1998) 405–10; William B. Helmreich and Reuel Shinnar, 'Modern Orthodoxy in America: Possibilities for a Movement under Siege', Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, pub. no. 383 (1998) 1–12; S. I. Freedman, *Jew vs. Jew: The Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000); Alan Brill, 'Judaism in Culture: Beyond the Bifurcation of Torah and Madda', *Edah Journal* 4 (2004) 1–26; B. Kraut, *The Greening of American Orthodox Judaism: Yavneh in the 1960s* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2010).

4. Among many: J. Katz, 'Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective', in *Studies in Contemporary Judaism* (1986) 2: 3–17; idem, *A House Divided: Orthodoxy and*

developments⁵ and, along with all these, reactions to each other's statements by the spokesmen for various factions – all this suggests that there remains little new to be said on the subject. So why invoke this exhausted, and exhausting, subject once again? My only excuse for so doing in the following is that, as the result of my participation in a recent, semester-long research group devoted to the subject,⁶ a few thoughts have occurred to me about the history of one of Orthodoxy's central concerns, the matter of Jews' relations with the non-Jewish world. This subject nowadays often involves a comparison of Orthodoxy's stance with that of its close neighbour and occasional *bar pelugta*, the movement that is sometimes called Ultra-Orthodoxy or *Haredi* Judaism, but which, for the purposes of this paper, I will refer to via the more general (and more inclusive historically) term of 'Separatist' Judaism.⁷

I. Separatist Judaism Then...

The issue that both Orthodoxy and Separatist Judaism seek to face is a serious one: the extent to which Jews can allow themselves to live their lives and think

Schism in Nineteenth-Century Central European Jewry (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1998); particularly relevant: Marc B. Shapiro, *Between the Yeshiva World and Modern Orthodoxy: The Life and Works of Rabbi Jehiel Jacob Weinberg, 1884–1966* (New York: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1999); idem, 'Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer's Program of Torah u-Madda', *Torah u-Madda Journal* 9 (2000) 76–86; Adam Ferziger, *Exclusion and Hierarchy: Orthodoxy, Non-Observant, and the Emergence of Modern Orthodox Identity* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2005).

5. Note especially S. della Pergola and U. Rebhun, 'American Orthodox Jews: Demographic Trends and Scenarios', *Jewish Action* (1998) online at: <http://www.ou.org/publications/ja/5759fall/americanjews>; also J. Sarna, 'The Future of American Orthodoxy', *Sh'ma, a Journal of Jewish Ideas* (1 February 2001) (see above, note 2).

6. 'Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: Exploring Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs', Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, January–June, 2013.

7. I mean this as a descriptive term, useful here precisely for its historical dimension; in general, however, I would favour the use of this name over ultra-Orthodox or *Haredi* Judaism, since 'Separatist' highlights the most salient feature distinguishing this form of Judaism from Orthodoxy. For some of the historical background of modern Ultra-Orthodox/*Haredi* Judaism's emergence: Michael Silber, 'The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy: the Invention of a Tradition' in J. Wertheimer, *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era* (New York, NY: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1994); Z. J. Kaplan, 'Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, Zionism, and Hungarian Ultra-Orthodoxy', *Modern Judaism* 24 (2004) 165–78.

their thoughts in close contact with the non-Jewish world without losing the things they hold most dear – strict adherence to *halakhah* as well as their very identity as Jews, ever-threatened by assimilation, intermarriage and the disappearance of distinctive traditions and patterns of behaviour.

The problem, of course, is not new. Scarcely was Israel conceived of as a distinct people connected to an altogether unique Deity than the issues of foreign gods,⁸ foreign wisdom⁹ and foreigners in general¹⁰ came to be a central (if disputed)¹¹ topic of debate. Does being faithful to Israel's God require Jews to separate themselves from non-Jewish society? The answer of some has *always* been: Yes! Thus, around 300 BCE, the Greek writer Hecataeus of Abdera described the Jews as a 'somewhat unsociable and foreigner-hating people',¹² and this description seems to match other writings from the same

8. This hardly needs glossing; it seems to me to be as old as anything one might identify as the 'religion of Israel', and is unmistakably present in such ancient texts as the Decalogue as well as being the great theme of the legal corpus of Deuteronomy.

9. Specifically addressed in Proverbs 7 and 8, a relatively late text; an earlier, and crucial, statement is Deuteronomy 4:6: it (like many other biblical texts) seems to locate conventional *hokhmah* as the province of *other* nations, suggesting that Israel's *hokhmah* is uniquely in its laws; cf. 1 Kings 4:29–31. This is rather different from the view of M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomist School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 151, which seeks to find in Deuteronomy 4:6 the equation of wisdom and law.

10. Particularly sensitive was the question of exogamy (intermarriage): Deuteronomy 7:1–6; Ezra 9:1, 10:2–5; Tobit 4:12; Jubilees 20:4, 22:20, 25:4–9, 30:5; Philo, *SpecLeg* 3:29; *T. Job* 45:3; *Jos. Asen.* 7:6; *Pseud-Philo*, *LAB* 9:5, 44:7, 45:3. G. Knoppers, 'Sex, Religion, and Politics: The Deuteronomist on Intermarriage', *Hebrew Annual Review* 14 (1994) 121–41; Christine Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); S. J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 241–62; Christian Frevel (ed.) *Mixed Marriages: Intermarriage and Group Identity in the Second Temple Period* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).

11. The book of Ruth has frequently been treated as a deliberate protest against the anti-exogamic measures recounted in Ezra-Nehemiah: see, e.g., Marjo C. A. Korpel, *The Structure of the Book of Ruth* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2001). Other recent studies focus more on the matter of social identity: see P. H. W. Lau, *Identity and Ethics in the Book of Ruth* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2011); note also G. Knoppers, "'Married into Moab": the Exogamy Practiced by Judah and his Descendants in the Judahite Lineages', in Frevel, *Mixed Marriages* (see n. 10) 170–91.

12. Cited in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* XL, 3, cited in M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1976) 1:26.

general period.¹³ It is unlikely that Hecataeus' characterization arose from anti-Jewish animus (apart from the phrase cited, anti-Judaism is actually quite absent from the surviving fragments of his treatment). Then why call the Jews 'foreigner-hating'? Even at this early date, it would seem, some Jews were indeed perceived as fundamentally antagonistic to foreigners and foreign ideas and eager to build physical and intellectual walls to keep them out. Along the same lines, the third-century BCE Egyptian Manetho is quoted by Josephus as saying that a certain 'Osarseph' (Joseph?), the leader of the Jews in Egypt, ordered them 'to have relations with no one except those of their own confederacy'.¹⁴ Somewhat later, in the first century BCE, Diodorus Siculus wrote that the Jews have 'utterly outlandish laws: not to break bread with any other race, nor to show them any good will at all'. He goes on to refer to their 'xenophobic laws'.¹⁵ In the first century CE, Josephus reports that the anti-Jewish author Apion 'attributes to us an imaginary oath, so that it would appear that we swear by the God who made heaven and earth and sea to show no good will to a single alien, above all not to Greeks'.¹⁶ And the list goes on.¹⁷

Certainly some of these writers exaggerate or entirely invent what they report; but there is no doubt that at least some Jews were indeed hostile to non-Jews – for example, the anonymous Jewish author of the book of *Jubilees* (written c. 200 BCE). His book certainly demonstrates what a Greek would describe as xenophobia or *xenelasia* (unsociability). He believed that contact with non-Jews was in itself corrupting; indeed, it rendered a Jew impure in a way that, for *Jubilees*, was clearly more serious than the sort of ritual impurity discussed at length in Leviticus and other biblical books.¹⁸ In the extreme case,

13. Josephus ascribes to the first-century BCE rhetorician Apollonius Molon a condemnation of the Jews for 'refusing admission to persons with other preconceived ideas about God and for declining to associate with those who have chosen to adopt a different mode of life'. Cited in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors* (see n. 12) 156. See also J. Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Abington, 1972); idem, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

14. Cited in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors* (see n. 13) 79.

15. Ibid 182.

16. Ibid 414.

17. Note in particular Tacitus, cited in *ibid* 2:26.

18. Such as that imparted by touching a human corpse, for example; *Jubilees* actively sought to diminish the importance of such cultic impurity in his book. See L. Ravid, 'Purity and Impurity in the Book of Jubilees', *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 13 (2002) 61–86; also J. Klawens, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford, 2000).

Jubilees' author considered sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews not only to be forbidden, but to be virtually a form of bestiality, since it linked two utterly unlike species.¹⁹

Despite such views, the author of *Jubilees* was no doubt troubled by a problem that continues to plague Separatist Jews: those non-Jews sometimes seem to know things, so that even the most rabid xenophobe might find himself having to make use of their knowledge, including their science and technology. For *Jubilees*' author, a case in point was geography. When his retelling of Genesis came to describe the division of the world among Noah's descendants (*Jubilees* chaps 8–9), he felt he had to present a precise delineation of each descendant's inheritance. In so doing, he ended up having to use a highly detailed map of the world that was indisputably borrowed, either directly or *par personne interposée*, from Greek geographic writings.

In such cases, the tactic sometimes described as 'defensive modernization' appears. While freely mining the knowledge of Greek geographers, the world map reflected in *Jubilees*, in common with that of other Jewish texts of the period, included a number of crucial adjustments to keep it in line with traditional Jewish views, significantly relocating the 'centre of the earth' or *omphalos mundi* to the territory assigned to Shem, Israel's ancestor (*Jubilees* 8:12).²⁰ Another example of defensive modernization: when an anonymous writer of perhaps the third century BCE sought to import Mesopotamian astronomical lore into Judaea, he hid its foreign origins and connection to alien worship, presenting it instead as the teaching of an altogether kosher figure, the biblical Enoch, who, having ascended bodily into the heavens (Genesis 5:24), must have found himself in a position to converse with the angels as well as to observe the movements of heavenly bodies first-hand, enabling him to impart this knowledge to the Jews on earth.²¹

19. See *Jubilees* chapter 30; a man who gives his daughter or sister in marriage to a non-Jew has committed 'an outrage' and is to be stoned to death, while the woman is to be burnt alive. More generally Jews were, in the author's view, an utterly unique and essentially heavenly race, a 'holy seed', the only people 'hallowed and blessed' (to match the heavenly institution of the Sabbath, 2:19–24); they are circumcised, through which they are akin to the highest categories of angels (*Jubilees* 15:27).

20. See P. S. Alexander, 'Jerusalem as the *Omphalos* of the World: On the History of a Geographical Concept', *Judaism* 46 (1997) 148–63; D. A. Machiela, 'The Genesis Apocryphon (1Q20): A Reevaluation of its Text, Interpretive Character, and Relation to the Book of Jubilees', PhD Dissertation (Notre Dame, 2007) 178–80, 224, 256–8.

21. This section of *1 Enoch* is known as the 'Book of Luminaries' (chaps 72–82).

The opposing pulls of Jewish separatism and Jewish recourse to, or active embrace of, non-Jewish society and non-Jewish ideas are thus an age-old feature of Judaism itself – one might say that both tendencies (and the tension between them) are virtually dyed in the wool. So, while Hecataeus of Abdera or books such as *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* are rarely included in the discussion of the roots of modern Separatist Judaism, the temptation for Jews to cut themselves off from outside influences and/or to limit access to (or modify) non-Jewish sources for their own ideological ends has always been a force in Jewish social and intellectual history. At the same time, true openness to the outside world while seeking to uphold the teachings of Judaism and the Jewish way of life is equally well represented in Judaism's ancient past. Today's Orthodox proponents of the 'openness' tendency often cite Maimonides as a model of the integration of secular and religious knowledge – and certainly an intellectual biography of the great twelfth-century scholar reveals the profound influence of Greek and Arabic thought.²² More generally, the whole intellectual tradition of Jews in medieval Spain reveals broad areas of outside influence extending into such unassailably Jewish domains as the development of Hebrew grammar; medieval Hebrew poetry and rhetoric; biblical commentary; legal principles and jurisprudence; and, more broadly, all of 'Jewish thought' and philosophy. But the history of such intellectual openness hardly begins in the Middle Ages. It is certainly evident in the Second Temple period, when contact between Jews and Greek civilization reached its apogee starting from the third century BCE. Holding on to Jewish teachings and Jewish values in the face of the encounter with Hellenism was no easy prospect, and many Jews apparently defected utterly to Hellenism's ways. But this was also a period of great syntheses, with towering figures such as the first-century philosopher and biblical commentator Philo of Alexandria, standing as a monument to the ability of Jews to absorb or otherwise reckon with outside ideas and influences without surrendering what they hold most dear: the Torah, its ideas and the way of life it sets forth.²³ Philo is, however, merely one of numerous Jewish

22. A point made by virtually all such intellectual biographies (see for the present context Lamm, *Torah Umadda* [see n. 2]), though just now Maimonides's overall 'Mediterranean' influences have come to the fore, see S. Stroumsa, *Maimonides in his World: Portrait of a Mediterranean Thinker* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

23. For one representative instance, see D. Winston, 'Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon on Creation, Revelation, and Providence: The High-Water Mark of Jewish Hellenistic Fusion', in J. Kugel (ed.) *Shem in the Tents of Japhet: Essays on the Encounter of Judaism and Hellenism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 93–108.

writers who, in one way or another, sought to embrace aspects of Hellenistic learning while upholding traditional Jewish teachings.²⁴ Further examples might include such works as the *Wisdom of Solomon*,²⁵ large sections of the *Sibylline Oracles*,²⁶ the *Letter of Aristaeas*, the book of *4 Maccabees*, the historical writings of Artapanus, Demetrius the Chronographer, Eupolemus and others, the philosophical works of Aristobulus and the *Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, the poetry of Ezekiel the Tragedian, Philo the Epic Poet, Theodotus and numerous others. Even rabbinic writings, concerned as they are with internal Jewish subjects and apparently intended solely for a Jewish readership, did not shy away from the use of Greek (or, later, Latin or Persian) terms, as well as references to Greek institutions, themes, or ideas.²⁷ For this reason, it would be difficult to connect the extreme Separatist stream described above specifically with the predecessors or founders of rabbinic Judaism; rather, movements such as that of the Qumran covenanters, or more generally the Essenes with whom they appear to have been affiliated, seem most clearly to have embraced values reminiscent of today's Separatists.²⁸

II. . . And Orthodox Judaism Now

Thus, openness to non-Jews and their ideas always was a disputed topic, and today it remains the great *discrimen* separating Orthodoxy from Separatist Judaism. But how far can openness go? While Separatist Judaism today usually stands for maximal separation – separate neighbourhoods, separate schools (excluding even religious Jews of the non-Separatist persuasion, and sometimes

24. Unfortunately, the work of many such authors has either disappeared or survived in a few fragments cited by later writers.

25. One recent study of the phenomenon in detail: A. Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10: A Jewish-Hellenistic Reinterpretation of Early Israelite History Through Sapiential Lenses* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011).

26. For details see J. J. Collins, 'The Sibylline Oracles', in M. Stone, *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Philadelphia: Van Gorcum/Fortress, 1984) 358–81.

27. Still outstanding among many treatments: S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II-IV centuries CE* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1942); idem, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the I century B.C.E.-IV century C.E.* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1962).

28. Again, see Lamm, *Torah Umadda* (see n. 2). In this connection it is to be noted that the Qumran scrolls contained fragments from no fewer than fifteen manuscript copies of the book of *Jubilees*.

even excluding the children of a different Separatist subgroup), cultural separation enforced by the banning of television, the internet and so forth – Orthodoxy hardly stands for the opposite of all these. Rather, its position would better be described as a delicate balancing act. True, Orthodox Jews generally do not seek to live in demarcated Jewish enclaves; nevertheless, they must by necessity live within walking distance of an Orthodox synagogue, and this often makes for neighbourhoods with a high density of Orthodox Jews. Similarly, in education, their choice is generally for Orthodox schools through elementary and secondary educational institutions, nowadays often supplemented by a further year or two of intensive Jewish learning, usually in Israel. But the desire for further education brings many young Jews into a university setting together with non-Jewish students and teachers, and it is there that the limits of openness are sometimes keenly tested.

How is one to integrate the teachings of Torah with secular learning? The overall approach embraced by Orthodoxy's spokesmen (going back at least to Samson Raphael Hirsch in the mid-nineteenth century) has been precisely to stress the delicate balancing act mentioned earlier. Judaism and the non-Jewish world present two *complementary* sorts of learning: Torah (in the broadest sense) and *madda* ('knowledge', nowadays 'science'), the latter including all learning that is not explicitly part of traditional Jewish teaching and practice. As Norman Lamm has observed in a much-cited remark, 'Torah, faith, religious learning on one side and *Madda*, science, worldly knowledge on the other, together offer us a more over-arching and truer vision than either one set alone'.²⁹

That is nice, but what happens when the two actually conflict? This problem is regularly encountered by Jewish professors working in various areas of Jewish studies, particularly, I think, in my own field of specialization, the Hebrew Bible and the literature of the Second Temple period.³⁰ There is nothing obviously *complementary* about traditional Jewish views of Torah and, say, Wellhausen's Documentary Hypothesis. More generally, I do not believe that any great synthesis is possible between traditional Jewish (or, for that matter, Christian) belief and modern biblical scholarship.³¹ For the Orthodox Jew, the idea of complementarity has its limits.

29. *Torah u-Madda* (see n. 2) 236.

30. See David Sperling, *Students of the Covenant: A History of Jewish Biblical Scholarship in North America* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

31. What I have often said (and written) is that modern biblical scholarship and traditional Jewish belief are fundamentally irreconcilable; see *How to Read the Bible* (New York: Free Press, 2007) 681.

Does this mean that studying modern biblical scholarship ought officially to be forbidden to Orthodox Jews? Whatever happens in practice,³² such a possibility surely goes against our modern valuation of intellectual freedom, our desire to discover anything that can be discovered and not to shy away from unpleasant truths. How then can one simply turn one's back on an entire field of research pursued in universities and seminaries across the world, an area of study that focuses on texts absolutely vital to Judaism itself? Modern biblical scholarship has been pursued for more than two centuries. Its findings are based on things quite unknown in an earlier day: the excavation of historic sites all over the territory of ancient Israel as well as in neighbouring Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and elsewhere; a comprehensive knowledge of ancient Near Eastern languages (Egyptian, Akkadian, Ugaritic, Hittite and others), which has led to the decipherment of thousands of texts written in these languages by biblical Israel's neighbours and so provided us with (among other things) a detailed picture of the beliefs and religious practices of those neighbours; and in general, a broad understanding of the history, culture and religious practices of ancient Israelites in their larger environment during biblical times. Surely all this new knowledge cannot simply be shrugged off or dismissed (as some have tried to do) as a bunch of unproven theories. I believe that any such dismissal must be recognized for what it is: intellectual cowardice, no matter how it is dressed up. So, while I personally would never obligate any Orthodox Jew to study modern biblical scholarship, I believe that as an institution, Orthodoxy has no choice but to face this material squarely.³³

Such a reckoning ought, I believe, to begin with an understanding of where precisely Orthodoxy and modern scholarship differ. The two are, as noted, incompatible, but *not* because Judaism defines the Torah as the unitary text transmitted by God to a certain Moses at Mount Sinai, whereas modern biblical scholarship sees the Pentateuch as a complex text including the work of

32. I should make it clear that my views would never *require* an Orthodox Jew or anyone else to study modern biblical scholarship.
33. My own position on modern biblical scholarship – summarized in the following as well as in the forthcoming *The Kingly Sanctuary* – is somewhat paradoxical, which is probably why it has often been misrepresented (usually not in print, but by earnest bloggers). Among many, many others, see: <http://haemtza.blogspot.co.il/2009/01/professor-james-kugel-and-yeshiva.html>; <http://tzvee.blogspot.co.il/2008/03/richard-friedman-cooks-james-kugels.html>; <http://hirhurim.blogspot.co.il/2007/10/james-kugel-and-new-york-times-mistake.html>; ; <http://hirhurim.blogspot.co.il/2009/02/considering-kugel-ii.html>; <http://www.vosizneias.com/25007/2008/12/31/new-york-city-yeshiva-university-gives-platform-to-questionable-apikores/>.

different authors and editors, none of whom may reasonably be identified with the biblical Moses. To accept this as the fundamental disagreement between Judaism's definition of 'the Torah' and modern scholarship's Pentateuch is to concede the argument before it begins. Judaism's definition has never been that the Torah equals the words on the pages of the Pentateuch (which may or may not then be interpreted with all the tools of modern scholarship, depending on whether one is an Orthodox Jew or not). Rather, Judaism's 'Torah' has always been much more than the words on the page: it has always been the words on the page *plus* Judaism's great interpretive tradition, or, in Hebrew, the *torah she-bikhtav* (the 'written Torah') along with the *torah she-be'al peh* (the 'oral Torah'). This is quite a different text from that of the Pentateuch alone – and in more than one way.

To begin with, if Judaism's Torah consisted of the words alone, then 'An eye for an eye' would mean that if you knock out my eye, I get to knock out yours in return (rather than stipulating, as the Babylonian Talmud does, that this verse really refers to monetary compensation for such an injury, in other words, *not* an eye for an eye).³⁴ Similarly, *aharei rabbim lehattot* ('to pervert [justice] in favour of the mighty') in Exodus 23:2 could never be thought to refer to something entirely different from the plain meaning of those words, namely, the principle of majority rule;³⁵ *mimmahorat ha-shabbat* in Leviticus 23:15 ought reasonably to be understood as the day after the Sabbath, rather than the day after the first day of Passover;³⁶ and so forth and so on, through hundreds and hundreds of examples.³⁷ Orthodox Judaism's Torah is an entirely different *text* from modern biblical scholarship's Pentateuch.

But this disagreement in turn represents a still more basic difference. Orthodox Judaism is not interested in seeking to interpret its text *afresh*, using all the resources of archaeology, ancient Near Eastern history and the like. The Torah of Orthodox Judaism, at least, has already been definitively interpreted: its interpretation can be found on the pages of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, in tannaitic and amoraic midrash, and then further refined in an unbroken chain of Torah scholars, stretching from the period of the Geonim to Rashi's commentaries and on to various legists and the authors of codes such

34. *Bab. Talmud* Baba Qamma 83b–84a; see also Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 4:278–80.

35. *Bab. Talmud* Baba Metzi'a 59b.

36. *Bab. Talmud* Menahot 65a–66a; see D. Weiss Halivni, *Peshat and Derash: Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis* (New York: Oxford, 1991) 12.

37. For further example, J. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

as the *Mishneh Torah* and the *Shulhan Arukh*, and so on right down to today's *posekim*.

This is the fundamental disagreement between the Torah of Orthodox Judaism and the Pentateuch of modern biblical scholarship: the *very idea of Scripture* by which each operates is different from the other's. Modern biblical scholarship is always moving backwards, ever in search of the pristine text, uncorrupted by external ideas or even by the work of later redactors and editors. Using all the scholarly tools at its disposal, it seeks to understand the text's earliest form and the historical circumstances in which it was created, the better to reconstruct its original meaning. Orthodox Judaism, on the other hand, operates on a completely different idea of Scripture and what it consists of, as well as the purpose of, and method for, studying it. 'Original meaning' has nothing to do with it. From the standpoint of Orthodoxy, to think that the way to study Scripture is to investigate how and by whom and when it came into being is comparable – though I admit the analogy is only approximate – to presuming that what one ought to try to learn from reading a first-aid manual or the instructions that come with a pocket tape-recorder is the identity of the person who wrote them as well as the precise circumstances in which he or she did so. It is not that such things cannot be known; rather, it is that setting out to do so is fundamentally to distort what the text is for and how it is to be used.

Along with this comes the whole matter of Scripture's divine origin, a crucial element of Orthodox belief. This is the one element in Scripture that cannot be (and never has been) addressed by modern scholarship, for the simple reason that it is not given to historical investigation. No theory of multiple authorship, or various redactors or editors, can affect in the slightest the Jewish belief in *torah min ha-shamayim*, the Torah's divine origin. So in this matter as well, there is a basic 'disconnect' between what modern scholars seek to investigate and what is fundamental to the Jewish conception of Torah. At the same time, however, the rabbinic tradition makes clear that Scripture's divine origin does not mean that the Torah's meaning is petrified, reduced to the original sense of those divinely given words. Rather, as the Babylonian Talmud³⁸ states explicitly (citing Deuteronomy 30:12, 'It is not in heaven [any longer]'), what starts in heaven is ultimately given over to human beings, and it is in that sense that the Orthodox conception of Scripture is altogether dynamic, moving not backwards but forward to the present day. I know that a lot of Orthodox Jews still cannot seem to grasp this most

38. *Bab. Talmud* Baba Metzi'a 59b.

fundamental difference, but it seems to me quite obvious, as well as providing the only honest way of understanding the difference between Judaism's Torah and modern biblical scholarship's Pentateuch. An Orthodox Jew who truly understands this basic difference will have nothing to fear from modern biblical scholarship.

In fact – here is a pretty paradox – it is precisely a knowledge of modern biblical scholarship that offers the clearest understanding of the historical roots of the Orthodox idea of Torah and, in that sense, locates it (rather than its rival, the Pentateuch of modern biblical scholarship) deep within the biblical period itself. I should therefore like to conclude by saying (alas, in too schematic a form here) what I mean by this.

Biblical scholars are well aware that virtually every book in our *Tanakh* has undergone some form of editing, often a protracted series of redactions that not only resulted in the rearrangement of parts of the original text, sometimes moving whole chapters from here to there, but also frequently supplemented the original text with altogether new material, ranging from scribal glosses and minor emendations to the addition of large blocks of writing.³⁹ Our book of Jeremiah, to cite one such instance, is some ten chapters longer than the version of Jeremiah underlying the Old Greek ('Septuagint') translation of that book, made in the closing centuries BCE: not only is that version shorter, but the chapters are arranged in a different order. Fragments of both versions are now attested in Hebrew in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and it would appear (though perhaps not beyond dispute)⁴⁰ that the longer version represents an expansion of the shorter text rather than the latter being a later abridgement. And so it is as well with the books of Joshua and Judges, Samuel and Kings, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ezekiel, Daniel, and so forth: all these and other biblical texts seem to

39. A well-known instance is our current book of Isaiah: most scholars (starting with Abraham ibn Ezra in the twelfth century) agree that chapters 40–66 could not have been written at the time of the original, eighth-century prophet Isaiah, but seem to belong to the period of the Babylonian Exile in the sixth century and that of the Judean restoration that followed. Note the wide-ranging review of Orthodox views on this and similar questions in A. Frisch, 'Jewish Tradition and Bible Criticism: A Typology of Israeli Orthodox Approaches to the Question of Deutero-Isaiah', in *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 19 (2012) 259–87.

40. Alexander Rofé has argued that the shorter version represents a condensation of the original longer version: 'The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah', *ZAW* 101 (1989) 390–8; idem, 'The name Yhwh SEBA'OT and the Shorter Recension of Jeremiah', in R. Liwak and S. Wagner (eds) *Prophetie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel: FS Siegfried Herrmann* (Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1991) 307–15. Whichever contention is correct, it is immaterial for my overall point.

have been tinkered with in the course of their transmission, some well on into late Second Temple times.

Such changes raise a fundamental question: How dare they? How dare a scribe or copyist, or even a well-known sage or prophet, take a collection of the words of Jeremiah or Isaiah and say: 'This is good, but I think I can make it even better'? By what right could an ordinary (or even extraordinary) human being take the very words spoken by God to His prophets and change even the slightest detail? And the answer to this 'How dare they' – quite indisputable not only in view of the evidence provided by historical context, but even in many cases on the basis of actual variant texts preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls library and elsewhere – is, quite simply: 'They dare'. Whatever our present sense of an immutable, utterly fixed biblical text, perfectly preserved in every detail, such a sense is not backed up by the evidence. Even in Second Temple times, Scripture was apparently still conceived of as a somewhat malleable thing; such malleability appears to be evidenced even (though to a far lesser extent) in Judaism's holiest of books, the Torah itself.⁴¹ Evidently, from a very early period the received words-on-the-page were not considered *the* text, absolute and immutable. For some time, they were given to further explanation, elaboration or reinterpretation, and these were reflected in traditions orally transmitted or sometimes in changes or additions inserted into the actual written text.

In fact, even after the texts themselves became fixed and immutable, their meaning was still never reduced to the words-on-the-page. So it was that interpreters (going way back into biblical times) frequently said about sacred texts: 'The words say X, but what they really mean is Y'.⁴² The book of Daniel thus recounts: 'I, Daniel, consulted the books concerning the number of years

41. On this question see S. W. Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2008) esp. 39–59, and Michael Segal, '4Q Reworked Pentateuch or 4Q Pentateuch?' in L. Schiffman et al (eds) *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years After their Discovery* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000) 391–9; A. Petersen, 'Rewritten Bible as a Borderline Phenomenon – Genre, Textual Strategy, or Canonical Anachronism', in A. Hilhorst et al. (eds) *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino Garcia Martinez* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 285–306; M. M. Zahn, 'The Problem of Characterizing the 4QReworked Pentateuch Manuscripts: Bible, Rewritten Bible, or None of the Above?' *DSD* 15 (2008) 315–39, also J. Kugel, "'In the Beginning, God Created the Malleability': The Final Form of the Biblical Text and Ancient Biblical Interpretation", in *Mótun Menningar: Festschrift Gunnalugur A. Jónsson* (Reykjavík: Icelandic Literary Society, 2012) 1–14.

42. See my *Traditions of the Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) 14–19.

that, according to the word of the Lord that came to the prophet Jeremiah, were to be the term of Jerusalem's desolation – seventy years' (Daniel 9:2). But that evening, the angel Gabriel appears to Daniel and informs him that 'seventy groups of seven years have been decreed for your people and your holy city' (Daniel 9:24) – in other words, the book of Jeremiah said 'seventy years', but what that book really meant was 490 years. The words on the page were only the starting point of understanding.

This, as we have seen, was precisely the stance of the founders of rabbinic Judaism. That is why their very notion of Torah did not limit its content to the words on the page alone, but insisted that Torah truly consists of those words as interpreted and expanded by the *torah she-be'al peh*, the oral traditions which, they said, had accompanied it from earliest times. It seems to me (and again, this is an item well demonstrated in the biblical interpretations and retellings found among the Dead Sea Scrolls) that such a conception of Scripture goes way, way, back: the *very idea of Scripture* was, from the very beginning, never limited to a fixed set of written words.

But to say this is only to raise another 'why'. Why should anyone insist (as the *torah she-be'al peh* endlessly does) that when the text says X it really means Y, that 'An eye for an eye' really means *not* an eye for an eye, and so forth? Indeed, why, despite the fact that the Written Torah specifically forbids adding to or subtracting from its laws (Deuteronomy 4:2, 13:1), should rabbinic Judaism endlessly do precisely that? The answer to this most fundamental question speaks to the very heart of Orthodox theology. Judaism values the Torah supremely because its laws and its narratives impart a detailed programme for *avodat ha-Shem*, the service of God; indeed, *avodat ha-Shem* is, in a single phrase, the whole purpose and content of Judaism and the reason why it plays an important role in our daily lives. One might therefore say, with only a touch of irony, that the Torah, our most sacred, divinely given text, is nevertheless essentially what they call in the publishing business a 'how to' book; it was given to teach us the 'how to' of *avodat ha-Shem*. In fact, the Pentateuch alone might more properly be described as Volume 1 of a great, multi-volume work entitled *How to Serve God*. The succeeding volumes – the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds and all the other sources mentioned above – are a continuation of the great trajectory first established in the divinely revealed Torah. So paradoxically, while the whole approach to Scripture championed by modern biblical scholarship (and the liberal Protestant Churches that have been its greatest ongoing sponsor)⁴³ is quite

43. J. Kugel, 'The Bible in the University', in W. H. Propp, B. Halpern, and D. N. Freedman, *The Hebrew Bible and its Interpreters* (Eisenbrauns, 1990) 143–66.

incompatible with Judaism, one of the things that modern biblical scholarship itself has demonstrated is that its very notion of Scripture is somewhat out of keeping with the notion of Scripture that created the Bible itself.

Is this a reason for an Orthodox Jew to take up the study of modern biblical scholarship? I suppose it depends on the Orthodox Jew. But I hope that my presentation of this last point about modern biblical scholarship does not overshadow the earlier one about openness to the outside. This is indeed an altogether Jewish value, with a distinguished history going back to Second Temple times. The delicate balancing act referred to earlier has never been simple; apparently being a 'somewhat unsociable and foreigner-hating people' has always been, since at least the fourth century BCE, an appealing solution for some. But in the end such an approach often comes into conflict with intellectual honesty, and with the desire of most human beings to know, and to tell, the truth.

From Jacobs to the New Materialism: Revelation in Judaism after Metaphysics

Professor Paul Morris

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Professor, Rabbi, Dr Louis Jacobs contended that a Jewish theologian must develop his theology 'without subterfuge' and with 'intellectual honesty'.¹ Intellectual honesty entailed a rejection of what psychologists call 'compartmentalization', that is, of the separation of the religious from the reason-driven, intellectual dimensions of life; and 'without subterfuge' meant that while apologetics was integral to the theological enterprise, this had to be transparent and fully acknowledged. Jacobs was in particular concerned that the twin notions of the new science of critical history and the unbridled use of enlightenment reason had created the 'new truth' that, in Leo Strauss's words, Jews 'must assimilate to'.² For Jacobs the truth was manifest as the 'myth' of Sinai, as the 'divine dictation' of the Torah, generating an urgent need for a new basis, or theology, for the Mitzvot, and for Jewish life and thought, as an alternative to the no longer credible or tenable 'medieval Judaism' of his day. Drawing on the Breslau legacy of *Jüdische Wissenschaft*, Jacobs developed his own theological position on revelation, which he later called 'liberal supernaturalism', liberal in relation to biblical criticism, supernaturalist in terms of the reality of God.³ This allowed him to carefully distinguish 'revelation' from the 'record of revelation'. The former was an existential encounter with a personal deity while the latter was a later interpretation of the revelatory event, often as divine commandment. This gap between revelation and commandment occupied much of his subsequent theological reflection. Jacobs's analysis still seems apposite, although his neither-fish-nor-fowl solution was less satisfactory and although he came to understand

1. Louis Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973) 4.

2. Leo Strauss, 'Why We Remain Jews, or Can Jewish Faith Still Speak to Us?' [1962], in Leo Strauss, *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997) 311–56, reference to 312.

3. Louis Jacobs, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1999) 31ff.

the human history of the interpretation of Halakhah as its very paradigm, he also recognized the weakness of the detachment of commandment from God and invoked 'tradition' and the distinctive Jewish 'way of life' as authorizations for religious practice. His reconnecting of commandment to a particular community over time giving historical authority to practice, was something akin to what Michel Foucault called 'bio-power'.

Does it matter if you observe the Mitzvot but subscribe to an untenable and incredible account of revelation? Jacobs was certain that it did. Emmanuel Levinas, on the other hand, argued that 'the people of Israel' have a 'unique' relationship to 'revelation' but asks, in the modern world 'how it is thinkable?' In relation to this uniqueness, he writes, 'Even their land rests on the Revelation'. For most Jews their understanding of revelation is the 'most obvious interpretation of the Biblical accounts'. 'Orthodox Jews,' he reports, 'individually or in communities, untouched by the doubts of the modern age even though they sometimes participate, in their professional lives, in the feverish world of industry, remain – despite the simplicity of the metaphysics involved – spiritually attuned to the highest virtues and most mysterious secrets of God's proximity.' This contrasts with the 'modern Jews, however – and they are the majority – whose concern with the intellectual destiny of the West and its triumphs and crises is not simply borrowed, the problem of the Revelation remains pressing, and demands the elaboration of new modes of thought'.⁴ Although Levinas distinguished between those contemporary Jews who need a new theological account of revelation and those who do not, he insisted that the non-philosophers are not spiritually disadvantaged. He continues:

These questions are indeed urgent ones for us today, and they confront anyone who may still be responsive to these truths and signs but who is troubled to some degree – as a modern person – by the news of the end of metaphysics, by the triumphs of psychoanalysis, sociology and political economy; someone who has learnt from linguistics that meaning is produced by signs without signifieds and who, confronted with all these intellectual splendours – or shadows – sometimes wonders if he is not witnessing the magnificent funeral celebrations held in honour of a dead god. The ontological status or regime of the Revelation is therefore a primordial concern for Jewish thought, posing a problem which should take precedence over any attempt to present the contents of that Revelation.

4. Emmanuel Levinas, 'Revelation in the Jewish Tradition', in Seán Hand (ed.) *The Levinas Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989) 190–210. Quotations from 191–3.

Levinas thus maintained that we have to begin with the question of revelation before we can even address issues of its contents.

The 'dead God' is the God of medieval theology and modern science. It is this 'dead god' that links Levinas's reconceptualization of revelation in terms of the primordial ethical demands of the other to the movement known as radical theology. Radical theology, a movement largely consisting of Christian theologians but also a number of Jewish thinkers, profoundly engages in the attempt to think about God after the Holocaust. Modern theology can be seen as beginning with the articulation of God within the new framework of Newtonian physics, and radical theology is a challenge to that re-visioning in terms of a new notion of universal history. Radical theology with its rejection of the 'now dead' metaphysical deity of the theology of the Middle Ages and early modern Europe, in favour of this Hegelian supersessionist idea of history, provides a fascinating foil for the explication and examination of twentieth-century Jewish theologies. The stark contrasts between Jewish and Christian radical theologies highlight the specificities of the creative responses of Jewish thinkers to modern and contemporary histories and the very different demands of a Jewish theology that arises from both different resources and experiences. Hegelian history presents Jewish thinkers with an especial challenge, and a number of them, including Fackenheim and Rosenzweig, have consciously considered this. These and other Jewish post-Hegelians have been influential across a range of Jewish religious thinking. The Jewish embracing of Kant likewise raises particular concerns of a Judaism 'within the bounds of mere reason' that then has to interpret 'moral duty' as 'divine commandment'.

Radical Jewish Theologies is the working title for the research for my current monograph. The project traces modern Jewish theologies after the Shoah and the establishment of the State of Israel in what is intended to be novel ways. By Jewish theologies, I am referring to authoritative articulations of God, explicit and implicit, as known through revelation and commandment, and while the focus is on Orthodox theologies, non-Orthodox theologies also feature in the analysis. Jewish encounters with modernity have included a series of highly traumatic events, often interpreted as unprecedented, that have dramatically impacted on modern Jewish theological reflection. These Jewish experiences have been theologically framed in terms of Auschwitz theodicies, *Medinat Yisrael*, and diverse forms of Judaism, contained, and constrained, within the spaces allotted to religion in modern nation-states. These post-Holocaust theologies reflect a new questioning and increasing scepticism about the implicit metaphysical underpinnings of the dominant historical modes of

Jewish theology: Jewish scholasticism, and Kabbalistic and Hasidic religious thinking. Contemporary thought sensitizes us to the specific theological and metaphorical uses of language, and challenges both the outdated medieval ontologies of divine being and those of enlightenment science, in favour of an imminent deity, between and among us.

While it becomes clear that Jewish theologies cannot be radical in quite the same way as radical Christian theology, it becomes equally evident that major strands in modern Jewish theology are just as, if not more, radical, than their Christian counterparts. God plays a most discrete, often hidden, and even absent role in much of modern Jewish theology, and yet a new reading of Jewish theology from a radical viewpoint reveals a persistent concern to rethink God and revelation as a primordial call to individual and communal ethical life, in the light of nation-state sovereignty after the horrors of the Shoah. Radical Jewish theologies offer a myriad of original insights that draw on Jewish traditions, as Jewish thinking engages with the dynamic realities of Jewish life within and beyond the Jewish State, as interpreted in terms of new understandings of revelation and its revealer.

The first section of the monograph, the focus during my Oxford fellowship, explores changing Jewish understandings of revelation, which have traditionally been understood in very different ways from the hyper-literality of Midrash and Kabbalah to the hyper-rationalism of medieval Jewish philosophers. The long elite tradition of non-literal appreciations of *Torah Mi-Sinai* from Maimonides and Cordovero through to Levinas and current thinkers has existed alongside more literal readings. The Levinasian construction of God, again influential on Orthodox and non-Orthodox theologians, offers a model of an imminent deity, albeit one that perhaps leaves too little room for any account of the biblical God, and one that is perhaps still too bound to the Heideggerian philosophical framework that it inverted. However, when elucidated from a radical perspective it may offer a more viable Jewish theology.

Louis Jacobs's theology of revelation served as the platform for an exploration of the meaning of theology by Jewish thinkers from the seventeenth century to the present and the significant communal contexts of their debates and discussions about revelation. His clarity and originality and the requirement to provide a new ground for religious law was the base for a discussion of this pivotal concern in the works of Soloveitchik, Buber, Rosenzweig, Kook, Heschel, Hartmann, Plascow, Greenberg, Borowitz, Rubenstein, Krochmal, Steinheim, Kaplan, Breuer, Miller, Leibowitz, Kavka and Green.

The importance of philosophy and theology from outside of the Jewish

tradition was stressed in terms of Leo Strauss's trenchant critique of the inadequate appreciation by many Jewish Kantians and Hegelians of the philosophical traditions that they utilize to present their Jewish theologies. This lamentably continues to be the case for many Jewish post-modernists, analytical philosophers and liberal thinkers who fail to grasp that they re-render their faith in vessels that all too often deny the very claims they seek to establish.

The second part of the monograph explores the new materialism as an opportunity for Jewish theologians to liberate themselves from medieval ontologies and Newtonian physics in favour of the foundation of a more sophisticated and dynamic view of material life. The increasing understanding that matter and force are more intimately related than mandated by Newtonian physics is suggestive of a new materialist theology where order is implicit within subtle matter and where the deity does not merely act upon a separate creation but is integral to it. Re-reading Jewish sources about God in this light offers new understandings of God in relation to creation and humanity. This complex materialism resonates with a God unable to be pinned down to either substance or relational force, a view that also provides a lens to re-view the Jewish traditions of ritual and reflective practice. This radical way of re-thinking is read alongside modern theologies of Halakhah in developing a new materialist theology of Jewish religious practice that locates us more evidently within nature.

The third part of the book links revelation to community and develops a radical Jewish political theology. The democracy of modern Jewish learning reflecting a wider democratization of the acquisition and use of knowledge challenges traditional rabbinic elitism. The ethical challenges of feminist thinking too require a new knowledge equity within communities. The new materialism fosters a new view of Jewish community, more inclusive, based on a material field rather than on more constructivist accounts. The final section promotes a radical new materialist view of Jewish sovereignty in Israel and beyond.

Torah as the Word of God

Professor Jacob Ross
University of Tel-Aviv

The US philosopher of religion Nicholas Wolterstorff (b. 1932) opened his book *Divine Discourse*, based on his Wilde lectures at the University of Oxford in 1993,¹ with a quotation from the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1906–95), aiming to show the audacity of the claim that God speaks to man. Levinas writes as follows:

Our world lies before us, enabling us, in its coherence and constancy, to perceive it, enjoy it, and think about it; it offers us its reflections, metaphors and signs to interpret and study. Within this world, it appears that the opening of certain books can cause the abrupt invasion of truth from outside ... How can we make sense of the ‘exteriority’ of the truths and signs of the Revelation which strike the human faculty known as reason? It is a faculty which despite its ‘interiority’, is equal to whatever the world confronts us with. But how can these truths and signs strike our reason if they are not even of this world?

These questions are indeed urgent ones for us today, and they confront anyone who may still be responsible to these truths and signs but who is troubled to some degree – as a modern person – by the news of the end of metaphysics, by the triumphs of psychoanalysis, sociology and political economy; someone who has learnt from linguistics that meaning is produced by signs without signifieds and who, confronted with all these intellectual splendours – or shadows – sometimes wonders if he is not witnessing the magnificent funeral celebrations held in honour of a dead god.²

Obviously stimulated by the reference in the passage to ‘the opening of certain books that can cause the abrupt invasion of truths from outside’, Wolterstorff

1. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 8–9.

2. ‘Revelation in the Jewish Tradition’, in Sean Hand (ed.) *The Levinas Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989) 191.

began his first chapter by presenting the story of St Augustine’s conversion to Christianity in the fourth century, after meeting two fellow North Africans in the Italian city of Milan, as a primary example of God’s speaking. Their discussion of asceticism and the monastic life led St Augustine to tormenting reflections on his own manner of existence. He left his companions, threw himself under a fig tree and heard a child’s voice calling out ‘Take it and read. Take it and read!’ This reminded him of a story he had just heard concerning St Antony who had adopted the monastic life on hearing an appropriate verse from the Gospels being read in a church which he happened to visit. So he got up and ran back to the house where he had seen a book containing St Paul’s Epistles, opened the book and read the first passage on which his eye fell. This told him: ‘Not in revelling and drunkenness, not in lust and wantonness, not in quarrels and rivalries’. He had no need or desire to read on. St Augustine wrote: ‘it was as though the light of confidence flooded into my heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled’.³ He was sure that God had spoken to him.

So it is not only about the *direct* speech of God to the prophets and other human beings of which we are speaking. It is also the idea of *indirect* speech of God through the Holy Scriptures that must be explained. For as Wolterstorff correctly concludes, ‘Not only are such attributions as this characteristic of Jews, Christians and Muslims; they are fundamental in the religious thought of these communities and in theological reflections of their scholars’.⁴

Levinas himself, in the article from which Wolterstorff was quoting, went on to tell his readers that he accepted the account of the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) regarding the nature of divine Revelation and speech, as set out in Ricoeur’s essay ‘Towards a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation’.⁵ Levinas therefore devoted his own article mostly to the Oral Law which, in the Rabbinic tradition, was said to have accompanied the giving of the Torah to Moses, and guided its interpretation and application in all subsequent generations. According to this, the Torah, once delivered to Moses, was no longer ‘in Heaven’, but in the hands of Joshua, the elders, the prophets, the judges (of the First Temple period), members of the Great Assembly (of the early Second Temple period) and the judges and rabbis of later tradition.

Wolterstorff praises Ricoeur’s essay for its close look at the biblical text and his classification of this into five genres: prophetic discourse, narrative

3. *Confessions* VIII, 12: 29.

4. Wolterstorff (see n. 1) 8.

5. Paul Ricoeur, ‘Towards a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation’, in his *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

discourse, prescriptive discourse, wisdom discourse and hymnal discourse. Since Ricoeur regards prophetic discourse as the original nucleus of the traditional idea of revelation, he takes this as his 'basic axis for inquiry'. Thus, each time that Ricoeur moves to a new genre he asks what in it is analogous to what was identified as revelation in the preceding discourses. At the end he arrives, so he claims, 'at a polysemic and polyphonic concept of revelation', as something 'at most analogical in form'. At this point Wolterstorff dissents and accuses Ricoeur of having left the speech of God entirely out of the picture, supplanted it with the notion of *manifestation*. This, he says, is indeed one form of revelation. But instead of dealing with the different forms of biblical discourse in terms of texts and the 'worlds' they 'project' (as do Ricoeur and other theoreticians of the Hermeneutic school), Wolterstorff prefers to think about speaking in the context of the speech-act theory of J. L. Austin (1911–60), initiated some forty years before his Wilde Lectures at Oxford. The theory makes a distinction between *locutionary* and *illocutionary* acts. The former refer to the acts of uttering or inscribing words, and the latter to acts performed *by way of* illocutionary acts, such as asking, asserting, commanding and promising. Wolterstorff writes:

Once illocutionary acts are thus distinguished from locutionary acts then it immediately occurs to one that though of course such acts as asking, asserting, demanding, and promising, can be performed by way of uttering or inscribing sentences, they can be performed in many other ways as well. One can say something by producing a blaze, or smoke, or a sequence of light flashes. Even more interesting: one can tell somebody something by deputizing someone else to speak on one's behalf. Perhaps the attribution of speech to God by Jews, Christians, Muslims, should be understood as the attribution to God of *illocutionary* actions, leaving it open how God performs these actions – maybe by bringing about the sounds or characters of some natural language, maybe not.⁶

The 'may not' alternative is one which is reminiscent of Maimonides. But Wolterstorff specifically singles out Maimonides's view as one that he rejects. This is because Maimonides belongs to that scholastic tradition which assumed that divine speech must be reducible to divine revelation. This is so since God has no vocal chords with which to utter words and no hands with which to write them down. God cannot literally speak or be a participant in a linguistic

6. Wolterstorff (see n. 1) 13.

community. For this reason the attribution of speech to God must be taken as metaphorical. Moses Maimonides in the *Guide of the Perplexed* writes that:

All these acts are only performed by means of bodily organs, all these organs are figuratively ascribed to Him; those by means of which local motion takes place – I mean the feet and their soles; those by means of which hearing, seeing, and smelling come about – i.e., the ear, the eye, and the nose; those by means of which speech and the matter of speech are produced – i.e., the mouth, the tongue, and the voice... To sum up all this, God, may He be exalted above every deficiency, has had bodily organs ascribed to Him in order that His acts should be indicated by this means, and those particular acts are figuratively assigned to Him in order to indicate a certain perfection; which is not identical with the particular act mentioned... Action and speech are ascribed to God so that an overflow proceeding from Him would thereby be indicated... Organs of speech [are] mentioned with a view to indicating the overflow of intellect towards the prophets.⁷

Wolterstorff notes that a contemporary theologian (Sandra M. Schneider) shares the same view in her book, *The Revelatory Text*, and maintains that this view overlooks the possibility that God might cause soundings-out or inscribings of words even though God has no body, and that in any case, according to speech-act theory, speaking itself is the act of communication, rather than the verbalizing or writing. This criticism by Wolterstorff seems to me unfair, since in the final development of his ideas he comes close to saying something very similar to Maimonides. In any case, the theory of overflow (*shefa*) which Maimonides notes is a medieval version of Arabic neo-Platonism which gives metaphysical strength to the notion of inspiration. This is something which the view of Ricoeur virtually parallels in his understanding that all forms of biblical text may be regarded poetically as being 'inspired' by the Holy Ghost.

But whereas Ricoeur and his pupil Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) denied the centrality of 'authorial intention' in the interpretation of texts, including the texts of Holy Scriptures, Wolterstorff seems to offer qualified support to the notion of 'authorial intention' in order to promote the possibility that God can continue to speak to individuals through the Scriptures, and otherwise, even today. But there is to my mind no necessary connection between 'authorial intention' and this possibility.

7. Moses Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) I:46, pp. 99–100.

If we may be permitted, then, to deal with the topic of ‘divine revelation’ as *Torah min Hashamayim* in modern traditional Judaism, and assess the theological views of Louis Jacobs and others, we will discover that Jacobs came very close to the views of Ricoeur and Levinas in his early writings. However, he made the mistake (which he later corrected) of thinking that if the word of God is both divine and human, there is a way of pointing out that anachronistic views regarding morality such as the total destruction of the Amalekites are not truly the word of God. What he should have realized was that, in accordance with the notion of ‘divine accommodation’ as used by many Jewish thinkers, especially Maimonides, the more sensible view is that God accommodated His commandments to the times of the occurrences in the Bible, so it suited His divine purpose to employ the laws of warfare as understood in those times rather than ours. Much more remains to be said, clearly, about the traditional doctrine of Torah as the word of God and the possibility of accepting some more critical views in biblical studies, together with the rabbinic view of *Torah min Hashamayim*.

Orthodoxy and the Challenge of Biblical Criticism: Some Reflections on the Importance of Asking the Right Question

Professor Tamar Ross
Bar-Ilan University

Moses Maimonides’s eighth principle of faith emphasizes belief in a divine Torah, entailing the notion that the biblical text in our hands today was transmitted by God to Moses, that every word of this text is equally divine and laden with meaning, and that this written text was simultaneously accompanied by an oral commentary. Critical approaches to the biblical text that pose problems for this formulation are not a modern invention, but there is no denying that the scope and intensity of such questions have deepened considerably in the past century. Beyond the usual difficulties (erroneous or fallible content, questionable morality and textual evidence of evolutionary historical development), the feminist critique has most recently problematized the very notion of divine revelation as verbal communication – given that language itself now appears so pervasively rooted in a particular perspective and cultural bias.

One heterodox response to such difficulties has been to abandon the notion of divine revelation altogether. Thus, Mordecai Kaplan, founder of the Reconstructionist movement, rejects any appeal to metaphysics and transcendence in describing the origins of the Torah. Instead, he prefers to view revelation naturalistically, as the human ‘discovery’ of how to live religiously.

Other non-Orthodox responses, as represented in the writings of Franz Rosenzweig, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Louis Jacobs, all appear to be variations on Martin Buber’s attempt to promote a more nuanced understanding of revelation that does not reject biblical claims to metaphysics altogether. This more complex approach to the biblical text, which has come to be known as ‘dialectical theology’, understands everything in the Torah that is said about God as a human effort to convey or recapture certain genuine meetings with the divine. Because such meetings were inevitably experienced in a particular linguistic and cultural context that structured the nature of the experience and its interpretation, and no written or oral report can totally successfully convey

these encounters in terms that are entirely free of the influence of historical context, the argument now consists of just how much was revealed in that meeting. Differences of opinion range from the notion that the divine element consisted merely in the meeting itself, with all resultant texts a human response, to the belief that a complete text was given but necessarily distorted because every human 'hearing' involves re-interpretation, or to some in-between suggestion of a more minimalistic linguistic message that was relayed and left for humans to fill in over time. At any rate, what is left for us is to extract the eternal illuminations that the Torah communicates to us from those trappings that are the fruit of passing human experience.

Viewing revelation as a dialogic encounter which entails both human and divine elements appears more satisfactory than Kaplan's reductionism. Instead of understanding the religious experience as merely the product of innately human impulses, this approach acknowledges biblical claims to a supernatural source. However, such a theology does not satisfy the traditional requirement that the *entire* Torah be viewed as the word of God and that *all* its details be regarded as equally authoritative and binding. And so the question remains: Can a document so thoroughly riddled with identifiably dated and partisan human perspectives truly be divine? Can traditionalists develop an approach to the Torah that acknowledges the naturalist explanations of Mordecai Kaplan without his reductionism, and appropriates the metaphysical claims of dialectical theology without succumbing to its selectivity?

An increasing number of Orthodox Jews are recognizing that biblical criticism is not a theory that they can accept or reject at will. Contemporary scholars may argue regarding this or that particular version of the documentary hypothesis, such as whether there was one final redactor or many, or the exact dates involved, but there is no way that empiric evidence will leave the traditional picture intact. Until recently, however, the traditionalist response to such conclusions has largely been simply to ignore or avoid them. To the extent that Orthodox thinkers have attended at all to the challenges of higher criticism, they have generally adopted a modernist approach associated with the slogan *Torah u-madda* ('Torah and science'), which regards both sources of knowledge as valuable avenues to Truth. Such an approach addresses any possible discrepancies between them as localized controversies regarding 'the facts of the matter'. Under such circumstances, the validity of the Torah's rendition will always be maintained.

Proponents of this approach often enlist the tools of science itself in order to defend the accuracy of traditional accounts on science's own grounds.

Alternatively, difficulties are resolved by appeal to Maimonides's classic statement that 'the gates of interpretation are never sealed', intimating that whenever the literal meaning of the Torah can be incontrovertibly refuted, this should be taken as clear indication that the text was meant to be understood allegorically, with deeper meanings to be extracted by the more philosophically inclined. Questionable features of biblical morality are resolved in a similarly ad-hoc manner, drawing on various apologetic arguments in order to defend their underlying values and conclusions. Rabbi Mordechai Breuer's understanding of biblical contradictions as planted deliberately by God for educational reasons, or Professor David Weiss Halivni's suggestion of a perfect Torah corrupted during a period of halakhic negligence (whose practical consequences are corrected through authoritative midrashic interpretation), offer more striking and ingenuous theories as justification for what on first blush appear to be perplexing anomalies in the text. However, there is no denying that the entire battery of tactics which still links the sanctity of the Torah to the authenticity of an original revelatory event at Sinai, and to the unique status of Moses as prophet, loses its persuasiveness when the various difficulties it purports to address can be far more simply and elegantly explained by reference to their historical setting and the development of human understanding.

In line with the observation of Edward de Bono, an authority on creative thinking, who states that 'asking the right question may be the most important part of thinking', I believe that the key to an Orthodox resolution of this dilemma involves a radical departure from the *Torah u-madda* approach, which relates to all truth claims of religion cognitively, as simple statements of fact. Instead of questioning whether the doctrine of Torah from Heaven is true empirically, Orthodox believers must rather ask: what is its function in the context of their religious lives. Is its primary concern to discuss history or to fulfil purposes of another sort?

A notable passage from *The Lonely Man of Faith*, in which Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik, revered leader of American Modern Orthodoxy, states that he has 'not been perplexed by the impossibility of fitting the mystery of revelation into the framework of historical empiricism', might be construed as a first step in this new direction. While asserting that we 'unreservedly accept the unity and integrity of the Scriptures and their divine character', Soloveitchik declares that he is untroubled by 'theories of Biblical criticism which contradict the very foundations upon which the sanctity and integrity of the Scriptures rest', on the strength of a distinction he makes between factual and non-factual biblical

accounts of human existence. In this context, even the latter may be justified as pointers to ineffable truths that transcend verbal expression and cannot be validated empirically.

A more radical break with cognitive truth as a criterion for establishing the divinity of the Torah is exhibited in the thought of Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, who emphasized the sharp distinction between historic or scientific statements on the one hand, and statements of value ('religious facts') on the other. In his eyes, questions regarding the historical grounding of the biblical account of the Sinai event are totally meaningless in a religious context and irrelevant in establishing the sanctified status of the Torah. As opposed to Soloveitchik, Leibowitz does not see the Torah as 'speaking for itself' in any manner. It is not its timeless existential message that grants the Torah its sanctity, or the accuracy of its description of the circumstances surrounding its transmission, but the practical role assigned to it by historical Judaism. Rather than teach us about a past event in which God spoke to Moses, or convey any current sense of His presence seeping through the lines of the text, the proposition that 'God gave the Torah' is a normative statement that comes to express recognition of our obligation to assume the yoke of the Torah and its commandments. Thus, instead of revelation providing the basis for a particular way of life, it is this way of life, and – more specifically – the halakhic tradition of the Oral Law, which grants the Torah its revelatory status as the word of God and establishes its prescriptions as binding. Because God's absolute transcendence precludes any revelation of His self in the world, the ultimate authority of the Torah as God's word is grounded exclusively on the voluntary decision of the rabbinic Sages to accept it as such. Undertaking performance of Mitzvot for its own sake without any thought of attunement to human needs is the only way of relating to a Being who is by definition inscrutable and totally 'Other'.

Although he was a scientist, and therefore mistrustful of supernaturalism, Leibowitz was also a deeply religious person who would vociferously object to the contention that religion has no ontological grounding. Leibowitz's reservations regarding a literal understanding of religious propositions – unlike those of Mordechai Kaplan – do not stem from a full-fledged flight from metaphysics, but rather from a Kantian-like objection to applying human categories to an absolutely transcendent God, which he relates to Maimonides as well. Thus, accepting the Torah as God's word mandates engaging the Torah in an interpretive project, whose objective is to translate the ostensibly supernatural connotations of its mythological language, which

speaks of God's revelation and intervention in worldly affairs, into terms that are theologically compatible with this Kantian/Maimonidian constraint – i.e., as bearing a normative thrust, rather than conveying any informative content. Thus the opening verse of Genesis stating that 'in the beginning God created heaven and earth', which makes no sense theologically (as God is above time) nor empirically (because these words correspond to nothing in our natural experience), are reinterpreted to teach us a religious lesson: 'What I [Leibowitz] learn from this verse is the great principle of faith, that the world is not God – the negation of atheism and pantheism'. So too, the proposition 'God gave the Torah', which is similarly unintelligible both theologically and empirically, is now understood not as a 'religious fact', but as 'the obligation compelling the individual to worship God'. Because God's absolute transcendence precludes any revelation of His self in the world, Leibowitz grounds the ultimate status of the Torah as God's word exclusively on the formal decision of the rabbinic Sages to define it as such, rather than on any objective historical occurrence.

Aside from a small circle of intellectuals, Leibowitz's metaphysically muted approach has not succeeded in captivating the minds and hearts of most rank and file believers. Beyond his terse, polemical language and propensity for stark, paradoxical aphorisms that turn conventional views on their head without cushioning the blow, this failure boils down to the fact that a theology which grounds the divinity of the Torah merely on the voluntary decision of the Rabbis leaves many religious believers cold. If Leibowitz is not prepared to allow for any revelation of God's will on theological principle, why should rabbinic fiat be granted any privilege in determining the divine nature and meaning of Torah? Another apparent shortcoming of Leibowitz's approach is that his narrow view of the biblical message diminishes the significance of the Torah in religious life. Can the total import of the Torah be reduced to normative statements regarding the obligation to serve God through His commandments? Surely generations of believers have found greater meaning in the Torah than this!

A more recent version of revelatory minimalism that might overcome these difficulties is the recommendation of the Oxford Jewish Studies scholar Norman Solomon, in a book entitled *Torah from Heaven*, that the logical status of this doctrine be changed from historical truth to a foundational myth of origin. In labelling the belief in Torah from Heaven a 'myth of origin', Solomon appears, like Leibowitz, to be appropriating the understanding that the purpose of religious language is not the imparting of any type of information – metaphysical or otherwise. But there is a difference in the degree of receptivity

to the original text that the two views mandate. Because Leibowitz still appeals to a form of reasoning beyond religious discourse in stipulating the existence of a God whose nature transcends human understanding, and is not revealed in history, he is driven to demythologize the ‘religious facts’ described in the Torah which purport to talk about God and His relationship with the world. Instead of taking such descriptive statements at face value, he must relate to them as value judgments and directives for practical behaviour, so that they will not clash with his pre-conceived theological views. Solomon’s understanding, by contrast, allows him to accept the mythic formulation unconditionally, with no theological strings attached.

Irrespective of questions regarding their original intent and context, Solomon’s point is that it is only when biblical narratives are treated strictly as history that questions of ‘accuracy’ become appropriate, and the need to formulate apologetic resolutions with contemporary sensibilities arises. When treated as a myth of origin, the traditional account of revelation – even if it appears today as entirely fictitious or overwhelmingly inaccurate – can still bear theological validity *as it stands*. Its rationality or ‘truth’ is maintained not by appeal to external evidence or re-interpretation, but in its ability to discharge its mythic function, imbuing those who appropriate it with a sense of responsibility to the past and inducing them to relate to the received text of Scripture as sacrosanct.

In elucidating this view of revelation as myth, Solomon alludes in passing to some measure of affinity with the concept of ‘narrative theology’ now fashionable in some Christian circles identified as ‘post-liberal’. Indeed, the appeal to the role of myth in religious life in both cases joins forces with a broader interest on the part of various contemporary philosophers in highlighting the place of ‘as if’ beliefs in all aspects of our cognitive activity. Contrary to what many non-scientists tend to assume, even such partial truths as protons and electrons, waves of light, gravity as distortions of space, are not things that anyone has seen or proven to exist. Nevertheless, because they are useful constructs that work for the moment, we relate to these convenient fictions ‘as if’ they were true, hoping that they will lead us to better, more useful understandings that can reflect as well as contribute to how we conduct our day to day living.

In a religious context, the primary function of such beliefs is to generate a stock of suggestive images and associations that tacitly direct the way we experience and deal with the more spiritually challenging aspects of human existence, preserving a sense of wonder and awareness of the mysterious

boundary conditions of our experience that exceed rational comprehension. At other times ‘as if’ beliefs function more politically, structuring verbal or non-verbal behaviours that define the community of the faithful and establish group membership. Professing ‘belief’ in Torah from Heaven, for example, might serve – among other functions – to signal to other Orthodox Jews that the speaker is a member of their group. In this context the doctrine of Torah from Heaven is part of a vocabulary of Jewish religious identity, a ‘rule of thumb’ with which to approach the world in company with fellow religionists, rather than a fully informed judgment about history or metaphysics.

From the point of view of Orthodox Judaism, another significant point of similarity between defining Torah from Heaven as a foundational myth and post-liberal theology (beyond a loose understanding of doctrine) is the unusual combination of radical post-modernism and nearly fundamentalist traditionalism that both positions afford. Despite the extreme liberty that they display in divorcing the meaning of religious statements from the manner in which they are formulated, Christian post-liberals nevertheless insist on absolute commitment to abide by the formal guidelines of the religious system within which they function, and to submit to their internal authority. Transposing this approach to Orthodox Judaism, accepting Torah from Heaven as a myth of origin rather than an accurate historical account frees the religious believer to relate to each and every word of the Torah ‘as if’ it were literally dictated by God and to embrace the written along with the Oral Torah as ‘a unified whole’. As Solomon puts it: ‘The narrative of Torah from Heaven presents the Torah as a timeless whole, revealed by God and managed by the rabbis. ... Since myth is impervious to historical evidence, moral questioning, and the like, we do not have to “pick and choose” which bits of tradition to regard as “Torah from Heaven”; we simply tell the story.’

In a sense, a constructivist approach to divine revelation (viewing it as a type of ‘placeholder’ necessary for sustaining routine religious behaviour), can be taken as the apologetic of all apologetics, a type of meta-solution broad enough to cover even the most general and all-pervasive critique regarding the ‘truth’ of this Jewish dogma. Indeed, it would be fair to say that most believers in the past assumed such an attitude unreflectively, simply allowing the concrete experience of their everyday lives to be shaped by this traditional religious claim, without dwelling overmuch on its precise doctrinal content. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that when this approach is adopted consciously and deliberately as a blanket response to newfound awareness that the doctrine of Torah from Heaven may not be literally ‘real’ or ‘true’ in any common-sense

understanding of these terms, conducting one's day to day living in accordance with its guidelines could be more problematic. Conveying reasonable import may not be the main function of religious truth claims, but a strong sense that they are *unreasonable* might well render them ineffective in accomplishing the regulative function for which they *are* meant: i.e. to compose the 'picture' that stands behind the religious form of life. Surely the fact that myths of origin in all religions present themselves as historical accounts, imposing an aura of objectivity, has something to do with their staying power.

A telling remark of the biblical scholar James Kugel illustrates this point. Although unencumbered by Leibowitz's philosophical baggage regarding God's utter transcendence, Kugel's scholarly findings regarding the history of the transformation of the Bible into Scripture similarly preclude relating to traditional accounts of revelation as strictly factual descriptions. This leads Kugel to share much of Leibowitz's 'no-nonsense' approach to Torah, regarding belief in its divinity primarily as affirmation of the rabbinic understanding that the true way to approach God is by submitting to His commands as explicated by the Oral Law. Nevertheless, in expanding on this notion in a theological epilogue to what is essentially a scientific work in biblical scholarship, Kugel confesses that he 'could not be involved in a religion that was entirely a human artefact' (*How to Read the Bible*, p. 689). For all his awareness of the decidedly human origins of the biblical text, an entirely man-made religion is not for him. Some appeal to the supernatural that extends beyond human initiative is still required in order to render compelling the rabbinic understanding of Torah as a by-product of Israel's acceptance of 'the supreme mission of serving God', and their fleshing out of this perception in a myriad of legal particulars.

The inherent inability of a constructivist approach to provide a patent objectivity, that is at any point guaranteed by reference to some factor that exceeds the limits and biases of human experience, inevitably leads all who struggle with this psychological obstacle to a more philosophical one: Can we know or experience a God that is by definition beyond definition and beyond our grasp? Changing the status of the doctrine of Torah from Heaven from historical truth to foundational myth may by-pass many specific questions arising out of the clash between scientific and religious world-views, thereby counteracting the dialectical theologians' basis for selectivity. Nevertheless, due to its centrality to the religious way of life, its metaphysical claims are *sui generis*, a special case. Simply assuming the conceptual coherence of a God that can communicate with man, while ignoring the dubious ontological status of such talk is insufficient when conducted from within an 'as if' framework that

has lost its pre-modern innocence. In order to accomplish its psychological task, a constructivist understanding of divine communication must also engage in serious examination of what 'And the Lord spoke to Moses' might possibly mean even beyond its self-certifying justification as the linchpin for a spiritually meaningful way of life.

I believe that the solution to this philosophical dilemma lies in developing a concept of God that breaks down the sharp dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural, and between God's existence and human initiative. This mode of response is arguably already being developed intuitively on the ground, where the true destiny of any theology is really determined – in an increased interest in mysticism and the interconnected nature of all that exists. But this is an issue which deserves further treatment on a more philosophically rigorous plane. It is to this vista that the future of Orthodox theology beckons.

Christians and Christianity in Halakhic Literature from the End of the Eighteenth to the Middle of the Nineteenth Centuries

Professor Yosef Salmon

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

In his book *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, Jacob Katz outlined Ashkenazi rabbinic attitudes and conduct toward Christians from the time of Rabbenu Gershom Me'or Ha-Golah (960–1020) until Moses Mendelssohn (1729–96). In this article we will try to fill in a gap in Katz's treatment of the subject.

As a rule, Jews in the Middle Ages related to Christians on the theoretical level as idolaters, even if for economic reasons they adopted a more moderate attitude in practice. These qualifications were based on the view of Rav Yochanan that 'Gentiles in the Diaspora are not actually idolaters, but merely maintain the practices of their ancestors', or the claim by Rashi and other medieval halakhic authorities that 'Gentiles in our times are not well versed in the nature of idolatry'. Another qualification, voiced by Tosafists and reiterated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, indicated that 'The sons of Noah are not prohibited regarding *shittuf* [i.e. belief in the Trinity]'. In other words, only Jews are required to believe in absolute monotheism. Christians' belief in the Trinity does not constitute a violation of the prohibition of idolatry. Already in the Middle Ages, therefore, halakhic authorities excluded Christians and Christianity from the category of idolatry on theological grounds, based on the assumption that Christians of their time did not worship idols. Katz also pointed out the unique philosophical position of Rabbi Menahem Ha-Meiri, who viewed contemporary Christians positively as a group 'bound by the strictures of a religious system'.

Katz distinguished these from the reasoning behind rulings relating to relations between Jews and Christians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He cites the seventeenth-century scholar Moshe Rivkes (1595–1671), the author of *Be'er Ha-Golah*, a commentary on the *Shulhan Arukh*, who claims that because Christians in his time believe in the creation of the world, the exodus from Egypt and other fundamental principles of Judaism,

they cannot be considered idolaters. He concludes that it is appropriate to pray for their welfare, and that they are 'among the righteous of the nations of the world who have a portion in the world to come'. As Katz understands it, the author of *Be'er Ha-Golah* went further than his predecessors in stating that both religions have the same beliefs regarding 'religion and revelation', and that they therefore share a religious tradition. According to Katz, Rabbi Rivkes provided halakhic support for anyone wishing to claim that Christians in modern times are not considered idolaters.

Katz then describes how Rabbi Yair Hayim Bacharach (1638–1702), from Mainz and Worms, and Rabbi Jacob Emden (1697–1776), from Altona, responded to Rivkes's comments. Emden went still further than his predecessors by stating that Jesus 'never intended to abrogate the Torah so far as Jews were concerned, but merely wished to spread Jewish tenets and the seven Noachide laws among non-Jews'. Katz argues that Emden's position reflects the assumption that the clash between Judaism and Christianity, and Christian persecution of the Jews, stemmed from a misunderstanding. Emden, who had studied the New Testament, concluded that later Christian commentary on it was responsible for creating the misunderstanding between the two religions. Emden claimed that it is impossible to deny the salvation of Christian souls, since they believe in one God, prophecy and revelation, so are among those who have a portion in the world to come. He even argued that Christian scholars 'help the Jews to preserve their Torah' and that 'they are a defensive wall for us and our sacred books in general'. This clearly reflected the tolerant positions adopted by contemporary Christians in daily life, including visits to synagogues and the participation of senior officials, and particularly courtiers, in Jewish celebrations.

Katz ended his description of the development of traditionalist attitudes toward Christianity with Jacob Emden. For him the moderate position towards Christianity merely continued with the enlightened position developed by Mendelssohn and the Paris Sanhedrin (1807), by which point Judaism had gone as far as it could in its rapprochement with Christianity without endangering its own existence.

Yet by moving directly from Emden to Mendelssohn, Katz omits fifty years of development of lenient positions vis-à-vis Christianity in rabbinic literature. This article will illustrate the development of moderate views in rabbinic literature primarily in Central Europe up to the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century, and then examine the breakdown of Jewish moderation and the hostile refortification traceable to subsequent Orthodox rabbinic literature in Central Europe.

Rabbi Ezekiel Landau (1713–93), one of the most prominent halakhic authorities in the latter half of the eighteenth century, served as rabbi of Prague from 1755 until his death and was a contemporary of Jacob Emden. He declared his approach to Christianity in the introduction to his book of response, *Noda Bi-Yehudah*:

1. To be very careful to accord proper respect to the nations [i.e. non-Jews] in our times since we are taking refuge in their lands and their countries. And we must pray for the welfare of their kings, officers and soldiers, and pray for the welfare of the state and its residents, lest we be ungrateful of the good that we have received, God forbid.
2. There is no distinction at all in the prohibition of robbery between the property of Jews and the property of gentiles.
3. In any place, in any publication, where there is derogatory comment about *akum* [idolaters], *goyim* [non-Jews], *kutim* [Samaritans] and the like, using these terms, one should not err and interpret it to refer to the non-Jews in our times. ... Rather the intent is to refer to the ancient nations who believed in the stars and the zodiac, like the Sabians mentioned by Maimonides in the *Guide for the Perplexed*. For those nations were heretical deniers, and did not believe in the creation of the world and in the miracles, and they denied the words of the prophets.

The first two items, referring to prayer on behalf of the nations and prohibiting robbery, had both appeared in Talmudic literature. But the third item, claiming that contemporary Christians believe in the creation of the world, miracles and Mosaic prophecy, extends the medieval halakhic principle that their belief in the Trinity is not idolatrous, a reason for tolerance toward Christianity similar to that of Landau. Landau's standing as one of the greatest halakhic authorities of his time, and the fact that his views appear in books of halakhic rulings, give added weight to his statements. Landau viewed himself as representing Austro-Hungarian Jewry, heaping praise on Queen Maria Theresa even though her anti-Jewish legislation was among the most severe in Europe at that time. In 1756 he arranged for a prayer for the welfare of Queen Maria Theresa to be recited morning and evening, just ten years after the brutal expulsion of the Jews of Prague and other cities in Bohemia and Moravia on her orders, and he issued an excommunication order against anyone who tried to harm the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Rabbi Landau formulated a more restrained position over time toward the government of Josef II, after the Patent of Toleration for the Jews in the countries under his patronage, which was favourably interpreted

by enlightened German Jews as reflected in Naphtali Herz Wessely's 1782 pamphlet *Divrei Shalom Ve-Emet* ('Words of Peace and Truth').

His positive formulation of the merit of Christians appears even more explicitly in his book *Dagul Mervavah*: 'The nations in whose shadow we dwell ... believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and in the holy Torah', words reminiscent of Rabbi Rivkes's similar praise of Christians. The even more positive relations between Jews and Christians in Bohemia in those years were reflected in the recommendation for an improvement in the legal status of Jews by Christian Wilhelm Dohm, the noted German historian and economist.

Baruch Jeteles (1762–1813), son of Rabbi Yonah Jeteles and lay leader of the Prague Jewish community, expressed positions that were even further-reaching than those of Landau. He was a Torah scholar as well as a notable doctor, and while serving as the head of the *yeshivah* in Prague, was also close to enlightened Jews in Berlin, a contributor to their journal *Ha-Me'asef*, and a leader of the Jewish enlightenment in Prague. In Prague this movement was more conservative and traditional than the parallel one in Germany, so enjoyed a close relationship with the rabbinate of Prague. Jeteles's contribution to rabbinic literature appeared in a commentary entitled *Ta'am Ha-Melekh* on the book *Sha'ar Ha-Melekh* by Rabbi Yitshak Nunis on Maimonides's *Yad Ha-Hazakah*. His statements relating to Christianity in the foreword, under the title *Aleh Le-Trufah Katuv Le-Amim* ('Medicinal Folios Written for the Nations'), are designed not merely to satisfy the censor, and express far-reaching ideas relating to Christianity. His expression of gratitude to the Austrian Kaiser Franz II might appear rather formulaic: 'The righteous and upright ... may God establish his throne and subdue nations under him'. But he then argues that Christians are to be viewed not only as observers of the seven Noachide laws: they 'not only believe in revelation, but also in the chain of tradition. ... Our holy Torah is for them a solid foundation stone, for they like us believe that Moses received the Torah at Sinai and passed it on to Joshua.' Similarities between Jews and Christians can be found also with regard to commandments between man and God and between man and man. Far from being idolaters, they are not even in the category of gentiles when it comes to issues of impurity and damage to property. For Jeteles their status goes beyond the rabbinic concept of 'the righteous among the gentiles', and they inhabit a higher plane than gentiles. Yet even Jeteles was not prepared to forfeit belief in the election of the Jewish people or their distinctiveness: 'We are a treasured nation, and in that we are distinct from the other nations'. Jeteles did not refer to election in an ontological sense, however, but to the obligation to fulfil the

commandments. But one has the impression that he is navigating a fine line here between acceptance and warning: 'Preserve justice and act righteously [towards] every Jew and non-Jew, love him so that you be loved'.

Rabbi Eleazar Fleckeles (1754–1826), a student of Landau, served as head of the Rabbinical Court of Prague (1801) and in several academies in Prague before becoming rabbi of the city. He developed friendly relations with prominent Christians including the Emperor, Franz I, and perhaps even more importantly, with the censor. These relationships explain the positions expressed in his writings. He warned the readers of his pamphlet, *Ahavat David*, to 'be careful to be respectful of the nations and the kings of the land ... since it is evil people who believe that the Jews denigrate all of their beliefs and opinions; it is a commandment and an obligation incumbent on every Jew to pursue them to the end'. In his pamphlet *Kesut Einayim*, published in his book *Teshuvah Me-Ahavah*, Fleckeles states that 'the non-Jews in our times observe the seven [Noachide] laws, have a portion in the world to come and are called *Hasidim* [pious]'. He goes further than Maimonides in saying that 'anyone who is punctilious in the seven rational laws' falls into the category of a person (*adam*), is considered a righteous gentile, and has a portion in the world to come. The prohibitions of theft, appropriating lost objects and deceit therefore apply even vis-à-vis idolaters; and scorning the nations in whose shadow we have taken refuge is 'against the Torah, fear [of heaven], and the dictates of wisdom'. Fleckeles argues that Jews must give charity to idolaters, honour agreements with them and observe all obligations of *hesed* ('kindness') such as visiting the sick, burying of the dead and leaving a corner of the field, gleanings and forgotten produce for the poor. These commands apply also to idolaters 'in order to promote peace', he says. In these matters Fleckeles relies on positions expressed by Talmudic sages, going further to argue that the verse in Psalms that reads: 'Pour out your wrath upon the nations' applies only to idolaters and to followers of Shabbetai Zvi, but not to contemporary gentiles.

The furthest-reaching conclusions among the students of Rabbi Landau were drawn by Rabbi Moshe Konitz (1774–1837), who served as a rabbinical judge in the city of Pest, and then as rabbi of old Ofen (Buda) from 1828, with Pressburg, the most important Jewish community in Hungary. Rabbi Konitz was already known as an independent thinker due to his support of the Reform Rabbi Aharon Chorin in the first polemic against him, and in his subsequent support of changes in the liturgy instituted by founders of Reform congregations in Berlin and Hamburg. Already in his book of responsa, *Ha-Metsaref* – in which he relates to *halakhah*, *aggadah*, theology and language –

he expressed ideas that diverged from normative responsa regarding biblical exegesis, Jewish history, Hebrew linguistics and Talmudic research. Yet despite his independent position, he was not rebuffed by other Central European rabbis.

He argues in the introduction to his book *Ben Yohai*, on the sayings of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai, that the Talmudic expressions *goy*, *akum*, and *nokhri* do not apply to non-Jews of his times. But his reasoning departs from that of his predecessors in saying that contemporary gentiles 'have merited lofty achievements in all areas of wisdom and have ascended the stages of science; and in all social commandments that we have been commanded by our Torah, we are obligated toward them as toward ourselves'. Jews are required not only to love non-Jews, but to categorize gentiles as wise people, like the Jews in the biblical verse: 'a wise and understanding people' (Deuteronomy 4:6). The legal status of Jews and non-Jews is therefore equal in all commandments between man and man: 'And in all social precepts – such as: love your neighbour as yourself, and your brother shall live with you, do not murder, do not steal, do not take interest from your brother, and the like – the Torah obligates us toward him [the non-Jew] as toward us, the Jews, a man toward his neighbour'. Rabbi Konitz omitted the rabbinic concept *mipne darkei shalom*, 'in order to promote peace', by which earlier sages used to justify acts kindness toward non-Jews, not because he forgot to utilize it, but because he argued for ontological equality between Jews and Christians. Based on enlightenment principles, he rejected the legal ruling that allows Jews to take interest from non-Jews (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'ah*, 159:2), and extended the application of the category 'righteous gentile' from the individual to the group, arguing that 'non-Jews in our times are not idolaters'. In doing this he utilized a positive formulation: 'And one who does not accept idolatry and believes that there is a God in heaven is in our religion called a Jew like us'.

In equating contemporary Christians to Jews he not only removed them from the category of idolaters, but included them among those who fulfil the commandments, declaring contemporary Christians to be 'pious, close to the Supreme God and his Torah, lovers of truth who praise it in their gates, writers of books of ethics that teach equity to all men'. Although Rabbi Konitz relied on statements by Ezekiel Landau, Baruch Jeiteles and Eliezer Fleckeles for the basis of his arguments, comparing his views with theirs demonstrates that he went well beyond them. He claims no less than that the idea of Jewish chosenness and the separation of Jews from their surrounding environment were no longer valid.

With the outbreak of the polemic relating to the Reform temple in Hamburg (1819), however, and the publication of the Orthodox rabbinic pamphlet entitled *Eleh Divrei Ha-Brit* that opposed its builders, hostility toward Reform Judaism put pressure on Orthodox attitudes toward Christianity. In the wake of this Christians reverted to the status of idolaters in Central European rabbinic literature. Key figures in this revolution in Orthodox legal rulings were Moses Schreiber and Moses Schick.

Moses Schreiber, rabbi of Pressburg, known as the *Hatam Sofer* (1762–1839), was one of the greatest authorities of his time and is considered the father of Jewish Orthodoxy. His motto, *hadash assur min ha-Torah* ('anything new is forbidden by the Torah'), became the guiding principle of Orthodoxy. From his appointment as rabbi of Pressburg (1806) he became a spokesman for the traditional approach, having encountered proponents of acculturation in his community and suffered their attempts to limit his authority. From 1810 onward he became the main defender of tradition, resisting proposals to cancel the prohibition of eating legumes on Passover, annul the second days of festivals in the Diaspora and open general schools for Jews.

Schreiber must have been aware of Rabbi Konitz's understanding of the status of contemporary Christians in Jewish law, since he cited his favourable opinion with regard to Christianity in his own responsum on tax evasion. But he rejected Konitz's views of Christians and placed them in the category of idolaters. Perplexed by the custom of refraining from studying Torah during the first half of the night of the Christian holiday of Christmas, he ruled that particularly when Christians are celebrating Christmas, Jewish scholars should dedicate themselves to counteract the idolatry of Christians by studying. He even employed the status of idolater with regard to accepting the testimony of a Christian or returning a lost object. He did not make his underlying views explicit, but his intention is clear from the context. Non-Jews cannot receive the status of agents because of their status as idolaters. He distinguished non-Jews who observe the seven Noachide laws from those who did not, with regard to laws of *kashrut* and ritual slaughtering, but without saying whether contemporary Christians do or do not observe them. Even where he permitted a non-Jew to work for a Jew on the Sabbath, such as in a field that a Jew leased from a non-Jew, or in running a business owned in partnership with a non-Jew, he based his rulings on laws governing relations with idolaters.

Rabbi Yehezkel Panet (1783–1845), who was slightly younger than Schreiber, served as rabbi in several small communities in Hungary and Galicia before becoming rabbi of Transylvania. In his collection of responsa entitled

Mareh Yehezkel (Sighet, 1875), he discussed the rental of estates by Jews and hiring people to work on them on the Sabbath, a topic already addressed by others including Schreiber. Rabbi Panet issued a still more stringent ruling, rejecting the halakhic solution of writing a bill of sale of the estate to a non-Jew for the Sabbath, and referring to the workers as idolaters, leaving no doubt that he was referring to all Christians of his time.

Rabbi Moshe Schick, known as Maharam Schick (1807–1879), rabbi of Huszt in northeast Hungary, studied under Schreiber, was one of the greatest sages of his generation, and went further in categorizing the Christians of his time as idolaters. Following the Jewish Congress in Hungary (1869) at which the Orthodox separated from the modernizing Neolog Jews who had gained control, Schick became even more radical in relation to modernizers and Christians than Schreiber. In a responsum of 1878 he prohibited the use of 'foreign' or non-Hebrew first-names, based on a ruling of Maimonides in *Hilkhot Avodah Zarah* ('The Laws of Idolatry') that 'One should not follow in the customs of the idolaters, and should not be like them in dress or hair style, or the like, as it says (Leviticus 20:23): "And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation [which I am casting out before you]"'. His decision to emphasize this in 1878, eleven years the emancipation of Austro-Hungarian Jewry, implies that Schick was referring to Reform Jews and those he judged assimilationist. As he says: 'Now that the weight of the exile has lightened and Jews are not ridiculed by the nations, they are changing their names and their language in order to make themselves like the non-Jews, and we can apply to them the Biblical verse that they are a vile generation'. Schick forbade using foreign names in a writ of divorce (*get*), even though Schreiber had permitted it, and strongly prohibited the custom of carving the image of a dead person on his gravestone, as was customary among Christians, although he could again have relied on lenient halakhic sources. But Schreiber had already described this as a custom of idolaters, concluding that it violates the commandment 'you shall not go in their statutes'. Schick even decreed it forbidden to set up a marriage canopy within a synagogue, instead of in a home or the open air, not because it is actually against Jewish law, but because it resembled the Christian practice of conducting weddings in church. Schick's intention was to oppose Jewish reformers, but the rabbinic sources on which he relied led him to apply the label 'idolater' to Christians of his own time.

The return of Christians to the category of idolaters in Central European Orthodox halakhic rulings from the time of Schreiber, both in monetary and ritual matters, was more severe than during the Middle Ages, not because

attitudes of Christians toward Jews had deteriorated, but as a consequence of the Orthodox reaction to the Reform movement and the desire to reinforce the boundaries between traditional Jews and surrounding society. Applying the label 'idolater' to contemporary Christians was the easiest way to achieve that separation, since Talmudic writers used it in relation to many aspects of regulating Jewish behaviour among non-Jews. A ruling issued in Michalowitz in 1866 lists nine prohibitions regarding synagogue prayer and structure, designed to distance Jews from Christian practices. The ruling lacked adequate halakhic support, yet synagogues that ignored the prohibitions were labelled 'houses of idolatry', because they appeared to copy Christian prayer practices. Keen to separate Orthodox from Neolog Jews, Schick issued rulings without halakhic basis also about genuine Jewish practices, such as the obligation of a bridegroom to wear a *kittel* at his wedding, even if doing so would have distanced the couple from the Orthodox community. Lenient considerations relating to the need for peaceful contact between Jews and others, for example in Schreiber's responsa with regard to rental, now disappeared, generating a stringent attitude on relations between Jews and non-Jews that has not changed to this day, despite attempts by some Orthodox rabbis and academics to moderate the position. The internal crisis within the Jewish community caused by the confrontation between Orthodox, Reform and Neolog Jews created an ethos of halakhic stringency particularly in areas with social implications for relations between the Orthodox and various categories of Reform Jews.

Orthodox Judaism in Transition – An Oxymoron?

Professor Chaim I. Waxman
*Rutgers University, New Jersey,
and Van Leer Jerusalem Institute*

A commonsense answer to the question in the title above might seem to be: 'Of course not!' Yet there are those, typically Ultra-Orthodox or Haredi Jews, who insist that both the Written and Oral Torah as we know them were given at Sinai, and that any mention of halakhic development is heresy. This article seeks to highlight change in American Orthodox Judaism from the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twenty-first centuries. The first part, which I have examined in detail elsewhere¹ so is only summarized here, deals with cultural change. The second part looks at change in the halakhah-related sphere that is deemed to be religiously acceptable in the halakhah-observant community.

The denominational designation 'Orthodox' did not exist in the United States until the mass immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe. Thus when we speak of American Orthodox Judaism we are referring essentially to Orthodox Judaism that was transplanted from Eastern Europe. Some prominent Eastern European Orthodox rabbis, such as Rabbi Israel Meir Hacoen Kagan (1838–1933), popularly known as the *Chafetz Chaim*, opposed immigration to the United States. Some Eastern European Orthodox rabbis who immigrated were highly critical of American society and culture and saw little future for 'authentic' Judaism there. Moses Weinberger, for example, wrote a stinging critique of the deplorable condition of traditional Judaism in New York, in

1. Chaim I. Waxman, 'From Institutional Decay to Primary Day: American Orthodox Jewry Since World War II', *American Jewish History* 91 (Sept-Dec 2003) 405–21; 'From *Treifene Medina* to *Goldene Medina*: Changing Perspectives on the United States among American Haredim', in Steven T. Katz (ed.) *Why Is America Different?: American Jewry on its 350th Anniversary* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010) 114–27; 'The Americanization of Orthodoxy', paper presented at the 'International Conference on Ultra-Orthodoxy Between Modernity and Post-Modernity', Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, 31 December 2012.

which he lambasted, among much else, the Constitutional notion of separation of religion and state. Another, Rabbi Jacob David Wilowsky (1845–1913), the rabbi of Slutsk (now Belarus), commonly known as ‘the Ridvaz’, is alleged to have condemned anyone who went to America because Judaism was trampled on there, so that anyone who left Europe left not only their home but their Torah, Talmud, yeshivah and sages.

Less than fifty years later Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895–1986), who was rabbi of Luban (now Belarus) until his emigration to the United States in 1937, where he headed a yeshivah in New York and became a leading authority on halachah within Orthodox circles, gave a sermon in which he lauded America’s separation of religion of state. Contra Weinberger, he asserted that in enforcing separation of religion and state the government of the United States is following the will of God, that this is the reason the country flourishes, and that Jews are obligated to pray that the government will succeed in all its undertakings.

In contrast to the dismal state of Jewish education described by both Weinberger and Willowsky, and their pessimism about the future of Judaism in America, a number of high-level yeshivah seminaries, mostly transplanted from Eastern Europe, were established during the 1930s and 1940s, and a movement of primary and secondary-level yeshivah day schools was formed in the 1940s. These sparked the founding of day schools that provide intensive Jewish education along with a quality secular curriculum, and there was a virtual boom in the growth of the day-school movement from World War II to the mid-1970s in cities and neighbourhoods across the country. In addition, a day school often became the feeder-school for a higher-level yeshivah, so that by the fourth quarter of the twentieth century the number of Jews in post-high-school yeshivah seminaries was greater in the United States than it had been during the heyday of Jewish Eastern Europe.

Ironically, this type of day school, combining both sacred and secular education, was anathema to the Orthodox rabbinic leadership in Eastern Europe, and still is to the haredi rabbinic leadership in Israel. Many of the rabbinic leaders who spirited the day-school movement into existence had previously been adamantly opposed to it. As it turned out, the day-schools movement is perhaps the most significant innovation enabling the survival and growth of Orthodox Judaism in America.

The Americanization of Orthodox Judaism stands out in the approach of the rabbinic leadership to the English language, especially in sacred learning. Initially English was viewed ‘goyish’, a non-Jewish language the use of which is part of an assimilation process. There had been even stronger opposition

to English in sacred settings, and calls for the exclusive use of Yiddish in rabbinic sermons and Jewish education. Yet the contemporary generation of even ‘Ultra-orthodox’ or haredi Jews in the United States not only speak English, but their sacred learning is also in English – or more accurately ‘Yinglish’ – and an increasing number of sacred texts are published in English, mostly but not exclusively by the Ultra-orthodox ArtScroll Publishers. At the celebration of the completion of reading the Talmud cycle, *Siyum Hashass*, at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey in the summer of 2012, marked by the world’s largest gathering of Jews, sponsored by Agudath Israel of the United States, most of the speeches, lectures and salutations were in English.

Ultra-orthodox Judaism was traditionally opposed to secular higher education, and fiction was alien to it. Today, American Ultra-orthodoxy uses cutting-edge psychology and counselling terminology and techniques in its popular literature, and a new genre of Ultra-orthodox fiction has emerged.² Likewise, the entire area of sports was shunned as being part of ‘Greek’, i.e., pagan, culture. Yet today American Orthodox people of all varieties are engaged in sports, both as observers and as consumers in sports-salons who perceive the benefits and importance of physical fitness. Finally, whereas popular music was previously viewed as non-Jewish and to be avoided, contemporary American Orthodoxy has enthusiastically adapted popular music by giving it a Jewish flavour.

Equally interesting is the impact that social change has had on traditional Jewish religious practice, and a series of American Orthodox halakhic innovations will now be briefly indicated. An extensive analysis and discussion of them awaits book-length treatment.

Decorum in Shul

The first major attempt at reforming Jewish religious services in the United States was made in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1824, when a group of forty-seven members of Congregation Beth Elohim, who were unhappy with the way synagogue services were organized, attempted to reform the congregation’s services by abbreviating them, having parts of the service read both in Hebrew and in English, eliminating the practice of auctioning synagogue honours, and having a weekly discourse or sermon in English. These reforms were radical at that time and the leadership of Beth

2. Yoel Finkelman, *Strictly Kosher Reading: Popular Literature and the Condition of Contemporary Orthodoxy* (Boston, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2011).

Elohim rejected them, which led to the group splitting off from the parent congregation and forming their own, which then introduced much more radical reforms. Ironically, the group's initial demands are quite compatible with contemporary centrist Orthodox synagogue services in America.

Talmud for Women

Until the twentieth century it was axiomatic that females were not to be taught or to engage in Torah study. This was based on the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer in the Talmud (BT Sotah 21b) and reiterated by Maimonides. During the first half of the twentieth century, Rabbi Israel Meir Hacoheh Kagan (author of *Mishnah Berurah*) and the Lubavitcher Rebbe asserted that in these days women are obligated to study the Written Law as well as those laws which specifically pertain to them. The Maimonides School, a day school in Boston founded by Rabbi Dr Joseph B. Soloveitchik, was the first Orthodox day school in America to provide co-education for both males and females, including Talmud study, through high school. Soloveitchik, who was widely revered as a Talmud scholar and halakhic authority, gave the inaugural lecture at the opening of the Beit Midrash programme at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women in 1977, thereby indicating his support of educational equality at the highest levels. Yeshiva University subsequently established a Graduate Program for Women in Advanced Talmudic Studies, and several other Orthodox institutions of higher Jewish learning for women have been established.

Bat Mitzvah

In his first responsum dealing with the issue of Bat Mitzvah, written in 1956, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein – widely known as 'Reb Moshe' – asserted that there is no reason for celebrating a female's coming of age and that such a thing is *hevel be'alma*, 'simple nonsense'; that the meal in honour of the Bat Mitzvah is not a *se'udat mitzvah*, 'decreed dinner', so has no religious significance; and that it is a violation of the sanctity of the synagogue to hold the ceremony there. Three years later, Reb Moshe retained his opposition to holding the ceremony in the synagogue itself, but permitted, albeit reluctantly, a kiddush in honour of a Bat Mitzvah to be held in the social hall of the synagogue.³

3. The latter was in response to a query from Rabbi Meir Kahane, later notorious as the head of the Jewish Defense League and the Kach party in Israel. At the time of the correspondence he was the recently ordained rabbi of a modern Orthodox congregation.

A careful reading of his responsa on Bat Mitzvah suggests that his basic opposition was to having the ceremony in the synagogue, and that this was because of his opposition to changes in synagogue ritual and practice, as well as his steadfast opposition to Conservative and Reform Judaism. Were the Bat Mitzvah celebration to be held in the home he probably would not have objected, since a number of his elders and colleagues are reported to have held such celebrations even in Lithuania.⁴ But increasing numbers of Orthodox Jews now celebrate Bat Mitzvah in a communal setting, most typically in a social hall and frequently in a women-only ceremony, and some are finding ways to hold the ceremony in the synagogue itself in ways that are now deemed to be halakhically approved.

Non-observant Jews

Reb Moshe's opposition to non-Orthodox Judaism was steadfast and he merely dismissed Reform Judaism, which does not merit much discussion in his work, as heretical. For example, in a responsum as to whether it is proper to honour Reform and Conservative rabbis with blessings at Jewish organizational banquets, he asserts that even if they pronounced the blessing properly, their blessings are void since they are heretics, a description that he regards as so obvious that it needs no elaboration. He addressed Conservative Judaism in greater detail, and in a number of responsa emphasized its heretical nature. In one on the question of whether one may organize a *minyan*, a quorum, to pray in a room within a synagogue whose sanctuary does not conform with Orthodox standards, he distinguishes between Orthodox and Conservative synagogues. In a Conservative synagogue, he asserted, one should not make a *minyan* in any room, 'because they have announced that they are a group of heretics who reject a number of Torah laws'. One should distance oneself from them, 'because those who deny even one item from the Torah are considered deniers of the Torah'. However, in an Orthodox synagogue which is ritually unfit because it has no *mechitzah*, separation between men and women, or because it contains a microphone, or some other such irregularity, the members 'are not heretics, Heaven forbid; they treat the laws lightly but they do not deny them', so there is no obligation to distance oneself from them.

With respect to non-observant Jews, Reb Moshe adopted a conciliatory position, in direct opposition to Rabbi Israel Meir Hacoheh Kagan, whose

4. For an in-depth analysis of the history and development of Bat Mitzvah see Norma Baumel Joseph, 'Ritual, Law, and Praxis: An American Response/a To Bat Mitsva Celebrations', *Modern Judaism* 22 (October 2002) 234–60.

multi-volume *Mishnah Berurah* (MB) is widely viewed as halakhically authoritative. While the latter cited precedence for excluding Sabbath violators from a *minyan* (MB 1, 55:46), Reb Moshe says they may be counted, and even allowed them to be called up to the Torah unless they are overt heretics. In a similar vein he allowed a suspected Sabbath desecrator to be appointed president of a synagogue, and barred only those who publicly and brazenly do so. Likewise, he ruled that a kohen who is not a Sabbath observer may be permitted to bless the congregation. In all these cases, Reb Moshe, the foremost halakhic authority in twentieth-century American Orthodoxy, was obviously influenced by the social and cultural and religious patterns of American Orthodox Jewry. He was willing to accommodate non-observant Jews so long as they did not challenge the authority of Orthodoxy. Those who did challenge its authority were deemed to be beyond the pale.

Eruv

The phenomenon of the *eruv* (pl. *eruvim*) – symbolically enclosing a neighbourhood or community to allow Jews to carry on the Sabbath – established in cities across the United States, is another example of the impact of social change on traditional Jewish religious practice and halakhah. Many who are familiar with Orthodox amenities in America today might be surprised to learn that until 1970 only two cities in the entire United States had an *eruv*, and that both were highly controversial. The first, established in 1894, was in St Louis, Missouri. New York City had two *eruv* controversies. The first, on Manhattan's East side in 1905, was widely dismissed as unacceptable. The second, enclosing the entire island of Manhattan, stirred up a controversy from 1949 to 1962.⁵ But by 2011 there were more than 150 *eruvim* in communities across the United States. A variety of sociological factors contributed to the increased halakhic acceptance of *eruvim*, perhaps the most significant being the increased social and geographic mobility of the Orthodox, many of whom moved to the suburbs in the 1970s and 1980s.

Electric Timers ('Shabbos Clocks')

When electric timers first made it possible to switch electrical appliances on and off on the Sabbath, resistance in the Orthodox community was based on several halakhic issues. Reb Moshe wrote two *responsa* in the 1970s in which

5. For a social history and analysis of *eruvim* in the United States, see Adam Mintz, 'Halakhah in America: The History of City Eruvin, 1894–1962', PhD diss., New York University, September 2011.

he emphatically prohibited their use because they distort the objective of the Sabbath. He did, however, reluctantly permit their use for setting lights to go on and off on the Sabbath, because there was precedent for it in synagogues and it contributes to the enjoyment and thus the sanctity of the Sabbath. For all other appliances, however, he categorically prohibited them.

More recently, however, such timers have come to be widely used within the Orthodox community for a variety of other appliances, such as those for home heating, air conditioning and food heating, as well as a variety of other functions which can barely be considered within the category of actions which contribute to the sanctity of the Sabbath.

Halav Yisrael

According to halakhah, milking must be supervised by an observant Jewish adult to assure that it is indeed cow's milk, *halav yisrael*, and not that of a non-kosher animal. In a number of *responsa* written during 1954, Reb Moshe ruled that in the United States milk that is under government supervision is surely cow's milk, because the dairy would be severely penalized for violating the law. All milk under the label of a reputable company is therefore kosher. In 1970 Reb Moshe reiterated this lenient ruling, but added that it is proper for one who is punctiliously observant to be strict and use only *halav yisrael*. Principals in yeshivah day schools, he asserted, should certainly provide *halav yisrael* only to their students, even if it is more expensive, precisely in order to show the students that Torah Jews should be stringent even if there is only a slight chance of transgression. Reb Moshe here initially took a lenient position, but bowed to social pressure for a more stringent one, presumably because there were already a number of dairies selling *halav yisrael* and there was an increasing population of consumers of it.

It is usual to assume that the influence of American society and culture is to urge greater leniency in religious practice. But the impact of American experience can cut both ways, occasionally towards leniency and at other times the opposite, as in the case of *halav yisrael*. I have analysed elsewhere a phenomenon I termed 'the haredization of American Orthodox Judaism',⁶ and gave examples of such stringencies. What is now called for is an analysis of the criteria under which stringency emerges, and also of those under which there is a move towards leniency.

6. Chaim I. Waxman, *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints*, No. 376, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 15 February 1998.

Additionally it should be noted that increased stringency can itself lead to a countermove toward leniency, and, as Yehuda Turetsky and I have indicated, there has in general been a 'sliding toward the left' in American Orthodoxy.⁷ While in the past, such moves resulted in breaking away from Orthodoxy – leading to the formation of Conservative Judaism in the US and Louis Jacobs's Masorti movement in Britain – it is still unclear where institutions and groups such as Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, Yeshivat Maharat and the International Rabbinical Fellowship are going. Perhaps contemporary American Orthodoxy is and will continue to be considerably broader and more flexible than its established spokespersons wish to admit.

7. Yehuda Turetsky and Chaim I. Waxman, 'Sliding to the Left? Contemporary American Modern Orthodoxy', *Modern Judaism* 31:2 (May 2011) 119–41.

Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs with Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg.

New Research



We Have Reason to Inquire: The Life and Works of Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs

Dr César Merchán-Hamann, Jane Barlow,
Dr Zsófia Buda, Milena Zeidler

Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs, arguably the greatest Anglo-Jewish scholar and rabbi and certainly one of the most popular, was voted by readers of the *Jewish Chronicle* ‘the greatest British Jew’ in a poll conducted in 2005. He combined an active rabbinical career with tireless activity as a scholar, publishing widely on Jewish thought, history, mysticism and liturgy, focusing particularly on Hasidism and Rabbinics. His contribution was particularly rich in the field of Jewish theology, and it is Rabbi Jacobs as a theologian that we highlighted in two exhibitions this year – one of them at the Muller Library in Yarnnton, and the other its virtual and much expanded equivalent on the Centre’s Library website. But we did not neglect his work as a community rabbi, communicating with the ‘Jew in the pew’ in an ongoing conversation about Jewish tradition.

Rabbi Dr Jacobs was in communication with some of the greatest scholars of his time, but could only rarely devote himself fulltime to purely academic activities, such as when he was Visiting Professor at Harvard University or other institutions. In his unusual choice of fields, including some from which more traditional scholars had shied away, he may be compared to pioneers such as Gershom Scholem. It is a great privilege that Rabbi Dr Jacobs generously donated his Library to the Leopold Muller Memorial Library shortly before his death, thanks to the good offices of the former Fellow Librarian, Dr Piet van Boxel.

Rabbi Jacobs defined Jewish theology as ‘an attempt to think through consistently the implications of the Jewish religion’, and believed that this needed to be done anew in each time and place, in accordance with the current state of knowledge. Modern thinkers could not sit in judgment on Judaism, however, but must recognize their own limitations. Jewish theology is therefore invariably provisional and to be constantly reconsidered. There is only one constant: Jewish theology must be consistent, an assumption which led him to re-examine the Orthodox tenet of Torah from Heaven (*Torah min hashamayim*). His inability

to accept it literally would lead to the ‘Jacobs Affair’, which brought him to public attention and gave birth to the Masorti movement – which he did not plan to found, but which has changed the tenor of Anglo-Jewish life.

The aftermath of the Affair produced controversies in several fields, but particularly concerning the validity of marriages conducted in Masorti synagogues or by non-Orthodox rabbis, and over the Jewish status of the children of such marriages. Here the links between Rabbi Jacobs’s scholarly endeavours and rabbinic activities are particularly apparent, showing an ability to bridge fields made possible by the fact that for him Judaism was something both lived and thought. We can follow his activities so closely because we have access to an archive which documents Rabbi Jacobs’s involvement in both scholarly and rabbinic community activities in detail, as will be seen below.

The physical and the extended virtual exhibitions of material from this archive were produced with the unstinting help of the Friends of Louis Jacobs, particularly Rabbi Jacobs’s son, Mr Ivor Jacobs, and the rest of the family. The Exhibition Team is grateful to all who contributed archival material or advice, and who helped and supported us in various ways throughout the process.

The Louis Jacobs Archive

Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs preserved a large archive reflecting his work over many years, and when it was decided to bring together an international team of scholars of Jewish Orthodoxy for the Centre’s Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies (OSAJS) in 2013 (see pages 26–140 above), to discuss the role of Jacobs’s thought in Modern Orthodoxy, his family loaned a significant part of this to the Muller Library, providing material for the exhibition.

For over fifty years Louis Jacobs and his wife Shula collected personal and professional letters, sermons, handwritten notes, newsletters and newspaper cuttings about Jacobs himself, and about what would eventually become the British Masorti movement. This material offers opportunities for researchers not only into early-twentieth-century Jewish culture in the UK, but into Latvia and Lithuania, where Jacobs’s parents lived before settling in Manchester. The archive also contains photographs and memorabilia of the extended family.

The archive includes dozens of boxes of correspondence, with up to 450 items per box, containing letters written by, but also those addressed to Jacobs, with drafts and copies of his replies. The correspondents include personal friends and family, academics, members of his and other congregations, Jewish leaders and leaders from other faiths.



A photograph labelled 'My father's eldest brother, Israel Avraham'.

Jacobs corresponded regularly with Rabbi Professor Alexander Altmann, based in North America, over several decades, providing insights into Jacobs's personal experience. On 19 May 1964, at the time of the 'Jacobs Affair', for example, he wrote to Altmann: 'The dust of the battle has now settled and we are worshipping as a new congregation called the New London Synagogue. It has possibilities and I am glad to say that my friends are extremely loyal' (F, 152).

Correspondence with the Office of the Chief Rabbi is preserved, and several personal exchanges with Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks, who in 1973 wrote to Jacobs about his methods of biblical criticism. The pair discussed the problems and limitations of language when discussing theological and philosophical issues, such as how words such as 'empirical', 'objective' and 'meaning' may be used in multiple contexts and for a variety of purposes (F, 155–156). Such letters provide the opportunity for a more nuanced understanding of the Jacobs Affair and the growth of the British Masorti movement.

A key component of Jacobs's archive is his notebooks. We currently have sixteen handwritten volumes containing sermon ideas, theological notes and

reflections, as well as the original versions of many of his books. These include *Helping with Inquiries*, as well as the revised edition of the *Tree of Life*, in which Jacobs addresses reviews of the previous edition in 1984 and revisits his view of Torah from Heaven (S60,005). They also include unpublished material, such as the plan for a book entitled *Belief in Action* which was never fully developed (S55, 113–145). Some notes were incorporated in *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, 1999, written forty years after the Jacobs Affair, in which he discussed varying biblical interpretations in different strands of modern Judaism.

Another important category of material is contained in his scrapbooks. There are seventy-seven of these, containing newspaper cuttings from around the world about Jacobs and the Jacobs Affair, continuing until just before his death in 2006. They also contain cuttings, reviews and other memorabilia collected and collated meticulously by Jacobs's wife Shula and himself. Due to the intensity of the Jacobs Affair in 1964, several scrapbooks were filled in this year alone, some covering only a few weeks. A few items they contain are available elsewhere, but assembling a mass of material over an extended period of time makes it possible to analyse shifts in attitude systematically.

The archive provides valuable insight into the way Jacobs's theology was perceived by others. His most controversial work, *We Have Reason to Believe*, was published in 1959, but received only minimal attention at the time. It was only in the 1960s, when Jacobs was being considered first for the position of principal of Jews' College and later as a rabbi at the New West End Synagogue, that Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie's attention was drawn to the publication and he vetoed the application. The book was subsequently reprinted, revised and expanded five times.

In 1999, more than forty years after its publication, Jacobs wrote *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* (1999/2000), a systematic defence of the original thesis of *We Have Reason to Believe*, designed to help the reader 'decide whether [he has] presented a case beyond reasonable doubt'.

Initial responses were varied. In 1963 an anonymous author wrote in *The Jewish Quarterly* that Jacobs's theology 'is not an original work at all'. Some correspondents and reviewers despised the book and others commented on how it had affected them personally. One wrote that 'were it not for the controversy it has caused one would scarcely recommend it at all'. These and other examples of reactions to Jacobs's theology – not all of them negative – are available on the website and in the archive.

Outline of book entitled:
BELIEF IN ACTION

Preface

40 years since WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE

This book considers how the ideas have passed in these 40 years and how Masorti stands in relation to other Jewish traditions.

1. The idea of liberal supersessionism.

The historical approach, and the critical-historical method applied to the Bible and the Rabbinic literature.

2. Solutions: 1) no problem - the same method but rejected

on grounds of P. 12. Critique of this.

2) Method sound but not when applied

to the Pentateuch. Critique of this.

Jacobs's notes for Belief in Action.

I agree with you absolutely about the attitude which the modern Jew should accept towards the Bible. Even if the modern critics were all proved correct (which would be an impossibility anyway), nevertheless, to us the Jewish Bible is not simply the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Hagiographs, but those writings plus all the interpretations and expansions of them given to them throughout the ages by countless rabbis and teachers.

Jacobs's response in 1958 to a reader's comments on We Have Reason to Believe.

Jewish Status: Conversion and Marriage

The archive offers deeper insight into the practical consequences of Jacobs's theological views – for himself, his congregation and the wider Jewish community – than his published works. Nowhere are theology and practicality more closely entwined than in the material on marriage and conversion.

The emergence of what later became the British Masorti movement from theological differences about the nature of Torah impacted on everyday life.¹ Essential pillars of Jewish communal life – the official registering of birth, marriage and death – became controversial because Orthodox authorities challenged the Jewish status of those belonging to other movements. The Jewish status of the members of those communities, whom they could marry, where they could be buried and whether their offspring could be considered halakhically 'Jewish', were opened to question. The archive contains numerous letters written to Louis Jacobs concerning those whose Jewish identity had been challenged by the Orthodox authorities.

Jacobs expressed his views on the status of the marriage ceremony quite clearly.

In Jewish Law a marriage between two persons both of whom profess the Jewish faith is valid provided there is no legal impediment [...] the marriage is effected by the delivery of the ring, in the presence of two witnesses, attended by the declaration, 'Be thou betrothed unto me by this ring according to the Law of Moses and Israel' [...]. It follows that provided there is no legal impediment, it is impossible to invalidate a marriage solely on the ground that it took place in a Liberal or a Reform synagogue. This has been acknowledged more than once by the Chief Rabbi.²

The right to register marriages has been a central issue in the fight for religious authority within Anglo-Jewry for 150 years. Isaac Goldsmid, one of the founders of the first Reform synagogue (the West London Synagogue), had already in 1845 appealed against the Marriage and Registration Acts of 1836, which took marriage out of clerical and into secular control, rendering the Reform congregation dependent on the Board of Deputies for certifying its activities. The President of the Board at that time, Moses Montefiore, refused to give the new synagogue the necessary certificate for performing marriage ceremonies.³ Some decades later, the Liberal movement met the same resistance, as still later did Louis Jacobs's congregation.⁴ A communiqué of the London Bet Din represents the position of the United Synagogue: 'Marriages performed by Dr

1. We use the term Masorti movement, although it is important to clarify that Louis Jacobs had no intention of founding a new movement. He considered himself Orthodox, and wished to stay within the framework of Orthodox Judaism.

2. Louis Jacobs, *Helping with Inquiries* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1989) 215.

3. Anne J. Kershner and Jonathan A. Romain (eds) *Tradition and Change. A History of Reform Judaism in Britain, 1840–1995* (London, 1995) 13–14, 39.

4. *Ibid*, 210–11.

Jacobs, even in cases where both parties are eligible for marriage according to Jewish law, have no more halachic validity than marriages contracted in a Register Office in Civil Law. Conversions under the auspices of Dr Jacobs have no validity whatsoever in Jewish law.⁵

Difficulties around marriage are often intertwined with those of conversion. Matrilineal Jewish descent makes the conversion of women particularly sensitive, and if a woman or a female ancestor were converted in a non-Orthodox synagogue, their Jewish status might not be recognised. In some cases, people who considered themselves practising Jews have been asked to convert because the synagogue in which they wish to be married does not recognize their Jewish status.

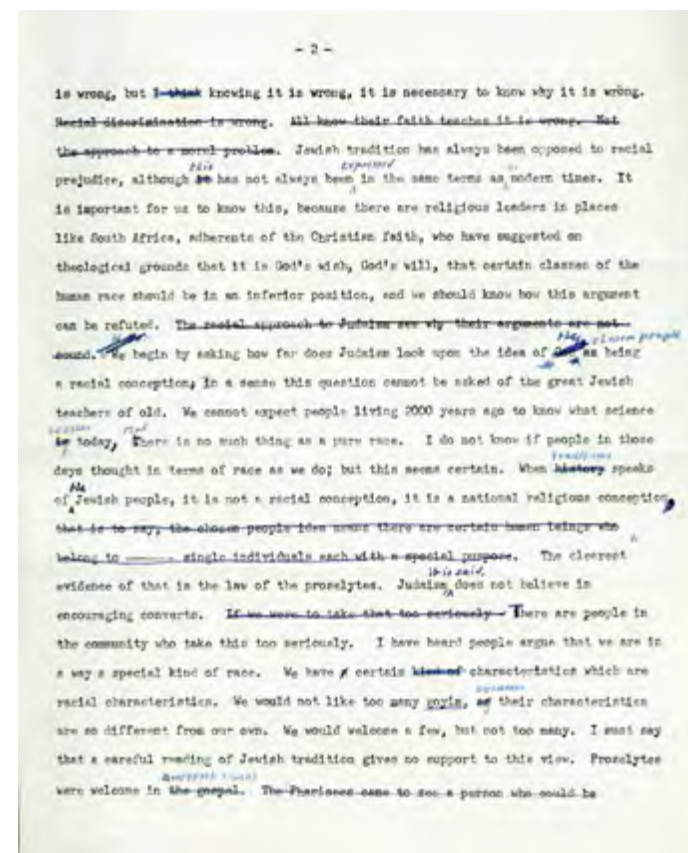
The Archive contains numerous letters written to Louis Jacobs requesting his opinion on such problems and asking if he would be willing to perform their wedding. A woman who intended to marry an Orthodox man but did not have the *ketubah* of her grandparents explained how 'I turned to the Beth Din for advice and was told that without the necessary documentation I was not to consider myself a Jew and must attempt to obtain a full conversion to Judaism'.

A member of the New North London Synagogue related in 1992 how when a mother wished to send her son to a Jewish school, 'She was asked where she and [her husband] were married and she replied that she was married at New North London and that you [Louis Jacobs] officiated. She was told that the Ketuba from the N. N. L. S. was not acceptable and she would have to prove she was Jewish by producing her parents' Ketuba although, of course she had done so before the marriage. As I say, you are probably familiar with the situation, but I would be grateful for any comment you have [...]'.⁶

The issues surrounding conversion – particularly its difficulty and protracted nature – are complex and contested, and lie at the heart of differences within the community.

In an unpublished essay entitled 'Jewish Approach to Racial Prejudice' (undated, but written probably in the 1960s), Jacobs indicated that he believed extreme caution over conversion to be misplaced: 'Judaism it is said does not believe in encouraging converts. There are people in the community who take this too seriously. I have heard people argue that we are in a special kind of race. [...] We would not like too many *goyim*, because their characteristics are so different from our own. We would welcome a few, but not too many. I must say that a careful reading of Jewish tradition gives no support to this view. [...]

5. *Jewish Chronicle*, 30 September 1983; see Louis Jacobs, *Helping with Inquiries* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1989) 219.



The manuscript of 'Jewish approach to racial prejudice', an unpublished essay probably from the 1960s.

In accepting a proselyte, there must be some evidence of real sincerity. Once the evidence is forthcoming, any forthcoming person can be accepted as a Jew. He becomes a fully-fledged Jew, treated with greater sympathy. You shall love the stranger, for ye were strangers to the land of Egypt.'

The tension between Louis Jacobs and the Orthodoxy represented by the United Synagogue has never been resolved. In 1993 the Chief Rabbi was asked about the United Synagogue's refusal to accept Louis Jacobs as the officiating rabbi at a wedding, and his office's response demonstrates how practicalities are intertwined with theological questions. 'While it is quite true that, in many

respects, the Masorti congregations have retained much of traditional practices, they remain, theologically, outside of orthodox traditions. Quite apart from the relatively minor matters of form and substance in which Rabbi Jacobs and his colleagues have deviated from Orthodox practice, there is also the very major axiom of Jewish belief, that the whole Torah is the divinely revealed will of G-d, is the principal issue that separates Rabbi Jacobs and the Masorti Movement from Orthodoxy.’ (H067a)

Louis Jacobs’ archive provides vivid insights into inter-denominational relations and delineates shifts and changes in religious trends over almost six decades. The selections displayed in the physical and virtual exhibitions illustrate the research potential of the archive, which awaits the attention of researchers into Jewish theology and the history – and present – of Anglo-Jewry in particular.



About the Exhibition

The exhibition entitled ‘We Have Reason to Inquire: The Life and Works of Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs’ – in both its physical and the virtual form – was arranged by the library staff during the autumn and winter of 2012. Each item in the archive was described and allocated a shelfmark, before about 6500 out of the 7000 pages were scanned for preservation on the Centre’s server. The remaining 500 images were completed early in the 2013–2014 academic year. The digitizing and exhibitions complement the work begun on the ‘Friends of Louis Jacobs’ website, which also displays scans of parts of the archive, especially scrapbooks and manuscripts, as well as transcripts of key texts and sermons, and some video recordings.⁶

6. <http://www.louisjacobs.org>



Timeline from the virtual exhibition.

Panoramic image of the physical exhibition.

While digitizing the items we selected 50 to be displayed physically at the library, and some 150 for the virtual exhibition, now available permanently online.⁷ The physical exhibition was launched on 23 January 2013 and the virtual one in July.

Both exhibitions are divided into three sections:

1. Jacobs’s understanding of revelation and the concept of *Torah min hashamayim* (‘Torah from heaven’),
2. Jacobs as part of a wider community of scholars (including Salo Wittmayer Baron and Abraham J. Heschel),
3. Jacobs’s approach to issues of conversion and marriage.

7. http://www.ochjs.ac.uk/mullerlibrary/digital_library/Louis-Jacobs/index.html

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Professor Ada Rapoport-Albert

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Vallentine Mitchell Publishers

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Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg *New North London Synagogue*

Taste, Discrimination and Money: Jewish Art Collectors of Great Britain¹

Charles Sebag-Montefiore FSA

The invitation to deliver the 2013 Martin Norton Annual Lecture was an honour which gave me an excellent reason to examine a subject about which little has been written – the Jewish Art Collectors of Great Britain. Although work has been done on some individual collectors (the many studies of the Rothschild family come immediately to mind), no continuous chronological survey appears yet to have been published. In the twentieth century the number of Jewish collectors grew substantially, compelling me to bring this paper to a close in 1939 simply for reasons of space. Indeed, after the Second World War, the story becomes so plentiful that a separate paper would be needed to do justice to the years since 1945.

One consequence of the Civil War of the 1640s was that most of the picture collections belonging to King Charles I and the so-called Whitehall Circle of collectors were either sold in London or taken to Holland and sold there. The King was tried for treason and beheaded in January 1649 on a scaffold erected outside the Banqueting House, the sole but splendid surviving portion of Whitehall Palace. In 1653 Oliver Cromwell became head of state as Lord Protector, holding that post until his death in 1658. Depending on their point of view, historians consider him either as dictator or hero, but he is highly relevant to this story, as he approved the re-admission of the Jews to England in 1656. It was in 1655 that Menasseh ben Israel, a celebrated scholar from Amsterdam, submitted his petition entitled *The Humble Addresses of Menasseh Ben Israel ...*

1. This paper is an expanded version of the Martin Norton Annual Lecture delivered at the Jewish Museum, London, 6 June 2013. Charles Sebag-Montefiore is the joint author of *The British as Art Collectors: From the Tudors to the Present* (London, 2012) and author of *A Dynasty of Dealers: John Smith and Successors 1801–1924*, a study of the art market in nineteenth-century London (London, 2013). He is a Trustee of the National Gallery and Hon. Treasurer of the Friends of the National Libraries, the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, the Walpole Society and other charities. He was a Trustee of the Samuel Courtauld Trust (1992–2007) and of the Art Fund (2000–11). He is a Governor of the Oxford Centre and Chairman of its Library Committee.



1. Two paintings by Zurbarán and his assistants from the series *Jacob and his Twelve Sons*, acquired by James Mendez of Mitcham probably in the 1720s. (Auckland Castle Trust, Bishop Auckland, Durham)

on behalf of the Jewish Nation, which argued the case for Jewish readmission and was addressed to 'His Highness the Lord Protector of the Common-Wealth'.

Cromwell's agreement did not derive so much from a spirit of religious tolerance as from sound commercial reasons – the wish to attract prosperous Jewish merchants and bankers to move from Amsterdam to London. Bevis Marks Synagogue opened in 1701: its architecture echoes that of the Great Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam, built twenty-five years beforehand. By the early eighteenth century, London was home to many of the chief Jewish financiers from northern Europe, including the families of Mendez da Costa, Abudiente and Lopez.

The earliest secure reference to a Jewish possessor of paintings relates to James Mendez (1694/5–1749) who owned the remarkable series, painted in the 1640s by Zurbarán and his assistants, depicting *Jacob and his Twelve Sons*. (Plate 1) James was the grandson of Fernando Mendez, who accompanied Catherine of Braganza to England in 1662 as her doctor. How the Zurbaráns appeared in England at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the artist was unknown outside Spain, is still a mystery, but it is thought that the series was seized by pirates who captured a ship bound for the Spanish colonies in South America and then taken to England. The series was offered for sale in London in 1722 at the auction of the collection of Sir William Chapman, but unfortunately it is not known whether James Mendez acquired them at the Chapman sale or subsequently.

In about 1730 James Mendez moved to the then rural area of Mitcham in Surrey and is described as a 'merchant' in his will dated 19 January 1749, held in The National Archives at Kew. His son, Moses Mendez (c. 1690–1758) wrote poetry and dramas and was said to be the richest poet of his time. In 1770 his widow changed their surname to Head, and his grandson, Francis Bond Head, was created a baronet in 1838.

James Mendez's picture collection was sold at auction posthumously on 21 February 1756. Twelve of the thirteen paintings by Zurbarán were bought by Richard Trevor, the Bishop of Durham, but surprisingly the thirteenth in the series, *Benjamin*, was not acquired by the Bishop, but by Lord Willoughby de Eresby. It is not known why the Bishop did not buy the complete series, but in 1756 he commissioned Arthur Pond to paint a copy of the *Benjamin* he failed to buy. They all remain at Bishop Auckland as the centrepiece of the Auckland Castle Trust, the brainchild of Jonathan Ruffer. The *Benjamin* has passed by descent to Lady Willoughby de Eresby and remains at Grimsthorpe Castle in Lincolnshire.

The records of eighteenth-century Jewish collectors are tantalizingly sparse. The *London Magazine*² provides contemporary evidence of the places where prosperous Jewish merchants lived: these include Fernando da Costa in Highgate in 1736; Mr Montefiore, a great-uncle of Sir Moses, in Lime Street in 1753; Aaron Nunes Pereira in Islington in 1769; and Moses Isaac Levy in Wimbledon in 1782. Press reports of dowries and estates indicate considerable prosperity. Although the numbers might be exaggerated, dowries are recorded of £10,000, £30,000 and even £50,000. In 1736 Fernando da Costa was said to

2. Listed in Albert Hyamson, *The Sephardim of England* (London, 1951) 121–2.

have 'died worth £300,000' and in 1777 Abraham Franco Costa was said to have 'died worth £900,000'. But frustratingly we do not know how these individuals and other Jewish merchants decorated their homes or furnished their rooms. Nor do we know about the paintings they hung on their walls.

We do know, however, that Hebrew was widely studied in England, not only by those of the Jewish faith but by intellectual Christians, and that a classical education included not only Greek and Latin but Hebrew as well. The greatest cultural legacy of the eighteenth century was the foundation of the British Museum, the first museum in the world formed by a democracy for its citizens, offering free entry, and not under the control of monarch, church or parliament. It was founded in 1753, and opened to the public in 1759 in old Montagu House, the site of the present museum. Its foundation collections consisted of the vast hoard of specimens, objects, jewels, coins and medals of Sir Hans Sloane; the library of Sir Robert Cotton; and the manuscripts of Edward and Robert Harley, 1st and 2nd Earls of Oxford. Interestingly, Sloane's library contained 13 Hebrew manuscripts, including the handsomely illustrated *Leipnik Haggadah* of 1740. The Harleian Library brought the new museum another 130 manuscripts, including the lavishly illuminated two-volume copy of the Lisbon *Mishneh Torah*, completed in 1471–2.

On its foundation in 1759 the British Museum possessed just one printed book in Hebrew: this was the first edition of the Bomberg Talmud printed in Venice 1520–3, from the library of King George II. That same year (1759) Solomon Da Costa Athias (1690–1769), a merchant broker from Amsterdam who had lived in London for many years, gave to the Museum 180 printed Hebrew books, which originally came from the library of King Charles II, a most intriguing provenance. In a letter dated 31 May 1759 he expressed a view shared by several Jewish collectors for over 250 years, writing of his hope that his gift 'may stand as a witness for me that I have the Love of this Nation always present in my Mind and that I am not ungrateful for the favours I have received'. This gift contained valuable editions printed between 1484 and 1659 in Ferrara, Mantua, Venice, Constantinople and Salonica, and included *Hanhagat ha-hayim* ('The Management of Life'), an ethical treatise by Moses Almosnino, printed in Salonica in 1564, probably the first Judeo-Spanish book to enter the British Museum's library.

The first Jewish collector, in today's sense of the word, of eighteenth-century Britain was Sampson Gideon (1699–1762), who commissioned Allan Ramsay to paint his portrait. He was the son of Rowland Gideon, a West India merchant, who changed his name from 'Abudiente' on settling in England. Sampson



2. *The Family of Sir Balthasar Gerbier* by Rubens, from the collection of Sampson Gideon. (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC)

prospered rapidly as a broker and won widespread admiration in the period after the South Sea Bubble (1720) by his calmness in ignoring the gambling mania and restoring confidence in the financial system and in public credit. In the 1740s and 1750s he raised debt for the successive Governments of Sir Robert Walpole, Henry Pelham and the Dukes of Newcastle and Devonshire, and in 1749 advised Walpole's government on the consolidation of the national debt and the reduction of its interest, becoming known as the 'Great Oracle'.

In 1751 he acquired Belvedere House, in Erith, Kent, a handsome house on the brow of a hill overlooking the River Thames, which was remodelled in the 1760s for his son by James 'Athenian' Stuart. A catalogue of his picture collection there was published in Dodsley's *London and its Environs Described* of 1761: this list describes 39 paintings, the overall standard of which was

high. The colour of Venetian pictures plainly appealed to him, as he possessed works by, or attributed to, Giorgione, Jacopo Bassano, Palma Vecchio and Tintoretto and two each by Veronese and Canaletto. One of his paintings by Veronese, *Mars and Venus*, is a late work painted in the 1570s or 1580s, which now belongs to the National Gallery of Scotland. He owned a fine picture by Murillo, *The Flight into Egypt*, which is generally dated around 1647–50 and is now in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Art. Interestingly, the previous owner of this manifestly Christian subject was none other than James Mendez of Mitcham, at whose sale in February 1756 Sampson Gideon acquired it. Plainly Gideon had no inhibitions in possessing Christian religious images or scenes from classical mythology.

It was his northern pictures which must have most impressed visitors to Belvedere House. (Plate 2) Rubens's superb *Family Portrait of Deborah Kip, Wife of Sir Balthasar Gerbier, and Her Children* was painted in about 1629–30, and reworked probably in the mid 1640s. Gerbier was a well-informed, but unsuccessful Dutch painter, who was to become the fixer par excellence for the Whitehall circle, and in particular in acquiring paintings on the Continent for the 1st Duke of Buckingham. This portrait passed to Gideon's descendents, successively called Eardley, Hanbury and Fremantle, and was sold to the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 1971.

He also owned a late work by Rembrandt, *A Portrait of an Elderly Man*, painted in 1667, two years before the artist's death. During the eighteenth century it was wrongly attributed to Frans Hals and described as a portrait of 'Van Trump', a mistaken phonetic reference to the Dutch Admiral Maarten Tromp. Early in the twentieth century the portrait was acquired by the 1st Viscount Cowdray, and was sold in 1999 by the 4th Viscount for £9.3 million to the Mauritshuis in The Hague.

Gideon did not pioneer a style in collecting that can be defined as specifically Jewish. Rather he was collecting pictures in a conventional manner, conforming to contemporary taste and fashion. His pictures did not greatly differ from other collections listed in the same work by Dodsley, such as those of John Barnard of Berkeley Square and Paul Methuen of Grosvenor Street. In his faith, Gideon gradually distanced himself from Judaism, resigning from his Sephardi synagogue in 1754. He married an Anglican and brought up his children as Christians. In 1759, in recognition of his father's services to successive governments, a baronetcy was conferred on his son, also called Sampson (1745–1824), who was then a schoolboy at Eton aged only 15. (Plate 3) The son was painted by Batoni in Rome in 1767, aged 22, with a man traditionally



3. *Sir Sampson Gideon & Tutor* painted in Rome in 1767 by Pompeo Batoni. The son of Sampson Gideon, he is seated and wears blue. (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne)

identified as his tutor (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne). In 1768 he married Maria Wilmot, daughter of Sir John Eardley Wilmot, and in 1789 changed his name from Gideon to Eardley, being raised to the peerage in the same year as the 1st Baron Eardley. In 1787 he commissioned Reynolds to paint two of his children Maria (1767–1834) and William (1775–1805): the portrait was acquired by the Barber Institute, Birmingham in 2012 through acceptance in lieu of Inheritance Tax. Hence, in the case of Sampson Gideon, the finest

Jewish collector of the eighteenth century, we see one whose assimilation and choice of a career denied to those of the Jewish faith, led him to abandon it.

Among the earliest Jewish sitters to Reynolds and Gainsborough were members of the Franks family. In 1766 Reynolds painted Mrs Priscilla Franks: her portrait now belongs to the Joslyn Museum in Omaha, Nebraska. In the same year, he also painted Mrs Moses Franks, the daughter of Aaron Franks, a diamond merchant, who married her cousin, but the portrait is now untraced. In 1770–2 Gainsborough painted a portrait of Isabella Franks which passed in 1983 to the Birmingham City Art Gallery.

The greatest Jewish-born collector of the first half of the nineteenth century, Ralph Bernal (1783–1854), also converted to Christianity, probably in order to become an MP, which was then impossible for a Jew. The son of Jacob Israel Bernal and wife Leah da Silva, both Sephardim, he graduated from Cambridge in 1806 and was called to the Bar in 1810. He sat as an MP for 34 years for several constituencies between 1818 and 1852. His fortune derived from estates in the West Indies which he inherited in 1810, and he heralded a new era of specialist and discerning collecting that anticipated the Rothschilds. Despite forming one of the greatest collections of Sèvres porcelain, Bernal's heart lay in French medieval and Italian Renaissance objects. As Frank Herrmann wrote 'it is to Ralph Bernal, a highly intelligent man trained as a barrister, that we owe the shift of interest among collectors from the work of the artist to the product of the craftsman'.³

All descriptions of the Bernal collection focus on the great sale held at Christie's in 1855 after his death. The 4244 lots took 32 days to sell and produced £62,690. Such was the renown of the collection that a priced edition of the sale catalogue, with buyers' names, was published in 1857 by Henry Bohn. The range of the collection was wide: armour, antique jewellery, crosses, Chinese porcelain, Faenza and Urbino wares and German enamelled glass. The paintings were principally English and French historical portraits, but included works by Cranach and El Greco. The consistently high quality amazed those who attended the sale.

An attempt was made, supported by the Prince Consort, to buy the collection for the nation, but in the event the Treasury granted the newly formed South Kensington Museum only £12,000 and the British Museum £4,000 to buy objects. The latter acquired the *Lothair Crystal* made in the ninth century (c. 865) for Lothair II, King of the Franks (Plate 4), and 21 pieces of Italian

3. Frank Herrmann, *The English as Collectors* (London, 1972) 293.



4. *The Lothair Crystal* made c. 865 for Lothair II, King of the Franks. Acquired by Ralph Bernal, and acquired at his sale in 1855 by the British Museum.

maiolica. Among the many purchases made by the South Kensington (Victoria & Albert) Museum was a brass chandelier made in Germany between 1480 and 1520; a pewter dish known as the *Temperantia Basin*, made in France by Francois Briot c. 1585; a lidded casket depicting scenes from the story of Tristan and Isolde made c. 1350–70; and a silver-gilt medal depicting Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, made by Hans Reinhart the Elder in 1537.

With its mission to improve design in Britain, the South Kensington Museum also bought Limoges enamels and some of the finest Sèvres and Meissen. The museum was not authorized by the Treasury to bid above the estimates and they consequently missed items. What the museums failed to buy, private collectors, notably the Rothschilds snapped up. There was particularly stiff competition for Bernal's Sèvres between the 4th Marquess of Hertford, the 4th Marquess of Bath, Baron Mayer de Rothschild, Sir Anthony de Rothschild and Samuel Addington. A pair of Sèvres Rose Pompadour vases soared to nearly £2000: Hertford secured nearly all of the most expensive Sèvres pieces, which can be seen today in the Wallace Collection.



5. A reception room in Alfred de Rothschild's London house in Seamore Place, from the privately printed catalogue of his collection, 1884. (Author's collection)

The zenith of collecting important French decorative arts was reached by the Rothschild family, which could be seen in the two great Rothschild houses in the vale of Aylesbury, Mentmore Towers and Waddesdon Manor, as well as in their other homes at Aston Clinton, Ascott, Halton and Eythrope. The Rothschilds – an exceptional family – established internationally, have for six generations reinvented themselves both as financiers and collectors.

Baron Mayer Amschel de Rothschild (1818–74), from the third generation of the Frankfurt bankers, built Mentmore, employing Joseph Paxton as his architect, and filled it with paintings by Fragonard, Boucher and Lancret, sculpture by Clodion and furniture by Cressent, Riesener and Carlin. The opulence was matched by the high quality of the individual objects. His collection contained objects as varied as the superb rococo Bureau of Augustus III of Saxony (Victoria & Albert Museum), which Baron Mayer bought for £1000 in 1835 at the exceptionally young age of 17; a Louis XV ormolu-mounted marquetry secrétaire stamped with the mark of Bernard van Risenburgh II

(Rosebery collection, Dalmeny House); a rare Sèvres Oyster Stand of 1765; and a Sèvres Milk Pail made for Marie Antoinette for the *Laiterie* at Rambouillet.

Baron Mayer's masterpiece of the French eighteenth-century painting was Drouais's *Portrait of Madame de Pompadour* (National Gallery, London), painted in 1764, which he bought in 1869. He had a powerful interest in portraits by Italian masters and owned Moroni's *Portrait of a Scholar, said to be Basilio Zanchi* (National Gallery of Scotland); Alessandro Allori's *Portrait of a Collector* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) and Bartolomeo Veneto's *Portrait of a Lady* (Timken Art Gallery, San Diego). He shared the Rothschild family admiration of the work of the Tiepolo family, acquiring the final study for a large fresco for the ceiling of the Scalzi church in Venice, called *The Miraculous Translation of the Holy House of Loreto*. Tragically the original fresco was destroyed by bombing in 1915: the ex-Mentmore sketch was bought in 1994 by the Getty Museum.

The opulence and high quality of the Mentmore collection was also to be seen at Waddesdon, built for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839–98) by the architect Destailleur in the French Renaissance style. At Waddesdon, Ferdinand pioneered the taste for grand English portraits and French decorative arts that was later to flourish in America. Gobelins and Beauvais tapestries were set against eighteenth-century *boiseries*, but strangely he did not buy French paintings. Portraits by Reynolds and Gainsborough hung with Dutch seventeenth-century paintings above French royal furniture by Riesener and, more unusually in England, Charles Cressent. The Baron bought avidly at the celebrated sale in 1882 of the contents of Hamilton Palace, at which he acquired a Cressent *Commode* among many other pieces. Amongst his Sèvres there were no fewer than three examples of the very rare potpourri vases in the shape of masted ships, of which only twenty examples are known to survive.

Alfred de Rothschild (1842–1918), the second son of Lionel de Rothschild, began working at the family bank aged 21 and served as a Director of the Bank of England for 20 years between 1869 and 1889. He lived in London in a house in Seamore Place, near Hyde Park Corner, and built a country house at Halton in Buckinghamshire. (Plate 5) The photograph of one of the rooms at Seamore Place comes from a sumptuous catalogue of his collection, privately printed in 1884. We can see the familiar mix of landscapes and genre scenes by Dutch seventeenth-century painters, alluring portraits of girls by Greuze, full-length English eighteenth-century portraits, Sèvres porcelain and French furniture incorporating Sèvres plaques.

The Rothschilds hunted, entered Parliament and socialized with their

neighbours. Collecting art functioned not only as an expression of wealth, but marked their assimilation into the English elite. Just as Baron Ferdinand wrote of his works of art, 'their pedigrees are of unimpeachable authenticity', so a Rothschild provenance became a guarantee of excellence, the name becoming synonymous not only with the style, but above all with high quality. Kenneth Clark memorably wrote that: 'Up to the last war the style of Sir Richard Wallace was still to be seen in private hands in the houses of the Rothschild family. Indeed, if all their collections could have been united they would I believe, have put the Wallace Collection in the shade. A visit to a Rothschild Collection was always a memorable experience. Hushed, inviolate, almost indistinguishable from one another, they were impressive not only by their size and splendour, but by a sense of solemnity of wealth which hung about them. In a Rothschild collection I always found myself whispering, as if I were in a church.'⁴ With the Rothschilds the taste for the *ancien régime* reached its climax.

John Samuel (1812–87) was the brother of Mrs Isaac Cohen, and thus the uncle of Juliana Cohen who in 1850 married Baron Mayer de Rothschild of Mentmore. Hannah, Lady Rosebery was therefore his great-niece. A merchant with a business in Brazil, he had settled in London by the late 1850s, and in the 1860s he began to collect pictures, obtaining the help of Sir James Hudson,⁵ a British diplomat whom he had met in Brazil and who was British ambassador to Turin between 1852 and 1863. Hudson was passionately interested in Italian art and knew both Giovanni Morelli, the art historian, and Sir Henry Layard, who was to leave his own huge collection to the National Gallery in 1894.

John Samuel's collection reflected Layard's, but in a smaller way. A catalogue, privately printed after his death by his unmarried nieces Lucy and Louisa Cohen, reveals a collection of 47 pictures and 11 drawings. By 1868 he owned Moroni's fine portrait known as *Il Gentile Cavaliere*, brilliantly reframed by the National Gallery in 2010 with a remarkably sympathetic North Italian reverse cassetta frame, contemporary with the picture. He possessed good portraits by Lorenzo Costa and Callisto Piazza, but was more attracted by the eighteenth century, acquiring Sebastiano Ricci's *Esther Before Ahasuerus* and Marieschi's *Buildings and Figures Near a River*, pictures by Gian Domenico Tiepolo and Zuccarelli and no fewer than six works by Guardi. In 1906 his unmarried Cohen nieces bequeathed 26 of John Samuel's pictures to the National Gallery.

Very different from the Rothschilds was Sam Mendel (1814–84). Born in

4. Cooper, Douglas (ed.) *Great Private Collections*, Introduction by Kenneth Clark (London, 1963) 15.

5. See *The Burlington Magazine* vol. 115, No. 838 (January, 1973) 4–16.



6. *Mortlake Terrace: Early Summer Morning, the Seat of William Moffatt*, painted in 1826 by Turner, and acquired by Samuel Mendel soon after 1864. (Frick Collection, New York)

Liverpool, he moved to Manchester, where he created a very successful textile business, exporting cotton and other goods overseas to India, China and South America. He built Manley Hall in Manchester, which was surrounded by 80 acres of gardens, with artificial lakes and many greenhouses containing exotic plants. In the 1850s and 1860s he bought pictures, mostly through the firm of Thomas Agnew & Sons, originally based in Manchester: their London branch did not open until 1860. But in the 1870s Mendel ran into financial difficulties, partly through over-buying and partly as a result of the opening of the Suez Canal and the effect of the American Civil War on the cotton business. He eventually went bankrupt in 1875.

Christie's conducted the sale of his collections: this occupied 21 days, of which no fewer than five days were needed to dispose of his vast cellar of dozens of cases of sherry, port, Madeira, claret, burgundy, hock, champagne, brandy and various liqueurs. There were large quantities of fashionable engravings after Reynolds and Turner, silver, silver-gilt, carvings, porcelain, statuary and other works of art, but attention was focussed on his pictures and drawings.

Works by Royal Academicians, much admired at the time, crowd the sale catalogue, which is a veritable roll-call of famous Victorian artists, including Callcott, Collins, Ety, Frith, Landseer, Leighton, Leslie, Maclise, Millais and Roberts; but most celebrated of all were his Turners. One of the loveliest was *Mortlake Terrace: Early Summer Morning, the Seat of William Moffatt*, painted in 1826, and acquired by Mendel soon after 1864, (Plate 6) and sold to Agnews privately in 1873 (Frick Collection, New York). Turner's *Venice from the Porch of the Madonna della Salute*, painted in 1835, was the final lot on the last day of the 1875 sale. The 1st Earl of Dudley competed with Agnew for it, but lost to Agnew, who paid 7000 guineas for it. Then Lord Dudley bought it from the dealer for a 10 per cent advance. The picture was bequeathed in 1899 by Cornelius Vanderbilt to the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

According to George Redford, writing in 1888, 'Mendel made no pretensions to being a great connoisseur and did not collect works of art as a pursuit. He found himself a rich man and saw that other rich men in business, successful like himself, were displaying their wealth by buying pictures at high prices and making their dwelling houses as magnificent with works of modern art as the aristocracy had always done with the pictures by the old masters.'⁶ This judgement may appear harsh, but it is probably accurate. Mendel did not give commissions to artists or buy at auction: instead he relied heavily on Agnew's for his pictures, so Mendel's collection bore not his own character but that of Thomas Agnew & Sons Ltd.

So far we have considered individual Jewish collectors in a roughly chronological sequence. The collections of Gideon, Bernal and Mendel were broadly similar to those of contemporaries and no specifically Jewish character to their collecting can be discerned. The Rothschilds are uniquely *sui generis* and belong in an elevated class of collectors of their own.

From the 1880s onwards, however, the story ceases to be a chain of individuals in sequence, and becomes one of groups, often linked by blood or by business activity. Most notable are the bankers: Henry Louis Bischoffsheim of Bischoffsheim & Goldschmidt employed the young Ernest Cassel as manager. They were related by blood or by marriage to many families, such as Stern, de Worms, Hirsch and Rothschild. Henry de Worms (1840–1903) 1st and last Lord Pirbright was the great-grandson of Mayer Amschel Rothschild. The Stern Brothers bank was led by Sydney Stern (1845–1912), 1st and last Lord Wandsworth, and his cousin Sir Herbert Stern (1851–1919), 1st Lord

6. George Redford, *Art Sales, A History of Sales of Pictures and Other Works of Art, 1628–1887* (London, 1888) 1:200.

Michelham, who lived at Strawberry Hill and in great style in houses in 20 Arlington Street in London and 23 Rue Nitot in Paris, in full Duveen taste. Lord Michelham's owned Lawrence's famous *Portrait of Mary Moulton Barrett*, better known as *Pinkie* (Huntington Art Gallery, San Marino, California) and Romney's *Portrait of Anne, Lady de la Pole* (Museum of Fine Art, Boston). Other bankers who formed collections include Samuel Montagu, 1st Lord Swaythling, and Marcus Samuel, 1st Viscount Bearsted. The Randalords constitute another group: Alfred Beit and Sir Joseph Robinson will be considered here, but Sir Lionel Philips, Sir Max Michaelis and Sir Frederick Eckstein also formed collections.

One leading collector of old-master paintings was Ludwig Mond (1839–1909), chemist and industrialist. He created an outstanding collection with the help of Jean Paul Richter, an art historian and dealer who was an expert in the Italian Renaissance. Mond, who formed his collection in the 1880s and 1890s, wanted paintings worthy of a public gallery, and the quality of his pictures was prodigious. Most were Italian. The world of Florence is vividly evoked by his two Spalliera panels, painted by Sandro Botticelli in about 1500: *Four Scenes From the Early Life of Saint Zenobius* and *Three Miracles of Saint Zenobius*. It was in 1855 that Sir Charles Eastlake acquired the first Botticelli for the National Gallery, the studio *Virgin and Child* tondo, although he bought it as a Ghirlandaio. The great *Mars and Venus* (National Gallery, London) was purchased in Florence in the 1860s by Alexander Barker, one of the most interesting but least-known collectors of the period. By the 1860s the momentum of the enthusiasm for Botticelli was gaining ground, and from the 1880s onwards the artist had become a cult figure and a touchstone of taste, where the Pagan and Christian could co-exist with what John Addington Symonds called 'the echo of a beautiful lapsed mythology'.⁷

In the two-volume catalogue of Mond's collection, published posthumously in 1910, nearly all the first volume describes works by Venetian artists, but his pictures from the Florentine, Umbrian, Milanese, Bolognese and Ferrarese schools were no less remarkable. His picture by Raphael, now known as the *Mond Crucifixion*, is one of the artist's earliest works, painted when he was about twenty. (Plate 7) Richter bought it for Mond at the sale of Lord Dudley's pictures in 1892. Mond generously left forty paintings to the National Gallery in London, among which (in addition to the Raphael) are Palma Vecchio's *Blonde Woman*, Titian's *Madonna and Child* and Fra Bartolommeo's *Virgin*

7. John Addington Symonds *History of the Renaissance in Italy*. Vol. III The Fine Arts (Smith, Elder and Co., 1904) 182.



7. *The Mond Crucifixion*, an early work by Raphael, bought by Ludwig Mond in 1892 at the sale of pictures belonging to the Earl of Dudley. (National Gallery, London)

and *Child with Saint Joseph*. He also owned Ludovico Mazzolino's *The Tribute Money* (Art Gallery, Christ Church, Oxford) and Giovanni Bellini's *Virgin and Child* painted in the late 1460s to early 1470s (accepted by the Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax from the estate of Lord Clark of Saltwood and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum, 1987).

The Randlords represent a group of collectors who exemplify the plutocratic excess of the Edwardian era. Their fortunes derived from the goldfields and diamond mines of South Africa, and most were Jewish, but not all: Sir Julius Wernher was Protestant. Sir Joseph Robinson took a lease on Dudley House in Park Lane and filled it with expensive old-master paintings, particularly French eighteenth-century works by Boucher, but also by Gainsborough, Reynolds, Romney, Frans Hals and Rembrandt. Among contemporaries he favoured



8. *Otto Beit in his Study at Belgrave Square*, 1913, by Sir William Orpen. (Johannesburg Art Gallery)

John Phillip and Landseer. Alfred Beit (1853–1906) was his partner on the Randfontein gold mines, but dissolved the partnership because of Robinson's temper and disagreeable business manner. Lloyd George's nomination of Robinson for a peerage in 1922 caused a debate in the House of Lords, and the heavily adverse publicity led Robinson to write to the Prime Minister to decline the honour.

Alfred Beit, a more sophisticated collector, sought advice from the celebrated German curator and scholar, Wilhelm von Bode, who in return received donations to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin. Beit favoured

Dutch seventeenth-century paintings and owned many wonderful examples: Rembrandt's *Portrait of a Man* (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia), Vermeer's *Lady Writing a Letter*, Ruisdael's *Castle at Bentheim* and a series of six canvases depicting the *Parable of the Prodigal Son* by Murillo (all in the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin). A bachelor, on his death Alfred bequeathed his collection to his brother, Sir Otto Beit (1865–1930), who was painted by Sir William Orpen in 1913 in his study at 49 Belgrave Square, surrounded by the six paintings by Murillo, and some of his Italian Renaissance bronzes above the bookcase and below the pictures. (Plate 8) Otto Beit added important works by Raeburn, Reynolds and Gainsborough, as well as Goya's *Portrait of Doña Antonia Zárate*. Although Bode failed to interest Beit in Italian Renaissance painting, he formed a superb collection of bronzes and maiolica. Sir Otto's son, Sir Alfred, removed the greater part of the collection to Russborough, Co Wicklow, and bequeathed seventeen of the greatest paintings to the National Gallery of Ireland (including works by Velázquez, Goya, Vermeer, Metsu, Ruisdael, Murillo, Gainsborough and Raeburn) and the remainder of the collection and the house to the Alfred Beit Foundation.

Henry Louis Bischoffsheim (1829–1909), of the London branch of Bischoffsheim and Goldschmidt, bankers, acquired Bute House in South Audley Street in 1872. (Plate 9) He was related by marriage to Maurice de Hirsch, who also worked in the bank, which earned a huge fortune in railway promotion and speculation in sugar and cotton shares. It is interesting to note that Ernest Cassel started his road to riches as a manager at this bank, allowing Bischoffsheim to semi-retire in 1878. His wife, Clarissa, née Biedermann, was painted by Sir John Everett Millais in 1873. Bischoffsheim displayed his French furniture amid the familiar Rothschildian mixture of French and English eighteenth-century pictures, but the masterpiece of his collection, installed in the ceiling at Bute House by 1876, was Giambattista Tiepolo's *Allegory with Venus and Time*, a shaped canvas, painted in the late 1750s, for the ceiling of an unidentified palace belonging to the Contarini family. The painting remained disregarded in Bute House, which later became the Egyptian Embassy. Re-discovered in 1969 by the art dealer David Carritt (1927–82) still set in the ceiling, the Egyptian Government sent it to auction, where it was acquired by the National Gallery, London. It is the only large-scale picture by this artist in the United Kingdom, and can convey to the visitor a sense of a ceiling or fresco cycle by Tiepolo of the sort that one can see in Venice, Würzburg or Madrid.

In the first half of the twentieth century the habit of collecting old masters on a grand scale declined in Britain and moved to America. Nevertheless,



9. *Allegory of Venus and Time* by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, acquired by Henry Louis Bischoffsheim who installed it in a ceiling at Bute House, South Audley Street. (National Gallery, London)

some interesting collections were formed. Non-Jewish collectors include Henry Lascelles, later 6th Earl of Harewood at Harewood House in Yorkshire; Clive Pearson, younger son of the 1st Viscount Cowdray at Parham in Sussex; Lord Lee of Fareham at Chequers and Avening; and Captain George Spencer-Churchill at Northwick Park in Gloucestershire. Walter Samuel, 2nd Viscount Bearsted (1882–1948), who inherited a fortune from his father, the founder of Shell Petroleum, collected in this tradition. In 1922 he bought his country house, Upton in Warwickshire, which he filled with treasures before finally bequeathing it to the National Trust. The taste is toned-down Rothschild, with Dutch paintings, English eighteenth-century portraits, sporting art, and eighteenth-century Sèvres, Vincennes, Chelsea and Bow porcelain. The choice

of painters is revealing: quintessentially English pictures by Hogarth, Stubbs, Romney and Ben Marshall were hung alongside the works of artists far more rarely seen in English country houses, including Tintoretto, El Greco, Holbein, Pieter Breughel, Hieronymus Bosch, Memling, Metsu and Saenredam.

I should here note that in general the first generation of British collectors, whether Jewish or not, were slow to come to terms with Impressionism. The pioneers were Captain Hill of Brighton, Sir Hugh Lane, the Welsh sisters Gwendoline and Margaret Davies and Samuel Courtauld. It has been noted that in the main the taste of Jewish collectors went in parallel to their contemporaries, and British Jewish collectors of the nineteenth century were not quicker to buy Impressionist pictures, in which they differed from their Continental European contemporaries.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, we observe two trends. Collecting becomes increasingly specialized, and the focus on the decorative arts becomes more intense. The reasons are easy to understand. The price of old-master paintings was becoming prohibitive to all but the richest individuals, and the relative trend to living in smaller houses had an influence too. The greatest specialist collector of the time was not Jewish. Lady Charlotte Schreiber formed a comprehensive collection of English pottery and porcelain from all the chief factories. In 1884 she gave the English part of her collections to the V&A, where it remains the cornerstone of the national collection of English ceramics.

Collectors with more modest incomes but scholarly leanings have traditionally sought out less crowded areas of the market in which to collect. Sir Isidore Spielmann (1854–1925), who collected Delftware, is an example. He fills a special role for me, since he was my maternal great-grandfather. He can be contrasted with the Montefiores, who were much richer, but who sadly lacked aesthetic discrimination and failed to buy any decent pictures or works of art. An engineer, Spielmann was knighted for his services in organizing exhibitions, such as the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition of 1887 and the British fine-art sections of the exhibitions in Paris, Rome, St Louis and elsewhere. In 1904 he was a co-founder of the National Art Collections Fund ('Art Fund') and remained its honorary secretary until his death in 1925. The dining room at his house at 56 Westbourne Terrace was embellished with Spanish leather wall coverings and some of his collection of Delftware. (Plate 10)

He bequeathed his best pieces to the Victoria & Albert Museum. These included a large flower pyramid made c. 1695 for John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, when Earl of Marlborough, whose arms and motto appear on



10. *The Dining Room at 56 Westbourne Terrace, showing some of Sir Isidore Spielmann's collection of Delftware. (Author's collection)*

the base; a tin-glazed Delft earthenware dish and another dish with a mounted figure in armour seated on a rearing horse inscribed MH/ 1669, probably made at Rotherhithe. I suspect that there were many small and specialist collections like this in London and elsewhere, made by professional, knowledgeable individuals who loved art, but which were not bequeathed to public museums and therefore remain unrecorded.

Here it is convenient to mention the important role played by antique and curiosity dealers, many of whom were Jewish. Samuel Moses Mawson (1793–1862) acted as agent in London to the 4th Marquess of Hertford who lived in Paris. He viewed auctions, advised Lord Hertford and bid on his behalf. A fascinating book containing the correspondence between Hertford and Mawson was published by the Wallace Collection in 1981.⁸ John Coleman Isaac (c. 1803–87) was a leading dealer and counted among his clients the Duke of Rutland, Lords Brougham, Breadalbane and Shrewsbury, Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick, Ralph Bernal, Hollingworth Magniac and members of the Rothschild family. John Ingamells (ed.) *The Hertford Mawson Letters* (London, Wallace Collection, 1981).

family. Murray Marks (1840–1918) was one of the best-known of the next generation, who specialized in bronzes and Chinese blue and white porcelain. His trade card, depicting a blue-and-white jar, was designed apparently by Rossetti, Whistler and William Morris. He often sold objects to and bid at auction for the V&A Museum to which he also made many donations.

If the collecting of Judaica is taken to include Hebrew manuscripts and printed books, it may be noted that the Bodleian Library received its earliest Hebrew manuscripts in 1601 and that its first library catalogue, of 1605, contained 58 Hebrew books, mostly printed in Venice. Sir Thomas Bodley himself corrected, in Latin, some misprints in the Hebrew printing. But these antiquarian observations fall outside the scope of this study, which is to examine Jewish British art collectors.

In 1887 the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition was shown at the Royal Albert Hall, London. Conceived on a vast scale, with over 2600 exhibits, it covered title deeds and other documents, paintings, works of art for the synagogue and the home, antiquities, coins and medals. Bevis Marks Synagogue, the Great Synagogue, the Ramsgate and other synagogues lent generously, implying that religious art was not yet actively collected by individuals. The chief private lenders included Dr Adler, the Chief Rabbi; Mr H. Guedalla of 30 Connaught Square; Samuel Montagu MP, of 12 Kensington Palace Gardens; Joseph Sassoon of Ashley Park, Surrey; Israel Solomons of 108 Belgrave Road, Birmingham; Isidore Spielmann then of 3 Westbourne Terrace; and Lucien Wolf of 49 Lanark Villas, Maida Vale. Several members of the Cohen, Franklin, Goldsmid, Jacobs, Joseph, Levy, Lewis, Montefiore and Rothschild families also contributed loans. Philip Salomons (1796–1867), the elder brother of Sir David Salomons, who lived in Brighton, collected Judaica, but his heirs made no loans.

The study of old-master drawings is at the top end of connoisseurship: as they are frequently unsigned, the identification of the artist and subject will appeal to the collector with a scholarly eye. The tradition of collecting drawings is long established in the United Kingdom, and one of the earliest collections was made by the painter Sir Peter Lely, whose possessions were dispersed by auction in 1682. The 2nd Duke of Devonshire (1673–1729) assembled the glorious collection of drawings at Chatsworth which, along with the Royal Collection, is one of the finest and most extensive in Europe. The nineteenth-century collections of Sir Thomas Lawrence (dispersed in the 1840s) and of John Malcolm (bought for the British Museum in 1895) are also legendary.

The greatest Jewish collector of drawings was Henry Oppenheimer (1859–1932). Born in Washington DC, he trained in Frankfurt and became a



11. *Rider with a Rearing Horse* drawn by Leonardo da Vinci, from the collections of Sir Peter Lely, the Earls of Pembroke and Henry Oppenheimer. (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge)

partner in the banking house Speyer Brothers, from which he resigned at the outbreak of the First World War. Initially he bought small Greek and Egyptian antiquities, Renaissance medals and jewellery, enamels, metal-work, ivories and maiolica, but his purchase in 1912 of a large number of drawings from John Postle Heseltine made that part of his collection predominant. Oppenheimer owned important Italian drawings by Leonardo, Michelangelo, Carpaccio, Canaletto and an important group by Rembrandt.

These collections were sold by Christie's in July 1936 in two sales, each of three days: that of some 700 drawings sold in 460 lots and that of the decorative arts consisted of 349 lots. The *Portrait of an Ecclesiastic* by Jean Fouquet, of c. 1461 fetched the top price of 10,200 guineas (£10,710), paid by the dealer Joseph Duveen. Contemporary newspaper reports describe this lot as the 'sensation of the sale', as it was a new record for a drawing in any sale room. The provenance of the drawing was excellent, having been sold in 1693 at the auction in London of the painter Prosper Henry Lankrink, whose collector's mark 'PHL' is visible at the bottom right-hand corner. The drawing was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum, New York, in 1949.

Oppenheimer also owned Leonardo da Vinci's *Rider with a Rearing Horse*, (Plate 11) which belonged to Sir Peter Lely, whose mark 'PL' is visible at the

foot, and then to the Earls of Pembroke. The drawing was acquired in 1999 through a hybrid acceptance in lieu transaction by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Sir Robert Mond (1867–1938) was the elder son of Ludwig Mond and worked in the family business. He noted that his father's fine pictures brought him 'into contact with the love and study of the Old Masters' and wrote that it was in Rome that he 'learned to appreciate the importance of drawings, and even of their copies, as the raw material for works of art. The successive steps, by which the artist precised his conceptions, moulded the composition and the individual figures into the desired harmony, and gradually overcame such difficulties as presented themselves stand revealed, and help us both to appreciate and sympathise with him in his constant struggle for perfection.' This is an eloquent and professional explanation of the intellectual pleasure of collecting drawings. He bought a substantial portion of the collection of drawings formed by Sir John Charles Robinson after the death in 1913 of his son Charles Newton Robinson, and in 1937 his collection, then numbering 500 drawings, was catalogued by Tancred Borenius. Guercino's *The Raising of Lazarus* and Rembrandt's *Study of Two Actors* can serve as examples.

Robert Mond's younger brother Alfred (1868–1930), created 1st Lord Melchett in 1928, also worked in the family business, but was additionally a Liberal MP and Cabinet minister. As neither son could match the high quality of their father's Italian paintings, they applied themselves in different areas: Robert collected drawings and Egyptian artefacts, while Alfred focussed on Greek and Roman sculpture, both marbles and bronzes. Interestingly, several of Alfred's pieces also derived from Sir John Charles Robinson's collection, so it appears that the brothers co-operated and did not compete.

The masterpiece in his collection was *The Hope Hygieia*, a marble of the second century CE excavated at Ostia in 1797 and acquired by Thomas Hope, after whom the statue is named. (Plate 12) Hope kept it as part of his famed collection, first at his famous neo-classical house in Duchess Street and then at the Deepdene in Surrey. The Hope marbles were sold in 1917. Acting for Mond, Spink paid 4000 guineas for the *Hygieia*. When the piece was sold at Lord Melchett's posthumous sale of 1936 it fetched only 570 guineas, a price which demonstrates the dramatic change in taste of a later generation. It was acquired by William Randolph Hearst and now belongs to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Samuel Montagu, 1st Lord Swaythling (1832–1911), born Montagu Samuel, was the son of Louis Samuel, a Liverpool watchmaker who as well as founding



12. *The Hope Hygieia* was the masterpiece of Alfred Mond's collection, excavated at Ostia in 1797 and acquired by Thomas Hope. (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California)

his eponymous merchant bank, served as Liberal MP for Whitechapel for fifteen years. He formed a collection of English pictures which included Constable's *Stratford Mill on the Stour*, two grand landscapes by Gainsborough, and Dutch seventeenth-century works by Hobbema, de Hooch, Jacob van Ruisdael and Jan

Steen. As befits the son of a watchmaker, he also collected silver and possessed excellent examples, including a Tudor Cup of silver-gilt, shaped as a font and hallmarked London 1500; a circular French renaissance silver-gilt, embossed, chased and engraved basin made around 1560 (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge); a silver-gilt ewer hallmarked London 1583–4 (Victoria & Albert Museum); and a candelabrum made by Paul de Lamerie hallmarked 1731–2, engraved with the crest of Sir Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford (Victoria & Albert Museum). In his love of the decorative arts, Swaythling shared the taste of immigrant collectors like Otto Beit, Sir Julius Wernher and Sir Ernest Cassel.

In the period between the wars the supreme man of taste was Sir Philip Sassoon (1888–1939), whose various houses became centres of fashion and political gossip. Ronald Fleming described Sassoon's London house in Park Lane as having 'the atmosphere of the palace of a wealthy pasha combined with the meticulous taste and connoisseurship of an artistic aristocrat'.⁹ He combined French decorative arts and eighteenth-century English paintings, particularly conversation-pieces. At Port Lympne in Kent he wallowed in the modish retro-modernism of Glyn Philpot, Sargent and Rex Whistler. Sassoon commissioned Sargent to paint his portrait and Rex Whistler to paint murals in the *Tent Room* at Port Lympne. He bought English conversation pieces, including (in 1927) Gainsborough's *Portrait of the Artist with his Wife and Daughter*, which passed to the National Gallery in 1994.

The taste for collecting Chinese ceramics began in the late seventeenth century, but between the wars the number of British collectors and their discrimination dramatically increased and these led the world in this field of collecting. The first president of the Oriental Ceramic Society, founded in 1921, was George Eumorfopoulos (1863–1939), a collector of Greek origin who worked for the trading company, Ralli Brothers, whose collection was bought jointly by the British Museum and the V&A in 1935.

In 1935 the Oriental Ceramic Society mounted an International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London. The main lender was Sir Percival David, a cousin of the Sassoons, who was born in Bombay in 1892 and died in London in 1964. The giant among British collectors of Chinese ceramics, David formed a scholarly collection of flawless Imperial-quality Song ceramics from the tenth to twelfth centuries. The monochrome perfection of Songwares became the classic taste among serious collectors of the time, but David was also a pioneer of blue-and-white Ming, so popular with American collectors of the next generation,

9. Quoted Peter Stansky, *Sassoon* (Yale, 2003) 185.

eventually owning 1700 pieces. He collected works similar to those found in the Imperial Chinese Collection, which provided the lodestar of his taste. Indeed, many of his treasures may have originally come from the Imperial Collection, but provenance was rarely recorded in those days. In 1931 he established a chair of Chinese Art and Archaeology at the University of London, to which he gave his collection in 1950. It was housed in Gordon Square until its transfer to the British Museum in 2009.

What conclusions can we draw from this survey, and do differences exist between the way Jews and non-Jews collect? I have shown that the study of the Hebrew language was common to both. For example the *Blickling Haggadah*, painted in 1740 by Joseph ben David of Leipnik, in the present day Czech Republic, is thought to have reached the library of Blickling Hall, Norfolk, today a National Trust house, as early as 1742 as a bequest to the Hobarts by Sir Richard Ellys of Nocton (1682–1742). But the study of Hebrew books and manuscripts is a more intellectual or academic activity and is different from the aesthetic or emotional response we generally associate with 'collecting'.

This examination of Jewish British art collectors suggests an inescapable conclusion. Collectors within the same generation collected broadly similar works of art, irrespective of faith, so we cannot say that divisions of faith have any bearing on the way people collected. However, Kenneth Clark interestingly observed in his autobiography how 'The great collections were not formed by bargain-hunters. In our youth, it was customary for Christian collectors to boast of how little they had paid for their prizes. "Picked it up for a few coppers", was the usual phrase. Jewish collectors on the other hand, were proud to tell one what sacrifices they had made to obtain their treasures ... There can be no doubt which of these two standpoints denotes the greater love of art.'¹⁰ If this is the difference, it is an honourable one.

10. Kenneth Clark, *Another Part of the Wood* (London, 1974) 193–4.



1. Turkish soldiers at the Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem.

Two Jewish Soldiers in the Ottoman Army

Professor Glenda Abramson¹

Little has been written about the Jewish experience in the First World War, perhaps because it has been so greatly overshadowed by the Second World War and the Holocaust. Yet the scale of Jewish suffering in Europe, while not genocidal in scale, was nonetheless great, and the hardship in Palestine profound. This remains virtually unknown, however, other than to those acquainted with Hebrew or Yiddish.

Almost a million and a quarter Jewish soldiers served in the armies on both sides, in numbers more or less in proportion to the Jewish populations of the countries involved, and sometimes even greater.

1. This paper marks the publication of Professor Abramson's recent book, *Soldiers' Tales: Two Palestinian Jewish Soldiers in the Ottoman Army* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2013).

The First World War in the Yishuv

When Turkey joined the Central Powers in October 1914, the situation in Ottoman lands, including Palestine and in Jerusalem, rapidly deteriorated. The Ottoman Empire was in no condition to fight after its losses in the Balkan wars, but the Sultan nevertheless officially declared holy war, *jihad*.

This thrust the Jewish settlement in Palestine into an unprecedented crisis. Contemporary documents, telegrams and newspaper reports convey the sense of panic and despair. The *Jewish Chronicle* was told how:

The terrible danger, together with grief at the events in Europe and the uncertainty of the whole situation, has created great agitation. There is much praying among the followers of all religions, special fast days are ordered and in some very Orthodox quarters of Jerusalem the exaltation of feelings has risen to a point where the people expect the destruction of the whole universe and the coming of the Messiah. The eclipse of the sun which was observed the other day, served still further to rouse the superstitious feelings of Jews and non-Jews who saw it a sign from heaven.²

The crisis emerged from the war situation itself and the consequent almost complete loss of contact with Europe and America, and from the growing Turkish hostility towards the local Jewish population in the belief, not entirely unfounded, that Zionists supported the enemy. Once Turkey entered the war all financial credit ceased, leading to a total cessation of trade and a crisis of labour. Unemployment grew and food became scarce, leading to starvation in many quarters. Some servicemen's wives are reported to have walked into the sea with their children rather than starve slowly to death. Medical services were disrupted as hospitals closed due to the blocking of funding from abroad, and there was an acute shortage of medical supplies, leading to increased illness and death.

To exacerbate an already desperate situation, from March to October 1915 the Middle East was visited by a locust plague of biblical proportions.

Two Jewish Soldiers

Until 1909 only Muslims were subject to conscription in the Ottoman army, and had to serve for years in appalling conditions often in remote corners of

2. 'The War and Palestine'. Interview for the *Jewish Chronicle*, London, with Mr David Levontin. n.d. CZA A34/112. Levontin was one of the Directors of the Anglo-Palestine Company, which functioned as a bank. The solar eclipse took place on 21 August 1914.

the Empire. Jews and Christians were expected to pay the military exemption tax, *bedel*, a lump sum based on the reported number of men in the community. In 1909 military service was made compulsory for all male Ottoman subjects of a certain age. For Ottoman Jewish communities before the War universal conscription became a token of support for the Empire and for the participation of non-Moslems in the new Ottoman body politic. But even in the First World War non-Muslim private soldiers, unlike officers, were conscripted into support units rather than combat battalions. Compulsory conscription now applied also to foreign Jews in Palestine, who had chosen or were forced to become Ottoman citizens in order to be allowed to remain there. Those who refused Ottomanization were returned to their own countries, which for Russian Jewish immigrants meant immediate service in the Czar's forces.

From 1914 few options remained for those who wished to avoid army service. Jews could engage in peripheral labour and receive certificates of exemption from army service; or they could attempt to evade military-police searches. Under the rule of Ahmed Jemal Pasha, the Military Governor of Syria and Palestine, deserters faced execution, yet many men deserted nonetheless. In the chaos of the Turkish administration their chances of being caught and hanged seemed less than almost certain death in an army labour camp.

The main reason for avoiding military service was that once the Turks had pronounced the conflict to be a *jihad*, holy war, Christian and Jewish soldiers were removed from military units and many sent to *tawabeer al-amale*, labour battalions. Military histories almost completely overlook these *amale* battalions, yet there are a few personal records of life in these battalions, which comprised between 70 and 120 units. Their central purpose was to free regular Turkish soldiers for action at the fronts. *Amale* units performed a range of services, the most important being road construction and repair, laying railway tracks, filling sandbags, laying water pipes and construction. Soldiers designated for these units were considered to be of the lowest status in an army already divided by class and nationality. The Jewish contingents included those whose poverty made it impossible to pay the ransom, as well as middle-class Jews who had the means but for some reason had failed to obtain the correct certificates of exemption. Men who could not pay a ransom were sent to the *amale* battalions, to suffer backbreaking toil in Beersheba, the Sinai desert or the distant expanses of Anatolia and the Dardanelles.

Thirteen of the Labour battalions were assigned to combat the locust infestation of 1915. Pack animals, primarily camels, were scarce, so large quantities of supplies had to be carried on the backs of soldiers in Labour battalions. Poor

living conditions, disease, hunger, thirst and the trials of the journey caused many fatalities. The men were given a minimum of atrocious food and in all weathers slept without bedding in the open air, in summer beneath a burning sun and in winter under rain and cold by day and night. Descriptions of the treatment of these soldiers resemble descriptions of what took place in the Armenian units. Jerusalem-born Yehuda Burla, later a leading Israeli writer, was sent to one of these camps before finding an easier role as interpreter to a German officer. He writes:

Ten by ten the labourers pass by. They walk with faltering steps, there is no sound of life in this camp. Soldiers, in a manner of speaking, covered in rags, without the merest sign of a uniform; their heads are bent, their faces thin – fragments of human beings with the marks of misery and humiliation on their faces ... these are the comrades of those drowned in the floods, suffering from typhus ... and here – this is the place of horror and evil that people talk about in the cities in fear and trembling – the Amaliyah [*sic*] Centre, as this sixth centre is known, barren, black of fortune ... and this is where the train goes, the rails laid by the human casualties, victims of hunger, disease...³

Two Sephardi Jewish soldiers from the 'Old *Yishuv*', the settlement that predated the Zionist waves of immigration, set down their experiences in the Ottoman army, first in Palestine and then in the Anatolian territories in which they served either in Labour battalions, or in non-combat units very similar to them. Yehuda Amon, born in Jerusalem, wrote a diary or memoir comprising 1100 pages of Sephardi Hebrew handwriting, while Haim Nahmias, an emigrant from Monastir, Macedonia, wrote a shorter journal in Ladino, which was later translated into Hebrew. Nahmias hid in Jerusalem from the authorities for the first two years of the war, but in 1917 his wife fell ill and died, and while emerging from hiding for the *shiva* he was caught and conscripted. Like Amon, he travelled by train, often in cattle cars, to Turkey's western provinces where he and his comrades were moved from camp to camp and engaged in menial labour.

War diaries differ considerably from traditional daily journals. The primary impulse of their authors is to provide testimony and witness; to record experience for the larger community; to serve as a memorial to the diarists' comrades; and as a mark of the diarists' striving to retain meaning in life and personal

3. Yehuda Burla, *Bli kokhav. Sippurei milhamah* (Tel-Aviv: Devar-Massada, n.d.) p. 189; ellipses in the original.



2. Yehuda Amon of Jerusalem, unwilling soldier and powerful diarist in richly literary Hebrew.

3. A page of Yehuda Amon's diary, showing his fine Sephardi cursive script.

identity in the direst circumstances. In his diary, Nahmias implores the 'Holy One, Blessed Be He, to return me soon to my children and my friends, [so that I can] tell them of my experiences'.⁴

As the historian Erik Zürcher observes, there is a wealth of source material about the First World War in Europe, written both by men who served on the battlefield, and by civilians working for the war effort on the home fronts. These comprise letters, postcards, diaries, stories, poems and paintings. But there are few comparable writings from soldiers serving in the Ottoman armies, since most common soldiers were illiterate. A decade after the war only 10.6 per cent of the entire Turkish population was able to read and write. It was therefore common for Ottoman soldiers to leave little in terms of 'written monuments'.⁵

Literacy among Jews in the Ottoman army was much higher than among common Turkish soldiers, but memoirs and diaries even by Jewish conscripts in the Ottoman army are rare, unlike the comparative wealth of memoirs and

4. Hayim Nahmias, *Yoman 1917–1918* [Diary 1917–1918]. Trans. into Hebrew from Ladino by Avner Perez (Ma'ale Adumim, 2004). (Italics mine, G.A.)

5. See Erik Zürcher, 'Between Death and Desertion: The Experience of the Ottoman Soldier in World War I', *Turcica* 28 (1996) 236.

letters by Jewish officers in the training centres of Istanbul and Baalbek. The voice of Ottoman ordinary soldiers – Jews, Muslims and Christians – has so far remained largely unheard. The discovery of these two diarists, Nahmias and Amon, is therefore of profound importance for our understanding not only of the Jewish experience in Palestine and the Ottoman forces, but of life in the lowest ranks in the army. The writing of these two men, who could quote long passages from the Hebrew Bible and other sources in Hebrew and Aramaic, indicates that they were literate in more than one language. They were religiously observant, without being particularly pious. But despite their erudition in Jewish sources, they were comparatively unsophisticated and unworldly, ordinary men thrust into a life they could never have imagined. Their diaries record events as they experienced them, without commenting on the broader political or cultural picture.

A strong composite picture nonetheless emerges from these diaries about daily life in the Ottoman army in Western Anatolia: its routines, personnel, relationships, weaponry and food, most often the lack of it. Amon's diary shows in particular how the Ottoman army was disintegrating: food and clothing were scarce, transport was primitive and inefficient, discipline was random and desertion destructive for battalions behind the lines. He makes it clear that all the 'races', as he calls them, suffered equally. Men were treated no better than beasts of burden; indeed, animals were more precious to the army than the men.

An unending trial borne by both diarists was the cruelty of their immediate superiors towards the men as they built roads, laid tracks or felled trees. The officers remained fairly remote from the activities of the NCOs, but the corporals and sergeants seemed to have had free rein with the men, including the right to steal their belongings. Severe beatings were commonplace for minor offences, and a pervasive theme in both diaries is the frequency of harsh punishment – the only method tried, it seems, to instil discipline in the army. Ordinary Turkish soldiers suffered as badly as the Jews, Christians and Kurds, and like them were hungry, insufficiently clothed and at the mercy of their superiors' cruelty.

In Nahmias's camp the men appear to have shifted stones in order to make rain-soaked ground passable, and to have marched carrying bricks, lengths of rope and rolls of heavy barbed wire on their backs. Those suffering from disease or injury were forced to continue work with their weighty loads. Most of the Jews had only the clothes in which they had left home. From time to time, after exhausting days of toil, the men would be forced to remain on their feet for

hours to sing the praises of the Sultan. Often, too tired after days of marching and labour even to care about the lice that oppressed them almost as much as their taskmasters, they were permitted no rest, but immediately marched to local train stations to continue the journey. The cost of transporting thousands of exhausted, weakened, ill, hungry and thirsty men across Western Turkey must have been a drain on the resources of an already embattled empire.

The diaries show how Amon and Nahmias developed mechanisms for survival. Nahmias, a gentle man, suffered conditions even more severe than those of Amon. Although both men, Sephardi members of the 'Old *Yishuv*', were observant Orthodox Jews from Jerusalem, each encountered and adjusted to modernity in its most extreme forms, including the technology of war – trains, bombs and aircraft – and the modern urban environment.

These diaries offer the 'truth' of two individual soldiers' war, allowing us perhaps a more profound insight than the mere 'facts' of the war could do. They also offer an awareness of the role of individual narratives within a larger historical record.

Teaching the Jewish Book: Some Reflections on Doing it at the Bodleian

Professor David Stern
University of Pennsylvania

Despite being known as 'the people of the book', most Jews have been surprisingly oblivious to the book – that is, to the *material* book, the actual book, the physical artifact they hold in their hands. Yes, the religious and literary documents of Jewish tradition and culture have been studied since antiquity, but almost always as texts alone, constellations of verbal meaning, with an almost utter disregard, on the part of their readers, to how these texts were actually transcribed or to what the physical books conveying these texts look like. Indeed, that very obliviousness to material form may be the single lengthiest commonality in the history of Jewish reading. It is an unexamined assumption that has allowed generations of students and readers to connect almost viscerally with readers and students who lived and studied the same texts centuries earlier (albeit usually in a different material form). Precisely this obliviousness has enabled Jewish sages and students from the second century to the twenty-first to forge and participate in that great proverbial 'conversation' of texts that Jews have conducted since Moses received the Torah at Sinai.

Recent scholarship has alerted us, however, to the obvious but nonetheless profound insight that we do not read 'texts'. What we read are texts that have been inscribed on some type of writing material in a particular fashion. The writing-medium and the concrete specificity of its shape can vary: from a clay or wax tablet to a scroll or a codex (what we normally call a book), or to that other kind of tablet, made by Microsoft or Apple. The text on any one of these writing-mediums can be hand-written or printed; it can be illustrated with pictures or decorated with designs; accompanied by commentaries on the page or presented in its naked solitary splendour. Each of these modalities of a text's material transmission profoundly affects and shapes the ways we understand the words in a text. By 'understand', I mean not just interpret and explain their

meaning, but comprehend the place that the text inhabits in the world – its larger cultural, social, literary and religious significance.

These insights into the relationship between text and materiality have arisen largely through a field of scholarship that has developed over the last half-century, under the title of ‘the history of the book’. To be sure, this scholarly interest is not new. Scholars have been studying the material history of texts in a distinctively modern, critical fashion at least since the nineteenth century, when analytic bibliography first emerged as a scholarly discipline. But the appearance in France in 1976 of Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin’s *L’apparition du Livre* (Paris, 1976) essentially introduced a new approach to book culture. This approach used the study of the book, initially in its printed form, as a window onto understanding the book as both an agent and mirror of historical change in the early and later modern periods. In relatively short order, this approach moved from print back to manuscript, and then from history to other disciplines, like the sociology of knowledge and literary approaches that looked at the complex relationship of text and inscription.

Concurrently, a sea-change was taking place in the study of the Jewish book. Here I am referring specifically to the pioneering, Columbus-like work of Malachi Beit-Arié and Colette Sirat over the past half-century on Jewish scribal culture, and the massive charting of Jewish manuscript production that has been accomplished through the Sfardata project. Sfardata is a monumental data-bank of signed, dated and localized Hebrew manuscripts produced before the year 1550, that has recorded every codicological and palaeographic fact that can be extracted from a manuscript, and on the basis of which other unsigned or undated or unlocalized manuscripts can also be identified. Although Sfardata is concerned exclusively with scribal culture and manuscripts, the practices and tendencies it has revealed can easily be extended to printed books as well.

These tendencies and practices can be summed up in two fundamental features of Jewish book culture that were previously unverifiable even if they were grasped in an impressionistic way. First, Sfardata has shown that Jewish book culture invariably reflects that of the host-culture in which the manuscript is produced. In the case of printed books, this is easily observable; Sfardata’s main contribution has been to show the extent to which it pervades Hebrew manuscript culture. Second, it is against this reflective backdrop that one can define the singular if not unique features of Jewish book culture – how Jewish scribes in fact differed from their gentile counterparts, and how manuscripts written in Hebrew script differ from non-Hebraic ones.

These features have two significant consequences. First, the tendency of the

Jewish book to reflect the larger host culture in which the book was produced has the effect of making the Jewish book into a kind of microcosm of the Western book in all its geo-cultural and historical varieties. Due to their worldwide dispersal, and because Jews have produced books in nearly every place in which they have lived, the Jewish book *in toto* may be said to reflect the entire world of the book in Western culture over the past thousand years. At the same time, the Jewish book possesses singular features which we might characterize as the *Jewishness* of the Jewish book, particularly in terms of its materiality. In this sense, *Jewishness* turns out to be an inscribed feature of that materiality, not an inherent quality of the texts in those books. And because that materiality changes from one geo-cultural centre to the next, and from one historical period to another, it now becomes possible to write a ‘literary history of the Jewish book’ (as opposed to the history of Jewish texts). This new history brings together the study of the text with the history of reading and reception as both are shaped by the book’s material form, and it uses the intersection between textuality and materiality – the two faces or aspects of the book – as a vantage-point for viewing the book’s position in Jewish culture. And most important of all, this approach studies the book as a ‘whole’ artifact. It makes sense of all the Jewish book’s elements – material and textual – as they relate to each other within that book’s place in the larger history of Jewish books. One reads the book at once as both text and artifact. And through that reading, one tries to find the meaning of the book in its totality – that is, the function, the value and the significance that these actual books possessed for the Jews who produced, owned, read and held them in their hands.

In May I presented the Catherine Lewis Master Classes at the Bodleian Library, a mini-course co-sponsored by the Centre for the Study of the Book at the Bodleian and the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, in which I explored with students these questions about the Jewish book. The course consisted of five classes over the course of a week, each class lasting approximately three hours. In this intense structure, I had the chance for the first time, not having taught such a course before, to put the ideas I have sketched above to the pedagogical test, to see if they made sense to students. Originally, I had intended to devote one class to each of five books – the *Sefer Torah* (Torah scroll), the Jewish Bible (that is, as a codex), the Babylonian Talmud, the *Siddur* and *Mahzor* (daily and holiday prayer books), and the Passover *Haggadah*; and to relate the story of each from the time of the formation of its text until today, to show how its meaning changed for its readers along with its material form. By the middle of the first class, however, I realized that I had been too ambitious

and, if lucky, I would be able to get through at most the Torah Scroll, Bible and Talmud. Not only was the story of each book too complex to complete in three hours, but my students and I had the great good fortune to be able to use in class the Bodleian's magnificent Hebraica collection, and to be able to study these books at leisure. The Bodleian owns what is arguably the greatest collection of Hebrew manuscripts and early printed books in the world, including many of the most celebrated manuscripts – Maimonides's autograph copy of the *Mishneh Torah*, the Kennicott Bible, as well as the Laud, Michaelis and Tripartite *Mahzorim*, to name just a few of its treasures. To be able to explore my ideas in class by looking at these books was like using a Rolls Royce to teach someone how to drive.¹

Within the limits of this short essay, it is impossible to convey in any detail the ideas I sought to demonstrate in class. What I can do briefly – through a few select illustrations – is show the different shapes that a single text like the Bible has taken in different geographical and historical contexts, and suggest the difference that this has made. In the Middle Ages there existed a number of different types of Bible – codices that include only the biblical text, sometimes in its entirety or with one or more of its main sections (the Pentateuch, Prophets and the Writings); liturgical Pentateuchs, or what we know as *humashim*, with the weekly Torah readings and *haftarot* from the prophets geared to synagogue use; and Bibles that were meant primarily for study, as evidenced by the presence of multiple commentaries on their pages. By recognizing these different genres of Bible, one begins to appreciate the different purposes that Bibles served for Jews in the Middle Ages, and in some cases still do today.

In the various geo-cultural centres Jews inhabited in the medieval and early modern periods, these different types of Bibles also took on distinct material shapes. The most visible of these differences can often be seen in the way the *Masorah* is recorded on their pages. The *Masorah* is a vast corpus of annotations to the biblical text that prescribes the correct way the text is to be written and pronounced, and that enumerates every unusual lexical, syntactic or orthographic feature of the biblical text. The *Masorah* appears to have taken

1. The reader interested in learning more about the riches of the Bodleian's Hebraica collection, and particularly its cross-cultural dimensions, should consult *Crossing Borders: Hebrew Manuscripts as a Meeting-Place of Cultures*, edited by Piet van Boxel, former Curator for Hebrew and Judaica of the Bodleian, and Sabine Arndt (Oxford: The Bodleian Library, 2010), a wonderful collection of essays which deal with many of the greatest Hebrew volumes in the library.

shape as a fixed corpus sometime before the eighth or ninth centuries – it is already recorded in the earliest surviving biblical codices (from the tenth and eleventh centuries) from the Near East – and by the Middle Ages it had become an almost necessary presence in many Hebrew Bibles, an element that had to be on the page even if it was not in practice read or used. Invariably, the *Masorah* was written in micrography, miniature writing, a feature that simultaneously visually distinguishes the *Masorah* on the page, and makes the task of reading it one requiring decided effort on the part of the reader. In fact, in many Bibles, the *Masorah* is all but unreadable, as can be seen in the following examples.

Plate 1 is a page from a liturgical Pentateuch written in Spain in 1480, on which the *Masorah* has been written in micrography on both the top and the bottom margins of the page in different designs: on the top of the writing-grid it is in the shape of a knotted braid; on the bottom, in three lines resting above an intricate vine-like micrographic design. In addition, on the lower-right-outer margin, more *masorah* appears in a floral shape that resembles an *ansa*, the ornamental chapter markers used in Qur'ans as well as in some Sephardi Bibles (even though there is no need for such a marker in this passage). As in other Bibles composed in lands which once had been part of the Islamic realm, the designs, which are nearly always geometric, architectural or floral, reflect the aversion of Islamic culture to representational figures. Even though this Bible was produced in Spain long after the Christians had conquered it, its material form still reflects the features of the Islamic book, a practice that may have signalled an attempt on the part of its scribe and patron to identify the book (and themselves) with those of the other minority culture in Christian Spain, the Mudejar Muslims. This strategy would have enabled them to differentiate the Jewish Bible from its Christian counterpart, and simultaneously offered them a way to resist the hegemony of the dominant Christian culture.

In contrast, on the page in Plate 2, taken from a liturgical Pentateuch written in Ashkenaz in 1304–5, the *masorah* in the panel surrounding the initial word *Ve-eileh*, the first word of the Book of Exodus, is inscribed in the playful shapes of dragons and other fantastic hybrid beasts. The models for this visual menagerie were almost certainly borrowed from contemporary Christian books, and their use here appears to represent what the medieval Jewish historian Ivan Marcus has called 'inward acculturation', the process by which Jews absorbed and Judaized practices and beliefs from the surrounding host-culture, in this case Western European Christian culture, and thereby made them their own. Through the material shapes given to the *Masorah* on their



1. A liturgical Pentateuch written in Spain in 1480 (MS. Opp. Add. 4o 26, fol. 124v).

pages, the Sephardi and Ashkenazi Bibles represent two distinct responses to the larger Christian cultures in which their producers lived and the codices were produced.

Finally, both the Sephardi and Ashkenazi Bibles with their decorative and figurative *masorah* can be contrasted with Plate 3, the elaborate opening page of the Book of Joshua in the Holkham Bible, a particularly beautiful copy of the Bible printed by the early Jewish printer Joshua Solomon Soncino in 1491



2. A liturgical Pentateuch written in Ashkenaz in 1304–5 (Ms. Can. Or. 91, fol. 68r).

or 1492 in Naples. In this book, the text is set out in a single wide column and surrounded not by the traditional *Masorah* but by an intricate wood-cut border that depicts, against an exquisite floral background, a deer-hunt in progress with *putti*, little naked, cupid-like creatures, carrying bows and arrows and riding horses to chase their prey. This border is a masterpiece of early Italian book-art and, despite its apparent incongruity in a Hebrew Bible, it breathes all the ornate worldliness of the Renaissance onto the pages of this book, literally



3. The opening page of the Book of Joshua in the Holkham Bible printed by Joshua Solomon Soncino in 1491 or 1492 in Naples (Holkham c.1, fol. [107r]).

framing the Bible as a deluxe Italian book of the period, so as to give it an entirely different image.²

The texts in all three Hebrew Bibles are of course identical (or nearly identical, because no two Masoretic lists are exactly the same). By studying their changing material shapes, however, one can begin to discern the different meanings that the Bible – as an object, not just as a text – assumed in medieval Jewish culture in its various centres and historical periods, and the separate roles that the Hebrew Bible, as an iconic subject of Jewish identity, occupied in the medieval Jewish mentality. Such are the fruits of the study of the history of the Jewish book. To be sure, this is not the only form or direction that such study can take. The student of the Jewish book needs to master the basic disciplines of codicology (the study of the physical composition of the codex), palaeography (the study of script), and the history of printing, and then to become acquainted with such other subsidiary fields as book-art and decoration, the uses of the book as a historical source and as an agent in itself of historical change. From there a student can explore the more commercial aspects of book production and circulation, the regulation and control of book circulation (including censorship), and the history of reading and the ways in which the material shape of the book intersects with its texts.

Alas, it is ironic, and more than a little sad, that while all these sub-disciplines of the history of the book are flourishing in universities in America and Europe, the study of the Jewish book – that is, the books of ‘the people of the book’ – is languishing institutionally. There are almost no places in the world where Hebrew codicology and palaeography, let alone the other forms of book scholarship, are currently being taught systematically, and this absence persists despite the real interest in these subjects among students and scholars. There is no Centre for the Study of the Jewish Book comparable to the Centre for the Study of the Book at Oxford, or like those at many universities in America and Europe. Such a Centre requires, of course, not just faculty and students, but a collection of Hebrew books that can be used both for teaching and for scholarship. Obviously, the richer the collection, the more possibilities for its deployment. It was my great privilege to have been able to contribute what I could to the renewed study of the Jewish book by teaching the Catherine Lewis Master Classes at the greatest collection of Hebrew books in the world, that of the Bodleian Library.

2. On this frame, see the remarks of A. M. Habermann, ‘The Jewish Art of the Printed Book’, in Cecil Roth (ed.) *Jewish Art: An Illustrated History* (New York 1961) 470, who suggests that it may even have been designed and produced by a Jew.

The Academic Year



*Front Row (left to right): Professor Glenda Abramson, Dr Khayke Beruriah Wiegand, Professor Martin Goodman (Academic Director), Dr Jeremy Schonfield, Dr Joanna Weinberg, Professor Sir Fergus Millar
Middle Row: Daphna Witztum, Jordan Paul (Canada), Amy Winkle (USA), Allison (Lee) Lipton (USA), Ariel Resnikoff (USA), Dr César Merchán-Hamann
Back Row: Sue Forteath, Jonathan Rainey (USA), Dr Stephen Herring, Dr Garth Gilmour, Martine Smith-Huvers (Academic Registrar)*

Courses, Lectures, Conferences, Publications and Other Activities by Fellows of the Centre

I. Courses Taught by Fellows of the Centre

Professor Glenda Abramson

Topics in Hebrew Literature 1929–1982 (MSt in Jewish Studies)
Modern Hebrew Literature (BA in Oriental Studies)
History of Modern Hebrew Literature from the Enlightenment to 1948 (BA in Oriental Studies).
History of Israeli Literature (BA in Oriental Studies).
Modern Hebrew Literature and the Bible (BA in Oriental Studies).

Dr Miri Freud-Kandel

Modern Judaism (BA in Jewish Studies; BA in Hebrew; BA in Theology and Oriental Studies)
The Emergence of Modern Religious Movements in Judaism (MSt in Jewish Studies)
Judaism in History and Society (BA in Theology)
Modern Judaism (MSt in the Study of Religions)

Professor Martin Goodman

Jewish History 200 BCE to 70 CE (MSt in Jewish Studies)
Judaism from 200 BCE to 200 CE (MPhil in Judaism and Christianity in the Graeco-Roman World)
The Formation of Rabbinic Judaism (with Dr Benjamin Williams) (BA in Theology)
Religions in the Greek and Roman Worlds, 31 BC – AD 312 (BA in Literae Humaniores)
Varieties of Judaism in the Late Second Temple Period (BA in Theology)
History of Jewish-Christian Relations in Late Antiquity (BA in Jewish Studies)

Dr David Rechter

Modern European Jewish History (MSt in Jewish Studies)
 Modern Jewish History (MPhil in Modern Jewish Studies)
 Modern Jewish History (MSt in Modern Jewish Studies)
 From Enlightenment to Holocaust: The Jews of Europe, 1700–1945

Dr Alison Salvesen

Septuagint Texts and Studies (MSt in Jewish Studies)
 Aramaic Texts (MSt Bible Interpretation, BA Hebrew)
 Greek Ecclesiastical Texts (MPhil Eastern Christian Studies)
 Jewish Bible Interpretation: Greek Texts (MPhil in Judaism and Christianity)
 Wisdom Literature (MPhil in Judaism and Christianity)
 Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel (DPhil)
 Book of Tobit (DPhil)

Dr Jeremy Schonfield

Jewish Liturgy (MSt in Jewish Studies)

Dr Zehavit Stern

Eastern European Jewish Culture: Tradition, Crisis and Innovation (MSt in Jewish Studies)
 Modern Yiddish Literature, 1864–1939 (MSt in Yiddish)

Dr Joshua Teplitsky

Jews in Early Modern Europe, 1492–1789 (MSt in Jewish Studies)

Dr Joanna Weinberg

A Survey of Rabbinic Literature (MSt in Jewish Studies)
 Medieval Jewish Exegesis (BA in Hebrew Studies)
 Mishnah (BA in Hebrew Studies)
 Midrash (MSt in Ancient Bible Interpretation and MPhil in Judaism and Christianity in the Graeco-Roman Period)
 Formation of Rabbinic Judaism (BA in Theology)

Professor Hugh Williamson

Isaiah 6:1–9:6 (BA in Hebrew Studies; MSt in Theology)

Habakkuk 1–2 and the Habakkuk Commentary from Qumran (MSt)
 Topics in Biblical History (Hebrew Studies Prelims; BA in Theology)
 Biblical Hebrew Language (2nd year) (BA in Hebrew Studies)
 Biblical Hebrew Language (3rd year) (BA in Hebrew Studies)

II. Lectures and Papers by Fellows of the Centre*Professor Glenda Abramson*

‘Charm and the Grotesque: Edna Mazya’s Herod’, Association for Israel Studies Conference, Haifa
 ‘City of Iron and Blood: Agnon in Berlin During the First World War’, Research Colloquium at the Simon Dubnow Institute, Leipzig
 ‘Conflict and Rejection: Three Plays of Settlement’, The Purim-spiel and Beyond: A Seminar on Jewish Theatre, Oxford
 ‘The Jewish Settlement in Palestine During the First World War’, Thames Valley Limmud

Dr Miri Freud-Kandel

‘Is Theology a Good Jewish “ology”? The Idea of Theology in the Thought of Louis Jacobs’, Opening Lecture in Public Lecture Series in conjunction with the Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies on ‘Arguments for Heaven’s Sake: Orthodoxy and Theology’, New London Synagogue, London
 ‘What Do You Mean You’re Modern Orthodox?’, Jewish Book Week, London
 ‘What is the Relationship Between Academic Scholarship and Orthodox Judaism?’, Study Day in series on ‘Arguments for Heaven’s Sake: Orthodoxy and Theology’, Oxford
 ‘The Image of Torah min Hashamayim in the Thought of Louis Jacobs’, Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies
 ‘The Influence of the Shoah on the Theology of Louis Jacobs’, World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem

Professor Martin Goodman

‘Rome in Jerusalem’, public lecture, Yad ben Zvi Institute, Jerusalem
 ‘Writing a History of Judaism’, Jewish Historical Society of England, Liverpool
 ‘Writing the Roman World’, Classics Breakfast Club, Godolphin and Latymer School, London

- 'The Destruction of the Temple: The Ancient Origins of anti-Semitism', public lecture at Davar, Bristol
- 'Marginalization in the Roman World', Master Classes, Groningen University
- 'Jews in the Antonine Age', Ancient History Seminar, Oxford
- 'On Writing a History of Judaism', Jewish Historical Society of England, Birmingham
- 'Titus and Berenice', BSixt East End Classics Lecture (to schoolchildren), Hackney, London
- 'Pharisees and Sadducees in the Temple in Jerusalem', Meyer Memorial Lecture, Chabad Society, Oxford
- 'On Writing a History of Judaism', Montefiore Lecture, Southampton
- 'Jews and Judaism in a Christian Roman Empire', Tann Memorial Lecture, Birmingham
- 'Jewish Sects in the Late Second Temple Period', Seminar, University of Sydney
- 'The Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls', Seminar, University of Sydney
- 'The Destruction of the Second Temple', Seminar, University of Sydney
- 'Paul and the Politics of the Fifties', Fellowship for Biblical Studies, Moore Theological College, University of Sydney
- 'The History of Judaism: Can it be Written?' Mandelbaum Lecture, Mizrahi Synagogue, Sydney
- 'Torah from Heaven? How Jews have Explained the Evolution of Judaism', Mandelbaum Lecture, Mandelbaum House, University of Sydney
- 'The Origins of anti-Semitism in the Ancient World', Australian Catholic University, Melbourne
- 'Pharisees and Sadducees in the Temple: Toleration of Variety in Late Second Temple Judaism', Temple Beth Israel, Melbourne
- 'On Writing a History of Judaism', Australian Catholic University, Melbourne
- 'Church and Synagogue', formal respondent to lectures and papers in the conference of the Society for the Study of Early Christianity, MacQuarie University, Sydney
- 'Varieties of Judaism: In How Many Different Ways Has the Torah Been Interpreted Over the Ages?' Mandelbaum Lecture, Mandelbaum House, University of Sydney
- 'Classical Sources on the Essenes', Seminar, University of Sydney
- 'Disputes for the Sake of Heaven? How, When and Why Jews Have Tolerated Dissent', Mandelbaum Lecture, Mandelbaum House, University of Sydney

Dr David Rechter

- 'Edge of Empire: The Jews of Habsburg Bukovina', History Faculty, Oxford

Dr Alison Salvesen

- 'The Lexicon of the Tabernacle Accounts in the Syrohexapla Version of Exodus', Symposium Syriacum, Malta

Dr Jeremy Schonfield

- 'The Amidah – New Narrative Directions', Society for Jewish Study, London
- 'From Purim to Passover', Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue, London
- 'Sinai, Ruth and the Threshing Floor', Tikun Leil Shavu'ot, Alyth Gardens, London
- 'Adon Olam and Burnt Norton: Philosophical and Spiritual Views of God', Kehillah North London

Dr Zehavit Stern

- 'How to Begin the Story of Yiddish Theatre? The Quest for Origins and the Rediscovery of the Purim-shpil', Seminar on Jewish Theatre, University of Oxford
- 'The Dybbuk and the Challenge of Commemoration', Oxford Jewish Congregation, Oxford
- 'The Spielmann Theory and the Invention of the Jewish Bar', World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem

Dr Joshua Teplitsky

- 'Offered on the Publisher's Altar: Manuscript Publication in Eighteenth-century Ashkenaz', German Studies Association Annual Conference, Milwaukee, WI
- 'Princely Philanthropy: A "Prince of the Land of Israel" in Early Modern Prague', Association for Jewish Studies Conference
- 'Commerce and Conflict in the Trade of Citrons in Eighteenth-Century Bohemia', Symposium on the Micropolitics of Small-town Life in Eastern Europe, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
- 'The Chief Rabbi, the Jesuit Censor and the Habsburg Monarchy: Politics and Polemics in Early Modern Prague', Early Modern Catholicism Network, History Faculty, Oxford

'Building a Library, Collecting a Reputation: A Jewish Bibliophile in Eighteenth-century Prague', Seminar on Belief and Belonging in the Early Modern World, History Faculty, Oxford

'Narrating Networks': Using Networks to Tell a Story and Build an Analysis', Medieval and Early Modern Ashkenaz: New Directions Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem

Dr Joanna Weinberg

'The Lives and Works of Jacques Bongars and Rabbi Judah Loew: An Appraisal', at the symposium entitled 'History of Reading and History of Scholarship: Relations, Contrasts, Conflicts', The Warburg Institute, University of London

'Jacques Bongars in the Academy of the Great Rabbi Loew (the Maharal of Prague)', at a conference entitled 'Jacques Bongars (1554–1612). Diplomat, Gelehrter, Büchersammler in der Welt des Konfessionalismus', Berne, Switzerland

'Johannes Buxtorf the Elder Examines Hebrew Literature', at a symposium entitled 'Integration or Erasure? Christian Hebraists as Scholars and Censors', at King's College London

'David Gans Between Jews and Christians', keynote lecture at a conference entitled 'David Gans (1541–1613) After Four Centuries: The Legacy of an Early Modern Jewish Polymath', Prague

Professor Hugh Williamson

'The Vindication of Redaction Criticism', Society for Old Testament Study, Manchester

'Semantics and Lexicography: A Methodological Conundrum', Symposium on Biblical Lexicography, Hebrew and Greek, University of Strasbourg

'The Use of Psalm 132 at 2 Chronicles 6:41–42', conference on Psalms and Chronicles in Munich

Respondent at OTSEM (Old Testament Studies Epistemologies and Methods), an international graduate studies conference, Oxford

'The Sons of Joseph in 1 Chronicles 5:1–2', Society of Biblical Literature, Chicago

III. Publications by Fellows of the Centre

Professor Glenda Abramson

'The Crucified Brother: Uri Zvi Greenberg and Jesus', in Neta Stahl (ed.) *Jesus Among the Jews. Representation and Thought*. New York/Oxford: Routledge (2012) 171–86

'Vogel and the City', in Jörg Schulte, Olga Tabachnikova and Peter Wagstaff (eds) *Russian Jewish Diaspora and European Culture 1918–1937*. Leiden: Brill (2012) 37–54

'Haim Nahmias and the Labour Battalions', *Jewish Culture and History*, 14:1 (April 2013) 18–32

'"Oh My Land, My Birthplace": Lebanon War and Intifada in Israeli Fiction and Poetry', in Rachel S. Harris and Ranen Omer-Sherman (eds) *War in Contemporary Israeli Arts and Culture. Narratives of Dissent*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press (2013) 221–41

Soldiers' Tales: Two Palestinian Jewish Soldiers in the Ottoman Army. London: Vallentine Mitchell (2013)

Editor-in-Chief: *The Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* (Routledge) 12:1

Dr Miri Freud-Kandel

'Minhag Anglia: The Transition of Modern Orthodox Judaism in Britain', Pardes, *Zeitschrift der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien* (2012, 18) 35–50

Professor Martin Goodman

with Joseph David, Corinna R. Kaiser and Simon Levis Sullam, *Toleration within Judaism*. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization (2013)

editor, *The Apocrypha*. The Oxford Bible Commentary; Series Editors John Barton and John Muddiman. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2012). (Updated edition of this section of the Oxford Bible Commentary, first published in a one-volume hardback in 2001)

Dr David Rechter

Becoming Habsburg: The Jews of Austrian Bukovina 1774–1918. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization (2013)

Dr Alison Salvesen

'Early Syriac, Greek, and Latin Views of the Decalogue', in Jeffrey P. Greenman and Timothy Larsen (eds) *The Decalogue Through the Centuries: From the Hebrew Scriptures to Benedict XVI*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press (2012) 47–66

'The Role of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion in Modern Commentaries on the Bible', in I. Provan and Mark Boda (eds) *Let Us Go Up to Zion. Essays in Honour of H. G. M. Williamson on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*. Leiden/Boston: Brill (2012) 95–112

'Textual Criticism. Textual and Literary Criticism and the Book of Exodus: The Role of the Septuagint', in K. J. Dell and P. M. Joyce (eds) *Biblical Interpretation and Method. Essays in Honour of John Barton*. Oxford (2013) 37–51

Dr Zehavit Stern

'The Idealized Mother and her Discontents: Performing Maternity in Yiddish Film Melodrama', in Shiri Goren, Hannah Pressman and Lara Rabinovitch (eds) *Choosing Yiddish: New Frontiers of Language and Culture*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press (2012) 163–78

Dr Joshua Teplitsky

'Jews', in Margaret King (ed.) *Oxford Bibliographies in Renaissance and Reformation*. New York: Oxford University Press (2013)

Professor Hugh Williamson

'A Christian View of Wealth and Possessions: An Old Testament Perspective', *Ex Auditu* 27 (2011) 1–19

'Isaiah, Book of', in M. J. Boda and J. G. McConville (eds) *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets*. Downers Grove: IVP (2012) 364–78

'Scribe and Scroll: Revisiting the Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran', in D. J. A. Clines, K. H. Richards and J. L. Wright (eds) *Making a Difference: Essays on the Bible and Judaism in Honor of Tamara Cohn Eskenazi*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 49. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press (2012) 329–42

'The Vindication of Redaction Criticism', in K. J. Dell and P. M. Joyce (eds) *Biblical Interpretation and Method: Essays in Honour of John Barton*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2013) 26–36

IV. Fellows' Activities and Other News

Professor Glenda Abramson

In retirement Professor Glenda Abramson continues to edit *The Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, now in its twelfth year, and has delivered a number of lectures. She also published a second book on Hebrew writing about the First World War. While researching material in Jerusalem with the help of a Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship, she found the handwritten diary of a Jewish soldier serving in the Ottoman army that had been presented to the Ben-Zvi Institute by the writer's family only a few days earlier. This formed the basis of a book discussed at greater length elsewhere in this volume.

Dr Miri Freud-Kandel

Dr Freud-Kandel, who was appointed Fellow in Modern Judaism from October 2012, co-convened the Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies from January to June 2013 on 'Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. Besides participating in the research undertaken by the group, her role included the planning of an Opening International Symposium in January on 'Orthodox Judaism and Theology in the 21st Century', convening a series of weekly seminars open to members of the University of Oxford during Hilary and Trinity terms, and a public lecture series involving a wide variety of events in London and Oxford under the title 'Arguments for Heaven's Sake: Orthodoxy and Theology'. It also incorporated organizing and participating in a special session at the World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem related to the research seminar. The seminar series was related to her ongoing research project on the theology of Louis Jacobs. In addition she continued her role on the Editorial Board of the Academic Studies Press series on Orthodoxy, was involved in the inaugural conference of the UK branch of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA) and continued her teaching for a variety of different degrees at the Centre, the Oriental Institute and the Faculty of Theology and Religion.

Professor Martin Goodman

Professor Goodman continued as Academic Director for the year, served as Director of Graduate Admissions for the Faculty of Oriental Studies, and

taught students at all levels from undergraduate to doctoral. In January he gave a CRASIS (Culture, Religion and Society in Graeco-Roman Antiquity) master class on 'Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean' in the University of Groningen, and in early May he was Mandelbaum Scholar-in-Residence at the University of Sydney, giving a series of lectures and seminars in Sydney and Melbourne. In the course of the year he saw through the publication of *Tolerance Within Judaism* (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization), the fruit of his collaborative research with three research fellows funded by the Leverhulme Trust. He also completed a draft of a history of Judaism, to be published by Penguin. He convened the regular graduate seminar on Jewish History and Literature in the Graeco-Roman Period, and was joint convenor of the seminars on the Abrahamic religions which culminated in June in a two-day workshop, held in Oxford, of graduate students from Oxford and the Hebrew University. He convened, with Professor Tessa Rajak and Dr Andrea Schatz, two workshops (in January and June) as part of the project, funded by the AHRC, to investigate Jewish reception of Josephus since 1750. He continued to serve as Chairman of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society.

Dr David Rechter

Dr Rechter published a book on the history of the Jews of Bukovina and began research for a new project exploring the work of a number of intellectuals and activists who were instrumental in creating a Jewish public sphere in late imperial Austria. He convened the regular Modern European Jewish History seminar in Hilary Term with his colleagues Dr Abigail Green and Dr Zoë Waxman and served as Chair of the Sub-Faculty of Near and Middle Eastern Studies of the Faculty of Oriental Studies. He was appointed Deputy Chair of the Leo Baeck Institute, London.

Dr Alison Salvesen

Dr Salvesen taught for a number of degree programmes in the Oriental Institute this year, including her course in Septuagint for the MSt in Jewish Studies. She supervised five doctoral students and a visiting doctoral researcher from the University of Brasilia, and continued her oversight of Oriental Studies students, both undergraduate and graduate, at Mansfield College. She took over from Professor Hugh Williamson as Subject Coordinator for undergraduate tuition in Hebrew and Jewish Studies, and also acted as Coordinator for the MSt degree in Jewish Studies. She served as external examiner for degree programmes in Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester.

Dr Jeremy Schonfield

Dr Schonfield, who was appointed Research Fellow from October 2012, has taught at the Centre since 1989 on what has been known successively as the One-Year Programme, Diploma and MSt in Jewish Studies. This academic year he delivered a course on Jewish Liturgy. He is working on book-length literary studies of the morning liturgy, and of narratives underlying the annual and life-cycles. Since 1992 he has edited the Centre's *Annual Report*, Newsletters and various information pamphlets. He has also edited *Jewish Historical Studies* for the Jewish Historical Society of England since 1981. In addition to his work at the Centre, he taught four courses on Liturgy and medieval poetry at Leo Baeck College, London.

Dr Zehavit Stern

Dr Stern taught a course on Eastern European Jewish culture for the MSt in Jewish Studies, another on Modern Yiddish Literature for the MSt in Yiddish, and supervised a dissertation on Yiddish and Jewish-American high-modernist poetry for the MSt in Jewish Studies. She convened a seminar on 'The Purim-shpil and Beyond: A Seminar on Jewish Theatre', focusing on Jewish theatre in Europe and Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century, which included a special guest performance on Yiddish poetry by the Jerusalem based Salamanca group, and presented a paper in it. She also worked on an article entitled 'The Heartache of Two Homelands – Landscape, Home and Nostalgia in Two Generations of Modern Hebrew Poetry', examining poems in which Shaul Tshernichovski, Leah Goldberg and Avraham Shlonsky express nostalgia for their Eastern European homelands.

While on maternity leave in Hilary and Trinity terms she examined dissertations and assessed exams in Yiddish linguistics and literature and in Modern Jewish culture, and completed an article titled 'The *Purim-shpiler* and The Melancholy Clown: Folk Performance Between Tradition and Modernism in the Work of Avraham Shlonsky and Moyshe Broderzon'. She also prepared a paper on the ideological background to the historiographical dispute regarding alleged Jewish medieval bards.

Dr Joshua Teplitsky

Dr Teplitsky joined the Centre as the Albert and Rachel Lehmann Junior Research Fellow in Jewish History and Culture, a post affiliated with St Peter's College, Oxford. He is currently working on a monograph about David Oppenheim of Prague (1664–1736) whose extensive library and personal

papers are held by the Bodleian Library. This year he was awarded research grants from the Hadassah Brandeis Institute and the Wellcome Trust for his research on plague and its impact on the Jews of Prague in 1713–14.

Dr Joanna Weinberg

Dr Weinberg was a Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, from July 7 to 17 August 2012 as a member of the ‘Workgroup on Reading Practices and Canonical Books’.

Professor Hugh Williamson

Professor Williamson was on sabbatical leave for the first half of 2013, working mainly on the second volume of his major commentary on the book of Isaiah. He also continued with his editorial work for three journal and/or monograph series, undertook four doctoral examinations, and completed several other minor projects. He was honoured to be presented with a Festschrift just after his 65th birthday at the Manchester meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study in July 2012 (M. Boda and I. Provan [eds] *Let Us Go Up to Zion*).

V. Seminars, Conferences and Special Lectures Involving Centre Fellows

Michaelmas Term

Seminar on Jewish History and Literature in the Graeco-Roman Period: Maccabees, Hasmoneans and Their Legacy
(Convened by Professor Martin Goodman)

Symposium on Documents Relating to the Maccabees *Dr John Ma (University of Oxford) and Professor Robert Doran (Amherst, Massachusetts)*

The Documents and the Maccabees: A Response to Robert Doran *Dr John Ma (University of Oxford)*

The Mother of the Maccabees and her Seven Sons in the Syriac Tradition *Dr Sebastian Brock (University of Oxford)*

The Foreign Policy of the Hasmonaeans *Professor Philip Alexander (University of Manchester)*

The Maccabean Martyrs Between Judaism and Christianity *Professor Tessa Rajak (University of Oxford)*

The Qumran Collection as a Scribal Collection and its Relation to the Library of

Judah Maccabee *Professor Sidnie White Crawford (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)*

The Seleucids: Administrative Reform and Religious Persecution *Professor Dov Gera (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)*

Workshop on the Reception of Josephus by Jews and Christians from Late Antiquity to 1750
(Convened by Professor Martin Goodman, Professor Tessa Rajak and Dr Andrea Schatz)

Herod's Death Rewritten by Eusebius *Edith Parmentier (University of Angers)*
Josephus on the Essenes: Hippolytus, Porphyry and Eusebius *Professor Joan Taylor (King's College London)*

Josephus in Byzantine Chronicles: An Overview *Rivkah Fishman-Duker (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*

Foundational Tales and Polemic in Sefer Yosippon *Professor Steven Bowman (University of Cincinnati)*

The Maccabees in *Sefer Yosippon* *Saskia Doenitz (Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main)*

The ‘Hebrew Josephus’ and the Renaissance Quest for Jewish History: Diffusion, Interpretation, and Translation of Sefer Josippon Among Jews and Christians in Italy and Sicily *Dr Nadia Zeldes (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*

Allusions to Josephus in Abravanel's Writings *Dr Michael Avioz (Bar-Ilan University)*

The Reception of Josephus in Syriac Christianity *Dr David Taylor (University of Oxford)*

‘That Noble and Famous Jew’: Josephus and His Writings in the Renaissance Italian Imagination *Daniel Stein Kokin (University of Greifswald)*

Josephus, Augustine, Sabellicus: The Duke of Norfolk's Petition from the Tower of London *Kate Adcock (Oxfordshire County Council)*

‘Y lo que acerca de los Hebreos suele ser de autoridad’: Josephus as a Scholarly Weapon in Colonial Mexico's Anti-Jewish Polemics *Jesús de Prado Plumed (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes)*

Jaddus the High Priest and Alexander the Great – Fact or Fiction? Religion, Politics and Historiography in Late-seventeenth-century England *Meir Ben Shahar (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*

William Whiston's Josephus in the First Edition Published in 1737 *Professor Gohei Hata (Tama Art University, Tokyo)*

Fascinated by Josippon: Four Translations into the Vernacular by Hans Schwyntzer, Georg Wolff, Peter Morwen and James Howell *Dr Katja Vehlow (University of South Carolina)*

*The Purim-shpil and Beyond: A Seminar on Jewish Theatre
(Convened by Dr Zehavit Stern)*

- How to Begin the Story of Yiddish Theatre? The Quest for Origins and the Rediscovery of the *Purim-shpil* *Dr Zehavit Stern (University of Oxford)*
- Purim Balls in Jewish Palestine: From Community Theatre to Environmental Theatre *Dr Hizky Shoham (University of Tel-Aviv)*
- Conflict and Rejection: Three Plays of Settlement *Professor Glenda Abramson (University of Oxford)*
- New Readings in the History of Hebrew Theatre: The Workers' Theatre of Eretz Yisrael Staging 'The Good Soldier Švejk' (1935) *Dr Dorit Yerushalmi (University of Haifa)*
- The Dramaturgy of Loss and Suffering: Hanoach Levin's Play 'The Torments (Passion) of Job' *Professor Freddie Rokem (University of Tel-Aviv)*
- Fun shenk biz tsum kunst-teater*: Yiddish Theatre in Vienna Between 'Jargon' and Art *Dr Brigitte Dalinger (University of Vienna)*
- Staging the Hebrew Nation: On Dzigán and Schumacher's Yiddish Parody 'The New Dybbuk' *Diego Rotman (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*
- The Cultural Life of the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto: Czech-language Cabaret and Prague's Interwar Avant-garde *Dr Lisa Peschel (University of York)*
- Albatros 2003 oder 2003 Albatros* – a special performance by the Sala-manca group revisiting Modernist Yiddish Poetry and manifestos and paying homage to their revolutionary spirit by using experimental technology

*Conference on the Place of European Jewry
in the Global Jewish Community*

(Convened by Dr David Ariel and Dr Keith Kahn-Harris)

- Social Trends *Dr Ben Gidley (University of Oxford)*
- Economic Trends *Peter Oppenheimer (University of Oxford)*
- Trends in Social Innovation and the Voluntary Sector *Amy Birchall (Volans)*
- Political Trends *Professor Dov Waxman (City University of New York)*
- Jewish Demography in Europe: Resilience and Malaise *Professor Sergio Della Pergola (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*

- A Demographic and Socio-political Profile of French Jews *Professor Erik Cohen (Bar-Ilan University)*
- Report on Survey of Attitudes Among European Jewish Leaders *Marcelo Dimentstein (JDC Europe)*
- From Toulouse to Cheetham Hill: Terrorism, Security, Muslims and Jews *Dave Rich (Community Security Trust)*
- Violence and its Generators: The Narrative Infrastructure Behind Contemporary Violent European anti-Semitism *Dr Haim Fireberg (University of Tel-Aviv)*
- Jewish Perceptions and Experiences of anti-Semitism: Insights from Preparing and Running the EU Survey *Jonathan Boyd (Institute for Jewish Policy Research)*
- Anti-Semitism as Controversy *Dr Keith Kahn-Harris (University of London)*
- Overview of the Innovation and Cultural Renaissance in European Jewry *Barbara Spectre (Paideia, Sweden)*
- Changing Outreach Techniques, Loaded Outreach Catchphrases and (Un)predictable Collective Answers in the Budapest Jewish Community *Dr Zsafia Kata Vincze (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)*
- Jews Today in East-Central Europe: Remnant, Renaissance or Something Else? *Ruth Ellen Gruber*
- Why Jewish Organizations Need to Learn from the NGO Sector When it Comes to Innovation *Diego Orniq (Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Europe)*

The David Patterson Seminars

- The Qumran Scrolls as a Scribal Collection *Professor Sidnie White Crawford (University of Nebraska-Lincoln)*
- How Did Medieval Judaism Come to Be a Religion of Love and Spiritual Communion? *Dr Adam Afterman (University of Tel-Aviv)*
- The New Jewish Question: Diaspora Jewish Politics After Zionism *Professor Dov Waxman (The City University of New York)*
- Athalie and Esther: The Jewish Female Body and Racine's Sacred Dramas *Carolyn Rosen (Royal Holloway, University of London)*
- 1948 as a Jewish World War *Professor Derek Penslar (University of Oxford)*
- Picturing Abraham in Modern Art *Dr Aaron Rosen (King's College London)*
- Scroll Down: Classical Jewish Texts on the Internet *Dr Gary Rendsburg (Rutgers University, New Jersey)*
- Early Modern Networks of Exchange and the Making of the Bodleian Judaic Collection *Dr Joshua Teplitsky (University of Oxford)*

Hilary Term

Seminar on Jewish History and Literature in the Graeco-Roman Period
(Convened by Professor Martin Goodman)

The Reception of Josephus to 1750 *Professor Martin Goodman and Professor Tessa Rajak (University of Oxford)*

Qumran Forum (chaired by Professor Geza Vermes): The Essenes, the Scrolls and the Dead Sea *Professor Joan Taylor (King's College London)*

The Book of Jubilees and Ancient Biblical Interpretation *Professor James Kugel (Bar-Ilan University and Harvard University)*

Josephus' Interpretation of the Book of Samuel *Dr Michael Avioz (Bar-Ilan University)*

Philo's Discourses of Knowledge Between Alexandria and Rome *Dr Jang S. Ryu (University of Oxford)*

The Palestinian Talmud and Pinchas the Zealot *Dr Laliv Clenman (Leo Baeck College, London and King's College London)*

A Split Diaspora? *Professor Arye Edrei (University of Tel-Aviv)*

Jewish Leadership, Paul and the Jews of Corinth in the Time of 2 Corinthians *Professor Martin Goodman (University of Oxford)*

Seminar on Abrahamic Attitudes Towards Pagans
(Convened by Professor Martin Goodman, Dr Nicolai Sinai and Professor Guy Stroumsa)

Mishnaic Judaism *Professor Sacha Stern (University College London)*

Maimonides *Professor Sarah Stroumsa (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*

Talmudic Judaism *Dr Holger Zellentin (University of Nottingham)*

Seminar in Modern European Jewish History
(Convened by Dr Abigail Green, Dr David Rechter and Dr Zoë Waxman)

Hans Rosenthal: A Jewish Entertainer in Post-War Germany *Anne Giebel (University of Jena)*

False Start or Brave Beginning? The Society of Jews and Christians (or: When Did British Christians Officially Stop Trying to Convert the Jews?) *Anne Summers (Birkbeck College, University of London)*

The Politics of Jewish Consumption: From Mendelssohn to Zionism *Dr Gideon Reuveni (University of Sussex)*

Saul Ascher, Jewish Emancipation, and the Emergence of the German-Jewish Left *Dr Adam Sutcliffe (King's College London)*

Jewish Money, Jesuit Censorship, and the Habsburg Monarchy: Politics and Polemics in Early Modern Prague *Dr Joshua Teplitsky (University of Oxford)*

Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Symposium: Orthodox Judaism and Theology in the Twenty-first Century
(Convened by Dr Adam Ferziger and Dr Miri Freud-Kandel)

Is the Critical Method Compatible with Orthodoxy? *Professor David Weiss Halivni (Bar-Ilan University)*

Jeremy Bentham and the Modern Perception of Contradiction in Biblical Law *Dr Joshua Berman (Bar-Ilan University)*

Orthodoxies Confront Biblical Criticism: Must Orthodox be Orthodox? *Professor Alan Brill (Seton Hall University, New Jersey)*

Orthodoxy and the Challenge of Biblical Criticism *Professor Tamar Ross (Bar-Ilan University)*

Tradition, Continuity and Innovation: Opposing Halakhic Concerns? *Professor Daniel Sperber (Bar-Ilan University)*

Frum Unity, Frum Diversity: The Orthodox Continuum in Popular Culture *Professor Sarah Benor (Hebrew Union College)*

Old and New Orthodoxies: Would Rabbi Louis Jacobs Recognise the Present? *Professor Samuel Heilman (City University of New York)*

Mysticism and Theology in Judaism in the Twenty-first Century *Professor Moshe Idel (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*

Messianism and Gender in Twentieth-century Habad-Lubavitch *Professor Ada Rapoport-Albert (University College London)*

Obstacles to Spirituality in Contemporary Orthodoxy *Professor Ron Margolin (University of Tel-Aviv)*

Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – University Seminar Series on Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs
(Convened by Dr Adam Ferziger and Dr Miri Freud-Kandel)

Harmony: The Obsession of an Early-Twentieth-Century Hasidic Mystic
Rabbi Dr Harvey Belovski (London School of Jewish Studies)

War in Judaism and Jews in War: A Comparative Analysis Professor Derek Penslar (University of Oxford)

Adapting While Decrying Change: The Case of American Orthodox Judaism
Professor Chaim I. Waxman (Rutgers University, New Jersey)

Before the Jacobs Affair: The First Jewish Encounter with Biblical Criticism in Victorian England Dr Edward Breuer (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

‘The Form Things Assume When They are Forgotten’: Alienation, Advertising and the Criticism of Idols in Jewish Religious Thought Professor Melissa Raphael (University of Gloucestershire)

Jewish Hermeneutics and Constructive Theology. The (Re)sources of Tradition and the Task of Modernity: A New Model Professor Michael Fishbane (University of Chicago)

Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Internal Seminars on Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs
(Convened by Dr Adam Ferziger and Dr Miri Freud-Kandel)

Theology in the Codes: R. Isaac of Corbeil and his *Pillars of Exile* (Semak) Dr Judah Galinsky (Bar-Ilan University)

The Borderline Between Orthodoxy and Ultra-Orthodoxy Professor Yosef Salmon (Ben-Gurion University)

Orthodox Judaism in Transition: An Oxymoron? Professor Chaim Waxman (Rutgers University)

The Modern Problem of Matan Torah: Formulation, Analysis and Potential Solution Professor Paul Morris (Victoria University of Wellington)

London Lecture Series – Arguments for Heaven’s Sake: Orthodoxy and Theology (In conjunction with the Friends of Louis Jacobs)

Tradition, Continuity and Innovation: Opposing Halakhic Concerns? Professor Daniel Sperber (Bar-Ilan University)

Louis Jacobs’s ‘Heretical Sermon’ on the Theology of Revelation Professor Paul Morris (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)

Conversion – Conflict and Context Professor Chaim Waxman (Rutgers) and Dr Nechama Hadari (Visiting Fellow, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies)

Images of God in Jewish Thought Professor Michael Fishbane (University of Chicago)

What Do You Mean You’re Modern Orthodox? Professor James Kugel, Dr Miri Freud-Kandel, Dr Simon Hochhauser (Jewish Book Week Event)

Seminars in Jewish Studies

Great Things Float in the Air: Duelling, Dirigibles and Zionism Without Zion
Alex Marshall (University of Oxford)

Two Early Modern Yiddish Adaptations of Medieval German Literature
Jennifer Juillard-Maniece (University of Oxford)

The David Patterson Seminars

Being Jewish in Andhra Pradesh: Social Protest and the Lost Tribes of Israel Dr Yulia Egorova (University of Durham)

Is the Critical Method Compatible with Orthodoxy (Opening lecture of the Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies) Professor David Weiss Halivni (Bar-Ilan University)

Jewish Scripturalism and Islamic Literalism: Toward a Comparative Phenomenology Professor Sarah Stroumsa (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Jews and Human Rights: The Individual Right to Belong Professor Paul Morris (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)

The Religious Factor in American Jewish Identity Professor Chaim I. Waxman (Rutgers University, New Jersey)

Josephus’s Concept of Miracles Dr Michael Avioz (Bar-Ilan University)

Israelites and Jews in Scottish Enlightenment Thought Professor Fania Oz-Salzberger (University of Haifa)

A Jewish and Democratic Welfare State? Where the Political and Economic Collide Dr Amir Paz Fuchs (University of Tel-Aviv)

Trinity Term

Seminar on Jewish History and Literature in the Graeco-Roman Period (Convened by Professor Martin Goodman, Dr Alison Salvesen, and Professor Geza Vermes)

- Translating the Hekhalot Literature *Professor Jim Davila (University of St Andrews)*
- Josephus on the Jews' Egyptian Origins *David Friedman (University of Oxford)*
- Josephus, Rome and Divine Intervention: The Case of Gaius Caligula *Jonathan Davies (University of Oxford)*
- Justice and Mercy: 4 Ezra and the Second Temple Debate Concerning Divine Grace *Professor John Barclay (University of Durham)*
- The Paradigm of Late Antique Rabbinization *Dr Oded Irshai (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*

Workshop on the Reception of Josephus in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries in Western Europe (Convened by Professor Martin Goodman, Professor Tessa Rajak and Dr Andrea Schatz)

- Josephus, Josephism and Spinoza's Critique of the Hebrew Republic *Jacob Abolafia (University of Cambridge)*
- Historiography, Ideology and Religious Controversies: Jacques Basnage and Menahem Amelander Continuing Josephus in the Eighteenth-century Dutch Republic *Dr Bart Wallet (University of Amsterdam)*
- Josephus and the Miracle of Jewish History *Dr Jonathan Elukin (Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut)*
- Alfred Edersheim – Another Nineteenth-century 'Jewish' Observation of Josephus? *Oded Steinberg (University of Oxford)*
- Josephus Travels with the Montefiores *Professor Tessa Rajak (University of Reading)*
- Josephus in the *Jewish Chronicle*: 1840–1900 *Professor Sarah Pearce (University of Southampton)*
- Josephus and the History of the Jews from Whiston to Graetz *Dr Oswyn Murray (University of Oxford)*
- Josephus, Graetz and the Seductions of Gendered Respectability *Dr Marcus Pyka (Franklin College, Switzerland)*

Modelling a Jewish Exegetical Imagination: Nineteenth-century Peshat and Heinrich Graetz's Commentaries on Kohelet and Song of Songs *Alexandra Zirkle (University of Chicago)*

Catherine Lewis Master Classes (Convened by Dr César Merchán-Hamann)

- The Jewish Library: The Material History of Four Jewish Classic Texts *Professor David Stern (University of Pennsylvania)*
- From the Torah Scroll to the Early Masoretic Bible
- The Hebrew Bible: From the Middle Ages to the Making of the *Mikraot Gedolot*
- The Babylonian Talmud
- The Prayerbook (*Siddur* and *Mahzor*)
- The *Haggadah* for Passover

Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – University Seminar Series on Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs (Convened by Dr Adam Ferziger and Dr Miri Freud-Kandel)

- Jewish or Roman Law: The Patrilineal/Matrilineal Controversy in American Judaism *Professor Ranon Katzoff (Bar-Ilan University), with responses by Professor Arye Edrei (University of Tel-Aviv) and Dr Adam Ferziger (Bar-Ilan University)*
- The True Nature of Talmudic Reasoning *Dr Norman Solomon (University of Oxford)*
- The Agunah and the Theory of Halakhah: How is Change Possible? *Professor Bernard Jackson (Liverpool Hope University)*
- Is it Possible to Research Jewish Law as We Do in Other Legal Systems? Some Religious Views from the Twentieth Century *Professor Amihai Radzyner (Bar-Ilan University)*
- Is Modern Orthodoxy Moving Towards an Acceptance of Biblical Criticism? *Professor Marc Shapiro (University of Scranton)*
- The Case of a Religious Naturalist: 'Analytic Theologians' Attack Wettstein's Religious Experience *Dr Pamela Sue Anderson (University of Oxford)*
- Grammar from Heaven: The Language of Revelation in Light of Wittgenstein *Dr Brian Klug (University of Oxford)*
- Special Lecture: Analytic Philosophy and Biblical Exegesis *Dr Charlotte Katzoff (Bar-Ilan University)*

Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Internal Seminars on Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs
(Convened by Dr Adam Ferziger and Dr Miri Freud-Kandel)

Jewish Identities in Dialogue: The Current Debate on *Giyur* in Israel Professor Arye Edrei (University of Tel-Aviv)

‘Don’t Be A Stranger!’ – *Giyur* and Theologizing the Boundaries of (Jewish) Identity Dr Nechama Hadari

Back to Zechariah Frankel and Louis Jacobs? On Integrating Academic Talmudic Scholarship into Israeli Religious-Zionist Yeshivot and the Spectre of the Historical Development of the *Halakhah* Professor Lawrence Kaplan (McGill University, Montreal)

Torah as the Word of God Professor Jacob Ross (University of Tel-Aviv)

Sacred Texts in a Post-Modern Era: The Case of Modern Orthodoxy and Biblical Criticism Dr Ari Engelberg (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Where Does Evil Come From – Satan or Ourselves? Professor James Kugel (Harvard University and Bar-Ilan University)

Can Post-Lurianic Kabbalah Support a Constructivist Response to Biblical Criticism? Professor Tamar Ross (Bar-Ilan University)

Orthodox Jewish Thought’s Path Through the Catastrophe (and Obviating the Term ‘Post-Holocaust’) Professor Gershon Greenberg (American University, Washington)

Approaches to *Torah min Hashamayim* Professor Tamar Ross (Bar-Ilan University)

The Image of *Torah min Hashamayim* in the Thought of Louis Jacobs Dr Miri Freud-Kandel (Oxford University)

Oxford Yom Limmud – Arguments for Heaven’s Sake: Orthodoxy and Theology (In conjunction with the Friends of Louis Jacobs)

Melting Pot or Multiculturalism: The Development of Israeli *Halakhah* Professor Arye Edrei (University of Tel-Aviv)

Dying With God: Theological Paths During the Lithuanian Holocaust Professor Gershon Greenberg (American University, Washington)

Torah min Hashamayim and Israeli Orthodoxy: Preliminary Research Results Dr Ari Engelberg (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

What is the Relationship Between Academic Scholarship and Orthodox Judaism? Professor Tamar Ross (Bar-Ilan University), Professor Lawrence Kap-

lan (McGill University, Montreal), Dr Miri Freud-Kandel (Oxford University), Dr Adam Ferziger (Bar-Ilan University)

London Lecture Series – Arguments for Heaven’s Sake: Orthodoxy and Theology (In conjunction with the Friends of Louis Jacobs)

The Impact of Feminism on Orthodox Theology Professor Tamar Ross (Bar-Ilan University)

Jews and Biblical Scholarship – An Unhappy Marriage? Professor James Kugel (Harvard University and Bar-Ilan University)

Louis Jacobs Memorial Lecture: Freud’s Moses and the Formation of the Jewish Psyche Professor Lawrence Kaplan (McGill University, Montreal)

Seminars in Jewish Studies

Tapping into the Sacred: The Awakening of Orthodox Judaism in German D.P. Camps (1945–1948) Professor Gershon Greenberg (American University, Washington)

Axial Age Biblical Psalms Professor Stephen Geller (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York)

The David Patterson Seminars

The Language of God and the Citizen’s Speech: Reflections on Hebrew and Politics Dr Eyal Chowers (University of Tel-Aviv)

Feminism and Heresy: The Construction of a Jewish Metanarrative Dr Adam Ferziger (Bar-Ilan University)

The Phenomenon of Black Judaism in Africa and the United States Professor Tudor Parfitt (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; Florida International University)

The Man who Mistook his *Tefillin* for a Hat Professor James Kugel (Harvard University and Bar-Ilan University)

Have the Rabbis Always Been Honest with Their Readers? Professor Marc Shapiro (University of Scranton, Pennsylvania)

Kashrut and Kugel or Rupture and Reconstruction Reversed: Franz Rosenzweig’s *The Builders* and Minhag Ashkenaz Professor Lawrence Kaplan (McGill University, Montreal)

Israeli Religious Zionist Society and the ‘Singles Problem’: How Individualization is Affecting Religion Dr Ari Engelberg (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Visiting Scholars' and Fellows' Reports

Dr Michael Avioz

Dr Michael Avioz of Bar-Ilan University stayed at the Centre from 2 December 2012 to 12 March 2013 and worked on a forthcoming book on Josephus. He participated in the 'Workshop on the Reception of Josephus by Jews and Christians from Late Antiquity to 1750' at which he delivered a paper, and also spoke on 'Josephus' Interpretation of the Book of Samuel' to the Seminar on Jewish History and Literature in the Graeco-Roman Period, besides giving a David Patterson Seminar on 'Josephus's Concept of Miracles'. He completed two papers focusing on aspects of Josephus, and took the opportunity to hear papers at the Department of Religion and Theology at Oxford. Dr Avioz benefited from access to the Bodleian and the Centre's Muller libraries, and from conversations with Josephus scholars who helped him refine the results of his research.

Professor Alan Brill

Professor Alan Brill of Seton Hall University, New Jersey, stayed at the Centre from 20 May to 13 June 2013 and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. He explored the meaning of the word 'Modern' in the term 'Modern Orthodoxy', first applied in the early 1960s to 'a small alienated minority' of 'no more than several score intellectuals'. By the late 1970s this had grown to tens of thousands, and was also reapplied to describe Religious Zionists and followers of Hirschian Neo-Orthodoxy. But research reveals that many Jews had had all the characteristics of Modern Orthodoxy in England and Italy in the 1770s, suggesting that its origins are now postdated by two centuries. In particular, does Modern Orthodoxy grapple with issues of modernity, and if it does not, as in the case of the Jacobs affair, then is it truly 'modern'?

Professor Brill employed Anthony Giddens's three stages of modernity – Enlightenment, Modernism and Late Modernity – as a model to explore the various meanings of modernity when applied to Judaism from 1770 to 2013, and refined his definition with the help of work by writers such as Talal Asad, Shmuel Eisenstadt and Michele Vovelle, finally identifying multiple modernities over three stages. Key questions are: what makes Rabbi Samson

Raphael Hirsch modern? Is it his general education, changes to the liturgy, knowledge of Schiller, middle-class status, alienation from the hyper-Orthodox, or social breaks with the traditional community? In considering the Jacobs Affair, are we right to label individuals and groups as Modern Orthodox even if they lack high modernism, or are even anti-modernist?

Dr George Carras

Dr George Carras of Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia worked at the Centre from 7 January to 31 July on a book about Josephus and Paul as diaspora Jews, to be published by Brill. He re-mapped the project under the following dual headings, the first focusing on Josephus: (i) Judean Josephus; (ii) Josephus, the War, aftermath and prophecy; (iii) Roman Josephus; (iv) Josephan theological reflections; and (v) Josephan Jewish sensibilities. The section on Paul includes: (i) Judean Paul; (ii) Redirected Paul, the Epiphany; (iii) Diaspora Paul; (iv) Paul's Jewish reflections; and (v) Unravelling Pauline Jewish sensibilities. A final section will compare these two diaspora Jews in terms of their different situations, circumstances and interpretative histories.

Both claimed Pharisaic affinities and experienced a life-changing event. They had very different histories, and rewrote and interpreted the Jewish story from within their respective frames of reference, yet they also had common themes and strategies in their re-interpretative process. The book will explore these directions in new ways.

He also completed an article on the notion of a dual audience in *Contra Apionem* from Josephus' Law summary in 2.190ff.

Dr Carras benefited from the opportunity to meet various Oxford Josephus and related scholars, and from access to the collections in the Bodleian, Oriental Institute and Sackler (Classics) libraries. He took the opportunity to attend various seminars, including the Seminar on Jewish History and Literature in the Graeco-Roman Period, that on Plutarch in the Classics Faculty, and the New Testament Senior Seminar in the Faculty of Theology and Religion, at which he presented a paper on Paul and Jewish law. He also attended special lectures held at the Centre, as well the 'Workshop on the Reception of Josephus in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries in Western Europe'.

Professor Sidnie White Crawford

Professor Sidnie White Crawford of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln stayed at the Centre from 15 September to 31 December 2012 and worked on a book-length project entitled 'Scribes, Scrolls and Qumran Origins' (to be published by

Wm. B. Eerdmans). The bibliographic resources of the Bodleian Library enabled her to research scribal practices in Egypt and Mesopotamia as well as ancient Israel, and to complete drafts of three chapters of the book. She also submitted an article entitled 'The Library of Nehemiah and Judas Maccabaeus in 2 Macc 2:13–15 and its Relationship to the Qumran Library', to the *Journal of Jewish Studies*.

She delivered a David Patterson Seminar entitled 'The Qumran Scrolls as a Scribal Collection', and a paper entitled 'The Qumran Collection as a Scribal Collection and its Relation to the Library of Judah Maccabee' to the 'Seminar on Jewish History and Literature in the Graeco-Roman Period: Maccabees, Hasmoneans and Their Legacy', convened by Professor Martin Goodman.

She also gave papers at Edinburgh University, the University of Manchester, King's College London, the University of Birmingham and the British Museum.

Professor Arye Edrei

Professor Arye Edrei of the University of Tel-Aviv stayed at the Centre from 21 January to 18 July and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. Besides teaching a variety of courses in recent years on Jewish law and on the history and philosophy of halakhah, his research has focused on halakhah in modern times, particularly in response to secularism, the fragmentation of the Jewish community, and responses to Zionism and the State of Israel.

While at the Centre he concentrated on the laws of *giyur* (conversion to Judaism), a particularly controversial issue in the State of Israel and beyond. He correlated the halakhic positions of different rabbis and their ideological worlds and values, demonstrating that polemics on conversion are less formalistic halakhic debates than controversies flowing from policy considerations designed to shape the character of Jewish society. In this he followed the suggestion made by Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs in the introduction to the second edition of his *The Tree of Life*, to view the ideological and theoretical discourse associated with halakhic sources as essential to the debate. His research confirmed that some nineteenth-century rabbis developed lenient laws of conversion in the hope of including the children of mixed marriages within the community, and of developing a conceptual framework for readmitting Jews who had abandoned the traditional lifestyle. He then showed how this idea developed in the twentieth century, dividing Orthodoxy into what are in Israel the Religious Zionist and the Haredi camps.

Professor Edrei delivered several lectures at the Centre and elsewhere in the university, and gave talks to and participated in the work of the group seminar. He presented a paper entitled 'A Split Diaspora?' to Professor Goodman's Seminar on Jewish History and Literature in the Graeco-Roman Period, and another to the Oxford Yom Limmud.

Dr Ari Engelberg

Dr Ari Engelberg of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem stayed at the Centre from 19 April to 19 June, continuing research into the Religious Zionist community in Israel that he initiated in a doctoral dissertation and in several published articles.

His postdoctoral research focuses on the effect of academic research into the Bible on the faith of Orthodox Jews. Maimonides, followed by Orthodox Jews generally, regards the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai as a principle of Jewish faith. Academic biblical scholarship seems to contradict this belief, as has recently been increasingly discussed in American Orthodox online forums, although the question is still largely suppressed in Israeli Orthodoxy.

Dr Engelberg interviewed Orthodox or formerly Orthodox young Israeli men and women in order to clarify how this issue affects their decision-making about religious identity. He went on to compare data from the interviews with academic and public discourse.

Initial results point to a gap between the stated concerns of interviewees and of public figures. Most interviewees were less concerned with objective truth statements and contradictions between science and Torah, than with issues such as pluralism and egalitarianism, and whether Judaism falls short in these matters. This may partly be explained as a turn towards expressivism, individualization and a loss of belief in modern progressivism among Religious Zionists in late modernity.

Dr Engelberg presented his research in a David Patterson Seminar and at the Yom Limmud at the Centre.

Dr Adam Ferziger

Dr Adam Ferziger of Bar-Ilan University served between 21 January and 13 June as co-convenor of the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. He is grateful to the participants for their work and dedication, and particularly to his co-convenor, Dr Miri Freud-Kandel, for her professionalism, scholarly acumen

and collegiality. He is especially appreciative of the academic and professional staff of the Centre, led by Dr David Ariel and Professor Martin Goodman, who encouraged and facilitated proceedings both intellectually and in terms of material comfort.

During his stay he managed to work on two projects which will lead to full-length monographs. The first is entitled 'Beyond Sectarianism: The Realignment of American Orthodoxy' and the second 'Cremation and the Twentieth-century Jew', both of which are discussed in greater length in the section of this volume devoted to the work of the Seminar.

Dr Judah Galinsky

Dr Judah Galinsky of Bar-Ilan University stayed at the Centre from 16 January to 7 March 2013 and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. His contribution was to analyse one of Jacobs's lesser-known works, his *Theology in the Responsa*, in which he pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of utilizing responsa for uncovering an individual's theology or religious world view, and suggested supplementing the responsa literature with an examination of the theological materials usually included in the introductions of, if not throughout, codes of Jewish law.

He substantiated this claim through a study of Rabbi Isaac of Corbeil's thirteenth-century *Amudei Gola*, 'Pillars of Exile', or *Semak* as it is popularly known, that became the primary religious handbook for Ashkenazi Jewry during the later Middle Ages. He studied Isaac's letter of introduction, which describes the purpose of his programme of religious reform, and particularly his treatment of the most religiously central commandments: Love of God and Fear of God. It emerges that Isaac's general approach to the commandments – both in his letter and in the commentary – was influenced by a tantalizingly ambiguous passage from *Midrash Tanhuma* which discusses doing God's will *lishmah*, 'for the sake of heaven', while also emphasizing the heavenly reward for fulfilling God's will.

He also explored Isaac's understanding of the relationship between Love and Fear of God, which for him had a closer affinity than was commonly perceived, since 'fear' is more akin to awe rather than to dread, while 'love' includes appreciation for God's intrinsic goodness and greatness, and also gratitude for divine beneficence to man.

When these emotions are translated into action by fulfilling God's commandments, Isaac suggests that while love of God is characterized by *zerizut*,

'eagerness', to carry out positive commandments, fear of God is characterized by *zehirut*, 'caution', not to transgress a negative prohibition (*aveira*). In Isaac's view, therefore, the ideals of love and fear of God are complementary rather than opposites.

This project demonstrated the importance of exploring halakhic literature other than responsa, and the need to recognize it as a place to uncover Jewish theological traditions, as illustrated by the example of Rabbi Isaac of Corbeil's religious thought.

Professor Gershon Greenberg

Professor Gershon Greenberg of American University, Washington DC, stayed at the Centre from 22 April to 30 June 2013 and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. His work on formulating a new basis for Holocaust theology, drawn from Haredi real-time responses, focused on four issues. The first is how to re-create sacramental forms which could again afford us access to the sacred, especially that identifiable in the land of Israel. The second is to ask how reason might be employed to touch the mythic, mystical and revelatory expressions which nourished and provided meaning and certainty to Haredim through the Holocaust, and thereby to contribute to reviving theology and rapprochement between Haredi and modern Orthodox thinkers. The third is how to preserve the understanding of suffering which sustained Jews through the catastrophe and to instil these truths in present Judaism. The fourth is how to reconcile the a-temporal arena of *Galut* and *Ge'ulah* (as per the Maharal of Prague) or of *Galut-Teshuvah-Ge'ulah* (as per Yehezkel Sarna) with the streams of thoughts in which history opened to redemption, or redemption opened to history.

Professor Greenberg also conducted research in the Centre's Kressel Archives on the relationship between Getzel Kressel and Mosheh Prager. Prager's earliest publications about the Holocaust appeared in *Davar*, which was edited in Palestine by Kressel, while Kressel arranged for Prager to write his autobiography.

He presented a paper on Prager's religious historiography of the Holocaust at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, lectured on 'Tapping into the Sacred: The Awakening of Orthodox Judaism in German DP camps (1945–1948)' at the Oriental Institute, Oxford, and on 'Dying with God: Theological Paths During the Lithuanian Holocaust' at the Centre's Yom Limmud.

During his stay the following four papers appeared in print, the last of them in a book co-edited by Professor Greenberg: 'The Holocaust and the Hasidic Spark', in Steven Katz and Alan Rosen (eds) *Elie Wiesel: Jewish, Literary and Moral Perspectives* (Bloomington, Indiana 2013) 83–102; 'Out of the Shadows: The *Hareidi* Religious Realities of Holocaust History', in *Yad Vashem Studies* 41:1 (2013) 263–75; 'German Displaced Persons Camps (1945–1948): Orthodox Jewish Responses to the Holocaust', in *Historical Reflections/Reflections Historiques* 39:2 (2013) 71–95; and 'Dying with God: The Views of Three Roshei Yeshiva Into and During the Lithuanian Holocaust', in Michal Ben Ya'akov, Gershon Greenberg and Sigalit Rosmarin (eds) *That Terrible Summer... Seventy Years since the Annihilation of Lithuanian Jewish Communities – History | Thought | Reality. Papers Presented at an International Conference Commemorating the Seventieth Anniversary of the Annihilation of Lithuanian Jewish Communities at the Efrata College, November 2011* (Jerusalem, 2013) 1–20.

Dr Nechama Hadari

Dr Nechama Hadari stayed at the Centre from 7 January to 26 June and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. Her research focused on how different Jewish theologies are communicated to prospective candidates for *giyur* (conversion) through Orthodox bodies in Britain and Israel. She conducted interviews with research participants who had undergone a conversion process under the auspices of either the Israeli Chief Rabbinate or the London Beth Din between 1967 and 2012. A central premise was that a deeper understanding of the process and of the theology conveyed to *gerim* is possible if one analyses the reflections of converts, rather than by engaging only with the intentions, statements and written sources of those who wield power in the process – rabbis and *dayanim*.

Her research showed that while converts in Israel are explicitly required to know and profess beliefs about God, the Jewish people and the place of halakhic observance and participation in the life of Israel (land, state and people), there is no such requirement of British converts, nor any place for conveying theological beliefs in the conversion process. Since the absence of explicit theological input itself indicates a theological position, the research suggests that the London Beth Din significantly differs theologically from the Israeli Chief Rabbinate – or at least, that part of it which deals with *giyur*.

Uncovering competing theological conception(s) of the process of *giyur* itself, and of the status of converts after the process is completed, will contribute significantly to our understanding of prevailing notions about the nature of Jewishness in general.

Dr Keith Kahn-Harris

Dr Keith Kahn-Harris of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, London, worked at the Centre from 1 June to 30 November 2012 and served as academic director for a conference entitled 'The Place of European Jewry in the Global Jewish Community' held on 19–20 November 2012. He programmed and chaired sessions, and presented a paper on 'Anti-Semitism as Controversy', in which he examined how the act of defining and measuring anti-Semitism is enmeshed in increasingly fraught controversies. Other speakers – Jonathan Boyd, Dave Rich and Haim Fireberg – discussed this in a wider European context. While previous generations of Jew-haters acknowledged their hatred, the accusation of anti-Semitism today is frequently rejected by those accused of it. The reasons for this include the relation of Israel to anti-Semitism, the legacy of the Holocaust and the rise of multiculturalism. He concluded that although there is some consensus about 'core' forms of anti-Semitism (principally neo-Nazi anti-Semitism and some kinds of physical attacks on Jews) claims and denials of anti-Semitism circulate concerning a 'periphery' of other forms.

Future work will address the question of whether there is such a thing as European Jewry, or whether it is a multiple phenomenon, and how to draw the boundaries of 'Europe' in a Jewish context.

Professor Lawrence Kaplan

Professor Lawrence Kaplan of McGill University, Montreal, stayed at the Centre from 18 April to 13 June 2013 and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. His own research focused on the way academic talmudic scholarship has entered Israeli Religious Zionist yeshivot, releasing what he calls the 'Spectre of the Historical Development of the Halakhah'. The issue of halakhic development and the theological challenges it raises go back to Zechariah Frankel and were taken up more recently by Louis Jacobs. These have now expanded beyond the world of the university or modern rabbinical seminary to the traditional Yeshivah.

Jonathan Garb recently noted the revival in Israeli Haredi society of spirit-

ualist practice and doctrine. Professor Kaplan now observes parallel signs of searching and creativity in the Israeli Religious Zionist community. One important manifestation of this spiritual and intellectual search and creativity is in the development of new methods of teaching Talmud over the past two decades in Israeli Religious Zionist yeshivot. His analysis focuses on those *Rashei Yeshivah* (yeshivah deans) and *Ramim* (talmudic lecturers) who have sought to integrate academic talmudic scholarship into their *shi'urim* (talmudic lectures) and *Batei Midrash* (study houses), and the theological issues raised by this integration.

Perhaps the most thoughtful and articulate example of such a *Rosh Yeshivah* was the late Rav Shagar (Shimon Gershon Rosenberg), whose method of teaching Talmud Professor Kaplan calls the *shiluv* approach, a term that implies forming a new and harmonious whole. The approach, to cite Rav Shagar, 'has as its goal the cleaving [to the divine] which reveals itself in the uncovering of the existential significance and meaning [*mashma'ut*] of the *sugya* [unit of talmudic discourse], and the method it adopts is that of uncovering this meaning through joining together [*shiluv*] the tools of traditional conceptual analysis, *lomdus*, and those of [historical-critical] scholarship [*keilim lamdaniyyim ve-mehkariyim*].

Integrating academic historical-critical scholarship and its diachronic approach into Israeli Religious Zionist yeshivot raises the spectre of the historical development of the halakhah, challenging its authority as a divinely revealed system of Law. This is aggravated by the search for significance advocated by the *shiluv* approach, implying that the development of rabbinic law was fuelled by shifts or even revolutions in values among rabbinic Sages.

But can Orthodox *Rashei Yeshivah* admit that shifts in values occurred among the Sages; and if they did occur, how to account for it? Professor Kaplan has examined the various responses to such questions offered by advocates of the *shiluv* approach, such as, in addition to Rav Shagar, Rabbis Elisha Anselovits, David Bigman, Meir Lichtenstein, Yaakov Nagen and Avi Walfish.

Professor James Kugel

Professor James Kugel of Bar-Ilan University stayed at the Centre from 23 January to 6 February, 3 to 8 March and 20 May to 9 June, and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. During this time he put a few finishing touches on a forthcoming book, *The Kingly Sanctuary*, which addresses a number of issues connected to the position of Orthodoxy in today's world.

At the same time he worked on a longer study, tentatively entitled *Souls into Selves*, in which he hopes to examine some of the theological suppositions evidenced in a number of biblical and Second Temple period texts. He presented a chapter of this work at one of the regular Yarnton seminars. In a few spare moments he also checked the proofs of a forthcoming anthology of Second Temple literature, *Outside the Bible*, which he co-edited with Louis Feldman and Lawrence Schiffman.

Professor Paul Morris

Professor Paul Morris of Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, stayed at the Centre from 7 January to 15 March and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. He worked on a book with the working title *Radical Jewish Theologies*, tracing modern Jewish theologies after the Shoah and the establishment of the State of Israel in novel ways. Jewish encounters with modernity have included a series of traumatic events, theologically framed in terms of Auschwitz theodicies, *Medinat Yisrael*, and diverse forms of Judaism, contained, and constrained, within the spaces allotted to religion in modern nation-states.

The first section of the monograph, on which he focused during his Oxford fellowship, explores changing Jewish understandings of revelation. This has traditionally been understood in very different ways from the hyper-literality of Midrash and Kabbalah to the hyper-rationalism of medieval Jewish philosophers.

His research commenced with Louis Jacobs's stated intention in his *A Jewish Theology* (1973) that while a Jewish theology might necessarily be apologetic it must also be 'intellectually honest' and 'without subterfuge'. This was the platform for an exploration of the meaning of theology by Jewish thinkers from the seventeenth century to the present and the significant communal contexts of their debates and discussions about revelation. For example, for Jacobs, biblical criticism raised a new set of issues rendering impossible literal readings of the biblical revelation, *Torah mi-Sinai*. Jacobs went on to develop his own original view of non-traditional, non-literal revelation by distinguishing revelation itself from the record of revelation, that is, the written and transmitted accounts of revelation. The former is revelation of God himself while the latter is always a step removed and a later interpretation of the content of revelation. He called this 'liberal supernaturalism'; liberal

in relation to biblical criticism but supernaturalist in relation to the reality of God.

The second part of the monograph explores the new materialism as an opportunity for Jewish theologians to liberate themselves from medieval ontologies and Newtonian physics in favour of the foundation of a more sophisticated and dynamic view of material life. The increasing understanding that matter and force are more intimately related than mandated by Newtonian physics is suggestive of a new materialist theology where order is implicit within subtle matter and where the deity does not merely act on a separate creation but is integral to it. Re-reading Jewish sources about God in this light offers new understandings of God in relation to creation and humanity. This complex materialism resonates with a God unable to be pinned down to either substance or relational force. This view also provides a lens to re-view the Jewish traditions of ritual and reflective practice. This radical way of re-thinking is read alongside modern theologies of Halakhah in developing a new materialist theology of Jewish religious practice that locates us more evidently within nature.

The third part of the book links revelation to community and develops a radical Jewish political theology. The democracy of modern Jewish learning reflecting a wider democratization of the acquisition and use of knowledge challenges traditional rabbinic elitism. The ethical challenges of feminist thinking too require a new knowledge equity within communities. The new materialism fosters a new view of Jewish community, more inclusive, based on a material field rather than on more constructivist accounts. The final section promotes a radical new materialist view of Jewish sovereignty in Israel and beyond.

Professor Morris also gave a lecture entitled 'Is Revelation a Problem in Modern Jewish Theology?' at King's College London; a David Patterson Seminar at Yarnnton on 'Jews and Human Rights: The Individual Right to Belong', looking at circumcision and the human rights of religious communities and their children; and a public lecture in the context of the Seminar about 'Louis Jacobs's "Heretical Sermon" on the Theology of Revelation', Arguments For Heaven's Sake!' in conjunction with Friends of Louis Jacobs in London.

Dr Amir Paz-Fuchs

Dr Amir Paz-Fuchs of Ono Academic College and the University of Tel-Aviv was a non-resident Visiting Scholar from 1 October 2012 to 20 August 2013, and focused on developing the foundations for a long-term study of the interaction between national and economic dynamics in the Israeli welfare state.

Welfare states tend to have identities which survive those changes in government which sometimes lead to changes in policy. A transformative upheaval of the kind and depth experienced by the Israeli welfare state is exceptional, and deserves special attention.

Neo-liberal ideologies, latent and disparaged in Israel's first thirty years, gained credence, ideologically and professionally, following the financial meltdown that occurred in the early 1980s. But controlling the labour market and Jewish ownership of land, central tenets of the Zionist movement, remained central to the ethos of modern Israel. The two streams of policy – privatization and withdrawal of the state on the one hand; central control of land and labour on the other hand – seem in tension, if not conflicted.

Dr Paz-Fuchs's research challenges this stylized picture in three closely related respects. First, the picture assumes a strong relationship between government forfeit of resources and a transfer of power to the market. In contrast, he argues that on several occasions Israeli government has gained *more* power, and was enabled to advance its interests *more* successfully, because of and following privatization. Second, privatization, outsourcing and a retreat from universalist policies were driven not only by fiscal concerns but by ethno-nationalists interests. And third, analysis shows that the role of the legal system and the judiciary's desire to uphold equality between Jews and Arabs were not only forces that drove Israel towards privatization, but paradoxically exacerbated discrimination.

Professor Gary Rendsburg

Professor Gary Rendsburg of Rutgers University, New Jersey, stayed at the Centre from 6 June to 19 December 2012 and worked on a book entitled *How the Bible Is Written*, in which he studies the stylistics of Biblical Hebrew prose and poetry. He presented a portion of his research as a paper entitled 'Literary and Linguistic Matters in the Book of Proverbs' at an Old Testament Seminar held at the Theology Faculty.

He also completed work involved in his associate editorship of the *Encyclopaedia of the Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, published by Brill in 2013, which promises to become a standard reference work. In this context he wrote two long entries: 'Kinship Terms' (with Jeremy Smoak) and 'Negation (Biblical Hebrew)' (with Jacobus Naudé).

New horizons were explored in a David Patterson Seminar entitled 'Scroll Down: Classical Jewish Texts on the Internet', in which he surveyed the digitalization and increasing availability of Hebrew manuscripts of all genres

from before the age of printing. He demonstrated how the manuscript tradition provides for alternative readings which reflect not only minor linguistic differences, but major theological ones.

Professor Rendsburg additionally delivered lectures at the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), the University of Nottingham, the University of Birmingham, and the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society, and travelled to Amsterdam, Dublin and Tel-Aviv to present talks or attend conferences.

He benefited from access to the holdings of the Bodleian Library, the Ashmolean Museum, the Genizah Project in Cambridge, the British Library and the British Museum, and explored the medieval Jewish history of York and Lincoln.

Professor Jacob Joshua Ross

Professor Jacob Ross of the University of Tel-Aviv stayed at the Centre from 23 April to 14 June and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. The focus of his project was the claim that God speaks, and the philosophical problems that this involves.

He referred particularly to Nicolas Wolterstorff's book, *Divine Discourse*, based on his Wilde lectures at the University of Oxford in 1993, which enlists the speech-act theory of J. L. Austin to defend the notion that God can speak and that the Bible could constitute a mode of religious discourse. Citing St Augustine's conversion to Christianity after studying a text from the New Testament, which he interpreted as God speaking to him, Wolterstorff argued that God speaks in prophecy and through liturgy as well as via the text of legal sources and through events. Ross examined the force of Wolterstorff's rejection of criticism of 'authorial intention' developed by modern Continental Hermeneutic philosophers such as Ricoeur and Derrida, as well as Maimonides's denial that God really speaks. He offered an interpretation which illustrated that Wolterstorff was not far from Maimonides's own theory when properly understood. On the basis of these remarks, Ross hopes to address the efforts of modern Orthodox thinkers, following Jacobs, to offer interpretations of Torah as the word of God, as suggested by various Jewish theologians.

Professor Tamar Ross

Professor Tamar Ross of Bar-Ilan University stayed at the Centre from 23 to 26 January and from 23 April to 14 June, and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. In the opening session she lectured on various responses developed by Orthodox Judaism to the challenges of biblical scholarship since that of Jacobs over fifty years ago, assessing their strengths, weaknesses and theological viability.

In Trinity Term she sought to address the theological dilemma of Orthodoxy, engaging with participants in the group who were actively involved with related questions. Is it possible to reach some vision of Torah that accepts naturalist descriptions of its development without descending into reductionism, and at the same time to acknowledge the all-pervasiveness of its human dimensions without lapsing into selectivity regarding its divine origin and authority? Ross's contention that the answers to such questions are the province of theology, epistemology and philosophy rather than empiric investigation, leads her to a closer examination of the meaning of belief in revelation and God in the context of a modern Orthodox way of life.

While adopting a cultural linguistic approach to religious truth claims, she reaches beyond constructivist attitudes to seek some middle ground between realism and the language-game approach to Torah from Heaven, one that will fulfil religion's purpose and power, but not raise the paradoxes of representation. In addition to blurring the sharp distinction between the divine and the human in the transmission of God's word, she argues that it is possible to have a notion of divine reality without committing to a concept of God that makes the divine completely independent of our subjective perceptions.

Professor Ross delivered a second lecture at the Centre elaborating these views, and prepared a written version for publication.

Professor Yosef Salmon

Professor Yosef Salmon of Ben-Gurion University stayed at the Centre from 5 February to 15 March 2013 and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. He delivered one lecture on the history and current forms of Jewish Ultra-Orthodoxy, based in part on material in the Muller Library, and another

about rabbinical attitudes to Christianity from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, showing how positions changed from liberal to conservative and hostile. He suggested that this shift in attitudes had more to do with internal Jewish fights between Orthodoxy and Reform than with Christianity itself.

Dr Avi Sasson

Dr Avi Sasson of Ashkelon Academic College stayed at the Centre from 25 February to 6 June and worked on a study of holy tombs in Israel as officially sponsored locations designed to promote national and social legitimacy. Unlike tombs of saints in the Jerusalem area, for which there are relatively solid traditions, graves in the north are based on evidence of various degrees of certainty, some very slight. Visits by pilgrims help diffuse these doubts, as does government keenness to adopt popular cults and traditions as official institutions.

Official bureaucracy almost totally ignores tombs in the south, however. These are of more modern saints or in locations with little identificatory evidence. Jews from North Africa have a strong tradition of establishing new sites by private initiative. The southern town of Netivot is now a centre for memorializing the prominent Baba Sali, creating a 'sacred space' to which the bones of other saints are also brought from abroad.

Visits to such sites, located close to where most visitors live, are accompanied by *Hilula* ceremonies – eating and drinking which are not necessarily religious in nature – unlike the more formal cult of saints in the north. Politicians keen to recruit electoral power participate in ceremonies held at such tombs, helping to bring the Mizrahi population in the south – which sees itself as excluded in terms of culture, the media and politics – closer to the centre of society. The Baba Sali's tomb in Netivot is now included on the Ministry of Tourism website, along with tombs near Jerusalem and in the north, showing how Israeli civil religion employs tradition to strengthen modern national awareness, enabling Mizrahi ethnic groups to play a role in public life.

Professor Chaim I. Waxman

Professor Chaim Waxman of Rutgers University, New Jersey, and Van Leer Jerusalem Institute stayed at the Centre from 17 January to 12 March 2013 and participated in the 'Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies – Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. He conducted research into

changes in Orthodox Judaism in the United States between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries.

He delivered a seminar talk entitled 'Adapting While Decrying Change: The Case of American Orthodox Judaism' at the Oriental Institute, a David Patterson Seminar on 'The Religious Factor in American Jewish Identity', and a talk entitled 'Orthodox Judaism in Transition: An Oxymoron?' to the Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies, in which he analysed Orthodox responses and the way these addressed change.

He also gave a talk entitled 'Conversion: Conflict and Context' at the ORT Conference Centre in London on behalf of the Oxford Centre.

Dr Dov Waxman

Dr Dov Waxman of Baruch College, City University of New York, stayed at the Centre from 1 October to 20 December 2012, during which time he completed the research for and began to draft the opening chapters of a book on the contemporary politics of the American Jewish community, especially concerning Israel. The first chapter examines why American Jews support Israel and charts how their attitudes towards Israel have evolved over time. The second explores the argument about Israel currently raging in the American Jewish community, as the former political consensus over Israel breaks down.

He also gave a number of lectures, including a David Patterson Seminar entitled 'The New Jewish Question: Diaspora Jewish Politics after Zionism', and a talk on 'The Rise and Fall of Zionism' at St John's College. He delivered a lecture entitled 'Losing the Faith? American Jews and Israel' at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and gave a presentation on 'Political Trends in Europe and their Impact on the Future of European Jewry' in the conference at the Centre on 'The Place of European Jewry in the Global Jewish Community'.

MSt in Jewish Studies, University of Oxford

Eight North American students studied at the Centre this year, hailing from Canada and the United States of America. Three graduated (one with distinction); one student withdrew from the programme for personal reasons; two suspended their studies and will return next year to complete the course, and the other two intend to fulfil the course requirements next year. Fellows and Lectors of the Centre taught most of the courses and languages presented in the MSt programme, with additional modules provided by Professor Glenda Abramson, Professor of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Oxford University; Dr Garth Gilmour, Research Associate, Institute of Archaeology, Oxford University; Professor Sir Fergus Millar FBA, Emeritus Camden Professor of Ancient History, Oxford University; Dr Deborah Rooke, Regent's Park College; and Dr Zoë Waxman, Senior Associate of the Centre. Dr Alison Salvesen served as Course Coordinator and Martine Smith-Huvers, Academic Registrar, together with Sue Forteach, administered the course.

Courses

This year's students studied either Biblical or Modern Hebrew or Yiddish. In addition, they selected four courses from the list below and submitted dissertations. The following courses were offered during the 2012–2013 academic year:

A Survey of Rabbinic Literature *Dr Joanna Weinberg*

Eastern European Jewish Culture: Tradition, Crisis and Innovation

Dr Zehavit Stern

Introduction to the Archaeology of Ancient Israel: The Iron Age

Dr Garth Gilmour

Jewish History 200 BCE to 70 CE *Professor Martin Goodman*

Jewish Liturgy *Dr Jeremy Schonfield*

Jews in Early Modern Europe, 1492–1789 *Dr Joshua Teplitsky*

Modern European Jewish History *Dr David Rechter*

Septuagint and Related Studies *Dr Alison Salvesen*

The Diaspora in the Roman Empire: Jews, Pagans and Christians to 450 CE

Professor Sir Fergus Millar

The Emergence of Modern Religious Movements in Judaism

Dr Miri Freud-Kandel

The Holocaust: From History to Memory *Dr Zoë Waxman*

The Religion of Israel *Dr Deborah Rooke*

Topics in Hebrew Literature 1929–1982 *Professor Glenda Abramson*

Languages:

Biblical Hebrew (elementary) *Dr Stephen Herring*

Modern Hebrew (intermediate) *Daphna Witztum*

Yiddish (elementary, advanced) *Dr Khayke Beruriah Wiegand*

The Students Graduating This Year

Allison (Lee) Kolb Lipton (b. 1987) from Portland, Oregon, graduated from Reed College in Religious Studies, specializing in Judaic Studies, with particular emphasis on classical rabbinics, kabbalah and modern messianic thought. She then studied History at graduate level for a year at Portland State University before coming to Oxford to take the MSt. She is particularly interested in accounts of dybbuk possession, as well as the story of the Maiden of Ludmir, whose legacy as an historical individual has become 'folk-history' of sorts, cross-pollinating with various cultural idioms within Hasidism. Her dissertation was entitled 'The Maiden of Ludmir: A Case for Transgressing Gender in Hasidic Folklore'.

Jordan Ceilidh Paul (b. 1988) from Toronto, graduated from McGill University in Religious Studies and Middle East Studies, and has a Master's Degree in Religious Studies from Queen's University, Kingston. She is interested in modern Jewish literature in Eastern Europe, North America and Israel and in tracing the 'influence of religious texts and identities on political and cultural change in several key periods from the Bible to modernity'. Her dissertation was entitled 'The Use of Religious Language in Yehuda Amichai's *Open Closed Open*: A Counter-Theology of Human Love'. Ms Paul passed the MSt with Distinction.

Amy Catherine Winkle (b. 1976) graduated in Economics from Furman University, South Carolina, and has a Master's in Theology from Columbia Theological Seminary, Georgia, and another in Divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary, Kentucky, in which she specialized in the Bible and Christian texts. She discovered how to appreciate the context of the text and the reader and became interested in the identity constructions of Israel during the exilic and post-exilic periods. Her dissertation was entitled 'LXX Isaiah and its Relationship to Issues in Alexandrian Jewish Identity: A Survey of Recent Scholarship'.

End-of-year Party

At the end-of-year party held at Yarnton Manor on Wednesday 19 June 2013, the Academic Director, Professor Martin Goodman, welcomed students, their guests, the visiting fellows and scholars. He complimented the students on completing the intensive MSt programme. Ms Paul Jordan, the Student Representative, thanked the Centre, Fellows and all other Staff members on behalf of the students.

Acknowledgements

The Centre wishes to record its thanks to the Dorset Foundation who assisted with the 'Harry M. Weinrebe' scholarships this year, the Marc Rich Foundation for the Marc Rich Foundation Master's Degree in Jewish Studies Student Scholarship and the Dov Biegun Scholarship.

Journal of Jewish Studies

With the death of Professor Geza Vermes FBA, FEA, of Oxford University, on 8 May 2013, the *Journal of Jewish Studies* has lost its long-standing editor of over forty years. Professor Vermes was appointed editor in 1971, following a difficult period in the fortunes of the *Journal*. Under his editorship and vision it rapidly thrived, becoming one of the world-leading journals in the field. An obituary highlighting his devoted and entirely voluntary contribution to the *Journal* has been published in Volume 64, no. 2 (Autumn 2013). A more general obituary can be found on pages 270–1 of this *Report*.

Professor Vermes remained fully active in the *Journal's* work until his very last days. During the academic year 2012–2013, the *Journal* continued its regular publication under his editorship, together with Professor Sacha Stern of University College London as co-editor, and Dr Andrea Schatz of King's College London as book-reviews editor. This is the final report of Professor Vermes's editorship of the *Journal*.

Volume 63, no. 2 (Autumn 2012) includes a wide range of articles, from Jewish magic in late Antiquity to Albert Einstein's views on Zionism, with contributions by Gideon Bohak, Dan Levene and several others.

Volume 64, no. 1 (Spring 2013) includes a number of articles on language, ranging from Josephus's Latin terminology (by Joseph Sievers) to Modern Hebrew in the pre-State period, as well as an article by Sacha Stern entitled 'Compulsive libationers: non-Jews and wine in early rabbinic sources' (see illustration).

Both issues end with lengthy book-review sections.

The recently redesigned print version of the *Journal* has been further improved under the direction of the executive editor Margaret Vermes. The *Style Guide for Contributors*, which serves as the template for young, often inexperienced authors, has been further refined with the standardization of literary abbreviations, footnote references and the transliteration of non-Latin languages such as Hebrew, pointed Hebrew, Greek and Arabic.

The *Journal* has taken first steps to comply with the Government-led Open Access initiative, which will result in some articles being made freely available online.

The second volume of the *Journal's* Supplement Series is being released under the title *The Image and its Prohibition in Jewish Antiquity*, edited by Sarah



*The libation ritual. Woman with a jug pouring wine over the soldier's phiale onto the ground. Original in Louvre G54 bis (stamnos). Drawing by F. Lissarrague in O. Murray and M. Tecuşan (eds) *In Vino Veritas* (London: British School at Rome, 1995) 126–44.*

Pearce, Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Southampton. The *Journal* is proud to be its sole publisher. This richly illustrated book with fifty images includes ten essays by leading experts focusing on the interpretation of the Second Commandment in the ancient and late-antique Jewish world. It explores the tension between the biblical prohibition of images on the one hand, and the extensive evidence for representational Jewish art on the other.

The European Association for Jewish Studies

The European Association for Jewish Studies (EAJS) is the sole umbrella organization representing the academic field of Jewish Studies in Europe. Its main aims are to promote and support teaching and research in Jewish studies at European universities and other institutions of higher education, and to further an understanding of the importance of Jewish culture and civilization and of the impact it has had on European cultures over many centuries.

The EAJS organizes annual Colloquia in Oxford and quadrennial Congresses in various European locations. These major academic events are attended by scholars from all over Europe as well as from other parts of the world. In July 2012 the annual EAJS Summer Colloquium, which was held at Yarnton, was entitled ‘*Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Europe: Comparative Perspectives’. The 2013 colloquium, which took place in Oxford in July, was entitled ‘The *Jewish-Theological Seminar of Breslau*, the “Science of Judaism” and the Development of a Conservative Movement in Germany, Europe and the United States (1854–1933)’. The colloquium was held in memory of Francesca Y. Albertini z”l (1974–2011). Details of all EAJS congresses and colloquia are available on the EAJS website (<http://eurojewishstudies.org>).

Other ongoing projects of the EAJS include the *European Journal of Jewish Studies*, published by Brill, the Association’s website that incorporates a number of online news and information features, a New Books page, a monthly Newsflash, the online Directory of Jewish Studies in Europe, and the EAJS Funders Database. The last mentioned is part of the EAJS Funding Advisory Service which aims to collate a comprehensive database of Jewish Studies-related funding and grant opportunities throughout Europe for its members. In December 2012 this service was extended to include personal advice for EAJS members from the Funding Information Consultant.

The EAJS was founded as a voluntary academic association in 1981, and its Secretariat has been based at Yarnton Manor since 1995. In 2010 the Association became a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity (Charity Commission no. 1136128). It is currently administered by Dr Garth Gilmour, and managed by the EAJS Secretary, Professor Daniel Langton (University of Manchester).

Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies

The Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies, an associated institute of the Centre, this year published volume 25 of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*. This volume, edited by Šarunas Liekis, Antony Polonsky and Chaeran Freeze, was devoted to the subject of ‘Jews in the Former Grand Duchy of Lithuania since 1772’. The chapters in this volume reflect new approaches to Jewish history in Lithuanian territories and the often very difficult legacy of Lithuanian–Jewish relations. They cover the specific character of Lithuanian Jewry, the way relations between Jews and Lithuanians developed in the years after 1772, first under tsarist rule and then in independent Lithuania, the devastating impact on the Jewish community and on Lithuanian–Jewish relations of the Soviet and Nazi occupations of the country between 1940 and 1944, the further negative consequences on Jewish life of the reoccupation of the country by the Soviets between 1944 and 1990 and finally the slow revival of Jewish life since independence, including the attempts which have been made since then both to investigate the Lithuanian Jewish past and to come to terms with the difficult legacy of the Holocaust.

In December a one-day international conference convened by Professor Antony Polonsky and coordinated by Dr François Guesnet was held to launch the volume, disseminate its chief findings and discuss a series of relevant topics in some depth. Organized in cooperation with the Institute for Jewish Studies at University College London, the conference was generously sponsored by the Lithuanian Embassy, the American Association for Polish–Jewish Studies, the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies of Brandeis University, the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe, and the Polish Cultural Institute, London. The opening speeches contained some significant statements. The ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania, H.E. Asta Skaisgiryte-Liauškiene, said that ‘for hundreds of years, Lithuanian Jewry was part of the educated and the intellectual elite of the society. Ninety years ago they took a very active part in the process of creating the republic of Lithuania. They were elected to the Lithuanian parliament, took up diplomatic posts and served in the army [...] We acknowledge the responsibility of those [ethnic Lithuanians] who collaborated with the Nazis and killed thousands of Jews [...] There can be no pardon for what they have done.’ A letter from Sir Sigmund Sternberg, president of the Institute for Polish–Jewish Studies, was then read out. He

wrote that the embassy’s participation in this event should be ‘regarded as a positive development. I am well aware, as are we all, of the distress felt by some Lithuanian Jews – survivors or the children of survivors of the Nazi-fascist Holocaust – of what they regard as blatantly anti-Semitic acts against them. We share their hope that this conference – with its wide view of a bitter-sweet relationship which has spanned the centuries – will go a long way to improving understanding between all the democratic elements in Lithuania and demonstrate the concern of the government to combat bigotry and prejudice wherever it manifests itself.’

The theme of the conference was ‘Jews and non-Jews in Lithuania: Co-existence, Cooperation, Violence’. Speakers came from Israel, Lithuania, Poland, the UK and the USA, and included a number of senior Lithuanian scholars as well as representatives of the Jewish community of Lithuania. The programme included papers on the origins of ‘Litvak’ Jewish identity; the Lithuanian Jewish *musar* movement; early Lithuanian–Jewish relations; the effects of war and communism on Lithuanian Jewish life; anti-Semitism in Lithuania in the late nineteenth century and in Lithuanian political culture during the inter-war period; and a survey of the main historiographic problems in accounting for the Holocaust in Lithuania. There was also a round-table discussion on contemporary Lithuanian–Jewish relations. The conference was attended by more than 120 people, and it concluded with the screening of a moving Yiddish documentary, *Jewish Life in Vilna*, produced by Yitzhak Goskin in Poland in 1939.

On the eve of the conference the Lithuanian embassy hosted a one-day workshop on the theme ‘No Simple Stories: Jewish–Lithuanian Relations in Historical Perspective’. Two important recent books were launched on this occasion, one edited by Vladas Sirutavičius and Darius Staliūnas, *A Pragmatic Alliance: Jewish–Lithuanian Political Cooperation at the Beginning of the 20th Century* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), and the most recent issue (vol. 21) of *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, devoted to Jewish–Lithuanian relations. Speakers included H.E. Asta Skaisgiryte-Liauškiene, Dr Darius Staliūnas of the Institute of History in Vilnius, Dr François Guesnet of University College London, Mr Vivian Wineman, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and Ms Faina Kukliansky, deputy president of the Jewish community of Lithuania.

In November the Institute organized a panel discussion entitled ‘Europe and the Holocaust: Shifts in Public Debates in Poland, Germany, and the United Kingdom’. This was co-sponsored by the Polish Cultural Institute, London,

and the European Institute of University College London. The speakers were Professor David Cesarani (Royal Holloway, University of London), Professor Jacek Leociak (Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw), and Dr Ulrich Baumann (Deputy Director, Foundation for the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin), with Dr François Guesnet (UCL) in the chair; about 80 people attended. The discussion focused on the impact of institutions of Holocaust education, shifts in public opinion and the role of 'historical-moral debates' such as the public discussions in Poland of the massacre in Jedwabne in 1941.

In May, an event dedicated to the wartime diaries of Edmund Kessler, a lawyer in Lwów/Lemberg, took place at University College London. Renata Kessler, the editor of the diaries and the daughter of their author, discussed with Professor Antony Polonsky and an audience of around two dozen guests the events surrounding the German invasion and the end of Soviet occupation in the summer of 1941. The local Jewish population, including numerous Jewish refugees who had arrived from German-occupied central Poland after 1939, fell victim to horrific persecution and mass murder, carried out by the Germans though often with eager support by the local Ukrainian population. The Kessler family survived thanks to the selfless help of a local farmer's family, offering shelter to a dozen Jews for an extended period of time.

Looted Art Research Unit

The International Research Portal for Records Related to Nazi-Era Cultural Property gained considerable momentum over the past year, two years after the signing of a global agreement in Washington DC to widen public access to all records relating to looted cultural property from the Nazi era. The Director, as a member of the three-person Executive Board, co-organized a meeting in May of existing and new participants at The National Archives in Kew, which was opened by Oliver Morley, Chief Executive and Keeper of The National Archives, and by the US Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, Douglas Davidson.

As a result of invitations issued by the Director, twenty-two institutions from across Europe and the USA are now members of the Portal, which is hosted by the US National Archives, and provides access to a large range of records, many of them digitized. These include government documents, art and dealer records, Nazi confiscation records and postwar claims records, all of which are essential evidence in supporting the work of claimants, historians and researchers.

Notable new members include the General Settlement Fund (GSF) and National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, whose recently created online *Findbuch for Victims of National Socialism* is a remarkably comprehensive resource and database of records relating to individuals and property available in Austria, searchable by individual, family, company and other categories. The records include Aryanization files (*Arisierungsakten*) and Asset Registrations (*Vermögensanmeldungen*) from the holdings of the National Socialist Property Registration Office (*Vermögensverkehrsstelle*). A list of confiscated assets compiled after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 is available, as are documents and files on Nazi property seizures (1938–1945), the files of the Restitution Commissions at the Provincial Courts, the Financial Directorate (*Finanzlandesdirektion*), the Collection Agencies (*Sammelstellen*) A and B and the Compensation Fund. The *Findbuch* currently offers 129,017 records and is continually being expanded. As such, it is one of the most comprehensive collections of information on property seizures during the National Socialist era, and on restitution and postwar compensation measures on the territory of the Republic of Austria. (See Plates 1 and 2.)

New dealer and art historical records available through the Portal include the



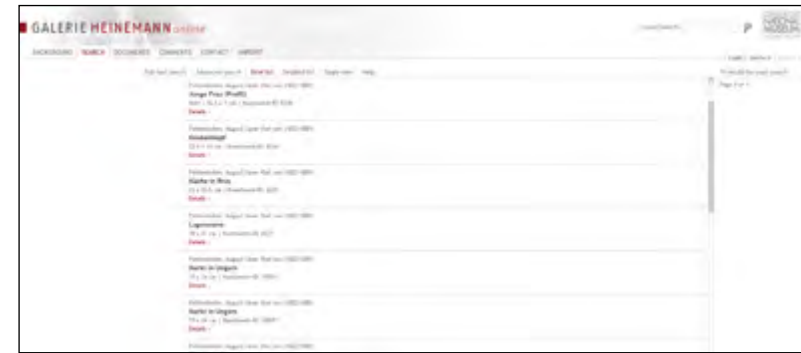
1. The first page of the 1938 Asset Registration of Konsul Gottlieb Kraus available on the Findbuch site.

2. A listing of shares belonging to Gottlieb Kraus set out in his Asset Registration, available through the Findbuch site.

Verzeichnis über das Vermögen von Konsul Gottlieb Kraus mit der Frau Mathilde Kraus, Wien, IV., Wohlthurngasse 22.

Schriftliche Wertpapiere.

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| 24. 100 Aktien Wiener B. | 100,- | 24.000,- |
| 25. 20 Aktien Laurahütte A | 12 1/2 S | 2.500,- |
| 26. 10 Aktien Deutsche Bank | 270,- | 27.000,- |
| 27. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 10 1/2 S | 2.100,- |
| 28. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 70,- | 700,- |
| 29. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 30,70 | 307,00 |
| 30. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 120,- | 1.200,- |
| 31. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 120,1/2 S | 1.201,50 |
| 32. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 120,- | 1.200,- |
| 33. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 30,- | 300,- |
| 34. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 140,- | 1.400,- |
| 35. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 11,500 | 11.500,- |
| 36. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 120,- | 1.200,- |
| 37. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 120,- | 1.200,- |
| 38. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 120,- | 1.200,- |
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| 41. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 120,- | 1.200,- |
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| 43. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 120,- | 1.200,- |
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| 45. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 120,- | 1.200,- |
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| 100. 10 Aktien Wiener B. | 120,- | 1.200,- |



3. The website of Galerie Heinemann, Munich, showing the sale of a number of pictures by the much-collected nineteenth-century Austrian painter August Pettenkofen.

digitized records of the *Galerie Heinemann* Munich. The *Galerie Heinemann* Munich was founded in 1872 by David Heinemann (1819–1902) and was numbered among the most important art dealerships in Germany until its Aryanization in 1938. The gallery, which operated internationally, had several branch offices in cities such as Frankfurt am Main, Nice and New York. It specialized in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century German art, but also dedicated itself to English, French and Spanish art. The digitized records focus on the period 1890–1939, and provide information on approximately 43,500 important paintings from all centuries as well as on around 13,000 persons and institutions associated with the acquisition or sale of these paintings. Dealer records can be of critical importance in enabling a looted painting to be unambiguously identified and therefore recovered. Often seizure records provide little detail of size or subject, beyond a general title such as ‘Landscape’ or ‘Portrait of a man’. By locating the prior provenance records – most importantly the acquisition record showing when and where the family acquired it – those details can be filled in, so proving beyond reasonable doubt that this was the looted painting. (See Plate 3.)

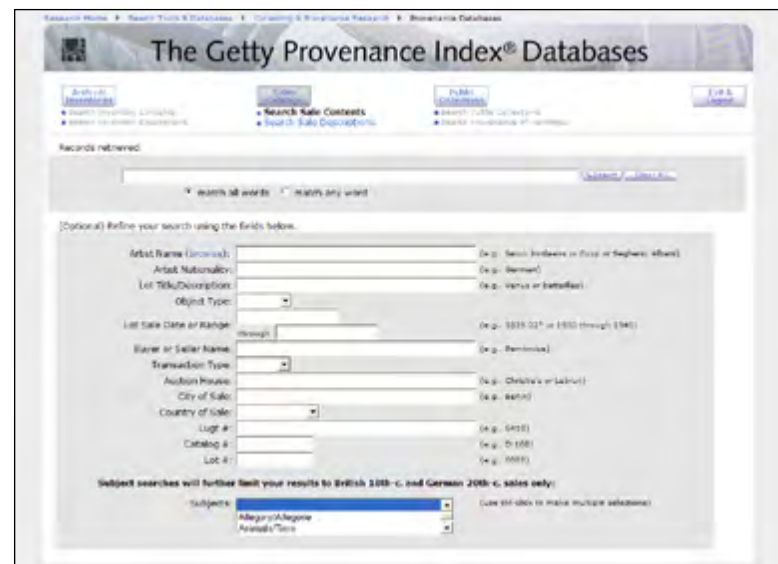
The Getty Research Institute project, *German Sales Catalogs, 1930–1945*, together with the Heidelberg University Library projects entitled *German Sales 1930–1945. Art Works, Art Markets, and Cultural Policy*, and *Art – Auctions – Provenances. The German Art Trade as Reflected in Auction Catalogues from 1901 to 1929*, have transformed provenance research for the Nazi era. The two projects provide over 4000 newly digitized sales catalogues published in Austria,



4. An index card recording the sale of one of the paintings to a Hungarian collector in 1917, showing how such documents can be used to substantiate ownership.

Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland between 1900 and 1945, drawn from 35 German, Swiss and Austrian libraries. More than 500,000 individual auction sales records for paintings, sculptures and drawings are available in these catalogue records, each of which is searchable according to a range of parameters.

Research by the Unit into a painting of skaters by Barent Avercamp (1612–79) that had been brought to its attention suggested that the painting was one of two versions of the work with the same dimensions, but with minor compositional variations between them. It was essential to clarify if there were indeed two versions and what the provenance was of each, in order to understand the status of the painting. A search through Heidelberg showed that one painting of this subject had appeared in the 1934 auction in Berlin of the art collection of Bernhard Albert Mayer of Mainz. Later catalogues showed a slightly different version which eventually came up for sale in London in 1996. However, this painting then appeared in a 1997 sale catalogue with identical composition to the 1934 painting. It transpired that the purchaser in 1996 had restored the painting, so revealing that it had been over-painted and that there was in fact only one painting of this subject by Avercamp. The Unit was then able to find photographs from 1936 showing that W. Paech, the German dealer who had acquired the painting after the Mayer sale, had subsequently ‘restored’ it, perhaps to make it less recognizable. (See Plates 4–8, and also the cover of this volume.)



5. The Getty search page, allowing one to search for artworks sold in German-speaking countries according to a wide range of search terms.

6. A catalogue of the Paul Graupe saleroom in Berlin, publicizing an auction of the art collection of Bernhard Albert Mayer in 1934, available on the Heidelberg website.

7. One of the paintings sold that day was ‘Winterlandschaft’, a work by the seventeenth-century Dutch artist Barent Avercamp.





8. A recent colour image of the painting by Avercamp identified in the Berlin sale of 1934 which reappeared for sale in London in 1997.

Other auction catalogues revealed that some seized property was not disguised, but rather marked with an asterisk to show openly that it came from 'Nichtarischer Besitz' (Non-Aryan Collections) and could be freely purchased. In the sale at Hans Lange, Berlin, on 18–19 November 1938 ten of the 22 collections on sale are marked with an asterisk and include the collections 'B., Wien', 'v. K., Berlin', 'O., Frankfurt a. M.', 'v. S., Berlin' and 'X., Wien'. Owners of some of these collections have still to be identified. (See Plate 9.)

Other catalogues reveal that it was the entire household property that was seized and sold. The auction catalogue of the firm Franz Menna of Cologne for 8 November 1935 shows that all the contents of the 'Villa Rollmann' (the house of Ernst and Mia Rollmann) had been seized and put on sale. The items that could be purchased by German buyers ran from paintings, household linen, cutlery and crockery, to pearl and diamond jewellery, the piano, furniture, carpets and curtains. The couple fled to Belgium and from there to France. Facing imminent deportation, Hans and Mia Rollmann committed suicide in Calais on 25 May 1940. (See Plates 10–11.)

The Italian Directorate General of Archives has made available through the Portal Italian government records on the expropriation and restitution of Jewish property. Expropriations began in 1938, and a government agency,

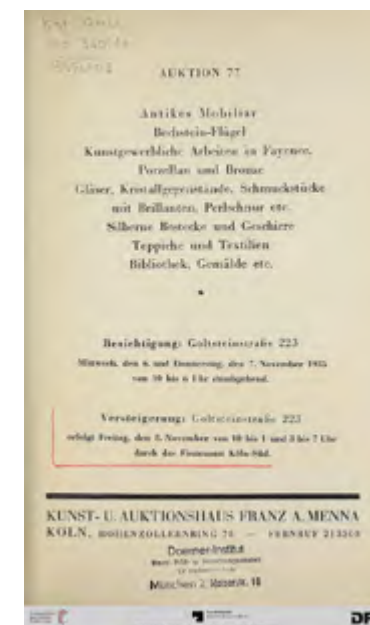
BESITZVERZEICHNIS

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9. In this page from a 1938 Hans Lange, Berlin, auction catalogue, collections bearing asterisks are identified in a footnote as belonging to 'non-Aryans', meaning that they had been expropriated and were available for purchase.

10. The cover of a catalogue of the sale of a Jewish property in Cologne in 1935, available on the Heidelberg website.

11. The details of this Cologne sale shows that it included all the family's household possessions as well as their paintings. The owners fled to France and, aware of their imminent deportation, committed suicide.



Ente di Gestione e Liquidazione Immobiliare, known as EGELI, was created to dispose of the expropriated properties, lists of which were published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* of the Fascist Republic in 1943 and 1944 and included 'properties' such as lamps, textiles, chairs and tables. The archive of EGELI correspondence is in the Central State Archive in Rome, but the files concerning the actual expropriations were kept in local offices of banks which were put in charge of selling the properties to Aryans at very low prices, especially between 1938 and 1943. The only complete archive of local EGELI operations is in Turin in the Fondazione San Paolo, as part of the archive of the San Paolo Bank. The archive has been studied by Fabio Levi, an Italian historian, who published *Le case e le cose. La persecuzione degli ebrei torinesi nelle carte dell'EGELI. 1938–1945* (Quaderni dell'archivio storico, Compagnia di San Paolo, Torino, 1998), about seizures in the Piedmont and Ligurian regions.

A special section of the SS had authority for seizing jewels and other kinds of art objects, including ancient silver ritual objects, from synagogues and homes. This was the fate of the *Biblioteca della Comunità ebraica* (Library of the Jewish Community) in Rome, which has never been found. It was seized by the Nazis in October 1943 together with the Library of the Italian Rabbinical College, and loaded onto German railway wagons. The libraries had been kept on different floors of the building which housed the offices of the Rome Jewish Community.

The Community's library consisted of works collected from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries in the five synagogues ('*scole*') and thirty confraternities located in the Rome ghetto which represented the community in earlier times. It included manuscripts, incunabulae and soncinati, as well as books printed in the sixteenth century by Bomberg, Bragadin and Giustiniani. There were also works printed in the early-sixteenth century in Constantinople, Salonica, Cracow and Lubin, and others of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from Venice and Livorno. Isaia Sonne, an expert who examined the library in the 1930s, stated that it contained approximately one quarter of the entire production of the Soncinos, a family of Jewish printers who worked in Italy and then moved to Salonica and Constantinople during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is estimated that the library consisted of around 7000 volumes primarily in Hebrew on religion, philosophy, kabbalah and related subjects.

A catalogue containing only 120 titles, chosen for their rarity and value by Isaia Sonne in 1934, includes a treatise on medicine by Avicenna translated from Latin in 1324, a treatise on fevers, *Aleh Raanan*, written by Abraham Caslari in 1325, other treatises on medicine, pharmacology and astronomy, a



12. A series of photos of ex libris stamps from the Library of the Jewish Community of Rome, the only surviving record of a series of important collections, including medieval Hebrew manuscripts and incunabulae, that remain lost.

codex containing a treatise on Jewish ethics translated from Arabic and dating to the second half of the fourteenth century, a codex from the second half of the fourteenth century containing a commentary on that of Averroes on the Organon of Aristotle, and a collection of ritual and legal responsa from the first half of the sixteenth century.

Only a small part of the Italian Rabbinical College's library has been recovered, and there is no trace of the Jewish Community's library, which is priceless both from a cultural and material point of view. Images of the ex libris are all that remain to identify the missing volumes. (See Plate 12.)

Claims records are another important new category of documentation available through the Portal, the most significant being the files of the Berlin Restitution Offices held at the Berlin State Archive (*Landesarchiv Berlin*). Following the enactment of the Restitution Decree (*Rücküberstellungsanordnung*, or REAO) in 1949, the Restitution Offices, located in West Berlin, began reviewing restitution claims submitted by victims of Nazi persecution. In 1957 the Federal Restitution Law (*Bundesrücküberstellungsgesetz*) was enacted, which also included property

The Leopold Muller Memorial Library

The Library continued to serve as the main resource for students of the MSt and for researchers at the Centre and the University, as well as in other academic institutions, during this academic year. It has gone from strength to strength, as demonstrated by the number of users and of donations, and by the fact that it was chosen by the New West End Synagogue to deposit the Western Hebrew Library, as detailed below. With an outstanding team of librarians in place, the Library is ready to continue to serve the needs of its users in Oxford and further afield.

The change in cataloguing standards from Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2) to the new Resource Description and Access (RDA), which was agreed to by all the major libraries in this country, has now taken place. All Library personnel took part in the training and are now certified RDA cataloguers. Three of us took part also in an online practical training specifically designed for Hebrew cataloguers and run by the RDA Hebraica Forum, and are now able to catalogue Hebrew and Yiddish records quickly and accurately.

The Library extends a welcome to the new Deputy Director, Milena Zeidler, appointed in October 2012, after a rigorous selection procedure. Ms Zeidler, the former Senior Assistant Librarian, started to demonstrate her usefulness and efficiency by organizing a one-day onsite training provided by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals on fundraising for libraries. In order to make the event possible, she extended the invitation to the wider Bodleian Libraries community in order to co-fund the workshop. As a result, a group of Oxford-based librarians specializing in fundraising decided to co-sponsor it and joined us on the day to address the need to improve the effectiveness of our fundraising strategies. Foremost, it is thanks to her powers of organization that the Louis Jacobs Exhibitions, both physical and digital, have come about.

The cataloguing of Library holdings has continued, adding over 1500 books to the OLIS University online catalogue in 2012–2013. Jane Barlow completed cataloguing training and was promoted to Assistant Librarian in April 2013 and, together with Dr Zsófia Buda, has been in charge of the bulk of the cataloguing. Dr Buda has made great progress in cataloguing the Hasidic material in the Louis Jacobs Library. Ms Barlow has started to organize the Loewe Family Archive. It is a measure of the team's achievement that since

the ALEPH system was introduced two years ago, the books, pamphlets and periodicals catalogued in the Leopold Muller Memorial Library represent a quarter of all the materials catalogued in the whole university system, including the Bodleian Library, one of the largest in the country.

The Deputy Director Milena Zeidler finished cataloguing the Sebag-Montefiore Archive, and produced a detailed inventory, listing the 865 records, many of them consisting of several items. This inventory will be an important resource for scholars interested in Sir Moses Montefiore.

We have hosted several visits, including the AGM of the Hebraica Libraries Group, a study-day for members of the Friends of Louis Jacobs group, and visits by the Newcomers Club, the Jewish Genealogical Society and two by members of the Alyth Reform Synagogue from London.

Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies

The Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies for the year 2012–2013, which began in Michaelmas Term, was entitled 'Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. The participants, from Europe, Israel and the USA, made use of the Library's holdings and particularly of Rabbi Louis Jacobs's personal library, given to us in 2006, to investigate Rabbi Jacobs's theological thought. The Seminar opened with a symposium entitled 'Orthodox Judaism and Theology in the Twenty-first Century' in which fourteen speakers from Europe and Israel took part. The proceedings are to be published in book-form, but a foretaste appears on pages 26–140.

Catherine Lewis Master Classes

Thanks to the Lewis Family Trusts, Professor David Stern of the University of Pennsylvania taught the Catherine Lewis Master Classes from 29 April to 3 May. This series of five seminars, entitled 'The Jewish Library: The Material History of Four Classic Jewish Texts', made use of the Bodleian Library's rich Hebrew collection of manuscripts. Those attending it had the opportunity to examine the physical fabric and development of some of the foundational Jewish texts, by looking at the examples held in the Bodleian. More on the master classes can be found in Professor Stern's paper, on pages 187–95.



1. Title page of the Hebrew translation of Sir Moses Montefiore's *The Story of Moses and Jerusalem*, *Sipur Moshe vi-Yerushalaim*, published in Warsaw in 1876.

Acquisitions

The Library has continued to coordinate its acquisition policy with the Bodleian Libraries. In the field of Modern Hebrew literature it has continued the retrospective purchase of titles which are not to be found elsewhere in University of Oxford libraries, and it has acquired over 400 books in the field of Hebrew literature, Rabbinics and Jewish History. All have been catalogued, making them accessible to scholars. The Library is grateful to the newly installed Stanley Lewis Professor of Israel Studies, Derek Penslar, for his advice as well as for supplying the funding to acquire books on modern Israel. In addition to this, the Library has purchased a rare study by a Christian Hebraist of Maimonides's work on the Shekel, as well as a first edition of the Sephardi translation cum commentary *Me'am Lo'ez* on Numbers.

Loans from the Lewis Family Interests

At the end of this Library report is a list of books and archival materials that have been given to the Centre on long-term loan by the Lewis Family interests,



2. Frontispiece to the 1783 Berlin edition of the *Sefer Netivot ha-Shalom*, Moses Mendelssohn's commentary on the Pentateuch with a German translation in Hebrew letters.

for which the Library is most grateful. First and foremost, we have received a wonderful addition to our Montefiore materials, 'The Catherine Lewis Loan', consisting of 90 rare items directly connected in some way to Sir Moses Montefiore, including letters, prayers, orders of service, addresses and books. A list of some of these items can be found below. The Library is most grateful to Mr David Lewis for acquiring these works, which contribute to making it one of the richest depositories of Montefioriana in the UK. (Illustration 1)

Thanks also to Mr David Lewis, the Library has received fifteen books on long-term loan from the Lewis 2011 Trusts, including four grammatical works, a treatise by a Christian Hebraist, five books printed in Amsterdam (including the regulations of the Hevrah Kadishah of the Ashkenazi community of Amsterdam printed in Hebrew and Yiddish) and a manuscript of Moshe Orenstein's *Sefer Hoge'et De'ot*. Also included are two works which enrich the already extensive Haskalah holdings – Moses Mendelssohn's *Sefer Netivot ha-Shalom* (Berlin, 1783, in 3 volumes), and his *Jerusalem, oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum* (Berlin, 1783), the latter in an edition we did not possess. The Library is grateful to Mr Lewis for his longstanding generosity. (Illustration 2)



3. Title page of Robert Étienne's 1556 Geneva edition of the Hebrew text of the Prophet Hosea, with the Targum Jonathan (Aramaic translation) and three rabbinic commentaries, together with textual annotations. A model of Christian Hebraist scholarship.

Western Hebrew Library (New West End Synagogue)

Following exploratory talks, in March 2013 the Board of the New West End Synagogue decided to give the Western Hebrew Library to the Leopold Muller Memorial Library on long-term loan. The Library, which incorporates the books purchased and collected for the New West End Synagogue by the First Baron Swaythling, Samuel Montagu, comprises over 1400 works, ranging from a rare incunable, the 1489 Lisbon Pentateuch with the commentary by Rabbi Moses ben Nachman of Gerona (Ramban), to scarce nineteenth-century products of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the movement for the scholarly study of Judaism. The bulk of it consists of books printed from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, reflecting the wide-ranging scope of the best Anglo-Jewish scholarly tradition, combining a fearless use of the latest intellectual



4. Title page of a Mahzor for Shavuot printed in Offenbach (1802-03?).

tools with a deep awareness of tradition. The Library is grateful to the Board of the New West End Synagogue for entrusting us with the care of this collection. The handlist of the books in the collection provided by the Director has been revised by Dr Buda who has begun to catalogue them. (Illustrations 3 and 4)

Donations

We are delighted to record our gratitude to all those who have enriched the Library collections over the past year with gifts of books, all of which have been of immediate use to scholars and students at the Centre and the University. Their names are listed below (see page 282), but we would like to mention a few individuals who are of particular importance.

Professor Glenda Abramson generously continued to donate books and other printed material in the area of Modern Hebrew drama and literature in general. Thanks to the good offices of Dr Jeremy Schonfield, we received 46 books from the library of the late Professor Raphael Loewe, including a copy of the rare Walton Polyglot Bible in six volumes, printed in London in 1654-7. We thank the Loewe family for this.

Thanks again to the good offices of Dr Jeremy Schonfield, the Library received nine books and two scrolls, mostly Sephardi productions, belonging to the late Dr Richard Barnett CBE, from his widow Mrs Barbara Barnett. The Library is grateful to Mrs Barnett for her generous donation.

We also received several works on Hebrew philology belonging to the late Professor J. B. (Ben) Segal, kindly donated by his daughter, Professor Naomi Segal. Professor Yuval Dror continued to donate many books in the fields of modern Israeli society, politics and education, helping to augment the Library's modern Israeli section.

With the help of the endowment in memory of the late Sir Isaiah Berlin, the library acquired several scholarly works on Jewish thought, including the English translation of Mendelssohn's last writings. A list of these volumes can be found on page 283 below.

The Hans and Rita Oppenheimer Fund for books related to the Holocaust enabled us to purchase several volumes dealing with, among other matters, the Holocaust in Latvia and Lithuania and the aftermath of the Holocaust. Details all these volumes can be found on pages 283-4 below.

The *Journal of Jewish Studies* generously continues to supply us with review copies, in all areas of Jewish Studies. We have also received books from the Wiener Library and David Frankel.

*'We Have Reason to Inquire:
The Life and Works of Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs'*

An exhibition of material from the archives of Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs opened in the Library on 23 January, coinciding with the inaugural lecture of the Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies, 'Orthodoxy, Theological Debate and Contemporary Judaism: A Critical Exploration of Questions Raised in the Thought of Louis Jacobs'. Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of Louis Jacobs, and in particular of his son Ivor, we had full access to Rabbi Jacobs's papers, from which the Library team selected documents to illustrate his intellectual background, network of colleagues, theological position on revelation and rabbinical practice. Two student librarians helped the Library personnel during the five months of preparatory work. It was decided to focus on questions relating to the Jewish status of people who had undergone non-Orthodox conversions, and to the children of parents who had been married in non-Orthodox synagogues, topics that throw light especially on the links between Louis Jacobs's activities as a theologian and a practising rabbi. The exhibition, based on just fifty items, has been a great success, attracting visitors from outside the Oxford area. An online virtual version of the exhibition containing 150 documents has since been made available on the Library's website. In tandem with the preparation of the Exhibition, 6500 pages from the Louis Jacobs Archive were digitized in high resolution. For this the Library team also had the invaluable help of Ms Kim Czajkowski. More on the Exhibition, the materials and on Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs can be read in this *Report* on pages 242–52.

Crossing Borders Exhibition

The Bodleian Library 'Crossing Borders Exhibition', co-curated by the former Fellow Librarian, Dr Piet van Boxel and Sabine Arndt, was open to the public at the Jewish Museum in New York from 14 September 2012 until 3 February 2013. It was a great success and was warmly reviewed in *The New York Times*. In conjunction with the Exhibition, a Symposium was held at the Jewish Museum in New York in January on the subject of 'The Medieval Manuscript Today', co-sponsored by the Centre and the Jewish Theological Seminary. The Centre's President, Dr David Ariel, introduced the speakers. Two of the librarians, Dr Zsófia Buda and Dr César Merchán-Hamann spoke, as well as one of the co-curators, Sabine Arndt. The Symposium attracted a large and enthusiastic attendance, including scholars and members of the general public.

*Books on Long-term Loan from
the Lewis Family Interests*

- Bezalel ben Solomon of Kobrin. ספר פלה הרימון [Sefer Pelah ha-Rimon]. Lublin, c. 1684.
- [Bible] כתובים Ketuvim (Psalms, Proverbs–Chronicles). Amsterdam, 1732.
- [Bible] ספר תהלים Book of Psalms. Basle, 1726.
- Mendelssohn, Moses. ספר נתיבות השלום [Sefer Netivot ha-Shalom]. Berlin, 1783. (3 vols)
- Mendelssohn, Moses. *Jerusalem, oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum*. Berlin, 1783.
- Orenstein, Moshe. ספר הוגה דעות [Sefer Hogeh De'ot]. Manuscript, undated.
- Schwadron, Shalom Mordechai. משפט שלום [Mishpat Shalom]. Piotrków, 1902.
- Sonnenfels, Aloys von. אבן בוחן Lapis Lydius [Even Bohan]. Vienna, 1757.
- יום תיקון קריאה לכל לילה ויום [Tikkun keriyah le-khol laylah ve-yom]. Amsterdam, 1666.
- Zafig, Abraham ben Jeudah. ספר עיני אברהם [Sefer Eyne Avraham]. Amsterdam: Widow and orphans of Jacob Proops, 1784.
- Four grammar books. (1) ספר דקדוק אליהו [Sefer Dikduk Eliyahu]. Rabbi Elijah Bachur. Berlin, [1767]. (2) דרכי נועם עם מרפה הלשון [Darkhei No'am with Marpeh Lashon]. Rödelheim, 1806. (3) מאמר אמרה צרופה [Ma'amar Imra Tserufa]. Rabbi Moshe ben Treitel Lemans. Amsterdam, [1808]. (4) ספר היחש [Sefer ha-Yahash]. Rabbi Ya'akov Bacharach. Warsaw, 1854.
- Regulations of the 'Hevrah Kadishah Gemilut Chassadim' of the Dutch Ashkenazi Community of Amsterdam. Amsterdam, 1810. Hebrew and Yiddish.

Catherine Lewis Loan: Selected Items

- Belais, Abraham. *Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the Success which crowned the mission of Sir Moses Montefiore to Russia, and for his safe return with Lady Montefiore to England*. By Rabbi Abraham Belais, Of the College Heshaim, Portuguese Synagogue, Bevis Marks. = קול תודה וקול זמרה [Kol todah ve-ḳol zimrah... 'al hatslaḥat nešī'enu ve-šarenu kevod ma'alat ha-šar Moshe... Montefiore... be-ḥazarato be-shalom 'im ha-geveret he-ḥasidah Marat Yehudit...] London: Vallentine, 1846.

- [Benvenisti, Ezra]. [*Life of Moses and Judith.*] ספר משה ויהודית [Sefer Haye Moshe Vi-Yehudit] Jerusalem: Zuckermann, 1886. [Hebrew and Ladino versions]
- [Dik, Meir Itsik & Eliashewich, Hayim Shelomo]. האורח [Ha-Ore'ach...] *The Traveller: An Account of the festival days, celebrated by Jews of Wilna about the news of the arrival of Sir Moses Montefiore Baronet and his consort Lady Judith Montefiore 1846.* Vilna, 1846.
- Fiebermann, Josef. *Internationales Montefiore-Album.* Frankfurt a.M.; Mahlau & Waldschmidt, c. 1885.
- Fiebermann, Josef. *Sir Moses Montefiore Bart. F.R.S. Ein Lebensbild zum Andenken an die Vollendung seines hundertsten Lebensjahres (8 Marschschwanz 5645 = 27. October 1884) aus dem Englischen des Mr. Israel Davis in's Deutsche übersetzt von Josef Fiebermann. Mit den Bildnissen Sir Moses' und Lady Judith Montefiore's.* Frankfurt a.M.: Fiebermann, 1884.
- Finn, James. *Byeways in Palestine.* London: J. Nisbet, 1868. [Finn was the British Consul in Jerusalem from 1846 to 1863].
- Gelberg, Tsvi Hirsh ben-Yitshak Aryeh Leib. *שר מאה שנה! Šar Me'ah Shanah! – Hundertjähriger Sir! Li-khvod ha-šar ve-gadol la-yehudim, ga'on Ya'aqov, tsevi Yiśrael, ohev adam, ha-mal'akh ha-go'el 'amo mi-kol tsarah... Sir Moshe Montefiore Baronet ... ketsat toledot yeme haye ha-šar mi-yom ... 'ad yom ... hu yom haq yovel shenat ha-me'ah li-shenot hayav...* Lemberg, 1885.
- Girardi, O[razio]. *Sir Moses Montefiore, 1784 – 1884.* Livorno: 1884.
- Guedalla, Haim. *כתר שם טוב [Keter Shem Tov] = The Crown of A Good Name A Brief Account of a few of the Doings, Preachings, and Compositions of Sir Moses Montefiore's Natal Day, November 8th, 1883, on which day he was favoured with a succession of telegraphic Congratulations from the Queen of England and many eminent people of all creeds.* London: Wertheimer, Lea, 1884.
- Guedalla, Mrs. Haim. *Diary of a Tour to Jerusalem and Alexandria in 1855, with Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore. By the Late Mrs H. Guedalla.* London: Darling & Son, 1890.
- Kahana, Hillel ben Yehoshua. *בכי אבל משה [Bekhi Evel Moshe].* Cracow: Fischer, 1886.
- Loewe, Louis. *בכי אבל משה Bechi Ebel Moische. Eine Trauerrede abgehalten bei der Gedenkfeier nach Ablauf der dreissig Tage der Trauer um den verstorbenen ehrwürdigen und sehr betrauten Sir Moses Montefiore Bart. F.R.S. Sonntag. 19 Ellul 5645 = 30 August 1885 in Judith, Lady Montefiore's theologischem Kollegium Ramsgate.* Drohobycz: Zupnik, 1886.

- Loewe, Louis. *אדרת תפארת משה = Aderes Tiferes Moische. Eine Rede = Aderes Tiferes Moische An Address delivered at Judith, Lady Montefiore's Theological College in Ramsgate on the ninety-ninth Anniversary of Sir Moses Montefiore's Birthday Heshvan 8. 5644 = November 8. 1883.* Lemberg: Ehrenpreis, 1884.
- Moher, Avraham Menachem Mendel. [*Herald of Zion, Includes attributes of all Towns of the Land of Israel as They Are and all their preciousness which they had in the Ancient Days.*] מבשרת ציון: כולל תכונת כל ערי ארץ ישראל הקדושה כאשר הם [Mevašeret Tsiyon kolel tekhu'at kol 'are Erets Yiśrael ha-qedoshah kaasher hem 'ata, ve-khol maḥamadhem asher hayu la-hem mi-yeme qedem...] Lemberg: Joseph Schnayder, 1847.
- [Montagu, Samuel, and Penso, Abraham Haim]. [*Exchange of letters between Samuel Montagu and Abraham Haim Penso, the secretary of the Portuguese Community in Jerusalem, on the controversy between Montagu and Moses Montefiore with regard to situation of the Jews in the Land of Israel.*] no place, no date. [ca –1876]
- Montefiore, Judith (Loewe, Louis – translator). *יהודית: ספר כולל מסע לשרתי. ירודיית: ספר כולל מסע לשרתי. ירודיית מונטיפיורי [Yehudit – Sefer kolel sipur masa' le-šarati Yehudit Montefiore]* London: Valentine, [1869].
- Montefiore, Moses. *Sipur Moshe vi-Yerushalaim. [The Story of Moses and Jerusalem.]* Warsaw: Haim Kelter, 1876.
- Montefiore, Moses. Letter dated 7 September 1878, headed East Cliff Lodge, Ramsgate; to a Mrs Hodding signed by Moses Montefiore (then in his 94th year) inviting Mrs Hodding, her daughter and son to dinner. 1878.
- Montefiore, Moses. [*Moses and Jerusalem: Includes the Story of Journey of Moses Montefiore...translated into Hebrew by David Gordon.*] *משה וירושלים [Moshe vi-Yerushalayim: kolel sipur masa' le-ha-šar Moshe Montefiore ... asher he'elah ha-noseh ha-nikhbad 'al sefer meyuḥad bi-šefat english edut prate masa'o ha-aḥaron le-erets ha-qedoshah bi-shenat 5626. Meturgam li-šefat 'ever al yede David Gordon].* Lyck: Rudolph Ziebert, 1867.
- Montefiore, Moses. [*Story of Moses and Jerusalem.*] *ספור משה וירושלים [Sipur Moshe vi-Yerushalayim...ve-hu sipur masa' le-erets ha-qedoshah...ve-hu masa'o ha-shevi'it asher naša ha-Šar bi-yeme hayav li-drosh bi-shelom Yerushalayim].* Warsaw: Yisrael Alapin, 1879.
- Montefiore, Moses. Letter dated 5th January 1882, headed East Cliff Lodge, Ramsgate; to Lady Tobin signed by Moses Montefiore (then in his 98th year) Wishing Lady Tobin a happy new year and reciprocating her good wishes. 1882.

Montefiore, Moses [Dublin]. *Letter/Receipt Letter dated 20th September 1864 (5624), signed by Moses Montefiore. Part lithographed or some form of early duplication and filled in with manuscript additions some in English and some in Hebrew and signed by Sir Moses Montefiore.*

Order of Service at the Celebration of the Fifty-Third Anniversary of the Dedication of the Synagogue founded by Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore, 5593 – 1833. Ramsgate: 1st Tamuz, 5646 – 4th July, 1886. London: Wertheimer, Lea, 1886.

Order of Service on the occasion of the Laying of the Foundation Stone of a new Synagogue for the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, (being a branch of the congregation Shaar Ashamaim) in Upper Bryanstone Street, Edgeware Road, by Sir Moses Montefiore, Bart., F.R.S., on Tuesday, 11th Nisan, 5620.–April 3rd, 1860. קול רנה [Kol Rinah ... al husad Bet ha-Kneset ḥadashah le-Ḳehilah Ḳedoshah Sefardim...] London: Jewish Chronicle, 1860.

Order of Service to be observed in the (ק"ק שער השמים) Synagogue of Spanish & Portuguese Jews, Bevis Marks, on Monday, the 15th Adar, 5601–8th March, 1841. Being the day appointed for A General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for His Divine Protection to His People Israel, so signally manifested in the success which attended Sir Moses Montefiore, F.R.S. in his mission to the East. London: The Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, 1841.

Palache, Chaim. *Sefer Haim Derakhav le-Moshe Tehilah*. Salonika, 1845.

Plaut, Rudolph (Dr.). *Fest-Predigt zur Feier des vollendeten hundertsten Lebensjahres des Sir Moses Montefiore am 25. Oct. 1884*. Frankfurt a. M.: Auffarth, 1884.

Prayer and Thanksgiving, offered up on Sabbath, 4th October, 5627. On the occasion of Sir Moses Montefiore's Return from Roumania. ... תפלה במקהלות עם [Tefilah be-maḳhelot 'am ... be-shuv ha-śar Moshe Montefiore el beito me-erets Rumania]. London: Wertheimer, Lea, 1867.

A Prayer offered by the Jewish Community for Sir Moses Montefiore, F.R.S. whose generous heart urges him to undertake a far distant journey in aid of our afflicted and persecuted brethren of the house of Israel. May the Lord protect him!... the 22nd day of Sivan, A.M. 5600. London: Wertheimer, 1840.

Prayer offered up in the London Synagogues of the United Congregations. On Sabbath, the 10th of Kislev, 5624. For the success of Sir Moses Montefiore's

Mission to Morocco. תפלה במקהלות עם בק"ק לונדון ... להצלחת איש זקן ונשוא פנים [Tefilah be-Maḳhelot Am be-Ḳehilah Ḳedoshah London...le-Hatslaḥat Ish Zaḳen u-Nešo Panim Nediv ve-Shu'a ha-Śar Moshe Montefiore be-'Et Šumo la-Derekh Pe'amav la-'Erev]. London: Wertheimer, 1863.

Prayer Offered Up in the Synagogues of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews (שער השמים) On Adar 1, 5619 (שבת תרומה) in Consequence of the Approaching Departure of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore on Their Mission to Rome = תפלה שהתפללו בבתי כנסיות של ק"ק שער השמים בלונדון ביום ש"ק א' לחדש אדר ראשון [Tefilah she-hitpalelu be-vate kenesiyot shel Ḳ"Ḳ Sha'ar ha-Shamayim be-London]. London: 1859.

Prayer to be offered up in the synagogues of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews (שער השמים) on Kislev 3, 5624 (שבת תולדות) in consequence of the approaching departure of Sir Moses Montefiore, Baronet, on his mission to Morocco. = תפלה שהתפללו בבתי כנסיות של ק"ק שער השמים בלונדון ביום ש"ק ג' לחדש כסליו [Tefilah she-hitpalelu be-vate kenesiyot shel Ḳ"Ḳedoshah Sha'ar ha-Shamayim be-London...] [1863]

Prayer offered up in the synagogues of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews. שער השמים On Adar, 5626 (שבת תרומה) on the occasion of the approaching departure of Sir Moses Montefiore, Bart., for the Holy Land. תפלה שהתפללו בבתי כנסיות של [Tefilah she-hitpalelu be-vate kenesiyot shel Ḳehilah Ḳedoshah Sha'ar ha-Shamayim be-London...]. London: Wertheimer, 1866.

Prayer offered up in the synagogues of the United Congregations, on the occasion of Sir Moses Montefiore's departure for the Holy Land. Adar, 5626. תפלה במקהלות עם להצלחת איש זקן ונשוא פנים השר משה מונטיפיורי בעת שמו לדרך פעמיו לירושלים [Tefilah be-maḳhelot 'am le- hatslaḥat ish zaken u-nešo panim ha-śar Moshe Montefiore ... be-'Et šumo la-derech pe'amav li-Yerushalayim 'Ir ha-Ḳodesh...] London: Wertheimer, 1866.

Prayer offered up in the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Synagogues of England, on Sabbath, July 13th, 5632, for the Success of Sir Moses Montefiore's journey to Russia. Special Service to take place in the Kehilah Kedoshah Sha'ar ha-Shamayim Synagogue of Spanish and Portuguese Jews, Bevis Marks, on Monday, 5 Nisan (11 April), 5624. Being the day appointed for A Public Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for His Divine Protection to His people Israel, so signally manifested in the success which attended Sir Moses Montefiore, Baronet, in his mission to Morocco. London: Wertheimer, 1864.

Prayer offered up in the synagogues of the United Congregations of the British Empire, on Sabbath, 27th of July, 5627. For the success of Sir Moses Montefiore's Mission to Jassy. תפלה במקהלות עם ... להצלחת השר המרום הגביר משה. [Tefilah be-makheilot 'am ... le-hatslahat ha-sar ha-meromam ha-gevir Moshe Montefiore asher yašim la-derech pe'amav le-'Ir Yassi la-'azor aḥenu...] London: Wertheimer, Lea, 1867.

Rausuk, Samson. שיר תהלה [Shir Tehilah] Poem Commemorative of The Successful Mission of Sir Moses Montefiore, Bart. to The Court of Morocco. Composed on his safe return, April 7th, 5624–1864, by the Rev. Samson Rausuk, Librarian of Hebrew College. Kindly Paraphrased by Samson Samuel, Esq. London: Vallentine, 1864.

Service of Prayer and Thanksgiving to be used in all the Synagogues of the British Empire on the occasion of Sir Moses Montefiore, Bart., completing his hundredth year. Sunday, 26th October, 5645, 1884. תפלה למשה [Tefilah le-Moshe] London, 1884.

Shaffner, Abraham. A Wisp of Myrrh in a Bed of Spices = צרור המר בערוגת הבשם [Tseror ha-mor ba-'arugat ha-bošem] / [Myrthenstrauß und Gewürzbeet] A narrative of interesting events in the life of Israel's benefactor, the illustrious philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore, and reflections upon his many deeds of kindness and benevolence... New York: The Jewish Daily News Print, 1887.

Sobil, Yiśra'el Mosheh ben Ḥayim. ספר אות לטובה [Sefer Ot le-Tovah] [Sign for Good, Includes Three Sermons for all who Desire Heavens...] Przemysl: Buchdruck. gr. kath. Domkapit, 1870.

[Solomon], Yoel Moshe. [Song of Moses in Honour of Our Master and Lord, Sir Moses Montefiore...which I sang on the Day of His Arrival to the Holy City of Jerusalem, 8th of Nissan 5606 (1846).] שירת משה לכבוד אדונינו השר סער משה [Shirat Moshe li-khvod adonenu ha-sar Sir Moshe Montefiore ... asher sharti le-yom bi'ato le-'Ir ha-Ḳodesh Yerushalaim be-ḥet Nisan 5606]. Jerusalem: Avraham Rotenberg, 1866.

[The Song of Praise Sung by the Sons of Jehuda Dwelling in Jerusalem, in the Great Synagogue, the Miniature Sanctuary "Tiferet Israel"...in Honour of... Moshe Montefiore.] שיר תהלה אשר שרו בני יהודה יושבי ירום בבהכ"ס הגדול מקדש [Shir tehilah asher sharu bene Yehuda yosheve Yerushalayim be-vet ha-keneset ha-gadol miḳdash me'at

"Tiferet Yisrael" ... li-khvod ... Moshe Montefiore]. Jerusalem: Ḥayim Tsvi, Nekhed Yiśrael, [1875].

Special Service to Take Place in the (ק"ק שער השמים) Synagogue of Spanish and Portuguese Jews, on Wednesday the 25 Elul (25 September) 5627. To Celebrate the Safe Return of Sir Moses Montefiore, Baronet, from Roumania, and the Success of his Mission. London: Wertheimer, Lea, 1867.

Wertheimer, Shlomo Aharon. ספר אבל משה Sefer Evel Moshe. Jerusalem, 1885.

Weston, James (pseud Edward Step). Sir Moses Montefiore: The Story of His Life. London: Partridge, [ca -1885].

Wolff, A. A. Sir Moses Montefiore, Baronet. Zwei Predigten zu dessen 99 und 100 Jahrigem Geburtstage. Kopenhagen: I. Cohen, 1885.

Zalman Ze'ev from Vilna. [The Glory of Moses: an Excellent Sermon delivered by the Rabbi, Gaon and Righteous Man, Zalman Ze'ev.] ספר תפארת משה [Sefer Tiferet Moshe: Derush Niflah asher darash ha-Rav ha-Gaon ha-Tsaddik R' Zalman Ze'ev...] Warsaw: Schriftgisser, 1884.

In Memoriam
Professor
Geza Vermes,
1924–2013



Geza Vermes, Honorary Fellow of the Centre, Emeritus Governor, Editor of the *Journal of Jewish Studies* and for many years Director of the Qumran Forum, was an expert in the history of Judaism in the early Roman empire whose prolific writings, particularly on the Jewish background of early Christianity and on the Dead Sea scrolls, have had a profound effect both among scholars and in the wider public.

Geza Vermes was born in Makó in southern Hungary in 1924. His father, Ernó, a journalist, and his mother, Terézia, a school teacher, were part of the largely assimilated Jewish bourgeoisie in Hungary. In 1931, when he was six, he and his parents converted to Christianity. Sent to the local gymnasium, he proved a precocious student and decided in his late teens to study for the priesthood. The decision almost certainly saved his life, since the seminary priests protected him during the period of the mass deportation of Hungarian Jews in 1944.

After the war Geza joined the order of the Fathers of Notre-Dame de Sion and in 1947 he was sent by the order to Louvain to study Theology and Oriental history and languages. His intention was to write a thesis on Isaiah, but on news of the discovery of biblical and other ancient Jewish writings in the Judaean desert, he changed his topic. His thesis on the origins of the Dead Sea sect, completed in 1952, was the first doctoral thesis to be written on the Dead Sea scrolls. In 1957, having left the priesthood, he was appointed to a Lecturership in Divinity in the University of Newcastle, and it was there that he published with Penguin in 1962 the first edition of *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, as well as a series of important studies on Bible interpretation in antiquity.

In 1965 he was appointed Reader in Jewish Studies in Oxford and a Fellow of Iffley (soon to be Wolfson) College. In his new post, he soon became widely known for a series of studies on Jesus within his Jewish environment, particularly *Jesus the Jew*, first published in 1973. The depiction of Jesus as an individualistic

holy man who operated at a tangent to the religious currents of the Judaism of his day was further clarified in a series of later studies.

Geza was appointed by the University to serve as a Governor of the Centre at its foundation in 1972, and he remained closely identified with the Centre throughout the rest of his life, not least in his role as editor of the *Journal of Jewish Studies*, which had been started in 1949. Geza had been appointed editor in 1971 and ownership of the *Journal* was transferred to the Centre in 1976. For many years its production was essentially a cottage industry operating from Boars Hill, with back copies stored in 45 St Giles'. Geza had superb instincts as an editor, and an impressive ability to ensure that each volume was published to time. His work over some forty years has ensured that the *Journal* has maintained its international reputation as a forum for scholarly discussion of Jewish history and literature.

Geza was among the first in a humanities faculty in Oxford to seek to attract graduate students by setting up taught masters courses in Jewish Studies in the Graeco-Roman Period, and he attracted and inspired many doctoral students who went on to academic careers all over the world. A number of these students remained in close contact with him in later life, and a small cluster of them collaborated with him and Fergus Millar in the revision of Emil Schuerer's *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, which was one of the major achievements of Geza's time in post.

Geza's output was hardly diminished after retirement in 1991. A series of studies sought to clarify his views on the significance of Jesus within Judaism. He produced an edition of the fragments of the Community Rule from Cave 4, in collaboration with Philip Alexander, with exemplary speed and accuracy. Among his many later publications were a series of studies of central elements of the Jesus story (on the nativity, passion and resurrection) and, most recently, a history of Christianity from its origins to the fourth century.

Geza was awarded a DLitt by Oxford in 1988 and he was appointed to a personal chair in Jewish Studies in 1989. In 1985 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy, and in 2001 he was elected to the European Academy of Arts, Sciences and Humanities. He received honorary degrees from Durham, Edinburgh, Sheffield and the Central European University of Budapest, and in 2009 he was honoured by the United States House of Representatives with a vote of congratulation 'for inspiring and educating the world'. The latest edition of the translated Dead Sea scrolls, now entitled *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, was issued, fifty years after the first edition, as a Penguin Classic.

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