

Jewish Studies at Rutgers

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The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life • Department of Jewish Studies

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Honoring Yael Zerubavel

Last spring, the Bildner Center held several events in honor of the career and scholarship of **Yael Zerubavel** upon her retirement from Rutgers University.

On April 29, friends and colleagues gathered for a festive reception at the Douglass Student Center. Moving tributes were delivered by **Rob Bildner**, son of Allen and Joan Bildner; **Karen Small**, managing director of the Bildner Center; and **Ziva Galili**, distinguished professor emeritus of history at Rutgers. Each emphasized different aspects of Zerubavel's role in building both the **Bildner Center** and the **Department of Jewish Studies** at Rutgers.

The reception was followed by a public lecture, “**Out of the Shtetl: Anarchists, Zionists, and Other Dreamers Encounter the World**”—the **Raoul Wallenberg Annual Program**, funded by **Leon and Toby Cooperman**—delivered by **Omer Bartov**, the John P. Birkelund Distinguished Professor of European History at Brown University. The following day, a distinguished group of international scholars paid tribute to Zerubavel through an interdisciplinary symposium on history and memory, held in the Marion and Norman Tanzman Hall of Jewish Learning. (See page 4.)

Twenty-two years ago, Zerubavel came to Rutgers to establish the Bildner Center and a new Department of Jewish Studies. Since then, her name has become synonymous with both, and their prominence—on campus and in the wider academic world—is the legacy she will leave behind when she retires from Rutgers at the end of the year.

“I’m most proud of the academic integrity and scholarship we have achieved, but also of the way the center and the department are independent of one another, yet organically connected in their vital roles,” says Zerubavel. “Together, they have transformed Jewish life at Rutgers.”



Ari Bildner, Elisa Bildner, Yael Zerubavel, and Rob Bildner

Her efforts honor the vision of **Allen and Joan Bildner**, who generously founded the Bildner Center as an academic and cultural venue that bridges the university and the community. Over the years, she nurtured relationships with additional funders who have helped expand the center's programming and supported its long-term growth.

“The Bildner Center initiatives offer many options for interpreting the ways Jewish culture responds to challenges,” Zerubavel notes.

Most popular among them are the center's public programs, which attract diverse audiences that also include people who are not otherwise affiliated with the Jewish community. Zerubavel developed the center into a resource for faculty, teachers, and other professionals as well, making it a model for centers on other campuses nationwide while raising Rutgers' visibility in the process.

A professor of Jewish studies and history, Zerubavel has always seen the center's work as an opportunity for intellectual collaboration between scholars. To that end, the center regularly invites



Nancy Sinkoff named academic director of the Bildner Center. (See page 2.)

➤ See **Yael Zerubavel** on page 5

New Directions



I am thrilled to step into the role of the new academic director of the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life. As a faculty member at Rutgers in the departments of Jewish Studies and History for twenty years, I have been excited to be a part of the Bildner Center's development into a world-class center of learning, an

essential part of the School of Arts and Sciences, and an invaluable public resource at the local, national, and international levels.

These are uncertain times in the Jewish landscape in both the United States and Israel—the two great centers of post–World War II Jewish life. Circumstances have changed dramatically since the Center's founding in 1996. The identities of young Americans in general are more polarized than ever; that includes those of Jews, as reported in studies by the Pew Research Center and other research organizations. While some question the value of the humanities, the Bildner Center affirms its strong conviction that the study of the humanities can help us to overcome the critical challenges of our time.

Indeed, in my view, the humanities are more important than ever. Those of us who research and teach in the humanities strengthen the broad liberal arts mission of the university. We engage students in critical thinking, guide them in open-minded discussion, and expose them to literature, film, history, philosophy, art, languages, ancient texts, and music, among other fields. We help them become more articulate in their writing as well as more poised and confident in public speaking.

Rutgers' greatest and most distinctive asset among the top-tier public research universities is its ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity. In this context, Jewish studies are more important than ever, and the Bildner Center plays a signal role in enhancing the cultural diversity of the Rutgers community and presenting it to the public.

The Center engages the public with dynamic programs on Jewish life and culture, deepens the expertise of middle and secondary school teachers in Holocaust studies, and works together with the Department of Jewish Studies. Our public programs, visiting scholars, faculty seminars, and support for undergraduate research and study-abroad programs all sustain the humanistic cosmopolitanism that is the hallmark of a tolerant civic society.

Building on the impressive record established by my colleague and friend Yael Zerubavel, whose professionalism, intelligence, and commitment to Rutgers will be sorely missed, I am delighted to guide the Bildner Center as it moves into its next stage of prominence and relevance.

**—Nancy Sinkoff, Academic Director
The Allen and Joan Bildner Center
for the Study of Jewish Life**

A Time of Transition



As acting chair of the Department of Jewish Studies during the past academic year, I oversaw the department during an important transition in its history, as our inaugural professor announced her retirement and we set about hiring a new colleague.

With the retirement of

Professor Yael Zerubavel, we look

back with gratitude and admiration on all that she accomplished during her twenty-two years at Rutgers, not only as the founding director of both the Bildner Center and the Department of Jewish Studies, but also as a pioneer in the field of Israel studies.

Professor Zerubavel's departure prompted the need to hire a new scholar of Israel studies. The search we conducted last year resulted in the hiring of Professor Michal Raucher, previously assistant professor in the Department of Judaic Studies at the University of Cincinnati, who joined the Rutgers faculty in fall 2018.

The transition from Zerubavel to Raucher exemplifies the tremendous dynamism of the field of Israel studies. Zerubavel was instrumental in establishing this area of scholarly inquiry in North America. As a former head of the Association for Israel Studies and the author of the groundbreaking monograph *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, she transformed scholarly perspectives on the ways that the State of Israel constructed the story of its creation and remembers its past. Her research on the fashioning of Israeli culture and on Israeli memory practices laid the groundwork for subsequent generations of scholars in this field.

Raucher's research illustrates how the field of Israel studies has continued to develop. Working on issues of gender, religion, and medical practices, she brings new methodologies to bear on the study of Israeli culture. By focusing on women in ultra-Orthodox communities in Jerusalem, she adds nuance and complexity to understandings of the internal diversity of Israeli society. The department is thrilled to bring Raucher on board to continue its commitment to distinguished scholarship in the field of Israel studies and also to provide students with the opportunity to learn about this key area of Jewish studies. Demonstrating the breadth of her expertise, Raucher is teaching courses on the Arab-Israeli conflict and on Jews and medicine this year.

We wish Professor Zerubavel the very best as she starts another chapter in her life, and we head into the current school year excited about this period of new beginnings for the department.

**—Paola Tartakoff, Acting Chair
Department of Jewish Studies**

Scholar in Israel Studies Joins Rutgers Faculty

Michal Raucher joined the faculty of Jewish studies this fall after an intensive search process. Her research lies at the intersection of Israel studies, Jewish ethics, and the anthropology of women.

Raucher's first book, *Birthing Ethics: Reproductive Ethics among Haredi Women in Jerusalem* (Indiana

University Press, forthcoming), is based on ethnographic research she conducted as a Fulbright fellow. Her focus is the ways in which Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) women make reproductive decisions in the technologically advanced Israeli medical system, given that they have the highest birth rate in Israel and adhere strictly to religious laws.

Raucher spent two years in Jerusalem learning from Haredi women, as well as their doctors, nurses, and doulas, and observing ultrasound examinations and prenatal classes. She found that although Haredi women are faced with patriarchal religious authorities and doctors who cater to rabbis instead of their patients, they insist on their autonomy when making decisions about reproductive practices. Raucher was awarded research grants for the book from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, and the Crown Family Foundation.



Raucher's second book project, *"Tapping on the Stained Glass Ceiling: The Ordination of Orthodox Jewish Women in Israel and America,"* compares the contemporary phenomenon of Orthodox female clergy in Israel and the United States. She analyzes the contexts and tensions surrounding these ordinations as well as the ways Orthodoxy is changing and the impact of international feminism on the movement.

Before joining the faculty at Rutgers, Raucher was an assistant professor in the Department of Judaic Studies at the University of Cincinnati. She earned her Ph.D. in religious studies, with a concentration in religious ethics and anthropology, from Northwestern University. She has a master's degree in bioethics from the University of Pennsylvania, and she graduated from the Joint Program with the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University, earning bachelor of arts degrees in Hebrew Bible and religion.

Raucher has been a fellow at the Jewish Theological Seminary and a visiting scholar at the Hastings Center and Yale University's Center for Bioethics. She has also consulted for the United Nations Population Fund, where she worked with colleagues from around the world to improve reproductive and sexual rights and health for women and children.

A native of Connecticut, Raucher is eager to return to the Northeast with her family. She says she looks forward to "teaching and learning with the exceptionally talented and thoroughly engaged students at Rutgers University, and to being part of a Jewish studies department that is filled with passionate, welcoming, and accomplished scholars."

Jeffrey Shandler Promoted to Distinguished Professor

Jeffrey Shandler, chair of the Department of Jewish Studies, has been promoted to distinguished professor in recognition of his extraordinary scholarly achievements. Shandler joined the Department of Jewish Studies in 2001, and has since played a vital role in the growth and development of the department, the Bildner Center, and the Littman Holocaust Resource Center. His breadth of research includes American and Eastern European Jewish culture, modern Yiddish culture, Holocaust remembrance, and the role that

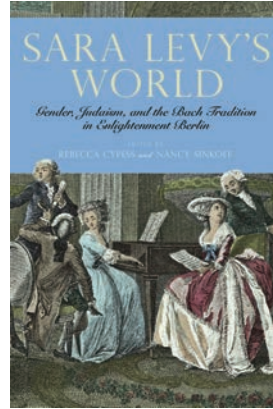
broadcasting, film, and other media play in modern Jewish life. He is the author of numerous books, including *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust*, *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language and Culture*, and *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors' Stories and New Media Practices*. Shandler has served as president of the Association for Jewish Studies, and he is also a fellow of the American Academy for Jewish Research, the oldest organization of Jewish studies scholars in North America.



New Faculty Books

Professors **Rebecca Cypess** and **Nancy Sinkoff** recently published *Sara Levy's World: Gender, Judaism, and the Bach Tradition in Enlightenment Berlin*, Eastman Studies in Music series (University of Rochester Press), as well as a related CD, *In Sara Levy's Salon*, featuring the Raritan Players, with Cypess directing and playing harpsichord and fortepiano. The coedited book and CD grew out of a multidisciplinary public symposium featuring musical performances and academic panels, "Sara Levy's World: Music, Gender, and Judaism in Enlightenment Berlin." Organized by both scholars in 2014, the symposium was cosponsored by the **Center for European Studies**, the **Mason Gross School of the Arts**, the **Bildner Center**, the **School of Arts and Sciences**, and others.

The book is the first academic study of the cultural, political, and aesthetic factors that shaped the world of Sara Levy (1761–1854), an active member of enlightened Prussian Jewish circles and a skilled musician from an eminent Court Jewish family. As a musical patron, collector, and performer, Levy played a significant role in shaping the cultural ideals of turn-of-the-century Berlin. Not only did she challenge religious and gender barriers through music, but she also acted as a catalyst for the Bach revival of the early nineteenth century, thus demonstrating the important part that Jews played in the history of German music.



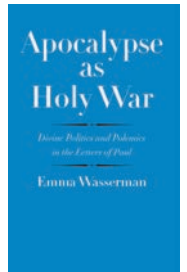
■ **Michael G. Levine**, *Atomzertrümmerung: Zu einem Gedicht von Paul Celan* [Atomic Fission: Celan's 'The Syllable Pain'] (Turia + Kant Verlag)



■ **Martha Helfer**, *Nexus 4: Essays in German Jewish Studies*, coedited with William Donahue (Camden House)



■ **Emma Wasserman**, *Apocalypse as Holy War: Divine Politics and Polemics in the Letters of Paul*, Anchor Yale Bible series (Yale University Press)



Ancient Torah Scroll Sheet Now Public Treasure

The oldest legible, intact Torah scroll sheet known to exist—a vital link to the founding documents of Judaism—was recently purchased by the Library of Congress for the public's

benefit, with help from Professor **Gary A. Rendsburg**, the Blanche and Irving Laurie Chair in Jewish History at Rutgers.

The story of the Jews' flight from Egypt is contained on the sheet, which was written in Hebrew on vellum in the Middle East during the tenth or eleventh century CE. It is about a millennium younger than the Dead Sea Scrolls, but those are fragments, while the copy that Rendsburg helped identify is a nearly complete scroll sheet.

The parchment contains portions of seven chapters of the Book of Exodus, commencing in the middle of chapter 10 and ending in the middle of chapter 16. It includes Exodus 10, in which God sends Moses and Aaron to the Egyptian ruler with the demand, "Let my people go." It also contains chapter 15, the Song of the Sea, which praises God for freeing the people of Israel from slavery.

Rendsburg's connection to the scroll sheet came via a former student, Ann Brener, who heads the Hebraic Section of the Library of Congress's African and Middle Eastern Division. Brener sent him an email with a link to an entry in a private catalog describing the scroll sheet—no photograph, just the description.

"I knew immediately what it was," Rendsburg recalled. "It had been sold at a Christie's auction in 2001, and Jordan Penkower, a scholar at Israel's Bar-Ilan University, had written a paper about it in 2002." Rendsburg told his former student that the item was indeed highly valuable and would be an important addition to the library's collection.

Adapted from "Ancient Torah Scroll Sheet Becomes Public Treasure, Thanks to Rutgers Historian," by Ken Branson, Rutgers Today (3/28/18).

Gary A. Rendsburg poses with the 1,000-year-old Torah scroll sheet he advised the Library of Congress to purchase.



Bildner Center Honors Yael Zerubavel

History and Memory Symposium

ISRAELI COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Moderator: **Ziva Galili**, Rutgers University

Avner Ben-Amos, Tel Aviv University
The Zionist Ceremonial System and the Formation of a National Memory

Vered Vinitzy-Seroussi, Hebrew University
A Holiday for All? Collective Memory and Israeli Collectivity

MEMORIES AND SILENCES

Moderator: **Natasha Zaretsky**, NYU, Rutgers–Newark

Alon Confino, UMass Amherst
Paradise and Dreams in Palestine and the Land of Israel: The Coming of the 1948 War

Edna Lomsky-Feder, Hebrew University
Orna Sasson-Levy, Bar-Ilan University
Silencing Memories of Violence: The Israeli Case

JEWISH HISTORY AND MEMORY

Moderator: **Nancy Sinkoff**, Rutgers University

Derek Penslar, Harvard University
Theodor Herzl's Afterlives

Galit Hasan-Rokem, Hebrew University
Diasporic Transformations in Israeli Culture: The Wandering Jew



Above: Len Littman, Yael Zerubavel, Rona Shein, and Jeffries Shein

Below: Ruth Rockoff and Yael Zerubavel



Above: Omer Bartov and Jim Masschaele, Executive Vice Dean, School of Arts and Sciences

► Yael Zerubavel from page 1

visiting professors from other universities and collaborates with faculty from different departments at Rutgers, ultimately benefiting the student body and community at large.

For Zerubavel, one of her most meaningful initiatives as Bildner Center director was a yearlong interdisciplinary research seminar that brought together visiting scholars and Rutgers faculty on a weekly basis throughout the 2013–2014 academic year. The seminar, which explored contested memories and the politics of change, culminated in a spring 2014 international conference, “**Contested Memories and Contours of the Past.**”

Zerubavel herself is an often-cited pioneer in the areas of memory studies and Israel studies, with a special interest in the cultural history of Israel. Her work on Israeli collective memory has shaped the field of study. Her award-winning book *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1995) was published shortly before her move from the University of Pennsylvania to New Brunswick, and it has become the standard text in the field.

Zerubavel began the challenging process of turning the university's handful of Jewish studies courses into a modern Department of Jewish Studies with an esteemed

faculty at the same time she was bringing the Bildners' vision to life. From the outset, she shaped Jewish studies as its own field of academic study, not an ethnic component of another discipline.

“The department's excellence is largely due to Yael's vision,” observes Galili.

All along, Zerubavel prioritized teaching, seizing the chance to inspire intellectual curiosity among the next generation of scholars. She mentored a number of students over the years, as a reader on doctoral dissertations at Rutgers and other universities and as an adviser to graduate and honors students, often providing them with their first taste of the research process.

Zerubavel's latest book, *Desert in the Promised Land* (Stanford University Press, 2018), will be released in December. The new book brings together years of research exploring the layered meanings of the desert as both a geographic region in Israel and a symbolic landscape.

Zerubavel's retirement plans do not allow much opportunity for rest. Rather, she looks forward to dedicating herself to her academic research and writing, as well as spending time with friends and with her husband, Eviatar, and their family. She also looks forward to continued engagement with the Bildner Center and the Department of Jewish Studies.

BILDNER CENTER PROGRAMS

Looking Ahead

This has been a year of transition at the Bildner Center. From the time Yael Zerubavel announced her retirement plans to her moving send-off this past spring, we have felt the winds of change. In our twenty years of working together and shaping the mission and activities of the Center, we brought a wide range of educational and cultural opportunities to Rutgers and to New Jersey. Our larger initiatives—the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival and the Holocaust education program for schoolteachers—impact thousands of people and have become the centerpieces of the Center’s outreach events.

As I look to the future and new directions, I welcome Professor Nancy Sinkoff as the new academic director of the

Center. She brings great energy and creativity to the position, along with her expertise in the field of European history and her interest in American Jewish culture.

This fall at the Bildner Center, we are privileged to host the Israeli screenwriter Moshe Zonder. He is having a strong impact as the Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist at Rutgers, both on campus and in the larger community. He is fully engaged, working with students in his creative writing course, “Screenwriting for Television,” and adding to our film conversations in the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival. It is special opportunities like this one that elevate our programs above the everyday and bring fresh perspectives to campus and the community.

—Karen Small, Managing Director

Free Holocaust Film Screening for Students

Approximately 300 middle and high school students from across New Jersey attended a free screening of *A Bag of Marbles* as part of the outreach of the **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival**. The film is a heartwarming adaptation of Joseph Joffo’s memoir, which recounts how he and his brother escaped through Nazi-occupied France to the southern free zone during World War II. Their tale of bravery and strength

as two Jewish boys struggling to survive on their own resonated with the student audience.

Henry and Bernard Schanzer, twin brothers now living in New Jersey who were hidden together as young boys on a farm in France, spoke with the students after the screening, which was held at the AMC Loews New Brunswick. They reflected on the ways their own wartime experiences mirrored those of the brothers portrayed in the film. Separated from their parents, Henry and Bernie’s sibling bond was key to their survival, as it was for Joffo and his brother in the film.

One particular takeaway for the students was the fact that survival during the Holocaust often depended upon a twist of fate, a coincidence, or the kindness of strangers. The Schanzers’ presence in the theater gave proof to what often seemed like unbelievable circumstances. After the screening, the students and teachers also expressed how meaningful it was to hear the brothers’ story in tandem with the one they had just seen on the screen, and they quickly lined up to take photos with the Schanzers.

Participating students hailed from Bayonne High School; Essex County Vo-Tech; Neptune High School; New Brunswick Public Schools; Roselle High School; Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Monmouth County; and Somerville High School.

The special screening was sponsored in partnership with the **Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center** at the Bildner Center as a way of supporting and supplementing classroom learning about the Holocaust.



Students and teachers from Neptune High School with Henry and Bernard Schanzer (seated, center).

2017 Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

The 18th annual **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival** offered a multidimensional view of the dynamic and diverse global Jewish experience, all through the lens of cinema. The festival—which has found a home at both AMC Loews New Brunswick and the Princeton Garden Theatre—was held from October 29 through November 12.

The film selections included documentaries that explored topics as wide-ranging as Iraqi music, immigration to Israel in the 1950s, and the monkey business of Curious George's creators. Feature films brought to life the stories of two courageous young Jewish brothers in occupied France; a modern twist on the biblical story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar; and an Orthodox bride who plans a wedding before she finds the bridegroom.

The annual festival offers a carefully curated slate of thought-provoking and entertaining films. Yet it distinguishes itself by providing a venue for audiences to engage in meaningful discussions with guest speakers who put the films in social, cultural, and historical context. Among those who participated this past year were directors, actors, and screenwriters, as well as Rutgers faculty and other experts from the academic world. There were even a few special guests whose surprise appearances delighted festival audiences.

Menashe Lustig, the lead actor in the film based largely on his own life, made an unannounced appearance at the Saturday night screening of *Menashe*. Shot in secret within the insular Hasidic community in Borough Park, Brooklyn, and performed entirely in Yiddish, the movie tells the story of a widower in a

custody battle for his son. Menashe's presence at the festival gave audiences a unique opportunity to discover what the on-screen character shared with the real-life personality.

When Israeli director **Joseph Cedar's** travel to New York coincided with the festival, he agreed to attend the screening of his film *Norman: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer*. His first English-language film, *Norman* stars Richard Gere as a small-time operator who befriends a young Israeli politician visiting New York. Cedar, who has an Academy Award nomination under his belt for his film *Footnote*, has had a warm connection with the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival since he attended ten years ago, when his film *Beaufort* was featured.

David and Sylvia Steiner sponsored the festival's showing of *Keep the Change*, the Audience Choice Award winner for favorite feature film. Starring a cast of young adults on the autism spectrum, this romantic comedy tells the story of a couple who meet in a Jewish community center support group in New York City. Director and screenwriter **Rachel Israel** and four cast members participated in a Q&A with the audience following the weekend matinee screening of the film. The discussion offered an inside look at the casting and complexities involved with making this award-winning film. Audiences valued the chance to ask the actors about their real-life challenges and how it felt to explore them as part of their on-screen roles.

Shot in black and white and filled with striking symbolism, *1945* follows a pair of survivors who arrive in a Hungarian village shortly after the war with fragile packages in tow. Their



Members of the film festival advisory committee: Yael Zerubavel, Marcel Rozencweig, Sharon Karmazin, Frankie Busch, Leslie Fishbein, Elaine Dunst, and Karen Small

arrival at the train station unsettles the locals, who begin to worry about the nature of their visit. As co-screenwriter **Gábor T. Szántó** explained to the audience, he wanted to address the silence in Hungarian society about what happened during the war by exposing corrosive prejudices barely hidden beneath the surface. Szántó adapted the script from his original short story "Homecoming."

Director **Yariv Mozer** attended two screenings of *Ben Gurion: Epilogue*, providing filmgoers with a wonderful opportunity to engage in deeper conversation about this important documentary. The film brings to light in-depth footage from interviews with Israel's first prime minister filmed seven years after he retired. *Ben Gurion: Epilogue* won the Audience Choice Award for favorite documentary.

The Rutgers Jewish Film Festival is made possible thanks to the generosity of the Karma Foundation and a devoted cadre of festival Patrons.

BILDNER CENTER PROGRAMS

The History and Fate of the Jews of Salonica



Jews once made up nearly half of the population of the Mediterranean city of Salonica, known as the “Jerusalem of the Balkans.” In fact, the community was so prominent, the port

would shut down each week for Shabbat. Yet, as Professor **Devin Naar** noted in his public talk at Rutgers, the fall of the Ottoman Empire would change everything, rendering Salonican Jewry a footnote in Jewish history.

The Rutgers event, held on October 15, 2017, was the Bildner Center’s **Toby and Herbert Stolzer Endowed Program**, cosponsored by **Rutgers Global**. Several hundred guests filled the hall at the Douglass Student Center, among them faculty, students, and a large showing from the community, including Jews of Greek descent from across New Jersey.

Naar gave the audience a glimpse into his recent book, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece* (Stanford University Press, 2016), winner of the National Jewish Book Award in the category of Writing Based on Archival Material. Translated into Greek in 2018, it also received the 2017 Edmund Keeley Book Prize for best book in Modern Greek Studies. Naar’s research took him around the globe, enabling him to remove “the shroud of oblivion” from Salonica’s rich Jewish past and add it to the broader Jewish historical narrative.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and Salonica’s incorporation into modern Greece in 1912 severely impacted the city’s Jewish community and reduced its numbers. Those who did not emigrate actively sought to transform themselves into Hellenic Jews, envisioning a better future for their families in Greece. Yet in 1943, under the German occupation of Greece, nearly all of Salonica’s remaining 50,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz. The metropolitan area is home to fewer than 1,000 Jews out of a population of 1 million today.

Naar is the first to tell the story of Salonican Jewry from their own perspective, though they were once the world’s largest Ladino-speaking Sephardic community. In addition, his research has given voice to a Sephardic survivor community whose experience has been largely overlooked in the narrative of the Holocaust. For example, as Naar pointed out, it was only in 2003 that Ladino was added to the

memorial plaque listing the languages spoken at Auschwitz.

For him, the story is also a personal one. Naar’s great-grandparents were among the many Salonican Jews who immigrated to Middlesex County in the early twentieth century. They often passed as non-Jews, in part because they did not have the more familiar Ashkenazi-sounding Jewish surnames. Naar’s great-grandfather served as the first spiritual leader of New Jersey’s oldest Sephardic synagogue, Congregation Etz Ahaim, now located in Highland Park.

Brenda Tanzman’s grandfather was a founding member of the shul and its first president. Her grandparents, who came from Salonica to New Brunswick, sponsored Naar’s great-grandparents when they came to America. Before his talk at Rutgers, Naar met with Brenda and her husband, **Roy Tanzman**, supporters of the Bildner Center. It was a wonderful opportunity for them to share stories, including Brenda’s memories of the Greek Jewish community growing up in Highland Park and in the shul.

Naar is the Isaac Alhadeff Professor in Sephardic Studies and chair of the Sephardic Studies Program at the University of Washington, Seattle, as well as a member of the university faculty both at the Stroum Center for Jewish Studies and in its Department of History. He has spearheaded a project to collect, preserve, and disseminate the rich Sephardic and Ladino historical, literary, and cultural heritage and co-launched the first major online Sephardic Digital Library and Archive.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age

Jeffrey Shandler, Rutgers University

Scroll Down: Classical Jewish Texts on the Internet

Gary A. Rendsburg, Rutgers University

Windows of Understanding: We See through Hate

A public art project coordinated by Rutgers’ Mason Gross School of the Arts, the New Brunswick Community Arts Council, and others

Ghetto of Florence: Reconstructing a Lost Jewish Space

Presented by the Medici Archive Project and cosponsored with the Department of Italian Studies, the Department of Jewish Studies, and others



Exploring Polish Jewish History, Culture, and Music

A groundbreaking new look at the history of the Hasidic movement and a concert featuring musical works by Polish Jews that are little known to American audiences were presented in March at Rutgers. Open to the public, both events were held in cooperation with the **Fifth Annual Polish Jewish Studies Workshop**, an interdisciplinary forum for scholars to discuss new research on Polish Jewish history and to further international scholarly cooperation. The **Bildner Center** provided support for these programs.

The workshop included a symposium, “**Centering the Periphery: Polish Jewish Cultural Production beyond the Capital**,” hosting more than thirty international scholars who discussed cultural production in Polish lands after partition and before World War II, and beyond the capital city of Warsaw. The workshop was organized by Professor **Nancy Sinkoff** (Rutgers’ Center for European Studies), Professor **Halina Goldberg** (Indiana University Bloomington), and Professor **Natalia Aleksium** (Touro College).

On March 4, Professor **Uriel Gellman** of Bar-Ilan University, one of the symposium participants, delivered a

public lecture about the recent book *Hasidism: A New History* (Princeton University Press, 2017), the first complete history of the movement, which dramatically changed modern Judaism. Gellman, a contributor to the volume, addressed an audience of community members, students, and faculty at the Douglass Student Center. The lecture was sponsored by the Bildner Center and supported by the **Henry Schwartzman Endowed Faculty Seminar Fund**.

On March 5, a public concert, “**Soundscapes of Modernity: Jews and Music in Polish Cities**,” was performed to a full house at Kirkpatrick Chapel. Presented by Rutgers’ **Mason Gross School of the Arts**, the concert offered an opportunity to experience one of the many ways that Jews in Polish cities responded to the challenges of modernity—by reshaping the musical soundscapes of their communities. The concert included choral pieces from nineteenth-century progressive (“Reform”) congregations, compositions associated with Jewish music societies, avant-garde works by Jewish composers, and modern-day premieres of forgotten compositions. Under **Patrick Gardner’s** direction, graduate performance students and the **Mason Gross Kirkpatrick Choir** did a glorious job of bringing to life music from the Polish Jewish past.



When the **New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC)** approached the **Bildner Center** about bringing its “**Israel at 70**” cultural series to the Rutgers campus, it was a fortuitous opportunity. The Center teamed up with **Rutgers Hillel**, and thanks to a grant from **NJPAC**, Israel’s milestone seventieth anniversary was celebrated in memorable fashion on Yom Ha’atzmaut, Israel’s Independence Day. More than 200 students and community members attended the April 19 event, funded in part by the **Ruth and Alvin Rockoff Program Fund**.

Professor **Yael Zerubavel** moderated a panel discussion on new trends in Israeli music and dance. Invited scholars Dr. **Dina Roginsky**, who teaches modern Hebrew language and culture at Yale, and Dr. **Galeet Dardashti**, founder of the all-women’s ensemble Divahn and musician-in-residence at the Jewish Theological Seminary, discussed these topics in the context of Israel’s seventieth anniversary. Dardashti was the **Dr. Norman and Syril Reitman Visiting Scholar** at the Bildner Center in 2014.

Roginsky explored the history of Israeli folk dancing, an integral part of Israeli culture since before the establishment of the state. The hora originated on the kibbutz, when hand-holding in a circle represented the idea of the socialist collective. While dance remains a popular national pastime, it has evolved stylistically over time in a way that reflects broader political and social changes in Israel’s modern democracy.

Israel’s musical heritage, as Dardashti noted, is tied to the culture of the country’s immigrant communities. The earliest European arrivals to the fledgling state sought to break from the Diaspora, creating a musical tradition that was predominantly Euro-Ashkenazi with some Middle Eastern overtones. Subsequent waves of new immigrants from Middle Eastern countries could not relate to the popular music of the day. They launched their own underground musical movement—one that is now in vogue among the population at large.

Held at Rutgers Hillel on the College Avenue campus, the event also featured **IsraBand**, a New York-based Israeli cover band, which played a concert of Israeli music, including the country’s greatest hits. The audience sang along to Naomi Shemer’s moving classic “Yerushalayim Shel Zahav” and danced to the beat of Kaveret’s “Yo Ya,” capping off an entertaining and meaningful evening.

Visiting Israeli Screenwriter

Moshe Zonder, the **Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist** at the Bildner Center this fall, was the head writer for *Fauda*, the enormously successful Israeli television program that became the first Israeli series to be released as a Netflix Original. He has written many screenplays for film and television, including the documentary film *Sabena Hijacking: My Version*, shown at the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival in 2016. Zonder began his career as an investigative journalist for the Israeli newspaper *Maariv*. At Rutgers, he is teaching “Screenwriting for Television” in the Creative Writing Program and participating in outreach activities of the Bildner Center. The Visiting Israeli Artists Program is sponsored by the **Israel Institute**.



The Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center

Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education

Egon Berg RC'59 was a toddler when his family fled Europe to escape the Holocaust. As an adult, he has devoted himself to learning more about the history of those years, but he worries about subsequent generations. How will educators access the critical resources needed to teach students about the Holocaust, to help them learn its lessons while perpetuating the memory of those who were lost?

These questions led him to visit the Bildner Center's **Master Teacher Institute (MTI) in Holocaust Education**—and go back to his Rutgers roots. “I received an excellent education at Rutgers and am grateful for the opportunity to give to the university in return,” says Berg, who is a donor to the MTI. He also drops in to meet the teachers during the program each year.

The MTI is offered through the auspices of the **Herbert and Leonard Littman Families Holocaust Resource Center**, under the guidance of Bildner Center Managing Director **Karen Small**. Open to middle and high school teachers, the dynamic program nurtures expertise in Holocaust studies while addressing the complex methodological issues involved in teaching this difficult subject.

America and the Holocaust was the focus of this past year's curriculum. The fall courses explored the war years and the period immediately after, while the spring program examined postwar history and contemporary issues such as Holocaust denial.

The Takeaway: Collaboration and Innovation in the Classroom

The subject matter resonated with participant **Sarah Fernandez**, a teacher of world history and American civics at Cranbury Middle School. She embraces the opportunity to tie together the diverse areas of knowledge presented at the MTI with her regular curriculum in innovative ways. This enriches her work in the classroom, though Fernandez believes her students also benefit from “the collaborative spirit of the MTI. Participants learn from one another, and we bring new ideas back to our classrooms.”

Jessica Schram, a teacher of ninth-grade modern world history and Advanced Placement eleventh- and twelfth-grade psychology at Verona High School, agrees that the collaboration among participating teachers makes all the difference. Many educators return to the MTI year after year, allowing for an ongoing exchange of best practices. Schram also credits the MTI for giving her the breadth of knowledge to weave a variety of Holocaust topics into the syllabi for her courses. “Because of it, I can give my students a broader sense of history,” she observes.

Like Berg, Fernandez believes resources are critical



Teachers in the MTI gather outside the Bildner Center.

tools that help teachers enrich the lessons of the Holocaust, and she enthuses about the excellent ones the MTI provides. For example, materials she received in past years about the Rwandan genocide have had a great impact on the curriculum she teaches to her seventh graders. She and a colleague also created a mini-unit on teenagers in the Holocaust using diary resources from the MTI, making it possible to add other voices to that of Anne Frank.

Last year, MTI participants had the chance to view *No Place on Earth*, a film about thirty-eight Ukrainian Jews who hid in a cave for more than 500 days during the Holocaust. Fernandez was so moved by the story that she reached out to the science faculty at her middle school. Together, they piloted a project for sixth graders. Students watched the film, then engaged in activities that gave them a sense of what life in a cave might have been like and had thought-provoking discussions about survival. Fernandez and her colleagues repeated the successful program this past June, adding new components to the curriculum.

Bill Miller, a seventh-grade civics teacher at Woodbridge Middle School, shares his colleagues' belief that the MTI experience has opened many doors for discussion about the Holocaust in his classroom. The training has given him such well-rounded knowledge of the Holocaust that he can integrate it into his teaching of nearly every subject he covers. Because of this, he says, “Every aspect of the MTI is a highlight. It has made the unexpected possible.”



Claims Conference ועידת התביעות
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

*This educator training project has been supported by a grant from the
Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.*

Additional support provided by:

The Marjorie and Egon Berg Holocaust Education Fund
and the **Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences**

We are grateful for the generosity of our donors

Leadership: \$25,000 and up

- **The Karma Foundation**, led by **Sharon Karmazin** DC'67, SC&I'69, and **Dina Elkins**, for its commitment to Jewish culture through a multiyear grant to the **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival**.
- **The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany** for a multiyear grant in support of the **Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education**.

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- **Christine and Steven B. Boehm**, Esq. RC'75, for their contribution to the **Holocaust Education Support Fund**.
- **Shelley and Steven Einhorn** RC'70 for sponsoring a film in the **Rutgers Jewish Film Festival**.
- **Edward** RC'64 and **Linda** DC'67 **Wacks** and **The Walter F. & Alice Gorham Foundation, Inc.**, for their gift to the **Bildner Center**.
- **The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation** for its continued support of the **Department of Jewish Studies Curriculum Enhancement Fund**.

What the Yiddish Press Reveals about the Jews

On March 19, an eager crowd gathered at the Douglass Student Center to hear Dr. **Eddy Portnoy** deliver a public lecture about his irreverent and frequently hilarious book of stories, ***Bad Rabbi: And Other Strange but True Stories from the Yiddish Press*** (Stanford University Press, 2017). An expert on Yiddish language and culture as well as Jewish humor, Portnoy is academic adviser for the Max Weinreich Center for Advanced Jewish Studies and exhibition curator at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. He is also a former instructor in the Department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers. His talk, “**The Bizarre Tales of Yiddishland: What the Yiddish Press Reveals about the Jews**,” was the Bildner Center’s **Abram Matlofsky Memorial Program**, funded by the **Karma Foundation**.

The stories expose the seamy underbelly of pre–World War II New York and Warsaw, with true stories of Jewish drunks, thieves, murderers, and more, mainly plucked from the pages of the Yiddish dailies. Though the stories are discrete, they are all connected by deviance, disaster, and Yiddish. . . .

From the Warsaw Daily *Der moment*, July 30, 1928

MEN GO LOOKING FOR WORK AND “MEANWHILE” GET MARRIED A SECOND TIME

Yesterday, Gitl Akerman came into the Rabbinate and told the following “new-fangled” story:

She has lived with her husband, Avrom, a tailor, for sixteen years according to the laws of Moses and even has a Polish marriage certificate and birth certificates for their two children.

In Radom, she stopped working while her husband went to work in the big city, in Warsaw, where there is a need for artisans.

And he was quickly snatched up. Mademoiselle Feyge of 63 Gensha Street, a girl, a gold digger, was really looking for a solid man for a husband, not one of these young Charleston dancers. Such a man she found in Avrom, who introduced himself as a stable man and a complete gentleman.

Gitl saw that it was already a few months since Avrom had forgotten their address. Without thinking long, she left the two kids with a neighbor and came to Warsaw. Once here, she inquired at the address bureau and went to 63 Gensha Street. When she got to the address, she happened to arrive exactly one hour after her husband had been led to the chuppah.

Gitl didn’t want to disturb the wedding party and said to him quietly, “Avrom, come home.”

“What? Who are you?” he yelled. “A crazy lady just walked in.”

Her arguments didn’t help, and Gitl ended up getting slapped around too. Because Avrom refuses to go to a rabbi and not to anyone else either, Reb Dan suggested to her that she take the Polish marriage and birth certificates directly to the government commissar.

Gitl left the Rabbinate in a despondent state: How can one make one’s own husband unhappy and bring him to a criminal trial!

Year-End Celebration

On May 2, students from New Mexico to Illinois, in fields ranging from art history to business entrepreneurship, gathered at the Tanzman Hall of Jewish Learning for the annual Jewish studies awards ceremony. Undergraduates and graduate students came together with faculty, family, and friends to honor academic excellence and pay tribute to graduating seniors in the **Department of Jewish Studies**.

The festive program included a presentation by graduating senior **Jenna Kershenbaum**, winner of the **Louis Fishman Memorial Award**. She reflected on her time at Rutgers, including her work as an Aresty Research Assistant with Professor **Gary A. Rendsburg**, for their joint project, "The Book of Samuel in the Cairo Geniza." (See page 13 for student profile.)

Awards designed for study in Israel were offered to students in a growing number of diverse fields. **Arielle Nozek**, who studies psychology and entrepreneurship, was one of several recipients of the **Herbert and Jacqueline Klein Award for Study in Israel**. This past summer, Arielle participated in "Business in Israel," a new Rutgers Business School initiative designed to give students hands-on experience with the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Israel. Arielle hopes one day to design innovative programs for people with mental illness.

A doctoral candidate in violin at the Mason Gross School of the Arts performed Jewish Polish artist Aleksander Tansman's Basso Ostinato from Five Pieces for Violin and Piano. The piece, which had also been performed at the March 5 "Soundscapes of Modernity" concert, offered guests a rich multidimensional experience. (See article on page 9.)



Reflections of a Graduate

Over the course of my Rutgers experience, few departments or organizations have been as impactful and inspiring as the Jewish studies department. During my past five formative years at Rutgers, the Bildner Center and the various staff have been part of the foundations of my Jewish experience. My time here was highlighted by taking courses on a variety of topics, from biblical Hebrew poetry, to the Dead Sea Scrolls, to museum studies. I've also served as Dr. Gary Rendsburg's research assistant, and have been offered the opportunity to partake in exciting and unique academic endeavors, such as the transcription and digitization of the medieval Obadiah the Proselyte documents. What remains certain is that with the support, compassion, and friendship of those at the Bildner Center, I've experienced incredible growth as a scholar and an individual, without which my Rutgers degree would not have been possible.

—Peter Shamah



Student Award Recipients, 2018

Vincent Beiler, Graduate Student, Jewish Studies
Gertrude and Jacob Henoah Memorial Award
Betty and Julius Gillman Memorial Award

Ashley Jones '20
Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award

Jenna Kershenbaum '18
Louis Fishman Memorial Award

Micah Lebowitz '18
Ruth Feller Rosenberg Award

Talia Schabes '19
Barry and Deborah Venezia Adler
International Study Award

Peter Shamah '18
Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award

Steven Weinberg, Graduate Student, German
Norma U. and David M. Levitt Award

AWARDS FOR STUDY IN ISRAEL
Supported by Herbert and
Jacqueline Klein

Asher Allen '20
DanceJerusalem Program, Hebrew University
of Jerusalem, 2018–2019

Rachel Degutz '20
University of Haifa, Spring 2018

Marissa Grosso, Graduate Student, Social Work
Thelma Pleites, Graduate Student, Social Work
Rutgers School of Social Work Program in Israel,
Winter 2018

Arielle Nozek '19
Rutgers Business School "Business in Israel"
Initiative, Summer 2018

Student Digs Deep into Her Jewish Roots

For Jenna Kershenbaum, the decision to major in Jewish studies at Rutgers was “one of the most fulfilling” of her college career. She wanted to dig deep into her Jewish roots from an academic perspective, a natural extension of her Modern Orthodox day school education and a year of intensive Torah study in a women’s seminary in Jerusalem after high school.

“As a Jew, I am always questioning the importance of how and why we are here,” she notes. “I can’t just wander through life without seeking answers.”

Jenna continually challenges herself to find them. “Introduction to Bible,” a course offered by the departments of Religion and Jewish Studies, enabled her to examine the Bible through a scholarly lens, expanding her religious point of view. In her Jewish studies courses, she established connections between the Jewish past, present, and future, a continuum that has long piqued her curiosity. She also volunteered at the Mount Zion Archaeological Project, led by a team at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, in order to learn more about habitation over the course of Jerusalem’s 3,000-year history.

Jenna pursued her interests further as an Aresty Research Fellow under the guidance of Professor **Gary A. Rendsburg**. Together they read more than 400 manuscripts of the Book of Samuel found in the Cairo Geniza, now dispersed in international library collections and available online. They also were able to view documents in person at Princeton’s Firestone Library. This research, which documented textual variants that will help answer the broader question of how medieval biblical texts match up to the ones used today, culminated in a presentation at the Aresty Undergraduate Research Symposium in spring 2017.

Rendsburg, who calls Jenna “the model student—responsible, conscientious, curious, inquisitive, and interested,” says she “has taken full



“As a Jew, I am always questioning the importance of how and why we are here. I can’t just wander through life without seeking answers.”

advantage of her Rutgers experience, including all that Jewish studies has to offer.”

Her keen interest in engaging with the past, especially as it relates to the lives of Jewish communities around the world, compelled her to double major in history. She completed the Undergraduate Certificate Program in Public History, which guides students in thinking critically about the public presentation of history. She interned in Special Collections at the Alexander Library as part of her certification, where she worked on an exhibit about New Jersey and the Great War (World War I).

Jenna particularly enjoyed the overlap between her history and Jewish studies classes. As part of a course on New Jersey history, she conducted original research on the history of anti-Semitism at Rutgers. She credits her Jewish studies coursework for giving her the foundational knowledge required to undertake a project of this focus.

Although she decided to attend Rutgers to benefit from its in-state tuition, Jenna was also drawn to its school spirit, academic reputation, and the diversity of Jewish life. She found

her voice as an observant Jewish woman on campus, serving in various positions on Hillel’s student leadership board.

Jenna, who received the **Louis Fishman Memorial Award** in recognition of her accomplishments in Jewish studies, made aliyah after graduation. She currently works as a counselor at a girl’s religious seminary for post-high school students in Jerusalem.

In the long term, Jenna dreams of working with artifacts that “tell the story of the long and arduous journey of the Jewish people throughout history. Where better to achieve that than in Israel?” she asks.

To that end, she hopes to secure an internship at Jerusalem’s Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, study for a master’s degree in Jewish history, and, later, pursue doctoral work in the cataloging of Jewish mobility over time.

“It’s important to place yourself on the great historical timeline,” Jenna reflects. “My experience at Rutgers has enabled me to do just that.”

Jewish Studies Graduates 2017–2018

Aaron Abramowitz
Steven Gotlib
Rachel Jacobus
Benjamin Kern
Jenna Kershenbaum
Ethan Klein
Thomas Krapin
Lee Levy
Paulee Manich
Gregory Matechak
Peter Shamah
Shafir Sidjaja
Blair Singer

FACULTY UPDATES

Charles Häberl gave the following invited lectures: “A Mandaean Chronicle of the Late Sasanian Empire,” Mandel School for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; “About the Chaldaeans: August Ludwig von Schlözer and the Discovery of Semitic,” keynote address, eighth annual “Jil Jadid Conference in Middle Eastern Languages and Literatures,” University of Texas at Austin; “A Sixth Century Chronicle of the Sasanian Empire,” Brown Bag Lunch Lecture Series, Department of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University; and “Greek Influence in Mandaic,” at the international conference “Aramaic—Linguistic Diversity across Three Millennia,” Centrum für Nah- und Mittelost-Studien, Philipps-Universität Marburg. He gave the following conference talks: “Writing in a Sacred Tongue: Inter-Aramaic Alloglottography,” International Linguistic Association 63rd Annual Conference, New York; and “A Chronicle of the Late Sasanian Empire,” American Oriental Society 228th meeting, Pittsburgh. He published the following article: “The Mandaean Death of John,” in *Alpha: Studies in Early Christianity* 1 (Warring States Project, University of Massachusetts at Amherst). He has been invited back by the Center of Jewish Studies at the National University of Ostroh Academy, Ukraine, to teach Mandaic at the Third International Summer School on Hebrew Studies and Semitic Philology. He taught last summer at the second one.

Martha Helfer published the following: *Nexus 4: Essays in German Jewish Studies*, coedited with William Donahue (Camden House); and “Lessing and the Limits of Enlightenment,” in *Sara Levy’s World*, coedited by Rebecca Cypess and Nancy Sinkoff (University of Rochester Press). She delivered an invited lecture, “Romantic Afterlives: The Poetics of Death in Annette von Droste-Hülshoff,” Johns Hopkins University. She gave the following presentations: “The Aesthetics of Silence: Maurice Sendak’s *Dear Mili*,” Atkins Goethe Conference, Pennsylvania State University; “Fairy Tales and the Transmission of Prejudice,” German Jewish Studies Workshop, University of Notre Dame; “Fairy Tales for the Language Classroom and Beyond,” Teach Europe Workshop, Rutgers University; and “Negative Representation: The Kantian Sublime,” Rutgers Philosophy Club.

Michael G. Levine published a book, *Atomzertrümmerung: Zu einem Gedicht von Paul Celan* [Atomic Fission: Celan’s ‘The Syllable Pain’] (Turia + Kant Verlag). He also published the following article and essays: “Die Erfahrung des Unmöglichen. Derrida: ‘Qu’est-ce qu’une traduction *relevante*?’” [The Experience of the Impossible: Derrida’s “What Is a ‘Relevant’ Translation?”], *Das Dedalus-Projekt*, Contextes, at <https://dedalus.blog/creations/michael-levine/>, and as “L’expérience de l’impossible. Derrida: Qu’est-ce

qu’une traduction ‘relevante’?,” translated from German by Karin Leuenberger, at <https://dedalus.blog/creations/michael-levine-2/>; and “Between Grief and Grievance: Memories of Jews in France and the Klaus Barbie Trial,” in “Wounded: Studies in Literary and Cinematic Trauma,” edited by Gail Finney, special issue, *Humanities*. He gave the following invited lectures: “The Clinch of an Antagonistic Embrace: Kafka’s ‘Jackals and Arabs,’” Brown University; “Affect and Cognition in Holocaust Culture,” German Studies Association closed seminar, Atlanta; and “Derrida’s *Archive Fever* Reconsidered: A Roundtable,” New York University.

Gary A. Rendsburg published two articles, “The Etymology of χαρτηζ ‘Papyrus Roll’” and “The World’s Oldest Torah Scrolls” (online). He delivered public lectures at the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Biblical Archaeology Society, and he conducted a Smithsonian one-day program entitled “Egypt at the Met” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On campus, he spoke before the Rutgers British Studies Center and the Colonel Henry Rutgers Society. He spent several days at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, training the staff, docents, and volunteers in advance of the major Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition currently on display there: <https://www.dmns.org/dead-sea-scrolls/>. He served as consultant to the Hebraic Section of the Library of Congress on its purchase of a singular Hebrew manuscript, the world’s oldest complete Torah scroll sheet legible with the naked eye. The document dates to about 1000 CE and contains the entire text of Exodus 10:10–16:15, including the Song of the Sea. (See article on page 5.) On two occasions, Rendsburg inspected Hebrew manuscripts at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. On the second occasion, he was part of a select group of scholars invited to join Professor Malachi Beit-Arié of Hebrew University to read manuscripts in the museum’s collection.

Jeffrey Shandler was a Starr Fellow at the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University for the spring semester. He published the following essays: “Enacting Ethnicity: Yiddishkeit Masked and Unmasked on the Contemporary American Stage,” in *Jewish Social Studies*; “On the Road among the Skyscrapers in Yiddishland: Foreword to Yermiah Ahron Taub’s Yiddish Poems” (in Yiddish), in Yermiah Ahron Taub, *A Mouse among Tottering Skyscrapers: Selected Yiddish Poems* (Library of Contemporary Yiddish Literature); and “What Becomes of Old Media?,” in *AJS Perspectives*. He gave the following presentations: “Living Room Witnesses: American Television and the Holocaust,” Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, Toronto, as Scholar-in-Residence, and also at University of California, San Diego; “And Now I Have to Read in

Jewish Something’: Yiddish Performances by Holocaust Survivors,” keynote address for The Visual History Archive, Research Experience: Interdisciplinary *Journée d’Étude*, American University of Paris, and also at Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, Skokie; “Seeing as Believing: Watching Videotaped Interviews with Holocaust Survivors,” Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, and also at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Fordham University; “The Way (Back) to Our Youth: YIVO’s Autobiographies of Jewish Adolescents in Interwar Poland,” keynote address, Kristallnacht Commemoration, College of Saint Elizabeth, Morris Township; “Another Holocaust: An Analogy and Its Discontents,” 49th annual Association for Jewish Studies conference, Washington, D.C.; “*Do liget a yid a posheter*”: Sholem Aleichem’s Public Image in America,” at the conference “The Highs and Lows of Sholem Aleichem: Yiddish Literature and the Pursuit of Popular Writing,” Center for Jewish Studies, University of Wisconsin–Madison; “On Writing a Biography of Yiddish: Wrangling with a Metaphor,” Starr Seminar, Center for Jewish Studies, Harvard University; “Tales Retold: Holocaust Survivors on *Schindler’s List*,” Center for Jewish Studies, University of California, Berkeley; “An Archive in Contexts: The Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive,” Center for Jewish History, New York; and “Film in Teaching about the Holocaust and Genocide,” keynote presentation, Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Ramapo College. He also participated in these panels: “Holocaust Education, Youth and Social Media,” International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, Residence of the Ambassador of Switzerland, Washington, D.C.; and “Literary Estate as Mirror of Persecution: The Restitution Case of the Yiddish Poet Naftali Hertz Kon,” Princeton University.

Nancy Sinkoff continued to serve as the director of the Center for European Studies, where she oversaw a full array of programs related to Europe in cooperation with several academic units and centers at Rutgers. The year’s highlight was the Fifth Annual Polish Jewish Studies Workshop, which comprised an international symposium, “Centering the Periphery: Polish Jewish Cultural Production beyond the Capital,” and concert, “Soundscapes of Modernity: Jews and Music in Polish Cities,” which she co-organized with Dr. Halina Goldberg (Indiana University Bloomington) and Dr. Natalia Aleksium (Touro College). With Rebecca Cypess (Department of Music, Mason Gross School of the Arts), she coedited *Sara Levy’s World: Gender, Judaism, and the Bach Tradition in Enlightenment Berlin*, Eastman Studies in Music series (University of Rochester Press), which includes her “Introduction: Experiencing Sara Levy’s World.” She also published “A Melancholy Offering

Tendered with Esteem': Gershom Scholem and Lucy S. Dawidowicz on Nathan Birnbaum, an Unexpected Conversation," *Jewish Quarterly Review*; and the blog post "A Different Perspective: Journeying through Jewish History," <http://www.jtsa.edu/journeying-through-jewish-history>. She gave the following talks: "Using Biographies and Autobiographies for Teaching History," at the "Teach Europe" workshop, Rutgers; "Lucy S. Dawidowicz's *From That Place and Time: A Memoir, 1938–1947*," at the conference "Vilna—the Jerusalem of Lithuania—and the Poetry of Abraham Sutzkever," Lund University, Sweden; "Mussar and the Jewish Origins of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy," University of Hartford; and "The Origins of a Holocaust Historian: Lucy S. Dawidowicz and the Rescue of Jewish Cultural Property after World War II," in the Shoah Teaching Alternatives in Jewish Education (STAJE) program "Transferring Jewish History from East to West," Museum of Jewish Heritage / A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, New York. In July 2018, she assumed the role of academic director of the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life.

Paola Tartakoff served as acting chair of the Department of Jewish Studies at Rutgers and as co-chair of the Division of Medieval and Early Modern Jewish History, Literature, and Culture in the Association for Jewish Studies. She completed her second book manuscript, "Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder in Medieval Europe," and submitted it for review. She gave a talk, "Conversion, Martyrdom, and Cultural Entanglement in the Fourteenth Century," at the "Jewish Life in the Medieval Christian and Muslim Worlds" conference, University of Notre Dame, and she served as a respondent for a panel, "Modes of Polemic and Conversion between Jews and Christians in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean," at the annual Association for Jewish Studies conference, Washington, D.C. She published a review in the *American Historical Review* (June 2018) of Benjamin Gampel's recent monograph, *Anti-Jewish Riots in the Crown of Aragon and the Royal Response, 1391–1392*.

Emma Wasserman published *Apocalypse as Holy War: Divine Politics and Polemics in the Letters of Paul*, Anchor Yale Bible series (Yale University Press).

Azzan Yadin-Israel published "Authorial Intent: Human and Divine," in *Talmudic Transgressions: Engaging the Work of Daniel Boyarin*, edited by Charlotte Fonrobert and others (Brill); and "'These and These are Words of the Living God': Halakic Pluralism and Its Discontents," in *The Faces of Torah: Studies in the Texts and Contexts of Ancient Judaism in Honor of Steven Fraade*, edited by Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, Tzvi Novick, and Christine Hayes (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlag). He presented the following talks: "Secular Song, Sacred

Theme: Bruce Springsteen's 'Adam Raised a Cain,'" at the conference "Trying to Say 'God': Re-enchanting Catholic Literature," University of Notre Dame (via Skype); "Theological Critique of Sacrifice—Porphiry and the Rabbis," at the World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem; "Material Culture and Rabbinic Isolation: A Cultural Ecology Perspective," as part of the Bard Graduate Center series "Jewish Material Culture"; and "The Rise of the Apocalypse," at "Bruce Springsteen's Darkness on the Edge of Town: An International Symposium," Monmouth University. He also went public with his current monograph, "Birth of an Icon: How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple," presenting the argument of the book at Rutgers, the University of Florida, and the University of Minnesota. At the latter, he also presented a public lecture, "Is the New Testament a Jewish Work?" In addition, he published the second installment of his book series on foreign-language acquisition, *Intuitive Vocabulary: Spanish*.

Yael Zerubavel published "Numerical Commemoration and Toponyms: Memory and Forgetting in Israeli Public Space," in Hebrew (*Hantsaha misparit ve-shiyum he-avar: Zikaron ve-shikheha ba-merhav ha-tziburi be'israel*), in *Majority-Minority Relations: Memory and Oblivion in Geographical Place Names*, edited by Amer Dahamshe and Yossi Schwartz (Resling). Her book *Desert in the Promised Land* will be published by Stanford University Press in fall 2018. She participated in a panel discussion on Hizky Shoham's book *Israel Celebrates: Jewish Holidays and Civic Culture in Israel*, at New York University; on a panel, "Michael Feige: The Legacy of a Scholar, Colleague, and Friend," at the 49th annual Association for Jewish Studies conference, Washington, D.C.; and on a panel, "Ethnography Challenged," at PROS: International Process Symposium, Kos, Greece. She delivered the inaugural Michael Feige Annual Lecture, "The Desert and the Island as Symbolic Spaces: On Landscapes, Identity and Memory in Israeli Culture," at "Israel: A Case Study; The Jewish State through the Prism of Social Sciences and Humanities, International Conference on the Occasion of Israel's 70th Anniversary," Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Zerubavel has joined the academic advisory board of the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and continues to serve on the advisory boards of the academic journals and presses *Israel Studies*, *Israel Studies Review*, *Journal of Israeli History*, *Public Sphere [HaMerhav HaTziburi]*, *AJS Perspectives*, and *Postscripts: The Journal of Sacred Texts and Contemporary Worlds*; the Rutgers University Press series *Jewish Cultures of the World*; and the Academic Studies Press series *Israel: Society, Culture, and History*. She has been reappointed by the governor to the New Jersey–Israel Commission.

Faculty Seminars, 2017–2018

- **Elisheva Baumgarten**, Hebrew University of Jerusalem: "Jewish Family Power Struggles and Communal Identities in Medieval Northern Europe"
- **Hélène Mouchard-Zay**, Center for Study and Research on the Internment Camps in Loiret: "Vichy Legacies: The Loiret Internment Camps and the Fate of Jean Zay." *Cosponsored with the departments of French and Jewish Studies, and the Program in Comparative Literature*
- **Devin E. Naar**, University of Washington: "Sephardic Jews and the Holocaust"
- **Hizky Shoham**, Bar-Ilan University: "Why Hebrew Shoah? A Lexical History and Two Zionist Narratives"
- **Azzan Yadin-Israel**, Rutgers University: "Birth of an Icon: How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple"

Jewish Studies Faculty, 2018–2019

Core Faculty

Michal Raucher
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Paola Tartakoff
Azzan Yadin-Israel,
Undergraduate Director
Yael Zerubavel

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Maurice J. Elias
Leslie E. Fishbein
Judith Gerson
David Greenberg
Charles Häberl
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Martha Helfer
Michael G. Levine
Emma Wasserman

Language Instructor

Orna Goldman, *Hebrew-Language Coordinator*

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PUBLIC PROGRAMS, FALL 2018

Living in English, Writing in Hebrew: A Conversation with Ruby Namdar
September 27, 7:30 p.m.

The Raoul Wallenberg Annual Program funded by Leon and Toby Cooperman
The War Refugee Board and America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe
Rebecca Erbelding, historian, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
October 9, 7:30 p.m.

Rutgers Jewish Film Festival
October 30–November 11

The Ruth and Alvin Rockoff Annual Program
Israel and American Jews: The Future of a Challenging Relationship
Yehuda Kurtzer, Shalom Hartman Institute of North America
December 13, 7:30 p.m.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS
Master Teacher Institute in Holocaust Education
Free Workshop

Individuals Matter: Personal Narratives in Response to the Nazi Threat
Rebecca Erbelding, historian, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
Colleen Tambuscio, pedagogical consultant
October 10, 9:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

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