

# אגרת

## איגוד הפרופסורים לעברית

Newsletter of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew  
Editor: Zev Garber, Los Angeles Valley College

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### Presidential Perspective

Language is a means to communicate but also and, in many ways more importantly, a window into thinking and culture that are otherwise inaccessible. In other words, knowing Hebrew is not just about communication, but also about understanding the worldview and culture within which the language is used and texts are produced. Although this seems obvious to us, it is striking that the study of

Hebrew, and especially my field of biblical Hebrew, is under pressure in our current academic environment. In this newsletter, I want to highlight some of those ways.

First, the tyranny of time means not just that students sometimes do not want to put time into the study of Hebrew, but also that academic institutions which want students to have competence in Hebrew are reluctant to include sufficient time for language instruction as part of their academic curriculum. The same is true of many Bible translation organizations which claim to want their translators to work from the source texts, but in actual practice do not allow or provide adequate time for training in the biblical languages. Rather than maintaining language standards and focusing on better pedagogical methods, academic institutions as well as Bible translation organizations sometimes fall for claims of “quick and easy” Hebrew instruction through short courses with lowered standards, especially when such short courses are offered by universities. Acquiring a language simply takes time to absorb regardless of how good the pedagogical method is and, in the end, there are no short-cuts to competence.

Second, the availability of technology, both specific to Hebrew (e.g. Accordance, BibleWorks, Logos for Biblical Hebrew) as well as language generally (e.g. Google Translate) has resulted in a kind of sloppiness about language learning and teaching and a lack of clarity concerning language learning goals. Is it really necessary, some say, for students to learn all of those messy verb forms when the information is so readily available electronically? And if they do not need to learn basic morphology, is it really necessary to learn anything at all, given the wealth of information available at the click of a mouse? Similarly, computer programs are being produced to supply users who do not know Hebrew detailed information concerning the cultural background of the Bible.

Third, the importance of Biblical Hebrew for biblical studies has recently become more tenuous within the Society of Biblical Literature annual program. The “Applied Linguistics for Biblical Languages” section has not been renewed for 2016. This section provided an important venue for academic inquiry on the peda-

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**Presidential Perspective (Continued) . . .**

gogy of Biblical Hebrew (and Biblical Greek) alongside the NAPH sessions of Biblical Hebrew pedagogy. The “Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew” section, which also applied for renewal, has not been renewed as this newsletter goes to press and its future is not clear, although the section does currently appear in the electronic Call for Papers. Since this section has provided an important venue for the study of Biblical Hebrew from a linguistic perspective for around 30 years, it does not bode well for our discipline that inexplicable difficulties in the renewal of the section have been encountered.

As an organization that promotes the study of Hebrew language and culture, we need to do find ways to transform the broader discipline(s) within which we work so that the importance of Hebrew is understood and appreciated. This is especially the case with respect to cultural and sociological approaches to the biblical text. Similarly, we must find ways to convince both students and academic institutions that firsthand knowledge of Hebrew language within its cultural context more than repays the time and effort required to master it.

Each year at the NAPH breakfast during the Society of Biblical Literature meetings, our executive director, Gilead Morahg, includes in his report the most recent statistics from the Modern Language Association on the teaching of Hebrew in the US. In recent years, the picture has been one of decline. I continue to believe that there are tremendous opportunities for growth by looking outside of North America and Europe. Hardly a week goes by, but I receive an e-mail from someone in Africa who wants to study Hebrew. There is a sense in which African biblical scholars, religious leaders, and Bible translators understand that knowledge is power and therefore knowing Hebrew firsthand is one way to move beyond colonialism. If we as an organization can become more international, we can be a part of this movement concerning Hebrew. We can do this through a number of initiatives.

Most importantly, we must recognize that the economic disparity between the so-called “Third World” and the West. What seems like a very reasonable annual membership fee in the West, is simply out of the question in Africa, especially in light of falling currencies and inflation. To take only one example, in 2009 an NAPH membership cost the equivalent of 250 Rand; in 2014 it cost 500 Rand and in 2015 it costs 750 Rand. This is an enormous increase and is not sustainable. Many international organizations recognize this fact and make memberships for members from developing countries significantly less expensive. The Society of Biblical Literature, for example, provides membership at the reduced rate of \$15 (as opposed to the ordinary member’s rate of \$105); see the information and the list of countries at <http://www.sbl-site.org/membership/joinnow.aspx>. Another organization, the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies, uses a sliding scale based upon the gross national product of various countries with four levels of fees; see the information at <https://www.iatis.org/index.php/membership/membership-bands-and-fees>. NAPH needs to address this question in a serious way with respect to the 2017 membership dues (or even as a matter of urgency the 2016 dues).

Another problem with memberships in less developed areas involves the mailing of the journal. Not only is international postage expensive, but many postal systems are very slow and highly unreliable. If we could institute an electronic version of the journal, this would solve the problem of journals becoming lost in postal systems, it would make a reduced membership for international scholars feasible, and it would also reduce the labor involved in sending out the journals from the NAPH office. This is a win-win situation.

A third initiative for promoting Hebrew could involve setting up electronic connections between students around the world, thus connecting students in areas with less access to Hebrew language instruction the opportunity to interact with other students. This could take the form of chat groups or Facebook pages.

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**Presidential Perspective (Continued) . . .**

Perhaps our honor society, Eta Beta Rho could take up this challenge for connecting students electronically. It would be fantastic, for example, to have African students connecting with students in the US and Israel, with the additional by-product of enhanced cultural understanding in both directions.

A fourth initiative for promoting Hebrew could involve scholarships for students who wish to study Hebrew. Perhaps by offering the journal electronically, we could free up some funds from membership fees for this purpose.

As we think about these initiatives, I hope that we can also think about bringing younger scholars into leadership positions in the organization so that we can both prepare for the future and advocate for our discipline in innovative ways in the present. We also need to expand our leadership and advisory board beyond the US and Israel to become truly international. And we can support those who promote the study of Hebrew abroad in difficult political and academic circumstances by finding a way to recognize their efforts to keep the study of Hebrew alive and flourishing.

Finally, the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual International Conference on Hebrew Language, Literature and Culture was held at the University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee, June 22-24, 2015. The conference was sponsored by The Departments of History, Anthropology, Foreign Languages & Literatures, Philosophy, Political Science & University College at the University of Memphis, with additional support from NAPH institutional membership. A big thank you and congratulations is due to conference chair, Shaul Bar, and his assistant, Shoshana Yaffe, whose hard work made the conference a success. While smaller than 2014, the conference was attended by approximately 150 participants with 104 presenters. We look forward to a great 2016 conference at Brown University, June 21-23. The 2016 conference will be chaired by Ruth Ben-Yehuda Adler, Senior Lecturer of Judaic Studies at Brown University.

With all good wishes

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## **Notes From Here & There**

### **I. Elie Wiesel: Nocturnal Silence**

*2015 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II. August 14, 1945 is the day that WW II ended and America and her allies began laying the foundations to ensure that the ideology and events leading to the greatest war will not repeat. And the necessity to speak of the murdered European Jewry.*

For nearly half a century, Shoah survivor (Auschwitz and Buchenwald) and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel's superb gifts as activist, commentator, speaker, professor and mainly storyteller have seized a world-wide audience in an emotional grip that borders on biblical religiosity. Shoah-invested novels like *Night*, with its chilling vow, "Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence . . . those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust," parallel in reverse the *Tokheḥah* Warnings in Deut 28. His

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poignant writings on the Jews of Eastern Europe (*The Oath*), Russia (e.g., *Zalmen, or the Madness of God*, *The Jews of Silence*, etc.) and Israel (e.g., *Dawn, A Beggar in Jerusalem*, etc.) are a striking reminder of a people's desperate struggle not to be silent, to define itself, and to forge a new destiny *One Generation After the (V)elt Hot Geshvign*. Wiesel unveils fresh insight and poignancy in *Messengers of God*, *Five Biblical Portraits*, *Four Hasidic Masters*, and *Souls on Fire*; and his rendition entices even the reader with scant knowledge of the biblical hero and Hasidic master. He plumbs the ashes of the murdered European Jewry, for whom he tirelessly campaigns as "a messenger to mankind --- not with a message of hate and revenge but with one of brotherhood and atonement."<sup>1</sup> Arguably, through his writings, teaching, and public appearances, Wiesel has emerged as the most visible messenger of the Event to millions in the post-Auschwitz age.<sup>2</sup>

Wiesel writes masterfully, with a Kafkaesque pen, and his themes include pogroms, the destruction of the *shtetlekh* (Jewish villages), songs of mourning and exile, the madness of the Messiah, divine love and silence, and the guilt and obligation of survival, all of which are interwoven with threads of Hasidic tales, Kabbalistic mysticism, talmudic wisdom, and pietistic folklore. Theologically, his testimony is a continuous *Din Torah* (a disputation based on the judgment of the Torah) with God, who did not uproot Auschwitz "in the world which He created according to his will" (*Kaddish* prayer), and with radical dehumanization, the existence of which raises the possibility that the world is either not listening to or does not care about the lessons that can be learned from the Shoah.

Wiesel has done more than anyone to establish "Holocaust" (a word that invokes images of fire and burnt offerings) as the accepted term for the Judeocide that occurred during World War II. Because the term is associated with the *akedah*, or "binding," of Isaac in the biblical story in which Abraham is tested and Isaac is victimized (Gen 22), the use of the term permits Wiesel to question the intentions of God.<sup>3</sup> This act of questioning does not diminish the paradox of the Shoah, but serves to make the issue more significant and more troubling, and therefore more full of hope. Wiesel has strongly advocated that the specific lessons of the Shoah should never be lost. His eyewitness approach to the issue, which is rooted in the redemptive quality of memory and conscience, carries the communication that one can survive with morality, a message that will appeal to all those who have suffered or will suffer.

## II. Lungers

Ernest Gilman, *Yiddish Poetry and the Tuberculosis Sanatorium 1900-1970*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015. xxiv + 187p, index. ISBN 978-0-8156-3379-2 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-8156-5306-6 (e-book).

*Tuberculosis; A communicable disease of human and animals caused by a microorganism, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, and manifesting itself in lesions of the lung, bone, and other bodily parts.*

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<sup>1</sup> Words of Egil Aarvick, chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Prize Committee, upon presenting the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize for Peace to Elie Wiesel.

<sup>2</sup> For example, on July 15, 1993, over 20 million viewers saw Oprah Winfrey interview Elie Wiesel on *Night* and other lessons from the Shoah.

<sup>3</sup> See Z. Garber and B. Zuckerman, "Why Do We Call the Holocaust 'The Holocaust'? An Inquiry into the Psychology of Labels," *Modern Judaism* 9 (1989), pp. 197-212, reprinted as Chapter 3 in Z. Garber, *Shoah, The Paradigmatic Genocide* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994) and Chapter 1 in Garber and Zuckerman, *Double Takes: Thinking and Rethinking Issues of Modern Judaism in Ancient Contexts* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004).

The goal of this book and the principles which guide its composition reflect the author's observation that there scarcely exists any book length study in English to decipher and understand the complex idiomatic jargon of Yiddish literary composition related to medicine and disease. Specifically, the poetry of three gifted Yiddish writers who produced the substance of their work as patients in a tuberculosis sanatorium. Pruning vocabulary and concepts from the *Yiddish welt* of the 20<sup>th</sup> century immigrant generation and secondary sources, Gilman (New York University) accrues the challenges and effects of barely existing in the shadow of death. Written for the reader with limited linguistic knowledge of Yiddish, Yiddish vocabulary, phraseology, and syntax are precisely recorded and, when needed, annotated with minimal references. Featured are hefty translations of poetry related to life *afn shvel* ("on the threshold" between life and death). The strength of this tome is learning how basic writing and literature are the key to balance the personal anguish and triumph of three brilliant artists affected by tuberculosis, the white plague, the disease without a known cure (late 19<sup>th</sup> century till circa 1960).

There is an assumption that Zionist nationalism and enlightened modernism are responsible for the lack of authentic religious expression in modern Israeli poetry and similarly in Yiddish poetry. However, Gilman's analytic and selected study of Solomon Bloomgarten (pen name "Yehoash," 1870-1927), H. Leivick (born Leivick Halpern, 1888-1962), and Sholem Shtern (1907-1990) argues otherwise. Drawing from biographical data, secondary sources and, where possible, direct interviews with family members and friends, sanatorium life, and selected poems from their oeuvre, Gilman demonstrates that for the said poets the God talk is a centrally meaningful albeit conflicting in their attempt to bridge the world of tradition and the challenges of modernity. The poets delve into the language of traditional prayer, religion and theology in their attempt to understand God's interaction with humankind, which is compounded by the seemingly eclipse or hidden presence of the Creator and His covenantal promises. Absence of divine justice, bewilderment and frustration in life's absurdities, and limitations of scientific knowledge are some of the issues that the poets express emotively and Gilman examines methodically.

The Introduction and Chapter 1 ("The Poetics of Lunger Lit") present an overview of tuberculosis sanatoria, condition of the patients, heliotherapy, and related activities. The first chapter focuses on the daily activities at the Denver Jewish Consumptive Relief Society (JCRS), in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains, where Yehoash and Leivick were patients, and Mount Sinai Sanatorium in the Laurentian mountains of Quebec where Shtern was a patient. In lieu of no medicinal cure for TB, writing is encouraged from the patients and the "lunger" literature is shown to exhibit therapeutic value. For example, assigning "san" (sanatorium) smack to the story of Passover: Egypt (sanatorium, near death enslavement), Exodus (life determination at all costs begins the cure), Freedom (fresh water, clean land, airy mountains), and Return (homebound, renewed and recharged). Chapter 2 ("Yehoash and the Yiddish *Hiawatha*") deals with the life aspiration and achievement of this Vilna born, Volozhin yeshiva *bocher*, who emigrated to the United States in 1890, contacted TB from glass dust while working in a glass factory in New York, and migrated to Denver for therapy in 1899. Yehoash believed in the power of the sanatorium and its philosophy to assist patients in need. He helped launch *The Sanatorium*, the JCRS's first newsletter, befriended and counseled with patients and also devoted years of activity to raise funds and consciousness in behalf of the Denver complex. During and after his stay at JCRS, he wrote verse poetry, collaborated with Charles Spivak on a Yiddish dictionary of Hebrew and Aramaic with an emphasis on inward *loshyn kodesh* than outward modern *ivrit*, and composed a Yiddish translation of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow "The Song of Hiawatha." Beginnings of Yehoash's Yiddish Bible began in 1904. Serial pieces appeared in *Der Tog* (religiously oriented Yiddish daily newspaper), book form (*Shir ha-Shirim*, *Iyov*, *Yeshayahu*) and complete *Humash* in 1927, the year of his death.

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The life and ideology of H. Leivick is analyzed in Chapter 3 (“Leivick and the ‘Ballad of Denver Sanatorium’”). Poet, playwright, journalist, he was seen by many as the greatest Yiddish poet in his lifetime. The celebrated dramatist of the *The Golem* (1921) was born in tsarist Russia, became a revolutionary, was exiled to Siberia, escaped and reached America. Gilman writes that Leivick’s work can be “political, ethical, biblical, introspective, patriotic, celebratory, anguished, and visionary by turns” (p. 85). His three year stay at JCRS (1932-1935) yielded the verse drama *Abelard and Heloise* and fifty three poems that form a section of his *Lider fun Gan-Eyden* (1940). From the latter, his dialogue with Spinoza poems embraces suffering, confinement, looming death, injustice, banishment, and return. For Leivick, *neshoma* (soul not soil/Zion) and *folk* (ethnicity not observance is the litmus test), together lead to *Freiheit*. And his Shoah and anti-Nazi poems of the 1940s are expressively poignant due to his *tzimerl-tzel* (“cozy little room” also prison “cell”) sojourn in the Colorado compound.

Sholem Shtern, born in a shtetl near Lublin, immigrated to Montreal in 1927 at age 20. He underwent nearly two-year treatment for TB at Mount Sinai Sanatorium in the Laurentian Mountains of southern Quebec, where he met Sonia Elbaum, the nurse who became his wife. Internationally acclaimed Yiddish writer, Shtern was a career teacher and principal in a Jewish school, and prolific journalist and poet. He authored three volumes of poetry, three novels, collection of essays and memoirs. His life as a patient at Mt. Sinai is reflected in his first collection of poems, *Noenkayt* (Nearness), published in 1929 shortly after his stay at the sanatorium. His *Dos Vayse Hoyz* (“The White House”), a verse novel set in the sanatorium, appeared nearly 40 years later in 1969. This is volume two of a trilogy dealing with Shtern’s adjustment to Canada reflecting the immigrant experience as played out over decades. *Dos Vayse Hoyz* showcases Shtern’s autobiographical Velvel who imparts dramatically the wrenching elusiveness of death in the shadow of whiteness (plague, sheets, snow, House). In the lunger’s world, the darkly shadows of death is still white. Concluding comments, several appendices, and word index follow. The book concludes with the author’s reprinted translation of H. Leivick’s “Ballad of Denver Sanatorium.” An appropriate testimonial to a poignant memory.

Gilman grew up in Denver, Colorado, in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains and the Jewish Consumptive Relief Society’s sanatorium, where his father was a patient as mentioned in the Introduction accompanied with a photo of Jack Gilman and H. Leivick on the grounds of JCRS. The personal touch interweaves matters of fear, separation and tribulation in the corridors of death combine with recovery and determination in Nature’s landscape. An insightful introduction to lunger literature. Well worth the read.

### III. Discovering or Remaking Self-Identity

Michael Weingrad, editor and translator, *Letters to America: Selected Poems of Reuven Ben-Yosef*. Syracuse; Syracuse University Press, 2015. 208 pages, notes. ISBN 978-0-8156-3398-3 (paper). ISBN 978-0-8156-5325-7 (ebook).

The effort of Michael Weingrad to understand the contribution of Reuven Ben-Yosef to contemporary Hebrew poetry is distinguished by a dual purpose. To understand why and how an assimilated American Jew rejects parents, siblings and the comfort of bourgeois American urban life for communal life on Kibbutz HaGosherim in northern Galilee in the proximity of Lebanese and Syrian borders. Weingrad depicts sympathetically the artist as he engages his personal convoluted voyage from America Diaspora to total immersion in the Promised Land. So attested by replacing his secular birth name (Robert Reiss) by his *halakhic* patronymic title (Reuven Ben-Yosef); determined at all costs (physical, spiritual, financial) to write exclusively in Hebrew; and embracing a seemingly selective cultural - religious life style (e.g., Shomer Shabbat ve-Chagim sans synagogue attendance, observe Kashrut but not wear a kippah, etc.). Second, the bulk of this book is a minute selection of the more than two dozen award winning volumes of

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poems by Ben-Yosef edited and translated by Weingrad. The poems are arranged chronologically identified by their year of publication. Cohesively, they mirror the style, talent and vicissitudes of a gifted poet composing in biblical and modern idiom, reflecting on things sacred and secular, and pondering life and death issues related to war and peace. Commendable is Ben-Yosef's successful immersion into the Hebrew language and references to select images of the Jewish classics in penning his words.

Reuven Ben-Yosef born in 1937, made Aliya in 1959, and died in 2001 from lung cancer. In the States, he attended and dropped out of Oberlin College after his freshman year (despite good grades) believing that he needed life experience beyond the campus environment to be a successful writer. Alas, lacking student deferment, he was inducted into the U.S. army intelligence division, sent to Monterey language school to learn Russian, and was stationed in Germany to monitor soviet troop broadcasts (mid- 1950s). While in service he bonded with a Jewish American soldier, Barry Fogelson, and both agreed after discharge from military service to settle in a Kibbutz in the State of Israel and start life anew. Sadly, this was not to be. Fogelson died from kidney cancer in 1958. (His friendship and effect on Ben-Yosef is poetically remembered on pp. 89-90, 173-174). But Ben-Yosef and his new bride, Jody (Yehudit, convert from Quaker tradition), who intentionally dropped out of Oberlin to marry Reuven, made the Aliya step instead in 1959. In the introductory matter, Weingrad conceptualizes that the Robert/Reuven meandering is related to the dynamics within the Family Reiss (parental disappointment, disparity between Reuven and brother Jim, separation, conversion, intermarriage (sister Lucinda and brother-in-law, William Luvaas, and on). Thus the title *Letters to America* mirroring his published writings of the 1970s *which* project the ins and outs of a struggling soul and gifted mind of a proud and complex artist who bares openly his anguish flight to and fro his Jewish identity. Interview with Ben-Yosef's wife and three adult children succors the loss and raises the hope that his work be seen as the narrow bridge connecting Jews of America and Israel.

#### IV. Crossing the Divide

Sharon Hart-Green, editor and translator, *Bridging the Divide: The Selected Poems of Hava Pinhas- Cohen*. Syracuse; Syracuse University Press, 2015. 248 pages, notes. ISBN 978-0-8156-3419-5 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-8156-1054-0 (paper). ISBN 978-0-8156-5333-2 (ebook).

Engaging contemporary Hebrew poetry in the original is a rhetorical challenge to American students of Hebrew at university, college and seminary. To make Hebrew poetry accessible to an English reading audience requires a first-hand familiarity with the poet and his/her writing, the experience of a classroom instructor and the savvy of a seasoned translator. Editor and translator Sharon Hart-Gree (Ph.D. in modern Hebrew literature and instructor of Hebrew and Yiddish literature at the University of Toronto since 1988) suggests that she qualifies. In this slim volume, Hart-Green briefly introduces to an American audience the poetry of the internationally respected prize winning contemporary Israeli poet, Hava Pinhas-Cohen. The editor's comments convey that Pinhas-Cohen's poetry bridges the divide between her Sephardic Bulgarian religious upbringing wedded to Moroccan tradition (husband, Yossi, son of a Marrakesh rabbi) and protesting self. Her unique style affirms traditional values and promises with earnest solemnity and yet fights being a slavish amen-sayer to formal or standard belief. The introduction mentions and the table of contents alludes to themes of interest from different periods of her writing in order to understand the *ars poetica* of Hava Pinhas Cohen. Hart-Green opines that Pinhas- Cohen's secular style poetry rooted in the life cycle of religious Judaism, interlaced with biblical allusions, separates her from Rivka Miriam, Admiel Kosman, and other contemporary poets who share similar background but differ in approach and conclusion. Writing poetry, in Pinhas-Cohen's own words, writing is an individual effort and at times a lonely affair. This is shown in her cycle of poems entitled

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*Poems of Orphe'a* (2000), which mirrors her coping with the terrible loss of her husband due to cancer and her anguish attempt to contact him from the *yenner welt*. Cadences of yearning, anguish, anger, frustration, disappointment are the poetics. Her inner resources shared publicly are the sign of return.

Hart-Green's masterful translation requires classroom assistance. Her brief endnotes explain words and idioms in context; required, also, are explanatory notes to thoughts in context. Translation alone does not help. Nonetheless, this bilingual edition from Syracuse University Press to Hava Pinhas-Cohen's poetics properly whets the appetite of a first-rate contemporary Hebrew poet. Walk the narrow bridge.

#### **V. Rabbi Harold Schulweis Z"l (1925-2014)**

Leading Conservative Rabbi Harold Schulweis z"l strong opposition to a Jewish believer's praise of Jesus at his daughter's Bat Mitzvah at Valley Beth Shalom (Encino, CA) was recalled by me at the NAPH session on Messianic Judaism in San Diego at the AAR-SBL annual meeting (Nov. 2014). Several weeks later the Rabbi *niftar* due to cardiac arrest. Rabbi Schulweis and I began our San Fernando careers in 1970. I started at Los Angeles Valley College the first accredited Jewish Studies program at a public college in the State of California and he at Valley Beth Shalom set the standard of the ideal American Rabbi and why Shul matters. We shared Bronx birth and moxie, Yeshiva Rabbi Israel Salanter *musar* (ethical teaching), and Yeshiva University contact (I at MTA High School and he at Teachers Institute). He spoke at LAVC and I spoke at VBS (Auschwitz Convent Controversy). In typical Salanter tradition we disagreed on what we disagreed. A Bronx tale. I was a guest at the Schulweis home on the first night of Passover 1975. Traditional readings, outstanding commentary, *geschmaked pesachdik* food, and all is well. Then the Open Door for Elijah and Shulweis proclaimed that he doesn't plead to the Almighty to pour out His wrath upon the nations that know Him not for if they do they would not devour Jacob and laid waste his habitation. That night's additional Passover question asked by me, why not? The Rabbi responded that the "curse of nations" is medieval tradition and further not respecting the Other. Like hell it is not, as I rushed to the open door and *shreied* in the Encino Hills the justice paragraph of the Haggadah. Returning to the table of befuddled guests, I said, "Harold, a couple of months ago the United Nations declared 'Zionism is Racism.' That is why the *shfokh chamatkha* is justified." "Operation Protective Edge" (Summer 2014) and slanted UN report thereon, Amnesty International, on and off campus SJP and BDS attempts to isolate and delegitimize Israel cement the importance of this charge. In *Iggeret 86* (2014) I emphatically wrote against demonizing the Palestinian and presenting Israel in a mire of lies and deceit. Disagree, oppose, argue but do so respectfully and truthfully. *Ein B'ra*.

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## Meetings and Conferences

### NAPH Annual Meeting in Conjunction with AAR/SBL

#### Minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting of NAPH Officers

Atlanta, GA

November 22, 2015

Officers present: David BakerSerge Frolov, Zev Garber, Cynthia Miller-Naudé, Gilead Morahg, Marvin Sweeney

1. **Gilead Morahg**, NAPH Executive Vice President, welcomed all present and presented the following report: I am pleased to report that our Association continues to be solvent and continues to carry out its mission effectively in all our areas of endeavor. Our membership cycle year begins on October 15, with the first call for next year's dues. Renewals of Hebrew Studies subscriptions start coming in at that time as well. So our coffers begin filling up again. This is also the time when Jared generates the final membership tally, and here the news is a little less rosy. As I reported last year, 2014 was marked by a drop of 46 NAPH members. We went from 444 to 394, which was a disturbing reversal of a slow but steady upward trend. The new, downward trend continued, at a considerably lower rate in 2015, when we went from 394 to 385, a loss of 9 members, which is not very many, but a loss nevertheless. Since there has been no change in the range and quality of NAPH activities, the question of why this is happening continues to hang out there. The breakdown of the numbers according to membership categories may provide some insight.

Last year the membership breakdown was as follows: regular members: 279 (down 30), retired members: 64 (down 10), student members: 55 (down 6). This year the numbers were: regular members: 271 (down 8), retired members: 68 (up 4), student members: 46 (down 9). These numbers seem to indicate that the ranks of our senior members, who are retiring are not being replenished by younger faculty, and that the number of advanced students in our field is declining as well. This assumption appears to correlate with the findings of the latest MLA survey of foreign language enrollments, which is conducted every four years. The most recent survey, published late last year, was for 2013. It shows drops in enrollments in almost every language. The largest drop was in ancient Greek, which went from 20,040 students in 2009 to 12,917 in 2013, a drop of 35.5%. The second largest drop was in Modern Hebrew, which went from 8,307 in 2009 to 6,698 in 2013, a drop of 19.4%. Enrollments in Biblical Hebrew were also declining, although at a considerably slower rate: from 13,749 in 2009 to 12,551 in 2013, a drop of 8.7%. If we go back to 2006, in which Modern Hebrew had a record number of 9,620 students, we find that, since then, enrollments in Modern Hebrew declined by a whopping 30%! And enrollments in Biblical Hebrew declined by 11%.

The MLA survey reflects enrollments in 2013 and reports I am getting from the field indicate that this downward trend is not being reversed. So I think it is safe to assume that the decline in enrollments is accompanied by a reduction in the number of instructors, as well as of graduate students—and hence the decline in the number of NAPH members. Still, our database shows that there is a significant number of people in the field who are not NAPH members or have not renewed their membership in recent years. So Jared and I have been making an effort to reach out to these colleagues and encourage them to join our association. Since mid-October, this effort has resulted in the addition of 20 new members. So we may be able to at least hold the line.

Membership dues continue to a major source of our income, but fortunately it is not the only one. Since completing the project of digitizing Hebrew Studies and offering its articles online through

MUSE and JSTOR, income from the journal has virtually doubled, while we have managed to keep production costs pretty much constant. The increase of income from Hebrew Studies is considerably larger than the loss of income from membership dues. So we continue to owe a huge debt of gratitude to **Serge Frolov** on the outstanding work he and his board have been doing. Serge will be giving his report next, so I just want to let you know that work on the 2015 volume of Hebrew Studies has been completed. On schedule, as always. And it will be mailed to all members after Thanksgiving. Working with Serge continues to be a pleasure as does working with **Rick Painter**, our superb managing editor, who managed to keep the journal on schedule while tending to his significant administrative responsibilities at his college and despite the fact that he got married this year and had to plan a wedding.

Another, more modest but still significant source of income is the NAPH summer conference. The generous support we have been receiving from our host institutions combined from the registration fees paid by the growing number of conference participants have been leaving us with a surplus after all our conference expenses are paid off. The 2015 summer conference at the University of Memphis was another great success with close to 150 participants. **Zafi Lidovsky Cohen** did an excellent job in putting together the program, together with the professional subcommittees chaired by **Shmuel Bolozky and Esther Borochofsky Bar-Aba** (Language and Linguistics), **Nitza Krohn** (Pedagogy), **Itamar Kislef** (Biblical Literature), **Haim Weiss** (Post Biblical Literature) and **Vered Shemtov** (Modern Hebrew Literature). There will be a full report on the conference in the *Iggeret*, but I don't want to deny myself the pleasure of acknowledging the outstanding work of Shaul Bar, the conference chair and local host and his dedicated staff. The schedule of future summer conferences is as follows:

2016: Brown University, June 21-23.

2017: New York University

2018: University of Amsterdam

The new issue of *Iggeret* is ready, due to **Zev Garber's** usual diligent work. As we decided, it will be published online and sent to members by email after this meeting, so the information will be up to date. Thanks to Zev also for arranging the program for the NAPH sessions at SBL. We will have his report on both. But thank you, Zev, in advance. We also published a new issue of our online journal Hebrew Higher Education. The editor, **Adina Ofek**, should be recognized for her excellent work in putting this volume together. This year, she was assisted by **Orna Goldman**, who did the proofreading for the Hebrew articles as well as the journal layout. The Nominating Committee will present its slate of nominees for the NAPH Officers at the end of the meeting. But at this time, I would like to express my appreciation for **Cynthia Miller-Naudé's** service as our president for the past two years. Thank you, Cynthia. I would also like to express my appreciation for the work of our Associate Director, **Jared Henson**, who continues to do outstanding work in running our day-to-day operations.

2. **Serge Frolov**, Hebrew Studies editor, gave the following report: The Hebrew Studies journal remained in good shape this year, thanks to the considerable effort and time invested by editorial team, especially by the Managing Editor **Dr. Rick Painter**, the Book Review Editor **Dr. Pamela Barmash**, and the Associate Editor **Dr. Smadar Shiffman**. The 2015 volume, produced according to our regular schedule, contains 19 full-sized research articles and a NAPH symposium including an introduction and four papers. Overall, our editorial policies remain largely unchanged. Since the size of the last two volumes has been close to the threshold beyond which printing and shipping costs increase substantially, we plan to continue publishing around 20 articles a year, totaling circa 125,000 words. The focus will remain, first, on the quality of the published articles. In this respect,

we are quickly approaching the goal, formulated several years ago, of increasing the journal's rejection rate to 50%; there are some indications that this goal can be attained already with the 2017 volume. Another objective is to keep the editorial portfolio manageable, so that the time lapse between submission and publication remains within reasonable limits. Ideally, we would like to see each volume filled and ready for editing by the time the previous one goes to print, but not earlier, so that the total waiting time for all authors is between one and two years. We are completing the transition from standard book reviews to review essays, which is one reason why there are relatively few of the former in the 2016 volume. The purpose is to publish at least five review essays a year. We will also keep publishing NAPH symposia. As mentioned above, one of them appears this year (it is devoted to New Testament Jesus in Modern Hebrew literature); another is already accepted for 2016.

3. **Zev Garber**, Iggeret Editor and NAPH/SBL sessions coordinator, announced a new feature in the newsletter: Reports from the Field. He called upon colleagues to submit 1,000 word reports on their professional experiences and concerns. He reported on the 2015 NAPH/SBL sessions and called upon members to suggest and lead innovative sessions in future conferences.
4. **David Baker**, Eta Beta Rho Coordinator, reported that no new chapters of the Honor Society were formed this year. He encouraged members to promote EBR on their campuses and is planning to send out a notice about this on NAPHNET.
5. The NAPH Nominating Committee submitted its slate of nominees for the 2016-2018 NAPH officers. Gilead Morahg moved that the slate be accepted. Zev Garber seconded. The motion passed. The slate of the 2016-2018 NAPH officers is appended below:

**President:** Esther Raizen, University of Texas at Austin  
**Executive Vice President:** Gilead Morahg, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
**Vice President:** Marvin Sweeney, Claremont School of Theology  
**Vice President:** Zafrira Lidovsky Cohen, Stern College  
**Editor of Hebrew Studies:** Serge Frolov, Southern Methodist University  
**Editor of Hebrew Higher Education:** Adina Ofek, Binghamton University  
**Editor of Iggeret:** Zev Garber, Los Angeles Valley College  
**National Conference Coordinator:** Zafrira Lidovsky Cohen, Stern College  
**Eta Beta Rho Coordinator:** David Baker, Ashland Theological Seminary

Submitted by the NAPH nominating Committee:

Nancy Berg, Cynthia Miller-Naudé, Gilead Morahg, Moshe Pelli, Ziony Zevit

Minutes prepared by

Gilead Morahg

NAPH Executive Vice President

## NAPH 2015 Annual Meeting

The NAPH 2015 Annual Meeting was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of AAR/SBL in Atlanta, GA. Sessions of the 2015 NAPH meeting are below...

### P22-101

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#### National Association of Professors of Hebrew

7:00 AM to 8:45 AM

11/22/2015

Hanover F (Exhibit Level)

Annual Breakfast and Business Meeting

Gilead Morahg, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Presiding

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### P22-137

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#### National Association of Professors of Hebrew

9:00 AM to 11:15 AM

11/22/2015

International 9 (International Level)

Minding Letters: Current Approaches to Ancient Hebrew Palaeography in the United States, France, and Israel

Avi Hurvitz, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Presiding

Ziony Zevit, American Jewish University, Presiding

Ziony Zevit, American Jewish University

**"Readin', Writin', and 'Rithmetic" in Ancient Hebrew Palaeography** (10 min)

Anat Mendel, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Screenshots from a Young Epigrapher's Laptop: Israeli Palaeography Today** (40 min)

Michael Langlois, Université de Strasbourg

**Ancient Hebrew Palaeography in France in the Digital Era** (30 min)

Christopher Rollston, George Washington University

**An Albrightian Approach to Script Typology: the Nuts and Bolts of Palaeographic Methodology in the Johns Hopkins University Tradition** (40 min)

Discussion (15 min)

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**P22-335**


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**National Association of Professors of Hebrew**

4:00 PM to 6:30 PM

11/22/2015

313 (Level 3)

Post-missionary Messianic Judaism (Brazos 2005) Ten Years Later: Assessing the value and Viability of Mark Kinzer's Proposal for the Role of Jewish Followers of Jesus in the Jewish-Christian Relations

In his 2005 volume, Mark Kinzer argued that the New Testament, read canonically and in light of the last two thousand years of history, warranted a bilateral ecclesiology in which the church is constituted as a twofold reality composed of a multinational community joined to a corporate Jesus-believing expression of Jewish life. The Jewish ekklesia (i.e., the body of "Messianic Jews") would endeavor to observe the Torah, honor Jewish tradition, and live as a faithful branch of the Jewish people. This would enable the multinational ekklesia (i.e., the Christian church) to develop a natural affinity for Judaism and a closer attachment to the Jewish people. Kinzer argued that such an ecclesiology was necessary if the church was determined to affirm both the universal mediation of Jesus and the enduring validity of the election of the Jewish people. While Postmissionary Messianic Judaism had a major impact on the Messianic Jewish world and received positive reviews in a number of religious journals, the volume's thesis has not been seriously engaged by many in the world of academic theology. Ten years after its publication, the conveners of this session believe that it is time to reflect constructively and critically upon this provocative proposal.

Zev Garber, Los Angeles Valley College, Presiding

David J. Rudolph, Messianic Jewish Theological Institute

***The Impact of Post-Missionary Messianic Judaism on the Messianic Jewish Movement*** (20 min)

Peter Ochs, University of Virginia

***Patterns of Scriptural Interpretation in Postmissionary Messianic Judaism*** (20 min)

R. Kendall Soulen, Wesley Theological Seminary

***"Mostly dead is slightly alive" (Miracle Max)*** (20 min)

Zev Farber, Project TABS - TheTorah.com

***Messianic Judaism: Jewish and/or Christian?*** (20 min)

Mark Kinzer, Congregation Zera Avraham, Respondent (20 min)

Zev Garber, Los Angeles Valley College, Respondent (20 min)

Discussion (30 min)

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**P23-338**


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**National Association of Professors of Hebrew**

4:00 PM to 6:30 PM

11/23/2015

A704 (Atrium Level)

Methods for Teaching Particular Types of Content or Skills

Pamela Scalise, Fuller Theological Seminary (Northwest), Presiding

Pamela Scalise, Fuller Theological Seminary

***Methods for Teaching Particular Types of Content or Skills*** (5 min)

Dennis R. Magary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

***Engaging the Text of the Hebrew Bible—How Prezi Can "Take You There"*** (35 min)

Discussion (5 min)

Robert Stallman, Northwest University (Washington)

***When Less Is More: Applying 'Focus on Form Instruction' in the Biblical Hebrew Classroom*** (35 min)

Discussion (5 min)

Paul Overland, Ashland Theological Sem

***As was the custom in those days: Teaching language through culture*** (35 min)

Discussion (5 min)

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**P22-231**


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**National Association of Professors of Hebrew**

1:00 PM to 3:30 PM

11/22/2015

Baker (Atlanta Conference Level)

Prophetic Literature

Marvin Sweeney, Claremont School of Theology, Presiding

Matthew Hamilton, Carson-Newman College in Tennessee

*The Role of the Divine Warrior: Isaiah 42:13-17 in light of the Comparative Literature* (25 min)

Emmanuel Ukaegbu-Onuoha, Claremont Graduate University

*Coping with Multi-Roles in Prophetic Traditions: The Case of Jeremiah Literature* (25 min)

Soo J. Kim, Claremont School of Theology

*Was Ezekiel a Messenger? A Manager? Or a Moving Sanctuary? A Beckettian Reading in the Inquiry of the Divine Presence* (25 min)

Penelope Barter, University of St. Andrews

*Inquiring of Yhwh in the Book of Ezekiel* (25 min)

Kyung Sik Park, Claremont School of Theology

*Assyria Cannot Save Us: Socio-Political Reading of Hosea's Metaphors and Proclamations* (25 min)

Jeffery M. Leonard, Samford University

*The Prophets and Israel's Early Historical Traditions* (25 min)

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**S23-129**


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**Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew; National Association of Professors of Hebrew**

9:00 AM to 11:30 AM

11/23/2015

A708 (Atrium Level)

Editing the Hebrew Bible and Historical Linguistics

Jacobus A. Naude, University of the Free State, Presiding

Jared S. Klein, University of Georgia

*Historical Linguistics and Ancient Religious Texts* (20 min)

Discussion (5 min)

A. Dean Forbes, University of the Free State

*The Diachrony Debate: A Tutorial on Methods* (20 min)

Martijn Naaijer, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Dirk Roorda, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences

*Measuring Syntax: New Ways of Researching Linguistic Variation in relation to "Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew"* (20 min)

Discussion (10 min)

Ian Young, University of Sydney

*Ancient Hebrew Without Authors* (20 min)

Aaron D. Hornkohl, University of Cambridge

*Historical Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew: Observations from the Perspective of 4QRevised Pentateuch* (20 min)

Discussion (10 min)

Nili Samet, Bar-Ilan University

***The Question of LBH Syntax: The Case of Ecclesiastes 1-2*** (20 min)

Discussion (5 min)

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## **P23-339**

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### **National Association of Professors of Hebrew**

4:00 PM to 6:30 PM

11/23/2015

A708 (Atrium Level)

Biblical Hebrew Narrative

Serge Frolov, Southern Methodist University, Presiding

Yisca Zimran, Bar-Ilan University

***Divine-Human relations in Exod. 3:1-4:17*** (30 min)

Hanne Loeland Levinson, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

***"If This is the Way You are Going to Treat Me, Then Kill Me Now" (Num 11:4-34)*** (30 min)

Sok-Chung Chang, Catholic Kwandong University

***Israel's YHWH Worship in Judges*** (30 min)

Sonya Cronin, Florida State University

***Childbearing as Reward and Punishment for Women in Hebrew Bible*** (30 min)

Peter Boeckel, Southern Methodist University

***The Book of Which Covenant? Intertextuality, Josiah's Reform, and the Enneateuch*** (30 min)

## **2016 NAPH Annual Meeting**

The 2016 Annual Meeting of NAPH will be held in San Antonio, TX, during the annual meeting of AAR-SBL, November 19-22, 2016. Members in good standing are invited to submit titles and abstracts of papers to be read at the meeting. Papers must be in the area of, or have a bearing on, Biblica, Hebraica, or Hebrew teaching methodology. The length of the paper should be 20-25 minutes. Call for Papers is posted on the SBL website, [www.sbl-site.org](http://www.sbl-site.org). Hit link to NAPH affiliate. If there are questions, contact Professor Zev Garber, Annual Meeting Coordinator Program, [zevgarber@juno.com](mailto:zevgarber@juno.com).

## **Hebrew Language, Literature and Culture Conference**

### **2015 International Conference on Hebrew Language, Literature and Culture**

The 2016 NAPH International Conference on Hebrew Language, Literature and Culture will be hosted by Brown University, Providence, RI, on June 21-24, 2016 and will be chaired by David Jacobson and Ruth Ben-Yehuda Adler. A Call for Papers will be sent to all NAPH members and posted on the NAPH website. For questions, please email Jared Henson in the NAPH office at [naphoffice@gmail.com](mailto:naphoffice@gmail.com).

## **Report on the 2015 International Conference on Hebrew Language, Literature, and Culture**

### **University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee, June 22-24, 2015**

The NAPH 33<sup>rd</sup> annual International Conference on Language, Literature, and Culture was held at the Fogelman Executive Conference center of the University of Memphis on June 22-24, 2015. The conference was chaired by Shaul Bar and was sponsored by The Departments of History, Anthropology, Foreign Languages & Literatures, Philosophy, Political Science & University College at University of Memphis with additional support from NAPH institutional membership. With almost 150 participants and over 100 different presentations – it was a well-organized and academically challenging conference, reflecting the state of the field and allowing for intimate collegiate interactions. As in the past couple of years, most presentations were grouped into thematic sessions, some of them organized by colleagues, and others by the conference committee. Sessions in the area of Bible and Post Biblical Literatures included “Investigations in Homonymy and Polysemy in Biblical Hebrew Lexicography,” organized by Chaim Cohen (BGU), and a “Workshop on Teaching Masorah,” organized by Christopher Dost (Nyack-Alliance Theological Seminary), as well as additional sessions on various themes in biblical and post biblical investigations. Sessions in the area of Language and Linguistics included a large variety of presentations in Hebrew phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, as well as sociolinguistics, rhetoric, pragmatics, stylistics, and linguistic creativity. Pedagogy sessions included themes such as “Teaching the Hebrew Textual Tradition across Cultures,” organized by Or Rogovin, (Bucknell); “The Teaching of Hebrew Language in Israel and Around the World;” “Grammatical Awareness and Language Teaching;” Language and Thought, Language and Culture;” “Technology in the Language Teaching Classroom;” and “Advanced Students and Heritage Learners in Hebrew Programs.” Two special sessions were

*Continued on next page. . .*

offered in Pedagogy. One included several presentations and a lively discussion on “The State of Hebrew Language Programs in USA” following the MLA 2013 survey reporting an alarming decline in the number of students in Hebrew programs all through the USA,” organized by Rina Kreitman (Columbia U). The other session, “Israel in Short Films: Integrating Film into the Hebrew Language Classroom, was led by Isaac Zablocki, Director of the Israel Film Center at JCC Manhattan, featuring three award winning short films and conversations coming out of Israel's blossoming film industry, followed by a demonstration of how films can be best integrated into the classroom. Once again, the conference was blessed with a great variety of excellent presentations in the area of Hebrew literature and culture. Thematic sessions included “Female Master Poets: Yocheved Bat Miriam and Dalia Hertz,” organizer: Ruth Kartun-Blum (Hebrew U); “New Views of Time in Hebrew Literature,” organizer: Roy Greenwald (BGU); and “Home and Homelessness in Modern Hebrew Literature,” organizer: Iris Milner (TAU). Individual presentations were grouped in themes such as “Studies in Classical Hebrew Fiction;” “Jewish Traditions and Modern Hebrew Literature;” “Studies in Hebrew Drama;” “New Studies in the Works of Contemporary Poets;” “Studies in Modern Hebrew Fiction;” “Studies in Current Hebrew Fiction;” “Newly discovered Treasures from Hebrew Literary Archives;” “Literature and Politics;” “Literature and Ethics;” “Hebrew Press and Hebrew Culture;” and “Middle Ages Romance and Mystical Narratives of Women Kabbalists.”

The first day of the conference ended with a lively cocktail reception at The Grand Ballroom Foyer of the Holiday Inn-University of Memphis and was followed by a traditional banquet in the spacious center Ballroom of the hotel. Participating members were greeted by our host, Shaul Bar, Director of the Bornblum Judaic Studies program at the University of Memphis; Dr. Abby Parrill-Baker, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, for Dr. M. David Rudd, the president of the University of Memphis; and Rabbi Joel Finkelstein of Anshei Sphard Beth El Emeth congregation, on behalf of the Memphis Jewish community. Entertainment was provided by a 5-piece band of Klezmer music.

Organized by Lev Hakak (UCLA), the closing session of the conference featured four published poets reading from their new and old works: Edith Covensky, Robert Whitehill-Bashan, Nitsa Kann, and Lev Hakak. It was followed by a cordial Farewell Reception.

Many thanks to Shaul Bar, and to Shoshana Yaffe Cenker, Administrative Assistant, at the Bornblum Judaic Studies program of the University of Memphis, for their hard work and gracious hospitality. The Fogelman Executive Conference Center setting, as well as the excellent on-campus accommodations, provided a superb setting for an ongoing interaction between the conference participants during the sessions, the coffee breaks, and beyond.

The 2015 conference committee included Rina Ben-Shahar (University of Haifa & Ornaim College of Education), Shmuel Bolozky (University of Massachusetts Amherst), Esther Borochofsky Bar Aba (Tel Aviv University), Simon Chavel (University of Chicago), Ronit Engel (University of Pennsylvania), Giore Etzion ((Washington University in St. Louis), Avital Feuer (University of Maryland), Shiri Goren (Yale University), Roy Greewald (Ben Gurion University), Galia Hatav (University of Florida), Sari Havis (University of Denver), Robert Hoberman (SUNY Stony Brook), Shalom Holtz (Yeshiva University), Itamar Kislev (Haifa University), Rina Kreitman (Columbia University), Nitza Krohn (Jewish Theological Seminary) Barbara Mann (Jewish Theological Seminary), Iris Miner (Tel Aviv University), Yaron Peleg (Cambridge University), Fabio Radak (Hebrew University Jerusalem), Yael Reshef (Hebrew University Jerusalem), Vered Shemtov (Stanford University), Naomi Sokoloff (University of Washington), Tamar Sovran (Tel Aviv University), Ilana Szobel (Brandeis University), Gideon Ticotsky (Stanford University), Haim Weiss (Ben Gurion

University), and Anat Weisman (Ben Gurion University). Their dedication to NAPH and contribution to the high quality of the conference is greatly appreciated.

The continuous support of NAPH's institutional members allowed us to offer this year generous travel grants to 13 graduate students. We look forward to increasing the funding and to drawing more young scholars from around the world to future conferences. We urge all supporters of NAPH to encourage graduate students and young PhDs to join the association and consider active participation in its various activities. We also look forward to establishing academic relations with institutions of Jewish education in the USA and to engaging more Hebrew scholars beyond USA and Israel in our annual conferences as well as other NAPH activities.

The 2016 conference will be held at **Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island** June 21-23, 2016 and will be chaired by David Jacobson and Ruth Ben-Yehuda Adler.

For more information, please visit our website <http://www.naphhebrew.org>

Zafrira Lidovsky Cohen,  
Stern College / Yeshiva University  
NAPH Conference Coordinator

[lidovsky@yu.edu](mailto:lidovsky@yu.edu)

## Notes from the Field

### I. Teaching Online via Instructional Video: If Not Now, When?

It is a truism that new technology is necessarily accompanied by new challenges. Nowhere has the impact of sundry forms of hi tech communication been felt more keenly than in higher education. With the advent of online instruction traditional pedagogy is being forced – occasionally dragged – into new and fresh paradigms. It is a process often referred to as “creative destruction,” in which old forms and modes of operation are replaced by things novel and unique. In the case of a modest Judaic Studies program, that had been growing and developing for many years at a major university in the southeast, the demand by students for online instruction has appeared at best destructive and at worst disastrous, in terms of the overall enrollment and general health of the program.

Having taught multiple Judaic Studies courses, ranging from ancient Jewish history and literature (including the Hebrew Bible) through the history and culture of the Diaspora, and the rise of the modern state of Israel, I have seen our enrollment numbers balloon over the years, from classes of barely a dozen to class sizes regularly between fifty and ninety. A course I have taught every fall semester on the history of the Holocaust is a case in point. A decade ago I was being assigned a room that could hold between twenty-five and thirty students. Every class had a wait list, and I had an ongoing quarrel with the fire marshal regarding the number of students my room could legally accommodate. I was eventually assigned a room that could hold as many as seventy students. Enrollments rose quickly, routinely reaching over sixty.

Then came a rush of innovative new online course offerings in many disciplines, beginning about three years ago, with which Judaic Studies now found itself in regular competition. While my university offers a Judaic Studies minor, in which certain courses are required, the majority of my students have been taking my courses as elective credit. Simultaneously, the university has, in the attempt to encourage graduation within a reasonable timeframe, been actively discouraging the taking of courses beyond the specific requirements for graduation. This effectively limits the number of elective

courses students are able to take, without incurring penalties in the form of additional tuition costs. With room for very few electives in their schedules, students routinely find themselves selecting online elective courses, that do not involve scheduling conflicts with the required courses they are obligated to take.

The immediate result was the plummeting of our enrollment numbers across-the-board. In the succeeding year, enrollment in my Holocaust course dropped from roughly sixty-five to forty. The year after that there were only twenty-five enrolled. Last year that number dropped to a scant sixteen. The “destructive” side of the new paradigm was clearly taking its toll, on a course that is not only important for the health of our program, but for advancing the vital injunction to keep alive the memory of those who perished. The “creative” side of the paradigm needed to be embraced – immediately.

I took a semester-long course offered by the university, to be certified to teach online. I developed a complete “course shell” on the history of the Holocaust, to be debuted in the fall 2015 semester. Having in the past determined silently that I would never teach online, due to the loss of personal interaction and the simple advantage of being able to look my students in the eye, I decided that in order to embrace the new technology I would need to innovate. Since for me the whole notion of being unable to deliver personal lectures to my students is unthinkable, I decided to make video recordings of my lectures as an integral part of the online course. Like many modern universities, mine is equipped with a state of the art television studio, including teleprompter and green screen.

In order to convert my lectures to video, I first prepared a detailed script, compressing the contents of a one hour and fifteen minute class session into an average of twenty minutes, by eliminating extraneous comments and focusing on the precise details of the arguments and insights I am advancing. It is important that such videos are not overly long, given the relatively short attention span of most young viewers. In any case, I have found, surprisingly, that I am indeed able to convey the nub of what I want in a twenty minute script. I also prepared various slides, photos and images to appear behind me, in place of the green screen, over which I am superimposed. I then arranged with the video production staff to come in on a weekly basis to make the recordings.

I felt, however, that more innovation was yet possible. Having had considerable theatrical experience in the past, I realized that video is the perfect medium for dramatizing some segments of my lectures. Rather than merely talking about various characters involved in the tragic narrative of the Holocaust years, why not theatrically “become” some of these characters, as brief or even extended segments of the final video product? With the teleprompter displaying my script, I employed various costuming elements to mimic the desired personage. This portion of the twenty minute presentation would then be rendered in black-and-white, to enhance the desired historical effect.

Thanks to the expertise of the university videographer, the production value of the individual lectures has far surpassed my expectations. While for the first time I will not be physically present to interact with my students in class, I foresee clear – perhaps overwhelming – advantage to this new mode of pedagogy. I have long been aware that while a good number of my students in a physical classroom are captivated by the contents of my lectures, a good many others may well be described as “disengaged.” Absences are a common phenomenon, especially in the second half of a semester. Moreover, the reality of the student who falls asleep in class is not uncommon. The challenge of reaching such students has always been problematical, but the new technology may well provide a serious remedy.

In the new Holocaust course of fall 2015, each week's material will be accompanied by a ten question online quiz, specifically geared to my video lectures. The quizzes are strictly timed, and the lecture scripts are not posted (though the videos themselves are subtitled, to be ADA compliant). Students may watch the lectures repeatedly, if desired, and are encouraged to take their own notes. Success will be determined on the basis of what they have actively learned from these presentations, supplemented of course by the weekly readings. Reaching all of the students, not merely a devoted

fraction, is the obvious advantage of video instruction if we as pedagogues step up to utilize the services available to us at our respective institutions.

The fruit of my endeavors will only be apparent at the end of the fall semester. However, the fact that the course is entirely online has already turned around the enrollment picture. As of the beginning of the fall semester 2015, there are sixty-seven students enrolled – a record number for this particular course. I have been told that I am the only professor at my university who is recording a full semester of lectures in this way. I am already recording video lectures (including various dramatizations) for a new course entitled “Judaism and Jesus,” to debut in the spring semester 2016. Additional video snippets, recorded during a guest lecture on the subject, will be included in the online course shell. Hopefully, others will follow on the trail I am attempting to blaze. If, as has been said, “the medium is the message,” and if the technology already exists, there is no reason not to embrace the “creative” side of “creative destruction.” If not now, when?

**Ken Hanson**, Univ. of Central Florida, [melumad@mac.com](mailto:melumad@mac.com)

Link to one of the lectures: <http://vimeo.com/cdlvideo/review/110251817/132fdc2ea8>

## II. Yair Qedar’s “Ha’Ivrim” on the Screen and in the Classroom

“Ha’Ivrim,” Yair Qedar’s series of documentary films about major writers in the modern Hebrew canon, has justly garnered praise and prizes in Israel. They should also be purchased by every library at an American university that offers courses in modern Hebrew literature. As every professor who teaches Hebrew literature at an American university knows, it is a challenge to introduce the writers of the modern Hebrew canon and their world, in many ways so different from contemporary American experience and in other ways too deceptively familiar. Subtitled in English, the films of “Ha’Ivrim,” with their archival footage, scholarly commentary, arresting animation and musical accompaniment, are a wonderful resource for helping these writers and their works come vividly alive in the classroom.

So far, the series includes films devoted to Lea Goldberg, Yona Wallach, and Haim Nahman Bialik, and new films on Zelda, Yosef Haim Brenner, and Rahel have recently been completed, with many more planned. I have had the opportunity to use the Goldberg and Bialik films in my modern Jewish literature survey course, and found them ideal teaching tools. Qedar’s inaugural film on Goldberg opens a luminous vista onto the feel of Hebrew poetry in its shift from Europe to Palestine between the wars, and the accomplishments and private sorrows of the writer, and does so with the help of beautiful animated sequences and Chava Alberstein reprising her musical performance of “Mishirei erets ahavati.” The film, entitled “The Five Houses of Lea Goldberg” can be paired with “Bialik, King of the Jews” to provide an excellent cinematic introduction to the Hebrew Revival. As I wrote in my review of the Bialik film some months ago in Mosaic magazine:

Qedar’s film traces the arc of this career, including its darker interstices: Bialik’s childlessness, the long poetic silence that lay upon him later in his life, his thwarted relationship with the artist Ira Jan. . . . In the film, an all-star roster of scholarly talking-heads, including Dan Miron, Ariel Hirschfeld, and Avner Holtzman, provides engaging commentary, and the exquisite singer Ninet Tayeb accompanies with musical renditions of such poems as *Hakhnisini tahat kenafeikh*, “Bring Me Under Your Wing.”

I have found the Bialik film especially valuable in providing my students with a more visceral and accurate sense of one of the most difficult aspects of modern Hebrew literature for them to grasp: the project of secularizing or displacing into secular forms the sacred texts and religious library of Judaism.

The cinematic, visual medium of the film seems to allow my students to overcome our modern, either/or conceptions of religious versus secular culture.

That said, the films do require context—some more than others—to full exploit their value for students. Elsewhere in my Bialik review I noted:

Created for an Israeli audience, the film at times lacks the sort of context—for instance, about the evolution of modern Hebrew, the history of Zionism, and the budding Jewish state in Palestine—that would likely be helpful to American viewers. Yet this doesn't lessen its impact, which in any case relies less on our being told what to think than on conveying an impression of the force of the poetry.

My suggestion here is for teachers of Hebrew literature to create a web-based collection of teaching materials--study questions, assignments, primary and supplementary readings—that can be used in conjunction with the films. And I should mention that there is already a wealth of Hebrew materials on the “Ha'ivrim” website—delightful, full interviews with scholars, writers, and commentators, from which the films have excerpted, and which could be fully subtitled for use by students.

I have not yet had the chance to use “The Seven Tapes of Yona Wallach” in the classroom, but it too would make an excellent addition to my courses, perhaps with an emphasis on poetic psychology more than literary history. Here is an excerpt from my review of that film:

The film is diligently attentive to Wallach's own words, and slows down and freezes footage of the poet to allow us to gaze on her expressions, her gestures, in a manner more empathetic than lascivious. Much of the film lingers over a series of recently rediscovered interviews (the tapes of the title) conducted with the poet by the editor and translator Helit Yeshurun in 1984, while Wallach was hospitalized with advanced stage breast cancer. (Wallach died from the disease the following year at the age of 41.) Yeshurun especially, both in the skeptical resistance she brought to those interviews, and in her reflections on Wallach a quarter century later in the film, injects into the documentary a note of melancholy regret that challenges the romantic myth Wallach created of herself.

“The Seven Tapes” is accessible without lapsing into the boring conventions of a typical documentary about a dead writer: i.e., slow pans across photographs interspersed with academic talking heads. Not that there isn't fascinating commentary by literary figures such as [Meir] Wieseltier, Gabriel Moked, and Menachem Peri. But Qedar shapes the material into a film that is cinematically and literarily satisfying. Especially notable is the film's dazzling use of animation which runs as visual commentary to Wallach's words and verse, capturing the synaptic explosions of her unique mind.

The Zelda documentary (“A Simple Woman”) is in some ways similar to the Wallach film—of course, the two women were friends until Wallach published her infamous poem “Tefillin”—in that they are character studies more than literary-historical explorations, and each quite moving in their own ways even as they leave many unanswered questions.

Watching with my pedagogical agenda, I was somewhat frustrated by Qedar's new Brenner film “The Awakener” because, while it everywhere proclaims Brenner's status as a culture hero (or anti- hero), it doesn't have much detailed information on the cultural context and history which students would need to appreciate his impact. While I can imagine students finding the film engaging, with its somewhat sensationalistic focus on Brenner's murder and on the homoerotic dimension of his friendship

with Gnessin, this is a case in which the film does not stand alone as a teaching tool. Again, a website where teaching materials can be shared would be a great boon.

This summer in Israel I had the chance to ask Qedar some questions about his project.

MW: What do you hope to accomplish with “Ha’Ivrim”?

YQ: Twelve years ago, when I began the project, I was thinking of a lack, an absence, and how it might be possible to fill it. To make a series of biographies that didn’t exist. Two decades ago the writer Dan Tsalka pointed to the lack of a biographical tradition in Hebrew culture, this lack of a space in the culture that joins the personal story and the artistic creation and the historical and cultural context. After his call, the Zagagi Fund was created and funded several biographies. And a few years later, I came with “Ha’Ivrim.” And I see in this series an enterprise similar to “American Masters,” an ongoing list that commemorates people central to the culture and that tells the stories of their creations, a continuous chain of memory and Hebrew cultural activity.

MW: How did you choose the writers, and why isn’t Agnon on the list?

YQ: Twelve years ago there was a list of fifteen figures. Meanwhile I didn’t have the budget, we made some of the writers, and the Israeli canon has changed. So the list of Hebrews constantly changes and is renewed. Every few months I update it. Agnon has been on all the lists and I hope there will be an actual film one day. Although there will be eight films in “Ha’Ivrim” this summer, there is no single factor in funding or influencing that enables “Ha’Ivrim.” Each film is a puzzle of many small subsidies. And each film is the end of a long journey of fundraising and persuasion and the struggle to find a cinematic language. So some figures are waiting or delayed or deferred, but they will come in the future. I really hope so.

MW: “Ha’Ivrim” is a powerful and loving expression of devotion to Zionism and Hebrew culture. Should we be surprised that a gay activist who previously made a film about gay and lesbian life in Israel is the moving force behind this project?

YQ: Within the complex of modern Zionism one of the most striking elements is the revival of Hebrew and the art created within it. This is not even debatable as far as I know. In this respect “Ha’Ivrim” is an expression of affection and appreciation. But obviously this isn’t a package deal. It highlights one aspect, and an aspect which is reflected in, among other things, the lives and works of the Hebrews we present.

Before “Ha’Ivrim” I was active in the gay community and I did indeed make a historical film about the community. And for me there is a similarity between these two things. When I began to work on “Ha’Ivrim” I felt I was dealing with a world that was disappearing, a world in which literature and art were central to it, a world of high culture, a world of Hebrew culture from the first stage of Zionism, from the Revival to the decline of the labor movement, a world with utopian and imaginary elements. And just as I began to be active in the gay community at a time when the subject was taboo and bound up with suppression, violence, and discrimination, and through my work publishing the journal of queer culture and the first kind of community newspaper, *Hazman Havarod*, I took part in turning the subject of gays and the gay community from something unacceptable to something accepted and legal, in a similar way I feel I’m taking part in changing perception and culture—dealing with materials and people who allegedly belong to the old world, who seem to belong to high culture but not contemporary culture, whose time has supposedly passed, and seeking to place them again on the cultural stage through films and through my artistic partners in these films, to connect them to the present and the center so as to prevent their disappearance, and to encourage cultural continuity.

MW: You seem to indicate that “Ha’Ivrim” ends with Yona Wallach. Are the values of these writers still with us, or is your series an elegy?

YQ: Yona Wallach is the last of the mythic poets, but she is not the last of the Hebrews. In this project of redeeming the dead and resurrecting the great cultural figures that began twelve years ago, she was the final name on a list that began with Bialik, but it doesn't end with her. And I invite creators and directors to propose figures and create films as part of "Ha'Ivrim," as I did this year with three guest directors who are making films about Rahel, [Rabbi David] Buzaglo, and Jabotinsky. And I hope that the list will grow in the coming years, with more films, and that "Ha'Ivrim" will become even broader, more representative, and significant, acting for the preservation, documentation, and resuscitation of the true treasures of our culture.

Michael Weingrad, Portland State University, [weingrad@pdx.edu](mailto:weingrad@pdx.edu)

## News From Our Members

### Recent Publications

**Bill T. Arnold**, Asbury Theological Seminary: *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources*, edited with Richard S. Hess (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2014); "The Genesis Narratives," *idem*, 23-45.

**Ehud Ben Zvi, University of Alberta:** *Poets, Prophets, and Texts in Play. Studies in Biblical Poetry and Prophecy in Honour of Francis Landy* (edited with Claudia V. Camp, David M. Gunn and Aaron W. Hughes; LHBOTS, 597; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015); *Memory and the City in Ancient Israel* (edited with Diana V. Edelman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2014); *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period* (edited with Diana V. Edelman; LHBOTS, 456; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014); *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period* (edited with Christoph Levin); BZAW, 461; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2014); *Perspectives in Hebrew Scriptures IX: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures, vol. 12* (edited with Christophe Nihan; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2014); "Remembering Hosea: The Prophet Hosea as a Site of Memory in Persian Period Yehud," in Ehud Ben Zvi, Claudia V. Camp, David M. Gunn and Aaron W. Hughes (eds.), *Poets, Prophets, and Texts in Play. Studies in Biblical Poetry and Prophecy in Honour of Francis Landy* (LHBOTS, 597; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015) 37-57; "Remembering Pre-Israelite Jerusalem in Late Persian Yehud: Mnemonic Preferences, Memories and Social Imagination,"• in Adam Kemezis (ed.), *Urban Dreams and Realities in Antiquity: Remains and Representations of the Ancient City* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2014) 413-437; "Reshaping the Memory of Zedekiah and His Period in Chronicles,"• in Christl M. Maier (ed.), *Congress Volume 2013* (VTSup; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2014) 370-395; "Exploring Jerusalem as a Site of Memory in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Period,"• in Diana Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (eds.), *Memory and the City in Ancient Israel*, (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2014) 197-217; "Introduction,"• Diana Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (eds.), *Memory and the City in Ancient Israel*, (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2014) 3-19; "Thinking of Water in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Judah: An Exploration,"• in Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin (eds.), *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period* (BZAW, 461; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2014) 11-28; "Othering, Selfing, 'Boundarying' and 'Cross-Boundarying' as Interwoven with Socially Shared Memories: Some Observations,"• in Diana Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (eds.), *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period* (LHBOTS, 456; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark (2014) 20-40.

**Michael Carasik**, University of Pennsylvania: *The Commentators' Bible: Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2015); a new twice-weekly podcast at <https://biblesmanyvoices.wordpress.com> based on my recent book *The Bible's Many Voices*; electronic versions of *Many Voices* and the *Commentators' Bible* on the Accordance platform; "Janus Parallelism in Job 1:20," *Vetus Testamentum* [forthcoming].

**Simeon Chavel**, University of Chicago: *Oracular Law and Priestly Historiography in the Torah* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament II 71; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); "Prophetic Imagination in the Light of Narratology and Disability Studies in Isaiah 40–48," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 14 (2014) 1–48; "A Kingdom of Priests and its Earthen Altars in Exodus 19–24," *Vetus Testamentum* 65 (2015) 169–222.

**Chaim (Harold R.) Cohen**, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev: "The Well-Attested BH-Akk. Simile כראים (Ps 92:11) / כמו בן-ראמים (Ps 29:6) = Akk. *kima rimi/rimanish* and Its Semantic Equivalent כאביר (Isa 10:13 [kethiv]) in the Speech of the Assyrian King", in *Marbeh Hokmah: Essays in Memory of Victor Avigdor Hurowitz* (edited by Shamir Yonah et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), pp. 83-110; "Pharaoh's שלישים 'Third-Man Charioteers' (Exod 14:7; 15:4) and the Unnoticed Literary Allusion to the Battle of Qadesh in the Song of the Sea" in *Visions of Life in Biblical Times - The Meir Lubetski Festschrift* (edited by Claire Gottlieb et al.; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015), pp. 17-44; "נוספים לאור" "רעים לא נאמנים" נערך יל ידי מרדכי כוגן, האקדמיה הלאומית הישראלית האכדית, בתוך ספר יובל מוגש ליעקב קליין לרגל הגיעו לגבורות, נערך יל ידי מרדכי כוגן, האקדמיה הלאומית הישראלית למדעים, ירושלים בדפוס; המילה היחידאית 'דיו' בהקשר 'ואני כותב על הספר בדיו' (ירמיה לו 18): "רע לא נאמן" בעקבות אי הכרת בעלי המסורה במילת היחס המקראית 'בדי' במובן "ל, עבור", בתוך שנתון למקרא כד בדפוס.

**Lee M. Fields**, Mid-Atlantic Christian University: *Devotions on the Hebrew Bible: 54 Reflections to Inspire and Instruct* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), coeditor, with Milton Eng, and contributor; "Succession Narrative, *Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Logos Research Systems, 2014), electronic edition.

**Amos Frisch**, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan: *Torn Asunder: The Division of the Kingdom Narrative in the Book of Kings* (Beer Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2013) (Hebrew + English Abstract); "Limited and Unlimited Monarchy: Malbim's Interpretation of the Division of the Kingdom Narrative (1 Kgs 12:1–24)," *Judaica*, 71 (2015) 21-32; "From Distinguishing between Synonyms to Revealing the Coherence of the Literary Unit: On the Interpretive Method of Malbim," *Judaica* 69 (2013) 393-429; "Malbim's Approach to the Sins of Biblical Personages," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 13 (2013), article 13, 21 pp.

**Zev Garber**, Los Angeles Valley College: "'One in Christ': The View from Torah and Shoah," in D.L. Matson and K.C. Robertson, eds., *One in Christ Jesus: Essays in Early Christianity and "All that Jazz," in Honor of S. Scott Bartchy* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2014) 99-112; ed., *Teaching the Historical Jesus: Issues and Exegesis* (Oxford and New York: Routledge Press, 2015); "Introduction," and "Teaching Jewish Studies, Hebrew Scriptures, and the Historical Jesus in the Context of Jewish Studies at a Two-Year Public College: Rationale, Objectives, Evaluation," *op. cit.*, 1-9, 13-25; "New Testament

Jesus in Modern Jewish Literature,” *Hebrew Studies* LVI (2015) 357-358; “The Jewish Jesus: Conversation Not Conversion,” *Hebrew Studies* LVI (2015) 385-392. Reviews in *Choice*, *CBQ*, and *RBL*.

**Marco Di Giulio**, Franklin and Marshall College: "S. D. Luzzatto's Program for Restoring Jewish Leadership in Hebrew Studies," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 105.3 (Summer 2015), 340-366; "Resisting Modernity: Jewish Translations of Scripture and Rabbinic Literature in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Italy," *Modern Judaism* 35.2 (May 2015) 203-232.

**Shiri Goren**, Yale University: "Humor, Violence and Creative Resistance in the Israeli TV Show *Arab Labor*" (in Hebrew). *Studies in Israeli and Modern Jewish Society*, [Iyunim Bitkumat Israel], No. 24 (December 2014) 73-93.

**Lily Kahn**, University College London: *Handbook of Jewish Languages*, edited with Aaron Rubin (Leiden: Brill, 2015); 'Lexical Borrowings in the Eastern European Hasidic Hebrew Tale', in *Semitic Languages in Contact*, edited by Aaron Butts. Leiden: Brill (in press, 2015).

**Chana Kronfeld**, University of California, Berkeley: *The Full Severity of Compassion: The Poetry of Yehuda Amichai* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

**Yair Mazor**, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee: *Under A Silky Sky : The Symbolist Poetry by Edith Covensky* (Milwaukee: Maven Mark Books, 2015); *A Poet Writes The Blues : The Hebrew Poetry of Ronny Someck* (Milwaukee: Maven Mark Books, 2015 ). In June and July 2015, Prof. Mazor gave invited lectures in Kumamoto University, Japan; Galicia Jewish Museum , Krakow , Poland; participated in a summer seminar at the Catholic University , Lublin , Poland. The lectures pertained to Hebrew poetry and biblical poetry.

**Adia Mendelson-Maoz**, Open University, Israel: *Multiculturalism in Israel - Literary Perspectives* (Purdue University Press, 2014); "Femininity and Authenticity in Ethiopia and Israel in Asfu Beru's A Different Moon," *Shofar* 33: 4 (Summer 2015) 158-172.

**Uzzi Ornan**, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (emeritus) and Haifa Technion (visiting professor since 1987): Prof. Ornan, Israeli linguist and member of the Academy of Hebrew Language, has published dozens of papers in Hebrew morphology, syntax, phonology and lexicography, as well as some books in Hebrew, among them "Grammar of Mouth and Ear" in 1947 and many later editions, "Hebrew Syntax" (1963, 69, 79), "Dictionary of Forgotten Words" (1996), "The Final Word - Mechanism for Hebrew Word Generation" (2003), and "In the Beginning was the Language" (2013). His "outstanding" life story is portrayed in Nili Osheroff, *Yotse min ha-Klalim: Uzi Ornan, Sippur Chayyim* (Carmel Jerusalem, [books@carmelph.co.il](mailto:books@carmelph.co.il), June 2015). Pages of linguistic interest: \*New adjunct clause: Content clause (p.50); \*Squeezing new roots (p. 64); \*Arabic versus Chinese (p. 77); \*Linguistics and Computers (p. 96); \*Teaching strict alphabets in IDF (p. 118); \*Phonemic transcription (p. 123); and \*Theoretical versus Observational entities (p. 134).

**Moshe Pelli**, University of Central Florida: *The Journals of the Haskalah in Mid-Nineteenth Century: HeHalutz (1852-1889) and Bikurim (1864-1865)* - Monographs and Annotated Indices to Two Hebrew Periodicals In Galicia. The Hebrew University Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 2015; 499 pp.; bibliography, index, English abstract (H); *Bikurim* Vol II (1864–1865): "For the Benefit and the Spiritual Enjoyment of Lovers of 'Hochmat Israel' [The scholarly study of Judaism] and Our Holy Tongue," [Part II]: "The Haskalah Generation is the Pillar that Enlighten This Successful Generation," *Kesher*, Journal of Media and Communications History, 47 (Winter, 2015) 104–113, 9e (H); "Yehoshua Heschel Schorr [YHS]:

The Editor of HeHalutz (1852-1889): The Pioneer in the Struggle for Reform in Religion and Customs – His Style of Editing and Criticism,” *Hador*, The Hebrew Annual of America, 2015, 77-89 (H).

**Wido van Peursen**, Leiden University: “Dealing with Sacred Texts and their Linguistic Features,” in A. Bausi et al. (eds.), *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies. An Introduction* (Hamburg: COMSt, 2015) 453–458. Online available at <http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/COMST/handbookonline.html>.

**Ora R. Schwarzwald**, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan: "Rare Words and Special Forms in Folksongs," *Helkat Lashon* 46: 2013, 114-136 (Hebrew); "Back formation" (I: 250), "Consonant Clusters: Modern Hebrew" (I: 272-279), "Defective verbs" (I: 673-678), "Derivation" (I: 712-716), "Dialects" (I: 717, with Gary Rendsburg), "Diphthongs: Modern Hebrew" (I: 739), "Dual: Modern Hebrew" (I: 776-777), "Galilean Dialect" (II: 1-2), "Gender" (II: 12-17), "Hypercorrections" (II: 218-219), "Inflection" (II: 271-278), "Judeo-Spanish Influence on Hebrew" (II: 427-430), "Judeo-Spanish Loanwords (in Modern Hebrew)" (II: 430-432), "Lexicon: Modern Hebrew" (II: 535-542), "*Mishkal*" (II: 646-650), "Modern Hebrew: Language Varieties" (II: 668-682), "Morphology: Modern Hebrew" (II:741-746), "Number: Modern Hebrew" (II: 892-898), "Secret languages, Hebrew in: Judeo-Spanish" (III: 517-518), *EHLL*:

*Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, I-IV volumes (New York: Brill 2013); "Between Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish". *Hed HaUlpan HeHadash* 101: 2013, 17-28 (Hebrew)

<http://cms.education.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/9B57F581-A76B-4CC0-BB11-0BDC12DBFEC9/182452/Ora.pdf>;

"Survey of Research Studies in Israel," *Hebrew Linguistics* 68: 2014, 95-105 (Hebrew); "Old, New, and Renewed in Contemporary Hebrew," *Hed HaUlpan HeHadash* 103: 2015, 138-147 (Hebrew)

[http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/AdultEducation/hed\\_haulpan/hed\\_103\\_ora\\_shvartzwud.pdf](http://meyda.education.gov.il/files/AdultEducation/hed_haulpan/hed_103_ora_shvartzwud.pdf); "The Hebrew Component in the Ladino of Two Books by the Same Author," *Nit'e Ilan: Studies in Hebrew and Related Fields Presented to Ilan Eldar*, edited by Moshe Bar-Asher and Irit Meir (Jerusalem: Carmel 2014), 399-416 (Hebrew); "Hebrew *hinne*, *wəhinne* and *hen* in the Ladino and medieval Spanish Bible translations of Genesis," *Karmillim [HaIvrit Weahyoteha]* 10: 2014, 113-131 (Hebrew); "Man and Woman in a Ladino Siddur from the Sixteenth Century". *Ka'et* 1: 2014, 26-37 (Hebrew); "Ladino instructions in *Meza de el alma* and in *Seder Nashin* from Thessaloniki in the Sixteenth Century," *Around the Point: Studies in Jewish Literature and Culture*, edited by Hillel Weiss Roman Katsman, Ber Kotlerman (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2014), 121- 134; "Linguistic Variations in Early Ladino Translations," *Journal of Jewish Languages* 2: 2014, 1-48; "Personal Names, Toponyms, and Gentilic Nouns in Ladino and Spanish Translations of the Bible," *El Presente* 8-9(3) (*Dameta leTamar: Studies in Honor of Tamar Alexander; Mikan* 15(3): 2015, 209-228; "On two derivational phenomena in Judeo-Spanish," *SKASE Journal of Theoretical Linguistics* (<http://www.skase.sk>) 12 (3) (*A Festschrift for Pavol Štekauer*), 488-506; "Reviews in *Megamot*, *Journal of Jewish Languages*, and *Higher Hebrew Education*.

**Marvin A. Sweeney**, Claremont School of Theology and Academy for Jewish Religion California: *Reading Prophetic Books: Form, Intertextuality, and Reception in Prophetic and Post-biblical Literature* (FAT 89; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); *Reading Ezekiel: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Reading the Old Testament; Macon: Smyth and Helwys, 2013); Hebrew Bible Editor. *The SBL Handbook of Style, Second Edition: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, edited by B. J. Collins et al (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014); "Eschatology in the Book of Jeremiah," *Marbeh Hochma: Memorial Volume for Avigdor Victor Hurowitz*, edited by M. Gruber (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015); "Farewell Speech," "Form Criticism," "Gog and Magog," "Haggai," "Habakkuk," *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*; "Biblical Theology," "Moses," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Theology*, edited by Sam Balentine (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); "The Prophets and the Prophetic Books, Prophetic Circles and Traditions—New Trends, Including Religious-

Psychological Aspects,” *Hebrew Bible—Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. III/2: The Twentieth Century*, edited by M. Saebo; Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2015) 500-530; “The Books of Kings,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Ethics*, edited by R. Brawley et al (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); “The Ezekiel that G-d Creates,” *The G-d Ezekiel Creates*, edited by Dalit Rom-Shiloni and Paul Joyce (LHBOTS 607; London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2015) 150-161; “Foreword: The Oracles Concerning the Nations in Prophetic Literature,” *Concerning the Nations: Essays on the Oracles against the Nations in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel*, edited by E. K. Holt et al (LHBOTS 612; London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2015) xvii-xx; “Isaiah 1- 39,” *Fortress Commentary on the Bible*, edited by G. Yee et al (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014) 673-697; “Modern Study of the Bible,” *The Jewish Study Bible*, edited by A. Berlin and M. Brettler (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2166-2177; “Davidic Messiah,” *The Jewish Study Bible*, 2035-2041; “Introduction to the Prophetic Books,” *Anselm Companion to the Bible*, edited by Corrine L. Carvalho (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2014) 238-252; “Introduction to the Prophetic Books,” *Anselm Companion to the Old Testament*, edited by Corrine L Carvalho (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2014) 236-250; “Myth and History in Ezekiel’s Oracles concerning Tyre (Ezekiel 26-28),” *Myth and Scripture: Contemporary Perspectives on Religion, Language, and Imagination*, edited by D. Callendar (SBL Resources for Biblical Study, 78; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2014) 129-147; “The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in Jeremiah,” *Reading Prophetic Books: Form, Intertextuality, and Reception in Prophetic and Post-biblical Literature* (FAT 89; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014) 167-182; “Myth and History in Ezekiel’s Oracles concerning Tyre (Ezekiel 26- 28),” *Reading Prophetic Books*, 203-218; “Differing Perspectives in the MT and LXX Versions of Jeremiah 1-10,” *Reading Prophetic Books*, 135-153; “Form and Coherence in Ezekiel’s Temple Vision,” *Reading Prophetic Books* 233-250; “Eschatology in the Book of Isaiah,” *The Book of Isaiah: Enduring Questions Answered Anew. Essays Honoring Joseph Blenkinsopp and His Contribution to the Study of Isaiah*, edited by R. J. Bauckham and J. T. Hibbard; Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2014) 179- 195; “Dimensions of the Shekhinah: The Meaning of the Shiur Qomah in Jewish Mysticism, Liturgy, and Rabbinic Thought,” *Hebrew Studies* 54 (2013) 107-120.

**Aryeh Wineman**, Northampton, MA: *Letters of Light* (Passages from *Ma'or va-Shemesh* by Kalonymus Kalman Epstein of Krakow, translated with commentary by Aryeh Wineman). Wipf and Stock Publishers, Pickwick imprint, 2015.

## Current Research in Progress

**Bill T. Arnold**, Asbury Theological Seminary: *The World around the Old Testament*, edited with Brent A. Strawn. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, [in press]; “Graf and Wellhausen and Their Contribution to Biblical Interpretation,” • with David B. Schreiner, *History of Biblical Interpretation, Volume 3: The Rise of Modern Biblical Criticism in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, edited by Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans (in press); “Reexamining the ‘Fathers’ in Deuteronomy’s Framework,” a paper for the SBL Book of Deuteronomy Consultation, Atlanta, (November 22, 2015).

**Lily Khan**, University College London: *The First Hebrew Shakespeare Translations: A Bilingual Edition and Commentary* (London: UCL Press); and *The Routledge Comprehensive Grammar of Modern Hebrew* (London: Routledge Press).

**Yair Mazor**, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee is currently working on a new book to be entitled *The Cryptic Bible: The Bible Surrenders its Aesthetic Secrets.* It follows his previously published book

on Biblical literature, *Who Wrought the Bible? Unveiling the Bible's Aesthetic Secrets* (Wisconsin University Press, 2009).

**Moshe Pelli**, University of Central Florida, continues to do research and work on the 19th-Century Hebrew Periodicals project, phase VI, the index and monographs of the Hebrew journal *Kochvei Yitzchak*, published from 1845 to 1870.

**Marvin A. Sweeney**, Claremont School of Theology and Academy for Jewish Religion California: *Introduction to the Pentateuch: Foundations of Israelite and Judean Identity* (Core Biblical Studies; Nashville: Abingdon, forthcoming, 2017); *Isaiah 40-66* (FOTL 17; Cambridge and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, in press, 2016); Co-Editor with Stephen Chapman, *The Cambridge Companion to the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in press, 2015).

## Recent Promotions or Change in Position

**Shiri Goren**, Yale University, was promoted to Senior Lecturer II.

**Marvin A. Sweeney**, Claremont School of Theology and Academy for Jewish Religion California: Visiting Scholar. Chung Jung Christian University, Tainan, Taiwan, June, 2015; completed term of appointment as Chair of the Faculty, Academy for Jewish Religion California, 2011-2015; completed term of appointment as Director of the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center, Claremont School of Theology, 2003-2015; Editor, Hebrew Bible and Old Testament Monograph Series, Claremont School of Theology Press.

## Curriculum Innovations and Awards

**Adia Mendelson-Maoz**, Open University, Israel, was awarded an *Israel Science Foundation Individual Research Grant* (2015-2018) for the research project "*Yoram Kaniuk: Life and Work*."

**Wido van Peursen**, Eep Talstra Centre for Bible and Computer: The online database of the Hebrew Bible of the SHEBANQ project (<https://shebanq.ancient-data.org/>) was awarded with the DH Award 2014 in the category "Best Tools or Suite of Tools". From the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research Wido van Peursen received a scholarship for the PhD project "Verbal Valence in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Syntactic Variation and Linguistic Change", to be carried out by Femke Siebesma (start 1 October 2014) and a scholarship for the PhD project "Who is Who in the Psalms? A Computational Analysis of Participants and Their Networks", to be carried out by Christian Erwich (start 1 September 2015).

# ETA BETA RHO HONOR SOCIETY

This year I have received little EBR news concerning chapter activity and new member inductions, though I am sure that individual chapters have been active in many ways. I would be happy to hear of such activities so to be able to report to the NAPH membership. I also strongly urge those members who teach at an institution which does not yet have an EBR chapter through which to acknowledge student excellence that they might consider starting such a chapter. Information on doing so is located on our webpage (<http://www.naphhebrew.org/publication/eta-beta-rho>).

The *Kaph* chapter of Eta Beta Rho congratulates its sole inductee for the 2014-2015 academic year, Edward Noftz. In the past, Ashland has had up to twenty or more inductees in a given year, coming from as many as five separate Hebrew classes. This past year, Hebrew instruction was drastically impacted by an institutional decision not to require Hebrew for any of our degrees. Steps to reinvigorate language instruction in this new reality are being discussed, and I am happy to be a clearing house for any ideas which you might wish to share on how to encourage study of Hebrew language and literature at your institution and others.

**David W. Baker**, EBR National Coordinator, Ashland Theological Seminary, [dbaker@ashland.edu](mailto:dbaker@ashland.edu)

## ETA BETA RHO

### National Scholastic Honor Society for Students of Hebrew Language and Culture

#### Chapters

(\* = inactive or non-responsive)

- |     |                    |   |
|-----|--------------------|---|
| 1.  | <i>Alpha</i>       | *Hunter College   |
| 2.  | <i>Beta</i>        | *New York University  |
| 3.  | <i>Gamma</i>       | *Butler University  |
| 4.  | <i>Delta/Dalet</i> | University of Maryland, Nili Levy ( <a href="mailto:nlevy@umd.edu">nlevy@umd.edu</a> )  |
| 5.  | <i>Epsilon</i>     | *Temple University  |
| 6.  | <i>Zeta</i>        | *Rutgers University   |
| 7.  | <i>Eta</i>         | Wheaton College, Illinois, Michael Graves<br>( <a href="mailto:michael.w.graves@wheaton.edu">michael.w.graves@wheaton.edu</a> ) |
| 8.  | <i>Theta</i>       | *Immanuel School of Religion, Milligan College  |
| 9.  | <i>Iota</i>        | *Lehman College, Zelda Newman,<br>( <a href="mailto:ZELDA.NEWMAN@lehman.cuny.edu">ZELDA.NEWMAN@lehman.cuny.edu</a> )            |
| 10. | <i>Kappa</i>       | *Los Angeles Valley College   |
| 11. | <i>Tav</i>         | *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Bruce Rosenstock,<br>( <a href="mailto:brsnstck@uiuc.edu">brsnstck@uiuc.edu</a> )  |
| 12. | <i>Mu</i>          | *Western Conservative Baptist Seminary  |
| 13. | <i>Nu</i>          | *University of Wisconsin  |
| 14. | <i>Heh</i>         | Cincinnati Christian University and Seminary, Sara Fudge  |
| 15. | <i>Vav</i>         | *Yeshiva University   |
| 16. | <i>Zayin</i>       | *Florida Christian College  |
| 17. | <i>Heth</i>        | *Sterns College   |
| 18. | <i>Chi</i>         | Indiana University, Steven Katz ( <a href="mailto:katzs@indiana.edu">katzs@indiana.edu</a> )                                    |
| 19. | <i>Tet</i>         | *Columbia Bible College and Biblical Seminary   |
| 20. | <i>Yod</i>         | Bethel Theological Seminary, Paul Ferris ( <a href="mailto:paul-ferris@bethel.edu">paul-ferris@bethel.edu</a> )                 |

21. *Kaph* Ashland Theological Seminary, David Baker ([dbaker@ashland.edu](mailto:dbaker@ashland.edu))
22. *Lamed* University of Utah, Keren Rubinstein
23. *Mem* \*Brigham Young University
24. *Nun* Bluefield College, Timothy Crawford ([TCrawford@bluefield.edu](mailto:TCrawford@bluefield.edu))
25. *Samekh* \*Cumberland College
26. *'Ayin* University of Arizona, J. Edward Wright ([edwright@email.arizona.edu](mailto:edwright@email.arizona.edu))
27. *Peh* Brandeis University, Vardit Ringvald
28. *Tsadeh* Washington University, St Louis, Martin Jacobs ([mjacobs@wustl.edu](mailto:mjacobs@wustl.edu))
29. *Qoph* University of Minnesota- Twin Cities, Bernard Levinson  
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30. *Resh* Asbury Seminary, Bill Arnold ([Bill\\_Arnold@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:Bill_Arnold@asburyseminary.edu))
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35. *Gimel-dalet-lamed* \*Waldorf College
36. *Yod-dalet* University of Kansas, Sari Havis ([shavis@ku.edu](mailto:shavis@ku.edu))
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38. *Tet-zayin* Colorado Christian University, Kyle R. Greenwood  
([kgreenwood@ccu.edu](mailto:kgreenwood@ccu.edu))
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40. *Yod-tet* University of Denver, Sari Havis ([shavis@ku.edu](mailto:shavis@ku.edu))

Inquiries about the society should be addressed to its national director: Professor David W. Baker, Ashland Theological Seminary, Biblical studies, 910 Center Street, Ashland, OH 44805; [dbaker@ashland.edu](mailto:dbaker@ashland.edu).

## **TECHNOLOGY and עברית In Search of the Perfect Translation**

*According to the biblical story, in the beginning all people spoke a single language. After the great flood the survivors decided to build a tower to the heavens, the Tower of Babel, in order to avoid being dispersed over all the earth. God, upset, blamed their affront on the fact that "they all have one language." He decided to confuse and scramble human language so that people can no longer speak to one another. Communication became infinitely more complicated, and the art of translation was born.*

Translation is a primary force behind the dissemination of ideas. Without it, advances in science, technology, literature, and culture would stall at the borders of each country. As a powerful facilitator of globalization, translation broadens our minds and opens up our world. This is especially evident in academia, where the accurate transfer of ideas is critical to collaboration and international access to research.

Academia poses a particular challenge for translation professionals. New terminology and innovative research must be described adequately by using the available terms in the target language. With this in mind, the importance of superb and precise translation is self-evident. But is it possible to have a 'perfect translation'? What are the necessary components which would make up such an ideal translation?

### **Translation: Science or Art?**

Translation requires knowledge and skill, as well as intelligent and creative problem solving. Although there are firm guidelines, expert translators do not adhere to a strict set of fixed rules.

This is the reason why an ongoing debate continues over the definition of professional translation. Is it an art or a science? Is it a branch of literature or linguistics, or simply a technical trade?

### **Adaptation as Part of the Translation Process**

Put simply, good translation must preserve and convey the information, meaning, and tone of the original language document. Speakers and readers of the target language must be able to understand the text clearly. The translation must be accurate; there is no room for ambiguity.

A good translation is not the result of a mechanical word-for-word rendition of the source text. While proper grammar and syntax are obviously critical, translators must also cope with the social nuances, contextual references, and cultural sensitivities of the target audience. In many cases a translation must veer from the literal meaning of the text in order to successfully encompass its overall message.

During the translation process, cultural adaptation is often necessary in order not to confuse – or even offend – the target readership. If an author includes references to political, religious, or public figures who are not widely known outside the original context, the translator must rework these references to suit the destination language and audience. Other details, such as metric measurements or spelling variations, must also be altered appropriately. These decisions are made in consultation with the author as part of an ongoing dialogue between the two sides.

As the owner of Academic Language Experts (ALE) I encounter this challenge on a daily basis. For example, we recently translated a Hebrew language article in the field of Bible Studies that compared the tale of David and Goliath to the heroic warfare depicted in *The Iliad*. One particularly troublesome and recurring phrase was “defended with armor,” as it might be literally translated ( מוגן בשריון is the original). However, this literal translation did not convey the phrase's true meaning. A slightly altered English phrase, “equipped with armor”, was a better fit; the translator employed the necessary artistic license to convey the message.

### **Preserving the Author's Voice**

The author's unique voice and style must come through in the translated text. Academics have often spent decades honing a particular writing style or tone that buttresses their substantive arguments.

Translators must be sensitive to each academic's preferred style. At ALE, we offer clients the option of choosing among several different translators. Before a contract is signed, the author is invited to submit a short text and numerous expert translators from their field of expertise complete short translation samples. The author can then decide which language expert truly understands the piece, both stylistically and in terms of the content.

To translate eloquently and precisely, it is imperative for language experts to have an academic background in a discipline that is relevant to the article or book being translated. The ALE staff consists of translators who have in-depth knowledge of a wide variety of academic fields. Quality is assured by an experienced translation manager who reviews the work to ensure that it is ready for publication according to the appropriate style sheet.

## **Human and Machine Translation for Academia**

Digital translation services are on the rise: are they better suited to generate the "good translation" described above? With regard to word-by-word transformations of a text, computers do demonstrate an exceptional command of linguistics. Yet, as discussed, there is a subjective human element that comes into play when translating a document.

Mastery of the source and target language is not sufficient for a translator to execute a superb translation. A translator needs to listen and understand the underlying message of the text before writing a single word. Researchers construct their arguments in sophisticated ways, with some of the most important ideas concealed between the lines of the text, where a machine cannot detect them.

### **The Perfect Translation**

There are many aspects of a good translation, but no absolute, objective definition of a "perfect" translation. Once the conditions for a good translation are met, the author can decide on their preferred style, and choose to work with a translator who understands their unique approach. There is just one additional gauge for judging quality: the finished product should read so naturally that the reader cannot tell that it is translation at all.

**Avi Staiman** is the owner and managing director of Academic Language Experts, a company dedicated to helping academic scholars publish their research by providing translation, editing, and formatting services to academics worldwide. [info@aclang.com](mailto:info@aclang.com).

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