

# FRANKELY SPEAKING

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Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for  
Judaic Studies

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“Complex Projection #1: The Sabbath Square, 2003.” Photograph by Yigal Feliks.



# From the Director: Paula Hyman and the Virtues of Collaboration

by Deborah Dash Moore, Director, The Frankel Center  
Frederick G.L. Huetwell Professor of History

We often speak in academia of collaboration, and we practice it as well. At the Frankel Center, faculty members team-teach; they conduct research together, co-author articles, and co-edit volumes. The Frankel Institute promotes intellectual collaboration through its weekly workshops. Indeed, this year's Institute has produced its first co-authored book project. Ken Wald (University of Florida) and Herb Weisberg (Ohio State University) are collaborating to examine the distinctive voting behavior of American Jews. But despite our extensive experience sharing ideas and working together to produce new knowledge, we rarely reflect upon the virtues—and challenges—of collaboration.

I have enjoyed the pleasures (and occasional frustrations) of collaboration with diverse scholars, but I first learned its virtues from Paula Hyman, who serves on the Academic Advisory Board of the Frankel Institute. We started out as friends in graduate school doing the things grad students do so well together: preparing for comprehensive exams, discussing our dissertations. But as feminist graduate students, we also shared political passions and a commitment to find a way to combine family with career. Both of us chose to have children while we were still students. The demands of raising young children led us to integrate our intellectual exchanges with personal and political ones.

After graduation, we began to navigate a collegial relationship. Paula Hyman stayed at Columbia University's History Department and I went to the Religion Department at Vassar College but maintained affiliation with the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York City. That provided the basis for our first collaboration.

Paula Hyman called me up one day in 1979 and invited me to lunch at the Columbia Faculty Club, a special treat, so that we could plan a conference to be sponsored jointly by YIVO and Columbia on "Jews, Cities, and Modernist Culture." We aimed to bring writers and artists

together with scholars and journalists, to connect young academics like Leon Botstein with established figures like Grace Paley, and to encourage them to speak across disciplinary boundaries as well as those separating practitioners from academics. We hoped for a large, diverse audience. When the conference opened in April 1980, we were not disappointed. Hundreds attended. Planning the conference we parceled out the tasks; we wrote grant applications, invited participants, managed logistics, and argued over themes and people. It was challenging for two untenured faculty members to pull off, but ultimately rewarding; and we learned a lot about Jewish and academic politics.

Our subsequent collaborations extended across decades; one continues to this day. In 1982 Paula Hyman and I agreed to co-edit a series on the Modern Jewish Experience for Indiana University Press. We are a good team; Paula focuses on Europe and I cover the United States. Together with Janet Rabinowitch at the press, we have published a steady stream of books, including a number of prizewinners that helped to launch many of our colleagues' careers.

In 1988 I invited Paula to serve on the editorial board of a reconstituted *YIVO Annual for Jewish Research*. She accepted. Then at one of our early board meetings she got into a knock-down, drag-out fight with another board member over the virtues of a feminist memoir that had been initially approved for publication. In the end, Paula convinced a majority of the board that the voices of unheralded observers, including women, deserved to be heard, published alongside scholarship. Principle established, subsequent editorial board meetings spawned less conflict.

Paula and I agreed about the memoir and women's voices, but we haven't always agreed about Jewish politics. Yet one of the virtues of collaboration means that we keep on talking, arguing our points of view while still loving and respecting each other and finding ways to accommodate our different perspectives.

For both of us, a high point of collaboration occurred in 1994, after the demise of the *YIVO Annual*, when Paula invited me to co-edit *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*. Although we both now were established scholars, Paula Hyman at Yale University as Lucy Moses Professor of Modern Jewish History, we tackled this massive project with some of the same naiveté that characterized our first conference collaboration. Choosing whom to invite to the editorial board, and then picking the women to be included in the encyclopedia, themes to be addressed, and finding hundreds of scholars, young and old, to write the entries, turned out to be an enormous and highly politicized undertaking. Paula had asked me to join her in editing the encyclopedia not just because of the work involved or because she wanted an ally but because, she said, we'd get to see each other regularly. That clinched it.

When it came time finally to write the preface, all those years of collaboration paid off. The sentences just flowed. First hers, then mine, then her intervention, then my rewrite. It was exhilarating. Collaboration born of years of intellectual exchange, political discussion, and personal friendship, found its fulfillment in a worthy project.

The virtues of collaboration are manifold: intellectual rigor, strengthening of one's own values, acquiring fresh perspectives, support for risk-taking and critical consciousness, and most importantly, enduring friendship.



Paula Hyman

# New York Times Correspondent Roger Cohen to Speak on 'Israeli Spring' at February 6 Conference

To what extent do recent developments in the Middle East challenge existing patterns of diplomacy, regional cooperation, decision making and public debates about and within Israel? On February 6, historians and political scientists will gather to discuss "Up Against the Wall: Israel in a Changing Middle East." Designed for scholars, students and the wider public, the full-day conference will explore various political consequences of recent events in the Middle East and the official request from the United Nations to recognize Palestinian statehood on domestic Israeli politics, Israeli-Palestinian relations and international politics.

founding of the Jewish state, has Israel conformed to its founding ideals.

"Israel," explains Cohen, "by giving Jews at last a small piece of earth, was supposed to create what Ben Gurion called 'a self-sufficient people, master of its own fate,' rather than one 'hung up in midair.' This was to be the resolution at last of the Jewish Question. After the millennia of marginalization," he continues, "after the pits in the Lithuanian forests and Auschwitz and Dachau, it was supposed to end Jewish precariousness, Jewish annihilation angst—the inner 'exile' of the Jew." This is what Zionists



Bir Nabala, 2007. Photograph by Yigal Feliks.

Panels will include "Shifts in Political Decision Making Processes in Israel and Palestine" with Yoram Peri and Wendy Pearlman; "Cooperation or Isolation? Israel in International and Regional Politics," discussed by Robert Axelrod and Shai Feldman; and the final panel with Sammy Smooha and Sarai Aharoni, "Has the Israeli Public Debate Changed?"

The conference will close at 6pm with a talk by Roger Cohen, columnist for the *International Herald Tribune* and *New York Times*. His talk—"Israeli Spring? The Enduring Jewish Question"—will ask how close, 63 years after the

hoped to accomplish. "Know your history, be proud of your history, end Jewish meekness and humiliation, the acquiescence that took your forbears to the ditches and the gas: that was Israel's message." Cohen will discuss the lesson of strength, coupled with that of tolerance declared in the Founding Charter of 1948.

[This conference is free and open to the public. For a complete schedule, visit [www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic/](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic/), email [judaicstudies@umich.edu](mailto:judaicstudies@umich.edu), or call 734.763.9047. "Israel in a Changing Middle East" is sponsored by the Frankel Center for Judaic studies and the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS).]



# Jews & the City: Five Years Later

In February 2005, the Jean and Samuel Frankel Jewish Heritage Foundation provided a gift of \$20 million to establish the Jean and Samuel Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. In Fall 2007, the first group of fellows arrived to explore the theme of Jews and the City under the leadership of Frankel Center Director Deborah Dash Moore. This group of scholars from around the world examined the concept of sacred space as applied to diasporic cities as well as those in Israel and raised questions about the relation of text to space, of representation to practice, of prayer to built environment, of difference to holiness, of creative constructions to physical ones. They explored the fruitful intersections of gender and sexuality, commerce and entertainment, politics and public culture, labor and domesticity, class and religion, as mediated through urban spaces, as well as inter-ethnic relations, cultural-brokering, identity-formation and ethnicity. The commonality was urban space and Jews as one group among many who reside in cities.

Five years after the Frankel Institute's founding, some of the 2007-2008 fellows look back at their time in Ann Arbor and discuss how their work now has been informed by their Institute projects.

## Barbara Mann, Jewish Theological Seminary

I came to the Frankel institute on the theme Jews and the City with the intention of working on an interdisciplinary study of space and place. I was especially interested in how critical and theoretical writing about space—broadly known as ‘the spatial turn’—might be helpful in thinking about space in Jewish cultures, especially the depiction and meaning of space in literary texts. I also thought that the particular character of space within Jewish experience—the meeting of the mundane with the transcendental that is contained in the Hebrew term for place, *makom*—could contribute in some fashion to the broader discussion of space within the academy. The Frankel Institute provided a supportive and nurturing environment in which to pursue my work, and the interactions with colleagues from a variety of fields influenced the shape and substance of my manuscript. My new book, *Space and Place in Jewish Studies*, is organized around a series of key sites and terms, some familiar and intimately connected with Jewish history—Jerusalem, Diasporas, the Eruv—and others that are more abstractly conceived, such as the Environment and the City. I hope the book will both contribute to what has emerged as a new subfield—“Jewish spatial studies”—and serve as a model for further interdisciplinary work.

## Lila Corwin Berman, Temple University

At the Frankel Institute, I started to research how Detroit Jews understood their migration away from the city after World War II. I am now writing a book, tentatively called *Jewish Urban Journeys Through an American City and Beyond* that focuses on the ways in which Jews reconfigured their urban identities as they left cities after World War II. Detroit remains the focus of my research, a city that occupies an important place in the scholarly discussion about white flight. Yet my research challenges historians' depiction of white, middle class disinvestment from city politics, culture, and people after World War II. It also erodes standard explanations of Jewish suburbanization as indicative of Jews' easy mobility and detachment from physical space. In the September 2012 issue of *Journal of American History*, my article entitled “Jewish Urban Politics in the City and Beyond” will appear. The article argues that post-World War II Jews created a new brand of urban-centered politics even as they were leaving cities.

## Veerle Vanden Daelen, University of Antwerp

I arrived at the Frankel Institute shortly after obtaining my PhD, for which I had studied the return of Jewish life to Antwerp (Belgium) after the Second World War. The theme “Jews and the City” provided me with a challenging new focus for the study of this topic, especially through the scope of markers, “borders and boundaries,” *eruvim*, Jewish neighborhoods, and the like. I learned new ways from different disciplines and perspectives to look at Antwerp's Jewish community. My submitted research topic was “Experiences of Jewishness and Clustering in a City as Perceived by Jews and Non-Jews: The City of Antwerp Since World War II in Comparative Perspectives.” Upon my return to the University of Antwerp Belgium, I was awarded a three-year postdoctoral fellowship by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) for my research project: “The ‘Jewish Neighborhood’ in Antwerp. Geographical and Symbolic Uses of Space by Jewish Foreigners in an Urban Context (ca. 1900 - 1950).” During this fellowship, I continued exploring many themes touched upon during my time in Ann Arbor. I returned to the U.S. in 2009 as a fellow in the “Jews, Commerce, and Culture” program at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. My research project for this fellowship was entitled “Integrated Segregation: Jews, Orthodoxy, and Diamonds in Antwerp (Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century - Present).” In this work I built on experiences from the Frankel inaugural group by considering geography, symbolic spaces, and visual presence, and by looking for traces of history in literature from the period studied. As a fellow of the Frankel inaugural group, I especially appreciated and was amazed with the program's broad scope and its encouraging and intellectually challenging atmosphere. My academic work, especially two recently published articles, continues to reflect elements from my experience at the Frankel Institute. (One of these articles is in English: “Visible and Non-Visible Borders of a Minority Group: The ‘Jewish Neighborhood’ in Antwerp in the Twentieth Century,” in Judith Frishman, David J. Wertheim, Ido de Haan & Joël J. Cahen (eds.), *Borders and Boundaries in and Around Dutch Jewish History* (2011)).

## Catherine Rottenberg, Ben Gurion University

One project that I am still working on and did, indeed, emerge from my year at the Frankel is an edited volume entitled *Black Harlem and the Jewish Lower East Side: Narratives Out of Time*, which examines the representations of Harlem and the Lower East Side in twentieth-century African-American and Jewish-American literature. I am the editor, and the volume includes articles by professors Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Harvard), Hasia Diner (NYU), Cheryl Greenberg (Trinity College), Magdalena Zaborowska (University of Michigan), and Cherene Sherrard-Johnson (University of Wisconsin - Madison), as well as other prominent and emerging scholars. I have just signed a contract with SUNY Press (its Multiethnic Literature Series), so I am hoping that by next September the anthology will be out.

## Sara Blair, University of Michigan

In fall 2010, I curated an exhibition, *The View from Below: Photography, Innovation, and the Lower East Side*, at the Institute for the Humanities gallery. The show featured 36 images spanning late nineteenth-century to contemporary work; they were loaned from major collections and archives, including the International Center of Photography, the Howard Greenberg Gallery, the Jewish Museum, and the Harvard Art Museum. The show was accompanied by an exhibition catalogue I edited and published with the support of the Frankel Center and the Institute for the Humanities.

An essay I wrote based on my fellowship research, “Visions of the Tenement: Photography and Modernity on the Lower East Side,” is forthcoming in the interdisciplinary journal *Images: A Journal of Jewish Art and Visual Culture*, winter 2011.

Most recently, I was awarded an ACLS research fellowship starting in January 2012 to complete a book that extends my fellowship research. Titled “The View from Below: Imaging Modernity on the Lower East Side,” my work will focus on the importance of America's iconic ghetto as a site of encounter with social alterity and of experimentation with visual technologies and forms.

## Scott Lerner, Franklin & Marshall College

My project for the Frankel Institute focused on a book project on Jews of Italy. I also completed a few other shorter projects while there. The project is now tentatively entitled *The Narrating Architecture of Modern Italy: The Popes, the Jews and the State, 1860-2010*. It looks at these three poles of modern Italian identity and nation-formation. In a pair of chapters, published previously, I examine the “narrating architecture” of the monumental Jewish synagogues that were built “over the ruins” as it were, of the old ghettos, in the early years of the new state. While at the Frankel Institute, I extended this view to Turin in conjunction with the film *After Midnight*, a film whose structure depends, ultimately, on the history of a building, the Mole Antonelliana, originally intended as the new synagogue of Turin and now the National Museum of Cinema. While at the Institute, I completed

this article, which was part of my colloquium presentation: “Why Angel's Fallen: The Narrating Architecture of *Dopo mezzanotte*.” *Italica* 87.4 (2010): 646-671.

The chapters mentioned above deal with the Jews and the State. Subsequently, I wrote another chapter of the project, which deals with the relation of Church and State recently published as: “Modern Italian Subjectivity in the Era of *Roma capitale* (1870-2010): The Embrace of the Empty Sign,” *Annali d'Italianistica* 28 (2010), *Capital City: Rome* (1870-2010): 137-152.

This spring, I will write the last chapter of the book, on the relation of the Jews and the Church. I will be looking closely at the historic visits of John Paul II and Benedect XVI to the Great Synagogue of Rome, which was built over the ruins of the old ghetto and serves as a paradigm of the “narrating architecture of emancipation” in this project. I also examine how each side, the Church and the Jews of Italy, attempts to reconceive the relation of Catholicism and Judaism at the intersection of their formal spaces and their narratives.

## Deborah Dash Moore, University of Michigan

I took the subject of Jewish photographers as the focus of my year at the Frankel Institute and published several articles, most recently, “Walkers in the City: Young Jewish Women with Cameras,” which appeared in *Gender and Jewish History*, a volume I co-edited with Marion Kaplan in honor of Paula Hyman.

However, I pursued simultaneously a large editorial project that examines the history of Jews in New York. New York University Press will publish *City of Promises: A History of the Jews of New York* in September 2012, a comprehensive three-volume set for which I served as general editor. Volume I, *Haven of Liberty*, by historian Howard Rock, chronicles the arrival of the first Jews to New York (then New Amsterdam) in 1654 and highlights their political and economic challenges. Overcoming significant barriers, colonial and republican Jews in New York laid the foundations for the development of a thriving community. Volume II, *Emerging Metropolis*, written by Annie Polland and Daniel Soyer, describes New York's transformation into a Jewish city. Focusing on the urban Jewish built environment—its tenements and banks, synagogues and shops, department stores and settlement houses—it conveys the extraordinary complexity of Jewish immigrant society. Volume III, *Jews in Gotham*, by historian Jeffrey S. Gurock, highlights neighborhood life as the city's distinctive feature. New York retained its preeminence as the capital of American Jews because of deep roots in local worlds that supported vigorous political, religious, and economic diversity.

The impact of the Frankel Institute registers in the “visual essays” by art historian Diana Linden included in each volume. These visual materials narrate and interpret aspects of life for New York's Jews from their arrival until today and illuminate Jewish material culture and art, architecture, as well as everyday culture and community.



# Scholars Convene in Milan at Sixth Enoch Seminar

by Jason M. Zurawski



The Michigan Team at Lago Maggiore: Rodney Caruthers, Deborah Forger, Gabriele Boccaccini, Isaac Oliver, and Jason Zurawski

This past summer, the Sixth Enoch Seminar convened just outside of Milan, Italy, in the lovely lake-side town of Gazzada. Its subjects focused on “Second Baruch and Fourth Ezra: Jewish Apocalypticism in Late First Century Israel.” Professors Matthias Henze of Rice University and Gabriele Boccaccini, U-M Near Eastern Studies Professor of Second Temple Judaism, chaired the seminar.

Boccaccini founded the Enoch Seminar in 2001. It aimed to look at the second temple period from a holistic perspective, breaking down artificial boundaries created by modern scholarship. Instead of examining the period through viewpoints of canon versus Pseudepigrapha, Jewish versus Christian, viewpoints which often lead to misrepresentations of the complicated issues of the time period, the Enoch Seminar and its participants consider the second temple period from an historical framework that allows its diversity and complexity to be acknowledged.

Since its inception ten years ago, the Enoch Seminar has met in Florence, Venice, Camaldoli (twice), Naples, and now Milan. Participation and attendance is by invitation only and is limited to specialists in the field. The Enoch Seminar is designed as an actual seminar where engaged discussion is fostered and true progress is made on the topics at hand. The structure of the Seminar, where all participants stay at the same location and enjoy all meals together, also creates an environment of camaraderie that encourages the dialogues which began during the day to continue in a more relaxed atmosphere long after the official business has ended. Often these conversations extend well into the night and have sparked not a few rewarding insights.

In the summer of 2011, nearly 90 international experts from countries such as Ethiopia, Switzerland, Germany, Argentina, Israel, Australia, Scotland, Italy, Canada, England, Poland, Norway, Russia, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Hungary gathered at the beautiful Villa Cagnola to discuss two of the most valuable texts from the late first century, texts which bear striking witness to the ways in which Jews dealt with the loss of the temple after 70 C.E., 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch.

The twelve major papers by Devorah Dimant, Gabriele Boccaccini, John Collins, Hindy Najman, Lutz Doering, Loren Stuckenbruck, Adela Yarbro Collins, George Nickelsburg, Daniel Boyarin, Steven Fraade, Liv Ingeborg Lied, and Karina Hogan were the primary focus of the Seminar, but there were also short paper sessions and exegetical workshops devoted to a close reading of the texts. In addition, this summer’s Seminar featured two important sessions in Milan. The first, a public session at the Catholic University of Milan on “End of Times: Fear or Hope,” included papers by Marco Rizzi, James Charlesworth, Giuseppe Visonà, and Lawrence Schiffman, and addresses from representatives of the city of Milan and the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities of Milan. Following this public session, the participants of the Enoch Seminar were invited to a unique session at the Ambrosiana Library, home of the only manuscript of the Syriac 2 Baruch.

At the close of the Sixth Enoch Seminar, participants enjoyed a scenic boat trip on Lago Maggiore and a visit to several of the Borromean Islands, the perfect ending to an undeniably successful Seminar.

A generous donation of €150,000 from the Alessandro Nangeroni International Endowment will allow the Enoch Seminar to expand its activities, including a return to Milan and the Villa Cagnola this upcoming summer for a new addition to the Enoch Seminar family, the first biennial Nangeroni Meeting, as well as significant developments to the Online Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism, 4enoch.org. This summer will also feature the Fourth Enoch Graduate Seminar to be held at the University of Notre Dame with Professor James VanderKam. The following summer (June 2013), the Enoch Seminar proper will be held in Sicily, where it will discuss “Enoch and the Synoptic Tradition.”

# Medieval Exegesis: An “Interfaith” Discourse

By Ryan Szpiech, Departments of Spanish and Judaic Studies

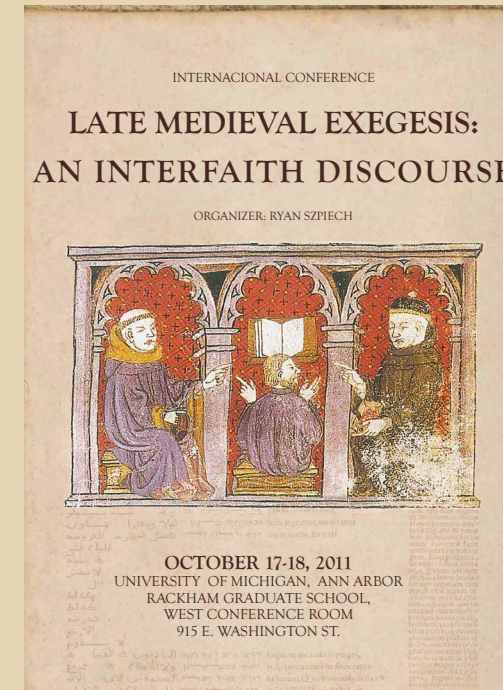
In the High and Late Middle Ages (10<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries), exegesis (scriptural commentary) was at the heart of medieval Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions around the Mediterranean. Evolving in all three Abrahamic traditions as a multifaceted practice—at once social, devotional, intellectual, creative, and educational—it constituted an essential aspect of expression and belief. At the same time, because it dealt by nature with issues such as the shape of the canon, the limits of acceptable interpretation, and the meaning of salvation history from the perspective of faith, exegesis was always elaborated on the fault-lines of inter-confessional disputation and polemical conflict.

On October 17-18, 2011, I was pleased to welcome twenty-one scholars from Europe, Israel, Canada, and around the United States, to the Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan for a conference entitled “Late Medieval Exegesis: An Interfaith Discourse.” My goal in organizing this conference was to explore medieval exegesis as a discourse of cross-cultural and inter-religious conflict in all three traditions, paying particular attention to the exegetical production of scholars in the Western and Southern Mediterranean.

Speakers at the conference posed some of the following questions: Who was reading exegesis from other faith traditions and in what contexts? In what contexts did exegetes collaborate across confessional divisions? Was the discourse of medieval exegetes always a polemical (conflictive) discourse, or was there also a counter-tradition of “irenical” (peaceful) exegesis? How did the practical and technical demands of reading foreign scriptures and commentaries affect exegetes’ views and traditions? How did individual exegetes working with foreign commentaries negotiate their relationship with the larger traditions to which they themselves belonged? In exploring these questions, the presentations addressed the complex relations

between commentary, polemic, dialogue, and scholarship within the boundaries of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scriptural interpretation across the Mediterranean.

I organized this conference as part of my ongoing work with a Spanish/American team of five researchers on a project entitled “INTELEG: The Intellectual and Material Legacies of Late Medieval Sephardic Judaism,



an Interdisciplinary Approach.” This project, directed by Principal Investigator Esperanza Alfonso of Spain’s Higher Council of Academic Research (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas) in Madrid, received a four-year grant from the European Research Council in the amount of € 700,000 to cover a series of conferences, symposia, seminars, as well as individual research projects by each of the five members. In addition to Dr. Alfonso and me, the other members of the team include Arturo Prats (Complutense University in Madrid), Jonathan Decter (Brandeis University), and Javier del Barco (also of Spain’s Higher Council). This conference on “Late Medieval Exegesis” is the third of four conferences planned as part of the INTELEG project,

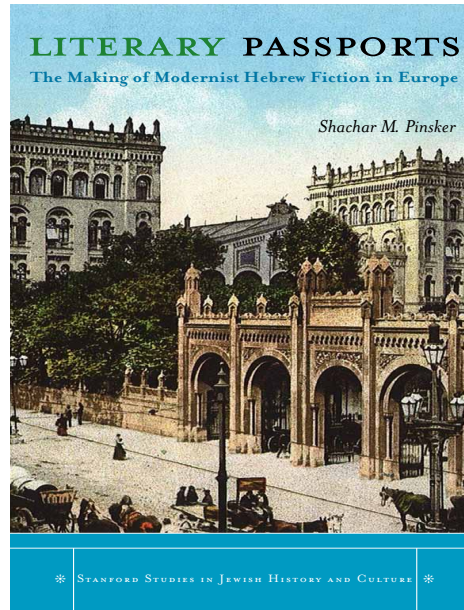
the first having been held in Madrid in 2009 (on “the Bible and fifteenth-century literature”) and the second at Brandeis in 2010 (on “patronage and the sacred book”). While most of the funding came from the European Research Council, additional funding was provided by the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, and the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies.

The conference offered a new perspective on medieval exegesis by approaching it as a vehicle for interaction and conflict between communities and religions rather than only as a tool for preserving and teaching a single religious tradition. Some panels approached Sephardic Jewish commentaries in terms of their relations with Muslim and Christian majority cultures. Others situated Islamic commentaries on the Qur’an in the context of Muslim interest in the Bible and also in terms of Christian interest in translation and polemic. The conference included thematic panels, focusing on links between exegesis and issues of gender and concrete issues arising from manuscript work and paleography. Not only did the conference explore how commentary on scripture in the Middle Ages was a manifold and fluid practice in all three major religious traditions of the Mediterranean, but it also made manifest how even collaborative and non-polemical interest in other traditions and languages was very often a means of self-definition rather than contact with difference.

While the conference explored many important questions about the role of Scripture in belief and identity in the Middle Ages, many new questions were also raised, and all of the participants look forward to continuing this conversation in the months to come. To that end, I am currently organizing a collection of selected essays based on the presentations to further explore these questions.



# An Interview with Shachar Pinsker, Recipient of the Jordan Schnitzer Book Award



University of Michigan Associate Professor Shachar Pinsker (Near Eastern and Judaic Studies) has been awarded the Jordan Schnitzer Book Award for his recent book *Literary Passports: The Making of Modernist Hebrew Fiction in Europe* (Stanford University Press, 2011). The award, granted yearly by the Association for Jewish Studies, focuses on particular areas in Jewish studies. This year, the award honors a book published between 2007-2011 in the category of Jewish Literature and Linguistics.

"*Literary Passports* is readable, scholarly, and original," observed the selection committee. Shachar Pinsker "covers vast territory, combining close readings with wide-ranging commentary, breaking new ground in modernist studies generally and in the study of Hebrew literature in Europe." The award citation notes, "Pinsker integrates a range of critical perspectives and scholarly sources, engaging scholarly work in critical geography, gender studies, and studies of religious experience." Indeed, as Pinsker admits, *Literary Passports* is a result of years of rigorous research. "My aim," he continues, "was to present and explicate complex texts and ideas in a readable, accessible style. The Jordan Schnitzer Award confirms that this scholarly endeavor achieved these goals and that my book is reaching its intended audience. I am

humbled and honored to have received such a distinguished award from the Association for Jewish Studies."

**How did you happen upon the subject(s) of your book? And what resources did you use for the research of *Literary Passports*?**

Researching and writing *Literary Passports* was a slow and prolonged process with many stages. The "prehistory" of the book was my PhD dissertation, which I had written as a graduate student at UC Berkeley under the wonderful supervision of Professor Robert Alter, Chana Kronfeld, and Naomi Seidman. The dissertation was entitled "Old Wine in New Flasks: Rabbinic Intertexts and Modernist Hebrew Fiction." The main question that preoccupied me was: How was modernist Hebrew fiction, written during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, created in a language that was not used as a spoken language, but a language of books, mostly religious texts. I was engaged in a close reading of stories, novellas and novels by three Hebrew writers, showing how they fashioned intricate prose by appropriating texts from the rabbinic corpus (Talmud and Midrash) in order to deal with the upheavals of their own life and of life around them in time of major revolution in the Jewish sphere and the rest of the world in general.

After I completed my PhD and moved to the "real world" (teaching at Harvard and Ben-Gurion universities, and then taking a position of Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan), I faced the dilemma of what to do with my dissertation. My initial plan was to revise the dissertation into a book, but then I realized that it was of great interest to people in the small field of modern Hebrew literature. I turned chapters of the dissertation into articles, which I published in Hebrew and English and also edited a volume on Dvora Baron, the first recognized Hebrew woman writer (published in 2007). It took me some time to grasp the fact that although most of the literature I dealt with was

created in Eastern and Central Europe, there was no book devoted to this subject. I understood that this is what I need to do, and what I would like to do. However, I didn't know how to do it, because the topic was so vast and involved work in various languages (Yiddish, German, Russian, etc.) and diverse fields of academic studies, some of which were completely new to me. But at this point, I was already deeply invested in what was essentially a new project. I began reading and searching for every piece of information about Hebrew modernism in Europe. I conducted research in archives and libraries in America, Europe and Israel, and have assembled a large body of materials. It was bewildering at first and I was afraid that I would never be able to complete the project, but gradually everything came together like a puzzle with many pieces.

The breakthrough came when I realized that three major themes emerge from the materials I researched: 1. The European cities in which modernist Hebrew fiction was created and the representation of the urban experience. 2. Gender and sexuality in modernist Hebrew fiction. 3. Tradition, modernity and the religious experience in modernist Hebrew fiction. When this became clear, I had the new structure of the book, and I began writing very intensely for a period of about two years until I had produced a draft of the entire book manuscript. I then worked very hard to make the manuscript as readable and accessible as possible. I did it both because the books I value mostly are those that are written in a lucid style and also because I had a hunch that the book might be of interest to scholars and readers in many fields: Jewish history, Jewish literature, Modernist Studies, Urban Studies, Gender Studies, etc. This meant that I needed to write in a way that was accessible to many people without sacrificing the depth and breadth of my discussion. The truth is I never thought that the book would win an award, but I was so thrilled when the AJS announced that *Literary Passports*

was the winner of the Jordan Schnitzer Award. It made me realize that the large (and sometime thorny) scholarly endeavor yielded a successful result to the extent that it reached its intended audience, and will, hopefully, make an lasting impact in a number of fields.

**What surprises did your research yield? Did your semester as a fellow at the Frankel Institute during the theme year of "Jews and the City" influence your project? Are there particular anecdotes or stories you discovered that you'd like to share?**

One of the main surprises that moved my research and writing a big step forward was a trip that I took through European cities during the summer of 2007. I realized that I had never had the chance to visit some of the cities I was writing about, and I thought I should take the time to do it. The funny thing was that some colleagues thought that this is a waste of precious time. They told me, "sure, you are going to have good time, but since everything was ruined by the Second World War and subsequent decades, you will not find much there. You'd better use the time for writing." However, they were very wrong. My trip, which was very carefully planned (I had made detailed maps of places where Hebrew writers lived, worked and published, as well as maps extracted from fictional stories and novels. I also had local guides who were experts on the period), gave me a most valuable perspective. In spite of the fact that the cities have indeed changed dramatically, I had, for the first time, a real grasp of the urban space. The funny thing was that I was so focused on the map of the past that I didn't prepare myself for the fact that I would encounter the present. I was walking in the streets of Odessa, Lviv, Vienna, and Berlin seeing the past and the present scattered one on top of the other like archeological layers, and it was fascinating.

One surprising element that became clear to me only when I visited these cities was the importance of the

urban café as a space of literary and cultural creativity. When I was looking for the places where writers actually congregated, met and wrote, I found that cafés were important in each and every city. In the beginning, I thought that these places stood out because of my own love of cafés, but when I came back to Ann Arbor and looked at the literature and archival materials I realized that it wasn't a coincidence. At this point, I was fortunate to spend the Fall semester as a fellow at the Frankel Institute for advanced Judaic Studies in its inaugural year, when the topic was "Jews and the City." This was just the perfect occasion to work on my project with a wonderful group of scholars from various fields dealing with issues of urban space and Jewish culture. I wrote most of the first part of *Literary Passports* during this fellowship period.

Another interesting surprise came when I was writing the part of the book that dealt with gender and sexuality in modernist Hebrew fiction. I came across a number of translations into Hebrew and Yiddish of works by Oscar Wilde, as well as essays and studies about him, including by figures as remote from Wilde as possible. This pushed me into a small but intense research on the extent on the interest in Wilde and the reasons for it. I discovered that there was a real "Wildemia" in the world of Jewish literature and culture during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This deep interest (which was not limited to Wilde but extended to writers of Russian, German, Scandinavian, Polish and other languages) had to do, among other things, with wide-ranging changes in perceptions of gender and sexuality that I identified and analyzed. So, I began the part of the book that is devoted to the topic, with a discussion of the Hebrew translation of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*, which was commissioned and published by Yossef Haim Brenner, who lived in London's East End.

**Are you planning to teach any classes at Michigan that relate to this book?**

The truth is that until now it was very difficult to teach a course that deals directly with the topic of my book. This is partly because until I've written the book, there was no good framework in which one could look at the materials in a clear and comprehensive way. Also, for the contemporary reader, the literary texts are difficult and not accessible, unless you are trained in the Hebrew written in early 20<sup>th</sup> century (which is very different from Hebrew spoken today!). I was very fortunate to have a wonderful group of graduate students, with whom I conducted a seminar on modernist Hebrew literature while researching the book. I have learned much from their wise comments, the outstanding discussions we had in the classroom, and their thoughtful, superb seminar papers and other written work, which I cited in my book extensively. I am indebted to their work and rejoice in our scholarly dialogue and warm intellectual and interpersonal relationships. Beyond these graduate-level seminars, I make much use of the research and writing I have made for the book in a course on "Exile and Homecoming in Modern Hebrew and Jewish Literature," "From Bible and Midrash to Modern Hebrew Literature," and "Ethnicity and Nationalism in Modern Hebrew Literature." Materials from my book are also featured in a team-taught course which I teach together with my Judaic Studies colleagues Mikhail Krutikov and Julian Levinson (which is my favorite course): "Jews in the Modern World: Texts, Images, Ideas." Finally, I draw on my book in new courses I develop, like "A Tale of Two Cities: Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in Israeli Culture," which I am teaching in Winter 2012. The ultimate satisfaction in teaching is to introduce to students materials, texts and questions about which I thought long and hard, and to discover that they come up with something new and original that never occurred to me. Fortunately, this happens very frequently and will probably continue to happen.



# University of Michigan Teams with Harvard for Conference on Russian-Speaking Diaspora

Generous grants from the Frankel Family Foundation and the Blavatnik Family Foundation enabled the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies to co-sponsor a conference with the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University on November 13-15, 2011. The conference focused on the contemporary Russian-speaking Jewish diaspora and drew over a hundred scholars from eight different countries.

Russian-speaking Jews are concentrated overwhelmingly outside their birthplaces or the birthplaces of their parents. Today almost two million Russian-speaking people, most of them Jews, live outside the Former Soviet Union (FSU). There are probably no more than 300,000 – 400,000 Jews living throughout the former Soviet territories, about 250,000 in Russia itself. Just between 1989 and 2009 about 1.6 million Jews and their non-Jewish relatives left the FSU, with nearly a million going to Israel (61%) and about 326,000 immigrating to the United States and 224,000 to Germany. All told, 1,890,000 Jews and their non-Jewish relatives emigrated between 1970 and 2009, about the same number of Jews who left the Russian Empire between 1881 and 1914, when the population base was nearly five times as great. Thus, today there are between four and five times as

many Jewish native speakers of Russian *outside* the borders of the FSU as within them.

Of nearly 140 proposals for papers submitted to the conference, convenors Zvi Gitelman of Michigan and Lisbeth Tarlow of Harvard selected 26 for presentation. Symposia involving those who work with Russian-speaking Jews in Germany, Israel, and the United States, as well as immigrants themselves, complemented the formal papers. Zvi Gitelman delivered the keynote address, “Homelands, Diasporas, and the Islands in Between.” Other Frankel Institute Fellows or Frankel Center affiliates who participated in the conference were professors Brian Horowitz, Mikhail Krutikov and Lenore Weitzman. Former Fellow Alanna Cooper and incoming Fellow Olena Bagno also presented scholarly papers.

Conferees analyzed several dimensions of the largest Jewish emigration in a century: demographic, political, cultural and sociological. Many presentations addressed broader questions about the concepts of diaspora, globalization and transnationalisms. A volume of selected papers, edited by Zvi Gitelman, is planned, and it is likely that all the papers will be made available online.

## INSTITUTE FELLOWS:

**Brian Horowitz** published one article—“Semyon An-sky-Dialogic Writer”—in *Polin: A Journal Devoted to Polish-Jewish Relations* (Vol. 24, 2011, 131-149), and another was accepted for publication in *Zion*: “The Russian Roots of Simon Dubnov’s Life and Thought” (in Hebrew).

**Olena Bagno-Moldovski** gave an invited talk in November at Stanford. The topic was “Russian Foreign Policy in the Middle East: A Reversal to Come in 2012?”

**Melissa Klapper** has been promoted to full professor at Rowan University. She also received the Cashmere Subvention Grant from the Association for Jewish Studies Women’s Caucus and was awarded the Charles DeBenedetti Best Article Prize from the Peace History Society for “‘Those By Whose Side We Have Labored’: American Jewish Women and the Peace Movement Between the Wars” (December 2010, *Journal of American History*).

**Miriam Bodian** gave a lecture at the University of Florida in November titled “‘Liberty of Conscience’: The Inquisition Case of Isaac de Castro Tartas” and presented a graduate seminar the following day on her book *Dying in the Law of Moses*.

**Lenore J. Weitzman** was invited to give the keynote address at the International Conference on Women in the Holocaust in Warsaw, Poland, at the Polish Academy of Science in November 2011, along with her co-author, Dalia Ofer. They presented “A Conceptual Framework for Explaining the Presence (and Absence) of Gendered Behavior during the Holocaust.” The American Embassy in Warsaw sponsored Weitzman’s visit to Poland and they arranged for her to travel and to speak at Lodz University in Lodz, Poland. The trip to Poland also provided Weitzman with an opportunity to examine personal testimonies at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.

**Jason von Ehrenkrook** (Ph.D., 2010) published his dissertation—*Sculpting Idolatry in Flavian Rome: (An)Iconic Rhetoric in the Writings of Flavius Josephus*—as part of the SBL series on Early Judaism and Its Literature.

## FACULTY:

**Deborah Dash Moore** gave an invited lecture in Amsterdam sponsored by the Menasseh ben Israel Institute for Jewish Social and Cultural Studies, a collaboration of the University of Amsterdam and the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam. Its title was “Loyalty Debates Among American Jews in a Transnational Era, from the Rosenberg Case to the Israel Lobby Controversy” and was part of a series on Jewish Loyalties.

**Zvi Gitelman** lectured at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y in New York in October 2011, opening the exhibit, “Lives of the Great Patriotic War: The Untold Stories of Soviet Jewish Soldiers in the Red Army During World War II.” The exhibit was mounted by the Blavatnik Archive and ran from October to December. The Blavatnik Family Foundation has sponsored and organized the

collection of a thousand videotaped testimonies from Jews who served in the Soviet military or partisans during the War. Gitelman also wrote the introduction to the bilingual (English-Russian) exhibit catalogue, edited and designed by Julie Chervinsky, Aaron Kreiswirth and Leonid Reines.

Also in October, Gitelman spoke on Soviet Jewish partisans in WWII as part of the series organized by the Hatcher Graduate Library, complementing the exhibit of photographs taken during the war by Faye Schulman, herself a partisan in Belorussia. Frankel Institute Fellow **Lenore Weitzman** spoke that same evening on “Women in the Holocaust.”

**Ryan Szpiech** edited the critical cluster “Between Gender and Genre in Later-Medieval Sepharad: Love, Sex, and Polemics in Hebrew Writing from Christian Iberia” in *the Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 3.2 (2011): 119-217, for which he also wrote the introduction (119-129). He also published “Converting the Queen: Gender and Polemic in the Book of Ahitub and Salmon (Sefer Ahitub ve-Salmon)” in the same journal.

## STUDENTS:

**Jessica Evans** (M.A., 2008) is the new co-director of the Posen Foundation in the U.S.

# Mazel Tov!

## Upcoming Events at The Frankel Center

### January 4, 12 noon

Panel Discussion: Deborah Dash Moore, Zvi Gitelman, and Steven Zipperstein

*What Drives Judaic Studies? Money & Priorities: Prospects and Pitfalls*  
911 N. University, Michigan League, Kalamazoo Room

### January 22, 2 pm

*Concert: Italian Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust*  
Caroline Helton, Kathryn Goodson, and Ralph Williams  
(Sponsors: The Frankel Center, The Italian Consulate, The Dante Alighieri Society of Michigan)  
Britton Recital Hall

### January 24, 4 pm

*Wiera Gran: A Singer, A Collaborator? The Other Side of Polanski’s Pianist*  
Agata Tuszynska, author of *Accused: Wiera Gran*  
International Institute, Room 1636

### January 26, 12 noon

Brian Horowitz, Tulane University, 2011-2012 Frankel Institute  
*The Politics of Jewish Enlightenment*

*in Late-Tsarist Russia*

202 South Thayer Street, Room 2022

### February 6, 9:30 am - 4 pm

Symposium: *Up Against the Wall: Israel in a Changing Middle East*  
911 N. University, Michigan League, Koessler Room  
(Sponsors: Center for Middle East and North African Studies (CMENAS), The Frankel Center)

### February 6, 6 pm

Roger Cohen, New York Times  
*Israeli Spring? The Enduring Jewish Question*  
530 S. State Street, Michigan Union, Rogel Ballroom

### February 8, 4 pm

Mark Slobin, Wesleyan University  
*Klezmer Time Zones*  
202 South Thayer Street, Room 2022

### February 9, 12 noon

Olena Bagno-Moldovski, Stanford, 2011-2012 Frankel Institute  
*Political Culture of FSU Jews in*

*Germany, Israel, and the Ukraine*

202 South Thayer Street, Room 2022

### February 14, 4 pm

Mark Slobin, Wesleyan University  
*Mogulesco: A Tale of the Yiddish Theater*  
(Film and Discussion)  
202 South Thayer Street, Room 2022

### February 15, 4 pm

Michal Kravel-Tovi, Mandell L. Berman Postdoctoral Research Fellow in *Contemporary American Jewish Life*  
*An Accounting of the Soul: The American Jewish Community, Social Science and the Language of Crisis*  
202 South Thayer Street, Room 2022

### February 16, 4 noon

Michael Schlie, Indiana University, 2011-2012 Frankel Institute  
*The Politics of Evil: Franz Rosenzweig, Leo Strauss, and the Last Man*  
202 South Thayer Street, Room 2022

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SAVE THE DATE

**March 7, 7 pm (Reception at 6:30 pm)**

**22nd Annual Belin Lecture:**

**Samuel Norich, Publisher,**

***The Forward***

**“The Forward: Independent Jewish  
Journalism in the Age  
of Digital Media”**

100 Washtenaw Ave., Palmer Commons,  
Forum Hall

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