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The Calendar of the Therapeutae as Described by Philo of Alexandria in *De vita contemplativa*

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The Therapeutae, described by Philo in his treatise *De vita contemplativa*, were a pious mixed Jewish congregation, composed of celibate men and women who lived in equality, which was quite exceptional at the time. They resided in the outskirts of Alexandria, in a village consisting of very simple individual dwellings, each with only one room and a small space for intellectual and spiritual growth, where they led an ascetic life of study and prayer. Separated from the world, they spent their days in the solitude of their own refuge, although once a week, on the Sabbath, they had a day of fellowship. The community met and attended a type of Liturgy of the Word, led 'by the eldest and most learned in doctrine, who gave a reasoned and pondered address' (Ph. *Contemp.* 31). Every seventh Sabbath, at twilight, they held a great celebration to commemorate the departure from Egypt and the end of the slavery of the Hebrews. This event began at dusk on the forty-ninth day and ended at dawn on the fiftieth, and essentially consisted of a gathering of the members of the association and a homily given by the πρόεδρος, or president, of the assembly. A sacred banquet then took place that lasted until dawn, with dances and canticles in honour of God.

The life of this devout congregation was regulated by a calendar created around these feasts, the Sabbath and the Pentecostal meeting, based on the numbers seven and 50 and framed within a solar hemerological context. While seven was related to the Sabbath, 50 referred to the day of the community's great feast that occurred every seven weeks. Although the Therapeutae calendar was original, it resembled some of those followed at Qumran. However, it was completely separate from the official Jewish calendar. Indeed, these ascetics/philosophers had a special position in relation to the observance of the Law; while they did not depart dramatically in practice from the Jewish canon (ὀρθοπραξία) they did alter it in some respects. In addition, in their theoretical orientations (ὀρθοδοξία), they were more flexible and had their own approaches.

Clearly, this congregation, without being apostate, maintained a very *sui generis* attitude towards temple Judaism, although this was not exclusive to the Therapeutae; the Jewish world at the time was divided into a number of different sects, and the various Jewish groups had their own particular features and interpretations of religion. The position of the Therapeutae did not align with Philo's perspective based on Mosaic law, and although the Hebrew philosopher praised this community in his treatise, he criticized their 'dissenting' position in some of his works (Ph. *Migr.* 86-93). This article explains the characteristics of this peculiar calendar and its relationship with others of the era.

The Synagogue of Los Golondrinos of Toledo: An Archaeological Study

Marcos Alonso García

In March 2020, an archaeological survey was conducted at 31 Calle de las Bulas, in the historic Alacava district inside Toledo's Jewish quarter, that discovered a small synagogue, complementing the remains discovered fifteen years earlier at the neighbouring property, 29 Calle de las Bulas. Along with the bibliographic data already found to support the presence of such a building in this location, this information comprises evidence of the Synagogue of Los Golondrinos of Toledo. Bibliographic sources indicate that the building, which existed between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, coexisted with at least 11 other synagogues during the period of maximum Jewish splendour in the city of Toledo. Only two major synagogues, Santa Maria la Blanca and El Transito, both of which were converted into Catholic churches, have survived to this day. The others, including Los Golondrinos, were abandoned and were most likely destroyed during anti-Jewish activity in the late fourteenth century.

The significance of this discovery does not only lie in its historical value, but also in the quantity of the discovered remains, which provide a rare wealth of information about the synagogues on the Iberian Peninsula. Nearly all the main elements characteristic of these houses of worship have been preserved: perimeter walls, pillars, entrances, floors, decorative and ritual elements, amongst others. Both the external architectural composition and the internal layout and divisions can be discerned, elucidating the function and meaning of the building. Of the most important remains, the position of the floors and the marks found on them indicate a specific division of spaces, emphasizing above all the central area, the site of the prayer room. The ability to interpret the building in relation to adjacent structures found in neighboring properties adds complexity to the discovery, providing data to speculate about the urban space that it occupied. It was clearly one of the most important places in the neighbourhood from both a religious and social perspective. This exceptional discovery sheds light not only on this type of

building and its significance, but also on the history of the Jews of Toledo. Currently, all necessary efforts are being made to recover it and open it to public visits in the near future.

Arabic as a Second Language in Israel: The State of the Art

Adrián Tellez Martín

The context surrounding the Arabic language in Israel is unique in the world. For a variety of reasons in that country, Arabic finds itself in a somewhat contradictory situation. Although it enjoys official recognition and some degree of institutional support, at the same time, it is not valued very highly in the Israeli linguistic market. This dual trend leaves the language in a sort of no man's land, wanting to retain the public regulations that protect it, but unable to establish itself in the Hebrew-speaking sector of the Israeli population. This unique case has caught the attention of many specialists in Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics of Arabic, with each one generally focusing on one aspect of this multifaceted phenomenon: the historical reasons for the current situation; the linguistic policies implemented since the foundation of the State of Israel and the aims and ideologies behind them; the coexistence between Hebrew and Arabic and the battle over public – and even private – spaces; the portrayal of Arabic and its value amongst Hebrew speakers; and teaching and learning Arabic as a second language. All these factors shape the different contexts in which Arabic exists in the Israeli linguistic landscape.

This article provides a coherent and comprehensive discussion of the most significant conclusions reached by the researchers who have worked in these areas. In that spirit, the study unravels the complex situation of Arabic as a second language, in other words, a language that is not native to the Hebrew sector. While the aims of the article are broad, particular focus is placed on the question of teaching and studying Arabic in Hebrew elementary, middle and secondary schools. The article begins by establishing the current sociolinguistic situation around Arabic in Israel and explaining the historical causes behind it. It then looks at the different linguistic policies adopted from the Hebrew-speaking sector that have addressed the Arabic language, particularly vis-à-vis education. Finally, the article summarizes the status of teaching and learning Arabic as a second language from three different perspectives that are not often analysed together: methodology (the teachers), attitudes (the pupils) and results (the outcome of the process). The article concludes that not only does the obvious failure of Arabic instruction as a second language in Israel result from a variety of different sociolinguistic contexts, but that it is easier to understand the situation when they are connected and analysed together.

Between *Arab Chic* and *Shas Chic*: Sigalit Banai and her Particular Artistic Vision in Contemporary Hebrew Poetry

Erica Consoli

This article presents a translation, description and analysis of the poetry of Sigalit Banai, highlighting the characteristics that make her poems unique and particular in Israeli literature: the mix of artistic languages she uses and the way she includes characters and situations from the periphery of Israeli society in her work. Performance art, theatre and cinema have all influenced Sigalit Banai's poetry, forming the foundation for her artistic creations. Through this mixture of genres, Banai addresses different themes, transforming herself into a character in her poems and questioning Israeli identity in the broadest sense. Both the themes and her form of writing play a significant role in her poetry, representing an exception in the Israeli literary panorama, even while they are influenced by global trends, like performative and spoken word poetry and transmedia literature, amongst others. This article analyses her first two intimately connected works, *Hatikva Neighborhood, Cairo* (2013) and *Hebrew Woman* (2016), describing Banai's relationship with the Hebrew and Arabic languages within and outside Israeli society. The Mizrahi question also forms an integrative part of her oeuvre, both in poetry and cinema.

The article's three main sections explore various aspects of Banai's technique. The first concerns her use of different artistic languages, her particular way of bypassing the limits of written poetry by reading her poems, bringing them to theatres and even adapting them to video clips. By mixing writing and orality in different media, Banai not only produces work that is more comprehensible and able to reach a wider public of readers and listeners, but also creates her own specific interartistic language. The second part of the article reveals how the mixing of artistic languages corresponds to a linguistic mix; although Banai largely writes in Hebrew, the call for the use of Arabic as part of the Israeli culture – with the argument that Israel is part of the Middle East – is a fundamental part of her poetry. She uses Arabic in her written and, especially, her spoken work. In one of her poems, she also proposes the use of 'Arabrew', a mix of Arabic and Hebrew, as part of the fight against colonialism. In this context, Banai's poetry is most notable for her unique way of transforming herself in her poems. She becomes one of the characters, and almost every poem is dedicated to a person/character who represents a minoritized context (Mizrahi Jews in Israel, Arabs both in and outside Israel, Orthodox Jews). Sigalit Banai transforms her identity in each poem, reinventing herself as an Arab or Orthodox Jewish woman. The third section explores Banai's artistic production as a way to discover and enter Israeli peripheries, to listen to (usually silenced) voices from peripheral contexts, and to gain a broader idea of Israeli society as multiple, complex and changing.

Two Poems of Yiṣḥaq ibn al-Ḥadib (14th-15th Century)

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In this contribution, included in the “Texts” section of the journal, Esperanza Alfonso offers the Spanish translation of two Hebrew wedding poems by Yiṣḥaq ibn al-Ḥadib. The author, born in Castile in the mid-14th century, emigrated with his family to Sicily, where he settled and apparently lived until his death. Al-Ḥadib excelled in the fields of translation, exegesis, astronomy and mathematics. In addition, he was also a poet and some ninety poems of his, edited by Orah Ra‘anan in 1988, have come down to us. In the first poem translated herein, which echoes a moral testament of sorts, Al-Ḥadib addresses his son, Abraham, on the day of his wedding, wishing him happiness and giving him advice for a successful future. He lists the sources and fields he has to become acquainted with and eventually master, as well as the values that must govern his behavior and his relationship with others. The advice transmitted includes adherence to the thirteen principles of Judaism, listed in versified form. The second poem, which Al-Ḥadib addressed to his son Ṣaddiq on his wedding day, is an abridged variation of the former.

The translation is preceded by a brief introduction that provides context. In this introduction, Alfonso places these two poems in relation to an earlier composition on the same topic, the famous poem *Qa‘arat kesef* («Silver Bowl») by the 13th-century Provençal poet Yehosef ben Natan ben Ḥanan ha-Ezobi. This poem, which ha-Ezobi dedicated to his son Šemu‘el, also on the occasion of his wedding, would become very popular, was circulated in a good number of manuscript copies and has been edited several times. Alfonso compares the *curriculum* outlined by the two authors, the cultural models they put forth and the social and cultural anxieties that the poems reveal.

Language and History: A Reconstruction of a Sephardic Doctor’s Life from his own Words

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This article explores the use of lexical elements to ascertain the extent to which they can help reveal features of an author’s life that were hitherto unknown. The object in this case is an anonymous text written in seventeenth-century Istanbul, only preserved in manuscript form (NLI, Fr.3172). As is characteristic of writers of Judeo-Spanish, the author, a doctor, uses words from various languages with the main element being Spanish. As a reflection of his family’s exile from Spain after the expulsion of 1492, many

of the words used by the author were already obsolete in that country in the seventeenth century. Along with the members of many other Jewish families who went to Portugal, the author continued to communicate using the Spanish his family brought with them, which did not evolve as it did in Spain. Indeed, many medieval terms lost in Spain were retained among these speakers, while they also created new words.

Because the author was born in Portugal, the text could be expected to contain that language, but there is very little Portuguese. Given that the doctor was born around 1578, the scarcity of Portuguese could well be related to the historical events that took place in 1580, when the union of Spain and Portugal under King Philip II opened the border between the two countries. At the same time, Portuguese persecution under the Inquisition led many New Christian families to move to Spain. The lack of Portuguese, then, suggests that the author did not grow up in Portugal and it may well be that he picked up the few words from that language that appear in the text while he was living in Istanbul. The author studied medicine at the University of Salamanca, where Latin was the language of books and learning. In the text, the doctor uses Latin phrases not commonly understood in Istanbul, with Spanish translations next to them. This suggests that he was proud of his university education and may have looked down on the physicians in Istanbul who did not receive such training. His educational background was part of his identity, and this most likely explains what could be viewed as his useless – and often inaccurate – Latin references. Although the doctor lived in Istanbul for 25 years, he uses few Turkish words and mentions few Turkish colleagues or patients, indicating that although he had some relationship with the Muslim Turkish world, he largely interacted with the Sephardic Jewish community. By far the most common non-Spanish terms in the text are in Hebrew. The analysis of the Hebrew terms used suggests that he was a diligent new Jew who learned the language during this process of embracing the religion of his ancestors. It also indicates that the medical terms translated into Hebrew during the Late Middle Ages were still in use. This is confirmed by the signature of the author's son, Samuel Moreno, in this text and in a seventeenth-century copy of a medical work that had been translated into Hebrew in the thirteenth century. Overall, the language in this text helps to reconstruct a life story and even suggests the reason for author's exile. Additionally, as it was written while Judeo-Spanish was taking shape, it is a rich source for the study of that language as well as the history of medicine.

The Jews of Briviesca in the Middle Ages: A Historical-Documentary Approach

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This study focuses on the medieval Jewish community of Briviesca (Province of Burgos) from a historical-documentary perspective. This *aljama* was located at a natural

crossroads connecting the northern and western Iberian Peninsula, which fostered trade and, therefore, demographic and economic expansion. The article presents a brief state of the historical research into the area (Huidobro Serna, 2011; Cantera Burgos, 1952; Soyfer, 2016), followed by a chronological examination of the community's stages of development.

The first reference to Briviesca's population is found in the community *fuero* of 1123, and its presence is attested in the thirteenth century in tax documents and jurisdictional links with the nearby Monastery of Santa Maria la Real de Huelgas and the Abbey of San Salvador de Oña. In the fourteenth century, the Jewish community underwent a spatial restructuring, with the transfer of the population to another location, followed by a jurisdictional restructuring as a result of the town's incorporation into the territory of Blanca of Portugal, who granted a new *fuero* in 1313 that included some provisions related to the Jews. In 1366, Rabbi Shemuel ibn Zarza noted that the Jewish quarter of Briviesca was nearly destroyed during the war of succession between Pedro I and Enrique of Trastámara. The community recovered somewhat under King Enrique II of Castile, with the town being brought into the noble house of Pedro Fernández de Velasco. The financial activities of Çag of Monzon and Senor Corcós also date from this period. The population then declined, with migrations to Murcia and Portugal, where Rabbi Hayyim of Briviesca produced his most notable work. The fifteenth century witnessed a progressive demographic recovery in the area, which became a centre of influence for other Jewish communities in the region. The Jews of Briviesca were renowned for their financial, tax collection and lending activities, some in service of the Velasco family. Yuçaf Bienveniste and his son Mayr were active during this period. In the mid-fifteenth century, the Briviesca Jewish community began to show signs of weakness, and was replaced by the more powerful Jewish communities in the towns of Belorado and Medina de Pomar. The participation of Jews in the collection of loans from the town council of Burgos is documented, as are other lending activities that were denounced as usurious to the Royal Council. When the expulsion was enacted in 1492, many of Briviesca's Jews left the town via the Port of Laredo in Santander. The fate of the *aljama*'s communal property is unknown, although some private properties were sold. It is likely that the site of the Briviesca synagogue belonged to the Hospital del Rey at that time, becoming property of the constables in the seventeenth century. The only possible material remains of the Jewish culture is the '*tesorillo de Briviesca*', a diverse collection of crockery, coins and other gold and silver objects whose affiliation with the Jewish community has not been definitively established. The article includes an appendix containing an extensive regesta with the most important information available on this group during the Middle Ages, providing a systematized and updated documentary source that fills in numerous gaps in the history of this important Jewish community.

The Synagogue of Los Golondrinos of Toledo

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The Alacava district in Toledo is often described as the ‘quarter of the *conversos*’ by historians, who did not consider it a Jewish settlement in the strict sense of the word, with no major buildings belonging to the Jewish community identified there until recently. The neighbourhood was destroyed in 1355 during the war of succession between Pedro I and Enrique of Trastámara, and after its destruction it fell into oblivion. There is no synagogue called Los Golondrinos in the list of the ten synagogues destroyed during the pogrom of 1391, indicating that it had probably been demolished and abandoned when the Alacava was attacked in 1355. However, early sixteenth-century documents in the archives contain the description of several houses adjoining a plot of land formerly occupied by a synagogue. This article presents a regressive investigation into the area made possible by the study of documents that record the tributes levied on houses, a tax paid by all the residents of houses and systematically renewed from the Middle Ages until the ecclesiastical confiscations of the nineteenth century. Since each new landlord or tenant had to assume the duties placed on the house, there is a thread of the tribute obligations that can be traced using a regressive method, starting from the most recent data and progressing back to the oldest. The documents analysed led to the identification of a house that belonged to Abrahén Aben Rabi, a Jewish goldsmith and coin maker at 9 Callejón de Esquivias, the centremost part of the Alacava district. The documents also indicate that a synagogue, which was close to the house owned by Lope de Acre, was located amidst a cluster of houses on the highest part of the Alacava hill in 1350, as corroborated by the results of archaeological excavations done in 2006 at 29 Calle de las Bulas. Indeed, the building at this address occupied part of the former synagogue.

The information provided by the medieval documents in Toledo comprises an important source which, together with field exploration, has opened up new avenues of research. Indeed, the combined methods of regression investigation and archaeological excavations highlight the need for interdisciplinary work to facilitate discoveries that will augment the current understanding of medieval urban planning. In the case of Toledo, the Synagogue of Los Golondrinos was known from archival documents, but could not be located in the city. Excavations subsequently uncovered the remains of this synagogue, which are remarkable for both their originality and their state of conservation. The characteristics of the building’s floor plan, its pavement, the side rooms probably associated with a mikvah and, above all, its location at the top of the Alacava – which allowed for two entrances, one at the upper level and another at the lower level – suggest new interpretations for such buildings and their relationship with their urban setting.