THANK YOU, DENA DAVIS!

Dena Davis, our part-time office assistant of almost six years, left the Center for Jewish Studies at the end of this summer and moved away from the Cambridge area. Dena retired from her position as Coordinator at the Harvard Semitic Museum (downstairs from our office) in 2009 and we were very fortunate that she came to help us afterwards. Dena has worked on archaeological excavations in Israel organizing and marking pottery and other finds from the digs.

Dena’s organizational skills contributed tremendously to our office. She is well liked by our faculty, visitors, staff and students (who will surely miss her). We have benefited from her experience working at events, knowledge of kashrut, and hospitality at our lectures and events. We have come to depend on her meticulous attention to detail with our filing, archiving, and especially proofreading.

We wish Dena all the best in this new chapter of her life, and know she will keep busy with the trips she has planned, her many friends and activities and, of course, her granddaughters.
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR
by David Stern, Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature

I WANT TO BEGIN THIS LETTER — my first, as the newly appointed Director of the Center for Jewish Studies — by thanking my colleague Professor Jay Harris for directing the Center for Jewish Studies during the past year. Since coming to Harvard a year ago, I have been continually astounded by all that Professor Harris, the Harry Austryn Professor of Jewish Studies and Dean of Undergraduate Education in Harvard College, manages to accomplish, both as a gifted administrator, an acclaimed teacher, and as an active and productive scholar. It is a great honor for me to succeed Jay and to continue the very fine work he has done in leading and re-invigorating Jewish Studies at Harvard.

In December, the Center will sponsor an international conference to commemorate the establishment of the Venice Ghetto five hundred years ago. Organized by Professor Jay Harris, the conference will explore not only the meaning of the Venice Ghetto within its own historical context but also its comparative significance, as a precedent for later ghettos and forced population centers, both Jewish and Gentile. In the fall, Professor David Ellenson will deliver our annual Dreben Lecture in Jewish Law and in the fall, the Center will bring distinguished Holocaust historian Saul Friedlander for our annual Doft Lecture. In the spring, the Center will also sponsor and host our annual Starr Seminar; this year’s theme is Jews and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World, and will be directed by Professors Paul Kosmin of the Department of Classics and Shaye Cohen of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

All this is, of course, in addition to the Center's regular sponsorship and coordination of courses, other academic programs in Jewish Studies, and the fellowship and research support we offer to our students on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. These activities and programs are all made possible through the support of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Office of the Dean of Arts and Humanities, and through the generosity and help of our many donors and Friends. To all of you we offer our heartfelt gratitude.
Students, faculty and staff celebrated on March 28th when Jay Harris welcomed David Stern as our new Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature.
RABBI GEOFFREY GOLDBERG spent the spring 2016 semester at the Center for Jewish Studies as our twenty-second Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellow. This fellowship was established in memory of Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver ’48 to enable an “active congregational rabbi who has demonstrated exceptional intellectual and academic interest, originality, and energy” to engage in full-time academic research at Harvard.

Rabbi Goldberg came to us from Temple Beth El in Lancaster, PA. During his stay at Harvard, he worked on a study entitled “From Liturgical Soloist to Liturgical Song Leader: The Development of Congregational Song in the American Conservative Synagogue.” Rabbi Goldberg enjoyed the wonderful resources for research at Harvard, as well as exchanging ideas with the group of scholars at the weekly Starr Seminars. The Starr Fellows enjoyed his presentation at the Purim Starr Seminar on “The Musical Detours of Megillat Esther in the Ashkenazic Tradition.”

SPRING VISITORS
2015–2016 HARRY STARR FELLOWS IN JUDAICA
Yonatan Miller, Harvard University
Sara Ronis, Yale University
Elisha Russ-Fishbane, New York University
Sasha Senderovich, University of Colorado Boulder
Nadav Sharon, University of Toronto
Rachel Wamsley, University of California, Berkeley

DANIEL JEREMY SILVER FELLOW
Geoffrey Goldberg, Lancaster, PA

FELLOWS
Rachel Greenblatt, Wesleyan University
Liora Halperin, University of Colorado Boulder

SUMMER VISITORS
FELLOWS AND VISITING SCHOLARS
Rachel Greenblatt
Moshe Rosman, Bar-Ilan University
Ofra Tirosh-Becker, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES
THE HARRY STARR FELLOWSHIP IN JUDAICA supports a group of scholars from around the world to gather at Harvard to engage in full-time research in Jewish Studies. This research fellowship was founded with a generous bequest from the estate of Harry Starr ’21, former president of the Lucius Littauer Foundation.

The Starr Fellowship is open to scholars at different stages of their academic careers. Most years we organize the fellowship around a designated subject area. This year, Professors Shaye J. D. Cohen and David Stern co-hosted the Starr Seminars, where Fellows present their works in progress at weekly meetings during the spring semester. These presentations often elicit lively discussions between the Starr Fellows, other visiting scholars, and faculty and students from Harvard and other area universities. In addition, Starr Fellows met at weekly Starr Fellows’ Reading Group meetings to discuss published work by other scholars.

In 2015–16 we opened the Starr Fellowship to post-doctoral fellows and junior faculty only and did not designate a particular subject area. We gathered a dynamic group with a diverse array of research interests.

**HARRY STARR FELLOWSHIP IN JUDAICA SEMINARS**

**STARR READING GROUPS SPRING 2016**

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STARR FELLOWS: (REAR) NADAV SHARON, YONATAN MILLER, ELISHA RUSS-FISHBANE, (FRONT) SARA RONIS, RACHEL WAMSLEY, SASHA SENDEROVICH
STARR SEMINARS

FEBRUARY 4
Orientation Meeting

FEBRUARY 11
Text discussion: Jewish Observance of Shabbat in Merovingian France

LED BY PROFESSOR SHAYE J.D. COHEN
Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University

FEBRUARY 18
Text discussion: ‘That company was born of fire’: Jews and the Devil in the Poetry of Rumi

ELISHA RUSS-FISHBANE
New York University (spring semester)

FEBRUARY 25
Text discussion of trope: The Magical Arab

SARA RONIS
Yale University (academic year)

MARCH 3
Curriculum discussion

MARCH 10
‘That company was born of fire’: Jews and Judaism in the Classical Sufi Tradition

ELISHA RUSS-FISHBANE
New York University (spring semester)

MARCH 24
The Musical Detours of Megillat Esther in the Ashkenazic Tradition

RABBI GEOFREY GOLDBERG
Temple Beth El, Lancaster, PA and Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellow (spring semester)

MARCH 31
The Future Fall of Rome and the Coming of the Messiah: A Comparison of 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch

NADAV SHARON
University of Toronto (spring semester)

APRIL 7
From the USSR to the US of A: Scenes of Encounter and the Creation of the Soviet Jew

SASHA SENDEROVICH
University of Colorado Boulder (academic year)

APRIL 14
Classification Matters: Demonic Taxonomies in Rabbinic Literature

SARA RONIS
Yale University (academic year)

MAY 5
Violence in the Temple: The Boundaries of a Motif

YONATAN MILLER
Harvard University (academic year)

MAY 12
The Jewish Convert as Bibliographic Entrepreneur: Judah Monis in New England

RACHEL WAMSLEY
University of California, Berkeley (academic year)

MAY 19
Text discussion: Oral Torah and the Material Evidence

LED BY PROFESSOR DAVID STERN
Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard University
LECTURES & EVENTS

FEBRUARY 9, 2016
The Israeli Slang

REUVEN (RUVIK) ROSENTHAL
Israeli writer and linguist
Harry Edison Fund

FEBRUARY 10, 2016
Annual CJS Spring Reception

MARCH 4, 2016
Jewish Languages, Past and Present

AARON RUBIN
Malvin and Lea Bank Professor of Jewish Studies, Classics & Ancient Mediterranean Studies, and Linguistics, Penn State University
Suzanne R. & Dr. Lawrence M. Fishman Endowed Fund for Jewish Studies

MARCH 9, 2016
Hannah Arendt and the Laboring Body

PATCHEN MARKELL
The University of Chicago
Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund with The Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, The Harvard Colloquium for Intellectual History and Political Theory Colloquium
MARCH 17, 2016
Rethinking the Polish Underground and the Jews during the Holocaust

JOSHUA D. ZIMMERMAN
Professor of History, Yeshiva University
Leon I. Mirell Lecture Fund with the Jews in Modern Europe Study Group, The Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies

MARCH 21, 2016
Gorgeous Solipsists: Hamlet, Shylock and Moses Herzog, or How Shakespeare Invented the Modern Novel

HOWARD JACOBSON, FRSL
Honorary Fellow of Downing College Cambridge, Visiting Professor at New College of the Humanities
Alan and Elisabeth Doft Lecture and Publication Fund

MARCH 28, 2016
The Lives of Jewish Books (Welcome Event for David Stern)

DAVID STERN
Welcome Event
Harry Starr Professor of Classical and Modern Jewish and Hebrew Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature, Harvard University

Harry Elson Lecture and Publication Fund; Jeanette and Ludwig Goldschmidt Bequest for the Benefit of the Center for Jewish Studies with the Department of Comparative Literature and the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

MARCH 30, 2016
Eichmann In Jerusalem: Conscience, Normality, and the Rule of Narrative

DANA VILLA
Packy J. Dee Professor of Political Theory, University of Notre Dame
Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund with The Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, The Harvard Colloquium for Intellectual History and Political Theory Colloquium

MARCH 31, 2016
From Musa Dagh to the Warsaw Ghetto: Armenian and Jewish Armed Resistance to Genocide Conference

SPEAKERS:
DR. DEBORAH DWORK
ERIC BOGOSIAN
DR. DIKRAN KALIGIAN
DR. JAMES R. RUSSELL
Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University
Moderated by: Marc A. Mamigonian, Director of Academic Affairs, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) with the Mashtots Chair of Armenian Studies, Harvard University and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research

APRIL 1, 2016
Translation Downtown is not the Center of Town (or: ass or behind: thoughts and arguments)

ASSAF GAVRON
Visiting Professor at San Diego State University
Friends of Center for Jewish Studies with the Jewish Societies and Cultures Seminar at the Mahindra Humanities Center

APRIL 4, 2016
Diaspora and Homeland – Israel and Africa in the Hebrew-Israeli Literature of Beta Israel

ADIA MENDELSON-MAOZ
Department of Literature, Language and the Arts, The Open University of Israel; Visiting Scholar, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University (2015–2016)
Martin D. and Helen B. Schwartz Lecture Fund with the Department of African and African American Studies, the Department of Comparative Literature, the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, and the Jewish Societies and Cultures Seminar at the Mahindra Humanities Center
APRIL 6, 2016

Hannah Arendt and the Problem of the Public Intellectual

BENJAMIN WURGAFT
Visiting Researcher in Anthropology at M.I.T.
Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund with The Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, The Harvard Colloquium for Intellectual History and Political Theory Colloquium

APRIL 11, 2016

Anarchy, Legitimacy, Charisma: How Martin Buber Used the Bible against Weimar Political Theology

SAMUEL BRODY
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, University of Kansas
Friends of Center for Jewish Studies with the Harvard Jewish Studies Workshop

APRIL 11, 2016

BESA: The Promise (Film screening and Panel)

JOHANNA NEUMANN
A Jewish survivor of the Nazi persecution in Albania, will be on hand with the movie’s producer,
JASON WILLIAMS
in a conversation with
PROFESSOR ALI ASANI
Director of The Alwaleed bin Talal Islamic Studies Program at Harvard University
William Landau Lecture and Publication Fund with Harvard Hillel, the Worship and Study Minyan at Harvard Hillel, the Mashtots Chair of Armenian Studies, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and The Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Islamic Studies Program

APRIL 20, 2016

Hannah Arendt: Thought Defying Evil

RICHARD J. BERNSTEIN
Vera List Professor of Philosophy, New School for Social Research
Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund with The Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, The Harvard Colloquium for Intellectual History and Political Theory Colloquium

MAY 3, 2016

Square Pegs into Round Holes: Creating Moscow’s New Museum of Jewish History

JONATHAN DEKEL-CHEN
Professor of History, Hebrew University and University of Columbia
William Landau Lecture and Publication Fund with the Jews in Modern Europe Study Group, The Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies
CJS RECEPTION 2016
NAMED FUNDS IN JEWISH STUDIES

Those pursuing Jewish studies at Harvard University may benefit from a number of funds established over the years. New funds are formed continuously; the following funds are currently supporting students and scholars in their pursuit for greater knowledge and achievement in this field. These also may support publications and events at the Center for Jewish Studies. For further information on establishing a named fund, or contributing to one, go to cjs.fas.harvard.edu.

NAMED STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS AND PRIZES IN JEWISH STUDIES
Mandell L. Berman Fellowship
Barney and Essie Cantor Scholarship Fund
Harry Edison Fund
Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund
Leo Flax Fellowship
Goldhirsh-Yellin Foundation Fund for Undergraduate and Graduate Travel to Israel
Hertog Undergraduate Study Abroad Fund
Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship
Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund
Raphael and Deborah Melamed Fellowship in Jewish Studies
Aaron and Clara Rabinowitz Trust Fellowship
Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund
Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund for Jewish Studies
Sidney L. Solomon Fellowship
Sosland Family Fellowship
Harry and Cecile Starr Prizes in Jewish Studies
Alan M. and Katherine W. Stroock Family Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica Studies
Isadore Twersky Fellowship

NAMED TEACHING AND RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS
Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation Yiddish Language Instruction Fund
Joseph Engel Fund
Suzanne and Dr. Lawrence Fishman Fellowship Fund
Freed Research Fund in the Center for Jewish Studies
Isaac-Melech, Icla and Zelma Rykles Memorial Fund
Edwin Lichtig, Jr. Research and Teaching Fund
Joseph Morton Miller Endowed Fund for Yiddish Studies
Rohr Visiting Professorship in Modern Israel Studies
Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellowship
Harry Starr Fellows in Judaica Fund
Harry Starr Teaching and Research Fund
Alan M. Stroock Fund for Advanced Research in Judaica
Alan M. and Katherine W. Stroock Fund for Innovative Research in Judaica
Selma and Lewis H. Weinstein Fund for Jewish Studies
Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professorship

NAMED LECTURE AND PUBLICATION FUNDS
Yigal Allon Memorial Fund
Abraham and Rachel Bornstein Fund
Alan and Elizabeth Doft Lecture and Publication Fund
Robert and Florence Dreben Lecture and Publication Fund
Harry Elson Lecture and Publication Fund
William Landau Lecture and Publication Fund
Leon I. Mirell Lecture Fund
Estelle and Howard Rubin Fund
Martin D. and Helen B. Schwartz Lecture Fund
Harry A. Wolfson Publication Fund
Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund

OTHER NAMED FUNDS
Center for Jewish Studies Fund
Suzanne R. and Dr. Lawrence M. Fishman Endowed Fund for Jewish Studies
Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies
Josephine and Martin Gang Memorial Fund
Jeanette and Ludwig Goldschmidt Bequest for the Benefit of the Center for Jewish Studies
Judith and David Lobel Fund for the Center for Jewish Studies

JAY HARRIS

CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES
FRIENDS OF THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

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

You are Invited

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

If you know anyone who might be interested in joining the Friends, please notify the Center at (617-495-4326) or cjs@fas.harvard.edu, so that we may contact and acquaint them with the Center’s mission.

Some of the projects sponsored by the Friends include:

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

HOW TO GIVE

ONLINE: To make a gift by credit card to the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University, please click HERE (https://community.alumni.harvard.edu/give/16040850) for Harvard University’s online giving form and follow the instructions.

Click on “Select a School/Affiliate” and scroll to UNIVERSITY from the dropdown list. Then under “Select a Fund,” enter OTHER-Harvard University. Under “Gift details,” enter Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies (or the name of another fund of your choice), Center for Jewish Studies.

GIFTS BY CHECK MAY BE MAILED TO:

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

Please make checks payable to “The President and Fellows of Harvard College” and include a note in the memo line of the check that this is for the “Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies” (or the name of the other fund of your choice).
I am filled with gratitude for the funding I received from the Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship and the Center for Jewish Studies to participate in an interdepartmental graduate student trip to Israel last summer. I greatly appreciated the chance to connect with other Harvard students in early Christianity and Hebrew Bible. Together, we spent two weeks on an archaeological dig at Magdala, near Tiberias. Reputed to be the home of Mary Magdalene, Magdala is a place of historical significance to both Jews and Christians because it was populated in the first-century C.E. prior to being destroyed by the Romans. The most significant discovery there is that of a first century synagogue with an intricately carved ritual stone. On our dig we learned about different schools of archaeology and went on trips to a variety of important sites for understanding Judaism of the late Second Temple period.

Following our time in Magdala we moved to Jerusalem, where we attended a graduate student conference regarding various forms of textuality across religious traditions. The most valuable part of the trip for me was having the time and opportunity to share my research with other graduate students who are further along in their programs than I am and to hear about their research. It sparked research interests and connections that will help me as I enter the next stages of my own doctoral work.

— Miriam-Simma Walfish
Ph.D. Candidate, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

“...we spent two weeks on an archaeological dig at Magdala, near Tiberias.”

— Miriam-Simma Walfish

Thanks to the generous support of the Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship and the Center for Jewish Studies, I split this past summer between Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, New York, Boston, and Washington D.C. Luckily, I was generally within the secure confines of air-conditioned libraries and archives where I collected material as part of preliminary dissertation research. I focused on tracking down material relating to the idea of population transfer in interwar and post-World War II Europe, the United States, and Mandate Palestine/Israel. I was especially excited to find that Zionist and Israeli legal and political figures were extremely interested in the population exchange between Turkey and Greece in the aftermath of WWI and in the 1947 partition of Colonial India. This attention to global developments is definitely going to be a part of my continuing research and, hopefully, my dissertation.

— Rephael “Rafi” Stern
Ph.D. Candidate, History

“...Zionist and Israeli legal and political figures were extremely interested in the population exchange between Turkey and Greece in the aftermath of WWI and in the 1947 partition of colonial India.”

— Rephael “Rafi” Stern
Ph.D. Candidate, History
As a cultural sociologist, I am continually fascinated by what comparative research can teach us about our own society. My dissertation examines how veganism, which has historically been a marginal social practice, has recently become a popular lifestyle choice. Veganism is growing to different degrees around the world, yet research has not compared why it growing more or less in certain places. I am comparing veganism in three national contexts—the United States, France, and Israel—which represent three cases of medium, low, and high prevalence of veganism in terms of public consciousness and adoption at the individual level.

With the support of the Edward H. Kavinokey Fellowship, I spent part of last summer in Israel conducting interviews with activists, restaurant owners, and other movement leaders to understand how these individuals translate global ideas of veganism into the local context, and how Israelis respond to those efforts. Israel represents the most intriguing case in the dissertation given how quickly veganism has grown as a practice among individuals in Tel Aviv but also elsewhere in the country. It was my first time in Israel, and I found the people I talked to incredibly generous with their time and their willingness to welcome an outsider into their personal philosophies of living.

Highlights include living in and studying an urban vegan ecological community in the center of Tel Aviv, interviews with several prominent restaurant owners and activists, and participating in a conference on food and sustainability at Tel Aviv University. The next step will be to return to Israel for a more extended period to continue conducting fieldwork to further develop my initial research questions into a dissertation project. The summer trip was instrumental in assessing the feasibility of the project, and would not have been possible without the generous support of this fellowship and of the Center for Jewish Studies.

—Nina Gheihman
Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, Harvard University

Thanks to the generous help of the Center for Jewish Studies and its Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund, I was able to spend three weeks engaged in an intensive program in spoken Ancient Greek at the Pontifical Holy Cross University in Rome. Through speaking Ancient Greek, I developed a more active relationship to the language’s morphology and vocabulary. I plan to continue learning spoken Ancient Greek during the upcoming academic year, thus hopefully gaining a greater facility in ancient Jewish and Patristic texts.

—Jesse Mirotznik
Ph.D. Candidate, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

“Through speaking Ancient Greek, I developed a more active relationship to the language’s morphology and vocabulary.”

—Jesse Mirotznik

“I am comparing veganism in three national contexts—the United States, France, and Israel... in terms of public consciousness and adoption at the individual level.”

—Nina Gheihman

Thanks to the Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund and the Center for Jewish Studies, I spent the summer working towards the ultimate completion of a long-term project of love. Specifically, I traveled to Tel Aviv in order to conduct in-person interviews with several of the leading members of the Ars Poetica movement and Mizrahi intellectual figures, such as Shachar-Mario Mordecai, Eyal Sagui Bizave, and Roi Hassan. These artists and poets constitute the cultural heart of the Mizrahi revival and their work articulates a very relevant, and often mordant, critique of Ashkenazi cultural superiority in Israel. Although I was unable to conduct interviews with Tahila Hakimi and Adi Keissar, I was able to buy their publications, which are essential for my growing primary source collection of Ars Poetica poetry. An article and, hopefully, translation of one of these poets’ collections are the desired final product of this period of research. Without the Malloy Fund, none of this would have been possible. THANK YOU!

—Walter “Sasson” Chahanovich
Ph.D. Candidate,
Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

I am grateful to the Center for Jewish Studies and the Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund, which enabled me to spend one month in Mexico City this summer gaining perspective on the scope of Yiddish there. Over the course of my visit, I conducted archival research at the Centro de Documentación e Investigación Judío de México (CDIJM) and in the oral history collection of the Amigos Mexicanos de la Universidad Hebrea de Jerusalem (AMUHJ). I found many treasures created by Mexican-Yiddish writers during the 20th century...the vast majority of which have never been widely read in the original nor translated into Spanish or English. Finding these materials has opened up exciting new research possibilities for me as I enter the second year of my Ph.D.

Acclimating myself to Mexican Yiddish culture in context, I also had the privilege to participate in more personal encounters with the contemporary Ashkenazi community. I particularly loved attending family meals, a local Yiddish class, and a “mixed” Ashkenazi-Sephardic wedding. Being able to access this community beyond their pages helped to expand my perspective on Mexican-Jewish identity, inter-communal relationships among the various Jewish communities in Mexico, and the presence of Yiddish and Yiddishkeit within the Ashkenazi community today.

I also was able to bring this newfound knowledge from my investigation in Mexico to the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, where I spent the remainder of my summer. As an intern with the Steiner Summer Yiddish Program, I helped to process oral histories of members of this same Ashkenazi Jewish community in Mexico, excerpting and translating from Yiddish and Spanish into English...these oral histories, which were at once formal interviews and informal recollections, were rich sources of personal family narratives, stories of the founding of institutions and schools, and reflections on the general experience of being Jewish in Mexico. Working on them gave me yet another avenue of insight into the complexity of this group.

With this past summer’s experience, I feel confident about the evolving direction of my work. In the future I hope to return to Mexico City to further my research, deepen my professional relationships with leaders of the community, and continue to explore the symbolic and actual presence of Yiddish in Mexico.

—Rachelle Grossman
Ph.D. Candidate, Comparative Literature
Thanks to the Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund for Jewish Studies, I spent my summer in Israel looking at documents for my senior honors thesis. I am writing about contemporary North American understandings and interpretations of Sarah Schenirer and the early years of her Bais Yaakov movement. Established in 1917 and active in Eastern Europe until the Holocaust, Bais Yaakov was the first widespread religious school system for Orthodox Jewish girls. After the war, survivors started Bais Yaakov schools throughout the world, establishing the roots of what quickly became a thriving system catering to the right-wing Orthodox community.

However, Bais Yaakov is not the only movement that calls Sarah Schenirer its ancestor: so do women at the left wing of Orthodoxy who are seeking rabbinic ordination. These women, most of whom identify by the title of maharat, cite Bais Yaakov as the genesis of formalized women’s religious education. My thesis is motivated by the question of who is closer to Sarah Schenirer’s vision of the goal of Orthodox women’s religious education: Yeshivat Maharat or contemporary Bais Yaakov? What did Schenirer think the logical conclusion of increasing women’s religious education would be? What would Sarah Schenirer think of me—a Bais Yaakov graduate who is pursuing a degree at a secular college?

...I spent time reading journals put out by the Bais Yaakov movement in 1920s-30s Poland at the Ganzach Kiddush Hashem in Bnei Brak. I was expecting articles in the vein of contemporary Bais Yaakov publications, which focus on kinder, kuche, and kirche, but the journal had articles about diverse topics ranging from Gandhi to Spanish Jewry to the political status of the Western Wall. It was also fascinating to see the development of a coherent Bais Yaakov ideology as I read through years of issues: for example, early editions included a Polish language section, but it was quickly phased out and replaced by ads and articles urging readers to speak exclusively in Yiddish. I also looked at pre-war documents that were written to garner donations about the movement’s goals, widespread international reach, philosophical underpinnings, and pedagogical methods, as well as booklets from various postwar memorial services held for Sarah Schenirer that are full of varying conceptions of the woman and the early years of her school.

I greatly enjoyed my summer in Israel and am so grateful to the Center for Jewish Studies and the Shrage Fellowship for making my research possible and thereby enriching the content of my senior honors thesis.

—Talia Weisberg, Harvard College Class of 2017

I am delighted to have had the opportunity to present a chapter of my dissertation at the European Association for Biblical Studies meeting in Leuven, Belgium, with the generous support of the Edwin H. Kavinoky Fellowship and the Center for Jewish Studies. My paper was entitled “Horses, Wombs, and Raging Gods: Inscrutable Divine Anger in Oresteia and the Ark Narrative,” and I presented it in the compelling Deconstructive Poetics session organized by Francis Landy of the University of Alberta. I had never attended this particular conference before, and I found it to be a wonderful forum for sharing my work and getting to know many interesting scholars from around the world.

—Maria Metzler
Ph.D. Candidate,
Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

THE CJS MAILBOX
cjs.fas.harvard.edu/ CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES
2016 WINNERS OF THE SELMA AND LEWIS WEINSTEIN PRIZE IN JEWISH STUDIES

ABSTRACTS:

**FIRST PRIZE: NANCY KO, KIRKLAND HOUSE ’17**

Iran’s Dreyfus

The Habib Affair of 1915 between Alliance and Empires

In 1915, two decades after the beginning of the Dreyfus Affair and in the thick of the First World War, a Jewish employee of the British Oriental Carpet Manufacturers and former schoolmaster of the Alliance Israélite Universelle was fired from the OCM on charges of treason. The story of Monsieur Marco Habib, who was stationed in Kermanshah, bears a striking resemblance to that of the Alsatian Jew, Alfred Dreyfus. However, this paper argues that the international nexus in which the Habib affair existed challenged conventional narratives that render “loyalty” and “treason” in the strict boundaries of nation-statehood. The existence and content of documents relating to the Habib affair within the Alliance archives is not only a challenge to limited notions of the Alliance as a primarily educational institution, but also as a testament to the transnational nature of modern Iranian Jewry, in which Jewish individuals at once maneuvered and were maneuvered by colonial apparatus.

**FIRST PRIZE: ELENA HOFFENBERG, CABOT HOUSE ’16**

Of Nation and Neighborhood

Rabbi Wentworth Arthur Matthew and the Commandment Keepers Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation of Harlem

Alongside the musical and literary creativity that made Harlem famous in the 1920s and 1930s, a group of Black Jewish synagogues emerged in the New York City neighborhood. When Wentworth Arthur Matthew founded the Commandment Keepers Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation in 1919, he brought Jewish historical narratives and religious traditions together with the black nationalism of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association to create a synagogue for African Americans. However, unlike Garvey and other black nationalists, Matthew remained in Harlem instead of encouraging a return to the African continent. Archival sources, Yiddish press reports, and coverage in black newspapers contribute to this examination of the development of this community of Black Jews in the early twentieth century with connections to non-Jewish African American movements and Ashkenazi Jews.

**RUNNER UP: JACOB MOSCONA, CABOT HOUSE ’16**

Cloak of Meritocracy

Harvard’s ‘New Plan’ of Admissions and the ‘Jewish Problem’

Just over a decade after Abbott Lowell replaced Charles Eliot as president of Harvard University, Harvard drastically changed the policies and practices that guided university admissions. While Lowell had suggested that the University impose a quota system and place explicit limits on Jewish admits, the new plan—proposed in 1923—rejected quotas and instead outlined a holistic admissions process that would be less “quantitative” and place greater emphasis on individual attributes like “good character” and sociability. I argue that this new admissions policy, cloaked in meritocratic rhetoric, was in fact designed to limit the admissions of minority students, especially Jewish students. I depart from previous analyses that place significant blame on Lowell’s own outlook, and instead find that the policy reform was driven by a broad movement within the Harvard community that considered Jews its primary target. Opposition to the new plan was limited and emerged almost exclusively from the Jewish community. Like recent scholarship, contemporary opposition to admissions reform focused its criticism on Lowell himself and not on the new “holistic” policy or the Harvard alumni network that drove the policy change. As a result, the new admissions policy emerged from the 1920s largely unscathed and remains influential in the admissions policies of many elite universities today. While present-day admissions committees and alumni lobbies do not likely share the bigoted views of many of their 1920s counterparts, Harvard’s “new plan” has lasting implications and adds to an ongoing dialogue about how we decide who “deserves” admission to top schools.
ELENA HOFFENBERG

Harvard College class of 2016

ELENA HOFFENBERG’S family moved to Hawaii when she was only one year old. “I get to go home during vacations; it’s a beautiful place.” Elena partly credits her strong Jewish identity to growing up with a small Jewish community. She attended Punahou High School, a private Christian school and one of the oldest private schools in the country. (Elena pointed out that Allegra Goodman went to this school, but not that President Obama was a graduate.) There she attended chapel weekly and opted to learn more about Jewish history in history class.

Elena attended Hebrew school at their synagogue and went away to a Jewish summer camp in 2004. “It was the 350th anniversary of the Jewish settlement in New Amsterdam.” They played a game based on Jewish historical figures, and Elena was particularly interested in Emma Lazarus. She spent a summer in Israel during high school on the Bronfman Youth Fellowship. There, she met young people who seemed to have a far more “core Jewish traditional” education, many of whom attended Jewish schools. Elena was determined to learn more.

During her first week at Harvard, Elena shopped a number of classes and had trouble deciding whether to take Yiddish or Hebrew language; both met at the same time. “I was taken up with Yiddish,” Elena explains. “We started with a scene from a Coen brothers film. I learned how taking Yiddish could help me to understand this scene, as well as Yiddish literature in the US and Europe, and [Ashkenazi] culture.” She chose a joint concentration in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and History, excited by the opportunity to use the framework of the discipline of history to understand Jewish history.

At Harvard, Elena has enjoyed opportunities to spend time away during the summers to engage in research and study with the support of the Center for Jewish Studies. In the summer of 2014, she participated in the Helix Project in Belarus, Poland and Lithuania, where she studied Jewish history and culture. These actual places she had imagined as the “old country” differed from those Elena had imagined. In Bialstok, Poland, she walked through the Jewish ghetto, with memorials on the streets to Jews lost during the Holocaust and contributions of Jews before the Holocaust. (For example, the founder of Esperanto was a Yiddish speaker born in the city.) This showed Elena both the importance of the memory of the Holocaust and the history before 1935.

continued next page
ELENA HOFFENBERG (continued)

Elena has especially enjoyed her Jewish studies classes at Harvard, including two courses with (now retired) Professor Ruth Wisse, “a phenomenal teacher.” Elena took a course entitled “Judaism Confronts America” with Engel Visiting Professor Jonathan Sarna. She explains the course was framed around examining how Judaism adjusted to American standards and ways that Judaism changed America. For example, Jews participated in the abolition of blue laws. She was grateful to Prof. Sarna for his generosity in reviewing her senior thesis years later.

For three years during college, Elena worked at the Judaica Division in Widener. There she helped to process the archives of Leyzer Ran and worked on a collection of about 16,000 photographs taken by a man from California of Jewish symbols and Hebrew writing throughout the world. This archival experience proved to be a wonderful background both for Elena’s senior thesis research and her work after graduation.

Elena’s senior thesis, submitted to both the Departments of History and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, is entitled “Black Harlem, Jewish Harlem: The Politics of Race, Religion and Language in New York City, 1919-1943.” For this project, Elena examined printed and handwritten materials: newspaper articles, letters, reports and more. This broad range of sources helped Elena to understand this important and understudied moment in the past.

This project was inspired by a Langston Hughes poem that Elena encountered while browsing in a bookstore the summer after her freshman year, “I, Too, Sing America” in Yiddish translation. Elena knew that there was a story to be told about how this poem came to be translated into Yiddish. She began reading about black-Jewish relations before World War II in New York City, and notions of race as it related to Jews and other groups at that time. Elena explained that at the beginning of the 20th century, Harlem had the second largest Jewish neighborhood in the US (after the Lower East Side) and the third largest in the world (after Warsaw). In the study of Jewish history in New York, “Harlem often gets brushed over; history focuses more on the Lower East Side.” In working with a Ph.D. candidate in American history, Elena was challenged to examine new ways of understanding the relationship between government politics and policies and race relations in a neighborhood. She extended this work last summer with a CJS Summer Fellowship to study and conduct research at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York.

“I wanted to explore periods of transition and change in [Harlem] neighborhoods and identify individuals and organizations involved in black-Jewish relations.”

—Elena Hoffenberg

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

The Center for Jewish Studies congratulates these recent graduates whom we have supported over the years and wishes them all the best in their future endeavors.

B.A. ▪ ELENA HOFFENBERG
▪ YOAV SCHAEFER

M.A. ▪ WALTER “SASSON” CHANANOVICH
   Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Ph.D. ▪ CHARLES LESCH
   Government

▪ YONATAN MILLER
   Starr Fellow and November graduate in
   Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

▪ IOSEF ZHAKEVICH
   Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Th.D. ▪ AMY PAULSON-REED
   Study of Religion
campaign between the two leading candidates was structured in an interesting way. One was the child of German Jews born in the US who had attended Columbia College. The other was the charismatic African-American son of a preacher at the largest African-American church in Harlem, the largest church in New York. “The structure of the election allowed them to campaign collaboratively.”

This summer, Elena has an internship in Washington, DC at the Library of Congress. There she will be part of a cohort of summer interns. Her project, “Hidden in Plain View: Yiddish and Hebrew Collections in the Library of Congress,” will involve working with uncataloged Yiddish and Hebrew texts from the 18th and 19th centuries, to make them more accessible to the public. Elena is excited to have the opportunity to work with these documents and to combine her Yiddish language and library cataloging experience. “It is amazing that this collection is at the Library of Congress, part of the legacy of America.”

In the future, Elena hopes to continue her study of Jewish history in graduate school. This fall, she joined the Jewish Women’s Archive in Brookline, MA.

STUDENT GROUP MEETINGS

DINNER WITH THE DIRECTOR FOR UNDERGRADUATES AND GRADUATE STUDENTS
Professor Jay Harris began this new initiative to meet regularly with students to discuss their ideas and the Center’s resources.

MEETING DATES: February 24, May 9

JEWISH STUDIES STUDENT WORKSHOP
At this graduate student-led group, students shared their research for feedback.

MEETING DATES: February 1, February 8, February 22, March 7, April 4, April 11 (Lecture), April 18, May 2

JEWISH STUDIES READING GROUP
At this graduate student-led group, students met to discuss readings in Jewish studies informally.

MEETING DATES: March 3, March 25, April 19
“Two things have been particularly outstanding at Harvard: the breadth and depth of community and the ability to craft one’s own intellectual journey.”

—Nancy Ko

INTERVIEW: NANCY KO

Harvard College class of 2017

Where did you go to school before coming to Harvard? How did you become interested in Jewish studies?

I grew up in Bensonhurst, near Borough Park, and share the same elementary school alma mater as Woody Allen. (Unfortunately I was born in Staten Island but we don’t talk about that.) Growing up in Brooklyn was a huge part of my initial interest in Jewish history and culture. At the time my neighborhood was largely Jewish, Russian, and Italian. I’d sit in my parents’ grocery store, reading All-of-a-Kind-Family and then Chaim Potok, Roth and Singer, and of course every day with the customers was nine arguments and ten new photos of the kids. It was wonderful.

What aspects of Jewish studies interest you the most?

In college I decided to take my interest in Jewish history more seriously, as a way of understanding more about the world I grew up in. This led to a trip to Israel during the summer of 2014 with Professor Jay Harris, where I was exposed to Mizrahi culture and after which I took on Arabic as well in an ongoing quest to understand Jewish cultures a little farther from Brooklyn. Currently I am most interested in late-19th and early-20th century Jewish communities in the Muslim world, in particular how Iranian Jewish communities operated in the political conditions before and during World War I. Until about ten or fifteen years ago there was a dearth of work being done on modern Middle Eastern Jewish history and I hope to join the scholars who are doing this work.

What is your concentration at Harvard?

History and NELC (joint)

What has been enjoyable or beneficial to you during your time at Harvard?

Two things have been particularly outstanding at Harvard: the breadth and depth of community and the ability to craft one’s own intellectual journey. This semester I was able to act as a research assistant to Professor Liora Halperin ’05 from the University of Colorado Boulder when she spent this year at the Center for Jewish Studies as a Fellow. Such opportunities to meet and even work with scholars from across the country or world are common at very few places, and a testament to the intellectual community fostered here and the particular freedom we are granted in seeking out eye-opening experiences.

What do you hope to do once you graduate?

I intend to pursue a Ph.D. in History and continue my work on Jews in 19th- to 20th-century Iran and the Arab world. And of course, there are always more languages to learn!
THE JEWISH STUDIES READING GROUP is composed of a great community of students who meet every two weeks during the semester. Harvard is particularly well adapted to welcoming new student groups, so it was quite easy to find a meeting place. The Dudley Fireside Room is just as its name suggests: a warm, inviting space in Lehman Hall, the center of graduate community student life.

I had the idea to form the group following a series of conversations with various students and professors on campus. Harvard is a special place, with curious and smart people at every corner. I would get so excited after those conversations about an article here, a book there, and I thought to myself, what if all of these people could speak to each other? Many of the people I was talking to about Jewish studies literature didn’t know each other. I thought to myself, what if we had a group that could link all of these fabulous minds together, so that we could work through various themes and trends that affect both Jewish studies and fields that go beyond the discipline.

The field of Jewish studies can gain so much from conversations that pull from the literatures of other disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, history, etc. For example, we recently read Moshe Rosman’s *How Jewish is Jewish History*. Though I myself am getting a doctorate in the field and so my interest in Jewish studies literature is pretty obvious, there are so many students who are not directly specializing in Jewish studies who can both contribute to the field and learn from it. There’s no reason to limit the conversation about Jewish studies only to those who are being formally trained in the discipline. An interdisciplinary approach to learning about and from Jewish studies can only benefit everyone involved in the conversation.

I’m lucky to have an adviser who encourages that vision. When I mentioned my wish to gather together students to talk about secondary sources, (then) CJS Director Jay Harris was undeniably supportive. He provided advice about potential sources of funding, and even gave names of other students who could contribute to the dialogue.

Ultimately, the group would not exist without the continuous participation of students who choose topics and give presentations. In short, all are welcome, even the physicist who has a passing interest in Jewish studies! I am grateful to the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies for supporting this important endeavor.

“Harvard is a special place, with curious and smart people at every corner. I would get so excited after those conversations about an article here, a book there, and I thought to myself, what if all of these people could speak to each other?”

—Tal Grebel
STUDENT FUNDING 2015–16

GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS

Zhan Chen (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Aaron and Clara Rabinowitz Trust Fellowship
Ofer Dynes (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Alan M. Stroock Fund for Advanced Research in Judaica
Eric Fredrickson (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Isadore Twersky Fellowship
Will Friedman (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Sidney L. Solomon Fellowship
Tal Grebel (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund
Matthew Hass (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Center for Jewish Studies Fund
Mihaly Kalman (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Rafael and Deborah Melamed Fellowship in Jewish Studies
Joanna Greenlee Kline (Study of Religion) Mandell L. Berman Fellowship
Jesse Mirotznik (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund
Ethan Schwartz (Study of Religion) Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship Fund
Adam Stern (Study of Religion) Sosland Family Fellowship
Miriam-Simma Walfish (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Leo Flax Fellowship

SUMMER RESEARCH AND STUDY FELLOWSHIPS

Graduate Summer Supplemental Research and Study Funding

Jacob Abolafia (Government) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund
Walter Scott (Sasson) Chahanovich (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund

Zhan Chen (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund
Joshua Carl Abramson Cohen (Study of Religion) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund
Martón Farkas (Comparative Literature) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund
Eric Frederickson (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship
Nina Gheiman (Sociology) Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship
Tal Grebel (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship
Rachel Grossman (Comparative Literature) Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund
Raphael Koenig (Comparative Literature) Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund
Maria Metzler (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship
Jesse Mirotznik (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Anna Marnoy Feldberg Financial Aid Fund
A. David Owen (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Barney and Anne B. Malloy Memorial Fund
Raphael (Rafi) Stern (History) Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship
Miriam-Simma Walfish (Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship

Undergraduate Summer Research and Study Funding

Nancy Ko ‘17 (History and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) Barney and Essie Cantor Scholarship Fund
Talia Weisberg ‘17 (Study of Religion) Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund for Jewish Studies
CJS Goes Green!

If you would prefer to receive electronic copies of our newsletter, please email: cjs@fas.harvard.edu

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