

Noa Yuval-Hacham

Iconoclasm in Churches and Synagogues in the Southern Hebron Hills during Late Antiquity

Several dozen Late Antique churches and synagogues in the Land of Israel and Transjordan demonstrate an iconoclastic phenomenon involving the effacement of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic images in the works of art that adorned the ritual structures.

This phenomenon is especially pronounced in the southern Hebron hills region where comparable iconoclastic activity is attested in two synagogues and four churches that operated in the same vicinity. In addition to the factors that precipitated the phenomenon of iconoclasm throughout the wider region, the southern Hebron hills area was distinguished by ultra-conservative communities with entrenched anti-figural conceptions. The overtly similar features of the iconoclastic effacement in the churches and synagogues alike might attest to the cultural ties that obtained between these two societies during the early Islamic period when both communities lived and functioned as minorities under Islamic rule.

Asaf Yedidya

Between Internal and External *Tikkun* and Between Symbolic-Theurgic Messianism and Realistic Messianism: The Vilna Gaon's Disciples and Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer

This article deals with the differences between the doctrine of redemption of the Vilna Gaon's disciples and that of Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, in light of the letter sent by the Kabbalist Yitzchak Kahane of Jerusalem – a third generation disciple of the Vilna Gaon – to Rabbi Kalischer (the letter can be found at the Central Zionist Archives).

While Kahane presented a doctrine of symbolic-theurgic messianic redemption, which focuses on the study of Torah and Kabbalah in the Land of Israel and the fulfillment of those specific biblical commandments which are land-based (as in agriculture etc.) as accelerators of redemption – a doctrine echoed in sources from the time of the *aliyah* of the Vilna Gaon's disciples at the beginning of the nineteenth century – Kalischer presented a realistic messianic redemption that focuses on immigration and agricultural settlement in the Land of Israel.

However, Kalischer was willing to accept support from all sides to prove that his plan was feasible and that it had many supporters among the Jewish public, whether they were proponents of a symbolic-theurgic messianic doctrine, such as the Vilna Gaon's disciples, or of a modern national doctrine, such as the proto-Zionist philosopher and socialist Moses Hess.

Iris Levy

The Patron of Jerusalem's Churches: Greek Orthodox Patriarch Gerasimus I, 1891–1897

This article aims to advance and enrich the study and documentation of the project led by Patriarch Gerasimus I, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem and the territory of Palestine and Transjordan in the 19th century.

This study collects for the first time all the documentation and materials related to the life and work of Gerasimus I as the Patriarch of Jerusalem. It presents a detailed survey of the construction and ornamentation project led by Patriarch Gerasimus I, who initiated and executed the construction and renovation of over eighteen churches and four monasteries in his see. In addition, Gerasimus was a patron of the arts, and under his patronage iconostases were erected in seven churches in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem: in Jerusalem

(1893); Ein Karem (1894); Beit Sahur (1895); Ramla (1896); Tiberias (1896); Madaba in Jordan (1896); Kafr Rama (1896). Another church in Jerusalem (1896) was decorated with murals under his patronage. The study of the life's work of Patriarch Gerasimus I contributes to our understanding of Christian leaders in Greek Orthodox churches in 19th century Palestine and to the history of the Christian Arab communities that lived in its Episcopal see.

Ofer Idels

Imagined Games: Sports, the Yishuv and XI Olympiad, 1931–1936

The XI Olympiad, mostly known today as the 'Nazi Olympics', is one of the most controversial events in the history of modern sports. As a result the event has attracted a great deal of interest on the part of the academic world. Two of the issues that are dealt with in much of the rich historiography about the 1936 Olympics are the attempts to boycott the games and the question of Jewish participation and discrimination. Despite the relevance of Jewish society in Palestine to these questions, research has not yet adequately addressed the Yishuv's perception of the 'Nazi Olympics'. Using official documents, newspaper articles and other publications, I will argue that the Yishuv's perceptions of the event were not derived only from a general conflict between Jews and Zionism on the one hand and Nazism and Anti-Semitism on the other. Rather, opinions were also influenced by internal political struggles in the Yishuv itself, and by multiple European ideologies of physical culture.

Na'ama Ben Ze'ev

The Arab Revolt from the Viewpoint of a Young Attorney

Towards the end of his life, Haifa attorney Hanna Naqara wrote his memoirs. In the passage presented in this article (in Hebrew translation), he describes the role he played during the Arab Revolt (1936–1939) in representing defendants in British Mandate military courts. The Revolt has been the subject of inquiry by researchers of Palestinian history and discussed in numerous articles and books; however, aspects

related to logistical assistance extended to the rebels have not been extensively detailed or analyzed. In cases where this has been discussed, most historians emphasize the role played by the rural population. Naqara's description illustrates the voluntary assistance to the rebels extended by the urban middle class; he thus broadens our understanding of the Palestinian population's support of the national movement and armed uprising. The passage from Naqara's memoirs is prefaced by a brief explanation of the circumstances surrounding the writing and publication of his book as well as a concise profile of the author.

Lilach Rosenberg-Friedman

The National Character of the Yishuv and its Limitations: The Va'ad Leumi's Committee on the Birthrate Problem as a Case Study

At the center of this article are the perceptions and activities of the Committee on Birthrate Problems of the Va'ad Leumi (National Council), founded in 1943. This committee sought to contend with the low birthrate characteristic of the Yishuv which contradicted the national aspiration for a Jewish majority in Palestine during the British Mandate. Therefore, the committee examined birth patterns in the Yishuv, as well as factors that reduced the birthrate in its various sectors. The committee addressed questions related to both the general population and the leadership, and coped with dilemmas and conflicts that, although raised by the issue of the low birthrate, were actually fundamental issues related to the new society's character. Therefore, the Committee's activity, which attempted to formulate a birthrate policy, can be seen as part of the practice of cultural agents who sought to shape the Yishuv society in a variety of areas. A discussion of strategies to boost the birth rate, a field that touches both on institutional policies and everyday life, as well as on the complex interface between these two, presents a unique test case for examining basic issues in Yishuv society, its characteristics and the processes of its formation. From this discussion, a varied and complex portrait of the Yishuv arises, as does a portrait of the complexities of nationalism, with all its limitations.