20 YEARS OF JUDAIC STUDIES AT UT

- **October 24, 2013**, 7PM Professor Daniel Boyarin, University of California Berkeley

- **January 23, 2014**, 5PM Maestro Lucas Richman, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra

- **February 12, 2014**, 12PM Professor Emeritus Henry Fribourg, University of Tennessee

- **March 25, 2014**, 7PM Professor Tsvi Kahana, Queen’s University, Canada
  Karen and Pace Robinson Lecture on Modern Israel, “Majestic Constitutionalism: The Israeli Version,” Room 132, College of Law, organized by Professor Robert Blitt, College of Law, reception to follow.
It seems only yesterday that Professor Gilya Schmidt joined our department and began building the Judaic Studies program whose 20th anniversary we are celebrating this year. We give thanks for its two decades of existence as well as its manifold contributions on campus and in the community over the years. I encourage you to read this engaging newsletter to appreciate Dr. Schmidt’s creative leadership and ceaseless commitment to Judaic Studies, as well as the productive network of donors, administrators, faculty, students, alumni, and members of the Knoxville community.

Rosalind I. J. Hackett, Ph.D.
Head, Department of Religious Studies

Dear Friends of Judaic Studies,

In 1992, the hard work of Professor Charles H. Reynolds, Head of the Department of Religious Studies, Dean Larry Ratner of the College of Arts and Sciences, and members of the Jewish community paid off. An endowment to strengthen the financial resources for a new hire in Judaism was in place, and a search began for a scholar of Judaism. This process brought me to the University of Tennessee in 1993. For me, it was a lucky break. I hope it has been a good investment for the university and for the community as well.

During the two decades that followed, we have enjoyed many successes—bright students, inspiring visiting scholars, interesting publications, wonderful collaborations, strong and gratifying support on several fronts—all this in spite of economic downturns and several changes of administration. Our ever so faithful major donors, Manny and Fern Steinfeld and Guilford and Diane Glazer, again and again bolstered our existing funds, primarily the Endowed Chair in Judaic Studies, held by Professor Gilya Schmidt, and the Endowed Professorship in Ancient Jewish History, held by Professor J.P. Dessel, and prompted new initiatives, such as the teaching of Modern Hebrew and student scholarships. But they were not the only contributors to the program. Many members of the Jewish community supported our efforts with smaller, but regular donations. For a number of years, Mitchell and Natalie Robinson annually enhanced the Judaic Studies Support Fund, a fund that supports teaching and small equipment needs for the Chair. Dr. Alan Solomon established the Abraham and Rebecca Solomon and Ida Schwartz Distinguished Lecture Fund for speakers of renown, while the Knoxville Jewish Alliance Lecture Fund for speakers of renown, while the Knoxville Jewish Alliance underwrote an annual Judaic Studies lecture series for 15 years until community donations decreased. Mira Kimmelman donated more than five thousand dollars in royalties from her first book, *Echoes from the Holocaust*, published in 1997, to the Chair Endowment in Judaic Studies. The first Judaic Studies scholarship fund was established with a gift from the estate of the late Dr. Ruben Robinson, and the latest gift, from Pace and Karen Robinson, supports an annual lecture on Modern Israel. Manny and Fern Steinfeld, in addition, provided moneys for a Steinfeld scholarship, and many, many members of the community contributed what they could to the cause, some of them many times over during the past twenty years.

Some of our proudest moments were two Holocaust conferences in 1995 and 2001, when different units at the university and organizations in the community worked together to raise the funds through donations, grants, and in-kind gifts to bring some of the finest Holocaust scholars to Knoxville. Among them were Gerda Weissmann Klein, Yaffa Eliach, and Elie Wiesel. We also showcased our very own—Mira Kimmelman, Arnold Schwarzbart, Art Pais, Ernie Gross, Sonja Dubois, Trudy Dreyer, and the late Matilda Goodfriend—who had poignant and heart-wrenching stories to share as well. We celebrated Israel’s 50th anniversary with an entire semester of cultural events, from reading groups to concerts to films and lectures, most of it on a shoestring budget. On these occasions we partnered with many different local and regional organizations, among them the Knoxville Museum of Art, the East Tennessee History Center, the Dogwood Arts Festival, Tennessee Children’s Dance Ensemble, Circle Modern Dance, the Arnstein Jewish Community Center, Heska Amuna Synagogue, Temple Beth El, the Israeli Consulate in Atlanta, Jubilee Community Arts, Tennessee Schmaltz, Norman Magden and the UT School of Art, NCCJ, and the East Tennessee Foundation.

Most recently, the community and the university came together once more, to raise the funds for three
successive Schusterman Visiting Israel Professors from 2008-2011. Though in different disciplines, all three made interesting, cutting-edge contributions to the study of Judaism at the university and contributed to the cultural life of the Jewish community. Almost simultaneously, the Glazers and then Allen and Lea Orwitz stepped up to support the teaching of Modern Hebrew at UT. Our fourth Glazer/Orwitz Modern Hebrew Teaching Fellow, Itzik Pariente, recently arrived from Israel. We are also fortunate that, for the first time, both Modern and Biblical Hebrew are taught, due to the arrival of Jacob Love in January 2012.

To each and every individual who has supported Judaic Studies over the past two decades, be they in the institution or in the Jewish or wider community, we offer our deepest gratitude. Nothing is more gratifying than people coming together for one cause. We have certainly been blessed in this respect.

The obvious question is, what does the future hold? The program is ready to grow in faculty and students and to expand intellectually. I am very much indebted to our loyal Judaic Studies Advisory Committee, some of whose members have been with us from the beginning—Robert Blitt, Erin Darby, J.P. Dessel, Nancy Henry, Heather Hirschfeld, Marilyn Kallet, Vejas Liulevicius, Jacob Love, Daniel Magilow, Amy Neff, Itzik Pariente, and Tina Shepardson.

Where to put our current resources and how to raise additional needed funds, that is the question. Judaic Studies has been amazingly stable over the past two decades. In addition to several new faculty members over the years, the Schusterman Visiting Israel Professors and the Modern Hebrew Teaching Fellows brought diversity over the past five years. We are fortunate that the arrival of new faculty again allows us to expand both research and teaching. Judaic Studies courses suffer from one shortcoming—we often do not see students until they are seniors, at best juniors. This means that the students who take our classes are close to completing their already chosen majors so that they can graduate. In most instances it is too late for a new or second major. In spite of this handicap, the students who do commit to Judaic Studies, as majors, double majors, or minors, or who seek one of us out as mentors for College Scholars, show great promise. Few are Jewish, yet their course of study serves them well for life.

One of our very first students, Nathan Solomon, graduated about 17 years ago, and we are still in touch. Married to Tonya, and after graduate studies at Old Dominion, he served several tours as a chaplain in Afghanistan. We are also very grateful that, during the past few years, Nathan has become a generous alumnus donor to Judaic Studies. Link Elmore, Nathan’s friend at UT, likewise got married, to Karen, and he and his family live in Virginia. Melissa Range went on to a graduate degree and teaching and writing; Diana Whaley became a nurse; Betsy Taylor a French teacher; Meg Pattison studied to be a lawyer at Vanderbilt University; Dani Gray did graduate work in Judaism; Jamin Carlisle got an M.A. in Religious Studies, with a focus on Zionism, here at UT; Lisa Plante earned a Ph.D. in Education and Holocaust Studies; Jerry Gay continued serving in the military; Allison Castell went into teaching, Lauren Shey moved to the West Coast, and Avi Shem Tov from Israel earned a degree in Logistics and Transportation and returned to Israel. Ali Azizi earned graduate degrees in international business at Vanderbilt. Last I heard he was heading for Asia to build schools in poor rural areas. And, of course, Suzy Garner recently served as a development officer for the humanities at UT. Others such as Laura Kendrix, Karen Dhyanchand, Marian Rosenbaum, John Jennings, Kim Hislop, Evan Bronstein, David Smith and his daughter Maggie Smith, have moved on and we only occasionally hear from them. Over the years, a number of students who sought out one of us as their mentors were College Scholars. Michelle Warriner went to Harvard Divinity School and became a minister; then there was Jennifer Gridley, and Igor deSouza is currently completing his Ph.D. in Medieval Judaism at the University of Chicago.

Since 2008, Judaic Studies majors and minors have the opportunity to compete for two scholarships in the program, sometimes more than once. Adam Schwartz, Amy Canter, Mike Derocco, Nikki Swartwood, Jesse Feld, and most recently Alissa Reeves received Dr. Ruben P. Robinson Judaic Studies Scholarships; Rich Adams, Mark Kline, Naima Cortez, Amanda Cappanola, Chris Whaley and again Nikki Swartwood received Manfred and Fern Steinfeld Scholarships in Judaic Studies.

From our resources, human and financial, follows the direction of programming as well. New initiatives between the university and the community, faculty-led student trips to Israel and other sites of Jewish interest, collaborations between diverse faculty from within and without the university—these are some of the future possibilities, reflecting recent hires. As the Director of Judaic Studies, and in conjunction with the Judaic Studies Advisory Committee, I ensure that the desired activities happen and seek out and support new opportunities for collaboration. In all of my activities, I am supported by a Graduate Assistant, for the past three years by Ashley Combest from the English Department, whose help and expertise is invaluable in getting the job done.

We invite you to celebrate our accomplishments with us during this anniversary year and to help us make the future even brighter for our students, scholars, and community—Kadima (Onward).

With much gratitude and all good wishes for a sweet and successful year,
DONORS IN 2012-13

Every year not only the earnings from our endowments keep Judaic Studies afloat, but additional contributions from existing or new donors. We would like to thank all of our 2012-2013 donors for their generosity and for their interest in keeping the study of Judaism alive at the University of Tennessee.

This past year we received contributions from:

- Manny and Fern Steinfeld for Chair in Judaic Studies Endowment
- James S. and Ronda Shapiro Bogard for Judaic Studies Endowed Chair Fund
- Dr. Jeffrey and Nancy Becker in honor of Natalie L. Robinson for Karen and Pace Robinson Endowment
- Zane W. Bell for Judaic Studies Support Fund
- Marcia Silverstein for Abraham and Rebecca Solomon and Ida Schwartz Distinguished Lecture Fund
- Stella Iroff for Chair in Judaic Studies Endowment
- Rose P. Holz for Judaic Studies Support Fund
- Guilford and Diane Glazer for Diane and Guilford Glazer/Lea and Allen Orwitz Teaching Fellowship in Modern Hebrew Fund
- S. Pace and Karen M. Robinson in honor of Mintha E. Roach for Karen and Pace Robinson Endowment
- Sondra Markoff in honor of S. Pace Robinson for Karen and Pace Robinson Endowment
- Allen and Lea Orwitz for Glazer & Orwitz Teaching Fellowship in Modern Hebrew Fund
- W. Nathan Solomon for Judaic Studies Support Fund

The Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies offers two scholarships:

- THE FERN AND MANFRED STEINFELD SCHOLARSHIP IN JUDAIC STUDIES
- DR. RUBEN ROBINSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Students interested in the criteria should check the Judaic Studies website at http://web.utk.edu/~judaic, or contact any of the faculty affiliated with the Judaic Studies Program.
Robert Blitt
Professor Robert Blitt of the College of Law enjoyed a break from teaching in 2013 to take care of his third son, Abraham Meir. Baby Abie was born in November 2012 and arrived home to a warm welcome from his brothers Noah and Idan. Also waiting for Abie at home—a giant pile of hand-me-downs that he continues to outgrow at an astonishing pace. Professor Blitt’s forthcoming scholarship includes two peer-reviewed book chapters addressing the impact of the Arab Spring on the right to freedom of religion or belief (in Eileen Barker and David Kirkham, eds., State Responses to Religious Minorities) and the function of international human rights law in informing efforts at promoting social justice (in Jon Shefner, et al., eds., Social Justice and the University).

Erin Darby
The last academic year has been a busy one for Dr. Erin Darby. In addition to teaching Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, Introduction to Early Judaism, Comparative World Religions, and an upper-level seminar in Archaeology and the Bible, Erin’s dissertation was accepted for publication. She spent much of her time revising, editing, and expanding her manuscript, Interpreting Judean Pillar Figurines: Gender and Empire in Judean Apotropaic Ritual, which should be available this coming year with Mohr Siebeck. Additionally, Erin presented two papers at the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Chicago (“Archaeology’s Next Top Model?: Assessing Interpretive Approaches to Figurines as Ritual Objects” and “The 2011 ‘Ayn Gharandal Archaeological Project”), one paper at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Chicago ("Idol Economy: International Trade and Idol Prohibitions in the Ancient Near East"), two papers at the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in Seattle (“A Late Roman Castellum in the Deserts of Jordan: Results from the 2011 Season of the ‘Ayn Gharandal Archaeological Project” and “Washed Away: The Missing Baths of the ‘Roman’ Near East”), one paper at the annual meeting of the Society of Ancient Mediterranean Religions at Emory ("Judean Pillar Figurines and the Making of Female Piety in Israelite Religion").

Many of these proceedings are slated for future publication. Erin was also invited to give two public lectures for the East Tennessee Society of the Archaeological Institute of America and for the ancient studies seminar at the University of Missouri-Columbia ("Digging the Divine?: Judean Pillar Figurines and the Archaeology of Israelite Religion").

During 2012-2013 Erin received a number of grants and awards, including a UT Scholarly and Research Incentive Funds Equipment Award for $18,950.00 to purchase advanced surveying and computer equipment for her summer excavation project (see below), a UT Scholarly and Research Incentive Funds Foreign Travel Award for $2,800.00 to present papers in Germany and Scotland, an
SEC Faculty Travel Grant for $2,500.00 supporting travel to the University of Missouri-Columbia to give a public lecture, coordinate study abroad programs, and work on a forthcoming grant application, and a Harris Grant for $600.00 from the American Schools of Oriental Research to support the purchase of conservation supplies for her summer excavation project (see below). Erin also spearheaded a number of community initiatives. Together with Jack Love, they began the UT/Knoxville Hebrew reading group that welcomes all members of the community to a co-led weekly Classical Hebrew reading session. She also served as the Vice President of the East Tennessee chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America and chaired the committee organizing the society’s biggest yearly event—International Archaeology Day. She remains an active member of a number of professional organizations, where she serves in a variety of leadership roles.

One of Erin’s most important achievements in the past year was to co-lead UT’s first study abroad trip to Jordan, currently the only faculty-led study abroad program that takes students to the Middle East. After a year of intensive planning, Erin and her husband, Robert Darby (School of Art), brought 12 UT students to Jordan for an archaeological excavation at ‘Ayn Gharandal in the southern Arabah Valley. In addition to the archaeological excavations, the students traveled around the country visiting a variety of historical and cultural sites, including Jerash (ancient Gerasa), Bethany on the Jordan, Wadi Rum, and Petra. As the centerpiece of the program, students spent four weeks excavating under the Darbys’ guidance as part of the ‘Ayn Gharandal Archaeological Project, directed by Erin and Robert since 2009. Not only did students learn the “ins and outs” of archaeological field method, they worked side by side with local Jordanians and an international team of students and scholars. The students did an outstanding job, both as excavators and as cultural ambassadors for East Tennessee and will be presenting their experiences in a variety of venues throughout the 2013-2014 academic year.

Nancy Henry
In the past year, Nancy Henry delivered a talk on “Women and the Victorian Culture of Investment” as part of the Institute for Humanities Distinguished Lecture Series at Mississippi State University. She also delivered talks to the Trollope Society and the Mid-Atlantic British Studies Association (both in New York City). In June 2013, she attended an international Victorian Studies conference on “The Local and Global” in Venice, Italy, organizing a panel entitled, “Global Finance and the City of London.” During the Venice Conference, she participated in a seminar on the history of the Jewish Ghetto in Venice, which was taught by Murray Baumgarten (UC Santa Cruz) and included a tour of the Ghetto. In August, she attended the annual Dickens Universe Conference at UC Santa Cruz, along with colleague Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud and two graduate students. At UT, she continues as Coordinator of Graduate Admissions and Job Placement and as director of the Nineteenth-Century British Research Seminar (funded by the Humanities Center). She also received the 2013 Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Research.

Heather Hirschfeld
Professor Hirschfeld continues to focus on her role as the Riggsby Director of the Marco Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Scholarly highlights of 2012-2013 included serving as president of the Southeastern Renaissance Conference and organizing its annual meeting in October; co-leading a seminar on “Shakespeare and Collaboration” at the 2013 Shakespeare Association of America Conference in March; and

Marilyn Kallet's new poetry book, The Love That Moves Me (Black Widow Press), came out in 2013. The book was influenced most by Dante and Baudelaire. The opening section, set in Auvillar, contains more oral histories of the Holocaust in the region. One such poem is “The Soothsayer,” about an elderly seer, Marie-Louise, whose family hid Jews during the war.

Dr. Kallet gave readings at Pellissippi State Community College, Union Avenue Books, UT’s Writers in the Library, College English Association (Savannah), Widener University, and in Auvillar, France.

She taught her poetry workshop, “O Taste & See: Writing the Senses in Deep France,” in Auvillar. This was her sixth time of teaching the workshop for VCCA-France; the workshop will be offered again in 2014, May 12-29.

At the request of Mayor Madeline Rogero and Communications Director Jesse Mayshark, Dr. Kallet organized an ensemble reading at Ijams Nature Center on September 23. There was an overflow crowd at this event leading up to the mayor’s Conservation Centennial in October.

She was the visiting writer-in-residence at Widener University in Chester, Pennsylvania, March 23-25.

In March she directed the 20th annual Young Writers’ Institute at UT; more than 100 teens and their teachers attended for a free day of writing workshops.

In August 2013 Dr. Kallet was named the first Nancy Moore Goslee Professor of English, a five year professorship.

She continues to direct the creative writing program, which this year will begin accepting applications for a new MFA program. The program has been ranked highly for the Ph.D. with creative dissertation, and the MFA will help to raise the profile of the program even more.

Marilyn Kallet preparing to host graduate students at her home, catered by Bruce Bogarz. Courtesy of Marilyn Kallet.

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Vejas Liulevicius
Professor Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius (Lindsay Young Professor in History and Director, Center for the Study of War and Society) was invited to write an article on Syria and military intelligence for Foreign Affairs Online. The Great Courses Company of Chantilly, Virginia, released a fifth lecture course on tape by Dr. Liulevicius, entitled, “Turning Points of Modern History.” For more information, see: http://www.thegreatcourses.com/tgc/courses/course_detail.aspx?id=8032&ai=81190. Dr. Liulevicius is especially proud of a history doctoral student working under his direction, Brad Nichols. Brad’s dissertation topic is Nazi “Regermanization” policies in Poland. This spring, Brad won a fellowship to the UT Humanities Center for 2013-14. In addition, he was also awarded a Cummings Foundation Fellowship at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) for 2014. He will use the fellowship to mine further unique sources held at the USHMM for his research.

Jacob Love
After a hiatus of five years, Biblical Hebrew was restarted by a joint effort of Religious and Judaic Studies just last year. Five students continuing from that first year are enrolled in Intermediate Biblical Hebrew. In the Fall semester, these students are reading—in the original—texts from Exodus, Deuteronomy, Samuel, and Judges. In the spring, they will learn
the poetical books of major and minor prophets, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.

In addition, intermediate level students will be introduced to ancient texts written in the Old Hebrew alphabet, texts from the sectarian writings of the Dead Sea Scroll community, and early Medieval Hebrew (selections from the Mishnah).

Of course the program needs new blood. Ten students are enrolled in Beginning Biblical Hebrew. With patience and program cultivation, we can bring a stable program of Hebrew education to our Knoxville campus and community.

2013 Conference of the German Studies Association, Dr. Magilow presented a paper about the 1927 silent film Familientag im Hause Prellstein (Family Day at the Prellsteins), based on an early-20th century play from the Berlin Yiddish theater but adapted to the screen by Hans Steinhoff, who later became a leading propagandist in Nazi Germany. Other current projects include an article about the German-Jewish photographer Erich Salomon, a photoreporter of Germany’s interwar illustrated press who became famous as one of the first paparazzo photographers.

Daniel H. Magilow continues to teach and research topics related to German-Jewish history, visual culture, and the Holocaust. He is serving as the chair of the German section in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures although he is spending the 2013-14 academic year on Faculty Development Leave. During this time, he is completing the co-authored book Holocaust Representations in History: An Introduction (forthcoming through Bloomsbury Academic), intended as an introductory textbook for college courses about the Holocaust in art, film, and literature. At the October

This year marks a major achievement in a project that has been part of Professor Neff’s academic life for the last twenty years, a study of the Supplicationes variae in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, a beautifully illuminated late thirteenth-century manuscript made in northern Italy. Her book on the Supplicationes has been accepted for publication by the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, with an anticipated printing in 2014.

As part of her work on the Supplicationes and on other concurrent research, she traveled to Paris, Padua, and Venice last summer, looking at manuscripts in the Biblioteca Antoniana, Padua, and photographing thirteenth-century frescoes and mosaics. A highlight of the trip was a visit to the Baptistery of San Marco, Venice, which has been closed to the public for many years.

Dr. Neff was invited to give two lectures on another research project, the holy man’s cave. This project addresses the symbolic representation and topography of sacred caves in Italy and the Near East. Specifically, she is interested in the ways in which Franciscan theologians constructed a pilgrimage cult at Mount La Verna in central Italy by symbolically linking the site and its miracles to Mount Sinai and Mount Tabor. Saint Francis of the thirteenth century thus became a new embodiment of the Hebrew prophets, Moses and Elijah. Her lectures on this topic were at the Freie Universität in Berlin, October 2012, and at the Annual Meetings of the International Congress of Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI, May 2012.

Another invited lecture was delivered at a Symposium at the J. Paul Getty Museum Research Institute in Los Angeles, California. The Symposium, “New Approaches to Painting and Illumination in the Time of Giotto,” accompanied a major international exhibit at the Getty of Florentine painting in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Her talk was titled, “To Follow in Christ’s Footsteps: Franciscan Devotion in Two Illuminated Manuscripts, ca. 1300.”

And finally, Dr. Neff has been honored with a Lindsay Young Fellowship this year, for which she is very grateful.

Tina Shepardson
The past year has been another good one—it has been great to welcome Dr. Erin Darby as a new tenure-track assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies, and to have in her a wonderful conversation partner about Roman Judaism, among other things. In addition, Dr. Shepardson has continued to chair the faculty research seminar on “The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity,” and with the added participation of Erin and of Jacob Love,
the seminar has been able to include more discussion of Judaism than it previously had. We were fortunate to have Paula Fredriksen participate in our seminar in February 2013, and we look forward to Daniel Boyarin’s participation in October 2013 during the visit coordinated by Judaic Studies.


Dr. Shepardson continues to present her research nationally and internationally. She has recently accepted an invitation to present her work in Zurich, Switzerland, next summer; she had a paper accepted for a conference in Finland that will take place this November; and she continues to present her research at the annual meetings of the North American Patristics Society. In addition, last year she accepted invitations to speak at Duke University, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Kentucky (Lexington); and this year she has been invited to speak at Brown University.

As always, she keeps herself busy with plenty of service to the college, university, and wider Knoxville community. Among other things, she continues to accept speaking engagements around the local area, and this year she is chairing the university’s Research Council. It was an honor last winter to receive the College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Academic Outreach Award.

Although she hasn’t travelled abroad as much as usual in the past year, Dr. Shepardson has had a chance to travel more in the region—the recreation of the Scope’s Trial in Dayton, the Sandhill Crane migration, the Bristol Rhythm and Roots festival, Hogskin History Day at Narrow Ridge Earth Literacy Center, Mountain Makin’s festivals in the mountains, and of course hikes everywhere from Ijams to the Smokies. She looks forward to the year ahead and the adventures it will bring.

**J.P. Dessel Activities**

**Manfred and Fern Steinfeld Professor of Ancient Jewish History**

Research

See how Calno has suffered the fate of Carchemish.

Is not Hamath like Arpad, Samaria like Damascus

Before now I have overcome kingdoms full of idols.

With more images than have Jerusalem and Samaria,

—Isaiah 10:9-10

Last newsletter I reported on the very exciting finds from Tell Tayinat, including a two-ton basalt statue of King Šuppiluliuma of the kingdom of Patina/Unqi on which a lengthy Luwan inscription was inscribed on the back side. We know that the capital city of the kingdom of Patina/Unqi was named Kunulu or Kullani. We are now certain that the site of Tell Tayinat is quite clearly Kunulu. Already many years ago Biblical scholars, including W.F. Albright, identified Kunulu with Calno of the Hebrew Bible. Calno is found in Isaiah 10:9, among other places, where Isaiah refers to it as one of the “kingdoms full of idols.” While I doubt Isaiah had any actual knowledge of the wide-eyed and evocative statue of Šuppiluliuma we unearthed a few seasons ago, it seems clear that the monumental statuary of Neo-Hittite sites like Tell Tayinat were well known in the Biblical world.

The entire staff was very much looking forward to returning to Tayinat last summer to follow up on this exciting find, but the political realities of the Syrian civil war simply made that impossible. Tayinat, located in the Hatay Province of Turkey, is a scant three kilometers from the Syrian border. The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism wanted us to
continue the excavation, but by last winter everyone concerned realized the impossibility of such a plan. We then had hoped to return to the nearby city of Antakya for a study season, but by the spring of 2013 this too became impractical due to security considerations. We are again planning to return to the field in the summer of 2014 but have no idea what the future holds.

I have made good progress on my book project entitled, Acting Locally: Rethinking the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I From a Village Perspective. It will be an archaeological history of the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I of the southern Levant from a village perspective. I am also working on several articles, including a review article on Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age economies and issues of craft specialization. This review article, which will appear in the Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, allows me to return to some of the issues I raised in my first book, Lahav I, on the role of ceramic production in Early Bronze Age economies. I am also working on an article on the Iron Age I for The Bible in Archaeology and History: The Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel. The aim of this volume is to present and interpret historical, literary, and archaeological material that will enhance modern understanding of the biblical record in its cultural setting.

Helen Dixon, who wrote an excellent dissertation on Phoenician mortuary practices entitled, “Phoenician Mortuary Practice in the Iron I-II (1100-500 BCE) Coastal Levantine Homeland.” I helped introduce Helen to the world of the Phoenicians found in Israel, as opposed to Lebanon, where she had spent the bulk of her time. The end result of this was a very well rounded and comprehensive dissertation that truly encompassed the entire Phoenician homeland! I also served on an M.A. committee in Judaic Studies for Joshua Wilson. His thesis was entitled, “Iron Age II ‘High Places’: Metonymy in Literature and Reailia in Archaeology.” I was responsible for guiding Joshua through the archaeological material on Iron Age cult places. I always find working with graduate students very gratifying as it often helps me frame my own research questions.

Service to the Profession

In 2012-13 I served as the interim president of the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem. I have been a longstanding trustee of the Albright and an officer for many years. After being elected vice-president last year, I had to immediately step in and serve as the interim president. It was quite a busy and eventful year; we ran a search for a new director, the first such search in 33 years. We made what we believe is an excellent hire in Dr. Matthew Adams and look forward to him becoming the director in June of 2014. We also redesigned the Albright website, and that should come online within the next two months. If any of you have an opportunity to visit Jerusalem, feel free to visit the Albright Institute—tea is served most every day at 4:00pm and the garden is one of the hidden treasures of Jerusalem.

I also gave a lecture for the Field Archaeology Series sponsored by the Interdisciplinary Program on Classical Art and Archaeology and the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology at the University of Michigan. The title of the lecture was “Statuary and State Formation: Iron Age Conundrums from Tell Tayinat, Turkey,” and reflected my work at Tayinat.

In Closing…

Again I want to thank my colleagues and friends at the university and especially the Department of History for their support. Though the holidays were very early this year (ever notice how the haggim are either very early or late—they never seem to be on time?) I wish everyone a very sweet and healthy new year—Shanah Tovah!

The Department of History

Last year I chaired a search in the Department of History for a pre-modern Chinese historian. It was quite an interesting process, and I learned a great deal about Shang, Chou, and Han China that will help me in my survey of World History. We made a wonderful hire, Professor Charles Sanft, whose area of expertise is political thought and practice of early imperial China.

Graduate Student Mentoring

I was very fortunate to serve on several M.A. and Ph.D. committees at the University of Michigan, whose Judaic Studies Program and Near Eastern Studies Department offers graduate degrees. In the Department of Near Eastern Studies I worked with

CONGRATULATIONS TO ASHLEY COMBEST AND NATHAN HUFF, who tied the knot on June 22, 2013. All good wishes for the future to both of you!
Two students who went on the dig to Jordan with Dr. Darby this past summer had also studied Judaism before this adventure. Both of them received Judaic Studies scholarships in 2013. Alissa Reeves graduated in August 2013 and Nikki Swartwood plans to graduate in May 2014. We asked both of them for a brief essay on their summer experience for this issue of the newsletter.

Alissa Reeves, graduate of English and Religious Studies, and recipient of the Dr. Ruben P. Robinson Scholarship in Judaic Studies

“In the most terrible moment of my 40-year life, May 28th at 11am, my soul was ripped out of my chest with pliers, my heart was pounded on with a sledge hammer, and I left my spouse on the wrong side of airport security. Alone for the first time ever, I headed to my Air France flight bound for Amman, Jordan. I would be home in 40 days. Just like Noah. 40 days. I could turn around, get in the car and go home. 40 days. 40 days.

“I cried for almost 18 hours straight as I zipped away from home, from Tennessee. I cried as I flew over the dark Atlantic Ocean, the lush green flats of France, the green growing hillside of southern Europe, the blue waters and rock cliffs of the Greek Isles. I watched out my window in the direction of the Middle East, my tiny solace being a locket around my neck and the expectation of laying my eyes on Israel. All I thought about to stifle my tears was seeing Israel. I would not stop in Israel, I would never touch her beautiful ground, but I would see her through the plastic glass, because I made sure to have a window seat for my travels.

“I glanced away from the window for a moment; I was reading the card on my airplane tray that said (in English, French, Arabic and Hebrew) ‘No pork contained in this meal.’ I had not requested a kosher or halal meal, and I smiled. I looked around at the trays of other passengers; same message for each person. I felt the Middle East glow around me in those little, white cards. I took my message off the tray, stuck it in my unread book to show my family waiting at home (oh home! I want to go home!), and with puffy, tired, red, tearful eyes I looked out the window again.

“And she was there. And my broken heart sprang to life. I pressed my nose into the window. Israel. I knew it was her.

“I quickly looked at the Air France GPS mounted on the plane wall in front of me. I had followed the path of the plane, watching the kilometers click by, since I left America. It was Israel below me. Quickly, I stuffed my well-used tissue into my pocket, found a pen shoved into my folded magazine, and tore the corner off the first piece of paper I could find. In tiny print I wrote out my greeting for home, held it against the plane window, and snapped my camera. ‘Shalom my love. I am here.’

“I landed in Amman in what seemed just moments later. Tears gone (momentarily), tissues thrown away, scarf around my shoulders, I was the first passenger off the plane. My first trip alone, thousands of miles away from my Rocky Top home, I zipped through the airport, deeply breathing the new spicy smells and listening to words flowing around me in thick dialects that I did not understand. Immediately, I felt perfectly at ease in the Middle East; disorientation never seized me, and I became increasingly anxious to begin the purpose of my trip—an archaeological dig.

“It is thanks, in part, to the Dr. Ruben P. Robinson Scholarship in Judaic Studies that I ventured to Aqaba, Jordan, for 6 weeks and dug at the ‘Ayn Gharandal Archaeological Project. Filthy, exhausted, elated and powerful, I tried to earn my nickname from back home, Tennessee Reeves. I climbed Roman ruins, explored burial caves, and in those 6 weeks I was taught numerous lessons: archaeology is hard work, 1900-year-old walls collapse easily under your feet, water is precious, and goat is yummy to eat. I learned how to excavate fragile human remains, how to brush dirt for photographs, how to properly sift a sheep dung floor, and how to eat hard-boiled eggs covered in desert sand. I put sunblock on Syrian refugees’ noses, discussed America’s Second Amendment Right to bear arms, watched battle ships from undetermined countries patrol the Red Sea, and rode a camel in the Wadi Rum. And I went to Petra.

Yet above all that, the voice I call Yahweh, who made a promise in my ear on the airplane, kept Israel always in my sight. From the Jordanian shores...
of the Red Sea, I could see Israel. From the top of the ridge I excavated, I could see Israel. While laying on my back in the Dead Sea and dipping my toes in the Jordan River, I could see Israel. My tears continued to flow for my family, my books, my house, and above all, my spouse. But I never again cried for home. I always had Israel in my grasp. 'Rock and Redeemer of the people Israel; Bless the State of Israel. . . . Shield it with Your love; spread over it the shelter of Your peace. . . . Bless the land with peace, and its inhabitants with lasting joy. And let us say: Amen.'” (Prayer for Israel in Sim Shalom siddur)

Nikki Swartwood, minor in Judaic Studies and Philosophy, major in Religious Studies, History, Mathematics, Microbiology, and German Studies, recipient of the Manfred and Fern Steinfeld Scholarship in Judaic Studies

“Once arriving in Jerusalem, our entire car realized we were all heading to the same hostel. A bit disoriented, we were guided by people on the street, all of whom were kind and eager to help: they showed us the bus we needed to board and how to purchase tickets, and we were off! “When our bus released us on the Mount of Olives and we received directions that led us through shared residential courtyards, it became very clear that we were not at the correct Abraham’s. Yet, our host waved us in, gave us seats, and insisted on providing us food and drink. Several glasses of grape juice and bowls of simple soup and spaghetti later, I learned that I was in the home of a well-known Bedouin Peacemaker, who has spent his life traveling and campaigning for peace in the Middle East. His house in which we now sat was a Peace House, providing a space for travellers and the needy and running on only donations. Our host, Haj Ibrahim Ahmad Abu El-Hawa, filled the air with stories and showed us pictures of him at famous rallies and government meetings; he spoke to us as if he had known the group forever, and I felt the same.

“After our dinner and discussion, Ibrahim called up a van and had the driver bring Krista and me to the proper hostel. Once we arrived at our proper destination, we checked in, set down our bags, and immediately went to book what had been the most looked forward to piece of the trip—a trip to the Masada fortress.

“In the realm of Israeli tourism, the daybreak Masada hike is a well-known staple: bus out to the foot of the fortress in the early morning hours (3:30am for us) and hike through darkness and dusk to reach the summit in time for the sunrise. We arrived full-spirited, began the tedious hike upwards, and as soon as we decided it wasn’t so bad, we were met with a new surprise—stairs. Coming from the University of Tennessee, we always complain about our stairs up The Hill, but I can guarantee that I will never complain about that cakewalk ever again. But once we reached the summit of the fortress, the exhaustion seemed to fade away as I combed through a map to find the one space that had brought me here, the synagogue.

“The Masada synagogue has a special place in my heart. It was the first ancient synagogue that I was ever assigned to study in Dr. J.P. Dessel’s course on early synagogue architecture. Its columns and benches have been engrained in my brain, and to be able to walk inside this structure was an emotionally overwhelming experience. My face was met with tears of joy as my hands brushed the columns and my Chacos danced on the floor. I was actually here—I was actually inside the spaces I had researched in books. I had finally made it.

“Although both of the above experiences were amazing, life-shifting experiences, no other event in my three-and-a-half months abroad could top experiencing a Shabbat in Jerusalem.

“As the afternoon faded into dusk, the movement of the city outside slowed, and we saw fewer cars, fewer people. Even the public transportation began to wane. The city was slipping into Shabbat mode, which would officially start as soon as the first star appeared. In honor of the holiday, our hostel provided an opportunity to be a part of a Shabbat dinner. Not only were we invited to participate in a traditional dinner with the blessings, challah, and wine, but we were also privileged enough to enter the kitchen with our hostel mates and have a hand in preparing the food. At first, we started out with simple tasks, such
as slicing eggplant and zucchini, but by the end of the preparation, Krista and I were the last two in the kitchen, working alongside the chef and anticipating his next moves. In these moments in the kitchen, I was the least stressed I have been in a long time. There were no longer financial strains, academic concerns, or anxiety about my future. I just needed to prepare the food in front of me for those coming to dine with us.

“As we were preparing the food, the siren beginning Shabbat blew—not only was it loud, but it also seemed to fill the space. Unlike the call to prayer in Jordan, which seemed to flow with the environment, this seemed to just intrude into the lives of everyone; it catches your attention and demands you recognize its meaning. This siren is a powerful beauty.

“I also met so many people from around the world as we rotated about the kitchen and were united in this meal. Even if it was for only 3 hours, we had this time together. Unity in food.

“Once the meal was finished, the candles were lit, the blessings said, and the challah broken, we filed in line to receive the fruits of our labor. It was then that I noticed how truly still and peaceful the Shabbat was: nothing passed by the windows as the sky grew darker, the only sounds were small dinner conversations shared among strangers and friends alike, and the general air of happiness—in that moment, I truly understood Shabbat.

“Even though my visit to Israel was short and concentrated in one area, my heart knows I will return. The beauty of Jerusalem and Israel is their complex cultural identity, which intertwines the surrounding Middle Eastern culture and the cultures brought by the immigrants to the nation. The unity of these cultures for the celebration of Judaism is truly remarkable and inspiring.”

In October 2012 Judaic Studies inaugurated the Karen and Pace Robinson Lecture Series on Modern Israel with a lecture by Dr. Benjamin Hary, The Winship Distinguished Research Professor in the Humanities and Director of the Program in Linguistics at Emory University. The lecture, “The Politics of Judeo-Arabic,” gave rise to many discussions among faculty and students about “religiolects” for weeks to come. I don’t think any of us will think of Judeo-Arabic or Ladino the same ever again. On the occasion of the lecture, we honored Natalie Robinson and her late husband, Mitchell, for their strong and enduring support of Judaic Studies since its inception.

In January 2013, Professor Arkady Kovelman, director of the Judaic Studies Program at Moscow State University, visited the University of Tennessee with his daughter, Ioulia, who was invited by the Department of Psychology to give presentations to their department. We enjoyed learning more about Judaic Studies and about the state of Judaism in Russia and enjoyed Professor Kovelman’s lecture on “The Legacy of the Russian Humanities: From the Perspective of a Professor of Jewish Studies.” The event was co-sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences, Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures, and Religious Studies.

In March, Dr. Erin Darby, last year a lecturer in Hebrew Bible in the Department of Religious Studies, presented the results of her and Robert Darby’s dig at ‘Ayn Gharandal, arranged by the AIA and the Department of Classics. Dr. Darby’s colorful presentation was co-sponsored by Judaic Studies.

This academic year, 2013-14, we are celebrating our twentieth anniversary with the four lectures sponsored by Judaic Studies.

The Religious Studies Department’s third annual David L. Dungan Memorial Lecture speaker, Professor Paula Fredriksen, The William Goodwin Aurelio Chair Emerita of the Appreciation of Scripture at Boston University and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was also co-sponsored by Judaic Studies. In February, Professor Fredriksen spoke about her new book, Sin: The Early History of an Idea, to an appreciative audience.

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**GILYA G. SCHMIDT**

**ACTIVITIES**

**TEACHING**

**Fall 2012**

For the past twenty years, I have been teaching two versions of REST/JST 385, “Contemporary Jewish Thinkers,” one focusing on Zionism, the other on European and especially German Jews. In fall 2012, I taught a course on primarily German Jews, drawing on the extensive research I have conducted on the topic over the past twelve years. I could assure the 35 students that no one else at UT would be able to teach them about these lives and customs in quite the same way. Because Elisa Carandina, our Modern Hebrew Teaching Fellow, informed us of her good luck in garnering a position in Paris for fall 2012, it was decided that I should teach her REST 401 seminar on “Text and Context,” with 14 students. Luckily I had bought a book co-edited by my colleagues, Kenneth Seeskin and Judith Baskin, entitled, The Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Religion, and Culture. I had considered using it for my Introduction to Judaism class. Having little time to prepare, I decided on this book as our text for the course, supplementing it with suitable Jewish art and music as well as texts. I was so proud of the students, none of whom had taken any courses in Judaism before, but rose to the occasion. It was not an easy book to read, and covered so much of Jewish history and culture through the ages, but the students never complained. What an achievement!

Emma Hicks has carved out for herself a very interesting course of study. A College Scholar, Emma spent spring 2013 in Denmark studying the Holocaust. She had the opportunity to visit mainland Europe and several concentration camps. Emma is currently deepening her knowledge through some online courses at Yad Vashem, and we have begun to sketch out her senior project, which will be an exhibition based on the many images she brought back from her travels.

Emma hopes to graduate in May 2014. I am delighted to serve as Emma’s faculty mentor.

Judaic Studies minor Nikki Swartwood began work on her Religious Studies honors thesis in fall 2012. Having studied conversion efforts by Christians in Poland with me the year before, she decided to explore those efforts by German Christians. Her topic was difficult, the sources scarce and fairly inaccessible, and the thesis required adjusting throughout to accommodate the sources. This thesis was also in fulfillment of the requirement for honors in the History department. Faculty mentors were Dr. Denise Phillips and myself.

In spring 2013 I was granted a zero-teaching semester, so I could advance the work on my current research project on Jewish liturgy. Though on leave, committee work continued, as did speaking engagements and the advising and supervision of students. Nikki Swartwood continued to work on her honors thesis under the direction of Dr. Phillips and myself, and completed the project in May 2013. The thesis was entitled, “Forming the Molds: The Institutum Judaicum’s Utilization of Judeo-German in the Eighteenth Century Judaeminion.” We printed an excerpt of the institute’s mission below, prefaced by a German quote from one of the leaders of the institute, who devised a mechanism that would wake him up whenever he fell asleep at night, so that he could spend maximum hours studying in preparation for his mission.

> “Ich hatte zwey Jahr lang, die Nacht über höchstens drey Stunden geschlafen; um mich nun an solche schlaflose Nächte zu gewöhnen, befestigte ich einen Bindfaden an einen Topf, welcher mit Kieselsteinen angefüllt war, und setzte ihn in ein kupfern Gefäß; das andere Ende des Bindfadens schnürte ich an meine Hand; wenn ich die Hand im Schlaf auf die Brust legte, so fiel der Topf um, und die Kieselsteine machten in den kupfernem Gefäß ein Geprassel, daß ich darüber aufwachte.”


“The author of this quote, Stefan Schulz, educated himself in preparation for dialogues with the Jews of Europe, which were of central importance to his missionary efforts. The Institutum Judaicum focused on missions to the Jews of Europe and the Near East, as well as the training of the missionaries that would carry them out. The Jews of the German lands had a turbulent history with Christian missionaries, but this was the first Lutheran mission. Inspired by the fervor of the Pietism movement, the Institutum Judaicum sought to acquaint the Jews of the world with their newly refined conceptions of God’s Truth. Many of these conversations were later preserved on the pages of books published at the institute’s accompanying book press. Through its dialogues and publications, the Institutum Judaicum revolutionized the understanding of potential Jewish converts and the crafting of missionary works in the following century.

“What is particularly unique about this group is that they strove to speak to Jews as equals and to better understand their language and culture, especially the Yiddish language. They did not simply preach to the Jews to whom they brought their mission, but rather engaged them in a dialogue—providing respect and a stronger sense of equality. By providing such a forum, the Institutum Judaicum was particularly appealing to their potential converts, who often engaged in dialogue with the missionaries, even responding with socially hospitable behavior.”

**RESEARCH**

_Süssen is Now Free of Jews—World War II, the Holocaust, and Rural Judaism_, based on rich archival sources, was published by Fordham University Press in July 2012.
When is a project actually finished? Certainly not when a book is published—that is simply a more or less arbitrary termination point for the sake of timeliness. I am still working on research for this project, because with publication came new revelations. People one does not know exist learn of the information, and suddenly, there is a new chapter, or even chapters. This happened in May when an email arrived from Jeff Sieck in the state of Washington. He wrote that by chance he came across my book on the internet, and he identified himself as the great grandson of Max and Hedwig Ottenheimer, who owned a textile business in Süssen and in Göppingen, chapter 3 in my book.

In my own research, I knew a good bit about Max and Hedwig Ottenheimer. Their business history was well documented, both in Jebehausen and Göppingen, as well as in Süssen, where they opened a factory in 1905, along with Max’s father Josef and brother Alfred. Due to the reparations process following the Holocaust, the files also contained much information about the real estate and personal possessions of the Ottenheimers. In 2007 I traveled to Cuba to interview the only surviving Ottenheimer I was aware of, Werner, at age 91. He was the son of Max’s younger brother Alfred and his wife, Luise. Luise was murdered in the Holocaust, Alfred died after he had to sell his home to the Nazis in 1938, and their other son, Richard, had emigrated and lived in the U.S. By the time I began this research he was also deceased. The only reason I found Werner was because of a phone call from a journalist in Germany who was in touch with Werner and gave me his phone number.

I also knew that Max and Hedwig’s daughter Alice had gotten married to Arthur Rothschild, and that they had changed their name to Rodgers. They had two children, Gert (Gary) and Ruth. All of the Max Ottenheimer family members were able to emigrate, most of them to the U.S. Although the records indicated that the family members moved to California, much to my disappointment, I was never able to track down any of the Ottenheimers in this country. You can imagine my surprise when I got Jeff’s email telling me he was Max and Hedwig’s great grandson!

Jeff and his wife Barbara and their three daughters have just recently moved to the Seattle area from California. During a family visit to Seattle in June, my daughter drove me to the Siecks for a visit. Fortunately Barbara is a genealogy buff and had prepared a smorgasbord of neatly organized packages of family pictures and documents. Since I knew exactly what I wanted, even needed, we quickly made our way through the envelopes on the table. A whole new world opened itself to me—pictures! Pictures of every single Ottenheimer on Max’s side, and in addition, an extension to the family tree of the four most recent generations of Ottenheimer descendents with names and dates. Jeff also generously shared the Sieck family tree with me. There is no sweeter music to a historian’s eye and ear than facts, and here they were, right up to the present moment.

While the summer brought additional important finds for my current research project, Jeff’s email was definitely the highlight because it was so unexpected. Thank you very much, Jeff and Barbara, for your generosity and for your hospitality!

Fordham University Press chose Süssen is Now Free of Jews—World War II, the Holocaust, and Rural Judaism for their new electronic initiative, Fordham Scholarship Online (FSO). FSO is a discipline-based website for online publications of academic and research books in the humanities and social sciences. The synopsis of the book went online in January 2013.

The book also has a web presence on the Judaic Studies homepage, complete with a slide show of additional images and documents, located at web.utk.edu/~judaic. Two reviews have been published, one by Choice, a publication for librarians recommending the book, and a
second favorable one by the *Journal of Jewish Identities*, by Avraham Barkai, a scholar of German Jewry.

On November 18, 2012, the Knoxville Jewish Alliance organized an author talk and book signing at Union Books in downtown Knoxville. The Association for Jewish Studies recognized its authors with a reception in December, and in April I led a teacher’s workshop and book signing at Florida State University.

Other publications

At the invitation of the editor of the Buddhist journal, *Dharma World*, I contributed an article on prejudice to their publication. The article, entitled, “What a Beautiful World—So Why do We Insist on Destroying it?” was published in volume 39, October-December 2012.

The organizer of the 2012 Bonn conference on Jews in Asia invited me to contribute my paper, “Why the Chinese People are Interested in Judaism, the Holocaust, and Israel,” to a volume, *Between Mumbai and Manila, Judaism in Asia since the Founding of the State of Israel*, published by V&R Press/Bonn University Press.

I was invited by The *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* to review a book by Mary Fulbrook, *A Small Town Near Auschwitz: Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust*, published by Oxford University Press in 2012. This book deals with the “desk perpetrator” in the form of a public official who does not see anything wrong with putting his signature to documents that result in the dispossession of Jews in a town near Auschwitz, to whose leadership position he has been appointed. In November our research seminar on Germany and Central Europe will discuss this book for one of our sessions.

**Liturgy project: Mordecai Gustav Heiser—The Sweet Singer of Bnai Israel**

It is difficult to find sufficient quality time for advancing a research project while also teaching and serving in all of the capacities required of a faculty member. A semester without teaching last spring was very beneficial to the advancement of my liturgy project on the life and art of Cantor Mordecai Gustav Heiser, the Sweet Singer of Bnai Israel in Pittsburgh, PA. My earliest effort to memorialize the life and art of Cantor Heiser dates back to 1995 when I finished a project of cassette tapes with an accompanying biography as memorial tapes for Bnai Israel’s congregants. In 2000 I was fortunate to be able to travel to Berlin with Cantor Heiser’s daughter, Judy Stein, and two of her three daughters, Adele and Betty Sue, to research some of the family history. During many trips to Jerusalem over the years for other research, I was fortunate to find a wonderful and generous teacher in Professor Elijahu Schleifer at Hebrew Union College. He spent many hours with me, painstakingly listening to the tapes of services that the Heiser family had given me, in an effort to identify the composers of melodies Cantor Heiser used for the hymns of a particular service. Over the course of a decade we were able to identify a number of the composers which allowed me, in turn, to search for and locate the sheet music, both at HUC and at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

This summer I traveled to HUC in Cincinnati because I was still missing some key compositions. Fortunately, focusing intensely on my goal brought the desired results. A little bit of luck helped as well, and I came back with several additional compositions that had eluded me until now. To be in possession of the taped snippets of services as well as the original written compositions is incredibly thrilling because it allows me to learn much about the creativity of Cantor Heiser’s art. There is much work to be done still, mostly of an interpretive nature.

I spent much of the spring semester on the historical section of the book, continuing to transcribe and translate personal documents from Cantor Heiser’s life and writing a good bit of the biography. Additional facets of Cantor Heiser’s life still need further investigation. For many years, Cantor Heiser was devoted to the Jewish Theological Seminary’s Cantor’s Assembly in New York as well as to the Zionist Organization of America in the Tri-States area. These sources still need to be researched, as do the records of Congregation Bnai Israel, located at the Heinz Archives in Pittsburgh.

During the spring semester, we also digitized all of the documents that might be included in the book, and located many cantorial anthologies as well as histories of cantors relevant to the project. My very deep thanks to my faithful assistant, Ashley Combest, without whose patience and expertise in these matters it would have taken me much longer to achieve all of this.

Although I sometimes feel that there is no end in sight, I do hope to have a first draft of a book by 2015.
A special opportunity came to me courtesy of my colleague and friend, Professor Kurt Pfehler, at Florida State University. Temple Israel in Tallahassee, FL, invited me to be their scholar-in-residence in April of 2013. The topic was the Zionist Movement. I presented four lectures entitled, “How Young They Were: The Beginnings of the Zionist Movement,” “Theodor Herzl and Martin Buber, or Political and Cultural Zionism: The Struggle,” “Ephraim Moshe Lilien: The Artist of the Zionist Movement,” and “1901 and Beyond: Zionism as a Gesamtkunstwerk.” I really enjoyed immersing myself into Zionism again. My thanks to Rabbi Jack Romberg and to Kurt and Susan and Stella and Aaron for hosting me.

In February 2014 I have been invited to Temple Israel in Columbus, GA, as their scholar-in-residence. I am very much looking forward to spending a weekend with that congregation and their rabbi, my friend Beth Schwartz.

**Institutional**

At the institutional level, I recently submitted the final report for our federal grant, “Arabic Language and the Infusion of Arab Culture Across the UT Curriculum,” which ran from 2010-2013 to the Department of Education. Although a two-year grant, we were granted a third-year no cost extension since our instructor of Arabic was only hired in the second year of the grant. It was a great experience working with many different faculty members across campus who have an interest in Arab culture.

I continue as Associate Faculty for the Center for War and Society in the History Department and as Adjunct Faculty for the German Program in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures. I also again guest lectured for Dr. Maria Stehle’s Berlin class with two lectures on Jewish artists and the Holocaust in Berlin. Within the department, it is an honor to serve as faculty mentor for our newest faculty member, Dr. Erin Darby. I also continue to serve on the Dean’s Advisory Council, a forum for the discussion of timely issues in the college with Dean Lee.

**RESEARCH SEMINAR: MODERN GERMANY AND CENTRAL EUROPE**

For the past eight years, Daniel Magilow, Maria Stehle, Vejas Liulevicius, David Lee, myself, and more recently, Monica Black and Sarah Eldridge have participated in a research seminar on Modern Germany and Central Europe under the auspices of the College of Arts and Sciences’ Humanities Center. On the Humanities Center website, the seminar is described as “a venue for humanities faculty in the UT community with research interests in Germany and Central Europe to meet and discuss these interests with each other and with scholars from other universities. Since 2006, the group has organized book discussions, work-in-progress presentations, public lectures by invited speakers, and conferences (including, in 2012 and 2013, the Southeast German Studies Workshop with ca. 40 colleagues from around the region). We encourage scholars and students with interests in German culture, history, or literature to attend our events, or to contact one of the participating faculty to ask for more information. Visit us on the web at http://german.utk.edu/research_seminar/index.php.” (UT Humanities Center website) Over the summer, the seminar was renewed for the 7th time! I look very much forward to continuing this intellectually stimulating exchange with colleagues from near and far for some time to come.

**SERVICE**

**Professional**

Last year was a very busy conference year. In fall 2012 I read papers at the German Studies Association (“Weisst Du wieviel Sternlein stehen?”), Florida State University (“The Lutheran Church and the War Criminals in Their Midst: An Example”), Association for Jewish Studies (“Citizens Like You and Me: Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde?”), and the International Humanities and Arts Conference (“The Regional Peculiarities of South German Synagogues”). In January 2014, I will again present my research on Jewish liturgical music to the IHAC.

**Personal**

In 2012, Professor Rosalind I. J. Hackett, department head of Religious Studies, nominated me for the Quest Scholar of the Week (week of September 28, 2012). This was a great honor. We quote the announcement from the UT website, Gilya G. Schmidt, Professor in the Department of Religious Studies, specializes in modern Jewish history and culture, particularly European Jewry, Zionism, modern Israel, and the Holocaust. In July, Fordham University Press published Schmidt’s eighth book, Síssen is Now Free of Jews: World War II, the Holocaust, and Rural Judaism. Based on archival sources, this historical study documents Jewish life in a southern German village before, during, and after the Holocaust. The book makes a major contribution to the scholarship of “Landjudentum,” or rural Jewry, a category of scholarship of “Landjudentum,” or rural Jewry, that has taken root primarily as a consequence of the Holocaust, in an effort to document some of the hundreds of rural Jewish communities that have been lost forever.

Schmidt, who is the director of The Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies, is currently working on a second, more broadly conceived book on rural Judaism in Germany and on a study of Jewish liturgy. She is a core faculty member of the German and Central European Research Seminar in the College of Arts and Sciences, which is in its seventh year, adjunct faculty with the German Section in MFLL, and a Fellow with the Center for the Study of War and Society. Since 2010 she has served as project director of a Department of Education grant to introduce Arabic language and Arab culture into the UT curriculum.

She is also a community leader, graduate of Leadership Knoxville (class of 2008) and Introduction Knoxville (class of 2007), and 2008 recipient of the YWCA Tribute to Women Phyllis Wheatley Memorial Award. (Quest Archive, UT website).

I am very much looking forward to spending a weekend with that congregation and their rabbi, my friend Beth Schwartz.
Community
June 2012-June 2013 was my second and final year as president of Heska Amuna Synagogue. I have now moved on to the office of past-president, a less active leadership role. I continue to serve on the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, and the Rabbi and Religious Services Committee, but no more reports and no more speeches! Serving my congregation was an awesome experience. I thoroughly loved the interaction with so many different members of the congregation and with many other individuals and groups within and beyond the Jewish community. It is definitely a highlight of my life that I will always treasure.

For most of the years here, I have also served on the KJA’s Yom HaShoah Planning Committee and continue to do so.

JEWSH STUDENT CENTER/HILLEL

The Jewish students at the University of Tennessee are an active and enterprising group, who not only organize holiday services and year-round programming, but regularly find a home for Shabbat meals with families throughout the community. If you are interested in hosting the students for Shabbat, or if you are willing to help them in other ways, please contact their director, Deborah Oleshansky, at doleshansky@jewishknoxville.org. For general information, please see their website at http://www.utk.edu/~uthillel.

SHTETL NEWS

The Jewish community is a close-knit, extended family. We laugh and cry together. This past year was no exception—there were celebrations and commemorations, lives lost and lives gained and milestones in between.

The Hadassah Centennial Award is a unique opportunity to give special recognition to a Hadassah member who embodies the ideals and values that have exemplified Hadassah for a hundred years since its founding by Henrietta Szold, in 1912. Mazal tov to long-time friend Mary Linda Schwarzbart, who, in December 2012, was awarded Hadassah Knoxville’s Centennial Woman Award. Mary Linda, a native Knoxvillian, was chosen because of “her commitment to Zionism, vision for our community, leadership and advocacy for our Jewish community and Hadassah, and consistent ability to make a difference in our community through her actions and deeds.” A lifetime member of Hadassah Knoxville, Mary Linda is also a past president and past regional vice president for Hadassah. (HaKol, Vol. 5, February 2013)

Mazal tov to Sam Winston, son of Dr. Barry and Annette Winston, who was recently named Tennessee’s Young Optometrist of the Year by the Tennessee Association of Optometric Physicians.

As Marian Jay likes to say, this past year “it rained babies” in the community—a great “problem” to have. Mazal tov to all new arrivals, among them:

• Rabbi Alon Ferency and his wife Karen and son Elchanan on the birth of new son and brother Avishai Shapira Ferency
• Ellie and Mitch Nelles and Hallie, daughter and son-in-law of Drs. Barb Levin and Josh Gettinger, on the birth of daughter, sister, and granddaughter Nora Claire Nelles
• Leah and Sam Winston and

Noah Asher, son and daughter-in-law of Dr. Barry and Annette Winston, on the birth of daughter, sister, and granddaughter Lydia Rose Winston
• Rabbis Philip and Shoshanah Ohriner and Ari and Eli, son and daughter-in-law of Dr. Evan and Jenifer Ohriner, on the birth of son, brother, and grandson Yaakov Meir Ohriner, also known as Kobi
• Rabbi Yossi and Miriam Esther Wilhelm and children Mendel, Chaya’le, and Chanie on the birth of new daughter and sister Rusya Rochel Wilhelm.

More mazal tov...

In September, Halen and Ansel, daughter and son of Professor Lois Presser, celebrated their first birthday.

In May, Dr. Alan Solomon, long-time supporter of the Judaic Studies Program at UT, celebrated his 80th birthday in the circle of his family and friends.

On September 17, long-time friend and supporter Mira Kimmelman celebrated her 90th birthday in good health. Since the publication of her book, Echoes from the Holocaust,

Mira has donated more than $5,000 in royalties to the Judaic Studies Endowed Chair. She also participated in both Holocaust conferences and every year speaks to students in the “Voices of the Holocaust” course as well as other classes.
On September 20, Yetta Burnett, mother of Michael and Evelyn and the late Sidney, celebrated her 101st birthday. She is a long-time resident of East Tennessee and widow of a Jewish farmer in Fountain City. Mrs. Burnett is certainly the oldest person I know personally.

May each of you continue to enjoy good health and good spirits, bis zu hundertundzwanzig!

A fond farewell . . .

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