I am so sorry, I scanned the pages out of order in this section!

M rules below

Sci-ences

CROSSING CULTURES

Culture – namely "the best which has been thought and said," to borrow the words of English critic Matthew Arnold – comes from the soil. The word derives from the Latin *colo*, meaning to till and cultivate. While on the surface, today's digital, cosmopolitan, and urban culture has strayed far from its earthy roots, it nonetheless retains an aspect of those humble origins. Parallels abound: like seeds planted in rich tilled earth, culture grows and blossoms; culture requires the labor of the few to meet the hungers of the many; culture is fragile, like crops that wither in the blazing sun; and culture endures and even thrives after a season of fire. Most importantly, though, human cultures, just like different species of fruits and flowers, can cross-pollinate, creating combinations that are surprising, wondrous, and new. In fact, domesticating foreign ideas, techniques, or gods can help a culture remain vibrant and alive.

Since antiquity, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and other exact sciences have enjoyed cross-cultural validity: the same stars shine over Baghdad as over Berlin, and the heart beats the same in Venice as in Varanasi. This is why scientific discoveries and texts are among those that most easily travel from one culture to another. Often, in fact, theories that begin in a particular place return to it after a sojourn elsewhere. Thus, for example, the medical theories of the second-century Roman physician Galen were reincorporated in the western European medical curriculum after being preserved, corrected, and expanded by Muslim, Jewish, and Byzantine physicians. These layers of the Galenic medical tradition could even be gathered together in a single text, enabling practitioners to gain wisdom from the medical insights of different cultures and ages.

What is true of science holds for philosophy and religion. Men and women from cultures around the world aspired to membership in an elite, transhistorical society of thinkers and lovers of wisdom. From antiquity to modernity, the fourth-century BCE Greek philosopher Aristotle remained the unrivaled leader of that philosophical society. For generations of Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike, Aristotle was revered as the philosopher par excellence. For some, Aristotle and the philosophy he inspired were the antidote to God, while others interpreted his metaphysics to lend support to the monotheistic

trans-historical

worldview and the doctrines of the revealed religions.

But how does culture travel? How does this cross-pollination occur?

Culture and violence seem, outwardly, to belong to different worlds. But, paradoxically, war and conquest are among the most significant cultural catalysts. Stories of great armies meeting on the battlefield, of soldiers' bravery, and of fights lost and won have been the stuff of literature from its very inception. However, an army also brings its own culture to foreign lands; not only do the language, technology, and values of the conqueror spill over into the host society, but new rulers often use their might to impose their own culture onto that of the subject people. In the wake of military victory – and sometimes even as a precursor to it – traders bring knowledge of customs and cultures together with goods from foreign lands.

Without such fundamental structural processes, which act on societies as a whole, cross-cultural fertilization could never take place. However, in some instances, a single person can have an outsized impact. A scholar arrives on a distant shore and teaches a small cadre of students who then go on to key positions in church and government and, just like that, a new cultural movement is born. Like the famed butterfly effect, individual decisions can change the course of history.

On an individual level, curiosity is perhaps the most important driving force. Curiosity is confoundingly inexplicable: why is one person fascinated by Japanese prints while another finds them deathly dull? Whether arising from a quirk of personality or from personal history, an artist's fascination with the rites and rituals of different faiths or a student's attraction to the music of another people can produce a body of work steeped in the culture of the other. And as that work is seen, read, or heard, and as it passes through the hands of different owners – and is acquired, catalogued, and preserved by a library – it sparks the curiosity of new appreciators through the generations. Returning to its earthy roots, if culture is a plant in full flower, curiosity is the puff of breath that blows its seeds to new rich soils.

SAMUEL THROPE

A Doctor's Handbook, East and West

Articella, 13th century

STEFAN LITT

Textbooks for academic studies in medicine have always been expensive. This was certainly the case in the Middle Ages, when such compendiums were copied by hand on costly parchment and decorated with artful initials. The common medical textbook for European universities in this period was a compilation called *Articella* (*Little Art*). First compiled in a Latin translation in the eleventh century for the medical school in Salerno (Italy), it included texts by Galen, Hippocrates, Ioannitius (Hunayn ibn Ishaq), Theophilus, and Philaretus – physicians from the ancient times and the early Middle Ages who originally wrote their texts in Greek or Arabic. Bringing together texts from different periods and cultures created a scientific dialogue over time and space, thus manifesting the sameness of humans regardless of their cultural backgrounds, which remains the basic principle of medicine.

The thirteenth-century *Articella* in the National Library's collection emphasizes this agreement over humanity's oneness by including four texts by the Jewish physician Itzhak ben Shlomo, who was active in Cairo and Kairouan in the ninth and tenth centuries. These texts were not usually part of the *Articella*, but the editor of this version, which was made in France, apparently highly estimated their scientific value. Evidently, at least two students or scholars benefitted from this cross-cultural scientific compilation and left related glosses in medieval script in the broad margins, which had been left blank for exactly this purpose.

The Articellae lost their status as standard textbooks in the seventeenth century. The knowledge presented in them was outdated. What remains is the evidence of ancient knowledge in beautiful manuscripts.

Little Art (*Articella*). France, c. 1250–1270. Beginning of the treatise, "Isagoge," by Johannitius, a short medical treatise from the eighth or ninth century, folio 4r. The main text is surrounded by medieval commentaries in the margins, apparently written by students or scholars of the period. The artful initial "M" in the corner includes a miniature of a teacher and two students holding notes. The Harry Friedenwald Collection. Ms. Fr. 93.

Aristotle Crosses Cultures

Zerahia ben Isaac Hen, Hebrew Translations of Aristotle and Commentaries on Aristotle, 1380–1420

STEVEN HARVEY

Jewish, Muslim, and Christian thinkers at different times during the Middle Ages considered Aristotle the supreme philosopher and his writings the foundations of the sciences. Since few of them knew ancient Greek, most could access Aristotle's writings only through translation.

Curiously, while all of Aristotle's major works were translated into both Arabic and Latin, among the many translations from Arabic of Aristotelian philosophy and science, only three were translated into Hebrew. Instead (likely following Maimonides' advice to the translator Samuel Ibn Tibbon that Aristotle's important works cannot be understood without the great commentaries), Jewish translators translated virtually all the commentaries on Aristotle by the Islamic philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroes), the Aristotelian commentator par excellence. As a result, Jews studied, mastered, and commented on Aristotelian science primarily through the Hebrew translations of Averroes' commentaries.

This precious manuscript contains rare, and likely the oldest, copies of two of the three Hebrew translations of Aristotle's works: the 1284 translations of the Arabic versions of *On Generation and Corruption* and *On the Soul* by Zerahia ben Isaac ben Sheʾaltiʾel Hen in Rome.

Yet, this manuscript contains much more. Zerahia was a teacher of philosophy, a Maimonidean rationalist, and a biblical exegete, as well as a translator of philosophical and medical texts. As the collection of his Aristotelian translations in this manuscript shows, Zerahia created a veritable textbook or encyclopedia of most of Aristotle's works on natural science and metaphysics. Each version of an Aristotelian text – whether by Aristotle or a commentary on it – is translated into Hebrew for the first time in its entirety. His goal was perhaps to enable the careful study of Aristotelian science for Hebrew readers and, subsequently, the acquisition of knowledge that he deemed necessary for their intellectual development and the attainment of human perfection.

Zerahia Hen's translations into Hebrew of Aristotle and his commentators, Spain, 1380–1420. Zerahia's translation of the first book of Aristotle's *On the Soul*, with marginal notes added by later readers, folio 93r. Ms. Heb. 4° 1108.

A Cartographic Renaissance

Asia Quarta Map Based on Ptolemy, 1486

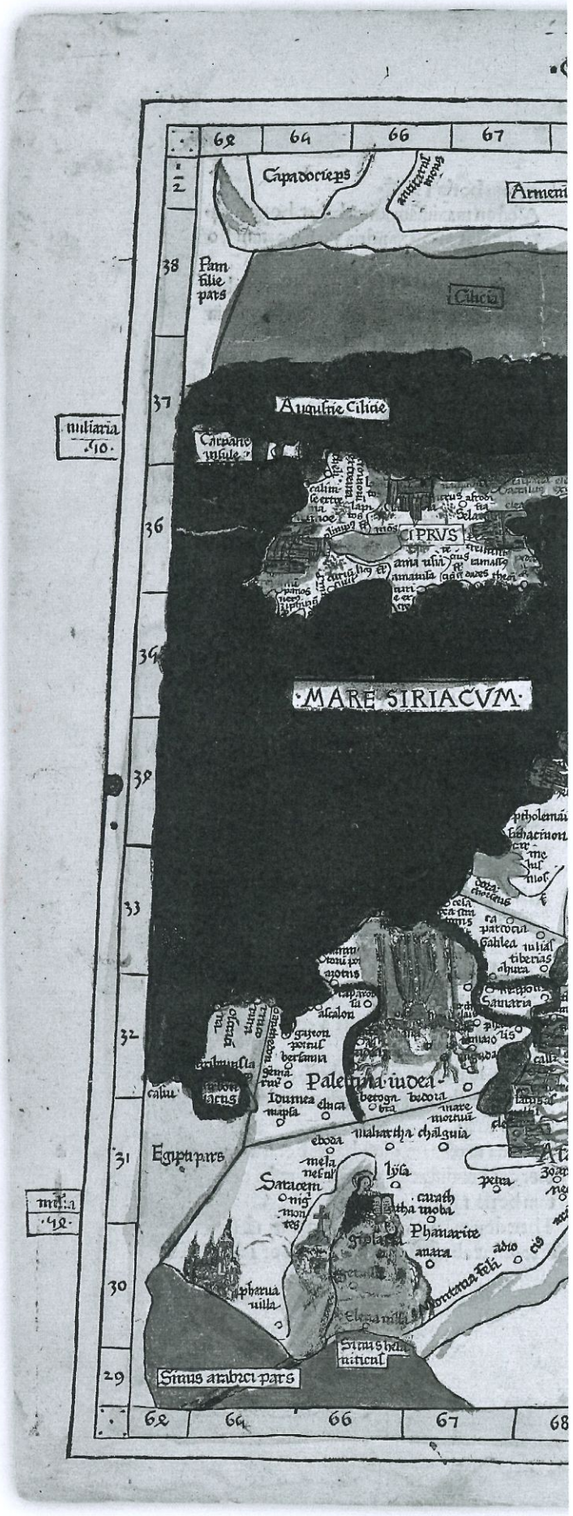
MILKA LEVY-RUBIN

In 1397, at the dawn of the Renaissance, Greek scholar Manuel Chrysoloras (1355–1415) was invited to Florence to fulfill a task that would transform the world of scholarship in the West: to teach Greek and to translate classical Greek books into Latin.

Besides Homer, Plato, and other classics, Chrysoloras also translated Ptolemy's *Geography*, a work that was to change the concept of geography. In this large treatise, Ptolemy, a famed geographer in second-century Alexandria, explained different mathematical map projection methods and included detailed lists of toponyms and their locations. The text was probably accompanied by a set of maps, as was the manuscript employed by Chrysoloras. Chrysoloras' translation was repeatedly copied and printed over the ensuing centuries.

The map of Asia Quarta presented here comes from Reger's 1486 Latin edition of *Geography*. It depicts the area between Armenia in the north, Arabia in the south, Cyprus in the West, and Persia in the East. Although it is one of countless exemplars made of the same engraving, this unique copy of the map contains several hand-painted additions portraying important biblical scenes: at the top right, Assyria, Babylon, and the collapsing tower of Babylon; at the bottom left, Moses receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, Samson bringing down the pillars of the temple of Dagon, and the burning of the "cities of the plain" (Sodom and Gomorrah) by the Dead Sea.

These exceptional additions represent the inclinations of the painter, who dressed the classical Greek map in the Christian garb of the Holy Land. This encounter between a humanist love of the classics and the edifying Christian tradition was typical of the fifteenth century, when the scientific approach often gave way to tradition. It would take much longer for these old traditions to be fully replaced by the scientific geographical methods that culminated in modern projections and measured maps.



Napoleon in Egypt

The Napoleon Archival Collection, 1794–1825

STEFAN LITT

In July 1798, close to the village of Rashid (Rosetta) in Northern Egypt, French soldiers from Napoleon's army discovered a fragment of an ancient stele inscribed with a decree in three languages. Experts hoped to decipher the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs with the help of this stone. However, the challenge of unlocking the ancient language became even harder during the ensuing period of tumult and transformation.

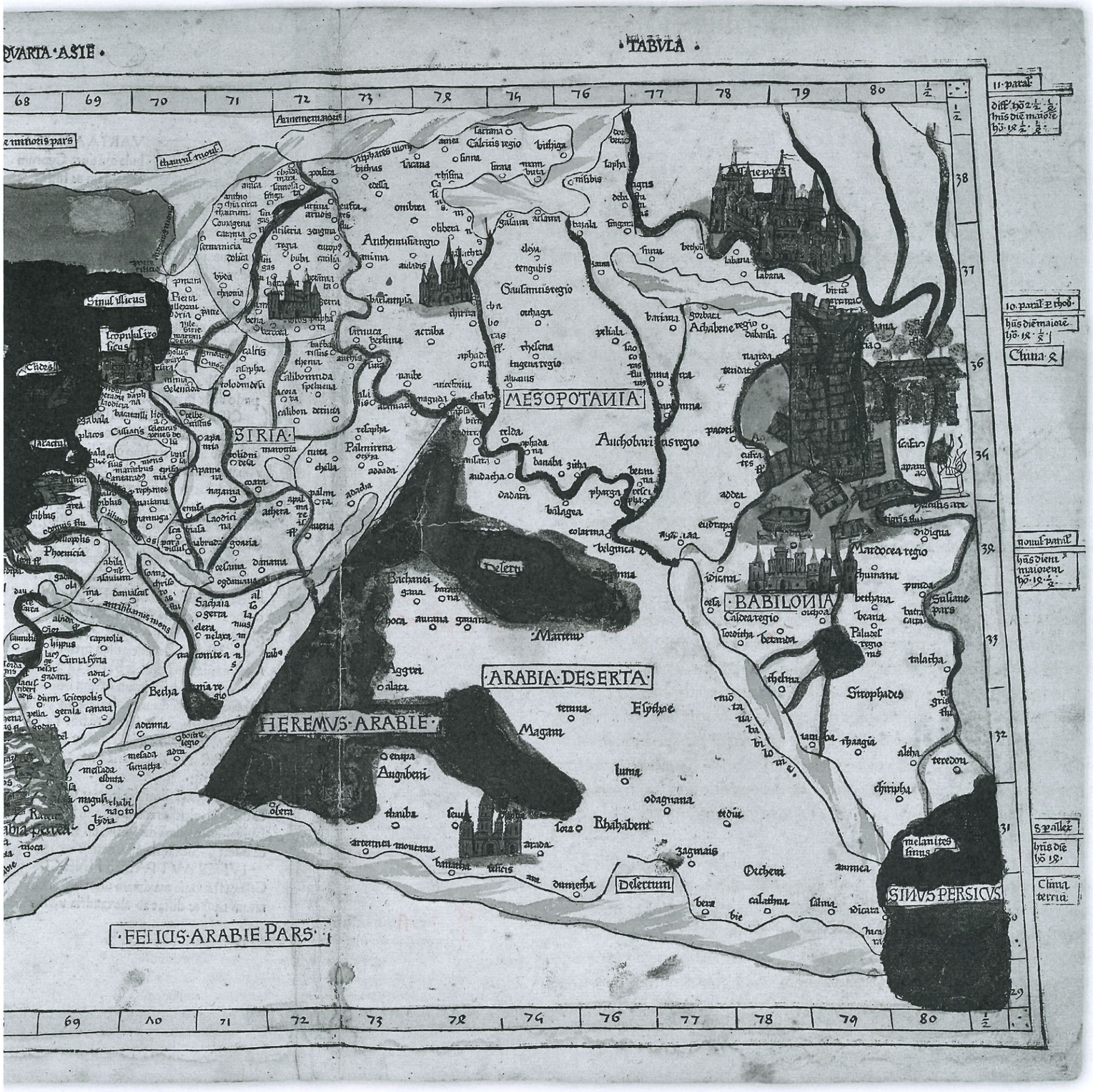
Napoleon's conquest of Egypt lasted only three years but was a watershed moment in Egyptian history. It was the first Western attack on the Middle East since the Crusades and aimed to disrupt British trade routes between India and Europe. By the time they were routed by the British in the summer of 1801, the French had both ushered in critical elements of modernization and laid the cornerstones for modern Egyptology and archaeology.

The National Library's collection of over 1000 letters, orders, reports, and other documents from the Napoleonic era includes about 300 items related to the Egyptian campaign. The documents show how the French used the newest methods to map the region, administer health policies to face the challenges of the bubonic plague in particular, and survey the region and its history and culture. They also testify to the introduction of the first printing press to Egypt and the initiation of a cultural program that included, for example, celebrating the renovation of the nilometers and the watering channels. Thirteen of these documents are signed by Napoleon himself.

Other documents shed light on archaeological excavations and discoveries made by French scientists. Most of the findings, however, did not remain with them after their return home. After the loss of the French fleet in a sea battle, the French expedition corps had no choice but to rely on the British Navy to bring them back home in 1801. However, the British commander-in-chief demanded the aforementioned Rosetta Stone, along with other findings, as compensation. This explains why this and other valuable items never reached France.

Right: Letter from French Minister of War Alexandre Berthier to the navy prefect of the city of Toulon requesting support for the engineer Pierre Jacotin, who was traveling to Egypt, Paris, 1801. Jacotin headed the cartographers' team that produced the first scientific maps of Egypt based on exact measuring. The Abraham Shalom Yahuda Collection. ARC. Ms. Var. Yah. 2 2 338.

Johann Reger, *Asia Quarta Map* (*Quarta Asie tabula*), Ulm, Germany, 1486. Hand-colored copy of the map, which once was part of a printed edition of Ptolemy's *Geography*. The map is depicted in modern northern orientation but otherwise includes inaccuracies due to a lack of measurements. The Eran Laor Cartographic Collection. Laor 604.



From Greek Conqueror to Muslim Prophet

Nizami, Book of Alexander, 18th century

SAMUEL THROPE

Alexander the Great's conquest of the known world lasted only eleven years, from 334 to 323 BCE, but the legacy of that almost unbelievable achievement – building an empire stretching from Greece to India before the age of thirty – continued to reverberate throughout the centuries. As his tale was told and retold, Alexander of Macedon became transformed from man to legend.

In the Islamic sphere, the portrayal of Alexander took a surprising and unexpected turn. Alexander's figure is already hinted at in the Qur'an in the description of the "two-horned one" in Surat al-Kahf. However, the twelfth-century Persian poet Nizami of Ganja, whose work profoundly influenced later Persian and Turkish poets, gives us an Alexander driven not by conquest but by justice; having attained perfect philosophical wisdom, the Macedonian warrior becomes, in the poet's hands, a monotheistic prophet.

In Nizami's retelling, which makes up the fifth and final section of the *Quintet* (*Khamsa*), his series of five romantic epics, Alexander, after gaining control over the known world, travels to the unknown. Accompanied by the prophet Khidr, he journeys through the Land of Darkness in search of the fountain of immortality. While he does not find the fountain, Alexander meets the angel Israfil, who awaits God's order to sound the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection.

Manuscripts of Nizami's version are often accompanied by miniature paintings illustrating the story's pivotal scenes. In one of the most famous scenes, Alexander, complete with halo, comforts the dying Persian King Dara (Darius III), who had been assassinated by faithless vassals. The miniature not only conveys the hero's mercy for his former rival but signifies the legitimate transfer of Iranian kingship to Alexander and his line.

Nizami, *Book of Alexander* (*Sharafnama-yi Sikandari*), ~~circa~~ 1800.

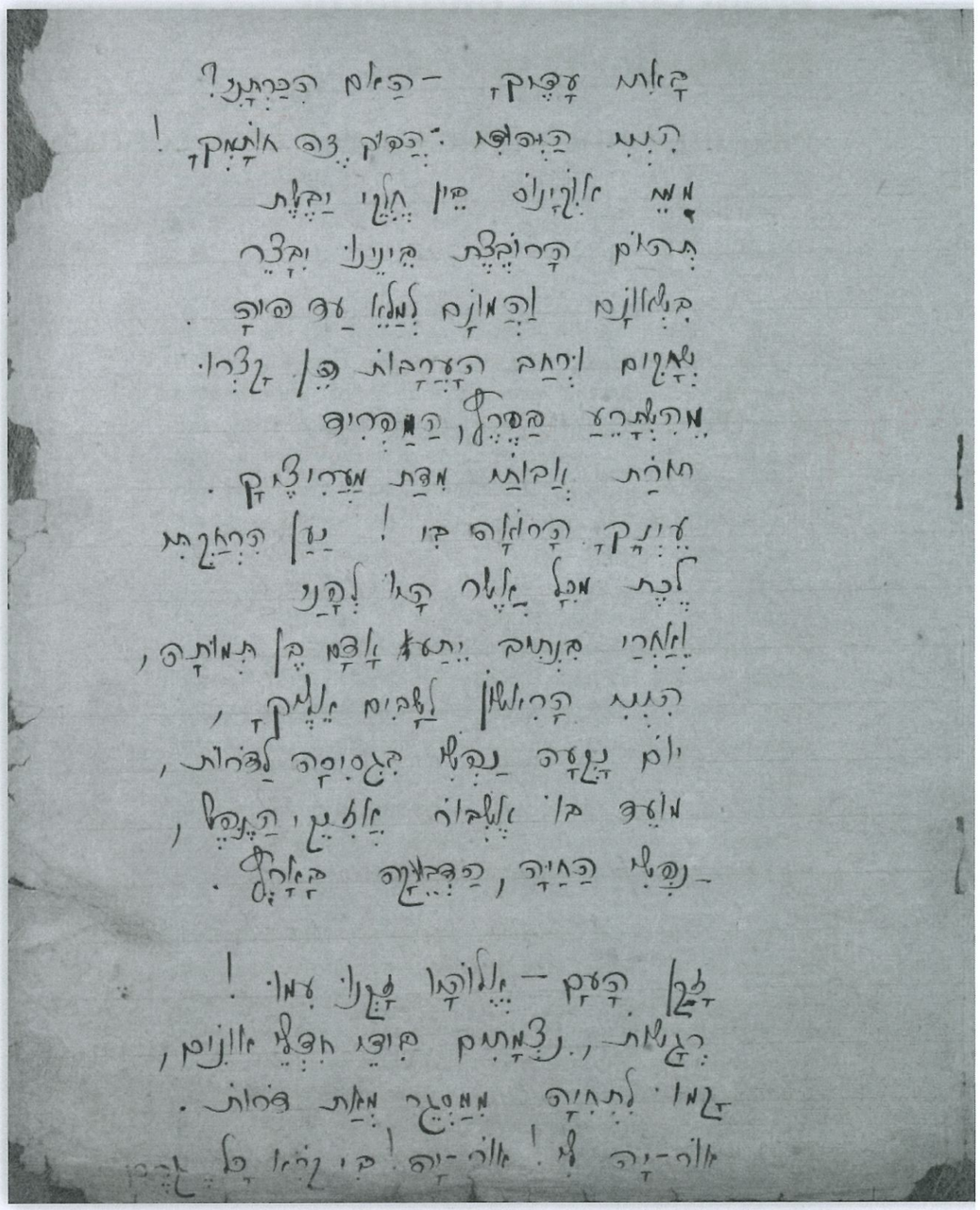
~~Left~~: Alexander the Great comforting the dying Persian King Darius III, folio 33r.

~~Right~~: Alexander (center) and Aristotle (right), studying with Aristotle's father Nichomachus (left), folio 11v. The Abraham Shalom Yahuda Collection. Ms. Yah. Ar. 1021.

Athens and Jerusalem

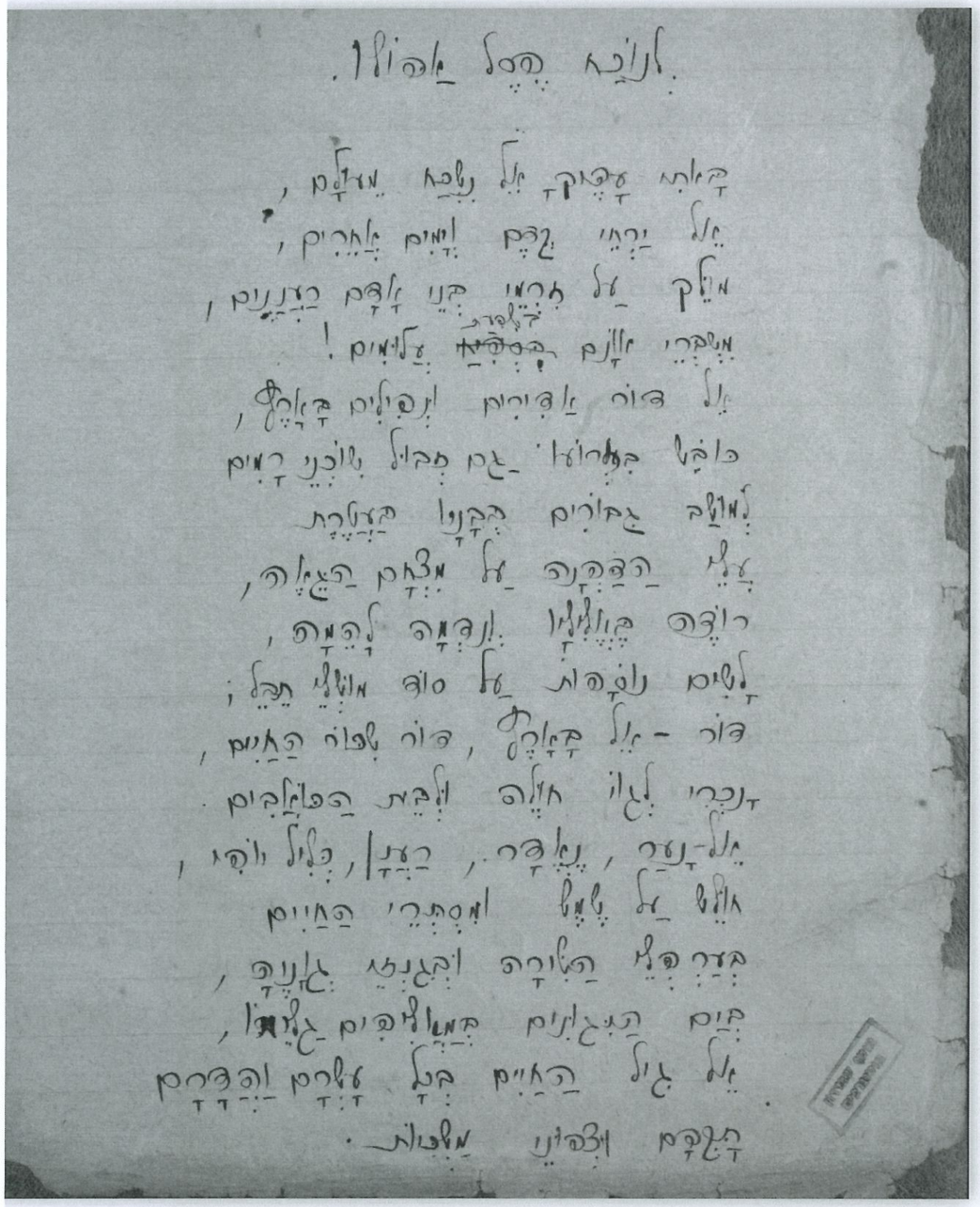
Shaul Tchernichovsky, Before the Statue of Apollo, ~~circa~~ 1901

HEZI AMIUR



Hebrew culture, at the turn of the twentieth century, was bold and revolutionary. And yet readers were nonetheless stunned by the young Shaul Tchernichovsky's (1875–1943) dialogue with Greek culture while standing before a statue of Apollo, the symbol of vitality and beauty. In this poem, Tchernichovsky extends a greeting of peace to the Greek god and writes admiringly of the Greek zest for life, art, and liberty: "I will kneel, I will bow to the good and the sublime...I will bow to life, to valor, and to beauty." He comes with an offering of appeasement in the name of a Judaism that has been resurrected after hundreds of years.

In one of the climactic lines of the poem, the Jew stands before the statue of Apollo and exclaims: "Do you recognize me? I am the Jew: Your adversary of old!" In this handwritten draft, however, we see that Tchernichovsky originally wrote: "Your seal in reverse!" Both the question and the response invoking a



Shaul Tchernichovsky's autograph of one of his most influential songs: "Before the Statue of Apollo," dealing with the relationship between Judaism and ~~the~~ Greek paganism. ca. 1901. Donated by Joseph Klausner, Schwad 01 09 129.31.

seal allude to the biblical story of Judah, whose daughter-in-law, Tamar, rebukes him for treating her unfairly, thus leading him to admit her righteousness. Their union ultimately gives rise to the Davidic dynasty.

Tchernichovsky's initial conception of the relationship between Judaism and Greek culture was not about the eternal conflict between lifelong enemies. He viewed it rather as an internecine conflict and chastised the stronger sibling for betraying their mutual accord. He also proposed a historical reconciliation that would bring a bright future for both cultures.

When he wrote this poem, Tchernichovsky was a student in Heidelberg along with Joseph Klausner, his lifelong friend and interlocutor on matters of art and poetry. Klausner ended up with many drafts, letters, and notes from Tchernichovsky, which were later entrusted to the National Library.

Shakespeare at Jaffa Gate

Trilingual Poster, 1919

SAMUEL THROPE

In November 1919, residents of Jerusalem were offered a theatrical bonanza. The Egyptian theater company of Abd al-Aziz al-Jahili had just arrived in the city. During their five-night run, the company would perform *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello* as well as *Charlotte*, a play based on the life of the French assassin Charlotte Corday, and *Hamdan al-Andalusi*. The poster announcing the performances was written in Arabic, English, and Hebrew in an attempt to attract the widest possible audience.

The choice of venue reflected similar aspirations. The cafe *Qahwat al-Ma'aref* was Jerusalem's main public performance space and was located in the city's commercial hub right outside Jaffa Gate. Constructed only a few years earlier, this new town center symbolized the modern, non-sectarian, and middle-class aspirations of late Ottoman Jerusalem.

Jahili and his troupe hailed from Cairo, the cultural capital of the Arab world and home to most of its important authors and thinkers. The Arabic versions of Shakespeare staged were likely borrowed from earlier translations by Najib al-Haddad, Tanyus Abdu, and Khalil Mutran. These were not literal renditions of Shakespeare's original text: Abdu's *Hamlet*, for example, changes the play's tragic ending to a happy one.

Despite the fact that the troupe's repertoire was performed in colloquial Egyptian Arabic, the poster reflects the fact that its designer was familiar with the new Hebrew culture of the Land of Israel. *Ram ve Yael*, as the story of Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers is translated, evokes the biblical names used in an important 1878 Hebrew version. This subtle allusion is all the more striking as the designer muddled the name of the English original, printing *Romes and Juliette* instead of *Romeo and Juliet*.

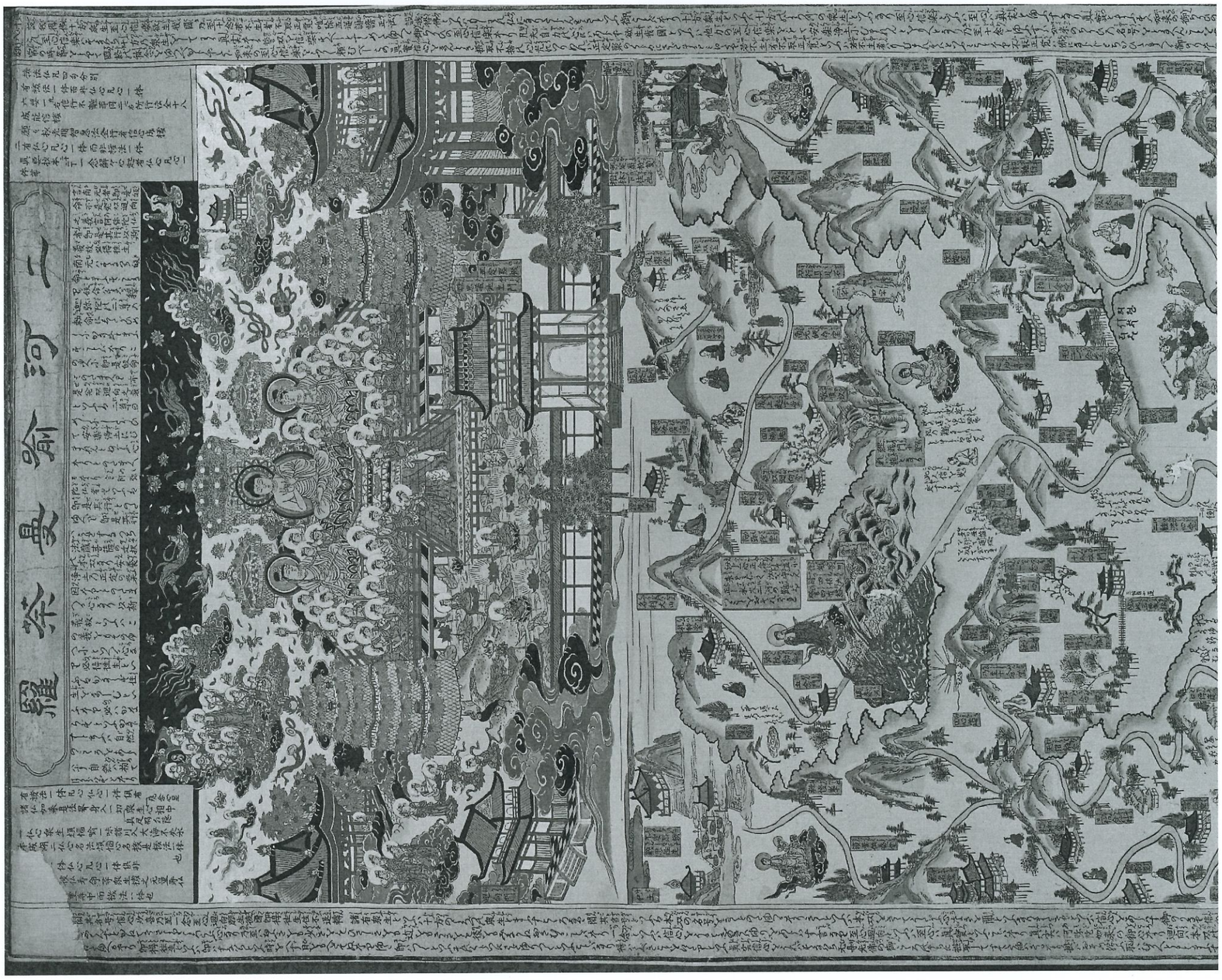
Trilingual theater poster, Jerusalem, 1919. V 2697 09.

The Buddha Travels to Jerusalem

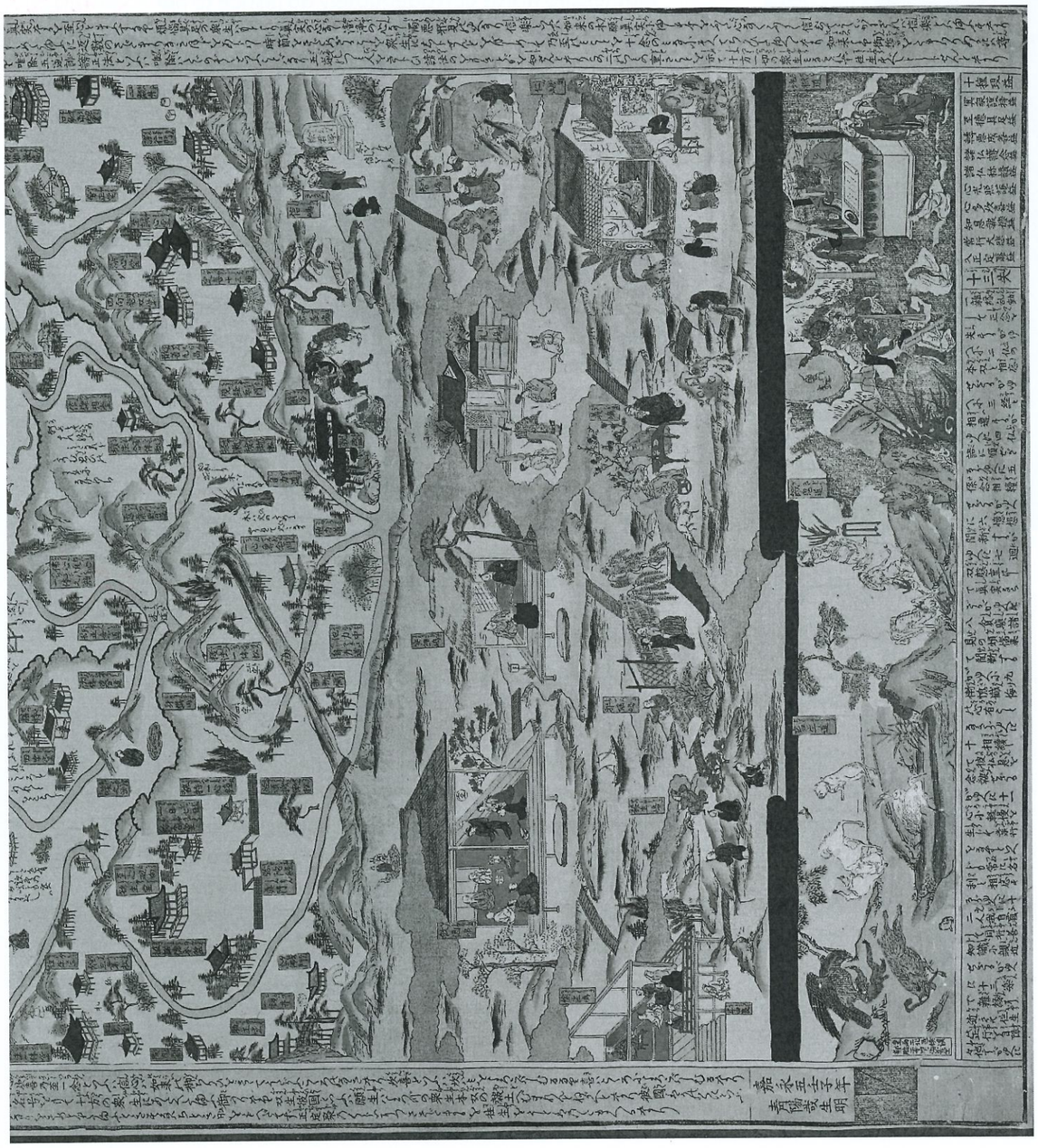
The Elizabeth Anna Gordon Collection of Japanese Art, early 20th century

MILKA LEVY-RUBIN

About ~~100~~ one hundred years ago, the National Library came into possession of an exceptional collection of 139 little-known Buddhist paintings. These are primarily copies of originals found in Japanese Buddhist temples during the nineteenth century depicting various expressions of Buddha, patriarchs, monks, and landscapes. Being far removed from the library's collection areas, how did these Japanese Buddhist paintings end up at the National Library of Israel? The story of their arrival at the library is indeed a fascinating one. The collection was bequeathed to



the library in 1925 by Elizabeth Anna Gordon (1851–1925), a devout Christian and ardent Zionist. A former lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria, Gordon visited Japan in 1891 and, enthralled by her visit, relocated to Kyoto in 1907, where she remained until her death. During her years in Kyoto, she spent her time researching Japanese Buddhism and expanding her collection of Buddhist art. Gordon adopted a belief, prevalent at the time, that the Japanese were descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel and the British were descendants of the tribe of Judah. She believed that the meeting between the Japanese and English royalty would bring about the reunion of Judah and Israel and a return to the Land of Israel, thus heralding the Messianic age. Regarding the rise of Zionism as part of this larger plan, Gordon became a fervent supporter of the Zionist movement; she even financed the Zionist Organization's 1903 expedition to investigate Uganda as a homeland for the Jews. Her decision to bequeath part of her art collection to the National Library of the Jewish People was no doubt inspired by these deep beliefs.



Mandala of the White Path Crossing Two Rivers, Japan, c. 1850–1925. The painting is based on a metaphor written by the seventh-century Pure Land patriarch, Zendo, in which he likened human desires to two raging rivers, one of water and the other of fire. The top of the painting shows a luxurious Pure Land and the bottom depicts scenes of Hell, including the court of Enma, Lord and Judge of Hell. The middle and main sections of the painting are dedicated to the human world. Donated by Elizabeth Anna Gordon in 1925. L 132 2013.

Flora of Bombay

The Sassoon Family Archive, 19th–20th centuries

RACHEL MISRATI

"Great Scholar, Hostess, and Woman of Business. Mrs. Flora Sassoon Dead," announced the *British Evening Standard* on January 14, 1936. "A noble and sainted mother...no words can adequately do justice to her personality and mentality," wrote her daughter, Lady Rachel Ezra. "A first-class Hebraist" was how Rev. Singer, president of the Jews' College Literary Society, introduced her when she became the first woman to preside over one of their meetings. "Her house was full of men of great affairs and half a dozen eminent scholars...her charity and her hospitality were great," reported her son, David.

Who was this extraordinary woman, heralded by family, friends, and important public figures in such terms?

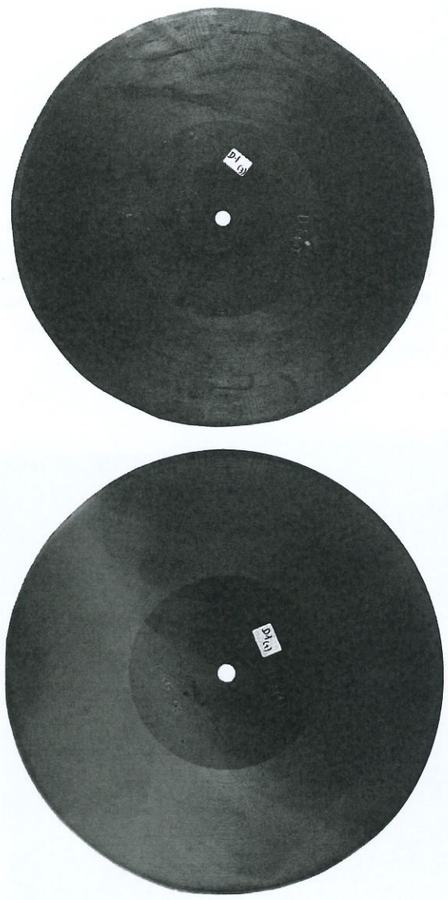
Flora Sassoon (1859–1936) was the wife of Solomon Sassoon, whose father, David, had moved from Baghdad to Bombay in the eighteenth century. There he established the Sassoon family's commercial empire with its major centers in Iraq, India, China, and England – each headed by one of his sons. By the eighteenth century, the Sephardi "Rothschilds of the East" were already among the world's wealthiest families.

Solomon ran the business in Bombay until his death in 1894 when he was succeeded by Flora. A prominent businesswoman, she divided her time between India and England in her search for the best medical treatment for her chronically ill daughter, Mozelle. She settled permanently in London in 1911. Flora moved in the highest circles of Indian, Anglo-Jewish, and English societies as a patron, philanthropist, and society hostess. She was a learned Jewish scholar, kept a traditional Jewish household, and corresponded with the renowned Sephardi Hakham Yosef Hayyim, known as the Ben Ish Hai. After her death in 1936, she was

Recording the Sounds of Palestine

The Robert Lachmann Archive, 1907–1939

GILA FLAM



Top left: Metal record, original no. D1b, recorded in Jerusalem in 1937 by Robert Lachmann of the singer 'Ali Abd al-Rahman. National Sound Archives Record Collection, JMR 3001.

Bottom left: X-ray film record, original no. D1a, recorded by Lachmann in Jerusalem in 1938. National Sound Archives Record Collection, JMR 3002.

Right: Song transcription and partial translation written by Lachmann of a Bedouin poetic song (with a rababa instrument) that was recorded on metal record no. D1b. The Robert Lachmann Archive. Mus. 26 A 58.

On September 19, 1933, Robert Lachmann (1892–1939) received a letter informing him of his "retirement" from his position as music librarian at the Berlin State Library. This was one of the many dismissals of Jews that accompanied the consolidation of Nazi rule in Germany. Lachmann, a pioneering ethnomusicologist and scholar of Arab music, managed to flee Germany, arriving in Jerusalem in 1935 along with his state-of-the-art recording equipment, phonograph, and personal library of books and records.

Lachmann was born in Berlin in 1892 to an assimilated Jewish family. During World War I, he served as an interpreter for North African and Indian prisoners of war held in Germany, and the music of the Tunisian prisoners served as the topic of his doctoral dissertation. Subsequently, throughout the 1920s and 1930s, he went to Tunisia and Morocco to study and record Arab folk music. He also served as one of the delegates of the Phonogramm-Archiv at the first International Congress of Arabic Music held in Cairo in 1932. At the conference, he met the well-known Jewish Iraqi musician Ezra Aharon, whom he would meet again in 1935 after they had both immigrated to Palestine.

He continued his fieldwork after arriving in Mandatory Palestine, and it is largely thanks to Lachmann that we can still revel in the musical diversity of Jerusalem at that time. He made 769 metal records documenting folk, religious, and urban Arab music as well as the music of Kurdish, Yemenite, and European Jews and of the Samaritans. After he could no longer import wax cylinders, the then preferred recording medium, from Germany, he designed his own unique metal records.

Lachmann presented his research and knowledge in public lectures in Palestine. In 1936 he launched a series of lectures on "Oriental Music" with recorded musical examples on the newly established Palestine Broadcasting Service. His English-language programs on this music were among the first to be broadcast on the pioneering station.

Lachmann died suddenly in May 1939, but his lectures and recordings were preserved by his student Edith Gerson-Kiwi and transferred to Israel's new National Sound Archive in 1965. His writings and recordings are available in Jerusalem and Berlin and tell the story of an uprooted Jewish German scholar.

reburied in the Sephardi cemetery on the Mount of Olives in 1947 in a ceremony that was attended by both chief rabbis and many other prominent personalities.

Flora Sassoon was an exceptional woman of her time. Annie Landau, head of the Evelina de Rothschild School in Jerusalem, expressed these sentiments in a letter during Flora's visit to Palestine in 1925: "From when I was a young girl beginning to study you were spoken of in our home as the Jewess whose wit, learning and heart it would be a privilege to try to emulate."

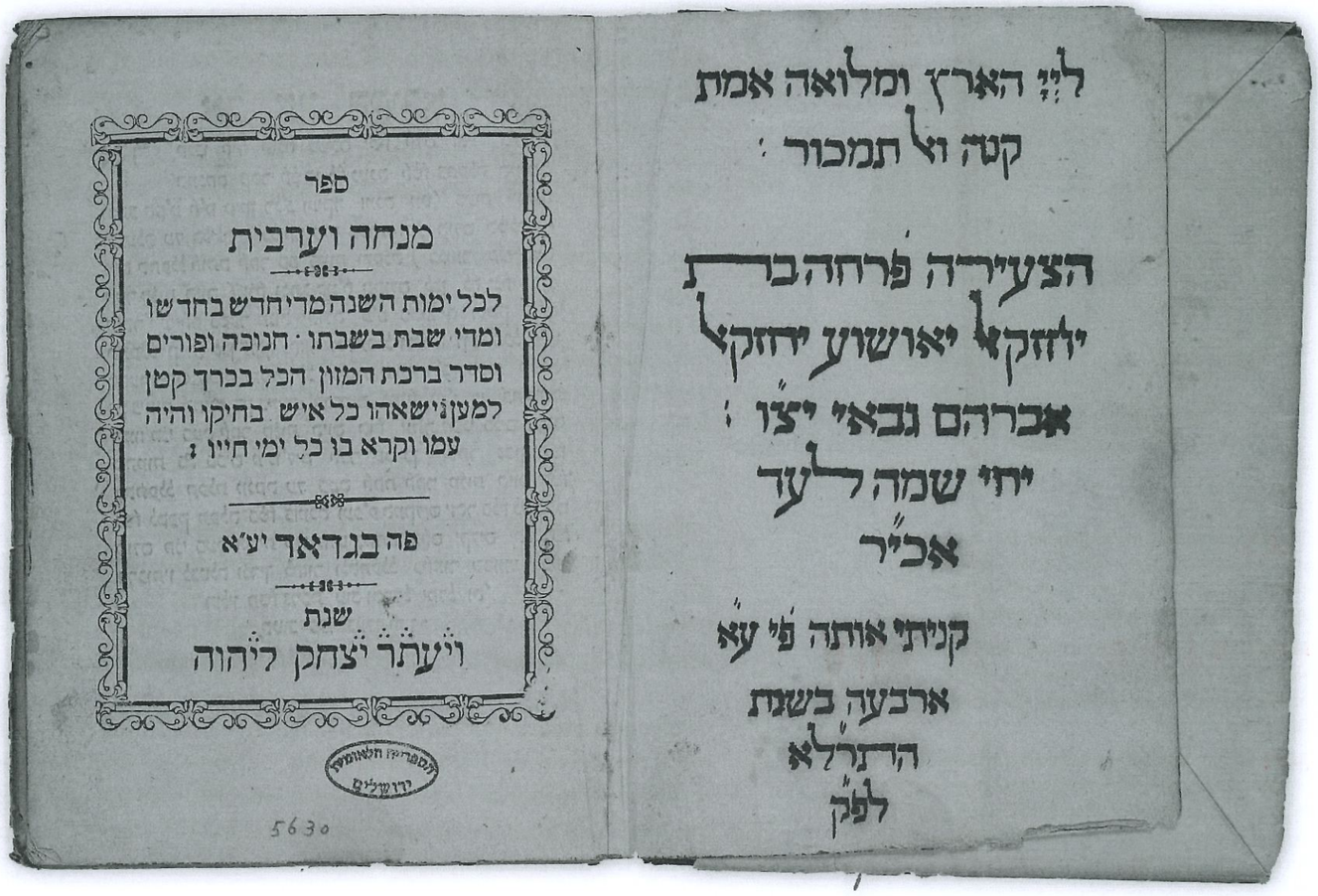
The exciting story of Flora and the transnational Sassoon family can be traced over hundreds of years in the thousands of documents, photographs, newspaper cuttings, and letters written by numerous generations in the fascinating and richly diverse Sassoon Family Archive.

Opposite/

~~Left~~: Mrs. Flora and Miss Rachel Sassoon pose for a photograph by Stanley Smith. ARC. Ms. Var. 325 04 29.

Below/

~~Right~~: A siddur for afternoon and evening services, Baghdad, 1870. Flora Sasson's name was inscribed in the flyleaf of her prayer book in 1871. 0° 2018 A 3494.



ספר

מנחה וערבית

לכל ימות השנה מרי חדש בחדשו
ומדי שבת בשבתו · חנוכה ופורים
וסדר ברכת המזון הכל בכרך קטן
למען ישאהו כל איש בחיקו והיה
עמו וקרא בו כל ימי חייו ׃

פה בגדאד יע"א

שנת
ויעתר יצחק ליהוה

5630

לויי הארץ ומלואה אמת
קטה וא תמכור ׃

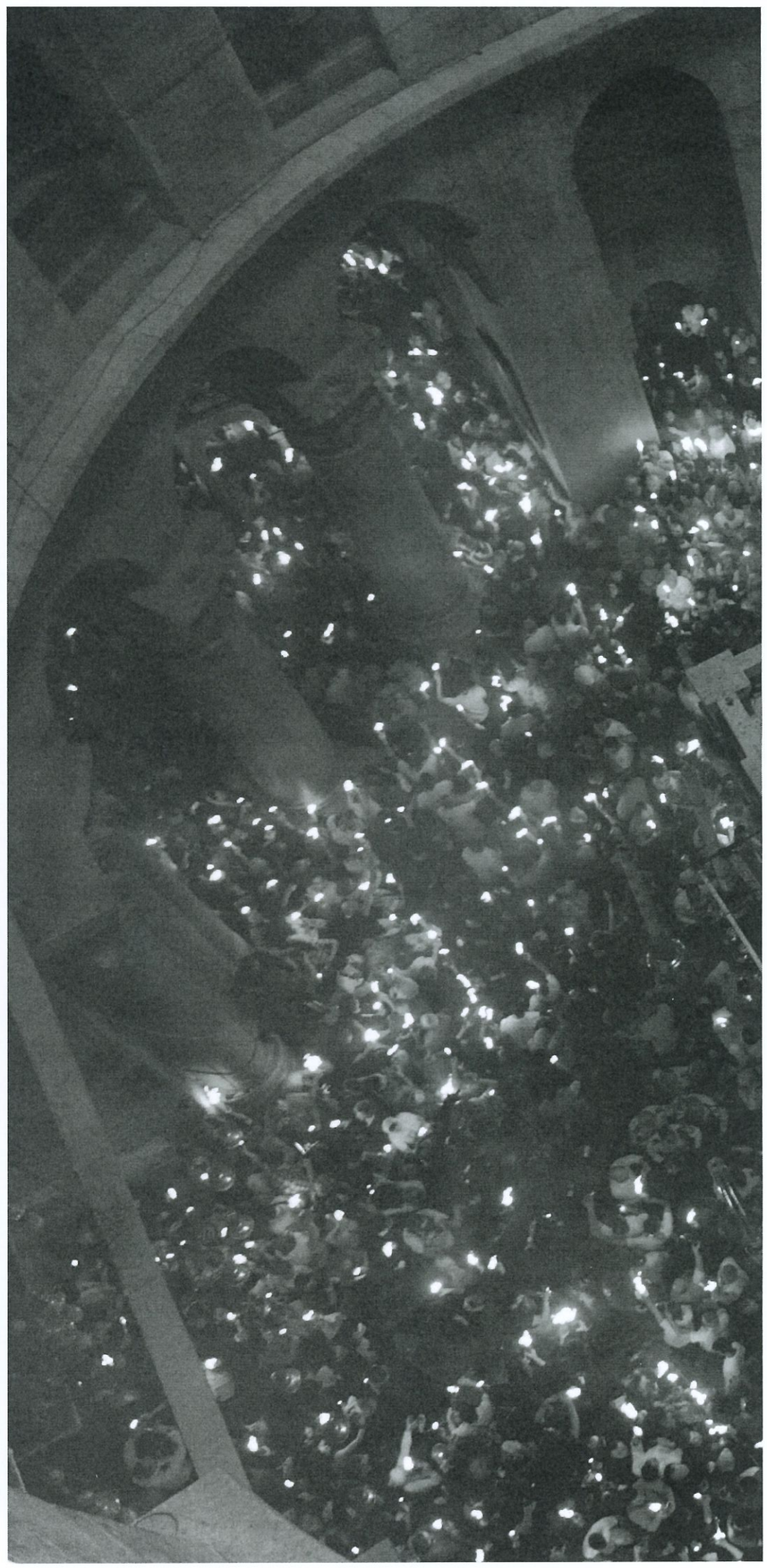
הציירה פרחה ברת
יחזקאל יאושוע יחזקאל
אברהם נבאי יצ"ו ׃
יחי שמה לעד
אכ"ר

קניתי אותה פי עא
ארבעה בשנת
הרת"לא
לפ"ק

A Ritual Mosaic of Israel

The Danchu Arnon Photograph Collection

ELCHANAN REINER

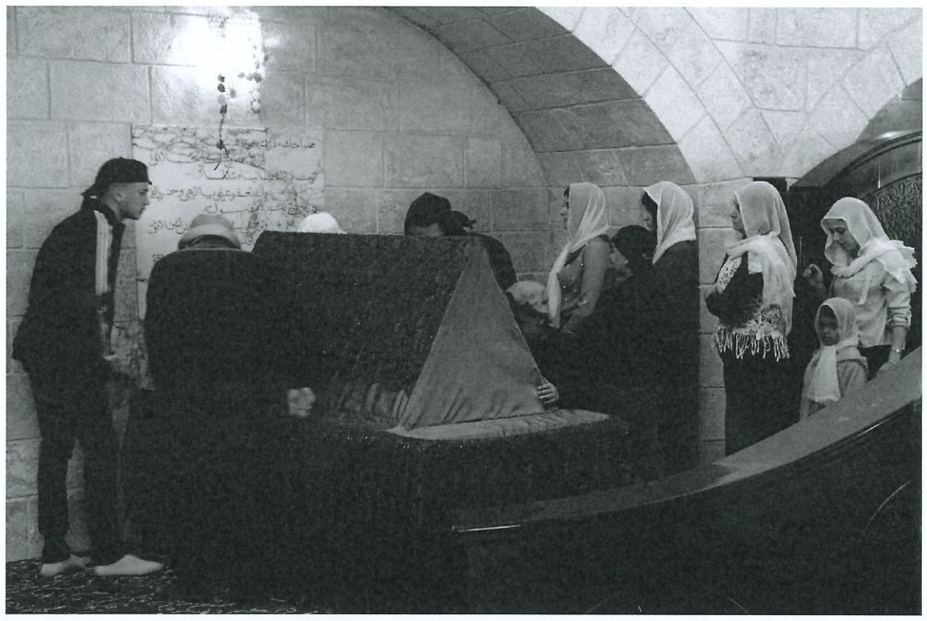


Dan "Danchu" Arnon (b. 1935) is responsible for one of the most distinctive, colorful, and diverse collections in the National Library, consisting of photographs he has taken of the entire spectrum of ceremonies, both religious and secular, in Israel. The Danchu Arnon collection documents the yearly cycle as reflected in hundreds of different ceremonies taking place in synagogues, churches, and mosques as well as on the street, in the market, in the field, and at home. The collection captures ritual life in Israel: a unique, elusive, ephemeral aspect of religious and secular culture among Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. Ritual is almost impossible to preserve in written texts. It is passed down orally from generation to generation, changing and developing over time. During his decades of work as a "hunter" of ceremonies, Arnon has followed such rituals with determination and perseverance.

The photographs document all the events surrounding each holiday from start to finish: from Ash Wednesday ceremonies of Catholics in Jaffa to Melkite reenactments of Good Friday to the Holy Fire ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Saturday and finally to Easter celebrations by the tapestry of Christian communities across the country. The photographs showcase holidays observed by all religious groups living in Israel, both permanent and temporary. ~~The photographs~~ capture public rituals and private family events: weddings, circumcisions, mikvah immersions, and more. Arnon never rests. He sets out tirelessly at the appropriate times each year, bringing back fascinating new material that would be lost to us if not for his documentation.

~~Top~~: The *"tisch"* (literally, table) of the leader of the Belz Hassidic community. Hanukkah candle-lighting celebration in Romema, Jerusalem, in 2013. Danchu Arnon Collection. ARC. 4° 2080 05 01 03.

~~Top~~: Muslim women at prayer during the *"ziyara"* (pilgrimage) to Nabi Musa near Jericho, in 2010. Danchu Arnon Collection. ARC. 4° 2080 02 104.



Druze worshippers at the gravesite of Nabi Shu'ayb (Jethro), near Tiberias, in 2018. Danchu Arnon Collection. ARC. 4° 2080 01 39

Henna ceremony of Yemenite Jews as part of the wedding celebrations at Moshav Ganei Tal in 2018. The bride and groom wear traditional clothing and jewelry, and the guests carry platters decorated with flowers and candles. Danchu Arnon Collection. ARC. 4° 2080 06 05 22.

Top: L

Above: L

or Bottom?

Samaritan pilgrimage to the summit of Mt. Gerizim at the dawn of the Festival of Weeks (Shavuot), in 2016. The priests lead the procession, carrying Samaritan scrolls of the Pentateuch. Danchu Arnon Collection. ARC. 4° 2080 03 04 19.

Procession of Ethiopian Christian pilgrims from the Ethiopian Archbishop's house to the Dir al-Sultan Monastery held on the roof of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City, in 2015. The procession is part of the Holy Saturday and Holy Fire ceremonies the day before Easter. Danchu Arnon Collection, 2018. ARC. 4° 2080 02 79.