

## Contributors

**Arianna Afsari** is a doctoral student and translator in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan. Afsari holds a BA in Russian and Post-Soviet Studies and Hispanic Studies from the College of William and Mary. Her studies span three regions and languages: Russia, Latin America, and Iran. Afsari examines traditions of guerrilla poetry and committed literature deployed as tools of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist resistance. Additional research interests include the role of violence in liberatory theory and praxis; conditions of extremity; and revolutionary, leftist imaginations.

**Frida Alexandr** (née Schweidson, 1906–1972) was a Brazilian writer. The daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants who came to southern Brazil, Alexandr was born and raised in Filipson, Rio Grande do Sul—a Jewish farming colony supported by the Jewish Colonization Association. After marrying Boris Alexandr, Alexandr moved to São Paulo where she became an active volunteer for the Women’s International Zionist Organization and wrote her only published book, *Filipson: Memories of the First Jewish Colony in Rio Grande do Sul* (1967).

**Nesi Altaras** is a Sephardic journalist, writer, and translator from Istanbul, Turkey. His work has been published in English, Turkish, and Ladino. He is currently a PhD student in History at Stanford University.

**Maya Barzilai** is a Professor of Modern Hebrew and Jewish Culture and the Director of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. Her research focuses on twentieth-century

Hebrew, German, and Yiddish literatures, translation theory, and visual culture. Her 2016 book, *Golem: Modern Wars and Their Monsters*, explores the mass appeal of golem narratives in the German-speaking world around World War I, as well as the ongoing association of golem figures with mass warfare and its technologies in American and Israeli cultures of the mid- to late twentieth century. It received the 2017 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award and an honorable mention for the Salo Baron Book Prize. She has also published widely on issues of translation, self-translation, and adaptation between Hebrew and German literatures. Her second book, *The Golem, How He Came into the World* (Camden House German Film Classics, 2020), is a detailed study of Paul Wegener's 1920 film, situating it in the cultural, historical, and social contexts of post-World War I Germany.

**Shalom Bekache** (1848–1927) was a Jewish author, journalist, translator, and publisher who wrote in Judaic-Arabic and Hebrew. Born in Mumbai to a Jewish family of Baghdadi origin, Bekache was ordained as a rabbi in Palestine and eventually settled in Algeria. A proponent of the Jewish Enlightenment movement (Haskalah), Bekache published articles and collections of traditional stories, first in Hebrew and later in Algerian Judeo-Arabic. Following the enthusiastic reception of *The Harbinger of Good* (*Mevaser tov*), which was published in Livorno in 1884, Bekache founded a monthly and later a weekly journal aimed at disseminating the ideas of the Haskalah in the Algerian Jewish vernacular. He went on to establish a printing press before ceasing his operations in the 1890s due to the gradual abandonment of Judeo-Arabic in favor of French under the influence of French colonial rule.

**Sara Familiant** was a Yiddish writer whose work was featured in an 1894 volume of *Hoyzfraynd*, an important five-volume anthology of Yiddish writing edited by Mordkhe Spektor and published in Warsaw. Her short story “A Modern Bride and Groom,” which appears in English translation in this issue, was previously translated to Hebrew and appeared in an anthology of Yiddish women’s writing published in 2021.

**Juan Gelman** (1930–2014) was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to a family of Jewish immigrants from Ukraine. A prolific author, journalist, and translator, Gelman is widely considered one of the most prominent, committed literary figures in the Spanish-speaking world today. His oeuvre includes over twenty collections of poetry. Gelman's first volume, *Violín y otras cuestiones* (*Violin and Other Questions*), was published in 1956, around the same time he joined the Communist Party and abandoned his university studies to work as a journalist. By the early sixties, he was deeply engaged with leftist guerrilla organizations including the *Fuerzas armadas revolucionarias* (FAR, Revolutionary Armed Forces) and the Montoneros. In 1975, he was forced to flee his homeland due to the escalating state-sponsored repression that anticipated Argentina's last military dictatorship (1976–83). In August of 1976, Gelman's son, Marcelo Ariel, and his pregnant daughter-in-law, María Claudia Iruretagoyena, were disappeared and assassinated by the Argentine military forces. Gelman would spend the next two and a half decades not only mourning his missing children and compatriots but also searching for his granddaughter born in captivity. Gelman received several literary distinctions, including the Juan Rulfo Prize in Latin American and Caribbean Literature (Mexico, 2000), the Pablo Neruda Prize (Chile, 2005), and the Cervantes Prize (Spain, 2007)—the highest literary honor in the Spanish-speaking world. He died in 2014 in his home in Mexico City, Mexico.

**Denisa Glacova** is a PhD student in the Department of Middle East Studies at the University of Michigan. Her research focuses on the relations between religiosity and secularity in Jewish literature and the Jewish press. Prior to Michigan, she studied at various European and Israeli institutions, including Charles University in Prague, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg. Denisa is also interested in museum education and worked in the educational teams of the Jewish Museum in Prague, Yad Vashem, and ANU - Museum of the Jewish People.

**Uri Nissan Gnessin** (1879–1913) was a Hebrew author, translator, and literary critic. Born in Starodub, in what is now Ukraine,

Gnessin wandered through the Russian Empire and spent periods of his life in London and Palestine. He received traditional Jewish education but also acquired deep knowledge in classical and modern languages and literatures. Gnessin began writing poetry as a young boy, and at the age of fifteen he began publishing a literary journal that he founded with Yosef Hayim Brener. At the age of eighteen, he moved to Warsaw and began working for *ha-Tsefirah*, a well-known Hebrew newspaper where he regularly published his poetry, prose, and literary criticism. He also translated several works from Yiddish, Russian, and German into Hebrew. He became well known for his lyrical, impressionist writing style, which was new in Hebrew literature at the time. Gnessin suffered from heart disease and died in Warsaw at age thirty-three.

**Yardenne Greenspan** is a writer and Hebrew translator born in Tel Aviv and based in New York. Her writing has been featured in *Literary Hub*, *Haaretz*, *Words Without Borders*, *Asymptote*, *Two Lines*, and *Apogee*, among other publications. Her translations have been published by Restless Books, St. Martin's Press, Akashic, Syracuse University, New Vessel Press, Amazon Crossing, and Farrar, Straus & Giroux. Her translation of *The Memory Monster* by Yishai Sarid was a 2020 *New York Times* Notable Book. She has an MFA from Columbia University and is a regular contributor to *Ploughshares*.

**Adriana X. Jacobs** is the translator of Vaan Nguyen's *The Truffle Eye* (Zephyr Press, 2021) and Merav Givoni Hrushovski's *End*—(carrion bloom books, 2023). In 2022, she won the Harold Morton Landon Translation Award. She is the author of the microcollection *Afterlife Is Sweet* (rinky dink press, 2023), and her chapbook, *The Turning*, is forthcoming from Dancing Girl Press. She is an Associate Professor of Modern Hebrew Literature at the University of Oxford.

**Jessica Kirzane** is a scholar of Yiddish studies, specializing in questions of race, gender, and regionalism in American Yiddish fiction. She has translated three Yiddish works by Miriam Karpilove: *A Provincial Newspaper and Other Stories* (Syracuse University Press, 2023), *Judith* (Farlag Press, 2022), and *Diary of a Lonely Girl*, or

*The Battle against Free Love* (Syracuse University Press, 2020). After receiving her PhD in Yiddish Studies from Columbia University in 2017, she became Assistant Instructional Professor in Yiddish at the University of Chicago, where she teaches Yiddish language and literature. She also serves as the editor-in-chief of *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*.

**Rita Kogan** is a poet, translator, and writer. Born in Saint Petersburg (then Leningrad), Russia, in 1976, Kogan immigrated to Israel in 1990. She now lives in Tel Aviv. Kogan published three books of poetry—*A license to misspell* (2015), *A horse in a skirt* (2018), and *Mal De Terre* (2022)—and a collection of short stories and novellas titled *Stoneland* (2021). She is the translator of several nineteenth-century Russian literary classics into Hebrew, including *The Tale of the Dead Princess and the Seven Knights* by Alexander Pushkin. She has also translated and published poetry from Russian and French (Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Boris Pasternak, Arthur Rimbaud, Charles Baudelaire, and Paul Verlaine). Her short story “Third Sin” won the first prize in the *Haaretz* short stories contest in 2016. Her poetry collection, *A horse in a skirt*, won an honorable mention from the Presidential First Lady/Gardner Simon Prize for Hebrew Poetry in 2018. She won the Levi Eshkol Literary Award in 2022. Her poems and stories have been translated into English, French, and Russian. Kogan is currently working on her second prose book and on a collection of poetry translations from Osip Mandelstam.

**Jiří Mordechai Langer** (1894–1943) was a Jewish writer and poet from Prague. Throughout his life, Langer created texts of various genres in the Czech, German, and Hebrew languages. His avid interest in Jewish mysticism and Hasidism and his repeated visits to the Belz Hasidim in Eastern Europe significantly influenced his literary oeuvre. Similar to his poetry, which is interwoven with mystical and homoerotic motives, his book *Die Erotik der Kabbala* (The eroticism of Kabbalah, 1923) also engages with cultural and psychoanalytic discourses on homosexuality. However, to the Czech readership, he is especially known for his 1937 compilation of Hasidic tales, *Devět bran: Chasidů tajemství* (Nine gates: Hasidic mysteries). In the same

year, Langer also published his translation of a selection of Hebrew poetry from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries titled *Zpěvy zavržených* (The songs of the rejected) into Czech.

**Hezy Leskly** (1952–1994) was an Israeli-born Hebrew poet, choreographer, and dance critic who lived most of his life in the environs of Tel Aviv, apart from a pivotal period in the Netherlands in the 1970s. These years afforded Leskly, who was openly gay, the opportunity to explore and express his sexuality without the constraints of Israeli social conventions and to develop as a poet and performance artist on his own terms. His published poetry collections include *Ha-akhbarim ve-Leah Goldberg* (The mice and Leah Goldberg, 1992), where the poem “The Rift” appears, and *Sotim yekarim* (Dear perverts, 1994), which was published shortly after his death of AIDS-related complications.

**Viktor Levi** (1865–1940) was a Sephardic journalist, writer, and translator from Istanbul. Born in 1865 and educated at least partly in French, he wrote for and edited various Ladino periodicals, joining a larger cadre of modern intellectuals. He wrote original stories and novels as well and adapted and translated works from French literature. He was an outspoken activist against sex trafficking and participated in efforts around Europe for this cause.

**Júlia Irion Martins** is a PhD candidate at the University of Michigan’s Department of Comparative Literature and Digital Studies Institute. Her research examines the ways in which online security practices have shifted modes of reading and interpreting contemporary women’s fiction and memoir. In addition to working on the internet, Júlia also works on Brazilian literature/film, architecture, and translation.

**Marina Mayorski** is a PhD candidate of Comparative Literature and Jewish Studies at the University of Michigan. Her research examines the rise of popular literature in the modern Jewish world, studying different sub-genres of the popular novel in Hebrew, Ladino,

and Yiddish and especially translations from French, Russian, and German.

**Devi Mays** is an Associate Professor of Judaic Studies and History at the University of Michigan. Her book *Forging Ties, Forging Passports: Migration and the Modern Sephardi Diaspora* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020) won the Dorothy Rosenberg Prize from the American Historical Association, the National Jewish Book Award in the category of Sephardic Culture, the Jordan Schnitzer Book Award in the category of Modern Jewish History and Culture: Africa, Americas, Asia and Oceania from the Association for Jewish Studies, and the Alixa Naff Migration Studies Prize from the Moise Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies. Her articles have appeared in *Jewish Social Studies*, *Mashriq & Mahjar*, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, and *AJS Perspectives*, and she has translated numerous pieces from Ladino, Spanish, and French for Jewish studies source readers. She is currently working with Julia Phillips Cohen on a book exploring a forgotten network of North African and Middle Eastern Jews in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe.

**Anita Norich** is Tikva Frymer-Kensky Collegiate Professor Emerita of English and Jewish Studies at the University of Michigan. She is a scholar and translator of Yiddish literature who has written and taught about American Jewish and Yiddish literature and literature of the Holocaust. She earned her PhD in Victorian Literature from Columbia University and studied Yiddish Literature at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her most recent book, *Two Feelings*, is a translation of a novel by Tsilye Dropkin (forthcoming). She is also the translator of *Fear and Other Stories*, by Chana Blankshteyn (2022), and *A Jewish Refugee in New York*, by Kadya Molodovsky (2019). Her other publications include *The Homeless Imagination in the Fiction of Israel Joshua Singer* (1991), *Discovering Exile: Yiddish and Jewish Culture in America During the Holocaust* (2007), and *Writing in Tongues: Translating Yiddish in the Twentieth Century* (2013). She is also co-editor of *Gender and Text in Modern Hebrew and Yiddish*

*Literature* (1992), *Jewish Literatures and Cultures: Context and Inter-text* (2008), and *Languages of Modern Jewish Cultures: Comparative Perspectives* (2016).

**Avner Ofrath** is a historian of citizenship, language, and the public sphere in the Middle East and North Africa. His first book, *Colonial Algeria and the Politics of Citizenship* (2023), investigates the troubled, multilingual, and radical history of rights and belonging in France's most important modern colony. He is currently working on his next major project, exploring Judeo-Arabic political writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Pessie Hershfeld Pomerantz** (1900–1978) was a Yiddish poet. Born in Kamenobrod (Kam'yanobrid), in what is now Ukraine, Pomerantz and her family immigrated to the United States and settled in Chicago in 1913, where she worked in a sweatshop while continuing to study. She first began publishing poetry in 1918, in New York-based literary journals and newspapers such as *Fraye arbeiter shtime* and *Der fraynd* as well as in Chicago publications such as *In nebl*, *Yugend*, and *Ineynem*. She was a leading figure in the Young Chicago literary circle, and her works appear in the group's anthology, *Yung shikago*, which was published in 1922. She published several books of poetry: *Kareln* (1926), a book of short, Haiku-like poems; *Geklibene lider* (1931) and *Royter toy* (1939); and *Reges fun genod, geklibene lider* (1957). After her husband's sudden death in 1962, the poet moved to Miami, Florida, where she published her final book of poetry, *Fun ale mayne lider* (1969).

**Shemtov Revah** was a Ladino journalist and author. Revah was active in Salonika (Thessaloniki) in the first half of the twentieth century. He was the editor of *El Asno*, a satirical anti-communist journal published in 1923. In 1931, he published his only novel, *Sochetá podrida* (*Rotten Society*), excerpts of which are included in this issue.

**Shloyme Shvarts** (1907–1988) was a Yiddish poet. Born in Kobrin, in what is now Belarus, he immigrated to the United States in



1920. He graduated from the University of Chicago, studying journalism and literature, and went on to become director of sales for Helix, Ltd., a photographic equipment store. Shvarts was a prominent member of the Young Chicago group of poets and was widely published in Chicago-based and international Yiddish newspapers and literary journals such as *Shikago*, *Idisher kemfer*, *Veker*, *In zikh*, *Kheshbn*, and *Literarische bleter*, as well as in several anthologies. His Yiddish poetry, often inspired by jazz music, was published in several volumes: *Bloymontik* (1938), *Amerike* (1940), *Goldener goles* (1971), *Vundn un vunder* (1975), *Brondzener mabl* (1981), and *Harbstiker fayer* (1984). He also published widely in English under the name of Selwyn Schwartz, including five volumes of poetry—some of which are self-translations of his earlier Yiddish versions: *The Poet in Blue Minor* (1942), *Passages of Refuge* (1942), *Preface to Maturity* (1944), *Letters to My Unborn Son* (1947), and *Horn in the Dust: Poems* (1949). In addition, his work was published in several modernist poetry journals in English, such as *Circle Magazine* and *Poetry* magazine. He received honors for his poetry from the World Jewish Cultural Congress Literary Foundation and the Comité Central Israelita de México and lectured on poetry at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University.

**Amanda Schwartz** is a PhD student in Mathematics at the University of Michigan, where she has also completed coursework in Ladino.

**Yossi Sucary** is an award-winning author and a Professor of Philosophy at Camera Obscura in Israel. “Win or Lose,” which appears in this volume in English translation, is a chapter from his first novel, *Emilia and the Salt of the Earth: A Confession* (2002). The novel was translated into French in 2006. At the vanguard of Israeli race and ethnicity discourse, his work includes essays, novels, novellas, and short stories. Sucary was born in 1959 to a family that immigrated to Israel from Libya. He grew up in the underprivileged neighborhood of Pardes Katz before moving to a predominantly wealthy Ashkenazi suburb in northern Tel Aviv. He dropped out of high school, but once he completed his exams, Sucary went on to earn a degree in philosophy and history at Tel Aviv University. Through his unique

writing style, Sucary often incorporates autobiographical elements, exploring the intricacies of Mizrahi Israeli identity, challenging its false sense of cohesion and entrenchment in Zionist narratives.

**Ruth Tsoffar** is a Professor of Comparative Literature, Women's and Gender Studies, and the Frankel Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, University of Michigan. Ruth received her PhD in the Near Eastern Studies Department at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *Life in Citations: Biblical Narratives and Contemporary Hebrew Culture* (Routledge, 2019) and the award-winning book *The Stains of Culture: An Ethno-Reading of Karaite Jewish Women* (Wayne State University Press, 2006). Tsoffar's earlier work on Israeli ethnicity focused on the intersection of body, gender, and poetry and was published at *Hagar* in two complementary studies: "The Body that Crumbled': Mizrahi Men Writing Poetic Anatomy, Part I" and "Dissected Identity: Mizrahi Women, Space and Body, Part II." Her other works include her study of Yona Wallach and Anton Shammas. Her future projects include a collection of essays on violence and women in the Bible and a study of the erasure of Jamusin, a Palestinian neighborhood in northern Tel Aviv as it became the Mizrahi Givat Amal and the luxury residence complex Akirov Towers.