

EDITORIAL

I

The Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies to be held this August in Jerusalem will afford a convenient opportunity for the assessment of developments in Jewish Studies over the past four years. While the Congress is designated as a "World Congress," it is primarily a meeting of two large groups of Judaics scholars: Israelis and Americans. Participants from other countries are conspicuous in their uniqueness. Between the last Congress in 1973 and the coming Congress, the Association for Jewish Studies has enjoyed its period of greatest growth in activities and membership. And unlike the World Union of Jewish Studies whose main enterprise is the organization of the World Congress held once every four years, the Association for Jewish Studies has sponsored a variety of publications and scholarly activities, not the least of which is its placement service which has democratized the placement process throughout this continent, and has begun to give shape to the amorphous and diffuse body of Judaics scholars throughout the land. We come to the Seventh World Congress confident in our achievements over the past four years and eager to exchange information with our Israeli colleagues.

II

We have often remarked in this column and elsewhere that the litany of complaints received and filed in the AJS office will supply valuable and amusing material for some future historian of the mores of Judaics scholars in this century. The appreciative letters are naturally fewer and thus all the more cherished. In a gesture of self indulgence we present the following excerpt:

Would you please see to it that henceforth *two copies* of each issue of the *A.J.S. Newsletter* reach us regularly?

The reason for this is that I invariably find that I want to clip several reviews, etc. for my files, and as a result our file of the *Newsletter* turns out to be full of holes.

This, of course, implies, rightly, that I think the *Newsletter* is really first-class, and you all deserve high commendation. It takes care of the business of the organization as concisely as possible and then goes on to print substantive synopses, reviews, even articles of real value. This is especially valuable for someone like me who, holding the generalized belief that anything published after 1800 is probably not worth reading anyway, can't be bothered to keep up with the journals etc. as much as a lot of people do, therefore, of course, misses out on a lot, and the *Newsletter* now gives me a lot of the information and references that I do want to have.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial	1
News of Appointments	2
Ninth Annual AJS Conference	2
Report of Nominating Committee	3
Proposed Changes in AJS By-Laws	3
The Role of the Bible in the Spiritual Development of Soviet Jewry - Baruch A. Levine (N.Y.U.)	4

AJS REGIONAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

"Jewish Folklore"

Conference held at Spertus College of Judaica, Chicago, May 1-3, 1977

Abstracts of papers by:

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (Univ. of Pennsylvania, YIVO)	5
Mark Slobin (Wesleyan Univ.)	5
Reginetta Haboucha (Lehman College, Radcliffe Institute)	6
Samuel G. Armistead (Univ. of Pennsylvania)	6
Donna Shai (Univ. of Pennsylvania)	7
S.D. Goitein (Institute for Advanced Study)	7
Walter P. Zenner (S.U.N.Y. at Albany)	8
Laurence D. Loeb (Univ. of Utah)	8
Yona Sabar (Univ. of California, Los Angeles)	9
Jacob Neusner (Brown Univ.)	11
Dan Ben-Amos (Univ. of Pennsylvania)	11
Ronald Brown (Hebrew Union Coll.)	12

EIGHTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Abstracts of papers by:

Mark R. Cohen (Princeton Univ.)	12
Lee Levine (Hebrew Univ.)	13
Wayne Meeks (Yale Univ.)	14
Shaye J.D. Cohen (Jewish Theological Seminary)	15
Daniel J. Lasker (Ohio State Univ.)	16
Todd M. Endelman (Yeshiva Univ.)	17
Susan A. Slotnick (Columbia Univ.)	18
David G. Roskies (Jewish Theological Seminary)	18
Paula E. Hyman (Columbia Univ.)	19
Deborah E. Lipstadt (Univ. of Washington)	20
Deborah Dash Moore (Vassar College)	21

BIBLIOGRAPHIA JUDAICA

Reviews by:

Daniel J. Lasker (Ohio State Univ.)	22
Raphael Jospe (Univ. of Denver)	23

Ninth Annual AJS Conference

The following sessions have tentatively been scheduled for the forthcoming Ninth Annual Conference:

<i>Bible</i>	<i>Modern Jewish Thought</i>
<i>Midrashic Literature</i>	<i>Modern Hebrew Literature</i>
<i>Literary Exegesis of Classical Texts</i>	<i>Jewish Folklore</i>
<i>Medieval Jewish Philosophy</i>	<i>Contemporary Jewry</i>
<i>Medieval Jewish History</i>	<i>Jewish Linguistics</i>
	<i>Hebrew Language Practicum</i>

Individuals who wish to deliver papers at these sessions are invited to submit abstracts (in 3 copies) for consideration by the Program Committee. Abstracts should be sent to the AJS office by 1 August 1977.

In addition there will be an experimental "Round Table on Jewish Social History" in which all present will discuss a central paper in the development of the historiography of Jewish social institutions.

News of Appointments

() = previous affiliation; g = graduate student

David J. Biale (University of California at Los Angeles - g)	State University of New York at Binghamton
Steven B. Bowman (Indiana University)	University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Lawrence B. Fine (University of British Columbia)	Indiana University
Michael V. Fox (Hebrew University)	University of Wisconsin at Madison
Sheldon B. Greenberg (Yeshiva University - g)	University of Natal, Durban, South Africa
Arthur Hyman (Yeshiva University)	University of California at San Diego (visiting)
Aaron L. Katchen (Indiana University)	Brandeis University
Reuven R. Kimelman (Amherst College)	Brandeis University
Daniel J. Lasker (Ohio State University)	University of Texas at Austin
Arthur M. Lesley (Hebrew Union College, New York)	University of Toronto
Stanley F. Levine (Oberlin College)	State University of New York-College at Brockport
Ruth Link-Salinger (Hyman) (San Diego State University)	Yeshiva University - West Coast Branch
Yeshayahu Maori (University of Haifa)	Yeshiva University, Revel Graduate School
Peter B. Machinist (Case Western Reserve University)	University of Arizona
Joel Manon (Harvard University - g)	Tufts University
Alan L. Mintz (Columbia University - g)	Columbia University
Herbert H. Paper (University of Michigan)	Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati
Jonathan Rosenbaum (Harvard University - g)	University of Nebraska at Omaha
Norman Roth (Cornell University - g)	University of Wisconsin at Madison
Tamar Rudavsky (Trinity College)	Ohio State University

In Memoriam: Hayyim Hillel Ben-Sasson

Hayyim Hillel Ben-Sasson, Professor of Jewish History at the Hebrew University, died on Tuesday, 17 May 1977, of a sudden heart-failure. To his family, to his friends and colleagues, the loss is inestimable.

Hayyim Hillel Ben-Sasson was an inspiring teacher and one of the leading scholars of Jewish History, a disciple of J. Baer and of the late B.Z. Dinur. He came to the Hebrew University after having taught in various elementary and high-schools, including one in the old city of Jerusalem. Joy of life manifested itself in everything he said and did, and the joy of creativity spoke from every line he wrote. The phenomenon of creativity also stood at the center of his reflection, the creative powers of the Jewish community in all of its manifestations: its institutions, its leadership, religious movements, social and political thought, economic conduct. In *Hagut vehanhaga* (1960), he reconstructed the social thought of 16th-century rabbinic leadership in Poland at the height of its self-confidence and creative adaptability to new circumstances, which led to new avenues of legal interpretations. Here and elsewhere he showed that wherever there is political will, political theories can be found, even where they are not explicitly declared. In his work on Hasidut Ashkenaz, he showed us the tension between isolation and claims for leadership in the movement and its ideology. He demonstrated the dialectical reformulations of the consciousness of uniqueness among medieval Jews.

H.H. Ben-Sasson never tired of proving the profound awareness of Jews to political, religious or intellectual constellations surrounding them. Where others saw in the Jewish reaction to the reformation indifference and lack of awareness, he proved in a series of articles how differentiated and sensitive the Jewish response actually had been, commencing with hope if not sympathy and ending with fear and a yearning for order. Regarding the Sabbatian movement he regretted that not enough emphasis had been given to the political aspect, the urge for kingship in the century of absolutist monarchies; he meant to write about it. In the Karaite schism he examined, among other things, the growing atrophy of the severed limb. He sought the source of creative energies in his biographical studies, such as the paradigmatic article on the Gaon of Wilna (1966). H.H. Ben-Sasson discovered the fecund source of the personality and work of the Gaon in the tension between rational, discursive knowledge and intuitive-speculative, even mystical, faculties which the Gaon tried to repress. The recently translated *History of the Jewish People*, which he edited and of which he wrote the Medieval section, is the only challenging, original advanced textbook of Jewish History available in English, and sums up many of H.H. Ben-Sasson's positions.

Many of us profited by H.H. Ben-Sasson's insights and intimate acquaintance with Hebrew medieval manuscripts. He was generous with his help and advice. His friends will miss his good sense, his humour and encouragement. His colleagues will miss his rich and original perspectives.

Amos Funkenstein (Univ. of Calif., Los Angeles)

Joel M. Siegelman (Dropsie University - g)	University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Yochanan Silman (Bar-Ilan University)	Hebrew College, Boston (visiting)
Kenneth R. Stow (Queens College)	University of Haifa
Naomi Tamir-Ghez (Tel-Aviv University)	Yeshiva University, Revel Graduate School

Report of Nominating Committee

To be submitted to the membership at the Annual Meeting on 19 December 1977.

1. Nominees for Officers for 1978:

President: Marvin Fox (Brandeis)
 Vice-president/Program: Jane Gerber (City Univ. of N.Y.)
 Vice-president/Membership & Placement: Michael A. Meyer
 (HUC, Cincinnati)
 Vice-president/Publications: Frank Talmage (Toronto)
 Secretary-Treasurer: Nahum Sarna (Brandeis)

Nominees for Members of the Board of Directors, to serve a three year term (Dec. 1977-Dec. 1980):

Robert Chazan (Ohio)
 Jehuda Reinharz (Michigan)
 David B. Ruderman (Maryland)
 Haym Soloveitchik (Yeshiva)

2. The following Directors continue serving in terms to which they were elected at Annual Meetings in 1975 and 1976 respectively:

To serve until the annual meeting in 1978:

Baruch Bokser (Berkeley)
 William Cutter (HUC, Los Angeles)
 Michael Meyer (HUC, Cincinnati)
 Stanley Nash (Pennsylvania)
 Stephen Poppel (Bryn Mawr)
 Ruth Wisse (McGill)

To serve until the annual meeting in 1979:

David Blumenthal (Emory)
 Henry Fischel (Indiana)
 Deborah Lipstadt (U. of Washington)
 Benjamin Ravid (Brandeis)
 Ismar Schorsch (Jewish Theological Seminary)

3. Honorary Directors:

Arnold J. Band (UCLA)
 Leon A. Jick (Brandeis)
 Baruch A. Levine (NYU)

Respectfully submitted,

David Blumenthal (Emory), Chairman
 Arnold J. Band (UCLA)
 Jane S. Gerber (CUNY)
 Nathan M. Kaganoff (Amer. Jewish Hist. Soc.)
 Jehuda Reinharz (Michigan)
 Marshall Sklare (Brandeis)

Position Available

Hebrew—Instructor: Two-year non major Program. Emphasis: Spoken Modern Hebrew. Preferably person with experience in ULPAN Methods. Applications will be kept on file but cannot be acknowledged. Write to: Prof. Emilia N. Kelley, Chairperson; Dept. of Romance Languages; Emory University, Atlanta, Ga. 30322. Emory is an AFF-AC., EQ. OPP. Employer.

Proposed Changes in AJS By-Laws

At its meeting on 27 March 1977, the Executive Committee voted to recommend to the Board of Directors, in accordance with Article XI of the By-Laws, that the By-Laws be amended as follows:

1. Article 5, Section 1 to be revised to read as follows:

"Article 5, Section 1. The executive officers of the Corporation shall consist of a President, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and three Vice-Presidents elected by the membership. All officers shall serve for a one-year term or until their successors have been elected."

2. A fifth section to be added to Article 5, to read as follows:

"Article 5, Section 5. The Vice-Presidents shall have the powers and duties usual to this office and shall each assume responsibility for one of the following areas of Association activity: Membership and Placement; Program; Publications."

3. Article IX, Section 3 to be revised to read as follows:

"Article IX, Section 3. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for nominating one candidate for President, one for Treasurer, one for Secretary, and one candidate for each Vice-Presidency, and also for nominating the number of directors to be elected at the next annual meeting."

4. Article IV, Sections 1-3 to be revised to read as follows:

"Article IV, Section 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of no fewer than fifteen (15) members, in addition to the officers and Honorary Directors, nor more than twenty-five (25) members as determined by the Board.

"Article IV, Section 2. The President, Treasurer, Secretary, and the Vice-Presidents shall also serve as directors. Past Presidents shall serve as permanent Honorary Directors with full voting privileges."

"Article IV, Section 3. The directors shall, beginning with the directors elected in 1978, be elected for a term of two (2) years, with approximately one-third of the Board thereafter being elected each year for a period of two (2) years."

5. Article III, Section 1 to add a paragraph "d" as follows:

"d. Honorary membership for individuals so designated by the Board of Directors."

Jewish Philosophy Register

The *ad hoc* committee on Jewish philosophy (created at the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies in Boston in December, 1976) is seeking to compile a register of dissertations and scholarly work *actually in progress* in Jewish philosophy, thought, and mysticism. Scholars interested in having their work listed in the register are requested to send the following information to: Prof. Menachem Kellner, Dept. of Religious Studies, Coker Hall, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 22903.

1. Author's name.
2. Institutional affiliation.
3. Project name.
4. Brief project description.
5. Type of project (book, monograph, dissertation, article, review).
6. Present status (completed and awaiting publication or in progress now).

The compilers of the register will be grateful if readers of the *AJS Newsletter* will bring this announcement to the attention of colleagues in the field and to the attention of students working on dissertations.

Errata

The following were inadvertently omitted from the list of institutions represented at the Eighth AJS Annual Conference (*AJS Newsletter*, February 1977, p. 5):

University of Judaism
 University of Wisconsin at Madison

The Role of the Bible in the Spiritual Development of Soviet Jewry

(Abstract of a paper to have been delivered in Hebrew by Baruch A. Levine, Professor of Hebrew, New York University, at the Moscow Symposium on Jewish Culture, Moscow, December 21-23, 1976)

The role of the Bible in the spiritual development of Soviet Jewry was a subject listed by the Moscow Committee as being of particular interest to Soviet Jewish scholars, and to others who may be attending the symposium. I intended to deliver the paper in the Hebrew language. I don't speak Russian, and many of those attending in Moscow do not understand English. On the other hand, some Soviet Jewish scholars, among them scientists as well as social scientists and humanists, have been pursuing the study of Hebrew with impressive achievement, despite severe restrictions on the materials available to them, and on their freedom of assembly.

Biblical traditions on the wilderness period, between the Exodus from Egypt and the settlement of Canaan, reveal an intricate fabric of history, historiography, and later tradition. As history we may classify the corroborated or reasonably verifiable information provided by the biblical sources, when read together with the evidence uncovered in archaeological excavations and researched from the comparative materials. As historiography we may classify the coherent biblical accounts which, in lesser or greater detail, describe or refer directly to the events of the wilderness period, and purport to record them as they actually occurred. These accounts, to be found extensively in the book of Numbers (Hebrew *Bemidbar*), but also in Exodus, Deuteronomy, and in the historical books, are historiographic because they present the record within the framework of discrete religious interpretations of history, adducing causes and effects which can be properly understood only when one recognizes a distinctly normative orientation toward the past. As pure tradition we may classify those references in biblical literature to the wilderness period wherein the events of that earlier time constitute a frame of reference applicable to later situations.

Here I will discuss only one paradigmatic example from the book of Numbers so as to illustrate the interaction of history, historiography, and later tradition.

The book of Numbers preserves information on the situation faced by the Israelites after they had advanced by a circuitous route from Kadesh-Barnea, their base in Northeastern Sinai, up through much of Transjordan. After a number of military campaigns, which they had initially sought to avoid, the Israelites found themselves in the Jordan valley, across the river from Jericho, in the plains of Moab. It is from the oracles of that North-Syrian diviner, Balaam, that we first learn of Balak, the Moabite king who led the Moabite-Midianite coalition against the Israelites. Balak had summoned Balaam after all military efforts had failed to stem the Israelite advance. In true ancient Near Eastern fashion, Balak turned to execrations and curses when true prowess failed. We know from Egyptian as well as Mesopotamian sources that recourse to magic was had against armies and individuals in such circumstances. The late W.F. Albright was perhaps the first to note another echo of historic reality in the Balaam oracles, namely, the descriptions of certain ethnological groupings such as the Kenites, and certain

areas, such as Seir in Northeastern Sinai. These brief descriptions correspond to what is known of conditions at a very early period.

It may be of interest to note that in 1967 an Aramaic inscription was found written on plaster at Deir Allah, a site in the Jordan valley, in the very area of this ancient encounter. That inscription clearly records the name of Balaam, and although it really dates from a period centuries after the wilderness migrations of the ancient Israelites, it adds an interesting footnote to history.

In terms of historiography, the Balaam oracles serve as an epitome of God's providence over Israel, and emphasize the ultimate impotence of all augurers and diviners in a world governed by God, not magic. Balaam employs all the techniques of his craft, and yet is forced to utter what God puts into his mouth. The result is not only one of the finest examples of ancient Hebrew poetry, but a paean to the God of Israel, in which victory is prophesied for his people, Israel. The Deuteronomist (Deuteronomy 23:5-6) refers to the failure of execration against Israel, as does a prophet whose words are preserved in the book of Micah (6:5 f.):

My people, remember what Balak, king of Moab, counseled; and what Balaam, son of Beor, answered him . . . so that the victories of the Lord may be known.

I would like to close with Prof. Albright's interpretation of an ambiguous passage from one of Balaam's oracles (Numbers 23:23): I paraphrase:

No augury is effective against Jacob;
no divination against the Israelites.

For in the words of the same oracle we read:

No harm is in sight for Jacob,
no woe is in view for Israel;
The Lord their God is with them,
and the acclaim of their King is in their midst.

Here we have history and historical consciousness, historical interpretation, tradition and hope. This example suggests the role of the Bible in the spiritual development of Soviet Jewry. It's the same role the Bible exercises in our spiritual development as well.

Regional Conference in Washington

The first AJS Regional Conference of the 1977 series was held at George Washington University, Washington, D.C., on April 17-18. Prof. Shmuel Ettinger of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, presently visiting at Columbia University, served as Conference Director for the program, whose theme was East-European Jewry in Modern Times. Over 110 registrants attended the various sessions, and Prof. Ettinger as well as others who presented papers were gratified by the animated and often lengthy discussion periods, particularly after the seminar on the origins of Hasidism. The downtown Washington location of the conference made possible the participation not only of scholars and students from various universities in the metropolitan area, but also of representatives of national Jewish organizations and agencies of the federal government. Spurred on by several excellent questions from this diverse audience, Prof. Ettinger carefully weaved together historical and historiographic problems related to both Eastern Europe in general and the Jewish people there in particular.

David Altshuler
George Washington University
Conference Co-ordinator

The Shtetl Model in East European Jewish Ethnology

by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (University of Pennsylvania; YIVO Institute for Jewish Research)

The prevailing construct in post-World War II ethnological studies of East European Jewish society and culture is the *shtetl* model, particularly as it emerges from *Life is with People* (1952), an enormously influential volume. After delineating the *shtetl* model upon which *Life is with People* is predicated, this paper explores the way in which this model was constructed in the course of the Research in Contemporary Cultures Project in the late 1940s and in the context of the configurationist and culture and personality approaches which informed the project.

Nine features of the *shtetl* model are identified and discussed:

(1) The *shtetl* is a small town or section of a small town that is entirely Jewish in composition. *Shtetl* is thus coterminous with Jewish community and with organized Jewish community (*kehillah*).

(2) The world of *shtetl* dwellers is divided into Jews and non-Jews. Interaction with non-Jews is minimal and inconsequential. The non-Jewish population is homogeneous.

(3) The *shtetl* is isolated, Jews are excluded from the larger society, and the *shtetl* is a "cultural island."

(4) *Shtetl* culture is the core culture of the East European Jewish culture area. As such, it is essentially homogeneous. Local or regional variations are incidental and other differences represent "acculturation."

(5) The *shtetl* is a society in equilibrium. Disequilibrium is an effect of acculturation.

(6) *Shtetl* culture is essentially static and unchanging.

(7) The *shtetl* exhibits most of the features of Redfield's ideal folk society (1947), with the exceptions of literacy, reflection for intellectual ends, systematized knowledge, and the market economy.

(8) The *shtetl* is characterized by a special form of communal organization (*kehillah*), a long heritage of culture-specific institutions and values, and a rigid system of stratification based on erudition, lineage, and wealth.

(9) The above characterizations are in large measure how the informants see their society.

This construct is then compared with Jacob Katz's model of traditional Jewish society in the Middle Ages; the projections of traditional orthodox and Hasidic life in nineteenth-century Yiddish fiction; historical accounts of the Jewish community in Poland during the first half of the twentieth century; the folk models in various commemorative volumes (*yisker-bikher*) published by the survivors of East European communities destroyed during the Holocaust; the theoretical underpinnings of the Language and Culture Atlas of Ashkenazic Jewry; and the notions of *ghetto* and *caste*

as they have been used in the study of East European Jewish society and culture and its derivatives.

The *shtetl* model, when it appears in later studies of Hasidim, kibbutzim, and Jewish emigrant and immigrant culture, effectively merges village, town, city, ghetto, and Pale of Settlement, so that *shtetl* becomes an isolated community of indeterminate size whose culture represents the core of East European Jewish culture. The result is an anachronism in which a post-Holocaust model of a "pastoral" medieval Jewish society is projected on a twentieth-century ethnographic record. In contrast, the data, which were gathered at a distance in space and time and in the wake of the destruction of the physical communities being studied, reveal a complex, heterogeneous society of about 5,000,000 people, who lived in tens of thousands of communities, which ranged in size from a few families to 300,000 souls. These communities were spread over thousands of square miles and were in contact with a variety of other ethnic minorities. During the last century of their existence, these communities found themselves in the throes of cataclysmic change and in the midst of forging a modern Jewish existence.



Musical Style as Symbol in Yiddish Sheet Music

by Mark Slobin (Wesleyan University)

The paper will focus on two well-known scale structures stressing the interval of the augmented second found in Yiddish folksong, early Eastern European Yiddish popular music, and in Jewish-American popular music.

The opening section details the folk background of the scale structures in terms of 1) standard melodic usage in unaccompanied folksong; 2) conventional symbolism attached to the scale structures; 3) the close ties to co-territorial (Ukrainian and Rumanian) usage of the same scale structures.

The second section takes up the appearance of the scale structures in the work of Abraham Goldfaden, founder and first major composer of the Yiddish theater, to show how the musical materials and eclectic outlook of the Eastern European Jewish music culture were incorporated into Yiddish popular music at its very beginning.

The final section will continue the discussion in relationship to the emergence of a Jewish-American musical sub-culture. Using the works of the major popular music composers of the period through World War I (all European-born) — Mogulesco, Perlmutter and Wohl, Rumshinsky — the role of the scale structures will be re-examined. Tentative statements will be made about the establishment, in the musical realm, of a sense of *yiddishkayt* ("Jewishness") partly through the inclusion of familiar European materials which do not coincide with the new co-territorial music context, since American folk and popular musics lack the augmented-second scale structures.

The Cultural Context of Judeo-Spanish Folktales Collected in Israel
by Reginetta Haboucha (Lehman College; Radcliffe Institute,
Harvard University)

Jewish folk-literature is rich in examples which emphasize that man may alter or overcome his Destiny. One of the most effective ways to obviate or conquer cruel Fate is the performance of kind and generous deeds. According to both the *Babylonian* and *Jerusalem Talmud*, Charity can avert the fulfillment of one's doom. The *Proverbs of Solomon*, as well, twice assure us that righteousness delivers from death. It outweighs the adverse decrees.

This paper will examine various folktales selected from the vast repertoire of Judeo-Spanish-speaking story-tellers in Israel. The samples will illustrate the treatment of the Charity motifs and the requital obtained. As many of the tales derive from the Talmudic-Midrashic lore, similarities with Aggadic legends or other existing tale-types will be examined, whenever relevant.

In Sephardic folklore, almsgiving and uncharitableness are often contrasted and benevolent conduct is invariably recompensed. Retribution may occur immediately or it may be postponed until after the person has died. In either case, it stresses the point that kindness is never wasted. Sooner or later, in this world or in the next, it will be repaid. The unkind attitude of the unrighteous is usually shown in contrast, as suffering a deserved punishment, a tragic reversal of fortune, hunger in the after-life, or even death itself.

A charitable character may be a hero or a heroine, and may appear as a youth or an elderly person, a prosperous individual or a pauper. The miraculous reward of the deserving will frequently abrogate the fated death sentence, thus repeatedly underscoring the efficacy of generous and kind acts in thwarting the evil designs of Fate. One single act of Charity toward the distressed may help reverse the economic condition of an individual, bringing him/her sudden wealth or otherwise permitting him/her to enjoy good fortune during his/her lifetime. It may secure a place in Heaven, win a blissful life in Paradise, or deserve the privilege of a visit from the Prophet Elijah and his miraculous assistance. The legendary figure of the Prophet Elijah frequently appears in the tales, dispensing help and compassion to the needy and poor. Usually disguised as a very old man and/or a beggar, he often puts to the test the hero's or heroine's hospitality, patience and good heart. Upon the charitable and worthy he, at times, bestows riches. At other times, he offers comfort by inspiring the poor with hope and confidence. He protects the righteous, guarding them against danger and granting them just reward, but chastises the evil-doers and the unkind.

Didactic tales are endemic among Jews and the exemplary nature of the stories presented here serves to convey an edifying moral principle: to instil the teaching of righteousness and to stress the importance of generosity toward the needy. Most of these tales about destitution and charity are narrated by persons who live under precarious financial circumstances. They *are* the needy, and the selection they make of a specific story — and how much more so

(Continued on Page 10)

Recent Developments in Judeo-Spanish Ballad Scholarship
by Samuel G. Armistead (University of Pennsylvania)

Since World War II, there has been a notable increase of interest in the folklore and traditional literature of the Sephardic Jews. M. Attias' *Romancero sefaradí* (Jerusalem, 1956) will remain an indispensable research tool for work on the ballads of the Eastern Mediterranean communities, while P. Bénichou's *Romancero judeo-español de Marruecos* (Madrid, 1968) provides a model for future work on the North African traditions. Other important Moroccan collections are those of D. Catalán (1948), M. Alvar (1949; 1959), J. Martínez Ruiz (1948-1951), and A. de Larrea Palacín (1952). The field work of S. G. Armistead, J. H. Silverman, and I. J. Katz has been concerned with both the Eastern and the North African traditions. (See *The Judeo-Spanish Ballad Chapbooks of Y. A. Yoná*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1971.) Noteworthy collecting has been carried out recently (1970-1975) by R. Benmayor and M. Hollander (for the Eastern tradition) and O. Librowicz (for Morocco), producing various important discoveries. The oral tradition still offers a challenge to whoever is willing to probe its secrets.

Significant research on the early stages of the Judeo-Spanish tradition has been accomplished through the study of ballad *incipits* used as tune markers in Hebrew *piyutim* collections (H. Avenary, 1971; M. Attias, 1972; Armistead-Silverman, 1973-4). I. J. Katz's *Judeo-Spanish Traditional Ballads from Jerusalem* (New York, 1972-1975) has opened up new perspectives for the study of Sephardic ballad music by stressing its Balkan and Oriental character. S. G. Armistead's *Catalog and Index of Judeo-Spanish romances in the Menéndez Pidal Archive* (3 vols., Madrid, 1976) constitutes a first step toward the elaboration of a complete text-type and bibliographical index of both branches of the Sephardic ballad tradition.

P. Bénichou's path-finding book, *Creación poética en el Romancero tradicional* (Madrid, 1968) has stimulated new interest in the oral tradition as a dynamic, creative, self-renovating process. Note also D. Catalán's article, "Memoria e invención en el Romancero . . ." (*Romance Philology*, 1970-71) and the collectanea volume, *El Romancero en la tradición oral moderna*, eds. D. Catalán, S. G. Armistead, and A. Sánchez Romeralo (Madrid, 1973). Various innovative directions are apparent in recent scholarship: Investigations on formulaic diction, on the social functions of the ballad, on computerized stylistic analysis, and on semiotics suggest themselves for the future. Judeo-Spanish ballad research will help to advance the publication of the multi-volume, comprehensive *Romancero tradicional de las lenguas hispánicas* (ed. D. Catalán, 7 vols. to date, 1957-1975) and will hopefully also contribute to the elaboration of the projected collaborative Pan-European ballad index.



A Kurdish Jewish Animal Tale in its Socio-Cultural Context
by Donna Shai (University of Pennsylvania)

Scholars have conjectured that Jews played an important role in bringing fable literature into the literature of the Middle Ages. While the Jews were not the innovators of this form, they were responsible for translating and adapting fables from other sources. This paper deals with an oral variant of a medieval fable which I recorded from an informant in Jerusalem, Israel, who originates from Zakho, Kurdistan.

The tale begins with a fox and a wolf who are preying on smaller animals. In a discussion of what they will do if they meet up with a lion, the wolf brags that he has one hundred and one deceits which he will employ. The fox says that he has only one trick and will put his trust in God. When they actually encounter the lion, the wolf is too terrified to use any of his deceits and turns to the fox to save him. The fox tells the lion that he is having a quarrel with his wife: they wish to separate and can't agree on how to divide their nine children between them. The fox flatters the lion into agreeing to act as a judge, and arranges for the wolf to escape. The lion, who expects to eat the entire family, is duped into waiting outside the fox's cave. From within the cave, which is too small for the lion to enter, the fox calls out that a judge is no longer needed. The problem has been solved — the wife, according to the fox, has given birth to another child, rounding out the number of children. The lion dies from an "explosion of nerves" and the tale ends with the fox eating the lion.

Variants of this tale, which is in the Aesopic tradition, appear in several literatures. The oldest versions are in Hebrew in the fox fables of Berechiah ha-Nakdan, in "The History of Reynard the Fox" as translated from the Dutch, and in the Latin *Fabulae* of Odo of Cheritan, all originating in the thirteenth century. The tale appears in Spanish in the fifteenth century manuscript, "El Libro de los Gatos" by an unknown scribe, and in the seventeenth century poetry of La Fontaine as fable 14, "The Cat and the Fox." A modern version appears in a collection of Romanian folktales. In several of these versions the tale includes a moralizing epilogue in which the characters and events are assigned allegorical meanings.

The animal tale is well suited to conveying an ethical message. Recent studies in anthropology suggest that animals are a metaphor through which men express ideas about human behavior. Small populations surrounded by powerful neighbors often tend to express the tensions, fears and problems associated with neighboring peoples in the form of myths and folk beliefs about predatory animals. Kurdish Jews often use animal metaphors in describing human behavior, as evidenced by proverbs and sayings.

In the tale under discussion the world is seen as a place where larger animals prey on smaller animals. The fox through his wit reverses the usual order and ends up eating his would-be killer. Jews in Kurdistan frequently were occupied as peddlers who spent weeks at a time travelling on the road from one small village to another. They were frequent targets for marauding Kurdish bands. As a

relatively powerless minority within the Kurdish minority, Jews could identify with the fox who survived and triumphed by the use of his wits, as Jews were obliged to do as they interacted with stronger autonomous peoples in Kurdistan. In particular, the fox with his clever maneuvering flattery toward the King of the Beasts reflects the special role of the Jew in Kurdish society who was often employed by Kurds for delicate diplomatic missions with an especially irascible sheikh. In narrating animal tales such as the one discussed here, Kurdish Jews are maintaining to the present day an important Jewish contribution to general literature: the oral narration of the fable as a vehicle which, while it entertains, reflects both social relations and ideas about human identity.

Research Among Yemenites

by S. D. Goitein (Institute for Advanced Study)

Originally I was drawn to the Yemenites by my religious and national concerns. Their religiosity appealed to my own, and their usefulness for the work of the restoration of the homeland was obvious.

My first scientific interest was *linguistic*, the wish to learn an Arabic dialect which was indigenous and pure, both as a Semitic language and as a Jewish form of expression. The Hebrew elements in that speech were particularly fascinating. Since the free word is more difficult to capture than formed speech, I started out with the study of *oral literature, folklore*, such as stories and proverbs, but my aim was the knowledge of the living speech, and the listening to life stories rather than the recording of traditional matter. Soon it became recognized that it was impossible to study a language without a thorough knowledge of the material civilization and social organization of the speakers. I tried to learn more and more about both. I became and regarded myself an *ethnolinguist*. Further research revealed that Arabic and Hebrew words and phrases had a different psychological resonance when used by my interlocutors and myself. The understanding of the psyche behind the speech became imperative for the correct understanding of the speech itself. I turned into *psycholinguist*. All these trends are discernible in my book *Jemenica* and contemporary publications. Finally, the Yemenites are eminently tradition-bound and historically minded. My strictly synchronistic approach became *diachronistic*, forages into the past of the Yemenites which is so pointedly present to them. My *Mas'ot Habshush* and similar work is both folklore and history.

The avalanche of immigrants after the establishment of the state of Israel imposed both a maximalistic and minimalistic approach. On the one hand, it was imperative to make a *survey* of the 1,100 or so tiny communities from which the immigrants hailed, which underlined the already known observation that there existed very different types of Yemenites. On the other hand, one had to concentrate on one well preserved type and study it in *depth*. My *Portrait of a Yemenite Weavers' Village, The Language of al-Gades, Jewish Communal Life in Yemen* are examples of such depth research.

Censorship & Syncretism: Some Social Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Middle Eastern Jews

by Walter P. Zenner (State University of New York at Albany)

Rather than trying to present a model of a cultural configuration which would cover non-Ashkenazic Jewry, I will use some anthropological approaches to delineate social and cultural processes relevant to the study of Middle Eastern Jewish life. I will begin with some general remarks about anthropological points of view. Then I will turn to applying these to processes uncovered in the course of historical reconstruction and ethnological field work on Syrian Jews.

Anthropology, from its beginnings onwards, has tended to take the viewpoint of the outsider in studying societies, even European society itself. Because of this, the anthropologist, even if he or she is an orthopraxic insider, is engaged in debunking or unmasking what is sacred to actors in a particular social field. In abstracting processes out of their fieldwork, they often give particular attention to deviations and rationalizations of violations, as well as to the maintenance of a particular construction of reality by the people they study.

Censorship (erasure, doublethink), compartmentalization and certain forms of syncretism will serve as examples of processes which relate cultural content to social context. The first is an example of a process defining social reality. The second is a process, which, in a contact situation, allocates access to parts of the social field. The third deals with the regulation of "foreign" and "native" form and content.

Censorship, or erasure, is a process which can be detected in the course of ethnological or folkloristic fieldwork, when informants omit certain data from their reports. It can also be discerned in historical documents. In cases of annulment of betrothal (*qid-dushin*), found in the Syrian responsa of the 18th and 19th centuries, one finds situations which do not make sense on their face. By reconstructing a number of scenarios, the cases begin to come to life and one can understand how the rabbinic authorities could apply pressure to obtain the desired public construction of reality.

This type of censorship must take into account the adjustment which Jews in previous ages made to Diaspora life. One mode of accommodation which Jews used was compartmentalization. By this, they separated certain arenas off from the secular Gentile environment. Sexual dichotomization of music into male and female spheres as found among Yemenite Jews and denial of access to certain sensitive branches of learning to all but the most pious and mature are part of this process. Leadership in the Syrian Jewish community was divided between wealthy merchants and financiers who represented the community to the outside world and the rabbis. When the Ottoman government instituted the office of Hakhambashi, or chief rabbi, as the official leadership of the Jewish community, they upset this balance. The separate Jewish view of reality

(Continued on Page 10)

Jewish Life in Habban: A Tentative Reconstruction

by Laurence D. Loeb (University of Utah)

Habban was a small South Arabian commercial town of considerable economic and political importance, sitting astride the main incense route from Dhofar, Oman and the Hadramaut to Yemen. Located in the Eastern Aden Protectorate in the Wahidi Sultanate, Habban was on the border of the Upper Aulaqi Sheikhdom, 300 km northeast of Aden and about 100 km inland from the Indian Ocean. Its Jewish community was the easternmost permanent settlement of Jews in the Arabian interior. Erroneously referred to as "Jews of the Hadramaut" (a considerable distance to the East — where Jews were forbidden to settle), this community claims to have settled the area nearly 3000 years ago in the retinue of the Queen of Sheba. Lacking any kind of archaeological excavation in the vicinity of Habban, there has been no verification of supposed ancient Jewish sites, but it is quite likely that Jewish settlement in the region is old, perhaps predating the destruction of the Second Temple.

Politically Habban was located in a precarious spot and was the frequent target of Aulaqi incursions. Jews were usually non-combatants as befitted their *dhimmi* status, but often served as principal advisors to the Sultan in military as well as economic and political matters. According to tradition, Habbanite Jews were conferred a special high status because of their loyal support. Men were permitted to bear arms and even to wear the dagger, though few did so. They paid a very low poll tax and were permitted considerable freedom of movement.

In the pre-emigration period, prior to 1950, more than 80% of the approximately 500 Habbanite Jews maintained permanent housing in Habban itself. A part of one patrilineal clan had left Habban, perhaps 100 years ago, and resided in Hadheneh (al-Gabiyah) about one day's walk to the northwest. In fact, these towns were less permanent settlements than a base of operations, at least in recent memory.

Every Habbanite male was an itinerant silversmith, wandering the countryside from the Hadramaut in the East to Aden in the West. Alone or with male members of his immediate family, he would roam from Habban, searching for clients to service. Habbanites would leave the community in Heshvan and return in Nisan for the Pesah holiday, departing again in Iyyar to return in Ellul. They only occasionally wandered far enough west to contact the nearest Jewish communities of Bēdha, Bēhan and Dathinah, all of which were at least one week's distance by caravan. During these recurrent batchelorhood phases they learned to duplicate many of the tasks normally assigned women, e.g., cooking, cleaning and tailoring. To while away the time, they studied Tora, Halakha, Midrash, and a few, the Kabbala.

Women, left behind, developed their own culture while more or less sequestered in the houses of the Jewish quarter. Each of the four patrilineal clans had at least one house and the larger ones

(Continued on Page 10)

Kurdistani Realia and Attitudes as Reflected in the Midrashic-Aggadic Literature of the Kurdish Jews

by Yona Sabar (University of California, Los Angeles)

Much has been written on the influence of the Midrashic-Aggadic literature on the edification of Jewish life in the Diaspora. It seems, though, that the reverse, the influence of local Jewish life and attitudes on the recomposed Midrashic-Aggadic literature of the various Jewish communities, has hardly been explored. In general, however, the mutual influence between the traditional oral literature of a culture and its local realia and values is well known to scholars of oral tradition. There is also a constant interplay between some types of written traditional literature, which originated from oral literature, and later orally composed versions of that literature. Usually, the transmission of traditional literature is not just a mechanical act of memorization, or a blind copy of a previous text, or a verbatim translation from the original language. Each such act is rather accompanied by individual or local embellishments, subtle improvisations or total recomposition.

In regard to the Midrashic-Aggadic literature, one would expect such variations to be especially manifest in the oral versions of small, isolated Jewish communities, such as that of the Kurdish Jews, which retained very few printed, fixed versions. There was no printing-house and imported books were scarce and expensive. Moreover, a good knowledge of Hebrew, which was necessary to understand the available printed versions, was limited to the few learned *Hakhamim* (Rabbis). Historically speaking, oral recomposition and long history of oral improvisations were at the very basis of the Palestinian and Babylonian Midrashic-Aggadic literature. The numerous versions of the printed and manuscript editions still carry a clear mark of this improvisational nature. The printed versions which, when commonly available, would somewhat hold in check the recomposition of oral versions, did not serve this purpose in Kurdistan. This being the case, the oral Midrashic-Aggadic versions of the Kurdish Jews are, in a sense, a continuation of the old tradition of this literature, in which oral transmission and composition were closely related. More exactly, the oral tradition continued alongside the few available written or printed versions and was only sporadically influenced by it.

The term Midrashic-Aggadic literature as referring to this type of literature among the Kurdish Jews has to be redefined. It includes four distinctive groups:

1) Midrashic-Aggadic literature in Hebrew, found in several manuscripts originating in Kurdistan. This group, which I have not studied in detail, seems to be a verbatim copy of other Hebrew manuscripts or printed editions and probably includes very little, if any, local recomposition.

2) Midrashic-Aggadic literature in the Neo-Aramaic dialects spoken by the Kurdish Jews, found in several manuscripts which were used by the *Hakhamim-Darshanim* as a reference for their Sabbath and Holiday sermon (*derašah*), or for training of students and future *Hakhamim*. This group includes many minor local embel-

ishments and improvisations, but not as extensive as in the following groups.

3) Epic versions of Aggadic literature which were transmitted orally until they were put in writing mainly at the initiative of scholars in Israel. Generally speaking, this group shows many local embellishments and extensive recomposition, at least in comparison with the known printed versions.

4) Narratives and lamentations performed orally by women and for women. This group, as expected (since almost all women were so-called "illiterate", i.e., had no access to the written versions), includes only echoes or the barest outlines of the Aggadic themes and is almost entirely recomposed.

Before discussing the last three groups in more detail, a general statement regarding the originality of all the Neo-Aramaic versions is necessary. It is quite possible that in some cases what seems to be a local improvisation may be no more than a borrowing from a written Hebrew or Judeo-Arabic version that has not been preserved in the printed editions known to us, but was known to the redactor of the Neo-Aramaic version. Yet, in many cases Kurdistani realia and values, as well as linguistic evidence, such as word-play derived from Neo-Aramaic, seem to be the basis of the recomposition of some details or the whole.

There are several reasons for the local improvisations and recomposition which accompany the general process of transmission. As already indicated, those Aggadic texts which are retained in Hebrew show no apparent signs of Kurdistani improvisations, probably because the copyists' active knowledge of Hebrew was too limited to allow such modifications. On the other hand, the very act of translation into Neo-Aramaic involved certain improvisations, ranging from a limited free translation to extensive interpretation and interpolation. To be sure, at least some of this recomposition through translation is done quite unconsciously, thus indirectly reflecting local realia and attitudes.

Since all three groups of Midrashic-Aggadic literature in Neo-Aramaic mentioned above belong more or less to oral literature, they all have many characteristics of orally composed literature. The homiletic midrashim for the weekly *parašah* served for the *darshan* as a notebook for his public sermon in the synagogue. The Aggadic epics were usually sung from memory at home on Jewish holidays before a mixed audience of men, women and children. The Aggadic narratives and lamentations were recited and sung at home on the Ninth of Ab (the national Jewish mourning day) by women before an audience of women-folk and small children. This interaction between the performers (the *darshan*, the epic singer, the lamenting woman) and their unique audience in different circumstances is the basis of many improvisations. The *darshan* has to adjust his sermon to his congregation by omitting many digressive or obscure details, or replacing the alien and unfamiliar with the familiar and common. While the *darshan* had at least some notes to refer to, the epic singer usually relied only upon memory. Therefore, in epics the divergence from the fixed versions and interpolation of local realia is much more extensive. The epic singer, who usually was a less learned *Hakham* than the *darshan*, unconsciously

(Continued on Page 10)

Zenner (Continued from Page 8)

was also threatened when modernization (as in the form of secular education) penetrated the censorship and compartmentalization of the Jewish community.

“Compartmentalization” has been termed “phasic syncretism” by Henry Burger. Other aspects of syncretism, or the co-mingling of cultural elements, are related to the authority system, too. Here I will utilize a study of *baqashot* by Ruth Katz. *Baqashot* are Hebrew songs to God, which are sung according to the *maqamat*, the Arabic system of melody types. Here is a formal syncretizing tradition in which Arabic musical style accompanies a Hebrew text. The *baqashot* have become a cultural element by which Syrian Jews and other Middle Eastern Jews show their loyalty to their parental tradition. Despite this, the way in which they sing and embellish the *baqashot* has become exaggerated and no longer follows the limits formerly used. Katz interprets this in terms of a minority accepting a majority view of its cultural tradition. This shows the often subtle way by which culture change proceeds — an example of a “hidden-trend syncretism.”

In this paper, I have used three models of processes, as applied to Syrian Jews, in order to illustrate the way in which a certain group has manipulated the form and content of its culture. Descriptions of processes are used increasingly in social anthropology and folklore study. I have not attempted to construct a cultural configuration on the *shtetl* model. Despite very serious criticisms, such models have been devised for Middle Eastern Jews, as well as for others. As Lawrence Rosen has shown, processual description can be incorporated into such models.

Finally, it should be obvious that the delineation of processes of cultural change is a task which anthropology, folklore and Judaic Studies share. The transformation of certain symbols, the reinterpretation of unchanging signs, and the restructuring of social arrangements are the mutual meat of our disciplines. Continuation of the dialogue between these traditions of scholarship should be fruitful.

Sabar (Continued from Page 9)

interpolated themes from the local secular Kurdish folklore, transferred a theme from one epic or source to another, replaced the role of one character with another, forgot various details or created new ones to make his story more interesting to his particular audience. The lamenting woman had hardly any direct access to the printed or written versions of Aggadah. Her only access was through intermediaries such as the epic singers. Thus, the orally transmitted literature of women is even more removed from these written versions and includes only echoes of them. It is also interesting to see how men and women characters change roles in comparison with the written fixed versions, or how the emphasis is shifted in women’s literature from a man to a woman as a leading character, and vice versa in men’s literature. Thus, values and attitudes prevalent in the local community at one time or another are consciously or unconsciously intertwined in the Aggadic literature of its male or female groups.

Loeb (Continued from Page 8)

inhabited a number of patrilineage houses. The buildings were multistoried and arranged in a sort of semi-circular pattern in close proximity to the Sultan’s palace, overlooking Wadi Habban.

The extended absence of most males had a marked effect on some areas of Habbanite life. The community developed no formal political leadership — any male present might have to assume authority and responsibility at any moment. Few ritual specializations were encouraged. Many, perhaps most men, could function as *mohel*, *shoḥet* or as a member of a *bet din*. Every male could and did function as a *shaliaḥ zibbur* and *ba’al kore*. Despite the absence of ordained Rabbis, religious life was intense and Habbanite piety was reknowned through South Arabia — and even after 25 years in Israel. Education of males was accomplished formally in a school setting in one of Habban’s two synagogues and each father used every opportunity available to teach and review studies with his sons. When a son accompanied his father on a work-tour, a considerable amount of time was devoted each day to study.

Habban’s biggest problem was not anti-Jewish hostility on the part of neighbor or distant Muslim tribesmen. Drought was Habban’s main scourge and Jewish folklore is replete with tales of lineages wiped out or reduced to one individual who then fathered later generations; of men leaving South Arabia altogether and seeking their fortune in India only to discover the death by starvation of their entire family during their absence. Jewish population was kept low both as a result of subsistence hardships and because of the extended periods of sexual abstinence, although there appears to have been a rather high percentage of polygamous marriage. There also seems to have been a small, but steady trickle of conversion to Islam to escape the consequences of famine.

Despite the ostensible isolation of Habbanite Jewry, their cultural and ritual tradition is probably fairly close to that of Aden, and her satellite traditions in Bēdha and Dathina. How and why a rich creative Judaism existed in such difficult circumstances is the central problem examined in this paper.

**Haboucha (Continued from Page 6)**

when a large part of their repertory consists of a variation of the same theme: *Tzedaka?* — is often clearly indicative of the projection of their own feelings and concerns onto their narration. An attempt at drawing parallels between the life experience of individual informants and the stories they choose to tell will be made. Worthy of notice is the observation that these folktales are generally optimistic and show faith and hope in the face of adversity. They express confidence in the ultimate equity of Divine Justice.

Oral Tradition and Oral Torah: Defining the Problematic
by Jacob Neusner (Brown University)

Since Judaic theology claims that Moses, "our rabbi," received at Sinai a dual Torah, one in writing and one transmitted orally, it is widely assumed that the whole of the rabbinic literature, designated Oral Torah, falls within that more general category of oral traditions ("folk traditions") subject to investigation by scholars of folklore. Oral Torah, however, is to be distinguished from oral tradition in general on two issues: the point at which the conception of Oral Torah enters Judaic theological thinking; the particular document to which the conception of oral formulation and oral transmission pertains. Based upon the results of my *Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (Leiden, 1971), III. *Conclusions* and *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Purity* (Leiden, 1977), XXII. *The Redaction and Formulation of the Order of Purities in Mishnah and Tosefta*, this paper makes the following points.

1. The conception of Oral Torah is not found in Mishnah but is applied to Mishnah in the third century. The specific theological formularies, *Oral Torah*, *Written Torah*, and *Whole Torah*, are rare even in the Talmudic stratum of the rabbinic literature. The conception of the two Torahs is fairly common. The claim that the Oral Torah contains *ipsissima verba* of Moses is particularly important, however, in Sherira's polemic against the Qaraites. In any event it is a claim advanced in particular in behalf of Mishnah and not to be generalized to encompass the whole of the rabbinic literature, inclusive of the *midrashic* compilations.

2. The beginning of the claim that someone has a tradition formulated and transmitted orally in precisely the language in which that tradition is now repeated pertains to Yohanan b. Zakkai, alleged in sayings attributed both to Joshua and to Eliezer. But the stories in which that allegation is advanced also report that no one but Yohanan and his disciples knew what Moses is supposed to have said.

3. In any event we must make a rigid distinction, implicit in the antecedent materials, between the general notion that stories, sayings, or ideas have been passed on orally, and the very particular notion that tradition has been carefully formulated and transmitted orally, word for word, so that we have in hand *ipsissima verba* of Moses, our rabbi, or of any later rabbis. It is the latter conception which finds its way into virtually all accounts of the history of the rabbinic literature. So far as Mishnah's technical mnemonic devices confirm that conception, however, they indicate only that it was intended that Mishnah would be memorized (as "oral Torah"), to which said mnemonics are particular. They do not prove that the materials so formulated have come down in oral form to the redactors of Mishnah, only that Mishnah itself would be transmitted orally.

4. The claim that the Pharisees had traditions, not written down in Scriptures, is different from the claim that Pharisees had traditions in the exact words of Moses. This latter conception is absent

in all of the earliest accounts of the Pharisees, which are clear that the Pharisees have "traditions of the fathers" — that is, they know the gist of what was said — but hardly allege that these are in the exact words of the ancient authorities. Other groups of the same period, particularly the Essenes at Qumran and the Christians, likewise allege that they have traditions apart from Scripture, perhaps not written down. Paul, for example, draws on tradition, even oral tradition. But he uses it very freely and does not regard as important the exact verbal formulation.

5. Mishnah as oral Torah, by contrast, is worked out so that what is to be preserved is formulated to facilitate memorization of *ipsissima verba*, and no written form was prepared for deposit in an archive. Saul Lieberman's account of the publication of the Mishnah (*Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* [N.Y., 1950], pp. 83-99) is taken as definitive, because it conforms exactly to both the picture drawn by the pertinent sources and to the claims laid down therein.

6. Folklorists further want to know about the dates of stories and sayings. It is widely held that when we find correspondences in older literature to stories which first surface in later rabbinic compilations, we may suppose that said stories are much older than the compilations in which they first occur under rabbinic auspices. This is certainly plausible. But it follows not that "rabbinic tradition" is very old, only that rabbinic documents have taken over and rabbinized very old traditions, a quite separate matter. The contrary conclusion, resting upon the implications of the oral theory of the formulation and transmission of the rabbinic traditions, is unlikely and probably false. It depends upon an imprecise interpretation of what it is that the conception of "oral Torah" alleges, and, as has been emphasized, the particular document in behalf of which the allegation is advanced.



Generic Distinctions in the Haggadah

by Dan Ben-Amos (University of Pennsylvania)

The Haggadah is an all inclusive term that refers to a variety of folklore forms, ranging from exegetical interpretations of the Old Testament to historical narratives about post-biblical figures and events and even to fictional tales. The distinction between exegetical and non-exegetical haggadah is inherent in the narrative frame. The association with a biblical phrase is the distinctive mark between the two forms. The problem of generic distinctions among non-exegetical narratives is more complicated. The present paper is an attempt to discover, as much as possible, these existing generic distinctions.

The search for these generic features will be made on two levels: cognitive and expressive. A third social level of generic distinctions

(Continued on Page 12)

Tracing Oral Elements in Genesis Rabba

by Ronald Brown (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati)

A problem unique to students of oral tradition is identifying those features which distinguish an oral from a written tradition. The task becomes particularly complicated when an assumed oral tradition has been committed to writing, thus not allowing the folklorist access to the verbal narrative. Such is the case with Judaism's oral tradition. The folklorist, overwhelmed by an ocean of literature supposedly originating in an oral environment, must be content to analyse texts undoubtedly altered by scribes. Other than mnemonic aids or attestations to such, how can the folklorist ascertain whether a given text was indeed composed for oral transmission?

A possible solution might lie in the analysis of these traditions in terms of their phonic values. It should be determined to what extent a text is better suited for the ears of an audience rather than the eyes of a reader.

Genesis Rabba suggested itself as a fertile area to reveal vestiges of oral elements in Midrashic literature. Various passages were selected to demonstrate different degrees of complexity. The contention of this presentation is that a marked sound relationship may exist between a term in the exegetical text and a word in the corresponding Biblical verse, to which it refers. Certain Midrashim solely intended to be related in an oral manner have been unwittingly obscured in consequence of their being transcribed. On the basis of these examples it would seem that a different level of understanding of Midrashim can be achieved in the phonic realm. By investigating oral elements in Midrashic literature, the folklorist may be able to apply these techniques to the broader field of oral tradition.



Ben-Amos (Continued from Page 11)

is not analytically possible in those cases in which historical reconstruction is necessary.

At the cognitive level we shall examine the existing generic terms and the formulaic phrases that function as distinctive marks. On the expressive level we shall examine the interdependence between the formal and the thematic properties of the various narratives. On the basis of such an examination we shall recognize four genres: the legend, the exempla, the fable (*mashal*) and the hyperbole. Of these four only the last two genres are clearly designated by generic terms. The formula *ma'aseh b. . .* serves as an opening formula for both the first and the second forms, and hence could not have served as a distinctive feature. The differences between these two genres lie in the plot structure and its thematic substance.

The Origins of the Office of Head of the Jews (*Ra'is al-Yahud*) in the Fatimid Empire: The Period of the House of Mevorakh b. Saadya, ca. 1064 to ca. 1126.

by Mark R. Cohen (Princeton University)

The dissertation is based on three types of primary sources: Muslim historical accounts of the Fatimid period; Oriental Christian historical records (of the Coptic community); and a corpus of 201 Geniza documents, approximately 80% of which have not been published. The work explores the origins of the institution in medieval Islamic Egypt known as the Negidut (Nagidate), after the Hebrew honorific most commonly associated with it, but which is more properly designated the Headship of the Jews, in accordance with the actual, Arabic title of the officeholder, *ra'is al-yahud*.

The study takes as its starting point S. D. Goitein's well-documented and well-reasoned revisionist hypothesis regarding the genesis of the office. The hitherto dominant hypothesis states that the Fatimid government initiated the office of the Nagid at the time of the conquest of Egypt in 969 C.E. out of anti-Abbasid foreign policy considerations. In contradiction, Goitein has convincingly demonstrated that neither the title of Nagid nor a leader with the Nagid's powers appears in the Geniza records for Egypt until the 1060's, and that the Fatimids originally recognized the Gaon, or head, of the Jerusalem yeshiva as the chief of the Jews in their realm. Therefore, he has argued that the institution first arose in the final third of the eleventh century to replace the waning Palestinian Gaonate.

The research for the present study focused on a sixty-year period, comprising the administrations of the first four incumbents of the new office: the three court physicians of the House of Mevorakh b. Saadya, namely, Judah b. Saadya (ruled ca. 1064 to ca. 1078), his brother Mevorakh (ruled ca. 1078 to 1082 and again from 1094 to 1111), and the latter's son and successor Moses b. Mevorakh (ruled 1112 to ca. 1126); and the Nasi David b. Daniel b. Azarya (ruled ca. 1082 to 1094), whose twelve-year reign interrupted the continuity of the dynasty of the House of Mevorakh b. Saadya.

A careful reading of secondary and primary sources describing the Fatimid setting during the six-decade span in question established the existence of a political state of affairs which fostered a new, Egyptian-centered inwardness, resulting from, among other things, the loss of the province of Palestine-Syria to the Seljuks in 1071, and from the domestically-oriented policies of the strong-armed military vizier, Badr al-Jamali (ruled 1074 to 1094). A study of the Christian-Arabic chronicle of the lives of the Coptic Patriarchs — the *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*, exploited for Jewish history for the first time, revealed that significant changes in the leadership of the Christian minority were occurring during our period, transformations which parallel developments in Jewish self-government. A meticulous scrutiny of the documents in the Geniza corpus, sorted chronologically according to successive

(Continued on Page 14)

Jerusalem in the Herodian Period - A Jewish or Hellenistic City?
by Lee Levine (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Caesarea and Jerusalem: if someone says to you that both are destroyed, do not believe him; that both are flourishing, do not believe him. That Caesarea is destroyed and Jerusalem is flourishing, or that Jerusalem is destroyed and Caesarea is flourishing, you may believe him, as is written, "I shall be filled, she is destroyed" (Ezek. 26:2) if this one is filled, the other is laid waste; if the other is filled, this is laid waste.

(B Megilla 6a)

This statement of R. Isaac indicates a profound tension between Jerusalem and Caesarea, the Jewish religious center and the Roman provincial capital. Did such a polarity in fact exist in the first century, or ought this statement be construed merely as the personal prejudice of the third century sage?

Such a dichotomy would seem to be confirmed by numerous incidents from the late Second Temple period: the Jews' objection to Herod's placing what they thought to be images in the theater and an eagle over the entrance to the Temple, to Pilate's introduction of Roman standards into the city, and to Caligula's attempt to place a statue of himself in the Temple itself. The image of Jerusalem as a distinctively Jewish city seems to be corroborated by archeological data. With but one exception, no images appear on any of the city's coins, mosaic floors, wall paintings, sarcophagi, ossuaries, architectural fragments, funerary facades or other artifacts. Thus, at first glance, it might seem that Jerusalem was essentially immune to foreign influences.

Tracing the extent and nature of such influences on Jewish life generally has constituted one of the most fruitful and engaging areas of scholarship during this last half century. What, if any, information do we have indicating such influences upon Jerusalem society in the late Second Temple period? The evidence falls into several categories.

1. Material remains are the most plentiful and consistent. Strong Greco-Roman influence is to be noted in every area. The architecture, building techniques, and artistic remains are typical of the Roman east, and the several buildings of the city which Josephus describes in some detail would have been considered typical of any Greek city.
2. Language. Of the 200 inscriptions published by Frey in his *Corpus*, 80 bear Greek inscriptions, i.e. 40%. Of the 'monumental' inscriptions, the most famous is that of Theodotus, written in Greek and announcing the dedication of a synagogue in Jerusalem, one that had existed there for some three generations. The colophon of the Greek Esther indicates that the translation from Hebrew was made sometime in the first century B.C.E. by one Lysimachus, son of Ptolemy, a resident of Jerusalem.
3. Names often reflect cultural currents. The high priests and revolutionary leaders mentioned by Josephus characteristically bear Jewish names; those of the Herodian family and associated aristocracy are typically Greek, and even Roman. Names appearing

on the Greek inscriptions of Jerusalem are divided between Greek and Hebrew ones.

4. Herod built three major institutions in the city - a theater, amphitheater, and hippodrome. Moreover a 'xystus' is mentioned some seven times by Josephus. This may have been part of a gymnasium (shades of 175!) or more likely, a porticoed area used for public gatherings.
5. The population of Jerusalem was indeed cosmopolitan. Under Herod, Greek intellectuals, the Herodian family and prominent pagans of Palestine participated in and dominated court affairs for decades. Throughout this period many Diaspora Jews visited Jerusalem on the pilgrimage festivals.
6. Many of the values and ideas current in Jerusalem society are best explained as the result of outside influences. Certain Pharisaic ideas (resurrection; popular, non-aristocratic education) and institutions (the academy) are probably foreign in origin, as may be some of the hermeneutical principles ascribed to Hillel.

In light of the above, what then can be concluded about the Hellenization of Jerusalem. It is obvious that Hellenization expressed itself in very different ways within the society, sometimes more profoundly (material remains), at times somewhat less so (language, institutions, values, ideas) and still others not at all (cultic worship, imagery). The crucial questions: What was the extent of influence in *each* area? How did the Greek mesh with the Jewish? are for the most part impossible to ascertain with any degree of certainty. The material culture is the easiest to assess. Beyond this, our image of Jerusalem will depend on answers to a number of central questions:

- 1) What is the relationship between the material and nonmaterial culture? If one indicates the clear and unequivocal influence of the Greco-Roman world, can the other be far behind? Alternatively, does the absence of images reflect a general aversion to foreign influences, or is it a very specific response to specific circumstances?
- 2) What was the impact of Herodian institutions (theater, amphitheater, hippodrome) on the city generally? Did they exist during his reign only, or did they continue to function down to the destruction?
- 3) What was the extent and nature of the Diaspora Jewish community in the city? What was its impact on Jerusalem society?
- 4) How were the masses affected? Our sources deal almost exclusively with the upper classes. To the extent that we know anything about Hellenization, it involves this group only. Did this influence percolate down? Contrastingly, in the late Roman, i.e. Talmudic, age, evidence for Hellenization on all levels of society is abundant and striking.

In assessing the degree of Hellenization, it must be remembered that acculturation in ancient Jewish society (and in all pre-modern Jewish society for that matter) was not identical with assimilation.

(Continued on Page 14)

The Midrash of the Early Jesus Sect

by Wayne A. Meeks (Yale University)

One of the ways the early Christians legitimated and defended their beliefs in their "Messiah Jesus" was by scriptural interpretation. In this respect they were like all the other Jewish sects about which we have any information in the Second Commonwealth period. Indeed, many of the exegetical procedures, both formal and informal, found in Jewish literature roughly contemporaneous with the New Testament, from the Alexandrian allegories to the midrash halakah of the later rabbinic schools, have close analogies in the Christian writings. The parallels often extend to content as well as form, confirming what we would naturally expect, that the Christians adapted current exegetical traditions, including both ways of construing particular texts and elements of folklore that by midrash aggada were connected in the popular mind with the texts. In addition, of course, they quickly developed their own exegetical traditions, which often deviated sharply from any known Jewish or Samaritan ways of reading the same texts. The uses of scripture texts to tell and explain the story of Jesus, particularly of his death and resurrection, have their closest analogy, in general effect if not always in precise form, in the *pesharim* from Qumran. As the Qumran group found in Habakkuk and Nahum, for example, hidden allusions to the persecution of the Teacher of Righteousness, the imperial policies of the Romans, and schism within their own group, so the Christian understanding of Jesus' story unites memory of recent events, the community's own experience and developing structure, and vivid metaphors and patterns from scripture texts.

A review of several important groups of texts, associated by their key metaphors or patterns, will illustrate some of the directions of christological exegesis: The Rejected Stone (Ps. 118:22=LXX 117:22; Isa 28:16; 8:14; Dan 2:32,34); The Exalted Regent (Ps. 110:1=LXX 109:1; Dan 7:13-14; Ps. 8:7 LXX; Ps. 68:19=LXX 67:19); The Righteous Sufferer (Ps. 69=LXX 68; Ps. 22=LXX 21; Gen 22:16); The Seed of David (2 Sam 7:12-13; 1 Chr 17:11-12); The Heavenly Christ (Ex 23:20-21; *Merkaba* texts; Prov 8:22 ?). This paper does not offer an original exploration of these early Christian exegetical traditions, but only calls attention to some results of fairly extensive research in the past few years by various scholars. The comparative analysis of Christian, Jewish, and Samaritan "midrash" not only opens new insights into the ways early Christians developed their own ideologies, it also makes possible the use of the early Christian literature to discover early attestation of some Jewish and/or Samaritan traditions which are otherwise known only from later sources.

Much of the variety of beliefs and modes of interpretation, which we have learned in recent years to have been characteristic of Judaism in the Greco-Roman world, is reflected in the early Christian tradition. But the Christians concentrated that variety by pressing it into service to describe the roles ascribed to a single personage, Jesus. Both the Jewish traditions and the perceived identity of Jesus were transformed in the process. For example, functions and

names of eschatological figures and scriptural descriptive phrases tended in Christian usage to become titles: the Christ, the Son of Man, the Lord, the Son of God, the Word of God, the Savior. And the connotations of these terms were altered, sometimes radically, in the process. Very seldom were Jewish beliefs about a particular figure or a particular aspect of the eschatological scenario simply taken over whole and applied to Jesus. Rather, the traditions about Jesus the Christ took shape from a complex process in which scripture texts, some of which were commonly understood eschatologically but many of which were not, were interpreted in the light of the memory of the events of Jesus' life and death. And this memory itself was shaped partly by the later experience and the social context of the emerging Christian groups and partly by the words of the texts and their traditional interpretations.

Levine (Continued from Page 13)

as is so often the case in modern times. Jewish society was a well-defined polity, secure in the rights and privileges accorded it by the central government. The possibility of its disintegration or the attraction of Jews to the point of 'conversion' was remote. Therefore the Jews could more easily open themselves to outside influences without feeling threatened by dissolution.

Looking back at the remark of R. Isaac on the antithesis of Caesarea and Jerusalem, as regards the first century we may conclude that the third century sage was both correct and mistaken. Jerusalem was in fact different. Certain aspects of that society were unique to the Roman experience. But he also erred, for the antithesis was far from being as categorical as he suggested. On the one hand, Caesarea itself boasted a flourishing and vibrant Jewish community. On the other hand, all evidence points to the fact that Jerusalem had a cosmopolitan flavor as well as particularistic bent, was acculturated as well as uniquely Jewish, and included significant Greek elements as well as very strong Jewish ones. Such tension as noted by R. Isaac undoubtedly did exist between Jerusalem and Caesarea, but was also present within Jerusalem society itself.

Cohen (Continued from Page 12)

administrations with the aid of certain methodological criteria, permitted a reconstruction of the gradual, organic, and evolutionary process by which the new institution developed out of, and eventually broke away from, the Gaonate.

This student's research and writing experience suggests that similar projects integrating Muslim, Eastern Christian, and Jewish Geniza sources could be undertaken. In particular, it would appear that the inquiry into Coptic communal sources creates a viable methodological model for the comparative history of non-Muslim communities. Finally, the whole exercise shows the vast possibilities for investigating in rather fine detail the subject of medieval Jewish political history, a topic which, in the Near East at least, has traditionally received less attention than Jewish intellectual history.

Ancient Rabbinic and Christian Views of History, Tradition, and Heresy

by Shaye J.D. Cohen (Jewish Theological Seminary of America)

A central element in the history of both Judaism and Christianity has been the quest for orthodoxy: what is the true religion and what is heresy? who has the authority to determine what is right and what is wrong? Between the second and fourth centuries of our era, orthodoxies emerged for both Judaism and Christianity. These new orthodoxies, Rabbinic Judaism and Catholic Christianity, even after their victories over their competitors, did not lose their sectarian outlook: they regarded themselves as the sole legitimate expressions of Judaism (Christianity began as a Jewish sect and never ceased to regard itself as the true Israel). They alone, they claimed, know the correct interpretation of the holy texts; they alone fulfill God's will. All those who disagreed with them were considered heretics. This shared viewpoint caused both Rabbinic Judaism and Catholic Christianity (hereafter referred to collectively as "the elect groups") to treat the Jewish past by a common methodology. Self authentication was the goal. I shall outline the major historiographic parallels and cite in parentheses examples drawn from the literature of the elect groups.

A. Rewriting ancient history

1. Both groups retroject their religious teachings into the Biblical past by converting prominent Biblical figures into members of the elect group (the patriarchs, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, the prophets, etc., become Rabbis/Christians). Biblical laws and theology are similarly reinterpreted to make them conform to those of the elect group.

2. The same process is applied by the Rabbis to the entire second temple period, by the Christians to the New Testament period. Prominent figures outside of the elect groups are brought into the fold (Simon the Righteous and other high priests become Rabbis; Gamaliel and even Seneca and Pilate become Christians). Incidents which originally had no direct connection with the history of the elect group become part of the group's *Heilsgeschichte* (a political protest against Jannaeus in the temple at Tabernacles becomes a demonstration in favor of the Rabbis and Rabbinic law; Titus' death is the result of his destruction of the temple; the death of Agrippa I is the result of his persecution of the Christians; Titus destroys the temple in order to uproot Christianity).

For the Rabbis Jewish history is Rabbinic history. All of the major figures of Jewish history were Rabbis. The vast majority of Jews throughout the generations were good Rabbinic Jews. "Rabbinic Judaism" is the same as "Judaism." For the Christians all the major figures of the Jewish Bible — not the Jewish masses but the Jewish elite — were Christian and were part of the *praeparatio evangelica*. The leaders of the second temple period (except for the Maccabean martyrs who became Christian martyrs) have a more ambiguous status because the era of a new dispensation was approaching, but for the New Testament period the Christiano-centric view is clear. Jews who were kind to Christians were assumed to be, or to have

become, Christians, while those Jews (i.e., the majority) who opposed Christianity received divine punishment for their opposition. In sum: both elect groups see themselves as the navel of the theological world, hence of the historical world as well.

B. Tradition and Heresy

1. Both elect groups legitimate their claims to authenticity by asserting that they are the sole bearers of the sacred tradition (Pirquei Aboth; Irenaeus and Cyprian). The tradition has been handed down accurately from Moses/Jesus.

2. At one time all agreed upon the content of the tradition and there were no disputes or heresies (T. Hagigah; Irenaeus and cf. I Clement and Cyprian).

3. Heresy arose as a rebellion against the one, holy, and true tradition, and was caused by the stupidity, ignorance, or selfishness of the heretic leaders. Therefore the claims of the heretics to religious authority are false (B. Sanhedrin on Jesus and Aboth de R. Nathan on the Sadducees; Irenaeus and the other heresiologists on the Gnostics). In response to this view, the heretics (i.e., the Jews and Christians outside of the elect groups) attacked the notion of tradition as articulated by the elect (Sadducees and Gnostics).

These historiographic parallels are not necessarily the result of the influence of Rabbinic Judaism on Catholic Christianity or vice versa. Many groups which claimed loyalty to the Bible hailed the Biblical heroes as members of the group (e.g., Jubilees and Philo). All nomistic religions develop doctrines of tradition. All groups and peoples have a tendency to put themselves on the center stage of history. But these truisms explain only part of the parallels. A major factor was the impact of Hellenistic culture. Chains of tradition were used to authenticate the teachings of Greek philosophic schools. Consensus was used by Greek sophists to demonstrate philosophic truths, and was adopted by Josephus and other Oriental writers who praised the unanimity (hence veracity) of Oriental wisdom and ridiculed the confusion (hence mendacity) of Greek rhetoric and history. Greek thought was but a corruption of Oriental wisdom, they argued. Since Rabbis and Fathers regarded heresy and paganism as practically synonymous, they applied the same arguments against both.

These historiographic views were not questioned until the Renaissance and have persisted in traditional Jewish and Catholic circles until today. The Jewish and Christian reform movements (19th-century Geigerian and 16th-century Lutheran) attacked many of these points and advanced nearly identical theories for their own self authentication — but that is the subject of another paper.



Jewish Philosophical Polemics Against Christianity in the Middle Ages

by Daniel J. Lasker (Ohio State University)

The medieval Jewish-Christian debate has left us with a literature which is a fertile source for scholarly research. A thorough investigation of these polemical works allows us to make a number of significant conclusions about the nature of this historical religious encounter. In the present work, the Jewish polemical treatises from the whole medieval period were examined in light of their philosophical content, and conclusions were drawn as to the place of philosophy in the medieval Jewish-Christian debate.

One concrete example should suffice to indicate the nature of the findings in this dissertation. As part of their general refutation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, many Jewish polemicists made mention of an explanation of this tenet which identified each of the three Persons with a divine attribute. Thus, the Father was thought of as divine power, the Son as divine wisdom, and the Holy Spirit as divine will or goodness. This exposition of the Christian doctrine is found in the polemical works of Nahmanides, Meir ben Simeon of Narbonne, Moses ben Solomon of Salerno, Moses Ha-Kohen of Tordesillas, Profiat Duran, Shem Tov ibn Shaprut, Simon Duran, and Abraham Farissol. The most comprehensive critique of this doctrine was offered by Hasdai Crescas. Yet, an examination of standard Christian theological treatises reveals that this interpretation of the Trinity was hardly as common as the Jewish polemical literature would lead one to believe. In fact, the first western Christian thinker to propose this explanation of the Persons, Peter Abelard, was condemned for this teaching (Council of Sens, 1140). Though some Christian theologians such as Hugh of Saint Victor, Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas eventually accepted this doctrine after the students of Abelard kept it alive, they were not very comfortable with it.

Why, then, did Jewish polemicists refer to this explanation of the Trinity so often? The answer can be seen when one examines Christian polemical literature. In these works, e.g., those of Peter Alfonsi, Peter of Blois, Nicholas de Lyra, and Abner of Burgos, reference is made quite often to this, or a similar, interpretation of the Trinity despite its not being quite authoritative. Apparently, Christian polemicists attempted to convince Jews of the possibility of a divine Trinity by reference to a theory of attributes which was, on the whole, acceptable to Jewish thinkers. In turn, this explanation of the Persons must have struck Jewish audiences as the normative Christian doctrine, and it was to this theory that Jewish writers directed their arguments. We see, then, that the Jewish polemicists were addressing themselves to the Christianity presented to them by Christian missionaries. We thus conclude: with but few exceptions, e.g., Profiat Duran and Judah Aryeh de Modena, Jewish thinkers had little first-hand knowledge of standard, non-polemical Christian theological works. Jewish acquaintance with Christian doctrines was the product of polemical encounters.

We might ask why it is that Christian polemicists interpreted the Trinity in a somewhat unconventional manner. This becomes explicable when we consider the origin of the philosophical theory of divine attributes. According to Wolfson, Muslim thinkers adopted a belief in attributes specifically to combat the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Whereas Christians taught that God had three distinct Persons, the Muslim Attributists (*Sifatiyya*) would concede only that God had attributes, but not Persons. The anti-Attributists went further and denied the separate reality of attributes, arguing instead that anything predicated of God must be considered an essential attribute. Jewish philosophers by and large adopted some form of a theory of attributes, and, in turn, Western Christian thinkers did so also, even though they did not generally identify the Persons with attributes. Christian polemicists, on the other hand, noting the affinity between the Jewish theories of divine attributes and the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, must have thought that an explanation of the Trinity in terms of attributes would appeal to potential Jewish converts. Their reasoning may well have been that if Jews believed that God was powerful, wise, and good, and in general they did so believe, then perhaps some Jews could be persuaded to go one step further and accept the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Since the Jewish polemicists heard this interpretation of the Trinity from their Christian antagonists, and since they themselves saw the obvious connections between attributes and Persons, it was only natural that they considered this to be the authoritative doctrine.

From the Jewish arguments against the Trinity in terms of attributes we may learn something else. When Jewish thinkers discussed the attributes in a polemical context, they were apt to treat them differently than when the context was not polemical. The most noted example of this is Hasdai Crescas whose arguments against the Trinity in his *Bittul 'Iqqare Ha-Nozrim* seem to refute his theory of attributes presented in *Or Ha-Shem*. In addition, it can be demonstrated that some Jewish theories of attributes were consciously influenced by the Jewish-Christian debate. We may conclude, therefore, that Jewish philosophical polemicists were usually motivated more by polemical than philosophical motives in their rejections of Christian doctrine. In these religious debates, philosophy is clearly the handmaiden of theology.

This dissertation suggests future research that can be done in the field of Jewish-Christian polemics. An examination of other aspects of the Jewish-Christian debate would be useful to determine whether or not the same conclusions would be obtained.



Sources for the History of the Jewish Poor, London, 1700-1850
by Todd M. Endelman (Yeshiva University)

Throughout the 18th century the overwhelming majority of European Jews, including those in the more prosperous states of the West, remained impoverished. The immediate tasks of feeding, housing, and clothing themselves exhausted and drained the Jewish poor. Their education rarely extended beyond a few years of elementary Hebrew instruction in a *heder* and, in many fewer instances, a smattering of secular learning in one of the modern schools of the *maskilim*. As a consequence of their poverty and their lack of formal education, the Jewish masses of the 18th and early 19th centuries never produced a body of literature in which they confronted the changes that were reshaping the character of European Jewry. As one would expect, only the highly educated and the well-to-do responded to modernity in an articulate, self-conscious, and ideological manner.

The absence of a literary response to modernity on the part of the poor has led to their being ignored in discussions of the beginnings of modern Jewish history. Indeed, it would be possible — although incorrect — to infer from their literary silence that they were not directly caught up in the changes that their wealthier co-religionists were experiencing and that they remained a bastion of traditionalism until achieving bourgeois status in the second half of the 19th century. There is, however, a large body of historical evidence for Anglo-Jewry in the Georgian and early Victorian periods that indicates that the Jewish poor were as engaged by the processes of acculturation and integration as those at the top of the Jewish social hierarchy. (By extension, further research would in all likelihood discover similar bodies of material for other European Jewish communities.)

The materials which reveal the lives of the Anglo-Jewish poor are almost exclusively of non-Jewish provenance. The Anglo-Jewish elite had little reason to discuss publicly — that is, in print — the behavior of its poorer and less respectable brethren. On the contrary, the Jewish poor of Georgian England were an embarrassment to the well-to-do; their ungentlemanly behavior and their low, if not illicit, occupations were subjects that were best kept out of the arena of public debate. When the Anglo-Jewish elite commented on the state of the Jewish poor, it was largely to bemoan their existence and to wish for their rapid social improvement. Furthermore, the records of the Ashkenazi synagogues of London, who bore the primary responsibility for the relief of the Jewish poor, indicate only the sums spent on poor relief and practically nothing about the lives of the poor.

The non-Jewish world, on the other hand, found numerous occasions to record, often in great detail, how the Jewish poor lived. Christian missionaries, whose objects were poor rather than rich Jews, dutifully reported their forays into the Jewish neighborhoods of London, triumphantly printed the memoirs of apostates (includ-

ing much material wholly unrelated to their conversion experiences), and carefully recorded the marital histories of parents who applied to enroll their children in missionary schools. Social reformers, police magistrates, and hack journalists commented at length on the character of Jewish poverty, its probable causes, and its unwholesome effects, i.e., a thriving subculture of Jewish criminals, toughs, and desperados. London guide books warned visitors about the various frauds perpetrated by Jewish hawkers and sharpers. Travellers' accounts recalled the din and the clamor of London's open-air market for second-hand clothes and the ceaseless importunings of Jewish dealers. The Jewish poor of London, in short, attracted the attention of the non-Jewish world precisely because they were poor, highly visible, and numerous. Their poverty and, in particular, the behavior that it engendered thrust them into the public limelight. This is not to say that Jewish poverty was a distinct public issue that was treated in isolation, but rather that within the context of almost any account of the impoverished inhabitants of East London one can find much about the Jewish poor. For example, the printed records of the Old Bailey, the major criminal court for the City of London and the County of Middlesex, contain a veritable goldmine of information about the lives of the Jewish poor. They not only tell us about the crimes that Jews committed, but, more importantly in some ways, they contain valuable details about the breakdown of religious tradition among the Jewish poor and how the poor themselves regarded their own indifference to tradition. From the testimony of Jewish witnesses in criminal cases of the most prosaic nature, one can frequently discover who was keeping kosher, who covered his head while taking an oath, who was cohabiting with a non-Jew, who was doing business on the Sabbath, who was attending the synagogue, and who was mixing socially with non-Jews.

The portrait of the London Jewish poor that emerges from the above sources indicates that they were as acculturated and integrated into the non-Jewish world as the Goldsmids and the Franks at the top of the social hierarchy. The street hawkers and old clothes men of Anglo-Jewry took to many of the patterns of urban life of the social class to which they belonged, including criminal activity, sexual promiscuity, street violence, and a passion for prize-fighting. Many of them gave up much of Jewish tradition with alacrity and little remorse, if their own testimony is to be believed. Some of them achieved a degree of social intimacy with non-Jews that would have been the envy of the community elite.

The integration and acculturation of the Jewish poor should not be a matter of scholarly interest only to the social historian. The drive of the *maskilim* and their wealthy supporters to reform the Jewish people was aimed largely at the Jewish poor, most of the wealthy elements in Western Jewry already being well-mannered, enlightened, and, in theory, acceptable to the non-Jewish world. The programs of the *haskalah* and the motivations of their supporters cannot be fully understood unless something is known about the objects of these programs — the Jewish poor.

Dovid Bergelson

by Susan A. Slotnick (Columbia University)

Dovid Bergelson's first novel, *Nokh alemen* (1913), is a landmark in the history of Yiddish literature. Its artistic achievements include the creation of an entirely new kind of literary language in Yiddish, and a solution to the problem of structure in the long prose narrative which opened the way for a new kind of novel in Yiddish.

Rejecting previous traditions of narration (such as the first-person narrator current in the nineteenth century), Bergelson fashioned a literary Yiddish that was not modeled on the spoken idiom, nor on the traditional written styles. Unusual sentence structure and word combinations contribute to a rhythm and texture which provide for a subtle spectrum of narrative tone, while the deceptively "even" surface of narration provides a unity which permits an "omniscient" author to share the point of view with various characters. On such a continuum of tone and perspective, authorial comment can coexist with a "subjective" character's viewpoint, without violating the aesthetics or losing the credibility of the reader.

This seeming "neutrality" of tone also promotes a feeling of distance between narrator and characters; this avoids sentimentality by precluding any direct appeal to the reader's emotions. Dramatic tension is created, and the reader's attitude is influenced, by what is not said as much as by what is said, and by the filter through which the information is diffused. For example, the heroine is not introduced directly; the reader first sees her through the eyes of two men who are attracted to her. By the time we are permitted a more intimate view of her thoughts and feelings (and this is not until the third chapter of the second part of the novel), we are sympathetically disposed toward her, as well as curious to know how she sees and reacts to her situation.

With this type of narration, Bergelson is free to structure his work according to two principles: formal balance and emphasis on units of meaning. The focus of the novel is the heroine, Mirl Hurvits, and her struggle to cope with existence—in social/economic, personal and philosophical terms. The four parts of the novel, as divided by Bergelson, constitute a scheme of *abba*, in which the shorter first and last parts are prologue and epilogue to the two longer middle sections.

The organization of time in *Nokh alemen* may be seen as the frame on which the formal and thematic strands are woven. The seasons are significant for their symbolic nature as well as serving the formal function of marking passage of time and relating corresponding groups of chapters.

Bergelson's methods of characterization are especially interesting. He is famous for short "epithets" which sum up each character; these "fixed phrases" (usually one or more adjectives modifying a noun) are often synecdoches which subtly judge as well as describe. For instance, we are attracted by the heroine's "sad blue eyes," while her mother-in-law, a less sympathetic character, is always seen "stupidly squinting her nearsighted eyes."

Through the organization of characters, Bergelson reveals the social/economic dimension of meaning in the novel, and provides a constellation of figures which contrast, reflect and serve as implicit

(Continued on Page 19)

The Apocalyptic Theme in Yiddish Narrative Poetry

by David G. Roskies (Jewish Theological Seminary of America)

The Literature of Destruction has a history, a poetics and a message only tangentially related to the libels, expulsions and massacres that it ostensibly documents. What for historians are unique events arising out of peculiar social, political and economic factors are for the Jewish poets and threnodists an undifferentiated and uninterrupted manifestation of evil perpetrated against the people of God. While this literature, which dates back to the Book of Lamentations, has been edited, annotated and anthologized, only its most recent offshoots have as yet been subjected to literary analysis. The present paper focuses on one of many unexplored areas, the years 1916-1921, when the impact of the First World War and the ensuing Ukrainian pogroms challenged the conventions of poetic response to catastrophe.

In Yiddish poetry, these conventions were as strong as in Hebrew. Well into the modern era, the Yiddish folksong continued to preserve many features of the medieval threnody and historical song. Two folksongs, commemorating the pogroms in Balta and Odessa respectively (1882, 1905) are analyzed in terms of three critical variables: the use of *topoi* as opposed to factual data; the symbolic, religious framework, and the poetic voice. The final introductory example is Bialik's famous poem on the Kishinev pogrom, first published in Hebrew in 1904, then reworked into Yiddish. Though "In the City of Slaughter" draws much of its strength from the deliberate suppression of historical data and from the repudiation of traditional attitudes to destruction, the continuity of form with the folksongs is unmistakable. This tension between formal continuity and authorial stance, between national and religious imagery that would imply a commitment to Jewish values and a poetic voice vigorously challenging these values, is the central tension operating in the four narrative poems discussed at length in the present paper: Moyshe-Leyb Halpern's "A nakht" (A Night, 1916), H. Leivick's "Di shtal" (The Stable, 1920), A. Leyeles' "Di mayse fun di hundert" (The Story of the Hundred, 1921) and Peretz Markish's "Di kupe" (The Corpse Heap, 1921).

The pogrom theme common to all four works was enough to associate them in the minds of contemporary critics with Bialik's poem and then each with the other. According to the critics, an ascending ladder of radicalism led from Bialik to Markish. In fact, what the latter four poets shared is their having transformed the pogrom into an apocalyptic event, one that precluded political or communal action (except communal suicide) and this, in turn, differentiated them from Bialik's prophetic anger which was intended and understood as a this-worldly call for self-defense.

These narrative poems can be analyzed and appreciated not in terms of history but rather of literary history. Halpern's poem is located within the response to World War I on the part of his fellow writers of *Di yunge*: Zishe Landoy, Lamed Shapiro and L. Miller. "A nakht" thus emerges as a truly ambitious attempt to describe the

(Continued on Page 21)

From Paternalism to Cooptation: The French Jewish Consistory and the Immigrants, 1906-1939

by Paula E. Hyman (Columbia University)

Jewish immigration in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been discussed almost exclusively within the American context. Yet the immigration of eastern European Jews and the encounter of immigrants with native Jews took place in milieus which differed substantially from the American. The French case offers an interesting contrast and suggests the need to undertake a comparative study of Jewish immigration. For in France both the national context and the structure of the Jewish community made especially difficult the process of immigrant integration in the years between the conclusion of the Dreyfus Affair and the outbreak of World War II. Despite change in tactics French Jews were unable to formulate a definition of community acceptable equally to French opinion and to immigrant Jewish tastes.

Several factors specific to the French situation lay behind that failure. The lateness of immigration caused much of the integration process of the 200,000 Jews who settled in France between 1906 and 1939 to continue into the difficult period of the 1930's. Moreover, French social attitudes to immigrants, and particularly to urban immigrants like the Jews, were ambivalent at best. It was clear to the native Jewish establishment that French society welcomed immigrants only if they rapidly conformed to French cultural norms. No French version of the melting pot ideology was ever articulated. Native Jews therefore saw it as their task to Gallicize the immigrants — i.e., remake them in their own image — in order to prevent friction with the larger society, and to integrate them into communal institutions without relinquishing their own control. Education and philanthropy became the chosen methods to achieve those goals. Moreover, the paternalistic approach of native Jewish leaders was fortified by the unique communal structure of French Jewry. Neither pluralist nor democratic, the centralized and government-supported consistorial system encouraged native leaders to maintain that only their form of religiously defined community was both legitimate and practicable. Unlike British, German, and American Jews, French Jews were unable to find in the French environment or in their own communal tradition the stimulus to engage in political action in defense of their immigrant brethren.

While eastern European immigrants grudgingly accepted their client status vis-a-vis the native Jewish community in their early days of settlement, in the long run they proved resistant to the approaches of the native Jews. The separation of church and state in 1906 had brought to an end the formal monopoly of the Consistory over Jewish religious life in France. Immigrant Jews, thus, were free to establish their own religious and cultural organizations, a vibrant Yiddish press, and a host of political associations. Since they comprised two-thirds of the Jewish population of France by the 1930's, they soon came to dominate the Jewish cultural scene. Moreover, their secular cultural and political activity challenged the almost exclusively religious and philanthropic orientation of organized Jewish life in France.

As it became clear by the late 1920's that the paternalistic approach of the natives had failed to suppress the independence of the

immigrants and had brought few of them into the native-dominated communal institutions, consistorial leaders turned to the new tactic of cooptation while retaining their initial goal of communal control. Fearful that the Consistory would lose its claim, still tacitly recognized by the government, to speak for all Jews in France, and alarmed by the visibility and leftist orientation of much of immigrant Jewish politics, they began a forceful campaign to bring acceptable immigrant notables into their leadership circles and to subsidize those immigrant associations whose style seemed closest to their own. To broaden their appeal, they also introduced non-religious cultural programs formerly considered inappropriate to twentieth century French Jewry.

The policy of cooptation was only somewhat more successful than the prior paternalism for the goals of rapprochement were profoundly different for native and immigrant Jews. The consistorial circles had no intention of sharing power and prestige with the immigrant leaders but welcomed rapprochement as a means of recruiting new troops for their own command. Immigrant spokesmen, on the other hand, expected to share on an equal basis in the direction of the community and in its ideological development. Under the turbulent social and political conditions of the mid- and late 1930's, mutual misunderstanding and real ideological differences could not yield easily to the lure of rapprochement. By the middle of the decade native Jews reverted to blaming the immigrants for the resurgence of antisemitism. Moreover, neither immigrants nor natives could find within prevailing French social doctrines a mutually acceptable format for communal organization. However, despite its ideological limitations, the policy of cooptation and communal activism did initiate the first tentative contact between immigrants and natives and almost inadvertently infused new cultural elements into French Jewish institutions.

Slotnick (Continued from Page 18)

comment on the heroine's struggle. In particular, Mirl's ultimate refusal to choose a partner from the available set of men suggests that though she was an outcast she realized that a man's love is not the answer to her existential dilemma.

Contemporary critics, as well as later observers of Bergelson's art, recognized the importance of this first novel. The considerable volume of critical literature dealing with *Nokh alemen* consists mainly of praise, description, paraphrase, and interpretation of social aspects of meaning. There is no analysis of structure; remarks on characterization refer to Mirl's "psychological problems" rather than to methodology or technique. Aside from a couple of more detailed studies, discussion of style and language is limited to labeling of various "-isms."

Meaning in *Nokh alemen* is embedded in the aesthetic elegance of the formal framework. The social/historical message is less than optimistic: Mirl is by choice the last member of her family, an aristocrat who is uncomfortable in a society in which a newly rich element is becoming dominant. But the meaning of this novel transcends mere social comment; Mirl's struggle and search for some "principle," some purpose in life, brings her to discover that it is perhaps only the search itself that gives any meaning to existence.

The Media and the Holocaust: A Case Study

by Deborah E. Lipstadt (University of Washington)

Scholars generally agree that the United States took few concrete steps to prevent or halt the destruction of European Jewry during World War II. The growing literature on this topic conclusively demonstrates this fact and attributes it to a variety of factors. Late in the 1930s unemployment increased greatly and popular sentiment strongly opposed raising immigration quotas. The fear of fifth column infiltration reached hysterical proportions. The rise in Antisemitism further strengthened the opposition to increased entry of refugee Jews. In 1938 49% of persons polled believed European Jews deserved the treatment they were receiving from the Nazis.

There are those who accuse American Jewish leaders, Stephen S. Wise in particular, of being too easily seduced into silence by President Roosevelt. The American Jewish community failed to use its most potent weapon— the ballot— and continued to support Roosevelt throughout his tenure.

It is clear that by the end of 1942 details of the annihilation process were common knowledge. Yet, over half the American population did not believe these reports. Others claimed after the war not to have then known of them. There are a number of cogent arguments which can be made to counter this claim. The Nazis made no attempt to hide what they were doing prior to the war. All their Antisemitic measures were given the mantle of law. Outbreaks of "spontaneous" violence were witnessed by American correspondents and publicly condemned by Roosevelt. Hitler's speeches contained repeated threats against Jews. In 1938 German newspapers warned that Jews faced "extermination" by "fire and sword." In the spring of 1942 the Polish Government in Exile released the details of the extermination process. In December 1942 eleven Allied nations acknowledged the veracity of these reports.

Is it possible, in view of the above, to claim that one did not know what was transpiring or to continue to disbelieve (as did 49% of the population)? In order to answer this query one must analyze how news of these events was transmitted to the American public. Since media both reflects and affects public opinion it was felt necessary to study the treatment of the news over an extended period of time and not to focus on an isolated incident, e.g. the Warsaw uprising.

This project was not designed to assess the events themselves or to judge the editorial policy of the media. It was intended to determine the availability of news of the Holocaust to the general public. Three sources were chosen: The *New York Times* (1936-1943), *Time Magazine* (1937-1943) and CBS Radio news (1939-1944). The following questions were posed: How much data was reported? How complete were the details given? What priority was this item given in the paper or broadcast? If, in the case of the printed media, the article was not totally devoted to Holocaust news, what percentage dealt with this topic? Did the story fit certain established content categories? These included physical mistreatment, ghettoization, deportation, and extermination. A total of 15 content categories were established.

It must be noted that in one respect the project does offer some indication of editorial policy. The more important a story the more likely it is to receive front page treatment, be placed on the upper part of the page, given a long headline, and be told in great detail.

It was assumed that the *New York Times* would provide more complete coverage than other papers and serve as a standard of

measurement. Every fourth issue of the *Times* was reviewed and 1120 articles found. Half of these were completely devoted to Holocaust news and half discussed it in passing. With the exception of 1938, the year of the Evian Conference and Kristallnacht, the articles were evenly distributed. There were, with the exception of 1938, few front page stories. Most stories appeared between pages three and ten. The articles tended to be short with 50% under 47 lines. Many of the more "important" reports, e.g., those which discussed extermination, were under 30 lines. In 300 of the articles discussion of Jewish fate constituted less than 19% of the article. Physical mistreatment and legal action against Jews were given a great deal of attention. In 1942 over 25% of the articles discussed extermination.

The *Times* treated Holocaust news with remarkable consistency both before and during the war. There was little deviation in the yearly results of any of the variables analyzed. By 1942, readers had been given detailed reports of extermination of millions of Jews and the threatened deaths of millions more. It must be noted that much of the news was on inside pages of the newspaper in small articles or briefly mentioned in the course of an article on another topic. However, the story was available to *Times* readers if they were willing to look for it.

Time Magazine, which by the end of the war had a circulation of close to one million, did not report the story in as great details as did the *New York Times*. There were few articles completely devoted to the Holocaust. A cover story in 1942 on the fate of peoples under Nazi rule mentioned the Jews in a three line reference. Often when one might have expected this topic to be part of a particular story it was not included, e.g., a story on Hitler in 1941 failed to discuss his anti-semitism. There were reports of extermination and pictures of piles of Jewish corpses. It was, however, stated that they had died of starvation.

CBS radio presented a less complete story than did *Time*. Over the course of 1939-1944 less than 60 stories devoted to the Holocaust were broadcast. This includes regular news broadcasts, feature stories, and overseas reports. The reports were brief and contained little detail. It must be noted that radio correspondents in Axis lands were subjected to severe censorship. The censorship to which newspaper reporters were subjected was often not as stringent. A listener who depended on the radio as his main news source - as did 61% of the population by 1945 — learned relatively little about the fate of European Jewry.

The failure of CBS to provide a more detailed report increases in consequence when the role of radio as a news disseminator is analyzed. In 1939 participants in a poll indicated that if they found a conflicting report on the radio and in the paper 38.6% would believe the radio and 26.7% would believe the newspaper. 50% of the respondents considered radio news free of prejudice while on 17% considered newspaper reports to be so. CBS did not contradict the reports in the printed media. However, the fact that relatively little radio time was devoted to this story might have indicated to listeners that this information was not as important as readers of the *New York Times* might have been led to believe.

It is clear that Holocaust news was treated differently by various news sources. Those who depended on a news magazine or radio had greater difficulty in finding out the full story. However, for those inclined to believe this news and willing to go to some effort to find it the details were available in the American media.

From Kehillah to Federation: The Communal Functions of Federated Philanthropy in New York City

by Deborah Dash Moore (Vassar College)

The early decades of the twentieth century saw the establishment in many American cities of philanthropic Federations designed to coordinate and rationalize Jewish charities. Created largely by wealthy American Jews of German Jewish backgrounds, the Federations, as they waxed more successful, became the battleground between East European Jewish immigrants, the beneficiaries of Jewish charity, and native affluent American Jews, the donors, over the nature and function of Jewish communal structures in the United States. In New York City, where a Federation of Manhattan Jewish philanthropic organizations supported by nationally prominent American Jews was founded relatively late in 1917, the tension between East European immigrants and natives produced a new definition of Jewish community appropriate to the American environment.

In 1917, the Federation of Jewish Philanthropic Societies of New York City inherited the current American love affair with philanthropy, especially overseas relief, and the fruits of almost two decades of Progressive reform activities in the United States. In these traditions New York Federation leaders found their rationale for placing businessmen at the head of the community leadership and for using non-sectarian charity as the means of organizing the city's Jews into a community. Federation leaders also developed their ideas about the nature, structure and purpose of an American Jewish community through a dialogue with the pre-existing Kehillah. Rejecting the New York Kehillah's aim to create a democratic, voluntary Jewish community in a culturally pluralist America, Federation leaders proposed a hierarchical, secular, ethnic community in a capitalist America. Thus Federation addressed the question of how to integrate East European Jewish immigrants into a unified American Jewish community.

Initially created as a non-partisan organization restricted to raising money and committed to its member agencies' autonomy, New York Federation quickly enlarged its rationale to embrace much of the central communal functions of the Kehillah. Following its first successful fund-raising campaign, I. Edwin Goldwasser, Federation's executive secretary, proposed that Federation become the means to forge a united Jewish community in New York City. Specifically, Goldwasser envisioned Federation as the ideal American form of group association for Jews, because he saw Federation as voluntary, secular, and consonant with moral capitalist values. Ignoring the functional philanthropic problem of donor-beneficiary antagonism, Goldwasser attempted to implement the program of absorbing East European Jewish immigrants into the philanthropic Jewish community through the Business Men's Council.

The Council appealed to the emerging middle class stratum of East European Jews as donors, opening to them membership in Federation and justifying Federation's claim to represent the Jewish community of New York City. However, unlike traditional Jewish communities or traditional Jewish charities, the Business Men's

Council eschewed religion in favor of ethnicity in its structure and adopted American non-sectarian progressive ideals for its rhetoric. The Council used ethnic criteria to locate Jews through their occupational distribution and solicited them in their place of work. In making the American marketplace the scene of ethnic Jewish identification with the community through a contribution to Federation, the Council placed Jewish philanthropic communal activity squarely within the non-sectarian philanthropic rationale of American businessmen. To give to Federation became not only a way to affirm one's membership in the Jewish community but to assert one's American identity as well.

The Business Men's Council's success in attracting East European Jewish businessmen and their money affected Federation's structure. In 1925, Federation made room for more Council members on its Board of Trustees. East European Jews' desire to join prestigious Jewish social clubs and to integrate themselves into the American Jewish community met with more resistance. However, within the Council and especially at Council social events East European Jews found themselves accepted members of the Jewish community. Although the Depression severely challenged Federation's synthesis, no alternative visions of a comprehensive Jewish community arose to compete with Federation and Federation continued to pursue its goal with additional techniques.

Roskies (Continued from Page 18)

impact of the war on the individual psyche of the distant but suffering survivor; to trace the ideological roots of this vast destruction to the failure of redemption both religious and secular and to develop a poetic form commensurate with the madness of the event. The symbolic framework in Leivick's "Di shtal" is compared to that in his three earlier narrative poems inspired by the pogroms: "Er" (He, 1918), "Dos kranke tsimer" (The Sick Room, 1919) and "Der volf" (The Wolf, 1920). By contrasting and ultimately fusing the visual and aural qualities of the wooden synagogue with those of the military stable it now houses, Leivick achieved greater versatility and subtlety in "Di shtal" than in any of the earlier works. Both "Di shtal" and "Di mayse fun di hundert" described mass suicide as the inevitable and most exalted response of the pogrom victims. Leyeles was soundly rebuked by his fellow-Introspectivist Jacob Glatstein not for this thematic similarity but for having deigned to write "nationalist" poetry of any kind. N.B. Minkov, the third spokesman of Introspectivism, took a much more positive view and correctly understood the meaning of the pogrom for Leyeles as a philosophical, not as a national category. Markish's brilliant and blasphemous "Di kupe" is viewed from three perspectives: as a Soviet-Yiddish response to the Ukrainian pogroms; as a declamatory poem that harks back to the folk tradition and as an example of Expressionism.

These four poets, who were among the leading representatives of Yiddish modernism, used the pogroms to argue the abrogation of the national and religious heritage but continued to formulate their argument within a self-contained Jewish framework. Their apocalypse was both a vision of the end of Jewish history and a continuing manifestation of the Jewish poet's dialogue with that history.

Frank Talmage, *Disputation and Dialogue. Readings in the Jewish-Christian Encounter*. New York, KTAV Publishing House and Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1975. xix, 411 pp.

Yehuda Shamir, *Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen of Tordesillas and His Book 'Ezer Ha-Emunah (Etudes sur le Judaïsme Médiéval, VII)*. Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1975. xiv, 124 pp.

Reviewed by Daniel J. Lasker (Ohio State University).

The study of the historical Jewish-Christian encounter, especially the literary expression of it contained in polemical and apologetic treatises, has not yet been accorded its rightful place in the larger field of Jewish studies. Despite the pioneering work of Adolf Posnanski and the recently deceased Judah Rosenthal, it has been only in the past few years that general attention has been drawn to this area of scholarship, and long-ignored polemics are being edited critically, translated, and analyzed. The two books before us reflect this new-found interest in the Jewish-Christian debate. The first, *Disputation and Dialogue*, is a source reader edited by Frank Talmage, contemporary scholarship's leading authority in the area of Jewish-Christian polemics. The second, *Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen of Tordesillas and His Book 'Ezer Ha-Emunah*, is essentially the publication of a dissertation by Yehuda Shamir. Other than their inclusion in the field of Jewish-Christian relations, there is little resemblance between these two works in terms of their contents, scope, and scholarship.

Talmage's *Disputation and Dialogue* is an anthology of "readings in the Jewish-Christian encounter" (as the book is sub-titled), intended, it would appear, primarily as a basis for courses in this field. The selections included range chronologically from Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* (second century) to Talmage's own "Christianity and the Jewish People" (1975). They are organized into five sections: "Verus Israel," "Messiah and Christ," "Law and Gospel — Letter and Spirit," "The Scepter of Judah," and "Impasse, Coexistence, Dialogue." Analyses and introductions are kept to a minimum, allowing the selections to speak for themselves. Included also is a brief foreword by Edward A. Synan and a reprint of Talmage's bibliographical essay, "Judaism on Christianity: Christianity on Judaism," which appeared originally in *The Study of Judaism* (ADL, New York, 1972).

As a reader, rather than a piece of original scholarship, *Disputation and Dialogue* offers little new material (with the noted exception of translations of Buber's letter to Kittel and Machado's "The Mirror of the New Christians"). Its strength, therefore, rests on the wisdom of the selection and arrangement of the sources. The readings are well chosen. Talmage employs a good mix of materials from different time periods and geographical locations, though the emphasis is decidedly on modern authors (21 of 37 selections). The themes also stress the contemporary, e.g., the State of Israel, but not such theological doctrines as Trinity and incarnation. Due, no doubt, to their not having been previously translated, such giants of the Jewish-Christian debate as Jacob ben Reuben, Ḥasdai Crescas,

or the author of *Nizzahon Yashan*, among the Jews, and Peter Alfonsi, Raymund Martini, or Abner of Burgos, among the Christians, are not included. The selection from Profiat Duran is painfully short, as, indeed, are most of the pre-modern excerpts. This is regrettable but, in light of the goals and limitations of the work, understandable.

By presenting the readings thematically rather than chronologically, Talmage emphasizes one of his main points, namely, that "polemical literature is so often associated with a relentless sameness, with monotony, with repetition, with endless *déjà vu*" (p. 1). Thus, selections on a particular topic belong together because their contents, whether ancient, medieval, or modern, are essentially the same. Though for teaching purposes one might have wished a chronological framework, the arrangement is sensible and serves a didactic purpose.

As a teaching tool, *Disputation and Dialogue* promises to be a valuable asset. Talmage's introductions and explanations are clear and succinct, bringing to the student enough information to make the selections understandable but not burdening him with irrelevancies. An anthology such as this will serve as a good appetizer for the beginner, encouraging him to move on to the full-course dinner.

Moses Ha-Kohen of Tordesillas (fourteenth century) was an important Spanish Jewish polemicist whose anti-Christian treatise has been accessible only in manuscript. Though mentioned by most standard authorities, the work had not been the subject of any intense study. Yehuda Shamir is, thus, to be credited with bringing this author to the attention of the scholarly world and for providing an edition of his *'Ezer Ha-Emunah* (Field Research Projects, Coconut Grove, Florida, 1972, and a promised Israeli edition [p. 75]). Nevertheless, it must be noted that Shamir's work is seriously flawed and of only questionable value. It is unfortunate that Moses Ha-Kohen's first major entrance into the English-speaking world could not have been made with more grace.

Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen was already published once (in typescript, Field Research Projects, 1972), and it is difficult to understand why a reissue, with no significant changes, was considered necessary. Many errors of the original edition went uncorrected, e.g., Deut. 4:4 as the source of the Shema⁶ (p. 178 in the original, p. 92 here). Simple copy-editing might have helped eliminate the capricious and arbitrary use of commas, fragmentary sentences (e.g., p. 27), run-on sentences (p. 36), and inclusion in the text of references that should have been in footnotes (pp. 51, 81-82).

These matters of style might be safely ignored if Shamir's methodology came up to scholarly standards. A few examples will suffice. On p. 73, Moses Ha-Kohen is seen as a possible source for the "twenty conditions which should serve as an indication of the Messianic times" which, Shamir claims, are enumerated in Ḥasdai Crescas' *Biṭṭul 'Iqqare Ha-Nozrim*. This list of conditions, though printed in Eisenstein's edition of the *Biṭṭul (Ozar Vikuḥim* pp. 294-

(Continued on Page 24)

M. Herschel Levine, *Falaquera's Book of the Seeker (Sefer Ha-Mebaqqesh)*. New York, Yeshiva University Press, 1976. xlvi, 118 pp.

Reviewed by Raphael Jospe (University of Denver)

Shem Tov ben Yosef ibn Falaquera has been greatly underrated in the histories of Jewish philosophy. Husik and Guttmann mention him only a few times in their respective works. Graetz¹ dismisses Falaquera as "only" a living encyclopedia of the academic disciplines, and as a mediocre intellect, subject to the errors of his time. But this judgement is excessively harsh. To be sure, Falaquera was not a great innovator of a system of philosophy. In fairness, he never claimed to be an innovator, and in many of his works he explicitly disclaims originality.

Falaquera's main interests were twofold. First, he sought (successfully) to document philosophical developments, and in Munk's words,² "Ibn Falaquera knew — something rather remarkable for those times — to appreciate from a historical point of view the work" of such philosophers as Gabirol and Maimonides. Convinced of the harmony of faith and reason, Falaquera saw his second great task as supporting the process of consolidation of philosophy in Judaism, at a time when philosophy, and Maimonides as an individual, were under attack.

Unlike Maimonides, who wrote for an elite intelligentsia, most of Falaquera's works have the aim of raising the cultural level of the Jewish people. Therefore, it is, perhaps, precisely such a personality as Falaquera who can best indicate the extent to which philosophy succeeded in finding a home in Judaism. The pioneering philosophical efforts of earlier luminaries only attained an enduring impact on the course of Jewish history and on the religious life of the Jewish people through the consolidation of those efforts at the hands of Jewish philosophers like Falaquera. Their contribution is no less important for the fact that their light may often have been a reflected one. Of similar importance are Falaquera's lucid Hebrew style, advanced terminology (which often differs from that of the Tibbons), his brilliant interweaving of Biblical and rabbinic statements and ideas with philosophic and scientific expressions, and his critical insight as a commentator, translator, and author.

M. Herschel Levine's edition of *Falaquera's Book of the Seeker (Sefer Ha-Mebaqqesh)* goes a long way to righting the historical wrong done to Falaquera. Levine's is the first major English work on Falaquera. His book which is a revision of his doctoral dissertation (Columbia University, 1954) is not, however, the first dissertation on Falaquera. The father of "Wissenschaft des Judentums", Leopold Zunz, wrote his Latin doctoral dissertation, "De Schemtob Palkira" (Halle University, 21 December 1820), on the life, doctrines, and times of Falaquera.³ Munk's *Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe* deals to a large extent with Falaquera and his *Liqutim (Selections)*, on the basis of which Munk was able to identify Solomon ibn Gabirol as Avicbron, the author of the *Fons Vitae (Meqor Hayyim)*. Henry Malter, like Zunz and Munk, ap-

preciated Falaquera's importance, and published a study on Falaquera⁴.

Because of the general paucity of information in English about Falaquera, Levine's book is a valuable addition to the literature on the subject. In revising his thesis, Levine eliminated many of the stilted expressions of his original translation, but sometimes this change to a more flowing and idiomatic expression has resulted in a loss of accuracy. In seeking, perhaps, to appeal to a broader readership, Levine included in his revision more general background information, including a section on the history of the *maqama*, but unfortunately the book is not as well documented as the thesis and omits some of the references to Biblical and other sources in the text.

Although his thesis was submitted to the Faculty of Philosophy at Columbia University, clearly Levine, who currently is Professor of English at Eastern Connecticut State College, is more interested in the *Mevaqqesh* as literature than as philosophy. This may account for the major deficiency of the book, which is that it is a translation only of Part I of the *Mevaqqesh*, which is a *maqama*, rich in poetry and humor. Levine ignores Part II, which is purely prose, and which contains philosophy and science. There is no question that Falaquera regarded the philosophical section of the book as the more important of the two parts; he explicitly vowed at the end of Part I not to engage further in poetry (although he did not entirely fulfill that vow in his later works), and it is only at the end of the book, dealing with metaphysics, that the Seeker finds satisfaction, for only philosophy leads to ultimate truth and human perfection and felicity. Whatever original justification Levine may have had in his thesis for presenting only Part I, there is little excuse for him to continue to violate so fundamentally Falaquera's own values over twenty years later. Levine's Introduction similarly manifests his interest in comparative literature and poetry, and also fails to deal adequately with Falaquera's philosophy.

Another major drawback of the book is Levine's excessive reliance on secondary sources.⁵ This tendency of Levine's to quote secondary sources without verifying them occasionally gets him into trouble. For instance, he refers to Falaquera's commentaries on the Torah, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes,⁶ and cites references in Falaquera's *Moreh Ha-Moreh (Guide to the Guide)*, pp. 6, 145, 146. Levine seems here to be citing, without proper attribution, Moritz David's introduction to his edition of Falaquera's *Reshit Hokhmah (Beginning of Wisdom)*, in which this claim is made. But there is no reference in *Moreh Ha-Moreh* p. 146 to a Biblical commentary, and the other references do not mention a commentary on Ecclesiastes.⁷ In short, Levine apparently quoted David as his source for a reference to a commentary on Ecclesiastes, without proper attribution, and then compounded that mistake by not catching David's error.

This carelessness in citing his sources is also evident with regard to the question as to whether Falaquera ever married. We have no direct evidence to settle the matter one way or the other. There is an

(Continued on Page 24)

Jospe (Continued from Page 23)

honorific reference to Falaquera as "abba mari" in the beginning of *Batei Hanhagat Guf Ha-Bari' - Batei Hanhagat Ha-Nefesh (Verses on the Regimen of the Healthy Body - Verses on the Regimen of the Soul)*. Although this reference is the deciding factor in Levine's view that Falaquera married, (he asserts that it "makes it quite certain that he did have a son, and presumably a wife"),⁸ he never actually cites this reference for the reader's benefit, but instead refers the reader to the article on Falaquera by M. Zobel in the old German *Encyclopedia Judaica* (which was basically merely reproduced with its errors intact in the new English *Encyclopaedia Judaica*).⁹ Levine also mentions a poem, which he fails to quote, which allegedly shows that Falaquera's "attitude regarding women was not completely negative" (as if that proves that Falaquera married). The reader cannot necessarily be expected to know, but it was Levine's responsibility to inform him, that this question has been discussed before.¹⁰ Steinschneider originally assumed, from the term "abba mari," that Falaquera married and had a son, but he subsequently repudiated that view, and Malter and others (including Levine in his thesis) share the view that Falaquera never married. Levine here simply ignores all that has been written on the subject.

The book is also flawed in its frequent errors of detail, which cannot be attributed entirely to typographical errors, and which also plagued the original thesis. Even Falaquera's dates of birth and the composition of the *Mevaqesh* do not escape these problems. In the *Mevaqesh* (Hague edition p. 9; Levine's thesis, Hebrew text p. 168), Falaquera notes the date of composition of the book as 5024. Levine's thesis gives, in the English text (p. 10) the date as 5020, and the new book gives the date as 5025 (p. 1). Lest this point seem overly pedantic, it is on the basis of this reference that we date Falaquera's birth as between 35 and 40 years earlier, i.e., between 1223 and 1228 C.E. As if the issue weren't confused enough already, Levine informs the reader in one place in his introduction that Falaquera was born ca. 1235 (p. xvi) and, in another place, in 1224 (p. ix). Such carelessness is also evident in Levine's outright omission of Yehuda ben Giat from Falaquera's list of Spanish poets — an omission that is first found in the thesis (p. 152) and which was not corrected in the book (p. 89).

There are many other such flaws in Levine's work, but nevertheless, it is, on the whole, an important contribution to our knowledge of Falaquera, and is especially valuable in its discussion of Falaquera's literary sources and his own literary contribution.

NOTES

¹H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, VII, pp. 250-251

²S. Munk, *Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe*, p. 494.

³A copy of this hand-written thesis is in the possession of the Leo Baeck Institute (N.Y.), which graciously loaned me a photo-copy.

⁴H. Malter, "Shem Tob ben Joseph Palquera: A Thinker & Poet of the

Thirteenth Century", in *J.Q.R.* n.s., Vol. I, pp. 151-181. Malter also published Falaquera's "Treatise of the Dream" in *J.Q.R.* n.s., Vol. I, pp. 451-501.

⁵For example, he writes (p. xxii): "Drawing on the views of the Arab Kalam and the Jewish philosopher Bahya ibn Paquda, Falaquera argued that a person who derived his belief in the existence of God from tradition alone is inferior to one who gains such a belief through rational demonstration." But Levine himself seems, in this very quote, to rely more on "tradition" than independent investigation, for his footnote (p. 100 n. 5) does not document any sources in the Kalam or in Bahya, but rather refers the reader to Eliezer Schweid's *Ha-Rambam Ve-Hug Hashpa'ato*, p. 197, a work which is not even secondary but tertiary in nature, since it is merely the record of Dr. Schweid's class notes, published by a student for Akadamon (Hebrew University Student Union Press).

⁶*Seeker*, p. xlv and notes, p. 105 n. 22

⁷David also mentions, without listing a page, a reference in Falaquera's *Iggeret Ha-Vikuaḥ (Treatise of Disputation)* to a commentary on Ecclesiastes. I have not been able to locate this reference, and it does not appear in *Iggeret Ha-Vikuaḥ* pp. 12-13, where there is a reference to Ecclesiastes, but not to a commentary by Falaquera.

⁸*Seeker*, pp. xviii-xix, p. 100 n. 30.

⁹*Seeker*, p. 100 n. 29.

¹⁰See Malter, "Palquera etc." in *J.Q.R.* n.s., Vol. I, p. 155; Steinschneider, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 1894, pp. 1637-1638; Israel Hadash, Introduction to *Batei Hanhagat Guf Ha-Bari' - Batei Hanhagat Ha-Nefesh*, in *Ha-Rofe' Ha-Ivri*, Vol. II, 1937, pp. 155-156.

Lasker (Continued from Page 22)

96), does not appear in the real text of the *Bittul* (in ms., and two editions, Salonika?, 1860?, and Kearny, N.J., 1904). Even if Shamir were not aware that Eisenstein's texts are to be used only with the greatest care, he should have noticed that the latter's introduction to "Crescas' *Bittul*" admits a free editorial hand (p. 288). At least his doubts as to the authenticity of this edition of the *Bittul* (written 1398) should have been aroused by its references to Pius IX's Bull of December 8, 1854, and a sermon at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, 1927 (p. 293). Considering the fact that most of Shamir's references to other Jewish polemical works are taken from *Ozar Vikuḥim*, little of his discussion of sources or influences can be assumed to be accurate.

The Christian sources are employed erratically. Thus, great attention is paid to Abner of Burgos (ch. 3) and Jewish opponents of Abner (ch. 4). By such an emphasis, Shamir reinforces his theory that Moses Ha-Kohen had Abner (or his school) specifically in mind when writing *Ezer Ha-'Emanah*. Yet, of Abner's many works, he subjects only *Mostrador de la Justicia* to any detailed analysis. This book seems to have little direct relation to Moses Ha-Kohen's treatise, as Shamir himself admits (p. 47, n. 12). If Abner is so central, why were his other major extant works, *Teshuvot La-Meharef* and *Minḥat Qena'ot*, not considered, though Shamir is aware of their existence (p. 54, n. 25)? If other contemporary Christian sources had been consulted, Shamir would perhaps have been able to find more immediate parallels with *Ezer Ha-'Emanah*. In the study of a fourteenth-century polemic, use of the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* for comparison is hardly sufficient (p. 93, nn. 35-36). A complete analysis of *Ezer Ha-'Emanah* will have to be done in the future by someone with greater control of the Jewish and Christian sources.