ABRAHAM JACOB BERKOVITZ

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Education

2012–2017 Ph.D., Princeton University, Department of Religion

Dissertation Title: *The Life of Psalms in Late Antiquity*

Advisor: Martha Himmelfarb

Readers: Anthony Grafton and Moulie Vidas

2011–2012 M.A., Bible, Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies,

Yeshiva University (Graduated *magna cum laude*)

2008–2011 B.A., Jewish Studies, Yeshiva College, Yeshiva University

(Graduated *summa cum laude*)

2007–2008 Yeshivat Har Etzion, studies in rabbinic literature

Employment

Fall 2018 – Current Assistant Professor at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (tenure-track)

Spring 2019 Starr Fellow, Harvard University

2018-19 Rabin-Shvidler joint post-doctoral fellowship at Columbia and Fordham Universities (declined)

Spring 2018 Post-Graduate Research Associate, Princeton University, Department of Religion

**Publications**

**Books**

*A Life of Psalms in Jewish Late Antiquity,* University of Pennsylvania Press, under contract

Recipient of a Jordan Schnitzer First Book Publication Award

*Authority in Late Antique Historiography: Authorship, Law and Transmission in Jewish and Christian Tradition*,eds. Abraham Berkovitz and Mark Letteney, (London: Routledge, 2018)

*Lexical Studies in the Bible and Ancient Near East Inscriptions: The Collected Essays of Hayim Tawil,* eds. Abraham Berkovitz, Alec Goldstein, Stuart Halpern (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 2012)

**Articles in Peer Reviewed Journals**

“Psalm 45 between Jesus and Abraham: A Polemic and its Shelf Life,” *AJS Review,* forthcoming

“Psalm Incipits in Jewish Late Antiquity: Materiality, Interpretation and Translation,” *Book History* 25.1 (2022): 31-62

“A New Meaning of the Phrase ‘Knowledge of YHWH’ in Hosea,” *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Society,* forthcoming

“Parallelism and Beyond: The Relationship between Targum Psalms and Rabbinic Literature,” *Aramaic Studies* 19.1 (2021): 1-35

“Translation, Translation Technique and the Superscriptions of the Aramaic Psalter,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 110.4 (2020): 621-51

“May You Redeem the Nation that Completes the Book of Psalms:” An Aramaic Poem and its Linguistic, Literary and Historical Contexts, *Aramaic Studies* 17.1 (2019): 145-73

“Akkadian *Bulluṭu* and Hebrew רפא: Pardon and Loyalty in Hosea and Neo-Assyrian Political Texts (with Shawn Zelig-Aster), *Hebrew Studies* 59 (2018): 149-71

“Some *Temple Scroll* Restorations,” *Revue de Qumrân* 25:3 (2012): 445–450

“A Jewish Tradition in the Syriac Poetry of Jacob of Serugh,” in preparation

**Articles in Scholarly Volumes**

“The Receptions of Psalms in Jewish History: Transformation, Growth and Continuity,” *Cambridge Companion to the Book of Psalms*,(eds. Joel LeMon and Brent Strawn; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), forthcoming

“The Psalm Blessing,” *Prayer in the Ancient World* (eds. Daniel Falk and Rodney Werline; Leiden: Brill), forthcoming

“The Hallels,” *Prayer in the Ancient World* (eds. Daniel Falk and Rodney Werline; Leiden: Brill), forthcoming

“On Mechanics and Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis: Revelation, Gentiles and Psalm 29 in Tannaitic Midrash, *Himmelfarb FS* (ed. Ra’anan Boustan, Annette Yoshiko Reed and David Frankfurter), forthcoming

“Jewish and Christian Exegetical Controversy in Late Antiquity: The Case of Psalm 22,” *Ancient Readers and Their Scriptures* (eds. Garrick Allen and John Dunne; Leiden: Brill, 2018), 222-39

“Authority in Contemporary Historiography” (with Mark Letteney), in *Rethinking ‘Authority’ in Late Antiquity: Authorship, Law and Transmission in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2018), 1-16

“Beyond Attribution and Authority: The Case of Psalms in Rabbinic Hermeneutics,” in *Rethinking ‘Authority’ in Late Antiquity: Authorship, Law and Transmission in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, (London: Routledge, 2018), 57-77

“Missing and Misplaced? Omission and Transposition in the Book of Jubilees” *HaIsh Moshe: Studies in Honor of Moshe Bernstein* (eds. Binyamin Goldstein, George Brook, Michael Segal; Leiden: Brill, 2017), 40–63

“Targum and Book History,” *Encyclopaedia of Jewish Book Cultures,* invited

**Public Scholarship**

“The Other Side of Esther,” 2022 (https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/holidays/articles/other-side-of-esther)

“Book Note: Targum Chronicles and its Place among the Late Targums,” 2021 (https://www.ancientjewreview.com/read/2021/10/19/book-note-targum-chronicles-and-its-place-among-the-late-targums)

“Here Comes the Sun,” 2021 (https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/holidays/articles/here-comes-the-sun-passover)

“Was Haman Hanged, Impaled, or Crucified,” 2021 (https://www.thetorah.com/article/was-haman-hanged-impaled-or-crucified)

“Psalms No More,” 2021 (<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/belief/articles/psalms-no-more>)

Psalm Essays for Project 929 (https://www.929.org.il/lang/en/today): Psalms 23, 29, 30, 92, 110, 113, 114, 119, 126, 145

“(Mis)Quoting Scripture in American Politics,” 2020 (<https://thelehrhaus.com/commentary/misquoting-scripture-in-american-politics/>)

“Covid and Crisis: Echoes from Ancient Israel,” HUC-JIR Covid Project, 2020 (https://scriptions.huc.edu/scriptions/responding-to-crisis-and-covid-19-echoes-from-ancient-israel)

“My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me” Jesus or Esther?, 2020 (<https://www.thetorah.com/article/my-god-my-god-why-have-you-forsaken-me-jesus-or-esther>)

“Psalm 104:15 in the Babylonian Talmud,” Jewish Drinking Podcast, 2020 (<http://jewishdrinking.com/psalmtalmud/>)

“Dramatizing Torah Reading with Aramaic Liturgical Poetry,” 2019 (<https://www.thetorah.com/article/dramatizing-torah-reading-with-aramaic-liturgical-poetry>)

“Creating the Jewish Canon,” 2018 (<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/creating-the-jewish-canon/>)

“The Living Bibles of the Vatican Library,” 2017 (<https://www.thelehrhaus.com/scholarship/the-living-bibles-of-the-vatican-library/>)

Tablet Magazine’s *Take One Podcast on Daf Yomi*: Eruvin 60 (https://podcasts.apple.com/gh/podcast/eruvin-60/id1493757042?i=1000493992958) and Yoma 59 (https://www.tabletmag.com/podcasts/take-one/yoma-59-daf-yomi)

Teaching

As a Professor at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion

The Bible in the Synagogue: Homily, Translation, Poetry and Art

Aramaic Language and Literature

Ritual Theory, Jewish Practice

Psalms and its Readers

New Testament and Early Christianity

Psalms in the World of the Rabbis

Introduction to Jewish Liturgy: Texts and Contexts

As Assistant Instructor

Spring 2016 Princeton University – Theory and Methods in the Study of Religion (with Lianne Carlson, and as guest lecturer on Defining Religion)

Spring 2015 Princeton University – New Testament and Christian Origins (with John Gager)

2009–2011 Yeshiva University – Babylonian Talmud and its Commentators (with Jeremy Weider)

Related Experience

2021 “The Greek Version(s) of Esther” (4 classes) for HUC-JIR Summer Beit Midrash

2020 “Abraham and the Furnace: Legend, Literature and Context” (4 classes) for HUC-JIR Summer Beit Midrash

2020 The Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls (6 classes) for Streicker Center, Congregation Emanuel, NY, NY

2019 Psalms in Jewish Late Antiquity (2 classes) for Ma’ayan: Torah Studies from the Sources, Boston, MA

2012–Present Community Scholar – Congregation Ahavas Achim, Highland Park, N.J. (courses taught: Dead Sea Scrolls, Ancient Judaism, and History of Psalmody)

2015–2016 Teaching Certificate from McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning (available upon request)

2010–2012 Beit Midrash Scholar – Congregation Shearith Israel, New York, N.Y. (courses taught: Literary Approaches to the Bible, Biblical History, History of Prayer)

Academic Presentations

2022 “Did Priests Compose Targumic Literature?,” Martha Himmelfarb Retirement Conference, Princeton University (invted).

2022 “Rabbinization from the Perspective of Targumic Literature,” Rabbinization and Diversity, Virtual (Invited).

2021 “Historical Persecution, Jewish Tradition and Modern Anti-Semitism” Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, Rutgers University (with Jeremy Lichtman).

2020 “Between Liturgy and Interpretation: The Transformation of Scripturalization in Jewish Late Antiquity,” AJS Virtual.

2020 “Speech Identification as a Literary-Translational Technique in Targum Psalms,” SBL Virtual.

2020 “The Aramaic Poems of Esther,” Liturgical Mosaics: Ritual Song in Late Antiquity, Duke University. (Invited, but cancelled due to COVID-19).

2020 “Budling Knowledge through Rabbinic Reading,” Knowledge Construction in Late Antiquity, University of Maryland (Invited, but cancelled due to COVID-19).

2019 “Materiality, Paratextuality and Ancient Jewish Readers” Starr Seminar, Harvard University.

2018 “How to Create a World: The Psalter as a Hermeneutical Tool in Genesis Rabbah 1-9,” Society of Biblical Literature, Denver. (Invited).

2018 “Late Antique Jewish and Christian Psalm Piety in Comparative Contexts,” Psalms in Ritual Practices in Pluralistic Contexts from Antiquity to the Present, Erfurt. (Invited).

2018 “The Late Antique Contexts of Targum Psalms,” International Organization of Targum Studies conference, London.

2017 “‘Redeem the Nation that Completes the Book of Psalms’: A Late Antique Aramaic Poem”

Association for Jewish Studies, Washington, D.C.

2017 “Practice, Performance, and the Place of Psalm Piety in Ancient Judaism”

Society of Biblical Literature, Boston.

2017 “Between Translation and Interpretation: Contextualizing the Titles of the Aramaic Psalms”

World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem

2017 “The Aramaic Psalter: Some Linguistic and Literary Observations”

Tel Aviv University

2017 “Material Convention and Interpretation: The Divisibility of Psalms in Jewish and Christian Perspectives”

Regional Seminar in Ancient Judaism, New York

2016 “The Scrolls of Psalms in Late Antiquity: A Book History Approach,”

Association for Jewish Studies, San Diego

2016 “Opening the Psalter and Crafting a Reader: Psalm 1 between Jews and Christians,”

Talmud and Christianity: Rabbinic Judaism after Constantine, University of Cambridge

2016 “Beyond Authorship and Authority: Authorship of Psalms in Rabbinic Perspectives,”

Beyond Authority: Composition and Transmission in Late Antiquity, Princeton University

2016 “Splitting the Atom: Psalm 29 and the Case for Holistic Exegesis,”

Ancient Judaism Regional Seminar, University of Pennsylvania

2015 “Paratextuality and the Aramaic Psalm Titles,”

Society for Biblical Literature, Atlanta

2015 “Rabbinic Textuality and the Book of Psalms,”

Book History and Religious Studies Workshop, Princeton University

2014 “Healing a Broken Covenant: The Use of רפא in Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah,”

Society for Biblical Literature, San Diego

2014 “Jewish and Christian Exegetical Controversy in Late Antiquity: The Case of Psalm 22,”

Ancient Readers and Their Scriptures, University of St Andrews

University Service and Related Activities

2022 Article Referee for *Oqimta*

2021 Faculty Handbook Revision Taskforce

2021 (Fall) HUC-JIR/NY Writing Center

2021 Article Referee for *Jewish Studies Quarterly*

2020- Present Honors Committee

2020 Student Interview and Admission Committee

2020 Student Tenure Committee

2020 Organizer for “Psalms in Music” Conference, New York City

2019-Present Founder and Co-Chair of HUC-JIR’s Academic Works in Progress Series

2019-Present Founder and Chair of HUC-JIR’s Nasi: Academic Book Group

2019 Article Referee for *Jewish Quarterly Review* and *Hebrew Union College Annual*

2019 – Present Vice-Chair of Bibliographical Society of America Fellowship Committee

2018 Organizer for Regional Seminar in Ancient Judaism, Princeton University

2017 Founder of Jewish Studies Reading Group, Princeton University

2017 Conference co-organizer for “Judaism in the 7th and 8th Centuries,” Princeton University

2016–2017 Religion Department Graduate Student Committee, Chair

2016 Co-founder for “Materiality, Textuality and Reading Practices Workshop,” Princeton University

2016 Conference co-organizer for “Beyond Authority: Tradition and Transmission in Late Antiquity,” Princeton University

2016 Graduate Mentoring Award Committee, member

2015–2018 Co-president of Committee for the Study of Late Antiquity Book Club, Princeton University

2011-2012 Intern at Center for Israel Studies, Yeshiva University

2009-2011 Peer-mentor for Department of Judaic Studies, Yeshiva University

Awards and Scholarships

**Post-Graduate**

2022 AJS Jordan Schnitzer First Book Publication Award

2021 Compendia Rerium Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum Essay Prize

2020 Bibliographical Society of America, Program Award

2020 Rare Book School, Discretionary Director’s Scholarship

2019 AAJR Early Career Workshop

**Graduate**

2017–2018 Dean’s Completion/Post-Graduate Research Associate Fellowship

2017–2018 Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture

2017–2018 Association for Jewish Studies Dissertation Completion Fellowship

2016–2017 Bayard Henry Class of 1876 Graduate Fellowship

2016–2017 Center for Study of Religion Graduate Fellowship

2016 Katz Center Summer Graduate Workshop

2016 AAJR Graduate Student Seminar

2012–2016 Wexner Graduate Fellowship, Jewish Studies

Memberships

Association for Jewish Studies

Society of Biblical Literature

Research Languages

Hebrew (Biblical, Rabbinic, Modern); Aramaic (Imperial, Biblical, Palestinian, Babylonian, Syriac); Greek; German (reading proficiency); French (reading proficiency)