
AZZAN YADIN-ISRAEL
Jewish Studies and Classics
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Education

- Ph.D. **Jewish Studies.** University of California, Berkeley and the Graduate Theological Union. 1999. Dissertation: “*Imitatio Scripturae*: Torah and Hermeneutics in the Rabbi Ishmael Midrashim.”
- B.A. **Philosophy and Jewish Thought.** Hebrew University. 1994

Permanent Academic Positions

Rutgers University, New Brunswick NJ	
Professor, Jewish Studies and Classics	Fall 2014 – Present
Associate Professor, Jewish Studies and Classics	Spring 2013 – Spring 2014
Associate Professor, Jewish Studies	Spring 2005 – Spring 2014
Assistant Professor, Jewish Studies	Fall 2002 – Spring 2005
University of Minnesota	
Assistant Professor	Fall 1999 – Spring 2002

Visiting Positions

Princeton University	Spring 2015
University of Chicago Divinity School	Spring 2009
Princeton University	Spring 2008
Cardozo Law School	Fall 2007 – Spring 2008
Jewish Theological Seminary	Fall 2007
Princeton University	Fall 2003 – Spring 2004

Publications

Books

- *Temptation Transformed: The Story of How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple*. University of Chicago Press, 2023.
- *Intuitive Vocabulary: Ancient Greek*. Lingua Press, 2023.
- *Intuitive Vocabulary: Spanish*. Lingua Press, 2019.
- *The Grace of God and the Grace of Man: The Theologies of Bruce Springsteen*. Lingua Press, 2016.
- *Scripture and Tradition: Rabbi Akiva and the Triumph of Midrash*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.
- *Intuitive Vocabulary: German*. Lingua Press, 2013.
- *Scripture as Logos: Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Midrash*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Articles and Essays

- “Star Wars: The Hidden Empire,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 57 (2024), 247-256.
- “The Different Senses of Polysemy,” in Katrin Kogman-Appel and Naftali Cohn (eds.), *Beloved David: Advisor, Man of Understanding, and Writer: A Festschrift in Honor of David Stern* (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2024), 113-129.
- “Historical Linguistics and Language Change: The Rabbinic Hebrew Deponent,” in Aaron Rubin (ed.), *Linguistic and Philological Studies of the Hebrew Bible and Its Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 95-111.
- “The Halakhic Midrashim and the Canonicity of the Mishnah,” in Shaye Cohen (ed.), *What Is the Mishnah?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2023), 425-443.
- “Language” in Gwynn Kessler and Naomi Kolton-Frumm (eds.), *A Companion to Jews and Judaism in the Late Antique World, 3rd Century BCE – 7th Century CE* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), 55-68.
- “Midrash, Oral Law, and the Question of Rabbinic Authority,” in Leonard J. Greenspoon (ed.), *Authority and Dissent in Jewish Life* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2020), 13-24.
- “Religious Authority and the Rise of the Christian Intellectual,” forthcoming in Lewis Ayers (ed.), *The Rise of the Christian Intellectual* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 165-192.
- “Athens and Jerusalem? Early Jewish Biblical Scholarship and the Pagan World,” in Martin Mulslow and Asaph Ben-Tov (eds.), *Knowledge and Profanation: Transgressing the Boundaries of Religion in Premodern Scholarship* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 231-252.

- “Contact Without Borrowing: Areal Diffusion, Contact-Induced Continuity, and Late Antique Sacrifice,” *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 9 (2018), 230-258.
- “Authorial Intent: Human and Divine,” in Charlotte Fonrobert et al. (eds.), *Talmudic Transgressions: Engaging the Work of Daniel Boyarin* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 3-22.
- “‘These and These are the Words of the Living God’: Halakhic Pluralism and its Discontents,” in Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, Tzvi Novick, and Christine Hayes (eds.), *The Faces of Torah: Studies in the Texts and Contexts of Ancient Judaism in Honor of Steven Fraade* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 567-580.
- “Some Uses of Deixis in Rabbinic Hebrew,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 60 (2015), 331-340.
- “For Mark was Peter's *tanna*: Oral Tradition versus Eyewitness History in Papias,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 23 (2015), 337-362.
- “Bavli Menahot 29b and the Diminution of the Prophets,” *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 5 (2014), 88-105.
- “Rabbinic Polysemy: A Response to Steven Fraade,” *AJS Review* 38 (2014), 129-141.
- “*Qabbalah*, *Deuterosis*, and Semantic Incommensurability: A Preliminary Study,” in Ra'anan Boustan, Klaus Hermann, Reimund Leicht et al. (eds.), *Envisioning Judaism: Studies in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 917-940.
- “A Note on a A Middle High German Calque in *Sefer Hasidim*,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 19 (2012), 385-387.
- “Concepts of Scripture in the Schools of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael,” in Benjamin Sommer (ed.), *Jewish Theologies of Scripture*, (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 47-63.
- “The Creaturely Limits of Knowledge: Martin Heidegger’s Theological Critique of Immanuel Kant,” in Leonard V. Kaplan and Rudy Koshar (eds.), *The Weimar Moment: Political Theology, Liberalism, and the Law* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), 123-144. Co-authored with Sam Moyn.
- “Rabbi Aqiva and the Site of Revelation,” in Moulie Vidas and Philippa Townsend (eds.), *Revelation, Literature, and Community in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 177-216.
- “‘*Aretz* et la sémantique de la terre,” *Les Cahiers du judaïsme* 30 (2011), 104-113.
- “Rabbi Akiva’s Youth,” in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 100 (2010), 573-597.
- “Engaging Rabbinic Literature: Four Texts,” in Paul Socken (ed.), *Why Study Talmud in the Twenty-first Century?: The Relevance of the Ancient Jewish Text to Our World* (Lanham, MD.; Lexington, 2009), 201-214.
- “The Semantics of *tinok* in Mishnaic Hebrew” (Hebrew), *Leshonenu: The Journal of the Academy of the Hebrew Language* 71 (2009), 73-79.

- “Ronald Dworkin and Self-Undermining Interpretation,” in *Diné Israel: An Annual of Jewish Law* 25 (2009), 209-234.
- “Blorit: Pagan Mohawk or Sabra Forelock?: Ideologically Manipulative Secularization of Hebrew Terms in Socialist Zionist Israel,” in Tope Omoniye (ed.), *The Sociology of Language and Religion: Change, Conflict, and Accommodation* (London and New York: Plagrave Macmillan, 2009), 84-124. Co-authored with Ghil’ad Zuckermann.
- “Rabban Gamliel, Aphrodite’s Bath, and the Question of Pagan Monotheism,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96 (Spring 2006), 149-179.
- “Resistance to Midrash? Midrash and Halakhah (Oral Tradition) in the Halakhic Midrashim,” in Carol Bakhos (ed.), *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 35-58.
- “Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla’s works ‘Gates of Justice’ and ‘Gates of Light’” (Hebrew), *Pe’amim* 104 (2005), 41-64.
- “Goliath’s Armor and Israelite Collective Memory,” *Vetus Testamentum* 54 (2004), 373-395.
- “Qol (Voice) as Hypostasis in the Hebrew Bible,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003), 601-629.
- “Hammer on the Rock: Mekhilta Deuteronomy and the Question of Rabbinic Polysemy,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 10 (2003), 1-17.
- “A Greek Witness to the Semantic Shift בָּיַע-‘Buy’,” *Hebrew Studies* 43 (2002), 31-37.
- “4QMMT, Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Legal Midrash,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 10 (2002), 130-149.
- “Shnei Ketuvim and Rabbinic Intermediation,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 33 (2002), 386-410.
- “Samson’s Hida,” *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002), 407-426.
- “Web of Chaos: Bialik and Nietzsche on Language, Truth and the Death of God,” *Prooftexts* 21 (2001), 179-203.

Public Scholarship

- “St. Augustine’s Jews and the Undeserving Poor,” *Marginalia: Los Angeles Review of Books*, August 30th, 2019.
- “The Vicissitudes of *Am Ha-Aretz*,” *AJS Perspectives*, Fall 2014, 21-22.
- “A Measure of Beauty” (on the Israeli hip-hop band Hadag Nahash), *Jewish Review of Books* 3, Fall 2010, 44-45.

Encyclopedia Entries

- “Rabbinic Interpretation,” and “Rabbi Ishmael,” in Dale Allison, Jr. (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming).
- “Rabbi Akiva,” “Rabbi Ishmael,” “Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael,” “Sifra,” “Sifre Numbers,” and “Sifre Deuteronomy,” in Eric Olin (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Ancient Mediterranean Religions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
- “Hebrew in Contact with Other Languages” and “Neologisms,” in Geoffrey Kahn (ed.), *The Brill Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
- “Law in the Rabbinic Period,” *Oxford Bibliography Online*.
- “Rabbi Aqiva” in John J. Collins (ed.), *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Ancient Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

Book Reviews

- Barry Scott Wimpfheimer, *The “Talmud”: A Biography*, in *Speculum* 96, January 2021.
- Barry W. Holtz, *Rabbi Akiva: Sage of the Talmud*, in *Reading Religion*, January 2019.
- Yair Lorberbaum, *In God’s Image: Myth, Theology, and Law in Classical Judaism*, in *Reading Religion*, May 2016.
- Tzvi Novick, *What is Good and What God Demands: Normative Structures in Tannaitic Literature*, in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 44 (2013), 432-33.
- Avi Sagi, *The Open Canon: On the Meaning of Halakhic Discourse*, in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 55 (2010), 291-292.
- Michael Carasik (ed.), *The Commentator’s Bible*, in *The Jewish Review of Books* 1 (Spring 2010).
- Deborah Steinmetz, *Punishment and Freedom: The Rabbinic Construction of Criminal Law*, in *AJS Review* 33 (2009), 173-176.
- Joshua Levinson, *The Untold Story: The Narrative Art of Midrash*, in *AJS Review* 31 (2007), 379-382.
- Beth Berkowitz, *Execution and Invention: Death Penalty Discourse in Early Rabbinic and Christian Cultures*, in *Henoch: A Journal of Jewish Studies* 31 (2009), 165-168.
- B. Barry Levy, *Fixing God’s Torah: The Accuracy of the Bible in Jewish Law*, in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 34 (2003), 338-40.
- John W. Martens, *One God, One Law: Philo of Alexandria on the Mosaic and Greco-Roman Law*, in *Studia Philonica Annual* 16 (2004), 11-14.

Media Appearances and Reviews

- The French History Podcast. November 3, 2023.
- Biblical World Podcast. August 14th, 2023.
- The Medievalist Podcast. June 22, 2023.
- Gone Medieval Podcast. June 1st, 2023.
- New Books Network. January 15th, 2023.
- Eric Altermann, “Bruce Springsteen is Jewish-ish,” *The Atlantic*, October 2019.
- “One On One With Steve Adubato” (PBS), November 2017.
- Articles on “Springsteen’s Theologies” Course: *Rolling Stone*, *The Washington Post*, *New Jersey Monthly*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *L’Osservatore Romano* (the Vatican).

Invited Presentations

- University of Buffalo, David Blitzer Memorial Lecture, April 2024: “Plato and the Babylonian Talmud: The Status of the Forgotten.”
- University of New England, Global Humanities Program, February 2024: “How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple”
- Groningen University, January 2024: “Linguistics and Iconography: The Case of the Forbidden Fruit.”
- Protestant Theological University, Amsterdam, January 2024: “The Forbidden Fruit: History and Theology.”
- UCLA, April 2023: “The Promise and Peril of Historic Periodization.”
- Princeton, November 2022, the E. Franklin Robbins Endowed Lecture: “How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple.”
- Penn State University, September 2022: “How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple.”
- College of William and Mary, February 2022: “The Role of Scripture in Rabbinic Law” (online).
- Ben Gurion University, January 2019: “Birth of an Icon: How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple.”
- Bar Ilan University, December 2018: “Hermeneutic Issues in the Sifra.”
- The Institute for Advanced Studies, Jerusalem, December, 2018: “Birth of an Icon: How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple.”
- The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, December 2018: “Second Temple Judaism: An Ideological Examination.”
- Haifa University, Digital Humanities Forum, December 2018: “Birth of an Icon: How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple.”

- Rutgers University Philosophy Club, October 2018: “Heraclitus and Early Greek Philosophy.”
- University of Minnesota, March 2018. “Birth of an Icon: How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple.”
- University of Minnesota, March 2018. “Is the New Testament a Jewish Text?”
- University of Florida, March 2018. “Birth of an Icon: How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple.”
- Bard Graduate Center, October 2017. “Material Culture and Rabbinic Literature: An Ecological Perspective.”
- Scranton University, November 2017: “The Theologies of Bruce Springsteen.”
- St. Peter’s University Hospital, March 2017. “Created in God’s Image: Bioethical Implications.”
- Brandeis University, November 2016. “Contact-Induced Cultural Change: The Case of Late Antique Judaism.”
- Yeshiva University, May 2015. “Pagan Midrash.”
- Gradaute Theological Union, April 2012. “*Qabbalah* and Deuterosis.”
- UCLA, March 2012. “Social Critique in Hadag Nahash.”
- Yale University, October 2011. “Akiva in Moses’ Classroom.”
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, September 2011. “Textual Foreknowledge: Rabbinic, Pauline, and Pagan”
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, September 2011. “What Do We Really Know About the Rabbis?”
- University of Kansas, February 2009. “Literary and Theological Categories in Early Rabbinic Midrash.”
- University of Kansas, February 2009. “On the Jewish-Pagan Dialogue.”
- Oberlin College, March 2005. “David and Goliath and Israelite Collective Memory.”
- Jewish Theological Seminary, March 2003. “Rabbinic Judaism and the Question of Pagan Monotheism.”
- UCLA, February 2002. “Remapping the Rabbis: Legal Hermeneutics in Rabbi Ishmael and Clement of Alexandria.”
- University of Wisconsin, Madison, November 2000. “Goliath’s Armor.”

Conference Presentations (Selected)

- Leiden University, January 2024: “Plato’s *Symposium* in Czeslaw Milosz’s Poetry.”
- Harvard University, April 2020: “Legal Midrash and the Canonicity of the Mishnah.”
- Charles University, Prague, January 2020: “Bialik on Aggadah.”

- Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, 2018. "Pagan and Rabbinic Critiques of Sacrifice."
- Society for Biblical Literature Annual Conference, 2018. "Sacrifice: Pagan and Rabbinic."
- Australian Catholic University, Rome Center, July 2016. "Scriptural Interpretation and Received Tradition."
- Boston University, June 2015. "Roman Historiography and Rabbinic Historiography."
- Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, 2015. "The Rabbinic Hebrew Deponent."
- Northwestern University, May 2015. "Contact-Induced Cultural Change."
- UC Berkeley, March 2012. "Majority Rule and Minority Opinion in Rabbinic Jurisprudence."
- Cardozo Law School, February 2010. "Jewish Political Theology."
- Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, 2009. "Rabbi Akiva and the Question of Rabbinic Polysemy."
- American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, 2009. "Literary and Theological Categories in Early Rabbinic Midrash."
- Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, 2008. "Remapping Midrash."
- Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, 2005. "Moses and Rabbi Akiva."
- Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, 2004. "Rabbinic Models of Interpretive Authority."
- Society for Biblical Literature Annual Conference, 2004. "Halakhah and Pardosis."
- Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, 2003. "Rabbi Akiva's Youth."
- Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, 2002. "Legal Hermeneutics in the *Sifra*."
- Society for Biblical Literature Annual Conference, 2001, "Goliath's Armor."
- Society for Biblical Literature Annual Conference, 2001, "Rabbi Ishamel and the Oral Law."
- Society for Biblical Literature Annual Conference, 2000. "Samson's Riddle."
- Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, 2000. "The Hammer on the Rock."

Awards and Honors

- *Temptation Transformed: The Story of How the Forbidden Fruit Became an Apple*
Named one of the ten best books in medieval studies by *Medievalists*.
- Rutgers Research Council Award, 2019.
- Rutgers Board of Trustees Fellowship for Scholarly Excellence, 2005.

Curricular Offerings (Selected)

- “Art as Biblical Commentary”
- “Christians, Pagans, and Jews”
- “Jesus the Jew”
- “Jewish History: Origins to 1492”
- “Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah”
- “Late Antique Allegory: Jewish, Christian, and Pagan” (Graduate Seminar)
- “Linguistic Contact and Cultural Contact” (Honors Seminar)
- “Plato”
- “Rabbinic Hebrew”
- “Scripture and Tradition in Early Rabbinic Judaism” (Graduate Seminar)
- “The Binding of Isaac: The History of a Motif” (Graduate Seminar)
- “The Dead Sea Scrolls”
- “The Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism”
- “The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls”
- “The Jewish Body” “God’s Body”
- “The Presocratic Philosophers”
- “The Theologies of Bruce Springsteen”

Independent Study (Selected)

- “Plato and the Correspondence Theory of Truth,” Undergraduate Independent Study, Spring 2024
- “Greek Prose: Plato’s *Phaedrus*,” Graduate Reading Course, Fall 2023
- “Imperial Aesthetic Psychology,” Graduate Reading Course, Spring 2023
- “Fallen Angels: A Comparative Study of Aeschylus and the Book of Enoch,” Undergraduate Honors, AY 2022-2023
- “Heraclitus,” Undergraduate Capstone, AY 2021-2022

- “The Gnostic Gospels” Undergraduate Independent Study, Fall 2018
- “The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” Graduate Course Module, Fall 2016

Service to the Field

- Chair of the Second Temple History and Culture Division of the Association for Jewish Studies, 2022-present.
- Co-Editor of Mohr-Siebeck’s *Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism*, 2007 – 2017.
- Editorial Board, *Journal of Ancient Judaism*, 2009-2017.
- Chair of Rabbinics Division: Association of Jewish Studies, 2009 – 2011.
- Rabbinics editor, *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*, 2001-2006
- Book manuscript referee: Brown Judaic Studies; University of California Press; University of Pennsylvania Press; The Jewish Publication Society; Princeton University Press; Mohr Siebeck.
- Article referee: *Jewish Quarterly Review*; *AJS Review*; *Hebrew Union College Annual*; *Jewish Studies Internet Journal*; *Journal for the Study of Ancient Judaism*; *Prooftexts*; *Journal of Ancient Judaism*; *Jewish Studies Quarterly*; *Zion: The Journal of the Israeli Historical Society*; *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.

Service to the Department

- Jewish Studies: Acting Undergraduate Adviser, Fall 2022.
- Jewish Studies: Undergraduate Adviser, Fall 2015 – Spring 2019.
- Classics: Department Chair, Fall 2009 – Spring 2012.
- Jewish Studies: Graduate Committee, 2011 – 2015.
- Jewish Studies: Undergraduate Advisor, Spring 2003.
- Jewish Studies: Curriculum Committee, Fall 2002 – Spring 2006.
- Jewish Studies: Library Committee (Chair), Rutgers, Fall 2002 – Spring 2005.

Service to the University

- Promotion and Tenure Committee 2022-2023
- School of Arts and Sciences Revisioning the Minor Committee, 2021 – 2022.
- Promotion and Tenure Committee, Fall 2017 – Spring 2018.
- Mellon Graduate Fellowship Committee, Fall 2008 – Spring 2012.
- Promotion and Tenure Committee, Fall 2007 – Fall 2009.

Research Languages

- Classical Hebrew (Biblical, Rabbinic, Qumran), Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Arabic (Intermediate)
- Modern Hebrew, Spanish, German, French, Italian