WELCOME, SANDY CANTAVE VIL

It is a great pleasure to introduce our Staff Assistant, Sandy Cantave Vil, and to formally welcome her to the Center for Jewish Studies.

Before we were able to officially offer her this position, Sandy did an outstanding job covering this role on a temporary basis for nearly a year during an extended employee leave. We are all thrilled to have Sandy here on a more permanent basis.

Sandy comes to our office with many years of experience at Harvard, including her most recent role as Production Manager of the Sourcebooks Office. Sandy has been formally recognized for her outstanding work at Harvard as recipient of an Impact Bonus Award, as well as her selection to participate in Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences Mentoring Program for high-potential employees. She brings some wonderful computer, organizational and events planning skills, as well as exceptional poise, warmth and professionalism. We are thrilled to have Sandy join our team.
WELCOME, JAY HARRIS

by Eric Nelson

It is my pleasure to announce that Professor Jay M. Harris has assumed the directorship of the Center for Jewish Studies on July 1, 2015. Professor Harris, who served a term as director of CJS from 2001-2006, has been a member of the Harvard faculty since 1989. He is currently the Harry Austryn Wolfson Professor of Jewish Studies and Dean of Undergraduate Education. In 2000, he was named a Harvard College Professor, a five-year appointment recognizing outstanding undergraduate teaching and mentoring. Harris has also authored or edited nine books and was editor of the Association for Jewish Studies Review from 2000 to 2004.

Harris holds a B.A. from Columbia University, awarded in 1978; master’s degrees from Columbia and the Jewish Theological Seminary, awarded in 1980 and 1983, respectively; and a Ph.D. from Columbia, awarded in 1985. After various teaching appointments at Columbia, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Princeton University, and the University of Pennsylvania, he joined Harvard as an assistant professor of Jewish studies in 1989. Harris was named the Harris K. Weston Associate Professor of the Humanities in 1991, and the Wolfson Professor of Jewish Studies in 1994.

I have benefited immensely from Jay’s counsel and dedicated service during the last three years, and I know you will all be as delighted as I am to welcome him back as our director.

THANK YOU, ERIC NELSON

by Jay M. Harris

I am delighted to acknowledge the extraordinary contributions of Eric M. Nelson, who stepped down as the Director of the Center for Jewish Studies at the end of the academic year.

Eric is the Robert M. Beren Professor of Government at Harvard University. His research focuses on the history of political thought in early-modern Europe and America, and on the implications of that history for debates in contemporary political theory. His interests include the history of republican political theory, the relationship between the history of political thought and the history of scholarship, theories of property, and the phenomenon of secularization. Although only 38, Nelson has already published prodigiously, and has established himself as one of the stars in the world of political thought. He is the author of The Royalist Revolution: Monarchy and the American Founding (Harvard/Belknap, 2014), The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought (Harvard/Belknap, 2010), and The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought (Cambridge University Press, 2004). He has also edited Hobbes's translations of the Iliad and Odyssey for the Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes (The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2008). His books have received several prizes, and his essays have appeared in a wide range of scholarly journals and edited volumes. Nelson received his AB summa cum laude from Harvard University (1999).
and his PhD from The University of Cambridge (2002). He has been awarded fellowships by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies. He has also been a Junior Fellow in the Harvard Society of Fellows, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a British Marshall Scholar. He is currently at work on a long-term project on property rights and the theory of justice; he is one the brightest young stars in the world of political theory.

Eric’s time as Director was particularly busy, as we undertook four searches for new colleagues, in addition to maintaining our wide array of programs, public lectures, and cross-departmental collaborations. Eric’s wisdom and administrative acumen helped guide the Center through this whirlwind, and he leaves his directorship with the Center in excellent shape. We will miss him during his well-deserved leave this academic year; we look forward to his return to the Executive Committee, so that we may once again draw on his wise counsel. ■

VISITING LECTURERS

The Center for Jewish Studies was pleased to welcome two visiting lecturers during the 2014-15 academic year. Dr. Dara Horn Schulman, was our Weinstock Visiting Lecturer in Jewish Studies during the spring semester of 2014, and Dr. Rachel Fish of Brandeis University was our Rohr Visiting Lecturer in Modern Israel Studies for the spring semester of 2015. With the support of visiting professorships, the Center is able to host leading scholars in Jewish studies to supplement the courses offered by our full-time faculty.

DARA HORN SCHULMAN

Weinstock Visiting Lecturer in Jewish Studies

Dara Horn Schulman was born in New Jersey in 1977 and received her Ph.D. in comparative literature from Harvard University in 2006, studying Hebrew and Yiddish. In 2007 she was chosen by Granta magazine as one of 20 “Best Young American Novelists.” Her first novel, In the Image, published by W.W. Norton when she was 25, received a 2003 National Jewish Book Award, the 2002 Edward Lewis Wallant Award, and the 2003 Reform Judaism Fiction Prize. Her second novel, The World to Come, published by W.W. Norton in 2006, received the 2006 National Jewish Book Award for Fiction, the 2007 Harold U. Ribalow Prize, was selected as an Editors’ Choice in The New York Times Book Review and as one of the Best Books of 2006 by The San Francisco Chronicle, and has been translated into eleven languages. Her third novel, All Other Nights, published in 2009 by W.W. Norton, was selected as an Editors’ Choice in The New York Times Book Review and was one of Booklist’s 25 Best Books of the Decade. In 2012, her nonfiction e-book The Rescuer was published by Tablet magazine and became a Kindle bestseller. Her fourth novel, A Guide for the Perplexed, was published by W.W. Norton in September 2013, and was selected as one of Booklist’s Best Books of 2013 and was longlisted for the Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction. In addition to the Weinstock Visiting lectureship at Harvard, she has taught courses in Jewish literature and Israeli history at Sarah Lawrence College and City University of New York. She has lectured at over two hundred universities and cultural institutions throughout North America, in Israel and in Australia. She lives in New Jersey with her husband and four children.

During her semester at Harvard, Dr. Shulman taught Literature 147. "Why The Jews?" The Modern Jewish Experience in Literature in the Department of Comparative Literature, and Yiddish 200r. Literature and Belief: The Case of Modern Jewish Literature in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. ■

With content from http://darahorn.com/about-dara-horn/
Rachel Fish is Associate Director of the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University, where she teaches the Myra Kraft Seminar on Israel at the Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program. In 2013, she completed her doctoral degree in the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies Department at Brandeis University. Her dissertation, “Configurations of Bi-nationalism: The Transformation of Bi-nationalism in Palestine/Israel 1920’s-Present,” examines the history of the idea of bi-nationalism and alternative visions for constructing the State of Israel. Rachel has worked as an educator and consultant in various capacities in the Jewish community and higher education, teaching about Zionism and Israeli history at Brandeis University, UMASS Amherst and the Me’ah Adult Jewish Education program.

During her semester at Harvard, Dr. Fish taught one course, The Modern Middle East 128. The Arab-Israeli Conflict in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

With content from http://nelc.fas.harvard.edu/people/rachel-lea-fish

Two New Funds at the Center for Jewish Studies

The Center for Jewish Studies is delighted to announce two new funds recently established to support activities at the Center for Jewish Studies and student research in Jewish studies at Harvard. We are extremely grateful for the support of our donors and for the support these funds provide for our students and other programming in the field of Jewish Studies at Harvard.

**JUDITH & DAVID LOBEL FUND FOR THE CJS**

This current use fund was established with a generous gift from Judith Stern Lobel, AB 1985, JD 1989, and David S. Lobel. Through this generous gift, the donors hope to promote the study of the language, literature, history, philosophy and religion of the Jewish People by supporting activities such as conferences, speaker series, publications, faculty and student research.

**SUZANNE & DR. LAWRENCE FISCHMAN FELLOWSHIP FUND**

This current use fund was established with a generous gift from Dr. Lawrence Fishman, AB 1955, MD 1960, and Suzanne Fishman to support summer study fellowships for undergraduate and graduate students, with a preference for supporting student study of the Holocaust.

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You can find our Facebook page at facebook.com/CenterForJewishStudies

Follow us on Twitter!

@HarvardCJS
The Harry Starr Fellowship in Judaica supports a group of scholars from around the world to gather at Harvard to engage in full-time research in Jewish Studies. This research fellowship was founded with a generous bequest from the estate of Harry Starr ’21, former president of the Lucius Littauer Foundation. The theme in 2015 was “Jewish Law and Legal Theory.”
HILA BEN-ELIYAHU
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (spring semester)
FEBRUARY 12
The 16th Century Revolution of the Application of Law: the Qim Li Claim Revisited
APRIL 30
Conflict of Laws, Conflict of Customs: Between Jurisprudential Pluralism and Legal Pluralism

GUY DARSHAN
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (spring semester)
APRIL 16
The Priestly Law in Ancient Mediterranean Context: History of the Genre and its Sitz im Leben
APRIL 23
Law and Narrative in P: The Flood Story as a Case Study in Light of a New Akkadian Text

CHAYA HALBERSTAM
King’s University College at University of West Ontario (spring semester)
APRIL 16
Justice and Impartiality in Ancient Judaism: Law and Narrative
APRIL 23
Legal Justice in Tannaitic Literature

YAIR LORBERBAUM
Bar-Ilan University (spring semester)
FEBRUARY 12
On Rules and Reasons in Halakhic Discourse (1)
FEBRUARY 26
On Rules and Reasons in Halakhic Discourse (2)

AMIHAI RADZYNER
Bar Ilan University (spring semester)
FEBRUARY 26
The Jerusalem Genizah: Archival materials and rewriting the history of modern Halakhic issues (R. Ouziel and the prohibition against bigamy in Mandatory Palestine as a case study)
MARCH 11
The Law of the Knesset and the Rule of the Supreme Court as Minhag (custom)

RONI SHWEKA
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (academic year)
FEBRUARY 5
The Controversy About the Marriage Statute (Taqqanat Ha-Nissu’in) of Toledo
MARCH 26
Modes and Definitions of Legal Paternity in Antiquity
FEBRUARY 18, 2015

ANNUAL CJS SPRING RECEPTION
see page 8

MARCH 6, 2015

Today’s Middle East and Israel’s Elections—What is at Stake?
HARVARD HILLEL’S SECOND RIESMAN FORUM ON POLITICS AND POLICY

AMBASSADOR DENNIS ROSS
William Davidson Distinguished Fellow and counselor at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

GABRIELLA BLUM
Rita E. Hauser Professor of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law at Harvard Law School, Co-Director of the HLS-Brookings Project on Law and Security

MODERATOR ROBERT MNOOKIN
Samuel Williston Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, Chair of the Program on Negotiation, Director of the Harvard Negotiation Research Project

with Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and Hillel International

MARCH 12, 2015

Reading for Harmony, Reading for Conflict: The Implications of Source Criticism for a Jewish Biblical Theology

BENJAMIN D. SOMMER
Professor of Bible, The Jewish Theological Seminary

Harry Edison Fund with the Jewish Studies Graduate Student Colloquium

MARCH 31, 2015

Wives of Commoners and the Masculinity of the Rabbis, Jokes and Serious Matters

REUVEN KIPERWASSER
Institute Fellow, Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Michigan, (Ann Arbor), Research Fellow, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

with Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

APRIL 8, 2015

Veiling and Unveiling: The Poetry of Yeshurun, Biton and Pedaya

LILACH LACHMAN
Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature, Haifa University

Harry Edison Fund with the Jewish Societies and Cultures Seminar at the Mahindra Humanities Center and the Modern Hebrew Program at Harvard

APRIL 12, 2015

In Commemoration of Yom Hashoah/Holocaust Remembrance Day

WORLD PREMIERE OF THE CHOICE, A PLAY BY ELIE WIESEL (DIRECTED BY GUILA CLARA KEISSOUS)

GUILA CLARA KEISSOUS
UNESCO Artist for Peace

Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund with the Harvard Divinity School
APRIL 16, 2015

A New Magic Mountain: German Prose, Hebrew Modernism and the Central European Sanatorium

SUNNY YUDKOFF
Lecturer in Yiddish language, University of Chicago
Leon I. Mirell Lecture and Publication Fund with the Jews in Modern Europe Study Group at the Center for European Studies

APRIL 16, 2015

Fritz Bauer—Death by Installments
(A film by Ilona Ziok)

FILM AND TALK TO COMMEMORATE HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

IRMTRUD WOJAK
Frieda L. Miller Fellow, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study
Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund with the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, BUXUS STIFTUNG gGmbH, Munich, and Goethe Institute, Boston

APRIL 17, 2015

We, the Children—Second Generation to the Holocaust: A Complex Past, a Contemplative Present

EDNA SHEMESH
Award-winning writer, freelance journalist and translator
William Landau Lecture and Publication Fund with the Modern Hebrew Program at Harvard

APRIL 21, 2015

Jewish Studies in China: Past and New Developments

XU XIN
Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies and Director of the Glazer Institute for Jewish and Israel Studies at Nanjing University, China
Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies Fund with the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, and the Jewish Societies and Cultures Seminar at the Mahindra Humanities Center

MAY 4, 2015

Yiddish Fiction at its End—and Four Years After

EITAN KENSKY
Preceptor in Yiddish, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University
with the Judaica Division, Widener Library (Jacob Pat Memorial Lecture)

MAY 6, 2015

Women’s Voices from the Middle Ages

RACHA KIRAKOSIAN
Assistant Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures and of the Study of Religion, Harvard University
with Elson Family Arts Initiative Fund, Provostial Fund, Medieval Studies, Germanic Languages and Literatures
February 18, 2015
ANNUAL CJS RECEPTION

Students, graduate students, faculty, visitors, and staff joined together to celebrate CJS at another successful reception. The warmth was welcome during the snowiest month of the year!
FRIENDS OF THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

In December 1984, Peter Solomon (AB ’60, MBA ’63), then a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers, announced the establishment of the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies. The Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies seeks to provide an ongoing base of support for the Center and to enable it to expand its present areas of activity. Annual support from the Friends helps shape the future of Jewish Studies and sustains the Center as an influential, multi-faceted enterprise at Harvard.

ASSOCIATE: $50
PATRON: $100
PILLAR: $500
BENEFACTOR: $1,000

SOME OF THE PROJECTS SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS INCLUDE:

- student research projects (both undergraduate and graduate, school year and summer);
- graduate student fellowships;
- research-related expenses for visiting scholars;
- public lectures and class presentations by distinguished scholars;
- doctoral dissertation advising by specialized scholars from outside Harvard;
- group discussions of research in progress for Harvard faculty and students in Jewish studies at the Center for Jewish Studies Lunchtime Colloquium.

YOU ARE INVITED

Show your interest in Jewish Studies at Harvard by joining the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies in one of four categories listed in the box. Friends receive invitations to lectures, symposia and colloquia, copies of the newsletter, and selected publications published by the Center.

This year, we hope to substantially increase the number of Friends of the Center, thereby creating a broader base of support for the Center's projects and activities. If you know anyone who might be interested in joining the Friends, would you please notify the Center (617-495-4326) or cjs@fas.harvard.edu so that we may contact them to acquaint them with the Center's mission.

HOW TO GIVE

ONLINE: To make a gift by credit card to the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University, please click HERE (https://secure.post.harvard.edu/olc/pub/HAA/onlineliving/showGivingForm.jsp?form_id=128128) for Harvard University online giving form and follow the instructions.

When selecting a school/affiliate to donate to, please choose “Other” from the dropdown menu and enter a note in the “Comments/Other Designation” box with instructions that this gift should go to the “Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies, Center for Jewish Studies.” (If you choose to give to a specific other fund, please note the “(name of the fund), Center for Jewish Studies.”)

GIFTS BY CHECK MAY BE MAILED TO:

Center for Jewish Studies
Harvard University
6 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Please make checks payable to “The President and Fellows of Harvard College” and include a note in the memo line of the check that this is for the “Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies” (or the name of the other fund of your choice).
My adventures in Yiddishland this summer have taken me from the deepest depths of the archives at the Center for Jewish History and other institutions throughout New York City to a Jewish cemetery on the outermost edge of Queens. As a student in the Uriel Weinreich Summer Program at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, I have spent the past month immersed in Yiddish language, literature, grammar, and history through speech, film, song, and text. Each day of the program includes morning classes in literature and grammar and afternoon seminars, ranging from a song workshop to introduction to Yiddish research methods. Being in New York City means that many important sites in Jewish history are nearby, including the “Honor Row” at the Workmen’s Circle cemetery, where Sholem Aleykhem and other important literary, political, and historical figures were buried. I am very grateful to the Center for Jewish Studies and the Abraham and Rachel Bornstein Fund for this opportunity.

Since the program is located at the Center for Jewish History, which houses the archives of YIVO as well as other historical institutions, I have had the opportunity to conduct research for my senior thesis on black-Jewish relations between the First and Second World Wars. The texts I am finding in Yiddish have come together to form a rich and complex picture of how these two communities intersected and interacted. Some highlights include articles from inter-war Poland that report with great interest and at great length on the problem of lynching in the American south. In literature, Josef Opatoshu captured a lynching in his story “Lintsheray” found in his collection Rase (Race), published in 1923. I look forward to utilizing my Yiddish for more research on the topic over the coming year!

—Elena Hoffenberg, ’16
All societies seek to cultivate relations of loyalty, obligation, and mutual concern among their members. But in an age in which conventional norms no longer hold the same power, what can provide the moral basis of political community? Are there ways that we can redeem ethical life and foster social solidarity? In my dissertation, The Ethical Commonwealth: Social Citizenship and the Moral Life of Political Communities, I offer a novel answer to this question, developing an original model of community that I term the ethical commonwealth. Drawing from political theory, moral psychology, and sources in both contemporary and classical Jewish thought like Levinas and Maimonides, I argue that despite the diminished potency of religious norms, our moral motivation remains critically linked to non-rational sources. These sources underlie the parts of our ethical experience that often remain implicit and unexamined: the everyday dignity we grant to others, our concern for the vulnerability of the stranger, and our willingness to combat ordinary oppressions. With generous support from the Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship from the Harvard Center for Jewish Studies, I have been able to spend my time this summer on research and writing, and feel well-positioned to complete my dissertation this coming year.

—Charles Lesch, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Government

This summer, I was able to travel abroad and present my research in Germany and South America with generous support from the Edwin H. Kavinoxy Fund and the Center for Jewish Studies. In Berlin I participated in a graduate student seminar led by Professor Bernd Schipper at Humboldt University. Students from three universities — Harvard, Humboldt, and The Hebrew University in Jerusalem — gathered to discuss our research and exchange ideas in the inaugural season of the summer school, which focused on the theme of “Writing and Textuality in Jewish and Christian Antiquity.” Each week, we would hear a lecture by a faculty member at Humboldt, and then students would take turns presenting their work. A German class was offered as part of the program, as well as cultural activities, including guided tours of the Jewish Museum, the Berlin Cathedral, and a boat trip on the River Spree.

After six weeks in Berlin, I flew to Argentina to present a paper at the International Society of Biblical Literature conference in Buenos Aires. I was glad to have had the opportunity to participate in the first SBL conference ever held in South America. Apart from the conference itself, I also enjoyed visiting a ranch and watching some spectacular tango.

—I was glad to have had the opportunity to participate in the first SBL conference ever held in South America.”

—Maria Metzler

Maria Metzler (third from left) at Humboldt University in Germany

Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
My summer in Jerusalem consisted of intensive Hebrew language study from 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM every weekday at the ulpan at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Most weeks I didn’t have time to think about anything but Hebrew, and most weekends were spent resting or traveling around Israel. The program was intense; the vocabulary flash cards I accumulated after just four weeks of study in the ulpan outnumbered the flash cards I accumulated over an entire year of modern Hebrew language study at Harvard. We studied all the binyanim and many of the gizrot, read at least one independent text each day, watched Renen Schorr’s Blues Lahofesh Hagadol, a film about a group of Tel Avivian high school friends before their draft during the War of Attrition in 1970, learned to sing many, many new songs, wrote an average of two essays a week and got to know our teachers very well.

Occasionally I would attend a trip organized by the ulpan. Once I went mountain biking in the Israeli Judaean hills, the site of the battle between David and Goliath and the location of caves where the Jewish rebels of the Bar Kokhba revolt hid out from the Romans. Now the hills are home to sheep farms and wineries. The leader of the trip refuses to bike in the West Bank because he considers it part of the Palestinian state. Like many of the leftist Israeli Jews whom I met this summer with roots in Eastern Europe and the kibbutzim, he is intimately familiar with and cares deeply for the environment. He knows the names of all the flowers, plants and animals we came across.

The ulpan was over before I could blink. My weeks were packed, and my weekends were relaxing. I became friends with all my roommates, and three of us will be in the Boston area next year and plan to reconnect. My time in Israel was incredibly helpful to me as a language learner and a student of Israeli literature.

I am grateful to the Center for Jewish Studies and the Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship awarded me this summer. I could not have had a better experience studying Hebrew in Israel. Thank you!

—Will Tamplin, Ph.D. candidate, Comparative Literature

“...The vocabulary flash cards I accumulated after just four weeks of study in the ulpan outnumbered the flash cards I accumulated over an entire year of modern Hebrew language study.”

—Will Tamplin
This summer I was fortunate enough to receive funding from a CJS grant from the Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund for Jewish Studies to support my senior thesis research and enroll in the Jewish Theological Seminary’s five-week learning program, Nishma. I spent seven weeks in New York City taking a Beginner’s Talmud class in the mornings at JTS and conducting interviews for my senior thesis in the afternoon. As a joint concentrator in the Comparative Study of Religion and Sociology, I am writing my thesis on Conservative Jewish young adults’ opinions on interfaith dating and marriage through a series of interviews. Being in New York gave me the chance to conduct all of my interviews in person, and to meet with professors and Jewish professionals in the area that have completed related research and/or have insight from working with Jewish young adults.

—Orlea Miller, ’16

This summer I participated in a workshop on Ashkenazi Pinkassim, held at the Dubnow Institute in Leipzig, Germany.

This was an hands-on seminar, led by Prof. Adam Teller (Brown University) and Prof. Israel Bartal (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem). We collaborated in deciphering the Hebrew and Yiddish texts and were trained to make sense of their technical language. Finally, we reflected on different ways to make use of these highly unique materials in our own research.

I also took part in a conference in Vienna, dedicated to the multicultural heritage of Galicia, and in a conference in Jerusalem concerning the study of scholarship on Yiddish. In addition, I conducted archival research in Jerusalem, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Heidelberg.

One unexpected discovery was a book dedication from Haim Nahman Bialik, the Hebrew poet, to Mendele Mocher Sforim, the Yiddish writer. It was miraculously preserved in the archive of Mendele Mocher Sforim’s daughter. The daughter perished in the Holocaust, but, before she was sent to the camps, gave this book to one of her neighbors and this is how it survived. The book is now in Jerusalem, uncatalogued...

Without the support of the Center for Jewish Studies and the Anne B. Malloy Fellowship, none of this would have been possible.

—Ofer Dynes
Ph.D. candidate,
Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Here is a dedication from Haim Nahman Bialik to Mendele Mocher Sforim. This find is uncatalogued.
With the financial support of the Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship Fund from the Center for Jewish Studies, I received the opportunity to devote three weeks this summer to studying a number of ancient Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts of the Bible at the British Library in London. Among the various manuscripts I am studying, ranging from the 10th to the 16th century C.E., I am focusing my attention on the only extant manuscript of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, an Aramaic translation of the Torah. While Pseudo-Jonathan dates probably to the 9th century C.E., the manuscript that survived dates to the 16th century C.E. Studying the manuscript of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is an important and necessary project for me inasmuch as my dissertation deals with the method of translation implemented in this Targum. Rather than relying on modern published editions of the Targum, I am able to sit down and read the very words of the actual manuscript.

As I inspect each of the 231 folios of Pseudo-Jonathan, I give careful attention to the handwriting of the text, the shape of the letters, the words that were added in the margins, the words that were crossed out from the text, the color of the ink, the stains on the paper, the ink that smeared or that bled through the page, even the stale smell of the pages, and many other important features that make up the manuscript. Despite the many questions that arise from the analysis of this manuscript, a number of questions are also answered. For example, if I were to read a modern published edition of Pseudo-Jonathan, I would never know that Gen 22:24 has a word that appears to be misspelled in the text, for the modern editions correct the apparent misspelling of that word (יִשְׂעָר “ten”). If I were to read a digitized version of the manuscript, I would note the misspelled word (יִשְׂעָר), but I would merely be able to surmise how the error emerged in the text. However, only upon inspecting the actual manuscript would I be able to discover and present with full certainty the reason for this apparent error: in fact, the word is not misspelled; rather, the page has a hole at the place of the third letter of the word יִשְׂעָר, and instead of seeing a י we see what looks like two yods from a word on the following page, so that we get יעשרי in the verse in question. This is just one example.

It’s hard to capture in words the emotion I experience as I hold in my hands the 16th century manuscript of Pseudo-Jonathan as well as numerous other ancient manuscripts of the Bible.

—Iosif Zhakevich

Ph.D. candidate, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Yonatan (Yoni) Miller grew up in Teaneck, NJ, where he attended Jewish day school from kindergarten through high school. Before starting college, Yoni studied at Yeshivat Har-Etzion in Israel, where he had an “intensive immersion in Talmud.” His years of study there awakened his interest in a scholarly approach to Jewish texts. “We spent all day studying texts, but we never learned about who wrote them, and how and in what context the texts were produced.” “I started by studying the history of the traditional printed text, the Vilna folio,” explains Yoni. “I was fascinated by the realization that the vaunted Vilna text is only one version of the text, but not necessarily the best version... That was the beginning of my quest to discover the origins of rabbinic texts.”

Yoni earned his B.A. degree at Yeshiva University, where he began with a focus on medieval Judaism. A number of classes in ancient Judaism sparked his interest in this formative period. Yoni explains that 2000 years ago “you couldn’t speak of a single Judaism.” Instead, there were different communities, each pulling a lot of weight in society, and each claiming to be “authentic.” When in one of these courses Yoni read Shaye J. D. Cohen’s The Beginnings of Jewishness, he knew that this was the person with whom he wanted to pursue advanced graduate study.

To begin his graduate studies, Yoni decided to return to Israel where he studied ancient Judaism at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. There he further developed his interests and refined his skills in the study of Jewish literature, and ultimately felt confident enough to apply for doctoral programs. His first choice was to fulfill his wish from college, and come to Harvard to work with Shaye Cohen.

Yoni’s work at Harvard began in September 2009 and has moved quickly. “The coursework was intensive,” says Yoni, but also “rewarding in ways I couldn’t have imagined. You come to a university like Harvard and expect huge classes. I was able to cultivate close relationships with professors because classes were small and we had quality higher-level interactions.”

“The faculty here have been amazingly helpful and generous with their time.” For example, Professor Andrew Teeter offered to teach Yoni a one-on-one Dead Sea Scrolls seminar, as he had a course conflict at the regular class meeting time. “It was a wonderful experience!” He was thrilled to participate in Bernard “Berel” Septimus’s final class, which was “a real treasure; a small class with high-quality students and a high level of discourse.” Yoni has thoroughly enjoyed the several courses he has taken with his advisor, Shaye Cohen, including at least one independent study and numerous seminars.

Harvard has provided many opportunities for Yoni’s professional development, for which he is grateful, including his work as an editorial assistant for the Harvard Theological Review. Yoni is also proud of his work with Professor Noah Feldman to organize a program on Jewish Law. “It began with discussions in 2011 to create a framework at Harvard for advanced students in Jewish studies to learn major themes and
YONI MILLER, (continued)

concepts in legal studies. This group has evolved from a small group meeting informally in Professor Feldman’s office to an accredited Harvard Law School course.” In fact, the 2015 Starr Seminars on Jewish Law and Legal Theory tied in with this group.

Yoni’s dissertation explores the association of the Israelite priesthood with violence in the Hebrew Bible. He explores the development of this theme in Jewish literature through the lens of the violent priest Phinehas (Pinhas). Yoni examines the wide variety of reactions to priestly violence in Jewish texts from antiquity through post-Talmudic literature. Some writers were enamored of Phinehas and others were more cautious, or even critical. In his research, Yoni traces these attitudes and accounts for how and why they changed over time. “A lot has to do with the power of the priesthood. The priesthood was most powerful while the Second Temple stood. After its destruction we can detect some hostility between priests and rabbis, but with the passage of time, relations warmed and the priesthood was once again ascribed great importance.” Having read so much about Phinehas, Yoni says, “I feel like he’s almost a part of my family, but especially nowadays, I also recognize the dangers of the glorification of religious violence.”

“I loved teaching here.” Yoni explains that most of his teaching was done through the General Education program for Shaye Cohen, including for his course “From the Hebrew Bible to Judaism, from the Old Testament to Christianity.” He enjoyed the cross-section of students, and instilling in undergraduates a passion for the study of religion. “I was energized by the feeling of having been successful in the classroom, when you light the spark of understanding in a student.” It was a “fantastic experience” to teach his own course, “Introduction to Rabbinic Hebrew” to a small group of students. “It was empowering to design a course from the ground up, to be given that level of autonomy and responsibility.”

Yoni successfully defended his dissertation in August and hopes to move on to an academic career. Next year he will move from the role of graduate student to that of a Harry Starr Fellow in Judaica at the Center for Jewish Studies. He is excited for this opportunity to work on publishing portions of his research as articles, and revising his dissertation to become a book.

Outside of his studies, Yoni enjoys spending time with his wife and three year-old daughter, “who have been immensely supportive and understanding.” Yoni explains that he met his wife at The Hebrew University on the first day of classes. Now they have been married for seven years. In his spare time, Yoni enjoys “being the family cook.”

INTERVIEW: WILL FRIEDMAN

Ph.D. candidate, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Fresh Meadows, a neighborhood in the outer borough of Queens, although I commuted into Manhattan every day for high school.

Where did you go to school before coming to Harvard?

I attended Stuyvesant High School, which was an incredibly diverse and stimulating environment intellectually, academically, and socially. I did my undergraduate work at MIT, thinking I wanted to pursue computer science. After switching paths, I attended a number of post-college Jewish studies programs in Israel and in the U.S. before completing an M.A. in Talmud & Rabbinics at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). Afterwards, I worked on and received private rabbinic ordina-
“Although on their surface the Talmuds seems like disjointed collections of abstruse legal discussions, in fact they engage fundamental questions of human existence—how does one act ethically and create a just society?”

—Will Friedman

tion in Israel, and taught Hebrew grammar and Talmud at JTS for three years before coming to Harvard.

How did you become interested in Jewish studies?
Although I grew up in a Jewishly-involved family, my actual knowledge of Hebrew and classical Jewish texts was very weak. During my undergraduate years, I became exposed to a much more learned Jewish community at MIT, which lead me to want direct access to the texts they could read with such fluency. To begin to close the gap, I cross-registered at Harvard, taking Hebrew and Jewish studies courses with Irit Aharony and Jay Harris. What initially began as a source of personal enrichment soon became an all-encompassing fascination and passion. At the same time, I was becoming disillusioned with the isolated and technical nature of my work at MIT, and I realized I wanted something intellectually rigorous that could still speak to the human condition. I eventually found that in the Talmud.

What aspects of Jewish studies interest you the most?
I’m naturally drawn to legal texts, which seem to me to engage the deepest questions of human existence from a practical rather than philosophical or theological lens. This appeals to my engineering-trained mind, which looks for real-life solutions to real-life problems. The most exquisite examples of this genre are the Talmuds. Although on their surface the Talmuds seems like disjointed collections of abstruse legal discussions, in fact they engage fundamental questions of human existence—how does one act ethically and create a just society? Their answers aren’t static, of course, and I’m very interested in how the multi-generational conversations recorded by the Talmuds play out in their changing historical and social contexts, as well as how the answers of the Jewish legal elite compare to those of their contemporaries—Roman, Christian, Zoroastrian, etc.

What is your dissertation topic?
Although I’ve just completed coursework and am beginning reading for my comprehensive exams, I’ve already begun to consider avenues of research. I think there’s a lot of potential in contemporary legal thought to shed light on the processes of Jewish law over time, and I hope to explore that in my dissertation.

What has been enjoyable or beneficial to you during your time at Harvard?
Harvard has tremendous resources, and it’s been a pleasure to work at an institution so dedicated to the pursuit of academic excellence. In particular, given my interests, the ability to take theoretically-oriented courses at Harvard Law School has been a fantastic opportunity. I’ve also been able to explore other areas of interest through classes at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS)—Greek thought, the history of the idea of property in political theory, legal anthropology—as well as study with great scholars of Jewish studies. And the small size and strong backgrounds of the ancient Judaism cohort has meant that we’ve developed close bonds with each other and with Prof. Shaye Cohen.

What do you hope to do once you graduate?
I’m open to many different kinds of opportunities. Since I’ve also received private rabbinic ordination in Israel, my dream would be to combine work in the academy with educational work in the Jewish community, whether that means through rigorous college and post-college adult education, Hillel, or teaching in a rabbinical school. Most important, I don’t see a conflict between my intellectual and academic work and my rabbinic work; I think that deep contextual understanding of rabbinic texts only enhance their ongoing relevance rather than detract from it.

Are there any other details about your life outside your academic program such as activities, special interests, or your background that you wish to share?
Outside of Harvard, I’m blessed to be part of the very active Jewish community in Cambridge, and my wife and I take great pleasure in hosting people for meals and spending time with friends during our (very limited!) downtime. One of the things that led me to do a doctorate was my love of teaching, and I’ve also had the chance to do some of that in informal ways outside of Harvard as well.
The Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University awards the Selma and Lewis Weinstein Prize in Jewish Studies to the Harvard College student who submits the best essay in Jewish studies. This prize was established by Lewis H. Weinstein, A.B. 1927, LL.B. 1930.

ELENA FLORENCE HOFFENBERG ’16
Cabot House

Elena Hoffenberg’s entry, “A Shprakh of One’s Own: Women and Language in the Stories of Fradel Shtok,” won the first place prize.

ESSAY ABSTRACT

In the rich Yiddish literary environment of early twentieth-century New York, Fradel Shtok made a curious choice following the publication of her collection of Yiddish short stories: she published a novel in English. Receiving little attention, Shtok retreated from the world of literature only to return over a decade later to publish a short story, again in Yiddish, in the pages of the Forverts. In the stories from each stage of her publishing career, her negotiation with language finds expression in the characters she crafts and their relationships. Like Sthok, each of these characters seek a language other than the one they have already, and remain unsatisfied in seeking a language of their own. Fradel Shtok takes part in the tradition of Yiddish bilingualism and multilingualism and of women Yiddish authors, but in her stories a decisive conclusion about her place and her language remains elusive.

YOAV SCHAEFER ‘15
Adams House

Yoav Schaefer’s entry, “Brushing History Against the Grain: The Theopolitics of Walter Benjamin,” won the second place prize.

ESSAY ABSTRACT

The Jewish-German cultural and literary critic Walter Benjamin (1892-1949) once wrote to his friend Gershom Scholem, the eminent scholar of Jewish mysticism, that, “If I ever have a philosophy of my own, somehow it will be a philosophy of Judaism.” Benjamin is widely considered to be one of the most important thinkers of his generation, and yet his commitment to Judaism and the influence of Judaism on his writings are often dismissed. In his youth, Benjamin espoused a kind of theological antipolitics, what he and Scholem called “theocratic anarchism,” which they both considered “the most sensible answer to politics.”

This essay explores Benjamin’s youthful political theology in relation to his later writings, with a particular focus on his “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” which he composed shortly before committing suicide on the French-Spanish border while fleeing from the Nazis in 1940. By exploring the continuity of themes between Benjamin’s youthful and more mature writings, this essay argues that Benjamin returns to the antipolitical stance of his youth in his final essay.
Congratulations to the two new Ph.D.s in Jewish Studies in the Spring of 2015!

SUNNY YUDKOFF was awarded a Ph.D. in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Her dissertation was entitled “‘Let It Be Consumption!’ Modern Jewish Writing and the Literary Capital of Tuberculosis.” Sunny is Senior Lecturer in Yiddish at the University of Chicago.

ARIEL (EVAN) MAYSE was awarded a Ph.D. in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Ariel’s dissertation was entitled “Beyond the Letters: The question of Language in the Teachings of Rabbi Dov Baer of Mezritch.” He has accepted a Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the University of Michigan’s Frankel Institute.

SUNNY YUDKOFF AND ADVISOR RUTH WISSE

STUDENT FUNDING 2014-15

GRADUATE STUDENT FUNDING

Graduate Student Fellowships

ZHAN CHEN (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Aaron Rabinowitz Fellowship

OFER DYNES (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Mandell Berman Fellowship

JESSICA FECHTÓR (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Alan M. Stroock Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica

ERIC FREDRICKSON (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Isadore Tewsky Fellowship

WILL FRIEDMAN (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Sidney L. Solomon Endowed Fellowship

TAL GREBEL (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship

MATTHEW HASS (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Leo Flax Family Fellowship

MIHALY KALMAN (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Center for Jewish Studies Fellowship

JOANNA GREENLEE KLINE (Study of Religion) Mandell Berman Fellowship and Lewis and Alan Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship

ARIEL MAYSE (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Alan M. Stroock Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica

YONATAN MILLER (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Alan M. Stroock Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica

JESSE MIROTZNIK (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship

ETHAN SCHWARTZ (Study of Religion) Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship

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SARA “SUNNY” YUDKOFF (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Raphael and Deborah Melamed Fellowship

SUMMER RESEARCH AND STUDY FELLOWSHIPS 2015

Graduate Summer Research and Study Funding

JACOB ABOLAFIA (Government) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship

JOSHUA CARL ABRAMSON COHEN (Study of Religion) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship

WALTER SCOTT (SASSON) CHAHANOVIČ (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship

OFER DYNES (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship

TAL GREBEL (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship

ARI HOFFMAN (English) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship

GABRIEL HORNUNG (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship

RAPHAEL KÖNIG (Comparative Literature) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship

CHARLES LESCH (Government) Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship

MARIA METZLER (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship

JESSE MIROTZNIK (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship

ADAM STERN (Study of Religion) Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship

WILLIAM TAMPLIN (Comparative Literature) Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship

IOSEF ZHAKEVICH (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship

Undergraduate Summer Research and Study Funding

ELENA HOFFENBERG (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Abraham and Rachel Bornstein Fund Fellowship and Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies Fellowship

ORLEA MILLER (Study of Religion and Sociology) Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund for Jewish Studies Fellowship

DANIEL SOLOMON (Social Studies) Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund for Jewish Studies Fellowship
CJS Goes Green!

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